



final Handel and Purcell event of the year, the ideal culmination of the many anniversary activities of 2009.

VANESSA L. ROGERS



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## 'SOPRA IL GUSTO MODERNO': CIVILTÀ MUSICALE A NAPOLI NELL'ETÀ DI PERGOLESI

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To mark the third centenary of the birth of Giovan Battista Pergolesi, the Fondazione Pergolesi Spontini, Jesi, in collaboration with the Centro di Musica Antica Pietà de' Turchini, Naples, the Galleria di Palazzo Zevallos Stigliano – Intesa Sanpaolo, the Fondazione Teatro di San Carlo, Naples, and the Comune di Pozzuoli, organized the first scholarly congress forming part of the National Pergolesi Celebrations for 2010. The three-day event in Naples, organized by the Comitato Scientifico Pergolesiano, presided over by Renato Di Benedetto and made up of Francesco Cotticelli, Paologiovanni Maione, Dale Monson, Franco Piperno and Claudio Toscani, set out to further knowledge of the cultural context in which Pergolesi's creativity flourished from both multi- and interdisciplinary perspectives.

The congress began in the prestigious setting of the Chiesa di Santa Caterina da Siena, part of the monastery of this name, which housed the Conservatorio della Solitaria in the nineteenth century and is now the headquarters of the Centro di Musica Antica Pietà de' Turchini. An introduction by Maria Federica Castaldo, director of the Centro di Musica Antica, was followed by brief addresses by William Graziosi, chief executive of the Fondazione Pergolesi Spontini, and Vincenzo De Vivo, scholarly consultant to the foundation. The first session, presided over by Renato Di Benedetto (Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II), opened with Imma Ascione (Archivio di Stato di Napoli) discussing sources for the age of Pergolesi, demonstrating the importance of the documentary material conserved in the archives and libraries of Naples. These sources form a precious part of the jigsaw of the Neapolitan musical milieu, stimulating scholars to investigate new areas that have tended to be passed over. Elvira Chiosi (Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II) situated the figure of Pergolesi in the cultural and political history of Naples in the first half of the eighteenth century. The period Pergolesi spent there coincided with a profound transformation in the city's political, social and cultural life, after some fifteen years of Austrian dominion. Beatrice Alfonzetti (Università degli Studi di Roma La Sapienza) spoke about the representation of tragedy in the Habsburg Vicerealm in the work of Saverio Pansuti, an eighteenth-century Neapolitan poet. Roberta Turchi (Università degli Studi di Firenze) illustrated the popularity of the plot of *La serva padrona*, Pergolesi's celebrated *intermezzo buffo* with libretto by Gennarantonio Federico. The plot had already featured in Hasse's *La serva scaltra*, 1729, and earlier still in *Pimpinone*, written by Pietro Pariati and set to music first by Albinoni in 1708 and subsequently by Telemann in 1725.

Continuing the session, Maria Ida Biggi (Fondazione Cini, Venice) dealt with the illusion of perspective and the role of painting in early eighteenth-century stage design. Charged with constantly impressing and astonishing audiences, the baroque designer took fantasy and exhibitionism to their limits: stage machinery, *trompes l'oeil*, scene changes before the audience's very eyes, all gave the performance a dynamic vitality. The first day of the congress ended with the Neapolitan composer Roberto De Simone talking about Pergolesi's *Olimpiade*, a drama in three acts with libretto by Pietro Metastasio. In the eighteenth century this drama had a vast circulation in a whole range of reworkings and pasticcios. In this case Pergolesi was working with Metastasio's most brilliant and perfect libretto. He treated Metastasio's melodrama in the spirit of the Neapolitan musical comedy, respecting the heroic and rhetorically tragic component but playing up the



sentimental content in the spirit of a *commedia di caratteri*, in which the psychological aspect of the characters comes to the fore.

The second session was held in the Teatro San Carlo. Built in 1737 at the instigation of Carlo di Borbone to provide Naples with a new theatre worthy of its royal sovereign, it is one of the oldest opera houses in Europe. Congress participants were greeted by Gianni Tangucci, artistic consultant to the Teatro San Carlo and artistic director of the Fondazione Pergolesi Spontini. The morning session, presided over by Claudio Toscani (Università degli Studi di Milano), opened with Giuliana Boccadamo (Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II) giving an overview of religiosity in eighteenth-century Naples. Naples made an indelible impression on contemporary travellers as a metropolis with an abundance of churches and convents and a plethora of religious orders and confraternities, with a liturgical calendar full of devotional observances all year round. One aspect of this religiosity was undoubtedly sacred drama, a particular form of religious instruction dealt with by Ausilia Magaugga and Danilo Costantini (Conservatorio di Musica G. Verdi di Milano), who illustrated the diffusion of the genre in the Kingdom of Naples. In another contribution dealing with the sacred repertory, Gaetano Pitarresi (Conservatorio di Musica F. Cilea, Reggio Calabria) analysed Pergolesi's early output at the Conservatorio dei Poveri di Gesù Cristo, which comprised sacred oratorios and dramas. 'Music as an antidote to earthquakes' was the singular title chosen by Claudio Bacciagaluppi (Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg), who examined the devotional practices that evolved in Naples in honour of Sant'Emidio, deputed to protect the city from earthquakes. Bacciagaluppi reconstructed the forces used in the performance of Pergolesi's Mass in F major in 1734, suggesting on the basis of Neapolitan archive material that the work was linked with celebrations of Sant'Emidio. The morning session ended with two contributions devoted to the cantata. Teresa M. Gialdroni (Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata) illustrated the development of the cantata in Naples in the age of Pergolesi, showing how elements from a popular milieu were closely connected with typically baroque formal models. Antonio Carocchia (Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata) spoke about the dramatic dimension in some cantatas by Pergolesi, based on the interaction of text and music.

The Church of Sant'Antonio, Pozzuoli, was the venue for the third day, which opened with the greetings of the Mayor of Pozzuoli, Pasquale Giacobbe. The morning session, chaired by Franco Piperno (Università degli Studi di Roma La Sapienza), featured the results of research work promoted and financed by the Fondazione Pergolesi Spontini. The laborious recovery of information on theatrical and musical life in Naples from 1726 to 1736 as found in the registers of old banks conserved in the Archivio Storico of the Banco di Napoli has given a unique insight into the city's cultural life, clarifying the context in which Pergolesi worked. The omnipresence of music in theatres, churches and monasteries, aristocratic town houses and private houses, and indeed in the city streets, could have existed only thanks to a complex network of specialized agents, composers, singers, instrumentalists, dancing masters, ballet dancers, scenery and costume designers, stage hands and instrument makers, and a no less abundant series of institutions, both lay and religious, which made use of and provided support and funding for the music. A group of researchers coordinated by Paologiovanni Maione and Francesco Cotticelli has been carrying out a project set up in 1999 by Francesco Degrada. Bank deeds have provided a whole range of research leads, and each group member in turn illustrated one of the possible perspectives.

Marina Marino (Conservatorio di Musica N. Sala, Benevento) dealt with the reality of sacred music in eighteenth-century Naples. The city's religious houses played a dynamic role in the production of music, and the bank records of daily payments and withdrawals contain a wealth of evidence on the initiatives they undertook. I (Angela Fiore, Centro di Musica Antica Pietà de' Turchini) focused on the practice of music by girls and women in the convents. The religious houses were often responsible for producing and commissioning sacred music, and archive material provides many references to an important musical 'tradition' concerning both public and private spheres. Kelly Lidiane Gallo (Naples) focused on private patronage and music in aristocratic town houses, showing how the presence of music teachers in the households ensured an adequate musical education for the children of major families. Carla Ardito (Naples) threw new light on the history of the Teatro San Bartolomeo with a detailed reconstruction of the composition of the theatre



orchestra and also of the careers of such leading singers as Caffarelli and Vittoria Tesi, adding to current knowledge and opening up new critical perspectives. Paologiovanni Maione (Conservatorio di Musica D. Cimarosa, Avellino) illustrated theatrical life in the city by reconstructing the professional specialities, staff and playbills for such major venues of the *commeddeja pe museca* as the Teatro Nuovo and Teatro dei Fiorentini. Francesco Cotticelli (Seconda Università di Napoli) looked at the *teatro istrionico* provided by companies of comic actors who alternated with the opera buffa companies, diversifying the repertoire on offer in the capital and elsewhere in the kingdom. Finally, Francesco Nocerino (Naples), the first scholar to be able to put the material produced by this research project to practical ends, illustrated aspects of instrument making in Naples in the age of Pergolesi on the basis of bank deeds.

The first session of the fourth day, with Marina Mayrhofer (Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II) as chair, was held in the Galleria di Palazzo Zevallos Stigliano, headquarters of the Banca Intesa San Paolo. Situated in Via Toledo and built between 1637 and 1639 by Cosimo Fanzago to a commission from the Zevallos family, the palace currently houses a museum displaying Caravaggio's last work, *Il martirio di Sant'Orsola*. Starting from the biography of Pergolesi by Giuseppe Sigismondo, Rosa Cafiero (Università Cattolica di Milano) illustrated the life and musical education of the pupils of the four Neapolitan conservatories, providing information on the rules and teaching methods of the institutions. Giorgio Sanguinetti (Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata) illustrated the rules and theories of the Neapolitan school of composition, concentrating on *partimenti*, exercises in harmony and counterpoint, and the indications found in the non-figured bass parts in compositions by Pergolesi.

Music education was also the topic of Paolo Sullo (Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata), who offered an analysis of a manual of sol-fa by Pergolesi in the library of the Conservatorio San Pietro a Majella, Naples. Angela Romagnoli (Università degli Studi di Pavia) investigated the role of Francesco Mancini in the development of a 'modern' Neapolitan style. The signs of modernity in this music can be seen in the counterpoint and orchestration and also in the choice of texts, librettos and dramaturgical models. Stefano Aresi (Università degli Studi di Pavia) focused on the figure of Nicola Porpora. By comparing his instrumental with his vocal music, he showed how Porpora's output gave rise to a style in which tradition and elements of modernity were able to coexist and blend with features of Italian, Neapolitan and French music. The contribution by Cesare Fertoni (Università degli Studi di Milano) also focused on Porpora, in particular a collection of violin sonatas dating from 1735, and Fertoni discussed the destination and motivation for these compositions. They represent a perfect synthesis of the Italian and French tastes, and also a very distinctive virtuosic style, which exploited polyphonic writing, difficult bow strokes and ornamentation.

The afternoon session, in the hands of Francesco Cotticelli, began with a contribution by Robert Lang (Pädagogische Hochschule Ludwigsburg) on the question of Neapolitan stylistic elements in *Adriano in Siria*. Lang offered a comparison of three versions of this opera, one by Pergolesi dating from 1734, one by Giacomelli from 1733 and one by Veracini from 1735, focusing on the distribution of dialogue in the different settings and identifying metre as a tool of musical dramaturgy. Lorenzo Mattei (Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata) investigated the genesis and development of the myth of Pergolesi by studying thirty eighteenth-century theoretical treatises. Kurt Markstrom (University of Manitoba) offered an interesting comparison of Leonardo Vinci and Pergolesi, showing how both composers were interpreted in the eighteenth century either as the last exponents of tradition or as precursors of the *stile galante*, with its simplification of musical style and move away from counterpoint. Francesca Seller (Conservatorio di Musica di Salerno) focused on the reception of Pergolesi in Naples in the eighteenth century by looking at musical collections and miscellanies. Pergolesi was perhaps the first musician to attract the attention not only of music lovers but also of the cultural world in general and the beau monde, so that his personal fate was to some extent isolated from his works and made the object of sentimental idealization. The general public went out of its way to construct, on the basis of his music, an abstract, entirely fictitious image imbued with the traits of refined *manierismo*. The last two contributions of this session also had to do with the legend of Pergolesi: Loredana Palma (Università degli Studi di Napoli L'Orientale) spoke about Francesco



Mastriani's novel *Giambattista Pergolesi* (1874), and Lucio Tufano (Naples) gave examples of the myth of Pergolesi as found in nineteenth-century theatre and librettos, notably in two singular works dating from 1857: Ronchetti Monteviti's *Pergolese*, with libretto by Temistocle Solera, and Paolo Serrao's *Pergolesi*, with libretto by Federico Quercia.

The final session, held at the Centro di Musica Antica Pietà de' Turchini and presided over by Paologiovanni Maione, opened with a paper by Vincenzo Dolla (Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II) that compared *La fede tradita e vendicata* by Francesco Silvani, set to music by Francesco Gasparini (Venice, 1704), with *Il prigionier superbo* by Pergolesi, on a text based on Silvani's libretto and attributed to Gennaro Antonio Federico. Rosy Candiani (Milan) spoke about the *commedeja pe musecca* in Naples in the age of Pergolesi as a laboratory for theatrical experimentation, featuring a singular work dating from 1724 entitled *Lo Sagliemmanco falluto*, whose text and music are both anonymous. Raffaele Mellace (Università degli Studi di Milano) also dealt with the theatre, focusing on the theme of contrition found in Hasse's *La sorella amante* and Pergolesi's *Lo frate 'nnammurato*. Mario Armellini (Université de Rouen) concentrated on the presence of ruthless tyrants and oppressed princesses in two operas put on at the Teatro San Bartolomeo: *L'Ernelinda* (1726), with text by Silvani and music by Vinci, and *Il Prigionier superbo* (1733). Finally, Roberto Scoccimarro (Berlin) analysed melody and phraseology in some arias that Pergolesi wrote for *drammi seri*.

Proceedings were brought to a close in the superb setting of Villa Pignatelli Cortes by a concert entitled 'Lieto così, affetti napoletani di primo Settecento', featuring the soprano Simone Kermes accompanied by Le Musiche Nove, directed by Claudio Osele, in pieces by Hasse, Porpora, Leo, Gallo and Pergolesi. The programme, devised specifically for this occasion, was the result of intense archival research by Osele and his ensemble over several years, which has brought to light a considerable amount of vocal and instrumental music of the early eighteenth-century Neapolitan school.

The Pergolesi celebrations promoted by the Fondazione Pergolesi Spontini are due to last until 2011, and will feature performances of Pergolesi's *opera omnia*, a series of international congresses (to be held in Jesi, Rome, Milan, Dresden and Tokyo), various publishing and education initiatives, and the setting-up of a *commissione scientifica* with a view to furthering the planned National Edition of the Works of Pergolesi. The results of this Naples conference are to be published in proceedings.

ANGELA FIORE