

Zeitschrift:	Basler Jahrbuch für historische Musikpraxis : eine Veröffentlichung der Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, Lehr- und Forschungsinstitut für Alte Musik an der Musik-Akademie der Stadt Basel
Herausgeber:	Schola Cantorum Basiliensis
Band:	38 (2014)
Artikel:	Riducendo la maggior parte dell'arie dell'opera in canzon da battello : examples of aria transformations in an 18th-century Venetian music manuscript and its related sources
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DOI:	https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-868848

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*RIDUCENDO LA MAGGIOR PARTE DELL'ARIE
DELL'OPERA IN CANZON DA BATTELLO*
Examples of aria transformations in an 18th-century
Venetian music manuscript and its related sources

by Marco Rosa Salva

Reworking, transforming, and reusing musical material is a typical feature of *dramma per musica*. Successful librettos were often set to music by several composers. Arias were added, cut, or replaced to adapt to the public's taste, the specific talents of a singer, or the theatre's customs.¹ Moreover, the diffusion and popularity of opera created many musical 'by-products', adapted for domestic and non-professional use. There are countless collections of opera arias² reduced for voice and basso continuo, a transformation of the original score; and transcriptions for instruments are also quite common.³ In Venice, moreover, many arias have been reworked into simpler forms such as the

¹ It would be of course impossible to thoroughly list here the vast literature on such a topic. Case studies about text and music transformations of 17th-century operas have been conducted by Lorenzo Bianconi, Giuseppe Vecchi, Harold S. Powers, in: Maria Teresa Muraro (ed.), *Venezia e il melodramma nel Seicento*, Florence: Olschki, 1976; see also Wendy Heller, „The Queen as King. Refashioning Semiramide for 'Seicento' Venice“, *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 5/2, 1993, 93–114; Jennifer Williams Brown, „Scipione l'Italiano or Cavalli's Conquest of Italy“, in the International conference *Venezia mercato delle Arti*, (Venice, October 11, 2008). Wide circulation of arias are testified in Reinhart Strohm, *Italienische Opernarien des Frühen Settecento (1720–1730)*, Köln: Arno Volk, 1976 (*Analecta musicologica*, 16), two vols. About reworkings of *seicento* libretti for Handel's operas see Lorenzo Bianconi and Giuseppina La Face, *I libretti italiani di Georg Friedrich Händel*, Florence: Olschki, 1992, two vols. For borrowings and self-borrowings in Handel's works, see John H. Roberts, „Handel's Borrowings from Keiser“, and George J. Buelow, „Handel's Borrowings Techniques. Some Fundamental Questions Derived from a Study of 'Agrippina' (Venice, 1709)“, in: Hans Joachim Marx (ed.), *Göttinger Händel-Beiträge*, Kassel, Basel and London: Bärenreiter, 1986, 51–76 and 105–128. See also Nicola Usula's article in the present volume, 67–82.

² About the importance of collection of arias for the study of opera reception see for instance Teresa M. Gialdroni, „La circolazione di brani dell'*Olimpiade*“, in: Simone Caputo (ed.), *Studi Pergolesiani* 7, Bern: Peter Lang, 2012, 179–196.

³ See for instance the harpsichord transcriptions of Handel's arias by William Babell: Graham Pont, „An Early 18th-Century Manuscript of Harpsichord Music. William Babell and Handel's *Vo' far guerra*“, *British Library Journal* 21 (1996), 176–183; about transcription for recorder and flute of Handel's arias David Lasocki, „The London Publisher John Walsh (1665 or 1666–1736) and the Recorder“, in: Nicholaus Delius (ed.), *Sine musica nulla vita. Festschrift Hermann Moeck zum 75. Geburtstag am 16. September 1997*, Celle: Moeck, 1997, 343–374.

canzone da battello, a reworking in both genre and form.⁴ The present paper will examine some examples of *canzone da battello* stemming from well-known operas staged in Venice around 1730 as evidence of a wider cultural phenomenon.

Among the music manuscripts in the library of the Querini Stampalia Foundation in Venice, we find a miscellaneous volume⁵ consisting of fifteen gatherings copied by different mid 18th-century hands,⁶ possibly as part of the music archive of the Querini family.⁷ The volume was assembled at the end of the 19th-century, when the library's collection was reordered and catalogued. This assemblage combined different materials inaccurately, however, and caused imprecisions in the library's catalogue of music manuscripts printed in 1984.⁸

The main corpus of the manuscript is constituted of arias taken from operas staged in Venetian theatres during the first half of the 18th-century, all of them reduced to a melody and a bass line. Among them, we find a group of five arias entitled *Arie per il flauto* from the opera *Gianuir* by Giovanni Antonio Giay. In a following bifolium there is an extract from Johann Adolf Hasse's opera *Artaserse* entitled *Duetto a Due Flauti e Basso Del Sig:r Gio: Hasse Sassone* (see table 1). In both cases, the melody is notated in treble clef instead of soprano clef (which was commonly used for high vocal scores). Moreover, the music is transposed up to suit the range of the intended instrument, and is consequently too high to be sung. Both the ambitus and the chosen tonality strongly suggest that the word *flauto* refers to the recorder and not to the flute.⁹ Strikingly, however, it must be noted that despite the

⁴ On venetian tradition of *canzoni da battello* and *barcarole* see *Barcarola. Il canto del gondoliere nella vita quotidiana e nell'immaginazione artistica*, ed. by Sabine Meine, Rome: Viella, 2014; Sergio Barcellona, *La „Canzone da Battello“ veneziana en el siglo XVIII. Nuevas aportaciones*, at <https://independent.academia.edu/SergioBarcellona> (February 23, 2016); a facsimile of the principal sources of this repertoire is provided by Sergio Barcellona and Galliano Titton (eds), *Canzoni da battello, (1740–1750)*, Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1990 (Cultura Popolare Veneta).

⁵ Venice, Biblioteca della Fondazione Querini Stampalia, MS 1128 (Cl. VIII, cod. XIV). It is filed in the Italian national library service: SBN, codice documento IT\ICCU\MSM\0112621; it is not filed in RISM.

⁶ A single hand copied gatherings 5 (fols 62r–71v), 9 (fols 89r–90r), and 14 (fols 106r–109v); a different hand copied gatherings 6 (fols 72r–77r) and 8 (fols 86r–87v); and a third hand copied gathering 7 (fols 82r–82v).

⁷ On the musical interests of the Querini Stampalia family see Giovanni Morelli, „Un verbale di assenza con figure. La musica dei Querini“, in: Giorgio Busetto and Madile Gambier (eds), *I Querini Stampalia. Un ritratto di famiglia nel Settecento veneziano*, Venice: Fondazione Querini Stampalia, 1987 (Collana Queriniana 3), 125–136.

⁸ Franco Rossi, *Le opere musicali della Fondazione „Querini Stampalia“ di Venezia*, Turin: EDT Musica, 1984 (Cataloghi di fondi musicali italiani 2). Composers, place and date of performances, and opera sources are often misattributed: they are corrected below in table 1.

⁹ The Querini Stampalia library holds other works for recorder: sets of sonatas, including six by Alessandro Santini, one by Antonio Vivaldi (RV 52), two anonymous trio sonatas; they are described in Federico Maria Sardelli, *Vivaldi's Music for Flute and Recorder*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007.

obvious instrumental destination of these transcriptions the copyists always kept the original aria texts under the melodies.¹⁰

Running through the manuscript, it is possible to identify further aria transcriptions sharing the same characteristics, even though they lack the explicit indication *per flauto*. For instance, the complete gathering n. 5 includes seven arias from the opera *Alessandro Severo* by Andrea Bernasconi. Moreover, one finds one aria from Hasse's *Olimpiade* (in gathering 7), one from Domenico Natale Sarro's *Didone Abbandonata* (in gathering 9), one from Luca Antonio Predieri's *Scipione il Giovane*, and two arias from Geminiano Giacomelli's *Epaminonda* (all in gathering 14). All these transcriptions are extracted from operas performed between 1730–1739 at *San Giovanni Grisostomo*, the most famous and magnificent Venetian theatre at the time, which belonged to the Grimani family.¹¹ These transcriptions in *MS 1128* are therefore most likely the work of copyists directly linked to the theatre.¹² Table 1 displays these arias with a sample list of concordances, which includes other transcriptions and adaptations, for example the psaltery version of *Ritorna caro bene* in the Montecassino library and the sacred contrafacta of *Tu vuoi ch'io viva o cara*.¹³

Tab. 1: Recorder transcriptions of arias from Venice, Biblioteca della Fondazione Querini Stampalia, misc. ms. 1128 (Cl. VIII, cod. XIV). All operas given in S. Giovanni Grisostomo theatre, 1730–1739.

1) fols 62r–71v *Arie di San G G:mo della seconda* [*Alessandro Severo*, Andrea Bernasconi/Apostolo Zeno, 1739]
So che vezzoso il ciglio I, 3 *Faustina Bordoni Hasse*
Non fidarti di placido mare (not in libretto) conc.: I-Vlevi CF.B.55 5a
Vanne tosto I, 13 *Faustina Bordoni Hasse*
Figlio di questo seno (not in libretto) conc.: S-SK 494:6
Non ho in petto II,5 *Faustina Bordoni Hasse* conc: GB-Lbl Add. 31604; I-Vlevi CF.B.55 7am

¹⁰ Other transcriptions for recorder and flute of operas are listed by Gerhard Braun, „Arrangé pour deux flûtes, Opernbearbeitungen für Flöteninstrumente“, *Tibia* 4 (1987), 566–572. Further collections of arias similar to Querini's are those from *Siroe* by Hasse and from *Nitocri* by Sellitto (S-Skma, ms. T-SE-R); from *Didone Abbandonata* by Hasse (D-Bsa, ms. SA 1576); arias by Hasse and Leo in GB-CDu, Mackworth Collection vol. XVII; from Galuppi's *Il re alla caccia*, (S-Uu, ms. Gimo 92); and the arias in the library of Benedetto Marcello Conservatory, Venice, dated 1743 (Fondo Correr, busta 43.18).

¹¹ The Grimani of the branch of *S. Maria Formosa* were already the owners of *Santi Giovanni e Paolo* and *San Samuele* theatres; *San Giovanni Grisostomo* was built by the brothers Giovanni Carlo and Vincenzo in 1677. See Harris Sheridan Saunders Jr., *The Repertoire of a Venetian Opera House (1678–1714). The Teatro Grimani di S. Giovanni Grisostomo*, Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1985.

¹² The activity of musical copyists for Venetian theatres has been analysed by Sylvie Mamy, *La musique à Venise et l'imaginaire français des Lumières d'après les sources vénitaines conservées à la Bibliothèque nationale de France (XVI^e–XVIII^e siècle)*, Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 1996, 93–99.

¹³ The list of concordances is as wide as possible, taking into account that identification is difficult when texts are substituted, compositions misattributed, and for many sources not yet catalogued in RISM or other inventories.

Ritorna al caro bene III,8 Faustina Bordoni Hasse conc.: GB-Lbl Add. 31604; US-Wc ML96.H83 5a; I-MC 3-E-8b „per salterio“ 4a; D-MÜs SANT Hs 183 (Nr. 11) 6am; I-MC 6-D-9/30 4a; US-Fay Quarto 532 MS 9 4a; US-Wc ML96. L46 O6 6am; D-W Cod. Guelf. 301 Mus. Hdschr. (Nr. 4) 10am; D-KA Mus. Hs. 1039 4a

In sì torbida procella II,12 Faustina Bordoni Hasse

2) fols 72r-77v Arie per il flauto San Gio. Gris:mo 4a 1738 del Sig:r Ant:o Giay [Gianguir, Antonio Giay/Apostolo Zeno, 1738]

Non voglio lusingarmi I, 7 Rosa Pasquali conc.: I-Vnm Contarini It.IV.478 (10002) 3am

Di mirarti lieta in viso I,8 Agostino Fontana conc.: I-Vnm Contarini It.IV.478 (10002) 4a; D-KA Mus. Hs. 169 6am

Date o trombe III,4 Carlo Scalzi conc.: I-Vnm Contarini It.IV.478 (10002) 4a

No, non sperar che affetto II,2 Costanza Celli conc.: I-Vnm Contarini It.IV.478 (10002) 4a

Del mio sposo il caro nome I,1 Rosa Pasquali conc.: I-Vnm Contarini It.IV.478 (10002) 4a

3) fols 82r-82v 1738 Della Sig.ra Faustina S. Gio: Grisostomo Del Sig.r Gio Adolfo Hasse [Olimpiade G. B. Pergolesi? – Johann Adolf Hasse/Pietro Metastasio, 1738] **Tu di saper procura** (incomplete) I,6 Faustina Bordoni Hasse conc.: all 5a unless otherwise ind. D-Dl Mus.2477-F-83 (complete score Dresden 1756; others in A-Wn, D-Bsb); US-Wc M1505.H385P; I-MC 2-F-15/2e; D-MÜs SANT Hs 1979 (Nr. 30); GB-Lam MS 137S, 4a; B-Bc 15184/3; I-Vc Torrefranca Ms.B. 10; D-Dl Mus. 2477-F-122; US-FAy Quarto 532 MS 10; US-FAy Quarto 532 MS 8 Del Sig. Hasse La Sig:ra Faustina in S. Gio. Grisostomo 1738; US-Su ML96.L46 O6; D-Mbs Mus.ms. 5047 b; text „Al tuo bel ciglio vendrai“; D-Mbs Mus.ms. 1135; D-Dl Mus.1-F-124

4) fols 86r-87v Duetto a Due Flauti e Basso Del Sig:r Gio: Hasse Sassone [Artaserse, Johann Adolf Hasse/Pietro Metastasio, 1730]

Tu vuoi ch'io viva III, 7 (Francesca Cuzzoni – Carlo Broschi) conc.: all 4a; I-Vnm Contarini 10005, (complete score of Venice 1730; others in I-Mc, Nc, D-MÜs, US-Wc, GB-Cfm, Lam, Lbl); D-DO Don Mus.Ms. 627; text „Sunt perennes dies“; D-HVs Kestner No. 146 (Nr. 27); CZ-OSm A 1851; 26, text „Porterum fratris mei mens pia“; D-MEIr Ed 129p; US-FAy Quarto 532 MS 2; B-Bc 4170; B-Bc 5083; CZ-Pak 465 text „Salve o cara mater“; GB-Lbl R.M.23.f.2.(21.); GB-Lbl R.M.23.d.4.(6.); D-Dl Mus.1-F-28,13; D-MGmi HA IV 60; D-Dl Mus.1-F-28,10

5) fols 89r-90r [no title-page] [Didone Abbandonata, Domenico Natale Sarri/Pietro Metastasio, 1730]

Non ha ragione ingrato I,17 Lucia Facchinelli conc: D-MEIr Ed 147v (complete score) 6aM

6) fols 106r-107r [no title-page] [Scipione il giovane, Luca Antonio Predieri/Giovanni Francesco Bortolotti, 1731]

Dunque il perfido si crede I, 10 Faustina Bordoni Hasse, conc.: Eitner Quellen-Lexicon, followed by Grove and MGG reports F-Pc, but it is a different opera.

7) fols 107v-109r [no title-page] [Epaminonda, Geminiano Giacomelli/?, 1732]

Questo pallore non vien d'amore II,12 Faustina Bordoni Hasse conc.: B-Bc 2019 (complete score); Zavičajni Muzej Poreštine, Poreč, Croatia, ms. 3425 6am

Misera oh dio che fo III,9 Faustina Bordoni Hasse conc.: B-Bc 2019 (complete score); Zavičajni Muzej Poreštine, Poreč, Croatia, ms. 3425 5a; I-Vqs 1128 5a 4a/5a, 6am/6aM etc. = a perfect fourth/fifth, a minor/major sixth lower

Non voglio lusingarmi is an aria from the opera *Gianguir*, based on a celebrated libretto by Apostolo Zeno set in the exotic realm of the Mogols.¹⁴ It was originally written in 1724 and staged in Vienna with music by Antonio Caldara. Its first Venetian performance was at the *San Cassiano* theatre in 1728 with music by Geminiano Giacomelli. Then it was staged in Milan with music by Giovanni Porta, and eventually in Verona and Brescia as a pastiche. In 1738 it was again played in Venice, now at *San Giovanni Grisostomo* and with music by Giovanni Antonio Giay, *maestro di cappella* in Turin. The same year it was staged in Munich, and several further productions followed until 1760. The score of Giay's full setting is lost, but all the arias are preserved in MS *Contarini* 10002 of the Marciana library,¹⁵ where they are reduced to a melody with bass. As mentioned above, five of them are also included in the Querini collection. Their reading is mostly consistent with the *Marciana* MS, except that they are transposed in different keys.

Non voglio lusingarmi – the version in the Querini MS – does not bear the original text by Zeno. This comes not as a surprise, for in the 1738 version of the libretto most parts of the arias were substituted,¹⁶ as per usual practice described by Carlo Goldoni in a well-known passage of his *Memoires*.¹⁷ In it, he describes the rewriting of an aria from Zeno's *Griselda*, staged in 1735 at *San Samuele*, also a Grimani theatre, in the presence of Vivaldi.¹⁸ What is remarkable in this case is that the text of the aria is not completely new, but a paraphrase which expands the original text by Zeno retaining the same keywords. Other libretti of *Gianguir* modify the same aria in different ways. Venice's version in 1728, followed by Munich's in 1738, utilises the same method with less graceful results. On the other hand, Verona's version is completely different and has a weaker link to the plot (see table 2).¹⁹

¹⁴ Angela Romagnoli analysed the circulation of *Gianguir* in her „Apostolo nel Mogol e Gianguir in Europa: un libretto fortunato e le sue intonazioni“ in the International conference *Apologhi morali – I drammi per musica di Apostolo Zeno* (Reggio Calabria, October 4–5, 2013).

¹⁵ Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, cod. It. IV 478 (=10002). Ms. It. IV 477 (=10001) contains arias sung in S. G. Grisostomo in autumn 1724 and at carnival the next year; ms. It. IV 479 (=10003) has arias by Porta and Porpora of 1727 from the same theatre.

¹⁶ Just two arias and the two choirs are maintained; 18 arias are substituted, a duet is replaced by a trio; 10 arias are cut and one added.

¹⁷ Carlo Goldoni, *Memoires*, Paris: Colburn, 1814, I, 235–239.

¹⁸ Goldoni explains the reasons for the libretto's modifications: „pour faire dans cet opéra les changemens nécessaires, soit pour raccourcir le drame, soit pour changer la position et le caractère des airs au gré des acteurs et du compositeur.“

¹⁹ The Venetian version for *S. Cassiano* changes Zeno's six *settenari* into ten shorter *quinari*, making the rhythm of the verses somehow more monotonous. That for *S. Giovanni Grisostomo*'s maintains the *settenari* but divides the poem in two strophes of equal length and syntactically symmetrical. Verona's version lacks the central juxtaposition of hope (*speranza*) and illusion (*lusinga*) of the original.

Tab. 2: *Gianguit, Zama's aria.*

<i>poesie drammatiche di Apostolo Zeno,</i> Giambattista Pasquali, Venice 1744, vol. II, p. 147 and libretto of Vienna 1724 (music by Antonio Caldara), II, 1	Venice, S. Cassiano 1728 (music by Geminiano Giacomelli) I, 7 and Monaco 1738 (music by Giovanni Porta?) I, 7	Venice, S. Grisostomo 1738 (music by Giovanni Antonio Giay) I, 6
Non deggio lusingarmi; né voglio disperar.	Non mi lusingo ma non dispero né il ben mi fingo né il mal pavento so che ingannarmi può il lusinghiero/della speranza e che può darmi/la mia costanza pace e contento.	Non voglio lusingarmi Né disperar vogl'io è stanco il seno mio di sempre paventar.
Di credula speranza costume è l'ingannar; e vanto è di costanza [p. dr.: „È vanto di costanza“] cos'ardue superar.		Il so che può ingannarmi speranza adulatrice ma sempre è più infelice chi lascia di sperar
Non, ecc.		
		Nell'aspre vicende quest'alma smarrita confusa si rende disprezza la vita sarebbe la morte felice per me.
		A second set of venetian ballads, Walsh, Londra, 1744
		Amor già che son colto di due begli occhi alle scia come angellin che tresca sovra il ramo fatal misero al fin s'avrilede di batter l'ali in vano e crescer mira insano il periglio mortal.
		Biblioteca nazionale marciana, ms. It. IV, 178, Cicogna (=5156).
1	Se fusse anca impetrio co le se m'avicina ghà un gran calor quel sesso da qual se sia straggion. Perché mi son gazzà le voggio sempre arente le xe de mi contente perché no son baron.	3 Talvolta se m'imbatto che sia con un bel muso mi sento che me bruso da un fiero e gran calor. Più belle che le xe le fiamme xe più ardente e pur le me da al dente scoplie le ghò in tel cuor.
2	Mai se patisse freddo co donne se gha appreso ghà un gran calor quel sesso da qual se sia straggion. Sto effetto le me fà per questo mi le bramo e fieramente le amo le ho in mente note e dì.	4 Sia simpatia o altra cossa in somma no le lasso le xe sempre el mio spasso ne mai gho despiser. Sempre mi ghe farò finezze e complimenti ghe sporzerò presenti e tutto a so piaser.
		5 Le me gha tanto in uso che le me corre drio de molte so el so zio ne me sà abbandonar. Basta a trattarle ben se a latte de galina se gha qual se sia nina quando che se sa far.
		6 Se pol anca lodarse che mai gho tocca un deo za no ghe penso un neo de quel che è più stimà. Me basta co voi mi d'averle in compagnia acciò sta sempattia sia in tutto sodisfà.

Giay's musical setting is quite effective in depicting the indecision and suspense felt at that moment by the character Zama, by using syncopations, iterations, and interruptions of the musical phrases, including a fermata as early as the fourth measure.

Ex. 1: *Non voglio lusingarmi.*

Non voglio lusingarmi né di sperar voglio è stan-co il se-no mi-o di sem-pre pa-ven-tar

4

7

11

15

18

21

di sem-pre pa - ven - tar Non vo - glio_ lu - sin-gar-mi nè

p

24

dis - pe - rar vogl i - o è stan - co il se - no mi - o di sem - pre

27

pa - ven - tar di sem - pre pa - ven - tar

tr

tr

Fine

32

Il so che può in-gan - nar - mi spe - ran - za a du - la tri - ce ma sem-pre è più in - fe -

35

li - ce chi la - scia di spe - rar il so_ che può in-gan- nar - mi ma

38

D.C. al Fine

sem-pre è più_ fe - li - ce chi la - scia di spe - rar chi la - scia di_ spe - rar

The aria may have been rather successful, if we find it transformed into a *canzone da battello*, following the practice satirised by Benedetto Marcello in his *Teatro alla Moda*: „Copyists will sell to willing visitors good opera arias, old scores of the best authors; they will know how to compose, sing, play and recite, etc., by reducing most opera arias into *canzon da*

battello.²⁰ Another witness of the Venetian practice of singing ‚hits‘ on boats that is worth quoting is Aurelio Bertola’s *Sepolcro di Metastasio*: „The populace repeats your graceful verses they have learnt, / and so you are thousand times on the lips of the wise, / and the gondolier who only knew *Erminia* / now sings *Arbace* and *Aristea*“.²¹ The two arias by Hasse transcribed in the Querini manuscript are indeed the duet of Arbace and Mandane from *Artaserse* and an aria sung by Aristea from *Olimpiade*. With Erminia, Torquato Tasso’s heroine, Bertola is here referring to the gondoliers’ famous tradition of singing octaves from *Gerusalemme liberata*.

Hundreds of further *canzoni da battello* are preserved in Venetian or Veneto MSS copied around 1740.²² These are simple songs in binary form, often written in the Venetian dialect. They were fashionable in Venice and very popular among foreign travellers, who seem to have considered them with a quasi-ethnomusicologist interest.²³ In fact, besides the manuscript sources, the London printer John Walsh published three sets of *Venetian ballads* (1742, 1744, 1748). It has to be noted that the title pages of the second and third set indicate that the songs could also be played on flute, violin, or harpsichord.²⁴

Non voglio lusingarmi is found in the second set. It is not immediately recognizable because, besides the change in tonality, it also bears a different text, perhaps an attempt at hiding its origin as an operatic aria, and at giving it the features of an ‚original‘ composition. Transforming a da capo aria into a simpler binary song requires substantial changes in the musical material: the whole composition has to be shortened, virtuoso passages cut, the harmonic path altered. Nevertheless, the original melody is still well recognizable, since the Londoner arranger tried to preserve as much material as possible. The first part of the song quotes the first six bars of the original aria and then shortcuts to a cadence in the relative major key. In the second part, where it was necessary to diverge more from the original because of the different harmonic development of the two musical forms, there are some inventions such as a full-bar rest in the bass line, but still inspired by Giay’s aria (see ex. 2).

²⁰ „[Copisti] venderanno a forestieri che desiderassero, buone arie d’opera carte vecchie col nome de’ professori migliori; sapranno comporre, cantare, suonare, recitare, etc., riducendo la maggior parte dell’arie dell’opera in canzon da battello“, Benedetto Marcello, *Il Teatro alla moda*, [Venice: Pinelli, 1720], 51.

²¹ „Ripete il volgo i bei concetti appresi, / e t’ha sul labbro in mille istanti il saggio, / e il gondolier ch’Erminia sol sapea / or va cantando Arbace ed Aristea“; Aurelio Bertola, *Poesie*, Pisa: Nuova Tipografia, 1798, III, 127.

²² A facsimile of the principal sources of this repertoire is provided by Barcellona and Titton, *Canzoni da battello* (see n. 4).

²³ See for instance Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*, London: T. Becket, 1773, 144: „The songs of the Gondolieri or watermen (...) are so celebrated, that every musical collector of taste in Europe is well furnished with them“. They were not only collected as exotic souvenirs, but also regarded, and often misinterpreted, as the true expression of a popular natural taste.

²⁴ *Venetian ballads compos’d by Sig.r Hasse, and all the celebrated Italian Masters*, London: Walsh, 1742; *A second set of venetian ballads for the german flute, violin of harpsichord...*, id., 1744; *A third set...*, id., 1748.

Ex. 2: *Amor già che son colto.**A second set of venetian ballads* London: Walsh, 1744, 35

1

6

11

16

22

Conversely, the text – a generic love poem – bears no apparent relation with the original model. The syntax is not clear and even though it has the same meter of the original verses, the division of words and the distribution of accents – unlike the original – does not fit the music (see table 2). This suggests that the reworking was either made by a non-native Italian speaker, or not concerned with the result of the text-music relation, as it was meant for a foreign market. In sum the piece looks more like an artificial creation than as a transcription of a popular Venetian melody.

A different version of the piece is found in a manuscript source under the title *Mai se patisse freddo*, where the song is explicitly dated 1741.²⁵ The lyrics are in the Venetian dialect and are much better fitted to the music than in *Non voglio lusingarmi*. They are divided into six strophes and each one is sung with the same melody. The subject, completely unrelated to the original aria, is a kind of sketch scene, as often happens in this repertoire, depicting a curious character that loves female company but, as he says, would never dare to touch it. The melody has a different beginning from both *Non voglio lusingarmi* and *Amor già che son colto*. Its C minor key seems more comfortable for singing, while the D minor Walsh version would seem to be more easily played on a flute (see fig. 1).

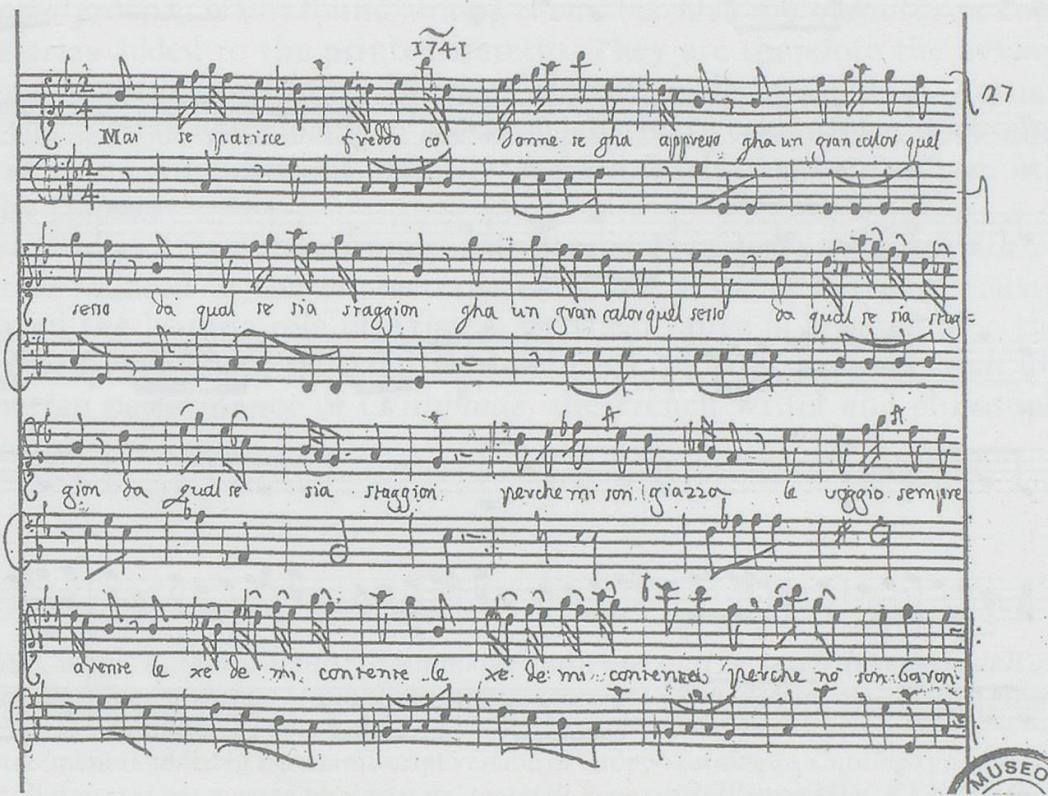


Fig. 1: *Mai se patisse el freddo*

The second example is *Tu di saper procura*, from the opera *Olimpiade*, one of the most famous librettos written by Metastasio, set to music by dozens of composers from 1733 to the 1800s – such as Caldara, Vivaldi, Pergolesi, Leo, Galuppi, Fiorillo, Latilla, Hasse, Traetta, Jommelli, Sacchini, and Cimarosa, just to name a few.²⁶ This aria belongs to the Venetian production staged in 1738, four years after the Venetian premiere given at the *San Cassiano* thea-

²⁵ Biblioteca nazionale Marciana, MS. It. IV 178, Cicogna (=5156), fols 27v–28r.

²⁶ A study of different scores of this opera and the transformations of its libretto has been made by Costantino Maeder, *Metastasio, l'„Olimpiade“ e l'opera del Settecento*, Bologna: Mulino, 1993 (Ricerca. Musica e spettacolo).

tre with music by Vivaldi.²⁷ Leaf 82 of the Querini manuscript preserves just the title page on the recto and the first half of the aria's part A on the verso. The following page is missing, but what we have is enough to identify and reconstruct the rest (see ex. 3).

Ex. 3: *Tu di saper procura*

²⁷ In that production, *Tu di saper procura* was substituted by a different aria: *È troppo spietato il barbaro fato*.

The 1738 libretto of *Olimpiade* does not mention the author of the music. This was first attributed to Giovanni Battista Pergolesi in Antonio Groppo's catalogue of Venetian *drammi per musica*,²⁸ where it is also said that some arias were changed by Carlo Goldoni,²⁹ an attribution then quite often repeated, for instance by Sartori in his catalogue of Italian librettos.³⁰ The 1738 version of the libretto has eleven arias substituted and four added.

Nonetheless, while the Querini version bears the original Metastasian text, its music does not reproduce Pergolesi's but Hasse's version, which was staged in Dresden years later, in 1756.³¹ Hasse's participation in the Venetian production is confirmed by the already mentioned Marciana manuscript 10002, which after the complete set from *Gianguir* includes six arias³² under the title of *New additions to Hasse's opera in S. Giovanni Grisostomo, 1738*.³³ However *Tu di saper procura* is not found among them, because the manuscript copies just the arias added to the printed libretto. They are therefore the evidence of further modifications to the changes already made by Goldoni. Actually, four of these arias come back to Metastasians texts taken from *Alessandro nelle Indie*; the compositions are at least partial self-borrowings from other operas by Hasse.

In *Tu di saper*, Hasse seemingly substituted Pergolesi's original with an aria better tailored to the characteristics of the voice of his wife Faustina who played the leading role of Aristea. Its vocal range is lowered by a third compared to Pergolesi's, ranging from *c4* to *g5*. In 1739, just one year after the Venetian performance of *Olimpiade*, the French writer and philosopher

²⁸ Antonio Groppo, *Catalogo di tutti i drammi per musica recitati ne' teatri di Venezia dall'anno 1637, in cui ebbero principio le pubbliche rappresentazioni de' medesimi, fin all'anno presente 1745*, Venice: Antonio Groppo, s.d.

²⁹ This statement is added in the manuscript version of Groppo catalogue, *Catalogo purgatissimo di tutti li drammi per musica recitatisi ne' teatri di Venezia dall'anno MDCXXXVII sin oggi [1767] da Antonio Groppo accresciuto di tutti li scenarii, varie edizioni aggiunte a drammi e intermedii*, Venice, 1741 [but 1767], I-Vnm, cod. it. VII 2326 (= 8263), 246–248.

³⁰ Claudio Sartori, *I libretti italiani a stampa dalle origini al 1800*, Cuneo: Bertola & Locatelli, 1991, IV, 277; also in Querini catalogue (Rossi, *Le opere musicali* [see n. 3]), 72; On the other hand, Raffaele Mellace defines the 1738 production a pastiche (Johann Adolf Hasse, Palermo: Epos, 2004, 174). Eleanor Selfridge-Field cites the composer as „Pergolesi-Hasse“ (*A New Chronology of Venetian Opera and Related Genres, 1660–1760*, Stanford/CA: Stanford University Press, 2007 [The Calendar of Venetian Opera], 458). It would be the first opera with music by Pergolesi in Venice, before *Serva Padrona* in Sant'Angelo in 1740, and *Orazio* in San Moisè in 1743.

³¹ Mellace, *Johann Adolf Hasse* (see n. 30), 233.

³² The six arias are *Chi vive amante sai che delira*, *O sugl'estivi ardori placida al sol riposa*, *È ver che all'amo intorno l'abbitator dell'onda*, *S'è ver che t'accendi di nobile ardor*, *Pensa che offeso io sono*, and *Non temer rasciuga il ciglio*.

³³ *Nova aggiunta dell'opera del sig. Hasse S. Giovanni Grisostomo 1738. Nova and not nona* as curiously reported in Marciana catalogue.

Charles de Brosses describes Faustina's voice as not anymore a young one.³⁴ Later, Hasse inserted the same aria in his own score composed eighteen years later for Dresden. But, ironically enough, in this opera the character Aristea was not sung by Faustina, who had already retired by 1756.

We find this aria transformed in a dance entitled *Minueto di Faustina* in a manuscript in the library of Zavičajni Muzej Poreštine in Poreč, Croatia.³⁵ It is a simple melody written for unaccompanied recorder transposed in the same key of the Querini version. The piece has a symmetrical structure of two parts of sixteen measures each, very likely to facilitate the composition of choreographic structures based on the minuet step-units, which in a music setting notated in triple time are always two bars long. The title proves that the melody was directly associated to the famous singer (see fig. 2).

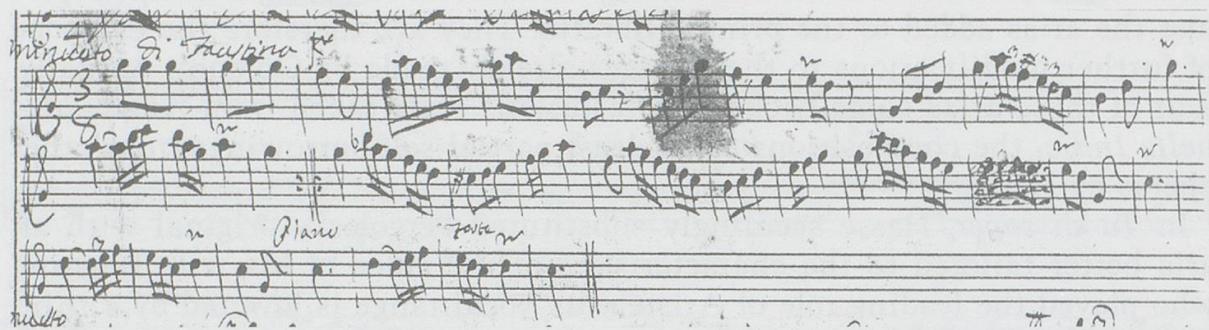


Fig 2: *Minueto di Faustina*

In the same Croatian library, we find one more version of this aria, now reduced to a *canzone da battello*, concordant with a manuscript in the Marciana library, MS IVnm 2047 (see ex. 4 and fig. 3).³⁶

Ex. 4: *Ti da saver procura.*



³⁴ „La célèbre Faustina Bordoni, sa femme, qui chante d'un grand goût et d'une légèreté charmante; mais ce n'est plus une voix neuve. C'est sans contredit la plus complaisante et la meilleure femme du monde, mais ce n'est pas la meilleure chanteuse.“ (Charles de Brosses, *Lettres familières écrites d'Italie à quelques amis, en 1739 et 1740*, Paris: Poulet-Malassis et de Broise, 1858, I, 215).

³⁵ Zavičajni Muzej Poreštine, Poreč, ms. 3375, 3v. About the recorder music in Poreč manuscripts see Marco Rosa Salva, „Canzoni da battello per flauto dolce“, in: Meine (ed.), *Barcarola* (see n. 4), 155–168.

³⁶ Zavičajni Muzej Poreštine, Poreč, ms without shelfmark and Venice, Biblioteca marciana, cod. It. Cl. IV 2047 (=12649), fols 39v–40r.

9 cu - ra se'l pen - sa so - lo a mi, se pos - so_ star - si - cu - ra,

16 se'l - pen - sa so - lo a mi, se'l pen - sa so - lo a mi

23 Sap - pie - me dir - se To - ni per a 3 - mor - mio so - spi - ra,

29 se'l var 3 - da al - tri bal - co - ni de not 3 - te o pur - de

34 dì, de not - - te o pur - de di, o pur - de dì

As with the *Gianguir* aria, the lyrics have been changed; but here the text is a parody of the original Metastasian poem in the Venetian dialect. The setting was changed from the Greek Elide to the Venetian lagoon, and the athlete Megacle is transformed into the less heroic lover, Toni'. Also in this case, the music had to be radically reorganised so as to fit the usual form of the *canzone da battello*. Considering the double manuscript source, this *canzone* was likely a quite popular part of the Venetian repertoire. Moreover, there is still another version, with a completely new text, in the first collection printed by Walsh in 1742.³⁷ Therefore, the popularity of *Tu di saper procura* seems to have transformed it into a *canzone da battello* even before its official debut at the Dresden operatic court (see fig. 3).

³⁷ *Dov'è l'amor Cattina, (Venetian ballads compos'd by Sig.r Hasse [see n. 24], 5).*

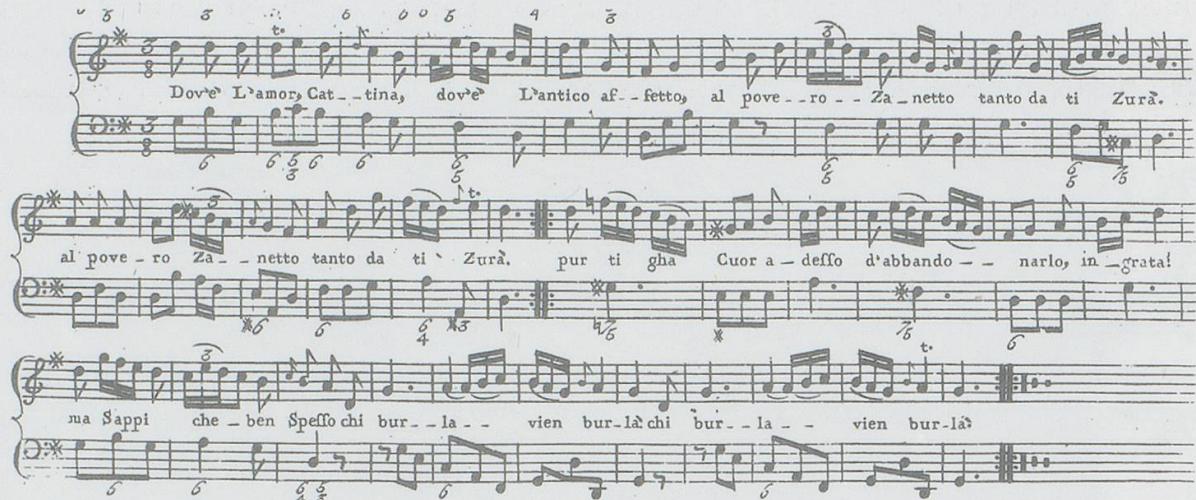


Fig. 3: *Dov'è l'amor Cattina*.

As we have seen by these examples, reworkings move through devious paths to pursue quite different results. Sometimes they followed the public's taste or resolved technical issues in the context of the professional world of opera. Other times they served to adapt the music to chamber music settings to palaces or even boats, or to modify it for amateur and didactic purposes. Other reworkings aimed at adjusting music – or text – for commercial and editorial strategies. The 'popularisation' of the music, finally, may also interact with the phenomena described above: the transition from a 'higher' musical genre to a 'lower' one, with or – actually more often – without a widening or a changing of the social class practicing it.³⁸ Boundaries between different genres, for instance between vocal and instrumental settings, are often overstepped thus weakening their differences.

As has been seen, an interesting detail is the (seemingly useless) preservation of original sung text in instrumental transcriptions. They may aim at different purposes: perhaps at evoking as many elements of the original settings as possible, perhaps at didactic uses. Original texts may have provided players with valuable hints about breathing or phrasing, articulation, *affetti* to be evoked, and so forth. Moreover, the phenomenon may be a symptom of the new musical aesthetic in instrumental music based on the so-called *stile cantabile*. As has already been stressed by Luigi Petrobelli,³⁹ there is a similar search for *cantabilità* in the stylistic change featured by Giuseppe Tartini in his production around 1740, perhaps influenced by a discussion with

³⁸ *Canzoni da Battello* have also drawn the attention of ethnomusicologists looking for elements of popular songs in this repertoire. A study following this point of view is made by Paola Barzan, „La canzone da battello veneziana dai salotti europei ai repertori dei gondolieri: uno sguardo etnomusicologico“, in: Meine (ed.), *Barcarola* (see n. 4), 137–153.

³⁹ Luigi Petrobelli, „Tartini, le sue idee e il suo tempo“, *Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana* 1/4, (1967), 651–675.

count Gianrinaldo Carli.⁴⁰ This search has been put in relation with Tartini's peculiar habit of writing poetic text under the music in many movements of his violin sonatas,⁴¹ quoting Metastasian arias but also *canzoni da battello* and related repertoire.⁴²

⁴⁰ As reported in his treatise *Osservazioni sulla musica*, Milan: Imperial Monistero di S. Ambrogio maggiore, 1786, Carli asked for a music more *sentimentale* and less *arabesca e artificiosa*. On the matter see Ivano Cavallini, „Musica sentimentale e teatro della commozione: la poetica del melodramma nelle Osservazioni sulla musica di Gianrinaldo Carli“, in: idem, *I due volti di Nettuno. Studi su teatro e musica a Venezia e in Dalmazia dal Cinquecento al Settecento*, Bologna: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 1994 (Musica Ragionata 7), 119–148.

⁴¹ „Motti tartiniani: nuove concordanze, nuovi problemi“ – Contributi dei seminari di Padova e di Roma“, in: Andrea Bombi and Maria Nevilla Massaro (eds), *Tartini. Il tempo e le opere*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 1994 (Temi e discussioni), 389–394.

⁴² For instance his *Sonata XII*, quotes the *Aria del Tasso* sung by gondoliers (complete text under the music), a *Canzone veneziana* (no text) and Metastasio's aria from *Ezio Quanto mai felici siete innocenti pastorelle* (text in the margin). Padua, Archivio musicale della Basilica Antoniana, MS 1888/1, sonata XII, 37–38.

Tab. 3: *Tu di saper procura/ti de saper procura/dov'è l'amor Cattina*

Pietro Metastasio,
Olimpiade, I, 6 [Libretto
of Vienna 1733 and
Venice 1738]

Anon, *Ti de saper procura*, I-Vnm 2047 and Zavičajni Muzej
Poreštine, Poreč, Croatia, [without shelfmark], (1st strophe only).

*Venetian ballads
compos'd by Sig.r Hasse,
and all the celebrated
Italian Masters*, London:
Walsh, 1742

1 Tu di saper procura
dove il mio ben s'aggira,
se più di me si cura,
se parla più di me.
Chiedi se mai sospira
quando il mio nome ascolta;
se il profferi talvolta
nel ragionar fra sé.

2 Dige che per lui moro,
che ghe son fida amante,
che lu xe il mio tesoro,
che per lu morirò.
Dige, che l'è 'l mio bello
ma che nol m'è costante
ma sempre el sarà quello
che in vita adorerò.

4 Dige che le sta' el primo
aver da mi l'affetto
e che lu solo stimo
che mai lo laserò.
Abbenche vedo adesso
che l'ama un altro oggetto
se nol me vedo appresso
sempre lo bramerò.

5 Dov'è l'amor Cattina,
dov'è l'antico affetto,
al povero Zanetto
tanto da ti zurà.
Pur ti gha cuor adesso
d'abbandonarlo, ingrata!
Ma sappi che ben spesso
chi burla vien burlà.

3 Che qualche occhiada al zorno
el me donasse almanco,
che'l venga in sto contorno
che 'l seguita el mio amor.
Viver non so un momento
se no mel vedo al fianco
che 'l dona sto contento
a chi gha donnà el cuor

6 Dige che senza piante
sarà la terra ancora
prima che sia incostante
del cuor la fedeltà
Che'l mar sarà senz'onde
se Bettina no' l'adora
e quel che 'l te risponde,
tutto ti me dirà.