

# PRODUCING THE OPERATIC CHORUS AT PARMA'S TEATRO DUCALE, 1759–1769

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## ABSTRACT

*Italian opera is increasingly receiving well deserved attention. Yet the process by which the chorus in opera seria was created remains largely unexplored. Between 1759 and 1769 Tommaso Traetta and Christoph Gluck composed path-breaking, reform-inspired opere serie for Parma's Teatro Ducale which integrated chorus, dance and stage spectacle in the French manner. In an era when operatic choruses usually comprised amateurs and chapel singers, evidence from printed librettos and documents from Parma's Archivio di Stato reveal that many of the Teatro Ducale's choristers were professional singers hired from neighbouring Bologna. Perhaps in response to logistical and financial difficulties in engaging skilled personnel for Traetta's choruses, Parma established a singing school to provide choristers for theatre. Gluck's choruses employed a combination of students from this school and professionals. The evidence from Parma shows that the wide-ranging circuit within which Italy's opera theatres functioned embraced not only leading soloists and other personnel, but choral singers as well. It demonstrates the impact of practical circumstances surrounding the production of Parma's operatic choruses on the success of operatic reform in Parma.*

The influence of production practices on the development of eighteenth-century opera is increasingly receiving well deserved attention.<sup>1</sup> Yet the process by which Italian operatic choruses were created remains largely unexplored. Although the genre of opera seria is known primarily for those structural features of its librettos that reinforced the supremacy of the solo singer, choruses occasionally appeared.<sup>2</sup> While in the

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1 Notable recent contributions to this area of scholarship include the chapters on operatic production by Franco Piperno and John Rosselli in *Storia dell'opera italiana 4: Il sistema produttivo e le sue competenze*, ed. Lorenzo Bianconi and Giorgio Pestelli (Turin: EDT, 1987; trans. Lydia G. Cochrane as *Operatic Production and Its Resources* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), John Rosselli, *Singers of Italian Opera: The History of a Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) and Anthony R. DelDonna, 'Production Practices at the Teatro di San Carlo, Naples, in the Late 18th Century', *Early Music* 30/3 (2002), 429–445, among others.

2 Marita Petzoldt McClymonds, 'Chorus. 1. Up to 1800', *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1992), volume 1, 850–851. While Metastasian *opere serie* usually concluded with a 'coro' – a chorus of soloists – this essay is concerned with the chorus as an ensemble of choristers. These appeared in Metastasian opera more often than is usually acknowledged, as noted in Marita Petzoldt McClymonds, 'The Myth of Metastasian Dramaturgy', paper read at 'Patrons, Music, and Art in Italy, 1738–1859', inaugural conference for the Ricasoli



traditional *dramma per musica* they essentially stood apart from and commented upon the action, in reform-inspired opera emerging around mid-century choruses participated more fully and were often integrated into the scenes, along with danced episodes. Francesco Algarotti advocated their use in his manifesto of operatic reform, the *Saggio sopra l'opera in musica* (1755), to heighten the spectacle and to create a continuous complex of various types of vocal music.<sup>3</sup> Algarotti and those echoing his sentiments in other mid-century writings desired the 'reform' of 'abuses' inflicted upon dramatic unity by the hegemony of solo singers. It was envisaged that the integration into the traditional Italian dramaturgical structure of chorus, dance and supernatural stage spectacle drawn from French opera might result in a greater emphasis on elements other than soloistic display.

Four operas by Tommaso Traetta exhibiting this stylistic mixture represent Parma's response to the calls for reform: *Ippolito ed Aricia*, *I Tindaridi*, *Le feste d'Imeneo* and *Enea e Lavinia*, composed between 1759 and 1761. Christoph Gluck's *Le feste d'Apollo*, written for Parma in 1769, has been seen as the conclusion of the Teatro Ducale's reform efforts.<sup>4</sup> The musical innovations of some of these operas have been acknowledged,<sup>5</sup> but the production practices that shaped them have remained unknown. Material from Parma's Archivio di Stato and evidence from printed librettos for the Parmesan performances present a fuller view of Parma's operatic choruses, leading to a more complete understanding of the circumstances behind their creation.

## ITALIAN OPERATIC CHORUSES: PARMA AND ELSEWHERE

Choruses posed logistical problems for most eighteenth-century Italian opera theatres. Without standing bodies of choral singers at their disposal most theatres simply could not produce choruses on a regular basis. Consequently choral texts were often cut from librettos when they were adapted for Italian theatres.<sup>6</sup> When theatres decided to include choruses, choral singers were generally of three types: students from nearby conservatories, singers from the choirs of local churches or working-class amateurs.<sup>7</sup> Operatic choruses usually consisted of men only; when choruses were mixed, there were twice as many men as women.<sup>8</sup> The prominence of the solo voice in opera seria resulted in choruses maintaining a stylistically inferior role in the genre: according to John Rosselli, 'as long as audiences kept up the cult of the solo voice, they tolerated a

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Collection, University of Louisville, 14–18 March 1989. I am grateful to Marita McClymonds for sharing her unpublished research with me.

3 Francesco Algarotti, *Saggio sopra l'opera in musica* (Venice: Giambattista Pasquale, 1755; reprint Livorno: Marco Coltellini, 1763). See the 1763 edition in *Francesco Algarotti: Saggi*, ed. Giovanni da Pozzo (Bari: Laterza, 1963): 'Il meraviglioso di essa [l'azione] darà campo al poeta d'intrecciarla di balli e di cori, d'introdurvi varie sorte di decorazione' (155); 'La bella modulazione trionferebbe del continuo nei recitativi, nelle arie, nei cori medesimamente di che vanno corredate le nostre opere' (166).

4 Paola Mecarelli, *Le feste di Apollo: Conclusione di un impegno riformistico a Parma* (Parma: Battei, 1991).

5 *Ippolito ed Aricia* is discussed by Daniel Hertz in 'Operatic Reform at Parma: *Ippolito ed Aricia*', in *Atti del convegno sul settecento parmense nel secondo centenario della morte di C. I. Frugoni. Parma 10–12 maggio 1968* (Parma: La Deputazione di storia patria per le province parmensi, 1969), 271–300. See also George W. Loomis, 'Tommaso Traetta's Operas for Parma' (PhD dissertation, Yale University, 1999); choral writing is examined in chapter 8. Loomis summarizes the composer's achievements in 'Traetta: Time to Rethink?', *Opera* 54 (March 2003), 284–290. Gluck's *Le feste d'Apollo* is discussed by Renate Ulm in *Glucks Orpheus-Opern*, *European University Studies, Musicology* 36/70 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1991).

6 McClymonds, 'Chorus. 1. Up to 1800', 851.

7 The following discussion is drawn from Rosselli, *Singers of Italian Opera*, 203–204.

8 In Turin in 1750, however, an operatic chorus consisting of six men and six women performed in Baldassarre Galuppi's *La vittoria d'Imeneo*. See Marie-Thérèse Bouquet, *Il teatro di corte dalle origini al 1788*, *Storia del Teatro Regio di Torino* 1, ed. Alberto Basso (Turin: Cassa di Risparmio di Torino, 1976), 235.



chorus fit only for simple music'.<sup>9</sup> With respect to opera seria's central components – star singers, dancers in the entr'acte ballets and lavish stage spectacle – choruses were a mere afterthought. More is known about operatic choruses in the nineteenth century, and anecdotes report that later choral singers were second-rate singers, badly behaved and ill-prepared; choruses represented 'the disreputable end of the [singing] profession'.<sup>10</sup>

In Naples boys from the conservatories made up eighteenth-century opera choruses until this practice was abandoned during the 1780s; the long hours at the theatre in the evenings resulted in poor performance in their studies.<sup>11</sup> In Florence operatic choral singers were shopkeepers, presumably with little musical training.<sup>12</sup> Turin's Teatro Regio employed male and female choristers.<sup>13</sup> Turinese musicians associated with the theatre and chapel hired and directed them; presumably therefore Turin's male operatic choristers also sang in the chapel's musical ensemble. The number of singers varied from opera to opera, and they received minimal payments. Turin seems to have produced choruses more often than most Italian theatres during the century, however, and operas with choruses enjoyed the greatest success there. Cities where opera seria was given outside Italy dealt with choruses in different ways depending on local circumstances.<sup>14</sup>

Even less is known about how choral singers were recruited and directed. The chorus master as an official associated with a particular theatre apparently did not develop until the nineteenth century.<sup>15</sup> In Turin, however, the musician charged with procuring choral singers during the eighteenth century received a contract, similar to other personnel hired there, which clarified his duties: he was to engage a certain number of singers (with the number of women and men specified), teach them their music, assist at all the rehearsals and ensure that they were present for each performance. Apart from his payment he received a sum of money to distribute to the singers, which would be reduced if they missed any performances.<sup>16</sup> Other eighteenth-century theatres must have employed someone who carried out similar duties.<sup>17</sup>

9 Rosselli, *Singers of Italian Opera*, 204.

10 Rosselli, *Singers of Italian Opera*, 203. While Rosselli makes this comment in reference to the nineteenth century, he implies that it was true earlier as well.

11 Francesco Degrada, 'L'opera napoletana', in *Storia dell'opera*, ed. Alberto Basso and Guglielmo Barblan (Turin: UTET, 1977), volume 1, part 1, 257, note 1.

12 Anecdotal evidence confirms that shopkeepers sang as choristers for Salieri's *La fiera di Venezia* (Florence, 1779). See Alexander Wheelock Thayer, *Salieri: Rival of Mozart*, ed. Theodore Albrecht (Kansas City, MO: The Philharmonia of Greater Kansas City, 1989), 67. See also Marita Petzoldt McClymonds, 'The Role of Innovation and Reform in the Florentine Opera Seria Repertory, 1760 to 1800', in *Music Observed: Studies in Memory of William C. Holmes*, ed. Colleen Reardon and Susan Parisi (Warren, MI: Harmonie Park Press, 2004), 281–299.

13 Choruses appeared in Turinese productions of *La vittoria d'Imeneo* as mentioned above (Galuppi, 1750) and in *Ifigenia in Aulide* (Bertoni, 1762), *Sofonisba* (Galuppi, 1764), *L'Olimpiade* (Hasse, 1764) and other operas in the 1770s and 80s. See Margaret Ruth Butler, *Operatic Reform at Turin's Teatro Regio: Aspects of Production and Stylistic Change in the 1760s* (Lucca: LIM, 2001), chapters 4 and 5 (on *Ifigenia in Aulide* and *Sofonisba*).

14 For example, St Petersburg used singers from the imperial chapel; see Daniel Heartz, *Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style, 1720–1780* (New York and London: Norton, 2003), 936–937.

15 John Rosselli, 'Chorus Master', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, volume 1, 852: 'There seems to be no evidence of a chorus master so called before 1800'.

16 Contracts and other payment documents for these individuals survive from 1750 through the 1780s in Turin, Archivio storico della città di Torino (hereafter ASCT); one such contract setting out these guidelines is found in *Carte sciolte* 6249 (1762–1766), contract for [Tomaso] Vallino, January 1762.

17 For example, Anton Ignatz Ulbrich functioned as a freelance choral director for the Viennese court theatres. I am grateful to John Rice for bringing this to my attention and for pointing me towards the following sources providing information on Ulbrich: Bruce Alan Brown, *Gluck and the French Theatre in Vienna* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 91 (Ulbrich prepared singers drawn primarily from the Hofkapelle when required for academies and French or Italian operas); Dexter Edge, 'Mozart's Viennese Orchestras', *Early Music* 20/1 (1992), 68–71; John A. Rice, *Antonio Salieri and Viennese Opera* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 215–216.



In contrast to most Italian theatres, Parma's Teatro Ducale frequently produced operas featuring choruses during the second half of the century. The French-inspired reform of music and theatre undertaken by Parma's Guillaume du Tillot, administrator of the Bourbon household and general intendant of the theatres, is by now well known.<sup>18</sup> Under his influence several French operas were imported to Parma from Paris in the 1750s. Among these works, all of which featured choruses, were *Castor et Pollux*, *L'Acte Turc* and *Titone et l'Aurora*.<sup>19</sup> Tommaso Traetta became maestro di cappella at Parma in 1758 and received the commission to write four Italian operas that responded to du Tillot's desire for a fusion of French elements with Italian style. Carlo Frugoni, Parma's court poet, provided texts for the first three operas, which consisted of reworkings of French librettos: Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie* served as the basis for *Ippolito ed Aricia*, which had its premiere in May 1759; *I Tindaridi*, based on Rameau's *Castor et Pollux*, was performed in May and June of 1760; and *Le feste d'Imeneo*, an opéra-ballet loosely modelled on Rameau's *Les fêtes d'Hébé*, was given in September 1760 for the wedding of the Infanta Isabella of Bourbon to Archduke Joseph II of Austria.<sup>20</sup> *Enea e Lavinia*, a reworking of the libretto for *Enée e Lavinie* set by Antoine Dauvergne, had its premiere in spring 1761.<sup>21</sup> Gluck came to Parma in the summer of 1769 to compose and stage his *Le feste d'Apollo* in celebration of the royal marriage of Maria Amalia, daughter of Maria Theresa of Austria, to Ferdinand IV of Bourbon. This work included a shortened form of his *Orfeo ed Euridice*, lavish spectacle and choral participation. With the departure of du Tillot in 1771, the French-inspired operatic endeavours came to an end. However, Sarti's monumental *Alessandro e Timoteo* of 1782 demonstrated that Parma did not abandon completely its taste for lavish supernatural stage spectacle, chorus and ballet.<sup>22</sup>

### CHORUSES IN TRAETTA'S OPERAS FOR PARMA

In contrast to traditional practice, the printed librettos for Traetta's four operas for Parma give choral singers' names. The choristers are designated either 'attori cantanti nei cori' or simply 'attori cantanti'<sup>23</sup> and

18 For the social and political context the seminal work is Henry Bédarida, *Parma et la France de 1748 à 1789* (Paris: Champion, 1927). See also Hertz, 'Operatic Reform at Parma'; and Gian Paolo Minardi, 'Parma', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, volume 3, 886–888, and "'Le projet est abandonné": Note sul tramonto della "riforma" parmigiana', in *Cantabilis harmonia: Studi in onore di Giuseppe Massera* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1985), 24–49; Giuliana Ferrari, Paola Mecarelli and Paola Melloni, 'L'organizzazione teatrale parmense all'epoca del Du Tillot: I rapporti fra la corte e gli impresari', in *Civiltà teatrale e settecento emiliano*, ed. Susi Davoli (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1986), 357–380; Brown, *Gluck and the French Theatre in Vienna*, chapters 1 (especially page 11) and 7; and Claudio Gallico, 'Cori a Parma, 1759–60', *Rivista italiana di musicologia* 32/1 (1997), 81–97.

19 These works are mentioned in archival documents from the 1750s. *Castore e Polluce* (*Castor e Pollux* by Jean-Philippe Rameau) premiered in November 1758, *L'Atto Turco* (*L'Acte Turc* by an unnamed composer) in November 1758 and *Titone e l'Aurora* (*Titon et l'Aurore* by Jean-Joseph Cassanéa de Mondonville) in 1759. While an accurate chronology for eighteenth-century opera at Parma does not exist, two of these works are mentioned in Paolo-Emilio Ferrari, *Spettacoli drammatico-musicali e coreografici in Parma dall'anno 1628 all'anno 1883* (Parma, 1884; reprinted Bologna: Forni, 1969), 34.

20 Bruce Alan Brown discusses this work in relation to parallel celebrations in Vienna in *Gluck and the French Theatre in Vienna*, chapter 7 (especially 263–266); see also Klaus Hortschansky, 'Feste teatrali a Parma intorno al 1760: *Le Feste d'Imeneo* di Carlo Innocenzo Frugoni', in *Musica e spettacolo a Parma nel settecento: atti del convegno di studi indetto dall'Istituto di Musicologia, Parma, 18–20 ottobre 1979*, ed. Nino Albarosa and Renato di Benedetto (Parma: Università di Parma, 1984), 237–246.

21 Jacopo Antonio Sanvitale wrote the libretto for *Enea e Lavinia*. Its source was a libretto by Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle set by Pascal Collasse in 1690 which was later revised and set by Dauvergne in 1758.

22 Friedrich Lippmann, 'Giuseppe Sarti: *Giulio Sabino e Alessandro e Timoteo*', in *Musica e spettacolo a Parma nel settecento*, 105–115.

23 They are called 'attori cantanti nei cori' in the librettos for *Ippolito e Aricia* and *Le feste d'Imeneo* and 'attori cantanti' in those for *I Tindaridi* and *Enea e Lavinia*.

**Table 1** Choristers as listed in Parma libretto for *Ippolito ed Aricia* (Parma: Stamperia Monti, 1759)

<b>Signore</b>	<b>Signori</b>
Domenica Lambertini	Francesco Cavalli
Antonia Fascitelli	Ludovico Felloni
Veronica Rainieri	Petronio Manelli
Girolima Maj	Domenico Tibaldi
Anna Boselli	Carlo Barbieri
Margherita Gianelli	Girolamo Landini
Barbara Girelli	Antonio Goldoni
Anna Lolli	Gasparo Torielli
Isabella Beni	Matteo Sabattini

**Table 2** Choristers as listed in Parma libretto for *I Tindaridi* (Parma: Stamperia Monti, 1760)

<b>Signore</b>	<b>Signori</b>
Girolama Maj	Ludovico Felloni
Anna Boselli	Girolamo Landi
Anna Lolli	Antonio Goldoni
Angela Majre	Nicola Agostino Bertelli
Lucia Bonetti	Carlo Barbieri
Anna Fascitelli	Giuseppe Ferri
Margherita Brandi	Gasparo Torielli
Elisabetta Goradi	Filippo Sucearelli
Antonia Fioroni	Pietro Pizzimiglia
Geltruda Santi	Giuseppe Costa
Angela Foresti	Tommaso Caminati

listed together with the leading singers. The choristers as listed in the libretto for each opera appear in Tables 1–4.<sup>24</sup> According to the librettos, the number of choral singers varied: eighteen for *Ippolito ed Aricia*, twenty-two for *I Tindaridi*, twenty-eight for *Le feste d'Imeneo* and twenty-two for *Enea e Lavinia*. The presence of the choristers in the Parmesan librettos, and their designation as 'attori cantanti', suggest that these singers had a higher than usual status in Parma. Table 5 gives the names of these singers in an alphabetical list. It is clear that only a few of them performed in all the operas; these names appear in bold. The remaining singers took part in one or occasionally two other operas. Thus a core of eight choral singers – four women and four men – sang in all four of Traetta's operas.<sup>25</sup> Others were added for each production, with some overlap from one opera to the next. As valuable as they are for providing the names of the choral singers, however, the Parma librettos cannot always be relied upon to present a complete picture. Archival material provides information that supplements and sometimes contradicts that of the librettos. Few documents referring to singers survive for *Ippolito ed Aricia* and *Le feste d'Imeneo*, and none for

<sup>24</sup> Lists of names in Tables 1–4 are drawn from librettos in the manuscript I-PAC.

<sup>25</sup> Brigida Lolli and Anna Lolli are almost certainly the same person. Although this person's name appears as Anna in the first three librettos, including that of *I Tindaridi*, and Brigida in the libretto for *Enea e Lavinia*, it appears as Brigida in the document listing payments to the choristers of *I Tindaridi* in Figure 1, where no payment to an Anna Lolli is recorded. As explained below, Brigida's middle name was Anelli; perhaps she adopted a shortened form as her first name prior to 1761. Brigida Lolli appears in librettos after 1761, but no Anna Lolli seems to have sung after this year.

**Table 3** Choristers as listed in Parma libretto for *Le feste d'Imeneo* (Parma: Stamperia Monti, 1760)

<b>Signore</b>	<b>Signori</b>
Anna Beni	Antonio Tibaldi
Anna Boselli	Ludovico Felloni
Girolama Mai	Antonio Goldoni
Anna Lolli	Girolamo Landi
Anna Farcelli	Filippo Sudadelli
Angela Majre	Pietro Cieccatini
Angela Merusi	Carlo Barbieri
Giuseppa Bonetti	Alessandro Franchis
Lucia Forti	Luigi de Sales
Maria Sartori	Giuseppe Ferri
Faustina Mainardi	Angelo Passavia
Anna Roselli	Pompeo Costa
Ludovica Forzoni	Pietro Muratori
Agostina Caccia	Filippo Luigioni

**Table 4** Choristers as listed in Parma libretto for *Enea e Lavinia* (Parma: Stamperia Monti, 1761)

<b>Signore</b>	<b>Signori</b>
Anna Boselli	Ludovico Felloni
Girolama Maj	Antonio Goldoni
Brigida Lolli	Girolamo Landini
Angela Majre	Gaetano Donini
Caterina Merusi	Carlo Barbieri
Rosa Vitalba	Gaetano Rizzardi
Margherita Borasca	Giuseppe Afferi
Anna Farscelli	Agostino Vîparino
Giuseppa Morelli	Giambattista Rosi
Geltruda Santi	Gasparo Tornielli
Margherita Brandi	Agostino Foresti

*Enea e Lavinia*. But those for *I Tindaridi* and *Le feste d'Apollo* provide evidence that can be used to achieve a better understanding of the other operas.

A payment roster for *I Tindaridi*, shown in Figure 1, reports names of choral singers who received payment for having performed in the opera.<sup>26</sup> One of them, Filippo Sucarelli, replaced Tommaso Caminati, who became ill at some point. Two boys, Pietro Pizzimiglia and Giuseppe Costa, sang with the women. Included in the group of paid singers are several names that do not appear in the libretto: Lucia Frigeri, Barbara Girelli, Anastasio Massa and Alessandro La Roche. The payment roster indicates that *I Tindaridi* featured eighteen paid choral singers; the libretto gives a total of twenty-two choristers. The singers who appear in the librettos but not in the payment lists might not actually have sung, or might have sung but were not paid.

<sup>26</sup> Archivio di Stato di Parma (hereafter ASP), Teatro, Computisteria Borbonica, fili correnti, busta 933 (1760–1766), 'Per l'Opera de i Tindaridi, Ricevute degli Onnorarij de Sig.ri Cantanti de' Cori'. This document gives payments first in *zecchini gigliati* (for example, thirty-five for Alessandro la Roche, the first name listed) and then their equivalent in lire (L. 1540; the equivalent is arrived at by multiplying by forty-four).



A list of costumes and stage props for *Ippolito ed Aricia* confirms the presence of all the female choral singers given in the libretto for that opera.<sup>27</sup> The singers, each designated *chanteuse de chœur* in the document, are Rainieri, Maj, Boselli, Gianelli, Girelli, Lolli and Beni. Although Domenica Lambertini and Antonia Fascitelli appear in the libretto as choral singers, they also sang small roles in the opera and are listed in the libretto and this document along with the principals. The male choristers are not listed; perhaps their costumes and props were not as elaborate as those for the female singers. For the women, at least, the libretto for *Ippolito ed Aricia* accurately reports all the choral singers present.

A housing list from October 1760 provides information for *Le feste d'Imeneo*, performed in autumn of that year.<sup>28</sup> Two female choristers not mentioned in the libretto received housing that month: Lucia Frigeri and 'Baglioni detta la Carnaccina'.<sup>29</sup> No other singers appear there, though presumably documents for earlier months, now lost, reported the presence of male and other female choristers. With at least two singers appearing in the documents but not the libretto for *Le feste d'Imeneo*, this libretto appears less reliable regarding the choruses than that of *Ippolito ed Aricia*.

Who were the Parmesan choristers? Parma had no conservatory in the eighteenth century, and since the choral singers were paid, they were certainly trained musicians. In fact two of them, Anastasio Massa and Lucia Frigeri, must have been more highly skilled than the others; as can be seen in the payments to the leading singers in Figure 1, they earned the same fee as the lowest ranking solo singers, Francesco Cavalli and Giambattista Ristorini.<sup>30</sup> One might assume that, as trained musicians, the choral singers came from the musical establishment of one or more of Parma's churches (the men and boys, that is).

However, other documents reveal that many of the choral singers were in fact not local: they required lodging when they were in Parma, as shown in housing lists for the out-of-town singers and dancers from April 1760 (for *I Tindaridi*) given in Figure 2.<sup>31</sup> At least eight (and possibly nine) choral singers – half of the total number, according to the payment documents – received housing: Lucia Frigeri, Anastasio Massa, Carlo Barbieri, Giuseppe Afferi, Antonio Goldoni, Alessandro 'il francese,' Girolamo Landini, Nicola Agostino Bertelli and perhaps Brigida Lolli, if she was the 'altra sorella' listed with the dancer Elisabetta Lolli.<sup>32</sup> The others were local: Anna Boselli, Antonia Fascitelli, Barbara Girelli, Girolama Maj and Ludovico Felloni.<sup>33</sup>

27 ASP, Teatro, Computisteria Borbonica, fili correnti, busta 932 (1758–1759), 'Etat des fournitures que j'ay faites pour le Theatre de SAR par ordre de S.r E.x du Tillot premier ministre par a commencer le 1 May 1759 pour l'Opera d'Hippolite et D'Aricie'. The names are given here in French spellings: Rainieri, Mai, Bozelly, Gianelly, Girelly, Lolly, Beni.

28 ASP, Teatro, Computisteria Borbonica, fili correnti, busta 933 (1760–1766), 'Conto delle Piggioni di Case occupate dalli sotto espressi nel Mese di Ottobre', dated '31 8bre 1760'.

29 The housing list offers a bit more information on these two singers. It reads in part: 'Baglioni detta la Carnaccina che doveva cantare l'Amore nel prologo, e che ha cantato ne cori' (who was supposed to sing Amore in the Prologue and who sang in the chorus). 'Baglioni detta la Carnaccina' was undoubtedly one of the daughters of Francesco Baglioni (a well known comic singer of the era, nicknamed 'Carnaccio'), perhaps Giovanna or Clementina, both of whom sang in other operas at Parma around this time. On this family of singers see Barbara Dobbs Mackenzie and Colin Timms, 'Baglioni' (1–3), in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, volume 1, 277–278; I thank John Rice for bringing this relationship to my attention. The documents offer no explanation as to why 'la Carnaccina' did not sing Amore as apparently planned; according to the libretto Lucia Friggeri sang this role. The housing list also reads: 'Lucia Frigeri essendo restata per l'opera del Carnevale' (having stayed for the carnival opera); this opera was *I Tindaridi*.

30 ASP, Teatro, Computisteria Borbonica, fili correnti, busta 933 (1760–1766), 'Per l'Opera de i Tindaridi, Ricevute degli Onnorarj de Sig.ri Virtuosi'.

31 ASP, Teatro, Computisteria Borbonica, fili correnti, busta 933 (1760–1766), 'Pigioni di Case in occasione dell'opera della Primavera', dated 30 April 1760. Although the document does not provide the name of the opera to which it refers, it is a housing list for *I Tindaridi*, performed in May and June of 1760. (Similar housing lists survive for these months.) The housing list shows that the choristers received lodging for the month of April, though, judging from Traetta's letter, to be discussed below, they apparently did not arrive until at least the end of that month.

32 Although it is not certain that Brigida and Elisabetta Lolli were sisters, Brigida Lolli was not from Parma, would have required housing and does not appear in a separate entry in the housing list.

33 Other local singers include the two boys and Veronica Rainieri, who sang in other operas.



**Table 5** Alphabetical list of all choristers whose names appear in librettos for Traetta's Parma operas (in documents from ASP where noted; alternative spellings reflect variant spellings in documents)

x = present in libretto

\* = might not have sung, or sang and were not paid; do not appear in documents

<b>Women</b>	<i>Ippolito ed Aricia</i>	<i>I Tindaridi</i>	<i>Le feste d'Imeneo</i>	<i>Enea e Lavinia</i>
'Baglioni detta la Carnaccina'			x (not in libretto; in documents)	
Isabella Beni (Anna)	x		x (Anna)	
Giuseppa Bonetti			x*	
<b>Anna Boselli (local)</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>
Margherita Borasca				x*
Margherita Brandi		x*		x*
Agostina Caccia			x*	
<b>Antonia Fascitelli (local)</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x (Farcelli)</b>	<b>x (Farscelli)</b>
Antonia Fioroni		x*		
Angela Foresti		x*		
Lucia Forti			x*	
Ludovica Forzoni			x*	
Lucia Frigeri (not local)		x (not in libretto; in documents)	x (not in libretto; in documents)	
Margherita Gianelli	x*			
Barbara Girelli	x	x (not in libretto; in documents)		
Elisabetta Goradi		x*		
Domenica Lambertini	x			
<b>Anna (Brigida) Lolli (not local)</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x (Brigida)</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x (Brigida)</b>
Faustina Mainardi			x*	
<b>Girolama Maj (local)</b>	<b>x (Girolima)</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>
Angela Majre		x	x	x
Angela Merusi (Caterina?)			x*	? (Caterina)
Giuseppa Morelli				x*
Veronica Rainieri (local)	x			
Anna Roselli			x*	
Geltruda Santi		x*		x
Maria Sartori			x*	
Rosa Vitalba				x*
<b>Men</b>	<i>Ippolito ed Aricia</i>	<i>I Tindaridi</i>	<i>Le feste d'Imeneo</i>	<i>Enea e Lavinia</i>
<b>Carlo Barbieri (not local)</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>
Nicola Agostino Bertelli (not local)		x		
Francesco Cavalli	x			
Tommaso Caminati		x		
Pietro Cieccatini			x*	



Table 5 *continued*

Men	<i>Ippolito ed Aricia</i>	<i>I Tindaridi</i>	<i>Le feste d'Imeneo</i>	<i>Enea e Lavinia</i>
Giuseppe Costa (boy)		x	? (Pompeo Costa)	
Gaetano Donini				x
<b>Ludovico Felloni (local)</b>	x	x	x	x
Giuseppe Ferri (not local)		x (Afferri)	x (Ferri)	x (Afferri)
Agostino Foresti				x*
<b>Antonio Goldoni (not local)</b>	x	x	x	x
<b>Girolamo Landini (not local)</b>	x	x (Landi)	x (Landi)	x
Filippo Luigioni			x*	
Petronio Manelli	x*			
Anastasio Massa (not local)		x (not in libretto; in documents)		
Pietro Muratori			x*	
Angelo Passavia			x*	
Pietro Pizzimiglia (boy)		x		
Gaetano Rizzardi				x
Alessandro La Roche detto 'il francese' (not local)		x (not in libretto; in documents)	x (Alessandro Franchis)	
Giambattista Rosi				x
Matteo Sabattini	x*			
Luigi de Sales			x*	
Filippo Sucearelli		x	x (Sudadelli)	
Domenico Tibaldi	x*		? (Antonio)	
Gaspero Tornielli	x	x (in libretto but not in documents)		x (Gasparo)
Agostino Vigarino				x*

A document detailing the copying of the music for *I Tindaridi* reveals that the out-of-town choral singers came to Parma from Bologna.<sup>34</sup> The copyists were paid extra for having sent the choral parts there, and some Bolognese copyists received payment 'for having assisted during the final days because of time constraints'. The choral singers were apparently late in arriving in Parma for *I Tindaridi*, and their delay caused Traetta some anxiety. A letter of 23 April from the impresario Pio Quazza to du Tillot confirms this.<sup>35</sup> Quazza reports

34 ASP, Teatro, Computisteria Borbonica, fili correnti, busta 933 (1760–1766), 'Conto della Copiatura di Musica per l'Opera Intitolata i Tindaridi per il Reggio ducal Teatro', dated 30 June 1760. The last two entries in the document read: 'Piu per aver spedito le parti dei Cori a Bologna' and 'Piu per ricognizione di copiatura alli SS.ri Bolognesi che anno agiutato nelli ultimi giorni per la ristrezza del tempo'.

35 ASP, Carteggio du Tillot, Teatri, busta 88-T, letter from Pio Quazza dated 23 April 1760. The first section of the letter refers to the Bolognese singers: 'J'ai crù d'ecrire hier au soir, a Bologne, Monsieur, pour que le S.r Carmanini fisse partir incessamment tous les Choeurs, ainsi que M.r Traetta m'en avait fait beaucoup d'istance; Lorsqu'a mon arrive à Parme j'ai trouvé une Lettre du susd.e Carmanini qui me demmande tout dabord cent Zequins pour les leur distribuer avant qu'ils partent ayant a arranger leurs affaires, et ils les attendent par le Courier de Vendredi pour pouvoir partir aussitot, n'étant pas trop bien aise M.r Traetta de ce delai a cause que le tems s'abrege, et qu'il voudroit faire commencer a repeter les Choeurs; mais ce n'est pas de notre faute' (I intended to write last night to Bologna, Sir, so that Mr



that his Bolognese contact Carmanini 'is preparing the choristers for their immediate departure', on which Traetta was insisting; he explains that Traetta would be 'displeased with the delay because time is growing short and he wishes to begin rehearsing them'. Quazza conveys Carmanini's request for an advance for the choral singers in the amount of one hundred zecchini so that they could 'get their affairs in order' before their departure.<sup>36</sup> Evidence of the eighteenth-century operatic rehearsal process is extremely rare, especially concerning choruses; this valuable letter demonstrates Traetta's concern for the choral singers' preparation and its importance to a successful production. It also shows that not only highly paid solo singers could make financial demands on a theatre and expect them to be met, but that sometimes the chorus could do so as well. Although it is not known when the singers arrived in Parma, the opera opened on 14 May, ran for thirty-one performances and closed 30 June.

Being from out of town apparently carried with it a certain cachet and usually resulted in higher payment. With only one exception, all of the non-local singers hired for *I Tindaridi* were paid more than those from Parma, as seen in Figure 1.<sup>37</sup> In addition, almost all of the men were consistently paid more than the women, with two exceptions: one of the men who replaced a singer who had become ill at some point (these two men earned less together than what the other men were paid) and Lucia Frigeri (Friggeri), a successful soloist from out of town, who earned more than most of the women. (Frigeri and Massa were the highest paid.) The preference given to choral singers from outside Parma continued to the end of the decade, as we shall see.

Not surprisingly, all choristers in *I Tindaridi* earned considerably less than the leading soloists in the opera. For example, the renowned prima donna Caterina Gabrielli earned a total of five hundred zecchini and Giuseppe Aprile, a leading soprano castrato, earned three hundred.<sup>38</sup> However, as mentioned above, the highest paid choristers, Anastasio Massa and Lucia Frigeri, both earned a total of forty zecchini. This sum is equal to the earnings of the lowest ranking solo singers, Francesco Cavalli and Giambattista Ristorini. While little evidence survives regarding choristers' payments elsewhere, in Turin each chorister in *Sofonisba* (1764) earned two lire per night for each of the opera's twenty-eight performances, for a total of fifty-six lire.<sup>39</sup> The Turinese choristers' low payments do not even approach those earned by Giuseppe Vignati, the lowest ranking solo singer in Turin's *Sofonisba*, who earned 250 lire for this opera (half of his five hundred lire payment for the two operas in Carnival 1764). In comparison with choristers in Turin, those in Parma were clearly more highly valued.

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Carmanini would prepare all the choristers to depart right away, since Mr Traetta has insisted upon it; when I arrived in Parma I found a letter from the aforementioned Carmanini, who requests one hundred zecchini immediately to distribute to the choristers before they leave, so that they can put their affairs in order; they [the choristers] are waiting for it to arrive with Friday's mail, so that they can leave directly; Mr Traetta will be displeased with this delay as he wants to begin rehearsing the choristers and time is growing short, but this is not our fault.)

36 A payment document for various expenses incurred during April confirms that this was sent to the choristers; ASP, Teatro, Computisteria Borbonica, fili correnti, busta 933 (1760–1766), 'Conto di Spese che riguardano il Teatro occasionate nel mese di Aprile 1760'.

37 Brigida Lolli was paid less than some of the local singers.

38 ASP, Teatro, Computisteria Borbonica, fili correnti, busta 933 (1760–1766), 'Per L'Opera de i Tindaridi. Ricevute degli Onnorarj de Sig.ri Virtuosi'. This document reports earnings for all solo singers in zecchini and lire equivalents. Caterina Gabrielli earned four hundred zecchini and an extra payment of one hundred as a gift ('più per Regallo alla Sig.ra Gabrielli, zech. 100').

39 Payment information for singers in Turin is compiled from several documents in Turin, ASCT, cited in Butler, *Operatic Reform at Turin's Teatro Regio*, 163 and 292. Many currencies existed in this period, and no contemporary exchange rate is available. (On this topic see Rosselli, *Singers of Italian Opera*, 131–134.) Zecchini might be converted to lire in both Turin and Parma, but the lira was probably not equivalent in the two cities. Payment information from Turin, then, is not meant for purposes of comparison with singers' earnings in other places. It is presented only to provide comparisons of choristers' and soloists' earnings in Parma and in Turin, thus demonstrating the respective value of choristers in each city.



*Per l'Opera de i Tindaridi*

*Ricevute degli Onnorarij de Sig.<sup>ri</sup> Cantanti de' Cori*

<i>Sig. Alessandro la Roche D. il Francese</i>	<i>7 ed. 1/2</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>£ 1540</i>
<i>Sig. Anastasio Manna</i>	<i>D.</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>£ 1760</i>
<i>Sig. Gerolamo Landini</i>	<i>D.</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>£ 1320</i>
<i>Sig. Ant.<sup>o</sup> Goldoni</i>	<i>D.</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>£ 1144</i>
<i>Sig. Carlo Barbieri</i>	<i>D.</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>£ 1144</i>
<i>Sig. Gius.<sup>o</sup> Afferi</i>	<i>D.</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>£ 1144</i>
<i>Sig. Nicola Bertelli</i>	<i>D.</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>£ 1144</i>
<i>Sig. Ludovico Felloni</i>	<i>D.</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>£ 880</i>
<i>Sig. Filippo Sagarelli detto il Romano, che</i>			
<i>è entrato doppo alcune recite in supplemento</i>			
<i>di Tomaso Caminati, essendosi ammalato. D.</i>			
		<i>6</i>	<i>£ 264</i>
<i>Sig. Tomaso Caminati sud.<sup>o</sup></i>	<i>D.</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>£ 176</i>
<i>Sig. Lucia Frigeri</i>	<i>D.</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>£ 1760</i>
<i>Sig. Ant.<sup>o</sup> Fascitelli</i>	<i>D.</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>£ 660</i>
<i>Sig. Barbara Girelli</i>	<i>D.</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>£ 660</i>
<i>Sig. Girolama Maja</i>	<i>D.</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>£ 660</i>
<i>Sig. Anna Boselli</i>	<i>D.</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>£ 528</i>
<i>Sig. Brigida Colli</i>	<i>D.</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>£ 440</i>
<i>Sig. Angiola Maja</i>	<i>D.</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>£ 440</i>
<i>Sig. Benimiglio ragazzo soprano</i>	<i>D.</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>£ 440</i>
<i>Sig. Gius.<sup>o</sup> Costa</i>	<i>D.</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>£ 440</i>
<i>Totale de Cori</i>		<i>376</i>	<i>£ 16844</i>
<i>Sig. Pietro Martinelli Direttore della scena</i>			
<i>in luogo del Sig. Salvoni p. ricognizione</i>			
		<i>25</i>	<i>£ 1100</i>
<i>Totale</i>		<i>401</i>	<i>£ 17644</i>

Figure 1 ASP, Teatro, Computisteria Borbonica, filii correnti, busta 933 (1760–1766), 'Per l'Opera de i Tindaridi, Ricevute degli Onnorarij de Sig.ri Cantanti de' Cori'. Reproduced with permission



Pigioni di Case in occasione dell'opera della Primavera	
Per il Mese di Aprile	
Per la <sup>te</sup> pro Gabriella in Casa del Sig. du. di Roma a raz. <sup>te</sup> di L. 2000 L'anno, che fa per ogni mese	166.13.
Sig. Giuseppe Aprile in Casa del S. <sup>ro</sup> Bartolo Gioielliere, ed al mese	100.-
Sig. <sup>ca</sup> Luigia Segantini, con madre, e Cam. <sup>ca</sup> in Casa del S. <sup>ro</sup> Ferdinando Buzzi, provuedura di tutto a ragione per ogni mese di	240.-
Sig. Don. Pangiacchi, e serva in Casa del S. <sup>ro</sup> Fran. <sup>co</sup> colla Dem.	132.-
Sig. <sup>ca</sup> Ricci, sua madre, e serva in Casa dall Argine Dem.	200.-
Sig. Fran. <sup>co</sup> Canali, in Casa del S. <sup>ro</sup> Bernardino Dentelli D. <sup>no</sup>	60.-
Sig. Gio. Bua Ristorini in Casa del Sud. <sup>o</sup>	60.-
Sig. Lucia Trigeni de' Coni in Casa del S. <sup>ro</sup> Pietro Borghi, sua madre, Padre, e serva D. <sup>no</sup>	140.-
Sig. Ant. <sup>o</sup> Mappa in Casa della Sig. <sup>ta</sup> Santa Grandi Dem.	60.-
Sig. Carlo Barbieri in Casa della Sud. <sup>o</sup>	60.-
Sig. Giuseppe Aggeri in Casa della Sud. <sup>o</sup>	60.-
Sig. Ant. <sup>o</sup> Godoni in Casa del S. <sup>ro</sup> Pelloni	60.-
Sig. Alessandro il Francese in Casa di M. <sup>te</sup> Susca	60.-
Sig. Girolamo Landini in Casa del S. <sup>ro</sup> Bernard. <sup>o</sup> Dentelli D. <sup>no</sup>	60.-
Sig. Niccola Agost. <sup>o</sup> Bertelli in Casa del Sud. <sup>o</sup>	60.-
Sig. Aloar primo Ballarino in casa della S. <sup>ta</sup> Elisabetta Ballini	100.-
	<u>1618.13.</u>

Figure 2 ASP, Teatro, Computisteria Borbonica, fili correnti, busta 933 (1760–1766), 'Pigioni di Case in occasione dell'opera della Primavera', dated 30 April 1760. Reproduced with permission



Somma Retro - - - - -		L. 1618.34
Sig. <sup>la</sup> Santini Zannuzzi prima Ballarina, in Casa del S. <sup>o</sup> Imbeni, quattro stanze, sei letti, e provued. <sup>o</sup> di tutto Vecchini's. -	220.	
Sig. <sup>o</sup> Carlo Sitalta Ballarino in Casa di Giulio Feri Per mese - - - - -	60.	
Sig. <sup>la</sup> Elisabetta Loli, e suo M <sup>o</sup> . Ballarini con loro madre e altra sorella in Casa della Sig. <sup>la</sup> Caterina Ricchini - - - - -	220.	
Sig. <sup>la</sup> Giustina Castelli Ballarina in Casa di Anna Folechini, con sua madre - - - - -	50.	
Sig. <sup>la</sup> Anna Offener, e sua madre in Casa di Pio Modi - - - - -	60.	
S. <sup>ra</sup> Maria Duchaine in Casa in Casa di Pietro Camera - - - - -	50.	
S. <sup>ra</sup> Fran. <sup>ca</sup> Stuckinder, e sorella in Casa della Sig. <sup>la</sup> Angela Gidini - - - - -	50.	
S. <sup>o</sup> Martinelli regolatore della Scene, e de Sirtuosi e Ballarini in Casa della Sig. <sup>la</sup> Teodora Piacentini - - - - -	30.	
S. <sup>o</sup> Inno centis Gamburri in Casa della S. <sup>ra</sup> Elisabetta Ballini - - - - -	60.	
Parma il 30. Aprile 1760		2404.134
<p><i>Nota</i></p> <p>che tutte le Case sopra esposte sono tutte mobiliate, e provuedum di tutti gli utensigli, Biancheria da Tavola e sono, eccettuato quelle della S.<sup>ra</sup> Gabrielli e S.<sup>ra</sup> Cecilia Farina, alle quali la Corte fornisce il bisogno.</p>		<p><i>Nota</i></p> <p>che la sudd. somma va compresa nel conto gente del mese di Aprile, non servendo questo conto, che a giustificazione.</p>

Figure 2 continued



It will be recalled that there were eight singers – four men and four women – who sang in all of the four reform operas. Contracts for Traetta's choral singers do not survive, and without them it is impossible to know when the choristers were hired or whether they were engaged for more than one opera at a time. The presence of a core of singers may have been a coincidence, but it is also possible that these singers were intentionally hired for the four operas all together as a group. A strong core would have provided stability in an otherwise flexible choral ensemble, the additional members of which changed from opera to opera. It may also have resulted in a degree of stylistic unity; with a standing body of the same eight singers at his disposal, Traetta would have known in advance, within certain parameters, the level of musical demands he could make on the choruses for all of the operas. Composers of eighteenth-century opera were known for constructing arias that showcased the particular abilities of their singers; perhaps this approach was taken with regard to choral music as well, at least in Parma.

Nothing is known about most of the choristers in the Parma librettos, other than their names, as shown in Table 5.<sup>40</sup> But the majority of those who appear in both the librettos and the payment documents sang in other theatres as well, almost all of them performing as soloists in smaller roles. This is true for all of the out-of-town singers and for some of the local singers as well.<sup>41</sup> Of the female choristers, three were from other cities. Both Isabella Beni 'di Bologna' and Lucia Frigeri 'di Milano' sang comic roles in Bologna before performing in Parma and went on to successful solo careers that lasted until the late 1770s. Frigeri also sang seria roles elsewhere before and after Parma. Brigida Anelli Lolli 'di Bergamo' sang in two *opere buffe* at Parma in 1771 and in others in various Italian cities in the 1760s and 1770s.<sup>42</sup>

The remaining five – Anna Boselli, Antonia Fascitelli, Barbara Girelli, Girolama Maj and Veronica Rainieri – were from Parma. Boselli came from a Parmesan noble family. She got her start as a chorus member in the French operas that were imported to Parma from Paris and later went on to sing in seria productions elsewhere through the 1770s.<sup>43</sup> Fascitelli had small roles in *Ippolito ed Aricia* and *Enea e Lavinia* and performed widely in most of the major Italian cities from the 1740s to the mid-1760s. Barbara Girelli, 'detta la Parmigiana', had small roles in two *opere serie* at Parma in 1758 and sang occasionally in other cities until 1771. Girolama Maj and Veronica Rainieri 'di Parma' were choristers in one of the French operas, along with Boselli;<sup>44</sup> Maj apparently did not sing elsewhere, but Rainieri had a small role in *I Tindaridi* and sang in other cities until 1763.

While most of the women were local, most of the men were not. Their careers vary widely. Carlo Barbieri 'di Bologna' debuted as a soloist in Bologna in 1751 and had roles in five other cities.<sup>45</sup> He is the only chorister from Traetta's operas who also sang in Gluck's *Le feste d'Apollon* in 1769. Nicola Agostino Bertelli sang a small role in Bologna before coming to Parma, then seems not to have sung elsewhere, while Giuseppe Ferri (Afferri) enjoyed a very successful career which brought him to most of the major Italian theatres. Domenico Tibaldi sang roles mostly in Bologna and Venice but had a prosperous career as well (he also sang a small role in *Ippolito ed Aricia*). Antonio Goldoni sang solo roles in Sassuolo before coming to Parma, then seems not to have sung elsewhere, and Girolamo Landini (Landi) and Petronio Manelli (along with Tibaldi) performed

40 The following discussion therefore omits them and focuses on the singers about which information is available.

41 The following sketches of the singers' careers are drawn from the singer index of Claudio Sartori, *I libretti italiani a stampa dalle origini al 1800: catalogo analitico con 16 indici*, volume 6, part 2 (Cuneo: Bertola & Locatelli, 1994). When not indicated in the Parma documents, origins of the singers are given as they appear in Sartori.

42 As mentioned above, Brigida Lolli and Anna Lolli are probably one and the same. Brigida Lolli appears in librettos after 1761, but after this year the name Anna Lolli does not appear. Sartori, *I libretti italiani*, volume 6, part 2, 370.

43 Numerous payment receipts to Anna Boselli for having sung in the chorus of the French operas survive, one for each month from December 1757 to March 1759 (ASP, Teatro, Computisteria Borbonica, fili correnti, busta 932 (1758–1759)). Boselli is the only singer for whom this is true, however. No evidence suggests that other Parmesan choristers participated in this many of the French operas.

44 Receipts for Maj and Rainieri 'per aver cantato nei Cori delle opere francese nel Carnevale prossimo scorso' dated 2 April 1759 survive in ASP, Teatro, Computisteria Borbonica, fili correnti, busta 932 (1758–1759).

45 'Di Bologna' in this case comes not from Sartori but from the list of choral singers for *Le feste d'Apollon* to be cited below.



as choristers in Reggio Emilia. Anastasio Massa 'di Bologna' performed mostly comic roles from the 1750s to the late 1770s in Venice, Bologna, Dresden and many other cities. Alessandro La Roche 'detto il francese' was presumably a member of the troupe that came from Paris; although he does not appear in the librettos for *I Tindaridi* and *Le feste d'Imeneo*, he received lodging in Parma for these operas. (In the housing list for the latter work he is called Alessandro Franchis, perhaps a variant of 'francese'.) Alexandre Reynaud sang in both *Titone et l'Aurora* and one of the earlier French operas.<sup>46</sup> Alessandro is perhaps a variant of Alexandre, and Reynaud, La Roche and Franchis may have been one and the same. If so, this French singer came to Parma in 1757, 1759 and 1760. Gaspero (Gasparo) Tornielli seems not to have performed at all beyond his role as a chorister in *I Tindaridi*, while Ludovico Felloni 'di Parma' led the choral ensemble for the French operas.<sup>47</sup> Together with the three Parmesan female choristers who sang in these operas and the male singer from France, Felloni serves as an important point of contact between the French repertory imported to Parma and Traetta's reform operas. Parma seems to have launched Felloni, as he went on to a successful career singing roles in Florence, Rome, Venice and other cities from 1766 until 1781.

The French operas imported to Parma from Paris clearly provided additional opportunities for some of the local singers and introduced them to French music. As mentioned above, four Parmesan choristers sang in them, supplementing the performing forces brought from Paris. These four choristers' introduction to the French style would have prepared them for the reform opera choruses, with their Italianate music integrated into the drama in the French manner. Perhaps the interaction of these groups of singers helped to unify the ensemble of the reform opera choruses – particularly because the chorus leader in the French operas, Ludovico Felloni, was not a French singer, but was from Parma and a member of the core chorus. Moreover, the presence in Traetta's choruses of one French choral singer, La Roche, reinforces the link between the French and Italian operatic styles and the overlap in personnel between the French and Italian opera choruses.

A few of the men were already familiar with Traetta's choral writing. Girolamo Landini, Petronio Manelli and Domenico Tibaldi, all of whom sang in *Ippolito ed Aricia*, had performed in the chorus of Traetta's *Nitteti* for Reggio Emilia's Teatro del Pubblico just two years earlier.<sup>48</sup> Landini was one of the core singers at Parma engaged in Bologna; this suggests that Reggio, like Parma, hired its choral singers from Bologna – Reggio's close proximity to both Bologna and Parma would have facilitated this situation. As mentioned above, the major Italian theatres sometimes produced choruses and therefore were at times able to overcome the financial and logistical obstacles they posed; apparently regional theatres such as Reggio Emilia were occasionally able to do so as well – even at times hiring professional choristers, as in Parma.

A group of singers this large undoubtedly required a stage director. Very little is known about stage directors in Italian theatres; it is generally assumed that the local librettist fulfilled this role.<sup>49</sup> This was not the case in Parma, where Pietro Martinelli (Martelli) and Luigi Salvoni, both from Bologna, served as stage directors. Quazza mentions a 'Sigr. Martelli di Bologna mio corrispondente teatrale' in a document from 1769. Martinelli (presumably the same person) appears as 'direttore della scena' in the personnel list for *I*

46 Reynaud performed as soloist and chorister in *Titone et l'Aurora* in 1759; Sartori, *I libretti italiani*, volume 5 (1992), 340. He also sang in the chorus of *Gl'Inca del Peru*, presented in Parma in 1757; Sartori, *I libretti italiani*, volume 6, part 2, 552.

47 ASP, Teatro, Computisteria Borbonica, fili correnti, busta 932 (1758–1759), 'Conto di Sig.ri Suonatori intervenuti all'Orchestra per le recite Francesi . . .': 'Al Sig.r Felloni cantore de cori delle opere francesi per nove recite', dated November 1758. Felloni also housed one of the visiting choristers: ASP, Teatro, Computisteria Borbonica, fili correnti, busta 933 (1760–1766), 'Pigioni di Case in occasione dell'opera della Primavera', dated 30 April 1760: 'Sig.re Ant.o Goldoni in Casa del S.r Felloni'.

48 Eight men are listed by name in the libretto for Reggio Emilia's production of *Nitteti*. Sartori, *I libretti italiani*, volume 4 (1991), 235. The opera included a single chorus, which is discussed in Loomis, 'Tommaso Traetta's Operas for Parma', 304–305.

49 Daniel Hertz, 'The Poet as Stage Director: Metastasio, Goldoni, and Da Ponte', in *Mozart's Operas*, ed. Thomas Bauman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 89–105.



*Tindaridi*; in the housing list he is named as ‘regolatore delle scene, e de Virtuosi, e Ballarini’. He is also listed as having substituted for ‘Sig. Salvoni’ in the *Tindaridi* documents. Luigi Bernardo Salvoni (Salvonio) served as stage director for other operas at Parma during the 1750s, in 1769 for *Le feste d’Apollo* and in 1770.<sup>50</sup>

Martinelli and Salvoni received both lodging and payment equal to twice what some of the singers earned – they were obviously highly valued in Parma. And the stage directors already had some contact with the choristers, having come from Bologna with them; perhaps it was Martinelli who received the choral parts for *Tindaridi* sent to Bologna in advance and helped the choral singers prepare their music before their arrival. As already noted, the role of the chorus master is not thought not to have developed until much later; the evidence from Parma suggests that one of the duties of the stage director was to assist with the chorus as well.

Returning to the assumption that eighteenth-century choruses were all male, possibly amateurs or at best second-rate singers and generally treated as an afterthought, this evidence paints a very different picture of Parma’s choruses. For Traetta’s operas, they comprised men and women in roughly equal numbers, combined local and out-of-town singers, and were directed by a professional stage director. Many of the singers were professionals and active as soloists, which suggests that they possessed a certain level of ability, and two of them earned fees on a par with third- or fourth-ranking solo singers of *I Tindaridi*. Traetta considered the Bologna choristers a central component of the operatic ensemble, worthy of thorough musical preparation with his personal assistance. These important singers even received payment in advance of their trip to Parma for *I Tindaridi* beyond what they earned for that opera.

Bologna was the musical centre to which young singers flocked in order to begin their careers before the centre of activity shifted to Milan later in the century.<sup>51</sup> The fact that Traetta’s choristers were hired by the Bolognese contact of Parma’s impresario demonstrates the importance of Bologna as a source for Parma’s personnel. It suggests that the performing circuit through which solo singers found work functioned in a similar manner for choral singers, too – at least when the choral singers were professionals, as in Parma.<sup>52</sup>

## CONSEQUENCES OF TRAETTA’S OPERAS: THE *SCUOLA DI CANTO* AND GLUCK’S *LE FESTE D’APOLLO*

Traetta’s operas for Parma were massive productions, extremely expensive and complex to put together. The lavish supernatural spectacle, with aerial appearances of numerous deities, complex ballets integrated within the scenes, ornate costumes, magnificent sets (with more scene changes than usual) and many other special effects ‘imposed a financial burden more appropriate to a kingdom than to a tiny duchy’.<sup>53</sup> An army of carpenters, painters and other technical staff was employed. While few documents pertaining to the singers for the operas survive, many report the details involved in the operas’ technical components. In 1768 a *scuola di canto* was established in order to supply singers for the theatre. The school was directed by the Parmesan musician Francesco Poncini and trained local singers until its closure in 1792.<sup>54</sup> The difficult logistics of Traetta’s operas may have given rise to the establishment of this institution, which would have alleviated the need for (and expense of) hiring outside choristers in the future.

50 According to the 1769 payment documents, to be cited below, Salvoni ‘ha dirretto, e messo in scena tutti gli atti d’opere’. He is also mentioned in documents from the 1750s and 1770.

51 Rosselli, *Singers of Italian Opera*, 152–153.

52 The contact between Parma and Bologna probably began much earlier, though very few administrative documents for Parma’s Teatro Ducale prior to the 1750s survive. Salvoni appears in documents from the 1750s, and Quazza himself travelled to Bologna in the 1760s to hire singers. Singers of opera buffa at Parma were often hired in Bologna. The connection between these two cities and its implications for Parma’s repertory as a whole merit further exploration.

53 Heartz, ‘Operatic Reform at Parma’, 296–297.

54 Parma’s *scuola di canto* is discussed by Raffaella Nardella in ‘Musica e musicisti alla corte di Don Ferdinando’, essay forthcoming in a collection to be published by the Deputazione di Storia Patria per le Province Parmensi. I am grateful to Raffaella Nardella for sharing her unpublished research with me.





The singing school began functioning on 1 December 1768,<sup>55</sup> and in less than a year it produced singers who performed in Gluck's *Le feste d'Apollo*, which opened on 24 August 1769. Compared with Traetta's Parmesan operas, this work has received relatively little attention. Falling between *Alceste* of 1767, with its famous preface outlining the tenets of operatic reform, and *Paride ed Elena* of 1770, *Le feste d'Apollo* represents an extension of the composer's ideals and a continuation of the reform efforts begun in Parma ten years earlier.

The archival record is much more complete for *Le feste d'Apollo* than for the earlier reform operas and reveals more about the choristers. While the libretto does not list individual choral singers by name, a detailed personnel list with payments survives.<sup>56</sup> With only two exceptions, none of the choristers is the same as those who performed in Traetta's operas. One might presume that this is because the choral forces were now drawn from the singing school. However, choristers from the school apparently did not completely supplant the use of professionals. The choruses for *Le feste d'Apollo* comprised three types of singers: students from the singing school, locals who were not from the school (presumably adults) and other out-of-town singers, all but one from Bologna. The adult singers (those not from the school) appear in the document with their city of origin: 'di Bologna', 'di Parma' (or 'Parmegiano') and 'Reggiano'. The Bolognese singers are Anna Lazzari, Carlo Barbieri, Carlo Gentilucci and Pietro Vacchi. Those from Parma are America Biggi, Antonia Fascitelli, Francesco Crespi, Angelo Delbò and Gabriele Bonzani.<sup>57</sup> Giovanni Bedogni is listed as 'Reggiano'. *Le feste d'Apollo* thus employed ten professional adult singers.

The list continues with 'six young Parmesan boys from the singing school' and, in a separate group, 'ten Parmesan girls from the aforementioned school'.<sup>58</sup> The sixteen children were taught their music by Francesco Poncini, who also played harpsichord in the opera orchestra. A separate list gives the names of the students.<sup>59</sup> There were thus twenty-six choristers, two more than the total number given in the libretto. Luiggi Salvoni served as stage director of this large ensemble. The work received fifteen performances.

Contracts for the choral singers of *Le feste d'Apollo* survive and provide additional information as to the terms of their engagement. Although it is not known when the out-of-town singers arrived in Parma, the four Bolognese singers all signed their contracts on 9 July 1769 and received housing for August and September.<sup>60</sup> The Parmesan choral singers signed their contracts much earlier than the Bolognese singers; the contracts for the singers from Parma are all dated early to mid-March of the same year. Perhaps some rehearsal of the Parmesan singers, possibly together with the children from the school, occurred before the Bolognese singers arrived.

The choristers for *Le feste d'Apollo* did double duty in other Parmesan productions as well. The contracts end with a statement of receipt for payment (confirming the amount in the contract) and an additional phrase and separate amount 'for having sung in the Arcadia'.<sup>61</sup> This refers to a musical entertainment given in the royal gardens during the wedding festivities.<sup>62</sup> These include all but one of the adult singers (Angelo

55 ASP, Teatro, Computisteria Borbonica, fili correnti, busta 934a (1768–1769), 'Conto degli onorari dei musici . . .': 'Al sigr. Francesco Poncini come maestro della nuova scuola di canto . . . con l'assegno al sud.o di due mille lire all'anno, ed incominciata il primo giorno del sud.o mese', dated 31 December 1768.

56 The choristers in *Le feste d'Apollo* are referred to as '24 attori e attrici cantanti' in the libretto (Parma: Stamperia Reale, 1769). ASP, Teatro, Computisteria Borbonica, fili correnti, busta 934a (1768–1769), 'Conto generale di spese occorse per i Spettacoli Musicali di questo Reale Teatro in occasione delle Allegrezze per le Reali Nozze; nell'Estate 1769' (a portion of which appears in Figure 3), names them.

57 Antonia Fascitelli and Carlo Barbieri are the two who sang in both this work and Traetta's operas.

58 'Sei Giovani Parmegiani della Scuola del Canto' and 'dieci Ragazze Parmegiane della sud.a Scuola'.

59 One might speculate that these were the choristers who appeared in the librettos but not in the payment documents for Traetta's operas, but this is not the case.

60 Contracts for these singers and housing lists naming them are in ASP, Teatro, Computisteria Borbonica, fili correnti, busta 934a (1768–1769).

61 A separate document lists female and male choristers who received payment for 'the Arcadia in the Royal Garden'.

62 This work was composed by Antonio Rugarli, presumably from Parma but about whom nothing more seems to be known. His name does not appear in any other documents consulted for this study.



Conto generale di spese occorse per i Spettacoli Musicali di questo Reale Teatro in occasione delle Allegrezze per le Reali Nozze; nell' Estate 1769.

Onorarij de Sig.<sup>ni</sup> Virtuosi

M <sup>re</sup> Covagliere, Giust. Maestro Compositore della Musica, ha avuto per suo regalo Zediri Romani n <sup>o</sup> 600; che fanno	2580.	
Detti Zedi 600. gli si sono fatti pagare per Lettera di Cambio a Vienna da M <sup>re</sup> Maurani, e secondo il Conto annuo del medesimo, per il Cambio, e Commissione si e risultata la spesa di	1215.10	35615.10
Più per Viaggi pagatigli da Vienna a Parma, e ritorno Zedi 100. n <sup>o</sup> 200; che fanno	800.	
M <sup>re</sup> Maestro Gius. Colla per aver composto la Musica della Cantata fatta in Colorno di Lucia, e Alopi, ha avuto per gratif. Zoni 60. Rom.; fanno	2580.	5160.
Più per quella intitolata Eco, e Narciso. Item	2580.	
Alla Sig. <sup>ra</sup> Lucrezia Aguiari Zedi Rom. n <sup>o</sup> 500. come segue; cioè n <sup>o</sup> 250. per la Primavera; 50. per la Cantata di Colorno, e 200. per gli Atti d'opere rappresentati in Parma; Dalli quali Zedi 500. in tutto, dedotti n <sup>o</sup> 150. ricevuti in Mandato separato speditogli a conto di S. <sup>ma</sup> Tomma. dalla Comunitaria gente. ecco li 21. Giug. <sup>o</sup> anno corrente, restano Zoni n <sup>o</sup> 350. che fanno	15050.	15050.
Somma		255825.10.

Figure 3 ASP, Teatro, Computisteria Borbonica, fili correnti, busta 934a (1768–1769), 'Conto generale di spese occorse per i Spettacoli Musicali di questo Reale Teatro in occasione delle Allegrezze per le Reali Nozze; nell' Estate 1769', unnumbered pages listing 'cori cantanti'



	Somma retro	144695.10
	Somma retro dei Ballerini	138935
Sig. <sup>ra</sup> Giuseppa Bravini Sanromeni Terza Ballerina Parmegiana, accordata in 2. <sup>ni</sup> Rom. <sup>i</sup> 10. per la prima vera, che fanno		1720
5000. Più per aver perduto un Teatro a ragione della dilazione, e stata gratificata di Zechi n.º 12		516
Sig. <sup>o</sup> Giamb. <sup>o</sup> Ronnet terzo Ballerino, accordato in Zechi Romani 30. che fanno		1290
Sig. <sup>o</sup> Ant. <sup>o</sup> Chiarini figurante di Cleonora, accordato in Zechi 100. <sup>i</sup> 30, &c.		1290
Sig. <sup>o</sup> Giamb. <sup>o</sup> Martinelli altro figurante di Cleonora, accordato in Zechi 100. <sup>i</sup> 20, sono		860
Sig. <sup>ra</sup> Angela Ulinelli figurante di Lodovica, accordata in Zechi 100. <sup>i</sup> 30		1290
Undici Ragazze figuranti della scuola espresse nella Lista annessa, regulate secondo il stabilimento di detta scuola a Zechi 11. Rom. <sup>i</sup> a cadauna, che in tutto fanno Zechi n.º 121, come da Ricevuta del Loro Maestro Sig. <sup>o</sup> Gius. <sup>o</sup> Bianchi a piedi di detta Lista, avendo stato il denaro da esso riportato, che fanno		5203
Nove Ragazzi figuranti della scuola, come dalla Lista annessa regulate come sopra, e firmata con Ricevuta del pred. <sup>o</sup> Sig. <sup>o</sup> Bianchi loro Maestro, che sono Zechi Rom. <sup>i</sup> n.º 99. a ragione di un pezzo cadauno, che fanno		1257
Sig. <sup>ra</sup> Anna Lazar <u>Cori Cantanti</u>		
Sig. <sup>ra</sup> Anna Lazar di Lodovica, contralta accordata in Zechi Rom. <sup>i</sup> n.º 20; come da Scienza, e Ricevuta, che fanno		860
Sig. <sup>o</sup> Carlo Barbieri di Lodovica, Tenore, accordato come sopra; &c.		860
		200056.10

Figure 3 continued



	Somma contro	200056.10
	Somma contro de Cantanti de Corsi	1720
Sig. <sup>ro</sup> Carlo Gentilucci di Bologna, Basso, accordato in 20. zechi Romi, che fanno	860	
Sig. <sup>ro</sup> Pietro Vacchi di Bologna, Basso, accordato come sopra	860	
Sig. <sup>ra</sup> America Biggi Parmegiana accordata in zechi n <sup>o</sup> 15. che fanno	645	
Sig. <sup>ra</sup> Elvira Fasitelli di Parma, accordata in zechi n <sup>o</sup> 15. Mem	645	
Sig. <sup>ro</sup> Gio: Bedogni Reggiano, accordato come sopra in zechi n <sup>o</sup> 15. -	645	15007
Sig. <sup>ro</sup> Fran. <sup>co</sup> Crezzi Parmegiano accordato come sopra	645	
Sig. <sup>ro</sup> Angelo Delbo Parmegiano, accordato in zechi n <sup>o</sup> 18. come uno de più capaci per sostenere gli altri, che fanno	774	
Sig. <sup>ro</sup> Gabriele Bonzani Parmeg. <sup>no</sup> accordato in zechi n <sup>o</sup> 15.	645	
Sei Giovani Parmegiani della Scuola del canto, come dalla lista annessa, regolati secondo il stabilimento della Scuola a zechi n <sup>o</sup> 11. ca. <sup>o</sup> , che in tutto fanno zechi n <sup>o</sup> 66. come da Ricevuta del loro Maestro Sig. <sup>ro</sup> Fran. <sup>co</sup> Bonzani a piedi di d. <sup>ca</sup> Lista, essendo stato il Denaro da esso ripartito, che fanno	2838	
Per dieci Ragazze Parmegiane della 1 <sup>ra</sup> Scuola, come da lista annessa come sopra, e firmata con Ricevuta dal pres. <sup>te</sup> Sig. <sup>ro</sup> Maestro Bonzani, che sono zechi n <sup>o</sup> 110. a ragione di 11. a ca. <sup>o</sup> , che fanno	1100	4790
All Sig. <sup>ro</sup> Luiggi Salvoni, che ha diritto, e meno in piena tutti gli anni d'Opere, per una Gratific. <sup>ne</sup> zechi Romi n <sup>o</sup> 50. come da Ricevuta annessa, che fanno	50	2150
	Somma	217213.10

Figure 3 continued



Delbò does not appear), nine of the ten girls and the six boys, all of whom were paid extra for the event. The choristers' engagement at Parma for *Le feste d'Apollo* thus presented additional opportunities for the singers to increase their earnings.<sup>63</sup>

Without exception the out-of-town singers for *Le feste d'Apollo* commanded higher payments than the local singers, as seen in Figure 3. While the Bolognese singers earned a total of twenty zecchini each, most of the singers from Parma (and the one from Reggio) earned a total of fifteen.<sup>64</sup> Angelo Delbò earned eighteen; he was Poncini's assistant in the singing school and was rewarded with a slightly higher fee 'as one of the most capable of supporting the others'.<sup>65</sup> Each of the boys and girls received a total of eleven zecchini. It will be recalled that the highest paid choristers in *I Tindaridi* earned the same fee as the lowest-ranking solo singers. However, payments to choristers in *Le feste d'Apollo* are all very low compared to that of the lowest-ranking solo singer: Felicita Suardi, who sang the role of the seconda donna, received one hundred zecchini. The wide discrepancy might be due in part to the fact that *Le feste d'Apollo* includes no third-ranking role (as in *I Tindaridi*), and because there were significantly fewer performances of *Le feste d'Apollo*: fifteen to *I Tindaridi*'s thirty-one.

Although the French-inspired reform of opera at Parma is considered to have ended with *Le feste d'Apollo*, Parma continued producing choruses in later works. *Uranio ed Erasitea*, a cantata from 1771 by Parma's maestro di cappella Giuseppe Colla, employed choruses, as did Sarti's elaborate and complex opera *Alessandro e Timoteo* of 1782.<sup>66</sup> The Bolognese choristers do not appear in any documents after 1769; the singing school apparently eventually fulfilled its purpose and became the sole institution furnishing choral singers for Parma's theatrical productions.

Scholars have long known that eighteenth-century Italian opera functioned in the context of a wide-ranging circuit, with leading singers, dancers, choreographers and designers moving among Italy's many opera theatres. The evidence from Parma reveals that this circuit was broader than we have assumed, embracing choral singers as well. Most importantly, Parma's experience demonstrates the logistical and financial problems choruses presented for operatic reform, the solution to which was a long-standing commitment of resources. As Bruce Alan Brown has observed regarding the calls for reform by Algarotti and others, 'only with the right combination of artistic talent, material circumstances, and effective management could any theatre afford to listen to such basic criticism'.<sup>67</sup> For a short time Parma achieved the 'right combination', an important element of which was its expensive and talented chorus of professionals. The subsequent establishment of the singing school, which provided able choristers at a more manageable cost, was part of the attempt to sustain the combination, an attempt thwarted by du Tillot's departure from Parma shortly thereafter. The evidence given here sheds light on the complex logistics involved in producing operatic choruses, and understanding the Teatro Ducale's experience in managing these logistics broadens the context for the study of operatic production in the eighteenth century.

63 Giuseppe Colla, maestro di cappella at Parma, composed two cantatas for the festivities, *Licida e Mopso* and *Eco e Narciso*. It is not certain whether these works employed choruses, but documents mentioning both these and others for the festivities list choristers.

64 These singers earned a total of twenty or fifteen zecchini romani for the entire run of *Le feste d'Apollo*, not per performance; the document in Figure 3 summarizes all expenses incurred over the course of summer 1769. The singers' individual contracts confirm these total amounts.

65 'come uno de più capaci per sostenere gli altri'.

66 ASP, Teatro, Computisteria Borbonica, fili correnti, busta 935a (1772–1773), a booklet entitled '1773-Cantata-Uranio ed Erasitea-settembre 1773', contains a list of choristers. The libretto for Sarti's opera reports that twenty-six choristers participated, but no documents providing information about this work survive.

67 Brown, *Gluck and the French Theatre in Vienna*, 9.