

FORTUNATO CHELLERI'S *CANTATE E ARIE CON STROMENTI* (1727): A SOUVENIR OF LONDON

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Izvilleček: *Italijanski skladatelj in inštrumentalist Fortunato Chelleri je med letoma 1725 in 1728 trikrat obiskal London. Čeprav mu ni uspelo, da bi tam izvajali katero izmed njegovih oper, so ga opazili kot izjemnega čembalista in čelista. Kot trajni spomin na svoje obiske je zapustil tiskano zbirko kantat in arij (1727), ki ga uvršča med omembe vredne skladatelje. Članek govori tudi o sočasnem izjemnem uspehu italijanske kantate v Britaniji.*

Ključne besede: *arija, kantata, Fortunato Chelleri, Charles Douglas, London.*

Abstract: *The Italian composer and instrumentalist Fortunato Chelleri paid three visits to London between 1725 and 1728. Although he failed to have any of his operas performed there, he distinguished himself as a harpsichordist and cellist and left a permanent record of his visits in the form of a published collection of cantatas and arias (1727) that demonstrates his considerable merit as a composer. The article also examines the extraordinary success enjoyed by the Italian cantata in Britain during the same period.*

Keywords: *aria, cantata, Fortunato Chelleri, Charles Douglas, London.*

In an age when musicians readily crossed the Alps and the seas in search of employment or experience, Fortunato Chelleri must count among the most mobile. From the point of view of his future reception, this mobility has been his undoing, since, as I have commented elsewhere,¹ no national, regional or local tradition has been able to claim him entirely as its own and thereby acquire a strong rationale to do justice to his considerable musical merits via monumental editions or commemorative writings. There have been several valuable studies touching on discrete aspects of his biography or music, but to date no unifying published life-and-works study to put everything into perspective.² The present

¹ Michael Talbot, *The Harpsichord Sonatas of Fortunato Chelleri: Some Observations on Form and Thematic Treatment*, *Relazioni musicali tra Italia e Germania nell'età barocca. Atti del VI Convegno internazionale sulla musica italiana nei secoli XVII–XVIII, Lovenjo di Menaggio (Como), 11–13 luglio 1995*, eds Alberto Colzani [...], *Contributi musicologici del Centro Ricerche dell'A.M.I.S.-Como 10, Como, A.M.I.S., 1997*, pp. 305–322: 305.

² The starting point for Chelleri's biography is Ernst Ludwig Gerber, *Historisch-Biographisches Lexicon der Tonkünstler*, 2 vols, Leipzig: Breitkopf, 1790–1792, vol. 1, coll. 272–275 (claimed

article follows its predecessors in dealing with only one particular aspect of Chelleri's career – his sojourns in England during the period 1725–1728 – but it is hoped that the result will in time feed into the more comprehensive study that by now is surely overdue.

Chelleri's early life can be described succinctly. Born, probably in 1690,³ into a family of Bavarian origin resident in Parma ("Chelleri" is an Italianized form of "Keller", and the spellings "Kelleri" and "Kellery" occur frequently in northern European sources, possibly being employed by the composer himself), he lost his father around 1702 while still a choirboy at the Cappella della Steccata in Parma. An uncle, Francesco Maria Bazzani, who happened to be *maestro di cappella* at the cathedral of Piacenza, acted as his guardian and instructed him in keyboard playing and singing. In 1708 Chelleri contributed arias to a revival of Albinoni's opera *Griselda* in Piacenza, launching a career that in its early stages was to be dominated by opera. He briefly visited Catalonia in 1709 during the period when the unsuccessful claimant to the Spanish throne, Archduke Charles (the future Emperor Charles VI), was resident there, but soon returned to Italy.

Between 1715 and 1722 Chelleri was much in demand as an opera composer in north-eastern Italy, writing twelve operas. Most were premiered in Venice, where he mainly resided, but others were commissioned by theatres in the Veneto (Brescia, Padua, Treviso) or neighbouring Ferrara. During this period, he enjoyed the patronage initially of the Elector Palatine, Johann Wilhelm, and thereafter (from 1716) of the Dowager Electress, Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici, but there is no evidence that he moved either to Düsseldorf or to Florence, where the electress retired in 1717. His first two operas, *La caccia in*

to be based on the composer's own account), supplemented by a few extra details in the same author's *Neues historisch-bibliographisches Lexikon*, 4 vols, Leipzig, Kühnel, 1812–1814, vol. 1, coll. 693–694. The only general study of Chelleri remains Wilhelm Eckert, *Fortunato Chelleri: sein Leben und Wirken, besonders an den ehemaligen Höfen zu Würzburg und Kassel*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Heidelberg, 1922. On Chelleri's antecedents and early years in Parma, see Nestore Pelicelli, *Musicisti in Parma nel secolo XVII, Note d'archivio per la storia musicale* 9 (1932), pp. 217–246, and its sequel *Musicisti in Parma nel secolo XVIII, Note d'archivio per la storia musicale* 10 (1933), pp. 233–248 and 313–325. On Chelleri's activities at Würzburg, see Oskar Kaul, *Geschichte der Würzburger Hofmusik*, Würzburg, Becker, 1924, and Fritz Zobeley, *Rudolf Franz Erwein Graf von Schönborn (1677–1754) und seine Musikpflege*, Neujahrsblätter herausgegeben von der Gesellschaft für Fränkische Geschichte 21, Würzburg, Schöningh, 1949. On his activities in Sweden, see Krister Hede, *Fortunato Chelleri och Sverige*, Uppsala, 1976 (University of Uppsala, unpublished undergraduate dissertation). Chelleri's keyboard music is discussed in the article cited in note 1 and in the introduction by Vassilis Vavoulis to his edition *Fortunato Chelleri: Keyboard Music*, Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era 101, Madison (WI), A-R Editions, 2000, pp. ix–xvi; Vavoulis is also the author of the entry for Chelleri in the revised edition (2001) of the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. Chelleri's activity as a cellist is discussed in Lowell Lindgren, *Italian Violinists and some Violoncello Solos Published in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, *Music in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, ed. David Wyn Jones, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2000, pp. 122–157: 141–142.

³ From the notice of his death in Kassel on 11 December 1757, which records his age as 67 years and 6 months, it appears that Chelleri was born in May or June 1690. Gerber, however, gives 1688 as the year of birth. Since Gerber's account contains numerous minor inaccuracies – for example, it confuses the Royal Academy of Music (the opera company) with the Academy of Vocal Music (the music society) – the birth year derived from the necrology appears more trustworthy.

Etolia and *Ircano innamorato* (both Ferrara, 1715), achieved many revivals, some under new titles. In Venice, Chelleri fell into the orbit of Vivaldi; his first two Venetian operas, both written for the Teatro S. Angelo, were programmed during seasons (1715–1716 and 1716–1717) when Vivaldi was musical director, and it may even be that the latter's arias "Sempre piace goder il suo bene" (*Arsilda, regina di Ponto*, RV 700, I.6), "Col furor ch'in petto io serbo" (*L'incoronazione di Dario*, RV 719, II.20) and "Sentirò fra ramo e ramo" (*ibid.*, III.2), all of which feature a part for solo cello, were conceived as showcases for Chelleri (assuming he was then playing as principal cellist in the opera orchestra).⁴

In April or May 1722 Chelleri was among a group of five Italian musicians recruited in Venice by the Prince-Bishop of Mainz, Johann Philipp Franz von Schönborn (1673–1724; Prince-Bishop from September 1719). Schönborn had made earlier attempts to obtain musicians for his *Kapelle* from Venice, using Carlo Luigi Pietragrua, the choirmaster at the Ospedale della Pietà who had previously worked at Düsseldorf, as his intermediary; however, these appointments had largely been unsuccessful, and by 1722 only the alto castrato Raffaele Signorini remained in his service.⁵ The new recruits were better: they comprised Chelleri, as *Maestro di cappella*; the oboist, harpsichordist and composer Giovanni Platti; the bass-baritone and composer Girolamo Bassani, nicknamed "Momolo";⁶ the singer Elisabetta Pilotti; and her husband, the cellist and bass-viol player Giovanni Battista Schiavonetto (or Schiavonetti). The last two had previously been in Hanoverian service for several years, and Pilotti had made frequent appearances on the London stage between 1710 and 1717.

Chelleri's period in Würzburg, terminated prematurely by the unexpected death of the Prince-Bishop on 18 August 1724, was perhaps the most productive and untroubled of his career. He used it to write great quantities of non-theatrical vocal music: oratorios, liturgical compositions, serenatas and cantatas. Only operas were lacking.

On Schönborn's death, his *Kapelle* was dissolved, Chelleri being dismissed from service on 20 November 1724. This obliged the court musicians to seek alternative means of gaining their livelihood. Platti and Bassani found new work in Würzburg, but Pilotti, Schiavonetto and Chelleri moved on.

The next established post that Chelleri held was as *Kapellmeister* in Kassel to Landgrave Karl of Hesse-Kassel. Following the death of Ruggiero Fedeli in 1722, the Kassel court remained for two to three years without a musical director until Chelleri's appointment, relying on its principal violinist, Johann Adam Birkenstock, to compose new music, and the Veronese soprano Girolamo ("Momoletto") Albertini, in service since

⁴ There is a complicating factor in that none of the three arias appears in the published librettos, and the first and third are excluded from what appear to be the complete scores in their earliest states. Chelleri caused a rumpus when, on 28 December 1716, he walked out with his score at the première of *Penelope la casta* in a dispute over pay (in January 1717, he narrowly survived an assassination attempt on the part of a disgruntled singer arising from the failure of this opera), so he was perhaps no longer *persona grata* with Vivaldi, or at least had not yet recovered from his wounds, when the latter's *L'incoronazione di Dario* opened on 23 January.

⁵ See Colin Timms, *Polymath of the Baroque: Agostino Steffani and His Music*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 126–127.

⁶ "Momolo" is a standard Venetian dialectal form of "Girolamo".

1701, to assist with the choir.⁷ Chelleri was in one special respect an obvious choice, since, as an expert cellist and (as we shall shortly see) most probably also a player of the bass viol, he was in an ideal position to instruct and advise the landgrave, who was a keen amateur of the second instrument.

It appears that Chelleri's formal engagement at Kassel occurred in mid-1725. On 8 August 1725 Giuseppe Riva, the Modenese Resident in London, wrote from Hanover to his regular correspondent in London, the merchant Giovanni Giacomo Zamboni.⁸ Riva requested that part of his letter be communicated to Attilio Ariosti, a leading figure in the Royal Academy of Music. From this paragraph we learn that Riva had met Schiavonetto and Pilotti, together with Chelleri and Albertini, in Hanover. Riva states that Schiavonetti and Pilotti claim to have placed Chelleri – by implication, not long before – in the service of the Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel, and that Chelleri “had two operas with him written expressly for England, which he had sold to the Academy cheaply”. The fact of Chelleri's appointment is, of course, true; and Pilotti and Schiavonetti may indeed have helped to bring it about, knowing him from Würzburg days, even if one suspects that “Momoletto”, a veteran of the Kassel court, had at least an equal part in it. That Chelleri had brought the scores of two newly composed operas to London and persuaded the Academy to purchase them (presumably in the form of copies) is plausible with regard to the first claim and not impossible with regard to the second, although corroborative evidence is lacking. One surmises that the point of relaying this information to Ariosti, an Academy “insider”, was to probe the truth of it. In reality, however, the composition of operas for the Academy had by then become an oligopoly shared between Handel, Bononcini and Ariosti, with little room for new talent.

The report does not by itself prove that Chelleri visited London in late 1724 and/ or early 1725, since agents for the Academy could have sought out and purchased new works on the Continent. Fortunately, however, there is one press announcement to prove that such a visit did indeed take place. On 12 April 1725⁹ the *Daily Courant* carried an advertisement for a performance, at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane, London, of John Fletcher's comedy *The Pilgrim*, to which was attached a benefit concert for the tenor Gaetano Filippo Rochetti that featured “a Solo on the Bass-Viol, to be performed by Sig. Chelleri, being the first Time of his appearing on the English Stage”.¹⁰ It has been suggested that “bass viol” here really means “bass violin”, since the former term was often

⁷ Rashid-Sascha Pegah has kindly informed me in private correspondence that it was Albertini who, on 8 January 1725, signed a document admitting a new choirboy after audition (Hessisches Staatsarchiv Marburg, Protokolle II Kassel, C b 10, Bd. XVIII (1723–1725), Fürstliche Original-Rescripte 1723–1725). Clearly, no new *Kapellmeister* was in place by then.

⁸ Extracts from this letter in English, with a commentary, appear in Lowell Lindgren, *Musicians and Librettists in the Correspondence of Gio. Giacomo Zamboni* (Oxford: Bodleian Library. MSS Rawlinson Letters 116–138), *R. M. A. Research Chronicle* 24 (1991), pp. 86–87 (no. 172).

⁹ All quoted dates referring to events in England observe the Old Style (i.e., the Julian, rather than the Gregorian, calendar) but place the start of the year in modern fashion at 1 January.

¹⁰ Benefit concerts were concerts financed by a patron (usually anonymous), who allowed the proceeds to go to the one or more nominated beneficiaries.

retained in England for the violoncello.¹¹ However, since it is today clear that the viol was not entirely neglected in Italy in the eighteenth century, while there is firm evidence that the Venetian bass singer Angelo Zanoni played the bass viol in public both in Venice and in London, there is no reason to dismiss *a priori* a literal interpretation.¹² Like their modern counterparts on the early music scene, eighteenth-century musicians sometimes “doubled” on bass viol and cello.

If 12 April 1725 really was the first time that Chelleri appeared in public in England, his date of arrival was probably quite recent. This raises an interesting further question: when the composer came to London, was he already secure in the knowledge of an appointment in Kassel (which would mean that the visit would have the character almost of a vacation between employments), or was he angling for a long, potentially permanent, period of residence in England? There is no doubt that, particularly in the heyday of the so-called “first” Royal Academy of Music (1720–1728), Italian musicians great and small flocked to London. Lowell Lindgren writes aptly of “an unprecedented influx of Italian performers and creators who, like Handel and other ‘outlandish’ personnel at this theatre [the Haymarket Theatre], found that salaries were higher, working conditions were better and freedom was greater in England than in their own lands”.¹³ There is too little information to permit firm conclusions about the circumstances and motivation behind Chelleri’s first visit to England. It is interesting that in his account of a visit to Italy in 1721, published in 1726, the German traveller Joachim Christian Nemeitz, mentions an excellent player of the *basse de violon* (i.e., the cello) in Amsterdam named Kelleri.¹⁴ Could it be that on either his outward or his homeward journey Chelleri sojourned in Amsterdam, performing in public on the cello? Such a visit might be related in some way to the fact that at the time of his death in 1743 the Amsterdam music publisher Michel-Charles Le Cène possessed a manuscript containing a set of twelve cello sonatas by Chelleri that, like several similar collections in this publisher’s possession, never reached the engraving stage.¹⁵

Chelleri must have taken up his Kassel post by 2 June 1725, when he acted as godfather to Carolus Fortunatus Zikkell, son of a lackey at the court.¹⁶ But he was evidently

¹¹ See the detailed discussion in L. Lindgren, *Italian Violoncellists*, op. cit., pp. 125–129. An anonymous glossary of English and Italian words published by Thomas Edlin in London in 1726 (*A Nomenclature English and Italian*) gives “bass-viol” (not “bass-violin”) as the English equivalent of Italian “violoncello”. As late as 1773 Charles Burney, in *The Present State of Music in Germany, the Netherlands, and United Provinces* (vol. 2, p. 136n) refers to what is obviously a cello (played by Francesco Alborea) as a “base-viol”. See also Brenda Neece, *The Cello in Britain: A Technical and Social History*, *The Galpin Society Journal* 56 (2003), pp. 77–155: 85–86.

¹² On the cultivation of the viol in Italy, especially under the name of *viola all’inglese*, see Michael Talbot, *Vivaldi and the English Viol*, *Early Music* 30 (2002), pp. 381–394.

¹³ L. Lindgren, *Musicians and Librettists*, op. cit., p. 1.

¹⁴ Joachim Christoph Nemeitz, *Nachlese besonderer Nachrichten aus Italien*, Leipzig, Gleditsch, 1726, p. 427n.

¹⁵ On Le Cène’s *Nachlass*, see Rudolf Rasch, *I manoscritti musicali nel lascito di Michel-Charles Le Cène, Intorno a Locatelli*, ed. Albert Dunning, *Speculum Musicum* 1, Lucca, Libreria Musicale Italiana, 1995, pp. 1039–1070; the reference to Chelleri’s sonatas is on p. 1066.

¹⁶ I am grateful to Rashid-Sascha Pegah for this reference (LandeskirchlichesArchiv Kassel,

itching to return to London, doubtless in pursuit of a production of his operas there. In the early autumn of 1726 he encountered in Kassel a young Anglo-Dutch aristocrat, William Count Bentinck, then undertaking a Grand Tour. His guide-cum-governor, Moses Bernège, reported the meeting on 25 September 1725 to the Count's mother, Jane Martha Temple, the Dowager Duchess of Portland:¹⁷

[...] Mons[ieu]r Bentinck a fait la decouverte du Sieur Kellery fameux musicien qui est depuis quelques années au service de cette cour, il a, ce qu'il dit enseigné la musique a la Signora Cuzzone [Cuzzoni], et il est grand ami de Sandoni, nous avons fait venir un clavessin et ils s'exercent a l'heure meme que j'ai l'honneur de vous ecrire [...]

(Mr Bentinck has discovered Signor Kellery, a famous musician who has already been some years in the service of the court here and has, he says, taught music to Signora Cuzzoni; and he is a great friend of Sandoni [Cuzzoni's harpsichordist husband]; we have had a harpsichord brought to us and they [Kelleri and Bentinck] are making music at this very moment.)

In a further letter, on 30 September, Bernège remarked in passing:¹⁸

[...] quand il est de retour a son hauberge, il ne manque point de trouver le S[ieu]r Keller qui le divertit par sa musique qui doit passer incessamment en Angleterre ayant obtenu la permission du Landgrave pour fair[e] ce voyage.

(When he returns to his inn he does not fail to seek out Signor Keller[i], who entertains him with his music, and who is just on the point of going to England, having obtained permission from the Landgrave to make this journey.)

The first evidence of Chelleri's presence in London is his enrolment as a subscribing member, at a cost of half a guinea, in the Academy of Vocal Music (later to be named Academy of Ancient Music) on 17 November 1726.¹⁹ This society of musicians and music-lovers oriented towards older music in conservative style was founded in January 1726. Originally, it had no members from the Italian musical community in London, but the situation changed dramatically in 1726 when, in March, Bononcini, Haym, Geminiani, Riva and Bernardi (Senesino) all joined, to be followed in November by Tosi and Chelleri.

According to Gerber, Chelleri's sojourn lasted ten months, which, if true, would place his return around August 1727. There is no evidence from news or advertisements in the press that he performed in public, but it is highly likely that he worked as a teacher and

Evangelische Kirche von Kurhessen-Waldeck, Kirchenbuch Kassel-Hofgemeinde, Taufen 1685–1739, p. 110).

¹⁷ London, British Library, Egerton Ms. 1711, ff. 352–353, at f. 363r.

¹⁸ London, British Library, Egerton Ms. 1711, ff. 356–357, at f. 356r.

¹⁹ London, British Library, Add. Ms. 11732.

as a harpsichordist or cellist at private gatherings of the nobility and meetings of music societies. The major legacy of this second visit to London was the publication of a volume of *Cantate e arie con stromenti*. Its publisher was William Smith, who specialized in privately financed musical publications and rarely advertised his wares: hence the absence of any announcement in the press.²⁰ From the dedication, however, it becomes clear that this was a parting gift to Chelleri's London patrons (thus dating from the summer of 1727). It may also have been a way of salvaging arias from the two operas for London, if these really existed. Krister Hede believes that the published arias were favourite pieces drawn from existing operas rather than newly composed ones – a reasonable inference, given the rarity at the time of what we today call “concert” arias, even though the latter possibility should not be discounted absolutely.²¹ To confirm Hede's hypothesis, one would need to trawl systematically through the librettos of Chelleri's operas, a task that the present writer has not yet undertaken.

Leaving detailed discussion of the cantatas and arias till later, we move to Chelleri's third, probably very brief, visit to England, which occurred in 1728. This visit has not, to my knowledge, been mentioned in earlier literature. The one piece of evidence for it is an advertisement in the provincial newspaper *Stamford Mercury*, on 12 September 1728, for a benefit concert on 18 September in favour of two musicians: “Seignior Kelleri and Seignior Catani”. The venue for the concert was not Stamford itself but the neighbouring Northamptonshire town of Peterborough, where there was a three-day race-meeting (advertised in the newspaper immediately before the mention of the concert) held on the Common on 17, 18 and 19 September.²² It was customary to hold “assemblies” (parties) on the days of the horse racing, although these were normally enlivened by a ball rather than a concert.²³ The portion of the advertisement referring to the concert reads:

N. B. There will be a Consort of Musick on Wednesday Evening the 18th Instant by several Eminent Masters from the Opera in the Hay-Market, for the Benefit of Seignior Kelleri and Seignior Catani; Tickets may be had at the Talbot [Inn] and Mr. Wells's in Peterborough [...]

The place of performance was perhaps The Talbot itself. Such concerts held during race weeks came to be very popular slightly later in the century; for example, similar musical events were organized during the 1740s by Charles Avison at Newcastle and John Garth at both Stockton on Tees and Durham.²⁴ Race meetings held just outside provincial

²⁰ On Smith's activity, see Sir John Hawkins, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music*, 5 vols, London, Payne, 1776, vol. 5, p. 110.

²¹ K. Hede, *Fortunato Chelleri och Sverige*, op. cit., p. 7. At least one of the cantatas (*Cinto d'intorno intorno*) must have predated the print, as we shall see.

²² Both Stamford and Peterborough were what were called “coaching towns” (towns suitable for breaking a journey by coach) on the main route north from London.

²³ From the previous issue of the *Stamford Mercury* (5 September 1728) we learn that assemblies were planned for each of the three evenings.

²⁴ See Roz Southey, Margaret Maddison and David Hughes, *The Ingenious Mr Avison: Making Music and Money in Eighteenth-Century Newcastle*, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne Bridge Publishing, 2009, p. 56.

English towns were among the rare occasions when the nobility and upper gentry of the entire surrounding area congregated in a single locality outside the capital, so it was only natural to take advantage of them in the musical calendar.²⁵

Giuseppe (Joseph) Cattani, whose surname appears in contemporary sources also as “Cattanei” and “Cattaneo”, was an Italian violinist active in England from the early 1720s until the early 1760s. Although he was a member of the Haymarket orchestra at various times, his activity centred on north-eastern England, particularly York.²⁶ He may have been a colleague of Chelleri in the Haymarket orchestra at the time, which would explain the recruitment, and transport to Peterborough, of this orchestra. The sponsor of the concert is not named, but could just conceivably have been John Manners, 3rd Duke of Rutland, who resided part of the year in Belvoir Castle in Leicestershire, not very distant from Peterborough. This nobleman was a devotee of horse-racing, a keen amateur violinist (he had the leading violinist Giovanni Stefano Carbonelli in his service) and a patron of the Haymarket opera. He was perhaps closely acquainted with Cattani, since in autumn 1746 he paid a guinea to “Mr Catani for a set of Solo’s [i.e., sonatas]”.²⁷ Another possible sponsor with more obvious local connections is Charles Mordaunt, 3rd Earl of Peterborough (c.1658–1735), whose interest in cantatas is attested by his advance order, in 1721, of six copies of Bononcini’s *Cantate e duetti*. It is hardly conceivable that Chelleri, as a beneficiary of this concert, did not participate in it, so his presence in England in 1728 cannot seriously be doubted.

There is no need to recount Chelleri’s further life in detail. After 1730, when Landgrave Karl succeeded his younger brother Friedrich as King of Sweden, his court relocated to Stockholm. The Kassel musicians were thereby made redundant, and the *Kapelle* reduced to a rump. Chelleri worked at Stockholm productively between 1732 and 1734 but returned to Kassel because, he claimed, the Swedish climate did not agree with him. On his return, he was given the title of *Hofrat*, a rank that he had enjoyed earlier at Würzburg, and he continued his career placidly until his death in 1757, concentrating on instrumental music. No new opera by him reached the stage after *L’amor tirannico* (Venice, 1722), and his failure to obtain operatic commissions at any stage of his career after the move to Würzburg must have been an enduring disappointment to him. The *Cantate e arie* became, in the event, a kind of swan-song to Chelleri the *operista*.

²⁵ One might indeed liken these concerts to the operas often staged in small provincial centres in Italy during the annual fair (*fiera*).

²⁶ On Cattani, see especially: Sonia Tinagli-Baxter, *Italian Music and Musicians in Edinburgh c. 1720–1800. A Historical and Critical Study*, 2 vols, Edinburgh, 1999 (University of Edinburgh, unpublished doctoral thesis), vol. 1, p. 5; Elizabeth Chevill, *Music Societies and Musical Life in Old Foundation Cathedral Cities 1700–1760*, London, 1993 (University of London, unpublished doctoral thesis), p. 89; R. Southey [...], *The Ingenious Mr Avison*, op. cit., p. 58. Cattani’s career in Britain is obviously a subject awaiting closer investigation.

²⁷ For this information, I am indebted to Carole Taylor, who is currently working on manuscripts at Belvoir Castle relating to the 3rd Duke.

The *Cantate e arie con stromenti*

The collection is printed in upright format (approximately 25 by 33 cm) on 32 pages: p. [i] is a title page in letterpress; p. [iii] is a letter of dedication in letterpress; pp. [ii] and [iv] are void; the remaining pages, numbered 1–28, contain three cantatas followed by eight arias, all engraved. Chelleri uses the simple headings “Cantata” and “Aria”, without numbering the pieces individually. The rather “irregular” number of pieces – eleven – probably arose from the imperative to fill, but not to exceed, the available 32 pages. In his effort to make each aria occupy exactly two pages, the engraver has frequently cramped the notation uncomfortably. The number of staves employed (never more than four) is reduced to the minimum, even if this means accommodating the two violin parts on a common staff (since they very frequently play in unison, this is quite conventional) and making the viola share the staff of the voice – a common expedient in late-Baroque operatic arias, and one that has the side-benefit of automatically thinning the texture during vocal periods – or even, in some instances, that of the second violin. The voice and the violins employ the treble clef, so whenever there is an overlap between the viola part in the alto clef and the part whose staff it is “borrowing” two different clefs have, briefly, to operate simultaneously on the same staff – an unusual and visually very strange situation.

The title page reads:

CANTATE E ARIE | CON | STROMENTI | DEDICATE | A sua Eccellenza il Sig^r Duca di Queensberrij, | Gentiluomo della Camera di S. M. Britannica e' Grand | Ammiraglio nel Nort della Gran Brettagna, | DA | FORTUNATO KELLERI, | Direttore e Maestro di Capella di S. A. S. Sig^r Landgravio | d'Esse-Cassel. | [typographical emblem of the printer representing the head of Corelli] | LONDON: | Printed by WILLIAM SMITH at Correlli's Head against Norfolk-Street in | the Strand.²⁸

Short and to the point, the dedication runs:

Ill^{mo} & Ecc^{mo} Sig^{te},

Avendo io risoluto di lasciare in Inghilterra, ove si ama tanto la Musica, una picciola memoria del mio Talento prima che io ritornassi alla mia corte, era cosa molto naturale, ch[?] io desiderasse l'onore di dedicarle a V. E. come quella che ha un finissimo [*sic*] gusto, e cognitione bastante per distinguere il mediocre dal buono, ed il buono dall'Ottimo. A. [*sic*] V. Ecc^{za} dunque le dedico, e consagro supplicandola a riceverle con generoso gradimento, ed a permettermi l'onore di essere

*di Vostra [*sic*] Ecc^{za}*

Umilissimo &

Ossequiosissimo Servo,

Fortunato Kelleri.

(Most Illustrious and Excellent Lord,

Having resolved to leave in England, where music is so much loved, a small record

²⁸ The example inspected is that in the British Library, shelfmarked H.55.

of my talent before I returned to my court, it was very natural that I should desire the honour of dedicating them [the cantatas and arias] to Your Excellency, a person who has a most refined taste and enough knowledge to distinguish the mediocre from the good, and the good from the best. To Your Excellency, then, I dedicate and consecrate them, asking you to receive them with generous approval and allow me the honour of being

Your Excellency's
Most Humble and
Obedient Servant,
Fortunato Kelleri.)

Chelleri could have hardly picked a more suitable dedicatee from the ranks of the nobility than Douglas, but before we evaluate this choice, it will be useful to summarize the history of the Italian cantata in Britain, and particularly in London, up to the 1730s.

During the seventeenth century, British travellers to Italy and immigrants from Italy to Britain brought into the country numerous prints and manuscripts containing Italian cantatas, many of which survive in libraries. Their appreciation and circulation, however, was limited to small circles: they did not become “public” music in the sense of finding a place in the public concerts that after the Restoration of the monarchy (1660) became increasingly frequent. Advertisements in the London press (which, while far from being a complete record of public musical life, especially in the provinces, provide a good guide to general trends) mention the cantata genre for the first time on 23 May 1701, when Francis Vaillant, agent for the Amsterdam music publisher Estienne Roger, announces the publication of Alessandro Scarlatti's *Cantate a una e due voci*, Op. 1.²⁹ Roger, however, did not persist with the publication of Italian cantatas, and this source of material soon dried up. Up to 1710, the public performance of cantatas was limited to English-language pieces written in imitation of the Italian models or *contrafacta* such as that of Albinoni's *Da l'arco d'un bel ciglio* (from his Op. 4 (1702): published c.1710 as *Under ye gloomy shade of a dark, sullen grove*). For a time, indeed, it seemed (as coeval operatic developments also suggested), that the English cantata would develop autonomously in the manner of the *cantate françoise*, leaving the Italian cantata as an exotic rarity. As early as 12 April 1706, the *Daily Courant* advertised the performance by the Italian-born singer Margarita de l'Epine of “an English cantata compos'd after the Italian manner”.³⁰ Between 1708 and 1710 cantatas by Daniel Purcell, John Eccles and Johann

²⁹ *New State of Europe Both as to Publick Transactions and Learning*, 23 May 1701. I have relied for citations from the British press on the online database of the Burney newspaper collection at the British Library (<http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy>); it should be pointed out, however, that indistinct print in the originals, “battered” type and similar defects sometimes allow the object of a keyword search to remain undetected.

³⁰ The cantata is tentatively identified as Daniel Purcell's *Love, I defy thee* in Richard Goodall, *Eighteenth-Century English Secular Cantatas*, New York and London, Garland Publishing, 1989, p. 119. Goodall's study is so far the only detailed historical-critical survey of cantatas and works in cognate vocal genres on English texts during the whole of the eighteenth century. Its (by comparison) brief discussion of the Italian-language cantata in England (pp. 173–175) offers a useful introduction to the subject.

Christoph Pepusch were performed in London and quickly published singly by Walsh and his associates. Finally, in 1710, the first set of cantatas in the vernacular appeared from Walsh: Pepusch's *Six English Cantata's*.

Nevertheless (and herein lies the essential difference from France), the constant influx of Italian singers stimulated the production of cantatas in the same language, especially after 1710, when, with Giovanni Bononcini's *Almahide*, Italian became virtually the sole language used in London opera. The first press advertisement for the performance of an Italian cantata appeared in *The Tatler* of 25–28 March 1710: the performance, in York Buildings on 31 March, was given by the boy treble Henry Holcombe (later to become a colleague of Chelleri in the Academy of Vocal Music), who sang "several Italian Cantata's never yet heard in England". On 17 April 1710 there followed, according to the *Daily Courant* of the same day, a benefit concert for Mrs Elizabeth Hemmings at the same venue, including "Several new Cantatas with other Songs and Italian pieces, lately brought from Italy". The cases of L'Epine, Holcombe and Hemmings remind us that even though, unsurprisingly, Italian singers generally performed in Italian, and English singers in English, a great deal of "crossover" went on. This was also true, albeit to a smaller extent, for composers.

The rise of the Italian cantata gathered pace during the 1710s and the popularity of the genre reached its height during the 1720s, the period of the "first" Royal Academy of Music. The same period witnessed a wave of what can only be described as "italomania" among the British nobility, accompanied by unprecedented interest in learning the Italian language for purposes ranging from the reading of literary classics to the appreciation of operatic librettos and preparation for the Grand Tour. It even resulted in what has been called a "temporary subsidence" of the English-language cantata during the 1720s and early 1730s.³¹ The most visible sign of this short-lived Italian dominance is the series of ten cantata publications (in some cases also including works in other genres particularly associated with the respective composer) published in London between 1721 and 1735, as listed in Table 1. Most of the cantata collections were dedicated to high-ranking nobles (if not to Royalty itself) and were conceived as a way of gratifying patrons and leaving (as Chelleri's preface acknowledges explicitly) a permanent record of their presence in England. Since the Italian music publishing industry had gone into steep decline in the second decade of the century, these collections, lacking a counterpart in Italy itself (or anywhere else in Europe), appear to constitute a "final flowering" of the genre. In a purely commercial sense, this is certainly true, but one must remember that the manuscript transmission of cantatas carried on in Italy as vigorously as before.³²

Chelleri's choice of the Scottish peer Charles Douglas, 3rd Marquess of Queensberry (1698–1778), as the dedicatee for his cantatas probably reflects earlier contact with him, though not necessarily formal employment. Douglas demonstrated his musical interests

³¹ R. Goodall, *Eighteenth-Century English Secular Cantatas*, op. cit., p. 173.

³² Italian-language cantatas composed in Britain also circulated in manuscript there. Best known are those by Handel, but a number of minor Italian composers, including Girolamo Polani, Nicola Francesco Haym and Carlo Arrigoni (not forgetting certain home-grown masters, such as Thomas Roseingrave) also made significant contributions to the manuscript repertory.

by being a member of the Music Club at Oxford in 1715–1716.³³ In the winter of 1717–1718 he visited Venice, where he may first have met Chelleri. He was a director of the Royal Academy of Music during its first full season (1720–1721). He subscribed for no fewer than 25 copies of Bononcini's *Cantate e arie*, and his wife ordered the same number. When Angelo Maria Cori's *A New Method for the Italian Tongue: or, A Short Way to Learn It* (London, 1723) appeared, the Duke took six copies, and the Duchess another six. His credentials as music-lover and italphile were thus impressive. In 1723 or 1724 he occupied his newly built London residence of Queensberry House (today, at 7 Burlington Gardens), which Chelleri may have frequented.

TABLE 1
Italian cantatas published in London, 1721–c.1735.

Year	Composer	Title	Publisher	Dedicatee
1721	G. Bononcini	<i>Cantate e duetti</i>		George I
1727	F. Kelleri	<i>Cantate e arie con stromenti</i>	Smith	Charles Douglas, 3rd Duke of Queensberry
1727?	P. G. Sandoni	<i>Cantate da camera e sonate per il cembalo</i>		
1728	A. Ariosti	[<i>Six cantatas and six lessons for viola d'amore</i>]		George II
1728	M. D'Alay	<i>Cantate e suonate</i>		Charles Lennox, 2nd Duke of Richmond
1732	C. Arrigoni	<i>Cantate da camera</i>	Atkins	Queen Caroline
1733	G. Rolli	<i>Six Italian Cantatas & Six Lessons upon the Harpsichord</i>	Furners	
1735?	A. Duni	<i>Cantate da camera</i>	Smith	João V of Portugal
1735	N. Porpora	<i>Cantate, Op. 1</i>		Frederick, Prince of Wales
1735?	T. Roseingrave	<i>VI Italian Cantatas</i>	Cooke	Thomas Coke, Lord Lovell

The contents of the *Cantate e arie* are listed in Table 2. Of the three cantatas heading the collection, all exhibiting the conventional RARA structure (Recitative–Aria–Recitative–Aria), the first two are “con stromenti”, while the third is a continuo cantata. All the recitatives, however, are set as *recitativo semplice* for voice and continuo alone. Most of the surviving manuscript concordances appear to derive from the print, but two, preserved in sources close to Chelleri's employer in Würzburg, Johann Philipp Franz von Schönborn, are almost certainly earlier. The concordance of *Cinto d'intorno intorno* in the Wiesentheid collection (Hs. 890, pp. 1–26) once possessed by the Prince-Bishop's cello-playing brother Rudolf Franz Erwein (1677–1754) differs from the published version by having an introductory “Sinfonia a la francese”, which, presumably, was sacrificed in the 1727 print either for the sake of uniformity or simply in order to save space. *O memoria dolente* is one of six continuo cantatas by Chelleri transmitted by a manuscript dated 1728 in Schloss Sünching near Regensburg that once belonged to Count Joseph Franz

³³ See Margaret Crum, An Oxford Music Club, 1690–1719, *The Bodleian Library Record* 11 (1974), pp. 83–99: 92 and 98.

Maria von Seinsheim (1707–1787), who was the elder brother of Johann Philipp Franz's nephew Adam Friedrich von Seinsheim (1708–1779), Prince-Bishop of Würzburg and, later, Bamberg. Quite possibly, these six cantatas were copied from originals in Johann Philipp Franz's library, today lost.³⁴

TABLE 2
The contents of Fortunato Chelleri's *Cantate e arie* (1727).

no.	page	incipit	genre	accompaniment	concordant sources
1	1–5	<i>Cinto d'intorno intorno</i>	Cantata	strings, bc	D-W, D-WD, S-Skma
2	6–9	<i>Amor, più non m'inganni</i>	Cantata	strings, bc	
3	10–12	<i>O memoria dolente</i>	Cantata	bc	D-SÜN
4	13–14	<i>Pupille care</i>	Aria	strings, bc	S-Skma, S-L
5	15–16	<i>Piangi se pianger vuoi</i>	Aria	vl1, vl2, bc	S-Skma
6	17–18	<i>La verginella ch'è senza amore</i>	Aria	strings, bc	
7	19–20	<i>Se in queste arene</i>	Aria	strings, bc	D-SWl, S-Skma
8	21–22	<i>Non avere amor nel petto</i>	Aria	strings, bc	
9	23–24	<i>Sol l'usignolo tra gl'augelletti</i>	Aria	vl1, vl2, bc	
10	25–26	<i>La navicella</i>	Aria	strings, bc	
11	27–28	<i>Soffri costante breve tormento</i>	Aria	strings, bc	

1. The cantatas are unnumbered in the source, their only heading being “Cantata” or “Aria”.

2. The vocal part, notated in the treble clef, has a total compass running from d' to a' flat.

3. “Strings” denotes violins 1 and 2 (possibly in unison much or all of the time) plus viola.

The eight independent arias resemble in style and structure (always with a *da capo* or *dal segno* repeat) those of their counterparts in the cantata arias with instruments, the only essential difference being that whereas the texts of the cantata arias conform to a familiar Arcadian *mise-en-scène*, those of the independent arias – appropriately for their use as concert arias – have a more abstract, impersonal nature. Two of the arias (see Table 2) omit the viola. The character and mood of the arias are well varied, although extremes of emotion and expression are avoided.

Without being extraordinary in any way, Chelleri's cantatas and arias reveal a highly competent and imaginative composer writing in a way clearly influenced by Vivaldi's operas of the previous decade and similar in general style to the vocal music of Giovanni Porta and Giuseppe Maria Orlandini. The instrumental parts are lively and exhibit considerable independence from the vocal part in rhythm and figuration. Example 1, the first vocal period of the aria *Sol l'usignolo tra gl'augelletti*, shows the violins in a typically Vivaldian “birdsong” mode, the second violin gently cooing while the first violin makes plaintive calls familiar from the older composer's concerto *Il gardellino* (RV 428). More impressive still is the rhythmically contrasting figure (three triplet semiquavers followed by two quavers) used in *Pupille care* to knit the whole movement together (see Example 2). To use instrumental figures rather than elements of the vocal line to create overall thematic

³⁴ Chelleri's surviving cantatas total thirteen, of which one (*Si, bellissima Clori*) is attributed also to Astorga (Ladd B178).

cohesion was Vivaldi's greatest contribution to operatic music, and Chelleri proves himself here an adept disciple.

Example 1

10 (Andante)

violin 1

violin 2

voice

bass

Sol l'u - si - gno - lo tra gl'au - gel - let - ti Men - tre po - san - do il mon - do

13

sta Al - l'au - re, ai ven - ti spie - gan - do va In dol - ci ac -

2

16

- cen - ti il suo do - lor, il suo do - lor.

Example 2

23 [Allegro]

violin 1 + 2

voice/viola

bass

Pu - pil - le ca - re Del mio bel nu - me Al vo - stro lu - me Qual far - fal -

30

- let - ta Si - nor gi - ra - - - - - i, si - nor gi - ra -

37

- i. viola Pu - pil - le ca - re

44

Del mio bel lu - me Al vo - stro lu - me Qual far - fal - let - ta si - nor gi -

2

51

- ra - - - - - i, si - nor gi - ra - i.

In one interesting particular Chelleri deviates from the norm. Quite frequently, the accompanying strings (especially, but not only, the viola) have “extra” notes to be performed with the aid of double-stops. This occurs especially often at cadence points. Here, Chelleri betrays his background as a keyboard player: in keyboard music, the traditionally free-voiced texture allows the composer to thicken chords at will (e.g., by adding the fifth of the triad in a situation where correct part-writing would permit only the third). A late compositional decision, made after Smith had completed the original engraving, sheds light on this practice. The *pentimento* occurs in the siciliana-like aria *Piangi se pianger vuoi*. Example 3a shows bars 15–16, the start of the second vocal period, as they were originally engraved. Chelleri evidently had second thoughts, and decided to add the note d[♯] to the second violin part in bar 15. He may also have found the melodic progression b[♭]–e[♭] across the barline unnecessarily awkward (and the prominence of the pitch E in the second chord too marked), hence the addition of c[♯] at the start of bar 16. Example 3b shows the final version, where the additions have been made carefully by hand in brown ink carefully matched in colour to the printer’s ink.³⁵ The added notes are panned with great regularity in a smaller “font”, initially in order to avoid a collision with the slur above, the vertical staccato strokes simply

Example 3a

Example 3a shows the original engraving of bars 15–16. The score includes parts for violin 1, violin 2, voice, and bass. The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 12/8. The lyrics are: Pian - gi se pian - ger vuoi, se pian - ger vuoi ———— Gl'a - cer - bi,af - fan - ni. The original engraving shows a slur over the first six notes of bar 15 in both violin parts. In bar 16, the second violin part has a note that is not present in the original engraving (indicated by a dashed line and a vertical tick mark), and the voice part has a note that is also not present in the original engraving (indicated by a dashed line and a vertical tick mark).

Example 3b

Example 3b shows the final version of bars 15–16, with handwritten corrections in brown ink. The score includes parts for violin 1, violin 2, voice, and bass. The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 12/8. The lyrics are: Pian - gi se pian - ger vuoi, se pian - ger vuoi ———— Gl'a - cer - bi,af - fan - ni. The handwritten corrections are visible in the second violin part in bar 15 and the voice part in bar 16, where the notes are panned in a smaller font.

³⁵ Handwritten corrections and additions added at source (i.e., by the publisher or distributor) rather than by the end-user are not uncommon in printed and engraved music of the Baroque period.

being overwritten by the stems of the new notes. In bar 16 the stems of the first three notes (e'') originally descended, and the engraver has reassigned these stems to the notes of the lower part (c''), not bothering to erase the fraction of the stems lying between the two pitches.

Conclusion

Chelleri was one of the more talented Italian musicians who visited British shores in the eighteenth century. Had he not gained secure and well-paid employment at Kassel before his second (or perhaps even his first) visit, he might well have stayed longer, particularly if he had succeeded in making a breakthrough with his operas. Leaving aside such hypotheses, the *Cantate e arie* are a fitting and musically worthwhile legacy of his principal visit. Even if a collected edition of Chelleri's music remains a distant prospect, a critical edition or facsimile edition of this 1727 print would be welcome, especially now that his harpsichord music has become better known.

The case of Chelleri underlines once again the need to investigate much more closely the activities of Italian musicians in eighteenth-century Britain and Ireland. If some figures have already given rise to important studies – one thinks immediately of Ariosti, Bononcini and Haym – many others, including Visconti, Sandoni, Cervetto, Cattani, the Castrucci brothers and D'Alay, remain in the shadows, the information on them either very fragmentary or unhelpfully dispersed. More work, too, needs to be done on the Italian literary colony in Britain and the British italophiles who sustained it with such devotion.

In their own way, the visits of Italian musicians and *letterati* to Britain were quite as much an educational experience as the Grand Tours undertaken by the British nobility in the reverse direction. While in Britain, the Italians encountered social, economic and artistic conditions very different from those of their home country and, most important, an unusually discerning, appreciative and free-spending audience. Johann Mattheson was not far off the mark (allowing for a little patriotic drum-beating) when he observed in 1713: “Die Italiäner executiren am besten [...]; die Frantzosen divertiren am besten; die Teutschen aber componiren und arbeiten am besten; und die Engelländer judiciren am besten”.³⁶ This sentiment finds a fitting echo in the words “ove si ama tanto la Musica” in Chelleri's dedication of the *Cantate e arie*.

³⁶ Johann Mattheson, *Das neu-eröffnete Orchestre*, Hamburg, Schiller, 1713, p. 219: “The Italians are the best performers [...]; the French are the best entertainers; but the Germans are the best composers and work hardest; and the English are the best judges”.

CANTATE E ARIE CON STROMENTI (1727) FORTUNATA CHELLERIJA:
SPOMIN NA LONDON

Povzetek

Italijanski skladatelj, čembalist in čelist Fortunato Chelleri (1690–1757) je London obiskal trikrat: v letih 1725, 1726–1727 in 1728, v zgodnjih letih svoje službe kapelnika pri dežel-nem grofu Hessen-Kasselskem. Tako se je pridružil številnim italijanskim glasbenikom, ki so v želji, da bi dobili zaposlitev in si pridobili naklonjenost plemenitih podpornikov novoustanovljene operne družbe, imenovane Kraljeva glasbena akademija, drli v Anglijo, še posebej v London.

Chelleri, rojen v Firencah, je bil tedaj že uveljavljen in uspešen operni skladatelj, delujoč v Benetkah (1715–1722), v času, ko so bila Vivaldijeva operna dela še posebno vplivna. Chellerijev slog kaže, da se je močno zgledoval po starejšem mojstru, katerega opere so pogosto izvajali skupaj z njegovimi. Med letoma 1722 in 1724 je imel Chelleri stalno in dobro službo kapelnika na dvoru würzburškega knezoškofa Johanna Phillipa Franza von Schönborna. Vendar je le-ta leta 1724 nenadoma preminil in skladatelj je bil prisiljen poiskati novo zaposlitev. Našel jo je leta 1725 v Kasslu.

Kljub obstoju nekaterih dokumentov, ki kažejo na to, da je Chelleri nameraval v Londonu uprizoriti dve svoji operi, se to dejansko ni zgodilo. Ker niti v Würzburgu niti v Kasslu (ali v Stockholmu, kjer je med leti 1732 in 1734 krajši čas deloval) ni bilo posluha za njegova operna dela, ga je londonski operni neuspeh dokončno potrl, četudi je kot inštrumentalist, virtuoz na dveh ali celo treh glasbilih (če smemo mednje šteti tudi basovsko violo), v Angliji še vedno uspel zbuditi zanimanje in pohvalo poslušalcev. Zanimivo je, da je tik pred vrnitvijo s svojega drugega obiska v Londonu dal tam natisniti zasebno izdajo svoje zbirke treh kantat in osmih samostojnih arij, ki jih je posvetil Charlesu Douglasu, markizu Queensberryskemu, pomembnemu italofilu in podporniku operne umetnosti. Tako je zapustil trajen spomin na svoje bivanje v Londonu. Omenjene skladbe so napisane po tedanji veliki modi glasbenih del na italijanska besedila, ki so v obdobju »prve« Kraljeve glasbene akademije (1719–1728) dobesedno preplavila Anglijo.

Chellerijeve *Cantate e arie con stromenti* so odlični primer omenjene zvrsti z razgibanimi inštrumentalnimi parti in močno izraženo tematsko enovitostjo. Povsem jasno izkazujejo vpliv Vivaldijevih glasbenih del. Zanimiva posebnost je občasna raba »dodatnih« not, ki jih uvaja z dvojenkami v notranjih glasovih. Zdi se, da te note izhajajo iz njegove prakse skladanja za glasbila s tipkami, kjer so take dodatne note naravna posledica razporeditve dopolnilnih glasov v polifoni strukturi.