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*Lowell Lindgren*      The Correspondence of Agostino Steffani and Giuseppe Riva,  
*and*                              1720–1728, and Related Correspondence with J.P.F. von  
*Colin Timms*                Schönborn and S.B. Pallavicini

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*To*  
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L. L., C. T.

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<i>B-Bc</i>	Brussels, Conservatoire Royal de Musique, Bibliothèque
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<i>D-Mbs</i>	Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Musikabteilung
<i>D-WD</i>	Wiesentheid, Musiksammlung des Grafen von Schönborn-Wiesentheid
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<i>GB-Lbl</i>	London, British Library
<i>GB-Lcm</i>	London, Royal College of Music, Library
<i>GB-Lgc</i>	London, Gresham College Library, Guildhall Library
<i>GB-Ob</i>	Oxford, Bodleian Library
<b>ITALY</b>	
<i>I-MOe</i>	Modena, Biblioteca estense universitaria
<i>I-Rscge</i>	Rome, Sacra Congregatio pro Gentium Evangelizatione seu de Propaganda Fide, Archivio

**THE CORRESPONDENCE OF  
AGOSTINO STEFFANI AND GIUSEPPE RIVA, 1720–1728,  
AND RELATED CORRESPONDENCE WITH  
J.P.F. VON SCHÖNBORN AND S.B. PALLAVICINI**

LOWELL LINDGREN AND COLIN TIMMS

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The 'Venetian' composer Agostino Steffani and the Modenese diplomat Giuseppe Riva became acquainted at Hanover in 1719. Steffani had first resided there between 1688 and 1703, when he served the Hanoverian Duke Ernst August and his son Georg Ludwig as a musician and special envoy (he went to Vienna, for example, to negotiate the elevation of Hanover to an electorate, a distinction approved by the emperor in 1692). He had been ordained a Catholic priest at Munich in 1680, received a sinecure appointment as an abbot in 1683 and been made an apostolic prothonotary by 1695. His diplomatic and evangelical achievements on behalf of the church were recognized in 1706, when he was named Bishop of Spiga, and 1709, when he was appointed Apostolic Vicar of North Germany. His home in 1703–9 was in Düsseldorf, where he served as chief councillor to Johann Wilhelm, the Catholic Elector Palatine,<sup>1</sup> but in November 1709 he returned to Hanover, a Lutheran city in Lower Saxony nearer the centre of his extensive vicariate.<sup>2</sup>

In 1714 Elector Georg Ludwig became King George I, the first Hanoverian ruler of Great Britain. He hoped to return each summer to his beloved Hanover, where he continued as elector; but problems in Britain, caused chiefly by supporters of the Stuart claimant to the throne, restricted such summer visits to the years 1716, 1719, 1720, 1723 and 1725. During each visit, foreign diplomats at the London court were instructed to attend him in Hanover. Among these diplomats was Riva, who had arrived in England in May 1715,<sup>3</sup> when he served as secretary to a noble ambassador from the duchy of Modena. In 1718–29 Riva alone represented the duchy in Britain.<sup>4</sup> In his correspondence with Giovanni Giacomo Zamboni he revealed his passionate interest in music, his constant involvement with musicians and musical affairs, and his attendance upon the king at Hanover in July–October 1719, July–October 1720, August–December 1723 and July–December 1725.<sup>5</sup> Although

<sup>1</sup> See Giorgio Maria Rapparini, *Le portrait du vrai mérite, dans la personne serenissime de Monseigneur l'Electeur Palatin... exposé le jour du nom de Son Altesse Elect. l'An 1709*, ed. Hermine Kühn-Steinhausen, *Die Rapparini-Handschrift der Landes- und Stadt-Bibliothek Düsseldorf* (Düsseldorf, 1958), 25, and summary in Gerhard Croll, 'Musikgeschichtliches aus Rapparinis Johann-Wilhelm-Manuskript (1709)', *Musikforschung*, 11 (1958), 262. Medallion 7/8 in Rapparini provides a portrait of Steffani with a four-line Latin poem that describes him as without peer ('Tota parit non mihi terra parem'). For a fine portrait of 1714, see Wilhelm Kohl, 'Ein unbekanntes Porträt des Barockmusikers Agostino Steffani (1654–1728)', in *Museum- und Kulturgeschichte: Festschrift für Wilhelm Hansen*, ed. Martha Bringemeier, Paul Pieper, Bruno Schier and Günter Wiegmann (Münster, 1978), 401; Colin Timms, in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (2nd edn, ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell, London, 2001) [henceforth *New Grove 2*], xxiv, 317; and *idem*, *Polymath of the Baroque: Agostino Steffani and His Music* (New York, 2003), frontispiece.

<sup>2</sup> For a summary of Steffani's career in Hanover and Düsseldorf, see Timms, *Polymath*, 42–4 and 50–135, and *idem* in *New Grove 2*, xxiv, 315–21. For a detailed account of Steffani's diplomatic activity in Hanover, see Claudia Kaufold, *Ein Musiker als Diplomat: Abbé Agostino Steffani in hannoverschen Diensten (1688–1703)* (Bielefeld, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> In a letter dated Rome, 8 June 1715 (*J-MOe* Campori Z.4.3), Giovanni Battista Primoli, the Viennese ambassador's secretary, thanked Riva for his letter, dated London, 13 May 1715.

<sup>4</sup> Friedrich Hausmann, *Repertorium der diplomatischen Vertreter aller Länder seit dem Westfälischen Frieden (1648)*, 2: 1716–1763 (Zürich, 1950), 225.

<sup>5</sup> Lowell Lindgren, 'Musicians and Librettists in the Correspondence of Gio. Giacomo Zamboni (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MSS Rawlinson Letters 116–138)', *Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle*, 24 (1991), nos. 35a–196, *passim*. Zamboni was a Florentine businessman and diplomat who resided in London.

he presumably met Steffani in 1719, only a single piece of evidence supports this idea. It is found in a letter addressed to Riva in Hanover by the poet Paolo Antonio Rolli in Richmond, 'il non so quanti d'agosto 1719' ('I don't know which day of August 1719'). Rolli reports that 'huge Heidegger has slept for two nights in your bed; he sang duets by Steffani at the residence of the Princess [of Wales]' ('l'Eiddegherrone à dormito due notti nel vostro letto; cantò i duetti dello Stefani dalla Principessa'). Johann Jakob Heidegger, manager of operatic productions at the King's Theatre, perhaps sang the duets with one of the four singers who, according to Rolli, were in Richmond: the castrato Benedetto Baldassari and three young women who were then being taught by the harpsichordist and composer Pietro Giuseppe Sandoni.<sup>6</sup> Rolli presumably mentioned Steffani because Riva had discussed the composer in at least one of his letters from Hanover.

The most joyous and festive of King George's visits to Hanover was that of 1720.<sup>7</sup> It was on 2 December 1720, shortly after he had returned from Hanover to London, that Riva began corresponding with Steffani (see Ill. 4). The fifty extant letters that they wrote to each other during the next eight years are given below in English translation, then in the original Italian or French, followed by editorial commentaries. They are supplemented by five related letters, four of which were addressed to Steffani, while the fifth was forwarded to him by Riva. These fifty-five are preceded by twenty-one related letters. The first eleven show how Steffani and Riva cooperated in 1721 in the search for singers for the court and chapel of Johann Philipp Franz von Schönborn, bishop of Würzburg. The remaining ten demonstrate how Riva and Stefano Benedetto Pallavicini, the librettist of Steffani's last two operas, *Arminio* (Düsseldorf, 1707) and *Tassilone* (Düsseldorf, 1709), collaborated in 1720 by negotiating with singers for the new Royal Academy of Music in London, then corresponded in 1723 about a tragedy (for music?) that Pallavicini was writing. The remainder of this introduction sets the scene for these letters by briefly discussing the careers of Steffani, Pallavicini, Schönborn and Riva, the notable features of the Steffani–Riva correspondence, and the involvement of Steffani and Riva with the Academy of Vocal Music in London.

### 1. Agostino Steffani (1654–1728)

When Steffani left Hanover in 1703, he effectively abandoned his career as a professional musician. Thereafter he composed few new works (*Arminio* of 1707, for example, is a pasticcio of previously composed pieces).<sup>8</sup> As the letters below amply demonstrate, however, he nevertheless remained actively interested in music and musicians up to a month before he died at the age of seventy-three. Indeed, it may be that his acquaintance and correspondence with Riva served to revitalize his interest in music, so that it figured more prominently in the last seven years of his life than it had during the preceding decade.

As Apostolic Vicar of North Germany, Steffani was responsible for the affairs of the Catholic church in Brunswick, Brandenburg/Prussia and the Palatinate.<sup>9</sup> His usual duties included the super-

vision of religious houses and missions and the monitoring of their finances. His extraordinary accomplishments included the foundation of two new missions, the construction of two new churches and the conversion to Catholicism of two prominent rulers, Duke Anton Ulrich of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel (in 1710) and Crown-Prince Friedrich August of Saxony (secretly, in 1712). But his tenure as vicar was increasingly overshadowed by financial worries, which led to his persistent attempts to lay hands on income that had been intended for him but which he did not receive.

This income was to be provided largely by benefices from two abbeys, one in Seltz and the other at San Stefano in Carrara. The town of Seltz, on the west bank of the Rhine, lay in the bailiwick of Gemersheim and the diocese of Strasburg. In 1692 its abbey was incorporated by the cardinal-bishop of Strasburg into the local Jesuit college. Under the terms of the peace of Ryswick (1697) the income of its provostship was split: two-thirds went to the Jesuits and the remainder to the Elector Palatine, to whom Gemersheim, also, was restored. This division and assignment of the revenues made it almost impossible for the provost, Steffani, to obtain any funds from the benefice.<sup>10</sup> The papal bull that granted him the abbacy of San Stefano in Carrara, which was situated between Padua and Rovigo, was issued in September 1709.<sup>11</sup> Like his predecessor, Cardinal Francesco Maria de' Medici, Steffani employed a Florentine abbot, Francesco Mori, as his agent in Carrara. He soon realized, however, that he was not receiving the income due to him. He therefore enlisted two old school-friends, the librettist and architect Count Girolamo Frigimelica-Roberti and Abbot Angelo Maria Lazzara, to investigate Mori's chicanery. Since their best efforts came to naught, Steffani resigned from this benefice around 1719.<sup>12</sup>

Because of such difficulties, which had mounted during his ten years as apostolic vicar, Steffani was eager to resign from his vicariate and return to his home land. On 30 April 1720 he wrote that 'it did not please His Holiness [Clement XI] to grant me the grace that I have requested so insistently and constantly over the course of more than six months, to let me enjoy a little repose after so many travails, and allow me to live for myself after having lived fifty-five years for others' (see letter C, below, penultimate paragraph). Although he had been born in Castelfranco, on Venetian *terra firma*, he had been to school in Padua and had always regarded Padua as his home town ('paese'). He had left Padua at the age of thirteen to serve Elector Ferdinand Maria of Bavaria, and did not return to reside in his 'paese' until 1722, precisely fifty-five years later. By then he had written his first fifteen letters to Riva. All but two of them in some way concern Abbot Giovanni Troisio, his agent in Rome.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, Steffani may have begun and continued his correspondence with Riva partly because the latter assisted his campaign for a post for Troisio at the court of the duke and duchess of Lorraine. King George, Madame d'Orléans, Count Bothmer, Baron Schack and Abbot Sommier all played a part in this quest, which presumably had both political and financial motives. Although such motives are not explained, it seems likely that Steffani could not afford to pay Troisio a salary and therefore sought to find him a master who could. In one of the letters that does not concern Troisio (no. 15, dated 12 August 1721; see Ill. 6), Steffani reports that he has sent his secretary, Giuseppe Bossis, to Rome, undoubtedly on a quest for the income due to him: 'seeing myself despoiled by all parties, for the sole reason that absentees are always in the wrong. . . I have finally come to the

<sup>6</sup> Lindgren, 'Zamboni', no. 38a.

<sup>7</sup> Ragnhild M. Hatton, *George I, Elector and King* (London, 1978), 158 and 160–1.

<sup>8</sup> See Gerhard Croll, 'Zur Chronologie der "Düsseldorfer" Opern Agostino Steffanis', in *Festschrift Karl Gustav Fellerer zum sechzigsten Geburtstag*, ed. Heinrich Hüsch (Regensburg, 1962), 82–7. For evidence that Steffani contributed to *Arminio*, see Timms, *Polymath*, 240–5.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Franz Wilhelm Woker, *Agostino Steffani, Bischof von Spiga i. p. i., apostolischer Vikar von Norddeutschland, 1709–1728*, Dritte Vereinsschrift der Görresgesellschaft (Cologne, 1886). On the general context, see *idem*, *Aus norddeutschen Missionen des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts. Franciscaner, Dominikaner und andere Missionare* (Cologne, 1884); *idem*, *Geschichte der katholischen Kirche und Gemeinde in Hannover und Celle: Ein weiterer Beitrag zur Kirchengeschichte Norddeutschlands nach der Reformation* (Paderborn, 1889); Anton Pieper, *Die Propaganda Congregation und die nordischen Missionen im siebzehnten Jahrhundert: Aus den Akten des Propaganda Archivs und des Vatikanischen Geheimarchivs dargestellt*, Zweite Vereinsschrift der Görresgesellschaft (Cologne, 1886); Paul Wittichen, 'Zur Geschichte des apostolischen Vikariats des Norden zu Beginn des 18. Jahrhunderts', *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, 6 (1904), 343–67; Johannes Metzler, *Die apostolischen Vikariate des Nordens: Ihre Entstehung, ihre Entwicklung und ihre Verwalter*.

*Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der nordischen Missionen* (Paderborn, 1919); and Hermann Tüchle, 'Mitarbeiter und Probleme in Deutschland und in Skandinavien', in *Sacra Congregationis de Propaganda Fide, Memoria Rerum: 350 Jahre im Dienste der Weltmission, 1622–1972, 2: 1700–1815*, ed. J[osef] Metzler (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1973), 647–79.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Franz Wilhelm Woker, 'Der apostolische Vikar des deutschen Nordens Agostino Steffani, Bischof von Spiga, und die Abtei Seltz', *Der katholische Seelsorger*, 11 (1899), 425–36, 468–79 and 514–24.

<sup>11</sup> See Pietro Ceoldo, *Memorie della chiesa ed abbazia di S. Stefano di Carrara nella diocesi di Padova* (Venice, 1802), 267–9.

<sup>12</sup> The year is implied by a document of 12 January 1725 in *I-Rscge Fondo Spiga*, vol. 7. Steffani discussed his difficulties with Mori in a letter of 31 July 1716 to Lorenzo Soranzo, printed in Josef Loschelder, 'Aus Düsseldorf's italienischer Zeit: Römische Quellen zu Agostino Steffanis Leben', *Beiträge zur rheinischen Musikgeschichte*, 1: *Beiträge zur Musikgeschichte der Stadt Düsseldorf* (1952), 26–7. Both the document and the letter are discussed in Timms, *Polymath*, 114–16.

<sup>13</sup> See below, nos. 3, 4, 6, 9, 11, 13, 16, 18, 20–2, 24 and 26, for those that discuss Troisio. Only nos. 8 and 15 do not mention him.

conclusion that it is necessary to adopt the one way that still remains open to me to try to make certain truths clear and to be in a position myself to take proper measures’.

The way he adopted in 1722 was to leave Hanover and settle in Padua, where he remained for over three years (except for four months—January to April 1723—that he spent in Venice).<sup>14</sup> In April 1723 his friend Frigimelica Roberti, who had moved to Modena in 1720, offered him the use of his Paduan palace. On 19 August 1723 Steffani informed another friend, the Hanoverian councillor and librettist Abbot Ortensio Mauro, that Frigimelica Roberti’s palace provided the best ground-floor accommodation in Padua.<sup>15</sup> By June 1724 Steffani had acquired his own house in Padua, which presumably betokens his intention to remain in the city for some time. While there, he did not neglect familial or ecclesiastical duties. He offered to help his relatives retrieve a deed pertaining to family property in Venice,<sup>16</sup> and he served as bishop for the vacant see of Padua. Such duties apparently prevented him from visiting his native Castelfranco.<sup>17</sup> Five of his Paduan letters to Riva are concerned mainly with one local singer, Benedetta Sorosina, while a sixth includes a recommendation for another, the alto castrato Angelo Poli (or Polli).<sup>18</sup> These are his only letters in which music is the main topic.

During Steffani’s absence from his vicariate, no one was appointed to replace him. As a result, relations in Hanover between the Catholics and the regency (headed by George I’s grandson, Friedrich Ludwig) deteriorated rapidly. Steffani knew that he must return, because he was the only vicar whom George I or his regent would admit to court and thus the only person who could represent and promote Catholic interests in the electorate. He therefore renewed his attempts to secure his income from Seltz and sought additional funding from Rome. After receiving an assurance of some assistance, he left Padua on 24 September 1725 and arrived in Hanover on 25 October. He must have been welcomed by many, including the king and Riva during what was to be their last visit to the electorate; his best friend, Abbot Mauro, was not, alas, among the well-wishers, because he had died on 14 September at over ninety years of age.<sup>19</sup>

The assurance that Steffani had received did not represent a lasting solution to his financial predicament. On 8 March 1725, when he was still in Padua, he informed Riva that, because of the intransigence of ‘the Jesuit fathers’ in Strasburg and ‘the faithless ministers of the Palatine court’ in Düsseldorf, he had decided to sell his pictures (see no. 35, below). By 26 March 1726, after he had returned to Hanover, he was ‘caught in a never-ending duel, the result of the obduracy of the French and Palatine courts’, and the sale of his pictures had become a pressing concern (no. 39). On 25 May he told Riva that he had decided to sell via Giuseppe Como, a merchant in London (no. 41); a month later Pallavicini wrote that there was nobody in Dresden who was likely to buy them (see commentary to no. 41). In November 1726 he told Lothar Franz von Schönborn, the elector-archbishop of Mainz who had consecrated him as bishop, that he had sold his silver chalice and had nothing more to sell, apart from a small number of pictures that he had collected over the previous forty years.<sup>20</sup> He

would have approached George I, but the subjects were mostly sacred and ‘when it is a question of money, there is no point in starting with him’; he had therefore offered them to the emperor.<sup>21</sup> Late in 1726 or early in 1727 the imperial treasury granted him 12,000 florins per annum for his missions in Hanover, Brunswick and Celle. Yet he must still have needed money, for less than a month before his death, in 1728, he asked a Councillor Bauer in Frankfurt to peruse his list of books, pictures and jewels, which he thought might fetch 3000 dollars.<sup>22</sup>

When Steffani died in Frankfurt, on 12 February, he had with him three chests of papers. One of these, which is reported to have included some music, was passed to his relatives and subsequently lost.<sup>23</sup> The other two, containing papers and correspondence pertaining to his ecclesiastical and diplomatic affairs, became the Fondo Spiga in the archives of the Roman Sacra Congregatio pro Gentium Evangelizatione seu de Propaganda Fide (herein abbreviated as *I-Rscge*). Alfred Einstein published a preliminary account of the Fondo Spiga in 1908–9; selected letters (including no. 49, below) were edited and translated (into German) by Josef Loschelder in 1952, and Michael F. Feldkamp’s detailed inventory and study was published forty years later.<sup>24</sup> The bulk of Steffani’s papers had, however, remained behind in Hanover, where they are preserved as Cal. Br. 23c, Nr. 1–448, in the Niedersächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv (herein identified by the siglum *D-HVsa*). This collection furnished the basis for Father Franz Wilhelm Woker’s detailed accounts of Steffani’s activities as Bishop of Spiga and Apostolic Vicar of North Germany.<sup>25</sup> It is also the repository of Riva’s letters to Steffani, from which Woker was the first to publish extracts (mainly in German translation).<sup>26</sup>

## 2. Stefano Benedetto Pallavicini (1672–1742)

In 1664–7, between the ages of ten and thirteen, Steffani was employed as a treble at the Basilica del Santo in Padua, where one of the organists was Carlo Pallavicino (c. 1649–87); he also sang in two Venetian operas, the first of which was probably Pallavicino’s *Demetrio* (1666) at the Teatro San Moisè.<sup>27</sup> Pallavicino was one of the leading opera composers in Venice, and when the Saxon elector, Johann Georg III, visited the city in 1685, he offered him a post in Dresden. Pallavicino moved there in 1687 with his son, Stefano Benedetto, but unfortunately died a year later. Stefano was then appointed a court poet, and his first opera libretto, *Antiope*, was staged in 1689; the setting, begun by

<sup>14</sup> For a detailed survey of these years, see Timms, *Polymath*, 116–21 and 127–9.

<sup>15</sup> ‘... son pallais, si vous voulez: ce qui est pour moy un grand bonheur, puisque dans toute la ville de Padoüe il n’y a très-asseurement pas un appartement terrain égal à celuy où je suis logé’ (*I-Rscge* Fondo Spiga, vol. 76, col. 110).

<sup>16</sup> See his letter of 5 June 1724 to Giacomo Antonio Stievani (*I-Rscge* Fondo Spiga, vol. 78, cols. 418–20), transcribed and discussed in Timms, *Polymath*, 320–1 and 118, respectively.

<sup>17</sup> Nadal Melchiori, ‘Catalogo storico cronologico, cioè Copiosa raccolta che contiene l’origine di Castelfranco’, Castelfranco Veneto, Biblioteca comunale, MS 158, p. 166.

<sup>18</sup> The five are nos. 27, 30, 31, 33 and 35, below. The sixth is no. 29.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Woker, *Geschichte*, 88 and 94. A sonnet ‘in morte dell’Abate Ortensio Mauro’ is printed in Stefano Benedetto Pallavicini, *Delle opere*, ed. Francesco Algarotti (Venice: Giambattista Pasquali, 1744), iv, 142. Pallavicini informed Steffani in a letter of 12 January 1726 (*I-Rscge* Fondo Spiga, vol. 11) that Riva had improved it by replacing ‘assidua’ with ‘grata’. Riva’s improvement is in line 11 of the printed version (‘Quindi il culto dividi, e grata infiora’).

<sup>20</sup> The relevant portion of the letter appears in German translation in Woker, ‘Der apostolische Vikar’, 521.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Loschelder, ‘Römische Quellen’, 29.

<sup>23</sup> Giordano Riccati, ‘Notizie di Monsig. Agostino Steffani’, *Nuova raccolta d’opuscoli scientifici e filologici*, 33 (1779), 26.

<sup>24</sup> See Alfred Einstein, ‘Notiz über den Nachlass Agostino Steffani’s im Propaganda-Archiv zu Rom’, *Zeitschrift der Internationalen Musik-Gesellschaft*, 10 (1908–9), 172–5; Loschelder, ‘Römische Quellen’; and Michael F. Feldkamp, ‘Der Nachlass des Komponisten, Diplomaten und Bischofs Agostino Steffani (1654–1728) im Archiv der Propaganda Fide’, *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, 72 (1992), 230–313.

<sup>25</sup> Woker, *Missionen* (1884), *Steffani* (1886), *Geschichte* (1889) and ‘Der apostolische Vikar’ (1899). Woker also published a study of Steffani’s Düsseldorf years: *Aus den Papieren des kurpfälzischen Ministers Agostino Steffani, Bischofs von Spiga, spätem apostolischen Vicars von Norddeutschland, Deutsche Angelegenheiten, Friedens-Verhandlungen zwischen Papst und Kaiser, 1703–1709*, Erste Vereinsschrift der Görresgesellschaft (Cologne, 1885). This study and Woker, *Steffani*, are eloquently summarized in Ludwig von Pastor, *The History of the Popes, from the Close of the Middle Ages*, trans. Ernest Graf, 33: *Clement XI (1700–1721)* (London, 1941), 356–60.

<sup>26</sup> Franz Wilhelm Woker, ‘Der Tondichter Agostino Steffani, Bischof von Spiga i. p. i. und Apostolischer Vicar von Norddeutschland (1655–1728)’, *Der Katholik*, 67 (1887), 422–4.

<sup>27</sup> See Nicoletta Billio D’Arpa, ‘Documenti inediti su Agostino Steffani, cantore soprano tra Padova e Venezia (1664–7)’, *Rassegna veneta di studi musicali*, 7–8 (1991–2), 121–46, and Nicoletta Billio, ‘Contributo sugli inizi di carriera di Agostino Steffani, Antonio Draghi e Carlo Pallavicino, musicisti al Santo di Padova’, in *Musica, scienza e idee nella Serenissima durante il Seicento*, Atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Venice, Palazzo Giustinian Lolin, 13–15 December 1993, ed. Francesco Passadore and Franco Rossi (Venice, 1996), 53–61; see also Timms in *New Grove* 2, xxiv, 316, and *idem*, *Polymath*, 6–8.

his father, was completed by Nicolaus Adam Strungk.<sup>28</sup> Stefano is not known to have written any other librettos while in the service of Johann Georg III, who was succeeded in 1694 by Friedrich August I (1670–1733). Even though the new elector dismissed all Italian personnel and replaced them with French actors, he initiated ‘the most glittering period in the history of music in Dresden’.<sup>29</sup>

After his dismissal Pallavicini moved to Düsseldorf, where he served the Palatine elector, Johann Wilhelm. He was presumably responsible for reworking Moniglia’s *Giocasta*, which was set by Johann Hugo von Wilderer for carnival 1696, and he wrote *Telegono, a tragedia per musica*, set by Carlo Luigi Pietragrua for carnival 1697. This is the first of his six Düsseldorf librettos that are collectively praised in Giorgio Maria Rapparini’s tribute to Elector Johann Wilhelm on the occasion of his nameday in 1709.<sup>30</sup> In this elaborate manuscript, entitled *Le portrait du vrai mérite*, Rapparini tells us that Pallavicini’s cradle had been attended by the Muses, that he was raised by these nurses on the milk of Italian poetry, and that his ‘heroic and sublime song attracted universal approbation’ (‘son chant héroïque et sublime lui attira l’approbation universelle’). ‘The ingenious twists that he gives to his phrases, whether in verse or in prose, attract the graces to him, with Venus in their train. The majesty of his grave and sustained style, the weight of his expression, the flow of his thoughts [and] the harmony of his rhymes speak highly in his favour, and more than I could ever do here’ (‘Le tour ingénieux qu’il donne à ses phrases, soit en vers, soit en prose lui attirent les graces; et les Venus à sa suite. La majesté de son style grave et soutenu, le poids de sa sentence, le coulant de ses périodes, la harmonie de ses rimes, parlent assez à son avantage, et plus de ce que je saurois jamais faire ici’).<sup>31</sup>

Pallavicini surely became well acquainted with Steffani when the composer was in Düsseldorf on a diplomatic mission from November 1699 to July 1700.<sup>32</sup> They worked side by side after Steffani moved there in March 1703 to serve both the elector and the Roman Catholic church. Three of Steffani’s operas were produced as carnival entertainments at Düsseldorf: *Arminio* (1707), *Amor vien dal destino* (1709) and *Il Tassilone* (1709). The librettos of the first and last were new, five-act tragedies by Pallavicini, while the second had been written by Ortensio Mauro at Hanover in the 1690s.<sup>33</sup> More than half of the musical numbers in *Arminio* were borrowed from earlier operas by Steffani.<sup>34</sup> Thus *Tassilone* was the only new score, and it was the last opera that Steffani composed. In his first letter to Steffani, dated 2 December 1720, Riva declared that the ‘royal princes’ had recommended this work for production by the Royal Academy of Music in London (see Ill. 4).

After Steffani moved back to Hanover in 1709, he corresponded with Pallavicini until his death. Only Pallavicini’s letters survive, however, and they are in *I-Rscge* Fondo Spiga, vol. 6 (4 September

1711 to 28 December 1716), vol. 63 (16 June 1716) and vol. 11 (11 January 1717 to 13 December 1721, and 7 November 1725 to 30 April 1727).<sup>35</sup> There are fifty-three letters from the years 1720–8, which overlap with the years of Steffani’s correspondence with Riva. Thirty-one of them date from 1720–1, and twenty-two from 1725–7. The gap represents the years when Steffani was in Padua, having withdrawn from his post in Hanover. Since these letters are concerned mainly with politics, extracts from only a few of them are cited below (see nos. 4A, 19A and the commentaries to nos. 21 and 41).

After the death of Johann Wilhelm, in 1716, Pallavicini was invited back to Dresden, where a splendid operatic company was soon assembled by the Hanoverian/Venetian composer Antonio Lotti,<sup>36</sup> who had been invited to do so by the crown prince, Friedrich August. The company first performed one of Lotti’s works in October 1717. Its most festive productions by far were given in 1719, when the prince married the Austrian archduchess, Maria Josepha. The most splendid of these was Pallavicini’s *Teofane*, set by Lotti and first performed on 13 September 1719 in a new court theatre that could accommodate more than 2000 spectators.<sup>37</sup> A few weeks or months later, the castratos Senesino and Berselli began quarrelling with the composer Johann David Heinichen, whose opera, *Flavio Crispo*, apparently displeased them. As a result, the elector-king dissolved the company,<sup>38</sup> leaving the Italians to seek employment elsewhere. It is at this juncture that Pallavicini began corresponding with Riva. His first six letters (L–Q, below) concern the hiring of the Dresden singers by the Royal Academy of Music in London. Two later letters (T–U) discuss a tragedy that he was writing, which may have been a *tragedia per musica*.

If Pallavicini did not meet Riva at Hanover between 1719 and 1725, they may have met for the first time at Vienna in August 1730, when Pallavicini was there as the secretary to a Saxon cabinet minister.<sup>39</sup> They met in Vienna on at least one later occasion, in January 1731,<sup>40</sup> when Pallavicini was again serving as a secretary for a court official.<sup>41</sup> The musical topics mentioned in Pallavicini’s letters of 1732–8 are summarized below, after letter U. His main concern in these letters, however, is his Italian translation of Latin works by Horace. He had begun to translate them while he was with the Saxon/Polish court at Warsaw in 1732, and he published his translation of all the odes in *Il canzoniere d’Orazio ridotto in versi toscani* (Leipzig: G. Saalbach, 1736). Since Riva and others praised his work, he began translating Horace’s satires in 1737. At that moment, however, he had little time to spend on such translations, because he was busy writing serenata and opera librettos for Hasse. Indeed, he seems to have written most of his librettos after 1733, when Friedrich August II became elector of Saxony (and King August III of Poland).

<sup>28</sup> Harris S. Saunders, in *New Grove* 2, xix, 10, and Sibylle Dahms, *ibid.*, xix, 11. He is named ‘Stefan Pallavicini [not Pallavicino], poeta del medesima altezza [Ser.mo Elettore di Sassonia]’ on the title-page of the libretto, which is cited in Moritz Fürstenau, ‘Die Oper *Antiope* und die Bestellungen des Kurfürstlich-Sächsischen Vicekapellmeisters Nicolaus Adam Strunck und des Hofpoeten Stefano Pallavicini’, *Monatshfte für Musik-Geschichte*, 13 (1881), 1. Portions of *Antiope*’s text are cited and evaluated in Fabio Marri, ‘Ein italienischer Dichter an den Ufern der Elbe: Stefano Benedetto Pallavicini’, in *Elbflorenz: Italienische Präsenz in Dresden 16.–19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Barbara Marx (Dresden, 2000), 160 and 162.

<sup>29</sup> Manfred Fechner, in *New Grove* 2, vii, 569–72.

<sup>30</sup> Rapparini, *Portrait*, 45. The list is reprinted in Croll, ‘Musikgeschichtliches’, 263.

<sup>31</sup> Rapparini, *Portrait*, 45. Medallion 29/30 includes a portrait of Pallavicini and a four-line Latin poem extolling his virtue.

<sup>32</sup> Georg Schnath, *Geschichte Hannovers im Zeitalter der neunten Kur und der englischen Sukzession, 1674–1714*, Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission für Niedersachsen und Bremen, 18 (Hildesheim, 1938–82), ii, 477–8. On 10 March 1700 Steffani informed Sophie Charlotte, electress of Brandenburg, that he had frequently been to the opera and that he sang it [Wilderer’s *La forza del giusto* (1700)] from beginning to end as he sat in the stalls during performances (see Alfred Ebert, ‘Briefe Agostino Steffanis an die Königin Sophie Charlotte von Preussen’, *Die Musik*, 6 (1906–7), 161).

<sup>33</sup> Its earlier title was *Il Turno*; no date for a Hanover production is known. See Timms, in *New Grove* 2, xxiv, 319; *idem*, ‘Gregorio Piva and Steffani’s Principal Copyist’, in *Source Materials and the Interpretation of Music: A Memorial Volume to Thurston Dart*, ed. Ian Bent (London, 1981), 171–82; and *idem*, *Polymath*, chapter 3.

<sup>34</sup> *Arminio*’s forty-six vocal pieces include at least twenty-nine that were borrowed from Steffani’s Munich and Hanover operas of 1687–95; see the list given in Croll, ‘Chronologie’. See also Timms, *Polymath*, 240–5.

<sup>35</sup> Feldkamp, ‘Nachlass’, 265, 266 and 287.

<sup>36</sup> He was born in Hanover, where his father Matteo was Kapellmeister, and is not known to have settled in Venice before 1683, when he was seventeen years old (Sven Hansell and Olga Termini, in *New Grove* 2, xv, 211).

<sup>37</sup> The coloured engravings of Alessandro Mauro’s eleven stage designs are reproduced and described in Michael Walter, ‘Italienische Musik als Repräsentationskunst der Dresdener Fürstenhochzeit von 1719’, in *Elbflorenz: Italienische Präsenz in Dresden 16.–19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Barbara Marx (Dresden, 2000), plates after p. 190 and description on pp. 193–5. Pallavicini’s text is evaluated in Marri, ‘Italienischer Dichter’, 162–4. It was shortened (from 1416 to 816 lines!) by Haym and re-set by Handel as *Ottone* (London, 1723); the alterations made in London are discussed in Winton Dean, ‘The Genesis and Early History of *Ottone*’, *Göttinger Händel-Beiträge*, 2 (1986), 129–40; Winton Dean and John Merrill Knapp, *Handel’s Operas, 1704–1726* (Oxford, 1987), 418–40; Fiona McLauchlan, ‘Lotti’s *Teofane* (1719) and Handel’s *Ottone* (1723): A Textual and Musical Study’, *Music & Letters*, 78 (1997), 349–90; and Lorenzo Bianconi, ed., *I libretti italiani di Georg Friedrich Händel e le loro fonti*, Vol. 1 in 2 parts (1707–25), *Quaderni della Rivista italiana di musicologia*, 26 (Florence, 1992), i/1 (*I testi händeliani*), 277–99, and i/2 (*Note ai testi e fonti*), 187–226.

<sup>38</sup> George Buelow, in *New Grove* 2, xi, 320. Buelow adds that the score ‘breaks off without explanation near the end of the final act, as if the composer gave it up at the time of these disagreements’.

<sup>39</sup> Lindgren, ‘Zamboni’, nos. 253–4.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 260.

<sup>41</sup> Because of his position, he was able to help Zamboni obtain a non-resident appointment in the Saxon government; see Lindgren, ‘Zamboni’, nos. 139, 197, 199 and 206.



Francesco Algarotti's posthumous edition of Pallavicini's *Opere* (Venice, 1744) contains only five librettos. Its first volume is identical to the 1736 print of translated odes, and its second contains translations of other poems by Horace. Its third begins with translations of Locke, Euripides and Virgil, then provides what may be the earliest extant copy of *Un pazzo ne fa cento ovvero Don Chisciotte* (iii, 135–236), a comic opera text that Giovanni Ristori had set for a Dresden production in 1727. The final volume consists mainly of occasional poetry, and it ends with a pastoral discourse on music and a discourse on friendship (which is dated 'Warsaw, 1732'). The occasional poems include three brief secular dramas and one oratorio: *Timandra*, an *egloga* for Teagene, Amarilli, Alcindo, Nerina and Dorinda, written for the arrival of Empress Amalia in Neuhaus, 27 May 1737 (iv, 51–66); *I delicati*, a *dialogo per musica* for Amore and a chorus, written to celebrate the birth of the elector's daughter (iv, 75–84); an untitled *dialogo per musica* for Marte, Venere, Imeneo and Calliope, for the marriage of Gio. Adamo, baron of Efferen, and Marianna, baroness of Spée (iv, 85–93); and *I pellegrini al sepolcro di N. S.*, an oratorio for Albino, Eugenio, Teotimo, Agapito and Guida (iv, 105–22). The last work was first set by Hasse in 1742. The composers of the secular dramas remain to be identified, because no bibliographic study of Pallavicini's librettos has yet been completed.

### 3. Johann Philipp Franz von Schönborn (1673–1724)

During the Baroque period, the Schönborn family was among the most powerful in the Austro-German empire. Johann Philipp von Schönborn (1605–73), called 'the German Solomon', was from 1642 the bishop of Würzburg and from 1647 the powerful elector-archbishop of Mainz and lord chancellor of the empire. Meanwhile, his brother, Philipp Erwein, fathered seven daughters and five sons, one of whom, Melchior Friedrich (1644–1717), sired seven daughters and seven sons, the eldest of whom was Johann Philipp Franz (hereafter, J.P.F.).<sup>42</sup> The seven brothers were each educated in Catholic schools chosen by their youngest uncle, Lothar Franz (1655–1729), bishop of Bamberg from 1693 and elector-archbishop of Mainz from 1695.<sup>43</sup> Five of the seven became priests, and four of these became bishops. Among the latter were the two eldest, J.P.F. and Friedrich Karl, who studied in 1687–9 at the Jesuit College in Würzburg and in 1690–2, when they were in their late teens, at the Collegio Germanico in Rome. The next two brothers, Damian Hugo and Franz Erwein, studied at this Roman college in 1693–5.<sup>44</sup> When the two eldest Schönborns were in Rome, they took violin lessons from a 'meister'.<sup>45</sup> Giuseppe Ottavio Pitoni (1657–1743) was *maestro di cappella* at their col-

lege and its affiliated church, Sant'Apollinare,<sup>46</sup> 'where on feast days the divine offices are celebrated with a great concourse of people, enticed by the exquisite music that is performed, and edified by the piety and devotion of the noble and well-bred youth' ('celebrandovi le feste li divini uffizij, con molto concorso di popolo, allettato dall'esquisita musica, che vi si mantiene, & edificato dalla pietà e divozione di questa nobile e si ben'allevata gioventù').<sup>47</sup> While in Rome, J.P.F. and Franz Erwein, the brothers most involved with music, made the acquaintance of Bernardo Pasquini, Arcangelo Corelli and Matteo Fornari (Corelli's assistant).<sup>48</sup> When he returned to Germany, Franz Erwein took with him at least three recently published collections of trio sonatas,<sup>49</sup> and J.P.F. may well have done the same. When the latter was in Rome in summer 1708, Franz Erwein asked him to purchase 'cello, violin and theorbo strings'.<sup>50</sup> He may have purchased music as well, because seventeen Italian prints in his brother's collection bear the handwritten date 1708, apparently indicating the year of acquisition.<sup>51</sup>

After their return to Germany in the mid-1690s, J.P.F. and Franz Erwein were often employed, as their father had been, as diplomats in the service of the elector-archbishop of Mainz. Baron J.P.F. thus represented Mainz at Paderborn in 1695, at Hanover and Düsseldorf in 1698 (where he may have met Steffani and Pallavicini, respectively), and at Würzburg in 1699–1700. He was appointed provost of St Bartholomew's Cathedral, Frankfurt, in 1700. His family was elevated to the rank of 'Reichsgraf' in 1701, so it was Count J.P.F. who represented Mainz at Würzburg in 1702–3. In 1703 he was elected provost of Würzburg Cathedral, but his opponent contested the decision, so J.P.F. journeyed to Rome, where Clement XI sanctioned his election. Meanwhile, Franz Erwein married in 1701 and became the count of Schönborn-Wiesentheid in 1704, while Friedrich Karl became imperial vice-chancellor upon the accession of Joseph I in 1705. When J.P.F. went to Rome in 1708, he attempted (in vain) to guarantee that the vice-chancellor would inherit the bishopric of Bamberg. He and his brothers were in Frankfurt for the coronation of Charles VI in 1711, and he was named provost of the cathedral chapter in Mainz in 1714.<sup>52</sup> When he visited Vienna in October 1714 as a representative of the elector of Mainz, he was accompanied by 'a complete retinue of 11–12 persons and a travelling carriage or 6 galleys with noisy musical instruments. . . . His entire household,

<sup>42</sup> The accomplishments of the seven sons are summarized in Friedhelm Jürgensmeier, 'Politische Ziele und kirchliche Erneuerungsbestrebungen der Bischöfe aus dem Hause Schönborn im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert', in *Die Grafen von Schönborn: Kirchenfürsten, Sammler, Mäzene*, Ausstellungskatalog des Germanischen Nationalmuseums, Nürnberg, 18 February to 23 April 1989, ed. Hermann Maué and Sonja Brink (Passau, 1989), 11–23, and a detailed genealogical table of the family is provided on a fold-out page at the end of the volume.

<sup>43</sup> His nepotism is discussed in Alfred Schröcker, 'Die Heiratspolitik des Lothar Franz von Schönborn (1655–1729)', *Mainzer Zeitschrift: Mittelrheinisches Jahrbuch für Archäologie, Kunst und Geschichte*, 71–2 (1976–7), 197–204; *idem*, 'Der Nepotismus des Lothar Franz von Schönborn', *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte*, 43 (1980), 143–57; and *idem*, 'Die Privatfinanzen des Lothar Franz von Schönborn (1655–1729)', *Geschichtliche Landeskunde*, 21 (1980), 192–229.

<sup>44</sup> Friedhelm Jürgensmeier, 'Dr. Gottfried Bessel im Dienste der Reichsgrafen von Schönborn', in *Gottfried Bessel (1672–1749): Diplomat in Kurmainz, Abt von Göttweig, Wissenschaftler und Kunstmäzen*, ed. Franz Rudolf Reichert, Quellen und Abhandlungen zur mittelrheinischen Kirchengeschichte, 16 (Mainz, 1972), 26; Josef Friedrich Abert, 'Die Jugend- und Studienzeit der beiden Würzburger Bischöfe Johann Philipp Franz und Friedrich Karl von Schönborn', *Frankenland: Illustrierte Monatschrift*, 1 (1914), 145–56; Andreas Steinhuber, *Geschichte des Collegium Germanicum Hungaricum in Rom* (2nd edn, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1906), ii, 56–9; Peter Walter, 'Zur Ausbildung am Collegium Germanicum im 18. Jahrhundert: Reformvorschläge von zwei geistlichen Reichsfürsten aus dem Hause Schönborn', *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, 61 (1981), 362–79. Abert, 148, reproduces a fine engraving that portrays J.P.F. as Bishop of Würzburg (1719–24).

<sup>45</sup> Letter from J.P.F. to his mother, dated 29 July 1690, partly printed in Fritz Zobeley, *Rudolf Franz Erwein, Graf von Schönborn (1677–1754) und seine Musikpflege*, Neujahrsblätter herausgegeben von der Gesellschaft für Fränkische Geschichte, 21 (Würzburg, 1949), 10–11.

<sup>46</sup> Pitoni served the college and church from 1686 until his death. See the biography by Girolamo Chiti, printed in Giuseppe Ottavio Pitoni, *Notizia de' contrapuntisti e compositori di musica*, ed. Cesarino Ruini, Studi e testi per la storia della musica, 6 (Florence, 1988), 351–6.

<sup>47</sup> Carlo Bartolomeo Piazza, *Opere pie di Roma, descritte secondo lo stato presente* (Rome: Gio. Battista Bussotti, 1679), 237, reprinted in *idem*, *Eusevologio romano, ovvero delle opere pie di Roma, accresciuto & ampliato secondo lo stato presente* (Rome: Giovanni Andreoli, 1699), i, 236.

<sup>48</sup> See letters dated 1708–9, cited in Zobeley, *Rudolf Franz Erwein*, 11, 19 and 29–30.

<sup>49</sup> Fritz Zobeley, *Die Musikalien der Grafen von Schönborn-Wiesentheid*, Part 1: *Das Repertoire des Grafen Rudolf Franz Erwein von Schönborn (1677–1754)*, Vol. 1: *Drucke aus den Jahren 1676 bis 1738* (Tutzing, 1967), nos. 26, 44 and 139. Vol. 1 catalogues 149 items of printed music – and vol. 2 lists 498 music manuscripts – that Franz Erwein collected. His next acquisitions were three prints bought at Leyden in 1696–7 and seven at Paris in 1699: see Lowell Lindgren, 'Count Rudolf Franz Erwein von Schönborn (1677–1754) and the Italian Sonatas for Violoncello in his Collection at Wiesentheid', in *Relazioni musicali tra Italia e Germania nell'età barocca*, Atti del VI convegno internazionale sulla musica italiana nei secoli XVII–XVIII, Lovenjo di Menaggio (Como), 11–13 July 1995, ed. Alberto Colzani, Norbert Dubowy, Andrea Luppi and Maurizio Padoan (Como, 1997), 262–3.

<sup>50</sup> Zobeley, *Rudolf Franz Erwein*, 19.

<sup>51</sup> The seventeen dated 1708 are Zobeley, *Schönborn-Wiesentheid*, part 1, vol. 1, nos. 1, 11, 14, 30, 38, 42, 63, 78, 95–7, 118 and 121 (vocal works) and nos. 31, 126, 128 and 136 (instrumental works). Two more prints of music composed by Italians bear the handwritten date 1708, but they were published in Augsburg (no. 21) and Paris (no. 81). There are also three Italian prints (nos. 10, 86 and 144) with the manuscript dates 1703, 1705 and 1707, respectively.

<sup>52</sup> His diplomatic assignments are listed in Ludwig Bittner and Lothar Groß, eds, *Repertorium der diplomatischen Vertreter aller Länder seit dem Westfälischen Frieden (1648)*, 1: 1648–1715 (Oldenburg, 1936), 300–15, while his ecclesiastical appointments are discussed in Jürgensmeier, 'Bessel', 32–4, and 'Politische Ziele', 16–17. The marriage of his brother is discussed in Max Domarus, *Rudolf Franz Erwein v. Schönborn, Graf und Herr zu Wiesentheid (1677–1754): Mensch, Künstler, Staatsmann* (Gerolzhofen, 1954), 27–58, and the career of the vice-chancellor in Hugo Hantsch, *Reichsvizekanzler Friedrich Karl, Graf von Schönborn (1674–1746), einige Kapitel zur politischen Geschichte Kaiser Josefs I. und Karls VI.*, Salzburger Abhandlungen und Texte aus Wissenschaft und Kunst, 2 (Augsburg, 1929).

including the cook, consists of musicians' ('einen gantzen corteggio von 11–12 persohnen undt einen reissegwagen oder 6 schiffen mit lautter musicalischen instrumenten. . . . Sein ganzer hofstaab bis auf den koch bestehet aus musicanten'). Since most of his time in Vienna was devoted to 'music und gallanterie', his uncle and chief patron, the elector-archbishop of Mainz, was mortified and asked the vice-chancellor to send J.P.F. back to Mainz as soon as possible.<sup>53</sup>

While J.P.F. may have met Steffani for the first time at Hanover in 1698, their earliest extant correspondence is dated January 1707, the month in which Steffani was consecrated bishop of Spiga in Bamberg by Lothar Franz, bishop of Bamberg and elector-archbishop of Mainz. By the end of September 1709, Steffani had written to J.P.F. at least twenty-five times, usually from Düsseldorf; all but four of his letters are autograph. The twelve extant letters from J.P.F. to Steffani are autograph drafts or copies dating from January 1707 to December 1708.<sup>54</sup>

Steffani does not refer to Pallavicini in these letters, but on 12 January 1708 he mentioned his colleague Joseph Paris Feckler (1666–1735). Feckler had become a priest at Salzburg in 1690, had studied music in Italy, had written a serenata that was performed for Archduke Joseph at Vienna in 1702, and had entered the service of the Düsseldorf court before 1707. In that year J.P.F. asked him to train a boy named Horneck, who in April 1708 was required to work with his teacher on a 'schöne opera' by Steffani, 'aus welcher viel zu lernen seyn werde' ('from which much will be learned'). Feckler also helped J.P.F. obtain musical instruments and completed a theoretical work that was to be published with a dedication to him. In 1708–9 he helped Steffani 'correct' his chamber duets, and in 1710–18 he assisted him as apostolic vicar by collecting money in south Germany and Austria for the construction of St Clement's Church in Hanover.<sup>55</sup>

In 1708–13 J.P.F. received musical scores from Horneck, who was then travelling in Italy, and from Matthias Ferdinand von Regatschnig, the resident for Mainz in Venice.<sup>56</sup> The latter sent such items as '36 original concerti', 'concerti e motetti', '60 arien von instrumenten', 'rare compositiones des Vivaldi', and works by the violinist Gio. Battista Tibaldi and the cellist Quirino Colombani.<sup>57</sup> In June 1712 J.P.F. asked him to send various items, among them 'una dozzena de più nuovi concerti del Vivaldi, Lotti e Polaroli'. Since works by these composers exist in Franz Erwein's collection, J.P.F. may have ordered them or had them copied for his brother. The brothers' shared passion for music is manifest in a good-humoured salutation in a letter of 17 January 1716 from Rudolf Franz Erwein to J.P.F.: 'womit ich mich gantz tactmässig auff's best Correlisch [sic], Albinonisch, Mascittisch, Vivaldisch als ein trewester Violoncello [sic] sambt allen meinigen zu Gnaden empfehlend verbleibe' ('wherewith I, in perfect time and in the best Corellian, Albinonian, Mascittian, Vivaldian manner, as a most faithful cellist, together with all my family, hope to remain in your grace').<sup>58</sup>

After J.P.F. became bishop of Würzburg in 1719, he lived for five years near the home of Franz Erwein in Wiesentheid, and so they shared musical personnel.<sup>59</sup> The best information we have about his initial attempts to form a musical establishment is found in his correspondence with Steffani, cited below (letters A–L). By 1722, which postdates our letters, he employed twenty or thirty musicians,

<sup>53</sup> Hantsch, *Reichsvizekanzler Friedrich Karl*, 294, and Zobeley, *Rudolf Franz Erwein*, 37.

<sup>54</sup> The correspondence is preserved in *D-WÜst* JPF 376 and 422–5. The four by Steffani that were copied by secretaries include two written in Rome (on 29 December 1708 and 19 January 1709) and the only letter that postdates 1709 (printed as letter C, below).

<sup>55</sup> Zobeley, *Rudolf Franz Erwein*, 20–7, and Adam Gottron, 'Joseph Paris Feckler: Kurmainzer Hofkapellmeister, 1728–35', *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, 19–20 (1962–3), 186–93. Feckler does not appear to have copied any of the known manuscripts of Steffani duets (Timms, 'Gregorio Piva', 179 and 184).

<sup>56</sup> Hausmann, *Repertorium*, 467.

<sup>57</sup> Zobeley, *Rudolf Franz Erwein*, 29–34.

<sup>58</sup> *D-WÜst* JPF 129, printed in Zobeley, *Rudolf Franz Erwein*, 39, who gives 'treumässig' instead of 'tactmässig'.

<sup>59</sup> Zobeley, *Rudolf Franz Erwein*, 46 and 49, cites Franz Erwein's thank-you letters of 1722 and 1724.

including six or seven Italians.<sup>60</sup> Three years later, he fell ill after an extended hunt and died at the age of fifty-one. His possessions, which were subsequently impounded in Würzburg, were not accessible even to his brothers, and his scores were destroyed by bombing during World War II.<sup>61</sup>

#### 4. Giuseppe Riva (1682–1739)<sup>62</sup>

Riva began working in 1702 as a secretary both to Rinaldo, duke of Modena, and to Lodovico Antonio Muratori, the Modenese court historian. In the following year Rinaldo was forced into exile in the papal city of Bologna, because he had unfortunately sided with Spain rather than Austria in the War of the Spanish Succession (1702–13). Riva nevertheless continued to serve the duke as well as Muratori, and we know from his letters to Muratori that he travelled to Rome in 1703, 1704 and 1709, then to Vienna in 1712.<sup>63</sup> He was back in Modena in 1714, when he became secretary to Count Fabrizio Guicciardi, the new special envoy from Modena to Great Britain. After his transfer to London in 1715, Riva continued to communicate with Muratori, who gave him excellent advice after Guicciardi had died (in December 1717) and Riva had received his credentials as the new diplomatic secretary for Rinaldo: befriend the imperial ministers in London, or they will insist that Rinaldo replace you.<sup>64</sup> The only 'portrait' we have of Riva is found in a *capitolo* written by his friend Paolo Antonio Rolli in 1716:

L'altro è l'Abate Riva; ei corto vede,  
ma li lucidi occhiali e la pienezza  
maestoso lo fan dal capo al piede.

Esempio è d'amicizia e gentilezza;  
accorto quanto il figlio di Laerte,  
qui Segretario è dell'Estense Altezza.

In que' piacer che può, ben si diverte,  
nulla però mancando al ministero,  
e, conoscendo i libri alle coperte,

tra letterati egli può far da serio  
geografo, storico, ed in poesia  
sino al fondo conosce il magisterio.

Abbot Riva is a short man,  
with shiny eyeglasses and  
a majestic bearing from head to toe.

He is a model of friendship and kindness.  
He is as wise as Odysseus, the son of Laertes.  
Here he is Secretary for the Estense duke.

He is well diverted by the available pleasures,  
yet lacks no ministerial qualities,  
and, being well aware of the worth of books,

Is taken seriously by the lettered, because  
he comprehends magisterially the fields of  
geography, history and poetry.

<sup>60</sup> See Andreas Scherf, *Johann Philipp Franz von Schönborn, Bischof von Würzburg (1719–1724), der Erbauer der Residenz, Schriftenreihe zur bayerischen Landesgeschichte*, 4 (Munich, 1930), 90–4, and Oskar Kaul, *Geschichte der Würzburger Hofmusik im 18. Jahrhundert, Fränkische Forschungen zur Geschichte und Heimatkunde*, 2–3 (Würzburg, 1924), 16–28. In his autobiography (cited in Zobeley, *Rudolf Franz Erwein*, 50), Johann Joachim Quantz wrote that the bishop's 'capella' included about thirty instrumentalists in 1724; perhaps this total includes the four waldhornists and four trumpeters listed by Scherf.

<sup>61</sup> Zobeley, *Rudolf Franz Erwein*, 50–1, and Scherf, *Johann Philipp Franz*, 165–6. The commentary in Zobeley, *Schönborn-Wiesentheid*, refers to some of these scores as 'ehem. Würzb[urg] Kons[ervatorium]', which is usually followed by 'verbrannt'. Since no catalogue of J.P.F.'s library is extant, we do not know how many of the destroyed scores belonged to him or to his brother Friedrich Karl, who succeeded him as bishop of Würzburg from 1729 to 1746 (Zobeley, *Rudolf Franz Erwein*, 51 n. 172).

<sup>62</sup> He was baptized 'Gioseffo Domenico' on 13 October 1682 (Modena, Archivio storico comunale, Stato civile, San Lorenzo parrocchia, Registro 15: Vivi 1679 ad 1688, no. 70). He died before Pallavicini wrote to Muratori on 1 August 1739 (Marri, 'Italienischer Dichter', 170).

<sup>63</sup> See the extracts from his letters to Muratori in Ercole Sola, 'Curiosità storico-artistico-letterarie tratte dal carteggio dell'inviato estense Giuseppe Riva con Lodovico Antonio Muratori, con giunte e note illustrative', *Atti e memorie delle RR. Deputazioni di Storia Patria per le provincie modenesi e parmensi*, ser. 3, vol. 4 (1887), 199, 202, 204–5 and 300–5. Marta Lucchi, 'Da Modena all'Europa melodrammatica. I carteggi di Giuseppe Riva e carteggi vari', *Teatro e musica nel '700 estense: Momenti di storia culturale e artistica, polemica di idee, vita teatrale, economia e impresariato*, ed. Giuseppe Vecchi and Marina Calore, *Historiae Musicae Cultores, Biblioteca*, 73 (Florence, 1994), 69, adds Madrid to the list of cities that Riva visited, perhaps on the basis of a letter of 30 January 1706, cited (without attribution to a writer) in Sola, 'Curiosità', 203.

<sup>64</sup> Letter of 31 March 1718, printed in Lodovico Antonio Muratori, *Epistolario*, ed. Matteo Campori, vols 5–8 (Modena, 1903–5), v, 1927 (letter no. 1769).

Ha buon orecchio ancor per l'armonia,  
e uscendo dal teatro cantar suole  
qualche ariettina, che ha portato via.<sup>65</sup>

He has a good ear for harmony,  
and, when he leaves the opera house,  
sings to himself an arietta that he has heard.

To this we should add a postscript that praises Riva for saving all the letters sent to him, because they reveal much—which we otherwise would not know—about the thoughts and works of Steffani, Pallavicini and his many other correspondents.

Riva presumably met Steffani for the first time when he was in Hanover, in the retinue of King George I, during the summer of 1719. He perhaps began his correspondence with Pallavicini at the same time, because in his first extant letter to Riva the poet wonders whether the diplomat has received the 'miscellany' ('miscee') that he sent him while he was in Hanover (see letter L, below, dated 9 March 1720). From this letter and from Pallavicini's next five, we learn that Riva acted as a London agent for the singers Berselli, Salvai and Senesino, all of whom joined the Royal Academy of Music for its second season (1720–1).<sup>66</sup> He presumably played some role in the hiring of the Modenese composer Bononcini (1670–1747), since they seem to have been good friends by 1714.<sup>67</sup> Riva's letters to Steffani demonstrate his unswerving devotion to Bononcini and headstrong opposition to Handel (see nos. 1–2, etc., below). By February 1724 he and Bononcini lived and were often seen together.<sup>68</sup> The contralto Anastasia Robinson was one of their mutual friends and was very closely tied to Bononcini;<sup>69</sup> when she learned that Handel had written a distasteful role for her in *Ottone* (which, as noted above, was based on Pallavicini's *Teofane*), she turned to Riva for advice.<sup>70</sup>

By January 1723, when *Ottone* was staged, all the Roman Catholics in London, including the Italians, had fallen out of favour and under suspicion because of the Jacobite conspiracy. Riva unhappily watched Haym replace his friend Rolli as librettist for the Academy, saw Bononcini's annual commissions reduced to one opera, then to none, and presumably lost much of his previous importance as a consultant to the Academy.<sup>71</sup> He was, nevertheless, the negotiator for the projected Academy visit to Paris during summer 1723.<sup>72</sup> As a result of its failure, he swore to abandon theatri-

<sup>65</sup> Printed in Carlo Calcaterra, 'Il capitolo di Paolo Rolli a Giampietro Zanotti', *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, 87 (1926), 108. For an overview of Riva's musical activities in London, see the article by Lowell Lindgren to be published in the proceedings of the Handel conference held at the Accademia Musicale Chigiana, Siena, in November 2002.

<sup>66</sup> Two other singers also travelled from Dresden to London: Durastanti, who arrived in time for the first season (spring 1720), and Boschi, who had already sung in London during the 1710–11 season. Riva is not known to have been involved in negotiations between them and the Academy.

<sup>67</sup> They conceivably met in their home town, Modena, at various times between the 1690s and 1713, as well as at Vienna in 1712. Letters of 1714–16 sent to Riva by Giovanni Battista Primoli, secretary to the Viennese ambassador (Johann Wenzel) in Rome, convey greetings from 'our [friend] Bononcini' ('nostro Sr Bononcini'), who sent Riva 'due cantate' and cordially greeted him ('che cordialmente vi riverisce') in February 1716. Primoli also reported on Bononcini's teaching of singers and on successful productions of his works. Primoli's letters are in *I-MOe* Fondo Campori, Y.Z.4.3; brief extracts are printed in Lucchi, 'Carteggi di Giuseppe Riva', 69–71.

<sup>68</sup> Our main source of information is the daily diary of the Florentine Antonio Cocchi, M.D. (who lived in London in 1723–6); extracts are published in Lowell Lindgren (trans. Sergio Durante), 'La carriera di Gaetano Berenstadt, contralto evirato (ca. 1690–1735)', *Rivista italiana di musicologia*, 19 (1984), 61–2, and Lindgren, 'Zamboni', nos. 76a, 78a–c, 95a, 109a, 122a, 123a, 126a, 126b, 129a, 172b, 173 and 186a.

<sup>69</sup> For example, they travelled as a 'duo' in France during the summer of 1723; see Lowell Lindgren, 'Parisian Patronage of Performers from the Royal Academy of Music (1719–28)', *Music & Letters*, 58 (1977), 15–17, and *idem*, 'Zamboni', nos. 103 and 107.

<sup>70</sup> Two letters (undated, but written in autumn 1722) from her to Riva are extant in *I-MOe* Fondo Campori, Y.Z.4.4. The second was intended for Haym and Handel, perhaps after Riva had revised it. Both are printed in Elizabeth Gibson, *The Royal Academy of Music (1719–28): The Institution and Its Directors* (New York, 1989), 169–71.

<sup>71</sup> Lowell Lindgren, 'Vienna, the "natural centro" for Giovanni Bononcini', in *Il teatro musicale italiano nel Sacro Romano Impero nei secoli XVII e XVIII*, Atti del VII convegno internazionale sulla musica italiana nei secoli XVII–XVIII, Laveno di Menaggio (Como), 15–17 July 1997, ed. Alberto Colzani, Norbert Dubowy, Andrea Luppi and Maurizio Padoan (Como, 1999), 382–4.

<sup>72</sup> Lindgren, 'Parisian Patronage', 9–14.

cal affairs;<sup>73</sup> but his oath was in vain, for music had long been the focus of his daily life and he continued to be involved by others in operatic affairs. In summer 1724, for example, Anastasia Robinson and her husband, Lord Peterborough, consulted him about the hiring of a Modenese tenor, Borosini, who was then employed in Vienna.<sup>74</sup> When Steffani, who was in Padua, heard about this possible engagement, he recommended instead an alto castrato who was living in Venice on a pension from Empress Amalia (see no. 29, below). In 1725 Muratori wrote that Jacopo Martinenghi, a friend in Piacenza, hoped to profit by sending one of his librettos to the Royal Academy in London. In his reply Riva revealed how much he disliked the librettos of Haym, which deformed texts ('difformarle') according to the formula required in London, and how much he admired Bononcini and his librettos, which were devised by students of the intellectual Roman poet Gravina.<sup>75</sup> Two years later he boldly published English and Italian editions of his brief *Advice to the Composers and Performers of Vocal Musick*, which contained a veiled critique of Handel and an unmistakable attack on Faustina Bordoni.

In 1726 Riva became a member of the new Academy of Vocal Music in London. He subsequently wrote to Steffani about the Academy, asked him to send them scores of his music and informed him of his election as president. Letters 42–50, below, reveal much about the Academy that would otherwise be unknown, and if Steffani had not died in February 1728, when preparing to dispatch, or having just dispatched, his *Stabat Mater*, the flow of information would have continued, at least until Riva left London over a year later. The bankrupt Royal Academy of Music ended its ninth and final season on 1 June 1728, after which the plans for a new academy were laid. During the following year, Rolli reported to Senesino that Riva 'was more than ever the same, favouring the same man and woman, puffing and snorting with anger, backbiting and raging' ('è più che mai l'istesso per l'istesso e per l'istessa; e di questo uguale ritorno buffa, sbuffa, sparla e avvampa'). Since he was now without influence, his 'raging' in favour of Bononcini, Cuzzoni and Farinelli was fruitless.<sup>76</sup>

On 5 April 1729 *The Weekly Journal; or, The British Gazetteer* reported that 'Signor Riva, Secretary from the Duke of Modena', had 'received letters of revocation and had his audiences of leave of their majesties and the rest of the royal family', and would 'in a few days set out . . . on his return'. After numerous conferences with the Viennese ambassador he left London for Vienna on 26 April, presumably to argue for his master's claim to the Tuscan throne during negotiations for the Treaty of Seville, which was signed in Vienna in November 1729.<sup>77</sup> Riva had pressed this claim zealously a decade earlier.<sup>78</sup> After his arrival in Vienna in 1729, however, he is not known to have played any role in the negotiations. Since, after they ended, his clear plan was to return to London, it is not known why he remained in Vienna, with a salary from the duke but without a diplomatic portfolio, until his return to Modena after Rinaldo's death in 1737.

<sup>73</sup> Lindgren, 'Zamboni', nos. 97, 102, 103 and 105a.

<sup>74</sup> One of her letters (in *I-MOe* Fondo Campori, Y.Z.4.4) implies that Riva was involved in the negotiations: 'I have spoke to my lord, & he will be sure to give you the paper [a promissory note, pledge or contract?] you require. I am very glad Borosini comes, as well for the pleasure I expect in hearing him, as the mortification I am perswaded he will give some people'.

<sup>75</sup> See Muratori, *Epistolario*, vi, 2459 (letter no. 2366) and 2576–8 (letter nos. 2516–17), and Riva's replies in Sola, 'Curiosità', 296–8. See also Lucchi, 'Carteggi di Giuseppe Riva', 61–4, and the English translation of extracts from Riva's letters in Otto Erich Deutsch, *Handel: A Documentary Biography* (London, 1955; repr. New York, 1974), 185–6 and 197.

<sup>76</sup> Rolli's letter (21 December 1728) is printed in Luigia Cellesi, 'Un poeta romano e un soprano senese', *Bullettino senese di storia patria*, 37 (1930), 321–3; his letters of 25 January, 4 February and 16 May 1729 are in *idem*, 'Attorno a Haendel: Lettere inedite del poeta Paolo Rolli', *Musica d'oggi*, 15 (1933), 11–16. All four are translated in Deutsch, *Handel*, 229–30, 235–8 and 242–3.

<sup>77</sup> Grand-Duke Cosimo III of Tuscany (1642–1723) had declared in June 1717 that Duke Rinaldo of Modena was to be his successor. Since his declaration was not recognized by the powerful nations of Europe, several treaties of 1717–31 tried to determine the proper succession. See Harold Acton, *The Last Medici* (3rd edn, London, 1980), 266–9, 283–4 and 293.

<sup>78</sup> See, for example, his letters to Muratori dated 21 April and 30 May 1719, published (with the incorrect year 1729) in Sola, 'Curiosità', 263–5.



### 5. The Steffani–Riva Correspondence

Giuseppe Riva began the correspondence on 2 December 1720. Twenty-one letters that he wrote to Steffani are extant in Hanover, Niedersächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv (*D-HVsa*), Cal. Br. 23c, Nr. 443. His twenty-second and final letter to the composer survives, by contrast, in Rome, Sacra Congregatio pro Gentium Evangelizatione seu de Propaganda Fide (*I-Rscge*), Fondo Spiga, vol. 62. Folder Nr. 443 in *D-HVsa* also contains fifty-four other letters addressed to Steffani; fifty were written by the Marquis of Courtaunce, two by Nicola Francesco Haym (nos. 43A and 48A, below), and one each by the Abbot of St Agnes (from Brussels) and Count Starhemberg. It also contains a letter from John Ernest Galliard to Riva (no. 48B) and copies of one from Abbot Spinelli, internuncio of Brussels, to Courtaunce and of Courtaunce's reply to Spinelli.<sup>79</sup>

In 1887 Franz Wilhelm Woker published—mainly in German translation—portions or summaries of three letters by Riva and the three by Haym and Galliard.<sup>80</sup> In 1998 Colin Timms published—in the original Italian or French—the extracts concerning music from eighteen by Riva and the three by Haym and Galliard.<sup>81</sup> The present edition includes complete translations and transcriptions of eleven letters by Riva and the three by Haym and Galliard. It omits some passages from the other eleven letters by Riva, but summarizes them in editorial commentaries.

Timms's 'Music and Musicians in the Letters of Giuseppe Riva to Agostino Steffani (1720–27)' was fortunately published just before Lindgren attended a conference in Modena. There Lindgren looked for the other half of the correspondence in the Autografoteca Campori of the Biblioteca estense (*I-MOe*), which contains items addressed to Riva by many of his noted contemporaries. A folder for Agostino Steffani in the Fondo Campori was found to include twenty-nine letters addressed to Riva, twenty-seven from the composer and two from Cesare Sardi in Amsterdam.<sup>82</sup> Steffani wrote one further letter to Riva (no. 41), which survives only in one of his copybooks in Rome (*I-Rscge* Fondo Spiga, vol. 82).<sup>83</sup> All but one of his letters were sent in copies made by secretaries; the exception, his letter of 12 August 1721 (see Ill. 6), exists in autograph, because he had just sent his secretary, Gioseppe Bossis, to Rome.<sup>84</sup> Steffani did not sign Ill. 6, but he did sign nos. 3, 4 and 50, and he added an autograph postscript to no. 22 (see Ills. 5, 7 and 12). The edition below includes a complete translation and transcription of twelve of his letters<sup>85</sup> but omits some passages from the other seventeen.

<sup>79</sup> For further details, see Colin Timms, 'Music and Musicians in the Letters of Giuseppe Riva to Agostino Steffani (1720–27)', *Music & Letters*, 79 (1998), 28 and 28 n. 12. When Timms published this article, he had not separated the interfiled Courtaunce and Riva letters. He therefore attributed more than seventy letters (rather than twenty-one) to Riva, and presented part of one Courtaunce letter as if it were by Riva (*ibid.*, letter 3, of 10 January 1721). This is the only letter written by Courtaunce that mentions music. Courtaunce represented Savoy in London from 1719 to 1725; details of his service and his letters are given below, in the commentaries to nos. 23, 24, 28 and 33.

<sup>80</sup> See the commentaries to nos. 42, 43A, 45, 48, 48A and 48B, below.

<sup>81</sup> He excluded four by Riva (nos. 10, 23, 25 and 40, below).

<sup>82</sup> Sardi was the agent who received and forwarded Riva's and Steffani's letters and packets. Even though his letters pre-date those of Steffani, they are placed between Steffani's last two letters, which are on ff. 51–2v and 57–8v. Sardi's are on ff. 53 (31 August 1720) and 55–6 (28 July 1720). Each letter also has a number in the lower left corner of its first page. Steffani's are nos. 85–110 and 113, while Sardi's are nos. 111 and 112.

<sup>83</sup> The last twenty-two of the eighty-six volumes in the Fondo Spiga contain copies of Steffani's outgoing correspondence from January 1723, during his 'retirement' in Italy, to February 1728, the month of his death. Vols 79, 80 and 82 include four letters that are preserved also in *I-MOe* Autografoteca Campori (nos. 29, 35, 36 and 39, below). The copybooks were located and examined by Timms.

<sup>84</sup> No. 15 is not entirely autograph, however, because a postscript was added by Marquis de Nomis, the Tuscan representative in Hanover. Bossis, who wrote nine letters in Hanover (nos. 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 24 and 26, below), is Steffani's only secretary of the 1720s whose name is known to us. Secretary A wrote five letters in Hanover (nos. 16, 18 and 20–2); secretary B wrote five in Padua (nos. 27, 29–31 and 33); secretary C wrote one in Padua, six in Hanover and one in Frankfurt (nos. 35, 36, 38, 39, 41, 44, 46 and 50).

<sup>85</sup> These twelve include letter C to Johann Philipp Franz, Count Schönborn.

Steffani's literary style, like that of his music, is elegant and polished, yet not stiff or formal; it has the easy grace of the accomplished diplomat, and conveys his understanding, sympathy and charm. He always tried to reply to Riva on the first post-day after receiving a letter from him (see nos. 3, 24 and 26) and was disappointed when his correspondent did not do the same. He amusingly threatened him with pages full of superlatives ('-issimi'), which over-use had rendered virtually meaningless, if Riva did not refrain from using them.<sup>86</sup> Although Riva felt stymied by these sensible instructions, he followed them until, in his last six letters, he could no longer withhold superlatives when addressing the elder statesman.<sup>87</sup> If Riva had felt free to write as he pleased, he would have expressed himself in an unvarnished, colloquial and even uncouth manner, as he often did in his letters to Zamboni.<sup>88</sup>

In his letters to Steffani, Riva expressed his favour for the compositions of Giovanni Bononcini and the singing of Francesca Cuzzoni, and his disfavour for the works of Handel and Ariosti and the vocal style of Faustina Bordoni. In doing so, he aligned himself with Pier Francesco Tosi (born, like Steffani, in 1654), who in 1723 ranked 'the *pathetick*', i.e., the pathos-filled Baroque style, above 'the *allegro*' of the dazzling new (pre-Classic) style. In the sonorous translation of John Ernest Galliard, who had studied with Steffani, Cuzzoni had 'Qualifications as particular and uncommon, as they are difficult to be imitated', namely, 'the delightful soothing *Cantabile* . . . joined with the Sweetness of a fine Voice, a perfect Intonation, Strictness of Time, and the rarest Productions of a Genius'. Faustina was, on the other hand, 'inimitable for a privileg'd Gift of Singing, and for enchanting the World with a prodigious Felicity in executing, and with a singular Brilliant (I know not whether from Nature or Art), which pleases to Excess'.<sup>89</sup> Tosi's itinerant life-style made him well aware of stylistic distinctions between regions, and he praised London for its maintenance of the *pathetick*: 'The golden Age of Musick would be already at an End, if the Swans did not make their Nests on some Theatres in *Italy*, or on the royal Banks of the *Thames*. O dear *London!*—On the other Streams, they sing no more as they used to do their sweet Notes at their expiring; but rather sadly lament the Expiration of those august and adorable Princes, by whom they were tenderly belov'd and esteemed'. Galliard's footnote to this passage lists other centres where 'august and adorable Princes' still ruled: 'In *Italy*, the Courts of *Parma, Modena, Turin, &c.*, and in *Germany*, the Courts of *Vienna, Bavaria, Hanover, Brandenburg, Palatinate, Saxony, &c.*'<sup>90</sup>

Singers and vocal works are the main focus of attention in the letters printed below. Count Schönborn sought and hired singers in 1720–2, then found that the three who came lacked good voices, a 'buona maniera', or common sense, so he dismissed or demoted them. In 1720 Pallavicini helped four singers—Senesino, Berselli, Durastanti and Salvai, all of whose employment in Dresden had come to an end—obtain contracts in London, and he asked Riva for news of their arrival and reception in England. Riva's first letter to Steffani, in December 1720, focused on the proposal for a London revival of the latter's final opera, *Tassilone*, which had been composed to a libretto by Pallavicini for Düsseldorf, 1709. Two months later a 'pastorale', presumably composed by Steffani in Hanover, was 'prepared' by Bononcini and sung by Senesino and Berselli in the king's apartments

<sup>86</sup> See letter no. 8, below.

<sup>87</sup> Riva chafed at the bit in no. 7, below. For his unleashing of '-issimi', see nos. 42, 43, 45 and 47–9.

<sup>88</sup> Examples from letters that he wrote at Hanover in 1723 are translated in Lindgren, 'Zamboni', nos. 95, 97, 102, 103, 106, 109 and 112.

<sup>89</sup> Pier Francesco Tosi, *Opinioni de' cantori antichi e moderni o sieno osservazioni sopra il canto figurato* (Bologna, 1723), trans. John Ernest Galliard, as *Observations on the Florid Song; or, Sentiments on the 'Ancient' and 'Modern' Singers* (2nd edn, London, 1743; repr. New York, 1968), 171.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 146. Tosi may have lavished praise upon London partly because the first edition of his treatise (Bologna, 1723) was dedicated to his Roman Catholic friend Charles Mordaunt (1658–1735), Earl of Peterborough, who secretly married the singer Anastasia Robinson in 1722–3 and was the dedicatee of Bononcini's *Farnace* in November 1723 (*Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee, (London, 1908–9) [henceforth *DNB*], xiii, 848; Dean and Knapp, *Handel's Operas*, 306–7, 315 and 317–18). Tosi's 1723 dedication and text are reprinted in Andrea Della Corte, ed., *Canto e bel canto*, Biblioteca di cultura musicale, 5 (Turin, 1933), 12 and 15–92.

(no. 5). Then the Royal Academy of Music was gradually torn apart by ‘the malignant spirit of parties, which is so natural to the English mind’: ‘it is not yet known whether Senesino will stay; Berselli is ill in the country; Durastanti has given birth; Bononcini either laughs or gets angry when he sees how absurdly things are arranged’ (no. 7). The last opera in the 1720–1 season was a ‘heavenly piece’ by Bononcini. Steffani declared that ‘a company of virtuosos is almost the same as a convent of brothers’, but rejoiced that Bononcini was ‘the rock in that turbulent sea’. Riva then sent him the ribald text of a bass aria (‘Here is Jonah in the midst of the sea’) that Bononcini reportedly claimed to have set for some nuns but which, instead, is an amusing portrayal of helpless South Sea investors; Steffani, in his only autograph letter to Riva, began to provide his own interpretation of the text, but ended with ‘I don’t know what I’m saying’ (nos. 12–15).

After Riva’s report of his music-making at Twickenham with Bononcini, Senesino and two harmonious English girls in August to October 1721 (no. 19), music takes ‘centre stage’ in nine letters. In the first, Steffani provides our only glimpse of music-making in his Hanover home, where three musical visitors—a singer, gambist and lutenist—were joined by the best instrumentalists from the court orchestra and by Steffani at the harpsichord for a session that lasted ‘from 4 o’clock until nearly 9’ (no. 20). In his next letters he reports on Durastanti’s encounters with his sister and the Bavarian court (nos. 21–2). After his move to Padua he became concerned with the career of Benedetta Sorosina, a young soprano who sang ‘in good taste’, although it was not ‘that which now reigns in this country’ [Italy]. He thought that Bononcini ‘would without much effort make something excellent of her’ and wanted her ‘to spend at least a little time outside Italy, because, between you and me, it seems to me that in Italy true singing no longer exists’ (no. 27). He recommends Angelo Poli, an alto castrato, in no. 29, then, in his remaining letters from Padua (nos. 30, 31, 33 and 35), concentrates on Sorosina—because she did travel to London to sing for the Royal Academy from January to June 1725. Finally, in 1727 he responds from Hanover to Riva’s request for assistance in finding a suitable appointment in Germany for the Florentine musician Gioachino Landi, who was then in London (nos. 45–7). It appears, therefore, that Steffani was keen to help musicians in need of assistance: he certainly apologised profusely when he felt incapable of doing so (see no. 46).

## 6. The Academy of Vocal Music and Steffani’s Last Three Compositions

The last nine letters in the correspondence are concerned largely with Steffani’s relationship with the Academy of Vocal Music, which had first met in London on 7 January 1726. On 31 December 1726, in his closing paragraph, Riva told Steffani that the Academy consisted of ‘the best composers and singers, Italian and English’, that he had been ‘admitted as a member, but without a vote and as a great amateur’, that ‘the repertory comprises madrigals, antiphons, duets, psalms and anything in which harmony reigns’, and that Piva’s *Gettano i re dal soglio* (SSATB) had been sung three times at yesterday’s meeting, which closed with Piva’s ‘sublime and divine duet *Saldi marmi, &c.*’ Gregorio Piva was Steffani’s pseudonym as a composer from about 1707.<sup>91</sup> Riva had been designated ‘humbly to implore Piva . . . to kindly send something of his composition’ as well as his portrait ‘in a small water-colour design or in any better medium’ (no. 42). To be thus honoured at the age of seventy-two, when he was not known to have composed anything for nearly fifteen years,<sup>92</sup> may have brought new ideas as well as old works to Steffani’s mind. The correspondence seems to have focused his attention increasingly on the Academy’s requests, and his final letter, written a month before his death, provides the most precious evidence of a renewal of his musical creativity. It is exceedingly rare when a collection of letters can end with a bang rather than a whimper, but such is the case in this volume.

<sup>91</sup> Timms, ‘Gregorio Piva’, 170–2; see also the commentary to no. 1 below.

<sup>92</sup> The last works he had written were apparently the duets *Dolce labbro, amabil bocca* and *Quando ti stringo*, composed at Hertford during the summer of 1712 or the summers of 1712 and 1713; see Timms, *Polymath*, 125–6.

We do not have Steffani’s ‘generous and obliging reply’ to the first invitation from the Academy (see no. 42), but—according to its secretary, Nicola Haym—the ‘immense favour’ that he granted caused them ‘with wondrous astonishment’ to render ‘most fulsome thanks’, to seek his permission to place his ‘celebrated name’ in their registers, and to ask for anything composed by him ‘in several parts, with either Latin or Italian words, but without instruments’ (no. 43A). Steffani’s second reply about the Academy, likewise, is lost, but in it he must have promised to submit ‘the sins of my youth [i.e., his musical compositions] to the scrutiny of those virtuosos’, and after it he sent them *Qui diligit Mariam* (SSATB), followed by a manuscript copy of six motets from his *Sacer Ianus quadrifrons*, which had been printed at Munich in 1685 (see nos. 44 and 46). After his second reply, also, Steffani was ‘unanimously elected’ the Academy’s president. The subsequent arrival and performance of *Qui diligit Mariam* increased their ‘desire to see and hear the others that you have promised [to send], which are awaited with great impatience’ (see nos. 47, 48, 48B and especially 48A). Steffani’s third reply to the Academy is, likewise, lost, but Riva’s response again requested his portrait and also enclosed Galliard’s list of the works by Steffani then in the Academy’s library, ‘whence it is up to you to procure what they lack from that St Augustine of Music and send it to them’ (no. 49). In his reply, Steffani offered to send Piva’s *Stabat mater dolorosa*, which is ‘the aforesaid composer’s masterpiece, to the extent that he has not dared put his hand to another work since, so that I can assure your most illustrious lordship that there is no power of number in sound, nor vigour of harmonical proportion, that is not to be found in abundance in that composition’.

Steffani’s election as president of the Academy is one of the most extraordinary aspects of his extraordinary career.<sup>93</sup> In his *Memoirs* of the composer, printed in about 1750, Hawkins described the election as ‘an honour which he [Steffani] thought it not beneath the dignity of his character to accept, and which he held to the time of his death. In return for this signal instance of respect shewn to a stranger [foreigner], he wrote them a letter of thanks [lost], and from time to time presented the academy with his compositions, which are frequently performed there’.<sup>94</sup> Did Steffani compose any new music for the Academy during the last years of his life? We believe that he wrote three works, partly because no extant source of them is earlier than our conjectural date of composition (see section 7, below). The first is the madrigal *Gettano i re dal soglio*, which, according to the copy in *GB-DRc* MS Mus. E. 15, pp. 48–54, was ‘sent to our Academy at y<sup>e</sup> Crown Tavern 1726’. The connexion between this manuscript and the Academy of Vocal Music is confirmed by the following inscription on the madrigal *Dolorosi martir* on pp. 12–16: ‘A Musick Meeting being held at y<sup>e</sup> Crown Tavern near S<sup>t</sup> Clements. Mr Galliard at y<sup>e</sup> head of it, & cheifly for Grave ancient vocal musick. Wee began it w<sup>th</sup> y<sup>e</sup> following song of Luca De Marenzio, Jan 7, 1725’.<sup>95</sup> This date—7 January 1726—is also the first date in the Academy’s minute book (*GB-Lbl* Add. MS 11732). As we have seen, *Gettano*

<sup>93</sup> The letters concerning the Academy are the only part of the correspondence that Woker summarized in 1887, in his study of Steffani as a composer (‘Tondichter’, 422–4). In the 1960s and 1970s, Harry Diack Johnstone informed the present collaborators (separately) both of these letters and of the wordbooks published later by the Academy; as a result of his kindness, we each published articles based partly on material in them (see Colin Timms, ‘Steffani and the Academy of Ancient Music’, *Musical Times*, 119 (1978), 127–30; Lowell Lindgren, ‘The Three Great Noises “Fatal to the Interests of Bononcini”’, *Musical Quarterly*, 61 (1975), 564–71; and *idem*, ‘The Accomplishments of the Learned and Ingenious Nicola Francesco Haym (1678–1729)’, *Studi musicali*, 16 (1987), 279–82).

<sup>94</sup> [John Hawkins], *Memoirs of the Life of Sig. Agostino Steffani, some time Master of the Electoral Chapel at Hanover, and afterwards Bishop of Spiga* [London, c.1750], p. v; repr. in *Gentleman’s Magazine*, 31 (1761), 491. Here, and in John Hawkins, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music* (2nd edn, London, 1853; repr. New York, 1963), 673, the date of Steffani’s election is erroneously given as 1724. The election is not mentioned in Hawkins, *Account of the Institution and Progress of the Academy of Ancient Music* (London, 1770), which contains only one vague reference to the composer: ‘Abbate Steffani transmitted to them from Hanover the most valuable of his works from time to time, as they were composed’ (p. 9). A facsimile edition of Hawkins, *Account*, introduced by Christopher Hogwood (Cambridge, 1998), is reproduced with Francesco Geminiani, *Concerti Grossi (after Corelli, Op. 5)*, performed by The Academy of Ancient Music, dir. Andrew Manze (Harmonia Mundi 907 261.62, ©2000).

<sup>95</sup> Brian Crosby, *A Catalogue of Durham Cathedral Music Manuscripts* (Oxford, 1986), 66. The Crown Tavern was also the venue for at least one other ‘Musick Club’, which met ‘every Monday Night during the Winter Season’ and allowed ‘the Company of Ladies or Masters of Musick’ only on St Cecilia’s Day (see *The London Journal*, 16 and 30 November 1723).

*i re dal soglio* was performed there, perhaps for the first time, on 30 December 1726. The member most likely to have 'commissioned' the madrigal is Galliard, who had studied with Steffani in Hanover in 1702.<sup>96</sup> The second new work is the motet *Qui diligit Mariam*, which was first performed in June or July 1727; since Riva was not present on that occasion, Galliard sent him a 'short account' of its 'beauties' (no. 48B), which Riva then forwarded to Steffani. If these two works were composed in 1726 and the first half of 1727, then the *Stabat mater dolorosa* must have been written during the second half of 1727, for, as Steffani tells us, he 'has not dared put his hand to another work since'. His comments on his 'masterpiece' are the most significant that he could have made. In 1858 Chrysander described this work as 'the greatest and perhaps the last of Steffani's compositions, which I here—so far as I know—mention for the first time. It is a great *Stabat mater*'.<sup>97</sup> Impetus for its creation may have come from the fact that this Marian sequence, which had been removed from the liturgy by the Council of Trent, was reinstated by Benedict XIII in 1727.<sup>98</sup> Be that as it may, Steffani's *Stabat Mater* is the most powerful expression in music of its composer's religious fervour.<sup>99</sup> The setting is somewhat old-fashioned in style, but it possesses an other-worldly, timeless quality that would have appealed to the academicians for whom it presumably was intended. That he said nothing about the work before finishing it suggests that he feared he might die before completing its composition. To judge from his last letter to Riva, he felt that this beautiful setting summed up all that he had left to say as a composer.

### 7. Sources of Steffani's Last Three Compositions

Most of the following manuscripts survive because a significant number of British antiquarians collected them. The principal British collectors and copyists named below are—in approximate chronological order—Estwick, Dolben, Needler, Gostling, Travers, Keeble, Boyce, Mathias, Alcock, Savage, Bever, Warren-Horne, Hayes, Fitzwilliam, Parker, Smith, Stevens, Greatorex, Hindle, Bartleman, Crotch, Novello, Husk, Grove, Marshall and Squire. All except the first three are discussed in A. Hyatt King, *Some British Collectors of Music, c.1600–1960* (Cambridge, 1963), where Appendix B lists extant auction catalogues.

English sale catalogues indicate that only one manuscript containing vocal music by Steffani was auctioned before 1750; it was a collection of 'seventy songs with one, two, three, four voices, with

<sup>96</sup> Hawkins, *History*, 829n. That *Gettano i re dal soglio* continued to be sung at the Academy is suggested by the following announcement from the *Daily Journal* for 16 January 1731: 'On Thursday last [the 14th] in the Evening, at the Academy of Vocal and Instrumental Musick, (Mr. Gates, Master of the Children of the Chapel Royal being Director for the Night, and a numerous Assembly of Nobility and Gentry being present) were performed, with universal Applause, the following Compositions: 1. A Madrigal for 5 Voices, by Abbot Stefani, late President of the Academy. / 2. A Piece of Vocal and Instrumental Musick, by Sig. Faux [Fux], Chapel Master to the Emperor. / 3. A Madrigal for 5 Voices, by Sig. Antonio Lotti, Chapel Master to the Doge of Venice. / 4. Mr. Handell's Great Te Deum and Jubilate.'

This concert must have been a very special event. It is the only Academy performance, so far as we know, of which the programme was printed in the press; it was publicized after the event, presumably to trumpet to those in the know that the Academy was now performing the madrigal 'In una siepe ombrosa' (*La vita caduca*) as a work by Lotti, not by Bononcini, who claimed to be its composer. And the programme itself was splendid, because it featured pieces by a past president, two chapel masters, and the great Mr. Handel.

<sup>97</sup> Friedrich Chrysander, *G.F. Händel* (Leipzig, 1858–67; repr. Hildesheim, 1966), i, 350: 'Das größte und vielleicht auch das letzte von Steffani's Tonwerken mache ich hier, soviel ich weiß, sogar dem Namen nach zuerst bekannt. Es ist ein großes *Stabat mater*'. This account follows Chrysander's observations on the Academy (i, 344–5, which he derived from Hawkins, *Account*) and on four works by Steffani that were performed at the Academy (i, 345–8): *Al rigor d'un bel sembiante* (SAT, bc), *Gettano i re dal soglio*, *Qui diligit Mariam* and *Non pavescat lethales horrores* (SS, bc). Chrysander does not state where he found references to these pieces; the fourth is the second section of *Qui diligit Mariam*. Recent scholars have guessed at the date of the *Stabat mater*: Heinrich Sievers suggested 1706 (*Hannoversche Musikgeschichte: Dokumente, Kritiken und Meinungen* (Tutzing, 1979), i, 143–6), while Magda Marx-Weber cautiously dated it before 1727, for a brotherhood in Italy ('Domenico Scarlattis *Stabat Mater*', *Kirchenmusikalisches Jahrbuch*, 71 (1987), 16 n. 10).

<sup>98</sup> John Caldwell and Malcolm Boyd, 'Stabat mater dolorosa', in *New Grove* 2, xxiv, 234–6.

<sup>99</sup> Colin Timms, 'Italian Church Music in Handel's London: The Sacred Works of Agostino Steffani', *Händel-Jahrbuch*, 46 (2000), 170–1.

variety of instruments, done by the famous Sig. Abbate, Steffano, and Scarlatti'.<sup>100</sup> None of the three works listed below, which we believe were composed c.1726–8, is known to have been sold at auction until half a century after Steffani's death (see the 1777 Gostling and 1778 Boyce catalogues). Subsequent auctions included many of Steffani's vocal works, and sale catalogues sometimes name one or more of the pieces—(a) *Gettano i re dal soglio*, (b) *Qui diligit Mariam*, (c) *Stabat Mater*—for which extant sources are listed below.<sup>101</sup> For example, (a) and (b) are named among the vocal items by Steffani that appear in *A Catalogue of the Very Valuable and Celebrated Library of Music Books, late the Property of James Bartleman, Esq. (Deceased.)*, sold by auction, by Mr. White, at his rooms, Storey's Gate, Westminster, 20–28 February 1822, lots 288, 553–61, 1157–9, 1219, 1220, 1222, 1223 and 1244. They respectively included the instrumental parts of (b); a score of one opera; eight collections of duets and trios; three scores including motets (at least the first included twelve motets, and the last was 'his own MS', that is, in his own handwriting); vocal and organ parts of (b); vocal and instrumental parts of (a); scores of *Qui pacem amatis* (two copies), *Sonitus armorum* and *Venite exultemus* with the 'printed life' (i.e., [Hawkins], *Memoirs*); two scores of (b), one of (a) and two scores as well as the vocal and instrumental parts of four motets. None of these sources can be identified with any of those listed below. Bartleman signed only one of these extant sources, *GB-Lbl* Add. MS. 31409, which begins with (a). The remainder of this manuscript of about 155 folios contains six motets, then forty-four madrigals that were published in parts in 1540–1601 and are here scored by the copyist, Warren-Horne. Bartleman's sale catalogue lists two sources that resemble Add. MS 31409, in that they are 300-page collections of madrigals and motets scored by 'Mr. Warren'; they differ, however, in the number of works they contain. Lot 1181 included 63 works (i.e., a dozen more) by '44 eminent Masters of the 16 and 17th Centuries', while Lot 1182 included only 33 works (i.e., eighteen fewer). Because the descriptions of lots in sale catalogues are brief and often lacking in detail, it is difficult to match them to extant sources.<sup>102</sup> It seems, however, as though many of the Steffani items listed in the sale catalogues have disappeared during the course of the past two hundred years. Only extant sources are listed below.

#### (a) *Gettano i re dal soglio* (14 sources)

*D-Hs* ND VI 435, ii, 29–45: 'Abbot Steffani'. All pieces in this manuscript were performed at the Academy of Vocal Music. Signed by an owner, 'John Alcock [1715–1806], Reading, 1746 . . . This Book is worth its weight in Gold'. Also includes the bookplate of 'Rev<sup>d</sup> John Parker'.

*GB-Cfm* Mu MS 22, pp. 14–19: 'Madrigale a 5, del Abbat Steffani'. Signed by two owners, '[William] Gostling' (1696–1777) and '[Richard, 7th Viscount] Fitzwilliam [1745–1816], 1775'. [Hawkins], *Memoirs* is bound in before the beginning of the manuscript.

*GB-Cfm* Mu MS 31, pp. 15–23: 'Madrigale a 5. voc. col organo, del Abbat Steffani'. Also includes (b), below. 'Manuscript by D<sup>r</sup> Boyce' means that William Boyce (1711–79) copied it (c.1760?). It is Lot 152, 'A very Elegant Score, Vol. I, by several of the most Capital Composers of Italy, &c.' in *A Catalogue of the Truly Valuable and Curious Library of Music, Late in the Possession of Dr. William Boyce*, sold by auction by Mess. Christie and Ansell, at their Great Room, Pall Mall,

<sup>100</sup> *Bibliotheca Leighiana: or, a Catalogue of the Entire Library of the Late Learned Dr. Francis Leigh . . . with One of the Best Collections of Music (by the Most Celebrated Masters in the World) that ever was offer'd to sale* (Tho. Ballard, bookseller, at St. Paul's Coffeehouse, beginning on 29 February 1720), cited in Lenore Coral, 'Music in English Auction Sales, 1676–1750' (Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1974), 190, no. 2\*.

<sup>101</sup> The texts of all three pieces (a–c) were printed in *The Words of Such Pieces, as are most usually performed by the Academy of Ancient Music* (London, 1761), 77, 11, 37–40, and 2nd edn (London, 1768), 92, 11, 37–9. In both editions, texts are ordered by genre, and (a), (b) and (c) are placed under 'ITALIAN MADRIGALS', 'MOTETS' and 'LATIN PIECES WITH INSTRUMENTS', respectively. In both editions, 'STEFFANI' heads texts (a) and (b), while (c) is preceded by 'PERGOLESI and D'ASTORGA'. The absence of Steffani's name before (c) may indicate that his setting of this text was not among those being performed by the Academy in the 1760s.

<sup>102</sup> See, for example, items 807–8 in Bartleman's catalogue: '807 Vocal and Instrumental parts of the Anthems and Motetts by Steffani and Colonna, MS, for a large band, 20 books', and '808 A set of books formerly belonging to the Ancient Musical Academy, containing the Oratorios of Esther and Deborah, Coronation, Funeral and other Anthems, in parts voc. and inst. for a large band, 23 vols green vellum'.

on 14–16 April 1779. Thomas Bever (1725–91) bought Lots 152–3 (*Cfm* Mu MSS 31–2) at Boyce's sale for fourteen guineas. Bever bequeathed his collection to the musician John Hindle (1761–96), whose administratrix disposed of it by auction on 7–8 June 1798, at Mr. White's, Storey's-gate, Westminster. The signature 'Fitzwilliam 1798' is on p. 1 of each manuscript, which signifies that the viscount purchased them at the Bever/Hindle sale.<sup>103</sup>

*GB-DRc* MS E. 15, pp. 48–54: 'Abbas Stephano, 5 voc., Sent to our Academy at y<sup>c</sup> Crown Tavern, 1726'. Largely in the hand of Sampson Estwick (c.1656–1739), one of the founders of the Academy, who was formerly in the Aldrich circle at Oxford.<sup>104</sup> A later owner was John Dolben (1684–1726).<sup>105</sup> See *GB-Lcm* MS 1090, below.

*GB-Lam* MS 32, pp. 283–98: headed 'Madrigale', with 'Steffani's Duetto's' on the spine label. In the same 18th-century hand as *GB-Lam* MS 35; see (b), below. Signed by an owner, 'R.J.S. Stevens [1757–1837], Charterhouse'.

*GB-Lam* MS 39, pp. 90–7: 'Madrigale a 5 del Abbat Steffani'. In the same 18th-century hand as *Lam*, MS 40; see (b), below. Signed by an owner, 'R.J.S. Stevens, Charterhouse, 1817'.<sup>106</sup>

*GB-Lbl* Mad. Soc. A. 22–7 (18): five partbooks, each headed 'Madrigale a 5 voci, Agostino Steffani'. For *Gettano i re*, see A. 22 (canto [primo]), pp. 53–4; A. 23 (alto), 2 unnumbered pages; A. 24 (tenore), pp. 50–1; A. 25 (basso), pp. 57–9; A. 26 (bc), pp. 20–2; and A. 27 (quinto = canto secondo), pp. 26–8. This early 18th-century copy also (b), below.

*GB-Lbl* Mad. Soc. C. 15, pp. 70–7: 'Agostino Steffani'. A late 18th-century copy, that includes the bookplate of 'Rev<sup>d</sup> John Parker' and (b), below.

*GB-Lbl* RM 24. c. 16 (3), ff. 1v–5v: 'Stefani'. In the same 18th-century hand as *GB-Lbl* Add. MSS 5329–32, which include 96 duets by Steffani and [Hawkins], *Memoirs*.

*GB-Lbl* RM 24. h. 11, ff. 53v–58v: 'Abbas Stephano, Bishop of Spiega'. This manuscript was presumably copied—partly by John Travers (c.1703–58)—for the Academy, c.1726. It also includes (b), below.

*GB-Lbl* Add. MS 31409, ff. 8v–11v: 'Abbat. Steffani'. Also includes (b), below. Signed by the copyist 'Horne', i.e., Edmund Thomas Warren-Horne (c.1730–94), and by an owner, 'James Bartleman' (1769–1821). The British Library purchased it in 1880–1 from Julian Marshall.

*GB-Lbl* Add. MS 31441, ff. 89–92: 'Madrigale a 5. voci, del Sig<sup>r</sup> Abbat Steffani'. The manuscript was 'a Present from M<sup>rs</sup> Hamilton of Conduit Street, from the Collection of her Father, Mr Keble [John Keeble, c.1711–86], late Organist of St. George's, Hanover Square, April 7, 1787, [to] T[homas] B[ever]'. Below the bookplate of Thomas Bever LLD is inscribed 'Coll. Omn. Anim. Socius 1787'. Above the bookplate is the signature 'H. Sikes'. It is not known whether 'H. Sikes' was related to the collector Lady Mary Elizabeth Sykes.<sup>107</sup> The British Library purchased it in 1880–1 from Julian Marshall.

<sup>103</sup> See MSS 31–2 in [John] A[lexander] Fuller Maitland and A[rthur] H[enry] Mann, *Catalogue of the Music in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge* (London, 1893), 12–13, and Richard Charteris, 'Thomas Bever and Rediscovered Sources in the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Hamburg', *Music & Letters*, 81 (2000), 194–5. Charteris, 180–1, also discusses Bever's will, which provides otherwise unknown information concerning the dispersal of his library and thus supplements what *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 68 (1798), 517, relates about the Bever/Hindle sale.

<sup>104</sup> See Margaret Crum, 'An Oxford Music Club, 1690–1719', *The Bodleian Library Record*, 9 (1974), 86–7.

<sup>105</sup> Donald Burrows, 'Sir John Dolben's Music Collection', *Musical Times*, 120 (1979), 150; see also Crosby, *Catalogue*, 66 and 218, and Timms, 'Steffani and the Academy', 128. *GB-DRc* MS E. 15 was the principal source for the edition published as a supplement to Timms, 'Steffani and the Academy'.

<sup>106</sup> Stevens was a pupil of William Savage, whose library passed to his son, Reverend George Savage, vicar of Kingston (d. 13 July 1816), then to George's widow. In May 1817 Stevens spent much time sorting the library, and on 28 July 1817 he purchased it after paying the auctioneer White to 'fix a price for each musical item' (Mark Argent, ed., *Recollections of R.J.S. Stevens, an Organist in Georgian London* (Carbondale, IL, 1992), 209 and 212–13). Only one manuscript, *GB-Lbl* Add. MS 31499, which includes (b) below, bears the signatures of Savage and Stevens with the year 1817. Three other manuscripts that Stevens signed and dated 1817, *GB-Lam* MSS 38–40, which include (c), (a) and (b), respectively, were presumably purchased also from George Savage's widow.

<sup>107</sup> Her sale is described in King, *Some British Collectors*, 45, 95 and 135.

*GB-Lcm* MS 1090, ff. 16v–21: 'Steffani'. The first section of this manuscript is a copy of *GB-DRc* MS E. 15, listed above. Bookplates of Sir John Dolben and John Lucius Dampier, who presented it to the Sacred Harmonic Society.<sup>108</sup>

*GB-Ob* Mus. d. 102, pp. 195–204: 'Madrigale'. Signed by an owner, 'Phil. Hayes [1738–97], Dec.' 1766'.

(b) *Qui diligit Mariam* (27 sources)

*B-Bc* D. 211, ff. 1–17v: 'Mottetto a cinque voci, del Sig<sup>r</sup> Steffani'. Copied in the 19th century.

*B-Bc* XY. 15018, f. 181. Copied in the 19th century by Carl Dreher, who included only section 2, the duet 'Non pavescat lethales horrores'.

*GB-Cfm* Mu MS 31, pp. 136–51: 'Motet a 5 voci col organo, del Sig. Steffani'. Also includes (a), above, where the copyist and owners are identified. 'Mariam' is replaced by 'Filium'.

*GB-Cfm* Mu MS 43, part 2, pp. 1–17. Copied c.1730.

*GB-Cfm* Mu MS 160 (1–7): seven four-page partbooks, each headed 'Madrigale a 5 del Sig. Steffani'. Copied in the mid-18th-century. The seven include duplicate copies for A, T and bc, and one for B.

*GB-Lam* MS 35, ff. 55–69v: the only heading is 'Steffani's Mottets. Vol. 1' on the cover label. In the same 18th-century hand as *Lam*, MS 32; see (a), above. Signed by an owner, 'R.J.S. Stevens'.

*GB-Lam* MS 40, pp. 108–21: 'Madrigale a 5 del Sig<sup>c</sup> Steffani'. In the same 18th-century hand as *Lam*, MS 39; see (a), above. Signed by an owner, 'R.J.S. Stevens, Charterhouse, 1817'.

*GB-Lbl* Mad. Soc. A. 22–7 (3): each of the five partbooks is headed 'del Sig<sup>r</sup> Steffani'. For *Qui diligit*, see A. 22 (canto [primo]), pp. 11–17; A. 23 (alto), pp. 12–18; A. 24 (tenore), pp. 12–18; A. 25 (basso), pp. 11–28; A. 26 (bc), pp. 5–12, and A. 27 (quinto = canto secondo). This early 18th-century copy also includes (a), above.

*GB-Lbl* Mad. Soc. C. 15, pp. 78–96: 'A. Steffani'. A late 18th-century copy that includes the bookplate of 'Rev<sup>d</sup> John Parker' and (a), above.

*GB-Lbl* RM 24. h. 11, ff. 59–67: 'Abbas Stephano, Bishop of Spiega'. See (a), above, for identification of one copyist and the date of copying. 'Mariam' is replaced by 'Christum'.

*GB-Lbl* Add. MS 5054, ff. 8v–18: 'Agostino Steffani'. Copied before 1760.

*GB-Lbl* Add. MS 14395, ff. 77–9v. Copied after 1831.

*GB-Lbl* Add. MS 31120, ff. 106–8. A transcription for organ of three sections—'Qui diligit', 'Non pavescat' and 'Haec potest'—which were apparently copied for or from Vincent Novello (1781–1861), *Select Organ Pieces, from the Masses, Motetts and Other Sacred works of Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Cherubini, Hummel, Palestrina, Carissimi, Clari, Steffani, Leo, Durante, Jomelli, Pergolesi, and Other Classical Composers of the German & Italian Schools* (London, c.1835?), i, 84–7.<sup>109</sup> Novello's source was 'a M. S. in the possession of the Editor', presumably Add. MS 31477, listed below. He noted that 'the motet *Qui diligit* . . . is generally considered as one of the very finest of all his [Steffani's] Compositions, the principal characteristics of which are a grandeur & severity of style in the melodies, profound science in the harmonies, and masterly skill in the construction of the most ingenious and elaborate counterpoint'.

*GB-Lbl* Add. MS 31409, ff. 12–38v: 'Abbate Steffani'. See (a), above, for identification of the copyist and two owners.

*GB-Lbl* Add. MS 31477, ff. 3–9: 'Mottet a 5, del Sig<sup>r</sup> Steffani'. The manuscript is 'in the handwriting of the Rev. Mr. W. Gostling, Minor Canon of Canterbury', who provided its title-page: 'Motetti Sacri Diversorum insignium Autorum Centuriæ 17<sup>m</sup>e. N.B. This is an exact Duplicate in every particular with one from M<sup>r</sup> Keebles Collection' (which is not known to be extant). In a long

<sup>108</sup> Burrows, 'Dolben's Music Collection', 150, and William Henry Husk, *Catalogue of the Library of the Sacred Harmonic Society* (2nd edn, London, 1872), no. 1941.

<sup>109</sup> An earlier keyboard transcription, which includes Steffani's entire motet, is found in William Crotch (1775–1847), *Specimens of Various Styles of Music, Referred to in a Course of Lectures, Read at Oxford & London, and Adapted to Keyed Instruments* (3rd edn, London, [c.1808–c.1815]), ii, 98–104 (no. 103).



note on f. 2v, T[homas] B[ever] explains why he 'everywhere erased the Word *Mariam* and substituted *Filium* in its room'. It was purchased at Gostling's sale by 'Tho<sup>s</sup> Bever, Coll. Omn. Anim. Socius 1777 May 26'. It was 'purchased at D<sup>r</sup> Beaver's Sale' of 1798 by the conductor 'Tho<sup>s</sup> Greatorex [1758–1831]'. In 1834 it was 'Purchs'd of M<sup>r</sup> W<sup>m</sup> Taylor's Widow' by the editor and publisher Vincent Novello (see MS 31120 above). She was presumably the widow of William Taylor (c.1753–1825), the proprietor and manager of the King's Theatre in London in 1781–1813.<sup>110</sup> The British Library purchased it in 1880–1 from Julian Marshall.

*GB-Lbl* Add. MS 31481, ff. 32–40v: 'Agostino Steffani'. Copied c.1826 with such care and consistency that it resembles an engraved print. The British Library purchased it in 1880–1 from Julian Marshall.

*GB-Lbl* Add. MS 31493, ff. 95–6v: 'Motet, Agostino Steffani'. An incomplete 19th-century copy, with [Hawkins], *Memoirs* bound in before the beginning of the manuscript. Signed by Peter Noaille on the flyleaf verso. The British Library purchased it in 1880–1 from Julian Marshall.

*GB-Lbl* Add. MS 31499, ff. 1v–11: the heading on fol. 1 is 'Various Pieces for Several Voices by Abbot Stephani under the Name of Gregorio Piva'. Signed by two owners, 'W<sup>m</sup> Savage [1720–89], Feb<sup>ry</sup> 11, 1750/1', and his pupil 'R.J.S. Stevens, Charterhouse, 1817'. The British Library purchased it in 1880–1 from Julian Marshall.

*GB-Lbl* Add. MS 39815, ff. 5–15v: 'Motett, Sig<sup>r</sup> Abbot Steffani'. A score intended for the bass soloist: 'Bass' is written at the beginning, 'Tempus est' for bass solo is written in very large notes, and the duet 'Non pavescat', for two treble voices, is omitted. Perhaps copied in the early 19th century. Presented by W. Barclay Squire, Esq. [1855–1927], 3 Mar. 1919.

*GB-Lcm* MS 672, ff. 1–24: 'Motett, Sig<sup>r</sup> Abbot Steffani'. Copied, according to a red leather label on the cover, for (the conductor, who played the?) 'Organ, C[oncerts of] A[n]cient M[usic]', which flourished from 1776 until the 1840s. In the same hand as *Lcm*, MS 2261, below.

*GB-Lcm* MS 995, ff. 96v–105: 'Madrigale [sic] a 5'. Copied in the 1730s. Bookplates of Sir John Dolben and John Lucius Dampier, who gave it to the Sacred Harmonic Society.<sup>111</sup>

*GB-Lcm* MS 1025: the score (19 pp.) is headed 'Del Sig<sup>r</sup> Agostino Steffani'; each of the five part-books—for 'canto 1<sup>o</sup> and canto 2<sup>o</sup>' (8 pp.), 'canto 2<sup>o</sup> and organo' (6 pp.), 'alto' (3 pp.), 'tenor' (3 pp.) and 'organo' (3 pp.)—is headed 'Motett a 5 Voci, A. Steffani'. Copied by 'M<sup>r</sup> [Edmund Thomas] Warren, May 13, 1767'.

*GB-Lcm* MS 1066, f. 194. Copied by William Henry Husk (1814–87).

*GB-Lcm* MS 1121, ff. 87–97: 'Motet a 5 voc., del Sig<sup>r</sup> Agostino Steffani'. An 18th-century copy in which 'Mariam' is replaced by 'Filium'. Two owners are identified by bookplates: Robert Smith (1741–1810),<sup>112</sup> who also signed his name on f. 87, and G. O. C., whose motto was 'Fidus et Audax'. A later owner was the Sacred Harmonic Society.<sup>113</sup>

*GB-Lcm* MS 2261, ff. 61–70v: 'Canto 2<sup>o</sup>, N<sup>o</sup> 4, Motett, Sig<sup>r</sup> Abbat Steffani'. Copied around 1800, in the same hand as *GB-Lcm* MS 672, above. 'Mariam' is replaced by 'Filium'.

*GB-Ob* Mus. d. 7, ff. 64–73v: 'Madrigale a 5, del Sig<sup>r</sup> Steffani'. Copied in the 18th century.

*GB-Ob* Tenbury 926, pp. 104–25: 'A. Steffani'. Copied in the late 18th century.

### (c) *Stabat Mater* (14 sources)

*CZ-Pnm* XLVI D 306, 34 fols.: 'Steffani'. Copied in 1866. Stamps of a previous owner, Monsign. Jan Pachta, Strahov.

<sup>110</sup> Curtis Price, Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, *Italian Opera in Late Eighteenth-Century London*, Vol. 1: *The King's Theatre, Haymarket, 1778–1791* (Oxford, 1995), and Judith Milhous, Gabriella Dideriksen and Robert D. Hume, *Italian Opera in Late Eighteenth-Century London*, Vol. 2: *The Pantheon Opera and Its Aftermath, 1789–1795* (Oxford, 2001), *passim*, and Philip H. Highfill, Jr., Kalman A. Burnim, and Edward A. Langhans, *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers, & Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660–1800* (Carbondale, IL, 1973–93), xiv, 380–5. For a commentary on all former owners of this manuscript, see Charteris, 'Thomas Bever', 199.

<sup>111</sup> Burrows, 'Dolben's Music Collection', 149 and 149n; and Husk, *Catalogue*, no. 1921, vol. 2.

<sup>112</sup> See Lucy Roe, 'Robert Smith, Music Collector', *Handel Institute Newsletter*, 14/2 (Autumn 2003), [5–8].

<sup>113</sup> Husk, *Catalogue*, no. 1939.

*CZ-Pu* 59 R 22: the score (36 fols.) is headed 'Abbate Steffani'; there are also 40 partbooks: 7 for vocal soloists, 26 for choristers, and 7 for instrumentalists. Copied by the Capuchin Barnabas Weiss in Prague, 1865.

*D-B* Mus. ms. Winterfeld 6. Copied in the late 18th or early 19th century.

*D-Hs* M B/1761, 48 fols.: 'Abbate Steffani'. Copied in the 19th century, and owned by Friedrich Chrysander (1826–1901).

*D-Hs* M B/2510. Vocal parts for canto 1, canto 2 and tenor 1 (4 fols. each), and for alto, tenor 2, bass and bass, second copy (3 fols. each). Copied in the mid-18th century on English paper. Previously owned by Chrysander.

*D-HVs* No/8/Stef/1–2. Two scores, full and vocal, copied by the music historian Georg Fischer (1836–1921).

*D-Mbs* Mus. ms. 2833. Copied c.1900 from Chrysander's transcription of *GB-Lbl* Add. MS 31498.

*D-Mbs* Mus. ms. 6240. Copied c.1900.

*GB-Lam* MS 38, 47 fols.: 'Steffani'. Copied in the early 18th century; in the same hand as *Lbl* Add. MS 31498, below. Signed by an owner, 'R.J.S. Stevens, Charterhouse, 1817'.

*GB-Lbl* Add. MS 5049, f. 34–64v: 'Abbate Steffani'. Copied by Henry Needler (?1685–1760), an amateur violinist who was a member of the Academy of Vocal [later, Ancient] Music from 1728 until his death. With the bookplate of James Mathias (d. 1782).

*GB-Lbl* Add. MS 31498, 50 fols.: 'by M<sup>r</sup> Steffani'. Copied in the early 18th century; in the same hand as *GB-Lam* MS 38, above. Signed by an owner, P. Salter.<sup>114</sup>

*GB-Lcm* MS 1062, f. 22v. Includes only the tercet 'Vidit suum dulcem natum'; copied c.1840 by George Grove (1820–1900).

*GB-Ob* Tenbury 712, ff. 31v–38v: 'Augustino Steffani'. A mid-18th-century organ score, similar to the later ones by Crotch and Novello, listed above.

## II. TRANSLATIONS, TRANSCRIPTIONS AND COMMENTARIES

The letters below are presented in accordance with conventions that are defined here or at the beginning of each of three sections: Prelude, A–K: The Schönborn–Steffani Correspondence; Prelude, L–U: The Pallavicini–Riva Correspondence; Counterpoint, 1–50: The Steffani–Riva Correspondence. The Prelude comprises ten plus ten letters, plus one by the composer Carlo Luigi Pietragrua (J), while the Counterpoint includes fifty letters, plus two each by the poet Pallavicini (nos. 4A and 19A), the composer Nicola Francesco Haym (43A and 48A) and the composer John Ernest Galliard (48B and 49).

The writers of all except nos. 43A and 48A–B apparently used New Style dates, which had been established by a papal bull of 1582. Old Style dates, which were eleven days behind New Style in the 1720s, had been employed in protestant Hanover until 1 March 1700 and continued to be used in England until 14 September 1752 (Hatton, *George I*, 13). This is demonstrated by letter no. 1, below, dated [Monday] 2 December 1720 [N. S.], where an event of 'last Saturday' occurred on 30 November N. S. and 19 November O. S.

Each letter is presented first in English translation, then in a transcription of the original Italian or French. Folio or page numbers found in the manuscript sources are retained in the transcriptions, in square brackets. Some letters are given complete. When, in the main group (nos. 1–50), only extracts are given, they almost always include the beginning and end of the letter, all sentences pertaining to music or musicians, and some passages relating to political or societal issues.

<sup>114</sup> Perhaps he was related to the music-seller Humphrey Salter, who was active from 1683 to 1705; see Frank Kidson, *British Music Publishers, Printers and Engravers* (London, 1900; repr. New York, 1967), 114, and Coral, 'English Auction Sales', 35–7.

In the transcriptions, the original spelling is retained, except where the letters 'j' and 'u' are equivalent to today's 'i' and 'v', in which case it is modernized. Punctuation, capitalization and accents have been tacitly modernized. Modernization thus removes or shifts the position of many commas and lowers the upper-case letters on everyday nouns. Initial lower-case letters are raised for the formal 'you' and 'your' (e.g., 'Ella', 'Lei', 'La', 'Sua', 'Suoi', 'L'assicura'). In raising such lower-case letters, the editors are disobeying Steffani's requests for an informal style of address (see nos. 3, 4, 8 and 38, below), but they do so in order to conform to modern style, which serves to identify the addressee by means of a capital letter.

Italic type is used for the expansion of scribal abbreviations. In many letters the addressee is formally referred to as 'V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup>'. In each transcription, the first example of this abbreviation is expanded to 'Vostra Signoria Illustrissima' ('your most illustrious lordship'); at its second and subsequent appearances, 'V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup>' is retained and the translation is abbreviated to 'your m. i. lordship'. Similarly, 'Sua Maestà' ('his' or 'her majesty') and 'Sua Altezza' ('his' or 'her highness') are expanded only the first time they occur in a letter; thereafter the abbreviations 'S. M.' and 'S. A.' are given. Since 'Monsieur', 'Madame', 'Mr' and other titles customarily begin with a capital letter, 'Signor' and 'Signora' have been capitalized in the transcriptions, even though these words often begin with a lower-case letter in the sources. Scribes usually shortened 'Signor' to 'Sig.' or 'Sig.<sup>e</sup>'; we have ignored the superscript 'e' and rendered both abbreviations as 'Signor'.

To mark the beginning of a new paragraph, the letter-writers usually began a new line or left an exceptionally long gap on the current line; when they embarked on a new topic without such a paragraph marker, we tacitly divide their paragraph in our transcription. One example is the closing salutation, where they normally, but not always, begin a new paragraph; we always do.

The translations match the transcriptions in using modern punctuation and capitals but differ from them in modernizing the spelling of proper names. Editorial glosses or additions are placed in square brackets.

After each transcription we offer comments on the published extracts, followed by summaries of the omissions indicated by ellipses (. . .). The omitted passages are concerned almost exclusively with political or religious affairs. In our summary of an omitted passage, we place in square brackets any proper name or title not provided by the letter-writer.

### Prelude, A–K: The Schönborn–Steffani Correspondence

The eleven cited letters date from June 1719 to October 1721. Their sixteen-month span thus begins during the summer when Riva first met Steffani in Hanover, encompasses nos. 1–20 in their correspondence and embraces letters L–Q from Pallavicini to Riva. In letters A–B, D–I and K, Schönborn, the newly elected bishop of Würzburg, beseeches Steffani to send him some of his vocal duets and to find three good Italian singers for his chapel choir. Steffani asked at least two other people for help with the latter request: Riva (see nos. 4–6, below) and Carlo Luigi Pietragrua (see letter J, below). Letter C is Steffani's only extant reply to these letters from the new bishop, and it is the only letter given complete in this part of the Prelude. Schönborn's signature is omitted, except after the extract from letter A. The two friends continued their correspondence after October 1721, so letter K is followed by a summary of the bishop's reactions to his newly acquired singers and duets. Schönborn's letters survive in a volume without foliation, and no folio numbers have been added below. Letters J and K are reproduced in facsimile, as Ills. 1 and 2.

#### A. Schönborn to Steffani

Würzburg, 22 June 1719 [N.S., Thursday]

. . . I am eager to give free rein to the passion that I continue to nourish for music, and, since I can never forget the sweet taste of the harmonies of your most illustrious and most reverend lordship, I beg you to provide new nourishment for this, my passion, and new life for my small orchestra, by honouring me with some of your duets, those most worthy creations of your peerless talent. . . .

Your most humble, devoted and obliged servant,  
Johann Philipp, Count Schönborn

. . . **Ardisco dar scampo alla mia passione, che di continuo nutrisco per la musica, e, non potendo scordarmi mai delle dolcezze del gusto armonioso di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima e Reverendissima, supplicarLa di voler dare nuovo nutrimento a questa mia passione e nuova vita alla mia piccola orchestra, col'honorarmi di qualche Suoi duetti, parti degnissimi d'una virtù senza paragone . . .**

**Umilissimo, devotissimo servitore obligatissimo,  
Giov. Filip. Conte di Schönborn**

*I-Rscge* Fondo Spiga, vol. 29. Johann Philipp Franz, Count Schönborn, always wrote 'Erbipoli', the Latin name for his city of residence; we have replaced this with 'Würzburg', the German name, in our headings. In his signature he usually abbreviated his given names; when they are written out in Italian (e.g., at the end of letter F), they are 'Giovanni Filippo Francesco'. His names are followed by either his old title, 'Conte di Schönborn', or his new one, 'Vescovo d'Erbipoli' ('Bishop of Würzburg').

#### B. Schönborn to Steffani

Würzburg, 4 December 1719 [Monday]

My most manifest obligations to you are continually being augmented by the repeated kindness with which your most illustrious lordship so graciously favours me. I have new evidence of this in your kind offer to send me some of your duets. I will be most grateful for all that you wish to send, since I am utterly deprived of those I already had, having given them to Count Stadion, who never returned them to me. I therefore await their arrival with great anticipation . . .

**Vengono sempre aumentate le mie distintissime obbligazioni dalla continuata bontà di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima della quale con tanta finezza mi favorisce. Ne ricevo una nuova testimonianza nell'offerta che Le[i] ha piaciuto farmi d'alcuni Suoi dueti. Mi saranno gratissimi tutti quelli, che vorrà mandarmi, mentre resto intieramente privo di quelli che già ebbi, havendoli dati al Signor Conte di Stadion, da cui non mi furono mai restituiti. Gli aspetto dunque con gran desiderio . . .**

*I-Rscge* Fondo Spiga, vol. 29. Friedrich, Count von Stadion (1691–1768), was born in Würzburg and educated in Mainz; in 1718 he obtained a government appointment in Tauberbischofsheim (Walther Killy and Rudolf Vierhaus, eds., *Deutsche Biographische Enzyklopädie* (Munich, 1995–2000), ix, 428).

#### C. Steffani to Schönborn

Hanover, 30 April 1720 [Tuesday, in Bossis' hand]

I should write a volume of very obsequious excuses for having gone so long before bowing to your most reverend highness, and for waiting from one day to the next before sending you the news that I have arrived here to obey the sovereign commands of Our Lord [Pope Clement XI] and to satisfy the wishes of the Sacred Congregation [for the Propagation of the

Faith], and thus depriving myself of the precious honour of the comments of your highness, since you did not know where to send them. I should, I know, beg your obsequious pardon, if it were not for the fact that I did the wrong to myself.

I should, however, hope to obtain forgiveness from the generous goodness of your highness, when you consider that I arrived here at the end of Passion week, and then, for the consolation of this numerous community, performed during Holy Week and the ensuing feast of Easter all the solemn liturgical functions in this my new church, with all the freedom that could be desired, and the greatest possible tranquillity, which perhaps had not been seen here for some centuries [i.e., since pre-Reformation days].

The rest of my time [from Easter] to now has been consumed by my recovery from a violent attack of my usual illness and by my efforts to restore calm in the aforesaid community, which had been extremely convulsed by the malice of others.

These are the reasons why I was unable before today to remind your highness of my long-standing and profound respect, and to tell you that, as a token of this, preparations are currently being made for the copying of [my] duets, and since I expect the remainder of the sins of my youth [to arrive here] in a few days, your highness will be able to decide whether you want more of them, because you already know that there is nothing in my power that is not at your most absolute disposition.

I was hoping to be, as they say, overjoyed to bring your highness what I shall instead have to send you, because it did not please His Holiness [Pope Clement XI] to grant me the grace that I have requested so insistently and constantly over the course of more than six months, to let me enjoy a little repose after so many travails, and allow me to live for myself after having lived fifty-five years for others.

May your highness preserve for me the honour of your most precious protection, and believe as eternal and pure the most profound respect with which I am

[in Steffani's hand:] Your most reverend highness's  
[in Steffani's hand:] Most humble, most devoted and most obliged servant,  
[in Steffani's hand:] Agostino, bishop of Spiga.

**Io dovrei far un volume di ossequiosissime scuse d'essere stato sì lungo tempo senza umiliarmi a Vostra Altezza Reverendissima, e differendo da un giorno all'altro di darLe notizia d'esser giunto qui, per ubbidire ai sovrani comandi di Nostro Signore e sodisfare al desiderio della Sacra Congregazione, havermi privato del pretioso honore dei comandamenti dell'A. V. per non haver Ella potuto sapere ove indirizzarmeli. Dovrei, dico, chiedergliene ossequioso perdono, se non fosse che il torto è da me fatto a me medesimo.**

Per altro, io spererei d'ottenere dalla generosa bontà di V. A. il compatimento sul riflesso d'esser io arrivato qui sul fine della settimana di Passione, e di haver poi per consolazione di questa numerosa comunità fatte durante la Settimana Santa e le seguenti feste di Pasqua tutte le funzioni pontificali in questa mia nuova chiesa con tutta la più desiderabile libertà, e tutta la maggior tranquillità, il che forse non si era veduto da qualche secolo in qua.

[p. 2] Il resto del mio tempo sin hora è stato consumato nel liberarmi da un violente attacco delle mie habituali indisposizioni, e nel travagliare a rimettere in calma questa sopradetta comunità, ch'era estremamente sconvolta dalla malizia altrui. Queste sono le cause per le quali non ho potuto prima d'hoggi ricordare a V. A. l'antico mio profondo rispetto, e dirgli per un contrasegno di esso che li duetti sono in pieno lavoro per essere copiati, e come fra pochi giorni aspetto qui il resto dei deliti della mia gioventù, potrà l'A. V. risolvere se altro ne desideri, poiché già sa che nulla v'ha in mia potestà che non sia a Sua assolutissima dispositione. Io mi lusingavo d'haver a toccar il cielo col dito, sperando poter

portar io medesimo all'A. V. ciò che mi converrà mandarLe, ma non ha piaciuto a Sua Santità [p. 3] il farmi la grazia che ho chiesta con tanta istanza e costantemente nel corso di più di sei mesi, di lasciarmi godere un poco di riposo dopo tanti travagli, e permettermi di vivere a me stesso dopo haver vissuto cinquanta cinque anni per altri. V. A. mi conservi l'honore della Sua pretiosissima protezione, e creda eterno e senza macchia il profondissimo ossequio con cui sono

[in Steffani's hand:] Di V. A. Reverendissima,  
[in Steffani's hand:] Umilissimo, devotissimo obbligatissimo servitore,  
Agostino, Vescovo di Spiga

*D-WD* Schönborn Archive (housed in *D-WÜst*), Johann Philipp Franz, vol. 425. Steffani was also to describe his compositions as 'sins of my youth' in no. 44, below.

#### D. Schönborn to Steffani

Würzburg, 27 July 1720 [Saturday]

... As for the musical works, which with singular goodness you destine for me, I beg you to send them to one of the two persons whose addresses are enclosed. I await the works with impatience. I doubt not their excellence, for I have the good fortune to know the sublime virtue and merit of the person who created them ...

... Ma per quanto concerne le opere di musica, che con singular bontà mi destina, La pregho di mandarle ad uno di quei due, dei quali va qui annesso l'indirizzo. Le aspetto con impazienza, non dubitando della lor eccellenza, poiché ho la fortuna di conoscer la virtù ed il merito sublime del personaggio da cui provengono ...

*I-Rscge* Fondo Spiga, vol. 29.

#### E. Schönborn to Steffani

Bischofsheim, 27 August 1720 [Tuesday]

I already declared in my last letters to your most illustrious and most reverend lordship how welcome will be the duets that you intend to send me; the greater the satisfaction with which I receive them, the more shall I esteem the work of such an eminent virtuoso. Your m. i. and reverend lordship knows that I take great delight in music and that I often spend an hour or two on it when I am free from my responsibilities.

Despite my love of music, I freely confess that my chapel choir is now very weak. Not to speak of other deficiencies, I lack a good soprano and an alto, and although I should like to fill these vacancies with a pair of castratos, I am nevertheless reluctant to engage such singers because of the large sums of money they normally demand ...

Già palesai a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima e Reverendissima colle mie ultime, quanto mi saranno grati li duetti che destina d'inviarmi, li quali con tanto maggior sodisfazione riceverò quanto più stimo l'opera di sì gran virtuoso. Sa V.a S.a Ill.<sup>ma</sup> e Rev.<sup>ma</sup> che assai mi diletto della musica, e vi passo tal volta un horetta che mi resta libera dalle occupazioni.

Ma confesso tuttavia che la mia capella fin adesso è molto diffettuosa. Senza parlar del resto, vi manca un buon soprano e contr'alto; e benché desiderarei d'aver un paro di castrati per supplire al difetto, nondimeno differisco di pigliarli per causa delle grosse spese che ordinariamente richiedono ...

*I-Rscge* Fondo Spiga, vol. 29. This letter, together with F and G below, may be one of those from Schönborn that Steffani showed to Riva at Hanover during the autumn of 1720 (see no. 4, below). <> Since Schönborn no longer refers to 'your duets' (as he does in letters A and B, above), but

instead to those composed by a 'personaggio', 'gran virtuoso' or 'l'autore' (in letters D, E and G, respectively), it seems likely that Steffani had 'disowned' these 'deliti della mia gioventù' (see letter C) by attributing them to Gregorio Piva (see no. 1, below).

#### F. Schönborn to Steffani

Rottenbuch, 20 September 1720 [Friday]

. . . The small box containing duets, which I hear is now on its way, will give me great pleasure when I return [to Würzburg] from these woods, where I am amusing myself by hunting deer. I await them therefore with no less impatience than the others which, by your goodness, are to follow, since I confess that music is one of the greatest relaxations that I take from the very tiring responsibilities of my government.

Your most illustrious lordship will oblige me much more by procuring the two voices, a soprano and an alto, that are lacking from my chapel choir. I will tell you what I have decided to spend in order to have them. First of all, I declare that I could not agree to grant either of them permission from time to time to make a tour in England or anywhere else in order to stay there during the winter, since this is precisely the season when I have the most time and opportunity to amuse myself with music. I do not lack occupations or pastimes during the other seasons, when I do not normally remain in the city. Thus I favour the other idea, kindly suggested by your m. i. lordship, of allowing them to hope for a benefice; an opportune vacancy should not take long to present itself, since I have many benefices at my disposal. Apart from that, I have decided to give each of them four to five hundred dollars per annum, from which they would pay for board and lodging. The latter is not expensive, there being good quarters in Würzburg for twenty to thirty dollars [a year], sometimes even for half that amount; likewise, they themselves can procure food cheaply, and in this way they will be able to suit their own taste and inclination. I know that this offer is fairly mediocre in comparison with what similar virtuosos demand, and yet there are some who prefer a small, guaranteed salary, with the security of a constant, established post, to the promise of a larger salary that is not paid punctually and where they are subject to various changes . . .

I almost forgot to mention that I should be grateful if your m. i. lordship also found a way to procure for me a good bass—though this is rather less important, because it would not be difficult for me to find a bass, even in this region. I am more concerned to acquire the two aforesaid voices, for which I immediately seek your kind assistance. I was told some time ago of an alto at the court of Kassel who intended to leave there, but since I have heard nothing about this for many months it will be necessary to look elsewhere for what I need . . .

P. S. It must be borne in mind that the two singers in question should not be too advanced in years.

. . . La cascettina coi duetti, che sento istradata a questa volta, mi sarà di gran diletto dopo il mio ritorno da questi boschi, dove sto divertendomi colla caccia de' cervi. L'aspetto dunque con impazienza non meno che gli altri che per Sua bontà seguiranno, confessando che la musica è uno de' più grandi sollievi che mi piglio dalle cure assai faticanti del mio governo.

Tanto più m'obligherà Vostra Signoria Illustrissima col procurarmi le due voci di soprano e contr'alto, delle quali manca la mia capella. Dirò quel che ho destinato di spendere per averle. In primo luogo mi dichiaro che non potrei risolvermi di conceder all'un od all'altro la facoltà di far quando in quando un giro in Inghilterra od altrove per soggiornarvi un inverno, poiché questa è giusto la stagione nella quale ho più tempo e comodità di divertirmi colla musica, non mancandomi occupazioni e passatempi nel resto delle stagioni, nelle quali non voglio star per ordinario in città. Così più gradisco

l'altro progetto, che V.a S.a Ill.<sup>ma</sup> si compiace di suggerirmi, di fargli sperar qualche beneficio, del che non potrà tardare a presentarsi l'occasione e vacatura, perché assai ne tengo a mia disposizione. Oltre di ciò mi risolverò di dar ogni anno quatro in cinque cento taleri per uno, compresi la tavola e l'alloggiamento, che non costa caro, trovandosi a Erbiboli un buon quartiere per venti in trenta taleri, anzi tal volta per la metà; la tavola parimente da procurarsi da loro stessi puol aversi a buon mercato, ed in tal guisa potranno accomodarsi al gusto e genio loro. So esser assai mediocre questa offerta per quel che simil gente virtuosa suol pretendere, ma pur ve ne sono che più gradiscono un salario piccolo e certo, colla speranza sicura del costante suo stabilimento, che la promessa d'un soldo più grande che non si piaga puntualmente, e dove stanno soggetti a varie mutazioni . . .

. . . Mi scordavo quasi di far menzione che mi sarebbe grato se V.a S.a Ill.<sup>ma</sup> avesse anche il mezzo di procurarmi un buon basso; ma in quanto a questo, non tanto m'importa, perché non mi sarà difficile di averlo ancora in queste parti. Più mi preme d'esser provisto delle due voci sudette, per le quali ricerco istantemente la Sua favorevole assistenza. Mi si parlò tempo fa d'un contr'alto che si trovasse alla corte di Hassia Cassel ed avesse disegno di ritirarsene, ma come da molti mesi non più ne sento niente, bisognerà cercar altrove quel che desidera . . .

P. S. Sarà necessario di riflettere che li due musici menzionati non siano d'un età troppo avanzata.

*I-Rscge* Fondo Spiga, vol. 29. Rottenbuch was an Augustinian monastery near Weilheim in upper Bavaria. <> Schönborn's 'assai mediocre' offer of 500 dollars a year may be compared with the offer of 1,000 dollars made to Margherita Durastanti at Munich in 1721; she declined it, because she wanted 2,000 (see no. 22, below). <> This may be one of the Schönborn letters that Steffani showed to Riva (see letter E, above, and no. 4, below).

#### G. Schönborn to Steffani

Würzburg, 26 October 1720 [Saturday]

For many weeks I have, for the most part, been out of town, and this is why I have not until now either acknowledged the arrival of the expected small box from your most illustrious lordship or answered your last, most esteemed letter. The duets are in the finest of taste: the greater the pleasure they give me, the more I venerate the composer who created them . . .

With regard to the two singers, I thank you for the frankness with which you reveal your sentiments; nor shall I fail to express mine with similar candour, for I believe that this is the proper way for good friends to deal with one another. I do not deny, as your m. i. lordship indicates, that the salary of 500 dollars is rather mediocre when compared with what they [castratos] usually receive. But sometimes the certainty of payment, the hope that some benefice will be obtained in time, and other factors will cause them to prefer an appointment that seems in other ways unfavourable. Ultimately, however, if all else fails, I will not find it difficult to add about 50 florins for lodging, since I do not have the facility to provide this in kind. If they conduct themselves discreetly and reasonably, I could also gradually augment the stated salary by adding some wheat and wine . . .

P. S. The expenses for the copying [of the duets], for the transport of the small box and for other similar things I will gladly pay, as soon as your m. i. lordship sends me the details.

Da molte settimane in qua io sono per il più stato fuori di città, e questa è la causa che fin adesso non solamente non avvanzai a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima la notizia dell'arrivo della consaputa cassetta, ma che ritardai ancora la risposta all'ultima Sua stimatissima lettera. Li duetti sono di gusto finissimo, ed a me di tanto maggior diletto, quanto più venero l'autore da cui provengono . . .

Toccante li due musici, La ringrazio della franchezza colla quale mi palesa li Suoi sentimenti, ne mancherò di spiegharLe parimente i miei con ingenuità, stimando questa la più giusta maniera di trattare



tra buoni amici. Non nego, come m'accenna V.a S.a Ill.<sup>ma</sup>, esser assai mediocre il salario di 500 taleri per quel che ordinariamente sogliono ricevere, ma tal volta la sicurezza del pagamento, la speranza di qualche beneficio da ottenersi col tempo, ed altre considerazioni gli fanno preferire una condizione benché per altro disuguale. Però finalmente, se ad altro non tiene, non farò gran difficoltà d'aggiungervi una cinquantina di fiorini per il quartiere, non havendo io la commodità di darlo in natura. Se poi mostrassero una condotta discreta e ragionevole, potrò succesivamente aumentare ancora detto salario di qualche aggiunta di frumento [=frumento] e vino . . .

P. S. Le spese per le copie, per il porto della cassetina, ed altre simili pagherò molto volentieri subito che V.a S.a Ill.<sup>ma</sup> vorrà mandarmene la specificazione.

*I-Rscge* Fondo Spiga, vol. 29. Fifty florins were equivalent to 25-33 dollars, the annual rent cited by Schönborn in letter F, above. In 1698 Emperor Leopold I wrote that 60 florins were equivalent to 40 dollars (cf. Ludwig von Köchel, *Johann Josef Fux* (Vienna, 1872; repr. Hildesheim, 1974), 297), but in 1760 the exchange rate was 2:1 (cf. Robert and Elborg Forster, *European Society in the Eighteenth Century: Selected Documents* (London, 1969), 410). <> This is probably one of the Schönborn letters that Steffani showed to Riva at Hanover (see letter E, above, and no. 4, below).

#### H. Schönborn to Steffani

Würzburg, 21 June 1721 [Saturday]

I experience new proof of your most illustrious and most reverend lordship's continued goodness to me, in seeing that you do not cease to exert yourself in trying to procure for me the two desired virtuosos. I can well believe that you are encountering difficulties in your search. Since the principal [church] feasts on which they could sing are already past, I will gladly wait until about next October, if there is some hope of having them [by then].

If your m. i. and most reverend lordship is pleased to promise me further duets, that will augment the very binding obligations that I owe to you . . .

**Sperimento nuovi attestati della continuata bontà di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima e Reverendissima verso di me, mentro vedo che non cessa di darsi pena per procurarmi li desiderati due virtuosos. Io sono ben persuaso che s'incontri difficoltà nella ricerca, e come le feste principali nelle quali potevano servire già sono passate, aspetterò volentieri sin verso il mese d'ottobre prossimo, se pur vi sia speranza d'averli.**

**Che poi V.<sup>a</sup> S.<sup>a</sup> Ill.<sup>ma</sup> e R.<sup>ma</sup> si compiaccia di promettermi altri duettini, ciò aumenta le obbligazioni che Le porto strettissime . . .**

*I-Rscge* Fondo Spiga, vol. 29.

#### I. Schönborn to Steffani

Würzburg, 27 August 1721 [Wednesday]

Seeing from the most courteous folio of your most illustrious and most reverend lordship that my obligations to you are continually multiplied, as much by the new consignment of duets as by the trouble you still take to procure for me the desired virtuosos . . .

As for the bass [Benedetto] which your m. i. and most reverend lordship mentions, I am ready to accept him. But first I should like to spell out my conditions, so as to avoid any difficulty that could arise. To this end I should like to know how much money he is asking for, then whether he is a priest or married, young or old; and although I could say in advance that I would pay him the same as what he has received until now from the prince whom he serves, I do not wish to commit myself before I receive further information.

It remains for me to tell you about the decision that I have taken regarding the salary of the other two virtuosos, which is that, depending on their merit, I would give each of them nine hundred to a thousand florins per year, but not a penny more . . .

Vedendo dal gentilissimo foglio di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima e Reverendissima che continuamente si moltiplicano le mie obbligazioni tanto per la nuova rimessa dei duetti, quanto per la pena che continua di pigliar a procurarmi li desiderati virtuosos . . .

Toccante il basso del quale V.<sup>a</sup> S.<sup>a</sup> Ill.<sup>ma</sup> e Rev.<sup>ma</sup> fa menzione, io son pronto d'accettarlo, ma vorrei prima regular bene i patti per levar ogni difficoltà che potrebbe occorrere. A tal fine vorrei sapere qual soldo lui dimanda; di più s'è prete o ammogliato, giovine o vecchio, e benché potrei per avanza dichiararmi di dargli l'istesso che ha fin ora ricevuto dal prencipe che serve, non però mi voglio impegnare senza l'ulterior avviso. Mi resta di palesarLe la resolutione da me presa sopra il salario degli altri due virtuosos, la qual è, che secondo il lor merito darei bensì ad ogni uno d'essi anchora nove cento fin a milla fiorini per anno, ma senz'altro di più . . .

*I-Rscge* Fondo Spiga, vol. 29. A salary of 900-1,000 florins would have been equal to 400-660 dollars, depending on whether the exchange rate was nearer 2:1 or 3:2 (see commentary to letter G, above).

#### J. Carlo Luigi Pietragrua to Steffani

Venice, 12 September 1721 [Friday]

I have received your most illustrious lordship's very courteous letter, and in accordance with your most obliging instructions I have not failed to speak with Signor Pellegrini about the two paintings for your beautiful church [in Hanover]. He asks me humbly to greet you and to tell you that, at the moment, he is busy painting pictures for a certain Signore; if, however, your m. i. lordship can wait, he promises to serve you at the beginning of winter, without fail. This is as much as I can tell you about this.

A friend of mine in Bologna has finally managed to find for his highness a soprano who is young, handsome and skilled in music. He comes from Pescia in Tuscany, is currently in Bologna, and can sight-read. He agrees to serve his highness on the terms indicated to me by your m. i. lordship, and he is ready to depart [for Würzburg] whenever his highness commands. With tomorrow's post from Modena I am expecting a reply about the alto [Raffaele Signorini?], and I hope your m. i. lordship will be pleased with what I have done. I ask you to arrange for his highness either to send me the travel expenses for these two [singers], or, at least, to provide the name of the person whom I should approach for the money, while I have them come here and find them a carriage to Würzburg. I also expect a reply about the bass Benedetto, who has written to me that he has again suffered an attack of tertian fever, so that he is very determined to set off . . .

**Amesso la gentilissima di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima, e in esecuzione dei di Lei benignissimi comandi non è mancato di parlare al Signor Pellegrini circa i due quadri per la di Lei bella chiesa. Ed egli m'impone di umilmente riverirLa e dirgli come presentemente egli si trova occupato a far quadri per un certo Signore, che se però V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> puole aspettare, egli promette di servirLa al principio d'inverno senza fallo. Questo è quanto posso significarLe intorno a ciò.**

**Alla fine è sortito ad un mio amico di Bologna di trovar un soprano per Sua Altezza, giovine, di bell'aspetto, e franco nella musica. Egli è di Pescia di Toscana, si trova presentemente in Bologna, e canta sulle musiche; e egli accetta il servizio di S. A. alle condizioni significatemi da V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> ed è pronto a partire quando S. A. commanderà. Attendo con la posta di domani da Modena una risposta per il contralto, e spero V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> sarà contento del mio operato. La supplico far in modo che S. A. mandi il**

danaro per il viaggio di questi due in mano mia, o almeno ch'io sappia a chi devo indirizzarmi per riceverlo danaro mentre farò che venghino qua e li troverò vettura fino a Viotzburgo. Attendo pure risposta circa del Benedetto basso, il quale mi scrive d'aver sofferto novamente una malattia di febbra terzana doppia, onde è risolutissimo di voler metter a via . . .

*I-Rscge* Fondo Spiga, vol. 29 (see Ill. 1). This letter is given complete, apart from the closing salutation. <> Pietragrua had worked with Steffani in Düsseldorf in 1703–9. From 1719 until his death in 1726, he was *maestro di coro* at the Ospedale della Pietà in Venice; see Jane L. Baldauf-Berdes, *Women Musicians of Venice: Musical Foundations, 1525–1855* (2nd edn, rev. Elsie Arnold, Oxford, 1996), 200, 205 and 207. <> The Venetian artist Giovanni Antonio Pellegrini (1675–1741) painted decorative, historical pictures in England in 1708–13, in Düsseldorf in 1713–16, and in many cities in 1716–30 (Bernard Aikema, in Jane Turner, ed., *Dictionary of Art* (London, 1996), xxiv, 339–42). These included the two canvases discussed in this letter, which were for St Clement's, Steffani's new church in Hanover (see letter 11, below, and George Knox, *Antonio Pellegrini, 1675–1741* (Oxford, 1995), 129–32).

#### K. Schönborn to Steffani

Würzburg, 12 October 1721 [Sunday]

It was with the greatest satisfaction that I saw from the very kind letter of your most illustrious lordship, and from the copy [of letter J, above] attached to it, that the soprano I wanted has been found, and that he has accepted employment in my service on the conditions mentioned in my last letter. Since I do not doubt that your m. i. lordship will meanwhile have received certain and positive news also of the bass [Benedetto], or at least that such news will soon arrive [in Venice], in order that both singers may start the journey together and proceed without delay, while the roads are still practicable and the season temperate, I have given precise orders for the remission in Venice, via today's courier, of two hundred and fifty *onghari*, payable to Carlo Luigi Pietragrua, who will then consign two thirds of the sum to the aforesaid two musicians for the expenses of their journey, retaining the rest for the alto, who will use the sum when he is found, whether now or in the future.

If it were possible that a good alto could accompany the other two now, that would increase my satisfaction, be more convenient for the singers themselves, and reduce the expenses, which—if perchance they exceeded the aforementioned sum of two hundred and fifty *onghari* (which, however, I doubt)—would be reimbursed by me . . .

Before leaving this topic, I must tell your m. i. lordship about the information I have received from [Pietro Paolo] Bencini in Rome concerning two castratos, one a soprano, the other an alto, who sing angelically. He believes that both would accept a contract. If, therefore, the alto that your m. i. lordship [wrote about] does not want to commit himself, I beg you to inform me as soon as possible, so that I can take advantage of the opportunity to obtain the aforesaid alto from Rome . . .

Con somma mia sodisfazione ho visto dalla gentilissima lettera di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima, e dalla copia annessavi, che s'è incontrato il soprano che desideravo e che ha lasciato impegnarsi al mio servizio sulle condizioni menzionate nelle mie anteriori. E sicome io non dubito, che fra tanto V.ª S.ª Ill.ª avrà ricevuto avvisi sicuri e positivi anche del basso, od almeno che giungeranno a tempo, perché l'un e l'altro si possano di compagnia metter in viaggio per inoltrarsi senza ritardo a questa volta, mentre le strade ancora sono praticabili e la stagione temperata, così ho già dato gli ordini precisi per rimetter coll'ordinario di hoggi ducento cinquanta onghari in Venezia da pagarsi al Signor Carlo Luigi Pietragrua, che poi consegnerà le due terze della somma a' detti due musici per farne le spese del viaggio, ritenendo il restante per il contr'alto, che se ne servirà in caso che si ritruovi adesso od all'avvenire.

Benché se fosse possibile ch'un buon contr'alto accompagnasse gli altri presentemente, questo aumenterebbe la mia contentezza, darebbe a loro stesti [=stessi] maggior commodità, e sminuirebbe le spese, le quali, se per sorte eccedessero la somma degli sopr'accennati ducento cinquanta onghari, che però non credo, gli sarà da me rimborsato . . .

Prima di finire questa materia, devo comunicar a V.ª S.ª Ill.ª la notizia ricevuta da Roma dal Bencini di due castrati, l'uno soprano, l'altro contr'alto, che cantano all'anima. Crede questo, che tutti due accetterebbero il partito; se dunque il contr'alto di V. S. Ill.ª non volesse risolversi, La prego d'avvisarmelo quanto prima, per potermi valer della congiuntura a pigliar il contr'alto sopra detto di Roma . . .

*I-Rscge* Fondo Spiga, vol. 29 (see Ill. 2). Bencini (c.1670–1755) was *maestro di cappella* at Santa Maria in Vallicella in Rome, 1705–55 (Jean Lionnet, in *New Grove* 2, iii, 224–5). One of the two altos discussed was Raffaele Signorini.

#### Postscript to A–K

During the next six months Schönborn mentioned his singers or Steffani's duets in nine letters. On 18 October 1721 he told Steffani what emoluments to offer the bass, Benedetto, who was at Mantua. On 5 December 1721 he thanked Steffani for all he had done, and said he was happy to hear that the singers were ready to leave for Würzburg. On 20 December 1721, a day after their arrival and first performance, he expressed satisfaction with the bass (Benedetto) and the contralto (Raffaele Signorini), but his first impression of the soprano was so negative that he begged Steffani to ask Pietragrua to find a replacement. Four days later, on 24 December 1721, he declared himself content with all three singers, especially in view of the rather low salary he was paying them. On 9 January 1722 he said that another soprano should be sought, because his was weak in various ways; he also mentioned negotiating with two clerics from his diocese about serving in his chapel choir. On 4 February 1722 he reported that both the soprano and the alto lacked good voices and a sense of style ('buona maniera'); he would therefore keep them only until the weather was suitable for them to travel, then pay them what he had promised and send them back to Italy; he was happy to hear that, in a few months' time, Steffani would be in the vicinity of Würzburg [on his way back to Italy]. On 25 February 1722 he reported that the bass, Benedetto, had that day left for Mantua, where he would put his affairs in order before returning; the alto (Raffaele) would remain in Würzburg, but at a lower salary, and might serve in future as his second alto, while the soprano had already returned to Italy. Schönborn blamed Pietragrua for not revealing that the soprano was so bad; in future he would follow Steffani's advice and correspond directly with Pietragrua. On 18 March 1722 he was very disappointed that Steffani had not yet received his letter of thanks for a small box of duets that gave him singular pleasure, since he found them in the very best of taste. On 25 March 1722 he resolved to release Benedetto from his service, because the bass, having sung at the court of the margrave of Ansbach (Wilhelm Friedrich), had impertinently returned a reward that he considered 'mediocre'.

During the summer of 1722 Schönborn employed approximately twenty-five musicians, about ten of whom were Italians. The known names are listed in Scherf, *Johann Philipp Franz*, 92n, and in Lindgren, 'Schönborn', 267–8. The only singer whom he had retained from 1721–2 was the alto castrato Raffaele Signorini of Florence. The new bass was Gerolamo Bassani of Venice. The new Italian soprano was a woman, Elisabetta Pilotti Schiavonetti, whose husband (Giovanni Schiavonetti, a cellist) and son (an oboist) were also employed by Schönborn.

#### Prelude, L–U: The Pallavicini–Riva Correspondence

Thirty-one letters written by Stefano Benedetto Pallavicini to Riva survive in *I-MOe* Autografoteca Campori, *busta* Pallavicini. The complete texts of the first ten, dated in Dresden between March 1720

and November 1723, are given below. After a break of eight and a half years, the remaining twenty-one letters were written during a six-year span, May 1732 to May 1738. A summary of the musical topics in this second group follows letter U, even though the 1730s are not discussed elsewhere in this study.

In letters L–Q, written in 1720, the primary topic is the recruitment of singers for the new Royal Academy of Music in London. In letter R, dated 13 March 1723, Pallavicini apologizes for the break in their correspondence that had followed the summer of 1720, but the implication of nos. 6–7, below, is that Riva rather than Pallavicini was responsible for the break. The correspondence resumed with letters S–U in the autumn of 1723, and the final two letters mainly respond to Riva's wish to see the 'tragedy'—perhaps a *tragedia per musica*—that Pallavicini was writing. None of Pallavicini's letters to Riva mentions the proposed London production of a revised version of *Tassilone*, which had been created by Pallavicini and Steffani for Düsseldorf in 1709. Riva and Steffani discuss this proposal in seven of their letters (nos. 1–4 and 6–8, below), and Pallavicini refers to it in two letters that he addressed to Steffani (nos. 4A and 19A, below).

Many of Pallavicini's sentences (e.g., the first one in letter L) are very difficult to translate, but we have tried our best to clarify their meaning. The formal conventions of the letters are as follows. Covers survive for five of them: letter L is addressed to 'Joseph Riva, Secrétaire, Le Duc de Modène', while M–O and R are addressed to 'Riva à Londres'. The first page of each is headed 'Illustrissimo Signor mio Padrone Colendissimo'. Each letter terminates with the same salutation and signature: 'Di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima, / Devotissimo, obbligatissimo servitore / S. Pallavicini'. Neither the address and heading at the beginning nor the salutation and signature at the end are given below. The city and date are written at the head of the first letter but after the text in letters M–U. A librarian has placed catalogue numbers in the lower left corner of the first page of all except letter L. Letters L–Q are nos. [202]–207, R is no. 198, S is no. 210, T is no. 209 and U is no. 208. The letters of 1732–8 are nos. 211–31. Since there is no foliation, each letter is paginated separately below. Letter Q is reproduced in facsimile, as Ill. 3.

#### L. Pallavicini to Riva

Dresden, 9 March 1720 [Saturday]

The more I tried to find out whether your most illustrious lordship had received that miscellany [my last letter], the more I doubted whether you had, since no reply from you in Hanover had reached me.

Abbot Mauro resembles you in that he has for me a partiality that far exceeds my merit. You shall discover this to be true.

I do not know how better to respond to your m. i. lordship about the Berselli affair than by enclosing one of his letters, in which the proxy [i.e., the power of attorney] is included. I made him decide on the spot, so I have the fortune and pleasure of having served you both. The only difficulty that remains for him is that of the London air, which is usually not well suited to those of a delicate constitution. For this reason Berselli reserves the right to break his contract after the first season. I encouraged him with the example of your m. i. lordship, since you—if I remember correctly—are not among the sturdiest of men. I hope that these two virtuosos [Berselli and Senesino] will find it to their advantage to stay, and that the Royal Academy will retain them for more than one season, enabling you to boast of having chosen the best.

To come now to the account of Salvai that your m. i. lordship requested, she has a beautiful and full-bodied voice, is young, small in stature, but comely and uninhibited. Handel, who has heard her, and Durastanti, who will have arrived there, will be able to tell you about her manner of singing in a way that I cannot. It cannot be denied that, during the

few months that she stayed at this court, she benefited from hearing the celebrated singers. I would think that in a 'seconda donna' role that was mostly cheerful, she should not fail to do well. There, I have told you simply and frankly what I think.

Above all, regard as sincere the protestations of my respect, for I am . . .

**Intanto io m'informai se Vostra Signoria Illustrissima aveva ricevuto quelle miscee, inquanto, non essendomi pervenuta la Sua risposta d'Hannovera, ero in dubbio s'Essa fosse rimasta servita.**

**Il Signor Abbate Mauro s'accorda seco in avere per me una parzialità di gran lunga superiore al mio merito. Vos videritis.**

**Non saprei come meglio rispondere a V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> in ordine all'affare del Signor Berselli, che aggiungendo qui una sua lettera, nella quale viene inclusa la procura in quistione. Io l'ho messo alle strette per farlo risolvere su due piedi, et ho la fortuna e'l piacere di aver serviti ambidue. La sola difficoltà che gli resta è quella dell'aria di Londra, che appresso questi di corpo gracile suol [p. 2] essere in poco buon concetto; e però il Signor Berselli si riserva la facoltà di rompere dopo la prima stagione il contratto. Io gli fo animo coll'esempio di V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup>, la quale, se la memoria mi serve, non è de' più grassi. Spero che questi due virtuosi troveranno egualmente il lor conto a restare, e l'Accademia a ritenerli più lungo tempo, potendosi Ella vantare d'aver sfiorato.**

**Per venir poi al ragguaglio che V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> mi prescrive intorno alla Signora Salvai, ha questa una bella e gagliarda voce, è giovane, piccola di statura, ma vistosa e disinvolta. Il Signor Hendel, che l'ha sentita, e la Signora Durastante, che sarà arrivata [p. 3] costì, potranno darLe del suo modo di cantare quella informazione ch'io non saprei; e non può negarsi che ne' pochi mesi ch'ella si è trattenuta a questa corte, molto non abbia profittato dall'udire questi celebri cantanti. Crederei, che in una 2.<sup>a</sup> parte, che tirasse sull'allegro, non dovesse [ch]e non riuscire. EccoLe con ingenuità e confidenza detto quello ch'io penso.**

**Creda altrettanto sincere le protestazioni del mio ossequio, mentre sono . . .**

Abbot (Bartolomeo) Ortensio Mauro (1632/3–1725) was a poet, a central figure in the Roman Catholic community in Hanover, a councillor at its court, and the librettist for the nine dramatic works that Steffani set to music in Hanover, 1689–97 (Colin Timms, in *New Grove* 2, xxiv, 319). <> Durastanti (*fl.* 1700–34) sang in Dresden in 1719 (see no. 22, below). Handel heard her there, and upon his recommendation she was engaged for the Royal Academy of Music in London, where she sang for four seasons: spring 1720, 1720–1 and 1722–4 (Winton Dean, in *New Grove* 2, vii, 746, and Highfill, *Biographical Dictionary*, iv, 519–21). <> Matteo Berselli (*fl.* 1708–21) received an annual salary of 4,275–4,500 dollars in Dresden, 1717–20 (Robert Prölss, *Geschichte des Hoftheaters zu Dresden: Von seinen Anfängen bis zum Jahre 1862* (Dresden, 1878), 128n, and Moritz Fürstenau, *Zur Geschichte der Musik und des Theaters am Hofe zu Dresden* (Dresden, 1861–2; facs. repr. Leipzig, 1971), ii, 105n). Handel negotiated with him there, and he sang in the 1720–1 season of the Royal Academy (Winton Dean, in *New Grove* 2, iii, 451–2, and Highfill, *Biographical Dictionary*, ii, 66). <> Maria Maddalena Salvai (*fl.* 1716–37) received a salary of 2,000 dollars at Dresden in 1719 (Prölss, *Dresden*, 128n), then sang for the Royal Academy for two seasons, 1720–2 (Winton Dean, in *New Grove* 2, xxii, 182–3, and Highfill, *Biographical Dictionary*, xiii, 193–4).

#### M. Pallavicini to Riva

Dresden, 17 April 1720 [Wednesday]

It was five weeks ago that our Senesino sent your most illustrious lordship an envelope containing what you deemed necessary to enable him to conclude an agreement with the Royal Academy of Music. At the same time I sent you the decisions of Berselli, which conformed with what I had proposed in your name.

I am somewhat perplexed that I have not received the replies that should have arrived in my hands by the 7th of the current month in order to prevent the first of the aforementioned virtuosos from returning to Italy.

I also wonder why I have not seen here any report of the arrival of Durastanti, and am, furthermore, made anxious by seeing Salvai uncertain of the promises offered her by the contract that your m. i. lordship was pleased to draw up for her.

All these circumstances justify the frankness with which I request some news concerning the aforementioned envelope. Nor am I less eager for the continuation of your greatly esteemed grace, while I am ever more . . .

**Saranno da cinque settimane che da Senesino nostro fu trasmesso a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima un piego con quel tanto ch'ella giudicava necessario per poter ultimare il di lui accordo con cotesta Real Accademia di Musica. Con la medesima occasione io Le mandai le risoluzioni di Berselli uniformi a ciò che in di Lei nome gli era stato da me proposto.**

**Mi tiene in qualche perplessità il non riceverne quei riscontri che doveano capitare in mie mani per farli tenere al primo de' virtuosi suddetti partiti di conserva alla volta d'Italia fino dal 7. del corrente.**

**Meraviglia insieme mi [p. 2] reca, che non s'abbia qui avviso alcuno dell'arrivo della Signora Durastanti, e mi aggiunge sollecitudine il vedere la Signora Salvai incerta di quello che possa prometterci dal trattato che V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> si è compiaciuta d'intavolare per essa.**

**Giustificchino tutti questi motivi la confidenza che prendo di domandarLe qualche nuova del piego accennato; né mi creda men premuroso della continuazione della stimatissima Sua grazia, mentre sono sempre più . . .**

Francesco Bernardi (c.1680–c.January 1759), called Senesino, received an annual salary of 6,650–7,000 dollars in Dresden, 1717–20 (Prölss, *Dresden*, 128n, and Fürstenau, *Dresden*, ii, 105n). Handel heard him there, and he sang for seven seasons with the Royal Academy, i.e., during all but its first spring season (Winton Dean, in *New Grove* 2, xxiii, 78–9, and Highfill, *Biographical Dictionary*, xiii, 249–55). <> One singer who—like Senesino—was employed at Dresden in 1717–20, then at the Royal Academy in 1720–8, is not mentioned in Pallavicini's letters to Riva. This is the bass Giuseppe Maria Boschi (*fl.* 1698–1744), whose annual salary at Dresden was 3,325–3,500 dollars (Prölss, *Dresden*, 128n, and Fürstenau, *Dresden*, ii, 105n). He had already sung at the London opera house (in 1710–11) and was the only new recruit in 1720 to have done so (Winton Dean, in *New Grove* 2, iv, 50, and Highfill, *Biographical Dictionary*, ii, 239–40).

#### N. Pallavicini to Riva

Dresden, 24 April 1720 [Wednesday]

Having been favoured by your most illustrious lordship's most esteemed letter of the 9th, I did not fail to send your enclosure promptly to Senesino, who continues to travel with difficulty because of the bad weather that he has encountered. What you tell me of the problems that have arisen since the conclusion of the agreement tallies with the news written by Handel to one of his correspondents here, from which—although it is based partly on suspicion—we have concluded that the Academy is divided by a kind of schism.

I thank your m. i. lordship for your advice concerning Salvai, with which she will be able to proceed more confidently.

And it gave me infinite pleasure to have news of our Casimiro [Avelloni]; your description of his manner of speaking and gesturing was vivid and virtually life-like. I must surely have provoked great curses from his wife [Durastanti] for having been one of those who counselled her to take the road for Holland.

I await letters from the first [Senesino or Avelloni] and an opportunity of obeying your m. i. lordship in order to please you, since I am . . .

**Favorito da Vostra Signoria Illustrissima colla stimatissima sua carta de' 9. non ho mancato d'indirizzare prontamente l'inchiusami al Signor Senesino, il quale proseguiva con fatica il suo viaggio mercè il pessimo tempo che gli è toccato. Ciò ch'ella mi accenna delle difficoltà insorte dopo la conclusion del negozio confronta colle nuove scritte qua da Monsieur Hendel ad un suo corrispondente, dalle quali sebbene in parte sospette veniva a comprendersi esservi nell'Accademia una specie [p. 2] di scisma.**

**Rendo grazie a V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> di ciò che mi ha avvisato intorno alla Signora Salvai, con che potrà questa prendere più accertate misure. Mi ha dato poi gusto infinito il sentir nuove del nostro Signor Casimiro; e la circostanza del suo parlare, e del suo gesto me lo ha dipinto vivo, vivo. Gran maladizioni mi sarò attirato io dalla moglie per essere stato uno di quelli che l'anno consigliata di far la strada d'Olanda. Attendo lettere del primo e qualche occasione d'ubbidire V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> per compiacerLe, che sono . . .**

Casimiro Avelloni, the husband of Durastanti, may have been a Neapolitan nobleman. Four letters by him, and twenty-three that discuss or mention him, are in Zamboni's correspondence (Lindgren, 'Zamboni', 187, s.v. Avelloni). He was often involved in business negotiations, and some of his dealings appear to have been unsavoury.

#### O. Pallavicini to Riva

Dresden, 7 August 1720 [Wednesday]

If the newsletter from Holland can be trusted, your most illustrious lordship has followed the king [George I] to Germany. I am sending the present [letter] to ascertain whether this is correct and also to learn whether, by chance, our Don Casimiro took advantage of this opportunity to send me a certain small box, since I have not heard a word from him since his letter of 3 June, in which I enjoyed the honour of a most delicious postscript from your m. i. lordship. I imagine that he is in the country in the company of his wife [Durastanti], who does not like to let him out of her sight.

Senesino and Berselli must now be on their way, and your m. i. lordship will have more reliable information about them from Modena, through which the first was intending to travel. They will not be pleased to hear that you are on this side of the channel and that they will not find you in London when they arrive.

Those news items that we receive from there now and then refer to a certain Monsieur de L'Orme, who was formerly a minister at this court.

I await news from your m. i. lordship, who I hope will be able to tell me of the prosperous health and good humour in which you will have found our friend Abbot Mauro. I continue to laugh about the wig of that N[oble] M[an], and continue even more to have a most particular deference . . .

**Se il gazzettiere d'Olanda merita fede, Vostra Signoria Illustrissima ha seguitato il re in Alemagna. Mi sia lecito d'azzardar la presente per accertarmene; come anche d'informarmi, se per sorte il nostro Don Casimiro si fosse prevalto di questa occasione per ispedirmi certa cassetta, giacché da una lettera de' 3 di giugno in qua, nella quale godei l'onore d'un deliziosissimo P. S. di V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup>, non ho più veduto parola di lui. Melo figuro alla campagna a tener compagnia alla moglie, [p. 2] che non ama perderlo di vista.**

**Devono a quest'ora essere in viaggio Senesino e Berselli, e V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> ne avrà più certo riscontro da Modena per dove il primo era intenzionato di passare. Non piacerà loro il sentirLa di qua dal mare, e il non doverLa al loro arrivo trovare in Londra.**

Quelle nuove così fatte, che ne riceviamo di quando in quando, vengono ad un certo *Monsieur de l'Orme*, che vi fu altre volte ministro di questa corte. Io m'attengo [p. 3] a quelle di V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> che spero potrà darmene della prospera salute e del buon umore in cui averà trovato il nostro *Signor Abate Mauro*. Io duro a ridere della barrucca di quel N[obil] H[uomo], e più ad essere con particolarissimo ossequio . . .

Charles Pierre de L'Orme was the British resident in Dresden from January 1710 to December 1714 (Bittner and Groß, *Repertorium*, 455). <> The N[obil] H[uomo] with the wig was presumably Abbot Mauro, though he may instead have been someone in London about whom Riva had written.

**P. Pallavicini to Riva**

**Dresden, 10 August 1720 [Saturday]**

On the same day that I wrote my last letter to your most illustrious lordship, Monsieur Le Coq arrived here and sent me your very kind letter, together with the small box [from Casimiro]. For these I offer you a thousand grateful thanks; since the order and report of our [friend] Don Casimiro are correct, he will be pleased to receive the sum of 55 shillings.

Three times I tried to see the aforementioned Monsieur Le Coq without finding him at home, and he must have departed yesterday evening. Apart from the honour of knowing him, I would have had the satisfaction of speaking [with him] about your m. i. lordship; but, unless I had been thinking or discoursing geometrically, I would hardly have confirmed the good things that you have told him about me: of this I have been informed.

Continue to censure me when you are in the company of Monsignor Spiga [Steffani], Marquis Nomis and Abbot Mauro, all of whom I respect without ceasing, and believe in my most obsequious deference to your m. i. lordship, to whom I must convey both the greetings and the complaints of Tosi, who has not seen a reply to one [letter] that he wrote to you two months ago . . .

Il giorno medesimo ch'io scrissi a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima la mia antecedente, arrivò qua Monsieur Le Coq, e mi fece tenere assieme con la cassetta il di Lei gentilissimo foglio. Sono a renderglene mille devote grazie; è giusta l'ordine et il ragguaglio del nostro Don Casimiro si compiacerà di ricevere l'importare di 55. schellini.

Fino a tre volte ho cercato di vedere il prefato Monsieur Le Coq, senza trovarlo in casa, e deve esser ripartito ier sera. Oltre [p. 2] all'onore di conoscerlo, avrei avuto la soddisfazione di parlare di V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup>, ma, non pensando né discorrendo io geometricamente, avrei malamente sostenuto il bene, ch'Ella gli ha detto di me, che di tanto sono informato.

Seguiti a maltrattarmi in compagnia di Monsignor di Spiga, del Signor Marchese Nomis, e del Signor Abate Mauro, da me senza fine reveriti, e mi creda colla più ossequiosa riconoscenza di V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup>, a cui devo portare i complimenti e le querele insieme del Tosi per non aver veduto risposta ad una sua scritta. Le due mesi sono . . .

Jacques Le Coq represented Saxony in England in 1718–28 and in France in 1719–20 and 1728–9 (Hausmann, *Repertorium*, 334–5). Twenty-four letters in Zamboni's correspondence refer to him (Lindgren, 'Zamboni', 190, s.v. Le Coq). <> Marquis Andrea Gasparo de Nomis served as the Tuscan representative in Hanover from at least 1713 until the mid-1720s (Feldkamp, 'Nachlass', 263 and 306). <> In 1693 the castrato Pier Francesco Tosi (1654–1732) performed and taught in London; 'from 1701 to 1723 he travelled extensively as musical and diplomatic agent of Emperor Joseph I and the Elector Palatine'; and in 1724 he was once again in London (Malcolm Boyd/John Rosselli, in *New Grove* 2, xxv, 647, and Highfill, *Biographical Dictionary*, xv, 33–4).

**Q. Pallavicini to Riva**

**Dresden, 26 October 1720 [Saturday]**

Before your most illustrious lordship re-crosses the channel, allow me to greet you once more from nearby. And since courtesies are always accompanied by requests (I assume that my writing to you is a courtesy, not a bore), permit me to ask you at the same time for some news of Senesino. I have not seen a line from him since he left Frankfurt, and I am impatient to know what he thinks of England and what the English think of him. I do not doubt but that your m. i. lordship will have had a detailed report on him, and so I hasten to ask you to send it to me, and also to forward to the aforesaid the annexed letter, which is a very solemn mercurial.

I have for a long time owed thanks both to you and to our [friend] Abbot Mauro for the Latin verses that you kindly shared with me. The friends of the abbot must hope that his body will remain as lively and fresh as his spirit, and I more than anyone else wish him this.

You look after yourself, too, and believe in my true, indeed very true respect . . .

Prima che Vostra Signoria Illustrissima ripassi il mare, mi permetta di riverirLa anche una volta da vicino; ma perché le finezze non vanno mai da qualche interesse disgiunte, se pur finezza e non tedio è il mio scriverLe, mi permetta nello stesso di domandarLe qualche nuova di Senesino. Da Francofort in qua io non ho veduto riga di suo, e vivo impaziente di sapere come gli riesca l'Inghilterra e come egli medesimo riesca agli inglesi. Non dubito che V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> non ne abbia esatta notizia, e perciò mi avanzo a pregarLa di comunicarmela, [p. 2] come anche di voler indirizzar al suddetto l'annessa, ch'è una solennissima mercuriale.

Gl'è lungo tempo ch'io mi trovo in obbligo di render grazie sì a Lei che al nostro Signor Abate Mauro dei versi latini di cui anno voluto farmi parte. Gli amici del Signor Abate devono desiderare che il suo corpo si mantenga vivo e fresco a misura del suo spirito, et io più d'ogn'altro gliel'auguro.

Si conservi Ella egualmente, e mi creda un vero, ma vero ossequio . . .

See Ill. 3.

**R. Pallavicini to Riva**

**Dresden, 13 March 1723 [Saturday]**

I never address letters to our friend Berenstadt without feeling a secret remorse at restricting myself with your most illustrious lordship to a simple envelope. Nor do I seem to have assuaged this feeling by burdening the same [i.e., Berenstadt] every time with giving you a reminder of my devotion. The P.S. on the backside, for which which I am accused, heaps reproof upon my indolence, so that I can no longer postpone making apologies, both for the past and the future.

Enjoy those comic scenes, of which there will be no end so long as singers and musical operas remain in the world. And keep me in your favour, which I shall always supremely value, with the sincere ambition of becoming better acquainted . . .

Io non mai indirizzo lettere al nostro amico Berenstadt che non provi un segreto rimorso di restringermi con Vostra Signoria Illustrissima ad una semplice sopracoperta. Né perché incarichi ogni volta il medesimo di farLe memoria della mia devozione mi pare d'aver soddisfatto. Aggiunge rimproveri alla mia indolenza il P. S. deretano, con cui mi trovo prevenuto, onde non posso più indugiare a fargliene, e per lo passato e per l'avvenire, mie scuse.

Si goda Ella quelle commedie, di cui non mancherà la sorgente fin che dureranno al mondo musicisti ed opere musicali, e mi conservi la grazia Sua, ch'io stimerò sempre sommamente con ambizione sincera di farmi conoscere . . .



Gaetano Berenstadt (1687–1734) sang in London during the spring of 1717, in Dresden—at a salary of 3,000 dollars (Fürstenau, *Dresden*, ii, 105n)—in 1717–18, in Rome, Bologna, Brescia, Florence, Milan, Padua and Venice in 1720–2, then for the Royal Academy in London in 1722–4 (Highfill, *Biographical Dictionary*, ii, 49–50; Lowell Lindgren, in *New Grove* 2, iii, 308–10; *idem*, ‘Berenstadt’, 42–68 and 101–8; *idem*, ‘An Intellectual Florentine Castrato at the End of the Medicean Era’, in *Lo stupor dell’invenzione*, Firenze e la nascita dell’opera, Atti del convegno internazionale di studi (Florence, 5–6 October 2000), ed. Piero Gargiulo (Florence, 2001), 139–63; and Maria Augusta Morelli Timpanaro, ‘Su Gaetano Berenstadt, contralto (Firenze, 1687–1734), e sui suoi amici’, *Studi italiani: Semestrale di letteratura italiana*, 9/2 (1997), 145–211).

### S. Pallavicini to Riva

Dresden, 25 September 1723 [Saturday]

I received your most illustrious lordship’s letter in Prague, and it gave me greater satisfaction than the solemnities and spectacles. I have deferred rendering thanks to you until my return [to Dresden], because I wanted to inconvenience you with the enclosed letters, which I could not write there. I hope above all else that the most courteous Le Coq has spoken to you of my concern when I was informed of the health of your m. i. lordship; whatever else he says is mere politeness.

I was comforted by the good news that you sent about our friend Berenstadt, because I love him in proportion to his height. But how could I regale you in exchange for such a delightful tale? To help relieve my hypochondria, which is sometimes increased by excessive idleness, our most charming Pellegrini has come to Dresden [from Prague], and I hope that we will have him here for many months or even years. He greets you in particular, and I beg you ever to believe me.

Ricevei in Praga la lettera di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima, e mi fu di maggior soddisfazione che le solennità e gli spettacoli. Ho differito di rendergliene grazie fin al mio ritorno, perché ero d’intenzione d’incomodarLa colle accluse, che di là non potevo scrivere. Desidero sopra ogn’altra cosa che il gentilissimo Monsieur Le Coq abbia parlato della premura colla quale mi sono informato della salute di V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup>; il rimanente è sua mera cortesia.

Mi anno consolato le buone nuove ch’Ella mi ha date di Berenstatt nostro, perché [p. 2] l’amo quant’egli è lungo. Ma di che potrei io regalarLa in contraccambio di quella istorietta così graziosa? In soccorso de’ miei ipocondri, che qualche volta il troppo ozio dilata, è venuto a Dresda il nostro amenissimo Pellegrini, e spero che l’averemo per molti mesi per non dir anni. Egli la riverisce particolarmente, ed io La prego sempre di credermi.

The most splendid of the spectacles mounted for the coronation of Emperor Charles VI as king of Bohemia was Johann Josef Fux’s setting of Pietro Pariati’s ‘festa teatrale per musica’, *Costanza e fortezza* (Prague, Hradschin, 28 August 1723), ed. Egon Wellesz in *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Oesterreich*, 34–5, Jg. 17 (1910). <> On Berenstadt’s great height, see Lindgren, ‘Berenstadt’, 58–9, *idem*, ‘Intellectual Florentine Castrato’, 142, and *idem*, ‘Zamboni’, 61. When Riva wrote from Hanover on 9 November 1723, he amusingly asked Zamboni to give Berenstadt an embrace ‘if he is seated’ (‘s’ègli a sedere’).

### T. Pallavicini to Riva

Dresden, 3 November 1723 [Wednesday]

What will your most illustrious lordship say, seeing that I have interposed a month between your letter and my reply and that, having been ordered to let you read my tragedy, I have not

attended promptly to such a simple matter? I have needed all this time to decide whether to send it to you as it is, that is to say, as a sketch or a skeleton of a tragedy, or whether it would be better to wait until I had changed it in many places in order to make it more bearable. I have finally decided on this latter alternative, meanwhile thanking your m. i. lordship for the honour that you do me and reserving the right to beg you to give me your opinion of it, informed as I am of the perfection of your taste, which I respect by reserving this right.

I must render thanks to you also for the letter from Berenstadt that you recently forwarded to me. He gives me excellent news of himself. It’s an age since I received any about Abbot Mauro. Your m. i. lordship will do me a signal favour if you will tell me something [about Mauro] before your departure [from Hanover]; as this is probably drawing near, allow me to anticipate it with best wishes for a prosperous voyage, while I submit myself . . .

Che dirà Vostra Signoria Illustrissima ch’io abbia frapposto un mese fra la Sua lettera e la mia risposta e che, avendomi comandato di farLe leggere la mia tragedia, io non l’abbia con prontezza in così leggier cosa ubbidita? Di tutto questo tempo ho avuto bisogno per risolvere se doveva mandargliela tale quale ella sta, vale a dire un abbozzo o uno scheletro di tragedia, o se tornava meglio aspettare che io l’abbia in molti luoghi cambiata per renderla più tollerabile. [p. 2] A questo ultimo partito mi sono finalmente appigliato, ringraziando intanto V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> dell’onore che mi fa, e riserbandomi di pregarLa di dirmi sopra di essa il Suo parere, informato come io sono della finitezza del Suo gusto ch’io con questa riserva rispetto.

Ho da renderLe anche grazie per la lettera di Berenstatt ultimamente trasmessami. Egli mi dà ottime nuove di se. Di quelle del Signor Abate Mauro gl’è un tempo infinito ch’io ne manco. Una grazia singolare [p. 3] mi farà V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> se vorrà dirmene qualche cosa prima del suo partire, il quale probabilmente accostandosi, mi sia lecito di prevenirlo cogli auguri d’un prospero viaggio, mentre mi rassegno . . .

### U. Pallavicini to Riva

Dresden, 27 December 1723 [Monday]

Le Coq’s sojourn here of several further weeks has given me the opportunity to serve your most illustrious lordship by sending you my tragedy. Impelled by the stimulus that the aforesaid has provided on your behalf, I have applied myself by going through it once again and reworking it in many places. Be that as it may, I am obeying you by sending it, certain at least that it will not bore you with excessive length. It is not [only?] for this reason that I do not regret having recopied it. The only request that I have is that your m. i. lordship will not evade your duty; indeed, I ardently beseech you to tell me your opinion with as much candour as that with which I ask for it. If for any reason you regret your curiosity [to have a tragedy by me], as I have cause to fear, discuss it with the bombastic Berenstadt, who is biased toward me and has said good things about it.

A letter from your m. i. lordship has kindly been delivered by Count Petronio, who arrived here two days ago. I shall be delighted to hear of your arrival in London, and I remain with the usual respect . . .

Il soggiorno di qualche settimana di più, che ha fatto qui il Signor Le Cocq, mi ha dato luogo di servire Vostra Signoria Illustrissima con trasmetterLe la mia tragedia; poiché, mosso anche dagli impulsi che il suddetto mene ha dati in Suo nome, mi sono messo a ripassarla e rifriggerla in molti luoghi. Tale quale ella sia, ubbidisco, e glieLa mando, sicuro almeno che non L’annoierà per troppa lunghezza. Non per questo ha lasciato di rincrescermi il ricopiarla; e questo è tutto l’obbligo [p. 2] che pretendo che V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> mene abbia, non però esimendoLa, anzi vivamente pregandoLa di dirmene il Suo parere con

**altrettanta sincerità con quanta io glielo dimando. Che se avrà di che pentirsi della Sua curiosità, come io ho motivo di temere, se la pigli coll'enfatico e mi parziale Berenstatt, che gliene ha detto del bene.**

**D'una lettera di V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> mi ha favorito il Signor Conte Petronio, giunto qua due giorni sono. Godrò dei felici riscontri dell'arrivo di Lei a Londra, e sono col solito rispetto . . .**

In 1720–1 Pallavicini and Steffani had agreed to revise *Tassilone*—a *tragedia per musica* (Düsseldorf, 1709)—for a production by the Royal Academy of Music in London, but this project had been abandoned for many reasons (see nos. 1–2, 4A, 7–8, 15, 18–19, 19A and 20, below). Five-act works labelled *tragedia per musica* were uncommon, but *Tassilone* was Pallavicini's third. The earlier ones were *Telegono* (Düsseldorf, 1697), which had been set by Carlo Luigi Pietragnua (the writer of letter J, above), and *Arminio* (Düsseldorf, 1707), a pasticcio drawn from Steffani's earlier works (see Croll, 'Chronologie'). Pallavicini could therefore have been writing another *tragedia per musica* in 1723. The setting envisaged for it might have been another pasticcio of arias by Steffani or a new score by Riva's favourite, Bononcini. It is conceivable, though highly unlikely, that Pallavicini made changes to Lorenzo Morani's text for *Farnace* (Venice, 1703), a libretto that Bononcini set for a London première on 27 November 1723. The adaptors of Morani's text are unknown, but one of them may have been Bononcini's brother-in-law, Luigi Riccoboni, the director of the *commedia dell'arte* troupe in Paris, where Bononcini performed during the summer of 1723. Bononcini's two most 'tragic' operas for London were *Farnace* and *Astianatte* (1727). On the latter, see nos. 43 and 47, below. <> Count Petronio has not been identified.

#### Postscript to L–U

Twenty-one additional letters from Pallavicini to Riva date from 1732 (nos. 211–16), 1733 (217–19), 1734 (220–2), 1736 (223–6), 1737 (227–30) and 1738 (no. 231). All but the last of these letters—three from Warsaw and seventeen from Dresden—were written to Riva after the latter had moved to Vienna. The final letter was written in St Pelten on 21 May 1738, shortly after Riva had moved to Modena. In no. 211 Pallavicini stated that 'the singing of the marvellous Farinelli [manifests], besides the calls of all kinds of birds, various other resemblances to them' ('il cantare del mirabil Farinello . . . oltre il verso d'ogni sorta [*sic*] d'uccelli, varie altre somiglianze'); he then greeted the singer Barbara Pisani and the costume designer Antonio Daniele, Count Bertoli (1678–1743), and asked Riva to inform Berna—if he wrote to him—that Pallavicini was anxiously awaiting letters from him. Bertoli, who was employed in Vienna from 1707 until his death (Ulrich Thieme, Felix Becker and Hans Vollmer, eds., *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart* (Leipzig, 1907–50), iii, 507), was mentioned in four more letters (nos. 212, 216, 221 and 224). Berna, who was mentioned in two more (nos. 215 and 218), was presumably Gaetano Berenstadt, who wrote to Pallavicini but whose 'ragings' ('smanie') rendered his 'fantasia' unintelligible (nos. 219–21), presumably because he was outspokenly opposed to the political changes in Tuscany (Lindgren, 'Berenstadt', 89–98; *idem*, 'Intellectual Florentine Castrato', 152 and 159–62; Morelli Timpanaro, 'Berenstadt', 180–6). Pallavicini delivered his judgment on the new vocal style in no. 216, dated 17 November 1732: 'the singers of our day, by wanting to imitate Faustina, have deformed music; I don't know what the imitators of Farinello can possibly do' ('i cantori de' nostri giorni per voler imitare Faustina anno deformata la musica; nè so cosa possa restar a fare agl'imitatori di Farinello').

On 3 September 1732 Pallavicini asked Riva to find a post in London for his friend and collaborator Giovanni Alberto Ristori (1692–1753), a musician who had been unjustly released from the service of (August II) the king of Poland (no. 213; cf. Sven Hansell/Wolfgang Hochstein, in *New Grove* 2, xxi, 443–5). Ristori was 'an able musician who composes with naturalness, writes well for the church, and is an excellent accompanist at the harpsichord, as are all those who were trained in Bologna' ('bravo musico, compone con naturalezza, fa bene da chiesa, ed è ottimo accompagnatore

di cembalo, come quello ch'è della scuola di Bologna'). Pallavicini recommended 'some permanent post at the Academy' ('qualche cosa di fisso da quella Accademia'), presumably because he did not know that the Royal Academy had exhausted its funds and ceased its operations in June 1728 (Deutsch, *Handel*, 224–7). Ristori could serve it well, 'because, apart from playing in the orchestra, he will know the best way to revise those operas that are brought over from Italy from time to time' ('oltre il sonare in orchestra egli sarebbe il caso casissimo per rifriger quell'opere, che di quando in quando fanno venire d'Italia'). If Senesino was in London, he was to be asked for an opinion, since he had known Ristori at the Dresden court. Pallavicini abandoned this quest after Riva informed him of the sad state of operatic affairs at London in 1733 (no. 215).

Pallavicini looked forward to the new Metastasio librettos that Riva sent him (nos. 214–16, 218, 221 and 224) and discussed his own translation, publication and distribution of Horatian odes in 'versi Toscani' (nos. 216–27), but he hardly mentioned his creation of librettos for operas and serenatas (nos. 228–9). He gave the precise date, 3 February, when Hasse and his wife Faustina Bordoni arrived in Dresden in 1734 (no. 220). He complained, on 21 January, that they had not yet arrived in 1737 (no. 227), presumably because Hasse was to set his new libretto, *Senocrita*, which was premiered on 27 February (Sven Hansell, in *New Grove* 2, xi, 110).

Copies of two further letters from Pallavicini to Riva, dated 22 March and 7 May 1737, are preserved in *I-MOe* Archivio Muratoriano, filza 86, fasc. 4.B.11. Extracts from these are printed in Marri, 'Italienischer Dichter', 169, nos. 2 and 4.

#### Counterpoint, 1-50: The Steffani-Riva Correspondence

The numbered letters given below include twenty-eight from Steffani to Riva and twenty-two sent by Riva to Steffani. They are supplemented by two from Pallavicini to Steffani (nos. 4A and 19A), two from Nicola Francesco Haym to Steffani (43A and 48A), and a letter and an undated work-list sent by John Ernest Galliard to Riva, who forwarded them to Steffani (48B and 49). This section is named Counterpoint for two reasons: unlike the Preludes, both 'voices' of its correspondence survive, and unlike the Preludes, which largely concern searches for young or up-to-date singers, the five 'contrapuntal' writers frequently frowned upon the new-fangled, non-contrapuntal frills of the pre-Classical style. They favoured instead the old-fashioned 'Renaissance' masters—Steffani (b. 1654), Tosi (b. 1654), Bononcini (b. 1670) and Cuzzoni (b. 1696)—and definitely disliked anyone—e.g., Handel (b. 1685) and Faustina Bordoni (b. 1697)—who rode roughshod over the established expressive traditions. In the following letters, such favour for the old underlies the many statements made about music and musicians, and it is most conspicuously demonstrated in 1726–8, when all five writers join and contribute to a consciously 'contrapuntal' endeavour, the Academy of Vocal [=Ancient] Music.

When the name of the addressee is found on the opening page or on the cover of a letter, we have not transcribed it. On the opening page of each letter from Steffani, Riva's surname is written in the lower left corner; it is preceded by 'Signor' (nos. 4, 33, 46 and 50), 'Monsieur' (5 and 30–1) or 'Monsieur' (the remaining twenty-one letters). Our microfilm includes covers for six of Steffani's letters: nos. 9–11, 13, 14 and 16. A sample address is that for no. 9: 'A Monsieur / Monsieur Riva Secrétaire d'État de Son Altesse Sérénissime de Modène / à la Cour de Sa Majesté Britannique / à Londres'. Riva did not place Steffani's name on the opening page of any of his letters. His covers are addressed to Steffani in one of three cities: 'A Monseigneur / Monseigneur l'Eveque de Spiga' / à Collonia', 'à Hannouvre' or 'à Padove'.

The city and date of writing are almost always placed at the beginning of the letter. Only nos. 4A and 19A by Pallavicini, 46 by Steffani and 46A and 48A by Haym place them at the end. As in the letters cited above, the addressee is typically designated *Vostra Signoria Illustrissima* (your most

illustrious lordship); since this is one of the meaningless superlatives that Steffani attempted to banish (see nos. 3, 4, 6–8 and 38, below), Riva seldom used it.

Letters conclude with a wide variety of salutations, which are sometimes followed by a signature. We have transcribed and translated these greetings, even though the decipherment of Riva's salutations, which were obviously scrawled in great haste, required a fair amount of guesswork. Riva ends nos. 14, 19, 25, 28, 34, 37, 40, 42 and 47 with an ampersand (&c) that is written with varying degrees of embellishment. Any doubt that it is an ampersand is removed by looking at passages within letters where it clearly functions as one—e.g., nos. 10, 23, 32, 34 and 42. Steffani ends no. 20 with two ampersands. Seven of his letters end with his 'monogram signature', written by a scribe; in nos. 6, 9 and 11 this monogram clearly looks like the letters AS superimposed, plus a few lines connecting the A to the S; but in nos. 8, 13, 16 and 26 the superimposed letters are more or less concealed by numerous ornamental strokes. The 'closing' signature was ordinarily provided by a wax seal, which impressed the writer's emblem. So far as we can ascertain from our microfilms, such seals were torn off when the letters were opened.

Nearly all of Steffani's letters were written by his secretaries. As indicated below, Gioseppe Bossis wrote nine letters in Cologne and Hanover (nos. 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 24 and 26); secretary A wrote five in Hanover (16, 18 and 20–2), B wrote five in Padua (27, 29–31 and 33), and C wrote eight in Padua, Hanover and Frankfurt (35, 36, 38, 39, 41, 44, 46 and 50). Steffani himself penned only no. 15, which was written just after his secretary, Bossis, had left for Italy.

Letters no. 1, 3, 15, 22, 28, 43A, 48B, 49 and 50 are reproduced in facsimile as Ills. 4–12.

### 1. Riva to Steffani

London, 2 December 1720 [Monday]

After having made a most tedious journey by land, we found the sea so tranquil that we passed from Calais to Dover in five hours without the slightest discomfort, whereupon I wished salvation to my enemies. Here we found the other sea, that of the South [the South Sea Company], in terrible turmoil: no sooner had we arrived in London than we beheld with compassion the first of the poor, drowned sailors, as well as others who were in danger without hope of saving themselves. What a difference between the London of five or six months ago and that of today! They have considered many ways of restoring the situation, at least to some extent, but so far the remedies have been found either too weak for the violence of the illness or too violent for the weakness of the infirm. All hope that now remains depends on the ability of the king [George I] and the prudence of his counsel.

Last Saturday [19 November O. S., 30 November N. S.] the opera house opened with the première of *L'Astarto*, with poetry by Apostolo Zeno [revised by Paolo Antonio Rolli] and music by [Giovanni] Bononcini, who is here. It had a marvellous reception, and in truth no opera could better stir the affections or make us more interested in the emotions of the characters. In sum, this is music that goes straight to the heart without any twists or turns, which I have heard mylord Piva [Steffani] say is the quality most difficult to achieve and rarely encountered nowadays. Some [of those] who are transported by Handel would like to find something [negative] to say, but it is difficult to resist the torrent [of admiration for Bononcini]. The singers perform both recitatives and arias very well.

The royal princes [of Wales, George and Caroline] have proposed an opera, said to be by Piva, entitled *Tassilone*. The Directors of the [Royal] Academy [of Music] wish to serve their highnesses, and, so that the music should be regulated with affection and precision, have asked Bononcini to direct it. They wish to avoid the racket that might be made by someone

else, or perhaps even a refusal to participate. Bononcini replied that he would be honoured to work with the composition of Piva, whom he considers the St Augustine of Music. It will be necessary to alter some of the recitative, but the arias will not be changed at all. Bononcini, who knows that I have the honour of being the servant of your most illustrious lordship, asks me to procure for him the honour of your esteemed grace, and to present his respects to you.

Here I am entirely at the disposal of your m. i. lordship, and I assure you that I have carried with me the memory of the cordial and generous kindness that you accorded me during my sojourn in Hanover.

I will address the present letter to [Cesare] Sardi in Amsterdam. Please greet devotedly my dear [Giuseppe] Bossis, and I remain with equal esteem and veneration,

Your m. i. and most reverend lordship's  
Most humble and true servant,  
Riva

[f. 135] Dopo aver fatto un viaggio assai noioso per terra, trovammo il mare così tranquillo, che passammo da Calais a Dovres in 5 ore senza il menomo incomodo, onde salutem is inimicis nostris. Abbiamo ben qui trovato l'altro Mare del Sud in una orribile tempesta, ed appena arrivati a Londra abbiamo veduti con compassione gli avanzi de' poveri naviganti sommersi, ed altri in pericolo senza speranza di salvarsi. Che differenza da Londra di cinque o sei mesi fa a quella d' adesso. Si sono esaminati molti progetti per rimettere almeno in qualche maniera le cose, ma sin ora i remedi sono stati trovati o troppo deboli per la violenza del male o troppo violenti per la debolezza del ammalato. Tutta la speranza che ora si ha consiste nella fortuna del re e nella prudenza del suo consiglio.

[f. 135v] Sabato passato si aperse il teatro delle opere ed andò in scena *L'Astarto*, poesia di Apostolo Zeno e musica di Bononcino, che si trova qui, e che ha maravigliosamente incontrato; ed in verità non si possono meglio muovere gli affetti ne interessarsi più nelle passioni degli attori di quello che si fa in quest'opera. In due parole, questa è una musica che va a dirittura al cuore senza tanti giri e contragiri, ciò che ho sentito dal mio Signor Piva dire ch'era la cosa più difficile e meno praticata al presente. Alcuni trasportati per Hendel vorrebbero trovare qualche cosa da dire, ma è difficile di resistere al torrente. I cantanti e recitano e cantano bene assai.

I principi reali hanno proposta un'opera detta del Piva intitolata il *Tassilone*. I direttori dell'Accademia vogliono servire alle loro altezze, e perché la musica sia regolata con [f. 136] amore ed esattezza, hanno pregato Bononcino a dirigerla, non fidandosi del fracasso di qualche altro, e dubitando ancora di rifiuto. Bononcino ha risposto che si farà gloria di servire alla composizione del Signor Piva, che considera il Sant'Agostino della Musica. Bisognerà mutare qualche poco di recitativi, ma non si farà la minor alterazione nelle arie. Bononcino, che sa che io ho l'onore d'esser servitore di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima, mi ricerca di procurargli quello della stimatissima di Lei grazia, e di presentarle i di lui rispetti.

Io son qui tutto agli ordini di V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup>, assicurandoLa che ho portato meco la memoria delle grazie cordialmente generose ch'Ella mi ha fatte nel mio soggiorno a Anover.

Indirizzo la presente al Signor Sardi di Amsterdam. Riverisca divotamente il mio caro Signor Bosis, e sono con egual stima e venerazione,

di V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> e Reverendissima,  
Umilissimo servitore vero,  
Riva

See Ill. 4. This letter is given complete. The Italian text of paragraphs 2–5 was printed in Timms, 'Music and Musicians', 30; four words ('qualche poco di recitativi') had appeared earlier in Gerhard



Croll ed., Agostino Steffani, *Tassilone*, Denkmäler rheinischer Musik, 8 (Düsseldorf, 1958), vii. <> As noted in the introduction, above, King George I went to Hanover in July 1720 for the third and most festive of his five summer visits to his electorate. Riva was among the foreign ministers who received instructions to follow him to Hanover in 1719, 1720, 1723 and 1725. <> Riva wrote this letter after his return to London in 1720. In it he stresses items of vital interest to Steffani. He ends his discussion of the South Sea scandal by expressing trust in George I, whose abilities and understanding as elector were crucial to Steffani's undertakings in Hanover, then focuses his discussion of music on a proposed London revival of Steffani's final opera, *Tassilone* (Düsseldorf, 1709). Riva's favourite composer, Bononcini (1670–1747), who resided in London in 1720–33, had agreed to direct it. Paul Henry Lang ended his review of Croll's edition of the opera by fabricating a fanciful and completely false tale: 'Giovanni Bononcini hit upon the idea of using this [Steffani's] vast prestige for his own purposes—what better way to defeat Handel than with an opera by this celebrated globe-trotting diplomatist-composer?' Lang continued by asserting incorrectly that Bononcini 'inflicted' the usual 'alterations' on the score, held rehearsals, then 'abandoned the venture because he was too good a musician not to realize that this score did not have the slightest chance to stand comparison with Handel' (*Musical Quarterly*, 45 (1959), 412–17). Subsequent letters (see nos. 2, 4A, 7, 8, 15, 18, 19, 19A and 20, below) will demonstrate that none of Lang's assertions is correct. <> Between 1706/7 and 1709, a few years after Steffani had been consecrated bishop of Spiga, he and his friends began to attribute his compositions and musical opinions to Gregorio Piva (d. 1740). Piva was a singer, instrumentalist, music copyist and music librarian in Dresden, Düsseldorf and Bonn between 1691 and 1740. After he moved to Düsseldorf in 1703, he copied various works by Steffani. His copy of *Tassilone* survives; the score is in *E-Mn* M. 2258–9, the set of parts in *GB-Lbl* RM 23. i. 18–24 (Timms, 'Gregorio Piva', 171–3). Although, strictly speaking, it is Piva rather than Steffani who was termed the St Augustine of Music, the epithet was clearly intended to apply to Steffani, who had the same first name as the saint (cf. no. 49, below). 'Piva' ('pipe' or 'bagpipe') was a name taken by many Venetian musicians who went abroad in the sixteenth century (Alessio Ruffati, 'Una migrazione di strumentisti italiani in Inghilterra e la presunta identità ebraica dei Bassano', *Il saggiautore musicale*, 6 (1999), 25, 29 and 31–3). <> It is noteworthy that the castrato Benedetto Baldassari, who created the role of Teodata when *Tassilone* was produced at Düsseldorf in 1709 (Croll, *Tassilone*, vi), sang several roles during the first and third seasons of Royal Academy productions in London, but no new parts (or none at all) during the second, 1720–1 (Highfill, *Biographical Dictionary*, i, 235, and Winton Dean, in *New Grove* 2, ii, 529–30). He presumably played no part in the projected revival of *Tassilone* in London. <> Rolli (1687–1765), who resided in London in 1715–44, served as librettist and stage manager for the Royal Academy of Music during its first three seasons, April 1720 to June 1722. For a summary of the Academy's genesis, noble patrons and repertory, see Dean and Knapp, *Handel's Operas*, 298–323, and Gibson, *Royal Academy*. <> Sardi was an agent in Amsterdam who forwarded letters and packets from correspondents like Riva and Steffani. <> Bossis is presumably to be identified with the 'Gioseppe Bossis' to whom Abbot Giovanni Troisio, Steffani's agent in Rome, wrote a letter on 11 October 1721 (*I-Rsege* Fondo Spiga, vol. 16).

## 2. Riva to Steffani

London, 5 January 1721 [Sunday]

This is a belated reply to the esteemed folio written by your most illustrious lordship on 17 December [not extant], which I received late because of bad weather . . .

Internal affairs here are in a bad state with regard to the interest, commerce and credit of the nation . . . Bankruptcies continue, credit is unobtainable at the [Stock] Exchange, and this terrible situation has caused overwhelming confusion and the impoverishment of honourable men.

In spite of this, the opera house is always full at half a guinea a ticket, that is to say, at twice the normal cost. They have given twelve performances of the beautiful opera by Bononcini, and this evening one by Handel [*Il Radamisto*] will be staged for the first time. I heard the general rehearsal, and oh! what a difference [between these works] for one who loves music that touches the heart. Bononcini is preparing another, and intends to make it even better [than *L'Astarto*]. He renders most humble thanks to your m. i. lordship for the good will that you show him, relays his regards to you, and asks you to ensure that Piva will make use of his services; if he is to direct something by him in London, he promises to do so carefully and honourably. Nothing more has been done about *Tassilone*, because it would be necessary to eliminate three of the characters, which could not be done without ruining the opera.

I greet devotedly my Bossis, and thank him for the kind memory of me that he preserves. I am yours with as much deference as obligation, which means that it is infinite,

Your m. i. and most reverend lordship's  
Most humble, devoted and obliged servant,  
Riva

[f. 19] **Rispondo tardi [a] un riverito foglio di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima delli 17 dicembre, perché l'ho ricevuto tardi a cagione da' tempi cativi . . .**

**Qui gli affari interni sono in pessimo stato per rapporto all'interesse, commercio e credito della nazione . . . [f. 19v] Seguono continui fallimenti, non si trova più credito nella Borsa, e si è fatta una stravagante confusione di galantuomo e furbo in questa terribile congiuntura.**

**Ciò nonostante, il teatro dell'opera è sempre pieno a mezza ghinea il biglietto, che vuol dire al doppio del solito. Si sono fatte 12 recite della bell'opera di Bononcino, e questa sera ne va in scena per la prima volta una dell'Handel. Io ne ho intesa la prova generale, ed oh! che differenza per chi ama la musica che tocca il cuore. Bononcino ne prepara un'altra e pretende di far ancor meglio. Egli rende umilissime grazie a V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> della bontà che ha per lui, Le presenta i suoi rispetti, e La [f. 20] supplica di fare che il Piva non si valga, dovendosi qui regular qualche cosa del suo, che di lui promettendo d'assistere con attenzione ed onoratezza. Non si è poi fatt'altro del Tassillone, perché bisognava levare tre personaggi, il che non si poteva fare senza guastar l'opera.**

**Riverisco divotamente il mio Signor Bosis; mi rendo grazie della gentile memoria che conserva di me. Sono con ossequio egual all'obbligo, che vuol dire infinito,**

Di V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> e Reverendissima,  
Umilissimo, devotissimo et obbligatissimo servitore,  
Riva

The Italian text of paragraph 3 was printed in Timms, 'Music and Musicians', 31. <> Steffani's letter of 17 December is presumably the reply that he mentions in the second paragraph of no. 3, below. <> Ten (not twelve) performances of *L'Astarto* were given by the Royal Academy of Music until 21 December 1720 (Emmett L. Avery, *The London Stage*, Part 2: 1700–29 (Carbondale, IL, 1960), 600–5). Handel's *Il Radamisto*, which had been premièred on 27 April 1720, was revived with revisions on 28 December 1720 / 8 January 1721 (Avery, *London Stage*, 578 and 605–6). Riva was wrong in declaring that 'this evening', i.e., Christmas Day (25 December / 5 January), was the revival date. <> The new opera on which Bononcini was working may have been either the second act of the pasticcio *Muzio Scevola*, first performed on 15/26 April 1721, or *L'Odio e l'Amore* (also called *Ciro*), first heard on 20/31 May 1721 (Avery, *London Stage*, 624 and 630).

## 3. Steffani to Riva

Cologne, 17 January 1721 [Friday, in Bossis' hand]

To show you, Sir, that I desire the honour of your news a little more frequently, I begin a correspondence as I have a number of others, of all shapes and sizes. If my letter pleases you, you have only to reply on the same footing, so that we tell each other confidentially what we have to say, without besmirching the paper inappropriately with superfluous compliments.

I received one of your cherished letters dated 3 [*recte*: 2] December last year. That is so long ago that I've almost forgotten it. I do not know if you received my reply, but I do know that I acquitted myself of this duty on the first possible post-day after having received your dear letter. As for this present letter, I am consigning it to Sardi in Amsterdam, because I should be very angry if it were not delivered to you safely. The reason for this is that I need to ask you a very great favour . . . I have a friend in Rome whom I esteem beyond measure, and who desires friends and protectors at the court of Lorraine . . . I should like to think that our [friend] Mr. le Bègue will not refuse me the kindness of interesting himself and his friends on behalf of mine . . .

Otherwise there is no news here that merits your attention, especially since you already know that the famous Law passed through here. Everyone still says that he is going to Rome. If he takes his fine economic system there, he will renovate that land, too.

Piva [Steffani] sends you his compliments but says nothing about what is happening in Dresden, because he knows that you have news directly from there. I await the honour of your reply, Sir, and remain, without reservation, the most humble of your very faithful servants,

[in Steffani's hand:]

A[gostino], Bishop of Spiga

[f. 1] Pour vous marquer, Monsieur, que je souhaite un peu plus souvent l'honneur de vos nouvelles, j'entame une correspondance telle que j'en ai une quantité d'autres de toutes sortes de calibres. Si la mienne vous agréee, vous n'avez qu'à répondre sur le même pié, ainsi nous nous dirons confidamment ce que nous avons à nous dire, et ne barbouillerons pas mal à propos le papier avec des compliments superflus.

J'ai reçu une de vos chères lettres en date du 3.<sup>me</sup> du dernier mois de l'an passé. Il y a si long tems que je l'ai presque oubliée. Je ne sçais si vous avez reçu ma réponse: toujours sçais-je que je me suis acquitté de ce devoir le premier jour de poste que j'ai rencontré après avoir eu votre chère lettre. Pour cettcey je la recommande à Monsieur de Sardi à Amsterdam, parceque je serois très fâché qu' [f. 1v] elle ne vous fût rendüe sûrement. La raison en est que j'ai besoin d'un grandissime plaisir . . . J'ai un ami à Rome que j'estime infiniment, et qui souhaite des amis et protecteurs à la cour de Loraine . . . Je me flaterois bien que nôtre Monsieur le Bègue ne me refuseroit pas la grâce de s'intéresser, et d'intéresser ses amis pour le mien . . .

Il n'y a point de nouvelle icy qui mérite votre attention, d'autant plus que vous sçavez déjà celle du passage par icy du fameux Law. Tout le monde dit encore qu'il va à Rome. S'il y va porter son beau sisteme d'économie, il accommodera bien ce pays là aussi.

[f. 2] Piva vous fait ses compliments et ne vous dit rien de ce qu'on fait à Dresde, parcequ'il sçait que vous en avez les nouvelles tout droit. J'attends l'honneur de vôtre réponse, Monsieur, et suis sans aucune réserve le plus humble de vos très fidels serviteurs,

[in Steffani's hand:]

A., Evesque de Spiga

See Ill. 5. Steffani had gone to Cologne to discuss his position as apostolic vicar of North Germany with Girolamo Archinto, archbishop of Tarsus, the papal nuncio in Cologne in 1713–21 (Hausmann, *Repertorium*, 263). In this letter, he begs Riva to ask [Joseph, baron] le Bègue [count of Torcheville] to intercede with his master [Léopold Joseph (1679–1729)], duke of Lorraine [and Bar], on behalf of

Abbot Giovanni Troisio, who was Steffani's agent in Rome in 1721–4 (see especially no. 9, below, and Feldkamp, 'Nachlass', 311, s.v. Troisio). Riva had presumably become acquainted with baron le Bègue between February and June 1719, when the latter was the envoy from Lorraine to Britain (Linda and Marsha Frey, *The Treaties of the War of the Spanish Succession: An Historical and Critical Dictionary* (Westport, CT, 1995), 247, and Hausmann, *Repertorium*, 206). <> John Law (1671–1729), a Scotsman, established the first French bank in 1716, formed a joint-stock company for the reclamation and settlement of lands in the Mississippi valley in 1717, and became controller-general of French finance in 1720. When the speculative bubble burst, he took flight (F[rancis] E[spinasse], *DNB*, xi, 671–5; Hatton, *George I*, 241 and 248–9; and nos. 4, 11 and 22, below). <> Riva's correspondent in Dresden was presumably Pallavicini, the librettist of Steffani's *Tassilone* (see no. 1, above); he is not known to have written to Riva in 1721–2 (see letters L–U, above).

## 4. Steffani to Riva

Cologne, 24 January 1721 [Friday, in Bossis' hand]

To give your most illustrious lordship the thanks that I owe you for your very kind letter of 5 January, I take the liberty, for the second time, of writing to you in a familiar style. I entreat you to do the same and give you complete freedom to choose whichever words seem to you the most fitting, without wasting time, paper or ink on so many superlatives, among which is 'most illustrious'; when I see this remain in your pen, it will certainly no longer slip out from mine . . .

I ask you to convey my most cordial compliments to Bononcini, and be sure to inform him that I was pleased to hear how, in that country, he is given just reward for his merit, which I know very well and esteem particularly highly. As for Piva, he writes me that he is absolutely determined that—if he must produce some feeble work—he will certainly allow no one but the aforesaid Bononcini to lay hands on it; and this will be an essential condition.

And, by the way, do not forget the letters from the prince of Würzburg [Johann Philipp Franz von Schönborn] that I made you read in Hanover, and try to the best of your ability to put me in a position to give a reply to that eminent prelate, whom I venerate in the highest degree and who is the best friend I have in the world. See if you can find some way of helping him, and rest assured that you will thus do me a favour that will greatly augment both the obligations that I owe to your m. i. lordship and my strong desire to prove the infinite obedience with which I am the most faithful of your most devoted servants.

[in Steffani's hand:]

A[gostino], Bishop of Spiga

[f. 3] Per rendere a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima le grazie che Le devo del Suo umanissimo foglio dei 5. del corrente, prendo per la seconda volta l'ardire di scrivere famigliarmente, pregandoLa di far lo stesso, e lasciandoLe intiera libertà di scieglier la lingua che gli pare la più commoda senza perdere il tempo, la carta e l'inchiostro in tanti superlativi; e come nel numero di questi viene l'illustrissimo, quando lo vedrò restato nella Sua penna, non escirà al certo più dalla mia . . .

[f. 4] Al Signor Bononcini La prego portare i miei più cordiali complimenti, et assicurarlo che ho goduto sentire che in quel paese si renda giustizia al di lui merito, da me ottimamente conosciuto e particolarmente stimato. Quanto al Piva, egli mi scrive esser risolutissimo che s'egli deve produrre qualche sua debolezza non permetterà certo che altri che il predetto Signor Bononcino vi ponga la mano; e questa sarà una conditione sine qua non. Ma a questo proposito Ella si ricordi delle lettere del Signor Principe di Wurtzburgo, che gli feci leggere a Hannovera, e procuri per vita Sua di pormi in istato di dar qualche risposta a quel eminente prelato, che io venero in sommo grado e ch'è il miglior amico che habbia al mondo. Veda se puol trovarsi di che servirlo, e si assicuri di far a me stesso una grazia che augmenterà

[f. 4v] di molto le obbligazioni che professo a V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> et il vivo desider[i]o di comprovarLe la infinit[a] osservanza con cui sono il più fedele de' Suoi devotissimi servitori.

[in Steffani's hand:]

A., Vescovo di Spiga

In the omitted passage Steffani expresses hope that Parliament will follow the prudence of the king [George I] and his ministerial cabinet. In Steffani's words, 'o si deve trovar rimedio al male, o veder chi non ha fondi sufficienti morir di fame' ('one must either find a solution to the problem, or see those without sufficient means die of hunger'). He notes that no one has spoken of Law since his departure [from Cologne], then adds information about the diplomatic agent [Abbot Troisio] whom he hopes Riva will help (see no. 3, above, and no. 9 onwards, below). <> As noted in the commentary to no. 1, above, Piva was Steffani's pseudonym for his 'under-cover' musical activity. It also proved to be a very crafty ruse. In no. 4, for example, Steffani reports what 'Piva' has said, but does not say whether 'Piva' will or will not compose something new (see no. 2, above). <> Count Schönborn became prince-bishop of Würzburg in 1719. The letters from him to Steffani that were shown to Riva in Hanover are probably E-G, above.

#### 4A. Pallavicini to Steffani

Dresden, 4 February 1721 [Tuesday]

Grateful thanks to your most illustrious lordship for your letter of 16 January . . .

From England I have had no reply, but I await one impatiently in order to give form to that embryo [presumably a revised version of *Tassilone*]. With regard to Piva, there is nothing that I would not do to serve him. Our modern composers demand aria texts a mile long in order to avoid, they say, excessive repeats of the same words. So long as this [English] silence lasts, I shall not know how to write any, whether long or short; but I will always remain with immutable respect,

Your most illustrious and most reverend lordship's  
Most humble, devoted and obliged servant,  
S. Pallavicini

[p. 1] Mi onora il foglio di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima segnato il 16 di quest'anno . . .

[p. 3] D'Inghilterra non vedo risposta, e l'attendo con impazienza per dar forma a quell'embrione. Trattandosi del Piva, non vi sarà cosa che non si faccia per servirlo. Questi nostri compositori moderni dimandano arie lunghe un miglio per [p. 4] ischivare, dicono essi, le soverchie repliche delle parole medesime. Io per poco che duri ancora questa scioperataggine non nè saprò più fare nè di lunghe nè di corte; ma sarò sempre con immutabil rispetto,

Di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima e Reverendissima,  
Umilissimo, devotissimo, obbligatissimo servitore,  
S Pallavicini

*I-Rscge* Fondo Spiga, vol. 11. This must be the letter that Steffani refers to in no. 6, below, since it contains 'the most terrible complaints about a certain long silence from London, which prevents the development of a certain embryo [a revised version of *Tassilone*] that has now been under consideration for a long time'. <> Pallavicini had written to Steffani on 11 November 1720 (also in *I-Rscge* Fondo Spiga, vol. 11), that is, three weeks before Riva's first letter to Steffani (no. 1, above). Since George I had been visiting Hanover, and Riva had been among the ministers attending him there, Pallavicini's comments presumably refer to events in Hanover: 'Voleva ben io stupirmi, che in quel paese così fatto si fosse presa una buona risoluzione. Egualmente mi mortifica, che l'altra speranza

da me non senza probabilità concepita venga distrutta da quel tanto, che Vostra Signoria Illustrissima si è degnata di confidarmi . . . [p. 2] Quand'io mi trovassi immerso nelle maggiori occupazioni, non che nell'ozio in cui la nostra corte mi lascia, cercherei tempo per ubbidire ai comandi di V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> Resta dunque, ch'Ella mi onori di spiegarsi di vantaggio, mentre sa, che di molte cose è di mestieri, ch'io sia informato. Dal Signor Riva ancora ebbi riscontro dell'onore, che mi fu fatto alla tavola di V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> Non ho per mostrargliene [p. 3] la mia ossequiosa riconoscenza che l'annesso piatto di tartufi, di cui la supplico di far parte al nostro Signor Abate Mauro, con raccomandarmi altresì alla buona grazia del Signor Marchese Nomis, mentre pieno di rispetto mi rassegnò' ('I am astonished that a good decision has been taken in a country like that. To the same degree I am mortified that the other hope, which I considered well-conceived, should have been destroyed by what your most illustrious lordship has deigned to tell me . . . If I were immersed in major undertakings, rather than the idleness in which our court [in Dresden] leaves me, I would find time to obey the commands of your m. i. lordship. Honour me, therefore, by explaining yourself more fully, since you know that I need to be informed of many things. Signor Riva also gave me an account of the honour done to me at your m. i. lordship's table. To demonstrate my devoted appreciation to you for this, I can offer nothing but the enclosed plate of truffles, which I ask you to share with our [friend] Abbot Mauro. Commend me also to the good grace of Marquis Nomis, while I sign myself with full respect'). The 'enclosed plate' is a 163-line pastoral poem ('Per la scoperta de' tartufi neri nelle terre di Misnia'), which wittily discusses 'Tartufi Alemanni' and ultimately honours crown prince Friedrich August; it was published with minor alterations in Pallavicini's posthumous *Opere* (1744), iv, 95-104. Since no. 1, above, announced the proposed revival of *Tassilone* as a new idea, the 'hope' that Pallavicini considered 'well-conceived' may refer to a political rather than an operatic endeavour.

#### 5. Riva to Steffani

London, 6 February 1721 [Thursday]

I find myself honoured this week with two most revered folios from you, one of 17 and the other of 24 January. Both arrived at the same time, because the same wind carried them from Holland. I am replying immediately, and in the [informal] way that you like. I shall write to le Bègue about the affair you mention . . .

Here, ministers are preoccupied with the affairs of the South Sea Company, which may be the most serious [crisis] that this kingdom could ever endure, since it is a question of restoring the credit and public confidence that have been utterly ruined . . . Moreover, a rigorous inquiry has begun into the affairs of the thirty-two directors of the South Sea Company, seven of whom are already in prison, and they are the richest ones. Although the treasurer of the company [Robert Knight] has saved himself by fleeing the realm, it is reckoned, nevertheless, that about five million pounds sterling will be recovered from these directors; they were acquired by bad administration of public funds, and will serve to heal the great wound. Thank God, I have not lost a penny.

I have conveyed your good wishes to Bononcini, who accepts them with pleasure. He responds with infinite veneration, and says that he will be honoured to take part in performances of musical works by Piva, whom he esteems highly. Indeed, fate has already given him such a privilege. Being one evening at the home of Mademoiselle Schulemburg, niece of the duchess of Kendal, the king sent for him to look at the beginning of a pastorale, and he recognized its style [presumably Steffani's]. When Madame Kielmansegg put on a very private concert for the king in his apartment, which was managed by her servant Brighella, that is, me, we decided to perform this pastorale and thus give His Majesty a pleasant surprise. Bononcini therefore had the instrumental parts copied, and the piece was

sung by the two heroes Senesino and Berselli. You cannot imagine the pleasure the king derived from this offering, nor the love with which Bononcini prepared it.

Handel has restaged an opera [*Il Radamisto*] that made a great splash last year (in the land of the blind, blessed are the one-eyed), hoping thereby to crush Bononcini's into the ground, but on the third evening the theatre was empty and the performance had to be cancelled.

A friend, who has just this minute arrived at my abode, assures me that another nine directors of the company have been arrested and that at least six million will be recovered from them all. That's all I have time for.

I remain with the usual deference,

Your most humble and most faithful servant,  
Riva

Convey to Bossis a checkmate of compliments.

Please turn over

P. S. Little can be done to find any suitable [musicians] in Italy for [Count Schönborn] the prince of Würzburg. The good ones do not want to know about it, and the bad ones would not please his most reverend highness. The friend that I have employed in this quest has not, however, entirely let me down, and in two or three weeks I shall have some news worth communicating to your most illustrious lordship . . .

[f. 14] **Mi trovo in questa settimana onorato di due riveritissimi di Lei fogli, uno delli 17 e l'altro delli 24 gennaio passato, amendue arrivati nello stesso tempo, perché il medesimo vento li ha portati d'Olanda. Vi rispondo subito ed in que' termini ch'Ella vuole. Scriverò a Monsieur le Bègue per l'affare consaputo . . .**

**Qui gli affari della Compagnia del Sud, che sino i maggiori che possa mai avere questo regno, trattandosi di rimettere il credito e l'interesse pubblico intieramente rovinato, occupano i ministri . . .**  
[f. 14v] **Del resto, si è cominciata una rigorosa inquisizione contro i 32 direttori della Compagnia del Sud, 7 de' quali sono già in gabbia, e sono i più ricchi, e benché il tesoriere di essa compagnia si sia salvato fuori del regno, ciò nonostante si fa conto che si caverà da costoro cinque milioni in circa di sterline che hanno guadagnato nella cattiva amministrazione de' fondi pubblici, che serviranno a medicare la gran piaga. Grazie a Dio non perdo un soldo.**

**Ho portato le grazie al Signor Bononcino, che si degna di fargli. Egli vi corrisponde con infinita venerazione, e dice che si farà gloria di servire alle produzioni musicali del Piva, che stima tanto. Ed il caso ha portato che si metta in possesso di questa prerogativa, perch'essendo egli una sera da [f. 15] *Mademoiselle* Scheulembourg, nipote della duchessa di Kandall, il re gli mandò a far vedere un principio d'una pastorale, e ne riconobbe la mano; e siccome *Madama* di Kilmansegg diede una musica al re nel suo quarto privatissima regolata dal suo servidor Brighella, che son' io, così pensammo di sorprendere agreablement *Sua Maestà* con detta pastorale, onde Bononcino ne fece cavar gl'instrumenti; e fu cantata da i due bravi, Senesino e Berselli. Non può Ella credere che gusto ebbe il re di questa finezza, e con che amore Bononcino l'assistesse.**

**Handel ha rimessa sul teatro un'opera che l'anno passato fece gran fracasso (in terra di ciechi, beati monoculi), credendo di butare in terra quella di Bononcino, ma la terza sera fu scena vuota, onde bisognò disdirsi.**

**Un amico arriva in questo punto da me, e mi assicura che altri 9 direttori della compagnia sono stati arrestati, e che da costoro tutti almeno 6 milioni ne tireranno. Non ho tempo per più. Sono col solito ossequio,**

Il Suo umilissimo e fedelissimo servitore,  
Riva

#### Al Signor Bossis uno scacco matto di complimenti.

Ella volti

[f. 15v: P. S.] **Poco da fare vi è per trovar cosa a proposito in Italia per il principe di Wirtzburg. I buoni non ne vogliono saper niente, ed i cativi non piacerebbero a Sua Altezza Reverendissima. L'amico che ho impiegato in quest'affare non mi dispera però totalmente, e fra due o tre settimane avrò qualche notizia che comunicherò a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima . . .**

The Italian text of paragraphs 3–5 was printed in Timms 'Music and Musicians', 32. <> In the first omitted passage Riva states that his letter may not have reached le Bègue, since the latter may already have left for Paris, then for the Congress of Cambrai (1722–5), where he was to act as a plenipotentiary. In the second omission, Riva conjectures that England will make a poor showing at the opening of the congress, then reports that Pozobueno, the Spanish minister, has presented secret proposals for the restitution of Gibraltar, but that Parliament is in no mood to consider them at present. Jacinto de Pozobueno represented Spain in Great Britain from December 1720 until January 1727 (Hausmann, *Repertorium*, 388). <> Knight (1675–1744) absconded on January 1/12 (John Carswell, *The South Sea Bubble* (London, 1960), 281 and 309). <> The so-called niece of the duchess of Kendal may have been Petronilla Melusine; she and her two sisters were daughters (rather than nieces) of the duchess and the king (Hatton, *George I*, 51–2). <> The private performance of a pastoral that featured two castrati was presented by the king's half-sister, Sophie Charlotte, Baroness Kielmansegg (1675–1725). In a letter of 31 January 1721 to the duke of Modena (cited in Gibson, *Royal Academy*, 142 note 104), Riva named Wednesday 29 January as the date of performance and described the occasion as 'un'accademia di musica privatissima' attended by 'il re solo' ('the king alone'), who was 'contentissima' with the 'divertimento' that Riva had 'regolato' ('organized'). <> Steffani could not identify this work (see no. 6, below), and neither can we. It is unlikely to have been his one-act opera *Baccanali* (Hanover, 1695), which calls for a large cast. Another unlikely possibility is Luigi Mancina's *La costanza nelle selve* (Hanover, 1697), of which the scores are designated 'pastoralle' (*GB-Lbl* RM 23. g. 23, p. 178) and 'favola pastorale' (*GB-Lbl* RM 23. h. 1); this is also the only work designated 'favola pastorale' in a handwritten inventory of musico-dramatic events in Hanover, 1679–97 (Philip Keppeler, 'Agostino Steffani's Hannover Operas and a Rediscovered Catalogue', in *Studies in Music History: Essays for Oliver Strunk*, ed. Harold Powers (Princeton, 1968), 341–54). Only the titles of two other possibilities—which may have been texts set to music—are known: '*Teleso in Tussia*, favola pastorale. 4<sup>o</sup>' and '*La pastorale mascherata*. 4<sup>o</sup>' (see Peggy Daub, 'Queen Caroline of England's Music Library', in *Music Publishing & Collecting: Essays in Honor of Donald W. Krummel*, ed. David Hunter (Urbana-Champaign, IL, 1994), 153 (no. 56) and 155 (no. 74)). <> Bononcini's respect for Steffani's works had been conveyed to him two decades earlier by Sophie Charlotte, queen of Prussia. In a letter of 25 July 1702 she implied that she served as accompanist whenever she 'asked Bononcini and Attilio [Ariosti] to sing them, because no one else performs them in the correct taste, and they are always full of admiration for him who composed them' ('Je les fais chanter à Bononcini et Atilio, car les autres ne les dissent pas dans le vrai gout et ils sont dans l'admiration toutes les fois pour celui qui les a composés': *D-HVsa* Cal. Br. 23c, Nr. 85, f. 38; cf. Richard Doebner, ed., *Briefe der Königin Sophie Charlotte von Preussen und der Kurfürstin Sophie von Hannover an hannoversche Diplomaten*, Publicationen aus den K. preussischen Staatsarchiven, 79 (Leipzig, 1905), 79, and Timms, *Polymath*, 75–80). <> Between 28 December 1720 and 28 January 1721, Handel's revised *Il Radamisto* and Bononcini's *L'Astarto* were each scheduled for five performances (Avery, *London Stage*, 605–12). *Il Radamisto* was scheduled for 28 and 31 December, then for 4, 21 and 25 January. No other source known to us tells of its dismal reception or of the cancellation of its performance on 4 January 1721, after which *L'Astarto* was revived. <> The amusing references to chess, and especially to checkmate, in this and later letters hark back to the many games that Riva must have played with Bossis during his stays in Hanover in 1719 and 1720.

## 6. Steffani to Riva Hanover, 25 February 1721 [Shrove Tuesday, in Bossis' hand]

I took as a very good omen the consolation of seeing your kind letter of 6 February among the first that I received here after my return, which occurred safely, by the grace of God, last Saturday, despite the inconveniences and dangers of rain, ice and mud, which had made me fear a long and tedious siege at an inn, not to mention in the middle of a road. But enough!

Thank God I am here; but I am still so weary from the journey and so bewildered by the prodigious quantity of letters I have found here, that I hardly know where my head is. Don't be surprised, therefore, if my letter fails perhaps to match yours in tone. I am hoping in a few days' time to wrest my spirit from confusion and then, at greater leisure, to send you the infinite thanks that I owe you for the goodness you continue to harbour for me.

I am pleased that the events which have convulsed not only that kingdom but also, by general consent, the greater part of Europe are beginning to take such a turn [for the better] that one can think seriously about the Congress of Cambrai, which to my mind is a significant omen. Above all, I am pleased by the news of the six million pounds ster[ling], which does not strike me as a bagatelle. But the major consolation was to read 'thank God, I have not lost a penny'.

I will wait patiently for you to tell me what reply you receive from our [friend] Mr. le Bègue . . .

Bononcini, if he wants to do me justice, should rest assured of my esteem and desire to serve him. But the beginning of a pastorale that revealed the [composer's] hand remains a mystery to me—though in no sense a distasteful one. On the contrary, I am infinitely pleased that it gave the king a moment of pleasure. But what I must tell you is that I have received a letter from Dresden [written by Pallavicini], containing the most terrible complaints about a certain long silence from London, which prevents the development of a certain embryo that has now been under consideration for a long time. You should remedy this evil, because you easily can.

I will inform my lord bishop of Würzburg [Count Schönborn] of the trouble you have taken and the difficulties you have encountered, which will cause very little wonder, since they were foreseen from the start. Nevertheless, you should not tire of doing whatever you can to oblige that most noble prince. Above all, don't allow any more of those 'most illustrious' and, into the bargain, those 'most humble and most faithful servants' to escape [from your pen], or you will find yourself burdened with a hundred checkmates by Bossis, who humbly greets you and assures you that I shall remain totally at your disposal so long as I live,

A S [monogram signature]

[f. 5] *Per ottimo augurio ho presa la consolazione di veder arrivar la di Lei gentilissima lettera dei 6. del cadente fra le prime che ho ricevute qui doppo il mio arrivo, che seguì per la grazia di Dio felice sabato scorso, non ostanti gl'incomodi et i pericoli delle acque, dei geli e dei fanghi, che a vicenda mi hanno fatto temere un lungo e noioso assedio sopra qualche osteria per non dire in mezzo ad una strada. Basta!*

*Lode a Dio son qui; ma vi sono ancora tanto stanco dal viaggio e tanto stordito da una prodigiosa quantità di lettere che v'ho trovate, che non so bene dove mi stia la testa. Non si meravigli dunque se questa mia lettera forse non risponde a tuono alla Sua, sperando di cavar fra pochi giorni i miei spiriti dalla confusione et allora poter a più bell'agio [f. 5v] renderLe tutte le grazie infinite che Le devo della bontà ch'Ella continua ad haver per me.*

*Mi rallegro che le cose le quali hanno sconvolto non solo quel regno, ma la maggior parte dell'Europa per consenso, commincino a prender una tal piega che si possa pensar seriamente al*

*Congresso di Cambraia, il che appresso di me è segno significativo. Sopra il tutto m'ha fatto piacere la notizia di quei sei milioni di lire sterline, che non mi pare bagatella: ma la maggior consolazione è stata nel leggere quel 'grazie a Dio non perdo un soldo'.*

*Aspetterò con pazienza ch'Ella possa dirmi qual risposta riceverà dal nostro Monsieur le Bègue . . .*

[f. 6] *Il Signor Bononcino deve se vuol farmi giustizia viver sicuro della mia stima e desiderio di servirlo; ma quel tal principio d'una pastorale di cui si è conosciuta la mano è un'enigma per me, che non ha nondimeno cosa alcuna di disgustevole; anzi mi rallegro infinitamente che il re v'abbia trovato un momento di piacere. Ma quello che devo dirLe è che ho ricevuta una lettera da Dresda, nella quale vi sono atrocissimi lamenti d'un certo lungo silenzio di Londra, per il quale manca il modo di dar forma a un certo embrione che già da molto tempo si è meditato. [f. 6v] Ella rimedii al male, perché facilmente lo può.*

*Renderò conto a Monsignor Vescovo di Erpiboli [Würzburg] degl'incomodi ch'Ella si è dati e delle difficoltà che incontra, che daranno tanto minor meraviglia, che da principio sono state prevedute. Ella però non si stanchi di fare quello che può per obbligare quel gentilissimo Principe; sopra il tutto non si lasci più scappare quegl'illustrissimi e sopra il mercato quelli umilissimi e fedelissimi servitori a pena di vedersi caricata di cento scacchi matti del Bossis, che La riverisce umilmente e L'assicura che io sarò finché vivo a di Lei assoluta disposizione,*

A S [monogram signature]

The letter from Dresden is no. 4A, above.

## 7. Riva to Steffani

London, 21 March 1721 [Friday]

Since your most illustrious lordship does not want me to use 'm. i.', so be it. Let us therefore proceed plainly, or, to put it better, as you wish. This, my irreverent folio, serves as a reply to your very kind letter of 25 February, to which I have been unable to respond before now. Another person would say that the reason is work, which has not allowed me time to fulfil other duties; but let truth be told, which is that I have been distracted by the demands of genial, legal and honest diversions, and, except for the discipline of the well [water], I now treat myself as I always treat you.

I am pleased that you have arrived safely in Hanover, and I share some of the consolation that all our good friends must have had. I can imagine our Abbot Mauro liberated from the rat disease [*male di ratto*]. I wanted to write *de la [ratta]* because rat was [once] a feminine noun. I have not completely forgotten my Italian. As a result of your return, I owe you replies to two of your very dear letters. I will pay my debt as soon as possible; meanwhile, I have made good use of the Aganippe fragments that you sent me, which have been welcomed by everyone.

After the death of Mylord Stanhope [4 February] and Mr Craggs [16 February]—one the head, the other the arms of the ministerial cabinet—the soul, Mylord Sunderland, was incapacitated by affliction and rendered incapable of fulfilling his duties. This gave scope for Townshend and Walpole to intervene . . . Mylord Carteret, his [Sunderland's] creature, has been made secretary of state, and I believe that His Majesty will have full confidence in him, so that it could be that the spirit of Sunderland will continue to govern. One has to know how to play chess well in order to avoid being checkmated.

Our [friend] Marquis Nomis has an extremely detailed letter concerning the affairs of the South Sea Company. You will see it, so I will not weary you here with a useless report on such matters. I beg (what the devil: how can I manage without saying 'your m. i. lordship') your m. i. lordship, therefore, to convey my greetings to him and to the most serene



marchioness. Do you or do you not wish to honour me with any of your orders in this land? I am entirely at your disposal, as I should like to prove.

As for the well-known embryo, to give form to which those in Dresden were awaiting information from me, I say to you in this folio that things are now going just as badly as they had begun well. The malignant spirit of parties, which is so natural to the English mind, has been introduced into the [Royal] Academy of Music, with the result that at present things are going sideways, and there is everything but harmony. It is not yet known whether Senesino will stay; Berselli is ill in the country; Durastanti has given birth; Bononcini either laughs or gets angry when he sees how absurdly things are arranged, and thus these affairs are in total disarray, like everything else. If they should ever be reformed, I shall not fail to give you immediately the account that you desire.

Keep me in your revered grace. Convey my respects to Marquis Nomis (oh, I have said this once already, but that does not matter, because I could never say it often enough to suffice), to my revered Abbot Mauro, to Bossis, a terrible chess-player whom I esteem less than a fig (how fine it is to play the 'bravo' from afar), and to the rest of my good patrons and friends. Write and tell me whether Baron Bernstorff will return to see Albion again.

I am with the usual respect,  
Your most humble and obsequious servant,  
Riva

[f. 26] *Giacché Vostra Signoria Illustrissima non vuole l'illustrissima, fiat. Andiamo dunque alla buona, o per meglio dire, com'Ella comanda. Questo mio irreverito foglio serve di risposta al suo gentilissimo delli 25 febbraio, cui prima d'ora non ho potuto rispondere. Un altro direbbe per occupazioni, che non gli hanno lasciato tempo di compire al suo dovere; ma viva la verità, perché mi son trovato distratto da incombenze di divertimenti geniali, leciti ed onesti, et salvo iure putei, ora sono a me, come lo sono sempre a Lei.*

Mi rallegro del suo felice arrivo a Hannover, ed entro a parte della consolazione che ne avranno avuta tutti i nostri buoni amici. Mi par di vedere il nostro Signor Abate Mauro liberato dal male di ratto. Ho voluto dire *de la* perch'è femminile. Non mi son dimenticato affatto l'italiano. Per lo ritorno di Lei sono debitore di riposta a due Sue carissime lettere. Pagherò il mio debito quanto prima, ed intanto ho fatto buon'uso de' Suoi Parti Aganippe da Lei mandatemi, che sono stati [f. 26v] ben ricevuti da tutto il mondo.

Dopo la morte di Mylord Stanhope e di Monsieur Craggs, l'uno la testa e l'altro il braccio del ministero, l'anima, che n'è Mylord Sunderland, essendosi per l'afflizione resa incapace d'ogni ufizio, ha dato campo a Tonshend ed a Walpool di subentrare . . . Mylord Carteret, sua creatura, è fatto segretario di stato, e credo che Sua Maestà avrà tutta la confidenza in esso, in modocché potrebb'essere che lo spirito di Sunderland continuasse a governare. Quanto gli giova saper [f. 27] ben giocare a scacco per non ricevere il matto.

Il nostro Signor Marchese Nomis ha una lettera esatissima, come lui è degli affari della Compagnia del Sud. Ella la vede, onde non La stanco qui con una inutile relazione di quelle cose. Supplico (che diavolo: come fare a non dire V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup>) V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> dunque a ricordare a lui, ed alla signora marchesa sua i miei rispetti. Ma vuole o non vuole Ella onorarmi di qualche suo comando in questo paese? Sono intieramente alla Sua disposizione, onde ne farei la prova.

Per l'embrione consaputo, per dar forma al quale si aspettavano in Dresda mie informazioni, dico a Lei in questo foglio, che le cose vanno al presente così male, come avevano cominciato bene. Si è introdotto lo spirito maligno de' partiti, ch'è tanto naturale al genio inglese, nell'accademia di musica, in modocché al presente le cose vanno allo traverso e vi è tutt'altro che [f. 27v] armonia. Non si sa ancora se

Senesino resterà; Berselli è in campagna malato, la Durastante ha partorito; Bononcino ora ride, ora s'adira, veggendo ordinarsi spropositi, e così le cose sono alla immitazione di tutte le altre, in un sommo disordine. Se prendessero mai buona forma, io non mancherò di dare a Lei subito la relazione che si desidera.

Ella mi continui la riverita sua grazia. I miei rispetti al Signor Marchese Nomis (oh, l'ho detto un'altra volta, ma non importa, perché nol potrei mai dir tanto spesso che fosse abbastanza), al Signor Abate Mauro mio riverito, al Signor Bossis, terribile scacchista che io non stimo un fico (che bel fare il bravo a lungo), ed al resto de' miei buoni padroni et amici. Mi scriva se il Signor Baron Bernstorff ritornerà a rivedere Albione.

Sono col solito rispetto,

Servitore umilissimo ossequiosissimo,  
Riva

The Italian text of paragraph 5 was printed in Timms, 'Music and Musicians', 33. <> The 'discipline of the well', mentioned at the end of the first paragraph, means that Riva was temporarily abstaining from alcohol. He confirmed this on 7 October 1721, when he stated that he had kept his 'muzzle dry' for two years (see no. 19, below). <> Mauro and Nomis are identified in letters L and P, above, respectively. <> The Aganippe was a fountain on Mount Helicon sacred to the Muses, which gave poetic inspiration or poetic power or method (*Oxford English Dictionary*). The 'parti aganippe' sent by Steffani were presumably words of wisdom that Riva found in his letters. <> James Stanhope, first Earl Stanhope (1673–1721), was a secretary of state for George I in 1714–21; he and Sunderland controlled the cabinet from 1717 to 1720 (*DNB*, xviii, 901–6; Jeremy Gregory and John Stevenson, *The Longman Companion to Britain in the Eighteenth Century, 1688–1820* (London, 2000), 46–8 and 439–40). James Craggs, the younger (1686–1721), was a secretary of state from 1718 to 1721 (*DNB*, iv, 1365–6; Gregory and Stevenson, *Longman Companion*, 47 and 71). Charles Spencer, third Earl of Sunderland (1674–1722), was already a secretary of state in 1706–10; under George I he ousted Townshend to become a secretary of state in 1717 and was promoted to First Lord of the Treasury in 1718; Walpole removed him after the South Sea Bubble burst in 1720 (*DNB*, xviii, 751–7; Gregory and Stevenson, *Longman Companion*, 44, 47–8 and 439). Charles, second Viscount Townshend (1674–1738), who married Robert Walpole's sister Dorothy in 1713, was appointed a secretary of state in 1714, resigned his post in 1717, was again named a secretary of state in 1721, and resigned in 1730 (*DNB*, xix, 1036–44; Gregory and Stevenson, *Longman Companion*, 46, 49 and 444). Robert Walpole (1676–1745) became First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer in April 1721 (*DNB*, xx, 635–64; Gregory and Stevenson, *Longman Companion*, 48). 'He helped save the government and the Hanoverian dynasty in 1720–1 during the aftermath of the South Sea Bubble. Walpole's rise to power was greatly helped by the fortuitous deaths and removal from office of his major rivals, and by his management of the Atterbury plot, which allowed him to use the Jacobite threat to consolidate his power base, and enabled him to accuse his opponents of being Jacobites. His control of the patronage system and his use of the House of Commons as the centre of political power, marked by his refusal to accept a peerage in 1723, contributed to his maintenance of office' (Gregory and Stevenson, *Longman Companion*, 447). <> The omitted portion contains further discussion of political affairs, including the fact that [John] Aislabe (1670–1742), Chancellor of the Exchequer, had been imprisoned in the Tower (*DNB*, i, 203–4; Gregory and Stevenson, *Longman Companion*, 14–15, 47 and 72). <> John Carteret (1690–1763), later Earl Granville, was appointed secretary of state in 1721 and named Lord Lieutenant of Ireland by Walpole (who thus removed him from the centre of power) in 1724 (*DNB*, iii, 1119–24; Gregory and Stevenson, *Longman Companion*, 49 and 379). <> The Hanoverian minister Baron [Andreas Gottlieb von] Bernstorff (1649–1726) apparently began his diplomatic service in 1677 (Bittner and Groß, *Repertorium*, 86–7 and 377;

Hausmann, *Repertorium*, 445; and Ragnhild M. Hatton, 'New Light on George I of Great Britain', in *England's Rise to Greatness, 1660–1763*, ed. Stephen B. Baxter (Berkeley, 1983), 224).

### 8. Steffani to Riva

Hanover, 4 April 1721 [Friday, in Bossis' hand]

If I did not reply last Tuesday to your most courteous letter of 21 March, I ascribe this to two perfectly valid reasons—one to do with time, of which I was short, the other with my health, which becomes very shaky at this change of season. I tell you this to prevent you from thinking, as a result of this little delay, that I intended to take revenge for your long silence—which you richly deserve, if for no other reason than the persistence of superlatives, as much in the body as in the signature appended to your letter. If you do not correct this immediately, I am determined to fill half a dozen folios of paper with most illustriouses, most humbles, most obsequiouses and as many mosts ['-issimi'] as I can find, to make you spend £10 or £12 in postage.

I thank you beyond measure for the news that you send me and implore you, if it is no trouble to you, to continue the practice, for, to speak frankly, I do not greatly value circular letters, supposing England to be no different from other parts of the world, where commendable care is taken to write down only what one wants others elsewhere to believe. If I tell you that I am not displeased by the case of Mylord Sunderland, I would lie, since I confess that I found him so reasonable on certain quite prickly subjects that he entirely conquered me. I therefore rejoice to hear that, according to your description, Mylord Carteret has the same outlook as his predecessor, since here there are doubters . . . .

I am sorry to hear that musical affairs there are in disarray. Since I want no one to doubt the good will of Piva, it would not be a bad thing if you replied to [Pallavicini in] Dresden about the well-known embryo. You most kindly request commissions from me. Rest assured that, when the opportunity arises, I shall avail myself of your good will without abusing it.

If you want a long litany of the friends who greet you, I shall give you one, but on this occasion you must be content when I tell you that everyone does, without naming anyone but Bossis, who is greatly offended by your declaration that he's not worth a fig and that you won't address him until after a series of checkmates. I wish that were tomorrow, in order to have the honour of embracing you and letting you know of my desire to serve you.

A S [monogram signature]

[f. 7] *Se non risposi martedì scorso alla Sua cortesissima delli 21. del passato, lo ascriva a due cause pur troppo vevoli, una del tempo che me ne mancò, e l'altra della salute che non poco in questa mutatione della stagione vacilla; glielo dico affinché non creda in questa picciola dilatione qualche motivo di vendetta del Suo lungo silentio, tutto che lo meriterebbe abbondantemente, quando non fosse per altra causa per la ostinatione di quei superlativi tanto in corpo di lettera quanto nella sottoscrizione, di modo che quando Ella prontamente non se ne corregga, io son risoluto di empire una mezza dozzina di fogli di carta d'illustrissimi, umilissimi, ossequiosissimi, e quanti issimi potrò mai trovare per farLe spendere dieci o dodici lire sterline in porto di lettere.*

Io La ringrazio infinitamente delle nuove che mi comunica, e se non gl'è d'incomodo La prego continuarme, perché a dirglieLa schiettamente io non faccio gran caso dei biglietti circolari, [f. 7v] supponendo che l'Inghilterra non sia differente dalle altre parti del mondo, ove si ha lodevol cura di far che si scriva ciò che si brama che altrove si creda. Se io Le dicessi che non mi dispiaccia il caso di Milord Sunderland, mentirei, confessandoLe che l'ho trovato tanto ragionevole sopra certe materie per altro spinose ch'egli m'aveva intieramente vincolato. Goderò dunque di sentire che Milord Carteret sia a riguardo dell'altro, quale Ella me lo dipinge, ma qui v'è chi ne dubita . . .

[f. 8v] *Che le cose della musica siano sconcertate costì me ne dispiace; ma come non vorrei che si dubitasse della buona volontà del Piva, non sarebbe male che si rispondesse a Dresda sopra l'embrione consaputo. Ella poi troppo gentilmente mi domanda commissioni, sia sicura che alle occasioni mi prevalerò della Sua bontà senz'abusarne.*

*S'Ella vuole una lunga litania degl'amici che La riverisce, glieLa farò, ma per questa volta si contenti che Le dico che sono tutti senza nominar altri che Bossis, che s'è offeso infinitamente della dichiarazione di non essere stimato un ficco e non lo digerirà se non dopo una serie di scacchi matti. Io vorrei che fosse domani per haver l'honore di abbracciarLa e di farLe conoscer il desiderio che ho di ubbidirLa.*

A S [monogram signature]

Steffani presumably knew that Sunderland's 'affliction' (see no. 7, above) was that Walpole had forced him to resign his post after he had been (unjustly) accused of accepting a bribe of £50,000 in South Sea stock (Hatton, *George I*, 160, 251–6). <> The omitted passage concerns Steffani's fear of a new imbroglio at Hanover, where the regent was Friedrich Ludwig (1707–51), grandson of George I and, since 1716, duke of Gloucester. The Jewish brothers Gumpert and Isaak Berens, who were the Oberhoffaktors (bankers and agents) for the Hanoverian court, were bankrupt. Having fled on the very day that payments to a large number of people were due, they had been arrested at Steyerwald, near Hildesheim. Their grandfather, Elieser Leffmann Berens (1634–1714), had founded the Behrens-Cohen banking family (Hatton, *George I*, 94, and Heinrich Schnee, 'Der Hof- und Kammeragent Leffmann Behrens als Hoffinanzier der Welfen: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Beziehungen zwischen jüdischer Hochfinanz und modernem Staat. Nach archivalischen Quellen', *Niedersächsisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte*, 23 (1951), 116–57). <> The 'well-known embryo' was presumably *Tassilone*.

### 9. Steffani to Riva

Hanover, 18 April 1721 [Friday, in Bossis' hand]

Since, with unparalleled kindness, you request and desire commissions, I shall now give you one. I have an agent in Rome named Abbot Giovanni Troisio, of whose ability, application and interventions at that rather difficult court I and various of my friends have remarkable proof. This man wishes to enter the service of the court of Lorraine . . .

I also hope that you will not forget entirely my willingness to serve, and that you will keep it in use by means of your honourable commands, accompanied now and then by some news of that country, since it is from your reports that I seem to gain the best insight into the current affairs of the world. Above all, I am waiting impatiently for news about whether they are thinking of proroguing Parliament, or whether difficulties will render that impossible. In sum, I do not yet see a ray of hope for the calm that all peaceable spirits desire.

Preserve your most precious affection for me and consider unalterable the lively desire that I harbour to obey you.

A S [monogram signature]

[P. S.] Bossis assures you of his most devoted respect and is getting worse at chess than he was before.

[f. 9] *Poich'Ella con una gentilezza senza pari domanda e vuole commissioni, eccogliene una. Io ho un agente in Rome che si chiama il Signor Abbate Giovanni Troisio, della di cui capacità, attenzione et entrate in quella corte così difficile io e diversi amici miei abbiamo sperimenti assai riguardevoli. Questo desidera entrare al servizio della corte di Lorena . . .*

[f. 10] Io mi lusingo poi ch'Ella non si dimenticherà affatto della mia servitù, e vorrà tenerla in esercizio con l'honore de' suoi comandi, accompagnati di quando in quando di qualche nuova di quel paese, poiché pare che da quelle si possano cavare i migliori lumi delle presenti cose del mondo. Sopra tutto io sto con impatienza aspettando se si pensi a prorogar il Parlamento o pure se le difficoltà lo renda impossibile. In somma io non vedo ancora barlume di quel sereno chi desiderano tutti quelli che hanno li spi-[f. 10v]riti pacifici.

Ella mi conservi il suo pretiosissimo affetto e creda inalterabile il vivo desiderio che nutro di ubbidirLa.

A S [monogram signature]

[P. S.] Il Bossis L'assicura de suoi più divoti rispetti e diventa a scacchi più cattivo di prima.

In the omitted passage Steffani reports that he has already asked George I to recommend to the duke of Lorraine that the latter appoint Troisio as his agent in Rome in succession to St Urbain, an appointment that would cost Lorraine nothing. The king has had Count [Hans Kaspar von] Bothmer (1666–1732) speak to Baron [Bertram von] Schack, the London minister for Lorraine (Hatton, *George I*, 410, and Hausmann, *Repertorium*, 206), with whom Steffani assumes that Riva, given his friendship with le Bègue, is acquainted. Steffani therefore asks Riva to speak to Schack about Troisio. St Urbain served as the Roman agent for Lorraine in at least 1705–7 (Bittner and Groß, *Repertorium*, 289). Schack represented Hanover on a mission to Denmark in 1715 and represented Tsar Peter the Great on missions to London in 1715–16 and 1722–3 (Hatton, *George I*, 410, and Hausmann, *Repertorium*, 319–20, 442 and 484).

#### 10. Riva to Steffani

London, 2 May 1721 [Friday]

In fulfilment of your most esteemed orders I have spoken to Baron Schack about the packet sent by you to His Majesty [George I]. Count Bothmer had already spoken to him, and he [Schack] had written; but the latter has renewed his entreaties to the duke [of Lorraine], his patron, because, having spoken with me, he believes—and says he knows for certain—that petitions come to His Majesty from Countess Platen . . . I have also written to Count le Bègue that he should promote the affair and facilitate it.

Masculine he is [William Augustus, duke of Cumberland, born 26 April 1721 N. S.], and he has a healthy appearance; one could wish for nothing more. Mademoiselle Gemingh did me the honour of secretly showing him to me. The news reached the king when he was at the opera, and since the theatre was full there was a most delightful din of voices and hands, applauding the good news. The royal princess [Caroline] is doing very well.

The Royal Academy of Music has succeeded in becoming a kind of South Sea Company. Everything went marvellously well at the beginning, but as it progressed the devil entered and sowed discord among the singers, subscribers and directors. The parties have started making insulting remarks to each other, and everyone has been carried away by mad passion. If people with a little prudence had not found a remedy on Wednesday, the curtain would have come down, or even worse things could have happened in the presence of His Majesty and the Prince [of Wales], who were at the opera. Now it seems as if they wish to remedy the harm already done, but it is difficult to return a river to its first bed when its course has been interrupted. Oh dear and adored English! What a capricious and fickle nation.

Here, matters of greater consequence than the opera—those of commerce and the public interest—are still going badly. All this week Parliament has been occupied with reading

lamentations from nearly all the cities of the three kingdoms [England, Scotland and Ireland], which groan because of the misery in which they find themselves, owing to the infamous administrations of past directors, and call in a loud voice for justice. The peasants shout, and the peasants pay.

My regards to my dear reverend Abbot [Mauro], to the Marquis and Marchioness Nomis, and to all my other good patrons and friends.

I am the most eager slave of my Signor Bossis. I am with the usual deference,

Your Riva

[f. 44] In esecuzione degli ordini di Lei riveritissimi ho parlato al Baron Schack per lo pacco mandato da Lei a Sua Maestà. Il Signor Conte di Bothmar gli ha già parlato, ed egli avea scritto; ma ha rinovate le premure al duca suo padrone dopo che avendo meco discorso ha creduto e dice di saperlo di certo che le istanze vengono a S. M. dalla Signora Contessa di Platen . . . [f. 44v] Ho scritto anche al Conte le Bègue, perché dia moto all'affare e lo faciliti.

Maschio egli è stato, ed ha un'aria di prosperità; che non si può desiderar di più. Mademoiselle Gemingh mi ha fatto l'onore di farmelo segretamente vedere. Giunse la nuova al re, ch'era all'opera, e siccome il teatro era pieno, così vi fu un gustoso rumore di voci e di mani, che applaudirono alla buona nuova. La real principessa sta benissimo.

L'Accademia di Musica è riuscita una specie di Compagnia del Sud. Tutto andava a meraviglia nel principio, ma nel progresso vi è entrato il diavolo, che ha messo la discordia tra' cantori e tra i sottoscriventi [f. 45] e direttori. Si sono cominciate insolenze da una parte e dall'altra, secondo che ogni uno era portato dalla pazza passione; e se mercordì non vi si metterà remedio da gente qualche poco savia, si calerà la tenda, o seguirà ancor peggio in presenza di S. M. e del Principe Reale, ch'erano all'opera. Ora pare che si voglia rimediare al male già fatto, ma è difficile di rimettere il fiume nel suo primo letto quando se gli è interrotto il corso. Oh cari ed adorati inglesi! Che capricciosa ed incostante nazione.

Qui le cose di maggior conseguenza di quelle dell'opera, che sono quelle del commercio ed interesse pubblico, vanno sempre male. In tutta questa settimana [f. 45v] il Parlamento è stato occupato a leggere le nenie di quasi tutte le città de' tre regni, che gridano per la miseria in cui si trovano per l'infame amministrazione dei passati direttori, e chiedono ad alta voce giustizia. Vilan grida, e vilan paga, &c.

I miei rispetti al mio reverendissimo Signor Abate, al Signor Marchese ed alla Signora Marchesina Nomis, ed a tutti gli altri miei buoni padroni & amici.

Schiavo acutissimo al mio Signor Bossis. Sono col solito ossequio,

Il Suo Riva

Countess Sophie Caroline von Platen (1669–1726), a Roman Catholic, was rumoured to be one of George I's mistresses (Hatton, *George I*, 135 and 137). <> William Augustus, duke of Cumberland, was the third son (though only the second to survive infancy) of Caroline (1683–1737), princess of Wales; that Riva was allowed to see the baby is presumably a sign of his influence or standing at court. Ms. Gemingh (Geninges) was presumably a lady-in-waiting in 1721. <> Riva's letter (2/13 May 1721) refers to a Wednesday performance attended by the king and the prince of Wales; this was presumably that of the pasticcio *Muzio Scevola* on 3 May, when the king is known to have been present (Avery, *London Stage*, 627). Neither he nor the prince is known to have been present for the revival of *Arsace* on 10 May 1721.



## 11. Steffani to Riva

Hanover, 13 May 1721 [Tuesday, in Bossis' hand]

Great is the debt I must owe you for the strenuous conversation you have had with Baron Schack, but even greater is that which I feel for the most obliging attention you have shown in writing to Count le Bègue [about Abbot Troisio] . . . You did very well, then, to leave the said Schack with the advantageous impression that the transaction that means so much to me was recommended by Countess Platen. I imagine that if I asked her to do this, she would do it wholeheartedly. Of you it might be said: 'He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak' [*Mark* vii. 37].

When news of the successful delivery of the princess royal [Caroline, princess of Wales] reached here, there was an accident—though everything that happens by accident still has a particular meaning. The happy news arrived during the singing of High Mass in our church, and the order was immediately given that, when Mass was finished, there should be a solemn *Te Deum*. Just as the sacred hymn was being intoned, the first volley was fired from the cannon on the ramparts, so it seemed as if our small [Catholic] bell-towers had given the signal [to the Lutheran military].

I am sorry that the Academy of Music has degenerated into a kind of South Sea Company, and it grieves me more that, for this reason, Piva cannot think well of it; for if the essence of music is harmony, there can be no music where there is discord. I should like to hope, nevertheless, that self-interest will restore unity among the singers, so long as that of the subscribers does not prevent it.

Here we are wondering how commercial affairs are going to recover . . .

Marquis Nomis and Abbot Mauro are very sensible of the honour you do in remembering them. Bossis greets you, but not as warmly as last year, because he now and again checkmates the marquis, and a bar separates equals, if you know what I mean. Continue to regard me with the favour of your precious benevolence, and I assure you of my inviolable desire to serve you,

A S [monogram signature]

[f. 11] *Grand'è l'obbligazione che io devo professarLe per la nervosa parlata che ha fatta al Signor Baron Schack; ma più grande ancora è quella che risento della obbligantissima attenzione che ha havuta di scrivere al Signor Conte Bègue . . . Ella ha poi fatta benissimo di lasciare il predetto Signor Barone Schack nella [f. 11v] vantaggiosa opinione che la Signora Contessa di Platten habbia raccomandato il negozio che a me tanto preme, lusingandomi che se io ne la pregassi, lo farebbe con tutto cuore. Un altro Le direbbe qui: 'Bene omnia fecit, et surdos fecit audire et mutos loqui' . . .*

*Capitò qui la nuova del felice parto della principessa reale e successe un caso: che tutto che sia caso non lascia però d'haver qualche cosa di particolare. Giunse la felice nuova nel mentre che nella nostra chiesa si cantava la Messa grande, e fu dato subito [f. 12] un ordine che, finita la Messa, s'intonasse solennemente il Te Deum. Ciò fu fatto, e giusto nel punto che s'intonò l'hinno sacro si diede fuoco alla prima salve del canone del ramparo, come se dai nostri semi-campanili se ne fosse dato il segnale.*

*Mi dispiace poi che cotesta Academia di Musica sia riuscita una specie di Compagnia del Sud, e più mi duole che a questa causa il Piva non potrà haver buona opinione di quella Academia, poiché se l'essenza della musica è l'armonia, ove è discordia non vi puol esser musica; voglio però sperare che il proprio interesse rimetterà la unione fra i cantori, purché quello dei sottoscrittenti non la impedisca.*

*Qui stiamo a vedere per quale strada si rimetteranno le cose del commercio . . .*

[f. 12v] *Il Signor Marchese di Nomis et il Signor Abbate Mauro sono sensibilissimi all'honore della di Lei memoria. Bossis poi La riverisce, ma non così profondamente che l'anno passato, perché il dar di quando in quando qualche scacco matto al Signor Marchese [?Nomis] e del pari fa alzar un pola, se La*

*m'intende. Mi continui il vantaggio della Sua pretiosa benevolenza e S'assicuri del inviolabile desiderio di servirLa,*

A S [monogram signature]

The church mentioned in the second paragraph was St Clement's. Steffani had been responsible, as Apostolic Vicar of North Germany, for both its construction and its consecration (1709–18). The first Catholic church built in Hanover since the Reformation, it was modelled on such Venetian examples as the Redentore and Santa Maria della Salute (Hans Haug, 'Die Propsteikirche zu Sankt Clemens. Ein venezianischer Kirchenbau in Hannover', *Hannoversche Geschichtsblätter*, 21 (1918), 404–31). <> In the second omitted passage Steffani observes that [John] Law, who is undoubtedly 'il fonte' ('the source') of the current financial disorder, now and then sells diamonds in Venice, where he died in 1729. No less worrying than the sufferings caused by commercial disasters are the movements of Turkish and Russian troops, whose targets are unknown. As for the conclave, few cardinals 'non pretendino con ragione alla tiara' ('do not aspire, with reason, to the crown'). Five days before Steffani wrote this letter, the long and contentious conclave had ended with the election of Michelangelo dei Conti (1655–1724), who became Pope Innocent XIII.

## 12. Riva to Steffani

London, 19 June 1721 [Thursday]

I have your latest, most revered folio, dated 30 May. I have delayed responding to it longer than I should have, because I wanted first to see Baron Schack, who was in the country, and to hear his reliable report on the affair of Abbot Troisio. Here, in the enclosed letter, is as much as I managed to learn. You will see that it consists of vague promises relating to the future . . .

If we are to believe the rumour that has been circulating here for a week, namely, that this year the king will again travel to Hanover, I should hope to have the consolation of greeting you in person and seeing again my good friends in that land. But, between you and me, I believe that this time there will only be wishful thinking, because present circumstances will not allow His Majesty to get away.

I have had the honour, thanks to Mademoiselle Gering, to see the new-born mini-prince (as he is called by van Ghelen, printer of the Italian newsletter in Vienna). Oh, what a fine baby, and, even more important, what a flourishing mien. The prince of Wales has been somewhat inconvenienced by a slight case of diarrhoea, but is now very well; and the royal princess also enjoys excellent health.

Affairs here are still going from bad to worse . . . Here is the arithmetic proof. The shares of the South Sea Company are at 110, that's one hundred and ten, so that there's no mistake. Even though good news has arrived from Spain, in that its king [Philip V, ruled 1700–46] has granted the Company the usual permission to trade in South America, there is fear, even panic.

The Academy of Music is deteriorating into a kind of South Sea Company. The fondness for parties, which is characteristic of this nation, and the gossiping about 'singercicos' (may the Crusca pardon this liberty), which is an original sin of the profession, have brought things to a state of collapse. Bononcini is coping well. He has composed the last opera to be given this year, entitled *Il Ciro*, which is a heavenly piece. If I come there [to Hanover], I will bring some of the arias with me.

I beg you to convey my greetings to our abbot [Mauro] and to Marquis Nomis, and to render them infinite thanks in my name for their continued memory of me. If you happen to

see Baron Bernstorff or Görtz, I ask you to do the same for them. I give a hug to my very kind Bossis, and I am with veneration equal to my obligation,

Your most humble servant, R

[f. 35] [H]o delli 30 maggio passato l'ultimo suo riverito foglio, cui ho tardato a rispondere più di quel che dovea, perché ho prima voluto vedere il Baron Schack, ch'era in campagna, ed avere da lui le nuove più certe dell'affare del Signor Abbate Troisio. Ecco però nell'inchiuso biglietto quanto mi è accaduto di sapere. Ella vede che sono promesse vaghe, che si parla dell'avvenire . . .

Se dovessimo credere alla voce che costante corre da una settimana in qua, che il re farà ancor quest'anno [f. 35v] una scorsa a Anovera, io spererei d'aver la consolazione di riverirLa in persona e di rivedere i miei buoni amici di codesto paese. Ma per dirla fra di noi, credo che per questa volta non vi sarà che la buona volontà, perché le congiunture presenti non permetteranno l'allontanamento di Sua Maestà.

Ho avuto l'onore per mezzo di Mademoiselle Geming di vedere il principino neo-nato (dice il Vangelen, stampatore degli avvisi italiani in Vienna). Oh che bel bambino, e quel che più importa, che cera di prosperità. Il signor principe di Galles è stato un poco incomodato da un picciol corso di ventre, ma ora sta benissimo, ed ottima salute gode pure la real principessa.

Gli affari qui sempre vanno di male in peggio . . . [f. 36] Eccone la pruova aritmetica. Le azioni della Compagnia del Sud sono a 110—cento dieci, perch'Ella non sbagliasse. Nonostante che sieno venute buone nuove di Spagna toccante il commercio, e che quel re abbia accordata alla compagnia la solita cedola per poter commerciare nell'America meridionale, timor, panico.

L'Accademia di Musica si riduce ad una specie di Compagnia del Sud. Il genio de' partiti, proprio di questa nazione, ed il petegolismo cantatrico (la Crusca perdona la libertà), peccato originale della professione, hanno dato il tracolo alle cose. Bononcino se la passa bene; ha messa in musica l'ultima opera che si reciterà quest'anno intitolata Il Ciro, ch'è un pezzo di Paradiso. Se verrò meco ne porterò alcune arie.

[f. 36v] La supplico di ricordare il mio rispetto al Signor Abbate nostro ed al Signor Marchese Nomis, rendendo loro in mio nome grazie infinite della memoria che conservano per me. In occasione ch'Ella vedrà i Signori Baron di Bernestroff e Görtz, La supplico di compir pure per me a questa parta. Un abbraccio do al mio gentilissimo Signor Bosis, e sono con venerazione eguale all'obbligo,

Il Suo umilissimo servitore, R

The Italian text of paragraph 5 was printed in Timms, 'Music and Musicians', 33. <> The 'enclosed letter', written by Baron Schack on 5 (5/16?) June 1721, is extant on f. 37. <> In the first omitted passage Riva discusses further problems in the quest for a position for Troisio. <> As Riva predicted, the projected visit to Hanover in the summer of 1721 did not occur. <> Riva may have forgotten that he had described his visit to the 'principino neo-nato' in his previous letter; if he did remember, he must have regarded it as a privilege that deserved reiteration. <> The Accademia della Crusca, founded in Florence in 1583, was dedicated to restoring and preserving the purity of the Italian language. <> South Sea stock had opened at 830 in mid-1720; by early November it had fallen to 135. 'The economic confusion of the last three months of 1720 has perhaps no parallel in the history of England. A tangle of ruined credit sprawled over the country like a vast, overgrown beanstalk, withering' (Carswell, *South Sea Bubble*, 171–205, especially 191). Riva's figure of 110 for South Sea stock means that it remained at its nadir until at least mid-1721. <> *L'Odio e l'Amore* (also called *Il Ciro*) received eight performances between 20/31 May and the end of the season on 1/12 July 1721 (Avery, *London Stage*, 630–4). <> Friedrich Wilhelm von Schlitz (1647–1728), known as Görtz, served as George I's chief minister in Hanover after 1714 (*Neue Deutsche Biographie*, herausgegeben von der Historischen

Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin, 1953–), vi, 536; Hatton, *George I*, 163–4 and 397; and *idem*, 'New Light', 225–6).

### 13. Steffani to Riva

Hanover, 8 July 1721 [Tuesday, in Bossis' hand]

The case you made to Baron Schack on behalf of Abbot Troisio, mentioned in your most welcome letter of 19 June, has worked wonders . . . Since the king of England warmly recommended the same person, the duke of Lorraine resolved: let it be as requested. From this you will understand that the accorded grace is without doubt the result of the argument you advanced, wherefore the obligations that I profess to you are infinite.

When I received from you the happy news that I could hope for the great pleasure of embracing you here, other letters of the same date informed me that the king was so busy with negotiations that he could not even think of enjoying the country air that His Majesty needed, so the situation is a little different from what I had hoped. You will understand from my good will, which you know very well, how much it grieves me that affairs are not yet taking the necessary turn. Your arithmetic proof could not be more correct, but I should like you to add the geometric one, making me somehow speculate secretly on who could be the source of the rather sudden docility of Spain.

That the Academy of Music should have been riven by dissension is understandable, because a company of virtuosos is almost the same as a convent of brothers. I rejoice, however, that our Bononcini is the rock in that turbulent sea, and ask you to greet him for me.

Your compliments have been given to everyone [in Hanover] except the president [Görtz], who has been on his estate at Schlitz for some weeks. Everyone [here] sends you a sack [of regards], but the fullest is that from Bossis, who is fretting because, having at length had the honour of checkmating Marquis Nomis from time to time, he would hope to obtain the same satisfaction from you. If you find my letter a little laconic, do not be surprised, because I am taking the waters. Rest assured in every way that nothing equals the true devotion with which I desire to have opportunities to obey your wishes.

A S [monogram signature]

[f. 13] L'articolo ch'Ella ha steso al Signor Barone Schack in favore dell'Abbate Troisio, com'Ella m'accennò nella Sua favoritissima delli 19. del passato, ha fatto miracoli . . . Che il re d'Inghilterra havendo fatta caldamente raccomandare la stessa persona, il Signor duca di Lorena aveva presa la risoluzione del fiat ut petitur. Da questo Ella comprenda che la grazia è senza dubbio opera della replica dettata da Lei, onde le obbligazioni che gliene devo professare sono infinite.

Nello stesso tempo che ricevei da Lei la fausta nuova che si potrebbe sperare il sommo [f. 13v] contento di abbracciarLa qui, altre lettere della stessa data mi dicevano che i negozii occupavano talmente il re che non poteva pensare ne pure a goder l'aria della campagna, di cui però la Maestà Sua avrebbe bisogno, onde la cosa mio malgrado è un poco differente. Quanto mi dolga che gl'affari non prendano ancora la piega che sarebbe necessaria, Ella il raccolga dal mio buon cuore che tanto L'è noto. La sua prova aritmetica non può essere più giusta. Ma desiderarei ch'Ella v'aggiungesse la geometrica, facendomi in qualche modo specolare a spalle di chi possa essere una così repentina docilità della Spagna.

Che l'Accademia di Musica sia caduta in dissensioni è cosa ordinaria, poiché una compagnia di virtuosi et un convento di frati sono appresso a poco la stessa cosa. Mi rallegro però che il nostro Signor Bononcini sia lo scoglio di quel mare agitato, e La prego di riverirlo per parte [f. 14] mia.

Li Suoi complimenti sono fatti da pertutto eccetto al Signor Presidente, il quale si trova alla sua terra di Schlitz da qualche settimana in qua. Ogn'uno gliene rende un sacco; ma il più pieno è quello del

**Bossis, che si tapina perché hormai havendo l'honore di dare al Signor Marchese Nomis di quando in quando qualche scacco matto del pari, spererebbe d'haver la stessa sodisfazione con Lei. Se in questa mia lettera Ella trova un poco di laconismo, non se ne meravigli, perché prendo le acque. Creda in ogni maniera che non v'è cosa che uguagli la vera divotione con cui desidero le occasioni di ubbidirLa.**

A S [monogram signature]

In the first omitted passage Steffani reports that he had turned for further support to Madame [Elisabeth Charlotte (1652–1722), the widowed duchess] of Orléans, who wrote to him on 29 June that her daughter [Elisabeth Charlotte (1676–1744)], duchess of Lorraine, had initially raised the same objections as had Baron Schack in London. A few days later, the daughter had informed Madame of the successful outcome of Steffani's quest. <> After a brief war with Britain in 1718–19, Spain suddenly seemed 'docile' because it joined the Quadruple Alliance (Britain, France, the Austrian Empire and Holland) in January 1720, signed a peace treaty in June 1721, then resumed diplomatic relations with Britain and France (Gregory and Stevenson, *Longman Companion*, 14–15, and Hatton, *George I*, 225, 230, 249 and 273). <> Steffani's comments on the 'mare agitato' ('turbulent sea') in the Royal Academy presumably led Riva and Bononcini to concoct the ribald aria text about the 'furiosa tempesta del Mare del Sud' ('furious tempest of the South Sea') in no. 14, below. Steffani was well aware that any 'company of virtuosos' could be 'riven by dissension'; George I reportedly discovered this while he was still a prince in Hanover: after trying to run the court opera for only a few days in the 1690s, Georg had declared 'that he could with much more ease command an army of fifty thousand men than manage a company of opera singers' ([Hawkins], *Memoirs*, p. ii, and Hawkins, *History*, 666).

#### 14. Riva to Steffani

London, 1 August 1721 [Friday]

I have never seen nor felt anything worse. It is as cold as December and as rainy as October . . .

Oh, how many curses [are uttered] against this Parliament by those who have lost their substance in the furious tempest of the South Sea, because they believed that it would have enabled them to enjoy the fortune of Jonah. Oh, I remember in this connexion a certain bass aria by Bononcini, which he said he wrote for some nuns. The words are: Here is Jonah in the midst of the sea: gaze on him, since he seems to have been born as a rock, deprived of his balls in the midst of the waves. Second part: Run toward him, tiny ones with hooks: and pull him to the bank . . .

[Margherita] Durastanti has given a concert in the [King's] Theatre for her own benefit. She was honoured by the presence of the king, who wanted her to sing some duets by Piva and ordered Madam Kielmansegg to ask Senesino to join her for that purpose. The result was indifferent, because only good painters and connoisseurs of art relish the drawings of Raphael. A certain [Pietro Giuseppe] Sandoni, from Bologna, was at the harpsichord. Bononcini, as always, sends you his respects and thanks you for continuing to remember him.

I am exceedingly happy that the Troisio affair has ended to your satisfaction; every gentleman is obliged to serve you as a principle of honour . . .

As always, give my respects to the Marquis and Marchioness Nomis and to the Abbot [Mauro], my most revered patrons, as well as to all my other friends, and particularly to Bossis, triumphant checkmate-master. I beg you to send one of your servants to the home of Monsieur Chappuzeau in order to greet warmly his entire family on my behalf. Likewise greet [Francesco] Venturini, if you have occasion to see him; I will send him some arias by

Bononcini at the first opportunity. Keep me in your precious good will, and I confirm myself herbally, verbally, and lapidarily, &c.

[f. 42] Non ho mai veduto né provato peggio. Fa un freddo come di dicembre ed un tempo piovoso come di ottobre . . .

Oh quante maledizioni contro questo Parlamento da quelli che hanno perdute le loro sostanze nella furiosa tempesta del Mare del Sud, perché credevano che quello avrebbe fatto goder loro il beneficio di Jona. Oh mi sovviene a questo proposito una certa aria in basso di Bononcino ch'egli dice aver fatta per certe monache. Le parole dicono: Ecco Jona in mezzo al mare: su miratelo, che pare nato scoglio, scoglio nato in mezzo all'onde. Seconda parte: [f. 42v] Su correte picinini co'gli uncini: e tiratelo alla sponda . . .

La Durastante fece un concerto nel teatro per suo beneficio. Ebbe l'onore dell'intervento del re, che desiderò si cantassero alcuni duetti del Signor Piva, e perciò fece che Madama di Kilmansegg ne pregasse Senesino. Il successo fu indifferente, perché altri che i buoni pittori ed i conoscitori della pittura gustano i disegni di Raffaele. Un tal Sandoni Bolognese era al cembalo: Bononcini sempre ricorda a Lei il suo rispetto e Le rende grazie della continuazione della di lei memoria.

[f. 43] Mi rallegro infinitamente che l'affare del Signor Abbate Troisio sia terminato con soddi[s]fazione di Lei, cui ogni galantuomo è obbligato di servire per principio d'onore . . .

Sempre i miei rispetti a' Signori Marchese Nomis et al Signor Abbate, miei padroni riveritissimi, siccome a tutti gli altri amici, e particolarmente al nostro Signor Bosis, trionfante scacco matista. La supplico di mandare un Suo servitore a casa di Monsieur Chappuzeaux, e salutare caramente in mio nome tutta quella famiglia, siccome pure a riverire in occasione di vederlo il Signor Venturini, cui manderò per prima congiuntura alcune arie di Bononcini. Ella mi continui il prezioso Suo affetto, e mi confermo herbis, verbis, et lapidibus, &c.

The Italian text of paragraphs 2–3 and part of 5 was printed in Timms, 'Music and Musicians', 33–4. <> Riva's assertion—that the *risqué* aria text that he cites was set by Bononcini for nuns—is not credible. As mentioned in the comment to no. 13, above, the text was presumably written as a South Sea analogy to a Steffani statement concerning the Royal Academy ('I rejoice, however, that our Bononcini is the rock in that turbulent sea'). Jonah aptly represents the South Sea Company, because whaling was an activity in which it engaged. Each half of the text features a *double entendre*: 'nato scoglio' means 'born [as] a rock', while 'scoglionato' means 'debollocked'; 'cogliononi' are fools, while 'cogliuncini' are 'tiny balls'. From the first section we learn that the company was 'scoglionato' in the middle of the sea, while from the second we understand that the many who invested in it are actively trying to draw it to the bank (shore) with their hooks or tiny testicles. The *da capo* reminds us that the company is 'debollocked', which implies that action by puny investors will accomplish nothing. <> Durastanti's concert, on 5/16 July (four days after the last opera performance of the season), included 'Two new Cantatas', written 'by Mr. Hendel and Sig. Sandoni', as well as 'Four Songs and Six Duettos by the famous Signor Stefan[i]', performed by Signora Durastanti and Signor Senesino' (Avery, *London Stage*, 634). <> As no. 16, below, demonstrates, the Troisio affair was not yet near a conclusion. <> Chappuzeau appears to have been a doctor (cf. Lewis Melville [pseud.], *The First George in Hanover and England* (London, 1908), i, 232)—perhaps Albertus Ludovicus Chappuzeau, the author of *Disputatio medico-chirurgica inauguralis de cattarrhacta* (Lugduni Batavorum [Leyden]: A. Elzevier, 1711). <> The violinist and composer Francesco Venturini (c.1675–1745) was employed at the court in Hanover from at least 1698 until his death; he was appointed Konzertmeister there in 1713, and later became Kapellmeister (Michael Talbot, in *New Grove* 2, xxvi, 418).

## 15. Steffani to Riva

Hanover, 12 August 1721 [Tuesday, in Steffani's hand]

Seeing me take up a pen, you will quickly deduce two things: first, that Bossis is now too far away [in Rome] to be of service to me [here]; second, that this reply to your very kind letter of 1 August cannot be very long.

With regard to Bossis's journey, I will say that, tired of seeing myself despoiled by all parties, for the sole reason that absentees are always in the wrong, and since it appears to me that those in our blessed country [the papal states] do not sufficiently understand that my residence in this one [the Lutheran electorate of Hanover] is solely the result of my submissiveness, desire to please and religious zeal, I have finally come to the conclusion that it is necessary to adopt the one way that still remains open to me to try to make certain truths clear and to be in a position myself to take proper measures.

You complain about the season. We have suffered a terrible one here, but for the last eight days we have enjoyed most delightful weather.

The aria [*Ecco Jona in mezzo al mare*] composed by our [friend] Bononcini for certain nuns is perfectly relevant to the present situation [the South Sea scandal]. The evil is that small ones with hooks [=tiny balls] cannot withdraw their money at the bank [=shore]; only Jonah, deprived of his balls, [can do it] in the midst of the waves. Yet many others who have not participated in this [South Sea] affair can withdraw, since it is agreed that the head [i.e., Jonah, who symbolizes the company] will suffer from any pain in the nerves of the feet [i.e., the investors]. I don't know what I'm saying, but . . . . .

I have read your report of the concert given for the benefit of [Margherita] Durastanti. With regard to who plays or sings his duets, Piva is completely indifferent, but you, with your usual dexterity, could do him two favours. First, beg all promoters of such diversions to leave Piva's books [of music] under layers of dust if it is impossible to have them directed by Bononcini, whom I greet with devotion. Second, since Piva has heard nothing more about the projected opera [*Tassilone*], he desires, with good reason, that the king should know that [the cancellation] is not the fault of him or his friend [Pallavicini] in Dresden, because both are ready to fulfil their promises; and if you gave Dresden the reply for which they have been waiting so long, the matter would be settled without further delay.

The item that Baron Schack desires will be made in the best possible shape. But with regard to shapes, since you have asked for commissions, here is one. The enclosed sheet gives the measurements for the entire brim—and the cut-out that of the diameter of the head—of a hat. If you would supply me with one like this, or a pair, and send them to me at the earliest opportunity, either by direct courier or by ship bound for Hamburg, I should be extremely grateful and would reimburse you via Sardi in Amsterdam. At the first similar opportunity that presents itself to me here, I shall take the liberty of sending you a glove and ask you to order some similar ones for me.

Meanwhile, your wishes have been fulfilled at the houses of Chappuzeau, Nomis, Mauro, Venturini, who make you a thousand bows ('inchini') while looking for the best glassware with small galant glasses ('bicchierini') . . . . But now I can find no more 'ini' with which to assure you of all my care to obey you.

[P. S., in Nomis's hand.] I arrive in time to find Monsignor [Steffani] writing to my kindest Riva, busy talking about diameters and hats, so I ask him to allow me to convey Florentine greetings to you in the space that he is willing to leave. I say no more, so as not to inflame the passion of a Modenese, but I assure you that I am and always will be your true friend and servant. And if I were permitted to do so, I also should beg you for a pair of hats, in your own taste, but a little larger in size. Count Bothmer will pay the price when

I know that I can be favoured with them, and I will remit the sum here to whomever you care to name. I shall not repeat my offers of service to you in these parts, because I hope you are persuaded of the inalterable attentiveness with which I am and always will be your faithful friend and servant.

B. Nomis

[f. 15] Dal vedermi prender la penna, facilmente Ella comprenderà due cose: la prima, che Bossis è ormai troppo lontano per servirmene; l'altra, che questa mia risposta al di Lei gentilissimo foglio del primo del corrente non può essere molto lunga.

Intorno al viaggio del Bossis, Le dirò che, stanco di vedermi spogliato da tutte le parti, con la sola ragione che gli assenti han sempre torto, e parendomi che nel nostro benedetto paese non si comprenda abbastanza che la mia permanenza in questo è solo effetto di docilità, compiacenza e zelo di religione, ho creduto finalmente necessario abbraccia[r] quel mezzo che ancora mi restava a tentare per far palpabile certe verità, et esser io medesimo in istato di prender misure giuste.

Ella si lagna della stagione. Noi ne habbiamo sofferta qui una terribile, ma da 8. giorni in qua godiamo un delitiosissimo tempo.

L'aria composta dal nostro Signor Bononcino per certe monache si addatta perfettamente alli tempi correnti; [f. 15v] ma il male sta Che i piccini, cogli uncini, non ritirano alla sponda, solo Jona scogliato in mezzo all'onda; ma vi ritirano tanti altri che nulla hanno che fare in quella facenda: essendo che per consenso patisce la testa del male nei nervi de' piedi. Io non so quel che mi dica; ma . . . . .

Ho veduto il negotio del concerto fatto a profitto della Durastante. Al Piva è sommamente indifferente chi suoni o canti li suoi duetti, ma due favori potrebbe Ella fargli con la Sua consueta destrezza. Il primo, di pregar li promotori o le promotrici di simili divertimenti di lasciar i libri del Piva nella polvere quando non si trovi a proposito di fargli dirigere dal Signor Bononcini, che riverisco devotamente. L'altro, che il Piva non sentendo più parlare dell'opera consaputa, desidera con gran ragione che il re sappia che non è colpa sua né dell'amico di Dresda, perché tutti due sono [f. 16] pronti a sodisfare alle loro promesse; e pur che Lei dia a Dresda la risposta che da tanto tempo vi si aspetta, il negotio si farà senza dilatione.

Ciò che desidera il Signor Baron Schack sarà fatto in tutte le migliori forme. Ma a proposito di forme, poich'Ella ha voluto commissioni, eccogliene una. L'annessa carta è la misura di tutte le ali et i segni ritagliati quella del diametro della testa d'un cappello; s'Ella volesse provedermene d'un paio, o un paio, e farmeli capitare con la prima occasione di corriere per qui, o di nave per Hamburgo, mi farebbe somma grazia, et io La farei rimborzare per mezzo del Signor Sardi d'Amsterdam. La prima simile occasione che mi si presenti qui, prenderò io la libertà di mandargli un guanto e La supplicherò di provedermene.

Intanto è servita a casa Chapuzeau, Nomis, Mauro, Venturini, che le fanno mille inchini e cercando i miglior vetri con galanti bicchierini . . . . Ma non trova ormai più ini per assicurarLa di tutta la mia attenzione ad ubbidirLa.

[P. S., in Nomis's hand, f. 16v] Giungo da Monsignore [Steffani] in tempo che lo trovo scrivendo al mio gentilissimo Signor Riva, occupato a parlarli di diametri e di cappelli, onde lo prego di permettermi come a fiorentino di riverirLa nello spazio che mi vorrà lasciare; non dico di più per non accendere la concupiscence d'un modenese; ma L'assicuro che sono e sarò sempre suo vero amico e servitore; e se mi fusse lecito, La pregherei ancor io d'un paio di cappelli a suo gusto, un poco più grandi della misura; il Signor Conte di Bothmer ne pagherà il prezzo quando saprò di poter esserne favorito, e lo rimetterò qui a chiunque La si compiacerà ordinare; non gli repeto le offerte della mia servitù in queste parti, perché spero che La sarà persuasa dell'inalterabile attenzione con cui sono e sarò sempre Suo fedelissimo amico e servitore.

B. Nomis

See Ill. 6. This letter, given in full, is the only one in the collection in Steffani's hand. The six dots at the end of paragraph 4 and the four in paragraph 7 were placed there by Steffani: they do not indicate any omission of text. <> Steffani presumably sent Bossis to Rome to plead his case because the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith understood neither how much money he needed for the proper fulfilment of his duties as Apostolic Vicar of North Germany nor how little he actually received from his benefices in Seltz and Carrara. <> Steffani rephrases the aria text given in no. 14, above, in order to make a point that he abandons before he clearly explains it. <> Steffani's desire that any performance of his duets be directed by Bononcini clearly relates to Bononcini's preference for the seventeenth-century style of composition and performance (see nos. 27, 28, 37 and 38, below). <> In his closing greeting Steffani writes in verse: '... Nomis, Mauro, Venturini, / che le fanno mille inchini / e cercando i miglior vetri / con galanti bicchierini . . . / Ma non trova ormai più *ini*'. We are grateful to Carlo Vitali for calling our attention to this solitary example of a versified close, which is featured in Steffani's only autograph letter in our edition.

**16. Steffani to Riva** **Hanover, 22 August 1721 [Friday, hand A]**

The news received from Lorraine is apparently like the season: one day of sunshine, then four of rain . . .

A S [monogram signature]

[f. 17] *Le nuove che si ricevono dalla Lorena apparentemente sono come la stagione: un giorno di sole, e quattro di pioggia . . .*

A S [monogram signature]

This letter is wholly concerned with the Troisio affair. Steffani explains that he was planning to ask Riva to thank Baron Schack for what the duke [of Lorraine] had granted Troisio at the behest of the king [George I]. News of this grant had been relayed to him in a letter written on 29 June by Madame d'Orléans. Now Riva, Troisio and Steffani are disconcerted by a letter of 11 July that the last has received from an Abbot Sommier [who was presumably attached to the court of Lorraine]. Steffani encloses copies of both letters so that Riva, after speaking to Schack, can tell him how to reconcile what d'Orléans and Sommier have written. Her letter, after all, must be based on what she has heard from her daughter, the duchess of Lorraine, whose source must have been her husband. Steffani then praises Troisio's abilities and asks Riva to tell Schack that Madame Kielmansegg has presumably received letters that support Troisio.

**17. Riva to Steffani** **London, 26 August 1721 [Tuesday]**

May the mission of our [friend] Bossis be prosperous and very successful. I hope so, because the wind has changed and seems not to blow quite as dry as before. He is an honourable youth, quick-witted and devoted to you, so that he will never fail in his duty. I am very sorry that his absence deprives you of an assistant as necessary as a secretary. It pained me to see in your last welcome letter, dated 12 August, the trouble that you took to write to me at such length. As for me, I should obviously feel favoured with only two lines from you. Your order for hats will be fulfilled: they will be sent to you at the first opportunity together with those for our friend, Marquis Nomis, to whom I beg you to record my respects. The absence of Bossis will contribute much to your health, because, if it is true that you checkmated him often, there will be no danger of your serum becoming acidic, or your urine or lungs suffering, either.

His Majesty at Kensington and the royal princes [the prince and princess of Wales] at Richmond are very well. As for the rest, everything here is carrying on as usual. Parliament has been prorogued until 19 October, and, by all appearances, there will be a new election next year . . .

I appreciated what you wrote to me on behalf of Piva. Bononcini still greets you with all respect. The affairs of the [Royal] Academy of Music are in disarray. They have not yet finished paying their debts for the season [which ended on 1/12 July]. Oh what wits these English have! Oh, and then they complain that they have been swindled by foreigners! They deserve it, because they do not keep their promises, and anyone who knows their nature sees that they must be taken on the wing. How similar the Congress of Cambrai is to that of Brunswick.

My respects to my most esteemed Abbot Mauro, and to my other good friends. Honour me with the continuation of your revered grace, and believe me ready to face cannon-fire on your behalf,

Your most humble servant.

[f. 47] *Sia con prosperità e buon successo il viaggio del nostro Signor Bossis. Io lo spero, perché il vento che si è cambiato non pare che spiri tanto secco come l'altro. Egli è un giovine onorato, lesto e pieno di zelo per Lei, onde non mancherà al suo dovere. Mi spiace bene che la di lui assenza La privi d'un sollievo tanto a Lei necessario com'è quello dello scrivere. Ho avuto pena di vedere nell'ultimo Suo riverito foglio delli 12 corrente l'incomodo ch'Ella si a preso in così lungamente scrivermi. Per me, sono evidentemente favorito con due Sue righe solamente. Sarà Ella servita de' capelli ordinatimi, e mandatiLe saranno per prima occasione insieme con quelli del nostro Signor Marchese Nomis, cui La prego ricordare il mio rispetto. L'assenza del Signor Bosis contribuirà molto alla Sua salute, perché s'è vero che lo matteggiava tanto spesso, non correrà pericolo che se gl'inacidica il scierro e l'urina, e così che la pleura possa patire.*

*Sua Maestà a Kinsigton ed i principi reali a [f. 47v] Richmond stanno benissimo. Del resto poi qui le cose vanno al solito. Il Parlamento è prorogato sino a' 19 ottobre, e secondo tutte le apparenze vi sarà una nuova elezione nell'anno prossimo . . .*

[f. 48] *Mi valevo di quanto Ella mi scrive da parte del Signor Piva. Il Signor Bononcino la riverisce sempre con ogni rispetto. Le cose dell'Accademia Musicale sono in sconcerto. Non hanno ancor finito di pagare i loro debiti della stagione. Oh che teste sono questi inglesi! Oh, e poi si lamentano che sono granellati da' forestieri! Se lo meritano, perché non hanno costanza ne loro impegni, e chi conosce la loro natura vede che bisogna prenderli al volo. Quanto mai si somiglia il congresso di Cambray a quello di Bronswich.*

*I miei rispetti al Signor Abbate Mauro mio stimatissimo, ed agli altri buoni amici. Ella mi onori della continuazione della riverita Sua grazia, e mi creda a prova di cannone,*

*Suo umilissimo servitore.*

The Italian text of paragraphs 3–4 was printed in Timms, 'Music and Musicians', 34. In the omitted passage Riva discusses 'Torriss', 'Whiggs' and Lord Sunderland, then relates that an extract from a secret report, published in the weekly *London Journal*, divulged the South Sea investments of the 'complici' ('accomplices') Sunderland, Madam the Duchess [of Kendal] and Madam Kielmansegg. James J. Mangan, *The King's Favour: Three Eighteenth-Century Monarchs and the Favourites who Ruled Them* (Stroud, 1991), Part 1, gives a ribald view of the last two: (Ehregard) Melusine von der Schulenburg, duchess of Kendal (1667–1743), called 'the maypole', and Sophie Charlotte, Baroness Kielmansegg (1675–1725), called 'the elephant'. The former was the king's mistress; the latter—who was his half sister—was considered by many to be another mistress, but Hatton, 'New Light', 217, has found 'ample evidence that renders this highly unlikely'.



**18. Steffani to Riva** **Hanover, 23 September 1721 [Tuesday, hand A]**

I enclose for you a letter warmly recommended to me from Dresden [presumably written by Pallavicini; see no. 19, below], and I gladly take the opportunity that it affords me to greet you and entrust myself to your continued precious good will. For news I have nothing worthy of your interest . . .

**[f. 25r] EccoLa una lettera caldamente raccomandatami da Dresda, ed io ben volentieri prendo l'occasione che mi da di riverirLa e raccomandarmi alla continuazione della Sua preziosa benevolenza. Per nuove io non ho cosa degna della Sua curiosità . . .**

Steffani continues by first wondering whether Russia and Sweden have signed a peace treaty [Nystad, August 1721]; he fears the intentions of the tsar [Peter the Great (1672–1725)]. Religious affairs [in Steffani's vicariate] are still in turmoil. The emperor [Charles VI (1685–1740)] has ordered that the 'corpi de' consigli' ('council records'), which had been taken from Heidelberg to Mannheim, be returned to their proper home. The Palatine elector [Karl Philipp (1661–1742)] does not seem keen to comply. Meanwhile, the king of Prussia [Friedrich Wilhelm I (1688–1740)] is threatening to call to Berlin the entire 'Dicasterie' ('ministry') of Cleves, which was within his jurisdiction. <> Steffani hopes that Riva has spoken again to Baron Schack [about Abbot Troisio]. Madame d'Orléans continues to maintain that the request on his behalf has been granted [by the duke of Lorraine], but no word of this has reached [Troisio in] Rome. Schack has told Count Bothmer, one of the king's principal secretaries of state, that his master [the duke of Lorraine] is already using Troisio, but the abbot has not yet been told that the duke wants to employ him. Steffani concludes: 'Qui potest capere capiat' ('He that is able to receive it, let him receive it', *Matthew* xix. 12). <> Steffani himself corresponded with Bothmer; the extant letters are in *I-Rscge* Fondo Spiga vols 9, 62, 65, 76 and 78–85 (Feldkamp, 'Nachlass', 299, s.v. Bothmer).

**19. Riva to Steffani** **Twickenham, 7 October 1721 [Tuesday]**

In contrast to the last two years, when I had to keep my muzzle dry, I am this year enjoying a bellyful of country living, but of the kind described below. For two months and more, I have been enjoying this most verdant spot on the Thames with good, genial and decent company, two miles distant from Richmond and five from Kensington. I have a carriage and a boat at my disposal. Our teeth are put to work on the best that air, woods and water can produce, and we wet our whistles with wines from Montepulciano, Burgundy and other places favoured by the son of Semele [Bacchus]. We play games of *hombre*, *tresette* and *minchiate*. We sing and play [music], since our Bononcini, Senesino and two harmonious girls, English ones—very different from Italian vocal show-offs—are here. This is the life, you will rightly say, of the golden age, or, to speak plainly, of the blessed boar [i.e., Riva himself], because, as the poets assure us, in that era the acorn was the common food; so one should go *pulerè pulerè*. We spend two hours each morning reading the history of England, and we celebrate Mass every day. Please note that we lack neither food for the soul nor nourishment for the spirit . . .

I beg you to send our [friend] Pallavicini the enclosed, a reply to that which you sent me [see no. 18]. We have done well not to involve this gentleman in the well-known affair, and I am relieved that you have not begun work, for by all appearances, in the forthcoming season either there will be no opera or things will go from bad to worse, because the [Royal] Academy has not yet resolved to start planning. The disgraces of the South [Sea Company]

have put confusion even into harmony. A propos of that, could he [Pallavicini], at your instigation, obtain a confidential and honest account from Munich of Durastanti's reception there? Torri could speak frankly to you. The answer will remain with me, since I should not like anyone to know that I had such curiosity.

My respects to our most revered Abbot Mauro, who remains my most esteemed patron, to Count Momeaux, and to all my other patrons and friends. I remain with veneration,

Your R, &c.

**[f. 54] Alla barba degli ultimi due anni passati, che ho dovuto stare a muso asciutto, mi prendo quest'anno una scorpacciata di villeggiatura, ma tenoris infrascripti. Sono due mesi e più che mi godo questo verdissimo luogo in buona, geniale ed onesta compagnia sul Tamigi, due miglia lontano da Richmond, e cinque da Kinsigton. Ho carrozza e barca alla mia disposizione. Si da lavoro al dente col migliore che produce l'aria, il bosco e l'acqua, e si umeta il gargozzo con vini di Monte Pulciano, di Borgogna e d'altri luoghi favoriti dal figlio di Semele; si giuoca a l'hombre, a tressette ed a minchiate, si canta e si suona, essendo qui nostro Bononcino, [f. 54v] Senesino e due figlie armoniche, ma inglesi, procul il cantatrico italiano. Questa è la vita, dirà Ella con ragione, dell'età dell'oro, e per parlar chiaro del beato Porco, perché come ci assicurano i poeti in quel tempo, la chienda [ghianda] era il cibo comune: oportet ire pulerè pulerè. Abbiamo due ore la mattina di lettura della storia d'Inghilterra, e tutte le feste la Messa. Oh veda che non ci manca ne meno il cibo dell'anima, ed il pascolo dello spirito . . .**

**[f. 55] La supplico d'incaminare l'inchiusa al nostro Signor Pallavicino, ch'è la [f. 55v] risposta di quella da Lei favoritami. Abbiamo fatto bene a non imbarcare questo galantuomo pel noto affare, e mi consolo ch'Ella non abbia cominciata l'applicazione, perché, secondo tutte le apparenze, la prossima stagione o non vi saranno opere o le cose anderanno di male in peggio, perché l'Accademia non ha a quest'ora presa veruna risoluzione pel cominciamento di quelle. Le disgrazie del Sud hanno posta confusione ancora nell'armonia. A propos si potrebb'egli per di Lei mezzo avere da Monaco una confidente e sincera relazione come piaccia colà la Durastante? Il Torri potrebbe parlar chiaro a Lei. La cosa resterà in me, anzi non vorrei chi sapesse che io avessi una tale curiosità.**

I miei rispetti al nostro riveritissimo Signor Abbate Mauro, sempre mio stimatissimo padrone, al Signor Conte di Momeaux, ed a tutti gli altri miei padroni et amici. Sono sempre con venerazione,

Suo R, &c.

The Italian text given above was printed in Timms, 'Music and Musicians', 34–5. <> Riva had to 'keep his muzzle dry' during the summers of 1719 and 1720, because he was then working as a Modenese diplomat in Hanover. <> In the omitted passage Riva informs Steffani that the hats for him and Marquis Nomis will be sent to Hanover and Hamburg, respectively, as soon as he returns to London. Then he summarizes the conversations he has had with Count Bothmer and Baron Schack about Abbot Troisio. <> Pallavicini's reply to letters from Riva and Steffani is given in no. 19A, below. <> Steffani discusses Durastanti's stay in Munich in nos. 21–2, below. Pietro Torri (c.1650–1737) served Maximilian II Emanuel, Bavarian elector, in Munich and elsewhere from 1689 to the end of his life. In 1696 he worked in Hanover, where he probably composed *Briseide*, an opera that has often been attributed to Steffani (Gordana Lazarevich, in *New Grove* 2, xxv, 638–9). Torri wrote vocal duets that are remarkably similar to those of Steffani, and some have been misattributed to the latter.

**19A. Pallavicini to Steffani**

**Dresden, 29 October 1721**

. . . As soon as my most slothful muse has furnished me with something alluding to the new-born child of the royal princess [of Wales], I will dispatch it in the hope of diverting Piva.

It would, however, be necessary for me to know how to write, now that the winds of the South Sea have overthrown the musical system [i.e., the Royal Academy] in London and we can no longer depend on the same voices. For the information that your most illustrious lordship desires, I have not yet been able to find anyone who corresponds with somebody in Munich. I could write to Torri, but it would seem like affectation or a lack of good will toward that woman [Durastanti].

I shall think how better to obey you, while submitting myself in all deference,

Your m. i. and most reverend lordship's  
Most humble, devoted and obliged servant

S. Pallavicini

[p. 3] **Subito che la mia infingardissima musa mi abbia fornito qualche cosa allusiva al parto della Principessa Reale, solleciterolla a pensare a divertir il Piva.**

Sarebbe però necessario, ch'io sapessi come regolarmi dopo che i venti del Mar del Sud anno sovvertito [p. 4] il sistema musicale di Londra, e che non si può più contare sulle medesime voci. Per l'informazione che Vostra Signora Illustrissima desidera non ho potuto ancora trovare chi abbia corrispondenza a Monaco. Potrei scriverne al Torri, ma parerebbe affettazione o poco buona volontà verso quella donna.

Penserò meglio per ubbidirLa, rassegnandomi intanto con pieno ossequio,

Di V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> e Reverendissima,  
Umilissimo, devotissimo, obbligatissimo servitore,

S. Pallavicini

*I-Rsce* Fondo Spiga, vol. 11. Our film of this source does not include the first page(s) of this letter; we assume that it lacks only one page. <> 'Piva' must have asked Pallavicini for some verse in honour of the birth of William Augustus to Caroline, princess of Wales (see nos. 10 and 12, above). This is possibly the verse to which Pallavicini refers in his letter to Steffani of 19 August 1721: 'Arrossisco in vero di corrisponder così male all'onore che il Piva vuol fare a' miei versi, supponendo che sia sempre question del duetto' ('I truly blush to respond so badly to the honour that Piva intends to bestow on my verses, assuming that it is still a question of the duet'). If Pallavicini wrote verse that was intended for a musical setting, 'Piva' would presumably have been the composer. <> On 12 November 1721 Pallavicini wrote to Steffani: 'Ho poi trov[at]o chi ha fo[n]te? a Monaco per l'informazione desiderata, ne mancherò tosto che giunga di farne parte a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima' ('I have now found someone with a source at Munich for the desired information, which I will not fail, as soon as it arrives, to share with your most illustrious lordship'). For Pallavicini's next observations on this topic (22 November), see the commentary to no. 21, below.

## 20. Steffani to Riva

Hanover, 31 October 1721 [Friday, hand A]

Much good may it do you, though I cannot say this without envy. More than two months in the country in good genial company on the Thames, with carriage and boat at your disposal, nourished by the best that air, water and earth can provide (they having preserved all that is worth preserving), washed down with Montepulciano, Burgundy, &c., and all this seasoned with Bononcini, Senesino and suchlike, are enough to make the mouth water, especially since all [such pleasures] are banned from our suitably boring life.

I am wrong, however, to say 'all', and withdraw this word, because only two days ago I was surprised by an abundance of the last [i.e., music]. A Dutchman named [Jacob Jan]

Hamel-Bruyninx passed through here on his way to Vienna, where he is the Dutch envoy. He had with him his wife, who sings in the best of taste; he plays the viola da gamba very well. Also in that company was a Swedish girl who plays the lute perfectly. All my many duties, which preoccupy me here more than anywhere else, prevented me from inviting this party to my house until the day before yesterday, the eve of their departure. Prince Friedrich [regent in Hanover], with his usual gallantry, allowed the comedy orchestra to be mutilated, by permitting the best musicians [including Venturini?] to come and favour me. Thus, having eaten badly and drunk worse, I took my seat at the harpsichord in good company, and we made music from 4 o'clock until nearly 9. I think that's enough for one sitting. And it's also enough to have wearied you with this account . . .

While on the subject of music, I am infinitely sorry that there is so much disharmony there [in London]. I have forwarded your letter to our friend Pallavicini, who will be very pleased to be released from his obligation. You may well believe that I am no less pleased than he, so long as it is understood that it [the collapse of the *Tassilone* project] was not the fault of Piva. I have also written, and had a letter written, to Munich, in order to obtain the report you desire, and I will communicate the reply to you as soon as I receive it.

I am infinitely obliged to you for kindly taking such an interest in the affairs of Abbot Troisio, which are so close to my heart . . .

Please tell me something about Parliament, whether it will be prorogued or whether they will proceed to the election of a new one, and whether the king will come here next spring or whether there is no hope of that: all these things are talked about here. And please rest assured of the grateful memory of your friends and of all my devotion, &c. &c.

[f. 19r] **Buon prò Le faccia: ma non posso dir senza invidia: due mesi e più di villeggiatura in buona geniale compagnia su'l Tamiggi, con carrozza e barca a Sua disposizione; pasciuto di quanto può di migliore produrre l'aria, l'acqua e la terra (servatis servandis), humettato con Monte Pulciano, Borgogna, &c., e tutto questo condito da Bononcino, Senesino e simili, sono cose che fanno venir l'acqua alla bocca, tanto più che sono tutte bandite da questa nostra vita competentemente noiosa.**

Ho detto male però a dir tutte, e mi ritratto, perché non sono che due giorni che mi sorpresa una scorpacciata dell'ultima. È passato di qua un'olandese che si chiama *Monsieur de Hamelbrüning*, e va Inviato d'Olanda a Vienna. Egli aveva seco la moglie, che canta di buonissimo gusto; egli sona molto bene la viola da gamba. Era anco in quella compagnia una figlia svedese che suona perfettamente bene il leuto. Il tutti mi vogliono, che in simili contingenze regna qui più che altrove, mi ha impedito di aver [f. 19v] questa carravana in casa prima d'hier l'altro, vigilia della sua partenza. Il Signor Principe Frederico con la sua solita galanteria soffrì che si stroppiasse l'orchestra alla comedia, permettendo che li migliori musici venissero a favorirmi. Sicché doppo haver mangiato male e bevuto peggio, si mettessimo al cembalo in buona compagnia, e ci stassimo dalle 4. hore sino quasi alle 9. Mi par che per una volta basti. E basta pure averLa annoiata con questo racconto . . .

Per non uscir dall'articolo della musica, mi dispiace infinitamente che quella di costì sia tanto sconcertata. Io ho incaminata la di Lei lettera al nostro [fol. 20r] Signor Pallavicini, il quale sarà molto contento d'esser liberato dalla consaputa fatica. La può ben credere che io non lo sono meno di lui, purché non si creda che sia colpa del Piva. Ho poi scritto e fatto scrivere a Monaco per haver la notizia ch'Ella desidera; e subito che riceva risposta non perderò momento a comunicargliela.

Io Le professo infinite obbligazioni della bontà con cui s'interessa nell'affare dell'abbate Triosio, che mi sta tanto a cuore . . .

Ella mi dica qualche cosa del Parlamento: se sarà prorogato o se si procederà all'elezione d'un nuovo? Se il re verrà qui alla prossima primavera o se non ve ne sia speranza? Perché tutto questo qui si dice. Ella si tenga sicura della grata memoria degli amici, e di tutta la mia ubbidienza, &c. &c.

Jacob Jan Hamel-Bruyninx was the Dutch envoy extraordinary in Vienna from 1700 to 1738 (Bittner and Groß, *Repertorium*, 354-5, and Hausmann, *Repertorium*, 242). <> The first omitted passage reveals that Marquis Nomis has gone to Hamburg to take his nephew to Captain Moer [*recte* More?], an English seaman or vessel bound for Cádiz; when Nomis returns, Steffani will tell him that Riva has not forgotten to order their hats (see no. 15, above). <> The cancellation of the London production of *Tassilone* is also discussed in nos. 8 and 15, above. <> From the second omitted passage we learn that no news of a resolution has reached Troisio in Rome, even though Madame d'Orléans continues to affirm that the matter is settled and Baron Schack says the same thing in London. <> Letters were written to (Torri in) Munich in response to Riva's request for news of Durastanti's reception there (see no. 19, above, and no. 21, below). <> In no. 17, above, Riva told Steffani that Parliament had adjourned until 19 October, after which there would probably be new elections; Steffani now wants more information on this subject. <> The two ampersands at the end of the letter emulate the '&c.' at the end of Riva's nos. 14 and 19, as noted above, in our introduction to 'Counterpoint, 1-50'.

## 21. Steffani to Riva

Hanover, 14 November 1721 [Friday, hand A]

In these few lines I will give you an account of the first reply from Munich concerning what you wanted to know. It assures me that Durastanti sang to great applause in the opera that was staged there at the beginning of this month and that she was universally loved and esteemed. This report—which was given to me by a very reliable source [Torri?], together with a promise, moreover, to inform himself [or herself?] of all the circumstances—must be well-founded, because the electress [Kunigunde Therese Sobieska, daughter of King John Sobieski of Poland] took the virtuosa with her into the nunneries when she went to visit them. I cannot doubt this, because my sister [Ippolita, born in 1656 and known as Teresa Maddalena], mother superior of the Convent of the Visitation, has written to say that she saw Durastanti. When the most serene electress told Durastanti that she [the mother superior] was my sister, Durastanti expressed a thousand compliments and a thousand obliging remarks about me. When the good nun asked her how she knew me, she replied with utmost gallantry that the whole of the Catholic world must know me, and that if they did not, they had only to hear the king of England speak of me. This is all I can tell you about this for today . . .

[f. 21] Con queste poche righe devo renderLe conto della prima risposta ricevuta da Monaco sopra quanto Ella desiderava sapere. Vengo dunque assicurato che la Durastante reciti con grande applauso nella opera che ivi si rappresentava al principio di questo mese, e che sia universalmente amata e stimata. Questo avviso, che mi viene dato da mano assai sicura, con promessa però d'informarsi più particolarmente di tutte le circostanze, deve però esser fondato, poiché la Signora Elettrice conduce seco quella virtuosa nelli monasteri di monache quando va a visitarli. Né di questa particolarità posso dubitare, poiché mia sorella, Superiora del Monastero della Visitatione, mi scrive haver veduta la Signora Durastante, alla quale la Serenissima Elettrice havendo detto che quella era mia sorella, ella gli ha fatto mille finezze e mille obbliganti espressioni di me. La buona monaca havendogli domandato come mi conosceva, rispose con somma galanteria che tutto il mondo cattolico deve conoscermi; ma che quando ciò non fosse, per conoscermi basta sentir parlar di me il re d'Inghilterra. Questo è quanto posso dirLe in questo proposito per hoggi . . .

The opera in question was Torri's *L'amor d'amico vince ogni altro amore*, which opened in Munich on 12 October 1721, the name-day of the elector and the electress. It was based on a libretto by Adriano

Morselli (*Pirro e Demetrio*), first set by Giuseppe Felice Tosi for Venice in 1690. Durastanti played the leading female role, that of Deidamia. <> The remainder of the letter is concerned with the unresolved Troisio affair. Steffani reminds Riva of the roles played by Madame d'Orléans, the duke and duchess of Lorraine, the king of England, Baron Schack and Count Bothmer. When Abbot Sommier was in Rome, he had told Abbot Troisio, on behalf of the duke, that the post was a commission rather than an appointment, so he could not name him St Urbain's successor until 'la occasione si presenterà' ('an opportunity presents itself'). Since 'tutto questo si riduce a vera freddura' ('all this boils down to total triviality'), Steffani immediately reported Sommier's distasteful declaration to the king and Madame d'Orléans. <> Pallavicini, who had also been drawn into the attempt to learn about Durastanti's reception in Munich (see no. 19A, above), reacted to Steffani's most recent news in a letter of 22 November 1721 (*I-Rscge* Fondo Spiga, vol. 11): 'Attenderò se i miei avvisi confront[ano] con quelli che Vostra Signoria Illustrissima ha ricevuti da Monaco; e poiché di monasteri è questione, io Le confesso che fui sul punto di suggerirLe di valersi delle monache per l'informazione desiderata, giacché queste sogliono essere istruite di quanto passa in una città. La persona sa assai vivere per meritarsi le distinzioni della Serenissima Elettrice, e non è più d'una età da darle suggerimenti; e Sua Altezza Elettorale l'avrà probabilmente conosciuta a Venezia' ('I shall see whether my reports tally with those that your most illustrious lordship has received from Munich. As it is a question of monasteries, I confess that I was on the point of suggesting that you avail yourself of nuns for the desired information, since they are usually well informed of what is happening in a city. The woman [Durastanti] knows how to live if she merits the attention of the Most Serene Electress, and she is no longer of an age to be given suggestions. His Electoral Highness probably knew her in Venice').

## 22. Steffani to Riva

Hanover, 5 December 1721 [Friday, hand A]

You last favoured me by writing on the 21st of the last [presumably 21 October, a letter not extant], which is, according to rules studied the other day, about sixty years ago. Thus my reply must begin: 'the question and answer should suit the case'. You gave me such happy news, lacking little, that I shall respond to nothing else. If the pill (as you perhaps justly baptize it) is more bitter than those of pure aloe, the sweetness that we, and I in particular, should taste in it is so great, that you must not take it amiss if I ardently desire that you be constrained to swallow it, since it must concern us greatly to see the king here, accompanied by so many good friends whom we desire to embrace. Rest assured, therefore, that if this fortune comes to pass next summer, as we have been led to hope, everything possible will be done so that you will not have to 'regretare' (it's a new word) the delights of England . . .

All your friends, particularly Marquis Nomis and Abbot Mauro, appreciate the honour of your memory of them, and I, more than any other, am desirous of serving you, &c.

[P. S. in Steffani's hand.] Durastanti won the hearts of the entire Bavarian court. They offered her 1,000 dollars a year if she would stay, but she wanted 2,000. Munich not being London, they then let her go, as I said, toward Rome. My compliments to Bononcini. He would do well to come [next summer?] and spend a month or two here with us; perhaps we would find a way to amuse him.

[f. 23] Li Suoi ultimi favori sono delli 21. del passato: secondo le regole studiate l'altro giorno, cioè una 60.<sup>ma</sup> [sessantina] d'anni fa, che interrogatio et responsio casu convenient, la mia risposta deve incominciare così. Ella mi dà una così lieta nuova che poco manca che io non risponda ad altro; e quando la pillola (come Ella forse giustamente la battezza) fosse più amara che quelle di puro aloe, è così grande il dolce che noi ne sentiremmo, ed io in particolare, ch'Ella non deve prendersi in mala parte se ardentemente si

desidera, ch'Ella sia costretta d'inghiottirla, essendo che troppo ci deve premere di veder qui il re, accompagnato da tanti buoni amici che desideriamo d'abbracciare. Conti Ella però che se questa fortuna ci arriva, come ci viene fatto sperare, in tempo d'estate, si farà tutto il possibile, perch'Ella non habbia a regrettare (è parola nuova) le delizie d'Inghilterra . . .

[f. 24] Tutti li amici, e particolarmente li Signori Marchese Nomis ed Abbate Mauro, sono sensibili all'honore della di Lei memoria, ed io più d'ogn'altro son desideroso di ubbidirLa, &c.

[P. S. in Steffani's hand, written upside down at the top of f. 24:] La Durastanti ha incontrato il genio di tutta la corte di Baviera. Gli hanno offerti mille talleri l'anno se voleva fermarsi, ma ne voleva 2,000. Indi Monaco non essendo Londra, l'han lasciata andare, come ho detto, verso [f. 23v, upside down:] Roma. Li miei complimenti al Signor Bononcino. Farebbe bene a venir passar qui con noi un mese o due: forse trovaressimo il modo di divertirlo.

See Ill. 7. In the first omitted passage Steffani regrets that nothing has changed in the Troisio affair. Baron Schack, Madame d'Orléans, the duke and duchess of Lorraine and Abbot Sommier continue to say the same things as before, and the only solution is a 'patente di sopravivenza' ('patent of succession') for Abbot Troisio. Steffani is anxious to keep Troisio 'in buon'humore' ('in a good mood'), because [thanks to Troisio] his difficulties with his provostship [of Seltz] appear to have taken a turn for the better. He adds that he has fought vigorously for Troisio, because he was certain that the latter would render good service to the duke of Lorraine. Hanoverians have received contradictory reports of John Law. Riva's few lines about him have led Steffani to decide that one story about him is fabricated. The imperial court in Vienna is in a heightened state of alert because of the alliance of two previously irreconcilable powers [Hanover and Prussia]. He opines that, if the Congress of Cambrai ever takes place, the ministers of the principal powers will sign, while the others will have to rely on common justice. 'Berlin is jumping through hoops' ('Si lavora in Berlino alla gaillarda') to reach an amicable accommodation with Vienna; also working assiduously are the kings of England and Poland [August II, i.e., Friedrich August I, 'der Starke', elector of Saxony (1670–1733)] and the landgrave [Karl (1654–1730)] of Kassel. <> Munich's offer of 1,000 dollars a year must have seemed insubstantial to Durastanti, who had been engaged at Dresden in February 1719 for the sum of 5,221 or 5,225 dollars (Prölss, *Dresden*, 127 and 128n). As Kapellmeister at Hanover in the 1690s Steffani had received a salary of 1,200 dollars per annum and an allowance amounting to 6,570 dollars p.a.; his salary as privy councillor and president of the Palatine Spiritual Council at Düsseldorf in 1703 was 1,500 dollars p.a. (Timms, *Polymath*, 51 and 86). Durastanti may have been offered as much as £500 to sing for the Royal Academy of Music during the spring of 1720, and she received £1,100 for the season 1720–1, when her contract included a special benefit concert (discussed by Riva in no. 14, above), from which she presumably earned several hundred pounds more (Gibson, *Royal Academy*, 122 and 144–5, and Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, 'Opera Salaries in Eighteenth-Century London', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 46 (1993), 32–4). It is hard to compare the fixed sums, since we do not have comprehensive information on exchange rates for 1720. In 1728, a German dollar was worth 4s 6d, according to Ephraim Chambers, *Cyclopaedia; or, An Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences* (London, 1728), 247–51 and 569–71, s.v. 'Coin' and 'Money', respectively. If this exchange rate was valid in 1719–21, Durastanti received £1,176 at Dresden for the spring of 1719 and was promised £225 for a year at Munich in 1721–22. <> Steffani's statement that Durastanti was heading for Rome in December 1721 casts new light on her career, because nothing else is known of her whereabouts during the half-year between her departure from Munich and her journey in May 1722 from Bologna to Venice, when she was robbed of jewels worth £500 (Corrado Ricci, *I teatri di Bologna nei secoli xvii e xviii, storia aneddotica* (Bologna, 1888; repr. Bologna, 1965), 424n).

### 23. Riva to Steffani

London, 19 March 1722 [Thursday]

I know that I truly deserve one of those bygone punishments given to schoolboys who have not done their homework, because my long silence means that I have failed in my duty. I can adduce several factors in my defence. For example, the forthcoming Congress of Cambrai occupies me inordinately; the arrival here of some Milanese cavaliers, whom I had to serve, has continually diverted my attention, and I know—but no, I don't want to use in my favour the advantage that I could enjoy from these excuses. I surrender, and declare myself guilty, hoping that this, my sincere confession, will more easily obtain a pardon for me from you and all my other patrons . . .

At the end of May, of this current year, the king will this time [i.e., this year] set forth [to Hanover]. With him will be the two secretaries of state, Mylord Townshend by right and Mylord Carteret out of friendship; also Mylord Sunderland, naturally, because a ship cannot move without its rudder. Will you see Riva? Monsignor, I do not know. It is more probable that I shall go to Cambrai, because Marquis Rangoni has made a great fuss at Modena about having me with him, and Baron Pentenriedter, who harbours a generous affection for me, intimated, when he wrote to the duke [Rinaldo of Modena], that he will send me there. Since, however, it is probable that the congress will finish before it has hardly begun, or that it will never begin, I should be able to plan a different itinerary. In that case, I shall probably be able to make an excursion to Hanover, which I would do very willingly, for the honour that I should have of seeing you again and saluting, besides [you], monsignor, Marquis Nomis, Abbot Mauro and my other good patrons and friends, to all of whom I beg you to convey my respects and assure them on my behalf of the kind memory that I preserve of them.

The Spanish build-up of arms at Cadiz, with its imbarcation of troops, engenders much concern, because we fear the beginning of a fire, now that the Bourbon union nullifies the terms of the [January 1720?] treaty of London. Italy will be the principal theater [i.e., battleground]. The emperor will certainly not try to prevent it, and will cover his [fire] with that of others.

The election of these (speaking reverently) members for the new Parliament is going a bit cold for the court, but pensions will, shall we say, domesticate these English Catos.

The page is full, and I will stop boring you. Bononcini sends you his respects, and I am your most humble servant.

[f. 75] **Conosco veramente di meritare uno di que' preteriti castighi che si danno a puti alla scuola che non hanno fatto il loro dovere, perché io ho mancato al mio con un così lungo silenzio. Potrei addurre qualche ragione in mia difesa. v. g. [= verbi gratia] che questo prossimo Congresso Cameracense mi occupa straordinariamente, che l'arrivo qui d'alcuni cavalieri milanesi, quali ho dovuto servire, mi ha continuamente divertito, e che so io, ma no, non mi voglio servire del vantaggio che potrei avere da queste scuse in mio pro. Do manus vivetas, e mi dichiaro reo, sperando che questa mia sincera confessione mi otterrà da Lei, e da tutti gli altri padroni miei, più facilmente il perdono . . .**

[f. 75v] **Alla fine di maggio di questa moneta il re [f. 76] s'incaminerà a codesta volta. Seco verranno i due segretari di stato, Mylord Tounshend per diritto, e Mylord Carteret per amicizia. Mylord Sunderland già vi s'intende, perché non va la nave senza il timone. E voi Riva verrete? Monsignor nol so; è più probabile che io passi a Cambray, mentre il Marchese Rangoni ha fatte grand istanze a Modena per avermi seco, ed il Signor Baron di Pentenrideter, che ha per me una generos'amicizia, in occasione di scrivere al duca gli ha insinuato di mandarmi colà. Comeché, però, è probabile che quel congresso a pena cominciato finisca, o che non cominci mai, così, dovendosi dare mi diverso sistema agli affari, come probabilmente succederà io potrei dare una scorsa a Annover, il che farei ben volentieri per l'onore che**



avrei di rivedere [f. 76v] e riverire oltre monsignor, il Signor Marchese Nomis, il Signor Abbate Mauro, e gli altri miei buoni padroni et amici, a quali tutti La supplico di portare i miei rispetti ed assicurarli per me della grata memoria che conservo di loro.

Questo armamento spagnolo a Cadice con imbarcazioni di truppe dà molto da pensare, perché si teme un principio d'incendio ora che l'unione Borboniana fa cessare i motivi del trattato di Londra. L'Italia ne sarà il principal teatro. L'Imperatore non si lascerà certamente prevenire, e coprirà il suo con quello d'altri, &c.

L'elezioni di questi (con reverenza parlando) membri pel nuovo Parlamento va un poco fredda per la corte, ma le pensioni, che cosiché domesticeranno questi Catoni Inglesi.

La carta è finita ed io termino d'annoiarLa. Bononcino Le ricorda il suo rispetto, ed io sono il Suo umilissimo servitore.

In the first omitted passage Riva thanks Steffani for the good wishes that he had sent via their friend, Marquis Courtance, whom Riva had, out of shameful lethargy, asked to respond to Steffani on his behalf. The marquis represented Savoy as envoy extraordinary to Britain from August 1719 until November 1725 (Hausmann, *Repertorium*, 364). His fifty extant letters to Steffani—which are interfiled chronologically with Riva's—concern political, religious and personal affairs. The first eighteen cover a year (3 December 1720 to 28 November 1721), and the next eighteen span the ensuing seven months (5 December 1721 to 10 July 1722). During the following two years, when Steffani was in Padua rather than Hanover, Courtance wrote one letter on 16 January 1723, then thirteen between 7 May 1723 and 23 June 1724. <> Riva then relates that Baron Schack has shown him a letter from the duke of Lorraine, stating that 'sopravvenza del consaputo posto' ('continuation of the post in question') is not common practice at his court, but that Troisio will be given the post, as the duke has promised, 'a suo tempo' ('in due time'). <> Riva (beginning of paragraph 2) stresses when George I will leave London, presumably because in previous years the king had left at least four weeks later. <> Johann Christoph, Freiherr von Pentenrieder (1678–1728), was the imperial representative in France (Hausmann, *Repertorium*, 60, 61, 64, 67 and 71, and Hatton, *George I*, 223, 228, 232 and 407). The Congress of Cambrai (1722–5) was intended to reconcile Spanish and Austrian disputes over possessions in the Italian peninsula, but it became a 'constant round of dinners and entertainments' in a city that was 'quite isolated from the main centres of diplomacy' (Janet M. Hartley, *Charles Whitworth: Diplomat in the Age of Peter the Great* (Aldershot, 2002), 178–200, esp. 197).

#### 24. Steffani to Riva

Hanover, 15 May 1722 [Friday, in Bossis' hand]

Your very kind letter of 19 March must have suffered one of those bygone punishments of which you speak, because it did not arrive in my hands until 11 May. You may ask why, therefore, did I not reply on 12 May? I will say that my cure prevented me, as it will prevent me today from writing at length, since my health, somewhat weakened by the extraordinary weather, has forced me to resort to my usual Sacred Anchor, which is the mineral water of a country estate. You don't need to seek excuses for your long silence, because your burdens are already well known to me; besides, the pleasure of [receiving] your letter made me immediately forget the displeasure of having been deprived of one for such a long time . . .

Here we await [the arrival of] the king in a few weeks, and if you are not to be prevented from following His Majesty except by the famous Congress of Cambrai, the friends who wish to see and serve you can hope to enjoy this good fortune, since it does not seem to me that there is any great semblance of negotiation in that peaceable assembly. For some time now I have sensed in my letters from Italy a constant fear of seeing a fire lit [i.e., war break out] in the bowels of that country; I cannot imagine that a fire could last very long down there

without spreading to the rest of Europe. What can be said more certainly is that without the light of such an unfortunate flame we shall have difficulty in emerging from the darkness in which we live, since people either have found a better way of keeping things secret or do not know what they want to do, perhaps because nobody knows what should be done.

What I know for certain is that I ardently desire opportunities to serve you, that I beg you to thank Bononcini very much for kindly remembering me, and that my unconditional obedience to you depends on your opinion of me.

[f. 27r] Bisogna credere che la Sua umanissima lettera abbia temuto uno di quei preteriti castighi de' quali Ella parla, perché in data dei 19. di marzo non è pervenuta alle mie mani che agl'11. di maggio. Ella mi domanderà perché dunque io non gli ho risposto alli 12? Et io Le dirò che la mia cura me lo ha impedito comme [sic] pur hoggi m'impedisce di diffondermi troppo, essendo che la mia salute un poco alterata dalla stravaganza delle stagioni mi ha costretto di haver ricorso alla mia consueta Ancora Sacra, ch'è l'acqua della villa. Ella non ha bisogno di cercar ragioni per iscusare il Suo lungo silenzio, poiché le Sue occupationi mi sono già note, oltre di che il piacere della Sua lettera mi ha fatto subito dimenticare il disgusto d'esserne stato privo per così lungo tempo . . .

[f. 27v] Qui si aspetta dunque il re fra poche settimane: e se Lei non è impedita di seguitar la Maestà Sua che dal famoso Congresso Cameracense, gl'amici che desiderano vederLa e servirLa possono lusingarsi di haver questa buona sorte, non parendomi veder grande apparenza di negotio in quella pacifica assemblea. È già un pezzo che nelle mie lettere d'Italia trovo il costante timore di veder il fuoco acceso nelle viscere di quel paese; non so però figurarmi che l'incendio possa durare gran tempo in quella parte senza comunicarsi a tutto il resto dell'Europa. Quello che si può dire di più sicuro è che senza il lume d'una tale sfortunata fiamma havremo della pena a sortir dalle tenebre nelle quali viviamo, poiché o si è trovato un miglior modo di tener le cose segrete o non si [f. 28r] sa ciò che si voglia fare, perché forse talluno non sa quel che si faccia.

Quello che so di certo è che ardentemente desidero le occasioni di servirLa, che La prego render molte grazie al Signor Bononcino della sua cortese memoria, e che dal di Lei arbitrio dipende la mia ubbidienza senza riserva.

Riva did not write to Steffani between 7 October 1721 (no. 19) and 19 March 1722 (no. 23). Before receiving the latter (on 11 May 1722), Steffani asked about Riva in his letters to Marquis Courtance of 27 March and 7 April 1722. Courtance replied on 10 and 16 April 1722 (*D-HVsa* Cal. Br. 23c, Nr. 443, ff. 85 and 86) that Riva had written to him (on 19 March 1722). In his second letter Courtance added: 'Il faudra le punir quand il sera à Hannouvre, en ne le laissent pas jouer aux echeqs ches vous; mais je crois q'il se justifiera auprès d'une persone aussi indulgente que vous du silence que vous lui reproches' ('You will have to punish him when he is in Hanover by not letting him play chess with you; but I believe that, in the presence of a person as indulgent as you, he will justify the silence with which you reproach him'). <> In the deleted passage Steffani thanks Riva for news of Troisio, to whom he has sent [a copy of] Baron Schack's note to Count Bothmer; he hopes that its promises will have their desired effect, for the sake of Troisio and the duke of Lorraine.

#### 25. Riva to Steffani

London, 10 June 1722 [Wednesday]

Before replying to your most courteous letter of 15 May, I wanted to see which of two [possibilities] would gain the upper hand in the mind of the king, either the necessity of remaining [here] or the desire to depart for there. Since His Majesty yesterday decided finally for the first option, by announcing his departure for Kensington, where perhaps he will remain all summer, I am presenting myself to you in a letter, since I cannot do so in person.



I am sorry to hear that you were slightly unwell, but hope that the waters by now will have had their usual good effect, which I desire as much as I respect and am obliged to you, which means infinitely.

What news of the [Jacobite] conspiracy? I know you are asking me with a perfectly reasonable curiosity. As a man of honour I know nothing about it, and I believe that other people know no more. There is talk of a conspiracy, yet we've seen no conspirator arrested, and none of the royal family who is thought to have had evil done to them has retreated to the countryside or gone overseas. On the other hand, however, if the famous harlequin of this country is here [*struck through*: quiet], there will be [military] camps and expeditions to the courts, and, above all, since the king did, without any other pressing reason that one could imagine, postpone his journey to some other time, one might imagine [conspiracy], but I still don't believe it. The lame man who runs so fast will surely inform us of the truth; as the Spaniard says, a lie is the daughter of something [but no-one knows what].

Baron Schack confirms that the duke [of Lorraine], his patron, will keep the promise that he made to the king in favour of Abbot Troisio, so that we shall no longer need to speak of this matter. I beg you [to give] my respects to Marquis Nomis and Abbot Mauro, both my most revered patrons. To you I convey those of our Bononcini, together with his thanks for the generous, courteous memory that you retain of him. I beg you also, in my name, dearly to greet [Francesco] Venturini and all his family, asking you to do the same for me with Rezzani, Maillet and my other good friends. I greet with all my heart the most gentle Bossis, and I remain with the usual sentiments of veneration, &c.

[f. 102] **Prima di rispondere all'umanissima Sua lettera delli 15 maggio passato, io voleva poter vedere chi de due avrebbe avuto il disopra nell'animo del re: o la necessità di restare o il desiderio di partire per costà. Comeché Sua Maestà ieri si determinò affatto per la prima parte, dichiarando la sua partenza per Kinsigton, ove forse dimorerà tutta la state, così sono a Lei con lettera giacché nol posso colla persona.**

**Mi spiace di sentire qu'Ella fosse un poco incomodata nella salute, ma spero che a quest'ora le acque avranno fatto il loro solito buon effetto, il che desidero a misura del mio rispetto e della mia obbligazione, che vuol dire infinitamente.**

**Ma che nuova della conspiratione? Sento ch'Ella con una ben ragionevole curiosità mi dimanda. Da uomo d'onore, che non ne so niente, e credo, che gli [f. 102v] altri non ne sappiano di più. Vi parla di conspiratione, e non si vede arestato alcuno de' conspiratori, ne che nissuno de' conosciuti male affetti alla real famiglia siasi o ritirato alla campagna o di là del mare. Dall'altra parte poi che si n'è [*quiete* is crossed out] il famoso arloqiano di questo paese, si debbano fare accampamenti, e spedizioni alle corti, e sopra tutto, che il re debba differire ad altro tempo il suo viaggio, e senza una ragione ben pressante può immaginarsi, ma non già credersi. Il zoppo, che tanto veloce corre, c'informerà del vero certamente, come dice lo spagnuolo, la mentira es hija de algo.**

**Questo Signor Baron Schak mi conferma che il duca suo padrone terrà la promessa fatta al re [f. 103] in favore del Signor Abbate Troisio, onde di questo particolare non ne parleremo più. La supplico de' miei rispetti al Signor Marchese Nomis ed al Signor Abbate Mauro, amendue miei riveritissimi padroni. A Lei porto quelli del nostro Signor Bononcino, unitamente a' suoi ringraziamenti della generosa cortese memoria ch'Ella di lui conserva. La prego più di riverire caramente in mio nome il Signor Venturini e tutta la sua famiglia, pregandolo di compire a questa parte per me col Signor Rezzani, con Monsieur Maleitt, e con gli altri miei buoni amici. Riverisco con tutto il cuore il gentilissimo Signor Bosis, e resto co' soliti sentimenti di venerazione, &c.**

This letter is given complete. Riva coolly describes the king's decision to spend the summer in Kensington rather than Hanover, then presents an 'I know nothing' view of a possible Jacobite conspiracy; these statements elicited a rather stern rebuke from Steffani (see no. 26, paragraph 2). Riva wrote infrequently to Steffani during this period (nos. 19, 23 and 25 are dated October 1721, March 1722 and June 1722), perhaps because he knew too much about the conspiracy, did not want to implicate himself or his friends, or did not want to upset Steffani, who was devoted to George I. Steffani was far better informed by such correspondents as Marquis Courtance, who wrote to him on 20 January 1722 about the rumour that the king would not go to Hanover (f. 70), on 27 March that the king would go (f. 84), on 1 May that he [Courtance] would join the entourage (f. 87), on 15 May that the visit was uncertain because of a crisis (f. 88), on 10 June of the conspiracy (f. 89), and on 19 June of the evil plans that had sent the king to Kensington (f. 90). <> After the failure of the South Sea Company early in 1721, Jacobites began planning fitfully for the restoration of James [III] Stuart. In November 1721 they formulated a 'secret' plan that was known much too far and wide for it to have remained a 'secret'. Nevertheless, their correspondence did not clearly identify a leader until Reverend George Kelly, when being questioned on 23 May 1722, inadvertently implicated Francis Atterbury, bishop of Rochester, 'by naming him as the recipient of a French dog named Harlequin, which had been mentioned in certain of the intercepted letters' (Gareth Vaughan Bennett, 'Jacobitism and the Rise of Walpole', in *Historical Perspectives: Studies in English Thought and Society in Honour of J.H. Plumb*, ed. Neil McKendrick (London, 1974), 85, and *idem, The Tory Crisis in Church and State, 1688–1730: The Career of Francis Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester* (Oxford, 1975), 223–41). In Riva's letter, Harlequin apparently represents the conspiracy of the Jacobites. For further information about their conspiracy, see nos. 26 and 28, below. <> The Spanish maxim, 'la mentira es higa de algo', is seemingly trivial, according to Benito Jerónimo Feijoo, *Teatro crítico universal* (Madrid, 1726–40), repr. within Edición digital de las Obras de Feijoo, Proyecto Filosofía en español (Oviedo, 1998), vol. 5 (1733), discourse no. 8: 'Divorcio de la Historia y la Fábula, section 1; yet it is 'perniciosa', because 'lies make fiction speak with authority and then attribute to it an illustrious birth in the cradle of truth' ('porque autoriza la ficción, atribuyéndola un ilustre nacimiento en la cuna de la verdad'). A pernicious example was the 'higo de algo' (= 'hidalgo') who was a 'son of something'; since no one knew his lineage, he could easily claim to be a nobleman. We are very grateful to Professor Margery Resnick of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who provided us with the reference to Feijoo and the explanation of the maxim. <> Signor Rezzani is also mentioned in two letters that Sardi wrote to Riva in July and August 1720 (which are bound between Steffani's last two letters to Riva in *I-MOe* Autografoteca Campori, busta Steffani, ff. 53–6) and in one from Steffani to Riva (no. 41, below); since he had a wife, he was presumably Signor Agostino rather than Filippo Alberto Rezzani, a missionary in Berlin. Maillet was a major in the Hanoverian artillery. Steffani's extant correspondence with Maillet and the two Rezzanis is indexed in Feldkamp, 'Nachlass', 305 and 308.

## 26. Steffani to Riva

Hanover, 23 June 1722 [Tuesday, in Bossis' hand]

I do not understand why I should have received your very kind letter of 10 June a day after other people received their letters from London dated 16 June. Let this be said so as to purge me of any suspicion of negligence, because I am responding to your last [letter] a few hours after its delivery to me.

That the king would travel [to Hanover] this time was regarded for many weeks to be certain, but the majority of the better informed in the ways of the world believe what they want to believe. It is all too true that no one supposed that the said journey could be prevented by conspiracies. What I find in your most esteemed letter has been said and written by many. But I flatter myself that I have the honour of knowing the king so well that

I can positively reject the opinion of those who would substitute a comedy for the tragedy that the conspirators appear to have conceived. That no one has been arrested or has fled could be explained by reasons other than that of the baselessness of the conspiracy, and these reasons, as you know better than I, could rest either with the government or with the accomplices. In any case, the politicians must, in spite of themselves, await the arrival of the lame man, and with this let's make an end . . .

Marquis Nomis and Abbot Mauro send you boundless greetings, and to theirs must be added those of Bossis, distraught at having lost the opportunity of checkmating you twenty-five times a day. To the others I will transmit your greetings with the certainty that they will be received with the proper gratitude, and I shall remain, so long as I live, ready to execute your highly esteemed commands.

A S [monogram signature]

[f. 29] **Io non so capire perché io debba ricevere i Suoi favori in data delli 10. corrente un giorno doppo che gl'altri han ricevute le loro lettere di Londra in data dei 16.; e questo sia detto per purgarmi da ogni sospetto di negligenza, poiché rispondo all'ultima Sua umanissima poche hore doppo essermi stata recapitata.**

Il viaggio del re a questa volta da molte settimane in qua si credeva sicuro, ma dalla maggior parte delli meglio informati delle cose del mondo si credeva perché ben si vedeva desiderarsi che si credesse. È ben vero che non v'era chi supponesse che il suddetto viaggio potesse essere impedito da conspirazioni. Si è detto e scritto da molte parti ciò che trovo nel Suo stimatissimo foglio; ma io mi lusingo haver troppo l'honore di conoscere il re per non rigettare assolutamente l'opinione di quelli che surrogano una comedia alla tragedia che li conspiratori parevano meditare. Che poi non se ne vedano di arrestati [f. 29v] o di fuggiti puol avere altre ragioni che quella della insussistenza della conspiratione; e queste ragioni, Ella sa meglio di me che possono essere e dalla parte del governo e da quella delli complici. In ogni caso li politici devono malgrado loro aspettare l'arrivo del zoppo, e con questo facciamo punto . . .

[f. 30] **Il Signor Marchese Nomis et il Signor Abbate Mauro La riveriscono infinitamente, et ad essi si accoppia Bossis, disperato d'aver perduta la occasione di darLe 25. scacchi matti in un giorno. Agl'altri porterò le sue gratie con sicurezza che saranno ricevute con la dovuta gratitudine ed io sarò sin che vivo pronto ad eseguire li suoi stimatissimi ordini.**

A S [monogram signature]

George I was indeed prevented from leaving England in 1722 by Jacobite conspirators who planned to murder him when he was *en route* to Hanover, arrest and place the British ministers in the Tower, seize control of the Bank and Royal Exchange, and replace George with the exiled Roman Catholic Stuart Pretender James (1688–1766), who would have become James III (Hatton, *George I*, 256–7). The plot was led by Francis Atterbury (1662–1733), bishop of Rochester and dean of Westminster, who was arrested and imprisoned on 24 August 1722 and placed on a boat for France on 18 June 1723 (Bennett, *Tory Crisis*, 256–75). Many others were implicated, in some cases apparently because their friends were at least peripherally involved. Italians, particularly, were suspected, because they were by definition Catholic and therefore potentially Jacobite sympathizers. As a result of such friendships, Paolo Rolli and Giovanni Bononcini, who were among Riva's closest friends, were infrequently employed by the Royal Academy of Music after the 1721/2 season (Lowell Lindgren and Carlo Caruso, in *New Grove* 2, iii, 873, and xxi, 534). Rolli did adapt three more Handel librettos for the Academy in 1726–7, probably because his successor, Nicola Francesco Haym (1678–1729), was busy with other projects (Lindgren, 'Haym', 309–13). Bononcini provided an opera (*Erminia*) near the end of the 1722/3 season, but perhaps only because it was scheduled for Parisian performances

(that did not occur) by singers of the Royal Academy during the summer of 1723 (Lindgren, 'Parisian Patronage', 13–14, and *idem*, 'Vienna', 382–3). He was rehired for the 1723/4 season, after which he remained in London only because of the lavish patronage of the junior duchess of Marlborough (see nos. 32 and 33, below); it was she who 'allowed' him to provide the final work for the Royal Academy's 1726/7 season (see nos. 43 and 44, below). <> In the omitted passage Steffani thanked Riva for his three lines about Troisio, which arrived at the same time as a brief message from the abbot himself. Steffani sent the message to Riva with a request that he pass it on to Baron Schack, who, he hoped, would honour in full the promises made by his highness [the duke of Lorraine]: Steffani would be very unhappy, both for himself and the court of Lorraine, if what was being said in Rome turned out to be true. This is the last mention of Troisio in the Steffani/Riva correspondence; we have no knowledge of his whereabouts or duties after 1722, and by 1726 he had been replaced as Steffani's agent in Rome by Giuseppe Modio (Feldkamp, 'Nachlass', 306). <> Steffani returned to Italy in July 1722, which presumably explains why there is a long break in his correspondence with both Courtance and Riva; the former wrote only once between July 1722 and May 1723 (see the commentary to no. 23 above), while the latter did not write between June 1722 and June 1723, when music rather than politics became the chief concern (see nos. 27–35, below).

## 27. Steffani to Riva

Padua, 13 May 1723 [Thursday, hand B]

I don't know whether you are still aware of my existence. I know it would be no wonder if you were not, since I have certainly never had any occasion whatever to merit your kind remembrance. Notwithstanding this gospel truth, however, I trust your beneficent spirit and dare to ask for a favour of great concern to me.

A daughter of a friend of mine, to whom I wish good fortune on every count, is making good progress in music, so that, provided she falls into the right hands, she could become one of the best travelling singers of today. I mean that she has an exquisite voice and an admirable disposition, and I would say that she sings in good taste, if mine could be reconciled with that which now reigns in this country. This means, in my language, that if our friend Bononcini (whom I greet most warmly) were to have Benedetta Sorosina (as the young woman is called) with him for some weeks, he would without much effort make something excellent of her. I have seen her perform, to my great satisfaction, in Venice. Now she is in Naples, whence reports of her are written in glowing terms. But I should like her now to spend at least a little time outside Italy, because, between you and me, it seems to me that in Italy true singing no longer exists. I should like her therefore to go to London, which should not be so difficult to arrange, since she was invited there some time ago (but her father could not accept the offer, because she was already engaged elsewhere). The same danger exists now, for I can assure you that the applause she has been given in Naples leads me to believe that many others will seek to employ her.

See, therefore, whether you can secure a place for her there, and be persuaded that this will bring you honour, because if the young woman is well coached she certainly will sing as well as one could wish. If, in order to accomplish this charitable task, you need a protector, Count Bothmer will not refuse to support you. In doing me such a signal favour you can be sure of obliging me beyond anything that words could say. When I see that you still have some small memory of me, I shall write more expansively, and we will speak of London, of Hanover, of Modena (where I have the good fortune to be known) and then, as a corollary, also of Rome, where it seems that terrible topsy-turviness reigns. You see that, although I ask much, I promise you not a little. Please revive our old correspondence by doing me the favour I ask of you, and believe, above all, that I am ever ready to do your bidding.

[f. 31] Io non so s'Ella si ricordi ancora che io sii al mondo: so bene che non sarebbe meraviglia alcuna che non se ne ricordasse; poiché certa cosa è non haver io mai havuta occasione alcuna di meritare la di Lei cortese memoria. Non ostante però questa verità evangelica, affidato su'l Suo genio benefico, ardisco pregarLa d'un favore di mia molta premura.

Una figlia d'un amico mio, al quale devo per ogni conto desiderar buona fortuna, si va facendo avanti nella musica, in modo che pur che cada in buone mani, potrà dirsi una delle rare cantatrici che in hoggi caminino. Voglio dire che ha ottima voce, mirabile disposizione, e direi che canta di buon gusto se il mio potesse accomodarsi a quello che hora regna in questi paesi; e questo significa nel mio linguaggio che se il nostro Signor Bononcini (che riverisco infinitamente) avesse per qualche settimana seco la Signora Benedetta Sorosina (così si chiama la giovinetta) ne farebbe cosa ottima, e senza gran fatica. Io la ho veduta recitare con molta mia sodisfazione in Venezia. Hora è in Napoli, donde se ne scrive un'infinito bene. Ma io la vorrei, per qualche picciolo tempo almeno, fuori d'Italia, perché, a dirla a Lei, mi par che in Italia più non si canti. La vorrei dunque in Londra, ove non dovrebbe [f. 31v] essere tanto difficile farla andare, poiché qualche tempo fa è stata ricercata; ma il padre suo non poté accettar l'offerta, poiché si trovava di già impegnato. Lo stesso pericolo vi è adesso, potendoLa io assicurare che l'applauso che gli vien fatto in Napoli mi fa dubitare che si cerchi d'impegnarla più oltre.

Veda Ella dunque se costì gli si può procurare un luogo, e sia persuasa che ne haverà dell'honore, perché al certo purché la giovine habbia una buona direzione canterà tanto bene, quanto possa desiderarsi. S'Ella per far quest'opera pia ha bisogno di protezioni, il Signor Conte di Bothmar non ricuserà di secondarla. Procuri di far una così insigne carità con sicurezza di obbligarmi oltre tutte le mie espressioni. Quando veda ch'Ella habbia ancora qualche picciola memoria di me, sarò più diffuso e parleremo di Londra, d'Hannovera, di Modana (ove ho la buona sorte d'essere conosciuto) e poi, per corolario, anche di Roma, ove pare che regnino terribili vertigini: Ella vede che domandando io molto, non Le prometto poco. Rannodi Lei la nostra antica corrispondenza col farmi la grazia che Le domando, e creda sopra il tutto che io sarò sempre pronto ad eseguire i Suoi cenni.

This letter, Steffani's first from Padua, is given complete. Despite the desperate financial circumstances that had forced him to retire there in the summer of 1722, he seems now to have been in good spirits. When in Padua, Steffani wrote to Riva six times; all of these letters are concerned wholly or partly with music. Benedetta Sorosina (ff. 1722–32), a soprano, was his principal concern. Her father, Giuseppe, was a friend of Steffani who served as the agent in Venice for Hanover and Great Britain from May 1720 until he was dismissed in February 1726 (Hausmann, *Repertorium*, 179). These were difficult times for the Sorosina family, because Giuseppe suffered from 'une Maladie très dangereuse' ('a very dangerous illness') in 1721, then in spring 1722 from 'un coup d'appoplexie qu'il le reduit impuissant et incapable d'agire pendant toute la même année' ('a stroke that rendered him helpless and incapable of working for the rest of the year'). This report was written by two medical doctors on 20 March 1726 to support Sorosina's own account of his illness, which is preserved with his defence of his stewardship for George I (*I-Rscge Fondo Spiga*, vol. 2, ff. 62r–v and 65v; printed in Colin Timms, 'George I's Venetian Palace and Theatre Boxes in the 1720s', in *Music and Theatre: Essays in Honour of Winton Dean*, ed. Nigel Fortune (Cambridge, 1987), 119–20). His daughter had first appeared on stage during the 1722/3 season, when she sang in *Arminio* by Pollarolo, *Timocrate* by Leo and *I veri amici* (anon., perhaps by Paulati) at the Venetian Teatro San Angelo. Steffani heard her in at least one of these works. During the 1723/4 season she sang at the Neapolitan Teatro San Bartolomeo in *Amare per regnare* by Porpora, *Siface* by Feo, *Silla dittatore* by Vinci, and *Didone abbandonata* by Sarri (Claudio Sartori, *I libretti italiani a stampa dalle origini al 1800* (Cuneo, 1990–4), *Indici*, ii, 616). <> For Tosi's view of the change of taste in the realm of vocal performance, see our Introduction, section 5. <> Steffani's links with the court of Modena stretched back at least to 1689, when two Modenese musicians—the tenor Antonio Borosini (c.1655–after 1721) and the

violinist Giuseppe Galloni—performed in his first Hanover opera, *Henrico Leone* (E[lisabeth J[eanette] Luin, 'Antonio Giannettini e la musica a Modena alla fine del secolo XVII', *Atti e memorie della R. Deputazione di Storia Patria per le provincie modenese*, ser. 7, vol. 7 (1931), 175–6). Steffani presumably knew Francesco II d'Este (1660–94), duke of Modena from 1674, and his successor Rinaldo III (1655–1737), who in 1695 married Charlotte Felicitas, daughter of Johann Friedrich of Brunswick-Lüneburg. It was presumably Francesco who obtained the only known contemporary copy of Steffani's six 'scherzi' (*I-MOe Mus. F. 1102*), which are solo cantatas with instruments (Colin Timms, 'Steffani's Solo Cantatas', in 'Con che soavità': *Studies in Italian Opera, Song, and Dance, 1580–1740*, ed. Iain Fenlon and Tim Carter (Oxford, 1995), 198–202). Steffani appears to have given a manuscript (*I-MOe Mus. G. 282*) containing forty-one arias from his Hanover opera *Le rivali concordi* (1692) to Duke Rinaldo, because the inscription, 'per S. A. Serenissima il Signor Duca di Modena', is in his own handwriting. These are two of the three Steffani manuscripts listed in Pio Lodi, *Catalogo delle opere musicali: Città di Modena, Biblioteca estense* (Parma, 1923; facs. repr. Bologna, 1967), 151–2 and 263, and in Alessandra Chiarelli, *I codici di musica della raccolta estense: Ricostruzione dall'inventario settecentesco*, *Quaderni della Rivista italiana di musicologia*, 16 (Florence, 1987), nos. 46, 48 and 843.

## 28. Riva to Steffani

London, 3 June 1723 [Thursday]

Do I remember my most kind monsignor? Do I remember? Could I forget an obligation which so much goodness and courtesy have implanted in me, like a nail in a wooden plank? You cannot still believe that the passage from Calais [to Dover] is like that over the river Lethe [to hell]. True, I have not written to you once since your return to Italy, but I have often asked Marquis Courtaunce to convey my respects when writing to you.

I read your letter to our [friend] Bononcini, who reminds you always of his infinite esteem and sincere respect. He says that, since three women have been hired by this theatre [i.e., by the Royal Academy], there is no opening for Sorosina. If, on the other hand, this lady were here or he were in Italy, he would count it a signal honour to teach a person recommended by you and to steer her far away from those musical defects that now reign in Italy to the grave detriment of true good taste. Here, unfortunately, the plague has spread too far, and arch-gurgling attracts applause from the ignorant crowd, which feeds on air and farts. Although Cuzzoni could succeed without this and draw the ignorant to herself with truth, even she occasionally engages in playful artifice.

Here, because of the factionalism that is the soul of this agitated country, which takes its nature from the element [water] that surrounds it, we have, beside Bononcini and Handel, a third composer, named Signor alias Father Attilio Ariosti, one of whose operas [*Coriolano*] has had a very good reception. Bononcini, being employed, will still remain here next year, but will then leave the field free [for others]. He hopes to greet you and to spend some days with you.

In a few days the king will leave for Hanover. I have not yet received my orders.

With the life imprisonment of [James] Plunket and [George] Kelly, the exiling of the bishop of Rochester and the death of the lawyer [Christopher] Layer, the accomplices in the incident (to speak respectfully of the conspiracy) have been punished. The poor Catholics are likely to be fried. The Bill against them calling for the extraordinary contribution of 100,000 pounds sterling has been passed in the two houses [of Parliament], notwithstanding the pleas of the emperor, the king of France and the king of Spain. The members of both houses are aware of the injustice but do not have the courage to go against Walpole, for whom this contribution is an obligation and who, having the exchequer under his control,

opens and uses it at will. 'I see the better way, but follow the worse.' Do they [the Catholics?] thus feign respect for protestants in Germany?

Keep me in your precious affection, and believe that I have for you the most sincere respect, &c.

[f. 114] **Se mi ricordo del mio gentilissimo monsignore? Se me ne ricordo? Potrei mancar io ad un obbligo che tanta bontà e cortesia hanno fissato in me come in asse chiodo? Ella non creda già che il passaggio di Calais sia quello del fiume Lete. Veramente, dopo il Suo ritorno in Italia io non Le ho mai scritto, ma non ho lasciato di pregar sovente il Signor Marchese di Cortance a ricordarLe il mio rispetto in occasione ch'egli Le scriverà.**

Ho letta la Sua lettera al nostro Signor Bononcino, il quale rammemorandoLe sempre l'infinita sua stima ed il suo sincero ossequio, dice che siccome in questo teatro i luoghi sono occupati da tre donne, così non esservi occasione per la Signora Sorosina, che se per altro questa signora fosse qui o ch'egli fosse in Italia, si farebbe un particolar onore d'insegnare ad una persona da Lei raccomandata, e di tenerla lontana da que' musicali difetti che ora regnano in Italia con grave detrimento del vero buon gusto. Qui pur troppo [f. 114v] la peste serpeggia, e con arcigogoli si cava l'applauso dal volgo ignorante, e che si pasce di vento e di vesce. E sebbene la Cuzzoni potrebbe far dimeno, e tirare a se colla verità gl'ignoranti, pure ancor ella fa di tempo in tempo i suoi giuochi artificiali.

Qui per forza de' partiti che sono l'anima di questo agitato paese, che tiene della natura dell'elemento che lo circonda, abbiamo oltre Bononcino ed Hendel un terzo compositore di musica nella persona del Signor alias Padre Attilio Ariosti, un'opera del quale ha avuto un buonissimo incontro. Bononcino resterà qui ancor l'anno venturo, essendo impegnato, e poi lascerà il campo libero. Spera egli di riverirLa e di passar seco alcuni giorni.

Il re fra pochi giorni parte per Hanover. Io non ho ancor ricevuti i miei ordini.

Colla prigionia perpetua di Plunchet e di Kelley, con l'esiglio del vescovo di Rochester e colla morte dell'avvocato [f. 115] Lear sono castigati i complici della passata (con riverenza parlando cospirazione). I poveri cattolici stanno da frigere. Il Bill contro di loro per la straordinario contribuzione di 100/m sterline è passato nelle due camere, nonostante gli uffici dell'Imperatore, del re di Francia e del re di Spagna. I membri dell'una e dell'altra camera conoscono l'ingiustizia, ma non hanno il coraggio di andar contro a Monsieur Walpool, di cui questa contribuzione è impegno, e che, avendo la Borsa in mano, l'apre e serve a suo talento. Bona video, et peiora sequor. E poi pretendono riguardi per i protestanti in Germania?

Ella mi continui il prezioso Suo affetto, e mi creda con sincerissimo rispetto, &c.

See Ill. 8. Riva's reply to Steffani's first letter from Italy is given complete. The Italian text of paragraphs 2–3 was printed in Timms, 'Music and Musicians', 35–6. <> During the year between nos. 25 and 28, Riva may have 'often asked Marquis Courtance' to convey his respects in letters to Steffani; but the six letters that Courtance wrote during this period (three during the month after no. 25, one in January 1723, and two during the month before no. 28) do not convey greetings from Riva or mention him. <> The 'arch-gurgling' or 'playful artifice' by which Cuzzoni gained applause from the 'ignorant' was presumably the new, pre-Classic style of singing, the leading exponent of which was Faustina Bordoni (see Tosi, *Observations*, 171, cited in our Introduction, section 5). <> Attilio Ariosti (1666–1729) was mainly employed in Berlin (1697–1703) and Vienna (1703–11) before he arrived in London in 1716 and composed *Tito Manlio* in 1717 (Lowell Lindgren, 'Ariosti's London Years, 1716–29', *Music & Letters*, 62 (1981), 331–51, and *idem*, in *New Grove* 2, i, 901–4). *Coriolano*, his first work for the Royal Academy, was performed thirteen times between 19 February and 11 May 1723 (Avery, *London Stage*, 723). <> Christopher Layer was publicly hanged on 17 May 1723, while his co-conspirator, James Plunket, and the most insidious Jacobite agent, Rev. George Kelly,

were sentenced to life imprisonment in the Tower (Bennett, *Tory Crisis*, 262–73). The revenue to be raised by additional, penal taxation of Catholics was £100,000; on 19 November 1722 Carteret addressed a letter to Alexander Campbell (Lord Polwarth) and Baron Charles Whitworth, explaining why this was 'not so unsupportable and ruinous to the Catholics as they pretend' (David Bayne Horn and Mary Ransome, *English Historical Documents, 1714–83* (London, 1957), 398–400). In the end, Walpole persuaded Parliament to suspend Habeas Corpus for a year and impose a fine of £10,000 on Roman Catholics, explaining that this was to pay for the heavy costs of their assumed support of the Pretender (Hatton, *George I*, 257). <> 'Bona video, et peiora sequor' is based on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Book 7, lines 20–1, where Medea, planning to betray her father for love, says: 'video meliora proboque; deteriora sequor' ('I see the better and approve it, but I follow the worse'). This concept was borrowed by Petrarch in the final line of his Canzone no. 264 ('et veggio'l meglio, ed al peggior m'appiglio'); the poem begins Part 2 of his *Canzoniere*, in which Petrarch mourns the death of his ideal, Madonna Laura. We are grateful to Jasper Griffin and Diego Zancani, Fellows of Balliol College, Oxford, who respectively told us of the Ovid and Petrarch citations.

## 29. Steffani to Riva

Padua, 10 August 1724 [Thursday, hand B]

If I reflect on my meagre merit, it seems certain that you no longer remember the bishop of Spiga; but if I consider the kindness with which you wanted me to hope for some place in your revered memory, I flatter myself that I still enjoy this happy fate. Be that as it may, the value I attach to your most esteemed benevolence is too great for me not to hazard these few lines in order to free myself from the very painful doubt in which I am held by your excessively long silence. And I do this so much more gladly, because I have been given an opportunity of urging you to serve, something to which you are spurred by natural instinct.

I know that the directors of the London theatre [the Royal Academy of Music] have great faith in your excellent taste and are currently beating the drum in Italy; all the more important, therefore, that they enlist here not common soldiers, but monarchs of the first rank, who, rather than representing such characters for only a few hours a day, never cease to sustain them. I know, moreover, that they are negotiating with a certain [Francesco] Borosini, but my sources conjecture that he may set his demands so high that it may be difficult for the London company to meet them. In case they do not agree, and the directors do not absolutely need [to engage] a tenor, I should like to recommend to your patronage a contralto perfectly well known to me in Venice, where he lives on a pension from Empress Amalia. He is called Angelo Poli—truly an angel in his habits as in his name. When you hear his voice, you will think you are hearing that of [Francesco] Ballarini, unless his [Ballarini's?] is much more flexible. As for his manner of singing, I would say only that he sings to my taste; but since perhaps my assertion may seem of little importance, I will tell you that the aforesaid Angelo sings to the taste of all those who hear him, for he can easily sing according to the taste of whoever asks him to perform. You may trust these sincere words of mine, and if you can find a niche for him, believe, on my good faith, that you will be honoured [in London] for your recommendation. For me this would be a most distinguished obligation, for the man certainly deserves success on all counts, the more so because that which would be done for him would not be unconnected with that done for the directors themselves. Please do everything you can, therefore, to give me this token of your most esteemed friendship, and let me promise you again that from my side I will do whatever is necessary, so that you will remain convinced of the most ardent desire that I nourish to fulfil your many precious commands.



[f. 33] Se io rifletto al mio poco merito, Ella al certo non si ricorda più del Vescovo di Spiga, ma se considero con quanta bontà Ella ha voluto che io spero qualche luogo nella Sua riverita memoria, mi lusingo haver ancora questa buona sorte. Sia comunque si voglia, troppo grande è il caso che faccio della di Lei stimatissima benevolenza per non azzardare queste poche righe ad oggetto di liberarmi dal penosissimo dubbio, su cui mi tiene il di Lei ormai troppo lungo silenzio; e lo faccio tanto più volentieri, che mi viene somministrata una occasione di eccitarLa a beneficiare, cosa alla quale il Suo naturale istinto la stimola.

Io so che li Signori Direttori del Teatro di Londra hanno molta fiducia nel di Lei ottimo gusto, e non ignoro che attualmente quei signori battono la cassa in Italia; tanto più importante che qui non si tratta di arrolare soldati gregari, ma monarchi di prima sfera, che per non rappresentarli che in alcune hore del giorno non lasciano però di farne la figura. Mi è noto altresì, che sono in trattato con un certo Signor Borosini; [f. 33v] ma suppongono le mie nuove ch'egli porti le sue pretensioni tanto in alto che sarà difficile che la compagnia di Londra vi possa arrivare. Caso che non si accordino e che li Signori Direttori non abbiano preciso bisogno d'un tenore, arderei raccomandare al di Lei patrocinio un contralto da me perfettamente conosciuto in Venezia, ove vive con una pensione dell'Augustissima Imperatrice Amalia. Si chiama il Signor Angelo Poli, angelo veramente di costumi come di nome; sentendo Ella la di lui voce, crederà sentir quella di Ballarino, se non è che questa è assai più flessibile. Della sua maniera di cantare, io non saprei dirLe altro se non che canta a gusto mio; ma perché forse la mia asserzione potrebbe parer di poco rilievo, Le dirò che il predetto Signor Angelo canta a gusto di tutti quelli che lo sentono, essendo capacissimo di cantare secondo il genio di chi lo fa cantare. Ella faccia sicuro capitale di queste mie sincere espressioni, e se può procurar qualche nichio a questo soggetto, creda sulla [f. 34] mia buona fede ch'Ella avrà dell'honore della Sua raccomandazione. Per me gliene haverei un obbligo distintissimo, perché il soggetto merita certamente per ogni conto che gli si faccia del bene, tanto più che quello che si farebbe a lui, non andrebbe disgiunto da quello dei Signori Direttori. Ella dunque faccia quanto può per darmi questo contrasegno della sua pregiatissima amicizia, e si riprometta che dal canto mio farò quanto potrò, perch'Ella resti convinta dell'ardentissima brama che nutro di eseguire molti Suoi preziosi comandi.

This letter, which is given complete, survives also in Steffani's copybook in *I-Rsege* Fondo Spiga, vol. 79, pp. 107–10, where, in the first sentence, 'goder' replaces 'haver'. <> The tenor Francesco Borosini (c.1690–after 1747), son of the tenor Antonio Borosini, was engaged by the Academy for its 1724/5 season at a cost of 1,000 guineas; when he made his début as Bajazet in Handel's *Tamerlano* on 31 October, he became the first Italian tenor to sing a leading role on the London stage (Winton Dean, in *New Grove* 2, iii, 918–19; Dean and Knapp, *Handel's Operas*, 667; and Avery, *London Stage*, 792). <> The name Angelo Maria Polli is found in only one known libretto, *I rivali generosi* (Padua, 1710), which was set to music by Gioseffo Saratelli (Sartori, *Libretti*, no. 20,027); he sang the part of Edelberto, the last of the seven listed roles. <> Wilhelmine Amalie (1673–1742) was the sister of Charlotte Felicitas (see no. 27, above) and the widow of Joseph I, emperor in 1705–11. Francesco Ballarini (born c.1660, died after 1717) sang contralto roles in Italy in 1680–93 (Sartori, *Libretti*, Indici, ii, 44) before entering the service of the Viennese court (Ludwig von Köchel, *Die kaiserliche Hof-Musikkapelle in Wien von 1543 bis 1867* (Vienna, 1869; repr. Hildesheim, 1976), 322 and 359).

### 30. Steffani to Riva

Padua, 3 November 1724 [Friday, hand B]

I do not doubt that you are unaware of how long we have been waiting for the guarantees required for the departure of Benedetta Sorosina, who has been ready to set off since the beginning of September. Seeing our hopes recede and the season of the year advance, Field-marshal Count [Johann Matthias von der] Schulenburg has generously decided to provide all

that's necessary for such a long journey, so that the girl can undertake it without being obliged to do so in the depths of winter. Having been notified that she is leaving the day after tomorrow, I can do nothing but accompany her with these few lines, which I shall send to Venice this evening, to be sure that she does not depart without this passport, however feeble it may be. My dearest Riva, you who have always manifested such great goodness toward me, manifest it again by receiving this very honest virtuosa as if she were someone who belonged to me. You are so kind, that these words are enough, and I feel certain that you will use all your credit and that of your friends to ensure that Benedetta does not regret having refused many theatres in Italy in order to grace the stage in London. Since this letter will surely be on the road for many weeks, it will be preceded by a longer one, which will leave by the post in the coming week; in it I will take the liberty of imploring you to do some favours for this little caravan before it arrives. In full confidence that you will not deny me them, I ask you to be unfailingly persuaded that in exchange I will fulfil promptly all the requests with which you may wish to honour me.

[f. 35] Io non dubito ch'Ella non sia informata di quanto tempo sia che si aspettano li recapiti necessari per far partir la Signora Benedetta Sorosina, ch'era pronta a mettersi in viaggio sin dal principio del passato 7bre. Vedendo le nostre speranze ritardarsi e la stagione avanzandosi troppo, il Signor Feld Marescialle Conte di Schulemburg ha presa la generosa risoluzione di somministrare il bisogno per un sì lungo viaggio, onde la figlia possa intraprenderlo senza essere obbligata a farlo nel cuor dell'inverno. Venendo io avvertito che la sua partenza è fissata a doman l'altro, non posso dispensarmi di accompagnarla con queste poche righe, che spedisco questa sera a Venezia per esser sicuro ch'essa non parta senza questo benché debolissimo passaporto. Il mio gentilissimo Signor Riva, che sempre ha havuta una bontà sì grande per me, haverà quella ancora di ricevere questa honestissima virtuosa, come se fosse persona che mi appartenesse. Alla di Lei gentilezza basta questa espressione, assicurandomi ch'Ella impiegherà tutto il Suo credito e quello de' [f. 35v] Suoi amici per far che la Signora Benedetta non si penta d'haver ricasati tanti teatri in Italia per passare ad ornar quello di Londra. Questa lettera dovendo star molte settimane per istrada, sarà preceduta da una più lunga, che partirà l'entrante settimana per la posta; e con quella prenderò poi la libertà di supplicarLa delle grazie ch'Ella può dispensar a questa picciola caravana prima del suo arrivo; e con piena fiducia ch'Ella non sia per negarmele, La prego esser costantemente persuasa che in contraccambio eseguirò prontamente tutti i comandi de' quali Ella vorrà honorarmi.

This letter is given complete. It is startling to think that Sorosina undertook such a long, exhausting and perilous journey with no guarantee of an engagement at the opera house in London. She and her father must have placed great faith in Steffani and the influence of his contacts there. It is noteworthy that her travel expenses were paid by Count Schulenburg (1661–1747), the eldest brother of (Ehregard) Melusine (see the comment to no. 17). As the supreme commander of Venetian land forces, Field-marshal Schulenburg had led a brilliant defence of Corfù against the Turks in 1715–16. He then lived in splendour in George I's palace on the Grand Canal, the Palazzo Loredan, where he amassed one of the greatest collections of paintings in eighteenth-century Venice. He was presumably fond of opera, because in 1728 George II gave him unrestricted use of his boxes in Venice (Timms, 'George I's Venetian Palace', 98, 101–3 and 112).

### 31. Steffani to Riva

Padua, 9 November 1724 [Thursday, hand B]

With an abundance of kindness you have always wanted me, my most revered Riva, to be persuaded of your obliging inclination to help me, so I cannot doubt but that you will receive



with your usual benevolence the letter that I sent at the end of last week to Benedetta Sorosina, who has taken it with her in the confidence that it will prepare the way for your authoritative patronage, which with all possible fervour I implore you to grant her.

I frankly confess, however, that after the departure of that most honest virtuosa, I heard something that made me feel quite bitter. To save time I decline to tell you the narrative now; but since there was no way in which I could forgo telling the whole story to Count Bothmer, I asked that most kind cavalier to relate it to you; I beg you to obtain it [from him] as soon as possible and then use all the credit that you deservedly enjoy with those directors of the King's Theatre, asking them to consider carefully the incontrovertible truth that I wrote to the aforesaid Count Bothmer and which I presume the Field-marshal, Count Schulenburg, has written to others. Now is the time to show me that you remember me and have some sympathy for my concerns, the more so as, in the present case, they do not depart at all from justice and integrity, to which, as you well know, I fully subscribe, as I should.

But that is not all: if you believe yourself, after such a small request, to be free from my importunity, you are grossly deceived. The poor Benedetta Sorosina has set off [from Venice], and since she passed through here [Padua] a few days ago, I suppose she is now up to her knees in the muds of Lombardy. The coachman who is driving her is the one who drove [Francesca] Cuzzoni some time [two years] ago. But when this latest little caravan arrives in London, where will it lay its head? One thing is certain: without the indefatigable charity of my kindest Riva, I foresee that it will be (as the saying goes) with 'a bunch of fleas in a sack'. If, therefore, you want to oblige me greatly, be so kind as to look for a house for Sorosina as close to the theatre as possible, and if you could find some Frenchman or even a German who would undertake to feed her and her small retinue, your record would be unsurpassable and I would profess undying obligation. You will have enough time to do the favours I ask, because, if my arithmetic does not deceive me, this letter will arrive three whole weeks before the little caravan that I am commending to you. If you would favour her with a note [about such preliminary arrangements] sent to Dover, that would be a most signal kindness. In the meantime I beg you, as earnestly as I know and can, to recommend her on my behalf to Mylord [Charles Mordaunt, Earl of] Peterborough, assuring him of my long-standing respects. Perhaps if he remembers how, with generous confidence, he told me in Hanover about his [military] affairs in Spain, he will harbour some good will for me and allow Sorosina to enjoy some of it. Tell our Bononcini that if he wants me to believe that he means all the kind things he says, he should be kind to this virtuosa. All I can say to end this long tale is that, according to what little I understand about music, Sorosina will sing in the way that they wish, provided there is someone who tells her how they want her to sing. You may count on this and make capital out of my obedience, because there will never be any occasion on which I will not do everything possible to fulfil your worthy commands.

[f. 37] *Ha voluto sempre il mio riveritissimo Signor Riva con eccesso di gentilezza, che io viva persuaso della Sua obbligantissima propensione a favorirmi, che non devo dubitare, non esser Lei per accogliere colla Sua consueta bontà la lettera che sul fine della settimana passata mandai alla Signora Benedetta Sorosina, che seco l'ha portata con fiducia, che possa con essa farsi strada al di Lei autorevole patrocinio, che per essa imploro io con tutto il fervore possibile.*

*Le confesso però ingenuamente che dopo la partenza di quella honoratissima virtuosa ho saputo un caso che mi ha sensibilmente amareggiato. Per economia del tempo io mi dispenso di fargliene la narrativa, ma come non potevo in modo alcuno dispensarmi di farla intiera al Signor Conte di Bothmar, prego quel gentilissimo cavaliere di comunicarla a Lei, e supplico Lei di procurare la comunicazione quanto prima, e poi impiegare tutto il credito che meritamente gode appresso cotesti Signori Direttori del*

*Teatro Reggio, pregandoLe a considerare maturamente la verità inconcuse che io ho scritta al predetto Signor Conte di Bothmar, e che non devo dubitare che il Signor Feld Marescialle Conte di Schulenburg non abbia [f. 37v] scritta ad altri. Tant'è che questo è il tempo di farmi vedere ch'Ella si ricorda di me, e che ha qualche compiacenza per le mie premure, tanto più che nel caso presente non si dilungano punto dall'equità, né dalla onoratezza di cui Ella ben sa che faccio tutta la professione che devo.*

*Questo però non basta; e s'Ella crede d'essere per così poco libera dalla mia importunità s'inganna all'ingrosso. La povera Signora Bendetta Sorosina è partita; e passata di qua li giorni addietro, io la suppongo nei fanghi della Lombardia sino alle ginocchia. Il vetturino che la conduce è lo stesso che condusse tempo fa la Cuzzona; ma quando questa nuova picciola caravana arriverà a Londra, ove mai darà della testa? Certo è, che senza la indefessa carità del mio gentilissimo Signor Riva, io prevedo che sarà (come volgarmente si dice) una manica di pulci nella stoppa. S'Ella dunque vuole obbligarmi all'eccesso, habbia la generosa bontà di cercare per la Signora Sorosina una casa più vicina che sia possibile al teatro; e se potesse trovar qualche francese o pur tedesco che volesse prender l'assunto di nodrirla [f. 38] colla sua picciola comitiva, la bravura sarebbe inarrivabile, ed io gliene professerei obbligazioni immortali. Ella avrà tempo sufficiente di farmi le grazie che Le chiedo, poiché se la mia aritmetica non m'inganna questa lettera arriverà tre buone settimane prima della picciola caravana che Le raccomando, e se vorrà favorirla di qualche avviso a Douvres sarà un segnalatissimo favore. Intanto La supplico quanto mai so e posso raccomandarla alla protezione di Mylord Peterborough per parte mia, assicurandolo de' miei antichi rispetti. Forse ricordandosi egli della generosa confidenza con cui mi fece parte in Hannovera delle sue vicende di Spagna, avrà qualche bontà per me e ne farà godere la Signora Sorosina. Dica poi al nostro Signor Bononcini, che se vuole che io creda volermi egli tanto bene quanto dice, ne voglia altrettanto a questa virtuosa. Ciò che Le posso dire per terminare questa lunga leggenda è che, per quel poco che io m'intendo di musica, posso dirLe che la Signora Sorosina canterà come vorranno, purché vi sia chi gli dica come deve cantare. Ella conti sopra di questo e faccia capitale della mia ubbidienza, perché non [f. 38v] vi sarà mai congiuntura in cui io non faccia tutto il mio possibile per eseguire i di Lei riveriti comandi.*

This letter is given complete. Steffani's bitterness was clearly related to the fact that Benedetta Sorosina had waited since early September for the Royal Academy to provide funds for her journey (see no. 33, below). Riva attempted to excuse the Academy by referring to its 'many expenses' and the 'stinginess' of one or more of its directors (see nos. 32 and 34, below). <> Lord Peterborough (1658–1735) was occasionally involved in the managerial affairs of the Academy; he secretly married the singer Anastasia Robinson in 1722, travelled to France to negotiate with singers in the summer of 1722, and helped to recruit Francesco Borosini two years later (Lindgren, 'Zamboni', nos. 100, 103, 110, 118, 153 and 175).

### 32. Riva to Steffani

London, 10 December 1724 [Sunday]

It was with infinite relief that I received the commands you were pleased to send in your revered folio of the 9th of last month, because I thus perceive that I am still alive in your precious memory.

From the enclosed letter you will see what I have written to [Giuseppe] Sorosina in response to what he was pleased to write to me concerning the arrival of his daughter, who has not yet appeared here. According to your wishes, I have spoken with Count Bothmer, and we discussed the missing [money], &c. To put it bluntly, all depends on how successful Benedetta is here, because the Academy has many expenses this year and the first opera [*Tamerlano*], which was by Mr Handel, was poorly received. Next we shall see that [*Artaserse*] of Father Attilio [Ariosti], which will necessarily be worse, and if they do not call

Bononcini to the rescue, things will deteriorate even further. The late arrival of [Benedetta] Sorosina could therefore be very damaging to her, in which case only the authority and protection of [Petronilla Melusine von der Schulenburg,] the countess of Walsingham, niece of the duchess of Kendal, could remedy the situation.

You may be certain that I shall not fail to give my attention to this matter, and I shall ensure that Benedetta employs whatever means are most decorous and useful for her.

Bononcini, who sends you his long-standing respects, will have great pleasure in serving you by serving [Benedetta] Sorosina. And when the duchess of Marlborough, his patroness, who gives him 500 pounds sterling a year, presents a musical entertainment in her house, he will certainly not forget Benedetta.

[P. S.] 20 December. I have held on to this my letter until today, hoping for the arrival of Benedetta, but to no avail. I tell you, I am very surprised at this delay, which will increase her difficulties with the directors of the Academy; the latter are distraught because the operas are going very badly, Attilio's having been staged with little success.

Continue your precious affection, and believe me in all deference, &c.

[f. 140] *Con mia infinita consolazione ho ricevuti i comandi che si è compiaciuta darmi col Suo riverito foglio delli 9 dello scorso mese, perché così mi veggio vivo nella Sua preziosa memoria.*

*Dalla qui acclusa lettera vedrà Ella ciò che scrivo al Signor Serosina, rispondendogli sopra quanto mi ha favorito di scrivermi in occasione della venuta qui della signora sua figlia, che non è ancor comparsa. Secondo i di Lei ordini mi sono abboccato col Signor Conte di Bothmar, ed abbiamo parlato dello smanco, &c. A parlar franco, tutto consiste nell'incontro che la Signora Benedetta avrà qui, perché l'accademia ha quest'anno molte spese, e la prima opera, ch'è di Monsieur Handel, ha cativo successo. Dopo verrà quella del Padre Attilio, che per necessità sarà peggio, e se non si chiama Bononcino al soccorso, le cose anderanno male, e così il ritardo della Signora Soresina potrebbe molto nuocerle, ed in [f. 140v] quel caso non v'è che l'autorità e la protezione della Signora Contessa di Walsingham, nipote della Signora Duchessa di Cendal che possa rimediarsi.*

*Ella stia pure sicura, che sopra di ciò non mancherò alla mia attenzione, e farò che la Signora Benedetta si serva di que' mezzi che saranno più decorosi e più utili per lei.*

*Il Signor Bononcino, che Le ricorda il suo antico rispetto, si farà sommo piacere di servir Lei, in servendo la Signora Soresina; e se la duchessa di Marleborough, sua padrona, che gli da -500-sterline l'anno, vorrà far qualche musica in sua casa, non dimenticherà certamente la Signora Benedetta.*

[P. S.] 20 dicembre. Sino al giorno d'oggi ho trattenuta questa mia lettera, sperando l'arrivo della Signora Benedetta, ma senza prò. E per dirLa, mi sorprende molto questo suo ritardo, il quale farà più difficili questi signori direttori dell'accademia, i quali [f. 141] si trovano in angustie, perché le opere vanno male assai, essendo andata in] scena quella di Attilio con poco successo.

Ella mi continui il prezioso Suo affetto, e mi creda con tutto l'ossequio, &c.

This letter is given complete. The Italian text of all but paragraph 1 was printed in Timms, 'Music and Musicians', 36. <> Riva writes Serosina or Soresina, while Steffani's secretary B always writes Sorosina. <> *Tamerlano* was performed nine times between 31 October and 28 November 1724, while *Artaserse* was given nine times between 1 and 29 December 1724 (Avery, *London Stage*, 792-802). Since these are impressive numbers, Riva's report of a poor reception—if true—must refer to poor attendance. <> Bononcini had planned to leave London in May 1724, but Henrietta, junior duchess of Marlborough, had kept him in England by offering him an extravagant salary (for any musician other than a singer) of £500 per annum. In return, Bononcini managed and played for her private chamber concerts (Lindgren, 'Vienna', 384-8).

### 33. Steffani to Riva

Padua, 25 January 1725 [Thursday, hand B]

I lack little, given that I have now received consoling signs that my dearest friends still preserve some memory of me and that such a great distance has not diminished the affection on which I was and am building such dependable capital. Your most precious letter of 10 December arrived a little late; this is no less true for the date on which it was finished, for, notwithstanding that this was 20 December, your letter arrived only with those of 29 December. This does not matter, however, seeing that your letters are always precious to me, whatever the date on which you post them.

To come now to the response owed to your very kind reply, I will tell you that I am greatly displeased that Sorosina has been on the road for such a long time, but if the weather in France has been like that here, this is not to be marvelled at. Not even the couriers can manage to make haste, and we receive all our letters with such irregularity that we are almost unable to cultivate our most essential correspondence. To be fair to Benedetta, she was ready to set off at the beginning of September, so her delay can be blamed directly on those who, for such a long time, led her to hope for a remittance [to cover travel expenses], which they always deferred; so much so that, if she had had to wait for it before she could leave, she would still be in Venice, suffering a very great loss on account of the theatres she had turned down because she believed she had been engaged by that in London. These reflections are founded on truth. If the [Royal] Academy wants to impute to that girl the faults of its own directors, it can do so, because it holds the purse; but I fear it will encounter difficulty on future occasions when it has an urgent need [for a singer from Italy]. Since, then, the fate of this girl depends on the reception that she receives there, I will tell you again, with my natural candour and with what little taste I have in music, that everything will depend on the instructions that this virtuosa is given, since she is certainly capable of singing in whatever way one may wish, and this is all I can tell you.

I am sorry that the [season's] first opera [*Tamerlano*], by Mr Handel, has fared badly and that the second [*Artaserse*], by Father Attilio [Ariosti], has suffered the same fate; we shall see what happens to the third, which I assume will be by the first of these two composers and will have been presented last year [*Giulio Cesare*]. If I could bend the ears of the Academy, I would certainly advise it to resort to Bononcini. Greet him cordially for me and assure him that my memory of him gives me infinite pleasure. I am delighted that the duchess of Marlborough recognizes his merit. Please send me some news of the marquis of Courtance, from whom I have received nothing for ages, and if you believe I am able to fulfil your esteemed commands, know that you will make a great mistake if you do not assiduously exercise my obedience.

[f. 39] *Manco male, che una volta ho ricevuti consolanti contrasegni che gli amici più cari conservino ancora qualche memoria di me, senza che una così prodigiosa distanza habbia sminuito l'affetto, di cui facevo e faccio un tanto sicuro capitale. La Sua preziosissima lettera dei 10. del passato è arrivata un po' tardi, e questo non è men vero per la seconda data, che ne fa il fine, poiché non ostante che questa sia dei 20; non è però giunta che colle altre dei 29. Questo non importa, attesoché i di Lei favori mi sono sempre preziosi in qualunque tempo me li dispensi.*

*Per vener hora alla replica dovuta alla Sua humanissima risposta, Le dirò che pruovo sommo dispiacere che la Signora Sorosina sia stata così lungo tempo in viaggio; ma se la stagione è corsa in Francia come qui, non occorre maravigliarsene. Gli stessi corrieri non trovano modo di far diligenza; e noi riceviamo tutte le lettere con tanta irregolarità, che quasi più non sappiamo come coltivare le corrispondenze più necessarie. Io devo rendere [f. 39v] questa giustizia alla Signora Benedetta, che sin dal principio del*

passato settembre era pronta a partire; sicché il di lei ritardo non può imputarsi che a quelli che per tanto tempo hanno fatta sperare la rimessa, e l'hanno sempre differita, tanto che se avesse dovuto aspettarla per partire, sarebbe ancora in Venezia con suo grandissimo danno per i teatri che ha ricusati ad oggetto di credersi impegnata con quello di Londra. Questi sono riflessi fondati sul vero: onde che se cotesta Accademia vuol imputare alla figlia il difetto dei suoi direttori lo può fare, perché ha la borsa in mano; ma temo che se ne troverà male nei casi a venire se pur siano per darsene di qualche urgente bisogno. Se poi la fortuna di questa figlia dipende dall'incontro che haverà costi, io posso replicarLe colla mia naturale ingenuità e per quel poco di gusto che ho nella musica, che tutto dipenderà dalle direzioni che saranno date a questa virtuosa, essendo ella certamente capace di cantare come si vuole, e [f. 40] questo è quanto posso dirLe.

Mi dispiace che la prima opera di *Monsieur Handel* sia andata a rovescio, e che la seconda del *Padre Attilio* habbia havuta la stessa sorte; vedremo come vada la terza, che mi vien supposto essere pur del primo di questi due compositori, e che fu già rappresentata l'anno passato. Se io fossi alle coste dell'Accademia, la consiglierei certamente di haver ricorso al *Signor Bononcini*. Ella me lo riverisca cordialmente, e lo assicuri che la sua memoria mi fa infinito piacere, godendo che la *Signora Duchessa di Marlebourgh* conosca il di lui merito. Mi dia qualche nuova del nostro *Signor Marchese di Courtance*, di cui è un secolo che più nulla vedo; e se mi conosce capace di eseguire i Suoi stimatissimi comandi, sappia, che havrà gran torto, se non tiene in assiduo esercizio la mia ubbidienza.

This letter is given complete. Since Sorosina had not reached London by 20 December, her journey had already lasted more than seven weeks. <> *Giulio Cesare*, which had received its première on 20 February 1724, was revived 'with alterations' for ten performances between 2 January and 9 February 1725 (Avery, *London Stage*, 802–9). <> Courtance had written his final letter to Steffani seven months earlier, on 23 June 1724 (f. 134v): 'I am expecting soon to be informed of my fate. I have asked very earnestly for a successor, so that I can return to Piedmont, where my presence is required by family affairs' ('J'attend dans peu d'estre instruit de mon sort. J'ay demendé très instament d'avoir un successeur et pouvoit me rendre en Piedmont, où mes affaires domestiques me demendent').

#### 34. Riva to Steffani

London, 31 January 1725 [Wednesday]

I have delayed responding to the most courteous folio of Monsignor bishop of Spiga, my great patron, which was delivered to me by [Benedetta] Sorosina upon her arrival here, because I wanted to be able to give you some account of the impression made by this good girl in our theatre. The countess of Walsingham, niece of the duchess [of Kendal], asked them to give her a tiny role in the old opera of Handel entitled *Giulio Cesare*, which has been revived on the stage. The lady's wish was granted, Handel composed two arias, and Benedetta did as she was told. She could not make a great impact, because the arias are mediocre and stuck on, as they say, with spit. Considering all that, she received appropriate applause. I mustered support on the opening night, and Bononcini visited her secretly in order to teach her how to humanize the inhumanity [of her pieces]. Secretly, I say, so as not to rouse the ire of Handelians. I hope that in some other opera, where Benedetta can have a significant part and support her singing with action, she will distinguish herself in the way that we all desire. [Anna] Dotti, who came from Paris because of Benedetta's late arrival and who sang in the first two, new operas, was also given a part in the third, by Handel, because she had made a good impression and her style of singing had generally gone down well. Although it is very bad, it is aided by a strong and even voice, and finds much favour. I do hope that the girl will have her own part in the last opera, which Padre or Monsieur Attilio

[Ariosti] will compose, and that your great protectors at court will ensure that she is not treated badly. I will strive strenuously to ensure this, as I have done and shall do on all occasions in order to obey the orders of monsignor [Steffani] and serve Benedetta, who, I hope, will already have done me justice for my attentiveness to her needs.

Bononcini, who, as ever, conveys his respects to monsignor, joins me in these sentiments and will help the girl in everything that she has to sing. He will make sure she sings in the concerts or musical entertainments that he organizes for his generous duchess of Marlborough, and they should bring her honour and prove useful.

Moreover, as the operas this year are not attracting much attention, we fear a proposal from some stingy director of the Academy for a reduction [of Sorosina's pay], especially because they had to get Dotti to come from Paris owing to the late arrival of Benedetta.

Since I am always the most cordial and most devoted servant of monsignor, you may be assured of my attention in this, as in every other matter, &c.

But I repeat, and I warn you most sincerely, monsignor, that I greatly fear a reduction, and that great perseverance will be required to prevent it, given the present cost-conscious directors. These no longer include Mylord Peterborough, the duke of Queensbery, Sir [Robert] Sutton, nor others who, when the occasion demanded, were generous, charitable and well-mannered. On the other hand, they believe that all the women who come from Italy must have the same marvellous talent for singing that Cuzzoni has, and they do not understand, as Bononcini tells them they should, that Cuzzoni's talent is unique in this world, and that others can have their own merits, even if they are very different from hers. I must give credit to Cuzzoni for what she has done for Benedetta and the trouble she has taken over her, &c.

[f. 142] Ho ritardato a rispondere al gentilissimo foglio di Monsignor Vescovo di Spiga, mio gran padrone, che mi fu consegnato dalla Signora Serosina al suo arrivo qui, perché ho voluto potergli dare qualche contezza della riuscita che ha fatto su questo teatro la buona figlia. La Signora Contessa di Walsingham, nipote della duchessa, pensò di farle dare una piccinina particina nella vecchia opera di Handel intitolata il *Giulio Cesare*, ch'è stata rimessa in teatro. La volontà della dama fu fatta, Hendel compose due arie, e la Signora Benedetta ubbidì. Il successo non poteva esser grande, perché le arie sono mediocri e poi attaccate, come si suol dire, collo sputo; con tutto ciò ebbe il suo applauso proporzionato alla cosa. Io feci broglio la prima sera, e segretamente Bononcino è andato da lei ad insegnarle come umanizzare quelle inumanità; dico segretamente non dar gelosia agli Hendeliani, e voglio sperare che in qualche altra opera ove potrà la Signora Benedetta aver [f. 142v] la sua parte, ed aiutare il canto coll'azione, si farà l'onore che desideriamo tutti. La Dotti, che venne da Parigi a cagione del ritardo della Signora Benedetta e che ha recitato nelle due prime opere nuove, ha ritenuta la parte ancor nella terza di Hendel, essendosi fatto un buon partito; e non dispiacendo generalmente il suo modo di cantare, che se bene cativo assai, pure aiutato da una voce forte ed eguale, incontra molto. Io voglio sperare che, nella ultima opera che dee fare il Padre o Monsieur Attilio, avrà la figlia la sua parte, e le grandi protezioni ch'Ell'ha della corte non permetteranno che le sia fatto torto; e perché ciò non segua io mi adoprerò con buon cuore, come ho fatto e faccio in tutte le occasioni per ubbidire agli ordini di monsignore e servire la Signora Benedetta, la quale spero che a quest'ora, mi avrà resa buona giustizia sull'attenzione che ho per lei.

Bononcino, che ricorda [f. 143] sempre il suo rispetto a monsignore, si unisce pur egli meco in questi sentimenti, ed assisterà la figlia in tutto ciò che dovrà cantare. Ne' concerti o siano divertimenti musicali ch'egli fa per la sua generosa duchessa di Marlebour, procurerà ch'ella pure canti, e ciò potrà fargli onore e procurarle utile.

Del resto, come le opere quest'anno non incontrano troppo, così può temersi da qualche spillorccio [spilorcio] direttore dell'accademia proposizione di defalco, particolarmente per aver dovuto far venire la Dotti da Parigi a cagione del ritardo della Signora Benedetta.

**Io sono sempre il cordialissimo e devotissimo servitore di monsignore, onde può assicurarsi della mia attenzione in questa, ed in ogni altra congiuntura, &c.**

**Ma torno a dire, e ne prevengo con tutta sincerità, monsignore, che temo forte del defalco e che si durerà gran fatica ad impedirlo co' presenti economi direttori, non essendo più tra loro Mylord Peterboror, il duca di Queensbury, il Cavaliere Sutton, ed altri, ch'erano [f. 143v] quelli, che alla occasione erano generosi ed avevano carità e creanza. Dall'altra parte credono costoro che tutte le donne che vengono d'Italia debbano avere il medesimo e meraviglioso talento che ha la Cuzzoni nel canto, e non distinguono, come Bononcino predica loro che dovrebbero fare, che il talento della Cuzzoni è cosa unica al mondo e che le altre possono aver il suo merito benché sieno da quella lontane. Debbo far giustizia alla Cuzzoni per quella che rende alla Signora Benedetta, e per l'impegno che ha preso per lei, &c.**

This letter is given complete. The Italian text was printed in full in Timms, 'Music and Musicians', 37–8. <> The fact that Sorosina's London début was inglorious may explain why Riva begins his letter in an unusually formal way, referring to Steffani as the bishop of Spiga. <> Sorosina portrayed a character named Nerina in the revival of Handel's *Giulio Cesare* between 2 January and 6 February 1725. The role was created specially for her and, as Riva notes, her two arias ('La speranza all'alma mia' and 'Chi perde un momento') are only loosely connected to the action of the opera. The revised scenes are in the appendix to Handel's conducting score (Hans Dieter Clausen, *Händels Direktionspartituren ('Handexemplare')*, Hamburger Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft, 7 (Hamburg, 1972), 152; Dean and Knapp, *Handel's Operas*, 518) and in Appendix II of Handel, *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*, ed. Winton Dean and Sarah Fuller (Oxford, 1998), 256–63. <> Sorosina was not given any role in Handel's *Rodelinda, regina de' Longobardi*, which was first performed on 13 February 1725. She portrayed Delia, 'a Scythian Lady, deceiv'd by Sidermes', who sang one aria in each act of Ariosti's *Il Dario*, which was given six times from 10 to 27 April 1725 (Avery, *London Stage*, 817–21); she sang more arias in this than in any other of her London roles, yet Delia fails to win Sidermes's love in the closing scene: 'Stendi mio ben la mano' ('Give me your hand, my love'), to which he replies, 'Non tanta fretta, Io vuo pensarvi ancora' ('Not so hasty, I still need time to think'). *L'Elpidia overo Li rivali generosi*, a pasticcio put together by Handel, closed the season with twelve performances from 11 May to 19 June (Avery, *London Stage*, 825–8). Since Dotti did not sing in this work, Sorosina took the significant role of Rosmilda, 'figlia di Vitige, amante di Arminio'. Yet she was given only two arias, one in Act 1, scene viii, about her poor father, the other in Act 3, scene v, about her unsuccessful love relationship. We do not know what Sorosina was paid for her performances, but she was not rehired for any subsequent season. <> Sir Robert Sutton (1671–1746) was a career diplomat (Hausmann, *Repertorium*, 146, 149 and 168; and David Bayne Horn, *British Diplomatic Representatives, 1689–1789*, Royal Historical Society, Camden Third Series, 46 (London, 1932), 16, 29 and 151–2) and a subscriber to the Academy; he seems to have been involved in the negotiations that brought Borosini to London (Lindgren, 'Zamboni', nos. 153 and 314).

### 35. Steffani to Riva

Padua, 8 March 1725 [Thursday, hand C]

Without compromising at all the utmost gratitude that my most revered Riva evokes by binding me indissolubly to him by means of his abundant favours, he can well believe that the sad tale of [Benedetta] Sorosina has distressed her father [Giuseppe] and made me somewhat bitter. The disgust it caused to that gentleman is clear and needs no comment. What I resent about it is that, having always maintained, in good faith, that in every place where that girl has sung, every attempt has been made to have her back, I should be sorry if her meagre success in that country cast doubt, I won't say on my taste in music, because that counts for little, but on my candour, which has always been spotless and beyond reproach. Luckily, the

brother of the girl has sent his father an account that tallies completely with what you deigned to write to me, adding only that Count Bothmer was notably disgusted by the conduct of the Academy's directors. I do not dare write about this today to that worthy minister, because, apart from the fact that he has little need to spend time on such bagatelles, I learned from a courier that I am deprived of his usual favour, whence I fear that either extraordinary duties or some alteration in his precious health may prevent him from granting it to me. The conclusion is that if one can't have what one wants, one should want what one can have. I have consoled [Giuseppe] Sorosina with the assurance of your protection for his daughter. She could benefit above all from the prudent charms dispensed by our most amiable Bononcini, to whom I ask you to convey the most lively protestations of my constant desire to serve him. For the rest, we must commend ourselves to God and wait for better times.

But what would you say if I had another favour to ask of you? I understand that a certain painter by the name of La Fontaine, who has left Lower Saxony and arrived in London, has decided to implore your protection in one of my affairs. I will not explain it to you, because that gentleman will have given you a minute account. I will say only that I am very concerned that it should succeed, because the Jesuit fathers of [the College of] Argentina [in Strasburg], with the approval of the faithless ministers of the Palatine court [in Düsseldorf], are ensuring that the success of the affair should concern me. La Fontaine writes that he has found a considerable obstacle in an Act of Parliament that prohibits the English from taking part in foreign lotteries. Now, if this be true, powerful support will be needed if I am to make it understood that this is not the lottery of Genoa, nor one of those in Holland, but a raffle of bagatelles, more or less of trifles. Count Bothmer is aware of this lottery, and when I next have occasion to write to him, I shall not fail to touch on this point. Meanwhile, I commend myself wholeheartedly to your most precious benevolence and authoritative actions, and am always ready to serve on all occasions that you will ask me to fulfil your esteemed commands.

[f. 41] Senza il minimo pregiudizio della somma gratitudine che il mio riveritissimo Signor Riva si vincola indissolubilmente con i Suoi abbondanti favori, può ben credere che la dolente storia della Signora Sorosina ha posto in angustie il di lei padre e data a me qualche amarezza. Il disgusto che ne ha ricevuto quel galantuomo è chiaro senza comentari. Quello che ne risento io è dall'aver di buona fede sempre asserito che in ogni luogo ove quella figlia ha cantato, si è fatto ogni sforzo per riaverla; onde mi dispiacerebbe che la di lei poco buona riuscita in quel paese facesse torto, non dico al mio gusto nella musica, perché non importa nulla, ma alla mia ingenuità, ch'è stata sempre illibata e senza rimprovero. Per fortuna il fratello della figlia ha fatta al padre una relazione totalmente conforme a quanto Ella si è degnata scrivermi, aggiungendovi solo di più che il Signor Conte di Bothmar si trovi notabilmente stomacato del procedere di cotesti Signori Direttori dell'Accademia. Io non ardisco scriverne oggi a quel degno ministro, perché oltre al poco bisogno ch'egli ha di perdere il tempo in [f. 41v] queste bagatelle, mi trovo da qualche ordinario in qua privo delle di lui consuete grazie, onde non son senza timore che o insolite occupazioni o qualche alterazione della sua preziosa salute gl'impediscono il dispensarmele. La conclusione si è che quando non si può quel che si vuole, convien voler quel che si può. Ho consolato il Signor Sorosina colla sicurezza della di Lei protezione per la figlia. Sopra il tutto gli potranno molto giovare le caute grazie, che gli dispenserà il nostro amabilissimo Signor Bononcini, al quale La supplico portare le più vive proteste del mio costante desiderio di servirlo. Per il resto conviene raccomandarsi a Dio ed aspettare la miglior sorte dal tempo.

Ma, che direbbe Lei, se io avessi un'altra grazia a chiederLe? Mi viene riferito, che un certo pittore, che si chiama Monsieur La Fontaine, partito dalla bassa Sassonia ed arrivato a Londra, avesse presa la risoluzione d'implorar il di Lei patrocinio in un negozio mio. Io non istarò a spiegarglielo, poiché quel



galantuomo Le ne averà reso minuto conto. Le dirò solo, che [f. 42] molto mi preme la sua riuscita, perché li P. P. [Padri] Gesuiti d'Argentina, d'accordo colla poca buona fede dei ministri della corte Palatina, fanno che la felicità dell'affare mi debba premere. Scrive il Signor La Fontaine, che trova un considerabile ostacolo in un Atto del Parlamento, che proibisce agl'inglesi di mettere a lotti forastieri: onde se questo fosse, vi sarebbe bisogno d'una gran protezione per far comprendere che questo non è il lotto di Genova, ne uno di quelli d'Olanda, ma un lotto di bagattelle e quasi quasi di frascherie. Il Signor Conte di Bothmar è consapevole di questo lotto, onde alla prima occasione che io abbia di scrivergli, non mancherò di toccargliene il punto; intanto mi raccomando vivamente alla di Lei preziosissima benevolenza ed autorevole attività, pronto sempre ad incontrare tutte le occasioni che mi si presenteranno di eseguire i Suoi stimatissimi cenni.

This letter is given complete. It is preserved also in Steffani's copybook in *I-Rscge* Fondo Spiga, vol. 80, pp. 210–13, which was the source for the transcription of virtually all of paragraph 1 in Timms, 'George I's Venetian Palace', 129–30, and of three excerpts from paragraph 1 in *idem*, 'Music and Musicians', 38–9. <> Perhaps Benedetta's brother was the composer Pietro Soresina; some of his works are listed in Chiarelli, *Raccolta estense*, nos. 55, 251, 354–5, 380–2, 483, 496 and 724. <> Georg Wilhelm Lafontaine (1680–1745), a painter of Huguenot stock, served the courts of Celle (1698–1705), Hanover and London (1726–30), where he painted George I and various members of his family (Thieme, Becker and Vollmer, *Allgemeines Lexikon*, xxii, 208, and Hatton, *George I*, plate 40, and pp. 47, 171 and 403). The 'affair' in which he and Steffani sought the assistance of Riva was clearly related to Steffani's need to raise money (hence his reference to the Jesuits and the Palatine government, who shared the proceeds of the benefice to which he was entitled, as noted in our Introduction, section 1), and probably to the sale of pictures from his collection, discussed in nos. 39 and 41, below. He apparently first thought of disposing of his paintings through a lottery (or raffle). Then, when he learned that the parliamentary Act of Suppression (1699) had declared all such lotteries illegal (see Cecil Henry L'Estrange Ewen, *Lotteries and Sweepstakes: An Historical, Legal, and Ethical Survey of their Introduction, Suppression and Re-establishment in the British Isles* (London, 1932), 176–8), he apparently decided to sell them outright.

### 36. Steffani to Riva

Hanover, 29 January 1726 [Tuesday, hand C]

I don't know how much the story that I am preparing to tell my most revered Riva will amuse him, [but] I well know that wicked fortune desires that I be constrained not to neglect to place it under his eyes in all its detail, not only so that he should be informed, but also in order that he may be so kind as to give an account of it to our [friend] Count Bothmer. The confidence with which I expect this favour from you means that, in my letter today to that worthy minister and incomparable friend, I may allude to what you will have the goodness to tell him about this extraordinary case, of which it would be difficult to find another example.

As you will doubtless recall, the last time I had the honour of seeing you before your departure [from Hanover in November 1725], you advised me, repeatedly and with the utmost concern, to banish that old priest [Mocheros, Moscherosch or Moscherosse] who had fallen here out of the clouds, and, with the door to my room in your hand, you said: 'send him away, because he is not in this region by chance' . . .

[f. 43] Io non so quanto la storia che m'accingo a fare al mio riveritissimo Signor Riva sia per divertirlo; so bene che la mala sorte vuole che mi vegga costretto a non trascurare di mettergliela sotto gli occhi con tutte le sue circostanze, non solo perché ne sia informato, ma ancora affinché abbia la somma compiacenza di renderne conto al nostro Signor Conte di Bothmar, poiché la fiducia con cui spero da Lei

questo favore fa che, nella mia lettera di oggi a quel degno ministro ed incomparabile amico, io mi rimetta a quanto Ella avrà la bontà di confidargli sopra questo strano caso, di cui forse difficilmente si troverà il secondo.

Ella si ricorderà senza dubbio che l'ultima volta ch'ebbi l'onore di vederLa avanti la Sua partenza, Ella mi consigliò con somma premura e reiteratamente di far uscir da Hannovera quel vecchio prete che vi è caduto dalle nuvole e che colla porta della mia stanza in mano mi disse 'La lo mandì via, perché non è al caso per questo paese' . . .

When Steffani returned to Hanover on 25 October 1725, he found Catholic affairs in disarray. This letter, which survives also in his copybook in *I-Rscge* Fondo Spiga, vol. 82, pp. 81–5, was written three months later. <> In the omitted passage he states that he has heard why the old priest was ousted from Hildesheim, how he wore a long beard in Vienna to conceal his identity, and how the imperial council refused to receive his petitions. The priest has behaved badly in Hanover, badgering Steffani to accept him as a missionary while protesting to the regency that he has no such ambition but merely seeks refuge from persecution by the chapter of Hildesheim Cathedral and the Jesuits. He has also engaged in other ruses. If he left with good grace, Steffani would give him a reference and a decent allowance for his journey, but he has obstinately refused and has even obtained permission to remain from Hanoverian ministers of state. Steffani has suspended him from saying Mass and invites Riva to judge how he feels, having a Catholic priest in Hanover against his will while Protestant ministers enable him to disobey his superior with impunity. The priest's crime has been compounded by insolence, in that he has had the temerity to send a notary and two witnesses to ask Steffani to name his accuser and the nature of his crime; the notary did not get beyond the foot of Steffani's staircase. This is the story that Steffani asks Riva to tell Count Bothmer. For later developments, see nos. 37–9 and 41, below. Steffani gives the priest's surname as Mocheros, but only once, in no. 41. According to Woker, *Geschichte*, 202, it should be Moscherosch. He is conceivably the Lodovico Moscherosse who was one of four candidates in 1703 for a chair of humanities at the Collegio Urbano in Rome (Maksimilijan Jezernik, 'Chapter 10: Il Collegio Urbano', in *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide, Memoria Rerum: 350 Jahre im Dienste der Weltmission, 1622–1972, 2: 1700–1815*, ed. J[osef] Metzler (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1973), 292); we are grateful to Gerry Slowey for assistance in interpreting this reference.

### 37. Riva to Steffani

London, 17 February 1726 [Sunday]

Your most illustrious lordship could not have asked anyone better-equipped than I to inform Count Bothmer about the mad and also malicious conduct of the well-known priest [Mocheros]. I took with me a very long letter that this man had written to my master, the duke [Rinaldo III of Modena], imploring his protection against his persecutor, who he said was your m. i. lordship. I left this letter in the hands of the count, who was equally surprised and irritated by its content, and will make good use of it to serve you and liberate you from this evil man. To obtain this outcome, I am told that you must inform the ministers there [in Hanover] of the affair, asking them to present the case to His Majesty, whereupon this count will lend a hand to achieve the result. When your m. i. lordship writes to me that you have done this, I shall be at the minister's side to urge him [Bothmer] to serve you, as is his wont, and also to act on his own.

Bononcini reminds your m. i. lordship of his reverent respect, and implores your continued affection. Here the opera is going to perdition. The directors have determined that Handel should assemble an opera with utmost speed while we await the arrival of Faustina [Bordoni], the sole refuge on which their hope is pinned. Bononcini has already presented



three concerts at the [home of] the duchess of Marlborough, his good and generous patroness—all new stuff, but not in the new [i.e., pre-Classical] style. Cuzzoni and Senesino sing well at these events, where harmony and expression, nature and art give much pleasure.

I beg your m. i. lordship to acknowledge receipt of the enclosed [conceivably a copy of the letter from Mocheros to Duke Rinaldo III], and I remain with the usual inalterable deference, &c.

[f. 144] Non poteva Vostra Signoria Illustrissima ordinare d'instruire il Signor Conte di Bothmar della pazza ed insieme maliziosa condotta del consaputo prete a persona che potesse farlo meglio di me. Io aveva meco una lunghissima lettera che quest'uomo scriveva al duca mio padrone, implorando la sua protezione contro il suo persecutore, che diceva essere V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> Ho lasciata tal lettera nelle mani del signor conte, ch'è stato egualmente sorpreso ed iritato del contenuto di essa, e ne farà buon uso per servirLa e liberarLa da questo maluomo. Per ottenere il qual fine mi die' esser necessario ch'Ella informi dell'affare i ministri costì, pregandoli a farne rappresentazione a Sua Maestà, che allora esso signor conte darà la mano per ottenere l'intento. Quando V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> mi scriverà d'aver ciò fatto, sarò a' fianchi del ministro per spronare il genio ch'egli ha di servirLa e che per altro da se medesimo corre.

[f. 144v] Il Signor Bononcini ricorda a V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> il suo riverente rispetto, e La supplica della continuazione del Suo amore. Qui le opere vanno in perdizione. I signori direttori hanno destinato che presto presto Monsieur Händel faccia un opera intanto che arrivi la Faustina, unico refugio a cui si appoggia la loro speranza. Bononcino ha fatte a quest'ora tre accademie dalla duchessa di Marleborough, sua buona e generosa padrona, tutta roba nuova ma non già di stil nuovo. La Cuzzoni e Senesino cantano pur bene in queste accademie, ove l'armonia e l'espressione, la natura e l'arte danno tanto piacere.

Supplico V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> del ricapito della inchiusa, e sono col solito inalterabile ossequio, &c.

This letter is given complete. The Italian text of paragraphs 2–3 was printed in Timms, 'Music and Musicians', 36. <> *Elisa*, 'an Opera of a foreign Growth', was premièred on 15 January and dropped from the repertoire after its sixth performance, on 1 February, because of 'thin' audiences (*Universal Mercury* for February 1726, cited in Avery, *London Stage*, 853). Handel's three-year-old *Ottone* was then given ten times before his new *Scipione* received its première on 12 March, less than six weeks after *Elisa* had been discontinued. <> The works that Bononcini presumably wrote or revised for Marlborough's concerts include nine cantatas in *GB-Er* MS P 1422, four serenatas in *D-B* 2191, 2191/10, 2192 and 2192/10, two serenatas in *A-Wn* S.M. 22123–4, and the cantata accompanied by two violins and a bass in *GB-Lbl* Add. MS 14213, ff. 103–10 (Lindgren, 'Vienna', 387–8 and 406).

### 38. Steffani to Riva

Hanover, 1 March 1726 [Friday, hand C]

To console myself completely with the longed-for certainty of the constant benevolence of your *most* illustrious lordship, I lack nothing other than the observation that, in your *most* kind reply of 17 February, you departed from your intimate manner of writing, weighing down your *most* precious lines with so many of those '*most* illustrious lordships' that they impose upon me the obligation to change my own former style, though without any alteration of my *most* constant gratitude.

Your m. i. lordship, therefore, cannot but believe what an acute sense of obligation I feel toward you for being so kind as to inform Count Bothmer of the mad and malicious conduct of the well-known priest [Mocheros]. You did very well to leave in the hands of that worthy minister the letter that the wretch had written to your most serene patron [Duke Rinaldo], but to illustrate the true madness of this homuncule, look at the enclosed précis of a letter that he has written to the duke of Lorraine, and conclude from this that he has written hither

and thither to the four corners of the world . . . In sum, I would be content with an order from the king to the regency [of Friedrich Ludwig, duke of Gloucester]; its [precise] terms matter little, since I would see to the rest, provided the Blessed God give me back enough strength to leave my house. If your m. i. lordship will continue to promote my case with the minister [Bothmer], believe that you will be doing not only a great favour for me, but also a great good for this Catholic community.

I beg you next to assure our Bononcini of my everlasting esteem and to tell him that I am pleased with all my heart that his concerts [for Marlborough] are going well; I am convinced that they will always get better and better, so long as he does not change his style, which he seems determined to maintain. Your m. i. lordship has been obeyed in the forwarding of the letter that you sent me [conceivably a copy of the letter from Mocheros to Duke Rinaldo III], and I shall always be obeyed, every time you test my allegiance by [sending] your revered commands.

[f. 45] A consolarmi intieramente colla sospirata certezza della costante benevolenza di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima, altro non manca se non che l'osservare nella sua umanissima risposta delli 17. del passato, che ha mutata la maniera confidente di scrivere, caricando le Sue preziosissime righe con que' tanti V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> che m'impongono la legge di cangiar ancor io il mio primo stile, senza però alcun pregiudizio della mia constantissima gratitudine.

V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> dunque non può credere qual sensibile obbligazione io Le professi della bontà con cui ha voluto informare il Signor Conte di Bothmar della pazza e maliziosa condotta del consaputo prete. Ella ha fatto benissimo a lasciar nelle mani del qui detto degno ministro la lettera che quel sciagurato scriveva al serenissimo di Lei padrone, ma per farLe vedere la vera pazzia di questo uomiccuiolo, osservi qui annessa la minute d'un'altra lettera, ch'egli ha scritta al Duca [f. 45v] di Lorena, e concluda da questo ch'egli scrive à tors et à travers nei quattro cantoni del mondo . . . [f. 46] In somma a me basterebbe un ordine del re alla reggenza; in quali termini poi, poco importa, perché io solliciterei il resto, purché Dio Benedetto mi ridoni tanto vigore a poter uscir di casa. Veda V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> se può secondare questo mio desiderio presso il ministro, e creda che farà non solo a me sommo favore, ma un gran bene a questa comunità cattolica.

La supplico poi assicurar il nostro Signor Bononcini di tutta la mia constantissima stima, e dirgli che mi rallegro di vero cuore che le sue accademie vadano bene, essendo persuaso che anderanno sempre di bene in meglio quando non muterà stile, come parmi risoluto di fare. V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> è restata ubbidita coll'indirizzo della lettera trasmessami, e la sarò sempre ogni volta che si compiaccia mettere co' Suoi riveriti comandi la mia ubbidienza alla pruova.

The omitted passage states that the complaint [of Mocheros] was that Steffani refused to accept him as a missionary. The latter is now angry mainly because the priest has refused to tell him where he was before he came to Hanover. He had tried to deceive Steffani by showing him an attestation, which was 'evidentemente falsificato' ('obviously forged'), from the suffragan of Mainz [Johann Edmund Gedult von Jungenfeld, suffragan 1703–27: cf. Erwin Gatz and Stephan Janker, eds., *Die Bischöfe des Heiligen Römischen Reiches, 1648 bis 1803: Ein biographisches Lexikon* (Berlin, 1990), 612]. Count Bothmer's proposal, of getting the Hanoverian ministers to unite in a statement to the king, 'sarebbe la mer à boire' ('would be like trying to drink the ocean'); Steffani will therefore write to Bothmer today and ask him to raise the matter with the king.

## 39. Steffani to Riva

Hanover, 26 March 1726 [Tuesday, hand C]

Your most illustrious lordship knows already that I have always benefited to the utmost from your goodness and from the precious friendship with which you have so generously honoured me, so that it pleases me to hope that you will grant me the liberty of imploring favours from you.

During the brief time that I last had the honour of seeing you here [October–November 1725] we discussed my affairs to such an extent that I can assume that your m. i. lordship is not unaware of them. The court of Rome, believing that religion had need of my presence in these lands, prevailed on me to come here. I was filled with a thousand fair hopes that, by invoking the authority of the pope [Benedict XIII], I would unfailingly recover the necessary means for my subsistence, since I ask only for what in all justice is owed me. But just when it appeared that the orders and prayers of His Holiness might find a way in, I am caught in a never-ending duel, the result of the obduracy of the French and Palatine courts. Your m. i. lordship should therefore not wonder why I am seeking ways to help myself avoid being forced to abandon this apostolic ministry for the second time, because there is an obvious danger that my second departure from here would have consequences even worse than those of the first.

Your m. i. lordship knows that I have some pictures. You know a painter there, called La Fontaine, who has full knowledge of these pictures. This man has been trying for over a year to persuade me to send some of them to England, since he imagines that when they are seen they will find buyers. Being finally assured by him that whatever customs duty is paid upon entry to the kingdom will be restored if the pictures have to be sent back, I have decided to *take the risk*. I still, however, lack a close friend to whom I may address the pictures. His only inconvenience would be to receive and take good care of them—he need do nothing more, unless he wishes, through an excess of kindness, to support the efforts of the painter [La Fontaine]. True, it would also be necessary for this friend to have the goodness to pay the customs duty, in the certain knowledge that, when informed of the sum demanded (which cannot be known in advance), I will arrange for him to be reimbursed by Cesare Sardi of Amsterdam without a moment of time being lost. Your m. i. lordship will decide whether you wish, or are able, to do me this favour yourself, and if you have reason to refuse (knowing well that I am not tyrannical to my friends), see whether you can find someone who would kindly oblige. I assure you that, in either case, I will profess the strictest obligation to you. You can well imagine that I await with impatience the honour of your reply, because until I receive it I cannot and must not take the measures necessary for this dispatch.

Just two words about our well-known priest [Mocheros], if indeed he merits that title. He is still here, and, because I have been pinned inside my house for little short of two months and Baron Bernstorff still cannot risk exposing himself to the air, I do not know what effect has been produced by the king's decree to the regency, with which I was very content. Meanwhile, I have banned him [Mocheros] from taking the sacraments, this being the only kind of excommunication available to me here. We shall see what he does next; but it seems that he is beginning to draw in his wings now that he knows that we are no longer ignorant of what he did in Hildesheim and then in Vienna.

May your m. i. lordship not weary of assisting me; cordially greet our Bononcini; and believe that, in everything, I manifest the perfect gratitude with which I seek to prove to you my obedience, without reserve.

[f. 47] *Vostra Signoria Illustrissima già sa aver io fatto sempre sommo capitale della Sua bontà e della preziosa amicizia, con cui ha voluto tanto generosamente onorarmi, di modo che mi giova sperare ch'ella sia per permettermi la libertà che Le chiedo d'implorare i Suoi favori.*

Nel poco tempo che ho avuto l'onore di vederLa qui ultimamente, abbiamo assai discorso delle cose mie per poter da me supporsi che V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> non le ignori. La corte di Roma mi ha spinto qui, credendo che la religione avesse bisogno della mia presenza in questi paesi; sono stato caricato di mille belle speranze che, mediante la impiegata autorità del papa, io ricupererei senza fallo i mezzi necessari alla mia sussistenza, poiché altri non ne chiedo che quelli che mi sono dovuti di piena giustizia. Ma con tutta l'apparenza che vi era che gli ordini e le preghiere di Sua Santità trovassero ingresso, io sono alle due da capo a causa della durezza della corte di Francia e della Palatina. V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> dunque [f. 47v] non si maravigli che io cerchi le vie di aiutarmi per non esser costretto di abbandonar per la 2da volta questo apostolico ministero, con evidente pericolo che la mia seconda partenza di qua abbia sequele ancora peggiori di quelle che ha avute la prima.

V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> sa che io ho de' quadri. Ella conosce un pittore ch'è costì, e si chiama La Fontaine, il quale ha piena notizia delli suddetti miei quadri. Questo già da più d'un anno in qua si affatica a persuadermi di mandar in Inghilterra una parte de' miei quadri, lusingandosi che quando saranno veduti troveranno compratori. Finalmente assicurandomi egli che quanto si paga alla dogana per l'entrata nel regno venga restituito se li quadri si debbano rimandare, io son risoluto de *hazarder le paquet*. Ma sin'ora mi manca un'amico di cuore al quale io possa indirizzar i quadri senza suo altro incomodo che quello di riceverli ed averne cortese cura e senza prendersi altra pena, se pur non volesse per sovrabbondanza di gentilezza secondare le diligenze del pittore. È vero che bisognerebbe ancora [f. 48] che questo amico avesse la bontà di pagar la dogana con sicurezza, che all'avviso della somma impiegata (la quale [quale] non si può saper preventivamente) io lo farei rimborsare per il canale del Signor Cesare Sardi di Amsterdam senza perdita di un momento di tempo. V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> veda dunque s'ella voglia o possa farmi questa grazia, e quando abbia ragioni di ricusarmela (sapendo bene che io non son tiranno degli amici) veda se potesse trovarmi chi volesse far questa carità, assicurandosi che in un modo o nell'altro, io gliene professerò *strettissime* obbligazioni. Ella può ben figurarsi che aspetto con impazienza l'onore della Sua risposta, perché prima di riceverla non posso ne devo prender le misure necessarie per questa spedizione.

Due sole parole del nostro noto prete, se pur ne merita il nome. Egli è ancora qui, perché essendo io da poco meno che due mesi in qua inchiodato in casa, ed il signor Barone di Bremsdorff non potendo ancora arrischiarsi all'aria, son all'oscuro dell'effetto che abbia prodotto il rescritto del re a questa reggenza del [f. 48v] quale son restato *contentissimo*. Intanto io gli ho fatto proibire di partecipare ai sacramenti, essendo questa la sola scomunica di cui posso servirmi qui. Vedremo cosa farà: pare però ch'egli cominci ad abbassar le ali dopo che sa che qui più non s'ignora ciò, che gli è successo a Hildesheim e poi a Vienna.

V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> non si stanchi di favorirmi, riverisca cordialmente il nostro Signor Bononcini, e creda a tutta pruova la perfetta gratitudine, con cui cercherò di comprovarLe [la] mia ubbidienza senza riserva.

This letter, which is given complete, survives also in Steffani's copybook in *I-Rscge* Fondo Spiga, vol. 82, pp. 223–6. Steffani had implied, in no. 35, above, that he was ready to sell his paintings, but no. 39 is the first letter in which he declares this to be his intention. The next letters to discuss it are no. 41, below, then one of November 1726 to Lothar Franz von Schönborn (1655–1729), elector-archbishop of Mainz (Woker, 'Der apostolische Vikar', 521–2).

## 40. Riva to Steffani

London, 3 May 1726 [Friday]

Because of a mistake made by a servant of Count Bothmer, which is the sole reason that can be imagined, I have received only today your old folio of 26 March. The high regard in which I hold your most illustrious lordship, and the attention that I owe to your orders, demand that I make this small apology on my behalf, so that the tardiness of my reply is not imputed to any failure of mine.

Turning to speak of the matter that is the subject of your letter, I must tell you, as your good servant, that at the present time, when Parliament adjourns and the rich and 'curious' leave London and go to their houses in the country, I feel that the despatch of your paintings would be inopportune, because they would not be able to be displayed until next year . . . Therefore my advice would be that, toward the end of this year, when the nobility have come back to the city from the country, your m. i. lordship should address the paintings to Sardi, and he should dispatch them to a similar merchant, his colleague Giuseppe Como, a very honourable man and a great friend of mine. Como has a spacious house in which to hang and display pictures, a necessary thing and not so easy to find in this country. I would then work together with Como and ensure that my friends who are dilettantes take the trouble to speak favourably to those who love rarities and have enough money to satisfy their whims. By doing things in this way we shall enjoy another considerable advantage, and this is that, by addressing your paintings to the said Como, the customs office will make it easy for us to recover them and will impose less stringent taxes, because he is a great friend of its governor . . .

I hope with all my heart that you are completely rid of that old priest, well known for his tiresomeness and for his maliciousness.

Keep me in your revered affection, and greet on my behalf Rezzani, Major Maillet, and all our other friends. I remain with the usual deference, &c.

[f. 145] Per isbaglio d'un servitore del Signor Conte di Bothmar, che altro non saprei immaginarmi che ne fosse stata la cagione, ricevo solamente oggi il Suo vecchio foglio delli 26 marzo. Il mio rispetto verso di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima, e l'attenzione che debbo a Suoi comandi, vuole che io Le faccia questa picciola apologia in mio favore, accioché la dilazione della risposta non venisse imputata a mio mancamento.

Entrando poco a parlare della materia che fa il soggetto della detta Sua lettera, debbo da Suo buon servitore dirLe, che nel tempo in cui siamo, nel quale finisce il Parlamento, onde i ricchi ed i curiosi lasciano Londra e vanno alle loro case di campagna, trovo che l'invio de' Suoi quadri è importuno, perchè sino all'anno venturo non se ne potrà far esito . . . [f. 145v] onde il mio consiglio sarebbe questo, cioè, che V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> verso la fine dell'anno corrente, nel qual tempo la nobiltà finisce di venire in città dalla campagna, indirizasse al Signor Sardi i detti quadri, e che questi li spedisce ad un mercante suo corrispondente che si chiama Signor Giuseppe Como, onoratissimo uomo e molto mio amico. Questi ha una casa capace per stendere e mettere in buona vista pitture, cosa necessaria e non tanto facile da trovarsi in questo paese. Con il Signor Como io poi m'intenderei e procurerei che i miei amici dilettanti prendessero impegno di ben parlare a' signori che amano le rarità e che hanno dannato da potersi soddisfare. Un vantaggio considerabile si avrà pure così facendo, e sarà quello: ch'essendo dette pitture indirizzate al detto Signor Como, avremo dalla dogana e facilità a ricuperarle e minor rigore nella tassa, per esser egli grande amico del governatore d'essa . . .

[f. 146] Io desidero di tutto il mio cuore ch'Ella si libera affatto da quel vecchio prete già noto, e per la sua seccaggine e per la sua malizia.

Mi continui Ella il riverito Suo affetto, mi riverisca il Signor Rezzani, Monsieur le Majeur Mallet, et tous les autres amis. Sono col solito ossequio. &c.

Giuseppe Como, who had agreed to receive Steffani's pictures, was a merchant in London who represented Parma in 1727–33 and Naples in 1739–41 (Hausmann, *Repertorium*, 239 and 269, and Lindgren, 'Zamboni', 188, s.v. Como). He was already in London by 28 July 1720, when he was involved in business dealings between Riva, Rezzani and Steffani, according to a letter sent to Riva by Cesare Sardi of Amsterdam (*I-MOe* Autografoteca Campori, busta Steffani, f. 56).

## 41. Steffani to Riva

Hanover, 31 May 1726 [Friday, hand C]

The tardiness with which my letter of 26 March was delivered to your most illustrious lordship caused more than a little disruption, and I also know that your most kind reply of 3 May remained *en route* for a long time, because I did not receive it until last Tuesday, a day when it was impossible for me to render you the proper thanks, because the mineral waters that I am taking do not allow me to sit at my desk every day.

As a token of your long-standing good will, I am accepting the advice you have given me about sending some of my pictures there by sea. Your m. i. lordship may be assured that I shall follow it to the letter and, at the prescribed moment, ask Signor Sardi to do what your m. i. lordship suggests . . . and I shall take care at the same time to notify you of everything, so that I shall be able to enjoy the benefit of your favour with Giuseppe Como.

We have been rid of the wretched priest Mocheros since Holy Week [14–20 April N. S.]—too late for the evil he did, too soon for what he deserved to have done to him—and I can well assure your m. i. lordship that if I had known from the start what I know now—that that man, who I thought had fallen from the clouds, had instead been spewed up from Hell—I would not have let him get off so lightly . . .

All your friends, particularly Rezzani and Maillet, are infinitely obliged to your m. i. lordship for your continued memory of them. The first of these two is devastated, with good cause, by the recent loss of his wife, who died suddenly, one might say, under my own eyes. Greet our Bononcini cordially on my behalf, and never doubt my most constant desire to obey all your precious commands.

[p. 444] Non è stato piccolo il disordine della tardanza, con cui la mia lettera delli 26. di marzo passato è stata resa a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima; e mi è sensibile l'altro ancora, che la umanissima Sua risposta delli 3. del cadente sia restata tanto in cammino, non avendola io ricevuta che martedì scorso, giorno in cui non mi fu possibile rendergliene le dovute grazie, perché non ogni dì le acque minerali che prendo mi permettono mettermi al tavolino.

Per contrasegno dell'antica Sua preziosa benevolenza, prendo il consiglio ch'Ella mi dà in ordine a mandar una parte de' miei quadri di là dal mare. V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> sia persuasa che lo seguirò a puntino e che verso il tempo prescrittomi pregherò il Signor Sardi di far quanto V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> mi suggerisce . . . [p. 445] ed avrò nello stesso tempo la cura di avvertirLa di tutto, affinché possa farmi goder le Sue grazie presso il Signor Giuseppe Como.

Dello sciagurato prete Mocheros siamo liberi affatto già dalla Settimana Santa in qua: troppo tardi per il male che ha fatto, troppo presto per quello che meritava gli si facesse; ed io posso bene assicurar V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> che se avessi saputo prima come ho saputo dopo, che quell'uomo, che io credevo caduto qui dalle nuvole e che però vi era vomitato dall'inferno, non lo avrei lasciato partire a sì buon mercato . . .

[p. 446] Tutti gli amici, e particolarmente li signori Rezzani e Maillet, professano a V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> infinite obbligazioni della memoria ch'Ella conserva di loro. Il primo di questi due è afflittissimo con gran ragione per la perdita che ha fatta della sua consorte, morta, si può dire, repentinamente sotto i miei occhi. Ella mi riverisca cordialmente il nostro Signor [p. 447] Bononcini, e non ponga mai in dubbio il costantissimo desiderio che ho di eseguire molti Suoi preziosi comandi.

This letter is extant only in Steffani's copybook in *I-Rscge* Fondo Spiga, vol. 82, pp. 444–7. <> It seems unlikely that Steffani sent any of his pictures to England. His next approach was apparently to Pallavicini in Dresden, who replied on 25 June 1726 (*I-Rscge* Fondo Spiga, vol. 11). Pallavicini acknowledges that he has received a list of the paintings without prices, and he discourages Steffani: 'Non so quanto abbia accertato chi Le ha supposto che qui sarebbe facile l'esitarli, mentre in primo luogo rarissimi, per non dir nessun, sono gli amatori di tal suppellettile . . . [p. 2] Un'altra difficoltà,

ne forse la minima, è poi l'esser tutti soggetti di divozione . . . [p. 3] Deve essere attualmente in viaggio a questa volta un pittore veneziano mio amico, che ha cura di rassettare i quadri del re e che si ingerisce di trafficarne. Io vedro di disporlo a procurarne l'esito o qui o in Praga, dove tiene delle corrispondenze' (I do not know how many assurances were given by the person who suggested to you that it would be easy to sell them here, where in the first place the lovers of such works are very rare, not to say non-existent . . . Another difficulty, perhaps the least of them, is that the subjects are all devotional . . . A Venetian painter [Pellegrini] who is a friend of mine must be travelling at the moment, but he is responsible for the restoration of the pictures belonging to the king [of Poland] and dabbles as a dealer. I will try to persuade him to organize a sale either here or in Prague, where he has connexions'). <> Pellegrini's work at Dresden in 1725 is summarized by Bernard Aikema, in Turner, *Dictionary of Art*, xxiv, 341. <> It seems unlikely that any paintings were sold in Dresden or Prague, because Steffani's letters of November 1726 to Lothar Franz von Schönborn and early 1728 to Councillor Bauer in Frankfurt (Loschelder, 'Römische Quellen', 29) indicate that none or only some of his collection had been sold by those dates. <> In the omitted passage before the closing paragraph, Steffani adds that the minister of Satan [Mocheros] has written to Padre Tonnemann, the emperor's confessor, and to Cardinal [Alvaro] Cienfuegos [imperial minister plenipotentiary to the pope in 1722–35]. His letters contain such atrocious calumnies against Steffani and his poor missionaries that they are read only with nausea and indignation. Mocheros has sold his soul to the devil: may God convert him and have mercy on him. <> Mocheros and another priest, named Wisselsheimb, were banished from Hanover simultaneously, because they had stirred up dissension in the Catholic community; they seem to have objected to Catholics swearing the oath of allegiance (24 December 1725) to George I, the terms of which had been drafted with Steffani's assistance (Woker, *Geschichte*, 202).

#### 42. Riva to Steffani

London, 31 December 1726 [Tuesday]

On the occasion of the forthcoming new year I remind your most illustrious lordship that my respect for you and my wishes for your complete happiness are inalterably constant, and that neither distance of place nor length of time will ever be able to erase them from my heart . . .

I have not yet received from your m. i. lordship any further instruction regarding the paintings that you were thinking of sending here, nor has Sardi ever written me anything about them.

Here a Musical Academy [the Academy of Vocal, later called Ancient, Music] has been established by the best composers and singers, Italian and English. I have been admitted as a member, but without a vote and as a great amateur, along with three other men of taste with a fine nose. Bononcini and Handel are members and are leading lights of this noble institute. The repertory comprises madrigals, antiphons, duets, psalms and anything in which [true] harmony reigns. Yesterday a madrigal by Piva, *Gettano i re dal soglio*, was sung, and Bononcini, in order to honour the Saint Augustine of Music, as he calls him, sang the bass part; it was sung three times. Afterwards, they sang some [madrigals] by Luca Marenzio and one by Bononcini, then finished with the sublime and divine duet *Saldi marmi*, &c. This report is not given by me to your m. i. lordship without a purpose, which I openly reveal to you, and that is humbly to implore Piva, in the name of the entire academy of virtuosos, to kindly send something of his composition, which will be preserved like a relic with the other rare things in the musical archive, of which the custodian is Pepusch and the secretary the good and studious Galliard, who send their respects together with the very aged Tosi, who has arrived here from Portugal and yesterday was received as an academician. I must ask your m. i. lordship for another favour, and that is to send me your portrait in a small water-

colour design or in any better medium that you can manage. Don't deny me this favour, which I request with as much zeal as I can muster. I humbly affirm, &c.

[f. 148] Nella congiuntura del prossimo anno nuovo ricordo a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima che il mio rispetto verso di Lei, ed i miei voti per ogni Sua contentezza, sono inalterabilmente costanti, e che ne lontananza di luogo ne lunghezza di tempo potranno mai scancellarli dal mio cuore . . .

Non ho poi da V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> ricevuto più alcun ordine per le pitture ch'Ella pensava di mandar qui, ne il Signor Sardi me ne ha mai scritto cos'alcuna.

[f. 148v] Qui si è stabilita un'Accademia di Musica composta de' migliori compositori e cantori italiani ed inglesi. Io son stato accettato membro, ma senza voto e come un gran dilettante, e meco tre altri soggetti di garbo e di buon naso. Bononcino et Handel sono accademici, ed i primi di questo nobile istituto. Si cantano madrigali, antifone, duetti, salmi, e cose tutte dove campeggia l'armonia. Ieri fu cantato un madrigale del Piva, *Gettano i re dal soglio*, e Bononcino, per fare onore a quel S. Agostino della Musica, com'egli lo chiama, cantò la parte del basso, e fu replicato tre volte. Dopo se ne cantarono alcuni altri di Luca Marenzio et uno di Bononcino, e si finì col sublime e divino duetto *Saldi marmi*, &c. Questa relazione non è data da me a V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> senza il suo fine, che sinceramente Le scopro, ed è di pregare umilmente in nome di tutta la virtuosa accademia il Signor Piva a voler mandar qualche cosa di sua composizione che sarà conservata come una [f. 149] reliquia colle altre cose rare nell'archivio musicale, di cui è custode il Pepu[s]ch e segretario il buono e studioso Monsieur Galliard, che Le fa riverenza insieme coll'antichissimo Tosi, qui caduto dal Portogallo, che ieri fu ricevuto accademico. D'un altro favore debbo supplicare V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup>, ed è di mandarmi in picciolo disegno a acquarella o come meglio si potrà il suo ritratto. Non mi neghi questo favore, che ne La prego quanto mai so e posso. Umilmente mi confermo, &c.

The Italian text of the final paragraph was printed in Timms, 'Music and Musicians', 39–40. It was partly printed in German translation in Woker, 'Tondichter', 422. <> In the omitted passage Riva asks Steffani to convey new year's greetings to some who have not been mentioned before in the correspondence: Baron de Ginti and his entire, illustrious family, Madame [Friederike Charlotte von dem Bussche (1684–1752)] and Monsieur [Franz Dietrich (1675–1748)] von Wendt, with their three graces, and her sister Madame de Bouch [either Hedwig Sophie Elisabeth (1678–1721) or Wilhelmine (1680–1733) von dem Bussche (see Erich Graf Kielmansegg, ed., *Briefe des Herzogs Ernst August zu Braunschweig-Lüneburg an Johann Franz Diedrich von Wendt aus den Jahren 1703 bis 1726* (Hanover, 1902), vi and 33 note 3)]. <> Riva first attended an Academy meeting on 12 May 1726, when the other newcomers included Senesino, John Loeillet (1680–1730) and five Englishmen. Johann Christoph Pepusch (1667–1752) and John Ernest Galliard (c.1687–1749) were at the first meeting of the Academy, held on 7 January 1726. The first three Italians were Giovanni Bononcini, Nicola Francesco Haym and Francesco Geminiani, who joined on 1 March 1726. Pier Francesco Tosi joined on 3 November 1726, i.e., seven weeks before Riva said that he was 'received as an academician'. Handel—in spite of Riva's statement to the contrary—is not listed as a member in the original minute-book (*GB-Lbl* Add. MS 11732, and Timms, 'Steffani and the Academy', 127–8). The 'three other men of taste with a fine nose' probably included Sir John Dolben, who—like Riva—first appeared on 12 May 1726, 'even though he was strictly ineligible according to the rules which only admitted present members of the Chapel Royal and St Paul's or "such as profess music"' (Donald Burrows, 'Sir John Dolben, Musical Patron', *Musical Times*, 120 (1979), 65). <> Steffani's madrigal *Gettano i re dal soglio* (SSATB) was sent to the Academy in 1726 (as discussed in our Introduction, section 6). *Saldi marmi*, che coprite (SS, bc) is in Steffani, *Twelve Chamber Duets*, ed. Colin Timms, *Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era*, 53 (Madison, 1987), 51–66. The madrigal by Bononcini was presumably one of the three attributed to him in extant manuscripts: *Foss'io quel*



*rossignuolo* (SSATB), *Mentre lunge ti stai* (SSAB) and *Quanto lessi d'amore* (SATB); manuscript sources are listed in Lindgren, 'Three Great Noises', 565.

#### 43. Riva to Steffani

London, 27 March 1727 [Thursday]

From the enclosed letter, delivered to me by two representatives of the virtuous Academy of [Vocal] Music, your most illustrious lordship will see that Haym, its secretary, has declared me an abbot. Let it pass.

Your most kind folio and the generous and obliging manner in which you were pleased to explain yourself to these gentlemen have given them reason to thank you and to entreat you, as you will see. To Count Bothmer, or to whomever your m. i. lordship judges more appropriate, you should send something by the matchless Piva, which will be placed like a rare jewel in the treasury of the Academy, and our Bononcini, who continually conveys his respects, will be responsible for performing it in the proper way.

In the end the directors of the opera were compelled to kiss the sacred vestments [i.e., humble themselves] and have begged the duchess of Marlborough, his patroness, to commission him [Bononcini] to write one that will be staged after Easter. The libretto [*Astianatte*] is [based on Racine's] *Andromaque*, and we will weep with pleasure, because the affections will be expressed correctly.

The two famous competitors, Cuzzoni and Faustina, divide the sentiments of England; the first, with her most beautiful voice, perfect intonation and excellent taste, enters straight into the heart, while the other tickles the ear with her marvellous facility of execution. The most aged Tosi is here, and professes to be your most devoted servant.

I beg your m. i. lordship to have the enclosed forwarded to whom it is addressed, and to keep me in the honour of your good graces.

I am, as usual, your most obsequious and humble servant,  
R.

[f. 150] Dall'acclusa lettera consegnatami da due deputati di questa virtuosa Accademia di Musica vedrà Vostra Signoria Illustrissima come il Signor Haym, segretario di essa, mi ha dichiarato abate. Transeat.

Il foglio gentilissimo Suo, e la maniera generosa ed obbligante colla quale si è Ella compiaciuta di spiegarsi verso questi signori, ha dato loro motivo di renderLe grazie e di supplicarLa, come vedrà. Al Signor Conte di Bothmer, o a chi V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> stimerà più a proposito, spedisca qualche cosa dell'unico Piva, che sarà posto come una rara gioia nel tesoro dell'Accademia, ed il nostro Bononcino, che Le ricorda sempre il suo rispetto, avrà cura di esporla come si dee.

Alla fine i signori direttori dell'opera hanno dovuto baciare il manipolo, ed hanno pregato la duchessa di Marleough, sua padrona, ad ordinargliene una [f. 150v] che anderà in scena dopo Pasqua. Il libretto è l'Andromaca, e si piangerà con gusto, perché gli affetti saranno mossi con ragione.

Le due famose competitrici, Cuzzoni e Faustina, dividono i sentimenti dell'Inghilterra, ma la prima, colla sua bellissima voce, con una intuonazione perfetta e con un ottimo gusto entra a dirittura nel cuore, e l'altra, con una maravigliosa facilità di eseguire, solletica gli orecchi. L'antichissimo Tosi è qui, e se Le fa servitore divotissimo.

Supplico V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> a far avere l'inchiusa a chi è diritta ed a continuarmi l'onore della Sua buona grazia.

Sono col solito ossequio di V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> umilissimo servitore,  
R.

This letter is given complete; its Italian text was printed in Timms, 'Music and Musicians', 40–1. The enclosed letter was no. 43A, below. Steffani's 'folio' to the members of the Vocal Academy is not known to be extant. <> Abate or Abbot is also the title that Paolo Rolli bestowed upon Riva in his *capitolo* of 1716 (cited in our Introduction, section 4). <> *Astianatte* was Bononcini's first opera for the Royal Academy of Music since *California* of May 1724. It was based on Nicola Haym's revision of a libretto by Antonio Salvi (Florence, 1701), and was given nine times between 6 May and 6 June 1727. During this month the rivalry between Cuzzoni and Faustina provoked cat-calls from the supporters of each singer and reportedly culminated in an on-stage fight, so that the final performance could not be completed (see no. 47, below, and Avery, *London Stage*, 924–30, Deutsch, *Handel*, 209–13, and Gibson, *Royal Academy*, 249–53 and 394–8).

#### 43A. Haym to Steffani

London, 13/24 February 1727 [Monday]

The most illustrious Abbot Riva kindly shared with our Musical Assembly the part of your letter that concerns us. After it had been read and discussed, with wondrous astonishment, we spent a long time considering, inconclusively, what token of our gratitude and respect could match such an immense favour. Finding, eventually, that this would be impossible for us, it was first determined that, with the present letter, written on behalf of us all, we should render you our most fulsome thanks. It was then proposed to place your most celebrated name in our registers, since your letter implied that you would grant us permission to do so. Some, however, prudently thought that we could and should not do this without the express permission of your most illustrious and most reverend lordship.

Assured of this [permission] by the aforesaid, most illustrious Abbot Riva, we will act on the proposal at our next meeting. This will provide our colleagues, who are most anxious to see themselves so signally honoured, with a new reason for rejoicing.

Meanwhile, in order to give you further cause to favour us, I have been charged with giving you this brief account of the foundation and operation of our Assembly.

Seeing that good and true music was everywhere in decline, it was proposed by some to form a band of virtuoso singers and composers, who would meet once a fortnight for two continuous hours in a large room, where they would spend their time singing Masses, psalms, motets, madrigals, canons, and other well-wrought items in four, five or more parts, without instruments. They would close each meeting with a most excellent canon in three parts on the verset of Psalm 113, *Non nobis Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo da gloriam*. This well-conceived institution was immediately joined by the three principal chapel choirs of this capital, i.e., the Chapel Royal, St Paul's, and St Peter's of Westminster [Abbey]. They regularly sing works by Josquin des Pres, Orlande de Lassus, Palestrina, [Alfonso] Ferrabosco [the elder], Luca Marenzio, Claudio Monteverdi, [Gesualdo] prince of Venosa, [Francesco] Foggia the elder, Carissimi, and other famous composers. St Cecilia's day is celebrated with instruments and with greater show than usual.

No audience is admitted, apart from the academicians themselves, since this exercise is undertaken solely for our study and pleasure, and not to provide unappreciated nourishment for the ignorant.

At the moment we are preparing to choose a name and an insignia for the academy, the costs of which are borne by the academicians themselves.

We have nothing by the most revered Piva other than a madrigal for five voices, *Cadono* [= *Gettano*] *i re dal soglio*, &c., which we cannot tire of repeating and admiring. Therefore, anything in several parts, with either Latin or Italian words, but without instruments, which this celebrated composer may wish to give us, will be accepted with the greatest pleasure. If



we can have a score immediately through the post, it will serve for the moment to satisfy our great desire to hear some of the sublime notes of the aforesaid Piva.

With due deference, in the name of all, I humble myself and remain

Of your most illustrious and most reverend lordship,  
the most humble and most devoted servant,  
N. Haym, Secretary of the aforesaid Academy

[f. 163] Essendo stata benignamente, dall'Illustrissimo Signor Abbate Riva, compartita alla nostra Assemblée di Musica quella parte della sua lettera che ci riguarda, e letta, e considerata con aggradevole sorpresa, ci tenne longo tempo sospesi in considerando qual segno di ossequio e di stima potesse compensare un così immenso favore. Ma trovandosi alla fine esser ciò a noi impossibile, fu prima determinato che con la presente, a nome di tutti, Le si rendesse i più che dovuti ringraziamenti; e si propose poi di porre il suo celebratissimo nome ne' nostri registri, già che pareva nella Sua che ce ne desse mutualmente la permissione. Ma da alcuni fu prudentemente considerato che ciò non potea, ne dovea, farsi senza particolar licenza di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima e Reverendissima.

Avvalorati in appresso dal predetto Illustrissimo Signor Abbate Riva, ciò si farà nella prossima adunanza e sarà materia di nuova gioia a' nostri colleghi, che tanto sono ansiosi di vedersi così insignamente onorati.

Intanto, per darLe materia di favorirci più oltre, mi viene imposto di parteciparLe in breve [f. 163v] il cominciamento e gli istituti di questa nostra assemblea.

Vedendosi che la buona e vera musica andava da per tutto deteriorando, si propose da alcuni di formare una comitiva di virtuosi cantanti e compositori, i quali radunandosi ogni due settimane una volta, in luogo capace, per due ore continue, vi s'impiegasse il tempo in cantar messe, salmi, mottetti, madrigali, canoni, ed altre cose studiate a 4, a 5, e più parti, senza istromenti, e che ogni volta si terminasse quest'essercizio con un eccellentissimo canone a 3 sul versetto del salmo 113, *Non nobis Domine non nobis, sed nomini tuo da gloriam*. A così ben pensata istituzione, concorsero subito le tre principali cappelle di questa dominante, cioè La Regia, S. Paolo, e S. Pietro di Westminster; e si van cantando continuamente cose di Jusquino da Prato, Orlando di Lassus, Palestrina, Ferabosco, Luca Marenzio, Claudio Monteverde, Prencipe di Venosa, Foggia Vecchio, Carissime, ed altri insigni autori; ed il giorno di Santa Cicilia se ne celebra la festa con istromenti e maggior pompa del solito.

[f. 164] Non si ammette auditorio alcuno, se non i propri accademici, mentre questo essercizio si fa solamente per nostro studio e diletto e non per dar pascolo noioso agli ignoranti.

Ora si sta preparando a dar un nome ed un impresa all'accademia, la sussistenza della quale è a proprie spese degli accademici.

Non si ha del Riveritissimo Signor Piva altro che un madrigale a 5, *Cadono i re dal soglio*, &c., il quale non possiamo stancarci di ripeterlo ed ammirarlo; onde qualunque cosa a più parti, o con parole latine o italiane, però senza stromenti, che questo insigne autore voglia favorirci, sarà di sommo gradimento. E se si potrà avere qualche partitura immediatamente per la posta, servirà per ora ad appagare la grande avidità che abbiamo di udire qualcuna delle sublimi note del predetto Signor Piva. E con dovuto ossequio a nome di tutti umiliandomi, resto

Di V. S. Illus.<sup>ma</sup> e Reverend.<sup>ma</sup>  
Umilissimo e devotissimo servitore  
N. Haym, Secretario della predetta Accademia

See Ill. 9. Haym's letter is given complete. Its Italian text was printed in Lindgren, 'Haym', 280–1, and Timms, 'Music and Musicians', 41–2. Paragraph 4 to the end was printed in German translation in Woker, 'Tondichter', 423. <> Since only one composer named Foggia is known, Haym's epithet

'vecchio' would more aptly follow Ferrabosco's name. <> The three-part canon on *Non nobis, Domine* may have been composed by William Byrd; see Philip Brett, 'Did Byrd write *Non nobis, Domine*?', *Musical Times*, 113 (1972), cover and 857.

#### 44. Steffani to Riva

Hanover, 11 April 1727 [Good Friday, hand C]

That Haym should have declared your most illustrious lordship an abbot is an honour that he has bestowed on the whole corps of small capes and cloaks, but that he, in the name of the entire virtuoso Academy of [Vocal] Music, should have lavished so much praise on the feeble works of Gregorio Piva would almost scandalize me if it were not that your credit with this assembly had, to good purpose and with the best of intentions, given it an idea of the subject that conformed more to your most kind partiality than to his [Piva's] own merit. Be that as it may, I profess to your m. i. lordship the most tender obligations for having placed me in such good odour with such a select society, and in order not to leave you in the lurch I have decided to expose myself to 'presence reduces fame' rather than excuse myself from submitting the sins of my youth [i.e., my musical compositions] to the scrutiny of those virtuosos. Your m. i. lordship will find enclosed my unsealed reply [to Haym; not known to survive], which I share with you thus for two reasons: first, so that you can tell me if my form of address is defective, assuring you that I will not fail to correct it according to your welcome enlightenment; second, so that I do not have to write the same things twice, seeing that I have nothing to add to what you will read in my letter to Haym, other than that I am delighted that justice has finally been done to our Bononcini, whom I pray you to greet cordially on my behalf, as also Tosi, whom you describe as very old, even though Piva is much older than he. I will speed up the copying [of my music] as much as I can, and will endeavour on every occasion to display the true and most faithful deference with which I desire to execute your most esteemed commands.

[f. 49] Che il Signor Haym abbia dichiarata Vostra Signoria Illustrissima abbate è un onore che egli ha fatto al corpo delli petits colets; ma ch'egli a nome di tutta cotesta virtuosa Accademia di Musica carichi di tante lodi le debolezze di Gregorio Piva quasi mi scandalizzerebbe, se non fosse che il di Lei credito presso quella assemblea può aver con buon fine ed ottima intenzione aver data una idea del soggetto più conforme alla di Lei gentilissima parzialità che al merito di esso. Sia però come si voglia, io professo a V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> le più sensibili obbligazioni di avermi posto in così buon odore appresso una compagnia così scielta; e per non farLa restar corta, ho risolto di espormi piuttosto al 'minuit presentia famam [recte famam]' che dispensarmi dal sottomettere alla censura di que' virtuosi li delitti della mia gioventù. V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> troverà qui annessa la mia risposta a sigillo volante, e gliela confido così per due ragioni: la prima, perch'Ella possa avvertirmi se forse il mio titolare è difettoso, assicurandoLa che non mancherò di [f. 49v] correggerlo giusta i lumi, ch'Ella si compiacerà darmene: e la 2.<sup>da</sup>, per non iscrivere due volte le stesse cose; essendoché a quanto Ella leggerà nella mia lettera al Signor Haym non ho ad aggiungere altro, se non che mi rallegro che finalmente siasi resa giustizia al nostro Signor Bononcini, che La prego riverir cordialmente per parte mia, come ancora il Signor Tosi, ch'Ella qualifica antichissimo, benché il Piva lo sia molto più di lui. Affretterò quanto mai potrò le copie, e procurerò in ogni occorrenza metter in luce il vero e fedelissimo ossequio, con cui desidero eseguire i di Lei stimatissimi comandi.

This letter is given in full. <> Steffani derived 'minuit presentia famam' from Claudianus, *De bello Gildonico*, where the public standing of Agricola, who had returned to Rome after his military triumphs in Britain, was diminished by his physical presence. <> Steffani's first known reference to his compositions as sins of his youth is found in a letter of November 1713 to Ruggiero Fedeli: 'Veniamo alla Musica. Sono delicta Juventutis' (Loschelder, 'Römische Quellen', 52); another is found in letter C,

above. His metamorphosis from composer to bishop was considered by an anonymous travel-writer in 1718 to be as ridiculous as Lucian's transformation of a courtesan into a philosopher (Joachim Lampe, *Aristokratie, Hofadel und Staatspatriziat in Kurhannover. Die Lebenskreise der höheren Beamten an den kurhannoverschen Zentral- und Hofbehörden, 1714-1760*, 1: *Darstellung*, Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission für Niedersachsen, 24 (Göttingen, 1963), 134 note 176). A title that respected both professions was applied by Bononcini, who termed Agostino the 'St Augustine of Music', as Riva reports in nos. 1 and 42 (see also Timms, 'Music and Musicians', 30-1 and 39). <> The 'justice' for Bononcini was the Royal Academy's commission for *Astianatte*, described by Riva in no. 43, above. <> Steffani's claim that he was much older than Tosi is a tease (unless he did not know the year of Tosi's birth): they were both born in the summer of 1654, Steffani on 25 July and Tosi on 13 August.

#### 45. Riva to Steffani

London [undated, but before 16 May 1727]

At times of great need one has recourse to saints who can do miracles. I am in that situation, and so I turn to your most illustrious lordship. Gioachino Landi, a musician born into an excellent family, a citizen of Florence, as young, able and studious as he is wise and polite, wishes to establish himself in one of the ecclesiastical, electoral courts. I who know his merit, and who know how much your patronage could assist him, recommend him as highly as possible, and beg you to favour him as if he were one of my brothers. To my recommendations and prayers I add those of Bononcini and Tosi, who know Landi's ability also in composition, which does not transgress the limits of reliable or good taste, notwithstanding the almost universal corruption [of today]. As a youth he was taken from Naples to Spain, where he stayed for some time. In Paris he directed the academy of Italian music [i.e., the Concert Italien] that had been established there, but which French jealousy did not allow to develop. He came to England a year ago and has had some voice pupils, but since he is upright and his nature inclines him to an ecclesiastical state, he tends to prefer, above every other advantage, the aforementioned service with one of the three electoral archbishops or with some other ecclesiastical prince in Germany. If your m. i. lordship honoured this worthy subject with your protection, he would obtain the employment that he desires, and if my testimony carries any weight with you, be persuaded, furthermore, that you will have excellent relations with, and even gratitude from, the patron who employs him.

I have delivered to Haym your m. i. lordship's reply [not known to be extant], which has been placed, like a pearl, among the records of the [Vocal] Academy. Imagine, then, what will happen to the jewels [compositions] that your m. i. lordship promises to send. Our Bononcini, who renews the vows of his inalterable deference, will take care to place them in the light they deserve for the admiration of those who understand and those who desire to understand.

May your m. i. lordship honour me with the continuation of your love, and believe that I retain the customary respect.

Your R.

[f. 151] *Ne' grandi bisogni si ricorre a' santi che fanno miracoli. Io sono nel caso, e però m'indirizzo a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima. Il Signor Giovachino Landi, musico manufatto di ottima famiglia, cittadina fiorentina, giovine, abile e studioso, non meno che savio e civile, desidera di stabilirsi in una delle corti elettorali ecclesiastiche. Io che conosco il suo merito e che so quanto il patrocinio di Lei può giovargli, lo raccomando quanto mai so e posso, e La supplico di favorirlo, come farebb'Ella un mio fratello medesimo. Alle mie aggiungono le loro raccomandazioni e preghiere il Signor Bononcino ed il*

*Signor Tosi, che conoscono l'abilità del Signor Landi anche nella composizione, e che non esce da' confini del solido o del buon gusto, nonostante la corruzione [f. 151v] quasi generale. Egli fu condotto in Ispagna giovinetto da Napoli; ivi si è fermato qualche tempo. A Parigi regolava l'accademia di musica italiana ivi stabilita, e che la gelosia francese non ha lasciato andar avanti. Venne in Inghilterra un anno fa ed ha avute alcune scolare nel canto, ma comech'egli è dabbene ed il suo genio lo porta allo stato ecclesiastico, pensa di preferire ad ogn'altro vantaggio il servizio mentovato d'uno de' tre elettori arcivescovi, o di qualche altro principe ecclesiastico di Germania. V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> onori questo degno soggetto della Sua protezione, gli ottenga l'impiego ch'egli desidera, e se il mio testimonio può valere qualche cosa presso di Lei, sia pur persuasa che ne avrà [f. 152] dal padrone che gli procurerà ottime relazioni e ringraziamenti ancora.*

*Ho consegnata al Signor Haym la risposta di V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup>, ch'è stata posta nelle memorie dell'accademia, come una perla. Si figuri Ella poi cosa sarà delle gioie che V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> promette di mandare. Il nostro Signor Bononcini, che le rinnova gli atti del suo inalterabile ossequio, avrà cura che sieno poste in quel lume che meritano per ammirazione di chi sa e di chi desidera sapere.*

*V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> mi onori della continuazione del Suo amore, e mi creda col solito rispetto,*

Il Suo R.

This letter is given complete. Its Italian text was printed in Timms, 'Music and Musicians', 42-3. The penultimate paragraph was summarized in German, and its last phrase printed in Italian, in Woker, 'Tondichter', 423-4. <> The Concert Italien was established in Paris in February 1724 by Agnès Berthelot de Pléneuf, marchioness of Prie (1698-1727), mistress of the ruling minister, Louis Henri, duke of Bourbon (1692-1740). Only the sixty subscribers were admitted to the twice-weekly concerts performed in a salon of the Tuileries Palace. The series was interrupted in June 1726, when Bourbon and Berthelot de Pléneuf were exiled to Chantilly and Normandy, respectively. Landi presumably departed for England at this time. When the series resumed in December 1726, the performers were two women singers from Rome and eighteen instrumentalists from Italy and France (Lindgren, 'Parisian Patronage', 17-20).

#### 46. Steffani to Riva

Hanover, 16 May 17[27] [Friday, hand C]

Most Illustrious Sir, my Most Honoured Sir

The last very kind letter of your most illustrious lordship begins with two sentences. One is all too clear, while the other does me an honour which, to my great sorrow, I do not deserve. What you ask me to do for [the musician] Gioachino Landi is truly a miracle, but I am mortified in the extreme to realize that I am powerless to do it. That virtuoso's idea [of serving a Catholic patron in Germany] is highly praiseworthy; and I should like to be able to help him, as much for the pleasure that comes from promoting persons of merit as for having this opportunity of executing the precious commands of your m. i. lordship. If the predecessor [Johann Philipp Franz von Schönborn, who died in 1724] of the current bishop of Würzburg [Christoph Franz von Hutten] were still alive, the business would be easy, but since I have unfortunately lost that most trusted friend, I frankly confess to your m. i. lordship that I do not know where to begin looking for a niche suitable for Landi. As your m. i. lordship knows, the ecclesiastical electors are three in number. The one in Mainz [Archbishop Lothar Franz von Schönborn, 1655-1729], my most venerable consecrator, is not, so far as I know, a music-lover and is, in any case, too advanced in years. As for the one in Trier [Bishop Franz Ludwig of Pfalz-Neuburg, 1664-1732], I have neither any correspondence with, nor any knowledge of, his court. As for the one in Cologne [Archbishop Clemens

August, 1700-61], I have no access other than via the papal nuncio [Gaetano de' Cavalieri, died 1738], a prelate who, by good fortune, has a passion for music equal to my own. If Landi wants to take the risk and try his luck with a letter from me to the aforesaid nuncio, your m. i. lordship should let me know at once, because without delay I will send it or even take it to Cologne and place it in the hands of this very kind prelate, by whom, I am sure, it will be welcomed warmly and supported with as much authority as his lordship commands. If your m. i. lordship wishes to honour me with your orders, it will be necessary, however, to arrange for them to be passed through the hands of Count Bothmer; otherwise, as I have observed, your highly favoured letters remain too long in the post. It is also true, however, that I do not know how long your last letter, which arrived with the post from Holland, was on the road, because it is undated.

What I had the honour to write to Haym is that too much [acclaim] has been received [by me] from that highly esteemed [Vocal] Academy. However, it is a source of real wonderment to me that I have still not heard about the arrival of a little roll, dispatched from here on 18 April, addressed to your m. i. lordship and sent via Cesare Sardi [in Amsterdam]. Sardi replied to me on 22 April with exactly the following words: 'Together with the highly revered folio from your m. i. lordship of 18 April I have received the packet for Riva, to whom I shall take care to transmit it as soon as possible, assuring you once again that your orders are extremely welcome and promptly executed'. The roll contains a motet for five voices [*Qui diligit Mariam*] by Piva. Also ready [to be sent] is the desired *Giano quadrifronte* [a collection of motets] by the same composer, but I am very perplexed about how to send it: my only idea is to enclose it in a little box and send it by post-coach to the aforementioned Sardi, with whom your m. i. lordship will be able to make arrangements, since I hope that the little box will depart next Thursday [22 May].

May your m. i. lordship preserve for me the honour of your most esteemed good will, cultivate on my behalf that of Bononcini and Tosi, and do me the justice of believing that the ardent desire I have of executing your most esteemed commands is ever constant.

[f. 51] *Illustrissimo Signor mio Signor Osservandissimo*

La gentilissima ultima lettera di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima comincia con due clausole: una, che pur troppo è evidente; l'altra, che fa a me un onore che, a mio gran rammarico, non merito. Ciò ch'ella mi domanda a favore del Signor Gioachino Landi è in effetto un vero miracolo; ma io mi trovo mortificatissimo di riconoscermi nella impotenza di farlo. È lodevolissimo il pensiero di quel virtuoso; ed io vorrei trovarmi capace di secondarlo, tanto per il piacere che dà il promuovere le persone di merito, quanto perché avrei questa occasione di eseguire i preziosi comandi di V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup>. Se ancora vivesse il predecessore del moderno Monsignor Vescovo di Würzburg, il negozio sarebbe facile; ma la disgrazia avendomi fatto perdere quel confidentissimo amico, confesso ingenuamente a V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> che non saprei ove dar della testa per trovare il nicchio ove brama collocarsi il Signor Landi. V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> sa che tre sono li signori elettori ecclesiastici. Quel di [f. 51v] Magonza, mio veneratissimo consecratore, non è, che io sappia, diletante di musica, oltre di che si trova già troppo avanzato in età. Con quello di Treveri non ho la minima corrispondenza né alcuna conoscenza alla sua corte. A quello di Colonia non ho verun mezzo fuor di quello di Monsignor Nunzio Apostolico, prelato il quale, per fortuna, ha per la musica una passione nulla inferiore alla mia. Se il Signor Landi vuole azzardare il pacchetto e tentar la sua fortuna con una mia lettera al suddetto Monsignor Nunzio, V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> me lo avvisi subito, perché incontinentemente gliela manderò, o pure gliela farò trovare in Colonia nelle mani dello stesso gentilissimo prelato, da cui son sicuro che sarà benignamente accolto ed aiutato per quanto dipenderà da Sua Signoria Ill.<sup>ma</sup>. Sarà però necessario che V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> volendomi onorare de' suoi ordini, procuri di farli passare per le mani del Signor Conte di [f. 52] Bothmar; altrimenti ho osservato che le di Lei lettere favoritissime restano

soverchiamente in camino. È però anche vero, non poter io sapere quanto questa ultima giunta colla posta d'Olanda sia restata per istrada, essendo senza data.

Quella che ho avuto l'onore di scrivere al Signor Haym, troppo ne ha ricevuto da cotesta stimatissima Accademia. Mi dà però qualche giusta meraviglia di non sentir ancora arrivato un picciolo rodolo spedito di qua già alli 18. del mese passato coll'indirizzo a V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup>, e raccomandato al Signor Cesare Sardi [in Amsterdam], il quale in data delli 22. del qui citato mese mi rispose le seguenti precise parole: 'Unito al riveritissimo foglio di V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> de' 18. corrente m'è pervenuto l'involto per il Signor Riva, al quale averò cura di trasmetterlo quanto prima sarà possibile, accertandoLa di nuovo che li di Lei comandamenti mi saranno sommamente graditi, e prontamente eseguiti'. Conteneva il rotolo [f. 52v] un mottetto a cinque del Piva; è anche pron[to] il motivato *Giano quadrifronte* dello stesso autore; ma sono assai imbrogliato nel modo di mandarlo, non sapendo prender altro partito che quello di chiuderlo in una picciola cassetta e raccomandarlo col carro di posta al suddetto Signor Sardi, col quale V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> potrà intenderseLa, poiché spero che la cassetta partirà giovedì prossimo.

V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> mi conservi l'onore d[ella] Sua stimatissima benevolenza, mi coltivi quella delli Signori Bononcini e Tosi, e mi renda la giustizia di creder sempre costante l'ardente desiderio che ho di eseguire i Suoi stimatissimi comandi.

This letter is given in full. It is the only letter from Steffani that is dated at the end rather than the beginning. <> A summary of the building projects and cultural life of Clemens August in Cologne is given by Andrea Kluxen, in Turner, *Dictionary of Art*, xxxiii, 277-8. <> The motet *Qui diligit Mariam* (for two sopranos, alto, tenor, bass and continuo) did reach London, and on 7/18 July Galliard wrote the extensive commentary printed below (no. 48B). Even though Steffani states that he will send the Vocal Academy the 'sins of [his] youth', neither this motet nor the madrigal *Gettano i re dal soglio*, for the same five voices, exists in any source that clearly predates 1726-7. (All known sources are listed in our Introduction, section 7.) The earliest extant copy of this madrigal is probably *GB-DRe* Mus. E. 15, which is headed: 'Sent to our Academy at ye Crown Tavern 1726'; nos. 42 and 43A, above, confirm that it was performed by the Academy in December 1726. <> *Sacer Ianus quadrifrons* is the title of Steffani's collection of twelve motets for three voices and continuo, published at Munich in 1685. The (presumably manuscript) copy of *Giano quadrifronte* that Steffani sent to the Academy seems to have included only six of the motets. This conclusion can be drawn from the minutes of the Academy, which moved on 26 May 1731 'That Dr Pepusch be desired to demand of Dr [Maurice] Green the Six Mottetts ye Bishop of Spiga sent the Academy' (*GB-Lbl* Add. MS 11732, f. 16, § 9). We conjecture that the manuscript copied in Hanover by 16 May 1727 and dispatched by Steffani on 22 May is *GB-Lgc* MS G. Mus. 418, which contains six of the motets in the hand of the most important copyist of Steffani's music (Timms, 'Gregorio Piva', 173-6 and 183-6). If the manuscript remained in the post as long as *Qui diligit Mariam*, it would not have reached London before the beginning of August 1727.

47. Riva to Steffani

London, 10 July 1727 [Thursday]

I was hoping to have the pleasure of seeing your most illustrious lordship again this year, and was making preparations for crossing the channel, but the death of our good king [George I] has taken the opportunity away from me, wherefore I must resort to this letter to remind you of my respect for you and make my requests. Therefore I beg you, please, to write the letter of recommendation for our good Gioachino Landi and dispatch it to Brussels in an envelope addressed to him, since he is there, placed within an [outer?] envelope addressed to Marquis Scaramuccia Visconti.

Sardi writes that he has received a packet addressed to me from your m. i. lordship, and my reply will tell him how he must send it to me.

This Academy of [Vocal] Music has sung your divine motet [*Qui diligit Mariam*] several times under the direction of our [friend] Bononcini, who sends you his most humble compliments. We await other works by the inimitable Piva in order to sustain the dying [art of] harmony. Meanwhile, your m. i. lordship has been elected president of the Academy by a unanimous vote, and these gentlemen hope that you will be pleased by their action and content to honour them in this way.

The operas have ended this year in a disorder that was, alas, inevitable, if we were to rid ourselves of the imposture that had already gained too much ground. The partisans of Cuzzoni and Faustina were challenging each other with a dangerous competition of whistles and applause, each supporting his or her favourite singer. Those for Faustina were completely silenced, and, furthermore, Cuzzoni was obliged to repeat her last aria without the opposing party daring to whistle. The opera was [*Astianatte*] by Bononcini, in which each singer had equal and strong weapons with which to destroy her rival. She [Cuzzoni] who knew better how to deploy them was victorious. Thus the directors [of the Royal Academy], who are mainly for Faustina, have thought of censoring operas, but the new rulers [George II and Queen Caroline] and the nation will not let them do so, and if Faustina wishes to leave, they will bid her farewell. If there is no opera [next year], Cuzzoni will nevertheless remain, because some of the leading noblewomen have pledged to keep her here at the same salary that she has received from the [Royal] Academy. It was very sad for anyone with insight, or for anyone with good taste, to see that the former, who sings out of tune, has a bad voice and does not know it, should have been able to vanquish the other, who has a most beautiful voice, perfect intonation, a precise sense of time and excellent taste.

May your m. i. lordship excuse me if I have detained you perhaps for too long with a tale of little concern to you.

Honour me with the continuation of your precious affection, and believe in my immutable deference, &c.

[f. 158] Quando io sperava di avere il contento ancor quest'anno di rivedere Vostra Signoria Illustrissima e che mi stava preparando per passare il fosso, la morte del nostro buon re me ne toglie l'occasione, onde debbo far come posso per ricordarLe il mio rispetto e servirmi di questo mio foglio. La supplico di voler dunque scrivere la lettera di raccomandazione per il nostro buon Signor Giovachino Landi, e spedirla a Bruxelles con una sopra coperta a lui, che si trova colà, e con altra a Monsieur le Marquis Scaramuccia Visconti.

Il Signor Sardi mi scrive d'aver ricevuto un pacchetto da V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> a me diretto, ed io a lui rispondo come me lo dee mandare.

Quest'Accademia di Musica ha fatto più volte cantare [f. 158v] il suo divino motetto, avendone avuta la direzione il nostro Signor Bononcino, che Le fa i suoi umilissimi complimenti. Aspettiamo altre cose dell'inimitabile Piva per poter con esse sostenere la cadente armonia. Intanto a pieni voti è stata V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> eletta Presidente dell'Accademia, e questi signori sperano ch'Ella gradirà la loro attenzione e si contenterà che abbiano un tanto onore.

Le opere sono terminate quest'anno con un disordine, ch'era però necessario per togliere l'impostura che già cominciava qui a prender troppo piede. I partiti della Cuzzoni e della Faustina si sono sfidati colla pericolosa pruova de' fischi e degli applausi, ogn'uno per la loro. Quello della Faustina [f. 159] è stato affatto battuto; e di più, alla Cuzzoni si è fatta replicare l'ultima aria senza che il partito a lei contrario abbia osato di fischiare. L'opera era di Bononcino, onde l'una e l'altra avevano armi eguali e vigorose per abbattere la rivale. Chi ha saputo meglio maneggiarle ha avuta la vittoria. I direttori però, che sono la

maggior parte per la Faustina, pensavano di distinguere le opere, ma i nuovi regnanti e la nazione nol vogliono permettere, e se la Faustina vorrà andarsene le daranno il buon viaggio. In caso che non vi fossero opere la Cuzzoni resta nonostante, essendosi impegnate alcune delle prime dame di trattenerla qui colla medesima paga che aveva dall'Accademia. [f. 159v] Era troppo dolorosa cosa a chi sa ed a chi ha buon gusto di vedere, che quella che stuona ha cativa voce, e non sa, dovesse tener oppresa l'altra, che ha una bellissima voce, una perfetta intonazione, un esatto rigor di tempo ed un ottimo gusto.

Mi perdoni V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> se forse troppo L'ho trattenuta con un racconto per Lei di poco momento.

Mi onori della continuazione del Suo prezioso affetto, e mi creda con imutabile ossequio, &c.

This letter is given complete. Its Italian text was printed in Timms, 'Music and Musicians', 45. <> For further information on the rivalry between Cuzzoni and Faustina, see the commentary to no. 43, above.

#### 48. Riva to Steffani

London, 25 July 1727 [Friday]

From the annexed letter of Haym, and from the other [by Galliard], which I think I can justifiably communicate to your most illustrious lordship, you will see how honoured these gentlemen feel at having put your venerable name at the head of their excellent [Vocal] Academy, and how eager they are to obtain other rare things by the one and only Gregorio Piva. May your m. i. lordship welcome their attention with pleasure and grant their wish.

Our Bononcini reminds you of his respect, and I sign myself with my usual deference,

Your m. i. lordship's  
Most humble servant, R.

[f. 154] Dalla qui annessa lettera del Signor Haym, e dall'altra che credo ben fatto di comunicare a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima, vedrà Ella quanto questi signori si stimino onorati dall'aver messo in fronte della loro virtuosa Accademia il nome Suo venerabile, e quanta premura abbiano di ottenere altre cose rare dell'unico Gregorio Piva. V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> accolga con gradimento la loro attenzione e consoli il loro desiderio.

Il nostro Signor Bononcino Le ricorda il suo rispetto, ed io col solito ossequio mi confermo,

di V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup>  
Umilissimo servitore, R.

This letter is given complete here and in Timms, 'Music and Musicians', 46. A summary in German is given in Woker, 'Tondichter', 424. <> Letters 47, 48, 48A and 48B refer to the election of Steffani as the first president of the Academy of Vocal Music. According to its minute-book (*GB-Lbl* Add. MS 11732, fol. 4v), this occurred on 1 June 1727: 'This day it was agreed *Nemine Contradicente*, that D[on] Agostino Steffani, Bishop of Spiga (commonly known by the name of Abbot Steffani) be President of the Academy of Vocal Musick establish'd in London. N.B. His compositions att present goe under the name of Gregorio Piva'. The name 'D. Agostino Steffani, President', heads the fourth to the seventh subscriptions (i.e., lists of subscribers), which date from 4 December 1727 to 8 May 1729 (Add. MS 11732, ff. 5-9).

#### 48A. Haym to Steffani

London, 6/17 July 1727 [Thursday]

Long before now I should have informed you that our Assembly of Vocal Music has unanimously elected your most illustrious and most reverend lordship as its president, and has



inscribed your most precious name at the head of its registers. We employed this title, because we were unable to find a better one to honour ourselves while venerating you. Now we implore you to accept it, not as compensation for the favours we have received from you, but as one of those favours that you have kindly deigned to bestow on us.

After that [election] we received, by means of the most illustrious Riva, the most beautiful motet [*Qui diligit Mariam*], composed by the most famous Gregorio Piva and sent to us by your m. i. and most reverend lordship. It was sung very carefully a number of times, was greatly admired and was received with great pleasure, and for it we render infinite thanks.

The beauty of that motet, together with its most learned harmony, increases our desire to see and hear the others that you have promised [to send us], which are awaited with great impatience, so that we may enjoy that blessing of which you are pleased to make us worthy.

Our Academy considers itself fortunate to be able to pursue its praiseworthy purpose under your most powerful protection, which we are most desirous [to retain]. On behalf of all I subscribe myself,

Of your most illustrious and most reverend lordship,  
the most humble, most devoted, and most obliged servant,  
N. Haym, Secretary of the aforesaid Academy.

[f. 160] Già prima di adesso dovevo farLa partecipe qualmente la nostra Assambla di Musica Vocale aveva unanimamente eletta Vostra Signoria Illustrissima e Reverendissima per suo Presidente, e segnato il Suo pregiatissimo nome alla testa de' nostri registri. Si siamo serviti di questo titolo, non avendone potuto trovare altro maggiore per onorar noi medesimi, venerando Lei; ed ora La supplichiamo di accettarlo, non per ricompensa de' favori che noi da Lei abbiam ricevuti, ma per aggiunger anche questo a quelli che si è degnata benignamente di compartirci.

Dopo quel tempo, ci pervenne per mezzo dell' [f. 160v] Illustrissimo Signor Riva il bellissimo motetto composto dal famosissimo Signor Gregorio Piva e da V. S. Illus.<sup>ma</sup> e Reverend<sup>ma</sup> inviatoci; il quale fu cantato con grande attenzione più volte e sommamente ammirato e gradito, e per esso gli si rendono infinite grazie.

La bellezza di detto mottetto, unita alla sua artificiosissima armonia, fa che cresca in noi il desiderio di vedere e sentire quelli che ci ha in oltre promessi, e che con grande impazienza si attendono per goder di quel beneficio, che Lei si compiace di farne degni.

[f. 161] La nostra Accademia stimasi fortunata di poter continuare il Suo lodevole proponimento sotto la Sua validissima protezione, della quale siamo desiderosissimi; ed io a nome di tutti mi sottoscrivo

Di V. S. Illus.<sup>ma</sup> e Reverend.<sup>ma</sup>  
Umilissimo, devotissimo ed obligatissimo Servitore  
N. Haym Secretario della predetta Accademia

This letter is given complete. Its Italian text was printed in Lindgren, 'Haym', 281-3, and Timms, 'Music and Musicians', 46-7. Only the first sentence was cited in Italian in Woker, 'Tondichter', 424n. Haym's date, 6 July, is presumably Old Style. <> It is noteworthy that the Vocal Academy had not yet received the motets from *Giano quadrifronte* that Steffani was planning to post on 11/22 May (see no. 46, above).

#### 48B. John Ernest Galliard to Riva

London, 7/18 July 1727

I should not fail to express the appreciation due to you, from all the members of our Academy, for having been the reason why the very reverend and very illustrious monsignor

bishop of Spiga agreed to be numbered among us academicians. You know that, on this occasion [a recent meeting], as a mark of distinction, we placed his name at the head of our registers, as president, for we knew that this would add lustre to the whole body and were persuaded that this [honour] was due by right to him, in preference to any other person alive today.

As it is also through you that we hope from time to time to receive some of the excellent compositions of the illustrious Gregorio Piva, and since, to your misfortune, you were not at the Academy when his motet [*Qui diligit Mariam*], recently received, was performed, you shall have a short account of it, by which, as in a ghost, you will be able to make out some [of its] beauties, of which you will be a better judge when you hear it.

It [the motet] is in the twelfth mode transposed. The subject with which it begins is elegant and expresses the words devoutly and with energy; the countersubject enters straight away, continues, and combines closely with the inversion of the subject through to the end. There then follows a solo, to afford a little contrast, and a repeat of the first subject, beginning with different parts for the sake of greater variety. And for the same reason that the solo is placed in that position, there follows a very pleasant duet, which introduces [a section for] three voices. This is followed by a subject and countersubject treated in five parts with great art, the whole being very harmonious, solemn and devout. This is followed by another more lively subject, with two countersubjects, one of which is inverted at the end in an unexpected way. The last movement begins in a simple manner, with two voices announcing two subjects that are mixed together; and to crown the whole he [the composer] very skilfully introduces the subject with which he began the motet while the other [voices] obstinately persist with theirs with great vivacity. He finally concludes with the subject as found at the beginning, thus expressing the devotion with which he started.

Our academicians could not have enough of it [this motet], even though they repeated it three times, and they performed it from the first with as much spirit as if they had studied it—which I must say to render them justice.

I have passed over in silence the beauty of the expression of the words, which is so natural to the composer that one cannot decide whether his art lies more in his choice of material or in its assembly. If anybody wants to see other things of this nature, he must go to look for them in our good Ancients of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries [1400s and 1500s?], when study was more in fashion than it is at present. What am I saying about the present? It is pitiful, also because in those earlier periods, and even in a short space of time, there was an ant-hill of great men in almost every country of Europe, as if a benign star then reigned only in favour of this beautiful art [music], whereas nowadays you do not need all your fingers to count up those who have the right to be placed on a par with them.

One must, however, draw the line at the study of such Ancients [at 1400?], because, as for the Greeks, unfortunately for us, nothing remains any longer to convince us of their excellence, other than some strong probabilities—which have had such an effect on me as to persuade me that they [the Greeks] heard harmony that we Moderns do not wish to allow them.

I must finish, for I see that, unintentionally, I am beginning to write a dissertation. Let me tell you only that I am, with profound respect,

Sir,  
Your most humble and obedient servant,  
J. E. Galliard

[f. 155] Je ne sçaurois omettre de vous témoigner la reconnaissance qui vous est due, de la part de tous les membres de nôtre Académie, pour avoir été la cause que le très révérend & très illustre Monseigneur



L'Evêque de Spiga s'est voulu mettre au nombre de nos Académiciens. Vous sçavez qu'à cette occasion on a, par marque de distinction, mis son nom à la tête de nos registres[s] comme président, étant sensible[s] que cela répendroit [répandrait] un lustre sur tout le corps, et parce qu'ils étoient persuadé[s] que cela luy convenoit de droit, préférablement à quelconque personne vivante.

Comme c'est aussi par vôtre moyen que l'on a l'espérance de recevoir de tems en tems quelques une[s] des composition[s] excellente[s] de l'illustre Gregorio Piva, et que pour vôtre malheur vous n'étiez pas à l'Académie lorsque son motet dernièrement resçu fut exécuté, vous en aurez une petite relation, par laquelle, comme dans un[e] ombre, vous entrevoirez des beautés dont vous serez meilleur juge quand vous l'entendrez.

[f. 155v] Il est du douzième mode transposé, le sujet par ou il commence élégant & exprimant le[s] paroles dévotement et avec énergie, le contresujet entrant d'abord, continuant et se resserrant avec le renversement du sujet jusques à la fin. Après suit un solo, pour donner quelque repos & pour reprendre le premier sujet, commençant par différentes parties pour plus de variété. Et par la même raison que le solo précédent y est mis, suit un duo fort agréable, pour introduire trois voix qui sont suivies d'un sujet & contresujet à 5 voix, travaillé[s] avec beaucoup d'art, le tout fort harmonieux, pompeux, & dévot. Ce qui est suivi d'un autre sujet plus animé avec deux contresujets, dont un de ces sujets est à la fin renversé d'une manière non attendue. Le dernier mouvement commence d'une manière singulière par deux voix, qui introduisent deux sujets qui se meslent ensemble, et pour couronner tout il introduit fort artificieusement le sujet par lequel il a commencé le motet, pendant qu'o[ù]stinement les autres continuent les leurs avec b[e]aucoup de vivacité. Et il finit, enfin, par le sujet tel qu'il se trouve au commencement, pour faire sentir la dévotion avec laquelle il a commencé.

Nos Académiciens ne peuvent [purent] se satisfaire, quoy qu'il le répètent par trois fois; et ils l'exécutèrent dès la première fois avec autant de vivacité comme si ils l'avoient étudié—ce que je suis obligé de dire pour leurs [leur] rendre justice.

J'ay passé sous silence la beauté de l'expression des paroles, qui est si naturelle à l'auteur, & qu'on ne sçauroit décider si l'art est [f. 156] plus dans le choix du sujet que dans l'assemblage. Quiconque veut voir des choses de cette nature, il faut qu'il les aille chercher chez nos bons Anciens du 14 & 15:me siècle, où l'étude étoit plus à la mode qu'à présent. Que dis-je d'à présent? Cela fait pitié. Mais aussi c'est la cause que dans ce tems-là, et même dans une petite espace de tems, il se trouva une fourmillière de grands hommes, même dans presque tout [tous] les pais de l'Europe, comme si un astre favorable ne regnoit alors qu'en faveur de ce bel art; au lieu qu'à présent on n'a pas besoin de tout se doits [tous ses doigts] pour conter ceux qui ont droit d'être mis en parallèle [sic] avec eux.

Il faut donc s'arrêter à l'étude de ces Anciens-ci, car pour des Grecs, par malheur pour nous, il ne nous reste plus rien qui nous puisse convaincre de leur excellence que par de fortes probabilités, & qui ont tant d'effet sur moy, jusques à me persuader qu'ils entendoit [entendaient] l'harmonie dont nous autres Modernes ne leurs [leur] veulent pas faire concession.

Il faut que je finisse, car je m'aperçois qu'insensiblement je me mets en train de faire une dissertation; permettez-moy seulement de vous dire que je suis avec profond respect,

Monsieur  
Vostre très humble & très obéissant serviteur  
J. E. Galliard

See Ill. 10. This letter is given complete. Its French text was printed in Timms, 'Music and Musicians', 43–4, and parts of it were printed together with an analytical commentary in *idem*, 'Italian Church Music', 162–9. It was summarized in German in Woker, 'Tondichter', 424. Galliard's date of 7 July is presumably Old Style.

## 49. Riva [and Galliard] to Steffani

London, 16 September 1727 [Tuesday]

I have delivered to Mr Haym the letter from your most illustrious lordship [not extant], which will be entered among the notable items in the archive of the Academy, [both] as one of its glorious monuments and as a distinctive sign of your goodness and courtesy. Annexed to this letter you will find a list of the works by the famous Gregorio Piva that they possess, whence it is up to you to procure what they lack from that Saint Augustine of Music and send it to them. In other [letters] of mine I have asked your m. i. lordship to favour us by sending your portrait, at least in pencil or in red or black crayon—it does not matter which. I ask you for this again, most insistently, because we are extremely keen to have it here.

Bononcini reminds you of his constant respect. I remain with total deference,

Your m. i. lordship's  
Most humble servant

[in Galliard's hand:] List of the works of Gregorio Piva that we have . . .

Ho consegnata a questo Signor Haym la lettera di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima, che sarà registrata tra le cose notabili dell'archivio dell'Accademia per un monumento glorioso d'essa e per un contrassegno della di Lei bontà e cortesia. Qui annessa troverà Ella una lista delle cose che si hanno del famoso Gregorio Piva, onde a Lei tocca di procurare da questo Sant'Agostino della Musica quello che manca, e mandarlo. In altre mie ho supplicato V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> a favorirmi di spedirmi il Suo ritratto almeno in lapis, o sia a matite rosso o nero, che non importa; ne La supplico di nuovo instantissimamente, perché abbiamo una gran voglia di qui averlo.

Bononcino Le ricorda il suo costante rispetto. Io sono con tutto l'ossequio,

di V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup>  
Umilissimo servitore

Liste des compositions que nous avons de Gregorio Piva:

*Le discours, par lequel la musique est prouvé[e] être une science.*

Imprimé en italien, et en allemand avec des notes.

Les douze mottets, comme dans cette liste:

1. *Reginam nostram*, Rec.t; Eia omnes, festinem[us], a3
- 1 2. *Qui pacem amatis*, a3
3. *Felices adae fillii*, a3
- 2 4. *Sonitus armorum*, a3
- 3 5. *Flores agri*, a3
6. *Tandem adest*, Solo; Eia populi, a3
7. *Venite exultemus*, a3
8. *Videte gentes*, Rec.t; Pro Christo affligemur, a3
- 5 9. *Cingete floribus*, a3
- 6 10. *Surge propera veni*, a3
- 4 11. *Elevamini*, a3
12. *Fuge cara anima*, a3

Deux madrigeaux: *Gettano i re dal soglio*, a5, & *Al rigor d'un bel sembiante*, a3, intitulé *La Spagnola*.

Bon nombre de duetti, particulièrement les deux livres fait[s] au retour de ses ambassades, dont il se trouve dans l'un *Saldi marmi* & dans l'autre *E così mi compatite*. Tout [sic] ceux qui ont été fait[s] depuis, nous ne les avons pas, particulièrement un, où il y a ces paroles: *Vestito bruno*.

N. B. Vous sçavez que la plus part du tems nous exécutons dans nôtre Académie des motets et des madrigeaux a5 & a6.

See III. 11. This letter and the accompanying list of works are given complete in their original languages; the list of works is not given in translation. Both documents survive only in *I-Rscge* Fondo Spiga, vol. 62, where the folios are unnumbered. The Italian text of the letter and French/Latin text of the list were printed in Loschelder, 'Römische Quellen', 47–8, and Timms, 'Music and Musicians', 47–8; Loschelder also provided German translations. <> The letter is clearly in Riva's hand, while the list was written by Galliard, probably during the summer of 1727. The 'douze mottetts' represent the contents of Steffani's *Sacer Ianus quadrifrons* (Munich, 1685), in the correct order, but if the Academy had possessed a copy of this edition, Galliard would presumably have described the motets as 'imprimé'—the word he used for Steffani's 'discours', *Quanta certezza habbia da suoi principii la musica* (Amsterdam, 1695), trans. as *Send-Schreiben, darinnen enthalten, wie grosse Gewissheit die Music aus ihren Principiis und Grund-Sätzen habe* (Quedlinburg and Aschersleben, 1699; repr. 1700; rev. edn 1760). It seems likely, therefore, that the Academy owned the manuscript copy now in *GB-Lcm* MS 1023 (information provided by H. Diack Johnstone in a letter of 12 July 1970 to Colin Timms). The fragments of watermarks visible in this manuscript closely resemble watermarks B 10 to B 160 in Donald Burrows and Martha J. Ronish, *A Catalogue of Handel's Musical Autographs* (Oxford, 1994). Since these are typical of English papers in the first half of the eighteenth century, it is unlikely that the manuscript was copied in Germany or that Steffani sent it to the Academy. The six numbers that Galliard added to the left of the twelve refer to the six motets found in *GB-Lgc* MS G. Mus. 418, which was posted in Hanover on 22 May 1727 (see commentary to no. 46, above); this manuscript must have reached the Academy after Galliard had written out his list, because the six numbers are clearly a later addition. A note inside G. Mus. 418 states that the manuscript 'contains the Duplicates of No. II. IV. V. IX. X. & XI. in the other Volume'. Another note in the *Lgc* manuscript reveals that it was 'Purchased, together with another Book of curious Motets [*GB-Lcm* MS 1023], at the Sale of Music of the late Dr. Will[ia]m Boyce. Apr. 16 [1779] by me T[homas] B[ever]' (for information on Bever and his library, see Charteris, 'Thomas Bever'). Also absent from Galliard's list is Steffani's new motet *Qui diligit Mariam*, which reached London in late June or early July (see commentary to no. 46, and see no. 48B, above). The list must have been compiled before the arrival of the motet, and the fact that the latter was not added afterwards suggests that Galliard had already passed the list to Riva for forwarding to Steffani. If he did, Riva must have had it for about three months before sending it to the composer in mid-September.

#### 50. Steffani to Riva

Frankfurt, 11 January 1728 [Sunday, hand C]

Numberless are the thanks that I must render to your most illustrious lordship for your most precious letter of 27 December [not extant]. Not the least of the obligations that I profess to you on this account is that you freed me from the extreme anxiety in which I was gripped by your long silence, which made me fear that your m. i. lordship had totally forgotten your old and most faithful servant. You crowned all the signal favours dispensed to me at this latest juncture by addressing your open letter to Monsignor [Cavalieri], nuncio of Cologne, who was indeed the source of the commission with which I dared to importune your m. i. lordship, and which you have had the goodness to carry out with such precision and to the great approval of that worthy prelate, to whom I owe everything and can therefore deny nothing. Pray believe that with this your m. i. lordship has earned all my indissoluble gratitude.

But your m. i. lordship was pleased to fulfil that commission for the monsignor nuncio with such obliging exactness that I am spurred to beg you to take on a similar one also for me. I ask you therefore to inform me immediately to what expense I should expose myself if I could no longer resist the temptation to acquire one of those clocks that stand against the wall in a case—not one of the most expensive, nor one of the cheapest. I should like the

clock to run for at least fifteen days [without winding], to sound the hours and the quarters, and to repeat [a tune?] if one wishes. Confident of your incomparable kindness, I beg you for this information, but without thinking of making the purchase before I have taken the liberty of asking you for this favour, seeing that, before taking this step, I need to know whether the court of Rome wants me to set my sails from here for the north or the south.

On this occasion I also dare ask your m. i. lordship to give me some news of that excellent Academy [of Vocal Music], for having heard nothing more about it, and knowing my meagre merit, I have just cause to fear that its members may regret having done me the great honour of electing me president. Having always been informed that, at their virtuoso meetings, diverse works are sung, all without instruments, I believed that I could not, and should not, think of sending them a *Stabat Mater dolorosa* by the usual Gregorio Piva; but if those revered gentlemen do not mind that this composition requires a chorus of instruments, I will gladly send it to them, because it is the aforesaid composer's masterpiece, to the extent that he has not dared put his hand to another work since, so that I can assure your m. i. lordship that there is no power of number in sound, nor vigour of harmonical proportion, that is not to be found in abundance in that composition. I will await, therefore, your very kind reply.

In the meantime, I ask you to greet our Bononcini on my behalf, along with Haym, and to hold as invariable the perfect respect with which I shall be, so long as I live,

Of your most illustrious lordship,  
the most devoted and most obliged true servant  
[in Steffani's hand:] A[gostino], Bishop of Spiga  
[in Steffani's hand:]

[f. 57] Infinite sono le grazie che devo rendere a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima della Sua preziosissima lettera in data delli 27. del passato; e non è la più leggera delle obbligazioni che gliene professo quella di avermi liberato dalla somma inquietudine in cui mi teneva il di Lei lungo silenzio, che mi faceva temere essersi V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> totalmente dimenticata del Suo antico e fedelissimo servitore. Ella ha coronati tutti gl'insigni favori che mi ha dispensati in questa ultima congiuntura con quello d'indirizzare la Sua lettera aperta a Monsignore, Nunzio di Colonia, che in effetto era quello da cui veniva la commissione con cui ho arditto infastidire V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup>, e ch'Ella ha avuta la bontà di eseguire con tanta esattezza e gradimento sì grande di quel degno prelato, a cui dovendo io tutto, non posso per conseguenza nulla negare. Creda per tanto V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> di aver con ciò vincolata indissolubilmente tutta la mia [f. 57v] gratitudine.

Ma V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> si è compiaciuta di far con sì obbligante esattezza quella commissione per Monsignor Nunzio, che mi sprona a supplicarLa di caricarsene d'una simile anche per me. Io La prego dunque istantemente d'informarmi a quale spesa soggiacerei quando non potessi più lungamente resistere alla tentazione di esser provvisto di uno di que' penduli che si appoggiano alla muraglia con una cassa non delle più dispendiose, e che però non fosse delle treviali [triviali]. Converrebbe poi che l'orologio camminasse almeno 15. giorni, che sonasse le ore ed i quarti, e ripettesse quando si vuole. Affidato sulla di Lei impareggiabile gentilezza, La supplico di questa informazione, senza però pensar a far la compra sin che io non prenda la libertà di pregarLa di questo favore, atteso che prima di procedere a questo passo, mi conviene sapere se la corte di Roma voglia che di qua io dirizzi le vele verso il settentrione o verso il mezzogiorno.

Con questa occasione ardisco anche pregar V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> darmi qualche nuova di cotesta eccellente [f. 58] Accademia, poiché non sentendone più parlare, e conoscendo il mio poco merito, ho giusto motivo di temere ch'essa si sia pentita di avermi fatto il grande onore di eleggermi per presidente. Essendomi sempre stato riferito che nelle sue virtuose esercitazioni si cantano diverse cose, ma tutte senza stromenti, ho creduto non poter né dover pensare a comunicargli uno *Stabat Mater dolorosa* del consueto Gregorio Piva; ma se a que' riveriti signori non dà fastidio che la composizione sia fatta con un coro d'istromenti, io volontieri la loro comunicherei, perché è il chef d'oeuvre del suddetto compositore, di modo che dopo

quella non ha ardito metter la mano alla seconda, stante che posso assicurar V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> non esservi forza di numero sonoro o vigore di proporzione armonica che non si trovi abbondantemente in quel componimento. Attenderò dunque le di Lei gentilissime risposte.

Intanto La supplico riverire per parte mia il nostro Signor Bononcini unito col Signor Haym, e creder [f. 58v] invariabile la perfetta osservanza, con cui sarò sin che vivo.

Di V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup>

[in Steffani's hand:] Devotissimo obbligatissimo servitore vero  
[in Steffani's hand:] A, Vescovo di Spiga

See Ill. 12. This letter, written a month before Steffani's death, is given in full. He had gone to Frankfurt to seek medical advice. Although he must normally have been healthy and strong, he suffered from minor ailments throughout his life; as a result of seasonal changes, he frequently went to the baths (see nos. 8, 24 and 41). On 29 January 1728 Count Nesselrode-Reichenstein invited him to Herten, where the air was good (*I-Rsge* Fondo Spiga, vol. 62); two weeks later Steffani died of apoplexy in Frankfurt. <> The first paragraph of this letter presumably refers to an item that Riva obtained for the nuncio of Cologne, and not to his quest for a post for Gioachino Landi (see nos. 45-7, above). <> Steffani's *Stabat Mater* is discussed, and its sources are listed, in our Introduction, sections 6 and 7, respectively.

### III. ILLUSTRATIONS

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Illustration 1: Letter J, from Carlo Luigi Pietragrua to Agostino Steffani, 12 September 1721 (Rome, Fondo Spiga, vol. 29)

Mo. a Gio: B. P. Pietragrua  
in paese di Wüzburg

Stesso la madre di V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> è in gravidanza  
della sua figliuola Annamaria non armandosi di partora  
al M. Collegium Aveva i due quadri di diti della  
di; ed è di un'impegno di d'ambrosio, vivente, e d'inf.  
come profumante, e si trova occupato a far  
dri per un corpo di d'inf. che la parte di d'inf. quale  
spettava e si promette di servizio al primario di  
nesso, e d'inf. questo è quanto fatto d'inf. la  
intorno la di. [allegria è stato ad un mio amico di  
Podolpa di trovare un d'inf. no pag. d'inf. giovina, di d'inf.  
pato, e d'inf. nella musica, e di d'inf. di d'inf.  
si trova profumante in d'inf. a d'inf. della d'inf.  
e di d'inf. il servizio di d'inf. alle condizioni di d'inf. di  
d'inf. ed è pronto a partire quando d'inf. d'inf.

attendo con la porta di Joviani da Modena una signora  
 et il Conte d'Alto, a tempo di Joviani sua Contessa la  
 nota. La signora Joviani modo che J. A. Mendi il d'Alto  
 et il Viaggio di questi due in mano mia, g'altuano ch'  
 sappia a chi sono indirizzati per vicinanza d'Alto in  
 Langona che Vangelis qua, a la strada Vettura sua  
 Velturago. Attendo pure, ni possa circa del Brande  
 sotto il quale un d'Alto d'Alto nona un'Alto  
 malattia di Joviani con una doppia onta a ripulire  
 la strada d'Alto. Joviani con un Joviani: la d'Alto  
 nona g'altuano un'Alto: (vicinanza) sono  
 Joviani: 27, un'Alto  
 Vanzina li 12 d'Alto 1721

Vanzina li 12 d'Alto 1721  
 Carlo Luigi d'Alto

Illustration 2: Letter K, from Johann Philipp Franz von Schönborn to Agostino Steffani, 12 October 1721, in an unidentified secretary's hand, with Schönborn's signature (Rome, Fondo Spiga, vol. 29)

1721

Ill. m. e. Lu. m. Sig. P. one Col. m.

Con somma mia soddisfazione ho visto dalla gentile prima  
 lettera di P. A. Joviani, e della copia annessa, che se in-  
 contrato il soprano, che desidero e che ho lasciato impegnato  
 al mio servizio sulle condizioni menzionate nelle mie  
 anteriori. E siccome io non dubito, che fra tanto P. A.  
 Joviani non riceva nuovi favori e posizioni anche del  
 Re, ed almeno che giungano a tempo, perche l'un  
 e l'altro si possono di compagnia metter in viaggio per  
 instrarsi, senza ritardo a questa volta, mentre le strade  
 ancora sono praticabili e la stagione temperata. Cio  
 s'aggi, solo gli ordini precisi per rimettere coll'ordinario  
 di Roma trenta cinquanta vagliari in vacanza da par-  
 -tarsi al Sig. Carlo Luigi d'Alto qua, che poi consegnari  
 le due terze della somma in due charici per farne  
 l'effezione del viaggio siccome al restante per il conto d'Alto,  
 che se non termina in caso che si ritrovi dopo ad all'au-  
 -mentare. benchè se fosse possibile, ed un buon conto dato  
 accompagnare gli altri presentemente quello aumentabile

la mia contabilità, darebbe a loro Stesti maggior comodità, e diminuirebbe le spese, le quali, se per forte eu-  
 defero la somma degli sopr'acconciati duecento cinquanta  
 ongheri, che però non credo, gli sarà da me rimborsati  
 anche il di più. V. S. Ill. mi favorisca di far ancora  
 queste ultime disposizioni per dar la consumazione all'op-  
 -ra, per il quale ha ben voluto pigliarsi fin adesso tan-  
 tanta; ma s'assicuri, che mai perderò di memoria la  
 bontà dimostrata in questa ed altre occasioni, profet-  
 -tando eternamente un'opporuna ed inalterabile ed una ser-  
 -va per molti titoli obbligatissima. prima di finire questa nota  
 devo comunicare a V. S. Ill. la notizia, cioè che da Roma  
 sal Bonciani di due Contratti l'uno soprano l'altro contra' alle  
 che cantavano all'azione; credo questo che tutti due  
 accettarrebbero il partito; se dunque il contra' alla di V. S.  
 Ill. non avesse risoluta, la prego d'annunziarmelo qu-  
 -prime per potermi usare della congiuntura a pigliar  
 il contra' alle sopr'acconciati di Roma. Mi resta di scrivi-

V. S. Ill. col'ausilio, che dimanda, e di darle nuova del  
 buon stato di salute, ed intiera riconsualescenza del sig.  
 Dottore di Magorla, il quale da molti giorni si troua  
 fuora d'ogni pericolo, anzi colla speranza di veder li suoi  
 anni tanto maggiormente prolungati poiche la natura  
 con si gran vigore ha vinto il male, e resistito ad un  
 attacco assai duro e forte. Idio lo conceda per il ben-  
 -comune della Patria, e per la consolazione degli di lui  
 buoni amici e seruidori. Le poi il segretario di V. S. Ill.  
 vuol venir qui da me nel passaggio che farà per questa  
 città, haurò a caro di vederlo e sentirlo volentieri da esso,  
 quanto V. S. Ill. gli haurà comandato per me, ne  
 l'ancora di dargli dei contra' segni si' di pace, che di  
 fatti, della stima e venerazione, colla quale sono  
 per sempre  
 Di V. S. Ill. Servo  
 Trapani il 12 di dicembre 1721

Agostino Steffani et obsequio: Servo



Illustration 3: Letter Q, from Stefano Benedetto Pallavicini to Giuseppe Riva, 26 October 1720 (Modena, Autografoteca Campori, busta Pallavicini, no. 207)

M. Sig. mio P. M. Col.



Prima che V. M. <sup>mi</sup> v. g. il Mare mi  
permetta di riviverla anche una volta  
da vicino, ma perche' le fregate non  
vanno mai da qualche interesse  
disquante, se pur finera, e non tedio  
è il mio scrivere, mi permetta nel  
stesso di domandare qualche cosa  
di Senesin. Da Francofort in  
qua io non ho veduto riva di suo, e  
vivo impar. <sup>te</sup> a sapere come gli viene  
l'Ingr. e come egli med. viene agli  
Ingresi. Non dubito che V. M. non  
ne abbia data notizia, e perciò mi  
avanzo a pregarla di comunicarmela,

come anche di voler indirizzare al suddet.  
l'annessa, ch'è una <sup>no</sup> solem. Mercuria  
Il è l'uno tempo, ch'io mi trovo in  
obbligo di render grazie a lei  
che al mio P. Ab. Mauro dei versi  
Latin d'ui anno volub farmi parte.  
Gli amici del P. Ab. devono desiderare,  
che il suo corpo si mantenga vivo, e  
fresco a misura del suo spirito, e io  
più d'ogn'altro gliel'auguro. Si  
conferri ella egualm. <sup>te</sup>, e mi creda  
un vero, ma vero offequio.  
V. M. <sup>te</sup> V. M. 26. Oct. 1720.

Stefano Benedetto  
Pallavicini

Illustration 4: Letter 1, from Giuseppe Riva to Agostino Steffani, 2 December 1720 (Hanover, Cal. Br. 23c, Nr. 443, ff. 135-6)

Amato mio Agostino Steffani  
 Londra = <sup>135</sup> Dicembre <sup>1720</sup>

Dopo aver fatto un viaggio avari usito per terra, tornam-  
 -mo il mare con tranquillità, per le papaverine da Calais  
 a Dover in 8 ore senza il menomo incognito, onde  
 subito si incomincio a scendere. Abbiamo ben qui scorto  
 l'altro mare del sud in una orribile tempesta, e appena  
 arrivati a Londra abbiamo veduti con compassione  
 gli avanzi de' poveri naviganti sommersi, e altri  
 in pericolo senza speranza di salvarsi: che differenza  
 dall'onda d'ingue, o lei non fa a quella d'icefio.  
 Si sono comminate molte proposte per ammazzare almeno  
 in qualche maniera le loro vite, ma non i rimedi sono  
 stati trovati o troppo deboli per la violenza del male,  
 o troppo violenti per la debilita del ammalato. Non  
 la guarire che non si sia concesso nella fortuna delle  
 nella grandezza del suo consiglio.

Sabato passato si' aperte il Teatro delle opere ed ando  
 in scena L'incerto Bassa di Spartaco Zeno, e  
 l'incerto di Brononcio che si trova qui, e che ha mar-  
 -giamente incontrato, ed in verità non si possono meglio  
 muovere gli affetti se interloquiti più nelle passioni de-  
 -stati di quello del'gn' in quest'opera, in due parole  
 questa è una musica, che va a dirittura al cuore  
 senza tanti giri e contragiri; ciò che ha sentito dal mare  
 di qua dice che era la cosa più difficile, e meno praticata  
 al punto. Alcuni trasportati per il mondo vorrebbero trovare  
 qualche cosa da dire, ma è difficile d' resistere al Tarantolo  
 I cantanti e recitanti, e contano bene a parte il Sig. Keel  
 -L'anno prossimo un'opera detta dell'incerto intitolata  
 il Capitano. Il Direttore dell' Accademia vogliono scrivere  
 che non Altieri se perde la musica si reglata con

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amore, ed esserella hanno pregato Pronovino a dirigerla,  
 non fidandosi del frascato di qualche altro, e desiderando ancora  
 d'istruire. Pronovino ha risposto che li farà d'ora d'indietro  
 alla Compagnia. Dello Riva, che considero il S. Agostino  
 della Svizzera. Bisognerebbe intanto qualche cosa d'istruire  
 ma non si farà la minor alterca. nelle altre. Pronovino  
 che sa che io ho l'onore d'esser segretario di V. M. in niente  
 d'incaricarmi quella della Svizzera, e di  
 presentarle; e di lui ripeto. In fin qui tutto agli  
 ordini di V. M., sperando che ho portato meco  
 la memoria delle grazie cordiali, generose, ed alla  
 mia spina fare nel mio soggiorno a Amover. Indiritta  
 la per alij Sardi d'Amsterdam. Diviso di  
 il mio caro signor, come con equal stima, e  
 venerat.

Umilissimo Servo  
 Riva

A V. M. Chiamò

Illustration 5: Letter 3, from Agostino Steffani to Giuseppe Riva, 17 January 1721, in the hand of Giuseppe Bossis, with Steffani's signature (Modena, Autografoteca Campori, busta Steffani, ff. 1-2)

Coloquio <sup>(me)</sup> die 1791.



Pour vous marquer, Monsieur, que je sou-  
 haitte en plus souvent l'honneur de vos  
 nouvelles, j'entame une correspondance telle  
 que j'en ai une quantité d'autres de toutes sortes  
 de calibres. Si la mienne vous agréee, vous  
 en aurez qu'à répandre sur le même pied, ainsi  
 nous nous dirons confidamment ce que nous avons  
 à nous dire, et ne barbouillerons pas mal à  
 propos le papier avec des compliments sus-  
 perflus. J'ai reçu une de vos chères  
 lettres en date du 3<sup>me</sup> du dernier mois de  
 l'an passé. Il y a si long temps que je l'ai  
 presque oubliée. Je ne sais si vous avez  
 reçu ma réponse; toujours, mais je que je  
 me fais de quelle de ce devoir le premier  
 jour de poste que j'ai rencontré après  
 avoir eu votre chère lettre. Pour cette  
 je la recommande à M. de Sardi à Am-  
 sterdam, parceque je serois très fâché qu'  
 M. Riva

elle ne vous fut rendue siurement. à raison  
 en est que j'ai besoin d'un grandissime  
 plaisir; et puisque vous avez une si grande bonté  
 de m'offrir tous ceux que je prendrois  
 la liberté de vous demander, je me flatte  
 que vous ne me le refuserez pas cettuy-cy. J'  
 ai un ami à Rome que j'estime infi-  
 niment, et qui a beaucoup des amis et pro-  
 tecteurs à la Cour de Lorraine. Les graces qu'  
 il voudroit impetier à cette Cour là ne trou-  
 =bleront pas beaucoup l'économie, mais  
 auant qu'il se declare il voudroit estre  
 assuré de trouver de l'appuy. Je me flatte  
 d'ailleurs bien que Mr. le Beque ne me  
 le refuseroit pas la grace de s'interesser, et d'  
 interesser ses amis pour le mien, si je scaurois  
 où je doive luy demander. Comme je  
 scay Monsieur, que vous estes en grande  
 confiance ensemble, voyez si vous pouvez

luy escrire) et en cas que l'on puisse obtenir  
 de luy ses bons offices auprès de S. A. R.  
 soit Maître, tâchez de le persuader à me  
 faire sçavoir où je dois luy adresser mes  
 lettres pour luy expliquer ensuite toute  
 la chose.  
 Au reste il n'y a point de nouvelle icy  
 qui merite votre attention, d'autant plus  
 que vous sçavez déjà celle du passage par  
 icy du fameux Laus. Tout le monde dit  
 encore qu'il va à Rome. S'il y va porter  
 son belu Systeme d'économie, il accommodera  
 bien ce pays là aussi. Bien vous fait ses  
 compliments et ne vous dit rien de ce qui  
 on fait à Dresde, parcequ'il sçait que vous  
 en avez les nouvelles tout droit. Je  
 attends l'honneur de vre réponse Monsieur,  
 et suis sans aucune réserve le plus humble  
 de vos tres fidels serviteurs.



A. Esquel de Spiga.

Illustration 6: Letter 15, from Agostino Steffani to Giuseppe Riva, 12 August 1721, without the postscript by Marquis Nomis (Modena, Autografoteca Campori, busta Steffani, ff. 15-16)

Vannucera 12. Aug. 1721.

Del vedermi prender la penna facilmente ella  
 comprendeva due cose: la prima che Agostino e  
 Giovanni troppo lontano per seguirme: l'altra  
 che questa mia viaggio al di lei genit<sup>o</sup> e figlio  
 del p. del corv<sup>o</sup> non può esser molto lunga.  
 Intorno al viaggio del Agostino, lo devo che stanco  
 di vedermi spogliato da tutte le parti; con  
 la sola ragione che gli aggenti han sempre  
 fatto, e parandomi che nel novero benedetto non  
 non si comprenda affattanza, che la mia  
 serenanza in questo è solo effetto di docilità  
 compiacenza, e zelo di religione, ho creduto che  
 necessario abbaccia quel mezzo che ancora mi  
 restava di tentare per far palpare come verità  
 e effetto med<sup>o</sup>: in istato di prender misure giuste.  
 Della stagione della stagione: Noi ne abbiamo sofferto  
 da più una terribile, ma da 8. giorni in qua  
 godiamo un belia<sup>o</sup> tempo.  
 Parla composta dal mio sig. Monsignore per certe  
 Monache si debba restar<sup>o</sup> alli tempi correnti:

U. Steffani

ma il mal<sup>o</sup> sta = che i piccini e gli altri non  
 viavano alla spanda solo loro scapto non  
 in mezzo all'onda = ma vi viavano con  
 altri che nulla hanno che fare in quella faccenda  
 avendo che per concorso parlo la figura del mal<sup>o</sup>  
 nei nervi de piedi. Io non so quel che mi dica:  
 ma . . . . .

Ho veduto il negozio del sonetto fatto a profitto  
 della Duravante. Il Sig. è sommano. E non  
 ferente chi suoni, o cana li suoi due: ma  
 due favori potreste ella farli con la sua  
 cognata de' dotti. Il primo di pregar li  
 promotori, o li promotori di simili divenimen  
 di lasciar i libri del Sina nella polvere quando  
 non si trovi a proposito di farli di rigore  
 dal S. Bononini, che viaggia deuto.  
 altro che il Sina non venendo più parlar  
 del Sina consaputa, dipende con gran  
 ragione che il S. Sappia, che non è colpevole  
 del bell' amico di S. Sappia, perché con due sono



prova a' soddisfare alle loro promesse; e per che  
 lei dia a' Dresden la risposta che da tanto tempo  
 ci si aspetta, il negozio si fara' senza ritardo.  
 Co' che desidera d' S. Saxon Schaeffera' fatto  
 in due le migliori forme. Ma' a' proposito di  
 forme, poichè ella ha voluto commissioni, e spiegare  
 una. l'annata carta e la figura di tutte le  
 ali et i segni vitapha quella del diametro  
 della testa d'un cappello: ella ad ogni prova:  
 derivare d'un pajo, o un pajo, e farmeli capi:  
 avere con la prima occasione di Corriere per  
 qui; o di Nau per Stamburgo, mi farete  
 somma grazia, e se la farai rimandar  
 per mezzo del sig. e nobi d'Amsterdam. La  
 prima simile occasione che mi si presentà qui,  
 venderò la libreria di mandare la unghera  
 e la supplicherò di provvedermene. Inanis e  
 venuta a' casa Papageau, Nomi, Mauro, Scatani,  
 che te fanno mille inchini e cercano i migliori libri  
 con galani ricchierini.... ma non trova ormai più  
 più per assicurata di tutta la mia attenzione ad ubbidire.

Illustration 7: Letter 22, from Agostino Steffani to Giuseppe Riva, 5 December 1721, in the hand of secretary A, with a marginal addition by Steffani (Modena, Autografoteca Campori, busta Steffani, ff. 23-4)

(Hannovera, 5. Dec. 1721. 23  
 I miei ultimi favori sono dell'21. del passò: secondo le  
 Regole Audiate l'altro giorno, cioè una 60.<sup>na</sup> d'anni fa  
 che Interrogatio et Responsio casu convenient,  
 la mia risposta deve incominciare così, Ella mi dà  
 una così lieta nuova che poco manca che io non  
 risponda ad altro; e quando la pillola: come ella  
 forse giusta: la batterà: forse più amara che  
 quella di puro Aloe. e così grande il dolce che  
 noi ne sentiremo. ed io in particolare, ch'ella  
 non deve prendersi in mala parte se ardente  
 si desidera; ch'ella sia costretta d'inghiottirla  
 essendo che troppo ci deve premere di veder  
 qui il Sig. accompagnato da tanti buoni amici  
 che desideriamo d'abbracciarlo. Conto ella però  
 che se questa fortuna ci arriva, come ci viene  
 sperare. in tempo d'Estate, si farà tutto il  
 possibile, per ch'ella non habbia a' regrettare  
 la parola nuova / le delizie d'Inghilterra.  
 Ma' mi pare haverbe detto che se il Negozio dell'  
 abb. Proisio non mi fa dar uoffa al cervello,  
 con gliero sopra tutto che Dio per sua misericordia  
 gr. lina.

me ne habbia dato maggior provisione che non  
 credeuo, quelle che dice il sig.<sup>o</sup> B. Schack in In-  
 ghilterra, e totalmente conforme a quelle che  
 scrive qui madama d'Orleans da Parigi, in  
 seguito di questa scrive a c. A. R. la Ser.<sup>ma</sup>  
 sua figlia da Lunevilles. Il male sta, che il  
 sig.<sup>o</sup> Abb.<sup>o</sup> Sommier dice in Roma tutto il  
 Contrario, o poco ni manco: onde l'unico  
 rimedio di uscire da quest'imbroglio è ser-  
 -tarsi quello della Patente di sopranvenenza.  
 E non le nego che la grazia sarebbe per me  
 tanto più grande, che parendo le cose della  
 mia Prepositura prender buona piega, mi  
 importa infinita di tener l'Abb.<sup>o</sup> Troica  
 in buoni humore: e la posso assicurare  
 sopra l'honorario che non solliciterei  
 con tanto vigor la fortuna di quel Galant  
 se non fosse sicurissimo, che nello stesso  
 tempo giacendo in ottimo servizio al sig.<sup>o</sup>  
 Duca di Lorena. Sono così divergenti  
 le nuove che veggono qui sopra M.<sup>o</sup> Luis

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 offero mille volte di più, e non farò  
 che io mi ha fatto il sonno dei favori a dispetto  
 quelle poche parole, in vigor delle quali co-  
 -mincio a creder favolosa la contesa che si pre-  
 -tende essere stata molto agitata nella Camera  
 alta sopra quel particolare. Non minori obbli-  
 -gazioni le professo per le altre nuove comuni-  
 -cations. Certo è che alla Corte Ces.<sup>sa</sup> la Doppia Alleanza  
 -anza delle due Potenze, altre volte simili irre-  
 -conciliabili, rompe il sonno, e con qualche si di-  
 -ragione. Del resto io ho sempre creduto, siano  
 che se il Congress di Cambrai si tiene, li Ministri  
 delle Cortezze principali non hauseranno che la  
 pena di sottoscrivere, e quelli delle accessioni  
 saranno rimandati alle vie della Giustizia  
 ordinaria. Si lavora in Berlino alla Paillarda  
 per accomodare amichevolmente quella Corte  
 con la Ces.<sup>sa</sup>, e si dice per certo, che oltre il Re d'  
 Inghilterra, e quello di Polonia ai lavori affidu-  
 -am.<sup>o</sup> il Landgravo di Cassel. Tutti li Amici, e per-  
 -ticularmente il signor de' Nomis ed Abb.<sup>o</sup> Mauro sono  
 sensibili all'honore della dilucidatione, e di più  
 ogni altro son desiderosi di ubbidir la



Illustration 8: Letter 28, from Giuseppe Riva to Agostino Steffani, 3 June 1723 (Hanover, Cal. Br. 23c, Nr. 443, ff. 114-15)

London 3 Giugno 1723 <sup>114</sup>

Se mi ricordo del mio gentilissimo Ammiraglio? se me ne  
ricordo? L'ottimo mancar io ad un obbligo, che tanto  
l'entra; e con tanta l'armonia si fissa in me come in afe-  
chido? Ella non irreda già: che il passaggio di  
Catalis sia quello del fante Luce. Veramente dopo  
il suo ritorno in Italia io non se ho mai scritto,  
ma non ho lasciato di pregare avanti il sig. Marchese  
di Cantani a ricordarle il mio rispetto in sua  
d'egli la scriverò. Ho letto la sua lettera al  
nostro sig. Bononini, il quale rammemorandole  
sempre l'insistenza sua prima, ed il suo sincero  
augurio dice, che si tiene in questo Teatro i profi-  
sion occupati da tre donne, con un opera sua  
per la sig. Sorcina, che se per altro il sig. Giuseppe  
qui; o d'egli fosse in Italia si farebbe un parti-  
colar onore d'insegnare ad una persona da lei  
raccomandata, e di tenerla lontana da que'  
Ammirabili difetti: che ora regnano in Italia con grave  
detrimento del vero buon gusto; con pur troppo

che l'era sempre, e con arzigogoli e cava di  
appunto dal capo ignorante, e di si parte di  
vento, e di vento. E sebbene lo Culloni potra  
se far dimeno, e tirare a se colla verità gl'  
ignoranti pure ancor ella fu d' tempo in tempo  
i suoi giochi artificiosi. Con per forza de  
l'ottimo de loro l'anima di questo agiato lacer  
de tiene della natura dell' Elemento che lo circo  
altranne che Bononino, ed ha del un testo  
compositore di Amico nella persona del sig. alla  
Lade Amico Amico, un' opera del quale ho avuto  
un bellissimo incontro. Bononino resterà qu  
ancor l'anno venturo, spendo impegnato, e per  
lascierà il campo libero. Quasi egli d'invita  
e di parlar con alcuni giorni  
che fra pochi giorni parte per Hannover, lo non ho  
ancor niente i miei ordini colla signora  
perpetua di Humber, e di Sheley, con l'inglio  
ed ver. d' Rochester, e colla mare dell'istesso ca.

Illustration 9: Letter 43A, from Nicola Francesco Haym to Agostino Steffani, 13/24 February 1727 (Hanover, Cal. Br. 23c, Nr. 443, ff. 163-4)

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Levo sono caricati i conculci della passata  
 (con riverenza parlando conquisato). I poveri  
 cattolici sono da fuggire. Il Bill contro di loro  
 per la strada contribuit. di 100 sterl. e passate  
 nelle due Camere nonostante gli uffici dell'  
 Inf. del Re di Francia, e del Re di Spagna;  
 I ministri dell'una, e dell'altra Camera con  
 l'ingiustizia, ma non hanno il coraggio di  
 andar contro al M. Walpole, di cui il contributo  
 è impegno, e che avendo la parola in mano si  
 apre, e terra a suo talento. *Bonus videtur, et  
 peiora sequitur.* Dopo pretensiono riguardar  
 i Protestanti in Germania?  
 Etia mi continui il predetto tuo affare, e mi manda  
 con sincerità *inquit*

13. Febbr. 1727

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Ill.<sup>mo</sup> e Reverend.<sup>mo</sup> Signore

Essendo stata benignamente, dall' Ill.<sup>mo</sup> Sig.<sup>no</sup> Abate Riva,  
 compartita alla nostra Compagnia di Musica, quella parte della  
 sua Lettera che ci riguarda, e Letta, e considerata con aggradevole  
 Sorpresa, ci venne lungo tempo sospeso in considerazione qual segno  
 di ossequio, e di stima, potesse compensare un così immenso favore;  
 Ma trovandosi alla fine esser ciò a noi impossibile, fu prima de-  
 terminato, che con la presente a nome di tutti Le si rendesse, i più  
 che debuti ringraziamenti; e si propose poi di porre il suo celebratissimo  
 Nome ne' nostri Registri, già che pareva nella sua, che ce ne dovesse  
 mutualmente La permissione: Ma da alcuni fu prudentemente consi-  
 derato, che ciò non poteva, ne doveva farsi senza particular Licenza di  
 V. S. Ill.<sup>ma</sup> e Reverend.<sup>ma</sup> — Fu valorati in appresso dal predetto Ill.<sup>mo</sup>  
 Sig.<sup>no</sup> Abate Riva, ciò si farà nella prossima adunanza, e sarà ma-  
 teria di nuova gloria a' nostri Collegi, che tanto sono ansiosi di  
 vederse così insignamente onorati. — Intanto per darle materia  
 di favorirci più oltre, mi viene imposto, di parteciparle in breve

il cominciamento, e gli istituti di questa nostra Assemblée.

Vedendosi che La buona, e vera Musica, andava di per tutto deterioranda, si propose da alcuni di formare una Comitiva di Virtuosi Cantanti, e Compositori, i quali sudunandosi ogni due settimane una volta, in luogo capace, per due Ore continue vi s'impiagasse il tempo. Cantar Messe, Salmi, Motetti, Madrigali, Canoni, ed altre cose. Studiate a 4, a 5, e più parti, senza istrumenti; e che ogni volta si terminasse quest'esercizio con un eccellentissimo Canone a 3 sul verso del Salmo 113 Non nobis Domine non nobis, sed Nomini tuo da Gloria. A così ben pensata Istituzione, concorsero subito Le tre principali Cappelle di questa Dominante, cioè La Regia, S. Paolo, e S. Pietro di Westminster; e si van cantando continuamente cose di Jusquin da Prato, Orlando di Lassus, Palestrina, Ferabosco, Luca Marco, Claudio Monteverde, Prencipe di Venetia, Foggia Vecchio, Carissimi, ed altri insigni Autori; ed il giorno di S. Cecilia, se ne celebra festa con Istrumenti, e maggior pompa del solito.

Non si ammette Auditorio alcuno, se non i propri Accademici; mentre questo esercizio, si fa solamente per nostro studio, e diletto, e non per dar pascolo noioso agli ignoranti.

Ora si sta preparando a dar un Nome, ed un impresa all'Accademia, La sussistenza della quale, è a proprie spese degli Accademici.

Non si ha del Rivocitissimo Sig. Riva altro che un madrigale a 5 Cadon i Re dal Loggion & il quale non possiamo stancarci di ripeterlo, ed ammirarlo; onde qualunque cosa a più parti, o con parole Latine, o Italiane, però senza istrumenti, che questo Insigne Autore voglia favorirci, sarà di sommo gradimento; e se si potrà avere qualche Partitura immediatamente per La Poste, servirà per ora ad appagare La grande avidità che abbiamo di udire qualcuna delle Sullimi note del predetto Sig. Riva; e con dovuto ossequio a nome di tutti umiliandoci, Resto —

Di V. S. Illus.<sup>ma</sup> e Reverend.<sup>ma</sup>  
Londra li 13 Feb: 1727

Umilis.<sup>mo</sup> e Devot.<sup>mo</sup> Servitore  
N. Haym Secretario della predetta Accad.



Illustration 10: Letter 48B, from John Ernest Galliard to Giuseppe Riva, 7/18 July 1727 (Hanover, Cal. Br. 23c, Nr. 443, ff. 155-6)

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Monsieur

Je ne saurois omettre de vous témoigner la reconnaissance qui vous est due, de la part de tous les membres de notre Académie, pour avoir été la cause que le tres Reverend & tres Illustre, Monseigneur l'Evêque de Spiga, s'est voulu mettre, au nombre de nos Academiciens. Vous sçavez qu'à cette occasion on a, par une marque de distinction, mis son nom à la tête de nos Registres comme President, étant sensible que cela répandroit un lustre sur tout le Corps, et parce qu'ils étoient persuadés que cela lui convenoit de droit, préféablement à quelconque Personne vivante. Comme c'est aussi par votre moyen que l'on a l'esperance de recevoir de tems en tems quelques une des compositions excellentes de l'illustre Gregorio Riva, et que pour votre malheur, vous n'étiez pas à l'Académie lorsque son Motet dernièrement rasé fut exécuté vous en ayez une petite relation, par laquelle comme dans un Ombre, vous entrevoirez des Beautés dont vous serez meilleur Juge quand vous l'entendrez. —

Il est du Douzième Mode transposé. Le Sujet par ou il commence Elegant; & exprimant les paroles devotement, et avec energie; Le contre-sujet entrant d'abord, continuant et se resserant avec le renversement du Sujet jusques à la fin. apres suit un Solo pour donner quelque repos, & pour reprendre le premier sujet commençant par différentes parties pour plus de variété; Et par la même raison que le Solo précédent y est mis, suit un Duo fort agréable pour introduire trois Voix qui sont Sujet d'un Sujet, & contre-sujet à 5 Voix, travaillé avec beaucoup d'art, le tout fort Harmonieux; Simplice; & Devot; ce qui est suivi d'un autre Sujet plus brève avec deux contre-sujets, dont un de ces sujets est à la fin renversé d'une manière remarquable. Le dernier mouvement commence d'une manière singulière par deux Voix, qui introduisent deux Sujets qui se mêlent ensemble, et pour couronner tout, il introduit fort artificieusement le Sujet par lequel il a commencé le Motet, pendant qu'artifiquement les autres continuent les leurs avec beaucoup de délicatesse, et il finit enfin, par le Sujet tel qu'il se trouve au commencement, pour faire sentir la Devotion avec laquelle il a commencé. Nos Académiciens ne peuvent se satisfaire, quoiqu'il la regardent par trois fois; et ils l'exécutoient dès la première fois avec autant de vivacité comme si ils l'entendoient; car quoiqu'ils soient obligés de dire pour leurs vœux Justice. Jay passé sous silence la beauté de l'expression des Paroles qui est si naturelle à l'Auteur, & qu'on ne sauroit décider si l'art est

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plus dans le choix du sujet, que dans l'assemblage. quiconque veut voir des choses de cette nature, il faut qu'il les aille chercher chez nos bons anciens du 14<sup>e</sup> & 15<sup>e</sup> siècle, où l'étude étoit plus à la mode qu'à présent. que dis-je d'à présent! cela fait pitié. mais auj<sup>rd</sup> c'est la cause que dans ce tems là, et même dans une petite espace de tems, il se trouva une fourmillière de grands hommes, même dans presque tout le pais de l'Europe, comme si un autre favorable ne regnoit alors qu'en faveur de ce bel art; au lieu qu'à présent on n'a pas besoin de tout se donner pour contredire ceux qui ont droit d'être mis en parallèle avec eux. il faut donc s'arrêter à l'étude de ces anciens ci, car pour des grecs, par malheur pour nous il ne nous reste plus rien qui nous puisse convaincre de leur excellence que par de fortes probabilités, & qui ont tant d'effet sur moy jusqu'à me persuader qu'ils entendoit l'Harmonie dont nous autres modernes ne leur veulons pas faire conception. Il faut que je finisse, car je m'aperçois qu'insensiblement je me mets en train de faire une dissertation; permettez moy seulement de vous dire, que je suis avec profond respect

Monsieur

Londres 7<sup>e</sup> Juillet 1727.

Votre très humble &  
très obéissant serviteur  
J. E. Galliard

Illustration 11: Letter 49, from Giuseppe Riva to Agostino Steffani, 16 September 1727, with an annexed, undated list—in the hand of John Ernest Galliard—of works by Steffani in the library of the Academy of Vocal Music (Rome, Fondo Spiga, vol. 62)

Londra 16 Set 1727

Ho consegnata a g<sup>to</sup> sig. Maym Sabatara di V<sup>o</sup> Monte,  
che sarà registrata tra le cose notabili dell'Archivio  
dell'Accademia per un monumento glorioso d'op<sup>er</sup>,  
& per un contrappeso della di Lei bontà, e cortesia.  
Per annettere ancora alla mia lista delle cose, che  
si hanno del famoso Gregorio Riva, onde non  
sua di procurare da questo S. Agostino della  
Steffani quella che manca, o mancanti. In altre  
mie ho supplicato l'istesso affarissimo di spedirmi  
il suo catalogo attuale in libro, o sia qualche  
rofo o non importa, se la supplica di  
nuovo infrascriptum, perché almeno una gran  
copia di qui avrò. Accusarino il numero  
il suo costante rispetto. In suo con suo S.  
augurio. V<sup>o</sup> Monte V<sup>o</sup> Monte

Liste des Compositions que nous avons  
de Gregorio Riva.

Un Discours, par lequel la Musique est prouvée estre une  
Science. Imprimé en Italien, & en Allemand avec des Motets.

Les douze Motets. comme dans cette liste.

1. Regnum nostrum, Rec: Eia omnes Festinem, a 3.
2. Qui pacem amat, a 3.
3. Felices ada. Filii, a 3.
4. Somnus armorum, a 3.
5. Floras agri, a 3.
6. Tandem adest, Solo. Eia. Populi, a 3.
7. Venite exultemus, a 3.
8. Videte gentes, Rec: Pro Christo affligamur, a 3.
9. Congete Floribus, a 3.
10. Surge propere Veni, a 3.
11. Eluamini, a 3.
12. Fuga Cura animae, a 3.

Deux Madrigaux. l'un en l'italien a 5. & l'autre en l'Allemand  
a 3. intitulé La Spagnola.

Un Nombre de Quatre, particulièrement Les deux livres fait au retour de  
nos Ambassadeurs. dont il se trouve dans l'un l'Allemand, & dans  
l'autre, l'Italien. Et ces deux sont compatibles. tout ce qui ont été fait  
depuis, nous ne les avons pas; particulièrement un, ou il y a  
ces paroles Vertito Rotano.

NB. vous savez que la plus part du tems nous exécutons dans notre  
Académie. des Motets & des Madrigaux a 5, 4 & 6.

Illustration 12: Letter 50, from Agostino Steffani to Giuseppe Riva, 11 January 1728, in the hand of secretary C, with Steffani's signature (Modena, Autografoteca Campori, busta Steffani, ff. 57-8v)

Strano foglio del 1728

Infinita sono le grazie, che devo rendere a V. S.  
Illma della sua preziosa Lettera in data del 27.  
del passato, e non è da più leggera delle obbligazioni  
che gliene professo quella di avermi liberato dalla  
temuta ingratitudine in cui mi stavo vedendo di sì lungo  
silenzio, che mi faceva temere, essersi V. S. Illma total-  
mente dimenticata del suo antico, e fedel. Servo.  
Ella ha coronati tutti gli insigni favori, che mi ha  
dispensati in questa ultima congiuntura con  
quella di indirizzare la sua let. aperta a  
Monsegr. & Consiglio di Colonia, da in effetto era  
quella da cui veniva la Commissione, con cui  
ho ardito infastidire V. S. Illma, e ch' Ella ha  
avuta la bontà di requirere con tanta esattezza  
e gradimento si grande di quel degno Prelato, a cui  
si vendeva. Per tutto, non posso, per conseguenza nulla  
negare. Credo per tanto V. S. Illma di aver con  
ciò vincolato indissolubilmente tutta la mia  
Sig. Riva

gratitudine). Ma l'Alma si è lasciata di  
 far con sì obbligate esattezza quella Commissione  
 per Ngr Nenzio, che mi porta a supplicarla  
 di caricarsene d'una simile ande per me. Io la  
 prego dunque istantem<sup>te</sup> d'informarmi a quale  
 spesa soggiacerei quando non potessi più lon-  
 gamente resistere alla tentazione d'impresprovisto  
 di andr' que' penduli che si appicciano alla  
 Manafila: una casa non della più dipendenza  
 e che però non fosse delle straziali. Conturbato  
 poi, che l'orologio cominasse almeno 15 giorni  
 che sonasse le ore, ed in quarti, e rigate quando  
 si vuole. Affidato sulla di lei imprevedibile  
 gentilezza la supplico di questa informazione  
 senza però pensar a farla comparsa sin che  
 io non prenda la libertà di pregarla di questo  
 favore, avendole prima di procedere a questo  
 passo, mi conviene sapere se la Corte di  
 Roma voglia, che di qua se divisa l'ele-  
 verso il <sup>la</sup> venturione, o verso il mezzo giorno.  
 Con questa occasione ardino anche pregar l'Alma  
 darmi qualche nuova di costata sceltente

Academia, quindi non sentendone più parlare  
 e conoscendo il mio poco merito, ha giusto motivo  
 di temere, che essa si sia pentita di avermi fatto il  
 grande onore di eleggermi <sup>per</sup> presidente. Quando  
 mi sempre stato riferito, che nelle sue virtuose  
 esercitazioni si cantano diverse cose, ma tutte  
 senza istromenti, ho creduto non poter, né  
 dover pensare a comunicargli uno Stabat  
 Mater dolorosa del consueto Gregorio Riva,  
 ma se a que' Riveriti Sig.<sup>ni</sup> non dà fastidio,  
 che la composizione sia fatta con un coro d'  
 istromenti, io volentieri la loro comuni-  
 cherei, perché è il chef d'oeuvre del detto  
 Compositore, di modo che dopo quella non ha  
 ardo metter la mano alla seconda, stan-  
 te che posso assicurare l'Alma non esperi  
 forza di numero sonoro, o vigore di profusione  
 armonica, che non si trovi abbonantem<sup>te</sup> in  
 quel componimento. Attenderò dunque le  
 di lei gentili<sup>me</sup> risposte. Intanto la sup-  
 plico riverire per parte mia il nro Sig.  
 Bononini unito col Sig. Haym, e veder

invariabile eda perfetta ofessuanga, con un  
 stato di deo  
 D. V. J. [Signature]



Ms. Steffani no  
 1000  
 [Signature]

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## V. INDEX OF NAMES

An alphabetical index of the names of individuals and organisations found in our Introduction (In), in discursive passages within its footnotes (fn), in letters A–U, in letters 1–50, and in the commentaries (c) that follow each letter; individuals named in the List of Works Cited or in bibliographic citations in footnotes or commentaries are excluded. This index does not refer to page numbers. 'In' refers to the unnumbered section that begins the introduction, 'In1' to the first numbered section within it, and 'In1fn12' to footnote 12, which is within 'In1'. 'C' and '3' refer to letters and letter numbers, while 'Cc' and '3c' refer to the commentaries attached to those letters. 'Kps' and 'Ups' refer to the postscripts after letters K and U.

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 Tibaldi, Giovanni Battista, composer: In3  
 Tonnemann, Father, confessor to the emperor: 41c  
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 Tosi, Giuseppe Felice, composer: 21c  
 Tosi, Pier Francesco, castrato, composer and commentator: In5, P, 28c, 42–6  
 Townshend, Charles, viscount, secretary of state 1714–17, 1721–30: 7, 23  
 Travers, John, organist, composer and copyist: In7  
 Troisio, Giovanni, abbot, agent of Steffani in Rome 1721–2: In1, 1c, 3, 4c, 9, 11–14, 16c, 18c, 19c, 20, 21c, 22c, 23c, 24c, 25, 26c  
 Venturini, Francesco, violinist at Hanover: 14, 15, 20, 25  
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 Virgil, ancient Roman poet: In2  
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 Warren (Warren-Horne), Edmund Thomas, collector and editor: In7  
 Weiss, Barnabas, Capuchin and copyist: In7  
 Wendt, Franz Dietrich von: 42c  
 Wenzel, Johann, count Gallas, imperial ambassador in Rome 1714–19: In4fn67  
 White, Mr, auctioneer: In7  
 Whitworth, Charles, baron, British diplomat: 28c  
 Wilderer, Johann Hugo, composer: In2  
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 William Augustus, duke of Cumberland: 10–12, 19A  
 Wisselsheimb, priest in Hanover: 41c  
 Zamboni, Giovanni Giacomo, businessman and diplomat: In, In2fn41, In5, Nc, Pc, Sc  
 Zeno, Apostolo, librettist: 1

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