

Pasticcio. Ways of Arranging Attractive Operas. Description for the general public

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Italian word *pasticcio* (pastry, pie) was a term related to food, and more precisely to aristocratic *haute cuisine*. A *pasticcio* was a dish prepared from ingredients of the best quality and was usually presented in a surprising and extraordinary shape, for example that of a heart, an eagle, a star etc. A *pasticcio* was thus a showcase of the chef's skill, and its appearance on the table would mark the climax of an aristocratic banquet. From cuisine the term was then transferred to opera. It happened around 1725, when a German composer Johann Joachim Quantz used it for the first time to describe an opera created from the arias and recitatives of different composers (just as the culinary *pasticcio* was created only from the choicest ingredients). But a long time before this practice acquired a name, it was widely known in Italy. The *pasticcio*'s popularity spread in the 1730s and endured until the end of the century.

When we view the *pasticcio* through the prism of the modern concept of a musical work, with its emphasis on the originality, coherency and integrity of the creative process, it is tempting to perceive the *pasticcio* as inferior and lacking in artistry in comparison with original works, where a single composer set a libretto to music. However, it seems that the eighteenth-century opera audience considered *pasticci* to be equal to operas composed by single composers. What is more, they were very often considered better than ordinary operas, because they included pieces that were the most appreciated, the most beloved or the most famous. An opera *pasticcio* is thus a heterogeneous term: it can relate to a serious (*opera seria*) or a comic opera (*opera buffa*), produced from movements composed by different composers or based on a variety of sources adapted to form a new libretto, or using an already existing one. In the eighteenth century, the librettos by Pietro Metastasio and Carlo Goldoni were frequently used to create *pasticci*. It is also worth noting that many eminent composers such as Handel, Vivaldi, Hasse, Gluck or Haydn did not think it beneath them to produce *pasticcio*, and in fact they composed excellent works in this genre.

The project of the Polish-German group consists of several case studies or sub-projects: 1. *Pasticci* by Nicola Porpora or those created using his music; 2. Johann Adolph Hasse's autopasticci performed in Dresden and Warsaw; 3. *Venceslao*, a *dramma per musica* on a Polish theme and its *pasticcio* versions; 4. Two *pasticci* by George Frideric Handel and the itinerant Mingotti opera troupe on Metastasio's *Didone abbandonata* given in London and Hamburg; 5. Traditions and networks of operatic *pasticcios*: the example of Georg Philipp Telemann 6. Editions and database.

In the framework of the project we want to concentrate on three main aspects related to *pasticci* performed in Northern Europe: 1) The mobility of the "agents" and the musical material – the production of *pasticci* was connected with the migration and diffusion of musical and literary sources thanks to the travels of opera singers, composers, opera troupes, impresarios and patrons. 2) Aesthetic values – reflection on the artistic choices and arrangements connected with the creation of a *pasticcio*. 3) Reassessment of the concept of the "musical work" as such – an attempt to deconstruct the concept of work currently prevailing in modern musicology, which considers *pasticcio* as an inferior work, a cheap "recycling" of musical pieces. 4) The materiality of the sources – a study of the quality of the material connected with *pasticcio* performances, its origins and transfers.

Another goal of the project is the preparation of online editions (two *pasticci* selected from individual projects and interesting musical sources, which appear in the contexts of the edited *pasticci*), and launching a database which will combine information based on the aspects mentioned above and provide the context for a group of selected, especially interesting sources (among others *Didone abbandonata*, *Artaserse*, *Venceslao*, *Siroe*); in addition the database will be connected to the musical editions, showing the relations between the musical text and the data entries of the different sub-projects. Moreover, the framework of the project also includes a concert performance of a selected *pasticcio*. It will offer the modern public a unique opportunity to listen to a composition "full of most of my favourite arias" as the English nobleman Horace Walpole wrote about a *pasticcio* in a letter to the diplomat Horace Mann on 1 November 1742.