



# The Vocal Duets of G. F. Handel and His Italian Contemporaries (c. 1706–1724)

Ivan Ćurković



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*For Ági*





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# 1. Introduction

## 1. 1.

### HANDEL IN ITALY, HANDEL AND ITALY

The place of George Frideric Handel in music histories has not been questioned much since his musical “canonisation” in Britain and Germany in the 19th century. He is regarded not only as a “famous composer of Baroque music”, but also as one of “Western civilization’s greatest composers” (Buelow 2004, 476). Manfred Bukofzer’s *Music in the Baroque Era* sees a culmination of the tendencies of “late baroque” in the opus of Handel and J. S. Bach (Bukofzer 1948, 210–349). However relative the definition and periodisation of baroque music has come to be regarded lately (as outlined in detail in Leopold 1994), Handel, as shall be shown later on, is often singled out among the group of composers born in the last two decades of the 17th century for his conservative traits, i. e. his adherence to earlier musical traditions and his reluctance to wholeheartedly adopt some aspects of the emerging *style galant*. The question that this study will attempt to answer in its modest way (focusing on the highly particular form of the vocal duet) is which Italian composers from his immediate temporal (and to a certain extent, spatial) context would be the most suited for comparison with the master from Halle. In the period under examination in this study—from Handel’s stay in Italy to Giovanni Bononcini’s dismissal from the Royal Academy of Music (from roughly 1706 to 1724)<sup>1</sup>—departures from a “baroque style” (if there is such a thing in the first place) are less or not at all pronounced in Handel’s works, which will facilitate a selection of Italian composers to compare him with.

Although, especially in earlier music histories, most of Handel’s and his Italian peers’ production falls under the periodisation of Palisca’s (1968, 6) category of “high baroque”, some of the older historiographic literature takes a different stand. In Hugo Riemann’s (1912) opinion, the period of 1710–1760 in Italy can also be considered as an era of aesthetic decadence. According to him, in this period Italian vocal music abounds in arias that are mere “sing-song of the *canzonetta* type”<sup>2</sup> (Riemann 1912, 412) with or without virtuosic finery with the least artful accompaniment imaginable, and states an array of composers (G. M. Orlandini, T. Albinoni, A. Lotti, A.

1 A more detailed explanation of the narrowing down of temporal focus will be given in the course of Chapters 1, but also 2 and 3.

2 Kanzonettenartige Singsang.

Vivaldi, G. Porta, F. Gasparini, C. F. Pollarolo, A. Pollarolo, L. A. Predieri, G. M. Buini, F. Chelleri) whose arias match the unflattering description. It comes as no surprise that in this catalogue of names we find as many as three composers to whose comparison with G. F. Handel this study is devoted. Even though he will later list some of them (G. Bononcini, A. M. Bononcini<sup>3</sup>, A. Ariosti, F. Gasparini, F. Mancini, A. Lotti, et al.) as representatives of the fully-fledged chamber cantata, Riemann still insists that their cantatas are not on a “significantly higher level”<sup>4</sup> (413) than their stage works. The aesthetic underestimation of Italian composers not only of the *style galant*, but also of their precursors still within the frame of the old style in relation to their German peers like Handel and Bach is not characteristic only of Riemann and the generation of German musicologists around him but also of putting Handel’s output in Italian genres in the context of his Italian contemporaries in general. The following quote from a laborious landmark study of Handel’s borrowing practice by William Crotch confirms this:

Handel’s operas [...] contain fewer vulgar and boisterous melodies, and more that are in the true Italian style of the day. The same difference, however, existed between the German and Italian schools, as has been so remarkable ever since. The vocal melodies of Hasse, Porpora, Veracini, Pescetti, and Bononcini, were more light and beautiful; but for force, variety, design, invention, harmony, and instrumental effect, Handel was greatly superior to all his contemporaries. (Crotch 1986, 124)

This reception topos has continued to dominate research of Handel’s output in comparative terms, and the qualitative aspect of the comparison will always remain slightly awkward, for it inevitably brings the discussion to a halt by establishing Handel’s aesthetical superiority over his Italian peers. What remains to be a very difficult question is if and how these Italian predecessors and contemporaries were responsible in making Handel what he is. Although this study will not pretend to be able to provide answers by studying only a small and somewhat subsidiary element (the vocal duet), it is important to be aware of all the implications of the comparison. It is more than evident that Italy and its composers active in Handel’s lifetime have an important place in the stylistic positioning of the German composer’s opus. As a kind of “leading musical nation of Europe as a

3 Riemann wrongly lists the name as Marco Antonio, but the stated year of death confirms that he meant Antonio Maria.

4 Erheblich höheren Niveau.

whole”<sup>5</sup> (Leopold 1994, 1247), the influence of Italy spread with its music and musicians all over Europe in the course of the 17th century, remaining “style-forming for the whole of Europe long into the 18th century” (ibid.), and Handel with his international career is a quintessential representative of such an Italian-dominated European musical culture. Irrespective of these broader concerns, an “Italian period” is standard in the periodisation of Handel’s output due to the biographic fact of his stay in Italy in the period between 1706 and 1710, and in spite of some criticism (e. g. Harris 1980a and Riepe 2013), it remains without a doubt that the exposure to various musical stimuli on the Apennine peninsula left a mark on not just Handel’s composition during this period but also continued to assert itself throughout most of his later career. According to Strohm (2008, 3), works of the so-called Italian period “bear the stamp of the mature Handel; and when the composer incorporated some of this youthful material into later works, the spirit of the Italian period remained fresh and unsullied”, forming “a level of Italo-German craftsmanship comparable only with that achieved by the young Mozart”.

Italian elements in Handel’s musical language are usually seen as a part of his stylistic eclecticism, or—put in more positive terms—his capacity to synthesise. As Silke Leopold (1994, 1249), among others, points out, a synthesis of Italian and French styles was a preoccupation of German music from the efforts of Georg Muffat up to J. S. Bach and beyond, but it acquires a specific guise in Handel’s case. George J. Buelow (2004, 476) expands this aspect with the heritage of Handel’s adopted homeland: “His genius was rooted in German, French, Italian, and English musical styles from the turn of the eighteenth century, but he was, especially in his later works, more and more attuned to synthesizing those various styles.” Leopold (1985, 89) is even more specific when she claims that Handel’s operas are one of a kind “in their amalgamation of Italian, French, English and German stylistic elements”<sup>6</sup>. His main initial points of reference in the construction of a kind of *goût réuni* or *vermischter Geschmack*<sup>7</sup> must have been the music of Reinhard Keiser, who implemented a German, Italian and French synthesis in his substantial contribution to the repertoire of opera in Hamburg and, to a somewhat lesser extent, of Agostino Steffani, a composer active in Germany who integrated a lot of French stylistic traits into his cultivation of Italian genres. Juliane Riepe (2013, 268) adds Attilio Ariosti, Pietro Torri and even Johann Adolf Hasse to this group

5 Tonangebende Musiknation für ganz Europa.

6 In ihrer Verschmelzung italienischer, englischer, französischer und deutscher Stilelemente.

7 Coined by François Couperin and Johann Joachim Quantz, respectively.

of composers, and this makes it clear to which extent emigré composers prone to the reception of diverse stylistic (national or otherwise) influences are suited to a comparison with Handel. As Strohm (2008, 5) shows, many Italian composers “sought protection in foreign courts and embassies. Some created, while others maintained, contacts and commitments abroad. A large part of that splendid tradition of Italian opera outside Italy so characteristic of the eighteenth century owes its origins to the artistic diaspora which took place at this time.” It is therefore no coincidence that this study devotes itself to a comparison of exactly such composers (Steffani<sup>8</sup>, Bononcini<sup>9</sup> and to a certain extent also Lotti) with Handel!

“Four years in Italy (1706–1710) converted Handel almost completely to the melodious Italian manner, although his predilection for counterpoint, choral writing, and elaborate instrumentation never left him.” (Palisca 1968, 237) In Italy and especially in London, Handel differentiated himself from other composers by the specifically German elements of his musical language, e. g. in his use of orchestral colour. An English influence manifests itself most clearly in the English-language genres. However, according to Hicks (2001) “The Handelian synthesis as a whole did not undergo radical transformations during the composer’s career, so that his earliest music superbly exemplifies the then current styles (particularly Italian), while by the 1750s it was increasingly heard as possessing the virtues of an earlier age.”

### 1. 1. 1.

#### Contact with Italy: Biographic Aspects

From the generation of Heinrich Schütz to that of Johann Christian Bach, a journey to Italy has often been a very important part of the formative process of German composers, and most aspects of the motivation for this educational trip are combined in Handel’s case: “the cultural background in central northern Germany, the quest for learning, the aspiration to a career, the dependence on patronage, the spirit of adventure. [...] He arrived in Italy richly endowed with extensive experience of the German tradition at its most profound; he left as an ‘international’ artist. The most significant aspect of Handel’s character during his Italian period is his marked capacity to adapt himself to the whole body of circumstance and influence which surrounded him.” (Strohm 2008, 2)

8 As a composer given detailed analytical attention in this study, Agostino Steffani will only be referred to by his surname from here on.

9 As a composer given detailed analytical attention in this study, Giovanni Bononcini will only be referred to by his surname from here on.



Nevertheless, Handel's exposure to and confrontation with Italian music must have occurred as a series of often heterogeneous events. First contacts might have occurred during his early studies with Friedrich Wilhelm Zachow, who owned an extensive collection of Italian music and instructed Handel to copy and imitate some of these distinguished predecessors. Handel may have also had access to German anthologies of music elsewhere e. g. in Berlin (Strohm 1993, 10), possibly during a visit to the Prussian court, the date of which remains to be established.

A taste for opera may first have been stimulated on a visit to Berlin; opera there "was in a flourishing condition" and Handel is said to have met both Giovanni Bononcini and Attilio Ariosti. Such a visit is assigned by Mainwaring to 1698, but probably belongs to 1702, when both Italian composers were producing operas for the Prussian court. The fact that one of Handel's earliest musical works (the trio sonata op.2 no.2) appears to contain borrowings from Bononcini's operas of this period (*Cefalo* and *Polifemo*) suggests that the visit did indeed take place and was an important stimulant to the young composer. (Hicks 2001)

Other, more recent literature on the matter (Burrows et al. 2013, 16–17 and Riepe 2013, 157–160) shares this opinion. Backed by John Roberts's study of Handel's borrowings from Bononcini (Roberts 2010), Riepe decided that Handel might have studied the aforementioned scores by Bononcini as well as Attilio Ariosti's opera *La fede ne' tradimenti*, likewise written for a performance at the court of Sophie Charlotte. Mainwaring's (quoted in Burrows et al. 2013, 16–17) account of Bononcini giving Handel a particularly demanding chromatic cantata to play only to be embarrassed by the young man's musical prowess as well as Ariosti's more kind and fatherly disposition to him remains anecdotal in that it is impossible to confirm, and its value for the assessment of Handel's musical development cannot be judged.

A full outline of the facts on Handel's stay in Italy is impossible in spite of extensive study in the previous decade. We do not even have a precise time frame, and the exact dates of the departure from and return to Germany will remain unknown unless archival research unravels some unexpected sources. The data known of the principal stations of the composer's stay (Rome, Venice, Florence, Naples) does not build up to a continuous narrative. Even the exact reason for Handel's departure, whether it was Ferdinando de Medici's or his younger brother Gian Gastone de Medici's invitation<sup>10</sup>, is to a certain extent speculation. The chronology of

10 Strohm 2008, 11 and some other sources seem to imply that it was Ferdinando himself, a "fanatical opera lover", who invited Handel to Italy. Riepe (2013, 372–373) thinks that G. G. de Medici may have met Handel already in Berlin.

Handel's stay in Italy is much more complete in the *Handel Documents* by D. Burrows (Burrows et al. 2013) than it was sixty years ago in this publication's predecessor, O. E. Deutsch's *Handel. A Documentary Biography* (Deutsch 1955). However, as in the example of a possible meeting between Handel, Bononcini and Ariosti, biographical research still heavily draws on Mainwaring's (1760) biography of the composer, proving or—which is more common—speculating about its claims. There are lots of holes in the chronology, the biggest one probably from August 1708 (Handel's presence in Rome) to December 1709 (presence in Venice), and only the stay in Rome is more or less well documented, which makes room for a lot of speculation.

Naturally, music scholars have been curious about whom (or more precisely: which Italian musicians) Handel might have met during his stay. Mainwaring brings forth the following hypothesis: "When he came first into Italy, the masters in greatest esteem were Alessandro Scarlatti, Gasparini, and Lotti. The first of these he became acquainted with at Cardinal Ottoboni's. Here also he became known to Domenico Scarlatti." (Burrows et al. 2013, 70) Dean (1985, 2) likewise finds it highly probable that Handel met A. Scarlatti (he makes no mention of Domenico), whereas Burrows et al. (2013, 33) add the aforementioned Francesco Gasparini and Antonio Lotti to the list. As one of the most sceptical opinions on Handel's unprovable Italian contacts, Riepe (2013, 21) finds Handel's visit to Venice and the acquaintance with the operas of these colleagues of his plausible, but not that he necessarily met them personally. Dean (1985, 1) also extends the array of composers whose works Handel might have heard: "He must have encountered the operas of Pollarolo, Gasparini<sup>11</sup>, Lotti<sup>12</sup>, Caldara and Albinoni in Venice, Perti and Orlandini in Florence, Mancini in Naples, and many others. The Bononcini brothers were in Vienna, but Giovanni's *Il trionfo di Camilla* was still being played all over Italy. None of these composers however left an identifiable mark on Handel's style. I believe that with Alessandro Scarlatti the case is different." Handel unquestionably heard at least some of Scarlatti's oratorios performed in Rome in 1707 or 1708, and Dean speculates if he might have been able to hear his opera *Il gran Tamerlano*<sup>13</sup> when he came to Florence in 1707. The two composers even "shared the same patron (Cardinal Vincenzo Grimani), who commissioned dramatic works from both for Naples and Venice" (Dean 1985, 3).

11 As a composer given detailed analytical attention in this study, Francesco Gasparini will only be referred to by his surname from here on.

12 As a composer given detailed analytical attention in this study, Antonio Lotti will only be referred to by his surname from here on.

13 No musical sources for this opera survive.

The question of Scarlatti's possible musical influence on Handel, as one of the most discussed questions in the research of Handel's musical *italianità*, merits a separate subchapter (1.1.4). I shall for now concentrate on the topical importance of Rome, Florence and Venice for Handel. Although half of the time spent in Italy was sojourned in Rome, where opera was banned, this does not mean that Handel missed acquainting himself with opera, one of the main musical interests throughout most of his career. According to Strohm (2008, 11), he spent his autumns and winters in important operatic centres. At Pratolino, the residence of Ferdinando Medici near Florence, operas by A. Scarlatti and G. A. Perti were performed around that time. Their music is lost, but "each of Salvi's libretti from the years 1707–1710 was set to music by Handel in London some years later: they were *Sosarme*, *Berenice*, *Ariodante*, and *Rodelinda*."<sup>14</sup> (Strohm 2008, 11) Sabine Ehrmann-Herfort (2009, 37) is sceptical about the prospects of such an extensive Florentine stay, stressing that both Handel's stay as well as the idea that *Rodrigo* was a commission by Ferdinando Medici are mere hypotheses that cannot be proven.

The wealth of public opera production in Venice could have offered even more musical stimuli to Handel. And although a Venetian stay for the premiere of *Agrippina* is unquestionable, according to some, its representativeness of a Venetian operatic school as well as the formidable success Handel had scored with it (resulting in the famous acclamations to "il caro Sassone") are less self-evident. Since it is effectively a pasticcio made up of the most popular arias he had written during his time in Italy, one is tempted to consider it as an aesthetic summation of what Handel had learnt in Italy and its implementation in the genre that was to mark his subsequent career. This opera is far less representative of librettistic traditions that were *en vogue* in Venice at the time compared to the "proper" opera seria such as Handel's Florentine *Rodrigo*, but we are unable to make a comparison in musical terms since musical sources for most Venetian operas from 1700–1710 are lost. Obviously, Handel must have understood Venetian opera well for he scored a success, although Riepe (2013, 340) shows, drawing on other literature, that this success might have not been so unusual or exceptional. Still, Strohm (2008, 13) points out that in Venice Handel "encountered most of the original texts of the operas that he was later to set in London."

It is precisely the comparison of the composers outlined above with Handel that this study devotes itself to. One finds Handel's later career continually intertwined with these same composers, whether as a context in which he created his output in the genre of the chamber duet (Steffani,

14 Unfortunately, the music of the original Florentine operas has been lost.

Bononcini, to a certain extent also Gasparini and Lotti), or as competitors in the cultivation of Italian opera in London (Bononcini, Ariosti, Gasparini). One could also add Francesco Mancini to the latter group, who conducted Handel’s *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo* at the first performance in Naples in 1708 since Handel had to go back to Rome (cf. Marx 2002, 518). The fact that his opera *Gl’amanti generosi* served as the basis for *Idaspe fedele* (1710), one of the first Italian operas performed in London in the original language, although a coincidence, could indicate some kind of proximity, albeit indirect. One should also mention Giovanni Porta, the only Italian composer whose operas were performed in London who, along with Bononcini and Ariosti, actually travelled to the British capital. “Porta, whom Handel may have met in Rome [they were active in similar circles around the same time, A/N], was already in London under the patronage of the Duke of Wharton” (Burrows et al. 2013, 135) in 1720, when *Numitore* was commissioned to open the first season of the Royal Academy of Music. Handel confirmed the connection by borrowing from the opera in his English oratorios, including numerous borrowings from the duet that opens it.

Following Strohm’s thoughts on the matter, I can conclude that the time in Italy “left behind it a set of profoundly memorable experiences and a personal awareness of European culture, which were to be drawn on often in the future, with all the pride of the emigré” (Strohm 2008, 14). For the composer, the experiences on the Apennine Peninsula had the character of a “great intellectual adventure” (ibid., 10). Nevertheless, it remains hard to pin down the concrete musical ways this manifested itself in Handel’s works.

### 1. 1. 2.

#### Italian Influence or “What Did Handel Learn in Italy?”

It is notoriously difficult to prove direct influence in a period when composers used a common language and were not concerned to strike an original or intensely personal note, especially as key works may have been lost. Such influence has nothing to do with Handel’s borrowings, which are more tangible—and more conscious—but in this connection less significant. (Dean 1985, 3)

Although this quote stems from an article that claims a strong influence of A. Scarlatti on Handel (which has been subject to criticism since), it is strikingly lucid in its circumvention of a too broad a use of the term “influence”. Leopold (1997, 390) agrees with Dean that concrete influences have been impossible to prove, but expresses hope that research should focus on details and nuances of Handel’s compositional language which

he “demonstrably used already in Hamburg, tested further in Italy and finally applied them in England as a kind of a code for a particular affect”<sup>15</sup>. Riepe (2013) is the most outspoken in her critique of generalisation on the Italian influence on Handel. Her main argument is that our knowledge of the repertory of Italian vocal music at the beginning of the 18th century is too limited for an objective overview of repertory and styles that a comprehensive comparison would require.

The other extreme in this often too heated debate would be a negation of the (relevance) of Italian influence on Handel and the (over)stressing of the importance of his German musical background. Indeed, there is a body of literature (in certain aspects also Harris 1980; Taruskin 2010, 311; Riepe 2013) that claims Handel stayed true to himself more than he was influenced by Italian composers, meaning by “himself” mostly his (protestant) German musical heritage. While insisting that Handel’s German heritage was of “paramount importance”, Ellen T. Harris (1980b, 493) still admits that it should not be overemphasised like the Italian influence:

If the Italian influence is not as strong as previously thought, this does not mean that it had no effect at all. Handel adapted his style to the Italian model, [...] but these adaptations were mostly extraneous to his fundamental style, which includes his use of harmony, meter, counterpoint, or melodic sequence. (ibid.)

Harris maintains that the Italian influence on Handel was mostly of formal nature (e. g. the relationship between the ritornello and the vocal melody as well as the adoption of the *da capo* form) or appears in relation to the importance of the Italian language (the stay in Italy did transform Handel’s composition of recitative, henceforth showing much more idiomatic facility). According to her, whatever other Italian influence on Handel there might have been, it most likely came via his German models Keiser and Mattheson. In his *Grundlage einer Ehren-Pforte*, Johann Mattheson stressed the positive impact of Handel’s exposure to the Hamburg (operatic) school, and—if he is to be trusted—also of his own personal influence as a composer in the softening of Handel’s “stiff” German traits with Italian mellifluousness. Whether the stay in Italy enhanced this process or it happened comparatively independently of it cannot be subject to causal attestation. Another aspect that contributes to the ambivalence of the question of Italian influence concerns the difficulties of dating as well as the inaccessibility of sources. Strohm (1993) claims that Handel might have composed

15 Nachweislich schon in Hamburg verwendete, in Italien dann weitererprobte und schließlich in England als signifikante Affekt-Chiffren einsetzte.

more chamber duets during his time in Italy or perhaps even earlier, in Hamburg, than it was thought before (when a lot of them were assigned to Hanover), revising them subsequently for new performances.

Although he was a prolific representative of specifically Italian musical genres such as the cantata, chamber duet and opera, Handel did not seem to be interested in making a conscious contribution to these genres in general on a level that Italian composers might, but in using "progress made there to characterise his own output as a composer" (Strohm 2008, 8). "In London he was also continuing the tradition of Italian opera in Germany, a subsidiary tradition now twice removed from its source and in any case conservative" (Strohm 2008, 103) and was therefore in a different position to his London operatic rivals of Italian nationality. As Lindgren (1975), and even more decisively McGeary (2013) have shown, even though Bononcini was probably not a Jacobite, as a partisan representative of Italian culture, he could, unlike Handel, easily be entangled into aesthetical and political polemics. While Bononcini, the librettist Paolo Antonio Rolli and the like were members of an Italian cultural colony existent in lots of European cities, Handel was a representative of a "secondary practice of European adoption of Italian art, literature and music as humanist or 'classical' cultural goods"<sup>16</sup> (Strohm 1993, 30). In other words, had Handel really wanted to become an Italian, he could have become one, even in the sense of how Johann Christian Bach did, converting to Roman Catholicism for the sake of the advancement of his career in Milan. Indeed, Handel never did this, the same way that in spite of his naturalisation (as a British citizen) he never officially became a member of the Church of England. To continue along the lines of a religious metaphor, he did not have to convert to become a more fervent papist than the Pope himself:

To stay in Rome and conform—he did not want this, but he did want to head to the North as a prophet of the South... A kind of a cultural unselfishness that made him appear a better representative of Italian music than a Bononcini or a Porpora to some of his contemporaries, but firstly to posterity. It was not him who was converted, but his music: his music has some traits of a foreign language mastered in the manner of a virtuoso."<sup>17</sup> (Strohm 1993, 36)

16 Sekundären Praxis der europäischen Aneignung italienischer Kunst, Literatur und Musik als eher humanistischer oder ‚klassischer‘ Kulturgüter.

17 In Rom bleiben und sich anpassen – das wollte er nicht, aber nach dem Norden gehen als Prophet des Südens, das wollte er... Eine Art kultureller Uneigennützigkeit, die ihn einigen Zeitgenossen – und erst recht der Nachwelt – als besseren Vertreter italienischer Musik erschienenen ließ als einen Bononcini oder Porpora. Nicht er war konvertiert, aber seine Musik: seine Kunst hat manche Züge einer virtuos erlernten Fremdsprache.

Let us now turn again to the question "What did Handel learn in Italy?", asked by Leopold (1997, 387–396), who tries to expand the perspective from compositional technique to broader cultural aspects. The differences in the German and Italian approach to musical rhetoric, theory of the affects and theory of musical figures translate to the musical level in a comparison of the use of ostinato and sequential motifs in Handel's Hamburg opera *Almira* on the one hand and works that were written after his stay Italy on the other. These techniques depict pain and suffering, but in markedly different ways. Leopold's hypothesis is that before the exposure to Italy, Handel used musical figures in a strict, literal way, whereas afterwards he showed more flexibility, for example in the treatment of ostinato rhythms. In the portrayal of affects, the individual and not the typified emotion is in the centre; rather than interpreting the text (the specifically German term *Textausdeutung*), the composer is interested in the expression of drama. To illustrate this, Leopold draws the duet for Jesus and Maria, "Soll mein Kind, mein Leben sterben" from the *Der für die Sünde der Welt gemarterte und sterbende Jesus* (better known as the *Brockes Passion*, HWV 48) as an example, which unlike other German composers who set it, Handel turned it into a dramatic scene, a tragic duet of unity between mother and son.

It was this idea, to bring human beings and not the text or a regular texture into the focus that Handel brought with himself from Italy and turned into a governing principle for all his later works. [...] Writing Italian music meant replacing the pulpit with the stage, placing images before one's mental eye instead of following a text. [...] That unmistakable handwriting that distinguished Handel from his contemporaries of the same provenance came about only from the entirely individual synthesis of the German tradition of the cantor and Italian expressive art.<sup>18</sup> (Leopold 1997, 396)

In spite of this, Leopold is of the opinion that Handel's formation in terms of compositional technique might have already been completed in

18 Es war diese Idee, den Menschen und nicht den Text oder den regelhaften Satz ins Zentrum zu stellen, die Händel aus Italien mitbrachte und für alle seine späteren Werke zur Leitidee machte. [...] Italienische Musik zu schreiben bedeutete [...] die Kanzel mit der Bühne zu vertauschen, Bilder vor das geistige Auge zu stellen statt Texten zu folgen... Vielleicht erkannte er hier zum ersten Mal, daß auch der bewußte Verzicht auf das Handwerk ein starkes Ausdrucksmittel sein konnte, daß die musikalische Setzkunst nicht der Endzweck des Komponierens, sondern Mittel zum Zweck eines anderen Vorhabens war – dem der Menschendarstellung... Erst aus der gänzlich individuellen Synthese von deutscher Kantorentradition und italienischer Ausdruckskunst entstand jene unverwechselbare Handschrift, die Händel von seinen Zeitgenossen gleicher Herkunft unterschied.

Germany. His contrapuntal skills were formed in Halle, and as already remarked upon, Mattheson (and indirectly, Keiser) influenced him in terms of a more Italianate melodic idiom in Hamburg before his departure to Italy. So a qualitative development of the kind described above might have, indeed, occurred during his stay in Italy in a comparatively independent way, somewhat irrespectively of any concrete Italian influences (cf. Leopold 1997, 392). Riepe (2013, 150–151) agrees with the possibility that a qualitative development might have been part of the process of Handel’s personal aesthetic maturation, and concludes once again that it is impossible to prove a causal relationship between Handel’s experiences in Italy and what he might have learnt there. Given the extreme difficulty (verging in some cases on impossibility) of establishing causal links in (music) history, this study will have no pretence of establishing clear causal links between the vocal duets of Handel and his Italian contemporaries either.

### 1. 1. 3. Questions of Parody

Whereas it is unquestionable that Handel “seems to have been the champion of all parodists, adapting both his own works and those of other composers in unprecedented numbers and with unprecedented exactness” (Taruskin 2010, 327), this question has been prone to exaggeration and misinterpretation. In an era of the “above-individual character of the baroque work of art”<sup>19</sup> (Strohm 1993, 41) the practice of parody was not considered irreconcilable with but an integral part of artistic creativity. Other composers as well, including J. S. Bach, borrowed extensively and Handel was not unique. He was, however, highly specific in the sheer abundance and variety of ways he devised to work with a pre-existing musical model, taken either from compositions of his own or from music by his occasionally stylistically very different contemporaries and precursors. The term “parody”, used uniformly in German-language literature (cf. Marx 2002) seems more appropriate with its broad, historical connotations<sup>20</sup> than “borrowing” since it seems to imply the appropriation of something that is not one’s own.

This study will not dig too deep into the sheer magnitude of scholarly literature written on the subject for several reasons. Firstly, I am not interested in exactly what Handel borrowed from his Italian peers or vice versa and how this “influenced” either of them. Strohm (1993) had already made this point when he asked the question if “borrowings” and “influences” were causally connected at all, as well as if besides compositional

19 Über individueller Charakter des barocken Kunstwerks.

20 The so-called parody mass of the Renaissance, among others.



and ethical, borrowing had a musical-aesthetical relevance at all. Harris (1990, 305), as well, is more interested in the (aesthetic) intent and purpose behind Handel's parody techniques than their cause: "Handel borrowed frequently from himself and others as an integral part of the composition process. The question this raises is: so what?"

Secondly, Handel's parody techniques have had a somewhat problematic history of reception and evaluation. Early on in his historical survey of writings on the matter, Buelow (1987, 63) makes the point that, contrary to popular beliefs and anxieties about Handel's "moral integrity", he did not try to hide his borrowings, since even his contemporaries wrote extensively on the subject, acknowledging the special frequency of parody in Handel's opus but often not deeming it at all problematical. Attitudes began to change in the 19th century, especially in Britain, when charges of plagiarism were voiced with increasing frequency. As a result, two "camps" formed around the debate, one accusing and the other defending Handel, both equally unaware that he operated under entirely different ideas about artistic originality. In his *The Indebtedness of Handel to Works by Other Composers*, the only hitherto published monograph on Handel's parody practices, Sedley E. Taylor (1906) wanted to avoid the extremes that dominated the discourse on borrowings by acknowledging their existence and scope and admitting that although there are many cases when Handel surpasses what he takes from other composers, cases of routine, almost technical appropriation abound as well. He could still not distance himself entirely from the moralising stance that was typical, as Marx (2002) had observed, of 19th-century English-language literature on the matter. Thus, Handel's borrowing was not necessarily morally acceptable if it paid back what had been borrowed with "interest". Buelow (1987, 77) lists the research of authors as diverse as Winton Dean, Walter Siegmund-Schulze, Bernd Baselt and John Roberts as a sign that the tide was turning in the direction of a less value-laden and more level-headed examination of parody in Handel's opus, showing that these practices contributed to what Handel is mainly appreciated for.

As both Marx (2002, 581–584) and Buelow (1987, 68–72) have shown, in early modern aesthetics imitation was still a legitimate part of the *ars inventiois*, and the more artful the imitation, the closer it came to *imitatio perfecta*. Working without models was therefore thought to be almost impossible, although the Enlightenment spirit already questioned this in Handel's lifetime, as witnessed in the writings of his contemporaries Mattheson, Scheibe and Marpurg. The change of attitude towards parody in Handel's oeuvre was thus, a symptom of the changing notions of artistic originality after his death. Buelow (1987, 79), drawing on Baselt, distinguished three types of parody: the use of an entire movement (with a new text or not), the transformative use of a movement that produces,

by the techniques of “insertions, extensions and detailed modifications” a “quasi new piece”, and the “use of individual themes, accompaniment figures or other characteristic short melodic motifs, to build a fully new movement”. Marx (583–584) describes how due to deadlines and other temporal pressures, recourse was made to material that the public had not been acquainted with, which could thus remained unrecognised.

Many authors, ranging from Mattheson to John Roberts (1987), are of the opinion that Handel resorted to parody because his melodic invention was somewhat limited, although this does not necessarily diminish his aesthetical merits.<sup>21</sup> When it is thought that the borrowing had been identified in the form of a musical source Handel might have easily had access to, it is often in no way clearer how his musical memory worked. For instance, how can we explain his parodying of R. Keiser and Bononcini’s Berlin works at the time of his stay in Italy? Riepe (2013, 192) asks a question that Roberts (2010) had disregarded, namely if Handel could have carried scores by the above mentioned composers around Italy with himself, had a sketchbook with quotes, or if he had maybe quoted from memory.

The share of Italian composers and compositions among the objects of Handel’s parody processes has been a question of some debate as well. Whereas most authors, some of them mentioned in the preceding subchapters, consider that the significant part played by Italian composers in Handel’s parody practices is connected to the question of a strong Italian influence on him, Harris (1980b, 497–498) finds that not only are there more borrowings from German composers than Italian ones in Handel’s output but that these German parodies are more significant for the composer’s creative process. Many have attempted to devise some kind of a periodisation or at least a diachronic account of parody processes in the course of Handel’s career. Roberts (1987, 89; 2012, 184) shows that, after the initial phase of absorbing both German and Italian models as part of a formative period, Handel borrowed less in the 1720s when the bulk of his activity consisted of composing operas for the Royal Academy of Music, returning to a more intensive application of parody in the 1730s and 1740s. The stroke he had in 1737 may have left an impact on his creative abilities, but this has been strongly refuted by many authors (cf. Buelow 1987, 77; Roberts 1987, 87). Roberts (*ibid.*) in particular is adamant that the explanations of Handel’s parody practices offered in the past are unsatisfactory

21 Although firm in his view that Handel “had a basic lack of facility in inventing original ideas”, Roberts (1987, 88, 91) is convinced that the composer should be judged “not by his methods, still less by his motives in employing them, but solely by the effects he achieves. [...] No matter how many more borrowings are discovered, they will not detract from Handel’s greatness but only help us to understand it more fully.”

because “several of these theories could account only for certain kinds of borrowings, not for the phenomenon as a whole.”

One aspect of borrowing holds pride of place in this study. Already Taylor (1906, 37) had noticed that when Handel parodies either other composers’ or his own duets, he often resorts to a manipulation or an elaboration of the contrapuntal texture. When he reached for his own chamber duets *No, di voi non vuò fidarmi* (HWV 189, to be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.3) and *Quel fior che all’alba ride* (HWV 192) while composing his most famous oratorio, *Messiah*, he expanded the two-, or three-voiced contrapuntal texture into a large-scale choral one. While discussing Handel’s borrowings from Lotti’s collection of chamber duets and his Dresden operas into his anthems, operas and oratorios, Roberts (cf. 2012, 170–174; 2014, 281–299) also notices that the parody is often transformative in contrapuntal terms. On the other hand, as he describes the relationships of rivalry in the Royal Academy of Music, Strohm (1993, 34–35) gives the example of Handel’s “allusion”<sup>22</sup> to the melody of Fronima’s aria “Già preparai gl’inganni” from Bononcini’s *Etearco* (1711) in the second aria of his own opera *Radamisto*, Tigrane’s “Deh! Fuggi un traditore”. Strohm finds that Handel may have wanted to remind London audiences of music they had heard nine years before in the context of the rumours of Bononcini’s arrival to London as his rival, of a composer whose music they had cherished since 1706. “Allusion” is a much better term than “parody” or “borrowing” for it implies a conscious manipulation of listeners’ expectations. However, convincing claims like these are hard to make in numerous other intertextual situations occurring between scores by Handel and his Italian contemporaries, which is why I will have to shy away from being so bold in the revelation of intent as Harris and Strohm are.

#### 1. 1. 4.

### The Case of Alessandro Scarlatti

The absence of this influential Italian composer from the ranks of the ones singled out for comparative purposes certainly needs justification, since we are dealing with the composer who is considered to have left a decisive imprint on Handel’s opus ever since Edward Dent established this in his pioneering study of A. Scarlatti (cf. Dent 1960). For although Scarlatti’s status as the founder of a Neapolitan school of composers and of opera seria as a genre had been somewhat contested<sup>23</sup>, he still remains an important figure

<sup>22</sup> Anspielung.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. “Scarlatti used to be given credit for it [the use of horns or trumpets as supporting members of opera orchestras, A/N] along with so much else to which he is no longer thought entitled, not only because the work of his older contemporaries was even less well known today than his but also because innovations, historians tended to feel, had to have protagonists.” (Taruskin 2010, 186)

in the development of (Italian) music in the 18th century. Ellen T. Harris (1980b) was the first one to oppose the often repeated claim that Scarlatti had a great influence on Handel, insisting that not only Scarlatti's but the idea of a strong Italian influence in general is problematic. Dean (1985) criticised her, claiming that at least an aria type in *Mitridate Eupatore* did influence Handel, and the influence has been regarded as even more wide-ranging by Wolff (1975b, 59), whereas Strohm (1993) and Leopold (1997) stressed the lack of objective evidence for establishing an influence. We shall now elaborate on the points made by some of the parties in the polemic.

According to Dean (1985, 4), it is Scarlatti's operatic opus from the period of 1694–1707 and not his late masterworks that are relevant for Handel. He finds that the "Handelian" *Mitridate Eupatore* (1707) has a spaciousness and a depth of characterisation beyond that of Scarlatti's earlier operas or his later works, for *Mitridate* was a failure and he never repeated the experiment. Nevertheless, he finds the opera "prophetic of Handel's London style" (Dean 1985, 4) in its use of a slow siciliana type of aria in 12/8 metre<sup>24</sup> and its harmonic language abundant in chromaticism and the Neapolitan chord. Dean admits that Scarlatti is not the only Italian composer whose works these elements appear in around this time, and speculates that "it was probably from him that other Italian composers adopted it, for example Giovanni Bononcini in *Polifemo* (1702) and Mancini in *Gl'amanti generosi* (1705)<sup>25</sup>. It begins to appear in Scarlatti's operas in the 1690s. There are examples in *Pirro e Demetrio* (1694)" (Dean 1985, 6). The siciliana paired up with a contrapuntal string texture, and a heavy emotional charge is indeed frequent in Handel's London operas, especially during the Royal Academy of Music period. Leopold (2009, 78) admits that Handel could have adopted the siciliana from Scarlatti, but shows in a comparative analysis of the use of punctuated rhythmic figures in the bass to express pain and anguish in works by different composers (1997) that it is impossible to speak of direct contact in positivist terms.

Another often repeated example of Scarlatti's influence on Handel would be the latter composers' oratorio *La resurrezione* (1708), created in the context of Scarlatti's prolific activity as an oratorio composer in Rome, some of his oratorios being performed in close proximity to Handel's.

- 24 Similarly, Westrup (1968, 139) claims that the ritornello preceding Laodice's lament in Act IV of *Mitridate Eupatore* anticipates the seamless integration of the voice into a dense, contrapuntal string texture in the aria *Cara sposa* of Handel's *Rinaldo*. Wolff (1975b, 59) agreeing with Westrup, adds that beside this type of aria, Handel was in a way emulating Scarlatti's "broad melodic curves".
- 25 These are both operas Handel was to a certain extent familiar with, so one might rightly ask the question whether Handel could have been influenced by them instead of Scarlatti.

However, in spite of an evident relationship between the two composers placed in a position to write for the same audience, there are some evident differences in their approach as well. “It seems clear that in this oratorio Handel was attempting to outdo Scarlatti, one of the best-known specialists in the genre” by including some dance tunes and even popular songs (such as “Ho un non sò che nel cor”) in his setting of *La resurrezione*, thereby emulating Bononcini and Caldara rather more than Scarlatti.” (Strohm 2008, 10). Riepe (2013, 156) also convincingly shows that between *La resurrezione* and Scarlatti’s *Il giardino di rose*, whose performance in 1707 Handel attended and might have even assisted to, “the differences [...] seem greater than the similarities in details”.<sup>26</sup> However, as Dean (1985, 4) had established in the case of Harris’s (1980b) comparison of settings of the same cantata texts by the two composers (finding very little in common) the fact that Scarlatti, as well as Steffani, are a generation older than Handel, indeed puts them in the position of illustrious predecessors rather than composers who exerted a contemporary, topical influence.

As already pointed out, the idea to compare, side by side, some compositions by Handel’s contemporaries with certain aspects of the Halle master’s output, is at this stage hardly imaginable as a comprehensive survey with definitive, causally verifiable results. This would be even more difficult to carry out in the case of A. Scarlatti, who over the decades significantly transformed his style into a vast, dynamic opus still comparatively inaccessible in philological terms<sup>27</sup>. It makes more sense to examine Italian composers of a smaller stature in music history, but who were nevertheless in more direct contact with Handel.

### 1. 1. 5.

#### Selection of Italian Composers for Comparison

Less has been written on the influence of other Italian composers on Handel. One who is certainly not a lesser peer is Agostino Steffani, but his marked influence is more often recognised in the domain of the genre of the chamber duet, and this will be discussed in depth in Chapter 2. However, Steffani’s operas were also widely known in Germany, and it is primarily through their influence on Reinhard Keiser that they may have left a

<sup>26</sup> Scheinen die Unterschiede [...] größer als die Gemeinsamkeiten in Details.

<sup>27</sup> The works of Alessandro Scarlatti are still mainly available in manuscripts, with comparatively few printed editions. Unlike the works of the composers in this study, conserved mostly in London, Scarlatti’s are also scattered in various Italian libraries and abroad.

mark on Handel's output.<sup>28</sup> Wolff (1975b, 52), claims that "Handel modelled his operas on" Steffani's, as a result of his study in Hanover of the elder composer's "effective combination of vocally rewarding melodies with a contrapuntal bass". Not only Handel but also his Italian contemporaries (in particular Bononcini and Ariosti, who came in touch with Steffani's legacy in Germany) could have learnt the use of contrapuntal techniques in secular vocal music from their older Italian predecessor. Perhaps even the manner in which "Steffani brought vocal and instrumental styles into a much closer relationship" or treated accompanying or *concertante* instruments "as second voice parts" left an indirect mark on Handel's likewise contrapuntal operatic idiom? This opinion is shared by Colin Timms (2002, 67). "As Mattheson observed, the number of duets in Steffani's Hanover operas and his reveling in vocal counterpoint were quite exceptional. Steffani also made greater use, often with dramatic purpose, of the *aria in duetto*<sup>29</sup> in which successive strophes are sung by different characters." It must be added that the *aria in duetto* type of duet common in Steffani's operas was going out of fashion by the time Handel had reached maturity. This is only one aspect in which the argument from the comparison with A. Scarlatti is evident, that the two composers namely belong to different generations. Handel's and Steffani's operas are too different on many levels to enable the kind of closer comparative look that I will be aiming for, so this study will refrain from a comparison between the two even though establishing connections is of great historical significance.

Our guide in the outlining of influences by Italian contemporaries on Handel as possible candidates for the subject matter of this study will be Riepe (2013, 159–162), who offers an overview of the literature on the matter. There are names that only get a brief mention, such as Benedetto Marcello and Francesco Mancini. Alongside her above mentioned comparison of settings of the same cantata texts by Handel and Scarlatti, Harris (1980b) adds another two points of reference, concluding that Handel exceeds Mancini in expressiveness in his approach to a text that they both made use of in their cantatas, whereas Marcello's and Handel's settings of the same cantata verses have virtually nothing in common. This seems to support the criteria of selection at the core of this study: for however coincidentally and indirectly, Mancini's path is known to have crossed Handel's, whereas there is nothing to suggest that Marcello, although

28 Interestingly enough, the staging of Steffani's opera *Tassilone* was foreseen for the first season of the Royal Academy of Music in 1720/1721, with Bononcini at the helm, but it did not take place in the end.

29 For an attempt at a terminological distinction between the term *duetto*, *aria in duetto* and *aria a due*, see Chapter 3.1.

active in Venice at the time of Handel's possible visit, had any contact with Handel whatsoever.

As opposed to Marcello's works, Handel had probably heard and seen performances of Antonio Lotti's works during his stay in Dresden, which explains why he chose some of the same libretti for his own operas in London, and possibly also some of his borrowings from him (cf. Byram-Wigfield 2012, Roberts 2012, Roberts 2014). The ever sceptical Riepe (2013, 160–161) criticises the idea of similar fugue themes as proof of a link between the two composers' settings of *Dixit Dominus* because of the typical character of the theme, rendering it almost a topos of early 18th-century music. Besides, it is not even certain that Lotti's setting precedes Handel's chronologically and, in her opinion, Handel outdoes Lotti aesthetically. Regardless of all this, a comparison with some aspects of Lotti's opus will be included in this study, but it will be not at the centre of it. On the other hand, the performance of music by Francesco Gasparini in London and a stronger stylistic proximity with Handel will render comparisons more fruitful. According to Roberts's (2003, 285) study of Handel's borrowings from Gasparini, "there can be little doubt that Gasparini was one of Handel's models in developing his Italian style", although Riepe (2013, 160) warns that the borrowings and the other links that Roberts discusses date from 1719 onwards, long after Handel's Italian stay.

For Roberts (2010), it is of little relevance if and under which circumstances Handel met Giovanni Bononcini in Berlin or later in Rome. He establishes that Handel had borrowed from the composer 15 years his senior, often developing the material in question in a highly innovative way (which, as we have already seen, is characteristic of many of Handel's borrowings). He speculates, though, as to whether Handel had brought Bononcini's music with him to Italy from Germany or if the borrowing had arisen from hearing some of his operas in Venice. Referencing Roberts's article, Riepe (2013, 159) stresses once again that Handel borrowed mostly from those works of Bononcini's that he got to know while still in Germany and highlights that even Roberts does not see Bononcini exerting an influence on Handel. "One sees already in Handel's first Roman works a range and power of expression that goes beyond Bononcini's rather narrow limits. He might at times emulate the sweetness of the Italian's melody, but he had other strengths and much further to go." (Roberts 2010, 208) As we shall see in both Chapter 2 and 3, although their careers unfolded in parallel in the field of opera (also to a certain extent in the chamber duet), Bononcini and Handel are more often in a relationship of contrast than a conscious, causal adoption of each other's traits. For Riepe (2013, 160), the case with Attilio Ariosti is somewhat different due to the recourse to a "mixed taste" that they both share. However, Ariosti—whose

opus is on a much smaller scale—and his duets will not be included in the comparison. The reasons for this are manifold. Firstly, Ariosti did not compose chamber duets so it is not possible to examine this duality of genres in his opus. Secondly, his duets are less numerous than Handel's, Bononcini's and Gasparini's so they would better serve a monographic study of smaller proportions. Thirdly, due to the wide comparative approach taken in this study, the inclusion of Ariosti's duets might overload it in quantitative terms. Finally, I am more interested in contrast and overt difference, categories much more suited to a comparison of Handel and Bononcini than Handel and Ariosti.

A few words should be said about Italian composers who are not considered for a comparison with Handel within the framework of this study. A prolific composer of opera who nevertheless left his mark on European music primarily through his innovation in instrumental music, Antonio Vivaldi will stay outside my focus. However, a certain amount has been written on the possible influence of Vivaldi's ritornello form on Handel's instrumental works, to be more specific his *Sonata in B-flat major* (HWV 288), which could be the earliest sign of this kind of Vivaldi reception outside Venice. Riepe (2013, 161–162) summarizes the literature on the matter and agrees that this could be the only “proven” example of an Italian influence on Handel, but she cannot help finding it ironic that Handel never again chose to implement this influence during his Italian stay. The lack of other direct contact with Handel certainly seems to make a comparison with Vivaldi less fruitful than with the above mentioned composers.

In line with her insistence on the fact that we cannot know whose music Handel actually heard in Italy, Riepe (2013, 162–164) goes on to enumerate other composers who were prominent in the city's musical life, but hitherto unconsidered as exerting an influence on Handel. Insisting that the status of A. Scarlatti as the most important composer of the day might be a misperception, she singles out the composers who held the most prominent position in Roman churches, since sacred music was the most important segment of music-making in the capital. She stresses the importance of exploring the influence of the following composers whom Handel might have made an introduction to as the leading composers of Rome: C. Cesarini, P. Lorenzani, B. Gaffi, G. Amadori, G. O. Pittoni, P. P. Bencini and F. Amadei. Research into these composers is still in its early days and marred by the inaccessibility of sources, but Riepe singles out G. O. Pittoni<sup>30</sup>, P.P. Bencini and C. Cesarini<sup>31</sup> as the most important in the

30 Handel was Pittoni's neighbour and they might have made music together.

31 Unexpectedly, according to Burrows et al. 2013, the pasticcio *Love's Triumph* (1708) might have contained numbers by “Caesarini”.



group, concluding that it is unlikely Handel had not come across them in Rome and that “as long as we do not know the work of these composers better, it remains open what significance they had for Handel’s development in Italy as a composer.”<sup>32</sup> (ibid., 164)

Finally, the reasons for leaving some distinguished Italian composers of a younger generation out of the comparison should be explained. It is not difficult to notice that the Italian composers I have considered and selected so far range from A. Steffani (1654), a whole generation older than G. F. Handel, via F. Gasparini (1661), A. Ariosti (1666), A. Lotti (1667), G. Bononcini (1670), who are between fifteen and twenty-four years older, up to F. Durante (1684), a composer who will feature in the chapter on chamber duets, and who was only one year older than Handel. The generation of composers beginning with Nicola Porpora (1686), Leonardo Vinci (1690), Francesco Feo (1691), Leonardo Leo (1694) and Johann Adolf Hasse (1699), up to fifteen years younger, are, on the other hand, absent from the comparison. Although Handel’s and J. S. Bach’s year of birth is surely just a coincidence and not a historical turning point, it is unquestionable that there is a stylistic divide between these two groups of Italian composers. What could be at stake here is the aforementioned relationship with the nascent (Neapolitan) *style galant*.

It is beyond doubt that although somewhat isolated from Italian operatic goings-on in the British capital, Handel was up-to-date with musical developments on the Appenine Peninsula even after his last journey to Italy in 1729. This can be observed in the pasticcio operas from arias by Italian composers, in whose productions he was involved as a compiler of the music, leader of the company or both. Starting with *Elpidia* in 1725, the process intensified in the 1730s when Handel was dealing with the competition of Porpora and the *Opera of the Nobility* by offering his audience music along similar stylistic lines. However, perhaps in line with the comparatively lower number of duets in the operas of these composers (conditioned at least to a certain extent by Zeno’s and Metastasio’s Aristotelean precepts of verisimilitude), Handel resorted more often to borrowing duets from other operas when he was compiling *pasticcios* out of his own works, whereas according to the Händel-Handbuch (Baselt, Flesch, and Eisen 1978) he only did it twice in the *pasticcios* from works by Italian composers, in *Elpidia* (1725) and *Arbace* (1734). The composers whose arias Handel included are mostly the aforementioned Porpora, Vinci, Leo and Hasse, as well as G. Giacomelli (1692) and G. F. Orlandini (1676). Although nine years older than Handel, Orlandini was in some aspects more adventurous in the adoption of

32 Solange wir das Werk dieser Komponisten nicht besser kennen, bleibt offen, welche Bedeutung sie für Händels kompositorische Entwicklung in Italien hatten.

a “fashionable and forward-looking operatic style [...] as early as *Antigona* (1718), in which one finds light accompaniments, often with drum basses, simple, slow-moving harmony, frequent use of regular phrasing in two-bar units and reverse-dotted rhythm.” (Hill and Giuntini 2001)

The idea of Handel’s conscious and decisive resistance to these new trends, although frequently encountered in literature in the past (cf. also Grout and Weigel Williams 2003, 184), has been replaced by a more differentiated view. Most contemporary authors (e. g. Palisca 1968, 258; Hicks 2001) are united in a need to reconcile the view that Handel’s personal style had been formed early on in his career and resisted change on the one hand, but that it was also susceptible to more modern currents later on in his life. One can only speculate what motivated Handel in this slight stylistic rapprochement. Palisca (1968, 258) is of the opinion that his “seeming capitulation to the new fashion was partly stimulated by competition from younger composers, but there were other [business, A/N] circumstances”. This does not necessarily exclude genuine interest or a more intrinsic motivation either. However, even while admitting to some form of influence, it is often important to stress Handel’s compositional (and aesthetic) idiosyncrasies. As Calella (2009, 351) puts it, Handel had a limited interest in the “new style of vocal music that was more homogenous, but harmonically and contrapuntally less varied than his ‘mixed’ way of composing”<sup>33</sup>.

The stylistic and aesthetic appraisal of Handel’s younger Italian contemporaries was a matter of some controversy even in his own time, as can be shown in the opposing judgements of the music of Leonardo Vinci coming from musical authorities of the age such as Charles Burney, who praised the refinement of the melody by the vocal line’s clear morphological-syntactical structuring under an ornamental, virtuosic façade, whereas Pier Francesco Tosi criticised the “banishment” of counterpoint (cf. Taruskin 2010, 165). Leopold (1985, 94) expresses herself in similar terms on *galant* musical tendencies in London from the 1730s onwards, juxtaposing them with Handel’s musical strong points, “the novel style imported from Italy took away the basses’ independence, led the violins in unison or in octaves with the voice, degraded the wind instruments to a coloristic supplement and the strings to accompanying instruments. [...] What Handel won from this conservative stance was a musico-dramatic art that did not have to draw

33 Neuem Stil der Vokalmusik, der zwar homogener, jedoch harmonisch und kontrapunktisch weniger vielfältig als seine ‚gemischte‘ Schreibweise war.

solely upon vocal expression, but also lived from the tension between the voice and the instruments.”<sup>34</sup>

Therefore, one can safely conclude that regardless of whether we choose to view the contrast between Handel and his somewhat younger Italian contemporaries in terms of stylistic periods and currents or within a context of a great diversity of musical phenomena in the period 1720–1750, the stylistic divide would not facilitate a rounded comparison of Handel and the musical output of Porpora, Vinci, Hasse and the like. It is much more purposeful to compare Handel with the Italian composers with whom he has more in common in stylistic terms, and these are exactly the names that I have been outlining in the course of this subchapter. The fact that they are mostly composers of up to 25 years his senior is symptomatic of the stylistic positioning of the master from Halle. On the other hand, one should not underestimate Handel’s willingness (and ability) to renew his consistently personal and individual musical idiom with fresh breezes from the south, but it is beyond doubt that this happened mostly later on in his career. Given the fact that this study aims for a comparison of only a limited aspect of the composer’s production and that the activity of Handel’s somewhat older Italian contemporaries is more important for the early and middle stages of his career, I shall limit the comparison to a time frame, 1706–1724.

The reasons for electing 1706 as the starting point of this comparative research needs little further justification. For however important Handel’s German musical upbringing in Halle and Hamburg may be, it is beyond doubt that he must have received decisive impulses in the country of origin of musical *italianità*. 1724 as the year of Bononcini’s departure from the Royal Academy of Music provides the other end of the time frame under inspection. This study follows the evolution of the performance of Italian opera in London from 1706 and Handel’s debut with *Rinaldo* in 1711 and onwards. It is only in 1720 that a continuous production of *drammi per musica* took on. Bononcini as the most important Italian composer that Handel’s works were pitted against at the time will have pride of place in the comparison. The dissolution of the Royal Academy of Music in 1729 almost ended Bononcini’s musical career in Britain, and certainly did so in the realm of opera. In his subsequent operatic undertakings Handel had more independence, and so

34 Aus Italien importierter neuartiger Satz, der den Bässen jede Eigenständigkeit nahm, die Violinen unisono oder in Oktaven zur Singstimme führte, die Blasinstrumente zu einem koloristischen Zusatz degradierte und die Streicher zu Begleitinstrumenten. [...] Was Händel jedoch aus dieser konservativen Haltung gewann, war eine musikalische Dramatik, die sich nicht allein auf den Ausdruck der Singstimme stützen mußte, sondern auch aus der Spannung zwischen Gesang und Instrumentalsatz lebte.

did his competition (the *Opera of the Nobility*, for instance), which might explain the more distinct stylistic positioning of both sides. In Italy, his brief time in Hanover and in London up to the thirties Handel was incessantly compared to his coeval or slightly older Italian contemporaries, and his style owes something to this dialectic. The purpose of this study is to find out more about this process in the realm of the vocal duet.

On top of what connects them to Handel, there are subtle historical traces of links between these Italian composers themselves. In his influential treatise on the theory and practice of *basso continuo*, Gasparini praised Bononcini's cantatas for their exploration of the aesthetic realm of the "appealing ('vaguezza', 'armonia'), but also of the exclusively knowledgeable ('bizzaria', 'studio artificioso', 'capricciosa invenzione'"<sup>35</sup> (Riepe 2013, 183, quoted from *L'armonico pratico al cimbalo*, Bologna 1722, p. 79). The Spanish music theorist Antonio Eximeno (1729–1808) had a very high opinion of the older generation of Italian composers because of the unity they accomplished between expression and the art of counterpoint (Rodríguez Suso 2001). He added an extra layer of arguments in favour of a comparison with Handel's music: "In the compositions of Gasparini, Bononcini, Marcello and Clari the true purpose of music with the difficult harmony between expression and counterpoint came to light" (Garda, Jona, and Titli 1989, 384). This quote is definitely at odds with the one by Riemann at the outset of this chapter, finding nothing but sheer decadence in Italian dramatic vocal music between 1710 and 1760. Theorists such as Riccati (cf. Timms 2003 and De Piero 2012, to be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2) and Eximeno were obviously capable of recognising inherent qualities that escaped the likes of Riemann and Schmitz.

Finally, I should mention the author who advocated the need for what became the main topic of this dissertation. In two articles, Michele Calella (2000; 2009) examined the idea that Handel is distinguished from his Italian contemporaries in a more interesting and diverse (whether novel, or more traditional) treatment of vocal ensembles. His claims receive a more detailed account in Chapters 2.1 and 3. In the conclusion of the first article, Calella (2000, 143) states the following, "Only through a better knowledge of operatic ensembles of Handel's contemporaries (Orlandini, Bononcini, Gasparini, Vinci i. a.) will it be possible to assess if the fragmentary remarks in this paper depict the rule or the exception in operatic history of the early 18th century."<sup>36</sup> But even if this study succeeds to a

35 Gefälligen (,vaguezza', ,armonia') auch solche des Kennerhaft-Exklusiven (,bizzaria', ,studio artificioso', ,capricciosa invenzione').

36 Erst durch eine bessere Kenntnis der Opernensembles von Händels Zeitgenossen (Orlandini, Bononcini, Gasparini, Vinci u.a.) wird man beurteilen können, ob die fragmentarischen Bemerkungen dieses Beitrages einen Normal- oder einen Sonderfall in der Operngeschichte des frühen Settecento geschildert haben.

certain extent in this assessment, one must bear in mind, as Strohm (1993, 23) warns us, that “the time for conclusions has not come yet, and direct comparisons between Handel and individual Italian composers must not be extended to general verdicts nor to a German-Italian national dichotomy.”<sup>37</sup>

As pointed out by Taruskin, (2010, 311) “it is Handel who, for many modern historians and the small modern audience that still relished revivals of opera seria, displays the genre at its best, owing to the balancing and tangling of musical and dramatic values”. What fascinates in this quote is the realisation that Handel has become the landmark for not only an entire generation (or generations) of composers, but also the whole genre of opera seria, even though—paradoxically—he was not its native representative. If we bear this in mind, the pejorative stance taken by the older generation of German scholars such as Riemann and Schmitz makes more sense. The reasons have been explained by H. C. Wolff, as early as 1975:

Italian opera of the first half of the eighteenth century has had to endure the harsh judgements of later generations who branched out in new directions and chose to regard older operas as either imperfect precursors or degenerate latecomers. Most of these verdicts have proved quite unreliable, since they were based on far too superficial a knowledge of the operas themselves. (Wolff 1975a, 73)

Wolff’s remark on the lack of knowledge of the Italian composers whose duets are going to be studied in this chapter has not been entirely overcome since: their works are still rarely available in critical editions and less frequently performed, but we are in a much better position to judge them than a few decades ago. I will, however, not avoid Handel as a reference point since the aim of this research is not to study (and if need be, evaluate) these composers on their own merit but in relation to G. F. Handel. After all, a professional relationship with him was an important aspect of the musical activity of many of them, and we owe the renewed scholarly interest in their works to the great master from Halle, too. Finding middle ground between the derogatory tone of Riemann and the like and a need to elevate these “lesser” composers onto the higher ranks of music history will definitely remain a challenge.

37 Die Zeit für Schlußfolgerungen noch nicht gekommen ist. [...] Insbesondere direkte Vergleiche zwischen Händel und einzelnen italienischen Komponisten nicht zu Gesamturteilen, etwa gar über einen deutsch-italienischen Nationalgegensatz, ausgeweitet werden dürfen.

## 1. 2.

### THE VOCAL DUET

Before one tries to define and classify the vocal duet, it is important to note that even though the distinction between the duet as a vocal and the duo as an instrumental genre stems from some of the 18th-century authors to be quoted in the course of this chapter, “that usage is by no means universal except in present-day Germany” (Tilmouth 2001) and in English-language literature one often finds the term “instrumental duet”. Therefore, the term “vocal duet” is adopted in this study, but the specifying adjective will often be dropped when it is clear from the context that we are by no means dealing with an instrumental genre. A closer terminological distinction of the terms “duet” and “ensemble” is required, as well, since they are often used interchangeably in dramatic genres. Most of the consulted reference sources (McClymonds, Cook, and Budden 1992; Liebscher 1996, Rienäcker 1997, Cook 2001, Ruf 2001, Tilmouth 2001) agree that the duet is a subcategory of the broader term of the ensemble. “In modern operatic terminology, ‘ensemble’ denotes a musical number involving anything from two singers to the whole cast.” (Cook 2001) Some other authors (e. g. Dent 1910a, Dent 1910b, Robinson 1972) use the term “ensemble” predominantly for numbers written for more than two voices. Given the diversity of not only the performing forces involved (ranging from the sparse texture of two voices and *basso continuo* to as many as seven or eight soloists plus orchestra) but also of the stylistic changes the ensemble, it is not a simple task to attempt a definition of the ensemble in structural terms. Out of the above mentioned reference sources, Gerd Rienäcker’s article in *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Rienäcker 1997, 100) comes closest to a generalised (albeit rather intricate) outline of structural procedures common to the ensemble in general. As a model, it allows the omission of some of the numerous elements it lists, and is therefore surprisingly suited to the definition of the duet as well. Rienäcker stresses structural diversity and the vast number of combinations in the treatment of the horizontal and vertical plane, the distinction and contrasting of the vocal parts and their coordination, as well as the use of vocal and instrumental idioms:

The duets give word to the individual, so that they can build togetherness from it in oscillation between connecting and separating. They let the voices enter logically, after each other, after which the sequences of the voices are shortened and their entries dovetailed. They finally flow into a homophonic note-against-note texture, but

eventually dissolve it, as the voices rub against each other in chains of dissonances or *contrapunctus ligatus*<sup>38</sup> (Rienäcker 1997, 104).

The “connecting” and the “separating” of the voices obviously refers to their simultaneous and successive treatment. The tendency to move from lengthier entries of the individual voices to shorter ones and, consequently, a parallel cadence very often preceded by some sort of sequential counterpoint (e. g. suspensions that make out *contrapunctus ligatus*) is generally characteristic of the relationship between two voices in a duet texture, whatever the respective proportions of these three structural procedures (alternation, counterpoint, parallelism) are. At one point, Rienäcker (1997, 104) even speaks of “a pendulum swing between imitative polyphony, *contrapunctus ligatus* and note-against-note texture in thirds and sixths”<sup>39</sup>. In the course of this study, as we examine a wide range of types of duets, the structural pendulum will swing in increasingly different ways.

But this as well as other definitions of the duet are not ahistorical. Only after around 1680 did it become customary that “each character should sing first a short solo (often to the same music but with different words); imitative dialogue then quickly led into duet textures” (McClymonds, Cook, and Budden 1992). After the turn of the century, structural procedures in opera and other dramatic vocal genres became more entrenched and standardised in general and consequently in the duet as well. “After 1700, duets tended to begin with a long solo for each participant, usually singing a different strophe of poetry but set to the same music, a 4th or 5th apart in pitch; this is followed by a transitional section in which the voices have alternating short phrases and overlapping of parts or a section *a due* to lead to simultaneous cadences.” (McClymonds, Cook, and Budden 1992) For reasons already outlined and to be elaborated on in the course of these introductory chapters, this study will also concentrate on duets written in the period from the end of the 17th century to the fourth decade of the 18th century, so we shall leave aside further considerations on how this structural plan developed up to then. It is nevertheless important to point out how music theorists of the 17th and

38 Die Zwiegesänge [...] geben einzelnen das Wort, um daraus Zweisamkeit zu entwickeln im Pendel zwischen Verbindung und Abstoßung, lassen folgerichtig die Stimmen nacheinander einsetzen, verkürzen, hernach deren Abfolge, verzahnen die Einsätze, gehen schließlich über in homophone Note-gegen-Note-Sätze, lösen diese wieder auf, lassen die Stimmen in Dissonanz-Konsonanzketten des *contrapunctus ligatus* sich reiben.

39 Der Pendelschlag zwischen imitatorischer Polyphonie, *contrapunctus ligatus* und Note-gegen-Note-Satz in Terzen und Sexten.

the first half of the 18th century often acknowledged the importance of the duet, stressing that composing for two voices and at least a third, bass part required particular mastery and was difficult to excel in. Drawing on previous authors such as Giovanni Maria Bononcini (1969, 109–111) in his *Musico pratico* of 1673, Mattheson claimed that “a true trio is thus the greatest masterpiece of harmony, and if one can deal purely, singably and harmoniously with three voices then one will do well even with 24” (Mattheson 1981, 657). Besides being an important aspect of the teaching of the art (or craft) of musical composition, the chamber duet was also an integral part of vocal pedagogy, as the musical equality of the soloists put not only their melodic and rhythmic interpretive precision but also their coordination to the test. This was obviously much needed in a period of music history that favoured soloist self-display in vocal genres as diverse as opera, oratorio, church music and even cantata, but it also has a very long tradition, for example in the *bicinium*, an imitative two-part instrumental or vocal piece of the 16th and early 17th centuries.

What needs to be tackled more than historical developmental theories is the distinction between the so-called “dramatic duet” and the “chamber duet”. The dramatic duet features in dramatic vocal genres such as opera, oratorio, cantata and serenata as one of the many vocal numbers that such a work consists of and as such assigns the vocal parts to characters that interact in a dramatic situation at a certain point in the overall dramaturgy of the work, whether it was on a larger scale as in opera or oratorio or on a much smaller one as in a *cantata a due*.<sup>40</sup> In contrast, the chamber duet would appear “undramatic” since its voices do not assume dramatic roles, although this assumption will meet with a lot of criticism, especially in the course of Chapter 2. Calella (2000, 125) rightly points out that the distinction between these two types of duet can be “fluid”<sup>41</sup> and that the influence of the chamber on the dramatic duet should be explored, which is something that this study will attempt in its own modest way. The distinction “dramatic”/“undramatic” stems from the text rather than the way it is set: in this sense a chamber duet is a setting of a lyric (or less commonly, epic) text, and the dramatic duet a setting of a dramatic text. However, as we shall see in Chapter 3 in particular, dramatic musical genres often assign verses that entirely lack dimensions of dialogue to the *dramatis personae* singing a duet, but even so these duets have been conceived as parts of an overall drama.

40 I am deliberately avoiding the formulation “if the text of the two vocal parts could function in a verbal drama”. Dramatic vocal genres allow for dramatic situations that would be either impossible or incomprehensible in spoken theatre.

41 Fließend.



The difficulty to differentiate in these terms is particularly felt when classifications concentrate on the degree of difference in the text that the voices in a duet sing. For instance, in a different use of the term “dramatic” than is the case in this study, Tilmouth (2001) distinguishes between duets whose vocal parts sing identical lyrics and those “dramatic” ones that individualise the voices with different texts. One should, however, be very careful in making a causal link between the particularity of the texts that the two vocal parts sing and the degree of “drama” in a duet, since a duet can be “dramatic” even when the voices utter exactly identical texts. Duet texts in dramatic genres were conceived by librettists according to the same poetic criteria as arias, meaning that they had to be distinguished from their recitative surrounding by a regular poetic metre, and the imposition of the same metre on lines assigned to characters in a play who are reacting to the same dramatic situation will impose a certain metrical and stylistic stamp on them even if they are fully different. This is why I made only partial use of my earlier (Ćurković 2009) classification into “monotextual” (duets in which both voices sing the same text), “polytextual” (duets in which the voices sing different texts) and so-called “partially polytextual” duets. In the latter cases, “when the lyrics of the parts differ merely in certain details, such as personal pronouns (and are therefore also syntactically unified)” (Ćurković 2009, 40), the treatment of the voices is often very similar to the one in fully polytextual duets, whose vocal parts are nonetheless metrically and syntactically unified, not to mention how difficult it can sometimes be to draw a line between “partial” and “full” polytextuality.

However, the opposition between monotextuality and polytextuality should not be abandoned entirely, since most chamber duets are “monotextual”. As we shall see in Chapters 2 and 3, in dramatic duets the scale of concordance and difference between the texts sung by the voices can vary greatly, whereas in the chamber duets textual variance is a matter of exception or a special device. Therefore, even though it might seem to undermine it, this study is not able to dispense with the binary opposition of the chamber and the dramatic duet since the way duet texts in the period under study were set was firmly rooted in genre and performance conventions. Any kind of lyric poem could be set as a chamber duet, whereas there is no dramatic duet without a text clearly assigned to *dramatis personae*. It is, however, a difficult task to investigate the correspondence between the dramatic or undramatic character of a duet and the structural procedures outlined above since most duets combine all of them in different ratios.

It is interesting to consider a classification of an entirely different nature by Hugo Riemann (1921, 167–222) in his *Handbuch der Gesangskomposition*. Riemann’s aim is to teach how to compose a vocal

duet and not to investigate its historical development, which is why he elaborates his categories of the lyric, imitative and dialogic dramatic duet on an almost eclectic array of examples of 18th- and 19th-century music. His classification also shows signs of the utmost flexibility, which will prove instructive for the way this study should treat the numerous categories and typologies it resorts to. Since the consequent implementation of the technique most characteristic of the “lyric duet” (i. e. the continual leading of the voices in parallel thirds and sixths) leads to monotony, according to Riemann it is possible (perhaps even advisable) to introduce alternating appearances of the individual voices, especially at the beginning, or add pedal notes, even imitation to the outlining of a melodic idea in one of the voices. In other words, a lyric duet is better if it is infused with techniques characteristic of the other two types. The imitative duet, naturally, excels in the implementation of contrapuntal techniques, but Riemann (1921, 185) warns early on that “free imitation, i. e. the approximate adherence to the melodic lines suffices perfectly for the fulfilment of the implied aesthetic claims... Strict canon is a mere triumph of compositional technique, achieved mostly at the expense of the freedom of imagination.”<sup>42</sup> He continues with further examples of the combining of strict, canonic imitation with free counterpoint in examples by F. Durante, G. B. Martini, G. B. Pergolesi, E. d’Astorga and Handel himself. We shall see that this flexibility in the application of contrapuntal techniques will feature not only in the less learned domain of the dramatic duet but also in the innately contrapuntal chamber duets examined in this study. The dominant theory of fugal instrumental counterpoint of the 18th century (as outlined by Mann 1987 as one among many authors) cannot, therefore, be fully appropriated to the study of the vocal duet.<sup>43</sup> Finally, Riemann also examines the category of the dialogic dramatic duet, a category that we shall return to later, in Chapter 3.1.

Let us finish the examination of what was written on the definition and classification of the vocal duet with an attempt to get closer to what the composers at the centre of this study and their contemporaries thought of the duet, its role and importance. For this, we can turn only to theoretical sources stemming from their time, for the composers themselves left few written traces of their ideas. This does not come as a

42 Die freie Imitation, d. h. die ungefähre Wahrung der Melodielinien genügt vollkommen, um die angedeutete ästhetische Forderung zu erfüllen... Der strenge Kanon ist nur ein Triumph der kontrapunktischen Technik, der meist auf Kosten der Freiheit der Phantasie errungen wird.

43 It is not a matter of Handel and his Italian contemporaries being less contrapuntally consistent than, say, Bach in his instrumental and sacred music but being active in a genre with entirely different structural and technical requirements.

surprise because the establishment of aesthetics as an independent discipline had not been fully attained in the first quarter of the 18th century, but also because the duet did not occupy a central enough place to deserve a lot of analytical attention.

Theoretical sources of the 17th and 18th centuries abound with definitions of the duet. As Julia Liebscher (1987, 15–19) rightly observed, before the 1720s they were distinguished by a strong need to stress continuity with older theoretical traditions through the use of terms such as *bicinium* and *tricinium*. It took some time for the examination of the duet to be emancipated from the context of the development of the sacred concerto and the application of *concertante* techniques to a wide range of vocal and instrumental genres. The distinction between the instrumental duo and the vocal duet and their respective number of parts (the main question being if the *basso continuo* is counted in) was crystallised in the writings of Johann Mattheson. The most important to our understanding of the duet are the periodical *Critica musica* (1722–1725) and his most influential treatise, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*. It is there that Mattheson defined the duet as an “aria for two voices” (1981, 438), confirming the prevalence of structural and formal principles of the aria in vocal music of the time. He was also one of the first to standardise the precise distinction between the vocal duet (for two voices and accompaniment, therefore most commonly in three parts) and the instrumental duo (for two instruments).

Mattheson carries out a classification of the vocal duet in the chapter “On the Categories of Melodies and Their Special Characteristics” of *The Perfect Capellmeister*<sup>44</sup>, as follows: the French type of the vocal duet uses “same or similar counterpoint, that is... one voice sings the words at the same time as the other, so that either nothing at all or only here and there something dissimilar or concertato-like sneaks in” and it is appropriate for church music due to its “good qualities of piety and clarity” (Mattheson 1981, 438). The principal Italian type of vocal duet is essentially polyphonic, in “more or less severe contrapuntal writing” (Marx 1986, 121) due to its “fugal, artificial and intertwined nature” (Mattheson 1981, 438). “There must be a fugal or imitative quality, with suspensions, syncopations and clever resolutions.” (ibid., 658) Duets of this category could easily be labelled as “learned” as “they require a true man, and are a great pleasure to the musically-trained ear” (ibid., 438). Mattheson claims that this is encountered in church and chamber music, but “earlier, in Steffani’s time, also in the theatre” (ibid.). He brings forth another, third category, the essentially “secondary type of Italian duets, wherein there is only questioning and

44 Von den Gattungen der Melodien und ihren besonderen Abzeichen (Chapter 13, Part 11).

answering, as in a conversation, [that, A/N] almost achieves general prominence nowadays, especially on the operatic stages“ (ibid., 438). We are left with an interesting stylistic dichotomy: whereas the polyphonic type of Italian duet used to be characteristic of both dramatic and non-dramatic genres around 1700, by the time *The Perfect Capellmeister* came to be written it had become somewhat outdated in opera and almost replaced by the previously outlined category of the dialogue duet. Mattheson in any case finds that these duets, by being more “naïve” or “natural”, can have a deeply moving impact on the audience. In Chapter 3.1 we shall see to which extent what Mattheson outlined corresponds to the already mentioned “modern” type of dramatic duet as defined by Burney, and whether this change of fashion in the structuring of duets is reflected in the overall duets of G. F. Handel and some of his Italian contemporaries.

However, there is a wide spectrum of stylistic diversity in Italian vocal duets beyond the extremes of the strictly contrapuntal chamber and the successive, dialogic dramatic duet, leaving ample room for the use of techniques such as free or pseudo-counterpoint, parallel movement or the successive entries of the voices. Flexibility in the manipulation of these techniques has been, as shown above, labelled prerequisite for a skilful duet. Naturally, this diversity is somewhat greater in dramatic music than in the chamber duet, but—as shall be seen in Chapter 2—the latter is less monolithic than we are inclined to believe. Hopefully, this dissertation will succeed in highlighting some of the two-way influences between different types of duets.

## 2. Chamber Duet

### 2. 1.

#### DEFINITIONS AND TYPOLOGIES

As a field for compositional experimentation, for purposes of instruction or study, as “table-music” or music for social occasions in aristocratic palaces and affluent urban homes, the chamber duet remained limited to a relatively small circle of connoisseurs and admirers due to its high demands on composers, interpreters and recipients.<sup>45</sup> (Musketa 1990, 185)

The idea of the chamber duet as an essentially private musical genre in the 17th and 18th centuries explains its relatively marginal position in music history, as opposed to the more public genres of opera and church music. This can be explained by a fundamental change in musical aesthetics in the late 18th and the 19th century that led to a highly different concept of chamber music. While in the 17th and a larger part of the 18th century the term was applied with equal force to vocal and instrumental music, a tradition with Joseph Haydn’s string quartets at its outset led into the establishment of the aesthetic category of “absolute” instrumental music, and subsequently, chamber music became conceived as predominantly instrumental. In contrast, prior to this the chamber duet and the trio sonata were perceived as embodiments of the same structural principles in a different (instrumental and vocal) medium (cf. Boyd 1997, 182). The marginality of the chamber duet is reinforced by its similarly lateral position in relation to the genre synonymous with the term of “vocal chamber music”, the (solo) cantata. However, both chamber duet and cantata have in common that in the course of the 17th century they served as an experimental field for structural innovations and the expansion of forms that left a mark on the public genres of opera and oratorio, reluctant to take these risks themselves (cf. Riemann 1912, 391). It is interesting to note how Musketa traces this marginality to the “learned”, contrapuntal nature of the chamber duet, placing “high demands” on the levels of musical production, reception and performance. In an age that is gradually going to give way to ideas about

45 Als kompositorisches Experimentierfeld, für Unterrichts- und Studienzwecke, als Tafelmusik oder zu geselligen Anlässen in aristokratischen Palästen und wohlhabenden Bürgerhäusern blieb das Kammerduett aufgrund seiner hohen Ansprüche an Komponisten, Interpreten und Rezipienten nur auf einen relativ kleinen Kreis von Kennern und Liebhabern beschränkt.

the artificiality of counterpoint as opposed to a more natural aesthetic of sentiment, the share that contrapuntal techniques have in the chamber duet always plays an important part in its reception.

Compared to the vocal duet in general, the chamber duet is more difficult to define with precision. Although the already mentioned distinction between a lyric text as opposed to a dramatic one is decisive for the dichotomy between the chamber and the dramatic duet, due to the similar scale of the performing forces (two voices plus accompaniment, whether continuo or simpler chamber/orchestral forces) and often also the overall formal structuring, the line between a chamber duet and a (dramatic) cantata for two voices (in the original Italian: *cantata a due*) can be difficult to draw. This is evident in the ways different authors subsume the two genres within each other. According to Hans Joachim Marx (1986, 121), the “antithesis of lyrical and declamatory expression, [...] articulation by changes of beat and key, gradual separation of recitative and arioso sections” are common to both, to the extent that he finds that the *cantata a due* is a subspecies of the chamber duet and not of the cantata proper. On the other hand, Timms and Burrows (in Steffani 1987, vii) as well as the *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Emans et al. 1996, 1712) share the opinion that the chamber duet is a “subspecies”<sup>46</sup> of the cantata. Although the relationship between the text (dramatic or lyric) and the genre should be straightforward, in the course of Chapter 2 (2.4 in particular) we will deal with many examples that fall somewhere in between the two extremes. As we shall see later on, the reason for this is that the chamber duet can sometimes display formal and structural traits of the cantata, such as the alternation of solo and duet sections or of recitative on the one hand and aria or duet sections on the other hand, although not always.

The occasional use of the term “madrigal” in connection with the term chamber duet adds to the terminological confusion. It rests on the idea of a continuation of the tradition of polyphonic vocal music from the 16th century. “The cembalo in the early 18th-century drawing room had supplanted the Renaissance dining table as a gathering place, and the circle of singers had diminished from some half dozen to two or three.” (Saville 1958, 128) Even though evolutionary ideas of the sort have been subjected to criticism (cf. Liebscher 1987), a certain equivalence between the madrigal and the chamber duet cannot be denied. While discussing Gasparini’s collection of chamber duets (Gasparini MS, Duetti; to be dealt with in detail in Chapter 2.4), Michael F. Robinson (1981, 70–71) claims that in Gasparini’s time an older type of chamber duet in which “each singer normally sang all the words”, employing “polyphonic techniques

46 Unterart.

with more consistency” could be identified with the titular notion of the “madrigal”. He brings some more examples to support this claim: the collection *Madrigali a 2* (1740–1741) by Giovanni Carlo Maria Clari (Clari MS) and Benedetto Marcello’s *Canzoni madrigalesche* (1717), op. 4 (Marcello 1717), both containing quintessentially polyphonic duets of the first type. However, the title of Lotti’s collection *Duetti, terzetti, e madrigal a più voci* (Lotti 1705) seems to contradict Robinson’s claim as it makes a clear distinction between the madrigal as a vocal genre for more than three voices (and most often *a capella*) and not only the chamber duet but also the chamber trio. Robinson concludes that Gasparini’s collection might have initially contained madrigals in Lotti’s sense of the word, too, but that they have been meanwhile removed from the aforementioned manuscript at the British Library (also the only available source for the work), and although possible, to me this seems like stretching the argument a bit too far. There are, however, opposing opinions as well, such as Saville’s (1958, 130) that “there is no evidence that Clari himself especially thought of his secular pieces [chamber duets, A/N] as madrigals”, but that this designation of genre “persisted largely at the hands of publishers and especially of copyists, about whose pages [...] there clings an unmistakable aura of wishful thinking about the good old days of madrigal singing.”

A lyric poem is usually a reflection in the first person, and even though love poetry directly involves its addressee into the discourse, sometimes using direct and indirect speech for the purpose, the chamber duet as such rarely capitalizes on this. For instance, even if—and this is very frequent—it involves solo sections, movements in recitative and/or arias, the composer rarely sets them so as to differentiate direct speech as coming from only one of the two imaginary *dramatis personae*, as otherwise the composition would become a *cantata a due* instead of a chamber duet. Still, traces of “latent” dramaturgy will be sought in the chamber duets examined in this study, for even though the text is lyric and the voices do not represent distinct characters, composers still find a way to infuse their setting with dramatic traits. In this last instance, the term “dramatic” is not used in the literal sense (in the sense of equivalence to lyric, epic and dramatic literature) but in a metaphorical one, expressive of the character of the setting. When dealing with the category of the “dramatic”, the need for flexibility cannot be stressed enough, for even though the voices in a dramatic duet are individualised on the dramaturgic plane as distinctive characters, this differentiation can be absent on the level of the musical setting, whereas a setting of a chamber duet can be dramatic in character even if the texts that the two voices sing are not.

Let us now attempt to give a brief historical outline of the development—if one can call it a development—of the chamber duet in the 17th

and 18th centuries. As opposed to the authors stressing the continuity with the madrigal quoted above, Liebscher (1987, 31–42) insists that the chamber duet did not evolve from 16th-century vocal polyphony but from early 17th monody by the addition of an extra voice. The beginnings of the early chamber duet cannot be separated from the history of the related genres of the *continuo* madrigal for two voices and the dialogue on the one hand, and the aria and the solo cantata on the other (cf. Whenham 1982; Liebscher 1996). In the two-voice madrigal the generation of composers starting with Claudio Monteverdi used *concertante* techniques to create a specific, dialogic interplay between the voices on the firm basis of *continuo* accompaniment, whereas the genre of the dialogue was determined firstly as a “setting of a text involving conversational exchanges between two or more characters”, and only secondly as a “work that employed musical devices such as alternation, echo or contrast in a way which is analogous to the exchanges of spoken dialogue” (Whenham 1982, 181). On the other hand, cantata settings of both lyric, monologic (seemingly designed with a one-voice setting in mind, but set for two voices instead) and dialogic texts integrated soloist, aria movements and duet movements, as well as one-voice and two-voice recitative. Only halfway through the century did the term “duetto” begin to be applied uniformly to compositions deriving from all these previously listed traditions, the first entire collection stemming from Maurizio Cazzati (*Duetti per Camera*, Bologna, 1677). In the second half of the 17th century the composition of chamber duets was focused in Venice and Bologna, but most particularly in Rome, as the “leading cantata composers of Rome—Luigi Rossi, Carissimi, Cesti and Stradella—all wrote duets and set an example that was followed by Steffani and by composers elsewhere, especially at Bologna” (Timms in Steffani 1987, viii). Apart from learned contrapuntal techniques, traits of the opera duet such as dialogic successive exchanges between the two voices instead of imitation were—according to Schmitz (1916, 55–56)—even more prominent in Venetian chamber duets due to the domination of opera in the city’s musical life. These prevail in Cavalli’s, to a certain extent also Cesti’s and later Pallavicino’s and Pollarolo’s chamber duets, whereas composers such as P. A. Ziani and Giovanni Legrenzi drew on the older tradition of the *concertante* madrigal for two voices.

However, the chamber duet “acquired the status of an autonomous vocal genre with its own formal characteristics” only in the period 1670–1750, “when it can be considered as the vocal equivalent of the trio sonata”<sup>47</sup> (Liebscher 1996, 1572). Moreover, in her foreword to the HHA edition

47 Den Rang einer eigenständigen Vokalform mit Gattungscharakter erlangte es [...] wo es als vokales Pendant zur Triosonate greifbar wird.



of Handel's chamber duets and trios, Konstanze Musketa claims that the chamber duet reached "its full maturity around 1700" (Handel, 2011, XIV). Cazzati's successors from Bologna such as Giovanni Maria Bononcini, Antonio Pistocchi and Giovanni Bononcini remained at the helm of the genre tradition, turning the extensive, alternating soloist presentation of the long-span thematic material before the voices are combined into a specific feature of the Bolognese duet. But the breadth of techniques such as "echo, dialogue (questions-answers), imitation, simultaneous singing, contrasting juxtaposition of monologic and dialogic sections"<sup>48</sup> (Liebscher 1996, 1575) is at its most evident in the chamber duets of the Roman composer Agostino Steffani, who is at the centre of my interest. Although some contemporary authorities such as Charles Burney identified Bononcini's collection of *Duetti da camera*, op. 8 (1691) as the first representative of "a species of learned and elaborate *Chamber Duets* for voices that began to be in favour" (Burney 1958, 534), this is mostly due to the fact Steffani's duets were dispersed in manuscripts only after 1691, although Timms presents clear evidence that many of them were conceived earlier (cf. Chapter 2.2). According to Timms (Steffani 1987, viii), it was through Steffani's duets that the genre became associated with the notion of a display of contrapuntal skill.

According to Liebscher (2006, 1572), the chamber duet in the period 1670–1750 "led to the manifestation of three well defined formal types"<sup>49</sup>, to be described in detail soon and all of them clearly manifested in Steffani's chamber duet opus. She applies her distinction between "Triobesetzung" (trio setting), "Triosatz" (trio texture), "Trioprinzip" (trio principle) and trio sonata to the chamber duet in the following manner: the chamber duet shows a tendency toward the formation of a trio texture between the *concertante*, imitative upper pair of voices and the bass part occupying middle ground between harmonic support and contrapuntal balance, but never reaches the status of the bass part in the trio sonata (Liebscher 1987, 97). This means that the chamber duet is undoubtedly set for three voices and governed by the trio principle, but—unlike the trio sonata—does not display all traits of the trio texture. Nevertheless, the same way as in the trio sonata, it is the use of counterpoint that distinguishes the genre, although the techniques of imitation are handled more freely than in stricter polyphonic genres such as the fugue.

Chrysander, Liebscher (1987) and Timms (foreword to Steffani 1987) have devised somewhat contrasting, but methodologically similar formal

48 Echo, Dialog (Frage-Antwort [...]), Imitation, Simultanvortrag, kontrastierende Gegenüberstellung monologischer und dialogisierender Abschnitte.

49 Drei fest umrissenen Formtypen.

typologies of the chamber duet. Bearing in mind the formal diversity of Steffani's chamber duets, Timms speaks of the madrigal, the aria and the cantata type. By naming the type of duet that contains exclusively duet movements (and no solos) and has a through-composed, open conception of form after the madrigal, Timms stressed continuity with the most prominent 16th-century genre counterpart. Although most often through-composed, the movements of the madrigal type themselves can also be formally closed, e. g. in ABA form. Timms's aria type is the opposite of the madrigal type in that it inevitably involves repetition on a large scale, producing closed units on multiple levels of form. Unlike the madrigal type, it can also contain solos (a trait it has in common with the cantata type), both recitatives and arias. Elements of strophic repetition can also be found in the variants of rondo form that the aria type sometimes builds. One central duet movement assumes the role of the refrain while the episodes can be duets as well, but are more often solos and strophically related to each other (e. g. the formal plan A B A b A). Finally, Timms's cantata type combines traits of both previous types but is closer to the aria type with the crucial difference that it entails no large-scale repetition. This is where the kinship of the late 17th-century and early 18th-century duet with the cantata is at its most evident, as the "the solo and duet movements serve a formal function similar to that of recitatives and arias (respectively) in the late baroque solo cantata" (Timms in Steffani 1987, ix-x). The solos can include arias, but are most often recitatives with an extensive setting of the last line as *arioso*.

Chrysander divided Steffani's chamber duets into three groups: "(a) 'small' duets in one movement some with *da capo*; (b) 'large' duets in which solo movements, some with recitative, were framed by duet movements; and (c) 'medium' duets in more than one movement but without solos" (Timms 1987, 222). Liebscher took over and adapted Chrysander's categories. Table 1 attempts to juxtapose Timms's and Liebscher's formal typology. Unlike Timms's, Liebscher's aria type is mainly distinguished by its size. Her aria type is usually a chamber duet on the scale of a single movement, which makes the possibility of both large-scale repetition and solos unlikely and often finds its equivalent in Timms's madrigal type. Liebscher's cantata type is defined solely through its similarity with the cantata, as it is less important to Liebscher if it contains large-scale repetition or not. Finally, Liebscher's sonata type uses criteria that are absent from Timms's classification, since for her historical overview of the chamber duet from 1670 to 1750 it was more important to stress the influence of the trio sonata on the chamber duet. In its complete avoidance of solos and succession of duet movements Liebscher saw the principle of the sonata prevail over the principle of the cantata, and it is irrelevant

for Liebscher whether any movements are repeated. This study adopts Liebscher's categories because of their stress on the kinship between the chamber duet and the trio sonata. From the point of view of Liebscher's classification, dramatic duets often resemble the aria type of chamber duet or a single movement in the sonata type of chamber duet, which facilitates the comparison between chamber and dramatic duets that is at the core of this study when compared to, say, using Timms's classification.

TIMMS		LIEBSCHER
madrigal	→	aria
	←	sonata
aria	→	cantata
	←	sonata
cantata	→	cantata
	←	

TABLE 1.  
Timms's and Liebscher's formal classification of the chamber duet

Let us now offer an outline of structural procedures in the chamber duet, applying mostly to its duet movements, that is, to duets of Liebscher's aria or sonata type. As in the opera duet, the voices often alternate their statements of the material over the bass first before engaging in imitation with each other. A longer subject is often composed of two or three units, so that the composer can state it and imitate it both in its entirety or work with its separate units, often combining them contrapuntally with each other. Along with numerous "false entries", when instead of the whole subject only its head motif is stated, the techniques of the interrupting and splitting of the material result in the effect of a stretto although—strictly speaking—there is none.

According to Liebscher, all this can lead to an "incongruity between text and music as well as to an emancipation of musical-structural means as opposed to the text"<sup>50</sup> (1987, 174). With the extensive juxtaposition, superposition and repetition of the text, it is often rendered incomprehensible and a lot of the affect-laden expressivity of the music as the "servant of the text" is lost. Liebscher elaborates on this further by claiming that the incongruity is due to the fact that the text does not call for a two-part vocal setting in the first place, but forms a contradiction with it instead. She sees the dramaturgy of the chamber duet as the parallel unfolding of two monologues

50 Inkongruenz von Text und Musik sowie die Verselbstständigung der musikalisch-technischen Mittel gegenüber der Textvorlage.

interconnected only at the level of the texture, resulting in the estrangement of a monologic text through a dialogic setting. However, in my opinion this does not exclude occasional latent dialogic characteristics in the chamber duet. For instance, love lyric is “addressed to the distant beloved, who is yearned for with oaths of love or accused of infidelity. The singer as the performer of the underlying text is in this way at the same time mentally connected with the object to which the statement is directed.”<sup>51</sup> (Liebscher 1987, 208) The addressee that is not present in the text is to a certain extent made present in the person of the second singer. “The seeming dialogic stance in the text corresponds to the covert dialogic stance in the music.”<sup>52</sup> (1987, 208) In the course of Chapter 2, I shall examine if there is indeed more to this latent dramaturgical aspect than it would seem at first. However, there is no reason why this approach should be confined exclusively to the chamber duet, for latent dramaturgy plays a certain part in the opera duet as well. Many opera duets are conceived on the part of the librettist as parallel monologues, and even the treatment of a dialogic text in a dramatic duet can display traits typical of the chamber duet.

In devising a selection of the chamber duets considered in this chapter, it was essential to consider both printed collections and manuscripts. If we look for the earliest printed collections and the approximate time of creation of some of the manuscript duets, a provisory chronology of duets considered in this study presents itself: Giovanni Bononcini (print, 1691, 1721), Antonio Lotti (print, 1705), George Frideric Handel (manuscript, 1708–1745), Giovanni Carlo Maria Clari (print, 1720 and various MS collections) and Francesco Durante<sup>53</sup> (manuscript, 1720–1730), while the chamber duets of Gasparini remain impossible to date (cf. Cavina 1998, 13). Even though his chamber duets were written over a large time span, Steffani was a pacesetter for the genre due to the wide influence of his chamber duets, so it goes without saying that he should be added to the list and considered first (Chapter 2.2). In the case of his duets the distinction between chamber and dramatic duets is clearer than in the case of some other composers whose works will be examined later on since his chamber duets differ on so many levels from his dramatic duets (see Timms 2003, 198–201), which makes them particularly suitable for a starting point in

- 51 An die ferne Geliebte, die durch Liebeschwüre herbeigesehnt oder wegen Treulosigkeit angeklagt wird. Der Sänger als Interpret des zugrundeliegenden Textes ist auf diese Weise gleichsam gedanklich mit dem Objekt verbunden, an das die Aussage gerichtet ist... Der im Text real nicht anwesende Adressat.
- 52 Der verdeckten Dialoghaltung im Text entspricht die scheinbare Dialoghaltung in der Musik.
- 53 As a composer given detailed analytical attention in this study, Francesco Durante will only be referred to by his surname from here on.

the examination of the genre in the given period. After an analysis of G. F. Handel's chamber duets through the prism of this influence (Chapter 2.3), a detailed comparative examination of selected duets from the aforementioned composers will follow (Chapter 2.4) in the hope of explaining the specificity of their contribution in relation to Handel's and how this relates to their respective dramatic duets, analysed in Chapter 3.

## AGOSTINO STEFFANI AS A FORERUNNER

The importance of Agostino Steffani for the music of the middle baroque period has been increasingly recognised lately. Colin Timms claims that “he made a major contribution to opera in northern Germany, where he spent most of his life, and his celebrated chamber duets for two voices and continuo represent an important stage in the development of Italian secular vocal music between Carissimi and Handel” (Timms 2001). Steffani “contributed handsomely to the dissemination of the late seventeenth-century Italian style” (Steffani, 1987, 1). His chamber duets had “a similar impact on European composers as the trio sonatas of his contemporary A. Corelli, only a year Steffani’s senior”<sup>54</sup> (Leopold, 2006, 1370), since, to be more specific, “composers such as S. Kusser, G. C. Schürmann, G. Ph. Telemann or G. Fr. Handel took Steffani’s style of composing, oscillating between Italian and French music as their example”<sup>55</sup> (Leopold 2006, 1368). Nevertheless, the most influential genre in the composer’s opus was unquestionably the chamber duet. Chrysander was of the opinion that “like the string quartets of Haydn, they said everything of which the medium was capable” (Timms, 1987, 222). The opinion of Steffani’s contemporaries and immediate successors, such as the aforementioned Mattheson (cf. 1981, 438) and the theorist Giordano Riccati, one of the composer’s first biographers, was along similar lines of praise. Riccati admired Steffani’s duets in his treatise *Saggio sopra le leggi di contrapunto* (1762) “for their variety and unity, expression of words, and marvellous ‘conduct’ which he found ‘unaffected, easy, and delightful’”. (Timms 2003, 304) The composer understood his duets as “an experimental field for vocal composition”<sup>56</sup> (Leopold 2006, 1369). “It is the quality of Steffani’s counterpoint and the beauty of his melodic and harmonic expression that make him the greatest exponent of the Italian chamber duet in the late 17th and early 18th centuries” (Timms, 2003, 288).

A precise chronology of Steffani’s duets is impossible to establish and can only be reconstructed in fifteen out of his 81 duets on the basis of circumstantial evidence, e. g. the former use of their texts in a cantata. A lot of texts stem from solo-cantatas from the last third of the 17th century, which is an indirect indication that they may have been composed earlier

- 54 Hatten für die Komponisten Europas eine ähnliche Vorbildfunktion wie die Triosonaten seines ein Jahr zuvor geborenen Altersgenossen A. Corelli.  
 55 Komponisten wie Joh. S. Kusser, G. C. Schürmann, G. Ph. Telemann oder G. Fr. Händel nahmen sich Steffanis zwischen französischer und italienischer Musik changierende Schreibart zum Vorbild.  
 56 Ein Experimentierfeld für vokales Komponieren.

than previously thought, as early as the 1670s. This is inevitably the case with the earlier versions of the nineteen duets that the composer revised in the period of 1702–1710, due to a self-proclaimed intention to improve them aesthetically. However, the majority of duets were originally written between 1688 and 1696 when Steffani was *Kapellmeister* at the court in Hanover (Timms 1973, 119), but the selection of duets analysed in this chapter will always take into account the revised versions.

The texts of Steffani's duets are expectedly lyrical, reflecting both the tradition of Petrarchan and pastoral poetry in their exploration of love. The occasionally dramatized, but more often monologic discourse is often directed to an idealised or unattainable amorous object, but can also contain accusations or jealousy or unresponsiveness. Sometimes the typical pastoral characters Clori, Filli, Tirsi or Fileno are named, either as the subjects or as the addressees of the discourse. Even if direct or indirect speech forms an integral part of the text, the musical setting never treats it in terms of dramatic differentiation. As an analysis of Steffani's only dialogic duet *Io mi parto* will show, the composer does not set a dialogue any differently than he would normally set a monologue. The somewhat abstract approach to the text is perceivable also in the relationship between poetic and musical structure and form. "The texts suggest, but by no means determine, the shape of the musical setting" (Timms in Steffani 1987, ix). Also, there are cases where "Steffani could have used one of the singers for narrative and the other for direct speech, but he ignored the opportunity for characterisation, placing considerations of musical form and balance above those of textual propriety." (Timms in Steffani 1985, pages unnumbered) Although Steffani adheres to the duality of text setting known from the cantata by setting the longer *versi sciolti* as recitative and the metrically regular stanzas as arias and duets, there is by no means a direct equivalence between poetic and musical form, especially regarding the question of whether a particular section of the text will be set as duet or aria. He often shows a disregard for large-scale strophic structures, since the "ignoring of strophic elements in texts betokens an interest in through-composition" (Timms 2003, 291).

Steffani's duets are tonally closed, with no more than one out of the maximum of six movements in a key other than the main one. They could be performed by gifted amateurs, but the technical demands can occasionally be challenging, although the composer achieves melodic expressivity by the simplest means as well. The texture of the duets is often rendered richer and denser by the expressive use of chromaticism (e. g. *Begl'occhi, oh Dio, non più*) or a predilection for suspensions (*Pria ch'io faccia, Begl'occhi, oh Dio, non più, Saldi marmi*). The duets are composed for diverse combinations of voices out of which the ones written for soprano and alto (20),

soprano and tenor (19) and soprano and bass (19) are the most common (Timms 2003, 284). As had been noticed by Leopold (2006, 1370), this is slightly unusual when we think of the fact that both the earlier, *concertante* chamber duet of the 17th century as well as the emergent trio sonata give preference to equal voices, most commonly two trebles. On the other hand, “since equal voices generally excel in similar parts of the range, their use tends to favour parallel motion; counterpoint is not excluded, but it is more difficult for the composer to maintain the independence and distinctiveness of the two equal parts. Scoring for unequal voices does not guarantee a contrapuntal texture, but it facilitates imitation at the fifth, octave, or twelfth and creates tonal space for manoeuvre: it provides opportunities for counterpoint, and Steffani exploits them to the full.” (Timms 2003, 285) Almost a third of Steffani’s duets written for soprano and alto are relatively late or revised compositions. This type of setting was ideal for the introduction of more dense contrapuntal writing, which contributes to the idea of the composer’s maturity. He is also important as one of the first composers to use double counterpoint in 17th-century vocal music.

It is interesting to observe how the thorough revisions Steffani made to his duets (there are 19 preserved examples) affected some of the aforementioned stylistic and formal traits. Steffani often made considerable changes to the thematic material itself, which often had a profound influence on the overall unfolding of the duet. “By exploring more thoroughly the contrapuntal potential of material recast for the purpose, he substantially increased the length and complexity of most of the duet movements. Compared with the earlier versions, the revisions tend as a result of these changes to comprise a smaller number of larger movements of which a greater proportion are duets and are not repeated” (Timms in Steffani 1987, x). Timms (2003, 294) goes as far as to say that on the basis of the chronology of the fifteen dateable duets, a compositional development from closed and repetitive to through-composed duets can be outlined due to Steffani’s “burgeoning interest in counterpoint” and supports this claim by a comparison of the revised duets with the earlier ones. The idea of a development from the aria and the cantata type to the sonata type is implied to be gradual, and even more importantly, qualitative and progressive.

Steffani’s chamber duets were highly influential in their age. They were not only regularly performed in Hanover, Kassel, Würzburg, Munich, Brussels and Berlin but also imitated by composers such as Giuseppe Antonio Bernabei and Torri in Munich as well as Handel in Italy, Hanover and England. Additional indirect evidence that they were to a certain extent part of the musical life in London is provided by the following: “In London the impresario Heidegger sang them for Princess Caroline in 1719; two years later Durastanti sang ‘four songs and [with Senesino] six duettos by the famous Signor Steffani’ at her benefit concert” (Timms 2003, 304),



which was probably the first public performance of Steffani's chamber duets. Handel's singers, the castrato Senesino and the soprano Anna Maria Strada del Pò often sang them "during their morning studies", which not only testifies to their pedagogic function but proves that there must have been a connection between the chamber duet and operatic practice, if not directly at the level of composition (as this study will attempt to show), then at least in terms of performance practice.

Besides many manuscript copies, Steffani's chamber duets are accessible in three representative printed editions. The earliest is part of the series *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Bayern*, edited by Alfred Einstein and Adolf Sandberger (Steffani 1905). By favouring sonata duets for soprano and alto, it cultivates the image of Steffani as a "mature" composer of contrapuntal chamber duets. The image is slightly more diversified in the two collections edited by Timms, a transcribed selection of 12 duets (Steffani 1987) and the facsimile edition of autographs of cantatas and duets in the Garland series *Italian Cantata* (Steffani 1985). The selection of nine analysed duets has been heavily influenced by the accessibility of these sources. An overview is displayed in Table 2:

DUET	SETTING	TYPE	CHARACTERISTICS
<i>Ribellatevi, o pensieri</i>	S&S	cantata	liveliness, simplicity
<i>Su, ferisci, alato arciero</i>	S&S	cantata	
<i>Pria ch'io faccio</i>	S&S	sonata	
<i>Libertà, libertà</i>	S&A	cantata	attempt at dramatization
<i>Io mi parto / Resto solo</i>	S&T	cantata	unity, 'abstract' dramaturgy
<i>Placidissime catene</i>	S&A	sonata	
<i>E così mi compartite</i>	S&T	sonata	unity, formal diversity
<i>Begl'occhi, oh Dio, non più</i>	S&A	cantata	pathetic character
<i>Saldi marmi</i>	S&S	cantata	dying codas

TABLE 2.

A selection of Steffani's chamber duets and their main characteristics

These duets are meant to highlight the diversity of Steffani's chamber duets in terms of setting, formal and structural traits and the relationship to the text. Although not representative of all the traits of the composer's contribution to the genre, they nevertheless exemplify the most important tendencies. The first three duets are simple, lively compositions written for two sopranos, while the next two present attempts at dramatizing the chamber duet as a genre from within. The next three are elaborate chamber

duets for unequal voices. Attention to each one of these groups will be devoted in separate subchapters, while the exceptional and unconventional duet *Saldi marmi* will merit a separate subchapter.

### 2. 2. 1.

## Playfully Equal Voices

Whether a duet is set for equal or unequal voices exerts a great influence on its structural unfolding. The examination of three of Steffani's duets written for two sopranos shows that, although their texts are marked by different, sometimes even opposing affective contents, a range of common traits on the structural and formal plan are due to the specificity of the setting. *Ribellatevi, o pensieri* is an emphatic repudiation of love, *Su ferisci, alato arciero* a no less ardent invocation of Cupid, and *Pria ch'io faccia* a determinate pledge never to reveal the object of one's amorous interest. In spite of contrasting affects, all three of them open with a section in a swift (or in the case of *Pria ch'io faccia*, moderate) tempo in a major mode and the first two close with a repeat of this section. It is not an exaggeration to claim that a setting for equal voices, with its limited possibilities of contrapuntal development, favours shorter forms (as well as a lower share of duet sections within the overall chamber duet), and therefore repetition as well. Similarly, a lively *concertante* texture between equal voices functions better in a swifter tempo, as a slower tempo would offer fewer possibilities for diversity.

*Ribellatevi, o pensieri* (Steffani 1987, 20–25) and *Su, ferisci, alato arciero* share an identical formal plan of a tripartite (A B A) duet section followed by a strophic solo for each of the singers. The former is an example of utter simplicity in Steffani's chamber duets. The structural plan of subsection A of the duet is bipartite, which is typical for Steffani, and involves the transposition to the dominant of the opening subsection a1 (b. 1–15) as a2 (b. 15–30). This formal pattern will be found in many chamber duets of his. The main difference with most duets, especially those written for neighbouring rather than equal voices, is the looser, not strictly contrapuntal relationship between the voices. In order to achieve better exposure of his thematic material in the first bars of the duet, something that seems like a head motif in Soprano 1 is briefly imitated in Soprano 2 only to be taken up again in what sounds like a variant of the theme, but is in fact its continuation. The figurative nature of the material (arpeggiation, quaver figuration) is not only suitable to the emphatic nature of the text ("Ribellatevi", "Pera", both in the imperative mood) but also enables the free handling of contrapuntal techniques: imitation in the octave facilitates consonance, and the passagework can be modified without the loss of thematic recognisability. Subsection B (b. 31–54) is treated even more freely with a lot of loose counterpoint over held notes.

This structural model is slightly extended in *Su, ferisci, alato arciero* (Steffani 1987, 26–33; Steffani recording, *Su, ferisci, alato arciero*), a duet with a character very similar to *Ribellatevi*. Unlike in *Ribellatevi*, Steffani presents the thematic material of the opening section A in Soprano 1 in its entirety first, assigning distinctive motifs (b. 1–4 = a<sub>1</sub>; b. 5–7 = a<sub>2</sub>; b. 7–10 = a<sub>3</sub>) to individual lines (or their sections) before combining them contrapuntally in the manner of a stretto. Steffani never consistently imitates the three motifs in succession but makes them serve as countersubject to each other before resorting to transpositions and extension to keep the flow going. It is interesting to note that Steffani’s more or less consistent use of double counterpoint (juxtaposing a<sub>2</sub> and a<sub>3</sub>), a technique desirable in a chamber duet as the inversion of the voices propels the unfolding of the duet, does not require the same contrapuntal skills as in other duets due to the inevitably frequent crossing of the voices, and only enhances the effect of their interchangeability. *Su, ferisci* does not have a written out *dal segno*, but inverts the voices, written in consistent double counterpoint, in the third (A’) section of the only duet movement in the chamber duet.<sup>57</sup> Between comes a bipartite middle section of somewhat smaller proportions (B<sub>1</sub> B<sub>2</sub>). The almost madrigalistic musical interpretation of the text, secured by the careful placement of melismatic passagework on words like “ferisci” (a<sub>1</sub>), “stral” (a<sub>2</sub>) is resumed in the similar treatment of the words “saetta” (b<sub>1</sub>), “dolce” (b<sub>2</sub>) and “piaga” (b<sub>3</sub>). The singling out of particular, semantically important words for melismatic treatment is something that the chamber duet shares with the cantata and opera. Whereas *Ribellatevi* justified its lively character by its emphatic protestation, *Su, ferisci* addresses Cupid with the vivid musical imagery of his arrows, a sensual relish in the wounds and the pain that they cause.

TEXT	BAR	FORM		THEMATIC MATERIAL	KEY
<i>Su, ferisci, alato arciero,</i> <i>Il tuo stral non fa morir.</i>	1–10 10–34	A	A <sub>1</sub> A <sub>2</sub>	a <sub>1</sub> , a <sub>2</sub> , a <sub>3</sub> a <sub>1</sub> &a <sub>2</sub> &a <sub>3</sub>	G G-D-G
<i>Occhio nero che saetta</i> <i>Fa una piaga che diletta</i> <i>E fa dolce anco il martir.</i>	34–46 46–60	B	B <sub>1</sub> B <sub>2</sub>	b <sub>1</sub> &b <sub>1</sub> , b <sub>2</sub> &b <sub>3</sub> b <sub>1</sub> &b <sub>1</sub> , b <sub>2</sub> &b <sub>3</sub>	G
<i>Su, ferisci, alato arciero,</i> <i>Il tuo stral non fa morir.</i>	6off	A’	A <sub>2</sub>	A in invertible CP; A <sub>1</sub> as exposition left out	as A

TABLE 3.

Formal plan of the duet movement of Steffani’s chamber duet *Su, ferisci, alato arciero*

57 The distinction between movement and section is sometimes blurred in the chamber duet. This study will be guided by editorial markings, whereby movements are numbered and sections are units that movements consist of. However, in the cases of the so-called cantata type of duet, sections set for solo voices and sections set for two voices will be called movements, whatever their size.

The duet cannot be interpreted otherwise than as a parallel unfolding of two identical monologues, and it shows many parallels to the so-called monotextual dramatic duet of unity, which also unanimously expresses the same affective content, but by characters united in a dramatic situation. *Ribellatevi*, on the other hand, would only be possible to conceive in dramatic terms as a duet of conflict (a “quarrel duet” between two lovers), although there is no difference either in form or in style, which only proves that these dramaturgic distinctions play no part in the musical setting. Still, it is interesting to note that the first solo of the chamber duet, following immediately after the duet movement described above, mentions the amorous object (“infida bellezza”) as well. As in most chamber duets to be examined in this study, such a formulation is only slightly coded in terms of gender. Although love poetry of the period most often suggests, through its identification with the person of the poet, a predominantly masculine perspective, this one-sidedness is slightly destabilised through its performance by two voices that are, when it comes to the combination of soprano & soprano and soprano & alto, ambiguously coded in terms of gender as they could be performed both by female singers and castratos. The duet *Pria ch’io faccia* is even less suitable for considerations of latent dramaturgy, as the only hypothetical dramatic situation we could imagine for this duet would be two lovers leading the same inner monologue about the concealment of their passion from each other.

Although the first three sections of *Pria ch’io faccia* (Steffani 1987, 1–9; Steffani recording, Vocal chamber duets) are contrasting in terms of thematic material and are both scored for two voices, the fourth section, being a strophic variation of the second, shows that Steffani’s setting follows the strophic structure of the text after all. What begins as a typical example of a sonata duet proves to include large-scale structural repetition in its overall design (A B: first stanza; C B’: second stanza) given its musical, albeit not textual refrain. The first section consists once again of two subsections (A<sub>1</sub> A<sub>2</sub>), each one setting its two lines to a composite, bipartite subject. Whereas the first halves of the subjects (a<sub>11</sub> = b. 1–2; a<sub>21</sub> = b. 14–15) are given only one imitative treatment, the rest of the respective two subsections is based on a free imitative treatment of a<sub>12</sub> (b. 10–13) and a<sub>22</sub> (b. 16–22). Resisting symmetry, the respective subsections in section C are set differently: C<sub>1</sub> (b. 1–8) makes use of only one motif (c<sub>1</sub>), shifting the balance to subsection C<sub>2</sub> (b. 8–26), with its more extensive subject c<sub>2</sub> imitated in the manner of a *stretto* first and then more freely. This tendency of an asymmetrical treatment of sections is at its most intense in the refrain (B), containing three subsections (B<sub>1</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>, B<sub>3</sub>). Whereas the first one (b. 23–30) subjects its material (b<sub>1</sub>) to two subsequent “interrupted” imitations, the second one (b. 30–35) is almost rudimentary. The third one (b. 35–57) is the

most elaborate with its composite material: b31 (first occurrence in 35–36) provides melodic distinctiveness required of a refrain, while b321 (b. 38–39) and its continuation b322 (b. 39–40) are contrapuntally developed in both successiveness and simultaneity. Section B' is not a strophic repetition of B. Steffani inverts the double counterpoint of the closing section of B (b. 43–57) in B' (b. 49–62).

The composer's decision to give certain lines of the text more space is more meaningful if we carefully read the text. The anonymous poetry would lead us to expect a pathetic chamber duet in the minor mode. Steffani, however, has given the introverted lover's oaths of choosing death rather than revealing the identity of his/her beloved a particular twist. As already said, the dominant character is lively and playful. Steffani not only sets the entire duet in major keys, but implies (there are no tempo indications in any of his duets) a moderate tempo. This is why it does not come as a surprise that the lines mentioning death (motifs a2, b1) are either given little space or treated in a playful way in contrast to their meaning. There is a certain *joie de vivre* in the relishing in a secret and almost something witty in the refrain, as if Steffani was suggesting not taking the lover's oaths so seriously. It might be that this was the reason why Steffani chose to set it for two sopranos in the first place. Indeed, the *concertante* interplay of interchangeable voices does not seem to be appropriate for the pathetic register.

### 2. 2. 2.

#### Attempts at Dramatization

Steffani eschews these expectations by writing a duet for soprano and alto in the vein of the soprano duets examined so far. Nevertheless, *Libertà, libertà* (Steffani 1985, 92–100; Steffani recording, Duetti Da Camera) distinguishes itself from them by being a clear case of the cantata type, integrating extensive solos for both alto and soprano between the two duet movements<sup>58</sup>. Whereas two soprano solos, especially in immediate succession, would contribute to a sense of monotony due to the lack of both colouristic and dramaturgic differentiation between them (*Ribellatevi* and *Su, ferisci* do not even attempt to do so, assigning two stanzas of the same strophe to each soloist), *Libertà* can venture into more extended soloist representation, even though the solos do not fully escape the impression of monotony. The two duet movements that frame them, producing an overall four-partite formal design (A B C D), are more different than it

58 This duet is not edited, but as it belongs to the cantata type, the alternation of duets and solos will be considered like movements rather than sections.

seems at first. The first one (A) takes up two thematic ideas and imitates them perhaps even more freely than in the previously discussed duets, forming two sections (b. 1–12 and 12–22) in invertible counterpoint and attaching to them a coda (b. 22–34) with a great deal of parallel motion. The character of the duet, abundant in broken chords and dotted passages as well as the text that invokes freedom from a certain “fiera beltà”<sup>59</sup> are comparable to the operatic *Streitduett* or *Zankduett*, a duet giving musical shape to an argument between the characters with the effect of interlocutors interrupting each other. Steffani never sets the line “non posso, non voglio” in its entirety in a single voice but divides it between them. Division of the text between the voices rather than having both voices declaim all lines in their entirety is a distinguishing feature of dramatic vocal genres, and a dramatization of sorts is even more evident in the second duet movement (D). The lines “Quell’altiero semblante / più non riguarderò”, “di quell fasto arrogante / più non mi curerò”, “Si sprezzi il laccio ingiusto” and “si scuota il giogo indegno” are evenly divided between the two soloists in alternation, without any sort of contrapuntal interaction between them. The reasons for this could be either that the composer recognised the dual guiding principle of the text as having potential for the introduction of dialogic elements, or that he simply wanted to move on as quickly as possible to the main part of movement D, the setting of the final line “ciò che legò l’amor, sciolga lo sdegno” fully in the tradition of chamber duet. Having the stress on the final section of the text does not necessarily mean a semantic focus as well, but it could be attributed to a mere convention of text setting in vocal music of the 17th and 18th centuries, the same as the last line of a cantata recitative is often set as an arioso. In this movement, an extended subject is imitated three times in two cycles, ending the process with a parallel leading of the voices on the undulating motif of the countersubject. The mellow melismas are set to the word “sciolga”, and the verb “sciogliere” (to melt) is treated similarly in the duet *Placidissime catene*.

It is slightly puzzling that Steffani chose to round off this lively, energetic duet with such a gentle closing movement. The imagery of the dissolving of love’s ties by anger gains an almost melancholic dimension that creates a good musical balance to the rest of the chamber duet, but does not really lend itself to semantic interpretation. *Libertà* has shown that within a chamber duet, there is room for a pluralism of vocal styles, as elements of the solo as well as the dramatic cantata are often blended with the traditional, contrapuntal duet. Let us now examine the only overtly dialogic of Steffani’s

59 Although traditionally coded as feminine, in a more abstract interpretation the amorous object could be neutral in terms of gender.

chamber duets, not necessarily his best one. In its duet movements, *Io mi parto / Resto solo* (Steffani 1985, 113–122; Steffani recording, *Io parto / Resto solo*) does not divide the lines between the voices but uses two variants of almost every line in the manner of dramatic genres such as opera, in line with a dramatic situation of lovers parting. The text varies according to the question which one of the (imaginary?) characters is leaving (“parto”) and which one is staying (“resto”). The idea of a female subject (S) who is leaving and a male subject (T) who is staying finds justification in the background of the duet’s first performance—namely, it was sung by Princess Sophie Charlotte of Hanover and Max Emanuel, elector of Bavaria on the occasion of her visit to his court in Brussels in 1700, making her the leaving party and him the staying one (Einstein 1907, 87). Steffani’s intentions of composing the duet specifically for this occasion are unquestionable and it is interesting to examine to what extent he was aiming at an identification of the voices with the first performers (and the roles they were assuming). The text clearly prescribes a duet setting in the first and sixth stanza as they are the ones that contain the aforementioned textual variants, but it leaves open how the remaining stanzas should be set. A discreet gender specification is provided in the first stanza (section A) by the use of “solo”, the masculine form, in the second variant of the opening line, clearly implying a masculine subject who is staying (“resto”). However, in the second (B) and fourth stanza (D) this discrete hint gives room to a very specific dramatic individualisation: the second stanza refers, in direct speech, to “Fileno” as the addressee of the amorous discourse, while the fourth is addressed to an unnamed “bella”. This in itself would have not been a reason not to set the following, third (C) and fifth stanzas (E) as duets, since they continue the direct speech uttered by the “characters” Fileno and “bella” (probably an unnamed nymph), but in terms of verse structure both aria and duet would have been a viable option for a setting. By assigning sections B (recitative) and C (aria) to soprano solo and D (recitative) and E (aria) to tenor solo, Steffani identified the tenor as the shepherd Fileno, and the soprano as his “bella”. Whether Sophie Charlotte and Max Emanuel consciously participated in this pastoral masquerade remains unknown, but the specific occasion for which the duet was composed would not have been addressed in the setting had not Steffani wanted it so. Although it goes without saying that “the text of the opening duet would not have been out of place in an opera” (Timms 2003, 273), *Io mi parto / Resto solo* is a borderline example between chamber duet and *cantata a due*. Although in terms of the overall organization of movements it approximates the *cantata a due*, the duet movements do not possess traits of the dramatic duets in formal or structural terms.

Musically, the duet is quite unremarkable. Some of the other duets written for Sophie Charlotte (e. g. *Placidissime catene*) demand a higher

standard of vocal agility, whereas this one makes little demands on the soloists' technique, which may be down to Max Emanuel, who could easily have been a less able singer than the princess. It employs a simple melodic style in the duets throughout, and the form is structured even more straightforwardly than in some of the duets for two sopranos examined so far. The first duet movement is in tripartite A B A' form and avoids the *da capo* by inverting the voices in the restatement of the first section, written in double counterpoint. Each of the sections consists of three parts: in the case of A and A', the first two imitate their respective thematic material (a<sub>1</sub> and a<sub>2</sub>), whereas the third one (material a<sub>2</sub>', set to the same text as a<sub>2</sub>) adds a descending chromatic line to the words "amato bene". Varying the music of a text that had already been set is comparatively rare in Steffani's chamber duets and could be explained by the need to make the piece even more concise. The second duet movement is even shorter than the first one, comprising two imitative statements of motifs d<sub>1</sub> and d<sub>1</sub>' (a major-mode variant of d<sub>1</sub>) and two statements of d<sub>2</sub> with a countersubject. In terms of the thematic material, the parts are not differentiated, but this is most often the case in dramatic duets, too.

### 2. 2. 3.

#### Elaborate Duets for Unequal Voices

Another duet for soprano and alto, but more importantly, one of the rare duets analysed here that belong to the category of the sonata type, *Placidissime catene* (Steffani 1905, 7–14; Steffani recording, *Duetti Da Camera*) is included in the collection of Steffani's duets in Chrysander's edition of the *DTB*. He was of the opinion that, since the solo movements in the cantata type of chamber duet were often aesthetically inferior to the duet movements, "the finest works were the [above-mentioned, A/N] 'medium' duets" (Timms 1987, 223 and Chrysander 1919a, 332–333). By favouring the sonata type, Chrysander conceived (and helped perpetuate) an image of Steffani as a composer with a propensity for through-composition and an aversion to large-scale repetition. This way, Steffani's duets were made to resemble the sonata duets cultivated by Handel and Clari, which is a misperception since Steffani composed many chamber duets of the cantata type. The duet is constructed by stringing together sections based on two or three subsections that are treated contrapuntally with a varying degree of polyphonic density. The two stanzas of the text are set in two movements and five sections, three in the first one (I–III) and two in the second one (IV–V), although they are not grouped into a bipartite form. Table 4 provides a detailed overview.



TEXT	BAR	FORM	THEMATIC MATERIAL	KEY*
1. <i>Placidissime catene</i> Rallentarvi e crudeltà.	1–13	I.11	a <sub>1</sub> , a <sub>2</sub>	D
	13–20	I.12	a' <sub>2</sub>	A
	20–26 26–32	I.21 I.22	a <sub>2</sub> , a <sub>1</sub> a' <sub>2</sub>	D
Hà perduto ogni suo bene Chi ritorna in libertà.	32–38	II.1	b	A
	38–45	II.2	b	
Vivo in doglie e moro in pene Se i miei lacci amor disfà.	46–56	III.1	c <sub>1</sub> , c <sub>2</sub> (rhythm of a <sub>1</sub> )	b, A
	56–74	III.2	c <sub>1</sub> , c <sub>2</sub> : extended!	e, D
2. Affanni, pene e guai Voi non farete mai Ch'io mi disciolga, nò.	74–92	IV.1	d <sub>1</sub> +d <sub>2</sub> +d <sub>3</sub> , d' <sub>3</sub>	D, A
	Bar	IV.2	d <sub>1</sub> +d <sub>2</sub> +d <sub>3</sub> , d' <sub>3</sub>	D
Amor fa quanto sai, Dalla prigion ch'amai Mai mai non fuggirò.	1–13	V.1	e <sub>1</sub> , e <sub>21</sub> +e <sub>22</sub>	A, D
	13–20			
	34–60	V.2	e <sub>1</sub> , e <sub>21</sub> +e <sub>22</sub>	D

TABLE 4.  
Formal plan of Steffani's chamber duet *Placidissime catene*

\* Throughout this study, in tables the majuscule will refer to major and the minuscule to minor keys.

So far we have been dealing with duets that work with smaller segments of the text (usually a single line or a couple of lines), translating them into vivid musical imagery. The question of formal and structural unity has been addressed only in the case of duets which involve large-scale repetition of sections or in the case of a prevailing musical “character”. On the other hand, *Placidissime catene* is permeated by a madrigalistic musical metaphor if not in its entirety, then at least in the whole setting of the first stanza. This dominant imagery is incredibly well suited to the introduction of counterpoint as the prevailing musical technique of the chamber duet, since the duet is woven together from threads not unlike the “placidissime catene” of love that the text describes. This is most markedly felt in the opening, longest section (I) of the duet, whose second subsection (I.2) is a modified variant of the first one (I.1), resorting to the inversion of voices written in double counterpoint and a transposition of the closing subsection (I.12) back to the tonic (I.22). Subsections I.11 and I.21 are characterised by a triple unfolding of the main thematic material (a<sub>1</sub>) on the first line (“Placidissime catene”). It does not come as a surprise that the syllable “te” from “catene” receives extensive melismatic treatment, counterpointed consistently by the emphatic, rhythmically marked upward fourth leaps

of a2 (keyword: “rallentarvi”, to break you) as a countersubject. Thus the countersubject literally attempts to break the chains of the subject, but does not really succeed, since in the following subsections (I.12 and I.22) it is transformed into a chain itself in a free counterpoint that weaves alternating melismas around held notes, almost paradoxically on the syllable “tar” from “rallentarvi”. Thus attempts to break the chains of love become chains themselves and begin to dominate the texture until, quite unexpectedly, a1 enters again in b. 21 in a new subsection (I.21) that looks at first as if it was going to work only with material a2 like the previous one, but proves in the end to be a variant of I.11. Timms (2003, 288) must have had something like this reluctance of the composer to break his own contrapuntal chains in mind when he spoke of the contrapuntal expansion that marks this duet.

Section II offers some necessary contrast by combining the voices much more freely, but once again in double counterpoint, although the word “libertà” is fittingly underlined by parallel semiquaver passages. No wonder this section is the shortest and, to a certain extent, the most superficial in the duet, as it claims that the freedom from love’s chains is a great loss. The initial material of section III, with its angular movement and imitation on the seventh (sic!) is fittingly expressive of the affect of pain it conveys (“Vivo in doglie e moro in pene”), presenting the only digression in the minor mode. But it is not long before the major mode returns and with it the imagery of chains, this time in a stretto imitation of the new material c2, whose dotted rhythm reminds us of subject a1 and is followed by undulating melismas in free counterpoint on the word “lacci” (a synonym of “catene”) in its closing subsection. The bipartite structural principle brings yet another subsection (III.2) with inverted parts and an extension of the closing subsection into an even more florid chain of coloraturas than the first one.

As the opening section of the second stanza, section IV is marked by a similar motivic plasticity that comes to the fore in the use of an emphatic countersubject. Still, all this material is presented as a composite subject (d1+d2+d3) in the alto first (b. 74–83), although its d2 part is already counterpointed in the soprano by d1. The duality of these two motifs resembles the contrast between a1 and a2 in section I, not only because one of the motifs is dotted and outlines a gradual melodic bow (d1, a1) and the other treats an upward fourth leap sequentially (d2, a2) but also because the emphatic d2 (“voi non farete”) directly “addresses” the grief, pain and suffering mentioned in d1 (“Affanni, pene e guai”). The ultimate sense of this contrapuntal-semantic dialogue is revealed in the third line (d3), with its keyword “disciolga” (to melt, to dissolve). The pain and the suffering, inevitably an integral part of a Western cultural

perception of romantic love since Petrarch, would like to dissolve the bonds of love were it not for the determinate resistance of the subject (“voi non farete!”). In its two subsections (IV.1 and IV.2) Steffani works with  $d_1$  and  $d_2$  as subject and countersubject whereas  $d_3$ , the semantically crucial material of the section, is subject to a stretto imitation as well as to extension and ornamentation ( $d_3'$ , first occurrence b. 91). The treatment of “disciolga” is similar to the treatment of “catene”, “rallentarvi” and “lacci”, involving semiquaver passages against held notes in free counterpoint, suggesting perhaps again that love’s chains are more steadfast than they appear and that they will not dissolve after all. Section V confirms that the main theme of the second stanza is the lover’s determination and constancy. Both its subsections begin with the semantically less significant line (“Amor fa quanto sai”, motif  $e_1$ ), followed by a contrapuntal intertwining of  $e_{21}$  and  $e_{22}$  that may again remind us of the combinations  $a_1&a_2$  and  $d_1&d_2$ . In its repetitive oaths of “mai, mai” (never to escape from his beloved prison)  $e_{22}$  is once again sequential, rhythmically characteristic and emphatic. As before, near the end of the respective subsections (V.1 and V.2) this material undergoes a free stretto treatment, extension and variation, especially in V.2, where the initial gradual movement of  $e_{22}$  is extended into a fourth leap.

Steffani sent *Placidissime catene* with another two duets to Sophie Charlotte in 1699. The princess was not only an avid performer, but Steffani wrote and revised his earlier duets with her in mind. This particular duet displays no latent dramaturgy between amorous subject and object, and it could function both as a parallel unfolding of two identical monologues and as a love duet marked by a unity of affect, affirmative in its adherence to love in spite of the pain it brings. The kind of lyric poetry Steffani set insists on a clear delineation of the roles of the subject and the object of amorous discourse, but the sensuality of two voices in counterpoint is also very well suited to a poem describing the delights of the chains of love. The text is internally dramatized by letting the amorous subject emphatically address “placidissime catene”, “affanni, pene e guai” as well as the god of love himself (“Amor”). If a dramatic relationship takes place in *Placidissime catene*, it occurs between the amorous subject and more abstract entities such as the love commitment itself (depicted with the metaphor of chains) and the pains that it brings, and this kind of abstract dramaturgy will permeate some other chamber duets as well.

*E così mi compartite* (Steffani 1987, 43–50; Steffani recording, Vocal chamber duets) repeatedly addresses the eyes of the beloved with emphatic accusations of cruelty, using the first line as a refrain and introducing elements of formal unity. While both poems combine their respective refrains into repetitive forms on multiple levels of formal structuring, *E così mi*

*compartite* adds an extra, highly unusual layer to the structural and formal unities that permeate the piece. In Leopold's (2006, 1370) correct opinion "da capo form, strophic form, rondo form and vocal ostinato overlap"<sup>60</sup> in it. In spite of large-scale repetition, it belongs to the sonata type as it contains no solo sections. It is also strophic, outlining the following overall form: A B (first stanza) A B' (second stanza). Steffani remains true to his inclination towards binary forms not only on the level of subsections but also by neutralising the tripartite potential of the stanza with the integration of the second repeat of the refrain into the respective second sections (B and B'), written in double counterpoint. With a cadence in b. 17, section A is organised into two subsections (A<sub>1</sub> and A<sub>2</sub>). The composer makes very little use of the second part of the subject (a<sub>12</sub>, first occurrence b. 3–5) and reduces the texture to free imitations of the main thematic idea a<sub>11</sub> (first occurrence b. 1–2). Steffani decided to turn *E così mi compartite* into one of his most monothematic duets, but the thematic material he is working with has comparatively little potential for development.

In section B and B' Steffani chose to reach for motif a<sub>11</sub> again, which does not come as a surprise as the refrain almost demands this, but instead of going for the *da capo* repeat, he integrates the textual refrain into what begins at first as a soprano solo on a wholly different text. The idea to juxtapose the seemingly independent melodic unfolding in one voice after only eight bars (beginning from b. 46) with a counterpoint consisting of a modulatory sequence based on a<sub>11</sub> and some free figuration seems first and foremost unexpected, as full textual and motivic simultaneity is seldom met in Steffani's chamber duets. The decision seems motivated by a wish to enliven the texture. Had the text not been lyric and monologic, Steffani's idea of superimposing texts in section B would have been well suited to the dramatic situation of a "Streitduett", where characters are interrupting each other or not paying attention to what the other one is saying. Unlike in *Pria ch'io faccia* or *Libertà, libertà* with their simultaneity of different texts, here the parallel unfolding of texts is elevated to a structural principle.

*Begl'occhi, oh Dio, non più* (Steffani 1987, 103–114; Steffani recording, Duetti Da Camera), another example of the pathetic style, presents an interesting exploration of the pains of jealousy with the central image of tears that the nymph Clori sheds because of her unfounded mistrust of the lyric subject's devotion. This is probably the duet that Steffani revised most extensively. It was originally conceived in *da capo* form, with the first duet movement *Begl'occhi, oh Dio, non più* repeated in its entirety at the end of the piece as a refrain: A (*Begl'occhi*)–solo–B (*Clori mia*)–solo–A

(*Begl'occhi*). In addition, duet movement A itself was tripartite. In the revision, tripartite forms gave way to bipartite and large-scale repetition to through-composition. Besides his reductions on the level of overall form, Steffani also made cuts to the text of the recitative, resulting in a more economical text that reduces the incessantly repeated summoning of Clori to a minimum by narrowing the actual pleas to the metrically regular lines that are to be set as duets, while providing background information in recitative. Even more importantly, by cancelling all signs of the refrain principle, Steffani “sacrificed the balanced shape of the original”, discarding it “in favour of a more organic structure”. (Timms 1969, 122) The revision moved the movement “Clori mia” to the end of the chamber duet, resulting in the following formal design: A–solo (A)–solo (S)–B.

Movement A is shorter and more compact than movement B. Its first section (A1) presents two successive, lapidary motifs separated by rests (a11, b. 1–2 and a12, b. 3–4) that provide the section with melodic recognisability and a more elaborate musical idea (a13, b. 5–9) that induces the section with expressive flavour with the “expressive use of chromaticism”, depicting the keyword “piangete”. After the initial presentation in succession, motifs a11 and a13 are presented two more times. Section A2 (b. 20–50) is more extended as it works with a composite subject (a21, b. 20–21; a22, b. 21–23; a23, b. 23–28) first presented in its entirety and then imitated motif per motif. Most space is given to motif a23 (b. 31–50), whose forceful dotted rhythm, combined with a little chromaticism, depicts the word “foco” (fire), a contrasting metaphor for the ardour fuelled by Clori’s tears (“acqua”) in the lyric subject, resulting in a very common, paradoxical poetic opposition of fire and ice (or water). The expansion of this section is achieved by Steffani’s usual techniques (imitation, transposition and near-end extension), while the undulating, downward movement on “foco” (opposed to the steady upward movement of “piangete”) comes to dominate the texture.

Movement B is tripartite, longer and looser than movement A. It has as many as four sections, out of which the first (B1, b. 1–6) and the third one (B3, b. 25–28) consist of brief motivic alternations with only moderate elements of counterpoint, but are nevertheless important not only for the musical identity of the section but also for the homogeneity of the duet. Material b1 is distinguished by its motivic kinship with a12 (creating a bridge between movements A and B, separated by two long solos), whereas b3 is derived from the material of the preceding section, B2 (b. 7–25). In Timms’s opinion (1969, 124), material b2 (b. 7–13) is not substantial enough to carry the construction of this section on its shoulders. Still, in his desire to stress Steffani’s potential for contrapuntal and formal development (and the occasional lack of it), he overlooks the fact

that this section sets the words “Ferma il corso a quei due fiumi” (stop the flow of those two streams), so that the clear direction and the monotony of the melodic movement may be due to the endless uniformity of the flow of Clori’s tears. Finally, section B<sub>4</sub> (b. 28–57) is based on an even more extravagant poetic image, expressed by the keyword “sommerger” (to drown). Built on another bipartite composite subject, this final section exploits all the possibilities that the alternation and the contrapuntal combination of b<sub>41</sub> (b. 28–30) and b<sub>42</sub> (b. 31–34) provide. Motif b<sub>42</sub> closes the circle outlined by the rhythmically lively chromatic ascent of a<sub>13</sub> and the dotted chromatic descent of a<sub>23</sub> with its likewise dotted, extravagant wavelike movement that underlines, in a typical “marine” metaphor encountered in Italian poetry of the time, the unbridled, unrestrained character of the sea (of Clori’s tears). Timms has shown that Steffani revised the material of B<sub>4</sub> so that b<sub>41</sub>, in its melodic contour, can show similarities to the composite of b<sub>11</sub> and b<sub>12</sub> from section B<sub>1</sub> and that he intensified its contrapuntal treatment when compared to the earlier version of the duet. Indeed, b<sub>41</sub> and b<sub>42</sub> are both imitated individually and contrapuntally combined with each other in a section that unfolds effortlessly. Timms concludes that *Begl’occhi, oh Dio, non più* might have originally been a very early piece dating from 1672–1674. To this testifies a “large number of short points [motifs or idea, A/N] which, once stated, were not re-used”, whereas in the revision Steffani used fewer but longer and more elaborate ideas, “systematically exploited in various combinations” (Timms 1969, 127).

#### 2. 2. 4.

### Saldi marmi: An Atypical Case Study

*Begl’occhi, oh Dio, non più* shows no traces of latent dramaturgy, as a presumption that the jealous Clori has two lovers would not only trigger unsuitable comparisons with Handel’s cantata *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno* (where Clori is deceiving her two suitors), but it is clear that the text is directed to an absent and unresponsive amorous object. While the drama in *Placidissime catene* was more abstract, the conflict expressed in Saldi marmi (Steffani 1987, 51–66; Steffani, Vocal chamber duets), the last duet to be examined here, is very concrete. The duet is fascinating alone in its text, an engaging account of the nymph Fille, torn between the memory of her deceased beloved Fileno and the awakening of a new love for the handsome Tirsi. It is almost an exception in an array of more conventional lyrics that Steffani set. The poem is very long: it sets apart two different stanzas at the beginning and at the end from a detailed, metrically irregular conglomerate of verse, inviting the composer to set only the former

as duets and the latter as recitative. Leopold (2006, 1370) rightly noticed that by doing this Steffani “set himself apart from the idea of a musical scene”<sup>61</sup>, since setting direct speech (Fille’s laments) as duet and indirect speech (the narration that provides a context for the laments) as solo recitative contradicts the concept of the solo cantata.<sup>62</sup>

Steffani even expanded the already lengthy recitative section while revising the duet in order to bridge the affective contrast between the two movements of the duet (movement 1 and 2, see Table 5). The first stanza thrusts us in the midst of Fille’s distress: in the highly rhetorical opening, she is addressing the marbles of a yet unnamed lover’s grave as the witnesses of her fidelity to him with a dramatic question as to whether she should oppose the grave’s coldness to her new love, or simply die. This opposition leaves no room for a peaceful resolution, but is nevertheless ambiguous in the interpretation of the word “die” (*morire*), for we are left wondering if death is referred to literally as the only remaining, radical way out of the ordeal Fille finds herself in or if it is actually a reference to succumbing to amorous, sensual desire, whereof death is a typically baroque metaphor. In the following, long recitative section, a third-person narrator not only explains the background of the situation, naming all three “characters” and explaining that Fileno had died four years ago as well as that it is only after she met Tirsi that Fille considered loving again, but also states that Fille has in the end made the decision to give in to her new love after all. Afterwards, an equally energetic, but highly contrasting monologue follows. Fille not only spitefully rejects the reproaches of the allegorical figure of “*inconstanza*” (in modern words, her conscience) but directly addresses Tirsi’s eyes, openly admitting to him that she might love them (or him) only because of their resemblance to the late Fileno’s eyes and concluding the duet with the energetic closing statement “*vissi agl’estinti, e per chi vive or moro*” (I lived for the dead, and now for one who lives I die).

While revising the duet, Steffani added the recitative “*Così Fille dicea*” before the second movement (“*Inconstanza*”), set entirely as a duet, to prepare Fille’s change of heart. Unlike some other duets, here the setting (two sopranos) highlights the subject’s isolation and loneliness. This is especially felt in the first section of the first movement, where in a slightly morbid way Fille is addressing a quintessentially silent partner, a

61 Von der Idee einer musikalischen Szene.

62 The anonymous text could have easily been set as a dramatic operatic *scena*, the likes of which we often find in Handel’s cantatas such as *Dietro l’orme fuggaci* (Armida abbandonata), HWV 105 or *Dunque sarà pur vero* (Agrippina condotta a morire), HWV 110.

grave, giving the duet setting something of an echo-like effect. The figure of musical echo played an essential role in music history and remained recognisable as a musical topos in Steffani's time as well, so that one could imagine the chamber duet as an echoed monologue instead of a latent dialogue. Nowhere does this come to the fore better than in *Saldi marmi*, especially as Steffani transcends the limited technical capacities of a setting for two voices and adds a new dimension to the typical intertwining of two trebles. The prevailing longer note values (and, accordingly, probably moderate or slower tempi), the avoidance of large-scale repetition and its sheer length render this duet different from the others written for two sopranos, the domination of the major mode being the only common factor.

	TEXT	BAR	FORM	THEMATIC MATERIAL	KEY
1.	"Saldi marmi, che coprite Del mio ben l'ignuda salma	1-18	A <sub>1</sub>	a <sub>11</sub> + a <sub>12</sub>	B $\flat$ , F, B $\flat$
	Ch'ogni dì più in mezz'all'alma La mia fede stabilite, Che ne dite?	18-36	A <sub>2</sub>	a <sub>21</sub> , a <sub>21</sub> '  a <sub>22</sub>	c, B $\flat$  F
	Deggio al nuovo desire Opporre il vostro gelo, o pur morire?"	37-56 56-68 68-74	A <sub>31</sub> A <sub>32</sub> A <sub>33</sub>	a <sub>31</sub> +a <sub>32</sub> +a <sub>33</sub> a <sub>32</sub> +a <sub>33</sub> a <sub>33</sub> ' (coda)	F, B $\flat$
	Così Fille dicea...			recitative (S <sub>1</sub> or S <sub>2</sub> )	
2.	"Incostanza, e che pretendi? Amerò, sì, ch'amerò. So ben io come si può	1-13 13-21	B <sub>11</sub> B <sub>12</sub>	b <sub>111</sub> +b <sub>112</sub> b <sub>121</sub> , b <sub>122</sub>	B $\flat$
	Cangiar amanti e non cangiar gl'incendi.	22-48	B <sub>2</sub>	b <sub>21</sub> +b <sub>22</sub>	F
	Voi tra tanto, occhi lucenti, Che nel cor mi ravvivate Quegl'ardor ch'eran già spenti, Consolate i miei tormenti, Ch'altri per voi, e voi per altri adoro; Vissi agli'estinti, e per chi vive or moro."	1-4 4-17 17-26 26-30 30-51 51-64	C <sub>1</sub> C <sub>2</sub> C <sub>3</sub> C <sub>4</sub> C <sub>5</sub> coda	c <sub>1</sub> c <sub>2</sub> c <sub>3</sub> c <sub>4</sub> c <sub>5</sub> c <sub>5</sub> '	F B $\flat$ g, c c B $\flat$ , F

TABLE 5.  
Formal plan of Steffani's chamber duet *Saldi marmi*

Having a shorter text of only one stanza, the first duet section is somewhat more compact. Its three subsections show all the tendencies we have



observed so far. For example, both subsections A<sub>1</sub> and A<sub>3</sub> treat their respective composite subjects (e. g. a<sub>11</sub>+a<sub>12</sub> or a<sub>31</sub>+a<sub>32</sub>+a<sub>33</sub>) contrapuntally either in their entirety, by imitating its constituent parts or combining them with each other. In contrast, subsection A<sub>2</sub> presents a longer subject (a<sub>21</sub>) likewise lending itself to being contrapuntally “dismantled”, but chooses to imitate it instead in a consequent stretto (b. 18–22, 26–30) before breaking off into sequential chains of suspensions (b. 22–26, 30–33)<sup>63</sup> that are rhythmically and melodically derived from the semiquaver downward movement of a<sub>21</sub> (and therefore marked a<sub>21</sub>). The usual bipartite construction of the subsection through the use of invertible counterpoint and transposition (to B-flat major) is rounded off by three emphatic bars on the text “Che ne dite?”. By its swift alternation of a lapidary motif (a<sub>22</sub>, b. 34–36), this brief subsection evokes comparisons with similar homophonic passages in 16th-century madrigal. The madrigalistic stringing together of polyphonic subsections on ever newer thematic material will be even more evident in the second movement.

Meanwhile, it is important to stress a quality of this duet that was remarked upon already by Steffani’s immediate contemporaries such as Riccati, who praised the use of the major mode to convey the “affetti molli” of the poetic text, especially Steffani’s treatment of the word “morire”.<sup>64</sup> Timms identifies the last bars of what I called the coda of subsection A<sub>3</sub>, “where the voices form exquisite suspensions over a pedal in the bass” (Timms 2003, 274), as the passage Riccati might have had in mind. Apart from the major mode, the predominant musical character of subsection A<sub>1</sub> (textually invoking the marbles of Fileno’s grave) is also remarkable in its lightness and simplicity of melody and harmony as well as its steady, straightforward rhythmic movement. There is nothing to suggest the dramatic nature of a dead lover’s desperate invocations. Subsection A<sub>3</sub> is easier to account for. It is semantically more elaborate in its material: motif a<sub>31</sub> provides the initial motivic and emphatic impulse (“Deggio al nuovo desire”, must I this new desire), whereas a<sub>32</sub> (“Oppore il vostro gelo”, oppose with your coldness) and a<sub>33</sub> (“o pur morire”, or die) share syncopated rhythm (ideal for the application of suspensions) and gradual movement, but are differentiated in terms of melodic contour. In the first subsection (A<sub>31</sub>), Steffani presents the broad melodic arch in its entirety, first in the second and then in the first soprano, interrupting long stretches of solos with the juxtaposition of motifs a<sub>31</sub> and a<sub>32</sub> as

63 Unlike in *Placidissime catene*, the chains of Fille’s fidelity to the dead Fileno will acquire negative connotations in the course of the duet.

64 Due to the unavailability of a modern edition of Riccati’s treatise, all information on it was drawn from De Piero 2012 and Timms 2003.

counterpoint. Subsection A<sub>32</sub> omits a<sub>31</sub> altogether and is constructed solely on either a free stretto imitation of a<sub>33</sub> (modifying the original motif) or the already heard juxtaposition of a<sub>32</sub> and a<sub>33</sub>. Steffani clearly wrote the motifs not only in double counterpoint, but also in a way to secure a continuing contrapuntal flow with the simplest means of pitting against each other a series of suspensions and passing note figures. The most unusual bit of this subsection is its coda. Although b. 68–74 are obviously based on material a<sub>33</sub>, they decompose its motivic recognisability into undulating, complementary upward and downward movement. It is highly uncommon for Steffani's or for chamber duets by other composers to have non-thematic sections. As Timms had noted, the closing bars in particular are effective in avoiding monotony by a consistent use of passing notes and suspensions on a pedal bass. Subsection A<sub>3</sub> not only follows a dialectic plan of presenting its material, developing it contrapuntally and then decomposing it by having it die out in musical terms but also elevates the contrapuntal device of non-harmonic notes into a structural principle. Riccati obviously considered the "weakness" of the affective content of this passage of the text particularly poignantly expressed in the major mode, which is from a modern perspective an unusual way to paint the general atmosphere of the text.

The two stanzas of the second, closing duet movement of the work are separated by a double bar line and are therefore dealt with in Table 5 as sections B and C, respectively, but they do not function as distinctive, unified elements of form. Brevity of subsections dominates in both of them: not unlike subsections A<sub>1</sub> and A<sub>3</sub>, subsection B<sub>1</sub> works with both parts of a composite subject (b<sub>111</sub>+b<sub>112</sub>) only to concentrate more on the second one later on, treating it from b. 10 onwards in rapid alternation. "E che pretendi?" (b<sub>112</sub>) is given a swift reply in a brief moment of free interplay between b<sub>121</sub> (reminiscent of a<sub>21</sub>) and b<sub>122</sub>. Subsection B<sub>2</sub> is of a longer span and counterbalances the quaver passagework of b<sub>21</sub> with the descending chromatic line of b<sub>22</sub>, a contrast that is based on the opposition "cangiar"/"non cangiar". Nevertheless, unlike in section A, there is little in Steffani's setting that gives the text more semantic weight, and this applies to a certain degree to the following section C as well. It strings together as many as five mainly short subsections, freely constructed by either alternating short span material (in C<sub>1</sub>) or imitating in stretto a relatively simple subject (in C<sub>2</sub>, C<sub>3</sub> and C<sub>4</sub>). The final subsection (C<sub>5</sub>), on the other hand, is reminiscent of the final subsection (A<sub>3</sub>) of the first duet section both in its construction and character. Although the texts of A<sub>3</sub> and C<sub>5</sub> are highly contrasted (in the former Fille seeks death, whereas the latter ends with a pledge to "die" for the living), they not only treat their respective thematic material (fourth leaps and prolonged stepwise downward movement) in a

similar way, they also both exploit the sensuality of non-harmonic notes and end with a non-thematic coda freely based on preceding material. Steffani was guided by the word “moro” rather than by the meaning of the text, setting it as syncopated downward movement, the same way as “morire” in a33. In this coda he extended it even more than in A33, by through-composing an extended downward movement abundant in voice-crossing and suspensions. One has the impression that the two duet sections end in the same way.

Does this have semantic significance, in line with the poem’s constant drawing of parallels between not only Fileno and Tirsi as objects of Fille’s desire, but also between the intensity of her passion for lovers both dead and living? Could it be that the line between the nymph’s persistent mourning of Fileno and her irresistible attraction to Fille is difficult to draw, as they are two sides of the same coin? After all, the only way for her to resolve her conflict is to find a common denominator between the two, as she pointedly concludes in the last line. After all, she has only changed lovers but not fires (“cangiar amanti e non cangiar gl’incendi”)! The fact that Steffani set both aspects of her lovelorn *persona* in *affetti molli* is certainly a highly interesting take on poetry that seems better suited to the excessive musical practices of Monteverdi’s *seconda prattica* than Steffani’s smooth setting. By setting Fille’s languishing the way he did, Steffani certainly unified this chamber duet in terms of structural procedures, style and character to an even larger extent than the likewise homogenous *Begl’occhi, oh Dio, non più* or *Placidissime catene*.

## 2. 3.

## HANDEL'S CHAMBER DUETS

The *Duetti di camera* belong to the most sublime forms of Handel's vocal chamber music.<sup>65</sup> (Marx 2002, 600)

Unlike Steffani's, Handel's contribution to the genre of the chamber duet is slightly more easily dateable and therefore lends itself to a division into periods due to the available philological evidence. Handel wrote his first chamber duets in Italy in the period 1706–1710. These duets are distinguished by their setting (mostly for soprano and bass, with the occasional combination of two sopranos and soprano and tenor) and certain stylistic traits that clearly set them apart from Handel's later chamber duets. For instance, "Handel planned most of the early duets as a two-part compositions in which the basso continuo has no separate function, while the later ones are composed as trios, in which two high voices are balanced against an independent continuo." (Musketa in Handel 2011b, XIV).

The penchant of the Hanoverian court for the genre, due to the fact that Steffani was Handel's predecessor as *Kapellmeister*, played a huge part in determining Handel's subsequent dealings with the chamber duet. According to both Musketa and Timms (1987), the revisions Steffani made to his late duets were crucial in exerting an influence on the young Handel as he was composing his second set of duets in Hanover (1710–1712). These duets are all written for soprano and alto and, as will be shown later on, many of them adopt other traits of Steffani's mature chamber duets apart from the setting. For a long time it had been falsely assumed that Handel wrote many more chamber duets in Hanover than is really the case. Among others, the *Händel-Handbuch*, Bernd Baselt's thematic catalogue, lists as many as twelve duets belonging to this period. Scholars were misled by a manuscript source gathering these twelve partly disparate duets into one volume, which was convincingly refuted by Burrows (1985, 35–39), among others.<sup>66</sup> The manuscript nevertheless confirms the performance of these duets at the Hanover court, since it was compiled and dedicated to Wilhelmina Charlotte Caroline von Brandenburg-Ansbach (Caroline of Ansbach, later Queen of England and Handel's patron), the same way Steffani wrote, revised and compiled his duets for Sophie Charlotte. Moreover, Strohm (1993, 29) even toys with the idea that Handel might have gotten acquainted with

65 Zu den sublimsten Formen von Händels vokaler Kammermusik gehören die *Duetti di camera*.

66 Although there are slight disagreements about this among scholars, most probably only five chamber duets can be convincingly attributed to this period.

the genre of the chamber duet around 1702 at the Prussian court in Berlin, where Sophie Charlotte was queen consort.

Finally, after the sporadic composition of two duets in London in the 1720s, Handel returned to the genre in the period 1740–1745, writing 6 duets for either two sopranos or soprano and alto, and in their simplicity, these duets display traits of Handel's later style and elements in common with the dramatic duet known from Handel's operas. He used some of these chamber duets as a starting point for his own later, mostly choral compositions, the most notable examples being the duets *No, di vuoi non vuoi fidarmi* (HWV 189) and *Quel fior che all'alba ride* (HWV 192), wealthy sources of material for different movements in the *Messiah*. Handel always borrowed from his chamber duets for other compositions and never the other way around, and one can conclude that the genre is therefore not a marginal field in his opus (cf. Musketa in Handel 2011b, xiii–xviii). Irrespective of borrowing, duet techniques are important for other genres in Handel's opus such as the anthem, opera and oratorio. "The choruses in *Messiah* which are based on duets remind us that those techniques were central to Baroque methods of composition—and that it is only from such acorns that great oaks may grow." (Timms 1987, 242)

The influence of Steffani's duets on Handel's is undisputed and widely researched. Chrysander (1919a, 336) goes as far as to claim that "Steffani is Haydn, Mozart's share falls mostly on Clari and Handel is Beethoven: both of them, Handel and Beethoven, affiliate themselves with their masters, but both have outgrown the status of a disciple"<sup>67</sup>. As Roberts rightly points out about Handel, "Although he seems to have had little interest in the strict forms of canon, fugue, and *ricercar* hallowed by German tradition, he was evidently a master of free counterpoint, which he lavished on his Italian duets after the manner of [...] Agostino Steffani." (2014, 294) He makes use of the older master's compositional techniques, albeit in a somewhat different combination. There exists clear philological evidence for this influence in the form of a manuscript copy of Steffani's duets (in the *British Library*, Add. 37779) that Handel owned as early as 1707 (Timms 1969, 374–377), during his stay in Italy. Timms (1987, 229) speculates if Handel might have become familiar with some other Steffani duets not contained in the manuscript, perhaps already in Hamburg. Although their chronology has been somewhat revised since (see Handel 2011b), the duets that Chrysander numbered as no. 3–12 are indeed the ones Handel composed in Italy and Hanover, whereas "by the time he [Handel, A/N] wrote nos. 13–20 [in England, A/N] he had long since assimilated the influence

67 Steffani ist Haydn, Mozart's Antheil fällt größtenteils auf Clari, und Händel ist Beethoven: beide, Händel und Beethoven, schließen sich ihrem Meister genau an, beide sind über das Verhältnis eines eigentlichen Schülers hinweg.

of Steffani and developed his own style... Among the features that display Steffani's influence are the thematic material, contrapuntal procedures and structure of individual movements and complete duets."<sup>68</sup> (Timms 1987, 224) Timms (*ibid.*, 238) compares a dozen excerpts from duets by Handel and Steffani and manages to draw some successful parallels in terms of similarities in melodic treatment of related texts or *affetti*, with *Pria ch'io faccia*, *Quanto care al cor voi siete* and *E perchè non m'uccidete* as Steffani's duets that Handel shows to have been acquainted with. He is somewhat less convincing in concluding that some of Handel's chamber duets, *Sono liete*, *Troppo cruda* and possibly *Conservate, radoppiate* are examples of Handel parodying Steffani. However, I am going to leave aside the question of whether Handel "borrowed" from Steffani, since it is not of great relevance to the comparative approach at the core of this study.

In any case, Handel's chamber duets display a number of traits that make them different from Steffani's. For instance, like his cantatas, Handel's chamber duets are tonally open, i. e. they often end in a key other than the one they started in (see Boyd 1997, 188; Knapp 1987, 9; Timms 1987, 224). Likewise, Handel's chamber duets mostly avoid large-scale repetition; they contain no solo movements whatsoever and can therefore be understood as examples of the sonata duet. This means that they consist of a smaller number of contrasting movements, i. e. "they usually have two or three duet movements which alternate between common and triple time" (Musketa in Handel 2011b, xiv). Timms rightly stresses the fact that the manuscript copy of Steffani's duets in Handel's possession contains no duets with solo movements either, but although this proves that Steffani could not have influenced Handel to insert elements of the cantata into his own duets (see Timms 1987, 229), the consistency with which Handel adheres to the sonata type suggests that the omission of solos was a conscious choice. Boyd (1997) draws parallels between the composer's vocal and instrumental chamber music in terms of movement organisation. This is justified because the composer's chamber duets and trio sonatas share many structural traits. Besides making use of contrapuntal techniques in the same way, both can consist of three or four movements in contrasting tempi and time signatures.

The texts of Handel's chamber duets (like Steffani's), "give the same text to both voices, without the use of dialogue" (Musketa in Handel 2011b, iv) and insofar do not destabilise the demarcation line between chamber duet and *cantata a due* like the chamber duets of some other composers to be discussed later on. Unlike Steffani's, their texts do not restrict themselves

68 "Handel did not, apparently, have further recourse to Steffani when composing his late duets" (Timms 1987, 242), probably because Steffani's duets had become quite famous since his election as president of the Academy of Ancient Music in 1726, acquiring him a reputation matching that of Corelli's.

to pastoral amatory poetry but embrace reflective, philosophical subjects as well. Interestingly, Reinmar Emans (2012, 497) slightly undervalues the genre by claiming that “the strongly contrapuntal writing... was as little suited for compositional experiments as the short and often stereotyped textual models”<sup>69</sup>. He finds that Handel overcame these shortcomings by not neglecting the overall form, being expressive of the affects of the text and amalgamating irony and different stylistic levels (cf. Emans 2012, 497). However, the claim that the aesthetical superiority of a chamber duet stems from the surpassing of the genre’s conventions is somewhat questionable.

For the purposes of this research I have selected eleven of Handel’s duets for analysis. Table 6 lists them in the mostly chronological order that they will be dealt with. All the different periods of Handel’s career devoted to the genre are duly represented. Two or three duets composed in Italy document the composer’s first attempts, and four (or five) duets written in Hanover show how his chamber duets achieved maturity. His only two duets composed in London in the 1720s confirm that he built on these foundations after longer periods of interruption, only to be crowned in his late duets of the 1740s, represented by four compositions.

A precise date or year can be attached only to the six duets written in the 1740s. It is likewise mostly unquestionable that the duets *Langue, geme sospira* (HWV 188) and *Se tu non lasci amore* (HWV 193) were composed in the 1720s in London, but as far as the rest is concerned, different conclusions can be made on the basis of the available philological evidence. Authors such as Burrows, Emans, Musketa, Timms and Strohm vary in their opinions on whether certain duets (mainly *Va, speme infida* and *Tacete, ohimè, tacete*) were written in Italy, Hanover or possibly even Hamburg (see Emans 2012, Musketa in Handel 2011b, Timms 1987, Strohm 1993, 23–29). Strohm relativises the problem of dating even further by hinting at the possibility that Handel might have revised his chamber duets in line with new performance circumstances in London, Hanover or even Italy, which means that unknown original versions of certain pieces for which no sources have been conserved may have existed. This study adopts the opinion of Reinmar Emans, namely, that the period of four years (1708–1712) in which the duets in question were most likely written narrows down the problem of dating to the philological level, as it is doubtful if one can speak of a stylistic development in such a short space of time. Therefore, the considerations of individual duets at hand will engage in questions of dating only if it is relevant to the analytical methodology.

69 Die stark kontrapunktische Schreibweise, die das Wesen der italienischen Kammerduette ausmacht, [eigneten sich: word order changed, A/N] ebenso wenig für kompositorische Experimente wie die knappen und häufig stereotypen Textvorwürfe.

DUET	YEAR	PLACE	VOICE	CHARACTERISTICS
<i>Giù nei tartarei regni</i> (HWV 187)	1709?	Italy	S&B	latent dramaturgy (fire / ice); extensive, looser imitative structures
<i>Tacete, ohimè, tacete</i> (HWV 196)	1706?	Italy	S&B	Cupid's sleep; exchange of sections with or without imitation (extensive, looser)
<i>Va, speme infida</i> (HWV 199)	1709?	Italy or Hanover	S&S	many contrasting sections with differing CP density, abridged large-scale repetition
<i>Sono liete, fortunate</i> (HWV 194)	1710– 1712	Hanover	S&A	references to Steffani; 1 <sup>st</sup> move- ment: unity, development; free CP treatment
<i>Tanti strali al sen mi socchi</i> (HWV 197)	1710– 1712	Hanover	S&A	strong motivic unity in all movements; symmetrical & directional CP structures
<i>Troppo cruda, troppo fiera</i> (HWV 198)	1710– 1712	Hanover or Italy	S&A	1 <sup>st</sup> &2 <sup>nd</sup> movement: unity, polyphony; 3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> move- ment: disparity, homophony
<i>Langue, geme, sospira</i> (HWV 188)	1720– 1730*	London	S&A	2 <sup>nd</sup> movement: homophony; 1 <sup>st</sup> &3 <sup>rd</sup> mov. free CP structur- ing (derivation, alternation, parallelism)
<i>Se tu non lasci amore</i> (HWV 193)	1720– 1730**	London	S&A	1 <sup>st</sup> (da capo) & 3 <sup>rd</sup> movement: unity despite domination of derivative free CP structuring
<i>No, di voi non vuò fidarmi</i> (HWV 189)	1741	London	S&S	"Messiah duet"; 1 <sup>st</sup> &3 <sup>rd</sup> move- ments: 4 cycles, combined imitation of binary material
<i>No, di voi non vuò fidarmi</i> (HWV 190)	1742	London	S&A	1 <sup>st</sup> movement: combining cy- cles of imitation, ternary form; 3 <sup>rd</sup> movement: quasi fugue
<i>Beato in ver</i> (HWV 181)	1742	London	S&A	<i>da capo</i> ; sections have multi- partite themes: from working out in succession to free CP

TABLE 6.  
List of selected chamber duets by G. F. Handel

\* Burrows et al. (2013, 207) claims the duet was composed "about 1722". This is supported by the fact that Handel parodied a chamber duet setting of the same text by Pietro Torri in the duet "Notte cara" from his opera *Ottone* in 1723 (see Chapter 3.4.2.2).

\*\* According to Burrows et al. (2013, 207), the duet was composed "about 1722".



### 2. 3. 1. From Italy to Hanover

When examining Handel's early duets written in Italy, the choice inevitably falls on *Giù nei tartarei regni* (HWV 187; Handel 2011b, 51–57; Handel recording, *Duetti e Terzetti italiani*) due to its peculiarity. As rightly pointed out by Emans, the duet is highly unorthodox already in its choice of subject matter and the treatment of text (Emans 2012, 510). Similar to Steffani's *Libertà, libertà*, it assigns some of its lines to different voices, and although “Io perché troppo amai sarò dannato” and “Tu perch'amato hai poco / sarai dannato” seem like semantic equivalents of the same statement, the duet in no way resembles a dramatic duet like Steffani's *Io parto*. The text is very explicit in addressing its “madonna” (the male lyrical subject's female amorous object) in the manner of a dramatic monologue, whereas the semantic dualities inherent in the text are expressed by a pair of voices clearly coded in terms of gender, the *par excellence* male bass and the other extreme of the coloristic vocal spectrum, the soprano. Nevertheless, the dimensions of a dramatic duet are never attained. For instance, the text “Io perché troppo amai sarò dannato” is assigned to the bass, prompting identification on the basis of the first person singular. The equation of the soprano with the bass's “madonna” does not happen, since by uttering the text “Tu perch'amato hai poco / sarai dannato” the soprano seems to be charging the bass with the accusation expected to be coming from him instead. Due to the predominantly contrapuntal nature of the duet, this dialogic stance is not pursued apart from the beginnings of subsections A21 and A22 (b. 15–16, 27–30, see Table 7) and the ending of section D (b. 144–145), when the texts “io nel tuo cor” and “e tu nel cor mio” are briefly alternated between the soprano and the bass.

The text depicts a desperate lover dragging his amorous object down to the depths of hell for not reciprocating his love (or returning it only insufficiently), but the setting for two voices adds an extra layer of interpretation to the text, especially in relation to its second half (sections C and D). In the vein of Sartre's “L'enfer, c'est les autres”<sup>70</sup>, it is revealed that the infernal imagery is just a metaphor for the inner hell that the lovers find in each other's hearts (i. e. in each other). In this context, the idea of fire and ice as inextricably linked opposites acquires an extra dimension: for the male amorous subject, eternal punishment means being locked into the ice-cold heart of his mistress, whereas for her there is no greater suffering than being trapped inside his burning heart. Emans (2012, 512) and Musketa (2008, 238) disagree on whether the contrapuntal setting of

70 A quote from the play *Huis clos* (1943, English translation *No Exit*).

the text implies the incompatibility and irreconcilability or the mutual dependence and inseparability of the lovers, but in my opinion, this only highlights the fact that these two interpretations might be two sides of the same coin and that this semantic dimension would be lost in a setting for one voice.

TEXT	BAR	FORM	THEMATIC MATERIAL	KEY
Giù nei tartarei regni v'andrem, madonna.	1-14	A <sub>1</sub>	a <sub>1</sub> (a <sub>11</sub> +a <sub>12</sub> )	c
Io perché troppo amai sarò dannato (B) Tu perch'amato hai poco sarai dannato (S) ove maggior è il foco.	15-26 27-37	A <sub>21</sub> , A <sub>22</sub>	a <sub>2</sub> , a' <sub>2</sub>	c f g
Giù nei tartarei regni	38-54	A <sub>1</sub>	a <sub>1</sub> (a <sub>11</sub> +a <sub>12</sub> )	c
Io ch'ardendo mi sfaccio sarò gettato ove maggiore è il ghiaccio.	55-99	B	b <sub>1</sub> , b <sub>2</sub>	Eb, Bb, c, g, Eb, Bb
Ma perch'il ghiaccio estremo è nel tuo core, nel mio estremo ardore, avrem in sempiterno	100-104	C	recitative	
io nel tuo cor e tu nel mio l'inferno.	105-147	D	d <sub>1</sub> (d <sub>11</sub> +d <sub>12</sub> )	c, g, c

TABLE 7.  
Formal plan of Handel's chamber duet *Giù nei tartarei regni* (HWV 187)

The duet consists of four sections, out of which the second (B) and the fourth (D) display structural parallels in their imitative, almost fugal construction. The first one (A) is the only multi-part one in the duet, outlining the clear contours of a tripartite form. Its first subsection treats a composite subject (a<sub>11</sub>+a<sub>12</sub>) imitatively, providing an energetic opening by having “the music distinctly paint the stark collapse down into the Hades (Tartarus) with an octave leap directed downwards right at the beginning”<sup>71</sup> (Musketa 2008, 238) and by underlining the emphatic call “v'andrem, madonna” with a series of appoggiaturas. Subsections A<sub>21</sub> and A<sub>22</sub> work with only one thematic idea (a<sub>2</sub>) but modify it in line with the different texts that the soprano and the bass utter. Unlike Steffani, who rarely varies his thematic material, here the basic contours of the opening and closing minim are kept, whereas the melodic crotchet movement in

71 Die Musik malt recht deutlich den krassen Absturz hinunten in den Hades (Tartarus) mit einem abwärts gerichteten Oktavsprung gleich am Beginn.

between is marked by an angular line with wide leaps in the bass (a2) and gradual movement in the soprano part (a2'). The twofold alternation of these motifs without counterpoint is followed by some free counterpoint, abundant in suspensions, after which in A22 the parts are reversed for a somewhat transposed free restatement of subsection A21. The restatement of A1 rounds off this quite lapidary section, the only one in the duet that works with a set of shorter thematic ideas.

Sections B engages in an extensive *fugato* on two motifs (b1 and b2), treated separately and in succession, with the occasional use of pseudo stretto (b. 72, 75, 85, 87, 97). The fifth leap on “ardendo” and the semiquaver run on “sfaccio” convey the state of being unsettled, shared between these mismatched lovers. The treatment of motif b2 is indicative of Handel's less strict, but more extensive contrapuntal flow than we can find in most of Steffani's duets examined so far. He often modifies the intervallic leap of the third and the seventh quaver of the motif, adapting it to the harmony at hand. The two-voice recitative section C, reminiscent of similar passages in Durante's chamber duets (see Chapter 2.4) leads into the no less fugal section D. Motifs d1 and d2 are rarely stated separately, except when Handel sequences motif d1 (b. 121–124) or engages in free counterpoint with variants of motif d2 (b. 136–138). Compared to the fugal section of some of the later, Hanoverian duets (e. g. *Tanti strali, al sen mi scocchi*), section D still shows a certain freedom in its approach to form.

*Tacete, ohimè, tacete* (HWV 196; Handel 2011b, 65–73; Handel recording, *Duetti e Terzetti italiani*) shows that, in contrast to *Giù nei tartarei regni*, a chamber duet for soprano and bass can be highly undramatic as well. Although it has love for subject matter, the text is reflexive and philosophical. Taking as its starting point the poetic image of Cupid sleeping, it epigrammatically concludes that the world is at peace only when love is asleep. Strohm (1993, 23–25) interprets this sententiousness as ironic, drawing on the tradition of the satiric epigram, and develops his analysis from this main hypothesis. Whether Handel's interpretation is ironic or not, there are at any rate no traces of an attempted dramatization, not only because of a clearly monologic text, but also because the abstract content does not lend itself to anything of the sort. The *da capo* form outlined in its first three sections groups them into a larger tripartite form, resulting in the overall layout of three movements: I (A1 A2 A1), II (B) and III (C). More so than *Giù nei tartarei regni*, *Tacete, ohimè, tacete* builds on a stark contrast between its sections in a slow tempo, ternary metre and the major mode (A1 and C) and fugal sections in a moderate or fast tempo, binary metre and the minor mode (A2 and B). With their dominant imagery of sleep (“dorme”), A1 and C share a common character, too, contributing to the large-scale homogeneity. The fairly short section A1 has the loosest

contrapuntal structure of all the duet's sections: it presents its main motivic idea first in the bass (b. 1–6) and then in the soprano (b. 6–12) only to abandon it in its later course, proceeding as a free counterpoint that makes frequent recourse to the motif accompanying the main motivic idea in the bass (b. 8–9, later on b. 18–19, 24–25). The main purpose of this section is to evoke the serene atmosphere of Cupid's slumber.

The contrast of A2, an “energetic fugue in C minor, that seems to fulfil the academic-contrapuntal demands of the chamber duet with Teutonic thoroughness”<sup>72</sup> (Strohm 1993, 24) is all the more strong. Handel presents something that seems like a long composite subject in a stretto imitation at first. The text “Entro fiorita cuna / dorme amor” is associated with a longer-span motif (a21, b. 32–36), whereas the brief, emphatic question “no vedete? (a22, b. 36–38) is set to a jumpy dactylic rhythmic line. Like in the equivalent fugal section of *Giù nei tartarei regni*, Handel gives preference to a freer, but at the same time more expanded treatment of fewer thematic ideas rather than stringing together smaller sections (each of which is based on the working out of its own material), like Steffani sometimes tends to. For instance, he quickly abandons stating motif a21 in its entirety, reduces it to the gestural, emphatic head motif by leaving out its second part, consisting of a jerky, syncopated sequential movement in crotchets on the text “dorme”. From b. 38 onwards, a21 is stated not only in this abbreviated form but also less often with a22 as its continuation. The texture becomes dominated by pedal structures above which one of the voices outlines sequential statements of both the abridged a21 and of a22 (the latter dominating near the end of the section) and by free counterpoint (containing occasional figuration of the material, e. g. in b. 60 and 65). Two quasi-recitative bars (b. 81–82) lead back into the repeat of A1.

The principle of alternating serene and swift passages continues in movement B, which is even less consistently imitative than A2. The single thematic idea (b, first occurrence b. 1–2) is rarely provided with a counterpoint comparable to a countersubject. It is either accompanied by held notes (b. 3, 17–23) or sung note against note, sometimes even in parallel motion and is thereby sometimes slightly modified. Handel weaves passages of free counterpoint in between (often conceived like *contrapunctus ligatus*) and enhances the tension with sequential repetition. The sense of urgency and anxiousness inherent in the danger of waking Cupid conveys the havoc created by love. Finally, the last line and the last movement (C) present the duet's moral by returning to the tone of section A1. However, it slightly undermines the structural contrast between the two types of

72     Einer energischen c-moll-Fuge, die den akademisch-kontrapunktischen Anspruch des Kammerduetts mit deutscher Gründlichkeit zu erfüllen scheint.

movements that mark the duet by integrating more imitative elements than the previous movement B contains. It opens with a *cantabile* subject (c1, b. 1–8) first only in alternation between the two voices, then with its extended second part (syncopated downward movement) counterpointed by a contrasting countersubject (c2, b. 12–16). After another alternation of motif c1 and a few bars in free counterpoint (b. 31–34), this is followed by a canonic imitation of a variant of motif c1 (c1') over a pedal on the dominant. The complementary undulating movement of the voices in these nine bars (b. 36–44) reinforces the effect of a lullaby for the sleeping Cupid. This section is repeated with an added passage dominated by c2 (b. 51–66) before giving way to two series of suspensions on another dominant pedal (b. 67–70, 76–80). Similarly, although somewhat less radically than Steffani in *Saldi marmi*, this duet also “decomposes” its ending in harmony with the main poetic idea of the text. The idea of the world being at peace (“il mondo è in pace”) is conveyed by a gradual appeasement of the musical flow that will end in silence, since without Cupid’s mischief there is obviously little need to make music. This is so effective precisely because the duet builds on a dialectic exchange of sections lacking imitation and sections dominated by looser, albeit rather extensive imitation.

There is no consensus in literature on when exactly *Va, speme infida* (HWV 199; Handel 2011b, 74–83; Handel recording, *Duetti e Terzetti italiani*) was written. For instance, Timms claims that the duet was created in Hanover, while Strohm and Harris (2001, 269, 282–284) are of the opinion that it was composed most probably in 1709 in Florence or Venice. Emans seems to believe that the text could stem from the Hanoverian court poet, Ortensio Mauro, which renders Timms’s hypothesis plausible, but after taking into consideration borrowings from a cantata by Giovanni Bononcini and other evidence, he concludes that that the duet was more likely composed in Venice.

In its emphatic evocation of hope, the duet reminds us of the duets by Steffani where the addressee was love, whether in a similarly repudiative (*Ribellatevi, o pensieri*) or an enthusiastically affirmative way (*Sù, ferisci, alato arciero*). Two voices engage in dialogue, not with each other, but with an abstract, allegorically anthropomorphic entity such as hope, making the same reproaches not to the unresponsive amorous object but to falsity of hope in love. It is one of the few chamber duets by Handel that includes large-scale repetition, more common in Steffani’s chamber duets. However, “Handel significantly cuts short the first section at its recapitulation”<sup>73</sup>. (Emans 2012, 516) Naturally, this partial prevalence of the refrain principle

73 Verknüpft Händel den ersten Teil bei seiner Wiederaufnahme deutlich.

is due to the structure of the text, but the fact that Handel modified and abridged its repetition is nevertheless meaningful.

TEXT	BAR	MOVE- MENT	FORM	THEMATIC MATERIAL	KEY
Va, speme infida, pur, va, non ti credo!	1–29	I	A	a	d, F, d
Tu baldanzosa mi vai dicen- do al core:	1–18	II	B <sub>1</sub>	b <sub>1</sub>	F
“Presto in dolce pietà vedrai cangiarsi quel che teco usa Filli aspro rigore.”	18–100		B <sub>2</sub>	b <sub>21</sub> , b <sub>22</sub> , b <sub>22</sub> '	F, B <sup>b</sup> , E <sup>b</sup> , B <sup>b</sup> , F
Ma se mandace e vana fosti ognor ch'in tal guisa a me dicesti,	1–4	III	two-part recitative		g
fedo or vuoi che ti presti, quando di lei nel volto sdegno e dispetto accolto	5–37		IV	C <sub>1</sub>	c <sub>1</sub>
più che mai contro me mise- ro io vedo?	37–75	C <sub>2</sub>		c <sub>21</sub> +c <sub>22</sub>	d, a, d
Va, speme infida, pur, va, non ti credo!	76–96	A'		a	d, F, d

TABLE 8.

Formal plan of Handel's chamber duet *Va, speme infida* (HWV 199)

Movement A is constructed from a single thematic idea (first occurrence b. 1–3) that serves as a source from which all its motifs are derived. This includes the sequential semiquaver downward passage on the word “credo” that serves as a countersubject to the imitation of the thematic idea in Soprano 2 (b. 4) and permeates the subsequent interlude (b. 5–7), serving as a bridge to the second chain of imitations in F major (b. 7–11). The emphatic alternating dramatic calls on “infida” (b. 12–14) are also derived from the downward broken triad of the main material and they lead into a quasi-stretto imitation, underlined with the repetition of the initial crotchet on the word “Va” (b. 14–17). The complementary rhythm and the brief interjections of the voices give the impression of interlocutors interrupting each other, familiar from many of Handel's dramatic duets (to give but one example, the *Streitduett* “Troppo oltraggi la mia fede” from *Serse*) and imply a somewhat humoristic approach (Emans 2012, 515). However, all these features also testify of the textural specificities of a setting for two sopranos, evident in Steffani's duets. Imitation in the prime and swift

alternation of the voices will remain prominent in the course of the duet. After a few bars in free counterpoint, the stretto is repeated with inverted parts (b. 23–26) and the movement cadences in parallel movement with alternating soloist displays of an extended version of the broken triad motif (b. 28, 30). The concluding movement A' brings all the known elements from A but in a slightly abridged form: the extensive semiquaver melismas on the word "credo" are reduced to a minimum and the "comic" repetitions eliminated, but the movement still follows the trajectory of two sets of imitation, one in the tonic and the other one in the mediant, followed by emphatic treatment of the broken triad motif "infida" and a stretto before the voices cadence together. Is the less exuberant scolding of hope in A' suggestive of a softening attitude to its deceptiveness?

Not entirely, if we consider the intermediary movements B and C. These are more symptomatic of Handel's reluctance to repeat, a convention he had little problems with in the field of the cantata and opera. They are characterised by an atypical abundance of text, so that unlike in some other more concise lyrics that Handel set as a chamber duet (consisting often of as little as four lines), the composer needed to deal with different verse, often setting them to several motivic ideas of considerable length. He therefore divided up the second movement (B) of the duet into two sections, B1 (b. 1–18) and B2 (b. 18–99). There is little doubt that Handel sought to demarcate and differentiate them: the punctuated chains of melismas on the word "baldanzosa" convey hope's boisterousness in section B1, whereas the longer and rhythmically even livelier B2 follows the musico-poetic idea of hope's fickleness by assigning even more melismas to the word "cangiarsi", i. e. hope's deceptive promise that the beloved nymph Filli will change her attitude. The main difference between the two sections is that section B1 contains merely one free imitation of the main material, extended by passagework (b1, first occurrence in b. 1–5, imitation in b. 5–10) and followed by free counterpoint derived from the material, whereas B2 makes extensive use of imitation. It builds on two motivic units, b21 (first occurrence b. 18–20) and the bipartite b22 (first occurrence b. 22–33), consisting of the lapidary b221 followed by a long sequential series of undulating triplets (b222). Unit b21 is sequentially repeated, alternated between the two voices or combined with b221 before giving way to the detailed unfolding of b222, as the other voice gradually slides down in a series of appoggiaturas that can be extended or reduced if necessary. The imitative procedures take place in related keys with a consistent use of double counterpoint between bars 57–72 and 72–87 (which is not as frequent in all of Handel's duets as it is in Steffani's), enabling the overall expansion of form by free counterpoint and parallel movement

(b. 87–99). The setting clearly tones down Filli’s harsh severity (“aspro rigore”) that hope attempts to change into sweet pity (“dolce pietà”), deception gaining the upper hand. The line making the main point of the section (“quel che teco usa Filli aspro rigore”) is assigned no separate motivic unit of its own, but is used merely as a free countersubject to b222 (first in b. 37–43), its chromatic descending line slightly destabilising the escapist triplet runs of “cangiar”. The flight of optimism in this section, producing the effect of acceleration (Emans 2012, 515) seems to want to be blissfully ignorant of Filli’s antipathy.

The third movement of the duet begins with four bars of recitative that pass a judgement on hope’s true nature and provide a link before the mood changes radically in movement C, composed in what we have previously called the pathetic style. It likewise consists of two sections, each in the minor mode, but with a disbalance in the distribution of the text. The syntactical construction of the text does not justify the singling out of the fourth line into a separate section (C2, b. 37–75) in contrast to the first three (C1, b. 5–37). It is much longer and metrically irregular but it does not bring the poem’s bottom line due to the technique of enjambment: the words “sdegno e dispetto accolto” reveal Filli’s attitude already in the third line. Handel was probably led by the impact of the key words “misero io”. C1 treats its sequential, syllabic, descending theme imitatively, adding sequential repetitions somewhat freely. The musical culmination is reserved for section C2. Its composite subject is also built sequentially, but clearly articulated by breaks into two units: c21 (b. 37–40), distinguished by two complementary leaps on the words “più che mai contro me”, and c22, with long-held appoggiaturas reserved for the crucial word “misero”. Handel imitates the subject (c21+c22) using a countersubject consisting of motifs derived from c22, and resulting in a chain of deliciously sensual appoggiaturas. The effect of the return of A with “Va, speme infida” is even greater due to the exchange of highly contrasting sections so far. The lyrical subject plunges from despair and self-pity (“misero”) into wrath, directing all his anger to treacherous hope instead of his amorous object. Due to its sheer size and diversity of expressive amplitude and contrapuntal density, *Va, speme infida* displays many features of Handel’s maturity in the genre and it is indeed of little relevance if it was composed in Italy or Hanover. Compared to the two previously analysed duets, it seems a long way from the pseudo-academicism of the fugal fast movements of *Giù nei tartarei regni* and the predominantly featherweight and serene character of *Tacete, ohimè, tacete*. Likewise, the division of sections into subsections of unequal length with their own thematic material is slightly atypical of most of Handel’s chamber duets.



## 2. 3. 2. Hanoverian Maturity

What clearly distinguishes *Va, speme infida* from Handel's later duets is that its *basso continuo* never participates in the trio texture as an equal of the two vocal parts (cf. Handel 2011b, XIV). In *Giù nei tartarei regni* and *Tacete, ohimè, tacete* this is entirely understandable as they are written for soprano and bass, which would make the complete emancipation of the *basso continuo* from the lower of the two vocal parts more difficult. On the other hand, a duet such as *A mirarvi io son intento* (HWV 178; Handel 2011b, 84–92; Handel recording, Duetti da Camera) frequently includes the *basso continuo* in an imitative, *concertante* interplay with the voices and it is therefore probably not a coincidence that, unlike *Va, speme infida*, it was definitely composed in Hanover. Handel sets the first movement consisting of four lines in *da capo* form (A1 A2 A1). The motivic and harmonic connections between sections A1 and A2 recall the logic of the construction of a *da capo* aria, where the purpose of the middle section is not to outshine but to offer contrast and preserve unity with the first section. Handel thus imports traits from dramatic music into the chamber duet. This duet is also distinguished by a consistent level of motivic unity, and all these are the traits that were to be characteristic of chamber duets written in Hanover.

But if the criteria of the equality of the *basso continuo* in the trio texture was decisive in recognising traces of Steffani's influence in *A mirarvi io son intento*, in *Sono liete, fortunate* (HWV 194; Handel 2011b, 98–103; Handel recording, Duetti da Camera) this is not the case, with the exception of the third section of the duet. Nevertheless, for Timms (1987, 230–231), this duet is one of the most evident examples of intertextual relationships between Handel's and Steffani's chamber duets since he finds as many as four examples of borrowing from *Quanto care al cor voi siete*. Even though some of them indeed possess the character of a topos, i. e. the kind of thematic material found in works of many composers at the time, in my opinion the sense of kinship is much stronger in the case of the opening bars of *Sono liete* and Steffani's *Pria ch'io faccia*, recalling the practice of 16th-century parody. There are additional similarities supporting the claim that "Handel had at his disposal different duets by his Italian colleague [Steffani, A/N], *a mente* so to speak, so that certain character traits and some motifs could flow into the process of composition."<sup>74</sup> (Emans 2012, 521) What matters more than if the intertextuality was intentional is the kind of purpose this

74 Verschiedene Duette seines italienischen Kollegen standen sozusagen "a mente" zur Verfügung und so gewisse Charakterzüge und manche Motive in die Komposition einfließen konnten.

intertextual relationship came to acquire. In spite of the tragic potential of the text, Steffani took a somewhat joyous, even serene take on *Pria ch'io faccia* in his setting. This “character trait” is much more appropriate for the simplicity of the text of *Sono liete, fortunate* that expresses the joys of being in love. Although quite a bit shorter, in terms of subject matter and its main poetic idea it can be compared to another chamber duet by Steffani, *Placidissime catene*. Handel's brief ode to the chains of love does not miss out on the opportunity to depict them madrigalistically with the above mentioned “chain” figure on the word “catene” (first occurrence b. 3), reminiscent of the similar setting of the word in Steffani's *Quanto care*. In both duets the motif occurs in the second part of the main, composite subject, consisting of a1 (b. 1–3<sup>75</sup>) and a2 (b. 3–6). The sequential character of motif a2 makes it possible to use it for the chain of brief sequential pseudo-imitations that follow the imitation of the subject (b. 6–7 in *Sono liete*). The main difference between the two duets is that Steffani immediately moves on to new material (and the new text “Per colei che mi legò”), never to return to this material again in the course of the duet, whereas Handel permeates with it the entirety of the first movement (A) of the duet. Not only is every imitation of the composite subject followed by a few bars of the aforementioned “chain” sequence before the final cadence, this sequence is sometimes repeated (b. 8–10) or freely varied (b. 16–17, 19–21, 26–29). As we have seen, the musical embodiment of the chain metaphor, rudimentary in *Quanto care* but decisive for the first movement of *Sono liete*, permeates Steffani's duet *Placidissime catene* on a much larger scale. In its section I, the word “rallentarvi” receives treatment similar to the one the word “catene” receives in the two aforementioned duets, serving as a bridge between more widely spaced out imitative sections. However, apart from this, the semantic exploration of amorous chains in *Placidissime catene* extends to almost the whole of the duet.

This is not the case in *Sono liete*, but it testifies to the fact that Handel and Steffani were sensitive to the poetical imagery of the text in different ways. What distinguished Handel is an inclination to formal unity: instead of stringing together imitations of different motifs, he is more economical and therefore prone to develop his material, thereby expanding the form. The bipartite second movement consists of two sections: the slow, pathetic B1 (b. 1–14) and the swift, more extensive, freely fugal B2, subjecting its composite, figurative subject (b21, b. 15–19 + b22, b. 20–28) to an array of free imitations, wherein the continuo also plays a certain role. Although the web of imitations is extended, Handel rarely treats his

75 The bar numbers refer to *Sono liete, fortunate* rather than *Quanto care al cor voi siete* since it is Handel's duets that this subchapter is devoted to.

material contrapuntally in a literal and strict way, but subjects it to more variation than Steffani usually does. The stretto imitation of the undulating melismas occasionally results in parallel movement, and this also occurs more often in Handel's than in Steffani's chamber duets. As to whether it is due to the influence of dramatic vocal genres on Handel's chamber duets, favouring a more clear-cut articulation of the vocal parts with parallel movement in cadences, remains open to debate.

TEXT	BAR	MOVE- MENT	FORM	THEMATIC MATERIAL	KEY
Tanti strali al sen mi scocchi quante stelle sono in ciel.	1-98	I	A <sub>1</sub>	a <sub>11</sub> +a <sub>12</sub> +a <sub>13</sub>	G, D, G
Tanti fior' quanti ne tocchi s'innamorato al tuo bel.	99-138		A <sub>2</sub>	a <sub>21</sub> , a <sub>22</sub>	e, b, G
Tanti strali...	1-98		A <sub>1</sub>	<i>da capo</i>	G, D, G
Ma se l'alma sempre geme nell'amor arsa e consunta	1-16	II	B <sub>1</sub>	b <sub>1</sub> , countersubject	D, A
questo avvien perch'arde e teme dal tuo cor esser disgiunta.	16-27		B <sub>2</sub>	b <sub>2</sub>	f#, b
Dunque annoda pur, ben mio, di catena immortale anch'il desio.	1-49	III	C	c <sub>1</sub> +c <sub>2</sub> +c <sub>3</sub>	G, D, G

TABLE 9.

Formal plan of Handel's chamber duet *Tanti strali al sen mi scocchi* (HWV 197)

Led by the special brevity of *Sono liete, fortunate*, it is tempting to assume that the Hanoverian duets show a tendency towards a fewer number of movements. More important are the economy of means and the structural unities that Handel imposes on the genre, whether he was led in this by Steffani's influence or not. Like *A mirarvi io son intento*, *Tanti strali al sen mi scocchi* (HWV 197; Handel 2011b, 104-112; Handel recording, Duetti da Camera) opens with a movement in *da capo* form equally unified in motivic terms, but more concise in that the middle section (A<sub>2</sub>), with its shorter dimensions and harmonic contrast corresponds even more to a middle section of a *da capo* form in dramatic genres such as cantata or opera. The opening (A) and the closing movement (C) are characterised by an extreme economy of means, as both of them are wholly derived from their respective, composite thematic ideas. Unlike most of the chamber duets by both Steffani and Handel analysed so far, the first movement of *Tanti strali* unfolds its extensive subject, consisting of a<sub>11</sub> (b. 1-8) + a<sub>12</sub> (b.

9–13) + a13 (b. 14–20) in the soprano in its entirety before engaging in any kind of imitation in the alto.<sup>76</sup> The only motivic element that does not stem directly from this material is a contrapuntal figure accompanying motif a11 (in b. 22–25, 41–44, 82–85), but even it shares some common melodic-rhythmic traits with the main material. The rest of the countersubject accompanying two complete, regular imitations of the subject (b. 20–39 and 39–56) is derived from motif a13, which results in four bars of parallel melismas on the word “scocchi” (b. 31–32), once again vividly depicting the shooting of Cupid’s darts. The frequent simultaneous appearance of a12 and a13 provides evidence that Handel wrote the subject making sure that these motifs can be combined in inverted counterpoint. The remaining part of the movement does not contain any more full-scale imitations of the subject: instead, in b. 56–73, the already familiar combination of a12 and a13 is preceded by an inverted variant of a11 (b. 56–60) and a free imitation of a13 and a12 in turn. Handel’s setting suggests an affirmative approach to the thrills that Cupid’s arrows bring on the semantic plan. His biggest care was to balance out the whole of this *da capo* form: A2 is much shorter than the analogous section in *A mirarvi io son intento*, and its two motifs clearly derived from the subject of A1. The structural layout of this movement makes comparisons with the treatment of *da capo* form in an opera duet even more viable. Even the bridge to the *da capo* contributes to the overall sense of homogeneity, as it is a statement of a11 in the continuo.

Movement B is shorter and less unified, but its first section (B1) continues to impress by virtue of its economy and contrapuntal consistency. The gentle, cantabile subject (b1, b. 1–5) delivers the section’s two lines syllabically, giving the described sufferings of an enamoured soul an almost melancholic quality. It flows almost seamlessly into its countersubject (b. 3–7) on the same words, before the two voices cadence parallel and the process is repeated with the vocal parts in inversion. Interestingly enough, parallels to section A2 can be drawn on the basis of how section B2 is constructed: not only is it shorter and less prominent in its thematic material but it consists of two loosely imitative passages in double counterpoint transposed from F-sharp minor (the key B1 cadences in) to B minor. The similarities do not end here, as the *basso continuo* modulates back to G major after the vocal parts have cadenced in B minor, thereby almost making it possible to repeat B1 in the manner of a *da capo* form, the same way as had already happened in section A1 (but does not happen here). Large-scale formal parallels in the construction of the duet’s sections extend to its final movement, C. Like A, it works with a composite tripartite

76 This is a trait that recalls duets in dramatic genres where it was important for the spectator to clearly distinguish between the characters.

subject, consisting of an energetic opening with a broken triad (c1, b. 1–2), a sequential motif involving quaver repetition (c2, b. 2–4) and a semiquaver passage on the word “immortale”<sup>77</sup> (c3, b. 4–6), and it also uses one of its motifs (c2) as a counterpoint to the subject (b. 7–8, 11–12, 17–18, 27–28). The tempo is somewhat brisker and the subject and its motifs of a somewhat shorter span, but the movement follows movement A in both structure and form: e. g. the *comes* always sets in with imitation of the integral subject before the *dux* concludes, and imitations are combined with episodes likewise derived from the material. Besides the gestural, figurative character of the thematic material, the ease of the imitative unfolding is mostly due to the fact that unlike the duet's other movements, imitation often occurs on the prime here, which is rather unusual in most of Handel's duets for soprano and alto.

This is a good point to summarize certain traits of the Hanoverian duets analysed so far, and to compare them amongst themselves and especially in relation to the ones Handel wrote in Italy. A comparison of the fugal movements of *Tanti strali* described above with the third movement of *A mirarvi io son intento* (“E vibrando in un baleno”) shows that the latter movement is contrapuntally looser and contains more alternating, non-contrapuntal passages, besides being a little bit less thematically unified than, for instance, *Tanti strali*'s first (A) and third movement (C). However, if we look at *Giù nei tartarei regni*, the differences between the respective faster, fugal movements will prove even more drastic. The second section (B) of the latter duet rarely imitates literally, but modifies the material instead, using a lot of free counterpoint and treats what at first seems as a composite subject rather freely, by combining contrapuntally motifs b1 and b2 in succession, reversed order, separately or simultaneously. If one takes a look at sections A2 and B of *Tacete, ohimè, tacete*, the differences appear even more striking. To a certain extent section A2 gradually dissolves the initial imitation of its two motifs with the introduction of sequence and pedal notes, whereas in B, in its figurative material already less prone to strict counterpoint, free counterpoint almost dominates the mildly imitative texture. Given the described extremes between *Tacete, ohimè, tacete* on the one hand and *Tanti strali* on the other, we may safely draw the conclusion that in his Italian duets Handel was less inclined to write symmetrical, consistent and clearly directional imitative structures than in the ones he wrote in Hanover.

77 As Emans points it out, although placed on “immortale”, the melisma “actually portrays the ‘catene’ musically” (allerdings wohl die “catene” musikalisch darstellt, Emans 2012, 525).

Like some of the other chamber duets whose texts do not develop the idea of dramatic conflict, *Tanti strali* could function on the operatic stage as a dramatic duet that consists of two parallel monologues. Although the text is monological and the roles of the suffering subject consumed by love and the somewhat indifferent object who carelessly shares her (or his) graces without sensitivity to the havoc this provokes are clearly assigned, Handel's harmonious and balanced setting makes it sound as if the two lovers were addressing each other with the same reproaches, as if the roles were reversible. Although the text of *Tanti strali* with its "burnt and consumed" soul could have contained a grain of ambivalence, Handel's setting is once again surprisingly affirmative to the ideal of love it depicts.

TEXT	BAR	FORM	THEMATIC MATERIAL	KEY
Troppo cruda, troppo fiera è la legge dell'amor.	1-58	A	a <sub>1</sub> +a <sub>2</sub> a' <sub>1</sub> , a' <sub>1</sub> '	e, b, a, e
Ma la speme lusinghiera raddolcisce ogni rigor.	1-51	B	b <sub>1</sub> +b <sub>2</sub> b' <sub>1</sub> , b' <sub>2</sub>	G, D, G, C, b, G
Infiammate, saettate, ma lasciatemi sperar.	1-29	C	c, c'	b, f#, e
A chi spera, o luci amate, non dà pena il sospirar.	1-108	D	d <sub>1</sub> , d <sub>2</sub> , d <sub>3</sub>	e, b, e, a, e

TABLE 10.  
Formal plan of Handel's chamber duet *Troppo cruda, troppo fiera* (HWV 198)

Much more than *Tanti strali*, the music of *Troppo cruda, troppo fiera* (HWV 198; (Handel 2011b, 113-121; Handel recording, Duetti da Camera) moves along these lines of ambivalence. It progresses through as many as four affective stances to the problem of falsity of hope in love by a metrically regular sequence of four line pairs. As Handel set each of the pairs as a separate movement, the progression from a stoical acceptance of the law of love ("legge dell'amor") in movement A to the optimism at hope's appeasement of suffering (B) and the subsequent passionate plea to hope (C) ends in the equally stoic acceptance of suffering as the price for hope (D).

Burrows, Timms and Musketa are confident in assigning the duet to Handel's Hanover period, while Strohm is of the opinion that *Troppo cruda* (like *Va, speme infida*) might have been written earlier, in Italy or even in Hamburg. Relinquishing the possibility of giving an exact answer to the question of dating, I find it more important to examine Timms's claim for the maturity of *Troppo cruda* in terms of contrapuntal density and its alleged superiority over *Giù nei tartarei regni*, which he explains with exposure to

Steffani. His key argument is a comparison between the second section (B) of *Giù nei tartarei regni* and the second movement (B) of *Tropo cruda*, and he labels the latter “a marvellous example of counterpoint and structure” (1987, 241). Timms concludes that “by the time he came to write *Tropo cruda*, he [Handel, A/N] had clearly been profoundly influenced by Steffani’s ideas on counterpoint and structure.” The latter movement consists of a single fast fugal section based on a subject (b1, b. 1–4 + b2, b. 4–6) treated contrapuntally in a free manner. The subject in its complete, composite guise appears only three times, and is otherwise subject to variation, abridgement and extension. My own comparison between the two sections highlights considerably more similarities than differences, and not only due to the similarity of the thematic material. In both, a distinctive motivic complex is gaining momentum by being varied and adapted so that it can be subjected to extensive contrapuntal treatment without losing its recognisability. The contrapuntal freedom and lack of regularity are similar, with a difference that in *Giù nei tartarei regni* the flow is less directional than in *Tropo cruda*. The differences in the construction of fast fugal movements are strongly highlighted when we compare these two with the fugal movements in *A mirarvi io son intento* (movement A) and *Tanti strali* (movements A and C), characterised by strict thematic homogeneity, economy of means, consistency of contrapuntal procedures and lack of free counterpoint. The possibility that the difference in contrapuntal procedures in *Tropo cruda* when compared to the other Hanoverian duets is a sign of its earlier provenance should not be entirely overlooked.

Unlike the chamber duets written in Italy, *Tropo cruda* shows clear signs of cyclic organisation, compared by Malcolm Boyd (1997, 191) to the *sonata da chiesa*. The first movement (A), albeit in a slower tempo and of entirely different affective content, shows many parallels in overall construction to movement B discussed above. Its treatment of the composite subject (a1, b. 1–4 + a2, b. 5–11) is more consistent in that when imitated, the motifs are almost never modified, but the episodes between the imitative sections are likewise written in much freer counterpoint. Due to the shorter dimensions of the movement, they often consist of alternations of related motifs, all of which share not only the text but also the punctuated crotchet rhythm of a1 and are undoubtedly derived from it (which is why I marked them with a1’ and a1’’ in Table 10). Unlike many of Steffani’s chamber duets, Handel adopts contrapuntal procedures characteristic of the fugue here. Naturally, this is not carried out in strict terms as it would not be suitable to a genre such as the chamber duet. Movement A and B share a directional and consistent polyphonic structure that is partly absent from the last two movements of the duet. The slow movement C contains only pseudo-counterpoint in that instead of imitating, it alternates

its vocal parts on either rests (b. 1–3) or held notes (b. 4–12 and most of the remainder of the movement). At the same time, this brief movement also remains monothematic since it derives all its material with ease from the downward *ductus* of the head of motif c (b. 1–2).

Finally, movement D sets out as yet another imitative, tripartite *andante* movement, the likes of which we have often encountered in Handel, but after the imitation of its main idea (d1, b. 1–9), it slightly surprises us with a non-thematic homophonic passage on the word “sospirar”, making recourse to typical sigh figures descending half a tone (d2 in Table 10, first occurrence b. 19–23), known from numerous other works by composers of the period as the “rhetorical figure of *tmesis* or *suspiratio*” (Emans 2012, 527). The function of passages dominated by b3 (b. 27–32, 63–64) is modulatory, as was the case with the rhythmically identical (dotted quaver) motif a1’ from movement A of the duet, which might be a case of motivic connections between movements that Musketa (1990, 190) mentions. However, these “subsidiary” motivic complexes seem to be taking over the movement, for apart from its imitation at the opening of the movement, d1 appears only twice (b. 33–42, 83–89). Instead, a new material that inverts some of the melodic motifs from d1 (d4, b. 65–68) gains prominence along with the sigh motif (d2). It is not only subject to stretto imitation (b. 65–69) but also combined with d2 and put under the spotlight by the use of pedal notes (b. 74–80) and parallel statements. Handel almost abandons the initial subject and engages in a series of free motivic derivations combined in a texture that verges on the homophonic. The use of the sigh motif in particular draws on dramatic genres such as opera, oratorio and cantata. Although the overall meaning of the two lines that round off the poem (and the chamber duet) is a stoical acceptance of sighs as the price for hope, the prominent setting of the word “sospirar” suggests that these sighs are musically more prominent than the text suggests.

In spite of textural disparity (polyphony in the first two, pseudo-polyphony or even homophony in the last two movements), *Troppo cruda, troppo fiera* is distinguished by a different kind of thematic unity than the highly monothematic individual movements of, say, *Tanti strali*. It does not engage in the imitation of multiple motifs, but instead develops some more “subsidiary” material, often derived from the main subject and combined into alternating statements or free counterpoint. To sum up, although in certain aspects disparate, the duets written in Hanover examined here display certain features that testify of Handel’s “maturity”. Giordano Riccati had good reasons to single out *Sono liete, fortunate* and *Troppo cruda, troppo fiera* for the economy and developmental potential of their thematic material (De Piero 2012, 185). *Va speme infida* and *Troppo cruda* share some of these traits, which may or may not question their dating.



### 2. 3. 3. London in the Span of Two Decades

Handel's only duets that bridge a long temporal gap between the wealth of duets written in Hanover in 1710–1712 and in London in 1740–1745 are *Languè, geme, sospira* (HWV 188) and *Se tu non lasci amore* (HWV 193), written in London in the 1720s. Their dating is due to philological (the type of paper used) rather than stylistic reasons, and in spite of a gap of two decades, they deserve to be considered together with the duets from the 1740s. Certain traits already noticed in earlier, Hanoverian duets come to the fore, e. g. “a consequently executed double counterpoint”, the abandoning of “pre-existing [imitative, A/N] ways in favour of an insistence on small-scale motivic cells”<sup>78</sup> (Emans 2012, 530), most commonly by their rapid alternation as well as a tendency towards a smaller number and a clearer demarcation of movements.

TEXT	BAR	FORM	THEMATIC MATERIAL	KEY
Languè, geme, sospira e si lagna colomba che chiama l'errante compagna.	1–69	A <sub>1</sub>	a <sub>11</sub> +a <sub>12</sub> +a <sub>13</sub>	e, b, e, a, G, e
Ma poi quando vede che in braccio le riede quel ben che tant'ama,	69–110	A <sub>2</sub>	a <sub>21</sub> , a <sub>22</sub>	D, G, b
cangia i gemiti in baci e più non brama.	111–195	B	b <sub>1</sub> +b <sub>2</sub>	e, b, d, G, e

TABLE 11.  
Formal plan of Handel's chamber duet *Languè, geme, sospira* (HWV 188)

*Languè, geme, sospira* (HWV 188; Handel 2011b, 122–127; Handel recording, Duetti da Camera) consists of only two movements contrasting in terms of tempo (slow-fast), the first one bipartite, resulting in the overall form A<sub>1</sub> A<sub>2</sub> B. Like *Tropo cruda*, it combines polyphonic and homophonic sections, A<sub>2</sub> providing a predominantly homophonic contrast to the polyphonic A<sub>1</sub> and B. Emans is right when he claims that in section A<sub>2</sub> of *Languè, geme, sospira* “the voice leading runs largely parallel, to which end Handel was

78 Die vorgegebenen Bahnen zugunsten eines kleingliedrigen Beharrens auf kleinen Motivpartikeln.

surely motivated by the text uniting the lovers”<sup>79</sup> (2012, 529). To a certain extent, the same goes for the affirmative statement of “No, no, che d'altrui che di te mai non sarò”, and the parallelisms seem equally appropriate to stress the determinacy of the amorous subject despite the pain he or she felt in the previous section.

Although equally monologic as any other chamber duet text examined so far, instead of an amorous subject's unilateral dramatization of the pains or joys of love, the text of *Langue, geme* uses a metaphor from the natural world to depict the affects of amorous separation and reunion. The “wandering dove” is a frequent thematic topos in dramatic genres of the period, so it comes as no surprise that the text belongs to an aria from Domenico de Totis's libretto *La caduta del regno dell'Amazoni* (1690). Pietro Torri was the first one to set it as a chamber duet and Handel was not only led by his example but he also “borrowed” motivic material from the duet.<sup>80</sup> The dove's wandering is portrayed with equally “errant” chains of melismas and interestingly it is precisely this subsidiary material that dominates the section. Emans's astonishment that Handel did not treat the first line of the text as a quasi-motto seems ungrounded. The composer chose not to exploit the expressive potential of the main subject's (a11) suspensions—the sigh motifs on the keywords “langue” and “geme” (b. 1–4)—but stated them only four times, perhaps because the wandering dove will soon be reunited with its beloved. What initially appears as a tripartite composite subject (a11, b. 1–7 + a12, b. 7–11 + a13, b. 11–16) is imitated only once in incomplete form, since the soprano abridges a13 in b. 22–23 already. Instead, Handel works mainly with a12 and a13, using a11 as counterpoint with its contrasting long note values (b. 23–26, 45–48). It is the pulse of the semiquavers and the emphatic rhythmic figure of a12 that provide recognisability and continuity. Handel indeed makes use of “motivic cells”, combining them sometimes in the manner of a mosaic.

Section A2 also presents two motifs (a21, b. 69–71 and a22, b. 73–77), but they are not meant to form a composite subject. Motif a22 seems to be imitated at the fifth first, but this proves to be an illusion because not only does the interval change to the octave in bar 76 but a22 is also interspersed with rests, so instead of counterpoint, we in fact witness alternation and parallelism. The movement cadences in B minor, which not only makes the transition to movement B smooth in harmonic terms, but would leave room for a *da capo* repetition of A2. In terms of the text, a return to the initial languishes and moans after the dove has already been reunited with

79 Die Führung der Singstimmen läuft weitgehend parallel, wozu Händel gewiss vom Text motiviert wurde, in dem die Liebenden zusammengeführt werden.

80 As we shall see in Chapter 3.4.2, the “borrowing” is even more direct in the duet “Notte cara” from *Ottone*.

its mate would be absurd, but the proportions of the two sections and the aforementioned contrast, not to mention the slightly anticlimactic effect of the less inventive section A2 would welcome a repetition of A1 in strictly musical terms. What follows instead is the relatively short imitative section B, working with a bipartite subject (b1, b. 111–114 + b2, b. 115–119). In their basically imitative structuring that nevertheless seamlessly integrates alternating statements, motivic derivations and free counterpoint into the texture, there is a lot of kinship between A1 and B as the framing sections of this chamber duet. In this duet, Handel has convincingly shown that he can defy expectations without having to jeopardise a vivid musical interpretation of the text or the structural unity so important to him.

In *Se tu non lasci amore* (HWV 193; Handel 2011b, 128–135; Handel recording, *Duetti da Camera*), many of the tendencies that were already at strength in *Langue, geme* are taken even further away from the by now antiquated polyphonic construction of many of Steffani's chamber duets. Instead of a chain of sections that work out the clearly presented thematic material with varying, but in most cases consistently implemented imitative techniques, here we often have imitation only at the outset of a section, with its further course ruled either by alternating homophonic or freely contrapuntal, often figurative writing. Handel preserves the structural unity of its movements and sections whether he was following a strict monothematicism (like in *Tanti strali*) or writing in a more improvisatory, derivative way, which testifies to a new compositional logic behind his chamber duets. The duet is in three movements, but places the stress on the first one, composed in a written out *da capo* form: A1 (b. 1–27), A2 (b. 28–47), A1' (b. 48–75), B (b. 75–86) and C (87–167). In its first movement (A) the amorous subject is addressing his heart directly, which is followed in movements B and C by a monologic introspection about the fact that it is forlorn. The numerous, brief alternating statements (“lo so” / “mio cor” / ti pentirai”) in particular seem to suggest a dialogic stance, although the text could on no account be assigned to two imaginary characters. The change of stance in movement B with the question “Ma con chi parlo, oh Dio?” could be said to sum up the contradictory nature of the chamber duet *per se*, for although the subject in what is essentially a monologue asks himself who he or she is talking to, the musical texture remains as it was, in two parts and with an inner structural echo that determines the genre.

The second and the third movement are not unlike the movements and sections analysed so far. Setting off the typical “plot twist” of amorous discourse, the sudden comprehension that the subject has lost control of his heart as it no longer belongs to him or her, movement B (“Ma con chi parlo, oh Dio”) elaborates on a single emphatic utterance, making use of a concise motivic idea (b, b. 75–76) and intermixing it with minimal counterpoint and a lot of alternating and parallel statements as it moves through

a series of related keys. Movement C (“quando non ho più core, / o il core che pur ho non è più mio?”) displays many traits encountered in *Langue, geme* and some of the Hanover duets such as free imitation with a lot of alternation of the parts, free counterpoint and the almost improvisatory derivation of thematic material. What makes it special is the fact that the last line of its text is not thematically bound at all. At first it seems that, following the characteristic, “jumpy” head of subject c (b. 86–87), b. 88–93 outline the contours of what is perhaps even a bipartite subject, but the musical *ductus* of the movement evolves in an almost spontaneous manner. In consequence, the only thematic material of the movement is a single motivic idea consisting of two bars. Whereas in the case of the transitory, slow movement B this reduction is not surprising, it comes unexpectedly in a concluding, albeit not too extensive movement.

It is movement A, or more precisely its opening section (A<sub>1</sub>) that draws the most analytical attention. It appears at first to display a smooth, playful subject (b. 1–4) that is imitated at the fifth in the soprano along with what seems like a countersubject (b. 4–5). This subject served Handel as a source of self-borrowing in his oratorio *Messiah*, although unlike in HWV 189, he slightly modified its second half for the duet “O death, where is thy sting?”. The second part of the second line of the text (“Io so ben io”) is treated too freely for it to be considered an integral part of the subject. The only motivic constant in the setting of this text is the upward fourth leap on the text “Io so”, as can be seen in the following bars (b. 6–7), where the parts first alternate the aforementioned fourth motif with a semiquaver figure derived from the subject (b. 5) on the word “ti pentirai”, only to give way to this figure in b. 7–8. Expectations of a “regular” imitation of the subject after this episode are thwarted in b. 8–10, where the subject is presented only in an abbreviated form and leads into free, cadential counterpoint distinguished merely by the aforementioned upward jump (now extended to a sixth and an octave). The further course of the section playfully alternates both the semiquaver motif (b. 14, 16, 19–22, 24) and the “jump” motif (b. 15–17, 19–21, 23–25), with only one more appearance of the abridged subject (b. 17–18). The domination of “subsidiary” (and somewhat improvisatory) thematic material is seemingly abandoned in the seemingly more imitative section A<sub>2</sub>. However, the strong thematic identity of the section is weakened by its subsequent course, a fully improvisatory polyphonic, modulatory section only loosely based on the thematic material.

The question why the composer returned to the genre after such a long break in his last six chamber duets written in the 1740s remains open. As he borrowed from three of them in his large-scale works, it was considered that they were preliminary studies, but this has been refuted by many authors (Musketa 1990, 192; Burrows et al. 2013, 411). One of the best and most famous examples is *No, di voi non vuò fidarmi* (HWV 189; Handel 2011b,

142–149; Handel recording, Arcadian duets), often nicknamed the “Messiah duet” since Handel borrowed from its first movement in the chorus “For unto us a child is born” and from the third, “So per prova i vostri inganni” in “All we like sheep have gone astray”. He must have found the themes that he borrowed “appropriate in character (and in their technical ability to carry the new words) to the new contexts” (Burrows et al. 2013, 411). Taruskin’s (2010, 322) question “Should it surprise or dismay us to discover that this erotic duet became the basis for not one but two choruses in *Messiah*?” is clearly a rhetorical one. The techniques he made use of while transferring a freely contrapuntal duet texture onto the larger canvas of the orchestrally accompanied chorus have been discussed in detail elsewhere (Liebscher 1987, 219–228, among others), so we shall not dwell on them further. In terms of prosody and semantics the text of the first movement (“No, di voi non vuò fidarmi”) is indeed treated much more successfully in the original setting than in its later counterpart, “For unto us a child is born” (Knapp 1987). Both “For unto us a child is born” and “All we like sheep have gone astray” share a fast tempo and a predominantly joyous character with the first and the third movement of the chamber duet. What made the two movements even more suitable for borrowings in different movements of a large-scale work such as *Messiah* is the jumpy, emphatically rhythmic character of the opening material (a<sub>11</sub> and c<sub>11</sub> in Table 12), making them almost related in motivic terms. In contrast to the short middle movement “Altra volta incatenarmi” which serves as a harmonic link, we shall see that “No, di voi non vuò fidarmi” and “So per prova i vostri inganni” display additional structural parallels.

MOVE- MENT	TEXT	THEMATIC MATERIAL *	FORM	BAR	KEY
I	No, di voi non vuò fidarmi, cieco amor, crudel beltà! Troppo siete, menzognere, lusinghiere deità!	a <sub>11</sub> (+)a <sub>12</sub>	A <sub>1</sub>	1–24	G, D
			A <sub>2</sub>	24–36	D, G
		a <sub>2</sub> , (a <sub>3</sub> )	A <sub>3</sub>	36–51	G, C, G
			A <sub>4</sub>	51–65	G
II	Altra volta incatenarmi già poteste il fido cor.	b, b'	B <sub>1</sub>	1–19	e, a
			B <sub>2</sub>	19–28	e
III	So per prova i vostri inganni: due tiranni siete ognor.	c <sub>11</sub> , c <sub>12</sub> , (c <sub>2</sub> ?)	C <sub>1</sub>	1–12	G
			C <sub>2</sub>	12–27	D, G
			C <sub>3</sub>	27–41	G, C
			C <sub>4</sub>	41–56	G

TABLE 12.

Formal plan of Handel’s chamber duet *No, di voi non vuò fidarmi* (HWV 189)

\* In movement I, the display of the thematic material in Table 12 aligns with the text, whereas in movements II and III it aligns with the formal outline and its bar numbers.

As can be seen from the formal disposition of this lapidary duet, both the first and the third movement are characterised by the use of a seemingly bipartite initial subject (a<sub>11</sub>&a<sub>12</sub>, c<sub>11</sub>&c<sub>12</sub>, the second of which is abundant in coloratura passages), combined with a second, less characteristic and less consistently exploited motif (a<sub>2</sub> and c<sub>2</sub>) in four cycles (A<sub>1</sub>–A<sub>4</sub>, C<sub>1</sub>–C<sub>4</sub>), outlining a similar harmonic trajectory into the dominant and the subdominant and working towards a culmination before bringing the movement to an end with a cadential figure in a slower tempo. In the first movement, however, the heads of motifs a<sub>11</sub> and a<sub>12</sub> are identical, which accounts for the frequent false effect of a stretto when the two motifs are contrapuntally combined. The fact that a<sub>12</sub> with its melismatic passages sounds as a countersubject to the syllabic motif a<sub>11</sub>, interspersed with pauses, does not lessen its importance, for section A<sub>1</sub> presents the two motifs as a composite subject in both voices (b. 1–12 in S<sub>1</sub>, b. 6–18 in S<sub>2</sub>), before introducing the dotted motif a<sub>2</sub> by way of two bars of alternating arpeggiations (b. 18–20). Sections A<sub>2</sub> and A<sub>3</sub> are different from the first one in that they do not require such a detailed unfolding of a<sub>11</sub> and a<sub>12</sub> but work with a new motif on the third and fourth line that we could call a<sub>2</sub> although it takes on a fully different guise (a<sub>3</sub>) in A<sub>2</sub> (b. 33–36) and A<sub>3</sub> (46–51). It is fascinating that Handel treats the text cyclically, setting all four lines in each of the four sections, countering tendencies exemplified by Steffani and moving towards dramatic structures that treat the text of an aria as a unified whole, and not as a sequence of lines or pairs of lines. *Da capo* repetition exempted, Handel's two settings of "No, di voi non vuò fidarmi" (HWV 189 and HWV 190) are among the rare chamber duets by Handel that employ this kind of cyclic, multiple text setting. Finally, section A<sub>4</sub> combines a<sub>12</sub> in what most resembles a stretto, which results in the culminating parallel coloraturas characteristic of many Handel duets at the time (often marking the culmination of a movement) before the conclusion of the section. The seamless mosaic structure conceals its build-up and has the effect of a constant stretto of lapidary motifs, and thus perfectly suited to a text that, were it directed to a lover rather than the allegorical attributes of blind love ("cieco amor") and cruel beauty ("crudel beltà"), could function as an operatic "Streitduett".

In its first section, the second movement (B<sub>1</sub>) strings together three mildly contrapuntal entries of a simple subject (b, b. 1–5) that draws its pathetic appeal by the use of the Neapolitan chord, albeit on a semantically unremarkable word ("poteste"). Its second section (B<sub>2</sub>) breaks a variant of this subject (b', b. 18–25) into alternating and parallel statements. The purpose of this section is to offer a harmonic and an affective contrast to the overall joyous, playful character of the duet and in doing so it is not necessarily guided by the text, for the first two lines of the duet's second

stanza do not acquire their full meaning without the last two, reserved for the third movement. The tendency of depriving the text of some of its semantics is followed in the third movement. The four cycles of the setting of both lines are constructed in a similar way as in the first movement: they first present alternating statements of an emphatic motif (c11, b. 1–6) followed by a melismatic one (c12, b. 6–9), with the difference that the two of them never function as a compound or as countersubjects to each other. Section C1 is rounded off by a motif outlining a third in Soprano 1 (c2, b. 10–11) that seems insignificant at first, but gains in importance in sections C2 and C3 by being imitated (b. 22–23) and alternated in varied form (b. 38–41). The stretto in C4 culminates in parallel melismas similar to the first movement, after which c2 rounds off the duet as a cadential figure.

Unlike HWV 189, *No, di voi non vuò fidarmi* (HWV 190; Handel 2011b, 156–163; Handel recording, Arcadian duets) is written for soprano and alto, which slightly reduces the potential for a lively *concertante* exchange between equal voices, resulting in frequent rapid exchanges and quasi-stretto imitation on the prime. Due to the same text, it shares the former duet's three-movement structure, with two lengthier movements in the major mode framing a minor middle one. Handel decided to follow in his own compositional footsteps while setting the first four lines in several cycles in the course of the first movement, although the process has altogether different formal contours. In HWV 189 there was a through-composed cyclic, simultaneous setting of two groups of lines with their respective thematic material, whereas HWV 190 integrates likewise four settings of the whole text into a free tripartite form. After a section (A1, b. 1–57) that narrows itself to a setting of the first two lines, some new material on the third and fourth line follows, but the listener's expectations of a *da capo* form are thwarted, as from b. 72 onwards the movement is based on several cycles that alternate material associated with the respective pair of lines. The tonal structure is decisive in the outlining of a tripartite form; unlike the modulatory middle section (A2, b. 58–103), A3 (b. 103–140) stays within the confines of E major.

The movement opens with the alto presenting a lapidary, composite periodic subject (a11, b. 1–4 + a12, b. 4–8) in its entirety, then it repeats its head (b. 8–9) before giving way to a full imitation in the soprano (b. 9–16), doubled by a discrete counterpoint in the alto. In the remainder of A1, Handel works with a11 and a12 separately, alternating or imitating a11 in the manner of a stretto (b. 21–31, 40–44), while using cadential passages based on a12 to lead back into the tonic (b. 31–40). Section A2 imitates its repetitive motif a2 to a counterpoint of quaver neighbour notes that give way to the unfolding of the integral subject a1 (=a11+a12) in b. 72–79. The remainder of the section is constituted by alternating, modulating exchanges of

the head of motif a11 (b. 80–85), before devoting itself exclusively to two free imitations of a2 (b. 85–103). Finally, section A3 places the stress back on the material from A1, first by an even less regular, sequential imitation of a11 (b. 103–110) ending in arpeggiated figures on the words “cieco amor, crudel beltà” (b. 111–113), which is modelled on the respective passages in HWV 189. A free imitation of a2 (b. 114–124) is followed by a final extension of a11 to conclude the movement. It looks as if Handel, while rounding off this aria-like tripartite movement, seems to have forgotten about a12 and reduced the material combined from A1 and A2 to a11 and a2.

The second, *largo* movement (“Altra volta incatenarmi”) shares the pathetic, minor-mode character with HWV 189, but it differs from the former piece’s simple motivic alternations by a free, only partly imitative contrapuntal flow. On the other hand, the third movement (“So per prova”), however, shows no parallels to the first movement of the duet as had happened in HWV 189. It is written in the manner of a lapidary *fugato*, for it imitates a single thematic idea of a longer span (c, b. 1–6), with elements derived from it in its counterpoint (b. 7–12). The use of episodes derived from the subject in between imitations and brief strettos confirm this. In terms of motivic unity it compares with many movements in Handel’s duets that freely derive their subsidiary material from the initial one, but is nevertheless almost unique in its adherence to the structural principles of the fugue. It shows that, in contrast to the first two movements, Handel consciously conceived the third movement of HWV 190 independently of its counterpart in HWV 189.

The chamber duet *Beato in ver* (HWV 181; (Handel 2011b, 150–155; Handel recording, Duetti da Camera), the last one to be examined here, is the setting of a free translation of one of Horace’s *Epodes* (II, 1–8), idealising pastoral life because of its freedom from material goods and ambition. In his last duets Handel was apparently drawn to more reflective texts. *Fronda leggiara e mobile* (HWV 186; Handel 2011b, 164–172; Handel recording, Duetti da Camera), a reflection on the inconstancy of fate and an advocacy of steadfastness in face of life’s unpredictability, also displays the composer at his most philosophical in a chamber duet. I wonder whether the breach of the tradition of amorous subjects at the heart of the chamber duet had anything to do with the surpassing of the genre’s structural and formal conventions, taken furthest in Handel’s output so far, since Handel translates this eulogy of country life onto the plane of a single large-scale, almost operatic *da capo* form. In contemplative texts of the sort it is not only the somewhat surprising affect of joy but also the formal and structural regularity that contributes to the effect of playfulness and lightness.



	TEXT	THEMATIC MATERIAL *	FORM	BAR	KEY
A	Beato in ver chi può, lontan da gravi affari star ne' paterni lari e il suo terren solcar.	a <sub>1</sub> a <sub>2</sub> a <sub>3</sub>	A <sub>1</sub> A <sub>2</sub> A <sub>3</sub>	1-39 39-73 73-110	A, E, A A, D, A A
B	Troppa ricchezza, no, né povertà l'affanna, ambizion tiranna nol fa mai sospirar.	b <sub>1</sub> b <sub>2</sub> %	B <sub>1</sub> B <sub>2</sub>	110-149 150-195	f#, b, e, b, f# f#, c#
A'	Beato in ver...	<i>da capo</i>			

TABLE 13.  
Formal plan of Handel's chamber duet *Beato in ver* (HWV 181)

\* Like in the previous Table 13, the columns "Text" and "Thematic material" are mutually aligned, whereas "Form", "Bar" and "Key" refer to each other.

As in *Fronda leggiara e mobile*, each of the duet's sections opens with a lengthy alternative presentation of a tripartite subject, with the difference that the head (a<sub>1</sub>) intervenes in b. 16 in the alto, almost in the manner of a *motto* aria before the soprano concludes its final cadence, so that the alto can start again, stating the whole subject in b. 21. The composite nature of the subject (a<sub>1</sub>, b. 1-4; a<sub>2</sub>, b. 4-8; a<sub>3</sub>, b. 8-21) nevertheless leaves room for flexibility, as Handel subjects the range of the initial leap of a<sub>1</sub> to variation and freely extends a<sub>3</sub> by a *Fortspinnung* of its quaver figures (first occurrence b. 31-35), supported by a lengthy pedal in harmony with the text's pastoral theme. As in all the duets composed in the 1740s analysed so far, he constructs his sections in several cycles that set the text of the movement in its entirety. As in the opening movements of HWV 186 and 190, the first section<sup>81</sup> unfolds three cycles of this kind. Subsection A<sub>1</sub> avoids counterpoint altogether, presenting the material in alternation, while subsection A<sub>2</sub> and A<sub>3</sub> work out each of the subject's three particles in succession. Imitative procedures are free, due among others to the varying of a<sub>1</sub> (presented in alternating statements in A<sub>2</sub>, b. 39-46 and in parallel in A<sub>3</sub>, b. 73-76), whereas the imitation of a<sub>3</sub> gives way to some further extensive *Fortspinnung* (b. 56-64, 85-90, 96-102), resulting occasionally in (quasi-)parallel movement. The crucial difference between sections A<sub>2</sub> and A<sub>3</sub> is in the much narrower imitative entries of a<sub>3</sub>. Section A thus proceeds from a regular alternation of composite subjects via the working

81 There is no change of tempo or a double bar-line between A and B.

out of its particles to a free contrapuntal interplay in which the motivic material serves merely as a point of departure.

The part of the continuo, containing elements of  $a_1$  and  $a_3$ , leads into section B. It functions as a contrasting middle section in a *da capo* form, eventually rounded off by the repeat of A, and is therefore set apart from it by a harmonic contrast (related minor keys) and the idiomatic expressive treatment of words such as “affanna”, “tiranna” and “sospirar”, the latter interspersed with rests and following the traditions of musical rhetoric (Emans 2012, 538). However, I find it equally if not more important to stress the structural parallels and differences between the sections, taken even further than in section A. Although it seems that at the first utterance of the last line (“nol fa mai sospirar”) in b. 127, we are dealing with a new, third motivic unit, its subsequent treatment and its absence from subsection B2 show that Handel decided to treat this line freely, with the aforementioned sighing figures (first occurrence b. 132–136) as its only motivic trademark. As in section A, the two subsections display a growing share of *Fortspinnung* in their concluding bars, more extended in B2 when compared to B1 the same way  $a_3$  became extended in each of A's subsections.

To a certain extent, in both *Beato in ver* and *Fronda leggiara e mobile* (possibly written even later, between 1740 and 1745)<sup>82</sup>, Handel proceeds as he did in the two settings of *No, di voi non vuò fidarmi*, by turning away from the compositional logic of the madrigal in favour of a cyclical conception of form that sets all the lines of a movement in several turns. However, the movements of these late duets differ from HWV 189 and 190 by opening with lengthy, alternating presentations of long, tripartite (or in the case of the second movement of *Beato in ver*, bipartite) subjects that can be dismantled into their constituent motifs and are possible to combine contrapuntally in the manner of a mosaic. Unlike HWV 189 and 190, they do not unite an essentially dual thematic material into alternating cyclic settings, but present their respective texts (the first stanza in the case of the first movement, the second stanza in the case of the second one) as composite thematic material in its entirety. Both these duets seem to gradually abandon the need to infuse the text with interpretation, which could be down to both the reflective character and the departures from the tradition of the genre as exemplified in the work of Handel's great precursor, Steffani.

82 Disagreeing, Burrows (2012, 207) thinks that the duet was “probably completed” in 1741.

## 2. 4.

### CHAMBER DUETS BY HANDEL'S ITALIAN CONTEMPORARIES:

G. BONONCINI, F. GASPARINI, A. LOTTI, F. DURANTE

Whereas the need for a comparison of Handel's ensembles with the ones of his Italian contemporaries such as Bononcini, Gasparini and others is almost self-evident (see Chapter 1.1) in Handel's dramatic music, in the case of the chamber duet such comparisons need more justification. There is little trace of direct influence in this domain except for Steffani's chamber duets as predecessors and models, and the chamber duets by Giovanni Carlo Maria Clari, whose complex musical relationship with Handel surpasses the scope and purpose of this study. However, I still find it interesting to examine the chamber duets by composers as diverse as Antonio Lotti, Francesco Gasparini, Giovanni Bononcini and Francesco Durante<sup>83</sup> in their own merit. Firstly, most of them were written in Handel's lifetime and reflect the complex situation the genre found itself in. Secondly, some of these composers engaged in a specific musical interplay with Handel, whether as models or opponents in other musical genres although there is no evidence of direct contact between their respective chamber duets. Thirdly, as shall be seen in Chapter 3, many of these names will be important points of reference for duets in Handel's dramatic music. And we should not forget that not only Handel's contemporaries but also theorists of a younger generation in the 18th century such as the already mentioned Giordano Riccati compared the chamber duets of some of these composers. Riccati was, namely, of the opinion that the chamber duets of Giovanni Bononcini "do not yield in the least to the ones by Handel, and both the one and the other compete with the famous duets of Monsignor Agostino Steffani"<sup>84</sup> (Lindgren 2009, 149).

The accessibility and comprehensibility of the sources, as well as the availability of recordings played a crucial part in reaching a selection of nine chamber duets. However, the selection also highlights the diversity of the genre in a guise not so familiar from the chamber duets by Handel and Steffani that were analysed in previous chapters. Table 14 groups them partly according to structural and formal criteria to be explained in the course of Chapters 2.4.1 and 2.4.3 (the first two duets as well as the last four), partly by their authors (Bononcini and, to a lesser extent, Gasparini in the third group).

83 The composers are listed chronologically by date of birth, as an exact chronology of their chamber duets is not possible.

84 Non la cedono per lo meni a quelli dell'Handel, e che gli uni, e gli altri gareggino coi famosi duetti di Monsignor Agostino Steffani

COMPOSER	DUET	YEAR	SETTING	TYPE	FORM	TEXT/DRAMA	CHARACTERISTICS
Durante Francesco	<i>Mitilde, mio Tesoro</i>	1720– 1730	S&A	reworking of a cantata=hybrid	exchange of recitative arioso, duet sections	dramatized monologue	reflection on absence (echo) free contrapuntal elaboration
Gasparini Francesco	<i>Nice s'è ver che m'ami</i>	?	S&A	hybrid: text = cantata, music = chamber duet	recitative interspersed with arioso ending in a duet (fugue structure)	dramatic dialogue ending in duet of unity	ariosi: brief outbursts of joy; duet movement: regular fugue with tripartite subject
Bononcini Giovanni	<i>Luci barbare spietate</i>	1721	S&A	hybrid: text (epic), otherwise cantata a 2	2 movements separated with rec. (1st ABA, 2nd ABA)	1 <sup>st</sup> duet & rec: dram. dialogue, 2nd duet: narrator	1st and 2nd ABA: alternation & (quasi) imitation: unity, operatic in layout & structure
	<i>Pietoso nume arcier</i>	1721	S&A	cantata a 2 without arias	2 mov. sep. with rec. (1st ABA, 2nd ABA)	dramatic dialogue (unity)	similar to Luci barbare (unity), but loose structure, less imit.
	<i>Chi d'amor tra le catene</i>	1691	S&S	chamber duet: between sonata & cantata type	6 movements: first two sonata type, the others cantata type	monologue with traces of dialogue	movements I & II: tripartite, imitative; other movements: recitative + arioso or fugal
Lotti, Antonio	<i>Poss'io morir</i>	1705	S&A	sonata type	3 mov. built from short sections, last one repetition of first one	monotextual: no dramatization	sections based on own them. mat., brief imitation followed by sequential CP (suspensions)
Gasparini Francesco	<i>Sdegnò ed Amor</i>	?	S&A	sonata type	4 movements (inner: madrigal, outer: fugue structure)	monologue dramatized in 2 <sup>nd</sup> movement	outer mov.: fugal working out; inner mov.: madrigal structure, division of lines in 2nd
	<i>A' voi, piante innocenti</i>	?	S&S	sonata type	3 movement: fugue, free CP & combination of the two	emphasised lament	1st mov.: consistent fugue; 2nd homophony / free CP, non-motivic; 3rd: combination
	<i>Sento tal fiamma</i>	?	S&A	sonata type	2 movements	languishes cut short by Love's address	1st mov.: starts out as fugue but becomes more free; 2nd mov.: multi-sectional, diversity

TABLE 14.

A selection of chamber duets by Handel's Italian contemporaries for analysis

A duet by Durante is included not only because it is recorded (Durante recording, XII duetti a soprano e contralto) and available in a 19th-century edition (Durante 1844) but also because Durante's authorial transformation of Alessandro Scarlatti's solo cantatas into chamber duets results in highly unconventional solutions to the problems of genre posed by the chamber duet. A discussion of Gasparini's duet *Nice, s'è ver che m'ami* will follow before the analysis of other duets by the composer, many of them also recorded (Gasparini recording, *Amori e ombre*). This duet is akin to Durante's in that it is a hybrid between a *cantata a due* and a chamber duet, but in an entirely different way to Bononcini's *Si fugga, si sprezzi / s'apprezzi* and *Luci barbare spietate*, published in different printed collections in the composer's lifetime (*Duetti da camera*, 1691 and *Cantate e duetti*, 1721, see Bononcini 1701; Bononcini 2008). *Pietoso nume arcier*, however, is a fully fledged *cantata a due*, which is perhaps less surprising as it was originally published in a collection of cantatas. The fourth remaining Bononcini duet, *Chi d'amor tra le catene* is important as a link with the tradition of the older type of chamber duet in numerous sections or movements, often characteristic of Steffani. It will be interesting to compare it to a chamber duet by another composer associated with Handel through issues of borrowing, Lotti's *Poss'io morir*, a duet published less than fifteen years after Bononcini's (Lotti 1705) and meanwhile recorded (*Amore e morte dell'amore*, recording). Whereas Lotti's duet is a clear example of the "sonata duet", Bononcini infuses his with elements of the cantata. After an overview of diverse musical possibilities within the genre around the time Handel was reaching maturity in it, a study of duets that approximate Handel's more closely in stylistic and structural terms will follow. Three of Gasparini's duets (*Sdegno ed Amor*, *A voi, piante innocenti* and *Sento tal fiamma* from the same MS offer a chance for a comparison of common structural traits with Handel and the composers named above.

Giovanni Maria Clari will be absent from the comparison. Although widely available in editions both during his lifetime (Clari 1740) and later on (Clari 1823; Clari 1892) but barely recorded, his chamber duets have been subjected to more study (Taylor 1906; Saville 1958; Baggiani 1977; Liebscher 1987; Emans 1997) than the Italian composers' duets analysed in the subsequent course of this chapter. Clari is different from these Italian composers in that he is remembered first and foremost as a composer of chamber duets. Not only was he highly regarded by illustrious contemporaries such as Burney (who even favoured him over Steffani), Avison, Eximeno and Padre Martini but also by singing teachers of his age and beyond (extending into the 19th century), who used his chamber duets in vocal training. He was an "enormously skilled craftsman" (Saville 1958, 139), mostly in terms of contrapuntal technique and melodic idiosyncrasy. Saville describes Clari's collection *Duetti e madrigali* of 1720 in the

following words: “Formally, they rather resemble miniature ‘fugues’, each movement a schematic dialogue in which swift subjects and countersubjects spring nimbly from the text” and “engage in brief episodes” (ibid., 137). The majority are sonata duets, often working out the thematic material with variable degrees of contrapuntal density in several cycles, just like some of Handel’s. This renders comparisons with Handel viable, and it is precisely in relation to Handel that Clari has often been examined. Most authors focus on the topic of Handel’s borrowings from him, giving less attention to structural and formal similarities. Chrysander showed how Handel parodied six chamber duets by Clari in his oratorio *Theodora*, and the borrowing process has been further investigated since. Taylor’s (1906, 28) opinion that “several entire choruses and a long orchestral movement are, with more or less infusion of other matter, developed out of passages of two or three bars each taken from Clari’s unpretentious but charming little compositions” has not been challenged seriously even though later authors (e. g. Dean 1959; Liebscher 1987) realised that Handel often took over and adapted larger structures, sometimes even whole movements. However, the dominant point of view is that Handel improved the borrowed material, working it out on a “larger canvas” of choral and orchestral textures, although it hardly comes as a surprise that in the (dramatic) duet “To thee, thou glorious son of worth” from the oratorio *Theodora* (a parody of Clari’s *Dov’è quell’usignolo*) Handel abandoned the relationship between the vocal parts and the continuo of Clari’s original (Liebscher 1987, 215). In a dramatic duet the comprehensibility of the (different) text(s) comes to the fore and some of the textural complexity such as contrapuntal density is transferred from the relationship between the voices and the continuo onto the level of orchestral accompaniment.

That the comparative research of Handel’s and Clari’s chamber duets can lead to contradictory results is suggested by Emans’s analysis of “Come Mighty Father”. He insists that Handel here makes us forget his model by transforming it. He seems to imply that Handel consciously avoided reaching for more distinctive material from Clari so that he would not be limited in his transformative creativity (cf. Emans 1997, 420–422). Among others this proves that the similarities and the differences between the two composers’ chamber duets are either too circumstantial to outline or too complex to elucidate in the scope of this study. Moreover, since unlike the other Italian composers considered in this study, there were no direct contacts between Handel and Clari whatsoever and relations of parody and possible influence are confined to the genre of the chamber duet (in which Clari was not as influential a figure as Steffani), I can conclude that a comparison between these two composers would not be as fruitful.

2. 4. 1.  
Hybrid Chamber Duets

The Neapolitan composer F. Durante (1684–1755) differs from his own generation of composers in that he did not pursue an operatic career like his fellow citizens Nicola Porpora, Leonardo Vinci and Leonardo Leo. Having established his reputation entirely in the realm of church (and to a lesser degree, chamber) music, he was often regarded by his contemporaries and immediate successors as a follower of learned traditions, although he strived to amalgamate them with new stylistic influences the Neapolitan school was known for (see Cafiero and Dietz 2001). For instance, Dent singles out Durante from other representatives of the Neapolitan school (characterised by him in negative terms), claiming that “he exhibits a larger share than any of the others [Neapolitan composers, A/N] of Scarlatti’s poetry and tenderness of style” (1960, 198). Durante’s contribution to vocal chamber music played a considerable part in the composer’s reception, since he took recitatives from cantatas by Alessandro Scarlatti as the basis for his manuscript collection of *XII duetti da camera* and he reworked and expanded them into unconventional, formally fluid chamber duets to the extent that according to many (including Burney), they outshone the “original”. Although it was undertaken by Durante mostly for didactic purposes (cf. Dietz 2001), both his and Scarlatti’s merits in this fascinating case of intertextual exchange (designated “parody cantata” by Ferand) have been contested. Hasse and Dent on one hand and Villafranco on the other hoist the achievements of Scarlatti and Durante respectively, describing the other composer as “coarse and uncouth” or “dry and scholastic” (Ferand 1958, 54).

Durante transformed Scarlatti’s recitatives by developing them “into *arioso* sections by the devices of imitation, question-answer, echo effects, transposition, modulation, sequential treatment, and variation; occasionally, by interpolating material of his own... [...] The two voices sometimes start separately, in *arioso* manner, with longer or shorter phrases, or they begin simultaneously, in parallel motion, in chordal or moderately contrapuntal fashion...” (Ferand 1958, 53). Thus the formal openness and fluidity of the original recitative transfers onto the level of a variety of chamber duet textures, and it is not surprising that Riemann appreciated the different levels of contrapuntal density present in these chamber duets “at moments genuinely canonical, on wider and narrower intervals and differently spaced, and at other moments freely contrapuntal”<sup>85</sup> (Riemann 1921,

85 Die ‘XII duetti da camera’ von Francesco Durante sind ebenfalls bald wirklich kanonisch in engeren und weiteren Ton- und Zeitabständen, bald ganz frei kontrapunktiert.

193). Nevertheless, Durante's duets achieved popularity and held esteem throughout the 18th century and remained in use up to the 20th.<sup>86</sup>

Let us examine how Ferand's description relates to our own analysis of one of Durante's duets, *Mitilde, mio Tesoro* (no. 7 from the collection, Durante 1844, 2:12–18; Durante recording, XII duetti a soprano e contralto). The choice was not obvious as there are duets in the collection that draw our attention equally, if not more, by their unconventionality. The elaborate lyrics of *Dormono l'aure estive* (no. 11) inspired Durante to distinct musical ideas for each of the pastoral images described in the text in an almost madrigalistic way. Due to the scanty use of recitative, this is one of the most diffuse of the twelve duets in terms of form, abiding in arioso sections. Most of the other duets follow the dialectic of the cantata in distinguishing more clearly between recitative and duet sections. However, they are by no means cantata duets; on the contrary, they often contain parallel, two-voice recitative, rarely to be encountered in Handel's and Steffani's duets. This is explained by the fact that Durante's duets are reworkings of sections of solo cantatas for two voices, so it would make little sense if they contained solo sections, since Durante would have had to retain Scarlatti's. Therefore, Liebscher's typology remains somewhat inappropriate. A duet with longer and contrapuntally more worked out duet sections such as *Alme, voi che provaste* (no. 4) poses the question of how Durante decides which lines of Scarlatti's cantata he will set as recitative, which as duet, which he should structure like an arioso and which he should work out contrapuntally. In some of the duets from the collection, answers to these questions seem to suggest a somewhat arbitrary, almost experimental stance on the part of the composer, but in *Mitilde, mio Tesoro* Durante's decisions seem to make perfect dramatic sense, for this duet is fuelled with latent dramaturgy in the vein of many of Steffani's, which is why—among others—I chose it for analysis.

The text is a fairly conventional and generalized invocation of the absent beloved. Sections B and C, i. e. two parallel poetic imaginings of the beloved in pastoral landscapes ("fortunato lido" and "ciel"), are framed by the initial dramatic address to Metilde (section A) and the conclusion on the cruelty of amorous absence (section D). Unlike Handel's mature sonata duets, favouring a balanced relationship between movements (sections), Durante destabilizes the poem's symmetry by placing the musical emphasis on sections B and D. However, this does not mean that, since Durante's chamber duets grew out of a solo cantata's recitatives, sections A and C are mere recitative introductions to the "real" duet sections of B and D, for

86 The esteem of Durante's duets stems from their suitability for use in vocal training, but their reduction solely to this domain (Dietz 2001; Cafiero and Dietz 2001) is not justified, since he also wrote *sofeggi*, duets that serve this purpose only.



not only are some *arioso* passages integrated into section C, but both the text and—in a manner of speaking—the material of section A are brought back in section D, resulting in a specific, dual construction. Durante in his setting not only repeats lines and motifs associated with section A but also fragments and juxtaposes them, resulting in textual combinations (both in succession and simultaneity) that are not present in the original poem, such as “Metilde, tu mi tormenti!”. Whether it is merely her absence or the beloved nymph herself causing torment to the lyrical subject is less important than the fact that with its emphatic lines, often set in a way to highlight their latent dramatic potential, Durante’s setting for two voices adds a pseudo-dialogic dimension often encountered in many of Steffani’s duets and a few of Handel’s duets.

TEXT	BAR	FORM	THEM. MATERIAL	TYPE
Metilde, mio Tesoro, / e dove sei? Dove il tu piè s’aggira?	1–21	A	gestures (fourth, fifth)	recit.
Qual fortunato lido il tuo vago splendor stupido ammira?	21–45	B	b <sub>1</sub> , b <sub>2</sub>	duet
Qual ciel per te risplende al bel fulgor delle tue luci ardenti?	45–53	C	–	recit.
Ah distanza crudel, tu mi tormenti!	54–71		c <sub>1</sub> , (c <sub>2</sub> ?)	arioso
[Metilde, e dove sei? Ah distanza crudel, tu mi tormenti!]	71–103	D coda	gestures (A), c <sub>1</sub> , c <sub>2</sub>	duet
	104–114		c <sub>2</sub>	

TABLE 15.  
Formal outline of Durante’s chamber duet *Metilde, mio Tesoro*

Probably precisely because it grows out of the emphatic, gestural rhetoric of the recitative, *Metilde, mio Tesoro!* is atypical in its thematic material. Section A alternates two recitative statements (b. 1–5 and 5–10) of the only three lines of the section a fourth lower, but it soon becomes clear that only certain intervallic gestures will retain motivic significance throughout not only the section but also the duet in its entirety. These contain the downward fourth leap on the words “Metilde”, two leaps (the first usually a third, the second a fourth or a fifth) in opposite directions for the repetition of the words “e dove” as well as the melodic-rhythmic contours of the words “dove il tuo piè s’aggira?” (first occurrence b. 5). These three elements are freely varied in what matches Ferand’s description quoted above<sup>87</sup>, with

87 Development “into *arioso* sections by the devices of imitation, question-answer, echo effects, transposition, modulation, sequential treatment, and variation”.

b. 1–10 serving as a starting point. The effect of immediacy is enhanced by the shortening of alternating phrases, culminating in double-quaver exchanges of “dove” (b. 17–18, 20). This is followed by B, a “real” duet section that works out its initial material (b<sub>1</sub>, b. 24–25) in contrapuntal terms, but with a likewise free treatment. It subjects b<sub>1</sub> to alternation and imitation in an abridged or extended form, although motif b<sub>2</sub> (first occurrence b. 28–29, associated with the second line) emancipates itself from b<sub>1</sub> and is alternated and loosely imitated independently of it in the course of the section. This free contrapuntal interplay occasionally flows into sequential contrapuntal chains (b. 14–16, 40–42), but its main feature is the abundance of chromatic alteration typical not only of Durante’s duets, but also of Scarlatti’s cantatas. In this case, it is not governed by the semantics of the text but merely a generalized trait of “learned” music that could be associated with the chamber duet, as well.

Section C rapidly sets the second pair of lines (this time wondering about what skies Metilde finds herself under) as a swift recitative for the soprano (b. 45–50), but focuses on the motto of the poem, “Ah distanza crudel, tu mi tormenti” later on. Unlike the gestural contours in section A and the free variation in section B, this line is treated even more loosely in motivic terms, for it is first set in the alto to a quasi-recitative passage (b. 50–51) highlighting an expressive jump on the word “distanza”, only to be varied already in its repetition in the soprano (b. 52–53). A stark contrast is offered in b. 54 with the establishment of a steady rhythmic pace in a downward progression of minims accompanied by a likewise downward chordal figure in the continuo (b. 54–69), making way for an arioso *a due* in which the downward minim motif (c<sub>1</sub>, b. 54–56) is freely combined with varied outcries of “ah distanza crudel” (that I will mark as c<sub>2</sub><sup>88</sup>), characterised by emphatic leaps on the syllable “del” that vary from a major sixth (b. 59–60) to an octave (b. 60–61) and an augmented fourth (65–66). The following bars display, for the first time, arpeggiations on the words “tu mi tormenti” (b. 66–67) that are to be associated with this text in section D. One could argue that the latter’s beginning in b. 71 is somewhat arbitrarily defined, as the break from recitative to arioso happened already in b. 54, and in b. 71 there is no break within the arioso texture of b. 54–71. However, I will insist on this formal outline because fragments of the duet’s first line (“Metilde, e dove sei?”) return and—with them—their associated gestural motifs. Section D opens with four bars (b. 71–75) freely reminiscing on the gestural motifs on the words “Metilde” and “dove sei”, before returning to a free imitation of c<sub>1</sub>, underlined by its characteristic rhythmic accompaniment (b. 75–77). This unexpected ordering of the text

88 Although one can hardly speak of motifs in the strict sense, more so of motivic contours.

already produces the above mentioned semantic link between the torments and the beloved, and the remaining course of the section will only enhance this effect dramatically. It will continue to contrapuntally juxtapose the gestural motifs of “Metilde” or “dove sei” with variants of c2 (b. 78–80, 92–93), c1 (b. 90–92) or to develop free counterpoint from the already mentioned arpeggiations on the words “tu mi tormenti” (b. 94–99), making use—as before—of extension and variation, as well as the inversion of parts without consistent double counterpoint. The coda, left only with the text “tu mi tormenti” will get its expressive initial impulse from the leap on the word “crudel” (motivic association c2) extended to a diminished octave, only to die away gradually by a contrapuntal flow combining free counterpoint and brief alternation of parts reminiscent of the exchanges of “Metilde” and “dove” in section A. The lapidary ending—an exchange of “Metilde” in the alto with a descending “tu mi tormenti” in the soprano (far-reaching variation of c1)—makes for a pointing conclusion to the duet.

Chamber duets about amorous abandonment or solitude have benefited from the tradition of the musical echo, so prominent in music of the 17th century, since it is pointedly dramatic when there is nothing to answer the languishing laments of the subject but the faint echo of his or her voice. As had already been noticed in Steffani's *Saldi marmi* and, to a lesser extent, Handel's *Se tu non lasci amore* (HWV 193), the chamber duet not only plays with this effect but sometimes makes out of it a musical-dramatic guiding principle of the composition. There are few such elaborate musical structurings of an inner echo such as *Metilde, mio Tesoro!* Durante uses his method of reworking Scarlatti's recitatives to produce a flexible, fluid structure of two-voice recitative, arioso and duet proper, and he also assures large-scale motivic unity and continuity by bringing back the emphatic calls to Metilde and leading them into an intensive dialogue with the conclusion of the poem on the cruelty of absence. To this purpose, his rich harmonic language, abundant with alterations and chains of secondary dominants, is more than perfectly suited.

Francesco Gasparini's *Nice, s'è ver che m'ami* (Gasparini MS, Duetti madrigali, no. 5, 33'–38'<sup>89</sup>; Gasparini recording, *Amori e ombre*) is one of a few duets in the composer's MS collection of twelve duets conserved at the British Library that does not belong to the sonata type of chamber duet, along with *Su quest'amena spada* (Gasparini MS, Duetti madrigali, no. 3, 15'–26) and *Quanto felice sei* (Gasparini MS, Duetti madrigali, no. 12, 84–94), examples of the cantata duet. As Robinson (1981, 69) rightly points out, in the case of these duets “the musical form partly depends on the poetry”, whose verse structure “invites the musician to compose them more

89 In the main text, manuscripts will be referred to according to the Chicago Manual of Style in the following way: Author, Primary title, (Secondary title), Foliation.

or less in an operatic manner, that is, with recitatives and arias/duets in alternation.”<sup>90</sup> The reason why after the consideration of Durante’s duet I have decided to concentrate on *Nice, s’è ver che m’ami* is not merely that it, too, is a hybrid between the cantata and the chamber duet. The duet’s text is, namely, unambiguously a dialogue in recitative with roles clearly assigned to the shepherd Tirsi (A) and the nymph Nice (S), which means that, unlike in duets of the cantata type making use of both solo and two-voice recitative (thus remaining monologic), its text is conceived as a *cantata a due*. The shepherd Tirsi and the nymph Nice mutually confess that they have lost their hearts to each other and conclude that, since each of their hearts is safely endorsed within the breast of the other, there is no reason for jealousy and fear. They unanimously celebrate their inextricable bond, leaving no place for conflict. The parallel with Durante’s procedure of reworking Scarlatti’s recitatives lies in how Gasparini developed and extended certain recitative passages into brief *ariosi* sung by both protagonists, which rarely happens in a *cantata a due*. Unlike in the essentially undramatic, monologic texts of Durante’s duets, in *Nice, s’è ver che m’ami* this makes perfect dramatic sense, as the lines Gasparini decides to set as an *arioso* (“oh me felice”, “oh me contento”) express the affect of joy felt by both protagonists. He thus interrupts the recitative flow in two turns, first with a very short pseudo-imitative outburst on “oh me felice” (b. 9–12<sup>91</sup>), then with a slightly extended section on both of these phrases (b. 16–27), featuring pseudo-imitative counterpoint and parallel semiquaver passages of a longer span. The third, last and shortest recitative section (b. 29–35) ends in parallel two-voice recitative, confirming the prevalence of the duet over the soloist principle and flows into a proper duet section (the only one in the duet), written in the style of a fugue (Example 1). One wonders why Gasparini made the choice to treat a text that seems to have called for a *cantata a due* setting in the manner of a chamber duet. True, a cantata consisting of a mere dozen lines of recitative dialogue and ending in a monotextual duet (or *aria a due*) seems too limited in scope when compared to the cantata production of the period. For it to function as a cantata, it would require at least one aria for each soloist before concluding with a duet affirmative of the protagonist’s mutual love. Although in a form calling for a cantata setting, the lapidary scope of the text might have urged Gasparini to set it as a chamber duet instead.

90 La forma musicale dipende in parte dalla poesia... invitò il musicista a comporli più o meno nella maniera operistica, cioè, con recitativi ed aria/duetti in alternanza.

91 Bar numbers refer to my own bar markings on the photocopies of the scanned microfilm (Gasparini ms, Duetti madrigali, no. 5, 33’–38’).

33 **Allegretto**

[Canto] oh fe - li - ce\_mia spe-me, fe - li - ce\_mia spe-me oh bel cam - bio, bel

[Alto] oh fe - li - ce\_mia spe-me, fe - li - ce\_mia spe-me

[Basso]

37 **Allegretto**

cam - bio d'a-mor, o mio te - so - ro, se vi - vi io vi-vo, e se\_\_ tu\_\_

oh bel

Gasparini's skills in the art of counterpoint (to be discussed in more detail in the example of three of his other, perhaps more typical chamber duets later on) are exemplified by the above mentioned final section of *Nice, s'è ver che m'ami*, a setting of the text "Oh bel cambio d'amor, o mio Tesoro, / se vivi io vivo, e se tu mori io moro". In the manner of many of the duets analysed so far, it presents us a tripartite subject (a<sub>1</sub>, b. 36–37 + a<sub>2</sub>, b. 37–39 + a<sub>3</sub>, b. 39–42) and proceeds to imitate it in its integral form five times in different related tonalities (b. 40, 44, 49, 58, 68). Imitations are always outlined so that the imitative entry of a<sub>1</sub> falls just a quaver after the onset of a<sub>3</sub>, but instead of the impression of a stretto, the contrapuntal disposition of the section resembles a contrapuntal patchwork, like in many of Handel's and Steffani's duets, with the particles of the subject serving as building blocks, although the integrity of the tripartite subject is preserved throughout. Between these integral imitations, one encounters free contrapuntal combinations of variants of motifs a<sub>3</sub> and a<sub>2</sub>. Whereas the former is the least imposing and therefore the most viable to variation, the head of the subject (a<sub>1</sub>) needs to remain recognisable as a fugal entry and therefore cannot serve as a basis for the fugue's episodes. The only real contrast the whole duet works with is the contrast between the major-mode inflection of a<sub>2</sub> ("se vivi io vivo") and the mild chromaticism of a<sub>3</sub> ("se tu mori io moro"), but this is preserved only in the imitative entries and plays no part in the episodes, nevertheless stressing the interwoven destinies of the lovers effectively. The only duet section of *Nice, s'è ver che m'ami* proves that a chamber duet setting of a text more appropriate for a *cantata a due* can contain classically contrapuntal imitative sections as well, typical of the genre and of Gasparini's chamber duets.

#### 2. 4. 2.

### Chamber Duets by Giovanni Bononcini

The composer Giovanni Bononcini (1670–1747), son of composer and music theorist Giovanni Maria Bononcini (1642–1678) and sometimes erroneously called Giovanni Battista Bononcini, was born in Modena, but he moved to Bologna at the age of eight, where he received his musical education, among others by studying counterpoint with G. P. Colonna at the Church of San Petronio. This piece of biographical information is relevant because at the time, Bologna was the centre of "learned", contrapuntal church music (both vocal and instrumental), and the young Bononcini became a member of its renowned *Accademia Filarmonica* at the age of fifteen. Since this institution was "rigidly maintaining the practice of the earlier polyphonic style" and "helping to codify an acceptable and proper musical style" (Surian and Ballerini 2001), it is less surprising that,

before moving to Rome, in Bologna Bononcini published a collection of chamber duets (*Duetti da camera*, Bononcini 1701) as his op. 8. The duets in this collection were met with “great applause, both by scholars and music lovers”<sup>92</sup> (Riccati in Lindgren 2009, 148), they were reprinted and discussed by music theorists Le Cerf de la Viéville<sup>93</sup> in 1705 and Riccati in 1787. Although—as we shall see later on—his chamber duets are very different from Bononcini’s, Gasparini, too, who worked alongside Bononcini in Rome in the 1690s, praised them for their “*bizzaria*, beauty, harmony, artful study and fanciful invention” in his theoretical treatise *L’armonico pratico al cimbalo* (quoted in Lindgren 2009, 151). Similarly, Nicola Haym, Italian composer, cellist and man of letters, best known for adapting libretti for Handel, thought that the instrumental accompaniment in Bononcini’s chamber music is among the finest of his age (cf. Lindgren 2009, 146). Besides the ten from the 1691 collection, Bononcini is the author of another two<sup>94</sup> chamber duets published in the collection *Cantate e duetti* (London, 1721) and available in a facsimile edition, Bononcini 2008.

However, Bononcini’s reception was and to a certain extent still is a matter of some controversy. Even Le Cerf de la Viéville, highly critical of Bononcini’s melodic and harmonic style, conceded to some graciousness in Bononcini’s melody. Johann Ernst Galliard shared the impression of an “agreeable and easie style”, and this “lightness” and “easiness” is one of the most common points in writing on the composer. More recently, even though Timms (in preface to Steffani 1987) avoids value judgements while establishing that Bononcini’s duets are less contrapuntal and more like a *cantata a due* than Steffani’s, through the association with counterpoint (via Steffani) it is implied that a chamber duet making little use of counterpoint does not meet the requirements of the genre. Timms concluded that “compared with the music of Burney’s day, Bononcini’s duets must have appeared ‘learned and elaborate’, but they now seem less consistently contrapuntal than those of Steffani and closer to the *cantata a due*” (ibid., viii). It would thus appear that due to their proximity to the *cantata a due*, Bononcini’s chamber duets are less authentic representatives of the genre. Expectedly, Schmitz is more directly deprecating, criticising “the operatic character of the form, conceived as dramatized

92 Grande applauso, e da professori e da dilettaanti di musica.

93 In a polemic between the merits of French and Italian music, Le Cerf de la Viéville does not share the high opinion on the composer expressed by François Ragueneau (see Lindgren 2009, 141 and Viéville 1705, 81).

94 To this number we should add another duet from a Naples manuscript (*Quando voi amiche stelle*), considered spurious by some, but attributed to Bononcini by Lindgren (2009, 149).

duo-scenes with a rich interchange of solos and duets” and “the primitive counterpoint”<sup>95</sup> (1916, 57).

I hope to succeed in countering at least some of Schmitz’s value-overlaid judgements. Easiest to contest is the equation of traits of the cantata type of chamber duet with “operatic character”, since these traits are not characteristic of opera only but other dramatic genres as well. Chrysander shares Schmitz’s negative attitude to influences of the cantata such as the *da capo* form as well as the looser contrapuntal techniques, and clearly labels Bononcini’s 1721 contributions to the genre as “limited” (see Chrysander 1919b, 71), but it will be more interesting to return to his comments on the individual movements of the two respective chamber duets later on. In the correspondence of music theorist Giordano Riccati<sup>96</sup> (1709–1790), some attention is given to the chamber duets of Handel and Bononcini. Although the solo movements (i. e. arias) in the latter’s 1691 collection were somewhat antiquated for Riccati’s taste, he was of the opinion that the duet sections use all elements of counterpoint, imitation as well as occasionally countersubjects. Riccati criticized Bononcini’s abrupt modulations and somewhat limited harmonic language, but not his contrapuntal skills, as shown by his analysis of four duets from the collection (cf. De Piero 2012; Lindgren 2009, 149). In his own analysis, Lindgren states that “in all of Bononcini’s Op. 8 duets youthful fire is combined with academic texture” (Lindgren 2009, 150).

A closer look at the ten duets from the 1691 collection does show the domination of the cantata type. Six of them contain solo movements (*Se bella / E fido son io, Quanto cara/dolce la libertà, Prigionier d’un bel sembiante, Sempre piango/rido, O che lacci/strali io sento, Chi di gloria hà bel desio*) whereas the other four limit themselves to duet movements bound together by recitative dialogue (*Chi d’amor tra le catene; Il nume d’amore; Bellezza crudele/fedele; Si fugga, si sprezzi / s’apprezzi*). This naturally goes hand in hand with the occasional (or partial) dramatization of the compositions, whether through the more or less direct assuming of (named or unnamed) roles by the voices, or through the use of polytextuality, i. e. the fact that the two voices sing lines distinguished from each other only by a single, albeit crucial word (*Se bella / E fido son io, Quanto cara/dolce la libertà, Sempre piango/rido, O che lacci/strali io sento, Bellezza crudele/fedele; Si fugga, si sprezzi / s’apprezzi*). The tendency to use *da capo* form,

95 Vom opernhafte Charakter der vorwiegend als dramatische Duoszenen mit reichem Wechsel von Soli und Zwiegesängen gegebenen Form... primitiven Kontrapunkt.

96 Famous for his empirical achievements in the theory of harmony and musical acoustics, see Barbieri 2001. Riccati’s positive opinion on three of Handel’s duets has already been discussed in Chapter 2.3.



however, is far from being all-pervasive: only five, that is half of the duets adopt it in all the duet sections except in the final and more markedly contrapuntal one (*Il nume d'amore, Belleza crudele/fedele, Sempre piango/rido, O che lacci/strali io sento, Chi di gloria hà bel desio*).

Although *Chi d'amor tra le catene*, the duet opening the collection, will prove to be of special significance to the comparative agenda of this chapter, I will leave its consideration to the end of my discussion on Bononcini's chamber duets and focus on other selected duets, since it will turn out that they have much more in common in spite of the fact that thirty years separate their publication. Although published twenty years later in a collection that contains mostly cantatas (Bononcini 2008), the duet *Luci barbare spietate* (Bononcini 2008, 48–54; Bononcini recording, 'Luci barbare': cantate, duetti, sonate) displays an amazing number of parallel traits with the duet *Si fugga, si sprezzi / s'apprezzi* (Bononcini 1701, 126–137; Bononcini recording, 'Luci barbare': cantate, duetti, sonate) from the 1691 collection, including an identical formal plan and a similarly borderline position between a *cantata a due* and a chamber duet. This is why we shall briefly consider the two duets together, although the more recent one will be considered in more detail. *Si fugga, si sprezzi / s'apprezzi* is intricately polytextual, but its text also manages to individualise the two voices in dramatic terms. Although formally and structurally very different from Gasparini's *Nice, s'è ver che m'ami*, it could equally pass off as a *cantata a due* if it had additional solo arias for each voice. Despite no dramatic roles being named, in the recitatives and both of the duets the soprano consistently advocates scorn for love, whereas the alto shows worship for it, despite the awareness of the hardships it can bring. As a result, the respective texts of these two imaginary protagonists differ only in a word or two per line. In contrast, *Luci barbare spietate* is unquestionably monotextual and clearly indicates the roles of the shepherd Tirsi (S) and the nymph Dorinda (A)<sup>97</sup>. Like Gasparini's *Nice, s'è ver che m'ami*, it seems that the addition of a few arias would suffice to make a *cantata a due*. However, a closer look at the text reveals that the first duet movement and the recitative function on an entirely different diegetic plane than the second. With its accusatory tone and the use of the second person plural ("voi"), the first duet ("Luci barbare spietate") sounds as a lover's monologue at odds with its two-voice setting, but the subsequent recitative reveals that both Tirsi and Dorinda were in fact making the same accusation

97 It is typical of the gender identities of high voices that the male protagonist's part could be placed above the female's. In the available Bononcini recording of the duet, this produces the effect of travesty, as Tirsi's part is sung by soprano Monique Zanetti and Dorinda's by countertenor Pascal Bertin.

of “cruelty” to each other in parallel monologues, he for her refusal of his courting, she for his lack of faith. After they have consolidated their love in a recitative dialogue, what follows is not a love duet like in *Nice, s'è ver che m'ami* but a narrator's neutral commentary in the first person singular (“Spero, che in pace”), expressing hope that Tirsi and Dorinda will live in peace and happiness with each other. This final duet is therefore at dramatic odds with its duet setting (a characteristic of the chamber duet) and places the text on the epic rather than the dramatic plane.

TEXT	BAR	FORM	MOTIFS	KEY
Luci barbare spietate / accendetevi d'amore	1-31	A <sub>1</sub> =A <sub>11</sub> +A <sub>12</sub>	a <sub>1</sub> (+) a <sub>2</sub>	B, F, F, B
E così voi mi temprate / La cagion del mio dolore.	31-49	A <sub>2</sub>	a <sub>1</sub> , a <sub>2</sub> '	g, c, d
Luci barbare spietate / accendetevi d'amore.		A <sub>1</sub>	<i>da capo</i>	
Così Dorinda mia...	recitative reconciliation of Tirsi and Dorinda			
Spero che in pace / Vivran quest'alme / Senz'altra pena,	1-37	B <sub>1</sub>	b, be*	B, F, Eb, B
La doglia tace ora ch'amore / La rasserena.	37-59	B <sub>2</sub>	b', b''	g, Eb, c, g
Spero che in pace / Vivran ques'alme / Senz'altra pena.		B <sub>1</sub>	<i>da capo</i>	

TABLE 16.  
Formal outline of Bononcini's chamber duet *Luci barbare spietate*

\* Closing bar of motif b (to be explained later on in the course of the analysis).

*Si fugga, si sprezzì / s'apprezzi* shares the formal plan of *Luci barbare* as outlined in Table 16 with the difference that after two tripartite duet movements in *da capo* form separated by recitative, the composition is rounded off by an imitative coda. The first two duet sections are, however, very consistent in their avoidance of counterpoint. Bononcini limits himself to alternation and parallelism in that a single melodic line seems evenly divided between two voices. This division occurs so as to highlight the textual differences (“sprezzì / s'apprezzi” in A<sub>1</sub>, “soave/severo” in A<sub>2</sub>) at their first occurrence, after which the utterance of these contrasting words can occur in both voices in parallel. As we shall see later in Chapter 3, these characteristics are more often to be encountered in dramatic duets. Exposed use of the alternation of parts is sometimes recognised as a characteristic of the *Streitduett*, and indeed, the soprano and alto are here arguing on the merits of love. The absence of contrapuntal techniques that

were the motor of Steffani's, Handel's and Gasparini's duets is not felt as a loss because Bononcini works on a less "learned", more simple and direct stylistic plane. When the voices are finally intertwined in an imitative texture in the coda, one wonders whether the use of counterpoint after so much outright avoidance of it suggests that the two opposed opinions are not as irreconcilable as it seemed.

While writing about Bononcini's two duets from his 1721 collection, Chrysander understood them as a series of four (two times two) duets. He described the two duets comprising *Luci barbare spietate* in the following terms: "the first one has little worth, whereas the second one is adorned and delicately worked out in the best prototype of Steffani's chamber texture"<sup>98</sup> (Chrysander 1919b, 73). The contrasting evaluation of the two movements of the same duet (possibly the most unified in motivic and structural terms out of the duets by Bononcini examined in this study), necessitates a comparative analysis. In movement A, the first, repeated A1 section in this *da capo* design is unambiguously bipartite, consisting of a subsection (A11) modulating from the tonic to the dominant, and its counterpart (A12) written in quasi-inverted counterpoint, making the harmonic trajectory back to the tonic. This model, clearly building on the tradition of the baroque bipartite form, is "filled" with an imitation of a subject that can be labelled as bipartite and some cadential parallel movement. Like in many of Steffani's duets, there is only a thin line separating the second part of a bipartite subject (a2, first occurrence in b. 8–10 in the soprano) from a countersubject. The first part of the subject a1 (first occurrence b. 5–7) is alternated between the two voices without counterpoint and followed by a2 in b. 8 in the soprano as a counterpoint to a1 in the alto. The imitative flow is continued in b. 9 by an imitation of a2, leading to parallel semiquaver melismas and a reassertion of the dominant. The whole process is seemingly repeated in A12 in inverted counterpoint, but in b. 19 it becomes clear that Bononcini is more interested in freely varying and expanding the texture within the same framework, e. g. with parallel passages that give the duet some "operatic" splendour. One cannot help but wonder where in this gracious musical setting the accusatory tone of the text had disappeared to. Movement A's middle section A2 uses similar structural procedures to A1, with the main difference that there is (even) less imitation, motif a2 is reduced to its head (a2') and the form is less regular since it is governed by the need of a middle section in a *da capo* form to explore related minor tonalities. Bononcini is consistent in his motivically conditioned setting of the text: the same way as in A1, in

98 Das erste wenig Werth hat, das zweite dagegen nach den besten Mustern eines Steffanischen Kammersatzes schmückt und zierlich ausgearbeitet ist.

section A<sub>2</sub> a<sub>1</sub> remains reserved for the third line and a<sub>2</sub>' for the fourth. Bononcini's subsequent abandonment of a<sub>1</sub> and the concentration on a<sub>2</sub>' is justified in madrigalistic terms since the word "dolor" is considered particularly suited to modulatory treatment, although we are far from the expressive extremes of Steffani or (to a lesser extent) Handel, as the harmonic language is kept simple throughout.

TEXT	BAR	FORM	MATERIAL / STRUCTURAL TRAITS	
Pietoso nume arcier, / ascolta i voti miei / un sol momento.	1–17	A <sub>1</sub>	free invention & variation of motivic cells; ornaments, voice crossing	
Fa che di Tirsi/Aminta il cor / senta l'istesso ardor/ che al cor io sento.	17–26	A <sub>2</sub>	series of sequential imita- tions of motif w in inverted counterpoint	
Pietoso nume arcier...		A <sub>1</sub>	<i>da capo</i>	
Consolati Aldimira...	recitative		Dorinda consoles Aldimira	
Se l'idolo che adoro / fedel con me sarà che più bramar non sa / quest'alma amante.	1–33	B <sub>1</sub>	b <sub>1</sub>	parallel voice-lead- ing (with voice-crossing!), regularity
Già sento che ristoro / prendendo va il mio sen sperando che il suo ben / le sia costante.	33–57	B <sub>2</sub>	b <sub>2</sub> , b' <sub>1</sub>	imitation (suspension), CP against held notes
Se l'idolo che adoro / fedel con me sarà che più bramar non sa / quest'alma amante.	da capo	B <sub>1</sub>	<i>da capo</i>	

TABLE 17.  
Formal outline of Bononcini's chamber duet *Pietoso nume arcier*

In spite of Chrysander's contrasting evaluation, movement B shows many parallels with movement A. It is "fugal" in maintaining the unity of its single subject, merely deriving other motifs from it. Although counterpoint is applied more consistently and parallel movement used less often, due to frequent recourse to passages of long-held notes as a countersubject the texture is often no more taut than in movement A. After the modulation to the dominant by means of the initial imitation of b (first occurrence b. 3–5) in the lower fourth in the alto, the motif from the last bar of b (be, b. 8) sets off a sequential episode (b. 9–13), leading into another imitative chain (b. 14–19) and a second sequential episode. The regularly bipartite course of section B<sub>1</sub> is concluded with a lengthy section (b. 24–37) based

on note-to-note voice-leading, whether parallel or in contrary motion, and often integrating elements of be into its elegant, seamless flow. Bononcini obviously felt the need to infuse his chamber duets with structural features from cantata and opera, where voices can shine more prominently together rather than be pitted against each other all the time. But the difference between movements A and B is more a question of ratio than of stark structural contrasts as Chrysander understood it: movement A simply favours an alternating rather than imitative presentation of its material and is more extensive in its parallel passages, whereas movement B prefers to work out the material contrapuntally and reserves the parallel unification of the vocal parts for the closing section of section B1. Similarly to A2, the movement's middle section (B2) modulates into related tonalities. As he does this, Bononcini makes use of not only the material of B1 but of its imitative structures as well, employing be and the subsequent held note as a counterpoint to an abridged version of b (b', first occurrence b. 42–43). The idea that love shall brighten (crucial word “la rasserena”) the future of the two lovers is stressed with coloratura passages and builds a fitting bridge to the repeat of B1. Maybe Bononcini chose a more contrapuntal setting in movement B due to the more neutral nature of the narrator's text?

*Pietoso nume arcier* (Bononcini 2008, 95–99; Duetti, recording) is a case of a genuine *cantata a due* without arias. Unlike *Si fugga, si sprezzi / s'apprezzi* with its abstract dramaturgy, it is written for the clearly assigned roles of the nymphs Dorinda and Aldimira, both altos<sup>99</sup>. Unlike *Luci barbare spietate*, it lacks conflict since the characters are united in their unrequited love for the shepherds Aminta and Tirsi (movement A), the mutual consolation that they give each other (recitative) and the hope that their beloved ones will be faithful to them (movement B). In formal terms the duet is identical to *Luci barbare spietate*, with two duets in *da capo* form, but while the former's movements show a high degree of motivic unity and a great deal of common structural features, the two duet movements of *Pietoso nume arcier* are genuinely contrasting, and here Chrysander's (1919b, 73) opinion holds more ground: the first duet movement “is canonic, but takes liberties with the idiom without fulfilling its laws: it is without allure and content; the *da capo* form may be the least suited to this form.” On the other hand, the second (*Se l'idolo che adoro*), “fits this [*da capo*, A/N] construction much better, as it is held predominantly two-part”<sup>100</sup> and it can stand well as a stage duet of lighter fabric. Unlike in his assessment

99 Aldimira is Alto 1, Dorinda Alto 2, although there is a lot of voice-crossing between them.

100 Ist kanonisch, nimmt sich die Freiheiten dieser Schreibart ohne ihre Gesetze zu erfüllen; es ist ohne Reiz und Gehalt; die Rundstrophe dürfte sich zu dieser Form auch wohl am wenigsten schicken. ... Passt zu einer solchen Anlage schon besser, da es überwiegend einfach zweistimmig gehalten ist.

of *Luci barbare spietate*, Chrysander abandons the level of appropriateness to the genre as his main criteria and judges the movements on their own merits. It is refreshing how he places the movement *Se l'idolo che adoro* above the opening one even though he dismissed movement A of *Luci barbare spietate* because of its operatic character.

Movement A is atypical not only of Bononcini's, but also of all the chamber duets analysed so far in that it does not associate its lines (or pairs of lines) with clearly recognizable motifs or subjects. Instead, it engages in a seemingly spontaneous accumulation of several musical ideas slightly subject to variation. The voices open with the descending motif x, anticipated already in the introduction of the *basso continuo*, on the first line (first occurrence b. 3–4 in Aldimira's part), taken over by Dorinda after two. The close interlinking of the parts in vocal chains of lesser contrapuntal density than in Steffani's "placidissime catene" continues with a new motif, y, on the second line (b. 5–6) in Dorinda's part. Aldimira takes it up once, but after this, the interlinking of the vocal parts gives way to semiquaver neighbour notes on the section's last line (b. 6–7). After a pause, this material z (if one can call it material, for it is more of a—rhythmic—impulse) is further elaborated into a chain of appoggiaturas, ornaments and parallel thirds, maintaining the complementary semiquaver pulse and engaging in frequent voice-crossing (b. 7–10). The subsequent course of section A1 continues to develop this structural frame with an even more intensive use of voice-crossing and suspensions. Motif x is first alternated between Dorinda (b. 10–11) and Aldimira, not on the text "Pietoso nume arcier", but on the second line ("ascolta i voti miei") instead. By disregarding how a text was previously set, Bononcini distances himself from traditions of vocal music that the chamber duet might have grown out of. The much shorter section A2 sets all its three lines in one go on a rhythmic motif I shall label as w (first occurrence b. 17–18 in Alto 1). Its structure makes it possible to concatenate it into a series of sequential imitations written in inverted counterpoint and even more abundant in ornaments. The imitative entries in b. 17–21 are separated by two beats, but after a cadence in G minor motif w is briefly imitated at the distance of a mere quaver in a quasi-stretto (b. 21) that flows into parallelism and a further exploration of non-harmonic notes and parallel thirds in b. 22–26 before a *da capo* repetition of A1. It is not entirely clear why Chrysander thought that the *da capo* form is the most inappropriate aspect of this movement, for the extremely loose contrapuntal and motivic structure seems a more likely candidate for displeasing him.

Interestingly, it is almost always Aldimira's part that sets off the contrapuntal chains. It is she who introduces each of the three lines and, with it, the new material (x, y, and z). However, in the recitative Dorinda

assumes a more active role: she not only consoles the other nymph, persuades her to take on a more optimistic attitude to the prospects of her love for Tirsi being reciprocated but also confidently claims that Aminta, too, will be faithful to her. While some of Handel's and most of Steffani's numerous duets written for two sopranos distinguish themselves with a *concertante*, playful exchange between the two vocal parts, not shunning the high register either, in the only duet written for two altos that we have considered so far, Bononcini focuses on the middle register, interweaving the vocal parts very closely. The two nymphs not only share the same fate of unrequited love and provide solace and support for each other, they are also more literally close on a purely musical level as their voices build an extremely taut texture.

Movement B, however, sees the two nymphs entirely united in both dramaturgic and musical terms. After Dorinda had managed to turn around the faint-hearted Aldimira to optimism in the preceding recitative, the two nymphs sing an entire movement mainly in parallel. The change of affect (from despair to joy) does not bring about a change from minor to major the same way this was the case in *Luci barbare spietate*. In this movement, Bononcini returns to a more regular formal (and syntactical) outline known from the opening movements of *Si fugga, si sprezzi / s'apprezzi* and *Luci barbare spietate*. A more or less continual melodic stringing together of four- and six-bar phrases follows the instrumental interlude, leading from the tonic C minor to E-flat major and back. The voices are held parallel, bar a couple of quasi-imitative entries in b. 14–15 and 28–29 and some use of double counterpoint. In the middle section (B2), after a setting of the first two lines in a quasi-imitative passage that exposes a series of 2–3 suspensions (b2, b. 36–39), the composer sets the remainder of the text by alternating between passages in parallel and contrary motion and passages in invertible counterpoint against a long-held note.

Let us now examine one of Bononcini's lengthiest duets, *Chi d'amor tra le catene* (Bononcini 1701, 1–18;<sup>101</sup> Duetti, recording<sup>102</sup>) from his 1691 collection. Unlike the others analysed so far, this duet is not another borderline case, i. e. some kind of hybrid between the chamber duet and the cantata, but a genuine representative of the chamber duet. It is imposing already in its dimensions, for it consists of no less than six movements. Although Liebscher is of the opinion that there are no borderline cases

101 Although it has not been professionally edited, the following reliable IMSLP transcription facilitated analysis: [http://imslp.org/wiki/Chi\\_d%27Amor\\_tra\\_le\\_catene\\_\(Bononcini,\\_Giovanni\)](http://imslp.org/wiki/Chi_d%27Amor_tra_le_catene_(Bononcini,_Giovanni)), accessed August 10, 2014.

102 The only recording of the duet (Duetti, recording) chose to dispense with the performance of movements III to VI altogether.

MOV.	TEXT (S1 & S2)	FORM	BAR	MOTIF	CHARACTERISTICS	KEY
I.	Chi d'Amor tra le catene pose un giorno incauto il piè	A	1-33	a <sub>1</sub> , a <sub>2</sub>	imitative chains parallelism madrigalism ("abisso") free texture, parallelism <i>da capo</i>	a
	nell'abisso delle pene sventurato allor cadè.	B	34-67	b, a' <sub>1</sub>		e, b a, d
	Chi d'Amor...	A				
II.	Bella sì, ma crudel (S2) Vago sì, ma infedel (S1) Se ti lagni d'Amor ragion non hai.	A	1-21	%  a, ac	gender-specified text; alternation of parts imitative <i>concertante</i> texture in fast tempo <i>Largo</i> : alternation of parallel arioso and short-breath imitation <i>da capo</i>	F  F, C (d, a)
	Io sì che son fedel per un infido cor mi struggo in guai.	B	22-37	b		a, c, C, c
	Bella sì (da capo)	A'				
III.	Ma di perché con ingiuste querele offendi un cor fedele (S2) oltraggi alma costante? (S1)	rec.	1-5	%	recitative (one- and two-voice); dialogue: reproaches of the amo- rous object	d
	Non ha il mondo di me più fido amante.	<i>fugato</i>	5-45	a, a', ah	two-voice CP (one voice & b. c.)	d, a, d, g, b, d
IV.	Sei tù fido mio ben? (S2) Leal dunque il tuo sen (S1)	rec.	1-2	%	one-voice recitative: subject addresses object	a
	Con nuovi e dolci modi i biasmi d'Amor cangisi in lodi.	arioso	3-26	%	arioso: no imita- tion, contrast with other duet sections, transformation	e, a, e
V.	Amor è quel bambin (S1) che contenti e piacer spargendo vola.	stanza 1	1-14	a	one-voice <i>concertante</i> texture: diatonicism, sequential melismas	C
	Col volto suo divin (S2) rasserena i pensier l'alme consola.	stanza 2	14-26	a	transposition of stanza 1	a
	Amor è quel bambin... (S1&S2)	stanza 1	27-40	a	varied repetition of stanza 1, set for two voices	C
VI.	Ceda dunque ogni petto, (S1) ceda al nobile affetto di così dolce brama.	rec.	1-4		one-voice recitative	a
	Non conosce piacer cor che non ama.	<i>fugato</i>	5-79	a, a', ah	imitations	a, C, F, d, F, a

TABLE 18.

Formal outline of Bononcini's chamber duet *Chi d'Amor tra le catene*



between cantata and sonata chamber duets, this duet seems to combine the characteristics of both. Movements I and II, namely, are formally closed and strongly demarcated by a contrast in character and structure, which approximates them more to the sonata type. Nothing seems to suggest that the next four movements will be closer to the cantata type, each except movement V preceded by a short recitative. This formal diversity is combined with Bononcini's highly subtle, latent dramatization of the chamber duet as a monologic genre. The majority of the duet allows for the possibility to interpret the two-voice setting of lyrics in the first person singular as a parallel unfolding of two monologues, but there are nevertheless several individual lines divided between the two voices and, in addition, set only once. This is in line with Resta's comprehensive text (see Table 18), dramatizing a change of attitude towards love and—if we, helped by Bononcini's setting choose to interpret it as a dialogue—a reconciliation between a pair of lovers. Let us examine how this process unfolds gradually in each of the duet's sections.

The dialogue does not come to life only in movements III, IV and VI but also at the beginning of movement II, by a brief alternation of a motif on the first line (“Bella, sì, ma crudel”) in Soprano 2 and the second (“Vago, sì, ma infidel”) in Soprano 1, after which these lines never appear again. Up to this moment, in movement I we were within the bounds of conventional, monologic lyric poetry on the hardships brought by the chains of love. Although the first two lines in movement II could be interpreted as a generalised reflection on the cruelty of both sexes in love, Bononcini made sure that Soprano 2's account (or complaint) of a certain “bella” and Soprano 1's mention of a certain “vago” contribute to at least a partial dramatic differentiation of the voices into characters specified in terms of gender. The same-voice setting that stressed the connection between the nymphs Aldimira and Dorinda in *Pietoso nume arcier* serves a different purpose here, namely, to show that each of these two sopranos (a voice range both female and male) could be “bella” or “vago” and address a “bella” or a “vago” in dramatic discourse. Bononcini does not distinguish between Soprano 2 as male and Soprano 1 as female, but merely implies the possibility of such a gender coding. Although the voices leave this differentiation behind in the remainder of the movement, the fact that it is written in a *concertante* texture abounding in voice-crossing surely contributes to the effect of a certain dissociation of pitch from gender. The text of the middle section of movement II adopts the first person singular in an arioso texture with a quasi-recitative opening (b. 22–23<sup>103</sup>). This way

103 The bar markings are mine and they follow the disposition of movements in Table 18 counting from the beginning of each movement.

Bononcini again turns the attention of his listeners to the possibility that each soprano was, in a way, speaking for him or herself. The vivacious first section of movement II gains in interpretive appeal through repetition: it can be read both as a bitter reproach or a sarcastic comment.

The brief recitative opening movement III suggests a radical change of perspective: instead of the reproachful amorous subject, the offended amorous object is given a voice here, which implies that we are dealing with two characters that are referencing each other. After this recitative, the lovers are once again united in professing their faithfulness by setting the remaining two lines in the manner of a *fugato*. If these two lovers are competing with each other in making a convincing claim about which one of them is more faithful, it is also possible that both of them are making this point to their vocal partner in the duet. The recitative introducing movement IV contains a gender-specific address (“Sei tù fido mio ben?” in Soprano 2). Unlike in movement II, it is addressing not a female but a male amorous object, which implies that Bononcini did not mean to specify the voices in terms of gender after all. The following arioso traces an arch from lovesickness to the acknowledgement of mutual love. The change from reprove to praise of love is further elaborated in movement V with its strophic construction, allowing the two voices to alternate in their laudation of Cupid in a stanza each before they repeat the first one together. Finally, after Soprano 1 gives a sententious call to the audience to submit to the pleasures of love in the recitative opening of movement VI, the two voices engage in a contrapuntal unfolding of the last two lines.

This complex textual build-up abounds in poetic structures of various length, metre, line groupings and stanzas and demands some diversity on the musical level, too. Movement I sets out to leave a serious, dignified impression: in a *Largo* tempo, it unfolds two contrapuntal chains (b. 1–11, 12–17) written in invertible counterpoint and imitating motif a<sub>1</sub>, a setting of the first line. The second line is assigned its own, gestural descending material (a<sub>2</sub>, first occurrence b. 18–21), but a brief imitation in b. 19–22 gives way to a predominantly parallel undulating movement (suited to the word “incauto”) that brings the section to a close. After setting the tone with utter simplicity, the modulatory middle section (B) raises the harmonic complexity. This section is fugal, containing some highly madrigalistic thematic material, especially the dissonant fall of a diminished seventh in motif b (first occurrence b. 34–37), conveniently placed on the word “abisso”. The construction of this section is dual as in A: after the section imitating b (b. 34–48), the fourth line is set to a motif resembling an inversion of a<sub>1</sub> (a<sub>1</sub>’, b. 49–50), supported in the continuo with the diminished seventh leap from b (b. 48–49, 50–51). This motivic link between the two sections is of a short span and the treatment of the text in the rest of the section becomes freer.

In movement II, after initial alternating statements (b. 1–3), a subject (a, first occurrence b. 3–5) is consistently imitated four times. Bononcini avoids the impression of monotony by enriching the texture with two “false” entries of a variant of the subject and two abridged entries in the minor mode (b. 14–15 in Soprano 1 and b. 15–17 in Soprano 2). The first line of the second section (“Io sì che son fedel”) is set only twice as a parallel arioso, but otherwise the section comes down to short alternating and imitative statements of a lapidary motif, characterised by gradual quaver movement (b, first occurrence b. 23–24) as the movement modulates, probably because the realization that all the suffering happens for an unworthy heart requires a heightened sensuality and expressivity, further propelled by frequent voice-crossing and often accompanied by suspensions.

The duet sections of all the remaining movements (nos. III to VI) are invariably shorter and never bi- or tripartite. Movement III displays some parallels with section A of movement II in that it is constructed as a loosely structured *fugato* with a lot of voice-crossing and involves the continuo into the imitative texture, although most often combined with only one of the vocal parts. A somewhat more substantial subject, built from an easily recognisable head (first occurrence b. 5–6) and a sequenced semiquaver motif (first occurrence b. 7–8), is imitated twice, followed by an episodic section (b. 13–22). The subsequent imitations in G and B minor state the subject in an altered form (b. 22–25, 26–28, 30–33), with a counterpoint of a single held note. Only towards the end of the movement does the texture become genuinely three-voiced. In movement IV the change of heart of the mistreated lover (or lovers, if we choose to “hear” two dramatic voices) takes place. After an even shorter recitative exchange than in movements II and III comes the least imitative duet section in the whole chamber duet. With its contrast in tempo (*Largo*), articulation (resembling an arioso) and character, it aims at a musical depiction of the crucial words “cangisi in lodi” (changing into praise) and employing chains of suspensions to this expressive purpose.

Movements V and VI serve the function of affirming and consolidating love, and to this purpose movement V almost ventures into soloist territory, coming closest to this characteristic of the cantata duet. A somewhat longer, diatonic statement of the first stanza by Soprano 1 in C Major, abounding in semiquaver melismas, is repeated in Soprano 2 transposed to A minor on the second stanza, after which the two voices are strung together in pseudo-counterpoint in a varied repetition of the first stanza, again in C Major. Although this movement of the duet lacks in variety, it fulfils its clear function of setting apart and then joining the voices again, bringing it much closer to a dramatic conception of the setting of the text, according to which the two sopranos represent two voices accusing each other of cruelty or infidelity only to reaffirm their mutual love.

The final movement shows some resemblance to movement III in its contrapuntal construction, but it is also the only slow fugal movement (*Largo*) of the whole chamber duet, rounding off *Chi d'amor tra le catene* with a minor-mode movement, although very different in terms of character and texture from the opening. It radiates serenity in the stoic acceptance that “the heart that does not love does not know pleasure” (*Non conosce piacer cor che non ama*). Its subject is markedly bipartite: Bononcini even sets up expectations by alternating only the head of the subject (b. 5–7 in Soprano 1 and 7–9 in Soprano 2), but instead of resuming it again in Soprano 1, he states it in its entirety in Soprano 2 instead (b. 9–13). This second part of the subject, characterised by a syncopated gradual downward movement, lends itself to an introduction of a chain of suspensions in the other voice, while the bass provides a steady pace, almost resembling an ostinato (e. g. b. 15–19, 24–27, 37–40, 48–51, 63–67). After various imitations of the subject (more often than not in a slightly modified form), combined with modulatory episodes, the movement is concluded with a section (b. 61–79) distinguished by a total absence of the head of the subject, as the two voices are consolidated into cadencing together, in line with their newly found unity in love.

#### 2. 4. 3.

#### Further Solutions to the Problem of the Genre: Lotti, Gasparini

While *Chi d'amor tra le catene* attests to Bononcini's inclination to permeate his chamber duets with elements of dramatic music on the formal (the *da capo* form), structural (less strict imitative procedures) and dramaturgic level (dramatization of the genre by the individualisation of vocal parts) like any of the other duets of his mentioned in this study, it is unorthodox in its length and complexity<sup>104</sup>. Its placement at the opening of the collection may have wanted to impress the public, but also to build a bridge with the tradition of the madrigal by stringing together such a large number of sections. Antonio Lotti's *Poss'io morir* (Giuramento amoroso) as a consistent example of the sonata duet is even more firmly rooted in this tradition. Besides this, it also recalls the principle of the stringing together of sections based on new thematic material in the vein of some of Steffani's chamber duets.

Lotti (1666–1740) was a composer of seemingly local significance: he spent most of his life in Venice, where he excelled first and foremost

104 In an integral performance, the duration of *Chi d'amor tra le catene* would surpass ten minutes. Even Steffani's duets of the cantata type (containing solos) are usually shorter.

as the organist and *maestro di capella* of St Mark's Basilica and a composer of church music. However, as proved by both Byram-Wigfield (2012, 153) and Roberts (2012 and 2014), the impact of his only musical activity outside Italy in the service of Saxon Elector August der Starke in Dresden (1717–1719) was far-reaching, e.g. in the wide distribution of sources of Lotti's sacred music in Dresden, Prague, Vienna and Berlin. In Dresden Lotti composed operas, performances of which were witnessed by Handel himself, enticing him to sign up Lotti's singers for the Royal Academy of Music as well as to set some of his libretti. Lotti is also the author of a substantial body of vocal chamber music, out of which his op. 1, the collection *Duetti, terzetti e madrigali a più voci* (Lotti 1705) will be of interest to this study. Francesco Florimo, an Italian musicologist of the 19th century, claimed that Lotti's chamber music "could be quoted as a true model of grace and elegance", favouring it over his dramatic music that "lacks in vivaciousness"<sup>105</sup> (quoted in Becherini 1962, 224). The collection prompted a contemporary critical reply from Benedetto Marcello, member of the famous Accademia Filarmonica in Bologna and an ardent representative of the "learned", contrapuntal style, even though an amateur. In the anonymously published *Lettera Familiare d'un Accademico Filarmonico et Arcade, Discorsiva sopra un Libro di Duetti, e Madrigali a più voci, stampato in Venezia da Antonio Bortoli l'anno 1705* Marcello scrutinized Lotti's compositions in a negative light. Becherini (1962, 228) implies that his motivation was due to professional rivalry.<sup>106</sup>

Spitz (1918, 51) sees the composer as a follower of the tradition of chamber duet started by Steffani: "The style of complementary voice-leading, the treatment of canonic entry, then in turn the use of simply alternating voices that are in the end united—to interweave all these in a smooth musical unity would be the ideal fruit of the knowledge of Steffani's chamber art."<sup>107</sup> In what sense Spitz thinks of Steffani as Lotti's teacher remains uncertain: the odds that this was in the literal, biographical sense of the word are unlikely, as Steffani was appointed *Kapellmeister* in Hanover in 1688, by which time Lotti was in Venice even if we allow for the possibility

105 Le sue musiche per camera poi possono essere citate come veri modelli di grazia ed eleganza... manca la vivacità.

106 An examination of *Poss'io morir* (Giuramento amoroso) is included in Marcello's review, but the primary source is unavailable to me, and the example of the analysis of the trio *Ci string' il core Amor* (Lamento de tre amanti), quoted in Becherini 1962, 229, shows its adherence to an 18th-century academic discourse that is of little relevance to the approach taken by this study.

107 Die Art der gegenseitigen Stimmführung, die Behandlung des kanonischen Einsatzes, dann wiederum die Benutzung einfach alternierender Stimmen, die sich zuletzt vereinen – dies alles in ein flüssiges, klingendes Ganzes verwoben, wäre die ideale Frucht der Kenntnis der Steffanischen Kammerkunst.

of his birth in Hanover. Although published ten years after Bononcini's highly different collection<sup>108</sup>, Lotti indeed follows in the footsteps of the contrapuntal, madrigalistic conception of the genre. The authorship of two collections of chamber duets published within a space of ten years might have put the composers in a position of rivalry, perhaps against their own will and this may have played a part in the series of scandals that led Bononcini to leave England in 1732. To Taylor Sedley (1906, 176) the way in which the authorship of the five-voice madrigal *In una siepe ombrosa* (La vita caduca) was heavily contested in London is an indication that "plagiarism was regarded by educated musicians in the eighteenth century exactly as it is regarded by them in the twentieth."

Most sources (including Romagnoli 2000 and Bennett and Lindgren 2001) accuse Bononcini outright of plagiarising Lotti's madrigal, but Lindgren (1975) brings forth a somewhat different account. His point of departure is John Hawkins's (1776) original account of the three incidents "fatal to the interest of Bononcini". Hawkins maintained that the principal motor between the presentation of *In una siepe ombrosa* as Bononcini's composition were members of the Academy of Ancient Music centred around Maurice Greene, who presented the madrigal as Bononcini's composition in 1728, possibly without the composer's knowledge since there is no evidence that Bononcini ever claimed the composition as his own. In 1731 the madrigal was performed again, this time attributed to Lotti, which was followed by an extensive polemic that was eventually published, including a few letters to and from Lotti himself. Bononcini remained silent in the dispute, and Lotti's conciliatory stance towards him allows for the possibility that Bononcini might not have plagiarized Lotti's madrigal at all (see Lindgren 1975, 564–571). Another reason to compare the chamber duets of the two composers is that both of them are important points of reference for Handel, who extensively borrowed from his two older Italian peers. He evidently knew not only Lotti's sacred music and operas, but his 1705 collection as well, as has been shown by Roberts (2012, 171–173) who succeeded in identifying a number of borrowings in Handel's English-language works, mostly his anthems.<sup>109</sup>

Although the reasons why the choice fell on *Poss'io morir* (Giuramento amoroso; Lotti 1705, 39–43; Amore e morte dell'amore, recording) have already been outlined, it is certainly not the most representative, nor the

108 Both composers dedicated their collections to a distinguished dedicatee in the person of the current Habsburg emperor, Bononcini to Leopold I and Lotti to Joseph I, perhaps reflecting the taste for learned music in Vienna.

109 He does not identify any borrowings from *Poss'io morir*, though, which possibly makes it even more suitable for the kind of comparison this study strives to achieve.

musically most attractive duet of the collection. Although Lotti's chamber duets dispense with elements of the *cantata a due* altogether, they have a dramatic side to them since all the compositions in the collection carry a title, which makes them similar to a number of duets by Giovanni Carlo Maria Clari. They are even thematically divided into "amorous" and "pathetic" ones, and it is no surprise that the duets fall within the former category. In terms of scope and structural procedures, *Poss'io morir* is most similar to the duet *Ben dovrei occhi leggiadri* (*Querela amorosa*), which is in line with the somewhat lighter approach to love taken by the former's text, the most significant difference being that *Ben dovrei occhi leggiadri* resorts more often to alternating statements and parallelism. *Nò che lungi da quel volto* (*Lontananza insopportabile*) is worked out more extensively in contrapuntal terms. It deals with the subject of the absence of the beloved, perhaps more serious than the topos of a distant and unresponsive object's (the nymph Fille) mistrust for the subject's amorous pledges in *Poss'io morir*. Simply put, this duet represents a certain middle ground in the collection and it is more suitable for comparison with the other chamber duets discussed in this chapter.

MOV.	SEC.	TEXT	BAR	MOTIF	CHARACTERISTICS	KEY	
I	A <sub>1</sub>	Poss'io morir se non t'adoro,	1-11	a <sub>1</sub>	succession of short sections based on respective them. material	g d mod. mod. B <sup>b</sup>	
	A <sub>2</sub>	o Fille,	11-14	a <sub>2</sub>			
	A <sub>3</sub>	Ma che giova ingrandir col	14-19	a <sub>3</sub>			
	A <sub>4</sub>	giuramenti	19-24	a <sub>4</sub>			
	A <sub>5</sub>	La mia costanza eternal? Chiedilo a miei tormeni, Dimandalo alle tue care pupille.	24-38	a <sub>5</sub>			
II	B <sub>1</sub>	Ma perché tu non vedi la chiara fiamma ond'hai sì	1-25	b <sub>1</sub>	alternating statements disguised imitation; CP chains	E <sup>b</sup> , B <sup>b</sup> mod. g - F	
	B <sub>2</sub>	B <sub>21</sub>	pieni i lumi?	26-37			b <sub>2</sub>
		B <sub>22</sub>	E perché tu non credi / ch'io per te mi consume?	38-57			
III	C <sub>1</sub>	Torno à giurar la fè del mio martoro	1-10	c		F, B <sup>b</sup> , g	
	C <sub>2</sub> = A <sub>1</sub>	[Fille,] poss'io morir se non t'adoro?	10-22	a <sub>1</sub>			

TABLE 19.

Formal outline of Lotti's chamber duet *Poss'io morir* (*Giuramento amoroso*)

The loose, "madrigal" formal structure of the duet is evident in its first movement, consisting of as far as five thematically unrelated sections.

Out of these, the two framing sections stand out in thematic terms (A<sub>1</sub>), or in sheer length (A<sub>5</sub>), recalling the build-up of some of Steffani's chamber duets with its lengthier, more elaborate closing sections. Lotti's duets are generally on a smaller scale, and in none of the duets examined in this study except of Steffani's shall we see anything comparable to the tiny units that make up the first movement of *Poss'io morir*. Lotti usually starts his sections with a recognisable imitative motivic entry, but lets it unfold freely, usually in sequential passages loosely based on the initial thematic material that propel the enunciation of each of the five lines. He chose to provide a distinct, motivic section for each of them (which would have been unusual in the chamber duets of Handel and his generation of composers writing in the second or third decade of the century). The opening motto section with its fervent pledge (A<sub>1</sub>) will reappear in the final, third movement, closing the duet in its entirety as well. Two brief sections in D minor (A<sub>2</sub> & A<sub>3</sub>) follow, attaching a bar or two to a single imitation of their respective transitory motifs. The second and the third line thus receive only subsidiary treatment from the composer, even though they state the crucial ideas that further pledges to the nymph Fille are pointless because, as the next six lines explain, she chooses to disregard not only the subject's words, but his actions and behaviour as well. Lines four and five, with their imagery of torments ("tormenti") and the beloved's eyes ("care pupille") are set in a more expansive way, suggesting that poetic images are more important for the setting than rhetoric and semantic aspects of the text. A<sub>4</sub> starts off a chain of chromatically introduced secondary dominants that continue into section A<sub>5</sub> until the modulations reach and affirm B major in b. 26.<sup>110</sup> A<sub>5</sub> as the longest and only multi-partite section of the movement offers continuity on the compositional and the motivic plan: not only does it consist of two subsections (b. 24–30, 31–38) that follow the same plan of imitative entries, consequent imitative sequential counterpoint and parallel cadencing, they are also motivically related: the heads of a<sub>4</sub> and a<sub>5</sub> are similar and the *contrapunctus ligatus* that the parts weave around each other after the imitation is related as well.

Movement B dwells less on its lines' semantics than the first movement did and favours the quick alternation of motifs in the vocal parts to their imitative treatment in the first section (B<sub>1</sub>). A secondary motif (b. 13–16) displays some coloratura on the madrigalistic word "fiamma". As in the first movement, the concluding section (B<sub>2</sub>) is bipartite, its two subsections mutually reciprocal as with the two subsections of A<sub>5</sub>. Both of these subsections open with what seems like alternative statements of a brief

110 It is possible, although not conclusive, that Schmitz (1914, 145) might have had passages like these in mind when he praised Lotti's harmonic finesse.



motif (first occurrence b. 26–27) in the two voices, but it turns out that the voices are engaging in consistent imitation up to b. 34 while modulations take place. The section ends in a delicate chain of suspensions that confirm a new tonic on the word “consumi”, used here in the pejorative sense, and thus perhaps stressing the ambivalent appeal of the subject’s pining for Fille, maybe even inviting comparisons with the closing of Steffani’s duet *Saldi marmi*.

The only function of C1, the opening section of the final, third movement, is to provide a motivic bridge to the repetition of the opening line, inverted in the sense that it pushes “Fille” to the beginning of the line. The latter section (C2, equivalent to A1) is set as an almost exact repetition of section A1, mirroring the aforementioned repositioning of the word “Fille” onto a motif the length of a bar (b. 10–11 in Soprano 2, imitated in b. 12 in Soprano 1), after which the course of section A1 proceeds identically as in the first movement, the only difference being that the word “Fille” is no longer set, giving way to the syllables “do-ro” from “adoro” to round off the motivic entries’ minim cadences. The brief section C1 takes up characteristics of the other movements’ closing sections (A5 and B2) by imitating a characteristic motif. It subsequently gives way to a section (b. 5–10) built from two small units, comprising loosely structured chains of suspensions, but lacking in regularity and tension when compared to the equivalent passages in sections in A1, A3, A5 and B2. It should be interpreted in light of Lotti’s tendency to stretch out his brief section with the help of sequential structures often abiding in suspensions. The continuity of these compositional techniques provides *Poss’io morir* with a sense of unity that is not in contradiction with the heterogeneous motivic material of its numerous brief sections.

Even though their dating is uncertain and their distribution and probably also their influence somewhat limited, Francesco Gasparini’s twelve chamber duets (Gasparini ms, Duetti madrigali as the only available source) have received some scholarly attention. Gasparini, too, belongs to the group of “learned” Italian composers who were opposed to the advent of new musical styles in the second fourth of the 18th century (cf. Navach 2002). Also a teacher<sup>111</sup>, he had profound contrapuntal skills, “most obvious in the easy and frequent use of complicated canonic devices in his church music but also apparent from the mastery of free counterpoint in his other works (such as the set of brilliantly written chamber duets).” (Libby and Lepore 2001) According to Robinson (1981,

111 Not only did he teach Domenico Scarlatti, Benedetto Marcello and J. J. Quantz, he also published a treatise on *basso continuo* practice, *L’armonico pratico al cimbalo*.

70–71), Gasparini is highly sensitive to the expressive content of the text (somewhat more so than Lotti in *Poss'io morir*) and he begins each section of his chamber duets “like a fugal exposition” (Robinson 1981, 70–71), imitating a subject in stretto imitation, working with a countersubject or developing the head of a subject in free counterpoint resplendent in coloratura. Indeed, most of the duets in this collection (with the exception of *Nice, s'è ver che m'ami*, which is the reason why it was delegated to Chapter 2.4.2 with other examples of the hybrid type) employ extensive imitation, producing movements with fugal structure and inviting comparisons with fugal movements in some of Handel's chamber duets. However, as the three analyses in this chapter will show, not all of his sections open like a fugal exposition, and although this impression is enhanced by the opening and sometimes the closing movements of his chamber duets, Gasparini strives for a balanced application of different compositional techniques rather than some abstract fugal ideal.

A comparison of Gasparini's duet *Sdegno ed Amor* (Gasparini ms, Duetti madrigali, no. 11, 77'–83'; Gasparini recording, *Amori e ombre*) with *Poss'io morir* shows some parallels. Both duets belong to the sonata type and contain movements of a pointedly “madrigal” structure, the difference being that *Poss'io morir* is faithful to this structural principle in its entirety, whereas *Sdegno ed Amor* adheres to it only in its inner two, multi-sectional movements. The two framing movements (the first and the fourth) are strikingly different with their expansive subjects imitated extensively, and are thus, as we shall also see in *A voi, piante innocenti* (Gasparini ms, Duetti madrigali, no. 8) and *Sento tal fiamma* (Gasparini ms, Duetti madrigali, no. 4), more reminiscent of some of Handel's and Clari's chamber duets. The bulk of the poem on the contradictory impulses of anger and love, presumably due to the disinterest of the amorous object for the subject, is contained in the inner as opposed to the framing movements. In its unevenness, the distribution of the lines between the four movements is symptomatic of their different structural conceptions. The first and the fourth movement are the settings of the first and the last line, while all the other (eleven!) lines are distributed between movements two and three. This is certainly rhetorically justified, for first and the last line are not only the longest, they also state the essence of the subject's predicament (line 1) and bring an unexpected twist (line 13), thus stressing the compulsive, irrational nature of Amor as rational Sdegno apparently prevails. Whereas Gasparini worked out the material of movements I and IV extensively, he was left with an abundance of lines to set in the inner movements, requiring an altogether different approach.

MOV.	SEC.	BAR	TEXT	LINE
I	A		Sdegno ed Amor nel mio pensier fan guerra:	1
II	B	1-13	questi la fiamma accende,	2
			ch'era in parte già spenta,	3
			quel ripieno di gelo il cor mi rende.	4
			Questi m'annoda più, quel mi rallenta	5
	C	15-26	L'uno e l'altro m'atterra	6
			tent'è possente e fiero,	7
nè so dir chi di lor fia vincitore.			8	
III	D <sub>1</sub>	1-9	Ma ben ti dico, Amore,	9
			che se tu vinci e a' lacci tuoi ritorno,	10
	D <sub>2</sub>	10-35	non passerà mai giorno	11
			ch'io di te non mi doglia:	12
IV	E		tuo sarò, ma per forza e non per voglia.	13

TABLE 20.  
Rough formal outline of Gasparini's chamber duet *Sdegno ed Amor*

In order to examine the aforementioned connection between Gasparini and Lotti first, we shall now consider the inner movements of *Sdegno ed amor*. The composer was probably inspired by the opposition of the contrasting impact that Love and Anger have on the subject's heart when he divided the lines between the parts in movement II (Gasparini MS, Duetti madrigali, no. 11, 79-80'). Lines two and three and the first half of line five describe how Love rekindles the subject's passion ("Questi m'annoda più"), whereas line four and the second half of line five describe how Anger loosens these bonds ("quel mi rallenta"). Subsequently, Gasparini sets lines two and three only in the soprano and line four only in the alto using independent thematic material, and at first (b. 3-4) he seems to be doing the same with the two halves of line five, but proceeds to entangle the two parts with both poles of the opposition ("annoda"/"rallenta") in an imitation (b. 5-7), followed by a contrapuntal section (b. 7-14) in which both parts, in equal measure, bring forth two different motifs that have now become associated with each pole of the semantic opposition: an agitated ascending motif with a light chromatic touch for the words "questi m'annoda più" and a calm, syncopated descending line for "quel mi rallenta" (Example 2). In the setting of lines 6-8, the voices are united in the utterance of the same text (a summary on the power of the two opposing forces) and are consequently

led mostly parallel, broken up only by occasional playful exchanges (b. 22–25), once again suggestive of the competition of the two agents. While in Lotti's *Poss'io morir* the multi-sectional nature of the movements was a convention that appropriated the genre of the chamber duet to the tradition of the madrigal it was trying to revive, in this movement Gasparini is led almost exclusively by the text's semantic binary oppositions.

In the third movement<sup>112</sup> (Gasparini ms, Duetti madrigali, no. 11, 80'–82) there is a rhetorical change to the subject's monologic, lamenting address of Love, who is apparently more likely to win the duel. Unlike in the second movement, where the setting had a dual structural logic rooted in the opposed semantic forces of the lyrics, here Gasparini tips the balance between the movement's two sections. The shorter section D1 is written as a consistent imitative strain of a longer span, whereas the much longer D2 is no less contrapuntal, but contains fewer elements of the fugue and treats the text much more freely. For example, after the exposition of the subject of section D2 in the alto (b. 10–13) on both of the section's lines (no. 9 and 10), the composer supplements its imitation in the soprano with a countersubject (b. 13–15, in the alto) on the ninth line, contradicting the principle of never setting the same text twice in succession using different material. Section D2 alternates this kind of imitative texture with less dense sections.

It is difficult to say if this means that Gasparini in this duet owes more or less to the tradition of the madrigal than Lotti, for a concatenation of sections is usually not the typical structure he bestows on his chamber duet movements. He also places an expressive emphasis on the musical interpretation of the text more than Lotti did in *Poss'io morir*. For a better grasp of Gasparini's art of the chamber duet, a discussion of the first and the last movement of *Sdegno ed Amor* is needed, too. Both open with a lengthy subject whose second part is suitable for sequential contrapuntal treatment, and movement I (Gasparini ms, Duetti madrigali, no. 11, 77'–79) outlines three stretto statements of the subject (b. 1–6). In the first two imitations Gasparini uses a countersubject of sorts that sets off in the other voice when the subject is in its fifth bar. The remainder of movement I (b. 15–28) gives the impression of an even tighter stretto (at the length

112 We shall leave aside the question raised by the Gasparini recording, *Amori e ombre* if movement II could in fact be thought of as the middle section of a *da capo* form. The performers' choice to repeat the first movement ("Sdegno ed Amor nel mio pensier fan guerra") before moving on to the third is not indicated in the manuscript source (Gasparini ms, Duetti madrigali, no. 11, 80'), and the structure of movement II is nothing like the middle section of a *da capo* form, but in performance the repetition sounds musically valid and in line with the harmonic trajectory, that is, the modulation back into G major in section C.

Gasparini MS, Duetti madrigali, no. 11 (Sdegno ed amor, movement II), 79-79': b. 1-8

[Canto]

ques - ti la fiam - ma ac - cen - de, ch'e - ra in par - te già spen - -

[Alto]

quel ri - pie - no di

[Basso]

3

ta, ques - ti m'an - no - da più m'an - no - da più, m'an - no - da più,

ge - lo il cor mi ren - de, quel mi ral -

6

quell mi ral - len - - ta, quell mi ral -

len - - ta, ques - ti m'an - no - da più, m'an - no - da più, m'an - no - da

of a single bar) at first sight, but it turns out that it treats the semiquaver triplets of the subject's second part (first occurrence b. 3–4) as well as the repetitive second setting of the text “nel mio pensier fan” (first occurrence b. 5) exactly the opposite way, in a freer contrapuntal flow instead of the strictness that stretto imitation would imply. In comparison, the denser contrapuntal network of movement IV (Gasparini MS, Duetti madrigali, no. 11, 82–83') fulfils a different function. Unlike the opening *Allegro*, presenting the main binary opposition of the duet's semantics, this *Vivace* serves to round up the duet in a tone of hurried excitement in line with the already mentioned rational acknowledgement of Amore's compulsive nature (“per forza e non per voglia”). A dynamic, swiftly moving subject of only three bars hardly disappears from the 29 bars of the movement, appearing most of the time in consistent imitation, but leaving some room for freer contrapuntal treatment as well.

MOV.	SEC.	BAR	TEXT	LINE	MOTIFS
I	A	1–38	A voi, piante innocenti	1	a <sub>1</sub> +
			che in questo colle ameno	2	
			udite i miei lamenti	3	a <sub>2</sub> +
			narro, ma in vano, oh Dio,	4	a <sub>3</sub> +
			il barbaro rigor del fato mio.	5	a <sub>4</sub> + a <sub>5</sub>
II	B	1–20	Ne verdi tronchi almeno	6	
			permettere che incida	7	
			il nome della mia cruda omicida	8	
	C	21–77	accìo crescendo voi	9	c1+
			crescer si vegga poi	10	
			la sua fierezza e la costanza mia,	11	...c <sub>2</sub>
III	D <sub>11</sub>	1–16	e'l passegger che miri	12	
	D <sub>2</sub>	16–42	scolpiti i miei martiri	13	
			e la sua tirannia	14	
			dica con labbro di pietoso amore:	15	
			“Ninfa crudele, povero pastore.”	16	d <sub>1</sub> (+d <sub>2</sub> ?)

TABLE 21.

Rough formal outline of Gasparini's chamber duet *A voi, piante innocenti*

- \* Formal section does not coincide with the disposition of the text: both sections are setting of all five lines.

*A voi, piante innocenti* (Gasparini MS, Duetti madrigali, no. 8, 55–62; Gasparini recording, *Amori e ombre*) shares traits with the outer movements of *Sdegno ed Amor*, but it has an entirely different affective content reminiscent of Steffani's pathetic, minor-mode and harmonically expressive chamber duets (see Chapter 2.2, e. g. *Begl'occhi, oh Dio, non più*).

The first movement presents one of the most widely spaced out imitative structures that I have encountered in a chamber duet so far. The subject, a setting of all the five lines in the section, consists of as many as five motifs and it is imitated four times in succession in its almost complete form. Naturally, such an expansive subject is prone to stretto imitation like the one in the opening movement of *Sdegno ed amor*: the imitative entry is introduced halfway through the subject, shortly before the onset of motif a<sub>4</sub> (first occurrence b. 7). By introducing rests into the voice not bringing the subject, Gasparini secures textural diversity, before loosening the formal trajectory of the movement from b. 24 onwards. Instead of proceeding further with the fugal structuring, he develops two smaller sections (b. 24–31, Example 3 and 31–38) by freely imitating motifs a<sub>3</sub> and a<sub>4</sub>. Movement II (Gasparini MS, Duetti madrigali, no. 8, 57'–59') provides structural and textural contrast. Its first section (B) is one of the rare examples of homophony (b. 1–7) in Gasparini's chamber duets. The remainder of the section consists of freely imitative counterpoint (b. 7–20), but still without almost any kind of motivic-thematic identity. Section C, on the other hand, draws one's attention by its madrigalisms: the image of growth (of the tree to which the forlorn shepherd is addressing his amorous complaint, as well as of the nymph's pride and the shepherd's faith) is depicted by a rising chromatic figure (in motif c<sub>1</sub>, first occurrence b. 21–29), whereas the passage abiding in held notes often serving as its counterpoint (c<sub>2</sub>, first occurrence b. 31–40) portrays the shepherd's constancy.

The third movement (Gasparini MS, Duetti madrigali, no. 8, 59'–62) is unique in that it adheres neither to the “fugal” imitative nor to the freely contrapuntal texture type that we had the chance to observe in Gasparini's chamber duets so far. Unlike *Sdegno ed Amor*, the setting does not single out the final point of the poem into a separate, contrasting section. Here, the passer-by's conclusion in direct speech (“Ninfa crudele, povero pastore”) is woven into the indirect speech that sets the scene: the entirety of the text is set twice, in subsections D<sub>1</sub> and D<sub>2</sub> (cf. Table 21). This duality in the text is highlighted in the type of setting: whereas the four lines in indirect speech are set in a homophonic or freely polyphonic texture without motivic significance, the final line (or to be more precise, its first line, set as d<sub>1</sub>, first occurrence b. 10–16, prepared by a *fermata*) is set apart by imitation as well as marked motivic distinguishability, almost as if its emphatic repetitions and leaps were an outcry to the cruel nymph (“Ninfa crudele”). The other pole of this binary opposition, the poor shepherd (“povero pastore”), does not take on such sharp motivic contours (d<sub>2</sub>, first occurrence b. 11–16), although setting the text on syncopated motifs followed by semiquaver passages enables a more free elaboration later on (Example 4). After a transposed and mildly varied repetition of the

24

[Canto] - o nar-ro, mà in-va-no, oh Di - o

[Alto] nar-ro, mà in va-no, oh Di - o nar-ro, mà in-va - no, oh

[Basso]

27

il bar - ba-ro\_\_ ri - gor il bar - - ba-ro\_\_ ri -

Di - o il bar - - ba-ro\_\_ ri - gor il bar-



Gasparini MS, Duetti madrigali, no. 8 (A voi, piante innocenti, movement III), 60', b. 10-15

10

[Canto] Nin-fa cru-de-le, cru-de-le po-ve-ro pas-to-re, po-

[Alto] Nin-fa cru-Nin-fa-cru-

[Basso]

13

- - - - ve-ro pas-to-re, po-ve-ro pas-to-

de-le po-ve-ro pas-to-re, po-ve-ro pas-ve-ro pas-to-

[Basso]

setting of lines 12–15 in b. 16–22, an extended setting of motifs d1 and d2 in simultaneity and in succession follows. The shepherd seems to be gaining the upper hand here, since his syncopated passages are more suited to free contrapuntal variation and extension, resulting even in occasional melismatic parallelism in the voices.

MOV.	SEC.*	BAR	KEY	TEXT	LINE	MOTIFS
I	A <sub>1</sub>	1–35	E $\flat$ , B $\flat$ ,	Sento tal fiamma al core	1	a <sub>11</sub> +
		36–53	g, d,	mia vita, amato bene,	2	a <sub>12</sub>
	A <sub>2</sub>	53–89	B $\flat$ , E $\flat$	ch'è miracol d'amore	3	a <sub>21</sub> +
				se non incenerisco a tante pene.	4	a <sub>22</sub> /cs <sub>1</sub>
II	B	1–26	c, g, f, c	Ma un'aura lusinghiera	5	b <sub>1</sub>
				poi mi ravviva, e quando l'alma	6	+b <sub>2</sub> (CS)
				geme par che sol la conforti amica speme,	7	
	C <sub>1</sub>	26–28;** 41–43	E $\flat$ / A $\flat$	e con legge severa	8	%
C <sub>2</sub>	28–41; 43–62	E $\flat$ , f, A $\flat$ A $\flat$ , c, E $\flat$	Amor mi dice: "Mori, o soffri e spera."	9	c <sub>21</sub> , c <sub>22</sub> , c <sub>23</sub> (var.)	

TABLE 22.  
Rough formal outline of Gasparini's chamber duet *Sento tal fiamma*

\* Sections and bars are aligned with the range of tonal centres in this table, not with the lines and motifs.

\*\* The cycle C<sub>1</sub> (homophonic section, line 8) + C<sub>2</sub> (polyphonic section, line 9) is repeated once, in heavily varied form.

The opening movement of *Sento tal fiamma* (Gasparini MS, Duetti madrigali, no. 4, 26<sup>2</sup>–33; Gasparini recording, *Amori e ombre*) sets out as a typical fugal movement in Gasparini's duets, opening with a lengthy composite subject in the soprano (a<sub>11</sub>, first occurrence b. 1–4 + a<sub>12</sub>, first occurrence b. 4–8). At first it seems that the imitation of this subject in the alto (b. 8–15) is accompanied by an equally composite countersubject in the soprano (a<sub>21</sub>, first occurrence b. 9–12 + a<sub>22</sub>, b. 12–15) which could be conceived of as the continuation of the subject, except for the fact that it modulates into the dominant in the same way that this would happen in a fugal exposition (Example 5). The fugal constructivism is further enhanced by the supply of a<sub>21</sub> + a<sub>22</sub> with a descending countersubject of its own (cs<sub>1</sub>, first occurrence b. 15–19) as the music returns into the tonic E-flat major in b. 21. This is followed by a brief section in the dominant (b. 29–35) with a slightly varied rendition of the subject in the soprano with the complete

countersubject in the alto (a21+a22), modulating to G minor. The remainder of the movement takes an unexpected course as its imitative and motivic regularity gives way to much freer polyphonic structuring. The head of the subject (a1) and its complementary line 1 disappear, rendering the settings of line 3 with its relative pronoun (“che”) somewhat incomprehensible.<sup>113</sup> The modulatory middle section (A2) freely imitates motifs a21, a modified, abridged version of a22 and cs1, but when the dominant and the tonic are reinstated in section A3, rather than returning to the ways of A1, the texture becomes even looser in contrapuntal terms. As in A2, motif a21 is often subjected to a brief stretto, while the freely varied motif a22, accompanied either by cs1 or an isolated a12, propels the movement further and begins to dominate it. The concluding section (b. 74–89) displays an increasing motivic dissolution, as extensively varied variants of a22 are accompanied by extended leaps in the other voice and tension is enhanced by suggesting a move to A-flat major that never really happens.

In other words, in movement I we see an outlining of a two-voice<sup>114</sup> contrapuntal flow that at first suggests a fugal interchange of imitative and episodic passages but then breaks off from these as well as from the initial motivic constraints. Could this be related to Gasparini’s interpretation of the text? He did not attach a lot of importance to his first melodic idea, the undulating melismatic passage on the crucial word “fiamma”: in sections A2 and A3 lines 3 (motif a21) and 4 (motifs a22 and cs1) dominate instead. True, a lot of chamber duets give more attention to finishing lines (or sections) in a movement, but Gasparini manages to keep motif a22 recognisable in spite of varying and transforming it in section A3. One must bear in mind that the texture of the chamber duet is incompatible with consistent fugal writing by its very nature, but the reason why he opted to give a certain movement the illusion of fugal structure only to destroy it later is hard to point out.

Movement II takes an entirely different approach structurally and formally, perhaps inspired by the text’s more active stance compared to the incinerating languishes of the first stanza. Imitative, but this time less fugal writing is reserved for its first section (B), splitting up the three lines (no. 5–7) into two distinct motivic units, b1 (first occurrence b. 1–3) and b2 (first occurrence b. 3–7), which repeatedly serves as countersubject to the imitation of b1, although often in modified or abridged form. The

113 For unknown reasons and often colliding with the number of syllables, the source (Gasparini ms, *Duetti madrigali*, no. 4, 26’–28’) makes use of two variants of this line, “ch’è miracol d’amore” and “ch’è un miracol d’amore”. This is unrelated to the dropping of line 1 from A2 and A3 as it already occurs in section A1.

114 The *basso continuo* never participates in the counterpoint, limiting itself to steady minim and semibreve movement and providing harmonic support.

**Lento**

Canto

Sen - to tal fiam - - - ma al co - re mia

Alto

Basso

**Lento**

5

vi - ta a - ma - to - - - be - ne ch'è mi -

Sen - to tal fiam -

10

ra - col d'a - - mo - - re se non in - ce - ne -

- - ma al co - re mia vi - ta a -

13

ris - co - - à tan - - te pe - - ne se -

ma - - to - - - be - - ne

fugal quasi-exposition ends with bars 8–11 inverted and transposed (which shows that Gasparini wrote it in double counterpoint so that he can use it for episodes between imitations), and a non-motivic *codetta* (b. 23–26) leading into a *fermata*.

Similarly to the last, third movement of *A voi, piante innocenti*, the second and closing movement of *Sento tal fiamma* is also constructed in dual terms, as an interchange of contrasting settings of groupings or individual lines. After the “introductory” section B, in section C line 8 (subsection C1) alternates with the final line 9 (a contrasting subsection C2). The dual interchange is thus prefaced by an introductory section, with the substantial difference that unlike in *A voi, piante innocenti* where imitative treatment was reserved for only the very last line, here it is the prefatory section that bears resemblance to the fugal thinking we usually associate with the framing movements of Gasparini’s duets. C1 introduces the “severe law” (*legge severa*) in a brief homophonic passage of a mere two bars. In setting the last line, it must have been important to Gasparini to highlight the division of the line into indirect (“Amor mi dice”) and direct speech (“Mori, o soffri e spera.”) in a texture of alternating statements, as if Love itself was addressing the amorous subject. The texture is similar to that of some of Bononcini’s chamber duets, dividing the melody between the two voices in successiveness rather than simultaneity (Example 6). It seems at first that Gasparini is about to outline three motifs to base the entire section on: c21 on the text “Amor mi dice” (first occurrence b. 28–29 in the soprano), c22 on the text “mori” (b. 29 in the alto) and the descending c23 on the text “O soffri, e spera” (b. 30–31). It turns out that they are merely contours that can be “filled” with different melodic content via extensive variation as long as they retain their rhythmic and textural characteristics. The second rendition of subsection (C2, b. 43–62) is constructed in similar terms, with the important difference that “o soffri, e spera” as the more fitting choice to Love’s ultimatum seems to be gaining the upper hand, the amorous subject accepting suffering as the price of love instead of perishing amidst Love’s flames. Even in the first appearance of subsection C2 this text had repeatedly been uniting the voices in a free contrapuntal texture (b. 34–35, 39–40). It seems that by varying the structural procedures in this section, Gasparini wanted to depict that at the mercy of the incinerating power of the beloved, stoic optimism should always prevail.

It is not easy to explain why this chamber duet is somewhat different from the other two by Gasparini analysed here. Although it shares with them the combination of fugal and non-fugal movements and has a closing section of a similarly dual conception such as that of the third movement of *A voi, piante innocenti*, it develops these traits in a rather irregular and unconventional manner. Gasparini seems to relish in setting up structural

26

[Canto] e con leg - ge se - ve - ra A - mor mi di - ce, A - mor mi

[Alto] e con leg - ge se - ve - ra mo - ri,

[Basso]

30

di - ce ò sof - fri, è spe - ra mo - ri

mo - ri ò sof - fri, è spe - ra, A - mor mi di - ce ò sof -

expectation only to defy them in the end. While he clearly differentiated the fugal outer with the inner movements in *Sdegno ed Amor*, in *A voi, piante innocenti*, he stuck to this model only in the first movement, bringing in more diversity in the second one. *Sento tal fiamma* subverts the opening fugue by eventually repressing the head of its subject, although not in the vein of Steffani's sectional, madrigalistic concentration on the contrapuntal working out of the material presented (usually with more stress on the material we hear last), but in a much more intricate manner. Finally, although the last movement of *A voi, piante innocenti* also developed a dialogic dynamic between the emphatic material associated with the first half of its single, final line ("Ninfa crudele") and the second ("povero pastore"), the latent dramaturgy in the closing section of *Sento tal fiamma* seems equally if not even more complex.

## CONCLUSIONS ON THE COMPARISON OF CHAMBER DUETS

A comparative analysis of the selected chamber duets by Steffani allows for a few conclusions, although it is important to note that these are not to be generalised as they stem from a sample of a mere sixth of the overall number of compositions. With their affirmative approach to romantic love, duets as diverse as *Sù, ferisci* and *Placidissime catene* fall close to the category of the love duet as the unanimous expression of mutual devotion by a pair of imaginary characters. The voices of *Ribellatevi* and *Libertà, libertà* are, on the other hand, united in their desire to break free from the constraints of love and are the closest that a chamber duet can come to a duet of quarrelling lovers. The musical means used by Steffani show some signs of being rooted in the tradition of the musical interpretation of the text with its vivid musical imagery for the portrayal of key notions. Rapid scalar passages and arpeggiations depict the words “ferisci” and “stral”, crucial to the imagery of Cupid shooting arrows in the duet *Su, ferisci*. Chains and their breaking are at the heart of *Placidissime catene*, so this is underlined by alternating semiquaver passages on held notes on the words “catene”, “rallentarvi” and “lacci”, but also “disciolga”. Minor-mode, pathetic duets written for unequal voices such as *Begl’occhi, oh Dio, non più* are persistent in their use of dissonance and suspensions to express the anguishes of love in both harmonic and contrapuntal terms. In *Begl’occhi, oh Dio, non più* a semantic duality is at work: whereas the central image of Clori’s tears is conveyed by the expressive use of chromaticism, words such as “foco” and “sommerger”, natural metaphors expressive of mental agitation, are madrigalistically conveyed by vigorous rhythmic figures.

Steffani’s duets are generally not prone to latent dramatization. In most cases the utterance of the same text by the two voices can be interpreted only as the parallel unfolding of two identical monologues, although occasionally even this is rendered impossible in duets with clearly delineated roles for the suffering amorous subject and its indifferent object, e. g. in *E così mi compartite* and *Begl’occhi, oh Dio, non più*. If interpreted dramatically, parallel monologues can take on the guise of certain types of the dramatic duet, despite the fact that they are not related to it structurally or stylistically. Nevertheless, Steffani’s duets occasionally do draw our attention to latent dramaturgic traits. *Libertà, libertà* assigns parts of or even whole lines of the text to different voices, whereas in *Io mi parto / Resto solo* the text is dialogic in itself and demands a setting for two voices, therefore bordering on the dramatic *cantata a due*. However, more interesting are the cases where a dramatic relationship is formed between the subject and abstract entities such as the chains of love (*Placidissime*



*catene*) or the memory of a previous lover echoing the words of his beloved (*Saldi marmi*). The predominantly contrapuntal texture enables a semantic exploration of textual simultaneity. The emphatic interjections “e crudeltà”, “voi non farete”, “mai, mai” in *Placidissime catene* are “addressing” the contrasting thematic material they are contrapuntally combined with. *E così mi compartite* goes even further in integrating its refrain into what at first seems a solo movement. Still, the semantic treatment of the text often remains ambiguous, as abstract, musical categories prevail over textual interpretation. As seen in many duets, often the expansion of the final subsection does not stem from a semantic stress but from a desire to elaborate near the end.

Particular formal types of the chamber duet are appropriate for different expressive registers, and contrasting texts are often set in similar ways. Duets written for equal voices such as *Ribellatevi*, *Sù, ferisci* and *Pria ch’io faccia* have a number of characteristics<sup>115</sup> that make them almost unsuitable for a pathetic musical setting, characterised by the expressive use of harmony and counterpoint. The case of *Pria ch’io faccia* with its light treatment of the theme of the lover’s introversion seems to support this claim, but the tendency is to a certain extent countered by *Saldi marmi*, a duet for two sopranos with a very specific, highly dramatic text. It distinguishes itself by the stringing together of numerous sections as well as by the avoidance of repetition and by the use of the major mode in moderate tempi to convey entirely different affects.

Achieving formal unity (most usually by means of kinship of thematic material between different subsections and sections) was not imperative for Steffani. In some duets, large-scale repetition imposes elements of overall formal unity, but otherwise it is not easy to determine why Steffani strove for homogeneity or even monothematicism in certain duets and not at all in others. This tendency is not in contrast with his affinity for through-composition, as the most interesting examples of motivic homogeneity among the analysed duets belong to the sonata (*Placidissime catene*) and the cantata type (*Begl’ occhi, oh Dio, non più; Saldi marmi*) of chamber duet, containing no elements of repetition at all. *E così mi compartite* employs a complex refrain structure to heighten the sense of homogeneity, already inherent in the derivation of all of its motivic material from the same source. Still, in the likewise monothematic *Io mi parto / Resto solo* this can contribute to a sense of monotony, while duets such

115 Prevalence of the major mode and swift tempi, brevity and a tendency for large-scale repetition, pseudo-counterpoint with imitation at the prime, voice-crossing, a looser contrapuntal relationship of the voices and the affective content of joy or serenity.

as *Begl'occhi, oh Dio, non più* and *Saldi marmi* are more successful in their subtle motivic connections.

There is no doubt that Steffani is responsible for the flourishing of the chamber duet around 1700. While composing his late duets or revising the early ones, one may assume that he was pursuing a structural trajectory of the following kind. After having made a decision on the overall form of the duet, he divided the text into sections and subsections, sketched out the often composite thematic material for the respective subsections, then moved on to the working out of this material, handling its constituent parts both individually and in combination with each other. According to Konstanze Musketa (1990, 186), Steffani's mature duets are "more strongly worked out contrapuntally as opposed to the earlier ones and make the developmental tendencies of the genre appear especially clear"<sup>116</sup>. This "developmental tendency" played a crucial role in the composer's influence on a whole generation of composers.

It is no wonder that Musketa's summarising words on the corpus of Handel's chamber duets as a whole bear traces of the evolutionary paradigm: "In their high level of consistency and maturity Handel's chamber duets represent the crowning conclusion of the history of the genre: they are musically sophisticated, with a skilful contrapuntal texture; the early ones in stricter style, more academic and over-extended, but masterly in their technique, the later ones technically more ambitious, but more compact." (Musketa in Handel 2011b, xiv). These words elevate Handel to the status of the perfector of the chamber duet, a title he could inherit only from Steffani. It is less clear, however, what Musketa means by "early" and "later" duets. At the end of the spectrum, his first duets composed in Italy and the ones created in the 1740s in London leave little doubt as to which group they belong to, but the Hanoverian duets and the two duets from the 1720s are more difficult to place within these categories. Only a broad generalisation of the "development" of the genre at Handel's hand is possible rather than a precise periodization. As we have already seen, the stylistic differences between duets composed in Hanover and London (complicated by problems of dating) remain somewhat blurred. Consequently, insistence on developmental tendencies in the case of a genre such as the chamber duet might appear counterproductive.

A comparison on the basis of criteria such as the interpretation of the text, form, latent dramatization and homogeneity is not as distinctive as in the case of Steffani. Handel's duets are less varied when it comes to setting than Steffani's, and although the preference for duets for soprano and alto

116 Sie sind gegenüber den früheren stärker kontrapunktisch gearbeitet und lassen die Entwicklungstendenzen der Gattung besonders deutlich ablesen.

could be traced back to the model composer's influence, maybe Handel would have showed less diversity in the setting of his duets irrespectively of Steffani. In terms of form, the sonata duet dominates. Handel was less inclined to infuse the chamber duet with elements of the cantata, the same way he was less prone to accentuate elements of latent dramaturgy in his duets (though this is partially due to the texts he set) than his Italian predecessor. He had a different approach to form and structure and he showed an even greater tendency to unify his duets in structural, often also motivic terms. Rather than showing tendencies of developmental change in the contrapuntal working out of the thematic material, Handel displayed great flexibility, covering a wide spectrum from quasi-learned counterpoint to a less literal imitative treatment and almost improvisatory, derivatively free contrapuntal writing. As a result, his chamber duets often function on the more abstract level of instrumental music than, say, Steffani's, but they also integrate techniques characteristic of dramatic genres such as opera and cantata more seamlessly into themselves, although not as nearly as much as Bononcini's chamber duets.

In a comparative analysis of the use of counterpoint in Steffani's *Quanto care al cor voi siete* and Handel's *Giù nei Tartarei regni* and *Troppo cruda, troppo fiera*, Timms (1987, 240–241) claimed that Handel's inclination to more complex imitative structures can be brought into connection with his reception of Steffani's chamber duets (cf. Timms). However, if Timms's hypothesis that *Giù nei Tartarei regni*, composed in Italy possibly before Handel's full exposure to Steffani's chamber duets, weaves its motifs into a somewhat simpler contrapuntal web than *Troppo cruda, troppo fiera* is true, it might not necessarily follow from this directly but it could equally stem from Handel's "inner" development. However, it is plausible that Steffani's influence was rendering Handel's Hanoverian duets more directional and regular in their use of imitative procedures, for his chamber duets written in Italy, although deploying a diversity of techniques (imitation, stretto, free counterpoint) show less inclination to use invertible counterpoint (Steffani's trademark!) and they are also formally more open in their stringing together of numerous contrasting and often shorter, less clearly demarcated sections and movements.

The duets composed in Hanover examined here have a lesser number of movements, but are more rounded off formally and also show a tendency towards homogeneity and motivic unity, whether by means of a consistent imitation of a composite subject (e. g. in *Tanti strali*) or a free motivic derivation of the material from the main one (e. g. in *Troppo cruda*), with many alternatives to imitation in the polyphonic treatment of the parts. In these duets Handel integrates the continuo as an equal part into the trio texture for the first time. Imitation becomes only one

among many, consciously deployed techniques of voice-leading such as the alternation of parts, free voice-leading or even parallelism. In the first London duets some of these tendencies remain strong, but the strict imitative monothematicism of *Tanti strali* is less often encountered and motivic derivation occurs more frequently instead. The duets composed in London in the 1740s continue these tendencies, deriving subsidiary thematic material from the main one and strengthening the ratio of alternation, free counterpoint and parallelism as opposed to imitation. At the same time, Handel attempted to extend his chamber duets in formal terms, as he often subjected his thematic material (conceived as dual or ternary) to several cycles of imitation, whether simultaneous (*No, di voi non vuò fidarmi*, HWV 189), successive (*Fronda leggiara e mobile*) or the combination of both (*No, di voi non vuò fidarmi*, HWV 190). Finally, there is no better example of laying out the chamber duet on the canvas of opera duet than *Beato in ver*, and not only because it is written in a single extended *da capo* form like many of Handel's opera duets.

The examination of duets by Handel's Italian contemporaries such as Bononcini, Gasparini, Durante and Lotti after the analyses of Steffani's and Handel's duets gains momentum from being considered in this order given the sheer amount of diversity highlighted. Rather than the conventional ordering of the duets chronologically or in terms of their authors, the golden thread was the investigation of different, often hybrid solutions to the problem (if it can be considered a problem) of the questionable demarcation line between the *cantata a due* and the chamber duet on the one hand, as well as between different types of chamber duets (e. g. cantata and sonata type) on the other. The first two examples by Durante and Gasparini gain ground by their unorthodox nature. The highly specific contribution to the genre exemplified in the four duets by Bononcini could be compared to cutting the Gordian knot in that he often refused to distinguish between the *cantata a due* and the chamber duet. Although he was one of the first composers to publish his attempts in the time span under inspection in this study, of all the chamber duets examined, Bononcini distanced himself the most from Steffani's legacy, most evidently by permeating his chamber duets with elements of dramatic music. As can be seen in his duets *Luci barbare spietete* and *Pietoso nume arcier*, Bononcini seemed less interested in the translation of the poetry into musical ideas and concepts, as Steffani and Handel were, but placed strong musical and dramatic accents, allowing for more flexibility in terms of both technique and genre. His freedom of treatment of the genre pervades not only to the handling of contrapuntal techniques (resulting in a less dense texture than in Steffani's, Handel's and Gasparini's chamber duets), but also to the potential for latent dramaturgy. It often seems that with the differentiation of the voices in the texture or

with the help of different texts that they sing, he sets up expectations of a dramatization of the chamber duet from within not unlike Steffani's. However, Bononcini rarely follows through with this, especially in the elaborately long *Chi d'amor tra le catene*.

In spite of Gasparini's praise of Bononcini's skills and abilities as a composer (cf. Lindgren 2009, 140), the two composers' chamber duets could not be more different. Gasparini's chamber duets approximate Handel's in the interchange of fugal movements and/or sections based on a contrapuntal treatment of multipartite subjects and more freely constituted textural types. They also show features that distinguish them from the younger, German composer's works. Before drawing conclusions, one should bear in mind that Gasparini's chamber duet opus is on a much smaller scale, resulting in a modest sample in statistical terms, not to mention that one cannot attempt to outline anything like the developmental tendencies we can trace in Handel's chamber duets. This renders the comparison somewhat ungrateful, but a conclusion that Gasparini is a composer of pronouncedly individual solutions to the problems of the genre of the chamber duet has considerable plausibility nevertheless.

Certainly, there are many similarities between the two composers' chamber duets. They share not only the above mentioned interchange of taut (imitative, fugal) and less taut (homophonic or abiding in alternating or parallel passages) sections, but their fugal constructions have a lot in common, too, in that they often start out in a more or less strict, literal way and become freer as the section progresses. Both composers show a proclivity for through-composition, although Handel begins to experiment with operatic formal elements such as the *da capo* to a certain extent already in the duets written in Hanover, but most prominently in his London duets. Nevertheless, the regularity and symmetry of directional contrapuntal structures that often went hand in hand with a motivic economy of means (e. g. *Tanti strali, al sen mi scocchi*, HWV 197) is not characteristic of Gasparini. In his *Sento tal fiamma* and, to a lesser extent, *A voi, piante innocenti*, he defies expectations that were set up in the opening movements with substantial irregularity, a trait that can be recognised in Handel's *Va, speme infida, pur* (HWV 199) and especially in the opening section of *Lange, geme, sospira* (HWV 188), in whose first movement a distinctive head motif receives relatively little attention. The latter duet contains a section reminiscent of a middle section in a *da capo* form. Nothing could be further from Gasparini's formal procedures that rarely link movements or sections, showing considerable flexibility in manipulating the dual construction of closing sections (e. g. D1 and D2 in *A voi, piante innocenti* and C1 and C2 in *Sento tal fiamma*). This dual logic does not resemble the way in which Handel sets his dual thematic

material in several cycles in the opening movement of *No, di voi non vuò fidarmi* (HWV 189) or the irregular tripartite form of *No, di voi non vuò fidarmi* (HWV 190). If it might seem that Handel and Bononcini are different in the formal shaping of their chamber duet movements in the sense that Bononcini's clear-cut, balanced bipartite or *da capo* structures are absent from the German master's chamber duet opus, Gasparini seems even less likely to fit into the box of operatic regularity.

If Handel's chamber duets written in Italy were more representative of the state of the chamber duet in Italy in the early 18th century and his later development representative of the continental appropriation of the genre as laid out by his distinguished precursor Steffani, Gasparini's chamber duets examined in this study are certainly closer to the former, Italian tradition. If an estimate of their creation was necessary on purely stylistic terms, I would be inclined to say that they must have been written in the second or maybe the third decade of the century. They seem several steps ahead of Lotti's *Poss'io morir*, which still heavily treads in the footsteps of Steffani, but fall short of introducing operatic elements even in the moderate sense Handel had done in the 1720s and 40s. Maybe Gasparini's chamber duets are more representative of the tradition of the chamber duet (in Italy or in general) than it would seem at first by the limited distribution of their sources? Of course, it is entirely imaginable that Gasparini, a conservative composer of learned music in the first half of the 18th century, might have stayed true to his aesthetic and stylistic positions adopted early on in his creative life. As remarked in Chapter 2.3, *Va speme, infida, pur* (HWV 199) is notoriously difficult to date with any certainty, and it might not be a coincidence that with its formal experimentation, this duet of Handel's approximates the ones by Gasparini examined here the most.

Even though the chamber duet may have seemed marginal in the questions of musical relationships between Handel and his Italian contemporaries, the aim of this chapter was to prove the contrary by highlighting the diversity of the genre in the chosen period and to elucidate the distinguishing traits and interrelationships of composers active in the genre. With some exceptions (most notably Steffani), these composers will also feature in the second part of this study, a comparison of dramatic duets by Handel and his contemporaries. The dramatic duet is not only stylistically, structurally and dramaturgically different from the chamber duet but the comparative methodology in these two main parts of the dissertation will differ to a certain extent as well. In the observation as to whether the chamber and dramatic duets of these composers relate to each other and in what terms, the study of compositional techniques in the chamber duet will most definitely be of great use, too.

# 3. Dramatic Duet

## 3. 1.

### DEFINITIONS, TYPOLOGIES AND METHODOLOGY

This third chapter (at the same time also the second main part of this study) devotes itself to the dramatic duets by Handel and his Italian contemporaries in the period 1706–1724, with occasional excursions into earlier years all the way back to 1690 for comparative purposes, in order to see how the way some of these composers wrote duets developed up to the main period in question. As such it will concentrate on duets in the various Italian vocal dramatic genres already outlined in Chapter 1.2, but the focus will be on opera duets. The reasons for this are not only that they are usually the most numerous dramatic duets in the opuses of the composers under question due to the status of opera as a genre, but also their public nature, which facilitates the investigation of context. It is also impossible to avoid certain key issues in the development of opera seria, the genre to which most of the duets examined in this chapter belong. Reference sources repeat these slightly commonplace but nonetheless true topoi on ensembles in opera of the first half of the 18th century:

Reforms to the *opera seria* in the early 18th century (reducing the number of characters) [...] made ensembles rarer in serious genres, but they remained important in comic works and it is there that they attracted the richest and most varied treatment. During the first half of the 18th century the duet was the most common ensemble in all types of opera, typically for the main lovers in strong emotional situations. Indeed, in many *opere serie* the lovers' duet was both the dramatic highpoint and the sole concerted number. (Cook 2001)

Ensembles are relatively rare in Handel's operas. The most common, often at the end of acts, are duets in which the protagonists of the tragedy give expression to their emotions of bliss or total despair.<sup>117</sup> (Marx 2002, 586)

117 Ensemblesätze sind in den Opern Händels relativ selten. Am häufigsten kommen (meistens am Aktschluss) Duette vor, in denen die Hauptpersonen der Tragödie im Moment der Glückseligkeit oder der völligen Verzweiflung ihren Emotionen Ausdruck verleihen.

While it will never be an aim of this study to contest the truthfulness of these claims, they leave us with the seemingly ungrateful task of studying a phenomenon that is seemingly rare and somewhat typified. The so-called reforms of the end of the 17th century, introduced by a circle of poets around Apostolo Zeno, strove to ennoble libretto writing with features of Aristotelian aesthetics, such as his famous category of dramatic verisimilitude. It was this tendency that Pietro Metastasio later imposed as a norm, holding ground for the remainder of the century.<sup>118</sup> Calella (2000, 125) is only one of many authors who explain that this novel operatic dramaturgy considered the simultaneous musical speech of multiple *dramatis personae* unverisimilar (cf. also Rousseau 2008 as quoted by Saville 1958, 134), and, therefore better avoided, which in turn led to a comparable paucity of ensembles when compared to earlier operatic history of the 17th century. As a result, the diversity of Handel's dramatic duets (and ensembles in general) should not be "regarded in opposition to Metastasian dramaturgy or even as a pre-reform, but as a sign of a dramaturgic freedom that was characteristic of the early 18th century"<sup>119</sup> (Calella 2000, 126). Handel must have been aware that the tide was turning because two out of his three settings of Metastasian libretti (*Siroe* and *Ezio*) contain no ensembles whatsoever, but he continued to display his original affinity for duets, since "the examination of around 250 opera seria libretti in the period 1710–1745 nevertheless shows unequivocally that the number of ensembles in Handel's *opere serie* lies above the average, especially in the twenties and the thirties"<sup>120</sup> (Calella 2000, 128).

The examination of the vast repertory of dramatic duets by Handel and his already mentioned Italian contemporaries should revoke the impression of scarcity and uniformity conveyed by the reference books quoted above. However, it is necessary to forewarn that in part of the older literature on the subject the pejorative tone partly stems from a misunderstanding of the dramaturgy of opera seria. Heinz Becker, writing as late as 1980, remarks on a "lack of dramatic tension" (Becker 1980, 85) that is inherent in the binary, linear interchange of (*secco*) recitatives and arias, which is a typical imposition of classical dramaturgy on a genre that does

118 From a vast variety of literature on the subject, a monograph by R. Freeman (1981) and the numerous writings of R. Strohm (1979, 1997, and 2008 in particular) deserve to be singled out.

119 Im Gegensatz zur metastasianischen Dramaturgie oder sogar als 'Vorreform' angesehen werden, sondern als Zeichen einer dramaturgischen Freiheit, die für das frühe Settecento charakteristisch war.

120 Eine Überprüfung von ca. 250 Libretti von *Opere serie* im Zeitraum 1710–1745 zeigt jedoch eindeutig, daß die Anzahl von Ensembles in Händels *Opere serie* besonders in den späten zwanziger und in den dreißiger Jahren über dem Durchschnitt lag.



not conform to it. The concept of dramatic action as a sequence of events mediated by dialogue is often not suited to the affect-laden exchanges of arias at the musical heart of opera seria. “Opera depends on action, and action commands dialogue. The actual problem of opera was, not so much musical speech, as much as ‘dialogicism’ [Dialogizität, A/N], dialogue in the sense of a verbal exchange of two partners on stage, and not in the sense of two people singing together.”<sup>121</sup> (Becker 1980, 82)

This singling out of the principle of dialogue as crucial to dramatic development in opera, and of the duet as its ideal musical embodiment seems to suggest that duets which affirm dialogue are superior to the ones that do not. That Handel’s age did not see it that way does not need further explication. For Schläder (Schläder 1995), the constitution of the 19th-century opera duet according to the so-called *la solita forma*, that is, the multi-movement structure interchanging “dramatic” movements such as *tempo d’attacco* or *tempo di mezzo* with “lyric” ones such as the *cantabile* and the *cabaletta*, is a sign of the increased role of the duet in opera’s dialogic development. Counterpoint featured prominently in duets written between 1650 and 1750, but for Schläder it remained a means of differentiating the vocal parts in the texture without contributing in the least to the evolution of dramatic dialogue. Although Schläder goes to great lengths to name the numerous exceptions in Handel’s works that either break the *da capo* mould or are integrated into a sequence of numbers, he objects to them for conforming too much to the structural model of the aria without a tendency to develop its own norms. Robinson, too, speaks of ensembles in 18th-century Neapolitan opera as the “extension or enlargement of the solo aria rather than a development or evolution of earlier ensemble types like the madrigal” (Robinson 1972, 151), whereas Dent (1910a, 547) is even more restrictive when he maintains that “the Da Capo form was incompatible with dramatic progress”. Calella (2000, 123) rightfully warned against the risks of such a teleological approach that sees ensembles of the 17th and the 18th centuries as a mere preliminary stage to the opera buffa ensembles of Mozart, in comparison with which they seem thoroughly undramatic. Schläder’s claims about Handel’s duets could be applied to the duets of many of his contemporaries, for they, too, would be considered by him as no more than brief moments of textural culmination (in the simultaneity of two voices singing together) that neither illustrate nor contribute to the dramatic development of the opera.

121 Die Oper lebt jedoch von der Aktion, Aktion aber erheischt den Dialog. Das eigentliche Problem der Oper war somit weniger das musikalische Sprechen als vielmehr die Dialogizität, Dialogizität im Sinne von Wechselrede zweier Bühnenpartner verstanden, nicht von Zwiegesang.

Similarly, the following remarks by Robinson (1972, 156) were meant with opera seria and opera buffa of the second half of the 18th century in mind, although the same risk persists:

So long as composers desired subtlety through the understatement of characters' differences, where these were expressed simultaneously, the conventional ensemble gave them the chances they sought. What the mode of the period prevented was any musical exploitation or exaggeration of the conflicts where characters disagreed. Ill-mannered retorts, interruptions, words uttered out of turn, were the requisite of the comic rather than of the serious ensemble. [...] It is correct to say that characters in the serious ensemble were more united in the way they musically expressed their thoughts, more prepared to let one remark follow on in orderly fashion from the last and let the melody and harmony of their parts cohere, than those in other. What was disappointing was that more touches of realism could not be introduced when characters felt themselves opposed to each other. (Robinson 1972, 156)

Even when their own or the well-being of their loved ones is at stake, the characters preserve the all-pervasive *countenance* (cf. Strohm 1997, 210), which does not allow for an unseemly expression of conflict in a duet. On the contrary, composers were attracted by the possibility to unite two characters so that "the melody and harmony of their parts cohere". Handel and his Italian contemporaries would probably not have understood Robinson's disappointment "that more touches of realism could not be introduced", which is why we need to make sure we avoid his and other similar approaches. Typologies which derived from the later history of opera such as ensembles of action, reflection and contemplation (cf. Cook 2001; Rienäcker 1997, 101) should be used with caution, too since they are inappropriate for 18th-century opera seria. Dent's approach to the quartet "Bella!/Taci!" from A. Scarlatti's opera *Il trionfo dell'onore* can serve to exemplify this. Although he found it of considerable interest musically, Dent was disappointed by the "stately formality" (1910a, 546) and the lack of dramatic verve in the quartet. The essence of his reproach is in the aforementioned lack of dialogue and the irrefutable fact that, instead of an ensemble of action, we are dealing with an ensemble of reflection, albeit full of lively interaction between the four characters. However, "ensembles of action" did not exist in opera seria of the period because they were not considered appropriate to the genre.

The somewhat abstract category of the dramatic duet can be understood as a conflation of different types of duets in dramatic vocal genres in

the course of the 17th century. With time, the duet as a number in genres such as the cantata, the serenata and the Italian oratorio began to resemble the opera duet, becoming standardised in the course of the 18th century. But before this happened, the term *aria a due* was frequently used as a synonym for the dramatic duet, causing terminological problems. Dechant (1993) and Robinson (1972, 151) define it as an aria which distributes a single melody onto two voices that are always in a relationship of successiveness and never of simultaneity, i. e. the only structural procedure they use in the vocal parts is alternation, and never parallelism or counterpoint. On the other hand, Olga Termini (1978, 116) adopts the term *aria in duetto* from Francesco Caffi's manuscript *Storia della musica teatrale in Venezia* (c. 1850) for a successive duet in which respective stanzas are in turn sung by different characters. Although opposing, these definitions share the view that the *aria a due* is either a subcategory or a lesser variant of the duet, and Calella may have a point when he criticizes this conception of the *aria a due* as a not entirely formed duet, an "aria in disguise"<sup>122</sup> (Calella 2000, 124), especially when it is pitted against the "duetto" as its terminological opposite. Regardless of whether we accept Calella's opinion that "the sources show that the term 'duetto' was used [as, A/N] often and that the two terms were interchangeable" (Calella 2000, 124) or not, it is counterproductive to insist on a precise distinction between the duet and the *aria a due* (or *aria in duetto*).

Irrespectively of the above outlined Aristotelian precepts, J. J. Rousseau insisted on the incongruity of duets to certain dramatic situations except for "lively and moving situations"<sup>123</sup> (quoted in Saville 1958, 134). In dramatic genres of a larger scale, the dramaturgic placement of duets is indeed an important issue. Rienäcker (1997, 104) singles out their position "on the periphery, at the beginning or end of an act", and indeed, Italian operatic duets in the first half of the 18th century usually occupy nodal dramaturgic points at the end of the first act, the beginning or the end of the second or near the end of the third act. Since opera duets in this age usually confirm the dramatic unity of two characters (usually the main female and male protagonists, the *prima donna* and the *primo uomo*, although there are many exceptions), what could be more dramatically appropriate than a duet of unity at a point in the dramatic action where their future seems highly uncertain? Together with the amorous duet uniting the characters at the prospect of a happy dénouement, these are indeed the most common duet types of the period, but by no means the only ones. Calella, for instance, claims that around 1700 there were

122 Verkaptte Arien.

123 Situations vives et touchantes.

not only more ensembles in opera seria than is usually thought, but they showed considerable dramaturgic diversity, and this might be the tradition that Handel followed (cf. Calella 2000, 129). In some duets examined in this chapter older librettistic traditions were still strong, placing a closed operatic number (whether aria or duet) at the beginning or the middle of a scene, and not only at the end as began to be the norm with the introduction of *da capo* form.

In my former research, the highlighting of the category of dialogue as crucial to the development of the duet led me to focus on the idea of dramatic conflict as decisive for Handel's love duets (cf. Ćurković 2009). This stems from the quintessential importance of the dramaturgic category of conflict in drama and theatre studies. In hindsight, it became clear that a certain duet occurring in a dramatic situation of conflict does not always have distinguishing traits when compared to duets that do not play out any kind of conflict at all. In other words—and the duets analysed in Chapter 3 will also confirm this—a duet of unity and a duet of conflict could be different in terms of the structural procedures they apply, but they could also be similar. It is therefore not advisable to limit ourselves to certain fixed dramaturgic categories.

Although duets from cantatas, serenatas and Italian oratorios are to be examined together with opera duets in this chapter, the fact that the latter are enmeshed in an essentially public (especially in an urban centre like London) theatrical entertainment will significantly broaden the predominantly analytical approach taken in Chapter 2. Aspects of performance practice, whether musical or theatrical, will play a part in the consideration of compositional techniques and stylistic traits. Since dramatic duets are clearly assigned to two *dramatis personae*, and in the case of the serenata, Italian oratorio and opera also embedded in larger dramatic units such as scenes, parts or acts, questions of dramaturgy will be of prime importance, too.

My goal is to compare Handel and the Italian contemporaries he had some sort of contact with, and the public, representational genres to be examined here show that this contact consciously took on traits such as imitation, difference, competition and even rivalry. Composers who were active or whose works were performed, i. e. whose works served as a (musical) starting point for operatic performance in London in Handel's age will be at the centre of the comparative analysis. The time frame under investigation (1706–1724) is not only the period when Italian opera was established in London but also a time when the music of Handel's Italian contemporaries who are of the greatest importance to this study such as Bononcini and Gasparini flourished in London's musical life alongside Handel's. Handel's operatic undertakings in London in the 1730s and beyond are marked by an increased stylistic differentiation in relation to younger Italian contemporaries (Porpora, Vinci, Hasse and the like) and he

himself will proceed along different stylistic lines in his English oratorios, gradually abandoning opera and Italian vocal music altogether. Although his duet output began to show some distinguishing traits in the 1730s (cf. Zauft 1990; Calella 2000 and 2009; Ćurković 2009), these cannot be brought into relation with the Italian contemporaries at the heart of this study: their specificity could be elucidated only by taking a different approach, which is why this study will leave out this later period in Handel's activity as a composer out of consideration. However, it will not limit itself to London in purely spatial terms. The output of the Italian composers in question written for different Italian cities, as well as Berlin and Vienna in the case of Bononcini will also be taken into consideration in order to explain their overall development and to be able to compare whether and to what extent they wrote (or their works were adapted) for London in a different way. One must also bear in mind that the limited accessibility of sources<sup>124</sup> encouraged the inclusion of some works that were written well before the affirmation of these musicians as operatic composers in London. Therefore, thanks to the availability of facsimile editions and microfilms, Bononcini's works from the 1690s and 1700s also found their way into the comparison. With Handel, limits were drawn with works written in Italy on the one hand (because I am interested in duets in Italian vocal genres) and the year 1724 (Bononcini's departure from London) on the other hand, since the importance of their rivalry diminished from that point on.

Often we do not have access to sources documenting the music of all the duets in a given work. For instance, some of them to be discussed in the subsequent subchapters have been drawn from manuscript collections of arias, with the occasional duet included, since I either did not have access to the whole score or—no less frequently—it has not been preserved at all. This brings us to a philological aspect critical to the study of 17th and 18th century dramatic vocal music. Large-scale secular vocal works, especially operas, were comparatively rarely printed, and if so, usually only under special circumstances. Apart from manuscripts of the works in their entirety, a lot of numbers, especially arias that achieved some popularity, circulated in manuscript collections.<sup>125</sup> London as one of the first metropolises of modern Europe that had a considerable music market forming a

124 This study benefited greatly from the interlibrary loan services of the Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg in the acquisition of microfilms of manuscripts from the British Library and other European libraries, as well as several research trips to London, where I consulted various manuscripts in the British Library and the Gerald Coke Handel Collection, housed at the Foundling Museum.

125 This is why if the manuscript score of a certain opera has been lost (especially if it was not revived but only had a single run in the theatre where it was originally premiered), we can sometimes reconstruct the numbers that circulated independently of the opera in various collections of copies.

vital part of public musical life, also relied on the publishing of various “selected” or “favourite songs” from popular operas. These printed collections found their way not only into the private homes of a musical public that could sing and play some of the numbers but also into the playhouses and other kinds of entertainment venues where they could be channelled into different, more popular forms of music making. This is precisely why the orchestral accompaniment of the original arias was often streamlined to facilitate accompaniment on the harpsichord or some other continuo instrument. In contrast to Italy, where the most successful, challenging and spectacular arias could be “transported” into other contexts, in London it was often the simpler, less demanding and popular-sounding numbers that were incorporated into these anthologies, although individual collections vary greatly in this respect. However, with the exception of Handel’s, whole autographs or manuscript copies of operas performed in London at the time are rarely preserved in their entirety and we have to rely to a great extent on these “selected” or “favourite songs” for the analysis of duets, although they are sometimes not even included in the selections.

Much more reliable indicators of the presence of duets are the printed libretti, providing an overview of the overall numbers contained in an opera. Following continental practice, the libretti were not only published so that the audience could follow the plot (in London in both the original Italian and its English translation), they were also the main means of documenting a performance, containing not only information about the cast often unavailable elsewhere but dedications as well. If manuscript scores or other types of musical sources are unavailable, a libretto can tell us how many duets a certain opera contained, as well as display their texts, although there are occasional discrepancies between libretti and musical sources. The libretti provide invaluable contextual information on the duets even if their setting is not preserved. A certain type of text can require an equivalent type of setting, which enables us to make plausible assumptions. Comparative analyses in this chapter will show that in the same way as arias, duets were also subject to the most direct form of parody, that is, the transposition of a duet with a certain text to another opera, whether leaving the text unchanged or minimally modified. This makes it rather plausible that the music was also transferred from one work to the other, for the composer would not have reached for a text he had already set in place of an original had he wanted to compose new music for it. Another aspect where libretto analysis is of crucial importance is the adaptation of libretti, which is often highlighted as a specificity of Handel’s opus, but is actually characteristic of a wide array of operatic practices all over Europe. Some of the operas by Handel’s Italian contemporaries under inspection have also been adapted from libretti set much earlier, either by the same or a different composer and are often extensively revised. The possible availability of sources documenting earlier

settings can be valuable in the analysis of transformation or replacement of duet texts. Even though one would expect that duets, requiring more rehearsal time, would be more difficult to replace as well as the fact that two opera singers would be less likely to agree on the choice of older duets to transfer, it will be shown that this kind of parody occurred frequently in the case of duets.<sup>126</sup> In any case, a broad comparison of different versions of libretti and their settings can shed a light on the development of duets in the opus of a certain contemporary of Handel's, as well as on the inter-relationships of these composers.

Handel's cooperation with librettists and his methods of working with existing libretti, many of which he collected himself during his journeys is well researched in publications of different kinds, from a philological display of libretti and their sources that enables in-depth comparison (Bianconi 1992), to chronological overviews (Strohm 2008; Gier 2009) as well as individual studies on Nicola Francesco Haym (Lindgren 1987) and the influence of composers of the Royal Academy of Music on the choice of libretti (Clausen 1994; Dean 1995). As pointed out by Gier (2009, 196–197), although there was always a great deal of cooperation between composer and librettist in the first decades of operatic life in London, the fact that the names of librettists who adapted libretti for Handel after the dissolution of the Royal Academy of Music are often unknown suggests that henceforth he had even more independence in adapting the libretti.<sup>127</sup> Nevertheless, it is evident that there is a strong element of teamwork in the choice and placing of duets into London operas in the first third of the 18th century, which will make it both easier and more difficult to assess the intentions, reasons and motivations behind these choices.

Handel's relationship to the so-called operatic reform at the beginning and the first third of the 18th century has also been debated in a vast array of literature, and a clear consensus has been reached that he was not particularly interested in consciously implementing ideas of librettists such as Zeno<sup>128</sup> and Metastasio.<sup>129</sup> However, as has already been stated, the issue

126 It remains difficult to say if suitcase duets existed the same way "suitcase arias" did, since at least in the cases of the works examined in this study we do not have any contextual information of this kind on the singers involved.

127 The death of Haym, one of Handel's closest associates, in 1729, might have had a hand in this emancipation.

128 The librettist Pietro Pariati (1665–1733), with whom Zeno collaborated on a range of libretti to the extent that it is impossible to distinguish between the two men's creative share in their mutual projects, usually does not get the mention he deserves.

129 Even when he did set them, the libretti were often heavily revised, for instance Metastasio's *Siroe* (1728), *Poro, re dell'Indie* (1731) and *Ezio* (1732), Zeno's *Faramondo* (1737) as well as different *pasticci* based on Zeno's libretti. The latter are compiled from either works by Handel or from works by a younger generation of Italian contemporaries and are therefore excluded from this study.

is more complex. Firstly, Zeno and Metastasio were not the only librettists interested in imbuing the libretto with more serious, tragic elements along Aristotelian principles. As outlined in detail in Freeman 1981 and Ketterer 2010, Zeno was just one of many men of letters who displayed some of these tendencies in the period between 1690 and 1710, and all of them did so with varying degrees of consistency. Librettists such as Domenico David (d. 1698), Matteo Noris (d. 1714), Girolamo Frigimelica Roberti (1653–1732), Antonio Salvi (1664–1724) and Agostino Piovene (1671–1721), all active in Venice at the turn of the century, strived for a greater influence of French classical tragedy on libretti, the excision of comic characters and the concentration and unification of the plot. Although ensembles were to a certain degree considered incompatible with the Aristotelian ideal of dramatic verisimilitude, duets still hold a strong presence in their libretti as well as their revised versions. A comparative study like this could have taken the libretti as their point of departure, too. Many of the libretti that were set (in a revised form or not) in the first third or half of the 18th century by composers including Handel and the Italian contemporaries of his who are at the centre of this study belong to the distinguished librettists listed above.

However, I eventually decided against this approach. For one thing, some of the comparative work had already been done, e. g. in G. Cummings's (1982 and 1998) studies on settings of Metastasio's *Alessandro nell'Indie* by Vinci (1730), Handel (1731, as *Poro, rè dell'Indie*) and Hasse (1731, as *Cleofide*), including a detailed comparison of the settings of the famous "modern", dialogic duet "Se mai turbo il tuo riposo". Secondly, in most cases a comprehensive comparison would require tracking down sources that have a varying degree of philological accessibility, some of them in localities (such as the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek or different Italian archives) that were not within the financial means of foreseen field research.<sup>130</sup> Finally, as some of the examples discussed in the course of this chapter will show, the connection between a source libretto and its subsequent adaptations can become increasingly blurred. For example, Antonio Salvi, who is generally important for providing many libretti that Handel and his adaptors took as a starting point for their London productions, placed a duet of conflict in his libretto *Adelaide*, and this duet was set by Torri in the first production of the opera in 1722. Orlandini's setting for London (1729) contains, however, no ensembles whatsoever, and Rolli revised Salvi's libretto for Handel in the same year as *Lotario*, replacing the above mentioned duet of conflict with a duet of amorous unity. It would, therefore, be problematic to talk about fidelity to a librettist's conception

130 The above mentioned case of *Griselda* was perhaps the most feasible, but it is best approached in a monographic study of a shorter scope.



of a duet within a certain opera, and it seems likely that the criteria for omission and replacement could seem dramatically and musically arbitrary, depending on reasons that are difficult to account for, maybe having more to do with performance practice.

In spite of the methodological specificities just described, the musico-analytical approach to the dramatic duets will not be very different from the one in the first part of this study. In spite of all the contextual information crucial for their understanding, dramatic duets still share some structural traits with the chamber duets examined in Chapter 2. A special emphasis will be placed on the application of contrapuntal techniques, for while counterpoint in a chamber duet is a necessity as the stylistic tide was beginning to turn, it became a matter of choice in opera. This will perhaps be a more appropriate axis for comparison than some of the other elements outlined in this introduction. As we shall see, the duets examined in this study display some variety when it comes to contrapuntal shaping, varying not just from composer to composer but also from work to work. Highly imitative duets coexist with entirely homophonic ones.

However, it is important to consider one last typology crucial for this chapter in spite of its possible flaws. It was devised by Charles Burney (1935, 769) and considered in detail by Calella (2000; 2009). Burney came up with a binary opposition of opera duets according to the temporal relationship between the voices (simultaneous or successive) and the type of texture (homophonic or polyphonic) they create. A duet of the “modern plan” would thus favour a successive relationship of the vocal parts in a predominantly homophonic texture, whereas a duet of the “old plan” is more simultaneous and often contrapuntal. To Burney’s dismay, the duet of the “modern plan” had, in Handel’s heyday in the 1730s, grown into the most common type of duet, gradually superseding the duet of the “old plan”. This mirrors Mattheson’s complaint about the “lack of invention” in the modern dialogue duet, although the examples the composer from Hamburg gives are from the operas by Reinhard Keiser, which leaves a big generational and stylistic gap between what Burney might have considered “modern”. Calella (2000, 126–127) disagrees with Burney on this, although he admits that if not the most common, the “old plan” duet was the most admired type at the turn of the century, much earlier than the stylistic change began to take place. Clearly, Burney’s opposition is slightly ahistorical and to a certain extent merely theoretical, leaving numerous borderline cases between the two extremes, but it has remained influential even though the implicit knowledge of Burney’s contemporaries on text setting had long forsaken us.

The examples Burney gives are duets from Handel’s contribution to the London pasticcio *Muzio Scevola*. A detailed analysis of the opera’s

duets in Chapter 3.4 might question this clear dichotomy, but there is no doubt that “Notte cara” (II. 12; Gismonda, Matilda) is a remnant of the tradition of the chamber duet in an opera duet (cf. Calella 2000, 129) and therefore possibly valid as an example of Burney’s “old plan”. Definitely more representative of the “modern plan” is “Se mai turbo il tuo riposo” (I. 11; Cleofide, Poro), the only typical Metastasian duet in Handel’s operas. Described by Calella (cf. 2009, 341) as the lyrical heightening of dramatic conflict, it rests on a librettistic progression from polytextuality to monotextuality, consisting of a dialogic exchange of a longer span leading up to stichomythia and culminating in the characters singing the same text. Musically, the build-up (in the A section of the *da capo* form these duets mostly adopt) moves from long to short successive statements, and (mostly parallel) simultaneity is achieved only as the conclusion of the dramatic dialogue, usually taking place in a situation of conflict. There are numerous intermediary stages between monotextuality and polytextuality, but even if a duet clearly belongs to one of the two opposites, it is not always a clear indication for the composer to set a monotextual duet text on the “old” and a polytextual one on the “modern plan”. Handel defied expectations in this respect, often setting monotextual duet texts with a high degree of successiveness in the treatment of voices. Likewise, a duet text containing different morphological and syntactical versions of the same content does not necessarily have to be dialogic, but can be conceived as the parallel unfolding of two monologues, which gives the composer freedom to use different techniques of simultaneity and succession. Therefore, the principle of differentiation of parts in a dramatic duet is never applied consistently and usually gives way at some point to successive treatment. In the duets of G. F. Handel and his Italian contemporaries, this differentiation is often a nod to 17th-century traditions or it occurs in comical duets. It is more common in Handel’s operas written in the 1730s.

Finally, let me briefly outline the course of this chapter. Chapter 3.2 is devoted to the beginnings of Italian opera in London, from 1706 (the year of the first performance of *Camilla*) to 1710, the period just before Handel’s arrival in London and the premiere of *Rinaldo*. It places stress on the British public’s developing acquaintance with Italian opera in general and duets as their integral part in particular. As a large share of performed operas belongs to the category of the *pasticcio*, i. e. operas assembled from arias (and duets) from different works whose origin cannot always be traced, this part of the research will not be able to deal with questions of authorial specificities in the composing of duets to the extent the following chapters might. Rather than as in the 1720s and 1730s when it was often Handel himself who assembled pasticcios either from his own works or from works by other composers (most commonly Vinci’s and Hasse’s),

in this early stage of the development of Italian opera in London when no professional foreign composers were active in the British capital, the pasticcios were produced by the organisers and managers of the theatres and such polyvalent artistic personalities as Nicola Haym, basing them on existing libretti and/or scores. Duets in *Camilla*, *Thomyris*, *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* and *Almahide* composed by Bononcini are considered in this chapter rather than in Chapter 3.4 because their music formed an integral part of the pasticcio musical culture of London at this early stage and they were among the first Italian duets the British public got to know, so they need to be considered together with the other examples from this period.

While investigating the next period in the performance of Italian opera (1711–1719), chapter 3.3 examines the duet outputs of individual composers such as Gasparini and Handel in parallel with the continued production of pasticcios containing duets whose authorship is very hard to establish with certainty. A separate chapter (3.3.1) is devoted to Gasparini, in which the analysis of the duets in the two London operas associated with his name (*Antioco* and *Ambleto*) are supplemented with an examination of duets in some of his dramatic cantatas and operas written for other centres around the same time or later.<sup>131</sup> An examination of pasticcios from the period 1712–1717 (Chapter 3.3.2) will show how not only different composers' duets were tested on the London audience compared to the previous period but that structural and stylistic expectations from a duet were changing. Handel's Italian dramatic duets written during his time in Italy (1706–1710), delegated to this chapter rather than 3.2 in order to highlight the continuity in his evolving structural and stylistic traits, as well as the duets from his early London years (1711–1715) are pitted against the duets examined up to that point to see if and to what extent Handel was developing his own ideas about what a dramatic duet should be like.

Finally, Chapter 3.4 devotes itself to one of the most significant periods for Italian opera in London in the 18th century, the activity of the Royal Academy of Music (1720–1729). With a few exceptions, it was marked by the clear outlining of two authorial operatic poetics, Handel's and Bononcini's. This is why the focus is on the first five seasons (1720–1724), after which Bononcini departed from London and only wrote one more opera for the Royal Academy of Music, *Astianatte* in 1727. Although works by other composers were occasionally performed, including a significant contribution by Ariosti, whose works are going to be excluded from consideration in this study for reasons already outlined in Chapter 1.1, the customary reception of this period is through Bononcini's and Handel's

131 Gasparini is, naturally, of special interest because comparisons with his chamber duets (examined in Chapter 2.4) impose themselves.

growing rivalry. Initially the more successful of the two, Bononcini appears to have been ousted as Handel fashioned the taste of the London audience in his own favour. Although I am going to be critical of this topos (along with many that characterise the evaluation of Bononcini's music), a focused structural, stylistic and dramaturgic analytical confrontation between the duets of these two composers who worked with the same librettists (Rolli and Haym), can be seen as the culmination of the comparative methodology.

### 3. 2.

#### BEGINNINGS OF ITALIAN OPERA IN LONDON BEFORE THE ADVENT OF HANDEL (1706–1711)

In order to understand the relationship between Handel and his Italian contemporaries in the realm of dramatic duets, one needs to look into the beginnings of the performance tradition of Italian opera in London.<sup>132</sup> Britain resisted the introduction of Italian opera as a pan-European form of musical theatre even longer than France. Emulating French models at first, but developing its own forms of musical theatre on the foundations of the domicile tradition of spoken drama with musical interpolations, the so-called “dramatic opera” evolved, gaining increasing popularity in London’s theatres at the end of the 17th century. In the first decade of the 18th century, conditions were ripe for a continuous production of dramatic texts (in fact, libretti) set to music in their entirety. The fact that some of these first fully-fledged London operas “in the Italian manner” were performed in English or a combination of Italian and English forms a bridge to the evolving tradition of musical theatre mostly in Italian from about 1710 to 1728, the year of the first performance of *The Beggar’s Opera*, which although not a long-term threat, nevertheless indirectly contributed to the downfall of the Royal Academy of Music and anticipated Handel’s invention of the English oratorio, gradually assuming the place of Italian opera in his output. Therefore, although operas such as *Camilla*, *Thomyris* and *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* were sung (mostly) in English, they will be considered as part of the tradition of Italian opera in London since their music was Italian.

At the beginning of the century, three London theatres in the city mounted productions with a significant share of music in them: the theatre in Lincoln’s-Inn-Fields, the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane and the Queen’s Theatre (built in 1705, but renamed King’s Theatre at the succession of George I in 1714) in the Haymarket. After some fluctuation, the latter theatre eventually specialised in Italian opera, housing both the Royal Academy of Music and Handel’s Second Academy. Mainly because there were no composers of Italian opera active in London at the time, most of these early operas (19 out of the 30 performed works between 1705 and 1717, cf. Lindgren 1995, 155) were pasticcios assembled from works by different (Italian) composers, many of them at the centre of this study. Talbot (2008) distinguishes between two types of pasticcios: those based on an available score, from which recitatives, arias and duets could be retained but they could also

132 Fassini (1914), W. J. Lawrence (1921), L. Lindgren (1977, 1980, 1987, 1995), J. Merrill Knapp (1984) and Dean and Knapp (1987) describe the social and cultural context of the introduction of Italian opera to London in detail and this study is greatly indebted to them.

be replaced by new ones, and those based on an available libretto, where numbers had to be newly composed or numbers with different texts were introduced in their place.

Interestingly enough, one of the crucial people in the establishing of this foreign genre was one of Handel's close associates, active in London as early as in 1700. Nicola Francesco Haym (1678–1729), a Roman musician of German descent, was probably the person with the best knowledge of Italian opera in London at the time, a fact hardly surprising since he received his musical training at the time when Rome was an important operatic centre. In addition to being a “composer, librettist and theatre manager” (Lindgren 2001), Haym was equally active as a cellist and scholar, but the most important aspect of his professional life for this study are his operatic adaptations. Adaptation is a better word than compilation or arrangement to describe Haym's role, as especially at the beginning of the period considered in this chapter he was often responsible not only for providing a libretto (often an adaptation of a previously existing text), but also the music. “The poetic virtues of an Italian libretto were of little concern to Londoners, so an adaptor of texts worked mainly to combine the wishes of patrons, singers and composers into a coherent ‘dramatic skeleton’ that he could direct upon the stage.” (Lindgren 1987, 313) The physical presence of Handel as well as Bononcini and Ariosti in the following decades gradually reduced the need for pasticcios. Hence today, Haym is better known as librettist to Handel, Bononcini and Ariosti, although he was as important because of his adaptations.

Table 23 shows a selective list of operatic works performed in London in the period between 1706 and 1710, most of them being pasticcios. This chapter devotes further attention to the ones that sources have been preserved for, mostly collections of “favourite songs” that vary in comprehensiveness and do not always reflect the presence and the importance of duets in the respective operas. The five operas (*Camilla*; *Thomyris*, *Queen of Scythia*; *Pyrrhus and Demetrius*; *Almahide*; *Idaspe fedele*) selected for analysis are also the more successful ones with the London audiences, although to a different extent. At first the two theatres in Drury Lane and Haymarket participated in a competition to stage musico-dramatic works so fiercely that in 1708 Lord Chamberlain “consigned all the actors to Drury Lane and all the musicians and dancers to Haymarket. English dramatic opera, requiring both actors and musicians, was thus banned from the stage” (Lindgren, 1980, 51). Italian opera was henceforth presented only at the Haymarket, although a certain number of seasons still intermixed with drama. This does not include later revivals of *Camilla*, *Thomyris* and *Pyrrhus and Demetrius*, also considered in this study and performed elsewhere, for they were conceived of as an English alternative to Italian opera although they consisted of Italian music.

YEAR	WORK	LANGUAGE	COMPOSER /ARRANGER	LIBRETTIST /ARRANGER	DUETS*
1705	<i>Arsinoë</i>	English	T. Clayton, Italian composers, N. Haym?	J. Addison, T. Stanzani	7
1705	<i>The Loves of Ergasto</i>	Italian	J. Greber (not preserved)	A. Amalteo, anonym. adapt.	2
1706	<i>Camilla</i>	English, 1708– 1710: English & Italian	G. Bononcini, N. Haym	S. Stampiglia, N. Haym, transl. Northman**	8
1707	<i>Rosamond</i>	English	T. Clayton	J. Addison	9
1707	<i>Thomyris, Queen of Scythia</i>	English, 1708– 1710: English & Italian	J. C. Pepusch, A. Scarlatti, G. Bononcini, A. Steffani, N. Haym?, Ch. Dieupart?	P. A. Motteux (newly written to suit the arias)	9
1708	<i>Love's Triumph</i>	English?	G. Bononcini, C. F. Cesarini, F. Gasparini, V. Urbani?	P. A. Motteux, Ch. Dieupart	10
1708	<i>Pyrrhus and Demetrius</i>	English & Italian	Haym, A. Scarlatti, G. Bononcini, et al.	A. Morselli, Haym?, transl. O. Swiney	5
1709	<i>Clotilde</i>	English & Italian	F. Conti, G. Bononcini, A. Scarlatti	D. David, anonym. adapt.	?
1710	<i>Almahide</i>	Italian, comic scenes in English	G. Bononcini, A. Ariosti, J. J. Heidegger	P. A. Bernardoni	5
1710	<i>Idaspe fedele</i>	Italian	F. Mancini, J. C. Pepusch, N. Grimaldi?	G. P. Candi, S. Stampiglia	4

TABLE 23.

Selective list of pasticcios of Italian opera performed in London 1706–1710

\* In the case of the operas receiving closer analytical attention in the subsequent subchapters, the listed number of duets reflects their overall number in different versions of the opera (and libretto) and not the actual number performed either at the premiere or in the course of the run, since we often cannot know this information and all versions are to be considered.

\*\* Lindgren (1972) alludes to the possibility that Motteux and O. Swiney “aided with the translation or revision of the text”.

The gradual transition to performance in Italian was accompanied by the equally gradual domination of Italian singers as compared to English. The debut of the castrato Valentino Urbani aka Valentini in *Camilla* in 1707 or in late 1706 introduced London audiences to this—for them—exotic type of voice<sup>133</sup>, but also began the tendency of intermixing singing in English and Italian, depending on who was singing the role. This drew a lot of contemporary criticism and encouraged J. J. Heidegger to advertise *Almahide* as the first opera sung entirely in Italian although this was not the case, since the comic scenes were still in English. In December 1708 Londoners were acquainted with a much finer castrato voice in the person of Nicolo Grimaldi (also known as Nicolini), a bigger Italian (and international) operatic star. According to Lindgren (Lindgren 1995, 151), from 1708 to 1717 “he—rather than any score, libretto or scene design—was the featured attraction whenever he was on stage.” Gradually, Italian singers prevailed in entirety, laying the foundation to the formation of a permanent operatic ensemble at the Royal Academy of Music in the 1720s. As we can see in the table, Haym definitely played a key role in the creation of *Camilla* and *Pyrrhus and Demetrius*, but might have also collaborated in mounting *Arsinoë* and *Thomyris* on stage. The anonymous author of the preface to “A Critical Discourse on Opera’s and Musick in England” (1709, published alongside a translation of F. Ragueuet’s *A Comparison between the French and Italian Musick and Opera’s*) heavily criticised *Arsinoë*, *The Loves of Ergasto*, *The Temple of Love*, *Rosamond* and *Love’s Triumph*, largely because the music of these works was entirely unlike the Italian operatic idiom of the time, whereas *Camilla* personified this ideal, at least to London audiences of the time (cf. Lindgren 1980, 46–47). He was especially scathing in his views on *Arsinoë* as filled with “antiquated Italian airs”, which made it resemble “the Hospital of the old Decrepit Italian Operas” (quoted in Lindgren 1987, 261).<sup>134</sup> The three operas performed before *Camilla* (*Arsinoë*, *The Loves of Ergasto*, *The Temple of Love*) were also rather short, numbering 18 to 37 arias compared to *Camilla*’s 56, and the antiquated style of the arias meant that they were often irregular, rarely in *da capo* form and also short, so that the performances had to be supplemented with extra music

133 It is possible that a castrato already performed in the *Loves of Ergasto* (cf. Lindgren 1995, 151), but one cannot identify him.

134 A superficial look at the scores of *Arsinoë* (Clayton ms) and *Rosamond* (Clayton 1707) reveals that Clayton’s duets, although numerous, are mostly of a shorter span, written in a simple style that gives favour either to an exchange of shorter alternative statements by the voices, or to parallel movement, less frequently both. Lindgren’s (1987, 297) opinion that Haym might have helped Clayton in the composition of *Arsinoë* could have some plausibility, since the duets in *Rosamond* seem even simpler in comparison.



during the interval (cf. Lindgren 1997, 174). After Londoners acquainted themselves with the genre in *Arsinoë*, the brevity and “mangled” nature of the next two operas was not sufficient to satisfy them.

### 3. 2. 1. **Camilla (1706)**

As shall be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.4.1, Giovanni Bononcini’s impact on the development of a turn-of-the-century operatic style, although mostly contested in older literature, is recognised as a strong influence on opera in Britain in general and Handel’s opus in particular. Interestingly enough, Wolff (1975a, 75) finds that one of the first works Bononcini wrote in a “Handelian” style was *Il trionfo di Camilla* (1696). It remains to be seen whether these and other, occasionally contradictory comparisons indeed link Bononcini with Handel in a convincing manner or are mere generalised traits. While comparing Bononcini’s music for *Camilla* with an opera by Carlo Francesco Pollarolo, Strohm (1979, 56–62) concludes that Bononcini’s arias are “longer and more fully orchestrated”, even though the orchestral accompaniment often comes down to ritornellos framing arias scored for voice and continuo only (cf. 1974, 108). Nevertheless, the overall expansion of an aria is often achieved by the growth of the first part of the *da capo* form through repetition, the use of multiple, sometimes even contrasting motifs and a harmonic trajectory articulating it into a bipartite whole in itself (cf. Strohm 1979, 56–57). The duets in the London *Camilla* show few sings of this interplay between voices and instrumental accompaniment (the only exception being “Happy/ Hopeless I Love”), since most of them are written for continuo only with the possibility of an orchestral ritornello added at the end.

*Il trionfo di Camilla* was one of the most important operatic libretti of the late 17th and early 18th centuries. It was written by Silvio Stampiglia and first set by his regular collaborator Giovanni Bononcini for Naples in 1696. In terms of dramaturgy and content, with its lack of an “enlightened” idealisation of characters and the comic servants Linco and Tullia, Stampiglia is hardly a reform librettist like Apostolo Zeno (cf. Strohm 1979, 51–55). On the other hand, according to Lindgren (1972), Stampiglia was following trends such as the domination of *da capo* form, two thirds of which are exit arias, which shows a tendency for implementing continuity after the model of the *liaison des scènes* known from French classical tragedy. The libretto “received thirty-seven documented productions in seventy years. Bononcini’s [...] score may have been the basis for as many as twenty-six productions in twenty cities during a thirty-year span. The co-creators were certainly in charge of the production at Naples in 1696, and perhaps

of that in Rome in 1698; but they seemingly had nothing to do with later versions of their work. Every city had its own—usually anonymous—adaptors, who altered texts and music to accord with their personal ideals, the exigencies of the season, and the tastes of town.” (Lindgren 1977, 89) We cannot always know if and to what extent Bononcini’s music was retained in these subsequent settings or adaptations. From the original seven duets (three of which were written for the comic servants), one can trace down only the modification of a duet for Turno and Lavinia in 1698, whereas in later settings of the increasingly modified libretto a new duet was added occasionally. This, among other things, makes the London version of this opera highly remarkable.

Not many settings were based on the original score to the extent that the London *Camilla* (1706) was. The composer’s music had already been performed in London since 1700, which might have played a part in its choice for performance. Haym, who could have become acquainted with the opera while playing in the orchestra for its first revival (*La rinovata Camilla*) in Rome in 1698<sup>135</sup>, displayed an exceptional fidelity to Bononcini’s score by composing only the (English) recitatives afresh and retaining 53 of the original 56 arias (cf. Lindgren 1980, 47). This is fairly uncommon not only for London but also for the tradition of performance of Italian opera in the 18th century in general. Bononcini’s music must have left a strong mark on London audiences, since only a few arias were replaced in *Camilla*’s revivals in 1709, 1717 and 1726 (cf. Lindgren 1977, 114). The opera was performed in the British capital as many as 111 times from 1706 to 1728 (Lindgren 1980, 46), out of which 66 took place during its long first run (1706–1709). Both the Theatre Royal and the Queen’s Theatre in Haymarket competed to stage it. Bononcini even received an invitation to come to London in 1707, although he refused, reluctant to leave his prestigious court position in Vienna. “By 1710 Bononcini’s arias were so popular in London that they were inserted into other operas, and several of his later arias became popular songs.” (Wolff 1975a, 78) All in all, as the second most performed musico-dramatic work in the United Kingdom in the 18th century after *The Beggar’s Opera*, the importance of *Camilla* for the establishment of Italian opera and the formation of the taste of London audiences cannot be stressed strongly enough.

The fact that the manuscript copy of the 1696 Neapolitan original version of *Il trionfo di Camilla* is available in a facsimile edition (Bononcini 1978) enables a close comparison between Haym’s adaptation (Bononcini

135 Haym must have known Bononcini from his Roman years, since both being cellists, they may have played together in orchestral performances under Corelli.

and Haym 1707)<sup>136</sup> and its model. As Dean and Knapp (1987, 148) had put it somewhat sharply, the numbers in these early London operas were “printed in mutilated form, generally voice and bass, with truncated or missing ritornellos, no inner parts, and minimal figuring.” Along with the translation into English, the types of voices used for certain roles were modified by transposition. Pitches varied minimally in the case of the two (high) male serious roles of Turno and Prenesto, originally written for soprani: the countertenor Francis Hughes as well as the alto castrato Valentino Urbani performed the former part, whereas the soprano Margherita de L’Epine, the boy soprano Henry Holcomb and eventually, in 1709, also the castrato Nicolini sung Prenesto. More significant were the changes in the comic roles. The servant Tullia, a “vecchia” (older woman) sung according to Venetian conventions by a tenor in female attire, was transposed an octave higher and assigned to a soprano in London in 1706. The fact that in 1717 and 1726 the role of Turno was sung by the contralto Jane Barbier does not present a significant change in the evident flexibility in terms of gender (introduced to London audiences early on), but the performances of the tenor Thomas Salway (in 1726) and George Pack (in 1717, possibly also a tenor) in Tullia’s role seem to imply that eventually, the “vecchia” convention of travesty was adopted as well (cf. Lindgren 1997, 744–745).

Table 24 displays the duets in the original 1696 and the 1706 version of the opera. Column 1706 is based on a collation of two sources: the aforementioned printed collection of songs (Bononcini and Haym 1707) and a manuscript score in the Royal College of Music in London that was obviously copied in London in the early 18th century and is not precisely datable (Bononcini 1990), but reflects the Neapolitan version of the opera. Thus, the duets from the 1696 version that did not make it into the printed collection of 1706 could be identified and compared. A comparison shows that there are no significant musical discrepancies between the duets in the two versions, which is in accordance with Haym’s already described fidelity to Bononcini’s score. He merely dropped the comic duet “Se ben mi sprezzi” from Act 2 and added the simpler duet of unity for Turno and Prenesto (“Care is fled”) to the last scene of Act 3, just before the final *coro*.<sup>137</sup>

136 Cullen’s 1707 print and the first, 1706 print by Walsh (Bononcini and Haym 1706) are identical in terms of musical content.

137 The fact that in both manuscript sources the duets “Languisco” and “Non disprezzar” end with an orchestral ritornello that is omitted from the printed selection of songs can be easily explained with the fact that selections of songs from early London opera aimed at a market of private music-making and therefore reduced the instrumental accompaniments of the songs to the simplest.

ACT/ SCENE	ITALIAN INCIPIIT	ENGLISH INCIPIIT*	SERI- OUS / COMIC	CHAR- ACTERS	1696	1706
I. 4	Dal suo bell'arco	One day cupid wantonly	s	Lavinia, Turno	S&S	S&MS**
I. 12	Languisco / Per chi?	I languish / For whom?	c	Tullia, Linco	T&B	S&B
II. 7	Se ben mi sprezzi	%	c	Tullia, Linco	T&B	%
III. 1	Con la / senza speme di farmi	Happy / Hopeless I love	s	Turno, Prenesto	S&S	MS&S***
III. 3	Caro bello / cara bella, tu sei quello/quella	Thour are he/she	c?	Tullia, Linco	T&B	S&B
III. 5	Vorebbe il cuor	My heart to act is	s	Camilla, Turno	S&S	S&MS
III. 11	Non disprezzar / Più non tradir	Cease cruel to deceive me / tyrannizing	s	Turno, Lavinia	S&S	MS&S
III. 15	%	Care is fled, despair no more	s	Prenesto, Turno	%	S&MS

TABLE 24.  
List of duets in the 1696 and 1706 versions of *Camilla*

- \* Incipits are listed in English and do not reflect changes in the direction of bilingual performance that came later.
- \*\* The flexibility of voices, especially in the higher ranges (e. g. the difference between a soprano and a mezzosoprano / contralto not being pronounced at the time) meant that the role of Turno could be sung by a female soprano in 1696, a countertenor (Hughes) and an alto castrato (Valentini) in 1706–1709 and a female contralto (Barbier) in 1717 and 1726. The duets fit the range of all these voices.
- \*\*\* The diversity of performers in the role of Prenesto highlights the above mentioned flexibility, too.

I am going to begin by explaining which kind of duets, although accorded some attention here, will not receive a more detailed account in similar cases to be dealt with later on. “Dal suo bell’arco” (Bononcini 1990, 15’–16; Bononcini recording, *Il trionfo di Camilla*) is an example of an arioso *a due*, a short two-voice outburst merely a few bars long and a remnant of the librettistic traditions of the 17th century, the likes of which will disappear from 18th century libretti with its domination of exit arias and the abandonment of shorter arias situated at the beginning or the middle of a scene. The duets

for the comic characters are of only a limited interest to this study. Although Tullia and Linco appear in other scenes separately and are integrated into the main dramatic action as episodic characters, their mutual scenes are on the verge of becoming emancipated from the principal dramatic action since they form independent units interrupting the main action and greatly differ from the scenes and numbers of the serious characters:

Repetitive rhythms and syllabic treatment, often bordering on comic patter, are typical of Bononcini's buffo style, as of his predecessors and successors. Widely varied motifs are used in some duets so that the characters at any one moment can be strongly differentiated, although it is usual for them to exchange material. In duets the buffi often quarrel, whereas serious duets are usually concerned with love. When comic characters have love duets, everything in them tends to be exaggerated [... in, A/N] splendid parodies of the serious duet. (Ford 1974, 117–118)

This study will shy away from the analysis of comic duets precisely for reasons outlined in the quote above. In the 1711 adaptation of Bononcini's *Etearco*, containing as many as four duets for the comic servants in its original 1707 Vienna setting, Haym dropped all of these along with the only remaining duet for the *primo uomo* and the *prima donna*. This suggests that a more unified and serious conception of opera under the indirect influence of reform tendencies was gaining ground in London. However, the duet "I languish / For whom?" (Bononcini and Haym 1707, 16; Bononcini 1990, 42'–43; Bononcini recording, *Il trionfo di Camilla*) was retained in the printed collection of *Camilla* in 1710, 1715 and 1717. In it, "the two comic characters mock the favourite type of love-scene found in seventeenth-century *opera seria* in which a lover addresses a distant beloved who does not appear on the stage." (Wolff 1975b, 71–72). Linco, who feigns love for the elderly and unattractive Tullia only out of material interests, is mocking not only Tullia's character on the diegetic plane but also the convention of serious opera by constantly interrupting her and forcing Tullia to break character in a faster tempo, trying to suppress Linco's unwelcome interventions into her "aria", so that the duet is a duel of contrasting alternating vocal statements. "Throughout, *adagio* (for her languishing) alternates with *allegro* ('I'm not talking to you!', etc.), a comic contrast which is seldom found in the set forms of even the later *opera buffa*." (ibid., 72) Changes of tempo within a single vocal number in reformed opera seria of the first half of the 18th century are not in line with the unity of *affect* that lies at its heart, so it goes without saying that we are not going to be encountering many duets of the sort in the remaining part of this study.

In comparison, the two remaining comic duets are more typical. “Se ben mi sprezzi” (Bononcini 1990, 74–75; Bononcini recording, *Il trionfo di Camilla*), present in the original 1696 version of the opera but not in its London adaptation, is conceived like an *aria con pertichini* for Tullia, in which Linco pokes fun at her by contradicting and interrupting her with brief interjections “che nò” (to her “che si”) in complementary rhythm. The same procedure is repeated in the B section of this regularly written out *da capo* design with an even more overtly comical allusion to Tullia’s moustache. Haym (and/or his translator Northman) must have felt the need to drop this duet from the adaptation, perhaps increasing the share of serious duets by the addition of the aforementioned “Care is fled” instead. The performances of the opera in 1717 and 1726, on the other hand, reinstated male performers in the role of Tullia.

“Thou are he/she” (Tullia, Linco) or “Caro bello / cara bella, tu sei quello/quella” in the original Italian (Bononcini 1990, 113’–115; Bononcini recording, *Il trionfo di Camilla*) is the only remaining comical duet in the London version of the opera and somewhat borderline between the serious and the comical dramatic plane. Whereas the first (A) section of the duet displays traits of a serious duet of amorous unity, in its second (B) section the composer reverts to a comical alternation of the vocal parts in short comic replicas as in his asides (“dreadful features”) in section B. Linco is breaking the illusion of a happily reunited couple. The humour of the Italian version of the opera was augmented by the fact that both roles were sung by lower male voices, and a soprano Tullia, however good an actress Mrs Lindsey might have been, cannot compete with the effect of a bass and tenor tandem, the latter voice aided by a performance in drag. It is also significant that, contrary to the logic of the *da capo* aria, order is not reinstated after a contrasting second section with a repetition of the first one. The contrast is manifold: section B is in C minor, it contrasts the parts by alternating them and reserves simultaneity for the passage in which Tullia and Linco cadence together, although not in a smooth parallel texture, but in typical *buffo* syllabic declamation (Bononcini and Haym 1707, 39). In section A, on the other hand, the voices start out in a simultaneous, but not parallel texture, soon engaging in a texture of free counterpoint against held notes written in inverted counterpoint (and repeated with reversed parts in b. 9), a technique very well-known from Bononcini’s chamber duets. The voices at one point (b. 6–9) even engage in brief imitation, absent from most of the other duets in this opera, almost as if this duet was a more proper love duet than the only one for serious characters, “Cease cruel tyrannizing / to deceive me”. This duet was retained in the selections of songs published in 1710, 1715 and 1717, which proves that it continued to have audience appeal.

Rather than occupying dramaturgic nodal points at the end of the first act, the beginning or the end of the second acts, in both versions of the opera after the short arioso *a due* and the comic duets in the course of the first and the second acts, the majority of the serious duets (as many as four of them in the London version) are reserved for the last act. Perhaps the most remarkable in dramaturgic (and affective terms) is the first number in the act, “Happy/hopeless I love” (Bononcini and Haym 1707, 33), “Con la / senza speme di farmi contento” in the original Italian (Bononcini 1990, 105–107; Bononcini recording, *Il trionfo di Camilla*). Turno is pleased that the king Latino’s hostility towards him has been transformed into an alliance, which will reflect positively on his relationship with the king’s daughter Lavinia, whereas Prenesto is desperate because he is convinced that Camilla, disguised as the shepherdess Dorinda, does not return his love. Two characters who are in a relationship of friendship are, therefore, united in a duet as they find themselves in completely opposing dramatic situations, and consequently also contrasting affects, Turno’s joy as opposed to Prenesto’s sorrow. The string ritornello, not contained in the 1706 London printed collection, brings two motifs that will serve as a starting point for the material of the vocal parts. The opening onset of Prenesto and Turno in parallel thirds is based on the first motif (a) of the ritornello (b. 1–4, Bononcini 1990, 105r), as well as the following two passages in which the voices interchange between a development of this motif and a held note in inverted counterpoint. After this, the voices unfold the second motif (b) from the ritornello (b. 4–14) in parallel, well suited to a virtuoso display of coloratura. The first, A section, thus articulates a regular song-form, likewise well-known from Bononcini’s chamber duets analysed in Chapter 2.4.

A SECTION	RITORNELLO		DUET PROPER			
Motif	a	b	a	a <sub>1</sub>	a <sub>1</sub>	b
Bar	1–4	4–14	15–22	23–31	32–40	41–56

TABLE 25.

Formal plan of A section in the duet “Con la / senza speme”<sup>138</sup> from *Camilla* (1706)

The upbeat nature of this section with its tilting ternary metre seems more suited to Turno’s state of mind and it is almost at odds with the affect expressed by Prenesto (“Hopeless I love and ne’er must enjoy her”), but in the original Italian text (“Senza speme di farmi contento son amante di vaga

138 Naturally, bar numbers refer to the manuscript copy of the score (Bononcini 1990, 105r–107r).

beltà”) this change is carried out merely by replacing the preposition “con” with “senza”. It seems almost as if even the inability to find satisfaction in being the lover of a “fair beauty” cannot spoil the joy of loving for Prenesto. The B section of the duet provides harmonic contrast and lets the vocal parts alternate at first, but proceeds to entangle them in a *contrapunctus ligatus*, leading them in parallel thirds to a unison cadence. Bononcini had borrowed this duet from the 1696 Naples score with minimal intervention for a duet of two female characters in similarly contrasting dramatic situations in his 1707 opera *Turno Aricino*, to be discussed in Chapter 3.4.1.1. The duet was also retained in the selections of songs published in 1710, 1715 and 1717. However, a bilingual performance in English and Italian after 1707 (when Valentini joined the cast) was apparently not recognised as ideal by contemporaries in London, so that it was dropped during the first run of the 1706/1707 season and reinstated only after the performances of *Camilla* reverted to the original English. In 1717, the text (but not the music) was modified to “Never/ever shall I be blest in possessing” (Lindgren 1997, 711), perhaps a more fitting translation of the original Italian text.

The duet “Vorebbe il cuor” (Bononcini 1990, 121’–122’; Bononcini recording, *Il trionfo di Camilla*) for Camilla and Turno transforms the unfolding of two parallel monologues into a comic dramaturgic device. Camilla’s and Turno’s soliloquies are voiced to be overheard by Tullia, who draws false conclusions from the chance encounter of the two characters, interspersing their alternating statements with recitative aside remarks, thereby almost turning this duet into a trio, although it is consistently written in two staves and only Camilla and Turno’s voices are ever heard simultaneously. Camilla likewise expresses her awareness of Turno’s presence in an aside recitative, but proceeds to alternate melodically with him, eventually being united with the man in parallel as Tullia continues to rant against them. This type of extradiegetic duet, a clear nod to the tradition of libretto of the 17th century, will disappear from 18th-century opera, and it was certainly neither new nor unknown to Bononcini and Stampiglia, for they had already used the type in *Xerse* (1694). It is interesting how Handel went back to this tradition in the 1730s, most notably in the borrowings from Bononcini in his own opera *Serse* (1738). With its recitative asides, it was hardly appropriate for music-making in London’s parlours so it is no wonder that this atypical duet was not included in the printed collection of songs in 1706.

If we were to consider the *aria a due* as the type of duet with little or no simultaneity of the vocal parts whatsoever (but we will not, taking Calella’s aforementioned opinion to heart), the duet “Cease cruel tyrannizing / to deceive me” (Lavinia, Turno), “Più non tradir, crudele / Non disprezzar chi t’ama” (Bononcini 1990, 140–143; Bononcini recording, *Il*



trionfo di Camilla) in the original Italian would belong to it. Lavinia, who is convinced that Turno is betraying her with Camilla, is gradually won back by him and they reaffirm their mutual affections. In the printed collection, the whole duet scene is reduced to its closing section, A2 (Bononcini and Haym 1707, 44). The overall design is in varied *da capo* form: its first (A1) section is a full-fledged, albeit songlike aria in *da capo* form (a b a) for Turno (Bononcini 1990, 140'–141') alone, in the main key of G major, followed by Lavinia singing a brief recitative and the first section of Turno's aria transposed to C major (ibid., 141'–142). On the plane of overall form, Lavinia's "aria" forms the middle, B section of the overall design, and what follows is the only real duet section of the duet (A2), Turno's and Lavinia's combined rendition of subsection a (ibid., 142–143). As they proceed to repeat the same phrase in alternation, each voice is accompanied—in his/her own stave—with its own *basso continuo*, coming together only in the repetition of the final cadential phrase on the text "Ah! Ch'io moro" in parallel thirds (ibid., 143r). Bononcini stayed faithful to this conception of a duet consisting of two soloists singing the same aria first successively and then simultaneously in the manner of a patchwork as late as his London operas (e. g. *Astarto*). The simplicity and the dramatic effectiveness of this type of duet seem indebted to the tradition of the strophic duet of the 17th century. Handel makes innovative use of this model in duets such as "Dite spera e son contento" (Lurcanio, Dalinda) in his opera *Ariodante* or in the duet "Se mai turbo il tuo riposo" from *Porro*, where two different arias are combined together (cf. Cummings 1982), but these are operas from the 1730s that are not to be considered in this study.

The last duet in the London *Camilla*, "Care is fled / Give my heart" (Bononcini and Haym 1706, 16; Prenesto, Turno) is simultaneous in vocal terms in its entirety, but not consequently parallel since it also contains moments of free contrary motion. The two heroes express their joy at the happy outcome of the action in two complementary, almost periodical phrases of eight bars each before the onset of the final *coro*. Reasons why Haym might have felt the need to compose this duet have already been speculated on. Given the frequency of *Camilla*'s revivals, Lindgren (cf. 1980, 54) made the hypothesis that the success of *The Beggar's Opera* owes more to it than to the Italian operas of the Royal Academy of Music that it seemed to be parodying. The last one was held in 1726, shortly before the premiere of the ballad opera. Bononcini's by now somewhat old-fashioned arias or "songs" may have been akin to the simpler style of J. C. Pepusch rather than the contemporary operatic production of Handel, Bononcini and Ariosti. The two collections of songs published after the original 1706 and 1707 collections in 1710 (Bononcini and Haym 1710) and 1717 (Bononcini and Haym 1717) contain the same duets as in the original edition with the

exception of “Care is fled” which was dropped, probably because it was found too short even for the new ideal of simpler and more popular musical theatre as embodied in the *Beggar’s Opera*, or perhaps because it was known that it had not been composed by Bononcini but Haym instead. The remaining sources (mostly printed libretti, as no collection of songs was published for the 1726 revival) do not indicate any other changes to the duets as compared to the original version, so it is highly probable that they were retained throughout. Whatever the case, the first revival of *Camilla* in the theatre in Lincoln’s-Inn-Fields in 1717 coincided with the suspension of performances of Italian opera, so that instead of it, revivals of *Camilla* and *Thomyris* (in a somewhat revised form) dominated the seasons 1717/1718 and 1718/1719 as “English” theatre.

### 3. 2. 2.

#### ***Thomyris, Queen of Scythia* (1707)**

In *Thomyris, Queen of Scythia* (1707), the impresario J. J. Heidegger followed Haym’s recipe for *Camilla*, compiling the opera from 56 Italian airs by Scarlatti, Bononcini (the overture and 8 arias), Steffani and other Italian composers<sup>139</sup>. Although with its 44 performances spanning from 1707 and 1728 the opera was a success, Heidegger was not as skilled in compiling pasticcios, as witnessed by the failure of *Clotilde*, the ninth opera “in the Italian manner” performed in London. Although *Thomyris* “slavishly imitated *Camilla*” (Lindgren 1997, 208) to the extent that contemporaries noticed and even ridiculed the similarities, the differences to *Camilla* will be examined here in detail. In *Camilla* a distinguished Italian libretto was translated and adapted to local needs, and here Motteux who wrote the recitatives probably not based on any previous Italian libretto to suit pre-existing arias. Contrary to conventions to be established in London later on, in the first, original edition of the libretto (Motteux 1707) aria and duet texts are not highlighted in terms of layout with an indent. The three acts of *Thomyris* contain a low number of scenes since they do not change with the arrival and departure of characters but only with the set. Due to the bilingual performance, Valentini’s and later Italian additions’ lines are printed in both English and Italian without the later consistency of an interchange of Italian and English pages, which leaves a somewhat muddled impression. There is evidence that Haym was involved with the first run of the opera from April 1708 onwards (cf. Lindgren 1987, 339–340), and he must have been responsible for musical changes in the score, probably in

139 According to Price (1987, 132), *Thomyris, Queen of Scythia* includes arias by Albinoni and Gasparini as well, but the stylistic profile of the duets does not suggest their authorship.

relation to the cast changes<sup>140</sup>, but there are no extant sources, musical or textual, to record them. The only remaining source that documents the first run of this opera, obviously considered as a work in progress, is the 1709 libretto (Motteux 1709), which reflects some of the changes. Table 26 lists the duets in the different versions of the opera on the basis of the available sources: the three versions of the libretto (Motteux 1707; Motteux 1709; Motteux 1719) and the original 1707 printed collection of songs (Scarlatti, Bononcini, and Steffani 1707).

YEAR*	SCENE	TEXT	CHARACTERS	VOICES	COMPOSER
1707	I. 2	Prithee leave me / Pray relieve me	Media, Baldo	S&B	Steffani
1709	II. 1	Fye! This rudeness will undo you / No! No more in vain will I pursue you	Media, Baldo	S&B	no music
1707	II. 2	Oh! In pity cease to grieve me	Cleora, Tigrane	S&T	?
1707	II. 3	Say, must I then despair? / Oh! Leave me to despair	Oronte, Cleora	A&S	Bononcini**
1707	III. 1	When duty's requiring / Your virtues admiring	Thomyris, Cleora	S&S	?
1707	III. 2	I no hopes can discover / I despair, yet I love her	Orontes, Tigranes	A&T	no music
1707***	III. 5	Lost in pleasure / Oh my treasure	Cleora, Orontes	S&A	no music

TABLE 26.  
List of duets in the different versions of the pasticcio  
*Thomyris, Queen of Scythia* (1707)

- \* With one exception that will be duly noted, the duets from the 1707 version of the opera have been preserved in the 1709 edition of the libretto. Entries marked with 1709 concern additions.
- \*\* None of the other duets in the opera are by Bononcini, as confirmed by Lindgren 1997, 986.
- \*\*\* Due to the dramaturgic intervention in the denouement described below, this duet was dropped from the 1709 as well as the 1719 version of the opera.

No musical sources for the version of the opera performed in 1709 have been preserved, so we cannot know what the added duet for Media and

140 Most notably, Margereta de L'Epine, who formerly sung Thomyris, was cast as Tigranes, a role previously sung by the tenor Lawrence.

Baldo might have sounded like. Their original 1707 duet “Prethee, leave me / Pray, relieve me” has been identified as being composed by Steffani (Hawkins 1776, 289). According to Hawkins, the only remaining Steffani number borrowed from *Thomyris* was an aria for Baldo, and it is interesting how the compiler(s) found his music appropriate for comic and not for tragic scenes. This study never sought to investigate Steffani’s dramatic duets, but this duet paints a different picture of the Italian master active in Germany to his chamber duets. It is also quite different from the comic duets in *Camilla*, for it neither concentrates on a comic alternation of the vocal parts along with some typical *buffo* effects, nor does it feign and parody a serious love duet like “Thou art he/she”. It implies that the voices are going to sing longer alternating phrases, but subverts these expectations already in b.14 (Scarlatti, Bononcini, and Steffani 1707, 12) when it seems that the voices might engage in imitation. What starts to dominate the texture in b. 17 onwards instead is a comical interplay in complementary rhythm highlighting the textual opposition “you so fire me” / “you so tire me”. Not reminiscent of the oncoming *intermezzo*, but not comparable to serious Italian duets of the time either, it would not come as a surprise if the duet had been taken from one of Steffani’s Hanover operas. The only significant changes in the casting in terms of timbre between the first run starting in 1707 and the second run as documented in the 1719 libretto concerns the transferral of Media’s role to a man, the British singer George Pack who may have been a tenor, which points to the possibility that the comic scenes in *Thomyris*, like the ones in *Camilla*, are based on Venetian dramaturgic models. Although archaic by then, the practice of travesty may have been introduced to approximate the performance tradition of Italian opera even more to the country of its origin.

A SECTION		B SECTION	
Cleora	Oh! In pity cease to grieve me! Do but live, fate will relieve me. Joy and pleasure may return.	both	I alone may be lamenting.
		Cleora	Your despair is too tormenting.
		Tigranes	Oh! Your sorrow’s too tormenting.
Tigranes	Oh! In pity cease to grieve me! Do but smile, fate will relieve me! Joy and pleasure will return.	both	Grief redoubles, when you mourn.
		A section <i>da capo</i> ?	
		Oh! In pity, etc.	

TABLE 27.

Text of the duet “Oh! In pity cease to grieve me” (II. 2) from *Thomyris* (1707)

The remaining four, serious duets—in all three versions of the opera—reflect a need to include most of the characters and their voices into differing duet combinations, a tendency that was to change by the development of Italian libretto in the course of the 18th century, favouring the principal female and male protagonists for this type of dual display. However, the opera relies on a hierarchy between the two heroic male protagonists, two princes who are rivals for the hand of the Persian princess Cleora. The claims of these two *uomini*, out of which the Scythian prince Orontes (A), sung by Valentini is definitely the *primo*, and the Armenian king Tigranes (T), sung by the British singer Lawrence, the *secondo*, have almost equal legitimacy. Although betrothed to Tigranes, who was captured in his efforts to free her, Cleora falls in love with her captor (Thomyris's son Orontes), and the man returns her affections with equal zeal. With its dignified character, the first duet plays out Cleora's almost tragic conflict in the most effective manner. Ridden with guilt about her indebtedness to Tigranes, she is moved to tears at the sight of him in chains. Both are distressed at the evident pain of the other although Tigranes is unaware of Cleora's conflicted loyalties, and they attempt to console each other. Interestingly, the only preserved source for the duet "Oh! In pity cease to grieve me!" (Scarlatt, Bononcini, and Steffani 1707, 20) is in textual concordance not with the original 1707 edition of the libretto but with its 1709 counterpart (Motteux 1709). Table 27 displays the text of this duet in the 1707 edition.

Although the duets in *Camilla*, especially the comic ones, showed some flexibility in the treatment of form, so that regular *da capo* coexisted with monopartite, bipartite or varied tripartite forms, it was nevertheless the most common. Judging by the preserved sources, all the duets in *Thomyris* including Pepusch's 1719 additions are in *da capo* form. The only exception could be "Oh! In pity cease to grieve me!", since in the 1707 collection of songs the duet ends with what we could describe as the first column of Table 27, since it does not contain any of the lines starting from "I alone may be lamenting" and consequently, no repetition of "Oh in pity cease to grieve me", contained in the original libretto. On the other hand, the 1709 libretto (Motteux 1709) does not contain this presupposed B section and corresponds better to the musical content of the 1707 collection. We are left with three options to account for this discrepancy. It is possible that the composer did not set the duet in its entirety in the first place, but this is less probable since the (Italian) source libretto had obviously been translated to English in its entirety in the 1707 libretto. Comparable examples in the performance tradition of *Camilla* allow for the possibility that the duet was performed in London in its entirety, but that only its initial section was included in the 1707 printed collection. Lastly, the duet may have been abridged (with sections B and A' dropped) for performance on

the initiative of the producer(s), which in turn could have left a mark on the 1709 libretto by the cutting of the presupposed B section.

This last possibility is the most plausible since it is in a way supported by the musical setting. The text of the B section highlights the tragic nature of the relationship between Cleora and Tigranes: although she can struggle with whatever sense of duty she feels towards him, his love will remain unreturned. The textual repeat of the A section cannot change this, for it is a mere vain attempt of the characters to console each other. This semantic layer is lost when the B section is dropped: isolated in this way, the first three lines ring of an optimism that will prove unfounded by the action eventually uniting Orontes and Cleora in the 1707 version of the opera. The 1709 libretto is another matter, its denouement being slightly more confusing and unconvincing. Like in the 1707 version of the story, upon hearing the false news of Orontes's death, Cleora is on the verge of being sacrificed by Scythians were it not for Thomyris's intervention. The fate of Tigranes, who is wounded in battle, is left unresolved. However, the last scene (III. 6) in the 1709 version of the libretto alters the fate of the protagonists significantly with an abrupt plot twist. As a *deus ex machina* of sorts, Orontes himself happily (!) reveals to the despairing and wounded Tigranes that Cleora, who fell into captivity as a baby and was brought up by Cyrus as his own daughter, is in fact Thomyris's daughter and Orontes's sister. This annuls the reasons for the military conflict between Scythia and Persia and turns the marriage between Cleora and Tigranes into a genuine *lieto fine*. Although this dramaturgic device is frequent in 17th- and 18th-century libretti, its gratuitous use here discloses it as a last-minute intervention. As we shall also see in the duet "Say I must then despair", which has pride of place in the early opus of Giovanni Bononcini, in the course of the opera it does not seem likely that Cleora and Tigranes would be united in a happy ending. Nevertheless, the preserved setting of "Oh! In pity cease to grieve me!", whether abridged or not, seems to prepare and to a certain extent justify the final abrupt unification of its two characters.

The duet is a markedly major-mode piece of music, as if the composer was guided only by the key words "joy" and "pleasure", and one could claim that this foreshadows the 1709 *lieto fine* to a certain degree. The duet (or its first section, if it was originally tripartite) is clearly articulated into three units, the first two being Cleora's (b. 1–9) and Tigranes's (b. 9–15) alternating statements of a simple joyous melody ending in virtuoso coloratura flourishes. Tigranes's rendition of it is conveniently placed a fourth below Cleora's (Tigrane's role being in the mezzosoprano or alto range) and slightly modified to modulate back to G major from D major. The last section (b. 15–21) is the only one that allows for simultaneous singing. The only difference between Cleora's and Tigranes's lines is her "live" as

opposed to his “smile” in the second line. Although in b. 15–16 it seems at first that the voices are going to be led imitatively, they are soon united in a parallel texture that allows for another virtuosic display. Lapidary duets of this kind were to become rare in the operas performed in London (and in Europe in general) in the first decades of the 18th century. In my opinion, it is more likely that in its original form, this duet consisted of a contrasting middle section and a *da capo* repeat. Although the 1709 libretto lists the original Italian text<sup>141</sup>, searches in RISM have not helped to identify the original composer.

The advent of Orontes in the next scene produces another duet, this time for him and Cleora. “Say must I then despair / Oh leave me to despair” has slightly more musical substance than the previous one. It was a result of multiple borrowings, which testifies to its popularity, possibly enticing both Bononcini and later arrangers of opera to “recycle” it in different contexts. As the object of parody, Lindgren (1972, 986) identifies the aria “Si, che vorrei morir” (III. 1 Arsamene) from the opera *Il Xerse* (1694) (Bononcini 1986, 231–236). However, the duet has an even earlier source in Tirsi’s aria “Pur ti riveggio ancor” (Bononcini 1985, 228–233) from the 1693 serenata *La nemica d’amore fatta amante* (Bononcini 1985; Bononcini recording, *La nemica d’amore fatta amante*). In this original context, the aria is an unusually melancholic recollection of the days when Clori was severe (“Clori severa”) towards the enamoured shepherd, as if a Petrarchan amorous subject was mourning the fact that his suffering is over. In spite of the machinations of the jealous Fileno, in the course of the serenata the formerly scornful nymph Clori manages to convince the faithful Tirsi that she genuinely returns his feelings and even promises him her hand, leaving him almost incredulous at this unexpected reversal of fortune. As pointed out by Lindgren (1972, 34ff), the series of serenatas Bononcini wrote every August from 1692 to 1695 often served as a testing ground for arias later introduced into his operas as public works. The plaintive air, inserted without any intervention or transposition into *Il Xerse*, seems much better fitted to the dramatic situation: believing that Romilda is unfaithful to him, Arsamene despairs and craves death.

Regardless of how and why Heidegger might have selected this duet for *Thomyris*, it is an interesting choice for the dramatic situation. Orontes sets Tigranes free and informs him that he will not yield Cleora to him, but in the last recitative line preceding the duet Cleora, whose feelings for Tigranes have by now become clear not only to the audience but to

141 Vieni e spera o caro/cara / Che la sorte cangerà / Tanti affanni ch’hai nell’cor’ / lo già sento che mi dice / Che vivrai un di felice / E cangiato al fin’sarà / L’astro perfido d’amor.

Tigranes himself, hides behind the authority of her father who engaged her to the Armenian king. The conception of sectional, often strophic alternation of soloists who are then united for the first time in simultaneity in the third section of the duet, encountered in “Cease cruel to deceive me” from *Camilla*, also prevails in “Say must I then despair / Oh leave me to despair”. Its section A<sub>1</sub> is modelled on the A section of “Pur ti riveggio ancor”<sup>142</sup>, its B section on the respective middle section in the aria and its section A<sub>2</sub>, the only one that features a vocal contribution by Cleora, somewhat more freely on section A, in the place of its *da capo* repetition in the aria. Thus, the dramaturgic design of the duet could be described as an aria by Orontes, in which he eventually manages to reach out to the predominantly silent Cleora. Although making an effort to stay true to her recitative remark of subjugating herself to the will of the father all through sections A<sub>1</sub> and B, in section A<sub>2</sub> Cleora eventually gives in to the need to engage in a dialogue with Orontes after all.

SECTION	A <sub>1</sub>	B	A <sub>2</sub>	
Character	Orontes	Orontes	Cleora	Orontes
Text	Say, must I then despair? Will you, my cruel fair, No more regard me?	Oh! Grant me love again! Or let me ne'er complain: With death reward me.	Oh! Leave me to despair! From hope, and all that's dear, My fate debarr'd me.	Say, must I, etc.
Borrowing	“Pur ti riveggio ancor”, section A	“Pur ti riveggio ancor”, section B	based on “Pur ti riveggio ancor”, section A	

TABLE 28.  
Formal outline of Bononcini's duet “Say, must I then despair?  
/ Oh! Leave me to despair” from the London pasticcio  
*Thomyris, Queen of Scythia* (1707)

The biggest difference between “Pur che ti riveggio ancor” and this duet, at least in the form handed down to us in the 1707 collection of songs (Scarlatti, Bononcini, and Steffani 1707, 27), is the absence of the prominent part of violoncello *obbligato*, serving not only as an instrumental introduction (b. 1–4 in the original aria; Bononcini 1985, 228) but as harmonic and contrapuntal support throughout, so that one has the impression that instead of one, the aria is written for two soloists. If the duet was performed in London with the violoncello part after all, without this being reflected

142 Or “Si che vorrei morir”, but I am going to refer to the earlier source in the remainder of this analysis.



in the reductionist printed selection of songs (and the dry character of the continuo opening in b. 1–4 seems to speak in favour of this possibility), it is possible that Haym himself played it, and even though it was probably Heidegger who selected it originally, the ability to shine in a soloist role would have made it attractive in the eyes of Haym, too. Section A2 opens (b. 26, beginning of last stave in Scarlatti, Bononcini, and Steffani 1707, 27) with Cleora's rendition of the main thematic idea of the duet (and the aria), first heard in b. 5–8 in Orontes's part an octave lower. However, in b. 30–34 Orontes takes it up again at its original pitch, while Cleora provides a counterpoint not unlike the violoncello's accompaniment of the main thematic idea in the aria (b. 5–8, Bononcini 1985, 228), which leads us to believe that the violoncello part might have been replaced by the addition of the other voice. The remainder of section A2 is constructed on either a predominantly parallel texture (b. 34–36, 41–44) or contrapuntal passages, giving an opportunity to Cleora to shine briefly on the background of Orontes's held notes (b. 37–39) and leading the two voices in free counterpoint (b. 40, all in Scarlatti, Bononcini, and Steffani 1707, 28). The construction of this duet is indebted to the way Bononcini normally conceives an aria, and not only because this duet is a parody of two arias. After the opening of section A2, Cleora's part is merely superimposed on Orontes's, and the only duet proper section of the duet grows almost spontaneously out of the A1 section. The choice of material and structure from a highly effective aria that has proven successful in two previous contexts, and its introduction and reworking in *Thomyris* display considerable dramatic and musical sensibility. Who knows, maybe the process of parody extends to another, hitherto unidentified dramatic work in which the two arias were also turned into a duet and it is from this source that Heidegger and/or Haym have taken it over?

Not only have the harmonic and melodic contours of the parodied aria been preserved but its exact keys as well. With its plaintively melodious and at the same time pathetic character, the duet makes the most of the affective contrast between the tonic C minor and its relative E-flat major, and at the same time resorts to touches of related tonal areas through section B (b. 19–21), strategically placed on the key word “death”. As a result, in the predominantly major-mode section B, seemingly showing a more joyous side of Orontes' appeal in its first two lines, this musical optimism is momentarily tarnished. The resumption of the minor-mode, pathetic character in section A2 is Cleora's real cue, for in textual terms her lament (“Oh! Leave me to despair! / From Hope, and all that's dear, / My fate debarr'd”) is even more emphasised. Unlike Orontes, who can complain only of Cleora's rejection, she can blame the cruel fate that put her in this position of a prisoner in love with her enemy. Although

their voices display a musical unity and serve to sustain each other in a mellifluous texture, the characters and the texts they are singing are at odds with each other since they are not communicating with each other in dialogic terms. As already shown by the duet “Happy/hopeless I love”, Bononcini does not appear to have a problem with composing a duet in which music and dramaturgy work on entirely different levels, whereas Handel’s duets usually strive for balance between the characters on the librettistic and the musical plane.

The last duet in the opera, “When Duty’s requiring / Your virtues admiring” (III. 1 Thomyris, Cleora) is an opportunity to musically unite the two leading ladies who are in a position of heightened tension, both politically (Thomyris seems more aware of the strength of holding her enemy’s daughter captive than her son) and personally (Orontes’s love for Cleora leaves Thomyris feeling somewhat ambivalent). However, the two women come to terms with each other in the above mentioned scene when Thomyris comes to the rescue as her people are about to sacrifice Cleora, and the 1709/1719 alternative *deus ex machina* ending turns this dynamic around by the revelation that they are in fact mother and daughter. However, their only duet at the beginning of Act 3 does not excel particularly in terms of melodic or harmonic invention. It is different from the other duets in the opera in that it places the two voices in a slight position of rivalry, although this is not surprising given the fact that they share the same soprano range. It begins with as many as four attempts at pseudo-imitation (b. 1–3, 3–9, 11–14 and very briefly in b. 23–26<sup>143</sup>) in which Thomyris leads the way and Cleora answers, but for the remainder of the duet the two voices excel in parallelisms in thirds, with the occasional voice-crossing (b. 31–34, 40–46, 53–54) that jeopardises Thomyris’s domination in terms of higher pitch. The middle, B section (b. 38–58) of this *da capo* form (concise to the point of uneventfulness) shows no contrast in terms of structure, texture and material apart from the almost obligatory modulation into the mediant B minor.

We can now briefly summarize some of the traits of the first two 18th century London pasticcios. *Camilla* presented London audiences with a variety of duets of the comical and the serious type, the two bearing almost the same musical weight within the opera. Different shares of successiveness and simultaneity as well as formal conceptions were outlined and, in a way, tested, but this will gradually be replaced with more uniformity. *Thomyris, Queen of Scythia* gives a certain advantage to serious duets, and although some of them are still characterised by a high share

143 All bar numbers refer to the 1707 edition of songs (Scarlatti, Bononcini, and Steffani 1707, 41).

of successive rather than simultaneous singing, by their adoption of *da capo* form and somewhat larger scope they were differentiated from their comic counterparts.

### 3. 2. 3. Pyrrhus and Demetrius (1708)

*Pyrrhus and Demetrius* (premiered in 1708) was based on *Pirro e Demetrio* (1694), an opera composed by A. Scarlatti to a libretto by Adriano Morselli, for Scarlatti “one of his earliest successes” (Knapp 1984, 100). Owen Swiney translated the libretto into English, while Nicola Haym was definitely the arranger of the music and probably composed the new recitatives. Out of the 56 “songs” in the opera, the overture and 17 numbers were written by Haym himself, presumably because it was thought “that he might better fit the Taste of the English” (contemporary source quoted in Lindgren 1980, 47–48) and please the singers in the cast with music fitting their capabilities. This has misled most scholars into thinking that all the remaining numbers in the opera, a duet borrowed from Bononcini’s *Muzio Scevola* excepted, were original numbers by Scarlatti from his *Pirro e Demetrio*. For although A. Scarlatti, Haym and Bononcini are definitely represented in the music of the pasticcio, music by (many) other composers may have been included, but unfortunately often unable to identify. To mention only one of these misunderstandings, Knapp (1984, 100) concluded that “Haym’s arias are competent but dull; some of Scarlatti’s are first-rate with a drive and energy that matches the best of the time. He was fond of slow sicilianas and fast 3/8 pieces with frequent changes of tempo within either the A part or the B part of the aria.” Thus he gave the credit for what he perceived as qualities in some of the numbers to Scarlatti, although they might have in fact stemmed from someone else.<sup>144</sup>

The author of the preface to “A Critical Discourse on Opera’s and Musick in England” lauded Haym’s contribution as compiler and arranger to *Camilla* and *Pyrrhus* as opposed to *Arsinoë* and *Love’s Triumph*, produced by others (Lindgren 1987, 293). Opinions on the quality of Haym’s contribution as a composer vary. Lindgren (1987, 297) thinks that since Haym was so faithful to Bononcini’s score in his adaptation of *Camilla*, “he may have envisioned a similar fidelity to Scarlatti’s score for *Pirro e Demetrio*”. However, the premiere was delayed and the arrival of new singers necessitated the changes described above, as a result of which “the final

144 Dean’s example of siciliana arias is not an argument for Scarlatti’s authorship, since it was far from being exclusive to him although he was the first one to make abundant use of it (Little 2001).

product was a somewhat motley pasticcio". The London debut of Nicolo Grimaldi aka Nicolini in the role of Pyrrhus on 14 December 1708 as *primo uomo* was an important event. The casting of such a world-class singer in London (compared to the more modest accomplishments of Valentini) led the way to the success of Italian opera and for Handel, who was to rely on singers of the same rank, too (cf. Dean and Knapp 1987, 146). Whether it was Haym, Valentini or perhaps even Nicolini who had the biggest say in the selection of musical numbers in *Pyrrhus and Demetrius*, the opera was a success, with an overall of 58 performances in the period between 1708 and 1717, including the 1716–1717 revival.

In place of the authorial conception behind *Camilla*, *Thomyris* and *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* affirm the concept of the pasticcio only loosely modelled on a previous Italian setting of the model libretto, and this is the pasticcio tradition that both Handel and his Italian rivals were to continue in London in the 1710s and 1730s. Along with two editions of selected songs (Scarlatti, Haym, and Bononcini 1709a; Scarlatti, Haym, and Bononcini 1709b) and the printed London libretto (Haym, Morselli, and Swiney 1709), additional sources have been consulted to investigate the relationship of *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* to Scarlatti's *Pirro e Demetrio*. The original 1690 libretto by Morselli as first set by Giuseppe Felice Tosi (Morselli 1690), the 1694 Naples libretto as set by A. Scarlatti (Morselli 1694) as well as the revision of Scarlatti's setting for a performance in Florence in 1711–1712 under the title *La forza della fedeltà* (Scarlatti MS, *La forza della fedeltà*) have been considered. Although Scarlatti's was the second and by far the most popular setting of Morselli's libretto, no musical source for the original 1694 performance has survived, so that this revision, created three to four years after the performance of the London pasticcio and therefore impossible to have left any mark, is the only other (Italian) version that we can compare it to. Consequently, little can be concluded about Scarlatti's authorial share in *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* because we do not know what his original setting sounded like, but can only compare it to something that is another, later pasticcio, regardless of whether Scarlatti had a hand in it or not.

Unlike all the early London operas examined so far, the libretto(s) of *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* does not clearly distinguish between the serious and comic plane. Although in the 1690 Italian and the 1708 English version of the libretto there is the character of Deidamia's servant Breno/Brennus, he is integrated into the second main plot involving Deidamia's illicit love for Mario, and neither this, nor the main plot based on the love triangle between Pyrrhus, Demetrius and Climene are lacking in comic overtones in themselves. Pyrrhus, king of Epire (Nicolini) has successfully proposed to

Climene (C. Tofts), the daughter of the king of Thrace on behalf of his friend Demetrius, king of Macedonia (Valentini) and is supposed to cede her to him. He is conflicted between his friendship for Demetrius and the newly awoken love for Climene. This conflict is brought to the point of absurdity, culminating in some overtly comic scenes. Pyrrhus's sister Deidamia (Linchenham) on the other hand, although courted by Prince Cleartes (Ramondon) to the approval of her brother, is in love with a youth of lower social rank, Marius (De L'Epine), and although this subplot seems even more suitable for comic treatment no differentiation of the sort was made.

SCENE	TEXT*	CHARACTERS	VOICES	COMPOSER	
I. 2	Embrace me / I dare not	Climene, Pyrrhus	S&MS	?	no music
I. 12	Kindly Cupid, oh! Exert thy power	Deidamia, Climene	S&S	?	unity, parallelism, little invention
II. 1	Her lovely face enchants me / Resist enchanting beauty	Demetrius, Pyrrhus	MS&MS	Haym	
II. 9	Charmer, if faithful thou'lt believe me	Climene, Pyrrhus	S&MS	Bononcini	alternation, parallelism, but variety
II. 13	May I tell you that I'm dying / May I ever hope to move ye	Marius, Deidamia	S&S	? not Scarlatti	two strophic da capo arias
III. 2	I'm contented, ne'er tormented / And I'm delighted	Pyrrhus, Demetrius	MS&MS	Scarlatti?	alternation, CP ligatus
III. 17	Love, no longer we'll accuse	Climene, Deidamia	S&S	?	no music

TABLE 29.  
List of duets in *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* (1708)

\* Textual incipits refer to the 1709 score (Scarlatti, Haym, and Bononcini 1709b) and will be in English for the sake of consistency. Discrepancies with the 1709 London libretto will be discussed individually.

Table 29 displays the list of duets in *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* and some of their main characteristics. The relationships with their counterparts in the 1690 and 1694 libretti and the 1711–1712 score (*La forza della fedeltà*) will

be subjected to scrutiny, too. It is no wonder that the brief arioso *a due* “Embrace me / I dare not” (I. 2 Climene, Pyrrhus) was not included into the London selection of songs. As a dialogue in short replicas it seems to have been conceived for successive exchanges without vocal simultaneity like many comic duets of the age, and this is proven by the 1690 libretto and the 1711–1712 score. In all the available sources we are dealing with a *da capo* duet (cf. Morselli 1690, 17; Scarlatti MS, *La forza della fedeltà*, f. 8–8’), although with some variation in the text of the B section, whereas in the London libretto (Haym, Morselli, and Swiney 1709) the duet is monopartite, that is, the middle section had presumably been dropped from it.<sup>145</sup> This shows that despite the aforementioned deviation, there is some continuity between the 1690 and 1711–1712 versions of the libretto. Its 1711–1712 setting could have been the same, but was probably different than the one stemming from 1694. However, the number of syllables in Pirro’s reply to Climene in the part of the B section that differs in the two sources is the same, so it could have been sung to the same music, too, although if the adaptors in Florence went through trouble to adapt the text, they probably wanted to adapt the music as well. We cannot know what kind of music this duet was sung to in London, but there is even less knowledge of the last duet in the 1708 version of the opera, “Love, no longer we’ll accuse thee” (III. 17 Climene, Deidamia; Morselli, Swiney, and Haym 1709, 52), the last number in the opera that takes up the role of a *coro* epitomising the obligatory *lieto fine* of the opera. No Italian equivalent of its English text is present in the otherwise bilingual libretto, which hints at the possibility that it was a later addition instigated either by Haym or the singers performing it.

Lindgren (1987, 290) clearly identified which numbers from Walsh’s edition of selected songs (Scarlatti, Haym, and Bononcini 1709a)<sup>146</sup> can be traced back to Scarlatti: the author of “Kindly Cupid, oh! Exert thy power” (I. 12 Climene, Deidamia; Scarlatti, Haym, and Bononcini 1709b, 16–17) cannot be identified. It unites the two female protagonists shortly after they had just met. At this point in the action, they are neither friends nor enemies, and the audience is unaware of the lengths to which Deidamia’s ambition to rule together with Marius will go in the second and third act. They are united, though, in their unhappiness in love: Climene because she thinks that Pyrrhus does not return her love and Deidamia because

145 As similar cases in *Camilla* show, it could have been performed nevertheless.

146 This study will mostly be referencing Cullen’s edition (Scarlatti, Haym, and Bononcini 1709b) Although Walsh’s edition includes some numbers that are absent from the Cullen collection, in terms of duet content there is no difference between them.

she cannot be with Marius. Both the 1708<sup>147</sup> and the 1711–1712 version of the duet (“Sovra l’ali de teneri amor”<sup>148</sup>) make them react to these unfavourable circumstances in optimistic overtones. Swiney did not translate an Italian duet text known from any of the sources, so it was probably newly inserted for the singers, since the 1690 and the 1694 libretti have no duet of this kind at the end of the first act.

Although they are both monotextual, the two dramatically equivalent duets in the 1708 and the 1711–1712 versions of the opera are musically very different. “Kindly Cupid” is in B minor and is dominated by parallelisms in the vocal texture, “Sovra l’ali de teneri amori” in A major and more contrapuntal. The duet performed in London starts off the voices with a passage in parallel thirds (b. 7–14) after a bouncy string ritornello (b. 1–6). Motifs from the ritornello (b. 14–17) prepare the second and much lengthier vocal passage in the duet (b. 17–48), extending to the end of section A. Brief pseudo-imitation leads into parallelism and the quasi-invertible kind of counterpoint consisting of a held note and melismatic passages (b. 26–30 and 32–36). The middle section limits itself to the thematic material from A and to mostly parallel voice-leading, with only a couple of brief alternating statements thrown in in between (b. 66–67, 70–71). This is definitely not among the more original or the more imaginative duets audiences of Italian opera in London might have heard so far, but it acquainted them even better with a duet prototype, most probably stemming from the 17th century that has no trouble uniting the voices into a predominantly homorhythmic and parallel texture even if they are in no particular dramaturgic relationship with each other. The duet “Sovra l’ali de teneri amori vieni” (Scarlatti MS, *La forza della fedeltà*, 37–39) bears the exact same function in *La forza della fedeltà*, but does so with entirely different means, a much more playful character (attributed to its major-mode key, binary metre and string *tremolos*) and a structure consisting of imitative beginnings that end in free counterpoint. This is repeated in several cycles starting off with the same material. A proclivity for counterpoint is no indication of Scarlatti’s authorship, but the imbalance resulting from the absence of Deidamia from the second section (B) of this duet contributes to a stylistic differentiation with the duets in *Pyrrhus and Demetrius*, too.

- 147    Climene & Deidamia: “Kindly Cupid, Oh! Exert thy power, / Let not virgins too justly complain. / Hope appears with joy this hour to bless us, / Then/Next succeeds fierce despair to oppress us, / Joy and Sorrow alternately Reign.”
- 148    Climene & Deidamia: *Sovra l’ali de teneri amor / vieni dolce soave contento. Climene. Vieni vola diletto de cori / e discaccia l’antico tormento.*

	CHAR.	1690 LIBRETTO, I. 13	1709 SCORE, II. 1	1712. SCORE, II. 1
A <sub>1</sub>	Dem:	Se fra momenti al sen Non stringo il caro ben, Languir tu mi vedrai.	Her lovely face enchants me from her my heart can't move.	Se fra momenti al sen non stringo il caro ben, languir tu mi vedrai.
	Pirr:	Un cor del tuo piu tenere, Amor non ferì mai.	Resist enchanting beauty, resist the god of love.	Resisti alla bellezza armati di fierezza così non languirai.
B	Dem.	Troppo scaltri, e troppo neri Son quei lumi lusinghieri, che m'asstringono ad amar.	Her look to me is pleasing, / she charms me without ceasing, / nor fear I pain to prove.	%
	Pirr:	E quel bel, che ti consuma; brieve lampo e fragil spuma, che per poco ondeggia in mar.	Her look to thee is teizing thy torment still increasing I fear great pain thou'l't prove.	%
A <sub>2</sub>	D&P	Se fra momenti al sen...	da capo (A B A' form)	%
C	D&P	Ardo/peno al fulgor de due brillanti rai.	%	Ardo/peno al vago fulgor di due bei rai.

TABLE 30.  
Comparison of duet texts for Pyrrhus and Demetrius at beginning of Act 2

The next duet in the opera displays an even bigger contrast in the two different settings. The fact that “Her lovely face enchants me / Resist enchanting beauty” (II. 1 Demetrius, Pyrrhus; Scarlatti, Haym, and Bononcini 1709a, 20) was composed by Haym does not reduce the stylistic proximity that most duets from *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* display, it merely shows him as a composer of somewhat more modest means. However, before a more detailed outline of this duet’s and its 1711–1712 counterpart’s musical structure, we need to look into the complex background and the provenance of the text in its different versions. Table 30 shows the textual correspondences. The dramatic situation is somewhat ambivalent: after having attempted to see if Demetrius really still loves Climene, Pyrrhus tries to suppress his affections for her in favour of his friend. Not only the text the two characters sing but also their emotions are in stark contrast, since Demetrius expresses only infatuation with Climene and Pyrrhus, in asides, both a desire to resist his love for Climene and fear of how Demetrius might react were he to find out the truth. Both the 1708 and the 1711–1712 version of



the text have things in common with the 1690 libretto. By 1694, a duet for Pirro and Demetrio was moved from its original 1690 position at the end of Act 1 to the beginning of Act 2, and this duet text<sup>149</sup> was translated almost literally in the 1709 libretto's English text, thus serving as the starting point for both the London and the Florence version of the opera. The duet was textually at its most elaborate in 1690 with an irregular tripartite form plus added coda (C), since Morselli probably envisaged it as a culmination to Act 1. The binary logic of polytextuality in sections A1 and B as opposed to a monotextual section A2 was maintained in the 1708 London version of the opera, implying that the librettist foresaw the first two sections for a predominantly successive and sections A2 for a predominantly simultaneous vocal structuring. However, Haym and/or Swiney, who translated the 1694 duet text to English almost word-for-word, opted for regularity instead of the 1690 complexity by replacing A2 with a *da capo* repetition of A1. The compilers of the 1711–1712 reworking were even more radical in the restructuring of the original design, dropping section B altogether, although they kept the coda (C), retaining the original tripartite irregularity, but in a heavily modified and abridged form. The 1711–1712 version of the libretto clearly seems to be a conflation of elements from both the 1690 (Demetrio's first three lines and coda) and the 1694 libretto (Pirro's first three lines).

It is once again highly interesting how the two preserved settings reflect these intertextual connections, especially since both of them belong to the aforementioned type of duet that puts dramatically and/or affectively opposed characters into a position of musical unity, something that occurs comparatively rarely in Handel's duets. Musically, "Her lovely face enchants me" consists of interplay between alternation and parallelism. It opens with a continuo passage that will continue to feature prominently in the course of the duet with its motifs in octave displacement and lends itself well to performance on the violoncello (b. 1–7), thereby reflecting Haym's background as a cellist. After this, Demetrius and Pyrrhus bring forth a periodic structure of syntactic regularity that is seldom encountered in opera duets of the first half of the 18th century. A periodic structure (b. 7–26) unfolds from four alternating statements by the two voices, Demetrius's always followed by Pyrrhus's and a brief continuo interjection added between the clauses. After this, the voices are united in a simultaneous texture, followed by a semiquaver display of coloraturas in parallel

149 Demetrio: Un viso m'incatena / E m'hà legato il cor. Pirro: Resisti alla bellezza, Resisti al Dio d'amor. Demetrio: Un guardo che m'alletta / Il seno mi saetta / Né sento alcun dolor. Pirro: Un guardo, che t'alletta / Il sento ti saetta / Ti dà pena, e dolor. Un viso, etc.

thirds and a cadence (b. 26–38). The continuo motif leads into section B, exploring D and C minor with two brief alternating statements and the same cadential phrases. An impression of simplicity and monotony does nothing to suggest the drama of the situation. “Se fra momenti al sen / Resisti alla bellezza” (II. 1 Demetrio, Pirro; Scarlatti MS, *La forza della fedeltà*, 42–44), on the other hand, differs from the equivalent London duet in terms of a swifter tempo, a playful texture, the differentiation of voices in terms of contrasting thematic material and a lack of formal balance. After Demetrio’s longer statement that modulates to E-flat major and back to the G minor tonic, Pirro takes the duet to entirely new territory with his repetitive melody and the exploration of related tonal centres such as C minor and D minor, but this change is of a moderately short span and the lapidary duet is rounded off somewhat abruptly. The stylistic contrast between the duets in the two pasticcios is therefore additionally enhanced and will prove to be a general trait.

The background of the duet for Pyrrhus and Climene “Charmer, if faithful thou’lt believe me” (II. 9; Scarlatti, Haym, and Bononcini 1709b, 30–31), the only duet in the pasticcio whose author can be clearly identified (as Giovanni Bononcini, cf. Lindgren 1997, 985; Knapp 1982) is even more complex, as shown in Table 31. It was clearly borrowed from his opera *Muzio Scevola* (1695), but the numerous textual differences between the 1709 score as well as the English and Italian version of the text show an even more complex web of interrelationships than with “Her lovely face enchants me”. The text is different in all five versions of this duet, but the strongest concordance is between the 1690 libretto, the 1709 English version of the libretto and the 1711–12 score on the one hand and the 1695 *Muzio Scevola* libretto, the 1694 libretto, the 1709 Italian version of the libretto and the 1709 score on the other. The simplest possible explanation for the first concordance would be that libretto was translated to English from the 1690 original rather than Scarlatti’s 1694 setting, and that it was also this 1690 version of the duet that served as the point of departure for the 1712 score, which was not the case with some of the other duet texts examined so far. The differences between Stampiglia’s original text of the duet in *Muzio Scevola* and the 1694 libretto as well as the Italian version of the text in the London 1709 libretto, subtle in the A section but substantial in the B section, could be explained by the adaptation of the duet from one dramatic situation in *Muzio Scevola* into a rather different one in *Pyrrhus*. In Act 3 of *Muzio*, the relationship between the main protagonist and his betrothed Valeria is shaken by the fact that he had left her in the Etruscan camp as a hostage to Porsenna, who also harbours a passion for her, so that both characters are questioning the other one’s devotion. On the other hand, the duet at the end of the second act of *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* is

a moment of weakness for the protagonist. He promised Demetrius that he would tell Climene of the plan to cede her hand in marriage to him, but once they are left alone, Pyrrhus cannot resist Climene and they are united in an amorous embrace. The fact that this situation is not treated in entirely tragic overtones but has comic potential instead is suggested by the abundant erotic innuendo in the preceding recitative. It goes without saying that the extensive, dialogic B section of the 1690 duet that develops the conflict between the characters was deemed inappropriate for the sensual dramatic situation in *Pyrrhus*.

How all of this was reflected on the borrowing in musical terms is difficult to account for with certainty because of a lack of access to primary sources. That the borrowing was on a musical level, as well, is confirmed by a comparison of the incipits in the London selection of songs (Scarlatti, Haym, and Bononcini 1709b, 30) with incipits of the duet from *Muzio Scevola* preserved in a collection of duets by different composers in the *Santini Collection* in Münster.<sup>150</sup> The incipits of the continuo, Soprano 1 (Climene) and Soprano 2 (Pirro) are identical with the incipits of the equivalent parts in “Charmer, if faithful thou’lt believe me”. It is possible and highly plausible that Haym reached for Bononcini’s duet instigated either by his own preference for the composer (as witnessed in *Camilla*) or at the behest of the singers, but realised that the text of section B is not appropriate, choosing to replace it with something else. Whether the musical setting of section B was revised or replaced with a new one is difficult to determine without an insight into the aforementioned *Santini* manuscript. It is possible that Haym wrote the new text of the B section himself, making it shorter and simpler, had it translated into English by Swiney and then set it either to his own music or modified Bononcini’s setting to suit the purpose.

Once again, the 1709 (Bononcini’s) and the 1711–1712 duets have little in common. Out of the duets encountered in *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* so far, this one exerts the highest degree of playfulness. After a rocking continuo opening in triplets, the sensuality is heightened by a change of tempo from *Allegro* to *Adagio* as the voices are introduced with appoggiaturas but are gradually united in parallel motion (b. 7–10). This latter type of texture dominates for the remainder of section A, returning to the *Allegro* tempo and the bouncy, rocking continuo above which the voices repeat sequentially a short descending motif in parallel sixths (b. 10–13). A brief passage of alternation (b. 15–18) in which the soloists are united in terms of the text (“I’ll adore thee”) but only slightly differentiated in terms of their rhythmically complimentary melodies modulates to the

150 Shelfmark SANT Hs 3899 (No. 4), RISM entry no. 451023065.

	1690 LIBRETTO, II. 8	1695 LIBRETTO MUZIO SCEVOLA, III.5	1694 LIBRETTO, II. 7 & 1709 LIBRETTO, II. 9: ITALIAN TEXT	1709 LIBRETTO, II. 9: ENGLISH TEXT	1709 SCORE	1712 SCORE
A	Climene: Compagno diletto Pirro: Consorte adorata A 2: Finisca il penar.	Muzio: Cara infido tu mi credi / Valeria: Caro ad' altri tu mi cedi A 2: E t'adora l'alma mia.*	A 2: Caro/a se fido/a tu mi credi / Si t'adora l'alma mia.	Climene: My hope and ambition / Pyrrhus: My joy and my treasure A 2: No more let us fear.	A 2: Charmer, if faithfull thou't believe me / I'll adore thee, from my soul I'll still adore thee.	Climene: Consorte diletto Pirro: Mia sposa adorata / A 2: finisca il martir diletto.
B	A 2: Reciproco affetto Fra'l riso e l'diletto Ci guidi a scherzar.	Val: Ma se m'ami / Perche brami / Che sia mio, chi mio non chiedigio? Muz: Così deggio Val: Questa dunque e fedeltà? Muz: Così deggio, e cosi va a 2: Altro fato piu spietato Non si trona, e non si da / D'una sorte cosi ria.	A 2: E se tuo/a al fin mi brami, Qual lo te convien che m'ami Che sparisce allor che riedi Fuor dal sen la doglia ria.	A 2: Haste, haste to Fruition, And banish suspicion, Disquiet and care.	A 2: As I'm thine never deceive me, / for my love return me love. Thy approach my greifs remove, / Love me ever I explore thee.	A2: Reciproco affetto Fra il riso el diletto Ci guidi a gioir.
A	Compagno...	Cara/Caro...	Caro...	My hope...	Charmer...	Consorte...

TABLE 31.

Concordances between different sources for the text of Bononcini's duet  
"Charmer, if faithful thou't believe me" in the pasticcio *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* (1708)

\* It is difficult to establish where the librettist signalled to the composer the beginning of the middle section in this duet text, obviously meant to be set in da capo form.

relative minor and gives way to more parallelism (b. 19–21), but this time declamatory and repetitive. Section B offers sufficient harmonic contrast, exploring the tonal centres of G minor, C minor and D minor without any significant changes to the texture or the material, making recourse to the same cadential passages and alternating statements. As opposed to this duet's homogeneity of form and material, in the 1711–1712 version of the opera the duet is particularly brief, especially since it is in *da capo* form. In “Consorte diletto / Sposa adorata” (Scarlatti ms, *La forza della fedeltà*, 69<sup>7</sup>–70) the voices begin by taking up each other's melodic cues in alternating sequences (b. 1–4) before they are intertwined in a playful, partly freely contrapuntal, partly parallel texture (b. 5–10). In scope, character, form and vocal standards, the London duet for Pyrrhus and Climene is a more typical love duet written for the *primo uomo* (Nicolini) and the *prima donna* (Tofts). It displays more liveliness and less monotony than the previous two duets. With the formulaic nature of the thematic material and by its avoidance of anything contrapuntal it is still similar to the other duets in *Pyrrhus and Demetrius*, to the extent that we could even claim that Haym as the compiler of the opera provided a sense of musical unity, either by choosing duets from the 1694 setting, composing his own music or selecting duets from other operas.

The composers of the remaining two duets in the opera cannot be identified with certainty. However, the closest we can get to claiming that the music of a duet performed in London is based on one of the previous settings of the original Italian libretto by Morselli is “May I tell you that I'm dying / May I ever hope to move ye” (II. 13 Marius, Deidamia; Scarlatti, Haym, and Bononcini 1709b, 34). Labelled a “dialogue” rather than a duet in the original 1709 source, the number is indeed a dialogic strophic duet in which each character sings a stanza to the same music in *da capo* form, to the extent that in the “selected songs” it was enough to publish the music for Marius's stanza only, merely adding the text of Deidamia's part below. The melodic simplicity, again in line with the overall style of the duets in *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* is somewhat enlivened by modulations that have nothing to do with the interpretation of either Marius's or Deidamia's text. Nothing reflects the fact that this flirty, gracious pseudo-duet plots Pyrrhus's murder. The strophic duet is definitely a remnant of the mid-17th century operatic style. In this sense it can be compared to the 1690 equivalent to “Kindly Cupid”, another strophic *da capo* duet with subsequent exits. The 1690 libretto contains a duet for Deidamia and Mario with the incipit “Poss'io dirvi” (Morselli 1690, 48) and confirms that the English translation in the 1709 libretto and the score was based on the 1690 libretto. So was the 1711–1712 duet, although only the first two lines are an exact match while the rest had been modified. However, musically, the 1711–1712

duet “Poss’io dirvi che vi adoro / Poss’io dirvi che languisco” (Scarlatti MS, *La forza della fedeltà*, 23’–24) is completely identical with “May I tell you that I’m dying”, which serves to prove that the duet text might have been changed since 1690. This certainly did not happen in 1694 since this version of the libretto does not contain a duet for Deidamia and Mario at this point in the act (II. 10) at all. As the text could obviously stem only from the 1690 libretto, we need to ask ourselves if the same music for the 1709 London version of the opera and its 1711–1712 Italian revised revival (which is rare, as we have seen so far) means that they stem from the same musical source. Is there any chance that it could stem from Giuseppe Felice Tosi, the composer who first set the libretto in 1690? It is probably highly unlikely that a duet by a composer of that generation could have made it to a work produced in 1711–1712. Maybe it stems from a later, unidentified setting of Morselli’s libretto, unless it was a last-moment addition by Scarlatti to the 1694 setting.

“I’m contented ne’er tormented / And I’m delighted never slighted” (III. 2 Pyrrhus, Demetrius; Scarlatti, Haym, and Bononcini 1709b, 36), a duet whose authorship cannot be established with certainty either is more elaborate than the previous one and belongs to the same structural type as Haym’s duet “Her lovely face enchants me” and Bononcini’s “Charmer, if faithful thou’lt believe me”, consisting predominantly of playful alternation and parallelism. Unlike the first duet for Pyrrhus and Demetrius, this is an unequivocal duet of friendship for the main protagonists, who are reconciled after having had two comic confrontations. The first one occurred at the end of the second act when both Marius and Demetrius attempted to murder Pyrrhus. The third act opens with Demetrius chasing Pyrrhus, but Climene intervenes by thrusting herself between them, so that they are reconciled as each tries to renounce Climene in favour of the other, evoking her fury. Potentially tragic dramatic situations are sometimes treated comically, but this rarely reflects on the duets, maybe with the exception of “Charmer, if faithful thou’lt believe me” and “Embrace me”. In this last duet the two friends are dissembling in front of each other, although neither has any intention of renouncing Climene. The 1694 libretto and the Italian version of the text of the 1709 libretto as well as the selection of songs suggest a seemingly carefree reconciliation, whereas in the English version of the libretto<sup>151</sup> (Morselli, Swiney, and Haym 1709, 39) and the 1690 libretto (Morselli 1690, 55), the two men pledge to renounce the fickle god of Love. The 1711–1712 version of the duet, “Vuo pria morir che cedere

151 Great Pyrrhus / Demetrius ne’ver will tamley bow / To Love’s delusive Charms,  
/ The Pains poor Lovers feel / Are sharp as pointed Steel / ‘Tis Folly to be Woing,  
/ When Honour calls to Arms / Great.. (da capo)

a un guardo lusinghier” (III. 2 Pirro, Demetrio, Scarlatti ms, La forza della fedeltà, f. 93’–94’) is equivalent to the 1690 libretto and the 1709 libretto’s English translation in its A section, which probably means that in both London and Florence the libretto was translated from the 1690 libretto, but Haym and/or Swiney decided to insert a different, albeit similar duet from either Scarlatti’s 1694 or a later setting of this version of the libretto, which means that the music could even possibly be by Scarlatti.<sup>152</sup> Dean and Knapp (1987, 149) share this opinion when they ascribe the duet to Scarlatti, calling it “excellent”. Although *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* derives from Scarlatti’s opera, of the four duets for which music has been preserved for, this is the only one that could have in any likelihood been performed in London to Scarlatti’s music.

In spite of the affective content of the duet (happiness at reconciliation), “I’m contented / And I’m delighted” is in the minor mode. Compositional techniques that characterise the other duets in the 1709 version of the opera abound here as well, although this one escapes monotony to a certain extent. Its short alternating phrases leave the impression of repetition, but at the same time produce an effect of liveliness. This effect may have been enhanced by the fact that the London audiences were hearing two castrato voices together for the first time, learning to distinguish them in terms of their slightly differing ranges and timbres (Nicolini having a somewhat higher tessitura than Valentini). Interestingly enough, parallelism is perhaps the least represented technique here, and short-breath alternation and *contrapunctus ligatus* dominate instead. It is to this duet that “Vuo pria morir”, the 1712 version of “I’m contented / And I’m delighted” is most related to in that it is also a strophic duet in which each protagonist sings a stanza. Obviously it was important for Haym to provide London audiences in 1708 with a more substantial duet in the form of “I’m contented / And I’m delighted”. As we shall see in Chapter 3.2.5, it left an impression vivid enough to be remembered ten years later and introduced into the opera parody *Harlequin Hydaspes* (1719).

The great contrast between the duets in the 1708 and 1711–1712 versions of the opera (if it is justified to speak of versions), along with the discrepancies between the different versions of the libretto, suggest that Haym probably inserted duets from other works into the opera, as well as composing one himself. Scarlatti’s importance for the 1709 but perhaps

152 This hypothesis seems to be confirmed by an ms source in the Hans Sommer Archiv, Berlin (shelf mark Mus.pr. Scarlatti A.1) that contains this duet under the authorship of the Italian master (RISM ID no.: 452517418), although it can also stem from the incorrect assumption that all numbers not marked as Haym’s in the Walsh edition of the score are by Scarlatti.

also for the 1711–1712 version of the opera may be minimal. While working with models, Haym seems to have gone to great effort to smoothen out the conflict in dramaturgic and the imbalance in formal-structural terms. Compared to the shorter, lapidary duets in the 1711–1712 version of the opera, he often consciously avoided contrapuntal techniques, especially imitation, even more than this was the case in the duets of other early London operas. In the examination of pasticcios in the remainder of this study, it will be next to impossible to keep track of the changes between the original and the pasticcio, so that the comparative approach taken with *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* will have serious limitations. As we follow the process of the gradual Italianisation of operatic culture in London, pasticcios will cease to bear resemblance to their model, serving as a vehicle for new music and even more often new singers, in the same way as in contemporary Italy.

### 3. 2. 4. *Almahide* (1710)

The next pasticcio performed in London, still at the Queen's Theatre in Drury Lane, was *Almahide* (1710). It showed continuity with some traits of previous operatic pasticcios in London, but also abandoned some of them. It did not break away entirely from singing in English since the comic scenes were performed in the native language. These were, however, by now separated from the main action to the extent that they functioned as *intermezzi*, placed at the end of the first two acts so that its protagonists did not feature in any other scenes, which also eliminated the “absurdity” of bilingual performance of opera in London since 1707, recognised by some contemporaries. Out of the eight numbers in these two *intermezzos*, five were by Bononcini, which must have been recognised by the audience. When these comic scenes were used for the performance of spoken drama, they were advertised as being sung to music by Bononcini, who had since *Camilla* already built himself a reputation in London (cf. Lindgren 1997, 241).

No composers besides Bononcini were identified in the dedication of the libretto (ibid., 231). Out of the five duets, three can be identified as his. The libretto was based on Ariosti's Vienna opera *Amor tra nemici* (1708), but less than the majority of numbers in *Almahide* was actually drawn from this score since the chance to replace any number from the score or libretto that served as a starting point was taken advantage of whenever deemed suitable. The purpose of *Almahide* was to showcase “music from the recent Vienna operas of Bononcini and Ariosti” (Dean and Knapp 1987, 149) and the key figure in the supply of scores was Johann Wenzel, Count Gallas, Viennese ambassador in London from 1705 to 1711,



subsequently Bononcini's patron in Rome from 1714 to 1719. Gallas may have provided Bononcini's scores for different operas at the Haymarket theatre, not only *Almahide*. Moreover, some of the music of *Almahide* was possibly heard in private performances at his residence before it was introduced to the London stage. Besides Bononcini and Ariosti's, other, hitherto unidentified composers' music must have been included in the pasticcio as well. It was successful enough to stay in repertory for three seasons. Knapp (1984, 101) finds that "the music is decidedly more Italianate than that of some of the previous operas" and although Dean and him thought that the arias were "more elaborate in coloratura but still weak in dramatic profile", and that "even when the music is attractive in itself, it seems to exist outside the plot" (Dean and Knapp 1987, 150), this does not necessarily apply to the duets.

SCENE	TEXT	CHARACTERS	VOICES	COMPOSER	EQUIVALENCE
I. u	Good buy t'ye, good night t'ye	Blesa, Floro	S, T	Bononcini	Addio ben mio ( <i>Mario fuggitivo</i> )
II. 4	Che affanno, tiranno alato bendato	Almiro, Almansor	MS, MS	Bononcini	ibid. ( <i>Turno Aricino</i> ), Che cara la pena ( <i>Polifemo</i> )
II. 8	Se t'abborro e la tua morte / Se t'abborro ancor la morte	Almahide, Almiro	S, MS	?	%
II. u	Oh happy choice, how I rejoyce	Eliza, Floro	S, T	?	%
III. 9	Sospira, pena e geme il cor	Almahide, Almiro	S, MS	Bononcini	Sospira, pena e geme ( <i>Mario fuggitivo</i> )

TABLE 32.  
List of duets in the pasticcio *Almahide* (1710)

Table 32 lists the duets in the pasticcio. We devote only limited attention to the comic duets. They were written for three characters, Floro (Mr. Dogget, tenor), Blesa (Mrs Lindsey, soprano) and Eliza (Mrs. Crofs, soprano). The officer Floro courts the elderly Blesa only for her money, and in Act 2 leaves her for the younger Eliza. After she witnesses Floro's infidelity, Blesa angrily confronts them and a series of comic insults ensue before Blesa rushes off. Given this final outcome, it is not surprising that the farewell duet for Blesa and Floro before Floro goes off to war, "Good

buy t'ye, good night t'ye" (Bononcini and Ariosti 1710, 24)<sup>153</sup> is a parody of serious duets for departing lovers. Although not to the extent as "I languish / For whom?" from *Camilla*, it does include some alternating exchanges of a semiquaver motif resembling a trill (b. 4–5, 8–16) that make the lines "my lovely Madam" (Floro) and "my dearest joy" (Blesa) sound almost ironic. The voices are otherwise kept mainly parallel and there is less to indicate irony in the conventionally contrasting B section of the duet. A contrast in musical technique is evident in the only other comic duet of the pasticcio, "Oh happy choice, how I rejoyce" (II. u Eliza, Floro; Bononcini and Ariosti 1710, 45), since here the voices of the young lovers are led in a simultaneous texture throughout, most of the time in perfect consonances with the occasional contrary motion. Their amorous unity is, thus, more harmonious than the feigned one between Floro and Blesa, but the simplicity of style in melodic, harmonic and formal terms, perhaps even greater when compared to the comic scenes in *Camilla* with its more intricate duet designs, distinguishes these numbers from the serious duets of the opera.

There are three of them in the pasticcio, two out of which were composed by Bononcini. Like the comic ones, the serious duets are mostly monotextual, with only the slightest variation in "Se t'abborro e la tua morte / Se t'abborro ancor la morte". As we have seen in the early London operas examined so far, polytextuality used to be more frequent. The selection of the two Bononcini duets was most probably influenced by their popularity, for both had already been the objects of parody by Bononcini himself. The duet "Che affanno, tiranno alato" (II. 4 Almiro, Almansorre; Bononcini and Ariosti 1710, 29–30) has its origins in the one-act opera *Polifemo* (1702) as "Che cara la pena" (Aci, Galatea) and in the 1707 Vienna opera *Turno Aricino* (II. 4 Livia, Egeria) with the same incipit as in *Almahide*. The same music was used, with only slight modification, for duets in three different dramatic situations: in *Polifemo*, as shall be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.4.1, it was a love duet, in *Turno Aricino* it was given to two princesses who, although friends, are also political rivals, while in *Almahide* it was shared by characters who are in overt conflict with each other. In this last case, we are dealing with a parallel unfolding of two inner monologues of the same content (an appeal to love). The king Almansorre (Valentini) wants Celinda, the bride of his general Almiro (Nicolini) for himself, and by the end of the scene the two men are to come into conflict. The duet opens the scene, which is first and foremost

153 The duet was taken over with minimal intervention (mostly compression from the opera *Mario Fuggitivo* (I. 6 „Addio ben mio“; Bononcini ms, *Mario Fuggitivo*, p. 66–72) for the same typical characters.

a 17th century librettistic technique. Although this would suggest a duet of a smaller scope, this is certainly not the case. Unlike the remainder of Bononcini duets in London pasticcios borrowed from his operas composed earlier, this duet is going to be analysed now rather than in Chapter 3.4.1.2. One of the reasons for this is that in terms of dramaturgy the duet is at its most interesting in *Almahide*. However, the insight into the MS score of *Turno Aricino* (Bononcini MS, Turno Aricino, 39'–41') enabled a comparison between this second version and the version of the duet from *Almahide*. The scale of intervention was even smaller than in the borrowing of the duet “Good buy t’ye”: instead of the inverted counterpoint in b. 31–49 and 49–67 (Bononcini MS, Turno Aricino, 40–40'), where the voices alternate in the display of coloratura in one voice as opposed to a held note in the other one, in the *Almahide* duet it is only Almiro (sung by Nicolini, the primo uomo) who has an opportunity to shine in this way, whereas Valentini as the secondo uomo mostly provides support with his varied held note (b. 39–45, third stave; Bononcini and Ariosti 1710, 29). The second important transformation concerns vocal range: whereas the earlier two duets were scored for two sopranos, the transposition from the original key of B-flat major into F Major suits the lower mezzosoprano tessitura of the two London castrati. However, let us examine the duet more closely (see Table 33).

SECTION	SUBSECTION	BAR	KEY	TEXT	DESCRIPTION
A	ritornello	1–14	F	%	main thematic material
	a <sub>1</sub>	15–31		Che affanno tiranno alato ben dato ti chiedo merce.	alternating sequential exchanges
	a <sub>2</sub>	32–51			free counterpoint, voice-crossing
	coda	51–60			parallelism
B	b <sub>1</sub>	60–77	d, g, a	Non rida d’amore che libero ha il core ma impari da me.	alternating sequential exchanges
	interjection	78–79			emphatic alternation (“ma”)
	b <sub>2</sub>	79–95			alternating sequential exchanges
A	<i>da capo</i>				

TABLE 33.  
Formal plan of the duet “Che affanno, tiranno alato”  
from the pasticcio *Almahide* (1710)

	1708 SCORE		1710 SCORE		1710 LIBRETTO
Pub.	Sospira pena e geme Il Cor e sol per te.	Alm.	Sospira pena e geme Il Cor e sol per te.	Alm. & Orc.	Sospira pena e geme Il Cor e sol per te.
Dal.	Sospira pena e geme Il Cor ma non per te.	Orc.	Sospira pena e geme Il Cor ma non per te.		
Pub.	T'amo mia bella speme	Alm.	T'amo mia bella speme	Alm.	T'amo mia bella speme,
Dal.	T'amo cosi non è.	Orc.	T'amo cosi non è.		
Pub.	Arde per te il mio cor	Alm.	Arde per te il mio cor	Orc.	Ardo d'amore anch'io.
Dal.	Ardo d'amore anch'io	Orc.	Ardo d'amore anch'io		
Pub.	E tu sei la cara face.	Alm.	E tu sei / non sei* la cara face.	A 2	E tu sei la cara face.
Dal.	Tu non sei la cara face.	Orc.	Tu non sei la cara face.		
Pub.	Mi piacque il tuo sembiante	Alm.	Mi piacque il tuo sembiante	Alm.	Mi piacque il tuo sembante
Dal.	Del tuo divenni amante	Orc.	Del tuo divenni amante	Orc.	Del tuo divenni amante
Pub.	Or più mi piace.	Alm.	Or più mi piace.	A 2	Or più mi piace.
Dal.	Or non mi piace.	Orc.	Or non mi piace.		

TABLE 34.  
Comparisons of texts of Bononcini's "Sospira pena e geme" from  
*Mario fuggitivo* and *Almahide*

\* The two variants in Almiro's lines are further proof that the text was badly copied into the score.

The main motif (first occurrence in b. 1–3 in the violoncello, b. 15–18 in Almiro's part) is exchanged between the vocal soloists in alternation, sequentially repeated a major second higher (b. 21–27) and at its original pitch (b. 27–32). A brief moment of simultaneity is followed by the aforementioned passage where Almansorre's held note provides support for Almiro's scalar flourishes. It abounds in voice-crossing, questioning Almiro's supremacy in terms of pitch, and eventually culminating in exchanges of characteristic neighbour note movements (b. 45–47) before leading up to a cadence in parallel (b. 48–50). After some playful parallel movement varying the main

motif (b. 51–55), a final cadence on the tonic rounds off section A. The modulatory section B (b. 60–95, Bononcini and Ariosti 1710, 30) continues to work on the dynamic of sequential exchanges of the main motif (b. 60–71) by extending it with even more voice-crossing (b. 71–74). It must have been the euphonious nature of Bononcini’s style, as strong here as in his chamber duets, that made this music appropriate for differing dramaturgic contexts. The voices are not opposed in the texture by contrasting thematic material or a predominantly successive treatment, but they are at the same time highlighted enough for the audience to be able to distinguish and compare them to each other even if they are of a similar tessitura. Since both Almiro and Almansorre are complaining of the god of Love, there is no reason why the duet should not be monotextual and why they should not be united in a simultaneous, occasionally parallel texture like in the duets of unity in *Polifemo* and *Turno Aricino*. However, the alternating sequential treatment and the voice-crossing renders this duet fitting for their ensuing conflict, Almiro gaining somewhat more of a vocal prominence while the two soloists remain each other’s equals nevertheless.

The duet “Sospira, pena e geme il cor” (III. 9 Almahide, Almiro; Bononcini and Ariosti 1710, 59–60), another object of multiple borrowings, is a duet of unity for characters who were in antagonistic relations for the most part of the opera. Almahide was brought up as a man under the name Orcane in order to exact revenge on Almiro’s family, but she eventually fell in love with him and became conflicted by her actions. In the third act Almiro frees “Orcane” and admits that he no longer hates “him”, which in turn finally prompts Almahide to uncover her true identity as well as her feelings for Almiro. After the initial shock, Almiro reciprocates her love. This duet follows the recognition, and the comparison between the versions of the text printed in the London libretto (Bernardoni and Heidegger 1710, 57), the London selection of songs and the original Bononcini opera it was borrowed from, as stated in Table 34, shows that the text was obviously misprinted in the selection of songs. Similarly to “Che affanno, tiranno alato”, there is a parody link between the Berlin and the Vienna opera and the London pasticcio. This way, London audiences were acquainted with Bononcini’s development without necessarily being aware of it. Whereas Camilla was a rather faithful rendition of the composer’s 1696 score and *Thomyris, Queen of Scythia* resorted to numbers from works of his written in the nineties of the 17th century, *Almahide* gave an insight into Bononcini’s output from the first decade of the new century. First encountered in *Cefalo e Procride* (1702) as a duet of unity for the two main protagonists with an entirely different text (“Non vien per nuocer”; Bononcini MS, *Cefalo e Procride*, 117–124), the duet eventually found its way into *Mario fuggitivo* (II. 13 Dalinda, Publio; Bononcini MS, *Mario fuggitivo*, p. 136–151)

with an identical incipit as in *Almahide*. Although this suggests that the duets in *Mario fuggitivo* and *Almahide* share the same texts, this is only partly true, for unlike the duet in *Almahide*, the duet in *Mario fuggitivo* uses semantically opposed polytextual line variants for the two soloists in order to express not unity as in *Cefalo e Procride*, but the opposite, a sharp contrast of affective content between Dalinda and Publio. Just like in the case of “Che affanno, tiranno alato”, the Vienna operas were the original sources for Heidegger rather than the Berlin ones, which makes perfect sense since it was Gallas who provided them.

As we shall see in Chapter 3.4.1.1, in *Cefalo e Procride* the duet re-establishes the amorous unity between the protagonists after numerous tests to their fidelity, while in *Mario fuggitivo*, Dalinda is contradicting Publio’s amorous declaration by negating the reciprocation of his love in asides (cf. Stampiglia, 1708). Although the duet in *Almahide* serves the confirmation of a newly consolidated love between *Almahide* and *Almiro*, the editor of the 1710 print of selected songs copied the duet text directly from *Mario fuggitivo*, making errors. Judging by the 1710 score, *Almiro* professes his love for *Almahide*<sup>154</sup>, whereas she rejects him for someone else. The text is at odds with the dramatic situations and cannot be what Nicolini and De l’Epine sang on the Haymarket stage. The adaptor of the libretto for Heidegger knew better and assigned what were originally Publio’s lines in section A to both Nicolini and De l’Epine, while the lines of section B (starting with “Mi piacque il tuo sembiante”) needed less intervention, for Dalinda’s variant “e non mi piace” was simply dropped and *Almahide* adopted *Almiro*’s final line.

Changes as simple and as far-reaching as this one (basically, the abolishment of the elaborate negation of Publio’s lines by Dalinda) could gear a certain duet to an entirely different dramatic situation without making any changes to its musical structure. True, some of the dialogic traits of the *Mario fuggitivo* setting may have been lost in *Almahide* due to its text of unity, but it is doubtful whether this would catch the analytical eye had it not been known from before. Therefore, the dramatic situation in which a certain duet was used did not have a bearing on the musical structure or even the character of a duet. The question of whether a certain duet befits a certain dramatic situation, whether it was unity, conflict or parallelism between the characters could be much easier to answer than it seems at first. For Bononcini at least, maybe the dramatic situation was not that important at all? The appropriation of a certain piece of music to the most different dramaturgic contexts, as witnessed by typified aria

154 Funnily enough, the libretto and the score consistently refer to *Almahide* under her male identity *Orcane*.

texts that began to increasingly dominate the libretto of the 18th century, was evidently not considered a problem even in the case of duets, being slightly more specific because rather than one, they engage two characters in some sort of (dialogic) relationship. Apart from the dropping of the viola part, “Sospira, pena e geme il cor” from *Mario fuggitivo* is an almost exact musical contrafactum of the duet “Non vien per nuocer”, since it had not even been transposed, but the key of F Major was retained instead. It seems that Heidegger (and any musical collaborators he might have had) intervened more when they borrowed from Bononcini than Bononcini when he borrowed from himself, since in *Almahide* the duet was transposed to G major. This was not principally influenced by changes of cast, for the duet in *Mario fuggitivo* was also written for voices of a similar tessitura. Regardless of questions of parody, the duet “Sospira, piange e geme il cor” displays some of the techniques already encountered in “Che affanno, tiranno alato”, but still retains its specificity. It resorts to imitative entries of the voices, and although it makes use of alternation, parallelism and some free counterpoint between the vocal parts in almost equal terms, with its recognisable and almost fugal head motifs, the imitative passages leave a strong mark on the duet. Likewise, it is of a more extended scope, more thoroughly worked out and less songlike than the regularly unfolding phrases in “Che affanno, tiranno alato”, pointing to what was to become the prototype of the substantial showpiece duet for the *primo uomo* and *prima donna*. However, since the earlier versions of this duet (from *Cefalo e Procride* and *Mario fuggitivo*) are to be analysed in more detail in Chapter 3.4.1.1, let us now turn our attention to the only remaining and the only serious duet in the opera for which no author can be determined.

“Se t’abborro e la tua / anche la morte” (II. 8 Almahide, Orcane; Bononcini and Ariosti 1710, 37) occurs at the moment when the tension between Almahide (“Orcane”) and Almiro has reached its highpoint. Conflicted by her emotions for Almiro, Almahide nevertheless attempts to save him from King Almansorre’s death sentence. Since she cannot reveal her true identity, she invents a story about a relative of hers who is in love with him, but this is ignored by Almiro because he only harbours hatred for “Orcane”. As a result, both characters break out in a rage in this duet, justifying the explanation that an aria (or a duet) in opera seria is an affective outburst triggered by recitative (cf. Smith 1971). In this duet of wrath in which Almahide reacts impulsively to Orcane’s hatred with some piled up anger of her own, the characters are actually in a state of affective unity and the monotextuality makes perfect sense. The text speaks in military metaphors about the attainment of glory on the battlefield: whereas in the preceding recitative Almahide was being herself, in the duet she is Orcane again, turning it into a duel of two operatic heroes, of two *castrati* if one

wishes, although only Orcane's part was sung by a castrato, Nicolini. We have seen that Margherita de L'Epine (Almahide) performed male roles in all the early London Italian opera analysed so far, so that not only her (male) stage attire and acting but also her voice was deemed equivalent to the voice of a castrato.

SECTION	SUB-SECTION	BAR	KEY	TEXT	DESCRIPTION
A	a <sub>1</sub>	1–25	G, D	Se t'aborro e la tua morte me un bel campo a trionfar	alternating statements of theme, held note CP, parallel cadence
	a <sub>2</sub>	25–43	D, G	[Sarò in] campo a trionfar.	held note VS. semiquaver passage framing a long parallel flourish
B	b <sub>1</sub>	43–51	e, mod.	Ire eterne con mia gloria vuò serpar.	alternating exchanges (“ire eterne”), parallelism, free CP, voice-crossing
	b <sub>2</sub>	56–60	h		alternating exchanges, cadence
A	<i>da capo</i>				

TABLE 35.  
Formal plan of the duet “Se t'aborro e la tua morte” from *Almahide* (1710)

Similar to “Sospira, pena e geme”, following in the third act, this duet is written in broader strokes and in a highly *concertante* idiom removed from the tradition of short opera duets characteristic of late 17th-century Italian opera that still dominated the London *Camilla*. After a typical string ritornello with a rhythmically distinctive head motif, reappearing in the violin interjections in the course of the first section, Almahide, whose anger triggers the duet, opens with a lengthy presentation of a vocal variant of the ritornello material (b. 7–12). Orcane replies by repeating this theme in the lower fourth, but instead of providing a countersubject, Almahide counterpoints with a held note (b. 12–17). This texture, well known from the duets of Bononcini and others, continues to dominate in b. 17–20 as the voices exchange roles. A modulation to the dominant is underlined by a passage in parallel movement (b. 21–25), but instead of closure, the voices proceed seamlessly to the next subsection with a texture combining held notes and semiquaver passages (b. 25–29), eventually culminating in what seemingly starts off as imitation, but due to the sequential nature of the aforementioned semiquaver passage soon ends up in an extensive



parallel flourish for both voices on the key word “a trionfar” (b. 30–35). Section B contributes to the sense of dialogic competition as the words engage in alternating exchanges of downward triads (fittingly, on the word “ire eterne”) and thus briefly resembling a *Streitduett* (b. 43–45 and later, b. 56–57), but soon enough they are united in a simultaneous texture combining parallel movement (b. 46–48), sequential free counterpoint (b. 49–51) and extensive voice-crossing (b. 52–54). The latter contributes to the sense of a skirmish between two virtuosos, presenting a very effective close to Act 2 as a whole. The duet definitely shows many similarities to the duets of Bononcini in its use of compositional techniques, and in his London opera *Astarto* (1720) Bononcini employed a dramatically similarly effective duet (“Innamorar e poi mancar / abbandonar”, to be discussed in Chapter 3.4.1.2) to round off the second act at the height of tension between the characters. Before we begin to speculate if “Se t’aborro” could be ascribed to Bononcini, the fact that Lindgren (1972) did not identify it as a borrowing from Bononcini speaks against this. One can say that a certain, more extensive and also more virtuosic type of duet had gained foothold in *Almahide*, and it will be interesting to see if this tendency developed further.

### 3. 2. 5. *Idaspe fedele* (1710)

Unlike *Almahide*, we can more clearly identify the sources for the opera<sup>155</sup> *Idaspe fedele*, although the degree of fidelity to the original score, the 1705 opera *Gli amanti generosi* by F. Mancini (Mancini 1978, a facsimile edition of the main MS source) cannot be compared to the minimal interventions that Haym made to *Il trionfo di Camilla* when he was adapting it in 1706. The performance of the opera in the form specific to London seems to have been instigated by Nicolini, who probably brought the score with him to London, whereas the adaptor of the opera for performance was most likely J. C. Pepusch (cf. Burrows 2012, 85). Nicolini, who had by now acquired the status of principal star on London’s operatic scene, had an important say in the selection and maybe also adaptation of the music. Lindgren (1972, 239) had established that in contrast to *Almahide* only two arias stem from Bononcini’s works, both from *Regina creduta re* (Venice 1706). The dynamic between Mancini’s original music and the borrowings must have been important for this opera, although it is hard to determine exactly how.

155 *Idaspe fedele* stands between the extremes of an authorial opera and a pasticcio compiled from a wide variety of sources, but to avoid terminological confusion, I will call it an opera nevertheless.

Labelling *Idaspe fedele* as the first opera in London to be sung entirely in Italian is fully justified, and there were also no comic scenes whatsoever, which marked a trend for serious opera and brought the tradition of opera performance in London closer to continental fashion, probably because “literary sensibilities objected to the mixture of light-heartedness and tragedy.” (Mancini 1978, Preface).<sup>156</sup> Dean and Knapp were favourable to the musical merits of the preserved music for this opera, claiming that “the songs in *Idaspe*, mostly by Mancini, are a pleasant surprise, with a feeling for contrast and mood that contrives to bring the characters to at least momentary life.” (1987, 150) The 1710 London libretto (Candi, Ginlio, and Grimaldi 1710), the selection of songs (Mancini and Bononcini 1710) and the 1705 score (Mancini 1978), whose libretto is itself an object of multiple adaptations<sup>157</sup>, served as the basis for the comparison of duets as outlined in Table 36.

PROVE- NANCE	AUTHOR	SCENE	TEXT	CHARACTERS	VOICES
1705 & 1710	Mancini	II. 10 / II. 12	Voglio morir ferita / O dolce uscir di vita	Berenice, Idaspe	S, MS
1710	?	III. 1	Vado a morir o cara / Ti lascio idolo mio	Idaspe, Berenice	MS, S
1705	Mancini	III. 2	Che forza / che ardore	Dario, Mandane	MS, S
1710	?	III. 12	La costanza del mio core / Il valore delle tue braccia	Idaspe, Mandane	MS, S

TABLE 36.  
List of duets in *Idaspe fedele* (1710) and *Gli amanti generosi* (1705)

Mancini, the author of at least two duets in the London opera, is definitely not among the well-researched composers of the early 18th century since his name often appears only alongside Handel’s due to the reasons outlined in Chapter 1.1. Stylistically, he is placed among the precursors of the Neapolitan school, but “his work has its roots in the theatrical world of the late 17th century and reflects the salient features of late Baroque *melodramma* in its evolution towards the Classical style” (Cafiero and Selfridge-Field 2001). Angela Romagnoli (1993, 50) came to the following conclusion about the two composers’ treatment of duets: “In general, Bononcini uses alternation and parallel movement between the voices more than contrapuntal

156 From now on I will leave any possible comic duets entirely out of consideration.  
157 *Gli amanti generosi* is the only libretto by G. P. Candi. G. Convò and S. Stampiglia revised it for Mancini’s 1705 setting (cf. Saunders 2001).

combination, whereas Mancini willingly adopts it alongside other ways of composing.”<sup>158</sup> It will be interesting to observe how the duets in *Idaspe fedele* and *Gli amanti generosi* relate to these claims.

The first duet comes at the end of the second act, which is also in line with the developing new conception on appropriate places for duets midway and at nodal points of the main dramatic action. “Voglio morir ferita” / “O dolce uscir di vita” (II. 10 Berenice, Idaspe; Mancini and Bononcini 1710, 38) dramatizes a situation that will become a prototype for duets in 18th-century opera seria. King Artaserse has captured and sentenced his nephew Idaspe (Nicolini) to death, and his betrothed Berenice (De L’Epine), whom the king desires for himself, decides to die together with him rather than fall prey to Artaserse. In the original 1705 version the duet is prepared with a lengthy recitative (Mancini 1978, 72–73) in which after the initial refusal Idaspe comes to respect Berenice’s decision to share his tragic fate, so that the duet is a musical codification of this newly attained unity in adversity. The comparison of the 1705 MS source and the 1710 print shows no differences in terms of structure and form, only the usual simplification of the orchestration. What distinguishes this duet from the prototype which, among others, Handel was to develop in his London operas, is the absolute absence of counterpoint in the vocal parts. However, its tragic character is painted rather convincingly with the use of the key of F-sharp minor. Although the vocal parts are combined only in succession or in parallel, the strong rhythmic continuity corresponds to the determination of the characters to stoically accept their fate. It is no surprise that this duet is not an addition to the score by Bononcini, for he was uninclined to duets of this sort.

However, let us take a closer look at the duet’s structure: it opens with a string ritornello in a jerky, punctuated semiquaver rhythm (b. 1–3) that will have a limited *concertante* function, reappearing only twice. Its rhythmic unrest unsettles the steady pace of the vocal parts in b. 9–15 with repeated brief interjections containing the characteristic punctuated rhythm and an octave leap, but otherwise the relationship between voices and accompaniment is fairly simple, the continuo providing the quaver pulse that the voices follow for most of the time. After Berenice and Idaspe have divided a simple tune between themselves into complimentary phrases in alternating statements (b. 3–5) and the ensuing ritornello, they will repeat these two phrases again (b. 7–8) with an added passage in B minor in parallel, following the unexpected chromatic modulation in b.

158 In generale, Bononcini usa più l’alternanza o l’andamento parallelo tra le voci che la combinazione contrappuntistica, adottata invece volentieri da Mancini accanto agli altri due tipi di scrittura.

9. After this the alternation resumes with melodic variants of the initial vocal material (b. 11–15) before the voices are united again in a texture of parallel sixths and thirds to cadence back to the tonic F-sharp minor and round off section A of the duet. It goes without saying that Mancini's setting was conditioned by the dialogic structuring of the text so that the two characters' common line ("per chi fedel mi fù") is almost always, with the exception of Berenice's solo in b. 13–14), set in parallel. The B section is structurally identical, but explores the related keys of A major, B minor and C-sharp minor, although the dialogic relationship of the voices is enhanced because the text adds another topos often encountered in this type of duet. Berenice's "Ti lascio idolo mio" (b. 20–21) is answered by Idaspe with „Addio mio bene“ (b. 21), Berenice joining him for an emphatic "addio" (b. 21–22, 22–23) before they are united in the utterance of the last line ("Non posso dir di più"), indicating that the suffering is too great to say anything more, although this is contradicted by the *da capo* repeat.

Before we move on to the exploration of the remaining duets in the two versions of operas about Hydaspes, it needs to be said that the opera, although not nearly as successful as *Camilla*, *Thomyris* and *Pyrrhus and Demetrius*, did have an extended life on London's stage in the ensuing decade, reaching 46 performances by 1716 (cf. Knapp 1984, 103) and thus also forming a bridge of sorts with the period examined chiefly in Chapter 3.3. As Knapp (1986, 165–166) had pointed out, besides the revivals for Nicolini, a lot of music from *Idaspe fedele* was heard in the "mock opera" *Harlequin Hydaspes*, a *commedia dell'arte* style parody of not only *Idaspe fedele*, but Italian opera in general, performed at the theatre in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields in 1719. No score for the work survives, but along with the sung English texts the libretto (Aubert 1719) lists the Italian counterparts when the number stems from a work that was originally sung in Italian in London, as well as its provenance, so that it was possible to identify most of these "songs" as arias from not only *Idaspe fedele*, but also *Pyrrhus and Demetrius*, *Almahide*, Handel's *Rinaldo* and *Amadigi* and the pasticcio *Clearte* (1716). Two out of three duets in the libretto stem from *Idaspe fedele*. The first one was "Voglio morir ferita / O dolce uscir di vita", known under the English text "Then may we both together die / The pain be mutual, and the joy" (III. 1 *Harlequin*, *Colombine*; Aubert 1719, 39) and it was prepared by a dialogue rivalling the original Italian recitative in seriousness of tone. Obviously, a parody of operatic seriousness did not shy away from relishing in its tragic overtones.

The second was "With thee, my life! / Death opens, dearest" (III. 11 *Harlequin*, *Colombine*), originally the duet "Vado a morir, o cara / Ti lascio idolo mio" (III. 1 *Idaspe*, *Berenice*; Mancini and Bononcini 1710, 48) in *Idaspe fedele*. In the 1710 opera as well as its 1719 parody, this duet comes

shortly before the scene that made the opera famous by probably one of the wittiest writings on opera in general, Joseph Addison's satirical account of Nicolini's onstage fight with a lion on 14 March 1711 in *The Spectator* (Addison 1711). Idaspe is thrown into an arena with a lion, and Addison cleverly mocked the lack of "common sense" in the fact that a castrato pretends to be a larger-than-life hero who single-handedly defeats an actor in a lion's costume and even sings an aria ("Mostro crudele") beforehand. Whatever the reception of this scene might have been, it was certainly the most celebrated one in the opera, so that Nicolini and/or Pepusch initiated the introduction of another duet of departure for the hero and his beloved immediately before it, presumably to give it more emphasis. "Vado a morir o cara / Ti lascio idolo mio" is absent from the original MS source. It is hard to determine its provenance (RISM searches yield no results), but it could be that it was from an opera Nicolini had already sung in Italy. It is of the same dramaturgic and affective type like "Voglio morir ferita", but of a far shorter span. The minor mode and the shorter alternating statements in the vocal part enhance this sense of similarity, but the lack of any kind of motivic identity apart from the first four bars (with the continuo narrowed down to a pulsating quaver movement) points to the fact that his duet is rather different from any that we have encountered so far. "Vado a morir o cara" fascinatingly manages to pack a lot of harmonic content into a mere twelve bars. The sense of uncertainty in Idaspe's ensuing confrontation with a life-threatening danger is conveyed with an ongoing modulatory trajectory, leading away from the tonic G minor via sequential progressions into a series of related keys and eventually back to the tonic. This is punctuated in the final cadence with a simultaneous "Addio" in both voices (b. 11–12), the only moment of vocal simultaneity and yet another goodbye between the *primo uomo* and the *prima donna*. The introduction into *Harlequin Hydaspes* is even more surprising, since the setting is far from being comical in any way.

Given the unconventional nature of the duet, it is next to impossible to guess who its author might be. It is nevertheless significant that this duet was a replacement for a duet for the *secondo uomo* and *seconda donna* "Che forza / che ardore, che raro valore" (III. 2 Dario, Mandane; Mancini 1978, 232–234). In *Gli amanti generosi*, it was originally positioned after "Mostro crudele", the recitative following it and "All'ombre alle catene" (another aria for Idaspe), which were all part of the London version of the opera, so it might come as a surprise that Pepusch and/or Nicolini deprived these characters of an opportunity to praise the titular hero's "strength", "ardour" and "valour" for it not only does not form part of the 1710 selection of songs but is also absent from the libretto. Mandane (Isabella Girardeau) and Dario (Valentini) are in no dramatic rivalry with

the principal couple on the dramaturgic plane and serve them merely as friends and allies, so that this duet enhances Idaspe as a dramatic agent. Maybe Nicolini thought that sharing the spotlight with anybody at this highpoint of the dramatic action would eclipse his glory? Whatever the case, the original 1705 duet could not be more different than “Vado a morir, o cara”. It is far more regular, with its *da capo* design, but also structurally and motivically. It also shows a considerable lack of distinctiveness since the motivic content is rather formulaic, imbuing section A with a sense of predictability and, consequently, monotony. Although slightly more virtuoso in its coloratura display than both duets for Idaspe and Berenice, Nicolini’s primacy at the beginning of Act 3 would not have necessarily been jeopardised if “Che forza / che ardore” had been performed in London.

Although the soloists had plenty of occasions to display their technical skills in arias, Nicolini’s lack of ability to do so in the existing duet “Vado a morir, o cara” may have prompted the insertion of another duet into the last scene of the opera, when the happy outcome of the action has already been decided. “La costanza del mio core / Il valor delle tue braccia” (III. 12 Idaspe, Mandane; Mancini and Bononcini 1710, 70) is absent from the 1705 MS and its authorship is unknown. The likelihood that it was taken over from another opera, presumably one that both soloists sung in together is heightened by the fact that its constellation of soloists, the *primo uomo* (Nicolini) and the *secondo donna* (Girardeau), if not entirely impossible, is certainly misplaced for the moment in the dramatic action when the principal couple should be celebrating the happy outcome of their common fate. Since so little is known about Girardeau’s career apart from her London performances, it is not possible to investigate whether Nicolini and Girardeau had sung in an opera together and thus identify from which work this duet had been borrowed. Maybe Nicolini just wanted to sing another duet, and since he had already sung two with Margherita de L’Epine, it felt fitting to introduce a duet with the *seconda donna* for a change, although Girardeau does not seem to have been famous for her technical bravura (cf. Dean 2001a). However, this certainly does not account for the odd dramaturgic placement, since it would have been possible to introduce a duet for Nicolini and Girardeau earlier in the action and move a celebratory duet for the principal couple to the end of the opera instead. This duet is distinguished from the others in the opera by a slightly higher share of coloratura display, although still not too taxing and rather modest compared to the flashier duets in *Almahide*, written for some of the same soloists (Nicolini, Valentini, De L’Epine). It continues the tendency for a more imitative treatment of the voices already begun in *Almahide*. The violins introduce the initial motif of the voices (b. 1–4) and the downward semiquaver movement in punctuated rhythm (b. 5–9) that

are going to be used for vocal figuration later. After a stretto imitation of the main motif and its continuation in the form of cascading downward semiquavers, first heard in Idaspe's part (b. 9–14) and then in Mandane's a fifth higher (b. 10–15), the voices are united in parallel coloraturas for the remainder of section A of the duet. The much shorter middle section (b. 60–83) has more changes of texture, progressing two times from alternating statements to free counterpoint and parallel cadencing (b. 60–70 and 71–78). This is definitely a duet that unites rather than contrasts or sets its musical protagonists apart.

Finally, I need to repeat that the third and final duet in *Harlequin Hydaspes* is “For a blessing / Past expressing” (III. 13 Harlequin, Colombine; Aubert 1719, 55), a borrowing of “I'm contented, ne'er tormented / And I'm delighted”, the final duet for Pyrrhus and Demetrius from the eponymous opera. Since in that context it functioned as a duet of friendship disguising suppressed rivalry for Climene, the compilers of *Harlequin Hydaspes* changed the English version of the text so that they could give it to the lovers Harlequin and Colombine, but admitted its provenance by displaying the original Italian version of the text. The fact that it was remembered for an operatic parody in 1719 suggests that it probably made quite an impression, adding to the multi-faceted picture of the somewhat confusing period in the performance tradition of Italian opera in London discussed in Chapter 3.3. At least four of the early Italian operas performed in London in the period 1706–1710 (*Camilla*, *Thomyris*, *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* and *Idaspe fedele*) were kept alive in Londoners' memory in the following decade in various forms of revivals on the different stages of the capital. Whereas *Camilla* and *Thomyris*, *Queen of Scythia* became champions of English opera at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields (1717–1719), *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* turned away from its English (bilingual) roots when it was revived in Italian in 1716. *Hydaspes* performed both functions, being revived both in the original Italian for Nicolini at the Haymarket theatre in 1715–1716 and—heavily modified—as *Harlequin Hydaspes* in 1719. These early London works, borderline between proper operas and pasticcios, had obviously laid some firm foundations.

## DIFFERING CONCEPTIONS OF ITALIAN OPERA (1711–1717)

What is clear is a connection through adherence to a school, an affinity of attitude and general artistic approach. It is astonishing to see how far Handel is from his fellow-composers of opera in 1737. [...] Nor had Gasparini been in complete agreement with the operatic composers of 1720 when he wrote his almost metallic melodies, so different from the turgid “bel canto” style of Porpora or the abundant élan of the young Hasse. One thinks rather of the Giovanni Bononcini of the last years of the seventeenth century, with his *Xerse* or his *Trionfo di Camilla* (1696). Some trace of that Roman operatic style seems to have survived both in Gasparini’s later work at Rome and in Handel’s London. (Strohm 2008, 91–92)

Although significant since it draws the three composers central to this study (Handel, Gasparini and Bononcini) under the common denominator of a Roman style of composition at the beginning of the 18th century as opposed to the nascent Neapolitan school, the quote above conceals the complexity of the second decade of the 18th century as a period when operatic duets of these three composers were performed alongside each other on the London stages. This stage in the development of Italian opera in the British capital is even more multi-layered than the initial period examined in Chapter 3.2. Although Handel debuted in London in 1711 with an Italian opera (*Rinaldo*), a work summarising his achievements in Italy and a significant success with the audience, the Halle master’s career was taking a different turn with the exploration of royal and aristocratic patronage and the according interest in English genres. As a result of this, but also due to other processes that shaped the musico-theatrical scene in London, “there was no resident composer before 1720: the theatres preferred to rely almost exclusively on doctored imports and pasticcios” (Dean and Knapp 1987, 155) The distinction between authorial operas such as Gasparini’s and Handel’s on the one hand and the continuing production of Italian pasticcios in the manner established by the end of the first decade of the century is nevertheless important. This period is also marked by the influx of many exceptional singers and the extension and improvement of the Haymarket theatre, all laying foundation for future successes.

There is one aspect of musico-theatrical life in London in this decade that will not be considered in detail in this study. The efforts “to establish a so-called English opera or opera in English ‘after the Italian manner’” (Knapp 1986, 155), centred around renewed activities at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane as well as the newly opened theatre in Lincoln’s-Inn-Fields,



included revivals of works performed in 1706–1710 (dealt with in detail in Chapter 3.2), but none of these revivals introduced any significant novelty in the realm of duets, with the exception of Pepusch’s two additional duets for the 1719 revival of *Thomyris*. Therefore, we cannot say that this particular English-language reception of Italian operatic music changed in any significant way during the decade following its original introduction to the London scene. New productions of English opera “after the Italian manner” manifested themselves firstly in a work such as *Calypso and Telemachus* (libretto by John Hughes, music by John Ernst Galliard) in 1712 at—surprisingly—the Queen’s Theatre in the Haymarket, 1712. The opening of the theatre in Lincoln’s-Inn-Fields in 1714 instigated the Theatre Royal Drury Lane to revive the tradition of the masque, its first representative being *Venus and Adonis* (libretto by Colley Cibber, music by J. C. Pepusch; Drury Lane, 1715). This and other masques staged at Drury Lane and Lincoln’s-Inn-Fields in the period 1715–1719 were not a full evening’s entertainment and often functioned as “afterpieces” to plays, with the exception of *Calypso and Telemachus* (Galliard 1712)<sup>159</sup>. Masques were especially popular in the 1715/1716 season when Italian opera performances were suspended in the aftermath of the Jacobite rebellion. In 1716/1717 the theatre in Lincoln’s-Inn-Fields revived *Camilla*, *Thomyris*, *Queen of Scythia* and also *Calypso and Telemachus*, and for a whole season it kept up with Italian opera at the Haymarket as worthy competition. The competition between Drury Lane and Lincoln’s-Inn-Fields in the two seasons when no Italian opera was performed (1717/1718 and 1718/1719) was not that fierce, the latter theatre gaining the upper hand by mounting new and old masques, revivals of *Camilla*, *Thomyris* and *Harlequin Hydaspes*. Knapp (1986, 168) concludes that “a genuine English alternative to Italian opera, then, faded during the late years of the 1710s when nothing substantial was forthcoming from the two English theatres, even though they both had the musical and theatrical field entirely to themselves”. When royal and aristocratic support gathered around the Royal Academy of Music, musical theatre in English was pushed into the background until the appearance of *The Beggar’s Opera*. Unlike the ones from 1706–1710, these English language works had no influence on the development of a tradition of Italian opera in London nor was Handel in any way involved in their production. Handel did not take part in the production of Italian pasticcios at the time, either, remaining associated with composing and producing his own operas until 1725, when the pasticcio *Elpidia* was performed by the Royal Academy of Music under his auspices.

159 This work contains three polytextual duets in the tradition of early London operas (Chapter 3.2). They are distinguished by partially contrasting material in the voices, the avoidance of imitation and free counterpoint.

YEAR	WORK	MUSIC: COMPOSER, ARRANGER	LIBRETTIST: POET, ARRANGER	DUET*
1711	<i>Etearco</i>	Bononcini, Handel, Haym et al.	Stampiglia, Haym	0
1711	<i>Rinaldo</i>	Handel	A. Hill, G. Rossi	4
1711	<i>Antioco</i>	Gasparini et al.	F. Silvani	3
1712	<i>Ambleto</i>	Gasparini et al., Nicolini?	P. Pariati, A. Zeno	2
1712	<i>Il pastor fido</i>	Handel	G. Rossi	1
1712	<i>Dorinda</i>	C. F. Pollarolo et al., Haym	B. Pasqualigo	?
1713	<i>Teseo</i>	Handel	Quinault, Haym	4
1713	<i>Ernelinda</i>	Gasparini, Bononcini, Mancini, Orlandini, Telemann? et al., Haym?	F. Silvani	1?
1713	<i>Silla</i>	Handel	G. Rossi	3
1714	<i>Creso</i>	Albinoni, Caldara, Mancini, Gasparini, Lotti, G. Polani, Vivaldi, Haym	A. Aurelli, Haym	4
1714	<i>Arminio</i>	Lotti, Orlandini, Ristori, Vivaldi et al.	F. Silvani	2
1715	<i>Lucio Vero</i>	Albinoni, Vivaldi et al., Haym	A. Zeno	3
1715	<i>Amadigi di Gaula</i>	Handel	A. H. de la Motte, Haym?	2
1716	<i>Clearte</i>	A. Scarlati et al., Nicolini	G. D. Pioli	3
1717	<i>Vincislao</i>	C. F. Pollarolo, Mancini, Haym	A. Zeno, Haym?	?
1717	<i>Tito Manlio</i>	Ariosti	Haym?	5

TABLE 37.

Selective list of operas (pasticcios and authorial) staged in London 1711–1719<sup>160</sup>

\* Duet numbers are given taking the revivals of the respective operas into consideration up to the end of the period examined in this study (1724).

Some of the works listed in Table 37 will be closely examined in the remainder of this chapter, their duets subject to detailed analysis. The subchapter devoted to the dramatic duets of Gasparini (3.3.1) will be followed by subchapters on pasticcios (3.3.2) and Handel's dramatic duets (3.3.) The

160 The main sources of information in this table are Sasse 1959, Dean and Knapp 1987 and Lindgren 1987.

former will exceed the examination of duets in the pasticcios firmly based on Gasparini's operas *Antioco* and *Ambleto* in 1711 and 1712 and explore some operas and dramatic cantatas of his written in the second decade of the 18th century. The reason for this is Gasparini's importance in the realm of the chamber duet. In order to establish if and how compositional activity in this genre influenced the composing of dramatic duets and vice versa, Gasparini's dramatic duets not performed in London will be drawn into the comparison. On the other hand, Bononcini's presence on the London stage seems to have subsided in this period. Apart from the already mentioned revivals of works premiered in London in the previous decade and the inclusion of arias from *Camilla* in the pasticcios *Dorinda* and *Arminio* in 1713 and 1714, the available sources for other pasticcios produced between 1712 and 1720 bear no witness to additional music by Bononcini. (Lindgren 1997, 242–243). Haym had displayed considerable partiality to Bononcini's music as adaptor and compiler before, but his role in the production of Italian opera in London underwent a significant change in this period, the bulk of his contribution consisting of tasks such as adapting opera arias imported by singers from elsewhere to suit the libretto they were introduced to, e. g. in *Etearco* in 1711. This constituted "Haym's periodic role at the Haymarket theatre from 1711 until his death in 1729. Haym's editing of the text is assumed whenever he signed dedications of libretti." (ibid., 243) Thus he became more comparable to a producer, director or a dramaturg in the modern sense.

### 3. 3. 1. Gasparini's Dramatic Duets

Gasparini spent the largest part of his professional career in Rome, with the significant Venetian period in between, when he was often the first to set new, Arcadian libretti of Apostolo Zeno and Pietro Pariati, although his early and late Roman operatic output was equally important for his development (cf. Strohm 2008, 80). By the end of the second decade of the 18th century, his operas had been performed outside Italy, in German-dominated centres as well as London. He was respected as a theorist, with his *L'armonico pratico al cimbalo* (1708), a practically oriented *basso continuo* manual reaching many editions and as a teacher, counting Benedetto Marcello, Domenico Scarlatti and Giovanni Porta among his pupils. Interestingly, his early Roman years were evidently rather formative for him since in *L'armonico pratico* only contemporaries such as Corelli, Bernardo Pasquini and Giovanni Bononcini receive praise as composers, all of whom he had met and worked with in Rome back then (Lindgren 1981b, 178). As a composer of an older generation, (he was born in 1661), Gasparini

made a reputation of a learned master in his church music and his cantatas (cf. Libby and Lepore 2001). He obviously knew how to reconcile the tradition of polyphonic music with novel stylistic tendencies early on in his career, showing a proclivity for the *da capo* form in works written in Rome as early as 1689 (cf. Lindgren 1981b, 176). However, Gasparini was a strong enemy of the modern school that his friend, the singing teacher and theorist Pier Francesco Tosi turned against in *Opinioni de cantori antichi e moderni* (1723). This may have to do with his role as a singing teacher, since Nicola Porpora's new school of singing with Farinelli as chief representative was posing a certain threat, too.

Although "there can be little doubt that Gasparini was one of Handel's models in developing his Italian style" (Roberts 2003, 285), like many other composers parodied by him, Gasparini is considered first and foremost for what had been borrowed from him. The most famous examples are his operas *Il Bajazet* (1719) and *Il Faramondo* (1720) since Handel not only drew material from them but the scores influenced Handel's settings of the same source libretti, *Tamerlano* (1724) and *Faramondo* (1738), on a more general level. However, they either contain no duets (*Il Bajazet*) or served Handel as a source of inspiration in a time that falls out of the scope of this study. The borrowings extended long into Handel's career, including some of his English oratorios, but a duet is rarely the object of parody, with the exception of the borrowing from a duet from *Ambleto* to be discussed later on. In other words, by focusing on parody we cannot find out if the unexpected rapport between the chamber duets of the two composers extends to their dramatic duets as well.

Despite the fact that he was labelled "one of the most celebrated of the Venetian opera composers after 1700" (Wolff 1975a, 93), not much has been written on Gasparini's duets. The duets listed in Table 38 will be considered in chronological order, which does not imply a developmental curve in such a short period. Chapter 3.3.1.1 examines the four duets in the two London pasticcios based on his operas. A stylistic difference between these duets and the ones analysed in the next subchapter will be evident since they are often shorter and differently structured. In hindsight, we shall see if the detailed analysis of each duet can be brought into connection with their dating and/or authorship, depending on the degree of fidelity to Gasparini's original scores maintained by the adaptor(s). Chapter 3.3.1.2 opens with the discussion of duets in two of Gasparini's *cantate a due*. The composer wrote ten dramatic cantatas, all of them for two soloists, which shows an interest in the genre comparable to the chamber duets analysed in Chapter 2.4.3. The availability of printed editions of *Dimmi, gentil Daliso* and *Qui di natura in scorno* conveniently coincided with their creation (Rome, 1716 and 1717) in the period of interest to this chapter. Each

of these cantatas closes with duets that commence with lengthy alternating statements by the voices that are eventually combined in a predominantly parallel or a freely contrapuntal texture. Like the opera duets examined next, they are written in a developed *da capo* form, but with a somewhat lower degree of simultaneity. The two opera duets from *Astianatte* and *Eumene* share their major-mode and playful character, but they excel in a more virtuoso treatment of the voices resulting in abundant parallel semiquaver coloratura, which is to be expected in the realm of opera. They are also polytextual duets of conflict and therefore emphasise the textual and/or affective contrast by setting their first lines with shorter alternating statements, gradually interweaving the parts in imitation, free counterpoint and/or parallelism, thereby making them more comparable to some of Handel's own duets.

YEAR	AUTHOR	WORK	SCENE	INCIPIIT	CHAR.	VOICES
1711	pasticcio, ?	<i>Antioco</i>	I. 3	Vivrò a te fedele	Arsinoe, Leonildo	S&MS
1711	pasticcio, ?	<i>Antioco</i>	I. 13	Per tè bell'idol mio / caro mio bene	Antioco, Arsinoe	S&S
1712	pasticcio, Gasparini	<i>Ambleto</i>	II. 14	Godi o cara / Godo o caro	Ambleto, Veremonda	MS&S
1712	pasticcio, Gasparini	<i>Ambleto</i>	II. 16	Sempre in cielo Giove irato / averso il fato	Veremonda, Ambleto	S&MS
1715	Gasparini	<i>Eumene</i>	II. 18a	Se non temi il mio furore / Io non temo il tuo furore	Laodicea, Eumene	S&S
1716	Gasparini	<i>Dimmi gentil Daliso</i>	no. 11	Saprò / Se sai sperar costante	Daliso, Dori	S&A
1717	Gasparini	<i>Qui di natura a scorno</i>	no. 10	Già riede nel petto la gioia	Clori, Daliso	S&A
1722	Gasparini	<i>Astianatte</i>	II. 15	Le stelle s'amano / I cieli tuonano	Ermione, Andromaca	S&MS

TABLE 38.

Selection of dramatic duets by Gasparini or associated with Gasparini for analysis

## 3. 3. 1. 1.

*London Pasticcios Antioco (1711) and Ambleto (1712)*

There is a link between the two London pasticcios based on operas by Gasparini that does not have much to do with the composer, but the selection of *Antioco* (Vienna, 1705) and *Ambleto* (Venice, 1706) may reflect a certain preference on part of London producers and the audience. Zeno and Pariati, the authors of the original libretto of *Ambleto*, were relying on a 16th-century Danish chronicle and probably had no knowledge whatsoever of Shakespeare, but Heidegger may have. In *Antioco* the heroine Arsinoe feigns madness in the face of political vicissitude because of the tyrant Tolomeo, and the fact that the next Italian opera on the repertory of the Queen's Theatre bears even more resemblance to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* cannot have been a coincidence. These two operas must have been selected consciously, possibly to accommodate a specifically British tradition or taste. The source libretto, namely, was not among the more popular ones by Zeno and Pariati, and the London setting may have been the second one. Most characters in *Ambleto* have their equivalent in Shakespeare: Ambleto (A) is naturally Hamlet, Veremonda (S), a foreign princess in the opera, corresponds to Ophelia, the tyrant Fengone (B) to Claudius, whereas Ambleto's mother is not Gertrud but Gerilda (S). Like in Shakespeare, Fengone usurps the throne and marries Gerilda, whereas Ambleto feigns madness. As was the custom in opera seria, Fengone's villainy is exaggerated and his lustfulness finds a new victim in Veremonda, whom he intends to ravish. As many a *prima donna* before her, this is far from Veremonda's only trouble, since Valdemaro (S), a general loyal to Fengone also has pretensions for Veremonda and will not shun violence as a means to obtain her, but is eventually won over to change his allegiances from Fengone to Ambleto. Fengone will be harder to reckon with, threatening Veremonda to kill Ambleto if she does not give in to him, but luckily the obligatory *lieto fine* will result in his death only, leaving Ambleto to happily ascend the throne with Veremonda.

The London *Ambleto* (1712) is a pasticcio, not to the extent *Almahide* and maybe *Antioco* were, but comparable to *Idaspe fedele*. This is where the thin line between a pasticcio and a reworking of an opera can be found. Similar to the way *Idaspe fedele* was based on Mancini's *Gli amanti generosi*, the compilers of the London *Ambleto* definitely had access to the score of the 1706 Venice *Ambleto* and this score served as a solid musical starting point. Another thing connects these two pasticcios: Lindgren (1987, 301) and Dean and Knapp (1987, 157) believe that Nicolini was more actively involved in the compilation of these operas since he probably brought the scores with him to London. He sang the title role in both the original

1706 opera and in this production, so we may conclude that the opera was staged on his initiative and that together with Heidegger, Nicolini might be behind the inclusion of music by other composers. According to Dean and Knapp (1987), only 22 of 42 numbers from the Walsh collection of songs, the most important and most comprehensive musical source for the London version of the opera (reprinted as Gasparini and Porta 1986, *Ambieto*), come from the original score.<sup>161</sup> The fact that the duets are confirmed as original compositions by Gasparini makes our work here much easier than in some of the other examined pasticcios.

VERSIONS	AMBLETO	VEREMONDA
1705 libretto, II. 14	Godi, o cara, ma di un diletto Che misura sia de l'amor. Quell'affetto, che ben non gode Quand'è in braccio del dolce oggetto, E'un'affetto di debil cor. Godi, etc.	Godo, o caro, quanto so amarti, E fin godo nel tuo goder. L'alma amante che in me respira, In te passa per abbracciarti, E là s'empie del suo piacer. Godo, etc.
1712 libretto, II. 14 1712 score	Godi, o cara, ma di un diletto Che misura sia de l'amor.	Godo, o caro, quanto so amarti E fin godo nel tuo goder.

TABLE 39.  
Different versions of the text of Gasparini's duet  
"Godi, o cara / Godo, o caro" from *Ambieto* (1712)

Handel was not able to hear the opera in London because he was not present in the city at the time of the performance, but he reached for the score much later, partly because by then the 1712 opera would have faded from his audience's memory and they would not be able to identify the borrowings any more. The numbers he borrowed from *Ambieto* include a duet, "Godi, o cara / Godo, o caro" (II. 14 *Ambieto*, Veremonda; Gasparini and Porta 1986, *Ambieto*, 51).<sup>162</sup> This is a duet of amorous unity which comes after *Ambieto* had freed Veremonda from Valdemaro and it is followed by the usurper's arrival in the next scene. It is very different from the other dramatic duets by Gasparini examined here and bears similarities to the strophic duets by Scarlatti or Bononcini. In the score and the 1712

161 Arias from Pollarolo's *Vincislao* and one each by Caldara and Handel ("Tu ben degno" from *Agrippina*).

162 Handel parodied it in a duet of his own in the oratorio *Alexander Balus* (1748), "Hail wedded love" (II. 4 *Alexander Balus*, Cleopatra, Handel 1870, 148–154), considerably transforming and expanding its melody.

libretto (Zeno 1712, 57) the duet is monopartite, a concise setting of two lines for each soloist in which they express joy at being united. Musically, it consists of a note-to-note repetition of Ambleto's melody in G major (b. 1–10) by Veremonda a fourth lower (in C major, b. 10–20), after which a brief continuo passage (b. 20–24) rounds off the short piece. The unexpected arrival of Fengone leaves the impression that what could have been a longer duet had been cut short. This was, however, not the case in Zeno's original libretto (Zeno 1705, 49) where the duet is of standard length and in conventional *da capo* form, the four mentioned lines belonging to section A. As can be seen in Table 39, the adaptors of the opera for the London performance clearly wanted to shorten and simplify the duet by dropping its middle section. It is ungrateful to speculate what the original 1706 setting might have been like. It is possible that in section B the voices were again in a relationship of successiveness, while the third section could have been both a musical, literal *da capo* repeat or merely a textual one, with the last section (A2) combining the voices into simultaneity. Whatever the case, this duet confirms a tendency to supply London pasticcios based on Gasparini operas with shorter and simpler duets. Moreover, it recalls the cutting of originally tripartite (often *da capo*) duets to short monopartite ones in the collections of songs from earlier London operas (e. g. "Cease cruel tyrannizing / to deceive me" in *Camilla* or possibly "Oh! In pity cease to grieve me!" in *Thomyris, Queen of Scythia*).

Dean and Knapp (1987, 157–158) identified "a lax feeling for character" and the "unsuitability of the music to the emotion it is supposed to convey" in *Ambleto*. "The score is full of catchy tunes, based on dance rhythms, with many sicilianas and jolly gigues and occasional touches of expressive Neapolitan harmony." (ibid.) It is difficult to say if this applies to the second duet in the opera, "Sempre in cielo Giove irato / averso il fato" (Veremonda, Ambleto; Gasparini and Porta 1986, Ambleto, 52–54). It is positioned at a rather unusual place in dramaturgic terms, after Fengone had announced that Veremonda is going to be his, so it comes as a surprise that rather than despairing, the principal pair is singing about finding solace in heaven. Table 40 displays the three versions of the text of this duet: the Italian version as printed in both versions of the libretto (Zeno 1705, 51; Zeno 1712, 59), the English translation in the London libretto (Zeno 1712, 58) and the words actually printed in the collection of songs (Gasparini and Porta 1986, 52–54). The 1705 and 1712 Italian libretto differ in the presence of "Non sara, etc." after the last line. Although the 1705 libretto is otherwise consistent in indicating *da capo* repeats, it could be that the indication of the second line is a purely typographic error. The score contradicts this with the clearly written out indication "D. C.". However, the text in the score diverges from both versions of the libretto for it tones down the



polytextuality of section B by assigning what was originally Ambleto's first line to Veremonda as well, and it also adds "credi a me" to section A without fitting in with the metrical structure of the original text. Whatever the reason for these discrepancies, it probably did not influence the music that Isabella Girardeau (Veremonda) and Nicolini (Ambleto) sang.

Libretto 1705 Libretto 1712 Italian text	Amb/Ver: Sempre in Cielo Giove irato / Averso il fato / a 2: Non sara / Per te, mio bene; / Amb/Ver: Dal mio pianto / Dal mio duolo un di placato / Si che havra / Qualche pieta / Delle tue pene. (Non sara, etc.)
Libretto 1712 English text	Ver & Ham: Jove shall not always angry be / Heaven shall once declare for thee / Shall put a Period to my Grief, / And my sad Tears shall find Relief.
Score 1712 Italian text	Ver/Ham: Sempre in cielo Giove irato / averso il fato, / a 2: Credi a me, non sara, per te, mio bene; Dal mio pianto / Un di placato / Si che havra / Qualche pieta / Delle tue pene. <i>Da capo</i>

TABLE 40.  
Different versions of the text of Gasparini's duet  
"Sempre in cielo Giove irato / averso il fato" from *Ambleto* (1712)

The variants "Giove irato" / "Averso il fato" at the beginning of the first section of the duet are actually semantic equivalents. This seems like another case of polytextuality for its own sake, mostly to differentiate the soloists in the setting by successive alternating statements. However, this is not confirmed by Gasparini's actual setting of the duet. It opens with a three-part string ritornello conceived in imitative terms, the second violin opening the duet with a typical fugue head motif (x, b. 1), and although it is taken up in the first violins (b. 1–2) and later by the viola (b. 2–3) and the continuo (b. 3–4) in modified or truncated form, we are not dealing with a *fugato* but a free contrapuntal texture building mostly on the interplay of sequential semiquaver passages in some parts as opposed to quaver repetitions in the other(s). This type of texture is characteristic of the treatment of the vocal parts, as well, before they are joined in a parallel passage cadencing in D major (b. 11–13). In the next and at the same time closing section of the duet (b. 16–27, Gasparini and Porta 1986, *Ambleto*, 53–54), the composer does away with the head motif altogether, joining the voices in a variant of the free contrapuntal section (b. 16–18) before another, this time more extended and emphatic parallel passage highlights the added words "credi a me, non sarà per te, mio bene". This is justified in dramaturgic terms since the protagonists are addressing each other with words of comfort, which explains the surprising optimism of this light-hearted major-mode duet. In the metrically contrasting section B (b.

28–39, Gasparini and Porta, 1986, *Ambleto*, 54) the contrapuntal-rhythmic vivacity of section A is abandoned for lulling crotchet-quaver rhythms and after the initial alternation the soloists are led in a homorhythmic simultaneous texture.

The duets in *Ambleto* are not among the most varied and ingenuous duets by Gasparini. With their brevity and formal conciseness they remind us of the duets from early London operas discussed in Chapter 3.2 and they are at odds with the increasing complexity of Handel's duets performed in London in this period. Although the duets in the earlier *Antioco* (1711), the first opera after *Rinaldo* to be premiered in London and another pasticcio based on an earlier opera by Gasparini, are somewhat different, the provenance of the music is even more complex than in the case of *Ambleto* and the authorship of the duets cannot be established. "None of the London libretto's 38 aria texts are among those set by Francesco Gasparini for the first production given of the libretto–Francesco Silvani's *Il più fedel tra i vassalli* at Venice in 1703." (Lindgren 1997, 239–240) Dean and Knapp (1987, 157) identify the additions as stemming "from three Gasparini operas: *Il più fedel tra i vasalli*, *La fede tradita e vendicata* and *Antioco*<sup>163</sup> and one by Bononcini." All three Gasparini operas were written in the period 1703–1705, which suggests that they reflect Gasparini's early style. A detailed comparison for the sake of identification of the two duets in the London pasticcio was impossible as the only sources available to me are the 1703 libretto (Silvani 1703), the 1711 libretto (Silvani 1711) and the 1711 collection of songs (Gasparini et al. 1711). The plot revolves around the legitimate Egyptian princess Arsinoe (Elisabetta Pilotti Schiavonetti = S) and her efforts to marry her love Antioco (Nicolini = MS), whom the currently reigning king Tolomeo wants to depose. In her efforts she is aided by Leonildo (Jane Barbier = MS<sup>164</sup>), her ally who loves and is loved by Antioco's sister Oronta, desired on her part by Tolomeo. Arsinoe is an active dramatic force who resorts to cunning such as the aforementioned dissembling of madness as a way out of her predicaments. None of the above mentioned sources contain any duets in the second and third act of the opera. Thus the number of duets reflects librettistic reform, but their placement does

163 Premiered in Venice in 1705. Not much music from these operas has been handed down to us, but Kantner 1981, 65 claims that the score of *Antioco* contains one duet, so that in theory it is possible that it was borrowed for the London pasticcio.

164 In the absence of tables listing all the duets in a given opera, the voice range of the role is to be given next to the first mention of the singer who was singing it. The range does not refer to the singers' overall tessitura or to the overall range of a role but to the range in the duets in a given opera.

not. The compilers of the London pasticcio chose to respect this and did not feel the need to insert any duets into Acts 2 and 3.<sup>165</sup>

1703 libretto	A 2: A te sarò fedele / Leo: Sin che avrò cor nel petto. / Ars: Sin che alma avrò nel cor. Jan: Contro il barbaro infedele / Gonsia d'ira, e di dispetto / Spirerò sdegno, e furor. Ars & Leo: A te...
1711 libretto	A 2: A te sarò fedele / Leo: Sin ch'avrò core in petto / Ars: Sin ch'alma avrò nel sen. Jan: O morir o vendicarmi ( <i>da capo</i> Aria)
1711 score	A 2: Vivrò a te fedele / sin che l'alma avrò nel sen. E sì grande il mio contento / Ch'ogni tormento dal mio seno / Già volo.

TABLE 41.

Different versions of the text of the duet "Vivrò a te fedele" from *Antioco* (1711)

The duet "Vivrò a te fedele" (I. 3 Arsinoe, Leonildo; Gasparini et al. 1711, 11–12) has an intricate background as well. There is a strong continuity with the original 1703 libretto (Silvani 1703, 17), but the changes to the conception of the duet were considerable. Reminiscent of the innovative ensemble designs by Zeno, Silvani originally conceived a *da capo* form with the framing section occupied by a duet for Arsinoe and Leonildo and its middle section by a solo for Janisbe. Since this scene establishes the alliance between these three characters against Tolomeo, it made sense to unite them musically. The 1711 libretto modifies this conception by staying true to the duet text (section A in the 1703 libretto) with a few minimal modifications, but it replaces Janisbe's solo with an entirely new text. The libretti for London pasticcios were often printed prior to the rehearsal process by the direct translation of the source libretto, so that sometimes they did not include the changes introduced during the preparation of the production, often instigated by the singers. This duet proves that it was not always like this for either it was compiled from a later setting of the libretto, which is unlikely, or some changes were known in advance. The 1711 score confirms this since besides the duet (whose text contains some changes), it also contains Janisbe's aria with the same text, but without the *da capo* repeat indicated in the libretto. Instead, the duet text was

165 In Act 1 of the 1711 libretto there is an additional duet of unity for the secondary pair of lovers, "Abbraccia questo petto / Che se immense" (I. 7 Leonildo, Oronta). The absence of this duet from the printed selection of songs does not mean that it could not have formed part of the London pasticcio. Its absence from the 1703 libretto suggests that it was inserted from another opera, but we cannot know which composer's.

modified with the elimination of the initial polytextuality and the addition of two new lines for the soloists, set as the duet's middle section. There are basically two ways to interpret this: either Janisbe's solo was entirely emancipated from Silvani's original trio design into a short aria of its own sung after a fully-fledged duet, or the duet was repeated after it, the second option being less likely. Whatever the case, the modification and the addition of the text (especially the two lines of section B) are direct proof that we are dealing with a number inserted into the opera. Nothing speaks against Gasparini's authorship since "Vivrò a te fedele" displays common structural traits with "Sempre in cielo Giove irato / averso il fato" from *Ambleto*, but it could stem from a different composer, too.

The first duet in the opera is written for the *prima donna* (Pilotti Schiavonetti) and the *secondo uomo* (Barbier), which is the legacy of the libretto, but the fact that it was kept and not replaced by a duet from another work confirms that the new conventions about who should sing a duet together and when have not yet been established in London's operatic life. Both duets in *Antioco*, especially "Vivrò a te fedele" with its opening jerky violin tune, replete with octave leaps (b. 1–7) confirm Dean and Knapp's description of "catchy tunes" and "jolly giges" quoted above. The ritornello has almost nothing to do with the material of the vocal parts in thematic terms, since their movement is more gradual and on the whole rather dependent on one another. In the A section (1–22) of the duet there is only a brief moment of initial successive treatment (b. 7), when Leonildo takes up the motif of triplets followed by a downward fourth leap from Arsinoe, transposed a fourth lower. After this, the voices are led partly in contrary motion, partly parallel in a songlike structure building complimentary melodic units in a way comparable to the duets "Voglio morir ferita / O dolce uscir di vita" and "La costanza del mio core / Il valore delle tue braccia" from *Idaspe fedele*. After an abridged ritornello, the much shorter section B (b. 22–30) brings no surprises by leading the voices in parallel, separated by a brief moment of alternation (b. 24–26) that has no particular justification in the text. The modulations are not at all conditioned by the text or the dramaturgy and therefore feel somewhat rushed and forced, a mere convention of the middle section of a *da capo* form. However, the overall absence of imitation will make this duet akin to the aesthetically much more successful "Per tè bell'idol mio / caro mio bene".

At the end of Act 1 *Antioco*, banished by Tolomeo, meets Arsinoe who reveals to him that she is not mad, and the couple take their departure from each other in a duet. It is somewhat odd that the opportunity for Nicolini and Pilotti-Schiavonetti to sing a pathetic duet of departure, the prototype of which we encountered for the first time in *Idaspe fedele*, was missed in London. The 1703 libretto contains the duet "Dolce mia vita,

addio / Ah che morir mi sento” (I. 11 Antioco, Arsinoe; Silvani 1703, 32), but it was dropped from the 1711 libretto and the score, being replaced by “Per tè bell’idol mio / Per te caro mio ben” (I. 11 Antioco, Arsinoe; Gasparini et al. 1711, 29–30). The reasons for this were probably musical or related to performance practice since although its text does not directly refer to the departure, it still has the same dramaturgic function. Interestingly enough, here it is the score that displays additional polytextual traits rather than the libretto<sup>166</sup>, adding a polytextual alternation to the beginning of section B: Arsinoe adds “Il ciel le stelle i numi” to the line “Le selve i sassi i numi”, sung by Antioco and printed in the libretto. Structurally, the duet rests on alternating statements only in the settings of these two opening lines in section A and in section B, relying on simultaneity not unlike the one in “Vivrò a te fedele” for the remaining two lines of both sections. “Per tè bell’idol mio / Per te caro mio ben” is similar to the earlier duet in scope and the ratio between the two sections, as well, but these similarities are far less significant than the specific differences. As Table 42 shows, each of its two sections is built identically, of two subsections with the unfolding of the vocal parts in brief alternation followed by the type of simultaneous voice-leading just described.

SECTION	BAR	KEY	LINES	DESCRIPTION	
A	a <sub>1</sub>	1–10	a, e	1/2, 3–4	continuo ritornello, alternation, simultaneity (parallelism, contrary motion), continuo ritornello
	a <sub>2</sub>	10–22	e, d?, a	1/2, 3–4	alternation, simultaneity (parallelism, contrary motion, continuo ritornello)
B	b <sub>1</sub>	23–29	C, c, d	5/6, 7–8	alternation, simultaneity (parallelism, contrary motion)
	b <sub>2</sub>	29–35	d, C, a?, e	5/6, 7–8	alternation, simultaneity (parallelism, contrary motion)
A'	<i>da capo</i>				

TABLE 42.  
Formal outline of the duet “Per tè bell’idol mio / Per te caro mio ben”  
from the pasticcio *Antioco* (1711)

166 A section. An: Per tè bell’idol mio / Ar: caro mio bene / a 2: l’alma spirar desio / per non mancar di fe. / B section. Le selve i sassi i fiumi / Sapranno che fra pene / Io moro sol per te. English translation: For thee my idol I desire / rather than to be false t’expire; / The forests, rocks and rivers see / That my last pains are all for thee.

This duet also shares with “Vivrò a te fedele” a songlike quality of the melodic build-up, both the instrumental and the vocal parts unfolding in regular two-bar phrases. In spite of this and unlike “Vivrò a te fedele”, this does not result in monotony due to a sense of harmonic piquancy of Neapolitan harmony (b. 5, 17, and 34). The sense of melodic variety and vivacity in spite of the repetition of the structural design in all subsections is achieved by a sense of motivic freedom. The voices—Antioco always taking the lead—do not repeat or vary each other’s material but display a certain motivic kinship. Albeit somewhat different, the successive treatment of voices in section B also displays motivic unity and a seamless melodic flow. Variety is achieved with minimal means, especially since the range of the melody is sequential and somewhat limited, but a sense of direction is attained with harmonic means. The modulations have a sense of roundedness thanks to the repeated cadential passages. It is evident that the duet was inserted into the opera, but once again we cannot know if it was composed by Gasparini or someone else. There is no clear answer to the question why this duet displays more substance and diversity in its mere 35 bars than most of the duets examined in this subchapter.

Stylistically, the duets in *Antioco* seem more akin to the duets in *Idaspe fedele* than any of Gasparini’s duet analysed so far. Perhaps the explanation lies in the persons of the compilers that these operas shared. Haym did not take part, and apart from Heidegger (who had only limited adapting and composing skills) and Nicolini, someone else may have been involved, too. Unlike in *Idaspe fedele*, where Nicolini’s persona may have been the master mind behind the inclusion and exclusion of duets, this was probably not the case in *Antioco* as one of the inserted duets was for Pilotti Schiavonetti and Barbier. The unknown authorship of the duets in *Antioco* cannot be brought into relation with any of the preceding London pasticcios, but in the avoidance of overt virtuosity and a somewhat smaller scope as well as a more concise treatment of structure and form the contrast with Gasparini’s Italian dramatic duets to be discussed in Chapter 3.3.1.2 is obvious.

### 3. 3. 1. 2.

#### *Later Italian Cantatas and Operas*

Let us now turn to a brief examination of some dramatic duets by Gasparini written after the performance of the two pasticcios based on his earlier operas in London (1711–1712). They have been selected to highlight some traits that Gasparini had developed in the course of the first three decades of the century and thus form a contrast with the stylistic profile London may have gotten to know. The selection is meant to showcase

genre diversity and thus includes cantatas and operas written in the period 1715–1722 and—at least in the case of the operas—performed in Italy.

Most dramatic cantatas draw their plots from pastoral poetry, especially since the foundation of the *Accademia dell'Arcadia*, whose member Gasparini became in 1718. The *cantata a due Dimmi gentil Daliso* (Gasparini 2010, 36–66; Gasparini recording Dori & Daliso – Mirena & Floro), known under the names of its characters as *Dori e Daliso*, is a typical amorous debate between a shepherd and a nymph. The naïve Daliso (A) courts the bashful Dori (S), who, taunting Daliso, delays the approval of his love. The cantata consists of *secco* recitative interspersed with two arias per character and ends, as was often the case with *cantate a due*, with its only duet, “Saprò / se sai sperar costante” (no. 11 Daliso, Dori; Gasparini 2010, 60–66) in which Daliso asks for recompense for his fidelity while Dori encourages him to hope. The duet opens with lengthy alternating statements of the same subject by Daliso (b. 1–16) and Dori (b. 16–32, in the upper fifth), highlighting the textual differences in the two voices to the maximum. Dori agrees with a promise (“Se sai sperar costante, non sia senza mercè / la tua speranza.”) to Daliso’s condition of being hopeful (or patient) if there are prospects of her being merciful in the future (“Saprò sperar costante / ma voglio la mercè / della speranza”). After a string ritornello (b. 32–38, an abridged version of the subject presented by the voices), for the remainder of section A (b. 38–88) the voices are in a relationship of simultaneity and mostly led in parallel thirds and sixths. During the initial statements of the subject, the dominant key of D major was only touched upon in b. 17, but it is eventually attained and confirmed when the two voices take up the subject together (b. 46–62). However, the second, more melismatic part of the subject (b. 6–16 in its first occurrence) is used to modulate back into the tonic G major (b. 62–72) before a final ritornello with the subject ornamented.

After this regular, straightforward and homophonic framing section, the middle section (b. 88–146) brings more variety and drama into the duet, at the same time remaining entrenched in a fully worked out *da capo* design. This can be seen in the playful transformation of the thematic material: with their alternating presentation (of variants) of the subject, the voices are replicating the opening of section A, although their statements are shorter. To Daliso’s question (“Ma quando vien l’istante / che premio è della fe’ / della costanza?”) Dori replies (b. 97–104) with “Presto verrà l’istante / che premio è della fe’ / della costanza”. Daliso “interrupts” Dori before she had finished in b. 103–104 with a brief statement of the head motif, but the voices are then led in free counterpoint (b. 104–108) before they are united in a parallel statement of the melismatic second part of the subject (b. 108–116). Rather than by harmonic means, a sense of dynamism

before the final parallel flourish (b. 124–130) is accomplished by a free contrapuntal passage with heightened dialogic traits (b. 116–124). Motivic derivations of the subject are sequentially combined with each other in the voices, emphatically highlighting the words “verrà” and “presto” in Dori’s and “ma quando” in Daliso’s part, suggesting the hurried manner in which the nymph is trying to calm and reassure the shepherd. The latent dramaturgy is not unlike cases encountered in Steffani’s and Gasparini’s chamber duets. All in all, section B is slightly more freely conceived than section A, but they both outline a similar structural trajectory opening with a ritornello and alternating statements by the voices that present the thematic material before they are entangled in a freely contrapuntal or parallel texture of varying degrees of complexity, usually derived from the main material in motivic terms. The composer occasionally imbues this structural plan with elements of imitation and he stays faithful to it in all the dramatic duets analysed in this chapter.

In section of A “Saprò / se sai sperar costante” Gasparini is the most removed we will see him (in this study) from his predominantly contrapuntal chamber duets. If we are to conceive of this structural and stylistic contrast in terms of genre, we could also say that this is Gasparini at his most “operatic” in a dramatic duet. However, the difference between the two genres is not always as straightforward as that. The 1717 cantata *Qui di natura a scorno* (Gasparini 2008) displays many parallels with *Dimmi gentil Daliso*. It also consists of a few arias for each character interspersed with recitative *secco* and ending in a duet, “Già riede nel petto la gioia” (Gasparini 2008, 36–44). It also shares typically pastoral characters who manage to overcome the differences in their opposing stances to love, but this time it is the nymph Clori (S) who is mistrustful of the shepherd Daliso (A), so that he has to persist in his intention to persuade her of his fidelity. The duet, however, is a unanimous, monotextual expression of “gioia” and “diletto” and a celebration of the banishment of “affanno” and “dolore” from their relationship so that unlike in “Saprò / se sai sperar costante” (its B section in particular), the setting does not contain dialogic exchanges expressive of the tension between the characters. Structurally, there is more diversity and less of a contrast between sections A and B than was the case in the duet from *Dimmi gentil Daliso*, but both duets share the build-up in extensive alternating exchanges between the voices and the lack of imitation.

Unlike the duet from *Dimmi gentil Daliso*, “Già riede nel petto la gioia” opens with an imposing string ritornello (b. 1–13). With its trill flourishes (b. 8–13) it is much longer than the ‘subject proper’ (x, b. 1–8), presented in a somewhat abridged form first in the soprano (b. 14–20, “Già riede nel petto / la gioia e’l diletto”) and then, its head slightly modified, in the alto (b. 20–26, same text). Rather than using new material, lines 3 & 4 (“e’l fiero tormento / lontano sen va”) are set to a variant of the head



motif (x1, first occurrence b. 26–28 in the soprano, imitated in the prime in the alto, b. 28–30). The imitation is continued for another two bars, but from b. 32 the voices are combined in a specific *contrapunctus ligatus* texture with the continuo part. After the statement of the subject in the ritornello, the voices engage in a second imitative passage, with another variant of the head motif (x2, first occurrence in the soprano b. 46–48, a fifth lower in the alto, b. 48–50), ending in brief parallelism (b. 51–52) and confirming the tonic. Although it seems that the vacillation between the tonic and dominant will continue for the remainder of the section, the last imitative passage stays within the confines of C major and wraps up the vocal part of the section by another, somewhat varied repetition of the free *contrapunctus ligatus* section (b. 52–63) before the voices cadence and give way to the final ritornello (b. 69–83), enriched with suspensions of its own.

Section B of the duet (b. 84–110) is somewhat shorter and in that sense more typical of *da capo* form than that of “Saprò / Se sai sperar costante”. As in the former duet, it opens with alternating statements, which is the customary way to open a dramatic duet in most of Gasparini’s dramatic duets. The melodic content is treated less motivically since it consists of arpeggiations prone to *Fortspinnung* (b. 84–87 in the soprano, b. 87–91 in the alto). The remainder of the section is conceived mostly in free contrapuntal terms. The sense of harmonic searching is perhaps inspired by the mention of “l’affanno e’l dolore” in the text, but otherwise there are no significant attempts by the setting to interpret the text: in its unanimous expression of joy it is definitely not among the most inspiring dramatic duet texts we have encountered. In all the numerous alternating statements of the voices (unlike in “Saprò / Se sai sperar costante”, containing only two), it is always the soprano Clori who takes the lead. This would have been unimaginable in chamber duets, especially Steffani’s, Bononcini’s and Gasparini’s, where attention is given to a balanced relationship of equality. In the undramatic nature of the text and its treatment, “Già riede nel petto la gioia” could have easily been a movement of a chamber duet, but Gasparini made sure to indicate that it is a dramatic duet after all, mostly in its free treatment of the text and the operatic expansion, although he also distinguished it from his opera duets to be examined later on with lower demands on vocal virtuosity. Finally, the main difference between the two duets is that unlike “Saprò / Se sai sperar costante”, “Già riede nel petto la gioia” cuts down the use of parallel voice-leading (associated with opera duets) to the minimum in spite of the affective unity of the duet’s dramaturgy and text.

Next to be examined are Gasparini’s two mature operas, *Eumene* (1715) and *Astianatte* (1722). Antonio Salvi’s original libretto *Astianatte* will have an important place in this study because it also served as a starting point for Bononcini’s last London opera of the same title (1727),

made infamous because of the unrests between clans of fans of the two “rival queens”, Francesca Cuzzoni and Faustina Bordoni. “Salvi’s libretto of 1701, which is his earliest identifiable work, is an arrangement of Jean Racine’s *Andromaque* (1667). [...] The plot of *Andromaque* goes back to Euripides and is one of the most tragic, even among Racine’s works.” (Strohm 2008, 117). The story revolves around the predicaments of Hector’s widow Andromache. Held captive with her son Astyanax, she must suffer the unwanted advances of King Pyrrhus, the hatred of Orestes, who demands Astyanax be killed to prevent future vengeance and the jealousy of Pyrrhus’ betrothed Hermione, who eventually manipulates Orestes into assassinating Pyrrhus. Gasparini met Salvi in 1713 and he not only set the opera for Rome in 1719 but also supervised its revision for Milan, which indicates his ties to reform tendencies. But since the Milanese version of Gasparini’s *Astianatte* (1722) has nothing to do with the London setting and we are concerned only with its single duet for the sake of comparison with the composer’s duets possibly heard in London, we shall refrain from going further into questions of the adaptation of Salvi’s libretto as a whole. It is worth adding, though, that Strohm (2008, 117) described the 1722 version of *Astianatte* to be discussed below in the following words: “Here, as in all his scores, we find skilful and pleasing melodies, dance rhythms, well-balanced proportions and thin, sketchy textures.”

The original libretto, whose first setting by Giacomo Antonio Perti has not been preserved, contained only one duet in the first act of the opera, the duet of feigned amorous unity, “Begli occhi, alfin poss’io” (I. 13 Ermione, Oreste) (cf. Giuntini’s 1984, 143). This duet did not make it into either of Gasparini’s 1719 and 1722 settings of the same libretto (which were obviously revised), nor into Haym’s reworking for Bononcini (1727). Instead, it was replaced by duets for entirely different characters and placed into different acts. For a comparative analysis, I had the libretto for Gasparini’s 1719 setting (Salvi 1719) and the incomplete 1722 score (Gasparini MS, *Astianatte*) at my disposal. Both contain only a duet for Andromaca and Ermione at the end of the second act (II. 15; Salvi 1719, 55), with minimal textual alterations (cf. Strohm 2008, 110). Whoever was in charge of the revision of the opera for Milan (Strohm suspects it was Gasparini himself, did not compose nor insert new numbers into the opera as was the custom at the time<sup>167</sup>), but modified them by compositional reworking and transposition, since the tessitura of most of the roles was different when compared to the original Roman cast. However, the duet

167 In Italy but also in early London opera in the period 1707–1717 it is hard to distinguish between a pasticcio and a revival of an authorial opera, especially when the original composer was not present, since it was considered desirable to cater to audience taste and to the needs of singers for self-representation.

did not undergo any changes (cf. Strohm 2008, 111), which I can explain by the fact that in the 1719 version the role of Andromaca was sung by a mezzosoprano and Ermione by a soprano (both castrati), whereas in 1722 the tessituras were reversed, Andromaca a soprano and Ermione a contralto.

“Le stelle s’amano / I cieli tuonano” (II. 15 Ermione, Andromaca; Gasparini MS, *Astianatte*, 106–110’) is placed at the end of the act after tensions between the characters have culminated in Oreste’s attempt on Pirro’s life. Ermione is triumphant because her plan had succeeded (although as it turns out in Act 3, Pirro was only wounded), whereas Andromaca receives this unexpected turn of events with mixed feelings. Earlier in the act she had unwillingly agreed to marry Pirro because of his threat on Astianatte’s life. Although she could hardly be grieving for him, the mutual animosity between her and Ermione (leading the partisan audience of Bononcini’s *Astianatte* to such extreme behaviour) as well as Andromaca’s dignified, heroic characterisation make her meet the stabbing of a defenseless king in the midst of a temple, however much her enemy, as highly contemptuous and she and Astianatte would also face an uncertain fate without Pirro’s protection. Nevertheless, the duet is hardly a duet of conflict but a parallel unfolding of the two ladies’ reaction to the assassination attempt.<sup>168</sup> Whereas Ermione’s words refer to Pirro and identify death as the right retribution for his crime against “fedeltà” (his faith to her as his betrothed), Andromaca refers to Oreste and the sacrilegious deed against Pirro’s “majesty”.<sup>169</sup> The duet nevertheless exploits the tension between the heroines, which is what Haym chose not to do, introducing a duet for Andromaca and Pirro in the third act instead (as shall be seen in Chapter 3.4.1.2).

For two characters strongly opposed in dramaturgic terms, the duet displays an unusual amount of parallelism which is often interpreted semantically as a sign of unity, but should apparently not be, as witnessed by many duets analysed in this study that unite persons who are in no relationship of unity or expressing a unified affect. It could be argued that the latter is the case here, the affect in question being wrath, Ermione’s aimed at Pirro and Andromaca’s at Oreste. The duet opens with a long string ritornello (b. 1–9; Gasparini MS, *Astianatte*, 106–106’) that has little

168 An: Le Stelle s’armano / Er: I Cieli tuonano / An: Contro d’un Empio / Er: Sopra d’un Perfido / a 2: Che in mezzo al Tempio / An/Er: tradi sacilego la Maestà/la Fedeltà. An: Già lo circondano / Strette ritorte / Er: Già lotta il misero / Con la sua morte / An: E fra momenti / Su’I capo il fulmine gli piomberà. ER: E fra tormenti / L’anima barbara spirando va. An/Er: Le Stelle / I Cieli, etc.

169 If we look at the score, we shall see that the names of the characters are later additions to the left of the staves (Gasparini MS, *Astianatte*, 106). This and the disparities between the first four lines of the text in the two versions of the opera can be explained by the aforementioned revisions concerning changes in tessitura.

Gasparini MS, Astianatte, "Le stelle s' amano / I cieli tuonano"  
(Il. 15 Ermione, Andromaca), 107'-108', b. 25-33

25

[Violino I]  
[Violino II]  
[Viola]  
Cembalo II

Oboe I  
Oboe II

Andromaca  
Le Stel - le s' ar - ma - no, le stel - le s' ar -

Ermione  
I Cie - li tuo - na - no, i Cie - li tuo -

Cembalo I

28

[Vln. I]  
[Vln. II]  
[Vla.]  
Cemb. II

Ob. I  
Ob. II

An.  
ma - no con - tro d' un em - pi - o

Erm.  
na - no so - pra d' un per - fi - do

Cemb. I

32

[Vln. I]

[Vln. II]

[Vla.]

Cemb. II

Ob. I

Ob. II

An.  
che in mez-zo al Tem-pio tra-di, tra-di

Erm.  
che in mez-zo al Tem-pio tra-di, tra-di

Cemb. I

motivic significance for the material of the vocal parts. These set in with short alternating statements of a motif (x, b. 10–11 in the soprano; b. 12.13 in the alto in the lower fourth) on the text of the first two lines of the duet, thereby making them perfectly comprehensible. Comprehensibility, usually an important criterion in the setting of polytextual duets, will be abandoned in the subsequent course of section A (b. 1–59), for none of the remaining four lines in this section are set in succession or in a simultaneous texture that highlights at least the crucial binary opposition “maestà”-“fedeltà” (b. 19, 35, and 39). Instead we are presented with several short imitative passages that lead into some not entirely consistent parallelism. These brief subsections (see Table 43) usually take as their starting point a predominantly rhythmic figure distinguished by a flow of quavers with the penultimate being dotted, resulting in variation forms of the main motivic idea (x<sub>1</sub>, x<sub>2</sub>, x', etc.). The share of parallelism in the second of these imitative sections (a<sub>2</sub>) increases, and although most of the section stays within the confines of the tonic F major, a momentary inclination towards B-flat major is halted with a *fermata* on the dominant of F major in b. 33 (Example 7). Maybe a virtuoso parallel display of the voices can be interpreted as a musico-semantic embodiment of the rivalry and competition between the two characters? In that case the *fermata*, introduced again in b. 37 in the same harmonic role, can be expressive of the tension of the moment. Whether this is the case or not, this kind of structuring of the relationship between the vocal parts certainly pushes the text and the polytextual differences somewhat into the background.

SECTION	SUBSECTION	BAR	KEY	DESCRIPTION
A	a <sub>1</sub>	1–13	F	ritornello, alternating statements (x)
	a <sub>2</sub>	14–23	F	imitative passage (x <sub>1</sub> ), parallelism, brief ritornello
	a <sub>3</sub>	25–33	F, B $\flat$ ?	imitative passage (x <sub>2</sub> ), extensive parallelism, <i>fermata</i>
	a <sub>4</sub>	34–49	F	extensive parallelism, <i>fermata</i> , cadence, ritornello
B	b <sub>1</sub>	50–59	d, g	string of alternating statements (x')
	b <sub>2</sub>	59–67	F, a	imitative passage (x''), extensive parallelism, <i>fermata</i> , cadence
A'	da capo			

TABLE 43.  
 Formal outline of the duet “Le stelle s’armano / I cieli tuonano” (Andromaca, Ermione) from Gasparini’s *Astianatte* (1722)

The harmonically exploratory section B seems to be more dialogic in musical terms since it opens with a string of alternating statements by the voices that sing all the remaining eight lines in groups of two, thus being perfectly audible and understandable to the audience. (Example 8) Nevertheless, the question arises if this has any semantic significance when the A section failed to make a clear distinction about whom the two characters were singing with the incomprehensibility of the key words “maestà”-“fedeltà”. Gasparini’s decision to adopt a different approach than in section A was probably more motivated by a wish to enhance the musical contrast between the sections, the same way he chose to structure section B of “Già riede nel petto la gioia” in motivically freer terms than section A. Structurally, the second subsection (b2) is identical to the subsections of section A, an imitative passage of a short span giving way to culminating parallelism halted by a *fermata* (b. 65), the difference being that the harmonic tension is greater since instead of resolving into a C major chord, b. 66 resorts to a chromatic modulation to A minor. I hope to have shown in this analysis some of the similarities between Gasparini’s cantata and opera duets, like the comparatively equal musical weight placed on both sections of a worked out *da capo* design, the dialectic of duet techniques of alternation, contrapuntal treatment and parallelism as well as the free derivation of material from the motivic kernel, but also the differences, such as the heightened vocal virtuosity in parallel passages.

In his already mentioned investigation of secondary stagings of Gasparini’s late operas, Strohm (2008, 81) does not mention the Naples reworking of *Eumene* (1715), originally written for Reggio Emilia in 1714. This means that Gasparini himself was probably not behind the revision for Naples. A catalogue entry in the British Library’s Archives and Manuscripts<sup>170</sup> confirms this, identifying Gasparini, Leonardo Leo and others as the authors of the music in the only preserved source for the Naples version of Gasparini’s *Eumene* (Gasparini MS, *Eumene*). No musical sources for the original 1714 version have been preserved, but I was able to access not only the libretto of Gasparini’s original 1714 setting (Zeno 1714) but also the libretto of the overall first setting by Marc’Antonio Ziani (Zeno 1697). *Eumene*, successor to Alexander the Great, wants to restore his betrothed Artemisia, the lawful heir of Cappadocia to the throne. The ruling queen, Laodicea, is secretly in love with *Eumene* and schemes to

170 [245](http://searcharchives.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/display.do?tabs=detailsTab&ct=display&fn=search&doc=IAMS040-002036664&indx=1&recIds=IAMS040-002036664&recIdxs=0&elementId=0&renderMode=poppedOut&displayMode=full&frbrVersion=&dscnt=0&frbg=&scp.scps=scope%3A%28BL%29&tab=local&dstmp=1471446853796&srt=rank&mode=Basic&&dum=true&vl(freeTexto)=gasparini%20eumene&vid=IAMS_VU2, accessed September 12, 2016.</a></p>
</div>
<div data-bbox=)

49

[Violino I]

[Violino II]

Cembalo II

Andromaca  
Già lo cir - con - da - no Stret - te - ri - tor - te

Ermione  
Già lot - ta il mi - se - ro con la sua

Cembalo I

53

[Vln. I]

[Vln. II]

Cemb. II

An.  
E frà mo - men - ti sul ca - po il ful - mi ne gli piom - be -

Erm.  
mor - te

Cemb. I

56

[Vln. I]

[Vln. II]

Cemb. II

An.  
rà

Erm.  
E frà i tor - men - ti L'a - ni - ma bar - ba - ra spi - ran - do va

Cemb. I



prevent this with the help of Leonato, who is in love with her. Zeno often inserted innovative duets into his libretti, so that it is slightly surprising that in the 1697 libretto we find only one duet for Leonato and Laodicea, albeit a dialogic one. In this duet he wants reassurance from the queen to return his feelings rather than just manipulate him. In terms of ensembles, only the quartet in the last scene of Act 3 was taken over in 1714. The 1697 duet was replaced with a duet of conflict for Laodicea and Eumene nearer the end of the act (II. 19 “Se non temi il mio furore / Io non temo il tuo furore”; Zeno 1714, 54). It made its way into the 1715 Naples reworking, too, and by analogy with the case of Gasparini's *Astianatte*, we can make the assumption that this means Gasparini's setting for these was retained as well.<sup>171</sup>

At first sight the duet “Se non temi il mio furore / Io non temo il tuo furore” (Gasparini MS, Eumene, 91'–94) displays many similarities with the duet from *Astianatte*. It is also built from a series of imitative passages that end in parallelism, and these sections usually take the initial material, (presented here not only in the initial statements of the vocal parts but also in the ritornello), as their starting point, subjecting it to free derivation. In the first of these sections immediately after the ritornello (b. 1–11, Gasparini MS, Eumene, 91'), the imitation of the motif from the ritornello (x, first occurrence in the voices b. 11–13 in Laodicea's part) is of a longer span than was ever the case in “Le stelle s'amano / I cieli tuonano”, and the ensuing parallelism is used to modulate into the dominant F major in b. 20–21 (Example 9). The next section (b. 24–39, Gasparini MS, Eumene, 92–92') imitates a new motif based on an arpeggio and the ornamental figures used earlier for vocal parallelism (y, first occurrence b. 24–29 in Laodicea's part), confirming the new key after a passage conceived as a combination of free counterpoint and parallelism. Unlike the duets in the cantatas with their more or less consistent parallelism, in this duet the voices are led in parallel much more freely, with occasional contrary movement changing the interval between the voices. There is more free counterpoint in the subsequent sections as well, each with its own motif somehow derived from motifs x and y (b. 40–56, 57–66; Gasparini MS, Eumene, 92'–93. Section B (b. 80–98, Gasparini MS, Eumene, 93'–94) treats its material in even freer terms, occasionally giving up imitation altogether and diverging from the material of section A so that we cannot say if we are dealing with mere motivic topoi or if the material is derived in such a

171 These do not include Leo's *intermezzos* which contain three duets for the comic characters Neso and Rosinda, the third of which is a parody of pastoral amatory poetry comparing separated lovers to birds, with the voices mimicking birdsong by somewhat exaggerated tonal repetition.

far-reaching way that its origins are obscured. The main function of this section is, naturally, to explore related keys.

The findings stated above do not do justice to the overall differences between “Se non temi il mio furore / Io non temo il tuo furore” and “Le stelle s’amano / I cieli tuonano”. The MS source is not as carefully corrected as the *Astianatte* MS; many accidentals are missing, and this only supports the claim that Gasparini probably did not supervise the performance. It also displays less melodic invention than the Gasparini duets analysed so far. However, one should not overlook the greater role of the orchestral accompaniment in this duet. Besides in the ritornellos, the strings gain in stature at certain points in the unfolding of section A (section B being more sparsely accompanied), occasionally pushing the voices into the background while the two violins establish an imitative relationship not unlike the one between the two sopranos (e. g. in b. 19–23, Gasparini MS, *Eumene*, 92). The above mentioned freedom in the derivation and invention of material almost leads to it losing its distinguishableness, but luckily, there is no monotony or lack of direction. Since it is written for two sopranos, we can speculate if this is partly because of the frequent voice-crossing. Even if there is the slightest chance that Gasparini is not the author of this duet, it was certainly composed (or inserted) in a way not to clash stylistically with the features of his dramatic duets written around that time, at least the ones analysed here.

### 3. 3. 2.

#### Pasticcios (1712–1717)

Upon Handel’s return from Germany, the performances of the Gasparini pasticcios analysed in the previous chapters together with his operas *Il pastor fido* and *Teseo* established operatic life in London along dual lines. On the one side were pasticcios drawing on distinguished Italian composers’ music, on the other hand the operatic ambitions of a young German composer. However, Owen Swiney’s reckless management of the Haymarket theatre resulted in his abrupt flight from London in January 1713, leaving the singers and the set designer of *Teseo* unpaid, putting the operatic undertaking on shaky ground. Although the experienced Heidegger took over Swiney’s position, the following season (1713/1714) was slightly unsuccessful. A decline in the interest in Italian operas is evident in the fact that “of the eleven new productions during the five seasons 1712–1717, including three by Handel, Walsh printed songs from only two, *Creso* and *Arminio*” (Dean and Knapp 1987, 159). These two works were also the new pasticcios of this season. The reasons may have been a company of singers of somewhat weaker capabilities or the musico-dramatic shortcomings of

Gasparini MS, Eumene, "Se non temi il mio furore / Io non temo il tuo furore"  
(II. 19 Laodicea, Eumene), 91'-92, b. 11-24

11

[Violino I]  
[Violino II]  
Violetta  
Laodicea  
Eumene  
[Basso]

Se non te - mi il mio fu - ro-re ò - l'a - mo-re ò il des - tin ti vin - ce - rà  
Io non te mo il tuo fu - ro-re nè - l'a - mo-re nè il des - tin mi vin - ce -

17

[Vln. I]  
[Vln. II]  
Vla.  
La.  
Eu.  
[B.]

- rà,

21

[Vln. I]  
[Vln. II]  
La.  
Eu.  
[B.]

ò il de -

the repertory. Luckily, the tide was about to change in season 1714/1715 with the arrival of the new royal family from Hanover who became patrons of Italian opera (cf. Knapp 1986, 164).

The revival of *Arminio* moved the start of the season to an earlier date (October 1714) with the Prince and Princess of Wales in the audience, and a revival of *Ernelinda* later in the autumn continued the success of this pasticcio into its third season. A second reason was Nicolini's renewed presence in London from spring 1715 till 1717, for whom *Idaspe fedele* was revived and the title role of *Amadigi* written by Handel. There has been some debate on the influence of the Jacobite rebellion in July 1715 on the capital's cultural life. Although the other two theatres mentioned continued their activity (cf. Knapp 1986, 164), Italian opera performances resumed only in 1716 with revivals of *Lucio Vero*, *Amadigi* and *Pirro e Demetrio* (revived for Nicolini, but also showcasing the London debut of Antonio Bernacchi as Demetrio), the only new opera mounted that season being *Clearte*. Finally, although the last season examined in this period (1716/1717) saw revivals of *Amadigi* and *Rinaldo* with a stellar cast (Nicolini, Bernacchi, Anastasia Robinson, and in *Rinaldo* also Gaetano Berenstadt), its new productions *Vincislao* and *Tito Manlio* proved relatively unsuccessful and possibly as a result "Italian opera faded out for the time being" (Knapp 1986, 165). It is in this context that we need to examine the few duets preserved from the London pasticcios performed in the period.

In many cases, it is fiendishly hard to reconstruct what duet or duets a certain pasticcio contained. No musical sources whatsoever for *Dorinda* (1712), *Lucio Vero* (1715) and *Vincislao* (1717) survive, and the libretti of *Dorinda* and *Vincislao* were not printed either. *Ernelinda* (1713, revived in the next two seasons) is especially intricate. On the basis of Victor Schoelcher's assumption, it was long thought that a manuscript housed in the Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg (D-Hs MA/1014) documented the London version of the opera. However, it actually represents the version of the opera revised by Gasparini himself for Turin in 1719 (cf. Strohm 2008, 283), while no musical sources for the London version of the opera survive. A collation of the few available sources for the different versions of the opera handed down to us, stemming from 1704 (the original libretto and MS score, Gasparini MS, *La fede tradita e vendicata*, that served as a starting point for *Ernelinda*), 1715 (the second edition of the London pasticcio) and 1719 (the Hamburg MS of 11 numbers from the 1719 reworking) as undertaken by Roberts (2003, 301) shows that "if this pasticcio took Gasparini's 1704 setting of *La fede tradita e vendicata* as its point of departure, it certainly did not retain many of the original arias—at most two arias and an arioso, to judge from the 1713 libretto." The availability of the MS of Gasparini's original 1704 setting enables the comparison of the text

of the duet “Lascia ch’io mora sì / Nò morrai solo” (III. 4 Ernelinda, Vitige) with its equivalent in the 1713 London libretto (Haym and Silvani 1713):

	1704	1713
A	Ern: Lascia ch’io mora sì. Vit: Nò, morrai solo a 2: volto adorato.	Vit.: Lascia mia bella sì, / che solo io mora. Ern: Taci crudele nò, / O voglio anch’io morir.
B	Ern: Lascia ch’in questo sen / Con tutto il suo furor / Si stanchi il fato. Vit: Senza me caro ben / Nò sia ch’il suo vigor / adempia il fato.	Ern / Vit: Ferma / Vivi mio ben. a 2: A che nol vuole amor / Che mostra all’alma in sen / Dolce la morte ogn’hor / per chi s’adora.
A’	<i>da capo</i>	<i>da capo</i>

TABLE 44.  
Comparison of duet texts in III. 4 of  
*La fede tradita e vendicata* (1704) and *Ernelinda* (1713)

Clearly, the two duet texts are compatible and were derived from the same source although similar to the Gasparini pasticcios examined in Chapter 3.3.1.3, the initial polytextuality was toned down in favour of more unity between the texts sung by the two soloists. Lindgren (1987, 300–301) pointed out that the treatment of operas in revivals was particularly free, as seen in the settings of libretti derived from Salvi’s libretto in Italy and in London, among others. According to the selective lists of settings of *Le fede tradita e vendicata* (Saunders 1992; Libby and Lepore 2001), there were probably several settings (in 1707, 1709 and/or 1712) that used Gasparini’s original as a starting point or perhaps even involved Gasparini himself in the reworking process. I can only conclude that the original duet setting was at some point replaced by a new one, and the candidates for its author could include Orlandini, Giuseppe Vignola, Gasparini himself or anybody else popular in Italy at the time. In London, the presence of the new version of the duet, “Lascia mia bella sì” was steady. Not only is it among the thirteen retained numbers Lindgren mentions, the 1715 London libretto contains the same duet text irrespective of changes in the cast<sup>172</sup>, which implies that the duet was “favoured by both singers and audience”. Unfortunately, no musical sources—from London or elsewhere—for this new duet have been handed down to us, but we can conclude that it was most definitely different from the 1704 one since there does not seem to have been any apparent reason to modify its text if the music was left

172 The singers were of a similar tessitura, so no interventions in the duet were required.

unchanged. Besides, the 1713 text contains more lines, which means that it must have been sung to different music. The score of Gasparini's *La fede tradita a vendicata* was used for the pasticcio *Antioco* (1711), so it was possibly available to Haym at the time when he was assembling *Ernelinda*. Unless new sources are discovered, we will never know what music the duet was sung to in London, let alone its composer.

Since the 1704 duet "Lascia ch'io mora sì / Nò morrai solo" (Gasparini MS, *La fede tradita e vendicata*, 75'–77) is the only version of the duet available to me, I will engage in a brief analysis of its structure and dramaturgic function. Since this duet was replaced in later Italian reworkings of the opera, maybe it was not considered compatible with the latest duet fashions. It is impossible to answer with certainty if similar arguments were behind the fact that not this but a more up-to-date duet was sung in London as well or this stems from the fact that one of the later sources for *La fede tradita e vendicata* was used for the compilation of *Ernelinda*. Its dramaturgic placement is highly dramatic: in the preceding recitative, Vitige had disarmed his betrothed Ernelinda, preventing her from committing suicide. He wants her to live, whereas she wants to die with him, mainly because earlier in the action she had the choice of saving her father or Vitige as prisoners and she chose her father. Already a departure duet, the setting of a dungeon—common to operas at the time, cf. Romagnoli 1995—imbues the situation with more tragic patina. However, this did not result in a minor-mode pathetic setting, for the duet is the musical embodiment of bliss and serenity. Although the stoic acceptance of death by a pair of lovers who thus overcome their travails and join souls in eternity is very characteristic of the idealisation of operatic heroes and heroines of the time, in this case Gasparini's setting almost goes against the dialogic nature of the text.

The duet, with its 12/8 metre, lulling melodies, overall musical character and a moderate or slower tempo seems close to a siciliana. Moreover, it could serve as an example of contrasting uses of the siciliana type of aria by Gasparini on the one hand and Handel on the other. Handel reserved the use of this type of dance rhythm for harmonically expressive, minor-mode evocations of musical despair (cf. Leopold 2009, 78–80). The string introduction (b. 1–5, Gasparini MS, *La fede tradita e vendicata*, 75') to the onset of the voices in b. 5 cannot be called a ritornello since apart from the motif of downward movement beginning with a dotted quaver in the violins (y, first occurrence b. 1 in the first violin), it does not present any other kind of thematic material that the subsequent course of the duet would be working with. Ernelinda's emphatic plea to Vitige ("Lascia!" in the imperative mood) to let her die with him opens the duet in vocal terms, and this is the only semantic content of the text of the A section,

whereas section B merely elaborates on it a bit further. The voices are contrasted in motivic terms to highlight the two opening lines, Ernelinda's with a conjunct melody characterised by multiple ornamental notes (x, b. 5), Vitige's with the aforementioned descending motif (y, b. 5–6). The two motifs share the same rhythmical patterning, which contributes to a sense of rhythmic and metric continuity (not to say monotony) throughout the duet. In the next few bars, the voices are joined in a predominantly parallel simultaneous texture that uses motif y for the words "volto adorato", cadencing in G major and A minor. The only imitation in the duet (x, b. 8 in Ernelinda's part repeated a third higher in Vitige's, b. 8–9) and its sequential repetition are followed by a brief section (b. 10–11) that explores the dialogic elements in the exchange between Ernelinda and Vitige by juxtaposing the words "sì" and "no" on a downward sequence of chordal progressions that additionally confirm the tonic C major (Example 10). The remainder of section A (b. 12–18) shows nothing new: after a parallel cadence on the words "volto adorato", another series of "sì" and "no" juxtapositions is followed by a final statement of Ernelinda's plea (b. 13–14), a cadence and the varied and abridged introduction.

Section B (b. 18–25) is less effective in dramaturgic terms, its main function the exploration of related keys. It does this in a somewhat rushed manner on the scope of a mere seven bars, pushing the dialogic exchange between the characters into the background. After the exposition of their respective first two lines to material reminiscent of y (b. 18–21), the disparities between their third lines ("Si stanchi il fato" / "Adempia il fato") are rather incomprehensible in a simultaneous, predominantly parallel setting. The remainder of the section (b. 12–15) combines the voices in a simultaneous texture described above, but separated by dramatic rests that look as if they were built in for dramatic effect but nevertheless somewhat miss the mark. The peculiar effect that this duet has is in the affective contrast between the dance-like, pastoral diatonic setting and the tragic drama of the text. Handel might have been on the trail of something similar in the siciliana aria "Ecco alle mie catene" from *Ezio* (1732). The titular hero experiences a comparable contradiction of emotions since he is relieved about his betrothed Fulvia's fidelity and thus happy to go to his death (cf. Leopold 2009, 79–80). The difference is that Handel expressed this ambivalence of the siciliana with subtler musical means, whereas Gasparini was somewhat more successful in making the connotations of a siciliana work for the duet's semantic and dramatic essence in section A, but failed to provide anything significant in its middle section. Although this duet is in line with the traits we found characteristic of Gasparini's opera duets in Chapter 3.3.1, its formal expansion and the treatment of the 12/8 metre render it more comparable to the kinds of duets that became characteristic

Gasparini MS, La fede tradita e vendicata, "Lascia ch'io mora sì / Nò morrai solo"  
(III. 4 Ernelinda, Vitige), 75-76, b. 1-12

The musical score is arranged in systems. The first system includes staves for Violino I, Violino II, Vitige, Cembalo II, Ernelinda, and Cembalo I. The second system includes staves for Vln. I, Vlan. II, Vi., Cemb. II, Er., and Cemb. I, with vocal lines for Vitige and Ernelinda. The third system includes staves for Vln. I, Vlan. II, Vi., Cemb. II, Er., and Cemb. I, with vocal lines for Vitige and Ernelinda.

**System 1:**

- [Violino I]
- [Violino II]
- Vitige
- Cembalo II
- Ernelinda
- Cembalo I

**System 2:**

- [Vln. I]
- [Vlan. II]
- Vi.  
Nò, mor-rai so - lo, nò, vol - to a-do - ra - to, vol - to a-do - ra -
- Cemb. II
- Er.  
Las - cia ch'io mo - ra, sì, Vol - to a-do - ra - to, vol - to a-do - ra -
- Cemb. I

**System 3:**

- [Vln. I]
- [Vlan. II]
- Vi.  
to, nò, mor-rai so - lo, nò nò, mor-rai
- Cemb. II
- Er.  
to, las - cia ch'io mo - ra, sì, las - cia ch'io mo - ra, sì,
- Cemb. I



10

The musical score consists of six staves. The top two staves are for Violins I and II. The third staff is for the Violin soloist. The fourth and fifth staves are for the piano accompaniment (Cemb. II and Cemb. I). The vocal lines are on the Violin soloist staff and the Cemb. I staff. The lyrics are: "so - lo nò, nò, nò, nò, vol - to a - do - ra - - to, nò" and "si, si, si, vol - to a - do - ra - - to."

[Vln. I]

[Vln. II]

Vi.  
so - lo nò, nò, nò, nò, vol - to a - do - ra - - to, nò

Cemb. II

Er.  
si, si, si, vol - to a - do - ra - - to.

Cemb. I

EXAMPLE 10

of the London pasticcios to come and it is therefore not impossible to imagine it in *Ernelinda* as well, although—as had already been stated—the textual divergences refute this.

The next two pasticcios performed in the Haymarket theatre were no less eclectic than *Ernelinda*, whose successful revivals were “repeatedly bolstered with new music” (Dean and Knapp 1987, 160). These two authors are scathing in their opinion that “the printed music from the two new pasticcios is mostly dull” (ibid.). *Creso, rè di Lidia* contains music by Albinoni, Caldara, Mancini, Gasparini, C. F. Pollarolo, Lotti and possibly even Vivaldi or Francesco Polani. It was based on the score of an opera whose authorship was contested shortly after the time of its creation. *Creso tolto alle fiamme* (1705) was conceived as an artistic collaboration between Francesco Polani and Antonio Vivaldi, who allegedly agreed to write arias for the opera without taking the credit for them at the premiere, but the professional relationship eventually turned sour and Vivaldi took Polani to court. Since these numbers in *Creso* would be the first operatic attempts by Vivaldi in general, Talbot (2008) investigated in detail which numbers could bear his authorial stamp. The sources available to me include the original 1705 libretto written by Aurelio Aureli (1705), the 1714 London libretto (Haym and Aureli 1714), probably revised by Haym who was also in charge of compiling the music for the pasticcio, and the collection of songs from the pasticcio (Albinoni et al. 1714). According to Talbot (2008, 26) and confirmed by my own comparative examination of the libretti, the pasticcio contained four duets but only two made it into the collection of songs, so that only these will be dealt with in a detailed analytical way.

The moral parable about the conflict between the Lydian king Croesus and the Persian king Cyrus was, according to librettistic fashion, enriched with amorous intrigues revolving around Creso’s wife Climenide, who arouses the desire of Ciro to the chagrin of his betrothed Rosena. The aria texts were modernized to incline towards *da capo* and exit designs. As we shall see, the text of one of the published duets remained unchanged, leaving the retention of the 1705 music highly plausible, but the other saw some transformations, which opens up speculation about what music it was sung to. Talbot (2008, 28ff) dedicates the remainder of his article to an analysis of the five numbers in the opera whose texts he thought remained unchanged to determine if they were written by Vivaldi or Polani. In the end, he did not prove Vivaldi’s authorship in any of the two cases, but concluded that it was possible that these operatic numbers were sung to his music in London.

In addition to the two (and the only preserved) duets in Act 1, the original libretto contains an additional one in the first act for Climene and Adraspe (I. 10; Aureli 1705, 22). It is of the *aria a due* type of design in which

one soloist (Climene) sings two lines in section A, the other (Adraspe) his two in section B, followed by a *da capo* repetition of Climene's solo. This renders the piece somewhat uninteresting for this study's investigation of proper duets, but it is nevertheless fascinating that it still made it unchanged into the 1714 libretto (Aureli and Haym 1714, 14), which means that it was either sung to the original music or the libretto does not document last-minute changes that Haym initiated in the course of rehearsals. Since this is the early London pasticcio with the highest number of identified composers as contributors, it paints a vivid picture of the extent to which Haym's initiative as a compiler of music transformed in the eight years since the premiere of *Camilla*, since "he may have often followed the dictates of the singers" (Lindgren 1987, 301). The 1714 libretto does include a duet that is missing from the 1705 source libretto, "Dolce mia vita addio / Ah! che morir mi sento" (III. 4 Creso, Climenide; Aureli and Haym 1714, 50), a duet of farewell for the principal protagonists just before they are about to be executed. Astonishingly, we are dealing with the exact same duet from *Il più fedel tra i vassalli* (Silvani 1703, 32 in the libretto) in whose place "Per te bell'idol mio / Per te caro mio ben" was inserted in *Antioco*. No evident explanation imposes itself as to why a duet dropped from a 1703 score that served as a starting point for a 1711 pasticcio would be reintroduced into another pasticcio that has no apparent connection to Gasparini in 1714. To add to the irony, if Nicolini was behind its exclusion from *Antioco*, he must have crossed paths with the duet again when he replaced Caterina Galerati as Creso in the course of the run of *Creso, rè di Lidia*. It is not known whether the duet was retained or replaced, but as we shall see later on, some changes to the original musical content of the premiere had to be made due to the differences between the two singers' tessitura. Since none of the preserved duets from the pasticcio (nor any duets by Gasparini analysed so far, for that matter) display features of the pathetic, minor-mode duet of departure whose prototype was introduced to London audiences in *Idaspe fedele*, it would be intriguing to gain an insight into the music of "Dolce mia vita addio / Ah! che morir mi sento", but the necessary sources were inaccessible to me.<sup>173</sup>

The preserved pair of duets reflects the trends of pairing up lovers played by singers of the same status (*primi* or *secondi*) in duets. The role of Climenide was the operatic debut of soprano Anastasia Robinson, whereas Creso was sung by Caterina Galerati, likewise a soprano. Unlike them, the secondary pair was differentiated by range, Ciro sung by the alto castrato

173 A RISM search reveals a duet for two sopranos (the range of the roles!) with the same incipit ascribed to Gasparini in a manuscript collection in the Uppsala University Library (S-Uu, Vok, mus. i hs. 57:22).

Valentini and Rosena by the contralto Jane Barbier, but the version of their duet “Un volto ch’appaga” (I. 3 Rosena, Ciro; Albinoni et al. 1714, 9–10) preserved in the 1714 collection of songs is for two sopranos, the higher with the range g1–a2, the lower with g1–g2, exploring the higher parts of the range somewhat less frequently. Barbier and Valentini were unable to sing so high, but it is difficult to answer with certainty whether the duet was transposed or replaced in performance. The score specifies the singers, but it does not give the names of the characters at the beginning of the staves as was usually the custom, so it is unclear why the duet was printed in this form with the clear awareness of the available cast. The stylistic proximity with the second preserved duet in the opera, (“Parto ma resta il core / Vanne che’ questo core”) implies that they were conceived as a unified contribution to the opera. This possibility is supported by the duet text, taken over from the 1705 source libretto (Aurelli 1705, 15)<sup>174</sup> with the minimal intervention of toning down its polytextuality by assigning all the lines to both protagonists, in succession.<sup>175</sup> We are dealing with a conventional love duet in which nothing suggests the friction that will impose itself between the characters after Ciro had met Climenide. Talbot’s (2008, 30) analytical remarks on the duet hit the mark:

*Alla-giga* style, the wide leaps, [...] ritornello fragments to accompany the voice, the employment of a motto opening (the so-called double *Devise*) to launch the A section: all these are very characteristic of Vivaldi’s early music, even if they are also thoroughly generic and occur frequently also in Albinoni. (Talbot 2008, 30)

Section A (b. 1–34) opens with a ritornello (b. 1–5) in a typical string idiom. Its material will be transferred to the vocal parts in their first alternating statements, b. 5–8 (S1) and b. 10–13 (S2, on the prime). After this, the voices engage in a *contrapunctus ligatus* type of sequential texture that can be described as leap-frogging (b. 14–17), the leaps (a fourth or a fifth) enabling an upward movement in spite of the continuous suspensions. After the brief interjection of a compressed ritornello there are two sections (b. 20–25, 25–30) in which the voices engage in a sequential, but this time parallel movement in thirds. It is here that the duet grows a little uneventful and repetitive since the composer varies the repetition of this section only by

174 Ros: Un volto che appaga; Cir: Un vezzo, che alletta” / a 2: Saetta ogni cor; / Ros: Ma dolce e la piaga / Cir Ma cara e la piaga / S’il Colpa e d’amor.

175 In section A Soprano 1 opens with the text “Un volto che appaga / un vezzo ch’alletta” and Soprano 2 with “Un volto ch’alletta / un vezzo ch’appaga”. Similarly, in section B both sing lines 4 and 5 but in a different order.

inverting the voices, which is far from an accomplishment since they are of the same range and led in thirds. Talbot (*ibid.*) may have a point when he claims that unlike here, “even in his earliest and simplest works, Vivaldi likes to expand the central [...] and cadential [...] portions of his musical periods via such devices as phrase-repetition at the same pitch (or at an octave’s distance) and sequence”. However, if we examine the duet in the context of Italian operatic music in London with the possible exception of the three or four Handel operas performed so far, I am not sure that Talbot’s impression of a “markedly short-breathed character of the music”, which he considers an indication against Vivaldi’s authorship, would necessarily stand. Section B (b. 34–44, Albinoni et al. 1714, 9–10) is more successful than the one in Gasparini’s “Lascia ch’io mora sì / Nò morrai solo” in that it is concise, but retains a sense of direction, although the impressions of a formulaic character still stand. In spite of Talbot’s remarks, I think that plenty about this duet speaks for an authorship by a different composer from the ones we have considered so far, and its markedly instrumental idiom could be speaking in favour of a Venetian composer such as Albinoni or Vivaldi after all. A lack of interest in the differentiation of the parts distances this duet from the early English-language Italian operas of the first decade of the 18th century. Structurally, it avoids the use of counterpoint, but thanks to a more substantial ritornello interplay, it manages to expand the form to the size of the duets from the Gasparini pasticcios or even the composer’s original Italian dramatic duets.

The second duet in the collection, “Parto ma resta il core / Vanne che’ questo core” (I. 16 *Climene*, Creso; Albinoni et al. 1714, 24–27) is set in *Ciro*’s prison where Creso is held captive and although a duet of departure, it is pervaded with optimism. *Climene* has come disguised to *Ciro*’s court and the couple experience a brief moment of rapture at being reunited, but they have to part soon so that her cover is not blown (cf. Talbot 2008, 30). As Table 3.3.9 shows, this time the differences between the version of the duet in the 1705 libretto on the one hand and the 1714 libretto and score on the other are considerable. In 1705 the duet had an old-fashioned *aria a due* type of design in which each soloist gets a solo of her / his own and the *da capo* repeat consists of the first solo only. Similarly to earlier adaptations of duet texts, in 1714 the polytextuality was toned down in favour of more unified textual variants for both characters, even if this was at the expense of the qualities of the original poetry. The main poetic idea (the lovers’ hearts staying with each other in spite of separation) is slightly lost due to the modification of the text. The first two lines, reserved for section A, were made to resemble each other as much as possible so that the composer could set them accordingly, whereas polytextuality was reserved for the remaining four lines of section B. We can speculate when

this change took place: since the duet is stylistically similar (with some differences in scope and structure) to “Un volto che appaga”, it is possible that it was introduced by Polani or Vivaldi in 1705 already without this being reflected in the libretto, or in a later, unknown reworking.

CHARACTERS	1705 (I. 17 AURELI 1705, 29)		1714 (LIBRETTO AND SCORE)		LINES
Clim:	A	Parto ma resta il core Priggonier nel' tuo sen.	A	Parto ma resta il core Priggoniero e del' tuo sen'.	1 3
Creso:	B	Vanne, mia cara, và; Che il mio ti seguirà Su l'ale de'Sospiri, amato ben.		Vanne, che' questo core Priggoniero e del' tuo sen'.	2 3
Clim:	A	Parto, ma resta il core Prigionier nel tuo sen.	B	Sento che più non posso, De te partir mio ben':	4 5
Creso:	%			Il' petto, è già commosso Da un crudo rio velen.	6 7
Cli & Cre	%		A'	Parto... ( <i>da capo</i> )	

TABLE 45.  
Comparison of texts for the Act 1 duet for Climenide and  
Creso in the 1705 and 1714 versions of the opera *Creso*

Talbot (2008, 31) rightly notices the stylistic kinship between the two duets, but his claim that “Parto ma resta il core / Vanne che' questo core” “adds nothing to the points already made for and against Vivaldi’s authorship” needs some further consideration. First of all, this duet is much more extensive than most duets encountered in productions of Italian opera in London at the time. As can be seen in Table 45, section A resorts to a systematic repetition of previous passages, almost in a patchwork manner. It introduces elements of a dialogic exchange between the voices, prompted by the opening words of each character (“parto” and “vanne”, taking emphatic motivic form in downward leaps of varying scope, b. 15, 16, 53, 54, 91, 92, 106), a polytextual binary opposition between Climenide’s announcement that she is going and Creso’s acceptance and encouragement of this since their hearts are joined regardless. The amorous bliss and optimism of the characters is suggested by a fast tempo, a vivacious character enhanced by occasional melismatic semiquaver virtuosity and the use of C major whose stability is barely clouded by a momentary cadence in the dominant in b. 26. The composer set the word “priggoniero” as an almost inappropriately emphatic parallel passage (b. 20–26), as leap-frogging suspensions (b. 27–35) and the kind of quasi-imitation that

leads into semiquaver parallel flourishes (b. 37–44), often encountered in Bononcini’s and occasionally also Handel’s duets. The last subsection (a<sub>3</sub>) of section A adds nothing new and merely recycles previous passages. The ritornello provides the vocal parts with a motivic impetus and articulates the form, but it hardly becomes the source of all the material as was the case in “Un volto che appaga” due to a more pronounced instrumental idiom, clearly exemplified by the typical repetitive violin figurations that make out its second part (b. 7–16).

SECTION		BAR	KEY	LINES	DESCRIPTION
A	a <sub>1</sub>	1–27	C, G	1–3	ritornello, dialogic exchange, parallelism
	a <sub>2</sub>	27–52	C	3	leap-frogging, quasi imitation, parallelism
	a <sub>3</sub>	52–89	C	1–3	patchwork from a <sub>1</sub> &a <sub>2</sub> : dialogic exchange, quasi-imitation, leap-frogging, ritornello
B	b <sub>1</sub>	89–106	a	4–6	more alternation: main motif & new material
	b <sub>2</sub>	106–128	a, e	4–7	head motif, variation of new & material from A
A'	da capo				

TABLE 46.  
Formal outline of the duet “Parto ma resta il core / Vanne che’ questo core”  
from the pasticcio *Creso, rè di Lidia* (1714)

It is true that the repetitive construction of subsection a<sub>3</sub> imbues the duet with a sense of monotony. However, it also shares many of the qualities of “Un volto che appaga”, such as a sense of drive and formal and structural clarity. Its section B (b. 90–128) is more unpredictable. Far from a mere formal clamp linking hurriedly into the *da capo* repeat, it resorts far more often to freely conceived alternating statements by the soloists, led by Climene (b. 90–93; Albinoni et al. 1714, 26), and continues with some new material (b. 94–102), subjecting it later on to *Fortspinnung* (b. 107–113). The composer continues to shape section B in surprisingly free, almost improvisatory terms by giving Creso a brief moment to shine alone with the semiquaver run (b. 114–122) derived from the quasi-imitative passage in section A, and eventually unites the voices in a free contrapuntal passage (b. 122–128; Albinoni et al. 1714, 27). The question imposes itself: where does such a contrast in the approach to the two sections come from? Although one is tempted to assume that after a highly unified first section a more improvisatory method was chosen for the sake of contrast, the text offers

an additional explanation, namely, unlike in the original 1705 text, the B section of the 1714 version of the duet explores Climenide's uncertainties, for she experiences a moment of weakness and is no longer sure if she can indeed leave Creso whose life is in danger, which would explain why her voice is—musically—pushed into the foreground with lengthy solos.

If some of the composers whose music was used for *Creso, rè di Lidia* were active in Venice in the first decade of the century, the music of *Arminio*, the pasticcio that immediately followed it on the Haymarket stage confirms the interest of the London public in Venetian music as it consists of numbers by different Venetian composers. This could include any of the composers who made a contribution to *Creso, rè di Lidia*, but the literature on the matter mentions Lotti, Orlandini, Giovanni Ristori, A. Scarlatti and Vivaldi (cf. Sasse 1959, 206; Strohm 2008, 279). There is a coincidental connection with Handel, who reached for the original libretto by Antonio Salvi for Pratolino<sup>176</sup> (Salvi 1703) for his own setting in 1737 (Handel 2011a). Strohm (2008, 73) finds that Handel and the anonymous adaptor of the libretto were more faithful to the original 1703 libretto than the 1714 London pasticcio, although when it comes to the duets, only the first out of Salvi's five or six original duets, the duet of flight for Arminio and Tuscelda (I. 1 "Il fuggir cara mia vita"; Salvi 1703, 3), was retained by Handel and two new duets inserted into Act 3 (cf. Dean and Knapp 1987, 352), probably because it was deemed that Salvi wrote too many duets.

SECTION	BAR	KEY	DESCRIPTION	
A	a <sub>1</sub>	1–10	B $\flat$ , F	ritornello, parallel vocal statement, ritornello
	a <sub>2</sub>	11–14	F	2x chordal figures VS. exclamations (inverted CP.)
	a <sub>3</sub>	15–19		2x leap-frogging sequential progression VS. exclamations (inverted CP.)
	a <sub>4</sub>	19–24		2x falling progressions of sixth chords with suspensions (inverted CP.)
	a <sub>5</sub>	24–31		parallel cadence, ritornello
B	31–36	g, d	motivically free alternating statements	

A': *da capo*

TABLE 47.

Formal outline of the duet "Con rigida sembianza" from the pasticcio *Arminio* (1714)

Since there are no indications that Haym was involved in the compilation of the pasticcio and Nicolini was not in the cast, we cannot identify whoever was behind the compilation and adaptation of the pasticcio, neither on the

176 The composer was Alessandro Scarlatti, but alas, only excerpts survive.



librettistic nor on the musical front. However, there are no discrepancies between the 1714 libretto (Salvi 1714) and collection of songs (Lotti et al. 1714): both contain two duets, written for Caterina Galerati (Arminio) and Anastasia Robinson (Ismena). The soloist constellation of the duets diverges from Salvi's original design, as the librettist also involved the secondary couple and wrote a duet for Arminio and his sister Ramise, called Cilene in the 1714 pasticcio. The story revolves around the conflicts between leaders of German tribes in the midst of a Roman invasion, resulting in the captivity of the heroic prince Arminio and a conflict of loyalties in his wife Ismena, who is the daughter of Segeste, Arminio's enemy.

The duet "Con rigida sembianza" (II. 13 Ismena, Arminio; Lotti et al. 1714, 45–47) occurs at a point when Arminio and Ismena reasserted their mutual love and devotion after some previous conflict. In the monotextual section A, they are adamant to negate any lack of faith to each other, whereas in the musically much shorter but textually somewhat longer section B they are optimistic amidst all their suffering.<sup>177</sup> Like in "Un volto che appaga" from *Creso*, we are dealing with another major-mode *gigue* duet that opens with a lulling ritornello (b. 1–5) in a recognisable string idiom and whose head motif and characteristic rhythmical patterning permeate the unfolding of the vocal parts. The voices set out simultaneously in parallel thirds with the repeated head motif and a downward cadential phrase, thus replicating the first two bars of the ritornello before giving way to another repetition of a varied, modulatory fragment from the ritornello. Like in "Parto ma resta il core / Vanne che questo core", this is the only brief departure from the tonic. The next passage consists of chordal motifs in one part juxtaposed to brief exclamations of a freely singled out "mai" in the other (b. 10–12). Repeated with inverted parts in b. 12–14 (with "nò" becoming the exclamation in S<sub>2</sub>), the main purpose of this passage is to express the determinacy of the couple never to break faith. If there was any way of disentangling the constantly crossed voices of S<sub>1</sub> and S<sub>2</sub>, they have by now become indistinguishable. The whole process of conceiving a passage with a melody in one part and contrapuntal interjections in the other and then repeating it with inverted parts is re-enacted in b. 14–17 and b. 17–20, this time conceived as a sequential progression of chords where the continuo is leap-frogging, the higher positioned of the voices starting its downward movement at increasingly higher pitches while the lower one interjects "nò" and "mai". The last pair of sections consists of a downward chain of sixth chords with suspensions, and here b. 22–24 is again the inverted version of 19–22. The motivically much freer and somewhat formulaic section

177 A section. Arm & Ism: Con rigida sembianza / destin tu non farai / ch'io manchi mai di fe. B section. Arm: Lusinga la speranza / affanni del cor mio. Ism: Sento la speme anch'io / si lusinghiera in me.

B consists mainly of modulatory alternating statements. This duet shares many of the features of the two duets in *Creso*, and although it is more akin to Gasparini's Italian duets examined in Chapter 3.3.1.2 with their expansion of form, the three duets analysed in this chapter so far bear some stylistic stamps that could assign them to a group or even a single composer. They have a purposefulness and sense of direction sometimes lacking in early London duets, and their economy of means, often resorting to repetition or inverted counterpoint distinguishes them from Gasparini's Italian duets, as well. Although these traits can also be applied to Bononcini's duets, his more vocal idiom is irreconcilable with the instrumental figures that are often transferred from the string ritornello into the vocal parts in these duets.

The second duet in the opera, "Vanne o cara / Ah no, mio bene" (III. 9 Arminio, Ismena; Lotti et al. 1714, 54) is musically contrasting firstly because it is in a slower tempo and an even metre, in contrast to the dance-like brisk duets that dominate *Creso*, *rè di Lidia* and *Almahide*. Just before Arminio is led off to his execution, Ismena resolves once again to die with him, but he insists she should live for the sake of their infant son (cf. Salvi 1714, 79). We are dealing with a polytextual duet that involves a dialogic exchange comparable to the one in "Parto ma resta il core / Vanne che' questo core", but although here the characters are in disagreement about whether Ismena should stay or go, there is no essential conflict between them and thus no semantic or musical opposition. The duet would be very close to the prototype of duet of departure were there not the heightened exchanges between the soloists. There is a slight chance that its text was derived from a duet for Arminio and Ramise in the original 1703 libretto (III. 2 "Prendi o cara / caro in questo amplesso"; Salvi 1704, 43), in which the hero exhorts his sister to take courage and stay behind to take care of his wife Tusnelda (the name was changed in 1714 but retained by Handel and his libretto adaptor in 1737). Table 48 shows the versions of the text:

	1703	1714
A	Arminio/Ramise: Prendi o cara/caro / in questo amplesso / Prendi ormai / l'ultima addio.	Arm: Vanne o cara / Ism: Ah no mio bene / a 2: prendi ancora / un altro amplesso.
B	Arm: Se vivrai / viverà nel tempo istesso Ram: Se morrai / morirà nel tempo istesso Col tuo core, anco il cor mio.	Ismene: Deh la morte / non ei sciolga Arm: o la vita / ad ambi tolga a 2: il dolor nel / punto istesso.
A'	<i>da capo</i>	

TABLE 48.  
Comparison of two possibly complementary duets from the libretti *Arminio* (1703) and *Arminio* (1714)

Clearly, sections B of the two duets have nothing in common, but it is possible that the 1714 section A was created as a variation of the original 1703 lines, unless such poetry belongs to the stock repertory of contemporary libretti. The duet distinguishes itself by relative brevity (a mere 15 bars), but the scope does not implicate musical uneventfulness, especially as there is a rhythmic dynamism in the tension between passages in longer and shorter note values. An introductory semiquaver passage in the continuo whose structure will permeate the vocal parts later on (b. 1–2) is followed by short dialogic alternating statements (b. 2–3 in S<sub>2</sub>, b. 3 in S<sub>1</sub>) that set the first two lines to contrasting, but freely conceived gestural material. The voices are then joined in a simultaneous, mostly parallel texture whose most marked characteristic is its semiquaver upbeat rhythm, leading seamlessly into a cadence in the dominant G minor (b. 3–5). The alternation of “Ah nò mio bene” and “Vanne o cara” leading into a simultaneous texture and a cadence is repeated in extended form in b. 5–9. The simultaneous passage (b. 7–8) progresses gradually from quaver chords to more vivacious semiquaver runs, freely alternating between parallelism and contrary motion before cadencing in the tonic. An emphatic alternation set to the same brief motif (a descending quaver minor second on the words “prendi”/“dammi”) is integrated into it for added dramatic emphasis (b. 8). Performing its usual function of harmonic contrast, section B (b. 11–15) does not differ greatly.

This is an unusual duet of departure compared to the ones encountered so far. As we have seen from examples in *La fede tradita a vendicata* (“Lascia ch’io mora si / Nò morrai solo”, a duet that possibly served as a model for an equivalent text in *Ernelinda*) and *Creso, rè di Lidia* (“Parto ma resta il core / Vanne che’ questo core”), a duet of departure does not have to be tragic or pathetic in tone, and therefore the minor mode is not a requirement either. Together with “Per tè bell’ idol mio”, all these duets share a structural build-up from alternating statements to simultaneous movement, but they vary in the extent they want to differentiate the voices, and the London pasticcios usually made sure that these alternating statements were somehow contrasted. In affective terms, these duets of departure can evoke serenity, bliss, playful flirtatiousness, but they can also be tragic, although the latter option does not dominate in them to the extent it will—as we shall see—in Handel’s duets of departure. “Vanne o cara / Ah no, mio bene” is somewhere in between these extremes, injecting its minor-mode sadness with a touch of rhythmic vivacity, related to the tension of the situation.

Some pasticcios performed in London in the period were not considered for detailed analysis because no musical sources that unambiguously document the music were handed down to us. For instance, no selected songs from the pasticcios *Lucio Vero* (1714) and *Clearte* (1716) were published.

It is nevertheless possible to reconstruct some information on the duets they contained on the basis of their libretti, and both scores and libretti of the operas that served as their point of departure. With *Lucio Vero* (1715) the situation is complicated by the fact that the musical source for the pasticcio, Albinoni's setting for Ferrara (1713) has not been preserved either. To compensate for this lack, the libretto in the original form that Apostolo Zeno conceived it for the first setting by C. F. Pollarolo (Zeno 1700), the 1713 Ferrara libretto (Zeno 1713), the London 1715 libretto (Haym and Zeno 1715) and also the libretto of the 1716 revival (Haym and Zeno 1716) can be thrown into the comparative mix. The latter version of the pasticcio partly reflects the changes in the cast, e. g. Nicolini's replacement of Galerati in the title role. Surprisingly few changes to the 1715 duets were made, especially if we have in mind how significantly other revivals transformed a pasticcio, e. g. *Ernelinda*. Presumably not only Nicolini or Zanoni but stellar female singers could have contributed to the choice of music in *pasticcios* as well. It seems that Zeno's original 1700 libretto with its abundance of duets inspired later adaptors to make interventions of their own.

On the other hand, the pasticcio *Clearte* (1716) was based on A. Scarlatti's opera *L'amor volubile e tiranno* (Scarlatti MS, *L'amor volubile e tiranno*) to the libretto by G. D. Pioli (Pioli 1709), premiered in Venice. In this pasticcio we are dealing with a paradox of sorts: although the starting point was an opera by a great master who was already familiar to and appreciated by London audiences thanks to the reworking of *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* eight years ago and its revival for Nicolini only a month before the premiere of *Clearte* (cf. Sasse 1959, 212), the goal may have actually been to present the newest Venetian and Neapolitan operatic music to the audience. Judging by the London libretto (Pioli 1716), the first duet in the London pasticcio, "E dovrò pur lasciarti / Io sento nel core" (II. 9) (Pioli and Zeno 1716, 36) is an extensive duet of departure with a highly dialogic middle section typical of Calella's "modern plan" duet. There is no equivalent duet at this point in the 1709 libretto and score, but the Scarlatti opera does contain a duet for these characters nearer the end of Act 2 (II. 19). The contrast with the 1716 pasticcio could not be greater as we are dealing with a short duet text consisting of a mere four lines (Pioli 1709, 46), but the score contains only the setting of the first and parts of the second line, turning what was either a shorter monopartite, bipartite or even tripartite duet into a short arioso *a due* without simultaneity in the vocal parts, "Si mia cara / Mio tesoro, mia vita" (II. 18 Arsace, Climene; Scarlatti MS, *L'amor volubile e tiranno*, 144).

Therefore, Scarlatti's music was most likely not sung in this instance, although the opposite might be true for the third duet in the 1716 pasticcio, "Sorte ria può voler / Può ria sorte darmi" ("Sorte ria può voler / Può ria

sorte darmi” ms), whose music is handed down in a Neapolitan ms dating from 1713 in the Gerald Coke Collection housed at the Foundling Museum in London. The text of this duet differs somewhat from the less polytextual one in the 1716 London libretto (Pioli and Zeno 1716, 62). It is clearly derived from Zeno’s *Scipione nelle Spagne* (l. 17 Lucejo, Sofonisba; Zeno 1822, 281), whose second setting was by Alessandro Scarlatti himself in 1714. It would seem logical to conclude that a Scarlatti duet was included in a 1716 pasticcio based on an earlier score by the composer from 1714, but the fact that the ms source in the Gerald Coke Collection that contains the actual duet from *Clearte* is indicated as stemming from 1713 calls this into question. However, in l. 18a the Scarlatti score does contain the same duet (Scarlatti ms, *Scipione nelle Spagne*, 62) as the one in *Clearte* so the possibility that a duet by Alessandro Scarlatti was sung in *Clearte* in 1716 is plausible after all.

So far, the second decade of operatic life in London has been increasingly marked by how trends on the number, placing and importance of duets in contemporary Italian opera were changing on the continent. As had already been remarked, compared to the multitude and the musico-dramatic, structural and stylistic (often going hand in hand with somewhat old-fashioned, 17th-century traits) diversity of duets in the London operas preceding *Almahide*, the tide was changing in the direction of a lesser number of duets and their standardisation. Nevertheless, the case of *Lucio Vero* shows that when the composers and adaptors were inspired by the right libretto source, Londoners could still enjoy a higher number of duets that were not the exclusive right of the *primo uomo* and *prima donna* to express their love and/or bid a heart-rending farewell to each other. Conversely, *Clearte* shows that within the same pasticcio duets could be stylistically divergent, too.

As we shall see in Chapter 3.3.3, Handel’s duets written in the period display a different image. The list of operatic performances in the period 1710–1717 including all the revivals, with performance numbers as an indicator of popularity and influence (Dean and Knapp 1987, 150), shows that although *Rinaldo* was by far the most popular opera with an overall number of 47 performances, no other Handel opera reached more than 15 performances except for *Amadigi*, with its 17 performances in three seasons (1715–1717). In between are *Idaspe fedele* with 36, *Ernelinda* with 22, the revived *Pirro e Demetrio* with 21 (not counting the original bilingual performances) and *Antioco* with likewise 17 performances. Handel was absent from the country from 1711 to 1712 and the second half of 1716 (cf. Dean and Knapp 1987, 155). Also, his whereabouts from July 1713 to autumn 1714 are unknown, so his influence on the unfolding of operatic life in London in this period and thus the evolution of dramatic duets, too, should not be overestimated.

### 3. 3. 3. Handel's Early Dramatic Duets (1706–1715)

By the time he returned to Germany after his formative stay in Italy, Handel was a formed composer also in terms of composing dramatic duets. Although we shall concentrate on his activity as a composer of dramatic duets in London from 1711 onwards (Chapter 3.3.3.2.) since this is of main interest to this study, it is still important to summarize his accomplishments up to that point. Therefore Chapter 3.3.3.1. shall look into the evolution of the dramatic duet in the composer's opus during his sojourn in Italy, with the duet from the later *Echeggiate, festeggiate* included for comparative purposes as it is a direct parody of the duet from *Arresta il passo*. The stress will be on Handel's Italian secular dramatic duets. Although he was keen to learn about Italian opera, the fact that he spent most of his time in Rome increased his exposure to other genres more favoured by the Eternal City at the time such as the cantata and the oratorio. The duets in Handel's Italian oratorios will be of interest when they display dramatic or operatic traits. Among the dramatic duets he wrote in 1706–1710 (listed in Table 49) there is only one opera duet (from *Rodrigo*, which had been lost) and most of them belong to the cantata and the serenata. Scholars are not unanimous in the distinction between the two, and in spite of the association of the serenata with ceremonial performance out of doors, it is not always clear if larger dramatic cantatas should be considered serenatas as well. For instance, in Marx's (2002, 591) list of Handel's works in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart Cor fedele, Aci, Galatea e Polifemo, O come chiare e belle* and *Echeggiate, festeggiate* come under serenatas, whereas *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (Hicks 2001) lists them under the category of "dramatic cantatas". Attempting to devise a genre label for *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo*, Jung (cf. 2002, 139) admits that even though the work fits the definition of the serenata as an occasional work performed out of doors in the evening, similar works in the second half of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century were often called azione or festa teatrale, even cantata. Similarly, the status of *Il trionfo del tempo e del disinganno* (1707) as an oratorio had been contested by Carolyn Gianturco (1994) who develops a convincing argument that we are dealing with an example of the moral cantata instead. This study will not dwell on intricate questions of genre but examine Italian dramatic duets *per se*, in light of a comparison with Handel's Italian contemporaries and their London performance context.

3. 3. 3. 1.  
*Dramatic Duets Written in Italy (1706–1710):  
 Roots of Handel's Opera Duets*

YEAR	WORK	HWV / PLACE	TEXT	CHARACTERS	VOICES	
1707	Il trionfo del tempo e del disinganno	46a	I. no.6	Il voler nel fior' degl'anni	Bellezza, Piacere	S, MS
			II no.12	Il bel pianto dell'aurora	Tempo, Disinganno	T, A
1707	<i>Clori, Tirsi e Fileno</i> (Cor fedele)	96	I no.7	Scherzano sul tuo volto	Clori, Fileno	S, A
			II no.8	Fermati! / No crudel	Clori, Tirsi	S, S
				Senza occhi e senza accenti	Tirsi, Fileno	S, A
1707	<i>Rodrigo</i> (Vincer se stesso è la maggio vittoria)	5	III. 8	Prendi/prendo l'alma, prendi/prendo il core	Rodrigo, Esilena	S, S
1708	<i>La resurrezione</i> (Oratorio per la Resurrezione di Nostro Signor Gesù Cristo)	47	I no. 10	Dolci chiodi, amate spine / Cara effigie addolorata	Maddalena, Cleofe	S, A
			II no. 21	Impedirlo saprò / Duro è il cimento	Lucifero, Angelo	B, S
1708	<i>Aci, Galatea e Polifemo</i> (Sorge il di)	72	no.1	Sorge il di / Spunta l'aurora	Aci, Galatea	S, A
1708	<i>Aminta e Fillide</i> (Arresta il passo)	83	no.11	Per abbatte il rigore	Aminta, Fillide	S, S
1708	<i>Il duello amoro-</i> <i>roso</i> (Amarilli vezzosa)	82	no. 5	Sì, sì, lasciami ingrato / Su, su, restati in pace	Daliso, Amarilli	MS, S
1710	<i>Cantata per Carlo VI</i> (Echeggiate, festeggiate)	119	(no. 8)	Non più barbaro furore	Minerva, Giove	S, MS

TABLE 49.  
 List of Italian dramatic duets composed by G. F. Handel up to 1711

Table 49 presents the duets in chronological order. With the exception of the libretto of *Rodrigo*, they formed part of dramatic texts originally written for Handel to set, which allows us to examine how he responded to the wide variety of duet texts handed to him. This is where the difference with opera duets analysed so far comes to the fore. Whereas the adaptations of previously existing libretti enabled the adaptor of the libretto, the composer and the singers to display a preference for certain types of tendencies, whether textual or musical, in most of the cases analysed in this subchapter Handel was responding to outside stimuli without the ability to significantly influence them. As a young composer, this enabled him to develop different duet styles and make them his own. Therefore I am going to divide the duets written in this period into three groups. The first ones are the so-called “old-fashioned” duets that owe a lot to either older, 17th-century or simply non-operatic traditions such as the oratorio or the chamber duet. Expectedly, out of the four duets belonging to this category only one (“Il bel pianto dell’aurora” from *Il trionfo del tempo e del disinganno*) is in *da capo* form, and the group contains three out of four of Handel’s Italian oratorio duets. The second and largest group, containing seven duets, could be described as the mainstream of Handel’s Italian dramatic duets, displaying traits that Handel will adopt in many dramatic duets he came to write later, especially in the era of the Royal Academy of Music. It is not a coincidence that, with the exception of “Senza occhi e senza accenti” (*Clori, Tirsi e Fileno*), they are all written for a female and a male character who are in some sort of amorous relationship.<sup>178</sup> The third and smallest group counts only three duets whose texture displays some traits of dialogic structuring, mostly in terms of contrasting material in the voices, thereby approximating them to the duet of the so-called “modern plan”. It is important to stress that these are not duets of conflict since the latter is present—on purely dramaturgic terms—in some of the duets of the second group, too.

Let us begin the examination of the first group by looking at the duets in *La resurrezione*. At the time, oratorio in Rome competed with opera’s representative function on aristocratic courts by a spectacular performance at Marchese Ruspoli’s residence, but this is not reflected in the ensembles, which are simpler and more modest than the rest of the score. The second duet, “Impedirlo saprò / Duro è il cemento” (II. no. 21 *Lucifero, Angelo*; Handel 2010, 89–90; Handel recording, *La Resurrezione*) is a brief musical standoff on the morning of the resurrection between these two forces of good and evil. *Lucifero* rages at the triumphant *Angelo* at the thought that

178 Including the allegorical relationship between *Bellezza* and *Piacere*, who is given masculine traits by the librettist.



the mystery will be revealed to the approaching Maddalena and Cleofa, swearing that he will prevent this. A sense of dramatic tension is achieved by the repetition of the replicas “Impedirlo saprò” and “Duro è il cimento” that could have been set as recitative, but instead Handel composed a brief (mere 13 bars), almost improvisatory arioso *a due* displaying material more reminiscent of melodic-rhythmic formulae and juxtaposing the voices freely in succession and free counterpoint. It goes without saying that these kinds of outbursts *a due* were to grow out of fashion in early 18th-century opera.

In “Dolci chiodi, amate spine / Cara effigie addolorata” (I. no. 10 Maddalena, Cleofe; Handel 2010, 41–46; Handel recording, *La Resurrezione*) Handel also paid tribute to the tradition of the strophic *aria a due*, since the first stanza is sung by the first soloist, the second by the second and the third section is the only moment of simultaneity in the duet. Handel modified this model to suit his needs, Maddalena’s stanza (b. 28–77; Handel 2010, 42–43) being somewhat extended when compared to Cleofa’s (b. 78–115; Handel 2010, 44–45). Their common section (b. 116–159) is a free interchange between alternating statements, free counterpoint and parallelism, to the same musical material as the two stanzas, but using mostly Cleofa’s text. Maddalena is limited to her incipit line (b. 116–119), and although Handel avoids a clear-cut outline with a regular phrase structure, harmonically we are within the confines of a free tripartite conception (A B A’). Even if the strophic form means that no musical interpretation of the two characters’ different words is offered, the setting succeeds in the aim of taking the horror out of the evoked events of Jesus’s Passion and turning it into “sympathetic, sweet contemplation”<sup>179</sup> (Zywietz 2010, 63).

The same formal outline but with a much more regular structural plan is adopted in the duet “Sì, sì, lasciami ingrato / Su, su, restati in pace” (no. 5 Daliso, Amarilli; Handel 1994b, 62–64; Handel recording, *Olinto pastore*) from *Il duello amoroso*. This is probably the simplest duet Handel ever wrote, consisting of a regular successive unfolding of five 16-bar (8+8) periods bringing forth the same musical phrase: first by Daliso in E minor (A, b. 1–16), then by Amarilli in A minor (B, b. 17–32), followed by the two soloists joined in a contrapuntal section that modulates to C major and back to A minor (B’, b. 33–64) and leaving it to the repetition of the phrase in A minor as an orchestral ritornello (b. 65–96) to round off this lapidary duet. According to Harris (2001, 129), *Il duello amoroso* is not one of Handel’s most distinguished dramatic cantatas. The nymph Amarilli consistently rebukes the courtship of the shepherd Daliso, taunting him to resort to force and ridiculing him after he recoils: although it leaves

no doubt about the irreconcilability of their differences (and the fact that Daliso's love does not stand a chance), the final duet consolidates the characters nevertheless. Although somewhat unvaried compared to what we learn to expect from the composer in his later opus, the duet offers the maximum musical consolidation possible between nymph and shepherd. Clearly, they are not in a position to sing a love duet (of amorous unity) and Handel was not sufficiently inspired to write a modern, dialogic duet of conflict like he did a year earlier in *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno*. However, he did pay homage to certain traits of the so-called *Streitduett*. This is achieved in the third section (B', b. 33–64) with pseudo-imitative entries of the voices at the distance of two bars. As both voices unfold regular phrases with a repetition of an ascending dotted quaver figure every four bars, we hear this figure every two bars in alternation in each voice. Thus Handel produces an effect of emphatic, dialogic alternating statements (“Sì, sì!” / “Su, su”) although he is in fact leading the voices in counterpoint. Albeit ingenious, this duet concept wears itself out quickly.

Judging by the HHA edition of *Rodrigo*, this opera contains another duet permeated with elements of the chamber duet. However, the duet “Ti lascio, idolo mio” (III. 2 Esilena, Rodrigo; Handel 2007, 143–144; Handel recording, Rodrigo) is merely a reconstruction on the part of R. Heyink, the editor of the edition (cf. Preface in Handel 2007, xvii). The autograph score, also the only available source for the opera, specifies a departure duet at this point in the dramaturgy, but no setting has been preserved. If the opera is to be performed, though, a duet equivalent in dramaturgic terms should be supplied in its place, which is why Reyink's choice fell on “Ti lascio, idolo mio” (II. 10 Lepido, Flavia; Handel 2015, 87–88) from Handel's *Silla* (1713), likewise a duet of departure for a couple in adversity. Although both operas are concerned with a married monarch's seduction of other women, in *Silla* it is the tyrant's victim Flavia and her husband Lepido who sing this duet, frightened for their life. If it was sung in *Rodrigo*, it would have been given to Rodrigo and his wife Esilena. Esilena has forgiven Rodrigo for taking advantage of Florinda who has borne him a child and she is bidding him farewell as he goes off to fight off the advancing rebels. Handel's aim was clearly to enhance the position of the *primo uomo* and *prima donna* by giving them an extra duet that was not in the original libretto serving as a starting point for the production. The libretto in question is Silvani's *Il duello d'amore, e di vendetta* (as first set by M. A. Ziani in 1700), and it contains another duet for the principal couple (“Prendi/prendo l'alma, prendi/prendo il core”) that will be discussed later. Silvani's libretto also featured a second duet for the pair in II. 10, but clearly the adaptor of the libretto (there is disagreement in scholarly literature about his identity, cf. Dean and Knapp 1987, 97 and Strohm 2008, 40) chose to drop it. Although

Reyink's choice is stylistically viable, especially as the next duet in this first group of duets—written in the same year (1707) as *Rodrigo*—also displays traits of the chamber duet, nothing suggests let alone proves that “Ti lascio idolo mio” was written as early as 1707 and parodied in 1713 in *Silla*.

The duet “Il bel pianto dell’aurora” (II. no. 12 Tempo, Disinganno; Handel 1865, 85–86; Handel recording, *Il trionfo del tempo e del disinganno*) is, in terms of its overall formal design, a fully-fledged dramatic duet in *da capo* form but it still exhibits prominent features of the chamber duet in an almost exclusively contrapuntal treatment of the voices, consistently eschewing alternation and parallelism. It also makes use of the somewhat archaic technique of free ostinato, the opening figure in the continuo (b. 1–4) permeating the duet with occasional, often varied occurrences. Around it Handel weaves a sensuous contrapuntal web in the fairly unusual vocal combination of contralto (Disinganno) and tenor (Tempo), containing surprisingly little imitation, but nevertheless dense and avoiding homorhythmic movement altogether. At this point in the dramatic action of *Il trionfo del tempo e del disinganno*, the titular pair had already won the allegorical war with *Piacere* over the favours of *Bellezza*, who comprehended the transient nature of worldly pleasures and turned to penance. The main poetic idea of the text is that the tears of a penitent soul are more beautiful than the tears of dawn on a flowery meadow. Handel must have been inspired by the word “piante”, an emblem of the Baroque *lamento*, to introduce the ostinato. The voices bring no clearly outlined motivic content but still feel as if derived from the same stream and therefore perhaps reminiscent of the flow of tears. The composer thus imbued an image normally associated with the affect of sorrow and pain with sensuous beauty, which is in fact the main idea of the oratorio, progressing from the material domain to the spiritual. Although the duet is dramatic in its form, its monotextual reflexivity and the doubling of the dramatic agents of Disinganno and Tempo, who repeatedly make similar points throughout the oratorio, make it very different from the opera duets of unity or conflict that Handel developed in the second and third group of his Italian duets, to be discussed shortly. Also, a consistent use of counterpoint without the madrigalistic build-up of sections based on the contrapuntal working out of distinct themes and motifs is not typical of Handel's chamber duets either.

The second and largest group of duets Handel wrote in Italy produced a prototype that he developed throughout his career. It may not be a coincidence that out of the overall six, three of these duets belong to pastoral cantatas and serenatas (*Clori, Tirsi e Fileno, Aminta e Fillide* and *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo*) and unlike the duets of the first group, most of them are written for high voices. Harris (1980a, 155 & 168) notes a change

in Handel's pastoral style from the complex and experimental works written from May to September in 1707 to the more regular and balanced ones dating from the summer of 1708. The earlier pieces favour irregularity and strong contrasts on the rhythmic, melodic and harmonic plane as well as the extensive use of figuration, *Fortspinnung* and counterpoint, whereas the later ones are characterised by clear-cut phrasing, brevity and succinct *da capo* formal designs. This applies to arias more than to duets since because of the imperative to unite two voices into a more or less balanced musical whole, duets were less prone to the kind of experimentation just described. However, the duet "Il voler nel fior' degl'anni" (I. no. 6 Bellezza, Piacere; Handel 1865, 20–24; Handel recording, *Il trionfo del tempo e del disinganno*) seems to bear the stamp of the first period in the extensive, almost incessant figuration in the oboes and the strings that makes up its lengthy opening ritornello (b. 1–13). In terms of material, it outlines right at the beginning a recognisable rhythmic motif consisting of groups of upbeat double semiquavers followed by a quaver (b. 1–2) and repeats it straight away before moving on to the main rhythmic figure of semiquaver triplets that the duet subjects to an endless process of *Fortspinnung* (b. 3–13), varied by alternation in the violins and oboes. Handel also interweaves into the ritornello a passage in *contrapunctus ligatus* (b. 8–9) that will serve as the foundation for a specific type of texture in which two parts in interlocking suspensions and long note values are juxtaposed to a vivacious sequential semiquaver passage (b. 18–19, 22, 24–25). This type of texture that Handel may have borrowed from Reinhard Keiser's chamber duet "Caro autor di mia doglia" wrongly attributed to Handel as HWV 183 (cf. Marx 1993, 308–313) will continue to feature in many works of his, including two more duets examined in this chapter, but also choral movements from oratorios. The ritornello alone is a perfect musical embodiment of the concept of *joie de vivre* that is represented at this stage at the beginning of the oratorio by the allegorical characters of Bellezza and Piacere. The idea that it is foolish, even vain ("è vanità", as is often stressed by both voices in the few passages of monorhythmic simultaneity in this duet) to spend one's youth worrying is expressed by the musical equivalent of hedonism, endless instrumental and vocal flourishes that have no purpose in outlining some kind of material that will be worked out but playfully exercise their own virtuosic *raison d'être*. After the initial exposition of the opening rhythmic motif of the ritornello in alternation (Bellezza, who in spite of being manipulated by Piacere takes the lead, providing a held note counterpoint to Piacere's onset in b. 16), the voices are kept mostly in counterpoint, which shows that Handel is still removed from traditions of the Italian dramatic duet as represented in London in 1706–1717. However, the long flourish in semiquaver triplets (b. 30–33), modelled on the isolated parallel

moments between the oboes and violins in the ritornello, is undoubtedly operatic, as if Bellezza and Piacere were laughing at “affanni”, the worries that they want to banish from youth. With its all-permeating figurative material and lack of periodic structures the duet definitely conforms to Harris’s experimental style, although it is kept fairly simple harmonically and it contains neither contrasts nor formal surprises. In fact, in spite of a lengthy and sumptuous *ritornello*, its treatment of the *da capo* form is also rather simple. Section B is shorter, with continuo accompaniment only, its material freely derived from section A. The latter is bipartite, with two cycles (b. 13–25, 26–36) progressing from alternation (with a pedal counterpoint) via contrapuntal combining to parallelism, the first one cadencing in the dominant D major, the second one swiftly returning to the tonic. The ritornello at the end of section A is compressed, which is understandable since its spectacular character would have had less impact if it had been repeated as many as four times.

Although it was written in 1707 and presents on the whole a “study in contrasts” “with its great variety of aria styles”, Harris (1980a, 168) sees several anticipations of Handel’s new, 1708 style in the dramatic cantata *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno*. It is in works like these that it becomes evident why dramatic cantatas were so important for the development of Handel’s dramatic duets. Due to the limited number of characters and a certain monotony of stringing together one aria after the other in what is usually a typified plot without significant dramaturgic variations, ensembles contribute to the appeal by combining the characters into duets and trios. Two and three is indeed the most common number of characters in a secular dramatic cantata, for a larger cast usually borders on genres such as the serenata. In the realm of the pastoral, love triangles are ideal for the exploration of the amorous passions of shepherds and nymphs, so it is no surprise that they determine the dramaturgy of both *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno* and *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo* but also of Bononcini’s *La nemica d’amore fatta amante* as well as Handel’s opera *Il pastor fido*. The fickle nymph Clori has sworn fidelity to Fileno at the despair of her other suitor Tirsi, and in the duet ending the first part of the cantata, “Scherzano sul tuo volto / Ridono sul tuo labbro” (I. no. 7 Clori, Fileno; Handel 1994b, 181–186; Handel recording, Clori, Tirsi e Fileno), Clori and Fileno affirm their love in Watteauesque imagery of Graces and Cupids dancing on the two lovers’ faces. The ritornello of section A is as lengthy as the one in “Il voler nel fior’ degl’anni” (b. 1–12) and similarly built from a rhythmic motif followed by extensive figuration, but it is conceived as a more closed unit even though it displays no periodic structures. The voices are spaced out more leisurely and evenly in the texture, beginning with proper alternating statements with no counterpoint whatsoever (b. 12–13 and 14–15, a fourth lower), followed by figuration (the

word “mille” in syllabic declamation lending itself perfectly to this kind of treatment) over held notes (b. 16–19) and ending in parallelism based on the head motif of the ritornello (b. 20–22), thus lending the whole a sense of balance. The playful exchanges continue in a quasi-imitative passage (b. 22–25) that highlights the words “mille” before a texture in which the voices interchange semiquaver figuration and held notes (b. 25–29), drawing the vocal part of section A to an end. Whereas section A was genuinely polytextual (Clori singing about Graces and Fileno about Cupids), in section B Handel dealt with the abundance of the text by evenly distributing the lines between the two voices, although they were not originally conceived this way by the poet. Harris’s description of middle sections in *da capo* forms from 1708 seems to apply here in that section B (b. 40–53) does not offer anything new on the motivic plane, drawing on the material of section A for alternating exchanges, brief quasi-imitative passages and the accompaniment of semiquaver flourishes with held notes.

The duets from *Il trionfo del tempo e del disinganno* and *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno* are examples of the evolving prototype of the love duet, and the extensive figuration in both the instrumental and vocal parts show that it is embedded in Handel’s early Italian style, but if there is indeed a change about to happen, “Scherzano sul tuo volto / Ridono sul tuo labbro” confirms that a lack of structural restraint will give place to more moderate and regular designs. Although not a love duet, “Senza occhi e senza accenti” (II. Tirsi, Fileno; Handel 1994b, 270–276; Handel recording, Aci, Galatea e Polifemo) should be considered here not only as it belongs to the same cantata but because it adopts and modifies the evolving structural plan. Handel wrote two alternative endings for the cantata. The second one, probably for a reworking for Naples, ends with a trio: after both Tirsi and Fileno have come to terms with Clori’s infidelity, deciding that they will continue to worship her nevertheless, all three sing a praise to love as an irreplaceable life force. The first, Roman version of the work ends with the above mentioned duet for the two shepherds, in which after a recitative very similar to the one in the second version the two men reaffirm their friendship and comment somewhat sarcastically on the “woman of today”.<sup>180</sup>

The duet’s scoring is—and this is another factor of continuity with *Il trionfo del tempo e del disinganno*—equally rich, although the first and the second violins as well as the first and the second oboe are somewhat less independent of each other than in “Il voler nel fior’ degl’anni” and “Scherzano sul tuo volto / Ridono sul tuo labbro”. On the other hand,

180 Tirsi/Fileno: Senza occhi e senza accenti, / senza sdegni e lamenti, / vuol che sian gli amanti / la donna di oggidì; / E se non è il pastore / semplice e tutto amore, / nol prende per suo vago / perché lo vuol così.

“Senza occhi e senza accenti” has a more complex take on ritornello form in its framing sections, and consequently, also a somewhat more extensive *da capo* form. First and foremost, it offers a contrast to the last two duets examined here with its different character, felt most of all in its ternary dance metre as opposed to the binary *concertante* idiom of “Il voler nel fior’ degl’anni” and “Scherzano sul tuo volto / Ridono sul tuo labbro”. The ritornello opens by suggesting a periodic structure, but what it really does is a *tutti* repeat (b. 5–8) of its opening four-bar phrase (b. 1–4 in the oboes) before moving on to a cadence and a section in *contrapunctus ligatus* (b. 12–22) that one often encounters in the composer’s chamber duets. This material is the starting point for some extensive *Fortspinnung* in the vocal parts. Tirsi embarks on it as soon as he has stated the main motif (the four-bar phrase described above, b. 25–28). After this it is Fileno’s turn to bring the subject while he is sustained with a very long-held note in Tirsi’s part before the voices burst into the same type of *contrapunctus ligatus* texture (b. 63–73) familiar from the ritornello. It is very significant for this duet in particular, but also for Handel’s method of composing duets in general (differentiating him from Bononcini) that, although he resorts to the inversion of the parts, previously outlined contrapuntal material is never repeated literally but in varied form so as to give the impression of novelty. What distinguishes this duet is a free, almost improvisatory treatment of both form and counterpoint. I have already remarked on its dimensions, and we shall come back to this expansion of scope as something that transformed Handel’s London duets from *Teseo* and *Amadigi* onwards in Chapter 3.3.3.2. Its A section can be divided into two greater subsections: the first one (b. 1–95) marked by a modulation to the dominant, the second one (b. 95–166) returning to the G major tonic. Both subsections are interspersed with orchestral and vocal statements of the main motif, the above mentioned *contrapunctus ligatus* texture extended by *Fortspinnung* and brief moments of parallelism. What is somewhat lacking is a sense of musical interpretation of the text and the sense of stringency that marks most of the numbers in the cantata. Section B (b. 166–206) is more purpose-driven with its opening imitations (b. 166–179) and dialogic exchanges of the replicas “lo vuol così” and “perché” (b. 183–187).

Compared to this unconventionality that might have led Handel to insert a trio in its place instead, the second duet in *Rodrigo* has fewer surprises in store. “Prendi/prendo l’alma, prendi/prendo il core” (III. 8 Rodrigo, Esilena; Handel 2007, 165–170; Handel recording, Rodrigo) is a duet of unity that acknowledges the renewed love of the principal couple after Esilena had brought about the denouement expressed in the opera’s second title, *Vincer se stesso è la maggior vittoria*. At the height of dramatic tension when the avengers are about to kill Rodrigo, Esilena brings them

his child with Florinda, disarming everybody with her magnanimity and setting an example for forgiveness that everybody else follows. Calella (2009, 343) lists this duet as an example of a duet text that does not differ significantly from the text of an aria in spite of the fact that the characters are addressing each other in the imperative mood, which is dialogic. Dean and Knapp (1987, 104) describe it unflatteringly: “while on a more extended scale than the duets in *Almira*, [it, A/N] suffers from underdeveloped ritornellos and an excess of facile ornament”. Compared to the more developmental, *concertante* figuration of “Il voler nel fior’ degl’anni” and even “Scherzano sul tuo volto / Ridono sul tuo labbro”, this duet seems less ambitious and on an overall more modest scale. However, it does set up a structural plan that Handel follows in the duet in *Aminta e Fillide*.

Bar numbers in “Prendi/ prendo l’alma”**	1-3; 11-12	3-5; 12-14	5-6; 14-15	7-8; 16-17	9; 18	10; 19-24
“Prendi/prendo l’alma, prendi/ prendo il core”	ritornello; free CP	alternation; parallelism	CP ligatus; CP ligatus	parallelism; parallelism	free CP; alternation	parallelism; parallelism
“Per abbatter il rigore” & “Non più barbaro furore”	ritornello; CP ligatus	imitation; alternation	CP ligatus; parallelism	parallelism; CP ligatus	free CP; CP ligatus	parallelism; altern.; par.
Bar numbers in “Per abbatter il rigore”***	1-6; 17-19	6-8; 19-20	8-10; 21-26	11; 26-29	11-12; 29-34	13-17; 34-35; 35-41

TABLE 50.

Comparison of the sequence of vocal structural techniques in the A sections of three Handel duets written in the period 1707-1710

- \* Bar numbers should be read dependently on the sequence of techniques in the next row: the first interval refers to the first technique, the second one (separated by a semicolon) to the second. The sequence of techniques should be read as if in two rows: “ritornello” is followed by alternation and not by “free cp”.
- \*\* Up to b. 15 bar numberings in the two duets are identical, but in contrast to “Non più barbaro furore”, “Per abbatter il rigore” inserts an extra bar in b. 16. There is some minor divergence in the figuration later on, which explains why section A of “Per abbetter il rigore” ends in b. 47 and section A of “Non più barbaro furore” in b. 45. Otherwise, the structural plan of the two duets is identical.

The contrast with the above mentioned duets is even felt at its beginning: the opening ritornello (b. 1-3) is more of a compression of the main ideas that are to be developed during the course of the duet, the semiquaver



triple passage that Dean and Knapp probably found “facile” (b. 1), the passage in *contrapunctus ligatus* (b. 1–2) that has been mentioned in relation to “Il voler nel fior’ degl’anni” and probably stems from Keiser, ending with a cadential figure (b. 2–3). The voices are introduced promptly by stating a motif developed from the triplet figure in alternation (b. 3–4) and moving on straight away to the specific *contrapunctus ligatus* texture probably stemming from Keiser (b. 5–7) extended by the inversion of parts, something Handel makes ample recourse to in the next couple of duets. After this, the voices are joined in parallel and exchange semiquaver passages with the oboes and violins. The presentation of the ritornello, the alternating statements of the motivic material, their contrapuntal combining and eventual parallel combination leading onto a cadence is a process that can take dozens of bars in other duets, whereas here it has been accomplished in the space of a mere eight bars. From this point on, Handel merely develops this structural plan. Given the limited amount of material that he had presented, the fact that the duet does not slip into monotony in the remaining twenty bars of section A (b. 1–28) is a symptom of a firm grip on form and structure. The remainder of the section gradually gives more room to parallelism, culminating in flashy parallel triplet passages in b. 19–20 (again answered by the orchestra in b. 20–23) and b. 23–24. In the musical voluptuousness (justified by the allegorical moral of the text) that makes out the whole of “Il voler nel fior’ degl’anni”, passages like these would hardly stand out, but in “Prendi/prendo l’alma, prendi/prendo il core”, their culminating effect is carefully prepared in an operatically self-conscious way.

Table 50 attempts to compare the sequence in which the techniques of voice-leading used in “Prendi/prendo l’alma, prendi/prendo il core” made their way into a duet in the dramatic cantata *Aminta e Fillide* that Handel wrote the next year, as well as the serenata *Echeggiate, festeggiate* that he borrowed it for without significant modification, at least in section A. Besides the difference in scope—the duets “Per abbatter il rigore” and “Non più barbaro furore” are longer than the *Rodrigo* duet—they also display a growth in the length and exposure of vocal parallelism and *contrapunctus ligatus* passages. However, the dramaturgy of the two later duets is not only far from the affirmation of the unity between Rodrigo and Esilena but also quite different in *Aminta e Fillide* on the one hand and *Echeggiate, festeggiate* on the other. *Aminta e Fillide* operates with a similar story like *Il duello amoroso*, which Harris (2001, 133) calls the monomyth or micromyth of pursuit: here, too, a scornful nymph is courted by a desperate shepherd, but with a happier outcome. Aminta manages to win Fillide over with this fidelity and in the final duet they conclude that “the rigour of a ruthless, cruel heart” (Fillide’s) can be broken by “constancy and

the valour of fidelity". Thus "Per abbatter il rigore" (no. 11 Aminta, Fillide; Handel 1994b, 109–114; Handel recording, Aminta e Fillide) is not a typical duet of amorous unity expressing bliss at the strength of the lovers' bond but a moral comparable to the final lines of a chamber duet. Whereas it would be dramatically convincing in Aminta's mouth, it detaches Fillide's voice from her character. The troubles the lovers had to go through may explain an element of tension in the setting, witnessed already in the opening ritornello's energetic semiquaver octave leaps (b. 1), which possibly made the duet appropriate for parody as "Non più barbaro furore" (no. 8 Minerva, Giove; Handel 1995, 100–109), in which warring allegorical deities celebrate the arrival of peace.<sup>181</sup> This occasional political work, also known under the title *Io languisco fra le goje*, was most probably commissioned by circles in London belonging to the Tory party on the occasion of the coronation of Charles VI as Holy German Emperor. It is hard to date, the above mentioned hypothesis positioning its creation during Handel's first presence in London (1710–1711), although there are opinions that he could have composed it much earlier (cf. Marx 2002, 592). Whatever the case, Handel might have written the serenata in haste for it contains a large number of borrowings from his Italian period.

The appropriation of a pastoral duet to a heroic-allegorical one without the need for significant intervention or reworking is certainly suggested by the two duets' almost identical A sections, so that my analysis pertains to "Per abbatter il rigore" only. Its ritornello is longer than the lapidary ritornello of "Prendi/prendo l'alma, prendi/prendo il core", although still concise as it is built from the opening semiquaver figure in octave leaps, the "Keiser" *contrapunctus ligatus* passage mentioned above (b. 2–4) and a rhythmically energetic unison closing (b. 5–6). The abundant text lends itself to syllabic treatment appropriate to the declamation of words related to anger and other negative affects in both duets (such as "rigore", "crudel", "spietato", "barbaro furore", "orribile fragore"). The *contrapunctus ligatus* texture alternates throughout the section with increasing parallel passages, the main difference with the duets analysed so far being that the function of parallelism is not only a display of virtuosity but also the emphatic syllabic enunciation of the text. Handel eschews monotony even though he stays within the confines of the tonic for most of the time thanks to the "Keiser" *contrapunctus ligatus* texture since it serves as filling material of great vivaciousness and variability, its trio-texture allowing for different combinations between the two vocal parts and the continuo.

181 A section. Minerva/Giove: Non più barbaro furore / con orribile fragore / turbi all'orbe dolce quiete / ma sparisca il fier rigor. B section. Giove: Sol ulivi trionfanti, Minerva: Sol allori festeggianti, a 2: sian le mete / di grand'alma e nobil cor.

Harris (1980a, 1975–1976) claims that in section B of “Non più barbaro furore” there is a stronger contrast in relation to section A than in “Per abbatter il rigore”. True, in the former duet in addition to its more modest scale and reduced accompaniment, the middle section makes no direct reference to the material of section A. However, one could argue that the unison and harmonically ambiguous onset of the voices at the beginning of section B in “Per abbatter il rigore” is unexpected and therefore also successfully contrasting. The remainders of the two middle sections are structurally rather similar, so it is doubtful whether a certain smoothening out of the contrasts between sections of *da capo* form is indeed more pronounced in Handel's pastoral style (the pastoral cantatas and serenatas examined here) when compared to his heroic (opera seria) style, as Harris seems to think.

The third and smallest group of Handel's duets written in the period 1707–1711 contains duets that display some kind of dialogic elements. Given the already expressed reservations about attaching too much importance to this dramaturgic category, it must be said that the two very different duets belonging to it are exceptions of sorts in relation to the evolving prototype of Handel's dramatic duets, much like the more old-fashioned duets of the first group were exceptions, too. The duet from *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo* (1708) is indeed a singular duet solution that Handel did not return to in his later dramatic duets. On the other hand, Handel not only parodied the likewise rather particular (and in a way exceptional) “Fermati! / No crudel” from *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno* in his first London opera *Rinaldo* but one can say that the foresaid duet presents an anticipation of his dramatic duets of conflict in the 1730s (cf. Ćurković 2009 and Ćurković 2010). “Sorge il di / Spunta l'aurora” (no. 1 *Aci, Galatea*) Handel 2000a, 3–6; Handel recording, *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo*), the opening number of Handel's largest serenata or dramatic cantata, owes part of its unconventional characters to the fact that the beginnings of works were often reserved for deviations from the norm (cf., for Handel's operas, Leopold 2009, 29–42). It is somewhere between a conventional duet of unity and a dialogic duet as it opens with alternating statements that present contrasting motifs (b. 1 in the ritornello, b. 7–8 in the vocal parts). Given that the ritornello (b. 1–7) opens with these motifs and continues to unfold as a *contrapunctus ligatus* texture even simpler than the “Keiser” type mentioned so many times in the course of this chapter (b. 2, 4–6), we are led to expect that the vocal parts will develop these motifs, using *contrapunctus ligatus* and parallelism as filling material. Instead, the *contrapunctus ligatus* texture dominates the duet with its steady, sequential semiquaver flow, bursting into parallelism only occasionally. We might want to associate the characters with their distinctive motifs (or at least contours of motifs), but these expectation are soon abandoned. The reason could be that Handel conceived the vocal

parts in an improvisatory manner, the frequent alternation being in the service of comprehensibility instead of dialogue. If we examine the text<sup>182</sup>, it is in fact not dialogic either, for it merely describes different aspects of a landscape in dawn and contrasts its serenity to the suffering of a lover's (Aci's and Galatea's) heart. The revelation of the contrast is, like in a *simile* aria, postponed to section B (b. 24–31) and maybe this is the reason why it is somewhat more regular and conventional. Jung (2002, 135) is right in claiming that the main purpose of the duet is to set the action with its “serenely flowing movements in quavers and semiquavers” in an “idyll devoid of space and time”<sup>183</sup>.

In “Fermati! / No crudel” (II. no. 8 Clori, Tirsi; Handel 1994b, 187–190; Handel recording, Clori, Tirsi e Fileno) we see Handel at the height of his creative powers. The dramatic situation at the beginning of the second part of *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno* feels like a comic subversion of Harris's monomyth of pursuit, since gender roles are reversed and it is the nymph Clori who is pursuing, in fact chasing, the shepherd Tirsi. He overheard her previous amorous pledges to Fileno, culminating in the preceding number that ended the first act, the duet “Scherzano sul tuo volto / Ridono sul tuo labbro”. Disillusioned, he sets out to abandon the courtship, although—as we know it—he succumbs to Clori's charms again later on. At this stage, though, Clori puts on a tragic mask, swearing that she is faithful to Tirsi (“son fedel”) and topping her plea in section B with the pathetic rhetorical question “Vuoi ch'io m'uccida?”.<sup>184</sup> The duet opens with a ritornello (b. 1–10) that has no motivic significance but serves to set the scene in semantic terms instead. A discontinuous quaver line is expounded in the two violins, with—at least at the outset—the second violin repeating the note previously brought forth by the first violin. This way the musical flow is mimicking the chase and the unexpected appoggiatura clashes in b. 3, as well as the quickening of the pace with the semiquavers spreading from the continuo to the violins, are probably suggesting that Clori is catching up with the shepherd. This is why the duet is not in *da capo* but in *dal segno* form and the “sign” is placed in b. 10 (where the characters first engage in dialogue), as it would make no sense to repeat this orchestral introduction since Clori had already succeeded in stopping the fleeing Tirsi.

182 A section. Aci: Sorge il dì, e tranquillo / par che brilli ancor il ciel. Galatea: Spunta l'aurora, e più sereno / par che brilli ancor il ciel. B section. Aci: Scherza l'aura in braccio a Flora / e sol pena il cor fedel. Galatea: Ride il fiore al prato in seno, / e sol pena il cor fedel.

183 Eine ruhig fließende Bewegung in Achteln und Sechszehnteln... eine raum- und zeitenthobene Idylle.

184 The entire text is displayed in Table 52 in the comparative analysis with the duet with the same incipit from *Rinaldo* in Chapter 3.3.3.2.

The vocal parts begin their dialogue with alternating statements of brief contrasting motifs moving melodically in opposite directions as was the case in “Sorge il dì / Spunta l’aurora”. The difference is that the text is conceived dialogically and that in the course of the duet, Handel uses at least the first one of these motifs as a motivic kernel of sorts to derive further material from it. Clori’s opening outcry “Fermati!” presents this kernel (b. 10), answered by Tirsi—in stichomythia—with a downward leaping “No, crudel” (b. 11). The voices continue with seemingly improvised alternating statements that contradict each other (“Son Cori e son fedel” / “Sei Clori infida”), the ones outlining a broken major triad in b. 13–14 clearly derived from the motivic kernel, before they are intertwined contrapuntally in b. 16–19. However, the use of counterpoint has a clear dramaturgic function here since it juxtaposes parts of Clori’s lines (“Fermati”, “io son fedele”) with energetic outcries of “no” by Tirsi, taking either the form of octave leaps or of descending discontinued semiquavers known from the ritornello. Whereas usually the alternating vocal statements were the sole domain of dialogic replicas in a dramatic duet (including Burney’s “modern plan” duets), here the contrapuntal combination of the voices actually enhances the drama, which is something Handel achieved for the first time in his duets here, and chose to return to it in his later opera duets of the 1730s. The dialectic of following dialogic alternating statements of a motif derived from the kernel with this type of contrapuntal passage is repeated in b. 19–26, this time with inverted parts, leaving it to Clori to react with “no” to Tirsi’s accusations of cruelty and infidelity. It is Tirsi who has the last word with a decisive “Sei Clori infida” in b. 26, reaching his emphatic highest note (b<sub>2</sub>). The fact that the duet is written for two sopranos definitely contributes to the convincing musical portrayal of quarrelling in which the interlocutors attempt to outvoice each other. Besides reducing the accompaniment to the continuo, the short section B (b. 29–40) does not add anything new to this dialectic, with the exception that a dialogue in alternating statements is followed by a free, sequential contrapuntal section (b. 34–36) in which pain is expressed with repeated dissonant intervals by repetition. Clori’s plea “Vuoi che m’uccida?” is rendered more dramatic by harmonic means, meandering from C minor (b. 36–37) via F minor to a cadence on the dominant of D minor, almost convincing us that she is genuinely desperate. However, the fact that this was just a secondary dominant in the tonic key of B-flat major and that the argument resumes with the *dal segno* repetition leaves no doubt that this duet as a whole is conceived along comedic lines.

We have seen that in his Italian period, probably thanks to the wide array of contemporary influences he was exposed to, Handel experimented with a diversity of duet types, some of them reflecting the variety of genres—cantata, serenata, oratorio, and opera—that he was active in. Besides a group of duets following 17th-century traditions and only a few dialogic

ones, he mainly developed a prototype of a duet of unity in which, after initial alternation, *contrapuntus ligatus* played a role as important, if not more important than vocal parallelism. Although he showed a proclivity for imitative counterpoint early on in his career, there is little trace of imitation or even pseudo-imitation in these duets. It is left for us to see how his duet writing changed in Britain.

3. 3. 3. 2.  
*First London Operas (1711–1715)*

YEAR	WORK	HWV		TEXT	CHARACTERS	VOICES
1711	<i>Rinaldo</i>	7a	I. 6	Scherzano sul tuo volto / Ridono sul tuo labbro	Almirena, Rinaldo	S, MS
			II. 3	Il vostro maggio de'bei verdi anni	Armida, Rinaldo	S, MS
			II. 6	Fermati! / No, crudel	Sirene	S, S
			III. 6	Al trionfo del nostro furore	Armida, Argante	S, B
1712	<i>Il pastor fido</i>	8a	III. 8	Per te, mio dolce bene	Mirtillo, Amarilli	S, S
1713	<i>Teseo</i>	9	I. 4	Addio! Mio caro bene / Addio! Dolce mia vita	Clizia, Arcane	S, MS
			II. 2	Si ti lascio / Si ti sprezzo	Medea, Egeo	S, MS
			IV. 9	Cara!/Caro! Ti dono in pegno il cor	Teseo, Agilea	S, S
			V. 5	Unito a un puro affetto, non sa	Clizia, Arcane	S, MS
1713	<i>Lucio Cornelio Silla</i>	10	II. 6	Sol per te, bell'idol mio	Lepido, Flavia	S, S
			II. 10	Ti lascio, idolo mio	Lepido, Flavia	S, S
			III. 10	Non s'estingue mai la fiamma	Silla, Metella	S, S
1715	<i>Amadigi di Gaula</i>	11	II. 4	Crudel, tu non farai	Melissa, Amadigi	S, MS
			III. 3	Cangia al fine il tuo rigore	Oriana, Amadigi	S, MS

TABLE 51.  
List of Italian dramatic duets by G. F. Handel in the period 1711–1715

It has been established that Handel composed around 68 opera duets, out of which as many as 45, i. e. two thirds, are in *da capo* form (cf. Schläder 1995). Schläder's statistic did not take into account the different versions of duets that various revivals produced, mostly because it was devised before most of the modern critical editions of the operas were published. Nevertheless, it gives an indication of the scope and variety of opera duets written in the period of thirty years (1711–1741) during the composer's activity in London. The period of habitual performances of Italian opera in the second decade of the 18th century (1710–1717) is the least regular one in terms of a steady operatic output on Handel's part: in comparison, between 1720 and his last opera *Deidamia* in 1741 he composed at least one opera per season. The reason for this is Handel's absence from the country from June 1711 to spring 1712 due to his obligations as court composer in Hanover. Knapp (1986, 160) finds distractions and unfavourable conditions in the evolution of Handel's career as an opera composer in London after the stellar success of *Rinaldo*. When Handel returned to London, he was "pressed into a hurried production of *Il pastor fido* and soon thereafter (December 1712 and January 1713), the writing of *Teseo*". After two revivals of *Rinaldo* in May 1713, Handel went to Burlington House to concentrate on other kinds of musical genres, which is probably why no operas of his were performed in London during the 1713–1714 season. Table 51 displays all the duets in Handel's operas in this period, showing great diversity in both their numbers and structural-dramaturgic types.

Partly due to the somewhat unconventional way libretti for Handel's first London operas were assembled, all of them except *Il pastor fido* contain more duets than was to become the norm in Handel's later Italian operas. Similar to *Agrippina*, *Rinaldo* was conceived as a compilation of numbers from some of the best vocal music written in Italy, and thus contains only one original duet, the others being more or less direct parodies of duets from *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno* and an aria from *Aminta e Fillide*. *Teseo* contains the same high number of duets probably due to the fact that the libretto was derived from Philippe Quinault's *tragédie lyrique*, a genre that operated with entirely different formal and structural premises. We shall see that this opera is the most diversified when it comes to combining as many as three couples into duets, neither of which is comical. In this early period Handel stayed true to borrowing duets from his earlier works, somewhat more often than in his operas of the 1720s. This can be explained by the fact that when he parodied an older duet, he always chose one that his current audience was not familiar with. For instance, in *Amadigi* he borrowed a duet composed for *Silla*, since this opera was probably only performed privately, so that the bulk of the Haymarket public would not have recognised it. We shall see that Handel resorted to similar practices

during the Royal Academy of Music era mostly when he was reviving older operas. Before we move on to the analysis of individual duets, we should remind ourselves of Handel's particular working methods when composing an Italian opera for London. First and foremost, he was writing Italian music for a public that did not understand Italian, so he radically cut recitatives from the original libretti that served him and his adaptors/librettists Haym and Rolli as a starting point. This lack was often compensated for by aria texts specially introduced for this purpose "or—and this was the more frequent method—by Handel's actual setting of the arias taking over this function" (Strohm 2008, 99). Although this ability of the music to substitute a semantic loss applied more to arias than to the more typified duets, one should henceforth pay more attention to this ability of the setting to interpret and supplement the dramaturgy.

*Rinaldo* (1711) was not only an opportunity for the composer to shine brightly with the Italian music he composed in the past years of his creative development but also to test the adaptability of numbers from cantatas, oratorios and serenatas to the world of the evolving opera seria. Consequently, Handel developed his own types of opera duets by appropriating duets from the above mentioned genres to the operatic stage, in parallel to creating his own ideas of what an opera duet should be like. The libretto was written by Giacomo Rossi probably on the basis of an English prose draft, based in turn on Torquato Tasso's classic epic *Gerusalemme liberata*. With its love of the supernatural and the spectacular, this literary cooperation fitted well with the tradition of English theatre and the predecessor of Italian opera, the dramatic opera or semi-opera. However, as Dean (1995, 102) points out, "Handel himself must have contributed to the libretto", as well, due to the incorporation of both text and music from his earlier mentioned works. He obviously did not see a problem in the appropriation of pastoral music to the heroic and magic realm since in two of the duets he borrowed both text and music. In "Scherzano sul tuo volto / Ridono sul tuo labbro" (I. 6 Almirena, Rinaldo; Handel 1993b, 71–73; Handel recording, *Rinaldo*) his interventions into the original *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno* duet were minimal in section A. As it was written for singers of similar tessituras, the original key of A major was retained, the rhythmic figuration slightly altered, the ritornello shortened by two bars (for dramatic immediacy that favoured a sooner onset of the voices in a genre like opera) and Rinaldo's part somewhat altered in relation to Fileno's, apparently written for a singer with a somewhat lower tessitura, whereas Nicolini felt more comfortable in his middle and upper register. Similar to the modifications of the duet in *Echeggiate, festeggiate* in relation to its counterpart in *Aminta e Fillide*, the B section of the *Rinaldo* duet is rather different from the one in *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno*, perhaps confirming Harris's



opinion on genre differences between cantata and opera as manifested in the shaping of middle sections in a *da capo* form. It has an altered, simplified and much shorter text and is contrasted not only harmonically in the exploration of dissonant harmonies in related keys but also with a different time signature and a “poco adagio” tempo, most effective in bringing a pathetic touch to this duet, which has no justification in the text but perhaps foreshadows the travails of these happy lovers to come as in the next scene, Armida kidnaps Almirena, leaving the heartbroken Rinaldo to sing one of Handel’s most heartrending arias of grief, “Cara sposa”.

	TEXT OF THE DUET “FERMATI! / NO, CRUDEL!” FROM THE CANTATA CLORI, TIRSI E FILENO (1707)	TEXT OF THE DUET “FERMATI! / NO, CRUDEL!” FROM THE OPERA RINALDO (1711)
A	Clori: Fermati! Tirsi: No, crudel! Clori: Son Clori, e son fedel. Tirsi: Sei Clori infida.	Armida: Fermati! Rinaldo: No, crudel! Armida: Armida son, fedel... Rinaldo: Spietata, infida!
B	Tirsi: Lasciami! Clori: Pria morir! Tirsi: Non posso più soffrir. Clori: Vuoi ch'io m'uccida?	Rinaldo: Lasciami! Armida: Pria morir! Rinaldo: Non posso più soffrir. Armida: Vuoi ch'io m'uccida?

TABLE 52.  
Comparison of different versions of the duet text “Fermati!/ No crudel”

The musical transformation of “Fermati! / No, crudel” (II. 6 Armida, Rinaldo; Handel 1993b, 118–120; Handel recording, Rinaldo) when compared to “Fermati! / No crudel” (II. no. 8 Clori, Tirsi) (Handel 1994b, 187–190) is less extensive and refers mostly to the abridging of the ritornello and the adaptation of Tirsi’s former soprano part to Nicolini’s mezzosoprano by altering merely a few bars, including the above mentioned culmination on b2. The dramatic situation in the cantata and the opera bear many similarities, although the gender inversion of amorous pursuit is less harmless and comical here. The sorceress Armida has inadvertently fallen in love with the crusader Rinaldo and pursues him, provoking only disgust on his part for she is not only his enemy but had also abducted his betrothed Almirena. The main reason for a much shorter ritornello (b. 1–4) is the need to engage the characters in dialogue as quickly as possible since the plot twist (Armida’s highly unexpected infatuation with Rinaldo) in the preceding recitative has triggered strongly opposed affects of love and hatred that—in the world of opera seria at least—need to be given musical

vent as soon as possible. Obviously more known than its counterpart in *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno*, this duet provoked differing opinions and evaluations in scholarly literature. Schläder (1995), who is aware that in contrast to the usual techniques of imitation and parallelism, the most common way of conveying a dialogue musically is “the distribution of a thematic line rich in motifs between both voices”<sup>185</sup> finds that Handel rarely implements this consistently. He counts “Fermati! / No crudel” from *Rinaldo* among the exceptions, maintaining that in spite of the technique of echo (already anticipated in the ritornello) and the swift vocal alternation mimicking the quick replicas in an argument, the lack of contrast between the two voices’ material reduces it to the level of pseudo-dialogue. Ruf (2001, 91–92), on the other hand, finds that “Handel proves himself as a master of musical dialogue, even though here, unlike the trio from *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo*, the discrepancy of the affects and the differences between the characters do not play any [musical, A/N] role.”<sup>186</sup> Handel portrayed clashing affects and characters with the help of contrasting musical means increasingly only in his duets of conflict in the 1730s (cf. Ćurković 2009; 2010).

“Il vostro maggio de’bei verdi anni” (Sirene; Handel 1993b, 99–101; Handel recording, *Rinaldo*) is not an independent dramatic duet in the modern sense of the word since it is first of all given to episodic and generic characters whose only purpose is to attempt to seduce Rinaldo by appearing in this one scene. A librettistic concession to the tradition of English theatre, including dramatic opera (the siren duet in Purcell’s *King Arthur* comes to mind), it could scarcely have been imagined in an Aristotelean libretto by Zeno or Metastasio. The main melody with its periodic structure is a note-to-note parody of “Se vago rio” from *Aminta e Fillide*. “Aminta’s final aria before Fillide’s acceptance of his suit depicts his longing with the now familiar metaphor of the river running to the sea as an image of eternal union” (Harris 2001, 160). Perhaps this erotic subtext was the reason why Handel thought it especially suitable for a siren duet. This shows that even when he was parodying his own duets like in the three duets in *Rinaldo* just examined, Handel took great care to adapt them to their new musical surroundings and dramaturgic contexts. The voices are singing in unison and—in a way—not representing independent characters.

The only duet Handel composed specifically for *Rinaldo* is “Al trionfo del nostro furore” (III. 6 Armida, Argante; Handel 1993b, 162–169). After duets expressing amorous unity between Almirena and Rinaldo in Act 1

185 Aufteilung einer motivreichen thematischen Linie auf beide Vokalstimmen.

186 Erweist sich Händel als ein Meister des musikalischen Dialogs – wengleich hier, anders als im *Aci*-Terzett, die Diskrepanz der Affekte bzw. die Differenz der Charaktere keine Rolle zu spielen scheint.

and conflict between Rinaldo and Armida in Act 2, in Act 3 the opera's two villains are joining forces against the crusaders. In terms of its character as well as the techniques of combining both vocal and instrumental forces, it is in line with the stylistic and structural developments Handel showed in his cantatas and serenatas. The duet unites the protagonists in monotextual terms as in the first two lines (section A, b. 1–35) they express common determination and in the remaining two (section B, b. 36–59) they promise each other their hearts as a reward for this renewed unity against the Christians, which enabled Handel to create another sharp contrast with a ternary time signature (as against the A section's 4/4), a slower tempo and a mostly homophonic texture with elements of free counterpoint. Although the orchestral accompaniment (two oboes and strings *a quattro*) is maintained, it is doubling the voices for most of the time, whereas in section A it engaged in a *concertante* interplay with the voices. Section A also applies some of the techniques known from Handel's Italian duets. The figurative ritornello's (b. 1–7) first two bars are used as material for the—atypically—parallel and not successive onset of the voices (b. 7–9). This is followed by another variant of the *contrapunctus ligatus* type of texture known from previous duets (b. 10–12, repeated in varied form with the parts inverted in b. 12–14). The remainder of the section, however, outlines a tripartite structure of a higher degree of formal regularity than was the case in the dramatic duets written in Italy. After section A<sub>1</sub> (b. 1–14) follows a somewhat different section A<sub>2</sub> (b. 14–20), distinguished by alternating statements of passages in dotted rhythm evoking the character of a march and eventually combined into a free contrapuntal texture (b. 21–22). By positioning the alternations in the upper fourth and lower fifth, this section explores F major, returns to the tonic B-flat major and then ventures to E-flat major before returning again to the tonic. After this, section A<sub>3</sub> (b. 20–35) resembles a varied repetition of section A<sub>1</sub> and thus rounds off the duet's framing sections as a unified whole. This formal expansion of sections in Handel's dramatic duets that had already begun during his stay in Italy will be interesting to examine in the duets to come.

As opposed to that, “Per te, mio dolce bene” (III. 8 Mirtillo, Amarilli; Handel 1876a, 66–68; Handel recording, *Il pastor fido*), the duet in Handel's *Il pastor fido* (1712) does not seem to follow this trend at first by being merely monopartite. On the other hand it continues what Handel was striving for in the duets analysed so far, appropriating it to a dramatic situation he has not quite explored yet, although—as we have seen in Chapters 3.2.5, 3.3.1.3 and 3.3.2—London audiences saw it grow into a specific type of opera duet in the period 1710–1714. Rossi derived his libretto from another classic of Italian poetry, Giovanni Battista Guarini's pastoral play *Il pastor fido* (1585) by simplifying the plot and reducing the number of characters.

The nymph Amarilli has been sentenced to death because of her presumed infidelity to Silvio, to whom she was to be joined in matrimony because of a wrongly interpreted prophecy. There would be no love in this arranged marriage as Silvio is not interested in women (but will eventually fall for another nymph, Dorinda), and Amarilli's love for the shepherd Mirtillo is mutual, but unacknowledged out of a sense of obligation and because of the scheming of the nymph Eurilla, also in love with Mirtillo. The duet occurs just before Amarilli is about to be sacrificed because of her infidelity, after misunderstandings with Mirtillo had been cleared and their love finally confessed to each other. After Mirtillo expresses his wish to die in her place, in this tragic duet of departure they both sing the two lines "Per te, mio dolce bene / son contento/contenta di morir". The tragedy is conveyed with the use of G minor and what is probably a moderate or slower tempo, but it is difficult to denote in precise analytic terms why it drew the following words of praise from the otherwise rather picky Dean and Knapp (1987, 211): "a beautiful movement in that mood of tragic resignation that never failed to draw the best from Handel". Part of the reason must lie in the invocation of the imitative texture of the chamber duet. Atypically for an opera duet and therefore exercising the effect of surprise on the audience, Mirtillo opens the duet with an emphatic leap of a fifth followed by a syncopated crotchet, so often encountered in imitative structures. Only after this does the continuo join in to accompany the voice. After he had presented a rounded short subject (b. 1–3), Amarilli joins in what seems like imitation at first, but it turns out that Mirtillo is providing contrapuntal support for a short space of merely three beats (b. 3), rendering Mirtillo's statement of the subject (b. 3–4) a successive statement rather than an imitation. Suggesting a dense contrapuntal texture and eschewing these expectations is one of the main characteristics of this duet and perhaps this is not surprising since rather than for neighbouring voices, it was written for two sopranos, the castrato Valeriano Pellegrini and Elisabetta Pilotti Schiavonetti, who had already sung duets of departure in *Idaspe Fedele* and continued to do so in the pasticcios *Ernelinda* and *Lucio Vero*. Since two sopranos cannot be woven into a dense imitative texture because of their tendency to cross and become less independent, Handel combines them in a freer manner, using both *contrapunctus ligatus* (b. 5–6, 14–5) and a simultaneous texture of parallelism and contrary motion (b. 6–7, 9–10, 16–19) that often leads to cadences. In motivic terms, the opening subject gets lost on the way as Handel gives a prominent place only to the incipit (the ascending fifth leap) that serves as the point of departure for the only two (sequentially repeated) imitative structures in the duet (b. 10–14) and to the arpeggio originating in the subject (b. 1–2) and permeating the vocal texture in b. 6–7 and 16–7. The interplay between the orchestra and the

voices is also interestingly diverse: after mere continuo accompaniment at the outset, the strings join in to support the voices harmonically and start to gradually interweave—joined by oboes—motivic interjections into the texture while the voices are pausing (b. 7–8, 10–11, 12–13, 14–15). This process of increasing orchestral presence culminates in an imitatively dense and harmonically challenging final ritornello. Luckily, the ensuing *sinfonia* (Handel 1876, 68) announces the grand priest of Diana who brings happy news that the prophecy can be fulfilled by their own marriage instead of Amarilli's and Silvio's.

Most of the criticism levelled at Handel's next opera *Teseo* (1713) stems from the fact that it was adapted by Nicola Haym from Quinault's *tragédie lyrique* and therefore does not abide by the laws of the nascent *dramma per musica* (cf. Kimbell 1963; Dean and Knapp 1987, 236–248). Haym had to cut the recitative extensively and Handel decided to drop some lines that he had already set just before the performance. The arias (and duets), some of which were derived from Quinault's text and some newly added by Haym, are often not the exit numbers that began to be imposed as a norm in Italian opera and if they had their place in the French original, they were meant to be set as much shorter musical numbers. As a result, we are dealing with an unexpectedly high number of duets—four, some of them derived from Quinault, some of them by Haym—and their assignment and placing does not always conform to the hierarchy of roles and singers in Italian opera. Two duets for the third couple of protagonists (in other words: subsidiary characters), Egeo's confidant Arcane and Agilea's confidant Clizia would be unthinkable in an opera that assigns one to Teseo and Agilea on the one hand and Egeo and Medea on the other. As Dean and Knapp (1987, 246) have noticed, “they are the only pair of secondary lovers in a Handel opera to enjoy two duets. Both are excellent and particularly well integrated in their context”. Handel made sure to differentiate the in musical terms from the ones written for the *primo* and *secondo uomo* and the two *prime donne*.

The first one of these, “Addio! Mio caro bene / Addio! Dolce mia vita” (I. 4 Clizia, Arcane; Handel 1874, 19–20; Handel recording, *Teseo*) follows after Clizia had persuaded Arcane to join Teseo in the defense of Athens. Although earlier in the scene Arcane displayed some jealousy over Teseo given the gratitude and admiration Clizia expressed for him because he had saved her, it is a typical duet of departure for reconciled lovers in a slower tempo and a minor key. Dean and Knapp praise how it is integrated into the action, flowing almost seamlessly out of the preceding recitative and how it “develops into an eloquent cavatina on a wide-ranging bass, and culminates, after a recitative cadence, in an exquisite and fully scored ritornello rich in the suspensions appropriate to the parting of lovers”.

(Dean and Knapp 1987, 246–247) This closing ritornello (b. 50–57) presents an effective ending to this continuo duet similarly to “Per te, mio dolce bene”, but the suspensions are not unique to it: we have encountered them in the *contrapunctus ligatus* sections of many a Handel’s duet analysed so far. What fascinates one about this duet is how it almost sounds as if it was improvised, although we are dealing with a free tripartite form. The starting point and the conclusion of its first section (A1, b.1–16) is indeed a cadence. The voices start off by exchanging alternating statements on the semantic essence of the duet, the word “Addio”, set to a D-T-D cadence in the tonic G minor. The continuo figuration that ensues (from b. 4 onwards, carried throughout almost the entirety of the duet) propels the duet forward, but Clizia and Arcane bring it to a halt it again by another cadence (b. 7–8). After this they alternate on independent, freely developed material, presenting the textual binary opposition “io parto” / “or vanne” before cadencing again in B-flat major. This is the key in which the middle section B (b. 17–32), marked by a possible contrast in tempo, unfolds Arcane’s extensive statement (b. 17–24). Since this segment of the text is highly polytextual<sup>187</sup>, Clizia’s three lines are presented in succession (b. 25–32) to new material and in a contrasting key. Section A2, although the setting of the exact same text as A1, significantly extends the music, introducing the kind of sequentially repeated imitative counterpoint starting with fourth leaps (b. 37–41) familiar from “Per te, mio dolce bene”. It seems that, inspired by the possibility to work together with Haym (who may have been following Handel’s suggestions), Handel relished in the possibility to develop his own ideas of what a tragic duet of departure should be like. In doing so, he was not bound by conventions of performance practice like the need to supply star singers with the kind of duets they wanted to sing.

The duet “Unito a un puro affetto, non sa” (V. 5 Clizia, Arcane; Handel 1874, 103–104; Handel recording, Teseo), is slightly more extended than the previous duet of departure for Clizia and Arcane. It displays more virtuosity than was expected from a secondary pair of characters and it is indeed “surprising to find Clizia and Arcane stealing the principals’ limelight towards the end of the opera” (Dean and Knapp 1987, 247), although Agilea and Teseo outplay them with their own duet in iv. 9. Table 53 shows the clear formal outlining of closed musical units characteristic of “Unito a un puro affetto” in spite of its asymmetrical phrase-lengths. The alignment of the text is not in harmony with this formal structuring, but the subsections of section A are clearly separated from each other by strong cadences and changes in the texture. The motivic kernel is once

187 Arcane: Parto, ma parto in pene / Che teco resta ognor / Questo mio cor. Clizia: Breve sia la partita / Poi farò pago allor / Il tuo desio.

again contained in the incipit, this time in the continuo part, for it gives the whole duet its main rhythmic impetus. Like “Al trionfo del nostro furore”, this duet shows that it is possible to start out with vocal parallelism and leave contrapuntal combining for the section’s subsequent course, although the stress is on the technique of vocal parallelism, obviously expressive of the idea of amorous unity between the characters. Parallelism is also more suitable to the section’s songlike structure and it fittingly culminates in coloraturas at the end of section a<sub>3</sub>, thus leaving it to an abridged subsection a<sub>1</sub> to round off the section. Section B is of a smaller scope and more conventional, displaying harmonic contrast and standard contrapuntal combining. The statement of the ritornello after the *da capo* repeat of section A is in line with 17th-century operatic conventions and it is not surprising that it reproduces textures, even whole passages from the vocal parts.

FORM	BAR	KEY	TEXT	DESCRIPTION	
A	a <sub>1</sub>	1–19	G	Unito a un puro affetto non sa che sia sospetto	main motif (continuo), parallelism
	a <sub>2</sub>	20–39	D, G	non sa che sia sospetto un cor amante.	main motif over held note & free CP: repeated in inverted CP
	a <sub>3</sub>	40–52	G	un cor amante.	parallelism (dotted flourishes)
	a' <sub>1</sub>	53–63	G	non sa che sia sospetto / un cor amante.	parallelism (from a <sub>1</sub> )
B	b <sub>1</sub>	63–82	G, e	Non vo'che gelosia / entri nell'alma mia mà vo'che sia l'amor / sempre costante.	imitation, parallelism
	b <sub>2</sub>	82–92	b	mà vo'che sia l'amor / sempre costante.	main motif over held note, free CP

TABLE 53.

Formal outline of the duet “Unito a un puro affetto” from Handel’s *Teseo* (1713)

In terms of sheer vocal virtuosity, the duet “Cara!/Caro! Ti dono in pegno il cor” (iv. 9 *Teseo*, Agilea; Handel 1874, 84–88; Handel recording, *Teseo*) definitely shows that it was written for the *primo uomo* and *prima donna* of the production, although—as we shall see—Medea could hardly be called musically inferior to Agilea. Valeriano Pellegrini (*Teseo*), a soprano castrato in the service of the Elector Palatine in Düsseldorf and a “technically proficient rather than a glamorous singer” (Dean and Rosselli 2001) could

not have found the excessive coloratura in the duet too challenging, and Margherita de L'Epine (Agilea) had already sung similar duets in *Almahide*. Dean and Knapp are critical of Burney's judgement that the duet is "equal if not superior to any one of the kind that Handel ever composed", labelling it "decidedly verbose" and concluding ironically that "perhaps Handel is right after all: such an unpredictable shift of fortune is calculated to make any pair of lovers babble." (Dean and Knapp 1987, 245). Labelling extensive vocal figuration as verbose and babbling disregards the legitimacy of a duet that replicates the aesthetic of the *aria di bravura*, although there is no doubt that this is not one of the most inventive duets Handel wrote. Nevertheless, it reflects the trend for section expansion that Calella (2000, 135) describes as "'larger form' with two vocal section separated by a caesura cadence on the dominant (or in the case of a minor tonality, the relative major)"<sup>188</sup>. Nevertheless, I have to agree with Calella that "Si ti lascio / Si ti sprezzo" is a better example of this tendency than "Cara!/Caro! Ti dono in pegno il cor", whose two sections are of a somewhat uneven scope.

But let us examine this major-mode, jubilant celebratory duet more closely. Convinced that Medea is going to force Agilea to renounce Teseo, the lovers are relieved to see that she seemingly approves of their union after all. A sense of rhythmic vivacity is accomplished first and foremost by its composite ritornello (b. 1–9) built from as many as three motifs in the manner of the instrumental *concerto*, characterised by sixth and octave leaps as well as scalar passages. The voices are introduced over a caesura in longer note values that enables ornamentation in the *da capo* repeat (b. 10–11). This slowing down of pace is a sensual effect reserved for the portrayal of amorous bliss: Handel will make use of it in his Royal Academy of Music operas as well, e. g. in the duet for Cleopatra and the titular protagonist of *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* (1724) and the duet for Costanza and Riccardo, "T'amo, si" in *Riccardo primo* (1727). After this effective debut, the voices will alternate on a generic motif unrelated to the ritornello (b. 12–14) only to be united in parallelism straight away (b. 14–16). The section makes limited recourse to some contrapuntal combining of the voices, mostly semiquaver flourishes against held notes or suspensions (b. 16–20) before it cadences in the dominant. This first subsection (a1, b. 1–24) is shorter than the second one (a2, b. 24–58) but equally interspersed with orchestral interjections of motifs from the ritornello and thus vitalising the lack of invention in the vocal parts. The extended parallelism making out the second subsection renders it different from the first one: after alternation with the same motif as in a1 (b. 25–28) and a contrapuntal passage

188 ,Grössere Form' mit zwei, durch einen zäsurbildenden Schluß auf der Dominante (oder, im Fall einer moll-Tonart, in der Dur-Parallele) getrennten Gesangsteilen.



likewise modelled on the one from a1 (b. 30–34), the voices continue to spin out semiquaver coloratura passages in thirds, Agilea's part positioned under Teseo's, who was obviously considered the bigger *virtuoso*. Section B stays true to this kind of structuring, offering little contrast bar the obligatory modulation and the reduction of the accompaniment to the continuo. It starts out with an imitation of a semiquaver passage derived from section A (b. 57–65, the interrupted suspensions from the continuo adopted as Agilea's counterpoint to Teseo), and the whole passage is repeated—transposed and inverted—in b. 72–76. An equally important role is played by a contrapuntal passage juxtaposing a new, sequential and rhythmically pregnant motif to a held note (b. 67–72). This passage is also repeated transposed and with the parts inverted in b. 81–85, giving section B motivic unity and a sense of harmonic direction as it explores related minor keys. There was no model for this duet text in the original Quinault libretto and this is certainly felt in Handel's Italianate *di bravura* setting.

Calella (2000, 135) considers “Sì ti lascio / Sì ti sprezzo” (II. 2 Medea, Egeo; Handel 1874, 35–37; Handel recording, Teseo) the first duet in which Handel employed the above mentioned A section in “larger form” and found that henceforth this structural model was to become the norm for many of his duets. He is mistaken in the assumption that this structural model appears here for the first time since among the duets examined in this chapter, the A sections of “Il voler nel fior degl'anni” from *Il trionfo del tempo e del disinganno* and “Senza occhi e senza accenti” (the original, Roman closing duet of *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno*) already clearly outline it. The duet from *Il trionfo del tempo e del disinganno* is the more regular one of the two as it follows alternation (over a held note) with *contrapunctus ligatus* and then parallelism, also separating the two subsections with a fragment of the ritornello in the dominant key of D major. “Senza occhi e senza accenti” is more extended than “Il voler nel fior degl'anni” and also freer in the application of the vocal techniques of alternation, counterpoint and parallelism, which only proves that the structural model consisting of several cycles of these techniques that I had devised earlier (cf. Ćurković 2009 & 2010) should not be taken as a strict norm, for Handel can often combine them several times in different orders. We are evidently dealing with a trend towards formal expansion and complexity of the framing sections in *da capo* form. “Al trionfo del nostro furore” from *Rinaldo* presents an intermediary stage between Calella's “larger form” and a monopartite one since it does not separate the subsections of section A with a clear cadence but articulates a small-scale tripartite form with a contrasting middle section. But even if it is not Handel's first duet in Calella's “larger form”, “Sì ti lascio / Sì ti sprezzo” is exceptional in many other ways, including its dramaturgy. “Handel strikes a shrewd dramatic blow by using

the procedure of a love scene to suggest something like its opposite, not so much a clash of wills as an agreement to differ with strong reservations on each side.” (Dean and Knapp 1987, 241) Dean and Knapp compare it to “Ich will gar von nichtes wissen” (I. 10 Edilia, Osman; Handel 1994a, 75–77), a duet from *Almira* along entirely different stylistic lines since it occurs in a similar situation where two former lovers are ridding themselves of their previous bond. Nevertheless, in *Teseo* the duet is more confrontational, following Egeo’s announcement that instead of himself, he wants Medea to marry his son. Although it is equally clear that both of them are interested in other, younger partners (Egeo in Agilea and Medea in Teseo), Medea reacts to this in anger and the duet is the musical venting of the irritation that both characters are feeling, almost competing with each other in the intensity of mutual repudiation. We are dealing with a case of polytextuality<sup>189</sup> that does not reflect opposing affective contents or character traits: in a way, Medea and Egeo are not even in conflict as both of them want to end the relationship. Rather than having the function of some sort of semantic distinction, the variants “lascio/sprezzo” and “fuggirmi/schernirmi” in the text serve to differentiate the voices in the texture, although this is not consistently implemented. Handel takes this differentiation to the musical plane by giving the voices different and contrasting motivic material in section A.

As Calella had noticed, it is built from two sections, each one presenting the material in vocal alternating statements and then combining the voices in free counterpoint and parallelism on the way to a cadence. This first subsection (A1, b. 1–32) persists in the association of Medea’s line “Sì ti lascio” with an ascending fourth leap followed by a descending second (motif x, first occurrence b. 10–11) and Egeo’s “Sì ti sprezzo” with a descending semiquaver passage (motif y, first occurrence b. 12–13). They alternate twice (b. 10–14) and then engage in imitation derived from motif x (b. 14–17) before the whole process of successive exchanges of contrasting motifs is repeated in the dominant key of C major in b. 19–23. However, this time the parts are inverted and—as a result—Egeo is singing “Sì ti lascio” and motif x, while Medea answers him with motif y and the respective line, “Sì ti sprezzo”. Although it seems that Handel set out to differentiate his protagonists at first, this shows that they are in fact interchangeable and that their fates are inextricably linked. The remainder of this second part of A1 consists of a parallel texture (b. 24–28), which is a more appropriate way to lead up to the cadence in C major (b. 31–32). Subsection A2 (b. 32–62)

189 A section. Medea: Sì ti lascio. Egeo: Sì ti sprezzo. a 2: Altro cor io chiudo in petto.  
B section. Medea: Tu credesti col fuggirmi / Egeo: Tu pensasti col schernirmi / a 2: Che il mio cor fosse privo / d’orgni altro affetto.

brings further changes: this time it opens with alternating statements of motif x only, both Medea and Egeo singing their original lines to it, whereas motif y is transferred to the violin part where it alternates with motif x in the same way it did in a1 (b. 32–37). The duet began with the lovers almost competing to retort each other as quickly as possible and with contrasting replicas, the short alternating statements being reminiscent of exchanges in a heated argument. After the association of each of the characters with his or her motif (and line) has diminished in the course of subsection A1, it is almost completely abandoned in subsection A2. Its subsequent course seems to confirm this: after a brief imitative passage (b. 38–40), the voices are led further parallel or in cadential passages, without any further alternation like in subsection A1. Does an increased vocal simultaneity for Medea and Egeo suggest that we are in fact dealing with an “agreement to differ” after all? Not necessarily, for Handel might have abandoned the contrasting motivic differentiation for the sake of textural diversity only. This duet draws attention by interweaving the voices as equals into an orchestra that consists of two independent parts for oboes and violas and only one for violins. The fact that at the beginning of section a2 the violins take over motif y must be regarded as one step in the textural diversification of the duet. Section B (b. 62–82) drops the orchestral accompaniment and explores the relative minor keys of the tonic and the dominant. Structurally it is similar in that it alternates between newly devised motifs that highlight the polytextuality and a simultaneous texture. It does so in two shorter subsections and also consistently reserves its first line for Medea and the second for Teseo, but as we are dealing with free derivation of material derived from the same kernel as opposed to a motivic contrast, nothing is added to the successfully conveyed impression that Medea and Egeo are turning to a different love (“altro affetto”) only to spite each other.

*Lucio Cornelio Silla* (1713) is Handel's opera we know least about. Chrysander's assumption that it was only performed privately, most probably at Burlington House, has been confirmed. Dean and Knapp (1987, 263) and Strohm (2008, 43) are of the opinion that Rossi adapted the libretto from an older model. Although as short as *Il pastor fido* and *Imeneo* (both operas with pastoral subjects, which justifies the brevity), there is no doubt that *Silla* belongs to the genre of opera seria, whatever the shortcomings of its libretto. Dean and Knapp (1987, 264) have high words of praise for the two duets for which music has been preserved. The duet “Non s'estingue mai la fiamma” (III. 10 Silla, Metella; Handel 2015, 122–128; Handel recording, Silla) printed in the HHA edition of the opera is another reconstruction: the duet text was printed in the libretto, but there is no musical source documenting Handel's setting, so the duet “Prendi l'alma, prendi il core”

from *Rodrigo*, “which has the same verse-metre” (Preface in Handel 2015, 17), was adapted in its place transposed from the original G major to F major, probably in order to fit in with the disposition of tonalities in the opera. Handel did not normally engage in parody as direct as that. In the duet borrowings we have encountered so far he regularly adapted them in accordance with conventions of genre (cantata, serenata, opera), but also with the new dramaturgic context and affective content. He rarely took over whole duets note for note, and this would have probably not happened in *Silla* either. However, the fact that the two texts are in the same verse-metre is an odd coincidence given that both were assigned to a reconciled cheating husband and forgiving wife. Rodrigo does not display any of Silla’s pathological behaviour—threats to rape Flavia and Celia and to kill Flavia’s husband Lepido as well as Claudio—but the dramaturgic parallels between the two duets are striking. As we shall see in the comparison of the duets “Sol per te, bell’idol mio” and “Cangia al fine il tuo rigore” from *Amadigi*, it was perfectly acceptable to Handel to reach for a duet he composed earlier, either because of a lack of time or in order to reap more success from it, but the transformation that “Sol per te”, the first duet from *Silla* underwent in *Amadigi* suggests that a duet from *Rodrigo* written six years before would have been likewise adapted in some way. True, the difference between the dramatic situations in *Silla* and *Amadigi* is more pronounced, but as we shall see, this was probably not the main motivator for Handel’s adaptation of “Sol per te, bell’idol mio” into “Cangia al fine il tuo rigore”.

The other two duets in the opera are written for Flavia and Lepido, the secondary couple that, according to Dean and Knapp, outshine Silla and Metella with their music: “Both their duets, sung in the tyrant’s shadow, are in minor keys, and both are excellent.” (1987, 264–265) As had already been established in Chapter 3.3.3.1 when it was considered as a possible replacement for the unpreserved duet at the point in the action where Esilena takes leave from Rodrigo, “Ti lascio, idolo mio” (II. 10 Lepido, Flavia; Handel 2015, 87–88; Handel recording, *Silla*) displays some features of the chamber duet, but it does not implement them consistently since its purpose is to underline briefly and effectively the tragedy of departure. We have seen how Handel set an opera duet of departure for the first time (if we leave the unpreserved duet from *Rodrigo* out of consideration) in *Il pastor fido*. Similarly to “Per te, mio dolce bene”, in this duet he did not strive for a complex form either, but while the former makes use of all the duet techniques explored in this study, including a ritornello form type of interplay with the orchestra, “Ti lascio idolo mio” is so short that we could label it an *arioso a due*. It consists of an imitation of the opening motif in b. 1–3, a seeming cadence in A major in b. 3, followed by a free contrapuntal

passage (b. 4–7) that contains a *contrapunctus ligatus* texture modulating via a sequence of secondary dominants back into the tonic F minor, “the tonality of sadness and pain, of death and the underworld”<sup>190</sup> (Leopold 2009, 83), according to the theory of affections as outlined in Mattheson’s *Das neu-eröffnete Orchestre*. A brief cadence (b. 8–9) silences the voices and the closing ritornello Dean and Knapp praised so much as “a five-bar threnody of haunting contrapuntal eloquence” is based on the material already presented contrapuntally by the voices and the continuo, and is meant to accompany the moments when Flavia and Lepido are escorted offstage by Silla’s guards (as the stage instructions say, “partono, custoditi da soldati”). Handel evidently wanted to achieve the maximum effect possible in so little space. A year before in “Per te, mio dolce bene” and earlier in 1713 in “Cara!/Caro! Ti dono in pegno il cor” he was developing a duet type, but had not yet reached the full-scale *da capo* form adopted by the duet of departure in the operas and pasticcios compiled from works of his Italian contemporaries that were performed alongside his operas in London at the time. As we shall see in Chapter 3.4.2, he gave a fully mature contribution to it only in his Royal Academy of Music operas. At this stage, Handel was still experimenting, and in “Ti lascio, idolo mio” he was at his most immediate and, if one will, also at his most bold when giving musical shape to a tragic departure.

The duets “Sol per te, bell’idol mio” (II. 6 Lepido, Flavia; Handel 2015, 71–76; Handel recording, Silla) and “Cangia al fine il tuo rigore” (III. 3 Oriana, Amadigi; Handel 1971, 141–147; Handel recording, Amadigi) from the opera *Amadigi di Gaula* (1715) present—as had already been implied—one of the more interesting cases of self-parody in Handel’s dramatic duet output. That is why after an examination of their respective dramaturgic contexts, they will undergo a comparative structural analysis. In *Silla*, the duet occurs just after Lepido had informed Flavia of Silla’s lust for her: she reacts by saying that she would rather die than yield to the tyrant and he vows revenge. The duet consists of a pledge of love in section A and the invocation of Alecto’s wrath in section B.<sup>191</sup> Unfortunately, this determination of the couple gives way to the musical hopelessness embodied in “Ti lascio, idolo mio” only four scenes later. Occurring in a similar situation of utter despair, *Amadigi di Gaula* (1715) unites the titular hero and his beloved, the princess Oriana in their last plea to the sorceress Melissa, who holds them captive and is unsure whom she should kill first to exact her revenge on Amadigi for rejecting her love. Although both duets depict a

190 Der Trauer und des Schmerzes, des Todes und der Unterwelt.

191 Lepido & Flavia: A section. Sol per te, bell’idol mio, / il mio cor ha gioia e pace.  
B section. Chi tentar vorrà il mio petto / proverà di cruda Aletto / l’ardente face.

serious predicament and express their distress, the affective contents are quite different: Flavia and Lepido radiate revolt and resistance and the formerly proud Amadigi and Oriana beg Melissa for mercy.<sup>192</sup>

FORM	BAR	KEY	“SOL PER TE” (SILLA)	“CANGIA” (AMADIGI)	KEY	BAR	FORM	
A	rit.	1–18	a	Keiser motif (k), <i>Fortspinnung</i>		1–18	g	rit. A
	a <sub>1</sub>	19–35		k in overlapping alternation		19–35		a <sub>1</sub>
		36–47	a, C	free CP, <i>CP ligatus</i>	free CP, parallelism	36–45	g, B <sup>b</sup>	
	a <sub>2</sub> <sup>*</sup>	48–66	C, a	<i>Fortspinnung</i> of k, k in orchestra, <i>fermata</i> cadence		46–64	B <sup>b</sup> , g	a <sub>2</sub> <sup>**</sup>
		67–92	a	sequential free CP, parallelism, cadence	alternation over held note	65–89	g	
rit.	93–110		different from opening rit.	different from opening rit.	90–101		rit.	
B	111–142	a, e	free CP, parallelism	mostly parallelism	102–121	g, d	B	

TABLE 54.

Comparative formal outline of Handel's duets “Sol per te, bell'idol mio” from *Silla* (1713) and “Cangia al fine il tuo rigore” from *Amadigi di Gaula* (1715)

\* The “border” between a<sub>1</sub> and a<sub>2</sub> is actually in b. 54.

\*\* The “border” between a<sub>1</sub> and a<sub>2</sub> is actually in b. 52.

Interestingly, when he composed “Sol per te, bell'idol mio”, Handel made use of material from an aria in Reinhard Keiser's opera *Octavia* (1705), “Kann dich mein Arm” (I. 2 Nero, *Octavia*; Keiser 1902, 15–18). The opera was published as a supplement to Chrysander's *Georg Friedrich Händels Werke* due to the fact that Handel extensively parodied it, “implying a process of deliberate foraging rather than spontaneous recollection”, according to John Roberts (1986, 55). I have already stated that this study will not engage in an in-length discussion on questions of Handel's parody practices, but even a rudimentary examination of Keiser's original aria, whose construction is entirely different from Handel's duets', shows that Handel borrowed merely the main motivic idea in its first two bars. Both Keiser and Handel used it as a starting point for the outlining of the vocal

192 Amadigi & Oriana: A section. Cangia al fine il tuo rigore / Senti oh Dio di noi pietà. B section. Deh' ti muova il mio dolore, / troppo usasti crudeltà.

and the instrumental parts<sup>193</sup>, but while Keiser mainly alternates the motif in different parts to pedal accompaniment, Handel's treatment of it is much more developmental as in his ritornello he submits Keiser's motif to extensive *Fortspinnung*, reaching as many as 18 bars in both versions of the duet. The more complex structure and the scope of the duet turn away from Keiser's aria, the above mentioned motif being the only common denominator. Table 54 lines up Handel's two duets together, differentiating passages in which they concur and ones in which they differ. After developing his own duet design with the use of Keiser's material in "Sol per te, bell'idol mio", Handel was prepared to vary it in accordance to the needs of the duet in *Amadigi di Gaula*.

The table above highlights the parallels between the two duets in a common column and the differences in separate columns, but not necessarily their common overall formal structure. Their A sections are examples of Calella's "larger form", cadencing on the relative major (C/B-flat major) midway through the section, and followed by a brief statement of the ritornello in the orchestra as the unfolding of the phrase beginning with Keiser's motif (k) is halted on a cadence each time the voices join in (b. 59–60 and 64–65 in "Sol per te, bell'idol mio"; b. 56–57 and 63–64 in "Cangia al fine il tuo rigore"). This puts a significant musical stress on the key words "sol per te" and "pietà", contributing to a poignant dramatic effect. As if momentarily discouraged by the sudden interruption of motif k and the harmonic *caesura* on the dominant, the lovers can only repeat what is important to them at this stage. For Lepido and Flavia this is their insistence on staying true to each other in spite of Silla's aggression, for Amadigi and Oriana "pity", but—in the sort of idealised amorous relationship that characterises the world of opera seria—never for the self, always selflessly for the other. Whether these brief moments of musical standstill are gestures of fear embodied in the music is open to interpretation. What is beyond doubt is that Handel took a motif that nearly reaches the status of an ostinato in the original context of Keiser's aria to propel his own duet forward, permeating the entirety of section A with its impulse. In both duets it is clear already from the ritornello that Handel wants to manipulate expectations on phrase-lengths: the repetition of Keiser's motif (b. 1–3 in the oboes and 4–6, enhanced by the *tutti* orchestra) gives the impression of interruption and the remainder of the ritornello vacillates between binary and ternary phrases, although in hindsight it seems that it is clearly

193 Keiser's aria is scored for violins in unison, whereas both Handel's duets have independent parts for two oboes, two violins and a viola. "The scoring is richer and the development of the ideas more extended than in most of *Silla*." (Dean and Knapp 1987, 264–265)

constructed of six three-bar phrases. The energetic impulse of motif k with its specific rhythmic (dotted semiquaver followed by a demisemiquaver, two quavers, a crotchet and another quaver) and melodic contours always seems to announce the beginning of a new phrase. After the voices set in in b. 19 of both duets, the interplay will continue since Handel conceived the alternation of motif k (extended to four bars) in interlocking pseudo-imitation. Flavia sets off at the last bar of Lepido's statement of the four-bar phrase (b. 22) with her own rendition of the phrase and the whole process is repeated in b. 25 with Lepido's entry now being premature. Thus we have three four-bar phrases coated on top of each other, building a structure of three times three bars (b. 19–27). After this, the entries in both duets are more widely spaced out and Handel varies the motif k in different ways.

The differences between the two duets refer mostly to the transitional passages and the filling material they use, as well as the whole of section B. Whereas in the duet from *Silla* Handel was more prone to *Fortspinnung* and free figuration, especially in passages such as b. 36–47 and 67–84 with a complementary or simultaneous semiquaver pulse, in *Amadigi di Gaula* he was more restrained, keeping the transitional passages in line with the rest of the duet. He often permeated them with motif k juxtaposed to a held note accompaniment (and thus looking back to a certain extent to Keiser's aria) or with a parallel movement in quavers, e. g. in sections such as b. 36–45 and 65–79. “Cangia al fine il tuo rigore” is less exuberant and slightly more simple in its vocal figuration than the somewhat more melismatic and—as Dean and Knapp would say—verbose “Sol per te, bell'idol mio”. Is this why they had the following impression, failing to mention the self-borrowing from *Silla*? “The imploring duet with Oriana has something of the atmosphere of a Bach church cantata.” (Dean and Knapp 1987, 284) To a certain extent the dramaturgic context accounts for these differences: in *Silla* the characters are more self-confident and assertive, in *Amadigi* frightened for each other's lives. The fact that the soloists who sang the two duets had not only different ranges but also contrasting personalities probably played a role, too. Whereas “Sol per te, bell'idol mio” was sung by the soprano castrato Pellegrini and Margherita de L'Epine, “Cangia al fine il tuo rigore” welcomed Nicolini back to his second Handel role with an entirely different soprano in the person of Anastasia Robinson at his side.

After *Teseo*, two years went by before the premiere of Handel's next opera *Amadigi*, and this time left a mark on the development of Handel's style. In another adaptation of a French libretto, Haym reworked Antoine Houdar de La Motte's *Amadis de Grèce*, set by André Destouches in 1699. According to Dean and Knapp (1987, 275), it does not measure up to the high literary standards of Quinault, but “the production of *Amadigi* shows Handel still under the spell of Burlington House and the classicistic,



French-oriented taste of the aristocracy” (Strohm 2008, 43). “Crudel, tu non farai” (II. 4 Melissa, Amadigi; Handel 1971, 93–102; Handel recording, Amadigi) was another insertion on the part of Haym (cf. Kimbell 1968; Ćurković 2009, 84–85). Melissa’s attempt to win Amadigi over at the beginning of Act 2 is more nuanced in the original, whereas Haym wanted to confront the characters as sharply as possible, which is why Melissa’s quick temper breaks out in menaces early on in the recitative dialogue, the altercation culminating in a clear case of a duet of conflict for equal adversaries. The duet’s text, reproduced in Table 55, is monotextual in its section A but brings polytextual variants of most of its lines for the two characters in its middle section. However, as we shall see, this aspect and the quantity of lines does not reflect Handel’s setting which clearly puts his musical emphasis on section A by composing it in Calella’s “larger form” that shows the highest degree of structural unity and the most consistent implementation of contrapuntal techniques in Handel’s duets examined so far.

FORM	CHARACTERS	TEXT
A	Amadigi & Melissa:	Crudel, tu non farai Ch’il tuo rigor giamai Perturbi la costanza.
B	Amadigi:	Ho petto da soffrire
	Melissa:	Si hai petto da soffrire
	A 2:	Ogn’aspro e rio martire,
	Amadigi:	Nè temo il tuo rigor
	Melissa:	Torrò col’ mio rigor
	Amadigi:	Nè tua possanza.
	Melissa:	La tua speranza.

TABLE 55.  
Text of the duet “Crudel, tu non farai” from the opera *Amadigi di Gaula* (1715)

This is one of the most markedly monothematic duets of Handel’s opera duets as it derives most of the material of section A from the opening motif. In fact, as most of the material shares the rhythmic pattern of an upbeat quaver followed by two pairs of dotted quavers followed by a semiquaver, one could even say that all the motifs in the duet are derived from this proto-motif (x). For instance, the opening ritornello (b. 1–13) is a periodic structure that consists of a phrase built from motifs x1 (b. 1–3) + x2 (b. 3–7) that cadences on the dominant and another phrase built from motifs x1 (b.

7–9) +  $x_2'$  (b. 9–13) cadencing on the tonic. The last two bars of both these phrases see the remainder of the orchestra joined to the two oboes that start out each phrase, in a way occupying the same place in the *concertante* texture that is later given to the two voices. The vocal parts open with a motif ( $x_1'$ , first occurrence in b. 13–16 in Oriana's part, followed by Amadigi in abridged form in b. 16–17) imitated to a pedal note counterpoint in the other voice, but according to the rules of tonal reply. Handel consistently uses pseudo-imitation in this sense, allowing himself some flexibility by subjecting the material to variation. After a free contrapuntal section with some voice-crossing that modulates to the dominant, an abridged ritornello will round off the first subsection ( $A_1$ ) of this "larger form". Its second part ( $A_2$ , b. 28–66) is much longer, to the extent that one could begin to think that instead of a bipartite we are dealing with a tripartite conception. However, there are no strongly marked cadences or ritornellos before the final one to articulate further clearly-demarcated subsections. Instead, Handel makes the (quasi-)contrapuntal web even more complex. After imitating the head of  $x_1$  in free inversion (b. 28–29, 36–37) he modulates into the subdominant, but switches back to the tonic in the only unequivocally parallel vocal passage so far (b. 41–44). After this he engages in the alternation of a fragmentary variant of motif  $x$  ( $x_3$ , b. 44–48) on the text "tu non farai" that culminates with a cadential, vocally simultaneous *caesura* on the key word "crudel", reminiscent of the outcries of "per te" and "pietà" in the two previously analysed duets. This is followed by the only genuinely imitative, canonical section in the duet, a sequential imitation based on motif  $x_2$ . After a longer parallel passage, a new rhythmic motif of undulating triplets (b. 53–55) is introduced. Dean and Knapp (1987, 284) found that the treatment of this figure is symptomatic of "the improvisatory working of Handel's invention", and although spontaneous parallel outbreaks of the sort were usually reserved for moments of jubilation, Handel integrated it into the closing ritornello and even more importantly, into section B, too. Much shorter (b. 66–81) and more simple than section A, it dispenses with the orchestra and clearly organises the voices into smaller subsections (b. 66–74 and 74–81) that imitate a motif derived from  $x$  before bursting into the aforementioned triplets, while exploring related minor tonal centres.

Given the fact that section A is a setting of a single sentence split up into three lines shared by both characters, it is amazing how dialogic it can feel at times. In spite of contrapuntal combining, the lines are mostly stated in succession so that the integrity of the sentence is preserved, with the exception of the above mentioned emphatic treatment of "crudel" and "tu non farai". At this stage in the dramatic action, Amadigi is showing steadfast resistance to Melissa and although constantly resorting

to threats, she is still trying to win him over by her magical skills and her cunning. It is all the more fascinating with how many different meanings they imbue the relatively simple and unambiguous statement. Both are calling each other “crudel” (from Melissa’s point of view, it is Amadigi who is cruel) and both are referring to their constancy (“costanza”, a word underlined by melismatic ornaments), Amadigi to his constancy to Oriana and Melissa to—in her opinion—Amadigi. Clearly, if the same words set to the same or similar music can represent not only different affective stances but also such opposed personalities, the conflict is irreconcilable and it will inevitably lead to the situation that is at the heart of “Cangia al fine il tuo rigore” and Melissa’s subsequent shocking onstage suicide. By putting her in a parallel position to Amadigi, this duet leaves the door open for the possibility that Melissa is in the right as much as him, at least in musical terms. The duet “Sì ti lascio / Sì ti sprezzo”, with the ambiguous relationship between the characters due to their unresolved past, at first sought to differentiate Egeo and Medea but later almost joined them in a simultaneous texture minuet. On the other hand, in “Cangia al fine il tuo rigore” the conflict is very clearly focused with both protagonists fixated upon their positions and as such unresolvable. Handel found the most appropriate musical means to evoke both.

3. 4.  
 THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC (1720–1724)  
 WITH EMPHASIS ON BONONCINI AND HANDEL

3. 4. 1.  
 Bononcini's Dramatic Duets

Some say, compar'd to Bononcini  
 That Mynheer Handel's but a Ninny  
 Others aver, that he to Handel  
 Is scarcely fit to hold a Candle  
 Strange all this Difference should be  
 'Twixt Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee!<sup>194</sup>

The oft-quoted epigram above (Burrows et al. 2013, 146) first saw light in *The London Journal* in 1725 when the rivalry between Handel and Bononcini as opera composers for the Royal Academy of Music in London had already ceased but was still vivid in the public's imagination. The satirist's perspective concerns the over-the-top animosity between the two composers' supporters in what he considered a uniform foreign genre. However, for a public more versed in music "it was not really a case of 'Tweedledum and Tweedledee': Handel and Bononcini clearly had distinct musical styles that could coexist in the opera programmes, with Bononcini's qualities lying in a lighter, tuneful vein (particularly in the pastoral style) as against Handel's strength in large dramatic canvases demanding strong musical characterization and sustained compositional skill." (Burrows et al. 2013, 145–146) In the realm of opera, Handel's and Bononcini's styles have been pitted against each other since their coexistence on the London operatic stage in the 1710s and the 1720s. Several house composers at the Royal Academy of Music were a practical necessity (at least in the first four years of its existence) since the great demand for operas could not be met by a single composer.<sup>195</sup> Besides the press, contemporary theorists and historians also contributed to the tendency to compare. For instance, in 1727 Johann Joachim Quantz saw performances of Handel's operas and Bononcini's *Astianatte*, noting that "Handel's bass line prevailed over Bononcini's

194 The author of this epigram is John Byrom, although the last two lines may be by Swift or Alexander Pope.

195 Third in the circle was Attilio Ariosti, but for reasons already outlined earlier, this study leaves a more detailed exploration of his contribution to London's operatic life out of consideration.

treble"<sup>196</sup> (quoted in Clausen 1996, 169). Thus he hinted at the rootedness of Handel's style in a firm harmonic fundament and Bononcini's in an attractive melody.

As a topos, the binary opposition between the thorough and profound on the one hand, and the pleasing but superficial on the other became rooted in later reception and perpetuated itself in the writings of Mainwaring, Burney and Chrysander as well, who all compared Bononcini to Handel in favour of the latter. Burney wrote that Bononcini "possessed a felicitous melodic invention for the mild and tender, less so for the dramatic"<sup>197</sup>, while Chrysander was even less flattering in claiming that Bononcini wrote "truly thoughtless music in a truly beautiful way and he was liked by his age"<sup>198</sup> (Eitner 1900, 119). According to Hueber (1955, 1), Chrysander is responsible for the perception of Bononcini as a composer who rivalled Handel by making concessions to public taste. Also, the binary opposition was given a topical aspect by associating Handel with the heroic style and its elevated affects and Bononcini with the pastoral style's "sighing emotions" and "tender moods" (cf. d in Bennett and Lindgren 2001). The ambivalence in the evaluation of Bononcini's music reflects the changes in musical style during his lifetime:

In 1716 J.E. Galliard had termed Bononcini's style "agreeable and easy", but by the late 1720s it was found to be lulling rather than exciting, and was derided by some "very fine Gentlemen for its too great Simplicity" (*The Craftsman*, 10 June 1727). If we hear this "simplicity" as both the final stages of 17th-century bel canto and the precursor of *galant* and pre-Classical melodies, it aptly becomes the touchstone of taste at the turning-point around 1700. [...]. In the decades after 1700, however, when Bononcini's arias became markedly longer and more fully accompanied, their Handelian proportions were infrequently supported by the musical substance and inner propulsion which justifies such length in Handel's works or by the neutral, concerto-like figuration which maintains the momentum in Vivaldi's or Vinci's. (Bennett and Lindgren 2001)

Thus the music of this "somewhat older man whose style was more idiomatically Italian and up-to-date" (Taruskin 2010, 312) than Handel's is

196 Händels Grundstimme überwog Bononcinis Oberstimme.

197 Besaß eine glückliche melodische Erfindung für das Sanfte und Zarte, weniger für das Dramatische.

198 Wahrhaft gedankenlose Musik auf eine wahrhaft schöne Weise und er gefiel seiner Zeit.

associated with both older and newer tendencies, but not everybody was willing to view this ambiguity as worthy of scholarly attention, the aesthetic worshippers of Handel's works being particularly dismissive of Bononcini. According to Lindgren (1977, 98), Dent "derided Bononcini as 'intolerably conventional and artificial in his buckram truculence', while he at the same time admitted to hearing 'an irresistible swing' in Bononcini's melodies since 'one cannot help being attracted to the Handelian vigour of his style'". There lies another reception topos, the assumption that Bononcini's strong points reside in his similarity to Handel. Even Kurt Hueber, who wrote a dissertation on Bononcini's Vienna operas with the best intentions to focus on Bononcini's idiosyncrasies perpetuates the topos when he writes that "Camilla displays for the first time a musical style that is to be denoted in its pathetic stance as purely Handelian and does not appear so distinctly in any of Handel's predecessors"<sup>199</sup> (Hueber 1955, 34). It follows somewhat contradictorily that Bononcini reminds us of Handel when he makes use of both minor-mode chromatic and major-mode diatonic idioms. Dean and Knapp (1987, 149) were more nuanced in their criticism of Bononcini, highlighting the traits that may have diminished the developmental capacities of his melodic and rhythmic style:

Bononcini appears as a graceful melodist, apt in declamation but addicted to stereotyped harmonic patterns and automatic sequences and repetitions. [...] Above all, the music lacks dramatic vigour, paying more attention to smoothness and regularity than to the expression of emotion or character.

Wolff (cf. 1957; 1975b, 74–86; 1975a) was perhaps the most benevolent in his evaluation of not only Bononcini but of Handel's other Italian contemporaries such as Lotti, Gasparini, too. He distances himself from Chrysander's view of Bononcini as a "superficial 'entertainer' of a pleasure-loving society, a 'reactionary' who tried in vain to imitate Handel's 'noble style'", rightly stressing that "Handel found in Bononcini's operas a great source of inspiration" (Wolff 1975b, 74). He attempts to explain why Bononcini's music is sometimes more short-breathed than Handel's, rather than putting this down to the composer's deficiencies. The fact that Bononcini tended to compose shorter forms (e. g. songlike arias) as opposed to Handel's worked out grand *da capo* designs could be interpreted as a sign of generational differences as Handel was 15 years younger and Bononcini had built a

199 In der 'Camilla' zeigt sich zum ersten Male ein Musikstil ausgebildet, der in seiner pathetischen Haltung als rein Händelisch zu bezeichnen ist und der bei keinem der Vorgänger Händels in dieser Weise ausgeprägt erscheint.

career (and a distinctive style) as a young composer in the 1690s. Wolff finds that Bononcini's themes, motifs and formulaic structures made their way into the thesaurus of the baroque style and may have even been taken over by Bach or Vivaldi, although this is problematic since it is impossible to prove who took over what from whom. Dismissing criticism for a lack of development in Bononcini's music, Wolff (1957, 10) sees a strict sense of motivic unity, labelling the composer's arias "monothematic" because he only slightly varies the melodic content: "Bononcini, a master of melodic variation, was particularly fond of varying a short basic theme in such a way that a strict and ordered terseness of structure developed."

We need to remind ourselves that Bononcini was respected in his own country and abroad (in Paris and London) in the realm of vocal chamber music, especially his cantatas and by extension also his chamber duets. (Lindgren, 2009, 162) Although Bononcini's chamber and dramatic duets display less contrast, his musical skills made the strongest impact on his contemporaries in the non-dramatic domain of the cantata. In one of the main arguments in favour of the titular "relativity of historical judgement", Wolff (1957, 6) shows that Viéville's critique of Bononcini proves that his music had an entirely different effect on its listeners in the early 18th century than later when this impression was replaced by dullness, as witnessed by Galliard's and Burney's statements quoted above. We must nevertheless be sensitive to the fact that Bononcini built himself a reputation of "a bold innovator" whose music was "spiced with unusual dissonances and rapid modulations which horrified many of his contemporaries" (Wolff 1975b, 75) mainly in his small-scale works such as cantatas and not on the grand operatic stage.

### 3. 4. 1. 1.

#### *Development before London*

In previous chapters (most notably Chapter 3.2) we already had the chance to follow the development of Bononcini's duets on the London stage. This subchapter will attempt to preface the close examination of Bononcini's duets written for the Royal Academy of Music (Chapter 3.4.1.2) with a selective overview of his previous compositions in the realm of the dramatic duet written for and performed in other centres than the British capital, mostly in the period 1693–1710. In the overall selection of duets listed in Table 56, some duets will receive particular analytical scrutiny. In line with the methodology applied so far, even though not all the duets in a given work will receive equal attention, all of them will be considered in order to gain an insight into how Bononcini organised his duets in large-scale works. Besides operas, only a couple of works belonging to other

YEAR	WORK	SCENE	TEXT	CHARACTERS	VOICES
1693	<i>La nemica d'amore fatta amante</i>	no. 4	Per te peno / moro	Tirsi, Clori	A, S
1693	<i>La nemica d'amore fatta amante</i>	no. 10	Basta il tuo fallo / sguardo	Clori, Fileno	S, B
1693	<i>San Nicola di Bari</i>	II no. 10	Quando il Cielo alle colpe s'adira	Giovanna, San Nicola	S, S
1701	<i>La conversione di Maddalena</i>	I no. 4	Chi sol prezza / chi disprezza	Maddalena, Marta	S, A
		I no. 10	Goderò / Ti pentirai	Maddalena, Amor Divino	S, S
		I no. 11	Piangerò / T'inganni a fè	Maddalena, Amor Profano	S, B
		II no. 4	Goderà ne sacri ardori/ Senza riso e senza onori	Maddalena, Marta	S, A
		II no. 14	Al nume umanato / La fede	Maddalena, Marta	S, A
1702	<i>Cefalo e Procride</i>	Scena 7	Sì, sì che la colpa sono	Procride, Cefalo	S, MS
		Scena u.	Non vien per nuocer sempre	Cefalo, Procride	MS, S
1707	<i>Turno Aricino</i>	I. 4	Ama ma sol per gioco / Già il core è in man	Livia, Egeria	S, S
		I. 17	Che affanno, tiranno alato	Livia, Egeria	S, S
		II. 13	Scrivesti? E perchè mai / Se l'vuoi cancellerò	Egeria, Geminio	S, A
		III. 13	Pace goder desio / Pace ripiglio anch'io	Egeria, Livia	S, S
1708	<i>Mario fuggitivo</i>	II. 12	Cieli numi deh volgete	Icilio, Mario	S, A
		II. 13	Sospira pena e geme il cor ma sol per te / non per te	Publio, Dalinda	MS, S
		III. 8	Spiriti dell'Erebo	Giulia, Icilio	S, S



1720	<i>Astarto</i>	I. 9	Mio caro ben / Già sento ch'il gran tormento	Sidonia, Nino	S, S
		II. 9	Innamorar e poi mancar	Elisa, Clearco	S, MS
		III. 9	Mai non potrei goder	Elisa, Clearco	S, MS
1721	<i>Muzio Scevola</i>	II. 5	Troppo loquace è il guardo / Se quando parla il guardo	Orazio, Irene	S, MS
		II. 10	Dov'è il dolor / Fate un effetto	Clelia, Muzio	S, MS
1722	<i>Griselda</i>	I. 2	Al mio nativo parto / E per voler	Griselda, Gualtiero	
		II. 12	Dell'offesa / Mio sovrano	Gualtiero, Griselda	MS, MS
		III. 3	Quel timoroso / Tutta timore	Ernesto, Almirena	S, S
1727	<i>Astianatte</i>	III. 6	Dolce conforto / Con speranza dell'alma	Andromaca, Pirro	S, A

TABLE 56.

List of Bononcini's dramatic duets selected for analysis in this chapter

genres such as the oratorio and serenata will be included for the sake of comparison, mostly from the composer's earlier years. As in the majority of examples in this study except for Handel's, the criteria of philological availability played an important role. Apart from the facsimile edition of *La nemica d'amore fatta amante* and the selections of songs from his London operas, all the duets were either available online (on open-access sites such as the *Petrucci Music Library*), acquired as microfilms or consulted on the spot at the British Library.<sup>200</sup> There is a slight stress on Bononcini's activity in Berlin (*Cefalo e Procride*) and Vienna (*La conversione di Maddalena; Turno Aricino, Mario fuggitivo*) since these were important centres for his development, as can be observed in the example of pasticcios examined in Chapter 3.2 that used music from this period. One might wonder why no works from the period 1710–1720 were included. The reason is the close association of Bononcini's career with powerful patrons. This is why he refused the invitation of the Earl of Halifax to come to London in 1707

200 The first three works in Table 56 have the additional advantage of being recorded.

as he had the most prominent patron of his career in the person of the young Austrian emperor Joseph I. After the emperor died in spring 1711, he followed his next patron, the already mentioned Count Gallas (who was dismissed from his post of Viennese ambassador in London), to Rome, where in the second decade of the century he wrote only two new operas, *Astarto* (1715), the model for his Royal Academy of Music debut in 1720 and the pastoral opera *Erminia* (1719). Unlike the very productive period from 1700 to 1710 that saw Bononcini move away from the foundations of his youthful Italian style, there were simply not enough sources to trace any kind of development in the second decade of the century. Finally, besides the availability of sources, *Turno Aricino* and *Mario fuggitivo* were chosen because of their connections to the London pasticcio *Almahide* (cf. Chapter 3.2.4).

The serenata *La nemica d'amore fatta amante* (1693) bears a connection to Handel not only because the two composers shared a patron in the person of the Cardinal Colonna but more importantly the Arcadian Academy's renewed interest in pastoral poetry and drama. Like Handel's pastoral serenatas and dramatic cantatas, its dramaturgy is based on a love triangle between the nymph Clori (S), the shepherd Tirsi (A) and the satyr Fileno (B), who is opposed to the main couple not only in dramatic terms but also in vocal range, thereby suggesting that he is mismatched to Clori the same way Polifemo was no suitable partner for Galatea. The action revolves around the proud Clori's change of heart after she had been systematically rejecting love and it is a sequel of sorts to Bononcini's serenata *La nemica d'amore* performed at the Palazzo Colonna a year earlier, in 1692, likewise to a libretto by Bononcini's regular collaborator Silvio Stampiglia. The serenata opens with Clori's admission that she has fallen in love with her suitor Tirsi and she spends most of the first part of the serenata trying to convince the sceptical shepherd that her declaration of love is genuine and not just another attempt to deceive and eventually reject him. After she finally succeeds, the duet "Per te peno / moro" (no. 4 Tirsi, Clori; Bononcini 1985, 156–158; Bononcini recording, *La nemica d'amore fatta amante*) presents the culmination of the second scene of the opera. It clearly reveals the temporal proximity of his *Duetti da camera* (1691) since it could easily be imagined as a movement in a chamber duet with its short sections conceived imitatively, where alternation quickly grows into imitative and then sequential free counterpoint. It nevertheless outlines a very short tripartite form, the only departure from the written out *da capo* form being the addition of a brief repetitive coda. Sections A and B are identical in their build-up, the only distinction being the convention of the relative minor. The repetition of the free sequential contrapuntal passage as a coda is only a mild attempt to extend the brief number.

FORM	BAR	KEY	DESCRIPTION
A <sub>1</sub>	1–15	c	alternation growing into imitation and free CP.
B	B	Eb, g	alternation growing into imitation and free CP.
	coda	g	repetition of b. 19–23
A <sub>2</sub>	A <sub>1</sub>	c	written out <i>da capo</i> repeat of b. 1–13
	coda	38–45	repetition of b. 31–38 (=b. 6–13)

TABLE 57.  
Formal outline of the duet „Per te peno/moro“ from Bononcini's  
*La nemica d'amore fatta amante* (1693)

“Basta il tuo fallo / sguardo” (no. 10 Clori, Fileno; Bononcini 1985, 199–203; Bononcini recording, *La nemica d'amore fatta amante*) is an overt duet of conflict. Fileno, who courted Clori at the time when she was rejecting both him and Tirsi, uses deceit in order to plant discord between the lovers but fails to do so and is scorned by both of them. He refuses to leave and admits that Clori enflames him the more she rejects him so that the duet seamlessly flows out of the heating, often insulting recitative exchanges between the satyr and the pair into a succinct *a due* rendition of a single line per character. Polytextual variants make a semantic distinction (“basta il tuo fallo/sguardo a lacerarti/lacerarmi il core”) between the reasons of agitation. There are similarities in the imitative unfolding of the vocal parts, but the duet is still conceived differently to “Per te peno/moro”. A regular tripartite design was not deemed appropriate for the raw conflict portrayed here; we are dealing with a series of five sections instead. It is as if Bononcini set out to be maximally concise in these early duets, confirming Wolff's above mentioned qualifications of “strict monothematicism”. All five subsections start out imitatively with the same material, a four-bar phrase that sets the entire line except for the last word (“cor”), reserved for melismatic treatment later on. The first section (x<sub>1</sub>, b. 1–9) is the shortest, following imitation (b. 1–5) with a brief passage that modulates into the dominant. The second section (x<sub>2</sub>, b. 10–27) sets the bar for the remaining three by following the imitative passage with an ascending and then descending sequential free contrapuntal passage with suspensions (b. 16–27), modulating to the relative major. Without offering anything new, Bononcini manages to maintain a sense of momentum (and direction): in x<sub>3</sub> (b. 28–43) he compresses the ascent in the *contrapunctus ligatus* passage from x<sub>2</sub> just described, giving the impression of descending movement as he modulates back into the tonic. Section x<sub>4</sub> (b. 44–60) extends it into a larger ascending and descending arch, while x<sub>5</sub> (b. 61–80) is a slightly varied repetition of x<sub>4</sub>, reminiscent of the repetitions of closing passages in “Per te peno/moro”.

FORM	BAR	KEY	TEXT
X <sub>1</sub>	1–6	D	Quando il cielo / alle colpe s'adira
X <sub>2</sub>	x <sub>21</sub>	D, b	Si mitiga l'ira / Lo sdegno si frange
	x <sub>22</sub>	b	Si mitiga l'ira / Lo sdegno si frange
	orch.	A	%
X <sub>3</sub>	x <sub>31</sub>	A, D	Da un cor che sospira / Da un alma che piange.
	x <sub>32</sub>	D	Da un cor che sospira / Da un alma che piange.

TABLE 58.  
Formal outline of the duet “Quando il cielo alle colpe s'adira”  
from Bononcini's *San Nicola di Bari* (1693)

The duet “Quando il Cielo alle colpe s'adira” (II. no 10 Giovanna, San Nicola; Bononcini MS, San Nicola di Bari, 75–81; Bononcini recording, San Nicola di Bari) from the oratorio *San Nicola di Bari* shares many of the previous duets' features. This is logical since it was written in Rome in 1693 by the same librettist. What makes it different is the accompaniment for two violins and a viola, engaging in *concertante* interplay with the two sopranos. The libretto concentrates on the young St Nicholas (San Nicola) and his relationship with his parents, especially his mother Giovanna, and introduces another youth, Clizio, the opposite of the virtuous Nicola who is to repent for his sinful ways. Instead of the customary *coro*, the oratorio poignantly closes with this duet for Nicola and Giovanna outlining the main moral. Like “Basta il tuo fallo/sguardo”, it is based on the varying and working out of a contrapuntal passage in *contrapunctus ligatus*, organised in three sections. They are separated by orchestral interjections based on the same material. The first and—like in “Basta il tuo fallo/sguardo”—shortest one introduces the unaccompanied voices in suspensions (b. 1–3), after which the orchestra repeats this texture in the violins while the continuo provides a rhythmically more varied part, so typical of three-voiced *contrapunctus ligatus* sections in duets. The subsequent sections vary and extend this plan, embellishing or switching places between the three parts in the *contrapunctus ligatus* sections while related tonal centres are explored. Bononcini injected more variety into the structural plan of the duets in his serenata thanks to the presence of the orchestra and the extensive coloraturas in the vocal parts, surprisingly appropriate to a closing duet that describes the soothing of heaven's wrath with repentance.

This chapter will not focus on Bononcini's operas from the period, epitomised in *Camilla*, a work that received more than detailed attention in Chapter 3.2.1. In general, it seems that Bononcini's operas from the 1690s do not foreshadow the direction in which his dramatic duets would change

since they still owe a great deal to 17th-century conventions, as *Camilla* does. To a certain extent, we can claim the contrary about the Viennese oratorio *La conversione di Maddalena* (1701). The figure of Mary Magdalene has been a frequent oratorio subject due to the exemplary story of repentance and conversion ideal for the introduction of allegorical characters. Besides her sister Marta who provides moral advice, the opposed allegorical characters Amor Divino and Amor Profano woo Maddalena for his or her own cause, the negative character Amor Profano distinguished by his lower, bass timbre. However, out of the five duets in the oratorio listed in Table 56, proper duets are given only to the main characters of the sisters. The two brief, textually and musically equivalent duets that Maddalena sings with the allegorical characters were mistook by Lindgren for a trio since they follow each other without recitative in quick succession. In “Goderò / Ti pentirai” (I. no 10 Maddalena, Amor Divino; Bononcini MS, *La conversione di Maddalena*, 37’–38’) and “Piangerò / T’inganni a fè” (I. no 11 Maddalena, Amor Profano; Bononcini MS, *La conversione di Maddalena*, 38–39’) the tension in the dialogue is conveyed by the exclusively successive treatment of the voices and the contrasting material that they bring in sequential utterances, Amor Divino and Amor Profano dominating over Maddalena with their longer statements. In terms of form, structure and material, the two duets are identical, “Piangerò / T’inganni a fè” being a minimally modified transposition of “Goderò / Ti pentirai” from E minor to B minor. The fact that the opposing forces of divinity and profanity are portrayed by identical musical means shows that at this stage it was more important to produce a dramatically effective depiction of a situation in which Maddalena is torn between two spiritual forces than to elaborate on the conflict musically. On the other hand, the duet “Goderà ne sacri ardori / Senza riso e senza onori” (II. no. 4 Marta, Maddalena; Bononcini MS, *La conversione di Maddalena*, f. 77–85) will not be discussed at length for different reasons. Whereas the two small duets were unconventional dramaturgic inventions by the librettist and Bononcini, this one is an *aria a due*, for its section A is sung by Marta only, section B by Maddalena, followed by a *da capo* repetition of Marta’s stanza. This type of strophic duet often appears in Bononcini’s early operas (and the London pasticcios drawing on them), but it was to become less frequent in the new century.

Bononcini probably revised *La conversione di Maddalena* for a performance in Bologna in 1723, as documented by a published libretto (Anonymous 1723). No musical sources have been preserved, but the libretto does not contain any of the three duet texts mentioned so far, maybe because they were considered too old-fashioned or uninteresting. On the other hand, the two remaining original 1701 duet texts are to be found in the 1723 libretto with minor alterations, which means that it is possible that

their settings were also retained. “Chi sol prezza / chi disprezza la bellezza” (I. no 4 Maddalena, Marta; Bononcini MS, *La conversione di Maddalena*, 16’–20) is probably a more typical Bononcini duet. Its ritornello has no thematic significance, although it presents another typical passage in *contrapunctus ligatus* that does not play such a prominent role as in the examined duets from the 1690s. The characters are representing contrasting points of view, but this is reflected only in minimal textual variants and has no musical consequences. Whereas Handel, who also wrote duets of the sort, often found other musical means to depict the tension inherent in a situation like this, Bononcini’s duets sometimes seem blissfully unaware of the possibility of friction between the text and its setting. “Chi sol prezza / chi disprezza la bellezza” is a perfect example of this: it seems as if Bononcini was inspired by the word “bellezza” in the overall atmosphere of the setting and left entirely out of consideration the fact that Marta is expressing disapproval for the idolatry of beauty and love, while Maddalena does the exact opposite. After alternating statements of the same motif, the voices are swiftly joined in syllabic semiquaver parallel movement. In section A Bononcini combines this type of texture and *contrapunctus ligatus*, whereas in section B he avoids parallelism, without musico-dramatic significance.

“Al nume umanato / La fede” (II. no 14 Maddalena, Marta; Bononcini MS, *La conversione di Maddalena*, 119–125) has a different status because it is charged with the important task of concluding the oratorio. Besides providing the audience with an appropriate moral, the text is a dialogue between the sisters in which Marta gives advice to Maddalena on how to follow the path to heaven. Maddalena had already made the decision to choose virtue and penitence and it is clear from the examination of Bononcini’s setting that the duet is not expressive of tension. Nevertheless, it shows that the quest for the right path is still accompanied by questions. If we place this duet into the narrative of the formal and structural development of Handel’s duets in the period 1707–1715, we shall see that its section A (b. 1–35) does not display features of the so-called “larger form”, which is not surprising given the year of its creation and the more modest scale of vocal numbers at the time. However, this does not mean that Bononcini does not exploit the dialogic potential of the two sisters’ questions and answers, for although he stays within the confines of the G major tonic throughout section A, he intones the upward inflection of Maddalena’s first question (b. 1–4) with an ascending figure followed by a downward octave leap and also uses a secondary dominant to underline this harmonically. Marta’s reply (“La fede”, b. 4–5) resolves the tension with the resolution of the dominant of the dominant into the dominant proper. Typical of Bononcini’s economy, he does not seek new solutions for the second question and answer in the duet text but chooses to set it to the

second half of the first dialogic exchange, thus repeating the dialogue from b. 2–5 in b. 5–8 (“Chi l’alma sostiene? La speme.”). After these dialogic alternating statements, the remainder of subsection a<sub>1</sub> (the first half of section A, see Table 59) consists of a brief, freely contrapuntal section that imitates and sequentially develops a motif derived from the quaver figure that “chi scorta il mio piede” and “chi l’alma sostiene” were set to (b. 10–14), before cadencing on the tonic. (Example 11) Subsection a<sub>1</sub> is rounded off by a repetition of b. 12–16, with the parts inverted in b. 16–20. The interpretation of the text retreats to the background as Marta’s and Maddalena’s original distinct replicas (“Si spero perdono” and “S’implori pietà”) are distributed to both parts, although without damage to the dramaturgy.

FORM	BAR	KEY	CHARACTER	TEXT
A	a <sub>1</sub>	G	Maddalena	Al nume umanato / chi scorta il mio piede?
			Marta	La fede.
			Maddalena	Chi l’alma sostiene?
			Marta	La speme.
			A 2	Si spero perdono / S’implori pietà.
	a <sub>2</sub>		20–35	A 2
B	35–57	e, D	Marta	Chi sproma il desire?
			Maddalena	L’ardire.
			Marta	Chi affida il tuo core?
			Maddalena	L’amore.
			A 2	L’amor che diffonde di Dio la beltà.

TABLE 59.  
Text of the duet “Al nume umanato / La speme” from Bononcini’s  
*La conversione di Maddalena* (1701) with a basic formal outline

In contrast, subsection a<sub>2</sub> starts out by fragmenting the last two lines of section A into halves and alternating short motifs in the parts before a varied rendition of the free contrapuntal passage from b. 12–16 in 24–27. This is followed by a ritornello based on the material presented in the voices (b. 27–35), the first time we have heard the orchestra in the duet and it remains present in its B section (b. 35–57), albeit in a more discrete form as harmonic support to the voices. The absence of contrasts in the middle section except for the usual modulations is another argument in favour of the contrasting approaches that Handel and Bononcini took

Bononcini MS, La conversione di Maddalena, "Al nume umanato / La fede, la speme"  
(II. no 14 Maddalena, Marta), 119-120': b. 1-16

**Largo**

Maddalena



Marta






[Basso]



**Largo**

7



-tie - ne s'im - plo - ri\_ pie -  
la spe - me si spe - ri\_ per - do - no,

12



-tà, pie - tà, s'im - plo - ri pie - tà, si  
si spe - ri\_ per - do - no\_ s'im - plo - ri pi - tà, pie -

6



in the shaping of a *da capo* form's middle section. Section B begins with alternating dialogic exchanges of the exactly same material as section A, to the extent that we could say that b. 35–41 are a slightly varied and transposed repetition of b. 2–8, but without the secondary dominants. Bars 41–48 are likewise based on a figure from section A, although Bononcini uses it here as filling material for the contrapuntal texture, tossing it from one part to the other before a cadence in E minor. In contrast to section A, he does not repeat it but transposes it a second lower in modified form. Unlike the slightly dramatic upbeat ending of *San Nicola di Bari*, here the closing duet evokes a different atmosphere in line with the central plot of the oratorio, Maddalena's quest for answers.

*Cefalo e Procride* and *Polifemo* are referred to as one-act operas or seen belonging to the *festa teatrale* or the *serenata* (cf. Huth 1991). Both were written in 1702 and represent an important station in Bononcini's career: Berlin, or to be more precise, Charlottenburg, the estate of Sophie Charlotte of Hanover. The music-loving queen invited Bononcini and his brother Antonio Maria to the court to join their colleague Ariosti who had already been in her service since 1697. Sophie Charlotte organised a series of entertainments to celebrate the king's birthday and *Cefalo e Procride* marked the beginning while *Polifemo* (to a libretto by Ariosti) was performed later on during the summer. Unfortunately, an examination of the duets in *Polifemo* will not be possible because the sources were unavailable to me. However, as already explained in Chapter 3.2.4, it contained the duet "Che cara la pena" (Aci, Galatea) that served as the object of direct parody in the duets "Che affanno, tiranno alato" in *Turno Aricino* and the London pasticcio *Almahide*. In the Viennese opera the duet serves the function of dramaturgic parallelism, but in *Polifemo* Bononcini used it to depict amorous unity. Nothing hints at tension in Bononcini's duet, perhaps making the ensuing violence of *Polifemo* discovering the lovers and murdering Aci even more shocking.

The mythological story of *Cefalo e Procride* is based on two trials of fidelity for the protagonists. In the first one, Cefalo puts Procride's love to the test by courting her under an assumed identity. Procride passes the test triumphantly and the first duet, "Sì, sì che la colpa sono" (Scena 7 Procride, Cefalo; Bononcini MS, *Cefalo e Procride*, 58<sup>2</sup>–61) is the culmination of the heated exchanges between them in the preceding recitative. The two characters' texts<sup>201</sup> differ in one line only, "sol per cangiar sembiante" and "nel vedermi inconstante", highlighting the reason behind the pain they are feeling, in Cefalo's case dishonesty, in Procride's the sheer possibility of being unfaithful. Both sections of this written out *da capo* form (rounded

201 A 2: Sì, sì che la colpa sono / di questo rio tormento. Cefalo: Sol per cangiar sembiante / Procride: Nel vedermi sì inconstante a 2: Un gran duol al cor io sento.

off by a string ritornello based on the material of the voices) display features of the composer's chamber duets in the continuo accompaniment, the lack of periodic melodic arches and a relatively free, mostly contrapuntal unfolding of the voices, but it is still like no other duet by Bononcini that we have encountered so far. This mostly refers to the mood of sorrow, conveyed by minor keys, not only in section A (b. 1–23) but also in parts of section B and underlined by the slow tempo (*Largo*). The duet is already unorthodox in the way it opens with crotchet alternations on the word “si”, something that we would normally associate with a comic *Streitduett* in a fast tempo. After this, the voices are joined in figurative parallelism (b. 2–5), as if to stress that—although they might see the dramatic situation differently—they are actually affectively united. Section A does not provide any kind of motivic material in the strict sense of the word since its melo-rhythmic units are generalised enough to bear the impression of topoi. Bononcini resorts to repetition and to a lesser extent variation, but the section still possesses a sense of momentum since Bononcini achieves the maximum effect with minimal means. The freely contrapuntal passage in b. 6–10 is repeated in b. 12–16 and in-between Bononcini inserts a passage in parallel thirds that extends the melismas on the word “sono” from b. 3. (Example 12) The remainder of the section is a likewise freely contrapuntal passage with some emphatic melodic leaps such as diminished sevenths and fifths and as many as three different cadences in the tonic. Although even more freely contrapuntal with its seeming independence of the parts and absence of parallelism, section B (b. 23–36) has a more adventurous harmonic trajectory ranging from C major to C minor but only confirms the impression that the texture is conceived harmonically as an extended progression of chords. Bononcini occasionally suggests imitation, but it turns out that he is just tossing motifs from one voice to the other without losing a sense of direction (e. g. in b. 25–30). Section B starts out with alternating statements that highlight the already mentioned polytextual pair of lines revealing the cause of distress. Although it seems that the parts bring forward new material (a motif in quavers with an upbeat pair of semiquavers) to be developed, this does not happen as the section turns even freer than section A.

This duet precedes Procris's announcement that she will leave the scene agitated over the unknown seducer. Although this would have facilitated the introduction of a duet of conflict in which she expresses her anger and he his feigned desire, Bononcini followed Guidi's text with its dominant affect of sorrow. Perhaps the courtship of the “stranger” was not as unsuccessful as Procris would like Cefalo to believe and her sadness at parting is genuine, leaving Cefalo's self-confidence somewhat shaken? Regardless of whether this interpretation in the manner of Mozart's *Cosi*

**Largo**

Procride  
Sì, sì, sì, che la col - pa - so - - -

Cefalo  
**Largo** Sì, sì, sì, che la col - pa - so - - -

[Basso]

4 *piano*

Procride  
-no la col - pa - so - - no di ques - to rio tor -

Cefalo  
-no la col - pa - so - - no di

6

6

Procride  
men - - - -

Cefalo  
ques - to rio tor - men - - - -

9 3

*fan tutte* is convincing or not, it must be acknowledged that Bononcini was not prone to writing pathetic love duets or duets of departure. Although it would be hard to compare it with Handel's duets of the sort, of all the duets examined here it comes closest to the type. If we compare it with "Addio! Mio caro bene / Dolce mia vita" from *Teseo*, besides a different formal structure the biggest contrast is in the treatment of the voices. Not only are there no ideas to develop, no composite melodic arches to outline, but there is no space or time left in the texture for the voices to catch their breath.

Luckily, "Non vien per nuocer sempre" (Scena ultima Cefalo, Procride; Bononcini MS, Cefalo e Procride, 117–124) is spaced out more broadly and leisurely, with an important role played by the orchestral ritornellos, an overall more developmental structure and virtuoso treatment of the voices that befits a closing duet. It marks a moment of consolidation: although the jealous Procride spied on the hunting Cefalo and was accidentally shot by him, a *deus ex machina* happy resolution restores the lovers to each other to sing a moral about suffering as the true price for happiness.<sup>202</sup> The choice of motivic material alone announces a highly polyphonic and imitative duet since the opening motif (b. 3–6, first occurrence in the vocal parts but anticipated already in the second violin in the opening ritornello, b. 1–3) gives the impression of a typical fugue subject with its recognisable head motif of an upward fourth leap followed by quaver repetitions. After the ritornello had presented this head motif in quasi-imitations in the strings (beginning with the second violins and followed by the first violins and the violas), section a1 (b. 1–17) starts to unfold as a regular imitative working out of the subject, the *comes* (b. 6–9 in Procride's part) modulating to the dominant key of C major, accompanied by something that looks like a conventional countersubject in Cefalo's part although it never appears again. The reason is that although Bononcini was perfectly capable of writing fugal structures (as evident from these first ten bars), it was against the conventions of the dramatic duet to conceive it fugally, in contrast to the chamber duet, especially Gasparini's and Handel's. After a cadence in C major (Example 13), a short variation of the ritornello (b. 10–12) gives way to what seems like another imitation, this time in stretto, but the composer is only toying with our expectations. The regular unfolding of the subject in the tonic in Cefalo's part (b. 12–15) is answered

202 A section. a 2: Non vien per nuocer sempre / il mal che turba il cor. Cefalo: Cangia il destin le tempre / Procride: Divien gioia il dolor / Cefalo: Doppo tanti tormenti / Procride: Doppo tanti lamenti / a 2: Pur ti stringo o mio tesoro. B section. Cefalo: Se t'abbracciai consorte / Procride: Benché mi desti morte / io più t'adoro. Cefalo: Or dea t'adoro.

after only two beats in Procride's with what seems like the subject in tonal answer. But in fact, it is merely transposed a second higher so as to create appoggiatura clashes with the unfolding of the subject.<sup>203</sup> The bittersweet sound of resolved appoggiaturas seems appropriate to the celebration of newly found unity since the whole opera consisted of putting a love to the test with "mal che turba il cor".

So far Bononcini had set only the first two lines of section A's text, shared by both protagonists. In the next two subsections (a2, b. 17–31 and a3, b. 31–46), he will focus on its polytextual remainder, the four lines distributed evenly between Cefalo and Procride and the final one brought forward *a due*. Whereas he set the monotextual two lines imitatively, he highlights the polytextuality by starting out both subsections a2 and a3 with alternating statements of variants of the same repetitive, mildly descending motif to ensure the comprehensibility of the verse pairs "cangia il destin le tempre" / "divien gioia il dolor", although the distinction is not semantic since both protagonists are expressing the same thoughts on the changeability of fortune. In a2, these alternating statements begin a modulation that ends up in the dominant and this is followed by a brief passage in *contrapunctus ligatus* with characteristic octave leaps in the first violins (b. 23–25), giving way to a simultaneous melismatic, mostly parallel passage (b. 25–31) on the key word "tesoro", pure musical jubilation. Bononcini would not be Bononcini if even in a relatively through-composed duet such as this one he did not reuse pre-existing sections since a3 replicates the structural plan of a2 even though it is the setting of different lines. After alternating statements that are—in contrast to a2—woven into a contrapuntal texture after two bars only, bars 32–40 are a slightly varied, transposed version of bars 22–31 in a2 with inverted parts. The much shorter section B (b. 47–55) does not live up to the expectations raised by its predecessor. Not only its material but also its contrapuntal passages are derived from section A and it is not particularly adventurous in its departure from the tonic.

It is clear that *Cefalo e Procride* was written for a private performance before a chosen audience of music lovers and that Bononcini was more ready to experiment in such a context. Maybe that is the reason why there is more of a touch of the learned, contrapuntal style that he mastered in his youth in Bologna? Irrespective of questions of parody, the possibility

203 Roberts (2012, 170) identifies this passage in Handel's works, describing it as a "chain of overlapping entries climbing up the scale". He was firm in the opinion that if Handel "got it from anywhere in particular, it was probably from the final duet in Giovanni Bononcini's one-act Berlin opera *Cefalo* (1702)". However, it is difficult to say if the passage is indeed idiosyncratic of Bononcini or just a generalised topos.

**Vivace**

[Violino I]

[Violino II]

[Viola]

Procris

Cefalo

Non

[Basso]

**Vivace**

4

[Vln. I]

[Vln. II]

[Vla.]

Proc.

Cef.


Non


vien per nuo-cer sem - pre il mal che tur-ba il cor,


[Basso]


**Vivace**


7


[Vln. I] 

[Vln. II] 

[Vla.] 

Proc.   
vien per nuo - cer sem - pre il mal che tur - ba il cor.

Cef. 

[Basso] 

9

[Vln. I] 

[Vln. II] 

[Vla.] 

Proc.   
il mal - che tur - ba il cor

Cef.   
il mal che tur - ba il cor

[Basso] 

EXAMPLE 13

that Handel came into contact with Bononcini and his works written at the time in Berlin exists, even if Mainwaring's anecdote is not true. If any of Bononcini's duets examined so far had any kind of influence on Handel, the most likely candidate would indeed be „Non vier per nuocer sempre“. Hueber's opinion that “in the Viennese operas of our master one does not find duets whose formal shaping rests solely on the laws of imitation like this is perceivable in Steffani” and that “the construction of the Bononcini duet is mostly determined by a *concertante* alternation of both vocal parts.”<sup>204</sup> (Hueber 1955, 226) is clearly refuted by this piece. As we can see in this chapter, alternating statements do not always dominate in Bononcini's duets. Although in the conclusion of his dissertation Hueber (1955, 253) adds that the composer “was not a contrapuntist and a master of form”<sup>205</sup>, it remains to be seen if imitation and contrapuntal working out are really avoided so consistently in the composer's Viennese and also the operas written later in London.

The duets in the Vienna opera *Turno Aricino* (1707) do not reflect these tendencies, showing continuity with the composer's Italian operas from the 1690s such as *Il Xerse* and *Camilla* in that they contain a larger number of short duets, almost *ariosi a due*. It is interesting and somewhat surprising that of the overall number of four duets, three are written for the only female characters of the opera, the princesses Egeria and Livia. Although their fathers are enemies, their evolving friendship is reason enough to unite them even in dramatic situations where they do not have anything to do with each other. In the short arioso *a due* “Ama ma sol per gioco / Già il core è in man” (I. 4 Livia, Egeria; Bononcini MS, *Turno Aricino*, 14'–15) Livia advises Egeria, who is in love with Geminio, not to take love so seriously. The duet consists of nothing more than alternating statements by the two characters, the knowing Livia gaining the upper hand. Although the voices outline what seem to be distinct motivic contours, the course of the duet seems improvisatory and it seamlessly flows into the next scene where the ladies are joined by Geminio and Ottavio. “Scrivesti? E perchè mai? / Se l'vuoi cancellerò” (II. 13 Egeria, Geminio) is another, even shorter arioso *a due* without almost any vocal simultaneity, either. In contrast to the former duet with its comical reflection on love, it is highly dramatic since it occurs at the moment when Egeria's beloved Geminio must vote for the execution of her father Turno under

204 Duette, deren formale Gestaltung lediglich auf den Gesetzen der Imitation beruht, wie sie z. B. bei Steffani zu beobachten sind, trifft man in den Wiener Opern unseres Meisters nicht an. Die Anlage des Bononcini'schen Duettts ist meistens durch ein konzertartiges Alternieren der beiden Gesangstimmen bestimmt.

205 Der Meiser war kein Kontrapunktiker und Formkünstler.



Tarquino's threats even though he does not want to (cf. Hueber 1955, 111–112). This would have been the ideal spot for a dialogic duet of conflict in the “modern” style, but the librettist Stampiglia wrote no more than a recitative exchange. Wanting to stress the dramatic moment but not having an appropriate text to do so in the form of a large-scale number, Bononcini composed an arioso *a due* of even greater formal openness. Finally, “Pace goder desio / Pace ripiglio anch’io” (III. 13 Livia, Egeria; Bononcini MS, Turno Aricino, 101’–102) is a tripartite duet in which—in section A1 (b. 1.16)—Egeria outlines a melodic idea, followed by a variation of the same idea by Livia in the modulating section B (b. 17–32). The voices are joined in a simultaneous texture in section A2 (b. 33–51), back in the tonic. While Egeria repeats her melody from A1, Livia doubles it with a bar’s delay, suggesting that we are dealing with an imitation, although it will soon be clear that for most of the time the two voices are led in parallel thirds. There are other examples of the sort in Bononcini’s duets performed in London such as “Cease, cruel tyrannizing / to deceive me” and “Say must I then despair”.

The duet “Che affanno, tiranno alato” (I. 17 Livia, Egeria; Bononcini MS, Turno Aricino 39–41) has already been examined in Chapter 3.2.4 as part of *Almahide*. There are no significant differences between any of the three versions of this duet, which makes yet another structural analysis redundant. However, since this version of the duet is available in MS only, we shall remind ourselves of the opening four successive entries of the voices, outlining four overlapping four-bar phrases that build a periodic structure of sorts. (Example 14) Unlike in *Almahide*, where the parallel unfolding of a monologic reflection on love was given to the fierce rivals Almiro and Almansorre, here the monotextual duet is assigned to the princesses Egeria and Livia. Compared to their first duet at the beginning of Act 1, their fortunes have been reversed: whereas Egeria is happy about the consent of her father to her marriage with Geminiano, Livia has admitted to herself that she has fallen for Ottaviano. Instead of teasing her like Livia did in “Ama ma sol per gioco / Già il core è in man”, Egeria finds empathy for her friend and they are both united in an acknowledgement of the power of love. It is interesting how Bononcini found it important to stress the unity of the two ladies regardless of the conflict between their fathers, escalating in Egeria taking Livia hostage in Act 3. However, another duet of unity (“Pace goder desio / Pace ripiglio anch’io”) will reaffirm this friendship in the last scene of the third act. Resistance to tyranny as the main theme of the opera has little bearing on the duets which focus on the female protagonists, uniting rather than differentiating or pitting them against each other like Francesca Cuzzoni and Faustina Bordoni were at the Royal Academy of Music. This is underlined by the fact that of all

Bononcini's duets examined in this chapter, the latter two are the only ones in a dance metre, a moderately paced minuet in 3/8 time.

*Mario fuggitivo* (1708), likewise on a libretto by Stampiglia, is singled out for its thematisation of conjugal love between Mario's son Icilio and his wife Giulia, drawing exaggerated comparisons with Beethoven's *Fidelio* (cf. Kretschmar, as quoted in Hueber 1955, 116). It does not possess such a high degree of dramatic unity as *Turno Aricino*, mainly because the intermixing of tragic and comic actions and characters shows Stampiglia's rootedness in 17th-century traditions. Besides the presence of the corporal Floro and the servant Blesa (included in the London pasticcio *Almahide*, as well), all the characters except Mario and the praetor Sestilio have a comic side to them, most notably Icilio, who came to Carthage disguised as the slave Elisa, lady-in-waiting to the Numidian princess Dalinda. Aware of his gender, Dalinda becomes enamoured with Icilio and a love triangle between the pair and Dalinda's suitor and Sestilio's officer Publio is created. Dalinda manipulates Publio to help Icilio free his father from Roman captivity. Giulia, disguised as the gypsy fortune-teller Argene, confronts Icilio over his infidelity but he claims that he was dissembling only to free his father. The comedy is additionally enhanced by Floro falling in love with "Elisa".

As a result of this, the duets, too, are more varied both dramatically and structurally. From the overall five duets in the opera, two are reserved for Floro and Blesa, the comic servants whose scenes made their way into *Almahide*. From the remaining three serious duets that are the object of this study, "Cieli numi deh volgete" (II. 12 Icilio, Mario; Bononcini MS, *Mario fuggitivo*, 125–126) is a short simultaneous, although not homorhythmic syllabic duet comparable to the *ariosi a due* that dominated in *Turno Aricino*. Icilio frees his father Mario from prison, although the means to this end are hardly heroic: he persuades the infatuated Floro to unlock Mario's cell and Floro is punished for his lack of judgement by taking up Mario's place. The duet with its five bars followed by a ritornello of the same length based on the material presented by the voices leads the characters in parallel thirds for most of the time but instead of a jubilant expression of joy, it conveys an entirely different affective mood. This happens amidst the comedic shenanigans in the dungeon (if there was ever a tragic *locus in dramma per musica*, it is the dungeon!), including Floro's jealousy at the sight of Mario and "Elisa" embracing and his protests for her to leave the dungeon so that he can lock up Mario again. Mario taunts Floro and then manages to physically overpower and disarm him, threatening the cowardly *miles gloriosus* with his own sword. Before the duet itself, while Mario is occupied with persuading Floro to untie his chains,

Bononcini MS, Turno Aricino, "Che affanno, tiranno alato"  
(I. 17 Livia, Egeria), 39', b. 14-25

14 [Andante]

Egeria  
Che af - fan - no\_\_ ti - ran - no

Livia  
Che af - fan - no\_\_ ti - ran - no

[Andante]

[Basso]

20

a - la - to\_\_ ben - da - to

a - la - to\_\_ ben - da - to

4

Icilio sings the same three lines<sup>206</sup> that later feature in the duet as an even shorter, three-bar arioso (Bononcini MS, Mario fuggitivo, 123–124). This invocation of heaven to aid the fugitive is repeated *a due* at the end of the scene in the form of the duet that is under scrutiny here. Father and son sing to solemn, harmonically effective, but simple progressions. Like in *Turno Aricino*, Bononcini's approach to these short numbers growing out of the action spontaneously is improvisatory. Rather than taking up the melodic line of Icilio's arioso, in the arioso *a due* Bononcini keeps some of the harmonies, the descending ductus of the melody, a few rhythmic elements and the occasional non-harmonic note, revealing that he did want to anticipate it earlier. These brief musical outbursts give the predominantly comic scene a certain *gravitas*.

The privilege of closing the second act is reserved for the mismatched lovers Publio and Dalinda. By using amorous persuasion to have Mario freed, Dalinda has succeeded in blinding Publio to her deception in spite of Giulia's efforts to enlighten him. After they discover Floro in Mario's place, Publio orders the pursuit of the fugitives, but the act closes somewhat unexpectedly with a (seeming) love duet for Dalinda and him, "Sospira, pena e geme il cor, ma sol per te / non per te" (II. 13 Dalinda, Publio; Bononcini MS, Mario fuggitivo, p. 136–151). The differences between the different versions of the text and the dramaturgic repercussions of the multiple parody processes have already been discussed at length in Chapter 3.2.4 (see Table 34 in particular). The polytextuality has a hidden dialogic potential: although Dalinda still wants to keep up the deception that she returns Publio's feelings, she is negating his declarations of love with her variants of the lines, obviously conceived like asides in a comedy. Perhaps it was this comedic potential of the duet that led Hueber to describe it as a "duet rich in coloraturas and outright Neapolitan in its melodic and harmonic structure"<sup>207</sup> (Hueber 1955, 127). When Hueber was writing, scholarly literature still operated with stylistic labels such as "late Venetian" and "early Neapolitan" style, but I am at a loss as to which traits of this duet he found "outright Neapolitan".

Let us briefly summarise what a detailed comparative examination in Chapter 3.2.4 has already shown: musically, "Sospira, pena e geme il cor, ma sol per te / non per te" is almost a *contrafactum* of "Non vien per nuocer" from *Cefalo e Procride*. The F major key, the structure and the function of the ritornellos and the *concertante* exchange have been retained. Section B is equal in scope in all three versions of the duet, but in *Mario*

206 Cieli, Numi / Deh volgete i vostri lumi / A chi torna in libertà.

207 Ein koloraturreiches, in seiner melodischen und harmonischen Struktur ganz neapolitanisches Duett.

*fuggitivo* and in *Almahide* the contrapuntal voice-leading from “Non vier per nuocer” (b. 50–53; Bononcini MS, *Cefalo e Procride*, 123’) has been replaced by a texture with more homorhythmic and parallel movement (Bononcini MS, *Mario fuggitivo*, p. 144). Bononcini must have been aware of the attractiveness of “Non vien per nuocer” otherwise he would not have reintroduced it in a different dramatic situation six years later. Who knows, perhaps he even asked Stampiglia, with whom he had successfully collaborated since the early 1690s to close the opera with a metrically equivalent text so that he could engage in such a direct process of parody. Even though interventions were minimal, he nevertheless chose to slightly abridge the ritornello as well as to change section B in order to make it more operatic than “Non vien per nuocer”. Otherwise, there seems to have been no dramaturgic contradiction in the fact that in *Cefalo e Procride* the duet expresses triumphant unity and in *Mario fuggitivo* an almost comical process of dissembling. However, in the *lieto fine* of the opera, Icilio will be joined with his spouse Giulia, leaving Dalinda no other choice than to go back to her former suitor. The logic of the *lieto fine* did not see a problem in the seemingly arbitrary pairing up of its protagonists into couples.

As opposed to “Sospira, pena e geme il cor, ma sol per te / non per te”, the third duet in the opera is more specific and it follows entirely from the libretto. *Ombra* scenes in 17th- and 18th-century opera were the domain of the supernatural and they relied on a set of musical conventions to depict a mystical, sometimes even sinister atmosphere (cf. McClelland 2001). The invocation duet “Spirti dell’Erebo o ombre sentitemi” (III. 8 Giulia, Icilio; Bononcini MS, *Mario fuggitivo*, p. 83–96) is preceded by a scene for Floro and Blesa (III. 7; Stampiglia 1708, 72–74) likewise set in a grotto. After the *buffo* bickering of these two characters, Giulia and Icilio appear, still in their disguises. She summons the spirits to tell the recaptured Mario’s fate and instructs him to repeat her incantations with his eyes closed, while she retires into the cavern. The purpose of this elaborately scripted charade is for Giulia to mock and shame Icilio by removing her disguise during the “ritual”, appearing to him as his betrothed after he opens his eyes. The whole interaction could be seen as a parody of an *ombra* scene, but it speaks in favour of Stampiglia’s and Bononcini’s skilful, pre-reform intermixing of the serious and the comic. For although the duet does not encompass all the traits listed in the *Grove Music Online* definition of an *ombra* scene such as “slow sustained writing (reminiscent of church music), the use of flat keys (especially in the minor), angular melodic lines, chromaticism and dissonance, dotted rhythms and syncopation, pauses, *tremolando* effects, sudden dynamic contrasts, unexpected harmonic progressions and unusual instrumentation”, it can still function on both levels. The *Adagio* tempo, dotted orchestral ritornelli, the keys of E-flat

**Adagio**

[Violino I]  
[Violino II]  
[Viola]

**Adagio**

Giulia  
Icilio

**Adagio**

[Basso]

[Vln. I]  
[Vln. II]  
[Vla.]

Giul.  
Icil.  
[B.]

[Vln. I]  
[Vln. II]  
[Vla.]

Giul.  
Icil.  
[B.]

14

[Vln. I]

[Vln. II]

[Vla.]

Giul.

Cel.

[B.]

6 6 6 6 6 6 7 7<sup>b</sup> 6 5 4 3

EXAMPLE 15

major and C minor, the octave leaps in the vocal parts and the harmonic progressions often involving seventh chords and secondary dominants contribute to a solemn, serious tone that never verges on being too dark or gloomy since it avoids excessive dissonance and darker instrumental colours. "Spirti dell'Erebo" can be said to reflect Giulia's perspective as it does not let us forget that instead of a genuine invocation we are dealing with her gimmick, but at the same time it is also credible for Icilio, who falls easy prey to Giulia's deception.

In formal terms, the duet is a written out *dal segno* structure consisting of the following sections: A (b. 1–16; Example 15), B (b. 17–31) and A' (b. 32–44), a literal repetition of bars 4–16 preceded by an abridged string ritornello. This ritornello (b. 1–4) is in reality a descending homophonic progression of chords in a dotted, ostinato rhythm associated with orchestral *sinfonias* that have a ceremonial function. Hueber described it as "highly rich in harmonic terms"<sup>208</sup>, which is perhaps a slight exaggeration, but it is effective in what seems like a departure from the tonic E-flat major in the second bar already, although this proves to be a secondary dominant leading into a sequential progression of seventh chords resolved into sixth chords and eventually flowing into a cadence on the tonic. It is descriptive not only of the descent into the spiritual world but perhaps also of Giulia's descent into the cavern as well as Icilio's hypnotic submission to the spell. He consistently repeats Giulia's phrases like she instructed him, with the important difference that her statements are accompanied by the *basso continuo* and his are not, hovering in the texture with the harmonies that accompanied Giulia still reverberating in the listener's ear. These alternating statements by the voices are separated with orchestral interjections that are always related to the opening ritornello but are usually shorter, with the exception of the progression that closes section A (b. 13–16). Section B corresponds to the function of a middle section in *dal segno* form by exploring related tonal areas. It vacillates between C minor and E-flat major (a tension already contained in the opening ritornello) and raises the tension by making the alternating statements of the voices increasingly shorter until they reach the length of a bar (b. 27–30).

Let us end the discussion on Bononcini's dramatic duets written in 1693–1708 with this unorthodox duet. None of the examples examined here are typical nor do they outline some sort of a developmental curve. However, duets such as "Al nume umanato / La fede, la speme" (*La conversione di Maddalena*), "Non vien per nuocer" (*Cefalo e Procride*) and "Che affanno, tiranno alato" (*Mario fuggitivo*) illustrate well what Bononcini was capable of in the realm of the dramatic duet, and we shall see whether he



will stay on this path in London or look for new solutions as instigated by the developing competition with the master from Halle.

3. 4. 1. 2.  
*The Rival's Duets*

The new links which later introduced GB's new music to London were truly forged by the old link, Gallas. [...] GB's first opera after the death of Joseph I was the 1715 *Astarto*, which was produced under the direction of another of Gallas's employees, Paolo Rolli. [...] The Earl of Burlington attended this production, presumably also attended the private assemblies given by Gallas, and brought Rolli with him when he returned to London. Burlington and Rolli perhaps introduced Londoners to new music written by GB for Gallas. [...] James Brydges, 1st Duke of Chandos, might also have sponsored performances of GB's music at his Cannons estate. (Lindgren 1997, 244–245)

Although not only Bononcini himself but proponents of his music were mostly absent from London in the second decade of the 18th century, the quote by Lindgren listed above shows that preparations were being made for a second wave of increased interest in the Modenese composer's music. Bononcini's art was an integral part of the Italian cultural diaspora all over Europe, and as such enthusiastically promoted by some of his countrymen. The role played by Haym and Gallas in the early period of the performance of Italian opera in London was now undertaken by Giuseppe Riva, the Duchy of Modena's new representative in London and even more importantly, Paolo Rolli, Bononcini's new librettist with whom he started working together in Rome in 1714 and 1715. Rolli settled in London in 1716, acquired royal patronage as a poet, translator and Italian teacher and acted as the first secretary of the Royal Academy of Music in its first three seasons (1720–1722). He served as the author/adaptor of libretti for the operas performed during this time with the exception of *Radamisto* and he supervised their staging. Thus his role was comparable to Haym's in the earlier period. A lot has been written about the (supposedly) antagonistic relationships between Bononcini and Rolli on the one hand and Handel and Haym on the other (cf. Dean and Knapp 1987; Lindgren 1987; Clausen 1996; McGear 2013). If there is something beyond doubt in this complicated artistic social web, it is the changeability and pragmatic nature of relationships. This study will engage in value judgements over the merits of Haym and Rolli as librettists since both of them worked together with Handel as well as Bononcini. I do not find it purposeful to transfer binary oppositions established in the history of reception of the two composers onto other levels such as the libretti they set and the positions of duets therein.

As had already been explained, we shall concentrate on the period 1720–1724 because this is when Bononcini was active as a composer for the Royal Academy of Music, although the stress will be on the period of the first three years as his most intense and successful. His last London opera *Astianatte* (1727), set to a libretto adapted by Haym, will also be drawn into the comparison. The flowering of Italian opera in the age of the Royal Academy of Music is closely connected to the royal subsidy from the Hanoverian dynasty, a vital financial contribution that was absent in the past. Let us give a brief overview of Bononcini's London operatic output: "Eight operas plus one act of *Muzio Scevola* constitute GB's contribution to the London stage from 1720 to 1727. Three of these operas were revivals of ones heard in Rome: *Astarto* (1715), *Erminia* (1719) and *Crispo* (1721)." (Lindgren 1997, 248). The complete list includes: *Astarto* (1720, revived in 1734), *Muzio Scevola* (Act 2, 1721), *Odio e amore / Ciro* (1721), *Crispo* (1722), *Griselda* (1722, revived in 1733), *Erminia* (1723), *Farnace* (1723), *Calfurnia* (1724) and *Astianatte* (1727). Unfortunately, although we are aware that some of these operas did contain duets, due to diverse, mostly philological reasons it was impossible for me to access them. For example, collections of songs containing ten and eleven numbers do exist for *Farnace* and *Calfurnia*, but these selections lack the two duets contained in the opera *Farnace* or the single duet from *Calfurnia*, whereas MS copies of numbers from the respective operas were out of reach. However, the selection of five of Bononcini's London operas as outlined in Table 56, if not representative, provides a sample still giving a rather nuanced insight into the composer's dramatic duets performed in London, especially at the beginning of his activity. Lastly, due to the several examples of parody in duets examined in Chapter 3.4.1.1., it is important to stress that most of Bononcini's London duets were original creations: he seems to have wanted to present himself in a novel light:

None of the 13 arias in MUZIO SCEVOLA, only 3 of the 29 in GRISELDA, and only 5 of the 30 in FARNACE have been found in earlier works. Thus it does seem likely that these three works as well as ODIO E AMORE, CALFURNIA and ASTIANATTE consist mainly of newly-written arias settings. (Lindgren 1997, 249)

Before we move on to the examination of duets in Bononcini's London debut—the second version of the opera *Astarto*—we need to remind ourselves that the Royal Academy of Music did not open with an opera by Handel or Bononcini, but with a commission from the Venetian composer Giovanni Porta, described by Strohm (1979, 99) as "an important representative of

a new style in opera around 1720<sup>209</sup> who was significantly influenced by his teacher Gasparini. *Numitore* (1720), to a libretto by Rolli, was a success and continued the trend of publishing selections of a high number of arias from operas, often including duets (Gasparini and Porta 1986, *Numitore*).<sup>210</sup>

“Il ciel, le piante i fior vien meco a rimirar / per te vuò a rimirar” (Gasparini and Porta 1986, *Numitore*, 7–8) is the culmination of the exceptional opening scene in which Romolo frees his mother Rhea Silvia from a cave in which she was imprisoned by cutting down a tree and using it as a ladder. The duet is a jubilant celebration of Romolo's heroism and Rhea Silvia's joy, but given the more active role the son has in the plot, he also dominates in the unusual design of this freely tripartite duet. In contrast to the regularity of strophic form that features so often in Bononcini's works (A1: first soloist; B: second soloist; A2: both soloists in simultaneity), here it is Romolo only who sings in the duets' first two sections (X1, b. 1–14; X2, b. 15–28). Rhea Silvia joins him only in the third one (X3, b. 28–53), although this does have a dramaturgic justification. The wealth of motivic material distinguishes this duet from most of Bononcini's examined so far, rendering it comparable to some of the duets from the pasticcios *Creso* and *Arminio*. The opening ritornello (b. 1–8) contains several motifs and subjects them to *Fortspinnung*, a process that continues in the unfolding of Romolo's part in the first two sections, too. In the last section Rhea Silvia repeats Romolo's statement from section A, after which the voices are combined in alternation, parallelism and a brief section in *contrapunctus ligatus*. This was Margherita Durastanti's (Romolo) London debut, a singer with whom the composer from Halle obviously had a special rapport since she had already created the roles of Maddalena in *La resurrezione* and Agrippina in the eponymous opera. Handel extensively borrowed from the opera, including its opening duet, during the composition of his later oratorios *Messiah*, *Samson* and *Solomon*.

“Parto, ma oh Dio non sò / Resto ma dir chi può” (II. 1 Remolo, Lidia; (Gasparini and Porta 1986, *Numitore*, 31–33) displays Porta as an able composer of duets as well. More conventional in dramaturgic and vocal terms, this is a departure duet for the lovers Remo (soprano castrato Benedetto Baldassari) and Lidia (Anastasia Robinson, whose range had meanwhile changed into that of a contralto due to illness), who engage with each

209 Wichtiger Vortreter eines neuen Stils in der Oper um 1720.

210 Decades later, Handel most probably consulted this selection of songs when he extensively borrowed from it, including its opening duet, during the composition of his later oratorios *Messiah*, *Samson* and *Solomon*.

other musically on an equal footing. The extended section A (b. 1–85) has a dual construction: sections in which the relationship between the voices is predominantly simultaneous, with quasi-imitation and parallelism (b. 1–23; 42–53) interchange with sections in which alternating statements dominate (b. 24–41; 54–65), growing increasingly shorter. The reason for this is in the text: Porta makes sure that the significant differences between the lines are comprehensible in succession, although there is no semantical opposition since both characters bemoan their bad fortune and express a wish to die in the other's place. Displaying continuity with the departure duets encountered in pasticcios of the previous decade, it shows how London audiences welcomed different conceptions of it besides Handel's minor-mode pathetic type.

But let us return to the main topic of this chapter, Bononcini's activity in London. The first season with its delayed beginning and short duration (lasting from April to June 1720) featured only three operas: *Numitore*, *Radamisto* and a version of Domenico Scarlatti's *Narciso* with additional numbers composed by Thomas Roseingrave. The second season of the Royal Academy of Music was planned more ambitiously. Dean and Knapp (1987) as well as Bennett and Lindgren agree that 1720/1721 and 1721/1722—Bononcini's first two seasons—were outstandingly successful for him since “five of his works (including *Muzio Scevola* [...]) accounted for 82 of the 120 performances given by the Royal Academy of Music.” (Bennett and Lindgren 2001). This did not necessarily result in antagonism between the two composers working together:

We have little positive evidence of Handel's attitude to anybody at this time, and none at all of personal antagonism between him and Bononcini. Since Bononcini was a cellist, he and Handel presumably accompanied the recitatives in all the operas. The faction was instigated by third parties. (Dean and Knapp 1987, 307)

Except for the performances of authorial operas by Handel and Bononcini, in the second, 1720/1721 season plans were made to stage Steffani's opera *Tassilone* with the recitative adapted by Bononcini. Although this did not come to fruition, it is interesting to see that Steffani almost brought Handel and Bononcini together, both of whom had a connection with the Hanover composer and his chamber duets, although they responded to the questions posed by this genre in markedly different ways. The second season of the Royal Academy of Music was a breakthrough also because it saw the arrival in London of the alto Francesco Bernardi aka Senesino, the leading London castrato in the 1720s who sang in 32 operas before the company's dissolution.

*Astarto* (1720) was Bononcini's second setting of an opera "adapted by Rolli from a libretto by Zeno and Pariati based on two plays by Quinault (originally set by Albinoni for Venice in 1708)." (Dean and Knapp 1987, 306) Since the 1715 Roman setting was responsible for Bononcini's invitation to London, it is not surprising that it satisfied the expectations of the audience and received 23 performances, the highest number in one season by any opera produced at the Royal Academy of Music, especially since 25 of the 33 arias from the 1715 setting were retained. As a result, "for two years Bononcini's operas dominated the King's Theatre stage, outnumbering Handel's by 71 performances to 26." (ibid.) In contrast to this, contemporary written reception of the opera was not always so positive, e. g. Burney's:

The spirit of party, ignorance of good Music, and an unformed and trivial taste, must have enhanced its value with the public; but, for my own part, I am not only unable to point out a single air in which there is dignity, originality of design, or a fanciful melody, but to discover that tenderness and pathos, for which Bononcini has been so celebrated, even by those who denied his invention and science." (quoted in Dean and Knapp 1987, 309)

This reflects Dean and Knapp's opinions (1987, 309–310), coloured by the reception trope of unfavourable comparisons with Handel: "The basic idiom is Handel's, but the music lacks his energy, inventive power, unpredictability, and feeling for character. The arias are mostly short and slight, with initial ideas that tickle the ear but never tax it; they are almost never developed, falling instead into sequences." Although they find that "Bononcini's powers had advanced little in the quarter century since *Xerse* (1694) and *Camilla*", Dean and Knapp still single out the duets in *Astarto* as "agreeable". Moreover, they add that "Bononcini is happiest in contrapuntal textures, where the absence of long-breathed phrases is no disadvantage" (311), but this probably applies to arias since Bononcini does not seem to have excelled in a pronounced use of imitation in his duets.

The popularity of *Astarto* has resulted in the publishing of the entire musical contents of the opera without recitative instead of the usual "selected songs" format (cf. the reprint of Walsh's 1721 edition, Bononcini 1984). It reflects the original London form of the opera, and indirect comparisons with the 1721 and the 1734 revival were possible thanks to the published libretti (cf. Rolli, Zeno, and Pariati 1720; Rolli, Zeno, and Pariati 1721; Rolli, Zeno, and Pariati 1734<sup>211</sup>). However, he did not sing the most popular

211 The last revival was initiated by Senesino at a time when Bononcini's music was past its heyday so it can be written down to his nostalgia.

duet in the opera that saw light as a separate publication, “Mio caro ben / Già sento ch’il gran tormento” (I. 9 Sidonia, Nino; Bononcini 1984, 27–28). It is given to the secondary couple, Sidonia (Maddalena Salvai) and Nino (Matteo Berselli) whose characterisation is more light-hearted. In the first act, the schemer Sidonia tries to take advantage of the conflict between Clearco and Elisa in order to win Clearco over for herself. In the last scene, Nino courts her and she pretends to be returning his feelings in order to get rid of him, ending the act with a highly hypocritical dissembling of amorous unity.

FORM		BAR	SOLOISTS	KEY	TEXT
A	a	1–12	Sidonia	E <sup>b</sup>	Mio caro ben / non sospirar perchè mi fai penar.
	b	12–29		g, c, d	Già sento ch’il tuo desire / divien martire di questo sen. Tu peni, ma / spera sì / caro non sospirar.
	a	29–41		E <sup>b</sup>	Mio caro ben / non sospirar perchè mi fai penar
B	b’	41–58	Nino	g, c, d	Già sento ch’il gran tormento divien contento / di questo sen. Io peno, ma / cara sì / sola mi puoi bear.
A’	a’	58–81	Sidonia & Nino	E <sup>b</sup>	Mio caro ben / non sospirar perchè mi fai penar.

TABLE 60.  
Formal outline of the duet “Mio caro ben / Già sento ch’il gran tormento”  
from Bononcini’s *Astarto* (1720)

Table 60 outlines the duet’s regular, songlike structure. If instead of the dramaturgy of vocal successiveness and simultaneity we took the text and the harmonic structure into consideration, it would be more correct to describe it as a rondo of sorts, a subsection serving as a refrain, framing the episodes (subsections b) that explore related tonalities. However, Bononcini treated the text as a strophic *aria a due* although it does not seem to have been intended for such a setting, even though the duet must be Rolli’s addition to the Zeno-Pariati original since it does not feature in the 1708 libretto, where the act ends with an aria by Nino (cf. Zeno and Pariati 1708). The first three lines, shared by Sidonia and later also Nino, present the monotextual part of the duet, whereas in the next five lines the text reflects the different takes of the characters on the situation: Sidonia feigns pity for Nino’s amorous suffering and he is in turn comforted by this. The postponement of Nino’s rendition of the first three lines make

sense in dramaturgic terms since those words are a reaction to Sidonia's feigned sighs, but it must have been Bononcini who chose to reconcile this with the principle of strophic exchange of one stanza per character followed by a common one. Sidonia's stanza is in ternary song form itself, but it is not surprising that her share in the duet is bigger since she initiated the duet in an attempt to manipulate Nino's feelings. Subsections b as sung by Sidonia and Nino in succession are identical, which is unusual because the polytextuality is not highlighted musically. Maybe it can be read as Nino's utter musical beguilement by Sidonia, which is facilitated by the parts' equal soprano ranges. Subsection a', on the other hand, unites the two voices either by the distribution of the melody between them in succession or by its doubling in thirds. The fact that the material of both subsections a and b is uniform, with its characteristic, ostinato-like dotted rhythm and the leaps that close each short phrase contributes to the sense of a spontaneous, clear-cut melody. Sidonia's deception is obviously convincing on the musical plane, as well. One could even interpret the duet as a somewhat varied variant of the ternary song form (a II: b a :II) or a binary form with coda (II: a b :II coda).

Although somewhat shorter, the second duet in the opera "Innamorar e poi mancar/abbandonar" (II. 9 Elisa, Clearco; Bononcini 1984, 52–55) also brings an act to a dramatically effective close. *Astarto* seems to strive for the opposite of *Numitore*, where duets were placed at the beginning of the first two acts. The dramatic situation that prepares the introduction of the duet is rather tense: the queen Elisa (Durastanti) has had Fenicio, the man whom Clearco (Senesino) holds for his father, arrested on charges of treason. She wants to learn from him the identity of the titular Astarto, who is the legitimate heir to the throne and thus threatens her sovereignty, but since Fenicio will not divulge this information, she leaves the two men alone hoping that the older man will be more forthcoming to his son. In a surprising plot twist, Fenicio reveals that Clearco is in fact Astarto. Although he is true to the queen in both political terms and as her lover, holding no pretensions to the throne, Clearco/Astarto wants to save Fenicio, so he buys himself some time by telling Elisa that he will reveal Astarto's identity later. The duet's text (see Table 61) is a thematisation of conflicts that had troubled the pair in the course of the first two acts. Elisa reproaches Clearco that he betrayed her (politically), he assures her that this is not the case and as a result she gives him hopes for a reconciliation. Zeno and Pariati wrote a semantically similar duet for Clearco and Elisa at a later point in the dramatic action ("Occhi vezzosi / Alma crudele" III. 6 Clearco, Elisa; Zeno and Pariati 1708, 46–47). This means that Bononcini and Rolli wanted not only to move the disclosure of Astarto's identity and the confrontation between Clearco and Elisa to an earlier point in the action, but devised their own duet text as well.

FORM	BAR	CHARACTER	TEXT
rit. <sub>1</sub>	1–8	%	
a	8–16	Elisa	Innamorar / e poi manchar / dimmi perchè?
		Clearco	Innamorar / e abbandonar / dimmi perchè?
b	16–25	Clearco	E fido il mio cor / e ingrato non è.
		Elisa	E pur mi tradi /
a	25–33	Elisa	ma se vorrai / il premio avrai / della tua fe.
		Clearco	T'ingannerai / se temerai / della mia fe.
b	33–40	Clearco	E fido il mio cor / e ingrato non è.
		Elisa	E pur mi tradi /
a'	40–50	Elisa	Innamorar / e poi manchar / dimmi perchè?
		Clearco	Innamorar / e abbandonar / dimmi perchè?
a'	50–60	Elisa	ma se vorrai / il premio avrai / della tua fe.
		Clearco	T'ingannerai / se temerai / della mia fe.
rit. <sub>2</sub>	60–73	%	

TABLE 61.  
Formal outline of the duet  
“Innamorar e poi manchar / abbandonar” from *Astarto* (1720)

In formal, motivic and harmonic terms this duet is even simpler than “Mio caro ben / Già sento ch’il gran tormento”. It is also structured like an interchange of motivically related sections by repetition and minimal variation, the difference being that they are even shorter here and that a simultaneous texture prevails instead of the predominantly successive in “Mio caro ben / Già sento ch’il gran tormento”. The duet stays within the confines of the pastoral tonality of F major. All of the sections, including the ritornellos that replicate section a in instrumental form, start out with a quasi-imitation but quickly unite the voices in parallel thirds. In musical terms the second occurrences of both a and b (b. 25–33 and 33–40) are identical with the first (b. 8–16 and 16–25). The third and fourth occurrences of a (b. 40–50 and 50–60) differ only by the repetition of the last two bars as a *codetta*. However, as highlighted in Table 61, while he reserves b for Clearco’s fourth and fifth line and Elisa’s fourth line, Bononcini set all the remaining lines and the first three of each protagonist as section a. This association of the same music with a wide array of textual lines is unusual even for Bononcini, who is known to have treated his texts freely. With its oscillation between different affective contents, the text would have allowed for a more diversified approach, but Bononcini chose to give



a distinctly binary musical code to the duet, negating the grammatical, rhetorical and—to a lesser extent—semantical focuses inherent in it. There does not seem to be a musical equivalence to the dramaturgic complexity of the situation. One cannot escape the impression that instead of elaborating on the relationship between the characters and all their affects, Bononcini's aim was to end the act as soon as possible at the height of tension, to stifle a conflict instead of trying to express or interpret it. Not only the pastoral key and the diatonic harmonies with a lot of pedals but also the presence of horns frame the duet as a hunting scene of sorts, as if the characters were getting ready to go hunting together as part of a French operatic *divertissement*. Bononcini showed a proclivity for *da capo* form early on in his career when it was not yet the absolute formal norm and we have already seen that he often adopted it in the most lapidary form, so that its absence here at the end of the second act, usually reserved for a virtuoso number, was a conscious choice. Maybe the possibility that he borrowed it from an earlier work should be considered, although the complexity of the text would imply extensive adaptation. Its presence in all the versions of the opera associated with Bononcini (1715, 1720, 1721 and 1734) suggests it belongs to Rolli's original plan; Bononcini clearly stood behind this duet!

The monotextual duet of amorous unity “Mai non potrei goder” (III. 9 Elisa, Clearco; Bononcini 1984, 73–76) is probably the only conventional duet in the opera after the two lapidary, almost minimalist duets. As is customary in the *lieto fine*, the relationship between Elisa and Clearco/Astarto is consolidated on the personal and the political plane and this closing duet testifies to their unity, resolving their differences. Although we cannot call it particularly elaborate in terms of the techniques used as we could some of the duets examined in Chapter 3.4.1.1, it is the longest and technically most demanding duet in the opera, allowing the *primo uomo* and the *prima donna* a few moments of vocal brilliance. For the first time in a London duet, Bononcini works with two motifs, already clearly outlined in the opening ritornello (b. 1–4). Its first bar tosses a playful descending motif back and forth in the two violins in quasi-imitative alternating statements. In the second two bars they unite in parallel thirds in the outlining of a sequential syncopated passage featuring in both sections of this regular *da capo* form. The voices open by developing a subject (b. 4–6, first occurrence in Elisa's part) from the first motif in the ritornello, imitated in a slightly modified form (b. 5–8 in Clearco's part). Accompanied by some orchestral *Fortspinnung*, the voices engage in a contrapuntal section that juxtaposes the subject to a pedal note, followed by a parallel passage based on the second motif from the ritornello (y, b. 10–13) that modulates to the dominant.

The second part of this “larger form”, a2 (b. 14–28) is structured similarly, with the difference that it compresses the opening part into the alternation of the first motif from the ritornello in the violins accompanied by alternating crotchet outcries of “no” in the voices (b. 14–16). This way the setting stresses the impossibility of happiness without each other as “Mai non potrei goder / intero un sol piacer / mio bene senza te” is the only text in section A. Back in the confines of the G major tonic, the passage with the subject juxtaposed to a dominant pedal is now reproduced with the parts inverted (b. 16–18), followed by a parallel rendition of motif y (b. 18–21) interspersed with a bar of free contrapuntal combining. A closing ritornello reworking of motif y leads into section B (b. 28–38) distinguished by no particular contrast in affect or motivic material. It resorts, though more often than section A, to contrapuntal passages while exploring related minor keys, avoids references to motif x and uses motif y instead for orchestral interjections and cadential passages.

The text of “Mai non potrei goder” was not a part of Zeno’s and Pariati’s original 1708 libretto or Bononcini’s first 1715 setting. The introduction of this third duet may have been prompted by Bononcini. Unlike the first two duets with their long texts and dramaturgic specificity, the more typified “Mai non potrei goder” is easily replaceable, which is exactly what happened in the 1721 revival of *Astarto*, when a duet with the incipit “Cara/caro non v’è dolce diletto” took up its place.<sup>212</sup> The 1734 revival saw a further replacement, closing Act 3 with an aria for Clearco (“L’onor severo brama”) and a *coro* that incorporated a duet passage for Elisa and Clearco with the incipit “Contento e tormento”. In any case, *Astarto* shows that along with shorter and simpler, but unconventional duets that could capture the attention of the audience, Bononcini was ready to create more typical duet designs that still bear the stamp of his style.

The origins of the libretto for the London pasticcio *Muzio Scevola* (1721) are complex, going back to the eponymous libretto by Nicolò Minato, first set by Francesco Cavalli in 1665. The first act of the Haymarket production was composed by Filippo Amadei, a violoncellist active in London who did not compose much in his lifetime bar this commission. As there were no duets in his act of *Muzio Scevola*, we shall concentrate on Act 2, composed by Bononcini, whereas the third act by Handel will be discussed at length Chapter 3.4.2. Bononcini had already been involved with the story of the Roman hero Mutius Scaevola at least two times, in 1695 in Rome and in 1710 in Vienna. Back then his librettist was Silvio Stampiglia, who took Minato’s old libretto as his starting point and introduced some innovations.

212 I cannot account for the provenance of this duet as I could not access any sources documenting it.

For the 1710 production Stampiglia significantly revised the text and this libretto was probably the point of departure for Rolli. His reworking was more substantial, introducing new characters into the Minato / Stampiglia model. It is by now evident that because of the intricate derivative processes and the inaccessibility of some of the sources, a detailed comparison of all versions was not possible. Most of the background information will be based on scholarly literature (Powers 1976; Ford 1974), although I have verified myself that none of the duets from the 1695 libretto (Stampiglia 1695) and the 1710 score (Bononcini MS, Muzio Scevola)<sup>213</sup> made it into the London opera. Its libretto was published (Rolli 1721) along with a selection of four vocal numbers, but since I had access to the integral MS copy of the pasticcio at the British Library (Bononcini MS, Muzio Scevola, Act 2), this will be my main source.

The main difference between the 1695 and 1710 versions of the opera on the one hand and the 1721 pasticcio on the other is the treatment of the second plot involving the Roman officer Orazio, who in the 1695 version has a wife and a daughter, whereas in Rolli's version of the libretto he is in love with Porsenna's daughter Irene. Muzio's love interest in the 1695 and 1710 versions was Valeria, the daughter of the Roman consul, while in the 1721 pasticcio he loves Clelia, who displays even more valour and courage, provoking Dean and Knapp's (1987, 368) description of "a veritable Roman Amazon". The 1695 libretto and the 1710 score contain a duet for Muzio and Orazio (I. 4), a duet for Orazio and Elisa with a somewhat different text (II. 8 in the 1695 version of the opera, II. 9 in the 1710 one) and "Cara infido tu mi credi / ad altri tu mi cedi" for Muzio and Valeria (III. 4 in the 1695 version, III. 5 in the 1710 one), analysed in Chapter 3.2.3 in connection with its borrowing in *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* (1708). The first two 1695/1710 duets do not have a dramaturgic equivalent in the 1721 pasticcio. The third one would have had dramaturgic potential in the 1721 retelling of the Mutius story as a scene where Muzio and Clelia meet after he had ceded her to Porsenna appears there as well. I wonder if Bononcini was aware of the fact that London audiences had already heard this duet as part of *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* in 1708 even before he decided to borrow it himself for the 1710 Vienna *Muzio Scevola*. We shall see in Chapter 3.4.2 that Rolli replaced a duet at this point in the dramatic action of Act 3 with one nearer the end of the act. Moreover, the 1721 London version of the opera contains duets at entirely different dramaturgic points in general, so it is safe to conclude

213 The availability of this source came to my knowledge in the finishing phase of the research, so that it was impossible to include duets from it into the analysis in Chapter 3.4.1.1. I can however confirm that there is no direct parody between the duets in Bononcini MS, Muzio Scevola and other duets examined in this study.

that the new duet texts stem entirely from Rolli, who clearly had different ideas about what kind of duets he wanted in his retelling of the story.

*Muzio Scevola* presented *Chrysander* (1919b, 58–68) with an ideal opportunity to compare the styles of the two composers in the pasticcio's second and third acts. The comparison was very unfavourable for Bononcini, whose music was repudiated because of its likeability as “light” art. We should examine if the customary qualities of “lightness” and “sweetness” indeed apply to Bononcini's two duets as compared to Handel's two. Both composers wrote them for the same constellation of *primi* and *secondi* singers as in *Astarto*: one duet per act for Senesino (Muzio) and Durastanti (Clelia) and one for Berselli (Orazio) and Anastasia Robinson (Irene). In both acts the *secondi* sing a duet first, Bononcini's being “Troppo loquace è il guardo / Se quando parla il guardo” (II. 5 Orazio, Irene; Bononcini MS, Muzio Scevola, Act 2, 68–73).<sup>214</sup> Porsenna initially wanted to give his daughter Irene's hand in marriage to the exiled Roman king Tarquinio Superbo and he was opposed to her love for Orazio. Impressed by Muzio's and Clelia's courage and instigated by his growing infatuation for Clelia, Porsenna is considering a change of allegiances. The duet is a part of the scene containing a clandestine meeting between Irene and Orazio on the banks of the Tiber: Irene arrives on a boat to let Orazio know that her father might be changing his mind about consenting to their marriage but she cannot stay for long, so that the lovers' prolonged parting is sealed with this flirtatious dialogue duet.

As shown in Table 62, it is definitely not a tragic or pathetic duet of departure. At first it seems to have a similar structural plan like “Mio caro ben / Già sento ch'il gran tormento” and other duets in varied strophic tripartite form. However, the situation is more complex than that. The free tripartite form consists of two sections in which each voice sings its own stanza in longer, motivically related alternating statements. Orazio, who initiates communication with the parting Irene because he wants to extract a kind look from her before she leaves, always takes the lead, Irene answering him in the lower fourth. They engage in a discussion on love and its manifestations. Orazio chides Irene for being too restrained in the expression of her affections, while Irene encourages him to look deeper into her eyes—as the window to the soul—for reassurance. The melodies they both outline in A1 and A2 are similar, cleverly vacillating between a minor key and its relative major equivalent and spicing up the diatonicism with alterations in the form of a frequent figure of a diminished third. In the third section of the duet (A1') their singing is intertwined, beginning by alternations of

214 The MS source is often illegible which would have made a precise transcription difficult.

a shorter span based on the motivic material of A<sub>1</sub> and gradually combined into a simultaneous, mostly freely contrapuntal texture giving way to parallelism only in the last two bars (b. 44–45) before a short ritornello rounds off the duet. In textual terms, a fifth stanza sung by Orazio is juxtaposed to the repetition of the fourth stanza repeated by Irene, but whereas in A<sub>2</sub> it was sung in dialogue with him, here the peculiarities of the text, although highlighted in comprehensible alternating statements before being sung in simultaneity, flow into a mutual agreement and a musical unity, thus abolishing what little conflict this duet had in itself. The collaboration between the composer and Rolli that probably began in 1714 in Rome but continued in London obviously favoured irregular duets forms of abundant polytextuality with dialogic traits. The *da capo* was the exception rather than the rule, and although Bononcini had shown a proclivity for the *da capo* early on in his career, he gladly experimented with varied strophic forms and the creation of musical dialogue, e. g. in “Al nume umanato” from *La conversione di Maddalena*. Whether this was Bononcini’s and Rolli’s answer to the “modern plan” duet remains to be seen.

A <sub>1</sub> (b. 1–16)			
a <sub>1</sub> (b. 3–10)	a <sub>1</sub> ' (fourth lower, b. 10–16)		
Orazio	Irene		
Troppo loquace è il guardo S'è messaggier del cor Ma tu col tuo rigor Muto lo rendi.	Se quando parla il guardo, Tu sai che dice il cor Col nome di rigor Troppo l'offendi.		
Orazio	Irene	Orazio	Irene
Sul labbro venne l'alma Nel'intendesti allor Or viene al volto e ancor Tu non l'intendi.	Caro in quest'occhi Se non vedesti allor Or te la svelo ancor, Sì tu l'intenti.	Solo piacer dell'Alma, Mio primo dolce ardor, Con troppe fiamme il cor, Cara, m'accendi.	Caro in quest'occhi Se non vedesti allor Or te la svelo ancor, Sì tu l'intenti.
a <sub>2</sub> (b. 16–22)	a <sub>2</sub> ' (fourth lower, b. 22–28)	A <sub>1</sub> ' – in simultaneity (b. 28–50)	
A <sub>2</sub> (b. 16–28)			

TABLE 62.

Text and formal outline of Bononcini's duet “Troppo loquace è il guardo / Se quando parla il guardo” from the pasticcio *Muzio Scevola* (1721)

Although its text is less elaborate, the duet “Dov’è il dolor / Fate un effetto” (II. 10 Clelia, Muzio; Bononcini MS, Muzio Scevola, Act 2, 80–83’) continues the trend just described. It is even more dialogic since Muzio’s stanza is a direct reply to Clelia’s and the immediacy is enhanced by the number’s brevity. It occurs at the moment of an encounter between the pair on Muzio’s way back from Porsenna’s camp. As is known from ancient Roman history, Mucius Scaevola volunteered to assassinate Lars Porsenna in the Clusian camp during his siege of Rome, but killed someone else by mistake. Impressed by his courage and the fact that he put his right hand into a fire in punishment for his error, Porsenna sets Muzio free “and gives him an escort of guards, who are attacked by Clelia and her women.” (Dean and Knapp 1987, 368) Wanting to keep Clelia near, Porsenna decides to hold them hostage. Ford (1974, 119) describes the duet as “an example of the serious duet style” since the cries of “ahi”, often mocked in parodies of serious opera by comic characters, “are here used seriously”, namely, Clelia sees that Muzio’s hand is wounded and expresses sympathy for his pain with a touch of sentimentality, although he negates it.

The duet has the same structural plan of strophic alternation followed by a final simultaneous texture. It is in three sections, the first two consisting of alternating statements and the third bringing the voices together in simultaneity. In this sense it shows continuity with “Mio caro ben / Già sento ch’il gran tormento”. However, the duets from *Muzio Scevola* move away from the simplicity and diatonic idiom of the duets in *Astarto* into a harmonically more adventurous and also more dramatic, dialogic understanding of strophic form. “Dov’è il dolor / Fate un effetto”, likewise in a minor key, is shorter and contains less text than “Troppo loquace è il guardo / Se quando parla il guardo”; instead of the latter duet’s five stanzas, it has merely one stanza per character. Thus its first section (A<sub>1</sub>, b. 1–10) is the rendition of Clelia’s stanza in a single alternating statement and the second section (A<sub>2</sub>, b. 10–15) the setting of Muzio’s stanza as the repetition of Clelia’s melody transposed a fourth lower. The third section (A<sub>3</sub>, b. 15–33) consists—in textual terms—of the repetition of each characters’ stanza broken up into ever shorter alternating statements and then combined into a simultaneous texture in the last three vocal bars (b. 29–31) before the closing short ritornello. Unlike the two aforementioned duets in varied strophic form, “Dov’è il dolor / Fate un effetto” keeps vocal simultaneity to the minimum, reaching it gradually in a culminating process. But let us take a look at sections A<sub>1</sub> and A<sub>2</sub> (Example 16).

In terms of its text, this duet is the most simple of the three strophic duets mentioned (“Mio caro ben / Già sento ch’il gran tormento”, “Troppo loquace è il guardo / Se quando parla il guardo”) with its mere

two stanzas<sup>215</sup>. However, Bononcini achieves a sense of complexity by carefully building a melodic arch consisting of as many as five motifs: the opening  $x_1$  (b. 4–5<sup>216</sup>),  $x_2$  (b. 5–6) with its specific leap of an ascending seventh,  $x_2'$  (b. 6–7), a sequential repetition of  $x_2$  a second lower,  $x_3$  (b. 7–8), a descending melody outlining a diminished third and finally, the cadential  $x_4$  (b. 8–9). The way these motifs are separated by pauses but still grow out of each other in a spontaneous manner is a slap in the face of Bononcini's critics who insisted on a squareness and repetitiveness of the composer's phrase structures. Some of these motifs are anticipated already in the opening ritornello (b. 1–5):  $x_1$  appears in imitation in the two violins and the viola,  $x_2$  takes its cue from the second violins and is then transferred to the first violin, while motif  $x_4$  rounds off the ritornello. In contrast to the principles of ritornello form (or a duet such as "Il ciel, le piante i fior vien meco a rimirar / per te vuò a rimirar"), here the orchestra presents just a sample of the material that the vocal parts work out in its entirety. Clelia's statement of the composite, five-part subject touches upon B-flat major with a series of secondary dominants, but stays within the confines of the tonic. As a transposition of A1 into the dominant, A2 does the same on the tonal plane of D minor. However, Bononcini's harmonic mastery, so praised by his contemporaries such as Lecerf de la Viéville, is evident in section A3, where he combines motifs in the two vocal parts that appeared in the preceding two sections in different keys. The ritornello alone drew the attention of the listener with harmonic audacity already in the second bar: as soon as the G minor tonic has been established with an authentic cadence, it is destabilised by a brisk modulation into D minor and the statement of the dominant of its dominant (b. 2, second beat), after which it sequentially proceeds to further secondary dominants so that the aforementioned harmonic surprise does not stand out. Perhaps this is a good example of what Bononcini's contemporaries had in mind when they spoke of the shocking qualities of the composer's harmonic language.

Section A3 proceeds by balancing statements of varied and repeated motifs in Clelia's (soprano) and Muzio's (mezzosoprano) parts. It, as well, starts out in the tonic G minor, and after touching upon E-flat major and F minor during the sequential statements of  $x_2$ ,  $x_2'$  and  $x_3$ , it returns to the tonic in b. 24. It breaks up the composite, five-part subject onto two

215 In absence of a tabular outline, I am bringing the text here: Clelia: *Dov'è il dolor, dov'è / E mio quel tuo tormento. / Dalla tua destra il sento / Ahi che mi passa al cor / Forse più forte.* Muzio: *Fate un'effetto in me / La gloria e tua mia bella. / A te vicino e a quella / Non so che sia dolor, / cara e la morte.* Clelia/Muzio: *Dov'è / Fate...*

216 Bar numbers refer to the first occurrence in the vocal part (Clelia's).

[Violino I]

[Violino II]

[Viola]

Clelia  
 dov' è il do-lor dov' è \_\_\_\_\_ è mio\_ quel tuo tor men - to. Dal

Muzio

[Basso]

b 6<sup>b</sup> # (6) 4 b

7

[Vln. I]

[Vln. II]

[Vla.]

Cle.  
 la\_ tua des tra il sen - to ahi\_ che mi pas-sa al cor for - se, for-se\_ più for - se.

Mu.

[B.]

7<sup>b</sup> 6 7<sup>#</sup> b 6<sup>b</sup> 7<sup>b</sup> 4 #3

Fa-



10

[Vln. I]

[Vln. II]

[Vla.]

Cle.

Mu.

te un ef-fet-to in me, la Glo-ria e tua mia bel - la a te vi-ci-no e a quel - la non

[B.]

# # 7 6

13

[Vln. I]

[Vln. II]

[Vla.]

Cle.

Mu.

so - - che si - a do - lor ca - ra, ca - ra - - e la mor - te.

[B.]

7 6b 7b 6 4 #3

dov'

voices in a not altogether straightforward way. At first, an impression of regularity is conveyed by the rendition of  $x_1$  a fourth lower in Muzio's part (b. 16–17) after Clelia had stated it in b. 15–16. After  $x_2$  had been brought forward in Clelia's part (b. 17–18), the alternation becomes slightly more erratic: Muzio brings  $x_2$  forth (b. 18–19), Clelia states  $x_2'$  and  $x_3$  together sequentially a second lower, she herself transposes  $x_3$  (b. 21–22) a fifth higher, which is followed by her emphatic outcry "ahi". Although the text is not new (we have heard it in its entirety in sections A1 and A2), Bononcini gives Clelia's distress some additional emphasis. To balance out the alternation, Muzio steers back the harmonic course to the tonic with a rendition of  $x_2'$  and  $x_3$  (b. 22–24), after which the voices exchange  $x_4$  in varied form (b. 24–27). This is followed by a coda (b. 27–33) of sorts, the passage Ford (1974, 119) had described and also transcribed in his article. The alternation reaches its dialogic culmination since Clelia's cries ("ahi") are juxtaposed to Muzio's ("cara") in a sequential progression of sixth and seventh chords that outlines a cadence in the tonic, but nevertheless conveys some of the delicate sentimental sweetness of the situation. After this, the already mentioned brief moments of vocal simultaneity provide a conventional closing.

Comparing the Vienna *Muzio Scevola* with former operas by Bononcini, Hueber (1955, 143) concludes that "the style of the master has not changed considerably in a period of 13 years since 1697, both in content, form and in terms of orchestration"<sup>217</sup>. However, it had changed in the following decade, possibly under the influence of Rolli's and Bononcini's new ideas on musical dramaturgy, at least in the realm of duets. In *Muzio Scevola* their collaboration seems to have gone a step further. The dramatic situation in which the coda occurs and the coda itself are indeed slightly sentimental (although one could argue that there is nothing sentimental about second-degree burns), but the duet as a whole is certainly not. With their minor-mode tonalities, the renouncement of mellifluous motivic material and the absence of regular, periodic structures, as well as a love for irregularity and occasional harmonic audacity, Bononcini's two duets in this opera depart from his previous duets, although in formal and structural terms they do show some continuity as well.

In 1721/1722 *Crispo* and *Griselda* by Bononcini were performed alongside Handel's *Floridante*, reaping slightly more success than Handel. Due to the absence of Durastanti, the female leads in both operas were written for Anastasia Robinson, who won the hearts of London audiences in

217 Der Stil des Meisters hat sich seit 1697, also innerhalb eines Zeitraumes von 13 Jahren nicht wesentlich verändert, weder in inhaltlicher, formaler, als auch instrumentationstechnischer Hinsicht.

*Griselda* in particular. “According to Hawkins, Bononcini had improved her method of singing and wrote particularly well for her in *Crispo* and *Griselda*.” (Dean and Knapp 1987, 312). The publication of *Cantate e duetti* (1721) cemented Bononcini’s success in this season, although these chamber duets were quite different from the duets in *Muzio Scevola* and the first two in *Astarto*. In general, the stylistic and structural changes that the genre of the chamber duet underwent between the publishing of the two collections (1691 and 1721) were smaller than the ones witnessed in the composer’s dramatic duets.

As has already been remarked, although Bononcini wrote many more operas before he left the Royal Academy of Music, we are able to consider only those in Table 56 because some operas either contain no duets at all, or no sources documenting them were accessible. For instance, Salvi’s *Amore e maestà* in Orlandini’s 1715 setting, with the libretto revised by Rolli and the addition of 15 arias by Amadei was premiered under the title *Arsace* just after *Astarto* in 1720, but contained no duets. *Ciro*, the last premiere of the second, 1720/1721 season does not seem to have either. On the other hand, *Crispo* definitely contains one duet, “Mi lasci crudele / Consolati e parti” (I. 7 Costante, Olimpia), as can be seen from the printed libretto (Rolli and Lemer 1721, 18). In this variant of the Phaedra story Fausta, the wife of the emperor Constantine the Great is in love with her stepson Crispo. The duet is assigned to Fausta’s son Costante and Olimpia, Crispo’s betrothed. Asked by the emperor Costantino to choose between her two suitors, Olimpia has chosen Crispo, to Costante’s dismay. In this “modern plan” duet text he complains and admonishes her for not returning his feelings, while she remains steadfast and wants to leave. We are dealing with a highly polytextual and dialogic text. This time it does not stem from Rolli but from Gaetano Lemer, the author of the libretto for the first version of the opera, produced in Bononcini’s absence in Rome in 1721 (Lemer 1721, 25), which proves that there were other librettists besides Rolli who were interested in exploring innovative, serious duet designs. It is a shame that there are no musical sources that reflect a setting of this text with absolute certainty. However, although Robinson in the role of Fausta was the absolute *prima donna* of the opera, she did not take part in any duets.

This was not the case in *Griselda* (1722), the opera by Bononcini most praised by his contemporaries including Burney who was otherwise not particularly positively inclined to Bononcini: “It is manifest that Handel’s bold and varied style, rich harmony, and ingenious contrivance had made such an impression on the public as to render it necessary for Bononcini, in setting this opera, to quit his *rambling nag*, and to mount his great horse, accoutred in all his trappings, and endeavour to move with unusual pomp

and stateliness.” (quoted in Dean and Knapp 1987, 313). Dean and Knapp themselves do not give Bononcini the benefit of the doubt, claiming that “there is nothing here that Handel did not do much better. As before, he strikes the mood of a piece in the first phrase, ignores its undercurrents, and falls back on formulae.” (ibid., 313–314). My intention is not to refute these tropes of negative reception of Bononcini’s music since it would be hard to debate them on the basis of isolated examples from the opera, but let us nevertheless examine how they compare to the rest of Bononcini’s dramatic duets examined so far.

Zeno’s *Griselda* was one his most renowned and popular libretti, first set by Pollarolo (1701) and before Bononcini by a variety of composers such as Albinoni (1703), Orlandini (1716), Antonio Maria Bononcini (1718) and A. Scarlatti (1721). It remained popular throughout the first half of the century. However, for the London performance the libretto was adapted by Rolli, and we have seen that he had a tendency to make significant changes not only to the texts of the vocal numbers but to the dramaturgy in general as well, much bigger changes than are present in the settings of Bononcini’s brother, Scarlatti and Vivaldi. If we narrow a brief comparison of these settings down to the duets, we shall see that the operas by A. M. Bononcini and Scarlatti contain one duet for *Griselda* and *Costanza* and one for *Roberto* and *Costanza*, which is a big difference when compared to Rolli’s three duets. Rolli also changed the name of the characters as we already witnessed him do before, keeping only those of the *primi*, the Sicilian king *Gualtiero* and his plebeian wife *Griselda*, whom he subjects to cruel tests of worthiness to the throne after her legitimacy had been questioned by the people. Having told *Griselda* that their daughter is dead, *Gualtiero* banishes her to the countryside and announces that he will remarry. As part of the next ordeal, he summons her back to court to be a servant to his new bride-to-be, called *Costanza* in most versions of the opera but renamed *Almirena* by Rolli. She is in love with Prince *Ernesto*, called *Roberto* in Zeno’s original. *Griselda* stoically accepts all these ordeals, so it is revealed to her that *Costanza/Almirena* is actually their daughter and that *Gualtiero* had been testing her all along. In a typical *lieto fine*, the people accept *Griselda* as their queen since she has proven that the nobility of character is more important than the nobility of blood. Perhaps *Griselda* was so popular precisely because of this enlightened moral, and London audiences were able to identify with it since they drew parallels between the titular character and *Anastasia Robinson*, the singer having come from a modest social background and was about to marry the Earl of *Peterborough* (cf. Dean 2001b). It was also important for librettists to soften *Gualtiero*’s cruelty by letting him express the depth of his love for *Griselda* and the remorse he feels for torturing her when he is left alone on stage.

Although he kept a duet for the secondary pair, Almirena and Ernesto, but placed it earlier in the third act into a different dramatic situation, Rolli clearly wanted to place additional emphasis on the main protagonists and his *primi* singers Robinson and Senesino by giving them two duets, none of which have an equivalent in Zeno. Their first duet is the only duet among the numbers from *Griselda* cited by Dean and Knapp as an example of “slow and plaintive” minor-mode melodies. One must add without delay that “Al mio nativo prato / E per voler di quello” (I. 2 *Griselda*, Gualtiero; Bononcini 1722, 7–8)<sup>218</sup> is none of this as not only is it ascribed *Andante* but it is also in D major and does not possess a plaintive character at all with its 3/8, dance metre. The dramatic situation would allow for the expression of the affect of sorrow, at least on *Griselda*'s part, as the duet occurs after Gualtiero had announced that she is to be sent back to the meadows where she used to tend to her flocks. *Griselda*'s lower social background is given overtly pastoral overtones and this is noticeable even in the flute accompaniment. Modulating from the tonic to the A major dominant, *Griselda* recounts how it was for the will of her king that she left her meadows in the first place. Gualtiero adds in what may sound sarcastic (as underlined by the use of the diminutive form “praticello”) that it was for his will, too, that she will be returning there.<sup>219</sup> Otherwise the duet is not of particular importance to this study because it is in strophic bipartite form, built out of two short sections (X1, b. 1–19; X2, b. 19–38), in each of which a character sings her or his three-line stanza without any vocal simultaneity whatsoever. However, even in this simplest design Bononcini showed a proclivity for varied strophic form as he based Gualtiero's section only loosely on *Griselda*'s, retaining merely the opening motif (b. 1–2 in the orchestra, b. 2–4 in *Griselda*'s part, b. 19–21 in Gualtiero's). After a brief detour to E minor (b. 21–25) that may or may not be expressive of Gualtiero's hidden discomfort concerning *Griselda*'s banishment, Gualtiero modulates back to the tonic with the repetition of the main motif (b. 25–27), but the subsequent course of his section unfolds differently from *Griselda*'s. The grace with which *Griselda* accepts her fate is clear from the start in this first number in the opera.

A lot happens before the pair is joined again in a duet at the end of Act 2. Just before they sing “Dell'offesa / Mio sovrano” (II. 12 Gualtiero, *Griselda*; Bononcini 1722, 50–52), Gualtiero rescues *Griselda* from Rambaldo's

218 Although clearly entitled as “sung by A. Robinson & Sigr. Senesino in *Griselda*”, at first sight it seems that “Al mio nativo prato” is an aria for *Griselda* only since Gualtiero's name has been erroneously left out of its place before the stave on p. 8. of Walsh's edition.

219 *Griselda*: Al mio nativo prato / dirò t'ò abbandonato / per voglio del mio Re.  
Gualtiero: E per voler di quello / puoi dire al praticello / oggi ritorno a te.

unwelcome advances, but he cannot admit in front of his retinue and Griselda that the motif for his act was love, so he insists that he was instigated by “giustizia” (justice) and not by “amor”, warning Griselda not to foster any false hopes, which she stoically accepts, nevertheless maintaining that on her part, she is incapable of not loving Gualtiero. In many ways this is an atypical duet for Bononcini, but not for the reasons some of the duets in *Astarto* and both duets in *Muzio Scevola* were, for it is in regular *da capo* form, with an A section in “larger form” (A1, b. 1–19; A2, b. 19–35). The duet does not venture beyond the diatonic “sweetness” normally associated with Bononcini, either. Moreover, whereas in the duet “Dov’è il dolor / Fate un effetto” the dramatic situation might have been “sweetly” sentimental, but the music not necessarily so, in *Griselda* the music smoothens out what could have been portrayed with more intense, pathetic expressive means, in line with the treatment of the story that did not strike people as misogynist as it does today. On the other hand, “Dell’offesa / Mio sovrano” is distinguished from most of the duets examined so far (except for the short *ariosi a due* from *La conversione di Maddalena* and *Turno Aricino*) by an unequal relationship between the characters and their vocal parts, to a certain extent also the lack of motivic-thematic and contrapuntal regularity.

The duet opens with a figurative, semiquaver ritornello (b. 1–5) that appears not to have any motivic significance but is well suited for orchestral accompaniment and it can be clearly contrasted to the parts. Gualtiero opens with a longer statement (b. 5–11) that consists of the main motif (b. 5–6) and a free *Fortspinnung* of melodic and rhythmic motifs derived from it, outlining a modulation to the dominant and culminating in a semiquaver triplet passage derived from the ritornello. After a quick modulation back to the tonic, Griselda sets in with the main motif on the same pitch (b. 12–14; after all, the two roles share a common *tessitura*), but Gualtiero soon enters again with the head of the main motif (b. 15–16) followed by extensive sequential *Fortspinnung* of the semiquaver triplets (b. 16–19). Griselda accompanies this with a downward moving sequential quaver phrase that gives the impression of a countersubject (b. 16–19). After this, A1 is rounded off by a clear cadence in C major without parallel vocal movement and a brief ritornello. If any expectations of following alternating statements by the voices with their contrapuntal combining have been set up in the first part of this “larger” form in which each protagonist has sung all of his or her four lines<sup>220</sup>, they are not followed in subsection A2. Griselda

220 The text of the duet in its entirety is as follows: A section. Gualtiero: Dell’offesa vendicarti / e giustizia amor non è. / Pastorella non lasciarti / lusingar dalla speranza. Griselda: Mio sovrano non amarti / sai che in mio poter non è. / Ma non serbo per turbati / ne pensiero ne speranza. B section. Gualtiero: Soffri e sii l’esempio solo / di fortuna e di costanza. Griselda: Non sdegnarla e questo solo / sia merce della costanza.

starts it off with the head of the subject followed by some free variation, and although Gualtiero replies to her with the same, only slightly varied motif in b. 22–23, the ensuing contrapuntal passage does not balance out the contrapuntal relationship between the parts by turning—as Bononcini often did, first and foremost in his chamber duets—to the technique of inverted parts. Although he could have easily conceived the juxtaposition of semiquaver figures in Gualtiero's part to Griselda's countersubject in section A1 in inverted counterpoint, in b. 23–27 Bononcini merely transposes the passage from b. 15–19 in modified form instead. After a brief ritornello interjection, Gualtiero continues with *Fortspinnung* of the triplet figure to a predominantly pedal accompaniment in Griselda's part, pushing her into the background of the texture once again. Section B (b. 36–52), in which Gualtiero insinuates that Griselda could be rewarded for her patience after all, features even more alternation as it harmonically explores the relative minor. Besides the occurrences of the head of the main motif from section A, it does not attempt to present any motivic material of its own but proceeds along free derivative and improvisatory lines. Griselda's answer (b. 39–43) to Gualtiero's initial statement contains her only brief passage in semiquavers in the duet on the key word “costanza”, but when it comes to figuration, it is still Gualtiero who dominates, closing section B over Griselda's counterpoint with his longest triplet passage so far (b. 48–52).

Although the soloists are of a similar *tessitura* and occasionally engage in voice-crossing, Bononcini clearly differentiated them in the texture by letting Gualtiero shine in virtuoso semiquaver passages, and pushing Griselda in the background most of the time to provide contrapuntal support. That this clearly has semantic significance is backed by the fact that the composer was not interested in the imitative working out of his material, but subjected it to derivation and improvisation instead, with almost as much *Fortspinnung* as we witnessed in the first duet in *Numitore*, “Il ciel, le piante i fior vien meco a rimirar / per te vuò a rimirar”. Griselda does not communicate with Gualtiero as her equal, but plays a subordinate role in this duet on the musical plane, as well, which stands out in view of the gender roles in *dramma per musica* of the 18th century. As Leopold (cf. 2000; 2009, 140–174) and many others have shown, opera seria often placed its female and male heroes in a relationship of absolute equality, which was reflected, among other things, in the proximity of their vocal range. Thus it cannot be a coincidence and it clearly derives from the libretto that Bononcini produced an imbalance between two voices of the same *tessitura*. After having written the role of the Fedraesque Fausta in *Crispo* for Robinson, Bononcini and Rolli clearly wanted to show off the range of talents of their only current *prima donna* in a role that was the exact opposite of Fausta. As a result, this duet provides an even more effective closing to the second act than “Innamorar e poi mancar” did for *Astarto*.

“*Quel timoroso / Tutta timore*” (III. 3 Ernesto, Almirena; Bononcini 1722, 63–66), the third duet in the opera, was sung by the *secondo uomo* Benedetto Baldassari and Maddalena Salvai, who was recommended to the Royal Academy of Music by Senesino and debuted as Polissena in Handel’s *Radamisto*, singing mostly *seconda donna* or roles lesser in stature in the course of the first two seasons. Gualtieri uncovers the deception in front of the pair somewhat earlier in Act 3 than in Zeno’s original libretto, so that Ernesto and Almirena can sing a happy duet of unity abounding in pastoral imagery. He compares himself to a scared deer fleeing a hunter that finds a spring to quench its thirst, she to a lost sheep that eventually hears the voice of its shepherd.<sup>221</sup> The treatment of this secondary couple is akin to contemporary English sentimental comedy, and Clausen (1994, 59) considers this as a conscious appeal to the bourgeois part of the audience. Rolli clearly had an aversion to monotextual duets, so that even when he needed to express relief at the accomplishment of amorous unity, he wanted to describe it in different poetic images. This duet is another variant of strophic form, but Bononcini—probably affected by the harmonious nature of the unity—went back to his more regular and less dramatic strophic designs, such as “*Mio caro ben / Già sento ch’il gran tormento*” from *Astarto*. Apart from Rolli’s Arcadian pastoral text, the oboes, too, vouch for pastoral atmosphere, consistently underlining a rhythmic figure at the end of phrases whenever it appears in the voices. Section A consists of two subsections, the first one (A1, b. 1–14) a wholesome outlining of Ernesto’s stanza and all the motivic material in the duet, the second one (A2, b. 15–39, with a closing ritornello in b. 34–39) starting out as Almirena’s stanza, but letting Ernesto gradually join her in a simultaneous texture. Unlike “*Dell’offesa / Mio sovrano*”, the duet is straightforward in the outlining of its motivic material and it does not depart from it in any way.

Ernesto’s melodic line consists of three parts: a1 (b. 1–6), a rhythmically unified idea in which each bar shares the same formula, underlined by the oboes; the sequential, modulatory a2 (b. 7–10) with its descending movement and a3 (b. 11–14) with its downward octave leap and ascending semiquaver passage in contrary motion, cadencing in the D major dominant. Almirena replicates the course of A1 in its first two parts, but when it comes to a3 in b. 24, Ernesto joins in by imitating the octave motif after which the two voices cadence in parallel (b. 27–29). Bononcini extends this

221 A section. Ernesto: *Quel timoroso / cervo cacciato / fuggito al monte / tutto affannoso / tutto assetato / trova un fonte / nel suo contento / somiglia a mè*. Almirena: *Tutta timore / smarita agnella / in selva solta / se dal pastore / che la rapella / la voce ascolta / nel suo contento / somiglia a mè*. B section. Ernesto: *Pietoso amore / si lieto core / Almirena: Sorte gradita / si dolce vita / a 2: sol devo a tè*.



part of A<sub>2</sub> by transposing the simultaneous rendition of a<sub>3</sub> back into the tonic with the parts inverted. Thus in a<sub>3</sub>' (b. 29–34) Almirena takes the lead with the octave motif, Ernesto imitates it and they cadence together. A ritornello based on varied motifs a<sub>1</sub> and a<sub>3</sub> leads into a much shorter section B (b. 40–49). It explores related minor keys in what starts out as short alternations (of a bar's length) between the voices based on the motif from a<sub>1</sub> (b. 40–43), followed by a cadence and an extensive parallel passage derived from the descending motif in a<sub>2</sub> (b. 45–49). The composer made sure that the young lovers are united on not only the dramatic but also the musical plane. Although the voices occasionally cross, there is no hierarchical relationship between them even though Ernesto has the whole of section A<sub>1</sub> to himself, which is not something that could be said of Gualtiero and Griselda in "Dell'offesa / Mio sovrano". In their London collaboration, Bononcini and Rolli were developing a prototype of a dramatic, dialogic duet on the one hand, but they could also work together on duets of unity such as this one. On the other hand, Handel had been developing a structural duet prototype of his own in his Italian and early London years, so far not directly connected to the activity of a single librettist.

At the height of his London success, in the autumn of 1722 Bononcini's fortunes took "an abrupt turn for the worse. On 5 October Lady Bristol wrote to her husband: 'Bononcini is dismissed ... the reason they give for it is his most extravagant demands'" (Dean and Knapp 1987, 314). Other authors (cf. Lindgren 1997; McGeary 2013) have speculated on Bononcini's dismissal from the Royal Academy of Music, too. Besides him asking for too high a salary, political reasons may have had a hand in this since the recent Jacobite rebellion made every Catholic and Italian suspicious, although McGeary is sceptical about this explanation. Dean and Knapp (ibid.) went furthest in their speculation by referring to the composer's general lack of likeability as the possible reason for his dismissal: "Hawkins says 'he was haughty and capricious, and was for ever telling such stories of himself as were incredible' (Hawkins, *History*, ii, 862)." A more level-headed appraisal of the situation has been offered by Burrows et al. (2013, 146), although it does not shy away from the possibility of personal animosity and confrontation between the two composers, either: "Bononcini was unquestionably the senior partner in terms of age, experience and European reputation. Bononcini presumably played continuo cello in his operas, perhaps in dangerously close proximity to Handel as 'Master of the Orchestra' at the harpsichord." (ibid.)

No musical sources for the two duets in Bononcini's *Farnace* (1723) were available to me. According to Lindgren (1981, 342; 1987, 307), it was the composer himself who adapted the libretto by Lorenzo Morari but the opera was coolly received and the indisposed and annoyed Bononcini

asked Ariosti to take his place in the continuo group at the third performance. His last opera before his official departure from the Royal Academy of Music in May 1724 was the Roman-themed *California* (1724), a revised setting of an original libretto by Grazio Braccioli, first set by J. D. Heinichen in 1713. Working together for the first time with N. Haym with whom he was allegedly “reconciled” by Riva (cf. Clausen 1994, 63), Bononcini thus broke up the yearlong collaboration with Rolli as librettist. I was not able to access musical sources documenting “Caro, ti lascerò / Cara, non partirò” (III. 2 *California*, Trebonio; Braccioli and Haym 1724, 58), the only duet in *California*. The plot slightly resembles the Iphigenia in Aulis plot: jealous of California and her beloved Trebonio, Lucio falsely reports to her father Mario that an oracle demands her sacrifice, although the designated victim is he himself. Like Iphigenia, California stoically accepts her duty and the duet is a tragic and pathetic departure for her and Trebonio. It was clearly Haym’s addition to the score as the original libretto (Braccioli 1713) does not contain any duets whatsoever. Francesca Cuzzoni, who had debuted in Handel’s *Ottone* in January 1723 was already part of the cast in *Farnace*, but in *California* she sang her first Bononcini duet with the *primo uomo* Senesino. She would go on to sing many duets with Senesino, including tragic duets of departure by Handel.

Luckily, the second and last Bononcini duet she sang with Senesino, at the same time Bononcini’s last opera duet performed in London, has been preserved. Although Bononcini stopped writing for the Royal Academy of Music after he had taken up the offer of the Duchess of Marlborough for an annual stipend (cf. Burrows et al. 2013, 145), he was invited one last time to compose the opera *Astianatte* (1727), collaborating again with Haym at a time when Handel was setting Rolli’s libretti. This was an ambitious project aiming to approximate the reworking of Salvi’s 1701 libretto to Racine’s original play *Andromaque* and thus make *dramma per musica* more similar to literary tragedy (cf. Clausen 1996; Ograjensek 2010). Handel’s *Admeto*, the opera created for the Royal Academy of Music in the same season is a reworking of an old, 17th-century libretto, probably because Rolli was not as motivated to revise it as he did in his previous collaborations with Bononcini, leaving the majority of Aureli’s text intact. In his comparison of the two operas, Clausen (cf. 1996, 170) finds that Handel drew more tragedy out of *Admeto* than Bononcini did from *Astianatte* because the Italian composer “did not possess the strength to help implement the breakthrough of ideas put before him”<sup>222</sup>. Regardless of this typical Bononcini reception trope, it will be interesting to observe how

222 Besaß nicht die Kraft, den an ihn herangetragten Ideen musikalisch zum Durchbruch zu verhelfen.

Haym's tragic reworking was reflected in the number of duets and their placement as well as to compare it to another adaptation of Salvi's libretto already examined in Chapter 3.3.1.2, Gasparini's *Astianatte*. As Ograjenšek (2010, 133) has shown, in Haym's reworking "Ermione and Oreste do not pledge their love in Act I". Thus Salvi's only original duet "Begli occhi, alfin poss'io" (I. 13 Ermione, Oreste) was excised as in both Gasparini's 1719 and 1722 settings. In the London version of the opera we do not find "Le stelle s' amano / I cieli tuonano" (II. 15 Ermione, Andromaca), the duet that was introduced into Gasparini's versions of the opera at the end of Act 2 after Oreste's attempted assassination of Pirro, although this is hardly surprising. Since the days of the London debut of Faustina Bordoni in Handel's *Alessandro* (1726), where her character Rossane sings a duet with Lisaura (Cuzzoni), the rivalry between the fans of these two primadonnas made it undesirable to pit them against each other in the same musical number. That these fears were justified is proven by the infamous incident that interrupted the performance of *Astianatte* and put an abrupt end to the 1726/1727 season. With a duet for Andromaca (Cuzzoni) and Ermione (Faustina) in Bononcini's opera, riots might have broken out even sooner.

Instead, Haym inserted the duet "Dolce conforto / Cara speranza" (III. 6. Andromaca, Pirro; Bononcini MS, *Astianatte*, no. 9). An amorous union between these characters may seem unlikely since Andromaca, the widow of the Trojan prince Ettore, is trapped with her son Astianatte at the court of her enemy Pirro, king of Epirus, whose unwelcome advances she must put up with. In order for Andromaca's feelings for Pirro to change in a convincing manner, he, as Ograjenšek (2010, 133–134) explained, "had to be made into a character worthy of her love. [...] Andromaca does not love Pirro from the start; he earns her love with his actions, and is generally presented as a more sympathetic character than previously." At the end of Act 2 in Haym's libretto, after the assassination attempt, Andromaca sends the guards after Oreste as "queen of Epirus" and despairs in the greatly admired aria "Deh! lascia o core di sospirar" because without Pirro's protection, she and her son are in danger (cf. Lindgren 1992). Unlike this aria, the duet did not make it into Walsh's selection of songs from the opera, but luckily it is available in an MS copy in Cambridge, Massachusetts (Bononcini MS, *Astianatte*, no. 9). In Act 3 Andromaca finds out that Pirro is alive, and she is much more welcoming to him than before, arousing Pirro's suspicions about this sudden change of heart. The duet consists of her reassurance that the feelings are genuine.<sup>223</sup> As explained

223 The text of the duet is as follows - Andromaca: Dolce conforto / dell'alma amante / si che costante / te voglio amar. Pirro: Cara speranza / dell'alma mia / te il cor desia / non ingannarar.

by Ograjenšek, Andromaca will stay true to her promise, making the *lieto fine* more convincing.

FORM	BAR	KEY	DESCRIPTION	
X <sub>1</sub>	ritorn.	1–8	B $\flat$	concordance with subject in the vocal parts (triad motif, b. 1–4)
	x <sub>11</sub>	9–20	B $\flat$ ,F	subject (Andromaca), <i>Fortspinnung</i> of triad motif
	x <sub>12</sub>	20–30	F, B $\flat$	subject a fourth lower (Pirro), different course b. 27ff (back to B)
X <sub>2</sub>	x <sub>21</sub>	30–40	B $\flat$ ,E $\flat$	start of subject (Andromaca), CP from ritornello's 2 <sup>nd</sup> violins (Pirro); alternation (motif from subject, b. 34–35), free CP (to "nò" in Pirro's part)
	x <sub>22</sub>	40–54	E $\flat$ ,B $\flat$	inverted parts: start of subject (Pirro), CP from ritornello (Andromaca); alternation (motif from subject, b. 44–45), extended free CP passage (first "sì" in Andromaca's part (b. 47–48), "nò" in Pirro's (b. 50–51))
	ritorn.	54–58	B $\flat$	abridged

TABLE 63.  
Formal outline of the duet "Dolce conforto dell'alma"  
from Bononcini's *Astianatte* (1727)

As seen in Table 63, the duet is in one section only, which is not surprising since it consists of four short lines per character only, and it would have been impossible to split those lines up into two lines per section in a *da capo* form. Bononcini stays true to the tendency that he started in *Astarto* and continued in *Muzio Scevola* and *Griselda* by opening the duet—after a ritornello—with extensive alternating statements for the voices, the one by Pirro not an entirely literal transposition of Andromaca's (which is stated first, see Example 17) since it needs to be modified to veer the harmonic course back from the dominant to the tonic. After this, the second part of the duet (X<sub>2</sub>) explores the subdominant area by combining the voices contrapuntally. In subsection x<sub>21</sub> Bononcini makes use of a descending scalar figure familiar from the second and the first violin part in the ritornello and from the two statements of the subject (first occurrences: b. 2 in the orchestra and b. 31 in Pirro's part). After some brief alternation of a motif derived from the subject, the voices engage in a free contrapuntal section (or quasi-contrapuntal, given the quantity of held notes and voice-crossing) whose main purpose is to juxtapose the cries of "nò" in Pirro's part (embellished with trills) to a flowing melismatic line in the other voice. Since in the aforementioned alternating statements in section X<sub>1</sub> the whole text was presented comprehensively, the dialogic potential

Bononcini MS, Astianatte, "Dolce conforto dell'alma / Con speranza dell'alma"  
 (III. 6 Andromaca, Pirro), no. 9, p. 2-3, b. 9-20

9

[Violino I] *pp*

[Violino II]

Andromaca  
 Dol - ce con - for - to dell' al - ma, dell' al - ma ama - te si che cos -

Pirro

[Basso]

7 8

14

[Vln. I]

[Vln. II]

An.  
 tan - te te vo - glio a - - - - -

Pi.

[B.]

4

17

[Vln. I]

[Vln. II] *p*

An.  
 - - - - - mar.

Pi.  
 Ca - ra

[B.]

EXAMPLE 17

of Pirro's emphatic outcalls to "speranza" (or metonymically, Andromaca herself) not to deceive him is perfectly conveyed. Bononcini's sense of motivic economy (already displayed in the use of the violin passage as a countersubject of sorts) is further emphasised by conceiving subsection x22 by inverting the parts of b. 30–38 in b. 40–48, this time Andromaca's repeated outcries of "sì" (stressing that she wishes to love Pirro) juxtaposed to Pirro's melismas. Moreover, once back in the safe confines of the tonic, Bononcini was able to extend the second part of x22 by the repetition of three bars from the second part of x21 (the juxtaposition of emphatic outcries to a flowing contrapuntal line, b. 36–38) in b. 49–51, thus seemingly prolonging the couple's affirmative and negative exchanges.

Although he continued some of his previous tendencies, in this duet Bononcini went back to the "sweet" diatonic idiom and motivic economy characteristic also of his chamber duets, bringing his duet opus full circle. Clearly, Rolli was his favourite collaborator when it came to innovation in the realm of the duet, but he had no trouble working with Haym on a dramatically effective design that, in harmony with the dramatic situation, unites the voices in contrapuntal intertwining that tickles the ear but does not give them the longed for resolution of parallelism. Andromaca might want to give in to Pirro at this stage, but they will be properly united at the end of the opera, only when Astianatte is safe and they have fully proven to themselves that they can trust each other. Unlike in the duet for Andromaca and Ermione "Le stelle s'amano / I cieli tuonano" from Gasparini's *Astianatte* (1722) where the characters were united in a simultaneous texture without any sort of dialogue happening between them, in his own *Astianatte* duet Bononcini proved that he can achieve a dialogic dramatic exchange with the subtlest of means.

### 3. 4. 2.

#### Handel's Duets for the Royal Academy of Music before the Departure of Bononcini

On the one hand, Handel's period at the Royal Academy of Music (1720–1729) is a well-known and researched aspect of his activity as a composer, to the extent that it is considered representative and in a way, typical. This impression is supported by the genre uniformity of the operas written in this period, since most of them belong to the so-called dynastic type of opera seria with historical subjects from Classical antiquity or the Middle Ages (cf. Dean 1969). Handel achieved a "peak" in the middle of this period (1724–1725) with his "masterpieces" *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*, *Tamerlano* and *Rodelinda* (Burrows et al. 2013, 287). The fact that the developmental dialectic of rise, culmination and decline has often been applied to, this decade in Handel's operatic output suggests that the period is not as monolith or typical after all.

Theories that in the 1720s and the 1730s Handel was encouraged and spurred on by competition (Bononcini and Ariosti in the first period, younger representatives of the so-called Neapolitan school in the second) have been refuted by Burrows (*ibid.*), who “dispels any notion of a simple causal relationship between commercial or social pressures and artistic quality. [...] Handel’s art had come to its full flowering only in the absence of competition: the great operas of the mid-1720s were the product of a situation in which he enjoyed a monopoly of creative opportunities in the theatre. By the time of *Tamerlano* and *Rodelinda*, Bononcini and Ariosti had departed from the scene.”

One can also try to explain Handel’s development in the 1720s in intrinsic terms of his “own technical invention and fluency as a composer” (*ibid.*). Clearly, a comprehensive explanation would need to find its place between these two extremes. In this chapter, we shall concern ourselves only with the first half of his activity at the Royal Academy of Music, when Handel was exposed to strong competition on the part of Bononcini. The first subperiod, marked by Bononcini’s superiority in terms of popularity (1720–1722) will be singled out in a separate subchapter (3.4.2.1). In the second (1723–1724, dealt with in Chapter 3.4.2.2) Handel was gradually gaining the upper hand, although Bononcini’s works were still performed alongside his.

As seen in Table 64, although Calella (2000, 128) claimed that “the number of ensembles in Handel’s *opere serie* lies above the average, especially in the twenties and the thirties”<sup>224</sup>, a decrease in the number of duets per opera is evident when compared to Handel’s early London operas, most often narrowed down to two. Whether this can be explained by the influence of reform tendencies remains to be seen, although Rolli and Haym adapted both older and newer libretti for Handel as they did for Bononcini. The selection will take into consideration only the revivals of operas that occurred during the period of the first five seasons of the Royal Academy of Music (1720–1724). Since even during this short period, Handel’s interventions in his own older duets were sometimes minimal (especially when compared to the transformations some of the arias underwent), minimally revised duets did not get a separate entry in the table. A brief dramaturgic overview of the 13 selected duets reveals that—with the exception of the two versions of the duet for Gismonda and Matilda from *Ottone* and the duet of departure for mother and son, “Son nata a lagrimar / Son nato a sospirar” from *Giulio Cesare*—we are dealing with duets of amorous unity for the *primi* or *secondi* pairs of characters. The duets are usually positioned nearer the end of acts as a musico-dramatic culmination of sorts. Schläder (1995) considers the proximity of the final duet of unity for the *primo uomo* and the *prima donna* to the ending of the operas *Radamisto* (HWV 12b), *Ottone*, *Flavio* and *Giulio*

224 Die Anzahl von Ensembles in Händels *Opere seire* besonders in den späten zwanziger und in den dreißiger Jahren lag über dem Durchschnitt.

*Cesare in Egitto* as a sign of the integration of vocal numbers into larger wholes, since the final *coro* is seen as a logical continuation and culmination of the formal and textural process begun in the duet preceding it. We shall disregard this slightly far-fetched claim and examine the duets on their own in relation to other duets in the opera within the period in question and in relation to Handel's duet output as a whole as well as the duets by his Italian contemporaries analysed in this study.

YEAR	WORK	LIBRETTO	TEXT	ACT	CHARACTERS	VOICES
1720 April	<i>Radamisto</i> (HWV 12a)	Haym, Lalli	Se teco vive il cor, caro/cara	II. 12	Radamisto, Zenobia	S, MS
1720 Dec.	<i>Radamisto</i> (HWV 12b)		Non ho più affanni	III. 11	Zenobia, Radamisto	S, MS
1721	<i>Muzio Scevola</i> , Act III (HWV 13)	Rolli, Stampiglia	Vivo senza alma / Mà quell'amore	III. 10	Orazio, Irene	S, MS
			Mà come amar? / Torna ad amar	III. 11	Clelia, Muzio	S, MS
1721	<i>Floridante</i> (HWV 14)	Rolli, Silvani	Ah mia cara, se tu resti/ Ah mio caro, se tu parti	I. 8	Floridante, Elmira	S, MS
			Fuor di periglio	II. 6	Rossane, Timane	S, S
1723	<i>Ottone</i> (HWV 15)	Haym, Pallavicino	Notte cara, a te si deve	II. 12	Gismonda, Matilda	S, MS
%			Non tardate a festeggiar (replaced with "Notte cara")	(II. 12)	Gismonda, Matilda	S, MS
1723			A teneri affetti	III. 9	Teofane, Ottone	S, MS
1723	<i>Flavio, re di Longobardi</i> (HWV 16)	Haym, Noris	Ricordati, mio ben	I. 1	Vitige, Teodata	S, MS
			Deh perdona, o dolce bene	III. 7	Guido, Emilia	S, A
1724	<i>Giulio Cesare in Egitto</i> (HWV 17)	Haym, Bussani	Son nata a lagri- mar / Son nato a sospirar	I. 11	Cornelia, Sesto	A, S
			Caro/bella, più amabile bellta	III. 9	Cleopatra, Cesare	S, MS

TABLE 64.

List of Italian dramatic duets by G. F. Handel performed during the first five seasons of the Royal Academy of Music (1720–1724)



*Competing with Bononcini (1720–1722)*

The libretto for *Radamisto* (1720) derives from Gasparini's second setting of Lalli's libretto *L'amor tirannico* in 1712, probably revised by Gasparini himself from his original, 1710 setting. Strohm (2008, 44) is of the opinion that Haym's adaptation of the libretto was "made under Handel's supervision", and Dean and Knapp (1987, 334) make an even stronger point by referring to "Handel's dominant role in the preparation of his London librettos". For instance, the duet of unity for the protagonists Radamisto and Zenobia "Se teco vive il cor, caro/cara" was the replacement of another duet ("Il vedermi / vederti a te vicino") for the same characters also positioned at the end of the act (II. 14) in the 1712 libretto (cf. Bianconi 1992). It is difficult to explain why Haym and Handel had replaced a moderately polytextual duet with smaller morphological and lexical variants with a semantically similar text with five lines per character instead of Lalli's four, but this is not the only change the opera's duets underwent in a short space of time. For the second season marked by the arrival of Bononcini and the star castrato Senesino, Handel revised the original version of the opera premiered in April 1720 (HWV 12a; Handel 1997) by adding thirteen numbers, including "Non ho più affani", another duet for Zenobia and Radamisto, with the difference that this one does not have an equivalent in Lalli. According to Dean and Knapp (1987, 341), the second version of the opera (HWV 12b; Handel 2000b) "had strong claims to rank with or even above the original". Most of the revisions were conditioned by the significant changes in the tessiture of the roles, but its premiere in December 1720 "in the middle of the very successful run of Bononcini's *Astarto*" must have played some part in how Handel approached his old score.

The composer may have easily envisaged *Radamisto* as the opening opera of the Royal Academy of Music even though this honour was given to Porta's *Numitore*, for he relished great care on the score and made sure it conformed with the requirements of the elevated, serious *dramma per musica* that was eventually imposed as the norm in the company. "Se teco vive il cor, caro/cara" (II. 12 Radamisto, Zenobia; Handel 1997, 126–132; Handel recording, *Radamisto*) ends Act 2 on a happy note after the numerous travails that the protagonists, especially Zenobia, had seen up to that point. The beginning of the act catches them fleeing from the enemy Tiridate. Not being able to keep up with her husband, Zenobia begs him to kill her and throws herself into the nearby river out of despair since Radamisto's sword manages to cause only a minor injury to her. She is rescued and taken to Tiridate's court where she suffers his unwelcome advances, but Radamisto makes his way to the court in disguise,

too, heralding his own death. Failing to recognise him, Tiridate charges Radamisto with the advancement of his cause with Zenobia and leaves the happily reunited couple alone. Judging by the techniques applied in this duet, not much time seems to have passed since Handel's last three London operas, *Teseo*, *Silla* and *Amadigi*. Like in most of the duets in these works, the orchestral accompaniment is dense, with independent string and oboe parts and an almost *concertante* interplay with the voices. As described by Dean and Knapp (1987, 333), the "rich counterpoint in the inner parts", among others, gives the duet "a solidity sometimes lacking in movements of this type". The treatment of the vocal parts is also characterised by contrapuntal shaping, less imitative and more often freely contrapuntal. The ritornello (b. 1–8) consists of several sections with their respective motifs, but we shall single out three—all in the part of the first violins—that feature in the vocal parts: the incipit (a1, b. 1–2), reminiscent of a fugue theme and suitable for imitative treatment, its continuation (a2, b. 2) and two ascending semiquaver passages followed by two quavers (a3, b. 3–5). The remainder of the ritornello abounds in typical string semiquaver figuration and it was to play a key role in the demarcation of section A's two subsections, A1 (b. 1–22) and A2 (b. 22–42). The first bars featuring the voices (b. 8–12) preserve the integrity of the ritornello: in two short alternating statements, motifs a1 and a2 are split between Radamisto (b. 8–9) and Zenobia (b. 9–10), after which the strings set in with motif a3, but their culminating pairs of quavers are underlined by the oboes and by Zenobia with her outcry "caro" (b. 11), answered by Radamisto with "cara" (b. 12). This kind of equal distribution of the material between the orchestra and the voices is rare in Handel's Italian dramatic duets. The remainder of A1 consists of a free contrapuntal flow between the voices and the instruments, modulating to the dominant, while the closing part of the ritornello is left to round off the subsection and confirm the new key. However, A2 quickly slips back to the tonic, opening with what seems like the imitation of a1 a fourth higher (b. 22–23), but turns out to be another free contrapuntal section derived from the material heard so far. While the oboes double the voices in a *contrapunctus ligatus* type of texture (b. 25–26), the strings supplement them contrapuntally and—after the voices have cadenced (b. 28–29)—almost seamlessly burst into the semiquaver passages familiar from the ritornello, leading into combined renditions of a3 with the voices underlining the phrase endings with "caro"/"cara" (b. 30–31). Section B (b. 42–48), a mere harmonic contrast, begins with alternating statements derived from the material of section A but quickly gives way to *contrapunctus ligatus*.

FORM	CHARACTER	HWV 12A	HWV 12B
A	Radamisto & Zenobia	Se teco vive il cor, Caro/cara! che la tua fè Non m'abbandoni almen.	Se teco vive il cor, Cara/caro! per la tua fè Non ho più affanni al sen.
B	Radamisto	Può cader l'eterna mole	Sarà ognor ques'alma amante
	Zenobia	Può mancar la luce al sole	Il mio cor sarà costante
A 2		Vacillar non può il mio piè	Più fedel a te, mio ben.

TABLE 65.  
Comparison of texts for the duet “Se teco vive il cor, caro/cara”  
from the two versions of Handel's opera *Radamisto*

“Se teco vive il cor, caro/cara” is not particularly concerned with a clear enunciation of its text. After highlighting the first line and the variants “caro”/“cara”, it leaves the remaining text of section A (“che la tua fè non m'abbandoni almen”) fairly incomprehensible. Handel was more concerned with a playful expression of joy: after all, Radamisto and Zenobia have earned this temporary moment of unity with their cunning and not their innocence. The only intervention in this duet in the December revival of the opera (HWV 18b; cf. Handel 2000b, 133–136) was a vocal swap of the roles and a change in the text that left the metrical structure intact (see Table 65). The December text seems more appropriate to the dramatic situation, with the April one somewhat out of place with its mention of the “abandoning of faith”, absolutely unimaginable with these characters, especially Zenobia. Maybe this is an indication that Haym and/or Handel took the duet text from an earlier source, perhaps even the setting of an earlier work by Handel no sources have survived for? In April, the two main roles were sung by Durastanti (Radamisto) and Robinson (Zenobia), whereas in December Senesino was heard as the *primo uomo* and Durastanti was given the role of Zenobia instead. Although this posed a challenge to the reworking of the arias, in the revision of “Se teco vive il cor, caro/cara” Handel opted for the simplest solution: he merely gave Radamisto's part to Zenobia and vice versa, without the need for any further musical intervention.

According to Leopold (2009, 275), the duet “Non ho più affanni” (III. 11 Zenobia, Radamisto; Handel 2000b, 202–204; Handel recording, Radamisto), inserted into the December version of the opera, “belongs to the musical pinnacles of the opera”<sup>225</sup>. In the second version of the opera it follows the dramatic quartet “O cedere o perir” in which Radamisto,

225 Gehören zu den musikalischen Höhepunkten der Oper.

Zenobia and Polissena beg Tiridate for mercy and the ensuing recitative in which, instigated by a rebellion against him and Radamisto's magnanimous forgiveness, Tiridate repents and everybody is reconciled. The duet is a monotextual expression of a joy for the principal couple that erases the memory of past troubles. As proven by many examples in Chapter 3.3.3, Handel liked to display a wide musical range in his duets and often conceived them along contrasting lines, but it is difficult to imagine that "Non ho più affanni" was added to *Radamisto* without any connection to the challenges of competition that *Astarto* and other Bononcini operas posed to Handel. Written in a contrasting style and building an entirely different structural plan to "Se teco vive il cor, caro/cara", one could say that this duet is a take on varied strophic forms Bononcini was developing in *Astarto* and *Muzio Scevola* as it can be roughly divided into three sections, the first one given to Zenobia, the second to Radamisto and the third brought forward in simultaneous texture by the two voices. However, this would simplify the duet's regular, almost periodic unfolding in two-bar phrases with occasional extensions, and it could be said that it is in varied and extended ternary song form.

BARS	1-5; 5-9	9-13	13-17	17-21	21-25	25-29	29-33	33-45	45
PHRASE	$x_1+x_1'$	$x_2+x_2'$	$x_1+x_1'$	$x_2+x_2'$	$x_1+x_1''$	coda <sub>1</sub>	$x_1+x_1''$	coda <sub>2</sub>	$x_1+x_1'$
CHARACTER	Zenobia			Radamisto	Zenobia & Radamisto				orchestra
FORM 1	II: a :II	b a		b a		coda			
FORM 2	a b		a b		a c		a c		coda

TABLE 66.

Formal outline of the duet "Non ho più affanni" from Handel's *Radamisto* (HWV 12b)

Table 66 highlights the regularity of phrase structures that—up to b. 25—consist of periodic two-bar phrases, the first one cadencing on the dominant ( $x_1, x_2$ ), the second one on the tonic ( $x_1', x_2', x_1''$ ), which is A major in the case of  $x_1$  and F-sharp minor in the case of  $x_2$ . At first Zenobia dominates the duet, outlining a small ternary form on her own before Radamisto takes over with the second rendition of the phrase  $x_2+x_2'$ , only to have her join him in the upper third as he sings phrase  $x_1+x_1'$ . Henceforth both voices feature throughout the duet in a mostly parallel, occasionally freely contrapuntal texture, at its most ornamental and virtuosic in the extended codas (settings of the key words "nel gran piacer"),

especially the second one (b. 25–45). It features a long parallel flourish replete with triplets, trills and other ornaments and is even embellished with the insertion of an *Adagio* bar. Formally, it can be interpreted in both ternary (Form 1 from Table 66) or binary terms (Form 2), but this matters less than the fact that Handel skilfully rounds off an opera serious enough to be described as following reform tendencies with the most light-hearted of duets, expressive of little else but sheer jubilation. The text offers two ideas in the manner of a *simile* aria: the first two lines (set to the phrase  $x_1+x_1$ ) state that the characters are forgetting their previous troubles in each other's arms, while the second two (set to  $x_2+x_2$ ) draw a simile with the helmsman who reaches a safe harbour. Apart from the reaching of the parallel minor, this has little significance for the duet. Can one speculate that by drawing on varied strophic form, one we have not seen in Handel's duets since *La resurrezione* and *Amarilli vezzosa*, Handel was influenced by a wish to rival not only the sweet simplicity of Bononcini's "agreeable and easie style" (cf. Lindgren 2009) style, but also the design of some of the duets he may have heard in the previous month at the premiere of *Astarto*, e. g. "Mio caro ben / Già sento ch'il gran tormento"? This is a question difficult to answer on the basis of one opera only. The influence of Bononcini on Handel's early Royal Academy of Music operas has also been discussed by R. A. Streatfeild, as explained by Hueber (1955, 256):

In Handel's early operas Steffani's and Keiser's influence is significantly stronger than Bononcini's. [...] This changes in the works that Handel wrote for London. Ever more of those pathetic siciliana and sarabande arias that are characteristic of Bononcini come to the surface, proving how intensely Handel was occupied with the simple, cantabile idiom of his rival. Streatfield points out especially the stylistic turnabout in Handel's "Floridante" that was conditioned by the great success of Bononcini's "Astarto" in London (1720) and goes on to show that the German master adhered to the newly acquired stylistic principles also in his operas "Ottone" and "Flavio".<sup>226</sup>

- 226 In den frühen Opern Händels der Einfluß Steffanis und Keisers bedeutend stärker ist als jener Bononcinis. [...] Das ändert sich in den Werken, die Händel für London schrieb. Es treten jetzt immer mehr jene für Bononcini so charakteristischen, pathetischen Siziliano- und Sarabande-Arien in Erscheinung, die beweisen wie intensiv sich jetzt Händel mit der einfachen, kantablen Schreibweise seines Rivalen beschäftigte. Streatfeild weist besonders auf den Stilumschwung in Händel 'Floridante' hin, der durch den großen Erfolg des Bononcinischen 'Astarto' in London (1720) bedingt war und führt weiter aus, daß der deutsche Meister auch in seinen Opern 'Ottone' und 'Flavio' an den neu gewonnenen Stilprinzipien festhielt

In a way, the purpose of this chapter is the examination of the validity of this influence in the mentioned operas, but if there is a fitting example to pit the two composers against each other as rivals in the realm of the duet, the pasticcio *Muzio Scevola* (1721) is one. Since an overview of Stampiglia's source libretto, its subsequent revisions and Rolli's substantial reworking for London have already been given in Chapter 3.4.1.2 in the discussion of Bononcini's contribution to the second act of the opera—not to forget the intricate case of the parody of a 1695 duet in the 1708 pasticcio *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* discussed in Chapter 3.2.3—I shall now focus on Handel's two duets in Act 3 of the pasticcio.

"Vivo senza alma / Mà quell'amore" (III. 10 Orazio, Irene; Handel 1874a, 54–57; Muzio Scaevola recording) is Rolli's invention entirely. Although scene III. 6 offered the opportunity to write another duet of departure for the secondary pair, Rolli chose to close the former scene by giving each character an exit aria and to reward them with a duet after Orazio had proven his military valour once again by freeing Irene from Tarquinio's unwelcome advances. The text consists of two stanzas with the conventional images of losing one's heart, one for each protagonist.<sup>227</sup> Handel follows up the strophic approach taken in "Non ho più affanni", but whereas there he had a single stanza to work with, here Rolli supplied him with a genuine strophic design that enabled Handel to approximate Bononcini's own varied strophic designs such as the ones in "Mio caro ben / Già sento ch'il gran tormento" from *Astarto* or "Dov'è il dolor / Fate un effetto" from Act 2 of the pasticcio. In the free treatment of varied strophic repetition, Handel is closer to the former. One wonders if the two composers had the chance to hear each other's duets for *Muzio Scevola* in rehearsal and possibly influence each other directly during the process of composition. As both of them took part in rehearsals, Handel at the harpsichord and Bononcini playing the violoncello, this is not unlikely. *Muzio Scevola* was envisaged by the directors of the Royal Academy of Music as a competition of the two composers and Handel "was very much on his mettle and aware that comparisons would be made. He took a great deal of trouble, not only over the details of each number but to achieve as much variety as possible within the arias and between the different sections of the work." (Dean and Knapp 1987, 371).

As Table 67 clearly shows, the first two sections of this irregular tripartite form belong to each of the characters in turn, whereas in the third they are combined in a simultaneous, predominantly parallel texture, both

227 Orazio: Vivo senza alma, oh bella / Perch'ella vive in te, / E solo amore e fè / Mi tiene in vita! Irene: Mà quell'amore, o caro, / E quella salda fè, / Si l'alma mia sol è / Ch'ho in te smarrita!

Orazio and Irene singing their former stanzas. Since we already clearly heard it in sections A<sub>1</sub> and A<sub>2</sub>, Handel's guideline in the third section was not the comprehensibility of the text but to follow the structural outline of the melody with minimal variation and harmonic adjustment. In "Dov'è il dolor / Fate un effetto" Bononcini manoeuvred the alternation between ever shorter statements by the soloists, but Handel chose the path his older colleague took in "Mio caro ben / Già sento ch'il gran tormento", simply adding one voice on top of the other. By doing so, he achieved more variety innate to his sense of variation. The phrasal and motivic skeleton of each section is the sequence of three passages: a<sub>1</sub> (modulating to the dominant), a<sub>2</sub> (modulating to the tonic) and a coda addition that reiterates the final cadence. This structure—periodic in harmonic terms but not so in morphological—is slightly varied by Irene in her own section with modulations to related minor keys, but her subsection a<sub>2</sub> is basically a transposition of Orazio's a<sub>2</sub> from B-flat major to F major. Section A<sub>2</sub> cadences in the dominant, leaving it to A<sub>1</sub>' to reaffirm the tonic and explore the richer sonority of two voices. In its subsection a<sub>1</sub>, Irene's (lower) part at first only enhances Orazio's melodic line in parallel thirds (b. 34–36). Afterwards the voices are led in free counterpoint (b. 37–38), while in a<sub>2</sub> Irene joins Orazio in the lower fourth in quasi-imitation. The extended coda reverts to parallel doubling, and the voices even get a chance for a *cadenza* in an *Adagio* bar comparable to the one from "Non ho più affanni", leaving it to full strings (as opposed to unison violins) to round the duet off. In spite of the careful formal structuring, it is important to stress that Handel succeeds in miming the effortless tunefulness of Bononcini's style.

BARS	1–8	8–13	13–18	18–19	19–22	22–27	27–32	32–33	34–38	39–44	45–51	51–56
FORM	A <sub>1</sub>				A <sub>2</sub>				A' <sub>1</sub>			
	rit. <sub>1</sub>	a <sub>1</sub>	a <sub>2</sub>	coda	rit. <sub>1</sub> '	a <sub>1</sub>	a <sub>2</sub>	coda	a' <sub>1</sub>	a' <sub>2</sub>	coda'	rit. <sub>2</sub>
CHAR.	%	Orazio				Irene			Orazio & Irene			
KEY	B	B $\flat$ , F	F, B $\flat$	B $\flat$	g	g, d	d, F		B $\flat$ , (F)	B $\flat$		

TABLE 67.  
Formal outline of Handel's duet "Vivo senza alma / M $\grave{a}$  quell'amore"  
from the pasticcio *Muzio Scevola* (1721)

Great care was taken to balance out the two composer's contributions to the opera, even at the level of duets. For instance, in Act 2 Berselli (Orazio) and Robinson (Irene) had sung the longer of Bononcini's two duets, while Handel gave a fully-fledged *da capo* duet to the *primi* in Act 3 instead. "M $\grave{a}$  come amar? / Torna ad amar" (III. 11 Clelia, Muzio; Handel 1874a, 60–65;

Muzio Scaevola recording) presents an evident stylistic contrast, perhaps even stronger than the one between the two duets in the second version of *Radamisto*. Maybe it could be read as a statement about Handel's specificity as a composer, at least in relation to the earlier duet in which he proved he could write in a style closer to Bononcini's. The complicated love triangle between Clelia, Muzio and Porsenna has already been discussed in previous chapters: at this final point in the dramatic action, Muzio leads his new ally and friend Porsenna back to Rome, ready to cede him Clelia's hand in marriage. Although formerly unwilling to accept Porsenna's proposal because of her feelings for Muzio, or—more importantly—to honour her pledge to him, Clelia had earlier (III. 6) escaped from Porsenna's camp, but is now willing to marry Porsenna and casts it in Muzio's teeth. When the Clusian king realises that Muzio and Clelia are lovers, he magnanimously renounces Clelia and gives them his blessing. However, Muzio needs to win back Clelia's trust and the duet is a musical depiction of this attempt.<sup>228</sup> Bononcini's 1695 and 1710 settings of Stampiglia's *Muzio Scevola* contained a genuine duet of conflict for Muzio and Valeria (the equivalent of Clelia) somewhat earlier in the act when her destiny was still uncertain. Rolli probably found Stampiglia's original duet text "Cara infido tu mi credi / Caro ad' altri tu mi cedi" too long and unpoetic, so instead of its direct dialogic exchange with stichomythia in section B, he opted for a more subtle exploration of the tension between the characters after their fate had been resolved.

Dean and Knapp (1987, 371) described the duet in the following—for them, rather flattering—terms: "The duet is long, the ritornello contrapuntal, and the voices almost wholly independent. [...] The style is carefully wrought, almost in the manner of a trio sonata or its vocal equivalent, a chamber duet." The contrapuntal density of the texture, even more pronounced here than in "Se teco vive il cor, caro/cara" from *Radamisto*, brings with it a particular relationship between the orchestral parts and the voices. The material initially brought forward by the voices is not related to the ritornello (b. 1–15), but its continuous imitative quaver pulse does have motivic relevance for the overall structuring of the duet. Apart from the separation of subsections in this example of a "larger form" A section (A1, b. 1–34; A2, b. 35–86, with a cadence on the dominant in between) and occasional interjections into the vocal texture in the manner of ritornello

228 A section. Clelia: *Mà come amar e come mai fidar? / La mia gran fedeltà ha così poca fè.* Muzio: *Torna ad amar, perchè non ti fidar? / Fù sola fedeltà il mio mancar di fè.* B section. Clelia: *Sento, ch'Amor vuole alletarmi ancor! / Mà l'alma ancor non sà come fidarsi a te.* Muzio: *Al suo gran cor cedi sì bell'onor / Non generosità forza d'Amor sol è.*



form, the ritornello plays an additional role in that a typical motif replete with neighbour notes (first occurrence in b. 1 in the first violins) gradually permeates the vocal parts in subsection A2. In A1 the vocal parts begin with alternating statements of two unrelated motifs, contrasted by movement in contrary motion and reflecting the upward inflection of Clelia's question "Mà come amar?" (b. 16–17), answered by the downward inflection of Muzio's reply "Torna ad amar!" (b. 18–19). The remainder of the two characters' first lines ("e come mai fidar? / "perchè non ti fidar") are set to another brief motif alternated between the voices (b. 19–23), after which they engage in free counterpoint that contains the aforementioned motif from the ritornello (b. 24 and 26 in Clelia's, b. 25 in Muzio's part). The second lines in the characters' texts are incomprehensible in this type of simultaneous texture when heard for the first time in b. 29–35. The first section of this "larger form" ending in b. 35 is shorter and more introductory than the elaboration that follows. However, both subsections share what Dean and Knapp had noticed: apart from a few beats preceding the aforementioned cadences, parallelism in the voices is entirely avoided.

Subsection A2 presents the duet's textual incipit, Clelia's question and Muzio's answer differently than was the case in A1, with a brief imitation of a motif based on A1's opening motifs (b. 41–44). The voices are thus no longer contrasted in a dialogic fashion and the remainder of section A stays predominantly contrapuntal. The opening motif from the ritornello features prominently in the prolonged free contrapuntal section that follows (b. 45–71), appearing in almost every bar in turn in the two voices (in b. 45–49, 55–58 and once again in 59). From b. 63 onwards the texture is gradually dominated by the ascending sequential motif derived from the opening of the ritornello. This is accompanied by an increasing polyphonic interplay between the orchestra and the voices. From b. 56 an almost *concertante* relationship between the two violins and the voices develops. The ending (b. 75–76) is preceded by a contrapuntal section that works out both motifs from the ritornello over a pedal accompaniment. An abridged statement of the ritornello leads into section B, contrasting two lengthy alternating statements by the voices (b. 87–101) and modulating to the relative minor and the dominant. The material is not derived from section A, bar the beginning of Muzio's statement (b. 94–95). The remainder of section B (b. 101–112) focuses on a free contrapuntal section loosely based on figures from A. The dialogic and dramatic potential of the text (Clelia's presentiment that she might be giving in to Muzio) is not really explored in musical terms, the section seemingly in a hurry to bridge the repetition to section A.

At this stage we should remind ourselves that it was exactly this duet that served Burney for his famous distinction between an "old plan" and a "modern plan" duet. Its text seems envisaged for an entirely successive

setting of the “modern plan” with its dialogic structure: the protagonists alternate twice as they sing their own stanzas, which facilitates their pairing up in a bipartite or—more likely—*da capo* tripartite form. However, upon closer inspection it becomes evident that by unifying the first two stanzas metrically, Rolli enabled Handel to set them simultaneously as well (cf. Calella 2000, 137). Indeed, in section A Handel set only the fully polytextual lines successively, while in the other two stanzas (section B) he maintained the consistently successive approach. The fact that—almost paradoxically—for Burney this was an example of a duet of the older “plan” shows how forced, not to mention exclusive the distinction really is. Although Dean and Knapp condemn the libretto’s “incompetence in language as in dramaturgy” (1987, 370), Rolli’s importance in the shaping of the duets in this pasticcio should not be underestimated. It was him who held all the threads of the opera together and we can say that apart from Bononcini, Rolli, too, exerted some kind of influence on Handel. This was probably no longer the case after the Jacobite rebellion, at the time of the opera’s single revival, opening the fourth season in November 1722. Some of the duets so dear to Rolli may have been dropped since the role of Orazio was probably reduced to recitative.

*Floridante* (1721) was Handel’s first full-scale operatic collaboration with Rolli. Although it has been implied that Handel had initially refused to work with Rolli (cf. Clausen 1994), this study shall refrain from going into detail about different factions in the Royal Academy of Music. It is beyond doubt that Bononcini, Rolli, Riva and some members of the British aristocracy formed a circle that may have been close to Jacobite political currents, but for this study it is more important that in the early years of the Royal Academy of Music this faction prevailed in the selection of libretti to be set by Bononcini and to a certain extent by Handel. Besides a certain affinity for reform tendencies and its dramaturgic tenets, an exclusive preference for Roman, Greek and Oriental, especially Persian subject was asked for. Although Bononcini and Ariosti will remain faithful to this requirement, Handel and Haym often disregarded it, e. g. in the Lombard-themed operas *Flavio* (1723) and *Rodelinda* (1725). The fact that the Persian-themed *Floridante* satisfies this condition may have been motivated by political reasons, too. The source libretto, Silvani’s *La costanza in trionfo* (1696) was set in Norway, which could have facilitated a (wanted or unwanted) allegorical identification of the usurper of the Persian throne Oronte with George I (cf. Strohm 2008, 46). Once again, Rolli’s reworking almost qualifies as a new libretto since no aria texts from *La costanza in trionfo* can be identified, including the duets.

We should begin with the examination of the second duet, “Fuor di periglio” (II. 6 Rossane, Timante; Handel 2005, 87–93; Handel recording,

Floridante). Unlike the main protagonists sung by the *primi*, the secondary pair—Oronte's real daughter Rossane (Maddalena Salvai) and Timante, Prince of Tyre (Benedetto Baldassari)—have less to worry about, for although their union is not favoured politically, they are planning their escape from the court. The duet follows after the scene in which Oronte reveals his intentions to marry his adopted daughter Elmira and she vents her disgust and hatred in an aria (“Barbaro, t’odio a morte”), followed by Oronte’s “Ma non s’aspetti, no”, in which he expresses impatience. The duet with its idyllic imagery comparing the lovers to doves is a clear contrast to the horrors of the former scene. Handel set Rolli’s two stanzas as a monothematic duet (which were probably Rolli’s intentions, too) and wanted to supply the scene with pastoral overtones in F major. He painted the atmosphere with sumptuous orchestral colours, including a *quattro* strings, two oboes, two bassoons and, according to original designs that he was forced to abandon, two horns. Dean and Knapp (1987, 399) were taken with the ritornello and its relationship to the voices: “the question and answer in the long ritornello adds variety, and the full orchestra periodically breaks into the interstices of the voice parts. The music is not particularly inventive [...] The charm of the piece lies in the orchestral texture.”

After the lengthy ritornello (b. 1–16), Rossane outlines what seems like a proper subject, consisting of two parts: a<sub>1</sub> (b. 17–22), a descending sequential repetition of the main motif and a<sub>2</sub> (b. 23–26), with a particularly memorable ascending two closing bars. It is consistently imitated, first in Timante’s part (b. 27–36) in the lower fourth, with a<sub>2</sub> slightly modified and accompanied by a countersubject in Rossane’s part, and then—somewhat abridged—back in the tonic in Rossane’s part again (b. 37–44), as it is Timante’s turn to provide the same countersubject. After this imitative, almost fugal outset, the voices are combined in a parallel texture in alternation with the instruments, outlining instrumental figures from the ritornello (b. 44–54). Handel plays about with the listeners’ expectations by bringing forth the last two bars of a<sub>2</sub> in imitation in both parts, seemingly modulating to the dominant again (b. 55–56), but the subject does not ensue and instead the two voices continue in the varying of the orchestral flourishes before they cadence in b. 69–70. Perhaps because he conceived the duet in the pastoral style, Handel contrasted section B (b. 70–93) only with the usual exploration of related minor keys and the reduction of the accompaniment to the continuo, but otherwise he worked with motifs derived from a<sub>1</sub> and a<sub>2</sub> in a contrapuntal texture.

As Dean and Knapp (1987, 399) have established, “in Rossane’s music, and perhaps still more in Timante’s, Handel—whether consciously or not—came close to aping Bononcini”. It is beyond doubt that, instigated by the great success of *Astarto*, Handel may have been inspired to abandon the

“grand heroic style of *Radamisto* and *Muzio Scevola*” for “something more modest, distinguished by graceful tunes, light accompaniments, and a less learned approach. We may feel that he beat Bononcini at his own game” (ibid., 390). As the first duet in the opera will show, on the level of duets this may have more to do with Rolli’s tendency, followed on the musical level by both Bononcini and Handel, to treat the secondary pair of characters in a lighter, perhaps also comedic vein. This is true of both Sidonia and Nino in *Astarto*, Irene and Orazio in *Muzio Scevola*<sup>229</sup> and Almirena and Ernesto in *Griselda* and it will be followed up by Handel again—this time in a libretto by Haym—in the comedic *Flavio* with the portrayal of Teodata and Vitige. Obviously, this element should not be attributed to Rolli’s invention since it owes something to the mixed style of 17th-century opera, but it is probably not a coincidence that most of these duets were written for two sopranos, some of them even for the same singers, Salvai (who sang Sidonia, Almirena and Rossane), Berselli (Nino and Orazio) and Baldassari (Ernesto and Timante). Thus apart from the specialisation of singers in a type of *secondi* roles, we can also speak of a duet type that both Bononcini and Handel cultivated with certain stylistic similarities, although Handel is clearly distinguished with his *da capo* form in relation to Bononcini’s strophic designs in *Astarto* and *Muzio Scevola*. On the other hand, *Griselda* (February 1722) saw light only after *Floridante* (December 1721) so it could not have exerted an influence on Handel in this sense.

“Ah mia cara, se tu resti / Ah mio caro, se tu parti” (I. 8 *Floridante*, Elmira; Handel 2005, 54–58; Handel recording, *Floridante*) occurs at the end of Act 1 and is a reaction of the lovers to Oronte’s banishment of *Floridante*. At this stage the couple are unaware of the more difficult challenges (repeated rape and death threats) that they will have to face, but the strength of their love is affirmed in pledges to die together rather than be separated. In his setting Handel reflected that this was not just a grand amorous gesture. The duet was highly regarded by both Burney (“an exquisite duet in the grand style of pathetic”), and by Dean and Knapp as “one of the opera’s great moments” (both quotes in 1987, 391). The part of Elmira was originally conceived for Margherita Durastanti, and Handel composed Act 1 with her in mind, but she was replaced due to illness by Anastasia Robinson, so Handel transposed the duet down from the original F minor to E minor and modified Elmira’s part to suit Robinson’s lower range (cf. Dean and Knapp 1987, 391, 394–395). In this study the

229 This applies more to Handel’s than Bononcini’s duet for the pair as Bononcini’s duet “Troppo loquace il guardo / Se quando parla il guardo” is written in a less diatonic idiom (see Chapter 3.4.1.2).

original version of the duet has been taken into consideration.<sup>230</sup> This duet shows how relative the distinction between duets of the “old” and “modern” plan really is. Although the text is minimally polytextual i. e. the lines of the two characters are differentiated with slight morphologic or lexical variants, Handel still opens it with long successive statements. There is less counterpoint between the voices than in *Muzio Scevola*, but the dense orchestral writing proves how we must consider the vocal and instrumental parts together.

The duet opens with an extensive, pathetic and densely contrapuntal, although not imitative ritornello. “The slurred quavers and heavy repeated crotchets of the string parts, a little reminiscent of Radamisto’s ‘Ombra cara’, and the short sighing vocal phrases, often in thirds, paint a picture of unrelieved tragedy” (Dean and Knapp 1987, 391). The voices set in with long alternating statements of a subject (b. 16–24, first occurrence in Floridante’s part) distinguished by an incipit with a prominent semitone movement and some descending arpeggiations, one in quavers, outlining a ninth chord (b. 18) and the other in crotchets, outlining a descending triad and repeated sequentially (b. 19–23) in alternation with the first violins, while the continuo outlines a vivacious walking bass resembling a free ostinato. In Elmira’s rendition of the subject (b. 26–34, on the same pitch) the accompaniment is reduced, but Floridante takes over the role of the first violins, alternating the triad motif with Elmira (b. 30–33) before they cadence together. After this, the voices elaborate the incipit of the subject in parallel with the orchestra (b. 34–39), followed by an extended free contrapuntal section (b. 39–52) with a freer treatment of the text and the occasional imitative outlining of the quaver arpeggiation motif (reduced to a seventh chord, b. 43–44) as well as the descending triad (b. 48–49) before the voices cadence again. A sense of variety and purposefulness has been achieved so far without any departure from the tonic. After this, a fragment of the ritornello (b. 52–58) slightly pushes the voices into the background while they alternate in stating the subject’s incipit in varied form before they are briefly joined in parallel (b. 57–58), followed by a free contrapuntal section (b. 59–62) cadencing on the dominant. After an emphatic pause, the voices are joined one last time in section A to resolve the dissonance in an emphatic statement of the key words “io morirò” / “a morte io vo” (b. 64–66). No significant change occurs in section B apart

230 As with “Fuor di periglio”, Clausen published another version of the duet suggested for performance that reflects Handel’s original intentions (that is, his conception before the replacement of Durastanti with Robinson) and at the same time respects the change of tessitura, but this is an editorial creation that has little philological legitimacy, so that the original version performed in December 1721 was analysed instead.

from the usual ones. It shares its predecessor's affective stance, its material and the structuring of the vocal parts in alternation followed by free counterpoint. It seems a bit more dialogic due to the more prominent place given to the successive treatment of the voices, but in semantic terms, the text does not provide anything new.<sup>231</sup>

Although sung by Senesino and Robinson as well as Senesino and Durastanti in later revivals of the opera, this first example of a special type of duet of departure in Handel's operas for the Royal Academy of Music will become a specialty of Senesino and Francesca Cuzzoni, appearing in the subsequent operas *Tamerlano* (1724) and *Rodelinda* (1725) as well. They are the only duets in these latter operas, both sung by the *primo uomo* and the *prima donna*, which is indicative of their rise to prominence. Bononcini's final departure from the Royal Academy of Music in that season may seem like an unrelated coincidence, but it is evident that he did not have an inclination to write duets in this vein, as witnessed by "Sì, sì che la colpa sono" from *Cefalo e Procride*, the only duet vaguely approximating the type but still very different from Handel's.

The duet "Vivo in te mio caro bene / mia dolce vita" (III. 5 Asteria, Andronico; Handel 1876b, 102–105) written for them in *Tamerlano* (1724) shares with the duet from *Floridante* not only the key (E minor) and the quaver-walking bass but also the dramatic situation of lovers in a predicament expressing their mutual devotion and the readiness to die for each other. The ritornello of the duet from *Tamerlano* is even more complex in terms of orchestration due to the addition of a pair of flutes to the strings, engaging in a similar interplay with the voices. It is distinguished by alternation in shorter motifs, as if a composite subject was broken up between the two voices, thus diminishing its "modern plan" potential for a lengthy dialogic exchange. This adds to the relativity of the categories since Asteria and Andronico are communicating with each other on the same musico-dramatic level as Elmira and Floridante. Handel uses some of the same techniques as in the duet from *Floridante* with a lesser penchant for counterpoint, which is understandable given the short alternating statements.

The same applies to the composer's next duet of departure, "Io t'abbraccio" (II. 7 Rodelinda, Bertarido; Handel 2002, 132–136) from *Rodelinda* (1725), occurring in an identical dramatic situation of lovers in adversity, with the important difference that the alternation of brief motifs is of an even shorter span and the voices predominantly led in parallel, with

231 A section. Floridante: Ah, mia cara, se tu resti, / infelice a morte io vo. Elmira: Ah, mio caro, se tu parti, / per l'affanno morirò. B section. Elmira: Altra speme / senza te, cor mio, non ho. Floridante: Altro bene / senza te, cor mio, non ho.

an insignificant share of free counterpoint. Bertarido has just been condemned to death by the usurper Grimoaldo, who wants to marry Rodelinda himself. Perhaps the unity of the spouses in the situation of extreme adversity was expressed more poignantly with parallelism? We shall see how Handel responded to a similar situation in the duet “Son nata a lagrimar / Son nato a sospirar” in *Giulio Cesare* (1724), although its protagonists were mother and son. Since all these duets with the exception of “Io t’abbraccio” were additions to the libretti reworked for Handel by Nicolo Haym, could it be that Handel realised how memorably he set a departure duet written for him by Rolli and asked his colleague Haym to provide him with more texts of the sort?

### 3. 4. 2. 2.

#### *Finding One's Own Way (1723–1724)*

In 1722 Rolli fell out of grace for reasons already explained and was replaced by Nicola Haym as secretary of the Royal Academy of Music. His ambitions as a poet were not as high and found no inconvenience in adapting old libretti for Handel's, Bononcini's or Ariosti's purposes. In his revisions, Haym was more faithful to the original, retaining parts of the recitative and the texts of arias as well as duets, but he was equally prepared to replace them with old ones from his large collections of libretti or—more rarely—by writing his own texts, at the behest of singers or composers. These changes were accompanied by new arrivals to the company, most importantly Francesca Cuzzoni in 1723 for her London debut in Handel's *Ottone*. According to Larue (1995), this led to a different system of casting and also transformed audience reception of Italian opera in London as singers were seen as specialists not only in certain aria types and vocal styles but they also came to be associated with character types to the extent that the libretto as well as its setting were meant to reflect this. This was in overt contrast with the versatile contribution of Margherita Durastanti who, apart from being the *prima donna* in the early years of the Royal Academy of Music, sang a variety of roles in terms of gender, temperament and importance in the hierarchy. Maybe all this contributed to the duets becoming the domain of the *primi* singers and the main protagonists of the opera, while duets for other characters and dramatic situations other than jubilatory celebrations of amorous unity or sorrowful departures became rarer.

This process was not completed in the first two seasons of Haym as secretary, that is, in the duets that will be examined here. There was nevertheless a specialisation taking place at the level of performance practice, not always necessarily reflecting dramaturgic tendencies. In all three of

Handel's new operas for the seasons 1722/1723 and 1723/1724 there are duets sung by Cuzzoni and Senesino as the *primi* on the one hand, and duets sung by Durastanti and Robinson in different character constellations on the other. This seems to reflect a singer-central duet conception that Haym and Handel must have been aware of during their collaboration, although rather than contribute to a sense of specialisation of the pairs of singers in duets of a certain stylistic, structural or dramaturgic type, variety was still sought. The influence of Bononcini and Rolli on Haym and Handel was no longer direct. Although Ariosti was less of a rival than Bononcini in the second and third seasons of the Royal Academy of Music, Handel's way of setting these operas must have reflected the fact that although his domination and confidence were growing, he was still aware of not being the only house composer in the company.

Haym did not have a preference for a high number of long, polytextual duets. Although the merits of the two librettists have been subject to debate in scholarly literature, it is a fact that Haym supplied Handel with just the kind of shorter aria and duet texts that he needed so that he could elaborate on them in his settings (cf. Clausen 1996). Let us at first examine the only duet in *Ottone* not by Haym, "A teneri affetti" (III. 9 Teofane, Ottone; Handel 2008a, 183–187; Handel recording, Ottone). This duet forms part of *Teofane* (1719), a libretto by Stefano Benedetto Pallavicino set by Lotti in Dresden, whose performance Handel most likely heard and saw in person. The fact that Senesino (*Ottone*), Durastanti (*Gismonda*) and Emireno (*Boschi*), three singers who performed in Dresden, reprised their roles in London confirms the connections between the two operas. On the other hand, Larue (1995, 98–101) thinks that Handel probably conceived the role of Teofane with Durastanti in mind before the arrival of Cuzzoni was confirmed, although this did not particularly influence the writing of this duet, the only one for her and Senesino in the opera. The monotextual "A teneri affetti" is generic in its celebration of joy that the protagonists Ottone and Teofane feel at being finally united in the *lieto fine* of the opera. It consists of one four-line stanza for each section of this *da capo* form, but they hardly differ in metric or semantic terms.<sup>232</sup> Described by Dean and Knapp as a "light piece" (Dean and Knapp 1987, 426), the duet is characterised by syncopated homorhythmic movement that extends from the opening ritornello (t. 1–10) to the entirety of section A and part of section B.

A subject derived from the ritornello first occurs in b. 10–14 in Teofane's part and it is imitated by Ottone with a gestural counterpoint

232 A section. a 2: A teneri affetti / Il cor s'abbandoni / Al duolo perdoni / Chi gode così. B section. a 2: Condisce i diletti, / memoria di pene / Ne sa che si bene / Chi mal non soffri.



in quasi-imitation (b. 15–17). Handel treats the material freely throughout the duet in both the strings and the voices, subjecting the elements of the ritornello and the vocal melodies to variation and *Fortspinnung* by maintaining the syncopated rhythmic pattern that he probably took over from Lotti's setting of the same duet in *Teofane* (cf. McLauchlan 1997 365–366). During a brief vocally parallel passage interrupted by pauses, a varied ritornello sets in (b. 21–26 in the first violins), but it soon gives way to a more extended parallel passage likewise based on the main material, briefly interrupted by the violins for two bars (b. 33–34). Although the text does not give reasons for a contrasting setting, section B drops the strings and modulates to minor keys by switching between lengthier alternating statements that vary the material of section A before uniting the voices again in a predominantly parallel texture with occasional free contrapuntal voice-leading. Although one can draw certain parallels to the duet “Fuor di periglio” in its structuring, the closing duet in *Ottone* explores a different kind of simplicity that injects the diatonic, euphonious melodies with rhythmic vitality without recourse to dance patterns and also achieves an almost strict sense of motivic unity.

As in *Floridante*, Handel rejected some of the numbers he had already finished composing and replaced them with others during the process of composition. This affected the duet ending Act 2, in which Gismonda and Matilda (Anastasia Robinson) celebrate the nocturnal flight of Gismonda's son and Matilda's betrothed Adelberto that they helped execute. A former prisoner of the German king Ottone, Adelberto is also his rival for Teofane's love. In contrast to Gismonda, who wants to advance her son on the political as well as the personal front, Matilda will regret her actions in Act 3 when she finds out that Adelberto had abducted Teofane. At this stage of the action, however, the two ladies express happiness that their plan, aided by the secrecy of night, had succeeded. A duet for characters who are not connected by amorous or familial bonds is very rare in 18th-century opera. To a certain extent, the 17th-century tradition to unite unrelated characters in a duet of dramaturgic parallelism is taken up here, although unlike the duets from the early London pasticcios that belong to this group, Gismonda and Matilda are united in both dramaturgic agency and affective content. Handel originally composed the duet “Non tardate a festeggiar” (II. 12 Gismonda, Matilda; Handel 2008b, 244–248; Handel recording, English cantatas<sup>233</sup>) for them, but chose to replace it with “Notte cara, a te si deve”. Both duets are written for a soprano and a mezzosoprano / alto and have a monotextual text that celebrates the flight, but with

233 The recording is of the duet “Gentle Hymen” found in the Oxford MS source 3 *English cantatas*. It is a parody of “Non tardate a festeggiar” not authorised by Handel (cf. Hicks 2001).

different emphasis. Pallavicino's original text<sup>234</sup> focuses on the celebration of the "triumphs of two hearts" in its shorter A section, whereas section B blesses night for enabling the deception, and we shall see that Haym expanded this element in his replacement lines for "Notte cara".

Handel's first setting was not triumphant, but a mild-tempered minuet whose character brings to mind duets such as "Senza occhi e senza accenti" from *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno* (1707). This duet resembles the original *Ottone* duet not only in metre and overall musical character, but also in its initial motivic material. However, the two duets could not be more different in the way Handel works with motifs and how he treats the voices, for—as already stated in Chapter 3.3.3.1—in the cantata duet he was much less restrained by regularity, writing in his early, abundantly figurative melodic style. From the more recent duets, "Fuor di periglio" comes to mind since although in a slower tempo, it shares a similar character and the mild diatonicism and "sweetness" reminiscent of Bononcini's melodies with the original *Ottone* duet. The entries of the voices are spaced out similarly, in leisurely alternating statements and regular imitation with a countersubject. In both duets they end the first sections of the *da capo* form with ornamental parallelism intermixed with traces of free counterpoint. The maturing of Handel's duet style as evident in the Royal Academy of Music operas is confirmed here by the lack of experimentation and the penchant for regularity. Perhaps the temporal proximity of Bononcini's *Griselda*, the opera in which Bononcini partly distanced himself from the varied strophic approach dominating the previous two Rolli operas suggests that the influence went two ways? The interchange might have begun by Handel imitating Bononcini's style to compete with his popularity in the Royal Academy of Music's first two seasons. With as many as two *da capo* duets with a higher share of leisurely imitation, Bononcini himself may have been influenced by Handel in *Griselda*, whereas "Non tardate a festeggiar" could be seen as a continuation of Bononcini's influence on Handel, felt to a certain extent also in *Floridante*. This line of thought can be concluded with another in a series of questions: could Handel—becoming aware of Bononcini's gradual decline as an opera composer in London—have replaced "Non tardate a festeggiar" because he felt that he could pursue his own ways with "Notte cara, a te si deve" after all? A parallel analytical overview of the two versions of the duet for Gismonda and Matilda may provide a possible answer to this question.

The opera had a complicated history of revivals, but we need not concern ourselves with them in detail since in chronological terms they

234 A section: Non tardate a festeggiar / Il trionfo di due cor. B section: Lunga età di te si dica / notte cara, notte amica / alle imprese dell'amor.

fall outside the scope of this study.<sup>235</sup> The “Notte cara” text<sup>236</sup> must have been supplied by Haym for Handel shortly before performance and he may have composed it as a last-minute substitute for “Non tardate a festeggiar”. Both Roberts and McLauchlan have pointed out borrowings from pieces by Handel’s Italian contemporaries in this new duet, although they name different compositions as the object of Handel’s parody. Roberts’s claim that Handel parodied Torri’s chamber duet “Langue, geme, sospira”, a composition that even shares its incipit with Handel’s chamber duet setting of the same text, is among the more convincing. Handel may have closely followed Torri “throughout the vocal exposition” (Roberts 2012, 171) when he composed “Notte cara, a te si deve” (II. 12 Matilda, Gismonda; Handel 2008a, 130–135; Handel recording, Ottone), but it is difficult to say with absolute certainty why. As rightly pointed out by McLauchlan (1997, 374–375):

The substituted text hardly differs in either meaning or emotion from Pallavicini’s original. A substantial amount of this text is indeed borrowed and rearranged from “Non tardate a festeggiar” [...] In both texts, Gismonda and Matilda address the night in gratitude for the successful outcome of their scheme for Adelberto’s escape. However, the vocative “Notte cara”, which is concealed within the “B” section of Pallavicini’s text, is placed prominently at the opening in Haym’s. The dramatic significance of these words is reflected in Handel’s musical setting of them.

Perhaps Handel and Haym thought it inappropriate to openly invite the audience to celebrate the “il trionfo di due cor” in “Non tardate a festeggiar” as one of those hearts (Matilda’s) will be disillusioned as soon as she finds out that Adelberto had abducted Teofane. Gismonda deceptively conceals this from her, giving their joyful celebratory unity a touch of irony. Whatever the case, the new text is more concerned with painting a nocturnal atmosphere than being overtly celebratory.

“Non tardate a festeggiar” opens with an extensive string ritornello (b. 1–22) unrelated to the material of the vocal parts in motivic terms, but akin to it in the regularity of its phrase structure. It provides regular motivic interjections into the vocal texture, at first conceived in alternating

235 In the 1723/1724 season presumably no changes were made to the duets. In the 1726 revival, “Notte cara” was replaced by an aria for Matilda, while in 1733 “Non tardate a festeggiar” was reinstated, sung by Durastanti and the contralto M. C. Negri as Matilda (cf. McLauchlan in Preface to Handel 2008a, x–xi).

236 A section. *Notte cara, a te si deve* / *Il trionfo di due cor*. B section. *Tu sei grata, / Sei bramata / Nelle imprese dell’amor*.

statements of a simple subject (first occurrence in b. 22–29 in Gismonda's part, followed by b. 29–36 in Matilda's). After a short freely contrapuntal section with a pedal note accompanying derivations of the subject and a brief ritornello cadencing in the dominant, the subject is resumed, its first part presented in alternation (b. 48–55) and the second in parallel thirds (b. 56–61). After the aforementioned section with a pedal note transposed back to the tonic, the remainder of the section follows in a parallel texture, growing increasingly ornamental. Section B stays true to this plan, providing a slight harmonic contrast, perhaps conditioned by the mention of "notte cara".

Although considered by Calella a *par excellence* representative of the contrapuntal, imitative duet of the "old plan", "Notte cara, a te si deve" has some things in common with its predecessor. It likewise opens with a ritornello unrelated to the material of the vocal parts (b. 1–6), with the difference that it is shorter, but injects the duet with more rhythmic vitality and a sense of urgency with its dotted arpeggiations. Like in "Ah mia cara, se tu resti / Ah mio caro, se tu parti" from *Floridante*, the continuous quaver movement in the continuo, although not an ostinato, provides a highly motoric background. The contrapuntal effect is enhanced by a subject in longer note-values that creates suspensions with the continuo. A sequential countersubject in even shorter note-values consistently accompanies the subject (cf. McLauchlan 1997, 375). Handel opens with the subject in Matilda's part (b. 6–10) and continues with Gismonda's, accompanied by the aforementioned countersubject (b. 10–14). At first it seems that the parts are then inverted, although it turns out that Gismonda is providing a modified, extended version of the countersubject to accompany a varied subject in Matilda's part. Both voices lead into a perfect cadence in the dominant in b. 19. After this we are back in the tonic, and another regular statement of the subject and the countersubject (b. 19–23) is introduced, giving way to an even more heavily modified one (b. 24–27).

This first part of section A (A<sub>1</sub>, 1–28, clearly contradicting Calella's idea of "larger form" since it cadences on the tonic) inspired Dean and Knapp (1987, 429) to describe it with these words: "the voices are beautifully intertwined, sometimes in canon, against a light accompaniment, half dreamy, half ironical." In spite of all the specificities of Handel's style including the independent ritornello, the duet is comparable to Bononcini's "Non vien per nuocer" (*Cefalo e Procride*) as both duets structure the first subsection of section A in an almost fugal manner, although Handel surpasses Bononcini in the number of entries of the subject, reminding us of some of his and Gasparini's chamber duets analysed in Chapters 2.3 and 2.4. As in Bononcini's duet, subsection A<sub>2</sub> (b. 28–41) is different and although much shorter, it still forms a unified whole with the preceding

subsection. Varied fragments of the subject are built into the rendition of the first part of the ritornello theme in the first violins (b. 28–31), after which parallel semiquaver passages from the countersubject cadence on the tonic (b. 31–36), leading to a repetition of the opening ritornello. A comparison with the contrapuntally dense dramatic duets from his Italian years that contain lots of *contrapunctus ligatus* passages (see Chapter 3.3.3.1) imposes itself: this is the composer reverting back to his old contrapuntal ways, but with more poise and regularity. Section B (b. 41–53) contributes to the overall sense of unity and direction by providing multiple contrasts.

It does not come as a surprise that the chamber duets “Se tu non lasci amore” and “Langue, geme, sospira” were written around the same time. Perhaps instigated by the lack of sensitivity in the text of “Non tardate a festeggiar”, Handel had asked Haym to write a new text focusing on the image of the “cara notte”, and decided to remind Londoners that along with the ability to emulate Bononcini’s “agreeable and easie style” he could also compose learned duets. However, he did not pursue this path in the duets of his next opera, *Flavio* (1723). The source libretto was *Flavio Cuniberto* by Matteo Noris, first set by G. D. Partenio in 1682, although Haym’s starting point was the 1693 adaptation for A. Scarlatti. Haym’s interventions were extensive, but besides cutting a second duet for the secondary pair of characters (probably because it would not have been suitable for the *secondi* singers to sing more duets than the *primi*), he merely replaced Noris’s duet texts in I. 1 and III. 7 with different ones, either his own or taken from other libretto sources (cf. Dean and Knapp 1987, 462–464; Bianconi 1992). On the whole, the libretto had a mixed reception because of its intermixing of the comic and the tragic. It is not surprising that the love triangle between the secondary couple and Flavio is depicted by comic overtones, but the treatment of the main plot involving the principal couple Guido and Emilia is somewhat more unorthodox. Emilia’s father Lotario is offended because a post promised to him by Flavio was awarded to Guido’s father Ugone instead. In an offstage confrontation he slaps Ugone, who—outraged by the offense—asks his son to challenge Lotario to a duel. Torn between the obligation to defend the family honour and his love for Elmira, Guido eventually challenges and kills Ugone. Although Emilia’s conflict between her love for Guido and the need to continue the cycle of revenge (reminiscent of Thomas Corneille’s tragedy *Le Cid*) has tragic potential, it is treated with ambivalence that allows for a comic perspective, too. According to Hicks (1992), “the blend of dark tragedy and lighter, satiric comedy is especially subtle” in *Flavio* and this perspective has coloured the reception of Handel’s setting, e. g. in Dean and Knapp’s (1987, 466) opinion that the “flickering emotional cross-currents between tragedy and farce, irony and pathos are held beautifully in balance” by Handel’s music.

In the two duets in the opera, a more light-hearted vein prevailed. The opera opens with a rushed, clandestine goodbye between the secondary couple Teodata and Vitige after they had spent the night together. She expresses hope that she will see him again that evening, but he will not be able to make it because of his duties at court. Teodata's reaction takes the form of her opening line in the duet "Ricordati, mio ben" (I. 1 Teodata, Teodata; Handel 1993a, 11–16). Vitige does not need to be reminded that Teodata feels lost without him since the feeling is mutual, soon confirmed by the minimal polytextual variation with which he repeats her lines throughout section A of the duet.<sup>237</sup> As in many of Handel's Royal Academy of Music duets from *Muzio Scevola* onwards, the independent ritornello (b. 1–14) with its regular build-up of two- or three-bar phrases will interject into the vocal texture although it is unrelated to it in motivic terms. This is facilitated by the fact that the subject (beginning in b. 14 in Teodata's and b. 22 in Vitige's part) also consists of regular phrases interrupted by pauses. It is difficult to say where the subject ends as its second part is varied to facilitate the modulation to the dominant and the return to the tonic. Likewise, Teodata's *Fortspinnung* of motifs from the subject continues without a clear cadence even after Vitige's onset, giving the impression of overlapping, which to a certain extent reminds one of the duet "Sol per te, bell'idol mio" (*Silla*) and "Cangia al fine il tuo rigore" (*Amadigi*). The structure of those two duets was much tauter, whereas in "Ricordati, mio ben", Handel treats the material and the voices much more freely. After Vitige had outlined the subject, the voices are combined in a free sequential contrapuntal texture that is not conceived as *contrapunctus ligatus* for a change, after which they are joined in parallel thirds in alternation with the strings. This process of a free contrapuntal passage (with added suspensions, b. 47–50) followed by vocal parallelism is repeated with the use of different material derived from the subject. The literal repetition of the ritornello leads into section B (b. 71–96), contrasting in the usual modulatory sense, but likewise deriving its melodic and rhythmic *ductus* from section A. It is Vitige who opens it, contributing to a sense of equality between the lovers as they confirm that their hearts will compensate for the absence.

This duet was dropped from the 1732 revival of the opera, presumably because of the changes in the cast. Teodata was sung by the contralto Francesca Bertolli, which would not have required revision or

237 A section. a 2: Ricordati, mio ben / Teodata: Che se da me tu parti, / Vitige: Che se da te io parto, / a 2: Io vivo sol con te. B section. Vitige: Già teco resta il cor / In pegno del mio amor, / Teodata: Già teco resta il cor / In pegno del tuo amor, / a 2: Di mia costante fè.

transposition, but the role of Vitige was given to Anna Bagnolesi, another singer of the same tessitura, which must have caused difficulties. Since this combination of ranges occurs comparatively rarely not only in Handel's but in opera duets of the time in general, we may conclude that it was easier to drop the duet rather than revise or replace it. Besides, the presence of a duet for the *primi* singers was more important, and since the ranges of the roles of Guido (Senesino in both the original production and the revival) and Emilia (Cuzzoni in 1723 and Anna Maria Strada del Pò in 1732) had not changed, the second duet in the opera, "Deh perdona, o dolce bene" (III. 7 Emilia, Guido; Handel 1993a, 143–149), although the weaker of the two, may have been retained for the revival. One can almost say that Handel's duets for Durastanti and Robinson in the Royal Academy of Music operas after Cuzzoni's arrival display more variety on both the musical and the dramatic plane, and this impression will be confirmed by the two duets in Handel's next opera, *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*. Dramatically, "Deh perdona, o dolce bene" had considerable potential. Emilia, who asked for justice from the king for the murder of her father, was unable to exact the revenge herself when Guido handed her his sword. In the last scene of the opera Flavio gives her the false news of Guido's death, allowing Guido and the court to observe Emilia's heartbroken reaction, eventually leading to a reconciliation of the lovers. Similar to the modification of the first duet in the opera—where Handel probably asked Haym to write a shorter duet in place of Noris's long, strophic text—Noris's lines have been replaced here, too. However, whereas the original libretto had a shorter, monotextual text of two lines per section with a didactical moral on the pleasures and pains of love, Haym wrote or inserted a more dialogic text in which Guido asks for forgiveness and Emilia grants it, requesting some time to mourn her father in section B in the manner of Donna Anna (cf. Bianconi 1992).<sup>238</sup>

We are dealing with another light-hearted, major-mode duet in a ternary metre and *Andante* tempo, but while the mellifluous ways of "Ricordati, mio ben" saw Handel recall his Italian phase with direct borrowing of the melodic material from the dramatic cantata *Amarilli vezzosa* (the aria "Piacer che non si dona") and his opera *Agrippina* (Poppea's "Col peso del tuo amor"; cf. Dean and Knapp 1987), here the diatonic sweetness recalls his attempts to mime. The ritornello (b. 1–14) and the vocal material share the same incipit and are related. Handel employs it in the same

238 A section. Guido: Deh, perdona, o dolce bene, / la mia colpa fu l'onor. / Emilia: Ti perdono, o dolce bene, / se tua colpa fu l'onor. B section. Emilia: Deh! Concedi in tante pene / Qualche triegua al mio dolor. Guido: Ti concedo in tante pene / qualche triegua al tuo dolor.

manner as in most of his duets from the 1720, by interspersing the vocal texture with brief motivic interjections as well as for formal demarcation. The fact that a “larger form” is articulated (A1, b. 1–54; A2, b. 55–122) shows just how relative Calella’s differentiation is, as there are much shorter sections in Handel’s duets that attain a higher degree of complexity, whether they can be articulated into two subsections by some other means or not. “Deh perdona, o dolce bene” consistently avoids counterpoint and imitation, but it is hard to tell if Handel was motivated by the dialogic stance in the text and the wish to highlight its comprehensibility. He certainly disregarded this aspect in other settings of dialogic texts! Instead of repeating Guido’s opening statement (b. 15–22) in succession, Elmira presents a variant of it that is nevertheless aligned with Guido’s idea in syntactic and harmonic terms, likewise cadencing on the dominant of the dominant, which would have suited a “modern plan” dialogic logic, as well as the alternation in two-bar phrases that follows. However, in the remainder of the section, this differentiation of the voices subsides as they are mostly combined in parallel (b. 35–44, 77–82, 88–108) or in very loose free counterpoint, mostly accompanying figuration in one voice with a pedal note in the other (b. 46–50, 69–74).

At its beginning, subsection A2 enhances the dialogic exchange especially effectively, with short overlapping alternation (b. 61–65, highlighting the couple’s exchanges “deh perdono” / “ti perdono” and “dolce bene / caro bene” as if we were dealing with stichomythia), but otherwise it is simply a bit too long. The motivic repetitions exhaust themselves and the harmonic insistence on F major does not help the growing impression of monotony. After the exact repetition of the ritornello, section B (b. 123–158) adds more interest with quasi-imitation of material derived from the opening statements of section A (b. 123–132 in Vitige’s, b. 134–135 in Teodata’s part). It quickly flows into a parallel texture and a skilful vacillation between D and A minor, appropriate to Emilia’s ambivalent wish to mourn her father rather than be united with her betrothed. On the whole, could it be that Handel attempted to emulate Bononcini’s style but with less convincing results than in previous operas? Or does the setting reflect a lack of dramatic convincingness, the same way Cornelia’s final and only major-mode, but hardly jubilant aria “Non ha che più temere” does not really do justice to the joy she should be feeling after Sesto had finally killed Tolomeo? Whatever the case, Handel did not return to this structural type of duet before *Admeto* (1727), incidentally (or not?) only a few months before the premiere of Bononcini’s *Astianatte*.

It is fitting to end not only this chapter but also this study with the consideration of *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* (1724) as one of the peaks of the operatic style that Handel gradually developed in London. The eponymous source libretto stems from Giacomo Francesco Bussani as set by Antonio



Sartorio in 1677, although the process of adaptation was one of the most intricate ones in Haym's collaboration with Handel. According to Dean and Knapp (1987, 486–487), he strengthened the dramatic fibre by focusing the dramaturgy on Cesare's and Cleopatra's love on the one hand and Sesto's and Cornelia's revenge on Tolomeo on the other. From Bussani's original libretto and its 1685 reworking he took over only fragments, including "some rearranged lines" for the duet "Son nata a lagrimar / Son nato a sospirar" (I. 11 Cornelia, Sesto; Handel 1875, 48–50). In a process comparable to the changes undergone by *Ottone*, Handel began working on the score in the summer of 1723 with a different cast in mind. Although this did not affect the setting of the duet for Cornelia and Sesto since the tessituras of the two roles were merely reversed when compared to the 1723 manuscript—where Sesto was the contralto and Cornelia the soprano and not the other way around—Handel changed its position, moving it from midway in the first act to its ending. According to Dean and Knapp (1987, 488), this "was a brilliant stroke, clearly motivated by dramatic and structural demands". Fate has not been kind to Pompeo's widow Cornelia and their son Sesto: after the Egyptian king Tolomeo had beheaded Pompeo, they are imprisoned at his court where she can barely ward off the king's and his general Achilla's unwanted amorous advances. The duet finds the characters at the outset of their troubles, when they are separated as Sesto is led off to prison and Cornelia is humiliated by serving as the gardener in Tolomeo's harem.

Dean and Knapp (1987, 497) were exceptionally complimentary of this duet, finding that it "conveys an impression of overwhelming pathos" with its siciliana 12/8 metre, characteristic rhythm and phrasing as well as the expressive use of the minor mode. As pointed out by Leopold (2009, 79), it finds itself at the beginning of Handel's tendency of abandoning the use of the siciliana to paint pastoral atmospheres and making it a prototype of operatic anguish and pain. Interestingly, Calella (2009, 344) singled it out as an example of duets whose text does not suggest a setting of the "modern plan", but Handel nevertheless set it with opening alternating statements and a predominantly successive treatment of the voices. The absence of contrapuntal combining, the maximal comprehensibility of the text, as well as the emphatic singling out of fragments of the text such as the sighs "ah", "ah sempre" and "mai più" it does, indeed, suggest a pronounced dialogic stance in a presumed last effort of mother and son to communicate with each other. The duet fascinates with the careful combining of its motivic material in both the vocal parts and the orchestra. The ritornello is made up of three units, the last one being a somewhat extended version of the opening one. Both these motifs are to feature in the vocal parts, although it seems at first that their motivic material is independent, consisting of distinct motifs set apart by pauses. However, motif x from the ritornello is used to round

off vocal statements as well. Cornelia and then Sesto alternate the same, likewise multi-sectional idea, in Sesto's rendition seemingly transposed to the relative major but modulating back to the tonic with the cadential motif *x* somewhat extended. The remainder of the first subsection consists of the alternating overlapping of motif *y* in Sesto's part to Cornelia's "ah" sighs. A cadence (always based on variants of motif *x*) in the dominant conforms the section to Calella's definition of "larger form".

FORM	BAR	KEY	CHARACTER	MOTIF	LINE	TEXT	
A	A <sub>1</sub>	1-6	e	(ritornello)	<i>x+y+x'</i>	&	Son nata a lagrimar / Son nato a sospirar E il dolce mio conforto Ah, sempre piangerò. Se il fato ci tradi Sereni e lieto di Mai più sperar potrò.
		6-9		Cornelia	<i>a+b+x</i>		
		9-13	G, e	Sesto	<i>a+b+x</i>	1-3	
		13-15	b	C &* S	<i>y'+x</i>	3	
		A <sub>2</sub>	15-19	e, a	C /** S	<i>a,b</i>	
	19-21	a, e	C & S	<i>x</i>	3		
	21-24	e	C & S	<i>y'+x</i>			
	24-28		C&S / vn.	<i>y'+x</i>			
	28-31		(ritornello)	<i>y+x'</i>		%	
	B 33-38 38-39	31-33	G	C / S	<i>a'</i>	4	
b		C & S	<i>x',y',x'</i>	<i>5-6</i>			
			(ritornello)	<i>y'+x'</i>	%		

TABLE 68.  
Formal outline of the duet "Son nata a lagrimar / Son nato a sospirar"  
from Handel's *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* (1724)

- \* Denotes simultaneity in the treatment of vocal parts.
- \*\* Denotes successiveness in the treatment of vocal parts.

The constituent units of the vocal parts' subject (*a+b*) are now presented in alternation instead of continuously, sequentially transposed and modulating back to the tonic and—via a series of secondary dominants—the subdominant, before being united in a brief moment of parallelism on motif *x* (b. 19–20). This harmonic trajectory is facilitated by motif *b*, an arpeggiation outlining a seventh chord and thus particularly suitable for modulatory processes. This method of sequential and harmonic manipulation of a subject broken up into motifs that alternate in the parts is reminiscent of Bononcini's two duets in Act 2 of *Muzio Scevola* (1721). The overlapping juxtaposition of motif *y* in Cornelia's part to Sesto's sighs in b. 21–24 are in fact b. 13–15 transposed back to the tonic with the parts

inverted, although Handel extends this process by setting a parallel vocal “ah” in thirds against motif y in the strings. The orchestra is present throughout the densely conceived duet’s two sections, doubling and supplementing the vocal parts in harmonic terms, but this is the first time it engages in a *concertante* interplay with the voices. After a cadence and an abridged ritornello, section B brings few contrasts apart from exploring related keys. After alternating statements of a variant of motif a, the voices are led in a parallel exploration of x and y with renewed sighs on the words “mai più”, which underlines the hopelessness of the situation.

Since in most later revivals of *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* Sesto’s role was recast for a tenor, it does not come as a surprise that this duet, exploiting rare moments of vocal simultaneity in a markedly tight relationship between the voices, was not included in the revisions. While in “Notte cara, a te si deve” Handel stressed the contrapuntal independence of the voices, in the next two duets composed for Durastanti and Robinson he emphasised their proximity. This does not come as a surprise since Durastanti’s *tesitura* was verging on the modern mezzosoprano, possibly also explaining the versatility of roles that she sang for Handel and Bononcini. It is fascinating how even in a duet of the “modern plan” Handel found a way to stress the closeness of the parting mother and son in such moving terms. More concise and also more mellifluous but less contrapuntal than “Ah mia cara, se tu resti / Ah mio caro, se tu parti” from *Floridante*, “Son nata a lagrimar / Son nato a sospirar” may have paved the way for the already discussed duets of departure in his next operas *Tamerlano* and *Rodelinda*. These were closer to a “modern plan” duet than the *Floridante* duet, but remained pathetic like the duet for Cornelia and Sesto. The fact that they were given to the *primo uomo* and the *prima donna* suggests that Handel was confident enough to let his biggest stars shine in a more subtle, but no less effective way than the case had been so far. The singers, too, must have recognised the benefits of presenting their skills together in such a way. As had rightly been pointed out by Leopold (2009, 164), Handel was capable of closely integrating not only equal, but also neighbouring vocal ranges such as Cuzzoni’s soprano and Senesino’s alto, and these duets are a sign that vocal proximity could also have dramaturgic poignancy.

Although not a pathetic duet, the closing number of the opera before the final *coro*<sup>239</sup> and also the final example in this study, “Caro/bella, più amabile beltà” (Cleopatra, Cesare; Handel 1875, 128–131) represents

239 The *coro* “Ritorni omai nel nostro core” contains another duet section for Cesare and Cleopatra as its middle section (“Un bel contento”), thus drawing parallels with similar elaborate endings in Handel’s operas, e.g. *Alessandro* (1726). Since it does not present a separate duet number, it will not be considered for analysis although it is symptomatic of the increased representation of Cuzzoni and Senesino in duets.

a qualitative change in the duets for Cuzzoni and Senesino as the *primi* singers of the Royal Academy of Music. Its structure is much more taut and goal-driven than the homophonic “A teneri effetti” or the somewhat leisurely “Deh perdona, o dolce bene” from the two previous operas, either because or in spite of the fact that it is a lively gigue in a brisk tempo. For a change, the relationship between the ritornello and the vocal parts is simple: the ritornello’s first half is taken up by the voices with minimal variation in their alternating statements, and its incipit becomes the main motivic source of the entire duet, subjected to a seemingly endless process of *Fortspinnung*. Besides a strong emphasis on the two voices shining melodically in parallel thirds and sixths, this kind of material is also prone to a free contrapuntal treatment abiding in *contrapunctus ligatus*, a texture Handel seems to have been avoiding in his operas for the Royal Academy of Music so far. But instead of a detailed analysis, I find it more fitting—especially as we are dealing with the last example in this lengthy study—to compare this duet to other similar duets by Handel, Bononcini or some of the Halle master’s other Italian contemporaries, thus both anticipating and seamlessly leading into the conclusion to come in Chapter 3.5.

In the dramatic duets written up to this point, Handel made recourse to a gigue only in “Una guerra ho dentro il seno” from *Apollo e Dafne*. However, if there was a model for this piece in Handel’s duet output so far, it would be the duet “Cara/Caro, ti dono in pegno il cor” (*Teseo*) with its acutely self-aware virtuosic representation of the voices of the *primo uomo* and *prima donna*. This duet also opens with a *fermata* on the characters addressing each other with terms of endearment (“cara/caro”) in longer note values, suggesting a slowing down of the tempo, although this is a feature also shared by the duet “Cara infido tu mi credi / Caro se ad altri tu mi cedi” from Bononcini’s *Muzio Scevola* (1695), heard in London as “Charmer, if faithfull thou’lt believe me” in the pasticcio *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* (1708). The *Teseo* duet, however, is more comparable to “Caro/bella, più amabile beltà” with its more ambitious structure and the exploring of figurative writing for two voices in brief alternation, counterpoint over pedal notes and extensive semiquaver flourishes in parallel thirds. In *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*, Handel realised that this kind of duet writing could be more effective and also more spontaneously joyous in a dance rhythm, and he also skilfully avoided a sense of monotony. London audiences have already had the chance to hear gigue duets in the pasticcios *Creso* (“Un volto che appaga”) and *Arminio* (“Con rigida sembianza”), and although these duets presented novel, more instrumental vocal styles from contemporary Venice, they were still very different from the jubilant duet for Cesare and Cleopatra, probably because Handel’s setting does not have a “short-breathed character” (Talbot 2008, 30). Bononcini also composed two

gigue duets that were analysed in this study. The much older “Cara infido tu mi credi / Caro se ad altri tu mi cedi” has only a few moments of brief successive treatment and persists with its unvaried, syllabic parallelism. “Dolce conforto dell’alma / Con speranza dell’alma” from *Astianatte*, on the other hand, opens with widely spaced out alternating statements and its dialogic potential has already been analysed in Chapter 3.4.1.2. However, it is distinguished by an almost total lack of parallelism and it was probably meant to be performed in a moderately fast tempo.

I hope to have demonstrated that when it came to vivacious splendour, it was difficult to match Handel’s talents. However, rather than as an equivalent of Handel’s playful gigue, the duet in *Astianatte* can be seen as Bononcini’s reaction to Handel’s domination at the Royal Academy of Music by providing a similar, partly dialogic and successive duet of the “modern” plan that nevertheless entangles the voices in a contrapuntal web of expressive and dramatic significance, something Handel was good at doing. He may have also provided Bononcini and his other Italian peers with a model to emulate.

## 3. 5.

CONCLUSIONS ON THE COMPARISON OF THE DRAMATIC DUET  
AND OVERALL CONCLUSION

While analysing the duet “O lovely peace!” (Israelite Man, Israelite Woman) from *Judah Maccabaeus* as an example of the lyric duet, Hugo Riemann (1921, 182) notices that it produces the illusion of canon with the help of “imitation in both voices at two bars that are actually not canonical, but taken leisurely as they come in the given moment”<sup>240</sup>. He names the duet “O death! Where is thy sting / thy victory?” from *Messiah*, a true example of this seemingly canonical voice-leading (ibid., 198) and adds that only a pedant could resent the lack of observance of the rules of canon in those cases. He lists more examples of the so-called “imitative duet”, repeatedly stressing that it is desirable to combine strict and free counterpoint in the writing of a duet.

Although Riemann plays the role of the teacher rather than the scholar, illustrating the craft of composition on a wide historical and stylistic array of examples, it is nevertheless significant that his example of flexibility in the imitative treatment of voices in a duet comes from the composer at the heart of this study. Granting that his examples are from Handel’s oratorios rather than his Italian operas simply because Riemann must have known them better, I hope to have shown that not only Handel but other composers strove for a free and skilful combination of different techniques in a vocal duet. As we have seen, the manipulation of these techniques can be rather different in the realm of the chamber duet and the dramatic duet. These two genres, namely, employ the same techniques in different ratios and build large-scale structures in thoroughly different ways. Although Handel may be an exception because he occasionally imbued his dramatic duets with a degree of contrapuntal density characteristic of his chamber duets (to a certain extent also the chamber duet in general), the case with some other composers such as Bononcini and Gasparini is different. True, certain stylistic marks accompany composers in the realms of different genre conventions, but the most significant difference is in the treatment of the text. And while we have seen a certain rapprochement of the chamber duet to a vocal number in *da capo* form in examples by both Handel and Bononcini, considerations of theatrical performance practice and operatic dramaturgy still greatly influenced the way composers set a dramatic text as opposed to a lyric one.

240 Imitationen der beiden Stimmen in kürzeren Abstände (2 Takte), die aber wieder nicht eigentlich kanonisch, sondern so genommen sind, wie sie sich gerade bequem ergeben.

These last attempted conclusions focus on tendencies in the composition of dramatic duets with only occasional references to the named composer's chamber duets. This does not mean that there are no links whatsoever: for example, Gasparini's tendency to open his dramatic duets with some form of musical simultaneity must have roots in the composer's position as a learned conservative in Italian musical life, best exemplified in his cantatas and the twelve chamber duets that this study devoted a great deal of attention to. Bononcini, on the other hand, is an example of a composer who took genre conventions into account, but also fully adapted as a composer to his surroundings, the patron and the audience he wrote for. This does not mean that he did not stay true to his style the same way as Handel and Gasparini did, but the need to challenge his audience or to form its taste was not as pronounced in his case.

But let us now turn to an overview and a summary of the development of the dramatic duet by Handel and his Italian contemporaries in 1706–1724, the period under scrutiny. The first stage of the performance tradition of Italian opera in London (1706–1710) was crucial in many ways. A gradual process from performing English-language adaptations of Italian operatic music with a mixed cast made up of local and foreign singers to a full professionalization with an ensemble of mostly Italian professional singers singing in Italian took place. It was more or less completed with *Almahide* and *Idaspe fedele*, laying the foundation for the decade to come. As we have seen, the period between 1711 and 1717 was marked not only by the advent of Handel but also by different turbulences that thwarted a continuous functioning of opera production. The staging of authorial operas with the occasional pasticcio thrown in became the norm with the foundation of the Royal Academy of Music in 1720 and lasted until its dissolution in 1729.

In the earliest period of Italian opera in London the initial variety of comical and serious duet types and their structural unconventionality and diversity as visible in *Camilla*—owing a lot to operatic traditions of the 17th century—gradually gave way to a lesser number and more uniform conception of duets. In *Camilla* and to a certain extent *Thomyris*, *Queen of Scythia* monpartite, bipartite or varied tripartite forms coexisted with the most common *da capo* form. However, the duets in *Thomyris* were not numerous enough and they were still on a somewhat modest scope to indicate a change of course in the conception of opera duets in London. Although it was not considered in Chapter 3.2 due to its unorthodox nature, brief mention should be made of *Love's Triumph*, a work performed in London in 1708, with a pasticcio from 1696 and Scarlatti's reworking of it from 1705 as its starting point. It is impossible to determine the

authors of its ten duets with certainty.<sup>241</sup> The score (Bononcini, Cesarini, and Gasparini 1708) is very difficult to position stylistically, not least because of the sheer quantity of duets. Although among the ten there are some conventional and uniform ones, it also presented London audiences at least one or two duets of diversified structural-dramaturgic designs hitherto unfamiliar to them. An even sharper differentiation between comic duets (with their predominantly successive treatment, smaller scope and monopartite or irregular forms) and serious duets (*da capo* form and a predominantly simultaneous treatment of the vocal parts) predicted the eventual overall prevailing of the serious duet. However, the duets in *Love's Triumph* still show a tendency for polytextuality, presumably because in the context of a strong British tradition of spoken theatre it was important to differentiate and also to understand the characters.

Along with a growing sense of vocal virtuosity in each successive London opera, *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* added a structural novelty in that its sources sustain the voices with denser instrumental accompaniment, but it showed slightly less structural variety in its duets, since unity and parallelism between the voices was favoured to contrapuntal techniques. Unlike the duets in *Love's Triumph* and to a certain extent also *Thomyris*, most of the duets in *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* join rather than oppose characters that are in some sort of conflict, thereby smoothening the dramatic situations in musical terms. Also, the study of *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* enabled us to follow a seemingly random, but evidently editorial adaptation of a source opera into a pasticcio in great detail. The clear musical contrast between the duets in the London as opposed to the Florence opera cannot be a result of chance but only of conscious musical shaping on Haym's part. Whereas the duets in *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* displayed an equal share of polytextuality and monotextuality, *Almahide*, in contrast to the predominantly polytextual duets of *Love's Triumph*, showed a tendency for duets in which the characters sing the same text.

Some of the duets in *Almahide* showed a degree of adaptability to different dramatic situations characteristic of the (other) Bononcini duets

241 The pasticcio in question is *L'amore eroico fra pastori*. Act 1 was probably composed by C. F. Cesarini, Act 2 by G. L. Lulier and Act 3 by Bononcini. It was reworked by A. Scarlatti under the title *La Pastorella* in 1705 and a manuscript collection of arias from this work kept at the British Library is the only other extant source, along with a selection of songs published in London. It is unlikely that the numbers in each act of the London pasticcio are entirely by the composers listed above since it is possible that Scarlatti's version, containing additional numbers by him, served as the model for *Love's Triumph* rather than the 1696 original.



analysed in this study.<sup>242</sup> With a limited use of parallelism and the clear distinguishing between the voices in spite of textural or affective unity, these duets written either for the *primo* and *secondo uomo* or the couple of main protagonists announced duet types that would dominate opera in the first third of the 18th century. Since *Almahide* was supposed to showcase music from Bononcini's Vienna operas written in the first decade of the century unlike the earlier pasticcios which presented music from his late 17th-century Roman works, it is hardly surprising that they are more advanced in stylistic terms. They are more *concertante*, expansive and also more virtuoso in the simultaneous vocal representation of the opera's principal characters. *Idaspe fedele* added to this development the appearance of the duet of departure for the principal couple in adversity and although lacking in the dignified *pathos* of the tragic duets of the sort written by Handel, it still pointed the way for future developments.

Duets were becoming an important part of the growingly self-conscious representation of singers as *virtuosi* on the London stage. The fact that Nicolini wanted to make sure he outshone his colleagues not just in the arias but also in the duets, foreshadowed the importance of the balance between the "rival queens" Francesca Cuzzoni and Faustina Bordoni in the era of the Royal Academy of Music. Although stylistically less consistent than the ones in *Almahide*, the duets in *Idaspe fedele* with their smaller numbers and dramaturgic standardisation, as well as the growing importance of all 3 types of duet techniques (alternation, counterpoint, parallelism) announced traits of the two following periods of Italian opera in London. On the level of performance practice, the transformative processes can be followed in the example of Nicola Haym's role in the staging of Italian opera in London. When he rehearsed *Camilla* with the singers in 1706, "his decision to include few aria settings which were not from the original Naples production probably received no opposition from them" (Lindgren 1997, 242–243). When they were preparing *Pyrrhus* in 1709, "he was apparently able to satisfy many of their demands by his own compositions." (ibid.) By the time of the staging of *Etearco*, Haym's responsibilities were gradually reduced to tailoring the texts of arias included in the production at the behest of the singers since a growing sense of teamwork began to dominate operatic life in London. In the understanding of Italian

242 It remains difficult to answer the question if Bononcini and the other Italian composers considered in this study were slightly less differentiated or sophisticated than Handel in the appropriation of a duet from one dramatic situation to an entirely different one. The Halle master also resorted to recycling parody practices of the sort at play in Bononcini's Vienna operas, but he—as seen in Chapter 1.1.3—also had much more varied ways of engaging with pre-existing material.

opera in London in the second decade of the century, this dialectic between composers like Bononcini and Scarlatti whose music we can identify and whose duets may even display some common features and the ones whose authors cannot be identified was even more important.

When we compare the duets from Handel's opera *Rinaldo* and the Gasparini duets in the pasticcio *Ambleto*, a stark contrast is evident between the German composer's contribution and the duet tradition represented in the older Italian composer's work. Chapter 3.3.1 has shown how different Gasparini was as a composer of chamber duets on the one hand and dramatic duets on the other. The biggest difference is in the avoidance of a consistent application of imitation techniques that have such a prominent place in his chamber duets (as well as Handel's), although this may have been down to the genre itself. In spite of all the contrasts between his chamber and dramatic duets on the structural and stylistic plane, there is an element that binds them together, and this is flexibility. Gasparini was evidently a flexible composer who adapted to all these conventions without the need to sacrifice his stylistic profile as a composer with a learned background. He displayed significant progressivity in his youth but became a staunch aesthetic enemy of nascent *gallant* and pre-classical tendencies in his maturity. His chamber duets, although a private genre that could not do a lot to boost his public reputation, display significant care and attention to detail, whereas dramatic duets were obviously not a domain in which he sought to assert himself, so that some of them show signs of a compositional routine. They do display some of the traits highlighted in the introduction to chapter 3.3.1 ("skilful and pleasing", but somewhat static melodies, relatively little dramatic substance), and they also possess a sense of direction and roundedness. Gasparini was hardly an eccentric or original duet composer like Handel or Bononcini. However, his contribution to the culture of dramatic duets in London was somewhat limited and it did not leave a strong mark on the second period at the heart of Chapter 3.2, the operatic diversity that ruled the London stage between 1711 and 1717. Juxtaposed with what little music by him is known to have been performed with absolute certainty in London a few years earlier, the duets he wrote between 1715 and 1722 show an apparent stylistic contrast.

On the other hand, In Chapter 3.3.2 we were able to follow how pasticcio duets performed in London in the course of the decade gradually became more extended. The gap witnessed at the beginning of the decade lessened as duets by different, most probably Venetian composers broadened the stylistic and structural frame of what Londoners recognised as viable dramatic duets. Techniques such as instrumental figuration, clear motivic unity and the recourse to (varied) repetition, along with an overall bigger scope made these duets more similar to Handel's, although they

could not necessarily compete with them in musical and dramaturgic complexity. In line with the goals of this study, the pieces by Handel's Italian contemporaries in Chapter 3.3.2 were examined in more detail since often nothing had been written on them, in contrast to Handel's.

Before moving on to Handel's contribution in this period, it was important to point out Handel's roots in the cantata and serenata duets written in Italy, experimenting with and distinguishing between three duet types (Chapter 3.3.3.1). The most represented of these grew into what can be described as the prototype of Handel's dramatic duets, anticipating his mature dramatic duets written in London in the 1720s. In terms of dramaturgy, these are duets of unity or conflict of an amorous nature, and in them Handel developed large-scale *da capo* forms with framing sections that tend to articulate a bipartite, "larger form" (as described by Calella) with a clear cadence in the dominant or another related tonal centre in the middle. In his operas, the composer sharpened the contrast between this more substantial section and a shorter middle section, more so than in the pastoral genres of the cantata and the serenata of his Italian years. Handel was not alone in this: the examination of Gasparini's duets in Chapter 3.3.1 shows that his older Italian contemporary sometimes also articulated his *da capo* duets this way. However, in the same way these tendencies were occasional in Handel's works from the period 1706–1710 but gradually became the norm in his first London operas, Gasparini—and to a certain extent also Bononcini—also participated in this trend towards formal expansion and complexity, but only to a certain degree. In some of his dramatic duets Gasparini displayed a tendency for contrapuntal, even imitative vocal shaping, too, but they seem less consistently implemented than in Handel's works.

Another duet type mentioned only in passing in this period is the strophic *aria a due*. Although it leaves an old-fashioned aftertaste in Handel's and some of Gasparini's duets, implying that it was beginning to be considered too dated even for Londoners' taste, we could see that Bononcini brought it back in the years of the Royal Academy of Music, offering his own specific forms of it that will challenge perceptions of the strophic duet as more simple and backward-looking than, say, either Handel's (freely) contrapuntal duet or Burney's "modern plan" dialogic duet. Moreover, Bononcini had amalgamated the latter type of dialogic duet with the principle of strophic alternation. In the pasticcio duets analysed in Chapter 3.3.2 we have also seen the rise of the prototype of the tragic duet of departure in a rather multi-faceted guise. While these duets by Gasparini and other Venetian composers were in fully-fledged *da capo* form, but displayed a wide range of affective content as well as considerable diversity of character, Handel experimented with different formal

solutions in this duet type but established as its main characteristics a minor key, a slower tempo, as well as different harmonic and contrapuntal means of achieving pathetic expression. Another important aspect of Handel's dramatic duets detected already in the period 1706–1715 is the dialectic of the techniques of alternation, contrapuntal combining and parallelism with a particular eye on vocal counterpoint. Although Handel made little use of imitation in the dramatic duets written during his Italian sojourn, the culmination of Chapter 3.3.3.2 in the form of the duets from *Teseo* and especially “Crudel tu non farai” from *Amadigi* with their skilful combination of imitation and pseudo-imitation probably pointed the way.

The entirety of dramatic duets considered in Chapter 3.4 covers a substantial chronological span from 1693 (Bononcini's *La nemica d'amore fatta amante*, the oldest work considered here) to 1727 (*Astianatte*). As already explained, similar to Chapter 3.3.3.1 on Handel's early dramatic duets, in Chapter 3.4.1.1 it was important to fashion a background for the development of Bononcini's dramatic duets in the stages of his career preceding his arrival to London in 1720. In Bononcini's opus there is a lacuna between the intense operatic activity in Vienna in the first decade of the century and in London in the third, so that the novelty of his Royal Academy of Music operas (and their duets) is strongly highlighted. In contrast, Handel's development seems more continuous, although we are in a position to follow this due to the accessibility of critical editions. Nevertheless, he seems to have abandoned some of the processes begun in his Italian years and perfected in his early London operas since he must have wanted to make a fresh start in the special circumstances and working conditions that the Royal Academy of Music provided, the same way Bononcini did.

However, the composers reacted to these new working conditions in different ways. As the stress on his relationship with Rolli in Chapter 3.4.1.2 has shown, Bononcini was likely a more equal collaborator to librettists, and as such more open to teamwork. As an Italian composer likelier to identify with vocal music in his mother tongue as national culture, he was probably more attuned to the literary, Academic agendas that Rolli may have cherished as a pupil of the distinguished poet and teacher Gian Vincenzo Gravina. Although the Italo-German Haym has shown great admiration for both Bononcini and Rolli, his relationship with Handel was less a union of equals, but a more pragmatic and perhaps—in a way—a more productive collaborative rapport.

The examination of Bononcini's dramatic duets has shown that contrapuntal techniques are not his trademark; he made use of them only in certain situations, more often in the early serenata and oratorio duets and only occasionally in the London works, thus conforming to genre

conventions that the learned does not have a place in the theatre. His London productivity in the realm of the dramatic duet is connected to an affinity for varied strophic form, favoured by Rolli who had an inclination to write long, polytextual duet texts. Therein lays a contradiction as strophic form was a relic of 17th-century operatic practices but it also enabled Bononcini to devise more modern, dialogic duet designs. Although Burney's differentiation of the "old plan" and the "modern plan" was rightly subjected to criticism by Calella, it is still a relevant category since duets with longer successive alternating statements were indeed increasingly cultivated by both Handel and Bononcini in their Royal Academy of Music duets, probably instigated by their mutual rivalry and competition. To a certain extent, this type of duet with longer alternating statements was anticipated on the London stage in the duets from *Creso* and *Arminio* in 1714 and probably also many other duets in the varied pasticcio production that marked the decade, showcasing music by recent Venetian or Neapolitan composers, stylistically much more progressive than Handel's.

It is important to stress that the binary opposition "successive" – "simultaneous" as used by both Burney and Calella to describe the differences between the "modern" and the "old plan" duet should not be taken literally or even necessarily in connection with dialogic exchanges in the text. If the duets analysed in this study have shown something, then it is the possibility that dramaturgic models can be superimposed on different kinds of polytextual and even monotextual texts, which relativizes the category of dialogue. Likewise, examples have shown that after presenting the material in longer alternating vocal statements, the composers can combine the voices in a variety of ways with each other, often also with the independently treated instrumental parts. Thus the initial successiveness often does not pertain to the entirety of the duet but only to its outset.

Even though we owe the singling out of the London pasticcio *Muzio Scevola* to Burney who picked out the two duets by Handel as examples of "old" and "modern plan" duets and to Chrysander's scathing opinion on Bononcini's Act 2, I still find that this opera was crucial for the subsequent development of Handel and Bononcini as duet composers in London. In this pasticcio Bononcini amalgamated "modern" dialogic alternation underlined by unconventional harmonic progressions with intricate strophic designs that show a simpler side to them in both operas preceding it (*Astarto*) and following it (*Griselda*). Handel responded with an aesthetic statement of sorts that he can produce both a more modern duet, albeit in his own way ("Vivo senza alma / Mà quell'amore") and a "conservative", more contrapuntal duet such as "Mà come amar? / Torna ad amar". Pasticcios have often been considered in negative terms, but maybe it was the competitive nature of the enterprise that inspired both composers to

experiment and to be open to influence, at the same time staying perfectly attuned to the dramatic situations and the portrayal of the characters.

In Handel's next operas for the Royal Academy of Music it is clear that he wrote them with the Italian composer's challenging popularity in mind. Regardless of whether they were conscious or not, the two-way processes that went on between these two composers are too complex to describe by the exclusive term "influence". Handel definitely changed in relation to his previous duet opus by deliberately pushing a "sweet", simpler, sometimes almost homophonic diatonic idiom into the foreground in some of his subsequent duets. At the same time, he would not be Handel had he not at the last minute inserted "Notte cara, a te si deve" into *Ottone*, a duet even more consistently imitative than "Mà come amar? / Torna ad amar". As the tide was changing and Bononcini fell out of grace, writing for the Royal Academy of Music only occasionally till 1724, it was interesting to observe how in the duet "Dolce conforto dell'alma / Con speranza dell'alma" from *Astianatte* the process was perhaps reversed. Although he followed the logic of widely spaced out, leisurely alternations between the voices, Bononcini insisted on an almost total absence of parallelism in this duet, choosing to work out the parts contrapuntally (although not imitatively) as a reflection of the dramatic situation in which Andromaca and Pirro make only furtive attempts at amorous unity.

If not in terms of character and dramaturgy, this duet can definitely be brought into a structural connection with Handel's departure duets, a prototype that he was developing ever since "Ah mia cara, se tu resti / Ah mio caro, se tu parti" from *Floridante* and that culminated in the pathetic anguish of the duets in *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*, *Tamerlano* and *Rodelinda*. The fact that this vacillation between Burney's "modern" and "old plan" is typical of London and probably also of the relationship between Bononcini and Handel is sustained by the analysis of the limited number of duets from Gasparini's later operas. With the exception of his somewhat old-fashioned strophic duets in *Ambleto* and the two dramatic cantatas, Gasparini does not seem to have been interested in "modern", successive dialogic structuring at all. He showed an affinity to combine the vocal parts in a simultaneous texture whether it was imitation, free counterpoint or parallelism, with a possible textural contrast only in the B section of a *da capo* form.

Let me end this monograph with a comment on the article that encouraged it, Calella's study of Handel's "dramatic multi-voiced"<sup>243</sup> music (Calella 2009). It goes without saying that both that article and this study

243 The original German substantive form ("Dramatische Mehrstimmigkeit") does not translate into English.

have demonstrated a rare variety and dynamism in Handel's treatment of the vocal duet. Calella does not refrain from asking the question as to whether Handel was an innovator in the realm of the duet and the ensemble, but eventually dismisses the possibility since he does not want to make a causal connection between quality and innovation (*ibid.*, 351). Against the developments of Metastasian dramaturgy that he must have found too limiting, Handel was—according to Calella—a rather conservative composer. No contemporary of his was able to “shape operatic ensembles so that they not only exhibit dramaturgic diversity but also traces of the learned art of Steffani that had almost disappeared from opera duets and trios around the time”<sup>244</sup> (*ibid.*, 352). Handel's difference had been falsely interpreted as innovation, especially when his output was approximated to the dramaturgic freedom and stylistic synthesis that opera had acquired in the late 18th century in Mozart's opus, with whom older literature often attempted to unsuccessfully compare him. Calella rightly warns us that “whether we see him [Handel, A/N] as a trailblazer depends on the historical perspective and not least on the ideology that is behind it”<sup>245</sup> (*ibid.*).

Striving to minimise any implicit “ideology” of the sorts, I hope to have proven that Handel was exceptional in the treatment of duets in relation to the Italian contemporaries Calella wanted me to compare him to. Even though duets are often a subsidiary aspect of opera seria, Handel often strove to reflect the specificities of the dramatic situation or the inner world of his characters in his duets. In terms of the variety of techniques employed, neither of the composers matches him, although some of them, especially Gasparini in his chamber duets and Bononcini in his dramatic duets come close, but from an entirely different angle. As shown, Bononcini was encouraged to do this by the two-way processes of exchange and rivalry in their common Royal Academy of Music period. However, we must bear in mind the socio-historical specificity of Handel, especially in London. One of the biggest differences between Handel and his Italian peers is the fact that Handel was not in the direct service of aristocrats in London, but as a commercial freelance composer he depended on his own success:

He was obliged to try to develop the taste of his audience in his own favour. [...] His public still remained the same year after year,

244 Keiner konnte wie er Opernensembles gestalten, die nicht nur dramaturgische Vielfalt, sondern auch noch die Spuren der gelehrten Kunst eines Steffanis aufweisen konnten – und die zu einer Zeit, in denen Duette und Terzette aus der Oper fast verschwunden waren.

245 Ob man ihn als ‚Vorreiter‘ sehen kann, hängt vom historiographischen Gesichtspunkt und nicht zuletzt von der dahinter stehenden Ideologie ab.

continually demanding something new and better. [...] Handel was always judged by the standards which he himself had set, as is clear from contemporary reactions to his works. (Strohm 2008, 101)

Another big difference in relation to Italian composers including Bononcini was the amount of time he had at disposal for—and subsequently also invested in—the process of composition, which accounts for the careful planning and the abundant revision. Therefore, Handel was in a unique position to develop in aesthetic terms comparatively independently of institutional or individual patronage: few composers of his age were able to gain that much autonomy, especially in Italy.

Maybe the richness and variety of his duets as compared to the Italian composers examined in this study also stem from these socio-cultural conditions? Not having the according methodological resources nor the space and time to do this, it is at the point of attempting to answer these questions that this study should hand over the baton to others.



## 4. List of Music Examples

1. Gasparini MS, Duetti madrigali, no. 5 (Nice, s'è ver che m'ami), 35'-36', b. 33-40
2. Gasparini MS, Duetti madrigali, no. 11 (Sdegno ed amor, movement II), 79-79', b. 1-8
3. Gasparini MS, Duetti madrigali, no. 8 (A voi, piante innocenti, movement I), 56', b. 24-28
4. Gasparini MS, Duetti madrigali, no. 8 (A voi, piante innocenti, movement III), 60', b. 10-15
5. Gasparini MS, Duetti madrigali, no. 4 (Sento tal fiamma, movement I), 26'-27', b. 1-15
6. Gasparini MS, Duetti madrigali, no. 4 (Sento tal fiamma, movement II), 31-31', b. 26-32
7. Gasparini MS, Astianatte, "Le stelle s'amano / I cieli tuonano" (II. 15 Ermione, Andromaca), 107'-108', b. 25-33
8. Gasparini MS, Astianatte, "Le stelle s'amano / I cieli tuonano" (II. 15 Ermione, Andromaca), 109'-110, b. 49-59
9. Gasparini MS, Eumene, "Se non temi il mio furore / Io non temo il tuo furore" (II. 19 Laodicea, Eumene), 91'-92, b. 11-24
10. Gasparini MS, La fede tradita e vendicata, "Lascia ch'io mora sì / Nò morrai solo" (III. 4 Ernelinda, Vitige), 75'-76, b. 1-12
11. Bononcini MS, La conversione di Maddalena, "Al nume umanato / La fede, la speme" (II. No. 14 Maddalena, Marta), 119-120', b. 1-16
12. Bononcini MS, Cefalo e Procride, "Sì, sì, che la colpa sono" (Scena 7 Cefalo, Procride), 58'-59, b. 1-8
13. Bononcini MS, Cefalo e Procride, "Non vien per nuocer" (Scena ultima Cefalo, Procride), 117-118, b. 1-10
14. Bononcini MS, Turno Aricino, "Che affanno, tiranno alato" (I. 17 Livia, Egeria), 39', b. 14-25
15. Bononcini MS, Mario fuggitivo, "Spiriti dell'Erebo" (III. 8 Giulia, Icilio), p. 83-87, b. 1-16
16. Bononcini MS, Muzio Scevola, "Dov'è il dolor / Fate un effetto" (II. 10 Clelia, Muzio), 80'-81', b. 5-15
17. Bononcini MS, Astianatte, "Dolce conforto dell'alma / Con speranza dell'alma" (III. 6 Andromaca, Pirro), no. 9, p. 2-3, b. 9-20

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no. 5, “Nice, s’è ver che m’ami”, 33v-38v.

no. 8, “A’ voi, piante innocenti”, 55r-62r.

no. 11, “Sento tal fiamma”, 77v-83v.

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The vocal duets of G. F. Handel are distinguished by a greater musical and dramaturgical diversity compared to the duets of his contemporaries, but this diversity has not yet been systematically examined in different contexts. This study investigates them in two genre traditions, that of the chamber duet and that of the so-called “dramatic duet”, a component of genres such as opera, cantata and serenata. It concentrates on London in the period 1706–1724 in order to explore to what extent Handel’s treatment of duets differs from the contributions by his Italian contemporaries, who were either active in London at the time (e. g. G. Bononcini) or whose works were performed parallel to his.



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