

**The Myth of the Diva: Female Opera Singers and Collaborative  
Performance in Early Eighteenth-Century London**

**by**

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**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
(Music: Musicology)  
in the University of Michigan  
2013**

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Dedicated, with love, to  
Amy Clark and Paul DeSimone,  
my parents;  
  
and  
  
Nick DeSimone,  
my brother.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is the product of long hours spent in various libraries and archives on both sides of the Atlantic, multiple drafts and revisions, and inspiring conversations with mentors, colleagues, friends, and family. I cannot thank Louise Stein enough for her devotion to my project and her unrelenting support. As my advisor and mentor, she has taught me how to pursue research and revise my work while guiding me towards a successful professional career. I have benefitted from her high standards and constant encouragement, such that this dissertation is a scholarly work of which I am very proud. The rest of my dissertation committee has been wonderfully supportive. I sincerely thank James Borders and Steven Whiting for their suggestions, guidance, and professional support. John Rice was kind enough to join my committee a month before the defense, and I thank him for his exceptionally rich feedback. Dena Goodman has been an invaluable source of creative inspiration, constructive criticism, and enthusiasm during my last four years of graduate school. I am so grateful for her close attention to my writing, her timely comments on every chapter draft I sent to her, and her unwavering interest in my project. I also thank Edward Parmentier for adapting my harpsichord lessons to my intellectual pursuits and for always expressing genuine interest in my research.

My dissertation research was supported by fellowships and grants from the University of Michigan and other institutions. At Michigan, thanks are due to Sidonie



Smith and the Institute for the Humanities, the Rackham Graduate School, the Institute for Research on Women and Gender, the Sweetland Writing Center, the Program of Medieval and Early Modern Studies, and the School of Music, Theatre, and Dance for the many funding opportunities I have received over the years. I also thank the American Association of University Women for offering to support my project in my final year. I am grateful to John Irving and Paul Archbold at the Institute of Musical Research, School of Advanced Study at the University of London for granting me an Overseas Doctoral Fellowship during my time abroad. Rosemary Leith opened her house to me for two months in London, for which I am exceedingly grateful. Finally, I would like to thank the members of the American Handel Society and The Handel Institute for awarding me funds to conduct research in London. I am grateful to all of these institutions for their generous financial and scholarly support.

Among the individual scholars who have given me their time, advice, and sometimes their work (cited throughout), I would like to thank Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson, Amanda Eubanks Winkler, Rose Pruiksma, James Winn, Kathryn Libin, Berta Joncus, and Rebekah Ahrendt. The University of Michigan's Special Collections Library, The British Library, the National Archives of the United Kingdom, the Royal College of Music, and the Royal Academy of Music have provided access to most of the primary sources needed for this project, for which I am most appreciative.

My colleagues in Michigan's Department of Musicology have inspired and supported me throughout this arduous process; I appreciate that they were willing to share their time and advice, always with a sense of humor. I thank Sarah Suhadolnik, Rebecca Fülöp, Jessica Getman, Nick Field, Kathryn Cox, and Elizabeth Batiuk. I am

deeply grateful to Melanie Batoff, who read my work and gave wonderful, insightful, and enthusiastic feedback; I could not have finished this dissertation without her support.

Outside of the School of Music, I would like to thank George Hoffmann and all the participants in the Medieval and Early Modern Studies Colloquium held in both 2011 and 2012; I am grateful for their invaluable suggestions and I enjoyed every moment of our discussions of my half-baked drafts. I also extend appreciation to my supportive colleagues who participated in the 2012 Sweetland Dissertation Writing Summer Institute, especially Dina Karageorgeos, Simon T. Walsh, Maria Paz Esguerra, Silvia Tita, and Louis Ciccirelli. Finally, I express my heartfelt gratitude to the 2012-2013 Institute of the Humanities Fellows, especially my grad student colleagues—Sara “SJ” Jackson, Rebecca “Rebetika” Porte, Sheree “Dr. Unicorn” Brown, Başak “B-shack” Çandar, and Brendan “Bren-diddy” Wright: your friendship got me through my final year and I will miss our crazy office antics.

I would like to thank Pam Stewart, Molly Thornbladh, Andrew Kraemer, Pat Purdy, Aislinn Williams, Chris Scholl, Casey Taylor, and M. Jahi Chappell for their part in keeping me sane all these years. Many thanks to Michael Ploof and Andy Baum for the constant reality checks. I am grateful to Elizabeth Perten, my musicology friend from afar, for sharing her brilliant ideas with me and keeping me company when I visit Boston. Bryan Parkhurst and Nina Strohmingler were far too good to me: always up for going to Big Boy at one in the morning, always willing to embarrass themselves for my entertainment. I also thank Josh White for reading my work, coaching me on fellowship applications, and most of all, sharing my impeccable taste in television and music.

My deepest and most sincere gratitude goes to those who became my closest friends during the past six years. Alexander Cannon, Abby Anderton, and Michael Mauskapf deserve recognition far beyond what I can write in these acknowledgements. From epically disastrous road trips to conferences, to long hours spent complaining and gossiping, to European adventures, you three have made my time in graduate school one hundred percent worth it and I could not have asked for better friends.

Finally, I thank my family for their constant support, unconditional love, and extraordinary patience. As much as I would like to grant them honorary doctorates for putting up with me during this process, they will have to accept my gratitude and my love. I dedicate this dissertation to them.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A-Wn	Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek
BDA	<i>A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers &amp; Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660-1800</i> , 16 vols., ed. Philip H. Highfill, Jr., Kalman A. Burnim and Edward A. Langhans (Carbondale and Edwardsville IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973-93).
ECCO	<i>Eighteenth-Century Collections Online</i>
GB-AY	Aylesbury, Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies
GB-Cfm	Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum
GB-Lam	London, Royal Academy of Music
GB-Lbl	London, British Library
GB-Lcm	London, Royal College of Music
GB-Lfom	London, The Foundling Museum
GB-Lna	London, National Archives
GB-Ob	Oxford, Bodleian Library
GB-STm	Stratford-upon-Avon, Shakespeare Centre Archives
GB-Ybi	York, Borthwick Institute of Historical Research
NL-SAA	Amsterdam, Staatsarchiv
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> , online



OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> , online, third ed.
PRO	Public Records Office, UK National Archives
SP	State Papers, UK National Archives
US-AAscI	Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Special Collections
US-SM	San Marino, Huntington Library

## Introduction

Around the turn of the eighteenth century, Europe was transformed into a cosmopolitan region of cultural, economic, and social exchange. Political ideologies, religious beliefs, and newly acquired wealth began to circulate through international circuits traveled by members of the nobility. The Grand Tour, a predominantly English phenomenon in the late seventeenth century, was designed to educate young gentlemen (and some women) in the sophistication of foreign culture. Their travels also allowed them to forge political and personal connections with their peers in other cities.<sup>1</sup> English nobles returned home having witnessed the latest and finest artistry Europe had to offer, including paintings, sculpture, architecture, theater, and music. Those on the Grand Tour especially appreciated lavish productions of operas, and many travel accounts from this period relate the awe and esteem with which such performances were received.<sup>2</sup> Musical performances, however, could not be brought back to England. Instead, the nobility left

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<sup>1</sup> The Grand Tour has been subjected to numerous studies in cultural history, art history, and other related fields—too many to account for here. During this period, Italy (especially Venice and Rome) was the most popular stop for most Englishmen, though they also often traveled to France, the Low Countries, and sometimes the German lands. On the impact of Italian culture on those touring Europe during the eighteenth century, see Paula Findlen, Wendy Wassing Roworth, and Catherine M. Sama, eds., *Italy's Eighteenth Century: Gender and Culture in the Age of the Grand Tour* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009). On women who toured Europe in the eighteenth century, see Brian Dolan, *Ladies of the Grand Tour* (London: HarperCollins, 2001). Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letters and memoirs about her travels from the mid-eighteenth century are especially important sources.

<sup>2</sup> Jeremy Black, *Italy and the Grand Tour* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), 174-175.

Italy with scores, instruments, and foreign musicians, hoping to recreate the musical and theatrical productions they enjoyed on the Continent.<sup>3</sup>

The Grand Tour also broadened the careers of professional musicians seeking new patrons, performance opportunities, and public markets. Many instrumentalists, composers, and singers followed the same routes as their wealthier counterparts, traveling to Italy for musical training before departing for cities and courts throughout Europe. Musicians, trained to perform and compose Italian-style music, brought their virtuoso skills and their repertoires to English audiences, who were delighted by the extravagant talent they had heard. Singers, especially, profited from their pan-European sojourns. Italian opera required singers who had professional training not readily available outside of Italy. Many began their careers on the stages of Venice, Naples, and Rome, before traveling to more distant—and potentially more lucrative—lands. By 1710, many major European cities boasted a theater for Italian opera, and Italian singers could find employment in the musical retinues of Europe's wealthiest patrons. For some singers, such as the castrati, their reputations preceded them, and they sought to increase their renown by touring cities that clamored for their unusual virtuosity.<sup>4</sup> For female singers, celebrity was harder to achieve, and competition could be fierce. Touring Europe, a singer might encounter less saturated theatrical marketplaces in which to promote his or her unique talents, garnering accolades, financial benefits, performance opportunities, and, above all, stardom. As the first “international” celebrities, their renown drew them into debates about cultural and musical integrity, the value of a pan-European elite

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<sup>3</sup> For example, Richard, the third Earl of Burlington, brought back the musicians Pietro and Prospero Castrucci and Filippo Amadei. He also ordered harpsichords. *Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>4</sup> Carlo Broschi, better known by his nickname “Farinelli,” gained tremendous fame throughout Europe during the 1720s and 1730s. His reputation preceded him in London. Thomas McGeary, “Farinelli and the English: ‘One God’ or the Devil?” *Revue LISA/LISA e-journal* 2, No. 3 (2004).

culture, national and political identities, the social utility of class systems, and shifting gender roles.

Female opera singers, especially those from Italy, became embroiled in these social and cultural controversies in early eighteenth-century England. Between 1703 and 1707, London audiences witnessed the first public performances given by professional Italian singers—all of whom were women.<sup>5</sup> The popularity of their voices and their music encouraged impresarios to produce operas featuring them. London's theatrical market quickly exploded with a variety of Italian-style operas: some performed entirely in English, others in Italian, and some in a mixture of both languages and musical styles. The presence of Italian *virtuose*, who performed alongside English actors, actresses, and singers, shaped the stylistic profiles of these musico-theatrical hybrids, and their performances affected the popular and critical reception of these works.<sup>6</sup> Like professional actresses of the Restoration theater, female opera singers claimed the spotlight both onstage and off.<sup>7</sup> Living in the public eye enhanced their celebrity as well as their notoriety. As female singers gained agency and authority in the public sphere, they became increasingly subject to criticism concerning their musical tastes and choices, their actions on and off the stage, and their personal affiliations with patrons, political parties, and religions. Individual celebrity, once achieved, could quickly invite an onslaught of public disapproval. As new arrivals, these women relied upon their

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<sup>5</sup> Of all foreign singers, only women performed publicly in London between 1703 and 1707. That year, the castrato Valentini made his debut on the London stage, and soon other castrati and basses joined him. Of course, male instrumentalists trained in Italy had been giving public concerts in London since the late seventeenth century. English men and women also sang on the London stage during this time.

<sup>6</sup> I define “hybrid” here as a conscious or unconscious juxtaposition of musical styles, gestures, and dramatic conventions that are borrowed from English and Italian theatrical practices.

<sup>7</sup> See Chapters 2 and 4 for more on how female singers both emulated and diverged from actresses in the spoken theater.

audiences to validate their worth as public performers—yet they also fell victim to capricious public opinion.

Female singers used their artistic and financial collaborations on and off the stage to legitimate their presence as professional musicians worthy of renown. Rather than navigate London's theatrical marketplace as self-interested "divas," female singers actively sought professional relationships with colleagues and peers. They demonstrated a keen awareness of the value of networks as a way to build and assert their individual artistic contributions in a nascent musico-theatrical marketplace. Through their collaborations with composers and librettists, actors and actresses, other singers and musicians, and patrons, female singers become highly visible co-creators and essential disseminators of musical culture. They contributed to the various musico-theatrical genres that co-existed on the London stage. Collaborative performances and professional partnerships also shaped the ways in which female singers produced their celebrity. This dissertation will show how their collaborations helped to define and round out their special performance personas. All of these factors made them unique brands in the eyes of their audiences and contributed to their individual celebrity. My study shows how female performers who sang in English and Italian operas, public concerts, and other theatrical events, capitalized on their working relationships to shape their professional autonomy as well as the music and dramatic profiles of London's theatrical works between 1700 and 1720.

### **Literature Review**

The early eighteenth-century in England has been a particularly troublesome era from a musicological point of view. The prominence of Henry Purcell in the late

seventeenth century and George Frideric Handel after 1710 have shifted scholarly focus toward a small selection of works by these now canonic composers.<sup>8</sup> Fifty years ago, Stoddard Lincoln lamented the lack of interest in music from this period, as no canonical composer was active in London between 1695 and 1710:

The sixteen years from the death of Henry Purcell [...] to the advent of George Frideric Handel [...], hardly noticed by scholars of drama and neglected by musicologists, are usually considered an interregnum between the consummation of the musical ideas of the Restoration, [...] and the establishment of the Italian music which dominated eighteenth-century England.<sup>9</sup>

Today, a few music historians have contributed studies documenting London's rich musical and theatrical life between 1700 and 1720. Yet most of these scholars, including Lincoln, have pursued English composers, performers, and works rather than trying to account for the variety of Italian-style musical productions that so many Londoners watched between 1705 and 1717.<sup>10</sup> Theater historians, most significantly Robert D. Hume and Judith Milhous, have painstakingly reconstructed early eighteenth-century theatrical seasons; their work has shed new light on the productions mounted on the opera stage and in the spoken theater, as well as the financial successes and failures of all of

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<sup>8</sup> For examples of "life and works" approaches, see Martin Adams, *Henry Purcell: The Origins and Development of his Musical Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Donald Burrows, "Bringing Europe to Britain: Handel's First Decade in London," *Händel-Jahrbuch* (2011): 65-77; Winton Dean, *Handel and the Opera Seria* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969); Winton Dean and J. Merrill Knapp, *Handel's Operas, 1704-1726* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987); Peter Holmon, *Purcell* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Jonathan Keates, *Handel: The Man and His Music* (London: Bodley Head, 2008).

<sup>9</sup> Stoddard Lincoln, "John Eccles: The Last of a Tradition" (Ph.D. diss., Oxford University, 1963), 1.

<sup>10</sup> See Christopher Dearnley, *English Church Music, 1650-1750: in Royal Chapel, Cathedral, and Parish Church* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970); Roger Fiske, *English Theatre Music in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973); Lincoln, "John Eccles"; Kathryn Lowerre, *Music and Musicians on the London Stage, 1695-1705* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009); and David Wyn Jones, ed., *Music in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2000).

London's theaters around the turn of the eighteenth century.<sup>11</sup> Yet close analyses of the newly composed Italianate operas, the pasticcio operas, and even the English masques and Italian heroic operas, have remained outside of the scope of these studies.<sup>12</sup> This dissertation offers a new entry into this neglected repertory through a focus on the foreign and English singers who participated in the creation and production of new musico-theatrical works.

Recent scholarship in baroque music has shifted away from the traditional narrative of composer as unalloyed creative master. The musical contributions of singers have started to claim significant attention. Monographs by Reinhard Strohm, Lorenzo Bianconi and Giorgio Pestelli, and John Rosselli have encouraged a flourishing new sub-field of scholarship on baroque opera about the lives and careers of specific singers.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Hume and Milhous's work is crucial for reconstructing London's theatrical life during the late Stuart era. See Robert D. Hume and Judith Milhous, "The Haymarket Opera in 1711," *Early Music* 17, No. 4 (1989): 523-537; Hume and Milhous, "Opera Salaries in Eighteenth-Century London," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 46, No. 1 (1993): 26-83; Hume and Milhous, "Heidegger and the Management of the Haymarket Opera 1713-1717," *Early Music* 27, No. 1 (1999): 65-84; Milhous and Hume, "An Annotated Guide to the Theatrical Documents in PRO LC 7/1, 7/2, and 7/3," *Theatre Notebook* 35, Nos. 1-3 (1981): 25-46, 77-86, and 122-129; Milhous and Hume, "Theatrical Politics at Drury Lane: New Light on Letitia Cross, Jane Rogers, and Ann Oldfield," *Bulletin of Research in the Humanities* 85 (1982): 412-429; and Milhous and Hume, "Construing and Misconstruing Farinelli in London," *The British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 28, No. 3 (2005): 361-385.

<sup>12</sup> In large part, this is because of the distaste with which later eighteenth-century music historians, such as Charles Burney, viewed these compositions. See Chapter 2 for a historiographical account of the negative reception of these works from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. If these works are considered at all, they are always discussed in the context of theatrical politics. For example, see W.H. Cummings, "The Lord Chamberlain and Opera in London, 1700-1740," *Proceedings of the Musical Association* (1913-1914): 37-72; Ophelia Field, *The Kit-Cat Club: Friends Who Imagined a Nation* (London: HarperPress, 2008); Robert D. Hume, "The Sponsorship of Opera in London, 1704-1720," *Modern Philology* 85, No. 4 (1988): 420-432; John Loftis, "The London Theatres in Early Eighteenth-Century Politics," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 18, No. 4 (1955): 365-393; Judith Milhous, *Thomas Betterton and the Management of Lincoln's Inn Fields, 1695-1708* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979); and Curtis Price, "The Critical Decade for English Music Drama, 1700-1710," *Harvard Library Bulletin* 26 (1978): 38-76.

<sup>13</sup> See Lorenzo Bianconi and Giorgio Pestelli, *Opera Production and Its Resources* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); John Rosselli, *Singers of Italian Opera: The History of a*

Writing about English musical history, Suzanne Aspden, Berta Joncus, Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson, Kathryn Lowerre, Amanda Eubanks Winkler, C. Steven LaRue, and Thomas McGeary have all contributed interpretive and biographical accounts that emphasize the creative agency of singers who performed in operas and concerts during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>14</sup> Their scholarship illuminates how professional singers trained, traveled, and performed; the variety of roles they played and types of music they sang; the vocal techniques in which they specialized; and their professional relationships with composers. Understanding how singers shaped opera

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*Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); and Reinhard Strohm, *The Eighteenth-Century Diaspora of Italian Music and Musicians* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2001).

<sup>14</sup> See Suzanne Aspden, "The 'rival queans' and the play of identity in Handel's *Admeto*," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 18, No. 3 (2006): 301-331; Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson, "Purcell's Stage Singers," in *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell*, Michael Burden, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Berta Joncus, "'In Wit Superior, as in Fighting': Kitty Clive and the Conquest of a Rival Queen," *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 74, No. 1 (2011): 23-42; C. Steven LaRue, *Handel and His Singers: The Creation of the Royal Academy Operas, 1720-1728* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); Lowerre, *Music and Musicians on the London Stage*; and McGeary, "Farinelli and the English." Amanda Eubanks Winkler's research on the actress-singer Anne Bracegirdle has not yet been published.

Many other scholars are researching singers and their careers in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in countries other than England. For examples, see Jennifer Williams Brown, "On the Road with the 'Suitcase Aria': The Transmission of Borrowed Arias in Late Seventeenth-Century Italian Opera Revivals," *Journal of Musicological Research* (1995): 3-23; Beth Glixon, "Scenes from the Life of Silvia Galiarti Manni, a Seventeenth-Century *Virtuosa*," in *Early Music History*, ed. Iain Fenlon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 97-146; Beth Glixon, "*La sirena antica dell'Adriatico*: Caterina Porri, a Seventeenth-Century Roman Prima Donna on the Stages of Venice, Bologna, and Pavia," in *Musical Voices of Early Modern Women: Many-Headed Melodies*, ed. Thomasin LaMay (Aldershot; Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2005); and Louise K. Stein, "Siface (Giovanni Francesco Grossi), A Castrato Voice of Virility," (conference paper, Annual Meeting of the American Musicological Society, San Francisco, CA, November 2011). Gina Rivera has recently completed a dissertation on female opera singers and celebrity in eighteenth-century France. See Gina Rivera, "*Les filles de l'Opéra* in the Early Eighteenth Century," (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2013).

Some have pursued the history of singers in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. See Hilary Poriss, *Changing the Score: Arias, Prima Donnas, and the Authority of Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); John Rice, "Mozart and His Singers: The Case of Maria Marchetti Fantozzi, the First Vitellia," *Opera Quarterly* 11, No. 4 (2004): 31-52; and Susan Rutherford, *The Prima Donna and Opera, 1915-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).



production and reception in early modern England lends nuance to traditional histories of English music.

As musicologists have turned away from composer-driven narratives, scholars in other fields have also looked to alternative narratives in early modern history beyond political and chronological accounts. Reconstructions of women's social, economic, and cultural contributions to European history offer one such renewed approach. Before the 1990s, scholars relegated women's experiences in the early modern era to the private sphere, whereas men's work remained a product of public life. Recent studies, however, have critiqued this reductive binary by drawing historical women out of their domestic circles and into more productive accounts incorporating the various roles they played in public society.<sup>15</sup> Lawrence Klein, Amanda Vickery, and others have shown that the public/private dialectic is more porous than once thought: "there is no *one* 'public/private' distinction to which interpretation can confidently secure itself."<sup>16</sup> Historians have recast their female subjects as independent agents, many of whom gained authority by mediating between their private duties and public interests. Gender historians such as Anthony Fletcher, Karen Harvey, Timothy Hitchcock, Michael McKeon, and Will Pritchard have critiqued the origins of the modern gender binary by

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<sup>15</sup> For the most part, these scholars have revised and rethought Habermas's seminal theory on the public sphere, which largely ignores women's issues. See Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: an Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989).

<sup>16</sup> Lawrence Klein, "Gender and the Public/Private Distinction in the Eighteenth Century: Some Questions about Evidence and Analytic Procedure," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 29, No. 1 (1995): 99 (italics mine, for emphasis). Klein reveals multiple public spheres, including a "magisterial public sphere" (the State and government), an "economic public sphere" (financial transactions and labor), a "civic public sphere" that includes both women and men, and an "associative public sphere, a sphere of social, discursive and cultural production" (ibid., 103-105). On redefining female friendship in a domestic space, see Amanda Vickery, "Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History," *Historical Journal* 36, 2 (1993): 383-414.

establishing that in the early modern era men and women were still negotiating their gender differences through cultural and social experiences.<sup>17</sup>

The theoretical work of gender historians has led to an explosion of scholarship that resituates women as producers and consumers of culture. English literary historians such as Paula McDowell and Jacqueline Pearson have recovered the work of early modern female authors and playwrights.<sup>18</sup> Scholars of labor history have illuminated the various roles women played in financial networks of trade and commerce;<sup>19</sup> theatrical markets (as producers and peddlers of performance necessities such as costumes and candles);<sup>20</sup> and as private patrons of musicians and artists.<sup>21</sup> These studies indicate that behind the scenes, the theatrical world included women at every level of production: as laborers providing basic necessities, as artisans creating new works of literature, and as patrons supporting the theatrical marketplace financially and socially.

Most important to the present study are those scholars who have carefully researched and documented the history of actresses in early modern England. The first

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<sup>17</sup> Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England 1500-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 407. Harvey's article is a thorough historiographical account of the relationship between the sexes in the early modern era. See Karen Harvey, "A Century of Sex? Gender, Bodies, and Sexuality in the Long Eighteenth Century," *Historical Journal* 45, No. 4 (2002): 899-916. See also Tim Hitchcock, "Redefining Sex in Eighteenth-Century England," *History Workshop Journal* 41 (1996): 72-90; Michael McKeon, "Historicizing Patriarchy: The Emergence of Gender Difference in England, 1660-1760," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 28, No. 3 (1995): 295-322; and Will Pritchard, *Outward Appearances: The Female Exterior in Restoration London* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2008).

<sup>18</sup> Paula McDowell, *The Women of Grub Street: Press, Politics, and Gender in the London Literary Marketplace, 1678-1730* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); and Jacqueline Pearson, *The Prostituted Muse: Images of Women and Women Dramatists, 1642-1737* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988).

<sup>19</sup> Nicola Phillips, *Women in Business, 1700-1850* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: Boydell Press, 2006).

<sup>20</sup> Natasha Korda, "Labours Lost: Women's Work and Early Modern Theatrical Commerce," in *From Script to Stage in Early Modern England*, eds. Peter Holland and Stephen Orgel (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 195-230.

<sup>21</sup> David Roberts, *The Ladies: Female Patronage of Restoration Drama, 1660-1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

historians to recover the actress as a significant public presence during the Restoration, including John Harold Wilson and Elizabeth Howe, approached these women through their biographies.<sup>22</sup> More recently, others have written interpretive accounts that frame actresses within the style, content, and reception of the plays in which they starred.<sup>23</sup> Still others have reconsidered how the theater became a space in which anxieties concerning gender roles and women's public presence were played out.<sup>24</sup> The relationship between onstage performance and the offstage creation of a public identity has become a common theme in these histories of women of the theater. As actresses became more prominent onstage, they accrued more social, economic, and artistic power in their public, daily lives. Performance theory, which analyzes how both men and women constructed their social behavior and relationships by enacting certain identities, often bolsters arguments concerning the plural roles that women assumed as public figures on the stage.<sup>25</sup> Felicity Nussbaum has claimed that "these celebrity actresses may be counted among the first

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<sup>22</sup> Elizabeth Howe, *The First English Actresses: Women and Drama 1660-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); and John Harold Wilson, *All the King's Ladies: Actresses of the Restoration* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958).

<sup>23</sup> See Gillian Bush-Bailey, *Treading the Bawds: Actresses and Playwrights on the Late Stuart Stage* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2006); Lisa Freeman, *Character's Theater: Genre and Identity on the Eighteenth-Century English Stage* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002); Cynthia Lowenthal, *Performing Identities on the Restoration Stage* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003); Jean I. Marsden, *Fatal Desire: Women, Sexuality, and the English Stage, 1660-1720* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2006); Felicity Nussbaum, *Rival Queens: Actresses, Performance, and the Eighteenth-Century British Theater* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); and Jennifer Popple, "Spectacular Bodies: Nell Gwyn, Elizabeth Barry, and Anne Bracegirdle as Symbols of Contract, Struggle, and Subversion in Restoration England, 1660-1707," (Ph.D. diss., University of Colorado, 2009).

<sup>24</sup> Kirsten Pullen, *Actresses and Whores on Stage and in Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); and Kristina Straub, *Sexual Suspects: Eighteenth-Century Players and Sexual Ideology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

<sup>25</sup> For seminal theories of performance, see Sue-Ellen Case, ed., *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre* (Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990); Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, eds., *Performativity and Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1995); and Janelle G. Reinelt and Joseph R. Roach, eds., *Critical Theory and Performance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992).

modern women” because they accessed a new professional space as yet not experienced by women.<sup>26</sup>

This dissertation draws together all of these historical threads by considering the female opera singer as another “modern woman,” one who traversed the boundary between public and private but who also crossed cultural and geographical borders. Like actresses, female singers in England achieved tremendous renown on the London stage. Perhaps more so than English actresses, however, female singers had to carefully cultivate their celebrity through artistic, financial, political, and religious negotiations of their performed identities. Italian *virtuose* learned how to promote themselves to audiences who distrusted foreigners (especially Catholics) but embraced virtuoso performance.<sup>27</sup> These women developed many strategic methods of selling their celebrity, but the crucial element to their ultimate success was collaboration. By working with other professionals in a multitude of capacities, Italian singers assimilated and adapted to English cultural practices, while maintaining their own unique identities as foreign *virtuose*. At the same time English singers adapted their techniques and training in order to accommodate performances of Italian music. Daniel Statt notes that “the [stories about foreigners in England] that have survived the passage of the centuries betray tension rather than harmony, [because] the gradual processes of accommodation, acculturation, and adaptation have left few records.”<sup>28</sup> The present study offers an interdisciplinary narrative of “accommodation, acculturation, and adaptation” that shows how female

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<sup>26</sup> Nussbaum, *Rival Queens*, 18.

<sup>27</sup> “Thus an ugly xenophobia, inspired principally by partisanship, fear, and cultural distaste, though at times bordering on racism, had come by the turn of the [eighteenth] century to inform at least the fringes of the debate over the admission of immigrants.” See Daniel Statt, *Foreigners and Englishmen: The Controversy over Immigration and Population, 1660-1760* (Newark, NJ: University of Delaware Press, 1998), 119.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

singers shaped the landscape of England's musico-theatrical repertory during the early eighteenth century by collaborating on and off the stage.

### **Musical and Documentary Sources**

An account of the lives and experiences of female performers in early eighteenth-century London requires a multi-source approach. In order to analyze musico-theatrical collaboration, I have consulted many kinds of archival material, including musical scores, libretti, private letters, newspaper advertisements, pamphlets, poetry, play texts, financial contracts, and paintings. These categories of evidence capture an encompassing historical picture of the ways in which female singers used their collaborations to create celebrity. Collaboration occurred in and outside of the playhouse, and the variety of sources I have consulted in writing this dissertation testifies to the complexities of their professional partnerships. Female singers did not collaborate only through their artistry. Their collaborations extended beyond the proscenium, as they negotiated offstage relationships with patrons, theater managers, and other performers outside of the context of the music they sang. This array of sources illustrates the complexities of celebrity—how female singers constructed their individual personas in relation to one another, how they performed collaboratively both on- and offstage, and how audiences perceived them as members of a new professional group.

On the stage, female singers performed collaboratively with other singers, composers, instrumentalists, actors and actresses. From initial conception, to composition and final performance, composers molded eighteenth-century operas to feature the voices of their singers. Their music, both in manuscripts and printed sources, reveals their

technical strengths and weaknesses, and the distinctive onstage personas fashioned collaboratively with other performers. Few manuscripts from this period survive.<sup>29</sup> In some cases, the extant manuscripts show how music was recomposed for a specific singer. These sources offer some insight into how composers and singers worked together when creating or re-creating a role in a new production. Printed musical scores, in contrast, are clean copies that were marketed and sold to the public. They often featured the best-known arias in each production, though all of them omit the recitative passages.<sup>30</sup> Some arias were printed and sold separately in various collections, including *The Monthly Mask of Vocal Musick* and other songbooks.<sup>31</sup> John Walsh, music engraver and publisher, was the first to print arias and opera collections for the London public; however, there are many inconsistencies throughout his scores, especially concerning his inclusion of English text, Italian text, or both.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, some of his collections

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<sup>29</sup> The pasticcio operas have not survived in manuscript form, but only in engraved prints by John Walsh. Because they were assembled from previously composed arias by a multitude of composers, it may be that full manuscript scores of these works did not exist even when they were being performed. The recitative passages do not survive, so the pasticcio operas exist only as collections of printed arias, and cannot therefore be completely reconstructed. The only manuscript scores or excerpts that I have consulted are *Arsinoe*, *Camilla*, the Pepusch masques (*Apollo and Dafne*, *Death of Dido*, *Myrtillo and Laura*), *Rinaldo*, *Teseo*, and *Amadigi di Gaula* (partial autographs and copies). More information about these sources will be provided in the chapters in which they are discussed. In addition, the bibliography provides archival details for each of these manuscripts. On Handel's musical sources, see Terence Best, *Handel Collections and Their History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); and Donald Burrows and Martha J. Ronish, *A Catalogue of Handel's Musical Autographs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

<sup>30</sup> I consulted musical scores printed by John Walsh and his partners, which are housed in both the British Library and in the University of Michigan's Special Collections Library. See the bibliography for a list of these scores. In addition, David Hunter, *Opera and Song Books Published in England, 1703-1726: A Descriptive Bibliography* (London: Bibliographical Society, 1997) offers a complete survey of printed vocal music from this period.

<sup>31</sup> Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson, *The Monthly Mask of Vocal Music, 1702-1711* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2007).

<sup>32</sup> This problem becomes particularly apparent in the pasticcio operas performed by the castrati as well as English and female Italian singers. Often, music for Valentini, Nicolini, and other castrati includes only the Italian text; but the arias composed and arranged for female singers sometimes includes both. On John Walsh, see William Charles Smith, *A Catalogue of Music Published by*

transposed arias from the original keys in order to make them marketable for a domestic audience; it may be, therefore, that he transposed other arias, thus obscuring evidence of a particular singer's range.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, Walsh's scores preserve the most complete set of theatrical music for English and Italian-style operas of the early eighteenth century. Most importantly, each aria print includes the name of the singer for whom the aria was composed or arranged. By featuring individual singers so prominently in prints sold to the public, these sources illustrate the importance of singers to the marketing of published music during the eighteenth century.

In combination with the music, libretti and newspaper advertisements facilitate reconstruction of cast lists for most of the operas.<sup>34</sup> Cast lists reveal which singers performed together most frequently, and they also show whether singers specialized in certain character types, whether a female singer played travesty roles on the stage, and which singers took over roles for revival performances. Newspaper advertisements also provide significant details concerning collaboration across theatrical genres. Traditional histories of music and theater in early eighteenth-century England often contend that by

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*John Walsh and his Successors* (London: First Edition Bookshop, 1953); and W.C. Smith, *A Bibliography of the Musical Works Published by John Walsh during the years 1695-1720* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948).

<sup>33</sup> One of his printed collections of songs from the opera *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* transposed all vocal lines to treble clef, in various keys suitable for high male and female voices. The title page elucidates Walsh's motivation: "All ye singing Parts being transpos'd into ye G: Cliff & put into such Keys that brings them into ye Compass of Treble or Tenor Voices. The whole being done from ye Original by that Compleat writer of Musick Mr. Armstrong, and by him carefully corrected also he hath made words to 17 of ye Italian Songs thus mark'd †." See *Songs in the New Opera, call'd Pyrrhus and Demetrius*, US-AAscl M1507.E12.

<sup>34</sup> Libretti and advertisements are available online through *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online* as well as Gale's *Burney Collection Newspapers*. Other useful catalogues and calendars include *The London Stage 1660-1800: A Calendar of Plays, Entertainments & Afterpieces together with Casts, Box-Receipts, and Contemporary Comment*, part 2: 1700-1729, vols. 1&2 (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1960); Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, *A Register of English Theatrical Documents 1660-1737*, vol. 1 (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991) and Claudio Sartori, *I libretti italiani a stampa dalle origini al 1800: catalogo analitico con 16 indici*, 5 vols. (Cuneo: Bertola & Locatelli, 1990).

the 1710s, operas and spoken plays were relegated to separate spaces after the Lord Chamberlain's massive reorganization of the theaters.<sup>35</sup> Advertisements push against this narrative by showing that singers, actors, and actresses routinely collaborated in a variety of theatrical productions, including concerts, spoken plays, short musico-theatrical works such as masques, and even Italian operas. Contracts and other professional documents, many of which make up the Coke Papers housed in the Houghton Library at Harvard,<sup>36</sup> offer another view of how female singers negotiated their business agreements collaboratively with their peers. These sources provide a more complete view of London's rich musico-theatrical culture in the early eighteenth century, and show that female singers were instrumental in preserving the integration of English spoken theatrical traditions with music, whether Italian or English.

Non-musical sources also contribute significantly to the stories of female performance and collaboration in London. Literature (pamphlets, articles, poetry, and play texts), visual art, and personal correspondence, illuminate how the English received and perceived female singers.<sup>37</sup> Female singers had dynamic, ever-changing relationships with their audiences, who shared authority over the ways in which female celebrity circulated. Reception amongst public audiences and other professional performers, whether positive or negative, affected the ways in which women collaborated with other performers onstage. These sources show how female singers immediately became influential contributors to English cultural life, and how their reception in England was

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<sup>35</sup> Curtis Price, "The Critical Decade."

<sup>36</sup> Some of these are also in the National Archives and British Library. See Milhous and Hume, *Vice Chamberlain Coke's Theatrical Papers, 1706-1715* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982); and Milhous and Hume, "An Annotated Guide."

<sup>37</sup> I found the majority of these sources at the British Library, National Archives of the United Kingdom, and other, smaller archives scattered throughout the UK. Please see this dissertation's bibliography for a full list of archives and documents consulted.



inherently tied to contemporary discourses about English identity, political and religious ideologies, and cultural assimilation. Most importantly, such documents reveal the varied ways in which female singers from both England and Italy integrated into already thriving social networks of patrons and performers in early eighteenth-century London. Documentary sources uncover the social significance of female celebrity in England by offering a glimpse into the contemporary controversies and debates surrounding their public reception as well as the reception of the music they performed on the London stage.

These different kinds of documentary and musical evidence reveal how female singers were crucial to the creation of which theatrical music, its dissemination, and its reception. Most importantly, all of these sources demonstrate that female singers could not have successfully participated in London's theatrical milieu as wholly independent agents. Instead, they asserted themselves as professional collaborators and sought opportunities to bolster their celebrity through their associations with colleagues and peers. Musical manuscripts and prints, libretti, contracts, and advertisements show how female singers worked with each other and with other performers on the stage, carefully forming their celebrity personas in relation to those around them. Literature, letters, visual art, and musical criticism, on the other hand, provide an account of their reception as celebrities, both individually and in the context of a collective of professional musicians.

### **Editorial Policy**

The musical examples in this dissertation present faithful transcriptions from the original sources. I do not pretend, however, that they offer a finished critical edition.

Almost all of the musical examples in this dissertation were transcribed and typeset (using Sibelius 7.0) from eighteenth-century printed and manuscript sources.

Descriptions of the sources, their context for publication (where applicable), and bibliographic information (if available) are given in the footnotes; there, I also describe my own editorial choices for groups of example. In some cases, the text underlay is unclear in the original source; therefore I have, to the best of my ability, provided the most logical solution. In addition, some examples are taken from modern editions (including all of the examples in Chapter 5); in these cases, the footnotes cite the modern edition and the relevant editorial policies.

In general, when transcribing from eighteenth-century manuscripts and songbooks, I have retained the original beaming (even if incorrect), text underlay, orthography, and scoring. Bass lines and accompanying *obbligato* melodies do not include instrument names, since the eighteenth-century sources rarely, if ever, qualified the type of continuo and accompanying melodic instrument(s); I have labeled them all “bassi.” In some cases, my musical examples present only the vocal melody and the bass line, with additional remarks about the original scoring supplied in the footnotes. Redundant flats and sharps have been removed in my transcriptions. In a few cases, the original key signature does not include the full number of sharps, leaving out the raised leading tone. I have maintained this practice and have followed the original source by supplying the sharps in the music itself. All examples retain their original clef, except in cases where I have transposed a vocal line to fit a different voice type, as explained in the footnotes. Finally, most of my musical examples do not include a figured continuo line; this is because the original source did not include a figured bass.

## Chapter Organization

The first chapter of this study explores musical life in London between 1703 and 1705 from the perspective of the first Italian *virtuose* who arrived during this period. They encountered a nascent public market for musico-theatrical entertainment, one still dominated by actors and actresses of the Restoration theater. In order to achieve financial success and build their reputations with audiences, singers sought close, professional partnerships within existing networks of celebrated performers. This chapter lays the theoretical groundwork for this dissertation by redefining musical celebrity in early eighteenth-century England as a collaborative, rather than an individual, phenomenon. Building upon theories of celebrity by Joseph Roach, Berta Joncus, Felicity Nussbaum, and others, it explores how female singers used collaboration to legitimate their professional independence and their individual celebrity. In light of their efforts to assimilate into English musical culture, the chapter also considers their initial reception in London. Female singers were crucial to the reception of Italian theatrical music in London, as evinced in the writings of English critics and commentators. Their criticisms demonstrate many of the complications professional *virtuose* faced navigating London's musico-theatrical marketplace, and therefore contextualize the reasons why they collaborated in order to validate their celebrity. Through analyses of contracts for three celebrated female singers in the early years of the eighteenth century, this chapter examines how they created financial partnerships with other musicians in London.

The subsequent chapters of this study consider different kinds of onstage collaborative relationships fostered by female opera singers between approximately 1703 and 1717. Chapter 2 argues that the earliest Italianate operas performed in England were

designed to accommodate the talents of English actress-singers, who cultivated unique collaborations onstage with other performers including professional Italian singers. Starting in the 1710s, these early Italian-style operas acquired negative reputations as contemporary English critics and commentators maligned their assimilation of Italian musical features with English texts. Analyses of *Arsinoe, Queen of Cyprus* (1705), *Rosamond* (1708) and *The Temple of Love* (1706) demonstrate that these operas highlighted female collaboration on the stage. Letitia Cross, Mary Lindsey, and Anne Bracegirdle approached onstage collaboration differently, but their efforts allowed them to pursue performing opportunities, even as more Italian singers arrived in London.

Chapter 3 focuses on the onstage collaborations and offstage rivalry between Catherine Tofts and Margarita de l'Epine. The two starred opposite one another in all the Italian-style pasticcio operas produced between 1707 and 1709, shaping the reception of these works. Their performances became entrenched in contemporary politics as they came to symbolize the cultural values of their home countries. Play texts, musical criticism, advertisements, satirical pamphlets, and personal correspondence depicted l'Epine as a foreign interloper whose imported musical contributions were destroying English theatrical music. Tofts, on the other hand, became England's musical savior who preserved her homeland's traditions. Yet the two women always performed together on the stage, specializing in equally virtuoso, complementary roles and music. This chapter reevaluates the trope of female rivalry on the stage through analyses of their collaborative performances in pasticcio operas including *Thomyris*, *Love's Triumph*, and *Clotilda*, as well as the English ode *Britannia and Augusta*.

Chapter 4 explores how female singers used benefit performances to establish and legitimize a collective presence in professional opera singing. As highly lucrative performative advertising, benefits permitted female singers to show off their vocal skills and to focus attention on particular singing techniques and strengths—with the possibility of reaping a substantial profit. In addition, they maintained control over most aspects of the event, choosing their repertoire, placing advertisements in newspapers, soliciting patrons to attend, and, most importantly, engaging the help of fellow musicians who had the potential to draw even larger audiences. These events were designed to showcase an individual amongst and against a group of her peers, demonstrating how female singers performed their celebrity with the support of their collaborators. This chapter presents four different types of benefit performances in which female singers took part, including variety shows, opera revivals, concerts, and newly composed works. A shift from individual to collaborative benefit shows how female singers situated themselves within a larger community of professional musicians.

My final chapter offers a critical analysis of the working relationship between the soprano Elisabetta Pilotti Schiavonetti and the composer George Frideric Handel. They collaborated on three operas between 1711 and 1715 and Pilotti gave the premiere performances of three of Handel's most powerful female characters, all sorceresses: Armida in *Rinaldo* (1711), Medea in *Teseo* (1713), and Melissa in *Amadigi di Gaula* (1715). Handel's music for her illustrates some of the most diversely challenging and virtuoso roles he composed for any singer during his forty-year period as an opera composer. Through these operas, Handel and Pilotti created and promoted themselves as collaborative virtuoso musicians and cultural representatives of the Hanoverian court.

Handel and Pilotti's collaboration matured between 1711 and 1715, resulting in a type of opera that privileged virtue, nobility, and heroism in its characters, rather than extravagant visual and musical virtuosity.

### **The Myth of the Diva**

My title, "The Myth of the Diva," refers to two separate phenomena concerning female performers and their collaborative contributions to celebrity culture in early eighteenth-century London. The first interpretation alludes to the literal mythologization of celebrity performers by audiences. As female singers became renowned public figures, their reception depended upon the musical personas they performed onstage, as well as the stories and myths circulated about them off the stage.<sup>38</sup> Performances given by female singers both on and off the stage contributed to larger narratives concerning their musical and theatrical contributions, their political and religious associations, and most importantly, their cultural value. They were public figures who relied upon their audiences to deem them worth supporting both financially and artistically. Thus, the mythologization of the diva reveals a kind of collaboration between audience and performer, one that I explore in Chapter 1.

The second interpretation, which is revisited at the end of this dissertation, pushes against the modern-day pejorative use of the term "diva." Although this word was not used in common speech until the nineteenth century, modern scholars adopt the word when describing female performers of any period. In constructing this dissertation around female performance and collaboration, I intend to show that female singers in London

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<sup>38</sup> Berta Joncus, "Producing Stars in *Dramma per musica*," in *Music as Social and Cultural Practice: Essays in Honor of Reinhard Strohm*, eds. Melania Bucciarelli and Berta Joncus (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: The Boydell Press, 2007), 280.

were not wholly selfish, demanding, or interested only in the spotlight. My dissertation combats the derogatory stereotype of the female performer as diva, and reclaims her as an essential and cooperative part of the process of musical creation, collaborative performance, and reception.

## Chapter 1

### Female Singers and Collaborative Celebrity

In the early eighteenth century, the first professional singers from abroad arrived in England, and they quickly transformed the production and reception of theatrical music.<sup>1</sup> These singers were *virtuosi*, professionally trained to perform Italian-style opera, which was to become London's newest cultural trend. These virtuoso performers shaped the content and performance of theater music by bringing their repertoires with them as they sought new, potentially lucrative opportunities for performance.<sup>2</sup> London's theatrical marketplace was a logical choice, and not only because of the fervor surrounding Italian music. Traditionally, playwrights in the spoken theater incorporated vocal music into their productions. Musical scenes, which complemented late seventeenth-century theatrical productions, were performed by actors and actresses who punctuated their dialogues and speeches with short songs and monologue airs to enhance the dramatic

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this dissertation, I use the term "professional" to denote those for whom opera singing and performance was a career. These singers were specially trained in virtuoso, Italian-style singing techniques, and were able to make a living based on their income from performances. In early eighteenth-century England, native English singers were not trained in operatic vocal techniques, although many of them frequently sang onstage and may have received some musical training (see Chapter 2). These performers were, first and foremost, professional actors and actresses, who made their careers almost exclusively in the spoken theater. By the 1710s, some English singers learned how to cultivate professional careers from their successful Italian colleagues and trained their voices to accommodate the stylistic idiosyncrasies of Italian-style opera.

<sup>2</sup> See Reinhard Strohm, *The Eighteenth-Century Diaspora of Italian Music and Musicians* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2001).



moment.<sup>3</sup> Even so, these English singers were professional players, not professional singers, and few could master the level of virtuosity that Italian vocal music required. The establishment of Italian opera in London required the successful integration of Italian *virtuosi*, who had the talent to perform such difficult music, and whose skill could entice potential audiences to the theater.

Female singers dominated the first wave of professional musicians to seek public careers in early eighteenth-century London. Between 1703 and 1707, a handful of Italian female singers paved the way by traveling to London from Italy to establish careers as professional opera singers. Joanna Maria Lindelheim, Margarita de l'Epine, and Maria Gallia were the first professional singers to perform publicly. Their number increased significantly during the first two decades, certainly a response to the growing demand for theatrical music, and, specifically, performances of Italian opera. By 1720 there were at least twenty women who sang in more than one opera season on the London stage. Isabella Girardeau, Francesca Vanini Boschi, Elisabetta Pilotti Schiavonetti, Maria Manina, Vittoria Albergotti, Diana Vico, Caterina Galerati, Giovanna Stradiotti, Elena Croce Vivani, Margherita Durastanti, and Maddalena Salvai had all joined their Italian colleagues on stage for at least one season by 1720. Moreover, English women learned to master the Italian language and musical style in order to perform; Catherine Tofts, Letitia Cross, Mary Lindsey, Jane Barbier, and Anastasia Robinson also joined the ranks of professional female singers in London. These women participated fully in London's musical life; they sang in public concerts, in private salons, in between the acts of plays, and, eventually, they played leading roles in Italian operas. Many of these women earned

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<sup>3</sup> For a definitive study of theater music in spoken plays at the turn of the eighteenth century, see Kathryn Lowerre, *Music and Musicians on the London Stage, 1695-1705* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Press, 2009).

extraordinary fees for their performances, and many were able to use their celebrity to further their prospects for social mobility.<sup>4</sup>

The public marketplace for theatrical entertainments allowed these women to achieve more control over their careers, thereby becoming more socially and financially independent than other women. The English monarchy all but ceased theatrical patronage after Charles II's reign, and this new, urban milieu driven by a commercial market supported prospects for public theatrical entertainment.<sup>5</sup> In addition, the city offered enticing freedoms for those striving to create and maintain professional careers outside of, or in conjunction with, private patronage.<sup>6</sup> Private patronage provided financial stability and consistent work, as well as basic necessities such as food, shelter, clothing, and other comforts; but singers in private employment were at the mercy of their patrons, who reserved the privilege to exert their influence on the music sung before them.<sup>7</sup> Public careers allowed singers to exchange guaranteed comfort for professional independence: they achieved more control over the music they sang, the ways in which they promoted themselves as unique and distinctive brands, their financial contracts with theater managers, and relationships with other musicians, performers, and patrons. Most importantly, female singers became integral members of a growing network of

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<sup>4</sup> By the 1710s, most of the top female singers earned £500 per annum to sing at London's theaters. On opera singers' salaries and the economic advantages of performing, see Robert D. Hume, "The Economics of Culture in London 1660-1740," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 69, No. 4 (2006): 487-533; and Hume and Judith Milhous, "Opera Salaries in Eighteenth-Century London," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 46, No. 1 (1993): 26-83.

<sup>5</sup> Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody, eds., *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain, 1660-2000* (Basingstoke, Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

<sup>6</sup> With the growing commercial popularity of public opera, singers had more opportunities for public patronage, a convenient substitute for the loss of private patrons due to the ongoing War of the Spanish Succession. See Warren and Ursula Kirkendale, *Music and Meaning: Studies in Music History and the Neighboring Disciplines* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2007), 269-285.

<sup>7</sup> John Rosselli, "From Princely Service to the Open Market: Singers of Italian Opera and Their Patrons, 1600-1850," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 1, No. 1 (1989): 1-32.

professional performers in London, and their visibility and vocal talents granted them access to a multitude of opportunities for public performance.

The significance of their collaborations is brought to light in a description of the first public performance in London given by a female Italian singer:

[February 1703] A famous young woman, an Italian, was hir'd by our Commedians to sing on the stage, during so many plays, for which they gave her £500; which part (which was her voice alone at the end of 3 Scenes) she perform'd with such modesty & grace and above all by her skill, as there was never any (of many Eunichs & others) did with their Voice, ever anything comparable to her, she was to go hence to the Court of the K: of Prussia, & I believe carried with her out of this vaine nation above £1000, every body coveting to heare her at their privat houses, especially the noble men.<sup>8</sup>

John Evelyn's diary, in which this entry appears, documents nearly eighty years of his life and charts the history of English politics, religion, and culture through the Civil War, the subsequent Interregnum, the Restoration, and the aftermath of the Glorious Revolution.<sup>9</sup> Although the singer described in this excerpt has not been firmly identified, the date of the entry suggests that she was Joanna Maria Lindelheim, known best by her nickname "The Baroness," whom Evelyn heard that February.<sup>10</sup> An advertisement posted in the *Daily Courant* just weeks before announced:

At the Theatre Royal in *Drury-Lane*, on Saturday next the 23d of *January*, will be perform'd a Consort of Musick by the best Masters, wherein the Famous *Signiora Joanna Maria* will sing several Songs in *Italian* and *French*, accompany'd by

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<sup>8</sup> John Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. John Bowle (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

<sup>9</sup> "Evelyn, John," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: in association with the British Academy: from the earliest times to the year 2000*, eds. H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>10</sup> Lowell Lindgren believes that her name was actually Joanna Maria Linchenham (based on her death notice), but I will refer to her as Lindelheim, the name that appears most commonly in secondary sources and in the *Biographical Dictionary of Actors and Actresses*, as well as advertisements from the period. Although her nationality is unknown, she was probably from either the German lands or the Low Countries. See Lowell Lindgren, "The Accomplishments of the Learned and Ingenious Nicola Francesco Haym (1678-1729)," *Studi Musicali*, No. 2 (1987): 247-280.

Signior *Gasperini*. With several new Entertainments of Dancing by Monsieur *Du-Ruell* lately arriv'd from the Opera in *Paris*, and by Mrs. *Campion* and others. To which will be added a Comedy of two Acts only, called *the Country-House*. And several Entertainments of Singing by Mr. *Leveridge*, Mr. *Laroon*, and Mr. *Hughes*. The Boxes are to be open'd into the Pit, where none are to be admitted but by printed Tickets, not exceeding four hundred in number, at Five Shillings a Ticket. To be deliver'd till Saturday Noon at Mr. *White's* Chocolate-House in *St. James-Street*, and at *Tom's* and *Will's* Coffee-houses in *Covent Garden*.<sup>11</sup>

This advertisement positions “Signiora Joanna Maria” prominently as the first of the evening’s eclectic collection of entertainments, alongside instrumental music, French dance, English songs sung by well-known actors, and a comedy. There are no advertisements announcing performances given by the singer in London before this one, and she seems to have left the city soon after her February run.<sup>12</sup>

Both Evelyn’s diary and the advertisement introduce important details that foreshadow the phenomenon of the professionally independent female singer: her financial opportunity and success; her noteworthy virtuosity; and her collaborations with other performers. Evelyn’s account of her remuneration indicates that there were already potential patrons and opportunities for public performance in London to make a career there financially viable. Though he probably overstated Lindelheim’s salary, he noted that the singer performed both in public concerts and at private houses;<sup>13</sup> it is quite likely

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<sup>11</sup> Advertisement. *Daily Courant*, January 21, 1703, *Burney Collection Newspapers*, Gale, The University of Michigan (accessed 2011).

<sup>12</sup> Lindelheim reappeared in London in 1705, this time as Nicola Haym’s “scholar” (or student). She eventually married Haym, and performed in London until the 1710s.

<sup>13</sup> £1000 for a singer to earn during a few performances would have been outrageous for the time. Upon her return in 1705, Lindelheim was paid 100 guineas for ten performances in Jakob Greber’s *Gli amori d’Ergasto*; certainly a lot of money, but not nearly as much as Evelyn said she had earned just two years earlier. See Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, “Opera Salaries in Eighteenth-Century London,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 46, No. 1 (1993): 27. Opera singers’ salaries were often exaggerated. In May 1703, it was announced that a female singer would make 20,000 guineas during a subscription concert, an inconceivable amount, and certainly hyperbole. (A guinea was equivalent to twenty-one shillings, or £1,10.) See Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, *A Register of English Theatrical Documents, 1660-1737* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991), 367.

that Lindelheim left England with a significant sum, despite the brevity of her stay. Her early financial success paved the way for other Italian singers in years to come. Evelyn also noted that she “perform’d with such modesty & grace,” a distinctive compliment considering that previous singers had been personally received with less enthusiasm.<sup>14</sup> Though Lindelheim was clearly talented and a true *virtuosa*, she also appeared to be humble and virtuous, rather than selfish and demanding. Most importantly, both the diary and advertisement indicate that Lindelheim relied on other performers—other musicians as well as stage actors and actresses (the “Commedians” as mentioned by Evelyn)—in order to create and maintain her professional identity as a singer. Lindelheim’s “consort [concert] of Musick” included performances by eminent English actors such as Richard Leveridge, who had achieved popularity in London in the 1690s as one of Purcell’s favorite basses. Singing alongside the virtuoso violinist Gasparo Visconti (“Signior Gasperini”)<sup>15</sup> also surely helped her to create a stage persona that associated her own talents with those of established theatrical performers. Newly arrived in London, Lindelheim realized the value of professional associations with established musicians. Visconti and Leveridge, both veteran performers, would have been able to help the soprano find the appropriate opportunities for public performance, and would have been able to advise her on how to cultivate and market a specific performance persona that would foster financial and critical success.

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<sup>14</sup> In 1687, the castrato Siface performed privately, at the house of Samuel Pepys, in London. Evelyn remarked that, although the singer gave a skillful and impressive performance, he was vain and selfish. See Evelyn, *Diary*, April 19, 1687.

<sup>15</sup> Gasparo Visconti (b. 1683, d. after 1713) was an Italian virtuoso on the violin as well as a composer. He studied with Arcangelo Corelli in Rome before traveling to England in 1702. Visconti is often confused for the violinist Francesco Gasperini because of the former’s nickname, according to John Walter Hill. See Hill, “Visconti, Gasparo,” in *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, The University of Michigan (accessed 2012).

This dissertation illuminates the ways in which Italian and English female opera singers crafted, promoted, and performed their celebrity through their collaborations with other performers on the early eighteenth-century London stage. Living in the public eye allowed female singers to gain immediate attention and therefore increased their opportunities to perform. But renown also drew them into the center of bitter polemics concerning the future of English theater and the reception of Italian opera.<sup>16</sup> Despite their popularity, female singers of Italian opera struggled to assert their continued value as professional musicians, rather than come across as talented but ephemeral novelties.<sup>17</sup> In early eighteenth-century London, maintaining celebrity as a female performer in a male-dominated theatrical world required a creative and strategic approach to the business of performance. Female singers from abroad also faced additional complications in the English context. Their audiences assumed that their training in Italy also signified their religious practices (Catholicism). In addition, the peculiar features of their spoken language and the unfamiliar stylistic characteristics of their music, which was in the

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<sup>16</sup> Many scholars credit Italian opera with being the most historically problematic art form imported to London in this time period. See Emmett L. Avery, "Foreigner Performers in the London Theaters in the Early Eighteenth Century," *Philological Quarterly* 16 (1937): 105-123; Winton Dean and J. Merrill Knapp, *Handel's Operas, 1704-1726* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1987); Roger Fiske, *English Theatre Music in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973); J. Merrill Knapp, "A Forgotten Chapter in English Eighteenth-Century Opera," *Music & Letters* 42, No. 1 (January 1961): 4-16; Lowell Lindgren, "Critiques of Opera in London, 1705-1719," in *Il melodrama italiano in Italia e in Germania nell'eta barocca*, eds. Alberto Colzani, Norbert Dubowy, Andrea Luppi, and Murizio Padoan (Como: AMIS, 1995); Thomas McGeary, "Thomas Clayton and the Introduction of Italian opera to England," *Philological Quarterly* 77, No. 2 (1998): 171-186; and Curtis Price, "The Critical Decade for English Music Drama, 1700-1710," *Harvard Library Bulletin* 26 (1978): 38-76.

<sup>17</sup> Stella Tillyard draws an important distinction between fame and celebrity in the eighteenth century, giving nuance to contemporary notions of the two phenomena as one and the same. Eighteenth-century London supported two simultaneous cultures, one of 'fame,' whereby the famous transcended their time, becoming immortalized. (For example, Henry Purcell was always referred to posthumously as "the late famous Mr. Henry Purcell.") The other was a "culture of celebrity," a transient phenomenon in which performers relied upon audience approval to sustain their renown, which could be fleeting if not properly maintained. Stella Tillyard, "Celebrity in Eighteenth-Century London," *History Today* 55 (2005): 25.

highly virtuoso Italian style, were noticeable markers of difference that contributed both to their novel appeal and to the suspicions attending their reception.<sup>18</sup> Most of the female singers discussed in this dissertation, referred to as “famous” in advertisements,<sup>19</sup> were, in fact, celebrities: always conscious of their public worth, sensitive to their audiences’ fickleness, and constantly promoting themselves as unique “brands” within a competitive theatrical market. Their aim was not to achieve the lasting fame and glory crowned by posterity, but immediate critical and financial success through public acclaim.

To maintain their celebrity, Italian and English female singers cultivated strategic collaborative partnerships with other singers, musicians, composers, and actors and actresses. These collaborations became integral to the ways in which female singers shaped and performed their celebrity in London. This chapter introduces the social, cultural, and historical circumstances in early eighteenth-century London that encouraged female opera singers to collaborate with musicians and other stage performers. Female singers used what I shall call “collaborative celebrity” as a mode of celebrity construction, which facilitated their entry into public theatrical performance and endowed them with professional agency in their financial, social, and artistic negotiations. In order to gain initial exposure and establish themselves as artists worthy of renown, female singers engaged in professional partnerships with established performers; these

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<sup>18</sup> Reinhard Strohm, “Italian Operisti North of the Alps (c. 1700 – c. 1750),” in *The Eighteenth-Century Diaspora of Italian Music and Musicians*, ed. Reinhard Strohm (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2001).

<sup>19</sup> Joanna Maria Lindelheim, Margarita de l’Epine, and Maria Gallia were frequently advertised as “famous” in ads promoting their first appearances. See, for example, “[...] Famous Signiora Maria Margarita Gallia, lately arrived from *Italy*, who has never yet sung in *England*,” Advertisement, *Daily Courant*, 31 May 1703, *Burney Collection Newspapers*, Gale, The University of Michigan, 2012. “In which the Famous Signiora Francesca Margarita de l’Epine will sing Four of her most Celebrated Songs;” Advertisement, *Daily Courant*, May 29, 1703, *Burney Collection Newspapers*, Gale, The University of Michigan (accessed 2012).

associations granted female singers access to new performance opportunities and the possibility of more control over their careers. Their collaborative relationships validated their positions as professionals who directly shaped musical creation and consumption, ultimately paving the way for a market dominated by celebrity performers as the eighteenth century progressed.

### **The Rise of Celebrity Culture in Early Modern England**

The origins of celebrity emerged long before the eighteenth century; the terms “fama” and “celebritas” entered Latin vocabulary in Ancient Rome, as cities became heavily populated and as people began to assume individual identities.<sup>20</sup> The first famous people were celebrated for their merits and achievements; Alexander the Great, Jesus, Julius Caesar, and many other historical figures were renowned in their lifetime for their individual accomplishments.<sup>21</sup> Modern scholars who have theorized about celebrity and fame consider the rise of the individual as both the catalyst for and the result of certain people achieving renown; put another way, “fame has been a way of expressing ... the legitimacy of the individual within society.”<sup>22</sup> A celebrity, whose social, financial, and personal circumstances are often coveted by fans and admirers, becomes “the public

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<sup>20</sup> David Giles argues that a culture of fame began as cities developed and as the written word spread. He gives the example of religious texts that emphasized the commentary of specific religious leaders during the medieval era, and that “the trend towards individualism in society was hastened by the figure of the solitary reader.” See Giles, *Illusions of Immortality: A Psychology of Fame and Celebrity* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; and London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 2000), 15-17.

<sup>21</sup> For a thorough account of the history of fame and celebrity throughout human history, see Leo Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown: Fame & its History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

<sup>22</sup> Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown*, 585. Quoted in Su Holmes and Sean Redmond, eds., *Framing Celebrity: New Directions in Celebrity Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 21. They question this broad, sweeping statement and acknowledge that more recent scholarship has provided more nuance to this claim.



representation of individuality in contemporary culture.”<sup>23</sup> The phenomena of fame and celebrity have been examined from multi-disciplinary points of view, yet psychologists, sociologists, film and theater scholars, historians, and musicologists agree that “the Western concept of the self is a major factor behind the rise of celebrity [...]. The aggrandizement of the individual within such a society creates the conditions for a culture of celebrity to thrive.”<sup>24</sup> Contemporary society celebrates the individual: film stars, pop stars, and other renowned persons claim their celebrity status as the result of unique and distinctive achievements and talents that distinguish them from other celebrated public figures.

Early modern England nurtured its own culture of celebrity, especially as the theater took on new social and cultural functions in the daily lives of Londoners in the late sixteenth century.<sup>25</sup> During Elizabeth I’s reign, The King’s Men acting troupe enjoyed an enthusiastic public reception; the actor Richard Burbage was especially celebrated for his interpretations of Richard III, Hamlet, King Lear, and Othello in Shakespeare’s eponymous plays.<sup>26</sup> Richard Flecknoe’s posthumous description of the actor (from 1664) called Burbage “a delightful Proteus, so wholly transforming himself

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<sup>23</sup> David Marshall, *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 242. Quoted in Giles, *Illusions of Immortality*, 72.

<sup>24</sup> Giles, *Illusions of Immortality*, 78. Tom Mole builds upon Giles’s argument, contending that celebrity culture gave rise to both the prominence of the individual as well as less concrete understandings of subjectivity and personal social agency: “[Celebrity culture] is intricately connected to the history of the self, since it helps to shape the subjectivity of those it promotes, and, by promoting them, to change understandings of subjectivity in general. As well as promoting particular individuals, celebrity culture promotes an abstract notion of the individual as a self-determining agent and as a principle of cultural classification [...]” See Tom Mole, *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture, 1750-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 12.

<sup>25</sup> For a general overview, see A.R. Braunmuller and Michael Hattaway, *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

<sup>26</sup> Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Playing Companies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

into his Part [...]. He had all the Parts of an excellent actor, animating his words with speaking and speech with action.”<sup>27</sup> In 1619, an anonymous poet wrote (but did not publish) a “funerall Elegy on the death of the famous Actor Richard Burbage,”<sup>28</sup> one of the first times in which “fame” was associated with a theatrical personage.<sup>29</sup> Burbage’s fame rested on his acting talents, as well as his apparently successful and popular embodiment of Shakespeare’s most celebrated tragic figures. Such widespread and heartfelt outpourings of grief for Burbage upon his death, as well as the retrospective account of the actor’s life, signify the nascent stages of England’s celebrity culture.

Theatrical celebrity was temporarily suppressed as warfare and political upheaval consumed seventeenth-century England. After Cromwell’s silencing of the public theaters during the Civil War and subsequent Commonwealth, Charles II enthusiastically patronized the stage upon the monarchy’s restoration in 1660. He instituted a series of reforms and decrees that ensured continued cultivation of theatrical practices as well as the fostering of celebrated individuals who made their careers in the theater.<sup>30</sup> During the second half of the seventeenth century, the theatrical marketplace quickly expanded, ushering in a new era of the celebrity actor and actress. Nell Gwyn, Thomas Betterton, Elizabeth Barry, and Anne Bracegirdle all became household names, known for their

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<sup>27</sup> Richard Flecknoe, *Short Discourse on the English Stage*. Quoted in Joseph Roach, *The Player’s Passion: Studies in the Science of Acting* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 41.

<sup>28</sup> *A funerall Elegy on the death of the famous actor Richard Burbage: who died on Saturday in Lent, the 13<sup>th</sup> of March 1618*.

<sup>29</sup> Braudy, *The Frenzy of Fame*, 331-339.

<sup>30</sup> Charles II gave two royal grants for theaters in England. Thomas Killigrew established the King’s Company at the Theater Royale in Drury Lane, which opened in 1663. William Davenant founded the Duke’s Company at Lincoln’s Inn Fields, which gave its first performance in 1661. Charles II also decreed that actresses could perform on London’s public stages; the first actresses appeared in 1661. For an overview of the early Restoration theater, see Deborah Payne Fiske, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

particular specialties playing certain kinds of characters and acting techniques.<sup>31</sup> Actors and actresses cultivated performative trademarks, which became one of the most important ways in which they could promote themselves as distinctive commodities. Their celebrity hinged upon the public circulation of celebrity personas through the press. Plays were printed and almost always included a cast list that included the names of the actors and actresses who had performed in the original production.<sup>32</sup> This practice ensured that audiences would associate a specific actor or actress with a particular role, and in turn, these public associations drew further attention to the individual trademarks cultivated by members of the spoken theater. Moreover, pamphlets, poems, and books were published referencing these renowned personages.<sup>33</sup> Whether for flattering or insalubrious purposes, the growth in print advertisement and the ubiquitous circulation of

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<sup>31</sup> For example, Elizabeth Barry became England's premiere tragic actress, who was able to move even the most stoic of men to express emotion. See Jennifer Poppo, "Spectacular Bodies: Nell Gwyn, Elizabeth Barry, and Anne Bracegirdle as Symbols of Contract, Struggle, and Subversion in Restoration England, 1660-1707," (Ph.D. diss., University of Colorado, 2010), 132-147.

<sup>32</sup> Printers of music learned from the tradition of the *dramatis personae*. Libretti almost always list the cast for the production, and the names of the original singers were usually printed at the top of each song published and sold as sheet music. On music printing, see David Hunter, *Opera and Songbooks Published in England, 1703-1726: A Descriptive Bibliography* (London: Bibliographical Society, 1997); and William Charles Smith, *A Catalogue of Music Published by John Walsh and his Successors* (London: First Edition Bookshop, 1953).

<sup>33</sup> One popular source for theatrical gossip was *A Comparison Between the Two Stages* (1702), an anonymous satire directed at some of London's most celebrated actors, actresses, and singers. In the pamphlet, Sullen, Critick, and Ramble exchange their opinions on the latest plays produced as well as the actors and actresses who starred in them. The preface explains that the author has "undertaken a Task that's like to raise me many Enemies; [...] I shou'd have enough to do to combat so many Antagonists: The *Players* will tilt me; the *Poets* will rail at me in dreadful Simile, and blazon me in odious Character on the *Stage*; the *Criticks* will damn my gentle Raillery; the *Audiences* will hiss me; the *Wits* will report me a Fool; and the *Women* will have me duckt for a Scold: The whole Scoiety will be in Arms against me; [...]" (A2). See *A Comparison Between the Two Stages, with an Examen of the Generous Conqueror and Some Critical Remarks on the Funeral, or Grief Alamode, The False Friend, Tamerlane, and others* (London: 1702), *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online*, Gale, The University of Michigan (accessed 2012).

the names and images of actors and actresses ensured that the press would play a crucial role in the creation and maintenance of celebrity.<sup>34</sup>

When the first professional female singers arrived in London in the early eighteenth century an emerging celebrity culture had begun to flourish in England. They quickly learned to rely upon the press to create public interest, thereby fashioning and maintaining their celebrity. With the expansion of the press, actors and actresses, as well as professional singers, became as celebrated for their publicly performed personas as for their offstage private lives and activities. Scholars have theorized that celebrities maintain an inherent sense of mysteriousness and unattainableness, a charismatic presence that seduces spectators into believing that they, the audience, can fully know and identify with the performer on the stage, both as an artist and as an intimate, private human being. The observed interest in a celebrity's private life is the driving force behind contemporary sociological and historical studies of celebrities, which contend that the rise of modern celebrity in the eighteenth century corresponded with the development of individuality and subjectivity.<sup>35</sup> Felicity Nussbaum has referred to this as the “interiority effect,”

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<sup>34</sup> Pramod Nayar claims that in order to cultivate a “celebrity ecology,” or a celebrity culture in the modern era, celebrities rely on mass media to circulate their images: “Celebrities are people recognized widely. They are commodities and effects that are produced by mass media image-making (representations), are consumed by large audiences who take an interest in their personal as well as public life, and who project, promote or present themselves in particular or spectacular ways for this consumption to take place. Celebrities serve a social function because of their cultural, symbolic, economic and political power, which is constantly enforced and reinforced through mass media representations.” See Pramod K. Nayar, *Seeing Stars: Spectacle, Society and Celebrity Culture* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2009), 7. Although late seventeenth-century England did not have the same kinds of mass media that we experience today, the expiration of the Licensing Act in 1695 prompted an explosion of publications that were no longer subject to governmental censorship or oversight. Newspapers, pamphlets, books, plays, poetry, and other forms of print culture capitalized and exploited the public's interest in celebrities.

<sup>35</sup> See Richard Dyer, *Stars* (London: British Film Institute, 1998); Daniel Herwitz, *The Star as Icon: Celebrity in the Age of Mass Consumption* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); Holmes and Redmond, eds., *Framing Celebrity*; Barry King, “The Star and the Commodity:

whereby “early actresses [...] manipulated privacy into the construction of a partially fictive offstage personality that became a theatricalized substitute for authentic knowledge about the actress’s life.”<sup>36</sup> Female opera singers also cultivated a projected and performed version of their interiority; gossip abounded concerning opera singers’ private lives, including their most intimate relationships with each other, with other musicians and stage performers, and with members of the nobility.<sup>37</sup> The public’s fascination with the private lives of female singers could be detrimental to their careers. Celebrity could quickly turn into notoriety at the whim of public opinion, and with the help of the press. As termed by James C. Scott, celebrity is “a social transaction,” a process by which audiences bestow prestige and renown onto individuals in the spotlight.<sup>38</sup> Although female singers controlled many aspects of their onstage performances, including the music they sang and the roles in which they specialized, at times they had little power over the ways in which public perception and criticism could manipulate their offstage reception.

To complicate the modern definition of celebrity, Joseph Roach theorizes beyond the construction of a charismatic outward persona, balanced by a veiled interiority

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Notes Towards a Performance Theory of Stardom,” *Cultural Studies* 1, No. 2 (1987): 145-161; Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody, eds., *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain, 1660-2000* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Chris Rojek, *Celebrity* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001); Graeme Turner, *Understanding Celebrity* (London; Thousand Oaks, CA; New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2004).

<sup>36</sup> Nussbaum, *Rival Queens*, 44.

<sup>37</sup> Although not subject to the same degree of scandalous attention as actresses, some female singers were publicly accused of flaunting their sexuality in order to further their careers (see Chapter 3 for examples). For the most part, however, the press did not often negatively exploit the sexuality of female singers. England had already debated the place of women in public performance during the Restoration, and by 1700 actresses were ubiquitous in theatrical productions. Moreover, the press focused on the cultural, political, and religious origins of foreign female singers, drawing attention to their nationality rather than their gender as a point of cultural anxiety and contention.

<sup>38</sup> James C. Scott, “Prestige as the Public Discourse of Domination,” *Cultural Critique*, No. 12 (1989): 146.

desired by audiences. He calls for a more subtle distinction concerning the power behind the celebrity figure, defining this as the “It-effect.” He emphasizes the qualities of “It” as “the power of apparently effortless embodiment of contradictory qualities simultaneously: strength *and* vulnerability, innocence *and* experience, and singularity *and* typicality among them.”<sup>39</sup> Restoration actresses like Elizabeth Barry and Anne Bracegirdle embodied these first two qualities; Bracegirdle, especially, exemplified these paradoxes in her performances of virtuous, innocent, and passive characters, despite the fact that English noblemen routinely became infatuated with her.<sup>40</sup> Most importantly, however, having “It” requires the simultaneous illusions of exceptionality and ordinariness. Perhaps more so than the actresses, female opera singers came to represent the extremes of both: their performative virtuosity, the exotic music they sang, and their seductive and powerful voices made them exceptional performers to behold onstage. On the other hand, their transience as celebrities, their reliance on audiences for financial success, and their statuses as professional musicians within a marketplace—one saturated with other performers of all kinds—reveals a striking tension in how these women reconciled their individual celebrity while negotiating their relationships with other performers in the public sphere.

As Italian opera became widespread throughout Europe during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, performers relied upon creating and promoting individual musical and professional personas.<sup>41</sup> Singers learned how to market themselves as brands or commodities by offering specialized performance styles and

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<sup>39</sup> Joseph Roach, *It* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 8.

<sup>40</sup> See Elizabeth Howe, *The First English Actresses: Women and Drama 1660-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); and Jennifer Popple, “Spectacular Bodies.”

<sup>41</sup> I am grateful to Louise K. Stein for introducing me to the concept of singers promoting distinctive personas and musical trademarks in seminars at the University of Michigan.

techniques to audiences, who came to expect distinctive musical and theatrical trademarks from their favorite singers. Individual celebrity became “a commercial property which is fundamental to [the singer’s] career and must be maintained and strategized if [the performer is] to continue to benefit from it.”<sup>42</sup> In London, professional female singers achieved public renown for their personalized virtuoso techniques, which they performed and exploited in operas and concerts.<sup>43</sup> In her study of the eighteenth-century star system in England, Berta Joncus has observed that “this valuation of stars [with regard to specialization] depends on their irreproducibility: to obtain and maintain their worth, stars must integrate technical skill with ‘personality’ or other qualities that appear inherent to the individual.”<sup>44</sup> Having witnessed their English contemporaries in the spoken theater fostering specialized performance personas, female singers adapted this strategy for their own practice. In order to become celebrities, they distinguished themselves from their colleagues through a variety of strategies of self-promotion: through their virtuoso vocal specializations, through the character types they played in operas, through their choices of music and the languages in which they sang, through their associations with particular patrons and factions of support, and through their professional partnerships with other musicians.

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<sup>42</sup> Graeme Turner, “Approaching Celebrity Studies,” *Celebrity Studies* 1, No. 1 (March 2010): 14.

<sup>43</sup> Some singers, for example, became known for specializing in trouser roles. Audiences frequently commented on Catherine Tofts’s mastery of certain technical embellishments, such as the trill. Nicolini carved his niche by promoting his superb acting technique. See Berta Joncus, “Producing Stars in *Dramma per musica*,” in *Music as Social and Cultural Practice: Essays in Honor of Reinhard Strohm*, eds. Melania Bucciarelli and Berta Joncus (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: The Boydell Press, 2007), 279. The author states that “[s]tars must distinguish themselves from rivals” by “reenacting” these trademarks through their performances, thereby creating an individual, recognizable onstage persona.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 277.

Female opera singers used their collaborations in order to build and preserve their public reputations as celebrities. Their artistic relationships with established performers provided new opportunities and venues for performance and legitimized their presence as professionals. The careers of the women discussed in this dissertation frame a new narrative of celebrity culture that interweaves individual renown with collaborative celebrity encountered through networks of other professional performers, theatrical personages, and patrons—in short, other celebrities. Female singers thrived individually *because* they engaged collaboratively with other public figures, including other renowned singers, musicians, composers, patrons, and actors and actresses. Thus, the experience of opera singers as celebrities in early eighteenth-century London was not simply an individual phenomenon, but instead as an exhibition of collaborative celebrity. Female opera singers took advantage of their surrounding musical and theatrical networks, pursuing creative and financial relationships with others in order to legitimize their professional status and become independent agents in London’s theatrical marketplace.

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Collaboration is essential in the theater, and both men and women engaged in collaborative relationships in the spoken theater and in the opera house. Theatrical networks depended on cooperation among librettists, composers, and playwrights, who worked closely with actors, actresses, and singers. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, composers, librettists, and playwrights tailored roles for specific players and singers in order to accommodate their strengths and downplay their weaknesses; this ensured that the performer could promote his or her individual celebrity persona.<sup>45</sup> Yet

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<sup>45</sup> Reinhard Strohm, “Towards an understanding of the *opera seria*,” in *Essays on Handel and the Italian Opera* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 98. He writes “the existence of



women and men experienced and exploited collaboration in different ways. Men had the artistic and social agency to create their own celebrity personas in London's competitive marketplace. For example, Richard Leveridge, an English bass singer who sang in the premiere of Purcell's *The Indian Queen* (1695), specialized in comic roles, which he continued to perform in the first Italianate operas in London.<sup>46</sup> He furthered his public celebrity by becoming renowned for his compositional efforts; he composed "The Enthusiastick Song," which he performed in *The Island Princess* (1699) to thunderous applause.<sup>47</sup> He also published two books of music, yet another way for him to cultivate public interest in his onstage career.<sup>48</sup> Although Leveridge routinely collaborated with other performers, he did not rely on these collaborative relationships in order to promote his career. Rather, he took charge of his performances by writing his own music, performing it, and publishing it. Leveridge's theatrical performances may have included on- and offstage collaborations with other members of London's theatrical network, but he created and cultivated his celebrity as an individual.

The careers of castrato singers also provide a counterpoint to the phenomenon of female collaborative celebrity in London. Valentini, the first castrato to sing publicly in

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these famous opera-singers was much more closely dependent on the theatre than that of any of the others involved, including the composer. The positive result of this was of course that they tried to dictate the character of the music and the production. It was on their personalities that the 'work' i.e. the actual theatrical event, had to be moulded. Not only individual roles, but whole works were conceived for individual singers [...]."

<sup>46</sup> See Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson, "Richard Leveridge, 1670-1758. 1. Purcell and the Dramatic Operas," *The Musical Times* 111, No. 1528 (1970): 592-594; Baldwin and Wilson, *Richard Leveridge: Complete Songs (with the music in Macbeth)*, in *Music for London Entertainment 1600-1800, Series A, Vol. 6* (London: Stainer and Bell, 1997). Chapter 2 goes into more detail concerning Leveridge's comic partnership with Mary Lindsey.

<sup>47</sup> Curtis Price and Robert D. Hume, eds., *The Island Princess: British Library Add. MS 15318* (Tunbridge Wells, UK: Richard Macnutt, 1985), xviii.

<sup>48</sup> Two of these were published in 1697 and 1699. He also composed the music for a revival of *Macbeth* in 1702 at Drury Lane. In November 1711, he published his third *New Book of Songs*. See Baldwin and Wilson, "Leveridge, Richard (1670-1758)," in *ODNB* (accessed 2012).

London, arrived in 1707; it is possible that members of the nobility who heard him perform in Italy during the 1690s invited him.<sup>49</sup> Only a few more followed, including Valeriano Pellegrini, Antonio Maria Bernacchi, and Nicolò Grimaldi (“Nicolini”). In almost all cases, the castrato’s reputation preceded him. Nicolini was already a pan-European celebrity upon his arrival in London in 1708 and was invited by Sir John Vanbrugh, impresario at the Queen’s Theatre in the Haymarket, and Charles Montagu, the fourth Earl of Manchester, who was an English diplomat to the Venetian Republic.<sup>50</sup> Despite some objectionable chatter in the press, London audiences enthusiastically welcomed the castrati who performed in Italian-style operas. England did not have a tradition of castrating young boys for the purposes of preserving their voices; thus, the castrato was a unique and irreplaceable phenomenon, necessary if Italian operas were to be performed with the same kinds of casts featured in Italy.<sup>51</sup> The anonymous translator of *A Comparison of French and Italian Musick*, usually a harsh critic of Italian-style music, noted that high-voiced men played convincing heroes onstage:

I can’t think the Base Voice more proper for a King, a Hero, or any other distinguish’d Person than the Counter-tenor, since the Difference of the Voice in Man is merely accidental. And as the Abilities of a Man’s Mind are not measur’d by his Stature, so certainly we are not to judge of a Heroe by his Voice: For this Reason I can’t see why the Part of *Casar* [sic] or *Alexander* may not properly

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<sup>49</sup> Valentini had an extensive career prior to his arrival in London. According to Winton Dean, the Duke of Mantua was his patron. He also performed in numerous operas in Venice, Bologna, Piacenza, Ferrara, Reggio nell’Emilia, Rome, and Turin between 1690 and 1696. He went into the service of the Electress of Brandenburg between 1697 and 1700, although he still performed throughout Europe. See Winton Dean, “Valentini,” *Grove Online* (accessed 2012).

<sup>50</sup> Joseph Roach, “Cavaliere Nicolini: London’s First Opera Star,” *Educational Theatre Journal* 28, No. 2 (1976): 193.

<sup>51</sup> Since Italian operas are composed for mostly high voices, if castrati did not play the male heroes, English countertenors or women would have had to take those roles. Most likely, the extraordinary voices and virtuosity of the castrato persuaded English audiences that their talents were better suited to these technically difficult parts. On the history of castration during the ancient and early modern periods, see Piotr O. Scholtz, *Eunuchs and Castrati: A Cultural History*, trans. John A. Broadwin and Shelley L. Frisch (Princeton: Marcus Wiener Publishers, 2001).

enough be perform'd by a Counter-tenor or Tenor, or any other Voice; provided the Performer, in Acting as well as Singing, is able to maintain the Dignity of the Character he represents.<sup>52</sup>

The castrato, referred to here as the “Counter-tenor,” was therefore an appropriate choice for Italian operas with high-voiced heroic roles. Even Joseph Addison, another strong opponent of Italian-style opera, acknowledged Nicolini’s tremendous musical and acting abilities: “I am very sorry to find [...] that we are likely to lose the greatest performer in dramatic music that is now living, or that perhaps ever appeared upon a stage. [...] I am speaking of Signior Nicolini, [...] who has] shewn us the Italian music in its perfection.”<sup>53</sup> Castrati were received enthusiastically by audiences; the sheer dissonance between their male bodies and their high voices was immediately novel and enhanced their celebrity in London.<sup>54</sup> The castrati did not strive to integrate into London’s cultural milieu. They never learned English, rarely (if ever) sang English music, and only came to London for a few seasons at a time, before journeying back to the Continent to further their

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<sup>52</sup> *A Comparison of the French and Italian Musick and Opera’s: Translated from the French; With some Remarks to which is added A Critical Discourse upon Opera’s in England, and a Means proposed for their Improvement*, (London: 1709), *Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale*, (University of Michigan, accessed 2012), 6 n. 5. This text is a short pamphlet that includes a full English translation of the François Ragueneau’s controversial *Parallèle des Italiens et des Français en ce qui regarde la musique et les opéras* (1702) with commentary in footnotes. The anonymous translator and annotator appended his own opinions on the state of theatrical music in England to the end of the translation. The translator/annotator of this text remains unknown, but John Hawkins speculated that it was by John Ernest Galliard. Burney refuted his speculation. In his article on the dispute, Stoddard Lincoln also considers and ultimately rejects Joseph Addison, John Vanbrugh, and Peter Motteux, settling on Galliard as the likely candidate. See Stoddard Lincoln, “J.E. Galliard and ‘A Critical Discourse,’” *The Musical Quarterly* 53, No. 3 (1967): 347-364.

<sup>53</sup> No. 405. *The Spectator*, June 14, 1712, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2012).

<sup>54</sup> Roger Freitas, “Eroticism of Emasculation: Confronting the Baroque Body of the Castrato,” *The Journal of Musicology* 20, No. 2 (Spring 2003): 196-249. On the social and cultural appreciation of castrati more generally, see Patrick Barbier, *The World of the Castrati: The History of an Extraordinary Operatic Phenomenon*, trans. Margaret Crosland (London: Souvenir Press, 1996).

international careers.<sup>55</sup> In contrast, almost all of the Italian female singers who performed in London between 1703 and 1720 moved there permanently and strove to appeal to English audiences by performing virtuoso music, learning the English language and English-style music, and marrying Englishmen.<sup>56</sup>

Like their male English colleagues, the castrati engaged in collaborations with other singers, musicians, and composers, but there is little evidence to suggest that they relied on these collaborations to maintain their celebrity. Instead, their extraordinary voices endowed them with an extraordinary allure and more immediate access to fame.<sup>57</sup> The success of the castrati in England depended more on their physical and vocal novelties than their interactions with other performers. Some castrati were even granted artistic power over opera productions. Nicolini adapted two libretti himself, having brought the music with him from Italy.<sup>58</sup> *Hamlet* (1712) and *Cleartes* (1716) include dedications written by Nicolini himself—a rare occurrence in the early eighteenth-century, when theater impresarios or librettists and translators wrote dedications. In the preface to *Cleartes*, Nicolini appealed to the “Ladies of Great Britain,” taking credit for the production and flattering his female audience, who “have often ingag’d in my

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<sup>55</sup> Valentini, who stayed the longest during this period, performed in London from 1707-1711, and again between 1712-1714. Valeriano Pellegrini stayed from 1712 to 1713. Nicolini, who found great success in London, stayed from 1708-1712, returning from 1715-1717.

<sup>56</sup> One example is Maria Manina, who arrived in London in 1712, first performing in John Galliard’s English opera *Calypso and Telemachus*. In 1715, she married John Fletcher, and subsequently was referred to in advertisements as Mrs. Fletcher. Toward the end of her life, she married the German musician Seedo (or Sidow). See Winton Dean, “Manina, Maria,” *Grove Online* (accessed 2012).

<sup>57</sup> Freitas, “Eroticism of Emasculation,” 202.

<sup>58</sup> Nicolini performed in *L’Ambleto*, a *dramma per musica* by Francesco Gasperini and a libretto by Apostolo Zeno, at the Teatro San Cassiano in Venice during the 1706 Carnival season. The lead role was composed especially for him, and he brought the music and libretto to London when he returned in 1712.

Defence, and by the Influence of their unequall'd Beauty crowded the Theatre.”<sup>59</sup> This excerpt underscores Nicolini’s individual popularity with his audiences, while demonstrating how he promoted his career by adapting the libretto and using the preface to reinforce his celebrity persona. With these two operas, Nicolini gained more professional independence by demonstrating his flexibility as an artist (by singing, acting, adapting libretti, and possibly even arranging music). Moreover, his appeal to his audiences in such publicly disseminated literature reveals that he had other outlets for making his name known beyond his onstage performances. Just as actors were more easily accepted by audiences in the seventeenth century, the castrati were still male subjects, “part of the hegemonic ‘we,’ whereas women, whatever her material or social position may be, is still Other.”<sup>60</sup> The castrati were allowed access to certain financial and performance opportunities still unavailable to women, thereby granting them additional independence in constructing their individual celebrity personas.

Female singers quickly learned how to develop individual performance personas that would complement those of their colleagues. They used their onstage performances to perform and promote their individual trademarks, but they crafted these trademarks around the distinctive abilities of other performers. This did not mean, however, that competition was inherent to their professional relationships with others. For example, two sopranos, Elisabetta Pilotti-Schiavonetti and Isabella Girardeau, starred in *Rinaldo* (1711), Handel’s first opera for the London stage. Pilotti and Girardeau, although playing onstage rivals, specialized in distinctly different character types and singing strengths.

The arias that Handel composed for them demonstrate that they cultivated starkly

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<sup>59</sup> *Cleartes*, preface (1716).

<sup>60</sup> Gilli Bush-Bailey, *Treading the Bawds: Actresses and Playwrights on the Late Stuart Stage* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 61.

different musical specialties. In *Rinaldo*, Girardeau played the role of Almirena, a passive female character whose music is simple, beautiful, and charming. Her most famous aria, “Lascia ch’io pianga,” most effectively revealed the singer’s musical personality through its uncomplicated *sarabande* rhythms, clear and unadorned melody (with the possibility for ornamentation), and the emotional similarities between the A and B sections.

**Example 1.01: "Lascia ch'io pianga," *Rinaldo*, act 2, scene 4, mm. 1-8.<sup>61</sup>**

Girardeau’s vocal specialties emphasized lyricism rather than unbridled virtuosity, as evinced in the modest vocal line Handel composed for her; she must have excelled at lyrical singing, and she was probably an effective pathetic actress in order to have portrayed Almirena convincingly.

In contrast to Girardeau’s dignified lyricism, Pilotti played the vindictive sorceress Armida, and her music illustrates that she specialized in different vocal techniques than her onstage partner. Armida’s music is technically flashy and is

<sup>61</sup> Transcribed from the Hallische Händel-Ausgabe (HHA). See George Frideric Handel, *Rinaldo: Opera Seria in Tre Atti, HWV 7a*, ed. David R.B. Kimbell (Kassel; Basel; London; New York; Prague: Bärenreiter, 1993). I have left out the string parts (Vln 1&2, and Vla) from this transcription.

embellished with long passages of coloratura and an extreme diversity of emotion within arias; Handel also exploited Pilotti's soprano range to full effect.

Armida

se-gui - ta

Bassi

Armida

Bassi

Armida

te mi

Bassi

**Example 1.02: "Furie terribili," *Rinaldo*, act 1, scene 5, mm. 52-64.<sup>62</sup>**

Pilotti's vocal prowess will be discussed later in this dissertation, but a comparison of these two passages indicates that she had more technical competence. She showed off her abilities by singing long passages of agile coloratura and long held notes, and often made use of the extremes of her range for dramatic effect. Pilotti and Girardeau established their individual performance identities by specializing in completely different styles of singing and vocal techniques. The two singers would not have competed for roles, since these vocal trademarks would have been appropriate for particular kinds of character types. As in *Rinaldo*, Pilotti's extravagant virtuosity suited the role of an unstable female antagonist, while Girardeau's more lyrical voice suited a young, romantic female lead.

<sup>62</sup> Transcribed from the HHA edition. I have left out the accompanying string parts (Vln 1&2, and Vla) from this transcription. The dashed ties were added to the HHA modern edition.

These excerpts show that the two singers nurtured complementary performing identities, both of which would have been necessary for the dramatic content of most Italian opera productions. Their complementary collaborations helped them craft their individual celebrity personas, which provided an alternative method of self-promotion.

Like Nicolini, Pilotti and Girardeau promoted themselves individually by specializing in distinctive vocal techniques and types of characters. Their complementary performances, however, allowed them to distinguish their onstage strengths by playing against the other's performative trademarks. Their celebrity, then, was not constructed only through their individual performances, but through their onstage collaborations. Many female singers worked with their colleagues both on and offstage in order to gain agency as professionals; their approach to defining their celebrity personas was collaborative. James C. Scott defines prestige as "a transitive good," an attribute to be gauged only in relation to the status of others.<sup>63</sup> Building upon this theory, I argue that in the eighteenth century, female celebrity was delineated by relationships with other star performers. In contrast to Scott, however, these relationships did not require singers to fit into some sort of hierarchy of celebrity, in which particular singers were "more prestigious" than others.<sup>64</sup> Instead, female singers cultivated professional relationships that would help them construct and promote their own unique brand of performance. Collaborative celebrity encouraged the development of a community of performers with similar professional goals, rather than a crowd of competitive, autonomous singers. Their growing presence suggests a paradigmatic shift in the ways in which women were able to stake their ground as performers of the highest caliber, deserving of exorbitant salaries

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<sup>63</sup> Scott, "Prestige as the Public Discourse," 146.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.



and public prestige, even within a market that oscillated between different styles and genres of theatrical music.

### **Female Singers and Early Criticism of Italian Music in London**

Female opera singers encountered enthusiastic audiences upon their arrival in London, but professional exposure came with a price. They were simultaneously reviled and embraced by some English critics and commentators, who saw them as interlopers, fascinating but detrimental novelties, and political and religious enemies, “a situation where the disadvantages of being a foreigner, a castrato, a minstrel, a courtesan, or a catholic were interchangeable in the eyes of various critics.”<sup>65</sup> These critics voiced their concerns and complaints in newspapers, pamphlets, poetry, play texts, books, and other publications, taking advantage of the expiration of the Licensing Act in 1695 to launch uncensored disparagement of the newest musico-theatrical genre and its performers.<sup>66</sup> In one such public complaint, Colley Cibber railed against Italian opera and advocated for a new kind of musical-theatrical entertainment in the English language. Cibber was hardly neutral; not only was he a playwright, actor, and theater manager, but he was married to the singer Catherine Shore, and wrote at least two libretti for musical entertainments.<sup>67</sup> He concluded that theater managers should strive to teach their famous Italian singers English and to produce operas in England’s native tongue, rather than providing poorly translated libretti for operas in Italian.

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<sup>65</sup> Strohm, “Italian Operisti,” 3.

<sup>66</sup> For more on theatrical criticism, see Siegmund Betz, “The Operatic Criticism of the ‘Tatler’ and ‘Spectator,’” *The Musical Quarterly* 31, No. 3 (1945): 318-330; Henrik Knif, *Gentlemen and Spectators: Studies in Journals, Opera and the Social Scene in Late Stuart London* (Helsinki, Finland: Finnish Historical Society, 1995); and Lindgren, “Critiques.”

<sup>67</sup> These include *Venus and Adonis* and *Myrtillo and Laura*, which he wrote in collaboration with Johann Christoph Pepusch. See “Cibber, Colley,” *ODNB* (accessed 2012).

*The following Entertainment is an Attempt to give the Town a little good Musick in a Language they understand: For no Theatrical Performance can be absolutely Good, that is not Proper; and how can we judge of its Propriety, when we know not one Word of the Voice's Meaning? [...]*

*It is therefore hoped, that this Undertaking, if encourag'd, may in time reconcile Musick to the English Tongue; and, to make the Union more practicable, it is humbly moved, that it may be allow'd a less Inconvenience to hear the Performer express his Meaning with an imperfect Accent, than in Words, that (to an English Audience) have no Meaning at all: **And at worst it will be an easier Matter to instruct two or three Performers in tolerable English, than to teach a whole Nation Italian.***<sup>68</sup>

Cibber's promotion of theatrical entertainments in English exposed contemporary political and cultural anxieties as Italian opera became the predominant genre of musical theater in London during the following decade. Cibber insinuated that the impetus for this transformation was Johann Jakob Heidegger's production of *Almahide* (1710), the first Italian-style opera performed completely in Italian by an Italian cast. Prior to that time, the operas and theatrical events that showcased Italian singers offered a compromise for English audiences who did not understand Italian: they were performed in both languages.<sup>69</sup> For example, during performances of the pasticcio opera *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* (1708), Valentini and Nicolini sang in Italian, while the rest of the cast sang in English. In his own preface to the pasticcio, Heidegger comments on this "absurdity," arguing that Italian was better suited to musical setting.<sup>70</sup> *Almahide's* popularity proved

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<sup>68</sup> Colley Cibber, *Venus and Adonis*, preface (1715). Emphasis mine.

<sup>69</sup> Peter Holmon, "Introduction," in *Music in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, ed. David Wyn Jones (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2000), 3. The earliest contracts that we have by Italian singers are written in French, suggesting that they had not yet mastered English. See Milhous and Hume, *Coke Papers*, 24.

<sup>70</sup> Johann Jakob Heidegger, *Almahide*, preface (1710).

that this new, single-language model worked, and theater managers and librettists abandoned mixed-language pasticcios in favor of opera sung completely in Italian.<sup>71</sup>

Cibber's preface to *Venus and Adonis* disparaged Italian opera for its reliance on famous Italian singers, who too often imposed their own conditions, terms, and language to the detriment of the opera's quality, destroying "Common Sense in their Original, as the Translation." He complained that "the Tyranny is carried yet farther for the Songs are so often turn'd out of their Places, to introduce some Absurd favourite Air of the Singer, that in a few Days the first Book you have Bought, is reduc'd to little more than the Title Page [...]." Italian singers all too frequently insisted upon incorporating their favorite arias into productions, thus affecting the final performance and contradicting the printed libretto. The anonymous translator of *A Comparison Between the French and Italian Musick and Opera's* complained of this practice in a footnote: "several Airs are alter'd or omitted, according to the Fancy or Ability of the Singers, without the Approbation or Knowledge of the Composer."<sup>72</sup> Cibber also believed that the reception of Italian opera had become too dependent on foreign performers, many of whom appeared in London just for a season or two before heading back to more prestigious theaters on the Continent: "And thus by slavishly giving up our Language to the Despotick Power of Sound only, we are so far from Establishing Theatrical Musick in England that the very Exhibition or Silence of it seems entirely to depend upon the Arrival or Absence of some

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<sup>71</sup> This is not to suggest that musical experiments at combining Italian-style music with English words did not exist; Pepusch's masque *Venus and Adonis* was one of these experiments. After *Almahide's* success, however, no new Italian-style operas were performed in a mixture of English and Italian; all Italian pasticcios were performed in Italian, usually (but not always) by Italian singers.

<sup>72</sup> *A Comparison Between the French and Italian Musick and Opera's*, 3 fn. 3.

Eminent Foreign Performer.”<sup>73</sup> Cibber’s complaints about the “tyranny” of “despotick” singers suggest the political origins of his argument, while demonstrating that by 1715 singers had become a dynamic part of the production and reception of theatrical performances.

Cibber was neither the last outspoken critic of Italian opera, nor the only one to blame singers for its nonsensical qualities. In *A Comparison Between Two Stages* (1702), a satirical exchange between Sullen, Ramble, and Critick on the current state of English theater, the characters quip:

*Sull.* And when the Poets Wit lies in the Singer’s Voice, what shall we say to that?  
*Cri.* The Reason for that is just of a piece with t’other; the Singer’s Voice makes Musick; Muse and Musick are synonymous Terms; so the Musick which proceeds from the Singer may be understood to proceed from the Muse.

*Ramb.* That’s ill Logick, *Critick.*

*Crit.* ‘Tis well enough for the Cause: And so of the Bow-stick, and the fine Finger on the Harpsicord, they’re all Brothers and Sisters to the Quill in the same Sense with the other, that is, they’re all of one Alliance. In short, it has been one of the most scandalous Practises of the Stage; and I look upon the *Drama* to be in a very wretched condition, when it can’t subsist without those absurd and foreign Diversions.<sup>74</sup>

Critick concludes that singers (as well as instrumentalists) are as much a part of the creation of music as the poet or the composer—to the detriment of artistic quality. To him, performers are “all of one Alliance” in their artistic contributions to theatrical music, which points to unease concerning the collective artistic power of singers. Both Cibber

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<sup>73</sup> Cibber, *Venus and Adonis*, preface. An example, and probably the one to whom Cibber was referring, was the castrato Nicolini, who first appeared in London during the 1708 opera season, in which he gave his debut performance in Nicola Haym’s version of Alessandro Scarlatti’s *Pyrrhus and Demetrius*. He returned in 1709 and stayed for three seasons, playing the title character in Handel’s *Rinaldo* and performing in other operas. He left in 1712, but returned three years later, in 1715, singing in Handel’s *Amadigi*. Many lamented his absence in the interim. See Winton Dean, “Nicolini,” in *Grove Online* (accessed 2012).

<sup>74</sup> *A Comparison Between the Two Stages* (London: 1702), *ECCO* (accessed 2012), 45-46. See also Staring B. Wells, ed., *A Comparison Between the Two Stages: A Late Restoration Book of the Theatre* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1942), 27.

and the anonymous author of *A Comparison Between Two Stages* echoed many well-worn complaints of the time, to the effect that singers of Italian opera, and the new artistic and financial powers they gained from their growing celebrity, prompted cultural anxieties about Italian opera and the future of English musical theater.<sup>75</sup>

Perhaps the most vocal critics were those involved with and invested in spoken theatrical productions, who viewed singers with suspicion and jealousy as Italian opera became ever more popular. Opera productions were irrational, ostentatiously showy, and unnatural in light of the English theatrical tradition. Many objected to the musical conventions of Italian opera, such as recitative and the *da capo* aria, as well as the elaborate vocal ornamentation emblematic of its musical style and the unfamiliarity of its language.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, English actors and actresses, whose stage training included only minimal musical instruction, could not easily master the virtuoso coloratura or sing in Italian. For this new, spectacular genre to work, trained Italian singers were invited from the continent and took over leading roles. Alongside veteran stage actors and actresses such as Richard Leveridge and Letitia Cross, operas featured Italian *virtuosi* who soon became household names.<sup>77</sup> These singers soon outshone—and out-earned—their counterparts. Critics balked at the exorbitant sums of money that female singers could earn, prompting one satirist to pen the following epilogue:

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<sup>75</sup> For a history of English political, cultural, and social issues with foreign immigration, see Daniel Statt, *Foreigners and Englishmen: The Controversy over Immigration and Population, 1660-1760* (Newark, NJ: University of Delaware Press, 1995).

<sup>76</sup> This is not to say that these were the only reasons that English critics maligned Italian opera. For a full treatment of the issues, see Thomas McGeary, “English Opera Criticism and Aesthetics 1685-1747” (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1985).

<sup>77</sup> Many of these singers became so well known that they were referred to by nicknames: Joanna Maria Lindelheim became “The Baroness” as early as 1703. Both Margarita de l’Epine and Elisabetta Pilotti Schiavonetti were often referred to by their first names. Castrati such as Nicolini and Valentini were fondly known by their nicknames.

*May we not well complain for want of Pence,  
 Since Actors now exceed our Audience?  
 And you so Fashionably nice are grown,  
 Nothing but what is Foreign, will go down:  
 You hardly will accept of Song and Dance,  
 But what's produc'd from Italy or France,  
 [...]  
 Thin Pit, and Cheating Turnkeys, for five-days  
 Secure us little Pay; and Saturdays  
 Italian Singing Tacking to our Scenes,  
 L'Epine, and Tofts sneak off with all our Gains.*<sup>78</sup>

This bit of sarcasm exposes fears about the vogue for foreign theatrical music, which appealed to the upper echelons of English society more than traditional English theater. The final two lines emphasize frustration with the fact that female opera singers reaped large financial rewards at the expense of English actors and actresses.

Theatrical performers were no strangers to harsh, sometimes even malicious, campaigns against their professions. Criticisms of the English stage had permeated the Restoration theater, especially after the expiration of the Licensing Act.<sup>79</sup> In 1698, Jeremy Collier's *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* attacked both playwrights and actors for penning and performing comedies that he viewed as blasphemous and indecent.<sup>80</sup> Just eight years later, Arthur Bedford reiterated Collier's dissuasive views, elaborating upon the evils of theatrical music:

But though Musick is a noble Science, and (in it self) an harmless Recreation, yet it may be abused: Nay as its Design is to affect the Passions, which may by such Allurements be drawn either to Good or Evil; so it is very liable to be corrupted. And as he is justly reckoned the best *Composer* who can most aptly accommodate his Notes to the Humour of the Words; so when the Words are obscene, or immodest, the Musick raiseth the Passion and makes them leave the great

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<sup>78</sup> Poem. *Diverting Post*, June 9 1705, *Burney Collection Newspapers*, Gale, The University of Michigan (accessed 2012).

<sup>79</sup> Nussbaum, *Rival Queens*.

<sup>80</sup> Jeremy Collier, *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* (London: 1698), ed. Arthur Freeman (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1972).

Impression: This is the Manner how Musick is corrupted in the *Play-house*, and this is the *Corruption* I then did speak against.<sup>81</sup>

Collier's and Bedford's pronouncements resonated in the later works of Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, authors of the literary journal *The Tatler* and its successor, *The Spectator*. Affiliated with the Whigs, whose political aims included the promotion of homegrown English culture, both authors took up the criticism of Italian opera.<sup>82</sup> Addison penned the following critique of Italian opera in 1710:

It is my design in this paper to deliver down to posterity a faithful account of the Italian opera, and of the gradual progress which it has made upon the English stage; for there is no question but our great grandchildren will be very curious to know the reason why their forefathers used to sit together like an audience of foreigners in their own country, and to hear whole plays acted before them in a tongue which they did not understand. [...] At present our notions of music are so very uncertain that we do not know what it is we like; only, in general, we are transported with any thing that is not English: so it be of a foreign growth, let it be Italian, French, or High Dutch, it is the same thing. In short, our English music is quite rooted out, and nothing yet planted in its stead.<sup>83</sup>

Addison perceived a blatant disregard for English cultural traditions, and was offended when Italian opera was performed in a nonsensical mix of English and Italian or, even worse, sung completely in Italian. He blamed this on the singers themselves, arguing that they diminished the theater's true purpose as a venue for the promotion of rational thought and positive public values: "We no longer understand the Language of our own Stage; insomuch that I have often been afraid, when I have seen our *Italian* Performers chattering in the Vehemence of Action, that they have been calling us Names, and

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<sup>81</sup> Arthur Bedford, *Serious Reflections on the Scandalous Abuse and Effects of the Stage* (London: W. Bonny, 1705), ed. Arthur Freeman (New York; London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1974), preface.

<sup>82</sup> For more on Addison and Steele's critiques of Italian opera, see Knif, *Gentlemen and Spectators*; and McGeary, "English Opera Criticism."

<sup>83</sup> Joseph Addison, *The Spectator*, March 21 1710. (No. 18, vol. 1), 100, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2012).

abusing us among themselves; [...].”<sup>84</sup> Addison’s bitter satire illustrates a general atmosphere of distrust of Italian singers in the first two decades of the eighteenth century.<sup>85</sup> Although *The Spectator* began publication at least seven years after the first female opera singers graced London’s stages, its criticism of Italian opera and singers shows that some English commentators were in no hurry to embrace foreign performers, despite the growing popularity of the art form.

Perhaps modeling himself after the more religious opponents of Italian opera, such as Collier and Bedford, the critic John Dennis also castigated Italian opera and its singers in the first decade of the eighteenth century. Though known as a playwright, Dennis achieved a modicum of notoriety for his vitriolic *Essay on the Opera’s After the Italian Manner* (1706), a pamphlet that venomously decried Italian opera and those who sang it for destroying English sense and sensibility. His views were certainly radical for his time period, and his rhetoric frequently blurred the boundary between virile patriotism and blatant xenophobia.<sup>86</sup> Dennis’s essay attacked Italian opera for distracting Englishmen from patriotic pursuits during the War of the Spanish Succession, arguing

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>85</sup> McGeary situates Addison’s criticism within neo-classical reception of Italian opera; he argues that many English critics saw opera as “drama,” and therefore subject to the same rules as classical drama. This meant that opera, or “neo-classical art attempted to exemplify order and harmony and thus to improve men’s intellectual and moral character” (“English Opera Criticism,” 23). In his writings, Addison was not merely expounding upon xenophobic beliefs, but thoughtfully attempting to justify why fully sung opera in the Italian language worked against the didacticism of neo-classical theatrical traditions. See McGeary, “English Opera Criticism,” 165-188.

<sup>86</sup> Dennis’s writings are difficult to discuss in the context of the history of Italian opera in England. Although Dennis was a radical, and his views were exaggerated and poorly represented the majority of English audiences, his writings cannot be ignored. McGeary places Dennis in the same neo-classical traditions of criticism as Addison and Steele, though Dennis’s rhetoric is more inflammatory. McGeary emphasizes Dennis’s belief that art must instruct in ethics and morality, just as classical writers proposed. Ibid., 125.



that the splendor and artificiality of Italian opera made English audiences temporarily forget their anti-absolutist, anti-Catholic sentiments:

And I depend upon those great Qualities [...] to defend the English Stage, which together with our English Liberties has descended to us from our Ancestors, to defend it against that Deluge of Mortal Foes, which have come pouring in from the Continent, to drive out the Muses, its Old Inhabitants, and seat themselves in their stead; that while the English Arms are every where Victorious abroad, the English Arts may not be vanquish'd and oppress'd at home by the Invasion of Foreign Luxury.<sup>87</sup>

Though *An Essay on Opera's After the Italian Manner* focused on the influences of poetry and music on the general public, rather than the influence of the singers themselves, it must have been written at least partially in response to female Italian performers. Published in 1706, the pamphlet predated the arrival of Valentini, who arrived in England the following year.<sup>88</sup> Dennis would have heard only female *virtuose* from Italy performing in between the acts of spoken plays and in the earliest opera performances. It was thus these women whom his *Essay* indirectly faulted for their effeminizing and seductive influence on English audiences.

Dennis's contention that Italian music rendered the superior art of poetry into absurdity also made its way into musical compositions of the time. Two songs published in John Walsh's songbooks of the early eighteenth century demonstrate opposing perspectives concerning the Italian musical style. Neither song bears the name of a composer (though it is likely that both were composed by Englishmen). Both were subsequently published in large collections of single-sided sheet music.<sup>89</sup> GB-Lbl H.1601

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<sup>87</sup> John Dennis, "Essay on Opera's after the Italian Manner," in *the Critical Works of John Dennis*, ed. Edwards Niles hooker, 2 vols. (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1943).

<sup>88</sup> Knif, *Gentlemen and Spectators*, 81.

<sup>89</sup> I use "anonymously" because no composer is indicated on the music, though this is the case for most printed music of the time period. For a catalogue of these songbooks, see David Hunter,

is a rich source and includes a plethora of English songs and Italian arias from the first two decades of the eighteenth century, though it is probable that these pieces (most of which are undated) were composed earlier than their publication in 1715.<sup>90</sup> In each song, English words are set to music that attempts to replicate the Italian style, though the manner in which the music is composed demonstrates divergent opinions concerning the redeeming qualities of Italian opera.

The first of these, entitled “A New Song after the Italian Manner,” is a genuine attempt at composing an Italian-style *da capo* aria setting an English text. This song, though short, reconciles the Italian music style to the idiomatic qualities of the English language, thus providing an aesthetic compromise between the two. The song follows standard *da capo* aria structure, with A and B sections separated by a ritornello (called a “symphony” here). The A section opens in G major with a substantial introduction that includes hallmarks of Italian orchestral music, including sequential string crossings idiomatic of Italian violin music (see mm. 3-6) in the top line. The symphony also introduces the aria’s vocal melody, a simple but lyrical tune meant to show off beauty of tone through its frequent use of conjunct antecedent and consequent phrases within regular four- and eight-bar periods. Strategically placed leaps emphasize the text, giving prominence to words such as “charming” and “Charmer” in measures 23, 39 and 41 (the subject to whom the song is addressed) and “heal” in measures 43 and 67. Perhaps the song’s most salient feature is the six-bar melisma on the word “Charmer” (mm. 56-61), sung as a duet between the voice and the solo instrumental line, without any bass

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*Opera and Song Books Published in England, 1703-1726: a descriptive bibliography* (London: Bibliographical Society, 1997).

<sup>90</sup> The British Library catalogue lists 1715 as a possible date for publication, though I believe these two songs were probably composed earlier, in the first decade of the eighteenth century. Most of the songs and arias in the collection were from operas and plays composed before 1710.

accompaniment. It is this feature in particular which bears influence of Italian arias; often, Italian arias of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries included passages of unaccompanied vocal melody in order to show of the performer's strengths at singing without bass support.

### A New Song after the Italian Manner

H.1601 v. 2 No. 282

8

16

25

33

*Sym*

*Song*

Love - ly cru - el char - ming fair\_

smil - ing heal the wound I Bear Love - ly cru - el char - ming fair\_

smil - ing heal the wounds I bear Love - ly Char - mer cru - el

41

Char - mer Smil - ing heal\_ the wound\_ I\_ bear Love - ly\_ Char - mer cru - el\_

49

Char - mer Smil - ing heal\_ the wound I bear Love - ly Char -

57

mer Love - ly Char - mer cru - el Char - mer

66

Smil - ing heal\_ the wounds I\_ bear. Tell\_ me Char - mer why\_ you fly\_ me

*Symphony as at first*

75

Why you Scorn me &\_ why de - ny\_ me tell me

83

90

de - ny me, tell me why you Scorn & why de - ny me. *Da capo*

**Example 1.03. “A New Song After the Italian Manner,” GB-Lbl H.1601.(282.)<sup>91</sup>**

The B section provides some emotional counterpoint as the text takes on a dejected tone. At first, this new music retains the turn motives from the A section (in mm. 71-72), but quickly the vocal line trades this lyricism for more dramatic melodies that rely on quick, large leaps and keys that oscillate between E minor, A minor, and B minor. Hemiola rhythms in mm. 89-90 and 94-95 drive the aria back to its *da capo*. Overall, “Lovely cruel charming fair” is a straightforward English rendition of an Italian aria: it sets the English poem to a melody that highlights the text while exploiting musical trademarks of the *da capo* aria: form, melodic sequences, vocal melismas and ornamentation, and the use of a symphonic ritornello. Though the composer of this piece is unknown, the song’s inclusion in the songbook not only documents English

<sup>91</sup> H.1601 is a large, two-volume collection of various printed broadsides and individual sheets of music, bound together seemingly without order. “Lovely cruel charming fair” is included in volume 2. Its composer is unknown, and its music is not sophisticated; in fact, there are numerous errors in voice leading and harmony, especially in measure 47, where the composer has written accompanying parallel 7ths with the vocal line. (Thanks to Steven Whiting for pointing this out.) These basic errors illustrate the composer’s lack of skill composing Italian-style music. Likely, he was English and trying to capitalize on the popularity of Italian vocal music, despite a lack of musical talent.

experiments with Italian aria composition, but also indicates that they were commercially viable and intended for mass consumption, not just something to be heard at the opera house.

Also included in H.1601 is another aria after the Italian manner. Sarcastically entitled “A New Song set after the Manner of our Foreign Composers of Musick to English Words. Wherein is expos’d their agreeable way in dividing of Sentences & destroying good Sence, by way of Sacrifice,” this composition demonstrates the musical and textual features of Italian opera that early eighteenth-century English critics constantly lambasted. The text itself is nonsensical, made up of only two short lines that are repeated in various combinations, thus “destroying good Sence”:

*A*

If it does not rain to Morrow  
If it does not,  
If it does not rain to Morrow,  
If it does not  
If it does  
If it does not, does not rain  
If it does,  
If it does not, does, not, does not,  
If it does not rain to Morrow,  
Not rain to Morrow,  
Not rain (not to Morrow, but to Morrow)  
If it does, not, does not, does not,  
If it does not rain to Morrow

*B*

I’ll go, I’ll go  
I’ll go, I’ll go  
I’ll go, I’ll go, I’ll go, I’ll go  
I’ll go not to Oxford, but to Oxford;  
I’ll go to, go to, go to Oxford.

Composed of one sentence describing a stereotypically English deliberation, the poem lampoons Italian aria lyrics that say little but are expanded through the musical setting.

By writing out the text as sung, including the repeats of words and phrases, the

anonymous composer of this satirical aria transforms the simple phrase into repetitive, nonsensical song lyrics unsupported by the music. The melody is drastically simple and uses stereotypical features of Italian music, such as sequencing and short melismas. The instrumental accompaniment, probably a violin but possibly a wind instrument, either introduces the vocal melody or repeats it, creating a hackneyed duet between the *obbligato* instrument and the singer.<sup>92</sup> In this context, however, the repetition of such short, simple phrases seems to comment on the inherent absurdity of Italianate musical virtuosity.

The setting further renders the text into gibberish by placing musical emphasis on unimportant words. In measures 8-10 and 12-13, the performer sings “does” on long held notes set high in his or her range; in Italian arias, moments such as these are usually reserved for word painting while simultaneously allowing the singer to show off his or her stamina. If the word “does” has no particular lexical importance in this context, the anonymous composer goes even further in measures 20-21, composing another sustained note followed by a melisma for the word “if.” The composer’s mocking title exposes his motivation for composing such a satire and reveals those musical and textual features of Italian arias that the English criticized. The absurdity of the text, when divided and repeated without meaning, as well as the inappropriate melodic setting of the text, probably sounded as incomprehensible to the ears of English audiences as arias sung in Italian; at the very least, it probably reminded the English of the unintelligible noise of Italian singers attempting to sing in English.

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<sup>92</sup> Walsh often published English songs with an optional melody for the flute printed below the music for the singer.

A New Song set after the Manner of our Foreign Composers of Musick to English Words.  
 Wherein is expos'd their agreeable way in dividing of Sentences & destroying good Sence, by way of Sacrifice.  
 By an Outalian.

1  
 2  
 3  
 4  
 If it does not rain to - Mor-row, If it does not,

5  
 6  
 7  
 8  
 If it does not rain to - mor-row If it does not If it does *Pia.*

9  
 10  
 11  
 12  
 13  
 If it does not, does not rain *Forte* *Pia* If it does, If it

14  
 15  
 16  
 17  
 does not, does not, does not, *For* *Pia* If it does not rain to Mor - row, not rain\_ to-Mor-row, not

18  
 19  
 20  
 21  
 rain (not to Mor- row, but to - Mor-row, If it does not, does not, does not, If it does not rain to-



22  
Fo  
Mor - row, I'll

27  
go I'll go, I'll go I'll go, I'll go, I'll go, I'll go, I'll go,

32  
Pia  
I'll go not to Ox - ford, but)

35  
to Ox - ford; I'll go to, go to, go to Ox - ford. DC

**Example 1.04. “A New Song Set after the Manner of our Foreign Composers...”  
GB-Lbl H.1601.(245.)<sup>93</sup>**

The juxtaposition of these two songs, published pages apart, demonstrates how Italian music was mocked critically even as it was valued highly. Their publication shows that both satire and tribute were viable commercial products in London’s marketplace for

<sup>93</sup> Also transcribed from H.1601., volume 2, I have retained all textual repetitions, spelling errors, dynamic markings, original beaming, and slur markings. Just as in Example 1.03, the accompanying instrument is not labeled in the original print. This particular composition is slightly more sophisticated than the previous example; errors seem to indicate satire here, rather than unintended compositional mistakes.

printed music. Most importantly, “A New Song Set after the Manner of our Foreign Composers” reveals that singers’ tendencies to ornament music liberally (often at the expense of the poetry or the quality of the music) remained central to criticisms of Italian music. In H.1601.(245.), the anonymous composer deliberately set the text atrociously by using melodic techniques typical of eighteenth-century Italian arias that would have allowed the singer to showcase his or her vocal virtuosity: the long, held notes demonstrating their breath support and stamina, the long, unnecessary melismas highlighting their vocal agility, and the exaggerated leaps (see, for example, m. 18, for a leap up from G4 to A5, over an octave) exhibiting their extensive range. By parodying the Italian style, this short aria, tucked away in this songbook, was a subtle musical commentary that echoed English criticisms of Italian opera and of those who performed it.

Opponents of Italian opera and its singers made their voices heard in pamphlets, periodicals, newspapers, books, and even musical compositions. Their criticisms of Italian opera complicate our understanding of the early reception of the genre and its singers, for although Addison, Dennis, and other authors were vocal in their disdain for foreign culture, it does not seem that their opinions represented the majority of the English public. Advocates of Italian singers and composers did not publish long tracts extolling the virtues of foreign musical culture. Instead, they supported Italian opera by attending productions at the Queen’s Theatre in the Haymarket, subscribing to these performances, and most importantly, by becoming financial benefactors of singers.

Because audiences supported Italian opera through their attendance and financial support, it is harder to know what they liked about Italian music and singers than what

the critics disparaged. One rare account in a letter from an impressionable young woman to her mother illuminates an enthralled reaction to Italian singers. Here, Anne Baker described her experience attending one of the first performances of *Rinaldo* in 1711:

[...] The Name of the Opera was Rinaldo, the 1<sup>st</sup> Scene was ye city of Jerusalem beseig'd a prospect of the Walls and a Gate on one side of ye Town and part of ye Christian camp on ye right-side of ye stage; ye next was an enchantress called Armida in ye Air in a Chariot drawn by huge Dragons out of whos mouths came out fire and Smoak. Ye next was a delightfull Grove in which the Birds are heard to sing and seen flying up and down among ye Trees. Ye next is a prospect of a Clam and Sunshiny Sea with a boat at anchor close upon ye Shore. At ye helm sits a mermaid in ye shape of a lovely Woman, others are seen dancing up and down in ye water. There was another of generals marching before their troops and ranging them in order of Battle. Then ye Armies attack each other and form a regular Battel which han[gs] in Ballenge till Rinaldo having stormed ye City descends ye Mountain with his Squadron and assaults ye Pagans in ye Rear who immediately fly and are pursued by him. There is a Sounding of trumpets beating of Drums exactly as before, and at a Battell with all sorts of Softer Musick and ye finest singing that was ever heard perform'd by Nicolini & Isabella, the best singers yet ever were in England.<sup>94</sup>

Clearly awed by *Rinaldo*'s special effects, as well as the "finest singing that was ever heard perform'd by Nicolini & Isabella [Girardeau], the best singers yet ever were in England," Anne equated the thrill of hearing Italian singers with the opera's dazzling staging. For many English operagoers like Anne, the nightly display of vocal virtuosity on the part of Italian singers became an essential part of the spectacle of Italian opera upon which theater managers and composers quickly attempted to capitalize.

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<sup>94</sup> Letter from Anne Baker to her mother. GB-AY D-X 1069-2-16. March 13, 1710/11. All punctuation is mine, though I have preserved her spelling. The letter is found in the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies, in a collection of correspondence of the Baker family, a well-to-do family from Penn, England (located northwest of London, in Buckinghamshire). Anne was the daughter of Daniel (high sheriff of Bucks) and Martha Baker. Around 1718, Anne married Captain Thomas Mead and seems to have lived a decent, middle-class life in the London area. At the time of this letter's composition, Anne was staying with her cousins, the Luttrells, in Chelsea. Her letter indicates that she attended *Rinaldo* in the company of one Mr. Gore, who seems to have purchased the tickets at four or five guineas apiece, a great sum for the time.

## Contractual Collaborations

The increasing popularity of Italian opera in early eighteenth-century London reflected England's embrace of a proto-capitalist economy, as competitive public markets for goods and services gradually replaced private and courtly patronage.<sup>95</sup> Similarly, Italian opera prospered due to higher audience demand, as London clamored for the newest voices and compositions from the Continent. This supply-and-demand structure created a marketplace unaffected, and perhaps even bolstered, by the critical reception of the product—Italian singers and their performances.<sup>96</sup> The early reception of Italian opera and its singers, both negative and positive, hinted at a new phenomenon, an increase in professional agency and public renown that reflected a shift in the consumption of culture in English society. Audiences embraced these singers as both “product and producers of product.”<sup>97</sup> Many of London's first professional singers claimed celebrity status upon arrival, but sustaining their celebrity was not always easy. As we have already seen, criticisms could be harsh, and reputations could easily succumb to partisan slander. Female singers sought out partnerships with other musicians that would benefit them professionally because their associations gave them access to more performance opportunities, more lucrative contracts and new music to sing. The first female opera

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<sup>95</sup> Nussbaum, *Rival Queens*, 13.

<sup>96</sup> For more on the London's theatrical economy during this period, see Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theater in Anglo-American Thought, 1550-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Ann Bermingham and John Brewer, eds., *The Consumption of Culture 1600-1800: Image, Object, Text* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995); Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society, and Family Life in London, 1660-1730* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989); Robert D. Hume, “The Economics of Culture in London 1660-1740,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 69, No. 4 (2006): 487-533; Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1982); Judith Milhous, “Opera Finances in London, 1674-1738,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 37, No. 3 (1984): 567-592; and J.H. Plumb, *The Commercialization of Leisure in Eighteenth-Century England* (Reading, UK: J.H. Plumb, 1974).

<sup>97</sup> Berta Joncus, “Producing Stars,” 279.

singers to perform in London took to the stage not as utterly independent celebrities performing for their own prestige, but in the company of other musicians attempting—sometimes struggling—to carve their own niche in the theatrical and musical marketplaces.

Foreign musicians and singers, both male and female, worked hard to gain opportunities for public performance in London, a city whose audiences simultaneously revered and distrusted musical novelty and virtuoso performance. While female opera singers could cultivate their celebrity through their spectacular onstage performances, many male musicians and composers had more difficulty promoting themselves as worthy of public support. Three contractual case studies illuminate the ways in which female singers used their celebrity to further their personal financial and artistic opportunities, as well as those of male composer/musicians with whom they worked. Nicola Haym, Giuseppe Fedelli Saggione, and Charles Dieupart arrived in London around the turn of the eighteenth century, about the same time as the first Italian *virtuose* such as Lindelheim, Margarita de l'Epine, and Maria Gallia.<sup>98</sup> Unlike female opera singers, who arrived in England's capital without precedent, the three composer-instrumentalists faced a different set of obstacles in establishing legitimate and lucrative careers as professional musicians. Foreign instrumentalists had traveled to London in droves during the reigns of Charles II and James II, working as musicians in theater pits, giving public and private concerts, and performing music in the Catholic chapel of James

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<sup>98</sup> Pepusch seems to have arrived first, some time after 1697. Haym followed in 1701, in the company of Nicola Cosimi, an Italian violinist. Haym started as his cellist-accompanist, but later established himself as a talented composer/arranger. See Lindgren, "The Accomplishments."

II and Mary of Modena.<sup>99</sup> Although Dieupart, Saggione, and Haym had all been successful musicians on the Continent, London's fickle musical marketplace was another challenge. They arrived in London without reputations to recommend them to audiences.<sup>100</sup> Like their female contemporaries, these fledgling composers shared the same financial and artistic goals: to take advantage of existing networks of foreign musicians for the purposes of establishing themselves as legitimate professional performers.

Upon their arrival, all three composer-instrumentalists made strategic connections with prominent patrons and impresarios in order to secure positions in private households and in the theater pits.<sup>101</sup> A "List of Proposed Orchestra Members and Petitioners' Salary Requests," found in the Coke Papers, suggests just how competitive pursuing a career as a musician in the theater pits could be. It shows that twenty-three musicians applied for only fourteen salaried positions at the Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket in 1707.<sup>102</sup> Dieupart, Saggione, and Haym were amongst those who were ultimately chosen. Another document shows that during the 1708 season all four instrumentalists were paid at a much higher rate per performance than the rest of the orchestra: they each earned £1,5 shillings per performance, in comparison to the mere 8 to 15 shillings made by the rest of the

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<sup>99</sup> See Margaret Mabbett, "Italian Musicians in Restoration England (1660-90)," *Music & Letters* 67, No. 3 (1986): 237-247; J.A. Westrup, "Foreign Musicians in Stuart England," *The Musical Quarterly* 27, No. 1 (1941): 70-89.

<sup>100</sup> For more on the lives and careers of these three composers, see Donald F. Cook, "The Life and Works of Johann Christoph Pepusch (1667-1752), with Special Reference to his Dramatic Works and Cantatas," 2 vols. (Ph.D. diss., University of London, King's College, 1982); Fiske, *English Theatre Music*; Stanley Godman, "Pepusch and the Duke of Chandos," *The Musical Times* 100, No. 1395 (1959): 271; Lindgren, "The Accomplishments of Haym"; John Williams, "The Life, Work and Influence of J.C. Pepusch," 3 vols. (Ph.D. diss., The University of York, 1975);

<sup>101</sup> For example, the Duke of Bedford employed Haym as his master of chamber music. See Lindgren, "The Accomplishments."

<sup>102</sup> See Milhous and Hume, *Vice Chamberlain Coke's Theatrical Papers 1706-1715* (Carbondale; Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991), Document 17, 30-31.

orchestra.<sup>103</sup> Clearly, the three had negotiated more lucrative contracts with John Vanbrugh, the impresario and owner of the Queen's Theatre. But what distinguished them from their orchestral colleagues, allowing them to earn so much more for their performances? All four were hired to play continuo, according to previous orchestral rosters.<sup>104</sup> But the rest of the continuo ensemble, including established musicians James Paisible, Mr. Desabaye, who played bass viol, and John Laroon, a bassist, earned far less than their four colleagues who filled out the section on harpsichord and cello.<sup>105</sup>

What Dieupart, Saggione, and Haym did have, in contrast with the rest of the instrumentalists at the Haymarket, were contractual associations, and, in some cases, personal relationships, with the leading female opera singers on Vanbrugh's roster. While Giuseppe Saggione probably arrived in England in the company of Maria Gallia, the other two composers cultivated relationships with female singers with whom they did not have a previous professional relationship.<sup>106</sup> Charles Dieupart and Catherine Tofts developed a mutually beneficial business partnership, and both composer and singer negotiated contracts, performances, and payments for the other. "The Baroness" was first

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 68 (Document 44). These figures are estimates, according to Milhous and Hume, but they are probably fairly accurate. They are listed in pounds, shillings, and pence. Even the musicians who doubled on instruments were still not paid as much as Dieupart, Pepusch, Saggione, and Haym.

<sup>104</sup> Document 18 from *Vice Chamberlain Coke's Theatrical Players* lists Saggione and Haym as "Double Bases" and Dieupart and Pepusch as "2 Harpsicords."

<sup>105</sup> On the musicians playing in London's theater orchestras during this time, see Donald Burrows, "Handel's London Theatre Orchestra," *Early Music* 13, No. 3 (August 1985): 349-357; and Judith Milhous and Curtis Price, "Harpsichords in the London Theatres, 1697-1715," *Early Music* 18, No. 1 (1990): 38-46.

<sup>106</sup> Maria Gallia married Saggione at some point before 1710 and became known as Mrs Saggione in opera roster lists. L'Epine arrived in the company of Jakob Greber, though she stayed behind after he left for Europe. Pepusch and l'Epine married later in the 1710s, though their association certainly began in the first decade of the eighteenth century. Haym and Lindelheim ("The Baroness") appear together in documents starting in the mid-1700s, around the time of Lindelheim's return to London. There is no evidence that Tofts and Dieupart had an intimate, personal relationship beyond the professional.

Haym's student, and later his performance partner and wife. Though the first known collaboration between Pepusch and l'Epine occurred in 1707 (in the opera *Thomyris*, for which Pepusch wrote the recitatives), in her earliest years in London, Margarita worked alongside Jakob Greber, giving the premieres of most of the vocal music he composed while in England.<sup>107</sup> The first advertisements for concerts given by female opera singers rarely included repertory lists, and reconstructing the music they performed before the *Daily Courant* began to name solo songs and operas is mere speculation. Despite the lack of musical evidence, however, contracts and financial documents illustrate how female opera singers gained professional agency through their collaborations with male musicians as they learned to navigate the business of opera in London. In all four cases, these professional relationships also helped each composer gain financial and artistic power in his negotiations with theater managers. Simultaneously, their female counterparts benefitted from their associations with male composers and instrumentalists, who frequently composed for and accompanied them onstage and often acted as their representatives in contractual disputes.

Perhaps one of the most elusive singers of this story, Maria Gallia probably arrived in London in the company of Giuseppe Fedelli Saggione, a cellist and composer, in 1703.<sup>108</sup> Early advertisements always list Saggione as Gallia's accompanist, and he

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<sup>107</sup> Unfortunately, almost all of Greber's music from his English period is now lost. Advertisements show, however, that Greber and l'Epine often performed together. A typical ad associating the two reads: "Together with several New Entertainments of Singing by the Famous Signiora *Francisca Margarita de l'Epine*. All compos'd by that Great and much esteem'd Master Senior *Jacomo Grayber*." Advertisement, *The Daily Courant*, June 11, 1703, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2012).

<sup>108</sup> Burney referred to Maria Gallia as the sister of Margarita de l'Epine, though Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson have since disproven this argument. Instead, they believe that Maria Manina, who started to sing in London during the 1710s, was l'Epine's sister. See Olive Baldwin and



wrote Italian songs for her to perform during public concerts. Though she initially gained renown for her concerts, held at the imposing edifice of York Buildings off of Villiers Street in the Strand, it was her role as Eurilla in Saggione's *The Temple of Love* (1706) that propelled her to stardom.<sup>109</sup> In *The Temple of Love*, a one-act pastoral opera set in the bucolic ambiance of mythic Arcadia, Eurilla is really the disguised Orinda, Sylvander's lost bride, who resists Thyrsis's advances and remains steadfast to her husband.<sup>110</sup> By 1708, as various orchestral rosters suggest, Saggione played in the continuo ensembles of both the Drury Lane Theatre and, later, the Haymarket; presumably he played during the operas in which his wife performed.<sup>111</sup> Two short documents surviving in the Coke Papers reveal how Gallia and Saggione negotiated their contracts with John Vanbrugh.<sup>112</sup> The contracts, as Hume and Milhous note, are drafts, and the language is unpolished with frequent misspellings.<sup>113</sup> Nevertheless, the demands that Saggione and Gallia make together suggest a powerful business partnership that allowed both to negotiate salaries and vacation at a more privileged rate than many other singers and composers.

#### 43. Terms Proposed by Saggione and Maria Gallia<sup>114</sup>

[Cover] Saggione

[January 1708]

A di [blank]

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Thelma Wilson, "Who was Signora Margarita's sister?" in *A Handbook for Studies in 18<sup>th</sup>-Century English Music* 15 (2007).

<sup>109</sup> "Gallia, Maria," *BDA*.

<sup>110</sup> See Chapter 2 for a musico-dramatic analysis of her role in the opera.

<sup>111</sup> Gallia also had roles in *Rosamond* (1707), a revival of *Arsinoe* (1707), both at Drury Lane, and in *Love's Triumph* (1708) at the Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket. Handel may have composed the role of Clizia for her in *Teseo* (1713).

<sup>112</sup> Milhous and Hume, *Vice Chamberlain Coke*, 66-67.

<sup>113</sup> We do not know whether it was Saggione or Gallia who wrote these drafts. According to Milhous and Hume, these documents are written on two separate pieces of paper.

<sup>114</sup> Both documents are transcribed from *Vice Chamberlain Coke's Theatrical Papers*. The words in brackets were added by Milhous and Hume.

Per Acordarsi nel Teatro Di Emarcht Io Ioseffe Fedelli Saggione, e che mi debba pagare pontual ogni [blank] per ano Ghinee cento è Cinquanta al ano: lasiando che tre mesi siano di vacanza è noue mesi obligati cioe [blank] e saper da chi ho da eser pagto

A di

Per Recitar In Emarchet Io Maria Galia Saggione, che mi deba dare Il mio guadagno sicuro ogni tanto tempo. Per ano, noue mesi obligati è tre di vacanza [blank] Ghinee settecento: e sicurarmi del mio dinaro doue e chi ha da pagarmi e se mi honora di dir se è tropo ò poco, io no uoglio manco prezzo sicuro che nesuna cioe di Margarita e mi staf il medemo prezo, se li pai ch'io lo meriti. suplico di non farmi torto<sup>115</sup>

Although Gallia and Saggione's demands were exorbitant for the time, especially considering that Gallia no longer played leading female roles in operas, these two proposals illustrate that they negotiated together. Both request three months of vacation and nine months of service, and both ask for extraordinarily high salaries; seven hundred guineas would have been the equivalent of £770, far more than the best paid opera singers of the day.<sup>116</sup> Other documents suggest that Gallia probably ended up earning about £200 for her performances during the 1707/08 season, while Saggione seems to have made about £70.<sup>117</sup> This discrepancy begs the question: why write such proposals at all? Although it is unknown whether Saggione and Gallia actually submitted these

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<sup>115</sup> "On the day, for accompanying at the Haymarket Theater, I, Joseph Fedelli Saggione, must be paid punctually every [blank] per year one hundred and fifty guineas per year: given three months for vacation and nine months for work and to know by whom I will be paid." [Second document] "On this day [blank], For singing in the Haymarket, I, Maria Gallia Saggione, must be given my guaranteed payments every so often. Per year, nine months working and three of vacation [blank] seven hundred guineas: and ensure regarding my money where and who has to pay me. And if you will honor me by telling me if it's too much or too little, I do not want to ask for more than Margarita [de l'Epine] or [mi staf?], but perhaps the same price, if you think that I warrant it. I pray that you do not wrong me." Translations mine. Milhous and Hume believe that "mi staf" was a garbled reference to Mrs. Tofts.

<sup>116</sup> I am not aware that other singers or instrumentalists ever requested specific time off for vacation. More often, singers negotiated a number of performances with an impresario, to be held during the opera season; the time off is usually implied. The highest salary female opera singers could earn was about £400 or £500 per annum, given to Mrs. Tofts and Signora l'Epine. See Milhous and Hume, "Opera Salaries."

<sup>117</sup> Milhous and Hume, *Vice Chamberlain Coke*, Document 49, 76-77.

requests, it seems that the two thought they held more bargaining power as a collaborative unit rather than as separate agents. Moreover, by comparing herself to Margarita de l'Epine and Catherine Tofts, the two best-paid singers of the time, Gallia implied that she was worth just as much (if not more) than her female contemporaries. At the very least, she knew that her performances were valued more highly than those of her husband, and the language used in the two proposals betrays an understanding that Gallia held more negotiating power. By emphasizing Gallia's worth as a skilled Italian *virtuosa*, it seems that Saggione thought he would benefit financially through his association with his wife. Although the proposal failed to sway Vanbrugh, Saggione, and Gallia negotiated together as business partners as well as artistic collaborators.

Catherine Tofts and Charles Dieupart also appear as joint negotiators in contractual documents, though unlike Gallia and Saggione, the two do not seem to have had an intimate relationship; instead, they worked together solely as artistic partners.<sup>118</sup> Little is known about her early life, but it seems that Tofts first achieved renown for her performances of English music in a subscription concert series sponsored by the Whigs in 1703/4.<sup>119</sup> Around the same time (February 11, 1703), Dieupart first appeared in an advertisement, playing alongside the virtuoso violinist Gasparo Visconti.<sup>120</sup> Both were employed at the Drury Lane Theater during these early years, and in January 1705, Tofts

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<sup>118</sup> Dieupart is never mentioned as Tofts's performance partner in any advertisements, and it does not seem that he ever composed music for the singer, although much of his music for the stage is now lost. Delarivière Manley's fictional *Secret Memoirs of a New Atalantis* claims that Tofts fell in love with "Du Parr," as noted by Baldwin and Wilson, but Manley's two large volumes are heavily fictionalized and no doubt were meant as libelous satire of prominent Whigs. See Baldwin and Wilson, "The Harmonious Unfortunate," 223.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid. Catherine Tofts's career is discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 3.

<sup>120</sup> Dieupart was a French Huguenot refugee who arrived in London around the turn of the eighteenth century. David Fuller and Peter Holman, "Dieupart, Charles," *Grove Online* (accessed 2012).

drew up a list of demands in response to an argument with Christopher Rich, the manager of the Drury Lane Theatre, and a notorious charlatan when it came to remunerating his singers.<sup>121</sup> In this proposal, Tofts stipulated everything she required to keep her at Drury Lane, including her own “Practising Roome” for locking up her clothing and jewels, the best days for benefit concerts, servants to dress her before and after her performances, and “two bottles of wine every time she sings to be for her use to dispose of them to the gent that preaches with her.”<sup>122</sup> One passage in particular clarifies her business relationship with Dieupart. The first item on her list demanded:

That Mr Rich shall give Mrs Tofts 100 pounds and a Release for all past for[feits?] or Neglects and She to have the Jewells she his [?] and she then to give him a discharge of all Demands past and Mr Dieupart to have 22 Guineas for what is past.<sup>123</sup>

It is significant that, as part of her first demand, she requested that Rich compensate Dieupart for past services. Though the harpsichordist does not show up again in the document, it was titled (in the Lord Chamberlain’s hand) “Proposalle delivered by Mr Dieupout [Dieupart] on the behalf of Mrs Tofts,” suggesting that Dieupart acted as Tofts’s business agent.<sup>124</sup>

This mutually beneficial business partnership appears in another contractual document, undated, but pasted into an account book by the Lord Chamberlain following the proposal mentioned above. In the letter, titled “The case of Catherine Tofts relating to her Agreement with Mr Rich, shewing the Reason why she forbears singing for him,”

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<sup>121</sup> For more on this dispute, see Curtis Price, “The Critical Decade.”

<sup>122</sup> GB-Lna PRO LC 7/3 f. 88.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Baldwin and Wilson propose that Dieupart served as Tofts’s agent, but they do not consider the consequences of such an arrangement, instead privileging Dieupart as the source of agency and power, rather than Tofts herself. See Baldwin and Wilson, “The Harmonious Unfortunate,” 225.

Tofts rants for two pages in unpunctuated, error-filled prose, railing against Rich's mistreatment of her and pleading with the Lord Chamberlain to intervene on her behalf.

At the end of the diatribe, Tofts again lists her ultimate demands:

Catherin Tofts demands of Mr Rich are as follows

- 1 That what she's to Forfeit for her Non performance be deducted weekly and not altogether as Mr Rich pretends so that she not singing three weeks in 9 weeks and half for which she was to have 100 pounds; her forfeiture comes to 50:16:9<sup>125</sup> and then there will be due to her 68:3:3
- 2 That Mr Rich must pay what Expence she's been at in Cloathes and Jewells in the part of his Opera of Arsinoe, amounts to 100
- 3 That Mr Rich must pay M Dieupart for his attendance and performance upon the Harpsichord 25 times that are due to him of 33 times Catherine Tofts has sung for Mr Rich since her Engagement with him the said Mr Dieupart having received but for 10 times and that is to be paid according to agreement between them.<sup>126</sup>

More forcefully than in the last letter, here Tofts defended Dieupart, citing damages incurred in the form of missed payments. Although not stated explicitly, Rich probably owed Dieupart for accompanying Tofts either during her concerts, during rehearsals, or both.<sup>127</sup> Perhaps it was then because Tofts felt responsible for Dieupart's compensation that she used her own list of contractual complaints to support his claims as well. No other document in the Lord Chamberlain's papers for the theater includes a separate contract between Dieupart and Rich; thus, it is possible that the composer's contractual obligations were written into Tofts's own agreement with the impresario. If so, this would suggest that they conducted business as each other's agents: Dieupart may have delivered her messages to the Lord Chamberlain, and he may even have written up her contracts and proposals, but as these documents show, Tofts used her own power of

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<sup>125</sup> Eighteenth-century manuscripts refer to money using this system; it represents pounds, shillings, and pence, in that order.

<sup>126</sup> GB-Lna PRO LC 7/3 ff. 167-168.

<sup>127</sup> Note that in PRO LC 7/3 f. 88, Tofts requested that she be allowed to hire a harpsichordist of her choosing; it would not be too speculative to suggest that this was Charles Dieupart.

celebrity in order to represent her accompanist in financial matters as part of her contractual negotiations.

Perhaps the best documented financial partnership between a female singer and a male colleague is the relationship between Joanna Maria Lindelheim, with whom this chapter began, and her eventual husband, Nicola Francesco Haym. Although they did not arrive in London together, they must have met soon after the singer's return to England in 1705; by the following year, she was commonly referred to as Haym's student and the two appear in numerous contractual documents together. Unlike Tofts, Lindelheim does not seem to have written her own contracts. Haym drafted at least three of their contractual documents, prompting Lowell Lindgren's assessment that "Nicola was her manager, [and] he may have accompanied her almost every time she sang at concerts in London."<sup>128</sup> A close reading of these documents, however, reveals that although Haym negotiated on behalf of his student, the composer often used her renown to boost his own financial gains. Rather than merely exploiting her, he acknowledged her value as a virtuoso singer and created contracts for her that take full advantage of her individual celebrity while also promoting his own interests.

Haym's first "Article of Agreement" mentioning Lindelheim dates from January 1705. Most of the document consists of specific details concerning his own employment at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane, managed by Christopher Rich. He dictated his own demands precisely, claiming remuneration for the various roles he played at Drury Lane, including his efforts at arranging pasticcio operas, performing on the bass viol in the pit, and helping rehearse the singers. In an addendum to the contract, Haym proposed that he be allowed to accompany Lindelheim in performances outside of Drury Lane: "That Mr

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<sup>128</sup> Lowell Lindgren, "The Accomplishments," 256.

Rich consents that Mr Hyam [sic] may during the first of these Articles Play in any Private consort in a Room as he did ye last yeare for he may accompany Signiora Johanna Maria his Schollar in Case she shall sing at ye other house [...].”<sup>129</sup> This proposal guaranteed her an accompanist, but did not specify compensation. The next contractual document that he proposed to the Lord Chamberlain further elaborated on Lindelheim’s salary. In March 1705, he implored the Lord Chamberlain to take his side in a dispute with John Vanbrugh and William Congreve, who were in the process of opening the Queen’s Theatre in the Haymarket.<sup>130</sup> According to the complaint, Lindelheim wished to be compensated for ten performances, five of which she missed due to illness; because Congreve and Vanbrugh never rescheduled those performances and thus allowed the time of her contract to elapse, the singer felt entitled to the money: “Upon this my Scholler went her self to know when they would have her sing and also advertis’d them that the time agreed for was neare expiring.”<sup>131</sup> Her initiative to fulfill the terms of her contract demonstrates that, although Haym authored her contractual agreements, she was well aware of her engagements and endeavored to adhere to the terms of the contract. Moreover, the singer (through Haym’s letter) expressed her displeasure that Vanbrugh and Congreve made it impossible for her to find employment elsewhere: “[...] why did they not when they were aply’d to both by letter and personally that they should make their Advantage of her singing within the time mentioned above, why did they not then say they would not let her sing any more, for she might then if she had lost what is due from them, the Season not being spent, have search her profit

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<sup>129</sup> GB-Lna PRO LC 7/3 ff. 86r-87v.

<sup>130</sup> Graham F. Barlow, “Vanbrugh’s Queen’s Theatre in the Haymarket, 1703-9,” *Early Music* 17, No. 4 (1989): 515-521; Philip Olleson, “Vanbrugh and Opera at the Queen’s Theatre, Haymarket,” *Theatre Notebook* 26, No. 3 (1972): 94-100.

<sup>131</sup> GB-Lna PRO LC 7/3 ff. 89-90.

elsewhere.”<sup>132</sup> Although she was not the author of her own contracts, these documents represent Lindelheim as a shrewd businesswoman who not only upheld her own agreements but also tried to take every advantage of other financial opportunities.<sup>133</sup>

Haym and the Baroness appeared together in one final extant contract, which shows how the composer and singer harnessed their individual performative strengths in order to promote their value as commodities:

Madam La Barroness’s demands are £300 sterling ascertain’d to her for singing 30 times, and if she sings oft’ner to be payd after the rate of this agreement; that she sing her part in *Camilla* and another in my new opera of *Pyrrhus*; she has larned a part in the new Pastoral, viz. that of *Eurilla*, and if desired will learn the part of *Thomiris*.<sup>134</sup>

The Baroness’s financial requirements, as laid out here, were fairly modest for thirty performances, especially considering all the roles she was meant to have learned: she knew the part of *Lavinia* in *Camilla* from previous performances, but her roles of *Deidamia* in *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* (a large role, one of the two female leads) and *Eurilla* in *Love’s Triumph* would have been a lot of new music to learn for one season. Moreover, it appears that she was even considered to take over for *Margarita de l’Epine* as the title character in *Thomyris*, though there is no evidence that this casting change actually occurred. Ultimately, the most interesting part of this contract occurs in its final lines, as Haym advocates on his own behalf as well as Lindelheim’s:

In fine I humbly desire of the Hon.ble persons (or Lords and Gentlemen) concern’d that I be not considr’d less or made second to any other person of the Musick, neither as to the profit nor any other matter, believing my self perhaps not of inferior merit to any of my Profession now in England-particularly to the foreigners; and as I have a part of Profit out of the Baroness’s pay (according to

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid. Also quoted in Lindgren, “The Accomplishments,” 258-259.

<sup>133</sup> In GB-Lna PRO LC 7/3 ff. 96-99, correspondence between Lord Chamberlain Kent and John Vanbrugh wraps up the matter, finding six more times for The Baroness to sing so that she could earn the full one hundred guineas she had been promised.

<sup>134</sup> Quoted in Lindgren, “The Accomplishments,” 266-267.



agreement betwe[e]n her and me), it would not be perhaps well that she be less consider'd then any of the other women singers.<sup>135</sup>

Haym insisted that he was one of the best performers in England, but he also emphasized (for his own financial benefit as much as hers) that his student was also one of the finest foreign singers in London, thus validating their combined worth as musicians. Although it is clear from these contracts that Haym took charge in her transactions with theater managers, whether as some sort of “agent” or, at the very least, an advocate for his student, these financial documents complicate our understanding of how singers and other performers communicated their professional agency to theater managers. His brief aside acknowledging that the two had their own personal agreement shows that Lindelheim promoted her own agency in their relationship. Although she did not negotiate her own contracts for public performance, she advocated on her own behalf through her professional partnership with Haym.

The first female opera singers to perform in London crafted their professional identities by building professional relationships with others, rather than relying solely on their own, often fleeting, celebrity. Their business partnerships with Dieupart, Saggione, and Haym reveals a balance of power between the value of female celebrity and male agency. These three male composer/musicians relied upon female singers in order to advance their own careers and gain access to financial prospects that otherwise may have eluded them; in return, their involvement in negotiating contracts seems to have validated the business personas cultivated by Tofts, Gallia, and Lindelheim. These mutually advantageous relationships demonstrate that collaboration was essential for female singers to become public celebrities in the first years of the eighteenth century. Rather

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 267.

than attempting to navigate the market as individual stars, however, female singers firmly established themselves as valued members in London's networks of musicians and performers. Moreover, these relationships indicate that their male colleagues adopted their roles as business partners for mutual benefit, defying the notion that women needed male agents to represent them in public.<sup>136</sup> Tofts's relationship with Dieupart, for example, shows that she did not need a man to conduct business transactions for her; rather, she and the harpsichordist became inseparable business partners, conducting financial negotiations as equals.

One final document elucidates just how these partnerships provided access to new business opportunities for both female singers and male musicians. In 1708, John Vanbrugh proposed a contract to his leading singers as part of his attempt to establish the Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket as a kind of joint stock venture. He offered Valentini, Tofts, l'Epine, Dieupart, Haym, and Pepusch shares in the company instead of set salaries in order to reduce his expenses.<sup>137</sup> Under the terms of the proposal, Vanbrugh would have divided the profits into four equal parts, with Valentini, Tofts, and l'Epine each getting one share, and Haym, Dieupart, and Pepusch dividing the final share. The musicians eventually refused his terms, but the scheme shows just how valuable these singers and musicians were to the Haymarket theater.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Lindgren, "The Accomplishments," 258, n. 52.

<sup>137</sup> Milhous and Hume, *Vice Chamberlain Coke*, 99; Winston Theatrical Collection, GB-Lbl Add. MS 38607 f. 3r.

<sup>138</sup> Significantly, this joint stock contract predates the Royal Academy of Music by eleven years. Only one other joint stock company had been proposed in the theater. This was when Thomas Betterton and his acting troupe broke away from Christopher Rich at the Drury Lane Theater and began performing at Lincoln's Inn Fields; this is the first time that actresses were offered a share in the theater's profits (though not equal to those of their male colleagues). See Judith Milhous, *Thomas Betterton and the Management of Lincoln's Inn Fields, 1695-1708* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979).

Moreover, Vanbrugh valued his singers more highly than the three instrumentalists. That Dieupart, Haym, and Pepusch are also included suggests that their relationships with publicly powerful women continued to benefit them financially well after they established their own careers. While perhaps not completely upsetting the balance of power between men and women in the public sphere, these business relationships illustrate that to become a successful professional performer, both men and women depended on collaboration rather than engaging with the theatrical market only as individual agents.

### Conclusion

In 1704, Edward Cocker published his English dictionary, with the cautious promotion that it would help his readers “[interpret] the most refined and difficult words.” His definition of “celebrity” appeared on page thirty-four: “*Celebrity*, a Solemn Assembly of Honourable Persons.”<sup>139</sup> “Celebrity” had not yet acquired its modern meaning. Not three years later, the *Glossographia* defined the term as: “Famousness, Magnificence.”<sup>140</sup> That the term took on another, more modern meaning between 1704 and 1707 suggests that, during first decade of the eighteenth century, celebrity became a prominent—and new—social phenomenon. Professional female singers, dazzling their audiences with their vocal virtuosity and larger-than-life offstage personae, surely inspired audiences to view them as authoritative and powerful women. Frequently

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<sup>139</sup> Edward Cocker, *Cocker's English Dictionary: interpreting the most refined and difficult words... by Edward Cocker, ... Perused and published from the authors correct copy, by John Hawkins* (London: printed for A. Back, and A. Bettesworth, 1704), *ECCO* (accessed 2012).

<sup>140</sup> *Glossographia Anglicana nova: or, a dictionary, interpreting such hard words of whatever language, as are at present used in the English tongue, with their etymologies, definitions, &c.* (London: 1707), *ECCO* (accessed 2012).

referred to as “famous” in advertisements, and described with wonder and awe in personal accounts such as Anne Baker’s, it is no wonder that celebrity had become synonymous with individual performers. A closer examination of the actual professional experiences of female opera singers, however, reveals that these women complicate our modern notion of celebrity as an individual phenomenon. By working with other performers and musicians, female singers established personal relationships and professional connections that legitimized their celebrity and that gave them more agency in their financial, social, and artistic transactions. Collaborative celebrity became a tool, endowing female performers with the power to take professional control of their stage careers in a way not previously witnessed in England.

How did female celebrity, achieved through collaboration, affect the production and reception of theatrical works performed in London in the earliest years of the eighteenth century? There are few personal accounts from audience members who attended the first operas performed in London, so their offstage receptions remain speculative. Despite the near silent historical record from the audience’s perspective, however, the music—both arranged and newly composed—preserves the voices of these female singers, and these arias and songs shed light on how these operas were composed to showcase specific female voices. Thus, considering how the music bears the trademarks and abilities of its singers offers insight into how these women directly influenced the musical style and dramatic presentation of these experimental operatic works. Because these operas also betray the influence of female collaboration, the following chapters will elucidate just how these different types of collaborative relationships allowed female singers to commodify themselves as professionally

independent agents while asserting their value within the growing milieu of professional musicians and stage performers in early eighteenth-century London.

## Chapter 2

### English Actress-Singers and Collaboration in Early Italian-Style Operas

*Arsinoe, Queen of Cyprus*, England's first fully sung opera in the Italian style,<sup>1</sup> was a tremendous success during the 1704-1705 theatrical season.<sup>2</sup> The opera received its premiere on January 16, 1705, and enjoyed at least fifteen public performances during the winter and spring. Even Queen Anne requested a special performance at court, in honor of her birthday that February.<sup>3</sup> Three prominent members of the theatrical community brought the production to the stage. The first was Thomas Clayton, an English violinist, who had traveled to Italy in the early eighteenth century to study composition. He brought back the libretto to Tommaso Stanzani's opera *Arsinoe*, originally produced in

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<sup>1</sup> Although *Arsinoe* is known as the first fully sung Italian-style opera performed in England, it not a full-length production; rather, it was an afterpiece to a spoken play. The English adaptation of Bononcini's *Camilla* (1706) reserves the distinction of being England's first full-length Italian-style opera.

<sup>2</sup> There are no house receipts for that season at the Queen's Theatre, but the number of performances and its frequent revivals in later years indicate that it was a commercial success. According to Curtis Price, the opera had thirty-five performances between 1705 and 1707. See Curtis Price, "The Critical Decade for English Music Drama, 1700-1710," *Harvard Library Bulletin* (1978): 44.

<sup>3</sup> This performance is significant, since Queen Anne was not an outgoing supporter of the public theater. She rarely attended public performances, preferring instead to support music-making in the Chapel Royal. See Andrew Barclay, "Queen Anne: Victim of her Virtues?" in *Queenship in Britain, 1660-1837: Royal Patronage, Court Culture, and Dynastic Politics*, ed. Clarissa Campbell Orr (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2002); and Stoddard Lincoln, "Handel's Music for Queen Anne," *Musical Quarterly* 45, No. 2 (1959): 192. James Winn is currently writing a book on Queen Anne's cultural patronage practices, but as of May 2013 it has not yet been published.

1676 with music by Petronio Franceschini.<sup>4</sup> The writer Peter Anthony Motteux translated the libretto into English, and Clayton composed the music.<sup>5</sup> Christopher Rich mounted the production at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane in anticipation of rumors that Sir John Vanbrugh, manager and architect of the newly built Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket, planned to inaugurate his new theater with a performance of an Italian opera.<sup>6</sup> *Arsinoe* featured fashionable Italianate music; that is, the entire opera included a series of recitatives and arias, without spoken dialogue.<sup>7</sup> This was novel for English audiences familiar with the dialogue-heavy semi-operas of Purcell and other Restoration composers.<sup>8</sup> By all accounts, *Arsinoe* was popular as well as a financial boon for Drury Lane. Its success spurred both the Theatre Royal and the Queen's Theatre to produce similar fully sung, English-language operas with Italianate music during the next five years.

Yet by 1709, *Arsinoe* came to symbolize the degenerate tastes of English audiences. Critics blamed Clayton's opera for being the first to exploit the novelty of Italian opera at the expense of English music and drama. The anonymous author of *A*

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<sup>4</sup> Tomaso Stanzani, *Arsinoe, dramma per musica da Recitarsi nel Teatro di San Angelo l'Anno 1678* (Francesco Nicolini, 1678).

<sup>5</sup> Like Dieupart, Motteux was also a French Huguenot, who settled in England in the late seventeenth century, quickly finding work as a journalist and author. See Robert Newton Cunningham, *Peter Anthony Motteux, 1663-1718: A Biographical and Critical Study* (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1933).

<sup>6</sup> Vanbrugh may originally have had designs on producing *Arsinoe* himself. For some reason, perhaps due to construction delays, Vanbrugh was forced to relinquish Clayton's opera for *Gli amori d'Ergasto* or *The Loves of Ergasto*, newly composed by Jakob Greber. *Ergasto* premiered on April 9, 1705 and received only a few performances before closing. See Roger Fiske, *English Theatre Music in the Eighteenth Century*, second edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 31-40.

<sup>7</sup> Only a few of *Arsinoe's* arias are *da capo*; the rest are through-composed, in binary form, or correspond to the text's structure. Fiske says that seven out of thirty-seven were *da capo*. See *ibid.*, 40.

<sup>8</sup> English semi-operas included a mixture of spoken scenes that mingled with masques, often performed by supernatural characters, and included music and dance.

*Critical Discourse on Opera's and Music in England* condemned the opera first:

Some time after, one Mr. Cl——n, newly return'd out of *Italy*, Labour'd might and main to Compose an *English Opera*, call'd *Arsinoe*, which, according to my Judgment, as little deserv'd the Name of an Opera as the Pieces before mentioned; [...]. There is nothing in it but a few Sketches of antiquated *Italian* Airs, so mangled and sophisticated that instead of *Arsinoe*, it ought to be called the Hospital of the old Decrepid *Italian* Opera.<sup>9</sup>

The author accused Clayton of borrowing the works of other composers whose music he probably heard and studied during his sojourn to Italy. He also objected to Clayton recycling unfashionable Italian airs, tunes so old that, according to the author, they were no longer worthy of public performance. The review lingered on pointing out the opera's musical and dramatic flaws, drawing attention away from Clayton's innovative composition.

The negative sentiment in *A Critical Discourse* has filtered down through the centuries. Cibber complained of the opera in his *Apology*.<sup>10</sup> At the end of the century, Burney castigated Clayton's compositional style, claiming "the common rules of musical composition are violated in every song [...] It is scarce credible, that in the course of the first year this miserable performance, which neither deserved the name of a *drama* by its poetry, nor an *opera* by its Music, should sustain twenty-four representations, and the second year eleven!"<sup>11</sup> More recently, modern scholars have echoed these eighteenth-century criticisms, disparaging the opera for its unsophisticated musical style, text setting,

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<sup>9</sup> Anonymous, *A Critical Discourse on Opera's and Music in England* (London: 1709), *Eighteenth-Century Collections Onlines*, Gale, The University of Michigan (accessed 2012), 65.

<sup>10</sup> "The *Italian* Opera began first to steal into *England*; but in as rude a disguise and unlike itself, as possible; in a lame, hobbling Translation, into our own Language, with false Quantities, or Metre out of Measure, to its original Notes, sung by our own unskilful Voices, with Graces misapply'd to almost every Sentiment, and with Action lifeless and unmeaning through every Character." See Colley Cibber, *An Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber*, second ed. (London: 1740), 261. Quoted in Fiske, *English Theatre Music*, 31.

<sup>11</sup> Charles Burney, *A General History of Music, from the earliest ages to the present period* (1789), ed. Frank Mercer, vol. 4 (New York: Dover Publications, 1957), 200-201.



and general lack of dramatic appeal. In his groundbreaking history of theatrical music in England, Roger Fiske cursorily dismissed *Arsinoe* as one of “the first virulent germs [carried] to this country by Thomas Clayton, [...] who returned from a visit to Italy with librettos and arias on which he drew for his own two operas.”<sup>12</sup> Curtis Price, too, has endorsed Fiske’s opinion, remarking that “this opera, with its pathetically diminutive plot and antiquated arias — performed, ironically, by an all-English cast — became very popular.”<sup>13</sup> Because of these conclusions, *Arsinoe* has languished in obscurity, cited only to mark a shift in English musical and dramatic taste. These attitudes have been a fundamental obstacle to understanding *Arsinoe*’s musical and dramatic influence on the reception of Italian opera and its singers, as well as on similar hybrid operas produced in the following years.<sup>14</sup> Most importantly, critics and scholars have yet to acknowledge the influence of singers on these productions. Clayton shaped the musical profile of the work by fitting melodies to new, English text, composing the recitatives, and by tailoring songs to fit the voices and talents of his all-English cast. Any musico-dramatic analysis of *Arsinoe* or the other early English-language, Italian-style operas demands an awareness of the perspective of those who sang in the original productions.

Between 1705 and 1707, London’s first five fully-sung operas were given premieres at the Theatre Royal and the Queen’s Theatre. *The Loves of Ergasto* (1705),

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<sup>12</sup> Fiske, *English Theatre Music*, 31.

<sup>13</sup> Price, “The Critical Decade,” 44. Price also calls the opera an “Italianate pasticcio” (“The Critical Decade,” 43), taking his cue from Sir John Hawkins, who thought Clayton had assembled *Arsinoe* from previously composed arias he had collected in Italy. See John Hawkins, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music*, vol. 2 (London: 1776), ECCO (accessed 2012), 136. In contrast, Burney claimed that *Arsinoe*’s arias are too crudely composed, and therefore Clayton must have been the composer. See Fiske, *English Theatre Music*, 32.

<sup>14</sup> *Arsinoe*’s treatment in secondary literature is standard for the other operas discussed in this chapter. It is cited as the most egregious contribution to English musical culture at this time, but *The Temple of Love* and *Rosamond* have encountered the same critical resistance.

*The Temple of Love* (1706), *Camilla* (1706), and *Rosamond* (1707) were also performed in English and emulated musical, structural, and dramatic features of Italian opera.<sup>15</sup> With the exception of *Rosamond*, all were based on Italian opera libretti from the late seventeenth century, the texts of which were translated into English.<sup>16</sup> Four of the five works were newly composed (*The Loves of Ergasto*, *The Temple of Love*, *Rosamond*, and probably *Arsinoe*), and one, *Camilla*, was a literal revival of Giovanni Bononcini's 1676 original, with an English text by Motteux replacing the Italian.<sup>17</sup> All five operas were sung throughout, alternating between recitative and aria in order to drive the dramatic action and deepen the dramatic characterization. Close musical analyses, however, show that the operas diverged from the musico-dramatic style of continental Italian operas.<sup>18</sup> Not all arias in these English works were *da capo*; instead, composers favored a mix of *da capo*, binary form, strophic, and through-composed arias, depending on the singer for whom each was designed, as well as the dramatic context. Such variety demonstrates that composers were still experimenting with the musical elements of opera. Composers, impresarios, and librettists realized that these new Italian-style operas depended on

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<sup>15</sup> It is possible that *The Loves of Ergasto* was performed entirely in Italian by an all-Italian cast. This has not been confirmed, however; the only singer associated with the work is Joanna Maria Lindelheim. The music for this opera is lost. See Fiske, *English Theatre Music*, 34.

<sup>16</sup> Joseph Addison wrote an original libretto for *Rosamond*. *The Loves of Ergasto* was based on a libretto by A. Amalteo (1661). Peter Anthony Motteux translated *Arsinoe* and *The Temple of Love* from Italian sources. The former was based on Tommaso Stanzani's libretto, brought to England by Clayton. The source material for *The Temple of Love* is unknown, but the libretto frontispiece states that it is based on an Italian pastoral play. The 1706 production of *Camilla* was a literal adaptation of Giovanni Bononcini's original production, for Naples in 1696; the libretto was by Silvio Stampiglia, and was translated by Nicola Haym. See Lowell Lindgren, "I trionfi di *Camilla*," *Studi Musicali*, vol. 6 (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1977): 89-160.

<sup>17</sup> See Lowell Lindgren, "A Bibliographic Scrutiny of Dramatic Works set by Giovanni and his brother Antonio Maria Bononcini" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1972), 165-192.

<sup>18</sup> For more on late seventeenth-century Italian opera and style, see chapters in Beth L. Glixon, ed., *Studies in Seventeenth-Century Opera* (Farnham, Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010).

modification and adaptation to suit the changing tastes and preferences of English audiences and to accommodate the voices of its singers.

Without question, these operas were shaped around the vocal resources available in London, a process that provided yet another significant connection to the creative process of composing Italian operas.<sup>19</sup> As mentioned in Chapter 1, only a few Italian singers—all of them women—had performed publicly in London by 1705. It is no surprise that the casts for these early Italianate operas included many professional English actors and actresses from the Restoration theater, some of whom also specialized in singing. *Arsinoe*'s cast list demonstrates that Clayton composed the opera to showcase English performers:

### **The Names of the Actors**

#### **Men**

*Ormondo*, General of the Queen's Army.... Mr. *Hughs*  
*Feraspe*, Captain of the Queen's Guards.... Mr. *Leveridge*  
*Delbo*, Servant to *Ormondo*, a Buffoon.... Mr. *Cook* or Mr. *Good*

#### **Women**

*Arsinoe*, Queen of *Cyprus*, in Love with *Ormondo*.... Mrs. *Tofts*  
*Dorisbe*, A Princess of the Blood, and Pretender.... Mrs. *Cross*  
*Nerina*, An old Woman, formerly *Nurse* to *Dorisbe*.... Mrs. *Lyndsey*<sup>20</sup>

Nearly all of the singers in *Arsinoe* were members of the Theatre Royal's company, although they were assigned different roles on Rich's roster, as actors, singers, or both.<sup>21</sup> Francis Hughes, who played the hero, was an English countertenor who probably had professional musical training as a choirboy. He first sang onstage in *The Grove*, or, *Love's Paradise* (a semi-opera with music by Daniel Purcell from 1700), and frequently

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<sup>19</sup> On the tailoring of Italian operas to the voices of its singers, see Ellen Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice: The Creation of a Genre* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; Oxford: University of California Press, 1991), 221-244.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas Clayton, *Arsinoe*, libretto, front matter.

<sup>21</sup> For a table listing the performers at Drury Lane in 1705, see Price, "Critical Decade," 51.

performed in concerts.<sup>22</sup> Most likely, Catherine Tofts also had superb musical training prior to her performance in *Arsinoe*, based on the difficulty of the music she sang in the production.<sup>23</sup> Richard Leveridge earned his reputation by singing his own popular composition, “The Enthusiastick Song,” in *The Island Princess*, a highly successful semi-opera produced in 1699.<sup>24</sup> Mr. Cook and Mr. Good were comic bass singers who had probably performed in a few prior plays; their comic abilities shine through in Motteux’s translation and Clayton’s music.<sup>25</sup>

By composing for Letitia Cross and Mary Lindsey, however, Clayton intentionally drew on their experience as actress-singers in the spoken theater. Mrs. Cross was a young, pretty actress who often starred as the flirtatious coquette or the madwoman in theatrical productions; she also led a scandalous personal life offstage.<sup>26</sup> Mary Lindsey was a veteran comedienne, who had performed comic roles in English theatrical productions since the 1690s.<sup>27</sup> Audiences surely would have associated these women with

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<sup>22</sup> “Hughes, Francis (1666/7–1744),” Olive Baldwin in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>23</sup> Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson, “The Harmonious Unfortunate: new light on Catherine Tofts,” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 22, No. 2 (2011): 217-234.

<sup>24</sup> For more on Leveridge’s contributions to this production, see Amanda Eubanks Winkler, “Enthusiasm and Its Discontents: Religion, Prophecy, and Madness in the Music for Sophonisba and *The Island Princess*,” *The Journal of Musicology* 23, No. 2 (2006): 307-330; and Curtis Price and Robert D. Hume, eds., *The Island Princess: British Library Add. MS 15318, A Semi-Opera* (Tunbridge Wells: Richard Macnutt, 1985), xvii.

<sup>25</sup> On Mr. Cook, see Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson, “Cook,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press (accessed 2012).

<sup>26</sup> According to Mottley’s eighteenth-century history of Peter the Great, she was his mistress upon his visit to London. See J. Mottley, *The History of Peter I, emperor of Russia*, 1 (London: J. Read, 1739).

<sup>27</sup> Few secondary sources give substantial background on these female singers. The best resources for biographical detail on these singers are the articles by Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, and *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, *Oxford Music Online*. For the most thorough biographical accounts, including primary source references, see Philip H. Highfill, Jr., Kalman A. Burnim, and Edward A. Langhans, eds., *The Biographical Dictionary of Actors and Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers & Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660-1800* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973).

their careers as actresses on the late Restoration stage. Their unique voices, modest singing abilities, and dramatic talents shaped the music that Clayton and others composed for them. The composer recognized that the skills of his English singers were very different from those professionally trained in virtuoso singing in Italian. *Arsinoe*'s preface, written by Clayton, sheds light on his motivations for composing a work that featured English singers:

*And though the Voices are not equal to the Italian, yet I have engag'd the Best that were to be found in England; and I have not been wanting, to the utmost of my Diligence, in the instructing of them.*<sup>28</sup>

Despite the superior technical abilities of Italian singers, Clayton made clear his intentions to employ English singers and to train them in Italian singing techniques. The other operas analyzed in this chapter do not include similarly revealing prefaces, but each of these operas featured actress-singers in roles designed to highlight and accommodate their distinctive talents.

*Arsinoe*, *Rosamond*, and *The Temple of Love* show how English actress-singers shaped and transformed the musical and dramatic profiles of these hybrid operas in the first decade of the eighteenth century. Most importantly, these operas also illustrate how English actress-singers collaborated in different ways in order to create and maintain their celebrity. Letitia Cross, a veteran of the spoken theater, worked with Thomas Clayton to shape the role of Dorisbe in *Arsinoe* around the musical and dramatic specialties she had cultivated in plays and semi-operas in the 1690s. Mary Lindsey exploited her comic partnership with Richard Leveridge in the opera *Rosamond*, drawing attention to the ways in which they adapted their onstage collaboration for the new milieu in Italian-style opera. Finally, Anne Bracegirdle, a celebrated Restoration actress, refashioned herself as

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<sup>28</sup> Clayton, *Arsinoe*, preface.

a performer capable of keeping up with the best Italian singers in London. In *The Temple of Love*, Bracegirdle starred opposite the Italian singer Maria Gallia, and their collaboration showed how English actress-singers and Italian *virtuose* could combine their individual talents. Rather than simply dismissing these productions as musically incompetent and dramatically absurd, I intend to reposition them as collaborative productions that were molded to fit the voices of English actress-singers and highlighted their collaborative artistic relationships. These operas showcased the possibilities of mixing musical styles, dramatic qualities, and most importantly, voices from home and abroad. The collaborations between celebrated actress-singers with composers and co-stars shaped the musical and dramatic content of the first English-language, Italian-style operas produced in London.

### **Letitia Cross in *Arsinoe*: Musical Contributions of English Actress-Singers**

In a mezzotint engraved by John Smith, the actress Letitia Cross (ca.1682 – 1737) looks coyly at the viewer. An extravagant coif adorned with pearls frames her small face, and her petite body is draped in flowing robes. A statue of Venus watches over her in the background, their poses almost mirror images, perhaps purposefully associating the desirable actress with the goddess of love.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Thomas Hill, "Portrait of Letitia Cross in a garden," mezzotint, J. Smith fec., 1700. Royal Academy of Music, Spencer Collection, Accession no. 2003.2374. Accessed November 19, 2012 at <http://apollo.ram.ac.uk/emuweb/pages/ram/display.php?irn=2007>



**Figure 2.01. “Portrait of Letitia Cross in a garden,” Mezzotint. John Smith and Thomas Hill. Spencer Collection, Royal Academy of Music, London, United Kingdom.**

In this portrait, Cross looks more like a child than an actress with more than five years experience on the London stage. The artist alluded to her profession by painting her in front of an archway and a curtain. He captured her onstage appeal as an attractive, coquettish woman, but the painting only hints at her celebrity; the actress points at a basket of flowers, perhaps meant to be a gift from an admirer. In 1700, the year that Thomas Hill painted the original portrait, Cross was one of London’s most popular actress-singers of the spoken theater.<sup>30</sup> Unlike her older contemporaries, such as Elizabeth Barry, she specialized in both singing and acting, filling an important theatrical

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<sup>30</sup> For a biographical summary of Cross, see Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson, “Purcell’s Stage Singers,” in *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell*, ed. Michael Burden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 124-125. For more detailed biographical information, see her entries in the *BDA* and the *ODNB*.

niche in the years before the first professional Italian singers arrived. As an actress, she was known especially for her playful, flirtatious roles in spoken plays, as well as for her expertly performed mad scenes.<sup>31</sup> As a singer, she was well versed in English singing techniques and styles—Henry Purcell may have trained her, and she sang in his final semi-opera.<sup>32</sup> Although the portrait above does not allude to her musical talents, she was a frequent performer of act tunes and interval concerts at the turn of the eighteenth century.

Cross's cachet as a seasoned actress-singer was surely why Thomas Clayton cast her as Dorisbe, the female antagonist, in *Arsinoe, Queen of Cyprus*. Mrs. Tofts and Mr. Hughes, who played the two leads, often performed in concerts, but neither had participated in large-scale theatrical productions prior to 1705.<sup>33</sup> They offered their carefully refined vocal techniques and experience as well-known singers.<sup>34</sup> Cross's participation allowed Clayton to benefit from her skills as an actress, and to make explicit connections with the roles she had played previously in admired theatrical productions of the previous decade. In 1711, Clayton explained that he had intended for *Arsinoe* to extend English theatrical practices, rather than reject the traditions of the illustrious

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<sup>31</sup> For example, in *The Female Wits*, an anonymous satirical play produced in 1696, Cross played an overtly flirtatious version of herself. For more on this production, see Gilli Bush-Bailey, *Treading the Bawds: Actresses and Playwrights on the Late Stuart Stage* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2006), 137-141.

<sup>32</sup> She sang in the masques of *The Indian Queen* in 1696.

<sup>33</sup> The only dramatic role that Tofts had played before this was in a revival of John Weldon's version of *The Judgment of Paris*, as Pallas. Francis Hughes sang some songs in *The Grove* and other plays, but it does not seem that he promoted himself as an actor as well as a singer.

<sup>34</sup> Little is known about their early training, though Hughes's later position in the Chapel Royal means he probably had some professional instruction. Baldwin and Wilson's research into Tofts's early career has shown that she probably learned singing from the violinist Nicola Matteis the younger, and possibly also from Charles Dieupart, with whom she frequently performed between 1703 and 1709. See Baldwin and Wilson, "The Harmonious Unfortunate," 223-224.



spoken theater that had reigned since the Elizabethan era. In the preface to his short English masque, *The Passion of Sappho and the Feast of Alexander*, Clayton wrote:

I am apt to flatter my self that *Arsinoe* had Nature in it, by the Success of having filled the Theatre so many Nights after the Subscription, which introduc'd it, was over. The Turn Musick took immediately after, I attribute as much as anything to my own Incapacity for exerting my self on such Occasions; else, from my kind Reception, I do not doubt but I should have kept the footing I had got among the People of Quality, and been the Servant of their Pleasures in this kind, as I was the Introducer. For want of this Address, that Province fell into the Hands of others very unfit for such Undertakings, so that at present the *English* Musick is wholly lost, and the Opera perform'd only in the *Italian* Language. [...] It has so happn'd, that as at first I was to introduce *Italian*, my present Endeavour is to revive *English* Musick.<sup>35</sup>

Clayton absolved himself from contributing to the domination of Italian opera on London's stages. He claimed, furthermore, that he had no intention of facilitating the success of this unwanted, and wholly un-English, phenomenon. By lamenting the loss of "English Musick," and stressing his intention to revive it, Clayton revealed that *Arsinoe* was not meant to usurp or eclipse England's theatrical traditions. Clayton's choice of Mrs. Cross for his female antagonist evinced these intentions. She was a celebrated actress-singer and their collaboration prioritized her connection with the spoken theater. In addition, he likely used her participation as a marketing ploy to increase his profits, surely counting on her ability to entice her admirers out of the playhouse and to the opera. Cross and Clayton highlighted salient musical and dramatic parallels with some of her previous roles in renowned English plays and semi-operas of the late Restoration.

Cross's performance in *Arsinoe* showcased her talents as an actress-singer, a specialized performance persona acquired by very few professional actresses at the turn

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<sup>35</sup> Thomas Clayton, *The Passion of Sappho and the Feast of Alexander*, preface (London, 1711). Quoted in Thomas McGeary, "Thomas Clayton and the Introduction of Italian Opera to England," *Philological Quarterly* 77, No. 2 (1998): 173.

of the eighteenth century.<sup>36</sup> But how did she come to specialize in such distinctive performance skills? How were her musical and acting abilities crafted and honed in the late Restoration theater? Cross's first performances were in 1695, when she earned her membership in the United Company at Drury Lane by stepping in for Elizabeth Barry and Anne Bracegirdle, celebrated actresses who had moved to a rival theater.<sup>37</sup> Mrs. Cross did not join those who rebelled, and by staying, she became one of the theater's leading actresses. Her first major performance was in Henry Purcell's *The Indian Queen* in April of that year. Mrs. Cross sang during the interludes and masques interspersed throughout the play. According to the printed music, which bears the names of the singers, she sang "I attempt from Love's sickness," and "They tell us that you mighty Powers above."<sup>38</sup> These two songs showcase the English elements of Purcell's late compositional style.<sup>39</sup> Neither is particularly showy; both are syllabic and lyrical, with the exception of a few moments of melismatic word painting. They also correspond to traditional English song

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<sup>36</sup> Others, such as Anne Bracegirdle, will be addressed later in this chapter. It is worth noting, however, that most female performers specialized in only acting or singing, rather than taking on both.

<sup>37</sup> Earlier that spring, a number of Drury Lane's most popular actors and actresses had followed Thomas Betterton to Lincoln's Inn Fields, breaking their contracts with Christopher Rich at Drury Lane and setting up a rival theater company. On the actors' rebellion of the 1694-95 season, see Bush-Bailey, *Treading the Bawds*, 95-100; Kathryn Lowerre, *Music and Musicians on the London Stage, 1695-1705* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 123-194; and Judith Milhous, *Thomas Betterton and the Management of Lincoln's Inn Fields 1695-1708* (Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979). When Christopher Rich took over as manager of Drury Lane, he attempted to force Thomas Betterton and Elizabeth Barry into retiring. The two actors, along with many of their colleagues, filed a petition with the Lord Chamberlain in 1694, asking for a patent to form another, rival company at Lincoln's Inn Fields, which they converted from a tennis court into a fully functional theater. Although Betterton's company escaped Drury Lane with some of London's best players, Lincoln's Inn Fields was not a prime location for a theater, and the new company struggled to produce works, eventually moving over to Dorset Gardens.

<sup>38</sup> Clifford Bartlett, *The Indian Queen: Z. 630* (Wyton, Huntingdon, Cambs: King's Music, 1994).

<sup>39</sup> On Purcell's style, see Martin Adams, *Henry Purcell: The Origins and Development of his Musical Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) and Curtis Price, *Henry Purcell and the London Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

forms—the first is a refrain air, and the latter is in binary form. Most notable, however, is that each text reveals a strikingly different reaction to being consumed by love. In “I attempt from Love’s sickness,” she earnestly begs for release from love’s clutches. The refrain lines, “I attempt from Love’s sickness to fly in vain / Since I am myself my own fever and pain,” return relentlessly throughout, perhaps signifying both a repeated prayer and the futility of escape. In contrast, “They tell us that you mighty Powers above” is resolute, a despairing acknowledgement of love’s constancy and steadfastness. Both of these airs are passionate supplications for relief from heartache; in the first, the singer seeks respite from her own self-torment, while in the second, she expresses her acceptance of the pain the love brings.

Musical analyses offer a method for reconstructing Cross’s musical abilities as a young actress and singer. Purcell’s music for her is modest in its difficulty, but provided dramatic and improvisatory opportunities. In “I attempt from Love’s sickness,” there is only one melisma, on the word “fly” in the refrain—a convenient use of literal word-painting, and a feature of Italian music that English composers adapted in the seventeenth century. Similarly, “They tell us that your mighty Powers above” includes two verses, with a repeat at the end of each binary section. The melodic simplicity of both songs may have allowed some ornamental interpolation, and Cross may have embellished the melody during the repeats. (See Examples A.01 and A.02 in Appendix A.) In typical Purcellian fashion, both arias are predominantly syllabic but melodically lyrical. Cross could declaim the text eloquently and clearly, in a style unfettered by unnecessary vocal ornamentation and without nonsensical text repetition. Most importantly, these two songs showed off her dramatic capabilities. Each presented two opposing perspectives on

lovesickness, which would have required her to emphasize different emotional states while singing.

Even in her first major role onstage, Mrs. Cross demonstrated her acting talent through song, by bringing out the emotional nuances in dramatically divergent pieces. Despite her youth, her performance in *The Indian Queen* must have earned her a reputation as a talented actress and singer. Her attractiveness, and the notorious offstage affairs that resulted from her beauty, also probably contributed to her popularity.<sup>40</sup> Later that year, she spoke the prologue, along with the actor Hildebrand Horden, to Thomas D'Urfey's *The Comical History of Don Quixote, Part Three*. As part of their witty banter, she flirtatiously confided in Horden the numerous ways in which she drew male admirers to the theater:

Shew 'em by dancing what to art belongs;  
Or if that fail, I'll charm 'em with new Songs:  
And thus I'll draw 'em to the Play in Throngs.  
I will but throw 'em out my Hook and straight  
Shoals of Male Gudgeons nibble at the Bait;  
Some by Diversion of my Voice—and some  
In Expectation of my Prime to come.<sup>41</sup>

Mrs. Cross understood that her musical performances, as well as her youthful allure, contributed to her popularity. Despite her youth, she must have impressed Purcell enough that he continued writing music for her. In *Don Quixote, Part Three*, he included what

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<sup>40</sup> According to her biographers, Cross led a sexually adventurous offstage life. Along with possibly being the mistress of Peter the Great, Ann Oldfield's eighteenth-century biographer mentioned that in 1698 or 1699 Cross left for the Continent with "a certain Baronet." See Baldwin and Wilson, "Cross, Letitia," *ODNB* (accessed 2012).

<sup>41</sup> Thomas D'Urfey, *The Comical History of Don Quixote as it is acted at the Queens Theatre in Dorset-Garden, by their Majesties servants*, Part 3 (London: Covent-Garden, 1669). This poem also lewdly refers to Cross's youth. Her reference to her "Prime to come" suggests that she was not yet twenty-one, according to Baldwin and Wilson.

was later advertised as his final song,<sup>42</sup> a short mad scene in the form of an English “cantata,” performed by Cross’s character Altisidora.<sup>43</sup> “From Rosy Bowers” has received some scholarly attention as one of Purcell’s final compositions, but the song also demonstrates the full extent of her musical and dramatic talents.<sup>44</sup> Altisidora sings the cantata in act 5, as she pursues Don Quixote as a practical joke. His rejection of her love sends her spinning into feigned madness, exemplified here by her wavering between insult and compliment:

*Altisidora:* Death, Dungeon, Darkness, Furies, Fate, and Fire! What’s in him that can cause this Wrack within me? For now I consider better, and look on him, he’s not handsom a bit; nay, by my Virginitie [here she starts into her freakish Fit] not tolerable, nor so sweet as a Dock-leaf, nor so cleanly as a Radish new pull’d – his Shape awkward and ghastly. And his Face – ugly and abominable. And then for his foolish Profession, his Knight Errantry. ‘Tis the most absurd, the most ridiculous, the most – hah! what am I saying? [here she turns in a very passionate Tone.] O mighty Love, forgive me; I lie, I lie, I lie, I lie, he is handsom, he is sweet, he is clean; his Wit is admirable, his Profession glorious; his Shape a Droit, and grateful as a Hero’s; his Face serene, and charming as a Cherubin.<sup>45</sup>

Altisidora’s hysterical indecisiveness is composed into her song. “From Rosy Bowers” is an exciting and emotional mad scene, in which Purcell drew from musical-theatrical tradition to illustrate her exaggerated plunge into insanity. The music is divided into five distinct sections, alternating between freely sung recitative and rigidly metered air. The final section has qualities of both, as Altisidora reaches the height of her fervor. The scene showcased Cross’s fiery dramatic abilities while it played to her strength of

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<sup>42</sup> *Don Quixote: The Music in the Three Plays of Thomas Durfey, originally published by Samuel Briscoe, London, 1694-1696*, intro. Curtis Price (Tunbridge Wells: R. Macnutt, 1984).

<sup>43</sup> I use this term to define a contained dramatic vocal work that alternates between recitative passages and short airs.

<sup>44</sup> For alternate analyses of this song with regard to Purcell’s compositional style, see Ester Lebedinski, “Music for the Mad: A study of the madness in Purcell’s mad songs,” (Bachelor’s thesis, Uppsala University, 2009), 35-39 and Curtis Price, *Henry Purcell and the London Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 220-222. See Lowerre, *Music and Musicians*, 144-145 for detail concerning the theatrical context of *Don Quixote Part III*.

<sup>45</sup> Thomas D’Urfey, *The Comicall History of Don Quixote, Part III*. Act 5, scene 1.

acting and singing simultaneously. Purcell exploited her range and different vocal registers to depict the several stages of her madness. The recitative sections (sections 1, 3, and the beginning of 5) include especially unpredictable vocal melodies, and the affect shifts suddenly from word to word.<sup>46</sup> In the opening recitative, emotional changes occur after each line of text; Purcell highlighted these fluctuating emotions with energetic rhythmic patterns and harmonic movement. (See Appendix A, Example A.03).

Altisidora's opening lines are rooted in C minor, with a move to the dominant by the end of the phrase, as she swoons. Immediately, however, the bass moves to an E-flat pedal, and the melody outlines an E-flat major triad as she hysterically calls upon Cupid and leaps up to the top of her tessitura. The melismatic word painting on "fly" brings her back down to the lower part of her voice. From here, the recitative stays relatively calm, in Cross's middle range. Yet, towards the end of the section, as Altisidora becomes anxious over seducing Strephon (Don Quixote), Purcell infuses the rhythm with quick sixteenth-note ornaments that once again drive the melody up to the top of her range. While the text clearly influenced Purcell's compositional choices, the character's dramatic movement of the scene is compelling. Mrs. Cross must have excelled at performing highly emotional scenes.

The metered sections also showcase Cross's musical and dramatic abilities. Both airs (sections 2 and 4) are dance-like; the first, "Or if more influencing" hints at a fast, duple meter dance (such as a rigaudon), while the three-eight meter of the second, "Or, say ye Pow'rs," echoes a gigue or a canarie. Both are set high in her tessitura: they occupy the upper half of her range, between B-flat<sup>4</sup> and G<sup>5</sup>, rarely leaping down except at the ends of phrases. Neither air is rhythmically complex, but in both the persistent

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<sup>46</sup> See Appendix 1, Examples A.03 and A.04 for excerpts from "From Rosy Bow'rs".

rhythms (steady quarter note movement in the first, triplets in the second) add to Altisidora's steadily growing agitation. Even the rhythmic juxtapositions in both airs contributed to the dramatic volatility of Altisidora's emotional state.

24  
Altisidora  
Or if more in-flu - en - cing is\_\_ to be brisk\_and Ai - ry, with a  
Bassi

**Example 2.01. "From Rosy Bow'rs," Henry Purcell, mm. 24-28. First air.<sup>47</sup>**

76  
Altisidora  
Or, say\_ ye Pow'rs, say, say\_ ye Pow'rs my Peace to Crown, shall I,  
Bassi  
85  
Altisidora  
shall I, shall I, Thaw my self\_\_ or\_ drown? shall I, shall I, shall I  
Bassi

**Example 2.02. "From Rosy Bow'rs," Henry Purcell, mm. 76-92. Second air.**

The final section is a recitative that becomes metered by the close of the cantata. Here, Altisidora's feigned madness has reached its full potential. Purcell exploited Cross's dramatic talents by slowly moving from free singing over a held bass note to strictly metered music that requires precise rhythmic coordination with the basso continuo. In the first four measures, her vocal line outlines C major triads and her dotted eighth-note

<sup>47</sup> All examples of "From Rosy Bow'rs" were transcribed and typeset based on Henry Purcell, *The Works of Henry Purcell*, vol. 16, *Dramatic Music: Part 1*, ed. Purcell Society (London: Novello, 1906), 181-193. The original print includes only the voice part and the basso continuo line.

rhythms urge the music forward. By measure five, the vocal rhythms become more concentrated; each “no” is set to two sixteenth notes, as Altisidora insists that love no longer rules her. The section comes to a dramatic climax as she lets loose a contrapuntal flurry of sixteenth note coloratura, illustrating the word “fly” as she sings of running wild. (See Appendix A, Example A.04). In these final measures, Altisidora has finally succumbed to her “madness,” after a multi-sectional journey through varying, disparate affective states. Purcell’s music captured this dramatic transformation, but it was Letitia Cross’s expert acting and singing that brought to life Altisidora’s mad scene.

Cross mastered the ability to imbue her musical performances with dramatic potency, but technically, however, she was not a professional virtuoso. She did not sing rhythmically difficult passages or long phrases of coloratura, as her professionally trained counterparts would have. Moreover, the continuo line always supported her, especially during the metered airs, providing a firm rhythmic and harmonic grounding for her vocal lines. Often, she sang in thirds with the bass line, and there are few dissonances or difficult leaps. As in *The Indian Queen*, Purcell’s music for her in *Don Quixote* is free of showy vocal indulgence. Every striking musical element, from the short sixteenth-note melismas, to the written out cadential ornaments, to the extreme juxtapositions of range, to the quick shifts in emotion signaled Cross’s distinctive talents as an actress-singer who made up for her technical deficiencies and lack of professional vocal training through her dramatic musical presence.

It is not surprising, then, that Clayton turned to Cross for her theatrical-musical expertise when he composed *Arsinoe*. Her reputation for performances of Purcell’s final theatrical compositions allowed Clayton to associate himself with the venerated



composer.<sup>48</sup> Although she was not *Arsinoe*'s female lead, her role as Dorisbe, the psychologically unstable antagonist, took full advantage of her dramatic flexibility as a character actress, since her attempts to assassinate Queen Arsinoe spur the opera's dramatic momentum. Her vengeful rage provided a dramatic foil to the passive female heroine, who falls victim to both infatuation and Dorisbe's horrific abuses. This would not have been a typical role for Cross, since her prior onstage roles tended toward flirtatious coquettes rather than enraged, spurned women.<sup>49</sup> As shown in "From Rosy Bowers", she had the talent to convey a depth and range of emotions, juxtaposed within a musico-dramatic scene. In *Arsinoe*, Dorisbe's musico-dramatic persona was crafted to fit Cross's onstage expertise, while not overtaxing her musical ability.

Dorisbe, a "Princess of the Blood, and a Pretender to the Crown of *Cyprus*," is an ambiguous antagonist—she is neither wholly sympathetic nor unsympathetic. She spends most of the opera plotting against Arsinoe, but only alludes to the reasons behind her vengeance: the queen "robb'd my Father of his Life, and shed my Brother's Blood."<sup>50</sup> This is never verified, and throughout the opera Arsinoe is only depicted as a passive romantic character, rather than a powerful monarch, suggesting that Dorisbe is falsely justifying her horrific plans. During the course of the three-act opera, she threatens or

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<sup>48</sup> Most likely, Cross was the most experienced actress-singer that Clayton had to work with at Drury Lane. Ann Oldfield, also a member of the company, was an accomplished actress but rarely sang. Mrs. Knight sometimes sang act tunes, but was not known for her singing as Cross was. For information on which singers performed and acted at Drury Lane in the 1704-05 season, see Price, "The Critical Decade for English Music Drama," 51. Price groups Cross with the "Actors," thereby drawing more attention to her participation in *Arsinoe*. She was the only actress to sing in the production, unlike Tofts, Lindsey, Leveridge, and Hughes, who were listed as "Singers."

<sup>49</sup> Among many roles, she was known for playing Dorinda in a revival of John Dryden's adaptation of *The Tempest* (1667), in which she sang the coy "Dear pretty youth" by Purcell. She was also known for her flirtatious duet with the young Jemmy Bowen, called "A dialogue suppos'd to be between a Eunuch Boy and a Virgin, Sung by Bowen and Mrs. Cross in a New Play called *Ibrahim*" by Daniel Purcell from 1698.

<sup>50</sup> Clayton, *Arsinoe*, 7.

tries to murder Arsinoe four times; during the first attempt, she sends a messenger (act 1, scene 2) to commit the deed, and when that fails, she tries to stab the queen herself (act 2, scene 8). This relentless thirst for vengeance is set in relief by the way in which she is first introduced. Unlike Arsinoe, who appears onstage in the first scene sleeping, and therefore helpless and vulnerable, other characters sing about Dorisbe before the audience sees her. In act 1, scene 5, Ormondo, realizing that he is in love with the queen rather than the princess, sings an entire aria conveying his remorse for his “Charming Fair,” to whom he bids “adieu.” In the following scene, Feraspe, who is still in love with Dorisbe, also calls her “Charming Fair”—hardly the appropriate description of a vindictive murderess. The sympathetic introduction of Dorisbe, before she even appears onstage, provided additional dramatic dissonance to enhance the psychological complexity of Cross’s character.<sup>51</sup>

In addition to her desire for retribution, Dorisbe’s psychological instability is characterized by her frequent threats and attempts to commit suicide. In act 1, scene 8, she hints that either she or Arsinoe must die: “Then ‘tis decreed, Arsinoe must live, Dorisbe bleed.”<sup>52</sup> When Ormondo, the object of her affections, rejects her, she threatens to kill herself, then immediately changes her mind and decides to kill the two lovers instead (act 2, scene 4).<sup>53</sup> In her monologue, just two scenes later, she insistently yearns for death. The opera’s final dramatic climax tricks the audience into believing that

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<sup>51</sup> To date, *Arsinoe* has not received a full musico-dramatic analysis. For partial analyses and brief mentions of this opera and its context, see Winton Dean and J. Merrill Knapp, *Handel’s Operas 1704-1726* (Woodbridge, Suffolk; Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, 2009); Fiske, *English Theatre Music*, 31-50; Lindgren, “A Bibliographic Scrutiny”; Lowerre, *Music and Musicians*, 358-362; McGeary, “Thomas Clayton and the introduction of Italian opera to England,” 171-186; and Price, “The Critical Decade,” 43-46.

<sup>52</sup> Clayton, *Arsinoe*, libretto 9.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

Dorisbe has redeemed herself; when she tries to stab herself in act 3, scene 7, Feraspe stops her just in time. He promises that they will run away together, and she agrees—yet, in the next scene, she interrupts the nuptials of Ormondo (now revealed to be Pelops, Prince of Athens) and Arsinoe by stabbing herself and throwing herself off a balcony. She survives, and the monarchs forgive her transgressions. Despite the happy ending, the frequency of her attempted bloodshed, either murder or suicide, underscores her insanity. She is “irrational and emotionally volatile,” as Amanda Eubanks Winkler has characterized other madwomen on the English stage.<sup>54</sup> Cross’s arias depict Dorisbe’s psychological struggle in form, affect, and musical gesture.

Cross sang five arias in *Arsinoe*, and each reveals a strikingly different perspective on Dorisbe’s character. Two vengeance arias allowed her to showcase her talent for depicting rage and insanity through singing. “Rise Alecto” and “Assist ye Furies” are the least vocally demanding of her five arias; they allowed her to concentrate on acting during dramatically potent scenes. “Rise Alecto,” the first of Dorisbe’s arias, is a triumphant and hopeful call for revenge as she appeals to one of the Furies. The printed music is at odds with the manuscript score, which has written out repeats for each half of the aria.<sup>55</sup> Structurally, “Rise Alecto” is not a *da capo* aria, but rather a simple binary, with repeats of both A and B sections. This formal stability illustrates Dorisbe’s early

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<sup>54</sup> For more musical depictions of madwomen on the seventeenth-century English stage, see Amanda Eubanks Winkler, *O let us howle some heavy note: Music for Witches, the Melancholic, and the Mad on the Seventeenth-Century English Stage* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), 63-113.

<sup>55</sup> GB-Lbl Egerton 3664. This may be an autograph manuscript, though Clayton’s name is not on it. It is a valuable source, since it is one of the only Italianate London operas to include all the recitatives, as well as the arias. For sake of clarity, I will provide musical examples based on images of the printed music, GB-Lbl R.M.15.c.12.(2.), which is transposed to treble clef and which is written more clearly. I have compared all the notes with the original manuscript, and have pointed out editorial changes in specific footnotes.

psychological state. Although she rages and calls for Arsinoe’s death, her vengeance hinges on her anger over her family’s death, because she is not yet a victim herself. Instead, she is a woman with agency and power, and her confidence is depicted in the rational and straightforward structure of her opening aria.

Neither vengeance aria is technically challenging. Clayton’s music supported the singer by providing easily memorable melodies with lots of vocal repetition. The composer often repeated a nugget of melody and transposed it, or derived another melody from a previous one; the arias also include frequent sequential passages and melodies that inspire later tunes. In “Rise Alecto” (act 1, scene 8) and “Assist ye Furies” (act 2, scene 4), much of the melodic material is derived from the first few measures.<sup>56</sup> In “Rise Alecto,” the opening vocal statement outlines a triad—in A major, it leaps from the tonic to the dominant, then descends in a scalar passage back down to the tonic. This brief melody returns in the B section, in F-sharp minor, is treated sequentially in A major, and then C-sharp minor before moving on to a new melodic idea.

Dorisbe

Rise, rise A- lec - to,

Bassi

**Example 2.03. “Rise Alecto,” *Arsinoe* (T. Clayton), m. 4. A section, first vocal statement.<sup>57</sup>**

<sup>56</sup> To compare the manuscript score with the printed music, see GB-Lbl Egerton 3664 ff. 19r-22r “Rise Alecto,” and Walsh’s printed music, GB-Lbl R.M.15.c.12.(2.), 15 “Rise Alecto”. For “Assist ye Furies,” see GB-Lbl Egerton 3664, ff. 46v-49v and GB-Lbl R.M.15.c.12.(2.), 27.

<sup>57</sup> All examples of “Rise Alecto” were drawn from the printed music (GB-Lbl R.M.15.c.12.(2.)). The examples here do not include the staves of two accompanying treble instruments. In addition, I have maintained the manuscript’s original key signature. Although the aria is in A major, during this period the raised leading tone was often left out of the key signature and was written in when needed, as in the bass line in this example.

17  
Dorisbe Re-joyce and see with me, Re - joyce and see with me,  
Bassi

19  
Dorisbe re-joyce and see with me the fall of proud Ar - si-no-e.  
Bassi

**Example 2.04. “Rise Alecto,” *Arsinoe* (T. Clayton), mm. 17-20. B section.**

Even the final vocal phrases, descending vocal runs that symbolize the word “fall,” are based on this opening motive. Instead of singing a syllabic scale back down to the A, Cross sang sixteenth-note ornaments that eventually lead back to the tonic. This gesture is repeated twice, and with it, her vengeance aria comes to a close.

24  
Dorisbe the fall of proud Ar  
Bassi

**Example 2.05. “Rise Alecto,” *Arsinoe* (T. Clayton), mm. 24-25.**

These derivative melodies may have been a feature of Clayton’s compositional style. Their simplicity, and the frequency with which they are repeated and transposed, however, suggest that the composer tried to accommodate Cross’s musical strengths and weaknesses.

“Rise Alecto” is a dramatic showpiece and emphasized Cross’s acting ability and limited musical talents. She hits A5 three times, and the rest of the aria sits comfortably

in her middle range so that she could project over the full orchestra.<sup>58</sup> The aria’s affect is one of triumph, power, and confidence; at this point in the opera, Dorisbe is not meek and mild, but rather takes action to accomplish her goals. Clayton knew how to exploit Cross’s acting abilities while adjusting the music to suit her lack of formal vocal training. In this aria, she sang in thirds with the bass line, which provided harmonic support. Most of the aria is scalar, with short motives, rather than long phrases requiring breath support and stamina. The final two melismas, more moments of literal word painting, are harmonically supported by both the bass and the full orchestra, giving Mrs. Cross some margin for error.

21  
Dorisbe  
the fall

23  
Dorisbe  
of proud Ari - si - no - e,

24  
Dorisbe  
the fall of proud Ar

Bassi

**Example 2.06. “Rise Alecto,” *Arsinoe* (T. Clayton), mm. 21-25.**

Clayton composed to suit Cross’s level of technical competency: the setting is not vocally challenging, and he shored up the melody with the support of other instruments.

<sup>58</sup> The manuscript score includes two lines for treble instruments. A note before the aria reads “All the Instruments,” implying the use of the full orchestra. In this case, that likely meant violins, some sort of treble woodwind (such as an oboe), and a *basso continuo* section.

Nevertheless, Dorisbe's first aria is a powerful and bold musical statement that exploited Cross's expertise at singing dramatically charged scenes.

Her laments showcased another side of her theatrical talents. Clayton composed two touching laments for Dorisbe, featuring another side of Cross's dramatic ability. Throughout the opera, Dorisbe wavers between rage and self-pity. Ormondo rejects her love twice: first in act 2, scene 4 when he accuses her of loving Feraspe, and again in act 2, scene 6, when she realizes that he loves Arsinoe. Cross's two arias, "Conqu'ring O but Cruel Eyes" and "Ye Stars that Rule my Birth" share musical and dramatic features that played to Cross's strengths and downplayed her weaknesses. Both demonstrate that the actress could be equally as convincing as a pitiable and sympathetic antagonist.

Dorisbe sings "Conqu'ring O but Cruel Eyes" after Ormondo rebuffs her advances. She is not alone onstage; Ormondo's servant Delbo stays on to observe her reaction, and, after the aria, he instigates a fundamental plot twist.<sup>59</sup> This scene gave Cross her only opportunity in the opera to sing a *da capo* aria. Although it is not labeled as such, in the manuscript the repeat of the A section is fully written out; in the printed music, Walsh added "End with the First Part" at the end of the B section.<sup>60</sup> Additionally, Clayton also wrote out a full repeat of the A section immediately after its first presentation, creating an AABA structure.<sup>61</sup> Thus, "Conqu'ring O but Cruel Eyes" is a modified hybrid that blends binary form with *da capo* aria form—perhaps Clayton's attempt to satisfy audiences clamoring for the new Italian style as well as the older traditional forms used by Purcell. In contrast, "Ye Stars that Rule my Birth" is in binary

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<sup>59</sup> He holds Arsinoe's scarf, which Ormondo has entrusted to him. When Dorisbe sees this, she realizes that Ormondo loves Arsinoe.

<sup>60</sup> See GB-Lbl Egerton 3664 43v. – 45r. See printed music, p. 26.

<sup>61</sup> This repeat is not included in the printed music.

form, with repeats of the A and B sections, and without a return to the A section after the aria has been sung through. In the libretto, Motteux sets this text apart, labeling the two stanzas, and drawing attention to the different sections.<sup>62</sup>

( 22 )

I live,  
But live in wishing Death!

I.

Ye Stars that rul'd my Birth,  
The Man I love restore!  
Pity my Grief;  
This one Relief  
But grant, I ask no more.

II.

Restore the Jewel of my Heart.  
All other Losses I can bear!  
Tho' he flies me,  
And denies me,  
He alone is worth my Care.

**Figure 2.02. *Arsinoe, Queen of Cyprus*, libretto, page 22.**

Clayton attempted to replicate the *da capo* aria, one of the defining characteristics of Italian-style opera; but by composing binary form songs as well, he also made connections back to typical song forms of Purcell's era.

Both laments share musical features that would have helped Mrs. Cross learn such technically challenging music. Each aria begins with a motto opening; the ritornello for "Conqu'ring O but Cruel Eyes" is long and introduces the melody of almost the entire A section. In "Ye Stars that rule my Birth," the motto opening is truncated, presenting only the first two measures of the first vocal statement before moving to cadential material.

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<sup>62</sup> Clayton, *Arsinoe*, libretto, 22.



Dorisbe

Bassi

4

Dorisbe

Bassi

6

Dorisbe

Bassi

7

Dorisbe

Bassi

8

Dorisbe

Bassi

10

2

Dorisbe

Bassi

Con - qu'ring O but Cru - el Eyes, why with  
 Ri - gor will you Kill her, who a - dores you,  
 why with Ri-gor will you Kill her, who a - dores you, who a-dores you, and im  
 plores you, can you wish to tri - umph more; Cease to

Example 2.07. “Conqu’ring O but Cruel Eyes,” *Arsinoe* (T. Clayton), mm. 1-11.  
 Motto Opening.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>63</sup> All examples of “Con’qu’ring O but Cruel Eyes” were drawn from the manuscript (GB-Lbl R.M.15.c.12.(2.)). The examples here reflect the original scoring: vocal line and bass line only. The instrumental introduction is different, in that it is written in both alto clef and bass clef. Neither the manuscript nor the printed music mentions which instruments would have been included in the continuo ensemble; however, the bass line fits the range of a cello.

The image shows a musical score for two parts: Dorisbe (soprano) and Bassi (bass). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The score is divided into two systems. The first system shows Dorisbe with a whole rest in the first measure, followed by Bassi playing a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second system shows Dorisbe singing the lyrics 'Ye Stars that rule my birth, the Man I Love re-' with a melodic line that includes a leap of a sixth and a scalar passage. Bassi continues with a similar rhythmic accompaniment.

**Example 2.08. “Ye Stars that Rule my Birth,” *Arsinoe* (T. Clayton), mm. 1-5. Motto Opening.<sup>64</sup>**

Dorisbe’s opening vocal melodies in these laments are more difficult than those in the rage arias. At the beginning of each lament, Cross navigated leaps of fifths and sixths, before moving to stepwise melodic lines. In “Conqu’ring O but Cruel Eyes” the leap to the E-flat on “O” occurs on a dissonance, showing that she could sing music more complicated melodies than scales or triads. In “Ye Stars that rule my Birth,” the vocal line is almost always consonant with the bass, but the opening passage engaged Cross’s entire range. The melody starts initially in a comfortable middle range, but gradually reaches up to A5 by measure 6. In measure 8, on “Grant,” the voice sings a scalar passage that leads back down to the bottom of her range (F#4), before quickly leap up a ninth to hit G5.

<sup>64</sup> All examples of “Ye Stars the Rule my Birth” were drawn from the printed music (GB-Lbl R.M.15.c.12.(2.)). The examples here reflect the original scoring: vocal line and bass line only. I have also changed the misspelling of “Yee” in the printed music to “Ye”.

4  
Dorisbe Ye Stars that rule my birth, the Man I Love re -  
Bassi

6  
Dorisbe store, pit-ty then my Grief, this one re-lief but  
Bassi

8  
Dorisbe Grant I ask no more.  
Bassi

**Example 2.09. “Ye Stars that Rule my Birth,” *Arsinoe* (T. Clayton), mm. 4-9.**

The music for these two laments demonstrates that Cross could sing music offering greater challenges than previous songs she had performed on the London stage. Replete with vocal leaps, emphatic dissonances, and distinctive register changes, these melodies may not have been easy for the actress, despite her prior experience with Purcell’s music. But extensive motto openings may have helped her learn her music more efficiently and easily.

Other features of these two arias suggest that Clayton knew Cross’s musical strengths and weaknesses. Both arias are almost completely syllabic, although the text affords many opportunities for florid singing (such as on the words “fly”). As in “Rise Alecto,” Clayton composed short motives that are transposed and sequenced, or that lead to other, similarly constructed motives. For example, in the B section of “Conqu’ring O

but Cruel Eyes,” Cross sings the melody to “Cease to Sparkle with disdain” twice through, then repeats it a step higher, starting on G5. The beginning of this melody is repeated, but after a few notes it changes and becomes a new melody that corresponds to the new text: “to Wound a bleeding Heart.” Finally, the new melody is transposed down a step. (See Appendix A, Example A.05). In contrast, Clayton’s arias for Francis Hughes and Catherine Tofts, Clayton’s professional singers, are much more elaborate: they include highly melismatic vocal lines, and their musical phrases are longer, requiring better breath support.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, their melodies are more original than the music for Cross, or for the other actor-singers involved in the opera (such as Richard Leveridge). Clayton’s reuse and recomposition of Dorisbe’s melodies probably helped Cross to learn, remember, and execute her arias with her level of musical training.

Letitia Cross’s participation in *Arsinoe, Queen of Cyprus* likely contributed to the opera’s initial success in London. As Curtis Price has asserted, acts from popular spoken plays of the time often accompanied the opera. During one such production, Richard Leveridge provided continuity between the entertainments by singing a song in act 4 of Susanna Centlivre’s play *Love’s Contrivance*.<sup>66</sup> He immediately left the stage to take the role of Feraspe in the following entertainment. Like Leveridge, Mrs. Cross provided continuity between the new opera and traditional spoken theater. An advertisement in the *Diverting Post*, from January 2, 1705 (the same month as *Arsinoe*’s premiere), referred to

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<sup>65</sup> See, for example, “As Roses shew more pale with dew” and “And you Dorisbe now forgive me” sung by Hughes; and “Wounded I, and Sighing lye” sung by Tofts. For another counter example, see “For thy Ferry Boat Charon,” sung by Mr. Cook or Mr. Good as Delbo. This aria is short and is musically repetitive throughout, indicating that whoever played Delbo was not a particularly strong singer.

<sup>66</sup> For Price’s account of this phenomenon, see “The Critical Decade,” 45-46.

her as “Famous for Singing and Acting in the Last Reign.”<sup>67</sup> Not only was she a celebrated actress from the spoken theater, she was remembered for her early career forged during the reign of William and Mary—the “glorious” monarchs who had saved England from the absolutist rule of James II. Clayton’s preface, in which he insists that English singers should be trained in Italian singing techniques, also reminded audiences that many of those same singers had been trained in English acting and singing. Although *Arsinoe, Queen of Cyprus* mimicked fully-sung Italian operas in structure and musical style, Clayton’s dedication to writing for established English performers shows that he saw the opera as an addition to England’s theatrical repertory. Letitia Cross’s participation in the opera was an alluring reminder of the opera’s dramatic heritage and its possibilities for the future.

### **The Musical Training of Actress-Singers**

Most likely, Letitia Cross was not professionally trained in singing, as her music illustrates.<sup>68</sup> But she could perform competently alongside more virtuoso performers, who were trained in the idiosyncrasies of Italian aria and recitative. Music and song had been integral to the English theater during the centuries preceding *Arsinoe*, so actors and actresses must have had musical training during their theatrical apprenticeship. Some

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<sup>67</sup> Advertisement. *The Diverting Post*, 2 January 1705, *Burney Collection Newspapers*, Gale, The University of Michigan (accessed 2012).

<sup>68</sup> In late seventeenth-century England, there were only a few female singers who could be classified as “professional,” as women who made their livelihoods through their vocal performances. These women sang in between the acts of plays, and probably had singing teachers and coaches. In 1693, John Dryden wrote to John Walsh and praised Anne Bracegirdle’s singing, adding at the end: “And the two whom I nam’d, sung better than Redding and Mrs Ayloff [Ayliff], whose trade it was,” clearly referencing singing as Mrs. Ayliff’s profession. Quoted in Curtis Price, *Music in the Restoration Theatre* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1979), 68-72.

men who sang in the theater received training in the Chapel Royal from professional music teachers.<sup>69</sup> Women, however, were not allowed to sing in church, and thus did not have access to musical instruction through religious institutions.<sup>70</sup> How would Cross and other stage actresses have learned to sing? Were they amateur singers, without any vocal training, or did they learn some singing technique and music theory?

There are few musical treatises from seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century England that shed light on the musical training of English actors and actresses.<sup>71</sup> Pier Francesco Tosi, who moved to London in 1693 and may have taught some singers there, did not publish his influential treatise until 1723.<sup>72</sup> Even then, *Opinioni de' cantori antichi e moderni* was published in Bologna and was not translated into English until

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<sup>69</sup> For more on musical training and instruction in the Chapel Royal during the late seventeenth century, see Donald Burrows, *Handel and the English Chapel Royal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Christopher Dearnley, *English Church Music, 1650-1750: in Royal Chapel, Cathedral, and Parish Church* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970); and Rosamond McGuinness, *English Court Odes 1660-1820* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).

<sup>70</sup> According to Donald Burrows, women were often hired as soloists for court ode performances from the 1690s on, but they were not regular members of the chapel choir. See Burrows, *Handel and the English Chapel Royal*, 108.

<sup>71</sup> William Bathe's *A Briefe Introduction to the Skill of Song* dates from Elizabethan England, and gives a detailed overview of Renaissance singing technique. This would have been outdated by the 1670s and 1680s, however, and was probably not used in the theater. See William Bathe, *A Briefe Introduction to the Skill of Song* (ca. 1587), ed. Leslie Hewitt (Kilkenny, Ireland: Boethius Press, 1982).

<sup>72</sup> For more on Tosi, see Sally Sanford, "Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Vocal Style and Technique" (DMA thesis, Stanford University, 1979); and Richard Wistreich, "Reconstructing Pre-Romanic Singing Technique," *Singing*, ed. John Potter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 178-191. My thanks to Louise Stein for first introducing me to these articles in her seminar on baroque singing practices in the winter of 2009. Other Italian musicians may have taught singing as well. The violinist Nicola Matteis the younger may have trained singers, although he was not a trained singer himself. In 1696 and 1699, he published two songbooks, each of which bore a title explaining the music's use in training his "scholars," or students. Roger North poked fun at Matteis, saying "And in like manner, if a violin master makes a song, it will be a clever violin lesson, and one [of them] had the impudence, by the strength of his violin hand, without any capacity of voice, to profess teaching ladys to sing. [...] Once it was a mode in London to learne to sing of a famous violin master, who had no manner of voice, but had the corrupting of many good ones." Quoted in Simon Jones, "The Legacy of the 'Stupendious' Nicola Matteis," *Early Music* 39 (2001): 560.

1742.<sup>73</sup> Tosi's treatise focuses on the training of voices for Italian music, rather than English-style airs. Closer to home, John Playford's *Breefe Introduction to the Skill of Musick* (1654) elaborated on the basics of musical theory and practice.<sup>74</sup> The treatise was written for amateurs, as explained in Playford's preface addressed to "all *Lovers of Musick*," and it focused on psalm and hymn singing in church services.<sup>75</sup> Although Playford wrote little about musical instruction, his chapter on "Tuning the Voice" included methods of practicing proper intonation and note placement. He described physical movements, such as raising and lowering one's hands, to help with precise rhythm while singing scales.<sup>76</sup> For those worried about singing in tune, he advised students to "get the assistance of a Person either skill'd in the Voice or Instrument, and let him Sing or Play your eight Notes over with you, till you can retain the sound in your Memory so well, as to be able to do it without him."<sup>77</sup> This suggestion may well have reflected English practice. Amateur singers who could afford to buy Playford's treatise

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<sup>73</sup> The translation was by John Galliard, a German composer active in England who wrote theatrical music. On Galliard's career and works, see Stoddard Lincoln, "J.E. Galliard and *A Critical Discourse*," *Musical Quarterly*, 53, No. 3 (1967): 347-364; and D.L. Watt, "*Pan and Syrinx: An Opera in One Act by J.E. Galliard, Libretto by L. Theobald*" (Ph.D. diss., University of London, 1981).

<sup>74</sup> The edition that I consulted was republished, in its fourteenth edition, in 1709, suggesting that the treatise was still very popular and still consulted nearly fifty years after its original publication. See John Playford, *An Introduction to the Skill of Musick*, 1709, *ECCO* (accessed 2012).

<sup>75</sup> At the end of the treatise, Playford included examples from popular songs and hymns as ways of practicing.

<sup>76</sup> "When you have sounded the first Note, you must rise by whole and half Tones or Sounds, as I have before observ'd, till you ascend to the top of your Lesson, and then down again, laying your hand down when you begin to sound the first Note, and taking it up when you have half sung it; then laying it down at the next, and up again; so consequently of all the rest that are of the same Quality, according to the Directions of *Chap. 3*." Playford, *Breefe Introduction*, 13-14.

<sup>77</sup> Playford, *Breefe Introduction*, 14. In his diary, Pepys describes his wife's music teacher instructing her to sing note by note, since she could not read music. See Samuel Pepys, *Diary*, March 12, 1667.

might use it as a guide, while supplementing their study with the help of a professional music teacher.<sup>78</sup>

Most likely, actress-singers learned to sing in the same ways in which they learned to act—they trained through apprenticeship. Often, children from poor families were apprenticed to a veteran actor or actress in one of the acting companies. In her infancy, Anne Bracegirdle “had the good Fortune to be well placed [...] under the care of Mr. Betterton and his Wife,”<sup>79</sup> and from him she learned acting technique.<sup>80</sup> Actors and actresses were also expected to learn through mimesis; that is, they were to carefully observe and replicate the mannerisms, poses, and vocal inflections of their seasoned counterparts. Charles Gildon, an eighteenth-century biographer of Thomas Betterton, remarked that there were six moods in acting tragedy: “anger, commiseration or pity, fear, power, pleasure and grief or trouble.”<sup>81</sup> Each emotion corresponded to a particular tone of voice:

Love is best expressed by a ‘gay, soft, and charming Voice’, hate by a ‘sharp, sullen, and severe one’. Joy has a ‘full flowing and brisk Voice’, grief a ‘sad, dull and languishing Tone.’<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Composers and instrumentalists may have had a hand in the training of their singers. Anne Bracegirdle’s singing teacher was the composer John Eccles, who often wrote music for her. See Eubanks Winkler, *O Let Us Howle Some Heavy Note*, 97-105. In 1715, Pietro Giuseppe Sandoni arrived in London, where he became a professional singing teacher and harpsichordist. His most famous pupil was Anastasia Robinson. He later married the soprano Francesca Cuzzoni.

<sup>79</sup> Thomas Betterton, *The History of the English Stage from the Restauration to the Current Time* (London: E. Curll, 1741), 26.

<sup>80</sup> According to Elizabeth Howe, in the early Restoration theater, acting companies also housed “nurseries” for young actors and actresses—theater schools attached to London’s main theaters. This practice was not mentioned again after 1682, however, suggesting that individual apprenticeships became the norm. See Elizabeth Howe, *The First English Actresses: Women and Drama 1660-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 10. This kind of apprenticeship also occurred in music, mimicking the spoken theater as well as conventions abroad. See Mollie Sands, “The Singing Master in Eighteenth-Century England,” *Music & Letters* 23, No. 1 (1942): 69.

<sup>81</sup> Howe, *The First English Actresses*, 13.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 13. See also Charles Gildon, *Life of Mr. Thomas Betterton* (1710).



Correct vocal inflection was an integral part of theatrical training, and one's acting abilities depended on developing expert intonation and enunciation. According to Betterton's memoirs, Elizabeth Barry had "little, or no Ear for Music, which caused her to be thought dull when she was taught by the Actors, because she could not readily catch the Manner of their founding Words, but run into a Tone."<sup>83</sup> Although she eventually became one of the foremost actresses of the Restoration, Mrs. Barry's inability to sing, much less emulate other actors, was an obstacle in her early training. Learning how to sing may not have been a daily exercise for actresses-in-training, but the art of proper diction and inflection—what Betterton termed the "Art of *Speaking*"—was an essential skill to cultivate in order to achieve success in the spoken theater.

English actress-singers could use their dramatic training in their vocal performances. The music composed for them usually did not require a high level of professional coaching. As Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson have explained, singers in the spoken theater did not need to learn how to project their voices since London's theaters were smaller, more intimate spaces than the opera theaters on the Continent.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, singers did not have to train their voices beyond their tessituras; songs were composed to fit their natural range.<sup>85</sup> Theatrical songs betray careful attention to the relationship between words and music, and emphasize correct enunciation, techniques that these women learned during their theatrical training.<sup>86</sup> This did not mean that English actress-singers could not perform ornaments, and the music composed for them

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<sup>83</sup> Betterton, *History of the English Stage*, 16. Barry never performed songs during plays, although Bracegirdle frequently did.

<sup>84</sup> Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson, "Purcell's Stage Singers," in *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell*, ed. Michael Burden (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 115.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> See Martin Adams, *Henry Purcell: The Origins and Development of his Musical Style*, 194-221.

illustrates that many were able to sing florid melismas, trills, and other embellishments. Coloratura was often used during moments requiring textual enhancement. For example, in “From Rosy Bowers” Purcell set the word “fly” to a melisma in the opening recitative, clearly illustrating the word’s meaning. The ubiquitous use of melismas in English theatrical music, dating back to mid-seventeenth-century composers such as Henry Lawes and Matthew Locke, demonstrates that Italianate features had already become a part of composers’ repertoires. It also indicates that some English singers would have been able to sing more virtuoso compositions, even if their training in the theater did not fully prepare them to sing Italian opera.

London’s theatrical marketplace in the early eighteenth century was distinguished by a co-existence of musico-theatrical genres, including these English-language, Italianate operas. Composers and arrangers drew upon resources, including singers, from the spoken theater in order to create continuity with more familiar theatrical genres. The difficulties they faced in composition, however, were predicted by John Playford, who claimed that “the Italian language is more smooth and better vowel’d than the English.”<sup>87</sup> Even if English actress-singers were not trained in Italian-style singing, they quickly learned to adapt to these techniques in order to remain relevant to new trends in theatrical music. Actress-singers may have acquired less professional musical training, but even so, they continued to fill specific roles in productions, even as professional Italian singers became more prevalent. In *Arsinoe*, Letitia Cross brought her dramatic talents, refined and cultivated in the spoken theater, to Italian opera. Similarly, her contemporary Mary Lindsey began her career on the stage as an actress who played stock comic characters including old women, coquettish servants, and bumbling nursemaids.

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<sup>87</sup> Playford, *Breefe Introduction*, 57.

Lindsey played her notorious comic roles in pasticcio operas and in newly composed works, bringing her trademark English humor to operas in the Italian style.

### **Mary Lindsey and Comic Collaboration in Italian-Style Operas**

*Arsinoe* was the first of many operas to which Mary Lindsey (fl. 1697-1713) lent her expertise as a comic singer. By casting her as Nerina, Dorisbe's lovesick old nurse in *Arsinoe*, Clayton again encouraged discernible continuity with traditional spoken theater. Prior to her opera performances, she made her debut singing act tunes in *The World in the Moon* at Dorset Garden in 1697,<sup>88</sup> and for the following eight years, continued to sing onstage, playing stock comic roles.<sup>89</sup> By 1705, Lindsey had become one of London's premiere female comic singers. During the first decade of the eighteenth century, she cultivated this particular niche in almost all of London's newly composed or arranged operas that included comic characters.<sup>90</sup> Her unique talents were most noticeable in her frequent onstage collaborations with the bass singer, Richard Leveridge. The two played comic roles opposite each other in nearly all the pasticcios and newly composed operas that had premieres between 1705 and 1710. In *Camilla*, Lindsey played Tullia, a servant who is courted by Leveridge (as the servant Linco) in an attempt to woo her and empty her pocketbook. In *Rosamond*, she graced the stage as the hot-tempered Grideline, who is married to Leveridge's obstinate Sir Trusty. Even when Italian pasticcio operas became

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<sup>88</sup> Baldwin and Wilson, "Lindsey, Mary (fl. 1697–1713)," *ODNB* (accessed 2012).

<sup>89</sup> In *The Island Princess*, for example, she played a flirtatious shepherdess as well as an old woman with no teeth. See Price and Hume, eds., *The Island Princess*, introduction.

<sup>90</sup> The only operas in which she did not perform between 1705 and 1710 were *The Loves of Ergasto* (1705), *The Temple of Love* (1706), and *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* (1708). The first two were performed at the Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket, while she was on the roster at Drury Lane. *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* did not include roles for comic characters. After 1710, few operas produced in London had parts for Lindsey; her performances onstage became more infrequent.

the predominant form of musical theatrical entertainment in London, Lindsey and Leveridge still participated in the Queen's Theatre's productions. They sang similar types of comic roles in *Thomyris, Queen of Scythia* (1707) and *Love's Triumph* (1708). In all four operas, their collaborations provided comic relief, reminding audiences of their former roles in late Restoration comedies.

Lindsey and Leveridge began collaborating early in their careers, but the two were not initially exclusive onstage partners. They first worked together on John Crowne's *Caligula* (1698), in which Lindsey sang a dramatic song composed for her by Leveridge.<sup>91</sup> "Tho' over all mankind" is one of two surviving songs from the play, and it can be found in Leveridge's *Second Book of Songs* from 1699.<sup>92</sup> According to the publication, the song was composed for a special performance of the play, produced "for the Entertainment of her Royall Highness the Princess [Anne]."<sup>93</sup> Its musical and dramatic content shows that Lindsey possessed refined technical abilities as a singer and actress. In this instance she gleefully sang of her prideful attitude towards love. The text explains that even though she "meet[s] disdain," her youth and beauty will prevail; she will not "languish, pine & dye" when confronted by the loss of love. The song is through-composed and divided into contrasting sections with different emotions, thereby offering her the opportunity to show off her acting ability, as Cross did in "From Rosy Bow'rs."

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<sup>91</sup> Kathryn Lowerre contends that music in *Caligula* is meant to invoke the corrupt excess of the Roman Emperor's court. See Lowerre, *Music and Musicians*, 215-216.

<sup>92</sup> GB-Lbl K.7.i.2. For a brief discussion of this song and its theatrical context, see *ibid.*, 215-216.

<sup>93</sup> See title, GB-Lbl K.7.i.2. It is unknown why this play was chosen for a special performance at court. It was one of Crowne's last plays, and the playwright had had a long relationship with Princess Anne. At age 10, she had performed in his court masque *Calisto: or, The Chaste Nymph* (1675) alongside her sister, Princess Mary. James Winn includes *Caligula* in his as yet unpublished manuscript on cultural patronage during the reign of Queen Anne.

Leveridge's music reveals that Lindsey had considerable musical ability. The vocal melody is musically varied and complex. Melodies are not frequently repeated, nor do they stay in one part of her voice. Instead, she sang across the entirety of her range, which in this song extended from E4 to G5. (See Appendix A, Example A.06). Most of the song is set syllabically, but Leveridge used melismas for the local mimetic coloring of certain words. The first, on "Conqu'ring" in measure 8, is not an easy stepwise or scalar passage of sixteenth notes; instead, he composed a sequence of triads, sung melodically, which would have required precise intonation and vocal flexibility. Even syllabic passages, such as measures 46-53, during which the vocal line leaps in counterpoint with the bass line, call for exceptional pitch accuracy. "Tho' over all mankind" would not have been an easy song to perform, nor an easy song to learn by ear if Lindsey could not read music. Despite her lack of onstage experience in 1698, this song gave Lindsey ample opportunity to showcase her musical technique, which was refined even at her young age. She was able to match the professionally trained voices that surrounded her.

After 1700, however, Lindsey played only comic singing roles. Rather than playing serious or lofty characters and singing challenging music, she became a comic actress-singer who played secondary characters. This was a niche as yet unclaimed by another actress or singer. Most actresses in the spoken theater demonstrated their flexibility by acting in both comedies and tragedies, instead of specializing in smaller roles.<sup>94</sup> Lindsey's first role in the spoken theater was the part of Fardell, an "Affected Tattling Nurse," in Thomas D'Urfey's *The Campaigners* (1700).<sup>95</sup> Perhaps it was the

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<sup>94</sup> Elizabeth Barry, for example, specialized mostly in tragic acting. See Popple, "Spectacular Bodies," 132-147. Bracegirdle switched between comic and tragic roles, but her offstage persona as a chaste and virtuous woman suited tragic roles more. On Bracegirdle, see *ibid.*, 215-224.

<sup>95</sup> Lowerre, *Music and Musicians*, 222.

popular reception of Daniel Purcell's bawdy song for her, "My dear cockadoodle," which convinced her to specialize in comic roles.<sup>96</sup> Later that same year, she first performed alongside Leveridge in *The Richmond Heiress*, a production that showcased them as a comic duo for the first time. This productive onstage partnership with Leveridge enhanced her comic persona and became one of her trademarks. They countered the growing numbers of professionally trained Italian singers by collaborating as comedians. This special niche ensured their continued significance and indispensability in Italian-style operas.

*Camilla* (1706) was the first Italian opera to exploit their onstage collaboration. It became tremendously popular with audiences, garnering one hundred and eleven performances before 1730.<sup>97</sup> Giovanni Bononcini's music, while outmoded on the Continent, sounded exciting and fresh to English audiences. Although both operas had given London a taste of Italian-style theatrical music, *Camilla* was the first full-length English adaptation of a previously composed Italian opera (Bononcini's original had been extraordinarily popular on the Continent as well). Impresario Owen Swiney dedicated the libretto to Lady Wharton as "a foreign Composition, that may serve at present to give us a Taste of the *Italian* Musick, and in Time prove a Foil to the *English*."<sup>98</sup> Nicola Haym

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<sup>96</sup> Lindsey sang the song in act 1, as she nurses the infant son of her employers. The text is insufferably coddling, but as she is singing she "smacks the child" and frequently comments on his "marks that lye under thy Cloaths" (referencing his genitalia). In the penultimate stanza, she sings of the moment when he will take a woman's virginity. Purcell's song was quite obscene, but audiences likely enjoyed it for that reason. It would not have been entirely appropriate for an actress of Bracegirdle's stature to perform such a piece, however. See Thomas D'Urfey, *The Campaigners, or, The Pleasant Adventures at Brussels* (London: 1698), *Early English Books Online*, Gale, University of Michigan (accessed 2012).

<sup>97</sup> Lowell Lindgren's article is the most definitive study of the opera's success in London and across the Continent in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. See Lindgren, "I Trionfi di Camilla," *Studi Musicali*, vol. 6 (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1977): 89-160.

<sup>98</sup> Owen Swiney, *Camilla*, libretto, 1706. Dedication to Lady Wharton (Lucy Wharton, second wife to Thomas Wharton, first Marquess of Wharton).

adapted Bononcini's Naples score (1696) but changed very little, beyond adding new recitative and English text.<sup>99</sup> Lowell Lindgren has shown that Haym "translate[d] seven-eighths of Stampiglia's text and retain[ed] fifty-one of Bononcini's fifty-seven aria settings."<sup>100</sup> Moreover, by cutting arias given to the other characters, Haym privileged the comic characters, granting them a fourth of the opera's arias.<sup>101</sup> The expansion of their roles relative to the others suggests that comic scenes were crucial for English adaptations of Italian operas. As a comic duo, Leveridge and Lindsey drew attention to the similarities between conventions in the English theater and those of Italian opera: both relied on secondary plots played out by minor comic characters who sang similar kinds of simple, rustic music.

The musical parallels between the two productions show that very little was altered to fit the voices of Lindsey and Leveridge. The only significant difference, in fact, is Lindsey's role, which was transposed an octave higher from Bononcini's original, since in the Naples production Tullia was played by a tenor for added laughs.<sup>102</sup> In her aria "Among Women they for Certain" ("Tra le donne tutte quelle" in 1696), the beginning of the B section is truncated. Haym excised part of the vocal line to create shorter phrases for Lindsey, perhaps to make the music easier and less dependent on breath support. Besides this, the music for the London production was almost a note-for-note adaptation of Bononcini's original. Little information can be gleaned about

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<sup>99</sup> Giovanni Bononcini, *Il trionfo di Camilla, Regina de' Volsci*, intro. by Howard Mayer Brown (Garland, 1978); Giovanni Bononcini, *Camilla, Royal College of Music MS 779*, intro. by Lowell Lindgren, *Music for London Entertainment, 1660-1800* (London: Stainer & Bell, 1990). Lindgren speculates that the Royal College of Music manuscript may have been especially adapted for a chamber production, and was probably not the score that would have been used at Drury Lane. He also notes that most revivals of *Camilla* in Europe often excised the comic scenes.

<sup>100</sup> Bononcini, *Camilla*, intro. Lindgren, xii.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, xxii.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

Leveridge and Lindsey's vocal palettes, since the music was not composed especially for them. Their prominent roles in the opera, however, show that their partnership was highly valued by the creative team who adapted *Camilla*, and by audiences, whose enthusiasm for the opera made it one of the most popular theatrical productions in English history.

Leveridge and Lindsey returned to the stage in 1707, starring as comic characters in Thomas Clayton's newly composed opera *Rosamond*. This was the third fully-sung opera in English written especially for London, and its composer tried even harder to promote his support of English language, Italian-style opera. Joseph Addison, a Whig politician and writer, penned the libretto; this was his first attempt at writing a theatrical work, and he drew from English history, rather than mythology, in order to please Whig superiors.<sup>103</sup> Its plot was a thinly veiled political allegory promoting the populist, pro-English campaigns of the Whig party.<sup>104</sup> By all accounts, *Rosamond* should have been a success—its subject matter was relevant to English audiences, and the production starred the best English singers. Yet, the opera closed after a mere three subscription performances, making it London's worst commercial operatic failure.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> See Brean Hammond, "Joseph Addison's Opera *Rosamond*: Britishness in the Early Eighteenth Century," *English Literary History* 73, No. 3 (2006): 601-629. Hammond argues that *Rosamond* was meant to be set at the newly constructed Blenheim Palace, home to the Marlboroughs. Sir John Vanbrugh, owner of the Queen's Theatre (where *Rosamond* had its premiere) was also Blenheim's architect and was patronized by the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 616-623.

<sup>105</sup> See Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson, "Rosamond," *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera, Grove Online* (accessed 2012). The anonymous author of *A Critical Discourse upon Opera's in England* wrote of the production: "In short, this Opera is no better than a confus'd Chaos of Musick, where there is ev'ry thing, and nothing, and for my part I think that only thing to be lik'd in it, is that it's short; and I believe, if a Reward was to be ordain'd for him that made the worst Musick in all the World, the Author of *Rosamond* wou'd have reason to see he had not lost his Labour, since he wou'd have an undoubted Title to the Gratification" (*A Critical Discourse*, 69). Quoted in Hammond, "Joseph Addison's Opera," 616-617.



Despite being a flop, *Rosamond* drew attention to Addison and Clayton's ultimate objective: to situate their opera well within the institution of English theatrical practices. The story of Henry II (reigned 1154-1189) and his illicit relationship with Rosamond Clifford provided a direct link to English history, a connection missing from previous fully-sung operas.<sup>106</sup> With the exception of Maria Gallia, who played the title character, the production starred only English singers, including Catherine Tofts (as Queen Eleanora), Francis Hughes (as King Henry), and Leveridge and Lindsey.<sup>107</sup> In casting the latter two, Clayton and Addison hoped to draw on the popular traditions from the spoken theater. Sir Trusty (Leveridge) and Grideline (Lindsey) are stock comic characters, archetypes common to plays and semi-operas of the previous decade. Like Corydon and Mopsa from Purcell's *Fairy Queen*, their humorous musical quarrels proffered rustic, musical simplicity that drew upon the English song tradition from the previous decade. Purcell and Dryden's bawdy lovers, while entertaining, were not essential to the dramatic trajectory of the semi-opera. In *Rosamond*, the two comic characters are an integral parallel to the serious characters. Clayton and Addison elevated their love story from comic sub-plot to provide essential lowbrow commentary on the serious interactions between Henry, Eleanora, and Rosamond. As Henry engages in a clandestine, extramarital relationship with Rosamond, and as Eleanora schemes for vengeance, Sir Trusty and Grideline's bickering and bantering is the only genuine relationship in the opera. In act 1, just after his first onstage squabble with Grideline, Sir Trusty opines,

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<sup>106</sup> As noted, *Arsinoe* and *Camilla* were based on Italian libretti. *The Loves of Ergasto* and *The Temple of Love* were pastoral operas. Addison, who often wrote of his dislike of Italian opera, stated that he preferred English theater to be relevant to English audiences. See Hammond, "Joseph Addison's Opera," 603.

<sup>107</sup> Evidently, Clayton liked to compose for these singers; this cast is entirely the same as *Arsinoe*'s, with Gallia replacing Letitia Cross.

“How much more bless’d wou’d Lovers be, / Did all the whining Fools agree / To live like *Grideline* and me!”<sup>108</sup> Although *Grideline* and Sir Trusty do not reconcile until the end of the opera, these wise words haunt the action of the other main characters throughout the drama.

Lindsey’s role as *Grideline* gave her more stage time than she had been granted in previous theatrical productions. Her part in *Arsinoe* was small; she appeared in only two scenes and sang just one aria and one duet.<sup>109</sup> Nevertheless, Clayton must have observed her potential as a comic actress-singer. He fashioned the part of “*Grideline*” specifically for her, taking full advantage of the range of comic skills she had displayed in *Camilla*. The cast of Clayton’s new opera was small; only five characters are essential to the plot, including the two comic parts, thus giving Lindsey more time in the spotlight.<sup>110</sup>

Act 1, scene 2 exposes the combative relationship between Sir Trusty and *Grideline*. The knight, singing alone onstage, grumbles about the difficulties of marriage and claims that his good looks make his wife jealous. The aria, “How unhappy is he,” is short, syllabic, and through-composed. Both the bass line and the vocal line alternate between sixteenth notes and eighth notes, in a patter-like melody. These quick, declamatory rhythms suit the English text and underscore Sir Trusty’s comically pretentious personality. Moreover, Leveridge had proven himself capable of declamatory patter singing in his famous “Enthusiastick Song,” which he had composed for *The Island*

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<sup>108</sup> Addison, *Rosamond* (1707), 10.

<sup>109</sup> The aria is “Tis the fashion, without passion,” from act 1, scene 6, and the duet, with Mr. Good, is “Delbo, if thou wilt not Woe,” from act 2, scene 7.

<sup>110</sup> The main characters are King Henry, Queen Eleanora, Rosamond, Sir Trusty, and *Grideline*. The opera also included minor characters such as the Page, and the two allegorical characters War and Peace; none of the three are integral to the plot.

*Princess* in 1699.<sup>111</sup> Despite Sir Trusty's inflated sense of importance, however, Clayton's harmonic accompaniment reveals that the knight has little personal substance. The harmonies never stray far from G major; only in cadential measures does the bass move to C major and D major, before returning to G. The lack of harmonic depth reflects Sir Trusty's own personality; his arrogance is musically unfounded.<sup>112</sup> (See Appendix A, Example A.07).

Grideline's entrance provokes a marital quarrel when she accuses him of lusting after Rosamond, and he vehemently denies it. In the air "O Grideline consult thy Glass," the knight attempts to woo his wife back to him, but the slippery harmonic ascent through tonicization (first in D major, then E major, then F-sharp minor) underscores his persistence while betraying his insincerity. The air, though not musically or dramatically complicated, provided Leveridge with plenty of musical moments he could exploit for comic effect. (See Appendix A, Example A.08). Grideline sees through his mollification and pokes fun at her husband, mocking his overblown sense of self worth in "O how blest were Grideline." Lindsey's first air of the opera exploited the singer's range of comic talents. Like Leveridge's previous two airs, this song is also short, through-composed, and syllabic; the simplicity of the vocal line, however, provided more opportunity to play up the hidden meaning of the words. Her opening lines, "O how Blest were Grideline, / cou'd I call Sir Trusty mine" are set to stable, A major harmonies, and the vocal line reinforces the harmonic stability by moving up the scale to F-sharp, and then skipping back down to A. Moreover, these first two lines are repeated after a brief instrumental refrain. Although the text sounds sweet and loving initially, Grideline's lines "did He not

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<sup>111</sup> See Eubanks Winkler, "Enthusiasm and Its Discontents," 317-329.

<sup>112</sup> See Appendix A for all of Sir Trusty's music.

cover Amorous Wiles, / with Beautifull deceiving Smiles” reveals her frustration and discontent. On the word “deceiving,” Lindsey sang the highest note of the air, an F-sharp, which drew attention to the word and offered the actress-singer a moment of potential comic intonation.

The image displays a musical score for the aria "O how blest were Gridline" from the opera *Rosamond*. The score is written in G major and common time (C). It consists of six systems, each with a vocal line for Gridline (soprano) and Bassi (bass). The lyrics are: "O how Blest were Gri-de line, cou'd I call Sir Tru - sty mine, O how Blest were Gri-de- line, cou'd I call Sir Tru-sty mine, did He not co-ver a-mor-ous Wiles, with Beau-ti-full de-cei - ving Smiles, how shou'd I Re-vel in De-light, the hap-py Spouse of such a Knight." The score includes measure numbers 5, 9, 12, 15, and 18. The Gridline part features a prominent F-sharp note on the word "deceiving" (implied by the context and the original text's description).

**Example 2.10. “O how blest were Gridline,” *Rosamond* (T. Clayton), act 1.<sup>113</sup>**

<sup>113</sup> All transcriptions from *Rosamond* are from John Walsh’s print, US-AAscI M1507.E12 v. 1. The printed music does not include accompanying instruments, simply the bass and vocal lines.

The final lines of the song, though superficially sincere, are more humorous if performed sarcastically. She is meant to sing “How should I Revel in Delight, / the happy Spouse of such a Peerless Knight,” and although the word “peerless” is left out of the printed edition of the music, its inclusion in the libretto underscores Grideline’s sarcasm. By referring to Sir Trusty (whose name itself hosts double meaning) as a “Peerless Knight,” Grideline pokes fun at his lack of nobility; although he’s a knight, he is merely the king’s servant, without peerage. Grideline’s witty double entendre was perhaps meant as an inside joke for audiences, one that teased the middle class members of the audience whose social-climbing antics Sir Trusty’s character lampooned. No matter the meaning, Lindsey had free reign to endow Grideline’s modest music and biting words with her own comedic wit.

The final duet showcased Lindsey and Leveridge’s comic chemistry. Sir Trusty’s attempt to pacify his wife has turned to anger after Grideline’s mocking aria. In the duet “Thou art ugly and old,” Sir Trusty berates his wife without success; instead, Grideline constantly interrupts him, turning the tables with denials and insulting him back. Clayton composed a patter song for their dialogue; even the bass line plays constant eighth notes underneath the uninterrupted chatter of Sir Trusty and Grideline.

Grideline

Sir Trusty

Bassi

Thou art ug-ly and old, and a Vil-lain-ous

3

Grideline

Sir Trusty

Bassi

I'm not ug-ly nor old nor a Vil-lain-nous Scold, but thou art a Ras-chal to call me

Scold,

5

Grideline

Sir Trusty

Bassi

so,

7

Grideline

Sir Trusty

Bassi

thou art u - gly and old, and a Vil - lain - ness



15  
 Grideline: dieu thou Tray - tor, thou  
 Sir Trusty: far - well thou Shrew,  
 Bassi: (Instrumental accompaniment)

16  
 Grideline: tray - tor, thou tray - tor, thou tray - tor, thou tray - tor  
 Sir Trusty: (Instrumental accompaniment)  
 Bassi: (Instrumental accompaniment) thou

17  
 Grideline: thou Tray - tor, thou tray - tor, thou tray - tor, thou  
 Sir Trusty: Shrew,  
 Bassi: (Instrumental accompaniment)

18  
 Grideline: tray-tor thou Tray-tor a - dieu a - dieu.  
 Sir Trusty: thou Shrew, a-dieu a - dieu.  
 Bassi: (Instrumental accompaniment)

**Example 2.11. “Thou art ugly and old,” *Rosamond* (T. Clayton), act 2.<sup>114</sup>**

As the song continues, they become angrier and more impassioned; their vocal lines become shorter and more motivically concentrated. Both Lindsey and Leveridge

<sup>114</sup> Spellings from Walsh’s print are used in this example.



ascend to the tops of their tessituras, as if musically shouting at one another. By the end of “Thou art ugly and old,” Grideline repeats the word “traytor” continuously to eighth notes, as if she is trying to drown out Sir Trusty’s nasty name calling (“thou Shrew”). As they hastily bid each other “adieu,” the continuous eighth note motion ends abruptly, a musical manifestation of their dismissive, exasperated goodbyes. Clayton’s duet for the two comedians was not musically complex, overly showy, or difficult to sing, but its comic potential animated the opera. By including Mary Lindsey and Richard Leveridge, Clayton and Addison tried to establish authentic continuity with English musical and theatrical traditions from the days of Purcell and Dryden.

*Rosamond*’s commercial failure did not damage Lindsey or Leveridge’s popularity. In April 1707, just a month after *Rosamond*’s spectacular flop, they sang comic roles in *Thomyris, Queen of Scythia*.<sup>115</sup> Leveridge, as the lowly servant Baldo, relentlessly pursued Lindsey’s contemptuous, teasing Media, thus turning the tables on the roles they had played in *Camilla*. Their scenes in *Thomyris* were even bawdier than in previous productions, with even greater opportunities to play up farcical moments. In act 1, scene 2, Baldo and Media meet for the first time onstage. He tries to “kiss and caress” her, but she pushes him off: “how dare you be so urging? / Would you ravish here a Virgin?” Their duet, which ends the scene, emphasizes Baldo’s persistent sexual pursuit of the elusive Media. In *Rosamond*, their duet channeled anger and frustration; they never sang simultaneously, but rather interrupted each other with insulting barbs. In “Prethee leave me,” Leveridge sang underneath Lindsey throughout the aria, illustrating Baldo’s

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<sup>115</sup> Johann Christoph Pepusch composed the recitatives for *Thomyris*; the rest of the opera is a pasticcio.

complete obliviousness to Media's rejection as he insistently pursues her. (See Appendix A, Example A.09).

Remarkably, Lindsey and Leveridge's collaboration in *Thomyris* gained a theatrical life independent from the opera's context. On July 19, 1712, *The Spectator* published an advertisement that promoted a performance of *The Loves of Baldo and Media*, "after the Italian Manner," to be performed by Lindsey and Leveridge at the Theatre in Greenwich.<sup>116</sup> Like many concerts of the day, the show included "several Concertos and Dances between the Acts," and featured a new prologue sung by the two comedians. Tickets were not expensive (at three shillings), and the concert was most likely an exciting event for audiences, who surely missed their comic partnership. The two singers had not performed together since 1708. In the intervening years, Leveridge frequently sang in public concerts in London and in the nearby provinces, but he had not performed in an Italian-style opera since *Love's Triumph*.<sup>117</sup> Lindsey had suffered a similar fate. Her role in *Clotilda* (1709) was small and inconsequential. In *Almahide* (1710), the first Italian opera performed in Italian by a cast of all Italian singers, Lindsey sang during comic interludes performed in English, alongside Thomas Doggett.<sup>118</sup> It was to be her last role in an opera on the London stage, and her performance in *The Loves of*

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<sup>116</sup> Advertisement. *The Spectator*, July 19, 1712, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2012). The actor and entrepreneur Thomas Pinkethmen owned the Greenwich Theatre, which still stands today. This theater became one of the main locations for public concerts outside of London.

<sup>117</sup> Leveridge made a comeback, of sorts, during the 1712-13 theatrical season, when Handel wrote parts for him in *Il pastor fido* and *Teseo*. In May 1712, he sang in John Galliard's English opera *Calypso and Telemachus*. For more on Leveridge's career, see Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson, "Richard Leveridge, 1670-1758. 1. Purcell and the Dramatic Operas," *The Musical Times* 111, No. 1528 (1970): 592-594; Baldwin and Wilson, "Richard Leveridge, 1670-1758. 2: The Italian Opera," *The Musical Times*, 111 No. 1531 (1970): 891-893); and Baldwin and Wilson, "Richard Leveridge, 1670-1758. 3. The Pantomimes," *The Musical Times* 111, No. 1532 (1970): 988-990.

<sup>118</sup> Baldwin and Wilson, "Lindsey, Mary," *ODNB* (accessed 2012).

*Baldo and Media* was one of her last public appearances.<sup>119</sup> Little is known about this revival. The 1707 libretto demonstrates that their dialogue and arias could be performed without the surrounding context of the opera's serious plot. The performance of comical excerpts as a stand-alone theatrical event shows that Lindsey and Leveridge were collaborative celebrities who could give successful performances independent of productions at the opera house.

### **Maria Gallia and Anne Bracegirdle's Collaboration in *The Temple of Love***

*The Temple of Love* (1706), an Italian pastoral opera newly composed by Giuseppe Saggione (fl. 1680-1733), was the Queen's Theatre's response to the successful fully-sung productions at Drury Lane.<sup>120</sup> The overwhelming popularity of *Arsinoe* had stolen the thunder of the opening of John Vanbrugh's new opera house. The theater's first venture, a newly composed Italian opera by Jakob Greber called *Gli amori d'Ergasto* (or *The Loves of Ergasto*) had been an immediate failure.<sup>121</sup> Vanbrugh decided to try again the following year by producing *The Temple of Love*. The opera's epilogue explains that it was a direct response to the productions mounted at Drury Lane:

[...] Set up some famous Singer of no Fame,  
And, tho' she's Dutch, Italianize her Name.  
What tho' the Singing or the Face affright,

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<sup>119</sup> She gave a benefit at Hickford's Rooms in 1713.

<sup>120</sup> The opera was based on an Italian pastoral play. The libretto reads that it was "English'd from the Italian. All sung to the same Musick. By Signior J. Saggione." This implies that Saggione composed some of the arias previously and adapted them to this production, but further research is needed to confirm this.

<sup>121</sup> According to John Downes' *Roscius Anglicanus*, the opera had only five performances. Vanbrugh and Congreve were going to produce the English opera *Semele* (with music by Eccles), but decided to mount Italianate operas after *Arsinoe*'s success. Downes claimed that *Ergasto* was performed by all Italian singers, but the only known singer involved was The Baroness. L'Epine may also have been involved, since she was the musical partner of Jakob Greber, the opera's composer. See John Downes, *Roscius Anglicanus*, eds. Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume (London: Society for Theatre Research, 1987); and Curtis Price, "Critical Decade," 46-47.

Worse Syrens get their Twenty Pounds a Night.  
Put out Red-Lettr'd Bills, and raise your Price,  
You'll Lure a select Audience in a trice.  
[...]  
Get some fam'd Opera, any how translated,  
No matter, so the t'other House don't get it.<sup>122</sup>

The production was designed to convince audiences that their newest opera was not a completely foreign endeavor. This was difficult to do because the opera was based on an Italian pastoral play, although Peter Motteux translated the text into English. Moreover, the composer was an Italian; Giuseppe Saggione had arrived in England along with Maria Gallia (fl. 1703-1734) in 1703.<sup>123</sup> Very little is known about Saggione's life prior to his arrival in London, though he played trombone at Saint Mark's Basilica in Venice at the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>124</sup> The music he composed for *The Temple of Love* betrays his Italianate compositional style. Faced with a production similar to *The Loves of Ergasto*, Vanbrugh understood that in order to mimic *Arsinoe's* success, he would have to recruit high-profile English singers rather than rely solely on Italian voices.<sup>125</sup>

As one of the two female leads, Anne Bracegirdle (ca. 1671-1748), the most famous stage actress of her generation, endowed the production with her talents,

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<sup>122</sup> Motteux, *The Temple of Love*, libretto. The allusions in this epilogue are difficult to ascertain, but most likely the "famous Singer of no Fame," whose face "affrights" and who "Italianized her name" was probably a reference to Margarita de l'Epine, who was said to have been unattractive. She also may have been French; see Chapter 3. "Some fam'd Opera, any how translated" probably refers to *Arsinoe*, which was supposed to have been presented at the Queen's Theatre. See the *Diverting Post*, October 28, 1704, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2012).

<sup>123</sup> The first reference to Saggione is in the *Daily Courant*, which advertised "With three Entertainments of Italian Singing by the Famous Signiora *Maria Margarita Gallia*, lately arriv'd from *Italy*, who has never yet Sung in *England*; the Musick which accompanies her Singing is compos'd by Signior *Joseph Saggion*." Advertisement. *Daily Courant*, May 31, 1703, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2012).

<sup>124</sup> Eleanor Selfridge-Field, "Fedeli," *Grove Online* (accessed 2012).

<sup>125</sup> The cast of *The Temple of Love* also included the veteran actors Marcellus Laroon as Sylvander, Mr. Lawrence as Thyrsis, and Mr. Cook as the Satyr.

experience, and celebrity. The other female star was the professional Italian singer Maria Gallia, Saggione's wife, who had gained renown through her concert performances.<sup>126</sup> Casting Bracegirdle and Gallia as Phillis and Eurilla, respectively, may have seemed strange to English audiences. Bracegirdle had honed her acting skills in the spoken theater, and had been one of Betterton's two financial partners in the ownership of the company at Lincoln's Inn Fields.<sup>127</sup> In plays, she often performed short songs, composed exclusively for her by John Eccles.<sup>128</sup> By 1706, she was one of England's most celebrated actresses, as numerous contemporary accounts of her career testify.<sup>129</sup> In contrast, Maria Gallia was anything but established. Her only performances in London had been her concerts, which, though successful, did not involve dramatic roles. She was renowned for her singing, especially her agile voice and extravagant coloratura. Her acting ability, however, was as yet unknown to English audiences at the premiere of *The Temple of Love*. The opera showcased Bracegirdle's acting and Gallia's singing, drawing attention

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<sup>126</sup> For more on Gallia's early career, see Chapters 1 and 4.

<sup>127</sup> In 1705, the company at Lincoln's Inn Fields moved to the newly opened Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket. Judith Milhous argues that Betterton may have persuaded Vanbrugh and Congreve to produce English theatrical pieces as well as Italian-style operas. See Milhous, *Thomas Betterton*, 193.

<sup>128</sup> Eccles started as a composer at Drury Lane in the 1690s and moved with Bracegirdle to Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1695. For more on their musical partnership, see Eubanks Winkler, *O Let Us Howle Some Heavy Note*, 95-96 and 103-105; Price, *Henry Purcell and the London Stage*, 215-217; and Price, *Music in the Restoration Theatre* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1979).

<sup>129</sup> She is buried in Westminster Abbey in the courtyard, another testament to her fame and wealth at the time of her death. Cibber, in volume 1 of his *Apology*, wrote: "In all the chief parts she acted, the desirable was so predominant, that no judge could be cold enough to consider from what other particular excellence she became delightful" (Cibber, *Apology*, 142). For eighteenth-century biographies and accounts of her illustrious career, see Tony Aston, *A brief supplement to Colley Cibber, Esq.: his lives of the famous actors and actresses* (London: 1747?), *ECCO* (accessed 2012); Betterton, *The History of the English Stage* (1741); Cibber, *An Apology* (1740); Downes, *Roscius Anglicanus* (1789); and Charles Gildon, *A Comparison between the two stages*, ed. Arthur Freeman (New York: Garland Publications, 1973).

to their different dramatic and musical personas. Their collaboration invited audiences to witness the best that the English spoken theater and Italian opera had to offer.

Biographies of Bracegirdle—contemporary and modern—consistently remark on her virtuous reputation as a public figure.<sup>130</sup> Unlike her counterpart Elizabeth Barry, who carried on an illicit relationship with the Earl of Rochester, Bracegirdle claimed her innocence both onstage and off. Anthony Aston’s supplement to Colley Cibber’s *Apology* described the actress as an attractive woman whose virtue prompted her admirers to gift her considerable sums of money.<sup>131</sup> Her reputation for innocence in matters of love shaped the roles written for her in the spoken theater. Playwrights capitalized on her perceived sexual innocence, which titillated audience members just as much as the sexual promiscuity of Barry and Nell Gwyn had during the late Restoration.<sup>132</sup> Roles for her exploited her virtue to the point of victimhood—her chastity was frequently fetishized onstage when she played victims of rape.<sup>133</sup> But her innocence was also channeled into less distressing parts. In Thomas D’Urfey’s *Don Quixote, Part II* (1694), Bracegirdle’s anguish over unrequited love possesses her to the point of madness. Her character, Marcella, a “Shepherdess that hates Mankind,” sings of her pain in the song “I burn, I

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<sup>130</sup> For modern biographies of Bracegirdle, see Bush-Bailey, *Treading the Bawds*; Howe, *The First English Actresses*; Thomas A. King, “‘As If (She) Were Made on Purpose to Put the Whole World into Good Humour’: Reconstructing the First English Actresses,” *The Drama Review* 36, No. 3 (1992): 78-102; Jean I. Marsden, *Fatal Desire: Women, Sexuality, and the English Stage, 1660-1720* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006); Popple, “Spectacular Bodies”; and John Harold Wilson, *All the King’s Ladies: Actresses of the Restoration* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958).

<sup>131</sup> “Her Virtue had its Reward, both in Applause and *Specie*; for it happen’d, that as the Dukes of *Dorset* and *Devonshire*, Lord *Hallifax*, and other Nobles, over a Bottle, were all extolling Mrs. *Bracegirdle*’s virtuous Behaviour, *Come*, says Lord *Hallifax*—*You all commend her Virtue, &c. but why do we not present this incomparable Woman with something worthy her Acceptance?*” Aston, *A brief supplement*, 10.

<sup>132</sup> Popple, “Spectacular Bodies,” 204.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 219; and Howe, *The First English Actresses*, 43.

burn.” Eccles’s music traces the character’s mental distress, but also indulged Bracegirdle’s superior technical abilities as both actress and singer.

In the scene, Marcella’s madness takes over after the object of her affection, Ambrosio, rejects her seduction.<sup>134</sup> Like Letitia Cross’s feigned madness in “From Rosy Bow’rs,” Bracegirdle’s music shifts from one idea to the next, changing during each line of text as the character descends into a lovesick insanity. Unlike Cross’s mad song, however, Eccles’s song is not divided up into clear sections; rather, the music transitions into different styles of singing depending on the text. Initially, “I burn, I burn” is in a predominantly syllabic style, and leaps around Bracegirdle’s range, from E4 all the way up to F#5. Melismatic vocal lines enliven the text’s imagery, depicting “Lightning Flashes” and blowing winds.

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<sup>134</sup> Eubanks Winkler, *O Let Us Howle*, 95-105 includes an analysis of the song. She argues that this scene was a way for Bracegirdle, as Marcella, to get her comeuppance after a scandalous affair involving a potential kidnapping and the suicide of one of her admirers. For another analysis, see Price, *Henry Purcell and the London Stage*, 215-217.

10  
Marcella  
Fla - - - shes, like Light-ning Fla - - -

Bassi

13  
Marcella  
- shes with-in my Breast; there glows a so - - lid Fire, which in a

Bassi

17  
Marcella  
Thou-sand, thou-sand A - ges can't ex - pire. Blo

Bassi

20  
Marcella  
- w, bl - w, bl - w, blow, blow the

Bassi

23  
Marcella  
Winds great Ru - ler blow, bring the Po and the Gan - ges hi - ther, tis

Bassi

**Example 2.12. “I burn, I burn,” *Don Quixote, Part II* (John Eccles), mm. 10-24.<sup>135</sup>**

These vocal runs are followed almost immediately by a declamatory passage, in which Marcella sings of her “Pride, hot as Hell / that first made me Rebell”: a restless confession of her seduction attempt.<sup>136</sup> The passage is in E minor, and the declamatory rhythms evoke her agitation, driving the music towards the final section. In measure 47, the bass line erupts into wild sixteenth notes, and the voice line becomes even more erratic, switching between short, staccato notes and more lilting sigh figures (see

<sup>135</sup> This transcription is from GB-Lbl G.151.a, *A Collection of the choicest Songs & Dialogues compos'd by the most eminent masters of the age* (London: John Walsh, ca. 1705). It includes 204 songs, originally published separately.

<sup>136</sup> See Eubanks Winkler, *O Let Us Howle*, 97. She argues that divisions were a conventional way to depict insanity.



measures 48-51). Finally, as Marcella sings of suicide (“bring me Daggers, Poison, Fire”), Eccles’s music reaches its apex—her vocal line climbs to her highest note (G5), depicting her ultimate cry of despair.

48  
Marcella  
off, off, off ye vain Fan - tas-tick Toyes, off, off ye vain fan - tas-tick toys, that drep'd this  
Bassi

51  
Marcella  
Face and Bo - dy \_to al - lure, bring, bring me Dag - gers, Poi - son, Fire, Fire, Dag - gers, Poy - son, Fire, for  
Bassi

54  
Marcella  
Scorn is tum'd in\_\_ to de - sire all Hell all Hell feels not the  
Bassi

57  
Marcella  
Rage, which I, poor\_\_\_\_\_ I, which I poor\_\_\_ I en - dure.  
Bassi

**Example 2.13. “I burn, I burn,” *Don Quixote, Part II* (J. Eccles), mm. 48-60.**

As illustrated in her song, Bracegirdle possessed refined qualities as an actress-singer. She had the capability to enact not only virtuous characters, but characters whose innocence eventually becomes their downfall. The unpredictable melodic changes portray Marcella’s mental turbulence and demonstrate that Bracegirdle could master the music’s inherent difficulties: melismatic passages that give way to declamation, a variety of leaps, and melodies that climb quickly from the low part of her range to the top. The continuo line rarely supports the voice; in the opening measures it behaves more like a recitative accompaniment. Starting in measure 19, the bass line takes off on its own unsettled

trajectory. The two parts come together again during the declamatory section (“’Twas Pride, hot as Hell) but again diverge in measure 47 (“Off, ye vain Fantastick Toyes”). Unlike Elizabeth Barry, who could not carry a tune, Bracegirdle was an accomplished singer and actress, whose musical talents were highlighted in nearly every production starring her.<sup>137</sup>

Bracegirdle’s celebrity as a talented actress and singer is surely what persuaded Vanbrugh and Saggione to cast her in *The Temple of Love*. Her character, Phillis, is yet another virtuous woman, a shepherdess who refuses the advances of numerous men, including a lustful satyr.<sup>138</sup> Phillis is initially in love with Thyrsis, but when she realizes that he has a wandering eye, she rejects him for the opera’s unattainable hero Sylvander. Even then, her pursuit is of an honest nature: she only insists on loving him because she believes that she is the answer to the riddle that will lead him to his true love, Orinda. In fact, it is Phillis’s friend, Eurilla (Maria Gallia) who is the disguised Orinda. By the end of the opera, all mistakes have been righted: Phillis forgives Thyrsis, and Eurilla and Sylvander realize they are long-lost lovers.<sup>139</sup>

The friendship between Phillis and Eurilla diverges from what was typical of two leading female characters. In *Arsinoe* and *Camilla*, the female leads are rivals; in *Arsinoe* Dorisbe lusts after both the crown and Ormondo, and in *Camilla*, Lavinia mistakenly believes the heroine desires her lover, Turno. In *The Temple of Love*, however, Eurilla

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<sup>137</sup> As Pople claims, Bracegirdle was the first true actress-singer because she sang all her own songs. Others, such as Barry, often hired trained singers to perform their music. See Pople, “Spectacular Bodies,” 215.

<sup>138</sup> Bracegirdle often played shepherdesses; in *Don Quixote*, Marcella is a shepherdess, and in 1703 she played Amintas in *The Fickle Shepherdess*, in which she sang the mad song “Hast, give me wings and let me fly.”

<sup>139</sup> For a short analysis of this opera, with a focus on Thyrsis’s music, see Timothy Neufeldt, “The Social and Political Aspects of the Pastoral Mode in Musico-Dramatic Works, London 1695-1728,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 2006), 121-131.

and Phillis are best friends, who support one another even as lovers dally with the wrong mates. The dramatic trajectory of the opera draws attention to the amity between the two women. Their pranks countering the satyr's shameful advances provide levity in the otherwise serious production. In act 3, when Eurilla is confronted with Sylvander's declaration of love, she refuses him because she knows that Phillis also has her eyes set on him: "Sylvander is lovely, but Phillis claims my Friendship [...]. / But yet the Power of Friendship / Is more prevailing / Where Honour is not failing."<sup>140</sup> At the end of the opera, Phillis acknowledges that Eurilla and Sylvander have been brought together by fate, and accepts Thyrasis instead. This onstage friendship may not have translated to the personal relationship between Maria Gallia and Anne Bracegirdle. Nevertheless, their collaboration invites an analysis that shows how the production combined the talents of the English actress-singer and the Italian *virtuosa*.

Bracegirdle and Gallia's musical profiles are strikingly different: Gallia's music showcased technical virtuosity, while Bracegirdle's music underscored her less flashy singing ability while highlighting her talent as an actress. Saggione privileged Gallia, whose voice he knew well after years of composing music for her, with six arias, far more than any other character. In contrast, Bracegirdle sang only three arias, a noticeable difference. Even so, Bracegirdle was granted more time onstage; her witty banter with both the satyr and Thyrasis, as well as an exciting scene in which the satyr ties her to a tree and almost ravishes her, provided enough action to satisfy both the actress and her fans. In scenes in which the two women sing in each other's company, however, Saggione's music exaggerates their individual specialties. He drew attention to Gallia's talent for sustaining long coloratura passages and held notes. His music for Bracegirdle is not as

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<sup>140</sup> Motteux, *The Temple of Love*, libretto, 27.

vocally challenging, but it showcased the flirtatious yet virtuous persona that she continued to cultivate in her theatrical roles.

Eurilla and Phillis share the stage in act 1, but do not sing arias together until act 2, and at first, their musical presentations are understated. Eurilla’s first aria is the opening to the opera. “Charming Roses” is lyrical, and contains melodic embellishment, but it is not overly elaborate. Melismas occur frequently, but they are momentary ornaments rather than extended passages; only the words “gay,” “Roses,” and “flowery” are treated melismatically (see measures 12-13).

4  
Eurilla  
Bassi

7  
Eurilla  
Char - ming Ro - ses, flow - ry Treas - ures, sweet and  
Bassi

10  
Eurilla  
smi - ling, sweet and smi - ling gay  
Bassi

12  
Eurilla  
like the Morn, gay like the Morn, sweet and  
Bassi

14

**Example 2.14.** “Charming Roses,” *The Temple of Love* (Giuseppe Saggione), mm. 4-14.<sup>141</sup>

<sup>141</sup> All examples from *The Temple of Love* were transcribed from the Walsh and Hare print, Hirsch III.741, copy of Hirsch IV.1582. In this example, I have removed redundant G-sharps included in the bass line of the printed music.

Similarly, in “I’ll ever be Loving,” Gallia showed off her breath support on the word “delight,” held over four measures (see measures 24-27), and again on the word “removing” in the B section. These moments, however, do not characterize the entire aria, which is mostly syllabically set and does not contain an array of technically challenging features.

**Example 2.15. “I’ll ever be Loving,” *The Temple of Love* (G. Saggione), mm. 21-30.<sup>142</sup>**

Bracegirdle’s first aria is quite similar to Gallia’s. “Ne’er leave me more my Treasure” is also in A major, and it is in compound quadruple meter (12/8), which is reminiscent of “I’ll ever be Loving” (in 6/8). Most significantly, her music is punctuated by melismas that embellish the word “treasure.” Each time, these vocal runs are slightly different; in measure 5, it is a playful dotted-rhythm passage that descends; in measure 11, it is reversed and the voice moves from low to high, still singing dotted rhythms; and in measure 14 the dotted rhythms are replaced by two sixteenth notes, providing a more lyrical line leading to the cadence.

<sup>142</sup> I have preserved all beaming, slur markings, and spellings from the original print.

5

Phillis  
Bassi

trea - - - - - sure, Char - mer,

**Example 2.16.** “Ne’er leave me more my treasure,” *The Temple of Love* (G. Saggione), mm. 5-6.

11

Phillis  
Bassi

trea - - - - - sure, char- mer, re-turn or I

**Example 2.17.** “Ne’er leave me more my treasure,” *The Temple of Love* (G. Saggione), mm. 11-12.

14

Phillis  
Bassi

trea - - - - - sure, char - mer re-turn or I

**Example 2.18.** “Ne’er leave me more my treasure,” *The Temple of Love* (G. Saggione), mm. 14-15.

“I burn, I burn” showed that Bracegirdle could navigate measure-long vocal runs, and in this first aria she demonstrates this feature of her musical prowess once again. Although Gallia’s vocal runs are longer, very little of the musical material in these arias distinguished the two singers’ capabilities. Instead, in the first act of the opera they exhibited similar musical profiles that downplayed their distinctive, specialized talents.

In act 2 the musical strengths of Bracegirdle and Gallia are noticeably juxtaposed. Act 2 begins with the sleeping satyr, whose dreams are visited by Diana and Venus. Eurilla and Phillis enter, and the former admits that she slapped Thyrsis because of his overt flirtations. Phillis responds with an aria, the only one that she sings in the onstage company of her companion. “Ev’ry Man in Love’s a Traitor” expresses her frustration and disappointment in Thyrsis, but the aria also draws attention to her own steadfastness and virtue. She accuses Thyrsis, as well as “ev’ry man in love” of flirting with “ev’ry Creature,” despite maintaining a façade of faithfulness. The aria is *da capo*, and includes elements associated with pastoral operas, the most obvious of which is its 6/8 meter. B minor, the only time this key is used in an aria in this opera, may have been a strategic choice. Bracegirdle’s range was not quite as extensive as Gallia’s; in “I burn, I burn” she hits G5 only once, and briefly at that. All her music in *The Temple of Love* sits comfortably in the middle of her range, usually between F#4 and E5. In “Ev’ry Man in Love’s a Traitor,” Bracegirdle even exercised the lower part of her voice: in measure 15, the melisma on “sporting” takes her all the way down to B3. B minor was a key in which Bracegirdle could sing comfortably, without taxing the upper part of her range. This careful, protected treatment of her voice throughout underscored her projected innocence, and perhaps even her vulnerability. It is probably no coincidence that in her next scene, Phillis is captured and almost raped by the satyr, who is out for revenge. Phillis and Bracegirdle’s actress persona were one in the same: good-natured and virtuous to the point of weakness.





It starts on a bold move to C-natural, with a fleeting harmony of C major, the Neapolitan in B minor. This melody is more lyrical, and spans from F#4 to F#5, the top of her range in this aria. The rhythm is also more complex, ranging from straight eighth notes, to a combination of quarters and eighths, to a dotted rhythm so typical of pastoral songs. This passage allowed Bracegirdle to show off her voice more than in the first part of the A section.

Bracegirdle’s melismas in the B section provided even more opportunities to show off her musical skills. The embellishments on “courting” in measures 37 to 41 required breath support; four measures is the longest melismatic passage that she sang in the opera. Rhythmically, this passage is not terribly complex; the dotted rhythm is repeated, leading to a cadence on F# minor, but the passage is pretty and lyrical.

**Example 2.21. “Ev’ry Man in Love’s a Traitor,” *The Temple of Love* (G. Saggione), mm. 37-41.**

Another vocal run on “courting” ends the B section. This time Bracegirdle’s melody is slightly freer, portraying a level of technical difficulty that she did not otherwise display in the opera.

**Example 2.22. “Ev’ry Man in Love’s a Traitor,” *The Temple of Love* (G. Saggione), mm. 46-49.**

Although it lasts only three measures, she had to navigate large, difficult leaps; the first, a tri-tone from E5 to A#4, and the second an octave, from the low part of her range (F#4) to the top (F#5). Phillis's aria did not require a high level of technical sophistication on the part of the singer. Moments, however, demonstrate that Bracegirdle was no ordinary actress-singer; she possessed specialized musical skills from her three decades singing songs in the English spoken theater. "Ev'ry Man in love's a Traitor" supported the alluring offstage persona singer's innocence. It also offered her the chance to show off particular musical strengths cultivated in the spoken theater.

Immediately after Phillis sings her aria, she and Eurilla spy a bird singing in a tree; Eurilla responds by singing a duet with the bird, played by Mr. Paisible on the flute.<sup>143</sup> The aria is unnecessary to the plot, and therefore invites interpretation, especially in light of Eurilla's music, which is one of her most virtuoso arias in the opera. Saggione and Maria Gallia play upon an Italian opera convention, the bird song, in which the voice and "bird" each try to outdo the other's display of technical virtuosity.<sup>144</sup> The aria opens with a long introduction played by the flute, which alternates between slow and fast tempi. The voice enters during the *adagio* section, with a melisma on "Warbling," which includes moments for trills on the second and fourth beats. The flute responds, still in the slow tempo, but the next vocal entrance immediately changes the tone of the aria: it is now *vivace*, making the following coloratura passages even more ostentatious.<sup>145</sup> In "Warbling the Birds enjoying" Gallia finally was able to display her technical virtuosity, which had remained under wraps for the first act of the opera. In the A section, short

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<sup>143</sup> See Neufeldt, "The Social and Political Aspects of the Pastoral Mode," 121-131, for another analysis of this aria.

<sup>144</sup> For example, see Almirena's aria "Augeletti" in Handel's *Rinaldo* (1711).

<sup>145</sup> See Appendix A, example A.10 for the full aria.

melismas on the words “warbling” and “gay” only hint at her next outburst of sixteenth notes.

Musical score for Eurilla and Bassi. Eurilla's part features a melisma on the word "Warbling" with a long horizontal line under the notes. Bassi's part provides a rhythmic accompaniment.

**Example 2.23. “Warbling the Birds enjoying,” *The Temple of Love* (G. Saggione), mm. 7-9.<sup>146</sup>**

Between measures 18 and 26, Gallia sang three and a half measures of uninterrupted sixteenth-note coloratura, followed immediately by a long held note for another four measures, during which the flute serenaded her.

Musical score for Flute, Eurilla, and Bassi. The Flute part has a melisma on the word "free & gay" with a long horizontal line. Eurilla's part features a melisma on the word "free & gay" with a long horizontal line. Bassi's part provides a rhythmic accompaniment.

<sup>146</sup> In this example, I have left out the *obbligato* flute. See Appendix A for the entire transcription.

The image displays two systems of musical notation. The first system features three staves: Flute (Fl.), Eurilla, and Bassi. The Flute part consists of a continuous melisma of sixteenth-note triplets. The Eurilla and Bassi parts are marked with rests. The second system also features three staves. The Flute part has four groups of triplet sixteenth notes. The Eurilla part has a long melisma, and the Bassi part has a short melisma.

**Example 2.24. “Warbling the Birds enjoying,” *The Temple of Love* (G. Saggione), mm. 17-25.**

She exhibited yet another technical feat on the next two repeats of the word “gay”: both are set to two-beat long triplet sixteenth note melismas that would have demonstrated her vocal agility and intonation. After a lyrical passage, the tempo shifts again, back to *largo* for the cadence; here, Gallia sang low in her range, dipping down to C4. The B section, in comparison to the first part, is short. Perhaps in an allusion to Phillis’s previous aria, however, Eurilla sings a two measure long melisma on the word “sports”. The sixteenth-note triplets from the A section return to embellish this passage, but it is extended both in number of beats and range; she hits her highest note in the aria, G5, at the apex of the melody.

**Example 2.25. “Warbling the Birds enjoying,” *The Temple of Love* (G. Saggione), mm. 39-46.**

“Warbling the Birds enjoying” was a compendium of the hallmarks of Italian singing technique. The singer luxuriated in long sixteenth-note coloratura passages, trills, long held notes of four or more measures, triplet coloratura passages, large leaps, tempo changes, and extremes of range. The duet with the instrument signified yet another convention of Italian arias, and drew further attention to the virtuosity of the singer.

The juxtaposition of their singing styles and musical strengths drew attention to the different ways in which each cultivated her celebrity persona. Gallia relied on her novelty as an Italian *virtuosa*, and her music in this scene demonstrates that she continued

to promote herself as a technically proficient, professionally trained singer of Italian-style music. In contrast, Bracegirdle was known for her acting as well as her singing in English plays. Her reputation for virtue and innocence, however, was also an integral part of how audiences received and engaged with her celebrity. Phillis's music combined the actress's musical abilities while continuing to cultivate the elements of her personality that had made her so successful in the Restoration theater. When compared with Bracegirdle's music, Gallia's arias immediately seem more technically demanding and refined. Yet, her most virtuoso moments were reserved for her scene with her English colleague. In *The Temple of Love*, the blend of their distinctive musical strengths, especially in shared scenes, offered audiences the chance to enjoy the best of past English theatrical practices, as well as newer, unusual elements of Italian-style opera.

*The Temple of Love* displayed the artistic possibilities of English-language, Italian-style operas by starring a celebrated English actress playing alongside a renowned Italian singer. In casting the two women, Saggione and Vanbrugh revealed the opera's commercial design. Anne Bracegirdle was a strategic casting choice because she had many admirers, acquired during years of cultivating her celebrity as an actress-singer. Her involvement showed that English actress-singers could still contribute artistically to production of Italianate operas, even if the cast included Italian singers. Similarly, Maria Gallia's celebrity as a professional *virtuosa* would have appealed to those in the audience who appreciated foreign music and performances, still a novelty in 1706. The prologue to the opera, written and spoken by Mr. Booth, supported the collaborative efforts of the two singers, as well as the rest of the opera's creative team:

“Drawn by [Queen Anne's] Fame, strange Shepherds now repair,  
In *English* Words, with soft *Venetian* Air,

To sing their Passion, and beguile your Care.  
 [...]
 Tho' in the Voice that double Charm is found,  
 The Harmony of Sense, and Melody of Sound:  
 'Tis hard to raise, or save, in ev'ry Place,  
 With manly *English* an *Italian* Grace.  
 Yet if this bold Attempt you'll kindly spare,  
 What may not then a grateful Spirit dare,  
 To strive to please the Gen'rous, and the Fair?"<sup>147</sup>

Booth pleaded with audiences to accept their offering of an opera that would provide features of both English and Italian theater. The prologue's references to Queen Anne extolled her as a virtuous monarch and England's protector and may have represented a concerted effort to smooth over the opera's Italianate elements. Booth drew attention to the combination of "*English* Words, with soft *Venetian* Air." Although neither Gallia nor Bracegirdle gets a mention in the prologue, their collaboration onstage created a new kind of operatic entertainment for audiences to enjoy, one that depended on Italian musical virtuosity as well as English acting.

### **Conclusion: Legacies of Actress-Singers**

English actress-singers were crucial collaborators in early English language, fully-sung operas. Their participation legitimized these operas as continuing English theatrical practices, despite conspicuous differences in dramatic content and musical style. Letitia Cross, Mary Lindsey, and Anne Bracegirdle all engaged in different kinds of collaborative relationships to influence their roles in the operas, and these collaborations helped to define—or redefine—their celebrity. Thomas Clayton's music for Cross reveals that he knew her vocal strengths and dramatic specialties well. He designed her role around these features, thus reminding audiences of how she first became a celebrity as

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<sup>147</sup> Motteux, *The Temple of Love*, prologue, spoken by Mr. Booth.

one of Henry Purcell's final collaborators. Mary Lindsey fostered a collaborative partnership with Richard Leveridge, another veteran of the spoken theater. By actively foregoing a career as a leading lady, she promoted herself as a comedienne-singer, filling a niche that had not yet been taken by another female performer. Anne Bracegirdle worked with Maria Gallia in only one opera, and yet their onstage collaboration paved the way for the Italianate pasticcio operas produced between 1707 and 1716, most of which starred both Italian and English singers. In these early productions, composers, librettists, managers, and singers experimented with different ways in which to market a foreign musical genre to the English. By casting English actress-singers, all of whom had made their early careers in the late Restoration theater, opera producers capitalized on their associations to a beloved and respected English institution. Even more importantly, these actress-singers pursued new and novel relationships with other theatrical personages in order to promote a new kind of collaborative celebrity.

By 1708, Italianate pasticcio operas and adaptations replaced newly composed, fully-sung operas in English. Cast lists show, however, that English singers were not completely supplanted by their foreign colleagues. Although English language, Italian-style operas would eventually give way to operas performed completely in Italian, only *Almahide* (1710) and *Rinaldo* (1711) had casts of only Italian singers.<sup>148</sup> All three of the actress-singers featured in this chapter retired by 1720, but it was not because they could no longer find work. Bracegirdle left the stage in 1707, and accounts suggest that this was due to a dispute over salary and roles. According to Betterton, the younger Ann Oldfield took over Bracegirdle's original parts, inciting a battle between the two actresses and

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<sup>148</sup> Even *Almahide* included comic interludes, external to the main drama, performed by three English singers: Mr. Lawrence, Thomas Doggett and Mary Lindsey.



Owen Swiney, the new manager of the Haymarket Theatre.<sup>149</sup> Letitia Cross remained popular, but performed only sporadically because of a conflict between her and the managers at Drury Lane.<sup>150</sup> Mary Lindsey maintained her onstage career until the mid 1710s; the cause for her retirement is unknown, but no Italian singer replaced her. More likely, the need for a comic actress-singer was waning. By the 1710s, Italian operas had become more serious in dramatic content, and therefore were less dependent on subplots involving comic characters.<sup>151</sup> Her niche, so strategic and successful in the first decade of the eighteenth century, may have been her professional downfall.

Rather than replacing English actress-singers, Italian singers influenced the ways in which their English counterparts created and cultivated their celebrity. In late 1706, the Lord Chamberlain separated acting and singing by confining them to separate theatrical spaces. Henry Grey, the first Duke of Kent and acting Lord Chamberlain between 1704 and 1710, decreed that all operas would be performed at the Theatre Royal in Drury

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<sup>149</sup> For contemporary accounts of this controversy, see Betterton, *The History of the English Stage*; and *Authentick memoirs of the life of, that justly celebrated actress, Mrs. Ann Oldfield. Collected from private records, by a certain eminent peer of Great Britain*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Dublin: 1731), *ECCO* (accessed 2012). It is notable that this is a dispute between English actresses, rather than an issue involving Italian singers.

<sup>150</sup> In 1709 she signed a five-year contract with Swiney, who refused to honor it when Colley Cibber, Robert Wilks, and Thomas Doggett joined him in managing the Theatre Royal. In response, she had seventy-three gentleman fans sign a letter of complaint. Later, Cross recanted her involvement in a letter to the Lord Chamberlain. She traveled to the Continent in 1711, and returned to the London stage in 1714-15, at the new theater at Lincoln's Inn Fields. For more on Cross's dispute with the Drury Lane managers, see Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, eds., *Vice Chamberlain Coke's Theatrical Papers* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982), 170-172; and Milhous and Hume, "Theatrical Politics at Drury Lane: New Light on Letitia Cross, Jane Rogers, and Anne Oldfield," in *Bulletin of Research in the Humanities* 85 (1982): 412-429.

<sup>151</sup> Handel's operas are a good example: *Rinaldo*, *Teseo*, and *Amadigi di Gaula* do not have any comic characters. In fact, by 1715 (when *Amadigi* had its premiere), the cast included only four characters. The downsizing of the casts of Italian opera, as well as the reformed approach to dramatic content, will be addressed in Chapter 5.

Lane, and all spoken plays would be performed at the Queen's Theatre.<sup>152</sup> Thus, actress-singers had to choose between acting and singing; they could no longer specialize in both. Most of Betterton's former company chose the spoken theater. Others, such as Mary Lindsey, chose Drury Lane, where she had more opportunities to perform.<sup>153</sup> This reorganization ensured the separation between acting and singing, but it also allowed composers, librettists, and singers to experiment with blending Italian operatic and English theatrical practices. The new Italianate pasticcio operas exploited the onstage collaboration between the English singer Catherine Tofts and the Italian *virtuosa* Margarita de l'Epine; their offstage lives, however, gave rise to accusations of professional rivalry as the reception of Italian opera and music became politically symbolic. The contested reception of the Italian-style pasticcio operas, and the growing anxiety over Italian opera's place in English cultural life, shows that as the eighteenth century wore on, audiences were less inclined to accept Italian singers and music as a legitimate continuation of English theatrical practices. Although not all of these operas were successful, *Arsinoe*, *Camilla*, *Rosamond*, and *The Temple of Love* strove to accomplish what later Italianate pasticcios could not: the preservation of salient dramatic and musical associations with the reputable English spoken theater, most predominantly through the collaborative contributions of celebrated English actress-singers.

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<sup>152</sup> Curtis Price, "The Critical Decade," 54-61.

<sup>153</sup> Leveridge continued to perform primarily as a singer in Italian operas. Handel even composed two roles for him in the 1710s: "Tirenio" in *Il pastor fido* and Minerva's priest in *Teseo*. On Leveridge, see Baldwin and Wilson, "Richard Leveridge, Part 2". On Barbier, see Phillis Ann Brenner, "The Emergence of the English Contralto" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia Teacher's College, 1989), 89-94. On Robinson, see Kathryn Lowerre, "Beauty, Talent, Virtue, and Charm: Portraits of Two of Handel's Sopranos," *Imago Musicae: International Yearbook of Musical Iconography* 9, No. 12 (1992-1995): 205-44.

## Chapter 3

### **Mrs. Tofts, Signora de l'Epine, and the Politics of Rivalry on the London Stage**

In February 1704, a scandal erupted at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane. Ann Barwick, a servant of the English soprano Catherine Tofts, was accused of throwing oranges and hissing at the Italian singer Francesca Margarita de l'Epine.<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Tofts apologized in a letter to Christopher Rich, manager of Drury Lane, exonerating herself from the disgraceful events:

SIR, I was very much surpriz'd when I was inform'd that Ann Barwick, who was lately my Servant, had committed a Rudeness last night at the Play-house, by throwing of Oranges and hissing when Mrs l'Epine the Italian Gentlewoman Sung. I hope no one can think that it was in the least with my Privity as I assure you it was not. I abhor such Practises, and I hope that you will cause her to be prosecuted, that she may be punished as she deserves. I am, Sir, your humble Servant, Katharine Tofts<sup>2</sup>

This letter, subsequently printed in the *Daily Courant* on February 9, was the first of many published reports of the alleged rivalry between the singers. As two of the most sought-after sopranos in London, Tofts and l'Epine were depicted as bitter competitors who battled over roles, fame, and fortune, sparking a public fascination with the scandalous private lives of female opera singers. Their onstage performances accrued

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<sup>1</sup> L'Epine is most often "Margarita," "Margherita," or "Margaritta" in eighteenth-century documents. I have chosen the first of these spellings.

<sup>2</sup> Advertisement. *Daily Courant*, Wednesday, February 9, 1704, *Burney Collection Newspapers*, Gale, The University of Michigan (accessed 2011). During the evening of the performance, l'Epine sang between acts of the comedy, *The Changes*. According to an advertisement in the *Daily Courant* on February 5, 1704, she sang Italian music by Jakob Greber.

political meaning for London audiences as foreign musicians began to flood the city, threatening to overwhelm England's musical and theatrical culture. England's political parties, irreparably fractured by the controversy over Queen Anne's successor to the English throne, also used the singers' rivalry to promote their warring agendas. By pitting Tofts and l'Epine against one another, critics and commentators created a convenient metaphor that engaged with contemporary political anxieties concerning the future of the English monarchy in the shadow of the impending Hanoverian succession.

But was their rivalry authentic? The relationship between Tofts and l'Epine has been preserved in poems, personal letters, commentaries, and memoirs of the eighteenth century; most of these sources tell a story of scandal and mutual animosity. Their opera roles, however, illuminate another perspective on their relationship.<sup>3</sup> Records show that the two performed together in at least four opera productions and a number of non-operatic musical events between 1705 and 1709 (the year Mrs. Tofts moved to the continent).<sup>4</sup> In each of these productions, the sopranos played equally important parts;

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<sup>3</sup> Substantial studies that discuss the lives and careers of these two singers include Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson, "The Harmonious Unfortunate: new light on Catherine Tofts," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 22, No. 2 (2011): 217-234; Charles Burney, *A General History of Music, from the earliest ages to the present period (1789)*, ed. Frank Mercer, vol. 4 (New York: Dover Publications, 1957); Colley Cibber, *An Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber*, 1740, ed. B.R.S. Fone (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1968); Ellen Creathorne Clayton, *Queens of song: being memoirs of some of the most celebrated female vocalists who have performed on the lyric stage from the earliest days of opera to the present time* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1865); D.F. Cook, "Françoise Marguerite de l'Epine: the Italian Lady?" *Theatre Notebook* 35, Nos. 1-2 (1981): 58-72, 104-113; John Hawkins, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music*, A new ed. (London: Novello, Ewer & Co., 1875); and E.L. Moor, "Some Notes on the Life of Françoise Marguerite de l'Epine," *Music & Letters* 28, No. 4 (October 1947): 341-346. L'Epine and Tofts are also mentioned in histories of English opera during this time, but they are usually relegated to footnotes.

<sup>4</sup> The operas are *Thomyris, Queen of Scythia* (1707); *Love's Triumph* (1708); *Clotilda* (1709); and *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* (1709). They appeared together in Johann Christoph Pepusch's ode *Britannia and Augusta*, composed to honor the recently deceased Duke of Newcastle. L'Epine also sang during the intermissions to *Arsinoe* (1705), in which Mrs. Tofts played the eponymous heroine.

only in *Clotilda* (1709) were Tofts and l'Epine cast as rival characters competing for the affections of the hero, and even then the two singers exhibited complementary musical personae. Yet their recurrent collaborations on the stage could not quell rumors of rivalry as their audiences began to identify each singer with her homeland. As the most famous English singer of her day, Mrs. Tofts embodied her country's current struggle against foreign musical influence. In contrast, l'Epine represented an Italian threat, one who jeopardized the supremacy of English culture because her exotic voice was so beloved by audiences, including members of the Tory party who supported the exiled Stuart monarch.

Tofts and l'Epine began performing in London at a critical moment in English history, as the nation's political factions vied for control of Parliament. Since the Glorious Revolution, the Whigs, fervent defenders of William III's monarchy and an eventual Protestant succession, had clashed openly with the Tories, who supported the restoration of the Stuart line. The Act of Settlement (1701) ensured the Hanoverian succession upon Queen Anne's death, thereby exacerbating the country's factious partisan strife, which culminated in the violent Jacobite rebellions of the 1710s.<sup>5</sup> Although the controversies over the future of England's monarchy most frequently played out in Parliament, both Whigs and Tories used cultural propaganda to gain public support throughout England. In 1695 it had become especially easy to publish pamphlets, plays, newspapers, and poetry zealously promoting their political agendas, often

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<sup>5</sup> See Michael Barthorp and G.A. Embleton, *The Jacobite Rebellions, 1689-1745* (London: Reed International Books, Ltd., 1982); R.O. Bucholz, *The Augustan Court: Queen Anne and the Decline of Court Culture* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993); Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies, 1580-1800: The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000); and Ophelia Field, *The Kit-Cat Club: Friends Who Imagined a Nation* (London: HarperPress, 2008).

disguised as witty allusions to contemporary public figures.<sup>6</sup> The theater was no exception. During the first decade of the eighteenth century, London's stages became spaces in which political arguments were played out in front of audiences as hungry for scandal-mongering as they were for well-written drama.<sup>7</sup> The alleged rivalry between Tofts and l'Epine provided an especially timely metaphor for members of the Whig party who sought to discredit Italian opera and its associations with Roman Catholicism—thereby demeaning the Catholic Stuart court and its Tory followers.

Propaganda concerning their acrimonious relationship, and the political debates their rivalry represented, abounded in the press. Two poems, both entitled “The Power of Musick,” exploited the singers' relationship as symbolic of a larger political struggle. The first, published anonymously in 1705, used their rivalry to illustrate England's contentious political partisanship, while criticizing the country's fascination with Italian music:

Musick has Learnt the discord of the state,  
And Consorts jar with Whig, and Tory Hate;  
Here S[omerset] and D[evonshir]e, attend  
To British Tofts, and ev'ry Note commend;  
To Native merit just, they're pleas'd to see,  
We've Roman Arts, from Roman Bondage free.  
There fam'd L'Epine does equal Skill employ,  
While list'ning Peers Crowd with Extatick Joys.  
B[edford]d to hear her Song his Dice forsakes,  
And N[ottingha]m's transported when she Shakes;  
Lull'd Statesmen melt away their drowsy Cares

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<sup>6</sup> The Whigs sponsored *The Tatler* (1709-1711) and *The Spectator* (1711-12), published by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele. The *Tory Tatler* was published between 1710 and 1711, and expressed opposing political views. Authors such as Jonathan Swift, Alexander Pope, Steele, Addison, Sir John Vanbrugh, William Congreve, and their contemporaries often published poems and epigrams concerning contemporary politics and ridiculing political figures such as the Duke of Marlborough and Lord Godolphin. See Field, *The Kit-Cat Club*, 176-198, 242-265.

<sup>7</sup> For example, Richard Steele's play *The Tender Husband* (1705) was a thinly disguised allegory lampooning the animosity between the English and the French during the early years of the War of the Spanish Succession. *Ibid.*, 148-149.

Of England's Safety in Italian Aires.<sup>8</sup>

The second poem, published two years later, upheld music as the antidote to warfare, claiming that “it can rebellious Hearts Subdue, / Both melt the *Heroe*, raise the Conquest too”.<sup>9</sup> In an apparent homage to its sister poem, the 1707 verse echoed the sentiment that “Two tuneful Rival Sisters next appear, / Who justly claim th’ Applauses of each Peer.” Yet the singers are “Equally Charming” and “equally too Great,” implying that there was not enough space on the London stage for both Tofts and l’Epine.<sup>10</sup> As the poems suggest, the two singers were set into competition both onstage and off: in operas, they were seen as rivals for the same kinds of roles; in daily English life, they symbolized the enmity between the Whigs and the Tories. Jonathan Swift quipped of their symbolic status in his *Argument against Abolishing Christianity*: “Suppose, for argument sake, that the Tories favoured Margarita, the Whigs, Mrs Tofts, and the Trimmers, Valentini, would not Margaritians, Toftians, and Valentinians be very tolerable marks of distinction?”<sup>11</sup> Swift’s witticism, as well as the two poems, indicated that Tofts and l’Epine became emblematic of opposing sides of England’s warring political factions, which exploited their assumed antagonism in literary propaganda. A trip to the opera house offered

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<sup>8</sup> Poem. *The Diverting Post*, June 9, 1705, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2011). That Charles Seymour, Duke of Somerset and William Cavendish, Duke of Devonshire, are mentioned in relation to “British Tofts” illustrates their political alliances with the staunchly patriotic Whig party, who supported the eventual Hanoverian succession. Similarly, Daniel Finch, Earl of Nottingham, was a Tory, most famous for supporting the Stuart claims to the throne. See their entries in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: in association with the British Academy: from the earliest times to the year 2000*, eds. H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>9</sup> Poem. *The Power of Musick*, 1707. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale. The University of Michigan (2012), 6.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>11</sup> Jonathan Swift, *An Argument Against Abolishing Christianity*, *ECCO* (accessed 2011). “Trimmers” referred to those who easily switched political parties for their own benefit.

English audiences the chance to witness the political controversies personified by the two singers.<sup>12</sup>

The alleged rivalry between Tofts and l'Epine has contributed to historical and modern perceptions of female performers as “rival queens,” women who fought fiercely to claim the best roles in operas and plays, the highest salaries, and the most prestigious benefit nights.<sup>13</sup> Rivalries between female performers were memorialized in eighteenth-century histories of the stage and claim attention in musicological and theatrical scholarship today. In the late eighteenth century, Burney observed that “[Mrs Tofts], the constant rival of Margarita, was a principal singer in all the first operas that were performed on our stage in English [...],”<sup>14</sup> and Sir John Hawkins also noted that “in [Mrs. Tofts’s] voice and manner she so far surpassed the rest of the English women, as to be able to divide the applause of the town with Margarita.”<sup>15</sup> Ellen Creathorne-Clayton wrote of the two singers in the mid-nineteenth century: “[Their] musical rivalry, a novelty in England, gave rise to many ‘squibs,’ and afforded subject-matter for laughter and

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<sup>12</sup> Pramod K. Nayar argues that scandal enhances modern celebrity by “humaniz[ing] larger-than-life figures,” though it also “enable[s] a questioning of the moral values of a culture [...] that call into question our codes of conduct and norms about sexuality, duties, patriotism, efficiency and public life.” Whether real or a product of the press, their rivalry would have given them additional publicity, which would have, in theory, increased their audience. Audiences were able to participate in the scandalous rivalry too, by taking sides depending on their political affiliations and cultural tastes. See Pramod K. Nayar, *Seeing Stars: Spectacle, Society and Celebrity Culture* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2009), 113-115.

<sup>13</sup> See Winton Dean and J. Merrill Knapp, *Handel’s Operas, 1704-1726* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987); and James Wierzbicki, “Dethroning the Divas: Satire Directed at Cuzzoni and Faustina,” *Opera Quarterly* 17, No. 2 (2001): 175-196. Suzanne Aspden has studied the rivalry between Francesca Cuzzoni and Faustina Bordoni as a construct of the press, in “The ‘rival queens’ and the play of identity in Handel’s *Admeto*,” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 18, No. 3 (2006): 301-331.

<sup>14</sup> Burney, *A General History of Music*, 197.

<sup>15</sup> John Hawkins, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music*, Vol. 5, 151.



gossip in coffee-houses, drawing-rooms, and supper-saloons.”<sup>16</sup> Modern scholars have maintained that female actresses and singers competed with each other in order to define themselves as unique commodities in a growing market for theatrical performance.<sup>17</sup> While a useful theoretical tool for exploring market competition, assumptions of rivalry and competition between female performers limit our understanding of how women supported each other within professional networks. Questioning these historical anecdotes of their relationship, however, reveals that Tofts and l’Epine’s relationship played into an emerging paradigm of rivalry that has haunted the reception of female performers throughout the Restoration and well into the eighteenth century. Concerning the contentious relationship between Francesca Cuzzoni and Faustina Bordoni, Suzanne Aspden has found that “the very clamor surrounding their encounter demonstrates an enthusiasm for simulation which suggests the rivalry was less the creation of the singers than the manufacture of others.”<sup>18</sup> Similarly, the fervor surrounding the rivalry of Tofts and l’Epine must be considered within the context of their critics, who used the singers to fuel the fire underscoring their own political agendas.

As publicly celebrated women, Tofts and l’Epine threatened England’s chauvinist attitude towards musical culture. In *The Devil to Pay at St. James’s* (1727), a pamphlet satirizing notorious opera singers, the anonymous author made note of significant rivalries between female performers of earlier decades:

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<sup>16</sup> Ellen Creathorne Clayton, *Queens of Song*. A “squib” is a short satirical piece of writing, much like an epigram.

<sup>17</sup> See Berta Joncus, “Producing Stars in *Dramma per musica*,” in *Music as Social and Cultural Practice: Essays in Honor of Reinhard Strohm*, eds. Melania Bucciarelli and Berta Joncus (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: The Boydell Press, 2007); Felicity Nussbaum, *Rival Queens: Actresses, Performance, and the Eighteenth-Century British Theater* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).

<sup>18</sup> Aspden, “The ‘rival queans,’” 303.

We have had Singers, nay, *Italian Singers*, here before now, but never such Doings: Witness Madam *Margarita* and Madam *Tofts*; who, tho' they ow'd each other a Spight, and had both pretty high Spirits, yet they never came to Handy-cuffs. Nay, I am very credibly inform'd, tho' they mortally hated each other, they had the Good-Manners to kiss and cry at Parting. This was as it should be; this was fashionable, this was handsome, and indeed commendable. Then we had Madam *Pilotti*, and Madam *Isabella*; they were as loving as *Balls Pigs*, and mild as *Turtles*; they visited and drank Tea, and there was no such Hurricane between them. It was much the same with Madam *Durastanti* and Madam *Robinson*.<sup>19</sup>

In order to “prove” that Francesca Cuzzoni and Faustina Bordoni are rivals, the author established a precedent of competition between female opera singers, thus normalizing the practice of female rivalry on the stage and fitting the two singers into an existing paradigm.<sup>20</sup> By the time of its publication in the 1720s, English audiences had witnessed women performing onstage for nearly six decades. Since the debut of the earliest Restoration actresses on London’s stages, however, female performers had succumbed to slanderous allegations concerning their offstage lives. As discussed in the previous chapter, female actresses were especially vulnerable to accusations concerning their sexual profligacy; even the most celebrated actresses, such as Elizabeth Barry, were accused of maintaining inappropriate sexual relationships with their wealthy, upper-class patrons.<sup>21</sup> As women in the theater gained public visibility and personal wealth, insinuations of sexual indiscretions served to undermine their newly acquired

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<sup>19</sup> *The Devil to Pay at St. James’s: or, A full and true Account of the most horrid and bloody Battle between Madam Faustina and Madam Cuzzoni* (London: 1727), 4.

<sup>20</sup> Although Tofts and l’Epine were certainly perceived as offstage rivals, at least by the public, Elisabetta Pilotti-Schiavonetti and Isabella Girardeau never competed on- or offstage for roles. Margarita Durastanti and Anastasia Robinson also do not seem to have had an antagonistic relationship.

<sup>21</sup> On Elizabeth Barry, see Elizabeth Howe, *The First English Actresses: Women and Drama 1660-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). On actresses in general, see Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England 1500-1800* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995); Jean I. Marsden, *Fatal Desire: Women, Sexuality, and the English Stage, 1660-1720* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2006); and Kristina Straub, *Sexual Suspects*.

professional agency. Similarly, indictments of petty squabbles between female performers grew to exaggerated proportions, further subverting the potential power that female performers could accrue as publicly visible women. Implications of rivalry reduced these powerful women to bickering divas obsessed with fame and fortune, easing the threat as economically successful businesswomen. As noted by the satirist above, the Cuzzoni/Bordoni scandal was seen as a culmination of decades of female competition playing out onstage and off.

Paradoxically, however, the author of *The Devil to Pay* does not claim that all the rivalries he lists were inherently hostile. In fact, Tofts and l'Epine seem to have only demonstrated mutual affection (out of politeness, according to the author), instead of indulging in the spectacle of antagonistic aggression of which Cuzzoni and Bordoni are accused. The third edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* includes a pertinent definition of "rival" which throws some relief onto this inconsistency: "A person having the same objective as another, an associate."<sup>22</sup> This definition highlights the importance of a shared goal between performers who were considered rivals. This establishment and execution of shared goals is the focus of my exploration of the relationship between Catherine Tofts and Margarita de l'Epine. "Rivalry" inherently implies plurality: there must be another with whom to compete, or work, in order for potential rivalries to exist. With competition comes partnership and collaboration, regardless of personal prejudice between the competitors. This subtle distinction complicates the ways in which female performers were considered "rival queens" in the eighteenth century and also exposes an emerging pattern concerning England's reception of female performers.

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<sup>22</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, 3d ed., s.v. "rival," 3.

Despite their public reputations as symbols of cultural and political conflict, on the stage Tofts and l'Epine were artistic collaborators who worked together to support and promote their individual careers. Their frequent collaboration in four operas and numerous other theatrical events indicates that the two singers consistently worked together as professionals. The singers worked around the perception of their rivalry, fashioning their own marketable personas as distinctive, equally talented performers of both English and Italian music. Yet these personas were inextricably linked through the operas in which they starred. The musico-dramatic content of the pasticcio operas featuring them depended upon their complementary partnership. They fashioned their celebrity personas through their unique (and titillating) onstage collaborations as a way to ensure mutually successful careers as well as continued work. Tofts and l'Epine ushered in a new era of theatrical performance, one in which an opera's success depended on public investment in the singers' collaborative celebrity. Their performances between 1705 and 1709 offer a model of collaboration seen as scandalous rivalry, a model that would become the dominant paradigm for the public's perception of female performers throughout the eighteenth century.

### **Margarita de l'Epine: England's "Italian Gentlewoman"**

Margarita de l'Epine's (b. ca. 1680, d. 8 Aug 1746) earliest known performance in London took place in 1703, when the *Daily Courant* announced that, "at the Desire of several Persons of Quality," a benefit performance for the actress Elinor Lee would be held the following Tuesday.<sup>23</sup> As was the custom, a play would be performed (in this case, presumably starring Mrs. Lee), with singing and dancing during the interval. The

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<sup>23</sup> Advertisement. *Daily Courant*, May 29, 1703, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2011).

play, a revival of Nathaniel Lee's *The Rival Queens, or, The Death of Alexander the Great* (1677), was complemented by the voice of the "Famous Signora Francisca Margarita de l'Epine," who sang "Four of her most celebrated Songs."<sup>24</sup> This advertisement shows that it was not the first time that l'Epine had performed in London. She may have arrived around the turn of the eighteenth century, although Frederick Moor dismisses the possibility that l'Epine was the mysterious "Italian Lady" who sang at York Buildings on January 7, 1693.<sup>25</sup> It is possible that l'Epine may have arrived as early as 1693, but she would have been young indeed.<sup>26</sup> Regardless of when l'Epine first sang for London's audiences, by 1703 she was established enough to be referred to as "famous" in the advertisement quoted above. Moreover, it is clear that the singer was already a box office draw; rather than extolling the talents of the beneficiary of the evening (presumably the focus of the night's events), the advertisement announced that it would be "positively the last time of her Singing on the Stage whilst she stays in England." Despite the promotional hook, this was not l'Epine's last performance in London.<sup>27</sup> She stayed in England for the rest of her life, singing in both Italian and English operas on the stage, marrying the composer Johann Christoph Pepusch, and training new singers after her retirement in the early 1720s. Although l'Epine assimilated into English society early in her career, she was always known as the "Italian Gentlewoman," an association that contributed to her reception in London.

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<sup>24</sup> Nathaniel Lee's play became one of the most frequently revived seventeenth-century plays in the eighteenth century, demonstrating England's fascination with women competing on the stage. See Nussbaum, *Rival Queens*; and Cheryl Wanko, "Colley Cibber's 'The Rival Queens': A New Consideration," *Eighteenth Century Theatre Research* 3, No. 2 (Winter 1988): 38-52.

<sup>25</sup> E.L. Moor, "Some Notes on the Life of Françoise Marguerite de l'Epine," 341.

<sup>26</sup> Donald Cook, "Françoise Margu rite de l'Epine," 58-60.

<sup>27</sup> Burney makes a joke of this fact in his account of her first performance: "[L'Epine] continued, however, singing more *last*, and *positively last times*, during the whole month." Charles Burney, *A General History of Music*, Vol. 4, 196.

In 1703, Italian music was still a novel phenomenon, and advertisements for Margarita's earliest documented performances reveal how her identity as an Italian *virtuosa* was used to attract audiences. She was often referred to as the "famous Italian Lady,"<sup>28</sup> and in nearly all advertisements in the *Daily Courant* starting in 1704, the singer's Italian heritage and skill at performing Italian music are announced explicitly, drawing attention to her exotic and virtuoso abilities:

And tomorrow will be acted, *Venice Preserv'd*, or, *A Plot Discover'd*. Wherein (at the Desire of Several Persons of Quality) the Famous Signora Francisca Margarita de l'Epine will perform several Italian Songs, being accompanied on the Harpsichord by Signor Giacomo Greber, it being the first of her performing at this Theatre.<sup>29</sup>

Margarita's Italian origin is already on full display in these early advertisements. Clearly, the thrill for audiences of hearing an Italian woman singing Italian music was something upon which theatre managers and l'Epine could capitalize. Although we do not know exactly what l'Epine sang at these events, vocal music composed by Jakob Greber (whose music she often sang) reveals an unsurprising dedication to Italian musical style: use of the Italian language, ostentatious passages of vocal melisma, and da capo aria form.<sup>30</sup> (See Example 3.01). By shaping her musical performances to suit English taste for novel and "exotic" Italian music, l'Epine created a marketable persona that also depended upon the exploitation of her cultural affiliations.

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<sup>28</sup> Advertisement. *Post Man and the Historical Account*, August 10, 1703, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2011)

<sup>29</sup> Advertisement. *Daily Courant*, January 28, 1704, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2011). Other examples are in the *Daily Courant*, Issues 565, 576, 606, 611, 629 and 662.

<sup>30</sup> Only a few of Jakob Greber's compositions are extant. The music for the 1705 pastoral performed in London has been lost. The excerpt below is from Mus.Hs.17252 held in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna, a manuscript of Greber's opera *Gli amori d'Ergasto* (bearing no resemblance, textually, to the opera by the same name composed for London in 1705). This version of the opera was composed in 1711 and it is one of few examples of Greber's compositional style.

Violini unisoni

Egle

Bassi

l'ol-tra-ga - to mi-o Cu - pi-do mo-ve guer - - - - -

Vln.

Egle

Bassi

- ra mo-ve guer ra in ques-to pet - to;

Vln.

Egle

Bassi

L'ol-tra-ga-to mio Cu - pi - do mo - ve guer -

Vln.

Egle

Bassi

- ra mo - ve guer - - - - - ra mo - ve guer - -

Vln.

Egle

Bassi

ra mo-ve guer-ra in ques-to pet

Example 3.01. “L’oltragato mio Cupido,” *Gli amori d’Ergasto* (1711), act 1, mm. 7-19.

In light of Margarita de l'Epine's self-promotion as an Italian *virtuosa* and her consistent associations so early in the eighteenth century with Italian music, a biographical detail emerges that complicates the singer's cultivation of a public persona rooted in her Italian origins. It may be that Margarita was not Italian at all, but rather of French (or possibly German) origin.<sup>31</sup> Singers arriving in London from Europe often used nicknames (the castrato Nicola Grimaldi was better known as Nicolini, for example). If she was not Italian, would Margarita de l'Epine have benefited from using the Italian version of her name? As discussed in Chapter 1, there was an established network of Italian musicians in London when she arrived in 1703, but many French musicians had found a home there as well, including Charles Dieupart, who composed and arranged music for Motteux's pasticcio *Love's Triumph* in 1708. Based on her clear mastery of the Italian language and its musical style, Margarita/Margu rite would most likely have been hired regardless of her nationality. If she had intended to establish stronger connections to Italy for the purpose of promoting herself as an Italian singer, this would demonstrate a deliberate act of agency in fashioning a marketable image to sell in London.<sup>32</sup> Whether or

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<sup>31</sup> See Moor, "Some notes," 345; and Cook, "The Italian Lady?" 109-110. Both authors cite a copy of her signature, which uses the French version of her name. Two other archival clues, newly discovered, reveal that l'Epine may have been born in France. *The Power of Musick* (1705), quoted in full above, was written in iambic pentameter, and the verse only reads properly if l'Epine is pronounced "Leh-Peen" (the French way) rather than "Leh-pee-nay" (in Italian). I am grateful to John Rice for pointing this out. However, in the prologue to *A Vice Reclaim'd*, below, the iambic verse works only if one pronounces the third syllable in "L'Epine," suggesting that even in eighteenth-century London her foreign origins were obscured and her name pronounced differently. I thank Rebecca Porte for her poetic expertise with this latter example. One final bit of evidence alluding to her origin: a new document has surfaced in the baptismal registers of Amsterdam in which l'Epine and Jakob Greber are listed as the parents of the newborn Marie Anne Greber, who was baptized in the French Catholic chapel on October 30, 1704. My deepest thanks are reserved for Rebekah Ahrendt, who drew my attention to this document. See NL-SAA 24062564.

<sup>32</sup> In 1703, however, Italian music was not necessarily as highly in demand as it would become; Margarita's arrival in England predates by four years the first castrato in England (Valentini, who arrived in 1706), and the first attempts at introducing Italian-style operas to England were still



not she was Italian-born, l'Epine was Italian-trained; her first documented performance was in 1700 in Venice, where she sang a leading role (as La Signora Francesca Margarita de l'Epine) in a production of Francesco Silvani's opera *L'oracolo in sogno* at the Teatro Sant'Angelo.<sup>33</sup> Before coming to London, she had mastered at least one role in a significant Italian theater. If Francesca Margarita de l'Epine was born Françoise Marguérite de l'Épine, she came to England with the voice of an Italian *virtuosa*.

In London, l'Epine's performances immediately attracted theater-goers hungry for novelty. Advertisements show that l'Epine sang during intervals at Drury Lane throughout the early summer of 1703; by August, she had followed most of London's nobility to the spa town of Tunbridge Wells in Kent, southeast of London. There the singer's popularity grew:

They write from Tunbridge Wells, that there is arrived there the famous Italian Lady Signiora Francisca Margareta de l'Epine, that gives every week Entertainments of Musick, all Compos'd by that great Master Signior Jacomo Greber, perform'd to the content and great satisfaction of all the Nobility and Gentry, which are in such great numbers there, as has not been seen these many years, the said Musick is perform'd at New-Bounds, at Southborough near the said Wells.<sup>34</sup>

Although payment records for her earliest public performances have not survived, a bill from a private concert honoring the King of Spain at Windsor Palace in 1703 shows that l'Epine was paid forty "gines" [guineas] for her participation; she and Jakob Greber were

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two years in the future. Other singers did not follow her example; no English singers Italianized their names in this period, although many of them became proficient at performing Italian music in Italian, and other foreign singers we can more easily trace to legitimate Italian origins.

<sup>33</sup> *L'Oracolo in sogno*, drama per musica, da rappresentarsi nel Teatro di Sant'Angelo L'anno 1700, Centre for Research Libraries (accessed 2012).

<sup>34</sup> Article. *Post Man and the Historical Account*, August 10, 1703, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2011).

the highest earners of the evening, which included Tofts.<sup>35</sup> Margarita's high salary for this performance suggests that she was able to reap the financial benefits of her novelty during her first year in London. Despite her popularity, however, some theater critics (many of whom belonged to the Whig party) received the singer with less enthusiasm.<sup>36</sup> Theatrical entertainments performed in English were especially popular with Whigs, whose staunchly patriotic members promoted English culture, and most of the original subscribers to the Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket were members of the Kit-Cat Club, a Whig organization.<sup>37</sup> Whig commentators and ideologues condemned Italian opera, associating the genre and its foreign performers with Roman Catholicism and the Stuart Pretender.<sup>38</sup> L'Epine's career was ensnared in the controversy, especially because of her connection to members of the Tory party, who supported restoring the Stuart line of succession. Charles Montagu, first Earl of Halifax and a prominent Whig member of Parliament, penned the following epigram satirizing l'Epine:

Orpheus *and* Margarita.

Hail Tuneful Pair! Say by what wond'rous Charms  
 One scap'd from Hell, and one from *Greber's* Arms.  
 When the soft *Thracian* struck the trembling Strings,

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<sup>35</sup> GB-Lbl Add. MS 61420, f. 13r. "A list of the vocal and Instrumental Musick that attended upon the King of Spain at Windsor being neither her Majesties nor the Prince's servants." L'Epine was paid ten guineas more than Tofts for this concert. Since this concert occurred in the second year of the War of the Spanish Succession, it is likely that the King of Spain, here, was not Philip V (House of Bourbon), who was the rightful heir to the Spanish throne according to the French, but rather Archduke Charles, of the House of Habsburgs. The Archduke, vying for the throne, renamed himself Charles III during the duration of the war, and would have been recognized by the English monarchy as the rightful king until the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713.

<sup>36</sup> See Sigmund Betz, "The Operatic Criticism of the 'Tatler' and 'Spectator,'" *The Musical Quarterly* 31, No. 3 (1945): 318-330; Henrik Knif, *Gentlemen and Spectators: Studies in Journals, Opera and the Social Scene in Late Stuart London* (Helsinki, Finland: Finnish Historical Society, 1995); and John Loftis, "The London Theatres in Early Eighteenth-Century Politics," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 18, No. 4 (1955): 365-393.

<sup>37</sup> Ophelia Field, *The Kit-Cat Club: Friends Who Imagined a Nation* (London: HarperPress, 2008).

<sup>38</sup> Barthorp and Embleton, *The Jacobite Rebellions*.

The Winds were hush'd, and furl'd their ruffling Wings:  
And since the tawny *Tuscan* rais'd her Strain,  
*R---k* furls his Sails, and dozes on the Main;  
Treaties unfinish'd in the Office sleep,  
And *Sh---el* yawns for Orders on the Deep.  
Thus equal Charms and equal Conquest claim,  
To him high Woods and bending Timber came,  
To her Shrub *H---s* and Pine *N---m*.<sup>39</sup>

Montagu's allusions to Tory statesmen include Sir George Rooke, Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Charles Hedges, and Daniel Finch, Earl of Nottingham. His sardonic references to the "tawny Tuscan," whose voice charmed Hedges and Nottingham just as Orpheus's lyre calmed Hades in the Underworld, drew l'Epine's career further into contemporary partisan disputes.

English playwrights also criticized Italian opera and its performers, worried that increased public interest in entertainments featuring Italian singers would supplant support of the spoken theater. John Dennis, took up the cause in his *Essay on the Opera's After the Italian Manner* (1706). In this pamphlet, he decries the "sensual influence" of Italian opera on spectators at the expense of nationalist fervor, especially during wartime. Such radical views clearly were not held by all theater-goers, but Dennis's pamphlet demonstrates one way in which Italian opera was blamed for the demise of national culture. He called upon the English to mount a defense against the subversive invasion of foreign culture, "which have come pouring in from the Continent, to drive out the Muses, its Old Inhabitants, and seat themselves in their stead; that while the English Arms are every where Victorious abroad, the English Arts may not be vanquish'd and oppress'd at

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<sup>39</sup> GB-Lbl Add. MS 40060, "On Orpheus and Margarita," copy. Italics original. Besides the others, the epigram also refers to Sir Cloudesley Shovell, a Whig minister of Parliament. Montagu's poem criticized Hedges and Nottingham especially for their apparent fascination with l'Epine.

home by the Invasion of Foreign Luxury.”<sup>40</sup> Additionally, many contemporary plays reserved a bitterly satirical tone for Italian opera. In the prologue to the comedy, *A Vice Reclaim'd, or, The Passionate Mistress* (1704), the actor Mr. Wilks proclaimed that:

Humour, which once prevail'd, is laid aside,  
And can't appear but by some Foreign Aid:  
Singing and Dancing is the only Grace,  
And Shakespear's well wrought Scenes will have no Place,  
With Fam'd L'Epine, and great Greber's Base.  
This shews a true Green-sickness of the Mind,  
What was of old for English Hearts design'd,  
Is grown so course, it can no welcome draw,  
Unless attended by some French Kicksbaw.  
Therefore since Novelty you love so dear,  
Think not too slightly, nor be too severe,  
But Judge according to the Time o'th' Year.<sup>41</sup>

This satirical passage not only referred to l'Epine as one of the usurpers of the English stage, but also indicated that Italian opera was considered to rival English spoken theater. Audience members would not have missed the jibe about l'Epine's voice replacing Shakespeare's plays as the crowning cultural achievement of England. Italian opera accrued negative political significance for supporters of English patriotism as the controversy over Queen Anne's successor grew more impassioned. As a consequence, Margarita de l'Epine's foreign voice seemed to threaten English values.

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<sup>40</sup> John Dennis, "Essay on Opera's after the Italian Manner," in *The Critical Works of John Dennis*, ed. Edward Niles Hooker, 2 vols. (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1943).

<sup>41</sup> Richard Wilkinson, *A Vice Reclaim'd, or, The Passionate Mistress* (London: Bernard Lintott, 1703), *ECCO* (accessed 2011). Wilks satirically laments that the English have succumbed to "green sickness", a term used in the period for anemia, and that only if foreigners attend would English audiences also appreciate the music. "French Kicksbaw," in this context, likely refers to a "foppish Frenchman." Greber's "Base" probably refers to his compositions, or possibly his playing *basso continuo* at the harpsichord.

Despite facing negative criticism, l'Epine maintained her popularity in London, living and working there until her death in 1746. Burney acknowledged that she must have been a true *virtuosa* to sustain public interest for two decades:

Indeed, her musical merit must have been very considerable to have kept her so long in favour as a singer on the English stage, where, till she was employed at the opera, she sung either in musical entertainments, or between the acts, almost every night. Besides being *out-landish*, she was so swarthy and ill-favoured, that her husband used to call her *Hecate*, a name to which she answered with as much good humour as if he had called her Helen. But with such a total absence of personal charms, our galleries would have made her songs very short, had they not been executed in such a manner as to silence theatrical snakes and command applause.<sup>42</sup>

Burney's harsh judgment of her personal appearance was probably founded on the memoirs of Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach, a German aristocrat on a tour of London. In his diary, *London in 1710*, von Uffenbach describes hearing l'Epine sing twice on the stage. The first was in a performance of the opera *Hydaspes* (1710), which von Uffenbach noted as being "very lovely in all respects" and that l'Epine, "the best of the females [...] has also done very well for herself."<sup>43</sup> At another performance, however, von Uffenbach was less taken with the singer:

Signora Margarita de l'Epine sang, but she was by no means as pleasing as in the opera. This was doubtless owing to the fact that the hall was neither so large nor so resounding as the Opera House, and also partly that she rehearses more for the opera, while here she sang whatever was put before her and did not take the trouble. We were surprised that on a near view her face was uncommonly ugly, especially in complexion.<sup>44</sup>

Von Uffenbach's account of l'Epine's personal appearance demonstrates a preoccupation with the physical attractiveness of women onstage. As sexual objects on display, or

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<sup>42</sup> Burney, *A General History of Music*, Vol. 4, 219-220.

<sup>43</sup> Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach, *London in 1710*, trans. and ed. by W.H. Quarrell and Margaret Mare, 17.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 66-67.

“[commodities to be displayed for [...] erotic impact,]”<sup>45</sup> male audience members often made no secret of their interests or intentions.<sup>46</sup>

The public attention that l’Epine received was not always due to her musical abilities. Early in her London career, she cultivated a personal—possibly sexual—relationship with Daniel Finch, Earl of Nottingham, one of her first English patrons.<sup>47</sup> Nottingham, a Tory statesman, invited l’Epine to his country estate of Burley in 1702 or 1703. Two letters from Nottingham’s daughters, Essex Mostyn and Mary Savile, Marchioness of Halifax, reveal that Margarita spent the better part of the winter between 1702 and 1703 at Burley.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, the Earl supported l’Epine while she sought to establish herself in London. According to several letters in the Hatton-Finch Papers, Finch entreated his friends to patronize the singer as well. A revealing letter from Lord Cholmondsley to Lord Nottingham indicated that even in 1703, l’Epine demanded a high salary:

I am Endeavouring to Obey your Lordship’s Commands and attend you in Town, but our Country Gentlemen are not able to come to the price of Margarita’s Voice with out doing Pennance whole Monthly in the Country first, to raise a fund sufficient to defray the Expence [...].<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Marsden, *Fatal Desire*, 8.

<sup>46</sup> Kristina Straub, *Sexual Suspects*.

<sup>47</sup> Both Cook and Moor, as well as the *Biographical Dictionary of Actors and Actresses* claim that Margarita and Finch had a sexual relationship while she stayed at his estate, but do not substantiate this claim with a primary source.

<sup>48</sup> GB-Lbl Add MS 29588, f. 20, Letter from E. Mostyn to Daniel Finch, no date; GB-Lbl Add. MS 29589, ff. 239r-239v, letter from Mary Halifax to Daniel Finch, dated September 28 [1703?]. In each of these letters, his daughters sound unhappy that Finch is keeping Margarita at Burley, and their tones insinuate that there is more to their father’s relationship with his prize singer. Another letter, GB-Lbl Add. MS 29579, f. 469r (to Lord Viscount Hatton, Daniel Finch’s father), dated October 10, 1703, stated that “Lord Nottingham has [Margarita] now to himself.”

<sup>49</sup> Hatton-Finch Papers, GB-Lbl Add. MS 29589, ff. 320r – 320v, Letter from Cholmondsley to the Earl of Nottingham, dated from Broadwell, December 6, 1703. One final letter, to Lord Hatton of Northamptonshire) from “Bertie” (possibly Robert Bertie, 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Ancaster and Kesteven, 1<sup>st</sup> Marquess of Lindsey) comments that Finch convinced him to become a subscriber to Margarita de l’Epine’s musical events. See also Hatton-Finch Papers, GB-Lbl Add. MS 29568, ff. 149r – 149v, dated London, November 4, 1703.

As a singer embarking on her own professional career, Margarita de l'Epine knew the value of wealthy patrons, and her association with the Earl of Nottingham, whether an illicit relationship or not, reveals the power that l'Epine managed to accrue very early in her career. Her professional relationship with Finch helped to bolster and legitimize her public reputation as one of the foremost Italian songstresses in England.

L'Epine built her professional career by aligning her musical tastes with those of her audiences. She seems to have realized the commercial value of cultural adaptation early in her London career, though she specialized in Italian style music and was fluent in the language. An advertisement from 1704 announced that she also sang English music during her concerts:

For the Benefit of Mrs. Knight

Not Acted there these Six Years

At the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane, tomorrow being Wednesday the 31<sup>st</sup> of May, will be reviv'd a Comedy call'd The Comical Revenge, or Love in a Tub. Written by the late Sir George Etheridge, and all the Parts play'd to the best Advantage. With several Entertainments of Dancing by Monsieur du Ruel, Monsieur Cherrier and others. And at the Desire of some Persons of Quality, the Famous Signiora Francisca Margarita de l'Epine will perform several Entertainments of Singing in Italian, being the best Songs she has Sung in England, the Musick that accompanies her compos'd by Signior Giacomo Greber. She also sings an English Song of the late Mr. Henry Purcell's.<sup>50</sup>

It is unknown exactly which Purcell song l'Epine sang at this concert, but this advertisement shows that the singer endeavored to integrate English music into her performances. Jakob Greber also espoused l'Epine's performances of English music. A travel diary kept by the German trumpeter Johann Sigismund Cousser, who traveled to London in 1704, cited Greber's advice regarding English performance etiquette:

[...] 17. Prepare yourself with music to fit their taste—no pathos certainly, and short, short recitatives.

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<sup>50</sup> Advertisement. *Daily Courant*, May 30, 1704, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2011).

[...] 19. Devote yourself to the English language, and sing an English aria from time to time. That pleases them very much.  
20. Praise the deceased Purcell to the skies and say there has never been the like of him. [...] <sup>51</sup>

L'Epine's efforts at performing English music during her concerts echoed Greber's counsel to Cousser. Starting in 1704 and ending with her retirement in the 1720s, the *Daily Courant* advertised that l'Epine sang "Songs in Italian and English," often including music by Purcell, who was still considered the most eminent of English composers. Moreover, on April 13, 1706, the *Daily Courant* announced that l'Epine would be giving the premiere of "an English Cantata, written and compos'd after the Italian manner."<sup>52</sup> In fact, l'Epine was the only Italian singer to include English music in every known concert she gave after 1704, in stark contrast to other Italian singers. Margarita's efforts at mastering the English language and singing traditional English music must have been intended to bolster her public reception. Although l'Epine could not control how her image was used in public discourse to further the cause against Italian opera, she presented herself as a flexible singer with experience in both English and Italian musical styles, appealing to audiences divided over the future of English musical culture.

### **Catherine Tofts as England's "Nightingale"**

Mrs. Tofts (b. ca. 1685; d. Venice, 1756) may have gained a notorious reputation by allegedly sponsoring her servant's public mistreatment of Margarita de l'Epine, but in fact she was one of the most revered voices of her day, symbolizing the potential for

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<sup>51</sup> Translated and quoted in: Harold E. Samuel, "A German Musician Comes to London in 1704," *The Musical Times* 122, No. 1663 (September 1981): 591.

<sup>52</sup> Though the identification of this work remains speculative, it is possible that this cantata is by Johann Christoph Pepusch, who composed his *Six English Cantatas* between 1700 and 1710.



English theatrical music to overcome the popularity of Italian opera. Though known as Mrs. Tofts, the singer was unmarried during her London career.<sup>53</sup> Little information regarding Catherine Tofts's early life or musical training has survived, although it seems that she took voice lessons from Charles Dieupart prior to her first public appearance.<sup>54</sup> The first record of the singer is from a *Daily Courant* advertisement in December 1703, when she sang in "the Subscription Musick" at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane.<sup>55</sup> Her next few concert advertisements showcased her specialization in English music by featuring the works of Henry Purcell:

At the Theatre Royal in *Drury-Lane*, this present *Tuesday* being the Fourth of *January*, will be perform'd *The Subscription Musick*. Wherein *Mrs Tofts* sings several Songs in Italian and English. With several select pieces of Musick (compos'd by the late famous Mr. *Henry Purcell*) taken out of the Operas of *The Fairy Queen*, *King Arthur*, *Dioclesian*, and *Bonduca*. And an Ode upon the Happy Accession of Her Majesty to the Throne, set to Musick by Mr *Daniel Purcell*, never perform'd before. [...]<sup>56</sup>

Although this advertisement mentions that Tofts sang in both Italian and English, it shows that the singer dedicated her early career to promoting English music, both new

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<sup>53</sup> Actresses were often known as "Mrs" in order to dispel rumors of sexual misconduct, or at the very least, to acknowledge their professional careers. See Mollie Sands, "Mrs. Tofts 1685? – 1741," *Theatre Notebook* 20, No. 3 (Spring 1966): 102.

<sup>54</sup> Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson's thoroughly researched article discusses three new sources related to Catherine Tofts: her father's will; a petition that she wrote demanding the money due to her upon her father's death; and Delarivière Manley's fictionalized account of the "Harmonious Unfortunate," an anti-Whig propaganda piece that uses Tofts as the thinly disguised protagonist to discredit English efforts at opera. See Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson, "The Harmonious Unfortunate: new light on Catherine Tofts."

<sup>55</sup> Advertisement. *Daily Courant*, December 14, 1703, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2011). Like today, subscriptions were a series of concerts, for which audience members bought a block of tickets. For more on early public concerts, see Hugh Arthur Scott, "London's Earliest Public Concerts," *The Musical Quarterly* 22, No. 4 (October 1936): 446-47; Scott, "London's First Concert Room," *Music & Letters* 18, No. 4 (October, 1937): 379-390; Scott, "London Concerts from 1700-1750," *The Musical Quarterly* 24, No. 2 (April 1938): 194-209; Michael Tilmouth, "Some Early London Concerts and Music Clubs, 1670-1720," *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 84<sup>th</sup> session (1957-1958): 13-26; and Susan Wollenberg and Simon McVeigh, eds., *Concert Life in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

<sup>56</sup> Advertisement. *Daily Courant*, January 4, 1704, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2011).

and old. Her performance of airs from Purcell's operas, as well as her premiere of a new English ode by Daniel Purcell, demonstrated that Tofts promoted herself as a specialist in English music. Just two weeks later, Tofts performed in another subscription concert, this time playing the part of Pallas in John Weldon's version of *The Judgment of Paris*.<sup>57</sup> When it first premiered, *The Judgment of Paris* was an attempt to sponsor the creation of new English operas following the death of Henry Purcell. Prominent Whigs had asked the playwright William Congreve to furnish the libretto, which was then set separately by four composers: John Eccles, Gottfried Finger, Daniel Purcell, and John Weldon. Weldon's version won the competition, and the opera was performed at the Dorset Garden Theatre in 1701.<sup>58</sup>

John Weldon's version of *The Judgment of Paris* shows the stylistic trajectory of English theatrical music at the turn of the eighteenth century. Although the role of Pallas was not composed specifically for Catherine Tofts, her performance in its revival in 1704 exemplified her promotion of English music. Audiences received Weldon's setting of the opera in 1700 enthusiastically; the composer, a relative newcomer to London's musical circles, triumphed over both Daniel Purcell and John Eccles, two established composers with prestigious appointments.<sup>59</sup> Weldon's musical style was deemed more modern and more musically daring than that of his older contemporaries, most notably for his

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<sup>57</sup> Advertisement. *Daily Courant*, January 18, 1704, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2011). It is worth noting that Tofts was the only singer mentioned in the advertisement, further supporting her popularity.

<sup>58</sup> David W. Music, *The Judgment of Paris*, No. 94 Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era (Madison, Wisc.: A-R Editions, Inc.), introduction. See also Amanda Eubanks Winkler, "'O Ravishing Delight': The Politics of Pleasure in *The Judgment of Paris*," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 15, no. 1 (March 2003): 15-31.

<sup>59</sup> Daniel Purcell was Henry Purcell's nephew, and John Eccles was the official court composer for William and Mary, as well as Queen Anne. Gottfried Finger was awarded fourth place; insulted, he left England soon after the competition. See Music, *The Judgment of Paris*, xi.

emphasis on virtuoso coloratura used for word painting. Pallas, one of the three goddesses to compete for Paris's golden fruit, symbolizes war, and her music juxtaposes the dramatic virtuosity of the vocal and trumpet lines with the stately reserve of the bass accompaniment and its harmonic progression.

The image shows a musical score for two parts: Pallas (soprano) and Bassi (bass). The score is in 4/4 time and consists of five systems. Each system has a vocal line for Pallas and a bass line for Bassi. The lyrics are: "Hark, hark, hark! The glorious voice of war, Hark, hark, hark! The glorious voice of war calls, calls a-loud, for arms pre-pare;". The Pallas part features intricate melodic lines with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, while the Bassi part provides a steady, rhythmic accompaniment with mostly quarter and eighth notes.

**Example 3.02. “Hark, the glorious voice of war!” *The Judgment of Paris* (John Weldon), mm. 4-18.<sup>60</sup>**

<sup>60</sup> This example is transcribed and typeset from David W. Music's modern edition. See John Weldon, *The Judgment of Paris*, ed. David W. Music (Madison, WI: A-R Editions, 1999).

*The Judgment of Paris* opera competition was meant to encourage composers and spectators to support fully sung opera in English.<sup>61</sup> Weldon's version of the opera illustrates a stylistic transformation of English operatic music, emphasizing a new kind of vocal virtuosity that singers cultivated in the early eighteenth century. Catherine Tofts supported the future of English opera by participating in a revival of this work in 1704, and by mentioning her name, the advertisement for this performance relied on her celebrity to draw an audience. As one of the most prominent, professionally trained voices on the stage, Tofts created a persona that emphasized her commitment to promoting the music of her homeland.

It is possible that Tofts continued her support of English opera by taking a leading role in the musical interlude *Britain's Happiness* (1704).<sup>62</sup> Conceived of as an opera, the work was left unfinished, and most of the music is now lost.<sup>63</sup> In the preface to his libretto, Peter Anthony Motteux stated, "This Interlude was long since design'd only for an Introduction to an Opera, which, if ever finish'd may be call'd, *The Loves of Europe*, every Act shewing the manner of a different Nation, in their Address to the Fair Sex."<sup>64</sup> Although we cannot know how much Italian musical style influenced this otherwise distinctly English work, the libretto is overtly patriotic. Showcasing a spirit of national

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<sup>61</sup> Curtis Price, "The Critical Decade for English Music Drama, 1700-1710," *Harvard Library Bulletin* 26 (1978): 38-76.

<sup>62</sup> Advertisement. *Daily Courant*, February 22, 1704, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2011): "Wherein Mrs Tofts Sings several Songs in Italian and English. With a new Entertainment of Vocal and Instrumental Musick (after the manner of an Opera) never perform'd before, call'd *Britain's Happiness*, the vocal part being compos'd by Mr. Weldon, and the instrumental by Mr. Dienport [Charles Dieupart]."

<sup>63</sup> Motteux's libretto was set twice: once by John Weldon, and once by Richard Leveridge. Of the two settings, only three songs by Weldon and one song by Leveridge remain, printed in *The Monthly Mask of Vocal Musick*. See Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson, *The Monthly Mask of Vocal Musick, 1702-1711* (Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate, 2007) and David Hunter, *Opera and Songbooks Published in England, 1703-1726: a descriptive catalogue* (London: Bibliographical Society, 1997).

<sup>64</sup> Peter Anthony Motteux, *Britain's Happiness*, preface.

pride while enjoying a more palatable type of spirits, two officers sing of their contempt for France and Rome, and praise their liberator, Queen Anne:

Free-born Sons of *Britain*, who fearless at home  
Disdain the vile yolk of false *France* & of *Rome*,  
Rouse now to secure all the Blessings you claim,  
Your Laws, and your Altars, Lands, Traffic & Fame.  
A Queen truly *British*, wise, pious and brave,  
Incites ye, your Rights, and all *Europe* to save.  
Then joyn for its Safety, till Dangers are ceast,  
And You, who don't fight for't, here, drink to't at least.<sup>65</sup>

Later in the interlude, Neptune, god of the seas, is furious that Queen Anne has conquered his oceans, and he threatens to destroy the country. Before Neptune can conjure his storms, Pallas convinces the god that he should ally himself with the queen, extolling the virtues of her female ruler:

Oh no more the Fair disdain,  
Nature owns a Female Reign;  
All the Virtues, all the Graces,  
Muses, Arts, and loveliest Faces,  
Ever claim  
A Female Name.<sup>66</sup>

In these final lines, Pallas justifies female rule, alluding to Queen Anne's power as monarch and inspiring patriotic lust in her subjects. If Tofts took the role of Pallas (the only solo female part in the interlude), then these lines take on another layer of meaning: they allude not only to Queen Anne's power, but also to the power of women in the arts, which, as Motteux says, "claim a Female Name." If Tofts did indeed perform in *Britain's Happiness*, a possibility since she was the Theatre Royal's foremost female singer and

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<sup>65</sup> Motteux, *Britain's Happiness*, 2.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

always performed during the intervals, her role as Pallas would have reinforced her formidable presence as an artist well versed in her homeland's musical traditions.<sup>67</sup>

Catherine Tofts's early reception was extremely favorable; audience members often commented on her lovely voice and comely appearance as equally attractive. A poem published in the *Diverting Post* in 1705 illustrates the seductive power that Tofts's voice seems to have held for her listeners.

How are we pleas'd when beauteous Tofts appears,  
To steal our Souls through our attentive Ears?  
Ravish'd we listen to th'enchancing Song,  
And catch the falling Accents from her Tongue:  
With Raptures entertain the pleasing Sound,  
Whose very Softness has a Pow'r to Wound;  
Pleasure and Pain she does at once impart,  
Charms every Sense, and pierces every Heart,  
Each Word's a Salve, but every Shake's a Dart.<sup>68</sup>

The sensual imagery, such as being ravished and raptured by her voice, suggests the powerful hypnotic effect that Tofts had on her audiences. Such overt references to her power as an attractive woman onstage articulate the unique relationship between spectator and female spectacle in the eighteenth-century playhouse, which divided the act of theater going into a tension filled spectacle between the exhibitionism of the female performer and the dominating scrutiny of men.<sup>69</sup> Phillips's poem suggests that Tofts's allure as a professional performer depended on her status as a physically attractive woman worthy of male admiration, and that her voice and physical appearance contributed equally to her popular reception. Writing at the end of the century, Burney remarked, "Mrs. Tofts seemed to have endeared herself to an English audience by her

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<sup>67</sup> It is also possible that Tofts took the role considering her financial and artistic partnership with Charles Dieupart, who provided the instrumental music for this opera.

<sup>68</sup> Samuel Phillips, "Upon Mrs. Tofts," *Diverting Post*, Saturday, February 24, 1705, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2011).

<sup>69</sup> Straub, *Sexual Suspects*, 5.

voice, figure, and performance, more than any preceding singer of our own country whose name and excellence have been recorded.”<sup>70</sup> Although history has not preserved any evidence of private patronage for Mrs. Tofts, a brief account of a private concert that many performers of the opera gave at the Duke of Somerset’s house discloses the singer’s popularity, especially with male admirers: “She was on Sunday last at the Duke of Somerset’s, where there was about 30 gentlemen, and every kiss was 1 guinea; some took 3, others 4, others 5, at that rate, but none less than one.”<sup>71</sup> The actor and playwright Colley Cibber, who worked with Tofts on numerous occasions, also noted Mrs. Tofts’s beauty contributed to her popularity and success: “The Beauty of her fine proportion’d Figure, and exquisitely sweet silver Tone of her Voice, with that peculiar, rapid Swiftness of her Throat, were Perfections not to be imitated by Art, or Labour.”<sup>72</sup> Tofts used her looks to court public favor onstage. Unlike Margarita de l’Epine, whose alleged relationship with the Earl of Nottingham is only alluded to in second-hand reports, Tofts explicitly showed off her physical attributes, seducing her listeners with her voice, and flirting openly with prospective patrons in order to cultivate her audiences.

In the early stages of her career, Tofts was viewed as England’s most prestigious native opera singer, a champion of English music who faced Italian adversaries upon the stage. Her concert performances were not solely dedicated to English music, however. Beginning in early 1704, she began to add Italian music to her subscription concert programs, though the advertisements continue to highlight her performances of music by

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<sup>70</sup> Burney, *A General History of Music*, Vol. 4, 215.

<sup>71</sup> Wentworth Papers, ed. Cartwright. Letter in Lord Egmont’s possession, dated March 17, 1709 (p. 66) in a footnote.

<sup>72</sup> Colley Cibber, *An Apology*, Vol. 1, 319.

English composers.<sup>73</sup> In a publication of 1704, the aria “Senza la legiadria”<sup>74</sup> is featured with the heading: “Sung by Mrs Tofts in the Subscription Musick.” The aria is in Italian, but stylistically, it is not sophisticated. Although a *da capo* aria, the A and B sections retain melodic and harmonic connections, and the text setting is syllabic, with only a few short melismas on the word “legiadria” to represent the “gracefulness” and agility of her voice. (See Example 3.03.) The aria’s stylistic simplicity illustrates just how carefully Tofts’s performances of Italian music were introduced to the public. “Senza la legiadria” combined the performance of Italian with a musical style that would have been more accessible to English audiences at the time. This aria would have also been easier for Tofts to perform as a singer new to the Italian language.

Catherine Tofts’s performances of Italian music suggest the importance of creating a flexible musical persona in a theatrical marketplace that encouraged performances in Italian and English. The increasing availability of virtuoso Italian musicians, as well as the rapidly shifting tastes of English audiences, shaped the ways in which both Tofts and l’Epine strove to cultivate their public images as professional singers. Although the two singers became public symbols of their native countries and corresponding musical styles, their performance records indicate that both women attempted to maintain an adaptable approach to performances, in order to accommodate the fluid trends of London’s musical market.

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<sup>73</sup> Advertisement. *Daily Courant*, February 22, 1704, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2011): “Wherein Mrs Tofts Sings several Songs in Italian and English.”

<sup>74</sup> The correct spelling is “leggiadria,” but I have chosen to maintain the spelling from the original print in both the prose and musical example.



Mrs. Tofts

Bassi

10

Sen-za la le - gia - dri-a

19

Sen-za la le - gia -

27

dri-a bel- lez - za, la bel - lez-za nul-la val, la bel - lez - za,

35

la bel - lez-za nul-la val, la bel - lez - za, la bel - lez-za nul-la val,

44

nul-la, nul-la val, Sen-za la le - gia - dri-a, la - bel- lez - za, la\_

2 53

— bel- lez - za, la - bel - lez - za nul - la, nul - la val, la bel - lez - za, la — bel - lez -

61

za, la — bel - lez - za, la bel - lez - za nul - la val, nul - la, nul - la val.

69

79

Pu - pil - la — va - ga non

88

sa — far — pia - ga Se — la gra - zia — se la gra - zia non vi - bra lo

97

stral. Pu - pil - la — va - ga

105

non sa, non sa far pia - ga, Se la gra - zia, se la gra - zia non vi - bra lo stral. *Da Capo*

Example 3.03. “Senza la legiadria,” GB-Lbl G.425.rr.(24).<sup>75</sup>

<sup>75</sup> John Walsh originally published this aria with the title “Sung by Mrs. Tofts in the Subscription Musick” in 1704 in *The Monthly Mask of Vocal Music*, a series that lasted from 1702 to 1711. For the facsimile edition, see Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson, eds., *The Monthly Mask of Vocal Music* (Aldershot, Hants, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007). I have preserved all spellings

### **The London Pasticcios: Competitive Characters, Complementary Roles**

The premiere of *Thomyris, Queen of Scythia* in 1707 marked the first onstage operatic collaboration between Margarita de l'Epine and Catherine Tofts, though they had performed together before. L'Epine often sang Italian arias during the intervals of plays and operas at Drury Lane during 1704 and 1705, and she had even replaced Tofts in the title role in a production of *Camilla* when the latter fell ill.<sup>76</sup> Their collaboration in *Thomyris*, however, brought the two singers together as performers of equal skill and merit as they played leading female characters opposite each another for the first time. In *Thomyris*, Tofts took the role of Cleora, the young Persian princess captured by Orontes, who soon falls in love with her. Tofts was known for specializing as the leading romantic interest, as she had done in *Camilla* in 1706; her noted good looks must have partially explained this frequent casting decision. As the other female protagonist, L'Epine played the title role, demonstrating her talent with authoritative, powerful female characters. Cast as rivals—both compete for Orontes' love, albeit differing kinds of love—Tofts and l'Epine demonstrated dramatically and musically different personalities in the opera, each complementing the techniques and abilities of the other.

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and beamings, although I have left out the traditional violin/flute part at the end of the print. In measure 102, the print includes an F# on the fifth beat; I have added parentheses since it may be a printer's error.

<sup>76</sup> A new libretto with Margarita de l'Epine's name was printed specifically for this performance, according to Claudio Sartori, *I libretti italiani a stampa dalle origini al 1800: catalogo analitico con 16 indici*, 5 vols. (Cuneo: Bertola & Locatelli, 1990). A letter from Haym to Vice Chamberlain Coke, dated April 21, 1706, states that "Signora Margherita desires the favour you wou'd pardon her for tomarow Morning she cannot come to you because she is obliged to Learn ye part of Camilla by heart for Tuesday next" (HTC Coke 26). See Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, *Vice Chamberlain Coke's Theatrical Papers* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982), 3. Winton Dean states that the performance took place on 23 April 1706, the fourth performance of the opera. See Dean, "L'Epine, Margherita de," in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, The University of Michigan (accessed 2011).

*Thomyris* is a pasticcio opera, an operatic genre assembled from previously composed arias by many different composers, to which a new text was added in order to create a coherent plot and characters.<sup>77</sup> Although most of the music in *Thomyris* was not composed anew for specific voices, the selection of arias for pasticcio productions usually involved the contributions of its leading singers, many of whom brought “suitcase arias” with them from city to city.<sup>78</sup> These arias, works that showed off specialized virtuoso abilities, became staples of singers’ concert repertoires and were also often interpolated (with different texts) into both pasticcios and newly composed operas. In early eighteenth-century London, the pasticcio became the predominant form of operatic production; between 1705 and 1711 (the year that Handel’s *Rinaldo* had its premiere), no fewer than eight out of the twelve new Italian-style operas were pasticcios.<sup>79</sup>

In *Thomyris*, the leading ladies are rival queens in the most literal sense.

Thomyris is Orontes’ mother, and throughout the opera she attempts to persuade Orontes to marry the daughter of the King of Pontus for political gain. After she realizes that

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<sup>77</sup> On the pasticcio, see Gordana Lazarevich, “Eighteenth-Century Pasticcio: The Historian’s Gordian Knot,” in *Studien zur italienisch-deutschen Musikgeschichte XI*, ed. Friedrich Lippmann, Silke Leopold, Volker Scherliess, and Wolfgang Witzemann, 1976. On specific pasticcios by Handel and other composers, see Lowell Lindgren, “Venice, Vivaldi, Vico and Opera in London, 1705-17: Venetian Ingredients in English Pasticci,” in *Nuovi Studi Vivaldiani Edizione e Cronologia Critica delle Opere*, ed. Antonio Fanna and Giovanni Morelli (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1988); Curtis Price, “Unity, Originality, and the London Pasticcio,” *Harvard Library Bulletin* 2, No. 4 (1991): 17-30; and Reinhard Strohm, *Essays on Handel and Italian Opera*, trans. M. Cooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). The history, creation, and content of pasticcio operas during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries form an avenue of future research that, unfortunately, will not be pursued in the present study.

<sup>78</sup> See Jennifer Williams Brown, “On the Road with the ‘Suitcase Aria’: The Transmission of Borrowed Arias in Late Seventeenth-Century Italian Opera Revivals,” *Journal of Musicological Research* (1995): 3-23.

<sup>79</sup> *Thomyris* (1707), *Love’s Triumph* (1708), *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* (1708), *Clotilda* (1709), *Almahide* (1710), *Hydaspes* (1710), and *Etearco* (1711) were all pasticcios. Published music and libretti usually only list composers’ names if he was well known (for example, Alessandro Scarlatti and Giovanni Bononcini are often named). Most often, composers are denoted as “Italians” in place of their names.

Orontes is in love with Cleora, she discourages their relationship and sends her son off to war. Cleora, a captive of the Scythian army, is loved by both Orontes and his own rival, Tigranes, the commander of the opposing army. The dramatic tension of *Thomyris* centers on Orontes's struggle between love for Cleora and duty to follow his mother's orders. Although Orontes is the dramatic linchpin, it is the tension-filled relationship between Thomyris and Cleora that drives the dramatic trajectory of the opera. The two female leads sing the largest number of arias: Tofts (as Cleora) is given twelve arias and three duets, and l'Epine (as Thomyris) is assigned ten arias and two duets.<sup>80</sup> From the outset, the music they sing clearly distinguishes both the characters and their individual musical strengths.

Cleora opens the opera, and her aria immediately establishing her vulnerability and despair. Expertly chosen to illustrate Cleora's helplessness and melancholy, this aria showcased Tofts's skill as a lyrical singer and expressive actress. Sigh figures pervade the aria, in both the basso continuo and in the vocal line. This short motive, first introduced in the bass and then taken up by the singer, repeats throughout, a musical illustration of Cleora's imprisonment. The aria never escapes G minor, except during a brief modulation to D minor in the B section; the dark harmonies evoke Cleora's tragic situation. The entire aria exudes helplessness and melancholy as she laments her fate.

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<sup>80</sup> Mrs. Lindsey, as Media, is given nine arias and one duet. Mr. Lawrence, as Tigranes, comes next, followed by Leveridge (as Baldo). Valentini, who played Orontes (replaced by Mr. Hughes during the production), was given only five arias and one duet, possibly because Valentini sang in Italian while the rest of the cast sang in English.

Cleora  
Bassi

Free-dom thou Grea-test

5

Cleora  
Bassi

Bles-sing, thou grea-test Bles-sing, why have I Lost thy joys

8

Cleora  
Bassi

Pi-ning no Rest Pos-ses-sing,

11

Cleora  
Bassi

no Rest Pos-ses-sing, grief all my hours em-ploys, grief all my hours em-ploy.

14

Cleora  
Bassi

Thy Loss now to my Eyes, a

17

Cleora  
Bassi

Flood of Tears will Cost, oh why do we not Prize our Trea-sure till tis Lost. *Da Capo*

**Example 3.04. “Freedom, Thou Greatest Blessing,” *Thomyris*, act 1, scene 1.<sup>81</sup>**

“Freedom, thou great Blessing” effectively sets up Cleora’s dramatic problem and provides an atmospheric opening for the opera, but most importantly, the aria highlighted Tofts’s special style of singing. Most of the aria is set syllabically, with the exception of

<sup>81</sup> I have added brackets over the repeated melody in both the continuo line and the voice. All transcriptions of *Thomyris* are based on the Walsh print, US-AAAscl M1507.E12, *Songs in the Opera Call’d Thomyris, Queen of Scythia* and preserve all original beamings, spellings, and slur markings.

one vocal run on the word joy (typical word painting for this kind of aria), and the melodic motion is mostly stepwise, apart from a few leaps of a fifth or sixth. Rather than showing off her virtuoso singing, Tofts excelled in great pathos, expressed through long sustained melodic phrases, sigh figures, and a limited vocal range.<sup>82</sup> Cleora is not a flashy character, and neither was Tofts. The opening of *Thomyris* focuses on Tofts's mastery of expressive lyrical singing and her capabilities as a pathetic actress.

By contrast, Thomyris's entrance in act 1, scene 2, emphasizes her power as a monarch as well as her authoritative and inspiring presence as a commander during wartime. She becomes the dramatic foil to Cleora's pathetic passivity and helplessness. The text of her aria, "Rouse ye brave for Fame and Glory" immediately brings to mind the heroic imagery used in *Britain's Happiness* to extoll the virtues of Queen Anne's reign:

Rouse, ye Brave, for Fame and Glory  
And Oppose invading Spight!  
Drive the slavish Foe before ye!  
Turn to Terror all their Raging!  
You must conquer when engaging,  
'Tis for Liberty you fight.  
Rouse, ye, &c.<sup>83</sup>

The music for this aria is highly Italianate and showcases the array of virtuoso elements in which Margarita de l'Epine specialized. The aria opens with a short melisma on "Rouse," emphasizing its rhetorical power, and subsequent vocal runs (some quite substantial) on "Glory" and "Oppose" in the A section of the aria reinforce Thomyris's sovereign authority.

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<sup>82</sup> Although the aria is set in a high tessitura, Tofts sang no more than a seventh in this aria (between G4 and F5).

<sup>83</sup> *Thomyris*, act I, scene 2.

In “Rouse, ye brave,” Margarita took control of the music. Her melismas dominated the aria, and the bass line can it is as if not keep up; in fact, the vocal line often introduces flashy motives that the bass line duplicates (see mm. 16-17: “Conquer” in the B section). The aria also exploited the extreme range of l’Epine’s voice: the aria is full of large leaps (in m. 1 she leaped up a fourth twice, from F4 to C5 to F5, thus completing the octave), and a melisma in m. 16 allowed her to navigate fast scalar passages that began low and ended high in her tessitura.

Thomyris  
Bassi

3

Thomyris  
Bassi

5

Thomyris  
Bassi

9

Thomyris  
Bassi

11

Thomyris  
Bassi

Lyrics:  
Rouse ye brave for Fame and Glo - - ry,  
& Op  
pose, and op- pose in - va - ding Spight, and op- pose  
in - va - ding  
Spight, and op- pose  
in - va - ding Spight; drive the sla-vish Foe be -



2

13

Thomyris

fore yee, turn to Ter - ror all their Ra - ging, you must

Bassi

15

Thomyris

Con - - - quer, you must con-quer when in -

Bassi

17

Thomyris

ga - ging, you must con-quer when in - ga - ging, 'tis\_ for\_ Li - ber - ty you

Bassi

19

Thomyris

Fight, 'tis\_ for\_ Li - ber - ty you Fight. \_\_\_\_\_

Bassi

*Da Capo*

**Example 3.05. “Rouse ye Brave, for Fame and Glory,” *Thomyris*, act 1, scene 2.<sup>84</sup>**

In this aria, Margarita de l’Epine’s virtuoso vocal skills became the medium through which Thomyris demonstrated her immediate control and command as a monarch. As rival characters, their musical styles distinguish the dramatic differences between Cleora and Thomyris, but as collaborative singers, the music demonstrated complementary vocal strengths as l’Epine and Tofts introduced their individual musical personalities.

The two characters share the stage in the beginning of act 3, just before the climax of the opera. Thomyris, in an attempt to discover whether or not Cleora truly loves her son, declares that soon the war will be over and that Cleora will no longer need to play

<sup>84</sup> The Walsh print misspells “ye” as “yee;” I have changed it to the former here.

hostage; she will be free to return home to her father. Cleora is upset at the prospect of being apart from her lover, but she resolves to obey rather than follow her heart. In the duet “When Duty’s requiring” (act 3, scene 1), Tofts and l’Epine merge their voices for the first time in their careers. Although the duet is stylistically typical of eighteenth-century Italian opera, the moment must have been significant for audiences who admired the individual talents of the two women. In accordance with the dramatic moment, Tofts and l’Epine sing together as equals, either in moments of melodic imitation or in long vocal phrases in which they sing together at the third (see Appendix A, Example A.11, for full aria).

Thomyris

Cleora

Bassi

6

Thomyris

Cleora

Bassi

When Du-ty's re-qui-ring, how Sweet is O-bey-

Your Vir-tues ad-mir-ing, how

- ing, O-bey-ing,

Sweet is de-lay-ing, de-

**Example 3.06. “When Duty’s requiring,” *Thomyris*, act 3, scene 1. Melodic imitation between voices.**

38

Thomyris In Vain do\_ you\_ press me, in vain do\_ you\_ Press\_\_\_\_\_

Cleora Oh, why do\_ you\_ press me, oh why do\_ you\_ Press\_\_\_\_\_

Bassi

43

Thomyris \_\_\_\_\_ me, oh why do\_ you Press\_\_\_\_\_

Cleora \_\_\_\_\_ me de-

Bassi

**Example 3.07. “When Duty’s requiring,” *Thomyris*, act 3, scene 1. Singing at the third.**

In the final act, the struggle between Thomyris, who upholds the importance of duty, and Cleora, who wishes to follow her heart, drives the opera to its dramatic conclusion. Just as the two female characters fulfill dramatically different needs within the opera, Tofts and l’Epine showcased alternative virtuoso strengths and styles in their two roles in order to lend musical variety to the drama.

In the years following *Thomyris*, Tofts and l’Epine starred together in three more operas and continued to distinguish their onstage identities through their choice of dramatic characters and specialized vocal techniques. Unlike *Thomyris*, the next two pasticcios, *Love’s Triumph* (1708) and *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* (1708), did not showcase the female singers as rival characters. Tofts played the female love interest in each opera,

but l'Epine played male roles, marketing her tractability as an actress and a singer and further distinguishing her from her "rival."<sup>85</sup> In *Pyrrhus and Demetrius*, Tofts and l'Epine do not share the stage at all; Tofts played the role of Climene, the woman with whom the title characters, Pyrrhus and Demetrius, are both in love. Perhaps because of the lack of a rival female character in the drama itself, or because of her willingness to portray a variety of roles, L'Epine took the part of Marius, the young, headstrong, male slave in love with the princess Deidamia, sister to Pyrrhus. Tofts and l'Epine never sang on the stage at the same time, but each was given an equal part to play (Tofts is assigned eight arias and two duets; l'Epine is assigned ten arias and one duet). This opera was designed to showcase its star castrati (Nicolini and Valentini) rather than exploit the onstage relationship between Tofts and l'Epine, so it did not provide an opportunity for the women to be considered as rival characters or as rival singers competing for the same kinds of roles.

*Love's Triumph*, a pastoral pasticcio with English text by Peter Anthony Motteux and music chosen from the works of various Italian composers, provides a distinct contrast to *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* in its dramatic use of the two singers.<sup>86</sup> Tofts once again played the main romantic character and l'Epine took a male role; in this opera,

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<sup>85</sup> Cross-sexual casting was not unknown in early eighteenth-century English theatrical works. Many actresses of the Restoration often played pants roles, and this tradition continued throughout the eighteenth century. Some female singers in the early eighteenth century specialized in playing exclusively male roles on the stage. Caterina Galerati, for example, played only male heroes in London during her two seasons in the opera. Jane Barbier and Francesca Vanini Boschi, both contraltos, also frequently played male roles. Keyser, "Cross-Sexual Casting;" Marsden, *Fatal Desire*; Nussbaum, *Rival Queens*; and Straub, *Sexual Suspects*.

<sup>86</sup> *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* was adapted by Nicola Haym. The majority of arias in the London production were borrowed from Alessandro Scarlatti's opera, *Pirro e Demetrio*, first produced at the Teatro San Bartolomeo in Naples in 1694. Haym also composed a number of the arias in the London production. *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* also marked Nicolini's first appearance on the London stage.

however, the two singers played feuding lovers, and by the end of the opera they end up happily together. Tofts and l’Epine share two duets in the opera. The last duet, sung by Licisca (Tofts) and Olindo (l’Epine) during their reconciliation, highlights their vocal collaboration through vocal unification, an occasion likely judged by audiences as a highly erotic moment in the opera. At first, the two women sing separate musical phrases; their melodies are similar, but the lower vocal line (presumably Olindo/l’Epine) sings a third higher than the top line (Tofts/Licisca). As the duet continues to build musically through the A section, the voices still do not come together (except for two measures at the end of the A section), prolonging the musical tension. Instead, it is half way through the B section, on the words “Death or madness / Death or life,” that the women’s voices blend for the first time in a sensual display of vocal ornamentation.

The image displays a musical score for three voices: Licisca, Olindo, and Bassi. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of two systems. In the first system, Licisca's line (top) begins with a quarter rest followed by a half note G4, then a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. Olindo's line (middle) has a quarter rest, then a half note G4, and a quarter note A4. The Bassi line (bottom) starts with a half note G2, followed by a quarter note A2, and a quarter note B2. The lyrics for Licisca are "Death or mad" and for Olindo are "Death or life". The second system continues the vocal lines. Licisca's line has a quarter rest, then a quarter note G4, and a quarter note A4. Olindo's line has a quarter rest, then a quarter note G4, and a quarter note A4. The lyrics for Licisca are "ness," and for Olindo are "life or death,". The Bassi line continues with a half note G2, followed by a quarter note A2, and a quarter note B2.

**Example 3.08. “Oh no more let love forsake me,” *Love’s Triumph* (1708), act 3.<sup>87</sup>**

<sup>87</sup> This is a transcription of Walsh’s *Songs in the Opera Call’d Love’s Triumph*, US-AScl M1507.E12.

The staggered vocal lines create musical suspensions throughout the melismatic passage, and the slight difference in rhythmic embellishment (Licisca, on the top line, sings sixteenth-note trills that are written out, while Olindo sings thirty-second-note trills on the second vocal line) highlights the “shakes” for which the two women were so well known.<sup>88</sup> The voices of Tofts and l’Epine blend suggestively throughout the B section of this aria, drawing attention to the shared skills of the two female singers and the erotic aural effect that the combination of their voices must have had on audiences.

In *Thomyris*, *Love’s Triumph*, and *Pyrrhus and Demetrius*, Tofts and l’Epine confronted their reputations as rivals by underscoring their differences in musical and dramatic specialization. By playing different types of characters and singing arias picked specifically from previously composed works that showed off their individual musical talents, Tofts and l’Epine distinguished themselves through their onstage personae. In their final collaboration, in the pasticcio *Clotilda* (1709), the sopranos again starred opposite each other, this time as rival characters. Although *Clotilda* was produced as a vehicle for Nicolini, who played the hero Alfonso, the actions of the two leading ladies inspired the most dramatic scenes of the opera.<sup>89</sup> Both women vie for the affections of King Fernando: Clotilda (l’Epine) is betrothed to the king, but Isabella (Tofts) persuades Fernando to abandon her by seducing him.<sup>90</sup> Although either Clotilda or Isabella

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<sup>88</sup> Their trills were noted in two separate publications. *The Power of Musick* noted that even “the Earl of N[ottingha]m’s transported when she [l’Epine] shakes.” *The Diverting Post* in 1705 quipped that when Tofts sings, “every Shake’s a dart.”

<sup>89</sup> The cast included Catherine Tofts as Isabella, Margarita de l’Epine as Clotilda, Valentini as King Fernando, the famous castrato Nicolini as Alfonso, and Mrs. Lindsey and Mr. Lawrence as the comic characters of Leonora and Rodrigo, respectively. The impresario Johann Jakob Heidegger selected the arias for this production; he had worked with Pepusch and Motteux on *Thomyris* as well, and had probably learned from its lack of success.

<sup>90</sup> *Clotilda* was a popular libretto by Giovanni Battista Neri, first produced in Venice at the Teatro San Cassiano with music by Giovanni-Maria Ruggieri in 1696. It was later produced, in 1702, as

appeared in every scene, the two characters do not share the stage until the end of the opera. The dramatic differences between Clotilda and Isabella provided both Tofts and l'Epine with the opportunity to build upon their musical specializations, but this opera signified a radical departure, especially for Tofts, in the types of music that they sang. Tofts's most Italianate aria in *Clotilda* was published in Walsh's edition with Italian words; the English words were printed below.

Isabella  
 La sor-te ed il des-tin, Com-bat-ter-ra per me.

Bassi

4

Isabella  
 La sor-te ed il des-tin, Com-bat-ter-ra per

Bassi

7

Isabella  
 me, Com-bat-ter-ra

Bassi

10

Isabella  
 Com-bat-ter

Bassi

13

Isabella  
 -ra per me. La sor-te ed il des

Bassi

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*Amar per vendetta* at the Teatro San Moisè in Venice. Another version of the opera was mounted in 1706 in Vienna, with music by Francesco Bartolomeo Conti; some of his music was reused in the London pasticcio. I thank Andrew Meagher for sharing his unpublished work on *Clotilda* and its sources.

**Example 3.09. “La sorte ed il destin,” *Clotilda* (1709), act 3. A section.<sup>91</sup>**

Replete with extended *passaggi*, this da capo aria highlights Tofts’s developed skill at singing Italian-style music. As Isabella, Tofts also broke out of her character type as the passive love interest by playing the conniving female antagonist.

Similarly, Margarita de l’Epine’s role as Clotilda, the victim of Fernando and Isabella’s machinations, was a change from her usual performance as strong female characters. Clotilda’s act 3 lament, just before she is about to fall on her sword, having been falsely accused of treason, highlights l’Epine’s masterful performance of an emotionally charged dramatic moment. The musical style of the aria, “Let Virgins ev’ry year,” is a marked shift from l’Epine’s usual performances of highly virtuosic, Italian-style music. Instead, this aria is set in a high tessitura and features slower harmonic

<sup>91</sup> All transcriptions from *Clotilda* are from US-AAscI M1507.E12, *Songs in the Opera Call’d Clotilda*. I have preserved all original beaming, spellings, and slur markings. Textual elision markings are mine.



rhythms, a highly chromatic vocal line, and lyricism rather than flashy displays of vocal virtuosity.

Clotilda  
 Bassi

1  
 3  
 5  
 7  
 10

Let Vir-gins ev-ry year in me-lan-cho-ly knell\_ and  
 wee-ping ac-cent tell, my\_ fa-tal sto-ry, and wee-ping  
 tell, and wee-ping ac-cent tell my fa tal sto-  
 -ry, and wee-ping, tell my fa-tal sto-ry, my  
 fa-tal sto-ry.

**Example 3.10. “Let Virgins ev’ry year,” *Clotilda* (1709), act 3. A section.**

In its published form, “Let Virgins ev’ry year” does not include Italian text, suggesting that l’Epine may have performed this, as well as most of the opera, in English.<sup>92</sup> In

<sup>92</sup> Many arias in Walsh’s publication of *Clotilda* were printed with both Italian and English text, but usually the top line of lyrics indicated the actual performance language, while the alternative language is printed in small type underneath. In “La sorte ed il destin,” the Italian lyrics were printed above the English, suggesting that she sang in Italian. *Clotilda* is the only pasticcio opera that has such a diversity of languages. In the other Italian pasticcios performed before 1710, only parts for castrati (who sang in Italian) were printed with the Italian language on top and the English translation underneath. In *Clotilda*, both Tofts’s and l’Epine’s arias alternate between Italian and English; in fact, half of l’Epine’s arias were printed with English on top, while the

*Clotilda*, Tofts, the English singer, and l'Epine, the Italian *virtuosa*, switched musical identities, cultivating new—though still complementary—musical personae. More importantly, however, Tofts and l'Epine demonstrated their flexibility as actresses and singers by showing London's audiences that they could perform non-native musical styles successfully without being inhibited by the prejudicial fervor surrounding Italian opera in the first decade of the eighteenth century.

Catherine Tofts and Margarita de l'Epine defined themselves as distinctive stage personalities who performed independent dramatic roles and specialized in different musical styles and vocal techniques. As I have explained with reference to *Clotilda*, Tofts and l'Epine did not allow cultural prejudice to prevent them from mastering the other's language and musical culture. Yet the two women were still framed as bitter rivals, representing different political and cultural factions, rather than artistic collaborators. The 1707 libretto for *Thomyris, Queen of Scythia* provides a possible explanation. The booklet includes a page-long prologue, a surprising but telling contribution to the opera's narrative. The prologue glorifies Queen Anne and introduces the plot of the opera. The text explicitly lauds Queen Anne's power and virtue as a monarch, while alluding to King Cyrus, the unseen antagonist of *Thomyris* (the foe against whom Thomyris is fighting her war):

With Virtues crown'd, adorn'd with ev'ry Grace,  
A Queen [ANNA] then rul'd a Warlike Northern Race;  
Who, bless'd and free, contented with their own,  
For Glory fought, and the World's Good alone.  
Down, by her Arms, Grand Cyrus soon was hurl'd,  
And, by a Woman, Heav'n reveng'd the World.<sup>93</sup>

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other half privileged the Italian. I have not been able to figure out Walsh's motivations for such discrepancies, though it may suggest that by 1709 both singers were well-trained in both languages and could perform in Italian and English with ease if needed.

<sup>93</sup> Prologue, *Thomyris Queen of Scythia*, libretto, 3.

Although the prologue seems to set up a political allegory, the final four lines discourage that interpretation:

Yet, when this Day we show a Scythian Queen,  
Think not we dare attempt a Modern Scene.  
As Britain's Beauties all the World's excel,  
Great ANNA's Reign disdains a Parallel.<sup>94</sup>

Attempts to understand the social and political meaning behind the opera are complicated by this prologue, whose language alludes to similarities between the power of Queen Anne and the Scythian Queen (especially through King Cyrus's defeat), though its final lines dissuade audiences from thinking of the opera as a political statement. Perhaps the prologue was meant to ease the shock of seeing an Italian playing the allegorical role of their queen. Or perhaps audiences heard these pasticcios as so distinctly Italian that opera producers strove to distance their cultural contributions from the political turmoil surrounding Italian culture and English identity. Examined closely, the roles that Tofts and l'Epine played in these four pasticcios illustrates that accusations of their rivalry, at least on the stage, was unfounded.

### ***Britannia and Augusta and the Harmony of Musical Styles***

The prologue to *Thomyris, Queen of Scythia* may have been intended to distance the work and its singers from the controversies surrounding the performance of Italian music in England. During the same season (1707), Johann Christoph Pepusch composed an English ode replete with political and patriotic sentiment, written exclusively for both Tofts and l'Epine. The ode demonstrates how English and Italian musical styles might coexist on the London stage. Its mixture of styles draws attention to a union between

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 3.

warring cultures, probably influenced by the talents of Tofts and l'Epine. Pepusch, an émigré from Berlin who settled in London in the final years of the seventeenth century, was also trying to succeed in his adopted homeland by catering to his new English audience. Early in the eighteenth century, he composed his *Six English Cantatas* and l'Epine may have sung their premieres some time before 1705.<sup>95</sup> In the preface to their 1710 publication, the anonymous author (either the publisher, or perhaps Pepusch himself) wrote:

[Pepusch] is desirous that the Publick shou'd be inform'd that they are not only the first he has attempted in *English*, but the first of any of his works publish'd by himself, and he wholly submits them to the Judgment of the Lovers of this Art, it will be a pleasure to him to find that his endeavours to promote the Composing of Musick in the *English* language, after a new model, are favourably accepted.<sup>96</sup>

Pepusch realized the importance of connecting with his audiences by writing English music.<sup>97</sup> It is unclear how these works were received in the first decade of the eighteenth century, but they remain Pepusch's earliest efforts at dramatic vocal composition. *Thomyris* (1707) and his cantata *Britannia and Augusta* (1707) are the only other theatrical pieces he composed until he became the music director at Drury Lane in 1714.<sup>98</sup>

*Britannia and Augusta*, an elegiac ode composed upon the death of William Cavendish, Duke of Devonshire, demonstrated Pepusch's dedication to seeking a

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<sup>95</sup> The works were published much later, in two volumes, in 1710 and 1720. Cook, *The Life and Works of Johann Christoph Pepusch*, 94-95.

<sup>96</sup> Johann Christoph Pepusch, "Six English Cantatas," preface. Quoted in John Graham Williams, *The Life, Work and Influence of J.C. Pepusch*, 3 vols. (Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of York, 1975), 93.

<sup>97</sup> For a thorough analysis of these early pieces, see Williams, *The Life, Work and Influence of J.C. Pepusch*.

<sup>98</sup> On Pepusch, see Cook, *The Life and Works*; Stanley Godman, "Pepusch and the Duke of Chandos," *The Musical Times* 100, No. 1395 (May 1959): 271; A.J.E. Lello, "Dr. Pepusch (1667-1752)," *The Musical Times* 93, No. 1311 (May 1952): 209-210; and Williams, *The Life, Work and Influence*.

common ground between English and Italian music.<sup>99</sup> The piece also betrayed the influence of the two sopranos for whom he composed. Rather than playing rivals within an operatic narrative (as in the London pasticcios), the complementary roles of Britannia and Augusta (played by l'Epine and Tofts, respectively) situated them as professional collaborators well versed in English musical traditions.<sup>100</sup> The harmony between the allegorical characters Britannia (England) and Augusta (Queen Anne) represented the successful musical collaboration between London's star sopranos.

John Hughes, a Whig librettist in staunch favor of setting English texts to music, furnished the words for *Britannia and Augusta*.<sup>101</sup> His libretto commemorated the death of the first Duke of Devonshire, showing his support for the Whig nobleman, and the text praises Cavendish's loyalty to Queen Anne. Although not a patron of music, one of Cavendish's most significant contributions to English history was his collection at his family home of Chatsworth of some of the most superb works of art by English painters.<sup>102</sup> In the first line of Hughes' poem, Britannia calls forth all the muses of the arts, perhaps alluding to Cavendish's penchant for cultural patronage:

Ye generous Arts and Muses join;  
Whil down your Cheeks the streaming Sorrows flow,  
Let murm'ring Strings with the soft Voice combine  
T'express the Melody of Woe.  
And thou, AUGUSTA! rise and wait  
With decent Honours on the Great;  
Condole my Loss, and weep DEVONIO'S fate.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> On its title page, *Britannia and Augusta* is referred to as an "ode," but its musical structure (alternating recitatives and da capo arias) suggests a classification as a cantata with English text.

<sup>100</sup> Tofts and l'Epine are named as the ode's singers in its published text. See Peter Holmon, "Introduction," in *Britannia and Augusta*, ed. Cedric Lee (Green Man Press, 2009), 2.

<sup>101</sup> Hughes may have composed a large portion of the text for Handel's *Acis and Galatea*. See J. Merrill Knapp, "Hughes, John," *Grove Online* (accessed 2011).

<sup>102</sup> David Hosford, "William Cavendish, First Duke of Devonshire," *ODNB* (accessed 2011).

<sup>103</sup> All textual excerpts come from Lee, gen. ed., *Britannia and Augusta*, 3-4.

The first half of Hughes' libretto paints an emotionally vivid mourning scene, as Britannia and Augusta sing together in soulful lament for their lost hero. Hughes gives equal prominence to each of the characters, and the textual structure of the ode reveals attention to symmetry and equality. The ode comprises two major sections. The first, made up of alternating recitatives and arias, laments the loss of "Devonio" (or the Duke of Devonshire). The second half of the ode also presents recitatives and arias for the two characters, but its text describes the various ways in which the allegorical and mythological characters will pay tribute to the Duke upon his death.<sup>104</sup>

**Table 3.01. *Britannia and Augusta*, musical structure.**

	Britannia (l'Epine)	Augusta (Tofts)
PART 1 (Mourning)		
	Recitative ("Ye Gen'rous Arts and Muses Join")	
<b>Key: C minor</b>	Air ("Queen of Cities!") – da capo	
		Recitative ("Tis Fame's chief immortality")
<b>Key: G minor</b>		Air ("Lands remote the Loss will hear") – da capo
	Recitative ("Great George!")	
<b>Key: C minor</b>	Duet ("To shade his peaceful Grave") – da capo	Duet ("To shade his peaceful Grave") – da capo
PART 2 (Celebration)		
		Recitative ("Now shall Augusta's Sons their Skill impart")
<b>Key: F major</b>		Air ("Lofty Birth and Honours Shining") – da capo
	Recitative ("Behold fair	

<sup>104</sup> Augusta mentions creating a sculpture ("And summon the dumb Sister Art, In Marble Life to show, What the Patriot was below") to mark his grave, while Britannia recommends shining lights around his tomb. It ends with an exultation of the new Duke of Devonshire, in whom "Devonio" will live.

	Liberty attend")	
<b>Key: E-flat major</b>	Air ("Preserve O Urn, his silent Dust") – through composed	
		Recitative ("Genius of Britain!")
	Recitative ("I own the new arising Light")	
<b>Key: C major</b>	Duet ("Gently smooth thy Flight, O Time!") – da capo	Duet ("Gently smooth thy Flight, O Time!") – da capo

Hughes and Pepusch highlighted the singers' complementary talents by dividing recitative and airs equally between the two roles. Although Britannia (l'Epine) sings an additional recitative in part one, her air "Preserve, O Urn, his silent Dust" is a truncated da capo aria. Moreover, Pepusch's key structure creates another layer of symmetry by reflecting the emotions expressed in Hughes's text. In part one, Britannia and Augusta lament the death of the Duke of Devonshire, and in part two, they memorialize the Duke and rejoice that his son will be a great successor. Pepusch created a circular harmonic structure, beginning in mournful C minor and moving through its closely related keys to end the ode joyfully in C major. Through his use of harmony, Pepusch alluded to Purcell's frequent use of the parallel major and minor to evoke opposing emotions.

Britannia (l'Epine) begins, singing recitative and aria pair that roots her musical persona well within English musical traditions. Britannia's first aria, "Queen of Cities, leave awhile" immediately grounds the listener in a style reminiscent of seventeenth-century English music through its use of a repetitive bass line, syllabic text setting, triadic harmonies, and musical and textual repetition:

Flute

Flute

Britannia

Queen of Ci-ties, leave a-while thy beau-teous smile, turn to ten-der sighs thy

Bassi

Fl.

Fl.

Britannia

Joy, to ten-der sighs thy Joy; thy beau-teous

Bassi

Fl.

Fl.

Britannia

smile, Oh\_ leave a - while, turn to

Bassi

Fl.

Fl.

Britannia

ten - der sighs\_ thy Joy, to ten - der, ten - der\_ sighs thy Joy,

Bassi

**Example 3.11. “Queen of Cities,” *Britannia and Augusta*, mm. 5-21.<sup>105</sup>**

<sup>105</sup> All examples from *Britannia and Augusta* were transcribed and typeset from the modern edition. See Johann Christoph Pepusch, *Britannia and Augusta, An Ode*, ed. Cedric Lee (Richmond, UK: Green Man Press, 2009). According to Peter Holmon’s introduction, the ode is



Although this is a *da capo* aria, Britannia sings short musical phrases set in a declamatory style and often repeated, a feature of Purcell's dramatic operas. The sigh figures that paint the words "tender sighs," as well as the imitation between the singer and the accompanying instruments, also resemble Purcell's use of word painting and imitation. The stylistic references to Purcell in Britannia's opening air ground the character firmly within English musical traditions. This is an especially interesting musical choice since l'Epine sang the part.<sup>106</sup> By casting her as the allegorical representative of England, and by composing stylistically traditional music for her, Pepusch created a convincing musical persona for the singer. Although they were both foreign in origin, their collaboration revealed that even foreigners could master England's musical traditions.

Pepusch's music for Tofts is also traditionally English in style, but Tofts is given a slightly more elaborate part in the ode. Augusta, the allegorical representation of Queen Anne, makes her first appearance just after Britannia's first aria. In Augusta's opening recitative/aria pair, Pepusch makes more use of word painting by composing virtuoso melismas for Tofts as she sings words such as "wafted" (mm. 11, 13-14) and "fly" (m. 23).

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scored for strings and winds, as well as continuo. The edition's original source is GB-Lbl Add. MS 5052, a copy by Henry Needler based on Brussels Conservatoire MS 1030.

<sup>106</sup> Moreover, Pepusch gives the only non-*da capo* aria in this work to l'Epine, in the second half of the ode ("Preserve O Urn, his silent Dust").

Augusta  
Lands re-mote the loss\_ will\_ hear from Rocks re- por- ting,

Bassi

Augusta  
seas trans- por- ting, will the waf- ted\_ sor- row bear;

Bassi

Augusta  
Lands re- mote the loss\_ will\_ hear from

Bassi

Augusta  
Rocks\_ re- por- ting, seas\_ trans- por- ting, will the waf -

Bassi

Augusta  
- ted\_ Sor-row bear, the waf - - - -

Bassi

Augusta  
- - - ted\_ sor- row, the waf- ted\_ sor- row bear.

Bassi

**Example 3.12. “Lands remote,” *Britannia and Augusta*, A section.**

Although the word painting is akin to some Italian virtuoso passagework, it also resembles the English stage music by Purcell, John Weldon, and others.<sup>107</sup> Moreover, Pepusch also relied on significant motivic repetition in the bass line. Although Tofts’s

<sup>107</sup> John Weldon’s setting of “Arise ye subterranean winds” is an example, with a long vocal melisma starting from the bottom of the singer’s range and ending at the top, to paint the word “subterranean.” From *The Tempest*, 1712.

melodic phrases are longer than l'Epine's, most of her aria is declamatory and exploits textual and melodic repetition. A da capo aria in form this may have been, but in musical substance Pepusch clearly wished to demonstrate his prowess at composing traditionally English-style music for his English star.

Although Pepusch subtitled *Britannia and Augusta* "an Ode After the Italian Manner," the few moments of Italianate music in this work remind the listener of the ode's English origins. *Britannia and Augusta* provided an opportunity for l'Epine and Tofts to join their voices in an English-style ode with a few Italianate touches and to overcome their reputations as figures of irreconcilable cultural origins. Their continuing collaboration in both Italian and English theatrical music between 1703 and 1709 highlights their attempts to market themselves as professional musicians capable of working together to promote music in England.

### **Conclusion: The Politics of Rivalry**

The 1709 performances of *Clotilda* marked the final time that Catherine Tofts and Margarita de l'Epine sang together on the stage. At some point in 1710, for reasons unknown, Tofts disappeared from London, traveling first to the continent and eventually arriving in Venice by late 1711. In an issue of the *Tatler*, Richard Steele implied that Tofts was forced off the stage, both by illness that severely limited her ability to sing, and by competition from Italian singers.

... the distresses of the unfortunate Camilla who has had the ill luck to break before her voice and to disappear at a time when her beauty was in the height of its bloom. This lady entered so thoroughly into the great characters she acted, that when she had finished her part, she could not think of retrenching her equipage, but would appear in her own lodgings with the same magnificence that she did upon the stage. This greatness of soul has reduced that unhappy Princess to an

involuntary retirement where she now passes her time among the woods and forests, thinking on the crowns and scepters she has lost, and often humming over her solitude

I was born of royal race  
Yet must wander in disgrace.<sup>108</sup>

Her “involuntary retirement” and her loss of celebrity, he suggested satirically, caused her alleged insanity. Steele, ever the opponent of Italian opera, may have been trying once again to disparage it by blaming it for the ruination of careers and personal suffering.<sup>109</sup> Although Steele’s article was not the only account of Tofts’s precarious mental state, it seems unlikely that she would have left England after a loss of popularity. She had recently revived her leading role in *Camilla* and she had performed alongside some of Europe’s best Italian singers in *Clotilda*. Perhaps Tofts was hoping to find success as an English singer on the Continent, as many of her Italian colleagues had upon their arrival in England.

A letter from Anthony Hammond to James Brydges, Duke of Chandos, from the summer of 1711, recounted the author’s meeting with Tofts, traveling under the name of Mrs. Smith, on a boat from London to The Hague.<sup>110</sup> The next mention of the singer is in a letter of December 11, 1711, from Secretary Cole in Venice to the Secretaries of State, simply stating, “Mrs. Tofts is come here.”<sup>111</sup> It has been suggested that Mrs. Tofts had already married Joseph Smith, a merchant based in Venice, by the time of her arrival there in 1711;<sup>112</sup> but letters from George Broughton and Alexander Cunningham to

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<sup>108</sup> Richard Steele, *The Tatler*, May 26, 1709, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2011).

<sup>109</sup> Burney was also skeptical of Steele’s motivations for writing about Tofts’s post-London career in *A General History of Music*, Vol. 4, 218-219.

<sup>110</sup> Hammond’s letter relates the tale as if it happened well in the past; therefore, it seems that Tofts left London prior to 1711. See Robert Schafer, “Mrs. Tofts Goes Abroad.” His source is in the US-SM Stowe 58, IX, fols. 60-65.

<sup>111</sup> GB-Lna SP 99/59, December 1711, f. 304r.

<sup>112</sup> Schafer, “Mrs. Tofts Goes Abroad.”

officials back in England between 1715 and 1716 suggest that Tofts was still being courted by Smith:

Venice, 23 August 1715

... And it's said Mr. Smith will sue for to succeed Mr. Cole as Resident, & in the such case, Mrs. Tofts the famous Voice who hath been here about 3 or 4 years is like to be Madame Resident.<sup>113</sup>

Venice, 31 January 1716

... It will be, I believe, a pleasure to Capt. Muetti [?] to know yet that Mrs. Taffts [Tofts] is improven wonderfully since she came into Italy, and tis said yet as soon as her health will permit that she's to be married [...]<sup>114</sup>

Venice, 28 September 1716

... As for Mr. Smith, he is soe much in love with Mrs. Tofts, that he is fit for nothing at present, and will imbroile us.<sup>115</sup>

It seems likely that, upon the improvement of her health, Tofts would have attempted to perform in Venice, and indeed a letter reprinted in the *Daily Courant* in 1712 suggests that she had gained a following there as a singer:

An English Gentlewoman named Mrs. Tofts hath been much applauded here for her fine singing, wherein she hath succeeded all the excellent voices on the stage of Venice. This lady hath sung in all the great Assemblies that were held at the Electoral Prince of Saxony's, and Signor Grimani hath endeavoured by all means to prevail upon her to remain here to sing in the Theatre of Chrysostome [Grisostomo], but it is believed she will rather chuse to return to her own Country, and the rather seeing the Opera's at London are better served at present than any in Europe...  
Venice, April 16<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> GB-Lna SP 99/61, f. 49r. Letter from J. Hugh Broughton, Venetian Consul, to London officials.

<sup>114</sup> GB-Lna SP 99/61, f. 116b. Alexander Cunningham, Venetian Resident, to London officials. This letter implies that Tofts had some illness when she came to Venice, although there is no indication or evidence that her malady had to do with her mental state.

<sup>115</sup> GB-Lna SP 99/61, f. 235v. Alexander Cunningham to London officials. Also quoted in *BDA*. "Imbroile," in this context, means "worry."

<sup>116</sup> Advertisement. *Daily Courant*, April 25, 1712, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2011).

Even if Tofts did not have a career in Venice, her marriage to Smith, a wealthy merchant, art collector, and musical connoisseur, would have ensured her a comfortable lifestyle until her death in 1756.<sup>117</sup>

After her departure from England, Tofts's reputation as her country's musical liberator transformed as Whig writers condemned the soprano for defecting to a "Popish" city. Alongside Richard Steele's satirical contributions to *The Spectator* quoted above, poets and pamphleteers capitalized on Tofts's departure in order to create a scandal that would further infuse English cultural life with a dash of partisan prejudice. In 1714, the poet Alexander Pope, who frequented Whig literary circles, published an epigram on the English singer entitled "On a Handsome Woman with a fine Voice, but very Covetous and Proud."<sup>118</sup> Although Pope's verse insulted her character, it was by no means the worst account of Tofts published after her move to the continent. The second volume of Delarivier Manley's gossipy novel, *Secret Memoirs and Manners Of several Persons of Quality, of Both Sexes, From the New Atalantis, an Island in the Mediterranean*, published in 1710, recounted a fictional version of the singer's youth, her musical training, and her sexual relationships with other musicians and members of the Whiggish nobility.<sup>119</sup> Perhaps the most blatantly libelous account of the singer was an anonymous

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<sup>117</sup> Her gravestone, in the cemetery of San Nicolò del Lido, reads: "Catherine Tofts / uxori incomparabili / de se bene merenti / quae obiit anno MDCCLVI / diutino vexata morbo / nec unquam displicuit nisi erepti / Joseph Smith Consul Britannicus / moerens fecit." In English: "To my incomparable wife / from virtue well deserved / who departed in the year 1756 / having been plagued by illness for a long time / from which she could not escape / Joseph Smith, British Consul / in sadness has made [this gravestone]" (translation by Wojciech Beltkiewicz). I sincerely thank Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson for sharing their photograph of Tofts's grave with me.

<sup>118</sup> Alexander Pope [attr.], "On a Handsome Woman with a fine Voice but very Covetous and Proud," in *Poetical Miscellanies, consisting of original poems and translations. By the best hands. Published by Mr. Steele*. [London, 1714], *ECCO* (accessed 2012), 331.

<sup>119</sup> For a full account of Manley's treatment of the singer, see Baldwin and Wilson, "The Harmonious Unfortunate."

pamphlet published in 1713 by John Barker, who was also the publisher of Daniel Defoe's first novels. The four-page poem recasts Catherine Tofts as a whore who seduces the Pope, giving him gonorrhoea, a truly "Dreadful Fire" in his breeches:

The Town and Nation know *Camilla*  
Who *Whilom* lived in this our *Villa*  
*She that was born of Royal Race,*  
*Yet lately wander'd in Disgrace,*  
Even She and Signior Nicolini,  
That Brother *Cod* to *Valentini*,  
Have lately ta'n a trip beyond Seas,  
Only, some say, to please their Fancies  
Howe'er, She's gone unto *Rome's* City,  
And there She chants out many a Ditty. [...]

*Pope* Saying, he seldom had of late  
Us'd this his Key to ope fore-gate,  
Therefore, dear Madam, 'tis no wonder,  
That now my Key has made a Blunder  
Now as he thrust the Key in Hole,  
Amaz'd, he cry'd, upon my Soul,  
The Key goes in most wondrous easy,  
What is the Key-hole broke, or Greasy,  
Hah! it turns round not very hard,  
I fear your Lock has neer a Ward,  
Pray what's the Reason of it, Madam?  
You must tell Truth by good St *Adam*,

*She* Ah! Sir, if it must be then spoken,  
My Key-hole is a little broken,  
As to the Wards, I do declare,  
They were knock'd out in *Angleterre*.

[...] Thus, Sirs, you see how *T---s* has pepper'd,  
The Codpiece of the *Romish* Shepherd,  
We could not burn the Pope at Home,  
But *T---s* has burnt the Pope at *Rome*,  
What may not Hereticks then hope,  
Since even at *Rome* they've burnt the Pope.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Anonymous, "A Full and True Account of a Dreadful Fire that Lately Broke Out in the Pope's Breeches," in *Eighteenth-century British Erotica*, ed. Alexander Pettit and Patrick Spedding (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2002), 347-354.

Published just as the Treaty of Utrecht was being signed, the poem's author used her move to Italy as a scandalous political allegory, which would have appealed to Jacobite, Popish sympathizers.<sup>121</sup> Tofts's beauty and sexual allure, which once had contributed to her fame and popularity amongst the English, now contributed to her new identity as a disease-ridden English prostitute who easily seduced the corrupt head of the Catholic Church. At a time when the Tories had regained power in Parliament and were pushing through a peace treaty to end England's participation in the War of the Spanish Succession, the Whigs no longer needed to use Tofts as a symbol for the superiority of English culture; instead, the singer became a cultural scapegoat, intended as a crude symbol for religious and political corruption.

Luckier than Tofts, Margarita de l'Epine enjoyed a London career untouched by scandal; she continued to perform in operas until her retirement in the early 1720s.<sup>122</sup> In 1709, Edmund Smith mentioned the singer in his elegy to the poet, John Philips:

So on the tuneful *Margarita's* Tongue  
The list'ning Nymphs, and ravish'd Heroes hung;  
But Citts and Fops the Heav'n-born Musick blame,  
And bawl, and hiss, and damn her into Fame;  
Like her sweet Voice is thy harmonious Song,  
As high, as sweet, as easie, and as strong.<sup>123</sup>

Smith used Margarita's voice as a symbol for Philips's poetical prowess, clearly meant as a compliment to both the singer and the poem's dedicatee. Margarita remained a popular singer, no longer subject to criticisms based largely in political rhetoric. She eventually married the composer Johann Christoph Pepusch, and she spent many of her later years

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 347-348.

<sup>122</sup> L'Epine came out of retirement in 1720 to replace Mrs. Turner Robinson in three Royal Academy operas: Domenico Scarlatti's *Narciso*, Handel's *Radamisto*, and Porta's *Numitore*.

<sup>123</sup> Edmund Smith, *Poem on the Death of Mr. John Philips* (London, 1709), *ECCO* (accessed 2012).



training young opera singers, most notably Isabella Chambers. Despite her continued work on the London stage, l'Epine's roles in operas in the 1710s did not rise to the level of her career in the first decade of the century. She occasionally played prominent roles in operas, but most of the leading roles for women went to newly arrived Italian singers, including Isabella Girardeau, Elisabetta Pilotti-Schiavonetti, Francesca Vanini Boschi (who specialized in pants roles), and Anastasia Robinson.<sup>124</sup> In 1714 she joined her husband, Pepusch, at Drury Lane, where she continued performing in English theatrical pieces. She collaborated with Jane Barbier, a professionally trained English contralto who was talented enough to perform alongside some of the most famous voices from the continent.<sup>125</sup> Her death notice, given in the *London Evening Post* on August 14, 1746, said: "On Tuesday was privately interr'd, in the Charter-house Burying-Ground, the Wife of the learned Dr. Pepusch. She died last Friday; and was formerly deservedly famous, under the Name of Signora Margareta."<sup>126</sup> Though brief, the notice memorialized l'Epine as talented singer, rather than indulging in the exploitation of her cultural identity as English commentators did forty years earlier.

The alleged rivalry between Tofts and l'Epine in the first decade of the eighteenth century represented a singular moment in the history of English musical culture. Public commentators vilified their relationship during a period of cultural, social, and political turbulence. In a world in which women were beginning to create professional careers, where Italian opera threatened to conquer London's stages, and when warring

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<sup>124</sup> The most important role L'Epine played in the 1710s was Agilea in Handel's *Teseo* of 1713. This was the only time she worked with Handel, other than when she replaced Margarita Durastanti in *Radamisto*.

<sup>125</sup> These works are all English masques by Pepusch: *Venus and Adonis* (1715), *Myrtillo and Laura* (1715), *Apollo and Dafne* (1716), and *The Death of Dido* (1716).

<sup>126</sup> Death notice. *London Evening Post*, August 14, 1746, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2012).

monarchs complicated England's political future, the "Italian Gentlewoman" and the "English Nightingale" became timely and appropriate symbols—even cultural scapegoats—to represent the chaotic and uncertain direction of England's future. Perceptions of rivalry between the two sopranos endowed their onstage performances with external implications concerning their cultural allegiances, musical tastes and choices, and personal relationships with other musicians and their audiences. The singers' collaboration symbolized the potential harmony between musical styles, between cultures, and between political parties. To maintain disharmony, and therefore to stoke England's patriotic fires as partisan schisms intensified, opera-going (primarily Whig) commentators exploited their relationship, creating a pejorative myth that sought to undermine the power that could arise from professional woman working together. By treating their performances both on and offstage as humorous scandals with political undertones, commentators created a powerful antidote that undermined the agency and authority of the new modern woman.

We are not certain what Catherine Tofts or Margarita de l'Epine looked like; besides the physical descriptions of the two women in Burney's *General History of Music*, the only other sources are a series of several paintings by the artist Marco Ricci, from around 1708, all entitled *The Rehearsal of an Opera*.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> See Richard Leppert, "Imagery, Musical Confrontation and Cultural Difference in Early 18<sup>th</sup>-Century London," *Early Music* 14, No. 3 (August 1986), 323-333, 335-338, 341-342, 345; and Eric Walter White, "The Rehearsal of an Opera," *Theatre Notebook* 14 (1960): 79-90.



**Figure 3.01. *The Rehearsal of an Opera* (1709), Marco Ricci. London: Eric Charles Graham Collection.<sup>128</sup>**

This portrait represents a rehearsal of *Pyrrhus and Demetrius*, and Horace Walpole, an eventual owner of one of the paintings, labeled the persons represented. Nicolini, the castrato, is pictured at the center of the image, and various singers and musicians surround him, as well as audience members. According to Walpole's captions, Mrs. Tofts can be seen sitting at the harpsichord, and Signora de l'Epine, wearing black and holding a handkerchief, sits on the far end of the instrument. It is significant that, even in this portrait, Ricci depicted Tofts and l'Epine as contrasting figures. Not only do the two women sit across from each other; the colors of their costumes suggest opposing, perhaps even rivalrous, personalities.

The relationship between Catherine Tofts and Margarita de l'Epine has been misunderstood as one of antagonism rather than collaboration. Their opposing depictions

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<sup>128</sup> Marco Ricci, "The Rehearsal of an Opera," (1709), London: Eric Charles Graham Collection. [www.wikigallery.org/wiki/painting\\_290355/Marco-Ricci/An-Opera-Rehearsal](http://www.wikigallery.org/wiki/painting_290355/Marco-Ricci/An-Opera-Rehearsal).

in Ricci's painting may have advanced their public reputation as rival queens, just as the numerous politically biased poems, prologues, letters, and historical memoirs has left an historical narrative of rivalry. Buried in Jakob Greber's list of recommendations for appropriate social behavior in England is a brief but telling statement: "16. Don't let them make a controversy of you. They are masters at this."<sup>129</sup> Though "they" remains undefined, it is most likely that Greber was referring to England's critics and public commentators, the same voices slandering l'Epine and Tofts as rivals. Despite their reputations, Tofts and l'Epine approached their careers and performances with more fluidity concerning their choices, both in roles and musical styles. They specialized in different musical techniques that were often complementary, but the sopranos also cultivated their performative flexibility, playing to the demands of a marketplace in which composers and theater managers were still experimenting with musical styles, genres, and languages. As collaborators, rather than rivals, Catherine Tofts and Margarita de l'Epine established a precedent for both foreign and native female opera singers who strove to create professional careers on London's opera stages. Their performances show that female singers could successfully build their celebrity through onstage collaboration, despite their reputations as rivals.

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<sup>129</sup> Samuel, "A German Musician," 591.

## Chapter 4

### Benefits and the Performance of Collaborative Celebrity

In the winter of 1722, two years after the contralto Jane Barbier retired from the stage, *The Daily Post* advertised that she would perform at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane. The concert, designed to showcase her return to the stage, was a particularly special event for the singer, since it was performed for her benefit:

*Daily Post*, Tuesday, February 20, 1722

For the Benefit of Mrs. Barbier

At the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane, on Friday next, being the 23<sup>rd</sup> Day of February, will be perform'd a Consort of Vocal and Instrumental MUSICK. The Boxes and Pit to be put together. Tickets to be had at Mr. Cooks' the box keeper in the Playhouse at 6s each.<sup>1</sup>

This advertisement provides little information concerning the particulars of the performance. Which other singers performed? Who played alongside her? What music was performed? Despite its lack of specifics, the announcement suggests that Barbier engaged other musicians, and perhaps even other singers, to supplement the evening's entertainment. The participation of other performers was especially important, since in 1720, *Applebee's Original Weekly Journal* announced that Barbier, "having gain'd above 5000 pounds by South Sea stock, has sung her last Farewell to the Stage."<sup>2</sup> Yet just two months later, she likely lost her fortune in the disastrous crash of the South Sea

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<sup>1</sup> Advertisement. *Daily Post*, February 20, 1722, *Burney Collection Newspapers*, Gale, The University of Michigan (accessed 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Notice. *Applebee's Original Weekly Journal*, August 6, 1702, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2012).

Company.<sup>3</sup> As was the custom for benefits, Barbier would have planned every aspect of this performance by choosing her own repertory, hiring an accompanist, soliciting patrons to buy tickets, and even choosing the other musicians who performed alongside her.<sup>4</sup> By organizing the event, she carefully determined how to minimize financial risk and to maximize her post-expense profits.<sup>5</sup> Her reliance on a benefit concert to jump-start her post-retirement career demonstrates that she was willing to count on her own celebrity, while relying on other musicians, to make a great deal of money in a short amount of time.

By the time Barbier came out of retirement, benefit performances had been a tradition in England for over fifty years. They originated in the spoken theater during the Restoration, and the first professional singers in England observed the financial and artistic potential of these events by performing in benefits given by actors and actresses. By 1714, every leading singer in the English capital was contractually entitled to one benefit per season.<sup>6</sup> The process of putting on such an event required time,

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<sup>3</sup> For more on the South Sea Stock bubble, its failure, and its economic ramifications, see Ellen T. Harris, "Handel the Investor," *Music & Letters* 85, No. 4 (2004): 521-575. Also, see Richard Dale, *The First Crash: Lessons from the South Sea Bubble* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004).

<sup>4</sup> Most of our knowledge concerning how performers promoted their benefits comes from the spoken theater. Scant evidence remains showing how this practice transferred to the opera houses, but we can piece together how female singers may have organized these events both on- and offstage. As noted in Chapter 1, Catherine Tofts wrote her accompanist Charles Dieupart into her contracts with the Theatre Royal, which probably included her benefit as well. Lindelheim's contracts, written by Haym, also included passages on benefits. Female singers were known to have visited patrons' houses in order to sell tickets to their benefits. In 1711, Elisabetta Pilotti Schiavonetti sold tickets to her Whig patrons by going door to door. See Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

<sup>5</sup> Barbier would probably have had to pay house charges, which included fees for renting the hall, hiring the orchestra and other musicians, providing candles to light the stage, and other necessities.

<sup>6</sup> In this year, five singers petitioned the Lord Chamberlain to regulate their benefit performances; though no original exists, the document was transcribed in the *Winston Theatrical Collection* (GB-Lbl Add. MS 38607, f. 44r). Those who signed it were the King's Theater's leading singers:

resourcefulness, and cooperation both inside and outside of the playhouse. Their organization usually began far in advance of the actual night. For example, Catherine Tofts's contract for the 1705 season at Drury Lane stipulated that "she shall have a binifitt [*sic*] day on Tuesday the nineteenth of February next in which she shall sing, but such her singing shall not be reckoned as one of the twelve times hereby agreed on to sing she paying the charge of the House and what shall be further agreed on at the finaling of the Articles."<sup>7</sup> She not only demanded her benefit, but even specified the day of her performance; the earlier in the season one's benefit took place, the better, since wealthy audience members left London to spend the spring and summer months in luxurious spa towns.<sup>8</sup> Tofts made it clear that her benefit night would not deprive her of compensation for the twelve times she was contractually obligated to sing. She also acquiesced to paying house charges, meaning that she would not have taken away the evening's full profits.<sup>9</sup> Thus, most of the financial particulars with the playhouse were arranged ahead of time through contracts, allowing the singer to focus on the musical and marketing aspects of her benefit. Her self-promotion outside of the playhouse was especially important to the evening's financial success. If the performance was a triumph,

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Jane Barbier (Stephen Barbier, her brother, signed for her), Caterina Galerati, Margarita de l'Epine (Pepusch signed for her), Anastasia Robinson (Thomas Robinson, her father, signed for her) and Valentini. Although Elisabetta Pilotti Schiavonetti did not sign the petition, advertisements indicate that she was also given a benefit that season. See Robert D. Hume and Judith Milhous, *Vice Chamberlain Coke's Theatrical Papers, 1706-1715* (Carbondale and Edwardsville, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982), document 134, 217.

<sup>7</sup> GB-Lna PRO LC 7/3, f. 88. Contract on behalf of Mrs. Tofts, January 28, 1705.

<sup>8</sup> St. Vincent Troubridge, *The Benefit System in the British Theatre* (London: The Society for Theater Research, 1967), 36.

<sup>9</sup> In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there were five types of benefits: the "clear" benefit, in which the beneficiary would gain all of the evening's profits; the "half-clear" benefit, where the management pays half of the house charges and the beneficiary covers the rest; the regular benefit, in which performers paid house charges and went home with the remaining profits; the "half benefit," meaning that the profits would have been shared between management and the performers; and joint benefits, shared by one or more performers. As the name suggests, regular benefits were the most frequent type for female opera singers. See *Ibid.*, 19.

the beneficiary could take away a tidy sum, perhaps increasing his or her annual income by half during one four-hour performance.<sup>10</sup> Theater managers were usually happy to accommodate these events, even though they had to split the evening's profits with the beneficiary. If the beneficiary paid house charges, the managers would not lose money, no matter how empty the theater. Thus, benefit performances were a risk for singers, but often only a slight inconvenience for theater managers, who only lamented the practice when an evening's generous profits went directly into the beneficiary's pockets rather than into the house coffers.

For singers, benefits were a huge undertaking, and always a gamble. Not only could the size of the audience depend on something as fickle as bad weather, but a small audience could damage a singer's reputation and thus her annual income.<sup>11</sup> Singers turned to their celebrated colleagues: most frequently, other well-known singers, but also instrumentalists, composers, and actors and actresses, in order to appeal to the largest crowd possible and to demonstrate their professional connections within a wider network of musicians. Benefits became events during which the beneficiary promoted herself as a star amongst stars. It was through these special, collaborative performances that the beneficiary established and reinforced her membership in a community of expert performers—professionals who, by playing or singing in the benefit, also demonstrated their professional support of the beneficiary.

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<sup>10</sup> The Coke Papers include lists of singers' profits during the 1712-1713 season at their benefits. Maria Manina (who was not given a benefit) and Jane Barbier (whose benefit was unsuccessful, netting her only £15 in profits) were exceptions to what was otherwise a highly successful benefit year for the Queen's Theatre's best singers. Valeriano Pellegrini, Pilotti, Valentini, and l'Epine each earned about £75 at their benefits. These singers' annual salaries averaged about £450; therefore, one night's performance gave each of the Queen's Theatre's most celebrated singers an extra sixth of their annual income. See *Ibid.*, document 123, 199-201.

<sup>11</sup> Robert D. Hume, "The Origins of the Actor Benefit in London," *Theatre Research International* 9, No. 2 (1984): 102.



Little scholarly attention has been devoted to the phenomenon of the benefit in eighteenth-century England, and none at all to the way in which musicians adapted this practice to advance themselves.<sup>12</sup> The present chapter explores benefits for singers by using advertisements, newspaper accounts, and pamphlets, as well as printed music, to reconstruct how benefit performances would have been organized and executed. My survey of advertised benefits for singers during the first two decades of the eighteenth century demonstrates that female singers experimented with the format and production of their benefits, and that they came to rely more and more on collaboration. Although scant evidence remains of how much independent control women had over their benefits, there is no reason to think that they were any less active in organizing their benefits than their male counterparts were. Here is how the trumpeter John Grano described his own experience organizing a benefit concert in 1728:

Arose at 5 in the Morn at which time the Door was Order'd to be open'd to me in Order to Survey the Town-Hall, to have it put in Order for the Reception of the Audience I expected at Night; [...] As soon as I came there I fell to work giving Directions and Sending for Wood to make Desks for to put the Performers' Books upon; for Candles; for Clay to Stick Candles on in Tin Sockets to nail about hoops, of which we made Sconces; and about the Desks where the Musicians Sate. The Hall was put in the Order as gave Satisfaction. [...] When [rehearsal] was over I went into the Hall and found every thing Dispos'd as I had Order'd [...].<sup>13</sup>

Grano worked diligently to produce his own benefit, and he relied on other performers to accompany him. His diary makes it clear that these additional musicians were integral to his benefit's success: "Mr Graham, Mrs Graham and Mrs Thurman thank[ed] me for the Performance Particularly, and I thank'd them for there [*sic*] Company and the Service in

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<sup>12</sup> See Robert D. Hume, "The Origins of the Actor Benefit," 99-110; David McKenty, "The Benefit System in Augustan Drama" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1966); and Troubridge, *The Benefit System*.

<sup>13</sup> Ginger, John, ed., *Handel's Trumpeter: The Diary of John Grano*, forward by Crispian Steele-Perkins (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1998), 82-83.

procuring such a considerable part of my Audience.”<sup>14</sup> His grateful acknowledgement of the other musicians who participated reveals that even the beneficiary realized how much their contributions affected his financial earnings and public reception.

As Grano’s diary demonstrates, benefits were not unique to female singers. A survey of advertisements in London papers published between 1703 and 1720, however, shows that these women were the first professional musicians to harness benefits for their own self-promotion.<sup>15</sup> In this chapter, I show how female singers used benefits to establish and legitimize their collective presence in professional opera singing. Berta Joncus has argued that “[s]tars help bind audiences together, generating supporters whose exhibition of shared taste may coalesce into a group identity.” The benefit performance also bound the stars themselves together, appearing onstage as a collective of professional musicians who collaborated in order to bolster their public reception.<sup>16</sup> I analyze benefit performances in order to demonstrate how female singers enhanced their individual celebrity through public participation in collective performances. Most importantly, I demonstrate how singers collaborated with each other in benefits to support their profession. Rather than acting as self-interested parties eager to show off in every performance, the success of these performances show that singers understood the financial and social power of collaborative celebrity. Eighteenth-century benefit performances were precursors to today’s star-studded benefits, galas, and awards

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>15</sup> The first benefit given by a professional female singer was in the spring of 1704, when Maria Gallia sang at York Buildings for her own benefit. See Advertisement, *Daily Courant*, 20 April 1704, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2012).

<sup>16</sup> Berta Joncus, “Producing Stars in *dramma per musica*,” in *Music as Social and Cultural Practice: Essays in Honor of Reinhard Strohm*, eds. Melania Bucciarelli and Berta Joncus (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: The Boydell Press, 2007), 281.

ceremonies. These events reveal the historical connections between collaborative performance, celebrity, and female independence in the professional world.<sup>17</sup>

### **Benefits in the Spoken Theater**

Actors' benefits became popular in the earliest days of the Restoration, when the public theaters reopened in 1660 after Charles II was crowned.<sup>18</sup> They originated from the practice of "third night" performances, when a playwright would receive additional compensation for his or her work by taking the profits from its third performance.<sup>19</sup> In 1668, Samuel Pepys recorded the first actor's benefit in his now-infamous diary: "Knepp's maid comes to me, to tell me that the woman's day at the playhouse is to-day, and that therefore I must be there, to encrease their profit."<sup>20</sup> It is likely that benefits for groups of actors were commonplace by this time—in this case, the company's female actresses were the beneficiaries of the evening's performance, and, after paying house charges, they would have split the remaining profits amongst themselves.<sup>21</sup> The earliest benefits focused on collaboration in order to ensure profits for a collective of actors and actresses. This tradition continued throughout the rest of the seventeenth century as a way for the acting companies to generate supplemental income (however modest) for their

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<sup>17</sup> Benefit concerts given today are often meant to raise money for charities or other non-profit organizations. This kind of benefit became more common towards the middle of the eighteenth century in England, but I have not found evidence of opera singers performing for charity (besides their own) before 1720. See Hume, "The Origins of the Actor's Benefit," and Troubridge, *The Benefit System*, for discussions of the charity benefit at this time.

<sup>18</sup> Oliver Cromwell silenced the theaters during the Commonwealth and subsequent Protectorate. For a general history of the early Restoration theater, see Richard W. Breviss, *English Drama: Restoration and Eighteenth Century, 1660-1780* (London and New York: Longman Group, UK Ltd., 1988) and Deborah Payne Fiske, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

<sup>19</sup> Hume, "The Origins of the Actor's Benefit," 100.

<sup>20</sup> Samuel Pepys, *Diary*, September 28, 1668. Quoted in *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 100-101. Hume adds that men and women probably had separate group benefits.

players who lacked shareholding status.<sup>22</sup> Although this collaborative model persisted, individual benefits for the most prominent actors and actresses in London gradually became more ubiquitous as performers began to realize the economic and artistic advantages of such events.<sup>23</sup>

By the late seventeenth century, actors and actresses could choose among five different types of benefits that would best display their individual talents and that would make them the most money. Beneficiaries could revive one of their most famous lead roles in a play, or they could take a new part traditionally played by one of their colleagues. A second-tier actor could also hire a guaranteed star to play the lead, thus drawing larger crowds. Often, the beneficiary would rely on the unusual casting of a frequently performed play (such as the revival of *The Fickle Shepherdess* in 1703 at Lincoln's Inn Fields, with a cast of all women), or the featured performer would announce the first appearance of a new performer.<sup>24</sup> In all instances, the beneficiary relied on some sort of publicity gimmick. Despite the participation of other members of the company, an individual beneficiary was almost always the evening's top priority.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> This included women (until 1695, when Elizabeth Barry and Anne Bracegirdle were offered shares in Thomas Betterton's company) and "young" actors, or those newly added to the company. New actors were normally given benefits on Wednesdays and Fridays during Lent, when audiences were thin and the company's veteran actors would take time off. See *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>23</sup> According to Colley Cibber, Elizabeth Barry was the first stage performer to be promised an annual benefit in her contract, in 1685: "She was the first Person whose Merit was distinguish'd by the Indulgence of having an annual Benefit-Play, which was granted to her alone, if I mistake not, first in King James's time, and which became not common to others 'till the Division of this Company after the Death of King William's Queen Mary [ca. 1694]." See Colley Cibber, *An Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber*, Vol. 2, ed. Robert Lowe (London: John C. Nimmo, 1889), 161.

<sup>24</sup> Troubridge, *The Benefit System*, 114. Actors and actresses often promoted female opera singers as the special novelty event during their benefits between 1703 and 1705.

<sup>25</sup> Advertisements also show this to be true. Nearly every benefit advertisement begins with: "For the Benefit of [name]" printed in bold, and often indented, at the top of the ad's text.

In addition to generating income, performers and theater managers used benefits to measure their individual popularity with audiences.<sup>26</sup> Because the beneficiary needed to have prior status as a box-office draw to ensure a financially successful evening, only the most celebrated actors and actresses were contractually permitted a benefit night each season.<sup>27</sup> Although theater managers initially permitted each major actor and actress only one benefit night per season (especially when they were unable to pay them in full),<sup>28</sup> by the 1702-1703 theatrical season, stage actors, singers, or instrumentalists gave at least thirty-seven benefit performances—an extraordinary number for theaters struggling to make a profit on regular evenings.<sup>29</sup> The proliferating number of benefits per season discouraged playwrights, who were loath to see their work resigned to just a few evenings of performance.<sup>30</sup> William Walker, author of *Marry or Do Worse* (1703), complained of this in his preface:

This poor Play has at length peep'd into the World, but to such Disadvantages [...] It was neither supported by a *Powerful Party*, nor had the Umbrage of a *Patron*; and, what was worse, the Season! To all these Difficulties there was another added, it was so hem'd in between the *Benefits*, that it seem'd merely

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<sup>26</sup> Usually, he or she would have to cover the house charges before taking the evening's profits. In 1709, the Lord Chamberlain issued a directive that house charges would not exceed £40; thus, anything the performer made above £40 went directly into his or her pockets. See Troubridge, *The Benefit System*, 45.

<sup>27</sup> The names of the beneficiaries often changed from year to year, depending on who was performing, but the stars of Lincoln's Inn Fields and Drury Lane (and later, the Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket) always received at least one annual benefit. See Hume, "The Origins of the Actor's Benefit," McKenty, "The Benefit System in Augustan Drama," Troubridge, *The Benefit System*.

<sup>28</sup> This happened in 1695, when the Patent Company at Lincoln's Inn Fields could not afford to pay each of its actors his or her full salary. See Hume, "The Origins of the Actor's Benefit," 105.

<sup>29</sup> This is the first season during which the playhouses routinely advertised their performances in the *Daily Courant*, and thus an appropriate example. According to the introduction written by Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume in their revised edition, Drury Lane advertised about forty percent of its plays in the newspaper. See *The London Stage, 1660-1800. A New Version of Part 2, 1700-1729, 1702-1703 season*, 68.

<http://www.personal.psu.edu/hb1/London%20Stage%202001/lond1702.pdf> (accessed 2013).

<sup>30</sup> Playwrights still customarily received the profits of the third night of their play's run. Hume, "The Origins of the Actor's Benefit," 100.

Confin'd to the Limits of a Single *Night* before hand; not that I have any reason to complain of the Civility of the House, as to the Performing, only the want of Time and Rehearsals.<sup>31</sup>

While they may have been artistically worthwhile ventures for the actors, a benefit could damage a play's reception by distracting audiences from the work itself. The *London Stage* corroborates a single performance of *Marry or Do Worse* at Lincoln's Inn Fields in the fall of 1703;<sup>32</sup> and although the *Daily Courant* advertised benefits occurring only at Drury Lane that autumn, many others were probably held at Betterton's theater as well.<sup>33</sup>

Theater managers also started to doubt the commercial value of the benefit for their theaters. According to the memoirs of Colley Cibber, the managers of Drury Lane saw potential profits slipping out of their hands every night an actor gave a successful benefit performance:

The Patentees [of the Drury Lane Theatre] observing that the Benefit-Plays of the Actors, towards the latter End of the Season, brought the most crowded Audiences in the Year; began to think their own Interests too much neglected, by these partial Favours of the Town, to their Actors; and therefore judg'd it would not be impolitick, in such wholesome annual Profits, to have a Fellow-feeling with them. Accordingly, an *Indulto*<sup>34</sup> was laid of one Third, out of the Profits of every Benefit [...].<sup>35</sup>

Cibber's recollection shows that successful benefit performances could detract from a theater's profits, especially as the season drew to a close. This is not surprising, since in 1702-1703 alone at least three benefit performances were held a week during the last half

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<sup>31</sup> William Walker, *Marry or Do Worse*, preface.

<sup>32</sup> The play's performance was not advertised, but Judith Milhous has determined that it probably had its premiere some time in mid-October 1703. See Judith Milhous, *Thomas Betterton and the Management of Lincoln's Inn Fields, 1695-1708* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979), 184 & 271.

<sup>33</sup> Lincoln's Inn Fields did not often advertise its performances in the earliest years of the eighteenth century, so it is not surprising that there remains little evidence of benefits given at the theater that season; there are only two plays advertised in October 1703 in the *Daily Courant*, including *Marry or Do Worse*.

<sup>34</sup> Misspelling of "indulgo," which meant house charges.

<sup>35</sup> Cibber, *An Apology*, vol. 1, 291.

of the season (March through June).<sup>36</sup> Other documents show that benefits could cause strife amongst actors and actresses. In 1709, Zachary Baggs, treasurer for the Drury Lane Theater, published an “Advertisement Concerning the Poor Actors, who under Pretence of hard Usage from the Patentees, are about to desert their Service,” a pamphlet that listed actors’ salaries including their remunerations from benefit performances.<sup>37</sup> Christopher Rich, manager of Drury Lane, had commissioned Baggs’s pamphlet as a response to the Lord Chamberlain (Henry Grey, first Duke of Kent), who had previously silenced the theater due to financial complaints from its performers.<sup>38</sup> According to Baggs, most of Drury Lane’s actors had received very high salaries, as well as additional income from their benefits, and thus had no cause for complaint. Ann Oldfield, one of the original plaintiffs, was said to have “acted 39 times and received £56 13s. 4d. at £4 a Week Salary.” Baggs (on behalf of Rich) accused the actress of “leaving off Acting presently after her Benefit.. tho’ the Benefit was intended for her whole 9 Months of Acting,” claiming that she did not fulfill the terms of her contract because she had earned £62 7s. 8d. at her benefit.<sup>39</sup> Rich’s harshest accusation, however, was that Mrs. Oldfield “refused to assist others in their Benefits,” an allegation that defied the unspoken obligations of any actor or actress who had given successful benefits of their own. The

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<sup>36</sup> Milhous and Hume, *The London Stage, 1702-1703 season*, <http://www.personal.psu.edu/users/h/b/hb1/London%20Stage%202001/lond1702.pdf> (accessed 2013).

<sup>37</sup> See Milhous and Hume, *The London Stage, 1708-1709 season*, <http://www.personal.psu.edu/users/h/b/hb1/London%20Stage%202001/lond1708.pdf> (accessed 2013). Also included in Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, *A Register of English Theatrical Documents, 1660-1737*, vol. 1, 1660-1714 (Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991), document 2031.

<sup>38</sup> Curtis Price, “The Critical Decade for English Music Drama, 1700-1710,” *Harvard Library Bulletin* 26 (1978): 38-76.

<sup>39</sup> Baggs adds that Mrs Oldfield received “an estimated £120” but does not say in what capacity. It is possible that this was a private gift from a patron, or possibly a royal donation to the promising actress. See Milhous and Hume, *A Register*, No. 2031. Their source is GB-Lbl 1344.n.62.

apparent aggravation expressed by Rich suggests that benefit performances had become part of a system that required artistic cooperation and exchange within a company of actors and actresses.

Although stage actors and actresses struggled with the problems built into the benefit system, the practice translated successfully into the world of musicians. The first benefit given by a musician was a variety concert at York Buildings, on January 28, 1703, on behalf of Mrs. Campion, who sang songs in English and Italian while accompanied by the violinist Gasparini (Gasparo Visconti) and “Signior Petto.”<sup>40</sup> Mrs. Campion reciprocated the favor in the spring by singing in between the acts of a play, a revival of *The Relapse*, performed for Gasparini’s benefit: “With Singing in Italian and English by Mrs. Campion. [...] And Signior Gasperini will perform several Sonata’s on the Violin, one between Mr. Paisible and him, and another between him and a Scholar of his, being the last time of his performance. For his own Benefit.”<sup>41</sup> Though the singer and violinist were not contractually bound to one another, their exchange of artistic services points towards a growing culture of collaboration in benefit performances, which was only strengthened by the arrival of other singers and instrumentalists in London.

### **The First Musical Benefits: Variety Shows, 1700-1705**

At the turn of the eighteenth century, actors and actresses began to incorporate foreign musicians into their benefits, hoping to attract even larger audiences to the theater. A close examination of benefit plays and concerts during the first decade of the eighteenth century reveals the variety of theatrical and musical performances that

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<sup>40</sup> Advertisement, *Daily Courant*, January 28, 1703, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2012).

<sup>41</sup> Advertisement, *Daily Courant*, May 18, 1703, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2012).



appeared during the intervals of both comedies and tragedies. Not only did actors and actresses give benefit performances by starring in plays, but they also supplemented these events with entertainments featuring instrumentalists and singers, thus providing more performance opportunities for newly arrived *virtuosi*. A benefit play given by Mrs. Prince in 1703 showcased an even more diverse cast:

At the Desire of several Persons of Quality  
For the Benefit of Mrs Prince  
The last New Tragedy, *The Fair Penitent* [Nicholas Rowe]... With Four  
Entertainments of Singing (entirely New) by the Famous Signiora Francisca  
Margarita de l'Epine; to which will be added, the Nightingale Song: It being the  
last time of her Singing whilst she stays in England. The Instrumental Musick  
compos'd by Signior Jacomo Greber. With a *Country Wedding Dance* by  
Monsieur Labbé, Mrs Elford, and others. Also a new Entertainment of Danceing  
between Mezetin a Clown, and two Chairmen. With the Dance of *Blouzabella*, by  
Mr Prince, and Mrs Elford. By reason of the Entertainments, the Play will be  
shortned.<sup>42</sup>

The variety of entertainment at this benefit shows how performers tried to encourage larger audiences. Not only did Mrs. Prince star in one of Nicholas Rowe's most beloved plays; she also engaged the services of professional dancers, a clown, and two of London's most celebrated foreign musicians. Each performer would have enticed his or her admirers to attend the performance, regardless of whether those admirers also appreciated Mrs. Prince's acting talents. Since the beneficiary would have been responsible for house charges, as well as for small fees for the rest of the cast, extra performers undoubtedly meant earning a smaller percentage of the profit. But bigger audiences also guaranteed a higher gross income for the evening. Hiring extra performers increased the financial risk, but the frequency with which others participated shows that the possibility of increased attendance made the risk worth taking.

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<sup>42</sup> Advertisement, *Daily Courant*, June 8, 1703, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2012). The performance took place at Lincoln's Inn Fields.

The participation of professional singers in actors' benefits was so lucrative that nearly every player in London coveted Italian *virtuose* for their benefit's interval entertainment. Disputes soon broke out over which actors or actresses were prominent enough to warrant the involvement of such esteemed singers. In May 1703, the actor John Verbruggen petitioned the Lord Chamberlain, complaining that Thomas Betterton, Anne Bracegirdle, and Elizabeth Barry (all shareholders at Lincoln's Inn Fields) would only allow "the Italian Woman" to sing at their benefits:

That this last winter the Receipts have been extraordinary great [especially] ever since the Italian Woman [Margarita de l'Epine, or Maria Gallia] hath sung & yet they pretend the debts are not all paid [...] And now Mr Betterton [...] hath ordered Bills to be printed for *Othello* to be acted on Friday next with singing by the Italian Woman for his own benefit. & 'tis said she is to sing twice more in plays for Mrs Barry & Mrs Bracegirdle & then to leave of[f]. So that those three design still as they have done to reap all the benefit to themselves to the wrong and damage of your petitioner and the rest of the Company [...].<sup>43</sup>

Verbruggen's petition suggests that the talents of *virtuose* increased the playhouse's receipts.<sup>44</sup> Thus, actors hoping to gain a higher percentage of the profits tried to hire professional singers, whose popularity drew larger audiences. Verbruggen's accusation against Betterton, Bracegirdle, and Barry for monopolizing the unnamed Italian singer during their benefits illustrates the value of such performers to the financial health of the spoken theater. Italian singers also benefitted from their entr'acte performances for actors and actresses. In the years before Italian operas were performed on the London stage, singing during actors' benefits was the primary way in which Italian *virtuose* could gain performance experience and onstage exposure.

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<sup>43</sup> GB-Lna PRO LC 7/3, f. 146.

<sup>44</sup> Milhous, "The Date and Import of 'Verbruggen's Petition' in LC 7/3," *Archiv* 217 (1980): 100-102.

Newly arrived musicians from the continent learned from actors and actresses by performing regularly in their benefits. Professional singers learned early on to take advantage of England's established theatrical benefit system. In June of 1703, actress Elinor Lee gave a benefit performance at Lincoln's Inn Fields, starring in a performance of Nathaniel Lee's *The Rival Queens, or, Alexander the Great*. She revived her role of Sysigambis, one of the warring queens. According to John Vanbrugh's account books, Mrs. Lee earned about £50 or £60 per annum; this was a substantial salary, but not nearly as impressive as what other actresses, such as Anne Bracegirdle or Elizabeth Barry, earned that year.<sup>45</sup> Although featured as the evening's star, the actress also organized additional entertainments between the acts. According to the *Daily Courant*, that evening Lincoln's Inn Fields produced "three Entertainments of Italian Singing by the Famous Signiora Maria Margarita Gallia, lately arriv'd from Italy, who has never yet Sung in England; the Musick which accompanies her Singing is compos'd by Signior Joseph Saggion[e]."<sup>46</sup> This was Maria Gallia's first performance in London, and the first time any professional female singer had performed during a benefit. Within the year Gallia sponsored a benefit for herself, a concert that capitalized on her own novelty as one of the first Italian *virtuose* in London.<sup>47</sup> Gallia's concert was meant to draw audiences by offering a variety of novel performances with the Italian soprano at the center.<sup>48</sup> By

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<sup>45</sup> GB-Lna PRO LC 7/3, f. 155. See *The London Stage 1660-1800: A Calendar of Plays, Entertainments & Afterpieces together with Casts, Box-Receipts, and Contemporary Comment*. Part 2: 1700-1729 vols. 1 & 2 (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1960); and Judith Milhous, "The Date and Import of the Financial Plan for a United Theatre Company in LC 7/3," *Maske und Kothurn* 21 (1975): 81-88. Bracegirdle earned £120 that season, and Barry claimed £150.

<sup>46</sup> Advertisement, *Daily Courant*, June 1, 1703, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2012).

<sup>47</sup> Advertisement, *Daily Courant*, April 20, 1704. *Burney Collection* (accessed 2012).

<sup>48</sup> The concert must have been a success, for just nine days later, the soprano Margarita de l'Epine also held a benefit, during which she sang Italian music by the composer Jakob Greber, her

participating in Mrs. Lee's benefit, Gallia came to understand the financial and artistic opportunities such events provided, as well as how to customize the benefit to show off her strengths as an Italian *virtuosa*.

At her first benefit, held on April 20, 1704 at York Buildings, Gallia sang newly composed music by Giuseppe Saggione as well as English songs by Henry Purcell.<sup>49</sup> She also performed alongside some of the best instrumentalists in London, including James Paisible and John Banister, Jr. Both were veterans of London's musical scene. Paisible, born in France, had arrived in England in 1673 and was appointed to the King's Musick in 1685 upon James II's accession to the throne. He was an accomplished recorder player, cellist, and composer, and frequently played in the orchestra at London's major theaters.<sup>50</sup> Banister, a violinist and wind player, had held a prestigious position as one of Charles II's twenty-four violins, and also played in the orchestra at Drury Lane.<sup>51</sup> Gallia's engagement of such prominent instrumentalists demonstrates that she had earned her place among London's professional musicians. Her celebrity helped to promote the two instrumentalists as well. The following week, York Buildings hosted a benefit evening for Banister advertising "a Consort of Musick, newly compos'd by Mr Keller. The Vocal

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frequent musical collaborator. Sir Robert Howard's play, *The Committee, or, The Faithful Irishman* was also revived for l'Epine's benefit. See advertisement, *Daily Courant*, April 29, 1704, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2012).

<sup>49</sup> "For the Benefit of Seigniora Maria Margarita Gallia ... will be presented a Consort of Vocal and Instrumental Musick, composed by that great Italian Master Seignior Gioseppe Saggion. With several Sonatas with Flutes and Hautboys; and likewise a Sonata with two Flutes, by Mr Paisible and Mr Banister. And several songs in Italian with Flutes and Hautboys, by Seignior Maria Margarita Gallia, who never Sung in any publick Consort in England but once. The whole being entirely new composed and accompanied by Seignior Gioseppe Saggion. And likewise several Songs in English, composed by the late Famous Mr Henry Purcell." Advertisement, *Daily Courant*, April 20, 1704, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2012).

<sup>50</sup> David Lasocki, "Paisible, James," in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, The University of Michigan (accessed 2012).

<sup>51</sup> Peter Holmon and David Lasocki, "Banister, John (ii)" in *Grove Online* (accessed 2012). Banister, Jr.'s father, John, was also an accomplished violinist.

part to be perform'd by Signiora Maria Gallia."<sup>52</sup> Thus, Gallia's first benefit performances in London legitimized the singer's reputation as a *virtuosa* while simultaneously equating her with the best performers in London.

In these earliest benefits, female singers were already experimenting with their performances, adapting the tradition from the spoken theater. Italian *virtuose* learned to capitalize on their own novelty while also pursuing professional relationships with other, more established and celebrated musicians. Benefits provided the opportunity to promote their unique talents to audiences, but these events also showcased their connections to London's growing network of professional musicians. By the 1710s, female singers found consistent employment in opera productions, which replaced variety shows as the primary performance vehicle for benefits. As the numbers of professional musicians in London grew, female singers became active members in a network of their own peers, rather than relying on actors and actresses. In the years that followed they began to experiment with benefits within their own area of expertise: Italian opera.

### **Italian Operas as Benefits, 1705-1713**

As Italian-style operas became increasingly popular with audiences, female singers began to request special performances of operas in which they starred to be offered as benefits. This quickly became their most widespread form of self-promotion. Because individual concerts often conflicted with the multitude of other theatrical events occurring in London every evening, operas were frequently performed as benefits for their major stars, especially those who were known for a particular role. For example, after her initial performance in the title role in Haym's adaptation of Giovanni

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<sup>52</sup> Advertisement, *Daily Courant*, April 28, 1704, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2012)

Bononcini's *Camilla* in 1706, Catherine Tofts was often referred to in the press as "Camilla," and writers and commentators frequently alluded to her famous scene in act 1, in which the heroine hunts and kills a boar onstage. Audiences so identified Tofts with this role that Addison and Steel wrote a satirical letter to *The Spectator* on March 26, 1711:

Mr. SPECTATOR,

Your having been so humble as to take Notice of the Epistles of other Animals, emboldens me, who am the wild Boar that was killed by Mrs. Tofts to represent you [...] I must confess I had but just put on my Brutality; and Camilla's charms were such, that b-holding her erect Mien, hearing her charming Voice, and astonished with her graceful Motion, I could not keep up to my assumed Fierceness, but died like a Man.<sup>53</sup>

At least a year after Tofts had moved to Venice, Steele and Addison were still exploiting the singer's most admired role for satirical purposes. It is no wonder that Tofts chose to revive *Camilla* for her benefit at Drury Lane in 1707, capitalizing on *Camilla*'s popular reception the year before.

Tofts's exploitation of her most celebrated role represents one strategic way in which singers used benefits for self-promotion as the decade wore on. Between 1707 and 1711, those male and female singers who performed at the Queen's Theatre relied on their most celebrated roles in Italian style operas for their benefits, echoing the tradition of benefit plays in the spoken theater. By the spring of 1711, the Queen's Theatre was presenting an overwhelming number of operas as benefits; nearly every week in April

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<sup>53</sup> Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, *The Spectator*, March 26, 1711, *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online*, Gale, University of Michigan (accessed 2012). Another satirical letter, written by "Camilla" herself, was published in 1712 in *The Spectator*. Written by Addison and Steele, the letter mocked Tofts's decision to move to Italy; in it, "Camilla" lists all her achievements in Venice and ends the letter with "I am ten times better dress'd than I ever was in England." See Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson, "The Harmonious Unfortunate: New Light on Catherine Tofts," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 22 (2010): 217-234.

and May of that year, the theater sponsored an evening for one of its star singers.<sup>54</sup> To ensure minimal competition with other theatrical entertainments, benefits were never scheduled on the same evening as those for actors and actresses, and in only a few instances did a singer's benefit conflict with another theatrical performance.<sup>55</sup>

Despite the frequency of benefit performances, singers were always able to rely on their colleagues to help them fill theaters. Often, singers who did not specialize in leading roles counted upon more celebrated singers to support them. Mary Lindsey, the English actress-singer who specialized in comic roles, gave a benefit during the 1708-1709 theatrical season. The Queen's Theatre revived Bononcini's *Camilla* on April 5, 1709 on her behalf, a strategic choice for the comic actress-singer. She was known for playing the part of Tullia, a retired nursemaid, who relentlessly pursues Linco, played by her frequent collaborator Richard Leveridge. Although it was the opera's smallest role (she sang in only five numbers, two of which were duets), her part provided much-needed comic relief to counter the otherwise serious love story. By singing in one of London's most popular Italian-style operas, Lindsey strategically played to her own performative strengths, and showcased her comic partnership with Leveridge.<sup>56</sup> Their first duet in *Camilla*, in which Tullia confesses her (reluctant) love for Linco as he pretends to love her back, illustrates their onstage musical chemistry.

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<sup>54</sup> See Table 4.01.

<sup>55</sup> On March 10, 1705, Margarita de l'Epine sang in between the acts of a play, *Secret Love, or, The Maiden Queen* at Drury Lane. Her benefit conflicted with a performance of *Don Sebastian, King of Portugal* at Lincoln's Inn Fields the same evening. This seems to be the only occasion advertised in which such a conflict with an opera singer's benefit occurred. See advertisement, *Daily Courant*, March 10, 1705, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2012).

<sup>56</sup> Lindsey and Leveridge played their famous comic scenes from *Almahide* at a benefit for Mr. Dogget in June 1710. See advertisement, *Daily Courant*, June 30, 1710, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2012).

Tullia I Lan-guish, I Sor-row, my Trea-sure,  
 Linco For whom, My Dear, I'm  
 Bassi

Tullia I Speak not, I Speak not to thee, my Trea-sure, I Speak not, I  
 Linco here, I'm here,  
 Bassi


Tullia Speak not to thee, I Speak not to thee, me wouldst thou O  
 Linco thee, thee  
 Bassi


Tullia help me, Thus pen-sive I go and ut-ter my woe, and ut-ter my  
 Linco here here,  
 Bassi


5  
 10  
 15  
 20 25




30


Tullia  woe, I Lan-guish, I Sor-row, my Trea-sure,

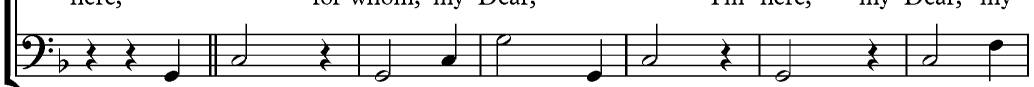
Linco  for whome, my Dear, I'm

Bassi 


35


Tullia  thus pen - sive I go, and ut - ter my woe, I Speak not to thee,

Linco  here, for whom, my Dear, I'm here, my Dear, my

Bassi 

40

Tullia  thus pen - sive I go, and ut - ter my

Linco  dear I'm here, for whom my Dear,

Bassi 

45

Tullia  woe, I Speak not to thee, I Speak not to thee.

Linco  yes, yes, I'm here my Dear, I'm here.

Bassi 

**Example 4.01. “I Languish/For Whom?” *Camilla* (1706). Sung by Lindsey and Leveridge.<sup>57</sup>**

<sup>57</sup> This example is transcribed from the 1707 print, *Songs in the New Opera of Camilla* (London: Cullen, 1707), GB-Lbl I.354.d.

In this scene, Tullia wavers between admitting and denying her love, while Linco tries to seduce her by repeating short endearments (“my Dear” and “I’m here”). Tullia then acknowledges her passionate feelings, singing short descending motives, often with minor inflection; her sighs are punctuated by Linco’s insincerely tender, short responses (see mm. 1-6). This musical “conversation” is interrupted by Tullia’s brief outburst; suddenly, she sings in a quick-tempo triple meter (mm. 6-9). As Linco tries to convince her of his love, their vocal lines come together, insistently repeating their false statements by extending their motives from the beginning of the duet. The duet is set syllabically throughout, and the scene relied upon the singers’ onstage rapport and quick comic timing.

The advertisement for this performance, however, suggests that Lindsey was not enough of a box office draw to depend solely on her own celebrity. The *Daily Courant* announced that, “For the Benefit of Mrs. Lindsey [...] The part of Prenesto to be perform’d by the famous Signior Cavaliero Nicholini Grimaldi. With an entire set of new Scenes, Painted by two famous Italian Painters (lately arriv’d from Venice) [...]”<sup>58</sup> Although Lindsey’s performance was clearly the focus of the evening’s entertainment, she depended upon Nicolini as a new member of the cast to entice audiences.<sup>59</sup> The announcement of scenery by two Italian painters (Antonio Maria Zannetti and Marco Ricci) would have been an additional draw; other advertisements capitalized upon their artistry as well.<sup>60</sup> Relying upon her co-stars, however, added to the financial risk, since by the mid-eighteenth century, it was standard practice to pay performers a small fee for

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<sup>58</sup> Advertisement. *Daily Courant*, April 5, 1709, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2012).

<sup>59</sup> The original Prenesto was played by the English countertenor Mr. Hughs, in 1706. Valentini took over this part for subsequent revivals after 1707.

<sup>60</sup> See advertisements, *Daily Courant*, April 7, 1709 (for l’Epine); and April 11, 1709 (for Mrs. Santlow), *Burney Collection* (accessed 2012).

their participation.<sup>61</sup> Her colleagues may have participated in her benefit voluntarily, or at least as part of their contractual obligations, which specified a certain number of performances in which they would have to sing per season.<sup>62</sup> *Camilla* was in the theater's standard repertory by 1709, and the cast had performed it just a few weeks earlier, for Valentini's benefit on February 16.<sup>63</sup> The singers would have been intimately familiar with Bononcini's music and would not have had to spend much time in rehearsals. Whether she paid them out of her own pocket or not, Lindsey still relied on the celebrity of her colleagues, whose participation confirmed their support for her musical talents so she could increase her annual income.

Benefit performances of operas complicated the ways in which theater managers structured their seasons, especially as more singers began to arrive in London. The spoken theater had already weathered the crisis of too many benefits per theatrical season, and professional singers faced a comparable problem of oversaturation. Between 1705 and 1711, the number of benefits performed on behalf of professional singers, both men and women, grew to about ten per season.<sup>64</sup> During the 1710-1711 theatrical season,

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<sup>61</sup> For example, Troubridge notes that in the 1760s, the famous actor Tom Sheridan received £30 for participating in any actor's benefit. See Troubridge, *The Benefit System*, 127.

<sup>62</sup> Performances were usually stipulated in contracts. None of Lindsey's contracts survive, but The Baroness's (from 1707-1708) states that she asked for £300 for singing thirty times in the opera. See Coke Papers No. 35 in Milhous and Hume, *Vice Chamberlain Coke's Theatrical Papers*, 56-57.

<sup>63</sup> Advertisement, *Daily Courant*, February 16, 1709, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2012).

<sup>64</sup> In 1710 to 1711, the *Daily Courant* advertised benefits for Mary Lindsey, Nicolini, Valentini, Elisabetta Pilotti Schiavonetti, Giuseppe Boschi, Francesca Vanini Boschi, and The Baroness. Most likely, Isabella Girardeau, Margarita de l'Epine, and Maria Gallia gave benefits as well; this still does not account for the numerous instrumentalists, arrangers, and composers who often produced their own concerts. For example, Thomas Clayton allowed himself two benefits in 1705; *Arsinoe* was performed on his behalf on April 12, 1705 and again on June 21, 1705 (unless, of course, the first performance was delayed until June). See advertisements, *Daily Courant*, April 12, 1705 and June 21, 1705, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2012).

each of London's most celebrated opera singers gave a benefit between March and May of 1711.<sup>65</sup>

**Table. 4.01. Benefit Performances for Opera Singers, 1710-1711 Theatrical Season**

DATE	THEATER	OPERA	BENEFICIARY
23 March 1711	York Buildings	Consort of Vocal and Instrumental Musick	Mary Lindsey
4 April 1711	Queen's Theatre	<i>Hydaspes</i>	Nicolini
11 April 1711	Queen's Theatre	<i>Rinaldo</i>	Valentini
28 April 1711	Queen's Theatre	<i>Hydaspes</i>	Elisabetta Pilotti-Schiavonetti
5 May 1711	Queen's Theatre	<i>Rinaldo</i>	Giuseppe and Francesca Boschi
12 May 1711	Queen's Theatre	<i>Pyrrhus and Demetrius</i>	The Baroness

As Table 4.01 shows, a variety of operas were performed as benefits during the 1710-1711 season: *Hydaspes* and *Rinaldo* were new productions, and *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* was a popular revival.<sup>66</sup> The choice of *Pyrrhus and Demetrius*, *Hydaspes*, or *Rinaldo* would have been justifiable, since all of these productions were guaranteed hits. Yet all of these benefits were performed within mere weeks of each other. Profits from benefit nights were not normally recorded in the theater's managerial accounts, so the total

<sup>65</sup> Nicolini, Valentini, Mary Lindsey, Catherine Tofts, and Margarita de l'Epine all performed in each other's benefits.

<sup>66</sup> *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* received twenty-seven performances during its first season, the most of any opera in 1708-1709. It is worth noting that Mary Lindsey gave a special concert this season, rather than holding her benefit at the opera house. This was due to the fact that she was no longer a member of the Queen's Theatre's company. Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, *The London Stage, 1660-1800: A New Version of Part 2, 1700-1729*, 1708-1709 season. <http://www.personal.psu.edu/users/h/b/hb1/London%20Stage%202001/lond1708.pdf> (accessed 2013).

amount that each singer took away from his or her benefit remains unknown.<sup>67</sup> In all likelihood, however, so many benefits performed on an almost weekly basis would have been a difficult financial model to sustain.

In subsequent years, female singers began to experiment with new kinds of theatrical productions, rather than relying on revivals of successful operas. Benefit performances of Italian operas provided opportunities for multiple singers to claim attention as individual *virtuosi*, but there were also consequences to holding such elaborate events. Performances of operas did not offer the singer complete control over the event, since her proficient colleagues could draw attention away from the beneficiary. In addition, these types of benefits required higher house charges (to pay for the scenery and special effects, not to mention the multitude of other singers) and more rehearsal time. By staging an opera for her own benefit, a female singer would have had to pay exorbitant house charges, thereby detracting from her income. In 1713, Jane Barbier earned only £15 from her benefit, a performance of *Rinaldo* during which she played the eponymous hero.<sup>68</sup> This amount, although a respectable sum for a benefit in the spoken theater, was shockingly low when compared to what her colleagues earned from their benefits the same season: l'Epine earned £76 5s. 8d., Pellegrini made £73 19s., and Pilotti and Valentini each brought in £75.<sup>69</sup> Evidently, the novelty of the contralto playing a trouser role was not enough to capture her audience's attention. Most importantly, however, Margarita de l'Epine was the top earner that season, which is striking because

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<sup>67</sup> Milhous and Hume, *Vice Chamberlain Coke*, No. 104, 172-173. The document lists receipts for performances in March, April, and early May, but leaves out the benefit nights.

<sup>68</sup> See advertisement, *Daily Courant*, May 5, 1713, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2012).

<sup>69</sup> Milhous and Hume, *Vice Chamberlain Coke*, 199-200.

her benefit was not a performance of an opera. Instead, she produced a concert in which her most celebrated colleagues, all professional opera singers, performed alongside her.

### **Collaborative Concerts: Benefits for Margarita de l'Epine in 1713 and 1714**

In 1713 female singers began to experiment with new and novel ways of promoting their own celebrity as part of a larger community of virtuoso singers. For her benefit concert that spring, Margarita de l'Epine tried a new promotional tactic. Rather than reviving an opera production, the soprano organized a special concert—a “one night only” affair that combined the talents of London’s star singers. L’Epine had given solo concerts before, and if she had wished to rely solely on her own musical gifts, she could have reprised such events.<sup>70</sup> Instead, her 1713 benefit concert brought together the individual talents of London’s most celebrated singers in support of their colleague. The evening emphasized the interplay between l’Epine’s celebrity persona on the one hand, and the collective talents of her guest singers on the other. The advertisement for the event ran as follows:

For the Benefit of Signora Margareta  
At the Queen’s Theatre in the Haymarket, to Morrow being Saturday, the 25<sup>th</sup> of April, will be performed, The Two first Acts of the Opera call’d, Dorinda. To which will be added, An Entertainment of the choicest Songs out of several Operas. Also a Piece (never perform’d before) by Signior Cavaliero Valeriano. The Songs out of the Operas will be as follows, Signora Piloti, Convezzo lusinghiero, Pria che la doglia. Signior Valentini, Del fallo sul camin, Ti stringo o mio diletto. Signora Margareta, E vano ognipensiero, To Beauty Devoted, Love wou’d invade me. Mrs. Barbier, Di se senti, Nume Alato. Mrs. Manina, Solo pieta vi chiedo, Di luci adourno. Concluding with the Chorus of Clotilda.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> L’Epine gave a number of solo concerts early in her career, such as on April 29, 1704; March 10, 1705; and February 16, 1706.

<sup>71</sup> Advertisement, *Daily Courant*, April 24, 1713, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2012).

Margarita's name stood out as the headline, but the ad also listed the other renowned singers who complemented her. Providing the specifics of the event was meant to intrigue potential audience members, who were accustomed to hearing such eminent singers perform together in operas, but not in concerts.<sup>72</sup> By naming "the choicest Songs out of several Operas," l'Epine designed her benefit around London's favorite arias in both Italian and English. Her promotional campaign seems to have worked—a year later, for her 1714 benefit concert, the soprano again advertised the singers and the arias they would perform. She capitalized on the celebrity of her colleagues not merely by listing their names, but also by showcasing their most celebrated pieces, which promised a concert of the most popular arias spanning the previous eight years. Her 1713 benefit concert was not just a variety show, like those in which she performed during the first years of the eighteenth century. Instead, the evening promoted l'Epine as a member of a prestigious group of professional singers.

The construction of both the 1713 and 1714 benefits featured the participation of l'Epine's colleagues through diverse uses of musical and theatrical genres. Both evenings included ensemble numbers, such as choruses and whole acts from pasticcio operas. Alongside these pieces, the singers recruited by l'Epine (all contracted through the Queen's Theatre) performed famous arias.<sup>73</sup> Each singer contributed his or her individual celebrity persona and vocal repertoires, as well as the special techniques for which he or she was known. Most importantly, each singer brought along his or her most ardent

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<sup>72</sup> Variety concerts usually included the participation of one or two singers, as well as instrumentalists and other performers. This is the first instance (outside of opera productions) in which more than two professional singers performed on the same program.

<sup>73</sup> It is unknown if they were remunerated for singing during her concert, though since it took place outside of the Queen's Theatre (and therefore was not a part of their contract), it is likely that she did pay them a small fee to perform. See Troubridge, *The Benefit System*, 112-114.

supporters, audience members who would fill the theater to encourage their favorite singers.<sup>74</sup> L’Epine relied upon the different devotees of each of the singers whom she recruited to sing. The rosters show that she included new singers and veteran stars, castrati and women, sopranos and altos, English singers and Italian singers. It seems that she opted for the broadest possible appeal, drawing diverse performances from her colleagues.

Margarita herself performed music composed or arranged for other singers, thereby showing off her voice in new and novel ways. Her guest performers chose to sing arias that were well-known and beloved pieces, but would not draw the attention away from l’Epine. Despite the similarities between the two events, however, a comparison of the two programs shows that l’Epine moved from a model in which she was featured as the star, to one in which she allowed each singer to show off his or her most distinctive and celebrated talents. This development suggests a more collaborative understanding of how celebrity was produced and sustained, as a way for singers to promote themselves as a professional group.

**Table 4.02. Margarita de l’Epine’s 1713 Benefit Concert.**

Performer	Aria(s) Performed	Original Opera	Original Performer
All	First two acts of <i>Dorinda</i>	<i>Dorinda</i> (1712)	
Valeriano Pellegrini	“A New Piece”		
Elisabetta Pilotti-Schiavonetti	“Con vezzo lusinghiero”	<i>Hamlet</i> (1712)	Herself
“	“Pria che la dolie”	Unknown	
Valentini	“Del fallo sul camin”	<i>Clotilda</i> (1709)	Himself

<sup>74</sup> Joncus, “Producing Stars,” 281.



“	“Ti stringo o mio diletto”	<i>Clotilda</i> (1709)	Himself
Margarita de l’Epine	“E vano ogni pensiero”	<i>Hydaspes</i> (1710)	Nicolini
“	“To Beauty Devoted”	<i>Camilla</i> (1706)	“The Boy”
“	“Love woud invade me”	<i>Thomyris</i> (1707)	Catherine Tofts
Jane Barbier	“Di se senti”	<i>Antioco</i> (1712)	Nicolini
“	“Nume Alato”	<i>Etearco</i> (1711)	Nicolini
Maria Manina	“Solo pieta vi chiedo”	<i>Etearco</i> (1711)	Isabella Girardeau
“	“Di luci adourno”	Unknown	
All	Chorus of <i>Clotilda</i>	<i>Clotilda</i> (1709)	

Margarita de l’Epine’s 1713 benefit was the first attempt by a female opera singer to organize a non-theatrical evening with the collaboration of fellow professional singers, but she still promoted herself as the major attraction and stood out as the featured performer by singing music chosen specifically to emphasize her vocal specialties. As discussed in Chapter 3, l’Epine was known for her long coloratura passages and fiery musical personality, and the arias she chose to sing in her 1713 benefit expertly showed off these strengths. The soprano chose three arias from three different operas she had performed earlier in London, but each aria was originally composed or arranged for another singer. Her first aria on the program, “E vano ogni pensiero,” is an excerpt from the pasticcio opera *Hydaspes*. It was an extremely popular new production in 1710, due to its dazzling music for the castrato Nicolini, who played the title role, as well as for the infamous lion-fighting scene satirized by Joseph Addison in *The Spectator*.<sup>75</sup> The opera

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<sup>75</sup> Addison wrote: “There is nothing that of late Years has afforded Matter of greater Amusement to the Town than Signior *Nicolini*’s Combat with a Lion in the *Hay-Market*, which has been very

was so popular, in fact, that it was revived in 1712, with Nicolini again playing the hero. The castrato had probably brought Francesco Mancini's music from the 1705 Naples production with him to London.<sup>76</sup> The original role of Hydaspes, including "E vano ogni pensiero," was composed for Nicolini's brilliant technical abilities. His voice so impressed English audiences that it is no wonder Margarita chose to sing an aria originally composed for him.

"E vano ogni pensiero" is a *largo* aria in triple meter, sung by Hydaspes as he laments his loss of his lover, Berenice. The aria alternates between syllabic melody and long sections of sixteenth-note coloratura, but throughout the vocal line progresses without any bass accompaniment; instead, the singer performs a duet with the obbligato solo instrument. The vocal line rarely drops below A4, and the part required the singer to sustain long phrases set high in his or her tessitura—sustaining all of these trademarks would have been musically challenging, even for Nicolini.<sup>77</sup> The aria suited l'Epine's musical strengths by showing off her vocal flexibility, stamina, and range.

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often exhibited to the general Satisfaction of most of the Nobility and Gentry in the Kingdom of *Great-Britain*. [...] Several, who pretended to have seen the Opera in *Italy*, had informed their Friends, that the Lion was to act a Part in *High Dutch*, and roar twice or thrice to a *Thorough Base*, before he fell at the Feet of *Hydaspes*." See Addison, *The Spectator*, 1, No. 13 (London: 1712-15), *ECCO* (accessed 2012).

<sup>76</sup> Mancini had composed the role especially for him in the Naples production. Nicolini wrote the dedication of the London libretto, suggesting that he was very involved in mounting the new production. See Stephen Shearon, "Amanti generosi, GI'," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, *Grove Online* (accessed 2012).

<sup>77</sup> Nicolini did not have an extensive range, but he was known for his coloratura and vocal agility. In London, he became celebrated especially for his acting abilities. Colley Cibber remarked in his *Apology* that "[Nicolini's] Voice at his first Time of being among us, (for he made us a second Visit when it was impair'd) had all that strong, clear, Sweetness of Tone, so lately admir'd in Senesino. A blind Man could scarce have distinguish'd them; but in Volubility of Throat, the former had much the Superiority." See Colley Cibber, *An Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber* (London, 1740), 225. See also Joseph Roach, "Cavaliere Nicolini: London's First Opera Star," *Educational Theatre Journal* 28, No. 2 (1976): 189-205.

[Violin or Flute] 

Margarita de l'Epine 

Bassi 

5  
[Vln. or Fl.] 

l'Epine 

Bassi 

9  
[Vln. or Fl.] 

l'Epine 

Bassi  E va - no, e

14  
[Vln. or Fl.] 

l'Epine  va - no og-ni pen-sie - ro di vog - lie-re del sen l'i-ma-go del mio

Bassi 

2 18  
[Vln. or Fl.] 

l'Epine  ben che tan - to bra - mo, che tan - to bra -

Bassi 

22  
[Vln. or Fl.] 

l'Epine  mo

Bassi 

26

[Vln. or Fl.]

l'Epine

Bassi

e va no\_og-ni pen - sie - ro di vo-glie-re dal sen l'i-ma-go del mio

30

[Vln. or Fl.]

l'Epine

Bassi

ben che tan - to\_bra - mo,

34

[Vln. or Fl.]

l'Epine

Bassi

di vog-lie-re dal sen l'i-ma-go del mio ben che tan - to

38

[Vln. or Fl.]

l'Epine

Bassi

bra - - - - -

41

[Vln. or Fl.]

l'Epine

Bassi

mo, che tan - to\_bra - mo.

Example 4.02. “E vano ogni pensiero,” *Hydaspes* (1710). A section.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Transcribed from *Songs in the New Opera Call'd Hydaspes* (London: Walsh, 1710). The *obbligato* treble instrument is not named in the original source. Since these arias were performed out of their original theatrical contexts, I have included the names of the singers, rather than the characters, next to the vocal staves for all following examples in this chapter. The Walsh print includes both the character name and the singer's name at the top of the music.

The other two arias she chose for her 1713 concert shared the same musical characteristics as “E vano ogni pensiero.” “To Beauty devoted” exaggerated her refined performances of coloratura, presenting long passages of difficult vocal runs set in the top half of l’Epine’s voice. The aria includes passages of unaccompanied singing, and the long held note (for the *messa di voce*) and difficult leaps would have further shown off contrasting aspects of her vocal control and musicianship.

Margarita de l'Epine

Bassi

5

l'Epine

Bassi

To Beau-ty de-vo-ted, Ex-pec-ting, de

8

l'Epine

Bassi

si- ring, with Pas - - - sion Ex - pi - - -

11

l'Epine

Bassi

- ring I ser - - - - -

13

l'Epine

Bassi

- - - - - ve, I\_ serve the blind Boy\_

16

l'Epine

Bassi

Ex-pec- ting, de-si- ring, with Pas-sion

20  
l'Epine Ex - pi - ring, I serve the blind Boy, ex - pec - ting, de - si - ring, with Pas sion ex -  
Bassi

22  
l'Epine pi - ring, I serve the blind Boy, ex - pec - ting, de -  
Bassi

23  
l'Epine si - ring, with Pas - sion ex - pi - ring, I serve the blind Boy.  
Bassi

**Example 4.03. “To Beauty Devoted,” *Camilla* (1706). A section.<sup>79</sup>**

L’Epine’s final aria on the concert exploited her vocal agility as her most impressive and distinctive musical skill. Catherine Tofts originally sang “Love wou’d invade me” in *Thomyris*, and the original music was clearly arranged for Tofts’s voice rather than l’Epine’s. “Love wou’d invade me” showed off Tofts’s light soprano, a voice that could easily navigate long but melodically simple passages of coloratura set high in her range. The opening melody, though stepwise and scalar, reaches almost to the top of Tofts’s range before leaping back down. In m. 13 a three-bar passage of sixteenth-note coloratura begins, but the melody is similarly uncomplicated; instead of difficult chromatic turns and circuitous vocal leaps, the coloratura phrases in this aria are written out trills, one of Tofts’s musical specialties.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Transcribed from GB-Lbl I.354.d., Cullen’s print of *Camilla* (1707).

<sup>80</sup> See Chapter 3 for a comparison of Tofts’s and l’Epine’s vocal specialties.

Margarita de l'Epine

Bassi

5

l'Epine

Bassi

8

l'Epine

Bassi

Love\_ woud in- vade\_\_\_\_\_ me, my Eyes have\_\_\_\_\_ Be

11

l'Epine

Bassi

tray'd me, Pride woud arm me, woud arm\_\_\_\_\_

14

l'Epine

Bassi

16

l'Epine

Bassi

\_\_\_\_\_ me, but my Heart, my heart says\_ tis Vain, Pride woud Arm\_\_\_\_\_

**Example 4.04. “Love woud invade me,” *Thomyris, Queen of Scythia* (1707). A section.<sup>81</sup>**

The middle of the A section is devoted to the singer’s voice; although the *obligato* oboe part was not included in the printed music,<sup>82</sup> the extended solo section starting on “Pride wou’d Arm me” works only with some sort of melodic accompaniment. The moment was clearly intended as an echo duet, an opportunity for the soprano to revel in the beauty of her tone while accompanied by the oboe.

<sup>81</sup> This is transcribed from *Songs in the New Opera Call’d Thomyris, Queen of Scythia* (London: Walsh, 1707), US-AAAscl M1507.E12. I have retained the original misspelling of “would.”

<sup>82</sup> The printed music reads “Cleora Sings with a Hoboy,” revealing that Walsh left an oboe part out of his engraving.



Oboe

l'Epine

Pride woud Arm

Oboe

l'Epine

Oboe

l'Epine

Oboe

l'Epine

Oboe

l'Epine

me, but my heart, my heart says, 'tis Vain.

**Example 4.05. Reconstruction of mm. 17-30, “Love wou’d invade me,” including *obbligato* oboe.<sup>83</sup>**

All three pieces that l’Epine chose to sing on her concert were showstoppers. These arias demanded vocal agility and the ability to sustain long, melismatic phrases. Most importantly, however, each aria exposed her voice through a variety of musical techniques—melodies set high in her range, long held notes, and long passages of unaccompanied singing. These arias demonstrate that l’Epine was well aware of her

<sup>83</sup> I reconstructed the *obbligato* oboe part myself by filling in the rests with echoes of the vocal melody. This reconstruction is entirely speculative, but shows one possibility for performance.

talents, and chose music to complement and display her strengths. Audiences would have expected l'Epine to cultivate and promote her own distinctive specialties during her benefit, and these arias indicate that she did not let them down.

The evening's other arias reveal that her guest singers ceded her the attention. Her three arias were framed by those performed by her colleagues, each of whom sang, at the most, only two arias<sup>84</sup> taken from popular pasticcio operas that had been performed during the previous eight opera seasons. Technically, however, their performances did not upstage l'Epine. For instance, Elisabetta Pilotti Schiavonetti sang "Con vezzo lusinghiero," an aria she had originally performed in Francesco Gasparini's *L'Amleto* of the previous season. It was not one of the soprano's more daring and vocally challenging pieces. Pilotti had made her debut during the 1710/1711 opera season, in which she sang the elaborate role of Armida in Handel's *Rinaldo*, and the singer was known for her extensive range (from A3 to C5), her vocal agility, and her expressivity as an actress. In choosing to sing "Con vezzo lusinghiero," Pilotti performed a piece that deemphasized her virtuosity. The aria is a *siciliano*, and though it is set high in her range (she hits an A5 in m. 7), the vocal melody is mostly syllabic and stepwise—a far cry from her typically extravagant musical persona.

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<sup>84</sup> Valeriano Pellegrini was the only singer to perform just one aria, "a new piece," (and therefore, unidentifiable).

Andante

Pilotti  
 Bassi

Con vez-zo lu-sin-ghie-ro in dar-no alle-ti un cor ma brac-cio fe-ri

4  
 Pilotti  
 Bassi

tor ti pu - ni-rà ti pu-ni - rà, ma bra-ccio fe - ri-tor ti pu - ni rà

7  
 Pilotti  
 Bassi

ti pu - ni - rà,

10  
 Pilotti  
 Bassi

in van con-tras-tial fie-ro a chi ser-ba nel

13  
 Pilotti  
 Bassi

Sen, à chi Ser-ba nel Sen o-no - re e fe-del - tà à chi Ser-ba nel

16  
 Pilotti  
 Bassi

Sen o - no - re e fe - del - tà, e fe - del - tà.

18  
 Pilotti  
 Bassi

Da Capo

Example 4.06. “Con vezzo lusinghiero,” *L’Amleto* (1712).<sup>85</sup>

<sup>85</sup> This aria was transcribed from US-AA FILM R403(2), *Songs in the Opera of Hamlet* (London: Walsh and Hare, 1712). I have preserved all mis-capitalizations and spellings from the original print.

Although the aria looks simple on the page, Pilotti probably ornamented the return of the A section with vocal runs, trills, and other embellishments, thereby indulging her talent for ornamenting unadorned vocal melodies without, however, upstaging the star of the show. Despite the potential of this aria for melodic decoration, “Con vezzo lusinghiero” did not represent the extent of Pilotti’s musical capabilities. Although she had performed the aria during the original run of *L’Amleto* in 1712, the other arias that she sang in that opera better captured her extravagant range and mastery of difficult coloratura.<sup>86</sup> A comparison between the music performed by Elisabetta with that of Margarita shows that the sopranos had similar musical profiles: both had extensive ranges and both were known for their coloratura.<sup>87</sup> Pilotti’s performance of “Con vezzo lusinghiero” suggests that even as she downplayed her own talent, she may have taken advantage of the occasion to feature her improvisatory abilities.<sup>88</sup> Pilotti’s celebrity, especially amongst the Whigs, would certainly have drawn crowds to the theater for the benefit of her colleague, without drawing attention away from the star of the evening.

In contrast to Pilotti’s understated performance, Jane Barbier’s two arias for the 1713 benefit took full advantage of the contralto’s novel voice. Before Barbier’s debut on the London’s stage, contralto singers such as Mary Lindsey most frequently played minor comic roles. Barbier’s first major role was Hildegard in the 1712 London production of

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<sup>86</sup> See “Nel tuo sen, crudel,” “Son vane tue minaccie,” “Ti consiglio amar un volto,” “Se un di stringer,” and “Tu indegno sei dell’allor” in US-AAscI 49-419, *Songs in the New Opera call’d Hamlet*.

<sup>87</sup> For more detailed analysis of their musical profiles, see Chapter 3 (for Margarita de l’Epine) and Chapter 5 (for Elisabetta Pilotti Schiavonetti).

<sup>88</sup> There are no surviving documents that explain who would have chosen the music for each performer on the program. In all likelihood, the singers consulted with l’Epine, who had the final choice in selecting the evening’s repertory. Most of the participants selected arias that had been originally composed or arranged for them, which suggests that they had some choice in the program.

Gasparini's *L'Amleto*; according to the printed source the music she sang in the production was set quite high in her range, occupying her upper tessitura (from A4 to G5).<sup>89</sup> If Walsh's printed edition of the opera retained the aria's original keys, Barbier had a flexible vocal range.<sup>90</sup> It is all the more striking that the two arias she chose for Margarita de l'Epine's 1713 benefit showed off the lower part of her range. Further, both of the pieces she sang were originally composed for Nicolini. Her performances of "Nume alato" from *Etearco* and "Di se senti" from *Antioco* must have drawn attention to her ambitions to establish herself as London's leading contralto.

"Nume alato" and "Di se senti" are musically and dramatically similar: these arias were sung to express the hero's dedication to love. Both texts include the same imagery, painting scenes of love's steadfastness when faced with dreadful obstacles. "Di se senti" is a lovely triple meter tune, occupying only an octave in the lower part of Barbier's range; the melody remains comfortably between A#3 and B4 and is often unsupported by the continuo.<sup>91</sup> Similarly, "Nume alato" exploited Barbier's lower register, though this aria is more musically elaborate. Accompanied by two *obbligato* treble instruments (probably oboes or trumpets), the opening symphony's stately fanfare in triple meter conjures affects of regal power and determination. The first vocal statement repeats the theme from the opening, but when sung, the melody seems even more resolute; the

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<sup>89</sup> Of her five arias, only "Parto bel'Idol mio" and "Si ti senti" are set comfortably in an alto range. "Non so qual sià maggior follia," "La speme del nocchiero," and especially "Beltà che sempre piace" are composed for a high soprano voice. See US-AAsc1 49-419, *Songs in the New Opera call'd Hamlet*.

<sup>90</sup> Unfortunately, sometimes Walsh's prints transpose the music, though he indicated this on the title page. For a printing of *Pyrrhus and Demetrius*, Walsh noted that all the songs were transposed to treble clef so that they could all be performed by high voices.

<sup>91</sup> GB-Lbl H.298 (Mus.Mic.7142), *Songs in the Opera of Antiochus*.

emphasis on triads, and certainly the accented octave leap down from D5 to D4 in m. 20, underscores Pollinnesto's resolve.

[Vln]   
 Barbier   
 Bassi

Nu-me a-la-to Ar-cier-ben-da-to,

[Vln]   
 Barbier   
 Bassi

Nu-me a-la-to Ar-cier-ben-da-to frà tu-oi la - - - - -

[Vln]   
 Barbier   
 Bassi

- - - - - ci io sen-to il Cor

[Vln]   
 Barbier   
 Bassi

Io sen-to il Cor

**Example 4.07. “Nume alato,” *Etearco* (1711), mm. 17-40.<sup>92</sup>**

The aria further emphasizes strength and determination through the frequency of melismas, long passages that require a physical act of stamina and breath support from the singer.

<sup>92</sup> All transcriptions from *Etearco* are based on GB-Lbl I.354.b., *Songs in the Opera of Etearco* (London: Walsh and Hare, 1711). In the print, the *obbligato* instruments are not named.

Barbier sa - rà la co - stan - za del mio a - mo - re un di

Bassi

Barbier

Bassi

Barbier

Bassi

**Example 4.08. “Nume alato,” *Etearco* (1711), B section, word painting on “la costanza”<sup>93</sup>**

Singing in her lower range, Barbier chose the aria to show off her vocal agility and the resonant lower range of her contralto voice. Since 1713 was only her second opera season, the singer was still a novelty for London audiences; she would also still have been shaping her onstage musical persona, attempting to fill a niche not yet taken by another professional singer. Furthermore, her strategy to specialize in music for her lower range demonstrates how she supported l’Epine during the benefit. Unlike Pilotti, who downplayed her virtuosity because her voice was so similar to Margarita’s, Barbier was able to showcase the full range of her specialized techniques because they did not rival l’Epine’s own musical capabilities.

The music performed by the castrato Valentini provides a noteworthy link between Margarita de l’Epine’s 1713 and 1714 benefit concerts. According to the advertisements, Valentini sang the same two arias on both programs. “Del fallo sul

<sup>93</sup> I have left the *obbligato* treble instrument out of this example. In addition, I have added G#s in parentheses, which were likely omitted by accident in the print.

camin” and “Ti stringo” were two of Valentini’s most vocally impressive arias from the pasticcio opera *Clotilda* (1709), in which he played Fernando. As the prince’s first major aria, “Ti stringo” was most likely a showstopper; the aria is tremendously challenging, including all the hallmarks of a professional singer such as melodic leaps of an octave (see m. 7), long passages of agile coloratura throughout, and an extensive use of the castrato’s range.<sup>94</sup> (See Appendix A, Example A.12).

Valentini’s performance of “Del fallo sul camin” was likely motivated by his knowledge of the London audience’s favorite numbers. This was Fernando’s final solo aria in *Clotilda*, and audiences fervently applauded his performance of “Del fallo sul camin,” according to the anonymous translator and annotator of *A Comparison between the French and Italian Musick*. (See Appendix A, Example A.13 for the aria’s A section.) In a footnote, the author draws attention to François Ragunet’s assertion that “the *Italians* pass boldly, and in an Instant from *b* Sharp to *b* Flat, and from *b* Flat to *b* Sharp; they venture the boldest Cadences, and the most irregular Dissonance.” In order to illustrate chromatic adjustments and modal mixtures within arias that English audiences would have known, the translator chose “Del fallo sul camin” as an example:

An instance of this change of the Key in the *Italian* Airs, is particularly to be found in an Air of *Gasparini*’s, in the Opera of *Clotilda*, viz. (*del’ fallo sul’ camin*) but we must observe, that the most beautiful Part of that Song was omitted by the Singer, which call’d his Judgment into question, and blemish’d his Reputation; nay, he wou’d willingly have left out the whole Air, alledging it to be a Composition not proper for the Theatre, and consequently not like to please the Audience, tho’, contrary to his Opinion, it met with a general Applause; for which Reason, we are to consult the Original, and not the Copy Printed here in *London*, where, as we observ’d before, the most beautiful of all the Musick is wanting in the second Part; upon these Words (*d’Eccesso in altro Eccesso*) where, with an inexpressible Boldness, and an extraordinary Judgment, the Composer has hit upon the sense of the Words; and the Vocal Musick rolls with a perpetual

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<sup>94</sup> This aria is particularly high for the alto castrato, often occupying the top fifth of his range (between C5 and G5).



Harshness, whilst the Violins without any interruption continue the first Subject, and introduce the former part of the Air again with an admirable Judgment, which shows him to be a great Artist.<sup>95</sup>

In a rare moment of specific musical critique, the translator noted that “Del fallo sul camin” was a compositional masterpiece because of its use of dissonance and chromaticism. Although Valentini may have tried to change the music, deeming it “not proper for the Theatre,” audiences loved the aria especially for its harmonic and melodic turns. Perhaps Valentini’s initial hesitation (if the annotator/translator is to be believed) stemmed from the aria’s difficulty. Walsh’s printed version maintained the chromatic alterations of B-natural and E-natural in the B section of the aria, which occurs during an abrupt modulation from C minor to D minor.

33 *Valentini*  
 la più se-cu-ra e spes - so d'ec - ces-so in al-tro ec-ces - so ar -  
 Bassi

36  
 di - to se - gui-tar, ar - di - to se - gui-tar. *Da Capo*  
 Bassi

**Example 4.09. “Del fallo sul camin,” *Clotilda* (1709). B section.**

Regardless of Valentini’s musical interpretation, his choice of “Del fallo sul camin” as one of his two arias for Margarita’s benefit indicates that both knew it was one of his biggest hits. Not only did the aria show off some of his most elaborate singing, but it was

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 15 f. 12.

also a guaranteed success with audiences. Valentini's choice of two of his most celebrated arias would have made rehearsing for Margarita's benefit less time consuming than learning new music, and they must have been successful since he repeated them both at her benefit in 1714.

The ensemble pieces that bookended the evening's performances of arias represented most fully the collaborative efforts of London's singers on behalf of one of their own. The benefit opened with the first two acts of *Dorinda*,<sup>96</sup> an admired pastoral pasticcio from the previous season, and it concluded with the chorus from *Clotilda*. The four-part chorus (shown below) included a bass voice (Sancho's character, played originally by Littleton Ramondon). Although the ad did not mention a bass, his presence suggests that she may have recruited other singers as well. The chorus, while not musically elaborate, was the musical culmination of an evening that brought together the individual voices of London's most talented singers.

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<sup>96</sup> Unfortunately, the music for *Dorinda* does not survive. The only surviving copy of the original libretto is at the Huntington Library, US-SM MS 437576.

Isabella Clotilda  
Tut-to ri - da in si bel gior-no

Alfonso  
Tut-to ri - da in si bel gior-no

Fernando Rodrigo  
Tut-to ri - da in si bel gior - no

Sancho  
Tut-to ri - da in si bel gior - no

Bassi  
Tut-to ri - da in si bel gior - no

I&C  
Tut - to ri - da in si bel gior - no. e Spa -

A  
Tu - to ri - da in si bel gior - no.

F&R  
Tut - to ri - da in si bel gior - no.

S  
Tut - to ri - da in si bel gior - no.

B.  
Tut - to ri - da in si bel gior - no.

2  
I&C  
ri - sca, og - ni do - lor, og - ni do - lor,

A  
e Spa - ri - sca, e Spar - is - ca og - ni do - lor,

F&R

S

B.

Example 4.10. Final Chorus, *Clotilda* (1709), mm. 6-24.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>97</sup> Transcribed from US-AScl M1507.E12, *Songs in the New Opera, Call'd Clotilda* (London: Walsh, Randall, and Hare, 1708).

The following year, Margarita de l’Epine gave another benefit concert, similar in concept but with significant changes to her program. The young Anastasia Robinson<sup>98</sup> and the recently arrived Caterina Galerati joined l’Epine, replacing Elisabetta Pilotti Schiavonetti and Valeriano Pellegrini.<sup>99</sup> The concert also included performances by other musicians, such as “A New Trumpet Song” performed by Mr. Grannon (probably John Grano), a violin sonata played by “a Youth of 11 Years old,” and finally, l’Epine’s own performance “on an Instrument of an Invention entirely new, imitating the Harp and the Lute.”<sup>100</sup> At first glance, the changes Margarita made to her 1714 benefit recall the variety shows of the early 1700s. But l’Epine’s expansion of her program is another example of how she cultivated her niche within London’s community of musicians.

**Table 4.03. Margarita de l’Epine’s 1714 Benefit Concert.**

Performer	Aria(s) Performed	Original Opera	Original Performer
All	First two acts of <i>Arminius</i>	<i>Arminius</i> (1714)	
Anastasia Robinson	“Se hai pieta”	<i>Pyrrhus and Demetrius</i> (1708)	Nicolini
“	“Due pupille”	<i>Pyrrhus and Demetrius</i> (1708)	Nicolini
Caterina Galerati	“Lusinghe vezzosi di speme”	<i>Arminius</i> (1714)	Herself

<sup>98</sup> At this time, Anastasia Robinson sang soprano; her voice later dropped to the contralto range due to illness before the first Royal Academy period. See Winton Dean, “Robinson, Anastasia,” *Grove Online* (accessed 2012).

<sup>99</sup> Both Pilotti and Pellegrini were still in London in 1714; I am unsure why they were replaced. It is possible that l’Epine opted to engage the newest singers in London, rather than rely on veterans for this second concert.

<sup>100</sup> At present, I have not determined which instrument it was that she played. L’Epine was an accomplished harpsichordist; according to Pepusch, she could play through the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book with ease. See “de l’Epine, Margarita,” *The Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers & Other Theatrical Personnel in London, 1660-1800*, eds. Philip H. Highfill, Jr., Kalman A. Burnim, and Edward A. Langhans (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973).

“	“Si t’intendo o core amante”	<i>Croesus</i> (1714)	Herself
Valentini	“Del fallo sul camin”	<i>Clotilda</i> (1709)	Himself
“	“Ti stringo o mio diletto”	<i>Clotilda</i> (1709)	Himself
Jane Barbier	“Cieco Amor”	<i>Etearco</i> (1711)	Giuseppe Boschi
“	“Ho un non so che nel cor” <sup>101</sup>	<i>Agrippina</i> (Venice, 1709)	Margarita Durastante
Maria Manina	“Care labra”	Unknown	
“	“Una speranza” (possibly “La speranza”)	<i>Almahide?</i> (1710)	Margarita de l’Epine
Margarita de l’Epine	“E vano ogni pensiero”	<i>Hydaspes</i> (1710)	Nicolini
“	“Si lieto e si contento”	<i>Antioco</i> (1712)	Nicolini
Mr. Grannon (John Grano)	“A New Trumpet Song”		
“The Wonderfull Youth of 11 Years Old”	“A Sonata upon the Violin”		
Margarita de l’Epine	“On an Instrument entirely new, imitating the Harp and the Lute”		

In 1714, L’Epine relied on the novelty of two new singers from the Queen’s Theater. Anastasia Robinson and Caterina Galerati were London’s newest sopranos. Robinson, who had made her public debut the previous season in a concert for her own benefit, quickly became the darling of London audiences, not least because of her extreme youth

<sup>101</sup> According to Handel’s biographers, this was the first Handel aria ever performed in England, sung by Francesca Vanini Boschi in a revival of *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* in 1710. Dean and Knapp state that Barbier sang the aria in productions of *Arminio* and *Ernelinda*, both performed in the early summer of 1714 (and therefore, after this benefit concert). See Winton Dean and J. Merrill Knapp, *Handel’s Operas, 1704-1726* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 130.

and reported charm and grace.<sup>102</sup> The two arias she sang for l’Epine’s 1714 benefit, both originally performed by Nicolini in *Pyrrhus and Demetrius*, perfectly showed off her most popular musical and personal qualities. “S’hai pieta” and “Due pupille” are both short arias that include frequent melodic repetition and sequential vocal passages. The fact that they were not exceptionally difficult might reflect Robinson’s inexperience, as well the fact that she was not a native speaker of Italian. The most striking moments in each aria, however, require a light, agile voice, especially in the upper registers.

Robinson  
in fau - ste co - me - - - - - te

Bassi

Robinson  
so - no in fau - ste co - me - t'al mio cor. in fau - ste co - me - - - - -

Bassi

Robinson  
- - - - - te so - no in fau - ste co - me - t'al mio cor.

Bassi

**Example 4.11. “Due pupille,” *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* (1708), mm. 18-29.<sup>103</sup>**

<sup>102</sup> Advertisement, *Daily Courant*, June 8, 1713, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2012). According to Winton Dean, Robinson was probably born in 1692 while her father, a portrait painter, was traveling and studying in Italy. The year of her performance on l’Epine’s concert, she would have been a mere 22 years old. See Dean, “Robinson, Anastasia,” *Grove Online* (accessed 2012).

<sup>103</sup> All transcriptions from *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* are from US-AAAScl M1507.E12, *Songs in the New Opera, call’d Pyrrhus and Demetrius* (London: Walsh and Hare, 1708).

Robinson  
 più bra - mar \_\_\_\_\_ che più bra - mar, io non\_

Bassi

Robinson  
 so'che io non so'che più bra - mar \_\_\_\_\_ che più bra - mar.

Bassi

**Example 4.12. “S’hai pietà,” *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* (1708), mm. 26-34.**

These coloratura passages are not difficult, owing to their brevity and the ubiquitous use of sequences, but both arias showcased Robinson’s elegant and agile soprano voice.<sup>104</sup>

Her participation in the benefit would not have overshadowed l’Epine, but her novelty as an innocent, youthful singer certainly would have intrigued audiences, most of whom had only heard her perform in one opera (*Croesus*, 1714). For her part, Robinson surely appreciated the extra performance opportunity. She was not the evening’s beneficiary, but as a young singer attempting to gain ground, exposure to audiences was imperative to starting her career. Her involvement supporting an established opera veteran was one way to gain recognition as London’s newest soprano.

Caterina Galerati also gained exposure by participating in l’Epine’s concert. The soprano had arrived in London earlier that season, making her debut in *Arminio* as the male lead. Previously, she had enjoyed a flourishing career in Italy, singing in Florence, Venice, Naples (where she sang for Alessandro Scarlatti), and other Italian cities, where she played both female and male roles. During her time in England, however, Galerati

<sup>104</sup> Long passages of sequential coloratura appear in other music written specifically for Robinson. Handel’s soprano solo part in his *Ode for Queen Anne’s Birthday* (1714), composed for her, exploits this feature of her voice; clearly she was able to navigate long melismatic passages, but sequences would have made it easier for her to sing. As noted by Winton Dean, “she was remarkable for charm and expressiveness, rather than virtuosity.” See Dean, “Robinson,” *Grove Online* (accessed 2012).

played only pants roles, and the two arias she sang for l'Epine's 1714 benefit concert were chosen from her two most prominent parts: Prince Arminio from *Arminio* and King Creso from *Croesus*. Neither "Lusinghe vezzosi di speme" (*Arminio*) nor "Si t'intendo" (*Creso, Re di Lidia*) is musically remarkable, but both arias strategically showcased Galerati's embodiment of masculine heroism and regal glory. "Lusinghe vezzo si di speme" is particularly dramatic; it appeared in a monologue scene for Arminius at the beginning of act 3, as the prince wishes for a triumphant outcome to the final battle. As noted above, all the singers who participated in Margarita de l'Epine's benefit performed the first two acts of *Arminius* at the opening of the concert; Galerati's addition of the climactic scene of act 3 provided the culmination, a dramatic denouement for which she was renowned.<sup>105</sup>

According to the printed music, "Si t'intendo" also occupied a dramatically important place in *Creso, Re di Lidia* (1714). Galerati's brilliant aria ended act 2, a darkly passionate admission of lovesickness and despair. Surprisingly, this aria was not included in the 1714 version of the libretto; instead, Climenide ended act 2 with a short monologue scene that Walsh moved to act 3 in his printed edition.<sup>106</sup> Perhaps "Si t'intendo" was an added aria, poached from Galerati's extensive repertory from her career on the Continent.<sup>107</sup> No matter its provenance, it exploited Galerati's most virtuoso technical abilities, including her soprano range, her vocal flexibility in coloratura passages, and her

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<sup>105</sup> See GB-Lbl H.322 (Mus.Mic.7144).

<sup>106</sup> There are numerous differences between the earliest printed libretto (1714) and Walsh's edition of the music from the same year. Numerous arias extant in the libretto were not printed in the music. It is possible that significant revisions were made to the pasticcio because of the singers. In a future project, I plan to compare arias printed in GB-Lbl H.323 (Mus.Mic.7145) with the libretto from 1714.

<sup>107</sup> Prior to arriving in London, Galerati had performed throughout Italy in at least twenty operas. See Claudio Sartori, *I libretti italiani a stampa dalle origini al 1800: catalogo analitico con 16 indici*, index 2 (Cuneo: Bertola & Locatelli, 1990).



breath support. At first glance, it seems inappropriate for Galerati to have performed such elaborate music, possibly stealing l'Epine's spotlight. It is more likely that these two arias were chosen for their dramatic purposes since they so effectively showcased Galerati's specialty playing male heroes. Although her specialized vocal techniques were similar to Margarita's, Galerati's two arias displayed her own highly celebrated brand of musical performance. Her arias for l'Epine's benefit were chosen in order to promote her unique contribution to the London stage, the first female singer to play only trouser roles during her three seasons in London.<sup>108</sup>

Like Robinson and Galerati, Jane Barbier continued to promote her unique musical trademarks, fashioning her celebrity as London's leading contralto through the arias she performed. The contralto added two new pieces to her concert repertory, performing Handel's aria "Ho un non sò che nel cor" from *Agrippina* (most likely transposed)<sup>109</sup> and "Cieco amor," which was originally performed by the famous bass singer Giuseppe Boschi in the opera *Etearco* (1711). This aria showed off her rich lower range, and allowed her to demonstrate her technical improvement since the previous year. Since the aria was meant originally for a bass, even transposing the melody up an octave required the contralto's expertise in projecting her lower range over a full orchestra.

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<sup>108</sup> She made her debut as "Vitige" in *Ernelinda* (1713), apparently taking over the role from Valeriano Pellegrini, who is listed in the original libretto. She sang the title roles in *Arminio* and *Creso, re di Lidia*, and also performed "Lucio Vero" in *Lucio imperatore di Roma* (1715). See Felicity Nussbaum, *Rival Queens: Actresses, Performance, and the Eighteenth-Century British Theater* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 189-225 for more on female performers and travesty roles. Galerati's particular specialty in travesty roles will be the subject of a future article.

<sup>109</sup> Handel first composed the aria for Mary Magdalene to sing in *La Resurrezione* (1708); the following year, he reused it in *Agrippina*.

[Violin] [Violin] [Viola?] Barbier Bassi

Cie-co a

10

[Vln.] [Vln.] [Vla.] Barbier Bassi

mor che ben dai Lu mi e ve le no de cos tu mi

18

[Vln.] [Vln.] [Vla.] Barbier Bassi

mo-stro reo d'og niem-pie-tà e ve-le-no de cos-

Example 4.13. “Cieco Amor,” *Etearco* (1711), mm. 1-27. Transposed to the alto range.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>110</sup> The text underlay for “Cieco amor” in the original print is amateur at best; often there are too many Italian syllables for the melody composed. This suggests that, as in many pasticcios, the aria was provided with new Italian text so that the lyrics would make sense in a new dramatic context. In this transcription, I have transposed the vocal line up an octave, so that it works in the alto range. In addition, the accompanying instruments are not named; I have inserted possible instrumentation in brackets.

The aria featured jagged and circuitous melodies, characterized by quick leaps of an octave or more that dipped into the lower depths of her range. In measures 38 to 41, Barbier sang one of her lowest notes (G3), followed immediately by expansive leaps up to the top of her range and back down, coming to rest once again on her low G.

35

[Vln.]

[Vln.]

[Vla.]

Barbier

d'og ni em - pie - tà, mo-stro reo d'og - ni em - pie - tà.

Bassi

**Example 4.14. “Cieco amor,” *Etearco* (1711), mm. 35-42. Transposed to the alto range.**

“Cieco amor” is not showy in that it has no long passages of difficult coloratura, and its range is limited, especially when compared to arias performed by l’Epine. Instead, “Cieco amor” exhibited virtuosity by nature of its difficult melodies. It required Barbier’s precise vocal placement, smoothing transitions between her chest and head voices, as well as her ability to sing low in her range while simultaneously projecting over a full section of strings. By choosing “Cieco amor” as one of her two arias, she again took the stage as London’s most talented contralto. Adapting Boschi’s aria to her own musical strengths, Barbier used l’Epine’s 1714 benefit concert to remind audiences of her own distinctive contribution amongst London’s premiere opera singers.

Although Margarita de l’Epine was the star of her 1713 benefit, her 1714 benefit concert promoted each individual singer’s talents. As noted above, she showed off her

instrumental skills by performing on a new instrument, perhaps even accompanying herself while singing. She also sang two arias that, once again, promoted the brilliant elements of her technical repertory consistently celebrated by audiences. The soprano repeated her performance of “E vano in ogni pensiero,” and added another aria sung originally by Nicolini to replace both “To Beauty Devoted” and “Love wou’d invade me.” “Si lieto e si contento” contains long phrases of coloratura, many of which include written out trills.<sup>111</sup> With an *obbligato* treble instrument, l’Epine’s future husband, Johann Christoph Pepusch, may even have accompanied her on the violin, an instrument that he played in the Haymarket orchestra. The aria is not particularly remarkable; certainly it was not as flashy as her previous year’s concert selections. In 1714, l’Epine showed off a variety of musical talents, rather than displaying only her voice. In doing so, she used the event to showcase new abilities, allowing her to blend in beside the equally talented professional singers who sang in support of her.

L’Epine’s concerts in 1713 and 1714 reveal an important change in the ways in which female singers constructed their benefit performances. She carefully organized the event by recruiting fellow singers and by agreeing to repertory that would complement, but not outshine, her own technical brilliance. At the same time, the music performed during these concerts indicates that l’Epine’s professional creativity was not the only contributing factor to the success of the benefit. The musical reconstructions of these two concerts reveal that she refined her approach to designing her own benefit after her first attempt, as she learned that collaborations could lead to overwhelming financial and

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<sup>111</sup> As arranged for Nicolini, the aria was printed in alto clef in the key of D minor; the voice part does not reach above D5. This would have been very low given Margarita de l’Epine’s high soprano voice, and therefore suggests that she would have sung a transposed version of this aria during her concert.

professional success. Her 1713 benefit concert showed her individual talent and professional independence, in that her music revealed her to be the star of the show. The other singers tailored their musical performances to remain professionally supportive but outside of the spotlight. In 1714, l'Epine encouraged each singer to pursue his or her own special "brand" of celebrity, which they promoted through their choices of arias that featured their distinctive technical ability. The act of organizing and performing in benefit concerts designed around London's best professional singers demonstrates an experimental shift during the early 1710s towards an understanding of the financial and social significance of a community of artists. L'Epine's benefit concert blurred the boundary between individual celebrity and collaborative celebrity, and ascribed professional and social value to a coalescing network of professional musicians.

### ***The Death of Dido and the Future of Benefits***

In 1716, two years after Margarita de l'Epine's second successful benefit concert, she once again changed her approach to her benefit night. Most likely, the change reflected her move from the King's Theater in the Haymarket to the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane.<sup>112</sup> She accompanied Pepusch, who took a job as the theater's music director—a promotion from his position as harpsichordist at the rival theater.<sup>113</sup> For her benefit that season, l'Epine performed in the premiere of a newly-composed dramatic piece by Pepusch, to a libretto by the actor Barton Booth:

At the Desire of several Ladies of Quality.

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<sup>112</sup> In 1714, Queen Anne died and King George I took the throne; the opera house quickly followed suit, changing its official name from the Queen's Theatre to the King's Theatre.

<sup>113</sup> On Pepusch, see D.F. Cook, "Venus and Adonis: An English Masque 'After the Italian Manner,'" *The Musical Times* 121, No. 1651 (1980): 553-557. Pepusch and l'Epine married some time before 1720.

For the Benefit of Mrs. Margarita de L'Epine  
By His Majesty's Company of Comedians.  
At the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane, to Morrow, being Tuesday, the 17<sup>th</sup> of April,  
will be presented a Comedy call'd, Wit without Money. To which will be added a  
New Masque (never perform'd before) call'd, The Death of Dido: Set to Musick  
after the Italian Manner, by Dr. Pepusch, and perform'd all in English. Aeneas by  
Mrs. Barbier, Dido by Signora Margarita, Mercury by Mr. Turner, Cupid by Mrs.  
Boman. With Dancing by Monseieur Dupre, Monsieur Boval, Monsieur Dupre,  
Jun., Mrs. Santlow, Mrs. Bicknell, and Miss Younger.<sup>114</sup>

*The Death of Dido* was one of four English masques that Pepusch composed for the  
Drury Lane theater. *Venus and Adonis* (1715), *Myrtillo and Laura* (1715), and *Apollo and  
Dafne* (1716) also starred both l'Epine and Barbier as the two leads, though the singers  
often switched character types.<sup>115</sup> *Dido* stands out, however, because it was the only one  
of the four masques that Pepusch composed explicitly for benefits given by these leading  
ladies. While l'Epine's benefit provided the opportunity for Pepusch to compose a new  
theatrical piece, just a week later it was repeated for Barbier's benefit.

At the Desire of several Ladies of Quality.  
For the Benefit of Mrs. Barbier.  
By His Majesty's Company of Comedians.  
At the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane, this present Tuesday, being the 24<sup>th</sup> of April,  
will be presented a Play call'd, The Humorous Lieutenant. To which will be  
added a New Masque (never perform'd but once) call'd, Dido and Aeneas. Set to  
Musick after the Italian Manner, by Dr. Pepusch, and perform'd all in English.  
Aeneas by Mrs. Barbier, Dido by Signora Margarita, Mercury by Mr. Turner,  
Cupid by Mrs. Boman.<sup>116</sup>

As noted in the advertisements, Pepusch designed his masque as an afterpiece to  
the plays *Wit Without Money* and *The Humorous Lieutenant*, by John Fletcher. These

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<sup>114</sup> Advertisement. *Daily Courant*, April 16, 1716, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2012).

<sup>115</sup> In *Venus and Adonis* and *Apollo and Dafne*, Margarita played the male hero, while Barbier starred opposite her as her romantic love interest. In *Myrtillo and Laura* and *The Death of Dido*, the two singers swapped; Margarita played the heroine and Barbier took over the pants role. Manuscript scores exist for all four masques: *Venus and Adonis* (GB-Lcm MS 975); *Myrtillo and Laura* (GB-Lam MS 88, ff. 1-55); *Apollo and Dafne* (GB-Lcm MS 976); and *The Death of Dido* (GB-Lam MS 85, ff. 1-72).

<sup>116</sup> Advertisement. *Daily Courant*, April 24, 1716, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2012).

were plays from the Jacobean theatrical era and were popular in revival in the eighteenth century.<sup>117</sup> Revivals of favorite old plays were traditionally the choice for benefits, since the theater's actors needed minimal rehearsal time for such productions.<sup>118</sup> Pepusch's tragic story of Dido and Aeneas complemented both of the lighthearted comedies, and the attention his masque received in the ads suggests that this work, benefitting each of its star singers, was the featured attraction. Although the extant copy of the libretto to *The Death of Dido* does not include a preface, Colley Cibber's introduction to Pepusch's masque *Venus and Adonis* explains the rationale for Pepusch's compositions. As noted in Chapter 1, Cibber wrote:

*The following Entertainment is an Attempt to give the Town a little good Musick in a Language they understand. [...] It is therefore hoped that this Undertaking is encourag'd, may in time reconcile Musick to the English Tongue; and, to make the Union more practicable, it is humbly moved, that it may be allow'd a less Inconvenience to hear the Performer express his Meaning with an imperfect Accent, than in Words, that (to an English Audience) have no Meaning at all.*<sup>119</sup>

Pepusch's masques were meant to reintroduce fully sung dramatic entertainments as an extension of England's rich tradition of theatrical music. Although Cibber did not explicitly mention John Blow's or Henry Purcell's late seventeenth-century contributions to the genre, *The Death of Dido's* connection, by way of subject and theme, probably reminded audiences of England's musico-theatrical traditions.<sup>120</sup> When Pepusch left the Haymarket, he also let go of his interest in Italian opera. Although *The Death of Dido* is

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<sup>117</sup> "Fletcher, John," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: in association with the British Academy: from the earliest times to the year 2000*, eds. H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>118</sup> Hume, "The Origins of the Actor's Benefit," 101.

<sup>119</sup> Colley Cibber, *Venus and Adonis*, preface (1715).

<sup>120</sup> *Venus and Adonis* was also based on a seventeenth-century theatrical work. John Blow's only fully sung dramatic work, from 1683, was also based on the myth.

Italianate in form (including recitatives and da capo arias), in style and language it is decidedly English.

Pepusch and Booth chose the myth of Dido and Aeneas because of its strategic theatrical connections and its dramatic potential. Purcell's opera had been revived in 1704, and a number of its most celebrated airs were published in early eighteenth-century songbooks.<sup>121</sup> The story's selection was also appropriate as a dramatic showpiece for Margarita de l'Epine and Jane Barbier. As Aeneas, Barbier could exploit her specialty in trouser roles. In contrast, Margarita's role as the masque's heroine displayed her own strengths with music composed anew for her voice. *The Death of Dido* was a collaborative effort between Jane and Margarita, as the masque's leading singers, but the two women also worked closely with Pepusch, who designed the musical drama in order to show off the distinctive professional qualities of his singers.

The last of Pepusch's masques, *The Death of Dido* promoted its two female stars in original and innovative ways. Their arias featured new specialized vocal techniques that departed from the vocal trademarks for which they were known. Along with Pepusch, Barbier and l'Epine had left the Haymarket Theater in 1715, likely because more popular singers, such as Diana Vico, Elisabetta Pilotti Schiavonetti, and Anastasia Robinson, had replaced them.<sup>122</sup> Drury Lane provided the possibility for theatrical employment, but not in operas; by this time, the Haymarket was the only theater licensed to produce full-length Italian operas.<sup>123</sup> Thus, Drury Lane offered the singers, and Pepusch, new opportunities for musical creation and theatrical performance. *The Death of*

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<sup>121</sup> Curtis Price, "Dido and Aeneas," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, Grove Online (accessed 2012).

<sup>122</sup> In addition, l'Epine was aging; she retired at the end of 1719, singing only a few more times during the first Royal Academy.

<sup>123</sup> Price, "The Critical Decade."



*Dido* promoted the brilliant vocal techniques for which the two singers were both renowned, but also gave the two singers the opportunity to reinvent their own musical profiles.

As the name suggests, *The Death of Dido* focuses on Dido's tragic story across the two acts. L'Epine had played the romantic love interest in a few operas at the Haymarket, but most frequently she played powerful, and often antagonistic, female characters.<sup>124</sup> Pepusch's masque allowed the soprano to display her virtuosity as a high soprano, but her role as Dido also gave l'Epine the opportunity to recast herself as a tragic actress. Although much of her music in the masque deployed her usual musical trademarks, the entertainment's dramatic climax was her performance of "Oh, I feel the friendly blow," Dido's final lament and death scene. Pepusch scored the aria for flutes, two sets of violins, viola, and continuo. Such a lush scoring would have allowed l'Epine to exploit her tone and projection, while maintaining its intensely tragic air.

The image shows a musical score for a scene from *The Death of Dido*. It consists of six staves. From top to bottom: Flute (Fl.), Violin 1 (Vln. 1), Violin 2 (Vln. 2), Viola (Vla.), Dido (Soprano), and Basses (Bassi). The Dido part includes the lyrics "Oh" and "I". The score is in a key with one flat (B-flat major or D minor) and a common time signature. The Dido part has a melodic line with a long note on "Oh" and a shorter note on "I".

<sup>124</sup> In a striking contrast to her usual roles, l'Epine played Agilea, the heroine in Handel's *Teseo* (1713), before she left the Queen's Theatre.

11

Fl.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Dido

feel the friend - ly blow, Oh I feel

Bassi

16

Fl.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Dido

the friend - ly blow, I feel the friend - ly blow.

Bassi

**Example 4.15. “Oh I feel the friendly blow,” *The Death of Dido* (1716), mm. 6-20.<sup>125</sup>**

The aria is devoid of coloratura; instead, the music is syllabic, and in 3/2, the slow rhythmic pacing helps retain the tragic atmosphere of the aria. Although the music mostly occupied the upper part of her tessitura, the overall melodic trajectories soar and then fall, a musical depiction of Dido’s death. The entire aria relied on l’Epine’s ability to sustain long notes—this showed off the beauty of her vocal tone, for which she was known, but

<sup>125</sup> All transcriptions of *The Death of Dido* are from GB-Lam MS 85, ff. 1-72, Johann Christoph Pepusch’s autograph manuscript score. The orchestration here is written in his hand in the autograph.

also captured the tragic essence of the masque itself. Although her final scene did not exploit her technical virtuosity, l'Epine's performance of Pepusch's music demonstrated her cultivation of a new marketable skill: her talent at acting the tragic heroine.

At her own benefit a few weeks later, Jane Barbier also attempted to reinvent her musical persona through her role as Aeneas. Although a leading contralto just a few years earlier, she had been pushed out of the limelight by a spate of newly arrived Italian *virtuose*.<sup>126</sup> As Aeneas, Barbier retained her specialty playing travesty roles. Aeneas's music, however, is not confined to the contralto range. The love aria, "Charmer of my soul, away," sits comfortably in a mezzo-soprano range, and includes a number of long melismas that emphasize the upper half of Barbier's tessitura.

13  
Aeneas  
Char - mer of \_ my soul a - way, you too long my Joys de - lay, too long, too long \_  
Bassi

16  
Aeneas  
too long my Joys de - lay char - mer of my soul, Char -  
Bassi

19  
Aeneas  
mer of \_ my soul \_ a - way.  
Bassi

**Example 4.16. "Charmer of my soul away," *The Death of Dido*, mm. 13-21.**

<sup>126</sup> Diana Vico, who arrived in London for the 1715 and 1716 opera seasons, was a celebrated contralto who had performed in at least nine Italian operas in Italy. She specialized in pants roles, like Barbier, and originated the role of "Dardano" in Handel's *Amadigi di Gaula* (1715). She went on to have a remarkably long career after her time in London, starring in at least forty-two more operas on the Continent.

25

Aeneas  
fly \_\_\_\_\_ his darts a-round me fly.

Bassi

The image shows a musical score for two parts: Aeneas and Bassi. The Aeneas part is written in a soprano clef (C1) and the Bassi part is in a bass clef (C2). Both parts are in the key of D major (one sharp). The Aeneas part features a melodic line with a long note on 'fly' and a more active line on 'his darts a-round me fly'. The Bassi part provides a harmonic accompaniment with a steady eighth-note pattern.

**Example 4.17. “Charmer of my soul away,” *The Death of Dido*, mm. 25-27.<sup>127</sup>**

These two excerpts show that Barbier could sing quite easily out of her typical contralto range. Although the aria dips down to C#4, in these two passages she consistently hits D5 and her two coloratura passages occupied most of the middle range of her voice.

Barbier’s music in *The Death of Dido* was not vocally extravagant, and her voice still complemented l’Epine’s high soprano range. Even so, Pepusch’s music demonstrates that both Barbier and l’Epine could cultivate and perform new musical trademarks in order to reinvent themselves as professional musicians.

### Conclusion

The two performances of *The Death of Dido* show just how far benefits had come from their humble beginnings as theatrical variety shows not even twenty years earlier. Rather than a hodgepodge of unrelated theatrical performances, by 1716 the singer’s benefit had become a musical event that was carefully constructed by the beneficiaries themselves, sometimes with the help of a composer. The success of such events depended upon the singer’s awareness and exhibition of those elements of her musical persona that contributed to her popularity with audiences. Female singers designed their benefits strategically in order to perform their celebrated musical trademarks for audiences who clamored for their favorite *virtuose*. These performances became temporary spaces in

<sup>127</sup> This aria is accompanied only by continuo.

which female singers could promote themselves as independent professional musicians, while simultaneously establishing their professional relationships with similarly celebrated singers, composers, and other performers. *The Death of Dido* showcased a new kind of benefit, one that emphasized the collaboration between singers and a composer. Pepusch's newly composed music was tailored specifically for their individual vocal talents, but analyses of his music show that the masque allowed both singers to promote new kinds of musical specialties, a necessary strategy to revive their careers after leaving the King's Theater in the Haymarket.

Between 1703 and 1720, the musical content of benefit performances was continuously changing. New singers, instrumentalists, dancers, and other musicians arrived in London, working alongside or replacing those who were already established. As the number of musicians in London grew, so too did the professional circles in which they moved. The experimental nature of benefit performances during this period was symptomatic of the expanding network of professional musicians performing in London's theaters and concert halls. For female singers, especially, benefit performances provided the opportunity to assume authority over their own self-promotion. Although these women learned how to shape their benefit performances around their own distinctive talents, they also realized the financial and social advantages of collaboration. Flaunting their own virtuoso abilities may have allowed female singers to gain early recognition as novelties during their early flirtations with giving benefits. Collaborative benefit concerts, however, determined their social prominence and financial worth: with the support of their colleagues, female singers justified their statuses as professional musicians and independent agents. As the eighteenth century progressed, and as women singing opera

onstage became less of a novelty, benefits for female singers became more and more standardized; during the first Royal Academy period, nearly all benefits given by professional singers employed by the King's Theater were performances of operas.<sup>128</sup> Jane Barbier's concert benefits of 1720 and 1722 were already vestiges of a bygone era, the days in which female singers had to be creative in order to gain audience recognition and prove themselves talented enough to perform on London's stages. It was during these earliest years of the century that benefit performances became a medium through which women could influence the ways in which they collaborated with their colleagues, thereby solidifying their position within London's emerging community of professional musicians.

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<sup>128</sup> Less celebrated instrumentalists and many English singers (especially women) gave solo benefit concerts, but these events did not display the same collaborative partnerships that female opera singers so relied upon earlier in the century.

## Chapter 5

### **Elisabetta Pilotti Schiavonetti and Collaboration in Handel's Operas, 1711-1715**

The autumn of 1710 did not portend a watershed season in the history of theatrical music in England. Instead, it started on shaky ground, as the Lord Chamberlain continued to reorganize the staff of each of London's theaters.<sup>1</sup> By October, he had moved the actors, as well as their co-managers Owen Swiney, Robert Wilks, Thomas Doggett, and Colley Cibber, back to Drury Lane.<sup>2</sup> The Queen's Theatre came under new management with the requirement that it produce only operas. William Collier, the theater's new impresario, left the day-to-day supervision and artistic decisions up to his partner, Aaron Hill.<sup>3</sup> Hill (1685-1750), a young playwright, had no experience producing opera, but he assumed authority over London's most celebrated singers. They included Nicolini, Valentini, Margarita de l'Epine, Mary Lindsey, Joanna Maria Lindelheim, and new arrivals Isabella Girardeau, Giuseppe Boschi, and his wife, Francesca Vanini Boschi.

Despite the musical talent at the Queen's Theatre, the operas produced that fall were not

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<sup>1</sup> In the fall of 1710, the Lord Chamberlain was the newly appointed Charles Talbot, Duke of Shrewsbury, who had replaced Henry Grey, the Duke of Kent earlier that year.

<sup>2</sup> During the previous seasons, the Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket had produced both spoken plays (managed by Wilks, Doggett, and Cibber) as well as operas (managed by Owen Swiney, and performed by a mix of Italian and English singers). At Drury Lane, manager Christopher Rich was caught up in managerial disputes with William Collier; Rich was eventually fired. On the third of the London theatrical revolutions, see Curtis Price, "The Critical Decade for English Music Drama, 1700-1710," in *Harvard Library Bulletin* (1978): 69-75.

<sup>3</sup> The circumstances of their partnership remain unclear, though it seems that Collier rented the theater and let Hill pay him £600 per annum to run the theater (according to Colley Cibber). See Christine Gerrard, *Aaron Hill: The Muses' Projector 1685-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 30.

inspired; instead of new works, only revivals of *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* (1709) and *L'Idaspe fedele* (1710) were performed.

Amidst the reshuffling of theatrical personnel, two young, talented musicians were added to the Queen's Theatre's roster. Both had recently traveled to London from Hanover, home to the Elector and Electress of Brunswick-Lüneburg.<sup>4</sup> In June of 1710, Electress Sophia (mother of Georg Ludwig, who would become England's George I in 1714) had appointed George Frideric Handel as the court's Kapellmeister;<sup>5</sup> just a few months later the composer traveled to London via Düsseldorf, where he organized the premiere of his dramatic cantata *Apollo e Dafne*.<sup>6</sup> Elisabetta Pilotti-Schiavonetti, an Italian soprano in the Electress's personal retinue, probably did not travel with Handel, but likely arrived in the company of her husband, Giovanni Schiavonetti, a cellist.<sup>7</sup> By December, Handel and Pilotti had reached London. Both were Hanoverian employees striving—and sometimes struggling—to establish their reputations as musicians of the

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<sup>4</sup> On the Hanoverians, see Ragnhild Hatton, *George I, Elector and King* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 15-110. George I was Queen Anne's first cousin, once removed.

<sup>5</sup> The official appointment began on June 16, 1710. See Winton Dean and John Merrill Knapp, *Handel's Operas 1704-1726* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 151. On the circumstances of Handel's invitation to Hanover, see Donald Burrows, "Handel and Hanover," in *Handel, Bach, Scarlatti: Tercentenary Essays*, ed. Peter Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 35-60.

<sup>6</sup> Handel's eighteenth-century biographer, John Mainwaring, gives some background regarding the composer's invitation, stating that the Duke of Manchester, an important Whig in the House of Lords, made Handel "strong invitations to England." Between 1707 and 1708, Montagu had been ambassador-extraordinary in Venice and may have encountered Handel and his music during his Italian travels. See John Mainwaring, *Memoirs of the Life of the Late George Frideric Handel, To which is added, A Catalogue of his Works, and Observations upon them* (London: 1760), 72 fn. Mainwaring's biography is an essential text for the reconstruction of Handel's life and career, but it is flawed and conforms to its own agenda; thus, I will refrain from quoting from it or citing it too extensively.

<sup>7</sup> Schiavonetti played cello and harpsichord for the operas, much in the same capacity as Nicola Haym. They may not have performed in operas at Hanover; an Italian opera company, directed by Agostino Steffani, was founded in 1689 but had closed by 1697. It is unknown whether the Elector and Electress sponsored operas privately at court. For more on Steffani in Hanover, see Colin Timms, *Polymath of the Baroque: Agostino Steffani and His Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).



highest caliber. They overlapped for seven years (1710 – 1717) in England where collaborated on four of Handel’s first operas for the London stage.<sup>8</sup> In the three magic operas (a distinctive musico-theatrical genre that emphasized elaborate scenic effects),<sup>9</sup> Pilotti gave the premiere performances of three of his most powerful female characters, all sorceresses: Armida in *Rinaldo* (1711), Medea in *Teseo* (1713), and Melissa in *Amadigi di Gaula* (1715). Handel’s music for Pilotti illustrates some of the most diversely challenging and virtuoso roles he composed for any singer in his forty years as an opera composer. Through these operas, Handel and Pilotti created and promoted themselves as collaborative virtuoso musicians and cultural representatives of the Hanoverian court.

Handel was neither the first to introduce Italian-style operas to London, nor the first to write a new, fully sung opera performed in Italian for English audiences;<sup>10</sup> nevertheless, his posthumous fame has influenced contemporary scholarly perspectives on his historical importance during his first years in London. Thus, his pre-Royal Academy operas occupy a precarious place in musical history because many analyze these works from the contemporary perspective of Handel as a master composer. Some scholars, most notably Winton Dean and J. Merrill Knapp, have taken these works as

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<sup>8</sup> *Il pastor fido* was the only pastoral opera that Handel composed during this time, and Pilotti played the role of Eurilla. They may also have collaborated on *Silla* (1713) but the cast for this opera, performed privately, is not extant. The opera is dedicated to the Duke d’Aumont, and only one copy of the libretto survives; Handel’s music is preserved in five manuscript copies and autograph excerpts. See Duncan Chisholm, “Handel’s ‘Lucio Cornelio Silla’: Its Problems and Context,” *Early Music* 14, No. 1 (1986): 64-70.

<sup>9</sup> For more on categorizations of Handel’s operas, see Winton Dean, *Handel and the Opera Seria* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1969).

<sup>10</sup> Hunter argues that *Gli amori d’Ergasto* may have preceded *Rinaldo* as the first fully sung Italian opera performed in Italian by an Italian cast to have been newly composed for London. See David Hunter, “Bragging on *Rinaldo*: Ten Ways Writers have Trumpeted Handel’s Coming to Britain,” *Göttinger Händel-Beiträge* 9 (Kassel: Bärenreiter-Verlag, 2001): 123.

evidence that Handel's style had not yet matured (thus explaining why so much of *Rinaldo* was borrowed from his own previously composed music, for example),<sup>11</sup> while others uphold them as early operatic triumphs that marked a turning point in English musical history.<sup>12</sup> Yet few have considered that Handel came to England as a relatively unknown composer, although he had achieved renown elsewhere in Europe.<sup>13</sup> Prior

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<sup>11</sup> For more on Handel's borrowings and self-borrowings, see Hans Joachim Marx, *Das Händel-Handbuch*, Band 2 (Laaber: Laaber, 2008).

<sup>12</sup> Dean and Knapp criticize *Rinaldo*: "But owing to the weak libretto, and perhaps to the fact that Handel was essaying a new type of opera in unfamiliar surroundings and was still comparatively inexperienced in the theatre, *Rinaldo* for all its manifold riches is neither a consistently articulated work of art nor a dramatic masterpiece" (174). The authors' detailed analysis of the three operas furthers their argument that Handel was still experimenting with and refining his compositional style and approach to musico-dramatic structure. See Dean and Knapp, *Handel's Operas*, 168-205, 234-259, and 273-297.

David Hunter gives an insightful review of the literature that lauds Handel's first years in Britain. He critiques Mainwaring, Burney, Hawkins, the nineteenth-century biographers including Chrysander, as well as modern biographies by Paul Henry Lang, Winton Dean, Christopher Hogwood, Jonathan Keates, and Donald Burrows. See Hunter, "Bragging on *Rinaldo*," 113-114. I would add Roger Fiske's assertion that "Handel did not cause the fever for Italian opera, but he ensured its continuance." See Roger Fiske, *English Theatre Music in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 51.

Mainwaring's biography of Handel was the first to immortalize Handel. Charles Burney, John Hawkins, and other eighteenth-century biographers took up similar views. Newman Flower's early twentieth-century biography elucidates his own agenda: "I have endeavoured, rather, to outline Handel the Man—the striking personality that never admitted defeat, but rose superior to whatever powers a surfeit of enemies could and did exert." He also refers to the "genius of George Frideric Handel." See Newman Flower, *George Frideric Handel: His Personality & his Times* (London: Cassell & Co., 1923), vii & 1.

More recent biographies have strayed from the "composer as genius" paradigm, but they still privilege a biographical approach that favors "the man" and "his music," phrases that appear even in the titles of biographies. As Christopher Hogwood argues, Handel has "passed from being an individual to an institution, and eventually a complete industry." While recent biographies of Handel do justice to the composer's career trajectory and development of musical style, most have offered nothing new by way of arguments or evidence. See Donald Burrows, *Handel*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Christopher Hogwood, *Handel* (London; New York: Thames & Hudson, 2007); Jonathan Keates, *Handel: The Man & His Music* (London: Bodley Head, 2008); and Paul Henry Lang, *George Frideric Handel* (New York: Norton, 1977).

Ellen Harris has addressed issues and assumptions in Handelian biographical approaches, including the circumstances that gave rise to his posthumous fame, in Ellen T. Harris, "Handel's Ghost: The Composer's Posthumous Reputation in the Eighteenth Century," in *Companion to Contemporary Musical Thought*, vol. 1, eds. John Paynter, Tim Howell, Richard Orton, and Peter Seymour (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 208-225.

<sup>13</sup> Only two of Handel's compositions had been heard in London prior to his arrival. A 1710 revival of *The Alchemist* by Ben Jonson used the overture to *Rodrigo*. Handel's aria "Ho un non

biographical approaches also diminish the significance of the other creative perspectives that shaped these operas.<sup>14</sup> I consider how *Rinaldo*, *Teseo*, and *Amadigi* presented the young composer and his star singer as equally talented collaborators, and how these operas showcased them in ways that would construct and enhance their collaborative celebrity. In each opera, Handel's music dramatically accentuated Pilotti's characters and displayed her musical and acting abilities. At the same time, her voice became the medium through which Handel's most impressive efforts at aria composition were conveyed to audiences. Thus, the singer and composer established a mutually beneficial musical partnership in which their performances emphasized and promoted the artistic expertise of the other.

A critical analysis of the working relationship between Pilotti and Handel reveals how they fashioned and promoted a collaborative identity onstage.<sup>15</sup> In the music he composed for her, Handel expertly showcased Pilotti's virtuoso vocal specialties,

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sò che nel cor" from *Agrippina* was included in a revival of *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* by Francesca Vanini Boschi in December 1710. See William C. Smith, "Handel's First Song on the London Stage," *Music & Letters* 16 (1935): 286. Additionally, Giuseppe Boschi sang "La mia sorte fortunata" (with slightly different text) in *Etearco* (January 1711). See J. Merrill Knapp, "Handel's Second Song on the London Stage, or, 'Agrippina a Londra,'" *The Musical Times* 123, No. 1670 (1982): 250-251. For criticism of Knapp's article, see Anthony Hicks, "Handel on the London Stage," *The Musical Times* 123, No. 1674 (1982): 530.

<sup>14</sup> Curtis Price gives Aaron Hill credit for devising a plot that incorporated references to past English theatrical works, such as *Rinaldo and Armida* (John Dennis, 1699) and *The British Enchanters* (George Granville, 1706). See Curtis Price, "English Traditions in Handel's *Rinaldo*," in *Handel Tercentenary Collection*, ed. Stanley Sadie (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1987), 120-137.

<sup>15</sup> Significantly, no one has investigated Pilotti's artistic influence on these works, or her relationship with Handel. If she is mentioned at all in Handel biographies, it is as a passing reference. Most sources that explore Handel's working relationships with his singers focus on the first Royal Academy period. See C. Steven LaRue, *Handel and his Singers: The Creation of the Royal Academy Operas, 1720-1728* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995). In addition to this early period of Handel's career, there is more work to be done concerning his oratorio singers.

designed to heighten the dramatic transformations of each of her characters.<sup>16</sup> In *Rinaldo*, *Teseo*, and *Amadigi*, each sorceress confronts her own humanity, struggling to reconcile her lust for power with her unrequited love for the opera's hero. Notwithstanding the similarities between their trials and tribulations, the musical treatment of each sorceress changes from opera to opera. Similarly, Handel and Pilotti's interpretation of the sorceress archetype also changed between 1711 and 1715. By reinterpreting these operas through the perspective of their anti-heroines, this chapter demonstrates how composer and singer together designed the musical profile of these three sorceresses—and, more broadly, the three operas themselves—around the exploitation or suppression of different elements of Pilotti's virtuoso musical profile. In so doing, I show how her musical collaboration with Handel matured between 1711 and 1715, contributing to their reception as musical celebrities.

### **Handel, Pilotti, and the Hanoverian Connection**

In the late spring of 1711, Lady Elizabeth Hervey wrote to her husband, John Hervey, first Earl of Bristol, from London. She recounted the previous week's events, including dinner appointments, gossip about other members of the nobility, and

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<sup>16</sup> It is difficult to ascertain some of Handel's compositional intentions for these three operas because there are no complete autograph manuscripts or known performing scores. *Rinaldo* is the most complete, thanks to John Walsh's immediate publication of many of its arias after its premiere. Both the Chrysander edition and the *Hallische Händel-Ausgabe* (HHA) use the conducting scores held in the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek in Hamburg; these have Handel's annotations, but may not be from the original productions. See Winton Dean, "The Musical Sources for Handel's *Teseo* and *Amadigi*," in *Slavonic and Western Music: Essays for Gerald Abraham*, eds. Malcolm H. Brown and Roland John Wiley (Oxford: Oxford University Press; Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1985), 63-80; and Winton Dean, "A New Source for Handel's 'Amadigi,'" *Music & Letters* 72, No. 1 (1991): 27-37.

reassurances that her health was improving after a bout of serious illness. Almost as an afterthought, she briefly described the circumstances of her upcoming trip to the opera.

I have been mightily solicited for the Opera for the benefit of Pilota, who has a great interest made against her because she came from Hanover, and has so many Whigg friends, in which number she reckons me, and has been to see me, so I have taken a ticket and now promis'd to go, being out of hopes of being better entertained. Yesterday I din'd with Lady Dalkeith, and she and Lady Katt sup'd with me after the Opera, which was as full as I ever saw it at a subscription, but that was by way of party, in order to get it empty on Saturday.<sup>17</sup>

Lady Hervey's letter, one of two known epistolary references to Pilotti, betrays a startling amount of detail concerning the singer's perceived political affiliations, her relationship with English patrons, and the difficulties she faced establishing her career as a professional singer. As the letter suggests, Pilotti directly solicited her patrons and supporters, all members of the Whig party, by going house to house selling tickets to her own benefit in order to avoid a thin audience. As seen in the previous chapter, female singers often promoted their own benefits. Pilotti's efforts to court prominent members of the Whig party, however, shows her precarious position as a newly arrived singer from the Hanoverian court trying to boost her public renown. Lady Hervey implied that the singer's professional connections to the House of Hanover had drawn her into the ongoing partisan disputes that had only intensified in the second decade of the eighteenth century.<sup>18</sup> Pilotti's appeal to Whigs, particularly Whig noblewomen, for financial support was a response to the negative reception she had gotten from members of the Tory party,

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<sup>17</sup> The tone of this letter is difficult to ascertain, but it seems that Lady Hervey may have been disdainful of Pilotti's direct self-promotion amongst members of the nobility. Perhaps this reflects a class perspective on the new ways in which professional women were publicly supporting themselves. Quoted in: Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, *A Register of English Theatrical Documents 1660-1737*, vol. 1 (Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991), 471. Letter dated April 26, 1711, from *The Letterbooks of John Hervey*, vol. 1, 301. Lady Elizabeth Hervey was the wife of John Hervey, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Bristol, a Whig politician close to the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough.

<sup>18</sup> Daniel Szechi, *Jacobitism and Tory Politics, 1710-14*, (Edinburgh: J. Donald, 1984), 59-68.

who used their subscription for the April 25 performance of *Rinaldo* to avoid going to Pilotti's benefit on April 28.<sup>19</sup> Her connections with the Hanoverians signified a possible hindrance to her artistic and financial success in England.

Contention over the Hanoverian succession grew in intensity around 1710, a pivotal year in Queen Anne's reign.<sup>20</sup> In January and February, England was in uproar over the impeachment and subsequent trial (for treason) of Henry Sacheverell, a clergyman known for his rabble-rousing religious speeches.<sup>21</sup> Later that spring, Queen Anne turned away from her former advisors: the Whigs John and Sarah Churchill, the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough, and Sidney Godolphin, first Earl of Godolphin and Anne's Lord Treasurer.<sup>22</sup> As the queen grew closer with High Tory members of

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<sup>19</sup> Pilotti's benefit that year was a performance of Mancini's *Hydaspes*. According to the Coke Papers (No. 104), the evening's receipts were £99 11s. 3d., considerably less than house receipts from the fall of 1710. Receipts from six performances in December 1710 show that the largest profit was £167 6s. 9d. on December 9 for a performance of *Pyrrhus and Demetrius*, and the least profitable evening was on December 6: £123 18s. 6d. for *Pyrrhus*. (See Milhous and Hume, *Vice Chamberlain Coke*, No. 97.) It seems, therefore, that those who boycotted her benefit succeeded in their goal to thin out the crowds, yielding less revenue.

<sup>20</sup> Queen Anne's biographer argues that the last four years (1710-1714) defined her reign. See Robert O. Bucholz, "Queen Anne: Victim of her Virtues?" in *Queenship in Britain 1660-1837: Royal Patronage, Court Culture, and Dynastic Politics*, ed. Clarissa Campbell Orr (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), 103.

<sup>21</sup> His sermon, entitled *The Perils of False Brethren, in Church, and State*, was subsequently published and was quickly disseminated throughout England, aimed at anti-Whig factions. Among those he accused of being "false brethren" was Lord Godolphin, Lord Treasurer and a Whig member of the House of Lords. On November 5, 1709, Sacheverell had loudly proclaimed that many Whig members of Parliament were "false brethren" who had undermined England's constitution in 1688, when James II fled for France and William III was crowned. On January 12, 1710, his trial started, provoking heated controversy between Tories and Whigs. See Geoffrey Holmes, *The Trial of Dr. Sacheverell* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1973).

<sup>22</sup> The Duke of Marlborough led English troops in prominent and successful battles in the War of the Spanish Succession. Sarah Churchill was one of Anne's bedchamber attendants as well as her confidant. In early 1711 the Duchess of Marlborough was stripped of her royal titles and banished to her estate at Blenheim. Lord Godolphin was also stripped of his title as Lord Treasurer, though his political affiliations are more complicated. During Anne's reign, Godolphin seems to have played to the interests of both Whigs and the Tories depending on whatever political favors he needed. See "Godolphin, Sidney, first earl of Godolphin (1645-1712)," Roy A. Sundstrom in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Parliament (most notably Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford), she began to support efforts to end the War of Spanish Succession, infuriating her former Whig allies who saw any armistice as a victory for the French and therefore for the Pretender. Although in hindsight there may not have been a real threat to the Act of Settlement, and therefore to the Hanoverian succession, political tensions were high in 1710 and some Whigs grew anxious as Queen Anne started to support their political opposition.<sup>23</sup> As local representatives of the Hanoverian court, Pilotti and Handel were pawns of both political factions: for Tories who did not support the succession, they symbolized the continued threat of Hanoverian invasion, yet for Whigs, the pair signified a tangible connection to the Protestant succession and perhaps a source of comfort as the political turbulence intensified.

Pilotti arrived in London during this period of political strife and highlighted her ties to Hanover as a part of her celebrity identity, thereby shaping her offstage reception. Although her true political affiliations remain irrecoverable, her employment at Hanover meant that she was a cultural ambassador to London, even if not in an official capacity. Electress Sophia and Georg Ludwig may have purposefully sent Pilotti and Handel to forge a cultural relationship with the Queen's Theatre's primary patrons, most of whom were the Hanoverians' most vocal supporters.<sup>24</sup> Evidence of Pilotti's Hanoverian connection appears in the *dramatis personae* of at least ten libretti published in England between 1711 and 1717. *Rinaldo* was the first to announce her as *Virtuosa di S.A.E.*

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<sup>23</sup> On the political schisms of the times, see Brian W. Hill, *Robert Harley: Speaker, Secretary of State, and Prime Minister* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988). On how this affected theatrical politics, see John Loftis, *The Politics of Drama in Augustan England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 1-93.

<sup>24</sup> Some Handel scholars have acknowledged that he may have been a cultural emissary, though the argument has never been made for Pilotti. For example, see Donald Burrows, "Handel and Hanover," 40-41; and Monod, "The Politics of Handel's Early London Operas," 446.

*d'Hanover* (*Virtuosa* of her most Serene Highness the Electress of Hanover); on the same page, Handel is identified as the *Maestro di Capella di S.A.E. d'Hanover*.<sup>25</sup> The libretto to *Il pastor fido* (1712) reinforced their associations with Hanover.<sup>26</sup> In the summer of 1713, however, Handel was dismissed from his post as Kapellmeister, and libretti stopped publicizing his private benefactors.<sup>27</sup> Pilotti, however, continued to flaunt her patronal associations until her final year in London. In addition to *Rinaldo* and *Il pastor fido*, libretti for *Hercole* (1712), *Hamlet* (1712) *Ernelinda* (1713 & 1715), *Lucio Vero* (1715), *Amadigi di Gaula* (1715), *Cleartes* (1716),<sup>28</sup> and *Tito Manlio* (1717) proclaim her as the “*Virtuosa*” of Electress Sophia or Caroline, Princess of Wales. The disclosure and persistent publicity of Pilotti’s relationship to the House of Hanover in cast lists indicates that those reading wordbooks were meant to connect the singer professionally with the heirs to the English throne.<sup>29</sup> Lady Hervey’s letter documents Pilotti’s endeavors to

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<sup>25</sup> Aaron Hill and Giacomo Rossi, *Rinaldo* (1711), libretto, *dramatis personae*. They are listed as employed by the Electress of Hanover until 1714, after George I assumed the English throne; then Pilotti is always mentioned as a servant of Her Royal Highness, the Princess of Wales (Caroline of Ansbach, George II’s wife).

<sup>26</sup> Giacomo Rossi, *Il pastor fido* (1712), libretto, *dramatis personae*. Valeriano Pellegrini’s patronal affiliation is also listed, as a servant to the Elector Palatine of Düsseldorf. As far as I know, there does not seem to be a familial relationship between the Elector Palatine and Hanover during this period. It may have been his patron’s stipulation that Valentini announce his courtly association when traveling abroad.

<sup>27</sup> *Teseo* refers to the Electress; the opera had its premiere in January 1713, five months before he was dismissed.

<sup>28</sup> *Cleartes* also lists the singer Georgio Giacomo Berwillibald as the “Servant to his Serene Highness the Margrave of Brandenburg Anspach.” The Margrave was the brother of Caroline, George II’s wife and Pilotti’s primary patron in London.

<sup>29</sup> This tradition existed since the rise of professional singers in the seventeenth century. Singers were often used for diplomatic purposes, and advertising their royal or courtly connections was a way for the singer to promote him or herself, and for the patron to maintain ties with other courts. Because opera in London was public, however, this seems to have been less of a concern for many singers—both English and Italian—who performed there. See John Rosselli *Singers of Italian Opera: The History of a Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 7-31. In this period, however, this practice was relatively rare and in Pilotti’s case, this was one of the first times a female singer was affiliated with a patron in either a libretto or an advertisement.



appeal to Whig patrons, and her patronal designation in English libretti served the same purpose.

These libretti also draw attention to the professional connections between the composer and singer that predated their collaboration in London. These documents do not mention any other musicians in connection with the Hanoverian court. Although no archival or musical evidence shows that they worked together during the time in which they overlapped in Hanover, Handel knew his singer's voice well when he composed the role of Armida.<sup>30</sup> The musical virtuosity required to sing the part, as well as the role's dramatic brilliance and showy display of onstage personality, suggest that Handel knew what virtuoso features he could exploit to make Pilotti's music worthy of a sorceress.<sup>31</sup> Even if he had not worked with her in Hanover, it is likely that he heard her perform at the Queen's Theatre while he was composing *Rinaldo*.<sup>32</sup> Advertisements show that Pilotti first sang on the London stage on November 22, 1710, playing the part of Berenice in a revival of *Hydaspes*; as echoed in libretti, even the ad mentions that she was a servant "of

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<sup>30</sup> Although it is unclear exactly when Handel arrived in Hanover, his official appointment began on June 16, 1710; by July, he was in Düsseldorf preparing *Apollo e Dafne*. Therefore, it is possible that Handel was only in Hanover for a few weeks, and scholars are unsure which music dates from this period. Even if they did not work together, however, it is likely that he heard Pilotti perform at court. For more on Handel's compositional output in Hanover, see Burrows, "Handel and Hanover."

<sup>31</sup> According to Hugo Meynell, "Judging from the parts Handel wrote for her, this lady must have been outstanding as an actress as well as a singer." See Hugo Meynell, *The Art of Handel's Operas* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1986), 51.

<sup>32</sup> In his published address to the reader in the libretto, Giacomo Rossi claimed that it took Handel "due sole Settimane" to compose *Rinaldo*. I follow Reinhold Kubik, who believes that Rossi exaggerated his claim. Dean and Knapp are more hesitant to dismiss Rossi, and acknowledge that based on the number of borrowings and musical adaptations in the opera—including the "overture, *coro*, and two-thirds of the arias"—Handel must have been rushed. See Dean and Knapp, *Handel's Operas*, 173-174; Reinhold Kubik, *Händels Rinaldo: Geschichte, Werk, Wirkung* (Neuhausen-Stuttgart: Hänssler-Verlag, 1982); and Marx, *Händel-Handbuch*.

her Highness, the Princess Sophia of Hanover.”<sup>33</sup> She continued performing the part through the month of December, and in January, she took the role of Mirene in the new pasticcio *Etearco*.<sup>34</sup>

In *Etearco*, Pilotti showcased her technical potential for the first time in London, and her performances may have inspired her musical collaboration with Handel. The opera is based on Bononcini’s opera of the same name, which received its premiere in Vienna in 1707. Haym retained most of the original arias, although many of them were probably adjusted for the new cast.<sup>35</sup> As Mirene, Pilotti played a virtuous noblewoman who becomes the reluctant object of King Etearchus’s affections. Mirene embodies a fiery passion for justice and a resolve to punish him. In act 1, scene 10, Mirene calls upon the Furies to torment the king, whom she suspects of killing his daughter. This particular incantation, a dramatic moment that would come to define the types of roles Pilotti played on the London stage, provided a moment for her to show off the brilliance of her professionally trained voice as well as the musical trademarks that distinguished her.

“Furie terribili” is a short *da capo* aria in C major, with *obbligato* instrumental accompaniment (probably violins). At a *presto* tempo, the agitated sixteenth-note accompaniment enhances her wrath as she anguishes over the king’s ill treatment of his daughter. Her distress is immediately apparent; she enters without any introduction, besides an emphatic C major chord that joins her on the downbeat of the first measure. The initial syllabic setting of the vocal line gives way to long passages of melismatic coloratura that cover the singer’s range. The first melisma, highlighting the word

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<sup>33</sup> Advertisement. *Daily Courant*, November 21, 1710. *Burney Collection Newspapers*, Gale, The University of Michigan (accessed 2013).

<sup>34</sup> The advertisements for *Etearco* do not reference any names, but the libretto includes her name in the *dramatis personae*.

<sup>35</sup> I intend to conduct a comparison of this opera with its previous versions as a new project.

“guerra,” is a written out trill that lasts for about a measure and a half, and ends on a leap to a high G. The second, a longer, more varied melisma on the same word, reaches down to A4 and then progresses in a sequential formula until it reaches its pinnacle on A5 before coming to a cadence.

[Violins or Oboes]

Mirene

Bassi

4

[Vlns. or Ob.]

Mirene

Bassi

7

[Vlns. or Ob.]

Mirene

Bassi

10

[Vlns. or Ob.]

Mirene

Bassi

14

[Vlns. or Ob.]

Mirene

Bassi

16

[Vlins. or Ob.]

Mirene

s'ap - ra la ter - ra sot - to il tuo pie, sot - to il tuo pie. *DC*

Bassi

**Example 5.01. “Furie terribili,” *Etearco* (1711).<sup>36</sup>**

This was not Pilotti’s first aria in *Etearco*, but it was certainly her most brilliant. It did not exploit all her abilities, but the combination of technically difficult passages with the dramatic intensity of Mirene’s anger allowed Pilotti to begin constructing her onstage persona. Whether or not this aria was recomposed for her voice, it featured her extensive range, her flexible coloratura, her breath support, and most importantly, what must have been a fiery onstage persona. Even before Handel had the opportunity to impress London audiences, Pilotti was already specializing in female characters with zealous vendettas.

It is likely that Handel saw Pilotti perform this scene, for just a month after *Etearco*’s premiere, he composed an opera designed around her incantations, her passionate onstage personality, and her technical brilliance. In *Rinaldo*, Armida enters for the first time in act 1, Scene 5, singing a new version of “Furie terribili.” Accompanied by thunder and lightning, the sorceress descended to the stage from high above in a chariot drawn by dragons breathing fire and smoke at the audience.<sup>37</sup> Handel’s “Furie terribili” is a more spectacular showpiece than Bononcini’s aria, and yet similar musical features draw attention to how carefully Handel tailored his music to Pilotti’s own brand

<sup>36</sup> Transcribed from Walsh’s print, GB-Lbl I.354.b., p. 22. The *obbligato* treble instruments are not named, but were most likely oboes or violins. I have retained all original beaming and slur markings.

<sup>37</sup> The stage directions read: “Armida *in the Air*, in a Chariot drawn by two huge Dragons, out of whose Mouths issue Fire and Smoke.”

of musical virtuosity. Unlike Mirene’s aria, Armida’s entrance is musically accompanied by a substantial orchestral introduction; yet the orchestral ritornello, characterized by frantic eighth-notes occasionally propelled forward by even more frenzied sixteenths, shares rhythmic similarities with the orchestral accompaniment of *Etearco*’s “Furie terribili.”

*Furioso. (Presto.)*

The musical score consists of three systems of staves. The first system includes Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Bassi. The second system includes Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Cello (Vc.). The third system includes Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Cello (Vc.). The music is characterized by a driving eighth-note pattern with occasional sixteenth-note runs, particularly in the Violin 1 part.

**Example 5.02. *Rinaldo*, “Furie terribili,” ritornello.<sup>38</sup>**

<sup>38</sup> All *Rinaldo* transcriptions in this chapter are based on the HHA edition. See George Frideric Handel, *Rinaldo: Opera Seria in Tre Atti, HWV 7a*, ed. David R.B. Kimbell (Kassel; Basel; London; New York; Prag: Bärenreiter, 1993). See the edition’s introduction for notes on their editorial policies.

Handel scored his orchestral ritornello more richly, and with more harmonic and melodic variety, but the two accompaniments provide the same dramatic effect: conjuring an atmosphere of musical agitation with a sinister undertone. If the ritornello creates the atmosphere, it was Pilotti’s first vocal entrance that must have left her audiences spellbound. Armida enters on a high G, without instrumental accompaniment, and after holding this note, drops a full octave and a fifth by the end of the word “terribili”:

The image shows a musical score for two parts: Armida and Bassi. The tempo is marked 'Adagio'. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The Armida part is written in a soprano clef (treble clef with one line below). It begins with a whole note G5, followed by a half note F5, a quarter note E5, and a quarter note D5. The lyrics 'Fu - rie ter - ri - bi - li!' are written below the notes. The Bassi part is written in a bass clef. It begins with a whole rest, followed by a half note G2, a quarter note F2, and a quarter note E2. A trill (tr) is indicated above the G2 note.

**Example 5.03. *Rinaldo*, “Furie terribili,” mm. 18-20.**

This moment references Mirene’s first vocal entrance, which is punctuated only by a short C major chord while the singer continues unaccompanied for a few beats. The orchestra then reenters as Mirene finishes up her vocal statements, rather than accompanying her throughout; Handel employed the same structure in his “Furie terribili,” emphasizing Pilotti’s magnificent voice by allowing her to sing unaccompanied, challenging the orchestra to cover her melody.

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Armida

Bassi

fu - rie ter - ri - bi - li, cir - con - da - te - mi,

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Armida

Bassi

se - gui - ta - te - mi cir - con

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Armida

Bassi

da - te - mi, se - gui -

**Example 5.04. *Rinaldo*, “Furie terribili,” mm. 25-33.**

[Violins or Oboes]

Mirene

Bassi

Fu - rie ter - ri - bi - li con fie - re im - ma - gi - ni S'ar - mi - no a guer -

**Example 5.05. *Etearco*, “Furie terribili,” mm. 1-3.**

Even the florid coloratura passages in both arias share similarities: Mirene has only two such moments, but they become longer, more substantial, and more difficult. Armida also has two long passages of melismatic singing; the first (Example 5.06) begins high in her range (on G5), but ends low (on F4), though it requires her to continuously leap up and down an octave on the words “circondatemi, seguitatemi con faci orribili.” The second (Example 5.07) illustrates the apex of Pilotti’s musical capabilities: the sequential coloratura lasting four measures gives way to a long held note on (D5), for five measures, and ends with an unaccompanied flourish as she reaches up to G and nimbly slides back down an octave.

Armida

Bassi

se-gui - ta - - - - -

Armida

Bassi

- - - - - te - mi, cir - con - da - te - mi, se - gui - ta - te - mi, con fa - ci or

**Example 5.06. *Rinaldo*, “Furie terribili,” mm. 33-40.<sup>39</sup>**

<sup>39</sup> In examples 5.06 and 5.07, I have left out the accompanying instruments (Vlins 1 & 2, Vla).



The image displays three systems of musical notation for the aria "Furie terribili" from Handel's *Rinaldo*. Each system consists of two staves: the upper staff for Armida (soprano) and the lower staff for Bassi (bass). The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C).  
 - The first system shows the vocal entry with the lyrics "se-gui - ta" under the Armida staff. The Bassi part provides a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes.  
 - The second system features a long, sustained note in the Armida part, indicated by a dashed line above the staff, while the Bassi part continues with a melodic line.  
 - The third system shows the vocal line concluding with the lyrics "te mi" under the Armida staff. The Bassi part remains mostly silent, with only a few notes at the beginning.

**Example 5.07. *Rinaldo*, “Furie terribili,” mm. 52-64.**

Handel’s version of “Furie terribili” takes many of its musico-dramatic cues from Bononcini’s version that Pilotti performed in *Etearco*. Not only do the two arias share the same opening line, but both highlighted the singer’s voice in similar ways: through unaccompanied singing, especially during the opening vocal statement, the dialogue effect between voice and orchestra, and the intensification of coloratura passages in range, length, and variety. As Mirene, Pilotti introduced herself to audiences as a professional singer with stunning technical ability. As Armida, Pilotti’s voice, adorned with ornamental pyrotechnics that confounded audiences with its stunning agility, further illustrated her character’s supernatural potency—as well as the scope of the singer’s abilities.

The first operas in which Pilotti sang in London—*Hydaspes*, *Etearco*, and *Rinaldo*—were opportunities for the newly arrived singer to make herself known to London audiences as a first-rate *virtuosa*. Through these three works, Pilotti built her

trademark musico-dramatic profile: that of a fiercely passionate woman whose emotions are matched by her technical prowess. Nevertheless, Pilotti could not create this persona alone. Handel's music provided a powerful medium through which she could publicize her talent to her audiences. During his first years in London, Handel also needed a star singer through which he could display his own capabilities as a talented composer with a flair for opera. Pilotti possessed an appropriately extravagant voice and an onstage audacity, musical and dramatic equivalents to the spectacular scenic effects of the magic operas that Handel envisioned for the London stage.<sup>40</sup>

### ***Rinaldo's Armida and Virtuoso Variety***

On March 6, 1711, Londoners opened *The Spectator* to find the entire issue dedicated to a satire of the Queen's Theatre's newest Italian opera. *Rinaldo* had opened the previous week, on February 24, and had received an enthusiastic reception from audiences, especially for its extravagant scenic effects.<sup>41</sup> Yet the opera did not thrill "Mr. Spectator," who remarked in his two-page spread that it reveled in its visual and dramatic spectacle to the point of absurdity:

In the mean time, to find out a more agreeable Entertainment for the Winter-Season, the Opera of *Rinaldo* is filled with Thunder and Lightning, Illuminations, and Fireworks; which the Audience may look upon without catching Cold, and indeed without much Danger of being burnt; for there are several Engines filled with Water, and ready to play at a Minute's Warning, in case any such Accident

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<sup>40</sup> Nicolini also inspired Handel to compose some of his most famous arias, including "Cara sposa" from *Rinaldo*; yet the castrato and the composer did not collaborate in the same way as Handel and Pilotti. Nicolini was already a revered celebrity in London in 1710, based on his performances in *Pyrrhus and Demetrius*, *Clotilda*, *Almahida*, and *Hydaspes*, and likely did not need to forge a close relationship with any composer in order to claim opportunities for performance.

<sup>41</sup> On Handel's staging, see Lowell Lindgren, "The Staging of Handel's Operas in London," in *Handel Tercentenary Collection*, eds. Stanley Sadie and Anthony Hicks (London: Macmillan Press Music Division, 1987), 93-119.

should happen. However, as I have a very great Friendship for the Owner of this Theater [Sir John Vanbrugh], I hope that he has been wise enough to *insure* his House before he would let this Opera be acted in it.<sup>42</sup>

Although the passage revels in satirical embellishment, *Rinaldo* was designed as a musico-theatrical showpiece, intended to illuminate the stage with special effects, some of which Addison (through the persona of Mr. Spectator) describes.<sup>43</sup> Such elaborate effects were matched by Handel's music, which displayed the technical brilliancy of the professional singers who brought life to the opera's characters.<sup>44</sup> Anne Baker, who attended *Rinaldo* in March 1711, equated the thrill of hearing Italian singers with the opera's dazzling staging. She listed its remarkable special effects, such as "Armida in ye Air in a Chariot drawn by huge Dragons out of whos mouths came out fire and Smoak," and "ye Armies attack[ing] each other and form[ing] a regular Battel which stands in Ballence" until Rinaldo vanquishes the Saracen army. The description ends with her

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<sup>42</sup> Article. *The Spectator*, March 6, 1711, *Burney Collection* (accessed 2013).

<sup>43</sup> Sets included the city of Jerusalem surrounded by high walls; a grove featuring live birds that were released into the audience; a ship upon an ocean; and a mountain that in Act 3 is meant to suddenly vanish, as if by magic. The libretto is one of London's first to include detailed stage directions and set designs. For example, the accompanying description for Act III, scene 2 reads: "Scene 2: Godfrey, Eustazio, and the Soldiers, having climb'd half way up the Mountain, are stopp'd by a Row of ugly Spirits, who start up before 'em; The Soldiers, frighted, endeavor to run back, but are cut off in their Way by another Trapp, who start up below 'em. In the midst of their Confusion, the Mountain opens and swallows 'em up, with Thunder, Lightning, and amazing Noises. [They try climbing again.] They gain the Summit of the Hill and entering the Enchanted Arches, strike the Gate with their Wands; when immediately the Palace, the Spirits, and the whole Mountain vanish away, and Godfrey and Eustatio are discover'd hanging on the sides of a vast Rock in the middle of the Sea; with much Difficulty they reach the Top, and descend on the other side." See Hill and Rossi, *Rinaldo*, libretto, 45.

<sup>44</sup> The cast was as follows:

Rinaldo – Nicolini  
Armida – Elisabetta Pilotti-Schiavonetti  
Almirena – Isabella Girardeau  
Argante – Giuseppe Boschi  
Goffredo – Francesca Vanini Boschi  
Eustazio - Valentini

exclamation that it was the “finest singing that was ever heard perform’d”.<sup>45</sup> Anne’s enthusiasm for *Rinaldo*’s special effects and its singing demonstrates that virtuoso spectacle—whether scenic, dramatic, or musical—was an essential element of the creation and reception of the opera.

A number of artistic collaborators contributed to *Rinaldo*’s musico-theatrical extravagance, especially in its initial stages: Aaron Hill fashioned the book, Giacomo Rossi composed an Italian libretto based on Hill’s material, and Handel composed the music.<sup>46</sup> In his preface to the libretto, Hill defended the opera’s approach to combining music and theater with stunning visual effects as an extension of English theatrical traditions:<sup>47</sup>

At once to remedy both these Misfortunes, I resolv’d to fram some Damma, that, by different Incidents and Passions, might afford the Musick Scope to vary and display its Excellence, and fill the Eye with more delightful Prospects, so at once to give Two Senses equal Pleasure.<sup>48</sup>

Hill’s solution was to appeal to both the eyes and the ears of his English audiences by uniting the basic structure of *dramma per musica*—fully sung with recitative, *da capo* arias, and including a heroic story—with plot devices and characters drawn straight from English semi-operas of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.<sup>49</sup> The legend of *Rinaldo* and *Armida* provided the perfect story for a spectacular opera. In the tale,

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<sup>45</sup> Letter from Anne Baker to her mother. GB-AY D-X 1069-2-16. March 13, 1710/11.

<sup>46</sup> Dean and Knapp, *Handel’s Operas*, 172-173.

<sup>47</sup> Price, “English Traditions in Handel’s *Rinaldo*,” 128. In 1699, John Dennis wrote the book for a semi-opera, *Rinaldo and Armida*, with music by John Eccles. Price argues that the two theatrical works have little in common, besides the source material.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Price argues that *Rinaldo* follows a similar plot to *The British Enchanters*. *Armida* is analogous to the sorceress Arcabon, who wages war against the Britains and falls in love with the “ineffectual” hero (Amadis in *The British Enchanters*). He also discusses the similarities between the siren song of Act II in *Rinaldo* and the siren’s song in Act 4 of Henry Purcell’s *King Arthur*. See Price, “English Traditions,” 123.

Rinaldo is a Knight of the Crusades, intent on wresting Jerusalem away from the Saracens and winning the hand of his general's daughter. Armida and Argante, Saracen leaders and pagan residents of the Holy City, are prepared to fight. Argante sends Armida to kill Rinaldo in his sleep, but she falls in love with him and cannot kill him, although he rebuffs her advances. In order to seek revenge, she kidnaps his betrothed. In the opera's final act, the Crusaders unleash their army on the Saracens, instigating an onstage battle ultimately won by Rinaldo's heroic surprise attack. Addison's sardonic description of *Rinaldo* was not without truth. Visual spectacle and theatrical excitement fill the opera; almost every scene includes at least one special scenic effect.<sup>50</sup> In accordance with Hill's objective that the opera "might afford the Musick to vary and display its excellence," Handel composed a score rich with orchestral movements as well as a variety of arias that showed off the virtuosity of his star singers.<sup>51</sup>

Handel reserved the most varied and excellent display of vocal virtuosity for Pilotti, who played the sorceress Armida. Hill adapted the opera's book from Torquato Tasso's epic *Gerusalemme liberata*, but in order to make the opera more dramatically tense and to highlight moments of spectacle, Hill focused on Armida's unrequited love for Rinaldo and the consequences of her magical vengeance. She is the opera's most spectacular character, both visually and vocally. Her music showed off her breadth of technical specialization, including her ability to act the role of both evil villain and pathetic heroine; her brilliant coloratura; her expansive vocal range; her breath support and ability to project over the orchestra; and her talent for navigating difficult melodies.

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<sup>50</sup> The following acts and scenes include at least one scenic effect: Act I, scenes 1-3, 5-7; Act II, scenes 1, 3-4, 7, and 9; and Act III, scenes 1-2, 4, 6, 9-10.

<sup>51</sup> According to Dean and Knapp, "the scoring of *Rinaldo* is calculated to make the maximum impact in the theater; no Italian opera hitherto heard in London had employed so majestic an orchestra." See Dean and Knapp, *Handel's Operas*, 179.

Moreover, Armida's virtuoso techniques change depending on her dramatic circumstances. Handel and Pilotti fashioned Armida around the soprano's vocal prowess. In *Gerusalemme liberata*, Armida's true source of power emanates from her eyes; it is through her gaze—and through their gaze upon her physical beauty—that she hypnotizes Goffredo and his fellow Christian conquerors.<sup>52</sup> In *Rinaldo*, Armida's magical power is expressed through Pilotti's virtuoso voice, made clear by the ways in which Handel used his music to highlight the sorceress's dramatic development over the course of the opera.

Armida's "Furie terribili" is the first of many scenes in the opera that unite visual spectacle—made dramatically possible by her magical powers—with unbridled musical virtuosity. It is also the first technically stunning moment in the opera, despite occurring as late as Scene 5, largely because of the immediate difference in how Pilotti's voice is presented and framed in relation to the other characters. *Rinaldo's* first scenes introduce all the major characters, each of whom has at least one aria. Goffredo and Eustazio (played by Francesca Vanini Boschi and Valentini, respectively) illustrate their technical proficiency in short arias with some coloratura passages and sustained notes. Yet both "Sovra balze" (Goffredo) and "Sulla ruota" (Eustazio) lack the dramatic intensity that Handel reserved for Pilotti; instead, their stately, short arias introduce them as minor characters. Almirena (Isabella Girardeau) and Rinaldo (Nicolini) sing more dynamic

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<sup>52</sup> See especially Canto 16, stanzas 18-22. "She gloried in herself, and he in her; / she in command, and he in slavishness. / 'O turn,' said he, 'turn,' said the cavalier, / 'to me those blessed eyes with which you bless! / You may not know it, but in my desire / Lies the true portrait of your loveliness. / Its wondrous form shows in the crystal's art / But truer in the mirror of my heart. / 'Ah, if you scorn to look at me, at least / look at your own face shining in my eyes, / for your glance will delight to see itself, / rejoicing, when no other can suffice. / A mirror cannot give a sight so sweet, / No glass can comprehend a paradise! / Heaven is the mirror worthiest of you, / And in the stars you see your beauty true." See Toquato Tasso, *Jerusalem delivered* (*Gerusalemme liberata*), ed. and trans. Anthony M. Esolen (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

music in the first half of act 1, but Handel's arias for them do not give either singer much opportunity to show off any distinctive virtuoso specializations. Almirena's "Combatti da forte" is optimistic and full of personality, embodied in melodic leaps in the first vocal statement, as well as its up-tempo, syllabic setting. As Dean and Knapp note, however, "the display is chiefly in the orchestra, which reinforces much of the vocal line."<sup>53</sup> Still, Hill and Handel portray her more heroically than they do Rinaldo, whose first aria is a lovesick response to her buoyant battle cry. "Ogni indugio d'un amante" played to Nicolini's talent at singing difficult, tortuous melodies, but it is no showstopper. Many scholars have shown that the opera's eponymous hero is dramatically weak and ineffective, despite the illustrious singer who originally performed the role.<sup>54</sup> Rinaldo's first aria contributes to his characterization as a weak hero, distracted by love, who is unable to resist Armida's spells.

In act 1, scene 4, Argante makes his first entrance; this moment rivals Armida's spectacular appearance in the next scene. Although Argante (played by the bass Giuseppe Boschi) does not have magical powers, Handel's music that accompanies his entrance displays his monarchical power as leader of the Saracens. Accompanied by a regal fanfare played by the full orchestra, Argante enters "*from the City, drawn through the Gate in a Triumphal Charriot, the Horses white and led in by arm'd Blackamoors. He comes forward attended by a great Number of Horse and Foot Guards...*" The scene does not require fireworks or flying machines, but the sheer number of extras on the stage—

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<sup>53</sup> Dean and Knapp, *Handel's Operas*, 178.

<sup>54</sup> A number of scholars refer to Rinaldo's weak characterization. Curtis Price argues that "though boasting heroic credentials, Rinaldo is foolish, indecisive, vain, an incompetent lover and warrior and never in fact heroic in the conventional sense." See Price, "English Traditions," 127. Dean and Knapp are less forceful, but agree that "Armida alone lives up to the standard of characterization Handel set himself in *Agrippina*" and that "Rinaldo and Almirena are a conventional pair of lovers [...]." See Dean and Knapp, *Handel's Operas*, 174 & 177.

not to mention horses—likely had a overwhelming effect on audiences. Argante’s aria, “Sibillar gli angui d’Aletto” is similarly magnificent. Giuseppe Boschi must have been a powerful bass with an extensive range, since the aria sits in a high tessitura around D4. Among the most impressive virtuoso features is a melismatic passage on “sibillar” that lasts for twenty-one measures.

The musical score consists of four systems, each with a vocal line for Argante and a bass line for Bassi. The key signature is two sharps (D major) and the time signature is 3/8. Measure numbers 8, 15, and 20 are indicated at the start of their respective systems. The lyrics 'si-bil - lar' are placed under the Argante staff in the first system, and 'gli an-gui d'a - let - to' are placed under the Bassi staff in the fourth system. The Argante part features a complex melismatic passage with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, while the Bassi part provides a steady accompaniment.

**Example 5.08. *Rinaldo*, “Sibillar gli angui d’aletto,” mm. 57-80.**

Although “Sibillar” preserves some features of Boschi’s technical ability, Handel did not compose this aria especially for the singer. Instead, he borrowed the entire aria, including the orchestration, from his cantata *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo*.<sup>55</sup> Argante’s introductory aria

<sup>55</sup> *Aci, Galatea, e Polifemo* was first performed for a ducal wedding in Naples in 1708. Handel later wrote another version of it, setting it to an English text, while living at Cannons and working



provided a moment for visual spectacle, and Boschi's flexible bass voice and breath control must have stunned audiences. Yet Handel only composed one new aria for him,<sup>56</sup> which suggests a more distant artistic relationship than the close partnership he cultivated with Pilotti.

In contrast to the first four scenes of the opera, "Furie terribili" united vocal brilliance with visual spectacle, equating Pilotti's virtuosity with her magical power. Later in the scene, she showcased her refined technical ability again, in "Molto voglio, molto spero," as a response to Argante's plea for her help defeating the Crusaders.<sup>57</sup> Although less vocally spectacular than her entrance, Handel's music highlights certain features of her voice that signify his detailed knowledge of her technical proficiency. "Molto voglio" depicts Armida's gloating; at this point in the opera, she is certain of victory and not yet undermined by love. Her confidence is depicted through its vocal audacity: the aria is full of large leaps, sits in an extremely high tessitura, and is often sung without bass support.

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for James Brydges, Duke of Chandos. Winton Dean's *Grove* article states that the original bass had a range of two and a half octaves. Argante's aria is revised slightly; Handel transposed many of the low notes up an octave, to sit more comfortably in Boschi's less extensive range. See Winton Dean, "Boschi, Giuseppe Maria," *Grove Online* (accessed 2013).

<sup>56</sup> This is "Vieni O cara" in Act II.

<sup>57</sup> Kubik's detailed analysis of *Rinaldo* provides many comparisons between melodies, and subsequent derivations across Handel's oeuvre. He points out that versions of the opening theme from "Molto voglio" appear in *La Resurrezione* (HWV 47), the cantata *Ah! Crudel nel pianto mio* (HWV 78), and *Agrippina* (HWV 6), as well as *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo*. See Kubik, *Händels Rinaldo*, 100-101. Dean and Knapp are convinced that the theme is based on Agrippina's aria "L'alma mia frà le tempeste." While the melodies are similar in harmony, character, and orchestration (both include *obbligato* oboe), the arias are different enough in melodic content that I would call "Molto voglio" newly composed, rather than borrowed, based only on a germ of an idea.

Armida Mol-to vo- glio\_mol-to spe-ro\_nul-la de-vo du-bi - tar, mol-to vog- lio\_mol-to

Bassi

Armida spe-ro\_nul-la de-vo du-bi - tar, mol-to vog- lio, mol-to spe-ro, nul-la de-vo du-bi -

Bassi

Armida tar, no, non de - vo, no, non vog- lio, nul-la de-vo du - bi - tar.

Bassi

Armida Mol-to vog- lio, mol-to spe-ro, vo - - -

Bassi

Armida - - - - - glio, nul-la de-vo du-bi-

Bassi

Armida tar, mol-to vo- glio, mol-to spe-ro, nul-la de-vo du-bi - tar, nul-la\_de-vo du-bi - tar.

Bassi

**Example 5.09. *Rinaldo*, “Molto voglio, molto spero,” A section.<sup>58</sup>**

Set in C major, “Molto voglio” includes an overabundance of leaps and motivic repetition, which often outline consonant triads. This heroic-sounding aria is a musical illustration of Armida’s conviction. Moreover, Pilotti often entered on extremely high notes without orchestral support: in measure 23 she would have had to place a high C (C6) without any preparation. Handel must have known that his star singer could

<sup>58</sup> I have left out the *obbligato* oboe line from this transcription.

accomplish such a technical feat night after night.<sup>59</sup> “Molto voglio” conveys musical confidence, supporting Armida’s momentary state of mind. Pilotti’s ability to navigate disjunct melodies and place exceptionally high notes, and her masterful intonation contributed to Armida as a musical spectacle. The aria is unnecessary to Armida’s dramatic transformation; its real function is to showcase the singer’s vocal ability, of which Handel clearly had an intimate knowledge.

In act 2, Pilotti showed off another side of her virtuoso persona: her powerfully emotive presence onstage, whether acting the pathetic, lovesick woman or the raging sorceress. The climax of the act—and, in many ways, the opera—is scenes 8 and 9. In scene 8, Armida sings her lament, confessing to her emotional struggle between love for Rinaldo and vengeance over his rebuff. “Ah! Crudel” is a tender moment for Armida; it is the only time in the opera in which she is alone onstage, and her monologue provides a respite from her spectacular display of sorcery and magic throughout act 1. The scene opens with an accompanied recitative (the only such moment in the opera): a passionate internal battle between conflicting emotions, a dramatic moment that would have been familiar to audiences with knowledge of the legend.<sup>60</sup> At first, Handel’s music alternates between slow moving harmonies and a scalar/triadic vocal line, accompanied by strings, whose sustained notes sound otherworldly. Armida sings of her astonishment that neither her beauty nor her promise of happiness persuaded Rinaldo to love her. In measure 9, she suddenly breaks free of her stupor; the accompaniment responds with *concitato* sixteenth notes that Armida interrupts as she flies into a fury.

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<sup>59</sup> Handel never again composed another C6 for any of his singers. Pilotti’s range was probably singular in its ability to hit such a note.

<sup>60</sup> Many audience members probably knew Armida’s dramatic monologue scene from John Dennis’s *Rinaldo and Armida* (1699), for example.

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Armida

Bassi

Dun-que i la - ci d'un vol - to, tan - te gio - je pro - mes - se,

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Armida

Bassi

li spa - ven - ti d'In - fer - no, for - za n'av - ran per ar - res - tar quel cru - do? E tu il

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Armida

Bassi

se - gui, o mio co - re! fat - to tro - fe - o d'un in - fe - li - ce a - mo - re! No!

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Armida

Bassi

si sve - gli' l fu -

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Armida

Bassi

ro - re, si ra - giun - ga l'in - gra - to, ca - da, ca -

Example 5.10. *Rinaldo*, “Dunque i lacci d’un volto,” accompanied recitative, mm. 1-12.

Handel's accompanied recitative for Pilotti allowed the singer to showcase the range of affective states in which she could act. His music exposed the singer's variety of emotions, which are played out in the overall atmosphere of the scene, and yet the vocal line remains conventional throughout. As the recitative oscillates between her dreamlike, lovelorn state and her wrath, Pilotti sings mostly scalar and triadic melodies, interrupted by leaps only for purposes of word painting. Her octave leap down on "Inferno" in measure 3, for instance, both underscores her invocation of Hell and acts as an exaggerated sigh figure—a rhetorical gesture that Handel uses liberally throughout her subsequent aria. As Armida becomes enraged, her melody does not become more erratic—Handel preserves the scalar and triadic motion of the vocal line, choosing instead to underscore her anger through the agitated accompaniment and the rapidly modulating harmony supporting the singer. The music provided the foundation for Pilotti to show off her acting ability; without composing too many dramatic requirements into the music, Handel gave Pilotti space in which to imbue the music with her own dramatic flair.

Handel and Pilotti continued to explore the dramatic possibilities of these warring sides of Armida's emotions in "Ah! Crudel" by varying the vocal melody within a more structured form. The aria is *da capo*, with strikingly different A and B sections—a feature not often present in Handel arias.<sup>61</sup> The orchestration evokes the same otherworldly atmosphere as the beginning of the accompanied recitative; scored for a large ensemble,

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<sup>61</sup> Dean and Knapp suggest that Handel used this "stock gambit" sparingly in the opera: "This is one of half a dozen *da capo* movements in *Rinaldo* where the sections are sharply contrasted [...]." See Dean and Knapp, *Handel's Operas*, 176. In *Rinaldo*, the only other singer besides Pilotti to sing such disparate A and B sections in an aria is Nicolini, who was known for his brilliant acting.

including three sections of violins, *obligato* oboe, bassoon, and contrabass, the orchestra reinforces the sincerity of Armida’s sadness.<sup>62</sup> The lush scoring also suggests that Pilotti was able to project over the entire orchestra. Armida’s first vocal entrance imitates the intertwining bassoon and oboe solos at the beginning, as she enters on a held D5, drawing the orchestra into its G minor cadence. Instead of repeating the instrumental melodies of the *ritornello*, Armida exaggerates this rhetorical sighing motion by leaping down a diminished seventh to finish the word “crudel.”

The image shows a musical score for the vocal piece "Ah! Crudel" from the opera Rinaldo. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system features Armida's vocal line in the treble clef and Basses' accompaniment in the bass clef. The second system continues with Armida's vocal line and Basses' accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Ah! cru - del, ah! cru - del, il pian - to mi - o deh! ti mo - va per pie - tà!"

**Example 5.11. *Rinaldo*, “Ah! Crudel,” mm. 9-13.<sup>63</sup>**

This leap, perfectly suited to the poignancy of the lament, also emphasized Pilotti’s expertise navigating difficult leaps and negotiating challenging melodies; these affective musical sighs are present throughout the A section. Rather than showing off her range or her flamboyant melismatic singing, the first part of “Ah! Crudel” focused on Pilotti’s more subtle virtuoso abilities: sustaining a purity of tone, breath support, projection, and acting while singing. In a moment when Armida reveals her vulnerability, Pilotti’s vocal line loses the extroverted virtuosity that she had displayed in “Furie terribili” and “Molto

<sup>62</sup> Some of the *ritornello* is borrowed from the cantata HWV 78, but as Dean and Knapp point out, after the vocal entrance the music quickly transforms into newly composed. See *Ibid.*, 176.

<sup>63</sup> I have left out the orchestral accompaniment from this example (Oboes I&II, Bassoons, Violins I, II, & III, Viola, and Violincello).

voglio.” In this lament, Handel and Pilotti cultivated a different kind of persuasive power in her voice—one that drew forth the audience’s sympathies by appearing accessible and exposed, rather than visually spectacular and impossibly virtuoso, in order to portray a new side of the opera’s anti-heroine.

The tender humanity of “Ah! Crudel” disappears in the B section, when Armida vows to take revenge on Rinaldo if he does not reciprocate her love. Instantly, Handel’s music shifts from *largo* to *presto*, and the orchestra’s restless rhythms invoke the opening to “Furie terribili” as well as the *concitato* profile of the preceding accompanied recitative. In contrast to her former lyricism, Pilotti sings melismatic runs that span nearly her entire vocal range. Even more striking is her interaction with the orchestra; rather than blending into the texture, as the vocal line does in the A section, here her voice overwhelms the orchestra. The accompaniment tries to interject, but every time it is constantly pushed aside by her commanding vocal spectacle.

The image shows a musical score for the aria "Ah! Crudel" from the opera Rinaldo. It consists of three systems of music. Each system has two staves: the top staff is for the vocal line (Armida) and the bottom staff is for the basso continuo (Bassi). The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor) and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are: "del al mio de-si - o pro-ve - rai pro-ve-rai la cru-del - tà, la cru - del -". The vocal line features melismatic runs that often overlap with or interrupt the bass line.

**Example 5.12. *Rinaldo*, “Ah! Crudel,” mm. 31-38. Vocal interruptions.<sup>64</sup>**

<sup>64</sup> I have left out the orchestral accompaniment (same scoring as fn. 63) from this example.

For an instant, the Armida from “Furie terribili” has returned: she is once again a powerful woman not to be undone by mortal men, and yet this moment lasts only sixteen measures before she returns to her plaintive lament. The transition back to the A section is jarring; the B section ends in D major, with Armida lingering on D5, which ushers in the first vocal statement (sung unaccompanied), skipping the *ritornello*. Pilotti’s exposed voice expressed the scene’s desolation and vulnerability; technically, however, it also shows her talent for persuasively acting both the maniacal sorceress and the tortured woman within the same aria.

Pilotti’s final moment of triumph marks the end of act 2; in scene 9 she sings “Vo’ far guerra,” a stark contrast to the humanity and self-pity that Armida displays in the previous aria.<sup>65</sup> “Vo’ far guerra” bears all the features of a typical vengeance aria, including agitated orchestral rhythms, a quick tempo, triadic melodic structures, and many moments of coloratura. What is most remarkable, and what best showcases the artistic collaboration between Pilotti and Handel, is its consistent dialogue between the solo harpsichord and the voice. In the *ritornello*, the harpsichord abruptly interrupts the orchestra with a lengthy virtuoso solo, which illustrates the powerful capabilities of an instrument that can imitate an entire orchestra.

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<sup>65</sup> Dean and Knapp call this a “cavatina-cabaletta” structure, since “Ah! Crudel” is in G minor and “Vo’ far guerra” is in G major. See *Ibid.*, 176.



Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Cembalo

Bassi

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Cemb.

Bassi

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Cemb.

Bassi

The image shows a musical score for five instruments: Vln. 1, Vln. 2, Vla., Cemb., and Bassi. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The Cemb. part is the focus, showing a complex, fast-moving sixteenth-note pattern in both hands. The other instruments have rests, indicating they are silent during this section.

**Example 5.13. *Rinaldo*, “Vo’ far guerra,” mm. 1-10. Cembalo solo during ritornello.<sup>66</sup>**

Prior to the eighteenth century, the harpsichord was rarely featured as a soloist in orchestral works. Instead, it was almost always used as part of the continuo ensemble, leaving the solos to melodic instruments.<sup>67</sup> But Handel was often the harpsichordist for his own opera productions, leading the orchestra from the keyboard.<sup>68</sup> The *obbligato cembalo* part, likely improvised by Handel himself, matches Pilotti’s vocal spectacle. The part requires dexterity, especially because of its speed; the unabating sixteenth notes transfer from left to right hands until they come together in a burst of figurations that invite the rest of the orchestra back in for a cadence. This cadenza allowed Handel to become known to audiences not only for his music, but also as a virtuoso performer and a valuable contributor to the opera’s sonic spectacle.

<sup>66</sup> The editors of the HHA *Rinaldo* edition have interpolated Babel’s transcription into the aria itself. See Handel, *Rinaldo*, 275 for the notes.

<sup>67</sup> See Peter Holmon, “Did Handel Invent the English Keyboard Concerto?” *The Musical Times* 144, No. 1883 (2003): 13-22.

<sup>68</sup> William Babel, a harpsichordist and minor composer, transcribed Handel’s cembalo solos for “Vo’ far guerra,” preserving what may have been one of the first proto-keyboard “concertos”. See Dean and Knapp, 176.

The *obbligato* cembalo returns throughout the aria, often as the only accompaniment for long passages of coloratura sung by Pilotti. In some instances, it provides a countermelody to the vocal line, playing a duet in thirds. In other instances it becomes a flamboyant soloist, especially during Pilotti’s sustained notes.

The musical score is presented in three systems. Each system features a vocal line for Armida and a cembalo accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C).  
 System 1: Armida's vocal line contains the lyrics "car," and is filled with triplet eighth notes. The cembalo accompaniment also features triplet eighth notes in the right hand and rests in the left hand.  
 System 2: Armida's vocal line contains the lyrics "ven-di- car," and includes a long note. The cembalo accompaniment has a "Tutti" marking and a bass line with fingerings 6/4, 5/3, 6/4, 5/3. The right hand has triplet eighth notes.  
 System 3: Armida's vocal line contains the lyrics "col" and has a long note. The cembalo accompaniment has a "Tutti" marking and a rhythmic pattern in the right hand.

**Example 5.14. *Rinaldo*, “Vo’ far guerra,” mm. 24-36. Cembalo and vocal duet.<sup>69</sup>**

Instead of an aria for Armida, “Vo’ far guerra” featured both Pilotti and Handel. The end of act 2 foregrounded their musical collaboration on two levels: first, as an artistic partnership between composer and interpreter, and secondly as equally talented performers, whose virtuoso duet epitomized *Rinaldo*’s unification of musical and visual spectacle.

<sup>69</sup> I have not included the rest of the orchestra here (Oboes I&II, Violins I&II, Vla, and Bassi). During the vocal and cembalo duet, however, the rest of the orchestra does not play.

In *Rinaldo*, Pilotti sang a variety of arias, all of which exploited her breadth of technical specialization in order to depict Armida's fragile and conflicted psychological state. Handel's music, which relied on Pilotti's virtuoso capabilities, provided a diverse array of musical profiles to portray Armida as both a powerful and formidable sorceress and a woman destroyed by unrequited love. In the drama itself, Armida must choose between sorcery and humanity in act 3; ultimately, she decides to give up her magical powers and convert to Christianity. The price she pays for redemption, however, is illustrated expertly through her music. After the armies battle onstage over Jerusalem, both Argante and Armida are taken prisoner and are presented to Goffredo and Rinaldo. As they look upon Rinaldo and Almirena embracing, Armida has a revelation: "No! Heav'n perhaps has chose this Road to save me, / And, willing I shou'd wash me from my Sins, / Holds forth her sacred Waters! Be it so, / Unworthy Instrument of all my Crimes, / Thus I revenge me on thee." In the moment that she gives up sorcery, she also gives up the power of her voice.

*Armida*

No, for-se ch'al ciel piac-que, ch'io spe-gna al fin pen-ti-ta il mio fo-co in-fer-

Bassi

(Spezza la vergo incantata.) *Argante*

nal col-le sa-cre ac-que. Ver-ga in-de-gna, ti spez-zo. Il tuo con-si-glio se-guo, mia

Bassi

*Armida (verso Goffredo)* *Rinaldo* *Almirena*

ca-ra. Il vos-tro ri-to io pi-glio. O cle-men-za del ciel! Be-a-ta

Bassi

*Eustazio* *Goffredo* *Argante*

sor-te! Trion-fo al-ter! La li-ber-tà vi do-no. Ca-ra, ti

Bassi

*Armida*

strin-go. Vien spo-so al mio tro-no.

Bassi

**Example 5.15. *Rinaldo*, act 3, scene 13. Final recitative.**

Armida's redemption should have been a dramatic climax in an opera conceived around her internal struggle and ultimate dramatic transformation; yet it is relegated to a brief moment of unaccompanied recitative. She is silenced, both by the Christian conquerors and by her own decision to break her wand, thereby renouncing her former life as a sorceress. Pilotti's extravagant voice, which had symbolized Armida's power throughout the opera, was no longer dramatically appropriate.

Almost every scene in *Rinaldo* delights the eye with illuminations and fireworks, but musico-dramatic spectacle is reserved for only a few characters. Nicolini, as the

opera's hero, took on some challenging scenes; "Cara sposa," although not too difficult technically, allowed him to show off his celebrated acting techniques. "Or la tromba" and "Venti turbini," in contrast, are extraordinary virtuoso showpieces that demonstrated Nicolini's vocal flexibility for which he became a star. Yet Rinaldo is not the dramatic focus of his own opera; as Curtis Price has argued, he is an ineffectual character who represents "the imperfection of humane nature" rather than the intrepid opera hero.<sup>70</sup> Instead, Armida fills the stage with a flurry of emotions for audiences to experience. Her scenes make a musico-dramatic impact, whether she is enacting the powerful sorceress, the furious spurned woman, or the heartbroken lover. As shown, Handel's musical profile for the sorceress took advantage of the range and variety of virtuoso singing and acting techniques in which Pilotti specialized. By giving voice to Armida—Handel's artistic collaborator, as well as an interpreter of his music—Pilotti's status as a celebrity in London became tightly linked with her demonstration of vocal virtuosity as well as her specialization as sorceresses. *Rinaldo* was performed at least forty-seven times between 1711 and 1717, and, unlike any other singer, Pilotti retained her role as Armida in all of these productions.<sup>71</sup>

Comparisons of *Rinaldo* with its revival of 1731 further demonstrate how the close artistic collaboration between Handel and Pilotti determined the original production's dramatic shape, musical profile, and spectacular character. Handel recomposed the entire score to accommodate his new cast of singers. Of these, Senesino was likely the most famous, having been one of the first singers recruited for the Royal

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<sup>70</sup> Torquato Tasso, *Godfrey of Bulloigne, or the Recoverie of Jerusalem*, trans. Edward Fairfax (London, 1600), ii. Quoted in Price, "English Traditions in Handel's *Rinaldo*," 128.

<sup>71</sup> Advertisements and libretti show that *Rinaldo* had revival performances in 1712, 1713, 1714, and 1717.

Academy of Music in 1720; his technical proficiency differed enough from Nicolini's that Rinaldo's music had to be transposed down.<sup>72</sup> Other parts were transposed to accommodate different voice types: Goffredo became a tenor role, for Annibale Pio Fabri, and Argante became a trouser role for the contralto Francesca Bertolli. Perhaps the most drastic recomposition, however, was *Armida*, rewritten for a contralto voice and sung by Antonia Merighi.<sup>73</sup> While Merighi was known for her fine voice and acting skills, she probably did not possess the same technical flair that Pilotti showcased. Rather than transposing *Armida*'s original music, Handel readjusted the entire role. "Furie terribili" is not the showstopper it once was; rather than displaying Pilotti's extensive range and extravagant vocal runs, the singer only has to sing the range of a sixth. "Ah! Crudel" is truncated to just the A section, focusing not on *Armida*'s dual personalities but only on her sympathetic side. Most strikingly, both "Molto voglio" and "Vo' far guerra," were removed completely from the production.<sup>74</sup> Overall, *Armida*'s 1731 incarnation is a less vocally powerful and a more dramatically conventional antagonist. Her lackluster recreation in 1731, however, reveals the significance of the original sorceress's uninhibited musical expression. Thirty years earlier, newly arrived in London and seeking to build their reputations with audiences and other musicians, Handel and Pilotti

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<sup>72</sup> For more on the musical differences between *Rinaldo* of 1711 and 1731, see Dean and Knapp, *Handel's Operas*, 186-191.

<sup>73</sup> She spent the 1729-1731 seasons singing in London and premiered three roles for Handel, including Matilda in *Lotario*, Rosmira in *Partenope*, and Erissena in *Poro*. Prior to London, she had often performed in Venice in operas by Vivaldi and Gasparini. According to Dean's Grove article, she was advertised as being "a woman of a very fine Presence, an excellent Actress, and a very good Singer," confirmed by Mrs. Pendarves. See Winton Dean, "Merighi, Antonia Margherita," *Grove Online* (accessed 2013).

<sup>74</sup> Handel added reworked versions of previously composed arias: "Combatti da forte" was rewritten for alto and given to *Armida*, replacing "Molto voglio." "Arma lo sguardo" was from *Lotario* (and was originally sung by Merighi) and "Fatto è Giove" became *Armida*'s finale in Act III, replacing the unaccompanied recitative.

worked together to create an Armida who uniquely demonstrated the variety and scope of their collaborative musical virtuosity.

### ***Teseo's Medea: Virtuosity and Madness***

*Teseo*, Handel's third opera for the London stage, had its premiere in 1713 at the Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket.<sup>75</sup> *Rinaldo's* success two years earlier spurred the production of this new magic opera, which tried to imitate many of its predecessor's spectacular features.<sup>76</sup> *Teseo* also included elaborate scene changes, onstage pyrotechnics, and grandiose musical effects including "*the Sound of a Warlike Symphony*" depicting an offstage battle (act 1, scene 1) and a triumphal ballet-chorus accompanying Theseus's act 2 entrance.<sup>77</sup> The opera also included another archetypal sorceress-villain, once again played by Pilotti. Her character, Medea, continues the musical and dramatic expectations set in place by Armida: she creates numerous enchantments, flies in chariots drawn by dragons, and summons the furies to torment those who have betrayed her. A close examination of Medea's musical profile and dramatic transformation shows that Handel

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<sup>75</sup> In 1712, Handel and Pilotti collaborated on *Il pastor fido*, a newly composed Italian pastoral opera. It was not successful, and because Pilotti did not play a sorceress archetype, it will not be analyzed in this dissertation. Instead, see Ellen T. Harris, *Handel and the Pastoral Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 176-209.

<sup>76</sup> Despite the use of spectacular scenic effects, Aaron Hill had no involvement in *Teseo*. In the spring of 1711, Hill was dismissed from his position as acting manager of the Queen's Theatre; Owen Swiney returned to fill his place. Unfortunately, he was not successful. In the winter of 1713, he absconded to the Continent with the entire profits from *Teseo*, leaving behind his angry, uncompensated singers and musicians. His desertion of the Queen's Theatre was a scandal, and yet Swiney found a position for himself in Venice, where he became an onsite agent for the Royal Academy of Music in the 1720s. Colman's Opera Register reports that "after these Two Nights Mr Swiny Brakes & runs away & leaves ye Singers unpaid ye Scenes & Habits also unpaid for. The Singers were in Some confusion but at last concluded to go on with ye Opera's on their own accounts, & devide ye Gain amongst them." See Elizabeth Gibson, "Owen Swiney and the Italian Opera in London," *The Musical Times* 124, No. 1692 (1984): 82-86.

<sup>77</sup> Nicola Haym, *Teseo*, libretto, in *The Librettos of Handel's Operas: A Collection of Seventy-One Librettos Documenting Handel's Operatic Career*, Vol. 2, ed. Ellen T. Harris (New York: Garland, 1989), 141 & 159.



and Pilotti's conception of the archetype had matured, becoming more subtle in its second incarnation. Rather than showing off a variety of brilliant vocal techniques in every aria, Handel saved Pilotti's virtuosity for specific dramatic moments, in order to depict her character's gradual descent into madness. Medea begins as a sympathetic character, and Handel's music for her, as well as his treatment of his singer's voice, highlights the sorceress's human side. Only when jealousy and vengeance consume her does Medea's voice display the same virtuosity that defined Armida.

*Teseo* diverges from the model of *Rinaldo* in plot, form, and structure. The libretto was based on a forty-year-old French opera by the collaborators Phillippe Quinault and Jean-Baptiste Lully. One of Lully's earliest *tragédies en musique*, *Thésée* was composed for Louis XIV in 1675 and it privileged the spectacular, by featuring scenic effects, ballets, and choruses.<sup>78</sup> It is unclear how Handel came to know this opera, or how and why he chose to adapt it as an Italian opera for London.<sup>79</sup> Nicola Haym, a continuo player who had also arranged *Camilla* (1706) and *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* (1708), was probably the translator and arranger of Quinault's original text, much of which he preserved in literal translation.<sup>80</sup> Haym also conserved the original opera's five-act structure and its features of grandeur and spectacle.

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<sup>78</sup> On Lully's style and cultural context, see Robert Isherwood, *Music in Service of the King: France in the Seventeenth Century* (Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press, 1994); and Caroline Wood, *Music and Drama in the Tragédies en Musique, 1673-1715: Jean-Baptiste Lully and his Successors* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1996).

<sup>79</sup> Paul Monod argues that the Earl of Burlington, to whom both *Teseo* and *Amadigi* are dedicated, may have chosen the libretti, based on the French operas he had seen in Paris while on the Grand Tour. See Monod, "The Politics of Handel's Early London Operas," 463. A recent study surveys the potential dramatic and literary influences on Haym's adaptation of Quinault's libretto, focusing on the role of Theseus in *Teseo* and in *Arianna in Creta*. See Robert C. Ketterer, "Helpings from the Great Banquets of Epic: Handel's *Teseo* and *Arianna in Creta*" in *(Dis)embodying Myths in Ancien Régime Opera: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Bruno Forment (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2012).

<sup>80</sup> David Kimbell, "The Libretto of *Teseo*," *Music & Letters* 44, No. 4 (1963): 371.

Haym altered his French prototype in order to incorporate spectacular elements into the drama in a new way. In *Thésée*, each act ended with a spectacular appendage called a *divertissement*, which did not advance the plot but instead provided an extra-dramatic moment of splendor and musical excess; often these scenes would involve large ballets or choruses sung by the entire cast.<sup>81</sup> Haym kept some of these large-scale theatrics, but his incorporation of spectacle is more organic, reserving most of the impressive visual effects for moments born out of the drama by Medea's supernatural spells. For example, in act 3, scene 4, the stage directions call for Medea to transform the scene "into a horrid Desert full of frightful Monsters" in order to scare her rival Agilea to death; later, at the end of the opera, Medea flies off in a chariot drawn by dragons, setting the palace on fire.<sup>82</sup> In *Teseo*, the sorceress controls the opera's visual spectacle, reserved as plot devices associated with Medea's psychological breakdown. Handel and Pilotti's musical approach to Medea's character is in keeping with Haym's organic use of visual spectacle in the libretto. The sorceress is not an inherently evil character whose passion for the opera's hero serves only as a momentary distraction. Instead, Medea's arias underscore her transformation as she becomes more unhinged during the course of the opera. By juxtaposing her emotional states—passionate love with deranged anger—Handel once again drew upon Pilotti's superior acting skills.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 379.

<sup>82</sup> Haym, *Teseo*, libretto, in *The Librettos of Handel's Operas*, 175 & 203.

<sup>83</sup> The Lully/Quinault model provided an appropriate model for a more subtle depiction of the sorceress: *tragédies en musique* allowed airs to occur more naturally in the context of the action, rather than as a moment of emotional apex followed immediately by the singer's exit. In French opera, emotions were expressed through recitative, which highlighted the superior declamatory abilities of French actors and actresses (including Marie le Rochois, Lully's original Médée), and emphasized a more fluid, and less structural approach to communicating a diversity of affects and emotions. Kimbell, "The Libretto of Handel's *Teseo*," 379: "The frequency [in *Teseo*] with which the aria-exit convention is disregarded, and the aria, instead of representing the emotional

Handel's scenes for Medea pay homage to the dramatic subtleties of his French model. The sorceress sings three different types of music in *Teseo*: arias, accompanied recitatives, and arioso-like pieces.<sup>84</sup> Handel employed these various musical forms in order to depict Medea's gradual self-destruction and embrace of insanity by the end of the opera. Although she begins as a woman passionately in love, by the end of the opera she is beyond redemption. Unlike Armida, Medea has no moment of moral conversion; instead, only a *deus ex machina* (the goddess Minerva) saves the city of Athens from her wrath. Handel's writing for Pilotti's voice carefully developed the enchantress's psychological collapse; as Dean and Knapp put it, the "progressive disintegration of her character [occurs] as much through the flexible treatment of aria form as in sheer invention."<sup>85</sup> Pilotti's virtuosity is suppressed, unleashing her most potent vocal brilliance in moments when Medea gives in to her jealousy and rage. Unconventional aria forms and Pilotti's control of her virtuosity conveyed a more understated antagonist whose musico-dramatic transformation drives the opera to its spectacular conclusion.

Medea's jealousy and consequential supernatural actions structure the opera's dramatic trajectory.<sup>86</sup> The sorceress, having committed infanticide in Corinth, arrives in Athens and quickly becomes engaged to King Egeo. Soon, however, Egeo meets Agilea and falls in love with her. Naturally, she is in love with the opera's hero, Theseus, who has just won an important battle for the king. Medea's heart is also set on Theseus, and

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culmination of a scene, just slides in and out of the dialogue (or would do, did not the eighteenth-century musical technique endow it with such enormous proportions) is likewise a feature of a seventeenth-century pedigree."

<sup>84</sup> In some cases, these are one-sectional arias.

<sup>85</sup> Dean and Knapp, *Handel's Operas*, 240.

<sup>86</sup> Both Quinault's livret and Haym's libretto adapted the third of the Medea myths. The first is the story of Jason and the Golden Fleece, and the second is Medea's dreadful actions in Corinth, upon finding out about Jason's adultery. This last myth was set as a French Baroque opera by Thomas Corneille and Marc-Antoine Charpentier in 1693.

she spends much of the opera alternating between pure hatred and passionate love for the hero. After tormenting Agilea and Egeo with monsters and evil spirits, she and the king connive to poison Theseus. Just before he drinks from the poisoned cup, he draws his sword, and Egeo recognizes him as his long lost son. The opera ends happily as Egeo permits Theseus to marry Agilea, but Medea's ire only grows worse. In the opera's penultimate scene, she flies over Athens threatening to burn down the city, but the goddess Minerva descends just in time, saving the lovers and ushering in a happy ending.

Medea dominates acts 2 through 5; as in *Thésée*, her first entrance occurs at the beginning of act 2, and this delay ensures a more gradual development of dramatic tension. We hear about Medea before she is actually introduced; in act 1, Egeo comments to Agilea that he will risk Medea's wrath in order to marry her: "I know that on him who contemns her, / She'll thunder her Inchantments / And revengeful Rage."<sup>87</sup> Despite her initial description as powerful and evil, her first scene exposes her intense passion for Theseus. Handel sets the scene as an aria that is interrupted by a brief passage of unaccompanied recitative. "Dolce riposo," called a *cavatina* by Dean and Knapp,<sup>88</sup> is not a full *da capo* aria as it lacks a contrasting B section. In order to express the sincerity and spontaneity of her feelings, Medea sings a one-section *da capo* aria that is interrupted by bars of unaccompanied recitative. Handel's orchestration is rich and persists throughout: the solo oboe often pierces the throbbing string texture, perhaps an allusion to the *obligato* woodwinds in "Ah! Crudel." Medea's vocal line is lyrical and expressive and forsakes any virtuoso embellishment in order to sustain long vocal phrases, purity of tone, and unfettered emotional expression.

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<sup>87</sup> Haym, *Teseo*, libretto, in *The Librettos of Handel's Operas*, 13.

<sup>88</sup> Dean and Knapp, *Handel's Operas*, 240.

*Largo.*

Oboe solo.

Violino I.

Violino II.

Viola.

MEDEA.

Bassi.

Dol - - ce ri po - so!

dol - - ce ri po - so, ed in - no - cen - te pa - ce! ben fe - li - ce è quel sen, ben fe - li - ce è quel

sen che vi pos - sie - - de, dol - ce ri po - so, ed in - no - cen - te pa - ce! ben fe - li - ce è quel

H. W. 60.

sen, ben fe - li - - ce è quel sen che vi pos sie - - - - - de.

Example 5.16. *Teseo*, “Dolce Riposo,” mm. 1-17.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Examples 5.16 and 5.17 are from Friedrich Chrysander, ed., *The Works of George Frederic Handel*. Leipzig, Printed for the German Handel Society by Breitkopf & Härtel, 7 (Farnborough, UK: Gregg Press, 1965-1966), 30-31. The HHA has not yet published a new modern edition of this opera.

Pilotti's range is exposed in this scene, but rather than exploiting her dramatic high notes, the music accompanies the undulations of the text as Medea sings of her peaceful state. Rather than a B section, Handel provides seven measures of unaccompanied recitative in which Medea explains that Cupid has drawn her to Theseus. This interruption is followed by a return to the accompanied aria, which repeats the text of the A section, eliding certain melodic fragments of the first half but not replicating the music exactly. The end of the aria subverts Italianate convention: rather than ending on a perfect authentic cadence, the accompanied melody stops abruptly on an A-flat major chord (IV of E-flat). The final text, "che vi possiede," is delivered in recitative style, with a definitive orchestral cadence on the tonic.

Medea.

Sem - pre fù a me ti - ran - no il par - go - let - to A - mo - re; or' nuo - vi stra - li al  
co - re d'a - ven - tar si com - pia - ce, e non lo sa - na al - lor ch'il ma - lo chiede.  
Dol - ce, dol - ce ri - po - so, ed in - no - cen - te pa -  
- ce! ben fe - li - ce è qual sen, ben fe - li - ce è qual sen che vi pos - sie - de.

Example 5.17. *Teseo*, “Dolce Riposo,” mm. 18-32. Recitative passage followed by extension of *arioso* section.

Instead of a true *da capo*, in which Pilotti would have been expected to embellish the melody, Handel composed a section of new music, derived from melodies of the A section, in order to show that Medea prefers her lyrical expressions of bliss to the unsettling questions concerning Theseus’s reciprocation of her feelings..<sup>90</sup> His loose adherence to *da capo* aria structure provides dramatic flexibility, and allowed his singer to promote her refined lyrical singing as well as the human side of her character.

Handel and Pilotti’s initial depiction of Medea as a lovelorn woman endures throughout the rest of the scene. In act 2, scene 1, just after “Dolce riposo,” Medea sings “Quell’amor, ch’e nato a forza,” in which she laments that forced love will never last. It is low in Pilotti’s range, sitting between Eb4 and Eb5..<sup>91</sup> Phrases are short and concentrated, and the aria is entirely syllabic except for a brief, measure long melisma, a long held note on “amante” (perfect for featuring her *messa di voce*), and another melisma on “istante”.

The image shows a musical score for two systems. The first system is for Medea (soprano) and Basses (bass). The Medea part is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a common time signature. It features a melisma on the word 'amante' with four triplets of eighth notes. The Basses part is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature, providing a rhythmic accompaniment. The second system continues the vocal line with a long melisma on the word 'istante' and a held note, with the Basses part continuing below.

**Example 5.18. *Teseo*, “Quell’amor,” mm. 25-28. Melisma and held note on “amante.”<sup>92</sup>**

<sup>90</sup> It is especially important to observe that the libretto lays out the text as if it was all recitative: in place of arias, the English translation merely summarizes (in italics) the emotional state of the character. In *Teseo*, the lyrics are completely written out.

<sup>91</sup> In fact, she reaches G5 only once, and only in the B section.

<sup>92</sup> This transcription does not include the accompanying *violini unisoni* line.

Neither passage is particularly extravagant; they resemble passing embellishments rather than moments of musical emphasis. In this scene, Pilotti suppressed her coloratura and featured other, less distinctively florid specializations; her understated performance preserved Medea’s humanity.

The sorceress’s next dramatic scene takes place at the end of act 2, in which she sings the first of three accompanied recitatives. All of her accompanied recitatives appear at critical dramatic junctures in the opera. Act 2’s “Ira, sdegni” initiates her struggle with sanity; alone onstage, she rails against Theseus and his love for Agilea. Her fury, depicted in the *concitato* orchestral texture as well as in her vocal melismas, quickly gives way to an eerie calm, as she contemplates the different kinds of torments to which she will subject the lovers. The vocal flourish on “furore” in measure 3 is the first brief hint of the powerful vocal expression that is to come.

Medea

I-ra, sde-gni, e fu-ro - - re!

Bassi

**Example 5.19. *Teseo*, “Ira, sdegni,” mm. 1-3. Flourish on “furore.”<sup>93</sup>**

Over the next three acts, Medea struggles with her sanity and Pilotti’s music becomes more elaborate and musically difficult. In act 3, her incantation/rage aria “Sibillando, ululando” displays her voice through coloratura passages that are ten measures long and that climb from the lower part of her voice to the top. Moreover, a fermata placed over a dominant chord at the end of the A section was surely a moment for Pilotti to unleash her improvisatory abilities in a cadenza.

<sup>93</sup> This example does not include the orchestral accompaniment (Violins I&II, Viola).



Medea  
Si-bil - lan - - - - - do  
Bassi

Medea  
- do at-ter - ra - te, si-bil - lan - do, u-lu - lan - do,  
Bassi

Medea  
la ri-val che mi scher - ni, la ri-val che mi scher - ni, scher - ni, scher  
Bassi

Medea  
ni, scher - ni, scher - ni!  
Bassi  
at - ter - ra - te,

Medea  
la ri-val che mi scher - ni, la ri - val che mi scher - ni!  
Bassi

**Example 5.20. *Teseo*, “Sibillando,” mm. 47-67. Long melisma and fermata on “scherni.”<sup>94</sup>**

Her melismatic passages are long and varied, and end with a descending octave leap. Handel borrowed these triplet melismas from *Rinaldo*’s “Molto voglio” and “Vo’ far guerra,” two arias that depict a similar psychological state. As a finale to the third act, Medea’s unrestrained virtuosity and the special effects that include “spirits” kidnapping Agilea heighten her dramatic transformation. Unrequited longing transforms into vicious anger; as it does so, Pilotti’s muted and lyrical voice also is transformed into a medium of furious vocal extravagance.

<sup>94</sup> This transcription does not include the full orchestration (Oboe *tutti*, Violins I&II, Viola).

The final act of the opera includes Medea’s most compelling scene in which she wrestles with her conflicting emotions one final time. Act 5, scene 1 begins with a monologue scene and includes Medea’s final *da capo* aria, “Morirò,” yet Handel once again varies the aria’s structure in order to illustrate the sorceress’s complete psychological collapse. The *ritornello* expresses in miniature Medea’s emotional struggle: at first, the *tutti* strings play a brash opening theme in unison, characterized by repeated quarter notes low in each instrument’s range that firmly establish G minor. This sullen and obstinate introduction is suddenly interrupted by a change in tempo. The strings burst forth into a flurry of sixteenth-notes, still played in unison, that drive the music toward a fermata over an implied diminished seventh chord (F# in all parts, following a measure of an F#dim7). Finally, the *ritornello* slows down, preparing for the first vocal entrance, an *Adagio*.

**Example 5.21. Teseo, “Morirò,” mm. 1-9. *Ritornello* tempi juxtapositions.<sup>95</sup>**

Medea’s first vocal entrance echoes the disparate emotions depicted in the instrumental introduction. She begins unaccompanied, on a sustained note in the upper

<sup>95</sup> Because the oboe does not play during the *ritornello*, I have left it out above.

half of her range, an affective cry perfectly illustrating “Morirò.” As her voice descends to G4, the *obbligato* oboe enters, echoing her extended sigh figure. Finally, Medea finishes her plaintive wail with a direct quotation from the first vocal statement of “Ah! Crudel”:

The image contains two musical examples. The upper example is for Medea and Bassi, showing a melisma on the word 'ri-rò' in the vocal line. The lower example is also for Medea and Bassi, showing a melisma on the word 'ri-rò' in the vocal line, which is a direct quotation from the first vocal statement of 'Ah! Crudel'.

**Example 5.22. Upper Example: *Teseo*, “Morirò,” mm. 20-27.<sup>96</sup> Lower Example: *Rinaldo*, “Ah! Crudel,” mm. 9-10.**

The image shows a musical score for Armida and Bassi. The upper line is for Armida, showing a melisma on the word 'Ah! Cru - del'. The lower line is for Bassi, showing the accompaniment.

Using exactly the same notes, Handel drew a sonic comparison to his first enchantress: Armida’s affective sigh is transformed into Medea’s death wish. Although the surrounding instruments play a different, more forceful accompaniment, the solo oboe lingers above the strings, another aural reminder of how Armida’s lament theme has gained bleaker significance. Just as Medea finishes her thought, however, the music shifts once again to *presto*, underscoring her immediate change in affect. She is now a deranged sorceress, and the resulting burst of coloratura showcased Pilotti at her most extravagant. Her melisma runs up and down the extent of her range, from G5 down to F4, and includes a quick and difficult octave leap. Just as suddenly, her music becomes syllabic;

<sup>96</sup> In the upper example, I have left out the full orchestration (Oboe, Violin, Viola).

Pilotti sings scalar figures starting high in her tessitura, gradually slides her way down to the bottom of her range, and then quickly leaps back up to the top. These leaps reach their apex in measure 40 when Pilotti hits the highest note of any singer in the opera: her A-flat5 is not as showy as her C6 in *Rinaldo*, but its piercing and unsettling effect is similar.

The image shows a musical score for two systems. The first system features a vocal line for Medea (treble clef) and a Bassi line (bass clef). The Medea line has lyrics: "rò; mo - ri - rò, mà ven - di - ca - ta, ven - di -". The Bassi line has a complex rhythmic accompaniment. The second system continues the vocal lines. The Medea line has lyrics: "ca - ta mo - ri rò; mo - ri - rò,". The Bassi line continues with a similar rhythmic pattern. The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 3/4.

**Example 5.23. *Teseo*, “Morirò,” mm. 39-44. High A-flat on mà.<sup>97</sup>**

The B section of “Morirò” reveals a new side to Medea’s insanity. The text setting becomes completely syllabic and Handel preserves the quick tempo so that Medea’s words “E vedrò pria di morire lacerate, trucidata la rival e l’infedele, che crudele m’oltraggiò”<sup>98</sup> are sung in quick, energetic bursts. Handel’s rhythms correspond to the text’s pronunciation, but the up-tempo pace of the B section’s declamation creates a patter-like sound. Medea’s words only speed up: at first, she sings a repetition of an eighth and two sixteenth notes, but her repetition of “lacerate” and “trucidata” accelerates into rapid-fire sixteenth notes. Pilotti’s declamation must have been skillful indeed for her to spit out each of those words in time with the accompaniment.

<sup>97</sup> See fn. 96 for full orchestration.

<sup>98</sup> “Before I die, I will see the rival and the infidel torn apart, slaughtered, how savage is my outrage.” Translation mine, with the help of Pamela Stewart.

Medea *E ve-drò, e ve-drò pri-a di mo-ri-re la-ce-*

Bassi

Medea *-ra-ta, tru-ci-da-ta, la-ce-ra-ta, la-ce-ra-ta, tru-ci-*

Bassi

Medea *da-ta, la-ce-ra-ta, tru-ci-da-ta, tru-ci-da-ta la-ri-val e l'in-fe-de-le,*

Bassi

**Example 5.24. *Teseo*, “Morirò,” mm. 68-74. Quick declamation on 16<sup>th</sup> notes.<sup>99</sup>**

Medea’s jealous rage has metamorphosed into unpredictable insanity. The second half of the B section (one of Handel’s longer B sections) preserves the patter declamation but finally gives way to shorter melismatic passages as she repeats “oltraggiò”. Her final cadence, energized by a vocal run up to G5 on “oltraggiò,” halts on D5—and once again Handel brings back the same technique that he used in “Ah! Crudel” for the transition back into the A section.

<sup>99</sup> See fn. 96 for full orchestration.

The image shows a musical score for Example 5.25, titled "Teseo, 'Morirò,' Transition from B to A sections for the da capo (dal segno).". The score is written in 3/4 time and features five staves: Oboe, Violin 1, Viola, Medea, and Basses. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The lyrics are: "giò. Mo - - ri - rò, mo -" and "ri - rò, mà ven - di -". The score includes various musical notations such as rests, notes, and dynamic markings, and ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

**Example 5.25. Teseo, “Morirò,” Transition from B to A sections for the *da capo* (dal segno).**

Instead of repeating the opening *ritornello*, Medea’s rage immediately collapses into her lament on “Morirò.” Like “Ah! Crudel,” this exposes Pilotti’s voice in an unaccompanied setting and reinforces Medea’s final moment of tragic expression in the opera. As her affective state once again shifts to fury, underscored by Pilotti’s unbridled and elaborate vocal virtuosity, the repeat of the A section makes clear that Medea has reached her psychological breaking point. Her transformation over the course of the opera is gradual. Medea’s final aria is a battle between psychological states and between modes of musical expression: mournful lyricism is conquered by flashy vocal virtuosity as they vie for supremacy. By the end of the opera, Medea gives in completely to her cruelty and anger; she avenges herself by setting Athens on fire and flying off in a chariot drawn by

dragons.<sup>100</sup> Handel featured his musico-dramatic skills by suppressing or exploiting Pilotti's vocal power and the virtuoso techniques in which she specialized.

In the context of Handel's operatic oeuvre, *Teseo* represents a new approach to Italian opera in London. It is singular in its form (five acts) and novel in its use of source material (an adaptation of a French *tragédie en musique*).<sup>101</sup> Though a magic opera, the scenery and special effects are far less exaggerated than in *Rinaldo*, suggesting that Handel and the other artists involved in the production had learned to reserve visual spectacle for only certain dramatic moments. Medea's musico-dramatic characterization depended on *Teseo*'s subtler integration of virtuosity—whether dramatic, scenic, or musical—and therefore on the more mature collaboration between Handel and Pilotti. If Armida's elaborate singing is equated to her supernatural power, Medea's music more often underscores her humanity. In *Rinaldo*, Pilotti's display of a variety of different virtuoso techniques made Armida terrifying: every aria exhibited a new feature of her voice, whose talent and specialized abilities were seemingly endless. For Medea, however, it is the display of virtuosity that represents her descent into madness, while her humanity (a powerful dramatic ploy, especially at the beginning of the opera) required more lyrical, sustained singing.

*Teseo* was an opera of transition. It signified a move toward a more natural musico-dramatic structure that offered emotional depth in its musical portrayal of its characters. The differences in the characterization of the sorceress archetype suggest that Handel and Pilotti revised their collaborative approach. By 1713 they were both well-

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<sup>100</sup> Like Armida's redemption, this scene is also set to unaccompanied recitative.

<sup>101</sup> Summarized in Dean, "The Musical Sources for Handel's *Teseo* and *Amadigi*"; and Kimbell, "The Libretto of Handel's *Teseo*."

known professional musicians. Pilotti had performed in at least five new operas,<sup>102</sup> and Whig nobles, especially Richard Boyle, third Earl of Burlington, had become Handel's patrons. *Teseo* was dedicated to Burlington, a gesture that some scholars see as a calculated political move by Handel and Haym.<sup>103</sup> Burlington and another Whig nobleman, Anthony Ashley, third Earl of Shaftesbury, prided themselves on their cultural patronage, and both subscribed to a particular ideology concerning the social responsibility of art and music.<sup>104</sup> Shaftesbury disliked Italian opera's predilection for special scenic effects and overblown virtuosity, arguing that these kinds of spectacles contributed to the fall of Rome, and believed that *tragédies en musique* were vulgar because of their machines and "musical adornments".<sup>105</sup> Although *Teseo* is not without visual spectacle or musical extravagance, it integrates such luxuries into a more refined musico-dramatic structure. Rather than bombarding the eye and ear with absurd scenic effects and showy virtuosity, Handel and Pilotti reserved these elements for the dramatic moments that required them—most of which illustrated Medea's downfall.

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<sup>102</sup> She sang in *L'Ambleto* (1712), *Il pastor fido* (1712), *Antioco* (1713), *Ernelinda* (1713), and probably Handel's *Silla* (1713), which had a private performance. For more on *Silla*, see Duncan Chisholm, "Handel's *Lucio Cornelio Silla*: Its Problems and Context," *Early Music* 14, No. 1 (1986): 64-70; and J. Merrill Knapp, "The Libretto of Handel's *Silla*," *Music & Letters* 50, No. 1 (1969): 68-75.

<sup>103</sup> Paul Monod argues that *Teseo* is a political allegory supporting the Glorious Revolution and the Hanoverian succession; he argues that Teseo represents William of Orange and that King Egeio symbolizes James II. See Monod, "The Politics of Handel's Early London Operas," 464-465 for his analysis. As an historian, Monod does not analyze Handel's music, and while I respect his points regarding Lord Burlington, I disagree with his libretto analysis

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 459-465

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 461. He cites a letter from Shaftesbury to Pierre Coste from 1709. For the full letter, see Thomas McGeary, "Shaftesbury on Opera, Spectacle and Liberty," *Music & Letters* 74, No. 4 (1993): 530-541.



### *Amadigi's* Melissa: Virtue and Virtuosity

In many ways, *Amadigi di Gaula* (1715) diverges from Handel's previous operas, anticipating those he would compose for the first Royal Academy of Music during the 1720s. This final collaboration with Pilotti was yet another magic opera, replete with supernatural events brought to life by scenic special effects, and another powerful and lovesick enchantress. Despite its spectacular façade, its differences illustrate just how far Handel and his collaborators had moved from Aaron Hill's vision for Italian opera four years earlier. *Amadigi* requires a small cast (only four characters),<sup>106</sup> and showcases more concentrated and dramatically potent arias, a freer approach to musico-dramatic unity and structure, and a moral subtext.<sup>107</sup> *Amadigi*, the opera's eponymous hero, is not at the crux of the drama's moral dilemma. Instead, Melissa, Handel and Pilotti's last sorceress, struggles desperately between right and wrong. She ultimately sacrifices herself rather than suffer the humiliation of redemption (accepted by Armida in *Rinaldo*) or the pain of self-imposed banishment after total destruction (as in *Teseo*). She is not inherently good, but neither is she inherently evil. In her moral ambiguity, she resembles Bajazet, from Handel's *Tamerlano* (1724), who sacrifices himself at the end of the opera to save his daughter.<sup>108</sup> Melissa's own impetus for suicide is not as selflessly noble, but her ultimate

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<sup>106</sup> A fifth character, Orgondo, appears at the end of the opera as a *deus ex machina* but sings only a few brief lines of recitative. The singer who played him is unknown.

<sup>107</sup> See Elizabeth Gibson, *The Royal Academy of Music 1719-1728: The Institution and Its Directors* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1989), 40-50 for more on the Whigs' views on opera. See also Sigmund Betz, "The Operatic Criticism of the 'Tatler' and 'Spectator,'" *The Musical Quarterly* 31, No. 3 (1945), 318-330; Henrik Knif, *Gentlemen and Spectators: Studies in Journals, Opera and the Social Scene in Late Stuart London* (Helsinki, Finland: Finnish Historical Society, 1995); McGeary, "Shaftesbury"; and Monod, "The Politics of Handel's Early London Operas," 459-465.

<sup>108</sup> On *Tamerlano*, see Terence Best, "New Light on the Manuscript Copies of *Tamerlano*," *Göttinger Händel-Beiträge*, 4 (1991): 134-145; and J. Merrill Knapp, "Handel's *Tamerlano*: The Creation of an Opera," *Musical Quarterly* 56 (1970): 405-430.

musical and dramatic restraint illustrates how Handel and Pilotti's approach to musical drama matured during their four years of collaboration.

*Amadigi* had its premiere late in the season of 1714-15, with its first performance on May 25, 1715. By this time, the Hanoverian court had finally followed Handel and Pilotti to London. In August of 1714, Queen Anne died and later that fall George I arrived in England to be crowned her successor. With the change of monarch, the Queen's Theatre aptly renamed itself the King's Theatre in the Haymarket. Despite the finality of the succession, violent outbursts followed the royal coronation, and in March 1715, on the anniversary of Queen Anne's accession, the riots reached London.<sup>109</sup> Thus, audiences first watched *Amadigi* amidst mounting political turmoil instigated by the unhappy Jacobites. The Whigs in the audience must have been especially pleased by the performance; although Handel proclaimed no political affiliation, many of his patrons were still affiliated with the Whig party.<sup>110</sup> Moreover, he still cultivated ties to the Hanoverians, despite having been officially released from his appointment as Kapellmeister.<sup>111</sup> Like *Teseo*, *Amadigi* was once again dedicated to the Earl of Burlington, this time by Johann Jakob Heidegger, who praised his "most refin'd Taste and mature Judgment" and even declared that "*Italy* will no longer boast of being the Seat of Politeness, whilst the Sons of Art flourish under Your Patronage."<sup>112</sup> Heidegger

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<sup>109</sup> Monod, "The Politics of Handel's Early London Operas," 465. The Jacobite rebellions of 1715 became known as "The Fifteen," when James III, the Old Pretender, tried to invade Scotland.

<sup>110</sup> Much has been said about Handel's connections with Lord Burlington. His other main patron before 1720 was James Brydges, first Duke of Chandos, at whose estate Handel lived between 1717 and 1719. See Joan Johnson, *Princely Chandos: James Brydges 1674-1744* (Gloucester, UK: Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd., 1984).

<sup>111</sup> Robert D. Hume and Donald Burrows, "George I, the Haymarket Opera Company and Handel's 'Water Music,'" *Early Music* 19, No. 3 (1991): 323-343.

<sup>112</sup> Anonymous, *Amadigi di Gaula*, libretto, in *The Librettos of Handel's Operas: A Collection of Seventy-One Librettos Documenting Handel's Operatic Career*, Vol. 2, ed. Ellen T. Harris (New

drew explicit connections between *Amadigi* and Burlington's aesthetic, in which art served a moral purpose and conveyed sophistication and restraint over ostentation or excess. Paul Monod has argued that "*Amadigi* exemplifies what Shaftesbury called 'the Misfortunes and Miserys of *the Great*'" in its characterization of its eponymous hero, who fails in his attempts to save Oriana from the sorceress's clutches. Instead, it is only Melissa's inability to kill them that saves the lovers.<sup>113</sup> While Shaftesbury's principles pervade the opera, the "hero" *Amadigi* is not its dramatic focus. Instead, Melissa's noble struggle between action and surrender, and her frequent evocations of her courage represent the opera's true moral dilemma. Handel and Pilotti designed their sorceress to embody the aesthetic philosophies promoted by Shaftesbury and Burlington—philosophies that would later provide the foundation for the Royal Academy operas of the following decade.

The plot of *Amadigi di Gaula* loosely follows the story of *Amadis de Grèce* (1699) by Antoine Houdar de la Motte and André Destouches,<sup>114</sup> but it also shares a few similarities with George Granville's semi-opera *The British Enchanters* (1706).<sup>115</sup> In Handel's version, *Amadigi* is a hero only in name; his only mildly heroic deed is throwing himself into magical flames that surround the tower in which his love, Oriana,

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York: Garland, 1989), preface. Heidegger replaced Owen Swiney as manager of the Queen's Theatre in 1713. See Robert D. Hume and Judith Milhous, "Heidegger and the Management of the Haymarket Opera 1713-1717," *Early Music* 27, No. 1 (1999): 65-84.

<sup>113</sup> Monod, "The Politics of Handel's Early London Operas," 466.

<sup>114</sup> Like *Teseo*, *Amadigi di Gaula* was based on a French opera. The unknown librettist, who was probably Nicola Haym, learned from the difficulties of adapting *opera seria* to a five-act structure; accordingly, *Amadigi* is in the traditional format of three acts. According to Winton Dean, Handel and the librettist borrowed the title from Lully and Quinault's opera, *Amadis de Gaule* (1684), rather than retaining de la Motte's original title. See Winton Dean, "Handel's *Amadigi*," *The Musical Times* 109, No. 1502 (1968): 324-327.

<sup>115</sup> Curtis Price draws comparisons between *The British Enchanters* and *Rinaldo*, but does not mention its similarity to *Amadigi*. See Price, "English Traditions," 121-123.

is imprisoned. The opera includes two antagonists: Dardano, the Prince of Thrace and Amadigi's rival in love, and Melissa, the opera's sorceress. Dardano is the more brutal of the two; he constantly threatens to kill Amadigi, and in act 2 challenges him to a fight to the death. Melissa, in love with Amadigi, also threatens and schemes to avenge her unrequited feelings, but as the following musical analysis will show, Handel concentrates more on her humanity than her supernatural power. Pilotti once again played the enchantress. Her cast mates included Nicolini (Amadigi), who had recently arrived from the Continent for one last season in London; the contralto Diana Vico (Dardano), a celebrated singer who often played pants roles; and Anastasia Robinson (Oriana), the King's Theatre's ingénue who left the production after its first performance due to illness.<sup>116</sup> Although the cast was small, *Amadigi* had a relatively successful run, perhaps because each singer had cultivated a celebrity presence with London audiences in previous productions.<sup>117</sup>

Melissa is the most sympathetic of the sorceresses played by Pilotti in London. Unlike Armida, who by the end of *Rinaldo* opts for redemption, or Medea, who gradually gives in to madness, Melissa is not actually “transformed” by the end of *Amadigi di Gaula*. Instead, she consistently struggles throughout with her unrequited passion for Amadigi, her anger at his betrayal, and her desire for vengeance—which she never executes. In fact, Melissa's supernatural powers rarely conjure up any special effects onstage that are not accompanied by scene changes. She summons the Furies, and she transforms Dardano's visage into Amadigi's, but even these fail to convince and neither

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<sup>116</sup> Dean and Knapp suggest that Handel probably replaced “Affannami, tormentami” (Oriana's Act 2 aria) with “Ch'io lasci mai d'amare” after Robinson fell ill. See Dean and Knapp, *Handel's Operas*, 281. In his *Grove Online* article for *Amadigi di Gaula*, Anthony Hicks speculates that Caterina Galerati may have replaced her.

<sup>117</sup> It had seventeen performances in London between 1715 and 1717.

threatens physical harm.<sup>118</sup> Dardano, the Prince of Thrace who is smitten by Oriana and considers Amadigi his rival, is the opera's true antagonist: in act 2, scene 8, Dardano attacks Amadigi offstage and is killed for his impudence. In contrast, Melissa's threats are empty. After she learns of Dardano's death, she tries to intimidate Oriana: "I never will deceive you more; / Too true the Torments shall appear, / And those most sharp, which I prepare for you [...] You'll surely die, if you do not yield" (act 2, scene 9), but these threats are never realized. At the end of the opera, Melissa seems ready to destroy her rival and her love; she tries to stab them, but each time she stops herself at the last second:

*Mel.* Both pain and death you'll have, but I begin with you.  
[*She is going to wound Amadis.*]  
*Ori.* O Heav'ns, aid and succor us.  
*Mel.* But what new Pity now invades  
And takes Possession of my Breast?  
Unfaithful Traytor,  
I'd be thy Death, but that my Heart wont give me leave.

Ultimately, Melissa's heart wins over her anger, and in act 3, scene 5 she stabs herself and dies onstage—the only onstage suicide in any of Handel's operas.<sup>119</sup> Handel reserved this dramatically potent moment for his star soprano, whose talent as an actress had already been demonstrated in his previous two magic operas. In *Amadigi di Gaula*, Handel and Pilotti focused on Melissa as a sympathetic and tragic character, rather than one whose desire for vengeance eventually overwhelms her.

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<sup>118</sup> In act 2, scene 4 Melissa conjures Furies that torment Amadigi. Unlike *Rinaldo* and *Teseo*, however, the only special effects included are a scene change to a Cave, the appearance of monsters, and thunder. Amadigi's torment lasts only a few lines of recitative; the scene ends with their duet, "Crudel, tu non sarai, ch'il tuo rigor giamai," followed by their exits. In comparison to the special visual effects and conjuring scenes of *Rinaldo* and *Teseo*, this one is quite anticlimactic.

<sup>119</sup> *Tamerlano* includes the other suicide scene, but Bajazet is not supposed to die center stage; instead, as he sings his final notes, Andronicus and Asteria escort him offstage.

In *Amadigi*, Handel's exploitation or suppression of the flashy potential of Pilotti's virtuosity allowed him to project two sides of the character. Rather than creating a dramatic binary between anguish and rage, as Armida and Medea expressed in *Rinaldo* and *Teseo*, Handel and Haym create a nobler internal struggle within their enchantress. Melissa wavers between giving into her despair and retaining her courage; put another way, the sorceress battles to preserve her agency and self-control, which is threatened by her love for Amadigi. In order to highlight the dramatic intensity of Melissa's plight, Handel includes one monologue scene in each act, and each allows Melissa to convey her most intimate thoughts and emotions. Two of Melissa's most dramatic scenes explore her heartache and betrayal. In both scenes, Handel does not draw upon Pilotti's ostentatious singing techniques to express the sorceress's suffering. Instead, she sings lyrically, expressing her sincere emotion through clarity of tone and ability to act the suffering, tortured woman. Melissa's other monologue scene is a true *bravura* aria. Replete with trumpets, it is the opera's most heroic aria, demonstrating Melissa's temporary victory over her feelings. Pilotti's voice revels in its agility, illustrated by her elaborate coloratura, and its power to overcome the full orchestra. As in *Teseo*, Handel reserves Pilotti's most unadulterated virtuosity for particular dramatic moments, but Melissa preserves her dignity until the end of the opera, when she takes her own life rather than abandoning her agency.

Melissa's first aria, "Ah! spietato," comes early in act 1, exposing her internal conflict between passion and action. In the preceding recitative, she fumes over Amadigi's love for Oriana but cannot summon enough energy to kill him: "Can I kill him, who life gives to this soul? / Ah! Now I feel within my breast / that Wrath and Hate

begin to change their Looks” (act 1, scene 4). Like “Dolce riposo,” this monologue illustrates her pathos, and an appeal to audience sympathy so early in the opera changes its dramatic tone. She is a woman in love, rather than an all-powerful sorceress prone to wrathful outbursts. She enters with only two beats of orchestral introduction; the lack of *ritornello* suggests that she cannot wait to express her anguish. A full set of strings quietly accompanies her, playing throbbing quarter notes and filling in the harmonic texture; above her voice, only by a solo oboe punctuates the musical texture, often echoing her cries.<sup>120</sup> As in “Ah! Crudel,” Melissa’s first vocal statement starts in the upper half of her range, and by the end of the first phrase, descends a full octave, from E5 to E4. This initial vocal descent permeates the entire aria, as if a musical metaphor for Melissa’s despair. Every vocal phrase leaps up, or starts high, and then falls back down, usually by an interval of a sixth or more:

Melissa  
Ah! spie - ta - to! e non ti

Bassi  
*Senza Cembalo*

Melissa  
muo - ve un af - fet - to si co - stan - te, che per

Bassi

Melissa  
te mi fà lan - guir, che per te mi fà lan - guir

Bassi

**Example 5.26. *Amadigi di Gaula*, “Ah! spietato,” mm. 1-11. Descending vocal phrases (marked with brackets).<sup>121</sup>**

<sup>120</sup> Chrysander’s edition includes “*senza cembalo*,” and the lack of harpsichord makes the full string texture even more ethereal.

<sup>121</sup> All examples from *Amadigi di Gaula* are transcribed from the HHA edition. See George Frideric Handel, *Amadigi: Opera Seria in Tre Atti*, ed. J. Merrill Knapp (Kassel, Basel, Tours,





“yearns to betray.”<sup>123</sup> Her anger paints the object of her affection as the antagonist. This moment persuades the audience to see the entirety of the opera through the eyes of Melissa, rather than through the perspectives of the lovers. The return to the A section, characterized by Pilotti’s beautiful, sustained tone, further emphasizes Melissa’s point of view.

Melissa’s next four arias, spread out over acts 1, 2, and 3, reinforce her decisive confidence and agency, rather than her despondency. None of the three arias refers to her magical powers, or her desire for murder or death. Instead, each scene depicts Melissa’s attempts to wave away her sorrow as she schemes and plots ways to make Amadigi love her. In two of these arias, Pilotti’s vocal restraint and control illustrate her determination and her rationality. In “Io godo, scherzo, e rido,” which she sings at the end of act 1 in response to her agreement with Dardano to help trick Amadigi, Pilotti’s vocal line is entirely syllabic and exposes her high tessitura without fully exploiting it. Melissa laughs at Amadigi’s potential heart break, and Pilotti’s leaps of a fifth, with a repeat of the high note, emphasize the word “rido” and convey the sorceress’s actual laughter.

Melissa

Bassi

Io go - do, scher - zo e ri - do

**Example 5.28. *Amadigi di Gaula*, “Io godo, scherzo e rido,” mm. 19-22. Laugh-like melody.<sup>124</sup>**

The aria’s gigue-like rhythmic energy propels her vocal line forward. Although Pilotti’s melody is circuitous and features some rapid declamation, the intensity of the continuous

<sup>123</sup> “Mà crudel, tu non sai come fai sdegnare un alma amante, che tu brami di tradir.”

<sup>124</sup> I have not included the full orchestration (Oboes I&II, Violins I&II, Vla) here.

eighth note rhythm makes it seem effortless. Pilotti's next aria, in act 2, uses the same musical restraint to show Melissa's rationale for deceiving Oriana. Her recitative passage immediately before the aria once again makes Amadigi and his lover seem like the opera's antagonists: "Though by Deceit it will be performed / Yet still a Lover's pleas'd in being lov'd again."<sup>125</sup> The sorceress implies that Oriana is truly in the wrong because she will believe anything in order to be the object of passion. Melissa's vocal restraint is even more apparent here. Perhaps alluding to a minuet, "Se tu brami" is largely syllabic, with one long held note and a few short melismas.<sup>126</sup> Once again, Handel includes an *obbligato* oboe, which doubles Pilotti's voice, reinforcing her assurance that she will appease Dardano and that "all shall end in Peace."<sup>127</sup> Both arias rely upon Pilotti's vocal restraint. For most of acts 1 and 2, Handel and Pilotti strive to curb Melissa's virtuoso profile in order to signify her self-control and her certainty in taking action rather than submitting to a love she cannot control.

Melissa's act 2 monologue illustrates another moment of doubt; however, the sorceress reveals that her ultimate battle is between preserving her courage and giving into her passion. For this scene, which ends the act, Handel composed a *bravura* aria, using her most extravagant vocal music to highlight Melissa's heroism. Just before her aria, Melissa regrets that both Amadigi and Oriana hate her and resolves never to lose her

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<sup>125</sup> "It" refers to Melissa changing Dardano into Amadigi for the purposes of winning Oriana. "Ancor, che per ingrano, piace l'essere amato, a un core amante."

<sup>126</sup> Minuet features include the triple meter (3/8), a nearly continuous eighth note pulse, and the prominence of hemiola.

<sup>127</sup> "Se tu brami di godere, lascia pur a me il pensiero, ch'io contento ti farò. Non havrai più tanti affanni, ed il fine de'tuoi danni, io con pace mirerò." Translation: "If you wish to succeed, leave this thinking to me, I will make you happy. You will not have many more troubles, and after this destruction all shall end in peace."

courage by succumbing to “Grief and Woe.”<sup>128</sup> Her following aria, “Desterò dall’empia dite,” emphasizes her heroism and valor in the face of adversity. Full strings accompany her, and brilliant trumpet and oboe solos vividly portray the triumphant atmosphere. In a motto opening, Pilotti enters without any accompanimental support; her first vocal statement is a confident, D-major arpeggiation echoed by the trumpets in the following measure. Set high in her tessitura, each of Pilotti’s short phrases is syllabic, until a long passage of coloratura illustrates the word “guerra” (mm. 49-53). Only a few bars later, she repeats “guerra,” and again bursts forth with another melisma, preceded by a long sustained note.

The image shows a musical score for two systems. The first system has a vocal line for Melissa and a Bassi line. The second system also has a vocal line for Melissa and a Bassi line. The lyrics are: "cru-di, per-fi-di, si, si, a far - vi guer - - - - - ra, cru-di, per-fi - di, si, si,"

**Example 5.29. *Amadigi di Gaula*, “Desterò dall’empia dite,” mm. 56-64. Held note and melisma.<sup>129</sup>**

To confirm her conviction that war is her only option, Melissa repeats “Si, si,” unaccompanied except for an echo in the oboe (mm. 64-66); when this is reprised in measures 81-83, both the trumpet and the oboe reiterate Melissa’s confident assurance.

<sup>128</sup> Recitative lines: “Mi diride l’amante, / La rivale mi sprezza; / Eu’io lo soffro è stelle? Nò; Non sarà già mai / Ch’io per da il mio vigor frà pene, e guai.” Translation: “My Lover now derides me, / And by my Rival I’m despis’d; / And do I suffer this, O Stars? / No, no it ne’er shall be, that I / My Courage lose, opprest by Grief and Woe.”

<sup>129</sup> I have left out the rest of the orchestration (Trumpets, Oboes I&II, Violins I&II, Viola) in this example.

The image shows a musical score for three measures. The instruments and voices are: Trumpet, Oboe, Violin 1&2, Viola, Melissa, and Bassi. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The vocal line (Melissa and Bassi) has the lyrics 'si, si, si, si, si,'. The instrumental parts for Trumpet and Oboe play a melodic line that is echoed by the vocal line. The strings (Violin 1&2 and Viola) are mostly silent, with some accompaniment in the third measure.

**Example 5.30. *Amadigi di Gaula*, “Desterò dall’empia dite,” mm. 81-83. Trumpet and oboe echo vocal line.**

Handel’s heroic musical setting for this scene again invites the audience to interpret the opera from Melissa’s perspective. She is not the inherently evil antagonist that Armida and Medea were. Melissa’s resolve to go to war does not expose her irrational emotional state. Instead, her music suggests that she is calm and controlled, having rationally explored all of her options. Handel reserved Pilotti’s most extravagant singing for the sorceress’s final triumph, preserving her courage and dignity rather than surrendering to her weakness. Pilotti’s confident delivery of “Desterò dall’empia dite” is act 2’s climactic moment, making her downfall in act 3 all the more painful and heart wrenching.

If Melissa’s act 2 monologue scene is the opera’s triumphant climax, then act 3, scenes 2-5 are *Amadigi di Gaula*’s tragic ending. In act 3, scene 2, Melissa sings in her final monologue. In “Vanne lungi” Melissa sings once again of preferring courage over love, illustrated musically through more coloratura singing. This time, however, her confidence seems like a façade rather than a sincere expression of action; the aria is much shorter than her previous one, and although the orchestra accompanies her, the lack of trumpets or any instrumental duet minimizes any residual feeling of courage. During the

next three scenes, Melissa tries to act, and fails: she attempts to stab Oriana and Amadigi once, and both times stops herself before committing the heinous deed. She even summons Dardano's ghost to do her bidding, but the spirit refuses and tells her that the gods protect the lovers. Finally, after one more attempt at murder, she turns the blade on herself, committing suicide center stage.

Melissa's final moments of life illustrate the most dramatically and musically potent scene that Handel composed for his star soprano. She chooses death, rather than suffer the indignity of living without being able to execute her vengeance. Melissa's last words are set to accompanied recitative and a *cavata* as she expires onstage. Pilotti's voice floats above sustained chords in the strings that move infrequently and almost imperceptibly to form new harmonies. Melissa bids farewell to Amadigi, and admits that she will rejoice in her own death; at this moment, the harmony, which previously cadenced in C minor, moves to an A-flat major chord (m. 5), a subtle, revelatory moment that reveals her humanity. Similarly, in m. 10 she reaches an A Mm7 on the lines "felice è la mia morte," a brief moment of happiness (though unresolved) as she asks Amadigi to lament her death.

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Melissa

Bassi

fred - do mor - tal già mi sor - pren - de; fe - li - ce è la mia mor - te

6<sup>1</sup>  
4<sup>#</sup>  
2

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Melissa

Bassi

se un tuo sos - pir com - pian - ge la mia sor - te.

**Example 5.31. *Amadigi di Gaula*, “Addio, crudo Amadigi,” mm. 8-12. A Mm7 on “morte.”**

This accompanied recitative is only a dramatic introduction to Melissa’s death. “Io già sento l’alma in sen” relied on Pilotti’s expert acting abilities, for before the end of the *cavata*, Melissa collapses onstage. Handel’s musical setting reinforces the nobility of the sorceress’s final moments. Set in 3/4 time, rests after the first two beats of almost every measure, or half note pauses on the second beats of measures, suggest a *sarabande*. (See Example 5.32). The rests disrupt Pilotti’s vocal line, a musical expression of Melissa’s ragged breathing.<sup>130</sup>

<sup>130</sup> On Handel’s use of rests, see Ellen T. Harris, “Silence as Sound: Handel’s Sublime Pauses,” *The Journal of Musicology* 22, No. 4 (2005): 521-558. She argues that Handel’s dramatic use of rests and pauses in his music later influenced David Garrick’s method of acting: “Garrick would later insert [them] as a matter of performing practice to increase the tension and emotional impact of his characterizations” (555).

*Lento*

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Melissa

Bassi

Io già sen-to l'al-ma in sen, che da

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Melissa

Bassi

me par-ten-do và, sen-to già l'al-ma in sen, che da

2

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Melissa

Bassi

me par-ten-do và.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Melissa

Bassi

Example 5.32. *Amadigi di Gaula*, “Io già sento l’alma in sen,” entire *cavata*.

Despite its moments of silence, this *cavata* requires lyricism, beauty of tone, and most of all, the ability to unite acting and singing to do justice to such a moving passage.

Although followed by a *deus ex machina* that arrives too late, and a scene in which the lovers rejoice, Melissa's onstage suicide represents the opera's true tragic ending. She destroys herself rather than surrender to her weakness for Amadigi, therefore preserving her poise and nobility and retaining the courage that characterizes so many of her previous arias. The *sarabande*, a dance known for its serious and grave affect, underscores the noble tragedy of the sorceress's last breath.

The dramatic and musical differences between Armida and Melissa demonstrate that Handel and Pilotti's collaboration matured during their five years working together at the Queen's Theatre. Pilotti honed her acting ability during this time, and *Amadigi di Gaula* represents the culmination of her acting and singing specializations. Melissa's plight seems the most human and the most tragic. Rather than relying on Pilotti's flashy coloratura, Handel deliberately chose to highlight less extravagant vocal techniques. Instead, her voice illustrated a subtler, and ultimately more potent, characterization of the sorceress archetype. The story is told from her perspective and her moral dilemma provides the dramatic impulse that runs throughout each scene. Pilotti's vocal restraint signifies Melissa's dignity, and even her humanity. Like many of the heroes and heroines of the Royal Academy operas in the 1720s, Melissa's virtuous portrayal suggests that Handel had arrived at a new paradigmatic approach to opera composition. It was his collaborative partnership with Pilotti that guided his musico-dramatic development during his first decade in London.



## Conclusion

*Amadigi di Gaula* was Pilotti and Handel's final collaboration in London, as well as the final time the composer would include a sorceress in one of his operas until *Alcina* in 1735. *Amadigi* was also his last opera before the foundation of the Royal Academy of Music in 1720; in the intervening years, he spent time at Cannons, the home of James Brydges, Duke of Chandos, composing English-style anthems and other religious music.<sup>131</sup> Pilotti stayed in London and performed in operas until the King's Theatre closed in 1717.<sup>132</sup> Most of these works were pasticcis that did not fare well at the box office.<sup>133</sup> After London, her fate remains mostly unknown. In the mid-1720s she sang in Stuttgart in a comic opera produced by her husband, and by 1733 she was in Venice.<sup>134</sup> In a letter, dated November 14, 1733, Mr. Billerbeck, likely a secretary to Queen Caroline, wrote to Charles Delafaye, an undersecretary to the Duke of Newcastle, concerning Pilotti's current tribulations:

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<sup>131</sup> For more on Handel's activities outside of the opera theater between 1711 and 1719, see Donald Burrows, "Bringing Europe to Britain: Handel's First Decade in London," *Händel-Jahrbuch* (2010): 65-77; Stanley Godman, "Pepusch and the Duke of Chandos," *The Musical Times* 100, No. 1395 (1959): 271; Johnson, *Princely Chandos*; Stoddard Lincoln, "Handel's Music for Queen Anne," *The Musical Quarterly* 45, No. 2 (1959): 191-207; Rosemary O'Day, ed., *Cassandra Brydges, Duchess of Chandos, 1670-1735: Life and Letters* (Woodbridge, UK; Rochester NY: Boydell Press, 2007); and James A. Winn, "Style and Politics in the Philips-Handel Ode for Queen Anne's Birthday, 1713," *Music & Letters* 89, No. 4 (2008): 547-561.

<sup>132</sup> After *Amadigi*, she performed in *Lucio Vero* (1715 and 1716 as Aspasia), *Clearthes* (1716 as Dorisbe) and revivals of *Rinaldo* and *Amadigi*. In her final season, she performed in *Tito Manlio* and *Winceslaus, King of Poland* (both in 1717).

<sup>133</sup> The reason for the Haymarket's eventual closure in the spring of 1717 was probably due to intense theatrical competition between the King's Theatre, the Theatre Royale, and Lincoln's Inn Fields. In 1714, disregarding the Lord Chamberlain's directives, Drury Lane and Lincoln's Inn Fields began to present plays with music as well as fully song operas in English. Some of the Haymarket's former singers, including Jane Barbier and Margarita de l'Epine, had moved to Lincoln's Inn Fields, managed by John Rich. Heidegger, who began managing the King's Theatre after Owen Swiney's flight to the Continent in 1713, closed the King's Theatre in 1717 after substantial losses of profit. See Milhous and Hume, "Heidegger and the Management."

<sup>134</sup> Winton Dean mentions the Stuttgart connection in his *Grove Music Online* article. See Dean, "Pilotti-Schiavonetti, Elisabetta," *Grove Online* (accessed 2013).

The Queen, having learned of the terrible persecutions that Signora Pilotti suffered on behalf of her son in Venice, wishes that my lord, the Duke of Newcastle, ask the Resident [Ambassador] to present her case to the Republic: that for the past thirty-three years, Signora Pilotti has behaved herself without reproach.<sup>135</sup>

Queen Caroline's request for the Duke of Newcastle to intervene on Pilotti's behalf in Venice shows that the soprano's reputation still loomed large at the Hanoverian court. As libretti had announced, Pilotti had been appointed one of Caroline's singers after the Hanoverian succession; in the libretto to *Amadigi*, the soprano is listed in the *dramatis personae* as "Sig. Elisabetta Pilotta Schiavonetti, di S.A.E. la Principessa di Galles" or "Servant to her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales."<sup>136</sup> It is possible that Pilotti was still in the queen's service in 1733, which explains the monarch's kind letter. Or perhaps the singer made such an impression on the Hanoverians twenty years earlier that Queen Caroline offered her own influence as a way to repay her. The letter makes clear that Pilotti still held cultural value for the English monarchy even though she had not performed in England in fifteen years. Her celebrity remained present in London long after her departure.

Handel and Pilotti's collaboration represented a mutually beneficial, artistic partnership that shaped the roles he composed for her. The preceding analyses show how Handel molded the characters Armida, Medea, and Melissa to Pilotti's various performative strengths, and how these sorceresses transformed the significance of the operas dramatically, musically, and in the context of their reception. Through the perspective of Pilotti and Handel's collaboration, we see *Rinaldo*, *Teseo*, and *Amadigi* as

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<sup>135</sup> November 14, 1733: "La Reine, aprenant les persecutions que La Sgra. Piloti Schiavonetti souffre de son Fils a Venise, souhaite que Milord Duc de Newcastle engage Mr. le Resident [?] de declarer de la part de S.ch. a la Republique: due [sic] depuis 33 ans la Sigr. Piloti s'est comportée sans reproche." Translation mine. GB-Lna State Papers 36/30/316.

<sup>136</sup> Anonymous, *Amadigi di Gaula*, libretto, *dramatis personae*.

experimental productions, designed to highlight their individual talents while also playing to the tastes of English audiences. *Rinaldo*'s extravagance allowed the composer and singer to introduce themselves to London audiences through a varied display of musical virtuosity and special effects. *Teseo* and *Amadigi* rely less on virtuosity, and more on a subtle integration of music and drama—still determined by the ways in which Handel composed for Pilotti's voice. Although *Amadigi* was only moderately successful, Handel refined its musico-dramatic approach—a focus on noble characters, less dependence on the virtuosity of its singers, and music that conveyed the dramatic story—during the Royal Academy years (1720-1728). Pilotti was not a member of the Royal Academy's opera company, but her collaboration with Handel during the previous decade surely shaped the ways in which he worked with his singers later on.<sup>137</sup> Composer and singer relied on each other to create and convey their cultural value to audiences. Handel's music provided Pilotti with roles tailored to her most prominent abilities; through his operas, she became known for her virtuosity, her acting talents, and most of all, for playing the role of the sorceress brilliantly. Similarly, the singer's voice shaped Handel's approaches to the roles he created for her, and her performances imparted his music to audiences. As professionals, their collaborations provided the medium through which they could each produce their own individual celebrity personas: Pilotti, the virtuoso

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<sup>137</sup> His subsequent professional relationship with the soprano Margherita Durastanti, for example, resembles the way he worked with Pilotti. Handel had composed extensively for Durastanti during his time in Italy; he wrote cantatas for her while in Rome, and later he composed the role of Agrippina for her in his opera of the same name, performed in 1708 in Venice. According to C. Steven LaRue, Durastanti's music "demonstrates two quite different approaches to the ways in which singers influenced his creative process: external influence on a part as a whole, such as Durastanti seems to have exercised, and internal influence in which the nature of the singer's musico-dramatic abilities became part of the nature of the role itself." See C. Steven LaRue, *Handel and His Singers: The Creation of the Royal Academy Operas, 1720-1728* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 104.

soprano who excelled at dramatic acting and singing; and Handel, the opera composer whose brilliant music rivaled the visual spectacle of the magic operas for which he wrote. The operas on which they worked between 1711 and 1715 signified a new kind of onstage collaborative partnership, one that transformed not only the method of opera composition, but also the ways in which singers and composers created and performed their celebrity through their collaborations.

## Epilogue

Elisabetta Pilotti-Schiavonetti's last public performance in London was in the opera *Tito Manlio*, which had its premiere in the late spring of 1717. According to account records, the season was not profitable.<sup>1</sup> It is likely that Pilotti departed London because Italian opera was no longer financially sustainable. She had enjoyed a salary of £500 during the season 1712-1713, but maintaining such an exorbitant income was no longer possible as the King's Theatre struggled to pay its bills. In the season after her departure, only a handful of popular revivals were performed, all at Lincoln's Inn Fields, rather than in the Haymarket, including Pepusch's masque *Venus and Adonis*, the pasticcio *Thomyris*, and the beloved *Camilla*. Cast lists included familiar names, including Margarita de l'Epine and Jane Barbier, but to audiences these productions must have seemed stale and outdated. Those who had subscribed to operas quietly abandoned their financial support. A document from 1720 reveals that wealthy members of the nobility had tired of spending their income on revivals, which "have been hitherto carried on upon a narrow Bottom by temporary Contributions Extreamly Burthensome to the

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<sup>1</sup> Heidegger recorded receipts of £2,197 (which does not include the subscription for *Tito Manlio*) but paid out at least £2,533, before the production costs for *Tito Manlio* or singers' salaries. Judith Milhous discusses the problems with the account books for this season in her *JAMS* article. She speculates that the total income (including production costs and subscription receipts for *Tito Manlio*, as well as singers' salaries) was likely £3,197, with expenditures totaling £5,533—creating a deficit of £2,300. See Judith Milhous, "Opera Finances in London, 1674-1738," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 37, No. 3 (1984): 580-582.

People of Quality.”<sup>2</sup> Italian opera, no longer novel and exciting in its current form, had become a financial encumbrance even for those who could afford it.

No Italian operas received performances at the King’s Theatre between June of 1717 and April of 1720. Some modern scholars have described this period as “the collapse of Italian opera”.<sup>3</sup> Those singers who stayed behind, like l’Epine, Barbier, and Robinson, found work on London’s other stages, singing in short musico-theatrical pieces like Pepusch’s masques and parodies of Italian operas,<sup>4</sup> while others were employed privately.<sup>5</sup> Others left for more lucrative positions at courts and in opera companies on the Continent.<sup>6</sup> To form the Royal Academy of Music, therefore, it was necessary to scour the rest of Europe for professional voices. In early 1719, as plans for the Royal Academy of Music took shape, Handel was sent to Dresden to procure singers for the new opera company.<sup>7</sup> As emissary, he was tasked with replacing London’s musical celebrities with singers who had already made their names on the Continent.<sup>8</sup> The singers who joined the Royal Academy during the 1720s had all performed extensively

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<sup>2</sup> GB-Lna PRO LC 7/3, ff. 46-47. Quoted in Milhous, “Opera Finances,” 582.

<sup>3</sup> Winton Dean and J. Merrill Knapp, *Handel’s Operas 1704-1726* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 166.

<sup>4</sup> One such popular parody was *Harlequin Hydaspes* (1719), which lampooned *L’Idaspe fedele*.

<sup>5</sup> Pepusch and Handel took up residency at Cannons between 1717 and 1718, under the patronage of James Brydges, Duke of Chandos. It is likely that as Pepusch’s wife, l’Epine also resided at Cannons during this period; she may have performed some of Handel’s works, including the masques *Acis and Galatea* and *Esther*.

<sup>6</sup> The castrati Nicolini, Gaetano Berenstadt, and Antonio Bernacchi had all performed in the final season. Berenstadt found a position at the court of Friedrich August I, the Elector of Saxony. Bernacchi performed throughout Italy, including in Venice, Pesaro, Reggio nell’Emilia, and Milan between 1717 and 1719.

<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth Gibson, *The Royal Academy of Music 1719-1728: The Institution and Its Directors* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1989).

<sup>8</sup> “Mr. Hendel, a famous Master of Musick, is gone beyond Sea, by Order of his Majesty, to Collect a Company of the choicest Singers in Europe, for the Opera in the Hay-Market.” Advertisement. *Applebee’s Original Weekly Journal*, February 21, 1719. Quoted in Otto Deutsch, *Handel: A Documentary Biography* (London: A. and C. Black, 1955), 86.

throughout Europe prior to arriving in London.<sup>9</sup> Unlike the previous two decades, in which musico-theatrical productions were largely shaped by the variety of voices available in London, the founders of the Royal Academy of Music sought out the best foreign singers in Europe.<sup>10</sup> The active recruitment of singers illustrates that by the third decade of the eighteenth century, celebrity culture had become an integral part of the theatrical marketplace.

The foundation of the Royal Academy of Music in 1719 ushered in a new musico-theatrical culture that depended in large part upon the individual celebrity of its singers. Senesino, Francesca Cuzzoni, and Faustina Bordoni, to name a few, garnered many accolades for their performances and became the next generation of star singers.<sup>11</sup> The ways in which they cultivated their renown as individual celebrities both on and offstage reflected the permanence of London's celebrity culture in the 1720s. Italian singers no longer needed to create their celebrity collaboratively. Most singers who joined the Royal Academy of Music opera company were recruited specifically because they had already established their reputations as stars.<sup>12</sup> Their celebrity was created to appeal to audiences throughout Europe, rather than designed only for local opera enthusiasts. London, which

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<sup>9</sup> On Handel's recruitment, see Dean and Knapp, *Handel's Operas*, 298-323.

<sup>10</sup> They included Margherita Durastanti, with whom Handel had worked in Rome in the 1700s and who had premiered the title role of *Agrippina* in Venice in 1709; Senesino, an alto castrato, who had performed in no fewer than twelve cities between 1707 and 1717; Matteo Berselli, a soprano castrato who had performed throughout Italy, including in operas by Scarlatti, Gasparini, and Lotti; and the bass Giuseppe Boschi, who had already sung in London during the 1710s.

<sup>11</sup> On Senesino, see Antonio Mazzeo, *I tre "Senesini" musici ed altri cantanti evirati senesi* (Siena: Tipolitografia Cantagalli, 1982). On Cuzzoni and Bordoni, see Suzanne Aspden, "The 'rival queans' and the play of identity in Handel's *Admeto*," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 18, No. 3 (2006): 301-331; C. Steven LaRue, *Handel and His Singers: The Creation of the Royal Academy Operas, 1720-1728* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 144-181; and James Wierzbicki, "Dethroning the Divas: Satire Directed at Cuzzoni and Faustina," *Opera Quarterly* 17, No. 2 (2001): 175-196.

<sup>12</sup> Handel recruited Senesino and Margarita Durastanti after visiting Dresden. Owen Swiney, rogue theater manager who moved to Venice in 1713, pursued Faustina Bordoni for the King's Theatre. See Dean and Knapp, *Handel's Operas*, 299-304.

had proven itself between 1703 and 1720 as a worthy environment for a culture of musical celebrity, was ready to support internationally recognized star singers.

Like their predecessors, the Royal Academy singers worked with each other on the stage, but they did not need collaboration to create and maintain their celebrity. The notorious rivalry between Cuzzoni and Bordoni between 1726 and 1728, for example, did not define their celebrity. Instead, the publicity enhanced their previously established renown. The two women worked well together because they already specialized in complementary roles and vocal characters.<sup>13</sup> Their contentious relationship has received much attention in modern scholarship,<sup>14</sup> although they sang opposite one another for only two seasons. Cuzzoni joined the company as its leading lady four years before Faustina's arrival and had plenty of time to procure her own admirers. Bordoni, on the other hand, was recruited by Owen Swiney, and, even a year before her arrival, the British press titillated its readership by promoting their rivalry: "Signiora *Faustina*, a famous Italian Lady, is coming over this Winter to rival Signiora Cuzzoni."<sup>15</sup> The thrill of possible scandal boosted their performative appeal, but it did not define them as professionals. Instead, audiences celebrated the two sopranos for their individual talents and their established reputations as stars. By recruiting singers who already had celebrated

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<sup>13</sup> Suzanne Aspden explores their rivalry onstage as a fabrication exploited by the King's Theatre in order to entice audiences: "Indeed, examination of the events surrounding this moment of operatic myth-making shows that the singers' personae were manipulated, not only by a hostile, gossip-mongering press, but also through the dramatic and musical design of the operas themselves." See Suzanne Aspden, "Rival Queens", 303. Her book-length study of the two singers was only recently published, and therefore has not been consulted for this dissertation. See Suzanne Aspden, *The Rival Sirens: Performance and Identity on Handel's Operatic Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

<sup>14</sup> Aspden, "The 'rival queens,'" ; LaRue, *Handel and His Singers*; Wierzbicki, "Dethroning the Divas."

<sup>15</sup> *The London Journal*, September 4, 1725. *Burney Collection Newspapers*, Gale, The University of Michigan (accessed 2013).



reputations throughout Europe, the Royal Academy of Music helped to shape the trajectory of female performance in eighteenth-century England. Collaborative performance gave way to the era of the prima donna, a paradigm of female musical celebrity that still thrives today.<sup>16</sup>

Female singers practiced collaborative celebrity in the period before “being a star” held cultural and social meaning for London’s performers and audiences. In the 1700s and 1710s, London was a prime location for these women to experiment with different methods of celebrity creation and self-promotion. Performers, composers, impresarios, and audiences were still negotiating the stylistic profiles of theatrical works, observed in the plurality of theatrical genres produced on the London stage during this period. Female singers could not sustain public interest solely through their individual performances because they were not yet “stars” or “famous” in the modern sense. Most began performing as relative unknowns, and the Italian operas in which they sang betrayed their foreign origins even as it gained status as a new cultural institution. Fashioning celebrity personas outside of a supportive network of performers was not an option for most of the singers discussed in these pages. Instead, their productive working relationships resulted in the institutionalization of opera singing as a socially legitimate and financially worthwhile public profession in London. Collaborations onstage and off

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<sup>16</sup> Female collaboration and celebrity creation on the opera stage in later eighteenth-century London is one avenue of research worth pursuing. Suzanne Aspden and Berta Joncus are currently working on projects, as yet unpublished, that will reveal how Cuzzoni, Bordoni, and Kitty Clive created their celebrity personas as individuals on the London stage. See Suzanne Aspden, *The Rival Sirens*. In addition, Hilary Poriss has explored how star female singers shaped Italian operas as individuals in the nineteenth century. See Hilary Poriss, *Changing the Score: Arias, Prima Donnas, and the Authority of Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). Complementary projects might investigate how (or if) female singers employed on and offstage collaborations in order to achieve celebrity as mass marketing and media became a necessary method of self-promotion during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

allowed female singers to make tangible contributions to theatrical productions; even more importantly, collaborations enhanced their professional autonomy and status as public figures, which laid the foundation for the prima donnas of the later eighteenth century. This dissertation has shown that collaboration was essential to the ways in which women created, honed, and performed their celebrity, as they established their membership within a growing theatrical network of professional performers.

\*\*\*

*We must mind that the writing of history has been all along engrossed by the men [...]. It is evident that the women, unless they had enjoyed an equal share of power and greatness with the men, will not be found upon record for their excellencies so much as the latter, though they had exceeded them in every virtue. Since men have enslaved us, the greatest art of the word have always debarred our sex from governing, which is the reason that the lives of women have so seldom been described in history.*

--- "Artesia," *The Female Tatler* (No. 88, Jan 25-27, 1710)

Issue No. 88 of the short-lived publication *The Female Tatler* (1709-1710) illuminated its social and literary mission. Written anonymously, the periodical was a literary space in which women and men could voice their opinions, thoughts, and beliefs in a public forum.<sup>17</sup> It took up numerous contemporary issues concerning women in public life, but as the excerpt above betrays, it also revealed a startling self-awareness concerning woman's presence in English history. On this occasion, the anonymous author's musing betrayed a sense of social self-consciousness more reminiscent of twentieth-century feminism than eighteenth-century satire. The journal's existence demonstrates that women's voices had become legitimate participants in the growing culture of print press, cultural and social criticism, and the creation of history. Yet even "Artesia" lamented the lack of women in the historical record. Her passionate rhetoric

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<sup>17</sup> It started as a satire of Richard Steele's contemporaneous, thrice-weekly journal, *The Tatler*. See Fidelis Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* (London: J.M. Dent, 1992).

divulged her frustration with the firmly rooted social hierarchies that excluded her sex from civic life in the early eighteenth century and the possibility of historical posterity thereafter.

This unintentionally prescient observation from 1710 still bears truth today. Despite the countless dissertations, articles, and books that our modern scholarly world has proffered to fill this lacuna, women's historical perspectives—especially in the realm of biography—are still scarce. My own scholarly mission began as one of archival recovery and historical rewriting, but it has moved far beyond the traditionally biographical. This project has not told the stories of female singers; it has shown how these singers were all connected to each other, through musical networks, performances on the stage, and their receptions off the stage. It has not illuminated the narrative of one woman, or of women as a sex, or of many independent female agents operating in their own exclusive spheres of influence. Rather, I have shown that female agency, especially on the stage and in the public eye, depended on the extraordinary relationships—professional partnerships, friendships, and artistic collaborations—that developed between female singers and their many various colleagues both on and off the stage.

Many of the women studied in this dissertation were just as publicly powerful, if not more so, than their male contemporaries. Yet they have all been left out of history, relegated to footnotes in secondary sources or surviving as signatures on flimsy, well-worn sheets of paper in the archives. To add to the problem of historical recovery, selfish and attention-seeking female performers have become a prominent archetype for women in histories of theater, film, and music. Labeled “divas” in a variety of scholarly and popular contexts, historical and contemporary accounts of female singers often acquire a

pejorative, and largely anachronistic, perspective.<sup>18</sup> By employing such terms, audiences learn to behold female singers through a predominantly male gaze, one that essentializes the female experience and strips these women of their professional agency. As “divas”, women become caricatures, “associated with vanity, self-dramatization, capriciousness, irritability, and glamour”<sup>19</sup> rather than empowered professionals whose contributions to music were both artistically appreciated and enthusiastically received. This dissertation has attempted to bring them back to life, through music, text, and narrative, not as individuals, but as a collective of women who collaborated with one another as they sought to claim their place as professional musicians on London’s opera stage.

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<sup>18</sup> Although “prima donna” entered English in the latter half of the eighteenth century (1782) and “diva” was not used regularly until the late nineteenth century (1883), scholars often use these two terms to refer to female singers of any historical era.

<sup>19</sup> Rachel Cowgill and Hilary Poriss, eds., *The Arts of the Prima Donna in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), xxvii.

## Appendix A

### Musical Examples

#### Chapter Two

#### Example A.01: "I attempt from Love's Sickness," *The Indian Queen* (H. Purcell). Sung by Letitia Cross.<sup>1</sup>

**Allegro**

Soprano

I at-tempt from Love's sick-ness to fly in vain, Since

6  
S. I am my-self my own fe-ver, since I am my-self my own fe-ver and pain. No

13  
S. more now, no more now fond heart, with pride no more swell, Thou canst not raise

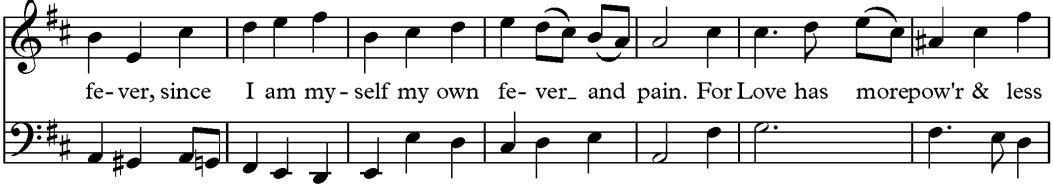
19  
S. for-ces, thou canst not raise for-ces e-nough to re-bel. I attempt from Love's

25  
S. sick-ness to fly in vain, Since I am my-self my own


<sup>1</sup> This transcription is based on Henry Purcell, *The Indian Queen: Z. 630*, ed. Clifford Barlett (Wyton, Huntingdon, Cambs: King's Music, 1994).

2

31

S. 

38

S. 

44

S. 

49

S. 

53

S. 

*Last Chorus and two verses again*

Example A.02: "They tell us that your Mighty Pow'rs Above," *The Indian Queen*  
 (H. Purcell). Sung by Letitia Cross.<sup>2</sup>

Soprano

They tell us that your migh - ty pow - ers a - bove Make per - fect. your  
 To suf - fer for him gives an ease to my pains There's joy in my

6

joys and your bless - ings by Love. Ah! why do you suf - fer, ah! why do you  
 grief and there's free - dom in chains; If I were di - vine, if I were di -

12

suf - fer the bless ing that's there To give a poor lo - ver such sad tor - ments here? Yet  
 vine he could love me no more And I in re - turn my a - dor - ers a - dore O

19

though for my pas - sion such grief I en - dure, My  
 let his dear life then, kind Gods, be your care For

23

love shall like yours still be con - stant and pure.  
 I in your bless - ings have no o - ther share.

<sup>2</sup> This transcription is also based on Clifford Barlett's edition of *The Indian Queen*. See fn. 1.

**Example A.03: “From Rosy Bow’rs,” *Don Quixote, Part 3* (H. Purcell), Beginning.  
Sung by Letitia Cross.<sup>3</sup>**

The musical score is presented in two systems, each with a vocal line for Altisidora and a bass line for Bassi. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor) and the time signature is 7/8. The lyrics are as follows:

Altisidora: From Ro-sie Bow'rs where sleep's \_\_\_\_\_ the God\_ of\_\_ Love,  
 Bassi: \_\_\_\_\_

Altisidora: hi-ther, hi-ther ye lit-tle wai-ting Cu - pids fly, fly \_\_\_\_\_, fly \_\_\_\_\_  
 Bassi: \_\_\_\_\_

Altisidora: hi-ther ye lit-tle wait-ing Cu - pids fly; teach me,  
 Bassi: \_\_\_\_\_

Altisidora: teach me in soft\_ Me - lodious Songs, to move, with ten - der, ten - der  
 Bassi: \_\_\_\_\_

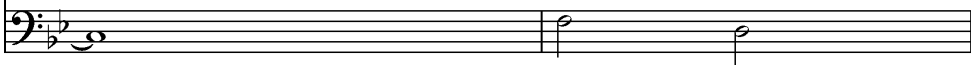
Altisidora: Pas-sion, my Heart's, my Heart's dar - ling\_ Joy: Ah!  
 Bassi: \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>3</sup> All transcriptions of “From Rosy Bow’rs” are from the facsimile edition. See *Don Quixote: The Music in the Three Plays of Thomas Durfey, originally published by Samuel Briscoe, London, 1694-1696*, intro. Curtis Price (Tunbridge Wells: R. Macnutt, 1984). I have retained the original spellings, beaming, and slur markings.




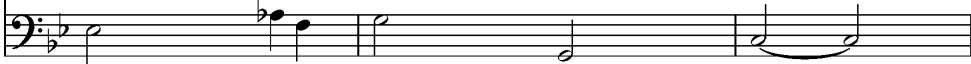
16

Altisidora  let the Soul of Mu-sick Tune my Voice, to Win— dear—

Bassi 


18

Altisidora  Stre-phon, ah!— ah!— let the Soul of Mu-sick Tune myVoice to Win— dear

Bassi 

21

Altisidora  Stre-phon, dear— dear— dear Stre-phon who my Soul— en-joys.

Bassi 

**Example A.04: “From Rosy Bow’rs,” mm. 133-152. Final Section. Sung by Letitia Cross.**

133

Altisidora  No, no, no, no, no I’le straight run Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad, that soon, that

Bassi 

135

Altisidora  soon my Heart will warm, when once the Sense is fled, is fled— Love,

Bassi 

137

Altisidora  Love, has\_ no\_ pow’r, no, no, no, no, no, no pow’r to Charm; Love has\_ no\_


Bassi 


139

Altisidora  pow'r, no\_ no,\_ no,\_ no, Love has\_ no\_ pow'r, no,\_ no,\_ no,\_ no,\_ no,\_ no,\_


Bassi 


141

Altisidora  no, no pow'r to Charm: Wild\_\_\_\_\_ thro' the Woods I'll fly\_\_\_\_\_

Bassi 

143

Altisidora  \_\_\_\_\_ Wild\_\_\_\_\_ thro' the Woods I'll fly\_\_\_\_\_


Bassi 


145

Altisidora  Robes, Locks shall thus, thus, thus,\_\_\_\_ thus be\_

Bassi 

147

Altisidora  tore; a Thou-sand thou-sand deaths I'll dye, a thou - sand,


Bassi 


149

Altisidora  thou-sand deaths I'll dye, e're thus, thus in vain, e're

Bassi 

151

Altisidora  thus, thus in vain, thus in vain a - dore.

Bassi 

Example A.05: “Conqu’ring O but Cruel Eyes,” *Arsinoe* (T. Clayton), mm. 11-21 (B Section). Sung by Letitia Cross.<sup>4</sup>

11  
Dorisbe  
more; Cease to Spar - kle with dis - dain, Cease to  
Bassi

13  
Dorisbe  
Spar - kle with dis - dain, Cease to Spar - kle, with dis - dain, more to  
Bassi

15  
Dorisbe  
Wound a bleed - ing Heart, more to Wound a bleed - ing Heart, the Con - quest  
Bassi

17  
Dorisbe  
sure, your Slave se - cure, your Con - quest sure, your slavese - cure, what  
Bassi

19  
Dorisbe  
Plea - sure to in - crease, to in - crease the  
Bassi

20  
Dorisbe  
Smart, to in - crease, to in - crease the smart. *End with the first part*  
Bassi

<sup>4</sup> Transcribed from the printed music (GB-Lbl R.M.15.c.12.(2.)) and checked against the manuscript (GB-Lbl Egerton 3664). I have retained all the original beamings, slur markings, and spellings.

Example A.06: “Tho’ over all Mankind,” *Caligula* (R. Leveridge). Sung by Mary Lindsey.<sup>5</sup>

This Song made for the Entertainment of her Royall Highness  
the Princess in the Tragedy of Calligula, Sung by Mrs Lindsey

Violin

Lindsey

Bassi

6

Vln.

Lindsey

Bassi

10

Vln.

Lindsey

Bassi

15

Vln.

Lindsey

Bassi

20

Vln.

Lindsey

Bassi

<sup>5</sup> Transcription from GB-Lbl K. 7.i.2. I have retained all original beamings, spellings, and slur markings. See also Richard Leveridge, *Complete Songs: (with the music in Macbeth)*, intro. Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson (London: Stainer & Bell, 1997).


25


Vln. 

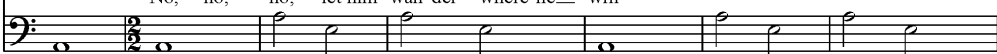
Lindsey   
young\_ in vain.

Bassi 

29

Vln. 

Lindsey   
No, no, no, let him wan-der where he\_ will

Bassi 


36


Vln. 


Lindsey   
let him wan-der let him wan-der, let him wa - -

Bassi 


42


Vln. 


Lindsey   
der, let him wan der\_where he will, I shall have youth & beau-ty,

Bassi 

48

Vln. 

Lindsey   
youth & beau-ty, youth & beau-ty, I shall have youth & beau-ty, youth & beau - ty\_ still:

Bassi 

54

Vln.

Lindsey

Bassi

I shall have beau - ty, that can charme a Love

61

Vln.

Lindsey

Bassi

Can Cha - - - - - me. a Love,

67

Vln.

Lindsey

Bassi

and no fault, no, no, no, no,

73

Vln.

Lindsey

Bassi

no, no, no, no, no, no fault no, no, no, fault, but Con - - -

79

Vln.

Lindsey

Bassi

stant Love. From my arms then let him fly

85

Vln.

Lindsey

Bassi

fly

90

Vln.

Lindsey

Bassi

Fly

95

Vln.

Lindsey

Bassi

From my arms then let\_ him\_ fly,

100

Vln.

Lindsey

Bassi

Shall I lan-guish pine & dye, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no\_ not\_ I.

Example A.07, “How unhappy is he,” *Rosamond* (T. Clayton), act 1. Sung by Richard Leveridge.<sup>6</sup>

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with two staves. The top staff is for Sir Trusty and the bottom staff is for Bassi. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are written below the Sir Trusty staff.

**System 1:** Sir Trusty has a whole rest. Bassi plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth and sixteenth notes.

**System 2:** Sir Trusty sings: "How un-hap-py is he, that's ty'd to a she,". Bassi continues the accompaniment.

**System 3:** Sir Trusty sings: "and fam'd for his witt and his Beau-ty, for of us pret-ty fel- lows, our wives are so jea- lous, they ne'er have e- nough of our". Bassi continues the accompaniment.

<sup>6</sup> Transcribed from US-AAscI M1507.E12. I have retained all original beamings, slur markings, and spellings.





10

Sir Trusty    
 Du - ty, for of us pret - ty fel - lows, our

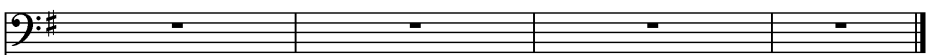
Bassi 


11

Sir Trusty    
 wives are so jea- lous, they ne'er have e-nough of our Du-ty.

Bassi 

13

Sir Trusty    
 - - - - -

Bassi 

**Example A.08, "O Grideline, Consult thy Glass," *Rosamond* (T. Clayton), act I.  
 Sung by Leveridge.<sup>7</sup>**

Sir Trusty    
 - - - - -

Bassi 

6

Sir Trusty    
 Gri-de-line con- sult thy Glass, be - hold that sweet be- witch-ing Face,

Bassi 

10

Sir Trusty    
 - - - - -

Bassi 

<sup>7</sup> Transcribed from US-AAscI M1507.E12. I have retained all original beamings, slur markings, and spellings.

15

Sir Trusty    
 Glass, be - hold that sweet be- witch - ing face, those

Bassi 

18

Sir Trusty    
 Bloo-ming Cheeks, that love-ly hue, those Bloom-ing Cheeks that love-ly

Bassi 

21

Sir Trusty    
 hue, ev-ry Fea- ture, Char-ming Crea- ture, will con

Bassi 

26

Sir Trusty    
 vince you. I am true.

Bassi 

31

Sir Trusty    
 O Gri- de- line con- sult\_ thy Glass, be -

Bassi 

34

Sir Trusty    
 hold that sweet be - witch - ing face.

Bassi 

Example A.09, "Prethee leave me," *Thomyris, Queen of Scythia*. Sung by Lindsey and Leveridge.<sup>8</sup>

Media  
Pre-thee leave me, or dare not to Court me, you so tire me, you so tire me,

Baldo

Bassi

9  
Media  
you so tire me, that I must fly, Pre-thee leave me or dare not to

Baldo  
Pray re-leave me, or do not trans-port me,

Bassi

17  
Media  
Court me, you so tire me, you so tire me, you're so tei - zing

Baldo  
you so fire me, you so fire me, you so fire me that I must try, you're so

Bassi

25  
Media  
you're so tei - zing, you're so tei - zing, so af fright - ing,

Baldo  
plea - sing, pray re-leave me, or do not trans-port me, you're so plea-sing, so de

Bassi

<sup>8</sup> Transcribed from *Songs in the New Opera call'd Thomyrs, Queen of Scythia*, US-AAscI M1507.E12. I have retained all original beamings and spellings.

33

Media 
  
pre-thee leave me, or dare not to Court me, you're so tei - zing, so af-

Baldo 
  
light - ing, you're so plea - sing, so de-light - ing,

Bassi

40

Media 
  
fright - ing, so af fright-ing that I must Fly.

Baldo 
  
so de-light-ing that I must try, that I must Try.

Bassi

Example A.10, “Warbling the Birds,” *The Temple of Love* (G. Saggione). Sung by Maria Gallia.<sup>9</sup>

Flute *Largo* *Allegro*

Eurilla

Bassi

4

Fl. *Adagio*

Eurilla

Bassi

7

Fl.

Eurilla

Bassi

Warb - - - ling the Birds en-joy -

<sup>9</sup> Transcribed from *The Temple of Love* printed music, GB-Lbl Hirsch III.741. I have retained all original beamings, spellings, and slur markings.

10

Fl. *Vivace*

Eurilla ing, sweet

Bassi

12

Fl.

Eurilla plea-sure free and gay

Bassi

14

Fl.

Eurilla sweet plea-sure fre and

Bassi

16

Fl.

Eurilla gay,

Bassi

17

Fl. 

Eurilla   
free & gay \_\_\_\_\_

Bassi 

20

Fl. 

Eurilla 

Bassi 

22

Fl. 

Eurilla 

Bassi 

24

Fl.

Eurilla

Bassi

26

Fl.

Eurilla

Bassi

27

Fl.

Eurilla

Bassi

29

Fl.

Eurilla

Bassi



31

Fl. *Largo*

Eurilla  
plea - sure\_ sweet\_ plea - sure\_ free and\_ gay, warb -

Bassi

33

Fl.

Eurilla  
- ling the birds en - joy - ing, sweet plea - sure\_ free and\_ gay.

Bassi

35

Fl.

Eurilla

Bassi

37

Fl.

Eurilla

Bassi

39

Fl.

Eurilla

Bassi

while we with love com- ply - ing, our selves to care are ty- ing,

42

Fl.

Eurilla

Bassi

he hops and spor - - - -

44

Fl.

Eurilla

Bassi

ts, he hops and sports all Day.

*Slow*

*Da Capo*

### Chapter 3

Example A.11. “When Duty’s requiring,” *Thomyris, Queen of Scythia*. Sung by Catherine Tofts (Cleora) and Margarita de l’Epine (Thomyris).<sup>10</sup>

Thomyris  
Cleora  
Bassi

When Du-ty's re-qui-ring, how Sweet is O-bey-ing,  
Your Vir-tues ad-mir-ing, how  
Sweet is de-lay-ing, de-lay-ing,  
how Fa-tal de-lay-ing, our mo-ments re-pay-ing.

6  
11

<sup>10</sup> Transcribed from *Songs in the New Opera call'd Thomyris, Queen of Scythia*, US-AAAScl M1507.E12. I have retained all original beamings, spellings, and slur markings.

16

Thomyris  
 ing, de- lay -

Cleora  
 ing, re- pay -

Bassi

21

Thomyris  
 ing, how Fa - tall de -

Cleora  
 ing, our mo-ments re - pay- ing,

Bassi

27

Thomyris  
 lay - - - - -

Cleora  
 de - lay - - - - -

Bassi

32

Thomyris 

Cleora 

Bassi 

38

Thomyris 

Cleora 

Bassi 

43

Thomyris 

Cleora 

Bassi 

49

Thomyris 

Cleora 

Bassi 

54

Thomyris *me?* *Da Capo*

Cleora *me.* *Da Capo*

Bassi

## Chapter 4

Example A.12. “Ti stringo, o mio Tesoro, o mio diletto,” *Clotilda* (1709). A section.  
Sung by Valentini.<sup>11</sup>

*Symphony*

Bassi

4

Bassi

7 *Valentini*

Bassi *Ti strin - go, ti strin - go ò mio Te-so-ro ò mio di-*

10 *Symphony*

Bassi *let - to.*

<sup>11</sup> Transcribed from *Songs in the New Opera call'd Clotilda*, US-AAscl M1507.E12. I have retained all beamings and slur markings. As in the original Walsh print, I have also kept the label “symphony” for the orchestral *ritornelli*.



34

Bassi

36

Bassi

**Example A.13. “Del fallo sul camin,” *Clotilda* (1709). A section. Sung by Valentini.<sup>12</sup>**

*Symphony*

Bassi

5

Bassi

8 *Valentini*

Del fal-lo sul ca - min chi s'im-peg-no col pie in li-ber-tà non

Bassi

11

e' s'il vuol ri - trar in li-ber-tà

Bassi

<sup>12</sup> Transcribed from *Songs in the New Opera call'd Clotilda*, US-AAscl M1507.E12. I have kept all beamings and slur markings. As above, *ritornelli* are labeled “symphony” in keeping with the original Walsh print.



14

non e' s'il vuol ri-

Bassi

17

trar del fal-lo sul ca - min chi s'im-pe- gno\_ col\_ pie in li-ber tà non

Bassi

2

20

e' s'il vuol ri - trar\_ in li-ber-tà non

Bassi

23

e, in li-ber-tà

Bassi

26

*Symphony*

s'il vuol rit - rar.

Bassi

29

Bassi

31

Bassi

33

*Valentini*

la più se-cu-ra e spes - so d'ec - ces-so in al-tro ec-ces - so ar-

Bassi

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 33 to 35. It features a vocal line in a treble clef and a bass line in a bass clef. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The vocal line begins with a whole rest, followed by a quarter note G4, and continues with eighth and quarter notes. The bass line starts with a whole rest, followed by a quarter note G2, and continues with eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are written below the vocal line.

36

di - to\_\_ se - gui-tar, ar - di - to\_\_ se - gui-tar. *Da Capo*

Bassi

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 36 to 38. It features a vocal line in a treble clef and a bass line in a bass clef. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The vocal line starts with a quarter note G4, followed by eighth and quarter notes, and ends with a whole note G4. The bass line starts with a quarter note G2, followed by eighth and quarter notes, and ends with a whole note G2. The lyrics are written below the vocal line. The piece concludes with a double bar line and the instruction 'Da Capo'.

## Appendix B

### *Dramatis Personae*

#### Major Female Singers

**Barbier, Jane** (fl. 1711 – d. 1757). Contralto with specialty in pants roles. First appeared in *Almahide* in 1711 and performed in English and Italian operas in London until 1717, when she moved to John Rich's company to perform in pantomimes. She sang parts in revivals of Handel's *Rinaldo*, and he composed roles for her in *Il pastor fido* (Dorinda) and *Teseo* (Arcane). She also appeared in many English masques, including John Galliard's *Calypso and Telemachus* (1712), as well as Pepusch's masques *The Death of Dido*, *Venus and Adonis*, *Myrtillo and Laura* and *Apollo and Dafne*. In these masques, she formed a collaborative performance partnership with Margarita de l'Epine. Her will, found in the National Archives, shows that she died in December of 1757.

**Bracegirdle, Anne** (b. 1671 – d. 1748). English actress-singer who became a celebrity on the late Restoration stage. She often performed the virtuous ingénue role opposite the actress Elizabeth Barry, who played more powerful female characters. Bracegirdle was known for being a talented singer, and she often performed music by John Eccles. One of his most famous songs, "I burn, I burn" from *Don Quixote* was composed for her. She sang in only one Italian-style opera: *The Temple of Love* by Giuseppe Saggione (1706), in which she played a shepherdess opposite Maria Gallia.

**Cross, Letitia** (b. 1682 – d. 1737). English actress-singer who flourished around the turn of the eighteenth century. She started singing and acting in English theatrical productions and semi-operas of the 1690s, performing a role in Henry Purcell's *The Indian Queen*, one of his last stage works. She gained notoriety by being Peter the Great's mistress in 1698 during his visit to London. In 1705, she took the role of the female antagonist, Dorisbe, in Thomas Clayton's fully sung opera in the Italian style, *Arsinoe, Queen of Cyprus*. This was her only role singing in an Italian-style opera; afterwards, she returned to the spoken theater, where she performed until the 1720s.

**de l'Epine, Margarita** (b. c.1680 – d. 1746). Professional singer trained in Italian-style vocal technique. She may have been French, but likely came to London from studying voice in Italy, where she appears in a libretto for *L'oracolo in sogno* (1700). She first appeared in London in 1703, and engaged in a professional partnership with the composer Jakob Greber, who may have been the father of her child. She stayed in London after Greber left, and performed in nearly every Italian-style opera and pasticcio opera produced in London between 1707 and 1714. She played the first lady, often opposite the English singer Catherine Tofts, in pasticcio operas until 1711, when she was

demoted to second lady. Handel composed three roles for her, including Eurilla in *Il pastor fido* (1712), Agilea in *Teseo* (1713), and possibly Flavia in *Silla* (1713). She was a soprano who learned how to sing in English as well as Italian. In 1715 she moved with her husband Johann Christoph Pepusch to Drury Lane and performed in his masques. In 1720, she retired except to replace Ann Turner Robinson in Royal Academy Operas that season (including Handel's *Radamisto*). During her retirement, she taught singing lessons in London. She was a high soprano who specialized in powerful female characters early in her career, and had extreme vocal flexibility and had mastered Italianate coloratura.

**Gallia, Maria** (fl. 1703 – 1734). Italian soprano and one of the first professionally trained Italian singers to sing publicly in London. She arrived in 1703 with her husband, the composer Giuseppe Saggione, and performed in concerts. Her first opera appearance was in his Italian-style opera *The Temple of Love* (1706), in which she played opposite the English actress-singer Anne Bracegirdle. She sang in a few pasticcio operas and may have premiered the role of Clizia in Handel's *Teseo* (1713).

**Lindelheim, Joanna Maria** (d. 1724). Soprano from either the German lands or the Low Countries, known by her nickname "The Baroness". She first gave concerts in England in 1703 and studied with Nicola Haym, whom she later married. She performed in Jakob Greber's *Gli amori d'Ergasto* (1705) and in *Camilla* (1706) as Lavinia. She sang in many of the Italian pasticcio operas of the late 1700s, but her final performance in an opera was as Deidamia in *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* (1708). She became a singing teacher after her retirement from the stage.

**Lindsey, Mary** (fl. 1697 – 1712). English actress-singer with a flexible range. She first made appearances in small comic roles in the English spoken theater, and sang music by Daniel Purcell and Jeremiah Clarke in *The World in the Moon* (1697). She frequently collaborated with Richard Leveridge, playing comic roles opposite him in Italian-style operas and pasticcios of the 1700s. Her final appearance in an opera was as Besa in *Hydaspes* (1710), but she appeared in concerts, often with Leveridge, after this. She could not compete with professional singers, but found her niche in comic singing and excelled at playing old women, nursemaids, flirtatious servants, and other minor characters.

**Pilotti Schiavonetti, Elisabetta** (d. 1742). Italian soprano and *virtuosa* who came to London in 1711 from the Hanoverian court. Between 1710 and 1717, she sang in nearly all of the newly composed Italian operas and pasticcios produced at the Queen's/King's Theatre. She sang in all of Handel's operas during this time, cultivating a close working relationship with him. Her husband, Giovanni Schiavonetti, was a cellist and continuo player who performed in the orchestra pit. They left London before the foundation of the Royal Academy of Music in 1719/1720, appearing in Stuttgart in 1726 and in Venice in the 1730s. She was known for her extravagant coloratura, her extensive range, and her brilliant acting, which she showed off in Handel's *Rinaldo*, *Teseo*, and *Amadigi di Gaula*, in which she played sorceresses.

**Tofts, Catherine** (b. c1682 – d. 1756). English soprano who may have had professional musical training. She first appeared in a series of concerts sponsored by the Whigs between 1703-1704. She later took the leading female roles in nearly all of the Italian-style operas performed in English before 1710. She was most famous for playing Camilla in the English adaptation of Giovanni Bononcini's *Camilla* (1706), and for her onstage partnership with Margarita de l'Epine. She was known for her light and agile voice and her ability to ornament, especially trills. She was also a notorious flirt. In 1709, she left London for Venice, where she married a diplomat and art patron, Joseph Smith. She may have performed in Italy, but likely not on the opera stage. Her reputation in England suffered after her move, which was seen as cultural defection.

#### Other Singers, Actors, and Actresses

**Albergotti, Vittoria.** Italian soprano, possibly from Rome, who performed in *Ernelinda* as Edvige in 1713.

**Ayliff, [Mrs.]** (fl. 1692-1696). English actress-singer who became Henry Purcell's principal soprano during the 1690s. She performed in *The Fairy Queen* and he also composed parts for her in his anthems. In 1695 she moved with Thomas Betterton to Lincoln's Inn Fields, and sang in *The Loves of Mars and Venus* by John Eccles and Gottfried Finger.

**Baldassari, Benedetto** (fl. 1708 – 1725). Italian soprano castrato who sang in London during the 1712 season. He performed female roles, for which he was celebrated. He returned to London in 1719 and sang in the first season of the Royal Academy of Music. Handel composed the roles of Fraarte in *Radamisto* and Timante in *Floridante* for him.

**Barry, Elizabeth** (b. 1658 – d. 1713). English actress who rose to prominence during the Restoration. She started as a member of the Duke's Company, but became most celebrated in the 1680s. She was both a comedienne but excelled at tragic acting. She often played opposite Anne Bracegirdle, who specialized in virtuous heroine roles, while Barry tragic, fallen women. In 1695, she left Drury Lane with Thomas Betterton and became a shareholder of their new theater in Lincoln's Inn Fields along with Bracegirdle—the first time women held prominent impresario positions at any of England's public theaters. Barry was one of the most celebrated actresses of her day, but she was no great singer. Cibber criticized her singing voice in his *Apology*.

**Bernacchi, Antonio Maria** (b. 1685 – d. 1756). Highly regarded alto castrato who had an international career during the first half of the eighteenth century. He first appeared in London in a revival of Scarlatti's *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* (1716) and for this production Handel composed three new arias for him. He also appeared in revivals of *Rinaldo* and *Amadigi*, and he sang in the operas *Cleantes* (1716) as Arsace, *Tito Manlio* (1717) as Decio, and *Wincelous, King of Poland* (1717) as Ferdinand.

**Betterton, Thomas** (b. 1635 – d. 1710). English actor and theater impresario who helped to develop the semi-opera by producing the first ones at the Dorset Garden Theatre in the

1670s. Betterton was also involved in the production of *Albion and Albanus*, a fully-sung opera by Louis Grabu and John Dryden that celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Restoration. In the 1690s, Betterton commissioned new semi-operas and engaged Henry Purcell to compose the music. In 1695, Betterton left Drury Lane, setting up his own company at Lincoln's Inn Fields, where they staged plays with music and semi-operas. In 1705, his company merged with the Queen's Theatre, resulting in crossover performances by some actors and actresses, who sang in some of the first Italian-style operas.

**Bordoni, Faustina** (b. 1697 – d. 1781). Italian mezzo-soprano who became extraordinarily celebrated throughout Europe during the eighteenth century. She first sang in Venice, and quickly became one of the most sought after sopranos, performing in operas by Albinoni, Vinci, and Gasparini. She traveled to London in 1726 to sing for the Royal Academy of Music, where she sang in five of Handel's operas. She made her debut in *Alessandro* (1726), and also played leading lady in *Admeto* (1727), *Riccardo Primo* (1727), *Siroe* (1728) and *Tolomeo* (1728). Later, she married Johann Adolphe Hasse and often sang in his operas. She was known best in London for her notorious rivalry with the soprano Francesca Cuzzoni.

**Boschi, Giuseppe** (fl. 1698 – 1744). A virtuoso Italian bass singer. He performed in Venice during the 1700s, singing in Handel's *Agrippina*, among other operas. He arrived in London in 1710, singing in *L'Idaspe fedele*. The following year, Handel wrote the part of Argante in *Rinaldo* for him. Later in the 1710s, he moved to Dresden, but returned to London for the first Royal Academy, during which time he sang in all of the operas produced by the company. He was known for his vocal agility and his range, which reached up to at least G4. He also probably had exceptional breath support and control; many of his coloratura passages are very long, with little room for breathing.

**Campion, Mary Anne** (fl. 1687-1706). English actress-singer who performed at Drury Lane during the early eighteenth century. Her singing was often praised, and she gave a number of concerts and benefits and performed in John Weldon's version of *The Judgment of Paris* in 1702. Later, she had a relationship with the Duke of Devonshire, who persuaded her to leave the stage.

**Cassani, Giuseppe** (fl. 1700 – 1728). Italian castrato who sang in a revival of *Camilla* in 1708 to terrible reviews, which caused him to leave London quickly. He returned between 1710 and 1712, performing in a number of pasticcio operas as well as Handel's *Rinaldo* (as the Mago, a very small and simple part).

**Croce Vivani, Elena** (fl. 1716 - ?). An Italian soprano who appears in only a few advertisements and libretti in London. She arrived in 1716 and performed the role of Lucilla in *Lucio Vero* that February. She also sang in a revival of *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* and the new pasticcio *Clearthes*. She seems to have performed in only one season in London.

**Cuzzoni, Francesca** (b. 1696 – d. 1778). Italian soprano who achieved international celebrity status during the eighteenth century. She first sang in Parma, and then toured around Italy singing in Bologna, Florence, Siena, Mantua, Genoa, and Venice. There, she first performed with Faustina Bordoni, who would later become her notorious rival in London. In 1722, Cuzzoni traveled to London, engaged as a star soprano in the King's Theatre's company. She made her debut in Handel's *Ottone* as Teofane, and she also created some of the composer's most famous roles in *Flavio* (1723), *Giulio Cesare* (1724), *Tamerlano* (1724), *Rodelinda* (1725), *Scipione* (1726), *Alessandro* (1726), *Admeto* (1727), *Riccardo Primo* (1727), *Radamisto* (revival of 1728), *Siroe* (1728), and *Tolomeo* (1728). She was known for being difficult to work with, but audiences revered her voice. After London, she continued to sing throughout Europe, and often performed Handel's arias.

**Durastanti, Margarita** (fl. 1700 – 1734). Italian soprano who worked closely with Handel in Rome and later, during the first Royal Academy. In Rome, she was employed by the Marquis Ruspoli and gave premiere performances of many of Handel's cantatas, as well as Magdalene in *La Resurrezione*. She then moved to Venice, where she sang in numerous operas, including in Handel's *Agrippina* in the title role. In 1719, Handel heard her sing in Dresden while he was there to recruit singers; he brought her back to London, where she sang in his *Radamisto* (as the male lead) and *Muzio Scevola*, among others. She returned between 1722-24, singing in *Floridante*, *Ottone*, *Flavio*, and *Giulio Cesare*, in which she played Sesto. After a prolonged absence from London, she returned during the second Royal Academy period (1733-1734), singing in revivals of *Ottone*, *Il pastor fido*, and the new operas *Sosarme* and *Arianna* (1734). She was flexible in terms of voice and acting; she often played male roles on the stage, but also excelled as the leading lady.

**Galerati, Caterina** (fl. 1701-1721). Italian soprano who often performed pants roles on the London stage. She first appeared in *Arminio* in 1714 as the title character. In the same season, she also sang the male lead in *Creso, re di Lidia*. The following season, she once again sang the title male role in *Lucio Vero* (1715) and also probably replaced Anastasia Robinson as Oriana in Handel's *Amadigi di Gaula* when contralto became sick. She reappeared in London for the first two seasons of the Royal Academy, when she sang in operas by Porta, Bononcini, and Handel (including *Radamisto* and *Muzio Scevola*).

**Girardeau, Isabella** (fl. 1709-1712). Italian soprano who sang the female lead in numerous London operas in the 1710s. She first sang during the 1709-1710 season, performing the romantic love interest in *Almahide* (1710) and *Hydaspes* (1710). The following year, she created roles in *Etearco* and Handel's *Rinaldo* (as Almirena). The 1711-1712 season was likely her last in London; she sang Veremonda in *L'Ambleto* and Oronte in *Antioco*.

**Grimaldi, Nicolò** (b. 1673 – d. 1732). Italian alto castrato, and one of the most famous castrati of the early eighteenth century. He trained in Naples and sang in many operas by Alessandro Scarlatti before touring around Italy starting in 1699. He first went to London in 1708, making his premiere in *Pyrrhus and Demetrius*. London audiences loved him; even Joseph Addison praised his singing and his extraordinary acting ability. He sang in

revivals of *Camilla* and *Thomyris*, and premiered roles in *Clotilda*, *Almahide*, and *L'Idaspe fedele*. This last opera included an onstage fight with a lion, for which he became famous and was routinely mocked. He sang in *Etearco* and *Antioco* in 1711, and also debuted the role of Rinaldo in Handel's *Rinaldo* that February. After singing in *L'Ambleto* and *Ercole* in 1712, Nicolini left for the Continent. He returned to England in 1715, in order to sing the eponymous hero in Handel's *Amadigi*. He stayed for the 1716 and 1717 seasons, but left the country permanently despite overtures to hire him during the first Royal Academy period.

**Hughes, Francis** (b. 1666/7 – d. 1744). English countertenor who often performed in concerts around 1700. He played Ormondo in Clayton's *Arsinoe* and also played the leading male role in *Camilla* (1706). In 1707 he sang in *Rosamond* and *Thomyris*, *Queen of Scythia*. Soon thereafter, he left the stage for a position in the Chapel Royal choir. He sang solos in many anthems and odes performed for the court, including Handel's *Ode for the Birthday of Queen Anne* (1713).

**Laroon, Marcellus** (b. 1679 – d. 1722). English baritone who sang in some English masques around the turn of the eighteenth century. He performed in one Italian-style opera: *The Temple of Love* (1706). He also made a living as an artist and painter.

**Leveridge, Richard** (b. 1670 – d. 1758). English bass singer and composer, specializing in comic roles. Leveridge made his name as a bass singer for Henry Purcell during the 1690s, especially with the role of Ismeron in *The Indian Queen*. He composed music for *The Island Princess*, gaining even more celebrity by performing his own "Enthusiastick Song", an audience favorite. When the craze for Italian opera swept London, Leveridge adapted his performance specialty, cultivating his talents for comic acting and singing. He and Mary Lindsey performed small comic parts in Italian-style operas between 1705 and 1708, singing in *Arsinoe*, *Camilla*, *Rosamond*, *Thomyris* and *Love's Triumph*. He also performed in Galliard's *Calypso and Telemachus*, and premiered roles in Handel's *Il pastor fido* and *Teseo*. In 1714 he moved to Lincoln's Inn Fields, where he continued to compose music and sing in pantomimes and English ballad operas until his retirement in 1751.

**Manina, Maria** (fl. 1712 – 1736). Italian soprano who sang small parts in London for almost thirty years. She made her debut in 1712, singing in Galliard's *Calypso and Telemachus* and performed the role of Almirena in the 1713 revival of *Rinaldo*. She married an Englishman named Fletcher and was known as Mrs. Fletcher in cast lists from 1715 on. After small roles in various pasticcio operas, she moved to Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1726, where she stayed until 1732, singing in Rich's pantomimes and revivals of Pepusch's English masques. More so than any other Italian singer (except perhaps for Margarita de l'Epine), Manina thoroughly integrated into English musical life, singing predominantly in English throughout her varied career.

**Pellegrini, Valeriano** (b. 1663 – d. 1746). Italian soprano castrato who was one of three main castrati used at the Queen's Theatre during the 1710s. He began singing in Rome in the Sistine Chapel choir, but quickly moved to operatic roles. He sang Nero in Handel's



*Agrippina* in Venice (1709) and moved to London in 1712. Handel wrote at least two more roles for him: Mirtillo in *Il pastor fido* and Theseus in *Teseo*. He may also have performed in *Silla*.

**Ramondon, Littleton** (b. 1684 – d. 1718). English bass baritone who also composed theatrical music. He performed in both Italian and English, playing smaller roles in *Camilla*, *Pyrrhus and Demetrius*, and *Clotilda*. He published many of his songs in Walsh's *The Monthly Mask of Vocal Musick* and later musical compilations.

**Robinson, Anastasia** (b. 1692 – d. 1755). English contralto. Robinson had professional training as a singer at a young age from Joanna Maria Lindelheim. She started as a soprano, and sang soprano roles in Handel's *Ode for Queen Anne's Birthday* in 1714 as well as pasticcio operas later that year. Handel wrote the part of Oriana in *Amadigi* for her, but she fell ill and had to be replaced after the first performance. She continued to sing in Italian operas until the opera house's closure in 1717, and some time during this period her voice dropped in range and she became a contralto. She was recruited for the first Royal Academy and sang *Zenobia* in Handel's *Radamisto* during the first season. She also sang in *Muzio Scevola*, *Floridante*, *Ottone*, *Flavio*, and *Giulio Cesare*, as well as operas by Giovanni Bononcini and Attilio Ariosti. In 1724 she retired, having secretly married the Earl of Peterborough.

**Salvai, Maddelena** (fl. 1716 – 1737). Italian soprano who sang in the first Royal Academy company between 1720 and 1722, having been recommended by Senesino. She sang in Handel's *Radamisto*, *Muzio Scevola*, *Floridante*, and operas by Bononcini. After London, she returned to the Continent, where she traveled, singing around both Italy and the Hapsburg Empire.

**Urbani, Valentino ["Valentini"]** (fl. 1690 – 1722). Italian alto castrato who was one of the principal castrati in London during the late 1700s and 1710s. He first appeared in operas in Venice, and was employed by the Electress of Brandenburg in Berlin between 1697 and 1700. He was the first castrato to sing in London, making his premiere in a revival of *Camilla* in 1707. He sang regularly between 1707 and 1711 in *Thomyris*, *Love's Triumph*, *Pyrrhus and Demetrius*, *Clotilda*, *Almahide*, *L'Idaspe fedele*, and in *Dorinda*, *Ernelinda*, *Creso*, and *Arminio* between 1712 and 1714. He also created the roles of Eustazio in Handel's *Rinaldo*, Silvio in *Il pastor fido*, and Egeo in *Teseo*.

**Vanini Boschi, Francesca** (fl. 1695 – d. 1744). Italian contralto who was married to the bass singer Giuseppe Boschi. She sang all over Italy before 1707, when she moved to Venice and performed in at least twelve operas there, including *Agrippina*. She traveled to London with Boschi in 1710, performing in *Pyrrhus and Demetrius*, *Etearco*, and *Rinaldo* (singing Goffredo). She often performed male characters, and both the roles that Handel composed for her were pants roles.

**Vico, Diana** (fl. 1707 – 1732). Italian contralto who performed in London between 1714 and 1716. She had performed throughout Europe, singing in Verona, Ferrara, Padua, Vincenza, and Mantua, among other places, often playing pants roles. In 1714, she made

her debut in *Ernelinda*, and also sang the title role in a revival of Handel's *Rinaldo* in 1714. She created the part of Dardano, Prince of Thrace in Handel's *Amadigi* (1715). After she left London, she continued to have a thriving career, performing in theaters across Italy.

**Zanoni, Angelo** (fl. 1710 – 1732). Italian bass singer who performed in London between 1714 and 1715. He sang in three operas, including a revival of Handel's *Rinaldo*, and gave two concerts.

### Composers, Arrangers, and Instrumentalists

**Clayton, Thomas** (b. 1673 – d. 1725). English composer who wrote the music for the first fully-sung, Italian-style opera performed in England. Around 1700, Clayton visited Italy, where he likely collected libretti and perhaps even music, bringing it back to London. In 1705, he composed music for *Arsinoe, Queen of Cyprus* at the Theatre Royal, which sparked a fervor amongst audiences for Italian-style opera. In 1707, he composed the music for *Rosamond*, which, unlike *Arsinoe*, was a commercial failure. Burney, Hawkins, and other eighteenth-century historians later criticized Clayton's music as trite and unsophisticated, which has become the predominant perspective on the composer in modern scholarship.

**Dieupart, Charles** (b. c1667 – d. c1740). French harpsichordist and composer who played in various theater orchestras throughout London during the early eighteenth century. He may have been related to musicians who lived in London during the second half of the seventeenth century. His six harpsichord suites were published in 1701, and were copied by J.S. Bach. The first record of a public appearance dates from 1703, when he performed in concerts with the violinist Gasparo Visconti. He may have composed the instrumental music for Clayton's *Arsinoe* (1705), and he provided the overture to the pasticcio *Thomyris*. His vocal music survives in the printed music for *Love's Triumph* (1708), for which he composed new arias and arranged previously composed pieces. He continued to play harpsichord for pasticcio operas until around 1710, at which time he organized a series of concerts (along with Clayton and Nicola Haym) at York Buildings. Dieupart was the professional partner of the singer Catherine Tofts; he acted as her go-between with the theater management between 1705 and 1709, and she often hired him as her personal accompanist.

**Eccles, John** (b c1688 – d. 1735). The resident composer for the United Company at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane between 1693 and 1695, where he composed music for spoken plays. He followed Betterton to Lincoln's Inn Fields, where he became its musical director. He also was appointed as Master of Music at court in 1700. Eccles set a version of William Congreve's *The Judgment of Paris* in 1701, and although he won second place, his version was the most popular with audiences. Eccles wrote the music for *The British Enchanters* (1706) and continued to compose court music such as anthems and odes. His final full-length stage composition, the Italian-English hybrid opera *Semele*, was never performed; soon thereafter, Eccles retired to the countryside. He

is best known for his musical collaborations with the English actress-singer Anne Bracegirdle, for whom he composed numerous stage songs.

**Greber, Jakob** (? – d. 1731). German composer who wrote the music for the first fully-sung Italian opera performed in London. His first appearance in London was in 1703, in the company of the soprano Margarita de l'Epine, with whom he cultivated a close professional partnership—and possibly a personal one as well. They performed in concerts together between 1703-1704; late in 1704, they traveled to Amsterdam, where records show that she gave birth to his daughter, Marie Greber, who was baptized that November. They returned to London in 1705, when he composed the music for *Gli amori d'Ergasto*, produced at the Queen's Theatre by John Vanbrugh. The score does not survive, but he seems to have composed a second version for Vienna (1711). Greber left London by 1707 without l'Epine; he was appointed Kappellmeister in Innsbruck, and by 1723 was appointed court composer in Mannheim.

**Handel, George Frideric** (b. 1685 – d. 1759). At the risk of distilling Handel's life into a short paragraph, this summarizes his earliest years in London. After training in Italy, Handel was appointed Kappellmeister to the Hanoverian court in June of 1710. Later that summer, he produced his cantata *Apollo e Dafne* in Düsseldorf before heading on to the English capital. He arrived in London by December 1710. He was quickly contracted to compose an opera for the Queen's Theatre; this, according to his librettist Giacomo Rossi, he wrote in only two weeks. *Rinaldo* had its premiere in February 1711 to great acclaim. Handel did not stay in London that summer, however; he returned to Hanover, where he continued to furnish music for his patrons. He returned to London in 1712, when he composed *Il pastor fido* that fall and *Teseo* in January of 1713. Neither opera was as popular as *Rinaldo* had been. He may have composed *Silla* for a private performance in the summer of 1713. Handel lived at the London estate of the Earl of Burlington between 1713 and 1716); in 1715, he composed his last opera of the decade, *Amadigi di Gaula*. During the next two seasons (1715-16 and 1716-17) he composed various arias for visiting singers. In the summer of 1717, Handel moved to Cannons, the estate of the Duke of Chandos, where he spent two years composing music, especially English anthems and his first oratorio, *Esther* (1718). In 1719, Handel was sent to Dresden to recruit singers for the Royal Academy of Music, which had its first season in 1720. During these early years in London, Handel worked with many English and Italian singers, many of whom he would contract to sing in the Royal Academy during the 1720s. He worked closely with the soprano Elisabetta Pilotti Schiavonetti, who sang in all five of the operas he composed between 1711 and 1715.

**Haym, Nicola** (b. 1678 – d. 1729). Italian librettist, cellist, composer, arranger, and theater manager. Haym was a musical jack-of-all-trades, and he participated in London's theatrical life in many different guises. He trained in Rome and composed oratorios for Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni between 1694 and 1700; he also learned to play cello and harpsichord. In 1701, Haym traveled to London as part of the Duke of Bedford's retinue, where he continued to compose. In 1705, he played in the orchestra for *Arsinoe* and often accompanied his wife, Joanna Maria Lindelheim. He adapted *Camilla* (1706) and *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* (1708) by providing new recitative and composing new arias

when required. In the 1710s, Haym became one of the most prominent libretto adaptors, furnishing texts for *Etearco*, *Dorinda*, *Creso* and *Lucio Vero* and possibly *Almahide*, *Ernelinda*, *Arminio*, and *Winceslaus*. He wrote libretti for two of Handel's operas, *Teseo* (1713) and *Radamisto* (1720) and possibly *Amadigi* as well. He played continuo in the Royal Academy of Music orchestra in the 1720s and continued to adapt texts for the company. He died while helping Handel and Heidegger set up what would become the second Royal Academy of Music.

**Kusser, Johann Sigismund** (b. 1660 – d. 1727). Composer who visited London between 1704 and 1707. He taught music privately and composed for singers. Little is known about his years in England. In 1707 he moved to Dublin, where he was appointed as “Master of the Musick attending to his Majesty’s State in Ireland,” requiring him to write odes and other court commissioned works.

**Pepusch, Johann Christoph** (b. 1667 – d. 1752). German composer who arrived in London in 1697 after studying music in Germany. He became a harpsichordist at Drury Lane in 1704 and composed music for the pasticcio *Thomyris*, *Queen of Scythia* in 1707. The next year, he joined the orchestra of the Queen’s Theatre, where he played in opera productions and concerts. In 1714, Pepusch left the Queen’s Theatre along with Margarita de l’Epine and Jane Barbier, moving to the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane where he became musical director. For the theater, he composed English masques starring the two women. In 1716, he moved to Lincoln’s Inn Fields, where he again became musical director; around this time, he also became James Brydges’ musical director at Cannons. Some time before 1720, he married Margarita de l’Epine. In the 1720s, he continued to compose English music for performances at Lincoln’s Inn Fields. Perhaps his most famous composition was the music he wrote for John Gay’s ballad opera, *The Beggar’s Opera*, which had its premiere in 1728. Pepusch was also a music theorist and music collector.

**Purcell, Henry** (b. 1659 – d. 1695). English composer who wrote much of the stage music composed for spoken theater companies during the Restoration. He studied with John Blow, and held various prestigious church and court appointments throughout London. After 1688, with the exile of James II and the coronation of William and Mary, Purcell began to compose more theatrical music. His fully-sung English opera, *Dido and Aeneas*, may have been performed at court some time before 1688, but most of his theater music dates from the 1690s. Purcell wrote four semi-operas during this time: *King Arthur*, *Dioclesian*, *The Fairy Queen*, and *The Indian Queen* for Betterton’s United Company before the schism of 1695. He also composed many musical scenes and set pieces for other spoken plays. Much of his music was published posthumously, and his semi-operas and airs continued to be performed and revered by audiences well into the eighteenth century.

**Du Ruel, [Monsieur]** (? - ?). French dancer who performed during concerts and in between the acts of plays, first at the Theatre Royale in Drury Lane and later (after 1705) at the Queen’s Theatre in the Haymarket.

**Saggione [Fedeli], Giuseppe** (fl. 1680 – 1733). Composer who arrived in London around 1703 in the company of his wife, the soprano Maria Gallia. He composed a new, Italian-style opera for the Queen's Theatre. *The Temple of Love*, a pastoral starring Gallia and the actress Anne Bracegirdle, had its premiere in 1706. Soon thereafter, he left England, eventually settling in Paris, where he continued to write music, especially in the French style, which were quite popular.

**Visconti, Gasparo** (b. 1683 – d. 1713). Italian violinist who was better known by his nickname, Gasparini. He frequently performed during concerts and in between the acts of plays between 1702 and 1705 in London, and he also composed chamber music for continuo and solo instruments. He left London for Italy before 1713. He studied with Corelli in Rome before arriving in London, and his violin sonatas, published in 1703, are similar in style to his teacher's.

**Weldon, John** (b. 1676 – d. 1736). English composer who studied with Purcell in the late seventeenth century. He composed some theatrical music, most notably the winning version of Congreve's *Judgment of Paris* (1701). Soon thereafter, he was appointed to the Chapel Royal as an organist, though he continued to compose some theatrical music. After John Blow's death in 1708, Weldon was promoted in the Chapel Royal, and in 1714 he became the organist for St.-Martin-in-the-Fields.

#### Librettists, Playwrights, and Publishers

**Addison, Joseph** (b. 1672 – d. 1719). Whig statesman, playwright, and journalist. Addison is best known for founding and writing *The Spectator*, a periodical that covered wide-ranging topics from politics to art and aesthetics in the early eighteenth century. In this newspaper, as well as its predecessor *The Tatler*, Addison anonymously decried Italian opera and advocated for English opera. In 1707, he provided the text for an all-sung English opera in the Italian style by Thomas Clayton. *Rosamond* drew upon English legend, and incorporated many traditional aspects of the English spoken theater, but it failed after only a few performances. Addison continued to write, expounding upon Whig ideology in his newspapers and holding minor political positions.

**Cibber, Colley** (b. 1671 – d. 1757). English actor, theater manager, and playwright. His career took off in the early eighteenth century when, in 1710, he became co-manager of the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane. He wrote many comedies for the English stage, including *Love's Last Shift* and *The Careless Husband*, and in 1730 he became Poet Laureate. His *Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber* is one of the most important theatrical memoirs of the eighteenth century. In this text, he waxes nostalgic on his early years as an actor, and provides many anecdotes about his colleagues in the theater, including opera singers.

**Congreve, William** (b. 1670 – d. 1729). English playwright and librettist who wrote many plays for the United Company at the Theatre Royal in the 1690s. He followed Betterton to Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1695; rumors had it that he was in love with Anne Bracegirdle, for whom he wrote some of his most famous parts, but he was also close

friends with John Eccles. He provided the libretto for *The Judgment of Paris* in 1701. In 1705, he partnered with John Vanbrugh to open the Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket, but he dropped out after the theater lost money in its first season. He also wrote the libretto for *Semele*, set by Eccles, which was never performed.

**Hughes, John** (b. 1677 – d. 1720). English librettist and author. He promoted the setting of English texts to appropriate music, and he wrote libretti for many musico-theatrical productions in English, including cantatas, odes, masques, and even an opera. His biographers speculate that he wrote the texts for Handel's English-language *Acis and Galatea* as well as *Esther*. In his prefaces, he intelligently expounded upon his beliefs that the English language was suitable for theatrical music, and lamented the vogue of operas being performed in Italian.

**Motteux, Peter Anthony** (b. 1663 – d. 1718). French playwright and librettist who traveled to England in 1685 as a Huguenot refugee. He first wrote for the *Gentleman's Journal*, but later began writing libretti for semi-operas and shorter musico-theatrical productions, including *Britain's Happiness* (1704). He also helped to adapt John Fletcher's *The Island Princess* (1699), which became a popular semi-opera. In the early eighteenth century, Motteux was involved in translating Tomaso Stanzani's original libretto for *Arsinoe, Queen of Cyprus*, and he also provided English libretti for *The Temple of Love*, *Thomyris*, and *Love's Triumph*. He died, possibly from autoerotic asphyxiation, in a London brothel.

**Walsh, John** (b. 1665 – d. 1736). Music publisher, printer, and engraver who printed arias from many early eighteenth-century operas and pasticcios. He became one of the most important publishers in the 1690s, when he realized that he had little competition. Because of the types of plates he used (pewter, rather than copper) he was able to print on a larger scale than many of his predecessors. He printed both *The Monthly Mask of Vocal Music* and *Harmonia anglicana*, as well as books of music from contemporary operas and plays. All of his publications have intricately engraved frontispieces, and include the names of the original singers who performed the music. Most of the arias he published come with alternative melodies for instruments, which are printed below the actual piece of music.

### Theater Managers

**Heidegger, Johann Jakob** (b. 1666 – d. 1749). Swiss theater impresario who first came to prominence in the 1710s in London. He helped produce *Thomyris* (1707) and *Clotilda* (1709) and began to manage the Queen's Theatre, alongside Aaron Hill, in 1711. He became the theater's main impresario in 1713, when Owen Swiney fled to Italy with *Teseo's* profits. In 1719, he helped to establish the Royal Academy of Music at the Queen's Theatre, where he continued to be manager for the next twenty-five years. In the 1730s, he partnered with Handel to found the second Royal Academy of Music.

**Rich, Christopher** (b. 1647 – d. 1714). Theater manager who ran the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane for thirty years. He first became involved in the theater by buying stock in

the Duke's Company in 1682; he later bought more shares from Charles Davenant, purchasing a controlling option in the company. In 1695, Betterton and actors loyal to him left Rich and Drury Lane behind; the impresario hired new actors, actresses, and singers, but struggled during the next five years with the new competition. He was not popular with his employees, who often complained of him withholding their salaries in petitions to the Lord Chamberlain. Their complaints prompted the Lord Chamberlain to reorganize the theaters during the early 1700s. Nevertheless, Rich was skilled at judging current tastes of audiences. In 1705, he mounted Thomas Clayton's *Arsinoe, Queen of Cyprus*—the first fully-sung opera in the Italian style performed in London. He also produced *Camilla* in 1706, which became one of the most successful operas of the eighteenth century.

**Swiney, Owen** (b. 1676 – d. 1754). Irish theater impresario who managed many of London's main theaters in the early eighteenth century. He first worked with Christopher Rich at Drury Lane, helping to produce *Camilla* in 1706. He then became the manager of the Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket and recruited many Italian singers, including Nicolini. In 1713, he absconded to Italy with the profits from *Teseo*, leaving many of his singers unpaid that season. In the 1720s, again in the good graces of London's performers, he became the go-between for the Royal Academy of Music, providing them with singers and libretti. He returned to London in the 1730s.

**Vanbrugh, John** (b. 1664 – d. 1726). A man of many talents, Vanbrugh was known as an architect, playwright, and theater manager during his lifetime. He combined all of these talents by opening the Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket in 1705. He produced Greber's *Gli amori d'Ergasto*, which had only a handful of performances. The following season, he produced both semi-operas and Italian-style operas. He continued to act as manager of the Queen's Theatre until 1708, when he transferred his power to Owen Swiney in order to build Blenheim Palace for the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough. He subscribed to the Royal Academy of Music in the 1720s.

## Appendix C

### List of New Operas Performed in London between 1705 and 1717

#### Abbreviations

Theatre Royal in Drury Lane (DL)

Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket (QH) – before 1714

King's Theatre in the Haymarket (KH) – after 1714

#### 1705

*Arsinoe, Queen of Cyprus* (Motteux/Stanzani; Clayton) DL

Catherine Tofts	...	Arsinoe
Letitia Cross	...	Dorisbe
Francis Hughes	...	Ormondo
Richard Leveridge	...	Feraspe
Mary Lindsey	...	Nerina

\*Margarita de l'Epine sang before and after the opera

*Gli amori d'Ergasto/The Loves of Ergasto* (Greber) QH

\*Cast unknown except for Joanna Maria Lindelheim

#### 1706

*The Temple of Love* (Motteux; Saggione) QH

Maria Gallia	...	Eurilla/Orinda
J. [Marcellus] Laroon	...	Sylvander
Mr. Lawrence	...	Thyrsis
Mr. Cook	...	A Satyr
Anne Bracegirdle	...	Phillis
Mrs. Bowman	...	Diana
Mrs. Baldwin	...	Venus
Mr. Pack	...	A Countryman
Mrs. Willis	...	A Country woman

*Camilla* (Haym/Stampiglia; Haym/G. Bononcini) DL

Henry Holcomb	...	Latinus/Prenesto
Francis Hughes	...	Turnus/Armidoro
Littleton Ramondon	...	Metius
Richard Leveridge	...	Linco



Catherine Tofts	...	Camilla
Joanna Maria Lindelheim	...	Lavinia
Mary Lindsey	...	Tullia

**1707**

<b><i>Rosamond</i></b> (Addison; Clayton)			DL
Francis Hughes	...	King Henry	
Richard Leveridge	...	Sir Trusty	
Henry Holcomb	...	Page	
Mr. Lawrence	...	Messenger	
Catherine Tofts	...	Queen Elinor	
Maria Gallia	...	Rosamond	
Mary Lindsey	...	Grideline, Wife to Sir Trusty	

<b><i>Thomyris, Queen of Scythia</i></b> (Motteux; Pepusch/various)			DL
Margarita de l'Epine	...	Thomyris	
Francis Hughes/Valentini	...	Orontes	
Catherine Tofts	...	Cleora	
Mr. Lawrence	...	Tigranes	
Richard Leveridge	...	Baldo	
Mary Lindsey	...	Media	

**1708**

<b><i>Love's Triumph</i></b> (Motteux/Ottoboni; various)			QH
Valentini	...	Liso	
Margarita de l'Epine	...	Olindo (male role)	
Richard Leveridge	...	Neralbo	
Catherine Tofts	...	Licisca	
Joanna Maria Lindelheim	...	Eurilla	
Mary Lindsey	...	Serpetta	

<b><i>Pyrrhus and Demetrius</i></b> (Swiney/Morselli; Haym/Bononcini/A. Scarlatti)			QH
Nicolini	...	Pyrrhus	
Valentini	...	Demetrius	
Littleton Ramondon	...	Cleortes	
Mr. Turner	...	Arbantes	
Margarita de l'Epine	...	Marius (male role)	
Mr. Cook	...	Brennus	
Catherine Tofts	...	Climene	
Joanna Maria Lindelheim	...	Deidamia	

**1709**

<b>Clotilda</b> (Heidegger/David; Conti/various)			QH
Valentini	...	Fernando	
Nicolini	...	Alphonso	
Littleton Ramondon	...	Sancho	
Mr. Lawrence	...	Rodrigo	
Margarita de l'Epine	...	Clotilda	
Catherine Tofts	...	Isabella	
Mary Lindsey	...	Leonora	

**1710**

<b>Almahide</b> (Heidegger; Bononcini/Ariosti/various)			QH
Valentini	...	Almanzor	
Nicolini	...	Almiro	
Giuseppe Cassani	...	Gemir	
Margarita de l'Epine	...	Almahide	
Isabella Girardeau	...	Celinda	
Mr. Lawrence	...	Rusteno	
Thomas Doggett	...	Floro	
Mary Lindsey	...	Besa	

<b>Hydaspes/L'Idaspe fedele</b> (Candi/Stampiglia; Mancini)			QH
Giuseppe Cassani	...	Artaxerxes	
Valentini	...	Darius	
Nicolini	...	Hydaspes	
Mr. Lawrence	...	Arbaces	
Isabella Girardeau	...	Mandana	
Margarita de l'Epine	...	Berenice	

**1711**

<b>Etearco</b> (Stampiglia; Bononcini/various)			QH
Giuseppe Boschi	...	Etearco	
Nicolini	...	Polinnesto	
Francesca Vanini Boschi	...	Aristeno (male role)	
Giuseppe Cassani	...	Temiso	
Mr. Lawrence	...	Delbo	
Isabella Girardeau	...	Fronima	
Elisabetta Pilotti Schiavonetti	...	Mirene	

<b>Rinaldo</b> (Hill/Rossi; Handel)			QH
Nicolini	...	Rinaldo	
Isabella Girardeau	...	Almirena	
Elisabetta Pilotti Schiavonetti	...	Armida	

Valentini	...	Eustazio
Francesca Vanini Boschi	...	Goffredo (male role)
Giuseppe Boschi	...	Argante

**1712**

***L'Ambleto/Hamlet*** (Zeno; Gasparini) QH

Salomon Bendler	...	Fengon, King of Denmark
Nicolini	...	Hamlet
Margarita de l'Epine	...	Valdemar (male role)
Giuseppe Cassani	...	Siffrid
Elisabetta Pilotti Schiavonetti	...	Gerilda
Isabella Girardeau	...	Veremonda
Jane Barbier	...	Hildegard

***Antioco/Antiochus*** (Zeno; Gasparini) QH

Giuseppe Cassani	...	Ptolemy
Nicolini	...	Antiochus
Jane Barbier	...	Leonildo (male role)
Mr. Lawrence	...	Ormonte
Elisabetta Pilotti Schiavonetti	...	Arsinoe
Isabella Girardeau	...	Oronte
Margarita de l'Epine	...	Janisbe

***Calypso and Telemachus*** (Hughes; Galliard) QH

Margarita de l'Epine	...	Calypso
Jane Barbier	...	Telemachus (male role)
Maria Manina	...	Eucharis
Mrs. Pearson	...	Mentor
Richard Leveridge	...	Proteus

***Il pastor fido*** (Rossi; Handel) QH

Valeriano Pellegrini	...	Myrtillo
Valentini	...	Silvius
Elisabetta Pilotti Schiavonetti	...	Amarillis
Jane Barbier	...	Dorinda
Margarita de l'Epine	...	Eurilla
Richard Leveridge	...	Brenius

***Ercole/Hercules*** (Rossi; various) QH

Nicolini	...	Hercules
Benedetto Baldassari	...	Teseo
Elisabetta Pilotti Schiavonetti	...	Onfale
Jane Barbier	...	Ippolita

<b><i>Dorinda</i></b> (Pollarolo/various)			QH
Valeriano Pellegrini	...	Silvius	
Valentini	...	Thirsis	
Elisabetta Pilotti Schiavonetti	...	Nicea	
Jane Barbier	...	Dorinda	

### 1713

<b><i>Ernelinda</i></b> (Silvani; various)			QH
Valentini	...	Ricimero	
Margarita de l'Epine	...	Rodoaldo (male role)	
Elisabetta Pilotti Schiavonetti	...	Ernelinda	
Vittoria Albergotti	...	Edvige	
Valeriano Pellegrini	...	Vitige	
Jane Barbier	...	Edelberto (male role)	

<b><i>Teseo</i></b> (Haym; Handel)			QH
Valeriano Pellegrini	...	Teseo	
Valentini	...	Egeo	
Elisabetta Pilotti Schiavonetti	...	Medea	
Margarita de l'Epine	...	Agilea	
Maria Gallia	...	Clizia	
Jane Barbier	...	Arcane	

### 1714

<b><i>Arminio/Arminius</i></b> (unknown)			QH
Caterina Galerati	...	Arminius (male role)	
Anastasia Robinson	...	Asmena	
Margarita de l'Epine	...	Cilene	
Mr. Lawrence	...	Germanicus Caesar	
Jane Barbier	...	Cecina	
Valentini	...	Regestes	

<b><i>Creso, re di Lidia/Croesus</i></b> (various)			QH
Caterina Galerati	...	Creso (male role)	
Valentini	...	Ciro	
Anastasia Robinson	...	Climenide	
Jane Barbier	...	Rosena	
Margarita de l'Epine	...	Adraspe (male role)	
Mr. Lawrence	...	Oronte	

### 1715

<b><i>Lucio Vero</i></b> (Zeno; various)			KH
Caterina Galerati	...	Lucio Vero (male role)	

Anastasia Robinson	...	Lucilla	
Diana Vico	...	Vologeso (male role)	
Elisabetta Pilotti Schiavonetti	...	Aspasia	
Angelo Zanoni	...	Claudio	
Mr. Lawrence	...	Anicero	
<b><i>Amadigi di Gaula</i></b> (possibly Haym; Handel)			KH
Nicolini	...	Amadigi	
Diana Vico	...	Dardano, Prince of Thrace	
Anastasia Robinson	...	Oriana	
Elisabetta Pilotti Schiavonetti	...	Melissa	
<b><u>1716</u></b>			
<b><i>Cleartes</i></b> (various)			KH
Elisabetta Pilotti Schiavonetti	...	Dorisbe	
Elena Croce Vivani	...	Climene	
Antonio Bernacchi	...	Arsace	
Nicolini	...	Clearte	
Anastasia Robinson	...	Elmire	
Mr. Lawrence	...	Fileno	
Giorgio Giacomo Berwillibald	...	Aurillo	
<b><u>1717</u></b>			
<b><i>Winceslaus, King of Poland</i></b> (unknown)			KH
Gaetano Berenstadt	...	Winceslaus	
Nicolini	...	Casimirus	
Mr. Lawrence	...	Alexander	
Anastasia Robinson	...	Erenice	
Antonio Bernacchi	...	Ferdinand	
Elisabetta Pilotti Schiavonetti	...	Lucinda	
Mr. Lawrence	...	Gismond (two roles?)	
<b><i>Tito Manlio</i></b> (Ariosti)			KH
Gaetano Berenstadt	...	Tito	
Nicolini	...	Manlio	
Anastasia Robinson	...	Servilia	
Elisabetta Pilotti Schiavonetti	...	Celia	
Antonio Bernacchi	...	Decio	
Mr. Lawrence	...	Geminio	

## Appendix D

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“E vano ogni pensiero,” <i>Hydaspes</i> .....	253, 256-259
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“I’ll ever be Loving,” <i>The Temple of Love</i> .....	148
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