Just for the Ladies? Compilation, Knowledge Practice

and Pasticcio in England around 1720

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ABSTRACT

In 1719, the Royal Academy of Music was founded with the purpose of setting Italian opera in England on solid ground. Previously, at least two thirds of the Italian operas staged in London had been pasticci. Much of the criticism of the Italian opera before 1719 concerned stylistic fickleness. This is just one reason why it seems likely that the declining number of pasticci after 1719 can be interpreted as an effect of the move against stylistic compilations in music. In fact, in the first period of the Academy's opera management (from 1720 to 1728) the share of pasticci fell to approximately 10 percent or even less – depending on where the dividing line is placed at a time before the English definition of the operatic pasticcio was established. My paper focuses on some experiments between 'opera' and 'pasticcio', staged in the Royal Academy's first period (particularly *Muzio Scevola*), presented against the backdrop of the audience's more general cultural knowledge practices and the works' appeal to female members of the audience.

Keywords: *Muzio Scevola*, education, pasticcio, Paolo Rolli, Margherita Durastanti

In 1719, the Royal Academy of Music was founded with the purpose of setting Italian opera in England on solid ground. Previously, at least two thirds of the Italian operas staged in London had been pasticci.[1] In the first period of the Academy's opera management (from 1720 to 1728), the share of pasticci fell to approximately 10 percent or even less – depending on where the dividing line is placed at a time before the English definition of the operatic pasticcio was established.[2] During this period, it seems that special care was taken to ensure that only a small number of composers (one or two) contributed to any given opera premiered in London. The Academy's rather rigid avoidance of pasticci in its first period becomes even more noteworthy if we compare it to its second period (1729–1734), when it returned to the earlier practice of staging a large number of pasticci. The first period can be seen as a balancing act between efforts to distinguish Italian opera as an outstanding musical project in a multi-faceted entertainment market and the necessity to meet the audience's expectations. Therefore, a focus on the rare operatic pasticci from this period may help evaluate the various tendencies within the emerging opera criticism. This article analyses selected differences between 'opera' and 'pasticcio' as staged during the Academy's first period, presented against the backdrop of the audiences' more general cultural knowledge practices. More specifically, since arguably the audiences interested in such music were primarily female,[3] suggestions have been made here as to how the experiment of *Muzio Scevola* might be understood more thoroughly when viewed through the lens of female knowledge preferences.

1) COMPILATION IN KNOWLEDGE PRACTICE – THE ENJOYMENT OF VARIETY

Stage entertainments with music were part of the social life of the *beau monde*, that is, the rich few percent of the population who could afford them.[4] They would expect to be presented with – and discuss – curiosities which their education would have enabled them to understand and judge, particularly since no fixed forms of art-specific criticism had yet been established. However, this education, even that of the gentlefolk, could be defined as a polite compilation. The topics which needed to be artfully incorporated into this entertainment in order to be recognised and appreciated were therefore quite

1 L. Lindgren lists 19 of 30 operas between 1705 and 1717 as operatic pasticci, 'Critiques of Opera in London, 1705–1719', in A. Colzani (ed.), *Il melodramma italiano in Italia e in Germania nell'età barocca*, Como, AMIS, 1995, pp. 155, 159–163. Counting as single-author operas only those operas which were declared to be so by the press etc., R. Strohm recently counted 24 pasticci and only six or seven newly-composed single-composer operas, 'Italian Pasticcio Opera, 1700–1750', in G. zur Nieden und B. Over (eds), *Operatic Pasticcios in 18th-Century Europe. Contexts, Materials and Aesthetics*, Bielefeld, transcript, 2021, p. 56.

2 On the history of the term (operatic) 'pasticcio' in England cf. C. Price, 'Pasticcio', *Oxford Music Online*, 2001, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.21051 (accessed 9 July 2021).

3 On the significance of women as an element of the entertainment audiences – and the corresponding misogynist reactions in print – see e.g. J. Brewer, '"The most polite age and the most vicious." Attitudes towards Culture as a Commodity, 1660–1800', in A. Bermingham and J. Brewer (eds), *The Consumption of Culture 1600–1800. Image, Object, Text*, London, Routledge, 1995, pp. 384–388, and J. Brewer, 'Sites and Sounds: The Cultural Topography of English Music, 1670–1750', in I. Knoth (ed.), *Music and the Arts in England, c. 1670–1750*, Dresden, musiconn, 2020, pp. 20–23.

4 On the audience(s) in London's 'public' music life in the first half of the eighteenth century, cf. esp. R.D. Hume, 'The Economics of Culture in London, 1660–1740', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol. 69, no. 4, 2006, and W. Weber, 'Did People Listen in the 18th Century?', *Early Music*, vol. 25, no. 4, 1997.

diverse. They included scientific as well as artistic ideas and other cultural phenomena which might be deemed interesting, high-profile or at least witty within the complex entertainment forms such as musical theatre. Neither these topics nor the manner in which they were included could easily be reduced to any specific norm or formula for success.

Refined fields of interest found their reflection in the then new media: journals and so-called moral weeklies. They tackled a wide range of topics and printed 'reader contributions' in order to present different opinions on the same subject, including arts. Importantly, these publications occasionally hinted at certain differences between male and female preferences with regard to variety and compilation in knowledge practice. On a very broad level, journals which predominantly addressed a female audience usually involved a concept of the French *l'honnête-femme* ideal. This ideal centred around the broad education reflected in a woman's ability to converse pleasantly on any topic just as well as the French *gentilhomme*. However, English journals of male authorship often mentioned the French *gentilhomme* disparagingly; his education was viewed as broad but superficial. The English gentleman, in turn, was ridiculed by journals such as *The Female Tatler* in their depiction of him as blind towards anything but his own individual field of interest. The following remarks by the fictitious author Mrs Crackenthorpe illustrate this kind of portrayal:

> *Foreigners* of Rank attain a mighty Character in mixing their Studies, talk genteely to every *Art* and *Science*, without being particularly fond of any; but our Nation, as it is divided into Parties, and every one violent in his own Opinion, so in point of Breeding, we give a strenuous Application to a particular Study, regardless of every thing else.[5]

Mrs Crackenthorpe uses political imagery to decry one-sided education that leads to one-sided judgements. This would inevitably be revealed in conversation, including conversation about the arts and sciences. She goes on to describe how an English music lover would make his general views and actions completely dependent on those of the musician, the poetry lover on the poet etc.[6] Critical remarks like this imply a broad interest in variety with regard to education – and by implication also entertainment – on women's side and a narrower one on men's. Of course, generalisations like this are problematic. For example, a simultaneous debate on the figure of the 'disinterested' (male) connoisseur – a perfect contrary to Mrs. Crackenthorpe's allegations – was fuelled by Shaftesbury's writings. Moreover, the tone of Mrs. Crackenthorpe's criticism, like those of many others at the time, is satirical. However, it does show that the boundaries of balanced knowledge application were an issue – and there are curious if confusing parallels to the refined entertainment sector with regard to the effusive demand for variety on the one hand and endeavours to regulate elitist entertainment and thereby diminishing variety on the other.

2) COMPILATION IN ENTERTAINMENT PRACTICE – ARTISTIC CALLS FOR UNITY

With regard to musical theatre, the mixture of, or preference for, particular artistic traditions could vary. The most basic categories are the three levels of text, music and performance (including the ways these three were combined). In the context of efforts to distinguish opera from other musical entertainment, English debates at that time focused on the question of whether these layers could be conceived as stylistically coherent. Such efforts at distinction are particularly relevant because, at the beginning of the eighteenth century prior to the introduction of all-sung Italian opera as a regular form of evening entertainment in London, the English stage had incorporated more diegetic as well as extra-diegetic types of music and dance into the main theatre plot than in other European stages in that period.[7] On the one hand, this may have had a detrimental effect on the dramatic coherence and may have included a seemingly arbitrary juxtaposition of different musical genres and composers within the same play. On the other hand, it provided a wealth and variety of entertainment for the pleasure of as many audience members as possible at any given moment, heightened by frequent possibilities of mental association with other artistic or educational contexts, from which the given tune was already familiar.[8] This idea could also

5 *The Female Tatler*, no. 3, 11-13 July 1709 (italics in the quotation – as in the original article).

6 *The Female Tatler*.

7 Cf. C. Price, *Music in the Restoration Theatre*, London, UMI Research Press, 1979 and K. Lowerre, *Music and Musicians on the London Stage, 1695–1705*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2009, pp. 17–119.

8 A. DeSimone bases her recent monograph on the assumption that a certain craze for 'musical miscellany' was at the heart

explain the fascination with the operatic pasticcio, which would ideally combine the 'best' pre-composed musical material by several masters. Either way, its effect on the audiences of the day – positive or otherwise – rested to a significant degree on its performers.

When Italian opera was introduced alongside efforts to separate musical from non-musical theatre,[9] printed commentaries (written predominantly by playwrights) started to focus on questions of stylistic coherence, of either the text, the music, or between text and music.[10] Some of these comments resemble evaluations of different forms of compilation in pasticci. Different variants of pasticci had already been established in Italy for different reasons.[11] In England, it was largely the lack of resident Italian opera composers that made operatic pasticci necessary if Italian opera was called for. Expressed simply, two pasticcio variants existed in practice, according to the way they were communicated to the audience in operatic libretti, scores, and pamphlets.[12] In the first variant, an impresario compiled arias from a number of different Italian operas and had a local composer modify them so as to suit an adapted libretto to which recitatives were then added. This was the case with John Jacob Heidegger's *Thomyris* (1707) and *Clotilda* (1709), for example. The second variant consisted of a single pre-existent Italian opera in which the recitatives and non-fitting arias were replaced with material that had been specially written by a local composer. This way, the process of musical composition was largely taken care of by two composers. Examples are Nicola Haym's adaptations of Giovanni Bononcini's *Camilla* and Antonio Scarlatti's *Pyrrhus and Demetrius*.[13] Based on the number of performances, the second variant generally fared better with audiences.[14] It also fared better with the anonymous critic, most likely a musician, who wrote the *Critical Discourse upon Opera's in England* (1709).[15] In his opinion '[n]o Opera's […] ought to be receiv'd but such as are intire, and of one Author, or at least prepar'd by a Person that is capable of uniting different Styles so artfully as to make 'em pass for one.'[16] This attitude was to prove broadly in line with the Academy's first period policies. For this reason, its use of the term 'style' might prove significant. However, the meaning of 'style' in the *Critical Discourse* is somewhat ambiguous. It does not necessarily refer to an individual composer's style but is instead employed to focus on expressive coherence within the given opera. While this can be interpreted as foreshadowing one aspect of nineteenth-century music, it might also refer to the specific act of staging, which was determined by local conditions. The need to adapt pre-composed material for a cast of singers different from the 'original' is not questioned (even if the author wishes for more encouragement being given to local composers). Nonetheless, what the *Critical Discourse* certainly does imply is that too many cooks spoil the broth.[17]

of any musical entertainment in England in the first half of the eighteenth century as part of English cultural identity, *The Power of Pastiche. Musical Miscellany and the Cultural Identity in Early Eighteenth-Century England*, Oxford, Clemson University Press, 2021.

9 Cf. Price, *Music*, pp. 111–134.

10 Debates on how to combine English poetry with Italian music continued to dominate well into the 1730s and have been thoroughly studied by numerous scholars. Cf. e.g. H. Knif, *Gentlemen and Spectators. Studies in Journals, Opera and the Social Scene in Late Stuart London*, Helsinki, Finnish Historical Society, 1995 and S. Aspden, 'Ballads and Britons. Studies in Journals, Opera and the Social Scene in Late Stuart London', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, vol. 122, 1997.

11 On the different reasons for – and practices of – staging pasticci in European theatres cf. e.g. the many contributions to the volume: G. zur Nieden and B. Over (eds), *Operatic Pasticcios in 18th-Century Europe. Contexts, Materials and Aesthetics*, Bielefeld, transcript, 2021.

12 Since this article is concerned with historic audiences' judgements and convictions, period information provided in printed libretti, scores, other print media, and conversations – as far as we are able to prove its authenticity – is the basis for this analysis. It is for this reason that my article focuses on period sources, whereas philologically more complex analyses of the operas in question will be referred to in the footnotes.

13 Cf. Lindgren, *Critiques of Opera*, pp. 159–163. Alison DeSimone updates Lindgren's categories in DeSimone, *Power of Pastiche*, pp. 61–63, and thereby also corrects some erroneous information transmitted to the audiences of the day. For example, Haym's adaptation of *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* is now known also to include music by Bononcini, though this fact was not 'officially' communicated at the time.

14 One of the exceptions was *Thomyris*, which was revived for many seasons to follow.

15 R. Fiske and R.G. King suggest that J.E. Galliard was the author, cf. 'Galliard, John Ernest', *Oxford Music Online*, 2001, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.10555 (accessed 9 July 2021).

16 In F. Raguenet, *A Comparison between the French and Italian Musick and Opera's*, London, W. Lewis, 1709, p. 84.

17 Raguenet, *A Comparison*, pp. 81–86.

3) THE ACADEMY OPERAS 1720–1728: UNITY IN DIVERSITY?

The Royal Academy of Music was a new opera enterprise organised as a stock company with a board of 15 to 20 directors entrusted with all the major decision-making. Its manager Heidegger was one of them and its musical director George Frideric Handel must have played a leading role in the Academy's decisions.[18] However, according to the charter, there were also regular board meetings of all the directors to decide on issues such as programming.[19] The choice of topics – mostly historical – seems to have been motivated by a classicist ideal, as several scholars have argued.[20] Such an ideal might imply a call for stylistic 'purity', which could easily be employed as an argument for a sole author to provide the musical component of an opera, as the author of the *Critical Discourse* demanded. Of the 34 operas staged in the course of the Academy's first period (from 1720 to 1728), 27 were newly composed and three (*Astarto*, *Crispo*, and *Erminia*) were adaptations of works by Bononcini, who had been appointed as one of the resident composers by that time and he personally took care of adapting them for London. Only two (*Narciso* and *Arsace*) were pasticci, representing the second pasticcio variant as described above. In the case of *Arsace*, a letter from Paolo Rolli to Giuseppe Riva strongly suggests that the new primo uomo Senesino used his influence to keep Heidegger from assembling various composers' arias and instead had Filippo Amadei adjust Giuseppe Maria Orlandini's score for the London cast, adding only a small number of Amadei's own freshly composed arias.[21]

Elpidia and *Elisa* are the two remaining operas commonly listed as pasticci, with a greater pre-composed variety than the second variant described above. However, even in these cases the Academy's directors may have ordered operatic works in which no more than two composers *should* have taken care of the music. *Elpidia*, if the libretto print is to be believed,[22] incorporated music by Leonardo Vinci and Giuseppe Orlandini, and it was long believed to be the first pasticcio arranged by Handel for the Academy.[23] However, John Roberts has recently argued that it was not Handel but the main contributor Vinci who had arranged it, being familiar with the London cast.[24] Roberts also claims that *Elisa* was compiled solely by its main contributor, Nicola Porpora, mostly out of his own operas. Moreover, letters indicate that Porpora may have been commissioned to compose a new opera and the Academy may not have known it had been presented with a pasticcio instead.[25] If Roberts is right, this would mean that, during the Academy's entire first period, the Academicians adhered even more rigidly than previously suspected to the principle of keeping the operas' musical compilation to a minimum. The extent to which classicist ideals played a role in this particular decision, as well as the extent to which the directors were influenced by musicians who either shared or employed such convictions to their own advantage, is almost impossible to assess in detail. However, there is (at least) one exception from the Academy's first period: *Muzio Scevola*.

18 Heidegger was not re-elected in the Academy's second season but remained the manager of the opera house, cf. E. Gibson, *The Royal Academy of Music, 1719–1728. The Institution and Its Directors*, New York, Garland, 1989, p. 27.

19 Cf. J. Milhous and R.D. Hume, 'The Charter for the Royal Academy of Music', *Music & Letters*, vol. 67, no. 1. On the directors, cf. Gibson, *Royal Academy of Music*, pp. 21–107. On the directors' authority over the musicians, cf. R. Strohm, 'Wer entscheidet? Möglichkeiten der Zusammenarbeit an Pasticcio-Opern', in T. Seedorf and D. Brandenburg (eds), *'Per ben vestir la virtuosa'. Die Oper des 18. und frühen 19. Jahrhunderts im Spannungsfeld zwischen Komponisten und Sängern*, Schliengen, Ed. Argus, 2011, pp. 77–79.

20 Cf. e.g. Gibson, and H.D. Clausen, 'Der Einfluß der Komponisten auf die Librettowahl der Royal Academy of Music (1720–1729)', in H.J. Marx (ed.), *Zur Dramaturgie der Barockoper*, Laaber, Laaber, 1994.

21 Cf. M. Bucciarelli, '"Farò il possibile per vincer l'animo di M.r Handel": Senesino's Arrival in London and *Arsace*'s Rhetoric of Passions', *Eighteenth Century Music*, vol. 14, no. 1, 2017, pp. 60–62, 86–87.

22 It should be noted that such explicit presentation of the composers' names was quite rare. The fact that the work is credited with two contributing authors (though we know today that the music was sourced from at least three composers in its first London staging) proves even more interesting thereby since it implies that specifying two composers may have been more agreeable to audiences than giving the correct number of three (or more).

23 R. Strohm, 'Händels Pasticci', in A. Jacobshagen and P. Mücke (eds), *Das Händel-Handbuch. Vol. 2,2: Händels Opern*, Laaber, Laaber, 2009, pp. 359–364, which is an updated version (including a pre-print discussion of Robert's findings, see next footnote) of R. Strohm, 'Händels Pasticci', in F. Lippmann (ed.), *Studien zur Italienisch-Deutschen Musikgeschichte IX*, Cologne, Arno Volk, 1974, pp. 212–215.

24 J. Roberts, 'Vinci, Porpora and the Royal Academy of Music', *Il Saggiatore musicale*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2016.

25 Roberts, 'Vinci', pp. 258–265.

4) THE MUZIO SCEVOLA EXPERIMENT

Muzio Scevola is still often referred to as a pasticcio even after it had been re-categorised by scholars as a rare exception from the standard pasticcio form.[26] Three composers each composed one act (1: Amadei, 2: Bononcini, 3: Handel). Together with *Ciro*, *Muzio Scevola* ended the 1720/1721 season. These two operas also started the Academy's fourth season together. This may not be a coincidence, given that their concepts were possibly influenced by a similar and specific combination of cultural influences (see below).[27] Among others, they stretch the Academy's rather conservative scheme (at least in *Muzio Scevola*'s case) of avoiding compositional compilation in music.[28] This seems particularly noteworthy since *Muzio Scevola* can be interpreted as a second attempt at a 'foundation opera' for the Academy.[29]

The librettist Paolo Rolli's part is particularly enlightening. Rolli had a reputation of being a proud librettist who took the dramatic component of the Italian *dramma per musica* more seriously than his colleagues.[30] His contributions to these two operas reveal his efforts to address and please the female members of the audience by incorporating such elements into the historical plots of *Muzio Scevola* and *Ciro* that arguably mark a French influence quite different in character from the influences of the French tragedy later found in *Tamerlano*, *Rodelinda*, and *Astianatte*.[31] *Muzio Scevola* is based on a legend from Roman history and *Ciro* on a legend from Persian history. Both had their own tradition on the Italian opera stage thanks to Nicolò Minato's libretti and their reception. However, what has largely been overlooked is that they only became operatic subjects after these legends were 'rediscovered' by Madeleine de Scudéry in her epic *romans-à-clef*: *Clélie* (10 vols., 1654–1661) and *Artamène ou Le Grand Cyrus* (10 vols., 1648–1653). Both ten-volume novels quickly became and remained famous in Europe. They were translated into German as well as English. Even though Scudéry originally published them under her brother's name, her identity was revealed after her success. Accordingly, the female authorship of these literary monuments must have been a well-known fact among the English nobility and gentry. The decision to present them together in two seasons may have been a clear enough reference to French literature of female authorship.

There are further indications that the drama was specifically tailored to suit the female members of the audience. The dramatic design of *Muzio Scevola* is particularly original. The female protagonist Clelia was portrayed as an Amazon, more independent in her actions than any of her earlier opera versions and any other Amazon previously presented on the English theatre stage

26 Cf., for example, its announcement as a pasticcio at the Händel-Festspiele in Halle, 2018 (https://www.barock-konzerte.de/pages/24_0_0_45.html, accessed 9 July 2021) vs. Price's discussion, *Pasticcio*.

27 At the same time, the prima-donna's role in both cases seems to have been specifically designed for Margherita Durastanti, who was absent from London during the third season.

28 With regard to *Ciro*, missing sources render such attributions more difficult. In the fourth volume of his *General History*, Charles Burney claims Ariosti was the sole author immediately after crediting him with one of *Muzio Scevola*'s acts (cf. Ch. Burney, A General History of Music, vol. 4, London, Robsen et al., 1776, pp. 274–280). This has long since been discredited. Letters as well as score manuscripts have emerged which name Bononcini as *Ciro*'s only composer, which was for decades the commonly held belief in musicology. Cf. R. Strohm, *Italienische Opernarien des frühen Settecento (1720–1730)*, Cologne, Arno Volk, 1976, vol. 2, p. 153. Based on text incipit listings in RISM, the arias in the two known manuscript aria collections ascribed to Bononcini make up 19 out of the 33 arias which the libretto suggests, including the two arias from Walsh's favourite song collection which are actually from *Ciro* (five are from other operas, among them three from *Crispo*. This raises the question of how much impasticciamento the opera contained when it was revived in the 1722/1723 season). Cf. US-LAur 170/391 and US-SFsc M2.1 .M54, for the latter see http://digital-collections.library.sfsu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p16737coll4/id/1431, accessed 9 July 2021. This leaves us with 14 arias which may have come from another contributor. In 2016, Alexandra Nigito claimed Ariosti to have been Bononcini's co-composer, cf. A. Nigito, 'Ariosti, Attilio. Werke', *MGG online*, https://www.mgg/stable/395580 (accessed 9 July 2021). The 19 Bononcini arias are drawn from all three acts of the opera. If Ariosti – who had already worked with Bononcini in Berlin – contributed the remaining 14 arias, *Ciro* might have been another experiment in compilation, this time drawing on different composers' freshly written contributions throughout the entire opera. However, due to missing sources, this remains open to conjecture and, based on the general handling of operas in the Academy's first period, seems rather unlikely.

29 Cf. I. Knoth, 'Eine Kriegerin für die Londoner Opernbühne: Margherita Durastanti als Clelia in *Muzio Scevola*', *Händel-Jahrbuch*, vol. 66, 2020, pp. 198–203.

30 However, later in the Academy's first period Rolli adapted his individual views to the directors' wishes more readily than at this early stage. Clausen, *Einfluß der Komponisten*, pp. 64–67.

31 As L. Lindgren and C. Caruso pointed out, Rolli may have been introduced to French literature by his father, an architect from Burgundy, and continued experiments with French literature well into the 1740s, 'Rolli, Paolo Antonio', *Oxford Music Online*, 2001, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.46200 (accessed 9 July 2021).

or in literature.[32] At the same time, Rolli made equally sure to appeal to the English gentleman. Instead of adapting one of the Italian libretto versions of this story by Minato, Silvio Stampiglia or Antonio Piovene, he developed a new version based on Livy's *Roman History*, a classic of the English gentleman's education.[33] Rolli designed the plot with each act containing one central heroic action by one of the three protagonists (Orazio, Muzio, or Clelia). Clelia's heroic escape from imprisonment and forced marriage to Porsenna is the turning point of the final act.

Thanks to this structure, it can be argued that each act of *Muzio Scevola* forms an independent dramatic unit, which favours music-compositional coherence within the three separate dramatic arcs of suspense. According to comments made at the time, the composers' musical contributions were evaluated differently by some members of the audience, revealing a strong bias on the part of individual listeners.[34] In this sense, the compilation did not gel as one 'style'. With regard to the performative effect, however, the three acts contributed different aspects to the overall unity. Care was taken not to reiterate the expression of affect in the prima-donna's role from one act to another, but to present her differently in each act (which might also explain why one of Bononcini's arias was left out). These expressive differences – 'ordered versatility' – can also be viewed as a semantically artful compilation if compared with the Academy's opera programming on a grander scale. The prima donna Durastanti's role was designed to enable her to present herself in a way that dramatically fits in with both her previous and her subsequent roles on the London stage.[35] Furthermore, even if most of the music was newly composed for the occasion (which may seem surprising, particularly in the case of Bononcini's act, since he had already composed a *Muzio Scevola* opera for Rome in 1695 and had reworked it for Vienna in 1710), one borrowing must have caught the ear. Bononcini chose the same overture for his act which had already been used in the London pasticcio *Thomyris*.[36] First staged in London in 1707, *Thomyris* remained popular for decades and was frequently revived. Incidentally, it was an opera about the same historical queen that would shortly afterwards become Rolli and Bononcini's protagonist in *Ciro*.[37] Thus, although freshly composed, the new opera(s) allowed for an associative interplay in a 'pasticcio sense'.

5) CONCLUSION

It is indisputable that, during the Academy's first period (from 1720 to 1728), its preference lay with freshly-composed operas by a single musical composer. This may have been due to musicians' interests and their influence on the directors or to more general classicist aesthetic ideals applied as a means of distinguishing the operatic ventures from more 'compiled' or 'miscellaneous' London entertainment. It is peculiar that the one experiment with the most openly premeditated compilation, *Muzio Scevola*, is also the opera where the artistic appeal to the female members of the audience becomes most obvious. Furthermore, in this context it should be noted that Bononcini dedicated *Erminia* directly to the 'Gentillissime Dame della GRAN BRITANNIA'.[38] Considering the choice of topics favoured by directors at the time, this pastoral opera was somewhat irregular. Nevertheless, there is not enough evidence to link the rigid path chosen by the Academicians in this first period to the 'violent' ways of the English gentlemen ridiculed in satiric journals, while simultaneously expecting more openness towards cultural variety from the female members of the audience. It may be a coincidence that these 'irregular' operas, which deviated from the directors' general policies, were specifically coaxing the female members of the audience. Still, it might also

32 Cf. Knoth, *Eine Kriegerin*, pp. 203–211.

33 Rolli even included citations from Livy and had them marked in the printed libretto.

34 While the writers of some preserved letters prefer Handel (cf. e.g. D. Burrows et al. (eds), *George Frideric Handel. Collected Documents*, vol. 1, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp. 541–542), Bononcini 'won' over a majority of the audience with the selection of 'favourite songs' by John Walsh, who asked audiences about their preferences in a newspaper advertisement. Cf. C. Lanfossi, 'Handel as Arranger and Producer. Listening to Pasticci in Eighteenth-Century London', PhD Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2018, pp. 20–22.

35 Knoth, pp. 212–214.

36 Originally, Bononcini had composed it for *La regina creduta re* (first staged in Venice, 1706), cf. DeSimone, p. 73. On Handel's borrowings for *Muzio Scevola* cf. S. Voss, 'Händels Entlehnungen aus Johann Matthesons Oper *Porsenna* (1702)', *Göttinger Händel-Beiträge*, vol. 10, 2004, pp. 81–94.

37 In this context, it should be noted that the queen Tomiri is presented in a more convincing leadership role in *Ciro* than in *Thomyris*.

38 This dedication is given on the inside title page of the printed libretto, signed by Giovanni Bononcini. He adapted his opera, which was first staged in Rome in 1719, for London in 1723.

suggest perceived differences in men's vs ladies' opinions concerning the value of musical compilation and variety within a single opera.

My discussion of the rare operatic pasticcio from this period shows that even when a new company began to diverge along elitist lines in the entertainment sector, there was still some demand for compilation in opera. After all, simultaneously with Italian operas the same refined opera audiences consumed other forms of entertainment which boasted a much greater element of compilation on the theatre stage, culminating in *The Beggar's Opera* of 1728. Furthermore, the Academy's board of directors had Handel stage a succession of pasticci in the Academy's second period, with arias taken from a larger range of composers – including the re-use of arias from the Academy's first period, including *Muzio Scevola*.[39] This time the Academy awarded Handel the same fee for a pasticcio as for a new opera of his own composition. It is clear then, that no 'single' 'ideal' opera form had yet been settled upon.

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39 Cf. Lanfossi, *Handel as Arranger and Producer*, pp. 144–216.

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