ARIAS FOR BENUCCI
MATTHEW ROSE ARCANGelo JONATHAN COHEN

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ARIA FOR BENUCCI

Arias written for the buffo bass-baritone Francesco Benucci, Mozart’s first Figaro

GIOVANNI PAISIELLO (1740–1816)

1 Overture from Il re Teodoro in Venezia (Vienna, 1784) ........................................... [4'46]

ANTONIO SALIERI (1750–1825)

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VICENTE MARTÍN Y SOLE (1754–1806)

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WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)

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discarded aria from Così fan tutte, K588, Act 1 (Vienna, 1790)

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VICENTE MARTÍN Y SOLER

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WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

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ANTONIO SALIERI

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20 DUETTO Il core vi dono from Così fan tutte, K588, Act 2 (Vienna, 1790) .......... [4’46]
21 RECITATIVO Restati quà! — ..........................................................[1’26]
22 DUETTO Per queste tue manine K540b .................................... [3’29]
interpolated duet (Vienna, 1788) from Don Giovanni, K527, Act 2

MATTHEW ROSE baritone
KATHERINE WATSON soprano 20
ANNA DEVIN soprano 21 22

ARCANGELO
JONATHAN COHEN conductor
NURTURED BY THE PATRONAGE of Emperor Joseph II, Vienna’s new Italian opera buffa company was inaugurated in 1783. Mozart was initially doubtful about whether an Italian comic opera troupe could flourish in Vienna, but soon he began to consider the potential of composing his own Italian comic opera for the new company. On 7 May 1783 he wrote to his father in Salzburg: ‘Well, the Italian opera buffa has started again here and is very popular. The buffo is particularly good—his name is Benucci.’

The company’s principal buffo Francesco Benucci began his career in his native Livorno in about 1768; no record of his birth or baptism has yet been identified, but he seems to have been about twenty-three years old when he first sang in revivals of old operas by Galuppi and Gassmann. From 1777 he started singing regularly in leading operatic centres across Italy, including Bologna (operas by Anfossi and Paisiello), Genoa, Turin, Florence, Rome (where he first collaborated with Cimarosa), and Venice, where his role as Frasconio in Giuseppe Sarti’s I contrattempi (Teatro San Samuele, 1778) was one of the first parts to be specifically composed for him. In an endearing accompanied recitative and aria (‘Oime! che innanzi agli occhi’ — ‘Penso, che per morire’, tracks 11 & 12), Frasconio exaggerates his predicament into a comparison with the difficulty the defiant Cato had in committing suicide.

In 1782 Benucci was performing in Milan, where the librettist Giovanni Battista Casti reported enthusiastically on his ‘rich vocal timbre’, and claimed that the ‘most excellent singer’ was ‘the most graceful buffo known to me, without vulgarity and poor taste, but with elegance and intelligence’. At Easter 1783 Benucci was hired by the Viennese court theatre (Burgtheater), where he became a mainstay for the next twelve years. His essential value to the fledgling buffa troupe is clear from Joseph II’s memorandum to the court theatre director Count Franz Orsini Rosenberg on 2 June 1783 instructing him to renew Benucci’s contract only five weeks after the company’s inaugural performance:

Since it appears to me that the singer Benucci finds favour with the public, I would like you to try to convince him to stay until Easter and then for one year further; if he agrees to this in a new contract … then you can keep the best from among the rest of the troupe; if Benucci … [does] not stay, then the others need not be kept on.

Benucci was evidently fundamental to the viability and success of Italian opera buffa in Vienna during the 1780s. He sang the role of the inn-keeper Taddeo in Giovanni Paisiello’s Il re Teodoro in Venezia (first performed on 23 August 1784). Its libretto by the political satirist Giovanni Battista Casti was based on an episode from Voltaire’s Candide, and the music was commissioned from Paisiello as he passed through Vienna on his way from St Petersburg to Naples; its spectacular overture (track 1) must have been one of the reasons this enormously successful opera had been performed nearly sixty times in Vienna by 1791.

Casti also provided the libretto for Antonio Salieri’s La grotta di Trofonio (12 October 1785), in which Benucci performed the title role. The sorcerer Trofonio amuses himself by conjuring up dark spirits and putting spells on innocent neighbours who live near his magical grotto. His first appearance, as he stands outside his cave and calls forth demons, is the entertainingly sinister ‘ombra’ scene ‘Spirti invisibili’ (track 2), which Salieri annotated in his autograph manuscript:

The aria ‘Spirti invisibili’, with chorus at the end, is purely magic; and it seems to me that the music has the right character. But for it to have effect the voice that sings it must be of great power, and dark.

Two successful operas first performed in 1786 both had librettos by Lorenzo Da Ponte: Mozart’s Le nozze di Figaro (1 May) and Vicente Martín y Soler’s Una cosa rara
Figaro was adapted from Beaumarchais’ play La folle journée (1784, Paris), a sequel to the author’s Le Barbier de Séville, which had inspired an operatic setting by Paisiello. Benucci sang Bartolo in the 1783 Viennese production of Paisiello’s opera (it had been first performed a year earlier in St Petersburg), but in Mozart’s sequel he was promoted to the title role. Count Almaviva, striving to be an enlightened lord, has abolished his droit de Seigneur, the feudal right to deflower his dependant brides in advance of their wedding. Susanna warns her husband-to-be Figaro that she suspects the Count is reluctant to abandon the old ways and is trying to seduce her. In the cavatina ‘Se vuol ballare, signor contino’ (track b13), Figaro vows that if the Count wants to dance, then Figaro will dictate the tune (Mozart’s music reinforces this message, by moving from a sarcastic minuet into a quick contredanse). However, the intrigues of this ‘day of madness’ swiftly become more complicated when it transpires that the hypocritical Count is jealous of the attention his lonely wife Rosina is paying to the ardent young page Cherubino, whom he discovers hiding in his wife’s room. The Count irritably banishes Cherubino to his regiment with an officer’s commission. Figaro pretends to send the boy off to war, telling him that carefree flirting will be replaced with death and glory (‘Non più andrai’, track b19). Tailor-made for Benucci’s vocal assets and comic acting, the company’s tenor Michael Kelly (who sang Don Basilio) later reminisced:

I remember at the first rehearsal of the full band, Mozart was on stage with his crimson pelisse and gold-laced cocked hat, giving the time of the music to the orchestra. Figaro’s song, ‘Non più andrai, farfallone amoroso’, Benucci gave, with the greatest animation and power of voice. I was standing close to Mozart, who, sotto voce, was repeating, Bravo! Bravo! Benucci; and when Benucci came to the fine passage, ‘Cherubino, alla vittoria! Alla gloria militar!’, which he gave out with Stentorian lungs, the effect was electricity itself, for the whole of the performers on stage, and those in the orchestra, as if actuated by one feeling of delight, vociferated Bravo! Bravo! Maestro. Viva, viva, grande Mozart. Those in the orchestra I thought would never have ceased applauding, by beating the bows of their violins against the music desks. The little man acknowledged, by repeated obeisances, his thanks for the distinguished marks of enthusiastic applause bestowed upon him.
By Act 4, Figaro’s plight has become more desperate. Heartbroken that Susanna appears to be unfaithful, his monologue ‘Aprite un po’ quegli occhi’ (track 17) uses disconnected phrases to convey his worries, and at its close he is mocked by a virile horn fanfare. Performed nine times during 1786, *Le nozze di Figaro* was reasonably successful, but six months later Martín y Soler’s light-hearted comedy *Una cosa rara* threw Vienna’s fashionable society into a frenzy. Alternatively titled *Bellezza ed onestà*—the full title thus implies it is a rare thing to find beauty and honesty together—within five years the opera had also been produced in Dresden, Prague, Milan, Venice, St Petersburg, London, Madrid, Barcelona and Paris. The mountain villagers Tita (Benucci) and his wife Ghita are devoted but hot-headed; he is trying to force his sister Lilla (the village beauty) to marry the local major against her will, rather than allow her to wed the mountaineer Lubino. Ghita emotionally pleads with Tita to relent; he responds by claiming that even if he had been as furious as a lion, the tears of the fairer sex reduce him to a lamb or a rabbit, but he also grumbles that women use their wiles to always get what they want (‘In quegli anni’, track 6). Later on, when Tita accuses his wife of infidelity, she angrily slaps him, and he splutters indignantly in a mixture of Spanish and Italian in ‘Ah mal aya, a quella mano!’ (track 3); he sings breathless repetitive short phrases, and concludes with an envoi addressed to all abused husbands in the audience. This aria was so popular in Vienna that it was printed as a soprano song.

Another sign of the popularity of *Una cosa rara* is Mozart’s affectionate quotation of an extract from it in the supper scene in *Don Giovanni*, first performed almost a year later at the National Theatre in Prague on 29 October 1787. On this occasion, the role of the anti-hero’s beleaguered but perversely loyal servant Leporello was sung by Felice Ponziani, but when the opera was revived in Vienna (7 May 1788) the part was taken by Benucci. Leporello’s witty but sly ‘Madamina, il catalogo è questo’ (track 5) is a perfect example of the kind of buffo catalogue aria at which Benucci excelled: he is known to have impressed audiences with his performances of catalogue arias in other operas, such as Titta’s list of his employment history as an assassin, dancer and male soprano, made up in order to impress a girl in Sarti’s *Fra i due litiganti il terzo gode* (Vienna, 1783), and Mozart also created for him an innuendo-loaded list in *Così fan tutte* (see below). Leporello’s catalogue aria conveys a juxtaposition of comic charm and cruelly salacious undertones: Donna Elvira, having been used and discarded by Don Giovanni, almost catches up with her betrayer, but he escapes and instructs his servant to explain the truth of things to the scorned woman; Leporello gleefully shows her the catalogue of Giovanni’s sexual conquests, pointing out the statistics of 640 in Italy, 231 in Germany, 100 in France, 91 in Turkey, and, in Spain alone, a gigantic 1003. Mozart switches the music to a sardonic minuet for Leporello’s sordid observation that Giovanni particularly enjoys young virgins.

The Vienna version of *Don Giovanni* necessitated some judicious rewriting of various scenes. Mozart’s Viennese alternatives include a new duet in Act 2 for Leporello and Zerlina (‘Per queste tue manine’, track 5). The servant, disguised as his master, has briefly escaped from the clutches of a host of offended people seeking to punish the libertine. In the Vienna version, Zerlina drags Leporello back by the hair, ties him to a chair fastened to a window, and threatens him with torture; he pleads his innocence and asks to be released, but Zerlina refuses and goes in search of help (Leporello tugs the window-frame from its hinges, and escapes still attached to both the chair and the window-frame).

Another opera to fuse serious and comic elements together was Antonio Salieri’s *Axur, re d’Ormus* (8 January
1788). The opera had initially been planned as a revision of Salieri’s recent Paris opera *Tarare* (1787) but Da Ponte found it difficult to adapt Beaumarchais’ French libretto into a suitable Italian text, so the opera was substantially rewritten and renamed. Packed with visual spectacle, French-influenced tragedy and musical kinship to opera seria, its creators distinguished it from the usual ‘opere buffe’ by calling it a ‘dramma trágico-m’. Benucci sang the title-role, a far more serious character than his usual parts (the tyrant eventually commits suicide on-stage). His arias, including ‘Idol vano d’un popol codardo’ (track 10), were designed on a concise scale, and are intriguing examples of his participation in a more solemn dramatic genre. Salieri’s annotations to the autograph score describe Axur as:

a ferocious man, without scruples. He will be dressed alla turca, if desired. The costume must be splendid, but with a combination of colours that serves as much as possible to characterize a tyrant.

Performed a hundred times in Vienna between 1788 and 1805, Salieri’s *Axur* was reputedly Joseph II’s favourite opera, but by the end of 1788 the emperor—his health worsening and in the midst of an expensive war with Turkey—announced plans to dissolve the opera buffa company. He recommended Benucci to the service of his brother (and successor) Leopold in Florence, writing to him on 18 December that: ‘In all fairness to him I have to avow that during his six years here his conduct has been entirely above reproach.’

In the event, Joseph II changed his mind and retained the Italian opera company, but in the meantime Benucci had agreed to sing with Nancy Storace in a series of performances in London (1789). Benucci obtained a leave of absence, and made his King’s Theatre debut in a revival of Giuseppe Gazzinga’s *La vendemmia*, an opera he had already sung in 1778 at Genoa, but which on this occasion included a duet interpolated from *Le nozze di Figaro* (Count Almaviva and Susanna’s ‘Cruel! perché finora’). The occasion was reported in the *Morning Post*:

Benucci, the new buffo, possesses a tolerable person, a very good voice, and considerable judgment. His voice is, however, not so good as [Giovanni] Morelli’s, nor has he so much humour as that performer, but Benucci is more of a gentleman, and is a better musician. It is, however, not proper to decide upon the merits of Benucci at first, particularly as his fame in Italy is very great.

In Vienna praise of Benucci’s qualities was more effusive. An anonymous pamphlet printed in 1790 extolled his dignified stage manner, praising that ‘only Benucci … knows how to elevate the plot with his acting and singing’. Exploiting Benucci’s capabilities was evidently on Mozart’s mind when composing the role of Guglielmo in *Cosi fan tutte* (26 January 1790). Da Ponte’s tale of two men who accept a wager to dress up as Albanians in order to test the fidelity of each other’s girlfriends (only to end up disillusioned by their varying rates of success) was intended initially for Salieri, who abandoned work on setting it to music. There is some evidence Mozart took considerable trouble over creating the large-scale aria ‘Rivolgete a lui lo sguardo’ (K584, track 4) for Guglielmo’s comic catalogue of the Albanians’ attractive merits: his boasts include references to mythical and historical figures including Narcissus, Cyclops, Croesus and Mark Antony, in a long list that alludes to Aesop’s fables and Boiardo’s fifteenth-century epic *Orlando innamorato*. Moreover, Guglielmo boasts of their skills in dancing and singing, and that he and his Albanian compatriot are without equal from Canada to Vienna; he insinuates that they also possess impressive physical attributes, which sends the sisters scurrying away in embarrassment. Notwithstanding the efforts Mozart went to in tailoring this showpiece including oboes, bassoons, trumpets and timpani for Benucci’s talents, it seems he
evaluated that the lengthy catalogue aria was unsuitable for the dramatic context of the scene. The big aria was removed during the compositional process and replaced with the more concise and functional ‘Non siate ritrosi’, in which Guglielmo’s innuendo about the size of the Albanians’ moustaches quickly breaks down into the laughing trio for the disguised men and their cynical mentor Don Alfonso. Later on in the opera, Guglielmo seduces Dorabella during a walk around the garden, and replaces her portrait of Ferrando with his own gift of a pendant heart. In their duet ‘Il core vi dono’ (track 29), Guglielmo can hardly believe his own success as he responds smoothly to Dorabella’s flirtatiousness. However, when he later reports to Ferrando of Dorabella’s fickleness, he provides cold comfort to his furious friend by opining paradoxically that he loves women, and will always defend their honour, but he is also revolted by their habit of deceiving men (‘Donne mie, la fate a tanti’, track 51).

Just under a month after the premiere of Così fan tutte, Joseph II died on 20 February 1790. He was succeeded by his brother Leopold II, who radically transformed the Vienna court opera by dismissing Da Ponte and reintroducing opera seria and ballet. In the event, Leopold only reigned for two years, and was succeeded by Francis II. Notwithstanding these drastic transitions in Viennese court life and operatic patronage, Benucci continued to flourish. By 1793–4 he was the opera buffa company’s highest-paid performer, and in 1793 the Berlinische musikalische Zeitung praised his vocal and dramatic abilities:

Benucci … combines unaffected, excellent acting with an exceptionally round, beautiful, and full bass voice. He is as much a complete singer as a choice actor. He has a rare habit that few Italian singers share: 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. I liked him particularly in the opera Il matrimonio segreto. He acts and sings the role of the Count in a masterly fashion. I wouldn’t have believed that, in spite of being a comedian, he nonetheless still manages to portray Axur by Salieri in a rather serious manner.

Benucci’s celebrated role of Count Robinson in Cimarosa’s popular masterpiece Il matrimonio segreto (1792) marked the climax of his Viennese successes. By autumn 1795 he was back in Italy; his last public opera performances at major theatres were at La Scala in Milan (1795) and Rome (1796). Thereafter, he returned to Livorno, where he gave his last known performance in 1800; he died in Florence on 5 April 1824.

This album presents a variety of scenes performed by Benucci, almost all of them from operas produced in Vienna, and mostly roles written specifically for him. The Viennese company staged seventy-five operes buffe between 1783 and 1792; only Mozart’s famous trilogy of comedies on librettos by Da Ponte have become established as popular core repertoire in the intervening centuries, but Matthew Rose and Arcangelo enable us to hear celebrated extracts from these masterpieces in the context of less familiar music for Vienna by Salieri, Paisiello and Martín y Soler. This broader view of ‘the first Figaro’ enables us to appreciate Mozart’s genius afresh, enjoy the different merits of his most talented contemporaries, and to consider the career and qualities of the most renowned buffo singer of his generation.

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GRAMOPHONE AWARD WINNER
GIOVANNI PAISIELLO (1740–1816)

1 Overture from Il re Teodoro in Venezia (Vienna, 1784)

ANTONIO SALIERI (1750–1825)

Spirti invisibili from La grotta di Trofonio, Act 1 Scene 5 (Vienna, 1785)

TROFONIO (uscendo dalla grotta) Spirti invisibili

Ch’ite per l’aere,
Di tuoni e folgori
Eccitator;
E voi di rupi
E d’antri cupi,
Voi del profondo
Centro del mondo
Al volgo incogniti
Abitator,
Restate meco
In questo speco,
D’effetti magici
Operator.

Quindi gli elettrici
Effluvi esalino,
Che i nervi e i muscoli
Urtino e scuotano,
E insinuandosi
Entro le cellule
Del molle cerebro
Sgombrin l’inzeria
E vi risveglino
Moto e vigor.

O i sensi ignavi
Offuschi e aggravi
Pesante e torpido
Crasso vapor.
E a chi s’interna
Nella caverna
Trasmuti ed alteri
Indole e umor.

Udiste? o incantamenti
Attendete più forti e più possenti?

TROFONIO (emerging from the cave) Invisible spirits

of the air,
of thunder and lightning;
and you of the rocks
and caverns dark,
who, unknown
to the common herd,
inhabit
the earth’s deep core,
stay with me
in this cavern,
artificer
of magical effects.

Let electrical
emanations be emitted,
shocking and shaking
nerves and muscles,
and insinuating themselves
into the cells
of the flaccid brain,
let them cast out inertia
and reawaken
activity and vigour.

Or let them dull the lively
senses, and induce
heavy, sluggish,
foggy vapours.

And whoever enters
the cave, let them
transmute and alter
his temperament and mood.

Did you hear? Or are you waiting for
stronger, more powerful incantations?
CORO DI SPIRITI (dal fondo della grotta)  Perché t’infochi,  
Con gridi rochi?  
Perché ci evochi  
Da i stigi lochi,  
Gran ciurmator?

TROFONIO  Se in quest’antro talun per una porta
Entri, e per l’altra sorta;  
Il tristo in gaio, e il gaio  
In tristo umor converta,  
E se all’antro poi torni e v’entri e n’esca  
Per l’opposto sentiero,  
Torni all’umor primiero.  
Così prescrive e vuole  
Il poter di mie magiche parole.

CORO DI SPIRITI  Qui stiam con irti
Orecchi a urdirti;  
Lemuri e spirti  
Ad obbedirti  
Attenti ognor.

GIOVANNI BATTISTA CASTI (1724–1803)

CHORUS OF SPIRITS (from the depths of the cave)  Why fire yourself up  
with raucous cries?  
Why have you summoned us  
from the Stygian depths,  
O great deceiver?

TROFONIO  If a person should enter this cave  
by one door and leave by the other,  
change the melancholic mood to merry  
and the merry to melancholic.  
And if he then comes back, and leaves  
through the opposite door,  
let the first mood return.  
Thus it is prescribed, and thus decreed  
by the power of my magic spells.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS  Here we are, ears  
pricked to hear you,  
ghosts and spirits  
ever attentive  
to do your will.

VICENTE MARTÍN Y SOLER (1754–1806)

Ah mal aya, a quella mano! from Una cosa rara, Act 2 Scene 11 (Vienna, 1786)

TITA  Ah mal aya, a quella mano!  
Uno schiaffo ad un serrano,  
Uno schiaffo ad un marito,  
Uno schiaffo ad un mio par!  

Por la vida de mi padre,  
Por la vida de mi madre,  
Y por vida de mí mismo,  
No lo quiero sopportar.

Qua la cappa, qua la spada, 
L’archibuso, la pistola, 
Me l’afferro per la gola.  
Cuciliada, pugnalada, 
Che stoccada, che macello!  
Y por tierra a de tumbar.

TITA  By the devil, by the hand!  
A slap for a mountaineer,  
a slap for a husband,  
a slap for a man like me!  
On my father’s life,  
on my mother’s life,  
on my own life,  
I will not put up with it.

Here the cloak, here the sword,  
the arquebus, the pistol,  
I will seize her by the throat.  
Stabbing, fighting,  
what a thrust, what a slaughter!  
And it would bring her down.
Ma una femmina a duello
Come mai si può sfidar?
Ah perché non fu qualche altra
Ch’io potea per vendicarmi
Col baciarla e ribaciarla
Da me sol giustizia farmi.
Ma la sposa non è cosa
Che dia gusto nel baciar.
Ah demonio dell’infierno
Come t’ho da castigar.
Maritati schiaffeggiati,
Se qui a caso alcun ven’ ha,
Dite voi che lo sapete
Se siam degni di pietà.
LORENZO DA PONTE (1749–1838)

NB: Da Ponte plays with mixing Italian and Spanish. He interpolates into the Italian text entire verses in Spanish (given here in italics), but misspells words that are similar in both languages; hence ‘sopportar’ (Italian) instead of ‘soportar’ (Spanish), ‘infierno’ (Spanish) instead of ‘inferno’ (Italian), and the Italian-like spellings of ‘Cuciliada’ and ‘pugnalada’ (rather than the Spanish ‘Cuchiliada’ and ‘puñalada’).

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)
Rivolgete a lui lo sguardo  K584  discarded aria from Così fan tutte, K588, Act 1 (Vienna, 1790)

GUGLIELMO  Rivolgete a lui lo sguardo
   E vedrete come sta:
   Tutto dice io gelo, io ardo;
   Idol mio, pietà pietà.
   E voi cara un sol momento
   Il bel ciglio a me volgete,
   E nel mio ritroverete
   Quel che il labbro dir non sa.

GUGLIELMO  Turn your gaze upon him and you will see how it stands:
   his body says clearly: I freeze, I burn;
   my idol, have pity, have pity.
   And you, my dear, for just a moment
   turn your lovely eyes on me,
   and in mine you will discover
   that which my lips cannot express.
Un Orlando innamorato
Non è niente in mio confronto
Un Medoro il sen piagato
Verso lui per nulla io conto:
Son di foco i miei sospiri,
Son di bronzo i suoi desiri.
Se si parla poi di merto
Certo io sono, ed egli è certo,
Che gli uguali non si trovano
Da Vienna al Canadà.
Siam due Cresi per ricchezza,
Due Narcisi per bellezza,
In amor i Marcantoni
Verso noi sarien buffoni
Siam più forti d'un Ciclopo,
Letterati al par di Esopo,
Se balliamo un Pich ne cede
Si gentil, e snello è il piede:
Se cantiam col trillo solo
Facciam torto all' uscignuolo;
E qualch'altro capitale
Abbiam poi che alcun non sa.
(Bella, bella, tengon sodo:
Se ne vanno, ed io ne godo;
Eroine di costanza,
Specchi son di fedeltà.)

LORENZO DA PONTE (1749–1838)

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)
Donne mie, la fate a tanti from Così fan tutte, K588, Act 2 (Vienna, 1790)

5
GUGLIELMO Donne mie, la fate a tanti,
Che, se il ver vi deggio dir,
Se si lagnano gli amanti
Li comincio a compatir.

GUGLIELMO My ladies, you fool so many men,
that, to tell the truth,
when lovers complain about you
I've begun to sympathize.
Io vo’ bene al sesso vostro,
Lo sapete, ognun lo sa:
Ogni giorno ve lo mostro,
Vido segno d’amista.
Ma quel farla a tanti e tanti
M’avvilisce in verità.
Mille volte il brando presi
Per salvar il vostro onor.
Mille volte vi difesi,
Colla bocca e più col cor.
Ma quel farla a tanti e tanti
È un vizietto seccator.
Siete vaghe, siete amabili,
Più tesori il ciel vi diè,
E le grazie vi circondano
Dalla testa sino ai piè.
Ma la fate a tanti e tanti
Che credibile non è.
Che se gridano gli amanti
Hanno certo un gran perchè.

LORENZO DA PONTE (1749–1838)

I think the world of womankind,
you know that, everyone does.
Every day I show you
proof of my friendship.
But the way you play with so many men
repulses me to tell the truth.
I’ve taken up the cudgels
a thousand times to protect your honour.
A thousand times I’ve defended you
with my words and even more with my heart.
But the way you play with so many men
is a tiresome vice.
You are pretty and lovable,
with many gifts from heaven,
you are girded with charms
from head to foot.
But you play with so many men
that it’s beyond belief.
If lovers complain
they most certainly have good reason.

VICENTE MARTÍN Y SOLER

In quegli anni from Una cosa rara, Act 1 Scene 12 (Vienna, 1786)

TITA In quegli anni in cui soleva
Ir le capre a pascolar,
Mio bisnonno mi dicea,
Ch’era un uomo d’altro affar:
‘Figlio mio, la donna è foco,
Guarda ben, non t’accostar.’

Io ripien de’ detti suoi
Per paura d’abbruciarmi,
Donne mie lontan da voi
Procurava di restar.
Ma un istinto naturale
Superò l’educazion,
E trovai che male, male
Predicava quel buffon.

TITA In those years when I used
to take the goats to pasture,
my great-grandfather, a man
of a different stripe, used to say:
‘My son, women are like fire,
be on your guard, stay well away.’

I, mindful of his advice,
for fear of being burnt,
my ladies, I endeavoured
to keep away from you.
But a natural instinct
overrode his teaching,
and I found that the old clown
had preached a pack of lies.
Qual farfalla, pian pianino,  
Pria cercai girarvi intorno:  
Poi mi feci più vicino  
Ed osai toccarvi un giorno,  
E sentendo che la pelle  
Delle dita tenerelle  
Non abbrucia, ma diletta,  
Volli far per voi vendetta  
Con amarvi e rispettarvi  
E con darvi questo cor.  
Non credete? ... non credete?  
Alle prove, o donne care,  
Tutto, tutto io voglio fare  
Per provarvi un vero amor.  
LORENZO DA PONTE (1749–1838)

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)

Overture from *Don Giovanni*, K527 (Prague, 1787)

Recitativo

LEPORELLO Eh consolatevi — Madamina, il catalogo è questo  
non siete voi, non foste, e non sarete  
né la prima, né l’ultima; guardate  
questo non picciol libro: è tutto pieno  
dei nomi di sue belle;  
ogni villa, ogni borgo, ogni paese  
è testimon di sue donnesche imprese.

Aria

LEPORELLO Madamina, il catalogo è questo  
Delle belle che amò il padron mio,  
Un catalogo egli è che ho fatt’io,  
Osservate, leggete con me.  
In Italia seicento e quaranta,  
In Lamagna duecento e trent’una,  
Cento in Francia, in Turchia novant’una,  
Ma in Ispagna son già mille e tre.

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)

Eh consolatevi — Madamina, il catalogo è questo from *Don Giovanni*, K527, Act 1 (Vienna, 1788)

LEPORELLO Well, take it easy:  
you are not, were not, will not be  
the first or last. See here!  
This fair-sized tome is packed  
with the names of his lady-friends.  
Every village, every town and every country  
bears witness to his deeds of dalliance.

LEPORELLO Little lady, this is the record  
of the beauties my master has loved;  
’tis a catalogue that I myself compiled.  
Come closer, read it with me.

In Italy six hundred and forty,  
in Germany two hundred and thirty-one,  
one hundred in France, in Turkey ninety-one,  
but in Spain—so far—one thousand and three.
V’han fra queste contadine, 
Camerei e cittadine, 
V’han contesse, baronesse, 
Marchesane, principesse, 
E v’han donne d’ogni grado, 
D’ogni forma, d’ogni età.

Nella bionda egli ha l’usanza 
Di lodar la gentilezza, 
Nella bruna la costanza, 
Nella bianca la dolcezza.

Vuol d’inverno la grassotta, 
Vuol d’estate la magrotta; 
È la grande maestosa, 
La piccina è ognor vezzosa . . .

Delle vecchie fa conquista, 
Pel piacer di porle in lista; 
Ma passion predominante 
È la giovin principiante.

Non si picca se sia ricca, 
Se sia brutta, se sia bella: 
Purché porti la gonnella, 
Voi sapete quel che fa.

LORENZO DA PONTE (1749–1838)

ANTONIO SALIERI (1750–1825)

Idol vano d’un popol codardo from Axur, re d’Ormus, Act 5 Scene 1 (Vienna, 1788)

AXUR  Idol vano d’un popol codardo, 
Sì odioso al mio cor, al mio sguardo; 
Ho pur vinto, morir ti vedrò! 
Ah ch’èccesso di gioia in me sento 
Nel pensare che giusto divento 
Nel momento che ucciderti fo! 

LORENZO DA PONTE (1749–1838)

AXUR  Vain idol of a lily-livered people, 
so hateful to my heart and to my sight, 
although I’ve won, I’ve yet to see you die! 
Ah, what excess of joy I feel 
thinking that I shall be justified 
the moment I strike you dead!
Oime! che innanzi agli occhi — Penso, che per morire
from *I contrattempi*, Act 2 Scene 12 (Venice, 1778)

**Recitativo**

11 FRASCONIO Oime! che innanzi agli occhi
parmi veder la morte,
che con l’adunca falce mi si vuole avventar.
Fermati … ah lascia …
da me m’ucciderò.
Ma poi … ah gelo nel solo pensarlo!
Eppur converrà farlo!
Ma chi lo dice?
Oime! Giunta è l’ora fatal!
Èbbene si mora
e si mora da forte qual Catone,
ora non sidura ch’io son Poltrone.

**Aria**

12 FRASCONIO Penso, che per morire
Ci vuol tre cose almeno
Un ferro, od un Veleno,
Coraggio e volontà.
Il ferro non mi manca,
Coraggio ne ho di troppo
Ma nasce un bell’intoppo,
Manca la volontà.
Coraggio da Leone
M’uccido; o non m’uccido;
È meglio esser poltrone
È meglio di campar.
Si mora … il passo è duro!
Coraggio. Amici, addio,
Addio Frasconio mio
Già sento replicar.
Ecco Frasconio è morto.
È morto un cavolo il mio Bisavolo,
Sen vada tutto al Diavolo,
Mi voglio conservar.
La pancia per i fichi
Io penso di salvar.

**FRASCONIO** Alas! Before my very eyes
death seems to have appeared,
threatening me with his scythe.
Stop! … Ah, hold your hand …
I’ll do the deed myself.
But then … Ah, the very thought makes my blood run cold!
Yet it must be done!
But who says so?
Alas! The fatal hour has come! So I shall die,
but die resolutely, like Cato,
it shall not be said that I am a coward.

**FRASCONIO** I’m thinking that to kill oneself
one needs at least three things:
a blade or poison,
courage and willpower.
The blade I have,
of courage more than enough,
but there’s a stumbling-block:
the willpower is lacking.
Brave as a lion,
I’ll kill myself … or not:
It’s better to be a coward,
it’s better to stay alive.
To die … It’s a drastic step!
Be brave! My friends, farewell.
Farewell, dear Frasconio,
I hear them reply.
So Frasconio is dead …
Dead? A fig for the ancestors,
may they all go to the devil,
I want to keep myself alive.
My stomach I intend
to save for figs.
WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)

Overture from *Le nozze di Figaro*, K492 (Vienna, 1786)

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)

Bravo, signor padrone! — Se vuol ballare from *Le nozze di Figaro*, K492, Act 1 Scene 2 (Vienna, 1786)

Recitativo

FIGARO Bravo, signor padrone! Ora incomincio a capir il mistero, e a veder schietto tutto il vostro progetto! A Londra, è vero? Voi ministro, io corriero, e la Susanna ... segreta ambasciatrice! Non sarà, non sarà—Figaro il dice!

Cavatina

FIGARO Se vuol ballare, signor contino, Il chitarrino le suonerò, sì. Se vuol venire nella mia scuola, La capriola le insegnèrò, sì. Saprò, ma piano, meglio ogni arcano Dissimulando scoprir potrò. L'arte schermendo, l'arte adoprando, Di quà punendo, di là scherzando, Tutte le macchine rovescierò.

LORENZO DA PONTE (1749–1838)

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)

Tutto è disposto — Aprite un po' quegli occhi from *Le nozze di Figaro*, K492, Act 4 Scene 8 (Vienna, 1786)

Recitativo

FIGARO Tutto è disposto: l'ora dovrebbe esser vicina; io sento gente ... è dessa! Non è alcun; buia è la notte ... ed io comincio omai a fare il scimunito mestiero di marito. Ingrata!
Nel momento della mia cerimonia
ei godeva leggendo:
e nel vederlo io rideva
di me senza saperlo.
Oh Susanna! Susanna!
Quanta pena mi costi!
Con quell’ingenua faccia,
con quelgli occhi innocenti,
chi creduto l’avria? Ah!
Che il fidarsi a donna, è ognor follia.

Oh Susanna! Susanna!
Quanta pena mi costi!
Con quell’ingenua faccia,
con quelgli occhi innocenti,
chi creduto l’avria? Ah!
Che il fidarsi a donna, è ognor follia.

**Aria**

*FIGARO* Aprite un po’ quegli occhi,
Uomini incauti e sciocchi,
Guardate queste femmine,
Guardate cosa son!
Queste chiamate dee
Dagli ingannati sensi,
A cui tributa incensi
La debole ragion.
Son streghe che incantano
Per farci penar,
Sirene che cantano
Per farci affogar,
Civette che allettano
Per trarci le piume,
Comete che brillano
Per toglieri il lume.
Son rose spinose
Son volpi vezzose;
Son orse benigne,
Colombe maligne,
Maestre d’inganni,
Amiche d’affanni,
Che fingono, mentono,
Amore non senton,
Non senton pietà,
No, no, no, no no!
Il resto no dico,
Già ognuno lo sa.

**FIGARO**

During my actual wedding ceremony, he smiled as he read the note: and watching him I laughed unknowingly at myself! O Susanna! Susanna! How you make me suffer! Seeing that childlike face, those seemingly guileless eyes, who would have believed it? Ah! To have faith in a woman is always sheer folly.
WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)

**Ehi, sor paggio! — Non più andrai** from *Le nozze di Figaro*, K492, Act 1 Scene 8, with alternative recitative (Vienna, 1786)

**Recitativo**

**FIGARO** Ehi, sor paggio!  
Oh, perdoni: sbagliai. Sor capitano!  
Ora si cangia la sua paggeria  
in uffiziale di cavalleria.  
Oh, che bel militare!  
Gran figura vuol fare,  
sbarbato, profumato e disinvolto.  
Ma a quel leggiadro volto  
or convien cera brusca ed occhio fiero:  
non sei più Ganimede, or sei guerriero!

**Aria**

**FIGARO** Non più andrai, farfallone amoroso,  
Notte e giorno d’intorno girando,  
Delle belle turbando il riposo,  
Narcisetto, Adoncino d’amor.  
Non più avrai questi bei penacchini,  
Quel cappello leggerio e galante,  
Quella chioma, quell’aria brillante,  
Quel vermiglio donnesco color!  
Fra guerrieri, poffar Bacco!  
Gran mustacchi, stretto sacco,  
Schioppo in spalla, sciabla al fianco,  
Collo dritto, muso franco,  
Un gran casco, o un gran turbante,  
Molto onor, poco contante.  
Ed in vece del fandango  
Una marcia per il fango.  
Per montagne, per valloni,  
Con le nevi, e i solioni,  
Al concerto di tromboni,  
Di bombarde, di cannoni,  
Che le palle in tutti i tuoni,  
All’orecchio fan fischiar.  
Cherubino, alla vittoria!  
Alla gloria militar!

**LORENZO DA PONTE (1749–1838)**

**FIGARO** Ah, milord the page!  
Oh, forgive me: my mistake. Milord the captain!  
Your status as page has now mutated  
to that of cavalry officer.  
Oh what a fine military man!  
What a fine figure he would cut,  
clean-shaven, perfumed and jaunty.  
But that pretty face now needs  
a haughty expression and a rolling eye.  
A ladies’ man no more, you’re now a warrior!

**FIGARO** No more will you go, like an amorous moth,  
night and day flitting here, flitting there,  
disturbing the ladies’ beauty sleep,  
narcissistic young Adonis of love.  
You’ll be shorn of those fine plumes,  
will lose your cap so gay and jaunty,  
your flowing locks, that dashing air;  
cheeks as pink as any girl’s!  
One of the soldiers now, by Jove!  
Bushy moustache, tight-fitting tunic,  
rifle on shoulder, sabre on hip,  
head held high, bold expression,  
lots of glory, little cash.  
Instead of dancing the fandango  
you’ll be marching through the mud,  
over mountains, through deep valleys,  
chilled by snow and scorched by sun,  
to an orchestra of blunderbusses,  
bombards, cannonades,  
thundering with a mighty roar  
as bullets whistle past your ears.  
Cherubino, on to victory!  
On to glory in the field!
WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)

Il core vi dono from Così fan tutte, K588, Act 2 (Vienna, 1790)

*Duetto*

20

GUGLIELMO Il core vi dono, bell’idolo mio;  
Ma il vostro vo’ anch’io, via dateolo a me.

DORABELLA Mel date lo prendo, ma il mio non vi rendo,  
Invan me’l chiedete, più meco ei non è.

GUGLIELMO Se teco non l’aii perchè batte qui?  
DORABELLA Se a me tu lo dai che mai balza li?

DORABELLA, GUGLIELMO È il mio coricino  
Che più non è meco,  
Ei venne a star teco, ei batte così.

DORABELLA Ei lascia che il metta.

DORABELLA Ei qui non può star.

GUGLIELMO T’intendo, furbetta.

DORABELLA Che fai?

GUGLIELMO Non guardar.

DORABELLA (Nel petto un Vesuvio d’amore mi par.)

GUGLIELMO (Ferrando meschino, possibil non par.)

LORENZO DA PONTE (1749–1838)
WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)

Restati quà! — Per queste tue manine  K540b, interpolated aria (Vienna, 1788) from Don Giovanni, K527

Recitativo

21

ZERLINA  Restati qua!
LEPORELLO  Per carità, Zerlina!
ZERLINA  Eh! non c’è carità pei pari tuoi.
LEPORELLO  Dunque cavar mi vuoi?
ZERLINA  I capelli, la testa, il cor e gli occhi!
LEPORELLO  Sentì, carina mia!
ZERLINA  Guai se mi tocchi!
Vedrai, schiuma de’ birbi, qual premio n’ha chi le ragazze ingiuria.
LEPORELLO  (Liberatemi, o Dei, da questa furia!)
ZERLINA  Masetto, olà, Masetto!
LEPORELLO  Fa piano, per pietà! Non trascinarmi a coda di cavallo!
ZERLINA  Vedrai, vedrai come finisce il ballo!
Presto qua quella sedia!
LEPORELLO  Eccola!
ZERLINA  Siedi!
LEPORELLO  Stanco non son.
ZERLINA  Siedi, o con queste mani ti strappo il cor e poi lo getto ai cani.
LEPORELLO  Siedo, ma tu, di grazia, metti giù quel rasoio mi vuoi forse sbarbar?
ZERLINA  Si, mascalzone!
Io sbarbare ti vo’ senza sapone.
LEPORELLO  Eterni Dei!
ZERLINA  Dammi la man!
LEPORELLO  La mano?
ZERLINA L'altra!
LEPORELLO Ma che vuoi farmi?
ZERLINA Voglio far … voglio far quello che parmi!

Duetto

LEPORELLO Per queste tue manine
Candide e tenerelle,
Per questa fresca pelle,
Abbi pietà di me!
ZERLINA Non v'è pietà, briccone;
Son una tigre irata,
Un aspide, un leone.
No, no, non v'è pietà.
LEPORELLO Ah! Di fuggir si provi!
ZERLINA Sei morto se ti movi!
LEPORELLO Barbari, ingiusti Dei!
In mano di costei chi capitar mi fe'?
ZERLINA Barbaro traditore!
Del tuo padrone il core avessi qui con te!
LEPORELLO Deh! non mi stringer tanto,
L'anima mia sen va!
ZERLINA Sen vada, sen vada o resti,
Intanto non partirai di qua!
LEPORELLO Che strette, o Dei, che botte!
E giorno, ovver è notte?
Che scosse di tremuoto!
Che buia oscurità!
ZERLINA Di gioia e di diletto
Sento brillarmi il petto.
Così, così, cogli uomini,
Così, così si fa!
LORENZO DA PONTE (1749–1838)
MATTHEW ROSE

British bass Matthew Rose studied at the Curtis Institute of Music before becoming a member of the Young Artist Programme at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. In 2006 he made an acclaimed debut at the Glyndebourne Festival as Bottom in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*—for which he received the John Christie Award—and has since sung the role at La Scala, Covent Garden, Opéra National de Lyon, Houston Grand Opera and at the Metropolitan Opera, New York. He has sung Talbot (*Maria Stuarda*) and Colline (*La bohème*) for the Metropolitan Opera; Sparafucile (*Rigoletto*), Sarastro (*Die Zauberflöte*) and Talbot at Covent Garden; Leporello (*Don Giovanni*), Nick Shadow (*The Rake’s Progress*), Callistene (*Poliuto*) and Collatinus (*The Rape of Lucretia*) at Glyndebourne Festival; Claggart (*Billy Budd*) at English National Opera; Mozart’s Figaro for Welsh National Opera, Opéra de Lille, and the Bayerische Staatsoper, Munich; Leporello at the Deutsche Oper, Berlin; and Henry VIII (*Anna Bolena*) at Opéra National de Bordeaux.

In concert he has appeared at the Edinburgh Festival, BBC Proms and the Mostly Mozart Festival in New York. His engagements include the LSO with Sir Colin Davis, Daniel Harding and Michael Tilson Thomas; the Los Angeles Philharmonic with Gustavo Dudamel; the Dresden Staatskapelle with Sir Charles Mackerras; the BBC Symphony Orchestra with Sir Andrew Davis, Jiří Belohlávek and Marc Minkowski; the LPO with Yannick Nézet-Séguin; L’Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique with Sir John Eliot Gardiner; the Boston Symphony Orchestra with Charles Dutoit; and the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia with Sir Antonio Pappano.

Matthew Rose’s recital appearances include the Brighton, Chester and Cheltenham international festivals, and at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, London’s Wigmore Hall, and the Kennedy Center, Washington.

Already a prolific recording artist his recordings include a critically acclaimed *Winterreise* with pianist Gary Matthewsman and *Schwanengesang* with Malcolm Martineau; Walter (*Guillaume Tell*) and Der Steuermann (*Tristan und Isolde*) with Pappano; Ratcliffe (*Billy Budd*, winner of a Grammy Award) with Harding; bel canto arias with Natalie Dessay and Evelino Pidò; Handel’s *Messias* with Stephen Cleobury and the Choir of King’s College, Cambridge; Tippett’s *A Child of our Time* and Berlioz’s *L’enfance du Christ* with Sir Colin Davis; and Liszt Lieder with Iain Burnside. His roles on DVD include Nick Shadow (*The Rake’s Progress*) and Mr Flint (*Billy Budd*) from Glyndebourne, and Polyphemus (*Acis and Galatea*) from Covent Garden.

This is Matthew Rose’s first recording for Hyperion.
Jonathan Cohen is one of Britain’s finest young musicians. He has forged a remarkable career with notable success as a conductor, cellist and keyboardist. He is well known for his passion and commitment to chamber music which he expands to diverse activities such as Baroque opera and the Classical symphonic repertoire. He is the Artistic Director of Arcangelo, Associate Conductor of Les Arts Florissants and Artistic Director of the Tetbury Music Festival.

Alongside his busy guest conducting career, Jonathan directs his own ensemble Arcangelo with whom he performs regularly throughout Europe at some of the most highly regarded festivals and concert halls. Jonathan and Arcangelo have recorded a wide range of music, from Porpora and Handel to Gluck and Mozart, including albums for Hyperion with soloists Iestyn Davies and Christopher Purves.

After finishing his studies at Clare College, Cambridge, Jonathan began his career establishing himself as a cellist. He performed as guest principal with many of the UK’s foremost orchestras and ensembles, both symphonic and ‘historical’. With this experience Jonathan developed a unique crossover specialism in the field of early music and an interest in period instruments. He was a founder member of The London Haydn Quartet, and continues to cherish performing chamber music with friends and colleagues.
Arcangelo brings together some of the world’s finest musicians who excel on both historical and modern instruments under the direction of their founder, artistic director and conductor Jonathan Cohen. Its players believe that the collaboration required in chamber music is the highest expression of what it means to make music, and Arcangelo attracts an outstanding calibre of performers who already have flourishing solo and chamber music careers. These are performers of dazzling technical ability, but they also have a passion for faithful interpretation that goes far beyond historical understanding.

violin 1 Matthew Truscott (leader), Kati Debretzeni, Michael Gurevich, Ken Aiso, Iona Davies, Meret Lüthi
violin 2 Cecilia Bernardini (principal), Johannes Pramsohler, Marcus Barcham-Stevens, Roy Mowatt, James Toll
viola James Boyd (principal), Rebecca Jones, Aliye Cornish, Emma Alter
cello Piroska Baranyay (principal), Sarah McMahon, Andrew Skidmore
double bass Tim Amherst (principal), Alexandra Scott, Cecilia Bruggemeyer (tracks 1 & 5)
flute Rachel Brown, Katy Bircher oboe Xenia Löffler, Frances Norbury
clarinet Jane Booth, Sarah Smith bassoon Peter Whelan, Philip Turbett
French horn Roger Montgomery, Martin Lawrence trumpet Neil Brough, Paul Sharp
timpani Alan Emslie keyboard Steven Devine
chorus (track 2)
tenor David De Winter, Nicholas Madden
bass William Gaunt, Stephen Kennedy, Benjamin Lewis, Jon Stainsby
director Jonathan Cohen

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Front illustration: The Sense of Taste (c1744–7) by Philippe Mercier (1689–1760)
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