Domenico Cimarosa (1749–1801)

Overtures

Domenico Cimarosa was the most famous and popular Italian composer of the second half of the eighteenth century. In the course of a brilliantly successful career he composed more than 65 operas as well as a significant body of instrumental music and works for the church. His operas were performed all over Europe both in Italian and in translation. A number of Cimarosa's operas continued to enjoy occasional stagings during the nineteenth century and his most famous work, *Il matrimonio segreto* (The Clandestine Marriage), is one of only a handful of operas of the period never to have left the repertory. The others are by Mozart.

Born in 1749 at Aversa, Cimarosa moved with his family to Naples, shortly after his own birth and shortly before the death of his father, a stonemason. His musical gifts, however, enabled him to study at the Conservatorio di S. Maria di Loreto and to embark on a career as a composer of opera in Naples. He subsequently entered the service of Catherine the Great in St Petersburg, then moving to the imperial service in Vienna and, in 1793, to Naples once more, a city from which he was expelled in 1799, when the monarchy was restored after a brief republican interlude. He spent his final years in Venice, where he died in 1801.

Cimarosa's operas are remarkable for their delineation of character, sureness of dramatic touch, melodic invention and assured handling of the orchestra. The overtures are themselves of particular interest. Some conform to the three-movement pattern of earlier Neapolitan composers, while others are cast in a single movement similar to the sonata-form structures of the contemporary symphony. Cimarosa's orchestration is deft and the equal of any symphonist of the period. He retains a fondness for three-part string textures throughout his career, typically with the first violin and viola presenting the melodic material while the second violin is assigned an accompanying figure. For all the similarities, however, the overtures are not symphonies and serve, rather, as scene-setters for the drama to follow, without thematic links to the opera itself and to an extent, therefore, interchangeable.

Nick Rossi and Allan Badley

Domenico Cimarosa was born in Aversa on 17 December 1749. He and his older colleague Giovanni Paisiello were the best-known composers of the last years of the so-called Neapolitan School. Cimarosa's works (autograph manuscripts of 65 operas and a number of sacred works have survived) were remarkably successful – his operas were staged and re-staged throughout Europe. Having first made his name in the Kingdom of Naples, Cimarosa soon saw his fame spread to central and northern Italy (particularly Venice, the city in which he died on 11 January 1801 and with which he maintained a fruitful relationship throughout his life). Success at home led to his appointment as *maestro di cappella* at the court of Catherine II in St Petersburg from 1787 to 1791, and then to commissions from Leopold II to write at least three operas (including perhaps his best-known work, *Il matrimonio segreto*) for the Vienna Burgtheater. Contrary to what some of his biographies say, Cimarosa was not officially appointed *Kapellmeister* in Vienna, but worked for the Emperor on what we today would call a freelance basis, earning the then enormous figure of 12,000 florins a year.

Over the course of his career, Cimarosa adopted two different forms for his operatic overtures: in his early period (until around 1786) he predominantly employed a three-movement structure (fast-slow and *cantabile*-fast in double or, more often, triple time); the vast majority of his later-period overtures, meanwhile, are cast in a single movement (an *allegro* in abbreviated sonata form, sometimes preceded

by a rhapsodic slow movement). It is worth noting that the choice of one musical form over another was not so much a case of the composer's own preference as of his adapting to suit audience tastes, which altered over time and from place to place.

Simone Perugini
English translation by Susannah Howe

Vol. 1

Voldomiro

Overture

Voldomiro was commissioned by the Teatro Regio in Turin for the carnival season of 1787, the only recorded performance. Copies of the score and of the libretto survive, however, in Lisbon and in Liège, respectively, suggesting wider contemporary interest. In Turin the king, who had insisted on restricting the length of operas and arias, was persuaded to allow Cimarosa five minutes more for one of the arias in *Voldomiro*, although the composer's reward for a successful performance was less generous.

La baronessa Stramba

Overture

Cimarosa created his two-act *opera buffa*, *Il credulo* (The Gullible One), for the Carnival season of 1786 at the Teatro Nuovo in Naples, and wrote *La baronessa Stramba* to go with it as the third act of the evening. The work is probably a revision of Cimarosa's earlier *I matrimoni in ballo* (The Weddings in Dance).

Le stravaganze del conte

Overture

Cimarosa received his first commission to compose an opera from the Teatro dei Fiorentini in Naples for the Carnival season of 1772. With a libretto by the well-established Neapolitan poet Pasquale Mililotti, *Le stravaganze del conte* (The Eccentricities of the Count) opened on 6 January 1772. It is possible that some of the opera was composed while he was still a student. Since the only extant manuscript of *Le stravaganze del conte* is the holograph score it can be assumed that this opera was never restaged.

Il matrimonio segreto

Overture (1793 Naples version)

Not only is *Il matrimonio segreto* (The Secret Marriage) the best-known and most popular of all Cimarosa's theatrical creations, it is perhaps the most popular *opera buffa* of all time. First staged in Vienna exactly two months after Mozart's death, it enjoyed a greater success at the time than any of Mozart's operas and continued in operatic repertory through the following century. The opera quickly achieved international fame outside Vienna, soon staged in Leipzig, Dresden, Berlin, Paris, Milan, Florence, Naples, Turin, Madrid and Lisbon. By the mid-nineteenth century it had been performed in German, French, Spanish, Danish, Swedish, Polish, Dutch, Russian, English and Czech; the opera reached Calcutta in 1870. From the many contemporary manuscript copies of the score, two well-known versions of the opera's Overture emerge, differing in length. The present version, recorded here for the first time, is based on Cimarosa's score for Vienna and is substantially different, particularly in the inclusion of a fine oboe melody as a second theme, omitted in other versions.

L'infedelta fedele

Overture

Cimarosa's *commedia per musica*, *L'infedeltà fedele* (Faithful Infidelity), his fifteenth opera, is unique in its early mixture of elements of *opera buffa* with those of *opera seria*. The work was intended for a new theatre in Naples, established by the king to provide opera buffa, otherwise a comic form popular with ordinary citizens, as an entertainment also for the nobility. On 20 July 1779 the king's Teatro del Fondo opened with the work, described by the court librettist, Gianbattista Lorenzi, as a middle-of-the-road kind of entertainment, with its *opera seria* setting in classical Greece and the story itself full of the "buffooneries which are so fashionable" in *opera buffa*. The only known performance after this was in Dresden at the court theatre on 5 October 1782, under the title *Treu in der Untreue*.

Il ritorno di Don Calendrino

Overture

Il ritorno di Don Calendrino (The Return of Don Calendrino), an *intermezzo* in two acts, was first staged during the Carnival season of 1778 at the Teatro Valle in Rome. Well received by the public, further performances of it were mounted in Florence, Livorno, and Rome, with stagings in Prague, Barcelona and Vienna. The overture borrows from the recently composed *L'Armida imaginara*, to which Cimarosa added two completely new movements, a central *Andantino* and a closing movement marked *Allegro con spirito*.

Il falegname

Overture

The comic opera *Il falegname* (The Carpenter) was written as the second opera for the 1780 season at Teatro dei Fiorentini in Naples, where it achieved great success, to be staged many times in the next few years elsewhere in Italy, and in 1783 at the Burgtheater in Vienna. Haydn produced the opera at Eszterháza for the season 1783–84. Foreign language productions followed, including one in Russian in Moscow in 1783, and one in Spanish in Madrid ten years later.

Cleopatra

Overture

Cleopatra, a two-act *dramma serio*, was written for Catherine the Great and probably intended to mark the anniversary of her coronation, a few days before its first performance on 27 September 1789 at the Kamennyi Theatre. The opera enjoyed a measure of success and was given several performances in St Petersburg, where it was later restaged. Cimarosa used the overture again for early performances of *Penelope* written five years later for the Teatro del Fondo in Naples to open the Carnival season of 1794–95. The *Penelope* version of the overture differs in a number of minor details.

Il convito

Overture

Il convito (The Banquet) was Cimarosa's 28th opera, written for the Teatro San Samuele in Venice for the Carnival season of 1782. With a successful performance in Venice, after which the composer was carried by torchlight back to his hotel, the opera was produced the following season in Prague, Trieste, Dresden (as *Das Gastmahl*), Turin (as *Il convito di pietra*) and Nice, and further stagings followed throughout Europe. There are two different overtures to *Il convito*. The three-movement work recorded here is from the composer's holograph score in the Conservatorio di musica S Pietro a Majella library in Naples. The second overture, in one movement, preserved in manuscript in the British Library, was apparently prepared for a performance of the opera before the court of Naples. Scored for pairs of

oboes and horns, timpani and strings (with divided violas and separate violoncello and contra basso lines), it is identical to the fifth overture of the five written for *L'impresario in angustie*.

La vergine del sole

Overture

La vergine del sole (The Sun Virgin) is a *dramma serio*, written for the Russian Court, where it was first staged in 1788. Further performances followed, in Russia and elsewhere. Because of the opera's dramatic story, set in Peru, Cimarosa made full use of the St Petersburg orchestra, scoring the overture for pairs of flutes, oboes, bassoons and horns in addition to timpani and strings, and implying, with loud bursts of strings and timpani, the forthcoming volcanic eruption and earthquake. His unusual use of the timpani also possibly suggests native Peruvian sacrificial drums.

L'impresario in angustie

Overture

Cimarosa was commissioned to write an *opera buffa* for the Carnival season of 1786 by the Teatro Nuovo in Naples. With a libretto by Giuseppe Diodati, with whom he had worked on his *Il capriccio drammatico* of 1781, the two-act comedy, *Il credulo* (The Gullible One) tells of the attempts of a man to marry off his daughter to a gullible gentleman from Naples, hampered by a jealous lover who spreads the rumour that the young lady in question has gone mad. Scheduled as the third opera of the 1786 Carnival season, together with Cimarosa's one-act comedy *L'impresario in angustie* (The Impresario in Distress), it was well received and rescheduled as the fourth opera of the same season, coupled with *La baronessa Stramba*.

The one-act *farsetta per musica*, *L'impresario in angustie* (The Impresario in Distress), proved to be one of Cimarosa's most successful works. Within a year of its staging in 1786 at the Teatro Nuovo in Naples, it played in Rome and was soon heard in Paris and Barcelona, and at Eszterháza. Further performances followed elsewhere, with versions in various other languages. Goethe heard the work in Rome, where, with a papal ban on the stage appearance of women, it was performed by an all-male cast. Impressed by the work, he introduced it to the court theatre in Weimar in 1791, in his own German version and with additional songs. When he revived it a year later, he interpolated selections from Mozart's *Schauspieldirektor*. There are at least five different overtures for *L'impresario in angustie*, each resembling overtures for other operas, oratorios and cantatas. The best known version, offered here, is based on an eighteenth-century manuscript preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, the source of the Paris printed edition of 1802.

Nick Rossi and Allan Badley

Vol. 2

L'Armida immaginaria

Overture

Cimarosa's comedy *L'Armida immaginaria* was commissioned by the Teatro dei Fiorentini in Naples in 1777. Shortly before the work's completion, the composer received a second commission for an opera for the Teatro Valle in Rome. Pressed for time, Cimarosa reused a large chunk of material from the overture to *L'Armida immaginaria* in the new work, *Il ritorno di Don Calendrino*, safe in the knowledge that the earlier work could not possibly be known yet in Rome. The relationship between the two overtures is extremely interesting for Cimarosa does not simply borrow material but reworks it in many small but significant details. The superiority of the later overture indeed makes the 'original' look like a sketch. Thus, in spite of the historical circumstances, the impression one gains is that the

overture to *L'Armida immaginaria* was written in greater haste than its sequel. The reuse of the thematic material, therefore, was as much an aesthetic decision as a pragmatic one. Giuseppe Palomba's libretto to *L'Armida immaginaria* was inspired by Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*. The work was well received at its première and was remounted the following season. A further production in Genoa (1787) is also known.

Oreste

Overture

Cimarosa's *Oreste*, based on a libretto by Luigi Serio, opened on 13 August 1783 at the Royal Theatre of San Carlo in Naples to celebrate the Queen's name-day and was given nineteen times between the opening night and 15 October. There are no further productions or performances on record, although eighteenth-century manuscripts of *Oreste* in Paris and Lisbon suggest the possibility that productions were mounted in those cities.

While the autograph score divides the opera into two acts, the libretto for the first performance states that the opera is in three acts. What was actually performed at the première is thus open to question. The situation is complicated further by the existence of a second eighteenth-century manuscript copy in the same collection that is in three acts, implying that some performances, perhaps even in Naples, were indeed in three acts. In this later version, the third act is very short, consisting of only a few scenes.

Extensive self-quotation is in evidence once again in this overture: the entire first part is lifted note for note from the first part of the overture Cimarosa had written a year earlier for his oratorio *Giudetta* (Judith), a work composed, as he himself wrote, "for the virtuous young ladies of the music conservatory in Venice known as l'Ospedaletta" where Cimarosa was not only a maestro but also an active choral instructor.

L'Italiana a Londra

Overture
1. Allegro con spirit
2. Andante
3. Presto

Written in 1778 when Cimarosa was not yet thirty, *L'Italiana a Londra* (The Italian Girl in London) proved to be the composer's first big hit. Following its première as a five-person, two act opera at the Teatro Valle in Rome on 28 December 1778, the opera was given numerous productions throughout Europe in the years that followed. By the end of the century performances had been given in German, French, Russian, Polish, Danish, Swedish and English in addition to countless productions in the original Italian.

The overture, similar to many of those by Cimarosa, shares part of its music with another overture, that to *L'infedeltà fedele* (Faithful Infidelity) written the following spring for the opening of the new *buffa* theatre in Naples, Teatro del Fondo. Cimarosa's original overture to *L'Italiana a Londra*, which was composed first, is in three movements: *Allegro con spirito – Andante – Presto*. Later, when he was composing his overture to *L'infedeltà fedele*, a one-movement overture, Cimarosa borrowed 63 bars from the 149 bars of the first movement of *L'Italiana a Londra* to create a longer single movement (194 bars) for the new work.

Artaserse

Overture

Cimarosa chose a much-used libretto for the *opera seria* he composed for the Teatro Regio in Turin: *Artaserse* (Artaxerxes) by the prince of librettists, Pietro Metastasio. *Artaserse* had been set previously by Leonardo Vinci (1730), Johann Adolph Hasse (1730), and Baldassare Galuppi (1749). Thomas Arne created his own libretto in 1762 for his *Artaserse*, crafting it after Metastasio's original. The only performance of Cimarosa's *Artaserse* on record after its first performance in Turin is one in Lisbon in 1801 for which additions were made to the score by Marcus Antonio Portugal.

Interestingly, the overture Cimarosa wrote for *Artaserse* which was given its first performance on the opening night of Carnival, 26 December 1784 in Turin, strongly foreshadows his best-known overture, to *Il matrimonio segreto*, which he composed some eight years later after 'borrowing' material from the *Artaserse* overture. There are also similarities between the overture to *Artaserse* and two others: *Il marito disperato* (Naples, 1785) and its reworking ten years later as *L'amante disperato*.

Alessandro nell'Indie

Overture
1. Allegro con brio
2. Andante
3. Allegro moltissimo

Alessandro nell'Indie (Alexander in India) was Cimarosa's first opera to a text by Pietro Metastasio, a tale of confrontation between Alexander the Great and Porus as recorded by both Arrian and Curtius Rufus among other classical writers. Cimarosa's *Alessandro nell'Indie*, a *dramma per musica* in three acts, was first presented at the Teatro Argentina in Rome on 2 January 1781. A further production of the work (Warsaw, 1792) is known but it does not appear to have enjoyed the success of many of the composer's other operas.

La donna sempre al suo peggior s'appiglia

Overture

La donna sempre al suo peggior s'appiglia (Women Should Be Taken at Their Worst), a *commedia per musica* in three acts, received its première at the Teatro Nuovo in Naples as the third opera of the 1785 season. Although there is an eighteenth-century manuscript copy of the full score in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (D.2101–2102) which suggests that a performance took place there, there is no record of any production of *La donna sempre al suo peggior s'appiglia* other than its initial performance at the Teatro Nuovo in Naples, a certain indication that the opera was one of Cimarosa's rare failures.

La donna sempre al suo peggior s'appiglia shares its overture with the later Cimarosa opera, *La felicità inaspettata* (Unexpected Bliss), a work from the composer's Russian period. The autograph score of the latter opera does not contain an overture, instead commencing with a *ballo* or dance. In contrast, the eighteenth-century copy of *La felicità inaspettata* in the library of the Conservatoire Royal de Musique in Brussels is preceded by a Sinfonia, one that is identical with that of *La donna sempre al suo peggior s'appiglia*.

La Circe

Overture
1. Allegro molto con spirit
2. Andante grazioso espressivo
3. Allegro molto

La Circe, a *dramma per musica* in three acts with a libretto by Domenico Perelli, was given its première at the Teatro alla Scala, Milan, during Carnival, 1783. Although there are many references to

performances other than the La Scala production, the première is the only staging for which documentary evidence survives. A number of authors, without citing their authority, have suggested that there were performances in Rome in 1773 (most unlikely since that was the year of Cimarosa's very first opera in Naples), Genoa (1789), Pavia in 1796 (with the title *Amor di Circe con Ulisse*) and in Lisbon (1805).

Il fanatico per gli antichi Romani

Overture
1. Allegro
2. Andantino grazioso
3. Allegro assai

Il fanatico per gli antichi Romani (The Fanatic for Ancient Romans) is a *commedia per musica* in three acts with libretto by Giuseppe Palomba. The first performance took place at the Teatro dei Fiorentini in Naples in the spring of 1777. The opera was also produced in its entirety in Paris during the nineteenth century under the title *Le fanatique des anciens Romains*.

Since the structure of most *opere buffe* in the eighteenth century consisted principally of a string of arias and recitatives (the ensembles being limited to an opening introduction to Act I and a finale for most of the other acts), *Il fanatico per gli antichi Romani* is remarkable for its wealth of ensembles: a duet, two trios, two quartets, a quintet, and two sextets. Surprisingly, it was not the ensembles but the solo items which were extracted for eighteenth-century performances in Genoa and Naples as well as in London.

Giannina e Bernadone

Overture

Cimarosa's dramma giocoso in two acts, *Giannina e Bernadone*, was given its première at the Teatro San Samuele in Venice in November 1781 and remains one of his most celebrated comic operas. Extremely popular in the eighteenth century in Italy and elsewhere, notable productions of the work were given in Venice (1781), Prague (1783), and in both Trieste and Rovereto in 1784. In 1785 it was produced in Dresden (as *Hannchen und Bernadon*), Bavaria and Warsaw; in 1786 at Drottningholm in Sweden, the Teatro San Angelo in Venice (as *Il villano geloso*) and in Zara; and in 1787 at the King's Theatre in the Haymarket, London. In the next decade it was staged in Madrid, Potsdam, Esterháza, Bilbao, Marseille, Lisbon and Lugano. Productions were mounted throughout in the nineteenth century and at least two revivals were mounted in the twentieth century including the pioneering broadcast of the opera by Italian State Radio (RAI) on 26 July 1953.

Allan Badley & Nick Rossi

Vol. 3

Le astuzie femminili

Overture No. 1
Overture No. 2

Just as Beethoven wrote four overtures for his only opera, so Domenico Cimarosa wrote two completely different overtures for his comic opera *Le astuzie femminili* (The Cunning Women). The two-act *commedia per musica* was commissioned by Teatro dei Fiorentini in Naples and was given its *prima* there on 26 August 1794 (with Overture 1). The opera was so well received that within a decade it had been staged in Florence, Barcelona, Lisbon, Paris, London and Milan. In Naples it was presented at the Court Theatre in the Royal Palace as "the best comic work of Domenico Cimarosa".

There is no evidence to indicate the reason why Cimarosa wrote a completely different overture for the opera when it was staged in Belgium nor is the date of this production known with any certainty. A libretto preserved in the Brussels collection, however, dated 1795, suggests that the production may have taken place a year after the work's *prima* in Naples. Two copies of the 'second' overture to *Le astuzie femminili* are to be found in Brussels; one in the library of the Conservatoire Royal de Musique (MS 2073. K. obl.), the other in the Bibliothèque Royale Albert 1er (MS F 2584 11 4012, 1–2). Neither is in Cimarosa's hand but the musical texts are identical.

Since Naxos is issuing the complete overtures of Cimarosa, both overtures are presented here: *Overture No 1* (that used in Naples at the opera's prima), and *Overture No 2* (probably used in Brussels and quite possibly in a number of other locations). *Overture No 1 in D* is a one-movement overture which shares some 76 bars with Cimarosa's overture to La vergine del sole. *Overture No 2 in B flat* – also composed as a single movement – is completely new.

The music of this opera so fascinated Ottorino Respighi that he re-orchestrated the opera for a performance in 1920. Respighi's revision also transformed the two-act structure of Cimarosa's original into two acts and four parts. In 1924 Respighi was involved in a further production based on *Le astuzie femminili* with the choreographer Leonide Massine. This ballet was based on the finale of his 1920 revision of the opera; Diaghilev choreographed the ballet in the earlier production.

Artemisia

Overture

Cimarosa's incomplete opera, *Artemisia*, was given its first performance at Teatro La Fenice on 17 January 1801, a bare seven days after his death. On the occasion the late composer received a most flattering posthumous compliment when the audience requested that the curtain be lowered at the point at which he wrote his last note.

The historical character of Artemisia, the Greek Queen of Halicarnassus in the first half of the fifth century BC, must have fascinated Cimarosa for he based two different operas on her life. In 1797, when the royal court in Naples commissioned him to write an *opera seria* to celebrate the wedding of Prince Francesco Borbone of Naples and Maria Clementina, Archduchess of Austria, the composer turned to Marcello Marchesini for a libretto based on the life of Artemisia. The resulting *Artemisia, regina di Caria* (Artemisa, Queen of Caria) was given its *prima* at Teatro San Carlo in June that year. When Teatro la Fenice in Venice commissioned Cimarosa in 1800 to compose an *opera seria*, he turned to the same subject, this time asking Count Giovanni Battista Colloredo to write the libretto. Unfortunately Cimarosa died in January 1801 before the second opera, titled simply *Artemisia*, could be completed.

Since Cimarosa always referred to the first of these operas as *Artemisia*, it is confusing today to know which opera is being referred to when a text refers to *Artemisia*. In a copy of a letter dated 11 November 1798 which is preserved in the Museo Teatrale della Scala, Milan, however, the writer (who is purported to be Cimarosa) makes a clear reference to *Artemisia, regina di Caria*:

"I am responding to your dear letter of the 7th in which you ask me which of the compositions that have sprung from my simple hand I might consider to be the best. I will confess to you that you are posing a very delicate question because as a composer I am not able to praise my works truthfully without exposing traces of vanity or presumption. But understand in absolute secrecy that even though my opera *Il matrimonio segreto* receives the highest praise, it is, in my opinion, a different work of mine that I prefer and think quite good: *Artemisia*."

Il mercato di Malmantile

Overture

The year 1784 was a busy one for Cimarosa with commissions for *opere buffe* arriving from Teatro alla Scala in Milan, Teatro della Pergola in Florence, Teatro Regio in Turin, Teatro dei Fiorentini in Naples and a request for an *opera seria* for the 'opening of the (Eretenio) theatre of Vicenza 1784' on 10 July. While the composer responded with five different operas based on five different stories and librettos, he made one overture serve three operas. The *sinfonie* are exactly the same for *Il mercato di malmantile, L'apparenza inganna ossia La villeggiatura* and *L'Olimpiade*. And to confuse matters further, a number of publications list *Il mercato di Malmantile* (The Market of Malmantile) under the title *La vanità deluse* (Illusive Vanity) for the reason that the opera is better known in our own time under this name.

Although both Fétis ('Domenico Cimarosa' in *Biographie universelle des musiciens*, 1866) and Maria Storni Trevisian (*Nel primo centenario di Domenico Cimarosa*, 1900) give the opera's first performance as having taken place in 1779, the Florentine libretto clearly states 'Regio Teatro di via della Pergola nella primavera del 1784'. Information on subsequent performances of the work are unsubstantiated, but it is likely that it was performed in Paris in 1805.

Cajo Mario

Overture

Cimarosa's first *opera seria*, his eighteenth work for the stage, *Cajo Mario* (Gaius Marius), was commissioned for Rome's Teatro delle Dame. Designated by the composer as a *dramma per musica*, it was first presented in January 1780 with an all-male cast as required by Papal edict. For this work Cimarosa turned to a libretto by Gaetano Roccaforte based on the story from Plutarch's *Lives* of the Roman General and Consul, Gaius Marius (157–86 BC), a politician who was one of the most powerful figures in the turbulent period of the late Republic. Roccaforte's libretto had already been set several times, the best known of which was by Niccolò Jommelli written over thirty years before Cimarosa's opera.

Cajo Mario was moderately successful with productions in Mantua the following spring and during Carnival in Genoa in 1782. The opera was also performed at the Teatro alla Pergola, Florence, during the winter season of 1784 and a copy of the score is preserved in the library of the Florence Conservatory (Fondo Pitti, FPT 121). *Cajo Mario* was also staged in Madrid (1787) and Modena (1794). The holograph score does not survive but eighteenth-century MS copies are to be found today in libraries in Milan, Rome (the Rome copy is marked "Roma 1780") and St Petersburg where the work may have been performed during Cimarosa's tenure as *Maestro di musica* to Catherine the Great.

I due baroni di Roccazzura

Overture

I due baroni di Roccazzura, an *intermezzo in musica* with a libretto by Giuseppe Palomba, was given its *prima* at Teatro Valle in Rome during the Carnival season of 1783. It became one of Cimarosa's most popular operas with performances during the 1786 season at La Scala in Milan followed by productions in Madrid (1789), Barcelona (1789), Vienna (1789), for which Mozart composed the aria '*Alma grande e nobile*', in St Petersburg (1791), Lisbon (1791), Cadiz (1792), Warsaw (1792), Zara (1792), Alexandria (1792) and Corfu (1792). It returned to Naples with a slightly altered text in 1793, was given in Modena under the title *La sposa in contrasto* (1802), and then in Paris (1802), London (1803) and in Paris again, this time at the Comédie Italienne as *Il Barone deluso* (1805). A second MS

overture to the opera is preserved in the library of the Conservatoire Royal de Musique in Brussels (MS X 8004). Cast in a single movement, it is an abridged version of the overture to *Giannina e Bernadone*. The original overture, presented here, bears some resemblance to the Overture to *L'eroe cinese* composed the previous year, which itself, is based on Cimarosa's overture to *Il convito*.

Le stravaganze d'amore

Overture

Le stravaganze d'amore (The Eccentricities of Love), a *commedia per musica* in three acts, was the first opera of the 1778 season at Teatro dei Fiorentini in Naples. The libretto, by Pasquale Mililotti, one of Cimarosa's favourite poets, tells a typical *opera buffa* story of several young lovers whose paths cross and who, through masquerades and various deceptions, eventually marry the partners of their original choice. While there are no performances of the opera on record either in Italy or elsewhere except for its *prima* in Naples, the existence of eighteenth-century MS copies of the full score suggests that the work was more widely performed. A copy of the work preserved in the library of the Conservatorio "Luigi Cherubini" in Florence (Fondo Pitti FPT66) includes another version of the overture but this is probably not by Cimarosa.

I nemici generosi

Overture

I nemici generosi (The Generous Enemies), a *farsa per musica* in two acts, was quite widely performed after its *prima* in Rome at Teatro Valle during the Carnival season of 1796. It was produced in Vienna on 2 July 1796; on 18 January 1797 in Dresden (as *Die grossmüthiger Feinde*); at Regio Teatro della Pergola in Florence in the spring of 1797 (with an enlarged cast) at Teatro Nuovo in Naples for Carnival 1797; in Barcelona on 9 December 1797; at Teatro San Moisé in Venice as *Il duello per complimento* (The Polite Duel), a one-act farce repeated at Teatro Giuliniari in Venice in 1801; in St Petersburg in 1798; in Paris at the Théâtre Italien in 1801; at Teatro Carcano in Milan, 1805; and during the autumn of 1805 in Cagliari, Sardinia. Stendahl said of the opera: "Rossini never achieved anything quite like the duel scene from Cimarosa's *I nemici generosi*, which was so exquisitely performed in Paris, fifteen or so years ago…"

The opera's overture also proved very popular. An early British arrangement for fortepiano survives in MS and a keyboard arrangement by A.E. Trial was published in Paris by Imbault at the close of the eighteenth century.

L'eroe cinese

Overture

L'eroe cinese (The Chinese Hero), described variously as a *dramma serio per musica in due atti* (the eighteenth-century MS copy in the library of the Conservatory in Milan) or as an *opera teatrale in 3 atti* (on the composer's holograph score in the library of the Conservatorio di musica San Pietro a Majella in Naples), was written "for the birthday festival of Santa Maria la Regina" and first performed at Teatro San Carlo in Naples on 13 August 1782. Records of further performances are scarce although it is clear from surviving MS copies that the opera was produced in the eighteenth century in both Milan and Florence.

As is the case with Cimarosa's *L'Olimipade*, *L'eroe cinese* is based on a heavily revised libretto of Pietro Metastasio. The unknown author of Cimarosa's libretto made substantial alterations to the structure of the story, reducing the three acts of Metastasio's libretto to two. The plot of the opera is a complicated one. Following an uprising by the people of Singana, China, the Emperor was exiled and his family killed. To save the infant son of the Emperor, however, Leango, the Chinese Regent,

sacrificed his own baby who was to have been murdered in place of the Emperor's son. The action of the opera takes place eighteen years later and deals with heroic battles and the revelation of unknown nobility.

The overture is written in three movements, the first two of which are linked. Rather unusually, the instrumentation is enlarged in the central section by the addition of a pair of clarinets. As the music modulates into B flat towards the end of the first movement, Cimarosa instructs the horns to change to an E flat crook to ensure that he can maintain its varied orchestral palette. Some of the material from this overture was reused the following year in the overture to *I due baroni di Roccazzura*.

Nick Rossi & Allan Badley

Vol. 4

I sdegni per amore

Overture
1. Allegro assai
2. Rondo – Andante grazioso
3. Allegro ma non tanto

I sdegni per amore (Love's indignations), defined as a "one-act comic opera" in the libretto printed for the premiere, a copy of which is now held by the Biblioteca Marucelliana in Florence, was composed by Cimarosa for the 1776 Carnival season at the Teatro Nuovo in Naples. It was presented as half of a double bill with a *farsetta*, also by Cimarosa, *I matrimoni in ballo*. The latter was then reworked by the composer in 1786 and retitled *La baronessa Stramba* and was performed, again at the Teatro Nuovo, as the "third act" of *Il credulo*. There are no known copies of any librettos printed for subsequent performances of *I sdegni per amore*, suggesting that in all likelihood it was not revived.

La finta Frascatana

Overture
1. Allegro di molto
2. Andante con moto
3. Allegro molto

La finta Frascatana (The Fake Lady of Frascata), a *commedia per musica*, or comic opera, was written to a libretto by Pasquale Mililotti and first staged at the Teatro Nuovo in Naples during the winter season of 1776. Although it was a hit with audiences at the time – thanks in part to Mililotti's amusing text – it was not taken up by other opera houses, possibly because some of its characters, as was common practice in productions designed for Naples, spoke in the local dialect, not easily comprehensible elsewhere. Given his huge workload during this period, Cimarosa reworked much of the overture's thematic material for its counterpart in *I tre amanti*, first produced within days of *La finta Frascatana* at Rome's Teatro Valle.

I tre amanti

Overture
1. Allegro di molto
2. Andante con moto
3. Allegro molto

An intermezzo in two acts, setting a libretto by Giuseppe Petrosellini, *I tre amanti* (The Three Lovers) was given its premiere at the Teatro Valle in Rome during the 1777 Carnival season. This was the work that made Cimarosa's name outside the Kingdom of Naples – it was a huge hit in central Italy,

and soon travelled to Florence and then on to Dresden, in a German translation entitled *Die drei Liebhaber*. The overture is cast in three movements, the first two of which are almost identical to those originally composed for *La finta Frascatana*. The only identifiable differences are to be found in some brief cadential episodes in the first movement and minor modifications to the melodic line of the second.

Le donne rivali

Overture
1. Allegro assai spiritoso
2. Andantino alle scozzese moto
3. Allegro assai

Written in 1780 for the Teatro Valle, *Le donne rivali* (Female Rivalry) was such a hit with audiences from the start that it was immediately snapped up by opera houses in Venice and Florence, and within a few years had been staged in St Petersburg and Moscow as well. The librettist is anonymous – the text printed for the premiere fails to list any author's name. When, in 1783, Mozart began work on the score of his *Lo sposo deluso ossia La rivalità di tre donne per un solo amante*, which remained unfinished and was never performed, its libretto was attributed to Lorenzo da Ponte (who probably simply revised the text); it was in fact the same text that Cimarosa had set for *Le donne rivali* (with a few modifications and new character names).

I finti nobili

Overture

I finti nobili (The Fake Noblemen) is a two-act comic opera with a libretto by Giuseppe Palomba. Cimarosa composed it for the 1780 Carnival season at the Teatro Nuovo. The evening was rounded off by a "third act" – a one-act *farsetta* by the same pair, *Li sposi per accidente*. This kind of double bill was common in Neapolitan theatres in the second half of the eighteenth century – the Teatro Nuovo, for example, rarely produced three-act comic operas, preferring to offer its audience pairings of two new works, the first on a larger scale (two acts), the second a one-act comic piece. Cimarosa was to reuse the overture of *I finti nobili* for the second opera he wrote for Vienna, *Amor rende sagace* (1793), composed in the immediate aftermath of the astonishing success of *Il matrimonio segreto*.

Il pittor parigino

Overture
1. Allegro brioso molto
2. Andantino grazioso
3. Allegro molto

Written for the Teatro Valle, with libretto again by Petrosellini, *Il pittor parigino* (The Parisian Painter) was first staged in the 1781 Carnival season. It was one of the composer's greatest successes – within a few years it had been performed, to great acclaim on each occasion, in Prague, Barcelona, Venice and Corfu. In 1789 Haydn directed his own specially adapted version of it at Esterhazy. *Il pittor parigino* is one of the few works by Cimarosa to have remained in the repertoire of various European opera houses into the early years of the nineteenth century. As was common at the time, it underwent various reworkings and modifications as it travelled around Europe, affecting not only the plot and distribution of musical numbers but also the title of the work – it was also presented as *Il barone burlato*, *Der Onkel aus Amsterdam* and *Der Pariser Maler*. The version entitled *Il barone burlato*, lengthened to three acts, was produced in 1784 at the Teatro Nuovo in Naples with additional music especially composed for it by Francesco Cipolla.

L'amante combattuto dalle donne di punto

Overture

Cimarosa wrote the three-act comic opera *L'amante combattuto dalle donne di punto* (The Lover defeated by the Scheming Women) in 1781 for the Teatro dei Fiorentini in Naples. The libretto printed for the first performance, of which a copy is housed in Florence's Biblioteca Marucelliana, uses this title, while the score has another, in the composer's handwriting: *La Biondolina* (the name of the main character). In 1805 the opera was revived at the Teatro Nuovo in Naples, now in a two-act version with yet another title, *La giardiniera fortunata*.

Giunio Bruto

Overture

This *dramma tragico per musica* about Lucius Junius Brutus, one of the first consuls of Rome, was given its premiere at Verona's Teatro Filarmonico in the autumn of 1781 (8 September, to be precise, as can be seen on the original playbill recently discovered by this writer). It was a huge success and soon went on to be staged in Genoa, Siena and Pisa. The tragedy was also admired by Haydn, who conducted a performance of it at the Esterhazy court in 1788, adapting the original score to suit the forces available to him there (as he did with other works by Cimarosa that he conducted at the court).

L'amor costante

Overture
1. Allegro con spirit
2. Andantino
3. Presto

L'amor costante (Steadfast love) was probably composed for the 1782 Carnival season at the Teatro Valle. There is, however, no firm evidence as to when and where it was first performed: no copy of the libretto has survived, and the partial autograph score gives no clues on the subject. The loss of the principal literary source also means that the librettist's name is unknown. The partial autograph score does not include an overture, although as the folio numbers show, Cimarosa must have planned for it to do so – the first volume begins at number 12, so the overture would have taken up the first 11 folios and must have been removed by the composer at a later date, perhaps for reuse somewhere else. This recording is based on an unpublished manuscript which is housed in the library of the Luigi Cherubini Conservatory in Florence and contains an overture probably composed by another musician – one whose name remains a mystery to this day.

Simone Perugini
English translation by Susannah Howe

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Atene edificata

Overture
1. Molto allegro con brio
2. Allegro

Cimarosa wrote the cantata *Atene edificata* (The Founding of Athens) during the brief period in which he was employed at the court of Catherine the Great. The full-autograph score is now housed in the library of the San Pietro a Majello Conservatory in Naples but, because it has been impossible to trace a copy of the printed libretto, most of what we know about the work's first performance has been

gleaned from the brief notes left by Cimarosa on the title page of the score. The cantata was almost certainly given its première on 29th June 1788 (10th July in the Gregorian calendar).

Dramatic composition for Cardinal de Bernis

Cantata per l'Eminentissimo Cardinale De Bernis in occasione della Nascita del Delfino: Overture
1. Allegro con spirit
2. Andantino
3. Allegro vivace

Little is known about the genesis and reception of the *Cantata a tre voci di Dom.co Cimarosa fatta / per l'Eminentissimo Cardinale De Bernis in occasione della Nascita del Delfino* (Three-part Cantata by Domenico Cimarosa written / for His Eminence Cardinal de Bernis on the occasion of the Birth of the Dauphin). The text was commissioned by François-Joachim de Pierre, Cardinal de Bernis, an adviser to both Louis XV and Louis XVI, from the poet, writer, dramatist and translator Vincenzo Monti – a leading exponent of the Italian neo-Classical style – to mark the birth of the Dauphin (the firstborn son of Louis XVI). The work was probably given in a private performance at the Cardinal's residence.

La bella Greca (I matrimoni impensati)

Overture
1. Allegro con molto brio
2. Adagio
3. Allegro giusto

La bella Greca (The Beautiful Greek Girl) is an *intermezzo in musica* (we know from the libretto printed for its première that it was also given the alternative title *I matrimoni impensati* – The Unforeseen Weddings) composed for the 1784 Carnival season at the Teatro Valle in Rome. Unfortunately the libretto does not include the name of the librettist (this was fairly common practice for the Teatro Valle in the latter part of the eighteenth century); it can, however, be attributed to Giuseppe Petrosellini, a poet active at the Teatro Valle during this period and with whom Cimarosa worked on most of his Roman productions. The partial-autograph score is housed at the San Pietro a Majella Conservatory in Naples; its nonautograph title-page is headed *La bella Greca*, but the text set by Cimarosa is known to be identical to the libretto of *I matrimoni impensati*, with the exception of two variations in scenes IX and X of the first act.

La felicità inaspettata

Overture

Cimarosa wrote the "pastoral cantata" *La felicita inaspettata* (Unexpected Happiness) in St Petersburg in 1788. In their book *Domenico Cimarosa. His Life and His Operas*, Nick Rossi and Talmage Fauntleroy make the somewhat surprising statement that no original sources of *La felicita inaspettata* survive, whereas in fact the full-autograph score is, again, housed in the library of the San Pietro a Majella Conservatory. The libretto, meanwhile, which was written by the Russian court's official poet Ferdinando Moretti, was published as part of a collection of the latter's theatrical works in 1794. As we know from the title-page of the score, the work was "performed for the first time / at the Hermitage Theatre on 24th February 1788".

La villana riconosciuta

Overture
1. Allegro con spirit
2. Adagio

The comic opera *La villana riconosciuta* (The Country Girl Revealed), setting a libretto by Giuseppe Palomba, was written in response to a commission from the Neapolitan Teatro del Fondo. Unusually for a Cimarosa production, we know the exact date of the first performance thanks to a mention in the *Gazzetta universale*. A brief report by an anonymous journalist, dated [Monday] 30th June 1783, tells us that "His Majesty on the 28th … attended a performance of a comic opera entitled *La villana riconosciuta*. This took place at the Teatro del Fondo, open for the first time this year, and Signor Cimarosa's music was warmly applauded by the audience." After its Neapolitan premiere, this work went on to be produced in many opera houses, both in Italy and further afield (London, Madrid, Berlin, Florence, Rome, Bologna, Modena), often under a different title.

I due supposti conti (Lo sposo senza moglie)

Overture
1. Largo staccato
2. Larghetto grazioso alla francese
3. Allegro molto

A *dramma giocoso per musica* in two acts to a libretto by Angelo Anelli, *I due supposti conti (Lo sposo senza moglie)* – The Two Would-be Counts, or The Groom without a Wife – was first staged at La Scala, Milan, on 10th October 1784. A short article appearing in the *Gazzetta universale* on [Wednesday] 13th October reports that, in what was a very rare occurrence for a work by Cimarosa, the opera was not a success. The unnamed writer seems to attribute this to a last-minute change of cast, but a close analysis of the partial-autograph score (again, part of the library holdings of the San Pietro a Majella Conservatory) also shows that Cimarosa must have compiled the manuscript in something of a hurry.

Le trame deluse

Overture
1. Allegro vivace
2. Allegro

The comic opera *Le trame deluse* (The Foiled Schemes) was staged as the "second opera" at the Teatro Nuovo in Naples in 1786. It was an instant hit with audiences and, to judge from the incalculable number of new productions at opera houses in Italy and abroad, has to be seen as one of the most successful of Cimarosa's career. It was staged in Vienna, Naples (1788, Teatro dei Fiorentini, in a two-act version adapted by Giuseppe Benevento), Dresden, Budapest, London, Bologna (with the alternative title *Li raggiri scoperti* – The Tricks Discovered), Madrid, Florence and Milan (at the Teatro della Canobbiana in 1811, and then at La Scala in 1818).

Il marito disperato

Overture

A *dramma giocoso, Il marito disperato* (The Desperate Husband) sets a libretto by Giovan Battista Lorenzi, and was written by Cimarosa for the Teatro dei Fiorentini in Naples, where it received its first performance in 1785. The two-volume partial-autograph score of *Il marito disperato* is housed at the San Pietro a Majella Conservatory, whose library also holds the manuscript, non-autograph score of a later version staged for the first time at the Teatro Nuovo in Naples in 1805 under the title *L'amante disperato* (The Desperate Lover).

L'Olimpiade

Overture

L'Olimpiade (The Olympiad), a *dramma per musica*, was composed for the inauguration of Vicenza's Teatro Eretenio in 1784. The libretto set by Cimarosa was the latest of many adaptations of a text originally written by Pietro Metastasio. Antonio Caldara had been the first to set this to music, and Metastasio's drama went on to inspire a further sixty composers. The Eretenio's impresarios had initially commissioned Giovanbattista Borghi, a composer considerably less well-known than Cimarosa, to compose their opera. For reasons that remain far from clear, having written various sections of the opera, he abandoned the task, and Cimarosa was called in at the eleventh hour – at the time he was in Florence working on a production of *La vanita delusa*, a *dramma giocoso* which shares an overture with *L'Olimpiade*.

La ballerina amante

Overture

The three-act *dramma giocoso per musica*, *La ballerina amante*, (The Ballerina In Love) was the result of another commission from the Teatro dei Fiorentini. Unfortunately, no libretto printed for the first performance of *La ballerina amante* survives to provide any definitive information as to its author. It is thought, however, to be another text by Giuseppe Palomba, one of Cimarosa's regular collaborators, who was active at the Fiorentini theatre at the time. *La ballerina* was produced many times outside the Kingdom of Naples, with stagings in Florence, Trieste, Malta, Corfu, Prague, Lisbon and St Petersburg.

Il fanatico burlato

Overture

Cimarosa composed his comic opera (*commedia per musica*) *Il fanatico burlato* (The Fanatic Duped) to a libretto by Saverio Zini, for the Teatro del Fondo in Naples where it was performed, as we know from the first-night libretto, as the "first opera" of 1787. It was in fact the last work Cimarosa wrote in Italy before taking up his posts at the Russian court: according to another anonymous report in the *Gazzetta universale*, as published on 10th July 1787, the composer had "set off for St Petersburg … summoned by the [Russian] Queen to set various works to music". *Il fanatico burlato* went on to be staged in Milan, Florence, Vienna, Barcelona, Paris, Corfu, Lisbon, Mannheim and Weimar.

Simone Perugini
English translation by Susannah Howe

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Il matrimonio segreto (Vienna version, 1792)

Overture

Setting a libretto by Giovanni Bertati, *Il matrimonio segreto* ('The Secret Marriage') was first staged at the Burgtheater on 7 February 1792. It was a hugely popular success and, as we know from a statement included in the libretto printed for a production at the Teatro dei Fiorentini in Naples in 1793, it was particularly appreciated by the Austrian emperor Leopold II. Legend has it that he asked the artists to give a complete second performance that same night, a story thought for many years to be true but for which there is in fact no documented evidence.

Gli Orazi e i Curiazi (1797 version)

Overture

This three-act *tragedia per musica* to a libretto by Antonio Simeone Sografi was commissioned by Alberto Cavos, impresario of Venice's La Fenice opera house, where it was premiered on 26

December 1796. Contrary to the stories told about a disastrous opening night in the official biographies of Cimarosa, *Gli Orazi e i Curiazi* ('The Horatii and the Curiatii') was in fact warmly received by the audience, as is backed up by a review that appeared in the *Gazzetta veneta urbana* on 31 December 1796: 'My first remark is that the libretto seems to me the best of its kind that Sografi has written. The music is very beautiful.'

Cantata per Ferdinando IV

Overture

On 23 December 1798, as Napoleon's troops continued their inexorable occupation of the Italian peninsula, Ferdinand IV fled Naples for Palermo, and on 21 January 1799 the Parthenopean Republic was proclaimed. The new republican government, fragile and badly organised from the start, was short-lived; it was overthrown on 14 June 1799 by counter-revolutionary forces led by Cardinal Fabrizio Ruffo. Sympathetic to the republican cause, Cimarosa had written patriotic music celebrating the downfall of the monarchy. When Bourbon rule was restored, he quickly had to repent his political sins and therefore composed this cantata in praise of Ferdinand IV.

Gli Orazi e i Curiazi (Paris version, 1800)

Overture

While the autograph score of *Gli Orazi e i Curiazi* has sadly not survived, various other manuscript versions are still to be found in libraries across Europe. Many of these are adaptations disfigured by cuts and interpolations of numbers by other composers, but they relate back to two authentic versions of the work: the three-act version produced at La Fenice in 1796 and a two-act version first staged in Paris in 1800. Each of these had its own overture.

Artemisia

Overture

Artemisia, a *dramma serio per musica*, was written by Cimarosa in response to a commission from Alberto Cavos at La Fenice. It was premiered there on 17 January 1801, a week after the composer's death. Originally conceived by librettist Giovanni Battista Colloredo (who used the Arcadian pseudonym of Cratisto Jamejo) as a three-act work, and presented as such in the printed libretto prepared for the opening, it was actually staged in a two-act reduction from the premiere onwards.

Penelope

Overture

This *dramma per musica* was commissioned by Giuseppe Coletta, impresario of Naples's Teatro del Fondo di Separazione for the 1795 carnival season. Setting a libretto by Giuseppe Maria Diodati, the opera was dedicated to Ferdinand IV, and the leading roles were played by Elena Cantoni, Matteo Babini and Girolamo Braura. It was a hit from the opening night onwards and went on to be produced at the Teatro Regio in Livorno in 1795, Lisbon's Teatro São Carlo in 1804, the King's Theatre, London, in 1817 and in St Petersburg in 1818.

L'imprudente fortunato

Overture

Unfortunately, nothing is known about the genesis or degree of success of the first production of *L'imprudente fortunato* ('The Imprudent but Lucky Man'), a two-act *dramma giocoso* which sets a libretto by an anonymous author and was composed for the 1797 carnival season at Rome's Teatro

Valle. The opera was presumably a hit, however, given that it went on to be produced at the Teatro Nuovo in Naples, where it played for 38 consecutive nights, and at La Scala, Milan, in 1812.

I traci amanti

Overture

Cimarosa composed *I traci amanti* ('The Thracian Lovers') for the Teatro Nuovo in Naples in 1793. The libretto was commissioned from Giuseppe Palomba, and the main roles were created by Nicola Perrotti, Benedetta Marchetti and Gennaro Luzio. The opera was an immediate success and, after its first season at the Teatro Nuovo, was staged in many opera houses in Italy and beyond, with productions in Turin (1794) and Madrid (1795), as well as in London, Lisbon (where it was retitled *Gli turchi amanti* – 'The Turkish Lovers'), Dresden, Venice, Vienna, Paris, Florence and Milan.

Achille all'assedio di Troia

Overture

Cimarosa composed *Achille all'assedio di Troia* ('Achilles at the Siege of Troy'), a *dramma per musica* in two acts, in response to a commission from Camillo Alliati, impresario of the Teatro Argentina in Rome; we know from a brief mention in the *Diario di Roma* on 11 February 1797 that it was premiered on 8 February. The librettist remains anonymous—there is no name given on the few surviving copies of the printed libretto produced for the premiere. Alliati dedicated the opera to Princess Maria Carlotta Barberini Chigi.

L'impegno superato

Overture

L'impegno superato ('The Broken Engagement'), a *dramma giocoso* in two acts, was commissioned by the Teatro del Fondo in Naples. Its libretto was newly written by Giuseppe Maria Diodati and it was premiered as the third opera of the 1795 season. It was an instant hit with audiences and soon became one of the most frequently performed of Cimarosa's comic works. Within a few months it had been produced in Florence, Bologna, Paris, Berlin and Vienna.

L'apparenza inganna

Overture

Cimarosa composed the two-act *L'apparenza inganna* ('Appearances are Deceptive') to a libretto by Giambattista Lorenzi for the Teatro dei Fiorentini in Naples where it was first staged in the spring of 1784. A partial autograph score of the opera is housed in the library of the San Pietro a Majella Conservatory in Naples (shelf mark: 13.3.7–8). The year 1784 was a particularly busy one for the composer, who received a series of commissions – for *L'Olimpiade*, *La bella greca*, *I due supposti conti* and *Artaserse* – within the space of a few months.

Il maestro di cappella

Overture (arr. S. Perugini for orchestra)

Current scholarship has as yet failed to establish with absolute certainty the true authorship of *Il maestro di cappella* ('The Music Director'), although the cantata, originally written for bass voice and keyboard, has always been attributed to Cimarosa. The version used for 20thcentury performances (and related audio recordings) is that prepared, in full score and piano reduction, by the Italian publishers Ricordi around 1950 featuring Maffeo Zanon's masterful orchestration. No 19th-century manuscripts with the full orchestration survive, and the Ricordi edition has a different overture from the one found in the manuscript of 1860 (the closest, chronologically speaking, to the period in which

Cimarosa lived). This recording offers listeners the chance to hear my new orchestration, based on 1780s-style Cimarosa.

Simone Perugini
English translation by Susannah Howe

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Judith (1782)
Overture

In 1782, in the wake of the enormous success he had achieved in Venetian theatres with the operas *Giannina e Bernardone* and *Il convito*, Cimarosa was appointed music master at the Ospedaletto girls' conservatory in Venice, replacing Pasquale Anfossi in the post. Soon after this he composed two oratorios for the institution: *Absalom* and *Judith* (the latter was produced again in the years that followed, without Cimarosa's direct involvement, in Rome, Berlin, Naples and Florence, under different titles and with the addition of numbers by other composers). Although a copy of the libretto printed for the first performance of *Absalom* has survived, the same is not true for *Judith* and the names of the original singers are therefore unknown.

Il convito ('The Banquet') (1782)
Overture

Il convito, a *dramma giocoso* in two acts setting a libretto by Filippo Livigni, was premiered in late December 1781 at the San Samuele Theatre in Venice. The opera was hugely popular with audiences from the start, so much so that just a few months later it was produced at the Teatro alla Pergola in Florence (whose impresario, Andrea Campigli, was always very keen to bring his audience the latest hits from elsewhere in Italy). For the Florentine version of *Il convito* a few changes were made to both libretto and score. It seems likely that most of the revisions to the score were made by Cimarosa himself who, thanks to the opera's Florentine success, was officially invited to compose a brand-new opera for the Pergola, *La vanità delusa*.

Amor rende sagace ('Love Leads to Wisdom') (1793)
Overture

On 1 April 1793 *Amor rende sagace*, a one-act *dramma giocoso* with libretto by Giovanni Bertati, had its premiere at the Vienna Burgtheater. Cimarosa composed the music for this opera after the immensely successful *Il matrimonio segreto*, premiered at the Burgtheater a year earlier. Unlike the latter opera, however, *Amor rende sagace* did not suit Viennese audiences' tastes so well, at least according to a review that appeared in the *Österreichische Monatsschrift* in April 1793. Perhaps it was this disappointment and the potential for the opera's score to fall into oblivion that led Cimarosa to have the libretto adapted in 1794 by Giuseppe Palomba. This new version became *Le astuzie femminili*, much of whose music was borrowed from *Amor rende sagace*.

San Filippo Neri che risuscita Paolo Massimi ('St Philip Neri Raises Paolo Massimi from the Dead') (1797)
Overture

It was the fathers of the Congregation of the Oratory of San Filippo Neri in Rome who commissioned librettist Giovanni Battista Rasi and Cimarosa to write the oratorio *San Filippo Neri che risuscita Paolo Massimi*. The work was first performed at the Oratory in Rome in 1797. Sadly no report survives on how it was received; all we know, thanks to a few surviving copies of the printed libretto,

is that the oratorio was produced again, in the same venue, in 1802 and 1819. Rasi's libretto was in large part adapted to Cimarosa's existing music for the opera *La Penelope*. The composer wrote just two arias and the opening sinfonia expressly for *San Filippo Neri*.

Il trionfo della fede ('The Triumph of Faith') (1794)

Overture

Cimarosa wrote *Il trionfo della fede* in 1794 to a libretto by Clemente Filomarino as the 'dramatic component to be sung at the Sedile di Porto on the day of the liquefaction of the glorious blood of San Gennaro'. The work was commissioned from him for the procession of the reliquary said to contain the blood of Gennaro, patron saint of Naples. For the same occasion the following year Cimarosa composed the cantata *Il martirio*.

Il capriccio drammatico ('The Theatrical Whim') (1794)

Overture

Il capriccio drammatico, a one-act comic opera based on a libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte (and not, as erroneously documented elsewhere, by Giovanni Bertati), was first staged at London's Haymarket Theatre in 1794. In fact, it was not a new opera, but an adaptation by the librettist of a very famous work by Cimarosa, *L'impresario in angustie*, initially produced at the Teatro Nuovo in Naples in 1786. Here Da Ponte added two new characters to the text originally written for *L'impresario* by Giuseppe Maria Diodati, and changed the name of another character, from Doralba to Dorinda.

Il martirio ('The Martyrdom') (1795)

Overture

This is the 1795 work Cimarosa composed to be sung at the Sedile di Portanova on the day of the San Gennaro procession in Naples. The autograph score of *Il martirio* has been lost, but the writer discovered a manuscript copy (on which the critical edition of the overture included on this album is based) in the State Library of Montecassino (Italy), where it is catalogued under shelfmark 1-A-12.

Absalom (1782)

Overture

As mentioned above, Cimarosa composed the oratorio *Absalom* in 1782 for the girls of the Ospedaletto in Venice, shortly after succeeding Anfossi as music master there. The partial autograph score is housed in the library of the San Pietro a Majella Conservatory in Naples (shelfmark 13.3.13) and contains the entirety of the oratorio's music.

Il matrimonio per sussurro, ossia Il cicisbeo discacciato ('Marriage by Noise, or The Banished Gallant') (1777)

Overture
1. Allegro con spirit
2. Andante
3. Allegro

In the early days of his career, Cimarosa often wrote arias and other music to be added to works by other composers when they were restaged in Naples, adapting them to the tastes and demands of the singers involved. By fortunate coincidence, the San Pietro a Majella library has the autograph scores of the pieces Cimarosa composed in 1777 for the opera *Il matrimonio per sussurro, ossia Il cicisbeo discacciato* by the Neapolitan composer Gaetano Monti premiered that year at the city's Teatro Nuovo.

Il padre alla moda ('The Fashionable Father') (1795)

Overture

Cimarosa composed *I traci amanti*, a two-act *commedia per musica*, for the Teatro Nuovo in Naples where it had its premiere in 1793. In 1795 a new production of the work was staged at the Teatro Nuovo in Padua, with the title changed to *Il padre alla moda*. Cimarosa himself wrote two new arias for the occasion, one each for the characters of Mustanzir and Lenina, and a new overture.

Simone Perugini
English translation by Susannah Howe