MOVING STATUES:

THE RISE AND FALL OF PYGMALION IN ITALIAN THEATRICAL MUSIC 1770-1815

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School

of Cornell University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Ellen Lockhart

August 2011

Moving Statues: The Rise and Fall of Pygmalion in Italian Theatrical Music 1770-1815

Ellen Lockhart

Cornell University, 2011

This dissertation examines the fashion for statuary animation in Italian music-theatrical works during the period of approximately 1770 to 1815.

Chapter 1 concerns choreographer Gasparo Angiolini's little-known work for the new Teatro alla Scala in 1782: the "philosophical ballet" *La vendetta spiritosa*. This pantomime dramatizes Condillac's empiricist treatise *On Sensations*, which gradually animates a statue by means of the successive activation of its senses. In his late period, Angiolini believed that music and bodily gesture could function as a free-standing language that acted directly on the listener, but only if the choreographer composed the music himself and followed every gesture with perfect accuracy. I situate Angiolini's published writings, Milanese choreographies and music within a Lombard movement of cultural and linguistic reform.

Chapters 2 and 3 trace the reception of Rousseau's first and only melodrama, *Pygmalion*, in late 18th-century Italy. Chapter 2 situates melodrama within the context of Rousseau's theories of music and language, and discusses the twilight classicism implicit within the first music for *Pygmalion* by Rousseau and Horace Coignet. I compare *Pygmalion* to related projects subsuming the spoken word within the domain of music, including Joshua Steele's *Prosodia Rationalis*, and theories of Italian operatic song by writers such as Antonio Eximeno and Stefano Arteaga. Chapter 2 concludes with the first adaptation of *Pygmalion* into a modified operatic language, by librettist Antonio Sografi and composer G.B. Cimador. Chapter 3 discusses subsequent adaptations of Sografi's text, and charts the rise of an aesthetic of the female statuesque in operatic performance.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Ellen Lockhart completed an M.Phil. in Musicology at Cambridge University under the supervision of Roger Parker, and a Ph.D. in Musicology at Cornell under the supervision of Annette Richards. In the Fall of 2011 she will begin a three-year postdoctoral fellowship at the Society of Fellows in the Liberal Arts at Princeton University. She is working on a critical edition of Puccini's *La fanciulla del West* for Ricordi.

To Jessica Lockhart

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Pygmalion had seen them, spending their lives in wickedness, and, offended by the failings that nature gave the female heart, he lived as a bachelor, without a wife or partner for his bed. But, with wonderful skill, he carved a figure, brilliantly, out of snow-white ivory, no mortal woman, and fell in love with his own creation. The features are those of a real girl, who, you might think, lived, and wished to move, if modesty did not forbid it. Indeed, art hides his art. He marvels: and passion, for this bodily image, consumes his heart. Often, he runs his hands over the work, tempted as to whether it is flesh or ivory, not admitting it to be ivory. He kisses it and thinks his kisses are returned; and speaks to it; and holds it, and imagines that his fingers press into the limbs, and is afraid lest bruises appear from the pressure. Now he addresses it with compliments, now brings it gifts that please girls, shells and polished pebbles, little birds, and many-coloured flowers, lilies and tinted beads, and the Heliades' amber tears, that drip from the trees. He dresses the body, also, in clothing; places rings on the fingers; places a long necklace round its neck; pearls hang from the ears, and cinctures round the breasts. All are fitting: but it appears no less lovely, naked. He arranges the statue on a bed on which cloths dyed with Tyrian murex are spread, and calls it his bedfellow, and rests its neck against soft down, as if it could feel.

The day of Venus's festival came, celebrated throughout Cyprus, and heifers, their curved horns gilded, fell, to the blow on their snowy neck. The incense was smoking, when Pygmalion, having made his offering, stood by the altar, and said, shyly: "If you can grant all things, you gods, I wish as a bride to have…" and not daring to say "the girl of ivory" he said "one like my ivory girl." Golden Venus, for she herself was present at the festival, knew what the prayer meant, and as a sign of the gods' fondness for him, the flame flared three times, and shook its crown in the air. When he returned, he sought out the image of his girl, and leaning over the couch, kissed her. She felt warm: he pressed his lips to her again, and also touched her breast with his hand. The ivory yielded to his touch, and lost its hardness, altering under his fingers, as the bees' wax of Hymettus softens in the sun, and is moulded, under the thumb, into many forms, made usable by use. The lover is stupefied, and joyful, but uncertain, and afraid he is wrong, reaffirms the fulfilment of his wishes, with his hand, again, and again.

It was flesh! The pulse throbbed under his thumb. Then the hero, of Paphos, was indeed overfull of words with which to thank Venus, and still pressed his mouth against a mouth that was not merely a likeness. The girl felt the kisses he gave, blushed, and, raising her bashful eyes to the light, saw both her lover and the sky. The goddess attended the marriage that she had brought about, and when the moon's horns had nine times met at the full, the woman bore a son, Paphos, from whom the island takes its name.

The Story of Pygmalion

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*

Prose translation by A.S. Kline

Introduction

We can begin with an artefact from the margins. In 1773, Venetian publishers Carlo

Canobbio and Luigi Marescalchi printed a peculiar piece of music: the Florentine

choreographer Gasparo Angiolini's *La partenza d'Enea, ò sia Didone abbandonata*, an

orchestral suite consisting of a Sinfonia and twenty movements based on Metastasio's

famous *dramma*. The most expensive score in the Canobbio/Marescalchi catalog by a

significant margin, this music had previously accompanied a pantomime ballet staged in

Venice earlier in the same year. The title page lists the venue – Venice's Teatro di San

Benedetto – as well as the choreographer and three principal dancers.[1] Little known to

modern musicology, this publication is notable in several ways. For one, it may be the only

published ballet score in all of eighteenth-century Italian dance – a tradition that was

renowned even at the time for the scant attention afforded the musical component.[2] Even

stranger, the music had been composed by the choreographer himself. Angiolini was best

known as one of Europe's foremost exponents of a new art that he called "speaking dance"

(*danza parlante*); *La partenza d'Enea* was one of his first compositions, but sufficiently

popular in its day to circulate in numerous keyboard reductions.[3] Canobbio and

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[1] This was a revival of a 1766 production for St. Petersburg. In the production for the San Benedetto, Antonio Campioni performed Enea, Catterina Curtz (or Kurz) was Dido, and Daniel Curtz danced the role of the villain, Jarba. The title page of *La partenza d'Enea* includes an abbreviated catalog, with prices, of the publications of Canobbio and Marescalchi; Angiolini's score is one of only two works listed under "Musica da Ballo di diversi Autori," where it appears as "Ballo della Didone con la Spiegazione della Storia." The other item is "N° 24 Minuetti di varii Autori." Thanks to the exhaustive research of Marian Hannah Winter, something is known about each of the *primi ballerini*: Campioni, a disciple of Angiolini, had danced at the Opéra during the early 1760s and was ballet master at the King's Theatre in London around 1770; he was one of many choreographers to remount his *Don Juan*; Caterina Kurtz had been a protégée of Angiolini's French rival Georges Noverre (*The Pre-Romantic Ballet* [London: Pitman, 1974], 117, 135, 139, 162-3).

[2] Kathleen Hansell, "Theatrical Ballet and Italian Opera," in *History of Italian Opera*, part II/*Systems*, volume 5, *Opera on stage.* Ed. Lorenzo Bianconi and Giorgio Pestelli, trans. Kate Singleton (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 212-15.

[3] Hansell, "Theatrical Ballet and Italian Opera," 224; and "Opera and ballet at the Regio Ducal Teatro of Milan, 1771-1776: a musical and social history" (Ph.D. Diss, University of California, Berkeley, 1980), 796.

Marescalchi printed parts for strings, oboe, horn, bassoon, and timpani, in addition to a version for keyboard. Most importantly, though, their printed first violin part contains annotations describing the mime – a fact that makes this document one of the richest extant sources of eighteenth-century pantomime.

Though this choreography is peripheral to our narrative, it is difficult to resist opening up the score and flipping through the pages, to see what kind of music Angiolini composed for his pantomime. A glance at *La partenza d'Enea* reveals two basic types of movement: those containing literal repetition, whether from repeat sign(s) or da capo, and those without. Of the former, many are in standard binary form, and are similar to traditional dance genres like minuets or gigues (though not labeled as such).[4] Other movements from *La partenza d'Enea* that are in this category derive their mode and character from the drama and lack the musical indices of these traditional dances, but retain their form, periodicity and substantial repetition. No. 4 "Andantino" (Example 1) is representative. The music is in two sections, and may perhaps be a minuet; it represents Dido and her handmaidens awaiting news from Aeneas.

Example 1 No. 4: Andantino, Vni I, from *La partenza d'Enea, ò sia Didone abbandonata*

Simple though this is, we may speculate about some aspects of its approach to musical representation: for instance, the ladies' courtliness is presumably mirrored in the measured balance of the melody and the "mezza voce" dynamic; the steps were probably

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[4] The only movement bearing a traditional dance title is No. 9, 'Chiaccona figurata'.

those Angiolini called the *danse noble* (about which more in Chapter 1). A restricted

orchestration – strings only – minimized timbral variation, saving the winds, percussion,

and brass for moments of higher drama. There is much formal repetition: the antecedent

and consequent of the first section; the unvaried recapitulation of the first eight measures

at the end; the codetta, which sounds the only cadential phrase for the fifth time. We may

also note the relative absence of harmonic tension: both halves cadence in the home key,

with only a brief excursion to the dominant following the double bar. Perhaps the extreme

musical stasis aims to create a sense of the ladies' impatience – but this seems unlikely.

Rather, the air is positioned to accommodate a necessary element: pure dance (here and in

similar movements, in place of actions the annotations read "ballano"), resulting in a

suspension of plot until the moment after the final cadence; permitting soloistic display of

elegance for the *prima ballerina*.[5]

      But *La partenza d'Enea* contains another type of movement. Nos. 18 and 19

(Example 2) occur at the climax of the work. Angiolini has inserted letters above the staves,

relating particular musical events to the actions described below.

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[5] Bruce Alan Brown has compared the prevalence of the binary air in mid-eighteenth-century dance to the "tyranny of the da capo aria in opera seria": "the fragmentation and repetition these forms engendered were inimical to the powerful situations, sustained theatrical illusion, and forward development of an action then being advocated by such theorists as Diderot…. In both, mimesis was often subordinated to the decorative and athletic" (*Gluck and the French Theatre in Vienna* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991], 143).

Example 2 No. 18: Allegro – Lento, and No. 19 – Allegro, Vni I, from *La partenza d'Enea, ò sia Didone abbandonata*

(a) the agitated Dido arrives with her handmaidens; (b) surveying the sea, she sees Aeneas in the distance, already departed; (c) she despairs; (d) oppressed by sorrow, she runs toward the handmaidens; (e) she faints into the arms of those ladies, who lay her down upon a rock; (f) Jarba and Mori dance with lit torches; (g) [Jarba] sees Dido unconscious; (h) he runs to embrace her; (i) Dido returns the embrace, believing him to be Aeneas, realizes her error, and angrily repulses him; (l) Jarba calls her his beloved; (m) she continues to reject him; (n) thus scorned, Jarba gives his men the order for the burning of Carthage; (o) Dido pleads with him to repeal the cruel command; (p) Jarba repeats his demands; (q) she stubbornly rejects him; (r) Jarba departs, repeating his orders.
[[a) *Didone smaniosa arriva con le Damigelle*; (b) *Guardando il Mare scorge da lungi Enea di già partito*; (c) *si dispersa*; (d) *Dal dolore oppressa corre verso le Damigelle*; (e) *Sviene in braccio a queste che la appoggiano ad un Sasso*; (f) *Jarba e Mori con accese fiaccole ballano*; (g) *Vede Didone svenuta*; (h) *corre ad abbracciarla*; (i) *Didone lo abbraccio credendolo Enea, s'accorge del fatto, ed irata lo scaccia*; (l) *Jarba gli chiede amore*; (m) *Ella sempre più lo riggeta*; (n) *Jarba sì vilipeso ordina a suoi l'incendio di Cartagine*; (o) *Didone lo prega a desistere dal crudel ordine*; (p) *Jarba rinnova le sue dimande*; (q) *Lei ostinata ricusa*; (r) *Jarba parte rinnovando li suoi ordine.*)

As the annotations indicate, a density of events overlays these two movements, forcing the music into an ever-unfolding transition. No. 18 begins as an Allegro in A major, its offbeat motives mirroring Dido's panic and confusion. As the heroine gradually realizes that Aeneas has left Carthage, the music intensifies, with progressively shorter phrases and smaller note values. The music modulates to the dominant, arriving in the new key at the

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double bar; this was of course traditional in binary dance forms, but here the double bar is vestigial, functioning as a formal indication but not calling for a repeat. Dido's despair is depicted with harmonic chiaroscuro: the key shifts to A minor as Aeneas's ship is spotted on the horizon. Her motion toward the handmaidens receives a painful augmented second; when she faints, the tempo switches from Allegro to Lento. The melody describes a descending chromatic scale, with a *smorzando* and *piano assai*, as her inert form is laid out on the rock.

The entry of Jarba, the villain, is marked by Allegro and a *forte* assertion of D minor (f). Jarba's renewed anger at (n) encouraged Angiolini to bring back the opening music precisely half way through the movement, thus creating a sense of symmetry. But as the rate of pantomime increases, the music loses its composure, symmetry being replaced by an aesthetic of real-time mimesis. A little earlier, at letters (g) through (i), Jarba interrupts his evil dance as he sees his unconscious beloved. His rush toward her is depicted by a questioning, rising figure on the dominant of F major (g), and a rapid descending scale (h) accompanies his embrace of her prone body. Dido rejects his embrace with an ascending figure that inverts Jarba's (i). The music gains a new, insistent lyricism as Jarba implores Dido to accept him as a lover (l). But then, in a moment reminiscent of the traditional *padidù*, she rejects him with music that is virtually identical to that of Jarba's entreaties.

As is evident from this brief exploration of *La partenza d'Enea*, Angiolini's music seems to display conflicting compositional impulses, precariously balanced: the musical lexicon of the *belle danse*, and something else that we might call sustained music-dramatic onomatopoeia. Such impressions are amply borne out by what survives from the rest of his oeuvre. In this, *La partenza d'Enea* resembles the ballet scores of Angiolini's Viennese

collaborator Gluck and the latter's predecessor in Vienna, Joseph Starzer, if somewhat less adroit in technical matters. Highly repetitive binary forms alternate with sections of through-composed music so changeful, so thematically volatile, as to be unlike anything else composed during the time.

The annotated score of *La partenza d'Enea* serves as a window to one of the major preoccupations of this dissertation: the alignment (or lack thereof) of musical and physical events in Italian music for the theatre. Its plot is somewhat peripheral, because this dissertation is primarily concerned with the fashion for statuary animation in Italy during the period of approximately 1770 to 1815. Angiolini's many pantomimes featuring statues, and his own theoretical apparatus for dance music, will be the topic of the first chapter; these and other operas and dances featuring the statue theme are cataloged in the Appendix. However, as we will see, this fashion coincided with, and was deeply implicated in, a series of large-scale shifts in the theory and stylistic practice of theatrical music more broadly. One of these – eminently manifest in *La partenza d'Enea* – was a new impetus in late eighteenth-century music-dramatic works to depict bodily motion with "miming" musical figures. I argue that this impetus originated in pantomime dance during the 1760s and 1770s, and was first popularized in Italy through Angiolini's writings and music.

My research on Angiolini has greatly benefited from Bruce Alan Brown's writings on the choreographer's collaborations with C.W. Gluck during the 1760s, and Kathleen Kuzmick Hansell's encyclopedic dissertation on the Regio Ducal Teatro in Milan during the years 1770-1777, as well as from Marian Hannah Winter's much-lauded *The Pre-Romantic*

Ballet, and shorter studies by Ingrid Brainard and Lorenzo Tozzi.[6] However, my own work focuses on shared imagery of animation within the theory and practice of pantomime, its relation to French and Italian theories of natural language and the senses, and in particular, on Angiolini's ballet *La vendetta spiritosa* (Milan, 1782), which purported to stage a portion of Étienne Bonnot de Condillac's *Traité des sensations*. In this sense, the present study constitutes something of a prequel to Mary Ann Smart's narrative of the decline of the miming principle over the course of the next century.[7]

In Chapter 2, I argue that this principle and its musical lexicon were imported into Italian vocal music, and eventually opera, through Rousseau's *Pygmalion* (Lyons, 1770, with music by Rousseau and Horace Coignet) and its Italian adaptations. With this work, Rousseau invented the *scène lyrique*, later known as melodrama: a new genre of musical theatre for actors and orchestra, that alternated between declaimed prose and gestural interludes accompanied by descriptive music. Long considered something of an orphan within the history of vocal music, melodrama has benefited from a recent, exhaustive study by Jacqueline Waeber, *En musique dans le texte: Le mélodrama de Rousseau à Schoenberg*.[8] As her title makes clear, Waeber traces the genre from its conspicuous "invention" and first flourishing in France and Germany through to the early twentieth century. The early history of melodrama in Germany and Georg Benda's composition of *Ariadne* and *Medea* for

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[6] Hansell's, Winter's, and Brown's studies are cited above. Ingrid Brainard, "The Speaking Body: Gasparo Angiolini's *rhétorique muette* and the *ballet d'action* in the Eighteenth Century," in *Critica Musica: Essays in Honor of Paul Brainard*, ed. John Knowles (Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach, 1996): 15-56; and Lorenzo Tozzi, *Il Balletto pantomimo del settecento: Gaspare Angiolini* (L'Aquila: Japadre, 1972).
[7] Smart, *Mimomania: Music and Gesture in Nineteenth-Century Opera* (University of California Press, 2005).
[8] Waeber, *En musique dans le texte: Le mélodrama de Rousseau à Schoenberg* (Paris: Van Dieren, 2005).

the troupe of traveling actors led by Abel and Sophie Seyler are known to modern

musicology through the work of Thomas Bauman and others.[9]

Almost entirely unknown to Anglo-American musicology and its French and German

cousins, though, is the fact that Rousseauian melodrama had a vibrant life on the Italian

peninsula during the last decades of the eighteenth century. The Italian reception of

melodrama was contemporaneous with its German cousins, but remained resolutely

distinct in terms of its theoretical preoccupations and performance practices. For one, as

we will see, melodrama in Italy was characterized by constant cross-pollination with the

robust tradition of Italian pantomime examined in Chapter 1. Another distinct aspect of this

tradition was linguistic in nature. The success of *Pygmalion* as a printed text was

documented in Silvia Rota Ghibaudi's *La fortuna di Rousseau in Italia (1750-1815)*, which

catalogued twenty-seven editions published in Italy between 1771 and 1815, but did not

comment on the history of its performance.[10] Chapter 2 of this dissertation suggests that

those editions from the 1770s and 1780s, which also featured the first translations of the

melodrama into Italian, were published to accompany performances of *Pygmalion* in the

original French. (This point alone is worthy of emphasis, as the genre was immediately

naturalized into German in the early 1770s.) In recent years, the Italian musicologist Lucio

Tufano has illuminated a handful of original, Italian melodramas created in Naples during

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[9] Thomas Bauman, *North German Opera in the Age of Goethe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); see also A. Dwight Culler, "Monodrama and the Dramatic Monologue," *PMLA* 90/3 (1975), 366-85; and Matthew Head, "Cultural Meaning for Women Composers: Charlotte 'Minna' Brandes and the Beautiful Dead in the German Enlightenment," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 57/2 (Summer 2004), 231-84.
[10] Rota Ghibaudi, *La fortuna di Rousseau in Italia (1750-1815)* (Turin: Giappichelli, 1961).

the late 1780s, though he does not discuss any version of Pygmalion except Rousseau's.[11]

Much work remains to be done on this music, but it is not examined in detail here.

Chapter 2 also argues that these decades saw a renewed impetus toward a revival of

the ancient Greek and Roman speech-song: an impetus that can be found both within

Rousseau's musical writings and the invention and reception of melodrama itself, though

later exegetes of that genre resist its neoclassical strain. The dissertation situates

melodrama within a network of related projects which attempted to revive or evoke the

voice of the ancient bard: these included, in England, Joshua Steele's *Prosodia rationalis*

(1775) and, in Italy, treatises on opera by Antonio Eximeno (*Dell'origine e delle regole della*

musica, 1773) and Stefano Arteaga (*Rivoluzioni nel teatro musicale italiano: dalla sua*

origine fino al presente, enlarged 2nd ed. Venice, 1785). Adaptations of *Pygmalion* into a

modified operatic language, by composers such as Giovanni Battista Cimador, Bonifazio

Asioli, Francesco Gnecco, and Luigi Cherubini drew on the theories of musical speech and

gesture expounded by Rousseau and his Italian disciples. These composers used a single

libretto, created by the Venetian playwright Antonio Sografi, which was exceptionally

faithful to the form, lexicon, and even the syntax of the original while providing some

opportunities for lyricism. Notwithstanding substantial popularity in their own day, these

scenes, and the movement they represent, are almost entirely unknown to present-day

scholarship. An exception is the first all-sung *Pimmalione*, by Cimador, which was the

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[11] Tufano, "La ricezione italiana del *melologo* à la Rousseau e la *Pandora* di Alessandro Pepoli," in *D'une scène à l'autre: l'opéra italien en Europe* II: *La musique à l'épreuve du théâtre*, eds. Damien Colas and Alessandro di Profio (Wavre: Mardaga, 2009), 125-40.

subject of two brief but helpful studies by Italian musicologists Elvidio Surian and Emilio

Sala.[12]

Chapter 3 examines the models of human animation, and their attendant

conceptions of gender and movement, that are reflected within these musical texts. I

document the rise of an aesthetic of the female statuesque during the years of the

Pygmalion phenomenon in Italy: a shift whose musical consequences can be traced within

the adaptations of Rousseau's text and the circumstances of their performance. This

chapter focuses on the scenes of animation within three *Pigmalione* operas by Asioli,

Cherubini, and Donizetti, and on the concurrent development of a new genre of statuesque

performance: the attitude. Chapter 3 suggests that this shift related to a new force for

human animation – electricity – which was believed to exist both inside and outside the

body, and could be manipulated by music and other external and invisible forces. This

chapter draws on a few important studies in the history of late eighteenth-century science.

Most notable among these is Marcello Pera's work on the Galvani-Volta controversy and

"electrical science" in Italy.[13] It also relies on the vast literature on Emma Hamilton's

"attitudes" – including recent books by Gail Marshall and Julie Peakman – and on the

substantial body of work concerning Pasta.[14] Kirsten Gram Holmström's seminal study

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[12] Elvidio Surian, "Pigmalione a Venezia," in *Venezia e il melodrama del Settecento*, ed. Maria Teresa Muraro (Florence: Olschki, 1981): 147-58; Emilio Sala, "La carriera di Pigmalione: ovvero, Nascita e prime metamorfosi del *mélodrame*," in *Rousseau-Coignet Pygmalion; Sografi-Cimador Pimmalione*, ix-lxxvii.

[13] Marcello Pera, *The Ambiguous Frog: The Galvani-Volta Controversy on Animal Electricity*, trans. Jonathan Mandelbaum (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

[14] Gail Marshall, *Actresses on the Victorian Stage: Feminine Performance and the Galatea Myth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Julie Peakman, *Emma Hamilton* (London: Haus, 2005). On Pasta, see Kenneth A. Sterne, "A Documentary Study of Giuditta Pasta on the Opera Stage" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1983); Paolo Russo, "Giuditta Pasta: cantante pantomimica," *Musica e Storia* 10/2 (2002): 497-528; and Isabelle Putnam Emerson, *Five Centuries of Women Singers* (Westport, CN: Praeger, 2005).

Monodrama, Attitudes, Tableaux Vivants was invaluable.[15] My work benefited greatly from

Susan Rutherford's studies on Pasta's acting and nineteenth-century operatic performance,

though I disagreed at times with her conclusions.[16] In this and the other chapters, I have

generally avoided direct engagement with feminist criticism and literary theory, and the

brilliant and seductive writings on eighteenth-century thought and culture by such as

Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Julia Kristeva, Terry Castle, and the many more recent

scholars who have continued in this vein. This decision is a function of my Italocentric

focus, and the fact that many of my sources are entirely unknown to modern scholarship; I

have sought to avoid consistently imposing on these newly uncovered artefacts any

theoretical apparatus crafted for foreign terrains. Though it may be naïve to imagine that

primary sources can speak for themselves in a dissertation such as this, I have nonetheless

borne this goal in mind when crafting my approach.

My research was originally intended to be much broader in scope, encompassing the

half-dozen operas composed on the topic of *Il convitato di pietra* (The Stone Guest or, as the

story is known today, Don Juan) between 1777 and 1790, and the several ballets on the

theme of Prometheus that appeared in Vienna and on the Italian peninsula in the early

nineteenth century. It was to situate famous works by Mozart and Beethoven in the context

of their lesser-known contemporaries. As the dissertation's focus narrowed, there

appeared studies on each of these topics: David J. Buch illuminated the immediate context

of the *Don Giovanni* of Mozart and Da Ponte, additionally providing an exhaustive catalogue

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[15] Holmström, *Monodrama, Attitudes, Tableaux Vivants: Studies on Some Trends of Theatrical Fashion 1770-1815* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1967).

[16] Rutherford, *The Prima Donna and Opera, 1815-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), and "La cantante delle passioni: Giuditta Pasta and the Idea of Operatic Performance," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 19/2 (2007): 107-38.

of operas and ballets on that theme.[17] There was also Mary Ann Smart's ingenious article on Beethoven's *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus*, Op. 43, composed to accompany a choreography by Salvatore Viganò, and the traces of that ballet in Beethoven's later instrumental works.[18] I invite the reader to bear in mind the context provided by these works. They illustrate admirably what this dissertation has ultimately set aside: namely, that while my focus is on Italian Galatea-figures and other quickened female forms, the craze for statuary animation in musical works during the years 1770 to 1815 was an international and cross-cultural phenomenon, encompassing both male and female statues, newborn adults and spooky revenants.

There is one more history to be sketched here, if only in the broadest terms. Like any cultural artifact, our Italian Galateas have relatives both recent and remote, and there is no telling when some feature of a distant ancestor may appear again on the face of the living. Animated statues have featured in Western literature since ancient times. In the *Iliad*, Hephaestus forms statues from hammered gold: statues who "looked like real girls" and that have "a mind within, and a voice, and strength."[19] In the *Argonautica*, Apollonius of Rhodes described a bronze automaton named Talos, also built by Hephaestus to fight off the enemies of Crete.[20] But the most famous story, and the one with the longest and most varied afterlife, is that of the sculptor Pygmalion, recounted in Book 10 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. This passage is given in full at the beginning of this dissertation. Readers

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[17] David J. Buch, *Magic Flutes & Enchanted Forests: The Supernatural in Eighteenth-Century Musical Theatre* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

[18] Mary Ann Smart, "Beethoven Dances: Prometheus and His Creatures in Vienna and Milan," in *The Age of Beethoven and Rossini*, ed. Nicholas Mathew and Benjamin Walton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

[19] Homer, *Iliad*, Book 18, lines 450-51, trans. Stanley Lombardo (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 368.

[20] Apollonius Rhodius, *The Argonautica*, Book 4, lines 1623-66; published by Oxford World Classics as *Jason and the Golden Fleece (The Argonautica)*, translated by Richard Hunter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 127-28.

who are familiar with the more recent, chaster Pygmalions of music and high art will find much that is alien in Ovid's version (or, at least, familiar only in a much lower register). This explicitly misogynist hero fashions his heroine from ivory, dresses her in jewelry and fine robes, and then undresses her and takes her to bed for carnal interludes. In a public festival, he asks Venus for a wife that is like his statue, but she is present at his prayer, and perceives that he is actually enamored with the inanimate woman that he made. The statue softens like warmed wax in the sculptor's bed; after nine months, she bears him a son. Also notable is that the association with music is established even in this first instance: the fable is sung by Orpheus, alongside the story of Euridice's rising from the dead – a fact that will be relevant in the music history given in Chapter 2.

A few studies have traced this theme through to the present day; though different in particulars, these studies coincide in broad outlines.[21] Classical statue myths, and Pygmalion in particular, were transmitted within early modern romance, didactic literature, and theatre.[22] Jean de Meun's *Roman de la Rose* (c. 1275) is the most famous of the medieval texts, and inaugurated the tradition of Pygmalion iconography.[23] In Giorgio Vasari's seminal work of art history, *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, ed architettori* (1550), the fable provides a paradigm for the appreciation of the "flesh," "breath," and "pulse" discernible in Michelangelan sculpture.[24] Less well known is the fact that this literary tradition existed alongside, and was informed by, a tradition of semi-improvisatory

[21] These include Kenneth Gross, *The Dream of the Moving Statue* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992); Victor I. Stoichita, *The Pygmalion Effect: From Ovid to Hitchcock*, trans. Alison Anderson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); George L. Hersey, *Falling in Love with Statues: Artificial Humans from Pygmalion to the Present* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).
[22] For an overview of Pygmalion tellings, see Jane Davidson Reid and Chris Rohmann, *The Oxford Guide to Classical Mythology in the Arts, 1300-1990s*, 2 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), II: 956.
[23] Medieval Pygmalion iconography is discussed in Stoichita, *The Pygmalion Effect*, 29-45.
[24] Giorgio Vasari, *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, ed architettori* (Florence: Torrentino, 1550); quoted in Stoichita, *The Pygmalion Effect*, 79.

performance. The moving statue was a staple of Commedia dell'Arte players, found in innumerable *lazzi* set in sculptors' ateliers and ruins, and in improvised versions of the plays and stories with that theme. For instance, *Don Juan* entered the repertoire of the Commedia upon its arrival in Naples in the early 1630s and remained there for the next two hundred years; the half-dozen comic operas on that text that appeared between 1777 and 1787 bore the marks of this tradition.[25] Metamorphosis was a favourite inspiration for Harlequins and Pulcinellas.

Marie Sallé ("La Vestale"), whose *Pygmalion* (London, 1734) has been called "the first modern dramatic ballet," had multiple connections to travelling Italian performers: her father was an acrobat and she began her career as a *foraine* at the Opéra Comique. At a young age she was brought to London by John Rich; Rich was a mime in the Italian comic style particularly noted for his Harlequin's metamorphoses, which included hatching from an egg, chasing butterflies, and the obligatory "statue scene."[26] Sallé's performance as the moving statue in *Pygmalion* caused a stir for its daringly scant "Classical" costume – a simple muslin shift – at a time when most female dancers appeared in corset and cumbersome panniers. In her version, the Galatea figure is brought to ripeness in a series of courtly dances, their diverse steps and meters supplying her with a gamut of enticing affects. The *Mercure de France* rapturously recalled how Sallé descended from her pedestal and "learned" the steps that, of course, she already knew well. She was even said to have

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[25] See Nino Pirrotta, "The Traditions of Don Juan Plays and Comic Operas," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 107 (1980): 60-70; and Charles C. Russell, *The History of the Don Juan Legend Before Mozart* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993).

[26] Dutton Cook, *A Book of the Play: Studies and Illustrations of Histrionic Story, Life, and Character* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1876), 270.

composed her own music for this dance; if she did, it is now lost.[27] A score survives for the

Parisian *Pygmalion* of Sallé's confidant Francesco Riccoboni and a Mlle Roland, done at the

Comédie-Italienne later that year, which several commentators have taken to be an early

revival of the London production.[28] Sallé's *Pygmalion* is thought to have been the

inspiration for the most important *Pygmalions* of mid-century, Rameau's opera-ballet, and

the pantomime by Angiolini's Viennese predecessor and teacher, Franz Hilverding.[29] It was

observed by the seventeen-year-old David Garrick, and he later recounted the scene to his

friend and fellow Sallé enthusiast Georges Noverre.[30] This ballet will be remembered,

explicitly or implicitly, by the principal players in each of the three chapters of this

dissertation. Here it will suffice to note the rapidity with which a fairground performance

technique (and performer) gained a "reform" mantle. Where possible, I have tried to

include traces of the improvisatory and the performative, despite their relative lack of

historical record. The itinerant moving statue exists to this day, in the oblique and gently

shifting Madonnas and Elvis Presleys clustered in the spaces around monuments and

routes of tourist transit. Indeed, we might imagine that these figures are the remnants of

the tradition examined here, exhibiting something of the same ability to fascinate and

unsettle, and giving pause even to the most harried traveler.

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[27] Daniel Albright, "Knowing the Dancer, Knowing the Dance: The Dancer as Décor," in *The Ancient Dancer in the Modern World: Responses to Greek and Roman Dance*, ed. Fiona MacIntosh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 300.

[28] Winter, *The Pre-Romantic Ballet*, 85; Susan Leigh Foster, *Choreography & Narrative: Ballet's Staging of Story and Desire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 1-2 and 278 n2. The music for Riccoboni's production is by Jean-Joseph Mouret, and has recently been reconstructed from reduced score by Rebecca Harris-Warrick.

[29] Quotation is from Lillian Moore, *Artists of the Dance* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1938), 30-31. See also Lincoln Kirstein, *Four Centuries of Ballet: Fifty Masterworks* (New York: Praeger, 1970), 106-107.

[30] Sarah McCleave, "Marie Sallé and the Development of the *Ballet en Action*," 175-95, in *Musique et geste en France de Lully à la Révolution: Études sur la musique, le théâtre et la danse*, ed. Jacqueline Waeber (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009).

CHAPTER 1 **ALIGNMENT, ABSORPTION, ANIMATION**

Pantomime Ballet in the Lombard Illuminismo

Like Italy itself as imagined by a later generation, Gasparo Angiolini's theatre was

populated by statues: human simulacra who dwelt among the living, arousing longing,

wreaking vengeance, or simply assisting in colonization. Yet unlike, say, the marble

goddess in Heine's *Florentinische Nächte* or the gallery of Canova's sculptures in Madame

de Staël's *Corinne, ou l'Italie*, which unsettled in their very stillness, Angiolini's statues came

to life to interact with the living, their newly animated limbs moving to a musical

accompaniment. Angiolini was the foremost Italian choreographer of the late eighteenth

century.[1] He is best known today for his *Don Juan* (Vienna, 1761, with music by C.W. Gluck),

which of course featured the return of the sepulchral "stone guest."[2] In 1767 he

choreographed a *Pygmalion*, in which a sculptor falls in love with his statue and Venus

brings her to life. In Angiolini's late propaganda ballet *Deucalione e Pirra* (Milan, 1797), the

hero and heroine create humans from rocks in order to repopulate the world. Yet surely

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[1] The choreographer known to us as Gasparo Angiolini (1731-1803) was born Domenico Maria Angiolo Gasparini. He adopted the pseudonym as early as 1747-48; throughout his career, his first name appeared variously as Gasparo or Gaspare. The principal sources on Angiolini are as follows: Renato Sóriga, *Dal cosmopolitanismo al nazionalismo: il coreografo Gasparo Angiolini* (Rome: Dell'Unione, 1916); Lorenzo Tozzi, *Il Balletto pantomimo del settecento: Gaspare Angiolini* (L'Aquila: Japadre, 1972); Marian Hannah Winter, *The Pre-Romantic Ballet* (London: Pittman, 1974); Kathleen Kuzmick Hansell, "Opera and Ballet at the Regio Ducal Teatro of Milan, 1771-1776: a musical and social history" (Ph.D. Diss, University of California, Berkeley, 1980); Hansell, "Theatrical Ballet and Italian Opera," in *History of Italian Opera*, part II/*Systems*, volume 5, *Opera on stage.* Ed. Lorenzo Bianconi and Giorgio Pestelli, trans. Kate Singleton (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Bruce Alan Brown, *Gluck and the French Theatre in Vienna* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991); Ingrid Brainard, "The Speaking Body: Gasparo Angiolini's *rhétorique muette* and the *ballet d'action* in the Eighteenth Century," in *Critica Musica: Essays in Honor of Paul Brainard*, ed. John Knowles (Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach, 1996): 15-56; and Brown, "Angiolini, Gasparo" in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/00929 (accessed March 12, 2009). The most recent work to treat Angiolini is Elizabeth LeGuin, *Boccherini's Body: An Essay in Carnal Musicology* (University of California Press, 2006), 90-100.

[2] See especially Brown, *Gluck and the French Theatre in Vienna*, 313-26.

the most peculiar of Angiolini's animated statues is found in *La vendetta spiritosa*, which

had its premiere in May 1781 at Milan's new opera house, the Teatro alla Scala. For one

thing, *La vendetta spiritosa* was something of a *Gesamtkunstwerk*: Angiolini wrote the story,

choreographed the dance steps and gestures and even composed his own musical

accompaniment. This pantomime is, though, most notable for its plot: Arcadian shepherds

and shepherdesses enact a portion of Étienne Bonnot de Condillac's philosophical tract, the

Traité des sensations (1754), bringing a statue to life by stimulating its sensing organs.

Angiolini's aim, as he later described, was to communicate "the abstract ideas of

philosophy" through bodily motion and music. Despite the challenges that *La vendetta*

spiritosa must have posed to its audience, it was deemed a success, and revived a decade

later for Venice as *La vendetta ingegnosa, o La statua di Condilliac*.

This pantomime attests to its creator's belief in the powers of theatrical pantomime:

surely no other choreographer has ever attempted to render a philosophical treatise in

dance, and Condillac's *Traité* is among the more prolix of its kind. Angiolini had argued

since the 1760s that gesture could function as a language – provided, of course, that it had

an appropriate musical accompaniment. His three well-known Viennese pamphlets – the

prefaces to *Don Juan* (1761) and *La Citera assediata* (1762) and the "Dissertation sur les

ballets pantomimes" accompanying his *Sémiramis* (1765) – drew heavily on recent French

theories of language.[3] But his "philosophical ballet" on the statue theme must be

understood as a monument to Milan: that ancient, sprawling capital of Austrian Lombardy

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[3] All of these were staged originally with music by Gluck; see Brown, *Gluck and the French Theatre*, 282-357. The preface to *Don Juan* is reprinted in facsimile in Christoph Willibald Gluck, *Sämtliche Werke*, volume 2, *Don Juan, Sémiramis: Ballets pantomimes von Gasparo Angiolini*, ed. Richard Engländer (Kassel: Barenreiter, 1966), xxiii-xxvii. The preface to *La Citera assediata*, long thought lost, has been reprinted by Gerhard Croll in *Traditionen – Neuansätze. Festschrift für Anna Amalie Abert* (Tutzing: Schneider, 1997), 137-144. The preface to *Sémiramis* was published simultaneously in Milan and Vienna in January 1765; the Milan edition was issued in reprint by Walter Toscanini (Milan: Dalle Nogare e Armenti, 1956).

where Angiolini lived for the last three decades of his life, and which was home to one of Europe's most distinctive projects of mass enlightenment. Among his colleagues there were Pietro Verri and Cesare Beccaria: figures now remembered as legal and political theorists, but who were energetic participants in contemporary debates on literature, music and theatre. As we shall see, Angiolini and his Lombard compatriots created something like an antique semiotics that spanned language and the fine arts: they sought a reformed relationship between meaning and its avatars, and new uses for representative sound. Their goal was nothing less than a revitalised Italian culture. However, as they discovered, cultural reawakening could verge dangerously on patriotic fever in an age of war and revolution.

Gregorio Lambranzi's Moving Statues

As noted in the Introduction, the moving statue was a core technique both of Commedia dell'Arte players and of the comic dancers who imported Commedia *lazzi* into theatres. Before the photographic era, these figures left few traces. But Gregorio Lambranzi's *New and Curious School of Theatrical Dancing* (1716) is an important exception.[4] Like Angiolini, Lambranzi was a choreographer and dancer, working in Italian and foreign theatres.[5] Unlike Angiolini, he embraced the Italian comic style. His treatise describes about a hundred of his own compositions: so-called "national dances" from Italy, France, Germany, Spain, Turkey and other countries. Lambranzi aimed not to provide a complete record of his work, but simply to encourage other dancers to improvise in a similar style: for each

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[4] This work was originally published in two parts as *Neue und Curieuse Theatralische Tantz-Schul* (Nuremburg: Johan Jacob Wolrab, 1716; facsimile edition, Leipzig: Peters, 1975); Part I has Lambranzi's preface and instructions both in German and Italian, while Part II contains no text other than the instructions for the individual dances, in German. It is available in English translation as *New and Curious School of Theatrical Dancing*, trans. Derra de Moroda, ed. Cyril W. Beaumont (first published London, 1928; reprint New York: Dance Horizons, 1966).

[5] On the tradition of entr'acte dancing within Italian theatres, see Kathleen Kuzmick Hansell, "Opera and Ballet at the Regio Ducal Teatro of Milan, 1771-1776," and "Theatrical Ballet and Italian Opera."

dance, he provided no more than a melody, a picture and a brief account of the plot.[6] In the preface he reminded his readers to use only the traditional steps (he mentions cabrioles, coupés, jetés, chassés, pas graves, contretemps and the pas de chaconne, courante, gavotte, minuet, bourrée and so on): even the Harlequins, Scaramouches, and other stock characters in the comic dances should use no step, figure or costume other than those usually employed in Italian theatres. He also noted that these characters have their own "absurd and burlesque" (*ridiculi e burleschi*) versions of these traditional steps.[7] For instance, the treatise contains several scenes for Scaramouche, the bad-tempered gentleman from Naples; in these dances, the performer should move with "long, unformed and heavy steps" (*grandi, lunghi, e spropositati passi*).[8]

The *New and Curious School* contains three dances for moving statues. The most elaborate of these occupies plates 12 to 17 in Part II, and depicts the animation and tussle of two stone servants in a palace. Plate 12 is reproduced here as Figure 1.1.[9] The curtain opens to reveal three figures, which remain motionless as the first half of the dance is played once. After point A has been reached a second time, the two outside figures jump down from their pedestals and begin the series of poses represented in subsequent images. Subsequent engravings represent something like a stop-motion wrestling match between the two figures: as the second half of the music sounds, they stand rigidly and shift their

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[6] The plates were created by the Nuremburg artist Johann Georg Puschner (1670-1720).

[7] Lambranzi concluded by assuring his audience that "I have myself performed these dances in the most distinguished theatres of Germany, Italy and France, and they are nearly all my own compositions" (*questi Balli io stesso li ho rapresentati sopra li principali Theatri in Germania, in Italia, e Francia e sono magior Parte di mia propria Inventione*); *Neue und curieuse theatralische Tantz-Schul*, Part I, 1. One can read in detail about Commedia-inflected steps in a treatise by one of the century's most prominent *grotteschi*, Gennaro Magri: *Trattato teorico-prattico di ballo* (Naples, 1779). This treatise is the subject of *The Grotesque Dancer on the Eighteenth-Century Stage: Gennaro Magri and His World*, ed. Rebecca Harris-Warrick and Bruce Alan Brown (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005).

[8] Lambranzi, *Neue und curieuse theatralische Tantz-Schul* Part I, 1.

[9] See also Wendy Heller, "Dancing Statues and the Myth of Venice," *Art History* 33/2 (2010), 306-307.

positions "on each musical beat or bar." All the while, the central figure remains motionless; at the end, the outside figures remount their pedestals and revert to their statuesque states. The music is simply entitled "Statue": it is abundant with melodic pictorialism: the stately dotted rhythms and arpeggiation of the first two measures represent the stateliness and immobility of the statues; the subsequent animation of the two figures coincides with the arrival of sixteenths and thirty-seconds. As the figures enact their shuddering tussle, the melody takes on a rigid, jerky contour, with a four-note figure temporarily establishing a triple meter. Though the diegesis supplies closure, with statues returning to statue form, the music seems to resist it: the frantic sixteenths return but in displaced relation to the barline, seemingly bringing the second half to another cadence in the dominant.

Figure 1.1 Plate 12 from Lambranzi, *Neue und Curieuse Tantz-Schule* (1716), Part II

Another of Lambranzi's statue dances can be found on plate 24 in Part I's collection of "national dances," and is reproduced here as Figure 1.2. As the curtain rises, the dancer is frozen on a decrepit stone podium amidst overgrown ruins. He stays motionless until the first half of the dance has been played once; when it repeats, he leaps from the pedestal and dances around the stage, performing "Scaramouche's steps, cabrioles and pirouettes." The music given at the top of the figure – a two-part Loure – is to be played two or three times. When it comes to an end, the dancer departs.[10] Lambranzi supplies no clue as to instrumentation or harmonisation, but custom, and the melody itself, would suggest nothing more exotic than violin-dominated string textures and the most basic harmonic progressions.

This dance contains a few points of ambiguity. The first concerns the identity of the figure: stone or flesh? The disintegrating pedestal and scenic ruins suggest that the figure is very old, quite possibly classical. And yet the costume and attitude place him firmly within the Commedia dell'Arte. The verbal indications are vague: caption and preface describe him first as "a lovely, motionless statue" and then, following the animation, by the name of Scaramuzza. Is Scaramouche himself therefore an animated statue, his awkward gait the result of stiff legs? Or was he merely hiding among the ruins for his own amusement, to leap out and frighten the tourist? The music provides no further clues: while the tunes associated with statues in Part II are rife with tone paintings, this particular one seems

[10] The preface supplies instructions in Italian: "All'aperto del Theatro si rappresenta questa bella statua immobile infino che la prima parte d'Aria sarà suonata e con la repetitione salta il Scaramuzza dal Piedistale, e fà li suoi belli passi alla Scaramuzza, Caprioli, e Piroletti, sin che l'Aria si suona 2 ò 3 volte alla ora si ritirá" ("At the opening of the stage the dancer represents this beautiful, motionless statue until the first half of the air is sounded, and as it repeats Scaramouche jumps from the pedestal and makes his lovely Scaramouche's steps, cabrioles, and pirouettes, until the air has been played two or three times at which point he departs"); *Neue und curieuse theatralische Tantz-Schul* Part I, page 2. The instructions given in German at the bottom of plate 26 differ from the Italian preface in a few details relating to the end of the dance: "nach 3. mahl gespielter Aria hat der tantz ein ende" ("after the air has been played three times the dance comes to an end").

oblivious to the action. Its lilting melody, dotted rhythms and repetition schemes place it

firmly within the domain of French courtly dance. The animation itself occurs in the liminal

space *between* musical events: after the end of the first statement and before its literal

repetition.

Also ambiguous is the relation of this dance to the treatise as a whole. Lambranzi

pretends to supply "fifty dances from different nations"; but what nation may be inferred

from this combination of a French courtly artefact and a Commedia *lazzo* within a setting of

classical ruins? The presence of Scaramuzzia suggests that this is an Italian dance: indeed,

the Commedia characters, with their acrobatic and often distorted motions, were

emblematic of "Italy" throughout Europe, just as clogs were indices of Holland and eunuchs

of the East (this language of "national" signifiers is employed throughout Lambranzi's

treatise).[11] Of course, in 1716 "Italy" existed only as historical memory and as a contested

literary and linguistic terrain (about which more below). By the time Lambranzi published

his treatise Italian comedians were perhaps the peninsula's most successful export: they

could be found in fairgrounds and theatres across Europe.[12] In the eighteenth century,

travellers visited simply to meet the past in the form of Roman ruins, Michelangelan

statuary and eventually the excavations around Vesuvius.[13] Italy's former literary

hegemony now belonged to France, whose language, like the steps of its *belle danse*, was in

use from Moscow to Gibraltar. Though it seems unlikely that Lambranzi imagined such a

pointed allegory, this dance does seem representative of his project as a whole. Cues to

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[11] On the nations represented within Lambranzi's treatise, see Daniel Heartz, "A Venetian Dancing Master Teaches the Forlana: Lambranzi's Balli Teatrali," *Journal of Musicology* 17/1 (1999), 136-151.

[12] Marian Hannah Winter, *The Pre-Romantic Ballet* (London: Pittman, 1974), 13.

[13] See, for instance, Clare Hornsby, ed., *The Impact of Italy: The Grand Tour and Beyond* (London: British School of Rome, 2000).

such a reading are displayed on the title page: in the upper half of the engraving, Athena holds a scroll, containing a Loure with French steps in Feuillet notation; below, Lambranzi-as-Scaramouche strikes his characteristic pose amongst a gallery of statues.

Figure 1.2 Plate 24 from Lambranzi, *Neue und Curieuse Tantz-Schule* (1716), Part 1

French and Italian Theatrical Dance Before Angiolini

Angiolini's training as a virtuoso dancer during the early 1740s would have versed him in
the techniques of the "belle danse" or "danse noble," if perhaps in an Italian dialect: those
steps, not coincidentally French in name, that formed the basis of theatrical and courtly
dance across Europe from the early seventeenth century into the nineteenth.[14] In the
French tradition and among its foreign derivations, these steps combined variously into
sub-genres such as the minuet, gavotte, gigue, sarabande, and so on, each with
corresponding musical indices. This is not, of course, to say that in being thus generic these
dances were referentially vacant; and as recent research has demonstrated, while the self-
styled reformers of dance such as Angiolini and his French rival Georges Noverre sought to
achieve a new degree of sustained, character-driven pantomime, French theatrical dance
had always included pantomime to varying degrees, even at the conservative Académie
Royale de Musique (the Opéra). Generally placed within operas, French theatrical dance
sequences from the seventeenth century or the first half of the eighteenth often assumed

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[14] These steps are transmitted in the notational system of Pierre Beauchamps, publicized by Raoul Auger Feuillet
(*Choréographie ou l'Art de Décrire la Danse par caractères, figures et signes démonstratifs*, Paris, 1700). Winter
wrote that Feuillet's manual achieved "the nearest to universal acceptance [of] any dance notation system," and
"firmly established French supremacy in almost all matters balletic': a supremacy that had been possessed by
Italian dance masters during the Renaissance (*The Pre-Romantic Ballet*, 45). The widespread use of the treatise in
the early eighteenth century is indicated by the geographical range of treatises that discuss them: they form the
core technique of dancing manuals from Germany (Johann Pasch's *Beschreibung wahrer Tanz-Kunst*, Frankfurt,
1707; Samuel Rudolph Behr's *Wohlgegründete Tantz-Kunst*, Leipzig, 1709; Gottfried Taubert's *Rechtschaffinen
Tanz-Meister*, Leipzig, 1717), France (Pierre Rameau's *Le Maître à danser,* Paris, 1725), Italy (Giambattista Dufort,
Trattato del ballo nobile... indirizzato all'eccellenza delle signore dame e de" signori cavalieri napolitani, Naples,
1728), and England (Kellon Tomlinson's *The Art of Dancing Explained by Reading and Figures*, London, 1735).
Predictably, and as Dufort confirmed, the theatrical style involved a more athletic, rigorous execution than the
courtly. Gennaro Magri's *Trattato teorico-prattico di ballo* (Naples, 1779) provides a later glimpse of an Italian
practice; see Sandra Noll Hammond's "International Elements of Dance Training in the Late Eighteenth Century," in
Rebecca Harris-Warrick and Bruce Alan Brown, eds., *The Grotesque Dancer on the Eighteenth-Century Stage*
(Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), 109-50.

the function of a group celebration or public festivity.[15] In these operas the dancers might

also act as bodily surrogates for a motionless chorus.[16] As Patricia Ranum has noted, we

have only to read the description of a solo sarabande in Father François Pomey's

Dictionnaire royal to understand the expressive potential of a "traditional" dance.[17] On the

Italian peninsula, the techniques of the French *belle danse* had been integrated with the

mime and acrobatics of fairground comedians and gymnasts over the course of the

seventeenth century.[18] Following operatic reforms around the turn of the eighteenth

century, Italian theatrical dance was dramatically and musically free-standing and occurred

between the acts of an opera.

Only a tiny fraction of the music for these dances has survived, and the richest

source, a collection of rehearsal scores for the entr'acte dances performed at Turin's Teatro

Regio between 1747 and 1762 comes from well within the sphere of French influence; but

we may sketch a few cautious assumptions about the forms and styles of Italian dance

scores on the basis of this surviving repertoire.[19] The suites composed for Italian theatrical

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[15] For a succinct introduction to dance within eighteenth-century French opera see Rebecca Harris-Warrick, "Ballet," in *The Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Opera*, ed. Pierpaolo Polzonetti and Anthony R. DelDonna (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 99-111.

[16] Rebecca Harris-Warrick and Carol G. Marsh, *Musical Theatre at the Court of Louis XIV: Le Mariage de la Grosse Cathos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). See also Thomas Betzwieser, "Musical setting and scenic movement: Chorus and *chœur dansé* in eighteenth-century Parisian Opéra," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 12/1 (2000): 1-28.

[17] Patricia Ranum, "Audible rhetoric and mute rhetoric: the 17th-century French Sarabande," *Early Music* 14/1 (1986): 22-39. The description of a sarabande as performed by a solo male dancer was included as an appendix to Pomey's *Dictionnaire royal* (1671); Ranum provides a transcription of the French original as well as an English translation (35).

[18] Winter has written, "the improvised Italian Comedy provided the background for action ballet in whatever tentative forms it is first manifest, and in whichever country it occurs," and further, "Ballet would not have developed in the same manner – in fact it could scarcely have developed at all – without the Italian comedians as a motivating force." *The Pre-Romantic Ballet*, 13.

[19] Though these three manuscript volumes provide only skeleton scores consisting of first violin and bass, they nonetheless reveal much about prevailing fashions of harmony, form, and melody in such music. The collection is currently housed at the Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia in Rome (G. Coll. Mus. 12, 13, 15) and includes music by such composers as Alessio Razetti, Rocco Gioanetti, and Giuseppe Antonio Le Messier. Six of Gioanetti's scores and six

dances seem to have consisted of a Sinfonia and between ten and twenty-five movements,

most of which were harmonically and thematically self-contained. Among these

movements we may observe many traditional dances, but also so-called character pieces,

sometimes labeled with the names of *Commedia dell'Arte* figures.[20] The latter are generally

resistant to categorization as dance genres but display a similar formal blueprint: they are

likewise in binary form with both sections repeated. Both in the Italian versions of French

dances and in the character pieces, a high degree of regularity results in a succession of

two-, four- and eight-bar phrases that is only occasionally disturbed. Milanese dance

theorist Giovenale Sacchi described the "satisfaction of the even numbers" in his little-

known *Dissertation on the Division of Time in Poetry, Dance, and Song* (1770):

> sonatas that are composed to accompany the dance are distinguished by one trait in
> particular, and that is their reliance on the even number. They are proceed with
> even numbers of bars, and further, four by four, and even more rigorously, eight by
> eight. ... Where measures are not equally distributed in music for the dance, neither
> the eye observing the dance, nor the ear that hears it will be entirely satisfied.
> (*Le sonate, che per servire a' balli composte sono, in una cosa da tutte le altre si*
> *distinguono; e questa si è, che vi si osserva il numero pari. Esse tutte si compiono con*
> *numero pari di Battute, e oltre a ciò, di quattro in quattro, e più rigorosamente di otto*
> *in otto Battute fanno cadenza; quegli ancora, che suonano, debbono bene marcarle*
> *tutte, premendo l'arco a tempo, d'onde avviene che i migliori Sonatori non sono*
> *sempre al ballo i più utili. ... Dove a caso le Battute non sieno egualmente compartite in*
> *una sonata da ballo, nè l'occhio veggendo, nè l'orecchio udendo si rimangono appieno*
> *satisfatti.*)

of Razetti's are reprinted in facsimile in *Balli teatrali a Venezia (1746-1859)*, vol. 2, Drammaturgia musicale veneta, vol. 30 (Milan: Ricordi, 1994). Lorenzo Tozzi provided a complete catalog of this collection in "Musica e ballo al Regio di Torino," *La danza italiana* 2 (Spring 1985): 5-21. See also Hansell's description of this source in "Theatrical Ballet and Italian Opera," 213-14.

[20] The Turin collection, for instance, contains movements labelled Arlecchino, Scaramoccia, Pellegrino, Policinella, the Dottore, and Pantalone, as well as numerous unlabelled character pieces.

Sacchi even went so far as to suggest that the best instrumentalists in an opera orchestra should not perform the music for the dance, as they would be less likely to accent each strong beat.[21]

If contemporary accounts are to be trusted, the preternatural athleticism of the Italian dancer was not simply the province in the comic genre. Italian dancers employed an acrobatic style "pantomimically diffused through the whole body" even when presenting serious or mythological themes.[22] Notwithstanding the popularity of Italian performers both on the peninsula and beyond, including a particularly vibrant practice in Paris, the Italian tradition and its techniques came to suffer from broad critical disparagement and suspicion when considered alongside the French *danse noble*, even among Italians themselves. This was owing in part to changing notions of a serious-comic divide within pantomime, and the ways such a divide ought to be reflected by dancers' bodies. A natural (read: French) physicality was appropriate for serious protagonists; while the Italian practice, and the whiff of the fairground that seemed to cling to it, was increasingly considered suitable only to the comic genre, and labeled the *stile grottesco* even on the peninsula.[23] As Algarotti noted, the Italian style "is nothing more… than a leaping about up to the point of exhaustion, a dishonest jumping that should never earn the applause of refined persons," while "in the serious or heroic ballets, one is forced to confess that the

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[21] Giovenale Sacchi, *Della divisione del tempo nella musica, nel ballo e nella poesia* (Milan: Malatesta, 1770; facs. reprint Bologna: Forni, 1969), 46-47. Page numbers refer to modern edition. Though Sacchi's treatise dates from 1770, his position relating dance meters to Greek poetic meters is old-fashioned. By his own admission, his principal sources – namely, Giambattista Dufort's *Trattatto del ballo nobile* (1728) – dates from forty years earlier.

[22] "Theatrical Ballet and Italian Opera," 206. This oft-cited passage is from Giovanni-Andrea Gallini, *A Treatise on the Art of Dancing* (London: Dodsley, 1762; reprint, New York: Dance Horizons, 1967), 51.

[23] By far the richest source on late-eighteenth-century Italian comic dance is Harris-Warrick and Brown, *The Grotesque Dancer on the Eighteenth-Century Stage*; see in particular Linda M. Tomko, "Magri's *Grotteschi*," 151-72, and Kathleen Hansell's appendix "Grotteschi in Italy, 1750-1800: A Preliminary Tabulation," 279-93, which lists all the dancers known to have performed *grottesco* roles during those years.

French conquer both ourselves and all other nations."[24] Beginning in the 1740s and '50s,

Italian theatres imported French choreographers and dancers, or foreign-trained Italians.[25]

These ballets would often feature French dancers as protagonists, with Italians performing

villains, comedians and *mezzo-carattere* parts in their native style.[26] Hansell's argument, on

the basis of dancer salaries and categorization within libretti of *ballerini seri* and *grotteschi*,

that this era saw the "rise of the *grottesco*," thus deserves qualification with regard to the

kinds of subjectivity to which these national styles had access.

Angiolini's Viennese Writings

Thus in the dissertations accompanying his important Viennese "reform" ballets, Angiolini

and his collaborators positioned his project not as the continuation of an Italian tradition

but as the heir of a French one.[27] This might have been considered particularly necessary

since the year preceding the first of these prefaces (*Don Juan*, 1761) had seen the

appearance of Noverre's groundbreaking theory of pantomime, the *Lettres sur la danse et*

sur les ballets (1760), to which Angiolini's project was in direct competition, and which had

been unstinting in its dismissal of Italian dancing.[28] Furthermore, *Don Juan* had been a

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[24] Algarotti, "Dei balli," in *Saggi sopra l'opera in musica* (originally published in Venice, 1755); quoted and translated in "Theatrical Ballet and Italian Opera," 200. Other prominent eighteenth-century critics of the Italian style included John Weaver (*An Essay towards an History of Dancing*, London, 1712), Charles de Brosses (a series of letters written during a tour of Italy in 1739 and 1740 and circulated in manuscript), Georges Noverre (*Lettres sur la danse*, 1760), Francesco Milizia (*Trattato completo, formale e materiale del Teatro*, Venice, 1772), and even Angiolini himself, as we will see.

[25] Hansell, "Theatrical Ballet and Italian Opera," 200-201.

[26] *Ibid.*, 200-207, 216, 245; "Opera and ballet," 689-705.

[27] Brown's claim that Angiolini's *Don Juan* was "the first complete drama in dance since Antiquity, prior to and independently of Noverre in Stuttgart," might seem overstated, given the innovations of Hilverding during the 1740s, and Italian choreographers of pantomime such as Francesco Salamoni on the peninsula. Turin's Teatro Regio featured an *Armida* in the first entr'acte to *Antigona* (1752), for which the music survives; this indicates that the dance was serious in tone, and contains a few, very brief sections of through-composed music interspersed with movements in the traditional dance genres.

[28] Georges Noverre, *Lettres sur la danse et sur les ballets* (Stuttgart and Lyons, 1760; reprint New York: Broude, 1967); translated by Cyril W. Beaumont as *Letters on Dancing and Ballets* (Brooklyn: Dance Horizons, 1966). English quotations are from Beaumont's translation unless otherwise noted, and page numbers refer to this edition.

repertory piece of *Commedia dell'Arte* troupes and Italian fairground theatres since the previous century.[29] The other ballets to include a statement (ostensibly) from the choreographer were *La Citera assediata* (1762) and *Sémiramis* (1765); the latter was based on Voltaire's play of the same name, and the preface was entitled "Dissertation sur les ballets pantomimes," in an obvious parallel to Voltaire's "Dissertation sur la tragédie ancienne et moderne" accompanying the original play (1749).[30] The first orders of business in this careful tweaking of Angiolini's image were to name a non-Italian as a teacher (his Viennese predecessor, Franz Hilverding, who had studied with Michel Blondi at the Opéra), and an ancient Greek genre of mimed theatre as a model. On first glance, Angiolini's claims about his project are very similar to those of Noverre's *Lettres*: both purported to reproduce the classical art of pantomime as danced by Pylades and Bathyllus; both claimed that the gestures they employ are imitative of nature.[31] But Angiolini's early theorization is remarkable in a few ways, particularly in its use of language, rather than painting, as the principal referent for mimetic gesture, and consequently in his theorization of pantomimic music as a linear and pseudo-linguistic phenomenon.

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[29] In these, the scene involving the moving statue was the *sine qua non*. See Nino Pirrotta, "The Traditions of Don Juan Plays and Comic Operas," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 107 (1980): 60-70; and Charles C. Russell, *The History of the Don Juan Legend Before Mozart* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993).

[30] Although these prefaces bore Angiolini's name only, Calzabigi later claimed to have had an uncredited role in writing both the *Don Juan* preface and the "Dissertation sur les ballets pantomimes" of *Sémiramis* – an assertion that Bruce Alan Brown and Kathleen Hansell have taken seriously, not least because those essays are far more concise and elegant than writings indisputably by Angiolini himself. Of the three prefaces, only that of *La Citera assediata* is in Italian, while the other two are in French. Nonetheless, in the present circumstances we will consider this early series of prefaces to be a legitimate reflection of the choreographer's aims during his tenure in Vienna.

[31] As Ingrid Brainard has noted, these choreographers' positioning of contemporary pantomime within discourses of classical revival was derived from distinguished French writers of the preceding and current century, including Michel de Pure, Claude François Ménestrier, the Abbé Dubos, and Louis de Cahusac. "The Speaking Body: Gasparo Angiolini's *rhétorique muette* and the *ballet d'action* in the Eighteenth Century," in *Critica Musica: Essays in Honor of Paul Brainard*, ed. John Knowles (Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach, 1996): 15-56.

The ancient practice of bodily mimesis – construed by Angiolini – consisted not only of reproducing historical or fictional actions, but of depicting the characters' emotions with expressive actions (*gestes*). Strung together, Angiolini maintained, the ancient mimes' expressive motions created much the same effect as a story told in words: "these movements, these gestures, must have formed, so to speak, a continuous oration … a type of declamation for the eyes" (*Don Juan*, [3]). To reproduce this practice of dramatic pantomime, Angiolini maintained, a choreographer should use the techniques of the *belle danse*, which were a kind of corporeal "alphabet."[32] But previous choreographers had been like children, unable to group "letters" together in meaningful ways (*Don Juan*, [9]). These individual graphemes were strung into a meaningful syntax by two linear streams communicating the same content simultaneously through different sense organs: gesture for the eyes, and music for the ears.

These two streams had to function in a carefully calibrated combination, the music varying according to what affect the actor wished to express, whether "love or hate, fury or despair" (*Don Juan*, [3]). In a sort of wordless ventriloquism, the offstage orchestra acted as the displaced voice, while the mute dancers performed: "it is the music that speaks; we do nothing but gesture" (*Don Juan*, [14]). This notion was reiterated in the *Sémiramis* preface: "Music is the poetry of pantomime: we can do as little without music as an actor can do without words… We base the steps, gestures, attitudes, and expressions on the roles we play, on the music that comes from the orchestra… Everything must speak in this music."

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[32] In the matter of "la danse méchanique" Angiolini differed substantially from Noverre, whose pantomime sequences "avoided any semblance of dance as it was then understood" (Hansell, "Opera and ballet," 709) and who maintained that the traditional dance positions were "good to know and better still to forget" (105). Nonetheless, Noverre had employed the metaphor of the alphabet to similar aims in the second "Letter": "Dancing is possessed of all the advantages of a beautiful language, yet it is not sufficient to know the alphabet alone. But when a man of genius arranges the letters to form words and connects the words to form sentences, it will cease to be dumb" (20).

Noverre had voiced a similar notion, though in his preferred comparison – of the choreographer to the painter – pantomime was a series of pictures for which music was one of a few subsidiary elements providing colour, light and shade.[33] Angiolini's system functioned much as had those ancient dramas that employed two persons per role: one actor offstage to voice a text (in this formulation, the orchestra), another onstage to act it out, bodily but silently (*Don Juan*, [14-15]). The more the dancers could appropriate the music for their expressive needs, the more successful they would be in making their language understood (*Don Juan*, [15]). This notion of appropriation is important. It claimed a crucial power reversal in the production of dance music: choreographers in Italian theatres traditionally relied on an orchestral violinist to compose the scores, and thus often had to match their creations to melodies and rhythms not perfectly suited to dance.

In the second of these prefaces, to *La Citera assediata*, Angiolini expanded further on this notion of calibration. These passages are of particular interest to musicologists. He reiterated his earlier claim that the role of music in a ballet was to communicate the affective content of the plot: "the sublimity of music ... is to communicate the Affects, and to raise passions to whatever level."[34] What is more, he maintained, music's affective potential was bestowed by Nature. This naturalness allowed it to supersede linguistic barriers, acting directly even on the "ears of a listener untutored in the technicalities of music"

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[33] Noverre thus summarized this principal metaphor for pantomime – one which reappears again and again throughout the letters – at the beginning of his *Lettres*: "A ballet is a picture, or rather a series of pictures connected one with the other by the plot which provides the theme of the ballet; the stage is, as it were, the canvas on which the composer [i.e., the choreographer] expresses his ideas; the choice of music, scenery and costumes are his colours; the composer is the painter" (10). Nonetheless, we may note that what I have indicated as the choreographers' principal referents for their pantomime – language for Angiolini and painting for Noverre – were predominant but not exclusive: in the fifth "Letter," Noverre suggested that "well-composed music should paint and speak," with dancing as "the echo which will repeat everything it articulates" (37), while in the preface to *Don Juan* Angiolini compared Hilverding's pantomime to "a picturesque and animated composition of a grand tableau by Raphael or Rubens" ([10]).

[34] Page numbers refer to the version of the Preface printed in "*Traditionen – Neuansätze*".

(*gl'orecchi di chi non conosce la Mecanica della Musica - La Citera assediata*, 141). But the development of national tastes – Angiolini mentioned French and Italian styles – had corrupted the purity of this communication, adding a learned component and thus a regional one. In order to "crush these prejudices created by a corrupt taste" (*La Citera assediata*, 141) the composer must rediscover a more natural music.

Angiolini suggested that composers who wished to tap into music's Orphic potential needed first to dispense with excessive diminutions, trills, runs, and warblings. (These are, of course, the usual suspects in contemporary opera criticism as well.) More than this, though, they must rediscover the art of expressive instrumentation. Modern music was artificially weighted toward notes; however, in reality "it is the instrument, and not the note, that produces the effect" (*La Citera assediata*, 141). In vain did composers use high-pitched or sweet-toned instruments to communicate terror or courage (*Per isvegliar terrore, o pur coraggio in vano adopransi i Flauti, i Violini, i Violoncelli – La Citera assediata*, 141). While melody, harmony, and tempo must concur, a composer could not hope to create a particular effect "without the correct and varied application of instruments" (*La Melodia, la Modulazzione, ed i variati moti devon concorrervi, ma senza la giusta, e variata applicazione degl'Istrumenti mai non si speri un particolare effetto – La Citera assediata*, 141). Though Angiolini maintained that the art of expressive orchestration was ancient and had been employed to advantage in the music of twenty years previous, his theory on the centrality of instrumental sounds seems to be in the vanguard: it is exactly contemporary with those of Rousseau's writings on instrumental colour that Emily Dolan has identified as ground-breaking. How might Angiolini simultaneously aver a preference for the musical style of twenty years earlier, and write progressively on instrumental sound? The key may

lie partly in his privileging of immediacy: if instrumental sound acted directly on the

spectator, then the properties of that sound were propelled into the foreground. As Dolan

has noted, instrumental sounds gained in aesthetic value as the human voice gradually lost

ground: a trajectory that spanned from the early 1760s to Berlioz's *Grand Traité

d'instrumentation et d'orchestration modernes* (1843).[35] But in pantomime, as we have seen,

the voice was not so much ignored as displaced. It was dangerous because of its ability to

sabotage the communicative enterprise of mimetic motion. In Angiolini's system, the

orchestra "spoke," like a collection of displaced vocal cords, its utterances gaining

specificity from the gestures of the bodies onstage. According to this principle, excessive

variation of pitch detracted from the focus on music as pure sound: for this reason, division

and ornamentation should be kept to a minimum. Angiolini called for dance orchestras to

be increased in size so that a wider range of instruments could accommodate a larger

gamut of affects: "orchestras [now] are not made up to be capable of arousing the various

passions and situations that a well-planned staged event must include" (*La Citera assediata*,

142). It is also possible, though, that here again Angiolini was advocating the emulation of

French practices that had preceded their theorization by decades. This may be due partly

to practicalities: while Italian dance orchestras were considerably smaller than their

operatic counterparts, with principal players resting between the acts of the opera, French

dance music had always been written with full resources. And while the surviving Italian

dance music of the early to mid-eighteenth century (including, indeed, his own) seems to

support Angiolini's complaints of violin-dominated textures, French composers such as

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[35] Emily Dolan, *The Idea of Timbre in the Age of Haydn* (Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 2006).

Rameau consistently varied the instrumentation of dance music to expressive ends, both between movements and within them.[36]

How did Angiolini's Viennese pantomimes look? Alas, much must remain conjecture, since none of his choreographies has survived.[37] But in the last of his Viennese writings, the "Dissertation sur les ballets pantomimes," he provided us with some notion of the style of dance he preferred: "with regard to the lofty dance style of Dupré, of Vestris, and their predecessors… everyone knows that it is the most beautiful, the most elegant, but also the most difficult" ([48-49]); while the Italian style was "the lowest of all" ([43-44]).[38] In other words, "speaking dance" had a French accent. Serious pantomime based on the technique of the French *belle danse* had much the same effect as the ideal music Angiolini had previously described: it acted directly on the spectator. The audience member's reaction would be as immediate and physical as if he himself were in the situation represented: he would "feel those internal tremblings that are the language with which horror, pity, and terror speak within us, and that bring us to the point of growing pale, sighing, shuddering, and bursting into tears."[39] The Italian style had the opposite effect, leaving its spectators

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[36] See, for instance, the imaginative use of winds in the opera-ballet *Les fêtes d'Hébé* (1739), which prompted flights of fancy from commentators since its first performance; Cuthbert Morton Girdlestone has called this "one of the most impressionistic pieces in eighteenth-century music" (*Jean-Philippe Rameau: His Life and Work* [first published 1957; reissue Mineola, NY: Dover, 1969], 371). See also Mary Cyr, "Rameau's *Les fêtes d'Hébé*" (Ph.D. Diss, University of California Berkeley, 1975), 22-24; and Rebecca Harris-Warrick, "Ballet, pantomime, and the sung word in the operas of Rameau," in *Coll'astuzia, col giudizio: Essays in Honor of Neal Zaslaw*, ed. Cliff Eisen (Ann Arbor: Steglein, 2009), 31-61.

[37] Brainard has suggested that such techniques changed very little over the course of the eighteenth century, on the basis of contemporary manuals of rhetorical gesture, English mime John Weaver's *The Loves of Mars and Venus* (London, 1717), and sources from the visual arts such as Charles Le Brun's *Méthode pour apprendre à dessiner les passions* (1698); "The Speaking Body," 27-56. Brainard's hypothesis relies heavily on the research of Dene Barnett (*The Art of Gesture: The Practices and Principles of Eighteenth-Century Acting*, with Jeanette Massy-Westropp [Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1987]).

[38] This treatise also named two intermediate categories between the French and Italian poles: a "comic" style that eschews acrobatics (for which the comedy of Molière provided legitimation); and *demi-caractère*, employed in pastoral or Anacreontic dances like those performed at the Opéra.

[39] Angiolini, *Dissertation sur les ballets pantomimes*. Quoted and translated in LeGuin, *Boccherini's Body*, 93.

indifferent: "it cannot excite anything in the viewers but astonishment mixed with fear, in seeing their fellow humans in danger of killing themselves at any moment" ([43-44]). At this point it is worth noting the remarkable ability possessed by French cultural objects of that time to traverse boundaries under the cloak of the "natural." As we will see, the notion that things Italian had a regionally circumscribed identity, while things French were more natural and thus more geographically mobile, was one that held considerable currency through the course of the eighteenth century, notwithstanding the prominent counterexample of Italian opera. Elisabeth LeGuin has documented the rise of what she calls the "reform body," exhibiting a corporeal softness and receptivity (*le moelleux*) that was – at that time – predominantly understood as a French phenomenon.[40] Theorists of language accounted for the supremacy of the French language by linking it to a lost Eden of natural bodily expressiveness. Such arguments also served to justify "ghettoizing" Italian culture for French gain. Within these writings, Italy was almost aggressively posited as a land of superstition and poverty, long fallen from its Renaissance glory: to be visited and admired for its archaeological wonders, the "land of statues" that coexisted with the (barely) living.[41]

But Italian writers in many fields adopted similar tactics in order to undermine prevailing cultural institutions on the peninsula. As we will see, a handful of Lombard *illuministi* came to hold the Tuscan language – its musicality, and aptness for poetry –

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[40] Angiolini's Viennese prefaces constitute important sources for LeGuin's investigations. *Boccherini's Body*, 65-104.

[41] For instance, Charles de Brosses wrote of Rome in 1740: "Imagine a people of whom a quarter are priests, one quarter statues, a third quarter scarcely work, and the fourth quarter do nothing whatsoever." Quoted in Daniel Heartz, *Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style, 1720-1780* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004), 51. On these notions as they were expressed by Voltaire, and on Voltaire's self-serving appropriation of Cesare Beccaria's *Dei delitti e delle pene*, see "L'Italia di Voltaire," in Gianmarco Gaspari, *Letteratura delle riforme: Da Beccaria a Manzoni* (Palermo: Sellerio, 1990), 21-34.

responsible for the cultural ossification and political fragmentation of its people, holding up French, the language of prose, as an ideal.[42] And following his return to Italy in 1773, Angiolini would position his music-mime within this broad project to naturalize French artefacts, possibly to political ends. Not by coincidence did the choreographer arrange to have his *Dissertation sur les ballets pantomimes* published concurrently in Milan: even as early as 1765, he knew that his writings would find a sympathetic audience there.

Language and Pantomime

The preface to *La Citera assediata* drew a telling distinction between the substance of verbal arts and their materials: true, Angiolini admitted, pantomime could not "translate" wordplay into motion; but, he asked, "do poetry, puns, word games, and sentences generate true Drama?" These had been a standard list of offenders at least since John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, whose sections on language sketched out a kind of antique semiotics and warned against languages whose indices and referents were not "regularly and permanently united in nature." But it was among the French writers of the generations following Locke that verbal language and other sign systems were systematically evaluated for their ability to collapse signifier and signified into a single entity. In his seminal 1719 essay on the fine arts, Abbé Dubos distinguished between artificial signs, which were created by humans, and natural signs, which made themselves understood immediately via the sense organs: "the sign which receives part of its force and

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[42] These stereotypes – the "poetic genius" of Italian and the rationality of French – pervaded eighteenth-century linguistic theories from both countries; their terms were famously laid out in the so-called "Bouhours-Orsi polemic" of the turn of the century. The opening sally was *La manière de bien penser dans les ouvrages d'esprit* (1687) by the Jesuit lexicographer Dominique Bouhours, which proclaimed the superiority of French and suggested that the failings of Italian could be ascribed to weaknesses in its national culture. The Bolognese aristocrat Gian Giuseppe Orsi responded with the *Considerazioni sopra un famoso libro franzese intitolato Della maniera di ben pensare nelle opere di spirito* (1703), and the quarrel between Bouhours' supporters and Orsi's continued through the 1710s and '20s. See Paola Gambarota, *Irresistible Signs: The Genius of Language and Italian National Identity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011).

signification from nature is more potent and operates more effectively upon us than the one which owes all its energy to chance, or to the caprice of the institutor."[43] Unsurprisingly, the mimetic arts were praised in such writings for not requiring a learned component: in other words, for the immediacy of their meaning. Among these perhaps the foremost was gesture, or "the language of signs": a prominence no doubt owing to gesture's perceived origins within the nervous system. How these impulses might "surface" in bodily motion or vocalization was the subject of wide-ranging investigations spanning fine arts, fiction, philosophy, and medical discourse.[44]

Perhaps the most prominent theory came from Étienne Bonnot, Abbé de Condillac, a radical disciple of Lockean empiricism, and Angiolini's most important influence. Rejecting all forms of innate cognition, including ideas, he devoted much of his output to discovering and describing the way people learned, and learned to communicate. His early *Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines* (1744) offered an Edenic scenario to account for the development of language. A young man and woman are alone together in the wilderness, and their first gestures and cries are involuntary responses to pleasant or painful associations (Condillac called this original system the "langage d'action"). In order to survive, they invent a means of communicating with one another, deploying these signs at will; this system, born of necessity, set in motion the more complex developments of advanced verbal language. Like Dubos, then, Condillac separated the "natural" signs (cries, gestures) that arose from the unmediated reactions of the physical mechanism –a man

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[43] Dubos, *Réflexions critiques sur sur la poésie et sur la peinture* (Paris: Mariette, 1719); quoted and translated in Sophia Rosenfeld, *A Revolution in Language: The Problem of Signs in Eighteenth-Century France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 34.

[44] On these investigations in France, see chapter 1, "The Gestural Origins of Semiosis in Society: An Enlightenment Solution, 1745-60," in Sophia Rosenfeld's *A Revolution in Language*, 13-56.

might cry out and move away when burned – from the artificial language born of understanding, communicative intention, and the recollection of natural signs in the absence of their signifiers.

Condillac believed that the original "langage d'action" was the ancestor of all modern forms of communication: "it has produced every art proper to express our thoughts; the art of gesture, dancing, speech, declamation, the art of notation, the art of pantomimes, music, poetry, eloquence, writing, and the different characters of language."[45] Evidently recalling Locke's warnings, Condillac proclaimed the restorative effects of his discovery: "this history of language will disclose the circumstances in which the signs were imagined; it will allow us to understand their true meanings, and will prevent abuse."[46] A linguistic archaeology, as it were, might allow the recovery of the original set of signs, both sonic and gestural – thus bypassing modern language's arbitrary combination of signifiers and signifieds in favour of a collapsed system of icons built on basic bodily impulses.

In this work, Condillac did not yet describe how sensory impressions could culminate in motion or vocalization; such considerations, though, seemed to be current as thinkers both medical and philosophical set about to uncover pre-lapsarian systems of understanding based on the manipulation or suppression of individual senses. The "past" imagined here occupied a strangely liminal space between phylogeny and ontogeny: it signified both the modern individual's earliest cognitive development, and the

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[45] *Il a produit tous les arts qui sont propres à exprimer nos pensées; l'art des gestes, la danse, la parole, la déclamation, l'art de la noter, celui des pantomimes, la musique, la poësie, l'éloquence, l'écriture et les différens caractères des langues.* Condillac, *Essai sur l'origine des connoissances humaines: ouvrage où l'on réduit à un seul principe tout ce qui concerne l'entendement humain* (Amsterdam: Pierre Mortier, 1746), xiv. On Condillac's treatment of music in the *Essai*, see Downing A. Thomas, *Music and the Origins of Language: Theories from the French Enlightenment* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), Chapter 3: "Music theory and the genealogy of knowledge in Condillac's *Essai sur l'origine des connoissances humaines*," 57-81.
[46] *Cette histoire du langage montrera les circonstances où les signes ont été imaginés, elle en fera connoître le vrai sens, apprendra à en prévenir les abus. Ibid.*

development of society from its own infancy. And yet these were pasts that had never

really existed, or at least could not be proven. Recovering objects from them thus involved

a bizarre archaeology that straddled the real and the imaginary. Ironically, much of what

had been "lost" could be uncovered by observing individuals with sensory disabilities: the

blind, the deaf, or the mute (ontogeny), or aboriginals (phylogeny – gazing on a society in a

primitive state, as though looking back through time at society's infancy). Within medical

research, the senses were considered for the first time as fundamentally isolated from one

another.[47] During these decades there also developed a literary genre that employed

thought experiments or thinly veiled allegories to illustrate the restorative effects of

sensory isolation or deprivation. In 1750, Pierre-Charles Fabiot Aunillon published the

story of an island of mutes who communicated only via the "natural" expressiveness of the

body: free from the corrupting influence of verbal language, their society was never

troubled by discord or argument; they lived in silent, peaceful accord until disturbed by an

emissary from modern Europe. Diderot's "Lettre sur les sourds et muets" sought an "ordre

naturel" by "translating" the sign language of a mute, while his "Lettre sur les aveugles à

l'usage de ceux qui voient" instructed readers in the potential benefits of sight deprivation.

Condillac himself returned to the question of the senses in his *Traité des sensations* (1754).

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[47] Condillac and Diderot were greatly influenced by the experiments of English surgeon William Cheselden (1688-1752), on a blind man granted sight for the first time. Robert Jütte, *A History of the Senses: From Antiquity to Cyberspace*, translated by James Lynn (Cambridge: Polity, 2004), 133. For an overview of these experiments, see Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 31-86.

Condillac's Statue (Paris, 1754)

The *Traité des sensations* (1754) focused exclusively on the internal workings of human beings, rather than on the social development of mutually understood signs. It demonstrated the gradual formation of complex pre-linguistic mental capacities based solely on information received through the senses. [48] No less groundbreaking, though, was Condillac's organization of this experiment around a popular theatrical device: the moving statue. Carefully controlling the readerly experience, Condillac asked his audience to imagine a statue with the un-activated organs of a human being. He then granted this imaginary statue one single avenue of sensory input, the sense of smell. From the impressions gained through its nose, the statue experienced pleasure and pain, basic sensations understood through the higher faculty (thereby created) of "attention." The next faculty to be created was that of memory: a simple, mechanical procedure, accomplished by placing a repeating sequence of objects beneath the statue's nose. From the sorting of various stimuli by way of comparison, the statue then acquired the faculty of judgment. In subsequent chapters, Condillac varied the experiment to discuss the cognitive faculties of statues in other extreme states of sensory deprivation: after "Man limited to the sense of smell" came "Man limited to the sense of hearing," "Man limited to the sense of taste," and "Man limited to the sense of sight." Once he had established the various formative effects of each sense in isolation, Condillac began to investigate various combinations: "Man with touch and smell combined," and so on.

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[48] *Traité des sensations, à Madame la Comtesse de Vassé, par M. l'Abbé de Condillac* (Paris: Bure, 1754). Translated by Geraldine Carr as *Condillac's Treatise on the Sensations* (Los Angeles: University of Southern California Press, 1930). Page numbers and quotations are from this translation, unless otherwise noted.

The keystone of this argument was the final sense: touch. For Condillac, touch signified consciousness of one's body and the ability to move it. Touch was the "lowest level of feeling" or "the *fundamental feeling*": "it is at this play of the machine that animal life begins. It depends uniquely upon it." (75) From touch came what Condillac called the "I": the statue may draw its hand along itself and discover that the various parts of its body are connected and have extension through space. Most importantly, through touch the statue can discover motion. This portion of the argument is crucial: his theory of the "langage d'action" (advanced in the *Essay*) required that bodily motion be the unmediated result of sensations. Predictably, Condillac's mechanism of movement was powered by pleasure and pain: pleasure prolonged repose, but pain triggered a muscle contraction, causing the affected body part to be moved away. The statue's first motions were pure, uncontaminated by intention or learned behaviours: "it moves, naturally, mechanically, by instinct and without knowing that it does it." The statue's discovery of the "I" would naturally lead it to discover other bodies, which it will identify as "not I" because in touching those things "the 'I' does not reply." (89)

Touching the things around it, moving automatically in search of pleasure and in flight from pain, Condillac's statue would gradually learn through trial and error to become master of its own mechanism:

> It will make many attempts [to regulate its movements], will repeat them over and over again until it succeeds. It will notice wrong movements and avoid them. It will notice those which responded to its desires, and repeat them. In a word, it will proceed tentatively and will form by degrees a habit of movements proper for its preservation. Then there will be movements corresponding to the desires of its soul. Then will it be moved by its will. (90)

Simply by moving around the statue would acquire the capacity for enjoyment, curiosity, idea creation, abstract and complex judgments, reflection, time perception, and

imagination. These faculties all preceded verbal language: they were formed in conjunction with motion and touch. Condillac's "langage d'action" involved using these unmediated responses to stimuli as a form of communication to others: because the gestures and cries were so natural, the individual who observed them in others was able to associate them immediately with meaning, without the need for education.

Thus the statue's awakening and first movements represent the crucial nexus of non-being and being, the transition from cold marble to supple "I." This was an odd move for a philosopher so opposed to the metaphysical: by using a statue rather than, say, an inanimate body or an infant, Condillac was distancing himself from human ontogeny and any conceivable relation to medical discourse or the real. And yet perhaps it was not so strange. By using a statue, Condillac placed the experiment within the domain of the aesthetic object, and its motions within the realm of the theatrical: what is theatre, after all, if not art in motion? The point is made clearer if we consider that Rameau's "acte de ballet" *Pigmalion* had received its premiere just seven years earlier, and quickly became one of the composer's most popular works, revived as recently as 1752 at the Opéra; the famous pantomime of Marie Sallé remained in the popular imagination.[49] Indeed, considered thus, the treatise begins to resemble the extended contemplation of an aesthetic object. It created, purposefully and unmistakably, a blank presence onto which the readers could project themselves, to feel the statue's tinglings in their own eyes, nose, fingertips.[50]

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[49] According to Graham Sadler, Rameau's *Pigmalion* was revived up to 200 times at court or at the opera between its premiere on 27 August 1748 and its last revival that century, in 1781; these include stagings every year between 1751 and '54, many of which with the famous haute-contre Pierre Jélyotte, who had created the role. 1753 also saw a parody of this work, entitled *L'Origine des marionettes*.

[50] On the influence of Condillac's *Traité* upon early nineteenth-century literary and musical discourses, see Leslie David Blasius, "The Mechanics of Sensation and the Construction of the Romantic Musical Experience," in *Music Theory in the Age of Romanticism*, ed. Ian Bent (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 3-24.

Condillac opened his *Treatise* with a call for precisely this kind of reflexive absorption. In the "Avis important au lecteur" he asked readers to imagine themselves as the statue in question, so that they could not only observe but also participate in the gradual awakening:

> I wish the reader to notice particularly that it is most important for him to put himself in imagination exactly in the place of the statue we are going to observe. He must enter into its life, begin where it begins, have but one single sense when it only has one, acquire only the ideas which it acquires, contract only the habits which it contracts: in a word he must fancy himself to become just what the statue is. (xxxvii)

In this formulation, therefore, the statue became a foundation for aesthetic engagement, permitting the reader to uncover a pre-linguistic self through progressively attending to sensations.

Language Reform in the Land of Statues

The closer a vernacular could come to the language of gestures and spontaneous cries – the more its natural, bodily component outweighed its artificial one – the better served would be the nation where it was spoken: and it is within this context that we must understand the projects of linguistic reform under discussion here. This linguistic turn impinged significantly on nationalist discourses, relating the so-called "spirit of languages" to the natures and politics of their peoples; for the relation of French to Italian, and the French to the Italians, the terms laid out decades earlier in the Bouhours-Orsi debate provided an effective and robust point of departure. Some contemporaries of Condillac attempted to demonstrate the innate symbolism of certain phonemes, tracing them back to the Eden of his spontaneous "langage d'action." Charles de Brosses, for example, imagined that modern verbal language had "primitive roots," derived from Condillac's original monosyllables, and which the latter incorporated into his *Grammaire* of 1775: for instance, "fl-" indicated

fluidity; "st-" fixity; and "tr-" evoked a body slipping between two others.[51] Predictably, French theorists argued their language to be the most natural and clearest of vernaculars, and the most suitable for direct, scientific, and rational prose.[52] French's direct subject-verb-object syntax (*la période*), formerly justified as more rational, gained a new critical apparatus that justified it anew as more natural (*l'ordre naturel*). Further, French had the most efficient correspondence of Words to Things of any language; Condillac himself noted proudly that French was the only language without any synonyms.[53] Notwithstanding the contributions of Rousseau, such arguments for the superiority of French continued through the 1770s and "80s, and such works as Rivarol's *De l'universalité de la langue française*, which argued presciently for policies of *francisation* throughout the civilized world.

By contrast, Italian was perceived to be "sick from an excess of literariness," in the words of language historian Claudio Marazzini.[54] While Italian writers from Muratori to Leopardi sought to argue the advantages of Italian – the "poetic freedom" that inhered in its abundance of synonyms, its natural resonance, its tolerance of inversions – the fact remained that its international status was in steady decline throughout the century while that of French was on the rise. Opera was virtually its only literary export. Undertakings such as the *Encyclopédie* were unthinkable on the peninsula, impeded by literary institutions and the censorial arms of foreign dominion. In the early 1760s, a concentrated assault on Italian was launched by a small but important circle of Milanese thinkers, including the brothers Pietro and Alessandro Verri, and Cesare Beccaria. These men sought

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[51] Claudio Marazzini, "Le teorie," in *Storia della lingua italiana*, Luca Serianni and Pietro Trifone, eds. (Turin: Einaudi, 1993) Vol. I: *I luoghi della codificazione*, 298.

[52] *Ibid*., 291-5; Alfredo Schiaffini, "Aspetti della crisi linguistic italiana del settecento," *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie* 57/2-4 (1937): 275-95.

[53] Condillac, *L'art d'écrire* (Geneva; Avignon, 1789); quoted in Schiaffini, "Aspetti della crisi linguistica," 284.

[54] Marazzini, "Le teorie," 294.

to replicate the *philosophes*' well-organized publishing culture and mass-education projects explicitly for the benefit of Italians. While we should be wary of subsuming such *illuministi* within a Risorgimento teleology, we may nonetheless observe that their goal was indeed an Italy of sorts, if not *the* Italy that came into being in the nineteenth century. Calling itself the Society of Fists (Società de' Pugni, or sometimes the Accademia de' Pugni), that Lombard circle aimed at a national audience ("L'Italia"), defined by geographical area ("from the Kingdom of Calabria to the Alps").[55] The Italy they sought, although still divided politically, would be unified by language and an enlightened "universal culture." In their view, the prevailing climate of superstition and ignorance prevented Italians from benefiting from innovations both at home and abroad – and put them at the mercy of those foreigners who wished to gain advantage over them.[56]

These Lombard *illuministi* were impaired by one critical factor: the extraordinary limitations of all available verbal media. Put simply, there was not a single shared language among their intended audience. Literary Italian was archaic and artificed from its inception in the sixteenth century, as well as divided along class lines. Following the triumph of Pietro Bembo's purist faction over the Machiavellians and the Courtiers, the Accademia della Crusca was founded in 1582 with the task of legislating the Tuscan vernacular according to the inversion-rich style of *trecento* poets such as Boccaccio and Petrarch.[57] In the intervening centuries, the Crusca had unwaveringly protected that vigorously literary

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[55] Alessandro Verri, "Rinunzia avanti notaio degli autori del presente foglio al vocabolario della Crusca" (1764). *Il Caffè* I (4). The entirety of the *Caffè* has been reissued recently in modern edition as "*Il Caffè" 1764-1766*, ed. Gianni Francioni and Sergio Romagnoli (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1993). In this volume, the "Rinunzia" occupies pp. 47-50. Subsequent page numbers of *Caffè* articles refer to this edition.
[56] The activities of this circle have received their most thorough documentation in the 6-volume *Settecento riformatore* of Franco Venturi. See in particular "III. Gli uomini delle riforme: la Lombardia," in *Settecento riformatore* V: *L'Italia dei lumi (1764-1790)*, 425-834.
[57] *Storia della lingua italiana*, Luca Serianni and Pietro Trifone, eds. (Turin: Einaudi, 1993) Vol. I: *I luoghi della codificazione*.

language from contamination by modern usages and other vernaculars. The six-volume

fourth edition of the *Vocabolario della Crusca* (1738) reversed the mild modernization in

matters technical and extra-literary of the third edition (1691). This obliged writers like

the Verris, Beccaria, and their contemporaries to participate in Enlightenment debates on

matters of economics, politics, fine arts, and so on, using only terms several centuries old;

those who did not were met with censorship.[58] So many vernaculars were in use on the

peninsula that, in Pietro Verri's immortal metaphor, a traveler in Italy changed languages

as often as he changed horses. Published prose and private communication in Lombardy

were subject to severe Austrian censorship. Faced with such a situation, the Accademia de'

Pugni held up the French language as an example of what Italian might be: a medium

whose flexibility rendered it adaptable for various kinds of modern use. In comparison,

literary Italian (*la toscana favella*) was in a state of rigor mortis. This reputation was

perhaps aggravated by the continued, pseudo-archaeological attempts, in such works as

Scipione Maffei's *Degli itali primitivi* (1727) and Marco Guarnacci's *Origini italiche* (1767)

to trace the roots of Italian through Etruscan to ancient Hebrew.

The fourth issue of Pietro Verri's famous, Milan-based periodical *Il Caffè* included

the first chapter of the Pugni's linguistic offensive against traditional Italian: Alessandro

Verri's "Rinunzia … al Vocabolario della Crusca." In this diatribe, generally considered a

watershed in the history of the Italian language, Alessandro attacked the Accademia della

Crusca, claiming that its conservative linguistic hegemony caused the intellectual

enslavement of living Italians: constraining them to sterile play with old and empty signs.

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[58] In an oft-quoted letter to a publisher, Pietro Verri lamented the suppression of one of his Gallic coinages: "per paura del nuovo verbo *regrettare* ha voluto sostituirvi *compiangere*, ha rifiutata un idea, perché non v'è nella nostra lingua un vocabolo che vi corrisponde, invece di dare la cittadinanza a un francese che rende l'idea perfettamente." Quoted in Tina Matarrese, *Storia della lingua italiana: il Settecento* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1993), 52.

The "Rinunzia" opens with mock legal solemnity, casting the opposition of "Words" and

"Ideas" in highly charged political terms:

> *Cum sit* that the authors of the *Caffè* should be extremely inclined to prefer ideas to words, and being staunch enemies of every unfair bond that one may wish to impose on the honest freedom of their thoughts and their reason, therefore they have *decided* to make, in solemn terms, a renunciation of the supposed purity of the *Tuscan language*. (47-48)
> (Cum sit *che gli autori del Caffè siano estremamente portati a preferire le idee alle parole, ed essendo inimicissimi d'ogni laccio ingiusto che imporre si voglia all'onesta libertà de' loro pensieri e della ragion loro, perciò* sono venuti in parere *di fare nelle forme solenne rinunzia alla pretesa purezza della* toscana favella.)

Alessandro maintained that, if Petrarch, Dante, Boccaccio, and Casa were able to invent

good new words, then the *caffetisti* should do likewise: like the old masters, they were

human, possessed of two arms, two legs, a body, and a head between two shoulders

(*abbiamo due braccia, due gambe, un corpo ed una testa fra due spalle com'eglino l'ebbero* -

48). If those long-deceased masters were to return from their graves, they would be

amazed by the voluntary servitude given them by mediocre minds (*risorgendo sarebbero*

stupitissimi in ritrovarsi tanto celebri, buon grado la volontaria servitù di que' mediocri

ingegni – 48). Alessandro construed traditional Italian as a choir of dead men, channeled

through "oracles" by the empty-headed wordsmiths of la Crusca. The resultant artificed

and archaic prolixity had the effect of reducing vital mobility. In a later article of the *Caffè*,

he suggested that no mind could vibrate sympathetically with things-in-themselves, or

move nimbly and rapidly between them, if weighted down by cumbersome Tuscan syntax:

"co" nostri rotondi periodi è impossibil il vibrar l'intelletto nelle cose, profondarle fuggendo

dall'una all'altra rapidamente" ("Dei difetti della letteratura e di alcune loro cagioni," 540).

Italians thus required a modern language.

The Pugni used grotesque images of frozen humans to illustrate the inability of Cruscan ciphers to index the thoughts of living beings: eerie simulacra constructed from the raw materials of signs. This imagery was latent in Verri's "Rinunzia" but assumed center stage in Cesare Beccaria's sarcastic "Risposta alla Rinunzia," which appeared a month later in the *Caffè*. Beccaria adopted the persona of a pedant ("B"), parodied the Crusca's emphasis on vacant signifiers by invoking a series of representations of humans at progressive levels of remove from the living. He opened by informing Alessandro that, as he was a living author, "all the force of truth annihilated itself in his mouth" (104). Only after his death might anyone suspect that he had been correct; indeed, Alessandro might be better advised to record his thoughts *in scriptis* than in a "pathetic little newspaper." Who, asked "B," was the author of the "Rinunzia" to invent new words? He had never made the glorious sacrifice of thoughts to words, as had the venerated fathers of the language. He had never molded an ordinary thought into a gigantic entity of many constituent parts, whose bloated "head," "limbs," and "body" were stitched together (like Frankenstein's monster) by "tiny threads." (105)

And was it not a glorious thing, rhapsodized "B," that an Italian oration should resemble a procession of gigantic, hollow, papier-mâché statues, all aquiver? He went on to describe such a procession in glowing terms. These statues were posed in traditional attitudes representing their rhetorical affects. *Esordium*, for example, was on his knees, with one hand imploring charity, and the other making a "grand gesture" of weakness. The centerpiece was a particularly eerie statue whose parchment skin was composed of indices of signs, such as footnotes and book indexes; his torso was composed of pages from Cicero, but he had the thighs of a Holy Father. Other, similar figures had eyes formed of Juvenal's

verses, and noses of Petrarch's poetry. All these statues emitted a narcotic odor, putting the common people to sleep. The final statue carried a placard providing one final layer of abstraction: on it are drawn in miniature all the preceding figures. (105-106)

Pietro Verri continued the *Caffè*'s assault on traditional Italian in the "Pensieri sullo spirito della letteratura d'Italia," (211-22) which employed similar images of frozen humans, and artificial or morbidly rigid surfaces constraining an inner, more natural substance. He compared the lexical fixations of Italian traditionalists ("tenacious word-lovers") with those who observe only the imprint of a coin and not the value of the metal, or who form a library based only on the elegance of the covers rather than the works themselves. In the most explicit linking of Italian with intellectual rigor mortis, he blamed the Cinquecento Bembists for having giving the language such "immobile confines" that Italian writing took on the "rigidity of a dead language" rather than the "suppleness" befitting a live one. The "relentless wordsmiths," maintained Verri, were the primary obstacle to intellectual growth in Italy.

In Italy's present cultural climate, Verri believed, those "frigid pedants" (*freddissimi pedanti*) considered "learned men" (*uomi dotti*) were occupied only with musty arcana: the archaeological study of medals and coins, chronicles, ancient parchments and inscriptions, sepulchral lanterns, pedestals, and pateras. How far removed were these things from the concerns of the "human heart" and "the principles of sensibility" that should be the true concern of philosophers. Their language was similarly morbid, maintaining only the appearance of reality through the "cold" manipulation of signs. Verri entered into an extended critique of the "gothic" distortions that befell a language preoccupied with sign play (215). These distortions included such non-sense as acrostics, puns, double-entendres,

and anagrams. Those who preferred words to things arranged their thoughts according to

sonic associations, as in the following Cinquecento verse quoted by Verri, virtually rap-like

in the density of its alliteration and assonance:

> Mi sferza e sforza ognor lo amaro amore
> A server, a servare a infida fede;
> Miei danni donna cruda non mi crede,
> Mi fere e fura, e di cure empie il core. (214)

> (Bitter love lashes and constrains me ever
> To serve, to slave for false faith;
> Merciless woman does not believe my injuries,
> She wounds and enrages me, and fills my heart with troubles.)

For Verri, poetry's fetishization of repeated sounds merely created the effect of a linear

harmony (*armonia*). And this turn held a wealth of further implications, not lost on its

author: for sound arranged according to the repetition of phenomena was better known as

music. And Verri, who aimed to synthesize all different types of knowledge, and sought

such a rigorous, one-to-one correspondence between words and things, could not tolerate

two different kinds of *armonia* or, writ large, two separate theorizations of sound.

<div align="center">~   ~   ~</div>

With this we come full circle, to the ways in which music-as-sound could signify, and how it

related to words-as-sound. Verri applied his theory of the appropriate uses of sound to

both words and music.[59] The lowest level of sonic phenomena was that of "simple sound"

(*la semplice suono* – 489): it was the "mere fabric" of music and words, devoid of any

meaning. Both in language and in music, the next level of expression was *armonia*. Echoing

Alessandro's statement about the confining powers of "rotondi periodi," Verri compared

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[59] "La musica," *Il Caffè* II/viii: reprint edition 487-94.

musical "armonia" to "a series of words, carefully representing a reasoning" but incapable of moving the soul. Indeed, Verri noted elsewhere, such *armonia* was more likely to congeal than to move: "the harmonious arrangement of voices and sonorous periods has frozen the souls of many" (*l'armoniosa disposizione delle voci e de' rotondi periodi hanno gelata l'anima di molti*).[60] The frequent repetition of sonic events prohibited that most germane indicator of vitality: rapid motion from one object to another. True eloquence, in music as with words, consisted in that "succession of sounds" that moved the soul to "tenderness, ardor, compassion, shame, and so on." (488-89) In music as in language, phenomena were imprinted on the hearer through sympathetic vibration: Verri believed that music created its effect by transferring the vibrations of different vocal or instrumental sounds directly onto the "internal sensibility… the muscles of one's physiognomy," resulting in "bodily disquiet and involuntary applause" (490). Specific instrumental sounds "seizing the soul, shake it from inaction, and transmit to it the sweet motions of the music" (491-92): he named the oboe as particularly passionate. Verri also believed that this effect was better created by simple, unornamented lines: did composers imagine that they could shake listeners" souls back and forth with their incessant trills? (493) Better also to replace the insensible cadenzas at the end of arias with the bittersweet heart-tug of "one well-placed appoggiatura" (*una ben situata appoggiatura* – 494). For Verri, real music, like verbal persuasion, achieved these effects only when it bypassed the aesthetic of sonic repetition in favor of ever-unfolding change.

If all this seems familiar, it is because Verri's theorizations of language, sound, and sensibility greatly resembled those of Gasparo Angiolini. These similarities were more than

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[60] Verri, *Estratto della letteratura europea* I (1767): 15; quoted in Venturi, "Gli uomini delle riforme: la Lombardia," 437.

superficial during the 1760s, when both were reading Diderot, Rousseau, and especially

Condillac. But after Angiolini returned to Italy in 1773, these men would begin a

collaboration of sorts, each benefiting greatly from the other's work. In the years following

the choreographer's arrival in Vienna, Angiolini and Verri both theorized the pantomimic

project in terms of the particular physical sensibility of Italians: a reorientation not without

political undertones.

Angiolini in Milan

There is no indication why Angiolini set his sights on Milan after such a promising start to

his career; however, we may speculate that it was owing in part to his knowledge and

admiration of the work of the *école de Milan*, and the possibility that his wife Teresa

Fogliazzi's connections among the *illuministi* would bring him social status and intellectual

stimulation. Angiolini had written to Beccaria from St. Petersburg in 1766 to inform him of

the favorable reception there of his famous treatise *Dei delitti e delle pene*. This letter

indicates that Angiolini already felt a fervent admiration for the kinds of work done by

philosophers who educated a broad public for general gain: "It has been sixty years since

anything has had such an effect [as Beccaria's treatise]. Thanks to philosophy and to those

illuminated spirits who, in the face of prejudice, fanaticism, despotism and barbarous laws,

know and have the courage to teach the road of justice, of sweetness, of humanity."[61]

Angiolini oriented himself toward the latest French philosophy, literature, and

theatre, until the end of his career. As Lorenzo Tozzi's biography attests, he frequently

based his choreographies on French sources, including experimental works like *drames*

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[61] Quoted in Tozzi, *Gaspare Angiolini*, 129-30.

larmoyants and even *tragédie bourgeoise* in the case of *Il disertore*.[62] His French sources

outnumber Italian ones significantly, and he was always far more inclined to quote French

writers than any other in his published prose. Like those of the *caffetisti*, his writings were

speckled with Italian translations or coinages of French words or phrases – thus his

frequent references to *belle arti*, *amatori*, *sensibilità*, and even *travaglia*.[63]

    One of the first orders of business in his two *Lettere a Monsieur Noverre* was to

indicate his continued aversion for *commedia*-style acrobatics.[64] New, though, was the fact

that he theorized these national styles in terms of the sensibility – and temperature – of the

human body. He dismissed Italian comic dance as "barbarous, indecent, unnatural," and the

dancers as "shameful and indecent mimes." Their lack of sensibility and cultivation

rendered them mere "automatons," and the "gentle souls" in the audience were made

physically uncomfortable when observing them (51-52). While French courtly dance was

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[62] Regrettably, it is difficult to find a complete catalogue of Angiolini's ballets: Tozzi's chronology (*Gaspare Angiolini*, 157-67) aims at comprehensiveness but contains notable errors and lacunae, while the other published studies by Brown and Hansell are complete with regards to the Viennese and early Milanese ballets respectively. Stefano Castelvecchi's "Sentimental Opera: The Emergence of a Genre, 1760-1790" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1996) concerns experiments in a "third genre" which were largely contemporary with Angiolini's project, and many of which were sources for his choreographies; see in particular Castelvecchi's writings on *Le déserteur/Il disertore*.

[63] On these words and other Gallic indices within Italian prose of that era, see Schiaffini, "Aspetti della crisi linguistica italiana," 290-95.

[64] Reprinted in *Il ballo pantomimo: lettere, saggi e libelli sulla danza (1773-1785)*, ed. Carmela Lombardi (Turin: Paravia, 1998), 49-88. Page numbers refer to this edition. These letters attacked the French choreographer on several points, and contested his claim of having invented modern pantomime. This quarrel is too well known to merit rehearsal here. For the most thorough recent account, including the subsequent Milanese pamphlet war debating the relative merits of Angiolini and Noverre, see Hansell, "Opera and Ballet," 766-920. We should note, though, that it has resulted in an unfortunate tendency among dance historians to cast Angiolini merely as Noverre's conservative Italian, and Italianate, rival. See, for instance, the scant attention afforded Angiolini by Judith Chazin-Bennahum in "Jean-Georges Noverre: dance and reform," *The Cambridge Companion to Ballet*, ed. Marion Kant (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 87-98. Bennahum cast Noverre as the disciple of the *philosophes*, and Angiolini merely as an *italiano arrabbiato*: but "history tells us who won this debate." (94) In the same volume, Dorion Weickmann provides this inadequate summary: "Angiolini represented a moderate modernisation in the development of dance; he intended to hold onto tradition as a secure guideline. … Noverre wanted freedom – freedom to invent and freedom to display sensibilities." Weickmann, "Choreography and narrative: the *ballet d'action* of the eighteenth century," 53-64.

the highest form of "material dance," it was also cold (*fredda*) and inexpressive (*non dice nulla*). To generate heat (*calore*), these steps must be wedded to pantomime.

The heat-giving effects of Angiolini's pantomime depended on change and development. Pantomime's extension through time permitted the "gradated series of ideas that render [it] so alive, so varied, so interesting" (61). This linearity allowed it to animate the spectator progressively through absorption: "the impression made by these continuous and successive ideas excites the soul gradually, and leads it always to a greater interest" (61).[65] In the preface to *Don Juan* of twelve years earlier, as we have seen, he had suggested that pantomime dance functioned much like the "living portraits" of Titian and Van Dyck, or the "animated composition of a great tableau by Raphael or Rubens" (*Don Juan*, [10]); now, however, he disavowed such comparisons, and criticized Noverre for making them. Painting was rendered a "dead" art by its very non-temporality:

> As concerns the analogy you [Noverre] make between dance and painting, my ideas are a little different. These two arts will be comparable only when painting has gained that gradated series of ideas that render pantomime so alive, so varied, so interesting, compared to which painting remains so dead, so weak, so monotonous. (61)

This mimic illusion, though, depended on one crucial factor: the synchronization of its media. Recalling Condillac, Angiolini called this vertical element the art of "combination." Because pantomime was a multi-media art, Angiolini theorized, the choreographer's task was to create and align the various streams of sensory information into onomatopoeic "particles." By means of "all these tiny particles [*particelle*], [pantomime] is able to touch

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[65] On the aesthetic phenomenon of absorption exclusively in the context of French genre painting, see Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980). Castelvecchi has benefited from Fried's work in his writings on experimental musical genres; see in particular "From *Nina* to *Nina*: Psychodrama, Absorption, and Sentiment in the 1780s," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 8 (1996): 91-112.

our hearts" (83). The total absorption of the spectator demanded a unified illusion,

rendered so through the perfect combination of its elements. Any tiny "dissonance" would

destroy the effect, and the spectator's heart would "halt and return to indifference" (83).

Angiolini had a term for this total effect: *L'Una*.[66] Small wonder, then, that while he had

collaborated to great acclaim with Gluck in the 1760s, he now came to believe that dual

authorship was likely to produce spoiled icons: the choreographer must compose the music

himself.

To ensure that all the relevant skills were part of a choreographer's training,

Angiolini proposed a new type of Italian dance academy. Dancers would study

choreography in the French style, musical composition, and "the connection between the

aforementioned two arts, and the absolute necessity of their being united" (74). In order to

receive honors at such an academy, the student would need to pass a test in

Gesamtkunstwerk-creation in solitary confinement:

> One could send the candidate to a studio where he could find every type of musical
> instrument, with music paper and paper for writing, where he could find classic
> works of history and mythology, and the poets of every genre. At that time, the
> Secretary of the Academy could give to the student in a sealed envelope the title of
> the subject chosen by the academy, which the student must then complete. ... From
> this room, he can be led to another, where he can find all the dancers necessary to
> perform the subject, and he must by then have sketched the program or plan of the
> ballet, and composed the necessary music, and prepared with appropriate clarity
> the correlating ideas for decorations, equipment, and costumes. (74-75)
> (*Potrebbe destinarsi al candidate una stanza ove fosse ogni sorta di strumenti
> musicali, con carta di musica e carta di scrivere, ove si ritrovassero i libri classici
> dell'Istoria, della Mitologia, ed i poeti d'ogni genere. Nel tempo stesso il Segretario
> dell'Accademia darebbe a questo in un biglietto sigillato il titolo del soggetto scelto
> dagli accademici, che il conseguente dovrebbe eseguire. ... Scorso che fosse, ed aperta
> la stanza, si condurrebbe in quella, ove si ritrovassero tutt'i necessary ballerini per
> effettuare il soggetto in questione, ed il candidate dovrebbe avere di già sbozzato tutto
> il programma o sia piano del ballo, e fatta tanta musica quanta bastasse per la prima*

> *prova, e preparate nella dovuta chiarezza le idee correlative per le decorazioni, per le macchine e per i vestiari*.)

This theorization resulted in a raising of the status of dance music. Angiolini noted that Hilverding had made small steps toward the ideal of *L'Una*: he often painted, and wrote little tunes, which Angiolini claimed to have in his possession at the time of the *Lettere*. While originally a mere choreographer of steps, Hilverding eventually learned to "conceive, combine, and produce a complete stage work" (*concepire, combinare e produrre un'azione completa* – 53). Angiolini had been composing the music for his pantomimes since he left Vienna in 1765. He ensured that this fact was well known, and always displayed prominently within the libretti – a fact that is notable in itself, given that these programmes tended to credit the composer only infrequently. Indeed, his insistence on this new rubric occasionally took a surprisingly literal form: Hansell has uncovered a libretto for one of his first Milan choreographies with the attribution pasted in.[67] In the *Lettere*, he mentioned in particular his recent production of *Telemaco nell'Isola di Calisso* (St. Petersburg, 1770), in which he was particularly touched by the character of Mentore: the great effect was because this dancer made "no step, nor gesture, nor glance, that did not correspond to the rigid tempo of the various musical ideas with exact precision" (84). Until other choreographers learned to compose their own music, and couple these two horizontal streams appropriately, they would remain in enforced servitude to their collaborators.

Eminently practical, Angiolini did not think that his creation could replace verbal language: indeed, he expressed support for any system of notation that might be useful, provided it did not "disgust the spirit, confound the memory, and fill the mind more with signs than with things" (71). He contradicted Noverre's assertion that dance notation was

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[67] "Opera and Ballet," 793.

useless, claiming to have notated the statue's awakening in Hilverding's *Pigmalion*. He did, however, come to believe that verbal language had no place in pantomime, either as narrative explication or within the bounds of the drama: verbal language and "gestural language" (*lingua de' cenni*) were mutually exclusive.[68] Paraphrasing Condillac's description of the "language of action," Angiolini wrote that "pantomime as an imitative art has its own means, and these means are the gestures that nature has given to man; and with which man explains naturally his needs, passions, emotions. These gestures cannot radically enhance or diminish with education." When gestures operated together with learned verbal language, the result was "uselessness, corruption, and monstrous absurdity" (*Riflessioni*, 118). The language of action could only be enhanced or diminished by means of "combination" with other pure sensory streams. Any mediated or otherwise compound ideas were banned, including allegories, past and future tenses, self-identification, and the supernatural. Furthermore, knowing details of the plot in advance disturbed the crucial animating effects of linear unfolding – "the reading of programmes ... weakens or removes the surprise of the situations, which is one of the principal vehicles for the fine arts, and especially pantomimes" – and tricked the ignorant into believing that they perceived something not communicated by the dancers (again, signs without signified).

Angiolini's exchange of public letters with Noverre captured the attention of the Milanese seemingly as no other aesthetic quarrel had during that period: anonymous supporters of each party published polemical pamphlets, and the *Gazzetta letteraria* reported in 1774 that the battle played out in "the theatre, the café, and the salon" alike.[69] After Noverre's brief and failed tenure at Milan's Regio Ducal Teatro in 1774, Pietro Verri

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[68] This reiterates the notion advanced in Rousseau's *Dictionnaire de la musique*, s.v. "ballet" (see above).
[69] *Gazzetta letteraria* 7 (16 February 1774), 4; quoted in Hansell, "Theatrical Ballet and Italian Opera," 234.

gave his own public endorsement to Angiolini, agreeing that Noverre's pantomime was poorly equipped to harness the sensibility of the audience. Verri had seen Noverre in Vienna in 1770, and had been a regular attendee of Angiolini's ballets since the latter's arrival in Milan.[70] Verri perceived immediately that the Angiolini-Noverre rivalry could inform – and lend currency to – his latest writings on the sensibility of the human mechanism, and the basic physical impetuses underlying advanced culture. (This new turn in Verri's thought, announced in the *Idee sull'indole del piacere* of 1773, occurred simultaneously with Angiolini's arrival in Milan.)

In his *Lettre à Monsieur Noverre* of 1776, Verri claimed that Noverre had appeared before Milanese audiences with "the air of a genius who came to enlighten a barbarous country" (*vous aviez l'air, Monsieur, d'un genie qui vient eclairer un païs barbare* - 627).[71] According to this account, Noverre had failed to win over Italian audiences because he had underestimated them. Verri noted in particular the jeers directed by the Milanese at Noverre's *Agamemnon vangé*, which had met with resounding success in Vienna only months previously. The changed reception was of course due to heightened Italian sensibility: "one needs a hammer to move a stupid nation," but Italians were mortified by the brutality of his dramas, and "so as to not to feel their souls being torn apart, a more sensitive people will distract themselves by looking for something to laugh at" (*per non sentirsi squarciare l'anima appunto una nazione troppo sensibile si distrae e cerca avidamente se v'è un canto sul quale ridere* – 614). Verri asked Noverre, "is it not true that a

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[70] See Sara Rosini, "Scritti sul balletto: Nota introduttiva," in the *Edizione nazionale delle opere di Pietro Verri* III: *I "Discorsi" e altri scritti degli anni settanta*, ed. Giorgio Panizza (Rome: Edizione di Storia e Letteratura, 2004), 597-621. This essay includes lengthy quotations from Pietro's letters to Alessandro on the pantomime, which both prefigured and elaborated upon his "Lettre à Monsieur Noverre."

[71] The "Lettre à Monsieur Noverre" is reprinted in *I "Discorsi" e altri scritti degli anni settanta*, 623-53. Page numbers refer to this edition. Spellings original.

sensitive nation cannot tolerate an excess of horror?" (*seroit-il vrai qu'une nation sensible ne pourroit pas souffrir un excès d'horreur?* – 633). Massacres and carnage in a pantomime "can be attempted in a cold nation, whose sentiments have little in the way of liveliness; but with a people who are less phlegmatic, and have a greater proportion of feeling, Sir, they can't succeed. It's too much mustard for a delicate palate" (634). Though Verri believed Angiolini to be the inferior of the two choreographers in matters of costume and scenery, he had much better gauged the sensibility of the Lombards. Verri praised Angiolini's model of gradual linear excitement as superior to Noverre's preference for sudden shocks: "one must manage the attention of the spectator; one begins by making him curious; then one captures his interest, develops it, augments it, heats it, and thus one can push his sensibility to the brink" (634). From the moment of his arrival in Milan, the Italian choreographer had thus moved the audiences there, training them in sensible absorption through the new genre of pantomime:

> We came to admire, to taste this new dramatic genre with the same attentiveness, the same sensibility that that vast parterre must have felt on the occasion that the incomparable Du Fresne and his troupe staged the most beautiful pieces in your Theatre François. I saw, Sir, the room regularly full of spectators, and from the first representation I remarked a silence, and an interest that one could not have predicted in a nation whose theatre is ordinarily given over to buffoons; I saw the spectators in tears, I saw them moved, and it is no small credit to the sensibility and natural taste of a nation that, having the misfortune of having its theatre defiled, has seized and felt the true and the beautiful from one day to the next. (626)
> (*On s'attendoit à admirer, à gouter ce nouveau gendre dramatique avec le meme empressement, avec la meme sensibilité qui a pu interesser tout ce vaste parterre à l'occasion que l'incomparable du Fresne avec sa troupe y donna les plus beaux morceaux de votre Theatre Francois. J'ai vu, Monsieur, la sale regulierement remplie de spectateurs, et dès la premiere representation j'ai remarqué un silence, et un interet qu'on n'auroit pu prevoir chez une nation dont le Theatre est ordinairement livré à des bouffons; j'ai vu les spectateurs en larmes, je les ai vu attendris, et ce n'est pas un petit eloge de la sensibilité et du gout naturel d'une nation qui, ayant le Malheur d'avoir le Theatre presque avili, a saisi e senti le vrai e le beau d'un jour à l'autre.*)

When compared to his writings on Italian culture from the mid-1760s, discussed above, Verri's optimism is palpable. No longer were the Milanese frozen into artifice by a morbid, unnatural culture. Angiolini transformed Milanese audiences into sensitive, weeping, silent individuals. He seized the spectators' bodies and made them feel the vivid impression of thoughts; he animated them. Crucially, Verri believed that Angiolini was able to do this "because he composed the music for his own ballets," and thus "better combined gestures to sounds" (628). In his last letter mentioning dance, written to Alessandro in 1781, Verri recounted a story: "they say that Angiolini improvises on his violin when he is given a topic [for a ballet], and that this process functions as a charm for the new ideas that arise from him" (621). This telling anecdote, whether or not it is an accurate reflection of Angiolini's composition process, indicates the extent to which the choreographer had managed to link dance with music in the imagination of his supporters. Music has become itself an "incanto" – a charm to animate body and mind.

La statua di Condilliac (Milan, 1782)

Pietro Verri never published his *Lettre à Monsieur Noverre*: for a while he had intended it as a supplement to his *Osservazioni sulla tortura*, which spoke eloquently on behalf of the injustices suffered by the "poor unfortunate and uncultured souls who were only able to speak the plebeian Lombard language" (*poveri sgraziati e incolti che non sapevano parlare che il Lombardo plebeo*).[72] This class of people was identified by its linguistic limitations:

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[72] The *Osservazioni sulla tortura* was completed in 1777 but not published until seven years after its author's death as a supplement to Verri's *Memorie storiche sulla economia pubblica dello stato di Milano* (Milan: Destefanis, 1804), 191-312. Its account of the failure of Milan's judicial apparatus during the plague of 1630 was an important source for the *Storia della colonna infame* (1840) by Verri's illegitimate nephew (and Beccaria's grandson) Alessandro Manzoni.

dialect was the glass ceiling that separated them from the enlightenment that Verri wished

were theirs. The potential of Angiolinian "sign language" to fill in the gaps in popular

education had already been noted ironically by its critics: Ange Goudar suggested in 1773

that "if I had to put an inscription on the door of the theatre, I would write, *Public school, in*

which everyone must instruct himself with his own money."[73] A decade later, the Milanese

critic Matteo Borsa scorned minuets with, as he put it, pretensions to being

Encyclopaedias.[74] For Angiolini, though, the didactic powers of his "sign language" were a

serious matter. To this end, he began a new project in 1782, using mime to communicate

"ideas, even the more abstract ones of philosophy" (*le idee anche più astratte della filosofia*)

to Milanese audiences.[75] Because "the Art of Signs" required no mediation – or so he

claimed – it could render these complex philosophical ideas more vividly than verbal

language, and thus was capable of effecting the mass enlightenment that had eluded the

Milan *illuministi*: "moving the spirit and the heart with a more unmediated effect, the Art of

Signs may one day forge a closer link between philosophy and imagination, reason and

sentiment" (*Attaccando con un effetto più immediato lo spirito, ed il cuore, potrà l'Arte de'*

cenni pervenire un giorno ad unire con un più stretto legame la filosofia e l'immaginazione, il

raziocinio ed il sentimento).[76] The project had its debut with *La vendetta spiritosa*. As we

have seen, Angiolini created the plot, choreographed the dance steps and the pantomime,

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[73] Goudar, "Sopra il ballo," in *Osservazioni sopra la musica ed il ballo* (Venice: Palese, 1773). Reprinted in *Il ballo pantomimo*, 25-47. The original is as follows: "Se io dovessi mettere un'inscrizione sulla porta del teatro, vi metterei *Scuola pubblica, nella quale ciascuno deve instruirsi per mezzo del suo denaro"* (page 37).

[74] Borsa, "Saggio filosofico sui balli pantomimi seri dell'opera," in *Opuscoli scelti sulle scienze e sulle arti* (Milan: Marelli, 1782); reprinted in *Il ballo pantomimo*, 209-234.

[75] Though the project itself began with *La vendetta spiritosa*, Angiolini only made his aims explicit in the preface to his subsequent ballet, *L'amore al cimento, o Il Sofi generoso*, a *ballo eroicomico nazionale*, which had its premiere at La Scala in the Autumn of 1782.

[76] Preface to *L'amore al cimento*.

composed the music and subjected all his visual and auditory streams to rigorous

combination.

Given his opposition to explicit verbal programmes during these years, Angiolini

provided no description of the plot; the later revival for Venice fills in the gaps for the

historian.[77] Following "various encounters and incidents" of an amorous nature, the

magical shepherdess Amarilli animates the statue of a Naiad by means of sensory

stimulation in order to cause discord between Tirsi and Clori:

> Various encounters and incidents result from unrequited love in a group of Arcadian shepherds and shepherdesses. One of the shepherdesses who is unpaired, and who possesses magic, resolves to take her revenge; she does it ingeniously following a magical operation in the company of her followers. Her vendetta consists in animating the statue of a Naiad celebrated by the shepherds in Arcadia, and which acquires ideas through her senses, in imitation of Condillac's ingenious statue. As the statue always prefers whatever object is just then receiving her attentions, she declares herself in love with the shepherd Tirsi, who had angered Amarilli in his love for Clori. This new and strange love causes discord between Clori and Tirsi, as was the goal the vengeful shepherdess. Finally, after various conflicts and situations, the magic shepherdess reconverts the statue into cold marble, Clori and Tirsi remain apart, and the story ends in confusion caused by the different sentiments of the shepherds.
> *(Dagli amori male assortiti fra un numero di Pastorelle, e Pastorelli d'Arcadia ne risultano varj incontri, varj incidenti. Una delle Pastorelle più delle altre mal corrisposta, che possiede la Magia risolve di volersi vendicare; il che fa ingegnosamente, dopo d'aver compiuta una Magica operazione in compagnia delle sue seguaci. Consiste questa sua vendetta nell'animare una Statua, che rappresenta una Najade dai Pastorelli festeggiata in Arcadia, la quale acquista le idee per la via dei sensi, a imitazione dell'ingegnosa Statua di Condillac, e d'oggetto in oggetto preferendo sempre quello che più le piate fissa la sua attenzione, e si dichiara amante del Pastorello Tirsi, che per l'amor di Clori, ha male corrisposto a quello, che per lui*

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[77] Angiolini's Condillac ballet was previously considered a very late work, staged in Venice in 1791. However, rare libretti at the New York Public Library demonstrate that it began life in Milan almost a decade earlier. That *La vendetta spiritosa* (Milan, 1782) and *La vendetta ingegnosa, o La statua di Condilliac* (Venice, 1791) are in fact one and the same is confirmed by the dramatis personae provided for both ballets in their respective libretti, and by Angiolini's claims in the preface to *L'amore al cimento* (Milan, 1782) of the "philosophical" content of *La vendetta spiritosa*.

risente la Pastorella Maga. Per questo nuovo, e singolare amore nasce la disunione fra Clori, e Tirsi, che è lo scopo della Pastorella vendicativa. Finalmente dopo varj contrasti, e varie situazioni la Pastorella Maga riconverte la Statua in duro marmo, Clori, e Tirsi restano disuniti, e un'ordinata confusione, cagionata dai diversi sentimenti de" Pastorelli, termina la Favola pantomima.)[78]

Like Lambranzi's statue ballet examined earlier, *La vendetta* effects a marriage of Italian elements with French ones: the characters are taken from Renaissance pastoral poetry, where they featured in works like Giovanni Battista Guarini's *Il pastor fido*; indeed, they may be familiar to musicologists from the sixteenth-century Italian madrigal settings of Guarini's text. Also like Lambranzi, Angiolini provides his ballet with a background of deteriorating classical artefacts. The second act takes place among ancient ruins. Indeed, it would seem that the "ingenious vendetta" of the title – Amarilli's animation of the Naiad through stimulation of its senses – is possible only after something of a magical incantation conducted among these ruins.[79]

Despite this rather incongruous dramatic context, Condillac's treatise appears to have been used with surprising philosophical fidelity. For Milanese audiences, the choreographer/composer provided this brief, evocative statement of intent.

> I attempt in this work to advance my art by a degree, in conveying to you a new series of ideas, explaining merely with the help of gestures not only the sensations that external objects may arouse in a new soul, and the comparisons that the soul can make with them, but also *making perceptible* the path from the first impressions of the most indifferent objects up to sentiment itself, and from foolish curiosity to the most delicate motions of the heart.
> (*Io tento in questo lavoro d'avvanzare d'un grado l'Arte mia, col trasportarvi una nuova serie d'idee, spiegando col solo ajuto de' gesti non solo le sensazione, che gli oggetti esterni risvegliano in un anima nuova, ed i paragoni, ch'ella ne può formare,*

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[78] Angiolini, "Preciso del ballo," in *La vendetta ingegnosa, o La statua di Condilliac*.

[79] The "magical operation" probably occurred in Act II, which is set during the night-time in the midst of an ancient, ruined building, partly consumed by flames" (*Luogo ristretto nel mezzo d'una antica fabbrica diroccata, in parte confumata dalle fiamme. Una quercia antica s'erge in mezzo delle ruine. Notte con Luna*).

ma rendendo anche sensibile la traccia, che dalla prima impressione degli oggetti i più indifferenti conduce fino al sentimento, e dalla stupida curiosità ai più delicati moti del cuore.)[80]

What Angiolini attempted, in other words, was to make spectators feel the reawakening of the statue tingling in their own bodies; make them feel the onset of human sensibility ("I attempt to . . . make perceptible the path from the first impressions of the most indifferent objects up to sentiment itself"). He used the verb "trasportare" to describe his communication: a mechanical word evoking the transmission of an impression. Like the readers of Condillac's treatise, Angiolini's viewers were thus participating in an archaeology of their own selves, designed to help rediscover their most natural bodily impulses and sensing mechanisms. In order to effect this transmission, Angiolini called for a sustained imaginative absorption: "the only favour that I request is a slight effort of continuous attention" (*la sola grazia, che io domando, si è un leggiero sforzo d'attenzione continuata*). Thus *La vendetta* made use of a rhetoric of becoming sensible, in much the same fashion as the treatise it professed to transmit, with the statue serving similarly as a figure of aesthetic attention.

As should be clear by now, the animation of the statue through sensory stimulation mirrored the very same animation that Angiolini professed to create in his audience through his music-mime. In the passage quoted above, he draws an unmistakable parallel between the effect of sensory impressions on the statue's "new soul" and the effect of *La vendetta*'s own "new series of ideas" conveyed through the eyes and ears: both are transformative, moving the object(s) from immobility to sensibility through stimulation. His unanimated statue – the naiad situated in a grotto-temple, leaning gracefully on an urn

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[80] Angiolini, *La vendetta spiritosa* (Milan, 1782).

– thus assumes a symbolic function much like Beccaria's gigantic papier-mâché monsters or Pietro Verri's coins. All are frozen humans representing a frozen humanity, whose congealment has resulted from ancient artifice. The quickening of the "statua di Condilliac" in *La vendetta* was a sign that contained – and created – its own truth. It may have been Angiolini's most perfect onomatopoeia.

The Dangers of Animation

The animative powers of pantomime were not welcomed by all. Opera theorist Stefano Arteaga agreed that such dance was derived from the original language of gestures and cries, and attributed its effects to a combination of visual immediacy with extension through time: "mime has all the advantages of painting and sculpture in the variety, choice and strength of its attitudes, and furthermore the incomparable advantage of putting its images in succession, giving them motion."[81] But the resultant stimulation of the spectators could have unforeseen and troubling consequences. These effects were stronger because mime was not to be reflected upon but only felt; "it seizes the soul with a cluster (*folla*) of compound sensations which hold the sensibility in a state of perpetual stimulation. It unites with the energy of gesture the vague yet vivid and voluptuous impression, of sounds."[82] Noting that the arrival of mimes heralded the fall of Roman culture, Arteaga suggested a ban on such dance in Italian theatres and he invited the "prophetic spirits" amongst his readers to tell him what would come of this "dangerous influence."[83]

Arteaga thus implicitly warned of an incipient revolution: crowds of plebeian Italians whipped into a bacchanalian frenzy by entr'acte pantomime. He remarked on the

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[81] Stefano [Esteban de] Arteaga "Ragionamento sopra il ballo pantomimico," in *Rivoluzioni nel teatro musicale italiano: dalla sua origine fino al presente*, 2nd edition (Venice: Palese, 1785), III: 210. Translations mine.
[82] Arteaga, "Ragionamento sopra il ballo pantomimico," 231.
[83] Arteaga, "Ragionamento sopra il ballo pantomimico," 233.

tendency of the "plebeian multitudes" to dominate Italian theatres, though they were servile elsewhere. It is impossible to deny that Angiolini and many of his supporters sought to animate the Milanese crowds for political ends. In the second, Venetian production of *La vendetta spiritosa* (and thus likely in the first), the statue is turned back into stone and the nymphs are separated; all ends in "confusion caused by the various emotions of the shepherds." Given Angiolini's political convictions, it is tempting to read this ending as an allegory of Italy's political fracture. His desire for a political union to match the cultural rebirth of Italy became abundantly clear later in that decade: he welcomed the French invaders openly, and even erected the symbol of Revolutionary France, the "Liberty Pole" (*albero della libertà*) on his property.[84]

Both Angiolini and Verri believed that the French unification of Italy could have been the triumphant result of decades of passionate Gallicism: free from Austrian and Spanish domination, Italy could take its place as the equal of France. The latent political imagery in *La vendetta spiritosa, ossia La statua di Condilliac* returned with a more explicit function in *Deucalione e Pirra* (La Scala, 12 July 1797). Here, the symbolism of quickened stones representing politically awakened Italians was unmistakable: the libretto referred to the story as an "Allegorico programma," and included a preface from the "Inventore" instructing the audience to interpret the drama in political terms. After a deluge, a shipwrecked couple, Deucalione and Pirra, arrive in a land populated only by abandoned temples and rocks. The heroic pair learn from an animated statue of "Peace" how to create companions from the rocks. The stones miraculously come to life, but they are ignorant and crass. Accompanied by an enchanting music that calms the rioting stone-people, the gods

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[84] Tozzi, *Gaspare Angiolini*, 146.

descend from the heavens to teach them how to be both cultivated and free. As the libretto's introduction makes clear, these stones represent Italians, rendered rough and inhuman by centuries of Austrian and Spanish rule. Teachers rather than tyrants, their French occupiers Deucalione and Pirra bring about the requisite "regeneration" (*rigenerazione*). The "nuovi creati" are taught to dance by watching the "noble and voluptuous dance" of Pirra, Deucalione, and the muses, including Terpsichore herself. The titular couple declines the crowns that are offered to them. At the close the Statue of Liberty emerges from the ground, carrying the *tricolore* (much like the choreographer's own Liberty Pole) – and is surrounded by little spirits representing Italian cities, united at last.

And what of human animation? In some senses one might argue that the moving statue is a floating signifier, its mutability of meaning testifying against the very bodily iconicity it was marshaled to support by Angiolini, Verri, and their compatriots. But the sheer prevalence of the image within these projects – and the earnestness with which it was employed as a metaphor – seem to ask for better: for some common thread that links Lambranzi's animated humans through Sallé's, Rameau's, Verri's, Beccaria's, and Angiolini's, and even further, to those of Rousseau, Mozart and Da Ponte, Mary Shelley. Perhaps we might say that it becomes an emblem of unrepeatability, or a vehicle for international influence, or a problematizer of human presence: building, thereby, a Wittgensteinian genre of the metaphor, a family of interconnected meanings. And yet the dangers of such an approach are obvious: heavy, top-down interpretation, forcing open antique symbols with blunt modern tools.

With regard to music we are perhaps on firmer ground, in the potential of adding a *topos* of animation to the growing lexicon. What musical spell did Angiolini use to breathe life into these stones? Alas, regarding those most vital of sounds, we must remain unstirred: the music for *La vendetta* is lost, buried under the sediments of nearly two and a half centuries. It is a sad irony that the composer should be mute in this most germane of his interests. Of Angiolini's many animated statues – the Commendatore in *Don Juan*, his notated "score" of Hilverding's *Pigmalion*, the two versions of his Condillac fable, and the statue of Peace and new Italians in *Deucalione e Pirra*, to be discussed in a moment – only the earliest has left a musical imprint; and that voice, as we know, is Gluck's. Followers of Angiolini's pantomime – among them Jean-Jacques Rousseau – would find their own uses for this statue-to-human trope. And through these works, we might possibly be able to both see and hear an Angiolinian animation – even if, by then, it is only a ghost.

In assessing Angiolini's talents as a composer, we must make do with those few works that, like *La partenza d'Enea*, have resisted the depredations of time. Modern musicologists have seen little in these scores to excite their sentiments. Brown and Hansell have noted awkward doublings and parallel fifths, regular processions of 2-, 4-, and 8-bar phrases, and a near-total reliance on tonic and dominant harmonies.[85] There is nothing to be found that approaches the rapid fluctuation of that most language-based of music, operatic recitative. In much of his music, such as the minuet in Example 1, the high degree of repetition recalls more the *armonia* of poetry like "Mi sferza e Sforza," condemned by Verri as cold and immobile. As we have seen, even the most through-composed of Angiolini's pieces retain substantial melodic and formal conventionality, a near-inexorable

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[85] Hansell, "Opera and Ballet," 797; Hansell, "Theatrical Ballet and Italian Opera," 224; Brown, "Angiolini, Gasparo."

rhythmic regularity. And though Angiolini might theorize ever-unfolding change, both musically and onstage, with dance steps always integrated within pantomime, even later scenarios such as *Deucalione e Pirra* display a significant quantity of "diegetic" dance. This last of Angiolini's pantomimes ends with "everyone coming together in happy, varied, noble Dances, which denote general contentment and perfect democratic harmony": beneath the new political patina, the semantic contours of poetic feet in *divertissement* remaining essentially intact.

Nonetheless, Angiolini's goals of music-gestural alignment and linear change would provoke a different kind of musical experimentation in his disciples. It was through these pantomime scores that the motivating principle of sustained iconicity, or perfect alignment between music and gesture, was introduced to Italian theatrical music. Elsewhere, this was the province of melodrama, which itself bore the influence of Noverre's and Angiolini's projects, and continued their work. Indeed, the sustained musical onomatopoeia received its first substantial introduction to Italian opera through all-sung adaptations of Rousseau's *Pygmalion*.

CHAPTER 2 **MELOS & LOGOS**

Rousseau and the reform of Italian opera

Musicologists are particularly prone to disagreement when identifying watershed

moments in late eighteenth-century Italian opera. In operatic histories, the period of about

1760-1800 is usually said to accomplish what Reinhard Strohm has called "the gradual

'musicalisation' of drama,"[1] marked by the decline of a collection of related elements, such

as the Metastasian libretto, *recitativo semplice*, the da capo aria, its repetition schemes and

coloratura, the comic-serious divide; and the ascent of others, such as syllabic declamation

within arias, a semi-serious or "bourgeois" genre, dynamic and thematically dense series of

linked movements, orchestral mimicking of bodily gestures. The operas generally featured

in this history of transformation, such as Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* and *Alceste*, and Mozart's

Don Giovanni, were themselves satellites of a larger, Italian practice. They account only

minimally for a select few of these transformations, and vanished from most stages shortly

after their premieres, to await revival later on. Admittedly, smaller and localised studies

have filled in some prominent gaps within our knowledge of Italian opera of this period;[2]

but they have hardly succeeded in influencing the standard narrative, and have often

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[1] Reinhard Strohm, *Dramma per musica: Italian Opera Seria of the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Yale University Press, 1997), 27.

[2] For scholarship on Italian opera of the period that does not center around Vienna, see in particular Mary Hunter, "The Fusion and Juxtaposition of Genres in Opera Buffa 1770-1800: Anelli and Piccinni's *Griselda*," *Music & Letters* 67/4 (1988): 363-80; Marita Petzoldt McClymonds, "Transforming Opera Seria: Verazi's Innovations and their Impact on Opera in Italy," in *Opera and the Enlightenment*, ed. McClymonds and Thomas Baumann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 119-32; Stefano Castelvecchi, "Sentimental Opera: The Emergence of a Genre, 1760-1790" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1996); Pierpaolo Polzonetti, "Opera buffa and the American Revolution" (Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 2003); Martha Feldman, *Opera and Sovereignty: Transforming Myths in Eighteenth-Century Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

adopted a form of special pleading, searching for traces of Gluck in some neglected "reform" opera.

The temptation to trace a story of Vienna-based innovation against a vacuously intransigent Italian convention has been compounded by that era's self-styled reformers: figures such as Ranieri de' Calzabigi and Lorenzo da Ponte, whose poetic talents were equalled by an ability to claim territory within a then-nascent music historiography.[3] Several writers have contested the pre-eminence traditionally accorded to the collaborations of Calzabigi and Gluck, on the eminently sensible grounds that they had few followers, and that in any case such reforms had begun earlier: the oft-quoted preface to *Alceste* notoriously reiterates Francesco Algarotti's encomium of French opera.[4] Similarly, Mozart's operas on da Ponte's libretti – like Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* so richly mythologized in the nineteenth century – are autumnal in matters of style. Nonetheless these operas are still presented as the alpha and omega of the period in question, the beauties of Mozart following upon the reform of Gluck, their prominence in direct proportion to the width of the historical lens. Notwithstanding the continued dominance of Italian opera in Europe during that time, Richard Taruskin's recent *Oxford History* accounts for this period by tracing a direct line from *Orfeo ed Euridice* (with obligatory quotations from the Preface to *Alceste*) through *Idomeneo* and Kantian Enlightenment, to the "sympathetic

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[3] The period between approximately 1760 and 1800 saw the creation of several large-scale narratives of music history by figures such as Charles Burney, John Hawkins, Nikolaus Forkel, and Padre Martini. "Dazzling artifices" as applied to eighteenth-century *opera seria* can be found in Richard Taruskin, *Oxford History of Western Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), II: 452.
[4] Raymond Monelle, "Gluck and the 'Festa teatrale'," *Music & Letters* 54/3 (1973), 308-25; Monelle, review of *Musica e cultura nel Settecento europeo*, ed. Enrico Fubini, *Music & Letters* 69/3 (1988), 381-2; Pierpaolo Polzonetti, "Opera as process," in *The Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Opera* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), ed. Polzonetti and Anthony R. DelDonna, 3-23; Rebecca Harris-Warrick, "Ballet," in *Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Opera*, 85-98.

'representations of humanity'" within Mozart's late operas.[5] Conspicuously absent, here and in other such histories, are alternative moments within Italian opera: moments whose musical beauties did not resist decay, and in whose "representations of humanity" modern audiences have not seen themselves reflected – which were not, in other words, the object of nineteenth-century mythologizing – but which initiated fundamental shifts in operatic practice by repositioning the outer limits of the genre.

We might begin such an alternative history with one such moment. When the curtain rose at Venice's Teatro San Samuele on the evening of 26 January 1790, spectators were greeted with a picture of the inside of a sculptor's workshop, strewn with statues in various states of completion. Seated amongst these sculptures was a lone, melancholy figure: star tenor Matteo Babbini, who had recently delighted Venetians with lead roles in *opere serie* such as *La morte di Cesare* (Sertor/Bianchi) and *Nitteti* (Metastasio/Bertoni). Babbini may have seemed alone, but in fact the stage had another occupant, not yet perceptible to the audience, and not usually seen within the borders of an opera: virtuoso dancer Carolina Pitrot. Prima ballerina in the Viganò company, Pitrot had been engaged by the San Samuele to perform in pantomime ballets during operatic entr'actes. In this case, though, she was at the back of the stage, frozen among the statues, covered by a curtain. Unveiled at mid-point in the drama by Babbini, who played the role of her sculptor, she would remain motionless until the final moments, a performance of muscular control no less virtuosic than the extended song it accompanied. The work in question was *Pimmalione*, a one-act "dramatic scene" with poetry by Antonio Sografi and music by

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[5] Taruskin, *Oxford History of Western Music*, II: 452-96.

Giambattista Cimador.[6] That these two stars should inhabit the stage together was emblematic of the strange nature of the work. *Pimmalione* was partly sung and partly "signed": between episodes of song, Babbini sketched a series of prescribed physical gestures, each one mirrored musically by the orchestra.

Sografi's and Cimador's *scena drammatica* – a hybrid of opera and pantomime, act and entr'acte, and explicitly neither comic nor serious – was without precedent in Italian opera. Not that the work was altogether new, or that it would have been perceived as such. The accompanying libretto informed its audience that this was an adaptation of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's melodrama *Pygmalion*, which had premiered at Lyons in 1770. A prefatory note, ostensibly written by Babbini and Pitrot, outlined the terms of the adaptation: the piece preserved "only the principal idea" of Rousseau's work, and had been tailored for the Venetian audience in order to show "respect and recognition for our natures."[7] This preface does not signal a wholesale operatic domestication of Rousseau's text, as some have suggested.[8] On the contrary, for reasons that will gradually become clear, this *Pimmalione* was one of the most peculiar dramas to be played on late eighteenth-century stages, its operatic essence multiply tempered by unfamiliar elements.

The genesis of melodrama itself, and Rousseau's collaboration with amateur musician Horace Coignet in the composition of the first *Pygmalion*, are too well known to merit rehearsal here.[9] Similarly, I must leave aside any exploration of "what this play is

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[6] A manuscript copy of this score, owned by the Fondazione Olga e Ugo Levi in Venice, is reproduced in *Rousseau-Coignet Pygmalion; Sografi-Cimador Pimmalione*, ed. Emilio Sala (Milan: Ricordi, 1996).

[7] "In essa è ritenuta soltanto l'idea principale del celebre autore.... Non ci resta, che significare di nuovo aver noi questa fatica intrapresa per manifestar in qualche modo il rispetto e la riconoscenza degli animi nostri."

[8] Guglielmo Barblan, "Un Cimador che divenne Cimarosa," in *Testimonianze, studi e ricerche in onore di Guido M. Gatti (1892-1973)*, ed. Giuseppe Vecchi (Bologna: AMIS, 1973), 202.

[9] Following the recent rediscovery of the autograph, Rousseau's and Coignet's *Pygmalion* has appeared in a modern critical edition: Jacqueline Waeber, ed., *Pygmalion, scène lyrique* (Geneva: Editions Université –

'about',"[10] adding my own layer to what Paul De Man once called the work's "distinguished

tradition of misreading."[11] Nor do I seek to reveal anew the vibrant existence of

Rousseauian melodrama on the Italian peninsula in the last decades of the century: a

circumstance that has been recently essayed by a number of Italian musicologists.[12] Rather,

I want to situate *Pygmalion*, together with its early performance history in Italy and

eventual adaptation as a modified Italian opera, in the context of related projects

subsuming the spoken word within the domain of music. Beginning simultaneously in

France, England, and Italy during the 1770s, these projects were inflected both by a kind of

twilight classicism (in particular with their study of ancient prosody and writing) and by

very recent investigations into the development of language. As such they bridged what we

might want to call the aesthetic and the real, seeking to locate speech within music and

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Conservatoire de Musique, 1997). *Pygmalion* has an extensive secondary literature. Important nineteenth-century sources include Horace Coignet, "Particularités sur J. J. Rousseau pendant le séjour qu'il fit à Lyon en 1770," *Oeuvres inédites de Rousseau* I, ed. V.D. de Musset-Pathay (Paris, 1825), 461-72; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Dichtung und Warheit*, ed. K.D. Mutter (Frankfurt: Deutscher Klassiker, 1986), 533-34, 942; Castil-Blaze, *Molière musicien* (Paris: Castil-Blaze, 1852), 423-26; Albert Jansen, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau als Musiker* (Berlin: Reimer, 1884; reprint Geneva: Slatkin, 1971). Twentieth-century sources include Edgar Istel, *Studien zur Geschichte des Melodramas I. Jean-Jacques Rousseau als Komponist seiner Lyrische Scene "Pygmalion"* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1901); Jan van der Veen, *Le mélodrame musical de Rousseau au Romantisme. Ses aspects historiques et stylistiques* (La Haye: Martinus Nijhoff, 1955); J.L. Carr, "Pygmalion and the *Philosophes*: The Animated Statue in Eighteenth-Century France," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 23: 3/4 (1960): 239-55; S.M. Weber, "The Aesthetics of Rousseau's 'Pygmalion'," *MLN* 83 (1968): 900–18; Henriette Beese, "Galathée à l'origine des langues: Comments on Rousseau's Pygmalion as a Lyric Drama," *MLN* 93 (1978): 839–51; Paul de Man, "Self," in *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 160-88; Giovanni Morelli, "Le quattro dimensioni allegoriche del 'Pygmalion' di Rousseau," in Morelli and Elvidio Surian, "Pigmalione a Venezia," in *Venezia e il melodrama del Settecento*, ed. Maria Teresa Muraro (Florence: Olschki, 1981): 147-58; Emilio Sala, "La carriera di Pigmalione: ovvero, Nascita e prime metamorfosi del *mélodrame*," in *Rousseau-Coignet Pygmalion; Sografi-Cimador Pimmalione*, ix-lxxvii; Jacqueline Waeber, *En Musique dans le texte: Le mélodrame, de Rousseau a Schoenberg* (Paris: Van Dieren, 2006).
[10] "[Galatea] is a figure of the Self, or rather a certain conception of the self, which is what this play is 'about.'" Lajer-Burcharth, "Pompadour's touch: Differences in Representation," *Representations* 73 (Winter 2001), 54.
[11] De Man, "Self," 176.
[12] See in particular Elvidio Surian, "Il cantante-attore Matteo Babbini e la comparsa del *mélodrame* a Venezia (1790)," in Morelli and Surian, "Pigmalione a Venezia," *Venezia e il melodrama del Settecento*, 159-68; Sala, "La carriera di Pigmalione," in particular lxvii-lxxvi; Lucio Tufano, "La ricezione italiana del melologo *à la* Rousseau e la *Pandora* di Alessandro Pepoli," in *D'une scène à l'autre: L'opéra italien en Europe* 2: *La musique à l'épreuve du théâtre*, ed. Damien Colas and Alessandro di Profio (Wavre: Mardaga, 2009), 125-40.

music within speech. One result was the invention of new notational systems; another was the rise of a verbal category best described as heightened utterance – a type of half-sung declamation, often reinforced with gesture, whose mimetic pronunciation gave it powers of signification beyond those of common speech. A musical work constructed around the spoken word, Rousseau's *Pygmalion* was largely responsible for importing these themes into opera. As we will see, its adaptations took part in a highly influential movement within Italian opera in the last decades of the eighteenth century.

Rousseau's *Pygmalion*: New Ruins

In composing *Pygmalion*, Rousseau self-consciously inaugurated a new kind of musical theatre: French prose alternating with sequences of gesture; the words sounded alone, while the gestures were accompanied by an orchestra.[13] He coined the designation "scène lyrique," but the new genre eventually became known as melodrama. As is well known, Rousseau was keen to manufacture around his invention an aura of disenchantment: he suggested that melodrama was necessitated by a deficiency of the French language.[14]

Like many other eighteenth-century writers, Rousseau believed that music and language had a common source.[15] He suggested in the *Essay on the Origin of Languages* that ancient languages had been regulated by a musical prosody controlling the pitch, rhythm,

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[13] For a history of the usages of "melodrama," see Emilio Sala, "Mélodrame: Définitions et métamorphoses d'un genre quasi-opératique," *Revue de musicologie* 84/2 (1998): 235-46.

[14] This deficiency was most famously articulated in the *Lettre sur la musique française*, originally published November 1753; reprinted and translated in *The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, vol. 7: *Essay on the Origin of Languages and Writings Related to Music*, trans. and ed. by John Scott (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1998), 141-74.

[15] On this pan-European phenomenon in Enlightenment thought, and its recent resurgence within the field of cognitive psychology, see Martin Küster, "Theoretical Approaches to Musical Prosody in the Eighteenth Century" (Ph.D. Diss, Cornell University, 2011).

and emphasis within words.[16] The first vocal sounds resulted from the spontaneous stimulation of the tongue, palate, and glottis (317-18). What is more, this early song was composed almost entirely of vowels, and was onomatopoeic or "mimophonic," imitating sounds and its other objects directly and thus containing its meaning within its very texture: "most of its root words would be imitative sounds, either of the accent of the passions, or of the effect of perceptible objects. Onomatopoeia would constantly make itself felt" (296).[17] These representative, musical qualities made the earliest languages immediately understandable to the hearer. He suggested that these qualities necessarily degraded over time, falling into ruin as the first civilisations' passionate immediacy was superseded by cold reason. Only southern languages like Italian retained something of this *accent*; in French, it was entirely absent. Italian opera dominated theatres throughout most of Europe because theirs was the most musical language.

Although Rousseau had once claimed that Italian music was adaptable to any language, he later suggested that other languages required a different kind of musical theatre.

> Convinced that the French language, lacking in all accent, is not at all suited to music, particularly to recitative, I imagined a dramatic genre in which words and music, instead of proceeding together, are heard successively, and where the spoken

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[16] Reprinted and translated in *The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, vol. 7: *Essay on the Origin of Languages and Writings Related to Music*, trans. and ed. by John Scott (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1998); page numbers refer to this edition. For an important introduction to pre-Rousseauian theories on the original union of music and language, see Downing A. Thomas, *Music and the Origins of Language: Theories from the French Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), particularly chapter 2, "Origins," 34-56. Owing to the exigencies of length, Condillac is largely absent from these discussions: his writings informed every aspect of Rousseau's thought on music and language. For an insightful introduction to Condillac's musical thought see Thomas, *Music and the Origins of Language*, 57-81.

[17] Mimophony, or sound symbolism, is the direct imitation of objects within sound; it is a broad application of the principle of onomatopoeia, or the imitation of sound within words; see Gérard Genette, *Mimologics-Mimologiques: Voyages en Cratylie*, trans. Thaïs E. Morgan (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995). As the title indicates, Genette traced what he called "mimologics" to Plato's *Cratylus*, in which Socrates first argued for the naturalness of language and then – following the failure of that argument – in favour of its arbitrariness.

phrase is somehow announced and prepared by the musical phrase. The *Pygmalion* scene is an example of this genre of composition.[18]

We should be wary of accepting Rousseau's official exegesis wholesale: commentators have convincingly numbered among *Pygmalion*'s unnamed influences Diderot's bourgeois theatre, English literature of sensibility, the multiply interrupted reform acting of figures such as David Garrick, and the pantomime of dancer-choreographers Georges Noverre and Gasparo Angiolini.[19] Nonetheless, this language-based construction of Rousseauian melodrama – suited to French and *not* to Italian – was well known, and may partially account for the fact that, for its first twenty years, *Pygmalion* was performed in Italian theatres exclusively in its original language.

In a lengthy prose monologue comprising most of the drama, Pygmalion describes his admiration for his statue, Galatea (a name coined by Rousseau and meaning milky-white), and his subsequent lack of inspiration. Pygmalion's words are so vague that many commentators have read the entire speech as a lightly aestheticized depiction of Rousseau confronting his own *oeuvre*. The metonymic function of the artist's tools and his sculpture becomes, in other words, embarrassingly literal: this statue is *Émile*, that is the *Social Contract*, another, unfinished, might be the *Essay on the Origin of Languages*, and so on. Yet the urge to locate Rousseau and his books within the drama runs the risk of oversimplifying a central theme: human presence, and the reliability of human senses. The hero desires a female form carved from inanimate materials; he is an artist fooled by his

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[18] Rousseau, *Œuvres complètes* V: *Écrits sur la musique, la langue et le théâtre*, 448. Translation mine. Note that this is counter to the opinion expressed in the Letter on French Music, where Rousseau wrote that "the Music of the Italians is not at all so peculiar to the language and the genius of their nation that it still does not suit all the others" (103).

[19] See in particular Van der Veen, *Le mélodrame musical*, 30-31; Waeber, *En musique dans le texte*, 37-43, 183-212; and Sala, "La carriera di Pigmalione," 19-20.

own artifice. His torment attests to the psychological disruption potentially caused by a well-made imitation:

> So it's for this inanimate object that I don't dare to leave here!... A sculpture! A stone! A hard and unformed mass, created with this tool!... Insane one, come back to earth; bemoan yourself, see your error, see your folly… but no… [*Impetuously*.] No, I haven't lost my mind, I'm not being bizarre; I don't blame myself. It's not by this dead marble that I am taken in; it's for a living being that it resembles, the image it brings to my eyes.

Here, as in Diderot's *drame bourgeois* and Richardsonian literature, physical agitation is signalled by syntactical breakdown: sentences and their punctuation are replaced with broken, exclamatory phrases and single-word interjections. A superfluity of ellipses – the sentimental punctuation mark *par excéllence* – controls the hero's frequent lapses into silence, nowhere more so than in this passage. Because his eyes are deceived, Pygmalion's bodily mechanism is stimulated into human feelings for the statue before him; his reason recognizes the error and, as with Michel Foucault's enlightenment lunatic, guilt provokes a state of crisis.[20] By comparison, Ovid's sculptor was unrepentant, kissing the statue's lips, fondling its breast, eventually taking it to bed for a carnal interlude. While Ovid's Venus intervenes out of pity for the foolish sculptor, Rousseau's hero prays to a "sublime essence... soul of the universe," lamenting "the violation of order, the outrage" he has committed, and asking the spirits to reverse the "affront to nature."

Finally, the affront is indeed reversed, here thanks to an unseen but powerful hand: Galatea comes to life. The theme of presence receives its final elucidation in the animation

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[20] Foucault wrote of the development during the late eighteenth century of a new conception of insanity that relied on application of the madman's reason and subsequent guilt at his madness; this system "substituted for the free terror of madness the stifling anguish of responsibility; fear no longer reigned on the other side of the prison gates, it now raged under the seals of conscience." *Madness and Civilisation: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard (London: Routledge, 2005; originally published as *Folie et déraison: Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*, Paris: Plon, 1961), 234.

scene, with two allusions apparently hitherto unidentified by Rousseau scholars. To depict

the climactic miracle, Rousseau called simply for "calm flutes," then tentative movements

from the statue and a few brief but telling first words: "Me... / *touches herself* / This is me...

/(...*touches another statue*) This is not me./... (*Galatea puts her hand on* [*Pygmalion*])... Ah!

Me again." The reference here is clear: the *dea ex machina* is supplanted by Étienne Bonnot

de Condillac, the radical empiricist from Grenoble, with Galatea his ventriloquist.[21] In the

relevant passage from Condillac's *Treatise on Sensations* (1754), when a statue is brought

to life it begins to speak thus: "This is me ... [*the statue*] *continues to touch itself* ... this is me;

this is also me." Condillac's statue extends its hand and touches bodies other than its own,

realizing their otherness when the *me* in the hand does not encounter a *me* in its object: "if

the hand says *me*, it doesn't receive the same response." In *Pygmalion*, as in Condillac's

Treatise, the life-giving force is pure sensation; movement culminates in touch, what Ewa

Lajer-Burcharth has called the "self-actualizing touch" that "enables the play's culminating

act of self-recognition."[22] But there is a critical difference: while Condillac's statue quickens

from stimulation to each of its senses in succession, Rousseau's Galatea is awakened by

musical sound.

When his statue begins to move, Pygmalion does not trust what he sees. He

proclaims with "*vivid indignation*" that "it is too fortunate, for the lover of a stone to

become a man of visions." Only when she speaks does he begin to believe that his statue is

now human. The operative notion here – that the human voice is a more reliable index of

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[21] Condillac, *Traité des sensations, à Madame la Comtesse de Vassé* (London [Paris]: Bure, 1754.) Lajer-Burcharth
discussed the animation scene from *Pygmalion* in the first pages of her "Pompadour's Touch: Difference in
Representation," which dealt also with Condillac's *Treatise*; however, she did not note that Rousseau's dialogue
was taken *verbatim* from the earlier work.
[22] Lajer-Burcharth, "Pompadour's Touch," 54.

presence than its image – was first proclaimed in the *Essay on the Origin of Language*. In this work, which remained unpublished until after his death, Rousseau sketched a sensory hierarchy that firmly placed the ear above the eye: while the eye may be fooled by visions, the ear receives only the truth. Elsewhere Rousseau had described musical sound in terms of color, but in a chapter of the *Essay* entitled "False analogy between colors and sounds" he distributed these two sensing organs on either side of a figurative animation. Thus he wrote, "colours are the finery of inanimate beings; all matter is coloured, but only sounds proclaim movement, the voice proclaims a sensitive being; only animated bodies sing" (325). This is reiterated in a later passage: "sounds need a moving body. Painting is dead and inanimate; it can transport you to the depths of a desert; but as soon as vocal signs strike your ear, they proclaim a being similar to yourself" (326). Melody, then, was able to index life because it required activity over time. Even musical automata attested to the presence of their creators: "it is not the automated flautist that plays the flute, it is the mechanic who measured the air flow and made the fingers move" (325). But this very fixity in living creatures rendered sound subject to decay, both in an immediate acoustic sense and more broadly over the course of history.

To illustrate that second, historical kind of decay, Rousseau asked the French reader of his *Essay* to conduct an experiment: locate your vocal pitch on a musical instrument, then pronounce as many French words containing diacritical marks as come to mind, regardless of syntax or meaning. Sonogram-like, the instrument will draw a flatline in response to these varied syllables. In ancient Greek script such accent marks indicated pitch trajectory, with acute indicating a rise, grave a descent, and circumflex a rise and then descent. Now they were merely empty shells, their original, mimographic meaning had fallen away. This

modern scene of a monotone Frenchman, sounding a single note and accompanying himself

in unison, was a comic reflection of that Classical archetype, the Homeric bard. The latter's

verse in the musical language of ancient Greek inevitably traced a resonant and varied

song, for which he plucked a simple accompaniment on the lyre. This ancient declamation

was renowned for its bewitching effects and represented a musical ideal for many

seventeenth- and eighteenth-century writers, Rousseau not excluded:[23] but while some

aimed at a straightforward revival, Rousseau's musical humanism was tempered by images

of irretrievable loss. Despite the recovery of numerous relics left behind by the Greeks,

their lyric voice proved ever elusive. For support in this hypothesis Rousseau quoted the

well-known classicist Charles Duclos, who had recently suggested that the study of ancient

notation was doomed to incompleteness: "all the ancients' prosodic signs, even assuming

that their usage had been well established, were still not worth so much as their use."[24]

More than that, Rousseau believed any effort to capture sound in writing merely

accelerated the demise of the sound-object. Again, from the *Essay*: "writing, which seems

like it should fix language, is precisely what alters it."[25] This was particularly true, he

thought, in modern times, because the linear and alphabetical writing employed by

"civilized peoples" (297) collapsed vocal utterances into a single stream, minimizing the

variety of unarticulated but expressive sounds that issued from the throat, and failing to

notate qualities of accent, emphasis, and length.

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[23] For a succinct introduction to French investigations into ancient Greek declamation, see Thomas, *Music and the Origins of Language*, 23-36.

[24] Charles Pinot Duclos, *Remarques sur la Grammaire générale et raisonnée* (Paris, 1754), I: 4, quoted in the *Essay on the Origin of Languages*, 304.

[25] Derrida famously located Rousseau's (accidental) challenge to Western logocentrism primarily in these passages; see *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974). Yet, as Thomas has noted, Derrida's reading ultimately requires him to close off from the rest of the text those portions that directly concern music. Thomas, *Music and the Origins of Language*, 88-89.

A language that has only articulations and voices [i.e., consonants and vowels] therefore has only half its riches; it conveys ideas, true, but in order to convey feelings, images, it still needs a rhythm and sounds, that is, a melody; that is what the Greek language had, and what ours lacks. (318)

Thus throughout the *Essay* Rousseau construed his peculiar brand of humanism as a contemplation of loss, the inevitable erosion of time. He evoked a kind of aural shadowland: "astonishing ruins" and notational skeletons marking the voices of "an almost terrifying antiquity," their "dead languages" and lost melodies. Both in the *Essai* and in the *Dictionnaire de musique*, he consistently dismissed attempts to revive the ancient speech-song through the study of its notation. Although he provided fragments of ancient music in the *Dictionnaire* entry on "Music," he asked readers to recall the vast distances that separated them from the musical artefacts they contemplated: after all, he noted, even present-day Frenchmen and Italians failed to understand one another's music. As Rousseau's rhetoric of animation illustrated, the visual imprint of a sound was no substitute for aural presence. To imagine a people into life from their writing, after all, is like "painting a man's portrait from his corpse": the work of revival is undermined by the eeriness of the disinterred cadaver.

In this context, then, what are we to make of the remarks of Rousseau's musical collaborator? The year following *Pygmalion*'s 1770 premiere in Lyons, Coignet told the *Mercure de France* that he had been instructed to evoke the ancients: "M. Rousseau wished in this spectacle to give an idea of Greek Melopoeia, their ancient theatrical declamation."[26] Modern exegetes have accounted for this statement by suggesting that Coignet, jealous for a recognition that he seemed not to have received, misguidedly imposed his own, garden-

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[26] Quoted in Sala, "La carriera di Pigmalione," XIX.

variety classicism onto Rousseau's very different vision.[27] On the contrary, however, one could argue that, particularly in its musical realization, this first melodrama sought an evocation more complex than mere revival: a process for which Coignet's remark and his music may indeed provide helpful windows. In short, both men sought to create what we might call a "new ruin," whose manufactured incompleteness attested to the loss of the original.[28] Any notion that this was exclusively Coignet's vision should be put to flight by the generic designation, which was undoubtedly Rousseau's coinage. *Scène* suggests merely a portion of a larger drama, though no indication is provided that such a parent work exists.[29] Certainly Rousseau's drama involves only a tiny portion of Ovid's original story, which begins with the sculpting of the statue and ends after she has borne Pygmalion a son. And then there is the adjective *lyrique*, which implies a double, earnest-ironic usage, evoking both affinity to and distance from the classical ideal. This alienation is most vividly illustrated by the orchestra, which was strung like a puppet to the face, limbs, and heart of the actor and traced his every (officially sanctioned) motion. Referring to the orchestral music, Coignet's letter to the *Mercure* evoked contemporary theorizations of pantomime, which similarly united classical revival with discourses of bodily sensibility: "[Rousseau] wished that the music should be expressive, that it should paint the situation and, so to

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[27] Van der Veen, *Le mélodrame musical*, 26; Sala, "La carriera di Pigmalione," XX.

[28] A number of scholars have documented the preoccupation of many eighteenth-century artists and writers with the imagery of the ruin. Secondary sources include Roland Mortier, *La Poétique des ruines en France: Ses origines, ses variations de la Renaissance à Victor Hugo* (Geneva: Droz, 1974), in particular 126-69; Laurence Goldstein, *Ruins and Empire: The Evolution of a Theme in Augustan and Romantic Literature* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977); Anne Janowitz, *England's Ruins: Poetic Purpose and the National Landscape* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1990); Gillen D'Arcy Wood, *The Shock of the Real: Romanticism and Visual Culture, 1760-1860* (New York: Palgrave, 2001); David B. Morris, "A Poetry of Absence," in *The Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Poetry*, ed. John E. Sitter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 225-48.

[29] Contemporary dictionaries are unanimous on this point. See, for instance, Pierre Richelet's *Dictionnaire de la langue françiose, ancienne et moderne*: "s*céne...* Terme de *Poésie*. C'est la partie d'une acte d'un Poëme dramatique, laquelle aporte du changement au theatre par le changement des acteurs." (Lyons: Pierre Bruyset-Ponthus, 1759) II: 598.

speak, the type of affect that the actor was experiencing." But whereas in contemporary

pantomime the musical accompaniment lent specificity to the physical gestures that

substituted for verbal language, in Rousseauian melodrama these coupled streams of pure

mimesis "announced and prepared" the French utterance: they substituted for its *accent*,

which would have incorporated such imitation within the words themselves.

Given this rhetoric of depredation, then, it should come as no surprise that Coignet's

music for *Pygmalion* consists of a series of musical fragments.[30] These range in length from

two measures to 23; most are for strings alone, although some include winds and horns.

While a small handful are lengthy enough to signal some sort of independence, most are

small snippets of melodic and harmonic material, their incompleteness marked by final

cadences on the dominant or in a key other than that in which they started. For instance, in

the Andante no. 12, the sculptor tentatively approaches Galatea's pedestal, striking her

with his chisel on the final, *fortissimo* chord. Here, the principle of duplication results in

rhythmic decisiveness (there is no mistaking the steps up the pedestal, or the chisel blow),

but restless, unresolved harmony: assuming the prevailing key is E minor, the excerpt

begins on a first-inversion tonic and ends on a secondary dominant. When the music

returns after the hero's next speech, this incompleteness is unresolved, is indeed

compounded by further unresolved dissonances and remote half-cadences. Historian of

melodrama Jan van der Veen has suggested that the lack of musical resolution within each

number represented an attempt to form a bridge between orchestral music and speech,

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[30] Both Waeber and Sala provide thorough accounts of the creation of *Pygmalion*; see Waeber, *En musique dans le texte*, 17-28, and Sala, "La carriera di Pigmalione," IX-XX. They draw on Coignet's account of the work's genesis in the *Mercure de France* of January 1771.

while the harmonic discontinuity between numbers was simply an "aesthetic error" on Coignet's part.[31]

Van der Veen's explanation may at first sound convincing, particularly given that Coignet has no other surviving work to attest to his competence (he was in fact a clothier by day); but a more thorough explanation is also at hand. Coignet's music for *Pygmalion* evokes the incomplete, broken remnants of a formerly contiguous surface. As such these incomplete numbers may be likened to recovered artefacts such as the Parthenon marbles: they gesture to something that used to exist beyond them, but that has not resisted the depredations of time. Their incompleteness implies, in other words, a manufactured decrepitude, matching the flattened contours and lost, silent word endings within the French language itself. Perhaps the most striking evocation of such pseudo-erosion is in the final musical portion, which follows the animation and precedes the lovers' final embrace: the moment at which, in the recent tradition of French adaptations, the statue would be taught to dance.[32] No. 26 (Example 2.1) begins a gigue for muted strings and horns in D major: a movement that would not be out of place as the finale of a pantomime by Angiolini or Noverre. But after a commonplace first fourteen measures, the tendency toward discrete phrases and their repetition suddenly disintegrates, and the harmonies become more chromatic and far-ranging, ending with a half-cadence in an implied but unheard E minor. Here, as in those broken remnants of Greek statues, the familiar becomes in its incompleteness profoundly aged, distant, and disquieting. Even as the new lovers are

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[31] Van der Veen, *Le mélodrame musical*, 10-11.

[32] Such was the model of pantomimes by Marie Sallé (*Pygmalion*, London, 1734) and François Riccoboni (Paris, 1734, with music by Jean-Joseph Mouret), and Franz Hilverding (Vienna, 1752-53), as well as the "acte de ballet" *Pigmalion* by Jean-Philippe Rameau with a libretto by Ballot de Sovot (Paris, 1748).

locked in their first embrace, the modal shift and chromatic descending bass evoke the chill winds of time and death.

Occupying the cracks in this theatre of ruin, the actor's voice played a special, dual role, one that has often been misunderstood by historians of melodrama. In a seldom quoted passage from the "Observations sur l'*Alceste*," Rousseau suggested that the declamation within *Pygmalion* was not simple speech but something like a half-song. The performer should improvise a spontaneous compensation for the missing *accent* by adding musical elements of pitch and rhythm: "a sensitive and intelligent actor, by bringing together the tone of his voice and the accent of his declamation with what the musical line expresses, mixes these foreign colours." The music in this speech did not evoke its objects directly, as in early languages, but rather echoed its own replacement within the orchestra. Through such smoke and mirrors, the effect was an *illusion* of a musical whole: an illusion confirmed by imaginings of an audience who is fooled. Again, Rousseau: "the actor mixes these foreign colours with such artfulness that the spectator cannot discern its nuances." In this formulation, melodrama was in fact closer both to opera and to the ancient Greek ideal than has previously been acknowledged. The difference was one of notation: the model outlined by Rousseau in this passage lent melodic agency to the actor. Yet perhaps Rousseau was being disingenuous. As we shall see from the work's reception, the actor's agency was gradually constrained by the invention of additional layers of notation, while the presence located within the sounds of *Pygmalion* was, increasingly, that of its creator.

Example 2.1 No. 26, Allegro con sordini from *Pygmalion*[33]

[33] Reproduced from Jacqueline Waeber, ed., *Pygmalion, scène lyrique* (Geneva: Editions Université – Conservatoire de Musique, 1997).

The idea that Rousseau's *Pygmalion* was actually a recovered object – something

perhaps unearthed at an archaeological dig – was reflected in the libretto printed by the

publishing house of Joseph Kurzböck for the debut of melodrama outside France.[34] In

February of 1772, Vienna's Burgtheater heard the French actor and translator Louis Bursay

perform *Pygmalion* with a new musical accompaniment by Franz Aspelmayr.[35] In an

engraving on the title page of the libretto, three *putti* play with classical masks and lyres,

objects that seem to have been excavated (there is a shovel in the bottom left-hand corner).

Two *putti* hold masks in front of their faces as if unsure of what to do with them; perhaps

they are performing this very work. But the most striking element comes near the center:

the third *putto* holds up a reflective tablet to one of the masks, reflecting a face toward the

audience. Gazing mildly out at the viewer, this face is both the most familiar – its

proportions are those of an adult, not a horned and winged baby – and the greatest

abstraction (a reflection of a mask). It renders the tablet simultaneously a mirror and a

portrait, reflecting the disembodied and oblique object of the mask held by a child's hand,

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[34] Joseph Kurzböck was active approximately 1755-1790, becoming University Printer in 1756 and University Bookseller in 1776. He is best known to music history as the first publisher of Haydn's *Sei sonate da clavi-cembalo* (1774) and the father of the pianist/composer Magdalena Kurzböck; see Daniel Heartz, *Haydn, Mozart, and the Viennese School 1740-1780* (New York: Norton, 1995), 74.

[35] Bursay was the stage name of French actor and translator Louis Bruyas. For more information on Bursay, his family, and particularly his daughter, who was the noted director Aurore Bursay, see "Mélanie en Russie avec les comédiens français (1808-1817)" in André Doyon and Yves du Parc, *De Mélanie a Lamiel, ou, d'un amour d'Henri Beyle au roman de Stendhal* (Aran: Éditions du grand chêne, 1972), 146. Bursay translated works by Metastasio and Kotzebue into French. This Viennese *Pygmalion* is described by Istel, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau als Komponist seiner lyrischen Scene*, 23. Istel quoted from "Der Theatralalmanach für das Jahr 1773": "den 19 Hornung (Februar) [1772]: Hannchen und der deutsche Pygmalion, die pantomimische und lyrische Scene des Rousseau. Es ist merkwürdig, daß ein französischer Akteur, Herr Burset, (*sic*) auch den deutschen spielte und sich im Deutschen recht wohl ausdrückte."

and evoking the author in a thoughtful pose, called into being by the image of his character. The dark sky and lightning bolt imply unrest and dark magic.

Figure 2.1 Title page, French *Pygmalion*; Vienna: Kurzböck, 1772
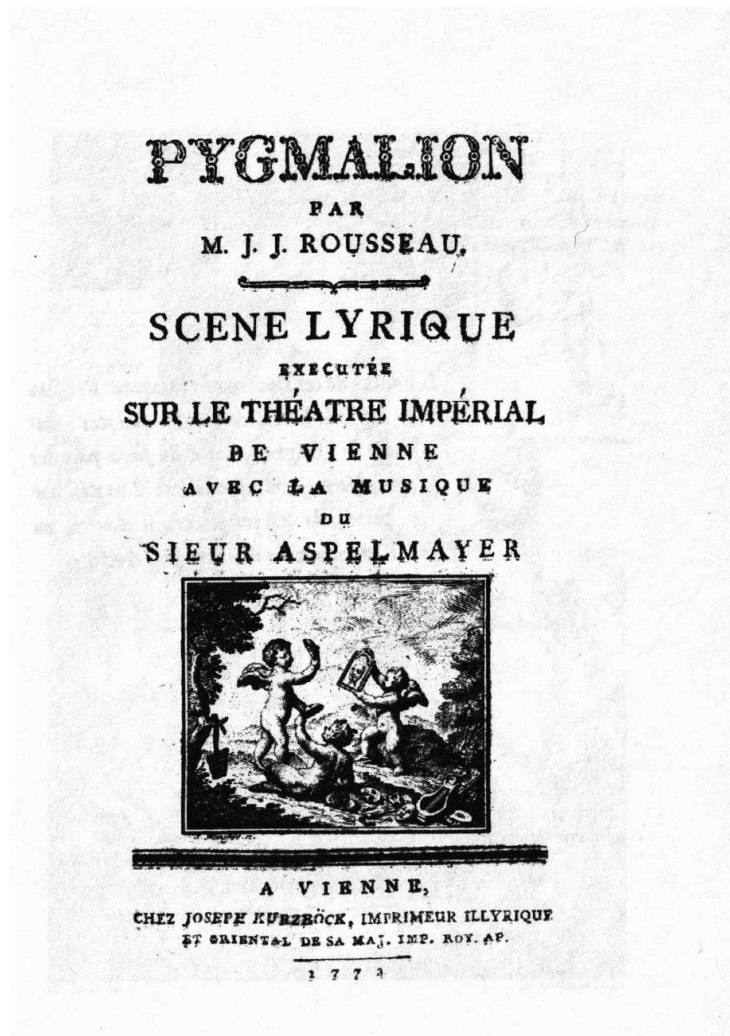
This engraving introduces a text that is unique in eighteenth-century theatre. Kurzböck produced Rousseau's text in three different languages: French, German, and Italian. Within each language, the text is organized in three vertical columns: gestures and speech are given on the right; a middle column notates in minutes and seconds the length

of the music-gestural interludes; and the left-hand column supplies descriptions of musical

character. Since Rousseau had provided no timings and virtually no musical descriptions,

these items had to be invented. For instance, Aspelmayr's first musical interlude, which

followed the overture but preceded the monologue, was proclaimed to express "sadness,

disquiet, chagrin, and discouragement."[36] On one hand, like Kurzböck's engraving, this

three-column format might be seen to evoke distance: a tablet of ancient writing in

columns, for instance, of the kind unearthed by contemporary archaeologists. Yet this

Pygmalion differs from those other texts in tablet form in that it is also a blueprint for

performance, and thus occupied with a present: controlling the production of an utterance

down to its very unfolding in time. With these parallel streams, the libretto uncurls each

single moment into its different components, one of which is time, and another pure

musical sound – or at least, such is the illusion: in the end, a libretto can supply no more

than writing. But in attempting to enclose sound and time within its only medium, this

libretto shores up for the spectator the animated human presence behind the production,

"sounds proclaim[ing] movement" in the manner described by Rousseau.

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[36] "Le premier morceau qui suit l'ouverture & s'y lie, peint comme elle, l'accablement, l'inquiétude, le chagrin, & le découragement." Reproduced in Sala, "La carriere di *Pigmalione*," L.

Figure 2.2 First pages of French, Italian, and German libretti for *Pygmalion*; Vienna, 1772
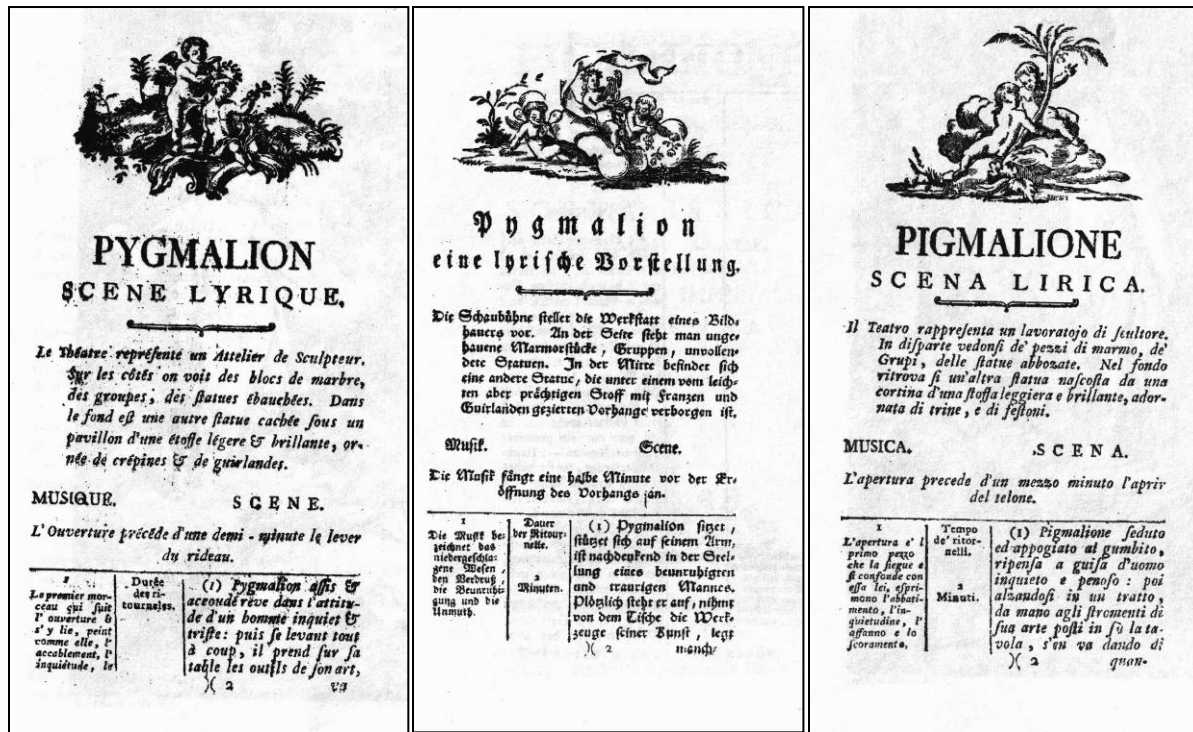
Two of these languages can be accounted for with relative ease: French is of obvious value, and Bursay performed the text in German. What, though, is to be made of the third, Italian version? The translation is almost word-for-word, an Italian patina over the original French contours, almost entirely free of inversions and hypotaxis. Such, indeed, is the abundance of linguistic mirror images clustered around an original, that the modern reader might recall Walter Benjamin's definition of a "true language" (*die reine Sprache*), generally associated with sacred texts: "Where a text is identical with truth or dogma, where it is supposed to be 'the true language' in all its literalness, and without the mediation of meaning, this text is unconditionally translatable."[37] In such cases, translations are

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[37] Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," in *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*, ed. Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 71-82.

produced "only because of the plurality of languages." In Benjamin's formulation, where it is a question of "true language," translations are presented alongside the original in interlinear or parallel arrangement. With Kurzböck's libretti, the interested reader could migrate between languages, noting instances where meaning and syntax align across the linguistic chasms, and where disruption occurred. The non-verbal graphics, including vertical and horizontal lines, *putti*, curlicues, and Arabic numbers, facilitated comparison and pointed to a common structure beneath disparate surfaces. This is not, of course, to say that Rousseau's text was mistaken for a religious utterance. Yet it is clear that his words were already in some sense undergoing reification, the object of fantasies about originals and copies that were uncommon in the context of musical theatre.

Pygmalion in Italy, Part I: 1772-85

The Italian version had an additional, practical benefit: when Bursay and his troupe traveled to Naples in the coming months, to perform the work there in French, he brought this Rosetta stone with him. Thus, with the Burgtheater performance as a point of departure and Bursay at its helm, melodrama made its southern Italian debut in February of 1773; as with the Viennese production, this tour used Aspelmayr's music (a French edition, probably based on a recent publication of the libretto in the *Mercure de France*, had been published in Milan in 1771, but there is no indication that this accompanied a performance). According to one contemporary account, the Naples reception was mixed: in a letter to a friend, Neapolitan *letterato* Ferdinando Galiani wrote that the French actors "played *Pygmalion* with his statue, half prose, half music, a monster produced by Rousseau's genius." The public was divided as to the merits of this novelty: "the statue produced a vivid impression on some, because in reality it was played by a certain Miss

Tessier, who, though not beautiful, has a very interesting body." However, "the rest of the audience was bored."[38] The experiment might have ended there but for the presence of one Francesco Saverio de' Rogati, a jurist and professional translator who was sufficiently struck by the work to create his own Italian version.[39] This *Pigmalione*, published in Naples a few months later, differed from its predecessor in a few significant ways.

Like the Viennese engravers, de' Rogati presented Rousseau's *Pygmalion* as an ancient artefact: the frontispiece to this translation (Figure 2.3) shows a stone tablet with degraded edges, bearing the title *Pigmalione* and half buried in the ground near the overgrown ruins of a Greek temple. The Piranesian etching may have been inspired by Francesco Milizia's mention of Rousseau's project in his *Trattato completo, formale e materiale del teatro* (1771), which plagiarized Coignet's account in the *Mercure*: "Rousseau volle dare con quello spettacolo una idea della Melopea de' Greci, e della loro antica declamazione teatrale."[40] This drawing introduces a dual-language text, with French on the left and Italian *versi sciolti* on the right: a design that was entirely alien to dramatic adaptations but common enough in publications of biblical and classical texts. Indeed, de' Rogati used an identical format in his translations of the Hellenic poetry of Sappho and Anacreon.

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[38] Quoted in Lucio Tufano, "Teatro musicale e massoneria: appunti sulla diffusione del melologo a Napoli (1773-1792)," in *Napoli 1799 fra storia e storiografia: Atti del convegno internazionale, Napoli, 21-24 gennaio 1999*, ed. Anna Maria Rao (Naples: Vivarium, 2002), 601. Translation mine.

[39] Francesco Saverio de' Rogati, *Pigmalione: Cantata per musica del signor Gio: Giacomo Rousseau, trasportata dal francese nell'idioma italiano* (Naples: [NP,] 1773).

[40] Francesco Milizia, *Trattato completo, formale e materiale del teatro* (Rome, 1771), quoted in Sala, "La carriera di Pigmalione," XX.

Figure 2.3 Title page of *Pigmalione*, Francesco Saverio de' Rogati
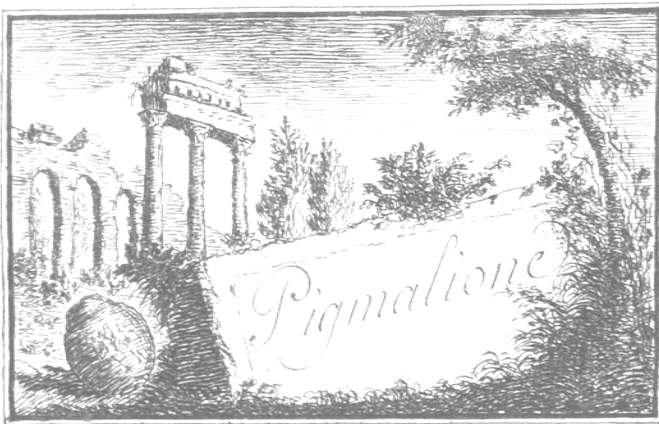
In the lengthy preface to this edition, de' Rogati both condemned the original genre and

lauded its potential for adaptation:

> One cannot imagine a greater lack of verisimilitude than accompanying or preparing
> with an instrumental ritornello the declamation of an actor who does not sing but
> speaks. And yet the precision, the vivacity, the passion of the very able actor, the
> appropriateness of the few musical notes of Mr. Aspelmayer [sic], distributed in
> time and sensibly, awakened in the audience a greater delight than the recherché,
> long, and ever dull music of today's Italian theatres.
> (*Non protrebbe figurarsi maggiore inverisimilitudine, che accompagnare, o preparare
> con un ritornello di stromenti, una declamazione dell'attore, che non canta, ma parla.
> Eppure l'esattezza della comica, la vivacità, la passione del valentissimo attore,
> l'opportunità delle poche note musiche del signor Aspelmayer, a tempo con saviezza
> disposte, destavan negli ascoltanti un maggior diletto, che le ricercate, lunghe, e spesso
> noiose musiche de' teatri presenti Italiani.*)

He expressed the hope that a composer would set his libretto to appropriate music: not a

standard "long, and ever dull" operatic setting, but one that "assists, rather than oppresses,

the poetry" (*aiuti, e non opprima la poesìa*) and preserved within it something of Bursay's

manner of speaking, "in such a manner that the song itself should not be much different

from French declamation" (*in maniera che il canto, presso a poco, non sia più lungo della declamazione Francese*). Such calls for a new, text-alert operatic practice were something of a cliché at the time, and we can find no more appropriate window into these discourses than the writings of de' Rogati's friend Saverio Mattei. In the latter's pamphlet *La filosofia della musica o sia la riforma del teatro per musica*, also published in Naples that same year, the author complained of the musical forms and text-setting conventions that prevailed in traditional opera, showcasing the virtuoso voice rather than honouring the sense of the text: given the florid style that prevailed within da-capo or "the older type of arias," Mattei complained, "we may lose a quarter of an hour on the 'a' of 'donator' so that the silly singer may receive satisfaction."[41] An operatic *Pigmalione* such as de' Rogati described – one that approached the rhythms of declaimed French prose – would necessarily reduce the repetitions, *messe di voce*, coloratura, and ornamented returns that formed the standard list of "abuses" occurring in modern opera.

To facilitate this reform, de' Rogati fashioned Rousseau's fractured prose into a customary libretto shape, with *versi sciolti* for recitative, and *versi lirici* for arias. Needless to say, this was vastly different from the first, Viennese edition, being closer to adaptation than translation. Nonetheless, this *Pigmalione* was still remarkably faithful: most of Rousseau's words are present in something like their original order, settling as kernels of the original within a more prolix foreign unfolding. The adaptation indeed makes a show of transparency: readers can observe its fidelity by moving from the French text on the left, which is shorter and so rendered in a large italic font, to the denser, smaller-font Italian on the right. For instance, the French text on page 16:

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[41] Quoted in Michael F. Robinson, "The Aria in Opera Seria, 1725-1780," *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 88 (1961-1962): 31-43.

> Vanité… faiblesse humaine… je ne puis me lasser d'admirer mon ouvrage… je
> m'enivre d'amour propre… je m'adore en ce que j'ai fait…

becomes in the Italian:

> La vanità, la debolezza è degna
> Per un opra sì bella. Io di mirarla
> Cessar non posso. Ebro [*sic*] del proprio amore
> In ciò, che ho fatto amo me stesso.

Fidelity is traceable through the common roots, although multiple inversions in the destination language send the reader back and forth via circuitous routes. Such a translation, de' Rogati imagined, might have enabled a reformed Italian opera to be built on a French enunciation. Of course, this project presented its difficulties: he acknowledged that such a setting would lack the length needed for an evening's entertainment. As he predicted, no composer chose to set this particular *Pigmalione*, even though – as we shall see – something of this principle of adaptation was present when *Pygmalion* finally donned operatic garb in 1790.

In 1773, de' Rogati's call to domesticate Rousseau's melodrama was premature. For the next decade *Pygmalion* enjoyed a vibrant life on the peninsula, but solely in the original language, translations appearing only as textual supplements. In 1773, a second Italian *Pygmalion* was published, this time as *Pimmalione*, for a performance in Venice that probably used Aspelmayr's music.[42] This libretto featured a new prose translation but clearly used Kurzböck as its source: the French text is presented in its Viennese version, and both French and Italian are displayed in the tripartite arrangement pioneered by

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[42] Whether this production was given at the San Samuele or the San Moisè has been the subject of some debate: the frontispiece mentions the San Samuele, but Taddeo Weil noted contemporary sources suggesting that this work, and the *Orfeo: scena lirica*, were performed at the San Moisè; Taddeo Weil, *I teatri musicali veneziani del Settecento: catalogo delle opere in musica rappresentate nel secolo 18 in Venezia, 1701-1800; con pref. dell'autore* (Venice: Visentini, 1897), 303.

Kurzböck. Here again the translator remained anonymous, with Rousseau's presence attested by a large engraving of his portrait, affixed to a mausoleum-like structure with Latin inscription and classical ornaments. For this production, the translator provided the following preface, making clear his anxiety:

> One requires a truly elevated genius to translate sublime matter from one language to another. To enter into the analysis of ideas, passions, sentiments, the concepts of a great man, and render [*ridurre*] all of this natural and clear in a different idiom, is not a vulgar undertaking, as unhappy custom would have us believe. Owing to incompetence, I am one of the many imperfect translators; but M. Rousseau may be certain at least that I understood the full merit in his work, and that I put into the endeavour all the effort of which I was capable, as well as the desire to honour him and myself. I exerted myself in order to infuse his ideas into my Italian words, and to oblige our words not to deviate from his. This is the true duty of one who translates.

Prefaces like this are, it hardly needs adding, uncommon in eighteenth-century libretti. The translator's emphasis on the word as the unit of translation – expressed in his proclaimed desire to "infuse [Rousseau's] ideas into Italian words" – leads him to preserve the structures of the original prose. Nonetheless, what remains is merely "a trace of what in the Original is marvellous." The preface, in other words, makes a conspicuous performance of failure, necessarily increasing the prestige of the primary object and placing it outside the realm of quotidian efforts.

A second melodrama performed in Venice that season makes clear that French-Italian ventures had become a distinguishing attribute of this imported musical genre. The experiment of placing French melodrama on a Venetian operatic stage was deemed so successful that another work in that genre was commissioned and performed:

Orphée/Orfeo, scena lirica,[43] with a prose libretto by "L.B., pastore arcade," in collaboration

with an unnamed composer.[44] Like *Pygmalion*, the melodramatic *Orphée/Orfeo* was

entr'acte entertainment for comic operas. Also like Rousseau's melodrama, this *scena lirica*

was published bilingually, presenting parallel French and Italian texts and apparently

performed in French. It contained a preface from the *autore e attore*, proclaiming that he

had written the work in response to popular demand following the success of *Pygmalion*,

and echoing the sentiments of the previous translator: "You have recently admired a

masterpiece ... and thus you desired another scene of this genre; I present to you this

Orfeo.... Between the immortal work of the celebrated Rousseau and this feeble imitation

there is no similarity other than that of genre."[45] Thus the characteristics of the *scène

lyrique* as they were perceived by this adaptor went beyond the simple alternation of

spoken text and representative music, now considered the principal characteristics of

melodrama. Clearly, the author/actor of *Orphée/Orfeo* considered melodrama to consist of

a classical story spoken in French, with gestural choreography, two characters, a "musique

analogue à l'expression pantomime des acteurs," and a single libretto with French and

Italian.[46] Because this work, unlike *Pygmalion*, was created for Italian stages, it required the

invention of a French "original" (of unidentified progeny) and the surfeit of synchronously

displayed languages.

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[43] Saverio Franchi and Orietta Sartori, *Le impressioni sceniche: Dizionario bio-bibliografico degli editori e stampatori romani e laziali, di testi drammatici e libretti per musica dal 1579 al 1800.* II: *Integrazioni, aggiunte, tavole, indici* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2002), 117-18.

[44] *Orfeo, scena lirica del sig. L.B. dell'Accademia degli Arcadi di Roma/ Orphée, scène lyrique par L.B. de l'Accadémie des Arcades de Rome* (Venice: Palese, 1774); mentioned in Tufano, "La ricezione italiana del melologo," 130, 137.

[45] Taddeo Weil, *I teatri musicali di Venezia*, 303.

[46] *Ibid*. The French text reads, "Les silences sont remplis par une musique analogue à l'expression pantomime des acteurs."

Indeed, the penchant for tandem versions of *Pygmalion* was such that on 30 July 1775 at the Teatro di Santa Maria in Florence, choreographer Antoine Pitrot staged a mute *Pigmalione*, preceded by a complete performance of the same work in French.[47] As in all the previous stagings on the Italian peninsula, the original was supplied on paper and proclaimed the master text, while interpreters provided a translation; here, though, the translation was from French into the so-called "langage d'action." Antoine, the father of Carolina Pitrot and disciple of Noverre, was then performing French-style pantomime on the Italian peninsula; this double Pygmalion functioned as a single entr'acte for Salieri's *La locandiera*. Its practice of preceding gestures with their corresponding words – albeit at a distance – was yet another form of analogue.

Thus, during the first years of its reception in Italy Rousseau's *Pygmalion* accumulated editions, performances, and translations to an extent unequalled in eighteenth-century Italian musical theatre. It is difficult fully to explain why an audience should tolerate two complete and consecutive renditions of the Pygmalion fable, the first in prose and the second in mime; or publishers should print and distribute so many tandem versions of the text when only one was customary. Perhaps we might speculate about a new pleasure of duplication, brought into being by the fear at its edges: a fear of substance lost during transmission, a polyphony of interpretations. Not by coincidence did such linguistic mirror-images reiterate *Pygmalion*'s most distinctive musical feature, the duplication of gesture and "announcement" of speech. These new translatory practices emerged simultaneously with the impetus to locate new sorts of meaning within sound –

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[47] Robert Lamar Weaver and Norma Wright Weaver, *A Chronology of Music in the Florentine Theatre, 1751-1800: Operas, Prologues, Farces, Intermezzos, Concerts, and Plays With Incidental Music* (Detroit: Harmonie Park Press, 1996), II: 504.

and particularly in the sonic fabric of the spoken word, its vowels and consonants, their order and proportions. This succession of sounds could supply a succession of represented objects – in other words, a *narrative* – whose meanings would be immediately felt. To preserve the meaning of an utterance in its transmission, therefore, one must preserve as many of the original sounds as possible: fantasies doubtless permitted by the kinship of French and Italian.

On the one hand, the treatment accorded Rousseau's text seems inextricably linked to his celebrity: actors voiced his words, translators were channels for his ideas. *Pygmalion*, circulated in tablet form, attested (fictitiously) to Rousseau's control over each medium like a web of marionette strings; as with any puppet show, the controlled movements of the simulacra below ultimately envoiced the controlling human presence above. Here we might recall the philosopher's own evocation of Vaucanson's flute-playing automaton, quoted above. But these tendencies coexisted stably with constructions of *Pygmalion* as a "new ruin" or relic from the distant past. The latter is traceable to Rousseau's own writings, as we have seen, which were centrally preoccupied with musical pasts both originary and classical, and which were read avidly by Italians despite the best efforts of censors. During the 1770s and 1780s, as we will see, the Rousseauian ideal of a musical utterance that collapsed media and meaning was imported into Italian opera. For Rousseau's disciples on the Italian peninsula, including opera theorists Antonio Eximeno and Stefano Arteaga, this ideal provided the clarion call for an operatic "revolution" based on a melopoeia of speech.

Phonographs and Mimophones: The Song of Speech

Comparing the powers of the fine arts in his *Rivoluzioni del teatro musicale italiano* (1785), Esteban de Arteaga put Pygmalion and his statue to metaphorical use:

The art of the composer and of the instrumentalist is ultimately nothing but an imperfect language, which fails to signify its object except distantly, whereas song is the most complete and most interesting imitation that the fine arts can achieve. The most complete because, imitating directly the tones of human language, the very elements of song that name the represented object function as a means of representation. The most interesting, because of all possible imitations the dearest to man's heart, is always that of his own sensibility, his affects. Painting and sculpture can only imitate, as one says, the skin of man; song can penetrate right into his soul, awakening its movement and depicting its most intimate changes. The former are as the mythic Pygmalion who created the statue of Galatea from marble; the latter is similar to the gracious soul [i.e., Galatea's] that animated that lovely statue, which placed before the lovelorn creator's senses those sweet tremblings, subsequent palpitations, tremulous glances, seductive sighs, ingenuous smiles, and enchanting words: signs of life suddenly transfused in the infertile marble.[48]
(*L'arte del maestro, e del sonatore altro non è in fine, che un linguaggio imperfetto, col quale non s'arriva a esprimere se non troppo rimotamente ciò che si vuole, laddove il canto è la più compita, e più interessante imitazione, che le belle arti possano proporsi per fine. La più compita, poichè imitando immediatamente i tuoni della umana favella, gli elementi stessi, onde si forma l'oggetto rappresentato, servono ad essa di mezzi a ben rappresentarlo. La più interessante, poichè egli è certo, che fra tutte le imitazioni possibili la più gradita al cuor dell'uomo sarà in ogni tempo quella della propria sensibilità, e delle proprie affezioni. La pittura, e la scoltura si fermano imitando, a così dire, nella scorza dell'uomo; il canto penetra fin nell'anima, l'avverte della sua esistenza, ne risveglia la sua attività, e ne dipinge le sue modificazioni più intime. Quelle sono come il Pimmalione della favola allorchè ritrae dal marmo la statua di Galatea, questo è simile al nume propizio, che animò quella statua medesima, e che ai sensi sottopose dell'artefice innamorato i soavi ondeggiamenti, i palpiti successivi, i tremoli sguardi, i sospir seducenti, i sorrisi ingenui, e le incantatrici parole indizj di vita trasfusa all'improvviso in quella pietra infeconda, e delizioso alimento alle speranze dell'amante.*)

Collapsing several themes into a single, rather elaborate conceit, Arteaga suggested that operatic song could ideally be an imitative art. Indeed, he suggested that the mimetic power of *il canto* was even more complete than those found in the visual arts, a quickened statue next to petrified ones. In this passage Arteaga revealed his familiarity with both

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[48] Stefano [Esteban de] Arteaga, *Rivoluzioni nel teatro musicale italiano: dalla sua origine fino al presente*, 2nd ed. (Venice: Palese, 1785), II: 33-34. Translation mine. Page numbers are henceforth included in main text.

Rousseau's *Essay on the Origin of Languages* and his *Pygmalion*: the statue metaphor reiterated the Rousseauian duality of visual/inanimate and vocal/animate in the *Essay*, published in 1781 for the first time; and his naming of the statue would appear to confirm Arteaga's familiarity with the original melodrama. But if Rousseau wrote of ruins, Arteaga aimed for revival: while much of his treatise was devoted to recounting the decline of music from its classical perfection, the "Revolution" of his title purported to restore to song its natural and historical birthright, the power of enchantment.

As we will see, Arteaga's revolution entailed a reform of Italian opera based on renewed attention to the sonic properties of words: not, in itself, altogether new, as critics had complained of text-mangling and other singer-dominated operatic practices for much of the preceding century. But this treatise, and the movement it synthesized, differed from earlier operatic reforms such as that advocated by Calzabigi and Gluck in two important ways: first, because its point of reference was not poetry but simply words as they were spoken; and second, in its claims about the mimetic or "mimophonic" power of these vocal sounds. For Arteaga, song's position as the most perfectly imitative of the arts came from its dual nature. It could provoke the flutterings of human sensibility, and replicate its objects in its very contours: "the very elements of song that name the represented object function as a medium of representation." In other words, the vowels, consonants, pitch, and rhythm that formed words also functioned as onomatopoeic or mimophonic devices: icons protruding from the ever-unfolding fabric of indices, simultaneously duplicating their meaning.

Such was the definition of song expounded by Arteaga's colleague Antonio Eximeno – also a Spanish Jesuit living in Italy – in an influential treatise virtually unknown to

modern musicology: his *Dell'origine e delle regole della musica* of 1773. We will examine

this treatise at some length, for it was largely responsible for importing Rousseau's ideas

into Italian opera proper, and thus prepared the way for later practice. Eximeno claimed to

have been drawn to the subject by a desire to make evident the numerous mathematical

errors made by music theorists such as Rameau, d'Alembert, Euler, Tartini, and others.

Ultimately, though, and to his surprise, he found that he could espouse neither a

mathematical nor a contrapuntal foundation for music theory: the only true music was *il

canto*, a type of song that amplified the pitch variation and rhythm of Italian speech (*il

commun parlare*). Basing his ideas on a study of the ancient Greeks, whose music was

renowned for its bewitching effects, he believed that music's true font was in the prosody

of language: the melody and rhythm of the words themselves.

Appropriately, Eximeno came to this realization in a moment of epiphany embracing

the Platonic and the Augustinian. While in exile, his initial excitement in writing about

music having burnt itself out, he resolved to cease speaking or even thinking about music.

Then, one morning during Pentecost at Saint Peter's Basilica, he heard a castrato singing

Niccolò Jommelli's *Veni Sancte Spiritus*. In a strange, covert duet with the singer, Eximeno

"recited those words energetically to [him]self, as [he] would have recited them to the

congregation in order to move them to devotion." Suddenly, he realized that his voice

traced the very same melody (albeit obscurely) as that of the singer. He felt as though he

had "exited a cave into the clear light of midday": "thus music ... is none other than a

prosody to give language grace and expression" (4). Thereafter he confidently pursued his

goal of proving that the roots of melody lay in common speech. Like Rousseau's monotone

Frenchman but with considerably better results, Eximeno tested his theory through a lyric

experiment: seated at the harpsichord, he successfully traced the melody of his speech through the instrument's strings.

Eximeno suggested that the signifying power of music and language came from a single origin: "human instinct." All languages were built from innately signifying sounds, and the intuitive use of the vocal cords, larynx, mouth, and lips encouraged humans to "express with vocal inflections the qualities of the object." Consonants made by the lips (*m, b, p*) are the sweetest, while that made by the throat (*g*) is barbarous. But consonants were inflected regionally: thus the Spanish made the barbaric *xu* sound inherited by them from the Moors, and so on. Vowels, on the other hand, were constant in number and sound through all human civilization; their signifying power was affective. *A* was the vowel of clarity and sincerity, and *u* of melancholy, while *o* was the most sonorous. Contrary to Condillac and Rousseau, Eximeno believed that these qualities did not deteriorate inevitably over time: after all, it was just as natural for humans to reason and reflect as to cry out when burned, and the word "electricity" is just as natural, and mimophonic, as the primal scream. Indeed, the more civilized a people, the more likely they were to cultivate the instinct to speak mimophonically. If language and music separated continuously as a people became more civilised, he argued, then it followed that Hottentots and Canadians should be the most musical people on the planet.

This is not to say, though, that in arguing against its inevitability Eximeno denied the notion – then very much *au courant* – of present-day musical decline. On the contrary, much of his treatise is devoted to a detailed account of the deterioration and ruin of European music following the classical age: a melancholy tradition he, like many others, attributed to the separation of music from language. Greek was the most melodic tongue

because it contained fixed accent and quantity (i.e., length), whence came naturally the melody and rhythm of song; Latin also had those "sweet," "pleasurable" qualities, although they developed only in the twilight of the Empire, when large-scale hedonism was leading to decline. (Roman poets finally sang, it seems, as Rome burned.) The distinction was simply in the question of inevitability: Eximeno believed that he had found in his adopted homeland a magical site of semi-preservation, a Jurassic Park of ancient speech-song, where even common speech was both operatic and mimophonic. Italian was second only to ancient Greek in being naturally melodious; "a great many of its syllables" also had perceptible quantity. For Eximeno, Italians effectively collapsed the distinction between speech and operatic song. "Without exaggeration," he stated, "it can be said that the Italian speaks as he sings. Even the most colloquial speech is never without its distinctive cadence" (409): the diatribe of an angry Roman woman was an operatic aria *fuori del teatro*. It was the sensitivity of the Italian organism that made this possible. Because "the Italian soul is extremely sensitive to the most delicate sensory impressions," the Italian voice "expressed with vocal inflections the qualities of its objects": for instance, the word *ferro* would be pronounced sharply, while *aria* caused breath to rush softly between the lips (135). Indeed, Eximeno prefigured Arteaga's conceit in proposing that one could sketch "an anatomy of the heart" merely by listening to the Italian language. But the speaking Italian also broadcast his message with natural signs in the visual medium: in addition to his voice he communicated with his eyes, hands, and the rest of his body.[49] As with the first humans, these visual signs were specific enough that words could be omitted entirely. Eximeno reported having "the pleasure of observing, in a café in Rome, the loveliest sight in

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[49] "these gestures … proceeding naturally and without reflection from instinct, are extremely beautiful, and apt for pantomime dance, in which Italians have excelled over all nations since the Caesarian age."

the world: a natural mute, sitting in a circle and conducting a long conversation, he and everyone else speaking only with gestures" (411).

Having rooted all communication, including the verbal, in the impulses of the nervous system, Eximeno was then in the difficult position of having to define precisely what separated speech from song. Having recourse to human anatomy he sought to define the distinction as one of surface. The anatomical account of singing by "a modern anatomist" (in fact Denis Dodart), recounted by Rousseau in the *Dictionnaire de musique*, was inappropriately invasive: "in song, he said, the conduit that carried breath from the lungs to the mouth oscillates and trembles, while in common speech this conduit is dampened by the bones that surround it." Eximeno, on the other hand, believed that humans had one voice both for speaking and singing: a continuity most audible in the pronunciation of the vowels. Of all vowels, the one that most clearly demonstrated this continuity – the conduit between speech and song and thus the lynchpin to his entire system – was the most sonorous: O. In a moment of typically melodramatic overdetermination, Eximeno demonstrated its pre-eminence by pointing to the iconicity of its notation: a true mimograph, "the letter O is a drawing of the position of the mouth required to pronounce it, i.e., concave and open." In the cave of the mouth's O, breath vibrated and echoed rather than exiting immediately as with the other letters: it thus appeared to be sung even within the context of speech. From this, he argued that the difference between speech and song lay simply in the concavity of the mouth and throat: in speech, the breath would exit immediately, while in song it echoed in the caverns behind the lips. The Greeks sang when they spoke because, as Horace tells us, they walked around with rounded mouths.

Thus the caverns of the mouth were a site of preservation and possible revival: from *bocche rotonde* the ancient speech-song could resound again. In most nations, these formerly open spaces behind the lips were collapsed, rendering voices mute and muffled. But such echo chambers were preserved in the mouths of Italians, particularly women. Cicero had said that Roman women pronounced Latin the most sweetly, and Eximeno was happy to announce that the practice persisted: "the influence of the climate on their tongues [is] more durable than the stones of Campidoglio." Creating music, thus subsumed within discourses of ruin and revival, became a passive process of transcribing the natural actions of the cords, teeth, lips, and tongue: "to compose one must throw oneself into nature's arms and let oneself be a conduit to the sensations aroused by the subject matter." Echoing Rousseau's views on writing, Eximeno suggested that traditional music notation served simply to damage a vibrant living practice, minimizing the subtle variations of the voice and thus damaging its vitality. Lyric music should require no more than a verbal text and a knowledge of the mode: the pitch and length of the first note would determine the rest of the musical unfolding.

In its subsuming of "common speech" within the realm of the musical, Eximeno's project could be compared to another, almost exactly contemporary effort: Joshua Steele's *Prosodia rationalis*, first published in 1775.[50] Steele, who is now little known to musicologists, proposed like Eximeno to "treat the modulation of *speech* as a *genus of music* under the rules of *Melopoeia*" (xvi); as his treatise came complete with notated examples, it may provide us with some sense of how this speech-song might sound. But unlike most

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[50] Joshua Steele, *Prosodia Rationalis: Or, An Essay Towards Establishing the Melody and the Measure of Speech, to be Expressed and Perpetuated by Peculiar Symbols* (London: W. Bowyer and J. Nichols, 1775; 2nd ed. London: J. Nichols, 1779).

other Europeans who addressed the topic of song within speech, Steele suggested that the keepers of "the Attic plant" were in fact the English: "I had long entertained opinions concerning the melody and rhythmus of modern languages, and particularly of the English, which made me think that our theatrical recitals were capable of being accompanied with a bass, as those of the antient Greeks and Romans were." He maintained that the imperfect notation of the ancients had resulted in centuries of quarrels about the precise sound of their musical language. So that the voices of his own era would not later fall into obscurity, he invented a modified musical notation that could transcribe all sonic aspects of the spoken word. Were his system to be adopted, Steele wrote, "the overwhelmed ruins of a Herculaneum should be retrieved from rubbish, and restored to their former splendours." Using "the judgment of his ear" and his knowledge of Greek metrical feet, Steele offered an ostensibly re-completed notation of some lines from the *Iliad*. Here, in a modified musical notation, the lines attached to the bottom of the stems represent pitch, while the symbols at the top provide rhythm. The dots and triangles beneath the words mark emphasis. The melody – if such it can be called – followed the text's diacritical marks, rising for acute and falling for grave, and rising then falling for a circumflex. As we can see in Figure 4, Steele also provided rests for breathing, which he called "stops of *expression*" (81), because "a *pause* or silence, fitly employed, makes a significant impression on an auditor" (81). These were similar in effect and ubiquity to the sentimental ellipsis found in *Pygmalion*, and serve a similar purpose, re-inscribing breath and the unfolding of time within the verbal text – and thus, in a Rousseauian sense, animating it.

Figure 2.4: Joshua Steele, excerpt from *The Iliad*, from *Prosodia rationalis*
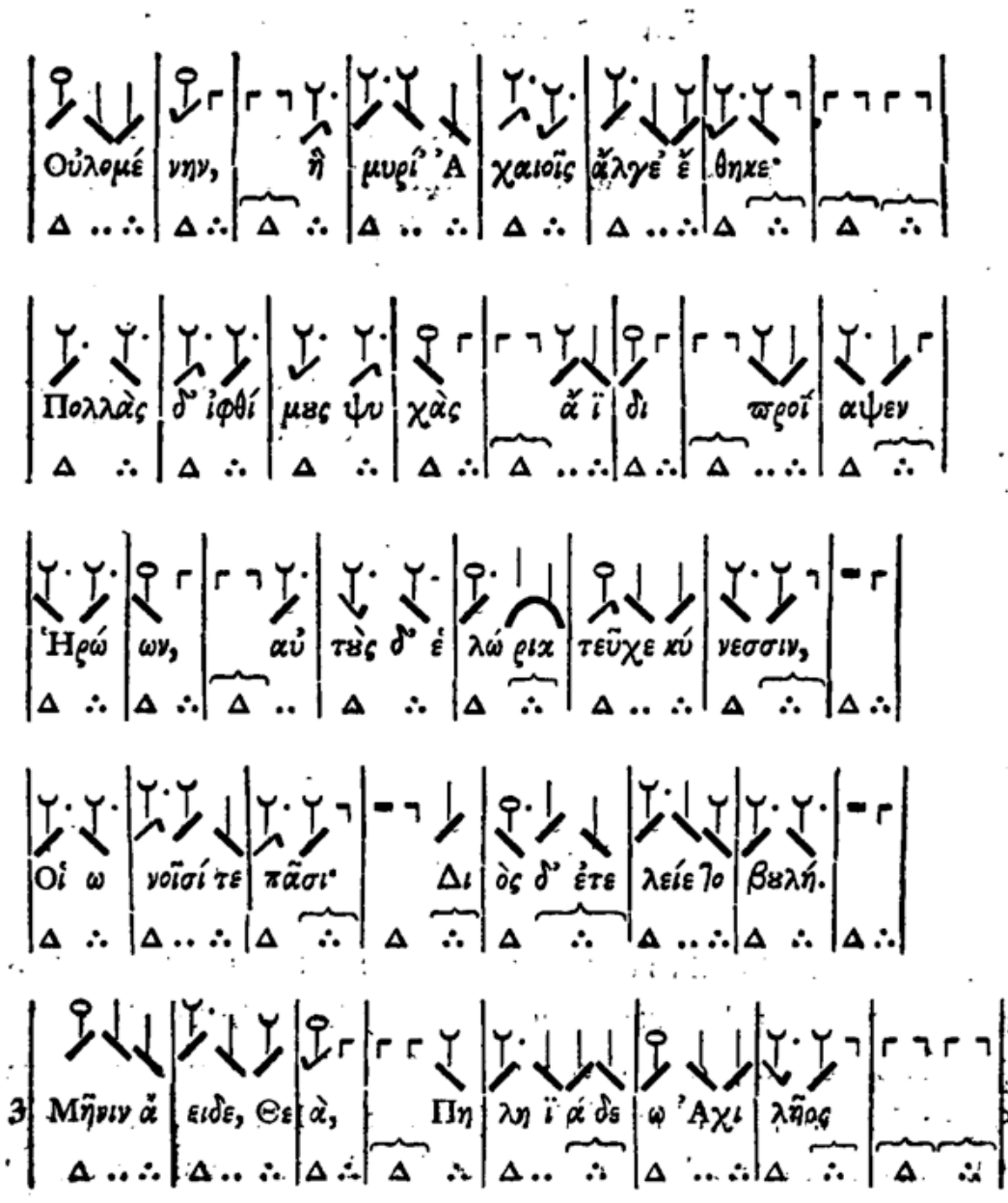
The effect of this notation is striking: Steele attempted to put breath into an ancient

artefact, created a voice from words. But this notation was not simply a method of bringing

historical objects to life: it also strove to control the way in which the present became past,

capturing moments of great eloquence and preserving them for posterity. He boasted that

recording speech within a system of modified musical notation allowed him to transcribe

every aspect of an actor's declamation. Thus, like a proto-phonograph, his pages recorded a rendition of Hamlet's "To be or not to be" (see Figure 2.5).[51] Commas indicate louder or softer, and the lines beneath the staff represent "loudness uniformly continued."

What Steele offered was a recitative derived directly from speech; but his system was superior in that it employed the tiny gradations of tones as in the ancient enharmonic genera, and was not confined to "unnatural and disgusting" tones and semitones. He suggested that his notation could be "read off as easily as a song tune," and could be used in combination with airs in musical theatre. But what is surprising is the extent to which this declamation already resembled music. For one, there are time signatures: the monologue begins in triple meter and quickens to duple at "For who would bear the whips and scorns of time" (not shown). The movement is initially Largo, becomes Allegretto with the shift to duple meter, and later begins to alternate more rapidly between the two tempi and meters. Steele even suggested that this declamation could be accompanied by a bass note for an "agreeable and advantageous" effect: here he supplied only a "tonic," though in such cases he supported movement between tonic and dominant. Following this notation, he provided a few additional notes permitting his readers to reproduce in their own voices the monologue as it had been pronounced by the era's most famous Shakespearean, David Garrick.

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[51] This text received another famous musical treatment at the hands of Heinrich Wilhelm von Gerstenberg: this poet and musical amateur overlaid a German translation of Hamlet's monologue to C.P.E. Bach's Fantasia in C Minor, purportedly to demonstrate the compatability of instrumental and verbal meanings. See in particular Tobias Plebuch, "Dark Fantasies and the Dawn of the Self: Gerstenberg's Monologues for C.P.E. Bach's C Minor Fantasia," in *C.P.E. Bach Studies*, ed. Annette Richards (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 25-66.

Figure 2.5: Joshua Steele, excerpt from "To be or not to be," *Prosodia rationalis* (1779)

The 1779 republication of *Prosodia Rationalis* was made timely by the death of Garrick that year. Steele proudly reproduced a letter from Lord Monboddo, author of the *Origin and Progress of Language*, who had praised Steele for having "fallen on a way to make Garrick live as long as his Shakespear."[52] This aspect of the project – its ability to record voices for reproduction after the speakers' deaths – did not escape notice by one of Steele's contemporaries, soon thereafter engaged in recording for posterity another of the century's most eloquent figures. James Boswell wrote thus in the *Life of Johnson*:

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[52] Quoted in Steele, *Prosodia Rationalis*, 91.

I cannot too frequently request of my readers, while they peruse my account of Johnson's conversation, to endeavour to keep in mind his deliberate and strong utterance. His mode of speaking was indeed very impressive; and I wish it could be preserved as music is written, according to the ingenious method of Mr Steele, who has shown how the recitation of Mr Garrick, and other eminent speakers, might be transmitted to posterity *in score*.[53]

For Boswell, Steele's musical notation, had it been employed in a timely fashion, could have been a means of discrediting those actors, like a certain Mr Henderson, who imitated only imperfectly what those who had heard Johnson called his *bow-wow way*. Bow-wow as used here was a colloquial term for onomatopoeic pronunciation, a term later used derogatorily by Max Muller to stand for the entire era in linguistics. Thus the ineffable in Johnson's "deliberate and strong utterance" was precisely his way of underlining verbal meanings iconically by means of pitch. Here again, then, the mimetic song within speech became a symbol of vitality; and speech's notation "as music is written... *in score*" held the means of shoring up an aural presence against the depredations of time. Like Arteaga's Galatea, Johnson's words outlined a human form, but the song within them quickened that form to life. Perhaps Boswell was imagining – whether in earnest or no – something like a Johnson songbook, which readers could leaf through while at an instrument, perhaps even reproducing the critic's famous tics inscribed in italics: a Johnson for everyone's living room, with the performer's larynx as the instrument of reproduction.

It is clear that Arteaga, the era's most prominent opera critic, was recalling these projects of musical speech when he outlined "a dramatic system ... built on the exact relation of the movements of the soul with the accents of the word and of language, and [the relation] of those accents with musical melody" (I/41[xli]). Notwithstanding what

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[53] Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (Ware: Wordsworth, 1999), 424. First published 1791. Emphasis original.

some have misleadingly described as conservative musical tastes, Arteaga was a dedicated

Rousseauian, and desired that Italian opera be "deriv[ed] from the deep sources of

philosophy": on the nature and development of languages in warm and cold climates, he

referred the reader to Rousseau's *Essay on the Origin of Languages* (I/63). He suggested

that the Italian language was unique in the closeness of its vowels to ancient Greek and

Latin and in the abundance of metrical feet; here, Arteaga referred the reader to Eximeno's

treatise*.*

Like Rousseau and Eximeno, Arteaga believed that Italian's unique adaptability to

song "consist[ed] in the accord of the sounds of the word with the nature of the object they

express": a mimetic unfolding that became more vivid in moments of passion. The rules of

prosody regulated these mimophones, being themselves deduced from a continual

observation of what happens naturally in speech. Thus "the melody of the Italian language

and its song is the most vivid and readily felt," because "the origin and force of its imitation

[are] transferred to song from the inflections made by man in his ordinary voice."

Following Eximeno, Arteaga suggested that even the "familiar discourse" of the Italian was

an overdetermined, multi-media presentation, the aural mimesis within its words

duplicated by the eyes, hands, and the rest of the body (I/94). These unmediated "idioms"

that unfolded together within common discourse subjected *la parola italiana* to a constant

renewal (I/94). And such, for Arteaga, was the source of all music.

Pygmalion in Italy, Part II: Venice, 1790

With this we come full circle, to Sografi's and Cimador's *Pimmalione*: a revolutionary work

that more than any other seemed to answer the call for an opera of speech. It demonstrates

that a real word-based reform of opera only came into being through adaptation: in

particular, adaptation of a spoken text that already had considerable cultural presence in its spoken form. Sografi's poetry for *Pimmalione* negotiated the first terms of this adaptation, building the poetic unfolding around the ever-resilient kernels of the original prose, much in the manner of de' Rogati seventeen years earlier. Sografi translated Rousseau's *Pygmalion* into something like a standard opera libretto, with most text rendered as *versi sciolti* for recitative, and a few sections of *versi lirici* highlighting moments of emotional crystallization. As in Rousseau's original, gestural directions were in italics: Sografi's source was clearly Kurzböck's libretto, and particularly the translation made for Venice in 1773, although for obvious reasons he omitted the three-column format along with its musical timings and descriptions. The extent to which the original text was preserved is nevertheless remarkable: nearly every distinctive word and phrase was woven into the new fabric. Take, for instance, the opening monologue:

Pimmalione seduto, ed appoggiato sopra il gomito si và atteggiando a guise d'Uomo inquieto, e melanconico. Si alza risoluto, prende i suoi Strumenti, e tratto tratto con lo Scalpello ritocca gli Abbozzi. Si allontana da essi, e li garda con afflizione, ed avvilimento.	*Pygmalion assis & accoudé rêve dans l'attitude d'un home inquiet & triste: puis se levant tout à coup, il prend sur sa table les outils de son art, va donner, par intervalles, quelques coups de ciseau sur quelqu'une de ses ébauches, se recule et regarde d'un air mécontent & découragé*
A che spirto, nè vita Più darvi non poss'io. Dove sei genio mio! Che mai sei divenuto Misero mio talento! In te tutto è già spento Quel foco animator, ch'opre immortali Facea sortir un dì... Itene al suolo Voi strumenti non più della mia Gloria, Ma del mio disonor. Lascia tu pure Avvilito Scalpello Questa mano volgar; non sei più quello.	Il n'ya point là d'ame ni de vie... ce n'est que de la pierre... je ne ferai rien de tout cela – O mon genie, où es-tu?... mon talent qu'es tu devenu?... tout mon feu s'est éteint... mon imagination s'est glacée... le marbre sort froid de mes mains... Pygmalion, tu ne sais plus des Dieux... tu n'es plus qu'un vulgaire artiste – Vils instrumens qui n'ètes plus ceux de ma gloire, allez... ne deshonorez plus mes mains. *Il jette avec dédain ses outils.*

Getta con dispregio i suoi Strumenti.	

As we can see, the gestural descriptions are rendered verbatim. Within speech, where prose is rendered as blank verse, each idea in the original is preserved, though sometimes with delicate modifications. For instance, in the opening lines, Pimmalione addresses his sculptures rather than speaking about them. Inversions notwithstanding, the translation approaches word-for-word in many places: "O mon genie, où es-tu?... mon talent qu'es tu devenu?" receives a delicate patina, becoming "Dove sei genio mio! /Che mai sei divenuto /Misero mio talento!"; "vils instrumens qui n'ètes plus ceux de ma gloire" becomes "Voi strumenti non più della mia Gloria," and so on. The "pauses of expression" seem at first to have vanished – yet a glance at the score shows that their notation has simply been displaced to the musical unfolding, and recorded as rests.

While the original melodrama had music of fragments, Cimador's score is without fissures: Sografi's text is underpinned with continuous orchestral sound. Rather than discrete numbers, Cimador supplied indications of "scena I," "scena II," and so on, but these simply number portions of the monologue, and are included in the vocal part only; a gestural interlude signals the end of one scene and the beginning of the next. Strikingly, all the hero's *versi sciolti* are set as accompanied recitative: sometimes the orchestra supplies sustained string chords, elsewhere a more active texture of harmonic support and interjection. Thus Cimador smoothed over the harsh discontinuity between recitative and aria so often lamented as an enemy of verisimilitude by opera critics from Algarotti to Arteaga. Verisimilitude, after all, has a new kind of importance in an opera built multiply around the idiom of speech: continuity, in all its forms, becomes paramount. In Cimador's

score, as in Coignet's, no individual musical part is self-sufficient or harmonically closed; but unlike the melodrama proper, each new section of Cimador's music emerges directly from the one before, whether sung or gestured, and leads in like fashion into the next.

The heterogeneous musical fabric is stitched together like a patchwork of music-theatrical genres, fashioned into a continuous whole with means such as overlapping cadence. (The size of these links may suggest a certain unease at the compatibility of the materials.) Example 2.2(a) reproduces a sample of this fabric, encompassing the final words of the opening monologue, the first gestural interlude, and the hero's resumption of speech. The last words of Scena I – "non sei più quello" – adopt a standard cadential formula, with its falling leap of a fourth in the voice followed by a dominant chord; the ensuing resolution coincides with the opening of the mime music. The text instructs that the hero is to "throw his tools down with disdain; walk agitatedly, stop, and turn as if by force toward the bottom of the stage, immediately withdraw his gaze, and fall into deep meditation" (*Getta con dispregio i suoi Strumenti; passeggia agitato, si ferma, e come a forza si rivolge verso il fondo, da cui tosto ritira lo sguardo, cadendo in una profonda meditazione*). Cimador has clearly followed Rousseau's supposed instructions that this music should "paint the situation": we can trace the mime within the musical texture with considerable ease. The cadence must duplicate the throwing of the tools; a bass line that moves on every quarter illustrates the "walking," while the faster-moving upper parts supply "agitation." The seventh measure of scena II, in which upper-voice syncopations are replaced by a questioning arc of quarter notes and the walking bass by the first of several whole-note B-flats, unmistakably illustrates the moment when Pygmalion ceases his steps and turns toward the veiled statue of Galatea. The final five measures provide this short pantomimed

portion with an end that is even more open than its beginning: a final dominant harmony

built on a root of B-flat. They depict the hero "falling into meditation" with a slowly

descending melody; his inner unrest at the conclusion is painted with a semitone

oscillation in the bass, as the accompanied recitative begins once more.

Example 2.2(a) Cimador/Sografi, *Pimmalione* (Venice, 1790), end of Scena I, Scena II (my reduction)

Example 2.2(b) No. 2, *Allegro*, from Aspelmayr, *Pygmalion* (Vienna: Burgtheater, 1771)[54]

 In this passage, and the others of its kind in *Pimmalione*, Cimador made use of pre-existing techniques of gestural mirroring: a lexicon that was startlingly consistent between adaptations of Rousseau's melodrama and the music of pantomime dance proper in the final decades of the century. Indeed, given the consistencies between this movement and its parallel in the *Pygmalion* score by Aspelmayr, reproduced as Example 2.2(b), it seems possible that Cimador used the earlier music as a guide. Similarities include the Allegro tempo and C-minor harmony; the "walking" quarter notes in the bass offset by syncopations in the upper parts; a second texture with melodic motion on the beat and one bass note per measure once the walking stops; falling melodic motion to indicate "falling into meditation"; a prolonged dominant, inflected by an augmented sixth chord, in the final measures.

The many sections of accompanied recitative, which together occupy most of the work, are a carefully calibrated speech-song, accentuating the prosody of the text with melodic contours and rhythmic emphasis. Such, after all, was ever the goal of recitative. But Cimador's musical setting is unique among operas of its time in the terseness, even anti-

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[54] Reduction taken from Sala, "La carriera di Pigmalione."

vocality, of its lyric portions. In addition to a concluding love duet, Sografi supplied texts for

six relatively brief lyric portions: three in *ottonari* and three in *senari*. Most are of four lines

only. Cimador turned each of these into an arioso consisting of one continuous iteration of

the text with no fragmentation and minimal repetition (the last two lines of the verse are

occasionally repeated). The poetry was declaimed almost uniformly in syllabic fashion,

with stepwise motion, within a vocal register of about a seventh. As both Steele and

Eximeno advised, this was the form and register both of Greek lyric verse and of common

speech. The meter of the music usually derives from the poetic meter, with important

verbal accents invariably arriving on the first beat of the measure: take, for instance, the

opening melody of the first lyric verse, reproduced in Example 2.3. As in Steele's speech-

song, the text unfolds at a regular pace. and note values are confined within a narrow

range: most are quarters or eighths, with the occasional sixteenth or dotted quarter.

Melodic motion is mostly continuous and stepwise.

Example 2.3 Cimador/Sografi, *Pimmalione*, beginning of Scena III

This first lyric portion is the longest of such texts in *Pimmalione*: it consists of two verses of

four *ottonari* and a concluding verse of two, each preceded by a brief portion of mime:

Siede guardando le Statue, e i Gruppi, che gli stanno d'intorno
> Voi che intorno a me vi state
> Cari oggetti lusinghieri
> Deh voi fate
> I miei pensieri
> Un'istante tranquillar.

S'alza con impeto aggirandosi per la Scena smanioso
> Ah che in vano al mio tormento
> Spero in voi trovar conforto:
> Dall'affanno più mi sento
> Dall'ardore trasportar.

Si ferma, e si rivolge con grande entusiasmo al Padiglione
> Sol colei
> Quest'occhi miei
> Può quest'alma consolar.[55]

Cimador's musical setting adheres to the poetic form, avoiding large-scale textual and musical repetitions. The result is a *sui generis* passage composed of three linked *ariosi*. As each verse portrays a different mood, Cimador provided a through-composed setting with different tempi and music for each verse. One result is an extraordinary terseness: these sections are sixteen, twenty, and then eleven measures, and the small bridges between verses double as pantomime portions (see the opening and concluding measures of

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[55] [*Pygmalion*] *sits, observing the statues and statue groups that surround him.*
> You who surround me,
> Dear, enticing objects,
> Ah, you bring
> My thoughts
> Momentarily to calm.

 He suddenly rises, walking around the scene agitatedly,
> Ah, in vain do I hope to find in you
> A comfort for my torment:
> I feel myself carried
> From fervor to fear.

He stops, and turns with great enthusiasm toward the [*i.e., Galatea's*] *pavilion.*
> Only with you
> Can my eyes
> Bring calm to my soul.

Example 2.3). Another consequence is that, since the musical unfolding is tied at every moment to the text (whether gestural or "spoken"), every orchestral and vocal event is isolated and unrepeatable. Similarly, since the vocal melody was tied to the text and the orchestra was controlled by the movements of the actor, Cimador maintained a strict division between voice and instruments nearly throughout. With one important exception, the vocal melody is never preceded in, doubled or repeated by the orchestra. The continuous, text-based musical unfolding had one final musical consequence: a profound suspicion of points of arrival. "Voi che intorno a me" contains only one complete musical cadence, marking the last syllable of the last word; and even this repose is immediately undermined by the next portion of accompanied recitative, which begins directly from it. Thus an operatic speech-song in the Rousseauian model carried with it, at least in this iteration, a musical burden akin to insomnia: the trace of sentimental prose within renders it restless and suspicious of arrival, always approaching the nirvana of pure voice and yet avoiding it.

Nevertheless, *Pimmalione* does have a single, wonderfully peculiar moment of repose: a few instants in which something foreign seems to impinge on the flow of gestures and words. Near the end, Sografi's sculptor extends his hands to the heavens and sings a heartfelt *preghiera*:

> *Dopo qualche pausa stende le mani al Cielo, e dice*
>> Ciel pietoso, Ciel clemente
>> A lei dona i giorni miei;
>> Se morir degg'io per lei
>> Non mi lagno di morir...[56]

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[56] *After a brief pause he extends his hands to the sky, and says,*
  Merciful heavens, lenient heavens
  Give to her my own days;

With his plea a portal seems to open. As Pygmalion himself finally ceases to move, the

strings suddenly go silent *in medias res* and we hear a "soave Armonia," reproduced in

Example 2.4: the unearthly sounds of solo oboe, bassoon, and harp. Their Andante allows

the tormented sculptor finally to rest and to wax lyrical, and he sings a slumber tune to a

rarified accompaniment.

> *Viene interrotto da una soave Armonia, che si ode all'intorno della Statua di Galatea*
> Qual divino concento!
> Qual soave armonia
> Rapisce l'alma mia!... Sì, sì, t'intendo,
> Bella Madre d'Amor, tu sei, tu sei,
> Che pietosa ti mostri ai pianti miei.
> *Il suono suddetto precede, ed accompagna le seguinti parole*
>> A un dolce riposo
>> Alfine pietoso
>> Invitami... Amor.
>> Che pace!... Che calma!...
>> Mi scende nell'alma...
>> Mi sento nel cor.[57]

<div style="margin-left:2em">

If I may die for her
I do not fear to die...

[57] *He is interrupted by a sweet harmony, that is heard around the statue of Galatea.*

What heavenly sounds!
What sweet harmony
Enchants my soul!... Yes, yes, I hear you,
Beautiful Goddess of Love, it is you, it is you,
Who takes pity on me.

The sound precedes and accompanies the following words.

To a sweet repose,
At last merciful,
Love invites me.
What peace!... What calm!...
Descends to my soul...
I feel it in my heart.

</div>

Encroaching dreamland seems to bring a heightened auditory awareness: for the first time, the song intertwines consistently with two other melodies in the accompaniment, sometimes taking its motives from the winds, sometimes echoed by them, and often singing in unison or thirds with one or another.

Example 2.4 Cimador, *Pimmalione,* end of Scena XV-beginning of Scena XVII

Che____ pa- ce!... Che____ cal- ma!... mi scen-de mi sen-to nel cor mi____

sen - to nel cor mi sen - to nel cor.

Cade lentamente sopra uno de' Massi,
e vi resta alquanto, come preso da sopore.

These dreamy moments have no parallel in Rousseau's *Pygmalion*, and their

presence within an otherwise faithful adaptation is at first difficult to explain. The harp

provides an important clue: its use as an obbligato instrument in eighteenth-century opera

is restricted to a few famous incidents in which it evoked the classical lyre and

accompanied an on-stage bard. Indeed, the coaxing arpeggios in Example 2.4 recall nothing

so much as those supposedly played by Gluck's Orpheus, as he calmed the furies at the

beginning of Act II. The intrusion of Orphic music here recalls the fact that, within the

original *Metamorphoses*, the story of Pygmalion was sung by Orpheus. Perhaps we might

imagine that Pygmalion's dream allowed him to hear his own storyteller: the song that

brought him into existence. But there is an additional possibility, not exclusive of the first:

might the player of the lyre be Rousseau, whose words lay within this enchanted surface?

Rousseau often drew comparisons with the ancient poets for his "sublime" eloquence; in

the *Confessions*, he professed having taken up music out of a desire to be taken for "a

modern Orpheus."[58] Whoever is heard through this dreamy portal, the harp is *his* lyre, and the wind instruments *his* diffuse and fragmentary vocalise.

This intrusion of a musical narrator makes evident the one resilient fissure within these projects. Despite the collapse of operatic media into a single musical whole, the person at the center of this spectacle – whose gestures move orchestral sound, and from whose mouth the ancient speech-song resounds again – did not actually create his own utterance. Certainly Babbini and his proponents endeavoured to cast him as the ancient Greek bard returned in the flesh: the caption beneath a portrait of Babbini reads, in Greek script, "Matteo Babbini, a whole bard, the first in an age." His eulogizer, Pietro Brighenti, recorded that Babbini had requested *Pimmalione* "in precisely this form" – something implied by the libretto's preface, described above.[59] The inscription beneath Babbini's portrait was cut away when it was reproduced in the nineteenth century and beyond. For as we know, fantasies of a singer-driven opera in the Greek model would prove to be the most ephemeral aspect of these projects of Rousseauian melodrama: like the voices themselves, they were subject to immediate decay. What remained after the apparatus of revival had been detached was a new mythology: that of a controlling presence, settling disembodied within the music.

The onset of slumber calls into question what follows. Does Pygmalion simply dream the statue's animation? Perhaps this added scene attested to the fact that, in 1790, the play itself was already old-fashioned: opera audiences were losing their taste for such miracles. Statuary animation along Condillac's model, earnestly deployed twenty years earlier to depict bodily mechanisms, was shifting territory toward the psychological and

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[58] Rousseau, *Les confessions* (London: [NP,] 1782), II: 80.
[59] Pietro Brighenti, *Elogio di Matteo Babini* (Bologna: Annesio Nobili, 1821), 202.

the macabre. Indeed, Rousseauian melodrama and its themes were the object of a parody

appearing also in Venice shortly afterwards, in the form of *La statua per puntiglio* (Teatro

San Moisè, 1792; libretto anon., music by Marcello di Capua). In this work, a foolish and

artefact-hungry antiquarian, Dottore Tolomeo, attempts to purchase Galatea's statue from

the sculptor Pygmalion: characters who are in fact Tolomeo's reluctant betrothed,

Altomira, and the Harlequinesque troublemaker Farfallone. In Greek costume as

Pygmalion, with Altomira frozen in position, Farfallone speaks to Tolomeo in a nonsensical

quatrain of perfect *quinari*:

> Lipsa Fallaspi
> Minchia chianchiaia
> Juspa Falluspa
> Cakerikan.

Taking this speech for a prayer to Venus in ancient Greek, Tolomeo credulously repeats it,

and Altomira/Galatea comes to life. Her first words and Tolomeo's responses, disjunct and

riddled with ellipses, are an obvious send-up of Rousseau's text:

Altomira: Io?... son io?... ma voi?...ma come?...
                Vedo?... parlo?... il sesso?... il nome?...
                Freddo sasso... donna... o dea...
                Dite voi chi mi sarò?
Tolomeo: Lei... voi... sì... dirò... cioè...
                Che voi siete... io non lo sò. [60]

Altomira soon forgets to restrict her vocabulary to Rousseauian essentials ("Does this face

please you? Aren't I beautiful? Aren't I charming?"), but Tolomeo is merely impressed with

her ability to learn the language.

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[60] Altomira: *I?... Am I?... But you?... But how?..../ I see?.... I speak?.... Sex?.... Name?..../ Cold marble... woman... oh Goddess.../ Can you tell me who I am?* Tolomeo: *She... you... yes... I mean... That is.../ That you are... I don"t know what.*

But despite such conspicuous critiques, and although it is unlikely to displace Mozart's operas in a History of Musical Beauties, the importance of Cimador's *Pimmalione* within Italian operatic traditions deserves to be made visible. Cimador eventually burned his autograph in embarrassment at the score's many flaws, but the scene survives in numerous manuscript and printed copies. A full score was published in Vienna in 1791, and a later Viennese score published four arias. The work had a significant presence in Cimador's adopted London: in 1797 the overture and four arias were published by the firm of Corri, Dussek & Co, and that year Giuseppe Viganoni sang the work at the King's Theatre. As a star vehicle for Babbini, his *Pimmalione* was heard internationally in the years around 1800: Brighenti recorded that the tenor performed it "to astonishing effect … in Venice, Bologna, London, Vienna, Florence, Genoa, Paris, etc., etc."[61] Perhaps predictably given its source, the work accumulated political and even nationalist significance during the revolutionary years: Brighenti reported that during the 1800 Siege of Genoa Babbini performed *Pimmalione* "with the sole aim of aiding the so-called *patriot refugees*" who fought on the side of the French.[62] Following Babbini's retirement, the scene was taken up by the Italian soprano Marianna Sessi, who, like Babbini, performed the role of the sculptor to an international audience, in London, Paris, Berlin, and Prague during the 1810s.

Even more notable is the number of composers who wrote *Pimmalione* scores in Cimador's model, generally using Sografi's text. These will be discussed in greater detail in the final chapter; here, a simple enumeration will suffice. Francesco Gnecco introduced the

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[61] "Per conoscere il sorprendente effetto di questo periglioso cimento, al quale esponevasi Babini eseguendo ne' teatri il suo Pigmalione (cantata da lui voluta espressamente in quella forma), basterà chiederne chiunque lo ha udito da Lui a Venezia, a Bologna, a Londra, a Vienna, a Firenze, a Genova, a Parigi, ec. ec." Brighenti, *Elogio di Matteo Babini*, 202.

[62] Brighenti, *Elogio di Matteo Babini*, 22-23.

model to Genoa in 1794. Bonifazio Asioli's version (Turin, 1796) was sung in amateur salons in London during the years around 1800 and was later taken up by Maria Malibran. Luigi Cherubini's second-last opera *Pimmalione* (Paris: Tuileries, 1809), once considered one of his finest works, was premiered in a semi-private performance for Napoleon and Josephine, and apparently effected a reconciliation between composer and emperor. These *Pimmalioni* all display Cimador's blueprint: *recitativo accompagnato* rather than *secco* throughout; brief *ariosi*, with tiny or nonexistent ritornelli, and which generally emerge from and return seamlessly into the fabric of accompanied recitative; predominantly syllabic declamation, even within lyric portions; gestural interludes duplicated within the orchestra; minimal points of musical arrival; an ever-present impulse toward through-composition and thematic variety. In each of these scenes – even when, as in Cherubini's version, the original was subject to significant modifications – the operatic unfolding is controlled by the traces of Rousseau's French prose within both song and movement. But the *Pimmalione* that effects perhaps the most telling link between these projects and ottocento opera is surely the last. The nineteen-year-old Gaetano Donizetti's first opera was a *Pimmalione* (1816) using Sografi's libretto and Cimador's compositional model. By then these sources were more than twenty-five years old: the connection probably came through his teacher Simon Mayr, who was in Venice in 1790, and may even have played viola in the opera orchestra at the San Samuele. Donizetti's *Pimmalione* was a student exercise, not heard until 1960, and written shortly before he discovered the works of Rossini. It will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

Let us conclude, then, by returning to music history: and in particular, to a recent history of nineteenth-century opera. Mary Ann Smart begins her *Mimomania* with a

passage from Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, in which the actor Laertes "comes

surprisingly close to imagining spoken theatre as opera"; for Smart, Laertes' description of

a musical theatre in which his bodily movements are controlled and animated by a musical

accompaniment is a point of departure for a progressive loosening of the bonds between

music and gesture occurring over the course of the nineteenth century.[63] The larger context

of this passage will allow us to connect our themes to the ones traced by Smart. In the

episode in question, the main character is travelling with Laertes' troupe of actors; they

encounter a mysterious old man with a harp. The stranger entertains them with a song,

which he sings "with such vigour and sincerity that he seemed to have composed it at that

moment specially for this occasion."[64] The singer mimes with his voice the contents of the

song: "He sang of harmony and grace in limpid, mellifluous phrases; but, suddenly, the

music became harsh, discordant and troubled when he expressed his disapproval of

acrimonious indifference, short-sighted enmities and the dangers of strife" (72). Each

listener thus felt within himself the sensations imparted by the melody. When asked by

Wilhelm about the source of his music, the old man is evasive. But he throws his fingers

across the harp, first softly and then more firmly, and the next lyrics provided something of

an answer. It opens with a king in his castle, hearing music sounding through the wall. An

ancient minstrel is brought inside; he plays for the king, and in payment asks only for a

draught of wine. At the conclusion of the song, the harpist himself takes a glass of wine and

drinks it. This opening image is startlingly reminiscent of the dreamlike moments in

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[63] Mary Ann Smart, *Mimomania: Music and Gesture in Nineteenth-Century Opera* (University of California Press, 2005), 1.

[64] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, ed. and trans. Eric A. Blackall. Vol. 9, *Goethe: The Collected Works* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989; originally published as *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. Berlin: Unger, 1795-96), 72. Page numbers henceforth placed within text.

Cimador's *Pimmalione* – mysterious strains heard through a wall, the source a hidden ancient bard. The boundary between the song and the performance is weakened by both the opening harp notes, heard by both the harpist's audience and the fictional king, and the concluding sips of wine. Thus the harpist seems himself like a ghostly intrusion on a foreign narrative, ancient and timeless. But Wilhelm does not identify him as such; rather, he is provoked into an ecstatic meditation on the representative powers of such music as compared to live theatre. He suggests that the harpist's song contained "more live presence in his singing than in our stiff stage personages." Because it was, itself, crammed full of representation and presence (he claims), this aural narrative might actually replace live actors – something to which the actors in his company take umbrage. In the passage quoted by Smart, Laertes reminds Wilhelm that acting is much easier within the context of musical theatre: in spoken theatre, he must control timing and gestures, and these may be disturbed at any moment by the other actors. When he acts in a musical context, though, he "becomes another person," giving over his agency to the music and allowing it to "animate" him: it controls his movements, the "manner of delivery," and the expression (73). In other words, Laertes speaks here to the inherent doubleness within such musical quickening: his body is animated, but it is no longer his own.

Pygmalion and the Making of Women

The statue's first utterance in Rousseau's *Pygmalion* is a single word: "Moi." After

Pygmalion echoes her, she continues her process of self-definition, touching first herself,

and then other statues, and then Pygmalion, until the curtain closes: "C'est moi. ... Ce n'est

plus moi. ... Ah! encore moi." These lines are one of the most distinctive aspects of

Rousseau's *Pygmalion*. "Moi" had something of a privileged semiotic status, as an index that

confirms its own truth: the being that names is the being that is named.[1] For audiences at

the time, it may have recalled the most famous moment in Pierre Corneille's *Médée*: asked

who she is after her country and husband have betrayed her, the heroine responds, "Moi.

Moi dis-je, et c'est assez."[2] With its philosophical roots in Condillac's *Traité des Sensations*,

Rousseau's climactic "Moi" became as famous as Corneille's. Many contemporary writers

held Galatea's first words to be the most "sublime" moment in a scene full of eloquent

poetic figures.[3] Footnoting this passage within the version of Rousseau's *Pygmalion* printed

to accompany his 1785 pantomime on the same topic, Dominique LeFèvre mentioned the

particular care he took to "translate" these words of self-identification into the appropriate

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[1] Jean-Luc Marion, *On Descartes' Metaphysical Prism: The Constitution and the Limits of Onto-Theo-Logy in Descartes' Thought*, trans. Jeffrey L. Kosky (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999; first published by the Presses Universitaires de France, 1986), 322-27.

[2] Pierre Corneille, *Médée* (1635), I.5/320-21. This is well known to be a translation of the line "Medea superest" (line 165) from Seneca's *Medea*. In the nineteenth century, Medea's "Moi" was taken to attest to the irreducibility of consciousness, Descartes's *cogito ergo sum* in dramatic form. See, for instance, Eugène Rambert, *Corneille, Racine et Molière: Deux cours sur la poésie dramatique française au XVIIe siècle* (Lausanne: Imer & Payot, 1862), 118.

[3] For instance, the *Mercure de France* (November 1770) noted the effectiveness of these words at the premiere of *Pygmalion*: "Cette manière naïve de peindre est simple & néanmoins neuve et sublime" (page 124); see also *L'Esprit des journaux, françois et étrangers* V (May 1778), 128, and [Louis Petit] de Bachaumont, *Mémoires secrets pour servir à l'histoire de la république des lettres en France* (London [Paris?]: John Adamson, 1777), 235.

signs: "Here I imitated J. J. Rousseau, as I did whenever Galatea repeats this word positively

or negatively. This expression is so simple, so natural, and depicts Galatea's situation with

such truth, that I believe the effect it creates to be infallible, whether rendered in words or

in gestures."[4]

Critics' preoccupation with Galatea's "Moi" attests to a broad cultural fascination

with observing women in the moments of becoming human. When Rousseau's melodrama

was performed abroad, Galatea's "Moi" and Pygmalion's echo formed something of a

translatory nub, remaining constant ("Io." "Io."/ "Ich?" "Ich!"/ "Me!" "Me!") when the rest of

the prose underwent elaborate metamorphosis.[5] When the Venetian librettist Antonio

Sografi adapted Rousseau's *Pygmalion* as a one-act modified opera, something more was

needed here: a final duet to bring the work to a close. Sografi's Galatea matures quickly, no

sooner identifying herself than beginning the seduction of her sculptor. These first

exchanges are set in the *versi sciolti* of recitative:

> *Galatea, fà alcuni passi con incertezza, guarda attorno di se medesima, e dice*
> *con sorpresa*
> Io!
> *Pimmalione, con grande sorpresa dice*
>   Io!
> [*Pimmalione*] *Mettendo un ginocchio a terra*
>   Numi del Cielo!
> Venere!... Galatea!...

---

[4] "Ho imitato qui G. G. Rousseau come in tutte le azioni in cui ella [Galatea] ripete questa parola affermativamente e negativamente. Questa espressione è sì semplice, sì naturale e dipinge con tante verità la situazione di Galatea, che ne credo infallibile l'effetto tanto nella pantomima quanto nel discorso." LeFèvre's pantomime on this theme was performed in 1785 at Naples' Teatro San Carlo between the acts of Giovanni Paisiello's *Antigono*. Quoted in Lucio Tufano, "Un melologo inedito di Francesco Saverio Salfi: *Medea*," in *Salfi librettista*, ed. Francesco Paolo Russo (Vibo Valentia: Monteleone, 2001), 104.

[5] German translation used by Georg Anton Benda, reproduced in liner notes of Naxos recording of J.A. Benda: *Ariadne auf Naxos/Pygmalion* (Naxos 8.553345), 23. English translation by Leigh Hunt in *The Indicator* XXXI (10 May 1820), 241-46.

Galatea, si avanza verso Pimmalione, si ferma, lo guarda attentamente, e poi gli dice

Dì… che son io?

Pimmalione tremante

Tu sei l'Idolo mio…

Cara… tu l'opra sei

Di mia man, del mio core, e degli Dei.

Galatea

Perché tremi?

Pimmalione

   Nol sò.

Galatea

     T'accosta.

Pimmalione se le accosta con rispetto, e timore

        Oh Dio!

Galatea

Dammi la mano almeno.

Si danno la mano, e guardandosi con tenerezza dicono

Pimmalione

Cara…

Galatea

   Caro…

Pimmalione e Galatea

   Non più, vieni al mio seno.

Si abbracciano.[6]

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[6] *Galatea makes a few uncertain steps, looks around, and says with surprise,*
Me!
Pygmalion, with surprise, says
   Me!
[*Pygmalion*] *with one knee on the ground*
     Gods above!
Venus!… Galatea!…
Galatea approaches Pygmalion, stops, looks at him attentively, and then says,
Tell me… what am I?
Pygmalion, trembling
You are my idol…/Dearest… you are the work/Of my hand, my heart, and of the Gods.
Galatea Why are you trembling?
Pygmalion I don't know.
Galatea Come closer.
Pygmalion approaches her with respect and fear Oh God!
Galatea At least give me your hand.
They clasp hands, and looking at each other tenderly, say
Pygmalion Dearest…

She also initiates the duet, bringing Pygmalion's hand to her breast and asking him to

explain the fluttering within.

> *Galatea con timore prende la mano di Pimmalione, e se la accosta al cuore.*
> > Ah senti ben mio...
> > Ah questo cos'è?
> *Pimmalione prende la mano di Galatea, e fa lo stesso*
> > È quello, che anch'io
> > Mi sento per te.
> *Si lasciano*
> > È un dolce tremore,
> > Che sentesi in core...
> *Galatea con sorpresa, e curiosità*
> > Il core!... Cos'è?
> *Pimmalione*
> > L'Asilo è d'Amore...
> *Galatea, come sopra*
> > Amore!... chi è?
> *Pimmalione*
> > È il Nume pietoso
> > Che diede a te vita;
> > Che l'aspra ferita
> > Sanò del mio sen.
> > È il Nume tremendo...
> *Galatea*
> > Lo sento... L'intendo...
> *Pimmalione*
> > Mia vita...
> *Galatea*   Mio ben.[7]

Galatea Dearest...
Pygmalion and Galatea Enough, come to my heart.
They embrace.
[7] *Galatea timorously takes Pim's hand, and brings it to her heart*.
> Ah feel this, love...
> Ah what is it?
Pimmalione brings Gal.'s hand to his heart and says,
> It's that which I also
> Feel for you inside.
They part

Nonetheless, Galatea remains in a state of pseudo-infancy: despite her mature physique,

she has only had the use of her body and voice for a few moments when the scene ends.

This results in a certain, selective innocence, one facet of which is sexual. For instance,

though the statue seems to have been granted the fundamentals of Italian grammar upon

animation, she requires explanation on a pair of choice nouns, "cuore," and "Amore."

Many composers who set Sografi's *Pimmalione* made this innocence manifest in her

song as well. The Galateas of Cimador, Asioli, and Gnecco, for instance, sang in short, simple

phrases within a narrow range. Such vocal naivety also had a practical justification. These

first Italian *Pygmalions* were star vehicles for the hero: singer-actors in the model of Matteo

Babbini, or else women in trousers. The role of Galatea – initially at least – was less apt to

receive the personal stamp of a performer. During his decade-long tour with Cimador's

Pimmalione, Babbini recruited his statues from among the local talent and probably at

rather short notice. As we have seen, the first Galatea was the *prima ballerina* Carolina

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   It's a sweet trembling
   That one feels in one's heart…
Galatea con sorpresa, e curiosità
   Heart!… What is that?
Pimmalione
   It is where Love resides…
Galatea, come sopra
   Love!… who is that?
Pimmalione
   He is the generous God
   who gave you life;
   Who healed the bitter injury
   in my heart.
   He is a tremendous God…
Galatea
   I hear… I understand…
Pimmalione
   My life…
Galatea
     My love.

Pitrot, who posed and sang opposite Babbini at the Teatro San Samuele in 1790; a performance of Cimador's work with the same two performers took place in Padova in March of that same year. Later interpreters of Galatea opposite Babbini included Caterina Perini (Naples, 1795) and Giacinta Bigi (Ferrara, 1798): relatively undistinguished second sopranos working in or around those cities as Babbini passed through.[8] Thus Galatea's song needed to be simple enough to avoid embarrassment. Cimador's brief final duet – an *Andante* in C major – provides a model in this regard. The vocal range of his statue is severely restricted, encompassing *f#'* to *e''* but mostly inhabiting only a fourth, *g'* to *c''*. Her interjections are mostly comprised of three or four successive eighth notes; she was never required to sustain anything longer than a quarter note. Yet to assess the role solely in operatic terms is surely to miss the point. At least in the early decades of the Pygmalion phenomenon in Italy (though not later, as we will see), the pleasures provided by Pygmalion's statue were not auditory or vocal but rather visual and physical: a calm, "interesting body" to balance the histrionics of the sculptor, which seemed distasteful to some viewers even then.[9]

Two years after the premiere of Cimador's *Pimmalione* in Venice, the animation scene was parodied in the comic opera *La statua per puntiglia*.[10] We have already noted in Chapter 2 that the exchange between the antiquarian Tolomeo and his "statue" (actually

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[8] The soprano Caterina Perini (fl. 1792 to 1795) specialized in comic roles and was active as a *seconda donna* in Naples during the 1795 season, when Babbini's *Pigmalione* tour visited there; see Francesco Florimo, *La scuola musicale di Napoli e i suoi conservatorii, con uno sguardo sulla storia della musica in Italia* IV (Naples: Morano, 1881), 83. Giacinta Bigi (fl. 1791 to 1800) had a similarly undistinguished career, which included a brief stint at the King's Theatre, Haymarket in 1796; see Philip H. Highfill, Kalman A. Burnim, and Edward A. Langhans, *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers, and other Stage Personnel in London, 1660-1800*, vol. 2, *Belfort to Byzand* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973), 121.

[9] Recall Ferdinando Galliani's impressions of the Neapolitan premiere of Rousseau's *Pygmalion*, quoted in Chapter 2.

[10] Music by Rinaldo da Capua, libretto anonymous.

the heroine, Altomira, in disguise) is an obvious send-up of Rousseau's text. But this mock

animation contains one other detail that deserves mention. Attempting to explain to

"Galatea" the difference between a human and a statue, Tolomeo launches into a

description of the organs: unlike marble statues, humans have "flesh, bones, muscles,

cartilage, and lots of nerves" (*Siam uomini finora/ Abbiamo carni, ed ossa,/ Muscoli,*

cartillagini,/ E nervi in quantità). This passage has no parallel within Rousseau's scene or

Sografi's adaptation, and yet it seems to invoke one of their subcutaneous themes: human

physiognomy, the inner workings of the "human machine."[11] What is animation, after all, if

not a setting-in-motion of those events that must happen within living bodies – the beating

of the heart, circulation of the blood, and transmission of impulses through the nerves? Yet

the authors discussed in this dissertation rarely specified what happened inside these

statues to set limbs to move, and bring "moi" to mind and lips. Despite the centrality of

sensory impulses in the *Traité des sensations*, for instance, Condillac had very little to say

about the nervous system *per se*, asking the reader simply to imagine "a statue organized in

its interior like us" (*une statue organisée intérieurement comme nous*).[12] Rousseau had even

less to say about the nervous system, despite having read widely on the subject in his

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[11] It is worth emphasizing that the concept of the human body as a machine underpinned virtually all eighteenth-century anatomical models, even the most nervous, fibrous, and animistic. See Barbara Maria Stafford, *Body Criticism: Imaging the Unseen in Enlightenment Art and Medicine* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991).

[12] Condillac, *Traité des sensations*, in *Oeuvres de Condillac* III (Paris: Houel, 1798), 49. Hersey suggested that the animation of Condillac's statue and its many fellows within the art and literature of his day could be traced to the new, invisible power that was then capturing the imagination of the multitudes: electricity. (Hersey, *Falling in Love with Statues*, 100). But Condillac's writings do not bear this out, suggesting merely that he was familiar with the Cartesian model of the nervous system – in which hollow tubes carried particles of life force or "animal spirits" between brain and nerves – and believed it to be inadequate. In the 1749 *Traité des systèmes*, Condillac described the theory of "animal spirits" as an "ingenious explanation" for the animation of living beings, but "we are fooling ourselves if we think we have an exact idea of what happens in the brain" (*Voilà des explications ingénieuses; mais, si l'on imaginoit avoir par-là une idée exacte de ce qui se passe dans le cerveau, on se tromperoit fort*). Condillac, *Traité des systèmes*, in *Oeuvres de Condillac* II [Paris: Houel, 1798], 352-53.) For a succinct history of animal spirits from Antiquity to the eighteenth century, see George S. Rousseau, *Nervous Acts: Essays on Literature, Culture, and Sensibility* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 14-32.

youth,[13] and despite his present-day reputation as a representative of the "Age of Sensibility."[14] Furthermore, we cannot simply refer to contemporary medicine – the anatomical treatises of Raphaël-Bienvenu Sabatier or Lorenzo Nannoni, for example – to see inside our Galateas during the moments of animation.[15] The boundary permeated by this metamorphosis is not simply that between non-life and life, but also that between art and life, the representation and the real.

Our eyes may view the surface alone. However, as Condillac and Rousseau were both at pains to remind their readers, the other senses could supply what the eyes could not perceive – and furthermore, they were less likely than the eyes to be fooled. The animation of Galatea is to be perceived by both the eyes and the ears, with music supplying a sonic reflection of the invisible processes. In the autograph text of Rousseau's *Pygmalion*, the animation begins with the sound of offstage music: in particular, "flutes calmes." These flutes have a peculiar generative power. As Galatea comes to life, not yet perceived by Pygmalion, the sculptor suddenly feels renewed, exclaiming, "What unexpected calm! What unforeseen courage reanimates me! … I feel myself reborn" (*Quel calme inattendu! quel*

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[13] Maurice Cranston, *Jean-Jacques: The Early Life and Work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau 1712-1754* (London: Allen Lane, 1983), 127.

[14] See. for instance, George S. Rousseau, "Nerves, Spirits, and Fibres: Towards Defining the Origins of Sensibility," 160-74, in *Nervous Acts*: "It slowly but surely becomes clear that Richardson, Sterne, Diderot, Rousseau, MacKenzie, and even Sade were the posterity of two generations of thinkers who had increasingly 'internalized' – that is the important word – the new science of man, leading thought about him from his eyes and his face to his nerves and brain, from what he looks like to what he feels, and from what he feels to what he knows."

[15] Sabatier (1732-1811) was a surgeon and professor of anatomy based in Paris before the Revolution; he later became the advising surgeon to Napoleon Bonaparte. His three-volume *Traité complet d'anatomie, ou description de toutes les parties du corps humain* (Paris: Didot, 1775) was one of the most famous of its kind in the second half of the eighteenth century, appearing in many editions and translations before 1800. Lorenzo Nannoni (*Trattato di Anatomia, Fisiologia, e Zootomia* [Siena: Bindi, 1788]) came from a dynasty of Italian doctors and was surgeon to the court of Tuscany; he traveled to England during the 1780s to observe the state of medicine there, and is occasionally remembered as a father of Italian pediatrics by virtue of his dissection of the corpses of foundlings. Roberto Carachi, Cenk Buyukanal, and Daniel Greer-Young, *A History of Surgical Paediatrics* (London: World Scientific, 2009), 265.

courage inespéré! … je crois me sentir renaitre).[16] In Sografi's adaptation, as we have seen, this music is supposed to emanate from the statue, cutting off the aria "Ciel pietoso, ciel clemente" after four lines: "[Pygmalion] is interrupted by a sweet harmony, which is heard around the statue of Galatea" (*viene interrotto da una soave Armonia, che si ode all'intorno della Statua di Galatea*). Unlike in the original, this musical interruption is actually heard by the sculptor. He exclaims in recitative, "What heavenly sounds! What sweet harmony enchants my soul!" (*Qual divino concento! Qual soave armonia/ Rapisce l'alma mia!*). These sounds are meant to continue for some time, providing the musical foundation first for a few lines of recitative and then for an aria.

Yet it is not clear what, precisely, this overheard music is supposed to represent. As we have seen in the previous chapter, Cimador seems to have provided a sonic glimpse of the Orphic narrator, with his familiar harp arpeggios. In the second setting of Sografi's text, composed by Francesco Gnecco for Genoa in 1794, Cimador's music was imitated closely by means of pizzicato violin arpeggios and wind melodies. As we will see, though, there occurred during the 1790s a vital shift in this overheard, animative music: a shift that can be first detected in the *Pigmalione* of Bonifazio Asioli (Turin, 1796), and can be traced through to the last, by Gaetano Donizetti (Bologna, 1816). This musical shift was related to new theories about what brought the human machine to motion and to life. The years of the Pygmalion phenomenon saw the gradual emergence of a new life-force – electricity – and a new discipline, "electrical medicine," for which Italian scientists were the world leaders, and which became increasingly implicated with the musical history under discussion here. In the coming pages, I will argue that our present colloquial usage of

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[16] Coignet seems not to have had flutes at his disposal when he set this melodrama to music. He provided three brief, recitative-like movements for strings alone to accompany the animation.

musical "electrification" – i.e., describing an "electrifying" performance or "electrified"

listener – emerged from this milieu. Furthermore, I will suggest that early nineteenth-

century metaphors of musical electrification developed in tandem with the Pygmalion

fable, and with a new kind of theatre, which would gradually gain popularity throughout

Europe: attitudes, in which a female performer represented a moving statue, or series of

statues, independently of a stable dramatic framework. This chapter will draw the present

narrative to a close, connecting its threads to a few, surprisingly familiar nineteenth-

century themes. We will begin, though, by looking at two other musical machines from the

decade 1770-1780, both of which bear telling connections to the projects under discussion

here.

Music, Awake Her: Sounds of Animation

When Rousseau called for *flutes calmes* to accompany the animation, he was, of course,

drawing on a longstanding trope. In *The Winter's Tale*, in what David Lindley has called

"one of the most wonderful of all musical moments in Shakespeare," the statue of Hermione

is awakened to an accompaniment of invisible instruments.[17] In the climactic scene, Paulina

reveals the statue of the wronged Hermione to a group of onlookers, exclaiming, "Music,

awake her. Strike! [*Music.*]/ 'Tis time; descend; be stone no more; approach;/ Strike all that

look upon with marvel. Come!" The longstanding association between "overheard" wind

music and animated art (or architecture) finds multiple confirmations in eighteenth-

century opera and related genres; as David Buch has demonstrated, such musical moments

were usually marked orchestrally by means of wind chorus and/or or strings *con sordino*.[18]

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[17] David Lindley, *Shakespeare and Music* (London: Thomson, 2006), 137.
[18] David J. Buch, *Magic Flutes & Enchanted Forests: The Supernatural in Eighteenth-Century Musical Theatre* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008). Buch noted in particular the use of flutes to accompany the animation

The decade following the premiere of Rousseau's original *Pygmalion* supplies two

further instances in which overheard music is a means to animation. The first of these may

be found in the opéra comique *Zémire et Azor* (1771), one of the most popular operas of the

second half of the eighteenth century. Like *Pygmalion*, its most famous scene conspicuously

staged the animation of still art. This work had a libretto by Jean François Marmontel based

on Madame de Beaumont's tale *La belle et la bête*, with music by André Ernest Modeste

Grétry.[19] The story is well known: the elderly Sander accidentally enrages a hideous beast,

Azor, who imprisons Sander inside Azor's enchanted castle; Zémire, Sander's daughter,

offers herself as a prisoner in exchange. In the third act, set inside the enchanted castle,

Azor allows Zémire to observe her father and sisters moving inside a "tableau magique."

This "magic picture" is actually a film of gauze held aloft by an enormous frame, behind

which the actors playing the heroine's father and sisters may be first seen and then heard.

The scene ends in suffering all around: Zémire may see and hear her family but not be seen

or heard by them, and thus is cast into despair. Stefano Castelvecchi has argued that this

scene stages the "spectatorial exclusion" praised by Diderot in relation to the genre

paintings by Greuze, and which Michael Fried has described as the necessary precursor to

aesthetic absorption.[20] More interesting for our purposes, though, are the mechanics of this

animation, and the ways in which it is marked musically. Azor's magic frame – described as

tele-visual by both Castelvecchi and Charlton – animates a still medium by collapsing a

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of the statue in Rameau's *Pigmalion* (64-65), and the enchanted pagodas in Rameau's *Les Paladins*, which dance a gavotte to the accompaniment of "strings and 'magic' flutes" (79).

[19] See David Charlton, *Grétry and the Growth of Opéra-Comique* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 98-108; Stefano Castelvecchi, "From 'Nina' to 'Nina': Psychodrama, Absorption and Sentiment in the 1780s," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 8/2 (1996), 91-112; Downing A. Thomas, "'Je vous répondrez au troisième couplet': Eighteenth-Century *opéra comique* and the demands of speech," in *Operatic Migrations: Transforming Works and Crossing Boundaries*, ed. Roberta Montemorra Marvin and Downing A. Thomas (Aldershott: Ashgate, 2006), 28-29.

[20] Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 57-59.

spatial distance, channeling something that is actually far away.[21] At the same time, though,

it acts as a powerful mediator, forbidding permeation from outside the frame, and even

going dark when Zémire approaches it.

The animation of the "tableau magique" is marked by a multi-faceted musical shock.

When Sander and his other daughters appear in the frame, the audience hears two horns,

two clarinets, and two bassoons: not from the orchestra, but hidden behind the stage ("les

instruments qui accompagnent sont derrière le théâtre"). For the space of twelve measures,

the hero and heroine merely gaze on the moving figures within the frame, as the winds

sound a chorus in E-flat major. The clarinet melody, marked "doux," is built from a single,

three-note motive, obsessively repeated; bassoons provide a bass line, while horns are

principally confined to a low pedal. Following this interlude, and a brief spoken exchange

between Zémire and Azor, the wind music resumes: it has become the accompaniment to a

trio for Sander and his two daughters. Though Sander sings of his agony, his voice traces

the same three-note melody described by the clarinets at the beginning of the previous

interlude. Charlton has described this repetitive music as hypnotic; I suggest, rather, that it

is mechanical, representing a sonic glimpse of the technology of animation: in other words,

it permits the audience to hear the workings of an enchanted machine.

The second of our two preliminary examples may be found across the channel, in

London's new "Temple of Health"; it will serve to introduce both a new animative force –

electricity – and a conception of human gender that will be of central importance to later

Italian projects. In 1780, the pioneering Scottish sexologist James Graham debuted what he

called the "Celestial Bed," where aristocratic couples could conceive "superior" children

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[21] Charlton, *Grétry*, 102-103; Castelvecchi, "From 'Nina' to 'Nina'," 98.

inside a vast machine powered by "medico, magnetico, musico, electrical" forces.[22] Graham

believed that men inherently carried a positive electrical charge and women a negative,

and conception involved the discharge of electricity: "the venereal act itself, at all times,

and under every circumstances, is in fact, no other than an electrical operation." Thus he

used electric shocks and magnetic attraction to encourage the "balmy fire of life" to pass

from "the *plus* male into the *minus* female" while in the bed. Perhaps recalling the creation

of life within Condillac's *Traité*, the doctor supplied stimuli for the individual senses of his

patients: beams of light flashed through the Celestial Bed, odors wafted, and – most

importantly for the present narrative – a large mechanical organ, decorated with automata

playing musical instruments, sounded "stimulating" airs.[23] The musical component was

designed and built by Graham's childhood friend, the scientist and automaton-builder

Thomas Denton.[24]

Music could reinforce the electric current within the bed because – Graham believed

– it too was a source of electricity, and one that could operate without the need for metal or

glass conductors. The musical component falls little short of dance and melodrama in its

coordination of bodily motion with musical events: couples were encouraged to harness

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[22] The most comprehensive book on James Graham and the Temple of Health is Lydia Syson's *Doctor of Love: James Graham and his Celestial Bed* (Richmond, VA: Alma, 2008); quotations are from this edition. See also Richard D. Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 82-83; Roy Porter, *Health for Sale: Quackery in England, 1660-1850* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1989), 161-2.

[23] In the second location, opened in 1782, '"harmonious strains of wind instruments" were wafted' through hidden openings, and the electrical apparatus gave off sparks that were reflected by mirrors and chandeliers – Dr Graham lectured, with musical preludes and postludes delivered by reigning Hebe (Altick, *Shows of London*, 83).

[24] Denton's mechanical ingenuity led him from musical automata and medical quackery into counterfeiting; he was condemned to die and executed in front of Newgate prison on 1 July 1789. An account of his life and death may be found in a sensational pamphlet by the lawyers William Baldwin and Andrew Knapp, whose colorful title merits full quotation: *The Newgate Calendar; Comprising Interesting Memoirs of the Most Notorious Characters who have been Convicted of Outrages on the Laws of England Since the Commencement of the Eighteenth Century, With Occasional Anecdotes and Observations, Speeches, Confessions, and Last Exclamations of Sufferers* (London: Robins, 1825) III: 150-51.

their erotic movements to the musical unfolding, which provided, as in *Pygmalion*,

relaxation and then gradual animation. When the couple began, the bed's mechanism

"breathe[d] forth celestial sounds... lulling them in visions of elysian joys! opening new

sources, new sluices... of pleasure, and untwisting all the chains which tie the hidden soul of

harmony!" Then,

> as the ardour – the intensiveness of the mighty conflict encreases! – the soft notes, - the plaintive tones – the tender aspirations, – the sweet undulating, – tremulous cooings, – the convulsive, agonizing blessedness of the melting and transported pair – are *moderated, increased, or prolonged by the corresponding music which flows or bursts from the pillars, from the dome, and from every part of this Elysium*! (Italics mine.)

This principle of music-gestural coordination – note the passage in italics – provided the

puppet strings with which Dr. Graham controlled the sex. Eventually, if accounts are to be

believed, the couple's movements would become raucous enough to effect a reversal,

bringing the bed's music under their own control: "the noble tones, and the home-strokes

of the full organ, which on violent motions being given to the bed, peals forth, bracing and

invigorating every spring and principle of life! – coiling up the latent courage of the soul!

and as it were, producing a new creation!" We must wonder if Denton's machine was

indeed this sophisticated – or if, as with the famous chess-playing automaton, all was in fact

operated by peeping eyes and human hands. As in *Pygmalion*, this unseen music resulted in

both a new body and a new self: "yes, *life and identity* are generally produced by these

blissful collisions." (italics mine)

Though this music has left few traces, secondary sources nonetheless allow us to

piece together a few salient details. For one, Graham seems to have found wind sounds

particularly appropriate: in addition to the organ, which had "the usual variety of stops,"

Graham had a "band of medical music" consisting of clarionettes and "mellifluous German flutes." Here as in *Zémire et Azor*, the uniform timbral clarity of the instruments suggests that the music is heard through a barrier: the magic frame is replaced by the bed frame, and the copulating couple are only two of many figures animated by this invisible technology. Above the bed was mounted "an elegant group of figures … having each of them musical instruments in their hands, which by the most expensive mechanism, breathe forth sound corresponding to their instruments." The headboard contained a magic picture with pastoral theme: "a fine landscape of moving figures, priest and bride's procession entering the temple of Hymen." With one notable exception, discussed below, Graham's musical component was always unseen, consisting of musicians hidden in antechambers or mechanism hidden in pillars and behind walls.[25] This band was hidden in a small cove next to the Temple's central dome. There was even a glass harmonica.[26] In addition to the obvious benefit of privacy, this concealment of the musical sources seems to have offered – as in its later, Wagnerian incarnations – the illusion of a single, mysterious agency.

Electricity I: Asioli's *Pigmalione*

While Graham's clinic is now counted as one of the most elaborate quackeries of medical history, he actually drew on recent developments in electrical science. Benjamin Franklin's experiments around the middle of the century were by then famous throughout Europe: he posited the existence of a single "electrical fluid," which could cause a body to become

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[25] On a similarly invisible musical machine – and its more illustrious musical ghost – see Annette Richards, "Automatic Genius: Mozart and the Mechanical Sublime," *Music & Letters* 80/3 (1999): 366-89.

[26] The obvious similarities between Graham's Temple of Health and the clinics of Franz Anton Mesmer – another of the famous quacks of the eighteenth century – must be noted, but it is not within the scope of this dissertation to investigate them in depth. Mesmer also touted the all-encompassing medicinal effects of an invisible power (in this case, magnetism); he also believed that animal magnetism could be "communicated, reinforced, and propagated" by means of musical sounds, and those of the glass harmonica in particular. On Mesmer and the glass harmonica, see Heather Hadlock, "Sonorous Bodies: Women and the Glass Harmonica," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 53/3 (2000): 507-42.

charged positively if it was present in excess, or negatively if it was lacking.[27] Furthermore,

he demonstrated that electricity – previously thought to arise solely from human

experiment – was always present in the atmosphere, and could be discharged in lightning.

But more notable for our purposes was the extent to which scientists and their audiences

came to believe that electricity was responsible for animating all living things. The

discipline of electrical medicine had been pursued enthusiastically in Italy since at least the

1750s, but it came to receive international attention in the 1770s and '80s, culminating

with the debates between Luigi Galvani and Alessandro Volta in the 1790s.[28] Giambattista

Beccaria, a Jesuit disciple of Franklin working in Turin during the 1770s, had done some

preliminary experiments concerning the effects of electric shocks on live bodies. Delivering

current into the partially detached extensile muscles of a live rooster, he discovered that

the pieces of muscle swelled and moved apart "resembling a lady's fan being opened

briskly."[29] The effect, in other words, was a sudden motion followed by rigor: a pose.

These were heady discoveries, which seemed to place the elixir of life in scientists'

hands, and – ultimately – to promise the possibility of real-life Pygmalions. These

experiments were continued by Galvani, the Professor of Anatomy at Bologna's Institute of

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[27] J.L. Heilbron, *Electricity in the 17th and 18th Centuries: A Study of Early Modern Physics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979). See in particular chapter 14, "Benjamin Franklin" (324-43) and chapter 15 "The Reception of Franklin's Views in Europe" (344-72). The science of electricity was made available to English readers in Joseph Priestley's *The History and Present State of Electricity, with Original Experiments*, 2 vols. (London: Dodsley [etc.], 1767).

[28] See in particular Vincenzo Ferroni, *I profeti dell'illuminismo: Le metamorfosi della ragione nel tardo Settecento italiano* (Bari: Laterza, 1989); and Walter Bernardi, "The Controversy on Animal Electricity in Eighteenth-Century Italy: Galvani, Volta, and Others," *Nova Voltiana: Studies on Voltaire and his Times*, ed. Fabio Bevilacqua and Lucio Fregonese (Milan: Hoepli, 2000), 101-114.

[29] Quoted in Patricia Fara, *An Entertainment for Angels: Electricity in the Enlightenment* (Duxford: Icon Books, 2002), 146.

Arts and Sciences, in the 1780s and '90s.[30] Galvani believed that that living bodies contained electrical fluid – which he dubbed "animal electricity" – that animated the nervous system. The nerves transmitted electrical stimuli to the brain, and the brain contracted the muscles by sending electric shocks through the nerves. When this fluid ceased to circulate, the body died. As early as 1780, before his famous experiments on frogs' legs, Galvani taught his students that the circulation of the blood created friction on the brain and nerves, thus producing "electrical fluid"; surveying a dead body, he asked "where is that most noble electrical fluid that seemed entrusted with motion, sensations, blood circulation – in short, with life itself?"[31] More importantly, outside sources could influence the current within a living body and thus its movement – and the kind of movement. While a regular current of "animal electricity" within living bodies could cause continuous and natural motion, a current amplified from without would produce jerky and mechanical motions: "at the very moment the foot touched the [charged] surface, all the leg muscles contracted, lifting the leg; immediately after, though, the foot fell back onto the surface then rose again; the phenomenon persisted for some time, with the leg alternately dropping to the surface and rising again as if 'hopping'."[32] As James Graham had predicted, Galvani determined that this current could be influenced not just by means of Leiden jars and metallic circuits, but also by the atmosphere itself: all that was required was a sudden discharge of atmospheric electricity – or, in other words, a lightning bolt. He observed that the frogs' limbs would suddenly contract when lightning struck, as many times as it struck,

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[30] These experiments are most famously recounted in Marcello Pera's seminal book *The Ambiguous Frog: The Galvani-Volta Controversy on Animal Electricity*, trans. Jonathan Mandelbaum (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992; originally published as *La rana ambigua: la controversia sull'elettricità animale tra Galvani e Volta* [Turin: Einaudi, 1986]); see especially pages 69-95.

[31] Galvani, *Lezioni anatomiche* (1780); quoted in Pera, *The Ambiguous Frog*, 67.

[32] *Memorie ed esperimenti inediti di Luigi Galvani con la iconografia di lui e un saggio di bibliografia degli scritti* (Bologna: Cappelli, 1937), 36; quoted in Pera, *The Ambiguous Frog*, 82-83.

and in its precise rhythm. Indeed, the contractions of the frogs legs could fill the same function as lightning, providing a visual index of atmospheric-electric discharge. He wrote,

> As often as the lightning broke out, at the same moment of time all the muscles fell into violent and multiple contractions, so that, just as the splendor and flash of the lightning are want, so the muscular motions and contractions of those animals preceded the thunders, and, as it were, warned of them.[33]

This discovery received immediate fame upon publication of Galvani's illustrated treatise in 1792. This furor is understandable. These experiments can be said to have accomplished a paradigm shift, relocating animation itself from something that was exclusively found within living bodies to something that is both inside and outside it, and could thus be manipulated by other sources of electrical and magnetic current. These other sources animated the limbs by short-circuiting the operations of the central source of animal electricity – the brain.

Galvani's experiments became the subject of immediate attention throughout Europe. Some of this attention was scientific: debates on Galvani's findings raged across northern Italy, and were observed by eager audiences across Europe. The rivalry between Galvani and Alessandro Volta has already been well documented, but there were also important contributions from Lazzaro Spallanzani in Pavia, Eusebio Valli in Pisa and London, and Antonio Maria Vassali-Eandi in Turin.[34] "Animal electricity" also became "a fashionable matter," as Leopoldo Caldani wrote to Spallanzani.[35] The animation of frogs' legs was said to be "repeated in ladies salons" in Milan, "furnish[ing] a good spectacle to

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[33] Galvani, *De viribus electricitatis in motu musculari Commentarius* (Bologna, 1792); translated by Margaret Glover Foley as *Commentary on the Effects of Electricity on Muscular Motion*, with notes and a critical biography by I. Bernard Cohen (Norwalk, CT: Burndy, 1953), 36.

[34] Pera, *The Ambiguous Frog*, 117-39.

[35] Letter from Caldani to Spallanzani of 16 March 1793; quoted in Bernardi, "The Controversy on Animal Electricity," 102.

all."[36] It was only a matter of time, then, before these electrical discourses converged with

the current preoccupation of audiences with musical and visual depictions of animation

and human becoming.

What electric animation might have sounded like, though, was still very much

unknown. Priestley had noted in the 1770s that electric reactions in glass containers

emitted a distinctive noise; following a series of experiments with a few musical friends

and two spinets, he was sufficiently confident to describe electrical sound as a consonant

collection of pitches distinguished by one predominant note, which sounded after the

rest.[37] (This chapter in the *Present State of Electricity* may have influenced James Graham's

decision to include a glass harmonica in his Temple of Health.) Somewhat at a loss to

explain how electricity was able to produce sound, he eventually settled on a wave model:

such chords were "produced by the air being displaced by the electric fluid, and then

suddenly collapsing, so as to occasion a vibration, which diffuses itself every way from the

place where the explosion was made."[38] The distinctive sound of electricity was also the

subject of an investigation by the Italian chemist and Volta's friend Luigi Valentino

Brugnatelli. In a paper published in Pavia in 1796, Brugnatelli recounted that he suspended

a long metallic wire – about "600 Parisian feet" in length – in the open air, in order to

collect electricity from the atmosphere and observe its effects "during fine weather."

Brugnatelli observed that this wire made a single, continuous chord, fairly consonant in its

pitches (*una quasi concordata armonia*) from morning to night. Though similar in touch

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[36] Letter from Bernardino Ferrari to Sebastiano Canterzani dated 14 September 1792; quoted in Bernardi, "The Controversy on Animal Electricity," 102.

[37] Priestley, "The Musical Tone of Various Discharges Ascertained" in *The History and Present State of Electricity* II: 355-56. "Every discharge made several strings [of the spinet], particularly those that were chords to one another, to vibrate: but one note was always predominant, and sounded after the rest."

[38] Priestley, *The History and Present State of Electricity* II: 29.

and appearance to a metallic harpsichord string (Brugnatelli observed), this wire emitted

not the harsh, strident sound of the *cembalo*, but rather the "pulsing tones of a bell"

(*ondulante suono di campana*).[39]

The year that Brugnatelli published his observations on the sounds of electric

current, the Correggian composer Bonifazio Asioli (1769-1832) was commissioned to

provide another all-sung version of Rousseau's *Pygmalion* using the libretto by Sografi.

Asioli, later known for his treatise on composition (pub. post. 1833), was then a young man

of twenty-eight, living in Turin and working for the family of the Austrian minister

Marchese Maurizio Gherardini.[40] He was reportedly a well-read individual with a broad

range of interests – not least, the "science" of sound and sonic representation[41] – and could

hardly have avoided those debates of which Turin was the principle hub. The commission

for *Pigmalione* came from Turin's most prestigious dilettante, the Cavaliere Ferdinand de la

Cainea. Contemporary sources tell us that La Cainea was "a celebrated amateur Italian

singer," possessed of "a beautiful tenor"; his "style of chamber-singing" was "replete with

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[39] Luigi Valentino Brugnatelli, *Annali di chimica e storia naturale: ovvero raccolte di memorie sulle scienze, arti, e manifatture ad esse relative* (Pavia: Galeazzi, 1796), XII: 62-67

[40] Sergio Lattes and Roberta Montemorra Marvin. "Asioli, Bonifazio." In *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/01414 (accessed July 1, 2010). On the circumstances of Asioli's coming to Turin and his relations with the Gherardini family, see Antonio Coli, *Vita di Bonifazio Asioli da Correggio* (Milan: Giovanni Ricordi, 1834), 20-22. Asioli also counted among his friends Giambattista Casti, Ippolito Pindemonte, and Carlo Botta.

[41] Coli, *Vita di Bonifazio Asioli*, 62-63.

taste and feeling."[42] He sang the work in salons both in Turin and in his adoptive London, until the early 1800s, and he requested other *scene* from Asioli along those same lines.[43]

This was the second most successful setting of Sografi's libretto after Cimador's.[44] Asioli's scene follows the earlier model in several respects: his *Pigmalione* alternates between accompanied recitative, mime, and arioso. In other respects it is closer to conventional opera: its brief arias generally call for the return of an A-section, and its melodies are more likely to feature text repetition and some pre-cadential vocal flourishes. The scene is most relevant to the present narrative, though, for the music contained in following measures:

Example 3.1 Bonifazio Asioli, *Pigmalione* (1796), excerpt

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[42] William Jesse, *The Life of George Brummell, esq.: commonly called Beau Brummell* I: 275. His full name was Francis Ferdinand Raibari de La Cainea, and he may have been of Sicilian origin, perhaps of the Rubari family. He became a theatre impresario during his time in London: Denise Yim notes that by 1808 he had acquired a managerial position at the King's Theatre (*Viotti and the Chinnerys: A Relationship Charted through Letters* [Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004], 135.) La Cainea married an Englishwoman, Sophia Mill, and was eventually promoted to the ranks of Baron and English Consul (Georgiana Blakiston, *Lord William Russell and his wife 1815-46* [Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004], 8). He sang Asioli's *scene* in the salons of London until at least 1808 (Yim).

[43] Yim, *Viotti and the Chinnerys*, 144. *Pigmalione* met with such success that Asioli wrote a second lyric scene for La Cainea: *Saulle: scena lirica*, based on a monologue from the drama by Vittorio Alfieri. La Cainea performed it in a private salon in Florence at which Alfieri was in attendance: Asioli's biographer Antonio Coli reported that the renowned dramatist "asked La Cainea to convey to Asioli *his sentiments of deepest gratitude*" (*pregò La Cainea di far aggradire ad Asioli* i sentimenti del suo pieno soddisfacimento); italics original. Coli, *Vita di Bonifazio Asioli*, 49.

[44] The full score survives in at least two manuscript copies: one, housed at the Biblioteca Civica Angelo Mai in Bergamo (227.29), apparently belonged to the composer Simon Mayr; another may be found in the library of the Conservatorio di Musica Giuseppe Verdi in Milan (Part.Tr.Ms.6). The work was also published twice in an arrangement for piano and singers: once ca. 1796 in London by Birchall, and again by Ricordi in Milan, ca. 1827.

These are the first seven measures of the "sweet harmony" overheard by Pygmalion in the moments before his statue comes to life. At first glance, the plain melody, 6/8 time signature, and drones undoubtedly evoke the pastoral. And yet there is a regularity, a repetitiveness, that resists human meanings, seeming also to suggest a mechanism of some kind. The passage bears some obvious similarities to that of the *tableau magique* in *Zémire et Azor*. In both cases, the sudden intrusion of an animative power is signaled by a *sforzando* E-flat major chord. In both cases, this chord is followed by the simplest of melodies: an ascent through the major scale. Both composers demarcated this event with special, rarified timbres, though Asioli used *divisi* violas, horns, and cellos rather than a wind chorus. But where the music for the *tableau magique* is robustly periodic, that of Asioli's Galatea is preternaturally smooth. For one, of course, there is the continuous drone: an E-flat in the cellos and horns that sounds in the first chord and then continues for the next ten measures, its pulsations becoming audible in the frequent melodic breaks. And then there are the dynamics: while Asioli was by and large sparing with dynamic indications in *Pigmalione*, offering only *pianos* and *fortes* intermittently throughout, in this passage he called for regular, undulating hairpin swells following the first *forte* chord. As should be clear by now, I would like to suggest that Asioli's statue was brought to life by means of electricity; and in this passage, he allowed his audience to hear the current entering the statue and setting her to life. Asioli's music seems to "breathe forth" its life-giving effects, much as the "invigorating airs" of Graham's Celestial Bed were "exhaled … by the exhilarating force of electrical fire" into their hearers, and with something of the same optimism. When, after another aria from Pygmalion, Galatea is about to say her first words, the electric drone becomes audible again, as the orchestra cuts again to a sustained bass

line, pulsating repeated notes, and hairpin swells. This prolongs a dominant chord for four full measures within the prevailing harmony of G major, creating a groundswell of dramatic tension. The orchestra falls silent after the briefest of resolutions, for by then the current has accumulated into a self and a voice. Her first word – "Io" – sounds slow and unaccompanied, a poignant sigh on an implied 4-3 appoggiatura.

Dances Dreamt and Remembered: Cherubini's *Pimmalione*

By 1800, the animated statue in Marie Sallé's *Pygmalion* – who gained maturity through learning a series of dances – had long since receded into half-forgotten cultural memory. Yet the principle that dance was located at the very threshold of (usually feminine) consciousness had a curiously long life. Of the statue-related works examined in this dissertation, Cimador's scene was unique in eschewing any relation to dance. We have already noted that in Angiolini's *Deucalione e Pirra* (La Scala, 1794), the rough stone-people, meant to represent Italians, were civilized by the eponymous couple through dance. Asioli's animation music seems to evoke the dance, though it is not a dance. Rather, snippets of a dance melody seem to float through the resonant hum.

The *Pimmalione* of Luigi Cherubini makes an explicit link between dances, dreams, and the animation of the statue.[45] Few music-theatrical works came closer to the epicentre of revolutionary politics than this opera: it was composed for a semi-private performance for Napoleon, Empress Josephine and their *coterie* at the Théâtre des Tuileries on 30 November 1809, perhaps the result of a commission from the emperor himself or from one of his musical advisors. (The story told by François-Joseph Fétis, that the identity of the

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[45] The version by Cherubini and Vestris was been published in a piano-vocal score: *Pigmalione: dramma lirico in un atto e due quadri*, ed. Dino Menichetti (Florence: OTOS, 1970).

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composer was concealed from Napoleon until after the premiere, has been discredited.)[46]

The opera strikes a curious balance of contrasting elements: French and Italian, old and

new, private psychological drama and public display. While *Pimmalione* was considered

one of Cherubini's finest works by many nineteenth-century listeners, it is often

understood by present-day musicologists as old-fashioned or even backward.[47] Michael

Fend has suggested that it often displays a "string-dominated texture simply supporting a

mellifluous vocal line": a texture that "appears curiously out of date."[48] Similarly out-of-

date was the vocal type. Pygmalion was the only role Cherubini composed for male soprano

after his final opera seria, *Ifigenia in Aulide* (Turin, 1788). (The castrato in Napoleon's court

was Girolamo Crescentini, a forty-six-year-old soprano from Urbania.[49]) But perhaps most

backward-looking of all were the alterations to the drama. Sografi's text was given

substantial revisions by a member of the famous Vestris dancing family, Stefano Vestris,

who consistently provided spectacle and scale at the expense of the psychological and

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[46] Vittorio della Croce, *Cherubini e i musicisti italiani del suo tempo*, 2 vols. (Turin: Eda, 1983-86), I: 412. Here is the original passage, from the entry on Cherubini in Fétis's *Biographie universelle des musiciens* (1835-44): "Some of Cherubini's friends attempted to defeat Napoleon's aversion and prejudice: they engaged Cherubini to write an Italian opera for the Tuileries theatre, and Crescentini undertook the principal role. The composer allowed himself to be persuaded, and a few months later, the score of *Pimmaglione* (sic) was complete... Napoleon seemed astonished when he was told the author of this work; he seemed at first to enjoy the work, but the situation of the composer was not improved." François-Joseph Fétis, *Biographie universelle des musiciens et bibliographie générale de la musique*, vol. 3 (Brussels: Leroux, 1836), 115-16. The story survived well into the twentieth century, where it was rehearsed as recently as 1964: see Joseph Horowitz, "Cherubini's 'Pygmalion,'" *Musical Times* 105/1453 (March 1964), 180-82.

[47] Fétis's dramatic account of the premiere provided an effective context for his enthusiastic evaluation of the work itself: "*Pimmaglione*! Charming work, in a style absolutely different from Cherubini's other creations, and in which we may find some scenes of the finest invention" (*Biographie universelle*, III: 115).

[48] Michael Fend, "Cherubini, Luigi," in *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/53110 (accessed July 9, 2010).

[49] Napoleon had a great regard for excellent singing and kept numerous virtuosi in his entourage; he hired Crescentini to teach singing to the royal family. Crescentini was only eight years younger than Matteo Babbini, and had also studied with Lorenzo Gibelli. See Nicola Lucarelli, "Crescentini, Girolamo," in *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/06813 (accessed August 3, 2010), and David Charlton and M. Elizabeth C. Bartlet, "Napoleon I, Emperor of France," in *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/19567 (accessed August 4, 2010).

monologic dimensions of the original.[50] The cast of two becomes a cast of dozens: in addition to prominent vocal roles for Venus and Cupid and the singing, dancing celestial entourage, Vestris and Cherubini also added a chorus of sculptors. Indeed, these features seem to mark the work as the natural offspring of Rameau's *Pigmalion* rather than Rousseau's.

I would suggest, though, that the opera does not simply display a monochromatic nostalgia, but rather stages a confrontation between two antithetical operatic ideals: sung melodrama, and *grand opéra*. This opposition is frequently marked by means of singing style – syllabic lyricism for the hero, coloratura for the gods and goddesses – and harmonic symbolism: modulation flatward for the human and melodramatic, and sharpward for the celestial and miraculous. But most important for our purposes is the way that this opposition is reflected in bodily motion and the music that accompanies it. Cherubini's *Pimmalione* is unique in calling for two different types of bodily movement – "melodramatic" gestures from Rousseau's original instructions, and *divertissement* dance – and, correspondingly, supplying two types of instrumental movements to accompany them. The music that accompanies Pygmalion's gestural interludes is notable for its thematic abundance, through-composedness, and colorful harmonic palette. For instance, the opera begins with a two-part *Introduzione* in D major, whose first part sounds while the curtain is still closed: it provides overture-like themes (i.e., major scales and arpeggios) and a gradual acceleration toward two full measures of dominant harmonies in dotted rhythms. At this

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[50] On the activities of the Vestris family in the late eighteenth century, see Ivor Forbes Guest, *Ballet of the Enlightenment: The Establishment of the Ballet d'Action in France, 1770-1793* (London: Dance Books, 1997), and "Vestris," in *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/46107 (accessed March 30, 2011). See also Rachel Cowgill, "Re-Gendering the Libertine; Or, the Taming of the Rake: Lucy Vestris as Don Giovanni on the Early Nineteenth-Century London Stage," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 10/1 (1998): 45-66.

point, the curtain opens, to reveal Pygmalion and his apprentices working in the sculptor's atelier. Once the hero is visible, the music loses its verve and momentum, effecting a sudden shift flatward; the flashy D-major scales in thirds replaced with poignant, slow-moving figurations, appoggiaturas, and diminished harmonies.

Example 3.2 Cherubini, *Pimmalione*, Introduzione, excerpt[51]

Example 3.2 reproduces the first ten measures of this opening mime, which is 45 measures in length: in total, it is as long as the overture-like part of the *Introduzione*, and significantly longer than any mimed portion in the earlier *Pygmalions*. This music's literal

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[51] This and the other examples from Cherubini's score are engraved from the piano-vocal reduction by Dino Menichetti (see n. 45 of this chapter).

mimicking of the gestures described in italics suggests a profound engagement with the melodramatic ideal. The opening figurations portray the "anguished, melancholic" attitude of the sculptor, who is seated when the curtain rises. When he stands suddenly and walks in resolute fashion toward the statues, the orchestra supplies a rising B-flat major arpeggio. His retouching of a sculpture receives a modified version of this figure, a move toward diminished harmonies suggesting that his sudden resolution has waned; the "retouching" chords are followed by more than a full measure of silence as the sculptor hesitates *in medias res* (Example 3.3). Many such sections can be found within the first scenes of opera, where they often function as bridges between sung portions. As within Cimador's version, such "gestural" bridges bear little or no thematic connection to the vocal music they border. Occasionally the alternation between *versi sciolti* and gestures is so quick that the result is something like the *recitativo accompagnato* within an extended *scena*.

Example 3.3 Cherubini, *Pimmalione*, Introduzione, excerpt

The second type of motion – dance – is the domain of the celestial characters; it occurs immediately before the animation. Rousseau's text was perhaps the first adaptation of Ovid's fable to erase the intervening goddess from the diegesis. The original melodrama and Sografi's adaptation call for the hero to make a plea to the heavens; he feels an unexpected calm, while Galatea is brought to life. Though divine presence is implied, no

divine being is ever seen. In the Vestris/Cherubini version, this erasure is reversed, albeit with substantial mediation. When the music begins to emanate from the statue the hero falls asleep onstage, and the divinities descend from the sky on a *gloire*. Venus – here played by Napoleon's former mistress, the alto Giuseppina Grassini – appears in a cloud, accompanied by Cupid and her entourage. Cherubini's music for the divine effects a sudden modulation sharpward: first, when the harmony emanates from the statue, from E-flat major to G major, and the second time, when the gods themselves appear, from B-flat major to G major. In both cases, the soaring B-natural of the celestial melody resounds acutely and in dissonance with the prevailing harmony, causing a momentary ache. There follows a multipartite duet with chorus, "Al cenno mio ti desta," in which Venus announces her intention to bring the statue to life, and Cupid his desire to unite Pygmalion and Galatea in love.

Venere:	Al cenno mio ti desta
	Opra agli Dei gradita:
	io ti darò la vita,
	(*ad Amore*) e tu gl'infiamma il cor.
Amor:	Cara madre...
Venere:	Amato figlio!
Amor:	ti rammenta...
Venere:	e che più vuoi?
Amor:	Il maggior dei doni tuoi
	È la grazia e la beltà.
Coro:	Il maggior dei doni tuoi
	È la grazia e la beltà.
Venere:	Sì, t'intendo. Ebben: si compia,
	Dolce Amore, il tuo desìo,
	Chi al diletto figlio mio
	Chi ad Amor resisterà?
Amor:	Ah, tu colmi il mio desìo,
	Fai la mia felicità.
Coro:	Ah, tu colmi il suo desìo,
	Fai la sua felicità.
Venus:	Anime innamorate [*Poco più adagio*]
	Che un bell'ardore accende,

                    Sperate se vi protegge Amor.
Coro: Trionfi oggi l'Amor.
Venere: Al cenno mio ti desta [*Primo tempo*]
                    Opra agli Dei gradita:
                    Io ti darò la vita,
                    (*ad Amore*) e tu gl'infiamma al cor.[52]

The celestial characters are not prone to the chromatic torments, gestural duplication, and

open-ended melodies given to the human hero: Venus in particular sings in large leaps,

roulades, and arpeggios, and even a two-and-a-half-measure *messa di voce*.

Then, there follows a series of dances performed by Venus's entourage: an Allegro in

3/8, a graceful Larghetto in common time (actually 12/8), a frenetic *perpetuum mobile* in G-

minor and, finally, an Andante con moto, which is a literal repetition of the music heard

when Venus first appears. Unlike the "melodramatic" type of instrumental interlude

described above, these movements are periodic, regular in their rhythms and textures, and

– with the exception of the last – pervaded by a single motive. The function of this *ancien-*

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[52] Venus: I awaken you with a gesture,
                       Art pleasing to the gods:
                       I give you life
                       (*to Cupid*) and you inflame her heart.
Cupid: Dear Mother…
Venus: Beloved son!
Cupid: Remember…
Venus: What do you wish for?
Cupid: The greatest of your gifts
                       Are grace and beauty.
Chorus: The greatest of your gifts
                       Are grace and beauty.
Venus: Yes, I understand. Then: fulfill,
                       Sweet Cupid, your desire,
                       Who can resist my dear son,
                       Who can resist Cupid?
Cupid: Ah, you reward my wish,
                       And give me happiness.
Chorus: Ah, you reward his wish,
                       And give him happiness.
Venus: Enamored souls
                       Enflamed by beautiful ardor,
                       Hope that Cupid will protect you.
Chorus: Let Cupid triumph today. [*Etc.*]

régime dramaturgy is too well known to merit a detailed rehearsal here: it will suffice to say that, here as in earlier courtly operas, the presence of the all-powerful and benevolent Venus within the diegesis cast a flattering reflection on the equivalent centre of power beyond the fourth wall of the stage.[53] The dancing of the subjects suggests that they are cultivated, graceful, and happy under her rule. The presence onstage of Pygmalion's sleeping form during this *divertissement* is ambiguous in meaning: perhaps it suggests that the miraculous sequence is all simply a chimera, or perhaps – in modern terms – a memory from the collective operatic subconscious: something that existed once but could no longer be believed. Perhaps, though, it is simply meant to preserve some sense of the boundary between human and divine that was established by Rousseau's text. Pygmalion awakes only when the visitors have retreated into the sky; he beholds their miracle, the statue that begins to move.

Most interesting for our purposes, though, is the fact that this dance suite sounds immediately before the animation of Galatea: a process that seems to invert the model of Marie Sallé's *Pygmalion* while – I would argue – preserving some of its meanings, if at a remove. As we have noted, the suite of dances within Sallé's pantomime gave Galatea a rapid education in grace, dexterity, and the affective gamut. In the *Pimmalione* of Cherubini and Vestris, this becomes the process behind the animation: the *grazia* of the dance is imprinted on her in the womb, as it were, the gift that Venus has promised to bestow. The point is made stronger when we consider that the strains of the dance sound again as

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[53] Giovanni Carli Ballola believed Venus to be the reflection of the Empress Josephine; see the *Storia dell'opera* (Turin, 1977), 140-41. On representations of absolutism in the court of Louis XIV and in the operas of Jean-Baptiste Lully and André Campra, see Georgia Cowart, *The Triumph of Pleasure: Louis XIV and the Politics of Spectacle* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); and Downing A. Thomas, *Aesthetics of Opera in the Ancien Régime, 1647-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). On the function of this dramaturgy in Italian opera of the late eighteenth century, see Martha Feldman, *Opera and Sovereignty: Transforming Myths in Eighteenth-Century Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

Galatea begins to move. She is not dancing – merely descending from her pedestal and "taking a few uncertain steps" (*fa alcuni passi con incertezza*) – and yet the orchestra makes the musical connection clear with a fragment of the *Andante*, a full step lower in F major. After three and a half measures, the music breaks off on a secondary dominant, and Galatea pronounces her first word: "Io." It resumes with another fragment after the first exchanges, as she wanders around the room. Thus dance is evoked as a pre-conscious memory at the moments of becoming.

Since the composer's lifetime, his apologists have cast this phase in his career in terms of the relationship between the composer and Napoleon himself, for which *Pimmalione* constituted the emotional climax. In these constructions, Napoleon was the man's man, his pre-eminent control over his emotions only occasionally wavering; Cherubini was the handsome, sensitive Italian, suffering from a nervous disorder, his behavior an unmediated index of his sentiment. The presence of these archetypes of homosocial friendship has provoked generations of Cherubini biographers into prolix excursions ranging from the anecdotal to the purely fictional. Take, for instance, Joseph Bennett's novelesque account of an early meeting between the two figures:

> Napoleon soon gave a dinner at the Tuileries to a number of distinguished men, and Cherubini was amongst the guests. On adjourning to the *salon*, the First Consul singled out our master and began, in his restless manner, to walk him up and down the room. He meant to be "nasty," and Cherubini must have detected it, wondering, perhaps, where the blow would fall. "So," said the lord of many legions, "the French are in Italy!" As the Florentine musician was not a very patriotic Italian, this did not hurt him much, and he had no difficulty in turning a compliment out of it. "Where would they not go, led by such a hero as you?" Napoleon seemed pleased, but soon relapsed into his disagreeable humour, and brought up the name of his favourite, Paisiello. "I tell you I like Paisiello's music immensely, it is soft and tranquil. You have much talent, but there is too much accompaniment." Cherubini answered: "Citizen Consul, I conform to French taste; 'paese che va usanza che trovi,' says the

French proverb." Napoleon persisted: "Your music makes too much noise. Speak to me in the language of Paisiello; that is what lulls me gently." The master's reply showed how unfit he was to figure in courts. Already discerning men saw at what glittering prize the fortunate soldier was aiming, and Cherubini very plainly hinted it when he replied: "I understand; you like music which does not stop you from thinking of State affairs." The conqueror's brow darkened; the hard, stern expression which often made nations tremble settled on his face, and the conversation ended.[54]

This richly purple anecdote seems to be merely an excuse for flights of fancy regarding a Corsican whose darkened brows "often made nations tremble," and an Italian "unfit to figure in courts"; elsewhere, Bennett refers to the "worse than womanish feeling" Napoleon cherished toward Cherubini and other antagonists (30). Yet one may also note in this passage the highly literal function understood for operatic music in the French and Italian styles, at least where politics was concerned: Paisiello's simple accompaniments gently soothe the emperor, while Cherubini's noisy orchestra might distract him from his imperial duty. The "glittering prize" at which Napoleon purportedly aimed was an opera written by Cherubini not in his own style but in that of Paisiello; Cherubini's snide response demonstrates his "unfitness" for court life but, by implication, fitness to figure in more republican surroundings. By the time of Bennett's biography, these notions already had an illustrious pedigree in the Cherubini literature. In 1843, Cherubini's countryman and earliest biographer Luigi Picchianti had similarly made Cherubini's music the object of latent republican fantasies. According to Picchianti, it was inconceivable that Napoleon, accustomed to the sound of cannons on the battlefield, could object to Cherubini's active accompaniments on purely sonorous grounds. "It is rather to be discovered that in

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[54] Joseph Bennett, "The Great Composers, no. XIII: Luigi Cherubini," published in instalments in *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 483-91 (May 1883-January 1884); reissued as *Luigi Cherubini* (New York: Novello, Ewer, & Co., 1890), 36-37. Page numbers refer to the later edition.

Cherubini's music ... Napoleon discovered the impress of an exalted spirit, and a certain republican austerity, which he did not at all relish, and would have been glad even to eradicate."[55] Thus Napoleon's preference for Italian opera was in fact a wish to lull the population into political sleep, so he could reach his nefarious purposes unfettered:

> There perhaps arose in him some fear lest such music should produce results clashing with his chief objects, which were to extinguish in the French people all excitement opposed, as he thought, to his particular aims, and for that very reason he wished, on the other hand, to maintain, by means of Paisiello's and Zingarelli's compositions, the reputation of the old school of Italian music, the quiet and suave style which seemed to him calculated him to lull the popular mind.[56]

Bennett believed that Picchianti went too far in his analysis: just as the working man enjoys going home to a quiet retreat in the evening, "with equal reason this soldier, accustomed to the din of military bands and the uproar of popular enthusiasm, sought relief in unexciting strains" (39-40).

In more recent Cherubini literature, the impetus to view *Pimmalione* as the successful culmination of a narrative of personal torment has been replaced with a necessity of distancing the work from the composer's more "essential" creations. Biographical context within modern musicology can function as an excellent distancing mechanism, a tongs with which to hold unwelcome incidents apart from stylistic narratives and distance the essential from the inessential: music written under personal duress can be seen encased in a kind of irony, displaying a disjunction between what is said and what was meant. For instance Marco Ravera accounted for the opera with an *embarras* of psychological and circumstantial cushioning: "There is no doubt that Cherubini, whether

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[55] Luigi Picchianti, *Notizie sulla vita e sulle opere di Luigi Cherubini* (Milan: Ricordi, 1843); quoted and translated in Bennett, *Luigi Cherubini*, 37.
[56] *Ibid*., 38.

because he was pleasantly surprised by the unexpected – and unsought – good will of the emperor, or because he was psychologically strong following his recovery and thus less moody, had deliberately sought, in this opera of one act, to soothe the emperor's ears and flatter his taste, without however abandoning entirely his artistic dignity."[57] But the notion that Cherubini didn't really *mean* his *Pimmalione* – that he was a republican at heart, and subdued his noisy republican accompaniments only in extenuating circumstances – is not credible. We might instead see this opera as a failed watershed moment in a very different music history: a music history only barely avoided. This history involved the continued dominance into the nineteenth century of an older style of Italian opera, with pomp borrowed from the French tradition: an Italian opera that was based in Europe's new political and cultural centre, Paris, and originated at the royal court. It involved the survival of older monarchic structures and their symbols within operatic dramaturgy.

However, in 1809, such a music history seemed very much in the cards. As Ravera noted in his chronology, the year in which Cherubini composed his *Pimmalione* saw the death of Joseph Haydn and the defeat and dismantling of Austria, the French annexation of the papal states and the imprisonment of Pius VII.[58] It was the height of Napoleonic France. Only a few months later, those dreams that made possible this *Pimmalione* would begin to lose their brightness, to be starved and frozen on the steppes of Russia. Cherubini wrote a few more operas, stylistically diverse but all relative failures – the comic opera *Le crescendo* (1811, reminiscent of *Lo sposo di tre* of 1783), the orientalist *Les abencérages* (1813), the propagandist comic opera *Bayard à Mézières* (1814) – before his appointment as Superintendent of the Royal Chapel following the fall of Napoleon, and a new and almost

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[57] Marco Ravera, *Invito all'ascolto di Cherubini* (Milan: Mursia, 1996), 65-6.
[58] Ravera, *Invito all'ascolto*, 22-3.

exclusive devotion to religious music. For a true watershed event within French operatic

history, we have to look no further than an opera that premiered two days before

Pimmalione, but at the Opéra: Gaspare Spontini's historical epic *Fernand Cortez, ou La*

conquête du Mexique, with libretto by Etienne de Jouy and Joseph Alphonse d'Esmenard,

became a model for the grand opéra of Daniel Auber and Giacomo Meyerbeer. Cherubini's

Pimmalione disappeared from stages shortly after its premiere, creating barely a ripple

within French or Italian operatic culture.

Electric and Mechanical Dances: Donizetti's *Il Pigmalione*

Dance – both its music and its motions – can be found in many of the most famous works

relating to human animation that appeared during the 1810s. Indeed, it came to function as

something of a bellwether, revealing the nature of the animated being. Our next example

relates not to quickening of a statue *per se*, but to the correction of an animation gone awry.

We have seen that, during the 1790s, the animation of living beings came to be attributed

to a current of "animal electricity" within their nervous systems. But while a regular

current facilitated smooth, controlled motions, a current that was too strong or otherwise

irregular resulted – at least according to some – in the rough, uncontrolled, jerky motions

of the epileptic seizure. In his 1816 treatise, now virtually forgotten, the noted Bolognese

doctor Angelo Colò suggested that such imbalances could be cured by means of a musical

accompaniment. The *Prodromo sull'azione salutare del magnetismo animale e della musica*

(Essay on the Healing Powers of Animal Magnetism and Music) attempted to unify the

recent findings in electricity with the earlier doctrines of animal magnetism: doctrines that

its author believed were too hastily discredited owing to the charlatanism of Mesmer and

his followers.[59] Colò suggested that mineral magnetism, electricity, Galvanism, and

Mesmerism were "but modifications of a single, universal fluid … which, travelling through

the nerves of animals, renders them sensible (*sensibili*)" (19). This fluid obeyed the laws of

science; in general it was controlled by the brain, but – as Mesmer himself had suggested –

it could be modified by outside forces acting at a distance, including music. Because the

nervous system (*il sistema gangliare*) and the brain (*il sistema cerebrale*) functioned in

opposition to one another, these outside sources of electro-magnetic current

simultaneously activated the nervous system and deactivated the brain (*Prodromo*, 20).

As in Graham's clinic, the "theatre" here was medical and the stage a bed, and the

electrical current travelled into a woman within it. The final portion of the *Prodromo* tells

the "strange and singular" story of one Signora Cavazzani, a vulgar, bad-tempered young

woman who suffered from terrifying nightly seizures. These seizures seemed to isolate and

segment the body parts, subjecting them to involuntary rhythmic motion. First, she

experienced spasmodic contractions of the diaphragm; then, a brief tremor in one big toe,

ceasing after a few seconds, and then the next; then, in rhythm, a tremor of each entire foot;

following that, at regular intervals, of the legs up to the knee, and so on.[60] The tremors

moved up the body, from one limb to the next, until they reached the brain, at which point

the patient's convulsions became so violent and lengthy that several people were required

to hold her down. After eight to ten minutes of full-body seizure and hallucination, the cycle

began again. Signora Cavazzani's doctors tried all the traditional remedies, including

opium, musk, and quinine; none was effective. One evening, though, a group of itinerant

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[59] Angelo Colò, *Prodromo sull'azione salutare del magnetismo animale e della musica, ossia Ragguaglio di tre interessanti guarigioni ultimamente ottenute col mezzo del magnetismo animale, e della musica* (Bologna: Giuseppe Lucchesini, 1815), 11.

[60] Colò, *Prodromo*, 82-91.

musicians happened to pass underneath the window, causing the seizures to lessen temporarily. The doctor grouped together as many dilettante musicians as he could find to form a chamber ensemble in the room of the patient. Under the direction of the doctor, the musicians were able to limit the seizures to the limb of the doctor's choice. "It was beautiful to see that playing at the onset of the diaphragm contractions, we could observe a flash, an electric shock, through the [patient's] entire body, thus soothing the contractions. ... The tightening [of the diaphragm] continued to occur, but the music cured it with a flash, an electric shock" (*Era bello il vedere, che suonando all'avviso dello stringimento agl'ipocondrj, si osservava solo un guizzo, qual scossa elettrica, di tutto il corpo dell'inferma, e con questa sopito il parossismo. ... Convien però notare che lo stringimento sempre compariva, ma che la musica lo faceva risolversi in un guizzo, o scossa elettrica* – 86-87).

At times the patient became delirious, achieving what Colò called a "true, spontaneous magnetic *somnambulism*" (*un vero* Sonnambulismo *magnetico spontaneo* – 91). This altered state had a few strange effects on the patient. First to change was her demeanor: "from melancholic, weary, and taciturn, she became all of a sudden spirited, bold, and loquacious" (*Di malinconica, abbattuta, e taciturna come era per l'addietro, diveniva ora in un momento spiritosa, ardita, e loquace* – 88-89). Her speech was suddenly "ennobled" (*nobilitato*), no longer the "rough local dialect" (*il dialetto rozzo del suo paese*) but rather "the purified speech of Tuscans" (*quello purgato de' Toscani* – 89). Most notable for our purposes was what happened next: it would seem that the Signora Cavazzani left her bed and began to dance a graceful minuet, her motions suddenly becoming fluid and facile (*I moti del suo corpo erano facili; poichè essa ballava con leggiadrìa il menuetto* - 89). This account of the dreamlike state may seem curiously inverted to the modern reader;

according to most later notions, humans' civilized surfaces concealed un-socialized

interiors, and not vice versa. The shrewish Signora Cavazzani, however, would appear to

have had a cultivated woman within what we might call her "Id": one who knew how to

affect the supple, graceful movements of the minuet.

The year 1816 seems to have signaled a shift in fables of animation, electrical and

otherwise: a shift wherein the dreams of Pygmalion and Prometheus shaded into the

nightmarish. Some of the most famous of these nightmares seemed to emanate from the

Italian themes under discussion here, albeit filtered through foreign imaginations. Mary

Shelley wrote her *Frankenstein: or, the modern Prometheus* in 1816; she read Galvani's

accounts of his experiments during that summer, and made her Pygmalion-hero, Victor

Frankenstein, an expert in Galvanism.[61] Not for nothing were the inventors and automaton

in E.T.A. Hoffman's "Der Sandmann" given Italian names: indeed, Spalanzani, supposedly

the father of Olimpia but actually her inventor, is now thought by some to be based on the

scientist Lazzaro Spallanzani, whom we have encountered in preceding pages.[62]

"Der Sandmann" is well known to literary criticism because of its centrality to

Freud's reading of the Uncanny: the disorientation created by its merging of the familiar

and fantastical, the human and the automated, and the gradual revelation of the horrific

beneath the mundane.[63] In this tale, the Galatea figure reveals her mechanical construction

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[61] See, for instance, Alan Rauch, "The Monstrous Body of Knowledge in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*," *Studies in Romanticism* 34/2 (Summer 1995), 227-53; and *Frankenstein's Science: Experimentation and Discovery in Romantic Culture, 1780-1830*, ed. Christa Knellwolf and Jane Goodall (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), in particular Jane Goodall, "Electrical Romanticism" (117-32), and Ian Jackson, "Science as Spectacle: Electric Showmanship in the English Enlightenment" (151-66).

[62] Stefani Engelstein, "Reproductive Machines in E.T.A. Hoffmann," in *Body Dialectics in the Age of Goethe*, ed. Marianne Henn and Holger A. Pausch (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003), 169-93.

[63] Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny" (first published as "Das Unheimliche," 1919), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth, 1953-74), XVII: 219-52.

to the reader – though not to her suitor, Nathanael – in part through the rhythmicity of her movements. When Nathanael first meets her at a party given Spalanzani, he notices her "stiff and measured walk." Later, Nathanael and Olimpia dance together, and "the peculiar rhythmic regularity with which Olimpia danced often disconcerted [Nathanael] and made him realize how badly he kept time."[64] The automaton Olimpia moves like Signora Cavazzani in the early stages of seizure: her motions are jerky, isolated, and precisely segmented. But while the music of the dance may civilize the epileptic patient, it cannot do the same for Olimpia; rather, it reveals her metronomic nature, providing a fleeting, early glimpse of her inner cogs and wheels.

These themes are also evident in the last setting of Sografi's libretto, which was composed in 1816: *Il Pigmalione*, by a 19-year-old Gaetano Donizetti, then a student of Stanislao Mattei at Bologna's Liceo Filarmonico Comunale. *Il Pigmalione* was his first opera, and the only one he composed on a mythological topic; it received its first performance only in 1960. Donizetti's biographers have not always been kind: William Ashbrook described the opera as "in every sense a modest work."[65] He suggested that Donizetti composed it at the suggestion of his former teacher and lifelong mentor Simon Mayr, who is known to have visited the younger composer in Bologna immediately before *Il Pigmalione* was begun, and who was in Venice in 1790 when Cimador's version had its premiere. (Indeed, Mayr might conceivably have attended that production, or even played

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[64] See Lucia Ruprecht, *Dances of the Self in Heinrich von Kleist, E.T.A. Hoffman, Heinrich Heine* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 66.

[65] William Ashbrook, *Donizetti and his Operas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 283.

the viola in the orchestra.[66]) It is generally agreed that the value of Donizetti's scene is archeological: it reveals the bottom layer of the composer's imagination, which preserves Mayr's influence but as yet no trace of Rossini's.[67] The archaeology becomes more revealing, I argue, when the music is considered as the most recent layer of an older sample. In several important aspects, the work follows the model laid out by previous composers of *Pimmalioni*: it has brief arias, uses accompanied recitatives throughout, includes a few instrumental passages to accommodate the mime, and its lead vocal part is largely devoid of coloratura. The symmetry of the arias recalls Asioli's version more than any other: indeed, the similarities between these two versions are at times so striking as to hint at the presence of the earlier music on the later composer's desk.[68]

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[66] Mayr's life has not yet been thoroughly documented; however, it is known that he arrived in Venice around 1790, and by 1792 was playing viola in the orchestra of the new Teatro La Fenice. See John Allitt, *J.S. Mayr: Father of 19th-Century Italian Music* (Shaftesbury: Lilian Barber, 1989), 49.

[67] The New Grove describes the opera as follows: "Noteworthy among these [unperformed student works] is *Il Pigmalione*, which exhibits a strong influence of Mayr but as yet little trace of Rossini." Julian Budden and Mary Ann Smart, "Donizetti, Gaetano" in *Oxford Music Online*, accessed 17 December 2010. Ashbrook included a very similar comment: "The influence of Mayr's style is apparent in many places, that of Rossini scarcely at all." *Donizetti and his Operas*, 284.

[68] It is possible that Donizetti had at hand both Asioli's and Cimador's scores: the library of the Liceo now contains a copy of each. However, Barblan and Zanolini also note the probable influence of Gnecco's version, on the basis of the presence within both scenes of the aria "Da smania e furor/ oppresso agitato." Guglielmo Barblan and Bruno Zanolini, *Gaetano Donizetti: vita e opere di un musicista romantico* (Bergamo: Società di assicurazione Liguria, 1983), 34.

Example 3.4 Donizetti, *Il Pigmalione* (1816), excerpt

Donizetti's first opera is the last, and youngest, piece of music to be discussed in this dissertation. Its distinctive final duet will serve as an introduction to the singing statues of the nineteenth century. But we will conclude the present section by listening to its *soave armonia*: the music that is heard immediately before the statue comes to life (Example 3.4). It is scored for a chorus of one flute, and two each of oboes, clarinets, horns and bassoons. Notwithstanding a brief interruption of recitative ("Qual divino concerto qual soave armonia rapisce l'alma mia?"), this is a twelve-measure dance in standard binary form. It is almost minimalist in its economy of motive: indeed, the middle section initially sounds a displacement of the first, as the descending sixteenth-note motive, formerly sounding in the second measure, becomes an upbeat to the first measure of the middle section. But perhaps most striking is the texture. The upper winds play in homophonic staccato, while the bassoons sound a simple, repetitive accompaniment. Where Asioli's *soave armonia* suggested a smooth, steady current, Donizetti's "divine sounds" recall the music to be heard issuing from a barrel organ, of the type made by firms like the nearby Gavioli and Sons (Modena), with a single crank-powered mechanism that filled an air chamber and sent bursts of air through reed pipes by means of pins on a barrel.[69] The staccato articulations serve to highlight the precise segmentation of time, which, here as in "Der Sandmann," has become an index of human absence, the loss of the fibrous and the fleshly: instead of the swells of a quickening hum, we hear a tines on a cylinder and their brittle, mathematical tick-tock. Gavioli organs usually contained a display of moving figurines that became animated when the mechanism turned: or rather, they spun and moved in figurations while

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[69] Arthur W.J.G. Ord-Hume, *Barrel Organ: The Story of the Mechanical Organ and its Repair* (South Brunswick, NJ: A.S. Barnes, 1978), and *Automatic Organs: A Guide to Orchestrions, Barrel Organs, Fairground, Dancehall & Street Organs Including Organettes* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer, 2007); on the Gavioli firm, see Antonio Latanza, "Il genio meccanico di Ludovico Gavioli, inventore dell'organo da fiera," *La Ricerca folklorica* 19 (April 1989), 87-92.

remaining frozen, their dynamic poses both evoking motion and inscribing its absence. Donizetti's Galatea becomes something like this barrel-organ dancer: she never fully sheds her statue-ness, even as she moves and speaks with the living.

Electricity II: Singing Statues from Emma Hamilton to Giuditta Pasta

Ashbrook considered Donizetti's *Il Pimmalione* to have a major weakness: "the final duet is, unfortunately, the one feeble part of the score."[70] It is not difficult to imagine what prompted this conclusion, though he provided no further details: "Ah senti mio bene" is marked by angular melodies, jarring modulations sharpward, and *grandi pause* not readily explicable by their formal context. I would suggest that the duet differs from the previous arias precisely because it must accommodate a singing statue – and moreover, a different kind of statue from the naïve archetype found in previous *Pimmalione* operas. We have noted that the animated statues in previous settings of Sografi's text are inexpert singers. Though Donizetti's Galatea likewise begins timidly – her first utterances (in recitative) are declaimed syllabically and in stepwise motion within a tiny range – this ineptitude does not last long.

Following the introductory chords of the final duet, Galatea begins to sing an arpeggiated melody over a simple accompaniment. No sooner has the first phrase been sung than the music is brought to a shuddering halt with a sudden tutti chord followed by a rest, while Galatea holds an unaccompanied c'' (Example 3.5a). The music then resumes: her teacher answers her question with a phrase of four measures, restoring the home key and the musical momentum – but not for long. Two subsequent interruptions (Examples 3.5b and 3.5c) continue to ratchet the harmony sharpward and claim further terrain within

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[70] Ashbrook, *Donizetti and his Operas*, 284.

the soprano stratosphere. The second fermata prolongs a half-note *e''*, and the third a *g''*. In each of these cases, the accompaniment ceases after a *tutti* chord and – but for those held vocal notes – time and movement seem to stop with it: in other words, the heroine's newfound voice seems to work against the musical flow. I suggest that these *fermate* constitute *poses*, or fissures in the prevailing musical time and form. Considered alongside each other, they tell an alternate story, drawing a meaningful line through a dominant chord in root position. Even as she sings, the Galatea in Donizetti's *Il Pigmalione* is trapped in the act of animation: in the limn between frozen art and moving life.

Example 3.5a Donizetti, *Il Pigmalione* (1816), final duet, excerpt

Example 3.5b Donizetti, *Il Pigmalione* (1816), final duet, excerpt

Example 3.5c Donizetti, *Il Pigmalione* (1816), final duet, excerpt

It is well known that the years around 1800 saw the development of attitudes or poses as a kind of theatrical genre, called "mimoplastic" for its imitation of sculpture.[71] Attitudes do not tell a story; rather, they provide the pretense of momentary material transformation and embodiment. The performer of an attitude stiffens her body to evoke the statue of a historical or mythological figure; when she moves again, the evoked being vanishes. During these early years, mimoplastics was primarily the domain of the female performer, who seemed better able than her male counterparts to mimic such material transformations. As we will see, the moving statue *qua* theatrical art form developed in Italy in the 1790s. Its emergence was connected both to the myth of Pygmalion, and to the recovery of human images from those ancient cities buried by the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 AD. Around the time of Donizetti's *Il Pigmalione*, the attitude became both a mode of operatic performance and – more lastingly – a discourse of performance reception.

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[71] Kirsten Gram Holmström, *Monodrama, Attitudes, Tableaux Vivants: Studies on Some Trends of Theatrical Fashion 1770-1815* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1967). The term "mimoplastic" was in use as early as 1877, when it can be found in a brief article on Emma Hamilton: "She carried the mimoplastic art, or the art of attitude, to such perfection that she might almost be said to have created it" (*The Secular Review and Secularist*, 10 November 1877, page 356). Some authors distinguish between the attitude and its close cousin, the tableau vivant, in noting that the former is an imitation of sculpture and the latter of painting; see Birgit Jooss, *Lebende Bilder: Körperliche Nachahmung von Kunstwerken in der Goethezeit* (Berlin: Reimer, 1999).

Goethe suggested that the turn-of-the-century fashion for attitudes and *tableaux vivants* came from the Neapolitan folk art tradition of the Christmas Crib, and in the peculiar susceptibility of Italians for human simulacra, while later commentators have grounded them in Diderot's aesthetics of the pregnant moment.[72] I would suggest, though, that its immediate origins as a gendered performance technique lay in the elaborate "electric" spectacles designed by Doctor James Graham for his Temple of Health. While Graham presided over the Temple, he seems to have been unable to channel the "medico, magnetico, musico, electrical" force into it without female assistance. This was accomplished by means of a musical incantation in the Greek style, performed at the beginning of the show by the reigning Hebe Vestina. Vestina was the only musician who could be both heard and seen within Graham's temple; she delivered an ecstatic recitation to an offstage accompaniment of organ, flute, glass harmonica, and harpsichord.[73] Vestina was able to bring electricity into the temple because she could channel it through her own body: as a woman, she carried a negative electrical charge (or was deficient in electrical fluid), and thus could be something like a lightning rod for the positive charge that was believed to exist within the atmosphere. Following the incantation, Vestina illustrated the fertility lecture by holding poses when Graham gave the appropriate verbal cues. These

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[72] See Jennifer Vanderheyden, *The Function of the Dream and the Body in Diderot's Works* (New York: Lang, 2004), 66-78. On the attitude in Goethe's writings, see Jooss, *Lebende Bilder*; other recent literature on this theatrical phenomenon includes Karin A. Wurst, *Fabricating Pleasure: Fashion, Entertainment, and Cultural Consumption in Germany, 1780-1830* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005), 215-38; and Aura Satz, "Tableaux Vivants: *Inside the Statue*," in *Articulate Objects: Voice, Sculpture, and Performance*, ed. Aura Satz and Jon Wood (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009), 157-82.

[73] Vestina's song was repetitive and incantatory, consisting of a series of additive exclamations: "Hail! Vital Air – Aethereal! – Magnetic Magic – Hail! Thine Iron Arm – thy bracing sinewy Arm! is everlasting Strength! Hail! Harmony! – Music Divine!!! thrice Hail! – Thy Soul is Love – Joy – Peace – and Health! And thou, celestial fire! – Thou, FIRE ELECTRIC! – GREAT RENOVATOR! – THE LIFE OF ALL THINGS! Hail!" On this musical entertainment, see also C.J.S. Thompson, *Mysteries of History with Accounts of Some Memorable Characters and Charlatans* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1928), 265-66.

poses allowed the audience a few moments to sketch a mental image and commit the

important position to memory, acting as conduits between Graham and his audience.

Graham's lecture thus took on the character of a live book, with masculine words and

feminine illustrations. The poses represented the images within the frame, while the

movement in between them was something like a page turn: a non-signifying transition.

This can be considered a prototype for the model of animation that will be traced in the

remaining pages. A masculine creator supplies a context or frame, a narrative (words, a

linear component); a female recipient or vessel within the frame performs this content by

mimicking plastic transformation. The female component is not linear but rather takes the

form of a series of stills. In Graham's spectacles, the animated stills were still separate from,

if adjacent to, the "electric" voice; as we will see, they would eventually be superimposed.

The first Vestina was a fifteen-year-old girl from Cheshire called Amy Lyon, hand-

picked for her supposed resemblance to the classical ideal, and thus rescued from an

incipient career in prostitution. The posing skills she learned at the Temple of Health would

serve her well: after leaving Graham's employ, she was hired as a model by the artist

George Romney, where she modeled for his paintings on mythological themes. Romney

himself had supposedly recorded these poses during his visit to Italy in 1773-75, when he

had the opportunity to sketch many antiques at Rome and Tivoli.[74] In 1785, Romney

received a commission from the notable collector of antiques, Sir William Hamilton, then

the ambassador to Naples; Romney painted Amy Lyon as "A Bacchante." The following

year, Hamilton acquired the model herself, after her then-lover Charles Francis Greville

found himself short of liquid assets.

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[74] On Romney and his circle in Italy, which included Swiss painter Henry Fuseli, see David A. Cross, *A Striking Likeness: The Life of George Romney* (Aldershott: Ashgate, 2000), 49-64.

In the late 1780s and early 1790s, Amy Lyon, by then known as Emma Hamilton,

caused a sensation in Naples with her so-called "attitudes" or *tableaux vivants*: series of

poses replicating the women in Sir William's collection of ancient Greek statuary, frescoes,

and vases.[75] As Gail Marshall has recently shown, the protector-mistress relationship

between Emma and Sir William was cast by their friends and contemporaries as a modern-

day Pygmalion fable.[76] This mythologizing was facilitated by Sir William's antiquarian

interests, and consequently by the erotic charge that had clung to such antiquarianism

since the rediscovery of Pompeii. As Walter Kendrick has demonstrated, the recovery of

explicit murals and statuary – and their subsequent half-concealment in a "Secret Museum"

by Neapolitan officials – held the origins of pornography as it is now understood.[77] Sir

William himself was no stranger to statue-love, having boasted of recovering "a Venus ...

with all her *tit*-bits such as *bubbies*, *mons veneris*, etc ... double gilt and the gold very well

preserved." He also contributed to a "highly erotic and subversive" book on the subject in

1786, *An Account of the Remain of the Worship of Priapus*.[78] Horace Walpole wrote that Sir

William had acquired "a gallery of statues." Goethe recorded similar observations upon

meeting the pair on his Italian journey in 1787: "Sir William Hamilton ... has now, after

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[75] The life and career of Emma Hamilton have inspired legions of authors from the eighteenth century to the twenty-first. Early biographies include *Memoirs of Emma, Lady Hamilton: With Anecdotes of her Friends and Contemporaries*, ed. William H. Long (London: Colburn, 1815; rev. ed. London: Gibbings, 1892); and John Cordy Jeaffreson, *Lady Hamilton and Lord Nelson: An Historical Biography Based on Letters and Other Documents in the Possession of Alfred Morrison, Esq. of Fonthill, Wiltshire*, 2 vols. (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1888). In addition to the works cited here, the more recent biographical literature includes Norah Lofts, *Emma Hamilton* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1978), Flora Fraser, *Emma, Lady Hamilton* (New York: Knopf, 1987), and a curious historical novel by Susan Sontag entitled *The Volcano Lover: A Romance* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1992).
[76] Gail Marshall, *Actresses on the Victorian Stage: Feminine Performance and the Galatea Myth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 41-42.
[77] Walter Kendrick, *The Secret Museum: Pornography in Modern Culture* (New York: Viking, 1987; reprint Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 1-32.
[78] Julie Peakman, *Emma Hamilton* (London: Haus, 2005), 36.

many years of devotion to the arts and the study of nature, found the acme of these delights in the person of an English girl of twenty with a beautiful face and a perfect figure."[79] Goethe noted that the antiquarian dressed his acquisition in "a Greek costume … which becomes her extremely," and that she was made to perform inside a large black box with a gilt frame. But it was Emma's poses that received Goethe's most vivid description:

> Dressed in [Greek costume], she lets down her hair and, with a few shawls, gives so much variety to her poses, gestures, expressions, etc., that the spectator can hardly believe his eyes. He seems what thousands of artists would have liked to express realized before him in movements and surprising transformations – standing, kneeling, sitting, reclining, serious, sad, playful, ecstatic, contrite, alluring, threatening, anxious, one pose follows another without a break.[80]

Holmström has justifiably argued that it was Emma's *tableaux vivants* that inaugurated the new art on the borderline "between pictorial art and theatre."[81] This new art seemed, by its very conflation of still and motion media, to encourage multiple representations in series. Sir William continued to have her likeness taken: he had eleven pictures of her, a stone bust, a cameo ring, as well as a model of her in clay and a model in wax.[82] Friedrich Rehberg drew a series of her poses, published in 1794 as *Drawings Faithfully Copied from Nature at Naples*; Pietro Antonio Novelli produced a similar series (reproduce as Figure 3.1). But it is also worth noting the extent to which this "new art" relied on factors already present in Graham's Temple of Health. Here as at the Temple, her poses represented moments of capture, while the time in between was non-signifying. Goethe recalled that Emma moved almost instantaneously between attitudes ("one pose follows another without a break");

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[79] Goethe, *Italienische Reise*, quoted and translated in Marshall, 42.
[80] *Ibid*.
[81] The turn of phrase is Goethe's (*Zwitterwesen zwischen der Mahlerey und dem Theater*), from a letter of 1813 to Heinrich Meyer (quoted in Jooss, *Lebende Bilder*, 319); Holmström, *Monodrama, Attitudes, Tableaux Vivants*, 139.
[82] Peakman, *Emma Hamilton*, 53.

other accounts have suggested that she used the shawl as something like a shutter, disappearing within it during the moments of transition.[83] Indeed, considered in this light, the attitudes become almost proto-filmic, suggesting a much later model of animation. The series of sketches they occasioned are something like prehistoric cartoons: similar, for instance, to the daily drawings of Vesuvius during the years 1765 to 1795 commissioned by Sir William himself, which traced long-term volcanic transformations by moving sequentially from one captured moment to the next.

And yet, in other ways, Emma's attitudes resist being thus subsumed within later developments. Perhaps most important here is the fact that the attitudes tell no story. Rather, they presented iconic moments from many different myths in unpredictable sequence. At one moment, she became Medea; the next, Niobe.[84] In narrative terms, the result was, quite literally, non-sense. Yet the purpose was not to tell a story, but rather to allow her body to become a technology of transmission. Where at the Temple of Health she had been a vessel for both positively charged electrical forces and for Graham's biological narrative, here she was a channel for the past, permitting ancient characters to intrude upon the present in moments of rupture. Thus while the performance was sequential, its

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[83] The Countess de Boigne recalled assisting Lady Emma Hamilton with her attitudes: "She threw a shawl over her head which reached the ground and covered her entirely, and thus hidden, draped herself with the other shawls. Then she suddenly raised the covering, either throwing it off entirely or half raising it, and making it form part of the drapery of the model which she represented. But she always appeared as a statue of the most admirable design. … I have sometimes acted with her as a subordinate figure to form a group. She used to place me in the proper position, and arrange my draperies before raising the shawl, which served as a curtain enveloping us both." Quoted in Hugh Tours, *The Life and Letters of Emma Hamilton* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1963), 91.

[84] The Countess de Boigne's account bears this out: "One day she placed me on my knees before an urn, with my hands together in an attitude of prayer. Leaning over me, she seemed lost in grief, and both of us had our hair dishevelled. Suddenly rising and moving backward a little, she grasped me by the hair with a movement so sudden that I turned around in surprise and almost in fright, which brought me precisely into the spirit of my part, for she was brandishing a dagger. The passionate applause of the artists who were looking on resounded with exclamations of 'Brava, Medea!' Then drawing me to her and clasping me to her breast as though she were fighting to preserve me from the anger of Heaven, she evoked loud cries of 'Viva, la Niobe!'" Tours, *Life and Letters*, 91.

own representations could be displayed as a collection (i.e., synchronically) rather than a story (linearly): a kind of curiosity cabinet of poses, like the rows of vases themselves in the British Museum.

If Emma Hamilton's stiffened body could create the illusion of time travel, though, her larynx and mouth destroyed the effect. Lady Holland reported "turning away in disgust" when Emma exclaimed, mid-pose, "Don't be afeared Sir William I'll not crack yer joug."[85] The Countess de Boigne recalled that, "leaving aside her artistic instinct, nothing could be more vulgar and more common than Lady Hamilton"; Lord Bristol was said to remark, "Take her as anything but Mrs. Hart and she is a superior being – as herself she is always vulgar."[86] Goethe's enthusiasm for Emma's attitudes waned when, on a second visit to the Hamiltons, he noted that her voice and speech were spiritless.[87] Still other accounts suggested that she continued to be an excellent singer. Sir William provided her with a music room and singing lessons, and she frequently moved her audiences to tears. She was even offered a three-year contract at the Italian Opera in Madrid, but declined in favor of the life of ease that Sir William provided.[88]

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[85] Peakman, *Emma Hamilton*, 49.
[86] Quoted in Gail Marshall, *Actresses on the Victorian Stage*, 42.
[87] Emma's poses reportedly put Goethe in mind of the Neapolitan tradition of decorating their rooftops with nativity tableaux containing both people and statues. He even recounted that a favorite Neapolitan parlor game involved arranging participants into living pictures. Goethe took pains to indicate that the stiffening of live bodies into tableaux or living pictures was a favorite pastime of Italians: Holmström recounts that in 1799, together with Schiller, he sketched the outline for an entry on "Italian amateur theatre ... including puppet- and puppet-style theatres, Christmas cribs*,* and *tableau*," to be included in an article entitled "On Dilettantism" in *Die Propyläen*. ("Italienische Liebhaberkomödie bezieht sich auf eine Puppen- und puppenartige Repräsentation. *Presepe* und *Tableau*.") quoted in Holmstrom, 215.
[88] Peakman, *Emma Hamilton*, 54-55.

Figure 3.1 Pietro Antonio Novelli, *Lady Hamilton's Attitudes*, 1791

It is possible to trace a direct lineage from Emma Hamilton to Giuditta Pasta through two Italian prima ballerinas connected with the choreographer Salvatore Viganò. The first of these was Maria Medina Viganò, Salvatore's wife, who created a sensation during the 1790s by dancing in revealing Grecian robes and with her hair unbound. She played the role of Galatea opposite singer-actor Giuseppe Naldi in an 1802 performance of *Pimmalione* at Trieste's Teatro Nuovo.[89] Her performance of ancient, "Hamiltonian" poses inspired similar series of stills: an artist by the name of Wachman engraved several attitudes from her first performance, and a porcelain statue was created from one of these; but Maria complained that these did not depict the correct positions. Johann Gottfried Schadow was engaged to create a second series of engravings, and a civic official oversaw that Viganò's

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[89] Little is known about this performance; the libretto identifies neither librettist nor composer. We do know, however, that it was followed by the "Gran-battaglia di Nelson," performed "a grande orchestra."

poses were represented "correctly and in the manner of Rehberg's series of Lady Hamilton's attitudes."[90] Stendhal and Ritorni both suggested that Pasta may have learned her acting directly from Salvatore's next muse, Antonietta Pallerini, who created mute versions of some of Pasta's heroines (including Desdemona and Juliet) during the 1800s and early 1810s, and danced the role of Galatea in Viganò's *Il nuovo Pigmalione* (1813). Pallerini's acting was similarly said to evoke the statuesque. One critic wrote, "Pallerini created forms and likenesses that resembled the model of a Greek statue, and which had the sharp lines of a sculpture rather than the soft contours of a painting."[91] Another recalled that when Pallerini performed Desdemona in Viganò's *Otello*, "all her attitudes were pictures."[92]

In recent scholarship, Giuditta Pasta is often described as the first star singer to adopt techniques from the mimic arts of dance and pantomime.[93] However, these studies have overlooked the extent to which Pasta's "pantomime" and its reception drew on the themes and techniques of animation. In the *Souvenirs d'égotisme*, Stendhal recalled Pasta's distinctive acting style:

> The ear completes the emotion begun by the eyes, and Mme Pasta remained a long time, for instance two or three seconds, in the same position. Did this make her task easier or more difficult? I often wondered. I came to believe that the act of remaining forcibly in the same position neither facilitated nor created further difficulties.[94]

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[90] Holmström, *Monodrama, Attitudes, Tableaux* Vivants, 99-101.

[91] *La Pallerini sortì forme e sembianze che somiglia il modello d'una statua greca, ed han piuttosto i taglienti contorni della scoltura, che i morbidi della pittura*. Quoted in Alessandro Roccatagliati, *Felice Romani, librettista* (Lucca: Libreria musicale italiana, 1996), 279.

[92] Quoted in Lois Potter, *Othello* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 64.

[93] Paolo Russo, "Giuditta Pasta: cantante pantomimica," *Musica e Storia* 10/2 (2002): 497-528; and Susan Rutherford, "La cantante delle passioni: Giuditta Pasta and the Idea of Operatic Performance," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 19/2 (2007): 107-38.

[94] *L'oreille achevait l'émotion commencée par les yeux, et Mme Pasta restait longtempts, par exemple deux secondes ou trois, dans la même position. Cela a-t-il été une facilitation ou un obstacle de plus à vaincre? J'y ai*

Stendhal described an odd unfolding, in which series of stills or poses were connected, and completed, by continuous song. Susan Rutherford has suggested on the basis of this passage that Pasta employed an old-fashioned style of operatic acting, involving motion during the recitative and stasis during the aria.[95] But contemporary accounts do not bear out this hypothesis. Indeed, the length of the poses cited by Stendhal – i.e., "two to three seconds" – suggests something entirely different: the momentary evocation of a picture or statue. Carlo Ritorni made this connection explicit: "Not with pantomimic gestures but in the style of a living picture, Pasta creates a second role of mute representation, sometimes better than that written by the poet and composer."[96] Ritorni suggested that Pasta's poses existed apart from the operatic text. Thus she acted two roles at once, the role of the character, and the role of the living artwork; the latter subjected the former to continuous ruptures. As with the other "living artworks" that we have seen, Pasta's poses seemed to encourage series of representations: an admirer once told her that "every pose of hers should be made into a statue."[97]

If Giuditta Pasta moved in stops and starts, though, her voice was infinitely changeable, liquescent. She was said to have had an enormous range, *a* to *d'''*, but with

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souvent rêvé. Je penche à croire que cette circonstance de rester forcément dans la même position ne donne ni facilité ni difficulté nouvelles. Reste pour l'âme de Mme Pasta la difficulté de donner son attention à bien chanter. Stendhal [Henri Beyle], *Souvenirs d'égotisme*, in *Oeuvres complètes de Stendhal*, ed. Ernest Abravanel and Vittorio del Litto, vol. 36 (Slatkine, 1986), 109-10.

[95] Rutherford, *The Prima Donna and Opera, 1815-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 234.

[96] *La Pasta, non co' gesti ed atti di pantomimo, ma con azione di viva pittura, a sè compon nel melodramma una seconda parte di muta rappresentazione, qualche volta migliore di quella che il poeta ed il musicografo le hanno scritta a declamare.* Carlo Ritorni, *Ammaestramenti alla composizione d'ogni poema e d'ogni opera appartenente alla musica* (Milan: Giacomo Pirola, 1841) 176-77.

[97] "Some Old Letters," *Scribner's Monthly* 10/1 (May 1875), 85.

"very different registers."[98] Stendhal reported that her voice was "not all molded from the

same *metallo*." One commentator praised her "infinitely varying shades"; another wrote

that "with Madame Pasta, the same note in two different situations can hardly be called the

same note." Its range permitted her to sing a wide variety of roles, for contralto, mezzo-

soprano, and soprano; she performed both Romeo and Juliet in Zingarelli's opera, Otello

and Desdemona in Rossini's. In other words, her voice was resistant to the kind of capture

evoked by her poses; she was forever in the act of becoming. Indeed, Pasta may well have

been a model for one of George Sand's "Histoire d'un rêveur" (1831): in this short story,

one of the author's first, the dreamer overhears a mysterious singer when he travels to the

mouth of Etna at dusk; the voice encompasses both male and female registers, and seems at

first to belong to a young man. The singer transforms into a beautiful woman as lightning

strikes and the volcano begins to erupt. She seizes the dreamer by the hair, and both jump

into the mouth of the volcano in order to travel to the land of enchantment.

Such segmented, rhythmic movements could now be theorized anew as electric:

representing jolts of current communicated from the music and into the limbs. Indeed, this

connection was made explicit by Pasta's frequent costar François-Joseph Talma, who wrote

that "the gesture, the attitude, the look ought to precede the words, as the flash of lightning

precedes the thunder."[99] A single, telling comparison emerges again and again from

encomia of Pasta's performance: she electrified her listeners. A few examples will suffice.

Stendhal praised her "extraordinary dynamism which can electrify an entire theatre," and

"her voice … [which] is as fascinating to the ear as it is electrifying to the soul." He

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[98] See, for instance, Isabelle Putnam Emerson, *Five Centuries of Women Singers* (Westport, CN: Praeger, 2005), 113-36.

[99] [François-Joseph] Talma, *On the Actor's Art*, trans. Sir Henry Irving (London: Bickers, 1883), 17.

suggested that many notes of her voice "have the ability to produce a kind of resonant and magnetic vibration, which, through some still unexplained combination of physical phenomena, exercises an immediate and hypnotic effect on the soul of the spectator." Henry Fothergill Chorley recalled Pasta's performance in similar terms: "when the passion broke out, or when the phrase was sung, it seemed as if they were something new, electrical, immediate."[100] Though such metaphors had been used sporadically since the early 1810s, it was in the reception of Giuditta Pasta's performance that listener electrification became a common rhetorical trope.

Of Pasta's many poses there is one that received special attention, both positive and negative, and which seems in particular to have merited the descriptor "electric": at moments of great musical intensity, she would raise her arms above her head and freeze thus until tension was released. She seems to have debuted the pose with the famous "Io" in an 1826 revival of Mayr's *Medea in Corinto* (first performed in 1813, with a libretto by Felice Romani): the raising of the arms would have been timed to the tutti chord, while the musical completion, "Io," was declaimed *a piacere* and unaccompanied. London's *Quarterly Musical Magazine* provided an enthusiastic account: "It is impossible to convey the dignity with which Madame Pasta invested these two notes. She gave them with the whole power of her voice, at the same instant flung wide her arms above her head, and her whole figure seemed to dilate with a passionate majesty."[101] The anonymous author of this article even supplied the melody in musical notation, with Giasone's preceding lines – "Che sperar

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[100] Henry Fothergill Chorley, *Thirty Years' Musical Recollections* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1862), 131-32.
[101] "Medea in Corinto: opera seria in due atti, musical del Sig. Mayer," *The Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review* 8 (1826), 366.

posso? Che mi resta?"[102] – but noted that the effect "can only be understood when seen, and when seen too as the climax of the preceding passage."[103] Given the history outlined above, it seems clear that with this gesture Pasta evoked musical electrification at its most literal: a shock could be seen to enter her body from the orchestra and freeze her limbs in a state of maximum extension; she then electrified her surroundings by means of an unaccompanied and extemporized *vocalise*.

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[102] Romani's lines for Jason here – "What can I hope for? What is left for me?" – alter the context of the "Moi" described above: Medea names herself in answer to Jason's question rather than as an act of self-definition.
[103] "Medea in Corinto," *Quarterly Musical Magazine*, 366.

Conclusion

This dissertation has two logical points of termination; in the remaining pages, I would like to provide both. The first is 1816. The craze for *Pygmalion* scenes and other statue works on Italian stages had burnt itself out by the end of the Napoleonic era: a fact that is unsurprising given the degree to which its imagery was implicated in Italian hopes of French alliance. In the first part of this dissertation, I situated Angiolini's Milan choreographies, and theories of musical and bodily gesture, within a new Lombard preoccupation with sensibility and language: a preoccupation owing not least to the perceived failure of literary Tuscan, and the hopes of Italian-revival-through-francization. Inspired by the linguistic theories of Rousseau, Condillac and Diderot, and by Milanese writers such as the Verri brothers and Cesare Beccaria, Angiolini aimed during his tenure at La Scala to create an unmediated music-gestural language that could overcome linguistic and even political boundaries. I have argued that the imagery of bodily animation – long a technique of Italian Commedia performers – assumed new significance in both the rhetorical and the theatrical texts of this Lombard movement. Of central importance was Angiolini's didactic "philosophical ballet" *La vendetta spiritosa* (Milan, 1782; revival Venice, 1791), which aimed to stage the statue's awakening within Condillac's *Traité des sensations*, and thus communicate "the abstract ideas of philosophy" in carefully crafted "particles" of gesture and representative music. During the early years of the Revolutionary wars, many Lombard writers and artists – Angiolini included – openly embraced the French invaders, hoping that they would liberate the Italian states and create an Italy that was the equal of France.

These projects did not survive long into the new century. Cesare Beccaria died in 1794, and Pietro Verri in 1797: the latter, a civic spirit to the last, collapsed at the first meeting of the Milan Municipality in the new Cisalpine Republic. His brother Alessandro, who at 23 had been the passionate author of the "Rinunzia," had been a great disappointment to Pietro: he moved from Milan to Rome in pursuit of a mistress, denounced his older brother's French sympathies, and even forsook his earlier preference for ideas over words, writing melancholically from Rome, "I now believe that the greatness of books comes not from what is said, but how it is said."[104] Angiolini's political convictions earned him two years of imprisonment and exile at the end of his life: he was deported to Dalmatia in 1799, returned to Italy only following the Peace of Luneville in 1801, and died shortly thereafter. The dreams of a French-inspired reform of the Italian language were effectively moribund following the Congress of Vienna, with writers like Ugo Foscolo and the Verri's bastard nephew Alessandro Manzoni re-embracing literary Tuscan and the renaissance masters, seeking a fatherland built around the monuments of its dead.[105]

This is also a logical point of termination for the Italian reception of Rousseau's *Pygmalion*. I have situated melodrama within the context of Rousseau's theories of music and language, and discussed the twilight classicism implicit within the first music for *Pygmalion* by Rousseau and Horace Coignet. I compared *Pygmalion* to related projects subsuming the spoken word within the domain of music, including Joshua Steele's *Prosodia Rationalis*, and theories of Italian operatic song by figures such as Antonio Eximeno and

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[104] *Sarà un mio errore, ma credo che la celebrità de' libri non viene da quello che dicono, ma dal modo; onde si debba più contare sul bene scrivere, ossia seducentemente scrivere, che sull'esattamente ragionare.* Letter, Alessandro to Pietro, 9 September 1778. Quoted in Gaspari, *Letteratura delle riforme*, 61.

[105] See, for instance, Joseph Luzzi, *Romantic Europe and the Ghost of Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

Stefano Arteaga. We then charted the reception of Rousseau's *Pygmalion* on the Italian

peninsula, and its performances in French during the 1770s and 1780s, its translation into

Italian and into "sign language." Melodrama in Italy was, at least at first, considered to

require the tones of spoken French – a position that was consistent with Rousseau's own

theories of musical and unmusical languages.

I have argued that the ideal of a song based on the rhythms of speech was imported

into opera precisely through the Italian reception of Rousseau's melodrama. This was

accomplished following the creation of a libretto based on Rousseau's text by the poet

Antonio Sografi, which was set to music many times over the following twenty-five years.

The *Pimmalione* scenes shared a common set of "reform" characteristics: sustained musical

mimicking of actors' motions; exclusive use of *recitativo accompagnato* rather than

semplice; an aversion to lyricism and, as a consequence, brief ariosi rather than extended

arias, syllabic declamation and a radically restricted vocal range. 1816 saw the last of these

melodramas-*qua*-operas: *Il Pigmalione* the first opera by Gaetano Donizetti, and the only

one he composed on a mythological topic. Though a detailed consideration of later

repertoire must remain outside the scope of this project, it is clear that the confrontation of

Italian opera with melodrama examined in Chapter 2 foreshadowed many later

developments in musical style. I would argue that the Romantic *canto declamato* and its

correlative form, the episodic *scena*, owe their existence at least in part to the style of

"melodramatic" opera crafted in the reception of Rousseau's text. Simon Mayr, who seems

to have collected the music and libretti for several of these scenes and made them available

to his student, is an obvious mid-point. Though Donizetti's own melodramatic opera was

never performed during his lifetime, it is certainly possible to detect the influence of

melodramatic "miming" in some of his most famous works: canonic moments such as the opening of Act II of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, when Lucia opens the letter her brother hands to her, and the orchestra mirrors her tremor.

The moving statues examined in this dissertation survived into the 1820s, 1830s and beyond, albeit migrated from *dramatis personae* to the realm of operatic performance, its reception and documentation. My final chapter outlined the ascendancy of electrical animation following a series of famous experiments by Luigi Galvani; one consequence of this was the development in Italy of a kind of music therapy for patients with disturbances in their "animal electricity" (namely, epileptics and somnambulists); another was the subsequent development, in the reception of opera's foremost singing statue, Giuditta Pasta, of a rhetoric of musical "electrification" that survives to the present day. Long after adaptations of Rousseau's melodrama had ceased to become fashionable, the evocation of a statue remained both a performance technique and a metaphor for understanding the development of female artists. In Paris in 1830, Pasta's rival Maria Malibran mounted a revival of Asioli's "fragment" *Pigmalione* nearly thirty-five years after its premiere, followed by excerpts from a more modern work, Rossini's *Tancredi*.[106] Like Sallé almost a century earlier, she performed the statue: a thankless role in vocal terms, as we have noted, involving thirty minutes of motionlessness and but three or four brief phrases of simple melody. Though the music was panned, Malibran's Galatea left a lasting impression. An anonymous reviewer recalled this performance – the last recorded staging of one of our

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[106] The concert took place at the Théâtre italien during the Carnival season of 1830. Critics suggested that the music had not aged well: see, for instance, the "Journal of a Parisian Resident," *New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal* 27 (1830), 574. Antonio Coli, whose biography of Asioli appeared four years later, took exception to this criticism, noting that the work was not designed for performance in such a large theatre. *Vita di Bonifazio Asioli*, 32.

Pigmalioni before the twentieth century – two years later when describing an exhibition of

attitudes at Egyptian Hall: "[The attitude] is an art, or rather an exhibition of art, not at all

known in England, nor indeed generally on the continent. It is a living imitation of a picture

… A few years ago, these Tableaux Vivans [*sic*] were all the rage with the fashionables at

Rome, and among the most admired representations were the famous Sibyls of Raphael, by

Mrs. Starkie and some younger friends." These considerations provoked an enthusiastic

recollection of Malibran's performance of a statue: "We remember, indeed, in this country,

to have once seen Malibran, then just budding into all her animated beauty, delight a whole

company with a somewhat similar exhibition: – it was merely an interlude – a scene played

off but for a few moments, but in such a round of delight, that memory, on recalling it,

sorrows in its weakness and humanity, to think such nights will never return… She played

the statue which Pygmalion had perfected all but the last few touches."[107]

  In these recollections, Malibran's famous voice seems almost irrelevant (as it would

indeed have been in that performance, given the vocal role). More interesting are the

parallels drawn between the animation of Galatea within the scene, and the "budding"

youth and "animated beauty" of the performer. The fragment permitted audiences to

observe, and commit to memory, Malibran in the act of *becoming*: becoming both herself

and an animated artwork. The recollection could be drawn from its cabinet a mere two

years later, but reverently, as though the ravages of time had already depredated the

original (and indeed, perhaps it had: Malibran died shortly thereafter, with her bereaved

common-law husband fighting away many "artists and others" who wished to make a cast

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[107] Quoted in Altick, *Shows of London*, 345.

of her face and head, or sketch her corpse).[108] The comparison of female singer to statue

continued to be fruitful into the middle of the nineteenth century and beyond. Malibran's

younger sister, Pauline Viardot, was most likely immortalized in Théophile Gautier's poem

"Contralto," wherein a singer is petrified within a museum of antiquities, her voice and

performance merely memories stirred by the "enigmatic," "disquieting" pose.[109] Viardot

was one of the first singers to be captured in the new medium of photography: a technology

whose usage in operatic culture was both prepared by the mimoplastic arts described here,

and perhaps eventuated their disappearance. But that is another story.

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[108] Countess de Merlin, *Memoirs and Letters of Maria Malibran, with Notices of the Progress of the Musical Drama in England*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Carey & Hart, 1840), 95.
[109] "Contralto" first appeared in the *Revue des deux mondes* of 15 December 1849.

Appendix

Here follows a catalog of operas and ballets featuring animated statues, staged on the Italian peninsula between 1770 and 1830. It includes the many versions of *Don Juan* staged during these years, and the other comic operas on original libretti that included statue scenes (whether through direct parody or otherwise). For reasons of scale, performances that took place outside of Italy – including the premieres of *Pygmalion* by Rousseau and Coignet, and *Pimmalione* by Cherubini and Vestris – are not cataloged here.

Year	Title	Genre	Librettist/ Choreographer	Composer	Location, Performers
1771	La statua animata ingrata al suo benefattore	Entr'acte dance	Antonio Terrades	Unknown	Venice, Teatro San Moisè
1772	Pygmalion[1]	Scène lyrique	Jean Jacques Rousseau	Unknown	Milan, private performance
1773	Pygmalion[2]	Scène lyrique	Rousseau	Franz Aspelmayr	Naples; perf. Bursay
1773	Pigmalione[3]	Canto per musica	Rousseau, trans. Francesco Saverio de' Rogati	n/a	Translation inspired by Bursay's performance (above); intended for musical setting but never performed
1773	Il Pimmalione[4]	Scena lirica (perf. in French)	Rousseau	Unknown (Aspelmayr?)	Venice, San Samuele, perf. Tommaso Grandi

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[1] French text published in Milan: J. Montani, 1771; Silvia Rota Ghibaudi reported that a copy is preserved at the Biblioteca Civica di Bergamo (*La fortuna di Rousseau in Italia*, 320).

[2] No libretto survives from this production.

[3] This *Pigmalione: cantata per musica* is preserved at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini (ROLANDI - NON MUSICATI O-PO). De Rogati's translation was reissued in 1783 in conjunction with his translations of ancient Greek poetry, *Le odi di Anacreonte e di Saffo recate in versi italiani* (Colle [di Valensa]: Martini, 1783). Rota Ghibaudi, *La fortuna di Rousseau in Italia*, 321. Sartori 18685.

[4] Libretto preserved at the Biblioteca nazionale Braidense (Racc.dramm.4098), and is available in pdf at www.braidense.it/cataloghi/catalogo_rd.php (accessed 22 April 2011). Sartori 18698.

Year	Title	Genre	Librettist/ Choreographer	Composer	Location, Performers
1774	Il Pimmalione[5]	[Scena lirica] (perf. in French)	Rousseau	Unknown (Aspelmayr?)	Published in Pisa, libretto designates merely "[il] Teatro di questa città", perf. Grandi and Teresa Monti "comici italiani"
1775	Pygmalion[6]	Scène lyrique (perf. in French)	Rousseau	Unknown (Aspelmayr?)	Verona, Tommaso Grandi and Antoinette Grandi
1775	Pigmalion[7]	Scène lyrique	Rousseau	Unknown (Aspelmayr?)	Milan, Ducal Teatro
1775	Pimmalione o sia L'unione del medesimo con Galatea[8]	Scena lirica che serve d'introduzione al secondo ballo	Rousseau	Unknown (Aspelmayr?)	Florence, Teatro in via Santa Maria, actors unknown (a Grandi production?); this was the first part of an entr'acte for *La locandiera* (Salieri); second part was a

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[5] Libretto preserved at the Biblioteca nazionale Braidense (Racc.dramm.4742), and is available in pdf at www.braidense.it/cataloghi/catalogo_rd.php (accessed 22 April 2011). Sartori 18699.

[6] This libretto seems to differ from the others for Grandi's productions in that it had a French title. Ghibaudi gives the complete publication information as *Pygmalion. Scène lyrique répresentée en français dans le petit théâtre de Vérone par Thomas Grandi et Antoinette Grandi, comédiens italians* (Milan: J.B. Bianchi, 1775), but provides no surviving copy.

[7] Sartori 18680. The entire title reads *Pigmalion. De monsieur Jean Jaques* [sic] *Rousseau. Scene lirique representé en françois dans ce Ducal Théâtre de Milan par Thomas Grandi, et Antoinette Grandi comediens italiens* (Milan: Jean Baptiste Bianchi, 1775).

[8] Libretto preserved at the Harvard University Library (Houghton *IC7.A100.B750 v.108, no. 12). Sartori 18700.

Year	Title	Genre	Librettist/ Choreographer	Composer	Location, Performers
					danced version (see below)
1775	Pimmalione	Ballo	Antoine Pitrot	Unknown	Florence, Teatro in via Santa Maria
1775	Il convitato di pietra	Ballo	?	Unknown	Padua
1776	Pygmalion	[Scène lyrique]	[Rousseau]	Unknown	Published in Brescia; performed by Boniface Welenfelt and Annette Paganini
1777	Il Pimmalione[9]	Scena lirica	Rousseau	Unknown	Venice, Tommaso Grandi and Antonia Grandi
1777	Il convitato di pietra[10]	Dramma giocoso	Pietro Pariati	Giuseppe Callegari	Venice: Teatro Tron di San Cassiano
1778	Il Pigmalione[11]	Scena lirica	Rousseau	Unknown	Naples, Teatro de Fiorentini, perf. "in lingua francese in prosa" by Giacomo Ceolini, "comico italiano"
1778	Il convitato di pietra	Ballo	Unknown	Unknown	Florence

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[9] This edition featured a new translation by the Abate Giulio Perini. It is preserved at the Biblioteca della Fondazione Giorgio Cini (ROLANDI - R AI N-Q). Perini's translation was reissued by Graziosi in Venice in 1787, though this does not seem to have been connected to a performance of the work. Sartori 17801.

[10] Sartori 6584.

[11] A copy of the libretto may be found at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (Special Collections CA 7698).

Year	Title	Genre	Librettist/ Choreographer	Composer	Location, Performers
1779	Pimmalione[12]	Cantata a tre voci	Unknown	Niccolò Zingarelli	Teatro San Carlo
1780	Il Pimmalione	[Scène lyrique]	[Rousseau]	Unknown	Fermo, Teatro dell'Aquila, performed by "the young students of the Accademia Felicini in Bologna"
1780	La statua matematica[13]	Opera buffa	Giovanni Bertati	Giovanni Valentini	Venice, San Moisè
1780	Il Pigmalione	Azione scenica (perf. in Italian)	Rousseau, trans. Pietro Ferrari	Unknown	Lucca, performed by "capocomico Pietro Ferrari"
1780	Il convitato di pietra	Ballo	Unknown	Unknown	Como
1780	Il convitato di pietra	Ballo	Unknown	Unknown	Florence
1781	La statua animata	Ballo pantomimo	Jacopo Baldonotti	Unknown	Macerata
1781	Il convitato di pietra	Ballo	Unknown	Unknown	Naples
1782	La vendetta spiritosa	Ballo comico pantomimo	Gasparo Angiolini	Angiolini	Milan, Teatro alla Scala
1782	Il Pimmalione[14]	Scena lirica	Rousseau	Unknown	Published in Bologna
1783	Pigmalione	[ballo]	Domenico LeFevre	Unknown	Florence: Teatro della

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[12] Zingarelli's *Pimmalione* survives in manuscript at the Conservatorio San Pietro a Majella in Naples (21.2.15). The manuscript has been made available for free at www.internetculturale.it/moduli/digi/digi.jsp (accessed 22 April 2011).

[13] This was an exceptionally popular opera, and received numerous stagings during the 1780s; revivals will not be enumerated in this appendix. Its alternate titles were *Le sorelle rivali* and *L'automate*.

[14] This edition appears in Rota Ghibaudi's catalogue as 34. *Il Pimmalione. Scena lirica*, with no additional information about performance or publisher.

Year	Title	Genre	Librettist/ Choreographer	Composer	Location, Performers
					Pergola
1783	Il convitato di pietra	Farsa	Giambattista Lorenzi	Giacomo Tritto	Naples
1783	Il convitato di pietra	Ballo	Unknown	Unknown	Milan
1783	Il convitato di pietra	Ballo	Unknown	Unknown	Novara
1783	Il Pimmalione	Scena lirica	Giangiacomo Rousseau, trans. Emanuele Lassala [Manuel Lassala y Sangerman]	[none]	One of five *scene liriche* appended to Lassala's tragedy *Ormisinda*, and never performed[15]
1784	Il convitato di pietra	Farsa	Giambattista Lorenzi	Giacomo Tritto	Palermo
1784	Il convitato di pietra	Ballo	Unknown	Unknown	Parma
1784	Il convitato di pietra	Ballo	Unknown	Luigi Marescalchi	Rome
1784	Don Giovanni, o sia Il gran convitato di pietra	Ballo	Anon.	Unknown	Verona
1785	Pigmalione	Scena lirica messa in ballo	Domenico LeFevre[16]	Unknown	Naples, Teatro San Carlo
1785	Le Pygmalion[17]	Scène lyrique	Rousseau	Unknown	[Verona?]; perf. Françoise Menichelli
1785	Il convitato di pietra	Ballo	Unknown	Unknown	Florence
1785	Il convitato di pietra	Ballo	Unknown	Unknown	Lodi
1785	Il convitato di pietra	Ballo	Unknown	Unknown	Mestre
1785	Il convitato di	Ballo	Unknown	Unknown	Treviso

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[15] Lassala, *Ormisinda, tragedia* (Bologna: Tommaso d'Aquino) is preserved in numerous copies, including at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini (ROLANDI - MUS 2B LAS).
[16] Libretto preserved at Naples' Conservatorio di Musica San Pietro a Majella (Rari 10.10.6/7).
[17] Ghibaudi reports that a copy survives at the Biblioteca nazionale Marciana in Venice.

Year	Title	Genre	Librettist/ Choreographer	Composer	Location, Performers
	pietra				
1785	Il convitato di pietra	Ballo	Unknown	Unknown	Undine
1786	L'amante statua	Ballo	Domenico LeFevre	Unknown	Naples, Teatro San Carlo
1786	L'antiquario burlato, ossia La statua matematica	[Opera buffa]	Giovanni Bertati	Luigi Caruso	Pesaro
1786	Il convitato di pietra	Ballo	Unknown	Unknown	Carrara
1786	Pigmalione[18]	Scena drammatica	Rousseau, trans. and adapted by Antonio Subotich	Unknown	published in Milan for a performance by Antonio Subotich's young son Armando ("in età di 8 anni")
1787	Don Giovanni, o sia Il convitato di pietra[19]	Dramma giocoso	Giovanni Bertati	Giuseppe Gazzaniga	Venice
1787	Don Giovanni, o Il nuovo convitato di pietra	Dramma tragicomico	Giuseppe Foppa, based on Bertati	Francesco Gardi	Venice
1787	Il convitato di pietra	Ballo	Unknown	Unknown	Ferrara
1787	Il Pimmalione[20]	Scena lirica	Rousseau, trans. Perini	n/a	Published in Venice by Graziosi
1787	Il convitato di pietra	Ballo	Unknown	Unknown	Ravenna
1788	Il convitato di	Ballo	Unknown	Unknown	Milan,

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[18] This is given in Rota Ghibaudi's catalogue (*La fortuna di Rousseau in Italia*, 322). According to this listing, a copy survives in the Biblioteca nazionale Marciana.

[19] This was an extraordinarily popular work – much better known in its day than the version by Mozart and Da Ponte – and it was revived dozens of times throughout Italy before the dawn of the nineteenth century. These revivals are not catalogued here; I refer the interested reader to David Buch, *Magic Flutes & Enchanted Forests*, 380.

[20] Sartori 18704.

Year	Title	Genre	Librettist/ Choreographer	Composer	Location, Performers
	pietra				Teatro alla Scala
1788	Il convitato di pietra	Ballo	Unknown	Unknown	Vicenza
1789	L'amante statua	Ballo	Domenico LeFevre	Unknown	Genova, Teatro da S. Agostino
1789	Il convitato di pietra[21]	Pasticcio	Unknown	Unknown	Pavia
1790	Pimmalione[22]	Scena drammatica	Rousseau, ad. Antonio Sografi	Giovanni Battista Cimador	Venice, Teatro San Samuele; Babbini/Pitr ot
1790	Pimmalione[23]	Scena drammatica	Rousseau/Sografi	Cimador	Padua, Palazzo del Podestà
1790	Pimmalione[24]	Scena drammatica	Rousseau/Sografi	Cimador	Published in Venice by Graziosi
1790	L'amante statua	Ballo	Pietro Giudici	Unknown	Bologna, Teatro Zagnoni
1790	Pimmalione	Scena drammatica	Rousseau/Sografi	Cimador	Trieste
1791	La statua per puntiglio	Dramma giocoso per musica	Anonymous	Marcello di Capua	Venice
1791	La vendetta ingegnosa, o sia La statua di Condilliac (sic)	Favola boscherecch ia pantomima	Gasparo Angiolini	Gasparo Angiolini	Venice
1791	Il Pimmalione[25]	Azione	Rousseau, trans.	Gluch [*sic*]	Catania;

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[21] This is the first recorded pasticcio on the theme of *Don Giovanni*; Buch has documented almost a dozen such between 1789 and 1791, with many more throughout the rest of the decade. These are not included in this catalogue; see *Magic Flutes & Enchanted Forests*, 380.

[22] The libretto is preserved at the Biblioteca nazionale Braidense (4324), and may be accessed online at www.braidense.it/cataloghi/catalogo_rd.php (accessed 22 April 2011). Sartori 18706.

[23] This second production of Cimador's scene featured the two principal stars of the premiere: Babbini and Pitrot. Sartori 18705.

[24] This version of Sografi's libretto included no performance information; it was published in Venice the year of the premiere of Cimador's opera. Sartori 18707.

[25] Sartori 18708. This is the first known performance of Perini's translation.

Year	Title	Genre	Librettist/ Choreographer	Composer	Location, Performers
		scenica	Perini		performed by Nicola Cioffi ("primo attore della comica compagnia detta degli Uniti") and Angela Fini Orsetti
1791	Don Giovanni, o Il nuovo convitato di pietra[26]	Dramma giocoso	Giuseppe Foppa, based on Bertati	Francesco Gardi	Milan
1791	Il convitato di pietra	Farsa	Giambattista Lorenzi	Giacomo Tritto	Naples
1792	Il Pigmalione	Ballo	Domenico LeFevre	Unknown	Turin
1792	Pigmalione[27]	Scena lirica	Anon; a bowdlerization of Rousseau's melodrama	Francesco Sirotti	Teatro degli Avvalorati, Livorno; Anna Davya de Bernucci, Antonia Trabattoni
1793	Pigmalione	Scena lirica	Anon (see above)	Sirotti	Milan, Teatro alla Scala; Anna Davya de Bernucci, Antonia Trabattoni
1793	L'amante statua	Ballo	Gaspare Ronzi	Unknown	[pub. Padua]
1793	Pimmalione[28]	Scena	Rousseau/Sografi	Giuseppe	Venice

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[26] Sartori 6586.

[27] Sartori 18688.

[28] A libretto for this production survives at the Biblioteca di studi teatrali Casa di Carlo Goldoni in Venice (CORRER-VENEZIA 57 E 59); the music seems to have been lost. The preface notes that Rossi composed the orchestral part only, with the vocal role "imagined" by Alessandro Pepoli ("Volendo ora il Co. Alessandro Pepoli recitarla … per meglio adattarla alle proprie corde, ha egli immaginato tutta la parte cantante, mentre la strumentale fu composta dall'esperto sig. maestro Giuseppe Rossi"). Sartori 18711.

Year	Title	Genre	Librettist/ Choreographer	Composer	Location, Performers
		drammatica		Rossi and Alessandro Pepoli	
1794	L'amante statua	Farsa	Antonio Valli	Luigi Piccinni	Verona, Teatro San Cassano
1794	Pimmalione[29]	[Scena drammatica]	Rousseau/Sografi	Francesco Gnecco	Genova, Teatro San Agostino
1794	Pimmalione	Scena drammatica	Rousseau/Sografi	Cimador	Ferrara
1794	Pimmalione	Scena drammatica	Rousseau/Sografi	Cimador	Vicenze
1794	Pimmalione[30]	Scena drammatica in due atti	Rousseau/Sografi	Cimador	Published in Florence: Pietro Allegrini
1794	Pimmalione[31]	[Scena drammatica]	Rousseau/Sografi	Cimador	Published in Cremona: Feraboli
1794	Pimmalione[32]	Scena drammatica	Rousseau/Sografi	Unknown	Bergamo; perf. Pompilio Panizza and Maria Panizza
1795	Pimmalione	Scena drammatica	Rousseau/Sografi	Cimador	Accademia de' Dilettanti in Reale Musica, Vicenza
1795	Pimmalione[33]	Scena drammatica	Rousseau/Sografi	Cimador	Naples; perf. Babbini and Caterina Perini

[29] No libretto survives from this production, but a manuscript copy of the music is kept at Ostiglia, Biblioteca musicale Opera Pia Greggiati (Mss.Mus.B 52).

[30] Sartori 18713.

[31] Ghibaudi provided the publishing information given here, but no further details as to performance; perhaps the edition did not accompany a performance. A copy was said to be housed at the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan, although there is no trace of this in modern catalogues.

[32] Libretto preserved at Bergamo's Biblioteca Civica Angelo Mai (Sala 32 D 2.6.05 - Antisala D 2 6 5).

[33] Sartori 18714.

Year	Title	Genre	Librettist/ Choreographer	Composer	Location, Performers
1796	Pimmalione[34]	Scena drammatica in due parti	Rousseau/Sografi	Cimador	Ancona; perf. Giuseppe Tassini
1796	Pimmalione	Scena drammatica	Rousseau/Sografi	Cimador	Rome, Teatro Apollo
1796	Pigmalione	Azione teatrale	Rousseau/Sografi	Bonifazio Asioli	Turin (private performance)
1797	Il Pimmalione[35]	Azione drammatica	Rousseau/Sografi	Cimador	Lucca, Teatro alla Pantera; perf. Giuseppe Michele
1797	Pimmalione[36]	Scena drammatica	[Rousseau/ Sografi]	Francesco Moro Lin	Venice
1798	Pigmalione[37]	Scena lirica	Unknown	Unknown	Parma
1798	Pimmalione[38]	Scena drammatica	Rousseau/Sografi	Cimador	Ferrara; perf. Matteo Babbini and Giacinta Bigi
1799	Pimmalione[39]	Scena lirica	Rousseau/Siro Comi	Tommaso Gilardoni	Pavia
1800	Pimmalione	Scena drammatica	Rousseau/Sografi	Cimador	Genova, perf. Babbini
1801	Pimmalione	Melodramma in musica	Rousseau/Sografi	Cimador	Teatro Nazionale, Turin

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[34] Sartori 18715.

[35] This is listed in Rota Ghibaudi's catalog (*La fortuna di Rousseau in Italia*); according to this record, a copy of the libretto survives at the Biblioteca governativa di Lucca.

[36] The music is lost, but a libretto for this production survives at Biblioteca di studi teatrali Casa di Carlo Goldoni in Venice (CORRER-VENEZIA 58 A 85). Sartori 18716.

[37] Rota Ghibaudi, *La fortuna di Rousseau in Italia*, 323. The catalogue provides a publisher (Alberici) and archive (Biblioteca universitaria di Bologna) but no information about performance. Sartori notes two similar editions of Rousseau's "Scena lirica" published in Parma (18691 and 18692; Alberici and Gozzi, respectively).

[38] Libretto may be found in the Biblioteca nazionale Braidense (Racc.Dramm.4316), and is available in pdf online at www.braidense.it/cataloghi/catalogo_rd.php (accessed 22 April 2011). Sartori 18717.

[39] Sartori 18693. Libretto offers a "new translation in verse by Sig. Siro Comi of Pavia, set to music for the first time by the celebrated Maestro Sig. Tommaso Gilardoni of Milan e rappresentato per la prima volta in Pavia nell'estate del 1799." The role of the hero was performed by Maria Gazotti.

Year	Title	Genre	Librettist/ Choreographer	Composer	Location, Performers
1801	Pimmalione	Scena drammatica tratta della scena lirica di Monsieur J.J. Rousseau	Rousseau/Sografi	Cimador	Naples, Teatro di San Carlo
1802	L'amante di una statua	Ballo semiserio in tre atti	Eleanora Dupre	Unknown	Naples
1802	Pimmalione	Dramma giocoso	Unknown [Rousseau/ Sografi?]	Unknown	Trieste, Teatro Nuovo, Giuseppe Naldi, Maria Medina Viganò
1807	L'amante in statua, o Il nuovo Pigmalione[40]	Ballo comico in un atto	Domenico LeFevre	Unknown	Milan, Teatro alla Scala
1807	Il nuovo Pimmalione	Farsa di un atto	Leonardo Buonavoglia	Gio. Morandi	Trieste, Teatro Nuovo
1809	Il Pigmalione	Farsa lirica divisa in due parti	Rousseau	Unknown	Published in Verona[41]
1813	La pittura e la scultura in iscompiglio	Ballo	Urbano Garzia	Unknown	Milan, Teatro alla Scala
1813	Il nuovo Pigmalione[42]	Ballo	Salvatore Viganò	Pastiche, incl. Beethoven, Viganò	Teatro alla Scala, Philippe Taglione/ Antonietta Pallerini
1816	Il dissoluto	Dramma	Lorenzo da Ponte	W.A. Mozart	Teatro alla

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[40] This was an entr'acte to *La scelta dello sposo*, farsa in musica by Buonavoglia and Guglielmi; the libretto is preserved at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini (ROLANDI - GUGLIELMI PC A-Z).

[41] This libretto is listed in Rota Ghibaudi's index with publishing information (Verona: Bisesti) but no archival or performance record. *La fortuna di Rousseau in Italia*, 323.

[42] Both *Il nuovo Pigmalione* and *Il Prometeo* (a revised version of Viganò's Viennese collaboration, this time with a pastiche score) were entr'actes for *Elisa*, a *dramma sentimentale* by Simon Mayr and Gaetano Rossi; a libretto survives at the Biblioteca della Fondazione Cini (ROLANDI - R MAYR C-F).

Year	Title	Genre	Librettist/ Choreographer	Composer	Location, Performers
	punito ossia Don Giovanni Tenorio	semiserio			Scala
1816	Prometeo	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Teatro delle marionette, Milan
1816	Il Pigmalione	Scena lirica	Rousseau/Sografi	Gaetano Donizetti	Student work, premiered in 1960
1817	Pigmalione[43]	Ballo anacreontico	L. Duport	Unknown	Real Teatro, Caserta
1818	Pigmalione	Scena lirica	Rousseau/Sografi	Cimador	Naples, Teatro nel Fondo; perf. Giovanni David and Signora De Bernardis
1825	La statua di Venere	Ballo anacreontico	Giovanni Coralli	Unknown	Teatro alla Scala
1829	Pigmalione	Spettacolo mitologico semi-serio in musica con mimica analoga e ballo	Unknown	Unknown	Palermo, Real Teatro Carolino

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[43] Libretto preserved at the Conservatorio San PIetro a Majella (P.OI.11.8/23).

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