Counting Musicians:

a London Catalogue aria in context

One of the most loved arias in 18th-century opera is Leporello's 'Madamina, il catalogo è questo' from Act I of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, in which the servant lists his master's supposed conquests, including their nationality, class, and age. This objectionable behavior is made worse by the hubris which allows the master to, as Roger Mosley has recently put it, 'outsource' the counting and recounting to a servant.[1] However, Don Giovanni's preferences are not those of sexual attraction, but represent indiscriminate seductions undertaken in service of the catalogue, 'Pel piacer di porle in lista.' The aria, described by Ronald Rabin as an example of a spontaneous and exuberant performance 'staged largely for the benefit of other characters',[2] was first heard by London audiences on 1 March 1794, as part of Giuseppe Gazzaniga's *Don Giovanni.* This was staged - according to Lorenzo Da Ponte – by Opera House manager William Taylor, in 'bestial preference to the *Don Giovanni* of Mozart, brought to London and proposed by me'.[3] Despite this dismissal of William Taylor's taste, Da Ponte involved himself in Gazzaniga's opera, adding passages to the text that were indicated in the printed libretto.[4] The staging also included added music by Sarti, Federici, and Guglielmi. Giovanni Morelli sang

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[1] Roger Moseley, 'The Qualities of Quantities: Mozart, 'Madamina, il catalogo è questo' (Leporello), *Don Giovanni*, Act I', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 28/2 (2016), pp.137-40; p.137.
[2] Ronald J. Rabin, 'Figaro as Misogynist,' in *Opera Buffa in Mozart'sVienna*, ed. Mary Hunter and James Webster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.236.
[3] Lorenzo Da Ponte, *Memoirs of Lorenzo Da Ponte*, trans. Elisabeth Abbott, ed. Arthur Livingstone (New York: J. B. Lippincott and Co., 1929), p.251.
[4] Larpent manuscript US-SM La 1013 gives the title 'Il Don Giovanni, A Tragi-Comic Opera in One Act. The Music By Messrs. Gazzaniga, Sarti, Federici, And Guglielmi'; the printed libretto GB-Lbl 907.k.4.(3.) adds 'the words are new, by L. Da Ponte, Poet of this Theatre, Except those that are not marked with inverted commas'.

'Madamina, il catalogo è questo' in the role of Pasquariello, the Leporello character, who 'unfolding a role of parchment', proceeded to regale the audience with the number of women seduced - and presumably abandoned - by his master.[5] The catalogue aria was an identifiable buffa aria sub-genre, and its texts could list almost anything: the eighteenth-century London audience heard lists of food (*Le servi rivali*, 1780),[6] masters (*La scuola de' gelosi*, 1786),[7] and cooking skills (*La Vendemmia*, 1789).[8] Probably the first such aria they experienced was the list of estates in 'Nel quartro cento sei possessioni' from *Il filosofo di campagna* staged in the 1760-61 season, the first in which opera buffa was a serious force.[9] John Platoff notes that such arias were a regular feature of Continental opera, but as it happens, in the 125 or so opere buffe staged in London between this season and 1800, this aria type was a comparative rarity.[10]

The Opera House subscription audience was an elite audience, and could be moneyed, knowledgeable, cantankerous, socially engaged, or any or all of the above, but they did at least show every sign of welcoming Gazzaniga's *Giovanni*. A few weeks before, however, the London audience at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden – then a playhouse with a mixed

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[5] *Il Don Giovanni, A Tragi-Comic Opera in One Act* (London: C. Clarke, 1794), pp.26-27.
[6] In 'Allor saprai chi sono', Letanzio lists the food he will serve at his wedding to Giacinta. *Le servi rivali* (London: W. Mackintosh, 1780), pp.66-67.
[7] In 'A Lion la Contessa la Crà', the footman Lumanca, worried about his job because his master's brain has grown fevered from jealousy, lists his past employers. *Le scuola de' gelosi* (London: J. Almon, 1786), pp.68-69.
[8] In 'Quando vedrai chi sono', the adventurer Count Zefiro claims extensive cooking skills to impress his new bride, Cardone. *La Vendemmia* (London: L. Wayland, 1789), pp.26-29.
[9] In 'Nel quartro cento sei possessioni', the notary shows Don Tritemio a list of Rinaldo's estates with the dates they were acquired to show that he (Rinaldo) has backing for his claim of a 'noble and ancient lineage'. *Il filosofo di Campanga* (London: G. Woodfall, 1761), pp.28-29.
[10] John Platoff, 'Catalogue Arias and the "Catalogue Aria"', in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *Wolfgang Amadè Mozart; Essays on His Life and His Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp.296-311.

programme in English of spoken drama, opera with spoken dialogue, dance, and other entertainments – had given *their* audience the opportunity to hear not only a continental-style catalogue aria, but one in English. But what they did hear was something rather different than the sometimes-bland listing of inert subjects such as food or estates, arias in which the comedy lies primarily in the manner of performance. The aria - which was included in the three-act opera *The Travellers in Switzerland* with a text by Henry Bate Dudley (1745-1824) (illus. 1) and music compiled by William Shield (1748–1829) (illus. 2) – was transformed into a meta-theatrical conceit by naming rival musicians, some of whom competed with those involved in the performance itself, and all of whom were associated with the Opera House, the home of foreign and elite opera and dance.

Travelling in Switzerland

22 February 1794 at Covent Garden was the first night of *The Travellers in Switzerland*. It was a three-act, full-length English opera with spoken dialogue, and contained some thirty-four numbers, some of which had topicality outside the theatre. The authors, Dudley and Shield, had already worked together on *The Flitch of Bacon* for the Little Theatre in the Haymarket (1778) and *The Woodman* for Covent Garden (1791); both works were major hits, *The Flitch* being one of the Little Theatre's most profitable shows, and *The Woodman* Shield's last big hit and featuring the fashionable ladies' pastime of archery. *The Flitch* was significant in other ways. It brought the Newcastle-trained Shield, then still making his way in London, much attention, and led

to his profitable association with Covent Garden. It also employed for the first time the formula that Shield would then exploit for the rest of his career; it had a total of 14 musical numbers, 9 of which were by Shield, but with the rest drawn from a range of sources, in which Linda Troost includes Italian opera, Tudor songbooks, and British folksong.[11] And the public enjoyed it: there were 21 performances in its first season, with the nearest in number being James Boaden's musical drama *Fontainville For*rest with 13. The rest of the season's offerings were in single figures in a season of 208 nights on which plays were performed.[12]

Quite what the performance of the piece was like is unknowable, but although the opera was regarded as too lengthy and there is some evidence that the performers had not learned the parts properly, the recorded responses to the show were positive. The commentator in the *Public Advertiser* remarked:

> The fable is slight, but sufficient to answer the purpose of Opera. It is not however destitute of character, incident, or situation. The dialogue is neat, and has several happy turns in it, but the chief object of the Author has been to afford himself an opportunity of a rich display of music and scenery.[13]

Clearly, there was a general understanding of what made a suitable opera plot or 'fable' (as distinct from one for another genre); here, that offered by

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[11] Linda Troost, 'William Shield', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: MacMillan, 2001), XXIII, 262-65; 262. See also *BDA*, XIII (1991), pp.361-63; and Roger Fiske, *English Theatre Music in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p.552.

[12] *The London Stage 1660-1800* (Carbondale: University of Illinois University Press, 1960-68), V: *1776-1800* ed. Charles Beecher Hogan (1968), Part 3, pp.1573-74.

[13] *Public Advertiser or Political and Literary Diary*, 24 February 1794.

Dudley had just enough suitable content to pass muster, and to provide enough opportunities for music and spectacle; one scene involved the appearance of a file of Swiss soldiery, with a platoon firing being heard off-stage. The scenes included an auberge on the side of a mountain at sunrise, an extensive lake, a hotel in Geneva, the glaciers, and various scenes in and around a castle. As one commentator remarked:

> The Scene as the title announces, being laid in Switzerland, innumerable grand subjects naturally present themselves to the eye of the Painter, of which he has here amply profited – for a greater variety of beautiful Scenery has seldom been exhibited in any one Piece.[14]

Another noted that it was 'taken from the sublime Nature of Switzerland, and painted in a very superior stile [sic].'[15] Importantly 'the greater part of the scenery of the piece was entirely new',[16] so the theatre clearly had enough confidence in the piece to commission these extravagant scenes by John Inigo Richards, Henry Hodgins and Thomas Walmsley.[17] The title page of the opera shows a scene that may have been based on the actual sets (illus. 3); Sybil Rosenfeld has proposed connections between the theatre settings, and those designs prepared for the title pages of similar musical scores.[18]

But other commentators spotted that there was also another agenda at work:

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[14] *Sun*, 24 February 1794.
[15] *London Packet or New Lloyd's Evening Post*, 21-24 February 1794.
[16] *London Packet or New Lloyd's Evening Post*, 21-24 February 1794.
[17] *Morning Herald*, 24 February 1794.
[18] Sybil Rosenfeld, *Georgian Scene Painters and Scene Painting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), plates 28, 29, and 20.

> The adventures of the various English people among the mountains of Switzerland are the subject of the story; and the author has rather contrived how to draw out the combined musical and comic talents of the numerous performers of the Theatre than to confine himself to a simple and regular fable. Justice must acknowledge he has very successfully hit the mark at which he aimed.[19]

And in this response we have confirmation of what we often suspect - but cannot always prove - that the work was tailored for the strengths of a specific cast.

Switzerland, the setting for the opera, was well known to some members of the English audience, for although it would become properly famous in its own right as a destination in the 19th century, many travelled through it on the way to and from Italy, and it was often 'taken in' as part of a Continental tour. The publication of an account by one such traveller, Robert Gray, coincided with the performances of the opera, and includes remarks on Geneva, the scene for the opera:

> The city of Geneva is remarkably situated as the west end of the lake, where the beautiful Rhone issues from it in two rapid currents of transparent green colour. The streets are not broad, and derive no embellishments from the lofty wooden arcades which shelter them from the sun […] The houses which face the lake, and those which

[19] *Morning Chronicle*,

> overlook the parks, are very handsome: the inns are good, the walks pleasant, and much resorted to.[20]

Such scenes, probably familiar to the audience, provided theatrical opportunities, which seem to have been fully realized:

> The Scene […] being laid in Switzerland, innumerable grand subjects naturally suggest themselves to the eye of the Painter, of which he has here amply profited – for a greater variety of beautiful Scenery has seldom been exhibited in any one Piece.[21]

Puffery? Certainly. Untrue? Well, it was probably an exaggeration, but not a complete invention. There certainly seems to have been enough in the show to catch the eye. Switzerland itself would become a topos in playhouse drama; shows with Swiss themes included *Idela; or, The Feuds of Switzerland* (1802), *Out of Place; or, The Lake of Lausanne* (1805), *The Terrible Peak* (1817), *Sigesmar the Switzer* (1818), *Switzerland* (1819), and *William Tell* (1825).[22]

The 'fable of the opera' belongs to a particularly rich theme in 18th-century English drama, that of the Englishman visiting a foreign country or town, and being subjected to ridicule through a lack of understanding of local customs; these include Samuel Foote's *The Englishman in Paris* and *The Englishman return'd from Paris*, and M. Favart's *The Englishman in Bordeaux*. In Dudley's show, Dorimond follows his love Julia (and her mother, Lady Philippa Sidney) to Switzerland; he is disguised as a Swiss servant.[23] Lady

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[20] Robert Gray, *Letters during the course of a Tour through Germany, Switzerland and Italy* (London: F. and A. Rivington, 1794), p.205.
[21] *Sun*, 24 February 1794.
[22] Sybil Rosenfeld, *Georgian Scene Painters and Scene Painting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p.177.
[23] Margaret Ross Griffel, *Operas in English: a Dictionary*, 2 vols (Lanham, Md.; Plymouth:

Philippa's husband does not, however, trust her; she is absorbed with class and status, and he suspects she is having an affair with the dotty and effete Count Fripponi. Fripponi's very name marks him out as a figure of fun; as an Italianized version of the English 'frippery', it suggests frivolousness, ostentation, and vacuousness. In counterpoint to this, Dorimond's friend Dalton is on the Grand Tour, and is in search of Louisa Somerville, the object of his affections. Louisa, after she overheard him expressing loving sentiments to Julia, has retired to a family castle on the Continent. As it happens, Dalton was attempting to further Dorimond's cause and Louisa has mis-interpreted his intentions; the opera ends with the resolution of this error. In the playbook's 'Advertisement,' Dudley claims not to have borrowed the story of the drama from another source, but does imply that he was adapting a pre-existing text of his own; this process, he claimed, resulted in 'various curtailments, and transpositions of scenes' which 'unavoidably deranged the unities of the piece'.[24] At the same time he offered further apologies for some of the aria texts:

> Several of the airs, and all of the Choruses having been written to compiled music, the critical reader will make a suitable indulgence for some irregular, and uncouth numbers, which he will necessarily meet with.

Dudley clearly had some tunes to work with, and tried to adjust the verse accordingly. Further, when the books of the opera were finally published, the piece was further 'deranged', for the title page carried the not-unusual note

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Scarecrow, rev. ed. 2013), I, pp.503-504.

[24] *Travellers in Switzerland*, 'Advertisement', p.5.

that 'the passages omitted on the stage, are marked with inverted commas'.[25] But it is also the case that even more than just the marked text was omitted. After the first night, the opera was damned as being 'at least three quarters of an hour too long',[26] and also elicited the complaint that 'the whole piece was a sacrifice to Music, as almost every third minute produced a song.'[27] The *Morning Post* made a series of suggested cuts for improvement,[28] and it was noted in the *Whitehall Evening Post* that by the performance of the 27 February:

The Travellers in Switzerland, lightened of a heavy burden of serious dialogue, tripped it merrily over the glaciers yesterday. Some of the songs have been omitted, the symphonies reduced, and choruses considerably curtailed.[29]After these 'curtailments,' the *Morning Post* reported that the 'performance went off with a degree of flippancy that considerably enlivened the performance.'[30] However, there may have been other reasons for the cuts:

> In the marked and decided applause of the audience there was not any alteration, nor could there indeed have been a change for the better. The performers, more accustomed to paths hitherto so lightly trodden, were hardly ever out of their *way*, and consequently the prompter's talk as a *guide*, was rendered much more easy.[31]

The suggestion here – and one not found in any other report – is that the performers did not know their parts well; the reason for the curtailments,

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[25] Advertisement, p.5.
[26] *World*, 24 February 1794.
[27] *World*, 24 February 1794.
[28] *Morning Post*, 24 February 1794.
[29] *Whitehall Evening Post*, 25-27 February 1794.
[30] *Morning Post*, 26 February 1794.
[31] *Whitehall Evening Post*, 25-27 February 1794.

then, may not just have been a negative reception by the public to the length of the piece, but an effort to reduce the dialogue that the cast had not been able to learn.

The publication history of the opera follows the usual pattern found for London works. The manuscript of the opera's wordbook survives in the Larpent plays, La 1010,[32] and like many of those texts, is a good quality fair copy with very few alterations to the words.[33] The text was submitted by Covent Garden to the Examiner of Plays, John Larpent, on 14 February 1794, where it promptly fell into the hands his wife Anna, for she records in her diary reading it that afternoon.[34] There she noted that it '"promises to be very pleasing from the Music & the decorations in the performance"'; her double inverted commas suggest that this is quotation of a puff, perhaps from a now-lost covering letter of application for a license.[35] A collection drawn from the opera entitled a 'Specimen of Songs' was published in the *Public Advertiser* as a taster for the show; somewhat surprisingly, the catalogue aria was not, however, included in this selection of texts.[36] The book of the songs was advertised as printed and being on sale at the performances,[37] and by 3 March, the text of whole opera was announced as 'shortly to be published';[38]

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[32] Henry Bate Dudley, *The Travellers in Switzerland*, US-SM La 1010.
[33] See a discussion of this issue in Michael Burden, 'Italian Opera Librettos in the Larpent Collection.' *Eighteenth-Century Drama*. 2016. Accessed February 06, 2017. http://www.eighteenthcenturydrama.amdigital.co.uk/Explore/Essays/Burden
[34] Anna Larpent, *Diary,* I: *1790-1795,* US-SM HM31201, 14 February 1794.
[35] Dougald MacMillan, *Catalogue of the Larpent plays in the Huntington Library* (San Marino, Calif: Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, 1939), p.168.
[36] *Public Advertiser or Political and Literary Diary*, 22 February 1794; *St. James's Chronicle or the British Evening Post*, 22-25 February 1794
[37] Bate Dudley, *Airs, duets, trios, glees, choruses, &c. In the opera of the travellers in Switzerland* (London: J. Debrett, 1794).
[38] Henry Bate Dudley, *The Travellers in Switzerland, a comic opera* (London: J. Debrett, 1794); *Oracle and Public Advertiser*, 3 March 1794.

this had appeared by 25 March.[39] There were ten editions of the books of the songs - of which only a handful of copies of each survive - and of the complete text, there are two 1794 London editions and one 1795 Dublin edition. The score was announced as published by 3 June by Longman and Broderip, and as was usual, appeared as a reduction that could be used for performance on keyboard.[40] Two of the numbers from the show, 'To all you ladies now at land', and 'You Gentlemen of England'[41] were produced as separate song sheets. (illus. 4)

As it happens, both of these last songs are not settings by Shield, but by John Wall Callcott (1766 – 1821), a pupil of Haydn and a well-known composer of glees. The text of 'Ye gentlemen of England' was by the Scottish poet Thomas Campbell (1777-1844); also called *The Mariners*, it was typical of the sentimental poetry for which Campbell was known. The text of 'To all you ladies now at land' was by Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorset (1638–1706), and Callcott's new setting was called *The New Mariners* to distinguish it from 'Ye gentlemen of England'.[42] Sackville's text, described as 'Written at Sea, in the First Dutch War (1665), the night before an Engagement', was a re-use of words written during this earlier battle. Both glees were brought out by different publishers, and were published in different places, but Joseph Dale's pair of songs sheets advertised that they had been 'sung at Harrison and Knyvetts concerts, & in the new opera of The Travellers in Switzerland'.

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[39] *Whitehall Evening* Post, 22-25 March 1794; *Morning Post*, 25 March 1794, and elsewhere.
[40] *Oracle and Public Advertiser*, 3 June 1794; registered by Longman and Broderip at Stationer's Hall, 17 March 1794; Michael Kassler, *Music Entries at Stationer's Hall, 1710-1818* (Aldershot: Ashagte, 2004), p.222.
[41] Registered by Joseph Dale at Stationer's Hall, 13 & 18 March 1794, respectively; Kassler, *Music Entries*, p.222.
[42] See the *Morning Chronicle*, 27 February 1794 for some discussion of Shield's use of the tune.

Harrison and Knyvetts Vocal Concerts was a series that took place from 1791 to 1794, and then from 1801 to 1822; they did 'much to foster the cross-fertilization of different genres of vocal music'.[43] As the playbill for Mrs. Mountain's Benefit illustrates, Harrison and Knyvetts had advertising value, for this evening's show included a bracket of music from the concert series. (illus. 5) Both songs continued to be popular, but were now also associated with the opera, and appeared in other contexts, such as the group of 'professional gentleman' from London who came to perform what was advertised as '*The New Mariners* from *The Travellers in Switzerland*' at a public breakfast at a hotel in Southend.[44]

The inclusion of, interest in, and publication of these two songs reflected the British public's then current pre-occupations with the successes and failures of the naval battles of the Seven Years' War, the American Revolutionary War, and the French Revolutionary Wars. They also show the ability of those working in the British theatre to use, re-use and re-contextualize material for purposes other than theatrical entertainment, an ability which Shield exercised to effect elsewhere.[45] *The Travellers in Switzerland* may, on one level, be a superficial load of tosh, but it contained well-established songs which had a current political relevance for the audience, and which in turn circulated as part of the opera's text.

Cataloguing musicians

[43] R. J. S. Stevens, *Recollections of R. J. S. Stevens, an Organist in Georgian London*, ed. Mark Argent (London: Macmillan, 1982), p.294.
[44] *Oracle and Public Advertiser*, 18 July 1794.
[45] See, for example, his use of 'How stands the glass my boys?', a song associated with General Wolfe, but which was reused to effect in *The Siege of Gibraltar*.

Among those 'combined musical and comic talents' that the *Morning Chronicle* commentator claimed had been exploited in the writing of the show, were those of John Fawcett the younger (1768-1837), the creator of the part of Count Fripponi and one of the greatest comedians of the day. (illus. 6) After early years spent in the provinces, he made his Covent Garden debut on 21 September 1791, as Caleb in *He Wou'd be a Soldier*, and went on to acquire - mainly through 'creation' - one of the largest group of roles of any British performer; these included Dr Grigsby in *The World in a Village*, La Gloire in *The Surrender of Calais*, Edward in *The Irishman in London*, and Blinvil in *The Castle of Sorrento*.[46] Fawcett was early on understood to be an excellent burletta singer, Thomas Dutton writing in *The Dramatic Censor* that his strengths lay in 'broad farce and caricature', that 'sentiment infallibly converts into farce and ridicule', and that the ballads he sang were 'tumultuously encored.'[47] These are, of course, all traits which make Fawcett a suitable creator of the part of Fripponi, and which indicate the type of performance that Fawcett gave of the catalogue aria. And the audience was indeed appreciative; it seems to be the 'particularly successful burlesque song' that was encored on the first night.[48]

Like Leporello's aria, Fipponi's is staged for another character's benefit; he addresses it to Dalton, whom he meets. Fripponi's dialogue – and some of the lyrics – are written in a garbled mixture of French and scrambled English spoken with a French accent. The tone of scene is set when he

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[46] Philip H. Highfill, Kalman A. Burnin, and Edward A. Langhans, *Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers and Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660-1800*, 16 Vols (Carbondale: University of Southern Illinois Press, 1973-1993), V (1978), pp.195-204.
[47] Thomas Dutton, *The Dramatic Censor*; *or, Weekly Theatrical Report* (London: J. Roach, 1802).
[48] *London Packet or New Lloyd's Evening Post*, 21-24 February 1794.

bounces onto the stage waving a parasol and singing. (illus. 7) The Count's claim is that he has had to flee from Geneva having run 'thro de body' the lover of a lady, who was seduced by his *canto bello*, and who then died of love for him at that same moment. The Count has appeared at the inn attracted by an English lady, who has shown him 'civilitè [sic] d'amour' on account of his *canto bello*. And it is his *canto bello* we not only hear about, but also hear in the course of this section of dialogue, for the text has three cues for Fripponi to sing, one of which is to an aria 'Ah mio core'. These cues appear to detail aspects Fawcett's performance, for they do not appear in the Larpent copy; they have been added between the preparation of the original text and the publication of the playbook. (illus. 8) The notion of his *canto bello* and role it plays in his seduction technique is, then, well established, when, agreeing with Dalton that his technique is successful with both men and women, launches into the aria.

As in the case of other catalogue arias, the text is, in fact, three catalogues, not just one.[49] The opening sequence lists the countries from which the women he would adore to seduce could come; given in Fripponi's Swiss-English, it takes us from Russia to Mexico. The second catalogue is a list of musicians, with whom he compares his *canto bello*. This is itself roughly divided into in a number smaller lists: singers, followed by composers, and finally instrumentalists, a closing flourish including the cellist John Crosdill, the oboist William Parke, and the flautist Charles Florio. The third list is of fencing masters as his possible rivals in love; Fripponi pretends to a bravery

[49] Henry Bate Dudley, *The Travellers in Switzerland, a comic opera* (London: J. Debrett, 1794), pp.56-57.

he doesn't possess, making the preposterous suggestion that he might 'pink' one of them, and then deliver the major 'flanconade' – a thrust in the side - required to vanquish such swordsmen. The list of fencers is framed by swordplay on Fripponi's part; he draws his sword as he imagines a rival appearing, and then returns it to its scabbard after his victory in an imaginary fight. The catalogue then returns to the list of musicians, adding eight new names of singers, and pairing Mara and Cramer in the final couplet.

For de vomen, I've de plan, Sir,
Oh to charm dem – I'm de man, Sir!
Den I do --- vid such an air,
Ev'ry ting beyond compare!
Be she Spanish,
Or Danish,
Or Russian,
Or Prussian,
Florentine,
Algerine,
American,
Beligican,
Corsican,
Mexican,
Holander,
Polander,
Venetian, Grecian, Portuguese,
Or pretty, prattling Piedmontese;
O, de sweet and lovely creature,
I adore her every feature!

Each soft word of love I utter,
Set her little heart to flutter:
Vid de kiss – her lip so hush is.
Ven I ogle – den she blushes:
If she hear my *canto bello*
Den she cry – Oh charming fellow!

Mara,[50] Banti,[51] Pachierotti,[52]
Billington,[53] sweet Manghotti,[54]

[50] Gertrud Elisabeth Mara (née Schmeling; 1749 –1833), soprano.
[51] Brigida Banti (1757–1806), soprano.
[52] Gaspare Pacchierotti (1740–1821), mezzo-soprano castrato.

Little David,[55] great Marchesi,[56]
Never give such notes to please ye!
Giornovichi,[57] or Giardini,[58]
Bold Pasquali,[59] or Nardini,[60]
Corporalli[61] or Viotti,[62]
Paisiello[63] or Mingotti,[64]
Sarti,[65] Bruni,[66] Boccherini,[67]
Heydn,[68] Pleyel,[69] San Martini,[70]
Gretry,[71] Ditters,[72] fat Jomelli,[73]
Bach,[74] Clementi,[75] or Corelli,[76]
Crosdil[77] wid de rapid bow,
Hautboy Parke,[78] or Florio,[79]
Cannot make so pretty strain
To relieve de lover's pain!

But should rival come to fight me. *(draws his sword.)*
Sa! Sa! To pink him it delight me;
Angelo,[80] D'Eon,[81] La Piere,[82]
Fam'd St. George,[83] or Lindamere,[84]

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[53] Elizabeth Billington (1765 or 1768– 1818).
[54] Unidentified.
[55] Unidentified.
[56] Luigi Marchesi (1754 –1829).
[57] Giovanni Mane Giornovichi (Ivan Mane Jarnović; 1747 –1804), virtuoso violinist-composer
[58] Felice Giardini (1716 –1796), violinist and composer.
[59] Niccolo Pasquali (*c*1718-1757), composer, violinist, theoretician and impresario.
[60] Pietro Nardini (1722-1793), violinist and composer.
[61] Andrea Francisca Caporale (*d.c*1757), cellist and composer; his name appears in the London and Dublin bills as both Corparelli and Carporale.
[62] Giovanni Battista Viotti (1755 –1824), violinist and composer.
[63] Giovanni Paisiello (1740 – 1816), composer.
[64] Regina Mingotti (1722-1808), soprano, composer, impresario; although Mingotti was known as a singer, she did in fact compose in her early years, and her formal portrait shows her with a roll sheet of music, the usual iconographical symbol of a composer.
[65] Giuseppe Sarti (1729 –1802), composer.
[66] Antonio Bartolomeo Bruni (1757 –1821), violinist, conductor, composer.
[67] Luigi Rodolfo Boccherini (1743 –1805), composer, cellist.
[68] Franz Josef Haydn (1732-1809), composer.
[69] Ignace Joseph Pleyel (1757-1831), composer, music publisher and piano maker.
[70] Giovanni Battista Sammartini (c. 1700 –1775), composer.
[71] André Ernest Modeste Grétry (1741 –1813), composer.
[72] Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf (1739 –1799), composer.
[73] Niccolò Jommelli (1714-1774), composer.
[74] Johann Christian Bach (1735 –1782), composer.
[75] Muzio Clementi (1752 –1832), multi-talented.
[76] Arcangelo Corelli (1653 –1713), composer.
[77] John Crosdill (*c*1750–55-1825), cellist.
[78] William Thomas Parke (1761-1847), oboist and composer.
[79] Probably Charles Florio (*c*1768-1819), composer, flautist and singer.
[80] Domenico Angelo (1717–1802), fencing master.
[81] The Chevalier d'Eon (1728 –1810), a soldier, diplomat and transvestite,
[82] Mons La Pierre (*fl*1740-1744), dancer.

Flanconade[85] I push so neat.
Dead I lay him at my feet. *(returns his sword.)*

Den return, like gallant fellow,
To de girl wid *canto bello*!

Viganoni,[86] Morichelli,[87]
Lovetini,[88] Faranelli,[89]
Alligranti,[90] Gabrielli,[91]
Cressentini,[92] Rubinelli,[93]
Never warble so complete!
Mara never sing wid voice so sweet,
Cramer never play de bow so neat!

The evidence suggests, however, that the text was not stable, or at least, was considered capable of variation:

> Fawcett's introducing the name of Incledoni among the singers in his humorous ballad, may certainly be considered complimentary to Incledon - but it is no more than his ability deserves – for there is not a man in the singing catalogue whose vocal powers are equal in the different inflections and intonations, to that performer's.[94]

What the commentator omits is that the joke was close to home; the tenor Charles Incledon (1763–1826) was playing Dalton, the character to which the aria is sung. What Incledon made of his inclusion is not, unfortunately, recorded, but the 1808 printing of the text inserts his name as a part of an extra sequence of names after the second 'canto bello':

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[83] Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges (1745 – 1799), fencing master.
[84] Probably Miss Lindar (*fl*1715-1729), dancer, actress, and singer.
[85] A fencing term for a thrust in the side.
[86] Giuseppe Viganoni, (1753-1822), singer.
[87] Anna Morichelli (1745-1800), soprano.
[88] Giovanni Lovattini (*fl* 1760-1782), singer.
[89] Carlo Broschi, called Farinelli (1705-1782), soprano castrato and theatre manager.
[90] Teresa Maddalena Allegranti, later Mrs Harrison, (c. 1750-c. 1802), singer.
[91] One of the Gabrielli sisters, probably the more famous Caterina (1730-1796), soprano.
[92] Girolamo Crescentini (1762-1846), mezzo castrato.
[93] Giovanni Rubinelli (1753-1829), soprano castrato.
[94] *World*, 1 March 1794.

Soft Bianchi,[95] Brahamini,[96]
Naldi,[97] rosy-cheek'd Rauzzini,[98]
Dickensoni,[99]
Fat Siboni,[100]
Inceldoni.[101]

Whatever text was in fact sung at this point in 1794, the words above must be exclusive to the 1808 staging; Mrs Bianchi did not make her debut until 1798, and Siboni, who sang successfully at the Opera House until 1809, did not arrive until 1806. And as we can see, Incledon's name was not the only local one to appear in the piece; John Braham and Maria Dickons were similarly included and Italianised.

Dudley's song exhibits many of the textual and musical characteristics identified by John Platoff as typical of the genre; in fact, it is not dissimilar in number of lines, layout and structure to Platoff's 'extreme example of a fully fledged catalogue aria' with its use of several catalogues of discrete subjects, long lines followed by shorter, often more fragmentary ones used to build both the pace and the comedy, and a tag line to close.[102] Here Dudley uses longer lines to articulate the structure of the piece by framing each list with them. But the musical structure broadly follows what, by 1794, would not have seemed surprising: a sotto voce orchestral opening (ex.1); a slow almost languid first section in lines 1 to 26 which lead to a fermata on *canto bello*

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[95] Probably Mrs Francesco Bianchi (1776-1858), née Jane Jackson; she married Bianchi in 1800, and sang at the King's Theatre under her married name, until Bianchi's suicide in 1810. She then married John Lacy, singing as Mrs Bianchi Lacy after 1812.
[96] John Braham (c. 1774 –1856), tenor.
[97] Giuseppe Naldi (1770-1820), singer.
[98] Venanzio Rauzzini (1746 –1810), castrato, composer.
[99] Maria Dickons, née Poole (1776-1833), soprano.
[100] Giuseppe Siboni (1780 –1839), tenor, conductor, director.
[101] Charles Incledon (1763–1826), tenor.
[102] John Platoff, 'Catalogue Arias and the "Catalogue Aria"', Stanley Sadie, ed., *Wolfgang Amadè Mozart: Essays on his Life and his Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p.299.

(ex.2); patter creating a much-quickened pace for lines 27 to 42 followed by a second patter section in lines 43 to 48 (ex. 3); an abbreviated return to the first two sections in lines 49 to 58 ending in a repeat of the *canto bello* fermata and finally, the epigram with a return to the musician's patter (ex.4).

The named composer of the opera, William Shield, was northern-born, and after an early training with Charles Avison of Newcastle and some work in Scarborough and Durham, he came to London, where he played violin and then viola for 18 years in the Opera House orchestra. He did so even after being appointed composer at Covent Garden in 1784 in succession to Michael Arne; he would remain attached to the playhouse until 1797. This career path gave him an unrivalled access to the latest operatic music from Italy as it arrived in London, although his horizon was of course limited to what was shipped in. Just prior to the 1791-92 season, however, he had a row with Covent Garden manager, Thomas Harris, and left for Italy, to 'study the mode of teaching singing for which purpose he had lessons from the best masters at Rome.'[103] He was back at Covent Garden for the 1792-93 season, and by the time of the opera, the composer Stephen Storace, who was present one 'evening to prosper the journey of the Traveller in Switzerland' is reported to have quipped 'that since Shield travelled through Switzerland to Italy, he has improved a talent before inestimable for simplicity and taste.'[104] Even before he departed for Italy, though, Shield had shown himself to be as fluent and as at home with the Italianate arias as he was writing (or harmonizing or re-texting) ballads; dramaturgically, he did not make a habit of assigning them

[103] *Monthly Mirror*, cited by Highfill et al, *A Biographical Dictionary*, XIII (1991), p.362.
[104] *World*, 1 March 1794.

to the aristocracy and the simpler tunes to the lower classes, but allocated both types of song to both types of character.

The source of the music for 'For de vomen, I've de plan, Sir' is unclear. Dudley's concerns about 'some irregular, and uncouth numbers' caused by a score with 'compiled music' emphasizes the use of pre-existent music either by Shield or by others; the former's operas usually included at least some borrowed or adapted tunes. From the nature of the catalogue aria's structure, it is hard to believe that the music was borrowed from elsewhere, but although Roger Fiske declares that the music was 'undoubtedly his', there is no direct evidence to support this attribution.[105] Before Shield's Italian trip, a proportion of the musical numbers in his operas were clearly attributed and were already in circulation, either in printed sources or from works he experienced at the Opera House. After his return to London, the issue becomes more complex, for there is no record of what he encountered abroad, and he may have been inspired to include the catalogue aria by any number of examples. But it is also possible that, well up in the affairs of the Opera House, he may have seen Da Ponte's score of *Don Giovanni*, always assuming Da Ponte's claim to have been in possession of a copy to be true. And there is another route, a curious circumstance that also leads to Mozart's aria as a possible inspiration. In 1790, Shield wrote the music for a show entitled *The Czar*, which failed dismally – Fiske describes this as Shield's 'nadir'– which included the duet 'Should worldly cares oppressing', which the published version attributed to Mozart, and which proves to be 'La ci darem' from *Don*

[105] Fiske, *English Theatre Music*, p.554.

Giovanni. As Fiske points out, *Don Giovanni* was not then published, so Shield must have had access to at least some of the *Don Giovanni* music.[106] Like *The Czar*, so like *The Travellers in Switzerland*; Dudley and Shield may have drawn inspiration from Da Ponte's 'Madamina, il catalogo è questo'. One notable point of possible influence can be found in Fripponi's listing of the countries from which he has drawn his supposed – but to us obviously false – list of conquests.

Catalogues, Parodies, Dilettanti

As a genre, the catalogue aria persisted in the English theatre to reach its apogee in Executioner Ko-Ko's little list in Gilbert and Sullivan's opera *The Mikado*, a number that is as much a parody of the genre as it is a list of names. Here, the practice of including contemporary references in its performance finds resonances with Fawcett's interpretation of Dudley's and Shield's 'little list'; doubtless all the theatre's performers hoped that they, too, would rate a mention with their named Italianized as Incledon's had been. The curious aspect of 'For de vomen, I've de plan, Sir', however, is that it relies on its comedy not just as a list of Italian names, but also as a list of recognizable musicians. And as far as the singers went, William Shield would have known all of them, met them, or seen them on stage: Gertrud Mara, Brigida Banti, Gasparo Pachierotti, Elizabeth Billington, and Luigi Marchesi all performed while Shield was in the Opera House orchestra. The composers may or may not have been known to him – he probably met J. C. Bach, and certainly knew

[106] Fiske, *English Theatre Music,* p.541.

Haydn, who went to a performance of his opera *The Woodman* and found the Covent Garden orchestra 'sleepy',[107] but he obviously did not have dealings with Corelli. The orchestral players all must have at least been acquaintances; Crosdill and Florio played in the same pit with him.

It was, however, one thing for an Opera House audience to recognize the names in the catalogue aria, but quite another for Dudley's and Shield's playhouse audience to follow suit. Knowing something of the musicians' performing styles or biographies may not have been essential in understanding the jokes, but it certainly would have added to the audience's enjoyment of the performance. This points once again to the fact that London audiences were not exclusive to the different venues, that the Opera House performers were celebrities to the extent that the characteristics and quirks of their performances were common knowledge, and that, on the lowest level of comedy, simply reading out a list of Italian names in bad English to a London audience was itself enough to add an extra dimension of unsubtle parody to the already rollicking nature of the text. In listing musicians, it is also parodying the catalogue aria itself, showing how silly – if entertaining - the practice of listing anything is when it consists of musicians who are known to the audience in the theatre.

But there was also another interpretation of Dudley's and Shield's catalogue, a contemporary one in which its text could been seen as targeted criticism of the elite audience, for it was noted that Fawcett

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[107] H. C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn Chronicle and Works: Haydn in England 1791-1795* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), pp.113-114.

> …. was particularly successful in a burlesque song, ridiculing the common cant of the *dilettanti*, who sing out names at random, and enter with rhapsody into the nature of merits, which they never conceive, nor are for an instant able to feel.[108]

The writer in *The Star*, then, positions the aria as an example of a playhouse author commenting on the pretentions the type of dilettante associated with the high culture that could be found not only at the Opera House, but in the salons and the musical gatherings of the capital. It was type that a London audience would have recognized immediately, for a version of the dilettante had been institutionalized in the Society of Dilettantes, founded around 1734. Intended to support the study of ancient Greek and Roman art, and to reform public taste, it became a major influence on the rise of British neo-classicism, and in the 1740s, supported the Italian Opera. Its members were ideal subjects for satire, and in the 1801 caricature, 'A Cognocenti contemplating ye Beauties of ye Antique' (illus. 9), James Gillray deftly parodies Joshua Reynolds's 'Sir William Hamilton and Society Dilettante' of the 1780s; both pictures have Sir William Hamilton at the centre, but while the former shows the actual members of the Society of Dilettantes, Gillray shows Sir William inspecting the bust of his wife Emma Hamilton, then in the throes of an affair with Admiral Horatio Nelson. Gillray seems to suggest that Hamilton was so enamoured of the antique that he neglected his wife and could not appreciate her unless she was re-cast as an ancient bust. Hamilton's implied self-

[108] *Star*, 24 February 1794.

absorption is expressed in the satirical use of the word 'cognocenti' [sic], which implies that as far as his wife is concerned, Hamilton is anything but.

Dudley's pot-shot at musical dilettanti has a similar starting point; a dilettante demonstrates that he knows nothing of that which he publicly claims knowledge. Count Fripponi's method of throwing 'out names at random' suggests a collection – a catalogue – of names collected – catalogued - for no other reason than he has heard them somewhere before. Indeed, so randomly are they thrown that the Italianization of Braham, Dickons and Incledon now suggests that he is totally ignorant of the basic differences between Italian and English singers, and ignorant of Braham's Jewish heritage. Through Fripponi's artistic pretentions, delusions, and outright falsehoods, Dudley and Shield offer us another layer of meaning in 'For de vomen, I've de plan, Sir' in, .for ultimately, the opera's authors have invited the audience to recognize their own pretentiousness in the vain name-dropping of the character onstage.[109]

[109] My thanks to Pierpaolo Polzonetti for some timely advice, and to Alan Howard, Joe Lockwood, and Roger Savage.