# San Salvatore, Venice’s Francophile Theater

Draft 5 (Sept. 2022)

1. Over the 40 years of its existence as an opera house (1661-1700), the Teatro San Salvatore was the only continuous competitor of Venice’s two Grimani opera houses—SS. Giovanni e Paolo (1639-1700) and San Giovanni Grisostomo (1678-1748). (For comedy, the Grimani maintained a separate house, San Samuele, founded in 1655.) San Salvatore Also known (especially as a comedy house) as the Teatro San Luca and as the Teatro Vendramin (after its ownership), San Salvatore operate within property had been in the hands of the Vendramin family since the mid-fifteenth century. Today’s Teatro Goldoni stands on approximately the same location.[[1]](#footnote-1)
2. As in most of the rest of Italy, Venetian opera theaters were built within the premises of a noble family. Individual families had no *formal* political alliances, for Venetian nobles were not allowed to pay allegiance to any foreign power. Yet many families had personal sympathies in times of conflict. Families that owned theaters often had past dealings with one or another foreign power either through government service or though trade.[[2]](#footnote-2) The Grimani family had particularly high political aspirations, as the family was rife with models for emulation. The brothers Gio. Carlo and Vincenzo Grimani, who founded San Giovanni Grisostomo and had succeeded to the management of the older SS. Giovanni e Paolo, did not occupy conspicuous posts in the Venetian government, but Vincenzo aggressively cultivated diplomatic posts within the Holy Roman Empire. His cunning (which some would characterize as ruthlessness) culminated in his appointment as Viceroy of the Two Sicilies (1708-1710).
3. In contrast, the Vendramin did not have such a high aspirations in government as the Grimani, but they had centuries of experience in commerce. That San Salvatore was near the Rialto (Venice’s commercial center) meant that it was likely to attract the notice of those with business to conduct in the district. The property obtained by Luca Vendramin in 1452 consisted of two houses (built in 1447 and 1448) in the parish of “San Luca.” They were given to a certain Maria Bembo.[[3]](#footnote-3) In time the Bembo household prospered, and this eventually benefitted the later Teatro San Salvatore.

## The Theater that served Two Masters

1. The theatrical rivalry between the Vendramin and the Grimani, which continued into the eighteenth century, was rooted less in opera than in *commedia*—a chameleon species of stage entertainment that ranged (in the later seventeenth century) from the learned to the insipid. The Vendramin had the advantage of prior experience, for informal performances were presented by them as early as 1622. Angelo Lippomano wrote a complaint on 18 November 1623 citing the debts owed by one Ioannis Cioffo (said elsewhere to have been a Neapolitan currently resident in Brescia).[[4]](#footnote-4) At that time Cioffo was associated with the famous Accesi troupe. Since he is named individually, and since two contracts had been signed by him (on 2 and 29 April 1622), he must have been the troupe leader at that time.[[5]](#footnote-5) The performances for which the Vendramin did not receive their due would have been in November of that year and probably would have started a week or more before Lippomano’s complaint was filed. The custom of providing outdoor entertainment (including *commedie*) on public squares for a week starting with the feast of St. Martin (November 11) already had some currency in Venice. (It had a long tenure in Paris as well.) San Salvatore’s owners were still unrecompensed as of August 1624, when another representative of Andrea Vendramin, Bartolomeo Bonhometi, pleaded the case of the theater.[[6]](#footnote-6) A week later two notaries wrote from Brescia on Cioffo’s behalf, indicating that the matter was considered settled (though on what terms remains unclear).
2. By 1626 comedies had resumed at San Salvatore. The house troupe was now that of the Confidenti, under Francesco Gabrielli (known *in arte* as *Scapin*). Gabrielli was reprimanded in 1631 for having failed to provide performances,[[7]](#footnote-7) a lapse which undoubtedly was necessitated by the catastrophic plague which had engulfed northern Italy in 1630-31. All festive activity revived slowly, since Venice lost one-third of the population in the plague. By 1635-36 the company of Domengo Brun (*Fulvio*) was officially engaged. However, in a mandate of 26 January [1635/6] Brun’s troupe was ordered neither to open the theater nor to perform comedies until further notice.[[8]](#footnote-8) This was probably a temporary injunction, for the government was ceaselessly enjoined to prevent crime (stabbings, shootings, burglaries) during periods of masking, when anonymity seemed to encourage the settling of old debts. In the hope of controlling public behavior, the Capi (heads) of the Venetian Council of Ten determined when exactly the festive period of Carnival, the period during which masks were permitted in the afternoon and evening, would open. Until the second quarter of eighteenth century, theaters’ opening dates were different every winter and rarely occurred more than a month before Ash Wednesday (the start of Lent).[[9]](#footnote-9)
3. Intermittently, San Salvatore had as competitors the theaters of San Cassiano and San Moisè. Under Flaminio Scala, the Confidenti had performed at San Cassiano in 1619.[[10]](#footnote-10) A fire in 1629 rendered the theater useless for several years. Its reopening in 1637 was marked by the now celebrated production of *Andromeda* given by the Roman *commedia* troupe of Benedetto Ferrari. (This work, in a musical setting by Francesco Manelli, is now designated the first public opera.) The widely-known Fedeli troupe, led by Giovanni Battista Andreini, performed from time to time at San Moisè for a decade from 1623. Although several core performers in the Fedeli troupe were Bolognese, the troupe’s reputation was established in France, where it had been summoned several times. As at San Cassiano, the *dramma per musica* soon followed the *commedia*. San Moisè marked its debut as an opera house in 1639 with Monteverdi’s setting of Rinuccini’s *Arianna*.
4. San Salvatore was thus the third Venetian theater to produce operas after first producing comedies. Unlike its predecessors, San Salvatore did not permit the accommodation of opera to displace comedy. It simply added to the sporadic autumn appearances of a comedy troupe before the full-blown staging of operas in the short Carnival period. This regular rotation of genres set San Salvatore apart from all other Venetian theaters. At times, San Cassiano and San Moisè were “either/or” houses that would indulge in one dramatic genre for years, then in the other for a similarly long period. The triggers for change were typically fires and/or new management regimes. By comparison, San Salvatore was systematic and predictable.
5. So it was too with San Salvatore. Its reincarnation as an opera house in 1661 followed the gutting of the theater by a fire in 1655 (the year in which San Samuele opened). *Commedia* had been the Vendramins’ bread and butter since the theater’s founding. It was a low-budget entertainment provided by roving troupes on short-term contracts. (Opera, in contrast, was a luxury offering for important Carnival visitors. It involved separate contracts for individual singers and stage engineers, as well as group contracts for orchestras, choruses, tailors, and the like.)
6. *Seicento* comedy at San Samuele, in contrast, followed no script and tended by the end of the century to consist of little more than a series of loosely joined skits, many of them ribald. By the 1680s, comedy performances in Venice were provided on a rotating schedule by troupes from the courts of Mantua (at San Samuele), Parma (at San Salvatore), and Modena (wherever the troupe could find work). During their frequent visits to Venice, the dukes of these courts were notoriously profligate in their behavior and took some pride in the stage reflections of their own debaucheries. Comedies involved costumes suggestive of the masks of *commedia dell’arte*, and the annals of comedy identify cast members by familiar generic roles (e.g., Primo innamorato). From around 1700 (if not earlier), comedies were performed with incidental music. Around 1700 it might amount only to some strumming on a guitar, but by the late 1720s a small string orchestra might play an overture and a few ritornellos for incidental dances.
7. Although the s*cenari* (loose descriptions of the sequence of actions, settings, and props) on which comedies were based belonged to troupes rather than theaters, the tone of performances elsewhere may have been higher. None of the troupe performances in Venice matched the magisterial splendor of earlier madrigal comedy as remembered from the wedding entertainments of Florence and Mantua *c.* 1600, or the dramatic intensity of the experimental works of the Florentine Camerata from that earlier era. However, a general connection between *commedia* and opera still lingered in the public mind when in 1661 San Salvatore inaugurated opera performance.
8. We know very little about the financial results of public comedy. There are two reasons to believe that it was more profitable than public opera: (1) the costs for personnel were fixed (troupes were hired for a season) and (2) production costs were minimal. In short, the terms favored the theater. Although troupe contracts could run for years, opera singers were hired individually by the year on frequently altered terms. Comedies used generic props and costumes to go with their “masks” (roles) and well-worn plots. Opera singers were initially fitted out for every production with new footwear, millinery, costumes, shields, swords, and so forth. They were reimbursed for travel costs. *Comici* at San Samuele were told by the Grimani in one instance to sleep on the floor of the theater if they required accommodation.
9. In 1661, when San Salvatore opened, the Grimanis’ SS. Giovanni e Paolo was the only fully operative opera house that had been in consistent operation for more than two decades.[[11]](#footnote-11)

## Transitions

### French connections

1. San Salvatore’s initial appeal to French (including Parmigian) taste is evident both through its choices of repertory and from the dedicatees who were honored in libretti.[[12]](#footnote-12) The French involvements of the Bembo family have been extensively documented by Fontijn.[[13]](#footnote-13) The large Ca’ Bembo on the Grand Canal along the Riva del Carbon was restored between 1657 and 1671 at a cost of some 47,000 ducats. Between their propinquity and their prosperity, members of the Bembo family accounted for a disproportionately large number of the box-holders at the rebuilt Teatro di San Salvatore. The second opera given at San Salvatore, the *Cleopatra[[14]](#footnote-14)* of Giacomo Dall’Angelo, set to music by Daniele di Castrovillari, was dedicated to Ambrosio Bembo. Francesco Bembo (the son of Marco) was involved with the theater between 1673 and 1680, ostensibly as its manager.[[15]](#footnote-15) It is not clear whether he managed the theatrical operations or the property in which the theater sat.[[16]](#footnote-16)
2. Another identifiable group of early patrons of San Salvatore consisted of noble families with significant involvements in the raging “war in Candia,” he long-running conflict in the waters off Crete between Venice and its allies against the Ottomans that ended in 1669. Prominent among the naval commanders were Alvise Mocenigo (in the battle of Naxos, 1651) and the future doge Francesco Morosini (in a series of battles in 1655).[[17]](#footnote-17) While Morosini was a career officer, Mocenigo retired to civilian office. By the time San Salvatore opened, he was serving as Venice’s ambassador to France.[[18]](#footnote-18)
3. A complete list of Venetian envoys to Paris is difficult to construct: French and Italian sources are in conflict on several points. It is clear, however, that the office did not remain in any single set of hands for long. Mocenigo was preceded by Battista Nani (1660). Among his successors were Alvise Grimani (1660-1664), Alvise Sagredo (1665), Marc’Antonio Giustiniani (1668), [Marco] Morosini[[19]](#footnote-19) (1670), Giovanni Morosini (1671), Francesco Michiel (1674), Ascanio II Giustiniani (1676), Domenico Contarini (1683), Sebastiano Foscarini (1683), Girolamo Venier (1688), and Pietro Venier (1695). The last Venetian career diplomat to serve as ambassador to Paris during the operation of San Salvatore *as an opera house* was Nicolò Erizzo, who was appointed in 1699. Like most of his predecessors, he was a young man during this tenure. Like many of them, his later career was studded with many successes. Service in France was clearly an opportunity to be coveted.
4. Apart from wartime, diplomatic service was largely concerned with the representation of mercantile interests and the resolution of trade disputes. Mercantile contacts between Paris and Venice were increasing during the early 1660s. As French ambassador to Venice (1672-74), Jean Antoine de Mesmes (1640-1709), count of Avaux, sought glass, lace, paintings, and “books for Colbert.”[[20]](#footnote-20) A memorable point in French-Venetian relations was reached during the ambassadorial term of Amelot de la Houssaye (1634-1706), the count of Gournay (1682-85). The count had a voracious appetite for understanding and documenting the complex structure of the Venetian government. His exhaustive published account,[[21]](#footnote-21) though sufficiently popular to merit several reprintings and translations, landed him in the Bastille, because in diplomatic circles it was considered indiscreet. Named French ambassador to Venice in 1662, Pierre de Bonsy (1631-1703), was the only ambassador to Venice who was also the dedicatee of a work at San Salvatore.[[22]](#footnote-22) The greatly applauded Venetian production (1663) was a revival of Cesti’s *La Dori* (revised from that of Innsbruck, 1657).[[23]](#footnote-23)
5. Did French relations play any role in San Salvatore’s initiation of opera productions? The theater’s formal opening fell during Cavalli’s celebrated residence in France to participate in festivities for the wedding of Louis XIV (1660-62). San Salvatore paid homage to the king by staging as its second opera a revival of Cavalli’s *L’Eritrea* (originally produced in 1652 at the ephemeral Teatro Sant’Apollinare), on a text by Giovanni Faustini. The Venetian staging of the wedding works, *Ercole amante* and *Pompeo Magno*, were adapted for performance at San Salvatore in xx. *L’Eritrea* was followed by a production of Daniele Castrovillari’s *Cleopatra,* based on a text by Giacomo dall’Angelo. Its dedicatee was Ambrosio Bembo.[[24]](#footnote-24) French culture was in the forefront of the Venetian public mind during this period. The lateral participation of Bonsy in 1663 rounds out the initial picture.

### French-style entr’actes: Balli at San Salvatore==

1. In conjunction with the San Salvatore’s standing commitment to *commedia*, it is difficult not to recognize the resonance of its staged activities with the contemporary *opéra-comique* and *opera-ballet* of Paris. Many commentators have noted the textual debts of Venetian opera to Racine and Molière, but to my knowledge no one has focused on the degree to which the beneficiary was Sa Salvatore. A common sequence of events at court in the time of Cavalli would have been the performance of ballets in advance of a *comédie* or an *opéra*. In Italian usage, the word *ballo* was as generic as the word *commedia*. On the Venetian stage, *balli* always involved the presence of a crowd (crowds could be differentiated from one another by the word *coro* (as in *coro dei giardinieri*, *coro di spiriti*, et al.). Cori were not generic. They reinforced tangents of the opera. In cases in which we have a libretto to the exclusion of a score it can sometimes be difficult to determine when the word *coro* implies miming, singing, or dancing. A *coro* could enact a battle or demonstrate a skill (such as archery). Libretti for San Salvatore are explicit in termning numbers which were danced *balli.* Over the 40 years of its steady operation, San Salvatore required more *balli* than any other theaters. In the 1660s, the only work which seems to have lacked *balli* was Cavalli’s *Eritrea*. *Balli* at San Salvatore aimed to make an impact and demonstrated a high level of artistic skill, perhaps because they offered a clear alternative to the battle scenes and military clashes so commonly presented as *entr’actes* at SS. Giovanni e Paolo (and eventually at San Giovanni Grisostomo). The performance of *balli*, moreso than their ubiquity, suggests a preference for refinement over spectacle for its own sake that plays out over and over again when each component of an opera production is examined.
2. The first extended comment on *balli* at San Salvatore concerns two that were given in the 1663-64 season “with great precision and ability, following the rhythm of the orchestra, which played throughout [the piece].”[[25]](#footnote-25) The report may be slightly flawed, because the only work produced at San Salvatore in 1663-64 was Legrenzi’s *favola drammatica* called *Achille in Sciro.* Atypically for this theater, it called for a *combattimento* (arguably an analogue of the *ballo*) but only one other (nominal) *ballo*. However, the production of Cavalli’s *Scipione africano* at SS. Giovanni a Paolo two weeks later called for multiple *balli* and *cori*. Both works were dedicated to members of the Colonna-Mancini entourage: ==*Achille in Sciro* (on a text by Ippolito Bentivoglio) to Filippo Giuliano (Philippe Julien) Mancini (the duke of Nevers; 29 January 1664) and *Scipione africano* (on a text by Nicolò Minato) to Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna (the Contestabile of Naples; 9 February 1664). Legrenzi’s work (his second opera) was a revival (from Ferrara, 1663). Whatever *balli* are the subject of the chronicle cited by F. Mancini et al. may have been intended to satisfy the tastes of the Colonna-Mancini families. They and Legrenzi’s accommodation of them were stellar examples of the *colossal Baroque*. At times the term “extravagant Baroque” might be an even more appropriate.
3. Giovanni Legrenzi tells us he was offered an appointment as a director of music [*sous-maître* of the Chapelle Royale (*c*. 1665) at the court of Louis XIV but did not assume the position “because of a grave illness that incapacitated him for a year.”[[26]](#footnote-26) ==

### Francesco Cavalli

1. Although on the surface it is hard to miss the coincidence of Cavalli’s tenure at the French court for the much delayed production of the works he provided for the wedding festivities of Louis XIV and Marie-Thérèse, Infanta of Spain (1660-62), recent authors have traced earlier links between Cavalli and both French and Francophile courts, notably that of Florence.
2. In his voluminous study of correspondence in the Bentivoglio Archive, Sergio Monaldini sketches a pathway from esteem from afar based largely on rumor to requests for arias, to the eventual request for full-scale stage works for the royal wedding itself. He notes, for example, that on 18 June 1655 Giovanni Bentivoglio writes from Paris to his son? xx Annibale in Ferrara that “the marquis has sent me a letter written by Cavalli in which he demands great extravagances for coming to France to present an opera, [but] he has not sent me the arias … that the queen wants very badly….”[[27]](#footnote-27) Three years late, on 5 April 1658, Bentivoglio (still in Paris) writes to his son xx, “I pray you do me the favor of sending some beautiful ariettas by Cavalli if you can….Whether they are new or old hardly matters; everyone here will think they are new.”[[28]](#footnote-28) In reminding his son of this request two weeks later Giovanni now indicates a specific aria, “Voglio di vita uscir, voglio che cadano,” which, he says, is “a melancholy chaconne.” He goes on, “if the French ambassador cannot bring one with him, I shall be infinitely grateful if you can send an entire *commedia* by [Cavalli] with the most recent of his music.[[29]](#footnote-29) More than a year later, Giovanni complains that he has never heard anything further about the arias or the *commedia*. “Just send me one or two [arias] with each letter,” he begs. “Don’t forget the one with the chaconne that starts, ‘Voglio di vita uscir, voglio che cadano.’ You can send the *commedia* with Abbot Siri.”[[30]](#footnote-30)
3. In his forthcoming *Tappe per una biografia*, Paolo Alberto Rismondo indicates that even while Cavalli evaded the requests of the Bentivoglio for his works, he remained in touch with Lodovico Canobio, canon of the cathedral of his birth city, Crema, in the months leading up to his arrival in Paris.[[31]](#footnote-31) From a French perspective, the idea of Cavalli’s commission had been that of Cardinal Giulio Mazzarin, but even Mazarin seems not to have found cooperation instantaneous. It took a petition by the French ambassador [Abbot Bonsy] to the doge to receive authorization (11 April 1660) for the San Marco organist to travel to France. In Medici Archives correspondence of 1658 Cavalli had been “reputed...as the premiere composer of Italy, especially in [works in] a dramatic vein” (“*oggi reputato il primo compositore d’Italia, particolarmente sopra lo stile drammatico*).”[[32]](#footnote-32) This praise was somewhat self-congratulatory: the composer had spent substantial time in Florence (1654-1658) for the composition and production of his *Ipermestra* at the Teatro della Pergola.
4. The French court was a frenzied place in the summer of 1660, with much bickering about casting for the forthcoming *Ercole amante*, singers (such as Antonio Rivani) who fell ill soon after arrival, masters of affairs who were aloof and inaccessible, and builders under pressure to accomplish a great deal very quickly. The new theater of the Tuileries (“*un théâtre des machines*”) was but one venue in which to host the 500,000 persons expected to witness some part of the festivities planned. As a stopgap measure, Cavalli’s *Serse* (on Minato’s text) had its premiere at the Louvre on 22 November 1660. It was richly adorned with a prologue and far more *balletti*  than Venetians were accustomed to seeing in the context of one opera. In fact, the Venetian ambasssador Antonio Grimani cited it “il Ballo nel Louvre.” He reported that the final performance of Cavalli’s *Serse* was given privately in the rooms of Cardinal Mazzarin on Epiphany 1631.[[33]](#footnote-33)
5. Soon after, the French courtiers began to realize the impossibility of staging Cavalli’s *Ercole amante* in the winter of 1661. The practical constraint was paramount: the theater was not approaching completion. Financial concerns, bickering over casting, and the many matters essential to a paramount spectacle—notably costumes, scenery, and machines. Rismondo maintains that from his experience in adjusting *Serse* to suit his French hosts he learned much that he could apply to the composition of *Ercole amanti*,[[34]](#footnote-34) especially given the gift of numerous delays. Meanwhile, the amuse the court and keep the already assembled musiciains occupied, the court was presented with *Le Ballet de l’Impatience* (text by Benserade; music by Lully). It was performed on 19 February 1661.[[35]](#footnote-35) The work was something of a pastiche, with texts in both French and Italian. The work contains faint whiffs of comedy and satire that foreshadow later practices on the Venetian stage. For example, one *balletto* (text in Italian) features a *scena grottesca* in which a *maestro di musica* instructs his students in the fine art of smoking.[[36]](#footnote-36) [xx: Venetian balli; intermezzi]. Lully’s *Ballet des saisons* (2 July 1661) was another work performed (at Fontainbleau) during the interim. Rismondo hypothesizes that it could have served Vigarani (the chief machine and scenery designed) to test the new apparatus intended for the Tuileries. Finally, in January 1662, rehearsals of *Ercole* began in earnest in Mazarin’s palace. Early rehearsals revealed problems with singers and also with the machinery itself, according to a letter from Antonio Rivani. In one instance, a [set for a] river (*fiume*) fell on and injured a French singer.[[37]](#footnote-37) The work finally had its premiere on 19 February 1662. Mazarin did not live to see the May revival, for he died early in March. xx
6. An unusual feature of *Ercole amante* was that it was in five acts. Xx Its length and structure (to which the opening prologue further contributed) were no doubt intended to provide ample time for the ballets of which the young king was so fond. (The fact that the queen refrained from dancing led to the speculation that she was again pregnant.) Dramatic entertainments for royal weddings had traditionally been very long and consisted of many parts. In its May 1662 revival *Ercole* was cited in Grimani’s report as the “Gran Balletto dell’Ercole.”[[38]](#footnote-38)The misalignment of French courtly taste and Italian musico-dramatic substance suggested by *Ercole amante* was tangentially addressed in the king’s patent (28 June 1669) to establish an Académie d’Opéra for the purpose of “representing French verse in music.”
7. Cavalli’s prestige in Paris may have influenced the introduction of the *dramma per musica* at San Salvatore even though he was not present at the time of its opening. The legendary failure of Daniele Castrovillari’s *La Pasife, overo L’impossibile fatto possibile* (text by Giuseppe Artali) in the winter of 1661 led to the rapid substitution of a revival (with anonymous madditions) of *L’Eritrea*, originally composed by Cavalli on a text by Giovanni Faustini (his Op. 11) for the Teatro Sant’Apollinare (1652). Its production must have roughly coincided with the originally anticipated [but as yet unrealized] staging of *Ercole amante* in Paris. For the remainder of the tenure (through 1664) of Antonio Boldù as impresario, San Salvatore staged a single work each year. The next two were Castrovillari’s *Cleopatra* (1662) and a revival of Cesti’s *La Dori* (1663). In contrast to the Venetian patrons in the first season, the pulsating presence of patrons connected in one way or another with the French court becomes evident in the patronage of the next two. Ambrosio Bembo (the dedicatee of Giacomo Dall’Angelos’ libretto for *Cleopatra*) was probably connected to the dominant family of the parish and of the theater’s supporters. Abbot Pierre de Bonsy (1631-1703) (*La Dori*), the current French ambassador to the Venetian Republic, was more directly an emissary of French taste. The son of a Florentine senator, he was named Bishop of Béziers by Louis XIV in 1659. He remained on cordial terms with the king for the rest of his life. What is here termed “Frenchness” is indeed the kind that Bonsy represents: it is French taste and values frequently filtered through italian courts awash in French courtiers. Florence is a prime example; Parma and Modena are not far behind.
8. The repertory staged at San Salvatore in 1664-1666 has a far more profound impact on its lasting reputation. The leading patrons are various members of the Mancini-Colonna family. Maria Mancini (Mazarin’s niece), rumored to have been a former mistress of the French king, married the contestabile of Naples, Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna, in 16xx. (In the 1680s Colonna would build two theaters inside his palace at Rome,xx but by that time his impetuous wife had entered a convent.) As patrons of Venetian opera, the newliweds and their family entourage (her brother and Mazarin’s nephew, Filippo Giuliano Mancini [the duke of Nevers], and his wife, Diane de Tiage) called for what must have been the most outrageous spectacles ever to be held on Venetian stages. Evidence recently gathered by Valeria De Bona from Maria Mancini’s correspondence suggests that the Venetian witness found the introduction of live game to have been extreme and inappropriate.(AMS xx) The excesses of the productions of Legrenzi’s *Achille in Sciro* (1664), Cavalli’s *Muzio Scevola* (1665), Sartorio’s *Seleucco* and Cavalli’s *Pompeo Magno* (both 1666) represent an exceptional chapter in the theater’s history and not one particularly suggestive of predominant French taste. The first two of these were dedicated to the Duke of Nevers and the fourth to his sister. Sartori’s work was dedicated to Paolo Spinola, the duke of Balbases. The Mancini Colonna spread their largesse to other Venetian theaters, especially SS. Giovanni e Paolo. (The inclination of Gian Carlo Grimani to support imperial causes in preference to French ones would have better suited the interests of the Contestabile than the Vendramins’ Francophile symphathies.) Although the Mancini-Colonna era was very short, its legends lingered for many decades. Some still take reports of random works as representative of Venetian opera in general, but this practice produce distorted views suited only to a few other works given in other theaters over the coming decades.[[39]](#footnote-39)

### Nicolò Minato

1. The Venetian production of Cavalli’s *Pompeo Magno* (1666) brought into convergence on his home turf Cavalli’s own reputation as the supreme composer of Italy, the fleeting presence of Nicolò Minato (now the ostensible manager of San Salvatore), the glamorous presence of the work’s dedicatee, Maria Mancini Colonna, and a subject—Pompey the Great—which offered great scope for spectacle. The production of *Pompeo Magno* was probably the most extravagant one preceding the great spectacles at Piazzola in the early 1680s. Its requirement for comics, allegorical figures, choruses, servants, slaves, prisoners, gentlewomen, gentlemen, pages, soldiers, Moors, and ordinary people—as well as 15 singers in individual roles—was an extreme expression of a general tendency to stage works near the end of Carnival with a large number of costumed extras. The greatest comment was caused by the four live horses and their riders as well as the three substantial *balli*.[[40]](#footnote-40) Valeria De Bona reports evidence that the extremities of the staging (particularly the use of large quadrupeds) were not well received by the Venetians.
2. Mancini,[[41]](#footnote-41) the niece of Cardinal Mazzarin, had been rumored to be the mistress of the fledgling French king. She was now the wife of the Contestabile of Naples, Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna. Like other royal newlyweds of the seventeenth century, the honeymooners seem to have conducted a all-but-royal progress to Venice, where they were to spend the better part of two years. Operas dedicated to the Contestabile, his bride, her brother (the duke of Nevers), and his wife (Diana Tiange) were numerous between 1664 and 1672. Those given at San Salvatore seem to have been especially lavish and quite “over the top” in terms of personages and spectacle. Even for Venice, they exceeded the norm in their extensive requirements. The cast of *Pompeo Magno* is known to have included Francesco Galli, the castrato Antonio Fontana (“Formenti”), the 15-year-old soprano Alessandro da Livorno, Stefano di Bentivoglio, Paolo da Rivani (“who played the old woman”), and “the blind singer from Milan.”
3. According to his own account, Minato was “summoned by the emperor in October 1667”.[[42]](#footnote-42) His departure for Vienna, which may not have occurred for another year, set the theater on a somewhat rickety course. While remaining the nominal manager, Minato left the theater in the charge of a certain abbot named Lorenzo Pic[c]oli.[[43]](#footnote-43) Piccoli clearly neglected his duties. In March 1669 Minato and Marco Monte Albano were cited by Sebastiano Soranzo, a judge for the Board of Examiners, for debts to a long list of box-holders.[[44]](#footnote-44) This could suggest that works performed in 1667-1669 did not attract sufficient viewer, but it could also reflect lax management—a failure to control tickets sales and the costs of production. Information provided by Andrea Vendramin indicated that Minato and Monte Albano had not yet paid the rent for the preceding (1668-69) cycle of productions.
4. It was on this account that Francesco Santurini made a property inventory[[45]](#footnote-45) which is more interesting for the light in sheds on opera production than for the financial details it provides. In the spring o 1669 San Salvatore had on hand 108 large scenes, three “perspective” sets each consisting of six panels, and 32 beds [perhaps for visiting performers[[46]](#footnote-46)]. A follow-up inventory of 22 April 1670 reported the total value of other property in the theater at 3,145 ducats.[[47]](#footnote-47) Some 222 canvas panels to represent skies and ceilings were mentioned. They were numerous because in any given scene the view had to match in perspective and distance, as well as coloration, the scenery representing walls, fields, forests, seas, and the like. There were twelve beds to be used *onstage*, as well as ten torches, 70 oil lamps, two statues, one bridge, fourteen curtains, miscellaneous ladders and staircases, a large number of ropes and pulleys, “streets” for the stage proper as well as streets to be shown on machines, and two trumpets.
5. One effect of Minato’s dual appointments in Venice and Vienna was that the travels of scores between points has left a cloud of confusion suspended over issues. For example, the 1669 production of *Argia* (usually attributed to Carlo Grossi) has recently been shown by Herbert Seifert to have been the work of Antonio Cesti. The same confusion lingered over Venetian revivals of works originally prepared by Minato (usually with music by Antonio Draghi xx) for the imperial court. These were given not only at San Salvatore but also at the Teatro ai Saloni, where noble amateurs sang and mounted the entire production. The Venetian performances cannot have been nearly so elaborate as the Viennese ones had been, for the numerous *cori* required in the original versions and other details of their production could not have been replicated in the salt warehouses of Dorsoduro. Audiences were, however, happy for the return of Minato in 1672.

## Consolidation and Innovation

### Sartorio and the House of Hanover

1. Countering the influence of the courts of Florence and Paris was that of the House of Hanover, which grew rapidly in ambition and influence between 1666 and the death of Johann Friedrich in 1679. Many of the works given at San Salvatore during these years were dedicated to members of the household of the duke of Brunswick. The Brunswick court was not French, but because of the conversion of its duke to Catholicism (1651), it was newly interested in aligning itself with the cultural tastes of Catholic courts.[[48]](#footnote-48) One of these was that of the Re Cristianissimo—Louis XIV—and in matters of dress, deportment, and absolute rule Johann Friedrich tried to model himself after the Sun King. In 1666 Johann Friedrich, inspired by Versailles, initiated the building of a great palace and garden complex at Herrenhausen, but it fell to his sister-in-law Sophia (1630-1714) to see to its completion. In 1676 he installed Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz as his librarian. Leibniz acquired the title of Privy Counselor a year later.
2. Typical of most potentates who visited Venice repeatedly, members of the House of Hanover maintained an agent (Francesco Maria Massi) in Venice. They also employed a series of Venetian composers at their court. Among these were Matteo Lotti, who was Kapellmeister in the court in Hanover when his son Antonio was born (1666). It was in 1666 that Antonio Sartorio succeeded to the position of Kapellmeister at the court. He relinquished his appointment in 1675 for reasons of health. He had no stable successor in Hanover until 1680, when the French composer Jean-Baptiste Farinelly, was appointed. Agostino Steffani succeeded to the post in 1688 but the length of his tenure is ambiguous. Sartori’s tenure was enriched by the presence of Nikolaus Adam Strunk at the head of the violins and (Giovanni?) Recaldini of the violas.[[49]](#footnote-49) There is no mention in court account books of Ruggiero Fedeli, who served Sophia, the widowed electress xx of Hanover in the late 1690s.[[50]](#footnote-50) A young composer named Georg Friderich Händel who served as Kapellmeister from 1710 to 1712; it was on the basis of this service that he was invited to head the music of King George I (previously Georg Ludwig of Brunswick) in England. [Antonio Lotti, an organist at San Marco, eventually became its *maestro di cappella*. Sartorio was an important contributor to the repertory of San Salvatore.]
3. Sartorio spent a substantial portion of his compositional career in Hanover. Although he passed many Carnival seasons and most of his final five years in Venice, his whereabouts are uncertain for the years 1662-1666; he was in Germany for two entire years in the early 1670s; and he was otherwise at the court for at least half the year between 1666 and 1675. In 1676 he was present in Hanover for the baptism of his nephew, Gasparo Antonio (the son of girolamo). When he was in Venice, Sartorio had to fulfill many commissions for his German masters. The dukes brought brothers, sons, mistresses, and large entourages of miscellaneous relatives and servants with them on their numerous trips to Venice.[[51]](#footnote-51) The composer barely outlived Johann Friedrich; for he died at the end of 1680.
4. From the perspective of Venetian opera, Sartorio’s life can be divided into two parts. The first represents his most innovative stage and its termination coincides as much with the coming of Guido Rangoni to San Salvatore as with his last years as Kapellmeister in Hanover. He first Brunswick patron of Venetian opera had been Georg Wilhelm, the older brother of Johann Friedrich. *Le fatiche d’Ercole e Dejanira* (text by Aureli, music by P. A. Ziani) was performed at SS. Giovanni e Paolo in the winter of 1662. Sartorio’s contact with the family was already established when *La prosperità d’Elio Seiano* (text by Nicolò Minato) opened at San Salvatore in the winter of 1667. It was paired (over an interval of weeks) with *La caduta d’Elio Seiano*, which was dedicated to [Charlotte] Amalia (1650-1714), queen of Denmark and Norway. Both works were overtly political; they focussed on strategies of succession and their consequences. In their preoccupation with the attempts to dictate marriage choices, both works may allude to affairs in the House of Hanover,[[52]](#footnote-52) although the lineage of the Danish crown was a different one; Charlotte Amalia was born a princess of Hesse-Cassel.

Other dedicatees from the House of Hanover included xx.

1. Sartorio’s evolving relationship with Hanover and Johann Friedrich is richly documented in Vavoulis’s recent edition of the correspondence of Massi, the librettist Pietro Dolfin, and the composer.[[53]](#footnote-53) The correspondence sheds much light on accommodations made by all three and by the duke to suit ever-changing circumstances and contingencies. During Sartorio’s absence from Venice in 1670 and 1671, San Salvatore staged Cavalli’s *Erismena* (1670/3), dedicating it to Ernst August. Cavalli’s operas were starting to lose their favor, however, and San Salvatore turned next to Antonio Boretti, a singer whose own stage works enjoyed even less favor. Boretti provided three works in succession: *L’Ercole in Tebe* (1670/5), *Dario in Babilonia* (1671/2), and *Claudio Cesare* (1671/3); the last was dedicated to Johann Friedrich, the two earlier ones to Venetian noblemen.
2. In the spring of 1672 Pietro Dolfin pressured Johann Friedrich to “put on an opera soon.” He was undoubtedly agitating for a production of his *Adelaide* (1672/02), the text of which had been sent to Sartorio on St. Stephen’s Day (26 December) 1670.[[54]](#footnote-54) Dedicated to Johann Friedrich, *Adelaide* opened very late in Carnival 1672, on or after 19 February, and can have had a maximum of 11 performances. Dolfin’s advice had also been to “employ the best singers in the city.” Militating against the likelihood of the work’s timely completion was Sartorio’s illness, which would prevent him from returning to Hanover in the spring. Instead, however, he was able to complete *Orfeo* (1672/03), which had its premiere the following December. *Orfeo*, which ran for more than a month, was a much loved work. Tonina Coresi (*Euridice*) was a particular favorite in it. The cast also included Giulia Masotti (“La Dori”) and an unnamed baritone. Meanwhile at SS. Giovanni e Paolo Boretti had died “of exhaustion” on 29 December, but his *Domitiano* (1672/4; destined to meet a luke-warm reception) opened on the 30th.[[55]](#footnote-55) The duke of Mantua used the box of Johann Friedrich to attend a few performances of it.
3. Sartorio’s *Massenzio*, said to have been composed in great haste, followed soon after *Orfeo*. Dolfin had mentioned on 16 November that Sartorio was ill and therefore unable to travel. He had, however, been asked by the Vendramin to provide a second opera for the current season.[[56]](#footnote-56) Nicolò Beregan [xx] wrote on 4 February 1673 that it was getting a good reception and that the performance of Nicola Gratianini was especially noted. Massi’s letter of the 10th claimed that San Salvatore had been the most successful of the Venetian theaters during the season. The work was said to have brough Johann Friedrich “immortal fame,” owing partly to its “exquisite cast.”[[57]](#footnote-57) In contrast, he observed, the Grimani had sustained a lot of 3,000 ducats and that payments to the musicians were overdue.[[58]](#footnote-58)
4. Other reports (including some by Massi) continued to comment on the crowds at San Moisè, even while denigrating the merits of Partenio’s *La costanza trionfante* (1672/5), which had opened around the start of 1673. Its cast was little-known (its libretto was the first to include a cast list), but it was fully staged. The text, by Cirostoforo Ivanovich, was dedicated to Jean Antoine des Mesmes, count d’Avaux, the current French ambassador to Venice. The ambassador had completely offset the costs of the production, absolving the impresarii;[[59]](#footnote-59) he offered each box-holder four tickets for free admission. With the reopening of San Moisè, which had had a speckled history which had concentrated mainly on prose comedy, San Salvatore temporarily lost of its status as a home for indulging Francophile tastes.

### Guido Rangoni

1. In April 1673 Dolfin wrote from his villa, Santa Giustina, that the Venderamin were considering letting the Teatro San Salvatore to Francesco Bembo for ten years for the production of comedies.[[60]](#footnote-60) It was the first whiff of a series of changes, only some of which were sustained. The Bembo bid was not honored. Instead, Guido Rangoni took charge of the theater interior. His first order was to renovate the interior. For this reason, no productions were given at San Salvatore between February 1673 and December 1674, a period of almost two years.
2. Dolfin’s letters over this interval speak of the reassignment of Johann Friedrich’s box and its refurbishment. “It is very sumptuous and will be redecorated and furnished,” he reports on 28 July 1673. (V 588) Nine months later, on 6 April 1674, Massi notes, however, that the box will need to be destroyed in order to enlarge the proscenium “in order to continue giving operas.” He mentions that Dolfin is annoyed with Sartorio for not yet having set his text for the opera *Alcina*. (V 589; suppl. 1). Massi wishes to return to his native Ancona, and Johann Friedrich consents to provide a pension. Dolfin verifies the rumor of his annoyance a week later when he implores Johann Friedrich not to entertain any requests from the Grimani family for Sartorio’s services, which he terms “quite a precious commodity,” because he still needs to set *Alcina*. Meanwhile, a conflict arose between Dolfin and Beregan over whose works would be given the second slot (i.e., the true Carnival position) in the reopening season.[[61]](#footnote-61) (The second slot was the more desirable because it called for the most lavish stagings and attracted the most prestigious audience.) Dolfin decides to postpone his opera, but Rangoni (himself a patron of comedy), in June, makes a commitment to producing operas. Johann Friedrich’s new box is still not complete.[[62]](#footnote-62) What is remarkable about San Salvatore’s long period of closure is how many cross-conversations occurred about future repertory and how few plans were realized. *Alcina* was never produced, and Sartorio seems never to set Dolfin’s work. Dolfin professed that SS Giovanni e Paolo would cheerfully have staged Alcina in a setting by Sartorio sooner than two works by Carlo Pallavicino (*Diocleziano* [1674/4] and *Enea in Italia* [1675/1]). (They were dedicated respectively to the duchess and duke of Nevers.) Another ghost is Beregan’s *L’Ottaviano Cesare Augusto,* which is mentioned in correspondence of November 1675 but never materialized.[[63]](#footnote-63) Wedged between the openings of Pallavicino’s works was Legrenzi’s *Etecole e Polinice* at the finally refurbished San Salvatore.
3. Rangoni’s vision for San Salvatore was extraordinary. He sought to overwhelm with scenery on a newly spectacular scale. He raised scenery design to new levels, inadvertently setting off a giant scenery competition with the Grimani, as they launched San Giovanni Grisostomo (1678), and the Contarini, whose private venues on their grounds at Piazzola gave scope of extraordinary pageants and hunts for live game—within the context of what were ostensibly operas (1679). Rangoni brought Gio. Battista Lambranzi on board as scenery designer. The stellar works of Rangoni’s first season were both set by Legrenzi. *Eteocle e Polinice* was noted for its “incomparable beauty,” for Lambranzi’s “masterful” scenery, and for the singing of “Maddalena” [probably Maria Maddalena Musi]. Rangoni’s tenure at San Salvatore attracted patrons from the Francophile orbit—among them the Monagasque Luigi Grimaldi and the nobleman Pietro Ottoboni, who was later (1708-1726) banned from Venice for his flagrant demonstrations of loyalty to the French crown during the War of the Spanish Succession.[[64]](#footnote-64) Rangoni housed Maddalena in the Palazzo Bragadin, which he had rented.[[65]](#footnote-65) *Eteocle* was crammed with some 78 scenes and 90 arias, perhaps in a nod to “modern” taste, which rejected recent efforts by Cavalli because there were not enough “lively” numbers.

### *La Divisione del Mondo* and its Sequels

1. The legendary *La divisione del mondo* presented an extraordinary allegory on creation. It was not customary in Venetian opera of that time to portray Biblical accounts. The *dei ex machina* were the gods of Roman mythology. San Salvatore’s leading patrons seem now to have craved grand allegories. *La divisione del mondo*, a (re)enactment of the Biblical account of Creation of regal proportions, stood alone in this category until the collaborations of Frigimelica-Roberti and Pollarolo at San Giovanni Grisostomo in the 1690s. Many of the specific items that contributed to the work’s stupendous success (xx, yy) became tropes of staging at San Salvatore over the next 15 years, however, and so allusions to the grandeur of this one production became reminders of its exquisite glory. However, *La Divisione* was an allegory based not exclusively on the Biblical but instead one which recharacterised the story to link it with earthly, especially political strife. Thus Corradi’s text was a prescient one, because it lent moral authority to earthly pursuits. The political agenda of the Venetian Republic was paramount among these. Appropriately, the libretto was dedicated to the “Venetian nobility” en masse. (That of *Eteocle e Polinice* had been dedicated to Venetian noblewomen.)
2. In *La divisione*, Jupiter, breaking free from the chains of Saturn, takes control of Heavens. The earth is left to Neptune and Pluto, who respectively take charge of the Seas and the Underworld. The work was devised to celebrate Rangoni’s redesign of the theater, to show it off in the most memorable possible manner. It was the first Venetian work to merit praise from a Frenchman, Alexandre Limojon de St. Didier. Although St. Didier’s account did not appear in print until 1688, we can assume that the “buzz” was present soon after the work was given. St. Didier was especially impressed by the opening scene, in which the Four Elements opened up to reveal the palaces of Love and Discord. These in turn were transformed into the Temple of Mars, which was ringed by “weapons of war.” St. Didier remembered it as “the most entertaining work I ever saw upon a stage.”[[66]](#footnote-66) Corradi professed to be captivated by Legrenzi’s “melody of Paradise” and praised the sweetness of the composer’s “harmonious notes” in his preface. The work was remembered by the bibliographer Gio. Carlo Bonlini in 1730 for the “breadth of conception of the machines and scenery.” In 1738 Luigi Riccoboni recalled its spectacular staging, which he can only have known from the work’s legendary reputation. In line with Legrenzi’s other recent works for the theater, *La divisione* called for 90 arias as well as eight *cori*. Two scores for *La divisione* (and one for *Eteocle*) are preserved in the Bibliothéque Nationale. Despite the other French links cited above, no earlier work from the theater is preserved there.
3. The casting of *La divisione* suggests the kinds of roles to which leading singers of the time were best suited. Rivani appeared as Jupiter (*Giove*), with Antonio Fontana as Saturn, Alessandro Moscanera as Mars, and Ippolito Fusari as Pluto. Maddalenina del Rospigliosi sang in the role of Juno, with Caterina Angiola Botteghi as Venus. The roles of Love and Discord were taken by Francesco Lotti and Pietro Paolo [Scandalibene]. A satire on the work, given in verse in a manuscript of the period, leads to the conclusion that the singers were, in their private dealings, variously greedy, vain, and pompous.[[67]](#footnote-67)

==

1. *La divisione del mondo* cast such a long shadow on future endeavors that Legrenzi’s next few works may received less notice than they may have merited. *Adone in Cipro* (1675/4) derived from Ovid’s account of Venus and Adonis, also featured an impressive opening scene. A group of instrumentalists (dressed as tritons) and nymphs (described as sirens in one account) appeared in the atrium of the Palace of Love, where they graced a banquet. An instrumental sinfonia followed the song of two nymphs. The music for it can ostensibly be seen in books lying in the foreground of the frontispiece. Like many other works given at San Salvatore, this text was originally written (by Gio. Matteo Giannini) for performance in Vienna. Giannini was quite put out by the more limited means available for production in Venice and also by what he expected to be an audience of more limited intellectual faculties. He remarked in the libretto that, “operas are not composed for those who pluck feathers nor for idiots who row boats or weigh caviar.” In the Viennese tradition, the work called for numerous attendants, warriors, soldiers, hunters, and demons. No complete score survives.
2. In *Germanico sul Reno* (1676/1), also on a text by Corradi, the moral force of political rectitude was portrayed through the lense of the Roman conquest of Germany. The Palace of Love was replaced by the Palace of Time. Time was represented by a globe of the earth, which was flanked by Military Glory (as befitted the story of the battle of Germanicus against Arminius and Segestes) and Eternity. Choruses of Hours, Days, Months, and Years were assembled in the Palace. A battle scene pitted tribal German soldiers against “gladiators.” *Germanico* called for eleven individual singers and a total of nine mute *cori*, plus a ghost of Orpheus. Corradi was given a gold medal by the dedicatee, Luigi Grimaldi, prince of Monaco. The castrato Antonio Coresi was cast with Giovanni Morelli, a tenor. The work was very well received in Venice and had reprises in several other Italian cities over the next five years. Dolfin praised the performance of the soprano Antonia Coresi.[[68]](#footnote-68)
3. In the winter of 1676 Sartorio resurfaced at San Salvatore. His return was marked by a work which has attracted some attention in the English-speaking world, for it echoed a one of the best known dramas of Shakespeare. This was his setting of Gio. Francesco Bussani’s *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* (1676/6). Many elements of the context were unusual. The text was dedicated to an Englishwoman, Grace Higgins [“Grasiggons”], the daughter of a special enjoy to Venice, Thomas Higgins, and the niece of George Monck, the duke of Albemarle, the governor of Scotland and a hero of the Restoration. Monck had, in a sense, reclaimed the same English land which Julius Caesar had conquered centuries before. *Giulio Cesare* was also the first of many San Salvatore works to be praised in *Le Mercure galant*. It applauded the “most excellent voices” in the performance. One of these belonged to Margherita Pia.[[69]](#footnote-69)
4. Opinions were divided on the merits of *Giulio Cesare* vs. those of Sartorio’s *Antonino e Pompeiano* (1677/6), again on a text by Bussani. It followed later in the same winter, drew a large audience, and was said by the English resident to have been “applauded in every respect.” This later work was dedicated once again to Johann Friedrich, and his wife, Benedetta Henrichetta. Cyprus was once again its backdrop. Although its official dedicatee was Pietro Ottoboni, the attendee who drew the most attention was the duke of Radzivil, the brother-in-law of the king of Poland and newly appointed Polish ambassador to the Holy See. Accompanied by his consort, his complete entourage numbered 150 persons, all en route to Rome. The Duke of Brunswick’s box was occupied by the Landgrave of Hesse. Sartorio sent the libretto for the work to Johann Friedrich on 2 December 1677, the date of its first performance. He took pride in the success of the some of the singers, especially the Neapolitan mezzo-soprano Gerolimino Cocola, who was thought to be “better than either Giuseppino di Baviera [Giuseppe Maria Donati] or Siface [Gio. Francesco Grossi].”[[70]](#footnote-70)
5. The notices accrued in *Le Mercure galant* between 1677 and 1683, all of them written by xx Saint-Evremond, targeted the French nobility. They expressed awe and were invariably laudatory. Every theater was praised. In the *Aout 1677* issue he said of the preceding winter’s productions that Sartorio’s *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* that it was “no less applauded” than the theater’s other work of the season, Sartorio’s *Antonino e Pompeiano* (1677/4). *Giulio Cesare* was sung by “most excellent voices.” Further, the “verse, music, decorations, and machines were…admirable.” The clearest proof of the work’s success was “the great concourse it enjoyed.”
6. When Sartorio’s *Ercole sul Termodonte* (1678/3) opened late in January 1678, it encountered unexpectedly strong headwinds, for the Grimani were just opening their opulent new theater, San Giovanni Grisostomo. *Ercole* ran head-to-head with Pallavicino’s *Vespasiano*. Bussani libretto for Sartorio claimed the composer’s music to be “ever more marvelous,” but there were management problems with the production. Rangoni had been replaced by Iseppo Astori, and production methods at San Salvatore had suddenly come back to earth. Astori lacked the resources and political clout of Rangoni. A notarial complaint against him was filed by the singer Gio. Angelo Marenghi, who was owed 100 *scudi,* on 28 February.[[71]](#footnote-71)
7. New challenges to San Salvatore arrived in rapid succession: Sant’Angelo opened in January 1677 and San Giovanni Grisostomo in January 1678. Vis-à-vis San Salvatore, Sant’Angelo was no more than a general contender to opera attendees. It was a more modest theater than San Salvatore or SS. Giovanni e Paolo and laid no claim to superiority. San Giovanni Grisostomo, opened with great fanfare and grand pretensions, an overt political agenda, resources sufficient to engage anyone it chose, and, in the person of the still young Giovanni Carlo Grimani, an autocrat who spared himself no expense or inconvenience to get what he wanted. The one thing that saved San Salvatore from complete annihilation was the fact that the Grimani brothers (Vincenzo’s involvements were typically with San Samuele) had very strong imperial sympathies. Although rancor between the Empire and France did not peak until the start of the War of the Spanish Succession in 1701, the relations between them were on a steady path of deterioration. The Grimani were largely uninterested in attracting the kinds of patrons who had brought San Salvatore its greatest successes. They were eager instead to court the rising nobility of the vast reaches of the Empire.
8. All the same, competition brought clear consequences for San Salvatore reacted to the sudden growth of competition. One is that the subject matter was shifted from subjects derived from antiquity in general to plots focused on Roman history. Camillo Badovero’s *Sesto Tarquinio* (1678/6), which opened the 1678-79 season as San Salvatore, under the newly appointed impresario Francesco Nicolini, leads this parade. The text was set by a relatively unknown composer, Gio. Battista Tomasi. Curiously, the erratic Duke of Mantua took the prospect of a new theater owned by his cousins, Gio. Carlo and Vincenzo Grimani, to offer his first documented patronage to San Salvatore. He may have been lured by the promise of titillating scenes and plots highlighting the moral lapses of ancient rulers, because the duke of a notorious profligate. The transition from Rangoni to Nicolini brought with it a spate of bath and harem scenes. <xx eliminate dup from above> The grandeur of Rangoni’s regime was still paid lip-service. Sesto Tarquinio was stages with no fewer than 23 groups of princes, soldiers, and pages.
9. However, the new management at San Salvatore may have looked to the duke’s splendidly rich stable of singers to fill its stages. Tomasi was the duke’s organist. Badovero, a Roman, was also engaged in Mantua. The market for singers was newly competitive, and with more offers to choose from, singers became more insistent on in their monetary demands, which could now include support for accompanying family members and servants. Singers also expected to be provided with lodgings as they traveled from engagement to engagement.[[72]](#footnote-72) For the 1678-79 season at San Salvatore Domenico Cecchi (“Il Cortona”) and Margherita Pio each received 400 gold *pistoles*; Giulia Romana received 250. <Mercure> Pio accompanied the duke of Mantua (Ferdinando Carlo Gonzaga) upon his return to his duchy on 5 January,[[73]](#footnote-73) a fact which indicates that the production of *Sesto Tarquinio* had ceased. According to a letter from Legrenzi to Ippolito Bentivoglio, the work had not been well received.[[74]](#footnote-74) In fact, at the time of his writing only 30 or 40 tickets had been sold. These negatives suggest that the production was staged at the behest of the duke, who, although the single most frequent dedicatee of operas given in Venice in the late decades of the seventeenth century, was a mercurial figure who traveled perpetually and usually on short notice.
10. *I due tiranni al soglio* (1679/2), the work which succeeded *Sesto Tarquinio*, was also to be Sartorio’s last. It completed the 1678-79 season. *I due tiranni* was dedicated to the emperor, Leopold I, possibly through the intervention of the Duke of Mantua, large branches of whose family tree were intertwined with those of the Hapsburg family tree. Sartorio set the music; the text was by Matteo Norris. The performers (Cecchi and Pio) were said to be “the best one could find anywhere.” The audience was entranced by the “stars” of the firmament, which they could view at close range from the theater’s balconies. The machine that portrayed the firmament (as it might be seen from “a palace of the gods”) was estimated by *Le Mercure galant* to have cost not less than 2,000 *ecus*.
11. The Gonzaga[-Hapsburg] interlude continued through the first production of 1679-80, which was Pallavicino’s *Messalina* (1670/8), a story sufficiently lascivious to appeal to male Hapsburgs and Nicolini’s tastes in staging at one blow. The text was dedicated to Isabella Clara Gonzaga. San Salvatore may have been responding to another new form of competition in 1679-80. The Contarini family, which now held the dogeship, received a tremendous response to its premiere work, Freschi’s *Berenice*, in November 1679. Rave reviews of the grand, well-appointed facilities and the lavish performances soon appeared in the *Mercure galant*. In its staging of *Messalina*, San Salvatore flattered the image of the Contarini enterprise by presenting a work by Pallavicino and a text by Francesco Maria Piccioli, both of whom had involvements there. As in *Berenice*, the heroine was a figure from the first century A.D., but whereas Berenice fought for her people, Messalina whiled away her time in sexual peccadillos with subjects of her husband, the emperor Claudius. Although *Messalina* was the only work given as San Salvatore in the winter of 1679, it did not enjoy the signal success of *Berenice*. Its production underwent continuous revision[[75]](#footnote-75) but nonetheless closed after two weeks.
12. Antonio Giannettini’s Irene e Costantino (1680/11) led off San Salvatore’s 1680-81 season, but (probably owing to Sartorio’s death) lacked a sequel. In Irene e Costantino (text by Andrea Rossini) a ballo performed in the first act depicts “women at their bath,” continuing to exploit the interest in the female body introduced in Messalina, although in contrast to Messlina, it was now the male figure, Constantine, who is depicted as having a dissolute life.

### Legrenzi’s Peak Years

1. Francophile interests and influences become difficult to trace (or at least less obvious) in the 1680s, because patronage becomes more diversified (another likely consequence of the increased competition). No specific locus or potentate leaves a clear mark on it. Johann Friedrich was now dead, and Sartorio does not lag him by much. The new star of the Venetian “firmament,” as Venice’s realm of power was so often termed, was Legrenzi. Until he became *maestro di cappella* at San Marco in 1685, his theatrical efforts were centered on San Salvatore. Each of the next three seasons presented a pair of new works by Legrenzi. These works (Table 1) restored much of luster lost during Nicolini’s tenure. Although all six are survived by arias, only *Il Giustino* is survived by a score (in fact by three).
2. It is obvious that Mantuan patronage has completely eclipsed the remnants of French and Francophile patronage, but several features in Legrenzi’s operas of this period nonetheless retained what was distinctively French in San Salvatore’s tradition—orchestration of particular kinds and *balli* (cf. Sec. VII). What Mantuan patronage brought, in addition to singers, was new librettists and eventually well honed composers. If there was one central value of the 1680s, it was the cultivation of artistic excellence. There was no lack of interest in spectacle at San Salvatore, but its primary aim was not [at least by the 1680s] to mesmerize audiences with visual display. It was to heighten their sensitivity to vocal and instrumental nuance. San Salvatore was the single Venetian theater in which music mattered for its own sake, rather than for political gain or the satisfaction of passing whims. The 1680s were the decade in which that goal came closest to being achieved.
3. *Pausania*, however, was something of a throw-back to the Rangoni years, with its audacious appeal to power. This is conveyed by the frontispiece of the libretto. It may have been an effort to pay homage to the dedicatee, Gio. Battista Mora, but in real-life Mora was an anti-hero: in April 1682 the Council of Ten fined him, stripped him of his title of nobility and his property, and sent him into exile for the rest of his life.[[76]](#footnote-76) The production was in any event ill-fated: the *prima donna* (“Margaritina”; Margarita Salicola?) developed a case of laryngitis, which caused performances to be cancelled for a week after Christmas. (At the time, these were prime nights for attracting an audience.) A full cast list was printed in the libretto of *Lisimaco*. It includes both Margherita and Angela Salicola as well as Rosanna Tarquini; the male members were little known.
4. Legrenzi’s next work, *I due Cesari*, which followed a year later, proved to be a stellar production. The roles of Bassanius and Geta were taken by Clement Hader (Clementino) and Gio. Battista Mutti (Speroncino). Francesco de Castris and Rosanna Tarquini also appeared in the work. In the libretto the singers were described collectively as “the swans of our time.”) The weekly Mercurio found it “absolutely marvelous.” *Le Mercure galant* commented enthusiastically on its “beautiful voices” and elaborate staging. <MG> In the opening scene a mock *bucintoro* (the doge’s ceremonial galley) sailed in the Tiber. Legrenzi himself commented that the house was full for the first three nights [19-21 December 1682]. After that, productions were terminated until the 26th so that the singers could rest their voices, for it was becoming the custom for the greatest stars of the opera stage to sing in the “midnight” mass at San Marco on the night of the 24th/25th. <On this practice, see Termini….> Despite all this praise, *I due cesari* was also castigated for “improprieties,” one of which was its overall length (“which is not considered pleasant here”).[[77]](#footnote-77)
5. Despite its success, *I due cesari* was eclipsed in public reputation by its immediate successor, Legrenzi’s *Giustino*. *Giustino* ran late in Carnival, which called for a particularly exuberant style of staging. This time the text was by Nicolò Beregan, who dedicated his text to an appreciate patron, Alessandro Farnese, the prince of Parma. The work provided battles on both land and sea as the hero attempted to vanquish the Goths. However, the ghost of one general stalked Justin. A “giant of extraordinary appearance” made a considerable impression on all commentators. In another scene, 20 people rode on an elephant. Two live horses figured in another scene, probably that in which Vitaliano was taken captive. The Florentine resident, Matteo di Teglia, found the production nothing short of “majestic” in its use of machines. On one of these cherubs were seen to be flying. Although from a commercial standpoint *Giustino* was Legrenzi’s greatest success, the public response to it was unexpectedly great. As *Giustino*’s reputation grew, *scagni* (stools) for the parterre had to be reserved two days in advance. (This was unusual; scagni were for those who drifted in and did not have access to regular boxes.) The text inspired later operatic treatments set by Domenico Scarlatti, Albinoni, Vivaldi, and Handel. Alessandro Scarlatti revived Legrenzi’s work in Naples in 1684. Excerpts from the work may have been performed for the dedicatee at the palace he rented in Venice during Lent of 1683. <xx>
6. Once again box-office business caused the singer to hold out for higher fees in the following (1683-84) season. It was Legrenzi himself who tried to recruit singers in the spring of 1683. (It was customary to write libretti and plan productions, as well as write contracts for the coming year, during Lent.) Giuseppe Maria Donati, Francesco de Castris, Vicenzo Olivicciani (Vicenzino) and Giuseppe Venturino were among those contact to seem to have consented. Giovanni Buzzoleni, on the other hand, wished to take no further part in Venetian opera productions.[[78]](#footnote-78) Although Legrenzi’s correspondence does not detail all the anticipated expenditures for *L’anarchia dell’imperio* and *Publio Elio Pertinace* (the two works given in the coming season), we know that the performers were reluctant to given the premiere of the first on the opening date and apparently with good cause: within two weeks the audience had dwindled to 40 persons a night.[[79]](#footnote-79) The subject (dramatized by Tomaso Stanzani), which treated the succession of Ludwig the Pious, was considered “a joke,” one which “excellent voices” were unable to levitate. The second work, on d’Averara’s text, was in the more standard mold of Roman antiquity and fared better critically. Its production in January 1684 was, however, disrupted by rites for the death of the doge, Alvise Contarini, and festivities for the inauguration of a new one, Marc’Antonio Giustiniani.
7. During this period at San Salvatore Gasparo Torelli was the impresario. That the receipts for 1683-84 were significantly reduced is suggested by a complaint by Carlo Fedeli,[[80]](#footnote-80) the concertmaster of San Marco and a likely continuo player at San Salvatore (Fedeli played the *violoncino* and *violone*). The comparative pay rates in the two venues are notable. The ordinary rate for string players at San Marco was 15 ducats a year. Fedeli was paid 100 ducats a year because, as *maestro de’ concerti*, he was responsible for providing and directing music for instrumental ensembles on a long list of feast days. The pay he was due at San Salvatore for having played throughout the 1683-84 season (which lasted two months, minus several feast days) was 100 ducats. It is probable that the pay rate was based were similar because the number of days of engagement were roughly the same.

### The Holy League

1. Soon after the election of Marc’Antonio Giustiniani as doge (xx. 1684), Legrenzi ascended to the position of *maestro di cappella* at San Marco (April 1685). It was a time of war, since Venice had now allied itself with the Holy League, a loose amalgamation of the Papcy, the Empire, and adjacent areas threatened by Turkish incursions across the Balkans. This alliance was glorious in the minds of its proponents. Venice contributed large numbers of troops to the united cause. Although the Republic courted its honorary nobles, who were mostly *condottieri*, it was forced to rent most of the troops it contributed from German princes and noblemen. Nonetheless, the glories of Christianity and Venetian moral force were praised at every opportunity, including those provided by stage.
2. For opera, the rise of the Holy League shifted political prestige away from France and towards the Empire. It was Vienna that suffered the Turkish siege. Meanwhile, Legrenzi’s time for composing operas had passed. He was on call for myriad ceremonies both private and public. He ran an *accademia* that focused on the playing of instruments; it seems to have met in the home of Alberto Gozzi, a wealthy merchant who left his substantial collection to xx. Gozzi was an important benefactor of the four ospedali, with their carefully groomer choruses and orchestras. Concerts in this charitable institutions were beginning to capture the fancy of noble visitors. The fate of San Salvatore was now dependent, once more, on new goals and personnel.

### The Mantuan Phase

1. The duke of Mantua, who had been stripped of his honorary Venetian nobility in 1682, had recently been the dedicatee of *Publio Elio Pertinace*. The duke was not able to come to Venice in the winter of 1684-85, but L. A. Predieri sent him gilt-edged copies of the scores for the works performed[[81]](#footnote-81)—Lonati’s *Ariberto e Flavio* (text by Rinaldo Cialli) and Marc’Antonio Ziani’s debut opera for San Salvatore, *Tullo Ostilio* (1685/6). The latter work was linked to the Mantuan court through its librettist, Adriano Morselli, who was the court poet. The performance of *Ariberto*, a work dedicated to a Dutch diplomatic official, Arnold Druyvestein, was greeted with great enthusiasm, especially for its “exquisite voices,” composition, and “perfect operation.” Ziani, although Venetian by birth, was also in the employ of the Mantuan court. *Tullo Ostilio* had revivals in seven Italian cities over the remaining years of the century. Ziani’s considerable skills and family ties (through his uncle Pietr’Andrea) paved the way for him to assume the position of vice-*Kapellmeister* at the court in Vienna in 1700. The sets at San Salvatore remained the creations of Gasparo Torelli. The duke of Saxony was so impressed with the singing of Domenico Cecchi (Il Cortona) that he offered him a title of honor and a huge stipend.[[82]](#footnote-82)
2. For a number of years San Salvatore was to remain oriented in a manner that showed off the skills of artists associated with Mantua. In 1685-86 it enjoyed the services of another gifted composer, Domenico Gabrielli. He set Morselli’s *Teodora Augusta* (1685/12) for the theater. It was dedicated to Ernst August, the brother of Johann Friedrich and the sitting duke of Brunswick. The succeeding work, Gabrielli’s setting of Cialli’s *Le generose gare tra Cesare e Pompeo* (1686/4), was more warmly received. Gabrielli’s name, Cialli wrote, was “tied to fortune and glory” because of his “virtuous, bizarre, and spirited notes.” *Le generose gare* was dedicated to Maximilian Wilhelm, prince of Brunswick.
3. Gabrielli’s greatest triumph came in the 1686-87 season, first with *Maurizio* (1686/9; text by Morselli), then with *Il Gordiano* (1688/2). Ranuccio Farnese, duke of Parma, was the dedicatee of the first, Maximilian Wilhelm that of the second. *Maurizio* was praised to the skies. Barbara Riccioni won extraordinary praise in *Pallade veneta* for her performance. *Il Gordiano* (given a whole year later; no productions opened in San Salvatore in 1687) won great praise for its staging. The Swedish architect Nicodemus Tessin wrote of the effect created by the final scene, in which, through the device of placing almond-shaped cutouts in the drapes of the background, candles were seen to be flickering in the “windows” of a distant “palace.” (Such effects also help to explain why fires in theaters were so common.) <xx early death of DG>
4. The upsurge in popularity of Gabrielli’s work, followed by his early death (1689xx) left the theater bereft of its top talent. Considering that he was little known outside Venice, Paolo Biego’s score for *La fortuna tra le disgrazie* (1688/9) was quite a success. Known previously as an organist at the church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo, Biego was also the composer of the succeeding work, *Il Pertinace* (1689/4), which related an episode from Roman history immediately preceding that of Legrenzi’s earlier *Publio Elio Pertinace*. Biego’s *Pertinace* appears to be the work after which the lute virtuoso Pietro Bertacchini gave a private concert. <xx>
5. Nothing changed as quickly as political motives. Francesco Morosini, who had succeeded to the dogeship in 1688, was an inveterate defender of Western Christian liberty. He spent much of his-year tenure in battle against the Turks and would die on a Balkan field of a kidney stone in 1694. These years of battle diverted attention from the indulgences of the 1680s and reaffirmed the more bellicose aspirations of the Venetians. Involvement in battle seemed perennially to elicit concentration on spectacle. Though now so well tuned to the musical wishes of discriminating patrons, the theater was persuaded once again to emphasize visual interest and captivating images. Some of its reorientation owed to an effort to compete more directly, for what were probably declining numbers of viewers, with San Giovanni Grisostomo. For San Salvatore, this was a fatal mistake.
6. The three years following Biego’s short tenure brought much vacillation. Giacomo Perti was its composer in 1690-91, Marc’Antonio Ziani in calendar year 1691, and Perti again in calendar year 1692. No works opened in 1693. What brought Giacomo Ant. Perti to San Salvatore in 1690 was an invitation to set *Brenno in Effeso* (1690/1; text by Antonio Arcoleo). The production seems to have been motivated by the election (1689) of Antonio Ottoboni, the nephew of the pope Alexander VIII, to a procuratorship. Ottoboni was the dedicatee of *Brenno,* which featured three singers under the protection of the duchy of Mantua. Perti stayed on the next year (1690-91) to compose the music for Silvani’s *L’inganno scoperto per la vendetta* (1690/9)*,* the text of which was dedicated to another recently elected procurator, Sebastiano Soranzo. However, in this season San Salvatore suffered the loss of Maddalena Musi, who, after rejecting an offer of 200 *doppie* from the Vendramin, moved to San Giovanni Grisostomo.
7. One of the most exotic works to be given at San Salvatore was *L’amante eroe* (1691/3)*.* The music of Marc’Antonio Ziani graced a text by Domenico David on a tale from the life of Alexander the Great in India. Alexander’s virtues can be inferred to have flattered the image of Ranuccio II Farnese, the duke of Parma. Several Venetian operas of this immediately period were revived at his court in the coming years. David complained in his preface about the “small amount of stage time now permitted in Venice.” In combination with the need of “excessive arias,” he was forced to curtail his recitatives, thereby reducing their expressive powers. It was, nonetheless, the first work by an Arcadian dramatist to be given at San Salvatore. (San Giovanni Grisostomo soon gobbled up all the Arcadian practitioners it could find.) Ziani’s *La Virtù trionfante tra l’amore e e l’odio* (1691/7), on a text by Francesco Silvani, was dedicated to Maximilian II Emanuel, the duke of Bavaria. Both in anticipation and in retrospect, it was lavishly praised. At the start of October the English agent G. Boughton was able to send arias “for Cortini and La Romanina” from “the forthcoming work” to the duke of Kent. The week before Christmas the dedicatee and several other ranking noblemen, including Eugene of Savoy, attended a sneak preview of *La Virtù*. The official premier, on 26 December, was praised for the “exquisiteness” of its voices, the “magnificence” of the scenery, and the “richness” of the costumes. Another report labeled the production “most sumptuous.” Silvani himself praised the architecture and scenery as well as the music and singing. The work seems to have run through the whole of January, a sign of significant success.
8. Perti’s *Furio Camillo* (1692/2)*,* which opened in early February of 1692, was greatly praised in its own libretto (by Matteo Noris) for its magnificent production—a hallmark of works which opened in February. Yet the news-sheets that buzzed about *La Virtù* were silent on the reception of *Furio Camillo*. Perti was from Bologna, which lacked the prestige of Mantua, but Noris’s text was dedicated to Ferdinando III de Medici, the grand prince of Tuscany, who usually enjoyed great respect in Venice. Noris’s *Nerone fatto Cesare* (1692/9)was set by Perti for San Salvatore the following winter. Dedicated to Ferdinando della Torre, the baron of Taxis, the work appealed to imperial interests by introducing a Spanish ambassador into the Roman plot. Its production received extraordinary praise—for its “sumptuous scenes” (M), for the participation of the “most celebrated singers of the century,” and “music of the finest gold,” words of praise from none other than Noris. It remained in production until the end of Carnival.
9. Ziani’s *La moglie nemica* (1694/1) on Silvani’s text followed a year later. The text was dedicated to Francesco Maria Spinola, a Spanish grandee. Foreign singers arrived in Venice early in December 1693 to rehearse. Cardinal Ottoboni attended a rehearsal early in January. Yet *La moglie* cannot have been well received, because it was replaced in little over two weeks by a work on a more patently Spanish subject, *Alfonso primo* (1694/3), usually attributed to C. F. Pollarolo but possibly set by Ziani.[[83]](#footnote-83) The staging contains some of the qualities soon to be associated with Pollarolo’s great works for San Giovanni Grisostomo. The curtains are parted in the opening scene “by the Winds.” The instrumentation is sufficiently varied to suggest Pollarolo’s uncanny skills of orchestration, though Ziani also had a vivid imagination for instrumentation. A second set of curtains was parted for Scene Two, which was introduced by a sinfonia for harps, violins, and theorboes. The sinfonia served as a dance for the *amorini* in the mists of Alfonso’s palace, which was termed the Heaven of Venus. (The Heaven of Venus became a tireless trope in the repertory of Venetian staging.) In the following scene, a third set of curtains opened to reveal ships at sea. This was intended to suggest treachery. The rest of the work was built on the basis of the conflicts between these three elements. The dedicatee of *Alfonso primo*, named Giovanni Antonio in the libretto, appears to have been Juan Antonio Moles, a Spanish enjoy who had an audience with the doge on the same day as this work opened, 24 January 1694. Spanish subject matter had previously been little touched in Venetian opera. It was to flourish in coming years.
10. *Alfonso*’s successor was Perti’s *Laodicea e Berenice* (1694/8; the title refers to the successive wives of the Syrian ruler Antiochus). On a text by Noris, it generated revisions and imitations in the eighteenth century. It was very well received when it opened at the end of 1694. Although it ran head to head with Pollarolo’s *Irene* (xx) at San Giovanni Grisostomo, *Laodicea* seems to have prevailed, for it ran from December 26 until the end of Carnival (xx) 1695. *Laodicea* was dedicated to Tarquinia Colonna Ottoboni.
11. Ziani’s reputation had been growing rapidly, and his service to San Salvatore became intermittent. Perti likewise was increasingly in demand elsewhere. *Laodicea e Berenice* was the last of his works to be given at San Salvatore. Ziani provided music for its sequel, *La finta pazzia d’Ulisse* (1696/2), which was dedicated to Dorothea, the new duchess of Parma.[[84]](#footnote-84) It ran until the end of January. One of its last performances had to be cancelled when Domenico Cecchi (Il Cortona) appeared to be “demented by a fever” before curtain time.
12. San Salvatore’s more major effort in 1696 was invested in *Eraclea* (1696/6)*,* which was the first five-act work in its repertory. They were a recent predilection of San Giovanni Grisostomo and were typically tragedies. They reflecting experimentation with dramatic genera under the impetus of the Arcadian reformers, who sought to emulate classical models and observe Aristotelian unities (of time and place). What called attention to *Eraclea* was its dedicatee, Francesco III de’ Medici, the grand prince of Tuscany. He had arrived a week before the production opened (8 February 1696) with a retinue of 40 persons. The text of Giulio Cesare Godi was apparently written at the behest of the dedicatee. Godi took pride in saying that he had spent three months on the text and he hoped this would set it apart from the typical libretto fashioned in notorious haste. The music is attributed to Bernardo Sabadini, who was in the employ of the court at Parma. As an official guest of the Venetian Republic, the grand prince was feted repeatedly during his stay. Four boatloads of gifts were required to dispatch them to Florence. For the all the hoopla it generated, no glowing reports of performance bear witness to the production of *Ereclea*. A handful of arias from the work survive. It is ironic that *Eraclea* was one of the last operas to be given at San Salvatore with such a build-up, because the dogeship of Sebastiano Valier (1693-1700) was marked by a great increase of state pomp and ostentation. The number of special celebrations continuously increased, and feasts that were well established became significantly more lavish.
13. Its sequel, the five-act *Tirsi* (1696/10), marked the end of San Salvatore’s experimentation with that genre. Apostolo Zeno’s text had found a warm welcome at San Giovanni Grisostomo the preceding xx in Pollarolo’s setting (xx), but at San Salvatore the music was put together from acts respectively by Antonio Lotti, Antonio Caldara, Attilio Ariosti, and anonymous others. It was the first pastiche to be given in any Venetian theater. Five-act works were hypothetical super-serious ones, but this *drama pastorale* opened early in November, when the bulk of the Venetian nobility (its most discriminating audience) were absent from the city because of their customary retreat into *villeggiatura*. Thus while the text was fashioned for the nobility, *Tirsi* can only have played to an audience of provincial merchants and Venetian *cittadini*. The dedicatee of *Tirsi* was Ferdinand Carlo Gonzaga. *Tirsi* had roles for four nymphs. Two of them played harps, one a *flauto*, and one a lute. A news-sheet allowed that the work “may be beautiful” but noted that it was not capable of drawing people away from *La costanza in trionfo* at <xx>.
14. The composer of the next work, Attilio Ariosti, was a priest from Bologna who played *viola* as well as keyboard instruments. He was said in G. B. Neri’s libretto to be well liked by the “most important monarchs of Europe.” His *Erifile* (1696/15) presented a heavily embroidered tale of a Cypriot virgin intended for sacrifice to the gods. The text was dedicated to Filippo Rangoni, the duke of Spilimbergo. *Erifile* cannot have been well received. A license to print its successor was presented within a week of its opening, which was just after Christmas 1696. In contrast, Ziani’s *I rivali generosi* (1697/3) was a true hit. The *Corriere ordinario* said it enjoyed “extraordinary applause.” The text was by Zeno. One of its principal singers, Matteo Sassani (Il Matteuccio), was invited by the French ambassador to give a private concert in his palace on 2 January. The papal legate, the Receiver of Malta, their respective courts, and at least one other singer were present. Only miscellaneous arias survive.
15. San Salvatore did not offer any operas in 1697-98, but in the autumn of 1698 it violated ordinary theatrical protocol by opening a work ahead of the recess of the Maggior Consiglio. The work was one that was already well traveled and widely hailed: Silvio Stampiglia’s *Camilla regina de’ volsci* (1698/5) set by Giovanni Bononcini (1696). It was one of the most popular works of the entire century.[[85]](#footnote-85) Although the text was officially dedicated to Marc’Antonio Borghese, the prince of Rossano, the unusually early opening seems to have been prompted by the state visit of the Russian czar Peter the Great, who arrived in Venice at the end of the July. The nobility were not so compelled to spend the month of October at their villas because of an unusually early commencement of rainfall. Thus the circumstances for auspicious for the early opening of a major work. The czar was accompanied by enough attendants to fill two palaces. His presence attracted a large number of other dignitaries, among whom was Marc’Antonio Borghese. San Salvatore did not fail to take advantage of this unusual opportunity: admission to *Camilla* cost one-quarter ducat, an unusually high price. *Camilla* ran for a long time, that is from October 6 until until the start of Advent (if not longer) xx.
16. *L’innocenza giustificata* (1698/9; music by Benedetto Vinnacesi, text by Silvani), which received mixed reviews.[[86]](#footnote-86) Audiences liked Silvani’s complex text, which was dedicated to Ferdinand Ernst, the count of Mollarth, but were less enthusiastic about what was termed Vinaccesi’s “fertile *bizzaria*.” In consequence, *Camilla* was revived during the winter. The winter calendar at San Salvatore was completed by Silvani’s *La fortezza in cimento* (1699/3), set by Perti’s pupil Giuseppe Aldrovandini. Dedicated to Eugene of Savoy, lately famous for his leadership of imperial troops in Transylvania, *La fortezza* was said to have enjoyed “universal applause” and to have attracted “a great concourse,” but the music is lost and no colorful descriptions survive.
17. The gradual infiltration of Bolognese performers (some by way of Mantua) becomes more notable in the theater’s final year of operation as a regular venue for opera. Cupeda’s *L’amar per virtù* (1699/6; setting by Antonio Draghi with contributions by Leopold I) opened ahead of the feast of St. Martin (11 November) in 1699. For *Camilla* an early opening accommodated an important patron, but in ordinary years an opening before St. Martin’s pointed to a work’s being pitched to a non-noble audience. Sure enough, *L’amar per virtù* is dedicated collectively to “the ladies of Venice.” Its cast members came most immediately from Mantua, Verona, Milan, and Rome. It included one Slavic surname (Theodorovich). We are not informed as to its reception, which typically means it did not attract much interest (success in one city never guaranteed success in another).
18. Silvani’s *Il duello d’amore e di vendetta* (1699/10) opened just after Christmas. Its musical setting is attributed to Ziani. Nicola Grimaldi, from the vice-regal court in Naples, where the composer’s uncle Pietr’Andrea had served with distinction (1676-84), made his Venetian debut as the Visigothic king Rodrigo. Grimaldi may have arrived in the entourage of the viceroy, Luis della Cerda y Aragona (the duke of Medinaceli), who was the dedicatee of the libretto. The casting was otherwise similar to that of *L’amar per virtù*. Curiously, none of these singers were to appear in again on a Venetian stage. However, Margherita Raimondi (Merisbein *L’amar per virtù*; Florinda in *Il duello d’amore e di vendetta*) later became the wife of Tomaso Albinoni. The role of Rodrigo had now figured in three Venetian operas of the 1690s. Its popularity attests to the growing influence of Naples.
19. The last work to be given in this succession at San Salvatore completed the 1699-1700 season. It was Silvani’s *La pace generosa* (1700/3), again set by Ziani. Its dedicatee was Charles-Henri of Lorraine-Vaudemont, the governor general of Spanish Lombardy. The story was a somewhat fanciful account of the Roman occupation of the Rhineland. Subsequent to his negotiations for the wedding of Ferdinand Carlo of Mantua to Suzanne Henriette d’Elbeuf (1704), Charles-Henri acquired for Lorraine control of the lands around Casale Monferrato, which had previously belonged to groom.

## What was French about San Salvatore

### Political sympathies

1. Retrospective glances at the roster of composers at San Salvatore from the mid-Eighties on would suggest the displacement of a French orientation with an Austrian one. During the Holy-League years such an alignment would have been welcomed, but retrospect only works in hindsight. No one could have known that in the year 1700 Marc’Antonio Ziani would have been called to Vienna as Vice-*Kapellmeister*. Nor could one have known that after the Peace of Passarowitz (1718) it would be the dominant power of continental Europe. In the founding years of public opera, the Austrian court had been in Innsbruck, which, though an important stop to those passing through Austria to/from Bavaria and though it was an important incubator of bowed string instruments, never pretended to the grandeur of the Hofburg, the splendor of the palaces built nearby in the eighteenth century, or the vivacity of the theatrical life for which Vienna later became known.
2. Austrians were captivated by Venetian opera in the 1690s, though. The *Corriere ordinario*, preserved incompletely from 1677 through 1721 in the ONB xx, contains copious references of Venetian events, especially operas, between 1692 and 1700. This interest mirrors the rise of generals and the awarding of spoils throughout the vast reaches of what would soon become the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The diverse locales from which these leaders came injected into the swirl of events in Venice a modest sense of a new world order, in which Central and Eastern Europeans, as well as Austria’s allies in Spain and Naples, found their niches among the long recognized Italians, French, and British.
3. Perhaps the most ambiguous political alliances were those of the duke of Mantua. Ferdinando Carlo, who was to be the last duke of Mantua. The duchy of Mantua was so intertwined with the Hapsburg court at Vienna that anyone would have believed in the middle of the seventeenth century that nothing could come between them. Yet when it came to musicians, the dowager empress Eleonora had been fond of Venetians, and service to the empress had brought its various rewards.[[87]](#footnote-87) Personal and familial loyalties meant nothing to the duke, whose family were tied by other hereditary strings to the House of Nevers and the duchy of Monferrato. The duke of Mantua (who, were he living today, would probably be considered to exhibit attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder) succumbed to a life of continuous involvements with horses, gambling, comediennes, and *virtuose*. One might say that he immersed himself in all that was theatrical about courtly life and its privileges. Because he rarely paid his bills, however, his fabled debts put him in bad standing with everyone with whom he dealt. His Austrian relatives also found his behavior distasteful and refused to fund his life-style. In Louis XIV he found a ready source of a life-time pension, but only in exchange for loyalties that left him liable to other difficulties. His acceptance resulted in his immediate dismissal from the honorary Venetian nobility and several other honorary positions. His cousins Gio. Carlo and Vincenzo Gonzaga paid him less and less heed, and soon after the War of the Spanish Succession began, he was forced to lived in exile in Monferrato. After his first wife died, he was obligated to take a French wife (1704), but like the first, she failed to produce heirs.
4. Because Ferdinando Carlo spent the bulk of the months when theaters were open (autumn and winter), he spent a great deal of time in Venice and was a frequent presence in all the theaters. Between 1660 and 1700 members of the Gonzaga family were the dedicatees of 22 operas given in Venice. His parents had each been dedicatees of works given at SS. Giovanni e Paolo in the 1660s. They were likewise the dedicatees of the first two works given at San Giovanni Grisostomo in its first season—Pallavicino’s *Il Vespasiano* (1678/2) and *Il Nerone* (1678/8). It was Ferdinando Carlo who was the first member of the family to become involved with San Salvatore (with *Sesto Tarquinio*, 1678/6), although the preceding year he had been the dedicatee of Legrenzi’s *Totila* (1677/2). His wife was the dedicatee of Messalina (1679/8). Ferdinando Carlo was justly proud of his musical resources and his enthusiasm for Venetian opera was beneficial to the singer, composers, librettists, and *comici* protected by his court. He was not partial to any one theater in the distribution of his favors. Works on libretti dedicated to him were set to music for which there seems to have been no threshold standard of experience or quality—the names of Legrenzi and Pallavicino are mingled with those of Tomasi and Francesco Rossi. Three were pastiches. While the continuity of interest is clearly demonstrated, the musical scores for works dedicated to Ferdinando Carlo were lost disproportionately to the works of other composers after 1679-80; from the last 29 years of the duke’s life, *Massimo Pupieno* (1685/1; set by Pallavicino for San Giovanni Grisostomo) is the only work dedicated to any Gonzaga that is survived by a score.
5. Other clues to San Salvatore’s stance can be gleaned from things that had negative affects on the theater. One example is provided by the departure of several members of the Ottoboni family for Rome in 1689. They were strongly sympathetic to the French throne and seem to have been peripherally involved with San Salvatore for some years. Antonio Ottoboni, his wife and brother, all left for the eternal city in mid-November, soon after his formal entrance as a procurator.[[88]](#footnote-88)

### Elements of Performance and Staging

1. All commentaries on San Salvatore praise its music. This is a rare distinction in the annals of early opera. The bulk of eye-witness accounts of performances at San Salvatore are relatively uniform in their view that San Salvatore strove for an unparalleled standard of performance. Where the Grimani theaters cultivated imposing sets and stupendous machines, projecting an image of unrivaled political power, San Salvatore aimed for beautiful sets, enchanting voices, and varied effects in instrumentation.
2. In its account of Legrenzi’s *I due Cesari* of 1682, *Le Mercure galant* comments on the serenade that Geta bestows on his mistress in a “Bucintoro” sailing on the Tiber. The boat is adorned with golden statues and brocades, which glitter in torch-light, and is full of musicians. Bassianus (the other “Caesar,” a role sung by Clement Hader) brings gifts for all the women.[[89]](#footnote-89) After an *entrée de ballet*, he (“who has one of the best voices to be found here”) sings “an air sustained by trumpets which unite with his voice so well that one can admire its sweetness without being overwhelmed by [the instrumentalists’] sound.” Other members of this cast included Gio. Battista Speroni, Ferdinando Chiarovalle, and Anna Maria Manarini.

### Singing

1. Sartorio’s *Massenzio* was the one said to have “brought immortal fame” to Johann Friedrich, on account of the well-received performances of singers from his court. Nicola Gratianini, who sang in the title role, appears to have been the chief object of this praise, although Antonio Rivani (Cieccolino) also won acclaim in the supporting role. (*Massenzio* is not survived by a full score.)
2. Legrenzi’s engagement during the following winter, which may have been occasioned by Sartorio’s ill health, enabled him to provide his debut work at San Salvatore, *Eteocle e Polinice.* It was said in the libretto (attributed to Teobaldo Fattorini) to possess beauty [*vaghezza*] which was “incomparable.” Also contributing to the unprecedented success of *Eteocle* were Gio. Battista Lambranzi’s “masterful” [*maestoso*] scenery and the singing of a certain Maddalena [Maria Maddalena Musi].
3. By the last two decades of the century, Venetians stages themselves came to constitute an emporium for the procurement of singers. The early stars who had bolstered San Salvatore’s reputation for exquisite singing were siphoned off one by one. Domenico Cecchi (Il Cortona) was lured into the service of the Duke of Saxony in March 1685 with a “title of honor” and a “huge stipend.”[[90]](#footnote-90) Carlo Pallavicino, who divided his time between Dresden and Venice (and within Venice between multiple theaters and the Ospedale of the Incurabili), is likely to been a promoter of this plan.
4. The most persuasive testament to the virtues of musical performance at San Salvatore is that the rate of source survival is much higher for it than for San Giovanni. There is no predominant locus for the location of such works today. San Giovanni Grisostomo’s scores found their way to Naples from time to time, while those of San Salvatore were scattered between Venice and Paris.

### *Balli*

1. San Salvatore had the highest rate of any Venetian theater in its use of incidental items in operas. Overwhelmingly, these were *balli*. They were only one kind (but by far the most prevalent kind) of *entr’acte* used at San Salvatore. The Grimani theaters favored battle scenes and shunned what they considered to be effeminate. The choreographed battles were spectacles of awe, sometimes enhanced by displays of weapons and other paraphernalia of war. In the 1660s and 1670s all the theater provided prologues for most works, but especially for those which were dedicated to an esteemed patron for whom augurs for health, fame, and fortune were considered almost *de rigeur*. Moreso than San Salvatore the Grimani theaters might also provide scenes for *cori* (group pantomimes). San Giovanni Grisostomo promoted subjects which focused on great battles. All these gratuitous elements of staging (prologues, *cori*, *balli*, and battle scenes) were used generously in the depths of winter than in the runs of the late autumn.
2. *Balli* certainly existed before 1660, but there is very little commentary on them until later in the century. In surviving scores, the music is often trivial in length or missing altogether. (Many *balli* indicated in libretti coincide with ritornellos represented only by blank staves in scores.) Fifty-five of the 66 works given at San Salvatore between 1661 and 1700 had *balli*. An early instance of San Salvatore’s use of them can be traced to Legrenzi’s *Achille in Sciro*, a *favola drammatica* staged with a prologue, *balli*, and a *combattimento* (perhaps for the benefit of its dedicatee, Filippo Giuliano Mazarin Mancini). The presence of Juno and Pallas in the prologue indicates that the remarks about two *balli* given “with great precision and ability, following the rhythm of the orchestra, which played throughout” [[91]](#footnote-91)1 describe this work and no one.
3. There is no evidence other than circumstantial that San Salvatore encouraged the use of *balli* to satisfy the French tastes of its early patrons. It can easily be imagined that the members of the Mancini contingent would have expected them and that Cavalli would have brought back from his Parisian sojourn a clear idea of what would have been expected there. However, when we look at scores of the works produced in Paris during Cavalli’s tenure, we see that a much larger proportion of the components of any given work would have been danced than in Venice. In contrast to the French court, where a work’s merits might be judged largely on its *ballets*, Venetian audience expected the spine of an opera to be provided by a text. They did not wish to be participants in the entertainment.
4. Various schemes for the segmentation of time lent themselves to individuation within the context of the “clockwork” of the whole. Thus P. A. Ziani’s *Antigona delusa d’Alceste*  featured a *coro* of The Twelve Hours of the Day. The work, on Aureli’s text, was revived from a 1660-61 production. Abbot Domenico Federici reported to the empress that “nothing [in it] is beautiful except the music, in which Ziani has captured all the good practices [he has learned] in Vienna. It is not so much a drama as an Iliad set to music.”[[92]](#footnote-92) Ziani had spent the years 1662-1669 primarily in Vienna, as Kapellmeister to the Dowager empress Eleonora [nee Gonzaga].
5. Other notable *cori* and *balli* included: xx

### Orchestration

1. Surviving opera scores from seventeenth-century Venice are invariably scored for string ensembles, with three, four, or five independent parts (one of which duplicated the basso continuo). Eye-witness accounts and libretti may mention other instruments, but they seem to have been hired independently of the house ensemble, which would have included at least two accompaniment instruments. What was variable and cannot be fully determined from scores is how the accompaniment was provided. Practices could vary according to the composers, the impresario, the theater’s budget, the available talent, and other considerations. Legrenzi had a predilection was for unusual bowed string instruments—among them viols (which were used in the Ospedale of the Mendicanti, where he taught). Because of the presence and competence of Carlo Fedeli, one of earliest violoncellists identified, at San Salvatore, the likelihood that viols were regularly used at San Salvatore seems remote. However, they could have been used for the accompaniment of certain kinds of scenes <xx>.
2. What makes this question an interesting one at San Salvatore is the occasional hint of practices for which there is no evidence from other theaters. Sartorio and Legrenzi were both adventurous in their use of instruments, not in the Renaissance manner of scene painting with blocks of instruments of a common timbre (such as viols) but rather in the introduction of striking obbligati. Legrenzi, who held an academy of instruments in his own home in the 1680s, was regarded as a connoisseur of instruments.[[93]](#footnote-93) He was also a great personal favorite of French visitors in Venice.
3. Sartorio’s *Orfeo*,[[94]](#footnote-94) for example, may have involved the playing of a harp. An agent for the duke of Brunswick had one commissioned in November 1672, a month before the work premiered. A harpist, Benedetto de Carli, had been hired at San Marco three years earlier. A volume of trio sonatas [by Agostino Guerrieri] in which the harp was mentioned as an alternative to the theorbo was published in Venice in 1673. We might suppose from this information that such a substitution would have been most likely to occur in a passage suggestive of theorbo. A suggestive passage in Orfeo is xx
4. San Salvatore is unlikely to have been significantly different from other theaters, although its inclusion of plucked strings such as theorboes. Sartorio’s *Orfeo* (1672) may have included a harp, although the walking bass for the aria “Cerco pace” conforms to the kind of activity found in obbligato theorbo parts in the ensemble sonatas of the San Marco organist Massimiliano Neri (1651).
5. As *obbligati*, theorboes are associated with allusions to the relentless passage of time (a link that carries over into the eighteenth century in works such as Vivaldi oratorio *Juditha triumphans* (1716). Theorboes also seem to underscore moments of soul-searching, as in “Venticelli che tacete” from Domenico Gabrieli’s *Maurizio* (1686/xx). Having been offered the hand of the emperor’s daughter, Maurice must now decide whether also to accept the throne offered him by Tiberius. He wanders in the garden of the palace, trying to hear in the gentle breezes (the “Venticelli che tacete”) a word of advice.[[95]](#footnote-95) (The role of Maurizio was taken by Domenico Cecchi.)
6. Trumpets, which might play fanfares and a few ritornelli in operas depicting great battles, were sometimes provided (at least in part) by the figure to whom a work was dedicated. For example <..>
7. The fact that lavish praise generated by performances at San Salvatore were repeatedly praised does not guarantee that all reports are beyond misinterpretation. For example, the “orchestra of 40” mentioned by *Le mercure galant*’saccount of Pallavicino’s *Nerone* (1678/xx) was used in the on-stage representation of an *academia de’ suoni*, not in the pit, where the customary number of players was roughly ten.

### Criticism

xx

### Comedy Again

1. Ferdinand’s forced allegiance to the French crown became an awkward issue when the War of the Spanish Succession broke out late in the year 1700. It was a long war, in which the Empire and the French court contested the succession to the Spanish throne, to which both claimed title through complex family trees. The war was not entirely resolved until the peace of Utrecht (1714), but much of the early fighting took place in northern Italy, where duchies were beginning to collapse. The duchy of Mantua was threatened by lack of issue, which was to account for the duke’s pursuit of a second wife. The exiled court took up residence in Casale Monferrato in 1703. This had profound repercussions for many performers because Mantua had cultivated vocal talent for the past 30 years.
2. San Salvatore was an incidental casualty war. Many singers were frozen in whatever place they happened to be in when the war began. There were to be no opera productions at San Salvatore after the 1699-1700 season closed (at least not until 1727??). There may not even have been any autumn comedies until 1703, when the troupe initially run by Teresa Costantini (detta Diana) was engaged. The blockade of Mantua at the end of 1701 had, according to Teresa, deprived her of many players, though in the end her troupe remained at San Salvatore until 1715.
3. In the hiatus left by the exile of duke of Mantua and many of his performers for Casale Monferrato, Teresa’s *primo inamorato,* Luigi Riccoboni, was not content to go along with prose comedy at the philistine level to which it had sunk. He was committed to the restoration of classical models in historically authentic representations. His goal was to return the stage to its sixteenth-century virtue of excellent performance. He believed that a classical foundation should support the *commedia*.[[96]](#footnote-96) Although Teresa was protected by the Gonzagas, they were anathema to Riccoboni.[[97]](#footnote-97) He sought to recast his career. Taking advantage of the fluidity of affairs and the uncertainty of engagements in northern Italy, Riccoboni set about to form his own troupe, which he aimed to take to Vienna. From 1704 Riccoboni’s new troupe began to travel periodically to Vienna.
4. By 1707 Riccoboni’s troupe was settled at San Salvatore. Its focus was on serious drama revived on the basis of sixteenth-century models but acted to a level not seen in Venice in recent years. His wife, Elena Baletti (the sister-in-law of Giovanni Bononcini; her stage “mask” was *Flaminia*), was its biggest draw. Some printed dramas associated with San Salvatore during Riccoboni’s years there include *Tito Manlio* (1707), *Eumene* (1709), *Ifigenia in Tauride* (1709), *Le Merope* (1714), *Sesostri* (1715), *Il Solimano* (1716), and *L’empietà castigate nella caduta di Domitiano* (1716). The authors of these works included Apostolo Zeno and Scipione Maffei, as well as Gio. Battista Abbati. Some works were anonymous. Although he was named director of the Théâtre Italien in 1716, Riccoboni went back and forth between Venice and Paris for the next five years. He then remained in Paris until his death in 1748.
5. The San Salvatore that Riccoboni served was not the same one that staged 66 operas between 1661 and 1700. The world itself had changed too much for any institution to be considered the same. Yet the fact that his success in Venice paved the way for his supreme command of the Parisian stage for more than 30 years speaks volumes about the respect that the stage of San Salvatore met in Paris. In future years (1752-62) San Salvatore (San Luca) would play a similar role in the life of Carlo Goldoni, a comic dramatist bent on reform of a different kind. He too would move from this theater to Théâtre Italien and would spend this last 20 years of his life basking in the afterglow of his Venetian career. Both talents were larger than any one theater could claim, but that does not diminish the important role of San Salvatore in nurturing dramatic talent—for an informed French public.
1. Starting from 1452 a series of acquisitions of adjacent properties, extending into the Calle dei Fabbri, over the next century enabled the Vendramin to become the landlords of several shops in the vicinity. The property which became the theater, which was gutted by fires in 1661 and 1740, was designated the Teatro Goldoni in 1875. On its earlier history, see I-Vcg, Archivio Vendramin, MSS F 12/5-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. It was the duty of every nobleman to accept appointments to the Republic’s offices. Government service was normally unpaid. Terms of service were short (typically eight or sixteenth months) in the low-level posts offered to young noblemen. Prominent posts in diplomatic service required the payment of substantial fees. Patents of nobility were also sold (for 100,000 ducats) to men of means whose political allegiance was undoubted. Many such patents were sold in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to fund the wars “against the Turks, or for the defense of possessions on which the Venetian Republic was losing its grip. The subject matter of Venetian opera was strongly symbiotic with war in general and enjoyed greater success in wartime than during periods of peace. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. I-Vcg Archivio Vendramin, 42 F 12/8. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The account suggests that he collected money at performances but did not pay the rent anticipated by the Vendramin. See I-Vcg, Archivio Vendramin, MS 42 F 16/4. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The seasons into which these dates fall foreshadow the later model used by the opera houses, whereby theatrical agreements were made in the spring for performances given during the following autumn and winter. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Loc. cit. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. I-Vcg, Archivio Vendramin, MS 42 F 16/3. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. I-Vas, Capi, Consiglio de Dieci, Notatorio, Busta 29, item dated 1635 Adi 26 Genaro. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. On the detailed structure of the theatrical calendar and its vicissitudes, see Eleanor Selfridge-Field, Song and Season: Science, Culture, and Theatrical Time in Early modern Venice. Contrary to other reports, Carnival did not open on December 26. This was the feast of St. Stephen, when, for one day only, afternoon masking was permitting in the course of numerous festivities. Masking was thereafter confined to evenings until the start of Carnival, which was signaled by a proclamation read on the Loggetta of the Campanile. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. The troupe was prohibited from appearing around the feast of Ascension in that year (Song and Season, p. 91). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. A number of ephemeral theaters had flickered on and off in recent years. San Cassiano, which as an opera house could claim two years’ seniority over SS. Giovanni e Paolo, had already sustained a fire and a closing, after a number of years of vacillation. The Tron family, which operated it, had in any event been involved with comedy long before public opera came onto the Venetian scene. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Dedicatees were almost always physically present in Venice when a work dedicated to him or her was about to be performed. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Claire Fontijn, *Desparate measures: The life and music of Antonia Padoani Bembo*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The first production featured a revival of *L’Eritrea* (generally attributed to Cavalli) on a text by Gio Faustini. The work had originally been produced at the ephemeral Sant’Apollinare in 1652. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. See I-Vcg, Archivio Vendramin, 42 F 2/5. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. In the eighteenth century two Vendramin brothers, Francesco and Antonio, filed complaints against [another] “Francesco e Fratelli Bembo” for operating a fruit store in the courtyard of the “commedia San Luca.” The operation seems to have existed from 1702 to 1737, when the litigation came to a head. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Morosini would serve as doge from 1688 to 1694. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. An earlier Francesco Vendramin had been Venice’s ambassador to France in the year 1600. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Marco Morosini, a nobleman who later opened the ephemeral Teatro Cannaregio in the parish of San Giobbe. At least one work scheduled there, *La politica mascherata* (1679), was a political satire (*A New Chronology of Venetian Opera*, p. 565). It is unclear whether it was performed as planned for 26 December 1678. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. However, there also emerged in the 1660s a rivalry between France and Venice in glassmaking. The French developed a new manufacturing process which, although apparently not immediately embraced by the French nobility, found favor elsewhere. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. *Histoire du gouvernement de Venise par le sieur Amelot de la Houssaye*, Paris: F. Léonard, 1676. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. The dedicatee [named Pierre de Bensy in the libretto; also rendered as Bonzi, Bonsi, Bonzy et al.; 1631-1703] was a clerical ally of Cardinal Mazzarin, who in 1660 was named bishop of Béziers. (The appointment was made hastily to replace a bishop who died just as the wedding of Louis XIV to the Spanish infanta Maria Teresa was about to take place.) Also a diplomat, he was named ambassador to Spain after his Venetian tenure, then archbishop of Tolosa (1671). He was appointed a cardinal in 1672 and then (1674) archbishop of Narbonne, a post which he occupied until the end of his life. The prelate was the son of a Florentine senator and a Roman countess (his maternal grandfather was an honorary Venetian nobleman). He had been naturalized in 1637. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. We can wonder, though, how exactly tied to the Venetian production this dedication was, because Bonsy had also been the dedicatee of the Innsbruck production. Early Venetian opera occasionally divulges lapses in revising libretti to suit new performing situations. It is possible that Bonsy recommended *La Dori* for production in Venice, though Cesti’s work was widely popular among those who frequented court circles. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Ambrosio Bembo is noted for his four-year travel diary of a tour through Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Iran, and the Protuguese colonies of the Indian subcontinent (1671-1675). The journal is now translated and discussed in Anthony’s Welsh’s edition (*The Travels and Journal of Ambrosio Bembo*, tr. Clara Bargellini, Berkeley: UC Press, 2007). Cleopatra was stage almost a decade before his travels began.

>>This Bembo does not appear within the family tree given in Claire Fontijn’s *Desparate Measures: The Life and Music of Antonia Padoani Bembo* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 26.

>>Born in c.1640, the subject was married in the nobleman Lorenzo Bembo in 1658. The marriage was not successful, but neither was her effort to obtain a divorce. Thus she moved to the French court, where her musical gifts were well regarded. The custodian of her property in Venice (or what was left of it after her estranged husband sequestered the items he coveted) was Domenico Sellas (“Dome[ne]go Seles Lauter a S. moisè”; p. 40), which suggests her possible involvement in the manufacture and/or transmission of musical instruments between Venice and Paris. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Mancini et al., *Teatri*, i, 285, quoting a 1745 print which reproduced a period chronicle. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Information provided by Stephen Bonta in “Giovanni Legrenzi,” *Grove Music Online*, 5 August 2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Sergio Monaldini, L’orto dell’esperidi: Musici, attori e artisti nel patrocinio della famiglia Bentivoglio (1646-1685) (Lucca: LIM, 2001), p. 94: “Il marchese mi ha mandata una lettera del Cavalli nella quale egli dimanda cose troppo esorbitanti per venire in Francia a far la musica di un’opera, non mi manda però le arie di detto Cavalli desiderate in estremo dalla Regina, ne egli mi scrive: di gratia scrivertegliene una parola.” [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Monaldini, p. 134: “Vi prego se mi poteste favorire di qualche bella arietta in musica del Cavalli di volermene mandare il più che potete, credo che la vicinanza di Venetia farà che possiate commodamente mandarmene. Vecchie o nove non importa perche quì tutte saranno nove.” [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Monaldini, p. 134: “Ricordatevi dell’arie del Cavalli, ne vorrei una particolarmente che communcia che è una ciacona melanconica; e se non il ritorno del ambasciatore di Francia che deve seguire poteste mandarmi una intiera commedia delle sue delle più fresche in musica m’oblighereste infinitamente.” [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Monaldini, p. 135: “Mai più mi havete scritto cosa alcuna delle arie di musica del Cavalli, e della commedia in musica pure di esso. Vi prego se desiderate obligarmi di farmene la gr[az]ia, le arie mandarmele a una o due per volta nel piego delle lettere, la maggior quantità che potrete, e particolarmente una ciacona le parole della quale communciano “voglio di vita uscir, voglio che cadano”; e la comedia la potrete far consignare all’Abbate Siri, la quale me la porterà e vi darà aviso della sua partenza.” [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Paolo Alberto Rismondo, *Pier Francesco Caletti Bruni detto il Cavalli: Tappe per una biografia* (2nd draft, June 2009), p. 41. In San Marco records of 1658 Canobio was designated a guardian (*procuratore*) of Cavalli’s affairs. In this context *procuratore* finds no direct translation in English that is accurate. Cavalli, who was now in late middle age, needed someone to mind his affairs during his absences (very numerous in the 1650s) from Venice. Being Cremasque, his father’s family (Bruni Caletti [sometimes Colletti]) endowed him with a strong support network in this small city as the Western edge of the Venetian Republic. Ferigo Cavalli, from whom the composer took his surname, was mayor of Crema when Cavalli was in his teens. He arranged for Cavalli’s education and his eventual transfer to Venice. Cavalli passed through Crema en route from Paris and was not shy about showing off the gifts given him by Louis XIV. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Rismondo, p. 328, citing Sara Mamone et al., Serenssimi fratelli principi impresari: Notizie di spettacolo nei carteggi medicei—Carteggi di Giovan Carlo de’ Medici e di Desiderio Montemagni suo segretario (1628-1644) (Storia dello Spettacolo, gen. Ed. Siro Ferrone, ser. Fonte, vol. 3 [Florence: Le Lettere, 2003]). [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Many sources trace the sequence of events from diplomatic correspondence. Here I follow A. Ademollo’s account in *I primi fasti della musica italiana a Parigi (1645-1662)* (Milano: R. Stabilmento Musicale Ricordi, n.d.), ppp. 66-82. It relies principally on the correspondence of Atto Melani and various archival documents. The libretto for the *Serse* given at the Louvre deviates in many particulars from those printed for Italian productions (see Rismondo, *op. cit*., p. 370). [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Rismondo, *op. cit.*, p. 370. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Rismondo, *op. cit.*, pp. 371f. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Rismondo (p. 372) notes that the score for this scene (*Récit des preneurs de Tabac*) is viewable at the Bibliothéque Nationale website: <http://www.gallica.fr>. Xx He allows that the model of *maestro di musica* could have been Cavalli. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Rismondo, *op. cit.*, pp. 377f, citing Mamone et al., doc #830. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Ademollo, *op. cit.*, pp. 86f. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. With respect to the use of live game, the other notable examples are the pageant-like productions given (mostly outdoors) at Piazzola between 1679 and 1685 and a few works at the Grimani opera houses at the height of the Holy League’s efforts to quell the Turks in the mid-1680s. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. The Dance of the Spirits (*fantasmi*; called *ombre* in the libretto) from *Pompeo Magno* is shown in reduction in Alm, “Winged Feet,” p. 253. The suite (*balletto*) for madmen (*pazzi*) follows on pp. 256f. The group included two roles each for Music, Painting, Alchemy, and Poetry. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. The work of Valeria de Bona is shedding much welcome light on Maria Mancini’s live. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Shortly before 26 October 1667 (I-Vcg, Archivio Vendramin, 42 F 6/2. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. I-Vcg 42 F 6/2, apology of 15 Maggio 1672. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Case brought on 8 and 9 Marzo 1669 recounted in I-Vcg, Archivio Vendramin, 42 F 6/2. The box-holders included four procurators (Ferigo and Nicolò Corner, Alvise Duodo, and Borbon Morosini), and several dozen others. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. I-Vcg MSF 42 F 6/2. Inventory of 9 December 1669. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Traveling troupes of *comici* did typically ask for accommodation within theaters. (See, for example, E. Selfridge-Field, “The *Guerra dei comici*,” [xx] on this practice at the Grimani comedy-house, San Samuele. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. I-Vcg MSF 42 F 6/2. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. His three brothers remained Protestant. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. The succession is presented in Eric Albertyn, “The Hanover Orchestral Repertory, 1672–1714: Significant Source Discoveries,” *Early Music* 33/3 (2005), 449-472. See especially pp. 451f. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Unlike Lotti and Sartorio, who succeeded to the musical establishment of San Marco after exposure elsewhere, Fedeli was a product of its musical culture. He was a son of Carlo Fedeli, *maestro dei concerti* for the last 20 years of his life (c. 1625-1685) and the brother of several musicians who became scattered across Europe in the first years of the eighteenth century. Carlo Fedeli (a principal of the orchestra at San Salvatore) dedicated his only published collection of instrumental pieces to Prince Karl of Brunswick (*Suonate* [*a 3*], Op. 1, 1685). [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Johann Friedrich was en route to Venice for Carnival when he died in xx February 1679. His party set off to enter the Venetian Republic from the north, but because of the length of mandatory quarantine, they changed course and headed for the western border of the Republic. where the length of quarantine was rumored to be shorter. Had they remained on their original route, the duke would have died in quarantine in the Tyrol rather than in Augsburg (their first stop on the revised route). His brother Ernst August continued on to Venice (via Milan) “to enjoy Carnival.” [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Sartorio’s residencies at court were curtailed in the 1670s because of his deteriorating health. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Vassilis Vavoulis, “A Venetian World in Letters: The Massi Correspondence at the Hauptstaatsarchiv in Hannover,” *Notes* 59/3 (March 2003), pp. xx-yy. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. An accompanying note from Massi reported that P. A. Ziani’s *Semiramide* (1670/4) was not a success at SS. Giovanni e Paolo and would soon be replaced by another revival of Cesti’s *La Dori* (1670/06). In turned out, though, that Ziani’s *Eraclio* (1671/01) on Beregan’s text was a resounding success when it opened on 19 January 1671 (Vavoulis, *op. cit.*, docs. 567-579). [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. New Chronology, p. 108. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Vavoulis, *op. cit*., doc. 586. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Massi had previously noted that San Moisè was charging lower prices for tickets than the other theaters. See Vavoulis, *op. cit.*, doc. 582. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Vavoulis, *op. cit.*, doc. 585. The Grimani losses would have been attributable to Boretti’s *Domiziano* (1672/4). However, Massi had mentioned twice in January that San Moisè, opened for the first time since 1667, was enjoying full houses with its production of Partenio’s *La costanza trionfante* (1672/5), which he did not consider to be either intellectually or artistically competitive. Massi had commented in December on the robust audiences for the comedies (*op. cit.*, p. 582). The add insult to the indignity of poor reviews and delayed payments, one of the singers in *Domitiano* was shot at while in his gondola (Vavoulis, *op. cit.*, doc. 585). [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. *New Chronology*, pp. 109f [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Vavoulis, *op. cit.*, doc. 586. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Vavoulis, *op. cit.*, docs. 587-92. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Vavoulis, *op. cit*., doc. 593. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Vavoulis, op. cit., doc. 595. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. For example, in 1708 the Cardinal hoisted the French flag over the portal to his Roman quarters. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. *New Chronology*, p. 113. Musi was still in Venice on 7 March 1675, when she was accompanied by the wife of Giovanni Molin at a *festa di cavallo* (I-MAas, AG, Carteggio da Venezia, Busta 1576, letters from Gio. Fran*ces*co Ferrari dated 17 9bre [novembre] 1674 and 9 Marzo 1675). [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Saint-Didier, *La Ville*, quoted in Nagler, *Source Book*, pp. 267f. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Fabbri, *Recensione*, pp. 435-466. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Vavoulis, *op. cit.*, p. 597. Beregan had advocated the performance of *L’Ottaviano Cesare Augusto* for this season (op. cit., p. 595). [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Vavoulis, “Massi,” p. 597. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Vavoulis, “Massi,” p. 598. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. I-Vas, IS, Busta 914, fasc. San Luca, unnumbered folio of 22 Febraro 1678. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Benedetto Marcello’s description of the haughty attitude of singers in *Il teatro alla moda* (1720) captures well the flavors of negotiations a half-century earlier. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. I-Rvat, AS, NV, N. 120, f. 10v. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. A. Morelli, “Legrenzi,” p. 69: “…l’opera del teatro S*an*to Luca non ha, non dico aplauso, ma né meno compatimento, mentre dicono male d’ogni cosa…ed in particolare…della poesia et della musica.” [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. See *Drammaturgia Musicale Veneta*, viii, (ed. E. Selfridge-Field) for a facsimile of its multiple texts and miscellaneous arias as well as full score. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. *New Chronology*, p. 153. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. See the Legrenzi correspondence compiled and annotated by A. Morelli, “Legrenzi,” pp. 77f. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. A. Morelli, “Legrenzi,” pp. 79f. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. I-MAas, AG, Carteggio da Venezia, Busta 1577, letter from Antonio Predieri dated 4 Xbre [Dicembre] 1683. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. I-Vas, Censori, Busta 17, item of 2 Maggio 1684. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Letter of 12 Xbre [Dicembre] 1683 in I-MAas, Archivio Gonzaga, Carteggio da Venezia, Busta 1577. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. I-MOas. xx [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. The overall musical idiom of *Alfonso* seems different from Pollarolo’s. The work is more contained and slightly more modest than Pollarolo’s. The surviving score (in the Frank V. De Bellis Collection at California State Univeresity, San Francisco, does not seem representative of Pollarolo. It is notably short for an opera of its time. It is possible that in performance it was provided with many further numbers. In the 1710s *ballerini* at Sant’Angelo brought their own *balli*, and other supernumeraries (such as mock combatants) brought their own routines. This modular approach to production extended to players of woodwind instruments there, although at San Giovanni Grisostomo the orchestra of the 1730s was a composite one and did not accommodate supernumeraries. Since San Salvatore did not survive as an opera house into the eighteenth century, it is difficult to read these aspects of production in the 1690s. Pollarolo is not linked to any other operas given at San Salvatore. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Francesco Farnese, her betrothed, was a supporter of autumn comedy at San Salvatore. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. *Camilla* ultimately had 38 productions, the last one occurring in 1765. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. *L’innocenza* illustrates the entrenched phenomenon of suiting the work to the patron. In its quest to please its dedicatee, Silvani’s effort immersed itself in a convoluted story concerning the division of property among four grandsons of Charlemagne, but the production also catered for a Franco-German identity. The *balli* featured Spanish and French cavaliers in one case and portrayed German rocket-launchers in another. The music is lost. xx [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Pietr’Andrea Ziani, for example, though an organist at San Marco, served as maestro di cappella at the Chapel Royal of Naples for the last eight years of his life (1676-1684). [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. I-MOas, Avvisi da Venetia, Busta 5280, Venetia 12 Novembre 1689. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. This was undoubtedly an effort to model the behavior Venetian noblewomen appreciated in visiting princes. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. I-MOas, Avvisi da Venetia, Busta 2576, Venetia 10 Marzo 1685. Margarita Salicola, who had appeared in Penelope at San Giovanni Grisostomo during the concluding season, was taken into the duke’s service under similar terms. Her carefully arranged clandestine departure became the subject of intense diplomatic discussion for several subsequent months. See I-MOas xxxx. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. 1 Mancini et al., *Teatri*, i, 285, quoting a 1745 print which reproduced a period chronicle. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Ferretti, “«Musica politica»,” p. 451. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. The patron of the academies was the Venetian merchant Alberto Gozzi, who may have been the owner of most of the instruments. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Available in facsimile in the series Drammaturgia Musicale Veneta, with an introduction by Ellen Rosand. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. A printed version of the aria (seen here) given in the Venetian journal Pallade Veneta (1687) suggests only conventional accompaniment. Among the work’s many later productions, the Modenese version (1689) indicates that the same aria was dramatized by an interruption for recitative, and that the obbligato accompaniment was by theorbo. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Comedies were not necessarily humorous works. Many of Riccoboni’s *commedie* were tragic. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Teresa herself refused to moved to the court in Casale. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)