

Sarti's *Fra i due litiganti* and Opera in Vienna

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In June 1784, Giuseppe Sarti passed through Vienna on his way from Milan to St. Petersburg, where he would succeed Giovanni Paisiello as director of the imperial chapel for Catherine the Great. On June 2 Sarti attended a performance at the Burgtheater of his opera buffa *Fra i due litiganti il terzo gode*, which was well on its way to becoming one of the most highly successful operas of the late eighteenth century. At the order of Emperor Joseph II, Sarti received the proceeds of the evening's performance, which amounted to the substantial sum of 490 florins.¹

Fra i due litiganti, premiered at La Scala in Milan on September 14, 1782, had been an immediate success, and within a short time began receiving productions in other cities. It was performed in Venice under the title *I pretendenti delusi*, and it was the third opera produced in Vienna by the newly re-established opera buffa company there in the spring of 1783. By the time of Sarti's visit to the Hapsburg capital a year later, *Fra i due litiganti* was the most popular opera in Vienna. It had already been performed twenty-eight times in its first season alone, a total unmatched by any other operatic work of the decade. Thus the Emperor's awarding

¹ Link, *National Court Theatre*, 42 and n. 35.

of the evening's proceeds to Sarti was an understandable acknowledgement of the success of his opera.

By no means, however, did the performance on June 2 present the opera as Sarti had written it for its premiere in Milan twenty-one months earlier. More than one-third of the arias—to be more specific, six of the fifteen arias performed—were pieces newly substituted in Vienna, by composers including Pasquale Anfossi, Vicente Martín y Soler, and Antonio Salieri. We may assume that being applauded and honored for a work that was not entirely his did not disturb Sarti in the least; nor is it a surprise to scholars of eighteenth-century opera. It is well known that as operas traveled to different cities, numbers were frequently replaced to suit the needs of singers.

What is surprising, though, is that the "Viennese version" of *Fra i due litiganti* that Sarti heard was already on its way to becoming the standard version, at least in most cities north of the Alps. As the opera triumphed in one opera-house after another, receiving nearly ninety productions by 1800, it was frequently presented not as created by Sarti but as altered in Vienna. The Viennese version flourished in a number of German translations, and it was the basis for a French version in four acts that audiences enjoyed in Paris, Brussels, and elsewhere in French-speaking Europe.

The numerous surviving sources for *Fra i due litiganti* reveal two very different patterns of transmission. In many theaters, especially in southern Europe, the

pattern more familiar to opera scholars prevailed: the work was presented in a version close to Sarti's Milanese original, with the substitution of a few arias here and there, presumably to accommodate the local singers. But in cities throughout northern Europe, the Viennese version was performed with remarkably few changes, no doubt reflecting the dominance of Vienna as the most important center for Italian opera in the German-speaking world. Moreover, the surviving manuscript scores demonstrate the centrality of the Viennese theater's music copying firm, led by Wenzel Sukowaty, as a source for operatic manuscripts purchased by opera houses from Eszterháza to Paris and from Bolzano to Copenhagen.

The importance of understanding the transmission and reception of *Fra i due litiganti* stems from two main factors. The first is simply the opera's extraordinary popularity; its success rivaled that of the most popular works by Giovanni Paisiello and Domenico Cimarosa, the other leading figures in the operatic world of the late eighteenth century.

The second factor, as we will see, is its particular significance in the operatic life of Vienna, with relevance to Mozart and Da Ponte's *Le nozze di Figaro* and to the careers of the singers Nancy Storace and Francesco Benucci. These two, the leading performers of the Viennese opera buffa company, created the roles of Susanna and Figaro in Mozart's opera. They also sang leading roles in *Fra i due litiganti*—not only in Vienna but in the original production in Milan. And the changes made for the two

singers in the Viennese version directly contributed to the creation of their characteristic musical and dramatic profiles in the minds of Viennese audiences.

***Fra i due litiganti* from Milan to Vienna**

Giuseppe Sarti (1729-1802) had a long and successful career as a composer of both *opere serie* and *opere buffe*, as well as sacred music. Born in Faenza, he studied with Padre Martini in Bologna before returning to his native city, first as organist at the Cathedral and then director of the theater. *Pompeo in Armenia*, his first opera, was performed there in 1752.

Sarti spent much of the next twenty-five years in Copenhagen, where he directed the Italian opera company and premiered more than two dozen of his own operas, most of them serious. Returning to Italy in 1775 he achieved a major success with *Le gelosie villane* (Venice, 1776), and in 1779 became *maestro di cappella* of the Milan Cathedral. His most enduring opera seria, *Giulio Sabino* (Venice, 1781), was written during this period.

The *dramma giocoso* *Fra i due litiganti il terzo gode* ("While Two Dispute the Third Enjoys [the Prize]") is chiefly known to opera-lovers and Mozart scholars because one of its arias, "Come un agnello," is quoted in the Dinner Music scene of

the Act 2 finale of *Don Giovanni*. But Sarti's opera was significant to Mozart and to opera in Vienna for other reasons as well. First, its tremendous popularity made it a model for Mozart and other composers who aspired to their own operatic success in Vienna. Second, its setting and aspects of its story closely resemble those of *Le nozze di Figaro*, the first of Mozart's three great opere buffe written with Lorenzo Da Ponte. And finally, two of its leading roles were created in Milan, and then reprised in Vienna, by singers central to the history of Viennese opera buffa in the 1780s: Nancy Storace and Francesco Benucci.

The libretto of *Fra i due litiganti* is an anonymous revision of Carlo Goldoni's *Le nozze*, which was set to music by Galuppi in 1755. The opera takes place in the palace of the Count and Countess Belfiore, and involves a love-intrigue in which the chambermaid Dorina (the *prima buffa*, played by Storace) is pursued by three suitors. Her employers the Count and Countess are arguing: the Count wishes Dorina to marry his manservant, Titta (a *buffo caricato* played by Benucci), while the Countess insists she marry the gardener Mingone—partly in the hope of keeping Dorina at a safe distance from the Count himself. The third lover, the shrewd estate-agent Masotto, manages everything and everyone and wins Dorina for himself. Titta settles for the hand of a second chambermaid, Livietta, while Mingone is left alone and disappointed. The climactic second-act finale of Sarti's three-act opera (whose brief

third act concludes with a coro) takes place, like the fourth-act finale of *Figaro*, in the woods at night.

A noble couple at odds, a lecherous Count in pursuit of a maid-servant, and a scheming underling who gets the best of his master—all these elements are familiar from *Figaro*, though they must also be understood as standard opera buffa tropes. Dorina in particular is a parallel figure to Mozart's Susanna, though a bit more passive. She is at the center of a romantic intrigue, determined to resist unwanted suitors (and the inappropriate attentions of a nobleman) and marry the man of her choice. And, like Susanna in *Figaro*, she participates in every one of *Fra i due litiganti*'s ensembles: there are two quartets and a trio, in all of which her suitors importune her while she fends them off.²

Although no records are known to survive that would document the popularity of *Fra i due litiganti* in Milan, the opera's success is evident from the speed with which it was produced at other opera houses. Within weeks after the premiere in Milan on September 14, 1782, productions were mounted for the fall seasons at the Teatro Carignano in Turin and at San Moisè in Venice, the latter under the alternate title of *I pretendenti delusi*. *Fra i due litiganti* was then produced in

² Hunter, *Culture*, discusses both the particularly close relationship between *Fra i due litiganti* and *Le nozze di Figaro*, and the degree to which both rely on plot elements that are thoroughly conventional in opera buffa. See 3, 61, 81-82, and *passim*.

Prague in spring 1783. It first reached the stage of the Burgtheater in Vienna on May 28, 1783.

The opera's arrival in Vienna coincided with the re-establishment of an Italian opera buffa company there, after a five-year hiatus during which the Emperor's National Singspiel presented only operas in German. The Emperor named Antonio Salieri music director of the company—returning him to the position he had occupied from 1774 until 1778, when the National Singspiel was instituted—and chose Lorenzo Da Ponte, newly arrived in Vienna, as its librettist.³

The new company began performances on April 22, 1783 with Salieri's *La scuola de' gelosi*, a re-working of an opera premiered in 1778 in Venice. In the initial season, not surprisingly, all but one of the works presented had been performed previously, most of them elsewhere but in three cases in Vienna back in the 1770s.⁴ Thus the main work for Salieri and Da Ponte in the first season was the re-arranging of existing operas to suit the company's singers and (presumably) the taste of

³ Rice, *Antonio Salieri*, 331–32.

⁴ The one new work, Josef Barta's *Il mercato di Malmantile*, with a Goldoni libretto revised by the singer Francesco Bussani, was a failure, lasting for only three performances. Michtner, *Das Alte Burgtheater*, 167; Link, *National Court Theatre*, 36–37.

Viennese audiences.⁵ Salieri's *La scuola* was followed by Cimarosa's *L'italiana in Londra* (Rome, 1778), and then by *Fra i due litiganti*.

While the Salieri and Cimarosa operas were reasonably successful, *Fra i due litiganti* took the city by storm, almost completely eclipsing its two predecessors. The opera was performed ten times in the first four weeks after its premiere, interrupted only by two performances of *La scuola*. By the end of the Italian opera company's initial season in February 1784 (the operatic season ran from Easter until the start of Lent the following year), *Fra i due litiganti* had been performed twenty-eight times—the highest single-season total for any operatic work in the 1780s.

The work's popularity in Vienna lasted for a number of years—it was heard in five consecutive seasons, omitted in 1788, and performed again nine times in 1789, for a total of sixty-five performances between 1783 and 1789. Only Martín y Soler's *L'arbore di Diana* and Paisiello's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* come close to matching this total, with sixty-five and sixty-two performances respectively in the decade 1783-92.⁶

⁵ John Rice has shown that in Vienna the re-arranging was the responsibility of the music director (often with an assistant) and the theater poet. See "Bearbeitungen," especially 81-82.

⁶ Three other works received more than 50 performances in this decade: Paisiello's *Il re Teodoro in Venezia* (59), Martín's *Una cosa rara* (55) and Salieri's *Axur, re d'Ormus* (51). These performance totals come from Link, *National Court Theatre*. But as Dexter Edge has pointed out in "Mozart's Fee," 211-35, performance totals are a far less accurate gauge of a work's popularity than box-office receipts. Unfortunately, these do not survive for the early 1780s.

However, the version of the opera that Viennese audiences so enjoyed was not the version originally created by Sarti for the work's premiere in Milan. Six or seven of the opera's solo numbers were replaced in the initial planning for the Viennese premiere, while two others were omitted. Over the first few months of the opera's run in Vienna, further changes occurred, so that what I will call the established "Viennese version" of *Fra i due litiganti* contained six arias not present in the original. Three further arias from the original version of the opera were cut.

Making changes to an opera when it was produced in a new city, with a troupe of singers different from those for whom the opera was first written, was standard practice in the eighteenth century (and for some time afterwards, at least in Italy). But the changes to *Fra i due litiganti* are unusual both for their extensiveness, which I discuss below, and for the fact that the Viennese version went on to largely supplant Sarti's Milan original as the opera made its triumphant way to dozens of opera houses around northern Europe for the remainder of the century.

Table 1 shows the speed with which *Fra i due litiganti* travelled all over Europe. In the years 1785-86 alone, there were thirty-one new productions. And as may be seen, the opera was still popular enough to merit new productions as much as sixteen years after its premiere, demonstrating a lifespan quite a bit longer than was typical of an opera buffa in the late eighteenth century.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

The first of numerous productions of *Fra i due litiganti* in German, with spoken dialogue rather than recitatives, appeared in 1784 at the Fasan Theater in Vienna in a translation by Ludwig Zehnmark entitled *Wenn sich zwey streiten, freut sich der dritte*.⁷ Another translation by Johann André, entitled *Im Trüben ist gut fischen*, first appeared in 1785 and circulated more widely, being used among other cities in Cologne and Amsterdam, as well as in a second German production in Vienna at the Kärntnertortheater in 1787.⁸ The Zehnmark translation of the opera was produced in Salzburg and elsewhere. And in 1786 a French translation and arrangement of the opera by Pierre-Ulric Dubuisson, as a four-act work called *Hélène et Francisque*, was performed in Paris, Brussels and elsewhere. The Parisian music publisher Sieber published a full score of this French version in 1789, attesting to what must have been its wide popularity. Paris actually saw multiple productions, with the opera also performed in Italian in 1789 as *Le nozze di Dorina ovvero I tre pretendenti*. The work was still being performed, apparently in both languages, in Paris well into the nineteenth century.

We can add to this list performances in Danish in Copenhagen, where Sarti had spent many years and where his music must have been very popular; in Polish in Warsaw; and in Russian in St. Petersburg, where Sarti was then working for Catherine

⁷ Loewenberg, Rosenthal, and Dent, *Annals of Opera*, column 398.

⁸ Ibid.

the Great. By any measure, *Fra i due litiganti* was among the most widely performed and best-loved opere buffe of the late eighteenth century, heard in nearly every corner of the European continent.

But as Table 1 shows, many of these productions presented the Viennese version of the opera, rather than Sarti's Milanese original or anything close to it. The cities listed in capital letters are those where sources confirm that the version was the Viennese one. (Many others of these productions were undoubtedly based on the Viennese version as well, but no libretto or other source remains to confirm this.)

Tables 2 and 3 reveal another aspect of the very different transmission patterns of *Fra i due litiganti* in southern and northern Europe. Table 2 shows the relationship between the Milan original and forty-eight sources closely related to it. As may be seen, most musical numbers remain unchanged in all subsequent productions: the ensembles, the act finales, and several of the arias. When arias were substituted, the new pieces varied from production to production—in only seven cases did the same substituted piece appear more than once. Thus it is reasonable to conclude that substitutions were made for local reasons, to suit the needs of the singers in any given city who were taking on the roles.

Table 3 compares the Viennese version of the opera with sources from other cities that are based on it. Unlike the situation with the productions based on the Milan original, these sources transmit the Viennese version with virtually no changes.

From time to time particular arias are omitted, but none are ever replaced. In short, while the sources based on the Milan version reflect our widely-accepted understanding of how opere buffe were altered in their travels from one opera house to another, the sources based on the Viennese version present a fundamentally different picture.⁹

TABLES 2 & 3 ABOUT HERE—PLACED ON FACING PAGES

Several possible explanations for this difference present themselves. First, at least some of the opera houses that produced the Viennese version may have lacked the resources to commission new substitute arias. But this is not very convincing in the case of larger cities like Paris or Berlin, both of which presented the Viennese version without any substitutions (though the order of pieces was rearranged in the

⁹ Tables 2 and 3 must be read with some caution, not with respect to the overall patterns but with respect to how accurately any individual libretto or score reflects what pieces were actually performed in a given production. In general, libretti are more likely to accurately reflect a production in a given city than scores, since a score—especially one without any revisions or performance indications—may have simply been the “raw material” acquired from another city. But libretti, as the discussion of the Viennese libretti below makes clear, also cannot be counted on fully. For instance, in Table 2 several libretti contain the text for Dorina’s “Sento amore che mi dice” in Act 1 and for the Act 3 coro “Amore discenda”. Yet no music exists for either piece, and there is no reason to believe that either was ever performed. In all likelihood, these texts were printed in their libretti as place-holders while the production was being prepared, and would have been replaced or cut by the time of the premiere.

It is also the case the libretti and scores from the same city rarely match exactly in their contents—in only two cases out of nine (Dresden and Stuttgart) is there an exact match.

French four-act version).¹⁰ Moreover, even in cities that lacked composers who could rapidly produce a substitute aria, one expects that the singers themselves could have provided their own preferred "suitcase" arias as substitutes well-suited to their voices.

The exceptional case of Regensburg, the only opera company I have found that used the Viennese version and made substantial changes (see Table 3), points to the reasons for the general pattern. Prince Carl Anselm of Thurn und Taxis supervised a Hoftheater that from 1774-78 and again in 1784-86 (after an interregnum from 1778 to 1784 in which German theater was performed) produced a variety of Italian operatic genres.¹¹ The company's musicians were an impressive group, including among others Ludwig Fischer, who had previously sung important roles in Vienna including Osmin in Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. Led by the composer Theodor von Schacht (1748-1823), the Thurn und Taxis opera company "staged performances of the newest operas from across Europe", in

¹⁰ In fact each of these cities offered two distinct versions of Sarti's opera. Berlin saw a 1787 production of the opera in its Milan version, with just one substituted aria; and a year later a production in German of the Vienna version, using the André translation. In Paris, the French *Hélène et Francisque* mentioned above was based entirely on the Vienna version, while the 1789 production of *Le nozze di Dorina* used the Milan version of the score.

¹¹ The information in this paragraph on the opera establishment at Regensburg comes from Glatthorn, "In the Name of the Emperor," 1-8; and Meixner, *Musiktheater*, 161-69, 200-21.

addition to operas by Schacht and other local composers.¹² And the Hoftheater budget was substantial: Christoph Meixner estimated that the Regensburg company spent about 33,000 fl. on opera in 1784-86, compared to roughly 38,000 fl. by the imperial court in Vienna during the same period.¹³

Two key sources for *Fra i due litiganti* from Regensburg survive: the score (Sarti 5), whose contents match those of the Viennese version almost exactly; and the libretto from the Regensburg production of 1786, which contains no fewer than six arias not in the Viennese version (both are shown in Table 3). Surprisingly, the texts of three of the six can be found in *Fra i due litiganti* libretti from other cities: one each from the Venice 1782 libretto, the earlier Vienna libretto (discussed below), and a 1785 libretto from Gorizia. The remaining texts are otherwise unknown.

Separate scores for three of the arias also survive in Regensburg. One of these is a setting by Schacht himself for the Countess's aria "Io non spiro che rabbia e veleno". Interestingly, this text appears in the first Vienna libretto of 1783 but seems never to have been set to music or performed in Vienna at all. The other two are arias taken from existing operas: one from Schacht's own 1775 opera *La semplice*, and one by Anfossi from his *Il curioso indiscreto* (Rome, 1777). Music for the remaining three substitute arias does not appear to survive.

¹² Glatthorn, "In the Name of the Emperor," 8.

¹³ Meixner, *Musiktheater*, 298, cited by Glatthorn, "In the Name of the Emperor," 8, n. 35.

This evidence suggests that Schacht, the intendant of the opera company, played a decisive role (no doubt in consultation with the singers) in providing substitute pieces as needed for the Regensburg production. In addition to obtaining a score of the opera from Vienna, the Hoftheater clearly had access to at least three libretti, which Schacht (and perhaps other composers) made use of in borrowing or newly composing the necessary arias.

The example of the Regensburg production suggests what must have been needed to mount a production of *Fra i due litiganti*, or any other opera, while extensively altering it: not only a competent music director willing and able to make the changes, but the financial resources to acquire the needed sources and to commission librettists and composers to write new arias. Schacht, like Haydn at Eszterháza, seems to have been such a competent and active music director.

Presumably some of the smaller opera houses represented by the sources in Table 3 would have lacked such resources. But this does not explain why larger companies, like those in Berlin or Paris, performed the Viennese version without making any changes to suit the local singers.¹⁴ A second possible reason is that

¹⁴ The question is particularly interesting because the Italian productions in those cities DID contain substituted pieces: one aria in the 1787 Berlin production, and no fewer than six in the 1789 Paris production, with music by Ferrari, Zingarelli, and Viotti (see Loewenberg, Rosenthal, and Dent, *Annals of Opera*, column 398). It may be that Italian opera productions featured the most celebrated singers, who were felt to have the right to insist on changes to their roles—for example, the 1789 Paris

singers were not given the same status—and in particular the same power to request or demand changes to their music—in parts of northern Europe as in Italy and Vienna. It may have been understood in Cologne or Salzburg, for example, that singers had to sing the parts given to them.

But a third reason seems more compelling. The widespread adoption of the Viennese version in opera houses across northern Europe—and the nearly universal use of that version without changes—most likely reflects the city's prestige and cultural importance, as the largest German-speaking city in the world and capital of the vast Hapsburg empire. Its opera company employed many of the best, and highest-paid, singers in Europe. For theaters in other German-speaking cities, it would have been logical to acquire scores from Vienna rather than from Italy. But even theaters in Copenhagen and Paris bought opera scores from Vienna, suggesting that the imperial capital was the most convenient and reliable source, rather than the cities in Italy where most of the repertory originated. Moreover, each of these houses could rightly claim that it was offering its audiences Sarti's *Fra i due litiganti* "as seen in Vienna."

production featured Stefano Mandini, who had been Mozart's first Count Almaviva in Vienna—while singers in productions in vernacular languages did not have the same clout.

The Sukowaty Copying Firm

Many of the scores that transmit the Viennese version were produced by the team of professional copyists in the employ of Wenzel Sukowaty (sometimes spelled Suckowaty), who was the official copyist of the Viennese court theaters from 1778 to about 1796.¹⁵ Sukowaty's arrangement with the Viennese theaters called for him to produce all the necessary materials for opera performances, including scores and orchestral and vocal parts. (For most operas the court also ordered an archival copy of the score.) He was then free to produce, for his own profit, what Dexter Edge calls "commercial copies" of scores in response to orders from outside Vienna. Many of these copies have a statement of their origins on their title pages, typically reading something like "Wienn. zu haben bey Wenzel Sukowaty Copist in K.K. Nazional Theater".¹⁶

To do the extensive amount of music copying required by the Viennese theaters, Sukowaty employed a stable of copyists. Edge has identified twenty-one separate hands in the Sukowaty manuscripts associated with Mozart; and in all likelihood many more appear in other scores and parts produced by his shop. The

¹⁵ Edge, "Mozart's Viennese Copyists," 117–18. Most of what we know about Sukowaty can be found in this dissertation.

¹⁶ This is the inscription on the title page of the score copied for Eszterháza, which is now in Budapest (H-Bn OE-4).

notion of a "shop" is metaphorical, however, not literal: as Edge explains, we do not know where the copying went on. Individual copyists may have worked at the Burgtheater or at some other central location, where the performing scores were kept; or they may have worked in their own homes.¹⁷ The fact that many scores contain a number of different ink colors suggests that the latter procedure may have been more common.¹⁸

The preparation of an opera for performance in Vienna began with the acquisition or creation of a performing score. For a newly composed work, that score would be copied by Sukowaty's team from the composer's autograph; for works imported from elsewhere the performing score would be a purchased one. In the case of *Fra i due litiganti*, the score now catalogued in A-Wn as KT 357—an Italian score probably of Venetian origin—was used as the performing score in Vienna throughout the 1780s. In all likelihood the score was one of several opera scores acquired in Venice by the Austrian ambassador, Count Giacomo Durazzo.¹⁹ As is typical of performing scores, KT 357 survives in a much marked-up and altered state, reflecting successive changes over a number of seasons of performance. (I discuss the details of these changes below.)

¹⁷ Edge, "Mozart's Viennese Copyists," 68–69, 109.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 188.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2193.

The performing score served as *Vorlage* for all further copying of scores and parts for Viennese use.²⁰ And it was also used as the basis for the commercial copies prepared by Sukowaty's copyists to be sent to theaters in other cities. In the case of *Fra i due litiganti*, I have identified ten scores copied by Sukowaty's firm that now survive in libraries outside Vienna (see Works Consulted). Three of these name Sukowaty on the title-page; the others are recognizable from the configuration of characteristic features of musical hand-writing that Edge has identified as typical of Viennese copyists.²¹

Certain details of the Sukowaty scores provide fascinating glimpses into the workings of the copying business. Scores were clearly produced to order and with the needs of the client in mind. For a theater intending to perform *Due litiganti* in the original Italian, the score was copied complete, containing both the musical numbers and the simple recitative, with the original Italian words underlaid throughout. But for theaters planning to perform the work in German, Sukowaty's shop produced copies that contained only the musical numbers; the recitatives are

²⁰ See also the discussion in Rice, "Bearbeitungen." Ulrich Leisinger (personal communication) has argued that the performing score of an opera, since it was in regular use at the opera house, could not have served as the *Vorlage* for Sukowaty copies, and that there must have been intermediate copies in Sukowaty's possession. However, no such intermediate copies of any opera are known to exist; and it may be that Sukowaty's copyists had access to the opera house, and even did their copying there. Alternatively, they may have borrowed sections of the performing score for brief periods between performances.

²¹ See *ibid.*, especially 260-63.

omitted, of course, because performances in German would have employed spoken dialogue. Some of the scores in German retain the original Italian names for the characters; but others omit them entirely, since the characters had different names in Andre's German translation (Dorina became Hannchen, Titta was Heinrich, and so forth). In these scores the German words, and character names, were subsequently entered in a hand completely different from those that copied the music. One German score shows a mistake when a Viennese copyist erroneously included the character name Dorina at the start of her accompanied recitative in Act 2, while she is named correctly as Hannchen at the start of the aria. Another score shows a different but equally obvious copyist's mistake: the Act 2 aria for the Count, "Bada bene a quel che dico," includes the original Italian text for the first seven measures, in addition to the complete German text.²²

There is no doubt that the provision of scores without the Italian text was intentional and by request. This is made clear in Titta's aria from Act 1, "Quando saprai chi sono." In the middle of this long, multi-sectional piece full of bluster and braggadocio, Titta demonstrates his singing ability by quoting part of an aria from Sarti's own *Achille in Sciro* (Florence, 1779), an aria which was famously associated

²² These errors are in a score from Berlin (D-B 19493) and one from Stuttgart (D-SI 572 a-d), respectively.

with the great castrato singer Luigi Marchesi.²³ Even in productions of *Due litiganti* in German, this quoted passage would have been sung in the original Italian; accordingly, the Sukowaty copyists supplied its text.

These differences suggest that a score could be ordered from Sukowaty in a variety of formats, depending on the needs of the opera house. And the existence of Sukowaty scores in cities around northern Europe—Berlin, Copenhagen, and Paris, in addition to cities closer to Vienna like Regensburg and Budapest—confirms that Sukowaty's firm must have been widely known as the principal source for scores of the latest Viennese operatic works.

The Creation of the Viennese Version

The early Viennese history of Sarti's opera and the creation of the Viennese version that was exported to other European theaters can be traced in a small set of key sources, which are shown in Table 4. A careful analysis of these permits us to reconstruct in considerable detail the process by which *Fra i due litiganti* reached its

²³ Pfeiffer, *Opere buffe*, 142–43. The aria is discussed in greater detail below.

widely-distributed form.²⁴ This process further allows us insight into how an opera as an object was conceptualized in the late eighteenth century. In particular, it reveals how tonal unity and contrast, issues central to modern conceptions of opera (and perhaps above all to views of Mozart's operas), seem to have been far less important to the musicians shaping *Fra i due litiganti* for presentation to a Viennese audience.

Even before *Fra i due litiganti* reached Vienna, the alteration of the opera had begun. The production in Turin apparently involved no changes,²⁵ but the production at the Teatro San Moisè in Venice contained several. The opera was presented under the alternate title *I pretendenti delusi*, and its libretto reveals four substitute aria texts, one each for the lovers Dorina and Masotto and for the Count and Countess.²⁶

An additional change in the Venice production, rather hard to fathom from our modern point of view, was the dropping of the final act. The lengthy finale to Act 2 concludes with the plot completely unresolved—no decision has been reached

²⁴ Albrecht-Hohmeier and Siegert, "Codierte Opernedition" gives a detailed comparison of several manuscript scores of the opera. The article discusses plans for a digital edition of several versions of *Fra i due litiganti* which as of this writing has not yet been completed.

²⁵ The 1782 Turin libretto (Sartori, *Libretti Italiani*, libretto 10900) follows the Milan libretto exactly; while the two scores in Turin (I-Tf, 1. II.18-19 and I-Tf, 1. II.25-26) use the later of the two Act I arias Sarti wrote for Titta (discussed below).

²⁶ Sartori, *Libretti Italiani*, libretto 19051; no Venetian score survives.

as to who will marry Dorina—and with the entire cast in the woods outside the Count's palace, fleeing a frightening thunderstorm. Only in the brief third act does Masotto persuade the Count and Countess that he himself is the best candidate for Dorina's hand. (Act 3 contains just two musical numbers: a comic trio for Dorina, Masotto, and Titta, in which the latter mistakenly believes that his wooing of Dorina has been successful; and a final homophonic coro.) Thus the version of the opera with all of Act 3 omitted—an omission found in a number of other productions as well—does not even pretend to supply the *lieto fine*, in the form of a marriage, that it has been long assumed was a fundamental part of the ethos of opera buffa. It ends in a musically satisfactory fashion, with a lengthy finale that closes with an exciting stretta—but without any sort of dramatic resolution of the story. And there is no doubt that the dropping of Act 3 was intentional: the Venice libretto concludes, after the Act 2 Finale, with the words "Fine del dramma".²⁷

TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

The story told by the sources listed in Table 4 reveals that the alterations made to *Fra i due litiganti* in Vienna came in three chronological stages: these are, not surprisingly, the initial planning of the production; the period shortly before the premiere, presumably during rehearsals; and further changes during the first weeks

²⁷ Seventeen other libretti that I have examined conclude in the same fashion—all based on the Milan rather than the Vienna version of the opera.

of the run of the opera. Moreover, these sources raise two central questions. First, why were changes made to the roles of Dorina and Titta, since they were being sung in Vienna by the same two singers (Storace and Benucci, respectively) who had created the roles in Milan? Second, why was the development of the Viennese version such an elaborate, ongoing process?

Typically, the changes planned in an opera imported from elsewhere would be reflected in the printed libretto and the altered performance score, whose contents would match. We can surmise that Salieri and Da Ponte, in consultation with the singers, would have decided which arias were to be replaced, chosen them or arranged for them to be newly composed, and then included them in the libretto and the performing score.²⁸ But in the case of *Fra i due litiganti* the situation was more complex.

As Table 4 shows, the earliest source is the score now catalogued as KT 357 in A-Wn. It is a score of Italian provenance that was used as the performing score for *Fra i due litiganti*'s performances in Vienna, as it shows numerous cuts, alterations, substitutions, and performance indications. While substantial portions of the original opera remain, in the handwriting of one or more Italian copyists, many other pieces have been removed and replaced, in some cases several times, as is evident from numerous annotations, cross-outs, and cuts that have been made by pasting over or

²⁸ Rice, "Bearbeitungen," 81-101.

folding and stitching-down pages. KT 357 may have been copied in Venice, since the score's wrappers give the Venetian title *I pretendenti delusi*, though the title page of volume 1 calls the opera *Fra Li Due Littiganti* [sic] and cites the Milan production. The score's multiple layers cannot be completely disentangled, but there are at least three: the original version as it arrived from Italy; a second stage at which KT 357, with numerous substitutions written by Viennese copyists, served as the model for the "archival" score, call number 17888 (see below), and numerous commercial copies; and one or more later layers, in which further changes and substitutions were made, presumably for performances later in the work's Viennese performance history. These changes include the addition of a German text, entered no doubt at the time of the opera's performances in German as *Im Trüben ist gut fischen*. Since KT 357 appears to have been used for performances at least through the end of the 1780s, it is impossible to know what it looked like at any particular point.

The archival score, 17888, is a clean copy produced by Sukowaty's firm. In all likelihood it was copied directly from KT 357; the vast majority of pages in the former are laid out exactly like those in the latter, and both recitatives and musical numbers have line- and page-breaks at the same points, some of them awkward ones.²⁹

²⁹ This conclusion is shared by Link, *Nancy Storace*, 113.

An additional Sukowaty score, now in Budapest (H-Bn OE-4), was produced no later than early July 1783 and sent to Eszterháza, where it presumably served as the basis for Haydn's production of the opera which was first performed on August 10, 1783. (One of the Eszterháza parts is dated July 20.) This production, only seventy-four days after the premiere in Vienna, may give additional evidence of the opera's extraordinary success in the Hapsburg capital. It is possible that the score was ordered from Vienna even before *Fra i due litiganti* had premiered there; that is, Haydn or his princely employer may have wanted to produce it based on reports of the opera's success in Italy. But the contents of the score make clear that, whenever it may have been ordered, it was actually copied well after the premiere—probably in early July.

Unusually for *opere buffe* produced in Vienna, there were two distinct versions of the libretto of *Fra i due litiganti*, both printed by Kurzbeck in 1783. (I know of no other opera in the decade for which more than one version of a libretto exists.)³⁰ This may have been because, due to the popularity of the opera, the first printing sold out. The earlier version was evidently printed shortly before the opera's premiere in late May 1783, the later one probably about six to eight weeks later.

³⁰ Rice makes the same observation, noting that "Viennese librettos...seem to have been rarely produced in more than one edition. The opera might have evolved, but the libretto stayed the same." "Bearbeitungen," 97.

(This second libretto is easily distinguished from the first by its title page, where "FRA I" is printed as "FRAI" and the printer's name is given as "Kurtzbeck.")³¹

In addition to these sources, invaluable information about the early changes to the opera may be gleaned from the diaries of Count Karl Zinzendorf, who assiduously attended the theater and opera in Vienna and whose detailed comments have long been cited by Mozart scholars. Zinzendorf (1739-1813) had a lengthy career as a government official under the Hapsburgs; beginning in 1781 he was president of the HofRechnungskammer (Court of Audit).³² While he was no musician—not even a knowledgeable amateur, as Link makes clear—he was a careful observer, who frequently remarks on the performances of particular singers or actors and even (as in the case of *Fra i due litiganti*) notes newly substituted pieces. Remarkably, Zinzendorf attended and commented on no fewer than twelve of the twenty-eight performances of *Fra i due litiganti* in its first season. Then and in later years, he frequently compared the work to other operas he had heard, usually expressing his preference for Sarti's opera.

³¹ Link, *Nancy Storce*, 113-14, erroneously states that three distinct versions of the Vienna libretto exist; she fully describes them in Link, *Francesco Benucci*, 115-16, where her exemplars (a) and (c) are both actually the earlier Vienna libretto, and (b) the later one.

³² Link, *National Court Theatre*, 194. Her book contains the most complete transcription of Zinzendorf's diaries, providing all the relevant entries for the years 1783-92 (pp. 204-398).

Table 5 illustrates the transformation of Sarti's opera from its original version as performed in Milan to the Viennese version which was widely transmitted throughout Europe in the years after 1783. Column 1 presents the original production in Milan, as documented mostly by the libretto but also by Italian musical sources; two of the numbers in brackets seem never to have been set to music, while the other three were replaced before or shortly after the premiere, but the replacements are almost certainly by Sarti. Column 2 shows the opera as represented in the first Kurzbeck libretto. The new Viennese pieces are in boldface type. Column 3 represents the form of the opera as it "settled" following the multiple alternatives tried in the first two months of the Viennese production. As is typical when operas are re-worked for productions in new cities, only arias were changed: the ensembles and the final coro of the opera were those written by Sarti, as they were in virtually every production of the work.³³

TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE

The large number of substituted pieces in Vienna is unusual. The vast majority of the *Fra i due litiganti* productions based on the Milan original—that is, those not derived from the Viennese production—have no more than three

³³ Both Overture 1 and Overture 2 are associated with the opera in Italian sources; neither represents a new overture used for the first time in Vienna.

For a rare example of an ensemble—the duet "Là ci darem la mano" from *Don Giovanni*—being substituted for an aria, see Platoff, "A Mozart duet."

substitutions (the median number in the thirty-three libretti shown in Table 2 is two). Not enough research has yet been done to know why there were so many substitutions in Vienna—or even whether this is typical in Viennese productions of imported operas—but there are several possibilities. Salieri, the music director, may have been determined to make his own mark on the new company by thoroughly reshaping the works of others. (Worth noting is the fact that one of the substituted pieces was composed by him, as discussed below). Or, in the early days of the company, he may have been exceptionally accommodating to the preferences of the singers, by providing them with substitutions for any of the arias that they felt did not suit their voices. A third possibility is that, since Vienna was a major musical center, there was a larger group of composers ready and willing to supply new arias for an opera than could be found in most other cities. Whatever the reasons, the sources reveal not only extensive changes, but a degree of indecision—or to put it more positively, a willingness to experiment and to respond to audience preferences.

The first Vienna libretto, almost certainly planned a few weeks prior to the premiere, contains six substitute arias and implies a seventh (Dorina's rondò, for which no text is supplied). These include replacements for two of Sarti's three original arias for Masotto, as well as both arias for the Countess, and one each for the Count and Titta. A second chronological layer in the libretto is represented by an untitled appendix (p. 134), which contains two aria texts for the Countess, to replace

those in the body of the libretto, and a text for Dorina's Act 2 rondò. No music is known to exist for the two arias initially planned for the Countess, "Io non spiro che rabbia e veleno" and "Ah dove andò l'affetto"; indeed, none may have been composed.³⁴ The two were then to be replaced by "Vorrei punir l'indegno" and "Dolce d'Amor compagna," respectively: both are found on the appendix page. These latter two are arias by Pasquale Anfossi, from his setting of *La finta giardiniera* (originally produced in Rome, 1774), which had been performed in Vienna back in 1775.³⁵

At the point in the libretto where Dorina's rondò should appear, following her extended accompanied recitative (just before the Act 2 finale, which is the most common place for the prima donna's rondò³⁶), there is no aria at all; but the appendix supplies a rondò text: "Quando mai del mio tesoro." In this case as well no music is known to exist for this text, and the aria may never have been performed.

³⁴ As mentioned above, an aria by Theodor von Schacht on "Io non spiro che rabbia e veleno" exists in the Regensburg library (D-Rtt, Schacht 134/II; see RISM 450011080), though it is not part of the Sukowaty score in the library there. The most likely explanation is that Schacht, the house composer for the opera in Regensburg, took the text from the Vienna libretto and, finding no music in the score for "Io non spiro," composed it himself.

³⁵ Michtner, *Das Alte Burgtheater*, 388; Hunter, *Culture*, 300. Alterations to the first of these arias (under the slightly altered title "Vorrei punirti indegno") in a variety of sources, including the Eszterháza score, are discussed in Siegert, "Rezeption," 112–23.

³⁶ Platoff, "How Original," 106.

This combination of facts makes clear that, even as late as a few days before the premiere, Dorina's rondò had not been decided on.³⁷

Certainly the appendix was added at a late stage to the already-prepared libretto (but in all probability before printing began, since no exemplars are known to exist without it.) Since the libretto would have needed to be available for sale by the time of the May 28 premiere, it is reasonable to assume that it was printed just before that date. Time must have been short: unlike the rest of the libretto, the appendix page is not accompanied by a German translation on the facing page.

A copy of the first Vienna libretto now in Rome contains handwritten insertions for three arias: Dorina's Act 1 "Non fidarti Amor mi dice" (discussed below); her Act 2 rondò for which the original printed libretto contains no text (see above); and the Countess's "Ah dove andò l'affetto," which as just mentioned was never set to music and was then replaced by an Anfossi aria. According to John Rice these insertions are in the hand of Lorenzo Da Ponte. While none of Da Ponte's new texts appear ever to have been used, their presence confirms that as the opera

³⁷ One possibility is that a setting of "Quando mai" was commissioned and composed, and then rejected, by which time it was too late to make any further changes to the libretto.

company's librettist he would have been directly involved in the process of providing substitute arias as needed for operas imported from other cities.³⁸

Column 3 of Table 5 shows the settled Viennese version of the opera which had been arrived at by the end of July, and which is reflected in the score now numbered 17888. And it reflects the third chronological stage of the opera's alteration in Vienna, including the several changes made after its Viennese premiere and in the first few weeks of its successful run. Four of the substituted arias initially chosen for the new production remained in the Viennese version shown in Column 3. But there were four additional changes: the Countess's aria "Dolce d'amor" was cut; new substitute arias were supplied for Dorina and Titta (I discuss both of these below); and a rondò, "Non potrò del caro bene," was finally decided upon for Dorina. The final tally of non-Milanese arias in the Viennese version is six.³⁹

The composers of five of these arias can be identified. Composers' names for four of them appear in the Budapest score which was copied by the Sukowaty firm: "La donna e sempre instabile" is by Salieri; the previously mentioned aria for the

³⁸ Rice, "A Libretto Collection," 434-38. Reproductions of the pages with Da Ponte's new texts are given as Figs. 26.1-3, pp. 436-38.

³⁹ Pfeiffer, *Opere buffe*, 53, n. 122 points out that Mary Hunter, in *Culture*, 148ff, erroneously treats several of the substituted arias as being by Sarti. The mistake is quite understandable, however, since all the Viennese sources, both scores and libretti, present the arias without attribution. The identification in a libretto of the composer of substituted arias, as occurred with Mozart's arias for Aloysia Lange in Anfossi's *Il curioso indiscreto* in Vienna in 1783, is extremely rare.

Countess is by Anfossi, from his *La finta giardiniera*; "In amor ci vuol finezza" is by Vicente Martín y Soler;⁴⁰ and Dorina's "Compatite miei signori" is by Stephen Storace, the young English composer who was the older brother of Nancy Storace, the soprano singing the role.⁴¹ The composer of Masotto's "L'onda placida e tranquilla" in Act 2 is not named in the H-Bn score, but the piece has been identified by Roland Pfeiffer as an aria by Felice Alessandri from his *La finta principessa* (Venice, 1782).⁴²

The Viennese changes as a whole reflect greater concern for some roles than others. The secondary characters Livietta and Mingone each simply kept two original arias from the Milanese version. One of the Count's two arias was newly supplied, by Salieri himself, while the Countess—also a secondary role—initially was to have two

⁴⁰ See Waisman, *Vicente Martín y Soler*, 277. It appears to be a lightly altered version of the aria "In Amor ci vuol malizia," sung by the character Zolfanello in Martín's *In amor ci vuol destrezza*, which premiered in Venice in 1782.

⁴¹ Bartha and Somfai, *Haydn als Opernkapellmeister*, 278–79, note only three of the composers' names and do not mention Salieri, though his name is plainly visible on the aria. There is independent confirmation of Salieri's authorship by an autograph score of the aria in Vienna (see Pfeiffer, *Opere buffe*, 53, n. 122), and of Anfossi's aria in manuscripts of *La finta giardiniera*. Martín y Soler is also named as the author of "In amor ci vuol finezza" in KT 357 (as "Martini"). No independent corroboration exists for the Storace attribution, but it stems from a Sukowaty copy and there seems no reason to doubt it.

⁴² Pfeiffer, *Opere buffe*, 53, n. 122. According to Edge, "Mozart's Viennese Copyists," 2194, the score of the *La finta principessa* was probably one of a group of scores sent back to Vienna from Venice by Count Durazzo, like the score of *Fra i due litiganti* now catalogued as KT 57.

The sixth substitute aria in A-Wn 17888, Dorina's rondò "Non potrò del caro bene," is possibly by Cimarosa, according to Pfeiffer, *Opere buffe*, 53, n. 122.

new arias. However these were replaced by two existing Anfossi pieces from an earlier opera; and in the end one of those was dropped, leaving her with just a single aria. The three leading roles of Dorina, Titta, and Masotto got more attention. As mentioned above, two of Masotto's arias were new to the opera. Probably these were chosen by the singer, tenor Michael Kelly, or at least with him in mind.⁴³

A Case Study: Nancy Storace and Her Viennese Operatic Persona

It is the changes to the roles of Dorina and Titta that are the most surprising, since Nancy Storace and Francesco Benucci, the singers of those roles in Vienna, had sung them in the initial production in Milan. We think of substitute arias as pieces requested or demanded by singers, to match their vocal and dramatic strengths more closely than the original arias written for other performers. In this case, since Storace and Benucci had *created* the roles of Dorina and Titta, the usual explanation

⁴³ The names of the singers of each role are written in red crayon in the Viennese archival score 17888. Zinzendorf's diary entry for the first performance confirms five of these: Storace as Dorina, Benucci as Titta, Kelly as Masotto, Therese Teuber as Livietta, and Stefano Mandini as Mingone. Link, *National Court Theatre*, 205–6.

clearly does not apply. But whatever the reasons, the changes resulted in a re-shaping of each singer's role in the opera, in a way that—above all in the case of Storace—helped create her operatic persona for Viennese audiences, not only in this opera but more generally. The ways in which the revised role played to Storace's strengths have particular significance because Storace's Dorina, as the role was altered in Vienna, bears such a striking resemblance to her Susanna in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* only three years later.

Storace's early life and career indicate that, even by the standards of the eighteenth century, when singers began performing professionally at earlier ages than today, she was something of a prodigy. Born in 1765 in London, the daughter of an Italian musician, she studied there with the castrato Vincenzo Rauzzini. By the time she was fourteen, Storace was already singing in Italy, where—despite her training with Rauzzini—she sang only a few roles in opera seria, mostly performing prima buffa and prima seria roles in opere buffe in Florence, Lucca, Turin, and elsewhere.⁴⁴

In 1782 she triumphed in Milan as Dorina in *Fra i due litiganti*, the first leading role written expressly for her. She was still only sixteen. After that success she sang three leading roles in Venice during the 1783 carnival season, where she was greeted with rapturous applause. Count Durazzo heard Storace perform there and

⁴⁴ Rice, *Antonio Salieri*, 335; Gidwitz, "Vocal Profiles," 106-08.

recommended her for Joseph's new Viennese opera buffa company.⁴⁵ In Vienna, as in Italy, she undertook both prima buffa and prima seria parts. Her first Viennese role was the latter: the Countess in Salieri's *La scuola de' gelosi*, which Durazzo had just heard her sing in Venice. This was followed by a buffa role in Cimarosa's *L'Italiana in Londra*, and then her brilliant success as Dorina in *Fra i due litiganti*. Storace went on to sing for four years as the most highly paid member of the Viennese company;⁴⁶ she performed some 20 operatic roles at the Burgtheater, many of them written expressly for her.

Forming a clear picture of Storace as a singer is not an easy task, primarily because the written judgments that have come down to us are so widely varied and stem from very different stages in her career (which continued until 1808). Some commentators praised her vocal agility and brilliance, and there are multiple reports of her having mimicked to perfection the virtuosic improvisations of the famous castrato Luigi Marchesi during and after his performances in Vienna in 1785.⁴⁷ On the other hand, many listeners (especially later in her career) complained of vocal limitations, especially with respect to her agility and purity of tone. Patricia Lewy Gidwitz, who studied in detail Storace's voice and some of the music composed for

⁴⁵ Gidwitz, "Vocal Profiles," 108.

⁴⁶ Link, *National Court Theatre*, 408–9, 412, 415–16, 421. In some years her salary is matched, though never exceeded, by the salary for one or two other singers.

⁴⁷ See Link, *Nancy Storace*, viii, xi.

her, reports that "from the extensive cuts and transpositions in the music for the Countess [in Salieri's *La scuola de' gelosi*], we learn that Storace was not entirely comfortable with the vigorous display of agility which normally accompanies the expression of exalted passions."⁴⁸ More generally, Gidwitz asserts that music written for Storace tended to lie somewhat lower in the soprano range and feature fewer bravura high notes or passages of extended coloratura. Dorothea Link, who has also studied Storace's music and published an anthology of arias associated with her career, concludes from the wealth of contemporary reports that "Storace had the technique for the *seria* style, but not the voice."⁴⁹

But if Storace the singer is a bit hard to bring into focus, Storace the actress is not: she was universally acclaimed for her brilliant dramatic talents, as well as (in the early years) her attractiveness. She had an appealing figure and enormous charm on stage; and as Isabelle Emerson puts it "her genius lay in acting in music, particularly in comic or witty roles, and ... she was extraordinarily capable of communicating the dramatic sense of the music."⁵⁰ Storace was a particular favorite of Count Zinzendorf, who commented far more frequently about her acting, and her physical attractiveness, than about her singing; and it is striking how often he praised her

⁴⁸ Gidwitz, "Vocal Profiles," 126.

⁴⁹ Link, *Nancy Storace*, ix.

⁵⁰ Emerson, *Five Centuries*, 100.

performance in comic ensembles, which generally provide more opportunity for displaying one's acting talents.

In the playful Act 3 trio of *Fra i due litiganti*, "Che vi par Dorina bella," Dorina pretends to respond to Titta's attentions while she and Masotto flirt amusingly behind Titta's back. This trio was among the opera's most popular numbers—it was one of the "Favorite Songs" from the opera in a 1785 London publication, and it was frequently moved into Act 2 when the opera was presented in a two-act version, which occurred in many productions (above all in Italy). Zinzendorf was enchanted with the trio, mentioning it no fewer than five times in the first two months of the opera's performances—the most he refers in his diary to any single operatic number.⁵¹

The key moment in the trio comes when Dorina agrees to Titta's request to let her "husband" kiss her hand. While giving one hand to Titta—who thinks he is to be the husband—she invites Masotto to kiss her other hand behind Titta's back. When Titta tries to kiss it again she tells him "but not so strongly [sì forte]", while urging Masotto to kiss again, "fortissimo." No fewer than three of Zinzendorf's comments on the trio refer to this passage. It is typical of the kind of comic byplay at which

⁵¹ Zinzendorf reports that at the performance of the opera on 9 July 1783, the trio was performed three times (that is, encored twice); and that at the performance on 16 July the Emperor was very pleased ("fort content") with the trio. Link, *National Court Theatre*, 207–8.

Storace excelled, and which is equally prominent in many moments of *Figaro*, from Susanna's mocking emergence from the closet in the Act 2 Finale, to her "yes-no" duet with the Count in Act 3.

The broad trajectory of Storace's four-year career in Vienna was a gradual move away from *parte serie*, with their grand, formal solos full of virtuosity, towards *parte buffe* in which the vocal demands were more modest and her dramatic talents could be put to best use. Gidwitz makes the point that this adjustment came in part as a response to "the local talent pool—with [Aloysia] Lange and [Caterina] Cavalieri chief among her rivals."⁵² We have already noted that Salieri apparently adjusted the music for Storace as the Countess in *La scuola de' gelosi* to reduce its vocal demands. In *Fra i due litiganti*, an even more significant change was made to Storace's role of Dorina.

Dorina sings three solo numbers, in addition to a short solo section in the Act 1 Finale. In Sarti's Milan version, all three are of a more serious or sentimental rather than a comic character. And two of them—Dorina's first aria, "Non fidarti Amor mi dice," and her rondò in the second act, "Solo in braccio al mio periglio"—are set to music of a distinctly grand character, more suitable to a *parte seria* than to a *prima buffa* who, moreover, played a chambermaid.

⁵² Gidwitz, "'Ich Bin'," 576, n. 19.

"Non fidarti" in particular seems strikingly inappropriate for the dramatic situation in which it appears, at least by modern standards. It is Dorina's first musical number, and it occurs at the climax of a scene in which she is being relentlessly, and comically, pressured by the two hapless suitors Titta and Mingone to choose between them. Dorina, having been quietly apprised by Masotto of his own interest in her, wishes to fend them off.

The comedy of the situation, however, is abruptly halted by her aria.

Non fidarti Amor mi dice	Do not believe, Love tells me,
Del linguaggio degli amanti,	The language of lovers;
Con lamenti, smanie e pianti	They are accustomed to deceiving
Sono avvezzi ad ingannar.	With laments, rages and tears.

Che vi par di questo avviso	What do you think of this advice?
State li, più non parlate.	Stay there, don't speak any more.
Ah mi fate un certo viso	Ah, you show me a certain face
Che m'insegna a dubitar.	That teaches me to doubt. ⁵³

⁵³ The text is taken from the first Vienna libretto (Sartori 10902); the translation is mine.

The text, especially in the first quatrain, abounds in language from the world of opera seria: "lamenti, smanie e pianti", for instance. And its representation of Dorina's situation is abstract and formal, as though she is lecturing her suitors on the philosophy of courtship.

Musically as well, everything about "Non fidarti" suggests grandeur and formality. Dorina's vocal entrance, shown in Example 1A, follows a two-minute long orchestral introduction in trommel-bass style with an elaborate solo for obbligato clarinet. It features a decisive triadic opening gesture and a lengthy held note while the clarinet plays. Later in the aria there are multiple passages of extensive coloratura in dialogue with the clarinet (one of these given in Example 1B). All in all, "Non fidarti" is a bravura showpiece, and it evokes an aristocratic, opera seria world far from that of a chambermaid.

EXAMPLE 1A and 1B ABOUT HERE

Early in the Viennese run of *Fra i due litiganti*, though, Storace replaced the aria with a completely different piece, written by her brother Stephen. Unlike "Non fidarti" the new aria, "Compatite miei signori," beautifully fits both the situation and the singer's strengths.

Compatite miei signori

Pardon me, gentlemen,

Se vi deggio qui lasciar.

If I must leave you here.

(Un si storce, l'altro freme, Ma gli voglio far crepar.)	(One writhes, the other trembles, I'd like to make them both croak.)
---	---

Tornerò si m'attendete Ma signori che cosa avete? Quella faccia così mesta, Deh non state a dimostrar.	I will return if you'll wait for me— But gentlemen, what's the matter? Please do not show Such sad faces.
---	--

Già sapete o giovinotti Che l'amore è una pazzia; Voi si fiera malattia Procurate di sanar.	You already know, young men, That love is a madness; You should try to cure yourself Of such a grave illness.
--	--

Maladetta la mia prescia Ma non posso qui restar.	Damn my haste But I can't stay here any longer. ⁵⁴
--	--

The aria is an Andantino with a light, grazioso vocal line, well-matched to the teasing, flirtatious tone of the text. In the opening vocal section, given in Example 2,

⁵⁴ The text is taken from the A-Wn score 17888; the translation is by Dorothea Link in *Nancy Storace*, xix, adapted by me. As she indicates on p. 114, the text of lines 9-12 was altered slightly in the course of the production; given here is the latest version.

Dorina's phrases are simple, largely syllabic, and at times even declamatory (as in mm. 24-29). One can see in the poetry—which is quite down-to-earth in its style and language—that Dorina alternates between behaving politely to her suitors, making fun of them in an aside, and then—in a slightly faster Allegro that begins with line 9—mock-seriously advising them to seek a cure for the disease of love that is plaguing them. “Compatite” thus suits both the character of Dorina and her situation better than did “Non fidarti.” It is the type of piece that Susanna might sing in *Figaro*, perhaps as she tried to fend off the advances of the Count. And it beautifully plays to Storace's strengths as a playful, charming actress rather than a brilliant virtuoso singer—strengths that increasingly came into focus in her Viennese roles, up to and very much including Susanna.⁵⁵

EXAMPLE 2 ABOUT HERE

The exact timing of the substitution can be dated within approximately six weeks in the summer of 1783. Storace certainly sang “Non fidarti” in the initial performances of the opera; the aria's text appears in both versions of Kurzbeck's libretto, and it is named specifically by Zinzendorf in his comments about the opera on its opening night. Link believes that Storace began singing “Compatite” no later than the performance of 11 June, relying on a somewhat ambiguous comment by

⁵⁵ A complete piano-vocal score of the aria is in Link, *Nancy Storace*, 20–26.

Zinzendorf; but in any case the new aria had certainly replaced "Non fidarti" by early July, since "Compatite" appears in the score copied by Sukowaty for Eszterháza, which had to have been produced by that time.⁵⁶

There are multiple reasons why Storace might have wanted to replace "Non fidarti" with "Compatite." One obvious reason is the desire to give her brother an opportunity to impress Viennese audiences (and perhaps the Emperor) with his abilities as a composer. (And indeed, Stephen was commissioned in 1785 and 1786 to write two *opere buffe* for the Viennese company.) But a prime motivation was surely the desire to succeed to the greatest extent in winning the approval of Viennese operatic audiences. As Zinzendorf's comments make clear, Storace's acting and her ability at comic byplay were very much prized. It seems likely that her decision, after beginning the run of *Fra i due litiganti* performances with "Non fidarti", to replace it with a number that highlighted her comic, flirtatious side represented a conscious effort to present herself as less of a virtuoso seria singer and more of a charming comic presence. In so doing, she altered both the way she was

⁵⁶ Link, *Nancy Storace*, 115. Zinzendorf's comment from June 11 is that the opera "still enchanted me, especially in the first act the finale, which is superb, [and] an aria sung by Storace at the end of the sixth scene." Link interprets this remark as referring to a new aria, but that is not entirely clear. Moreover, Zinzendorf's comment about the 9 July performance that "Miei signori, cosa fu really struck me this time" refers not to "Compatite," as Link claims, but to a passage in the Finale to Act 1.

seen by the Viennese and the way Dorina was understood; and in both respects she paved the way for the creation of Da Ponte and Mozart's Susanna.

A Case Study: Francesco Benucci and "Quando saprai chi sono"

The situation with Benucci's Act 1 aria is quite the opposite of Storace's. While she began the Viennese run of *Fra i due litiganti* with the aria she had successfully sung in Milan, only to replace it with a new piece, Benucci began in Vienna with a new substitute aria; but after a few weeks he dropped it, returning to the aria he had sung in Milan.

The situation is still more complicated because, as the Milan libretto of *Fra i due litiganti* makes clear, Sarti wrote two entirely different versions of Titta's Act 1 aria for Benucci (see Table 5). The first version, "Quel che mi bolle in testa," must have been replaced shortly before the premiere by "Quando saprai chi sono," since the former appears in Act 1 Scene 9 of the Milan libretto while the latter is in a "Mutazione" on the libretto's final two pages. Interestingly, both arias circulated widely in sources based on the Milan version of the opera. "Quel che mi bolla" appears in more than a dozen libretti, including some as late as the early 1790s, and in several Italian scores. "Quando saprai" is also found in Sarti's autograph and in

numerous Italian libretti and scores, as well as in virtually all the sources based on the opera's Viennese version.

"Quel che mi bolla," which in all likelihood was never performed in Milan, presents Titta in an amusing, if not entirely original situation: his attempts to woo Livietta (the maid who is his second choice, should his suit of Dorina not succeed) are repeatedly interrupted by the ringing of a bell summoning him to serve the count. The humor is provided by Titta's back-and-forth addresses to Livietta and to his absent master, along the lines of "Ah, my dear one—yes sir, I'm coming!" The final section of the aria explodes into rapid patter (the poetic lines switching from settenario to quinario doppio) as Titta vents his frustration with the ceaseless ringing of the bell. All in all this is an effective buffa aria, very familiar in its overall form, style, and rhetorical strategies.⁵⁷

However, "Quando saprai" is far more ambitious: it is an elaborate multi-tempo piece that gives Titta the opportunity to present himself as the servant to a swordsman, a dancer, and a singer. Significantly, it was also designed to appeal to the Milan audience by directly quoting one of Sarti's most famous opera seria arias, the rondò "Mia speranza io pur vorrei" for Achilles from his *Achille in Sciro* (Florence, 1779). The celebrated castrato Luigi Marchesi, a Milan native, had performed the

⁵⁷ For an overview of the buffa aria see Platoff, "Buffa Aria," 99–120.

aria to great acclaim in Milan when he inserted it into Myslivicek's *Armida* during the Carnival season of 1779-80.⁵⁸

	Quando saprai chi sono	When you know who I am,
	Sì fiera non sarai,	you will not be so proud
	Nè parlerai così.	nor speak like that.
	Un servitor sì buono	A servant so good
5	Nel mondo non fu mai,	was never seen on earth before
	Nè trovasi oggidì.	nor is to be found today.
	Ho servito un Paladino,	I have served a knight,
	Che ogni giorno col passetto	who every day gave me
	Perchè ho forte, e duro il petto	a thousand blows with his rapier
10	Mille botte mi tirò.	because I have a strong, hard chest.
	Una ricca ballerina	Then a rich dancer
	Poi mi prese per lacchè,	took me on as a lackey,
	E il mio merto in anni tre	and my merits in three years
	Cento Scudi guadagnò.	earned me a hundred scudi.
15	Con un musico soprano	With a soprano castrato

⁵⁸ This aria is discussed by Rice, "Sense, sensibility," 119-24, and by Nahon, "Le origine," 56-61. Rice cites contemporary sources attesting to the enthusiasm with which Marchesi's performance was received. Pfeiffer, *Opere buffe*, first noted the quotation of "Mia speranza" in "Quando saprai"; see 141-43.

	Fino in Londra son andato,	as far as London I went,
	E la musica ho imparato.	and I learned music.
	Non credete? Or canterò.	You don't believe me? I will sing.
	Mia speranza io pur vorrei	My hope, yet I would like
20	Quì languire al caro piè,	to languish here at your dear feet;
	E dar fine ai mali miei	and put an end to my pains,
	Coronando la mia fè;	crowning my faith.
	Dite voi se in tanto affanno	Say whether I don't deserve pity
	Io no merito pietà.	in so much anguish.
25	Ma questo è ancor pochissimo	But this is still too little
	Per tanta abilità.	for so much ability.
	Sono un diluvio un fulmine	I am a deluge, a thunderbolt
	Di grazia, e di beltà;	of grace and beauty.
	Voi belle donne, ditelo,	You, beautiful ladies, say
30	Se questa è verità.	if that is not true. ⁵⁹

In "Quando saprai," Benucci as Titta quotes not only the main theme of the

⁵⁹ The text is taken from the Milan libretto, Sartori 10899; the translation is by Dorothea Link, *Francesco Benucci*, xx-xxi, adapted by me.

Largo of the rondò (text lines 19-22), but also the main theme from its Allegro section, "Dite voi..." (lines 23-24). Except for a change of key from A (in the original aria) to G, the passages are quoted exactly; audiences in Milan would have had no difficulty in recognizing, and being amused by, Titta's comic appropriation of the ardent music from Marchesi's rondò.⁶⁰

Strikingly, "Quando saprai" opens with a reference to yet another opera seria aria by Sarti, though its music would not have been known to the Milan audience of 1782. The first three text-lines of the piece stem from an aria for Aeneas in Metastasio's renowned *La didone abbandonata*, originally from 1724 and set to music more than sixty times by the early nineteenth century. And according to Roland Pfeiffer, Titta's music for these lines is virtually identical to Aeneas's music in Sarti's setting of *Didone* for Padua in June 1782, only a few months before the premiere of *Fra i due litiganti*.⁶¹ While the audience could not have known that Titta was copying the music of Aeneas from Sarti's recent setting of the opera seria, some operagoers might have recognized the familiar lines of text from Metastasio's famous libretto and been amused at Titta's presentation of himself as the great hero

⁶⁰ The passages are given as examples 1 and 3 in Rice, "Sense, sensibility"; the Largo theme is also in Pfeiffer, *Opere buffe*, Example 9. The entire aria appears in piano-voice reduction in Nahon, "Le origine," Appendix 5, pp. 77-80.

⁶¹ Pfeiffer, *Opere buffe*, 51-52 and n. 117. "Nach einem unterschiedlichen Vorspiel weisen beide Arien ein fast identisches Melodieincipit auf."

of Classic tragedy—followed later in the aria by his presentation of himself as Achilles.

For the Vienna production, Benucci was provided with a new substitute number, "Dunque aspettate o cara,"⁶² presumably because the references in "Quando saprai" to Marchesi's famous aria would be lost on the Viennese audience. (Marchesi did not sing in Vienna until 1785, when he appeared to great acclaim in Sarti's *Giulio Sabino*.) "Dunque aspettate" appears in the earlier Viennese libretto as well as in the Sukowaty score copied for Eszterháza; and it was also mentioned by Zinzendorf as one of the numbers performed in the opera's Viennese premiere.⁶³ It has the form and style of a standard buffa aria, the conceit being that Titta, while ostensibly wooing Livietta, reflects to himself on the negative aspects of matrimony, above all its financial burdens. It is a typical buffo piece, but far from inspired. In particular the final patter section, where Titta lists in catalogue fashion the bonnets, the ribbons, the feathers, etc. that a wife will need, is remarkably pedestrian.

Perhaps not surprisingly, it was not very long into the Viennese run of *Fra i due litiganti* when Benucci dropped "Dunque aspettate," returning with apparent success to "Quando saprai." Zinzendorf comments on the aria in his diary entry for July 21, 1783: "Benucci chanta un grand air ou il fut le Spadassin, le loureur et le

⁶² This is the aria's title in the Vienna libretto; in several scores it begins "Dunque ascoltate o cara".

⁶³ Link, *National Court Theatre*, 206.

Soprano.”⁶⁴ But unlike in Milan, the aria’s success in Vienna cannot have rested on its comic re-use of Marchesi’s rondò. Instead, the logical conclusion is that “Quando saprai” allowed Benucci to show the full range of his singing and acting ability, in a piece where he could portray multiple characters and moods.⁶⁵

Benucci was in fact known to be a remarkable comic actor, as a number of commentators reported. The *Berlinische musikalische Zeitung* in 1793 provided the most detailed account, citing his “unaffected, excellent acting” and adding “*he never exaggerates*. Even when he brings his acting to the highest extremes, he maintains propriety and secure limits, which hold him back from absurd, vulgar comedy.”⁶⁶

Joseph II himself praised the way Benucci, as Dr. Bartolo in Paisiello’s *Il barbiere di Siviglia* later in 1783, copied the German actor Friedrich Ludwig Schröder, who played Bartolo in the spoken drama, “almost to the hair.”⁶⁷ And on more than one occasion, the Emperor indicated that he regarded Benucci (who sang in Vienna nearly every season from 1783 to 1795) as the most important member of the buffo

⁶⁴ Ibid., 208. In both the two Vienna libretti and the autograph score of the aria (RUS-Sptob 467), line 7 contains the word “paladino” (knight). But in the manuscript piano-vocal score that Link uses for her edition of the aria [A-Wn, Suppl Mus 10080] the word is replaced by “spadacino” (swordsmen). See Link, *Francesco Benucci*, 27-37 and 115. French and German translations of the opera (based on the Vienna version) also refer to a swordsman rather than a knight.

⁶⁵ These points are also made by Link, *Francesco Benucci*, xi-xii.

⁶⁶ Quoted and translated in *ibid.*, viii. Italics in the original.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, viii.

company.⁶⁸ As is well-known, he created the roles of Figaro and Guglielmo in Mozart and Da Ponte's *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Così fan tutte*, respectively; and sang the role of Leporello when *Don Giovanni* was first produced in Vienna.

Titta's three "impersonations" come in the second section of the aria (lines 7-18), following a powerful declamatory opening in D in which he delivers the first three lines in accompanied-recitative fashion (copying Sarti's music for Aeneas, as discussed above), and the next three in a rapid energetic peroration leading to a strong tonic cadence. In three successive quatrains he brags about his abilities in serving a swordsman (who used him as a practice dummy), a ballerina, and a "musico soprano". The last of these prepares him to show his singing abilities, leading to the quoted passages from "Mia speranza" (lines 19-22 and 23-24). And it must have been Benucci's acting rather than singing in this section that earned the audience's approval; the music for lines 7-18, all set to an *Andante non troppo* in 2/4, is nothing more than a set of routine declamatory paragraphs. In the absence of musical cues, Benucci's acting of these three personae must have been drawn from his own imagination and sense of dramatic style. In any event, once re-inserted into the opera, "Quando saprai" remained as a mainstay of the Viennese version of the opera;

⁶⁸ See *ibid.*, vii-xviii, for a summary of the singer's career and a list of his roles.

and it was included in all the commercial copies of the score that Sukowaty prepared for other cities.⁶⁹

Tonal Unity and Contrast in *Fra i due litiganti*

While a great deal has been written about the concepts of “tonal unity” and “tonal contrast” in opera buffa—usually addressing Mozart’s operas, rather than the wider repertory—neither concept has been precisely defined. Studies have generally focused on the relationships of the tonic keys of an opera’s musical numbers, suggesting (usually implicitly) that these relationships have important structural or aesthetic implications.⁷⁰ An examination of the keys in *Fra i due litiganti*, as it was written for Milan and as it was altered for Vienna, suggests that such considerations did not play a very important role in the thinking of the musicians involved, though certain conventional procedures seem to have affected their choices.

⁶⁹ The exception is H-Bn OE 4, the score prepared for Eszterháza, which as we have seen must have been completed by the beginning of July 1783, before Benucci returned to singing “Quando saprai”. As noted above, the Eszterháza score instead contains the soon-to-be abandoned “Dunque aspettate”.

⁷⁰ Some of these are cited in Platoff, “Tonal Organization,” which focuses on 28 operas performed in Vienna during the 1780s. One of those operas is *Fra i due litiganti*, which however was analyzed in its Viennese version. I am not aware of any comparable study of a wider opera buffa repertory.

When Sarti wrote *Fra i due litiganti* for Milan, the keys he chose for musical numbers and the overall disposition of keys throughout the opera conformed to the typical procedures observed in late eighteenth-century *opere buffe*. The overture and two of the three act-ending numbers use the key of D, while the other finale (to Act 1) is in C; these two keys are by far the most common for overtures and finales.⁷¹ As a result the opera can be said to be “unified” by virtue of its keynote (meaning the key shared by the overture and final number) of D, which is also quite common. The tonal arrangement of Sarti’s opera is also typical by displaying “tonal contrast” in two other respects: the composer ensured that no character had more than one aria in the same key; and he almost entirely avoided writing two successive numbers in any one key—the exception being the quartet “Ah Dorina” and Titta’s aria “Per voi visetto bello” in Act 2, which are both in F.⁷² These successions may be seen in Table 5. When Sarti replaced Titta’s “Quel che mi bolla in testa” (in G) with “Quando saprai chi sono” (in D), he created a second pair of musical numbers in the same key, since Titta’s aria is followed by Dorina’s “E destin troppo infelice” in D.

However, as a result of the substitutions made in Vienna, the Viennese version of the opera diverges strikingly from these typical patterns. Both of the arias newly substituted for Masotto are in A; which, added to the aria “Servo umilissimo” that is

⁷¹ Ibid., 155.

⁷² In the Viennese repertory studied by Platoff, successive numbers in the same key occurred 7% of the time; see *ibid.*, 159.

retained from Milan, means that all three of Masotto's arias are in the same key—something otherwise entirely unheard of.⁷³ Equally unusual is the sequence of three arias in Act 1 for Masotto, Dorina, and Mingone: the substitutions for the first two of these result in three consecutive arias in A (Table 5, Column 3).

Even more surprising is the close relationship between Masotto's aria "In amor ci vuol finezza" and Dorina's "Compatite miei signori," which follows it (after an intervening recitative). Not only are both pieces in A, as just stated—they are also both at about the same tempo, and feature remarkably similar melodic profiles in their opening material. (Compare the melody of Masotto's aria, Example 3, with Dorina's, Example 2.) It seems highly unlikely that the original composer of an opera would have put two such similar pieces in close succession; but they were inserted into *Fra i due litiganti* at different times—"In amor" in the initial planning for the Viennese premiere (see Table 5, Column 2) and "Compatite," as we have seen, several weeks later. Apparently, the juxtaposition that resulted did not concern anyone involved with the version of the opera performed in Vienna.

EXAMPLE 3 ABOUT HERE

⁷³ None of the characters in Mozart's Da Ponte operas have multiple arias in a single key; the only exceptions are Donna Elvira and Guglielmo, who each have two arias in the same key (Eb and G, respectively) as a result to later changes to the scores. See *ibid.*, 166 n. 70.

These differences in organization between Sarti's original opera and its Viennese incarnation suggest certain conclusions. First, Sarti was attentive to the conventional prohibition on multiple arias for a character in the same key, and (generally) to the prohibition on successive numbers in the same key, though the ban on the latter was clearly not absolute. And second, the appearance in Vienna of three successive numbers in A—and the fact that Masotto sings all three of his arias in that key—indicate that these prohibitions were not high priorities to the musicians (presumably above all Salieri) who oversaw the changes to the score. No doubt other matters ranked higher: the suitability of the new arias to the singers, their appropriateness to the dramatic situation, and perhaps the need to ensure a variety of moods and styles in the arias for any particular character.

Above all, the willingness of the Viennese adapters of *Fra i due litiganti* to ignore or override the conventional tonal arrangements of musical numbers suggests that these arrangements were not viewed by the musicians involved as important aesthetic considerations. Clearly, for example, if the avoidance of three consecutive numbers in A had been deemed important, one or more of the pieces could have been substituted for or simply transposed.⁷⁴ It seems that the aspects of

⁷⁴ Viennese performing scores quite commonly show arias marked to be transposed, usually by means of a simple indication in red crayon on the first page of an aria in G (for instance) that reads, "in F". The score of the aria is generally not re-written in the new key, but presumably new parts would have been copied.

"unity" and "contrast" discussed above were more likely understood as practical guidelines for composers, not crucial aspects of an opera's structure or meaning.

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Because *Fra i due litiganti* was performed so widely all over Europe, its history offers a valuable window into a number of aspects of the world of opera production in the late eighteenth century: above all how, and why, an opera might be altered as it moved from one opera house to another.

The documented revisions and alterations to *Fra i due litiganti* in Italy and southern Europe do nothing to challenge the accepted view of opera as a singer's art, one in which the preferences of the leading singers for arias best suited to their voices took precedence over all other considerations, resulting in the regular substituting of new or borrowed arias into productions in each new city. However, the pattern throughout northern Europe of rigid adherence to the Viennese version of the opera creates a very different impression. As I have suggested, this pattern may have been due to the prestige of Vienna as an operatic center, and the desire of other opera houses to present works as they had been performed in Vienna.

Alternatively, the status of singers in the operatic hierarchy, and the degree to which

they could demand that their roles be altered, may have been lower in cities in northern Europe than in Vienna and Italy. Another possibility is that some opera houses (though not, presumably, those in major cities like Paris or Berlin) lacked the infrastructure to produce or import substitute pieces; the scarcity of suitable composers and librettists may have been part of the reason why no substitutions were made. The exceptional case of the production in Regensburg serves to highlight this possibility. Further research will be needed to distinguish among these reasons; and studies of the performance history of other operas will be needed to determine whether the creation of a Viennese version of *Fra i due litiganti* was typical of popular Italian *opere buffe*, and whether there were other works that also traveled around northern and western Europe in a distinct Viennese incarnation.⁷⁵

The Viennese changes to the roles of Dorina and Titta are unexpected, given that Nancy Storace and Francesco Benucci, the singers of those characters, created the roles in the original Milan production and were presumably satisfied with the music written for them. In 1783 when *Fra i due litiganti* was presented in Vienna, Storace and Benucci were just beginning their careers in the Hapsburg capital. Eager to establish themselves with the Viennese audience, they changed their parts during

⁷⁵ For one such study see Schraffl and Niubo, "Paisiello's *La frascatana*." That opera's history has certain parallels to that of *Fra i due litiganti*: it came to Vienna during 1775-76 from Italy (specifically from Venice), also in the first season of a newly-formed Italian opera company, and like Sarti's opera it was hugely popular, with forty performances in one season.

the opera's run by substituting pieces that highlighted their acting as well as singing abilities. In the case of Storace, the new aria "Compatite miei signori" provided a vehicle for the lighthearted, teasing side of the singer's persona that Mozart showcased so effectively in her Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro* three years later. For Benucci, inserting "Quando saprai chi sono" from the Milan production enabled him to showcase his extraordinary acting, which was much praised during his career.

The alterations to the roles of Dorina and Titta, as we have seen, came about in opposite ways. Storace replaced an aria from the Italian version of the opera with a newly composed piece much better suited to Dorina's situation and the singer's strengths. Benucci tried out an aria newly written for him in Vienna, but after a few weeks returned to a piece from the Italian version that gave him a better opportunity to succeed with the public. Storace's and Benucci's preferred pieces both became part of the Viennese version of *Fra i due litiganti*, which as we have seen became the version in which much of Europe encountered the opera.

Finally, it is clear from the sources that the Viennese version developed in a fluid fashion, over the first few months of its performances and as a result of the interaction of the music director, the performers, and the audience. Ironically, it was this flexible and interactive process that led to the standardized, unvarying form of the opera that was transmitted to dozens of other cities over the following two

decades, immortalizing a version of *Fra i due litiganti* substantially different from the one that Sarti originally created.

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*Signed Sukowaty score

**Score identified as from Sukowaty's shop on the basis of musical handwriting

A-Wgm IV 71115

**A-Wn Mus. Hs. 17.888

A-Wn KT 357

CH-Zz AMG XIV 781 & a-c (Ms. 701)

**D-B Mus. Ms. 19493, as *Im Trüben ist gut fischen*

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D-DI Mus. 3273-F-503
 D-DI Mus. 3273-F-6
 **D-DO Mus. Ms. 1723a-c
 D-F Mus. Hs. Op. 505, as *Wer das Glück hat, führt die Braut heim*
 **D-HR III 4 ½ 4|o 79
 D-Mbs St. th. 107-1
 D-MÜs Hs. 3831 1.II
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 D-Rul SH 437
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 D-SWI Mus. 4763, as *I prettendenti delusi*
 D-Wa 46 Alt 5-6 (Sarti 3), as *I pretendenti delusi*
 D-Wrha DNT 7, as *Im Trüben ist gut fischen*
 DK-Kk mu 7302.0132, as *I oproert Van er godt at fiske* (prompter score)
 *DK-Kk mu 7402.0802
 DK-Kk mu 7408.2631, as *I oproert Van er godt at fiske*
 DK-Km R 428
 **F-Pn VM4 538
 *F-Pn VM4 539
 F-Pn 10 987
 *H-Bn Ms. Mus. OE-4
 I-Bc K.K. 75
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Abstract

Giuseppe Sarti's opera, premiered in Milan in 1782, was the first great success of the reconstituted Italian opera company in Vienna in 1783. The opera sustained its enormous Viennese popularity for years, while also receiving nearly ninety European productions by 1800. Mozart's quotation of the work in *Don Giovanni* testifies to its continuing appeal. But the version of the opera that was so successful in northern Europe differed substantially from the Milanese original. The surviving manuscript scores and printed libretti reveal that a standardized Viennese version of *Fra i due litiganti*, with more than a third of the original arias replaced, became the basis for productions across much of Europe. This unexpected standardization reflects the prestige of Vienna and its role as a distribution point for opera scores, especially since many of the manuscripts were produced by Wenzel Sukowaty, copyist for the Viennese court theaters.

The Viennese changes surprisingly include arias for Nancy Storace and Francesco Benucci—later Mozart's Susanna and Figaro—who had sung the same roles in Milan; normally arias would be substituted to suit the vocal preferences of new singers. These alterations not only changed the profiles of the characters; they allowed Storace and Benucci to define themselves for the Viennese public, establishing the musical and dramatic profiles that quickly made them the beloved favorites of Viennese audiences.

Table 1: Productions of *Fra i due litiganti* between 1782 and 1798

1782	1783	1784	1785	1786	1787	1788-89	1790-92	1793	1794-95	1796-98
Milan	ESZTERHAZÀ	Barcelona	COLOGNE	Brescia	Berlin	BERLIN	AMSTERDAM	INNSBRUCK	Copenhagen	Naples
Venice	Hannover	BONN	Ferrara	BRUSSELS	BUDAPEST	DRESDEN	CASSEL	Lisbon	Hamburg	Rovigo
Turin	Leipzig	Dresden	FRANKFURT	CARLSRUHE	Cracow	HANNOVER	Hamburg	London	Livorno	Turin
	Prague	Florence	Gorizia	COLOGNE	Crema	Madrid	Padua	PARIS	Milan	Zara [Zadar]
	VIENNA	London	Graz	Corfù	Novara	Paris	PARIS	STUTTGART	Verona	
		Naples	HAMBURG	Fiume	SALZBURG	VIENNA	PYRMONT	Udine	VIENNA	
		Udine	MAINZ	Lille	STRASBOURG	Warsaw	RIGA	WARSAW		
		Treviso	MANNHEIM	Lucca	VIENNA					
		Trieste	Munich	MUNICH						
		VIENNA	Nice	PARIS						
			PRESSBURG	REGENSBURG						
			St. Petersburg	Reggio						
			Siena	Rome						
			STUTTGART	SCHWEDT						
			Varese	Vicenza						
			Warsaw							

Note: Cities in all capital letters are productions of the Vienna version of the opera.

TABLE 3: The Vienna Version and Librettos and Scores based on It

A-Wn 17888	Bonn 1784	Stuttgart 1785	Regensburg 1786	Paris/Brussels 1786	Cologne 1786/88	Salzburg 1787	Vienna 1787	Hamburg 1791	Augsburg n.d.	Amsterdam n.d.	Augsburg 479	Berlin 19493	Berlin 19493/1	Bolzano D II/5	Budapest OE-4	Copenhagen RL 266	Copenhagen RL 080	Copenhagen R 428	Florence FFT 733	Frankfurt Opem 500	Karlsruhe 1723a	Munich 107-1	Paris, Sieber	Paris Vm 4 538	Paris Vm 4 539	Regensburg Sartt 5	Rudolstadt 437	Stuttgart 572a-b	Weimar DNT 7	Zurich XIV 781a																																
ACT ONE																																																														
Intro: La voglio																																																														
Count: La donna																																S																														
Countess: Vorrei punir																																S																														
Livietta: Io voglio																																																														
Quartet: Dorina																																																														
Masotto: In amor																																S																														
Dorina: Compatite																																																														
Mingone: Come un agnello																																																														
Titta: Quando/Dunque																																																														
Dorina: E destin																																																														
Finale 1																																																														
ACT TWO																																																														
Masotto: L'onda placida																																																														
Livietta: Sono una																																																														
Quartet: Ah Dorina																																																														
[Countess aria, cut]	S																																																													
Masotto: Servo umilissimo	S																																																													
Titta: La sposerò																																																														
Count: Bada bene	S																																																													
Mingone: Un giardinier																																																														
Dorina: recit, Ahimè																																																														
Aria, Non potrò																																																														
Finale 2																																																														
ACT THREE																																																														
Trio: Che vi par																																																														
Coro: Più fra noi																																																														

NOTES: Libretti are listed by year, then alphabetically by city. Scores are listed alphabetically by city. Shaded boxes represent no change from the Vienna version. S indicates a substituted number. A white box indicates the number was omitted in that source. There are two original alternatives for Titta's Act 1 aria: "Quando saprai" (in A-Wn 17888) and "Dunque aspettate" (in other Viennese sources). The Countess's aria in Act 2 was cut before 17888 was copied. When numbers were moved to different locations in the opera they are shown here as if in the original location.

Table 4: Principal Sources for the Viennese Version of *Fra i due litiganti*

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Manuscript scores and Printed Librettos</u>
Early spring 1783	A-Wn, KT 357 <i>I pretendenti delusi ovvero Fra li due litiganti</i> (an Italian score, used as the performing score in Vienna)
Before 28 May 1783	<i>FRA I DUE / LITIGANTI / IL / TERZO GODE</i> (Vienna, Giuseppe Nob. De Kurzbeck, 1783) A-Wtm, 629565-A
Early July 1783 ¹	<i>FRAI DUE / LITIGANTI / IL TERZO GODE.</i> (Vienna, Giuseppe Nob. De Kurtzbeck, 1783) A-Wgm, TB 16.972
Early July 1783 ¹	H-Bn, Ms. Mus. OE-4 <i>Fra Li Due Littiganti il Terzo Gode...Wienn zu haben bey</i> <i>Wenzel Sukowaty Copist in K.K. Nazional Theater</i> (a Sukowaty score made for Eszterháza)
After early July 1783	A-Wn, Mus. Hs. 17888 <i>Frà i due Littiganti Il Terzo Godè</i> (an archival score made from KT 357 by the Sukowaty shop)

Excerpts from the Diary of Count Karl Zinzendorf (in Link, *National Court Theatre*, 191-398).

¹ It is not possible to determine whether the second Kurzbeck libretto is earlier or later than the score now in Budapest. The libretto contains Dorina's aria "Non fidarti Amor mi dice," while the score includes her "Compatite miei signori" (discussed below) which replaced it between June and mid-July. On the other hand the score contains the aria "Dunque ascoltate o cara" for Titta, while the libretto has its July replacement aria, "Quando saprai chi sono". There are two other discrepancies between the sources, each one suggesting the opposite conclusion as to their relative chronology.

Table 5: *Fra i due litiganti* in Milan and Vienna

Milan Production, 1782¹		Initial Plans for the Vienna Production, 1783²		The Established "Viennese Version"³	
Overture 1	D	Overture 2	D	Overture 2	D
ACT ONE		ACT ONE		ACT ONE	
Introduzione: La voglio	Bb	Introduzione: La voglio	Bb	Introduzione: La voglio	Bb
Count: Vuo soffrire	C	Count: La donna (by Salieri)	Eb	Count: La donna (by Salieri)	Eb
Countess: Ah dovè andato	F	Countess: [Io non spiro] ⁷		Countess: Vorrei punir (by Anfossi)	Bb
Livietta: Io voglio	A	Livietta: Io voglio	A	Livietta: Io voglio	A
Quartet: Dorina	Eb	Quartet: Dorina	Eb	Quartet: Dorina	Eb
Masotto: Un assedio	G	Masotto: In amor (by Martín y Soler)	A	Masotto: In amor (by Martín y Soler)	A
Dorina: [Sento Amore] ⁴ Non fidarti	Bb	Dorina: Non fidarti	Bb	Dorina: Compatite (by Storace)	A
Mingone: Come un agnello	A	Mingone: Come un agnello	A	Mingone: Come un agnello	A
Titta: [Quel che mi bolla] ⁵ Quando saprai ⁶	[G]/D	Titta: Dunque ascoltate	Bb	Titta: Quando saprai	D
Dorina: E destin	D	Dorina: E destin	D	Dorina: E destin	D
Finale 1	C	Finale 1	C	Finale 1	C
ACT TWO		ACT TWO		ACT TWO	
Countess: [Non avrò riposo] ⁴		Countess: [Ah dove andò] ⁷		[]	
Masotto: Dove sei?	C	Masotto: L'onda placida (by Alessandri)	A	Masotto: L'onda placida (by Alessandri)	A
Livietta: Sono una	G	Livietta: Sono una	G	Livietta: Sono una	G
Quartet: Ah Dorina	F	Quartet: Ah Dorina	F	Quartet: Ah Dorina	F
Titta: Per voi visetto	F	[]		[]	
Li: [Un diavolino] ⁴		[]		[]	
Masotto: Servo umilissimo	A	Masotto: Servo umilissimo	A	Masotto: Servo umilissimo	A
Titta: La sposerò	Bb	Titta: La sposerò	Bb	Titta: La sposerò	Bb
Count: Bada bene	E	Count: Bada bene	E	Count: Bada bene	E
Mingone: Un giardinier	G	Mingone: Un giardinier	G	Mingone: Un giardinier	G

[Table 5, Continued]

Dorina: accompanied recitative, Ahimè	Eb	Dorina: accompanied recitative, Ahimè	Eb	Dorina: accompanied recitative, Ahimè	Eb
Rondò, Sola in braccio	F	[]		Rondò, Non potrò	Eb
Finale 2	D	Finale 2	D	Finale 2	D
ACT THREE		ACT THREE		ACT THREE	
Trio: Che vi par	A	Trio: Che vi par	A	Trio: Che vi par	A
Coro: [Amore discenda] ⁴ Più fra noi ⁶	D	Coro: Più fra noi	D	Coro: Più fra noi	D

¹ Based on the Milan 1782 libretto (Sartori 10899) and Italian musical sources.

² Based on the first Vienna 1783 libretto (Sartori 10902), not including the appendix page.

³ Based on the Vienna score, A-Wn 17888.

⁴ Present in the Milan libretto but never performed (no music is known to exist).

⁵ Present in the Milan libretto but replaced in the “Mutazione” by “Quando saprai”.

⁶ Not present in the Milan libretto but found in Sarti’s autograph score (RU-Sptob).

⁷ Present in the Vienna libretto but never performed (no music is known to exist).

EXAMPLE 1A

40 **Allegro moderato**

Musical score for measures 40-43. The score is in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It features three staves: an upper staff for 'Obbligato clarinet (concert pitch)', a middle staff for 'Dorina', and a grand staff for piano accompaniment. The piano part consists of a rhythmic accompaniment in the bass clef and a more complex melodic line in the treble clef. The vocal line for Dorina is currently silent, indicated by whole rests.

44

Musical score for measures 44-46. The score continues in the same 4/4 time and key signature. It features three staves: an upper staff for 'Obbligato clarinet', a middle staff for 'Dorina', and a grand staff for piano accompaniment. The piano accompaniment begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The vocal line for Dorina enters in measure 44 with the lyrics 'Non fi - dar - - - -'. The clarinet part has a piano (*p*) dynamic marking in measure 45.

EXAMPLE 1A, CONTINUED

2

47

The musical score consists of three systems of staves. The first system is a vocal line in a treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It begins with a melodic phrase starting on a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, and then a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second system is a piano accompaniment in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The right hand starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic and plays a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The left hand plays a simple bass line with quarter notes. The third system contains the lyrics "ti" under a long dash, indicating a vocal line that is mostly obscured by the piano accompaniment. The score concludes with a double bar line.

EXAMPLE 1B

69

Obbligato clarinet (concert pitch)

Dorina

ad in - gan - nar

72

EXAMPLE 1B, CONTINUED

75

Musical score for measures 75-77. The score is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. It features two vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The piano accompaniment consists of a treble and bass clef. The vocal staves have lyrics underneath. Measure 75: Treble clef has a melodic line with eighth notes and a quarter note. Bass clef has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Measure 76: Treble clef has a melodic line with eighth notes and a quarter note. Bass clef has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Measure 77: Treble clef has a melodic line with eighth notes and a quarter note. Bass clef has a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

78

Musical score for measures 78-79. The score is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. It features two vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The piano accompaniment consists of a treble and bass clef. The vocal staves have lyrics underneath. Measure 78: Treble clef has a melodic line with eighth notes and a quarter note. Bass clef has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Measure 79: Treble clef has a melodic line with eighth notes and a quarter note. Bass clef has a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

80

Musical score for measures 80-82. The score is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. It features two vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The piano accompaniment consists of a treble and bass clef. The vocal staves have lyrics underneath. Measure 80: Treble clef has a melodic line with eighth notes and a quarter note. Bass clef has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Measure 81: Treble clef has a melodic line with eighth notes and a quarter note. Bass clef has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Measure 82: Treble clef has a melodic line with eighth notes and a quarter note. Bass clef has a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

- so - - noav vez - - zi - ad

EXAMPLE 2

Andantino con moto

12

Musical score for measures 12-15. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 2/4. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "Dorina Com-pa - ti - te miei sig - no - ri se vi deg gio qui la". The piano accompaniment starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic and features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

16

Musical score for measures 16-20. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 2/4. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "sciar Com - pa - ti te miei sig - no ri, se vi". The piano accompaniment features dynamic markings of *sf* (sforzando) and *p* (piano) and includes a complex rhythmic pattern in the right hand.

21

Musical score for measures 21-24. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 2/4. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "deg gio - qui la - sciar, Se - vi - deg gio - qui la - sciar un si". The piano accompaniment includes a *mezz. voce* marking and a *p* (piano) dynamic marking. The piano part features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

EXAMPLE 2, CONTINUED

2

25

stör ge l'al - tro fre - me ma gli

sf

Detailed description: This system contains measures 25 and 26. The vocal line (treble clef) has a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a time signature of 3/4. The lyrics are 'stör ge l'al - tro fre - me ma gli'. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a complex texture with many beamed sixteenth notes in the right hand and a more rhythmic bass line in the left hand. A dynamic marking of *sf* (sforzando) is present in the piano part.

27

vo - glio far cre - par si cre - par

mezz. voce

f

Detailed description: This system contains measures 27, 28, and 29. The vocal line (treble clef) has the same key signature and time signature as the previous system. The lyrics are 'vo - glio far cre - par si cre - par'. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) is simpler, with block chords in the right hand and a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand. Dynamic markings include *mezz. voce* (mezzo voce) and *f* (forte).

EXAMPLE 3

Andante un po sostenuto

10



Masotto In a - mor ci vuol fi - nez - za fo sa - per - lo a chi non

Detailed description: This block contains the first line of musical notation, measures 10 through 13. It is written on a single treble clef staff in the key of A major (three sharps) and 3/4 time. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are: "Masotto In a - mor ci vuol fi - nez - za fo sa - per - lo a chi non".

14



sa e tal qual de - li - ca - tez - za che si

Detailed description: This block contains the second line of musical notation, measures 14 through 16. It continues the melody from the previous line. The lyrics are: "sa e tal qual de - li - ca - tez - za che si".

17



chia - ma, che si chia - ma, che_ si chia - ma ci - vil - tà.

Detailed description: This block contains the third line of musical notation, measures 17 through 20. It concludes the phrase with a double bar line. The lyrics are: "chia - ma, che si chia - ma, che_ si chia - ma ci - vil - tà.".