

Violoncello Obbligato Edition

Giovanni Bononcini

The Solo-Obbligato Violoncello Arias

‘Venir, pagnar e vincere’ – *Il Giosuè* (Bass, Violoncello, Continuo)

‘Posto abbiám ne’ nostri acciari’ – *Il Giosuè* (Tenor, Violoncello, Continuo)

‘Sempre invitto e sempre forte’ – *Il Giosuè* (Countertenor, Violoncello, Continuo)

‘Chi serva la beltà’ – *La Maddalena* (Soprano*, Violoncello, Continuo)

‘L’interesse sol prevale’ (Bass, Violoncello, Continuo)

‘Non c’è affet’ò parentela’ (Bass, Violoncello, Continuo)

‘L’amicizia si tradisce’ (Bass, Violoncello, Continuo)

‘Non si stimano che gl’ori’ (Bass, Violoncello, Continuo)

edited by

ALESSANDRO SANGUINETI

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
‘Venir, pugnar e vincere’ – <i>Il Giosuè</i>	6
‘Posto abbiàm ne’ nostri acciari’ – <i>Il Giosuè</i>	19
‘Sempre invitto e sempre forte’ – <i>Il Giosuè</i>	27
‘Chi serva la beltà’ – <i>La Maddalena</i>	45
‘L’interesse sol prevale’	53
‘Non c’è affet’ò parentela’	63
‘L’amicizia si tradisce’	67
‘Non si stimano che gl’ori’	77
Textual notes	87

INTRODUCTION

In Northern Italy after 1685 the violoncello began to appear regularly as an *obbligato* instrument, i.e. not as part of the continuo, in opera and oratorio arias. Domenico Gabrielli, Bernardo Sabadini and Giovanni Bononcini composed more than twenty-five such arias, although other composers sporadically employed the *obbligato* violoncello in arias as early as the 1670s, and by the early 1690s its use was relatively widespread. Despite the ongoing debate on the early violoncello's playing position and the recent surge of interest in the reduced sound of the late seventeenth-century performing ensemble in Italian opera, no publication is available to players of these relatively unknown arias. These three volumes bring together for the first time Gabrielli's, Sabadini's and Bononcini's *solo-obbligato* violoncello arias, i.e. arias scored for voice, violoncello and continuo.

This third volume collects all such arias by Bononcini composed in the early years of his career as part of his two oratorios. He played all types of string instruments, however he was particularly skilled on the violoncello. Presumably, he played the *obbligato* violoncello parts in these two oratorios, following Gabrielli's practice, thus using advanced techniques such as double-stops and chords. Furthermore, this volume presents four *solo-obbligato* violoncello arias 'del Bonocinino'. These were most likely composed by Giovanni Bononcini and were not part of any opera or oratorio.¹

IL GIOSUÈ

In 1688 this oratorio, dedicated to the Duke Francesco II, was performed in Modena. The associated libretto is by Tomaso Stanzani and the music, held at the Biblioteca Estense Universitaria (*I-MOe* Mus. F. 103), was composed by Bononcini.² Interestingly, in addition to the three arias with *solo-obbligato* violoncello, there is a further aria with *obbligati* violin and cello, while the two *sinfonie* include virtuoso cello passages.

The libretto narrates the story of Joshua, leader of the Israelites, conquering the Canaan and his battle against the kings of Jerusalem and Hebron. This is a

passage from the Book of Joshua, (6:1–12:24), in the Hebrew Bible. The fifth aria in the oratorio, 'Venir, pagnar e vincere' (ff.16v-21r) is sung by the King of Jerusalem, a bass. Seeing Joshua arriving to conquer his lands too quickly to seek help from other lands, the King of Jerusalem realises that he is about to lose the battle and vows to lose with honour:

Venir, pagnar, e vincere
Nostra virtù saprà.
Prefisse un Fato immobile
Che duce à impresa nobile
Fosse celerità.³

The tenth aria (ff.27r-29v) is also with *solo-obbligato* violoncello. After conversing with the King of Jerusalem about the help Joshua gets from God in battles, the King of Hebron, a tenor, reflects on how even they could have space for this God in their hearts:

Posto habbiam ne' nostri aciari
Cielo, Impero, e Legge, e Fè:
D'ogni Nume andiamo al pari
Dei di pena, e di mercè.⁴

The aria 'Sempre invitto e sempre forte', the fourteenth aria of *Il Giosuè* (ff.42r-45v), celebrates the strength of Israel which is going to battle in order to win. Joshua, a counter-tenor, sings:

Sempre invitto, e sempre forte
Israel trionferà:
Cinge allori,
Incontra onori,
E non teme strage, o morte
Chi invocò nostra pietà.⁵

LA MADDALENA IN CASA DEL FARISEO

The libretto of this oratorio, *La Maddalena à piedi di Cristo*, was written by Lodovico Forni. This oratorio was first performed in Modena in 1690 with music by Bononcini.⁶ The aria 'Chi serve la beltà' (ff.148v-151r)

¹ For further details, see A. Sanguineti, 'The Bass Violin in Northern Italian Repertoire in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century', PhD Dissertation, Royal College of Music, 2014, vol.i, pp.209-252.

² G. Bononcini, *Il Giosuè*, oratorio, *I-MOe* Mus. F. 103; T. Stanzani, *Il Giosuè*, libretto (Modena: Soliani, 1688), *I-MOe* 83.I.6. Biblioteca Estense Universitaria, Modena, is subsequently mentioned using the RISM library sigla *I-MOe*.

³ 'Our virtue will come, battle and win. An unchangeable destiny is bringing the conqueror fast to a noble victory'.

⁴ There are small differences in the MS text which uses 'acciari' and 'Noi de' numi'. 'We have room in our hearts for the sky, kingdom, law and belief: any God is equal for us, spiritual and earthly Gods'.

⁵ 'Never defeated and always strong, Israel will win: it crowns with laurels, meets honours, and who asked our pity, does not fear massacre, or death'.

⁶ G. Bononcini, *La Maddalena in casa del Fariseo*, oratorio, *I-MOe* Mus. F. 102; L. Forni, *La Maddalena à piedi di Cristo*, libretto (Modena: Soliani, 1690), *I-MOe* M.T.Ferr.Mor.21.26. There is no critical edition available unlike erroneously stated in my PhD dissertation (p.231).

Il Giosuè

Giovanni Bononcini

Aria 'Venir, pagnar e vincere'
(I-MOe Mus.F.103, ff. 16v-21r)

Aria

4

7

11