OPERATIC PASTICCIO IN 18TH-CENTURY EUROPE:
WORK CONCEPT, PERFORMANCE PRACTICE AND DIGITAL HUMANITIES

ABSTRACTS

Clemens Birnbaum (Stiftung Händel-Haus, Handel Festival Halle), Handel’s Pasticci and Current Music Practise at the Handel Festival in Halle

Looking back on the first Handel Festival in Halle in 1922, it is explained that a characteristic of the Halle Festival from the beginning has been a close connection between science and practice. Arrangements of Handel’s works were made both by practitioners and by proven musicologists. Despite this common editing practice, the opera-pasticcio group of works has been disregarded until the early 21st century. Since 2012, the Stiftung Händel-Haus in Halle has been considering a reassessment of this group of works. Alongside performances, editions should to be produced. The positive results of this initiative are listed, but at the same time failures are also pointed out. It is speculated that the pasticci and Handel's compositional practice will ultimately only receive a suitable appreciation if a new work aesthetic is elevated to a foundation.

Michael Burden (Oxford University), A Return to the London Pasticcio: Performing with Mingotti, Failing with J.C. Bach

The Italian opera in London – confined by license to one theatre, and by financial structure to one audience – had rarely a season in the 18th century in which one aspect or another of the techniques associated with the pasticcio were not in play. And as elsewhere, there are few clues as to the aesthetic, professional, and personal tensions behind the opera’s creation.

In this paper, I will be focusing on one singer and one composer. My singer is Regina Mingotti, a woman with whom I have spent many hours in archives and libraries over the years, and my composer is J.C. Bach, to whose works I am returning in the context of another project with the Packard Humanities Institute.

Regina Mingotti was not only a soprano, but the first woman to run the London Opera House. In both those capacities, she proved to be vigorous and spirited. Fortunately for us, this resulted in a public row with the impresario Francesco Vanneschi, a row which left the only sizeable record of the preparation of a London pasticcio.

J.C. Bach, employed by Mingotti’s successor Colomba Mattei, arrived in London earlier than most discussions suggest and in an unspecified capacity. Comparatively inexperienced, his first opera was a pasticcio titled Astarto, re di Tiro, a work which failed spectacularly at the most important point in the season.

I will be using the examples of Mingotti and Bach to return two broad themes, the value of the pasticcio to singer and its value to the composer, and I will be looking at them through the lens of the London stage with all its peculiarities and compromises.

Anne Desler (University of Edinburgh), ‘Le arie le condurrò meco’: Aria Choices and Singers’ Agency in 18th-century Italian Pasticcio

Among those aspects of the traditionally much-maligned pasticcio that require re-examination is the singers’ approach to the genre. It has generally been assumed that singers were keen to
insert arias they had sung previously whenever possible with the aims of drawing on earlier successes and saving themselves the time and effort to learn new material with little or no reference to substitute arias’ dramatic and musical suitability. However, whilst these motives could certainly play an important role in aria choices, the range of singers’ possible approaches to the pasticcio is wider and more nuanced.

Examination of scores, printed libretti and documentary evidence relating to pasticci in which Carlo Broschi (Farinello) and Nicola Grimaldi (Nicolino) appeared in the 1720s and 1730s reveals that they, but also other singers, did by no means pursue a minimum-effort approach by default. In fact, both Broschi and Grimaldi often sang new arias even though they could easily have retained arias they had performed in earlier productions of the same roles, and it was not uncommon for lesser-known and younger singers to draw on star singers’ arias rather than their own repertoire. This paper analyses different strategies towards replacement arias in early 18th-century pasticci, interrogating the motives behind singers’ choices as well as the aesthetic implications of their practices.

**Bruno Forment** (Orpheus Institute, Advanced & Research in Music Gent), *Pasticcing in Brussels, 1727-1730 and 2006: Artistic Agencies, Strategies, and Results*

Somewhat of a pastiche of itself, this paper evokes two disparate layers of ‘pasticcio history’ from Brussels: (A) the operatic imprese of Antonio Peruzzi and Gioacchino Landi at the Théâtre de la Monnaie, 1727-30; (B) the author’s personal ‘cut&paste’ operas *Ifigenia/Ipermestra* as performed at the Royal Conservatoire in 2006. While scarce documentation exists for the sixteen opere serie pertinent to A (only libretti, no scores, stage designs, or eye-witness reports) versus an abundant amount for B (an audio-visual recording, edited scores and libretti, archives and first-hand memories), the commonalities between these two historical strata illustrate the dynamic processes inherent in pastiching, regardless of era. As concrete examples drawn from A and B show, pastiching involves similar networks of agencies (the artistic and non-artistic desires of ‘producers,’ ‘performers,’ ‘recipients,’ and other operators or stakeholders), strategies (convergent and divergent), and outcomes (the composed linearity of which is as temporary and unstable as a modern-day playlist or deejay set). Documented results of pastiching are better not considered as ‘works,’ but rather merit to be seen as meta-compositional assemblages, combining exchangeable music-dramatic ‘texts’ from multiple libraries (existing libretti, scores, stage sets, gestures, etc.), the configuration of which resembles today’s gra

**Ina Knoth** (Hamburg University), *Just for the Ladies? Compilation as Knowledge Practice and Pasticcio in England around 1720*

In 1719, the Royal Academy of Music was founded to set Italian opera on stable grounds in England. Before that, according to Lowell Lindgren’s reckoning almost two thirds of the operas staged in London had been pasticci. Many of the partly ferocious critiques against Italian opera before 1719 had attacked stylistic fickleness. This is just one reason why it seems likely that a declining number of pasticci after 1719 can be interpreted as a move against stylistic compilation in music. After all, in the first period of opera management by the Royal Academy from 1720 to 1728 the share of pasticci on the London opera stage declined to just about 10 percent or even less – depending on where to draw the line. In my paper, I will focus on some experiments on the verge between ‘opera’ and ‘pasticcio’ staged in the Royal Academy’s first period. More specifically, I will discuss them against the background of a more general cultural knowledge practice of the audience and their appeal to a female audience in particular.
**Aneta Markuszewska** (University of Warsaw), *Pasticcio and Pleasure. ‘Armida abbandonata’ (Venice 1729)*

Pasticcio and pleasure are inseparable in 18th century opera theatre as demonstrated by *Armida abbandonata* which was performed in the Venetian Teatro San Giovanni Grisostomo for the end of the 1729 carnival. In my paper I would like to analyze the source of this assumption and to focus on the ingredients of this pleasure (the word ingredients used here fits perfectly the *haut cuisine* roots of the pasticcio). For *Armida* the librettist Giovanni Boldini used arias from operas by Nicola Porpora, Tommaso Albinoni, Leonardo Leo, Leonardo Vinci to which some new discoveries should be added and analyzed. In conclusion I would like to consider if the pleasure drawn from pasticcio is historically limited or has a more universal appeal.

**Raffaele Mellace** (Università degli Studi di Genova), *Hasse’s ‘Siroe’, thirty years after: a veritable work in progress*

The paper aims at assessing the changes occurring from Hasse’s original setting of Metastasio’s *Siroe* in 1733 to the composer’s second setting of the same drama, exactly thirty years later, in terms of dramatic, vocal, and musical balance. The two versions are going to be compared from a comprehensive point of view, focusing on two mains issues. On one hand, the origin of the two settings, which goes back to two distinct versions of the libretto: a different starting point which gives birth to two, to a certain extent separate dramatic projects, differentiated by a number of distinctive facets. On the other hand, special attention will be devoted to the play’s characters, which, even without undergoing any major change from one setting to the other, show remarkable differences in individual characterizations and overall balance, as far as both drama and music are concerned.

**Gesa zur Nieden** (Greifswald University), *Pasticcio, Arrangement or Adaptation? Georg Philipp Telemann’s Pasticcio ‘Judith’ Based on Fortunato Chelleri’s dramma per musica ‘Innocenza difesa’*

When Georg Philipp Telemann prepared the pasticcio *Judith*, performed in Hamburg in 1732 and based it on Fortunato Chelleri’s *Innocenza difesa*, the chosen model had already undergone extensive revisions between Florence (1720), Venice (1722), Kassel (c. 1725), London (1727), Wolfenbüttel and Brunswick (both 1731). Since Telemann was also very interested in London musical life and adopted some arias from Handel’s *Lotario* (1729) for *Judith*, his opera will be taken as an example to shed more light on the connections between pasticcio, arrangements with a view to dramaturgical perfection and adaptations to different performance venues. On this basis, transregional transfer lines and aesthetic developments of the opera genre in the early 18th century can be worked out like the tendency to shorten recitatives, which was widespread in London but also discernible European wide, and the spread of certain aria types. A comparability of pastiche and adaptation can be derived from the different ways and formats in which musically successful arias were also published in collected editions, detached from their dramaturgical context. Against this background, it can be assumed that the relationship between adaptation and pasticcio was very close in the first half of the 18th century: while the operatic pasticcio was not yet conceptually distinguished from adaptation, the opera dramaturgy seems to have focused on the constant perfection of structure and aria quality.
Emilia Pelliccia (University of Vienna) & Sonia Rzepka (University of Warsaw), From ‘insignificant’ bars to significant social relations: Elisabeth Teyber and Laodice’s accompagnato in ‘Siroe’ (1763)

Allowedly, singers of Italian Baroque opera could influence the final musical and dramaturgical design of a work. In our presentation we will focus on one very particular case study of Hasse’s compositional process. The 1763-version of his opera Siroe, re di Persia featured the ‘new-comer’ Elisabeth Teyber in the role of Laodice, whose dramaturgical weight seems to have been rethought several times by the composer. Laodice’s recitative of the 7th scene of the I act is of particular interest as it was written out twice by Hasse – once as an accompagnato and once as a secco version.

However, one of the aims of our Pasticcio project was not only to uncover and discuss compositional practices in Hasse’s self-pasticcio but also to find innovative ways to display the collected data. Therefore, we will approach the following questions: How do musical sources allow tracing the compositional process? Furthermore, what are the possibilities to show the outcome of our research to the broad public? In the course of our talk we will present digital humanities tools, which our team uses and develops: MEI-based digital scholarly editions of music and the project’s database. Those tools, as will be explained, serve not only to visualize data but also to display relations between sources, singers and composers and showcase once again the complex network of 18th century pasticcio practice.

Anna Ryszka-Komarnicka (University of Warsaw), Tortuous Roads. Unwinding the Paths of Reception of Apostolo Zeno's Libretto 'Venceslao'

During the 50 years of reception of Apostolo Zeno's libretto Venceslao (1703-1754) no less than 42 opera productions were staged throughout various European centres. In most cases, the given performance is documented in an accompanying print of the libretto. Only once the text of Venceslao was reproduced verbatim: the Kraków print of 1725 is identical with the Venecian one of 1722. All other prints vary from one to another, and usually in a significant way. In most cases the changes concern at least 30% of the most distinct components of drammi per musica, namely the closed poetic numbers (arias, ensembles, choirs).

The changes appeared in subsequent versions of the libretto, regardless of whether it was an opera impasticciata, a pasticcio or a production with newly composed music. Amongst the latter there were cases of completely new edition of the text, which included autoimpasticciamenti, or accidental impasticciamenti as well. The least represented in the group of text variants of Venceslao were those authorized by Zeno himself (1703, 1725, 1744). Modifications by other poets played a greater role, such as those penned by Domenico Lalli (1722 and 1736), by anonymous editors, or even librettos of opere impasticciate and pasticci.

We can distinguish several branches of reception of Venceslao text: the Venetian-Florentine-Milan (1703-1705), Neapolitan-Roman (1714-1716), Venetian (1703 & 1722), and Turin-Prague (1721-25). Most of the new versions were based on at least two earlier editions. Thus, it is possible to trace several older productions of Venceslao in a single libretto – a sui generis literary pasticcio. However, the interconnections of the versions of Venceslao are not always clearly related to the careers of entrepreneurs, composers, and singers.
Giovanni A. Sechi (Bologna), Arias a proprio modo: Collaboration and Intertextuality in the Repertoire of Farinelli

Nei ‘pasticci’ e nelle opere collettive i cantanti facevano ampio ricorso a brani già interpretati in passato. La possibilità di interpolare un certo numero di brani dipendeva dal prestigio e dal potere contrattuale dell’interprete. Un caso di studi ampiamente noto è quello di Carlo Broschi detto Farinelli durante i preparativi per l’Artaserse (Ferrara 1731). La scelta dei brani occupò alcune lettere del cantante al proprio protettore Sicinio Pepoli. A tal proposito, un dettaglio di una lettera colpisce in particolar modo: «circa le arie le condurrò meco, non ho avuto tempo di farmele fare a mio modo». Cosa intendeva Farinelli con l’espressione ‘a mio modo’? Uno spoglio del repertorio operistico di Farinelli offre una possibile spiegazione. Escluse le ‘arie di baule’ (che rimanevano sostanzialmente invariate pur passando da un’opera all’altra), si riscontra un ulteriore tipologia di brani. Questi brani attingevano la linea vocale da un altro brano preesistente, mentre l’accompagnamento strumentale era composto ex novo da un nuovo compositore. Lo statuto duplice di questi brani era sconosciuto fino a oggi: la nuova veste strumentale aveva occultato il legame tra questi brani e la loro fonte. Queste arie ‘riarrangiate’ saranno l’oggetto del presente intervento; verranno presi in esame alcuni brani dal repertorio di Farinelli e di altri cantanti coevi quali Faustina Bordoni, Francesca Cuzzoni, Gaetano Maiorana detto Caffarelli; sarà fornito un confronto con le fonti, e si analizzerà il modus operandi dei compositori coinvolti, tra gli altri Giuseppe Maria Orlandini, Nicola Antonio Porpora, Antonio Vivaldi.

Tale tipologia di arie testimonia una pratica compositiva diffusa, e che necessita di un inquadramento storico; nel contempo, questa ci invita a riconsiderare l’intervento creativo dei cantanti nelle opere da loro interpretate, e il concetto di autorialità plurima nell’opera del primo Settecento.

Jana Spáčilová (Palacký University Olomouc), Between the opera and the oratorio. The pasticcio oratorios in Brno and Prague c. 1730–1760

The phenomenon of the pasticcio oratorio was quite widespread in the Czech Lands around the middle of the 18th century. The first evidence of this practice was a Latin oratorio based on opera arias by George Frideric Handel (Prague 1725). In Brno, the capital of Moravia, the performances of the oratorios was supported by Bishop Wolfgang Hannibal Schrattenbach, who was also an important patron of the Italian opera. Therefore, interpolation by opera arias often occurs in the Italian oratorios produced in his palace every week during Lent. Some works from 1730’s were even created as pasticci composed of contrafacted opera arias. The only surviving score, La vittima d’amore by Joseph Umstatt (Brno 1741) with music by Caldara, Hasse, Leo, Feo, Porta and Pescetti, shows the process of creating such type of oratorio in detail. The reprise of this work by the Crusaders in Prague on Good Friday 1744 and its favorable reception stimulated the considerable development of this practice in the mentioned church. Between 1749 and 1758, a total of six pasticcio oratorios were performed here. The music was selected not only from the works of popular composers of the time (Hasse, Jomelli, Graun), but also from the compositions of the older generation (Fux, Lotti, Conti, Porpora). Based on the analysis of libretti and music sources, the paper will show some examples of this phenomenon, crossing the boundaries between the opera and the oratorio in both directions.
Mark Tatlow (University of Gothenburg), ‘Georgiana’: the Making of a New Eighteenth-century Opera Pasticcio

In 2018 I was invited to compile and conduct a new opera pasticcio based on the remarkable and ultimately tragic life of Georgiana Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire (1757-1806). Georgiana was one of the most colourful and intriguing figures in late eighteenth-century London. She was deeply involved in politics, science and the arts; she was an incorrigible gambler, and lived openly in a ménage a trois. The pasticcio was commissioned to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Buxton Festival in 2019, in the context of the long relationship between the town of Buxton and the Devonshire family, whose country seat, Chatsworth House, lies 25 km to the east of the town.

My paper will outline the process of putting the pasticcio together, including the principles used in choosing, cutting, transposing and rearranging the music, and will be illustrated by recorded video excerpts. It will mention the complex and delicate negotiations needed to create a piece recognisably if not literally eighteenth-century in style. These centre around issues of musical structure and dramaturgy on the one hand, and on the other, questions of language, textual repetition, and matters related to the inbuilt flexibility of Italianate vocal music of the period.

Finally I will briefly summarise the reception of the opera, and suggest how opere pasticci could contribute to the renewal of opera today.

Steffen Voss (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, München), Manuscript Aria Collections in German Libraries and Their Relevance for the Reconstruction of Pasticcio Operas, Especially from Hamburg and Braunschweig

In the years between 1730 and 1750 opera pasticci became more and more common at the two main Northern German operatic centres Hamburg and Braunschweig. While older works where re-arranged and "modernized" by adding insertions from new Italian scores, turning pre-existing works into pasticcio-like forms (famous examples are the surviving scores of the Hamburg arrangements of Georg Caspar Schürmanns Braunschweig operas Jason and Alceste), in later years genuine pasticci without a preexisting musical source were created as well.

Normally older Italian libretti were translated into German as recitatives were normally sung in that language, they formed the backbone of the musical drama; the arias were typically chosen from modern Italian operas. While very often the individual names of the composers of these arias are not mentioned in the libretto, there were some exceptions: especially in Braunschweig a number of pasticci named Johann Adolf Hasse as the prominent aria composer, a fact which is explained by the great popularity of this author. Among the pasticci reviewed in this paper there are 2 works from Hamburg, Die Hochzeit der Statira (1736) and Die Farbe macht die Königin (1737). Shortly after the performances of these works, the German opera troupe went bankrupt and the Gänsemarkt theatre was taken over by the Mingotti company, who would perform many pasticcio operas as well – now of course completely in Italian. Concerning Braunschweig the paper will discuss 4 later works, Fredegunda (1742), Pharamundus (1746), Antoninus Commodus und Pompejanus (1747) and Die großmütighe Thomyris (1749). No complete score of one of these Northern German pasticci has survived, but with the help of contemporary musical sources, especially aria collections from Northern German libraries (mainly Hamburg, Wolfenbüttel, Berlin and Schwerin), parts of their musical ingredients may be reconstructed.