

“LA FOLIA” IN LATE EIGHTEENTH- AND
EARLY NINETEENTH-CENTURY VIENNA

Several writers have commented on the fact that the minor-mode variation in the *Andante con moto* of Beethoven’s *Fifth Symphony* (mm. 167–74) shares its harmonic foundation with the first half of the melody known as *Les folies d’Espagne*, or *La folia* (or *folli*) *d’Espagne*.¹ Whether Beethoven expected listeners to recognize the passage as an allusion to *La folia*, and what such an allusion might signify, is the subject of debate. Certainly the passage stands out. Although the dotted rhythm and the rising 5–1–3 melodic contour allow us to recognize it as the beginning of a variation of the movement’s main theme, the new harmonic context (especially the replacement of the theme’s I–IV opening gesture with I–V) and the mechanical repetition of a single rhythmic motive convey a sense of this passage having been inserted into the movement from somewhere else—almost as it were a quotation. By interrupting the variation after only eight measures Beethoven seems to be saying that this was only a false start, a failed experiment, or perhaps even a joke.

Many in Beethoven’s audience knew *La folia*. Viennese music lovers had plenty of opportunity to hear the tune and its distinctive harmonic framework in published and manuscript instrumental music and in opera. From the inventories and catalogues of the Viennese music dealer Johann Traeg we know that the celebrated *Sonatas for Violin and Basso continuo* of Archangelo Corelli’s Opus 5, presumably including the Variations on *La folia* (op. 5, No. 12), were available in Vienna from the mid 1790s.² Traeg pub-

¹ Beethoven’s minor-mode variation and its significance is the subject of a forthcoming article by Stefano Mengozzi, *The ‘Folia’ as Subtext: Temporal and Narrative Contrasts in the ‘Andante con moto’ of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony*, based on a paper given at a meeting of the Midwest Chapter of the American Musicological Society in Indianapolis, 13–14 April 2002. I thank Mengozzi for allowing me to read portions of his forthcoming article. For earlier discussions of Beethoven’s minor-mode variation see Reed J. Hoyt, letter to the editor of *College Music Symposium* XXI (1982); and letters to the editor of *Musical Times*, 1994–95. For a up-to-date and comprehensive compilation of information on *La folia* see the website www.folias.nl. I am grateful to Dexter Edge and Michael Lorenz, who read a draft of this paper, for their corrections and suggestions.

² On Traeg’s important activity as a purveyor of ancient music (including Corelli’s trio and solo sonatas) see Dexter Edge, *Mozart’s Viennese Copyists*. Ph.D. disserta-

lished C.P.E. Bach's keyboard Variations on *La folia* in 1804.³ In Luigi Cherubini's opéra-comique *Hôtellerie portugaise* (Paris 1798), performed seventeen times (under the title *Der portugisische Gasthof*) in the court theaters during 1803 and 1804, the overture's slow introduction immediately establishes the opera's Iberian setting with a chordal progression corresponding to the first half of *La folia* and a long, solemn fugato on a theme derived from the beginning of the *Folia* tune.

This paper briefly considers several other appearances of *La folia* in Vienna between 1780 and 1820, three of which are in works written for performance in Vienna. The only complete sources known to me for two of these works, Conti's duet "*Va pure in malora*" and an anonymous orchestration (which I attribute to Joseph Eybler) of Corelli's variations on *La folia* from Opus 5, are preserved in the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, under the erudite care of the man to whom this article is dedicated.

La folia in opéra-comique

The allusions to *La folia* in Cherubini's *Hôtellerie portugaise* exemplify an association between *La folia* and opéra-comique that goes back to the early history of the genre, when its musical component consisted largely of *timbres*—melodies familiar to the audience, to which the dramatist attached new words. *La folia* was sung in one of the very first opéras-comiques, Alain-René Lesage's *Arlequin roi de Sérendib* (1713); the same author called for it again in *Les Couplets en procès* (1729–30).⁴ When opéra-comique came to Vienna *La folia* came with it. Christoph Gluck's *Le Diable à quatre* (Vienna 1759) uses the tune twice.⁵

Le Diable à quatre represents a stage in the history of opéra-comique when it was moving away from a dependence on *timbres* and toward newly composed scores. But some of the old tunes survived. André Modeste Grétry's *L'amant jaloux* (Versailles 1778) takes place in Spain, and it was probably for local color that the composer used *La folia* in a very brief duet, "*Le mariage est une envie*". The Viennese court theaters' Singspiel troupe

tion, University of Southern California, 2001, pp. 762–86. My thanks to David Black for sending me copies of entries in Traeg's manuscript inventory of 1796 showing that already in the mid 1790s he was dealing in Corelli's chamber music.

³ Mengozzi, *The 'Folia' as Subtext*, citing a review of this edition in *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*.

⁴ Daniel Hertz, *From Garrick to Gluck: Essays on Opera in the Age of Enlightenment*. Hillsdale/NY 2004, pp. 143, 144, 156.

⁵ See Bruce Alan Brown's edition of *Le Diable à quatre* in the Gluck complete works, Kassel 1992, pp. 34, 36. My thanks to Brown for telling me of these and other uses of *La folia* in Viennese opéra-comique.

presented *L'amant jaloux* (under the title *Der eifersüchtige Liebhaber*) nineteen times between 1780 and 1787.⁶

Lopez, a rich merchant, tells his widowed but still very young daughter Léonore that it would be folly to marry again; his advice is immediately repeated by Jacinte, Léonore's *suivante*:

“*Le mariage est une envie
Qu'une fois dans la vie
On peut bien se passer,
Mais ce serait une folie
Que de vouloir recommencer.*”

The word “*folie*” in the text nicely mirrors the music, which consists of a sixteen-measure melody (sung by Lopez) over the *Folia* bass and a repetition of the second half of the melody (sung by Lopez and Jacinte in octaves). Violins, flute, and bassoons two octaves lower accompany the singers with a decorated version of the *Folia* melody. After the duet Jacinte comments sarcastically: “*Voilà une belle pensée, et tout-à-fait neuve.*” The brevity and simplicity of this number, its emphasis on octave textures and its complete absence of development, is very much in keeping with the traditional uses of popular tunes in *opéra-comique*.

Conti's “*Va pure in malora*”: *La folia* in opera buffa

It was again as a duet that *La folia* made a rare appearance in Viennese opera buffa, this time however not only as a melody and a harmonic plan but as the basis for variations. The duet “*Va pure in malora*” brings together two traditions associated with *La folia* – the quotation of it in opera and the variation of it in instrumental music – to produce a piece that is both a set of variations and an operatic quarrel.

Pietro Alessandro Guglielmi's *La pastorella nobile* was first performed in Naples in 1788. Its title character, Eurilla, is a shepherdess with whom a nobleman, Marchese Astolfo, has fallen in love. Astolfo's fiancée Donna Florida comes for a visit; finding herself jilted, she explodes with anger and indignation. The local governor, the bombastic Don Polibio, and his charming but ne'er-do-well son Calloandro (who at one point is forced to impersonate Astolfo) provide plenty of comic relief.

When performed in Vienna in 1790 *La pastorella nobile* was subject to thorough revision, probably under the supervision of Lorenzo da Ponte, one of whose main responsibilities as the Burgtheater's theatrical poet was the

⁶ Franz Hadamowsky, *Die Wiener Hoftheater (Staatstheater) 1776–1966*, Teil 1. Vienna 1966, p. 34.

adaptation of operas brought to Vienna from elsewhere. One purpose of these changes was to increase the importance of the role of Donna Florida, first sung in Vienna by Da Ponte's mistress Adriana Ferrarese, who a few months earlier created the role Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*.⁷

La pastorella nobile reached the stage of the Burgtheater on 14 May 1790. We do not know the complete cast of the Viennese production – a cast that in any case evolved during more than two years of performances in Vienna. But we do know that during 1790 – in addition to Ferrarese in the role of Florida – Francesco Benucci (the first Guilelmo in *Così fan tutte*) sang Polibio and Gasparo Bellentani sang Calloandro.⁸ Vincenzo Calvesi (Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*) also sang in *La pastorella nobile*, probably in the role of Astolfo that he created two years earlier in Naples.⁹

⁷ See John A. Rice, *Emperor and Impresario: Leopold II and the Transformation of Viennese Musical Theater, 1790–1792*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley 1987, pp. 120–31.

A score of *La pastorella nobile* in A–Wn (KT 388) includes a cast list written, in what seems to be a nineteenth-century hand, in red pencil on the title page: “Donna Florida – Villeneuve / Marchese – Calvesi / Eurilla – Gabrieli / Don Polibio – Busani / Calloandro – Bellentani / Don Astiarto – Del Sole.”

“Gabrieli” presumably refers to Ferrarese, and the use of this erroneous appellation is a further indication that the list is not contemporary with the first performances of the opera in Vienna. This list conflicts with other evidence about the Viennese cast of *La pastorella nobile* provided by Artaria prints of keyboard-vocal scores of several numbers from the opera:

“Rondò ah Se un Core all’Infedele con Recitativo Misera me per il Clavicembalo Del Sigr. Weigl Cantato dalla Sigr. Ferarasi nel Opera la Pastorella Nobile Del Sigr. Guglielmi” (*Racolta d’arie* No. 74) [character name: Donna Florida].

“Duetto Va pure in malora per il Clavicembalo del Sigr. Conti Eseguito dall Sigr. Ferarasi ed il Sigr. Benucci nell’Opera la Pastorella Nobile del Sigr. Guglielmi” (*Racolta d’arie* No. 77) [character names: Donna Florida, Don Polibio].

“Aria mezzo mondo ho visitato per il Clavicembalo del Sigr. Cimarosa cantata dal Sigr. Bellentani nell’opera la Pastorella Nobile del Sigr. Guglielmi” (*Racolta d’arie* No. 79) [character name: Calloandro].

These excerpts were published between 20 February 1790 (when the *Wiener Zeitung* announced Artaria’s publication of the duet “Il core vi dono” from *Così fan tutte* [*Racolle d’arie* No. 73]) and 11 December 1790 (when the *Wiener Zeitung* announced the publication of excerpts from Paisiello’s *La molinara* [*Racolta d’arie* Nos. 83–89]). Since it is unlikely that the excerpts from *La pastorella nobile* were published before the opera was performed in Vienna, they probably appeared between June and December 1790. Thus their attribution of the roles of Florida to Ferrarese, Polibio to Benucci, and Calloandro to Bellentani has strong authority.

⁹ That Calvesi sang in *La pastorella nobile* in Vienna we know from a playbill for a performance of Paisiello’s *Il re Teodoro in Venezia* on 19 February 1791 (A–Wth), which contains the following announcement: “Wegen unpäßlichkeit des Hrn. Calvesi kann die bereits angekündigte Oper: *La Pastorella nobile*, heute nicht gegeben werden.”

Act 2, Scene 5, of *La pastorella nobile*, as performed in Naples in 1788, was a very brief conversation (only twelve lines in all) between Donna Florida, her brother Astianatte, and Polibio, in which they comment on their success in making Marchese Astolfo believe (incorrectly) that Eurilla has fallen and hurt herself. Then all three leave the stage.

In Vienna the scene was radically expanded as part of the strategy to increase the importance of Florida's role. Only Astianatte leaves the stage. Florida and Polibio remain, and she blames him for having caused her troubles. Her accusations give rise to a quarrel and a duet in which Florida and Polibio trade insults. This duet, "*Va pure in malora*", is a set of variations on *La Folia*.

The dramatic situation here, with a basso buffo and a noble soprano on stage together, resembles the scene in *Don Giovanni* in which Leporello tells Donna Elvira about his master's "*non picciol libro*". Also reminiscent of that scene, and suggestive of Da Ponte's authorship of this dialogue, is the fact that Polibio twice addresses Florida as "*Madamina*". If the scene reminds us vaguely of *Don Giovanni*, it may have reminded its Viennese audience of *Così fan tutte*, since it brought together again the singers who had recently created the roles of Guilelmo and Fiordiligi, giving them an opportunity denied them in *Così* – to sing a duet.

"*Va pure in malora*" is preserved in at least two sources: a keyboard reduction published in 1790 by Artaria and a manuscript full score from the Wenzel Sukowaty workshop in the Archives of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde (signature VI 553 [Q 2824]).¹⁰ The Artaria print attributes the duet to "*Sigr. Conti*".¹¹ The Sukowaty manuscript contains the attribution "*Del Sigr. Conte*", which has been corrected to "*Conti*", with the following added in darker ink: "*Carlo?*" (in reference to Carlo Conti, 1796–1868). "*Va pure in malora*" has also been attributed to Giacomo Conti (1754–1805), concertmaster in the Burgtheater orchestra during the 1790s, and a member of the Tonkünstler-Sozietät from 1796.¹²

But "*Va pure in malora*" is the work of neither Carlo nor Giacomo Conti. A much earlier musician, Francesco Bartolomeo Conti (1682–1732), who

¹⁰ On the date of the Artaria print see note 8 above. The title page of the manuscript full score is inscribed "*Wienn bei Sukowaty am Petersplatz No. 554 im 3ten Stock.*"

¹¹ For the full text of the Artaria title page, see note 8 above.

¹² C[arl] F[erdinand] Pohl, *Denkschrift aus Anlass des hundertjährigen Bestehens der Tonkünstler-Sozietät*. Vienna 1871, p. 108; Julia Moore, *Beethoven and Musical Economics*. Ph.D dissertation, University of Illinois, 1987, p. 410. I suggested an attribution to Giacomo Conti in Rice, *Emperor and Impresario*, p. 131; Theophil Antonicek, in his article on Giacomo Conti in *The New Grove*, second edition, included "*Va pure in malora*" in the worklist.

served the Habsburg court as theorbist from 1701 and as composer from 1713, used *La folia* to help establish the Spanish setting of *Don Chisciotte in Sierra Morena* (Vienna 1719), a tragicommedia on a libretto by Apostolo Zeno and Pietro Pariati.¹³ At the end of act 2, a quarrel between Sancio and Maritorne, a waitress at the inn where he is staying, reaches its climax in the duet “*Va pure in buon’ora*”. It was this duet that Benucci and Ferrarese brought back to life more than eighty years after its first performance.¹⁴

Whoever revised “*Va pure in buon’ora*” for performance in Guglielmi’s *La pastorella nobile* did more than change the first line. A poet (probably Lorenzo Da Ponte) replaced the first eight lines of text, but left almost entirely intact the delightful series of insults that follow. A musician (probably Joseph Weigl) omitted Conti’s orchestral introduction and added a cadential passage for orchestra at the end of the duet. He also shortened the duet by changing Conti’s da-capo structure (A–B–A) into a two-part form by omitting the repetition of the first part.

Accompanied by strings alone, “*Va pure in malora*” consists of *La folia*, eight variations, and some cadential material. In some variations (for example, Variation 1) a fresh accompanimental figure in the orchestra constitutes the main novelty; in others (Variations 5–8) a single bass-line recurs almost unchanged under evolving vocal parts.

“*Va pure in malora*” differs from a normal set of variations not only in its tonal instability (D minor – A minor – D minor – G minor) but in ending in a key different from the one in which it began. The tonal instability is Conti’s; the tonal asymmetry is the result of the decision to omit the second A-section from Conti’s A–B–A structure. The succession of tempos – *Allegro moderato*, *Presto*, *Largo*, *Presto* – and the strong cadential material at the end of both *Presto* passages encourages us to hear “*Va pure in malora*” in two parts: the *Allegro moderato/Presto* begins and ends in D minor, the *Largo/Presto* is in G minor throughout. In both parts the poetry moves from *senari piani* to *quinari sdruciolli*, and from a slow-paced dialogue in which Florida makes complete statements before Polibio answers to rapid-fire repartee. The text below differs a little from that of Viennese libretto of *La pastorella nobile*; it is based on the musical sources (except for the words in square brackets, which I have taken from the libretto in order to make complete poetic lines).

¹³ A manuscript copy of Conti’s opera, A–Wn, Mus. Hs. 17207, has been published in facsimile (New York 1982).

¹⁴ My thanks to Paul Gabler, who made this identification, for sharing it with me.

Part 1

<i>Florida</i>	Va pure in malora, Vecchiaccio insolente, Non curomi niente Degl'altri o di te.	<i>Allegro moderato</i> , 3/4, mm. 1–32 Theme, D minor, mm. 1–16
<i>Polibio</i>	Voi giudici faccio, Buonissima gente, Quant'essa è imprudente Cogl'altri e con me.	Variation 1, A minor, mm. 17–32
<i>Florida</i>	Odimi, [odimi], Villan più sordido, Villan più ruvido, Villan più critico Villan più rustico, Più detestabile, Più bastonabile, Mai non vi fu.	<i>Presto</i> , 3/4, mm. 33–86 D minor Variation 2 (first half), mm. 33–40
<i>Polibio</i>	Sentimi, [sentimi], Più falsa femmina Più asututa femmina Più doppia femmina, Più arditata femmina, Più insoportabile Più staffilabile Mai non vi fu.	Variation 2 (second half), mm. 41–51

Variation 3: Florida and Polibio together, singing the same words as Variation 2, mm. 52–67

Codetta: Florida and Polibio together, mm. 67–79

Orchestral postlude, mm. 79–86

Part 2

<i>Florida</i>	Mostrar ben potresti Col sesso gentile Umor più civile E men di livor	<i>Largo</i> , 3/4, G minor, mm. 87–102 Variation 4 (first half), mm. 87–94
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<i>Polibio</i>	Capir ben dovresti Che donna incivile Non merta altro stile Da un uomo d'onor.	Variation 4 (second half), mm. 95–102
<i>Florida</i>	Seguita, seguita, Balordo bufalo, Villan ridicolo, Vivo sproposito, La vera immagine Della goffagine Per me sei tu.	<i>Presto</i> , 2/4, G minor, mm. 103–185 Variation 5, mm. 103–118
<i>Polibio</i>	Termina, termina, Razza di zingari, Schiuma di diavoli, Lingua di vipera, Donzella equivoca, La vera immagine Di sfacciataggine Per me sei tu.	Variation 6, mm. 119–134

Variation 7: Florida and Polibio together, singing same text as Variation 6, mm. 135–150

Variation 8: Florida and Polibio together, singing last 3 lines of text, mm. 151–166

Coda: Florida and Polibio, singing last line of text, mm. 166–180

Orchestral postlude, mm. 180–185

Although *La pastorella nobile* was one of the operas most frequently performed in Vienna during the early 1790s, “*Va pure in malora*” did not apparently survive the entire run. With the departure from Vienna of Da Ponte and Ferrarese in early 1791, a new prima donna arrived at Vienna. Irene Tomeoni Dutillieu had created the role of Eurilla in Naples in 1788, and in Vienna she restored the primacy the title role vis-à-vis that of Donna Florida. “*Va pure in malora*” probably fell victim to Tomeoni’s triumph as Eurilla. At the end of one copy of the Viennese libretto that includes “*Va pure in malora*” a printed note informs us that, among other changes made to the opera, the duet had been replaced with a big aria for Polibio, “*La sposina*

s'attendeva”.¹⁵ The manuscript full score of *La pastorella nobile* used in the court theaters during rehearsals and performances (A–Wn, KT 388) does not include “*Va pure in malora*”.

Eybler's orchestration of Corelli's Variations from Opus 5

Empress Marie Therese, second wife of Emperor Franz II (I) and one of Vienna's leading patrons of music at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, organized and participated in many private concerts at court.¹⁶ The performing materials used in these concerts came largely from her own enormous music library, most of which survives in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek and the archive of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde. Although most of the concerts whose contents she recorded in the musical diary that she kept during the years 1801–1803 were dominated by excerpts from Italian operas, she devoted several concerts (especially during Lent) to sacred music and instrumental music. Two Viennese composers who performed frequently with the empress, Paul Wranitzky and Joseph Eybler, wrote much of her instrumental repertory.

On 18 July 1802 Marie Therese took part in a concert that, quite unusually, included music of all three categories. After operatic ensembles by Tarchi and Mayr, the concert continued with Michael Haydn's “*Dixit Dominus*”, a sonata for orchestra that Albrechtsberger had written especially for the empress, a “*Laudate pueri*” and a secular chorus by Eybler, and, finally, “*Die Follia di Spagna mit allen Instrumenten von Eybler*”.¹⁷

Eybler is not known to have written orchestral variations on *La folia*. Hildegard Herrmann's thematic catalogue of Eybler's works mentions no such composition.¹⁸ But two manuscript inventories that document the dispersal of Marie Therese's library show that among the items that ended up in the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde was *Follia con Variazioni* by Corelli.¹⁹ That work is probably the arrangement for full orchestra of Corelli's variations on *La folia* preserved in a set of manuscript parts in the Gesellschaft der Musik-

¹⁵ *La pastorella nobile*, dramma giocoso da rappresentarsi nel Real Teatro di Corte l'anno 1790, Vienna, Presso la Società Tipografica, n.d., copy in the Städt. Reiss-Museum, Mannheim.

¹⁶ On Empress Marie Therese's musical activities and library see John A. Rice, *Empress Marie Therese and Music at the Viennese Court, 1792–1807*. Cambridge 2003.

¹⁷ For the full entry from Marie Therese's diary see Rice, *Empress Marie Therese*, p. 302.

¹⁸ Hildegard Herrmann, *Thematisches Verzeichnis der Werke von Joseph Eybler*. Munich 1976.

¹⁹ Rice, *Empress Marie Therese*, pp. 32, 302.

freunde under the signature XIII 29392. The title page reads as follows:

“Follia di Correlli / a / Due Violini / Due Viole / con Basso / Due Flautti / Due Oboi / Due Clarinetti / Due Fagotti / Due Corni / Due Clarini / Tympani / con Organo”

The arrangement is anonymous. But it is almost certainly the work that Marie Therese performed in her concert of 18 July 1802. Since she was in a good position to know who created the arrangement, we can with some confidence attribute to Eybler the work preserved in the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde.

One of the odd aspects of Eybler’s orchestration is the organ part, which suggests the possibility that he conceived his arrangement for performance in church. The organ part consists mostly of a figured bass. Eybler focussed listeners’ attention on the organ by saving its appearance as solo instrument – a florid run of sixteenth-note arpeggiation, accompanied by pizzicato bass – until the second-to-last variation.

The organ solo constitutes the culmination of a long series of solos through which Eybler demonstrated the sonorities of almost every instrument in his orchestra, individually or in pairs. Thus in Variation 3 he arranged Corelli’s dialogue between violin and bass as a dialogue for two flutes. Variation 6 became a solo for oboe, Variation 7 a solo for bassoon, and Variation 15 a solo for horn.

The lyrical character of Corelli’s Variation 13, in 12/8 meter, inspired Eybler to make it a cello solo, with the rest of the orchestra silent save for pizzicato bass. This is the first of three solos for strings, the others being for violin (Variation 18) and viola (Variation 20, the remarkable variation in which Corelli suddenly broke away from the theme’s tonal plan and 8+8 measure structure and replaced it with a binary structure with repeats, the first half of which ends in the relative major).

By making his arrangement largely a series of solos, Eybler made sure that his use of full orchestra in Corelli’s final variation, and in the short c-detta that follows, would strongly reinforce the climactic effect that Corelli intended to convey in music that represents the end not only of this set of variations but of Opus 5 as a whole.

The Power of Music: Salieri’s *Venticinque Variazioni
sull’aria detta La Follia di Spagna*

The autograph manuscript of Salieri’s orchestral variations on *La folia*, dated December 1815, originally carried the title *Ventisei Variazioni sull’*

aria detta La Follia di Spagna.²⁰ The manuscript contains twenty-six variations, but Salieri cancelled the twenty-first variation (an *Allegretto* with solos for bassoon and flute) and changed the title to take account of the omission, crossing out “*sei*” and writing another number, presumably “*cinque*” above it. A later trimming of the page cut off the new number. Salieri’s early biographer Ignaz von Mosel miscounted the variations, describing the work as *Vier und zwanzig Variationen für das Orchester, über das Thema, La folia di Spagna genannt*.²¹ This erroneous title still appears in some recent books on Salieri, while in at least two recordings the cancelled variation is played, resulting in a total of twenty-six variations.²²

The first known performance of Salieri’s variations was in Tonkünstler-Sozietät concerts on 22 and 23 December 1818. According to C. F. Pohl, the concerts included „*Concertante Variationen mit ganzem Orchester über ein span. Thema, Violin und Harfe vorgetragen von Wranitzky jun. und Katschirek, schließend mit einem Vocal-Canon sammt Chor ‚Das Lob der Musik‘, comp. von Salieri*“.²³

Thus Salieri’s variations, although in the autograph manuscript and a modern edition they appear to constitute an independent instrumental work, were performed in 1818 as part of an instrumental-vocal work on a scale somewhat similar to that of Beethoven’s *Choral Fantasy*. That this composite work ended with a chorus in praise of music suggests the possibility that Salieri, in writing the variations three years earlier, had originally intended them for the Tonkünstler-Sozietät concerts on 22 and 23 December 1815. They presented Handel’s *Alexander’s Feast*, whose subtitle is *The Power of Music*.

Mosel referred to a chorus in praise of music that was almost certainly the one performed by the Tonkünstler-Sozietät in 1818. Salieri wrote it earlier, and for a different occasion: a concert given in 1817 by the students of the conservatory associated with the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde:

„*Als diese vier und zwanzig Zöglinge in dem letzten Concerte, welches die genannte Gesellschaft in jenem Jahre [1817] gab, zum ersten Male öffentlich*

²⁰ A–Wn, S.m. 4463; modern edition, ed. Pietro Spada, Rome 1978.

²¹ Ignaz von Mosel, *Ueber das Leben und die Werke des Anton Salieri*. Vienna 1827, p. 171.

²² London Symphony Orchestra, cond. Zoltán Peskó, CBS Masterworks LP 37229; Philharmonia Orchestra, cond. Pietro Spada, ASV CD DCA 955.

²³ Pohl, *Denkschrift*, p. 70. Anton Wranitzky the younger, possibly a son of the violinist and composer of the same name who served Prince Lobkowitz, was born in 1795 or 1796; the harpist Katschirek was either Karl or Joseph Katschirek, born in Preßburg in 1781 or 1782 (Gustav Gugitz, *Auszüge aus den Conskriptionsbögen* [typescript, Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, ca. 1952]; my thanks to Theodore Albrecht for this information).

*auftraten, componirte ihnen Salieri einen dreistimmigen Chor, der einen Dank an das Publikum, für die, der aufkeimenden Anstalt bis dahin bezeugte Theilnahme enthielt, und einen größern Chor für die gesammte Gesellschaft der Wiener-Musikfreunde zum Lobe der Tonkunst. Beide Chöre wurden mit allgemeinem Beifalle ausgeführt.*²⁴

Although Salieri's chorus "*Das Lob der Musik*" may no longer exist, its title offers us a clue to the meaning of the orchestral variations that preceded it in the Tonkünstler-Sozietät concerts. These variations praise music by demonstrating its rhythmic, timbral, and dynamic variety, and its ability to allude to (and perhaps even to arouse) a wide variety of emotional states.

In order to emphasize this variety as fully as possible, Salieri called for an orchestra more colorful, in all probability, than any of those for which he had previously written. In addition to the regular string ensemble, he orchestrated the variations for solo violin, harp, pairs of oboes, flutes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, trumpets, three trombones, timpani, and bass drum ("*gran tamburo*").

Salieri put these instruments together in various combinations, and in combinations of various dynamic levels and rhythmic motives, to produce variations that resemble miniature character pieces. Variation 10, in which the three trombones, playing a series of quiet, ominous chords, convey an atmosphere of holy awe, may have reminded Viennese listeners of the oracle in Gluck's *Alceste* or the Commendatore in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. But music can also inspire energetic joy – as in Variation 7, a rhythmically incisive Spanish dance (the violins, playing "*con la costa dell'arco*", imitate guitars). Variation 21, an *Andante pastorale* in 6/8 meter with a dialogue between oboe and clarinet, evokes peaceful relaxation, while the scherzo-like Variation 17, where *gruppetti* are tossed quickly from one wind instrument to another, is an expression of pure frivolity.

The "Theaterzettel" documenting the Tonkünstler-Societät concerts in December 1818 mentioned only two soloists, a violinist and a harpist, in connection with Salieri's variations. It thus called attention to the special importance of solo violin and harp in a work that displays the sounds, mostly in combination, of many instruments. The first of the instrumental protagonists to emerge is the harp, which plays a starring role in Variation 4. Its improvisatory arpeggiation, interrupted by the full orchestra's loud blasts, "*irresistably evokes the entrance of Orpheus in the underworld*".²⁵ What better way to demonstrate the power of music than to allude to a musician who could tame the Furies?

²⁴ Mosel, *Salieri*, p. 192.

²⁵ Vittorio Della Croce and Francesco Blanchetti, *Il caso Salieri*. Turin 1994, p. 571.