

BERTHOLD OVER

*Leonardo Leo on the London Stage: Success or Failure?*

The topic of how Leonardo Leo's music was received in London contains a number of possible starting points as well as problems. First of all, it involves discussion of the dissemination and circulation of music, be it as manuscripts, or as prints. In London, this point must be extended to the transfer of the musical material from Italy to the north of Europe, for which the channels are often unknown. Secondly, if we look at the nature of operatic production in London theatres, we face the problem of pasticcio practice. Operas given in London were mostly "opere impasticciate" or operas conceived as pasticcios to fit the abilities of the performers and to cater to English taste. Against this background, George Frideric Handel and the concept of operas by a single author is almost an exception, as Reinhard Strohm often emphasizes.<sup>1</sup> Pasticcio practice also presents the problem of establishing the provenance and authorship of the musical material used: where does it come from and who composed it? In this context it is also a challenge that such a study can often only be carried out by comparing librettos, yet it cannot be ascertained if two identical texts in different librettos were sung to the same music. Last, but not least, the high relevance of public discourse in London's journals and newspapers regarding music and

Cf., for example, REINHARD STROHM, *Italian Pasticcio Opera, 1700–1750. Practices and Repertoires*, in: *Operatic Pasticcios in 18th-Century Europe. Contexts, Materials and Aesthetics*, ed. by Berthold Over/Gesa zur Nieden, Bielefeld, transcript, 2021 (Mainz Historical Cultural Sciences 45), pp. 45-67, esp. 56-60.

musical performances, as well as the strong culture of music printing raise issues of popularity and popularization. These terms are often applied without further thought, but they must be balanced against the circumstances of the 18th century.

In my study, I will not deal with all of these individual problems and observations, but they must be borne in mind. My focus here is on Leonardo Leo's operas. On the London stage, Leo's music was performed in different contexts and periods, but in sum, the Leo performances are heavily characterized by pasticcio practice so typical for the British capital. Leo's music was heard in the following pieces:

1732: *Catone*, pasticcio by George Frideric Handel based on the *dramma per musica Catone in Utica* by Leo (Venice 1728)

1741: *Alessandro in Persia*, pasticcio based on the eponymous *dramma per musica* by Domenico Paradies (Venice 1738)

1742: *Gianguir*, pasticcio

1749: *La finta frascatana*, pasticcio based on the eponymous *opera buffa* by Leo (Naples 1744, second version of *Amor vuol sofferenza*, Naples 1739)

1749: *Il Giramondo*, pasticcio based on the eponymous *opera buffa* by Leo (Florence 1743)

1754: *L'amor costante*, pasticcio

We can see that, initially, the reception of Leo's music centers on *dramma per musica*, whereas after the arrival of *opera buffa* in London in 1748 the latter genre is brought into focus. Here, I want to investigate the modes of reception of Leo's music and how the image of the composer and his work develops up to the 1750s. In this context, the *Favourite Songs* are an important medium of dissemination and shall be considered more intensively.

### 1732: *Catone*

In 1732, George Frideric Handel arranged *Catone in Utica* by Leonardo Leo (Venice 1728/29) as a pasticcio.<sup>2</sup> He may have encountered the opera, but definitely did not hear it,<sup>3</sup> when he was in Venice in 1729. With the abbreviated title of *Catone* it was performed at the King's Theatre on the Haymarket from 4 November 1732. As a piece which opened the season it served as a vehicle to present the singer cast, notably the newly arrived soprano singer from Italy, Celeste Gismondi (or Hempson). Under her maiden name Celeste Resse she had been a *buffo* singer in Naples and dominated the stage of the Teatro S. Bartolomeo in *intermezzi* from 1725 until 1732, and had appeared in comic operas at the Teatro de' Fiorentini and the Teatro Nuovo since 1722.<sup>4</sup> The base of the pasticcio, Leo's *Catone in Utica* was itself an *opera impasticciata*: it comprised music by a broad range of composers.

<sup>2</sup> BERTHOLD OVER, *Paradigmen musikalischer Mobilität: Händels Pasticci*, «Händel-Jahrbuch», 65, 2019, pp. 85-103; ID., *From Opera to Pasticcio: Handel's Revisions of Leo's Catone in Utica*, in: «Studi musicali» n.s. 11, 2020, pp. 69-99; MARTIN ALBRECHT-HOHMAIER – BERTHOLD OVER, online edition of *Catone*: <https://pasticcio-project.eu>; cf. also REINHARD STROHM, *Catone* (HWV A7), in: *Händels Opern*, ed. by Arnold Jacobshagen, Panja Mücke, Laaber, Laaber-Verlag, 2009 (Das Händel-Handbuch 2), vol. 2, pp. 391-396; JOHN H. ROBERTS, *Catone*, in *The Cambridge Handel Encyclopaedia*, ed. by Annette Landgraf/David Vickers, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 129f.

<sup>3</sup> He simply arrived too late. Handel left London on 15 February 1729; the performances of *Catone* ceased before 12 February when the second opera of the season, Nicola Porpora's *Semiramide riconosciuta*, was premiered. OVER, *Paradigmen*, p. 86.

<sup>4</sup> REINHARD STROHM, *Comic Traditions in Handel's Orlando*, in: ID., *Essays on Handel and Italian Opera*, Cambridge et al., Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp. 249-269; FRANCESCO COTTICELLI – PAOLOGIOVANNI MAIONE, *Onesto divertimento, ed allegria de' popoli. Materiali per una storia dello spettacolo a Napoli nel primo Settecento*, Milan, Ricordi, 1996 (Civiltà musicale napoletana). Resse's engagements can be found via the index.

The reason for the highly unusual substitution of arias in an opera premiere may have been the first appearance of Carlo Broschi, Farinelli, on the Venetian stage in Leo's opera. He may have wished to be on his best behavior and inserted music by his brother Riccardo Broschi, Leonardo Vinci and unknown composers. The other singers may have followed his example so that the opera comprised also music by Handel himself and, maybe, Giuseppe Maria Orlandini.<sup>5</sup> In London, with similar aims in mind, only seven arias by Leo are present in the score, i.e. only a third of the 22 arias, and the remaining arias are by other composers (Johann Adolf Hasse, Nicola Porpora, Pietro Scarlatti, Leonardo Vinci, Antonio Vivaldi, and an anonymous composer). Moreover, recitatives were rewritten or cut and the chorus in Act III, Scene 13 became a sinfonia, so that Leo's opera appeared in a very corrupted form. Two of Leo's arias were printed by John Walsh in the *Favourite Songs* (Table 1) issued shortly after the last performance of the opera. While the very last performance was scheduled for 21 November 1732 – it was cancelled because Celeste Gismondi was ill –<sup>6</sup> the last performance actually took place on 18 November.<sup>7</sup> And the *Favourite Songs* were published on 25 November.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> BERTHOLD OVER, *How to Impress the Public: Farinelli's Venetian Debut in 1728-1729*, «Musicology Today», XVII/1, 2020, pp. 14-33 (<https://doi.org/10.2478/muso-2020-0002>).

<sup>6</sup> *George Frideric Handel: Collected Documents*, vol. 2, ed. by Donald Burrows, Helen Coffey, John Greenacombe, Anthony Hicks, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015, p. 568.

<sup>7</sup> *Ivi*, p. 564.

<sup>8</sup> *Ivi*, p. 567.

Table 1: *The Favourite Songs in the Opera Call'd Catone*,  
London, John Walsh, [1732].

| Composer     | Aria                          | Singer                                       | Taken from                               |
|--------------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| [N. Porpora] | Priva del caro sposo          | C. Gismondi                                  | <i>Germanico in Germania</i> , Rome 1732 |
| [L. Leo]     | Non ti minaccio<br>sdegno     | A.M. Strada                                  | <i>Catone in Utica</i> ,<br>Venice 1728  |
| [L. Leo]     | È follia se nascondete        | A.M. Strada                                  | <i>Catone in Utica</i> ,<br>Venice 1728  |
| [J.A. Hasse] | Vede il nocchier la<br>sponda | A.M. Strada [ <i>recte</i> :<br>C. Gismondi] | <i>Euristeo</i> , Venice<br>1732         |
| [J.A. Hasse] | Fra tanti pensieri            | C. Gismondi                                  | <i>Demetrio</i> , Venice<br>1732         |
| [L. Vinci]   | Vo solcando un mar<br>crudele | A.M. Strada                                  | <i>Artaserse</i> , Rome<br>1730          |

It has often been claimed that the *Favourite Songs*, mainly published by John Walsh (father and son), were a medium for the wider distribution of music produced in London's theatres among the lower social strata. But it is necessary to exercise caution: as research of the past years has shown, these prints were not cheap, and they could not serve as a medium for the broad dissemination of the music. In fact, the buyers of the music prints seem not to be much different from the theatre audience which was mainly formed by nobles and rich merchants.<sup>9</sup> As the prints were rather expensive,<sup>10</sup> only the higher ranks of society with

<sup>9</sup> DAVID HUNTER, *Patronizing Handel. Inventing Audiences. The Intersection of Class, Money, Music and History*, «Early Music» 28, 2000, pp. 33-49.

<sup>10</sup> DONALD BURROWS, *John Walsh and His Handel Editions*, in: *Music and the Book Trade from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Robin Myers/Michael Harris, Giles Mandelbrote, New Castle – London, Oak Knoll Press/The British Library, 2008, pp. 69-104, esp. 89.



sufficient financial means were able to buy them. Also, the paratexts of the printed music itself required information from the operas presented: opera titles, singers and composers are mentioned which may have been known more to operagoers than to other people not familiar with the world of opera.

However, the *Catone Favourite Songs* only contain two arias from Leo's *Catone in Utica*, the others come from operas by Johann Adolf Hasse, Nicola Porpora and Leonardo Vinci. Moreover, all the arias lack a composer name, so the dissemination of the music did not lead to an increase in the fame of the composer. Instead, every aria bears an inscription to a singer – as was customary in the *Favourite Songs* – pointing to the importance and esteem of the performers. In fact, in the *Favourite Songs* from *Catone* the mentioned singers conceal a real or staged rivalry. All the arias were sung by Handel's drawcard Anna Maria Strada, and by the newcomer Celeste Gismondi, while arias for the famous Senesino, for example, are not published.

Was Leo known in 1732? Not at all! Neither in the score of the pasticcio<sup>11</sup> (but in the score which served as the model and which bears Handel's pencil marks and annotations),<sup>12</sup> nor in the libretto, nor in the *Favourite Songs*, nor in the press or in other documents is his name mentioned. Against this background the perception of the music by the opera audience is rather indicative: while Lord Hervey (London) wrote to Stephen Fox (Melbury Sampford?, Dorset) on 4 November 1732 after having heard the premiere of *Catone*: "I am just come from a long, dull, and consequently tiresome opera of Handel's, whose genius seems quite exhausted"<sup>13</sup> and, thus, believes that the composer of the opera was Handel, *The Daily Advertiser* rectified such an opinion

<sup>11</sup> D-Hs, M A/1012, online: <https://resolver.sub.uni-hamburg.de/kitodo/HANShm214>.

<sup>12</sup> GB-Lam, Ms 75, online: [https://archive.org/details/GB-Lam\\_MS75](https://archive.org/details/GB-Lam_MS75).

<sup>13</sup> *Handel: Collected Documents*, p. 563.

in a notice published on 6 November 1732: “We hear that the Opera was not composed by Mr. Handell, but by some very eminent Master in Italy.”<sup>14</sup> Who this “very eminent Master” was is not made public.

### 1741: *Alessandro in Persia*

The pasticcio *Alessandro in Persia* is certainly derived from the eponymous opera by Domenico Paradies (Corago qualifies it as being by different authors).<sup>15</sup> Paradies composed the libretto by Francesco Vanneschi in 1738 for Venice. From 1741, Vanneschi was a poet and impresario in London and may have put his opera on the schedule. Moreover, the “star” of the London season in 1741/42 was Angelo Maria Monticelli who already sang in the premiere of Paradies’s opera in 1738. Thus, it appears plausible that the opera was revived in London with the usual changes of recitatives and arias.<sup>16</sup> That an aria by Leo was performed is only known because of the two published *Favourite Songs* collections (Tables 2 and 3). However, for the time being it cannot be traced where the aria “Dirti ben mio vorrei” comes from. There is no concordance in RISM which could specify the opera. And in the two earlier operas by Leo where Monticelli sang (Emira and Lucio Papirio, both Naples 1735) and from where he could have taken the aria, the text does not appear. Maybe it was a pre-existing aria with a changed text.

<sup>14</sup> *Ivi*, p. 564.

<sup>15</sup> Corago. *Repertorio e archivio di libretti del melodrama italiano dal 1600 al 1900*: <http://corago.unibo.it/libretto/DRT0001245>.

<sup>16</sup> The libretto: *Alessandro in Persia Melodrama. Per il Teatro di S.M.B. di Francesco Vanneschi*, London, J. Chrichley, 1741, online: <http://corago.unibo.it/libretto/DRT0001245>.

Table 2: *The Favourite Songs in the Opera Call'd Alexander in Persia*,  
1st collection, London, John Walsh, [1741].

| Composer           | Aria                          | Singer                    | Taken from   |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| G.B.<br>Lampugnani | Vorrei spiegar<br>l'affanno   | A.M. Monticelli           | <i>Semiramide</i><br><i>riconosciuta</i> , Rome<br>1741  |
| G. Arena           | Se d'un amor tiranno          | C. Visconti               | <i>Artaserse</i> , Turin<br>1741   |
| G.B. Pescetti      | Semplici amanti               | L. Panichi<br>(Moscovita) | ? (incipit identical<br>to a minuet by<br>J.A. Hasse in GB-<br>Lb1, Add.49599)                           |
| L. Leo             | Dirti ben mio vorrei          | A.M. Monticelli           | ? (manuscripts<br>reproducing the<br>print survive)  |
| [B. Galuppi]       | Pensa che in questo<br>pianto | L. Panichi<br>(Moscovita) | ? (concordance in<br>D-RH, Ms 237)   |
| J.A. Hasse         | Parto, ma del mio<br>affanno  | A. Amorevoli              | <i>Senocrita</i> , Dresden<br>1737 (= Lascia che<br>in quest'amplesso,<br>G major instead of<br>F major) |

Table 3: *The Favourite Songs in the Opera Call'd Alexander in Persia*,  
2nd collection, London, John Walsh, [1741].

| Composer       | Aria                              | Singer          | Taken from  |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| [G.] Scarlatti | Sparge al mare in ria<br>procella | A.M. Monticelli | <i>Merope</i> , Rome<br>1740 (anonymous<br>in CH-BEI, SLA-<br>Mus-JL MLHs<br>29/19, 32/27, 42/6<br>ascribed to D.<br>Scarlatti in RISM) |



|                   |  |                 |   |
|-------------------|--|-----------------|---|
| [G.] Scarlatti    | Passagier che fa ritorno                                 | A.M. Monticelli | <i>Merope</i> , Rome 1740 (D-B, Mus.ms. 30123 (4) ascribed to D. Scarlatti in RISM)       |
| [G.B. Lampugnari] | Quanto mai s'inganna un core                             | G.B. Andreoni   | <i>Ezio</i> , Venice 1737 (= Quanto mai felici siete)                                     |
| [B. Galuppi       | Vanne a quel nobil core (in: <i>Penelope</i> )           | A.M. Monticelli | ? (in GB-Lbl and written by a Venetian copyist in D-Wa 46 Alt 701)]                       |
| [J.A. Hasse       | Vedo l'ombra del mio bene (in: <i>Olimpia in Ebuda</i> ) | G. Carestini    | <i>Tigrane</i> , Naples 1729 (= Presso all'onde d'Acheronte, A major instead of D major)] |

### 1742: *Gianguir*

*Gianguir*, a pasticcio, offered a big choice of music and did not (as usual) conceal the composers of the arias. In fact, their names appear alongside the aria texts in the libretto.<sup>17</sup> In *Gianguir*, the audience could enjoy two arias by Leo: “Men bramosa di stragi funeste” (II,7, Asaf, sung by Caterina Galli) taken from *Ciro riconosciuto*, Turin 1739 (II,4, sung by Alessandro Veroni),<sup>18</sup> and “Al suo destin non crede” (III,4, Semira) from *Lucio Papirio*, Naples 1735 (I,8), in both instances sung by Caterina Visconti, obviously trying to repeat a previous success. However, the reception of these two arias by Leo seems to have been restricted exclusively to

<sup>17</sup> *Gianguir Drama per Musica Pel Teatro di S.M.B.*, London, T. Wood, 1742, sources: <http://corago.unibo.it/libretto/0001452942>.

<sup>18</sup> This aria is not found in Michael Burden's aria database *The Italian Aria on the London Stage 1705-1801*, online: <http://italianaria.bodleian.ox.ac.uk>. In contrast, Rinaldo di Capua's “Nell'orror di notte oscura” (I,10) is recorded under Leo's name.

the opera house because they were not published in the *Favourite Songs* and are not preserved as manuscripts in libraries of the United Kingdom.

When *opera buffa* arrived in London – initially with no particular success –<sup>19</sup> the reception of Leo’s music changes: as far as we know, *arie serie* by Leo were no longer produced in London’s opera houses and his *buffo* repertoire came to the fore.

Table 4: *The Favourite Songs in the Opera Call'd Gianguir*, London, John Walsh, [1742].

| Composer        | Aria                           | Singer          | Taken from   |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|--|
| J.A. Hasse      | Parto se vuoi così             | A. Amorevoli    | <i>Issipile</i> , Naples 1732                                    |
| ?               | Se poi senti con placido fiato | A.M. Monticelli | ?  |
| G.B. Lampugnani | Il pastor se torna Aprile      | A.M. Monticelli | ? (text from Pietro Metastasio, <i>Semiramide riconosciuta</i> ) |

<sup>19</sup> ANDREA ZEDLER – LENA VAN DER HOVEN – KORDULA KNAUS, *Die Opera buffa in Europa. Verbreitungs- und Transformationsprozesse einer neuen Gattung (1740-1765)*, Bielefeld, transcript, 2023 (Vernetzen – bewegen – verorten. Kulturwissenschaftliche Perspektiven 3), <https://doi.org/10.14361/9783839467039>, pp. 29f.

|                  |                              |                 |   |
|------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| [M. Fini?]       | Alla selva, al prato, al rio | A.M. Monticelli | <p><i>Orazio</i>, Florence 1740 (insertion – text in italics), “Aria del S:r Fini di Pisa”/“Cant: Dalla Rosa Gabrielli Firenze 1740” (US-FAy, Quarto 532 MS 9 – M. Fini)</p> <p><i>Orazio</i>, Venice 1743 (G.B. Lampugnani), “1743 S. Moisè L’autunno” (GB-Lbl, R.M.24.g.12.(3.) – M. Fini after RISM)</p> <p><i>L’impresario abbandonato</i>, Munich 1749/<i>L’Orazio</i>, Munich 1758, “Del Sig:re Auletta Napolitano” (D-Mbs, Mus.ms.1105)</p> <p><i>L’impresario abbandonato</i>, Prague 1764 (D-Dl, Mus. 2713-F-500: <i>L’Orazio</i> – P. Auletta after RISM – probably pasticcio) anonymous (S-SK, 494:72) (text from P. Metastasio, <i>Il re pastore</i>)</p> |
| G.F. Brivio      | S’addolora il pastorello     | G. Frasi        | ?   |
| Rinaldo di Capua | Nell’orror di notte oscura   | A.M. Monticelli | <i>Vologeso, re de Parti</i> , Rome 1739  |

### 1749: *La finta frascatana*

*La finta frascatana* was produced for the Neapolitan Teatro Nuovo in 1744 and is a reworking of Leo's *Amor vuol sofferenza* from 1739. However, the title of the 1744 production is not particularly unique because *Amor vuol sofferenza* was already known under the same title in 1739. In fact, Charles de Brosse, who was in Naples and heard the opera, mentions it in a letter of 24 November of the same year:

Nous avons eu quatre opéras à la fois, sur quatre théâtres différents. Après les avoir essayés successivement, j'en quittai bientôt trois pour ne plus manquer une seule représentation de la Frascatana, comédie en jargon, de Leo.<sup>20</sup>

The preface of the libretto from the 1744 production makes clear that the text of the recitatives and arias has been revised and music was changed to conform “[al]l’abilità de’ Personaggi”, i.e. the skills of the singers.<sup>21</sup> It was Leo’s task to undertake these revisions, but his sudden death on 31 October 1744 put an end to his work:

Io, tutto ciò che di nuovo ci vedi aggiunto, avevo destinato di farlo poner in Musica dal celeberrimo LIONARDO LEO, il di cui tutto il restante fù parto ben degno; ma avendo egli appena

<sup>20</sup> CHARLES DE BROSSES, *Lettres familières écrites d’Italie en 1739 et 1740*, ed. by M. R. Colomb, Paris, Didier, 1858, vol. 1, p. 386; cf. also ROBERTO SCOCCIMARRO, *Die Drammi seri von Leonardo Leo (1694-1744)*, Beeskow, Ortus, 2020, vol. 1: *Studien zu Überlieferung, Stilistik und Rezeption*, p. 16.

<sup>21</sup> *La finta frascatana. Commedia per musica di Gennarantonio Federico Napoletano da rappresentarsi nel Teatro Nuovo di sopra Toledo, nell’autunno di quest’anno 1744*. [...] Naples, Langiano, Vivenzio, [1744], p. [7], online: <http://corago.unibo.it/libretto/DRT0018883>.

composte due arie delle nuove del primo Atto; cioè la prima di Alessandro nella Scena V., ed anche la prima del MOSCA nella Scena X.; nell'atto, che le stava ripulendo, ci fù tolto, (oh sua beata sorte!) da quel SIGNORE, che si compiacque darli nel suo felice soggiorno un'eterno, e fortunato riposo; [...].<sup>22</sup>

The mentioned arias for the characters Alessandro and Mosca can be identified: "Riedi al caro genitore" and "Voi par che gite, di palo in frasca". The remaining recitatives and arias to be revised were composed by Matteo Capranica:

La musica è del fu celebre Signor Lionardo Leo, Maestro della Real Cappella di Napoli; però le Arie segnate colla stella alla margine: a riserba di quelle delle Scene V. e X. del primo Atto: sono del Signor Matteo Capranica, del quale anche sono la maggior parte de' recitativi del terzo Atto.<sup>23</sup>

However, the London production seems not to have been directly based on this second Neapolitan version, or only partially.<sup>24</sup> Only two aria texts set by Leo and one set by Capranica are found in the libretto. Moreover, no aria in Neapolitan dialect is found in the London libretto whereas in the 1744 version there are several (and even more in the original version from 1739). Although a score of *Amor vuol sofferenza* is preserved in the British Library,<sup>25</sup> it too seems to have nothing to do with the London production because passages in Neapolitan

<sup>22</sup> *La finta frascatana*, pp. [7f].

<sup>23</sup> *La finta frascatana*, p. [10].

<sup>24</sup> Sources: <http://corago.unibo.it/libretto/DRT0018889>. I was not able to obtain a libretto of the London production, but arias are listed in the database: *The Italian Opera Aria on the London Stage 1705-1801*.

<sup>25</sup> GB-Lbl, R.M.22.g.12-13; aria "Io non so dove mi sto": GB-Lbl, R.M.23.d.9. (17.).

dialect are included, whereas the London libretto is entirely in *toscano*.

In fact, if we compare the corpus of arias sung in London with other productions of *Amor vuol sofferenza/La finta frascatana* we can easily recognize that the production in Bologna in 1748 must be the base for the London performance. Only few arias were changed in the first and second acts whereas the third was remodeled and a piece from the earlier production in Florence in 1742 was even inserted (“Lasciate andare amor”, maybe parodied as “Seguite pur amor” in the same scene, cf. Table 5). However, it is no wonder that the Bologna production served as a model for the London performance. It results from the engagement of the opera troupe of Giovanni Francesco Crosa for London. According to recent research Crosa and his troupe were engaged by Charles Sackville, Earl of Middlesex, in February 1748 to present six opere buffe from 1 October 1748 until the end of May 1749: *La commedia in commedia*, *La vedova accorta*, *La Fiammetta*, *Orazio*, *La maestra* and *La finta frascatana* – with the option to change three of them. In fact, instead of *La vedova accorta* and *La Fiammetta* the troupe performed *Don Calascione (La finta cameriera)* and *Il Giramondo*. Almost all these operas were given earlier in Milan in 1745/46 and in Bologna in 1747/48.<sup>26</sup> As for *La finta frascatana* it must be retained that almost all the arias were changed for subsequent productions so that almost no music by Leo or Capranica was preserved, although for all the productions Leo is named as the composer of the piece. This fact is striking, but more or less the rule in operatic productions of the time.

<sup>26</sup> ZEDLER – VAN DER HOVEN – KNAUS, *Die Opera buffa*, pp. 89-91, 189-192. On the Crosa troupe cf. also RICHARD G. KING – SASKIA WILLAERT, *Giovanni Francesco Crosa and the First Italian Comic Operas in London, Brussels and Amsterdam, 1748-50*, in: «Journal of the Royal Musical Association» 118, 1993, pp. 247-275.



Table 5: *La finta frascatana*, London 1749,  
in comparison to previous versions.

| Act,<br>scene | <i>La finta frascatana</i> , London<br>1749 | <i>Amor vuol sofferenza</i> , Naples 1739,<br>Florence 1742; <i>La finta frascatana</i> ,<br>Naples 1744, Bologna 1748<br>(premiere: 27 January), Venice<br>1748 (Ascensione, not performed) |
|---------------|---|--|
| I,1           | Alma agitata                                | Venice 1748 (I,5), Bologna 1748 (I,5)  |
| I,5           | Con quel volto sì vezzoso                   | Bologna 1748 (I,9)   |
| I,6           | Voi par che gite di palo in frasca          | Venice 1748 (I,10), Bologna 1748 (I,<br>10), <b>Naples 1744: L. Leo</b> (I,10)   |
| I,7           | Signor mio, ci pensi bene                   |  |
| I,8           | Fiero stral del dio bambino                 | Bologna 1748 (I,12)  |
| I,10          | Deh lasciami in pace                        | Venice 1748 (I,14), Bologna 1748 (I,<br>14)  |
| I,12          | Parmi già che l'alma mia                    | Bologna 1748 (I,16), <b>Naples 1744:<br/>M. Capranica</b> (I,16)   |
| II,2          | Povera nacqui ignobil villanella            | Bologna 1748 (II,2), <b>Naples 1744: L.<br/>Leo</b> (II,4), <b>Naples 1739: L. Leo</b> (II,4)  |
| II,5          | È vero che il core                          | Venice 1748 (II,6), Bologna 1748 (II,<br>5)  |
| II,6          | Va, ti disprezzo altero                     |  |
| II,7          | Per me tutto il paese                       | Bologna 1748 (II,7)  |
| II,8          | Tu di bellezza                              | Bologna 1748 (II,8)  |
| II,9          | Chi alle donne presta fede                  | Venice 1748 (II,9), Bologna 1748 (II,<br>9)  |
| II,11         | Tu fosti un traditore                       |  |
| II,12         | Qual perdita navicella                      |  |
| II,17         | Nelle stalle d'Ippocrene                    | Venice 1748 (II,17), Bologna 1748 (II,<br>17)  |
| III,2         | Amor non ascolto                            |  |
| III,4         | Vuò dirlo basso, basso                      |  |
| III,6         | A lei che t'ama                             |  |
| III,7         | Penso sì per un'ingrata                     |  |

|        |                            |  |
|--------|----------------------------|--|
| III,8  | Lasciate andare amor       | Florence 1742 (III,12)                       |
| III,8  | Seguite pur amor           | Florence 1742 (III,12: Lasciate andare amor) |
| III,11 | Viva amor, vivan gli sposi |  |

### 1749: *Il Giramondo*

Leo's *Il Giramondo*, equally performed by the Crosa troupe in London, had its premiere in Florence in 1743. Because it included any recitatives and arias in dialect it posed no problems when the opera was revived in other cities. It is a bit puzzling that the troupe did not mention the name of the composer in the London libretto.<sup>27</sup> For, in comparison to *La finta frascatana*, for example, where Leo is named, *Il Giramondo* seems to contain much more music by the composer. Six of the aria texts are already part of the version of the Florentine premiere, thus they were most probably sung to Leo's music. Other texts come from the Milanese version (1745/46) produced by Crosa as well.

Table 6: *Il Giramondo*, London 1749,  
in comparison to previous versions

| Act, scene | <i>Il Giramondo</i> , London 1749 | <i>Il Giramondo</i> , Turin 1748 (L. Leo); Milan 1746; Florence 1743 (L. Leo) |
|------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| I,1        | Allor che il pescatore (duet)     | Turin 1748 (I,1); Milan 1746 (I,1), Florence 1743 (I,1)                       |
| I,1        | Tu stai sempre a tu per tu        |   |

<sup>27</sup> *Il Giramondo. Drama giocoso per musica. Per il Teatro di S.M.B.*, London, Woodfall, 1749, online: <http://corago.unibo.it/libretto/DRT0021843>.

|       |   |  |
|-------|---|--|
| I,2   | Non odo consigli                          |  |
| I,4   | Non si sdegni, senta me                   | Turin 1748 (I,4); Milan 1746 (I,4)                                     |
| I,5   | Sior padrone                              | Milan 1746 (I,5)   |
| I,7   | Quando vedrà ch'io ballo                  | Turin 1748 (I,6); Milan 1746 (I,7),<br><b>Florence 1743 (I,7)</b>      |
| I,8   | Per tenerezza il core                     |  |
| I,9   | Rondinella a cui rapita                   |  |
| I,12  | Signor padre, scusi lei<br>(quartet)      | Turin 1748 (I,11); Milan 1746 (I,12),<br><b>Florence 1743 (I,13)</b>   |
| II,1  | Alme amanti, v'ingannate                  |  |
| II,2  | Semplicetta più non sono                  |  |
| II,3  | Questo non sarà mai                       |  |
| II,4  | Se rimiro il tuo bel volto                | Milan 1746 (II,4)  |
| II,5  | Come le femmine                           | Milan 1746 (II,5)  |
| II,6  | Ne di giorno, ne di notte                 |  |
| II,9  | Qual cerva innamorata                     |  |
| II,10 | Così, oh dio, soffrir degg'io<br>(sextet) | Turin 1748 (II,9); Milan 1746 (II,10),<br><b>Florence 1743 (II,11)</b> |
| II,10 | Vieni pur che qui ti sfido                | Milan 1746 (II,10), <b>Florence 1743 (III, 10)</b>                     |
| II,11 | Eh, mio padrone (duet)                    | Milan 1746 (II,11)   |
| II,13 | Son restato come resta (tercet)           |  |
| III,1 | Feristi il core                           |  |
| III,2 | Non ha ragione, o dio                     |  |
| III,3 | Sian belle, sian brutte                   |  |
| III,5 | Questo è il compenso[,<br>ingrato]        | Milan 1746 (II,2)  |
| III,8 | Via su, miei padroni (finale)             | Milan 1746 (III,8), <b>Florence 1743 (III, 10)</b>                     |

### 1754: *L'amor costante*

*L'amor costante*, performed in London in 1754, remains a mystery. It is ascribed to Leo in the libretto and in the advertisements published in the *Public Advertiser*,<sup>28</sup> but the opera may derive from a pasticcio produced in Pesaro in 1743 (*L'amor costante o sia Il Don Bertoldo*).<sup>29</sup> *L'amor costante* was revived in Brescia in 1744 and – under the title *Emira* – in Venice in 1745, still with music by different composers. The opera was ascribed to Leo for the first time shortly after his death. His name appears in the libretto of a production given in Ancona in summer 1745 (*Emira*) and, after that, in those of the Amsterdam (1752) and London productions (1754). In all these productions the cast is largely the same, supposing that Antonia Ambrosini and Antonia Giordani as well as Nicoletta Pettina and Nicolina Giordani are identical (Table 7).<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> *Love and Constancy. As it is Acted at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden. / L'amor costante: Dramma comico per musica*, London, Woodfall, 1754, online: <http://corago.unibo.it/libretto/DRT0002303>; *The Public Advertiser*, 13 February 1754.

<sup>29</sup> The opera has nothing to do with *L'amor costante* by Pietro Auletta, Naples 1739, and subsequent performances.

<sup>30</sup> Antonia Ambrosini sings from 1742 until 1750 (also in 1711, but this may be another singer), Antonia Giordani from 1752 until 1756 (also in 1772). Nicoletta Petina sings from 1742 until 1752, Nicolina Giordani from 1754 until 1756. Cf. CLAUDIO SARTORI, *I libretti italiani a stampa dalle origini al 1800. Catalogo analitico con 16 indici*, 7 vols., Cuneo, Bertola e Locatelli, 1990–1994, vol. 7 (*Indice dei cantanti*).

Table 7: Cast of *L'amor costante/Emira*<sup>31</sup> in selected productions from 1744 to 1754.

|              | <b>Brescia 1744</b><br>"La Musica è d' Autori diversi." | <b>Venice 1745 (carn.)</b><br>( <i>Emira</i> )<br>"La Musica è d' Autori diversi." | <b>Ancona 1745</b><br>(summer)<br>( <i>Emira</i> )<br>"La musica è del Sig. Leonardo Leo, Maestro di Cappella Napoletano." | <b>Amsterdam 1752</b><br>"La Musica è del Sig. Leonardo Leo Maestro di Capella Napolitano." | <b>London 1754</b><br>"The Musick by Sig. Leonard Leo." |
|--------------|---|--|--|---|---|
| Leandro      | Nicola Setaro   | Nicola Setaro  |  | Francesco Giordani  | Francesco Giordani                                      |
| Emira        | Angiola Faustinelli                                     | Anna Guadagni  | <b>Antonia Ambrosini</b>   | <b>Marina Giordani</b>  | <b>Marina Giordani</b>                                  |
| Celindo      | <b>Antonia Ambrosini</b>                                | Giuseppe Guadagni  | Nicola Setaro  | <b>Antonia Ambrosini</b>  | <b>Antonia Giordani</b>                                 |
| Eugenia      | Leonilda Borgioni                                       | Anna Ferramonti  |  |   |   |
| Auretta      | <b>Nicoletta Petina</b>                                 | <b>Nicoletta Petina</b>  | <b>Nicoletta Petina</b>  | <b>Nicoletta Petina</b>   | <b>Nicolina Giordani</b>                                |
| Don Bertoldo | Giuseppe Ambrosini                                      | Giuseppe Ambrosini   | Giuseppe Ambrosini   | <b>Giuseppe Giordani</b>  | <b>Giuseppe Giordani</b>                                |
| Pancrazio    |   |  | <b>Giuseppe Giordani</b>   |   |   |

<sup>31</sup> Nicola Setaro, being in the cast of 1744 and 1745, was later an impresario himself in Barcelona (cf. ZEDLER – VAN DER HOVEN – KNAUS, *Die Opera buffa*, p. 30 and passim). In 1750, he performed *Il don Bertoldo*, maybe derived from the 1743 version of *L'amor costante*, there.

|            |                          |  |                          |               |                |
|------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Rosetta    |                          |  | <b>Marina Giordani</b>   |               |                |
| Ormino     |                          |  |                          | Lucia Tiziano | Francesco Lini |
| impresario | <b>Giuseppe Giordani</b> |  | <b>Giuseppe Giordano</b> |               |                |

Other performances of *Emira* are documented for Pesaro (1745), Graz (1747) and Salzburg (1749). Although I was unable to check these librettos, the presence of the same singer cast indicates that most probably the same opera was put on stage.<sup>32</sup> Remarkably, the music of the last two productions for Graz and Salzburg is ascribed to Leo as well.

It is obvious that *L'amor costante/Emira* belonged to the repertoire of the troupe by Giuseppe Giordani who organized the operatic season in London in 1754. As can be foreseen, almost any piece of the London production can be traced via RISM. However, three pieces can be identified with some certainty:

- the duet "E voi vi contentate" (I,12) is certainly identical to the one by Francesco Feo from *Il vedovo* (Naples 1729); a manuscript of the piece exists with an ascription to Leo (I-PAC, Sanv.A.51); other manuscripts name Feo;
- the aria "Se mai perdetevi" (III,4) can be identified with an aria by Davide Perez which is dated "1746" in a manuscript in D-Wa (46 Alt 693, other manuscripts in: CH-NXB obl. 230 (Ms.9830), GB-Lbl, Add.31601, US-NHub, Osborn Music MS 4);
- the duet "Io ti dissi e a dir ti torno" (III,5) is probably taken from *Lo frate 'nnamorato* by Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (Naples 1732/1734, III,15, several sources in RISM).

Other pieces cannot be found in RISM or exist in different musical versions so that it is difficult to reconstruct the choice of the troupe. However, it remains the fact that the opera had been

<sup>32</sup> Cf. the entries in *Corago*.



ascribed to Leo since 1745 when it was given under the title of *Emira*. But this may simply be the result of a misunderstanding: in fact, Leo wrote an *Emira*, but this opera was a *dramma per musica* which was premiered in the Neapolitan Teatro S. Bartolomeo in 1735.<sup>33</sup>

Success or failure? It is true that operas and arias by Leo were performed on the London stage. But often his authorship was obscured or his music seems not to have crossed the thresholds of the opera houses. Moreover, even when he is named as a composer as in the case of *opere buffe*, they were given as pasticcios to such an extent that their original musical form was barely recognizable. But because he is mentioned as a composer of entire *opere buffe* (instead of single arias from *drammi per musica*) in the librettos and advertisements around 1750, at that time Leo probably was perceived primarily as a composer of comic operas than of *drammi per musica*. Nevertheless, his name seems to have conveyed meanings of *italianità*, popularity and fame as an advertisement for a concert of sacred music from 1753 paradigmatically shows: Leo is the only composer mentioned for a vocal piece (“Signora Passerini, *Mottetto*, by Sig. Leo”).<sup>34</sup> However, this mention may foreshadow his later renown as a prestigious composer of sacred music.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>33</sup> On this opera cf. SCOCCIMARRO, *Die Drammi seri*, vol. 2: *Verzeichnisse und Quellen*, pp. 18f. Also Scoccimarro walks into the trap identifying the Pesaro, Ancona and Graz *dramma comico Emira* (1745) with the *dramma per musica*.

<sup>34</sup> *The Public Advertiser*, no. 5734, 15 March 1753.

<sup>35</sup> On the reception of Leo’s music in the 18th and 19th centuries cf. SCOCCIMARRO, *Die drammi seri*, vol. 1, pp. 15-30; on church music pp. 19ff.

