

Oxford Music Online

Grove Music Online

Rauchfangkehrer, Der

article url: <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com:80/subscriber/article/grove/music/O904289>

Rauchfangkehrer, Der [*Der Rauchfangkehrer, oder Die unentbehrlichen Verräther ihrer Herrschaften aus Eigennutz* ('The Chimney-Sweep, or The Indispensable Betrayers of Their Lordships' Self-interest')].

Musikalisches Lustspiel in three acts by ANTONIO SALIERI to a libretto by JOSEPH LEOPOLD AUENBRUGGER; Vienna, Burgtheater, 30 April 1781.

As the playful subtitle suggests, the opera is in the spirit of those late 18th-century Italian comic operas that deal with conflict between social classes. Volpino (tenor), an Italian chimney-sweep, is engaged to Lisel (soprano), a cook in the house of the young widow Frau von Habicht (soprano). Frau von Habicht and her daughter Nannette (soprano) are the objects of amorous advances by the impoverished noblemen Herr von Bär (bass) and Herr von Wölf (tenor). Volpino puts into action an elaborate trick that promises to result in a dowry for him and Lisel. With his musical skills he charms both mother and daughter into falling in love with him; then to Bär and Wölf he proposes to reject the two women in exchange for a handsome dowry. After a suitable amount of confusion and misunderstanding, his plan is successful and all the principal characters are happily engaged.

Salieri composed this opera at the command of Joseph II for performance by his German troupe, which included Caterina Cavalieri (who sang the role of Nannette) and Ludwig Fischer (Herr von Bär), but it is in many ways more Italian than German: both libretto and music resemble an *opera buffa* more than a north German Singspiel. It was moderately successful in Vienna, performed 13 times in 1781–2. The last performance was on 5 July 1782, less than two weeks before the première of Mozart's *Entführung*, the success of which must have contributed to the abandonment of *Der Rauchfangkehrer* by the Viennese court theatres.

John A. Rice

Copyright © Oxford University Press 2007 — 2009.