



The study score of the Duets could, at a pinch, be used for performance, since a fair amount of each piece appears on a given page; but only with the addition of judiciously xeroxed leaves, as the page-turns are completely unworkable. I mention this not to incite my violinist colleagues to violate copyright, but simply to acknowledge that they will almost certainly do so, since the price of €18 per duet for the 'practical edition' is fairly steep.

I sincerely wish I could offer constructive suggestions to the editors and the publisher about how to reduce the price of the *Opera Omnia*. One option would be to rethink the proportion of musical score to critical and introductory material, which, in the case of these Duets, just seems silly: 35 pages of introductory material + 53 pages of score + 57 pages of critical apparatus. One has to wonder whether it was really necessary to print the entire introductory and critical apparatus in three languages successively. These editions could be made more accessible to state-funded libraries and unfunded musicians by reducing the presentation of editorial material to one language (translations could appear on the internet). Perhaps, also, the gorgeous frontispiece in full colour is not really necessary. Perhaps the format could be slightly reduced and the page margins made less generous.

There is no doubt that such measures would chip away at the beauty and monumentality of the edition, of course, and this would be a shame, in view of the opportunity that this edition represents – to honour (finally!) a composer in a manner that befits his greatness. But an accord must be reached with the needs of a community of scholars and performers who would like to have (finally!) ready, reliable access to his work. Ultimately, however, I think that this stand-off between production standards and affordability may be less necessary than it used to be, for as a cursory survey of some of the other Boccherini websites will suggest, it is possible to make ingenious and elegant use of the internet to promote Boccherini's legacy and the critical work being done around it. In any case, sooner or later I think this *Opera Omnia* project will find itself confronting the question of how it can more effectively make itself also an 'Opera pro Omnibus'.

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*Eighteenth-Century Music* © 2009 Cambridge University Press  
doi:10.1017/S1478570609990194 Printed in the United Kingdom

STEPHEN STORACE, *GLI EQUIVOCI*

ED. RICHARD PLATT

Musica Britannica 86

London: Stainer and Bell, 2007

pp. li + 402, ISBN 978 0 85249 887 3

It was quite a coup in 1785 for Stephen Storace, a young Englishman aged just twenty-three, to stage his first opera, *Gli sposi malcontenti*, at Vienna's Burgtheater, and for this work then to enter the company's regular repertory. With the premiere of his second opera, *Gli equivoci*, at the same theatre eighteen months later, Storace must have felt that his career as an opera composer had been well launched. This time he had the advantage of a libretto that had been beautifully crafted by Lorenzo Da Ponte, court poet to Emperor Joseph II. Da Ponte had turned a French translation of Shakespeare's *A Comedy of Errors* into a two-act Italian opera libretto, complete with climactic multi-section finales to both acts. (He had made a similar adaptation only a short time previously, to produce the libretto for Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*.)

The score of *Gli equivoci* has now been published for the first time, as volume 86 in *Musica Britannica*, the monumental series of works by native, immigrant and adopted British composers. Despite Storace's Italian ancestry, not to mention the language and location of the opera's production, Storace was born in London and was very much an Englishman: his nationality was viewed by himself and others quite unequivocally.



Indeed, both the score and libretto of *Gli sposi malcontenti* name him as ‘Stefano Storace Inglese’. His training, however, was primarily Italian. The earliest musical instruction of Stephen and his younger sister Ann (Nancy) was doubtless first given by their Italian father, who had settled in London in the 1750s as a double bass player with the Italian opera company. Nancy became an accomplished singer; Stephen composed, played the harpsichord and occasionally played the violin.

In the late 1770s Storace *films* spent several years in Naples, studying at the conservatory of San Onofrio – but not very hard, according to the Welsh painter Thomas Jones. He and his family then travelled around Italy, with Nancy singing operatic roles and Stephen sometimes playing continuo. In 1783 Nancy, along with their friend the Irish tenor Michael Kelly, was recruited for the Burgtheater’s opera company. Stephen’s visits to Vienna were doubtless to see his sister, and were sweetened by the commissions of two operas. These probably came about as a result of Nancy’s connection with Emperor Joseph II, through her role as *prima buffa* at the Burgtheater.

The Storaces returned to England in 1787 intending to continue their careers in Italian opera at the King’s Theatre in London. To begin with, they did so successfully: Nancy sang, while Stephen contrived pasticcios and acted as director of music. Unfortunately, both siblings suffered from the unwillingness of the Italian opera community in London to accept them fully, despite their Italian heritage and their previous successful experiences in opera buffa. In 1788 Stephen, followed a year later by Nancy, moved to the Theatre Royal at Drury Lane, where their friend Michael Kelly was already singing and where they were welcomed warmly. Nancy became the highest-paid singer in the company, while Stephen acted as *de facto* house composer until his death in 1796, writing operas in English with spoken dialogue. His only attempt at an opera with recitative, *Dido, Queen of Carthage* (1792), provoked sarcasm in the press for its recitatives, and subsequently failed. Storace then turned his attention to educating his new public, who were primarily play-goers, and training them to foster a greater appreciation of the increasing integration of libretto and music on the stage. He introduced his London audiences to the multi-section finales that were commonplace in opera buffa, most notably in *The Pirates* (1792). In fact, a little of *Gli equivoci* comes back in the finale to Act 1 of *The Pirates*, as Storace was not averse to recycling his own musical ideas. He also used parts of it in two of his other works in English: one of these was *The Haunted Tower* (1789), which contains a scene that essentially matches the opening of *Gli equivoci*. The overtures of both works describe a storm at sea, complete with thunder and lightning, as the curtain rises to show characters reaching land. An effect that had been successful in Vienna was obviously not to be wasted in London.

Storace probably planned to reuse other material from *Gli equivoci* in the future, as he hardly expected to die at the young age of thirty-three. We must imagine that he was disappointed that his career moved from the elite Italian opera to the much less prestigious English theatre, just as we can deduce from the evidence of his music that he tried, gently for the most part, to influence his English audience’s taste towards the complex integration of drama and music which had played virtually no part in earlier English operas, but which was so important in the Italian genre. He did indeed achieve a certain success with the critics, who praised his music, and with his English public, who supported long runs and revivals of his English operas. As it is, *Gli equivoci* occupies an unusual position in Storace’s output: it was composed early in his career, before Storace began to work in the English theatre, and was based on what was undoubtedly the best libretto that he ever set to music. Although Storace’s later works are more mature in their compositional style and undoubtedly represent a significant phase of development in the history of English music, they are difficult to revive today, owing to the loss of the full scores and orchestral parts of all but one of his English operas. The sole surviving full score, *No Song No Supper*, is published as *Musica Britannica* volume 16.

*Gli equivoci*, on the other hand, has been revived a few times in the last thirty-five years, in productions at the Camden Festival in 1974, the University of California at Santa Barbara in 1980 and more recently at the Wexford Festival, the Batignano Opera Festival and the Bampton Classical Opera. At least three of these productions were sung in English. While some opera lovers may demur, this choice of language is essential for a successful reception of this work by any non-specialist Anglophone audience. The plot is a comedy in which verbal minutiae must be understood immediately in order for the implicit humour to have its full



effects. *Musica Britannica* provides a new English translation by Brian Trowell, a former member of the series' Editorial Committee. In the Translator's Note, Trowell explains the rationale behind his translation for singers, and in his retention of some of the Italian libretto's formal rhyme schemes. The occasional melodic alterations that are necessary for the performance of the English version of the recitative are marked in the score clearly and without fuss. Trowell deserves to be congratulated on a translation that is unobtrusive in its fluency, casually colloquial when appropriate (with such expressions as 'scot-free' or 'blab') and always graceful in its English phrase structure.

The opera has some unusual casting problems, which Richard Platt, the editor, suggests as one reason why it did not enter the regular repertory at the Burgtheater. The entire premise of the plot is that not one but two sets of twins can be, and frequently are, mistaken for each other. Twin masters are attended by twin servants, and both sets of twins have been separated since early childhood. Even so, the confusions would have been cleared up much more quickly had each set of twins not just looked identical but (unbelievably) had the same name as each other. Eufemio of Syracuse is attended by Dromio of Syracuse, Eufemio of Ephesus by Dromio of Ephesus. Only when the Eufemios' father recognizes one of his sons do the knots begin to unravel.

Platt based this edition on several surviving full scores. Two primary manuscript sources from the first production of 1786 exist in Vienna, and two secondary sources survive from a Dresden performance that was given in 1797 with substantial cuts. The *Musica Britannica* edition of the complete opera is issued in a reduction for voice and keyboard (with more than adequate indications of the original orchestral scoring), while a full score and parts are available for hire. This may be a timely publication: there is promise of a recording by the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment under the direction of Graham Lea-Cox in 2009–2010.

The edition is very well presented: the music itself is clean and clear to read, apart from the 'slashed' editorial slurs in the vocal parts, which are a little obtrusive and unnecessary. Other editorial markings are clear, although I did look unsuccessfully for an explanation of the two types of staccato markings. Platt's keyboard reduction is admirable. He has resisted any temptation to put in as much as possible of the orchestral parts, designing instead a part for the right hand that lies comfortably under the fingers.

The contextual information offered in the editorial is thorough and well thought-out. As well as the usual textual commentary, Platt includes discussion of the work's historical background, details of the first performance, descriptions of all the manuscript scores, and information about the cuts made for the Dresden production. The volume also includes illustrations of various documents and pages from three of the manuscript sources.

The acknowledgments in the front matter note that this volume was delayed in publication because of the debilitating illness of Richard Platt, who was unable to complete some of the final details. Platt has been a prolific editor of music for more than forty years, and at this juncture it appears appropriate to review briefly his important contributions to his chosen field. He has edited mainly, though not exclusively, English music from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, ranging in scope from standard repertory such as Boyce's *Symphonies Op. 8* to music by obscure composers like Thomas Morgan, Godfrey Finger and Richard Mudge, whose works would not otherwise be accessible to the average musician. He has also edited *Semele*, the opera by John Eccles, for *Musica Britannica* (which appeared as volume 76 in 2000). On a more personal note, Richard Platt has been a most generous correspondent with the present reviewer for over twenty years, and I find it fitting that his career should culminate in the production of such an elegant and thoroughly documented edition.

JANE GIRDHAM

