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NEWSLETTER

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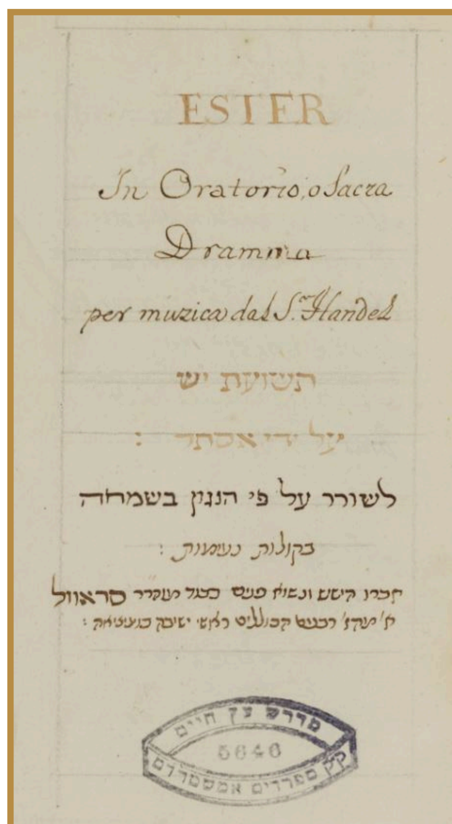
The Jews and Handel in Eighteenth-Century Amsterdam

Paul G. Feller-Simmons

In a recent edition of this Newsletter, I presented preliminary findings related to my dissertation research concerning Jewish-Christian musical exchanges in the eighteenth-century Netherlands.[1] My brief article focused on a collection of songs prepared by an anonymous hazzan (cantor) for use at the Amsterdam Sephardic Synagogue, an institution colloquially known as the "Esnoga." This compendium of cantorial music unveiled numerous contrafacts whose roots could be traced back to opera seria arias composed by musicians linked to the Imperial Court of Vienna, such as Giuseppe Bonno (1711–1788) and Johann Adolph Hasse (1699–1783). The article argued that the selection of such melodic material was congruous with the self-narratives of and social position enjoyed by the Sephardic community of Amsterdam. In a similar vein, I now pivot to show that the presence of three Hebrew manuscript renditions of George Frideric Handel's oratorio *Esther*, produced within the same Jewish community, shed light upon their signaling of cosmopolitan identity, their networks of musical dissemination, and, more generally, the Jewish reception of Handel outside of England.[2]

The analysis presented here underscores the dual role of the translations under examination: firstly, as indicative of the Sephardic community's affinity for Handel's compositions, and secondly, as vehicles with the potential to embody facets of Jewish spirituality. On a fundamental level, an oratorio based on the biblical story of Esther is an obvious choice from the array of plausible oratorios available to a Jewish community in the eighteenth century. The explication for this assertion resides in the profound significance of the narrative within Jewish faith. The Book of Esther assumes a central role as the cornerstone of Purim, the commemoration of the deliverance of the Jews in ancient Persia. Observances intrinsic to Purim encompass a medley of convivial activities, including drinking, feasting, donning costumes, and collective revelry. In this sense, the proposition of an artistically conceived rendition of the scriptural story is coherent with the celebration's spirit.[3] The appropriateness of an oratorio based on Esther for the Purim celebration, nonetheless, does not suffice to fully account for the prolific dissemination of translated adaptations of Handel's work in Amsterdam. A comprehensive account necessitates a nuanced grasp of the Sephardic proclivities, where the confluence of Handel's compositional aesthetics and the scriptural account resonates with their inclinations.


ESTER

In Oratorio, o Sacra

Dramma

per muzica dal S.r Handel

תשועת יש

על ידי אסתר :

לשורר על פי הנגון בשמחה

בקולות נעימות :

Figure 1. Title piece of 'Saraval's version: רתסא ידי לע לארשי תעושת (lit. Israel's salvation by Esther). The rabbi's name appears at the bottom as לווארס (EH 47 B 07)

To my knowledge, until recently, musicologists were only aware of two Hebrew translations of Handel's oratorio libretti, both of *Esther*, within the Amsterdam Jewish Community's collections. These two manuscripts are preserved in the Sephardic Synagogue's repository, the Ets Haim Library (EH).[4] Emerging from the scrutiny of these manuscripts, scholarly perspectives have crystallized around the attribution of the oratorio's Hebrew renditions to the Italian Rabbi Jacob Raphael Saraval (c.1707–1782).[5] It has been posited that this translation, presumably produced

1. Paul G. Feller-Simmons, "Opera Seria Contrafacts at the Amsterdam Esnoga and Dutch-Jewish Cosmopolitanism," *Newsletter of the Society for Eighteenth-Century Music* 39 (2022): 1; 8–10.

2. Central to this article, however, is a deliberate detachment from discussions regarding the conjectural roles of Handel's oratorios as conduits for theological disputation or of anti-Jewish undertones; see Michael Marissen, "Rejoicing against Judaism in Handel's Messiah," *The Journal of Musicology* 24, no. 2 (2007): 167–194; John H. Roberts, "False Messiah," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 63, no. 1 (2010): 45–97; Alexander L. Ringer, "Handel and the Jews," *Music & Letters* 42, no. 1 (1961): 17–29.

3. It is pertinent to observe that while some Jewish traditions prepare satirical dramatizations that reenact Esther's story, as a common practice, this tradition is not uniformly observed among the *Sephardim*.

4. The Ets Haim database describes the manuscripts as "[Hebrew Translation of the Libretto of the Oratorio Esther by Jacob Raphael Saraval and the Story of Judith, Copied by David Franco Mendes. Amsterdam Ab. 1780]," EH 47 B 07, Ets Haim/Livraria Montezinos; and "[Hebrew Translation of the Libretto of the Oratorio Esther]" (Amsterdam, c 1780), EH 47 A 29, Ets Haim/Livraria Montezinos. From this point on, I will refer to the Ets Haim Library as EH.

5. See Israel Adler, *Musical Life and Traditions of the Portuguese Jewish Community of Amsterdam in the XVIIIth Century*, Yuval Monograph Series 1 (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1974), 30.

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From the Editor

Michael Vincent

The SECM Newsletter is published twice yearly, in Fall and Spring. Submissions in the following categories are encouraged:

- News of recent accomplishments from members of the society (publications, presentations, awards, performances, promotions, etc.);
- Reviews of performances of 18th-century music;
- Reviews of books, editions, or recordings of 18th-century music;
- Conference reports;
- Dissertations in progress on 18th-century music;
- Upcoming conferences and meetings;
- Calls for papers and manuscripts;
- Research reports and research resources;
- Grant opportunities.

Contributions should be submitted as an attachment to an e-mail message (preferably in Microsoft Word format) to the SECM Newsletter editor (michael.vincent@unf.edu). Submissions must be received by August 1 for the Fall issue and by February 1 for the Spring issue. Claims for missing issues of the Newsletter must be requested within six months of publication. Annotated discographies (in the format given in the inaugural issue, October 2002) will also be accepted and will be posted on the SECM web site.

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President's Message

Drew Edward Davies

The eighteenth century was a cosmopolitan age, yet historically the diversity of the people who experienced, endured, and enabled that cosmopolitanism has attracted somewhat less attention than the artistic works produced. Thus it is exciting to announce that in Fall 2023 a bibliography of scholarly articles and electronic resources with topical content related to First Nations and Indigenous people, African heritage, the ramifications of Atlantic slavery, gender, cultural exchange, and building more inclusive curricula will debut on the SECM website. These topics expand, enrich, and reorient aspects of existing scholarship and compel us not only to bring new perspectives and knowledge to our scholarship, but to become increasingly mindful of how we teach eighteenth-century music, history, and culture. I wish to thank Laurel Zeiss for compiling this practical annotated bibliography and to the SECM colleagues, including Alison DeSimone, Kimary Fick, Olga Sánchez-Kisielewska, Sarah Eyerly, Poundie Bernstein, and others who suggested content. Indeed, I am impressed by the amount of scholarship current SECM members have produced in these areas, and I hope the bibliography proves inspirational for the creation of new, inclusive scholarly work that may be added to future iterations of the bibliography.

Having just returned from the Tenth Biennial SECM conference at the University of North Texas in Denton, I feel intellectually motivated by the quality of the papers presented, discussions had, and music heard. I wish to thank Rebecca Geoffroy-Schwinden for her impeccable planning as the local arrangements chair and her students Chandler Hall and Peter Kohanski for highly professional help throughout. I also thank Kimary Fick for chairing the Program Committee, along with members Dianne Goldman, Christina Fuhrmann, and Erick Arenas. Currently a senior at Austin College, Megan Kiel received the Murray Award for Student Travel so that she could attend her first SECM conference. Finally, Aimee Brown of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney, has received the Student Paper Prize for her paper "Eighteenth-century French dance for Musicians – A New Notation System." The committee recognized Aimee's innovative methodology and the potential impact her dance notation system could have on performance practices and future scholarship. Congratulations to Megan and Aimee!

I hope everyone has a healthy and productive Fall!

Fall 2023 Member News

Bertil van Boer was elected as a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Music in May.

Bruce Alan Brown's essay "The Fortunes of French Dance in Maria Theresia's Vienna, 1752–1765" has been published in the volume *La danse française et son rayonnement (1600–1800): Nouvelles sources, nouvelles perspectives*, ed. Marie-Françoise Bouchon, Rebecca Harris-Warrick, and Jean-Noël Laurenti (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2023).

Paulino Capdepón is a Full Professor of Musicology at the Spanish University of Castilla-La Mancha and has recently published the following:

"La Real Capilla de Madrid durante el magisterio del compositor italiano Francisco Corselli (1705–1778)", in Paulino Capdepón and Luis Antonio González (eds.): *Entre lo italiano y lo español: músicas, influencias mutuas y espacios compartidos* (Madrid: Tirant lo Blanch, 2022) 251-305. ISBN: 978-84-18802-64-5

Padre Antonio Soler (1729–1783). Villancicos, 9 vols. Colección Investigación y Patrimonio Musical (Cuenca: Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2023). ISBN: 978-84-9044-555-6

Ramón Garay (1761–1823): Obra musical sacra en latín, 2 vols. (Madrid: Fundación María Cristina Masaveu Peterson, 2023) ISBN: 978-84-09-49588-7.

In 2022 **Stewart Carter** was made a "Life Member" for lifetime service to the field by the Society for Seventeenth Century Music. He was also awarded the Curt Sachs Award for lifetime service to the field of musical instruments by the American Musical Instrument Society. His article "Early Performances of Haydn's *Creation* in the American South: The Moravian Connection" was published in *Becoming American: Moravians and Their Neighbors, 1722–1822*, ed. Ulrike Wiethaus and Grant P. McAllister. (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2023). His article "Trumpets in China's Qing Dynasty: Form, Function, and Terminology" was published in *Proceedings of Meetings on Acoustics* 49 (2022), https://doi.org/10.1121/2.0001692.

Koma Donworth received her PhD in historical musicology July 18, 2023 from the University of Birmingham (UK). The dissertation is titled "English Musical Antiquarianism in the Long Eighteenth Century: Religio-Political and Sociological Undercurrents."

Paul Feller-Simmons was awarded Northwestern University's Presidential Fellowship, the most prestigious competitive fellowship awarded to graduate students by the university. He was also awarded the Leo Baeck Fellowship for research into the history and culture of German-speaking Jewry, the Rolf und Ursula Schneider-Stiftung (Herzog August Bibliothek), the AMS Eugene K. Wolf Travel Fund Award for European Research, and the SSCM Diversity and Inclusion Research Award.

Kimary Fick's article "Aesthetic expression *an das Clavier:* performing character in the keyboard music of C. P. E. Bach," appearing this year in *Early Music*, is available as an advance article (https://doi.org/10.1093/em/caad026). Her article "The *Frauenzimmer* as Sensoryscape: Forming an Enlightened Feminine Identity" was published in *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 17/1 (2022, https://doi.org/10.1086/720813https://doi.org/10.1086/720813).

Guido Olivieri has edited the volume *Marchitelli, Mascitti e la musica strumentale napoletana fra Sei e Settecento* (LIM, 2023), which includes his essay announcing a newly discovered collection of sonatas by the Neapolitan violinist Pietro Marchitelli. For the volume *La formazione musicale nel Meridione fra Viceregno e Regno* (Turchini Edizioni, 2022) he has contributed a chapter on the professional training of instrumental players in 18th-century Naples. In collaboration with the Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History at the University of Texas at Dallas and the Center for the Art and Architectural History of Port Cities "La Capraia," he has organized and chaired the conference Soundscapes of Naples: From the Medieval to the Early Modern (Naples, June 8–10). Over the summer he has also given several talks (Naples, Salerno, Milan) and presented at the 16th Congress of the International Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (Rome, July 4–6) and at Tosc@ (Lisbon, July 6–8). He has collaborated with the ensemble Accademia dell'Annunciata on the recordings of Francesco Durante's "Concerti per archi" (Arcana A540). In 2023 Olivieri was the recipient of a Faculty Development Award from the College of Fine Arts of the University of Texas at Austin. He is member of the Advisory Board of the journal *Studi musicali*.

Since her retirement from Cornell University in 2021, **Rebecca Harris-Warrick** has remained actively engaged as a scholar. A book she co-edited and to which she contributed, *La Danse française et son rayonnement (1600–1800)*, was just published by Classiques Garnier. Articles by her have also appeared in *The Fashioning of French Opera, 1672–1791* (Brepols, 2023), *The Operas of Rameau: Genesis, Staging, Reception* (Ashgate, 2022), *Histoire de l'opéra français du Roi-Soleil à la Révolution* (Fayard, 2021) and the *Dictionnaire de l'Opéra de Paris sous l'Ancien Régime* (4 vols., Classiques Garnier, 2019–2020). In the past two years she has given lectures in the Juilliard 415 program, participated in panels and given pre-opera talks at the Boston Early Music Festival, and collaborated with Opera Lafayette as a musicological advisor and in various types of outreach. SECM members might be interested to know that OL will be mounting Mouret's comic opera *Les Fêtes de Thalie* in Washington, DC and NYC in May, 2024, conducted by Christophe Rousset and directed by Claire van Kampen—the first performances of this opera since its many revivals at the Paris Opera during the 18th century.

Mary Caton Lingold's new book is now available from UVA Press. *African Musicians in the Atlantic World: Legacies of Sound and Slavery*. The book bridges African diaspora studies, music studies, and transatlantic and colonial American literature to trace the lineage of African and African diasporic musical life in the early modern period. It is available at the publisher's website: https://www.upress.virginia.edu/title/5826/

Luca Lévi Sala has edited a critical edition: *Muzio Clementi: Musical Characteristics for Harpsichord (Piano) Op. 19, 1 "Fantaisie avec Variations" for Piano Op. 48 and 12 Monferrinas for Piano Op. 49*, Bologna, Ut Orpheus (Opera Omnia, Italian National Edition IX.2, CCE 4), xli–143, ISMN: 979-0-2153-2613-2.

Michael Vincent's article "Chevalier in Paris: Musical Cosmopolitanism on Film" was published in *Age of Revolutions*, available at https://ageofrevolutions.com/2023/09/11/chevalier-in-paris-musical-cosmopolitanism-on-film/.

2022/23 Financial Report

The Society for Eighteenth-Century Music finished the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, with $953.85 net revenue over expenses (compared to $4,020.41 for the previous year).

The financial position of the Society continues to be healthy, with $27,252.05 in assets as at June 30, 2023 (compared to $26,798.20 for the previous year.) For 2023, membership has reached its highest level since 2010, with 123 members, compared to 116 at this time last year.

Detailed financial statements for the Society are available on our website at: https://secm.org/misc/2022-23-financials.pdf

Announcements

To mark her retirement from Cornell University, Rebecca Harris-Warrick conceived and organized a performance entitled *The Pleasures of the Quarrel*, that was performed at Cornell on March 27, 2022 and is now accessible on YouTube. Directed and choreographed by Catherine Turocy, with professional singers, a mixture of professional and student dancers and a student orchestra, this mash-up stages excerpts from three key works produced during the "Quarrel of the Buffoons" that roiled the Parisian operatic world from 1752 to 1754. Who will prevail, the queen's arriviste Italian comedians, with their vulgar but sparkling intermezzi? Or the king's official French troupe, with its mythological stories and expressive ballet? Could the upstart Opéra Comique provide the path to harmony between the factions? To find out, go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A3vWGyjuWDs or search within YouTube for *The Pleasures of the Quarrel*. The video was professionally edited and is fully subtitled in English. This scintillating and humorous production is available for revival at other institutions; for more information contact RHW (rh14@cornell.edu).

Halvor K. Hosar is currently working on an article on a traveling flute virtuoso that impersonated Johann Baptist Wanhal during the late eighteenth century. If you are working with archival material from courts and monasteries from the period 1770-1800, Dr. Hosar kindly asks you to check for any visits from a Wanhal (or any close variant thereof) in your records. He shall be very grateful for any findings reported to halvor.hosar@musik.uu.se.

Goldoni's "Most Dangerous Woman"

Cameron Davis Steuart

Carlo Goldoni's decision to bestow the appellation of "the most dangerous woman" in all his plays to Mirandolina of *La Locandiera* often comes as a surprise to modern readers.[1] Most of all because she does not seem that dangerous, especially when she is held up against other characters, such as Beatrice of *L'uomo prudente* who attempts to poison her husband. In Goldoni's Venice, however, murder was not nearly so menacing as the status of Mirandolina, a young woman with her own money who felt no compulsion to marry and could therefore toy with suitors as she saw fit. The possibility of such a woman operating outside of the patriarchal structure of the family unit scandalized audiences and led Goldoni to do a great deal of apologizing and explaining in his preface to *La Locandiera*. This article expands the criteria of Goldoni's search for his "most dangerous woman" to include his operatic output. In particular, I will examine two roles (Cintia in *Il mondo alla roversa o sia Le donne che comandano* and Eleonora in *Le donne vendicate*) written for the alto Serafina Penna. These roles present a challenge to traditional gender roles that goes far beyond the situation presented in *La Locandiera*. Also of interest are the ways in which Goldoni does and does not attempt to reform these aberrant women.

That characters of this nature are found in operas, as opposed to spoken comedies, is not surprising. In his survey of Goldoni's operatic output Ted Emery comments that "the operas are ... the artistic and ideological opposite of the *commedie*: less realistic than the plays, they often have fantastic or fanciful plots and a playful, punning style ... they give freer rein to disorder and incorporate a more negative vision of the world."[2] This tendency toward the anarchic couples with the traditional association of women singing with sexual immorality to make opera an ideal vehicle for deviant female characters.[3]

Although opera allowed Goldoni more freedom than spoken comedy it should be noted that his conception of theatre did not permit the portrayal of characters that he considered to be truly immoral. Goldoni sought to entertain and, more importantly, to instruct an audience that he considered very receptive to the characters and situations presented on stage. For example, in the preface to *Il tutore* (Bettinelli, 1752) Goldoni explains that he decided to avoid presenting actual theft on stage because he worried that audience members would imitate what they saw, even if they later witnessed the thief being brought to justice.[4] Goldoni therefore moderated deviant characters and was careful to always reform or correct any bad behavior by the end of the drama. This is the approach to theatre that Goldoni lays out in his prefaces, it is not, however, consistently observed in his theatrical output. The two operas considered here break this mold by presenting women who not only avoid dominance by men but dominate men themselves. While this reversal of traditional gender roles is brutally corrected in *Il mondo alla roversa* the subversion of *Le donne vendicate* is left unresolved. The reason why Goldoni decided to venture outside of his own boundaries in these two operas likely has to do with the elevation of Serafina Penna to the role of *prima donna di mezzo carattere* in the autumn of 1750.

Penna stands out among the leading ladies of comic opera for two primary reasons. First, she was an alto. While there are occasionally parts written explicitly for altos in comic opera in the middle of the eighteenth century, they are rarely leading ladies. Penna also stands out among her contemporaries as a pioneer of the recently developed role *di mezzo carattere*. This role category, which blends elements of the tragic and the comic into a single character, was developed by Goldoni for singers like Penna in the decade leading up to his *La buona figliuola* (Rome, 1760), which introduced the role *di mezzo carattere* to the larger European circuit.[5]

1. "Non aver io dipinto, una donna più lusinghiera, più pericolosa di questa." Carlo Goldoni, preface to *La Locandiera* (Florence: Paperini, 1753), reprinted in Giuseppe Ortolani, ed., *Opere di Carlo Goldoni* (Verona: Mondadori, 1935-56), IV:779.

2. Ted Emery, *Goldoni as Librettist: Theatrical Reform and the Drammi Giocosi per Musica* (New York: Peter Lang Press, 1991), 77.

3. Martha Feldman, "The Courtesan's Voice: Petrarchan Lovers, Pop Philosophy, and Oral Traditions" in *The Courtesan's Arts: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Martha Feldman and Bonnie Gordon (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 105–8.

4. For an expanded discussion of Goldoni's conceptualization of the edifying aims of theater that is focused on gender dynamics see Maggie Günsberg, *Playing with Gender: The Comedies of Goldoni* (Leeds, UK: Northern Universities Press, 2001), 101-4.

5. For more on the development of this role category see Cameron Steuart, "Carlo Goldoni and the Singers of the *dramma giocoso per musica*" (PhD diss., University of Georgia, 2023).

This type of character could sing in both the comic and the serious style, they could employ the cunning of a maid and emote as intensively as a *prima donna*, more importantly, though, they could also explore new territory that was available to neither the purely comic nor the purely serious characters.

This is especially relevant insofar as it allows the role *di mezzo carattere* to operate outside of the gender boundaries that are built into the standard role categories. Serious women derive their status from their connection to powerful men, primarily in the form of fathers and husbands. Their ability to share in this power is conditional upon their participation in a patriarchal social structure that demands they be modest, chaste, and submissive. Comic female characters, on the other hand, are slightly freer to flaunt these traditional feminine virtues because they are less directly connected to powerful men. The degree of freedom enjoyed by these women tends to correlate directly with their distance from power. Female servants and peasants still face reprisals, however, including physical violence (e.g., "Batti, batti, o bel Masetto"), should they stray too far from accepted behavior. The role *di mezzo carattere* opens up the space between the lady and her maid and allows for the possibility of women that possess considerable social status and, at the same time, talk back to men as if they didn't. This subversive version of the female role *di mezzo carattere* seems to be specifically crafted for Penna because, as will be discussed below, Goldoni turned very much in the opposite direction when their period of collaboration came to an end.

In *Il mondo alla roversa* (music by Baldassare Galuppi) Penna plays Cintia who is one of three "femine dominanti" that rule over an island where men are bound by chains and made to work as slaves. This farcical story is set in a distant and obscure island, thus making it a safe location for exploring dangerous ideas. In her first aria Cintia proudly proclaims her disdain for men. Galuppi's setting of this aria responds to the confident tone of the text with a march. The 2/4 meter, dotted rhythms, and arpeggiatic motion of the vocal line connect Cintia to the traditionally masculine realm of martial authority (see ex. 1).

Se gli uomini sospirano,	If men sigh,
che cosa importa a me?	what does it matter to me?
Che pianghino, che crepino	They cry, they perish
ma vuo' che stiano lì.	but man wants women to treat him so.
Anch'essi se potessero	And men would treat us that waytoo
con noi farian così.	If they were able.
Laddove delle femine	Where the kingdom of women
il regno ancor non v'è	Is not yet established
la tirania dei perfidi	the tyranny of the traitors
purtroppo s'infierì;	unfortunately abides;
ed or di quelle misere	and now I enact vengeance
vendetta si fa qui.	for that miserable lot.

Shortly after this aria, Cintia initiates the sequence of events that leads to the dissolution of their all-female government when she quarrels with another of the dominant women who she catches flirting with her slave and lover Giacinto. This dispute leads to an election wherein a single woman will be chosen to rule over the island. The election ends in disappointment, however, when no woman is willing to vote for any other. Eventually, the relations between the dominant women dissolve to such an extent that they try to kill each other. This infighting leaves the door open for a band of men who arrive on the island in Act 2 to seize power and end the rule of women.

In Act 3 each of the women acknowledges their inability to rule and apologizes for their cruelty. Cintia's duet with Giacinto is especially humiliating as she begs to maintain some of her former dignity only to be brought low by his insistent threats to leave her (see ex. 2). Eventually, she gives in to his demands and switches to a pathetic vocal line in the singing style that contrast vividly with the forceful music of her first aria (see ex. 3).[6] The text of this section also betrays a reversion to an infantile state in which Cintia compares her lover to a child's doll ("Caro il mio bambolo / per carità").

The resolution of this plot thus adheres to Goldoni's conception of theater as a tool that can correct subversive behavior. Cintia's initial confidence and independence would have been threatening to contemporary Venetian sensibilities and so it is inevitable that she would be reformed by the conclusion of the drama. Still, the representation of a matriarchal society, even if it is only temporary and bound to be undone, is striking. Such an unsettling fantasy could only happen on the other side of the world.

Le donne vendicate (set by Gioacchino Cocchi, music lost), on the other hand, is set in the very real city of Bologna. In addition, the lack of a corrective restoration of patriarchal authority at the end of the opera makes for a much more dangerous reimagining of social organization. This opera opens with a group of three men and three women singing and drinking together. When the women leave two of the men admit that they are quite enthralled by these women, and by women in general. The third, named Volpino (Fox), says that he doesn't trust women and enjoys manipulating them. This diatribe is followed by an aria that fulfills the prophecy of Cintia's first aria in *Il mondo alla roversa*, proving that men would, given the chance, mistreat women in much the same manner.

6. This topic, though much discussed, is often poorly defined. Sarah Day-O'Connell forcefully argues that the semiotic core of the singing style resides in comprehensibility. She also underlines the ways in which this topic incorporates elements of "the feminine, the amateur, and the domestic," all of which resonate with the use of this topic in the moment of Cintia's submission to traditional gender roles. See Sarah Day-O'Connell, "The Singing Style," in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, ed., Danuta Mirka (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 238-58.

Ex. 1. Galuppi, "Se gli uomini sospirano," mm. 29–34

Ex. 2. Galuppi, "Eccomi al vostro piede," mm. 19–24

Ex. 3. Galuppi, "Eccomi al vostro piede," mm. 57–63

Donne belle che pigliate,	Beautiful women that ensnare you,
io già mai vi crederò.	I will never be fooled.
Via piangete, via pregate,	Cry and beseech as you will,
io di voi mi riderò.	I will mock you.
«Io vi voglio tanto bene.»	"I love you so dearly."
Maledette, non vi credo.	Be damned, I don't believe you.
«Per voi caro vivo in pene.»	"For you dear I live in pain."
Maledette, vi conosco.	Be damned, I see through you.
«Ahi che moro mio tesoro!	"Oh, how I die my treasure!
Quanto affetto mio diletto.»	Such affection, my delight."
Galeotte, disgraziate,	Wretched galley-slaves,
non mi state a corbellar.	Do not harass me.

The rest of the opera revolves around Volpino's harassment of the three female characters. In the beginning of Act 2 the women discuss how to take their revenge. During this meeting Eleonora, played by Penna, takes the opportunity to mock Volpino by parroting his first aria with her own commentary interspersed. In particular, she draws attention to the instability of his voice, saying that "la voce assotigliava; cantava or da soprano, or da tenore" (his voice thinned, singing now soprano, now tenor). In the margins of the libretto for this scene the indication "canta in falsetto" (sing in falsetto) is printed. Eleonora's use of a voice that is much higher than her own in imitation of Volpino is likely meant to emasculate him and foreshadow the outcome of their impending duel.

The swordfight begins when one of the men, Roccaforte (stronghold) challenges Volpino to defend the women's honor. Unfortunately, the brave Roccaforte is easily vanquished by Volpino. It is at this point that Eleonora takes up the sword herself and promptly disarms Volpino. This leads to the conclusion of the opera which sees Volpino with a leash around his neck repenting profusely for his mistreatment of the women. And that is how it ends. There is no restoration of patriarchal authority and Eleonora makes no apologies.

Tellingly, this opera was never revived.[7] *Il mondo alla roversa*, on the other hand, enjoyed no less than twenty-five subsequent productions. While there are many factors that dictate whether or not an opera will be revived it seems likely that subject matter was an important factor in deciding the very different fates of these two operas, which were performed by the same cast in the same theater only months apart.[8] While *Il mondo alla roversa* might seem more radical in its presentation of a world turned upside down, it is not

7. There is an intermezzo of the same title based on Goldoni's libretto that was set by Niccolò Piccinni for Rome in 1763 but it alters many of the critical details discussed here. Most notably, the villain in the intermezzo is more of a narcissist than a misogynist. He also refuses to fight when the character based on Eleonora challenges him.

8. If anything, *Le donne vendicate* would have the situational advantage as it was premiered in the carnival of 1751 while *Il mondo alla roversa* was given in the less prestigious and less attended autumn season. It is also unlikely that the quality of the musical settings made a substantial difference. Though Cocchi is a little-known composer today his status was comparable to Galuppi's at that time.

nearly as threatening as the more realistic and uncorrected subversion of *Le donne vendicate*.

It is also worth noting that Goldoni only wrote roles like this for Penna. Most of his female roles *di mezzo carattere* written for other female singers were, in fact, very much the opposite of the bold women considered here. The most famous of which is Cecchina of *La buona figliuola*, a model of chastity, modesty, and submission who spends most of her time lamenting her cruel fate and who is only rescued from destitution when her genealogy is discovered by accident at the end of the opera. Characters like Cecchina wouldn't dream of lifting a sword like Eleonora. This underlines the fact that much of the ideological content in Goldoni's librettos, which is often assumed to be a representation of his own opinions, might just as likely be a response to the aptitudes and inclinations of the singers he wrote for.

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Opera Seria, Identity, and the Performance of History

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Non-Verbal Teaching of a Non-Verbal Art

Addendum to Heartz, "Dr Burney, Sacchini, and Sir Joshua Reynolds"

Paul Corneilson

In his book, *Artists and Musicians*, Daniel Heartz includes a lively depiction of the composer Antonio Sacchini in London with the Burney family, singing some of his own arias and accompanying the castrato Giuseppe Millico.[1] Heartz quotes passages from Fanny Burney's journals, but he does not cite entries in later years regarding Sacchini.[2] Shortly after the premiere of his *Quinto Fabio*, Sacchini started to have health problems. Fanny and Susan Burney attended the performance on 22 January 1780 and a Miss Kirwan said that the tenor Gabriel Mario Piozzi and Sacchini had been in the fifth gallery.[3] A few days later, on 26 January, Susan Burney confided in her journal: "In the Eveg poor Mattei call'd. He told me he had been *da Sacchini* [at Sacchini's], who was confined wth a violent cold & *fluxione dagli occhi* [an eye infection]."[4] Luigi Mattei was the husband of the soprano Appolonia Marchetti, who had been engaged at the King's Theatre in 1773–74, and later at the Pantheon concert series in 1779. (Susan Burney's journals in particular have a wealth of information on the operas and concerts in the years when Sacchini was in London, 1773–1781, even at times mentioning when particular singers substituted arias from other operas.) On 9 March the castrato Gasparo Pacchierotti had his benefit performance of *L'Olimpiade*, a pasticcio that included music by Sacchini, but Susan "saw not Sacchini—yet doubtless he was there, as Pacchierotti was to sing his Se Cerca[, se dice], & not the same as last year's."[5]

On 13 April 1780, "Mattei called—He told me he had been with Sacchini, who was in bed with the Gout, & had been confined wth it ever since the Rehearsal on Monday ...."[6] On 19 April 1780 Susan Burney went to hear the final dress rehearsal for Sacchini's *Rinaldo* and reported:

> There was no *Maestro*!—Poor Sacchini confined wholly to his Bed with the Gout, & Mattei says fretting himself to death, that this Opera like Enea e Lavinia must come out wthout his being able to act as Director, or know whether things go well or ill—Indeed tho' [violinist Wilhelm] Cramer took great pains this Morng nothing seem'd to go so well as at the Rehearsal in the Room of last Week, owing to carelessness in some of the performers, & forgetfulness in others—Scarce anything was repeated—all hurried over, & Made Le Brun's great song in the 2d Act ["Non partir, mio ben tesoro"] & a great deal of Rece not even rehearsed—Nor was the *Rondeau* ["Dolce speme" in act 2, scene 7] tried—tho' I heard by Mattei it was quite finished some days before,

1. Heartz, *Artists and Musicians: Portrait Studies from the Rococo to the Revolution*, with contributing studies by Paul Corneilson and John A. Rice, edited by Beverly Wilcox (Ann Arbor: Steglein Publishing, 2014), esp. 260–63.

2. Sacchini's time in London is summarized by Heartz in *Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style, 1720–1780* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003), 920–26.

3. *The Journals and Letters of Susan Burney*, ed. Philip Olleson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 113.

4. Ibid., 114–15.

5. Ibid., 124. In the same journal entry Susan writes: "In his great Scene, Misero! *Che Veggo* &c between the *Drama*—the *Composition*, & [Pacchierotti's] performance I was—absolutely melted—I cried as I did at the first Serious Opera I heard, when [Gaetano] Guadagni performed Orfeo—I never heard any thing more touching, nor shall ever recollect it without Emotion—*Ah no, Si gran duolo non darla per me* yet resounds in my Ears — yet I heard his Sweet Voice, & *such* Music it is! — Oh! with how much feeling it is Set!!—" (ibid., 124). Daniel Heartz discusses Galuppi's and Anfossi's settings of "Se cerca, se dice" in "Hasse, Galuppi, and Metastasio," in *From Garrick to Gluck: Essays on Opera in the Age of Enlightenment*, ed. John A. Rice (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2004), 84–104, esp. 99–103.

6. Ibid., 128.

> & tho' there will be but one more Rehearsal of this Opera.— 'Tis indeed very hard on Sacchini, & may well fret him.[7]

With an all-star cast featuring Pacchierotti as Rinaldo and prima donna Franziska Danzi-Lebrun as Armida, Sacchini's opera should have been a triumph. (Sacchini had originally presented the opera in Milan in 1772 as *Armida*, and revised it for London in 1780.) Pacchierotti in particular was a great favorite of the Burney family and spent many nights entertaining them with his songs and stories. As Heartz points out, Sacchini also penetrated the Burney circle, but by 1781 his poor health and mounting debts forced him to flee London. Writing to her sisters, Susan and Charlotte Burney, on 16 July 1781, Fanny Burney gives a detailed portrait of the composer in decline:

> Sacchini is the mere Ghost of what he was in almost every respect: so altered a man in so few years I never saw. I should not even have known him, had his Name not been spoken: & the same ill Health which has so much impaired his Person, & robbed him of more Beauty than any other man ever possessed, seems also to have impaired his mental faculties. He is no longer pleasant now even when he tries to be gay, & that good breeding we so much admired in him is degenerated into too much obsequiousness. The change in his circumstances, & his continual distress for money, no doubt have much contributed to this general *decadence*.
>
> He is obliged to steal away *privately*, lest his Creditors should stop him! He means to try his fortune at Paris, where he expects to retrieve it, & then to return to London & begin the World anew.
>
> That a man of such extraordinary merit, after so many years giving to this Country such Works as must immortalise him, should at last be forced to *steal away* from it, made me, I must own, feel more compassion for him than a man whose own misconduct has been the sole occasion of his distresses has any fair claim to. But to see Talents which to all the World can give such delight, so useless to the owner, is truly melancholy.
>
> I pressed him very much to sing, &, though somewhat reluctantly, he complied. He seemed both gratified & surprised by my civility & attention to him, which he must long have observed were withdrawn, & which nothing but my present pity for him would have revived. He inquired after all the Family, & Miss *Susanne* twice, & reminded me of many things which had passed upon the commencement of our acquaintance with him;—his *one pea*, his German story, & his Watchman & the Olives, & we had much talk about sweet Millico.
>
> The first song he sung, beginning *En quel amabil volto* you may perhaps know, but I did not; it is a charming mezza Bravura. He & Piozzi then sung together the Duet of the Amore Soldato,—& nothing could be much more delightful, Piozzi taking pains to sing his very best, & Sacchini, with his soft but delicious Whisper almost thrilling me by his exquisite & pathetic expression. They then went through that Opera,—great part of Creso, some of Erifile, & and much of Rinaldo.
>
> Sacchini also sung Poveri affetti miei [from *Creso*],—& most divinely indeed! I begged him to sing Dov'e s'affretti per me la morta [from Handel's *Poro*],—he could hardly recollect it, & what he recollected he could hardly sing; it required more exertion than he can now use without pain & fatigue. I have not, however, had so much pleasure from music since Pacchierotti left England, & I am sure I shall have none like it till he again returns. It was altogether a delight of the highest Kind, & I wished the Evening to be without End.[8]

It is no secret that Sacchini had to leave London to avoid imprisonment, and his fortunes did improve at the French court with the support of Queen Marie Antoinette and a string of *tragèdies lyriques*, especially *Renaud* (1783) and *Oedipe à Colone* (1786). But he died in 1786 before he could enjoy his renewed fame and wealth. With Susan's and Fanny's descriptions of his poor health five years earlier, it is easier to understand his demise.

The first aria Fanny mentions is "En quel amabil volto," which she says she didn't know and must have given the incipit incorrectly. (There is no word "en" in Italian.) An aria in Paisiello's *Zenobia in Palmira* begins "Se quel caro amabil volto"; but a more likely candidate is the aria "Quel caro amabil volto" for which Mozart wrote embellishments (K. 293e). This aria is attributed to Sacchini in several sources, and at least one of the sources identifies the aria as belonging to Sacchini's opera *Eumene*, performed at the Teatro Argentina in Rome in 1765.[9] Fanny describes it as a "mezza Bravura" aria, and this seems to fit the *Non tanto allegro* piece in G major. I am not aware that Sacchini used this aria in any of his London operas, which would explain why Fanny would not have known it. Naturally, we'd love to know more about the anecdotes that she refers to in passing, but since her sisters knew the stories already, there was no need for her to repeat them.

The tenor Piozzi eventually married Hester Lynch Thrale, who was an early supporter of Fanny after it became known that she was the author of the best-selling novel, *Evelina*. Beginning in 1778, Fanny was taken under Mrs. Thrale's wing and joined her circle with Samuel Johnson, Joshua Reynolds, Charles Burney, and other *literati* in Streatham. Musicians were also welcomed and gave informal private concerts, such as the one above. It is rare to have not one but two accounts of Sacchini singing some of his own music. As Heartz states in *Artists and Musicians* (262): "(Composers are generally loathe to sing in public.)" We are fortunate that Susan and Fanny Burney were able to hear and record their impressions of Sacchini, Millico, Pacchierotti, and other musicians active in London in the 1770s and 1780s.

7. Ibid., 132–33.

8. *The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney*, vol. 4: *The Streatham Years, Part 2: 1780–1781*, ed. Betty Rizzo (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 411–13.

9. See Ernest Warburton, *The Collected Works of J.C. Bach*, vol. 48:1, *Thematic Catalogue* (New York: Garland, 1999), item Warb YG 26. Although K. 293e includes embellishments for two arias by J.C. Bach, this third one is not attributed to Bach in the sources. Perhaps the Mozarts came upon a copy of the aria in Rome, where Sacchini's opera was performed.

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In March 2024, the ensemble will present Fire: Blazing Italian Baroque, featuring a program of Baroque pyrotechnics in concerti and sonatas, and the season concludes in April 2024 with Earth: Rustic Classical, featuring rollicking chamber music with a Bohemian flair.

The concert series is supported, in part, by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, an agency of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Boston Cultural Council, the Sudbury Cultural Council, and an Engagement Award from Early Music America.

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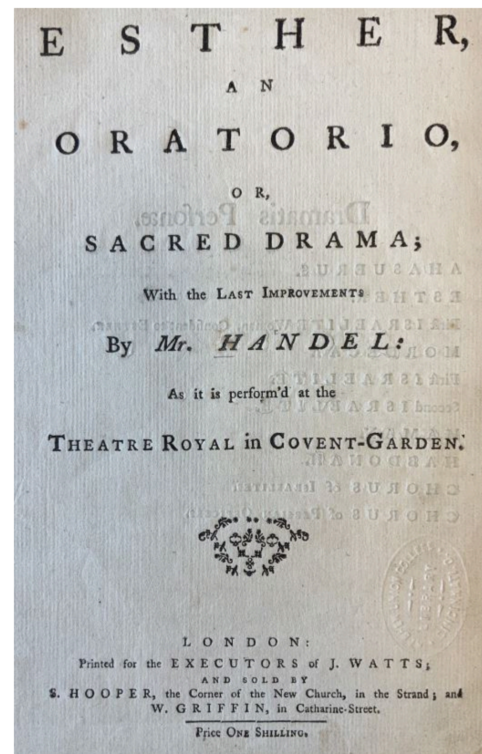
continued from page 1

while Saraval was in Amsterdam, subsequently underwent transcription at the hands of the local Jewish poet David Franco Mendes (1713–1792). Evidence supporting this posture includes the imprint of Saraval's name adorning one of the manuscript pages, supplemented by historical recollections of the Rabbi's sojourn in Amsterdam during the early 1770s. Moreover, handwriting congruences with many of the documents signed by Mendes still at EH offer proof of the poet's involvement in the manuscript's manufacture (see Figure 1 on page 1).

In the preceding year, an intriguing development emerged in my research, involving the discovery of a third Hebrew rendering of Handel's *Esther* in the Hebrew Union College's Klau Library (HUC).[6] All evidence indicates that this translation was crafted in the midst of the same Jewish community in Amsterdam. Notably, the copyist's hand closely aligns with that of Mendes. The distinctive feature of this third rendition lies in its layout, wherein the translated libretto manuscript was written on pages juxtaposed with a printed variant of the same text in English. The printed edition fortunately narrows down the chronological frame for the manufacture of the HUC manuscript as it finds its textual provenance in the performances hosted at the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden, its publication dating to the latter part of the 1760s (see figures 2 and 3).[7]

The serendipitous unearthing of the HUC manuscript furthermore allows hypothesizing that this document, rather than the previously presumed source attributed to Rabbi Saraval, marks the earliest known incursion of *Esther*'s libretto into Amsterdam. The rationale for this assertion primarily stems from the fact that the HUC rendition possesses an unequivocal linkage to an explicitly English provenance. Furthermore, of the two versions preserved at EH, at least one, which I will call the "Mendes EH" libretto, exhibits distinct indications of being derived from the HUC manuscript. Additionally, judging from the congruence observed between the HUC version's scriptorial hand and other manuscript documents at EH, it is possible to speculate that even the version attributed to rabbi Saraval was written by Mendes. Consequently,



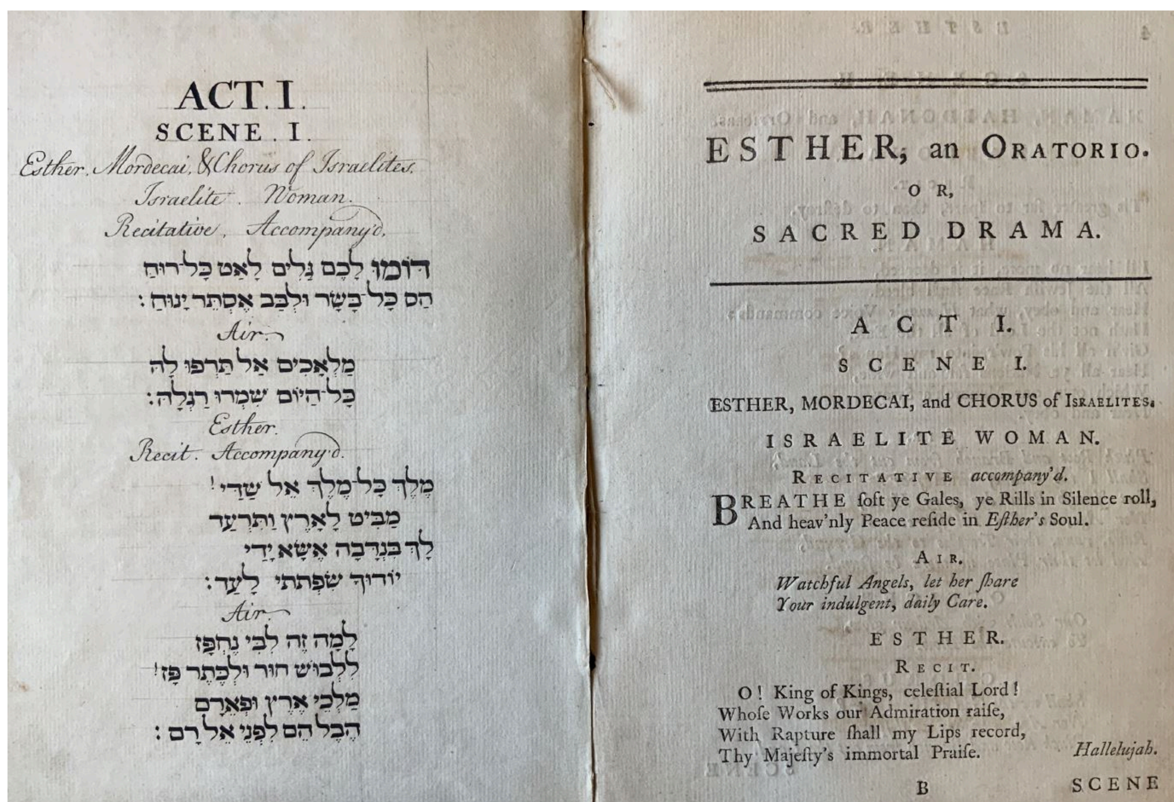
ESTHER,
AN
ORATORIO,
OR,
SACRED DRAMA;
With the Last Improvements
By Mr. HANDEL:
As it is perform'd at the
Theatre Royal in Covent-Garden.

LONDON:
Printed for the EXECUTORS of J. WATTS;
AND SOLD BY
S. HOOPER, the Corner of the New Church, in the Strand; and
W. GRIFFIN, in Catharine-Street.
Price One Shilling.

Figure 2. Titlepage (Klau Library, Ms. Acq. 2017-35)

6. The manuscript is under shelf mark Ms. Acq. 2017-35. This article would have been impossible without the help of the wonderful staff of the Hebrew Union College's Klau Library, Cincinnati.

7. I am grateful to Donald Burrows, who was able to identify the approximate date of the printed edition of the libretto.



ACT. I.
SCENE. I.
Esther. Mordecai, & Chorus of Israelites.
Israelite. Woman.
Recitative, Accompany'd.
דומו לכם גלים לאט כל רוח
הס כל בשר ולבב אסתר ינוח :
Air.
מלאכים אל תרפו לה
כל היום שמרו רגלה:
Esther.
Recit. Accompany'd.
מלך כל מלך אל שדי !
מביט לארץ ותרעד
לך בנדבה אשא ידי
יודוך שפתתי לעד:
Air.
למה זה לבי נחפז
ללבוש חור ולכתר פז!
מלכי ארץ ופארם
הכל הם לפני אל רם :

ESTHER, an ORATORIO.
OR,
SACRED DRAMA.

ACT I.
SCENE I.
ESTHER, MORDECAI, and CHORUS of ISRAELITES.
ISRAELITE WOMAN.
RECITATIVE *accompany'd.*
BREATHE soft ye Gales, ye Rills in Silence roll,
And heav'nly Peace reside in *Esther's* Soul.
AIR.
Watchful Angels, let her share
Your indulgent, daily Care.
ESTHER.
RECIT.
O! King of Kings, celestial Lord!
Whose Works our Admiration raise,
With Rapture shall my Lips record,
Thy Majesty's immortal Praise. *Hallelujah.*
B SCENE

Figure 3. Side-by-side Hebrew translation of Act 1, Sc. 1 (Klau Library, Ms. Acq. 2017-35)

this casts a measure of uncertainty upon the conventional ascription of Saraval as the primary translator.[8]

A conclusive element of substantiation contributing to a genealogical delineation among the trio of *Esther* manuscripts is discernible by paying attention to what the translators or copyists chose to omit from their renditions. The printed edition utilized by Mendes includes the royalist anthems that Handel had incorporated into his oratorio at the time of the 1732 Haymarket performance, which he explicitly advertised in the Daily Journal as being "after the manner of the Coronation Service."[9] The meticulous excision of all musical addenda extolling the elevation of the House of Hanover to the English throne is a distinct attribute of Mendes's revisions, executed with precision akin to surgical craftsmanship. A compelling example arises in the removal of the 1727 Coronation Anthem—"The King shall rejoice"—which was introduced by Handel to culminate the second act of the oratorio. This piece, notably absent from the HUC translation, is conspicuously denoted by a blank space. These hitherto unaccounted-for lacunae, intactly mirrored in the Mendes EH version, coupled with the congruity of scripts, serve as indicators pointing to its direct derivation from the HUC manuscript. Analogous structural omissions are preserved in the Saraval rendition, further implying a subsequent phase of replication.

As can be seen, the key addition of the HUC translation to the archival corpus surrounding the Esnoga already improves our understanding of the driving forces behind the musical life of the Amsterdam Sephardic community in the eighteenth century and *Esther*'s journey to the city. In light of the previous observations, it is plausible to conclude that Mendes had pre-existing knowledge of these pieces, which may suggest his participation as an audience member of Handel's music. It is worth noticing, too, that the printed publication lacks any informative cues regarding the subsequently appended "Hanoverian" sections. David Franco Mendes was, after all, a luminary poet endowed with a discerning sensibility attuned to the refined aesthetic ethos fostered by a cosmopolitan Dutch milieu. It is, thus, noteworthy that Mendes published a historical drama predicated upon Jean Racine's *Athalie* in 1770, given that the French dramatist is the same author on whose work Handel's *Esther* was based.

Considering a subsequent re-musicalization of Handel's translated libretto, often attributed to the Italo-Austrian composer Christiano Lidarti (1730–1793), the temporal parameters for the

8. The two iterations that I attribute to Mendes here are characterized by the use of Hebrew square script, a script traditionally employed for sacred texts. In contrast, the Saraval translation employs what is known as Sephardic cursive. However, the archives at EH do harbor documents attributed to Mendes, composed using Sephardic cursive, which exhibit morphological concordances with the manuscript bearing the name "Saraval."

9. "By His Majesty's *Command*. At the King's Theatre in the Hay-Market, on Tuesday the 2d Day of May, will be performed, *The Sacred Story* of ESTHER: an *Oratorio* in *English*. Formerly composed by Mr. *Handel*, and now revised by him, with several Additions, and to be performed by a great Number of the best Voices and Instruments. N.B. There will be no Action on the Stage, but the House will be fitted up in a decent Manner, for the Audience. The Musick to be disposed after the Manner of the Coronation Service;" in Otto Erich Deutsch, *Handel: A Documentary Biography* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1955), 288-9.

genesis of Mendes's translations can be reasonably conjectured to span from 1767 to 1774.[10] This chronological period not only aligns with documented records of Saraval's sojourn in Amsterdam and Mendes's tenure as honorary secretary of the local Jewish community and interest in Racine, but also corresponds to a burgeoning rapport between the English Jewish community and the musical compositions of Handel.

Drawing upon the extant corpus of evidence, a pathway for the trajectory of *Esther* emerges, tracing its dissemination from London to the cultural nexus of Amsterdam. The current exposition supports the notion that Mendes seemingly gained access to Handel's libretto from a source printed in London, and circumstantial evidence elucidates this exchange through a musical conduit interlinking the Jewish communities of Amsterdam and London. In the early modern era, after the readmission of Jews into England in the 1650s, it was the practice that many cantors pursued their apprenticeship in Amsterdam, subsequently transplanting their expertise to London. By the mid-eighteenth century, a significant change was observable within London's Jewish enclave, as vocalists began transitioning to the musical stage outside the synagogue threshold, increasingly engaging with Handel's musical corpus. An illustrative instance of this finds resonance in the figure of a youthful Michael Leoni (Myer Lyon, 1750–1797), who initially assumed the role of a falsettist *meshorrer*, or harmonizer, within the cantorial sphere of the Duke's Place synagogue in London. Leoni's trajectory peaked with his ascension to an esteemed status as an operatic virtuoso and for his renditions of Handel's oratorios.[11] Notably, a cantorial manuscript stemming from the Amsterdam Esnoga, now preserved at HUC, bears the signature of "Lyow Singer" from England—a distinctive appellation attributed to Michael Leoni.[12] Contiguously housed within an assemblage of synagogal music is a compendium of compositions attributed to "A[braham] Braham." Braham, identified as the father of John Braham, an operatic singer subsequently mentored by Leoni, furnishes an additional nexus within this intricate web of musical connections. These intertwined threads, which connect English cantors with operatic and oratorio performance, potentially establish the foundations for a network facilitating the dissemination of Handel's music to the receptive ears of Amsterdam's musical connoisseurs.

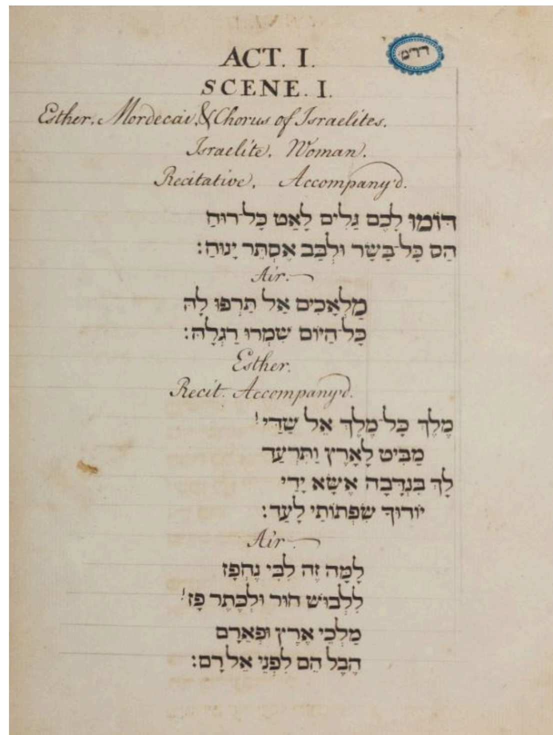


Figure 4. Mendes's version still in Amsterdam (EH 47 A 29)

While direct contemporaneous accounts of Jewish perceptions of Handel's oratorios within England remain absent from known historical records, the extant Hebrew translations from Amsterdam serve as tangible evidence of their esteemed reception across the channel.[13] Mendes's intentions, and conceivably Saraval's should he indeed have undertaken the later transcription based on Mendes's work, become conspicuously apparent in their shared desire to establish a direct nexus between their renderings and Handel's oeuvre. If the plan was always to re-set the Hebrew rendition to new music, then the inclusion of Handel's name on the Hebrew manuscript iterations assumes an even more profound resonance. It remains within the realm of conjecture that prior to the later musical reinterpretation often attributed to Lidarti, the oratorio might have undergone performances set to corresponding segments of Handel's own music. It is with a measure of regret, however, that my endeavors to uncover vestiges of Handel's musical arrangements within the archives related to the Esnoga have thus far yielded no tangible remnants.[14]

An additional piece of the puzzle sheds light on the deliberate selection of music associated with the name of Handel for performance at the Esnoga, a choice intrinsically tied to the projection of heightened societal status. An intriguing question arises from the Saraval translation, ostensibly derived from Mendes's rendition but distinctively supplemented with Italian translations for all the rubrics left in English. This variance assumes a profound significance when contextualized within the broader presence of Ital-

10. Besides carrying Lidarti's name on the title page, there is no robust evidence substantiating Lidarti's direct involvement in composing the Hebrew version of *Esther* now at Cambridge. Among other incongruities, within Lidarti's succinct autobiographical manuscript, signed and dated 1774, there is a notable absence of indications pointing to any travels beyond Austria and Italy, as well as no reference to Lidarti's familiarity with the Hebrew language or interactions with the Dutch Jewish community. It is possible that the Cambridge manuscript represents an extended contrafact derived from music by Lidarti that has been lost to time. See Cristiano Giuseppe Lidarti, "Aneddoti Musicali" (Bologna, 1774), Museo Internazionale e Biblioteca della Musica, http://www.bibliotecamusica.it/cmbm/scripts/gaspari/scheda.asp?id=1171.

11. A reportage within the Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, dated 1 September 1766, delineating the consecration ceremony of the Duke's Place synagogue, discloses that the ceremony featured a performance of Handel's Coronation Anthems; see Uri Erman, "The Operatic Voice of Leoni the Jew: Between the Synagogue and the Theater in Late Georgian Britain," *Journal of British Studies* 56, no. 2 (2017): 295–321.

12. In this context, "singer" would refer to a high-voiced *meshorrer*.

13. See David Hunter, "George Frideric Handel and the Jews: Fact, Fiction, and the Tolerances of Scholarship," in *For the Love of Music: Festschrift in Honor of Theodore Front on His 90th Birthday*, ed. Darwin F. Scott, Antiqua Musica 2 (Lucca: Lim antiqua, 2002), 16.

14. I am grateful to Heide Warncke, curator at EH, for her help in navigating the Esnoga archives.

ianate music in the service at the Esnoga, including the performance of opera seria contrafacts. Within this context, it becomes imperative to acknowledge Handel's introduction of his oratorios into the Italian opera season.[15] *Esther*'s version at the Opera House, became thus intertwined with the Italianate performance practices, notably featuring eminent Italian vocalists such as Senesino.[16] It is possible, then, that the Saraval version, potentially an integral component of the planning for the 1774 re-setting presently archived at Cambridge, supplied Italian annotations to underscore and accentuate its Italianate connection, thereby establishing a link between Handel's oratorio and the operatic tradition.

The Hebrew translations presented here best illuminate the dynamic engagement of eighteenth-century Jewish communities as active oratorio audiences and performers. For, what could exemplify a higher degree of agency than a community's endeavor to make a musical composition their own through processes of translation, editing, and even eventual re-musicalization? In early-modern Jewish-Christian musical exchanges, the translation of musical texts like Handel's *Esther* emerges thus as part of a continuum with the contrafacture of cantorial song that I explored in my last article. Such practices perform a process that can be described as an "aural conversion."[17] For the Jewish communities, the processes of translation and contrafacture can effectively convert non-Jewish music into Jewish cultural artifacts. In the specific case of the eighteenth-century Amsterdam Sephardic community, an aural conversion is accomplished by the accrual of Hebrew—a traditional Jewish liturgical language—and the deployment of the cultural artifact within a Jewish space such as the Esnoga. In this regard, aural conversion allowed musicians to engage with the wider, fashionable culture, and, at the same time, signal their Jewish specificity.

Mendes's deliberate omissions, likewise, serve as a method of "converting" *Esther* to a properly Judaic artifact. In its Hanoverian presentation, the oratorio depicts Jewish identity as a malleable construct that Christian audiences could appropriate to align themselves with the historical Israelites. Audiences listening to the oratorios composed by Handel found themselves ultimately entangled within the virulent debates revolving around the contentious "Jew Bill" of 1753, a legislative proposal permitting Jews residing in England to seek naturalization.[18] Situated within the mid-eighteenth English context, *Esther*'s Jewishness could thus be fashioned in a manner that dissociated it from contemporary Jewish concerns, instead favoring alignment with the sensibilities of the Church of England. In this regard, the act of omitting the indicators of (royal) English identity, particularly following the Jew Bill debates, provides an illustration of the mechanisms of aural conversion—a process by which Handel's oratorio underwent a localization for the specific necessities of Amsterdam's Jewish community.

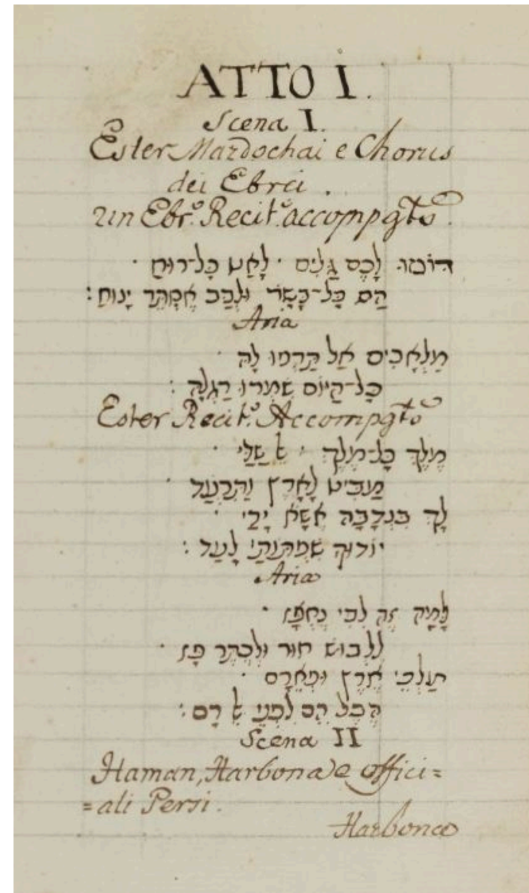


Figure 5. Saraval translation of Act 1, Sc. 1 with rubrics in Italian (EH 47 B 07)

Taking a broader vantage point, particularly when considering *Esther* in conjunction with the crafting of opera seria contrafacts for the Esnoga, the archival materials introduced in this article not only align with but also enhance the conception that Handel's musical compositions assumed the role of a cultural commodity that reflected high social status.[19] The incorporation of Italianate music, whether affiliated with Handel, Hasse, or Lidarti, serves as a means by which the Amsterdam *Sephardim* projected an image of parity with aristocratic patrons in London. In this regard, the consumption of Handel's music emerges as emblematic of the Jewish community's adeptness at signaling cosmopolitan refinement.

15. Donald Burrows, *Handel and the English Royal Chapel*, Oxford Studies in British Church Music (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 288-308.

16. Burrows, *Handel and the English Royal Chapel*, 293.

17. My current conceptualization of translation and contrafacture is an early result of my participation in the project JEWTACT: Jewish Translation and Cultural Transfer in Early Modern Europe. For literature on the subject, see https://www.jewtact.com/. I am particularly grateful to Iris Idelson-Shein, who has shared a wealth of material related to historic translation studies.

18. See Ruth Smith, *Handel's Oratorios and Eighteenth-Century Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 346.

19. Suzanne Aspden, "Disseminating and Domesticating Handel in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Britain," in *Beyond Boundaries: Rethinking Music Circulation in Early Modern England*, ed. Linda Phyllis Austern, Candence Bailey, and Amanda Eubanks Winkler, Music and the Early Modern Imagination (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2017), 207–222.

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