

## COMMUNICATIONS



## REPORTS

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BELLA BROVER-LUBOVSKY (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) AND CHRISTINE SIEGERT (Universität der Künste Berlin) write:

Giuseppe Sarti (1729–1802), recognized in his lifetime as one of the central figures of his generation, nowadays belongs to the category of largely neglected eighteenth-century Italian composers. At most he is remembered for ‘providing’ his famous contemporaries with sparkling melodies to be quoted in their operas: the aria ‘Come un agnello’ from the dramma giocoso *Fra i due litiganti il terzo gode* resounds in the finale of Act 2 of Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, while excerpts from his opera seria *Giulio Sabino* are quoted in Salieri’s *Prima la musica, e poi le parole*. But for these operas, the most performed and stunningly successful in his day, let alone his other works, no critical editions exist.

Sarti’s professional career began in his native town, Faenza (1748–1752); it continued in Copenhagen (1753–1765 and 1770–1775), Venice (1767–1768), Florence (1777–1778), Milan (1779–1784), St Petersburg (1784–1787 and 1793–1801) and Kremenchug, Ukraine (1787–1791). Shrewdly, and with impressive flexibility, Sarti displayed a great flair for combining local traditions with his personal style. He composed operas to Italian, French, Danish and Russian librettos and liturgical works for Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox services, together with oratorios, chamber cantatas and ceremonial music. Sarti’s talent and personality won him the admiration of King Frederik V of Sweden, Emperor Joseph II, Empress Catherine II and of the European aristocratic elite elsewhere. In *De la musique mécanique et de la musique philosophique* (Paris, 1826) Henri Berton described him as ‘one of the most learned composers of his epoch’ (17).

This overwhelming esteem notwithstanding, scholarship on Sarti remains at the germinal stage. Even such fundamental aspects as biographical research via primary documents, source studies of the music and the history of the music’s reception can be found only sporadically, generally focusing on specific works and genres and discussing Sarti in light of canonic figures such as Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. Sarti research has faced additional obstacles, mostly on account of his being associated with ‘peripheral’ trends in European musical life, in terms of both geographical remoteness and ‘secondary’ cultural significance compared with the perceived mainstream of musical development. Although the main repository of his oeuvre is the Biblioteca Comunale in Faenza, many compositions are scattered in archives and libraries all over the world, some of which have long been inaccessible.

The recently launched research project ‘A Cosmopolitan Composer in Pre-Revolutionary Europe – Giuseppe Sarti. Individual Style, Aesthetical Position, Reception and Dissemination of His Works’, generously sponsored by the Einstein Foundation, Berlin, aims to fill this lacuna, at least in part. The project is being led by Christine Siegert (Universität der Künste Berlin), Bella Brover-Lubovsky (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) and Dörte Schmidt (Universität der Künste Berlin). Additional institutions, such as the Musikwissenschaftliches Seminar Detmold-Paderborn and the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance, are also involved. International cooperation of this nature is essential for exploring a cosmopolitan figure such as Sarti, merging various research traditions as well as attaining complementary perspectives by combining editorial, analytical and aesthetic approaches. The project aims to reconstruct some of Sarti’s



important compositions and to conduct an overarching exploration of his work and activities, contextualizing these within the political and cultural life of pre-Revolutionary Europe.

Among the project's main purposes is the preparation of critical editions:

- (a) The musical spectacle *The Early Reign of Oleg* (St Petersburg, 1790) was created in collaboration with Vassily Pashkevitch and Carlo Canobbio, on a text by Catherine II. *Oleg's* music constitutes the first example of a full orchestral score ever printed in Russia (St Petersburg, 1791), but its print run comprised only 152 copies. Although fragments of this work were revived in 2006 in St Petersburg, it remains unknown even among experts: in recently published studies, its genre has been erroneously defined as an 'opera' (see Inna Narodnitskaya, *Bewitching Russian Opera: The Tsarina from State to Stage* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 114–139) or even as a 'Baroque Gesamtkunstwerk' (see Larissa Kirillina, 'In modo antico: The Alceste Scene in *The Early Reign of Oleg*', *Die Tonkunst* 7/1 (2013), 53–67).
- (b) The two Italian operas *Giulio Sabino* and *Fra i due litiganti* will be presented in digital editions, taking into account for the first time the genre-specific needs of Italian opera of that period. Usually, editions try to reconstruct an author's original text. This is particularly inadequate for Italian operas, though, which were adapted to the institutional circumstances when they were performed in other theatres. *Giulio Sabino* (Venice, 1781) was Sarti's most successful opera seria, with more than forty productions up to 1805. The opera has survived in at least twenty-four manuscript copies and was published in Vienna in about 1782, which was exceptional for Italian opera of that time. Nevertheless, printing obviously did not codify the work, as can be seen in a considerably modified copy of this print in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek. Our edition will demonstrate that *Giulio Sabino* has been changed just as much as Italian operas normally were. *Fra i due litiganti* (Milan, 1782) had more than eighty performances in Italy and abroad; it was also translated into Danish, German and French, with spoken dialogues substituting for recitatives. About forty manuscript copies of the opera can be traced, including a partly autograph score preserved in the Mariinsky Theatre Archive, St Petersburg.

Our digital editions incorporate various possibilities for the editing of eighteenth-century Italian operas, bearing in mind the arrangement practices that were characteristic of the time. As online open-access publications, they will present solutions that visualize different versions of the operas using the tools of the Edirom project (Hochschule für Musik Detmold / Universität Paderborn) and the Music Encoding Initiative (MEI), which enables the encoding of variants in the MEI mark-up language. This has been developed by Perry Roland and is continuously being advanced by an international group of researchers; see <<http://music-encoding.org/>> (23 April 2012). (See also Perry Roland, 'MEI as an Editorial Music Data Format', in *Digitale Edition zwischen Experiment und Standardisierung*, ed. Peter Stadler and Joachim Veit (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2009), 175–194.) By using these programmes, we are able to document the insertion and deletion of entire numbers as well as small variants. Thus our edition will consider Sarti's operas as works defined by the sum of the surviving sources. Such editions enable us to dissect the processes of cultural transfer documented in the sources and their consolidation.

Further, we will prepare a monograph addressing Sarti's activities as a dramatic and church composer, teacher and impresario. By studying previously inaccessible historical documents in Russia, Ukraine, Romania and Moldova, we will add to known data on Sarti's compositional and pedagogical activity and his political engagement and service at the courts of Catherine II and Pavel I in St Petersburg (1784–1787, 1793–1801), including his accompanying the Russian army in Bessarabia in the course of the Second Turkish War and the largely obscure period of his 'exile' in Ukraine in Prince Potemkin's service (1787–1791).

We intend to present the first results of the project and to map it within a broader context at an international conference (July 2014) hosted by the Universität der Künste Berlin, followed by publication of the conference proceedings. Another conference-workshop, with an emphasis on practical issues of editing, interpreting and performing late eighteenth-century Italian opera, will be held in Jerusalem in February 2015.



Given its focus on a cosmopolitan composer such as Sarti, who was active in Italy, Austria, Denmark, Russia and Ukraine, and who composed in various cultural and political environments, the project is ideally situated in Berlin, the city where Sarti ended his life and which symbolizes a reunified Europe. We shall also explore the cultural network of Sarti's family, his contribution to the musical life of the city and the traces of Sarti still to be found in Berlin today; this will form part of a separate study.

The current state of the project will be updated on the website <[www.udk-berlin.de/musikwissenschaft/sarti](http://www.udk-berlin.de/musikwissenschaft/sarti)>.



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ALBERT RECASENS (Madrid) writes:

The three hundredth anniversary of the Peace of Utrecht and of the end of the War of the Spanish Succession have been giving rise to various commemorative musical programmes. Of special importance has been that undertaken by the Festival de Música Antigua de los Pirineos (FeMAP), a young but ambitious festival organized in more than twenty locations in the Catalan and Andorran Pyrenees, with the first performance of a programme devoted to Francesc Valls that took place on 12 July in La Seu de Urgell. On the one hand, the festival wanted to mark the centenary of the surrender of Barcelona on 11 September 1714, which had such significance for Catalonia in its loss of privileges and laws, as was also the case for the rest of the kingdoms ruled by the Crown of Aragon. On the other hand, the festival planned to pay tribute to the figure of Francesc Valls (?1665–1747), the maestro active in Barcelona during the years of the fighting and one of the most distinguished composers of the Spanish Baroque.

Valls's musical activities were centred in the Cathedral of Barcelona. On 17 December 1696, a few months after having competed successfully for the post of *maestro de capilla* at the church of Santa María del Mar, he was named substitute *maestro de capilla* of the cathedral at Barcelona on the retirement of his predecessor, Joan Barter. On the death of the latter in 1706 Valls assumed the full position. After his retirement in 1726 he dedicated himself to writing his monumental compositional treatise *Mapa armónico práctico*, which he finished in 1735. During his thirty years of service at the cathedral Valls was immensely active, composing the greater part of the more than six hundred works that are currently known, most of these in sacred genres, whether set to Latin or Spanish texts. Nevertheless, his best-known work is the *Missa Scala Aretina* of 1702, famous for having prompted a storm of polemics, with contributions from more than fifty Spanish musicians as well as figures from abroad such as Alessandro Scarlatti or the Portuguese Pedro Vaz Rego. Even if the origin of the controversy may have been aesthetic (the unprepared ninth in the second-soprano entry of the 'Miserere nobis' of the Gloria), various writers such as Francesc Bonastre have pointed to its political undercurrent (Francesc Bonastre i Bertran, 'Pere Rabassa, "... lo descans de Mestre Valls": notes a l'entorn del tono *Elissa gran Reyna* de Rabassa i de la missa *Scala Aretina* de Francesc Valls', *Butlletí de la Reial Acadèmia Catalana de Belles Arts de Sant Jordi* 4–5 (1990–1991), 81–104): the dispute only unfolded many years later, between 1715 and 1720, and those who intervened in the controversy had close connections with others on one or the other side. Valls was even the victim of a reprisal on the part of the Bourbon faction by being expelled from his post, presumably for having sided with the Habsburg Archduke Charles (Valls was named in the list of those banished from their posts, the 'Officials Ecclesiàstichs extrañats per orde del Rei', of April 1719). Álvaro Torrente has advanced the view that the mass might have been composed in 1702 for the closing ceremony of the Catalan court ('Villancicos de Reyes: propaganda sacromusical en Cataluña ante la sucesión a la Corona española (1700–1702)', in *La pérdida de Europa: la Guerra de Sucesión por la monarquía de España*, ed. Antonio Álvarez-Ossorio, Bernardo José García García and Virginia León (Madrid: Fundación Carlos de Amberes, 2007), 226), which was presided over by Felipe V, and Josep Rafael Carreras i Bulbena suggested that the mass might have