

*A Note of introduction: In 1998, John A. Rice published his excellent book, Antonio Salieri and Viennese Opera, a wide-ranging study of the opera scene in Vienna in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and Salieri's predominant role as opera composer and executor of Joseph II's wishes. In Chapter 14, Rice takes a close look at the Mozart-Salieri relationship. Here you have most of the text from that chapter but without its numerous musical examples; for those, and for the full story well told, you should by all means go to the book itself (please see below).*

JOHN A. RICE

## MOZART AND SALIERI

MOZART settled in Vienna in 1781, fifteen years after Salieri, who was six years older. A young, brilliant, and ambitious musician eager to win fame and fortune, Mozart sought patronage from both the public and Joseph II, who personified the success and recognition that he longed for. He wrote his father only eight days after his arrival: "Well, my chief object here is to introduce myself to the emperor in some becoming way, for I am absolutely determined that he shall get to know me. I should love to run through my opera [*Idomeneo*] for him and then play a lot of fugues, for that is what he likes."<sup>1</sup> Mozart evidently hoped to participate in Joseph's chamber sessions, often devoted to the playing of Italian serious operas from the score.<sup>2</sup> He may have coveted the very position that Salieri, as one of the emperor's *Kammernusici*, had occupied since 1774. Mozart's pianistic career flourished during his early years in Vienna, but in his efforts to win imperial patronage he ran into a serious obstacle.

An orphan befriended by the emperor when he was only sixteen, Salieri had been a member of Joseph's chamber-music group since shortly after his arrival in Vienna in 1766. Joseph had watched over Salieri's career from the beginning, encouraging him and helping him. The emperor's letters to his ambassador in Paris show how deeply he cared about Salieri and his success. But Mozart exaggerated when he complained that the emperor "cares for no one but Salieri."<sup>3</sup> Just as Joseph gave Casti as well as Da Ponte a chance to write librettos for the opera buffa troupe, so he allowed no composer – not even Salieri – a monopoly over the composition of new operas for the Burgtheater. He probably liked to see his musicians and other theatrical personnel vie with one another to win his and the public's favor. One of his first major opera buffa commissions, resulting in *Il re Teodoro in Venezia*, left both Salieri and Da Ponte

1. Mozart to his father, 24 March 1781, in *Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen (MBA)*, Ed. Bauer, Deutsch, and Eibl. 7 vols. Kassel, 1962-75; 3:99.
2. But in writing that he wanted to play *for* Joseph rather than *with* him, Mozart showed that he did not understand the collaborative nature of Joseph's musical sessions.
3. Mozart to his father, 15 December 1781, in *MBA*, 3:179.

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out. Furthermore, Joseph's impulsiveness and unpredictability meant that Salieri could never feel completely safe as a permanent member of the emperor's musical staff. Less than a year before Mozart's arrival in Vienna Salieri had hurried back from Italy, afraid that he had lost the emperor's favor. Nor did Joseph refrain from criticizing Salieri's music, as, for example, when he confided to Count Mercy, in connection with the failure of *Les Horaces*, that Salieri could sometimes be "un peu trop baroque en cherchant l'expression dans la musique."

Mozart quickly achieved his goal of introducing himself (or better, reintroducing himself) to Joseph, who witnessed several of his public performances at the piano, applauding him warmly and commissioning *Die Entführung*. During the last decade of Joseph's life Mozart received more imperial patronage than any Viennese musician except Salieri. The emperor commissioned from him three full-length operas – two Italian, one German – and a one-act German opera. The Burgtheater presented a fifth opera that had been commissioned and performed elsewhere; on the performance of *Don Giovanni* in Vienna Mozart received a fee of 50 ducats, the only instance during the period 1782-92 of a composer receiving a fee for a work first performed outside Vienna.<sup>4</sup> One of the first actions that Joseph took in his reorganization of the court musical establishment in 1787-88 was to give Mozart an important musical position at court, that of Kammercompositor.

Yet Mozart remained below Salieri in the court hierarchy, where the principle of seniority was rarely challenged. He must have suspected that he would always be subordinate to the older composer. At the same time, clearly aware of the extent to which his talent surpassed Salieri's, Mozart resented the Italian's position at court. He rarely mentioned Salieri's name in his letters except in a tone of disappointment or resentment.

Salieri, for his part, rarely expressed his opinion of Mozart or of Mozart's music; this reticence is consistent with his tendency to avoid comment on the music of his contemporaries. "The greatest musical diplomat" may have thought it prudent to keep his opinions of Mozart to himself. When Rochlitz, editor of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, visited Salieri in 1822, the aged musician, who must have assumed that anything he said about Mozart would appear in print, called *Figaro* his favorite among Mozart's operas. But Rochlitz was apparently unable to learn more about Salieri's views of this or any other opera of Mozart.<sup>5</sup>

4. Dexter Edge, "Mozart's Fee for *Così fan tutte*," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 116 (1991); 224.

5. Letter from Friedrich Rochlitz to Gottfried Christoph Härtel, 9 July 1822, *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung (AmZ)* 30 (1828): cols. 5-16; quoted in translation in Alexander Wheelock Thayer, "Half a Dozen of Beethoven's Contemporaries: II. Antonio Salieri." *Dwight's Journal of Music* 23 (20 February-26 November 1864): 183-347. Edited as *Salieri, Rival of Mozart*, ed. Theodore Albrecht, Kansas City, Mo., 1987, 166-69.

Salieri gave his students more candid assessments. Hüttenbrenner, who studied with Salieri at the same time that Schubert did, wrote: "He spoke often to me in confidence, because I was as devoted to him as a child."<sup>6</sup> Salieri's remarks included judgments of Mozart as an operatic composer. Hüttenbrenner recalled that Salieri regarded Gluck as Mozart's superior:

He considered Gluck to be the greatest opera composer. He alone knew how to depict character in music most perfectly, and how to produce the greatest effects with the fewest notes; while in recent times one is left unmoved by the biggest masses of sound, because of their too frequent use. Of Mozart he always spoke with the most extraordinary respect. He, the incomparable one, came often to Salieri with the words: Dear Papa, give me some old scores from the Court Library. I would like to look through them with you. In so doing he often missed his lunch. One day I asked Salieri to show me where Mozart died, whereupon he led me to the Rauhensteingasse and pointed it out. It is marked, if I remember right, with a painting of the Virgin. Salieri visited him on the day before his death, and was one of the few who accompanied the corpse.<sup>7</sup>

Hüttenbrenner's account does not ring completely true; it is hard to believe that Mozart, only six years younger than Salieri, would have called him Papa (which was how some of Salieri's students, including Hüttenbrenner, did in fact address him). But that Salieri spoke about Mozart with respect, while at the same time showing a clear preference for Gluck in the realm of opera, should not surprise us.

Hüttenbrenner remembered Salieri pointing to a particular passage in *La clemenza di Tito* as an example of where Mozart failed to reach Gluckian perfection:

Salieri, who wrote fifty-two operas, bore no grudges against Mozart, who put him in the shade. But where he could detect a weakness in Mozart he pointed it out to his students. Thus one day Salieri, when I was alone with him, argued that Mozart completely mishandled the final scene of the first act of *Titus*. Rome is burning; the whole populace is in tumult; the music should also storm and rage. But Mozart chose a slow, solemn tempo and expressed more horror and shock. I did not allow myself to be led into error by Salieri, and agree even today with Mozart's view.<sup>8</sup>

6. Hüttenbrenner to Ferdinand Luib, 7 March 1858, in Anselm Hüttenbrenner, "Anselm Hüttenbrenners Erinnerungen an Schubert.," Ed. Otto Erich Deutsch, *Jahrbuch der Grillparzer-Gesellschaft* 16 (1906), 142-43.

7. Anselm Hüttenbrenner, "Kleiner Beytrag zu Salieri's Biographie," *AmZ* 27 (1825): cols. 796-99; quoted in Rudolph Angermüller, *Antonio Salieri: Sein Leben und seine weltlichen Werke unter besonderer Berücksichtigung seiner „großen“ Opern*. 3 vols. Munich, 1971-74; 3:6\*; English translation in Thayer, *Salieri*, 177-78.

8. Hüttenbrenner to Luib, 7 March 1858, in Hüttenbrenner, "Erinnerungen," 142; English translation in Volkmar Braunbehrens, *Salieri: Ein Musiker im Schatten Mozarts*. Munich, 1989. Translated by Eveline L. Kanés as *Maligned Master: The Real Story of Antonio Salieri*, New York, 1992; 226.

It is ironic that Salieri rejected exactly that part of *Tito* that appealed most vividly to the Romantic mind.<sup>9</sup> His attitude helps to explain why most of his own operas disappeared from the repertory in the early nineteenth century, just as *Tito* was finding new audiences.

Turning suddenly to *Don Giovanni*, Hüttenbrenner wrote ambiguously: "As far as I know, Salieri missed only one performance of *Don Juan*. This work must have interested him especially; but I did not know that he ever expressed himself enthusiastically about it."<sup>10</sup>

In the absence of other evidence we may assume that already in the 1780s Salieri recognized the craftsmanship and originality of Mozart's music. We may assume too that he felt threatened by this newcomer who was so eager to impress the emperor, and that he sought to defend his prerogatives as Joseph's chamber musician and operatic music director.

#### CABALS

Salieri and Mozart were rivals, but whether the resentment and jealousy they both justifiably must have felt led them into activities that seriously damaged the other's career we do not know. Mozart and his father frequently expressed suspicion that Salieri was involved in secret machinations – "cabals" – to keep Mozart's operas off the stage or to hasten their departure. But such suspicions were a commonplace of operatic production. Salieri probably feared cabals as much as Mozart did. Joseph II was confident of the success of *Les Danaïdes*, but only "if there is no cabal," as he put it to Count Mercy. Da Ponte accused Casti's supporters of circulating malicious criticism of *Il ricco d'un giorno* that contributed to the failure and early withdrawal of Salieri's opera. Much later, in 1799, Salieri was to be prevented by an "opposing party" from taking a bow after the second performance of *Falstaff*.<sup>11</sup>

Mozart's success with *Die Entführung* and his close relations with several members of the German troupe put him in an awkward position when Joseph abandoned Singspiel in 1783 and established an opera buffa company. In writing to his father shortly before the arrival of the Italians, he set himself up as a defender of German opera and announced his rather odd project of writing a German opera for himself.<sup>12</sup> The quality of the new troupe and its success with the public caused him to rethink his position, and he looked forward to writing an Italian opera. But one continues to sense in his letters feelings of resentment and

9. For some nineteenth-century views of the first-act finale see John A. Rice, *W. A. Mozart: La clemenza di Tito* (Cambridge, 1991), 128-30.

10. Hüttenbrenner to Luib, 7 March 1858, in Hüttenbrenner, "Erinnerungen," 142; English translation in Volkmar Braunbehrens, *Salieri: Ein Musiker im Schatten Mozarts*, Munich, 1989; 226. Translated by Eveline I. Kanes as *Maligned Master: The Real Story of Antonio Salieri*, New York, 1992. Hüttenbrenner may have made these somewhat incoherent comments in answer to a specific question from his correspondent, or perhaps in reaction to a statement that Salieri had enthusiastically praised *Don Giovanni*. That, at any rate, would explain the odd use of the past tense of the verb *wissen* (I did not know).

11. "The Diaries of Joseph Carl Rosenbaum, 1770-1829," ed. Else Radant, *Haydn Yearbook* 5 (1968): 58.

12. Mozart to his father, 5 February 1783, in *MBA*, 3:255.

suspicion toward various members of the Italian troupe. "Italians are rascals everywhere," wrote Leopold Mozart in 1775; Wolfgang, perhaps without realizing it, inherited his father's prejudice. He seems at times to have thought of the entire Italian troupe as a cabal arrayed against him. Salieri, as the company's music director, personified the machinations that Mozart, like his father, hated and feared.

Mozart's ties to former members of the Singspiel troupe led to his first musical contribution to the opera buffa company and also gave rise to some of his first suspicions that Salieri was leading a cabal against him. For the Viennese production of Anfossi's *Il curioso indiscreto* (Rome, 1777; first performed in Vienna on 30 June 1783) he wrote replacement arias for two German singers who had been among the original cast of *Die Entführung* and who were now making their debuts as members of the Italian troupe.<sup>13</sup> He wrote to his father of the controversy that arose from these arias:

Now you must know that my enemies were malicious enough to announce from the outset: "Mozart wants to correct Anfossi's opera." I heard it. So I sent a message to Count Rosenberg that I would not hand over my arias unless the following statement were printed in both German and Italian as an addendum to the libretto.

[In Italian:]

Note

The two arias on p. 36 and p. 102 have been set to music by Signor Maestro Mozart, to suit Signora Lange, those written by Signor Maestro Anfossi having been written not in accordance with her abilities, but for another singer. It is necessary to make this known so that honor may go to whom it is due, without the reputation and fame of the well-known Neapolitan being harmed in any way.

It was printed, and I handed over the arias, which brought inexpressible honor to both me and my sister-in-law. So my enemies are quite confounded! Now for a stunt by Salieri that did harm not so much to me as to poor Adamberger. I think I wrote you that I made a rondo for Adamberger. During a short rehearsal, before the rondo had been copied, Salieri took Adamberger aside and told him that Count Rosenberg did not like to see him replacing an aria and therefore advised him as a friend not to do it.

Adamberger followed Salieri's advice; but later it turned out that Rosenberg had nothing against his singing an aria by Mozart, who concluded: "it was only a trick on Salieri's part."<sup>14</sup>

13. Federico Pirani, "'Il curioso indiscreto'; Un' opera buffa tra Roma e la Vienna di Mozart," in *Mozart: Gli orientamenti della critica moderna*, ed. Giacomo Fornari (Lucca, 1994), 47-67.

14. Mozart to his father, 2 July 1783, in *MBA*, 3:276-77.

Mozart did not tell his father the whole story. The composition of replacement arias was an essential part of operatic life in the eighteenth century. Salieri himself wrote many during the 1770s, his student and assistant Weigl many more during the 1780s and 1790s. None, as far as we know, caused controversy of the kind described by Mozart. If the Italians resented Mozart, it was probably because of his having pointedly written arias for German singers only, as if to show that only Germans could perceive weaknesses in Anfossi's six-year-old opera (an opera that had all but disappeared from Italian theaters by 1781).<sup>15</sup> If he had had Salieri's diplomatic skill Mozart would have realized that from the Italians' point of view his teaming up with Adamberger and Lange could have been interpreted as a German cabal, organized against what was clearly the weakest opera that the Italian troupe had presented so far.<sup>16</sup>

Michael Kelly remembered Mozart as being "touchy as gun-powder"<sup>17</sup> – we can see as much in his overreaction to alleged grumblings about his replacement arias. The sarcastic note that he added to the libretto could only increase the Italians' resentment (if they had indeed given any thought to Mozart's arias before the note was printed). Mozart revelled in his triumph; but it was a Pyrrhic victory. One can easily imagine how members of the Italian troupe who were Mozart's enemies only in his imagination might learn to dislike him.

Mozart may have suffered from cabals in which Salieri played a role, but evidence of such activities and of Salieri's role in them is of course slim. Leopold Mozart wrote to his daughter shortly before the premiere of *Figaro*: "It will be surprising if it is a success, for I know that very powerful cabals have ranged themselves against your brother. Salieri and all his supporters will again try to move heaven and earth to bring down his opera. Herr and Mme. Duschek told me recently that it is on account of the very great reputation which your brother's exceptional talent and ability have won for him that so many people are plotting against him."<sup>18</sup> Leopold's attitude to Viennese operatic politics had not changed much since he had failed to have *La finta semplice* performed eighteen years earlier. But the fate of *Figaro* contradicted Leopold. Despite its great length and complexity Mozart's opera was a success, performed nine times during 1786 and revived for twenty-nine more performances in 1789 and 1790. Salieri's *Il riccio d'un giorno* and *Il pastor fido*, in contrast, received only six performances each before being dropped from the repertory.<sup>19</sup> The cabal against Mozart, if there was one, was less powerful than Leopold imagined. As for Salieri's role, we should keep in mind Constanze Mozart's statement (discussed below) that he became hostile to Mozart only much later, as a result of the success that Mozart achieved with *Così fan tutte* after Salieri had given up his projected setting of the same libretto.

15. A list of productions in Pirani, "Il curioso indiscreto," shows that the opera was performed frequently in Italy from 1777 to 1780, but rarely thereafter.

16. *Il curioso indiscreto* had been preceded by *La scuola de' gelosi*, Cimarosa's *L'italiana in Londra*, and Sarti's *Fra i due litiganti*.

17. Michael Kelly, *Reminiscences*, Ed. Roger Fiske, London, 1975, 130.

18. Leopold Mozart to his daughter, 28 April 1786, in *MBA*, 3:536.

19. Franz Hadamowsky, *Die Wiener Hoftheater (Staatstheater) 1776-1966*. 2 vols. Vienna, 1966-75, 1:92, 96, 105.

## MOZART'S DEVELOPMENT AS COMPOSER OF OPERA BUFFA, 1783-86

Shortly after the Italian troupe's inauguration Mozart expressed hope, in a well-known letter to his father, that Da Ponte would write a libretto for him after finishing his collaboration with Salieri on *Il riccio d'un giorno*: "Then he has promised to make a new one for me. Who knows now whether he can keep his word later – or wants to? For you know well how charming [*artig*] the Italian gentlemen are to your face. Enough, we know them! If he is in league with Salieri, I will never get anything from him. And I would like so much to show what I can do in an Italian opera as well!"<sup>20</sup> In the last sentence the word "auch" (rendered above as "as well") is important. It shows that Mozart thought of his projected opera buffa as a sequel to *Die Entführung* in his campaign to impress Joseph and the Viennese. Having demonstrated his skill (and surpassed Salieri) in the composition of German opera, he now hoped to do the same with opera buffa.

Of course Da Ponte, as the emperor's handpicked librettist, was "in league with Salieri," on whose recommendation Joseph had chosen Da Ponte in the first place.<sup>21</sup> But the failure of *Il riccio d'un giorno* caused relations between Da Ponte and Salieri to cool. Mozart's suspicions, like his father's concerning *Figaro*, turned out to have no foundation. Although Da Ponte's responsibility for the revision of *Lo sposo deluso* for Mozart has not been proven, it was probably he who collaborated with Mozart on this ill-fated project, reworking an anonymous Roman intermezzo.<sup>22</sup> The opera remained incomplete, as did Mozart's setting of a libretto by Giambattista Varesco, *L'oca del Cairo*.

Cabals, real or imagined, had nothing to do with the failure of these operas to reach the stage. Mozart's unwillingness or inability to bring these projects to fruition must be considered against the background of the success of Joseph's troupe, which fully exposed Mozart to the genre of opera buffa for the first time since he had reached musical maturity. Joseph's company forced Mozart to reconsider his view of the genre, as he learned at first hand what worked and what did not on the comic stage.<sup>23</sup>

20. Mozart to his father, 7 May 1783, in *MBA*, 3:267-69.

21. Daniel Hertz, *Mozart's Operas*, Berkeley, 1990, 127.

22. Alessandra Campana, "Il libretto de 'Lo sposo deluso,'" *Mozart-Jahrbuch* (1988-89), 573-88.

23. Andrew dell'Antonio, "Il compositore deluso': The Fragments of *Lo sposo deluso*," in Stanley Sadie, *Wolfgang Amadé Mozart: Essays on His Life and Music*; 403-12. Neal Zaslaw, "Waiting for Figaro," in Sadie, 413-35.

In May 1783 Mozart asked his father to communicate to Varesco, librettist of *Idomeneo*, a proposal that they collaborate on a comic opera for the Burgtheater. Looking forward to setting "a new libretto for seven characters," he stated his requirements with exactness: "But the most important thing is that the whole should be really comic; and, if possible, should introduce two equally good female roles, one of which must be seria, the other mezzo carattere, but both parts equal in excellence. But the third woman can be entirely comic, and so can all the male ones, if necessary."<sup>24</sup>

This passage is often quoted by scholars who point out how the specifications correspond to one or more of the operas that Mozart wrote later in collaboration with Da Ponte. But one can look at the passage differently. Nothing here suggests that Mozart wanted anything substantially different from the librettos he had set in 1768 in Vienna (*La finta semplice*) or in 1775 in Munich (*La finta giardiniera*), or indeed from those written by Goldoni in the 1750s. In the rigidity and specificity of his requirements we can sense that Mozart's conception of opera buffa was still circumscribed by conventions that, during the second third of the eighteenth century, had grown out of the popularity of Goldoni's librettos. Why, for example, did the opera have to have seven characters, four men and three women? Simply because a great many of Goldoni's most successful librettos (*L'Arcadia in Brenta*, *Il mondo della luna*, and *Le pescatrici*, to name just a few) had casts of four men and three women.

Three years almost to the day after Mozart wrote this letter, *Figaro*, a work that corresponds little to his earlier specifications, reached the stage of the Burgtheater. About a year and a half after that he presented *Don Giovanni*, whose cast of characters comes close to what he had asked from Varesco (the commendatore, an "extra" fifth male character, was originally portrayed by the singer who created Masetto); but it conspicuously ignores Mozart's «most important" requirement, "that the whole should be really comic."

Varesco and Da Ponte (if it was he who arranged the libretto of *Lo sposo deluso*) provided Mozart with what the composer, in 1783, thought he wanted. *L'oca del Cairo* (the text of which survives only in part) and *Lo sposo deluso* are both heavily dependent on Goldonian convention.<sup>25</sup> *L'oca* has eight characters, *Lo sposo* seven, most of whom belong to the types so effectively exploited by Goldoni. Sempronio and Don Pippo, stupid old men, answered Mozart's need for buffi caricati. Pairs of sincere young lovers – Celidora and Biondello in *L'oca*, Emilia and Annibale in *Lo sposo* – serve as parti di mezzo carattere. A servant girl, an opera singer, a tutor, and other stock characters fill out the casts. Although they contain a fair number of ensembles, both librettos are dominated by arias. In the first act of *Lo sposo*, for example, a quartet is followed by six arias that introduce all but one of the characters. A terzetto breaks into the succession of arias, after which the seventh character sings an aria.

24. Mozart to his father, 7 May 1783, in *MBA*, 3:267-69.

25. On the libretto of *L'oca del Cairo* and its derivation from Francesco Cieco's chivalrous romance *Il Mambriano* see Jane E. Everson, "Of Beaks and Geese: Mozart, Varesco and Francesco Cieco," *Music and Letters (ML)* 76 (1995): 369-83.

Mozart might have been able to set these librettos to music and bring them to the stage earlier in his career; but now, as he became intimately familiar with one of the best buffo troupes in Europe and a repertory that included some of the finest modern operas, his works in progress must have looked increasingly unattractive to him. Mozart's letters to his father concerning changes that he wanted Varesco to make in *L'oca del Cairo* represent his changing view of opera buffa: one has the feeling that Varesco would never be able to meet Mozart's requirements because these requirements themselves evolved so quickly.

Shortly after initiating the project, Mozart wrote something that should have warned him that he was going in the wrong direction: Varesco "has not the slightest knowledge or experience of the theater."<sup>26</sup> The later success in Vienna of two new operas, *Il re Teodoro in Venezia* and *La grotta di Trofonio*, could have served to demonstrate to Mozart the necessity of working with a clever poet who had, if not extensive theatrical experience, at least good theatrical instincts, and the usefulness of having this poet close at hand during the composition and production of an opera buffa. (This lesson Salieri had learned much earlier, from his intensive collaboration with Boccherini in the early 1770s.) Collaboration by post made revisions of the libretto difficult and time consuming, and it left the librettist out of the important work, normally supervised by him, of staging the opera. Never again would Mozart work with a librettist who had "not the slightest knowledge or experience of the theater." Never again would he collaborate by post, trying to stage a new opera without the librettist's active participation.

Early in his work on *L'oca* Mozart made another ominous remark. After discussing some of the more ridiculous aspects of the libretto in a letter to his father, he made fun of Varesco's plot with a pun: "In any case, I must tell you that my only reason for not objecting to the whole goose story [*die ganze gans=historie*] altogether was because two people of greater insight and judgment than myself have not disapproved it, namely you and Varesco."<sup>27</sup> In light of Mozart's earlier dismissal of Varesco's theatrical knowledge and experience, Leopold should have taken this falsely modest statement as an insult. Wolfgang himself had approved the silly story, probably because of his conviction that comedy had to predominate in an opera buffa, which he reiterated on 21 May ("The main thing must be the comic element, for I know the Viennese taste")<sup>28</sup> and again on 6 December ("the more comic an Italian opera the better").<sup>29</sup> What could be more comic than a lover finding his way into a tower where his beloved is imprisoned by hiding inside a mechanical goose?<sup>30</sup>

26. Mozart to his father, 21 June 1783, in *MBA*, 3:275-76.

27. Mozart to his father, 6 December 1783, in *MBA*, 3:294.

28. Mozart to his father, 21 May 1783, in *MBA*, 3:270.

29. Mozart to his father, 6 December 1783, in *MBA*, 3:295.

30. Mozart himself may have unintentionally suggested to Varesco the use of Francesco Ciego's goose. His pun "die ganze gans=historie" recalls his almost obsessive repetition of the word "ganz" in his letter to Leopold of 7 May 1783. He expressed preference for a "ganz Neues" libretto, mentioned that Da Ponte was writing a "ganz Neues" libretto for Salieri, and specified that Varesco's libretto be "recht *Comisch* im ganzen," that the two main female roles be "ganz gleich," but that the third woman could be "ganz Buffa."

Mozart said nothing about ensembles in his initial specifications for *Varesco*, and the relatively few ensemble texts in *Lo sposo* suggest that he made no special requests for ensembles from the arranger of that libretto either. Yet Viennese opera buffa of the 1780s was largely a comedy of ensembles, and Mozart seems to have become increasingly aware of their importance during the period in which he worked on *L'oca* and *Lo sposo*.

As Mozart rethought the second act of *L'oca* on 6 December 1783, he imagined the effect of an ensemble where *Varesco* had not placed one: "At this point a good quintet would be very suitable, which would be the more comic as the goose would be singing along with the others."<sup>31</sup> A few weeks later he again suggested the addition of an ensemble. In imitation of Goldoni *Varesco* had written for two different characters contiguous aria texts with the same meter and number of lines, and next to the second had instructed the composer to set both poems to the same music. Mozart himself had composed a song pair in *La finta giardiniera*. But the operas sung by Joseph's company must have avoided song pairs, to judge by Mozart's letter of 24 December 1783: "for one singer to echo the song of another is a practice which is quite out of date and is hardly ever made use of."<sup>32</sup> He suggested that *Varesco* write a duet instead, thus replacing a feature of the libretto that was typical of Goldonian opera with a feature typical of Viennese opera of the 1780s. But he did not follow through with his intended change, because soon after writing this letter he gave up entirely on *L'oca*.

Mozart never rejected Goldonian dramatic values and techniques, of course.<sup>33</sup> But *Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Così fan tutte* use Goldonian conventions selectively, for special effect. In none of them did Mozart start with an assumption that "the more comic an Italian opera the better." During his collaboration with Da Ponte from 1785 to 1790 Mozart worked within a new conception of opera buffa shaped less by Goldoni's librettos than by the operas performed by Joseph's troupe.

31. Mozart to his father, 6 December 1783, in *MBA*, 3:294.

32. Mozart to his father, 24 December 1783, in *MBA*, 3:297.

33. Daniela Goldin, *La vera fenice: Librettisti e libretti fra Sette e Ottocento*. Turin, 1985; 77-163; Hertz, *Mozart's Operas*, 230; Kunze, "Elementi veneziani nella librettistica di Lorenzo da Ponte;" in Muraro, *Venezia e il melodramma nel Settecento*, ed. Maria Teresa Muraro and David Bryant, 2 vols. (Florence, 1978-81); 2:279-92.



Another cheerful melody by Salieri that Mozart may have remembered when composing *Don Giovanni* was the minuet-song that, as sung and danced by Storage, delighted audiences in London as well as Vienna. Modern commentators, when they discuss Elvira's "Ah fuggi il traditor," tend to mention Handel in connection with its syncopations and odd phrase lengths.<sup>36</sup> But the aria that Ofelia sings on leaving Trofonio's cave was a more accessible model. It has many of the same rhythmic eccentricities as "Ah fuggi il traditor" and an opening melody very close to Elvira's.

"Ah fuggi il traditor" is no carefree minuet-song. Mozart developed musical material much like Salieri's into an aria that in craftsmanship and emotional depth far surpasses "La ra la ra." Salieri wrote a fine, original melody, but he did very little with it except repeat it. In Mozart's brilliant mind the bass line came to contrapuntal life; the tonal spectrum opened up; and Salieri's idea (or one similar to it) grew into a splendid portrait of an angry, eccentric, yet passionate woman.

Mozart's exploration of the demonic in *Don Giovanni* finds an important precedent in *La grotta*. If Salieri's musical emphasis on the dark, threatening aspect of Trofonio's magic was inspired in part by his experience with *Les Danaïdes*, then *La grotta* can be thought of as a conduit through which French musical culture entered Viennese opera buffa in general and *Don Giovanni* in particular.

Here again an allusion by Da Ponte to Casti's libretto may have pointed Mozart in the direction of Salieri's music. Near the end of *La grotta di Trofonio* invites the newly reconciled lovers to spend their honeymoons in his cave:

Posso un fausto vaticinio  
Far pel vostro matrimonio  
E impetrarvi il patrocinio  
Di Proserpina e Pluton.

[I can make an auspicious prophecy for your marriage and obtain for you the protection of Proserpina and Pluto.]

Da Ponte echoed Casti's ottonario tronco at the end of *Don Giovanni*, having Zerlina, Masetto, and Leporello say of Don Giovanni:

Resti dunque quel birbon  
Con Proserpina e Pluton.

[May that rascal remain with Proserpina and Pluto.]

36. See, for example, Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture*, 235.

Mozart knew French opera; and he knew the Italian operas in which Gluck incorporated elements of *tragédie lyrique*. He learned much from both, as *Idomeneo* clearly shows. He knew Gluck's *Don Juan*, and its dance of the furies helped to shape the end of *Don Giovanni*.<sup>37</sup> But none of these could serve as a model for the integration of the demonic into opera buffa, which is precisely what *La grotta di Trofonio* could do well. It showed that allusions to the supernatural and extensive use of the minor mode were compatible with comic opera and that buffo singers such as Benucci could convey menace as well as comedy. For a composer who had recently written "the more comic an Italian opera the better," *La grotta* served as a useful lesson to the contrary.

The importance of the minor mode in *Don Giovanni* as a symbol of Pluto's realm may owe something to Salieri's emphasis on the minor in *La grotta*. Each opera begins with a slow introduction in the minor mode that anticipates a terrifying moment later in the opera. The key of D minor in Trofonio's incantation in act 1 enhances the effect of the offstage male chorus (spirits of the cave), as it does in the finale of act 2. D minor gives way to D major during the course of that finale, as the danger of the supernatural fades. Mozart used the same minor key for his depiction of the confrontation between Don Giovanni and the stone guest, the same offstage male chorus, and the same modal transformation during the second-act finale.

In one of the less tragic but no less dramatic parts of *Don Giovanni*, the masked ball at the end of act 1, one can sense Salieri's influence as well. The absence of ballroom scenes from most previous operatic versions of the Don Juan story may have to do with the important role of the dinner to which he invites the stone guest. This is the *fiesta* in which the story culminates; librettists and composers may have felt that a ball earlier in the opera could only weaken the effect of the dinner scene at the end. Incorporating a ball into their version of the story in spite of the potential problems that it might cause, Da Ponte and Mozart built on a tradition of ballroom scenes in opera buffa, introduced to Vienna through the many ballroom scenes in Goldoni's librettos.

Although Goldoni usually placed balls at the ends of acts, he tended not to incorporate dancing into finales, which he conceived as ensembles more of conversation than of action. In *La fiera di Venezia*, in contrast, Salieri and his librettist Boccherini made their ball an integral part of the second-act finale. Their experiment must have been familiar to Mozart, who wrote variations on one of the minuets that accompanies the dancing in Salieri's finale. Any chance that he might, by 1787, have forgotten Salieri's ballroom scene or that Da Ponte might have been unfamiliar with it was eliminated by a revival of *La fiera* by Joseph's opera buffa company in 1785. (Zinzendorf singled out the second-act finale of *La fiera* as "très amusant" when he attended a performance on 7 October 1785.)<sup>38</sup>

37. See Bruce Alan Brown, *Gluck and the French Theatre in Vienna*. Oxford, 1991; 443.

38. Quoted in Otto Michtner, *Das alte Burgtheater als Opernbühne von der Einführung des deutschen Singspiels (1778) bis zum Tod Kaiser Leopolds II. (1792)*. Vienna, 1970; 397.

If the ballroom scene in *La fiera* represents the integration of social dance into the finale and the expansion of both beyond Goldonian parameters, the ballroom scene in *Don Giovanni* takes that expansion further by incorporating into the finale not only dance but also various events that immediately precede the ball. Da Ponte and Mozart conveyed very dramatically the anticipation, excitement, and uncertainty felt by their characters before the ball. Various episodes are interspersed with musical foreshadowings of the ball in the form of dance music played by an offstage orchestra ("da lontano" according to Mozart's instructions). When the ball finally begins in a room that Da Ponte, using a Goldonian phrase, described as "Sala illuminata e preparata per una gran festa di ballo," the audience will already have briefly heard most of its dance music.

Salieri had allowed his audience a similar sense of recognition by using the ballroom scene's A-major minuet and the forlana in the overture to *La fiera* (second and third movements, respectively). By incorporating their anticipations of the ball into the finale itself, Da Ponte and Mozart greatly enhanced the finale's dramatic realism and complexity.

Da Ponte, like Boccherini, departed from Goldoni's practice of naming only one dance in the stage directions for his ballroom scenes. The minuet gives way in Salieri's finale to the more popular, energetic forlana; in Mozart's finale the minuet is joined, in simultaneous performance, first by the contredanse and then by the "Teitsch," the German dance, each of which is more energetic and more popular than the previous dance. With its fast tempo, 3/8 meter, and scalar runs of four sixteenth notes Mozart's Teitsch resembles Salieri's forlana (the Teitsch marks its modulation to D major with an ascent from D to A identical to the beginning of Salieri's D-major forlana). In each finale a popular dance provides a nobleman with opportunity to make a romantic or sexual proposition. While others dance the forlana, Ostrogoto declares his love to the woman he thinks is Falsirena and suggests that they leave together; while Leporello forces Masetto to dance the Teitsch, Don Giovanni guides Zerlina off the dance floor.

The dancing itself lasts much less time in Mozart's opera than in Salieri's, in which 208 colorful measures of dance music unfold in three different keys and three different orchestrations (to speak only of the G-major minuet and its trios, not the A-major minuet and the forlana). Mozart wrote only 62 measures of dance music, all in G major and all accompanied by oboes, horns, and strings. The minuet with which the dance begins plays continuously throughout. We hear it first with repeats and then without: exactly the pattern of repetition to which Salieri's subjected his G-major minuet before the trio in C is first performed. Mozart presented his minuet a third time, incomplete: Zerlina's cries for help interrupt the dancing before the minuet is finished. Salieri's ball moves forward in real time, more or less; Mozart's occurs in a kind a surreal temporal compression.

Mozart limited the tonal and instrumental variety and the length of his ball so as to expand it in other, unexpected directions: spatial, contrapuntal, and metrical. Salieri's merry-makers dance to a single orchestra, as we know from Boccherini's stage directions, which call specifically for an "orchestra con suonatori" to appear on stage during the ball. Salieri, as far as one can see from the autograph score, wrote no music specifically designated for the musicians on stage; his stage musicians were evidently only for show.

Mozart, in contrast, required three different orchestras on stage, each playing a different dance. With dazzling contrapuntal and polyrhythmic ingenuity, he arranged his three dances so that stage orchestra 2 begins the contredanse while stage orchestra 1 is still playing the minuet; both of these orchestras continue while stage orchestra 3 joins in with the German dance.

Salieri's expansiveness in orchestrational and tonal variety and in length and Mozart's expansiveness in textural, contrapuntal, and spatial complexity have the same goal: a building up of tension, which is released suddenly by unexpected and violent action (Calloandra slaps Grifagno; Zerlina, off stage, cries for help) and a simultaneous cessation of dance. Mozart's ball and his minuet end together at this moment of violent surprise. Salieri's minuet ends too; but, in accordance with the more leisurely, naturalistic pace with which his dances are laid out, the ball continues with the forlana.

A second climax, an unmasking, occurs later in each finale and succeeds in finally bringing Salieri's dancing to an end. By having Ottavio, Anna, and Elvira take off their masks almost simultaneously, Mozart and Da Ponte recreated the moment in which Boccherini and Salieri, during the forlana, had Calloandra unmask to confront her fiancé: "Ab riconoscimi, o traditor!" Don Giovanni's accusers cry out: "Traditore, traditore!" in a vocal unison as threatening as the orchestral unison that accompanies Calloandra's words. Each unmasking leads, within a few measures, to a grand pause (in Salieri's finale this is the end of the forlana), followed by a passage in a new tempo and key in which characters respond to the surprises that have occurred during the masked ball.

*Don Giovanni* is the most Goldonian of Mozart's late opere buffe: the only one in which Goldoni's categorization of roles – parti serie, parti buffe, and parti di mezzo carattere – is closely followed.<sup>39</sup> Also Goldonian is the ballroom scene with which act 1 comes to its brilliant conclusion. But the integration of ball and finale so memorably realized by Mozart was more likely to have been inspired by Boccherini and Salieri than by Goldoni. The ballroom scene in *La fiera di Venezia* showed how effectively the finale could work as an ensemble in which physical activity – not only dancing but coming and going, changing costumes offstage, slapping, unmasking, fainting – is an essential ingredient. By concluding act 2 of *La fiera* with a great orchestrally accompanied number that is pervaded by the rhythms, movements, and intrigues of the masked ball, Boccherini and Salieri helped to lay the dramaturgical and musical foundations on which Da Ponte and Mozart built Don Giovanni's "gran festa di ballo."

39. Hertz, *Mozart's Operas*, 200.

SALIERI'S *COSÌ FAN TUTTE*

During the summer of 1829 the organist, choirmaster, and composer Vincent Novello and his wife Mary, both ardent lovers of Mozart's music, traveled to Salzburg and Vienna with the intention of interviewing Mozart's widow and aged sister and as many others who had known Mozart as they could find.<sup>40</sup> The Novellos' most valuable informant was their first. Constanze Nissen, previously Constanze Mozart, resident in Salzburg since 1820, spoke with the Novellos several times. She seems, at sixty-six, to have been of sound mind and body. Many of her statements, as paraphrased by the Novellos, can be verified by other sources; others have the ring of truth.

Among the many subjects that the conversations touched was Salieri's attitude toward Mozart, which caused Constanze to make a reference to *Così fan tutte*. Both Novellos were intrigued enough by the reference to record it in their notes. Mary paraphrased Constanze as follows: "Salieri's enmity arose from Mozart's setting the *Così fan tutte* which he had originally commenced and given up as unworthy [of] musical invention."<sup>41</sup> Vincent paraphrased Constanze at greater length, and interpreted her words differently: "Salieri first tried to set this opera but failed, and the great success of Mozart in accomplishing what he could make nothing of is supposed to have excited his envy and hatred, and have been the first origin of his enmity and malice towards Mozart."<sup>42</sup>

Biographers of neither Mozart nor Salieri have taken much notice of Constanze's declaration. This may be partly because, if one believes Mozart, Salieri began to act with malice toward him as early as 1783 (the episode involving Anfossi's *Il curioso indiscreto*) and partly because scholars have been unable to find evidence to support Constanze's statement. But such evidence has recently come to light in the form of a manuscript in Salieri's hand that records his attempt to set to music the libretto that its author Da Ponte entitled *La scola degli amanti* but that later, as set to music by Mozart, came to be known as *Così fan tutte*.

The Austrian National Library's huge collection of Salieri's autograph manuscripts includes, among works catalogued as "terzetti," settings of the first two numbers of Da Ponte's *La scola degli amanti*: "La mia Dorabella" and "È la fede delle femmine."<sup>43</sup> Salieri composed the terzetti on two different kinds of paper, at least one of which Mozart also used. "La mia Dorabella" is on the paper that Mozart used in parts of *Così* and in several other works composed from 1789

40. *A Mozart Pilgrimage, Being the Travel Diaries of Vincent and Mary Novello in the Year 1829*, ed. Nerina Medici di Marignano and Rosemary Hughes (London, 1955). The following discussion of a discovery made jointly by Bruce Alan Brown and me in Vienna in July 1994 is based largely on our article "Salieri's *Così fan tutte*," *Cambridge Opera Journal (COJ)* 8 (1996): 17-43. I am grateful to Brown and to Cambridge University Press for permission to publish our findings here.

41. Novello and Novello, *A Mozart Pilgrimage*, 127.

42. Novello and Novello, *A Mozart Pilgrimage*, 127.

43. Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, Musiksammlung (A-Wn), Mus. Hs. 4531.

until shortly before his death, the first completed and dated one being the aria "Schon lacht der holde Frühling," K. 580 (17 September 1789).<sup>44</sup> Salieri also used the paper in parts of the autograph score of *La cifra*, first performed on 11 December 1789.

Mozart completed *Così* shortly before its premiere on 20 January 1790: in his thematic catalogue he dated the opera "im Jenner." He was already at work on *Così* in December 1789, when he entered in his catalogue the aria "Rivolgete a lui lo sguardo," describing it as having originally been written for Benucci to sing in *Così*. Salieri probably composed *La cifra* during the period immediately before its premiere on 11 December 1789. It is unlikely that he would have begun composing *Così* after the completion of *La cifra* because by then Mozart had probably already begun to work on his setting of Da Ponte's libretto. Assuming that Salieri was busy with *La cifra* from the beginning of November until the premiere, he probably began and then broke off the composition of *La scola degli amanti* sometime between the completion of *Il pastor fido* (first performed on 11 February 1789) and the beginning of November 1789.

There are some good reasons why Da Ponte might have intended the libretto of *La scola degli amanti* for Salieri rather than Mozart. This was Da Ponte's original title; and he never departed from it even when referring, many years later, to Mozart's setting. The title and several aspects of the plot are reminiscent of the opera with which Joseph's comic troupe introduced itself in 1783: *La scuola de' gelosi*. Did Da Ponte intend *La scola degli amanti* as a kind of sequel to *La scuola de' gelosi*: the second in a series of "scuola-operas" by Salieri?<sup>45</sup>

Alfonso gives his first lesson in the fidelity of women in the terzetto "È la fede delle femmine," paraphrasing an aria by Metastasio ("È la fede degli amanti," in *Demetrio*). Earlier in his career (in *La secchia rapita*, *Der Rauchfangkehrer*, and *Prima la musica*) Salieri had shown himself more partial than Mozart to Metastasian quotation and parody.

44. Watermark no. 100 in Alan Tyson's catalogue of watermarks in Mozart's autograph scores, in *Neue Mozart Ausgabe (NMA)*, Serie 10, Supplement (Kassel, 1992), 47-48.

45. In view of the frequency with which French playwrights used the word *école* in the titles of plays, the infrequency with which Italian librettists used the word *scuola* in titles is surprising. When Da Ponte wrote *La scola degli amanti* only a handful of librettos beginning with *scuola* had been performed (see Claudio Sartori, *I libretti italiani a stampa dalle origini al 1800: Catalogo analitico con 16 indici*. 7 vols. Cuneo, 1990-94; 21348-93). These included, as it happens, a libretto entitled *La scuola degli amanti* (by Giuseppe Palomba), performed with music by Giacomo Tritto in Naples in 1783.

Mozart's *Così*, both text and music, contains several references to his previous Viennese opera buffa, *Figaro*, including the motto itself, adopted from the words "Così fan tutte le belle" sung by Basilio.<sup>46</sup> The decision to incorporate this particular motto into *La scola degli amanti* was made, probably on Mozart's suggestion, late in the compositional process, well after Salieri had given up on the opera.<sup>47</sup> It was probably also Mozart who turned the motto into the opera's primary title, placing Da Ponte's original title in a subsidiary position. The printed announcement of the opera's first performance referred to it as COSI FAN TUTTE, / o sia, / LA SCOLA DEGLI AMANTI (the alternative title in letters much smaller than those of the primary title). With this change of title Mozart obscured the libretto's references to *La scuola de' gelosi*: he put his personal stamp on the libretto by choosing a title that refers to one of his own operas rather than to one of Salieri's.

In composing his first opera buffa, *Le donne letterate*, Salieri sketched the introduzione as one of his very first steps. He seems to have done the same in the composition of *La scola degli amanti* twenty years later. Confronted with a libretto that began with at least two terzetti in rapid succession, he apparently considered these, together with the intervening dialogue in recitative, to share the function of an introduzione. He began composition with two of these terzetti and some recitative between them, probably first setting to music the text that interested him most – the Metastasian paraphrase. Having completed "È la fede delle femmine" he turned to the first terzetto, "La mia Dorabella," but left the number incomplete.

Alfonso's paraphrase of Metastasio is a joke; Salieri, like Mozart, responded to it with playful music (Mozart wrote "scherzando"). Salieri seems to have been more concerned than Mozart that his audience hear and understand Alfonso's words. Mozart gave Alfonso six measures of cut time, Allegro, to get through three lines of verse without a single rest; in Salieri's setting, Alfonso goes through the same three lines in six measures, but in slower tempo. His jovial tune in compound meter divides the old verses neatly into two-measure phrases. Mozart's Alfonso makes up for the haste with which he begins his joke by slowing down to emphasize the punch line ("dove sia nessun lo sa"), which Salieri allows to pass with less emphasis.

Mozart, in his setting of "La mia Dorabella," gave Ferrando and Guilelmo much the same music. Salieri differentiated them more clearly. The tenor Ferrando has a lyrical melody in which conjunct and disjunct motion are nicely balanced. After singing the first two lines of text to regular two-measure phrases, he declaims lines 3 and 4 ("Fedel quanto bella / il cielo la fé") in a single, four-measure phrase whose beauty reflects the words. Guilelmo responds with a mostly triadic line characteristic of the buffo caricato that he is. Alfonso, trying to reconcile his quarreling friends, sings a melody that brings together elements of their tunes ("Ho i crini già grigi" recalls "La mia Fiordiligi"; "finiscano qua" recalls "il cielo la fé").

46. Heartz, *Mozart's Operas*, 234.

47. Alan Tyson, *Mozart: Studies of the Autograph Scores* (Cambridge, Mass., 1987), 190, 197.

Why did Salieri give up the composition of *La scola degli amanti*? According to Mary Novello's interpretation of Constanze Nissen's statement, he found Da Ponte's text to be "unworthy [of] musical invention." According to Vincent, he "could make nothing of" the libretto. Neither of these explanations is consistent with Salieri's personality. During his long career he set several weak librettos. We have no evidence (other than one interpretation of Constanze's statement) of his ever having rejected a libretto because of its poor quality. This does not mean, of course, that he never did; but he certainly was not as selective as Mozart when it came to choosing librettos. Salieri's decision to leave *La scola degli amanti* incomplete probably had less to do with the quality of the libretto than with his state of mind in 1789, which seems to have been characterized by artistic indecisiveness, a relatively low level of creative energy, and varying degrees of dependence on earlier music. After the failure of *Il pastor fido* and his falling-out with Da Ponte during Lent 1789, he may simply not have felt up to the task of composing another new Italian opera, preferring to recompose an old one (*La dama pastorella*).

Once Salieri began an opera he almost always finished it. After he broke off the composition of *L'isola capricciosa* in 1779 it lay unfinished until 1792, when he completed it as *Il mondo in rovescia*. In 1780 he began *Semiramide* for Naples; two years later he finished and presented it in Munich. He might have finished *La scola degli amanti* too (doubtless he kept the fragments with that possibility in mind), had Mozart not taken over the libretto and created from it an opera that Salieri could not equal. That Mozart, in doing so, excited Salieri's "envy and hatred" is not outside the realm of possibility.

#### RONDÒS FOR FERRARESE

Despite being older than Mozart and having written many more operas, Salieri had much to learn from Mozart. But he seems to have been slow to do so, perhaps because so few of Mozart's opere buffe were performed in the Burgtheater until quite late in the 1780s. Only one full-length opera by Mozart, *Figaro*, was performed in the Burgtheater during the first five years of the opera buffa company. But during the last two years of Joseph's reign – the period of Da Ponte's greatest influence – Salieri had ample opportunity to hear and learn from Mozart's Italian operas. The Burgtheater presented not only a revival of *Figaro* but a new production of *Don Giovanni* and the premiere of *Così*. With the departure of Martin y Soler at the end of 1787 Salieri and Mozart emerged more clearly than ever as the two principal composers of the Viennese court theater. Writing for the same prima donna, Ferrarese, and setting to music words of the same librettist (even setting the same words to music, in the case of *Così fan tutte*), Mozart and Salieri absorbed certain aspects of each other's music, and both composers benefited from this interaction.<sup>48</sup>

48. The following is largely derived from my article "Rondò vocali di Salieri e Mozart per Adriana Ferrarese," in Muraro, *I vicini di Mozart*, ed. Maria Teresa Muraro and David Bryant, 2 cols. (Florence, 1989); 1:185-209.

When preparations were being made to revive *Figaro* in 1789, with Ferrarese in the role of Susanna, it was decided to replace the garden aria in act 4, "Deh vieni non tardar," with a rondò. Mozart, observing the convention that encouraged composers to place a rondò for the heroine of an opera buffa shortly before the opera's last finale, had originally intended to write a rondò for Strozzi, the first Susanna, in this spot; but he had abandoned it in favor of the seemingly simple, charming "Deh vieni."<sup>49</sup> With Ferrarese in the role of Susanna, Mozart agreed to eliminate "Deh vieni" in favor of a brilliant virtuoso aria, the rondò "Al desio di chi t'adora."

In "Al desio" Mozart created a rondò that in many respects follows the rigid conventions of the form, as exemplified by "Ah sia già de' miei sospiri," the rondò that Salieri had added to *La scuola de' gelosi* for its Viennese revival of 1783. The text, almost certainly by Da Ponte (the opening line is borrowed from the second finale of *Don Giovanni*, where Donna Anna sings it),<sup>50</sup> is a twelve-line poem consisting of three quatrains of ottonari:

Al desio di chi t'adora,  
 Vieni, vola, oh mia speranza!  
 Morirò, se indarno an cora  
 Tu mi lasci sospirar.  
 Le promesse, i giuramenti,  
 Deh! rammenta, oh mio tesoro  
 E i momenti di ristoro  
 Che mi fece Amor sperar!  
 Ah ch'omai più non resisto  
 All'ardor che il sen m'accende  
 Chi d'amor gli affetti intende  
 Compatisca il mio penar.

[To the longing of the one who adores you, come, fly, oh my hope! I will die if you let me languish any longer in vain. Oh my treasure, remember the promise, the vows, and the moments of comfort for which Love makes me hope. Ah! I can no longer resist the passion that burns in my breast. May those who understand the effects of love pity my suffering.]

"Al desio" consists of two parts, one in slow tempo and one in fast:

[Larghetto]	Allegro
A-B-A	C-D-E-D-F

The first quatrain of the text is set as a melody in duple meter (A). This is followed by contrasting material (B), a setting of the second quatrain. Then melody A returns. The fast section, also in duple meter, begins with a transition (C) that ends on the dominant; this is followed by the principal melody of the fast section (D); then a contrasting episode (E), a repetition of the principal melody, and closing material (F). "Al desio" differs in form from "Ah sia già" in one respect only: in Salieri's rondò the tempo change occurs after rather than before the transition passage C.

49. Hertz, *Mozart's Operas*, 151-52; John Platoff, "'Non tardar amato bene' Completed – but Not by Mozart," *Musical Times* 132 (1991): 557-60.

50. I am grateful to Richard Armbruster for pointing this out to me.

The conventionality of "Al desio" does not keep it from being Mozartean in many ways. By composing the aria in F major, the key of "Deh vieni," Mozart integrated it into the beautifully balanced tonal plan of *Figaro*.<sup>51</sup> He refrained from exploiting the full extent of Ferrarese's voice, making the vocal style of "Al desio" consistent with the rest of Susanna's music. His use of wind instruments is particularly beautiful, and richer than is normal in Italian rondòs of the period. The score includes a sextet of winds: two basset horns, two bassoons, and two flutes. Playing for the most part together in a group and often in antiphony with the strings, the winds give this aria an extraordinary sonority. (The basset horn was one of Mozart's favorite instruments, partly because of its use in the music of Viennese Freemasonry and partly because of his friendship with the great clarinetist and basset horn player Anton Stadler, also a Mason. Salieri, not a Mason, as far as we know, seems to have called for the basset horn in none of his operas.)

Mozart's rondò was a success in Vienna, if Zinzendorf's reaction is representative. He wrote in his diary on 7 May 1790: "To the opera *Le nozze di Figaro*. The duo of the two women and Ferraresi's rondo pleased as always."<sup>52</sup>

While the second version of *Figaro* continued to be performed during the second half of 1789, Da Ponte and Salieri brought *La cifra* to the stage. Ferrarese sang Eurilla, a role that suited her well. Eurilla is a noblewoman brought up as a shepherdess, whose growing love for a nobleman begins to stir her noble blood. But she cannot understand her feelings; and her confusion reaches its climax just before the finale of the second and last act, in a solo scena with rondò, "Sola e mesta fra tormenti."

Da Ponte's text is a typical rondò poem in twelve ottonari:

Sola e mesta fra tormenti  
 Passerò languendo gli anni,  
 E farò de' miei lamenti  
 Campi e selve risuonar.  
 Mi vedrò la notte e il giorno  
 Neri oggetti all' alma intorno,  
 E una barbara speranza  
 Che vorrei, né so lasciar.  
 Ah perché spietato Amore,  
 Nel mio core entrasti mai,  
 Perché vidi i cari rai,  
 Onde appresi a sospirar?

[Alone and dejected, I will pass the years languishing among torments, and I will make the fields and forests resound with my laments. Night or day, everything will be black to my senses, [made so] by a cruel hope that I want to give up but cannot. Ah, why, unmerciful Love, did you ever enter my heart? Why did I see the dear eyes from which I learned to sigh?]

51. Hertz, *Mozart's Operas*, 150.

52. Zinzendorf, 7 May 1790, in *Mozart: Die Dokumente seines Lebens (MDL)*, ed. Otto Erich Deutsch (Kassel, 1961), 321.

The structure of Salieri's aria follows the conventions of rondò form as closely as does that of "Al desio," differing from Mozart's aria most importantly in lacking the transition between the two main themes, A and C:

Un poco lento	Allegro – Non tanto allegro – Più allegro
A-B-A	C-D-C-E

As in "Al desio" (and many other rondòs), melody A is a setting of the first quatrain; contrasting material B is a setting of the second quatrain. After repeating melody A, Salieri had the choice of writing a transition in the slow tempo (as he had in "Ah sia già de' miei sospiri") or shifting directly to the fast tempo (as Mozart did in "Al desio"). He did the latter.

The similarities between "Sola e mesta" and "Al desio" suggest that Salieri knew Mozart's aria (hardly surprising) and that he drew inspiration from it. Salieri set his rondo in the same key as Mozart's. The elaborate writing for winds in "Al desio" finds an echo in the even larger wind ensemble in Salieri's aria: pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, and horns. Mozart accompanied the beginning of the main theme of the slow section with winds alone; Salieri went further in the same direction, accompanying his slow theme with two horns alone.

The opening themes themselves have similarities that go beyond the melodic conventions – such as those that encouraged the use of duple meter and gavotte rhythm that helped to shape both melodies. They are identical in their vocal range (from middle C to A an octave and a sixth higher). Susanna's opening idea reappears, lightly varied, in the second measure of Eurilla's tune. The accompaniments too are close. The two horns with which Salieri accompanied Eurilla's rising line F-G-G-G#-A are almost identical to the horn parts within the wind sextet that accompanies Susanna's F-G-G-A.

Mozart's melody culminates in an ascent from D to tonic F, with offbeat chords in the violins and bass descending from B $\flat$  to G to F. After quickly touching its highest point, A, the melody descends to the final cadence. Salieri's melody reaches a similar climax, with the same descent in the bass and offbeat chords. But Salieri interrupted Ferrarese's movement upward toward A by having her sustain F for two and a half measures, then incorporating the A into a cadenza-like descent. He further delayed her arrival on F by delving first into her lower register. Salieri amplified and dramatized Mozart's closing gesture, making fuller use of Ferrarese's virtuosity and range.

This is not the only part of "Sola e mesta" in which Salieri, without the limitations imposed by an existing role, could exploit the talents of his prima donna more fully than Mozart. The vocal range that he required of Ferrarese in "Sola e mesta" represents an extension of a semi tone in both directions beyond that in "Al desio." He made good use of one of Ferrarese's vocal specialties, having her leap between her highest and lowest notes.

The arias also differ in structure and proportions. Most of the musical interest of "Al desio" is concentrated in the long slow section, and especially the episode (part B). Salieri made his episode six measures shorter than Mozart's; it lacks the intricate interweaving of voice and winds that gives Mozart's episode its

richness. But Salieri's fast section is much longer and more complex than Mozart's; it includes several changes of tempo and a sudden, dramatic modulation by a third, from tonic F to A $\flat$  (at the beginning of part D) that recalls the move from G to B $\flat$  when Eurilla confronts the wild boar in the finale of act 1. There is no tonal gesture of this kind in Mozart's aria, but sudden shifts of a third within a rondò were nothing new for Salieri. He had experimented with one in "Amor, pietoso Amore" (*Il ricco d'un giorno*), a rondò in A that moves abruptly to C.

In the autograph of *La cifra* we find the following comment by Salieri concerning his scena for Eurilla. It is possibly unique among his annotations in mentioning the name of a singer: "Instrumental recitative 'Alfin son sola' and Rondò 'Sola e mesta fra tormenti': Pieces in the high serious style, but suitable for the person who sang them and for the situation in which she finds herself, and above all because they were composed for a famous prima donna [in a footnote: 'Mad. Ferraresi'], who could perform them most perfectly, and won the greatest applause."<sup>53</sup>

Ferrarese and her admirers did not have to wait long for another brilliant role. Two months after the premiere of *La cifra* she became the first Fiordiligi in *Così*. Again Da Ponte saw to it that she had a rondò, which he placed, as usual, in the second act, furnishing the composer and singer with yet another classic rondò poem, "Per pietà, ben mio, perdona." Just as Salieri seems to have learned from "Al desio di chi t'adora," so Mozart in turn seems to have learned from "Sola e mesta." Fiordiligi's rondò, indeed, resembles Eurilla's more closely than it does Susanna's. And it resembles "Sola e mesta" in precisely those respects in which Salieri's aria differs from Mozart's earlier rondò.

In the slow part of "Sola e mesta" Salieri wrote an episode six measures shorter than the analogous episode in Mozart's "Al desio." In "Per pietà" Mozart shortened the episode by another six measures: it lacks most of the repetition of words, the tranquil lyricism of the analogous passage in Mozart's previous rondò. Instead of the elaborate transition with which Mozart returned to the principal theme of the slow section in "Al desio," in "Per pietà" he ended the episode with just a simple cadence on the dominant, as Salieri did in "Sola e mesta."

While the episode in the slow section underwent progressive diminution in the three rondòs, the final part of the fast section became progressively longer and more elaborate, growing from thirty measures in "Al desio" to forty-one in "Sola e mesta" to forty-eight in "Per pietà."

The vocal style of "Per pietà" is also closer to that of "Sola e mesta" than to that of Mozart's earlier rondò. We find the same dramatic leaps that Salieri exploited in Eurilla's aria. Here too Mozart went beyond Salieri, extending Ferrarese's voice yet again a half step in both directions. Just as Salieri's opening

53. Salieri's annotations in the autograph of *La cifra* are transcribed in Rudolf Angermüller, *Salieri*, 3: 53-55; Angermüller, *Antonio Salieri: Fatti e documenti* (Legnago, 1985), 107-8; and Edward Swenson, "Antonio Salieri: A Documentary Biography" (Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 1974), 149-50.

melody reminds us of the opening of Mozart's "Al desio," so the opening of "Per pietà," in its leaps from the tonic down to the fifth scale degree and back to the tonic, reminds us of the beginning of "Sola e mesta." By transposing the leaps down a semitone Mozart emphasized more effectively than Salieri the beauty of Ferrarese's low register.

One of Salieri's best ideas was to accompany the beginning of his slow section with two horns alone. Salieri's two horns appear in Mozart's "Per pietà," but not at the beginning. Salieri was content to repeat the melody of the slow section literally, without any variation, when it returned after the episode. His practice reflected the Italian assumption that it was the performer's job, not the composer's, to vary a rondò's melody. Mozart, in contrast, almost always varied the melody or its accompaniment in some interesting way, such as the delicate pizzicato that accompanies the slow melody of "Al desio" on its return. In "Per pietà" he introduced Salieri's horns. Having allowed the horns a short solo in the slow section, he made them a crucial part of the fast section, their virtuoso display going far beyond anything Salieri dared to ask.

One important aspect of Salieri's rondò finds no counterpart in "Per pietà": the sudden shift from F to A $\flat$  in the fast part. Compared to "Sola e mesta" Mozart's rondò is harmonically tame. The color and virtuosity of the winds and brass, particularly the horns, compensate for its lack of tonal complexity. This does not mean that Mozart had no interest in the kind of harmonic surprises exploited by Salieri. Mozart's last rondòs, those of Sesto and Vitellia in *La clemenza di Tito*, are full of abrupt and daring modulations that differentiate these arias clearly from those he wrote for Susanna and Fiordiligi.<sup>54</sup> "Deh per questo istante solo," in A major, contains two sudden modulations by a third. When Sesto sings "Disperato io vado a morte" in C he reminds us of Eurilla singing "Fra tormenti" in A $\flat$ . It was from arias like "Sola e mesta" that Mozart learned the effectiveness of sudden third modulations in the fast section of a rondò and their usefulness for the expression of heroic pathos.

Mozart's "Al desio" and "Per pietà," in spite of having been composed less than six months apart for the same singer, and within the parameters of a very conventional form, are quite different. The differences are easier to understand if we think of "Sola e mesta" as a transitional work, inspired by and in turn inspiration for Mozart: an aria that demonstrated to him the strength of certain alternatives to his own previous attempt to write a rondò for Ferrarese and encouraged him to take these alternatives further than Salieri. These rondòs show us two composers contributing to an evolutionary process effecting large-scale form as well as melody, accompaniment, and instrumentation. As rivals for the patronage of Joseph II and the Viennese public Salieri and Mozart must have mistrusted and resented one another; but their rondòs for Ferrarese suggest that, as musicians, they respected and learned from one another.

54. "Compared to Vitellia's 'Non più di fiori' the two Rondeaux of 1789 are as tame animals to wild ones" (Daniel Hertz, "Mozart and His Italian Contemporaries: 'La clemenza di Tito,'" *Mozart-Jahrbuch* (1978-79), 283). And Sesto's "Deh per questo istante solo" is no less wild than Vitellia's rondò; see Hertz, *Mozart's Operas*, 323-27; and Rice, *W. A. Mozart: La clemenza di Tito*, 91-95.

BEYOND OPERA BUFFA: *AXUR*, *TITO*, AND *DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE*

In his last two operas Mozart explored genres other than opera buffa. He may have found inspiration in a work that, despite having been written for Joseph's opera buffa company, departs in most respects from the conventions of opera buffa. Echoes of Salieri's *Axur* in *Tito* and *Die Zauberflöte* suggest that Mozart's last operas would have been quite different had Salieri not written *Axur* three years earlier.

Flexibility of form, many ensembles (including finales), integration of chorus (including offstage chorus) into ensembles – *Tito* and *Die Zauberflöte* share these features with one another and with *Axur*. The offstage chorus singing "Ah" on a diminished seventh chord in the first finale of *Tito* recalls Salieri's offstage choral "Ah" that interrupts the second love duet in act 1 of *Axur*. The arrival of the three ladies near the beginning of *Die Zauberflöte*, where Tamino's C-minor cadence leads directly to A $\flat$  major sustained over two measures, looks back to the interruption of the C-minor cadence in the trio near the end of *Axur*, also with two measures of A $\flat$ -major harmony, as *Axur*'s slaves cry out for help.<sup>55</sup> A transition in *Tito* linking Vitellia's rondò in F, "Non più di fiori," to the following G-major chorus, "Che del ciel, che degli dei" reminds one of the transition with which Salieri linked the male quartet and the concluding chorus in the finale of act 3 of *Axur*. Both passages involve a sudden shift in tempo from fast to moderate (Salieri's "Mezzo allegro del doppio" presumably requires a tempo half that of the previous Presto). Both feature march rhythms, antiphonal effects at the beginning (Salieri's horns answer oboes; Mozart's strings answer brass and timpani), and fast scales at the end. The harmonic destination of both transitions is the dominant of the following chorus, reiterated by the whole orchestra in unison and ending with a grand fermata. The similarity in conception and function of these transitions shows that Mozart had much to learn from Salieri; but that similarity also calls attention to the extraordinary craftsmanship of Mozart's music, which is more concise, more purposeful in its harmony, and more muscular in its voice leading than Salieri's.

*Axur* had its origins in Beaumarchais's assumption that "an opera is neither a tragedy nor a comedy but participates in both and can embrace all the genres." *Die Zauberflöte* illustrates this conception of opera as clearly as *Axur*. Mozart's opera, called a "dramma eroicomico" when performed in Dresden and Prague in Italian translation,<sup>56</sup> shares with *Axur* an exotic setting, a solemn temple scene, and several splendid crowd scenes. The themes of abduction and rescue are common to both operas. Tamino and Pamina match Atar and Aspasia in goodness, nobility, and fidelity, while Papageno far surpasses Biscroma as a purveyor of comic relief. The priest-ruler Sarastro combines the offices of King *Axur* and Arteneo, high priest of Brahma. (Invocations of Brahma in *Axur* are echoed in another Viennese Singspiel of the period, Wenzel Müller's *Das Sonnenfest der Braminen*, 1790.) The trombones that contribute to the grandeur of the first version of *Axur* sound again in *Die Zauberflöte*.

55. For the passage from *Axur* see Rice, "The Operas of Antonio Salieri," 218.

56. Sartori nos. 10699-701 (see fn 45, above).

A few weeks before his death Mozart invited Salieri and Cavalieri to attend a performance of *Die Zauberflöte* as his guests. He wrote to Constanze:

You cannot imagine how charming [*artig*] they were and how much they liked not only my music, but the libretto and everything. They both said that it was an *operone* ("big opera"), worthy to be performed for the grandest festival and before the greatest monarch, and that they would often go to see it, as they had never seen a more beautiful or delightful show. He listened and watched most attentively and from the overture to the last chorus there was not a single number that did not call forth from him a bravo! or bello! It seemed as if they could not thank me enough for my kindness.<sup>57</sup>

When *Die Zauberflöte* reached the stage *Axur* was less than four years old, but it had already become closely associated with the Habsburg monarchy. First performed in celebration of the wedding of Archduke Francis, it became quickly known as Joseph's favorite opera. Leopold II chose to make his first appearance in the Burgtheater during a performance that celebrated Franz's second wedding in September 1790. *Axur* was one of several operas performed in Frankfurt in celebration of Leopold's coronation as emperor. When, less than a year later, Salieri praised *Die Zauberflöte* as an opera "worthy to be performed for the grandest festival and before the greatest monarch," was he perhaps acknowledging its kinship to *Axur*?

57. Mozart to his wife, 14 October 1791, in *MBA*, 4:161-62. Note Mozart's use of "artig" to describe Salieri. On 7 May 1783, expressing doubt as to Da Ponte's sincerity, he wrote to his father: "sie wissen wohl die Herrn Italiener sind ins gesicht sehr artig!"

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*A note from the author to the readers of this study:*

Three of Salieri's arias mentioned here – "La ra la ra," "Ah sia già de' miei sospiri," and "Sola e mesta fra tormenti" – can be heard on Cecilia Bartoli's Salieri Album. For further details and musical excerpts go to [www.deccaclassics.com/artists/bartoli/salieri](http://www.deccaclassics.com/artists/bartoli/salieri).

Salieri's *La grotta di Trofonio* is now available on CD, performed by Les Talens Lyriques under the direction of Christophe Rousset. Excerpts can be heard by going to [www.amazon.com/Salieri-Trofonio-Talens-Lyriques-Rousset/dp/B000BUCW50](http://www.amazon.com/Salieri-Trofonio-Talens-Lyriques-Rousset/dp/B000BUCW50).

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