

FARINELLI AS QUEEN OF THE NIGHT

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The popular conception of the eighteenth century as The Age of Reason has perhaps obscured the values cherished by many people at the time. The strength of its 'legitimist political movements' is hard for a modern mind to grasp.¹ Even harder is the 'political fantasy' of the 'renewed empire' prophesied by Virgil.² But these ideas were very real to the eighteenth-century mind.³ To this must be added the sacred nature of the ancient Orders of Chivalry and their origins in the Crusades, as well as their connections with the Templars and ancient Freemasonry. All this must be taken into account when considering Farinelli, his patrons and his colleague Domenico Scarlatti.

When he visited Farinelli in Bologna in 1770, Charles Burney was told that Domenico Scarlatti's own edition of his thirty *Essercizi* had been published in Venice.⁴ This was not true and Farinelli must have known it perfectly well, but until 1953 the world accepted it as historical fact. However, during the preparation of their book on music publishing Charles Humphries and William Smith spotted an advertisement in *The Craftsman* revealing that the *Essercizi* had been published in London.⁵ Why did Farinelli misinform Burney about an apparently innocent publication? Why also did Roseingrave's pirated, and somewhat creatively edited, edition appear at exactly the same moment, with the King's official Licence? The Royal Licence is dated 31 January 1739. The advertisement for the authentic edition in *The Craftsman* appeared in February 1739. It reads:

Just publish'd. Essercizi per Gravicembalo. Being 30 Sonatas for the Harpsichord, in 110 Large Folio Pages, finely engraved in big Notes, from the originals of Domenico Scarlatti. Musick-master to the Most Serene Prince and Princess of Asturias. To be sold by Mr. Adamo Scola, Musick Master in Vinestreet near Swallowstreet, Piccadilly, over-against the Brewhouse. Price Two Guineas. Beware of incorrect printed Editions, a scandal in this great Nation, and let not its fundamental Principles of Liberty and Property be abus'd by vile Worms that gnaw the Fruit of others ingenious Labour and Expense.

This is clearly a warning against the Roseingrave publication. Scarlatti's edition, with his own Preface, his dedication to the King of Portugal and its finely engraved 'big notes', is considered by many to be the most beautiful example of eighteenth-century music printing. More than that, it boasted a handsome allegorical frontispiece by Farinelli's friend Jacopo Amigoni. No expense was spared; it was clearly a very special production. Amigoni was in England at the time, having been a witness at Adamo Scola's wedding,⁶ and Farinelli had also been in London, leaving for Spain less than two years before the *Essercizi* appeared. Scarlatti had already been in Spain for ten years.

My thanks are due to Edward Corp for help on many issues and to Victoria Thorpe for reading this essay.

1 Jeremy Black, 'Jacobitism and British Foreign Policy, 1731–5', in *The Jacobite Challenge*, ed. Eveline Cruickshanks and Jeremy Black (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1988), 143.

2 Graham Parry, *The Golden Age Restor'd* (New York: St Martin's, 1985), 16.

3 For an illuminating insight into the eighteenth-century mind see Janet Gleeson, *The Arcanum* (London: Bantam, 1998), and ponder the sobering fact that this story was unfolding when J. S. Bach was in his thirties and living nearby.

4 Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy* (London: 1773), 203.

5 Charles Humphries and William C. Smith, *Music Publishing in the British Isles* (London: Cassell, 1954), 27.

6 'The Portuguese Embassy Chapel', *Catholic Record Society* 38 (1941), 164.



The Craftsman was a political journal, in opposition to the Whig government. This suggests that there was some political significance attached to the publication of the *Essercizi*.⁷ In April 1738, almost a year before the edition appeared, Scarlatti was made a Knight of the Portuguese Order of Santiago by King John V of Portugal, an honour normally reserved for noblemen. Originally one of the great military orders, the Order of Santiago had absorbed many of the Templars and their secret ways. John V himself was a member of The Order of Christ, the original Templar order of Portugal.⁸ When the Order of the Temple was dissolved in the early fourteenth century, the King of Portugal was permitted to found this new order and endow it with Templar possessions.⁹ Were the publication of the *Essercizi* and the Order of Santiago rewards for Scarlatti's loyal service to the crown of Portugal? If so, what kind of service? Scarlatti was still paid a stipend by the Portuguese king.¹⁰

On reflection the careers of Scarlatti and Farinelli appear very strange. Scarlatti was lured by John V of Portugal from a good post in Rome to the rising star of Lisbon, rivalling Rome at every turn and wallowing in Brazilian gold. He had a prestigious and well paid post, with choirs and orchestras at his disposal. This move is perhaps easy to understand. But his move to Spain – to obscurity, as music master to John V's daughter, whose husband was put down on every possible occasion by a stepmother, Elizabeth Farnese, ruthlessly ambitious for her own sons, with nothing to do except write keyboard pieces, and possibly a few cantatas or chamber works, for the young prince and princess – is impossible to understand. Not only the young couple but also their small retinue were kept in the background by the queen.

Farinelli abandoned a star-studded operatic career for a post that, ostensibly, entailed no more than keeping a severely depressive and wildly eccentric king on the rails. He ended up director of lavish operatic productions and an important and powerful member of the innermost court circle, 'the frequent channel of political communication',¹¹ but did he know this was going to happen when he left his singing career behind him? Possibly not, since he felt he had finished at the top of his profession and found peace in Spain, but nevertheless the question should perhaps remain. He told Burney that he fully intended to return to England, having entered into negotiations with the Opera of the Nobility, but his letter to Count Sicinio Pepoli and the surrounding correspondence do raise doubts: 'God has answered my prayers sooner than I had hoped: next year I had already resolved not to sing any more in the theatre, not being able any longer to suffer either the hard work or the behaviour of the crowd.'¹² As we have already seen, and shall see again, Farinelli was often economical with the truth. Was he committed to something we are unaware of? He sang for the Spanish ambassador Montijo in London and he sang on important occasions at the Portuguese chapel, so he was already moving in Iberian diplomatic circles.¹³ More than that, he numbered among his friends the Russian representative in London, Prince Antioch Cantemir, and the Duke of Leeds.¹⁴ About the only other singer who seems to have moved as an equal, as opposed to a subject of patronage, in both aristocratic and diplomatic circles was Faustina Bordoni, who

7 It was George Clarke, historian of Stowe, a centre of opposition politics, who first pointed this out to me.

8 Angela Delaforce, 'Lisbon, "This New Rome"', in *The Age of the Baroque in Portugal* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1993), 64.

9 Piers Paul Reid, *The Templars* (New York: St Martin's, 1999), 297.

10 Ralph Kirkpartick, *Domenico Scarlatti*, revised edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 339.

11 William Coxe, *Memoirs of the Kings of Spain*, volume 4 (London: Longman, 1815), 33.

12 'Dio ha esaudito le mie preghiere più tosto di quello ch'io speravo: l'anno prossimo avevo di già fissato il non cantar più in Teatri, non potendo ne più soffrire né le fatiche né il Teatro, né il costume della turba.' Carlo Vitali, *Carlo Broschi Farinelli: La solitudine amica. Lettere al conte Sicinio Pepoli* (Palermo: Sellerio, 2000), 143 (letter of 16 February 1738). See also Charles Burney, *A General History of Music, from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period. To which is prefixed, A Dissertation on the Music of the Ancients* (London: author, 1776–1789), volume 4, 413, and Thomas McGeary, 'Farinelli in Madrid: Opera, Politics, and the War of Jenkins' Ear', *The Musical Quarterly* 82/2 (1998), 383–421.

13 Burney, *A General History of Music*, 384.

14 McGeary, 'Farinelli in Madrid', and 'Farinelli and the Duke of Leeds: "tanto mio amico e patrone particolare"', *Early Music* 30/2 (2002), 203–213.



numbered among her true friends in England Lady Cobham, the Countess of Oxford and the Countess of Burlington.¹⁵

An important piece in the puzzle surrounding the publication of the *Essercizi* is the third Earl of Burlington. Although a careful study by this author of his 1714–1715 Grand Tour accounts unfortunately revealed nothing about Scarlatti, it revealed a great deal about the Earl himself. This renowned patron, great collector, apparently loyal Whig and founder of neo-Palladianism, itself held by twentieth-century architectural historians to be a Whig movement, steered a very strange course for a young aristocrat finishing his education.¹⁶ The questions raised by these accounts led to a reappraisal by several scholars of the great Palladian architect, who appears to have been a clandestine Jacobite and an important Freemason, whose masterpiece, Chiswick House, was conceived as a temple dedicated to the Divine Right of Kings.¹⁷ (Britain had two kings in the eighteenth century: the exiled Stuarts, kings by Divine Right, and the constitutional monarchs, the Hanoverians. Of the two political parties, Whigs and Tories, most Whigs, but not all, supported the Hanoverians and many Tories the Stuarts. Supporters of the exiled Stuarts, who clandestinely worked for their restoration, were known as Jacobites.) Many important Jacobites were Freemasons – not necessarily members of the London Grand Lodge, founded in 1717 and Hanoverian, but rather Ancient Masons, members of private lodges or The Grand Lodge of all England at York, membership of which included the higher degrees of Royal Arch and Knight Templar, which were both Jacobite and Christian. This was of vital importance in keeping any subversive activities secret, and these lodges were in communication with similar secret societies on the continent.¹⁸ The centre of this activity in southern England in the first half of the eighteenth century seems to have been Chiswick House, where the symbolism echoes the ritual of the York Grand Lodge, Yorkshire being where the Burlington estates lay. The London Grand Lodge of 1717 was founded in order to make Freemasonry, with its mystical and political Stuart past, non-political and loyal to the new ruling family.

Among those royal families who considered themselves in the true Davidic line were the Plantagenets, who included the Dukes of Lorraine. Both the Stuarts, through Mary Queen of Scots's mother, Mary of Guise-Lorraine, and Lord Burlington's family, through the Cliffords, were proud to be descended from them. John V of Portugal too was obsessed with his Divine Right.¹⁹ He also nurtured imperial ideals, as had his father, Pedro II.²⁰ Extremely ambitious dynastically, his marriage to Maria Ana of Austria, daughter of the Emperor Leopold I, was intended to further an alliance with the Austrian Empire. The marriage of his daughter, Scarlatti's Princess María Bárbara, to the Bourbon king of Spain was an important coup for Portugal. Spain and Portugal were deeply suspicious of one another. Portugal had fought against the Bourbons, as had her ally Britain under Queen Anne, the last Stuart queen, in the War of the Spanish Succession, so María Bárbara was, as it were, planted in the enemy camp. The greatest success for Divine Right was the marriage, aided and abetted by that omnipresent *éminence grise* Lord Burlington, of the Plantagenet Duke Francis of Lorraine to the Empress Maria Theresa.²¹ This marriage united the

15 I am grateful to George Clarke for this information. See also British Library, Althorp MSS. Box B8 (the Countess of Burlington to the Earl of Burlington, 16 September 1727), and *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*, ed. George Sherburn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), volume 3, 216 (Pope to the Earl of Oxford, 15 August 1731).

16 Chatsworth, Devonshire MSS, Grand Tour Account Book, and Jane Clark, 'Lord Burlington is Here', in *Lord Burlington: Architecture, Art and Life*, ed. Toby Barnard and Jane Clark (London: Hambledon, 1995), 253–258.

17 Jane Clark, 'Palladianism and the Divine Right of Kings', *Apollo: The International Magazine of the Arts* (April 1992), 224–229; Barnard and Clark, *Lord Burlington*, and *Lord Burlington: The Man and His Politics*, ed. Edward Corp (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 1998).

18 Clark, 'Lord Burlington is Here', 289–301; J. E. S. Tuckett, 'The Origin of Additional Degrees', *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* 32 (1919), 5–55; Frank McLynn, *Charles Edward Stuart* (London: Routledge, 1998), 532–535; and Edward Corp, *A Court in Exile: The Stuarts in France, 1689–1718* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 339–342.

19 Delaforce, 'Lisbon', 52.

20 Delaforce, 'Lisbon', 51–54.

21 Clark, 'Lord Burlington is Here', 307–308.



elected Habsburgs with the, in their eyes, true inheritors of the Holy Roman Empire, now centred in Vienna.

That John V's *mestre de capela* was neurotic, even a manic-depressive, seems likely. Scarlatti deserted the king for two years, going back to Italy for his health, as the air of Lisbon did not suit him,²² and Giovanni Giorgi had to be engaged in his place.²³ Perhaps Scarlatti could not hold down such an important post, but perhaps he could keep a secret. Was he in fact John V's agent in Spain in this hostile situation?²⁴ Were the publication of the *Essercizi* and the Order of Santiago rewards for this kind of service? If so, there was indeed a political dimension to the advertisement in *The Craftsman*. 'Principles of Liberty and Property' was one of the great Jacobite (legitimist) slogans.²⁵ From the time of Charles I the Stuarts and their supporters had argued that it was in fact they who safeguarded what the Whigs liked to think of as the ancient liberties of the subject and that it was the Whigs themselves who had undermined these liberties.²⁶ Scarlatti's edition clearly made no headway – very few copies survive and no one mentioned it – whilst the pirated, and much inferior, Roseingrave version caused a Scarlatti *furor* in England. Burney, though told the *Essercizi* were published in Venice, clearly knew only the Roseingrave edition.

Farinelli could keep a secret. Impresario Owen Swiney's reference to him as a 'blazing star', before he ever set foot in England, was surely less a comment, as everyone has assumed, on his ability as a singer, than an allusion to his position as a Freemason.²⁷ The eight-pointed Garter Star was also referred to as a blazing star, thus demonstrating the connection between the knightly Orders and ancient Freemasonry.²⁸ But why would Farinelli mislead Burney over the *Essercizi* thirty years later? The answer must be that there was still a Stuart Pretender to the English throne residing in Italy. Prince Charles Edward Stuart, or Bonnie Prince Charlie, whom Farinelli knew, was living in Rome and still ruffling Hanoverian feathers whenever opportunity arose.²⁹ He was still a live legitimist political wire. Trevor Stewart has written:

The young Prince Charles Edward Stuart and his doomed cause were defeated at Culloden, but they still live in the hearts of some Freemasons north of the Border. What the Hanoverian victors failed to realise was that defeated, and eventually dead by January 1788 in dissipated disgrace, he was much more dangerous to their somewhat tenuous claim to the throne than he had ever been while on his fatal and flawed march south into England and Derby.³⁰

22 See Gerhard Doderer, 'Aspectos novos em torno da estadia de Domenico Scarlatti na corte de D. João V (1719–1727)', Preface to facsimile edition, *Libro di tocate per cembalo – Domenico Scarlatti* (Lisbon: Instituto Nacional de Investigação Científica, 1991), 23, quoting the report of the Papal Nuncio Vicente Bicchi, 28 January 1727: 'Domenica doppo pranzo partì di quà alla uolta di Roma il Sig.^{ro} Domenico Scarlatti Mrò. di Capella della Maestà del Rè, per ristabilirsi in salute col beneficio di quell' aria, giacche non hà trouato in questa muodo di riauersi dalle sue indispozizioni'.

23 Siegfried Gmeinweiser, 'Giorgi, Giovanni', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001), volume 7, 396, gives the date of Giorgi's appointment as *mestre de capela* as January 1725, but this date is probably incorrect, since January 1727 would have been when the king needed a replacement.

24 If they had not been destroyed in the Lisbon earthquake of 1755, the Portuguese State Papers might reveal something on this, but if the information was sensitive it would be in code and Scarlatti would have a pseudonym.

25 Paul Kléber Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People, 1688–1788* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 336.

26 Murray G. H. Pittock, 'New Jacobite Songs of the '45', *Voltaire Foundation* (1989), 20.

27 Elizabeth Gibson, *The Royal Academy of Music* (New York: Garland, 1989), 366. See John T. Matthews, 'The Blazing Star Symbolises the True Freemason', in *Masonic Dictionary* (1999), <www.4masonry.com/education/files/masonic dictionary>, and Clark, 'Lord Burlington is Here', 277, note 107.

28 Clark, 'Lord Burlington is Here', 294–297; Barry Martin, 'The G Spot', in Corp, *Lord Burlington*, 71–90, and subsequent research by Ricky Pound of English Heritage.

29 McLynn, *Charles Edward Stuart*, 321.

30 Trevor Stewart in response to John Hamill, 'The Jacobite Conspiracy', *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* 113 (2000), 108.



Figure 1 Jacopo Amigoni, frontispiece of Scarlatti's *Essercizi* (1739)

Farinelli would have known that to open a can of worms like the *Essercizi* might still have endangered many people in Britain. More important, he was keeping a Masonic secret. And, as a Freemason, if Scarlatti had been an agent working secretly in Spain for the Portuguese royal family, kings by Divine Right like the Stuarts, Farinelli would have known it and not given away any political clues.

A possible answer to this question lies in Amigoni's frontispiece to the *Essercizi* (see Figure 1). The most important ceiling painting at Chiswick House, in the Red Velvet Room, is a many-layered representation of Jacobite/Royal Arch symbolism, graced by the blazing star of the Order of the Garter, with its motto.³¹ The message is the crucifixion and resurrection of Charles I, that is to say Divine Right, and the female figures are those of the three Marys, Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany and the Virgin Mary, all present at the Crucifixion.³² The figure of Mary Magdalene has been chosen as the seated figure in the frontispiece. Significantly, María Bárbara's full name was María Magdalena Bárbara. She has her hand on notated sheets of music manuscript and is pointing to Mercury, who holds the finished book. Three *putti* bear the Arms of Portugal. One of them is identical to Mercury as well as to the *putto* on the left and Mercury at Chiswick, where he represents Charles I as Mercurian Monarch, a theme common in Stuart masques.³³ The frontispiece is clearly a reference to this ceiling (see Figure 2).

There are two possible layers of meaning, one being that María Magdalena Bárbara inspired the sonatas and is pointing to Scarlatti as Mercury, messenger of the Gods, a messenger for Portugal. The other, and given the reference to Chiswick perhaps more likely, meaning is Mary Magdalene in her legendary role as

31 See note 28.

32 I am grateful to William Buehler for pointing out the connection between the three ladies and the three Marys present at the Crucifixion

33 A search through the Amigoni reproductions in the Witt Library produced no other images of this model.



Figure 2 William Kent, 'Mercury and the Arts' [no date known]. English Heritage Photographic Library



symbolic progenitor of the royal line and Mercury, as at Chiswick, as the king. There are similar allegorical portraits of kings as Mercury, often taken to be angels, but angels and Mercury were interchangeable in royalist iconography.³⁴ In this case both the ceiling and the Amigoni frontispiece bear the same message, support for Divine Right, or 'legitimist politics'. There are other Masonic references in the *Essercizi* design. The triangles formed by the *putti* and Mercury, and, inverted, by the crossed legs of the seated figure, symbolize the male and the female.³⁵ The belief held by many Masons in the harmony of the union of the sexes is best illustrated for musicians by the sacred marriage of Tamino and Pamina in Mozart's *Magic Flute*. For those Templar Masons like John V with imperial designs, this belief probably stems from Virgil's suggestion that the rebirth of Rome would take place through the uniting of male and female power.³⁶ The *Essercizi* appeared shortly after the Chiswick ceiling was painted. Adamo Scola, who published the *Essercizi*, taught the Burlington children both at Chiswick and at Burlington House.³⁷ Like Farinelli, Scarlatti seems to have been an important cog in the political works of Europe, so it is not surprising that the 'blazing star' felt the need to deceive Burney. It is also not surprising that the second volume of sonatas he promised in his Preface to the *Essercizi* could not be published in London.

An important secret symbol was the pug. Masonic iconography is tricky because symbols were hijacked by different degrees of Masonry and no one symbol should ever be considered in isolation. In the portrait of Lord Burlington and his sisters that hung at Chiswick opposite that of King Charles I and his family, one of the girls holds a small pug.³⁸ In a portrait by Domenico Dupra the young princess María Bárbara is portrayed with a similar pug (Figure 3). There is a famous portrait by Trevisani of Burlington's great friend Sir Thomas Coke with a pug, painted on his Grand Tour, a time when his Jacobite loyalties were inadvertently revealed.³⁹ Coke was an important Freemason. In one of Amigoni's portraits Farinelli fondles a pug,⁴⁰ and he is accompanied by a pug (and a King Charles spaniel) in a portrait that was in the Lyceo in Bologna in 1880 (Figure 4).⁴¹ The Masonic Order of the Mopses, German for pug, included women, and Owen Swiney actually says in his letter to the Duke of Richmond, after discussing Faustina Bordoni, that Farinelli is 'another blazing star', so Faustina might well have been a Freemason too. A tantalizing moment in this correspondence occurs in Swiney's previous letter to the duke, concerning Faustina's appointment to the Royal Academy of Music, when he writes, 'One thing more, and I have done, but this must be kept, as a Secret, to your Selfe, Lord Burlington & one or Two more that you trust it to', but the rest of the letter is missing.⁴² Faustina's friend Lady Burlington was a Mopse with her own lodge in her Summer Parlour at Chiswick, in which hung a portrait of the singer by Rosalba Carriera.⁴³ Faustina was certainly close to the Stuarts.⁴⁴ Swiney was, after all, writing to Charles II's grandson, who was also a Freemason and who, despite appearances, preserved an equivocal attitude towards his royal ancestors. The implication is that Swiney was a Freemason too. Diana, with her crescent moon, who graced the fireplace in the little female lodge at

34 Douglas Brooks-Davies, *The Mercurian Monarch* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), 1–2.

35 The compasses represent the male creative Deity and the square the female Earth Mother. Albert Pike, *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite and Freemasonry* (Charleston, SC: 1871), 851.

36 Douglas Brooks-Davies, *Pope's Dunciad and the Queen of the Night* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 22.

37 Clark, 'Lord Burlington is Here', 288.

38 Clark, 'Lord Burlington is Here', Figure 67, facing 254.

39 Clark, 'Palladianism', 224 and Figure 2.

40 Reproduced in Daniel Hertz, 'Farinelli and Metastasio', *Early Music* 12/3 (1984), 360.

41 Reproduced in Vernon Lee, *Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1880), facing 323. This portrait was apparently destroyed during the last war. I am grateful to Barbara Ventura for this information.

42 Gibson, *The Royal Academy of Music*, 365.

43 Clark, 'Lord Burlington is Here', 302–303, and Horace Walpole, 'Visits to Country Seats', *Walpole Society* 16 (1927–1928), 23.

44 Public Record Office, SP85/14, f. 315, Stosch, 3 April 1723. James III presented Faustina with a medal depicting himself on one side and his Queen on the other, a rare honour, when she sang at the Muti Palace.



Figure 3 Domenico Duprà, María Bárbara de Braganza (1725). Madrid, Museo del Prado

Chiswick, was Queen of the Night, the *Sternflammende Königin* (the Blazing Star Queen), goddess of the Mopses.⁴⁵

While they were both in England, Amigoni painted a portrait of Farinelli for the fourth Duke of Leeds, in which the singer holds a white dove and a miniature portrait as well as some music.⁴⁶ The

⁴⁵ Clark, 'Lord Burlington is Here', 303.

⁴⁶ McGeary, 'Farinelli and the Duke of Leeds', 208. My thanks are due to Penelope Cave, who first drew my attention to this portrait, of which she has a copy.

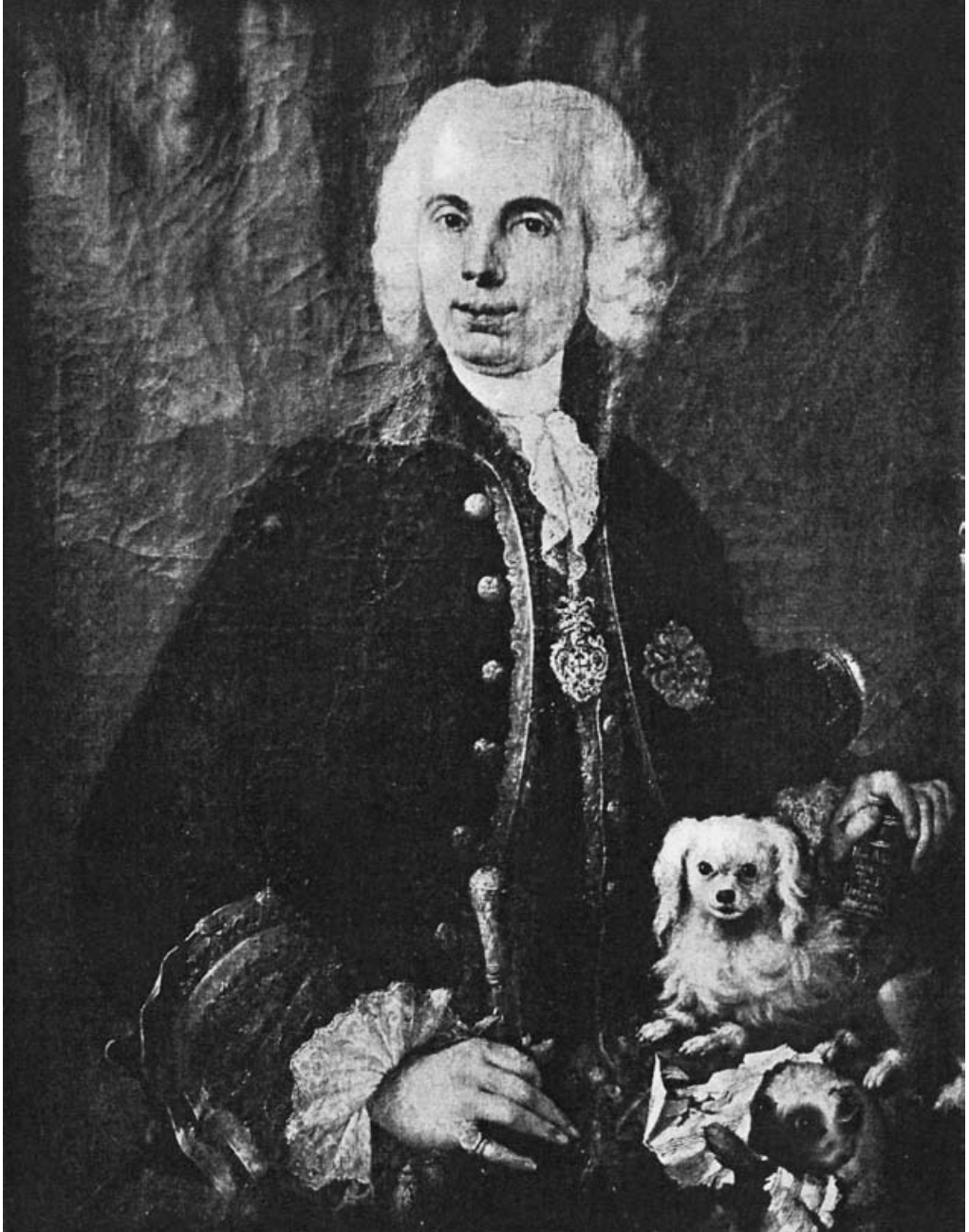


Figure 4 Unknown artist, Farinelli

white dove symbolizes the Holy Spirit, which was to be 'the possession of the coming Davidic king'.⁴⁷ The white dove holding an olive branch, as in this painting, was particularly important for Templar

⁴⁷ George Ferguson, *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 16–17, and *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), 649.



Masons.⁴⁸ It is likely that the miniature represents Prince Charles Edward Stuart. Amigoni may be making another reference to Chiswick House, since this portrait bears a distinct resemblance to William Kent's portrayal of the Prince in Lady Burlington's Summer Parlour.⁴⁹ The young Prince was seen as a harbinger of peace: 'Joy will come in the young Prince's time, Peace will be to the exiles restored.'⁵⁰ The music, if it could be read, would doubtless be significant too. Both the father and the grandfather of the Duke of Leeds were Jacobite-oriented, so it is likely that the fourth Duke was, too. As Edward Corp points out, he was only twenty when this portrait was painted,⁵¹ and even though in later life he appeared to have accepted the Hanoverian regime as inevitable, the emotional ties of many royalist families tacitly remained unchanged.

Farinelli himself possessed a painting by Amigoni, the subject of which is *The Glorification of the Arts*, a subject that very often carried with it Masonic connotations.⁵² The Red Velvet Room ceiling at Chiswick portrays the resurrection of the arts (or civilization, in Jacobite terminology) to be achieved by a restoration of the Stuart monarchs, and, by implication, the true line of David. Farinelli's painting is also complicated to read, but very obvious is a pair of outsize compasses, symbol of the Master of a Masonic Lodge, standing on an equally disproportionate Masonic pillar of stability. A pair of horns and a bass viol signify the male and female sexes.⁵³ The painting is dominated by an imperial equestrian statue.

It is of course very difficult to comprehend the values of an eighteenth-century mind, but what Frances Yates refers to as 'the phantom of empire' was clearly uppermost in the eighteenth-century Templar Masonic ideal:

The age of Augustus was the supreme example of a world united and at peace, and to that age also belonged the supreme honour of witnessing the birth of Christ. Virgil's *Aeneid*, with its glorification of Augustus, thus became a semi-sacred poem glorifying the historical framework of the Saviour's birth.

A restoration of the Empire 'will imply spiritual renovation, for in a restored world, in a new golden age of peace and justice, Christ can reign'.⁵⁴ From this it is easy to see how the peace-loving John V of Portugal could create a combination of intense Christian and imperial ideals in Lisbon and how the exiled Stuarts could adopt the *Aeneid* as their great political poem.⁵⁵ The Stuarts were a stepping-stone on the route to a restoration of The Holy Roman Empire, and the entrance to Lord Burlington's temple to Divine Right at Chiswick was presided over by a bust of Augustus.

The eighteenth-century idea of Empire was for some, like Robert Walpole, purely political, a question of the balance of power. For others, like Lord Burlington and John V of Portugal, it was also a vision. For Farinelli, too, as a self-confessed 'imperialist', his desire for peace among nations was all-important. He expressed this at the time at which his portrait was painted for the Duke of Leeds, thus underlining the meaning of the Templar olive branch.⁵⁶ The pugs that accompany Farinelli in his later portraits take on added significance when one takes into account the fact that they became a symbol of secret masonic allegiance in the Holy Roman Empire after the Papal Bull of 1738, which endeavoured to suppress Freemasonry.⁵⁷ Another possible allusion to Farinelli's hidden agenda is provided by the Latin inscriptions

48 Tim Wallace-Murphy, *The Templar Legacy and The Masonic Inheritance within Rosslyn Chapel* (Roslin: Friends of Rosslyn Chapel, 1994), 27. I am grateful to Niven Sinclair for this reference.

49 Clark, 'Palladianism', 229.

50 *Highland Songs of the Forty-Five*, ed. and trans. John Lorne Campbell (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1933), 3. I am grateful to Victoria Thorpe for this reference and for her observations on the painting.

51 Edward Corp, 'Farinelli and the Circle of Sicinio Pepoli: A Link with the Stuart Court in Exile', this issue, 317.

52 Reproduced in *Apollo* (April 1992), 27.

53 I am grateful to Peter Holman for the reference to the bass viol.

54 Frances Yates, *Astraea* (London: Ark, 1985), 4.

55 Murray G. H. Pittock, 'The Aeneid in the Age of Burlington', in Barnard and Clark, *Lord Burlington*, 231–249.

56 Vitali, *Carlo Broschi Farinelli*, 138 (letter of 2 July 1735).

57 Robin Simon, 'Panels and Pugs', *Apollo* (June 1991), 372.



that surround the engraved portrait of the singer on the frontispiece to the ode 'In lode del Signor Carlo Broschi detto Farinello', written by Tomaso Crudeli in 1734.⁵⁸ 'CAROLUS BROSCHI NEAPOL CAROLI VI ROM: IMPERATORIS PHONASCUS' makes it quite clear that Farinelli considered himself a servant of the Emperor Charles VI. 'NEGATA TENTAT ITER VIA' (Horace, *Odes*, III, 2, 21), literally 'he tries the journey by paths denied', implies that Farinelli's career was to venture near forbidden territory.⁵⁹ Crudeli was a Freemason whose trial at the hands of the Inquisition in 1739 became a *cause célèbre*.⁶⁰ A reading of his ode to Farinelli by someone acquainted with imperial metaphor could be interesting.

As far as factual reports of our Queen of the Night go, during the reign of Philip V and Elizabeth Farnese, Farinelli was the saviour, through his singing, of the demented king and an influential assistant with the Italian opera. Nothing very spectacular, an extraordinary contrast to his previous existence, though, it has to be said, the pay was good. On the accession of Ferdinand and María Bárbara all that changed dramatically. But the question hovers: was he, in fact, working for them before this? The ever-watchful queen tried to prevent him from having any contact with the prince and princess. On one occasion she sent a message to Farinelli 'never to go and sing or play any more in their apartment'. But Farinelli's answer shows he knew his power: 'Go and tell the Queen, that I owe the greatest obligations to the Prince & Princess of Asturias, and unless I receive such an answer from her Majesty's own mouth, or the King's, I will never obey it.'⁶¹ It would be interesting to know what those obligations were. It is perhaps worth noting that María Bárbara was in touch with the Countess of Montijo, wife of the ambassador in London for whom Farinelli sang, who sent her music from London in 1733.⁶² The Marquis of Ensenada, who became Secretary for The Marine, Finances and War late in Philip V's reign, kept his powerful position in the general reshuffle on the king's death. This was because, having formed a friendship with Farinelli, he acquired María Bárbara's patronage.⁶³ He must have seen that the princess, despite the efforts of the queen, was under the influence of the singer. According to Sir Benjamin Keene, the British minister in Spain:

The worth of him [Farinelli] is that he makes himself a dependent upon the *man* who entirely depends upon him, but I am not surprised that one of his rank and profession should not dare to be greater. You will perceive I mean Mr. de la Ensenada by the *man* I mention. And you now have a key to the secret of this country, which for Godsake keep to yourselves.⁶⁴

When Keene returned to Spain 1749 after a spell away, he went to the opera. He wrote, 'no sooner was I seated but their Catholic Majesties sent me the libretto by the hand of Farinelli. Judge how my confrères in the box looked upon this mark of distinction'.⁶⁵ Farinelli was by this time in charge of the whole operatic scene. A few days later Keene writes, 'Farinelli is much my friend and swears he loves the nation and will serve me' and 'he has desired me to make his humble compliments to my Lord Duke of Newcastle, and to assure his Grace that he is a true Englishman.'⁶⁶ Farinelli's perceptive biographer Patrick Barbier has remarked on the 'double language' used by the singer in talking to Benjamin Keene.⁶⁷ Other people at the court bemoaned

58 This frontispiece is illustrated in McGeary, 'Farinelli and the Duke of Leeds', 204.

59 I am grateful to Robert Ketterer for tracing and translating these inscriptions and to Richard Sharp for pointing out the implication of the second one.

60 John Heron Lepper, 'The Earl of Middlesex and the English Lodge in Florence', *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* 58 (1947), 37–49.

61 Kirkpatrick, *Scarlatti*, 97.

62 Lowell Lindgren, 'Musicians and Librettists in the Correspondence of Gio. Giacomo Zamboni', *RMA Research Chronicle* 24 (1991), letter 345.

63 Coxe, *Memoirs*, 23.

64 *The Private Correspondence of Sir Benjamin Keene, KB*, ed. Sir Richard Lodge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933), 98 (to Sir Andrew Stone, 25 February 1749. Stone was Under Secretary to the Duke of Newcastle).

65 *The Private Correspondence*, 95 (to Abraham Castres, 20 February 1749. Castres was British Consul at Lisbon).

66 *The Private Correspondence*, 98 and 99 (to Stone, 25 February 1749).

67 Patrick Barbier, *Farinelli: Le castrat des Lumières* (Paris: Grasset, 1994), 183.



the fact that Spain was being governed by the Portuguese and musicians. María Bárbara had as much influence over her Bourbon husband as Elizabeth Farnese had wielded over hers.

When Burney visited Farinelli twenty years later, the singer spoke of Keene with the highest respect, and said his death had been not only a misfortune for the two courts but an inseparable loss to himself and his friends. Perhaps Farinelli was genuinely devoted to Keene, but he also told Burney that 'he lamented his not being able, for *political reasons*, to settle in England for, next to Spain that was the place in the world he would have liked to spend the rest of his days.'⁶⁸ Several writers allege that Farinelli interceded with Queen María Bárbara on behalf of Jacobite Freemasons who had fled to Spain and were threatened by the Inquisition.⁶⁹ Here there is an interesting parallel, because Ferdinand VI, like all the Bourbon kings, was against Freemasonry whilst María Bárbara appears to have been, like her father, a member of a Templar Masonic secret society; and the Empress Maria Theresa was against Freemasonry whilst her husband, Duke Francis of Lorraine, was a Freemason.⁷⁰ According to William Coxe, Farinelli felt zealous devotion to María Bárbara and respect for Maria Theresa, whom, as a native of Naples, he always considered his sovereign.⁷¹ Maria Theresa's aunt was María Bárbara's mother and the Austrians ruled Naples until 1736. In the famous portrait by Amigoni of Metastasio, Castellini, Farinelli and the artist himself, the page boy wears the costume of the Austrian Archduke.⁷²

But, says Coxe, the most powerful, and perhaps the only, motive that overcame Farinelli's 'studied caution' was the esteem which he felt for Ensenada.⁷³ Ensenada was hostile to the commercial prosperity and naval power of England, of which Farinelli would have approved, and secretly favoured France, of which Farinelli was probably unaware. The Queen thought it more profitable to favour England. This did not stop Ensenada working behind the scenes. Upon Ensenada's discovery and impending punishment, Farinelli threw himself at the Queen's feet, with the result that the disgraced minister, who had faced the possibility of trial and the scaffold, retired to Granada with a pension of £2,000 a year.⁷⁴ Farinelli supported Maria Theresa, but Keene cautiously says he does not because of this consider him an enemy of Great Britain, 'for he has always expressed gratitude towards us'.⁷⁵ Some commentators are inclined to be sceptical about the extent of Farinelli's power, but the evidence amassed by the Patrick Barbier should dispel any doubts.⁷⁶ The singer's letters to Count Sicinio Pepoli betray an unusual interest in politics before he ever got to Spain. Letters from London indicate that Pepoli expected political news, and Barbier even wonders if Farinelli was an agent.⁷⁷ Pepoli himself was a *consigliere segreto del Sacro Romano Impero*, which means a secret agent.⁷⁸ As Conte di Castiglione, he was a subject of the emperor.⁷⁹ Letters from Spain continue to report on political issues, but these reports are evidently not the whole story. In 1742 Farinelli sends greetings to the Duke of Atrisco reminding him of 'confidential sessions' at El Pardo. He does not wish to say more; the phrase will be understood.⁸⁰ If Farinelli, as a blazing star, was working, through whatever political expedencies came his way, for the restoration of The Holy Roman Empire under a Davidic emperor, then his final years in Spain of dedication to the empress and her Plantagenet husband, who had been elected Holy Roman Emperor in

68 Burney, *The Present State of Music*, 221. My italics.

69 José A. Ferrer Benimeli, *La masonería española en el siglo XVIII* (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno, 1974), 172–173.

70 W. G. Fisher, 'A Cavalcade of Freemasons in 1732', *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* 76 (1963), 51.

71 Coxe, *Memoirs*, 34.

72 Hertz, 'Farinelli and Metastasio', 358.

73 Coxe, *Memoirs*, 34.

74 Coxe, *Memoirs*, 139.

75 Coxe, *Memoirs*, 177.

76 Barbier, *Farinelli*, 177–188.

77 Barbier, *Farinelli*, 87.

78 Carlo Vitali, 'Sicinio Pepoli conte di Castiglione e il "divino" Farinelli', *Savona setta Sambro* 10/19 (2000), 77.

79 Vitali, 'Sicinio Pepoli', 78.

80 'Salutarmi con tutta distinzione, il signor duca d'Atrisco, a cui rammento quelle sessioni che una volta, confidenzialmente, facevamo al Pardo. Non vo' dir altro, ben intenderà la frase.' Vitali, *Carlo Broschi Farinelli*, 182 (letter of 13 November 1742).



1745, make sense. The Stuarts were a part of this design, and this gives added significance to the connections explored elsewhere in this issue by Edward Corp.

Tracing the loyalties of blazing stars rather naturally becomes a game of happy families. Farinelli must have known well his fellow Freemason Lord Burlington, a founder member of the Opera of the Nobility, in London. Having supported his friend the Duke of Lorraine in his plans to marry Maria Theresa, Burlington evidently kept up contact with Vienna: when the Viennese dancer Eva Maria Veigel, known as Violette, who married David Garrick, came to London from Vienna, she came with a personal introduction from the empress to the Burlingtons, who adopted her.⁸¹ Maria Theresa's son, the emperor Joseph II, did not forget Farinelli. When he visited Bologna in 1769, he had no time to go out to the singer's villa, but he insisted that Farinelli meet him in the city, where they spent two hours together.⁸²

Just as Scarlatti was honoured by John V of Portugal with the noble Order of Santiago, so Farinelli was honoured by Ferdinand VI and María Bárbara with the Order of Calatrava, a signally high honour, again reserved for noblemen. In Farinelli's eyes this was a sacred symbol, and he wanted to be buried in the grand mantle of the Order.⁸³ It is very unlikely that Scarlatti was awarded his honour for writing keyboard sonatas or that Farinelli was awarded a similar honour for overseeing lavish operatic productions. Since María Bárbara was the one who made decisions, and since, like her father, she was in favour of 'legitimist' policies, the probability is that both musicians received their honours as a reward for reporting on the political movements of the court. A modern mind might find it far easier to understand a reward being given for Scarlatti's 'original and happy freaks' than one for working for 'the fantasy of the renewed empire', but we are dealing with the eighteenth century. The great men of the Age of Reason had a side we tend to ignore. Sir Isaac Newton and Duke Francis of Lorraine, later Holy Roman Emperor, were alchemists. The man responsible for neo-Palladianism in England had in his library at Chiswick not just drawings of Palladio but books on sacred geometry and the cabbala.

Of Farinelli's abrupt expulsion from Spain on the accession of Charles III Coxe says, 'It is remarkable that the first act of the new sovereign was an order issued at the instigation of the queen dowager enjoining him to quit Spain without delay.'⁸⁴ Finally she had her revenge for her protégé's forbidden support of her rivals. So we come a complete circle: Elizabeth Farnese, apparently so keen to entice the great singer to Spain, was even keener to see him leave. One purpose of this essay has been an attempt to square that circle by providing a few clues that might help to explain the strange careers of Domenico Scarlatti and Farinelli. The other has been to highlight underlying values that can sometimes be overlooked in an attempt to understand the eighteenth century.

81 Clark, 'Lord Burlington is Here', 284.

82 Barbier, *Farinelli*, 213.

83 Barbier, *Farinelli*, 223.

84 Coxe, *Memoirs*, 232.