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Introduction

This collection consists of twenty-nine songs and arias from the early nineteenth-century solo vocal music repertoire to which Giovanni Battista (Giambattista) Velluti (1780–1861) composed (and frequently, though not always, published) ornamentation. The last great operatic castrato, Velluti, over the course of his career, became increasingly well known not only for his singing, but also for his creative, adventuresome ornaments. During this time, his singing style became less purely virtuosic and more concerned with affect, especially as his vocal abilities began to wane. His publications of ornamented songs and arias were frequent throughout the last decade of his career.

According to Stendhal (Marie-Henri Beyle), writing in his 1823 biography of Gioachino Rossini, “Velluti always prepares *three different sets* of ornamentation for any given passage; so that, when the instant of performance arrives, he can choose the one which best suits his mood.”¹ This assertion is, unfortunately, not borne out in Velluti’s surviving ornamentation. There are no instances in this volume of even two complete surviving sets of ornaments on the same aria, and none of three. There are occasionally secondary *ossias*, alternative ornamentations to the primary ornamented line, scattered throughout—see, for instance, Stefano Pavesi’s “La tua diletta immagine” (no. 20)—and, if one considers a variation an ornamentation rather than a new, primary musical text, then the eight variations on “Nel cor più non mi sento” (no. 1) may qualify. But the short, alternative ornamentations almost never comprise more than a single measure’s worth of music and thus are a far cry from Stendhal’s claim. To be sure, Stendhal is an invaluable source for information on Velluti, writing an entire (though brief) chapter on him in his Rossini biography.² However, while Stendhal cer-

tainly could have been referring to ornamentation heard in performance and never written down or published, he was an extremely creative writer, and his otherwise uncorroborated stories should always be taken with a grain of salt.

Velluti is known to have performed ornaments at least somewhat different from those that appeared in his publications. Though there are very few comparisons of Velluti’s published ornamentation to his performed ornamentation, an anonymous 1826 review of his published ornaments to the scena and *romanza* “Notte tremenda—Caro suono lusinghier” from Francesco Morlacchi’s *Tebaldo e Isolina* (no. 12) claims that the ornaments Velluti actually sang in this aria were “like, but not quite” the same as those that were printed. Additionally, the singer sang ornaments in performance that did not make it into the printed version.³ As already noted above, the survival of Velluti’s own emendations to several of the variations on “Nel cor più non mi sento” (no. 1) and “La tua diletta immagine” (no. 20; see above) bear further witness to the singer’s varying approaches to embellishment within the same piece.

This edition includes only ornamented solo songs and arias with a secure attribution to Velluti. Those with

terms of religious and political controversy, as well as simple xenophobia. Religious controversies could arise due to the almost perfect interchangeability of the castrato, and of the making of castrati, with the Roman Catholic church in contemporary Protestant, English thinking. In the case of political controversies, the ruling Tories (and the Duke of Wellington, first and foremost) were great supporters of both the increasingly archaic, singer-driven opera seria, and, specifically, of Velluti, while the out-of-power Whigs, including most of the press and publishing world, were—predictably—strongly opposed to both. Finally, regarding xenophobia, in the period following the Napoleonic Wars, there was a strong undercurrent of distrust for foreigners in many (Whiggish) press accounts of music, especially of the King’s Theatre, the home of the Italian opera. Additionally, in the eyes of the 1820s London press, it seems, there was nothing more foreign, more exotic, or more “un-English” than the castrato. The omission of the chapter on the castrato could, however, be put down simply to the translator’s own distaste for the subject.

3. “Morlacchi’s Romance,” *Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review*, 1826, 202. The following passage seems to suggest that the writer had access to a copy of Morlacchi’s score: “The passages . . . are in point of fact the composition of Velluti—so little resemblance do they bear *in the original* to the highly ornamented embroidery of *the printed copy*.” Emphases mine.

1. Stendhal [Marie-Henri Beyle], *Life of Rossini*, rev. ed., ed. and trans. Richard N. Coe (London: John Calder, 1985), 355 n. 2.

2. *Ibid.*, 262–65. Unfortunately for Velluti’s London reception, even though the damning chapter about Velluti and Rossini was translated in full, this short chapter, along with other passages praising Velluti, were not translated in the nearly simultaneous English-language version of *La vie de Rossini* (*Memoirs of Rossini* [London: T. Hookham, 1824], vi). The anonymous translator acknowledges the omission of “certain points of a religious, political, and local nature; which, as not bearing upon the leading subject of the Memoirs, it has been judged advisable to omit.” It is actually fairly clear what could have been judged problematic in a chapter praising Velluti in

Texts and Translations

All texts follow the principal musical source for each piece. Orthography, punctuation, and capitalization have been standardized and, where necessary, supplemented to conform with modern practice. Text sources are listed following each text, where applicable, and discrepancies between the musical source and the text source are detailed in notes.

1. *Nel cor più non mi sento*

Nel cor più non mi sento
Brillar la gioventù;
Cagion del mio tormento,
L'anima mia, sei tu.
Mi pizzichi, mi stuzzichi,
Mi pungichi e mi mastichi;
Che cosa è questo ohimè?
Pietà, pietà, pietà,
L'amor è un certo che,
Che delirar¹ mi fa.

In my heart I feel no more
the brilliance of youth;
the reason for my torment,
my soul, is you.
You pinch me, poke me,
prick me, chew me;
what is this "alas"?
Mercy, mercy, mercy!
Love is a certain thing
that makes me delirious.

Text source. Giuseppe Palomba, *L'amore contrastato ossia [sic] La molinara, dramma giocoso per musica da rappresentarsi in Lucca nel teatro detto del castiglioncelli nel prossimo carnevale dell'anno MDCCXCI dedicato al singolarissimo merito della nobiliss. dama la signora Maria Trenta* (Lucca: Presso Franc. Bonsignori, 1791), 43.

Note. 1. Text source has "disperar."

2. *Or che la notte placida*

Or che la notte placida
Ai dolci furti invita,
Sorgi, mia bella vita,
È tempo di gioir.

Che più sperar non restami
Quando con te ragiono,
Quando lontano io sono
Mi sento, oh Dio, morir.

Now that the peaceful night
invites [us] to sweet thievery,
arise, my beautiful life,
it is time to rejoice.

Nothing more remains for me but to hope
when I converse with you;
when I am far away,
O God, I feel myself dying.

Text source. Unknown.

3. *Quel tuo girar del ciglio*

Quel tuo girar del ciglio,
Quel magico sorriso
L'idea del paradiso
Desta già m'hanno in cor.

Se il zeffiro la rosa
Molle del colle in vetta,
Ti sento in quell'auretta;
È Nice mia quel fior.

That turning of your brow,
that magical smile
have already awakened the idea of paradise
in my heart.

If a zephyr ruffles a rose
at the top of the hill,
I hear you in that breeze;
it is my Nike, that flower.

1. Otto variazioni sul tema "Nel cor più non mi sento"

Giuseppe Palomba

Tema

Giovanni Battista Velluti

Canto

Fortepiano

5

Nel

9

cor più non mi sen- to bril- lar la gio- ven- tù; ca-

13

sei _____

-gion del mio tor- men- to, _____ l'a- ni- ma mia, sei _____ tu. Mi

[col canto]

piz- zi- chi, mi stuz- zi- chi, mi pun- gi- chi e mi ma- sti- chi; che



[-sto ohi-]

co- sa è que- sto ohi- mè? Pie- tà, pie- tà, pie- tà, l'a-

*affettuoso*

mi

-mor è un cer- to che, che de- li- rar mi fa.

Variatione 1^a

Nel cor più non mi sen- to bril-

20. La tua diletta immagine

? Stefano Pavesi

Andante

Voce

Pianoforte

p 6 6

La tua di-let-ta im-ma-gi-

3 La tua di-let-ta im-ma-gi-ne,

u-ni-co ben-__ che__ a-do- dol-ce al cor mi-o ri-

6 u-ni-co ben che a-do-ro, dol-ce al cor mi-o ri-

-sto- ro nel ³ mi- o mo- rir sa-

9

-sto- ro nel mi- o mo-rir sa- rà.

-ta im- ma- gi- u- ni- co ben che a-

12

La tua di-let- ta im- ma- gi- ne, u- ni- co ben che a-

-do- ro, dol-

15

-do- ro, dol- ce al cor mio ri-

Critical Report

Sources

The sources used in this edition fall into two broad categories, published prints and unpublished manuscripts. The published sources date primarily from Velluti's London period (1825–29). Most of them were issued by the publishing houses of Grua, Ricordi & Co. (the London branch of Ricordi, only in existence 1824–28; nos. 4, 5, 8, 10, 14, 19, 20, and 25); J. B. Cramer, Addison & Beale (nos. 15–18 and 24); and Chappell & Co. (nos. 2 and 12). All of these firms seem to have had publishing agreements with the singer. From the period prior to his London seasons, Velluti had ornamentation published by Ricordi (Milan, one of the sources of no. 12), Loranzi (Florence, no. 6), Cipriani (Florence, no. 7), and Mechetti (Vienna, no. 11).

For the manuscript sources, which are not as widely scattered as the far more numerous prints, the most important source is the Fondo Velluti at I-BEe (nos. 1, 13, and 23; secondary source of no. 25). The Fondo Velluti was endowed by Velluti's many-times-great-grandnephew, Federico Velluti, who donated his family's sheet music collection (curated in the early twentieth century by his grandmother Emilia Velluti-Stadlbaur and presumed to be largely or entirely the personal collection of Velluti himself) to the city of Belluno in 2002. In addition to manuscripts with the singer's ornamentation, this collection includes many of Velluti's own publications, as well as complete opera scores and other vocal scores. Other important manuscript sources of Velluti's ornaments exist at the Fondo Mario of I-Rsc (nos. 3, 9, and 21; secondary source of no. 14), whose manuscripts came from the collection of Domenico Cerutti, an Italian musician active in London in the early nineteenth century; and the Fondo Borbone at I-PAc (secondary sources of nos. 1 and 13), which has at its core the music collection of Marie Louise of Austria, second wife of Napoleon Bonaparte and (following her abdication as empress) duchess of Parma.

Editorial Methods

Works actually composed by Velluti (as opposed to those ornamented by him) are presented first in the edition, after which works are organized alphabetically by composers' surnames. Titles are based on the source and in most cases follow the first line of the sung text; numbering is provided editorially. Instrumental and vocal part

nomenclature follows the sources, with the presentation of the words "Fortepiano" and "Pianoforte" (which sometimes appear hyphenated or as separate words) standardized. Part labels are provided editorially in brackets when missing. The placement, orthography, and appearance of all verbal directives from the sources, including part names, section labels, numbering of sections or variations, tempos, character names, dynamics, *8va* markings, and expression markings—all of which take various forms in the sources—have been modernized and standardized. Abbreviations have been either expanded or modernized as necessary to conform with modern practice, and minor spelling errors are corrected tacitly.

Score layout generally follows the sources. When the principal source contains two vocal lines (one for the original melody and one for the ornamentation), or when the principal source sets ornamentation in *ossia* staves, only the ornamented passages (i.e., those differing from the main vocal line) are shown as *ossia* staves above the main staff. When, however, the unornamented vocal line and the ornamented line come from two different sources (as in nos. 12, 13, 23, and 25), they are set as two coequal, regular-size vocal lines. Written emendations that appear in or above the main vocal line of the source are also given in *ossia* staves (when they exceed simple *appoggiaturas* or grace notes), and such instances are identified in the critical notes. When such handwritten emendations appear in a source that already includes separate staves (*ossia* or otherwise) for ornamentation, they are placed in a second *ossia* staff and identified in the critical notes (see, e.g., no. 6, mm. 151, 161–62, and 165).

Except where clearly erroneous, rhythmic values from the sources are retained, even when they fill the measure beyond its usual metrical capacity. Such passages, especially in ornamented parts, frequently function as *cadenzas* and exemplify Velluti's flexible approach to tempo (see "Notes on Performance" in the introduction). Editorial *col canto* indications have been supplied in the accompaniment at the appropriate points.

In the vocal part of the *Otto variazioni sul tema "Nel cor più non mi sento"* (no. 1), the original beaming has been retained as an example of early nineteenth-century beaming practice, which may convey information about phrasing. Beaming in all other vocal parts, and in all accompaniment parts, has been regularized according to modern conventions. Text underlay follows the source as closely as possible, with the understanding that beaming and