

# Italian Opera in Vienna in the 1770s: Repertoire and Reception – Data and Facts

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Im Herbstmonat.

Tag.	Schaubühne. R. B.	Schauspiele.	Ballett.
Samst. 2	17	la Finta Giardiniera. Der Deserteur aus Kin- desliche.	Die unglückliche Ver- ein Diverissement.
Sont. 3	18	la Fratellana.	Die lässlichen Untere- galtungen.
Mont. 4	19	Der Weidwider. Der Graf Dlabach.	Ein Diverissement.
Dinst. 5	20	Zween Freunde. Il gelajo al Cemento.	Die Schmitzer. Die Sasolarden.

## Abstract

Up to now in the research on Vienna's theater and opera life in the 1770s the subject of the Italian repertoire and its reception remained rather underexposed, among other reasons for lack of outstanding artistic events, but also for the particular attention devoted to the institution-historical developments of this decade, namely the foundation of the Deutsches Nationaltheater and the Deutsches Nationalsingspiel.

The first aim of this contribution is to present an overview of the Italian branch of Vienna's theater activity in the 1770s, first of all by reconstructing the daily program of Italian operas in both teatri privilegiati, thus correcting erroneous data contained in the standard literature on the one hand and answering a series of questions concerning the local production system on the other: which operas were performed, when, how often, and where, how long did they stay in the repertoire, how did Vienna's theater season function, how were Italian operas embedded in Vienna's theater business, what repercussions did institutional changes have on the Italian repertoire in that heterogeneous period?

The second objective consists in creating, on the basis of the information and data collected on the organization of the theater season, a more suitable and differentiated tool with respect to the conventional methods used for the success assessment of operas staged in Vienna. A systematic processing of the collected performance data, daily ticket sales—for lack of sources not available for the whole period—and contemporary commentary will thus enable statistically based statements that better reflect the reality of the reception and the success of individual Italian operas performed in Vienna and of the Italian opera branch in general than was previously possible.

The [reconstructed calendar](#), including the aforementioned information supplements, and the aggregated [statistical data](#) are annexed as Excel tables, allowing individual readers to retrieve, sort, and filter data for further research according to different criteria—date, day of week, title, theater, premiere type (absolute premiere, Viennese premiere, or revival), composer, librettist, and statistical keys.

**Excel tables for download:** [Calendar table](#) and [Statistics table](#)

In der Erforschung des Wiener Theater- und Opernlebens der 1770er Jahre sind das italienische Repertoire und seine Rezeption eher unterbelichtet geblieben, unter anderem aus Mangel an

herausragenden künstlerischen Ereignissen, aber auch aufgrund der besonderen Aufmerksamkeit, die den institutionsgeschichtlichen Begebenheiten dieses Jahrzehnts, nämlich der Gründung des Deutschen Nationaltheaters und des Deutschen Nationalingspiels, gewidmet wurde.

Das erste Ziel dieses Beitrags ist es, ein vollständigeres Bild der italienischen Sparte innerhalb des Wiener Theaterbetriebs der 1770er Jahre zu schaffen, zunächst durch die bisher noch ausständige Rekonstruktion des täglichen Spielplans der italienischen Oper in den beiden teatri privilegiati, wodurch einerseits diverse in der Standardliteratur angegebene Daten korrigiert werden können, andererseits auch eine Reihe von Fragen zum lokalen Produktionssystem erstmals präzise beantwortet werden können: Welche Opern wurden wann, wie oft und wo aufgeführt, wie lange blieben sie im Repertoire, wie funktionierte das Wiener Theaterjahr, wie waren italienische Opern im Wiener Theaterbetrieb eingebettet, welche Auswirkungen hatten die verschiedenen institutionellen Umbrüche dieses heterogenen Zeitraums auf den Wiener Spielplan?

Das zweite Anliegen besteht darin, auf der Basis der gewonnenen Informationen zur Organisation des Theaterjahres ein im Vergleich zu den bisherigen Methoden geeigneteres und differenzierteres Instrumentarium zur Bewertung des Erfolges der in Wien aufgeführten Opern bereitzustellen. Aufgrund der systematischen Auswertung der ermittelten Aufführungsdaten, der – quellenbedingt nicht für den gesamten Zeitraum verfügbaren – täglichen Kartenverkäufe und der ebenfalls in den rekonstruierten Spielplan integrierten zeitgenössischen Kommentare können so erstmals statistisch basierte und realitätsgetreuere Aussagen über Rezeption und Erfolgsgrad von einzelnen in Wien aufgeführten italienischen Opern sowie über die italienische Sparte im Allgemeinen getroffen werden.

Der [rekonstruierte Spielplan](#) samt der erwähnten Zusatzinformationen und die erfassten [statistischen Daten](#) sind als Excel-Tabellen beigelegt, die die Leser/innen selbst nach verschiedenen Gesichtspunkten – Datum, Wochentag, Operntitel, Aufführungstätte, Art der Erstaufführung (Uraufführung, Wiener Erstaufführung oder Wiederaufnahme), Komponist, Librettist und verschiedene statistische Maße – für weiterführende Studien durchsuchen, ordnen oder filtern können.

**Excel-Tabellen zum Herunterladen:** [Calendar table](#) and [Statistics table](#)

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# Introduction

[1] Vienna's theater history was particularly eventful in the years around 1770: controversies regarding the prohibition of improvisation, the introduction of censorship, and the dispute about the expenses of the French theater all flared up, and the takeover of theater management by Johann Nepomuk Count Koháry ended an era characterized by important artistic renewals. While the 1760s have been thoroughly investigated because of Gluck's opera reform,<sup>[1]</sup> as have the 1780s thanks to Mozart's activity in Vienna after the reappointment of an Italian opera ensemble by Joseph II,<sup>[2]</sup> the specific history of Italian opera in the Vienna of the 1770s still lacks in-depth documentation. This may be due, among other reasons, to the relatively steady presence of Italian opera as a traditional component of Vienna's theater world up to the foundation of the Nationalsingspiel and then to its marginal position between 1778 and 1783.

The time span under examination is situated between two periods considered heydays of Italian opera in Vienna, for which reason it is usually not analyzed as a distinct period in the literature but only as a subsection of more extensive studies, mostly covering a broad time range, on Vienna's general theater history,<sup>[3]</sup> single composers,<sup>[4]</sup> or an entire genre.<sup>[5]</sup> Initial specific researches on the Italian repertory of the 1760s and 1770s have been carried out recently, especially from the perspective of cultural transfer and the Viennese practice of adapting imported Italian operas.<sup>[6]</sup>

Institutional events of the 1770s are described repeatedly in the aforementioned general studies of Vienna's theater history, so it is only necessary to recall some of the key data on Italian opera in the following.

The transfer of Giuseppe d'Afflisio's heavily indebted theater management to Count Koháry in 1770 represented a sharp turn. Elisabeth Grossegger considers it "the smashing of a 'clique' [Calzabigi-Gluck-LoPresti-d'Afflisio] that by its artistic commitment had fostered the renewal of opera, seeking new ways of the arts."<sup>[7]</sup> In fact, to avoid total financial failure, Koháry very soon used Joseph II's permission to cancel "one of the three expensive performances, namely the opera seria and buffa, the French comedy, or their sumptuous ballets,"<sup>[8]</sup> to officially dismiss the French ensemble, and to limit the then parallel Italian genres to the cheaper opera buffa. Zechmeister presents this as a "great triumph of Italian opera buffa" from 1771 on,<sup>[9]</sup> without considering the fact that the very popular lighter buffa genre had already become "prevalent" in Vienna since the second half of the 1760s.<sup>[10]</sup> It was not by chance that the Opernkapellmeister Florian Leopold Gassmann composed only *drammi giocosi* after 1767—among them, significantly, also the meta-theatrical *L'opera seria*, a parody of the seria genre!—thus contributing to the start of a local buffa tradition. Numerous sources document the new popularity of the lighter genre: Leopold Mozart, in a letter to Johann Lorenz Hagenauer dated January 30, 1768, wrote that his son should write an opera buffa for Vienna's theaters, because opera seria was no longer in vogue in Vienna.<sup>[11]</sup> In the same year, Joseph von Sonnenfels admitted, while sharply criticizing Italian buffas, that they were nevertheless popular with everyone.<sup>[12]</sup> Such a change in taste reflected a general European trend, due to which opere buffe entered Habsburg court festivities despite their light and occasionally base comic content.<sup>[13]</sup> In fact, in September 1772 Charles Burney remarked with astonishment that as "rich as this city is at present, in musicians of genius and eminence, there is no serious opera either at the court or public theatre."<sup>[14]</sup>

And this situation underwent no change even after Koháry's bankruptcy and the management's takeover by a creditor committee chaired by Count Joseph von Keglevich.<sup>[15]</sup> The only new

development in matters of Italian opera was an increased frequency of weekly performances from three to four,<sup>[16]</sup> a relatively high number,<sup>[17]</sup> which persisted, despite several institutional changes, until March 1778.

Neither the Kapellmeister substitution—after Gassmann’s death in January 1774 his pupil Antonio Salieri was appointed—nor the foundation of the Nationaltheater in Spring 1776 exerted particular effects on Vienna’s repertoire. Christine Siegert’s supposition that the start of regular buffa performances in 1776 in Esterháza filled a gap occurring in Vienna cannot be confirmed,<sup>[18]</sup> because most of the dismissed members of the Italian opera ensemble and some of the singers appointed by Keglevich for the 1776/77 program in Vienna formed a private company, headed at first by the painter and set decorator Vincenzo Fanti, after his death by the officer Karl Kral, and staged Italian operas in the available theaters for one year.<sup>[19]</sup>

Even the subsequent change—in March 1777 Kral dismissed the whole Italian opera ensemble and cooperated with the impresario Giuseppe Bustelli, who staged mostly opere buffe with his troupe during the entire 1777/78 season—did not have far-reaching consequences on the repertoire.

After the foundation of the Nationalsingspiel (1778) no operas in the Italian language were staged in Vienna for a long while. It was only when Bustelli came back to Vienna with his renewed and expanded opera troupe in October 1779 that the Kärntnerthortheater again offered opera buffa performances, at least until the end of the 1780 carnival. From 1781 on at the latest, Italian operas were rarely to be found on Vienna’s stages, except for Gluck’s *Alceste* and *Orfeo ed Euridice*, both performed in Italian by the singers of the Deutsches Singspiel<sup>[20]</sup> between November 1781 and February 1782 for the incognito state visit of the Russian Prince Paul. During the following season two Italian opere buffe were staged—Antonio Sacchini’s *La contadina in corte* and Salieri’s *La locandiera*—which in some ways represented a “bridge” for the reappointment of a top-class Italian opera ensemble by Joseph II and the blossoming of opera buffa at Vienna’s court theater.

## The Sources

[2] The temporal frame of this study, heterogeneous because of several substitutions in personnel and changes in the production system, is determined not only by the published research results<sup>[21]</sup> but also by the accessible sources. The main sources suitable for reconstructing Vienna’s daily opera program and finding relevant criticism are theater almanacs and newspapers featuring titles of daily performances, comments on premieres, and occasional reports of theater-related events.<sup>[22]</sup> Despite some date errors and minor discrepancies, these sources seem to be reliable on the whole.

Yearly theater almanacs—always referring to the previous calendar year—were seemingly published in Vienna from 1772 on,<sup>[23]</sup> but only starting in the following year did they contain complete daily programs,<sup>[24]</sup> thus it is only after Christmas 1771 that a gapless reconstruction is possible. The *Kaiserlich Königliche allergnädigst privilegirte Realzeitung der Wissenschaften, Künste und der Kommerzien*, published from 1770 on, also only started printing daily theater programs for longer periods after April 1772, while the *Wienerisches Diarium* and other sources accessed for this study, such as Obersthofmeister Johann Joseph von Khevenhüller’s and Count Karl von Zinzendorf’s diaries or Charles Burney’s travel account, document only single

performances.

For the time of Keglevich's management (October 1772–February 1776) the Hungarian National Archive keeps even more reliable sources, such as daily box-office accounts (except for December 1772 and May 1774), weekly records, and occasionally monthly bills,<sup>[25]</sup> which allow a reconstruction of programs and daily ticket-sales data, providing a more insightful account of audience sizes for the respective evenings, albeit only for this three-and-a-half-year period.

After 1776, the sources become scarce: privately managed Italian opera was only a sideshow among Vienna's theater events, and the press was already focusing on the Nationaltheater; Khevenhüller died in April 1776, Zinzendorf was absent from Vienna from the end of May 1776 on and rarely attended Italian performances after his return at the end of 1777. From 1777 on, the *Wienerischer Musenalmanach* is apparently the only source suitable for reconstructing the calendar of performances outside the court's management.

Due to the lack of sources, the reconstructed repertoire has two gaps: the first is from mid-October to the end of December 1778, when presumably no Italian troupe was active in Vienna anyway, as was the case in the preceding and following months; the second gap concerns the whole year 1780, for which I could not find any calendar for the Kärntnertheater, as the *Musenalmanach 1781* contains no theater program and the *Verzeichniß aller Schauspiele und musikalischen Akademien* seems to have appeared only from January 1, 1782, on.<sup>[26]</sup>

The beginning date of the publications of Viennese theater almanacs, the lack of sources for the 1780 repertoire, and the absence of an Italian opera ensemble after Bustelli's leaving in 1780 together provide a natural boundary for this investigation; the infrequent stagings of Italian operas in 1781–82 are recorded in the calendar table for the sake of completeness but are not a matter of further inquiry.

**Table 1: First page of the calendar table**

Date	Day	th.	Title	Typ	Sources	a° s.	Commentary
1771-12-29	Sun.		La moda ossia Gli scappigli domestici		Ta 149		
1771-12-30	Mon.		La moda ossia Gli scappigli domestici		Ta 149		
1771-12-31	Tues.		Il maestro di cappella	P	Ta 149		Den 31. zum erstemal ein neues Singspiel, il Maestro di Capella. Musik von Hm. Deller, Compositor des Herzogs von Würtemberg. (Ta 149)
1772-01-02	Thur.		Il maestro di cappella	Zin			2. Janvier: ... au Théâtre. Il maestro di capella opera buffa Italien ou la Weissin est bien mis. (Zin)
1772-01-02	Thur.		La moda ossia Gli scappigli domestici		Ta 149		
1772-01-05	Sun.		Le pescatrici		Ta 149		
1772-01-09	Thur.		Le pescatrici		Ta 151		
1772-01-12	Sun.		La moda ossia Gli scappigli domestici		Ta 151		
1772-01-14	Tues.	K.	La comadina fedele		Ta 152, Zin		14. Janvier: ... Au Théâtre allemand. Ou donna un Opera buffa, la Comadina fedele. (Zin)
1772-01-16	Thur.		Il maestro di cappella		Ta 152		
1772-01-20	Mon.		La comadina fedele		Ta 153		
1772-01-21	Tues.		Il filosofo innamorato	VP	Ta 153		Den 21. ... zum erstemal ein Intermezzo, oder Operetta: il Filosofo innamorato ... (Ta 153)
1772-01-22	Wed.		L'incognita persagliata		Ta 153		
1772-01-26	Sun.		Le pescatrici		Ta 154		
1772-01-29	Wed.	K.	La fiera di Venezia	P	Ta 154, WD		Den 29. zum erstemal: la fiera di Venezia, die Worte von dem arkadischen Dichter Boccherini, und die Musik von dem Herrn Salieri, welche vortreflich gesetzt ist, und die Zuschauer entzückte. Dieses Singspiel erhielt den vollkommensten Beyfall des Publikums, welches sich nicht sat daran schon konnte. (Ta 154) Mittwoch, den 29. ist in der privilegierten deutschen Schauibühne, nächst dem Kärnthertore, ein welches Singspiel, der Jahemarkt zu Venedig, aufgeführt worden, dem allerhöchste Se. Majestät der Kaiser mit den königl. Hoheiten zugegen gewesen. Dieses Singspiel, welches den folgenden Tag wiederholt wurde, findet seiner vortreflichen Poese sowohl, als einnehmender Musik, und angenehmer Anzierungen wegen, einen allgemeinen Beyfall. (WD February 1, 1772)
1772-01-30	Thur.		La fiera di Venezia		Ta 154		
1772-02-02	Sun.	B.	La fiera di Venezia	Zin			2. Février: ... Au Théâtre français. La fiera di Venezia m'ennuyé, il n'y a rien qu'une tres belle musique. (Zin)
1772-02-05	Wed.		L'incognita persagliata		Ta 155		
1772-02-08	Sat.		Le pescatrici		Ta 155		
1772-02-17	Mon.		La fiera di Venezia		Ta 156		
1772-02-18	Tues.		La fiera di Venezia		Ta 157		Dieses Singspiel hatte wegen der vortreflichen Musik und seines abwechselnden Schauspiels lange Zeit starken Zulauf. (Ta 157)
1772-02-23	Sun.		La fiera di Venezia		Ta 157		
1772-03-03	Tues.		La fiera di Venezia		Ta 158		
1772-04-20	Mon.	K.	Le fite gemelle	VP	Kh VII 123		20. April 1772: ... Und beim Kärnthertor wurde eine neue Opera buffa le fite gemelle genannt, musick del Sr. Nicolo Piccini, mit mehrern Applauso aufgeführt. (Kh VII 123)
1772-04-21	Tues.		Le fite gemelle	VP	Real 254, Ta 159		Den 21. zum erstemal ein lustiges Singspiel: le fite Gemelle, Musik von den Herren Piccini und Marcello von Kapua, gefiel nur mittelmälig. (Ta 159)
1772-04-23	Thur.		Le fite gemelle	Zin			23. Avril: Chez moi. Pius au Spectacle. Opera Italien entayé. (Zin)
1772-04-28	Tues.		Le fite gemelle		Real 269, Ta 160		
1772-05-03	Sun.		Le fite gemelle		Real 282, Ta 160		
1772-05-05	Tues.		Le fite gemelle		Real 282, Ta 160		

# The Organization of the Theatrical Year

The analysis of the reconstructed repertoire allows, first, accurate statements on the organization of the theatrical year and, above all, exact datings. While Italian theaters were organized according to the *stagione* principle and printed libretti trace a narrow boundary of the time frame for the performance of specific operas through their indication of year and season (e.g. carnival 1772), Vienna's libretti indicate only the year. Contrary to the Italian *stagione* system, the theater season in Vienna covered the whole year. Every day from Easter Monday to Shrove Tuesday, except for an Advent closure (December 16 to 25) and some days when theater performances were forbidden (all Fridays and several holidays), a piece of the annual repertoire was performed—a custom fundamentally maintained even today. The reconstruction of the calendar makes it possible for the first time to accurately allocate specific libretti to a performance year for this period. For example, Gassmann's opera *La casa di campagna* (libretto Vienna 1773) belonged to the repertoire in the year 1772/73, and not 1773/74, because it premiered at the peak of Vienna's theater year at the beginning of February 1773 and remained in the repertoire for only a short time, until the season's end (the end of February 1773), while other operas were staged for months. In fact, according to the reconstructed repertoire the program was organized through the accumulation of units: the season began with a single opera, after an average of three weeks—probably allowing for the next opera's rehearsals. A second was added and more works accrued gradually, while the former ones continued being staged (though less frequently) until at the peak of the theater year, during the carnival season, all the operas of the annual repertoire (save flops) alternated with one another. Unsuccessful operas were dropped after a few performances and possibly replaced or suspended and improved. In fact, the repertoire was—as were the works themselves—flexibly adapted to the current situation. The more successful an opera was, the more often it was performed. The obviousness of this “equation” appears, for instance, in the *Allgemeiner Theater Almanach 1782*, where readers could get an idea of each opera's success by the number of repetitions.<sup>[27]</sup> Although the “novelty” principle was so prominent—every year mainly new operas never staged before in Vienna were performed and also presented as “new” in newspapers—usually the same opera was attended repeatedly, and box holders could view a season's three or four most successful operas as many as 20–40 times in 10–11 months.

One peculiar finding that emerges from the reconstructed repertoire that is hardly conceivable today, not just for logistic reasons, is that both *teatri privilegiati*, namely the Burgtheater and the Kärntnerthortheater, offered the same programs according to a different weighting during the period under investigation, meaning that the same works were performed in alternation in the two theaters by the same persons. Since almanacs did not name the locations of performances for the time before October 1772, it is hardly possible to obtain accurate data for this period. In any case, a distribution by genres was usual in the years before the dismissal of the French ensemble, inasmuch as the Burgtheater was often called *théâtre français* or *französisches Theater* and the Kärntnerthortheater *deutsches Theater* or *théâtre allemand*.<sup>[28]</sup> A specific weighting of genres must have also been in use in 1772–76, because German spoken theater was performed more often at the Kärntnerthortheater and Italian opera more often at the Burgtheater, probably in accordance with the social structure of their respective audiences,<sup>[29]</sup> the demand for certain genres, and the size of the theaters: aristocrats and foreign diplomats, who mainly rented boxes in the smaller Burgtheater and were fluent in the Italian language, attended Italian operas more frequently, whereas the broader and rather bourgeois public of the Stadttheater, as the Kärntnerthortheater was also called, preferred German spoken

theater—judging by the box-office accounts. Ballet, meanwhile, was popular with both audiences and was attended in both theaters after the respective performances.

[3] Under Koháry opera buffa performances normally took place twice a week at the Burgtheater and once at the Kärntnertheater, and under Keglevich they were held three times a week at the Burgtheater (usually on Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday) and once at the Kärntnertheater (usually on Tuesday). It was only from November 1775 to February 1776, when it was necessary to make room for the French opera ensemble, that Italian operas were sometimes performed only three times a week. After the foundation of the Nationaltheater (1776–78), Italian operas were distributed equally between the two theaters (usually being performed on Monday and Wednesday at the Burgtheater and Thursday and Saturday or Sunday at the Kärntnertheater), while after the foundation of the Nationalsingpiel independent ensembles could avail themselves only of the Kärntnertheater, where Bustelli's second troupe, judging from the available data for Autumn 1779, staged Italian operas three times a week (alternating between one week on Tues.-Thur.-Sat. and one on Mon.-Wed.-Sun.).

The premieres of Italian operas were held more often at the Kärntnertheater (68%), probably due to its greater capacity, because premieres usually, as ticket sales show, drew far higher attendance than subsequent performances. Under Koháry and Keglevich 8–10 operas were newly staged every year, including one or two revivals, while in the 1776/77 season the number of revivals among the 11 productions was far greater due to the institutional transition and the emperor's orders of March 16, 1776, according to which the dismissed personnel were to stage only old works during the three months of bail money.<sup>[30]</sup> Under Bustelli almost no premieres were held—the guest ensemble performed its rehearsed repertory—but more operas were staged, up to 20 (!) in 1777/78.

## The Personnel

The annual theater organization in Vienna shows that, contrary to the seasonally assembled casts of Italian theaters, a relatively stable ensemble of singers was appointed for the Italian opera, with a permanent Kapellmeister,<sup>[31]</sup> an Italian theater-poet<sup>[32]</sup>—both of whom were involved in the impresario's specific repertoire choices—and an Italian prompter.<sup>[33]</sup> Singers were engaged for longer periods, thus allowing the *compagnia* to unite despite occasional fluctuations and create a harmonious team. For this reason, the debut of a new singer who had joined the troupe was mentioned or commented on in newspapers as a particular event in Vienna's theater life, while in the reports on individual premieres the overall success of a work prevailed over singer performances. After 1768 no singer names were mentioned in Viennese libretti, making it nearly impossible to reconstruct the cast for most operas. Hence, singers are not a focal element of this repertoire study.

## The Italian Repertory

The Italian repertory in the 1770s consisted almost exclusively of opere buffe. On the whole, they were mostly (approx. 74%) imported from Italy, but with quite variable yearly ratios of imported operas to those composed expressly for Vienna's theaters. As the [statistical data table](#) shows,



Viennese operas largely prevailed (70%) over imported works (30%) in 1772/73; the proportion is even more blatant in relation to the number of performances (76% to 24%). A similar ratio should have existed in the not totally reconstructable 1771/72 season, as may be inferred from the data relevant to the carnival season (end of December 1771 to Shrove Tuesday 1772). The fact that five premieres were held in each of these two theater seasons, while the programs of subsequent seasons usually featured only one premiere per year, could be related to the change in theater management from the rather ambitious Count Koháry—who engaged not only Gassmann and Salieri but also “external” composers such as Josef Bárta and Florian Johann Deller to write new operas—to the creditors’ committee under Keglevich, which economized to balance the budget. Furthermore, 1772 was the breakthrough year for the young Salieri, who created three new works between January and October 1772: *La fiera di Venezia*, *Il barone di Rocca antica*, and *La secchia rapita*. They were so successful as to totally dominate the schedule: 71 of 135 performance days in the 1772/73 season, more than half of all evenings, were devoted to these operas!

Starting from the 1773/74 season, the ratio shifted clearly in favor of imported operas, which accounted for 72–95% annually in terms of both number of works and performances, with peaks of 90–95% reached only during the last year before the foundation of the Nationaltheater and under Bustelli. Zechmeister interprets this “turn” as evidence that “after Gassmann’s death” (January 20, 1774) “the Viennese chamber opera that entered into Salieri’s musical legacy could barely prevail against the flood of Neapolitan musical comedies.”<sup>[34]</sup> This assertion must in some way be straightened out, inasmuch as, first, the sudden change in the ratio of Viennese operas to imported works had already occurred one year before Gassmann’s death and had little to do with Salieri’s inability to write successful operas, but rather with a possibly financially justified decision made by the creditors’ committee. Second, the collected data show that Salieri’s operas were at least as well received in Vienna as were the most successful imported works, and third, no Neapolitan musical comedies, no *commedeje pe’ mmusica* in Neapolitan dialect, came to Vienna. What came instead were easily exportable standard works written almost exclusively in high-level Italian, which had stood the test in Italy’s great opera centers.

Most imported operas were from internationally renowned contemporary Italian opera composers and librettists: Pasquale Anfossi, Giovanni Paisiello (the author of half of the operas in the 1775/76 repertoire), Nicola Piccinni, Baldassarre Galuppi, Giuseppe Gazzaniga, and Giovanni Battista Borghi<sup>[35]</sup> were most frequently represented, and under Bustelli also Pietro Guglielmi. The librettists most worthy of mention were Giovanni Bertati, Giuseppe Petrosellini, Filippo Livigni, Giovanni Battista Lorenzi, and Pietro Chiari.

Even though many of the listed composers from different Italian regions had studied in Naples, they wrote for all of the Italian and European theaters, inasmuch as opera buffa already represented a pan-Italian and international phenomenon in the 1770s. Not by chance was the main location for the premiere of operas imported to Vienna for the seasons from 1771/72 to 1776/77 not Naples (13%) but Venice (52%) by far—at that time the greatest opera production center and gathering point for the music manuscripts trade<sup>[36]</sup>—where the genre originated in its standard form (three-act play with seven persons), and Rome (35%), from where a number of smaller two-act intermezzi with four to five persons (traditional usage at the Teatro Valle) were imported to Vienna. Only under Bustelli’s management can other, also non-Italian, premiere towns be found, such as Prague and Dresden, the sites of Bustelli’s former activity.

[4] The imported operas came to Vienna in many ways. The Keglevich papers occasionally

mention agents or other intermediaries: the music sheets for Paisiello's *Don Anchise Campanone* were forwarded from Venice to Vienna via a certain Joseph (presumably Giuseppe) Fioretti,<sup>[37]</sup> a "sig. Allegri" acted as an intermediary with the famous Venetian copyist Giuseppe Baldan for the score of Paisiello's *L'innocente fortunata*,<sup>[38]</sup> and Giuseppe Alcinai appears several times as an intermediary for libretti, scores, and artists.<sup>[39]</sup> Singers also participated in such opera transfers, as documented in the Budapest material. The tenor Leopoldo Burgioni was paid, for instance, "for librettos from Italy,"<sup>[40]</sup> and the singer Giuseppe Pinetti conveyed Gazzaniga's *L'isola d'Alcina*.<sup>[41]</sup> Once in Vienna, according to the custom of the time, operas were worked up and adapted to the singers' capabilities, to censorship requirements, and partly also to the prevailing taste.<sup>[42]</sup> The same Italian opera repertory was, indeed, widespread all over Europe, but within the diverse cultural contexts it was not only embedded in differently organized production systems but also differently adapted and received in accordance with the specific requirements and expectations.

## The Reception of the Italian Repertory of the 1770s in Vienna

### I. Methodological Considerations and Instructions for the Statistical Data Table

An opera's success depends on multiple factors—plot, music, staging, performance, and the degree to which it met the expectations of the public can determine its popularity. An accurate analysis of the possibly complex elements that influence the success of individual operas requires case studies that should be based on the specific Viennese version of the single works. Conversely, the following considerations will focus on "the first step," namely the "measurement" of such "success rates" in the context of Vienna's theater organization as described above.

In the musicological literature, the sole basis for assessing the success of an eighteenth-century opera in a specific town is usually, apart from the extant written documents, the absolute number of performances. However, this measuring method, in principle plausible, must be drastically relativized with regard to the cumulative organization of the Viennese theater seasons: whereas an opera premiered at the beginning of a season had perfectly good prospects of being performed very frequently before Shrove Tuesday, an opera premiered during the carnival period did not, because in the new theater year the repertoire featured new operas. That is why absolute performance frequencies cannot serve as the only benchmark in the context of Vienna's cumulative theater season system. As a consequence, the column of absolute performance frequencies ("perf.") on my [statistical data table](#) always has a column next to it for the respective relative frequency ("rel. fr."). The latter column indicates how often the specific opera was performed in relation to the number of performance days that were still forthcoming, thus also taking into account the floating number of yearly performance days, which depended on the fact that the beginnings and ends of Vienna's theater seasons were connected to movable feasts. The aggregation of these two frequencies results in an unbiased outcome, albeit one that is less informative for operas premiered at the end of the carnival period, for which the relative frequency figure on the statistical data table is enclosed in brackets. In the case of Anfossi's *Metilde ritrovata*, for instance, which was performed on the season's last six evenings in February 1775, the scanty number of performances (six) and the maximum though less significant relative frequency of 100% are insufficient to assess the opera's success, whereas the actual exceptional

success it enjoyed is testified both by its being a revival (R, third and fourth frequency column)—a sure proof of a high level of success—and by the high sales rate.

**Table 2: First page of the statistical data table. The color coding corresponds to the theater years.**

Date	Day	th.	Type	Title	Composer	Librettist	perf.	rel. fr.	perf.	rel. fr.	pr. tot.	pr. s.	pr. b.	pr. f.	trend
1771-12-31	Tues.		P	<i>Il maestro di cappella</i>	Celzer	Palombi	3	14%							
1772-01-29	Wed.	K	P	<i>La fiera di Venezia</i>	Salieri	Boccherini	7	170%							
1772-04-20/21	Mon./Tues.	K	VP	<i>Le finit gemelle</i>	Piccinni	Petrosellini	7	5%							
1772-05-12	Tues.	B	P	<i>Il barone di Rocca antica</i>	Salieri	Petrosellini	30	23%							
1772-06-23	Tues.		P	<i>I riviniani</i>	Gassmann	Boccherini	15	13%							
1772-07-19	Sun		P	<i>La diavolessa</i>	Barta	Goldoni	6	5%							
1772-08-12	Wed.		VP	<i>L'Americano</i>	Piccinni	A. Lungi?	8	8%							
1772-09-22	Tues.		VP	<i>La locanda</i>	Gazzaniga	Bertati	18	21%							
1772-10-21	Wed.	K	P	<i>La secchia rapita</i>	Salieri	Boccherini/Tassoni	21	31%			899	849	30	999	520
1772-11-15	Sun	B	R	<i>La fiera di Venezia</i>	Salieri	Boccherini			20	38%	703	681	22	747	626
1772-12-26	Sat.	B	R	<i>Le pescatrici</i>	Gassmann	Goldoni			5	15%					
1773-02-03	Wed.	B	P	<i>La casa di campagna</i>	Gassmann	Boccherini	5	136%			491	469	22	535	290
1773-04-12	Mon.	B	VP	<i>Il conte buggiano</i>	Piccinni	?	11	7%			368	349	19	406	102
1773-04-20	Tues.	B	R	<i>Il finto pazzo per amore</i>	Sacchini?	Marani			13	8%	202	187	15	232	315
1773-05-11	Tues.	K	VP	<i>L'amore soldato</i>	Felici	Tassis	27	18%			375	346	29	443	145
1773-06-08	Tues.	K	P	<i>La locandiera</i>	Salieri	Poggi / Goldoni	37	27%			570	520	50	670	283
1773-07-20	Tues.	K	VP	<i>Il puntiglio amoroso</i>	Galuppi	C. Gozzi	24	21%			371	336	35	441	168
1773-08-31	Tues.	K	VP	<i>Metilde ritrovata</i>	Anfossi	Petrosellini	27	29%			295	268	27	349	298
1773-10-18	Mon.	K	VP	<i>Il Calandrano</i>	Gazzaniga	Bertati	12	19%			435	403	32	499	285
1773-12-09	Thur.	K	VP	<i>L'isola disabitata</i>	G. Scarlatti	Goldoni	9	25%			787	740	47	881	385
1774-01-19	Wed.	K	R	<i>La fiera di Venezia</i>	Salieri	Boccherini			6	133%	743	695	48	839	298
1774-04-04	Mon.	B	VP	<i>L'isola d'Alcina</i>	Gazzaniga	Bertati	49	27%			563	543	20	603	384
1774-04-26	Tues.	K	R	<i>Il viaggiatore ridicolo</i>	Gassmann	Goldoni			29	17%	571	527	44	659	195
1774-06-01	Wed.	K	VP	<i>L'astratto</i>	Piccinni	Petrosellini	37	25%			483	436	47	577	422
1774-06-28	Wed.	K	VP	<i>L'amore in campagna</i>	Borghesi	Chiari	9	7%			320	290	30	380	82
1774-08-03	Wed.	K	VP	<i>La schiava amorosa</i>	Borghesi	Capua	4	4%			300	283	17	334	152
1774-09-10	Sat.	K	VP	<i>I visionari</i>	Astanta	Bertati	13	14%			607	589	18	643	262
1774-10-11	Tues.	K	P	<i>La calamita de' cuori</i>	Salieri	Boccherini / Casti / Poggi / Goldoni	22	29%			899	852	47	993	565
1774-12-06	Tues.	K	VP	<i>Il tamburo notturno</i>	Paisiello	Lorenzi	9	20%			499	453	46	591	192
1775-01-29	Tues.	K	VP	<i>L'inimico delle donne</i>	Galuppi	Bertati	4	115%			516	485	31	578	157

Unfortunately, daily theater box-office accounts are available only for the period of Keglevich's management (October 1, 1772, to February 20, 1776). They afford a fair insight into the respective sales rates, even though these data require further reflection to serve as a criterion for assessing an opera's success. First, these records concern only tickets sold at evening box offices, not the actual number of persons occupying the auditoria, because boxes were rented on a monthly or half-year basis, and certain persons—as Otto Schindler emphasizes in his in-depth study—were entitled to free tickets.<sup>[43]</sup> Second, the demand for box subscriptions was concentrated almost exclusively on the Burgtheater,<sup>[44]</sup> for which reason the sales ratio calculation should probably include more subscription spectators for the Burgtheater than for the Kärntnertheater.

Third, external factors—such as particular social events or popular ballet performances—may explain exceptionally high sales rates, especially as far as outliers are concerned. For instance, the surprising 802 tickets sold for the performance of Borghi's not particularly popular opera *L'amore in campagna* (211 tickets sold on average) on July 17, 1774,<sup>[45]</sup> at the Kärntnertheater were due to the visit of the Ottoman envoy Soleiman Effendi, who performed his prayer in his box publicly during the second act and probably aroused curiosity with his entourage. Even less exotic visitors seem to have attracted more people to theaters. When the emperor and his guest, Albert, Duke of Saxony-Teschen, attended the performance of Salieri's *La finta scema* on October 12, 1775, for instance, 787 tickets were sold, a number never reached even for premieres at the less spacious Burgtheater. This figure was exceeded if at all on Shrove Tuesdays and only once during the period under examination, on January 6, 1774 (826 tickets sold), for a performance of Gazzaniga's *Il Calandrano* followed by the premiere of Georges Noverre's last ballet before his departure for Milan, *Les Horaces et les Curiaces*. For the same ballet on February 14, 1774 (Carnival Monday), 1253 tickets were sold at the

Kärntnerthortheater, an absolute record number for the period under analysis and normally attained only by German plays.

Despite such relativization, box-office sales data—if contextualized—provide valuable evidence of the “relative attendance”<sup>[46]</sup> of a specific opera. Unlike those of Link (for 1783–92) and Zechmeister (for 1748–49), my inquiry is based on the number of daily ticket sales and not of the daily cash amounts, the latter being less significant for an assessment of success owing to the existence of different price categories and, even more importantly, less comparable because of price fluctuations through the years.

[5] In the statistical data table for each opera the tickets sold are recorded in terms of absolute (“total” column) and average numbers (“avg.” column) as well as average sales for second, third, and fourth performances (“trend” column). The last criterion constitutes a significant statistical category because, whereas premiere sales reveal more about the public’s expectations with respect to a new title and/or a certain composer, the sales trend data relevant to subsequent performances gauge actual demand and, hence, an opera’s success. The choice of three performances after the premiere reflects the fact that the least successful operas in Keglevich’s period were performed four times. This amount thus provides a less biased statistic comparability with other operas.

Ticket sales for premieres were above average, arguably partly also for social reasons, and they thus receive particular attention on the statistical data table. While mostly single tickets were sold for the other performances, and the total number of tickets sold corresponded more or less to the actual number of persons who accessed the theater by buying tickets,<sup>[47]</sup> more “box tickets” were bought for premieres, each potentially including several attendees. Therefore, the statistical data table splits the number of premiere ticket sales (“pr. tot.” column) further into single tickets (“pr. s.” column) and box tickets (“pr. b.” column) to take into account the social status of the audience at premieres and above all to approximate the number of walk-in spectators (“pr. f.” column), a fictive number calculated on the basis of the average of three persons per box, as assumed by Schindler.<sup>[48]</sup>

## II. Detailed Results

The collected statistical data thus aggregated and linked with the comments and reports from journals, almanacs, and diaries inserted in the [calendar table](#) provide a fair multidimensional, though at first sight not always evident, view of each opera’s success. Flops are the easiest findings to discern: one may conclude that an opera performed only one to six times and not premiered just at season’s end, thus presenting a low relative frequency, failed to meet expectations and was removed from the repertoire. Until the 1776/77 season this occurred once or twice a year, and any contemporary criticism normally confirms that the opera in question was unsuccessful, as for instance in the case of Bárta’s *La diavolessa* (6 perf., 5% rel. fr.), about which the *Realzeitung* printed the following devastating comment: “Words are squalid and music did not appeal” (“Die Worte elend, und die Musik gefiel nicht.”)<sup>[49]</sup> This concerned works both of less known—Borghi or Antonio Tozzi—and well-known composers. For instance, Paisiello’s *Il duello*<sup>[50]</sup> (3 perf., 3% rel. fr.) “did not meet approval” (“keine Approbation gefunden”) according to Khevenhüller,<sup>[51]</sup> and Galuppi’s *L’inimico delle donne*<sup>[52]</sup> (4 perf., sales trend 157) also apparently failed to meet the high expectations raised by the announcement in the *Historisch-kritische Theaterchronik von Wien*: “The music is by Buranello and is said to be very good” (“Die Musik ist von Buranello, und soll sehr gut seyn”).<sup>[53]</sup> Local Kapellmeister were not immune to failures either;

Salieri's *Daliso e Delmita* (5 perf., 5% rel. fr.) is a clear case, and the comments on Gassmann's *La casa di campagna—Realzeitung*: "appealed very little" ("gefiel sehr wenig"); Zinzendorf: "Opera plat, Musique indifferente"—explain contrasting data (5 perf., high but not significant relative frequency because premiered in February, yet with high sales rates).<sup>[54]</sup>

It is striking that the rare attempts in the serious genre did not prove successful in general: Bustelli's attempt with Johann Gottlieb Naumann's *Armida* and Luigi Bologna's *L'isola disabitata* as well as Salieri's *Daliso e Delmita*, an *azione pastorale* with choruses and dances, may be classified as flops. Only the *azione tragica Piramo e Tisbe* by Coltellini and Venanzio Rauzzini, performed by the seria singer Katharina Schindler, formerly active in Vienna, with an independent small ensemble, was well received (22% rel. fr.), as reviews also confirm.<sup>[55]</sup>

Interestingly enough, the success assessment reveals that whereas for most operas performed in Vienna under Koháry and Keglevich fair copies by Viennese copyists are preserved in the Austrian National Library, no Viennese scores are available for operas that people disliked. This probably means that they were not copied for the court because of a lack of interest.

For operas performed with a moderate frequency but not present on the program until the end of the season, a clearer picture is provided only through consideration of the whole context. Piccinni's Roman intermezzo *Il conte baggiano*, for instance, which inaugurated the 1773/74 season and was performed 11 times, is revealed to be a flop only upon closer scrutiny.<sup>[56]</sup> In fact, while normally an opening opera remained on the program for around three weeks before a second opera was added, *Il conte baggiano* was replaced after only one week with a revival of the opera *Il finto pazzo per amore* by Sacchini<sup>[57]</sup> after an unsuccessful premiere with "scanty acclaim" ("wenig Beyfall"),<sup>[58]</sup> a total of five performances, and greatly shrinking sales rates (35 tickets sold on April 17, 1773). Two weeks later, *Il conte baggiano* reappeared on the program, probably after having been adapted. The second new opera, Alessandro Felici's *L'amore soldato*, was finally premiered on May 11, but immediately after the premiere the *primadonna* Costanza Baglioni fell ill<sup>[59]</sup> and *Il conte baggiano* was performed again. The theater remained empty (23 tickets sold on May 13, and 35 on May 16!) and the intermezzo was definitively dropped. Interestingly enough, Khevenhüller remarked at the beginning of the 1773/74 season that after Koháry's bankruptcy "the direction [was] in general totally disarranged" ("es mit der Direction überhaupt sehr verwirret zugehet"), such that he and others discontinued their box rental.<sup>[60]</sup> After the management takeover, Keglevich and the creditors' committee had continued the 1772/73 season with premieres and revivals of Gassmann's and Salieri's operas and now had to cope with the problem of the new season on their own.

[6] The case of an opera not remaining on the program until the end of the theater season was very frequent under Bustelli. Altogether, considering Bustelli's program and Joseph II's assertion that Bustelli's troupe was "very bad, and generally not appealing" ("sehr schlecht ist, und allgemeinlich mißfällt"),<sup>[61]</sup> one has the impression that the *compagnia* could keep afloat only by continuously offering new operas. It is not clear, however, why some operas were also very successful in this period and were distributed over the whole season, especially Guglielmi's *Orlando paladino*, with 29 performances and a relative frequency of 22%, very high for this season, which rebuts Link's assertion that in 1790/91 "three operas by Guglielmi come as a surprise, since his works had not previously found favor there."<sup>[62]</sup> Having said this, an in-depth examination of Bustelli's program is impossible for lack of sales data and other sources.

Since sales data allow a considerably more differentiated analysis, the single cases described in the following are taken exclusively from Keglevich's period. To provide a summary of Koháry's

period, three operas were particularly successful, namely Salieri's *Il barone di Rocca antica*, Gazzaniga's *La locanda*, and Gassmann's *I rovinati*; Salieri's opera—with 30 performances, not 18, as Zechmeister reports,<sup>[63]</sup> and a relative frequency of 23%—was by far more successful than his teacher's work, a tendency also identifiable in the subsequent period. For the 1776/77 season, under Fanti's and Kral's private *impresa*, respectively, we can state in summary that the repertoire consisted of revivals with an above average ratio: the two most successful operas of the former year were performed again (Paisiello's *La frascatana* and Anfossi's *Il geloso in cimento*), and old operas reappeared, such as *La contessina* and *L'amore artigiano*, the highlights of the deceased Kapellmeister Gassmann, as well as Galuppi's *Il marchese villano* in the Viennese adaptation of 1767. The last two, together with some newly imported operas, Anfossi's *L'avar* and Paisiello's *Le due contesse*, seem to have been particularly successful.

The aggregation of different assessment data indicates that, under Keglevich's management, a whole series of imported opere buffe must have been particularly successful, as were several operas by the young Salieri. Judging from the total number of performances in the premiere year, the following operas seem to have been the absolute highlights:

**Table 3: Operas with the highest number of performances**

Composer	Title	Number of performances	Relative frequency
Gazzaniga	<i>L'isola d'Alcina</i> <sup>[64]</sup>	49	27%
Paisiello	<i>La frascatana</i> <sup>[65]</sup>	42	27%
Anfossi	<i>Il geloso in cimento</i> <sup>[66]</sup>	39	27%
Piccinni	<i>L'astratto ovvero Il giocatore fortunato</i>	37	25%
Salieri	<i>La locandiera</i>	37	27%
Anfossi	<i>La finta giardiniera</i>	37	27%

A closer look reveals that all these operas had been premiered at the season's beginning, when they had little competition from other operas. However, all show high relative frequencies (25–27%), but on the basis of the last criterion, other operas seem to rank at the highest level:

**Table 4: Operas with the highest relative frequency**

Composer	Title	Number of performances	Relative frequency
Salieri	<i>La secchia rapita</i>	21	31%
Salieri	<i>La calamita de' cuori</i> <sup>[67]</sup>	22	29%
Anfossi	<i>Metilde ritrovata</i>	27	29%

If one takes the performance figures of these works, the traditional success-assessment criterion, as the sole basis for their success, they would have been interpreted as less exceptional. However, their relative frequencies show that they must have been at least as successful as those listed above!

An even greater surprise with respect to the traditional performance number criterion is the relative frequency aggregated with the sales rates of *L'isola disabitata*, an opera by the Vienna-based composer Giuseppe Scarlatti, already premiered in Venice in 1757. Its performance figure of nine would not have been so striking, but taking into account the cumulative seasonal system of Vienna's theaters (25% rel. fr.) and sales rates (trend 385, average 342), it becomes evident that this opera must likewise belong to the "pool" of extraordinarily successful works.

Moreover, if one considers sales rates, the occurrence of a revival, and the idea that the most popular opera of the year was naturally chosen for the season's peak of Shrove Tuesday, an opera that has not yet been mentioned stands out: Salieri's *La fiera di Venezia*.<sup>[68]</sup> This was the only opera in the period under examination with two revivals and three performances on Shrove

Tuesdays (1772, 1773, 1774), and it enjoyed exceptionally high sales rates.<sup>[69]</sup> Unfortunately, no sales data are available for its premiere year, but several sources document an above-average popularity and strong attendance of this opera buffa for this period: regarding its premiere on January 29, 1772, the *Theateralmanach* wrote: “the music, admirably composed by Mister Salieri, delighted the audience. This opera received extraordinary applause from the audience, which could not get enough.”<sup>[70]</sup> Three weeks later, in the same almanac, the following note appeared: “This opera enjoyed ... great audience approval for a long time” (“Dieses Singspiel hatte ... lange Zeit starken Zulauf”).<sup>[71]</sup> During the following season, from November on, *La fiera di Venezia* was taken up again, and the sales figures for the first five performances (703, 905, 534, 440, 462) speak volumes, as do the preserved sales figures for the Shrove Tuesdays (740 and 784) and the overall average of ticket sales (416 for the first and second revival). In comparison, the highest overall average figures for the other operas of this period are usually below 350, and the other two available sales rates for Shrove Tuesdays are 402 and 446.

The last two values refer to the already mentioned opera *Metilde ritrovata* by Anfossi (402) and to Paisiello’s *La frascatana* (446). The first work was possibly used, after the successful premiere year of 1773/74 (for frequency data, see above; trend 298), during carnival 1775 (trend 378) as a substitute for Galuppi’s less successful opera *L’inimico delle donne*. The reason for its extraordinary success seems to reside—judging from the comments in the *Realzeitung* and *Theateralmanach*—in its “excellent music” (“vortrefliche Musik”).<sup>[72]</sup> Later on, in 1781 it was also staged as a German singspiel in Vienna under the title *Die verfolgte Unbekannte*. The second, *La frascatana*, was definitely the most popular opera of the 1775/76 season and beyond. The average sales figure of 321 tickets sold for the three performances after the premiere, the total number of tickets sold (9243 in a single season), and the aforementioned frequencies indicate that it was certainly a success, and many contemporary comments confirm this: Khevenhüller stated that *La frascatana* was “extraordinarily applauded” (“ungemain applaudiret”) at the premiere,<sup>[73]</sup> Zinzendorf made enthusiastic comments on three performances distributed over the year,<sup>[74]</sup> and Metastasio defined it as a “very beautiful opera,” remarking that Paisiello received “a long and roaring applause”<sup>[75]</sup> when he happened to be present at a revival during the second season, as also confirmed by an account in the *Realzeitung*, in which *La frascatana* was even defined as “the favorite play of our public and musical masterwork of this genre” (“das Lieblingschauspiel unsers Publikums und das Meisterstück der Musik dieser Gattung”).<sup>[76]</sup>

[7] The sales rates also confirm the ascertained successfulness of the other operas. As to the sales trend immediately following the premiere, three operas by Salieri turn out to be the best performers by far: the aforementioned *Fiera di Venezia* as well as *La calamita de’ cuori* (trend 565 and overall average 335) and *La secchia rapita* (trend 529 and overall average 321). The last two attracted a larger audience perhaps because they stood out from the ordinary repertory for various reasons: compared with the simple standard ensembles of Italian opere buffe, both operas presented an unusually rich instrumentation, choruses, and a mix, rare in imported operas, of comic and serious elements typical of the genre in the *dramma eroicomico* *La secchia rapita*, which was a striking and appealing special feature for the expert public.<sup>[77]</sup> In the Goldonian *La calamita de’ cuori*, this was instead deemed inconsistent and seems to have given rise to many discussions.<sup>[78]</sup>

Sales rates as well as contemporary comments also confirm the success discerned for the aforementioned imported operas. The *Theaterchronik* stated: “The opera, l’Isola d’Alcina pleased very well” (“Die Oper, l’Isola d’Alcina hat sehr gefallen”),<sup>[79]</sup> and Khevenhüller noted in his diary that “also the music pleased very well” (“auch die Music sehr gefallen”)<sup>[80]</sup> in that opera, which

definitely corresponds to the sales trend after the premiere (378) and the record number of 49 performances in a single year. Of *L'astratto* (excellent trend of 422 and high total number of 7671 tickets sold), the *Realzeitung* wrote that “the theater house was left content” (“man verließ das Schauspielhaus zufrieden”),<sup>[81]</sup> and both the text and music of *La locandiera* (trend 283, but high total number 7650 of tickets sold) met with “general deserved approval” (“allgemeinen verdienten Beyfall”).<sup>[82]</sup> The opera *Il geloso in cemento* was defined by Khevenhüller as “fairly successful,” though it attracted “less audience than the Frascatana” (“zimmlich reussiret, aber doch weniger als die Frascatana Zulauff gehabt”),<sup>[83]</sup> which definitely corresponds to the statistical data (a sales trend like *La frascatana* of 322, but an overall average of only 174 tickets sold per evening). The only opera whose high frequency values are strongly relativized by the sales rates is *La finta giardiniera* (a trend of only 241 and an overall average of 170). Unfortunately, up to now no comments that would provide more accurate indications on the success of this opera have emerged, except for Khevenhüller’s renewed statement that Anfossi’s two operas, *Il geloso in cemento* and *La finta giardiniera*, were performed with “less applause” (“mit wenigern Applauso”) than *La frascatana*.<sup>[84]</sup>

The overall averages of the operas of this season (1775/76) suffered slightly from the competition of Hamon’s French troupe, which gave guest performances in Vienna starting from November 1775 and drew public from the Italian ensemble. The opera that seems to have suffered most was Salieri’s *La finta scema*,<sup>[85]</sup> which achieved an overall sales average of 368 before the arrival of the French troupe, despite the “mediocre acclaim” (“applause mediocre”) Khevenhüller claimed it to have received,<sup>[86]</sup> but afterwards fell to 116. This was also true of Paisiello’s *L’innocente fortunata*, whose sales average fell from 303 (though this accounts only for the first three performances) to 136, for which reason these two operas fall into the larger class of only moderately successful operas, which also includes works such as Paisiello’s *Il tamburo notturno*. The *Theaterchronik* offered a rare (if not unique) vindication of this Neapolitan opera and advised the spectators to do justice to the work in their judgment of its performance in Vienna:

On December 6, the opera entitled: *il tamburro* [sic] *notturmo* (*The Ghost with the Drum*) was staged for the first time; it did not receive too much acclaim by the audience, albeit real connoisseurs admit that the music is among the best. To have a fair concept of the author, however, it is necessary to consider that in the first place this opera was written for other voices; second, since the music was not conducted by the composer himself, it necessarily had to lose some expressiveness; and third, as it was written according to the harmony of Neapolitan poetry, it lost much of its grace through translation into Tuscan. However, one cannot blame the local theater poet, who deserves all possible indulgence, because he had to translate the writing so as to maintain the same music, thus being extremely constrained, and had to translate, so to speak, word by word, syllable by syllable. Consequently, in order for the music to be sung, the poet had to cut it down to its size, however difficult it is to make poetry comply with music.<sup>[87]</sup>

Except for the third point, the arguments presented here apply to all of the imported operas, and the “connoisseurs” were probably aware of this, for which reason they normally appreciated and judged mainly the music of these works. In any case, *Il tamburo notturno*, attained a relative frequency of 20% despite its mediocre sales figures and therefore falls, like Paisiello’s *L’innocente fortunata*, Gazzaniga’s *Calandrano*, and Galuppi’s *Il puntiglio amoroso*, into a “good central field” as far as its success is concerned.

### III. Conclusions

[8] In the analysis of sales data, it is striking that German plays (whose original language, by the



way, was not necessarily German) attracted a good deal more public than all the other spectacles, probably mainly because of the broad audience's greater familiarity with the language. At times, the data give the impression that a German rival event influenced the ticket sales for an Italian opera—as an extreme case might show, when the actually popular *Isola d'Alcina* sold only 84 tickets on January 14, 1775, at the Burgtheater, compared with the 1225 sold for the comedy *Der Universalerbe* at the Kärntnerthortheater—though in most cases sales seem mostly independent from each other. The contrary applies to French opéras comiques, as the sales data relevant to the, albeit very short, documented period clearly show: while until October 1775 for the Italian opera yearly averages amounted to 221 to 234 tickets sold each evening, starting from November 1775 the average underwent a sharp decline to only 160 tickets per evening until February 1776. The reason for this gradient probably lies in the lengthy absence of French events (from carnival 1772 to October 1775) and the French troupe's full and varied repertoire (from November 1775 to February 1776), as emphasized by the *Realzeitung*.<sup>[88]</sup> On the contrary, the sales figures for German plays remained high despite the French competition, evidently because they addressed a different segment of the public, while Italian and French operas shared the same audience, consisting mostly of aristocrats and foreign diplomatic representatives.

As concerns the Italian opera per se, the relevant sales data indicate that the rare absolute premieres in the period under examination attracted larger audiences than the rather common Viennese premieres of imported works, which accounted in the examined Keglevich period for the bulk of the repertoire. Sales data for revivals mostly approach or even exceed those for absolute premieres, thus strongly confirming the presumption that only successful operas were revived.

**Table 5: Sales data in terms of premiere type**

	Premiere average	Sales trend	Overall average
<b>Premieres</b>	685	395	283
<b>Viennese premieres</b>	450	241	216
<b>Repertoire</b>	512	362	346

The sales data also show net differences between works by local composers, i.e. those active in Vienna independently of their origin, and nonresident composers.

**Table 6: Sales data in terms of provenience of the composer**

	Premiere average	Sales trend	Overall average
<b>Local composers</b>	692	387	311
<b>Nonresident composers</b>	437	257	234

Similar ratios appear in relation to the demand for box tickets on premieres (for local composers 40 on average, for nonresidents approx. 30). It is hardly surprising that works by well-known personalities, such as Gassmann and Salieri, whom Vienna's public met day after day and year after year as Kapellmeister in theaters, aroused more interest than others. Salieri's operas were apparently considerably more successful than his teacher's works, but this could also be due to the short period examined coinciding with the breakthrough of the young Salieri, while Gassmann's greatest successes belonged to the past.<sup>[89]</sup>

The authors of the most successful imported operas include the leading composers and librettists of Italy and all of Europe, with Anfossi—always in cooperation with the librettist Bertati—seemingly being quantitatively slightly more represented. As for the other star composers of that time, one outstanding work always seems to enjoy more success, such as Paisiello and Livigni's *La frascatana*, Piccinni and Petrosellini's *L'astratto*, Gazzaniga and Bertati's

*L'isola d'Alcina*, and Guglielmi and Nunziato Porta's *Orlando paladino*, at the same time clearly revealing who the most popular librettists of the time were. Carlo Goldoni's "old" libretti, on the contrary, were only set to music by composers residing in Vienna, who otherwise would have had only the house poets (Coltellini, Boccherini, De Gamerra) available.

Some highly successful libretti contain—according to the trend of the time—sentimental traits (*Metilde ritrovata*, *La frascatana*), while others are based on long-known subjects (*L'isola d'Alcina*, *Orlando paladino*). However, a content analysis of single works details would go beyond the scope of this study and perhaps not address the point because, while in contemporary comments the libretti were only rarely considered and always with a critical eye—for *I visionari* "the book's morals" were deemed "very bad" ("Die Moral des Buchs ist sehr schlecht")<sup>[90]</sup> and for *La calamita de' cuori* "the subject [was] too childish" (see [note 78](#))—normally the music of opere buffe was praised to the skies. *La fiera di Venezia* is one of the very rare cases in which "excellent poetry" was emphasized. The reason for the outstanding success of this opera, which earned its author the appellations "great composer" ("großer Tonkünstler")<sup>[91]</sup> and "famous composer" ("berühmter Tonkünstler") in the announcements of his subsequent operas,<sup>[92]</sup> is probably that it was found appealing in regard to all the operatic elements: in the *Wienerisches Diarium* it was praised "for its excellent poetry, charming music, and agreeable decoration" ("vortreflichen Poesie ... einnehmender Musik, und angenehmer Auszierungen"),<sup>[93]</sup> in the *Theateralmanach* "for its excellent music and varied play" ("wegen der vortreflichen Musik und seines abwechselnden Schauspiels").<sup>[94]</sup> For all the other successful operas, by contrast, it is mostly only the high quality of music that was unanimously praised.<sup>[95]</sup> This reception attitude is consistently also found in all the written comments to the buffa genre, from Sonnenfels's well-known tirades against opera buffa libretti<sup>[96]</sup> to several comments in the *Realzeitung*, for instance after the absolute premiere of Gassmann's *I rovinati*: "Rarely is the poetry of all these operas worth mentioning; the main thing is music, play, and the singing of opera singers."<sup>[97]</sup> The "nonsense" of buffa libretti was railed at repeatedly with typical Enlightenment argumentations.<sup>[98]</sup> At the same time, however, the reviewers always pointed out that the Italian opera would "always maintain the great primacy of good music" ("den großen Vorzug der guten Musik behaupten"),<sup>[99]</sup> which is why "music lovers appreciate the Italians" ("die Liebhaber der Musik schätzen die Italiener").<sup>[100]</sup> Thus, Italian opera was held up as something exclusive, really appreciated only by connoisseurs, as was asserted also in the aforementioned report on Paisiello's *Il tamburo notturno* as well as in the *Taschenbuch des Wiener Theaters 1777*: "in Vienna it has always been the destiny of the Italian opera to be loved and attended only by a small number of music enthusiasts and experts."<sup>[101]</sup>

## List of Abbreviations and Source Sigla

AT = *Almanach des Theaters in Wien 1774: Nebst einer Abhandlung von der Kunst und dem Stande des Schauspielers* (Vienna: Kurzböck, 1774).

AT-OeStA/HHStA = Austrian State Archives

avg. = average amount of tickets sold (overall average)

B = Burgtheater

Bur = Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in Germany, the Netherlands, and United Provinces: Or, the Journal of a Tour Through Those Countries, Undertaken to Collect Materials for*

[a \*General History of Music\*, 2 vols. \(London: T. Becket, 1773\): vol. 1.](#)

GT = *Geschichte und Tagebuch der Wiener Schaubühne*, ed. Johann Heinrich Friedrich Müller (Vienna: Trattner, 1776).

K = Kärntnerthortheater

K15-23 = Keglevich Család P 421 V/15-23 = fascicles 73-81, Magyar Országos Levéltár [Hungarian National Archives], Budapest.

Kh = *Aus der Zeit Maria Theresias: Tagebuch des Fürsten Johann Josef Khevenhüller-Metsch, Kaiserlichen Obersthofmeisters, 1742-1776*, ed. Rudolf Graf Khevenhüller-Metsch and Hanns Schlitter, 8 vols. (Vienna: Holzhausen, 1907-72).

Mus = *Wienerischer Musenalmanach*

n° s. t. = number of tickets sold per performance

P = absolute premiere

perf. = number of performances (absolute frequency)

pr. b. = number of box tickets sold at the premiere

pr. f. = fictive number of "walk-in spectators" at the premiere

pr. s. = number of single tickets sold at the premiere

pr. tot. = total number of tickets sold at the premiere

R = revival

Real = [Kaiserlich Königliche allergnädigst privilegirte Realzeitung der Wissenschaften, Künste und der Kommerzien \(1771-78\)](#).

rel. fr. = relative frequency

Ta = [Theatralalmanach von Wien für das Jahr 1773: Verfasset von einigen Liebhabern der deutschen Schaubühne; zu finden in dem k.k. priv. Realzeitungscomtoir. Zweyter Theil](#) (Vienna: Kurzböck, 1773).

Ta' = [Theatralalmanach von Wien für das Jahr 1774: Verfasset von einigen Liebhabern der deutschen Schaubühne; zu finden in dem k.k. priv. Realzeitungscomtoir. Dritter Theil](#) (Vienna: Kurzböck, 1774).

Tb = [Taschenbuch des Wiener Theaters 1777](#) (Vienna: Trattner, 1777).

Tch = [Historisch-kritische Theaterchronik von Wien: Nebst einigen Nachrichten von erbländischen und fremden Theatern; verfaßt von Freunden der Schaubühne](#), 3 vols. (Vienna: Bader, 1774).

th. = theater

total = total number of tickets sold

trend = average sales for the second, third, and fourth performance

Ver = [\[Vollständiges\] Verzeichniß aller Schauspiele und musikalischen Akademien](#), ed. Salomo Friedrich Schletter (Vienna: Ghelensche Erben, 1782 and 1783).

VP = Viennese premiere

WD = [Wienerisches Diarium](#)

Zin = Zinzendorf's unpublished diaries, AT-OeStA/HHStA KA Nachlass Zinzendorf Tagebücher 16-27

## References

1. Among others, see Elisabeth Grossegger, *Gluck und d’Afflisio: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Verpachtung des Burgtheaters (1765/67–1770); Festgabe der Kommission für Theatergeschichte zum 75. Geburtstag von Margret Dietrich*, Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-historischen Klasse 622 (Vienna: VÖAW, 1995). ↑
2. Dorothea Link, *The National Court Theatre in Mozart’s Vienna: Sources and Documents, 1783–1792* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998). ↑
3. Oscar Teuber, *Das k. k. Hofburgtheater seit seiner Begründung* (Vienna: Gesellschaft für Vervielfältigende Kunst, 1896–1906), vol. 2/1 and vol. 2/2; Gustav Zechmeister, *Die Wiener Theater nächst der Burg und nächst dem Kärntnerthor von 1747 bis 1776*, Theatergeschichte Österreichs 3/2 (Vienna: Böhlau, 1971); and Franz Hadamowsky, *Wien – Theatergeschichte: Von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des Ersten Weltkriegs*, Geschichte der Stadt Wien 2/3 (Vienna: Jugend & Volk, 1988). ↑
4. John A. Rice, *Antonio Salieri and Viennese Opera* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998). ↑
5. Mary Hunter, *The Culture of Opera Buffa in Mozart’s Vienna: A Poetics of Entertainment*, Princeton Studies in Opera (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999). ↑
6. At the University of Vienna, the FWF research project “[Opera buffa in Vienna \(1763–82\)](#)” was carried out between 2009 and 2017 under the direction of Michele Calella. In addition to articles on Viennese adaptation practice and several case studies (see [note 42](#)), this project led to an article that confuted the widespread assumption that Italian opera was not performed at all during the singspiel period. Cf. Ingrid Schraffl, “Gli anni del Nationaltheater di Vienna: Un’epoca buia per l’opera buffa italiana,” in *Commedia e musica al tramonto dell’ancien régime: Cimarosa, Paisiello e i maestri europei; Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi Avellino, 24–26 novembre 2016*, ed. Antonio Carocchia (Avellino: il Cimarosa, 2018), 99–112. ↑
7. Grossegger, *Gluck und d’Afflisio*, 128. Quotations are translated by the author, if not otherwise stated. ↑
8. Quoted from Hadamowsky, *Theatergeschichte*, 231. ↑
9. Zechmeister, *Wiener Theater*, 345. ↑
10. For details, see Michele Calella, “*La buona figliuola* für die ‘Teatri Privilegiati’: Anmerkungen zur frühen Rezeption der Opera buffa in Wien,” in *Wiener Musikgeschichte: Annäherungen – Analysen – Ausblicke; Festschrift für Hartmut Krones*, ed. Julia Bungardt, Maria Helfgott, Eike Rathgeber, and Nikolaus Urbanek (Vienna: Böhlau, 2009), 151. ↑

11. Ludwig Schieder mair, ed., *Die Briefe W. A. Mozarts und seiner Familie*, vol. 4/2, *Die Briefe Leopold Mozarts* (Munich: Müller, 1914), 272. ↑
12. Joseph von Sonnenfels, *Briefe über die Wienerische Schaubühne* (Vienna: Kurzböck, 1768), 159. ↑
13. Martina Grempler, "Courtly Representation Play, Singspiel, Opéra Comique: On the Reception of Antonio Sacchini's *L'isola d'amore*," *Musicologica Austriaca: Journal for Austrian Music Studies* (June 24, 2015); Christine Siegert, "Opera buffa als spätabolutistische Repräsentation: Joseph Haydns Opern für den Esterházy'schen Hof im Kontext," in *Joseph Haydn und Europa vom Absolutismus zur Aufklärung*, ed. Laurine Quetin, Gerold W. Gruber, and Albert Gier, *Musicorum 7* (Tours: Université François-Rabelais, 2009), 79–95. ↑
14. Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in Germany, the Netherlands, and United Provinces: Or, the Journal of a Tour Through Those Countries, Undertaken to Collect Materials for a General History of Music* (London: T. Becket, 1773), 1:366. ↑
15. The occurrences leading to this are described in Zechmeister, *Wiener Theater*, 70–71, and Hadamowsky, *Theatergeschichte*, 231–33. ↑
16. See the announcement in *Kaiserlich Königliche allergnädigst privilegierte Realzeitung der Wissenschaften, Künste und der Kommerzien*, October 24, 1772, 675, and subsequent corrected information in Johann Heinrich Friedrich Müller, ed., *Theatral-Neuigkeiten: Nebst einem Lustspiele und der dazu gehörigen Musik, wie auch die in Kupfer gestochenen Vorstellungen, des Theaters* (Vienna: Ghelen, 1773), 100. ↑
17. In Prague and Dresden, for instance, usually three Italian operas were staged each week. Cf. Marc Niubo, "The Italian Opera between Prague and Dresden in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century," in *Musiker-Migration und Musik-Transfer zwischen Böhmen und Sachsen im 18. Jahrhundert: Bericht über das Internationale Symposium vom 7. bis 9. November 2008*, ed. Hans-Günter Ottenberg and Reiner Zimmermann (Dresden: Technische Universität Dresden, 2012), 61. ↑
18. Siegert, "Opera buffa als spätabolutistische Repräsentation," 94. ↑
19. The Kärntnerthortheater was available at no cost for every troupe, but the Italian ensemble could also play at the Nationaltheater on the days when no German play was on stage. ↑
20. For the exact casting, see *Allgemeiner Theater Almanach 1782* (Vienna: Gerold, 1782), 104. ↑
21. Despite thorough institution-historical processing, the published repertoires for these years are not quite satisfactory: Zechmeister indicates only the dates of premieres for the period 1747–76, Hadamowsky's unmanageable tables for the Burgtheater repertoire (with figures instead of titles) start only in 1776, and dates for the Kärntnerthortheater before 1785 are totally lacking, and Schraffl deals only with the years 1776–79. Hence, for the time before 1776 no repertoire data are available. Cf. Zechmeister, *Wiener Theater*, 399–562; Franz Hadamowsky, *Die Wiener Hoftheater (Staatstheater), 1776–1966: Verzeichnis der aufgeführten Stücke mit Bestandsnachweis und täglichem Spielplan*, vol. 1, 1776–1810 (Vienna: Prachner, 1966); and Schraffl, "Gli anni del Nationaltheater," 110–12. ↑
22. The initial work for the reconstruction of the repertoire was carried out within the already

mentioned research project “[Opera buffa in Vienna \(1763–1782\)](#)” at the University of Vienna. Special thanks go to John Rice, the then cooperation partner of said project, for the data he generously provided and the notices concerning the period 1772–76, which contributed to a comparison with my own research findings. ↑

23. See the announcement in *Kaiserlich Königliche Realzeitung*, December 21, 1771, 833–35. For Vienna’s theater periodicals, see Paul S. Ulrich, *Wiener Theater (1752–1918): Dokumentation zu Topographie und Repertoire anhand von universalen Theateralmanachen und lokalen Theaterjournalen mit einem Überblick zu Zeitungen mit Theaterreferaten und deren Referenten*, *Topographie und Repertoire des Theaters 1* (Vienna: Hollitzer, 2018). For general theater periodicals, see Wolfgang Bender, Siegfried Bushuven, and Michael Huesmann, *Theaterperiodika des 18. Jahrhunderts: Bibliographie und inhaltliche Erschließung deutschsprachiger Theaterzeitschriften, Theaterkalender und Theatertaschenbücher* (Munich: Saur, 1994–97), part 1 (1750–80) and part 2 (1781–90); and <http://www.theaterjournale.at>. ↑
24. [Theatralalmanach von Wien für das Jahr 1773: Verfasset von einigen Liebhabern der deutschen Schaubühne; zu finden in dem k.k. priv. Realzeitungscomtoir. Zweyter Theil](#) (Vienna: Kurzböck, 1773), 146–86. ↑
25. Budapest, Magyar Országos Levéltár [Hungarian National Archives], Keglevich Család P 421 V/15–23 = fascicles 73–81. ↑
26. It could not be determined whether this gap is somehow connected to Maria Theresia’s death in November 1780 and the theater prohibition lasting until January 20, 1781. Usually theater almanacs were published at the beginning of the calendar year and contained the daily theater program of the previous year. ↑
27. “To show the quick progress of operas at the local k. k. Nationaltheater, it is necessary to set the day on which each opera was performed for the first time. Later, repeat performances will show which one appealed more or less.” [Allgemeiner Theater Almanach 1782](#), 61. Original wording: “Um den schnellen Fortgang der Opern auf dem hiesigen k. k. Nationaltheater zu zeigen, ist es nothwendig, den Tag, an welchem jede Oper zum erstenmale vorgestellt worden, anzusetzen. Aus den Wiederholungen wird man dann sehen, welche mehr und minder gefallen hat.” ↑
28. See, for example, Zinzendorf’s diaries, where such indications prevailed even a long time after the dismissal of the French troupe. For a genre-based breakdown, see also the aforementioned news in the [Wienerisches Diarium of September 4, 1771](#). ↑
29. For an inquiry on Vienna’s theater public in the eighteenth century, see Otto Schindler, “Das Publikum des Burgtheaters in der Josephinischen Ära: Versuch einer Strukturbestimmung,” in *Das Burgtheater und sein Publikum: Festgabe zur 200-Jahr-Feier der Erhebung des Burgtheaters zum Nationaltheater*, ed. Margret Dietrich, *Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-historischen Klasse 305, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Publikumsforschung 3* (Vienna: VÖAW, 1976), 11–95. ↑
30. See the “Hand-Billet” by Joseph II to Khevenhüller, Prot. no. 206, March 16, 1776, AT-OeStA/HHStA KA KK Protokolle und Indizes 11. ↑
31. Until January 1774 Gassmann, afterwards Salieri. ↑
32. Until 1771 Marco Coltellini, 1772–75 Giovanni Gastone Boccherini, 1775–76 Giovanni de

Gamerra. ↑

33. From 1763 on Bartolomeo Socrate. ↑
34. Zechmeister, *Wiener Theater*, 353. ↑
35. Zechmeister, *Wiener Theater*, 354, supposes him to be the same person as the violinist Luigi Borghi, active in the 1770s in Vienna. ↑
36. Daniel Brandenburg, "Zur Rezeption der Opera buffa im deutschsprachigen Raum," in *Oper im Aufbruch: Gattungskonzepte des deutschsprachigen Musiktheaters um 1800*, ed. Marcus Chr. Lippe, *Kölner Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft* 9 (Kassel: Bosse, 2007), 209–19. ↑
37. Keglevich Család P 421 V/17:350. ↑
38. *Ibid.*, 17:539. ↑
39. *Ibid.*, 17:157. ↑
40. *Ibid.*, 20:30. ↑
41. *Ibid.*, 17:142–43. ↑
42. For details, see Martina Grempler, "Unter den Augen Metastasios: Zur Bearbeitungspraxis in der Oper am Beispiel der Opera buffa in Wien um 1770," *Die Tonkunst: Magazin für klassische Musik und Musikwissenschaft* 8 (2014), 197–204; Martina Grempler, "Ensemblebearbeitungen in der Opera buffa an den Wiener Theatern der 1760er Jahre," *Die Musikforschung* 65 (2012), 127–45; for single studies, see [Grempler, "Courtly Representation Play"](#); [Marc Niubo and Ingrid Schraffl, "Paisiello's \*La frascata\*: Dramaturgical Transformations on Its Journey Through Central Europe," \*Musicologica Austriaca: Journal for Austrian Music Studies\* \(January 29, 2017\)](#); and [Ingrid Schraffl, "Kulturtransfer durch Bearbeitung: Galuppis \*Il marchese villano\*, eine venezianische Opera buffa am Wiener Kaiserhof," \*De musica disserenda\* 16, no. 1 \(2020\), 73–102](#). For the Viennese versions of opere buffe of this period and a list of the inserted musical numbers, see the homepage of the research project "[Opera buffa in Vienna \(1763–1782\)](#)." ↑
43. Schindler, "Das Publikum des Burgtheaters," 81–84. ↑
44. *Ibid.*, 59. ↑
45. And not on October 17, 1774, as Zechmeister, *Wiener Theater*, 354, asserts. ↑
46. Link, *National Court Theatre*, 495. ↑
47. Link, *National Court Theatre*, 492, calls them "walk-in public," and Schindler, "Das Publikum des Burgtheaters," 93–94, "Kassenpublikum" ("cash desk audience"). ↑
48. Schindler, "Das Publikum des Burgtheaters," 32 and 39. ↑
49. [Kaiserlich Königliche Realzeitung, August 1, 1772, 477](#). ↑
50. Zechmeister's dating of the premiere of the two-act opera "*Il duello* by an unidentified composer, on May 31, 1775" (*Wiener Theater*, 360 and 555) is probably wrong, inasmuch as the title *Das Duell* recorded in the box-office account of this day (Keglevich Család P 421 V/18:353) probably refers to the one-act piece of the same title by Friedrich Ernst Jester, performed in Vienna already in 1769, 1772, and 1773. It must be excluded that Paisiello's two-act opera buffa *Il duello* was performed before Gasparo Angiolini's ballet *Unnütze*

*Vorsichten* and the one-act piece *Die Stimme der Natur*, first because of the excessive length the program would otherwise have had, second because at that time a German one-act piece would never have been staged together with an Italian opera on the same evening in the same theater, and third because the title is recorded in German. Much more likely is Khevenhüller's indication of the premiere on July 13, 1775, though no box-office account is extant. ↑

51. Khevenhüller-Metsch and Schlitter, *Aus der Zeit Maria Theresias*, 8:91. ↑
52. Performed in Vienna with the title version *Il nemico delle donne* and erroneously translated or mistaken by Zechmeister, *Wiener Theater*, 358, for "Der Menschenfeind." ↑
53. [Historisch-kritische Theaterchronik von Wien: Nebst einigen Nachrichten von erbländischen und fremden Theatern; verfaßt von Freunden der Schaubühne](#) (Vienna: Bader, 1774), 3:169. ↑
54. [Kaiserlich Königliche Realzeitung](#), February 27, 1773, 126; and Zinzendorf's unpublished diaries, AT-OeStA/HHStA KA Nachlass Zinzendorf Tagebücher 18, February 3, 1773. ↑
55. [Taschenbuch des Wiener Theaters 1777](#) (Vienna: Trattner, 1777), 96–97. ↑
56. Also for this opera no Viennese score seems to be handed down. ↑
57. Zechmeister, *Wiener Theater*, 351 supposes that it is Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf's *Il finto pazzo per amore*, but as the [Almanach des Theaters in Wien 1774](#) does not feature this title in the list of newly staged operas, it seems more likely that it is Sacchini's revived opera. ↑
58. [Kaiserlich Königliche Realzeitung](#), April 17, 1773, 240. ↑
59. [Ibid.](#), May 22, 1773, 316. ↑
60. *Aus der Zeit Maria Theresias: Tagebuch des Fürsten Johann Josef Khevenhüller-Metsch, Kaiserlichen Obersthofmeisters, 1742–1776*, ed. Rudolf Graf Khevenhüller-Metsch and Hanns Schlitter (Vienna: Holzhausen, 1925), 7:161–62. ↑
61. See the "Hand-Billet" by Joseph II to Count Christian August von Seilern dated October 10, 1777, Prot. Sep. no 360 AT-OeStA/HHStA KA KK Protokolle und Indizes 11. ↑
62. Link, *National Court Theatre*, 490. Guglielmi's *La sposa fedele* seems also to have been on the whole successful in Vienna, premiered in 1769 under Afflisio, performed as many as 22 times in 1777 by Bustelli's troupe, and finally revived as a German singspiel, *Robert und Kalliste*, starting from October 1, 1778. ↑
63. Zechmeister, *Wiener Theater*, 347. Elena Biggi Parodi, *Catalogo tematico delle composizioni teatrali di Antonio Salieri* (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 2006), 99, indicates that the premiere was at the Burgtheater, but in the source quoted ([Theatralalmanach von Wien für das Jahr 1773](#), 161), the theater is not mentioned. ↑
64. *L'isola d'Alcina* was not premiered, as Zechmeister, *Wiener Theater*, 353 and 548, indicates, on April 23, 1774, but already on April 4, 1774. ↑
65. *La frascatana* was not premiered on April 30, 1775, as indicated by Zechmeister, *Wiener Theater*, 555, but on April 29. ↑
66. *Il geloso in cimento*—in Vienna initially named *Il geloso al cimento*—as already established in [Ingrid Schraffl, Opera buffa und Spielkultur: Eine spieltheoretische Untersuchung am](#)



[Beispiel des venezianischen Repertoires des späten 18. Jahrhunderts, Wiener](#)

[Musikwissenschaftliche Beiträge 25 \(Vienna: Böhlau, 2014\), 153](#), was not premiered on May 25, 1774, as Zechmeister, *Wiener Theater*, 353 and 549, erroneously asserts, but one year later, on May 25, 1775, while the first premiere had taken place in Autumn 1774 in Venice. ↑

67. As Biggi Parodi, *Catalogo di Antonio Salieri*, 117, has already pointed out, *La calamita de' cuori* was not premiered, as Zechmeister, *Wiener Theater*, 358 and 552, asserts, on October 31, but already on October 11, 1774. ↑
68. For a thorough examination of this opera, see Rice, *Salieri*, 182–231. ↑
69. The fact that in 1773 Mozart composed the *Sechs Variationen über "Mio caro Adone" aus "La fiera di Venezia"* (K. 180 [173c]) is more proof of the particular success enjoyed by this opera, and especially by the second finale, from which the theme of the variations is drawn. Instrumental arrangements and prints of single numbers in aria collections might constitute a further criterion for the success assessment of an opera, but relevant systematic research would go beyond the scope of this contribution. ↑
70. [Theatralalmanach von Wien für das Jahr 1773, 154](#). Original wording: "die Musik von dem Herrn Salieri, welche vortreflich gesetzt ist, und die Zuschauer entzückte. Dieses Singspiel erhielt den vollkommensten Beyfall des Publikums, welches sich nicht satt daran sehen konnte." ↑
71. [Ibid., 157](#). ↑
72. [Kaiserlich Königliche Realzeitung, December 11, 1773, 780](#); and [Theatralalmanach von Wien für das Jahr 1774: Verfasset von einigen Liebhabern der deutschen Schaubühne; zu finden in dem k.k. priv. Realzeitungscomtoir. Dritter Theil \(Vienna: Kurzböck, 1774\), 145](#). ↑
73. Khevenhüller-Metsch and Schlitter, *Aus der Zeit Maria Theresias*, 7:75. ↑
74. See the [calendar table](#). ↑
75. *Tutte le opere di Pietro Metastasio*, ed. Bruno Brunelli (Milan: Mondadori, 1943–54), 5:411–12, letter to Saverio Mattei of September 23, 1776. ↑
76. [Kaiserlich Königliche Realzeitung, August 20, 1776, 538](#). For more details of the successes of *La frascatana*, see [Niubo and Schraffl, "Paisiello's La frascatana."](#) ↑
77. Zinzendorf noted, for instance, on December 3, 1772: "M. Keith, next to whom I came to sit, drew my attention to the music of the *Secchia rapita*, a small Italian opera where gravity wonderfully harmonizes with comedy. The music is by Salierj, the end of the first act is admirable." Original wording: "M. Keith, a coté duquel je me trouvois me rendit tres attentiv a la musique de la *Secchia rapita* petit opera Italien ou le sérieux est marveilleusement allié avec le comique. La musique est de Salierj, la fin de ler acte admirable." On Salieri's *La secchia rapita* and its reception, see John A. Rice, "*La secchia rapita*: An Experiment in the Sustained Parody of Opera Seria," in *Antonio Salieri (1750–1825) e il teatro musicale a Vienna: Convenzioni, innovazioni, contaminazioni stilistiche; atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi, Legnago 18–20 aprile 2000*, ed. Rudolph Angermüller and Elena Biggi Parodi (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 2012), 135–52. ↑
78. In the *Theaterchronik*, the following note is contained on *La calamita de' cuori*: "Mister

Marquis \*\*\*, Mister Abbot Costi, Mister Dominikus Poggi, Mister Pocherini, and Mister Salieri are told to have corrected, mended, and embroidered the lyrics of this opera by Mr. Goldoni, nonetheless, the text was by no means appealing. As to the music, some connoisseurs and music lovers affirm that it is artful, beautiful, harmonious, and does Mister Salieri great honor. Yet the subject is too childish, others assert, and the music, though beautiful, too serious for the libretto." [Historisch-kritische Theaterchronik, 2:166-67](#). Original wording: "Herr Marchese \*\*\*, Herr Abt Costi, Herr Dominikus Poggi, Herr Pocherini und Herr Salieri sollen an der Poesie dieser Oper des Hrn. Goldoni verbessert, geflickt und gestickt haben, dennoch hat das Buch nicht gefallen wollen. Von der Musik wollen einige Kenner und Liebhaber der Musik behaupten, daß sie künstlich, schön, harmonisch sey, und Herrn Salieri viel Ehre mache. Der Gegenstand ist aber zu kindisch, behaupten andere, und die Musik, obschon schön, zu ernsthaft für das Buch." For details on *La calamita de' cuori*, see Rice, *Salieri*, 211-20. ↑

79. [Historisch-kritische Theaterchronik, 1:37](#). ↑
80. Khevenhüller-Metsch and Schlitter, *Aus der Zeit Maria Theresias*, 8:15. ↑
81. [Kaiserlich Königliche Realzeitung, June 18, 1774, 384](#). ↑
82. [Ibid., June 12, 1773, 367](#). ↑
83. Khevenhüller-Metsch and Schlitter, *Aus der Zeit Maria Theresias*, 8:81. ↑
84. [Ibid., 7:75](#). ↑
85. On *La finta scema* and its reception, see John A. Rice, "Violence, Pathos, and Comedy in Salieri's *La finta scema*," in *Music in the Theater, Church, and Villa: Essays in Honor of Robert Lamar Weaver and Norma Wright Weaver*, ed. Susan Parisi, Detroit Monographs in Musicology 27 (Warren, MI: Warren Park Press, 2000), 213-26. ↑
86. Khevenhüller-Metsch and Schlitter, *Aus der Zeit Maria Theresias*, 8:98. Salieri himself, in his comments on *La finta scema*, admits the mediocre success of this opera's music and ascribes it to the hoarse voices of the three singers in principal roles. See the autograph score held at the Austrian National Library, A-Wn [Mus.Hs.16608/2, fol. 215r](#). ↑
87. [Historisch-kritische Theaterchronik, 3:133-35](#). Original wording: "Den 6. Dec. wurde zum erstenmal aufgeführt die Opera, betitelt: *il tamburro notturno (Das Gespenst mit der Trommel)*, und mit nicht gar starken Beyfall des Publikums überhaupt aufgenommen, wenn gleich ächte Kenner eingestehen, daß die Musik eine von den besten ist. Um einen richtigen Begriff vom Autor zu fassen, ist nothwendig in Betracht zu ziehen, daß: Erstens diese Oper für andere Stimmen geschrieben wurde, Zweytens, daß da die Musik nicht von dem Compositor selbst geführt wurde, sie nothwendig von ihrem Ausdruck verlieren mußte, Drittens, daß da sie nach der Harmonie der Napolitanischen Poesie geschrieben wurde, sie in der Uebersetzung der Poesie ins Toskanische, vieles von ihrer ersten Grazie verlor, ob man gleich dieses dem hiesigen Theatralpoeten nicht zur Last schreiben kann, der alle mögliche Nachsicht verdient, weil er die Schrift so übersetzen sollte, daß die nämliche Musik beybehalten werden konnte, mithin äusserst gebunden war, und so zu sagen Wort für Wort, Sylbe für Sylbe übertragen mußte. Damit also die Musik gesungen werden konnte, mußte sie der Poet für selbige zuschneiden, so schwer es ist, wenn sich die Poesie nach der Musik richten soll." ↑
88. "Frenchmen remained afloat by the quantity of their novelties. Only few pieces were

performed several times, otherwise novelties followed novelties. Thus they got attention and applause." *Kaiserlich Königliche Realzeitung*, March 5, 1776, 158. Original wording: "Die Franzosen haben sich durch die Menge ihrer Neuigkeiten erhalten. Nur wenige Stücke haben sie etlichemale gegeben, sonst folgte Neues auf Neues. Dadurch haben sie sich Aufmerksamkeit und Beyfall erworben." ↑

89. The sources accessed do not confirm the revival, mentioned by Zechmeister, *Wiener Theater*, 358, of Gassmann's *Il filosofo innamorato* in December 1774. ↑
90. *Historisch-kritische Theaterchronik*, 2:79. ↑
91. *Theatralalmanach von Wien für das Jahr 1773*, 161. ↑
92. *Ibid.*, 181. ↑
93. *Wienerisches Diarium*, February 1, 1772, [6]. ↑
94. *Theatralalmanach von Wien für das Jahr 1773*, 157. ↑
95. Journals emphasize the beautiful music of Salieri's *La fiera di Venezia*, *Il barone di Rocca antica*, and *La calamita de' cuori*, Gassmann's *I rovinati*, Anfossi's *Metilde ritrovata*, Piccinni's *L'astratto*, and Paisiello's *Il tamburo notturno*, while Zinzendorf considers the music of the following operas particularly "belle," "jolie," "charmante," or "delicieuse": Salieri's *La fiera di Venezia*, *La locandiera*, and *La finta scema*, Gazzaniga's *L'isola d'Alcina*, Paisiello's *La frascatana*, Anfossi's *Il geloso in cimento*, and Galuppi's *Il marchese villano* (see the [calendar table](#)). ↑
96. *Sonnenfels, Wienerische Schaubühne Briefe*, 137-52. ↑
97. *Kaiserlich Königliche Realzeitung*, July 4, 1772, 414. Original wording: "Selten verdient die Poesie aller dieser Opern nur der Erwähnung; die Hauptsache ist die Musik, das Spiel und der Gesang der Operisten." ↑
98. See, for instance, the article referring to the premiere of Piccinni's *L'astratto*: "The plot construction is very often extremely bad: the development even worse. ... The storyline is often interrupted: and why? For a nothing: tied up again: torn once more. In looking at some [pieces], one sees that the authors spent many efforts to present something acceptable: and however again all inaccessible, unlikely, bombastic." *Kaiserlich Königliche Realzeitung*, June 18, 1774, 384. Original wording: "Die Schürzung ist sehr oft äusserst schlecht: die Entwicklung noch schlechter. ... Die Handlung wird oft abgebrochen; und warum? Wegen einem Nichts: wieder angeknüpft: nochmal zerrissen. Man sieht es einigen an, daß sichs die Verfasser haben Mühe kosten lassen, etwas erträgliches zu liefern: und doch wieder gesperrtes, unwahrscheinliches, Bombast." ↑
99. *Kaiserlich Königliche Realzeitung*, March 5, 1776, 159. ↑
100. *Ibid.*, March 26, 1776, 208. ↑
101. *Taschenbuch des Wiener Theaters*, 72. Original wording: "es ist in Wien von jeher das Schicksal der welschen Opern gewesen nur von der kleinen Zahl der Musik Liebhaber, und Kenner geliebt, und besucht zu werden." ↑