

LUIGI MARCHESI: LIFE AND VOICE

by

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(Under the Direction of DOROTHEA LINK)

ABSTRACT

Luigi Marchesi's career as one of the last operatic castrati spanned thirty years from the early 1770's until 1805. During his lifetime Marchesi achieved an international reputation, traveling as far from Italy as St. Petersburg, Vienna, London, and Munich while creating roles in operas by Domenico Cimarosa, Luigi Cherubini, Giuseppe Sarti, Francesco Bianchi, and many others. Known for his powerful voice, extensive range, and unparalleled powers of variation and improvisation, Marchesi enjoyed tremendous celebrity. This study includes a thorough biography of Marchesi created with information from libretto catalogs, correspondence, and memoirs, as well as a vocal analysis drawn from audience commentary, reviews, and two elaborately ornamented and rare musical examples.

INDEX WORDS: Luigi Marchesi, castrato, vocal ornamentation, Luigi Cherubini, Niccolò Zingarelli, Vacláv Pichl

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DEDICATION

To my father, who loved history, and would have been happy to know I love it too.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

With a career that spanned four decades Luigi Marchesi was considered by some to be the greatest *musico* of his generation.¹ He was also one of the last. By the end of the eighteenth century increasingly few roles were being written for castrati, and public opinion had largely turned against the practice of castration for musical purposes. After Marchesi's retirement in 1805 very few *musici* remained active in opera, and by his death in 1829 there were none.²

The current biographical information about Marchesi is frustratingly incomplete, particularly for a singer so famous. An international celebrity, at various points in his career Marchesi was employed by the Empress Catherine of Russia, the Elector of Bavaria, the King of Sardinia, and the Empress Marie Therese of Austria. His debut performances set records for ticket sales and his reported salaries were enormous. From the brief mentions of Marchesi in the memoirs and historical writings of Charles Burney, Michael Kelly, Richard Earl of Mount Edgumbe, Marie-Henri Beyle, as well as the collected letters of Giacomo Casanova, Thomas Jefferson, and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart it is easy to conclude that Marchesi had quite a reputation. Almost every text discussing the careers of *musici* in opera includes a reference to Marchesi, and always in the same sensational manner. Tales of his murder by poison and of his

¹ I have chosen to refer to Marchesi and his peers as *musici* whenever possible instead of, as John Rice mentions, the "less polite word," castrato. John A. Rice, "Sense, Sensibility, and Opera Seria: An Epistolary Debate," *Studi musicali* 15 (1986):111.

² John Rosselli, "Castrato," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, edited by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1992), 1:768.

tumultuous encounters with sopranos Nancy Storace and Luisa Todi invariably appear in most, as do accounts of the *musico*'s legendary demand to make his entrance on horseback in splendid armor and a plumed helmet, no matter which opera he was currently singing. The details of his training, early career, travels, and personal life are difficult to glean from these superficial blurbs, and there is no complete record of the roles written for him.

James Heriot's *The Castrati in Opera* seems to be the source behind many of these references.³ Heriot offers a glimpse into the lives and careers of the most famous *musici*, including Marchesi. Unfortunately his text is, as Martha Feldman notes, "amusing though unreliable."⁴ With no notes and only the briefest of bibliographies, Heriot's information is almost impossible to verify. Patrick Barbier offers a more modern update in 1989 with *The World of the Castrati*, translated from the original French in 1996 by Margaret Crosland. In general Barbier's information is well documented and seems much more trustworthy. In the case of Marchesi, however, Barbier seems to have relied heavily on Heriot's book and few other sources, leading to another biographical dead end.⁵

In my effort to compile a comprehensive biography of Marchesi I began by constructing a chronological list of the roles Marchesi sang during his lifetime using Claudio Sartori's catalog *I libretti italiani*, as well as databases like Worldcat, *Repertoire International des Sources Musicales*, Series A/II, Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico delle Biblioteche Italiane e per le informazioni Bibliografiche, and numerous library catalogs.⁶ The singer's obituary in the

³ James Heriot, *The Castrati in Opera* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1956).

⁴ Martha Feldman, *Opera and Sovereignty: Transforming Myths in Eighteenth-Century Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 14.

⁵ Patrick Barbier, *The World of the Castrati*, trans. Margaret Crosland (London: Souvenir Press, 1996).

⁶ Claudio Sartori, ed., *I libretti italiani a stampa dalle origini al 1800: Catalogo analitico con 16 indici*, 7 vols (Cuneo: Bertolla & Locatelli, 1990-1994).

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung sheds some light on the details of Marchesi's life, as do biographical encyclopedias including Rudolfo Celletti's *Enciclopedia dello spettacolo* and Ernst Ludwig Gerber's *Historisch-Biographisches Lexikon der Tonkünstler*.⁷ By combining this information with details gleaned from the mentions of Marchesi in the memoirs and correspondence mentioned previously I was able to compile a more complete history of the singer's life.

Even after constructing Marchesi's biography, significant questions about his music and voice were left unanswered. It was the voice of the castrato that set him apart from other singers, and it is that voice that remains unheard. There are very few existing comprehensive vocal studies of individual *musici*, and even fewer that include analysis of the actual ornamented music sung by the performers themselves. Perhaps the most significant is Franz Haböck's two-volume study of Carlo Broschi, better known as Farinelli, which includes both a biography as well as numerous extremely valuable examples of the *musico's* own ornaments. Roger Freitas' study of seventeenth century *musico* Atto Melani includes biographical details gleaned from the singer's personal letters, as well as an in-depth analysis of the *musico's* own chamber cantatas.⁸ Stephen A. Willier's biography of Marchesi's contemporary, Gasparo Pacchierotti, provides an excellent biographical model, and offers vocal commentary based on the *musico's* pedagogical writings rather than examining music composed for Pacchierotti, an option not available for Marchesi,

Repertoire International des Sources Musicales. Series A/II: International Inventory of Musical Sources After 1600 (May 2008).

Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico delle Biblioteche Italiane e per le informazioni Bibliografiche, www.internetculturale.it.

⁷ Rudolfo Celletti, *Enciclopedia dello spettacolo* (Florence: G.C. Sansoni, 1960), 7:102.

Ernst Ludwig Gerber, *Historisch-biographisches Lexikon der Tonkünstler (1790-92)* (Leipzig, 1790; reprint Graz: Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsanstalt, 1977), 1:871.

"Nekrolog," *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 32, no. 6 (1830), cols. 93-4.

⁸ Roger Freitas, "Un Atto d'ingegno: A Castrato in the Seventeenth Century" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1998).

who left no pedagogical works.⁹ Dale Monson's compilation of a complete roles list and vocal analysis of *musico* Giusto Ferdinando Tenducci was a helpful model for my project.¹⁰ However, Monson considers only the unembellished music composed for Tenducci. As the music on the page rarely represents what *musicisti* would have sung in performance, Monson's analysis is problematic when working with a singer like Marchesi, who was known for his tremendous vocal dexterity and virtuosic ability to ornament and vary the music he sang. The extant manuscripts and published editions of Marchesi's arias provide only the bare bones of arias, upon which the singer improvised and composed his own ornamentation that was almost never notated. I was fortunate to find two arias complete with incredible examples of Marchesi's embellishments, and have included an examination of each in this document.

Additionally I relied heavily on the reviews of his performances, particularly the prolific commentary from the newspaper reviews of his three seasons in London. Between his remarkably embellished performances, good looks, and strong personality Marchesi inspired extreme reviews, both favorable and not, and these descriptions factor heavily in my attempt to "hear" Marchesi sing.

By compiling a complete list of arias specifically composed for or sung by Marchesi, I was able to determine which numbers were his "hits." Dorothea Link constructed her profile of the voice of Mozart's first Susannah, Nancy Storace, by compiling a collection of Storace's greatest "hits," and I have followed her example in the construction of Marchesi profile.¹¹

⁹ Stephen A. Willier, "A Celebrated Eighteenth-Century Castrato: Gasparo Pacchierotti's Life and Career," *The Opera Quarterly* 11, no.3 (1995): 95-121.

¹⁰ Dale Monson, "Galuppi, Tenducci, and *Montezuma*: A Commentary on the History and Musical Style of Opera Seria after 1750, in *Galuppiani 1985: studi e ricerche*, eds. Maria Teresa Murari and Franco Rossi, 279-300 (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1986).

¹¹ Dorothea Link, ed. *Arias for Nancy Storace, Mozart's first Susanna* (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, 2002).

Performers like Storace and Marchesi frequently had certain numbers for which they were known, and these preferred arias were often inserted into many different operas during their careers. The most popular numbers were often published for the enjoyment of amateur musicians and fans. Certain arias reappear regularly over the years, and some were published by several companies, or even in multiple countries. I have included descriptions of three such “hits” in this document, as well as a table of all known arias composed for Marchesi (Table 2.7). In addition to establishing which were Marchesi’s most famous arias, this table also demonstrates the importance of the *musicista*’s career with its scope and size. Certainly a performer who inspired the composition of so much music requires further examination.

CHAPTER 2

BIOGRAPHY

In order to construct the following biography of Marchesi, I relied primarily on the information found in librettos and scores from the *musico*'s career. After creating a timeline of his known performances, I was able to follow Marchesi as he toured extensively in Italy, as well as traveling as far as London and St. Petersburg. By supplementing the *musico*'s travel with information from newspapers, letters, and memoirs I was able to construct a more complete history of Marchesi's life and career than has been previously compiled.

Childhood and Early Career: 1755- 1788

Luigi Lodovico Marchesi was born on August 8, 1755, in the city of Milan. His father, a waldhornist, found his son instruction on the trumpet at an early age, as well as vocal lessons with the sopranist Caironi.¹² Seeing promise in the young musician's voice, Caironi persuaded Marchesi to set aside his horn and submit to castration.¹³ Unlike the fabled young victims of

¹² There are inconsistencies regarding Marchesi's father's instrument. Some sources list trumpet (*Enciclopedia dello spettacolo* and Gerber) and others waldhorn (*Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*). There is further confusion as to which of the two instruments Marchesi himself played as a child. The *New Grove* mentions a slight inconsistency in Marchesi's birthplace. The *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, Gerber, and most other sources cite Milan as Marchesi's hometown though he may have received some training in Modena at a young age (*Enciclopedia dello spettacolo*). Ernst Ludwig Gerber, *Historisch-biographisches Lexikon der Tonkünstler (1790-92)* (Leipzig, 1790; reprint Graz: Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsanstalt, 1977), 1:871. Rudolfo Celletti, *Enciclopedia dello spettacolo* (Florence: G.C. Sansoni, 1960), 7:102.

"Nekrolog," *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 32, no. 6 (1830), cols. 93-4.

¹³ Celletti, *Enciclopedia*, 102.

boar bites, riding accidents, or ambitious parents, Marchesi traveled voluntarily to Bergamo, where he underwent the procedure against the wishes of his family. Particularly displeased with his son's decision, the elder Marchesi forbade him from ever returning home.¹⁴ In May 1765 at the age of ten, the young *musico* left his distressed family behind and joined the classes of student castrati in the cathedral choir of Milan. There Marchesi received instruction from tenor Ottavio Albuzzi, as well as composition lessons from the director Giovanni Andrea Fioroni.¹⁵

During the Carnival season of 1773, Marchesi made his debut at the Teatro della Dame in Rome, where he sang the female role of Giannetta in the premiere of Pasquale Anfossi's *L'incognita perseguitata*. That same season he sang another female role, Elmira, in the premiere of Marcello di Capua's *La Contessina*. Marchesi returned to Rome the following year for Carnival, and appeared in Niccolò Piccinni's *La buona figliuola*, playing Cecchina. Creating the role of Violante in Pasquale Anfossi's *La finta giardiniera*, Marchesi sang his final female part of the season and of his career, never again appearing onstage in a female or comic role.

By the Carnival season of 1775 Marchesi may have advanced beyond playing women's roles, but he would not perform as *primo uomo* for another year. Returning to his hometown of Milan, he spent the Carnival season performing at the Regio Ducal Teatro. In December he sang second to the well-known castrato Gasparo Pacchierotti in the premiere of Felice Alessandri's *Medonte re d'Epiro* and again in the following month's premiere of Carlo Monza's *Alessandro nell'Indie*.¹⁶ Traveling to Venice that summer, Marchesi sang the role of Olinto in Pietro

¹⁴ "Nekrolog."

¹⁵ Celletti, *Enciclopedia*, 102.

Sven Hansell, "Marchesi, Luigi," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., edited by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001), 15:823.

¹⁶ The composer named on the libretti is "Luigi Alessandri."

Claudio Sartori, ed., *I libretti italiani a stampa dalle origini al 1800: Catalogo analitico con 16 indici*, 7 vols. (Cuneo: Bertolla & Locatelli, 1990-94).

Guglielmi's *Il Demetrio*. Singing second to Giuseppe Millico, Marchesi made his final appearance as second man to another *musico*. Burney writes that later the same year, at Treviso, Marchesi began playing principal roles.¹⁷

In 1776 Marchesi traveled to Munich, where he was awarded a seven-year contract at the court of Maximilian III Joseph, Elector of Bavaria. There Marchesi collaborated for the first time with Josef Mysliveček, a Czech composer in whose operas he would frequently appear during the next few years. During his initial Carnival season in Munich, Marchesi sang in the Czech's *Il trionfo di Clelia* at the Elector's court theater. In 1777 Marchesi took part in a performance of Mysliveček's oratorio *Isacco figura del redentore*.¹⁸ Though he may not have actually attended the performance, Mysliveček's close friend Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart referenced the production in an October 11th letter to his father, saying that "all of Munich is talking about [Mysliveček's] oratorio 'Abramo ed Isacco,' which he produced here." Earlier in the same letter, Mozart mentions that both the Czech composer and the "whole of Munich [had] high praise" for their new *primo uomo*, Luigi Marchesi.¹⁹ Indeed Marchesi experienced great success in Munich. His obituary in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* mentions that he was awarded a chest "stuffed with ducats" for his work, which the singer generously gave to charity.²⁰ Unfortunately his engagement in Munich was cut short. Following the death of the Elector in 1777, court finances were redistributed, and Marchesi returned to Italy.

¹⁷ Charles Burney, *A General History of Music, from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period* (1789) (New York: Dover Publications, 1957), 902.

I have no other record of Marchesi's performance in Treviso that year.

¹⁸ James A. Ackerman, ed., *Josef Mysliveček: Isacco figura del redentore* (Madison: A-R Editions, 2000), xi.

¹⁹ Emily Anderson, ed., *The Letters of Mozart and His Family*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966), 1:306-7.

Ackerman says Mozart was referring to the oratorio, despite the slightly different title.

²⁰ "Nekrolog."

By 1778, Marchesi's stellar reputation had become well established, and he was engaged at the "great theater of San Carlo at Naples," which Charles Burney writes, "is the criterion and post of honor as an opera singer."²¹ During the following year, Marchesi performed roles in works by Ignazio Platania, Mysliveček, Anfossi, and Vicente Martín y Soler. In November 1778, he created the role of Megacle in Mysliveček's *L'Olimpiade*, a role that would become one of his most famous and oft performed. The Irish tenor Michael Kelly was in attendance at the performance in Naples, and later recalled the "exquisite" performance in his *Reminiscences*. Kelly favored Marchesi's aria "Se cerca se dice l'animo dov' è" in particular, and he writes that Marchesi's "expression, feeling, and execution...were beyond all praise."²²

The late 1770s and early 1780s mark Marchesi's first collaborations with two prominent composers, Francesco Bianchi and Giuseppe Sarti. Marchesi frequently performed works by both Sarti and Bianchi throughout the remainder of his life. An autumn 1779 performance of Bianchi's *Castore e Polluce* generated perhaps the most well known episode in the *musico's* career. Both Marchesi and English soprano Nancy Storace, fourteen years old at the time, were engaged in the production at Florence's Pergola Theatre.²³ Marchesi sang Castore, the lead, while Storace sang several smaller parts, but as Kelly recalls, the competitive spirit nonetheless seized the two sopranos:

Bianchi had composed the celebrated cavatina 'Sembianza amabile del mio bel sole,' which Marchesi sung with the most ravishing taste; in one passage he ran up a voletta of semitone octaves, the last one of which he gave with such exquisite power and strength, that it was ever after called 'La bomba di Marchesi!' Immediately after this song, Storace had to sing one, and was determined to show the audience that she could bring a

²¹ Burney, *A General History of Music*, 902.

²² Michael Kelly, *Reminiscences*, ed. Roger Fiske (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 22.

²³ Dorothea Link, ed., *Arias for Nancy Storace, Mozart's first Susanna* (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, 2002), xi.
Sartori, *I libretti italiani*.

bomba into the field also. She attempted it, and executed it, to the admiration and astonishment of the audience, but to the dismay of poor Marchesi. Campigli, the manager, requested her to discontinue it, but she peremptorily refused, saying, that she had as good a right to shew the power of her bomba as any body else. The contention was brought to a close, by Marchesi's declaring, that if she did not leave the theatre, *he* would; and unjust as it was, the manager was obliged to dismiss her, and engage another lady, who was not so ambitious of exhibiting a bomba.²⁴

Marchesi's tantrum and Storace's expulsion became legend, and Storace later profited from the incident when she was cast as *prima donna* in Antonio Salieri's *Prima la musica, poi le parole* and performed an acclaimed spoof of Marchesi's singing. Her parody must have been ingenious, as Count Karl von Zinzendorf later (jokingly) referred to her as Marchesi's pupil.²⁵ One must remember that Marchesi was an established *primo uomo* by this point, and Storace was an upstart singer significantly his junior. Her expulsion from the production may not have occurred solely at Marchesi's demand, nor was it entirely unreasonable.

Charles Burney described Luigi Marchesi as having "a soprano voice and a beautiful person," and indeed it was the singer's distinctive voice as well as his extreme physical beauty that strengthened his rapport with audiences.²⁶ Praises of Marchesi's elegance, beauty and grace fill biographical texts and reviews. Burney found the singer's performances "embellished, by the beauty of his person."²⁷ Upon hearing Marchesi in the 1788 London premiere of Sarti's *Giulio Sabino*, the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe found that "Marchesi was at this time a very well-looking young man, of good figure, and graceful deportment."²⁸

²⁴ Kelly, *Reminiscences*, 49.

²⁵ Dorothea Link, *The National Court Theatre in Mozart's Vienna: Sources and Documents, 1783-1792* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 250.

²⁶ Burney, *A General History of Music*, 901-2.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 902.

²⁸ Richard Earl of Mount Edgcumbe, *Musical Reminiscences of the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* (London, 1834; reprint New York: Da Capo Press, 1973), 61.

Perhaps the most glowing and detailed description of Marchesi comes from an anonymous document, *Lodi caratteristiche del celebre cantore Signor Luigi Marchesi*, published in 1781:

The young Marchesi has a right height, he is well proportioned in all his parts, he has dark hair with nuances, and he has a remarkable face where two very vivid eyes shine. It seems like he has a tongue in his eyes, to express [whether] he is talking or he is being quiet. His features are good, they promise the characteristic of a man of good spirit, and a thinking being, and he has a certain gaiety, and easy manners and posture so that all his spectators must like him. He is a great actor, always dressed with seductive taste; he is all beauty nobility, and grace when he is on the stage.²⁹

Several images of Marchesi survive. One portrait, an engraving by Luigi Schiavonetti from a miniature portrait by Richard Cosway, appears in several sources on castrati.³⁰ Cosway presents the singer in a proud profile, smiling only slightly, with a distinctly large yet elegantly long nose and high forehead. Burney mentions another image of Marchesi in *A General History of Music*. Described as a caricature, the 1789 drawing by John Nixon is titled *A Bravura at the Hanover Square Concert*. In this portrayal Marchesi stands, his back proudly arched, at the edge of a stage singing from music he grasps while a nearby cellist accompanies him. Nixon's

²⁹ [Anon.], *Lodi caratteristiche del celebre cantore Signor Luigi Marchesi* (Siena: Vincenzo Pazzini Carli e Figli, 1791), iii-iv: "Il giovane Marchesi è di giusta statura, ben proporzionato in tutte le sue parti, di tinta brunita ma vaga, ed ha un volto significante in cui brillano due occhi vivissimi. Par negli occhi la lingua, e parla, e tace. La sua sisionomia è buona, promette l'uomo di spirito, e pensante, ed ha un certo moto gajo, e portamento sciolto di macchina, per cui deve molto piacere a tutti i suoi spettatori. E' grande attore, sempre vestito con un gusto seducente, ed è tutto bellezza nobilità, e grazia quand' è sù le scene."

I am grateful for the beautiful English translations provided by my fellow graduate student at the University of Georgia, Rosaria Mangiavillano.

Lodi caratteristiche is credited to S. Marchesi in "Singing: a bibliography," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, edited by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1992), 4:388. I found no other mentions of S. Marchesi in connection with this text.

³⁰ Patrick Barbier, *The World of the Castrati*, trans. Margaret Crosland (London: Souvenir Press, 1996), illustration 12.

Angus Heriot, *The Castrati in Opera* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1956), illustration 6.

Marchesi, however cartoonishly rendered, strongly resembles Cosway's image of the singer. Both have distinctly angular noses and high foreheads, and their slightly haughty expressions are crowned by pronounced arching eyebrows.

In *Music, Men and Manners in France and Italy 1770*, Charles Burney includes a poster in celebration of the "incomparable" Marchesi's performances in Florence 1779. The red and gold poster includes an engraving of Marchesi's head in profile by Giannini, engraved by Cecchi, as well as a sonnet praising the singer's work.³¹ Here Marchesi's long neck, exposed by a low collared shirt, hints at the singer's slim physique. Marchesi's large nose and sloping high forehead are reminiscent of those in Nixon's and Cosway's depictions.³²

None of the images or descriptions of Marchesi imply that he displayed any of the typically abundant deposits of subcutaneous fat that plagued other castrati- a result of hormonal imbalances.³³ Tall and lean, Marchesi does bear the trademark long limbs of the castrati in one depiction from a performance of *Giulio Sabino*. Pictured in an embrace with Catarina Cavalieri, Marchesi looms over his costar, significantly taller. In this depiction, Marchesi's head seems slightly disproportionate, too small to top his broad shoulders. His distinctive pronounced nose and high flat forehead are obvious even from a distance.³⁴

James Boaden confirms that Marchesi appeared unusually attractive for a castrated man, and in fact audiences found his appearance unusual:

³¹ Charles Burney, *Music, Men and Manners in France and Italy, 1770*, ed. Herbert Edmund Poole (London: Eulenburg Books, 1974), 98.

³² Ibid., 99.

³³ For a description of the physical traits common to castrated males see Enid Rhodes Peschel and Richard E. Peschel, "Medicine and Music: The Castrati in Opera," *The Opera Quarterly* 4, no. 4 (Winter 1986/87): 27.

³⁴ John A. Rice, *Antonio Salieri and Viennese Opera* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 380.

We had not been accustomed to hear the quality of voice, possessed by Marchesi, proceed from a well formed person; and never had it been accompanied with heroic action. The manner of Marchesi was so built upon the antique, that he constantly reminded you of Grecian sculpture; or something more delicate, the forms of antiquity designed by Angelica Kauffman.³⁵

A more critical gaze fell on Marchesi's "unusual" body in another text. Innocenzo della Lena's 1791 *Dissertazione ragionata sul teatro moderno* "broad-sided the whole caste of castrati" in its attack on opera seria, but the author singles out Marchesi in particular.³⁶ However, even della Lena, who strives to paint Marchesi in an unflattering light, cannot deny the singer's attractiveness in spite of his "mutilation:"

He is tall rather than short, but not excessively so, nor exactly unbecoming. His head is quite elongated and small in proportion to his chest, or the trunk on which it rests. The whole chest is proportioned well enough- that is, the thorax and belly are well-formed, and do not at all show that they are those of a mutilated man. The lower extremities, namely the haunches and legs, are quite long in proportions to the trunk; and their forms are well composed, pleasing, and not excessive.³⁷

The author concludes that despite Marchesi's lack of the "superior humors of hot, dry males," the singer's body is astonishingly normal, and that such a well-made body "is otherwise quite rare in this race of people."³⁸ Della Lena concludes that those who consider Marchesi beautiful may only come to such a conclusion relative to the disfigurements audiences witnessed in other

³⁵ James Boaden, *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble, Esq., Including a History of the Stage from the Time of Garrick to the Present Period* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1825), 1:448.

³⁶ Martha Feldman, *Opera and Sovereignty: Transforming Myths in Eighteenth-Century Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 367.

³⁷ Ibid., 368: "Desso è alto di statura, piuttosto che basso, ma non eccedente, nè punto disdicevole. La testa è alquanto allungata, e picciola in proporzione del busto, o del tronco su cui posa. Tutto il busto è bastantemente proporzionato cioè il torace ed il ventre, e ben formato, e non mostra al certo che sia d'un mutilo di parti. L'estremità inferiori, cioè le cosce, e le gambe, sono alquanto lunghe in proporzione del tronco; le forme di tali parti, sono ben composte, aggradevoli e nulla eccedenti."

³⁸ Ibid., 368-9: "Ciò che è altresì ben raro in tal razza di gente..."

castrated bodies. “Perhaps for that reason,” della Lena allows, “Marchesi is said to be handsome- not too deformed like all the others, in other words; or at least not too deformed.”³⁹

Accounts of Marchesi’s demeanor both on and off the stage include praise of the *musico*’s grace and refinement. James Boaden mentions Marchesi’s “refined manners,” which “gave him entré to our families of distinguished rank.” The singer’s impressive presence was such that very “few among the female nobility...did not take lessons from Marchesi.”⁴⁰ Burney writes that it was not just Marchesi’s vocal performance in the London premiere of *Giulio Sabino* that astonished audiences:

But besides his vocal powers, his performance on the stage is extremely embellished, by the beauty of his person, and grace and propriety of his gestures. We expected a great singer, but that does not always include a fine actor.⁴¹

The Earl of Mount Edgcumbe’s account mirrors Burney’s. According to the Earl, Marchesi’s “graceful deportment” was accompanied by “spirited and expressive” acting.⁴² Accounts from the press generally confirm that Marchesi’s acting was extremely well received by audiences. In April 1788 the *London Chronicle* reported that the singer “manifested talents which entitle him to much praise as an actor.”⁴³ A review by an anonymous “spectator” published in the *Public Advertiser* that same month placed Marchesi “far above all his contemporaries whom he exceeds likewise in singing and acting.”⁴⁴

³⁹ Ibid., 368: “Perciò s’è forse detto bello Marchesi, cioè, non deforme come tutti gli altri, o almen poco deforme.”

⁴⁰ Boaden, *Memoirs*, 448.

⁴¹ Burney, *General History*, 902.

⁴² Edgcumbe, *Musical Reminiscences*, 61.

⁴³ Frederick C. Petty, *Italian Opera in London, 1760-1800* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1979), 257.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 258.

A rare but stinging criticism of Marchesi's acting appears in della Lena's *Dissertazione*: "It is undeniable that he is not even a mediocre actor," della Lena declares, "he is the worst of them all."⁴⁵ Della Lena's issues with Marchesi's acting include a lengthy criticism of Marchesi's use of his long arms while onstage:

For the upper extremities, namely the arms, are excessively long and overextended; and if Marchesi had actions and gestures matched to them, then gesture and action, which are the soul and life of every performance, would be only somewhat offended by them. Holding the arms down and raising them...makes the deformity stand out clearly to the eyes and makes the excessive length of the arms just like those of orangutans (macaque), or other like animals who form the numerous family of monkeys.⁴⁶

To della Lena, such a misuse of already offensively disproportionate arms was inexcusable and in "direct opposition" to great acting. "It is a rule that arms should never go over the top," he writes "but Marchesi, for his faulty habit, he will raise his long arms to the sky." By repeatedly breaking this rule, Marchesi appears to have been "educated among savages."⁴⁷

By this point in his career, Marchesi was becoming quite notorious for his voice as well as for his dramatic personal escapades. In a letter to his father dated December 30, 1780, Mozart

⁴⁵ Innocenzo della Lena, *Dissertazione ragionata sul teatro moderno* (Venezia: Presso Giacomo Storti, 1791), 86: "è fatto innegabile, che non è stato mai nemmeno mediocre attore, ma il pessimo fra tutti i primi." English translation by Rosaria Mangiavillano.

⁴⁶ Feldman, *Opera and Sovereignty*, 368: "Poichè l'estremità superiori, cioè le braccia, sono soverchiamente lunghe ed eccedenti, e se Marchesi avesse azione acconcia, e gesto, sarebbe perciò solo alquanto offeso il gesto, e l'azione che è l'anima e vita d'ogni spettacolo: tenendole abbassate, o alzandole, che non si può far di meno, di non alzare, ed abbassar le braccia, dall'avanzarsi tanto all'ingiù della coscia, ed all'insù del vertice, ne spicca agli occhi ben palese la deformità, e nel'eccedente lunghezza rassomigliano certamente le sue braccia, a quelle dell'Orang-Utang, del Maimone, o simiglianti altri animali, che formano la numerosa famiglia delle scimmie."

⁴⁷ Della Lena, *Dissertazione*, 86: "Si oppone direttamente all proprietà, e convenevolezza d'ogni recitazione, e sembra in ciò essere stat'educato fra i selvaggi. E regola prescritta, da i rettorici, a chi dee *parlare* altrui, o *recitare*, che tranne alcuni casi soltanto, richiesti dal sentimento, le braccia non deggiono mai alzarsi a segno d'oltrepassare il vertice..." English translation by Rosaria Mangiavillano.

again mentions Marchesi. The postscript concerning the *musico* contained no praise, rather a rumor of the singer's dramatic poisoning and "cowardly" death. Though false, the rumor of Marchesi's murder was widely reported:

You probably know that the worthy castrato Marchesi, or *Marquesius di Milano*, has been poisoned at Naples. And how? He was in love with a duchess, whose rightful lover became jealous and sent three or four fellows to give him his choice, either to drink poison out of a cup or to be assassinated. He chose the former, but being an Italian coward, he died *alone*, and allowed his murderers to live on in peace and quiet. Had it been myself and had it been absolutely necessary for me to die, I should have taken at least a couple with me into the next world. Such an excellent singer is a great loss.⁴⁸

For the next several years, the very much alive Marchesi traveled throughout Italy, performing in Naples, Pisa, Milan, and Genova. He created roles in works by Sarti, Martín y Soler, Mysliveček, and Joseph Schuster, and also performed roles by Niccolò Jommelli and Giacomo Rust. In December 1782, Marchesi created again the role of Megacle, this time in Francesco Bianchi's setting of *L'Olimpiade*, at La Scala in Milan. It was another Bianchi role, however, that advanced Marchesi's career further still. After the spring premiere of *Il trionfo della pace* in Turin, the singer was hired as a musician of the court of Carlo Emanuele IV, King of Sardinia.⁴⁹ That same season Marchesi sang at a "grand" funeral in honor of librettist Pietro Metastasio in Turin.⁵⁰

Only one opera season was held at Turin each year, thus Marchesi had the flexibility to travel for as many as nine months of the year. Between 1782 and 1785 he appeared in numerous productions throughout Italy and created roles by Felice Alessandri, Giovanni Battista Borghi,

⁴⁸ Anderson, *The Letters of Mozart*, 2:702-3.

⁴⁹ Celletti, *Enciclopedia*, 102.

⁵⁰ Vernon Lee, *Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1908), 344. This was only one of numerous memorials and concerts held throughout Europe in honor of the librettist.

Luigi Cherubini, Domenico Cimarosa, and Gaetano Pugnani. Finding the time and resources for charity, Marchesi founded the Pio Istituto Filarmonico in 1783. The organization, located in Milan, sponsored benefit concerts at La Scala, and provided resources for the children and spouses of deceased musicians.⁵¹

With his flexible appointment, Marchesi was able to take a considerable journey throughout Europe in the mid 1780s. In August 1785, Marchesi appeared in the Viennese production of Sarti's *Giulio Sabino*, a role he had sung previously in Florence in 1781. This six-show production, notably, was "mounted especially for him." Dorothea Link declares the great financial success of *Sabino* "nothing short of stupendous."⁵² Both Antonio Salieri and Emperor Joseph himself were involved in the production staged at the Kärntnertortheater. Salieri and several other composers contributed numbers to the opera, so much so that John A. Rice labels the Viennese production a pasticcio. Marchesi replaced an aria by Sarti, "Cari figli, un altro amplesso," with a rondò by Angelo Tarchi, "Cari oggetti del mio core."⁵³ An engraving of Marchesi's *Sabino* and Catarina Cavalieri's *Epponina*, alongside their children, depicts the dramatic farewell between the spouses. In the engraving, a long-limbed Marchesi towers over Cavalieri as they clasp hands.⁵⁴

Count Zinzendorf attended at least five performances of *Sabino* during its three week run in Vienna, and it seems he was quite impressed with Marchesi:

"Marchesini, Italy's leading soprano, enchanted the whole audience with his beautiful voice: soft, sonorous, harmonious, and expressive. In the duet Cavalieri obscured Marchesi's voice with her screams. Marchesini has a woman's face, a woman's gestures, which Storace, his student, has

⁵¹ Hansell, "Marchesi, Luigi," 824.

⁵² Link, *National Court Theatre*, 250.

⁵³ Rice, *Salieri*, 379.

⁵⁴ Engraving reproduced in Rice, *Salieri*, 380.

imitated very well, a voice beyond that of a woman, with astonishingly flutelike tones.”⁵⁵

After his triumph in Vienna, Marchesi traveled north to Russia, carrying a letter of recommendation from Emperor Joseph to Count Ludwig Coblenz, his ambassador in St. Petersburg. Despite having earned the Emperor’s respect vocally, Marchesi was still subjected to the usual sexual slights. Joseph wrote that Marchesi was “a good child, for it would be doing him too much honor to say he is a good man, because he lacks such a characteristic feature of the latter. He is not at all difficult or impudent, as these *messieurs* sometimes are.”⁵⁶

In St. Petersburg Marchesi was to be engaged for three years by the Empress Catherine, who would provide him with a yearly salary of 1500 guineas among other benefits.⁵⁷ While in Russia, Marchesi’s legendary personality left an impression on audiences and royals alike. It seems Alexander, the five-year-old grandson of Empress Catherine, found Marchesi “unpleasant and his grimaces horrible.”⁵⁸ The January 1786 premiere of Giuseppe Sarti’s *Armida e Rinaldo*, with Marchesi as *primo uomo*, accompanied the inaugural celebrations of the Hermitage in St. Petersburg. In September, the *musico* and Sarti collaborated again, and Marchesi created the lead role in the composer’s *Castore e Polluce*.

⁵⁵ Link, *National Court Theatre*, 250: “Marchesini, premier Soprano del’Italie enchanta tous l’auditoire par sa belle voix, douce, sonore, harmonieuse et touchante. dans le du la Cavalieri etouffoit la voix de March. par ses cris. March. a un visage de femme, des gestes de femme, que la Storace, son ecolière a tres bien imité, une voix au dela de celle d’une femme, des sons flutés etonnans,” English translation from Rice, *Salieri*, 381.

Storace was not Marchesi’s student, but as previously mentioned she had developed a successful imitation of his voice, one that she would display extensively later in her career.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Marquis of Lansdowne, ed., *The Queeney Letters: Being Addressed to Hester Maria Thrale by Doctor Johnson, Fanny Burney, and Mrs. Thrale-Piozzi* (London: Cassell and Company, 1934), 203.

⁵⁸ Virginia Rounding, *Catherine the Great: Love, Sex and Power* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2006), 397. Rounding dates the incident September 1783, which does not match the 1786 date of Marchesi’s trip to Russia. Alexander was born in 1777, and would have been almost ten when the *musico* was in St. Petersburg.

The three-year contract was cut short for unknown reasons. After barely one year, Marchesi departed Russia and, after an appearance in Berlin, returned to the warmer opera houses and courts of Italy.⁵⁹ By June of 1787 the singer was in Milan, creating the role of Ramiro in Angelo Tarchi's *Il Conte di Saldagna*, as well as performing in a concert benefiting the poor.⁶⁰ At Turin, the *musico* created two roles during the 1788 Carnival season. On December 26, 1788 Gaetano Pugnani's setting of the popular Metastasian libretto *Demofonte* premiered with Marchesi as Timante. Timante was not a new role for the singer, and he would appear in several other composers' settings of the libretto later in his career. The following month, Marchesi created the role of Achille in Luigi Cherubini's popular *Ifigenia in Aulide*. It was then, upon the completion of Carnival in Turin, that the most well-documented period of Marchesi's career began.

London Years: 1788-1790

The much-anticipated arrival of Marchesi in London had already been delayed several times, and with each delay, excitement over the singer's fabulous talent grew. As early as February 1785, author Hester Thrale-Piozzi began mentioning Marchesi in letters to her daughter in London. Mrs. Thrale-Piozzi wrote Hester Maria Thrale from Milan, Venice, and Florence, and in each letter her praise of Marchesi's vocal prowess increased. Her most vivid description of the *musico* came in an April 22, 1785 letter from Venice:

You may be sure of Marchese next Winter; and you may be sure he will astonish England as he has done Italy, who crowd about him as if he was a

⁵⁹ Hansell, "Marchesi," 824. Marchesi performed in Berlin on 9 March 1787. Aside from this mention I have no confirmation of this performance.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

Thing drop'd from the Moon. In fact *his* Excellence is not like that of Mrs Siddons, the excellence of others push'd to perfection in *him*, his Excellence is like that of the Man who about thirty years ago stood on his head a Top of the Monument of Fish Street hill, and then came down flying on a rope into Fleet Street- He had no *Imitators* however, and those who try to do what Marchese does will as effectually, tho' figuratively break their Necks.⁶¹

Mrs. Thrale-Piozzi's vivid analogy communicates the extent of Marchesi's vocal agility in a somewhat unusual way, as readers attempt to imagine the Fish Street hill acrobat's antics in an operatic context. Bizarre imagery aside, it was letters like hers that contributed to the mounting excitement in London.

His engagement in Russia, however, delayed the London debut anticipated by Mrs. Thrale-Piozzi. In February 1785 Mrs. Thrale-Piozzi informed her daughter that London "would not have Marchesi at last; the Empress of Russia *will* have him...for three years certain."⁶² The harsh Russian winters facing Marchesi also became a topic of interest, at least to Mrs. Thrale-Piozzi. In a letter dated May 11, 1786, Thrale-Piozzi speculated that "Madam Mara would do to sing Duets with Marchese- though if he loses none of his Powers in Russia he will make her stare too...."⁶³

It seems Russia was not the only cause for the delay of a London debut. By 1785, Sir John Gallini, manager of the King's Theatre, was struggling to hire a company of singers for the impending season in London. He wrote the Italian impresario Andrea Campigli in September that "if Signor Marccesi will come he has my agreement." In a letter to George Nassau Clavering, Earl of Cowper, Gallini made it clear that booking Marchesi was no simple task. He was in the process of making alternative plans "in case Marccesi should not come," which indeed

⁶¹ Lansdowne, *The Queeney Letters*, 198.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 203.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 223.

Marchesi did not. Instead, Gallini's second choice, Giovanni Rubinelli, sang *primo uomo* on the London stage that season.⁶⁴

Two years later Gallini was still bargaining for Marchesi's presence in London. In a letter likely dated March 1787, the manager wrote Earl Cowper, urging him to "tell Signor Campigli to settle with Signor Marchesi so that I can fix the rest of my company...if Marchesi does not come I will manage with Robinelli."⁶⁵ By May, however, Marchesi had yet to agree to sign Gallini's contracts, and the manager wrote Earl Cowper with a plea for assistance, as Marchesi's reluctance to commit to a London contract was affecting the entire casting process for the upcoming season. Marchesi was the talent that Gallini felt sure would draw crowds. "With regard to Robinelli and Mara- the public no longer listen to them." Gallini urged Earl Cowper and Campigli to intercede with Marchesi on his behalf.⁶⁶ Finally in June of 1787, Gallini wrote that he himself would be meeting Marchesi in Italy.⁶⁷ In a later deposition, Gallini stated that he "was obliged to go to Milan in Italy to prevail on [Marchesi] to come to England through the pressing Sollicitations of many of the principal subscribers to the Opera House."⁶⁸

The start of the 1788 season in London offered little excitement. A letter in the *Public Advertiser* in January 1788 regarding the production of Cimarosa's *La locandiera*, featuring Nancy Storace, indicated that Marchesi's arrival was eagerly awaited. The unnamed "Spectator" wrote that "upon the whole, [*La locandiera*] will do, until by arrival next month of the celebrated

⁶⁴ Elizabeth Gibson, "Earl Cowper in Florence and His Correspondence with the Italian Opera in London," *Music & Letters* 68, no. 3 (July 1987): 244.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 246-7.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 247.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 247-8.

⁶⁸ Curtis Price, Judith Milhous, and Robert D. Hume, *The King's Theatre, Haymarket: 1778-1791*, vol. 1 of *Italian Opera in Late Eighteenth Century London* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 384-5.

Signor Marchesi, and the serious groupe of Cantanti, the attention of the public will be more deservedly taken up.”⁶⁹

Fractional engagements, an innovation of Gallini’s, enabled singers to complete the Carnival season in Europe before coming to London. Singers whose contracts were fractional sang in England from sometime after Easter until July.⁷⁰ Under such an engagement with Gallini, Marchesi traveled to London in early spring of 1788 at the close of Carnival in Turin. On March 6, 1788, the *Public Advertiser* reported that Marchesi had arrived in the city,

but that the Managers, instead of keeping every thing in readiness against his arrival, and supposing him ready for his part (of which there is not doubt) are now waiting for the first and second woman, and for the tenor; nor is the scenery, &c. in readiness; so that the public must wait a month longer before a serious Opera can be presented.⁷¹

Several changes to the cast, as well as a potential scheduling conflict with another soprano delayed Marchesi’s debut further. The *Morning Post* reported that Marchesi wanted to avoid performing his debut on the same night as a Drury Lane benefit performed by soprano Madam Gertrude Mara, though the opera ultimately did not interfere with her April 8 concert.⁷²

The opera chosen for Marchesi’s debut was Giuseppe Sarti’s *Giulio Sabino*, a slight risk given that Luigi Cherubini’s opera of the same name had failed miserably only two years before. Though Cherubini’s opera was better received in Europe, in London *Il Giulio Sabino* had only a single performance. Charles Burney writes that the opera “was murdered in its birth, for want of the necessary support of capital singers in the principal parts.”⁷³ Sarti’s version did not suffer a similar fate.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 396.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 127.

⁷¹ Ibid., 400.

⁷² Ibid., 400-1.

⁷³ Burney, *A General History of Music*, 899.

On Saturday April 5, 1788, *Giulio Sabino* opened, and ticket sales were substantial. Quite an unusually large crowd gathered at the King's Theatre that night. 660 pit tickets and 636 gallery tickets were offered and all but around 100 of those sold- significant as typically fewer than half of the thousand tickets prepared were sold in a single night.⁷⁴ The Earl of Mount Edgumbe was in attendance and described the crowd at the debut:

On the first night of his appearance the theatre was not only crowded to the utmost in every part, but on the rising of the curtain, the stage was so full of spectators that it was some time before order and silence could be obtained, and with some difficulty that Marchesi, who was to open the opera, could make his way before the audience.⁷⁵

The April 7 *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* reported "that the Opera House was completely filled in less than half an hour after the doors were opened, and many could not obtain admission to the pit at seven o'clock."⁷⁶ According to *The Times* "Sir John Gallini was remarkably vociferous on Saturday evening, and cursed with all the bitterness of disappointment the Architects of the Opera House, for not making it larger."⁷⁷ Validating the Earl of Mount Edgumbe's report of crowds of spectators, the *Morning Post* reported that the bodies onstage were "so much that the business of the scenes was not accomplished without great difficulty."⁷⁸ The opening performance of *Giulio Sabino* was a great financial success, and "cash receipts for the night of 5 April 1788 totaled the startling sum of £473. 15s. 6d." Price, Milhous, and Hume report that ticket sales of more than £300 were exceedingly rare and occurred on only eleven of the 102 nights of the 1786-88 seasons.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ Price, Milhous, and Hume, *The King's Theatre, Haymarket*, 50-1.

⁷⁵ Edgumbe, *Musical Reminiscences*, 61.

⁷⁶ Petty, *Italian Opera in London, 1760-1800*, 257-8.

⁷⁷ Price, Milhous, and Hume, *The King's Theatre, Haymarket*, 401.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

Marchesi's London debut had certainly been an anticipated spectacle, and it seems the *musico* generally did not disappoint. The *Morning Herald* reported that Marchesi "displayed amazing powers in cantabile" during rehearsals for *Sabino*.⁸⁰ So great were his "pathetic strains that they [audiences] could not refrain their tears."⁸¹ The *Times* reported that none since Farinelli were "so truly entitled to commendation unlimited- his voice...is harmony itself...his acting, too, is much superior to what we have been used to."⁸² The *Gazetteer* praised Marchesi's voice, calling it "exquisitely fine, particularly his lower tones, from which he makes the most beautiful transitions to the higher notes. The nasal intonation so frequent in the Italian school...is a fault from which Marchesi is totally free." Additionally, the review delighted in "his manner of delivering recitative [which] gives it all the truth and beauty of the finest declamation."⁸³

The reviews were not entirely devoid of criticism. The *Gazetteer* reported that "if he has a fault, it is that he embellishes with too many graces."⁸⁴ The Earl of Mount Edgumbe's assessment of Marchesi's London debut includes both praise and criticism:

His vocal powers were very great, his voice of extensive compass, but a little inclined to be thick. His execution was very considerable, and he was rather too fond of displaying it; nor was his cantabile singing equal to his bravura. In recitative, and scenes of energy and passion, he was incomparable, and had he been less lavish of ornaments, which were not always appropriate, and possessed a more pure and simple taste, his performances would have been faultless, it was always striking, animated and effective.⁸⁵

The Earl of Mount Edgumbe had previously heard Pacchierotti sing arias from *Sabino* at a private recital in Italy, and he "was a little disappointed at Marchesi's execution of them." The

⁸⁰ Theodore Fenner, *Opera in London: Views of the Press, 1785-1830* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1994), 162.

⁸¹ Petty, *Italian Opera in London, 1760-1800*, 257.

⁸² Fenner, *Opera in London*, 162.

⁸³ Petty, *Italian Opera in London, 1760-1800*, 257.

⁸⁴ Fenner, *Opera in London*, 163.

⁸⁵ Edgumbe, *Musical Reminiscences*, 60-1.

Earl “missed his [Pachierotti’s] tender expression,” and found fault in Marchesi’s “flowery style,” which, he mentions, only grew increasingly elaborate in the years to come.⁸⁶ Some were less critical of Marchesi’s embellishment; for example, the *Advertiser* praised the singer’s ability to “vary his music” in each performance, “which he has been known to do for many running nights with the greatest of ease. That circumstance proves him to be the greatest professor and far above all his contemporaries whom he exceeds likewise in singing and acting.”⁸⁷

Giulio Sabino ran for eleven performances in London, likely bolstered by Marchesi’s popularity and allure. While Marchesi’s debut was a success, Sarti’s “insipid music” was not so well received.⁸⁸ The *Morning Post* found the work unimpressive, noting that “there is nothing that lingers on the ear and hangs about the heart.”⁸⁹ Another paper went so far as to rank Sarti in the “second class of musical writers.”⁹⁰ The *Morning Post* complained that *Sabino* seemed “rather an old opera,” and with each of the eleven performances ticket sales declined. By its fifth performance, on April 22, the total receipt was “no more that £124. 6d.”⁹¹ Price, Milhous, and Hume hypothesize that the fault was not Marchesi’s, but “rather with the opera itself.”⁹² The unnamed “Spectator” in the *Public Advertiser* claims that what made Sarti’s music “appear most brilliant last Saturday was the appearance in it of Signor Marchesi. Though it must always be understood that the modulations, flights, and variations which he utters are his own, and not the master’s.”⁹³

⁸⁶ Ibid., 62.

⁸⁷ Petty, *Italian Opera in London, 1760-1800*, 258.

⁸⁸ Fenner, *Opera in London*, 162.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 101.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Price, Milhous, and Hume, *The King’s Theatre, Haymarket*, 404.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Petty, *Italian Opera in London, 1760-1800*, 258.

Marchesi did gain one famous fan during his April performances of *Giulio Sabino*. The Italian artist Maria Cosway wrote her friend Thomas Jefferson from London that month, praising Marchesi's talent. "If you want to hear what Italian Singing is, come to London," she raved, "Marchesi is here and the Most wonderful Singer I ever heard. The opera is good but for want of equal performers with him it is rather dull as the whole spectacle depending one person, makes the rest appear tiresome."⁹⁴

Marchesi's next performance that season only strengthened his popularity in London. On May 8, 1788 he brought Megacle, a role he had created in Vicenza four years earlier, to the stage in Cimarosa's *L'Olimpiade*. The Metastasian libretto was familiar to the London audience, having been used last in a 1783 production. Marchesi's number "Se cerca, se dice" served as the farewell in Act II, scene vii, and was later published by Longman and Broderip.⁹⁵ Marchesi also sang Sarti's aria, "Questa non era o cara," in Act II, rather than Cimarosa's original "Nel lasciarti."⁹⁶ Longman and Broderip also published "Questa non era o cara."

L'Olimpiade had ten performances that season, and Marchesi was again well received. Critics of Sarti's *Sabino* praised Marchesi's performance in Cimarosa's opera. On June 9th, a reviewer in the *World* wrote:

The opera so far is interesting as the report is of a singer whose voice is beyond all comparison the finest in Europe, at length getting into the worthy use of it. Marchesi showed us from the first...that his former failures of impression were the fault of Sarti, rather than his own. In the *Olimpiade* his airs being written with feeling are of course felt as they are

⁹⁴ Julian P. Boyd, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956), 13:114-5.

⁹⁵ Price, Milhous, and Hume, *The King's Theatre, Haymarket*, 404-5.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 405. A manuscript version of "Nel lasciarti" from the Vicenza 1784 premiere of *L'Olimpiade* names Marchesi as the performer, indicating that he sang Cimarosa's aria in the original production.

sung both by the musician and those who hear him. The air ‘Se cerca, se dice’ was therefore much applauded and generally encored.⁹⁷

On June 23, 1788, the *World* again complimented Marchesi’s performance in *L’Olimpiade*:

Both [Marchesi’s] airs in the second act of *L’Olimpiade* are full of contrivance and beautiful effect. It is not easy to say which is the best. “Se cerca, se dice” was encored with a violence of applause seldom heard, and the second time was much varied and more brilliant than the first.⁹⁸

At the close of the opera Marchesi offered an additional number, which was “set to music by himself.”⁹⁹ He sang Carlo Francesco Badini’s text “Generosi Britanni in lieta fronte,” and the translation was provided for the audience. Price, Milhous, and Hume report that “one must assume it rightly made little impression,” as no reviewers even mentioned the encore.¹⁰⁰

Still under the employ of the King of Sardinia, Marchesi returned to Italy after the summer season in London. At La Scala during the autumn of 1788, Marchesi appeared in several roles he had previously created, Achille in Cherubini’s *Ifigenia in Aulide* and Megacle in Cimarosa’s *L’Olimpiade*.

By January of 1789, Marchesi had returned to London for his second season at the King’s Theatre. 1789 was a difficult year for the opera in London and marked the final performances at the King’s Theatre, which was destroyed by fire in June. Audiences still clamored to see Marchesi perform, and his return to London was triumphant. After his successes the previous year, Marchesi was awarded a hefty salary of £1500 as well as “a free benefit and apartments,” for his work from January to June 1789. The next highest paid singer, Cecelia Giuliani, received

⁹⁷ Petty, *Italian Opera in London, 1760-1800*, 260.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Price, Milhous, and Hume, *The King’s Theatre, Haymarket*, 408

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

only £891.¹⁰¹ Additionally, Angelo Tarchi was employed as a house composer “specifically to write and direct serious operas.”¹⁰²

On January 24, Marchesi sang the role of Achille in Cherubini’s *Ifigenia in Aulide*, a role he had created in Turin during Carnival of 1788 and sung in Milan a year later. Despite the failure of Cherubini’s *Sabino* in London, his *Ifigenia* met great praise. The *Gazetteer* found the opera “so infinitely superior to any that has been lately produced that [they] congratulate the public on the restoration of good taste and good music to the King’s Theatre,” and subsequently predicted that “it will be a lasting favourite with the public.”¹⁰³ The *Morning Herald* praised Marchesi as well. “Marchesi was wonderfully great; his recitative was given with all the energy and passion of a perfect tragedian, and his airs were executed with a precision and taste that conferred a credit on the composer, and did honour to himself...”¹⁰⁴

Several numbers from this production were published in London. Longman and Broderip issued Achille’s victory aria, “A voi torno o sponde amate.” Price, Milhous, and Hume remark that the D major aria’s “simple triadic melody exploits Marchesi’s low range and not, as one would expect in such a piece, his brilliant high notes.”¹⁰⁵ Commentary in a 1789 review offers a description of the published aria:

This air is published in *score*, and contains parts for violins, flutes, and hautboy, viola, horns, and trumpets. The melody is bold and somewhat striking at its commencement, but does not proceed with equal spirit. The style is however judicious, simple, and unaffected; and with the aid of the accompaniments (in which an intimate acquaintance with the *band* is

¹⁰¹ Charles Beecher Hogan, ed., *The London Stage, 1660-1800: A Calendar of Plays, Entertainments & Afterpieces Together with Casts*, Part 5, 1776-1800 (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1960-1968), 2:1096.

¹⁰² Price, Milhous, and Hume, *The King’s Theatre, Haymarket*, 410.

¹⁰³ Petty, *Italian Opera in London, 1760-1800*, 265.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 266.

¹⁰⁵ Price, Milhous, and Hume, *The King’s Theatre, Haymarket*, 428.

evinced) produces an effect with which every lover of good orchestra music must be pleased.¹⁰⁶

Longman and Broderip also published a rondò by house composer Angelo Tarchi, and Marchesi's "beautiful" performance of the rondò was praised in the *Morning Post* on January 26.¹⁰⁷ Another number apparently from the original score, "Almen del tuo tormento," the "charmingly executed" duet, sung by Marchesi and Giuliani, was praised for its "beautifully pathetic simplicity."¹⁰⁸

In February 1789 Tarchi's own opera *Il disertore* opened at King's Theatre. The opera was unusual, as it "was a *dramma serio* with a mundane contemporary setting involving ordinary people."¹⁰⁹ The opera was "anxiously expected by the musical world," and public rehearsals were held in a coffee house.¹¹⁰ The *Morning Post* offered a review on March 2, 1789:

Il deserter...was performed on Saturday last, and the high reputation of this composer suffered nothing by the reception of the music...The great objection to this Opera applies to the length of recitatives and of the airs. When these are shortened the Opera will pass if not with much better effect...The audience were liberal of applause but none of the airs were encored.¹¹¹

An earlier review in the same paper predicted that "the duet by Marchesi and Giuliani will be a lasting favourite in the musical world," but agreed that "the recitatives are too long... Let Tarchi shorten his recitatives and his opera will augment even his great reputation."¹¹² The *Times* praised the "delightful" music, but exclaimed "it was very near *eleven* before the curtain fell."¹¹³

¹⁰⁶ Petty, *Italian Opera in London, 1760-1800*, 267.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 266.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Price, Milhous, and Hume, *The King's Theatre, Haymarket*, 419.

¹¹⁰ Petty, *Italian Opera in London, 1760-1800*, 268.

Price, Milhous, and Hume, *The King's Theatre, Haymarket*, 420.

¹¹¹ Petty, *Italian Opera in London, 1760-1800*, 268.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

Despite general agreement that the opera was too long, audiences and reviewers responded enthusiastically both to the performers and the music. At the premiere the opera, “abounding with some of the finest flights of Tarchi’s genius, had a favourable reception from a very crowded Pitt and Boxes.”¹¹⁴ Longman and Broderip published one of Marchesi’s arias from *Il disertore* titled “A quei cari amati accenti.” This aria appeared in the “couch scene” during Act II and is found in the score, though it was omitted from the libretto.¹¹⁵ It was, in fact, this “couch scene” specifically that reviewers thought “might be totally omitted,” though the entire “last act in particular would derive considerable effect from the pruning knife.”¹¹⁶

Marchesi’s performance of Gualtieri was groundbreaking in one sense. According to Price, Milhous, and Hume, “the idea of Marchesi, the *primo uomo*...portraying Gualtieri, a common soldier who deserted his regiment to attend his dying mother, would have been unthinkable a few years earlier,” and subsequently “launched the King’s Theatre into the modern age of opera.”¹¹⁷ Audiences may not have questioned Marchesi’s lower class role, but critics did take issue with his costume. A March review in the *Morning Post* ridiculed the modern dress of Gualtieri, lamenting that “poor Marchesi’s dignity was quite destroyed—he appeared exactly like a *Valet de Chambre*.”¹¹⁸

On April 2, the first of nine performances of Cimarosa’s *L’Olimpiade*, seen on the same stage only the previous season, served as a benefit for Marchesi. There were multiple additions to Cimarosa’s score, including both “a new song by Marchesi” and “the favourite duet in The

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Price, Milhous, and Hume, *The King’s Theatre, Haymarket*, 421.

¹¹⁶ Petty, *Italian Opera in London, 1760-1800*, 268.

¹¹⁷ Price, Milhous, and Hume, *The King’s Theatre, Haymarket*, 419.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 164-5.

Deserter.”¹¹⁹ Following the performance, Marchesi sang several *Ariettes* he himself composed, accompanied on the harp by a Madame Krumpholtz. Tickets to the event were “to be had of Marchesi, No.37, Upper James-street, Golden-square.”¹²⁰ Such benefit performances were not uncommon, and Marchesi’s salary at the King’s Theatre was significantly supplemented by the proceeds from such concerts. He also earned 200 guineas for performing occasionally at the Monday evening Professional Concerts. A May 7 news clipping revealed how lucrative Marchesi’s benefits had been thus far:

Marchesi has been able to pay into Hammersley’s hands three thousand pounds, the produce of the present season. His late benefit at the Opera house procured him near a thousand; and now, for the gratification of the English Nobility, he is very obligingly going to have another benefit at the Hanover-square Rooms.¹²¹

On May 15 Marchesi appeared at the harpist Krumpholtz’s benefit concert. His own benefit recital was held June 1 and was immediately followed by appearances at the recitals of violinists Ignazio Raimondi and Wilhelm Cramer on the 3rd and 24th.¹²²

Another recital in 1789 provided London fans the rare opportunity to watch two famous *musici* on one stage, as the aging Gasparo Pacchierotti had returned to the city for performances at the Pantheon. The Earl of Mount Edgumbe described the concert given by “the two finest singers of Italy” saying,

Only once they sung in the same room, at a private concert given by Lord Buckingham, when both exerted themselves to the utmost in friendly rivalry, and their combined efforts afforded the highest gratification. It was difficult to decide the point of *precedence* between two such great and equal performers; but both were civil and obliging men, despising the

¹¹⁹ Hogan, *The London Stage, 1660-1800*, part 5, 2:1143.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Petty, *Italian Opera in London, 1760-1800*, 7.

¹²² Ibid., 12.

petty distinctions of which inferior performers are so tenacious, and Marchesi of his own accord yielded to his senior, Pacchierotti.¹²³

The Earl notes that Marchesi clearly “yielded” by singing before his more senior colleague and “left the last song to Pacchierotti” in a most respectful manner.¹²⁴

The 1788-89 season was a tumultuous one at the King’s Theatre. After a February 7th performance of *Ifigenia in Aulide*, featuring Marchesi as *primo uomo*, audience members rioted over the quality of the featured ballet *A Divertissement*. Though the riot was not related to his performance, *The Times* later reported that “the strains of Marchesi had only the power to soothe while they were heard!”¹²⁵ The discontented audience booed and hissed so loudly that the hapless dancers were forced to dance on without audible music, and Gallini fled the opera house rather than meet the angry crowds.¹²⁶ In a letter presumably written in May 1789, Gallini informed Earl Cowper that despite the fact that “everything foundered...Signor Marchesi himself is tolerated.”¹²⁷ Unfortunately, riots were not the only difficulty to plague Gallini’s house that season.

On June 2, 1789, Tarchi’s adaptation of *Alessandro nell’Indie*, titled *La generosità d’Alessandro*, opened at the King’s Theatre. Little more than two weeks later, however, the opera was forced out, as the theatre burned to the ground on June 17th.¹²⁸ “The season ended disastrously,” the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe wrote of the fire.¹²⁹ Tarchi’s production survived

¹²³ Edgcumbe, *Musical Reminiscences*, 64-5.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 66. Though this may have been the only time Marchesi and Pacchierotti shared the stage as equally famous *musici*, the two had technically performed together before. In 1775, at the start of Marchesi’s career, both sang in operas by Alessandri and Monza.

¹²⁵ Price, Milhous, and Hume, *The King’s Theatre, Haymarket*, 97.

¹²⁶ Hogan, *The London Stage, 1660-1800*, part 5, 2:1128 and Price, Milhous, and Hume, *The King’s Theatre, Haymarket*, 97.

¹²⁷ Gibson, “Earl Cowper in Florence and His Correspondence,” 249.

¹²⁸ Price, Milhous, and Hume, *The King’s Theatre, Haymarket*, 409.

¹²⁹ Edgcumbe, *Musical Reminiscences*, 63.

and was moved to Covent Garden to complete its eight-performance run. The opera itself was a great success with audiences, inspiring cries of “Bravo Tarchi!” “Bravo Maestro!”¹³⁰ On June 3, the *Morning Post* exclaimed “Marchesi never sung with better effect, as the airs were finely adapted to his powers.”¹³¹

After the close of the eventful season, Marchesi returned to Turin, where he remained in the service of the King of Sardinia. At the opening of Carnival, Marchesi created the role of Megacle in Vincenzo Federici’s *L’Olimpiade*. The role was not a new one for Marchesi, but the opera was the twenty-five year old Federici’s first. That same season, Marchesi appeared in yet another familiar role, this time creating Sabino in Angelo Tarchi’s setting of *Giulio Sabino*.

The 1789 fire at King’s Theatre forced Gallini to find a new home for Italian opera in London. By mid-August 1789 he had secured a new location, the Little Theatre at Haymarket, and was corresponding with Earl Cowper in order to hire a cast of singers for the upcoming season. “If I cannot engage Marchesi and Mara, who I am now treating with,” he wrote to the Earl, “I think of substituting Senesino and Banti in their Place.”¹³² Gallini did engage both Mara and Marchesi that season, but he chose to hold serious opera until the end of Carnival in Europe.¹³³ By April 1790 Marchesi made his final journey to London. The *musico*’s salary was once again reported to be a significant sum, £1150, while Mara received only £850.¹³⁴

Gallini commissioned a new serious opera by Vincenzo Federici, *L’usurpator innocente*, for the occasion of Marchesi and Mara’s arrivals that season. Both the audiences and the performers were familiar with the libretto, based on Metastasio’s *Demofonte*. Henry Holland

¹³⁰ Hogan, *The London Stage, 1660-1800*, part 5, 2:1162.

¹³¹ Petty, *Italian Opera in London, 1760-1800*, 270.

¹³² Gibson, “Earl Cowper in Florence and His Correspondence,” 250.

¹³³ Price, Milhous, and Hume, *The King’s Theatre, Haymarket*, 424.

¹³⁴ Hogan, *The London Stage, 1660-1800*, part 5, 2:1190.

published three numbers sung by Marchesi, as well as “La destra ti chiedo,” a duet sung by Marchesi and Mara, and all are attributed to Federici alone. While Marchesi sang numbers written by Federici, reviewers were quick to identify several of Mara’s numbers as the work of Gaetano Andreozzi and to accuse Federici of stealing the “divine” airs.¹³⁵ Price, Milhous, and Hume “exonerate” Federici of any plagiarism, but add that the music published and attributed to him “is mostly poor stuff.”¹³⁶

L’usurpator innocente enjoyed fifteen performances in London that season and, as always, the performances of Marchesi and Mara were met with great praise. “It is certain that no composer ever had a more favourable opportunity of reaching the pinnacle of fame, being supported by the musical efforts of Mara and Marchesi, a coalition capable of realising the fabulous wonders that are related concerning the music of the ancients,” raved a review in the *Morning Herald* on April 7¹³⁷. Several reviews mentioned the opera’s length, however, and by April 12 the *Times* reported “the opera had a judicious curtailment in several of the passages, but not the least diminution of applause.”¹³⁸

Tarchi’s *La generosità d’Alessandro*, well received the previous year in London, was revived for twelve performances beginning on April 29, 1790.¹³⁹ The opening night of the opera served as a benefit for Marchesi. Tickets to the April 29 performance “were to be had of Marchesi, No. 14, Charles-street, St. James’s-square.” According to *The London Stage* both

¹³⁵ Price, Milhous, and Hume, *The King’s Theatre, Haymarket*, 433.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 433-4.

¹³⁷ Petty, *Italian Opera in London, 1760-1800*, 275.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 267.

¹³⁹ Hogan, *The London Stage, 1660-1800*, part 5, 2:1189.

Acts I and II included “new songs of his own composition by Marchesi,” one of which was accompanied by violin, violoncello, and tenor.¹⁴⁰

On May 28, 1790, Gallini brought Sebastiano Nasolini’s recent opera, *Andromaca*, to Little Haymarket. According to the *Public Advertiser* “the music is for the greatest part, a production of Signor Nasolini, the most fashionable composer now extant in Italy.”¹⁴¹ Six performances of *Andromaca* were given, but no manuscripts survive from the production, and it seems little or no music was published.¹⁴² According to the same review, “Marchesi sung three airs of his own composition; and if we judge from the enrapturing impression they made on the audience, which of the two, his merit as a singer, or his skill as composer, should be the greatest object of admiration, we are at a loss to determine.”¹⁴³ The Little Haymarket season concluded on June 12. Productions of Italian opera then moved again to Covent Garden for another week before the season finished on June 17 with a final performance of *L’usurpator innocente*.¹⁴⁴

Marchesi left London for good after his final performance in July, and he did not travel alone. Maria Cosway, Thomas Jefferson’s faithful correspondent and possible romantic interest, left London for “Italy in September 1790.”¹⁴⁵ Fawn M. Brodie’s biography of Jefferson reports that Cosway was in the company of the famous *musico* during her travels for several months that year, and left her newborn child and husband behind.¹⁴⁶ Horace Walpole “thought it odd ‘to

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 2:1249.

¹⁴¹ Petty, *Italian Opera in London, 1760-1800*, 276.

¹⁴² Price, Milhous, and Hume, *The King’s Theatre, Haymarket*, 434.

¹⁴³ Petty, *Italian Opera in London, 1760-1800*, 276.

¹⁴⁴ Hogan, *The London Stage, 1660-1800*, 2:1268. Also see Price, Milhous, and Hume, *The King’s Theatre, Haymarket*, 434.

¹⁴⁵ Boyd, *Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 16:551.

¹⁴⁶ Fawn M. Brodie, *Thomas Jefferson: An Intimate History* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1974), 253.

drop a child and her husband and country all in one breath.”¹⁴⁷ It is unclear when Marchesi and Cosway parted ways.

Final Performances and Retirement: 1790-1829

The final years of Marchesi's career were spent in Italy and Vienna, and it was during this time that Marchesi's reputation as a difficult yet beloved diva was solidified. Boaden mentioned the *musico*'s "heroic action," and indeed many fans, particularly women, found Marchesi to be something of a hero.¹⁴⁸ John Rosselli reports that by 1787 the noblewomen of Milan had formed a society honoring the *musico*. Members wore ribbons with the initials LM tied around their waists.¹⁴⁹ In Vienna, the ladies of the court wore medallions bearing his image, and some wore as many as four, "one for each arm, one on the neck, and two for the buckles of their shoes."¹⁵⁰

Perhaps the most legendary and certainly the most frequently repeated incident of Marchesi's "heroic" character concerned his initial entrance onstage. According to both Angus Heriot and Patrick Barbier, by late in his career Marchesi had begun insisting that:

impresarios and composers should allow him to make his first appearance, whatever the opera, at the top of a hill, carrying a sword, a gleaming lance and wearing a helmet crowned with white and red plumes 'at least six feet high,' as Stendhal described it.¹⁵¹

Upon making this spectacular entrance, Marchesi would cry "*Dove son io?* (Where am I?) and then after an inevitable trumpet fanfare he would sing loudly *Odi lo squillo della tromba*

¹⁴⁷ Boyd, *Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 16:551.

¹⁴⁸ Boaden, *Memoirs*, 448.

¹⁴⁹ John Rosselli, *Singers of Italian Opera: The History of a Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1.

¹⁵⁰ Celletti, *Enciclopedia*, 102: "uno per ogni braccio, uno al collo, due sulle fibbie delle scarpe." English translation mine.

¹⁵¹ Barbier, *The World of the Castrati*, 112-3.

guerriera! (Hear the sound of the warlike trumpets.)”¹⁵² In the version recounted by Heriot, Marchesi’s grand entrance was made on horseback.¹⁵³ Henry Pleasants reported that though the *musico* preferred entering on a horse, he insisted on “at least descending a hill” in his spectacularly plumed helmet if horseback was not an option.¹⁵⁴ According to both Heriot and Barbier, Marchesi would then undoubtedly perform one of his favorite suitcase arias from *Achille in Sciro*, “Mia speranza, io pur vorrei” by Giuseppe Sarti.¹⁵⁵ However fabulous and entertaining the tale of Marchesi’s entrance stipulations may be, its source remains difficult to trace. Franz Haböck does mention that by late in his career Marchesi preferred an entrance on horseback from a hilltop.¹⁵⁶ Most texts that recount the incident cite Angus Heriot as their source. Heriot indicates that this particular incident comes from the writings of Stendhal, but he provides no specific location and a very vague bibliography.¹⁵⁷

Whether Marchesi made his entrances on horseback in a plumed helmet or walked onstage unadorned, his legacy seems to come largely from his vocal talents. Francesco Zacchioli heard Marchesi sing the very Sarti rondo described by Heriot and Barbier at La Scala in 1780, which was relatively early in Marchesi’s career. Though he does not mention costumes or horses, Zacchioli certainly witnessed Marchesi’s ability to captivate and amaze audiences:

Oh, dear friend, if only you had seen the rapid revolution that occurred throughout the theatre when Marchesi entered to sing this miraculous rondeau. No one batted an eye, hardly did anyone dare to take a breath, and if we could have gone without breathing, we would have done so. Every soul flies attentive to the ears, all the other senses are suspended, so

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Heriot, *The Castrati in Opera*, 76.

¹⁵⁴ Henry Pleasants, *The Great Singers: From the Dawn of Opera to Our Own Time* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966), 46.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. Also see Barbier, *The World of the Castrati*, 113.

¹⁵⁶ Franz Haböck, *Die Kastraten und ihre Gesangkunst: Eine gesangsphysiologische, kultur, und musikhistorische Studie* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1927), 297.

¹⁵⁷ I have been unable to find this incident in Stendhal.

that that of hearing has no distractions. Already the voice—supple, obedient, harmonious—masters the most rebellious combinations of sounds, seizes from nature all those beauties that lie hidden from art and that, after Marchesi, will perhaps never be found again...The whole theater responds to my sensibility: every listener is overcome...No one begins to breathe until Marchesi, in withdrawing from the stage, destroys the lovely illusion.¹⁵⁸

Marchesi's extreme popularity no doubt led to at least a few conflicts and rivalries. Heriot reports that an extreme case of the latter developed between the *musico* and soprano Luisa Todi when they were both in residence in Venice during the 1790s. Heriot cites the letters of Pietro Zaguri to Giacomo Casanova, which do make reference to Marchesi and Todi together several times between 1790 and 1791.¹⁵⁹ According to Zaguri, Todi was ultimately portrayed victorious over Marchesi in an engraving.¹⁶⁰ It is unclear if any personal disagreements between the two singers ever took place, or if the feud was merely the construction of rabidly loyal fans.

By autumn 1790 Marchesi had arrived in Venice for the upcoming Carnival season. At the rebuilt San Benedetto, Marchesi again sang Megacle in Cimarosa's *L'Olimpiade*, a role he created years earlier in Vicenza. On December 26, 1790, Tarchi's new serious opera, *L'apoteosi d'Ercole*, opened at San Benedetto where Marchesi created the role of Hercules. Marchesi also sang the now familiar role of Timante in a setting of *Demofonte*. Sartori does not name a composer, however, and manuscripts of arias for Marchesi are attributed to both Tarchi and Pugnani. Marchesi's third role in Venice that season was Medoro in a setting of Geatano

¹⁵⁸ John Rice, *Mozart on the Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 203.

¹⁵⁹ Heriot, *The Castrati in Opera*, 159.

¹⁶⁰ Giacomo Casanova, *Carteggi Casanoviani: Lettere del patrizio Zaguri e Casanova*, vol. 2 of *Collezione Settecento*, ed. Pompeo Molmenti (Milan: R. Sandron, [1920?]), 136: "S' è fatto un rame alla maniera inglese, ove si vede la Todi trionfante, Marchesi avvilito."

Sertor's *Angelica e Medoro*. A single manuscript for Marchesi, a cavatina, is credited to Gaetano Andreozzi, while *New Grove* lists F.G. Bertoni as the composer of the 1791 setting.¹⁶¹

Marchesi spent the summer of 1791 in Siena where he sang familiar roles in two operas by Tarchi. In autumn he traveled to Livorno and again sang works by Tarchi as well as Cimarosa. By December 1791 the singer had returned to Milan, where he created two new roles during Carnival. On December 26, 1791, Niccolò Zingarelli's *Pirro re d'Epiro* opened at La Scala with Marchesi singing the part of Pirro. Manuscripts and a published aria from the production survive and include a set of ornamented variations sung by Marchesi and notated by Václav Pichl. On February 4, Tarchi's new opera *Adrasto re d'Egitto*, began its run at La Scala.¹⁶² Marchesi sang the role of Learco in the opera, which was based on a libretto by Giovanni de Gamerra.

During summer 1792 Marchesi sang in Angelo Tarchi's new setting of the Metastasian *Ezio* at the Teatro Nuovo in Vicenza. A manuscript of a *scena e terzetto* sung by Marchesi, Giacomo David, and Giuseppa Grassini survives, as well as a cavatina sung by Marchesi alone, "A voi torno, o sponde amate."

Returning to Venice for Carnival 1793, Marchesi sang in another production of *Demofonte* at San Benedetto. A manuscript of a cavatina by Pugnani, "Prudente mi chiedi," is titled similarly to one Marchesi sang at Carnival 1791, though the opera's composer is not named in Sartori.¹⁶³ That summer a production of *Ezio*, presumably Tarchi's setting, found Marchesi in Vicenza.

¹⁶¹ Marita P. McClymonds, "Sertor, Gaetano," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, edited by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1992), 4:329. Andreozzi's setting followed in 1792.

¹⁶² Dennis Libby and Marita P. McClymonds, "Tarchi, Angelo," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, 4:653. Libby and McClymonds's entry questions the specific date of this premiere.

¹⁶³ See Table 2.7.

At some point in 1793 Marchesi and another singer, Teresa Bertinotti, traveled to Genoa for a concert. Another soon to be famous musician lived in the city, and through unknown circumstances was introduced to the pair. Young Nicolò Paganini, who was about eleven years old at the time, appeared on the recital with Marchesi and Bertinotti. They in turn sang in a second recital with the prodigy, this time a benefit for Paganini. According to Jeffrey Pulver, “this was the future maestro’s first public performance,” and “he enjoyed a veritable triumph.”¹⁶⁴

For the next several years Marchesi performed existing roles and created new ones in theatres in Venice, Bergamo, Milan, Vicenza, Modena and several other cities. In 1794 he created Timante in Marcos António Portugal’s *Demofonte*. Another new role, Achille, in Marcello Bernardini’s *Achille in Sciro* followed in autumn 1794. In Venice the following year Marchesi sang the part of Arbace in Giuseppe Niccolini’s *Artaserse*.

In Venice for Carnival 1796, Marchesi worked for the first time with German composer Simon Mayr. *La Lodoiska*, featuring Marchesi as Lovinski, was only Mayr’s second opera and helped solidify the young composer’s reputation. One number, a polacca called “Contento il cor nel seno,” was extremely popular and survives in multiple manuscripts. Versions of the polacca were published as far away as London.¹⁶⁵ Over the following year, Marchesi participated in productions of *La Lodoiska* in Faenza, Sinigaglia, Lisbon, and Genova before the opera returned to Venice in autumn of 1797.¹⁶⁶

In 1796 the forces of Napoleon Bonaparte conquered Lombardy and entered the city of Milan. Several biographies of Marchesi report that the singer refused to honor Napoleon with a

¹⁶⁴ Jeffrey Pulver, *Paganini: The Romantic Virtuoso* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1970), 25.

¹⁶⁵ See Table 2.7.

¹⁶⁶ Interestingly, the production in Lisbon (Sartori 14395) seems different from the others that year. Marchesi sang the part of Titiscano. Mayr is not mentioned, rather “Musica di Kreutzer e d’altri autori,” under the direction of Antonio Leal Moreira.

performance. However marvelous the story, it may be only a story, as its source is difficult to trace. Violet Paget's *Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy*, seems to be the oldest source that mentions the incident. Paget, writing under the pseudonym Vernon Lee, reported that the Italian people "adored now...the greatest, most heroic of men, the singer Marchesi, whom Alfieri called upon to buckle his helmet, and march out against the French, as the only remaining Italian who had dared to resist the 'Corsican Gallic' invader, although only in the matter of a song."¹⁶⁷ Marchesi's biography in the *Enciclopedia dello Spettacolo* reports that the singer responded to threats of arrest saying "the general may make me cry, not make me sing," and was banished to his villa upon threat of expulsion from the region.¹⁶⁸ Angus Heriot's colorful but unreliable text mentions the incident as well, quoting Paget and providing the date 1796. Heriot writes that by Napoleon's second campaign in 1800, the singer had reconsidered. "When the conqueror again captured the city after Marengo, Marchesi was one of the first to greet him, along with Mrs. Billington and the Grassini."¹⁶⁹

The Carnival season of 1798 found Marchesi back in Venice for two premieres. On February 14, *Lauso e Lidia*, a new opera by Mayr, opened with Marchesi as Lauso. Zingarelli's premiere of *Carolina e Mexicow* featured the *musico* as Mexicow. Also during Carnival in Venice that year, Catterino Cavos composed a cantata for two voices in honor of the Austrian troops who had recently taken control of the city. Marchesi and Angelica Catalini performed Cavos' work, *L'Eroe*, at La Fenice.

May of 1798 marked Marchesi's return to Vienna, where he had been so warmly received over a decade before. That summer he sang in the Viennese premiere of Mayr's *La Lodoiska*, as

¹⁶⁷ Lee, *Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy*, 100.

¹⁶⁸ Celletti, *Enciclopedia*, 102.

¹⁶⁹ Heriot, *The Castrati in Opera*, 159.

well as a production of Zingarelli's *Pirro* at the court theatre. It was this engagement that brought him to the attention of the young Empress Marie Therese. John A. Rice supposes that Marchesi's "success in these operas that caused the court, almost certainly at the empress's instigation, to grant him the unusual title of 'K.K. Hofkammer Sänger.'"¹⁷⁰ Rice also notes that this title was not merely ceremonial, but that in fact "he was to discover that Marie Therese's *Hofkammersänger* had his work cut out for him."¹⁷¹

Marchesi departed Vienna, and during the fall of 1798 sang Zingarelli and Mayr in Livorno. After spending part of 1799 in Genova, Marchesi returned to his hometown of Milan for Carnival 1800. That February he sang in the premiere of Marco Portogallo's *Indante ovvero I sagrefizi d'Ecate* at La Scala. In April 1801 several operas were commissioned in celebration of the inauguration of the Teatro Nuovo in Trieste. Antonio Salieri's *Annibale in Capua* premiered that month, and in one of his few professional interactions with Salieri, Marchesi created the role of Annibale. On April 21 Marchesi created Ariodante in Mayr's *Ginerva di Scozia*, also in celebration of the new theatre.

By fall of 1801 Marchesi returned to Vienna. On October 27 he brought Ariodante to the Kärntnertortheater for the Viennese premiere of Mayr's *Ginerva di Scozia*. The opera played "intermittently until March 1802."¹⁷² It was on this trip to Vienna that Marchesi's musical relationship with Empress Marie Therese blossomed. Marie Therese's *Hofkammersänger* did indeed work hard during his visit to the Empress' court. Several times a month for the next year Marchesi appeared in concerts and recitals in Marie Therese's private apartments, sometimes

¹⁷⁰ John A. Rice, *Empress Marie Therese and Music at the Viennese Court, 1792-1807* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 57.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid., 58.

even singing alongside her. According to Rice, Marchesi was “the only male soprano who participated in her concerts during the period covered by her diary.”¹⁷³

Marie Therese and her *Hofkammersänger* frequently sang duets from his previous *opera seria* roles, and many were love duets. Rice suggests that “singing them with Marchesi may have served Marie Therese as a means to express her intense affection for the aging *musico*.”¹⁷⁴ Indeed the young Empress seemed to have affection for Marchesi, so much so that her mother, Queen Maria Carolina, shared her concerns over Marie Therese’s crush in a letter to a friend:

My daughter is behaving very badly: without heart, without soul, without care. To all her other shortcomings and follies she has added her very, but very obvious infatuation with the old singer Marchesi. She has all of Vienna talking. With this impetuosity of mood, and her headstrong and intemperate disposition, she does unbelievable things: she dances the galop and the waltz with him; she thinks of nothing except him and what concerns him; she goes to her ladies-in-waiting so as to be with him without limitations; in short, incredible things. She has persuaded her good husband that she must conduct herself this way so as to defy the public and demonstrate her innocence. But if the good emperor ever opens his eyes, the explosion will be terrible.¹⁷⁵

It seems the “good emperor” kept his eyes shut, as the Queen’s letter was written in March, and Marchesi remained in Vienna until July of 1802. Marie Therese’s musical diary contains almost two dozen entries mentioning Marchesi before his departure.¹⁷⁶ When the *musico* departed in July he left with gifts from the Empress including “Gluck’s *Orfeo* bound in red satin, a silver breakfast service with Wedgwood cameos, and a watch decorated with pearls and diamonds on a golden chain with clasps set with diamonds.”¹⁷⁷

¹⁷³ Ibid., 57.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 59.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 58.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 279-309.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 58.

By 1802 Marchesi was in the twilight of his professional career and performing considerably less than he had in years previous. Carnival of 1803 was spent in Milan, where he performed familiar roles by Federici and Mayr. Marchesi did return once more to Vienna during spring 1803. During this trip he participated in a performance of Ferdinando Paer's *Per il santo sepolcro* with the Tonkünstler-Sozietät.¹⁷⁸ Marchesi sang in at least three more of the Empress' private concerts during March and April 1803.¹⁷⁹ The aging *musico* was extremely well liked in Vienna by ladies other than the Empress. It was reported that women in the Viennese court decorated their clothes and even shoes with medallions bearing the singer's portrait.¹⁸⁰

By 1805 Marchesi sang his final Carnival season in Milan. On January 8 he appeared in the premiere of Mayr's *Eraldo ed Emma*, and that same month in Stefano Pavesi's *Il trifono d'Emilia*. He also performed a role he had created two years earlier in Federici's *Castore e Polluce*. *New Grove* reports that Marchesi's final appearance was a performance of Mayr's *La lodoiska* in May 1805.¹⁸¹

Except for a few appearances in later years, Marchesi essentially retired after 1805. Stendhal saw Marchesi in the audience at a November 1816 recital given by the soprano Angelica Catalani, and reported that the *musico* still looked "passably young, and enviably wealthy." According to Stendhal, Marchesi gave "occasional concerts before a favoured company of friends."¹⁸²

Marchesi became a well-regarded teacher during the last years of his life. He led a "quiet life" at his estate in Inzago, near his hometown of Milan, and the rising stars of the next

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 306-9.

¹⁸⁰ Celletti, *Enciclopedia*, 102.

¹⁸¹ Hansell, "Marchesi, Luigi," 824. I don't have another record of this performance.

¹⁸² Henri-Marie Beyle, *Rome, Naples and Florence*, trans. Richard N. Coe (New York: George Brazillier, 1959), 27.

generation traveled to him for instruction. Marchesi's most famous pupils included soprano Benedetta Rosamunda Pisaroni and composer Giovanni Pacini.¹⁸³

Luigi Marchesi died on December 18, 1829, at his estate outside Milan.¹⁸⁴ An obituary in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* appeared in February of 1830. The singer died a wealthy man and donated his estate to charity. The Fondazione Marchesi di Inzago exists still today. The Ospedale Luigi Marchesi is also still in operation, and is located on Via Marchesi in Inzago.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ Haböck, *Die Kastraten und ihre Gesangkunst*, 421.

According to Pacini's biography, he studied with Marchesi around 1808, but in Bologna. Scott Balthazar and Michael Rose, "Pacini, Giovanni," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, 3:808.

¹⁸⁴ "Nekrolog."

The *Enciclopedia dello spettacolo* lists Marchesi's death as 14 December rather than 18 December.

¹⁸⁵ Fondazione Marchesi di Inzago. <http://www.fondazionemarchesi.it/> (accessed January 2009).

Table 1.1 Marchesi's Roles

* Asterisks indicate premieres

Year	Date	City	Title	Composer	Role	Source
1773	carn	Roma	<i>L'incognita perseguita</i>	Pasquale Anfossi	Giannetta	ES
	carn		<i>La contessina</i> *	Marcello Barnardini	Cont. Elmira	S
1774	carn		<i>La buona figliuola</i>	Niccolò Piccini	Cecchina	S
	carn		<i>La finta giardiniera</i> *	Anfossi	March. Violante	S
1775	carn	Milano	<i>Medonte re di Epiro</i> *	Felice Alessandri	Evandro	S
	carn		<i>Alessandro nell'Indie</i> *	Carlo Monza	Gandarte	S
	ascen	Venezia	<i>Il Demetrio</i>	Pietro Guglielmi	Olinto	S
1775	?	Treviso				GH
1776	carn	Monaco	<i>Il trionfo di Clelia</i>	Giuseppe Michl	Tarquinio	S
1777	carn	Monaco	<i>Ezio</i>	Josef Mysliveček	Ezio	S, A ⁱ
	Feb 21		<i>Isaaco figura del redentore</i> (cantata)	Mysliveček	Isaaco	A
	June	Padova	<i>Adriano in Siria</i> *	Anfossi	Farnaspe	S
	?	Milano	<i>La vera costanza</i>	Anfossi		ES
	?		<i>Astuzie amorose</i>	Giovanni Paisiello		ES
1778	Jan ⁱⁱ	Napoli	cantata a tre voci	Ignazio Platania	Tolomeo	S
	Jan		<i>Il re pastore</i> *	Platania	Aminta	S
	30 May		<i>La Calliroe</i> *	Mysliveček	Tarsile	S
	4 Nov		<i>Olimpiade</i> *	Mysliveček	Megacle	S
1779	Jan		cantata a tre voci	Vicente Martín y Soler	Re Gerone	S
	Jan		cantata a tre voci	Salvadore Rispoli	Agesilao	S
	12 Jan		<i>Ifigenia in Aulide</i> *	Martín y Soler	Achille	S
	ascen	Venezia	<i>La Circe</i> *	Mysliveček	Ulisse	S
	aut	Firenze	<i>Castore e Polluce</i> *	Francesco Bianchi	Castore	S
	aut		<i>Achille in Sciro</i> *	Giuseppe Sarti	Achille	S
1780	carn	Milano	<i>Armida</i>	Mysliveček	Rinaldo	S
	Jan	Napoli	cantata a tre voci	Giuseppe Schuster	Tigrane	S
	prim	Pisa	<i>Il Demofoonte</i>		Timante	S

Year	Date	City	Title	Composer	Role	Source
1781	30 May	Napoli	<i>L'Impermestra*</i>	Martín y Soler	Linceo	S
	12 Aug.		<i>Armida abbandonata</i>	Niccolò Jommelli	Rinaldo	S
	4 Nov.		<i>Amore e Pische*</i>	Schuster	Amore	ICCU, S
	?	Napoli	<i>Gli orti esperidi</i>	D. Giuseppe Valenti	Adone	S
	Jan		cantata a tre voci	Schuster	Alceste	S
	Jan		cantata a tre voci	Giovanni Bertati	Lucio	S
	20 Jan		<i>Arbace*</i>	Bianchi	Arbace	S
	prim	Genova	<i>Demofoonte</i>	Bianchi	Timante	S
	Aut	Firenze	<i>Giulio Sabino</i>	Sarti	Sabino	S
	Aut		<i>Venere e Adone*</i>	Bianchi	Adone	S
1782	carn	Milano	<i>Olimpiade*</i>	Bianchi	Megacle	S
	carn		<i>Ezio</i>	Alessandri	Ezio	S
	prim	Torino	<i>Il Trionfo della pace*</i>	Bianchi	Ciro	S
	Aut	Lucca	<i>Ezio</i>	Alessandri	Ezio	S
	Aut		<i>Demofoonte</i>	vari autori	Timante	S
	Oct.	Alessandri	<i>Ezio*</i>	Gio. Battista Levis	Ezio	S
	carn	Roma	<i>Artaserse</i>	Giacomo Rust	Arbace	S
	carn		<i>Quinto Fabio</i>	Luigi Cherubini	Quinto Fabio	S
	[12 June] ⁱⁱⁱ	Padova	<i>Il Demofoonte*</i>	Alessandri	Timante	S
	? ^{iv}		<i>Le virtu' rivali</i>	Alessandri	Giustizia	S
1784	aut	Firenze	<i>Ezio</i>	Alessandri	Ezio	S
	aut		<i>Piramo e Tisbe*</i>	Giovanni Battista Borghi	Piramo	S
	?		<i>Medonte re d'Epiro</i>	Sarti	Arsace	S
	carn	Roma	<i>Aspard*</i>	Bianchi	Aspard	S
	carn		<i>Olimpiade</i>	Sarti	Megacle	S
	prim	Mantova	<i>L'Alessandri nell'Indie*</i>	Cherubini	Poro	S
	10 July-10 Aug.	Vicenza	<i>Olimpiade*</i>	Domenico Cimarosa	Megacle	S
	aut	Lucca	<i>Olimpiade</i>	Cimarosa	Megacle	S
	carn	Torino	<i>Artaserse*</i>	Cimarosa	Arbace	S
	carn		<i>Achille in Sciro*</i>	Gaetano Pugnani	Achille	S

Year	Date	City	Title	Composer	Role	Source
1786	prim	Mantova	<i>L'Arminio</i> *	Angelo Tarchi	Arminio	S
	August	Vienna	<i>Giulio Sabino</i>	Sarti	Sabino	L ^v
	15/26	St.	<i>Armida e Rinaldo</i> *	Sarti		NGO
	Jan ^{vi}	Petersburg				
1787	22 Sep/ 3 Oct ^{vii}		<i>Castore e Polluce</i> *	Sarti		S
	9 March	Berlin				NG ^{viii}
	prim	Milano	<i>Il conte di Saldagna</i> *	Tarchi	Ramiro	S
1788	11 July		benefit concert			NG ^{ix}
	carn	Torino	<i>Demofoonte</i> *	Pugnani	Timante	S
	carn		<i>Ifigenia in Aulide</i> *	Cherubini	Achille	S
	5 April	London	<i>Giulio Sabino</i>	Sarti	Sabino	S, LS
1789	8 May		<i>Olimpiade</i>	Cimarosa	Megacle	S, LS
	aut	Milano	<i>Ifigenia in Aulide</i>	Cherubini	Achille	S
	aut		<i>Olimpiade</i>	Cimarosa	Megacle	S
	24 Jan	London	<i>Ifigenia in Aulide</i>	Cherubini	Achille	S, LS
1790	28 Feb		<i>Il disertore</i>	Tarchi		LS
	2 April		<i>Olimpiade</i>	Cimarosa	Megacle	LS
	2 June		<i>La generosità d'Alessandro</i>	Tarchi	Porus	S, LS
	carn	Torino	<i>Olimpiade</i> *	Vincenzo Federici	Megacle	S
1791	carn		<i>Giulio Sabino</i> *	Tarchi	Sabino	S
	6 April	London	<i>L'usurpator innocente</i> *	Federici	Timanthes	S, LS
	29 April		<i>La generosità d'Alessandro</i>	Tarchi		LS
	28 May		<i>Andromaca</i>	Nasolini w/ Federici	Pirro	S, LS
1791	aut	Venezia	<i>Olimpiade</i>	Cimarosa	Megacle	S
	carn	Venezia	<i>L'Apoteosi d'Ercole</i> *	Tarchi	Ercole	S
	carn		<i>Demofoonte</i>		Timante	S
	carn		<i>Angelica e Medoro</i> *	[Ferdinando Bertoni ^x]	Medoro	S
	est	Siena	<i>La generosità d'Alessandro il Grande</i>	Tarchi	Poro	S
	aut	Livorno	<i>Alessandro nell'Indie</i>	Tarchi	Poro	S
	aut		<i>Demofoonte</i>		Timante	S

Year	Date	City	Title	Composer	Role	Source
1792	aut	Milano	<i>Olimpiade</i>	Cimarosa	Megacle	S
	carn		<i>Pirro re d'Epiro*</i>	Niccolò Zingarelli	Pirro	S
	carn		<i>Adrasto re d'Egitto*</i>	Tarchi	Learco	S
1793	est	Vicenza	<i>Ezio</i>	Tarchi	Ezio	S
	carn	Venezia	<i>Demofonte</i>	Pugnani		RISM ^{xi}
	est	Vicenza	<i>Ezio</i>	Tarchi		RISM ^{xii}
	ascen	Venezia	<i>Pirro</i>	[Zingarelli] ^{xiii}	Pirro	S
	? ^{xiv}	Bergamo	<i>Pirro</i>		Pirro	S
1794	carn	Milano	<i>Demofonte*</i>	Marcos Antonio Portugal	Timante	S
	carn	Vicenza	<i>Artaserse</i>	Zingarelli	Arbace	S
	est		<i>Pirro</i>	Zingarelli	Pirro	S
	est		<i>Il disertore</i>	Tarchi	Gualtieri	S
	aut	Vicenza	<i>Olimpiade</i>	Cimarosa	Megacle	S
	aut	Venezia	<i>Achille in Sciro*</i>	[Marcello Bernardini]	Achille	S
	carn	Venezia	<i>Il conte di Saldagna*</i>	Zingarelli	Ramiro	S
	carn	Modena	<i>Pirro</i>	Zingarelli	Pirro	S
	carn		<i>Ifigenia in Aulide</i>	Zingarelli	Achille	S
	prim		<i>Il conte di Saldagna</i>	Zingarelli	Ramiro	S
1795	13 June- 14 July	Modena	<i>Olimpiade</i>	Cimarosa	Megacle	S
	aut	Venezia	<i>Artaserse*</i>	Giuseppe Nicolini	Arbace	S
	aut	Venezia	<i>Demofonte</i>		Timante	S
	carn		<i>Lodoiska*</i>	Simon Mayr	Lovinski	S
	prim		<i>Lodoiska</i>	Mayr	Lovinski	S
	prim		<i>Pirro</i>	Zingarelli	Pirro	S
	16 July	Sinigaglia	<i>Lodoiska</i>	Mayr	Lovinski	S
	17 Dec	Lisbona	<i>Lodoiska</i>	Kreutzer e di'altri autori	Titiscano	S
	prim	Genova	<i>Lodoiska</i>	Mayr	Lovinski	S
	aut	Venezia	<i>Lodoiska</i>	Mayr	Lovinski	S
1798	carn	Venezia	<i>Lauso e Lidia*</i>	Mayr	Lauso	S
	carn		<i>L'Eroe (cantata a due voci)</i>	Catterino Cavos		A-Wn, ICCU

Year	Date	City	Title	Composer	Role	Source
	carn		<i>Il conte di Saldagna</i>	Zingarelli	Ramiro	S
	carn		<i>Carolina e Mexicow*</i>	Zingarelli	Mexicow	S
	est	Vienna	<i>Pirro</i>	Zingarelli	Pirro	R ^{xv}
	est		<i>Lodoiska</i>	Mayr	Lovinski	R ^{xvi}
	aut	Livorno	<i>Pirro re di Epiro</i>		Pirro	S
	aut		<i>Il conte di Saldagna</i>	Zingarelli	Ramiro	S
	aut		<i>La Lodoiska</i>	Mayr	Lovinski	S
1799	carn	Genova	<i>Il disertore</i>	Tarchi	Gualtieri	S
	prim	Genova	<i>Lodoiska</i>	Mayr	Lovinski	S
1800	carn	Milano	<i>Lodoiska</i>	Mayr	Lovinski	S
	carn		<i>Idante ovvero I sagarefizi d'Ecate*</i>	Portogallo	Idante	S
[1801]	[Apr]	Trieste	<i>Annibale in Capua*</i>	Antonio Salieri	Annibale	ICCU
1801	21 Apr		<i>Ginerva di Scozia*</i>	Mayr	Ariodante	R ^{xvii}
1801	27 Oct	Vienna	<i>Ginerva di Scozia</i>	Mayr	Ariodante	R
1801	Nov-		engagement at court of Empress Marie Therese, private concerts			R
1802	July		Departs Vienna			R
1803	carn	Milano	<i>Castore e Polluce*</i>	Federici		ICCU
	carn		<i>Ginerva di Scozia</i>	Mayr		ICCU
	March-April	Vienna	concerts with Empress Marie Therese			R
	April		<i>Per il santo sepolcro</i>	Ferdinando Paer		R
1805	carn	Milano	<i>Eraldo ed Emma*</i>	Mayr		ICCU
	prim		<i>Il trionfo d'Emilia*</i>	Stefano Pavesi		ICCU
	prim		<i>Castore e Polluce</i>	Federici		ICCU
	May	Milan	<i>Lodoiska</i>	Mayr		NG ^{xviii}
[1811]	[26 Dec]	Venezia	<i>Idomeno*</i>	Farinelli		ICCU
[1812]	[26 Dec]	Venezia	<i>Teodoro*</i>	Pavesi		ICCU
1827/28?		Napoli	<i>Buondelmonte</i> (azione storico- mimica)	Placido Mandanici		ICCU

Abbreviations

Seasons

carn= carnevale, prim= primavera, ascen= ascensione, est= estate, aut= autunno

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ⁱ Listed as carnevale 1778 in Sartori 9543, but was most likely the 1777 production described in James A. Ackerman, ed., *Josef Mysliveček: Isaaco figura del redentore* (Madison: A-R Editions, 2000), xii.

ⁱⁱ “Per festeggiare nel Real Teatro di San Carlo il felicissimo giorno natalizio di sua maestà la regina.” Ferdinand IV was born January 12, 1751. Dates listed as “Jan” on this chart were all described similarly.

ⁱⁱⁱ All dates in brackets come from the *New Grove* works list of the composer in question.

^{iv} “Cantata a S.E. [...] Alvise P.K. Mocenigo [...] offerita dall nobiltà padovana in occasione ch’è gli termina l’applauditissimo suo reggimento” from Sartori 25013.

^v Dorothea Link, *The National Court Theatre in Mozart’s Vienna: Sources and Documents, 1783-1792* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 250.

^{vi} David DiChiera and Marita P. McClymonds, “Sarti, Giuseppe,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, edited by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1992), 4:185.

^{vii} Ibid.

^{viii} Sven Hansell, “Luigi Marchesi,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., edited by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001), 15:824.

^{ix} Ibid.

^x Sartori does not include a composer, but the Bertoni setting of the opera premiered in 1791 and the Gaetano Andreozzi setting in 1792. The cavatina Marchesi sang in Venice that year (RISM A/II, 455.016.174) was written by Andreozzi. Marita P. McClymonds, “Sertor, Gaetano,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, 4:329.

^{xi} RISM A/II, 450.010.706.

^{xii} RISM A/II, 450.011.345.

^{xiii} ICCU

^{xiv} “...nel Teatro Ricardi in Bergamo la fiera dell’anno 1793,” from Sartori 18778.

^{xv} John A. Rice, *Empress Marie Therese and Music at the Viennese Court, 1792-1807* (Cambridge:Cambridge University Press, 2003), 57.

^{xvi} Ibid.

^{xvii} Dates of Trieste premier from John A. Rice, “Salieri, Antonio,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, 4:143.

Rice reports that Marchesi created the role in Trieste and then sang it again in Vienna later that same year. Rice, *Marie Therese*, 58.

^{xviii} According to *New Grove* this was Marchesi’s final public performance. Hansell, “Luigi Marchesi,” 15:824.

CHAPTER 3

VOICE

Though a relatively complete chronology of Luigi Marchesi's life can be compiled using information from librettos, memoirs and correspondence, the mystery surrounding the *musico's* most famous feature persists. After all, it was Marchesi's amazing voice and his remarkable ability to vary his arias night after night that enthralled audiences. By examining the abundant commentary written by witnesses and contemporaries, as well as the music composed specifically for Marchesi (see Table 2.7), I hope to create a profile of his voice.

For the purpose of this study, I examined eight arias composed for Marchesi over a twenty-two year period spanning the height of his career. Five of the eight could be considered "hits" due to the large number of published editions and extant manuscript copies, and will be discussed in further detail in the following sections of this chapter. Two of these "hits" are particularly valuable to an analysis of the singer's voice. Both Cherubini's "Quanto è fiero il mio tormento" and Zingarelli's "Cara, negl'occhi tuoi" include, in painstaking detail, annotations of Marchesi's variations on the original vocal part.

Marchesi's vocal range was wide. The Earl of Mount Edgcumbe praised the singer's "extensive compass," though he found Marchesi's voice "a little inclined to be thick."¹ According to Henry Pleasants, the singer's range stretched "from the low C to the D above high

¹ Richard Earl of Mount Edgcumbe, *Musical Reminiscences of the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* (London, 1834; reprint New York: Da Capo Press, 1973), 61.

C.”² Patrick Barbier reports Marchesi’s range spanned G₂ to C₅, while Franz Häböck writes “g bis d'''.”³ A review in the *World* in April 1788 praised the “organic excellences” of a musician who “through three octaves, from the high soprano to the deep bass...displays himself with ease.”⁴

Throughout Marchesi’s reported three octaves it seems there were very few, if any, faults. James Boaden found that within the singer’s range “scarcely any of these notes were weak or uncertain.”⁵ So strong was Marchesi in all registers that the anonymous author of *Lodi caratteristiche del celebre cantore Signor Luigi Marchesi* argues “that three different voices can be heard in his, the most acute one of a soprano, one of a very vigorous mezzo contralto, and the more manlike and touching one of a tenor.”⁶ Francesco Zacchiroli recognized Marchesi’s “varied” voices as well: “Now with the high notes that imitate and even surpass the song of the nightingale,” he writes, “now with deep notes that imitate the majesty of the organ.”⁷

Audiences anticipated glorious high notes from *musici*, but the singer’s strong bottom register surprised and astonished. Burney found Marchesi’s “occasional low notes” to be “grand

² Henry Pleasants, *The Great Singers: From the Dawn of Opera to Our Own Time* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966), 88.

³ Patrick Barbier, *The World of the Castrati*, trans. Margaret Crosland (London: Souvenir Press, 1996), 93.

Franz Haböck, *Die Kastraten und ihre Gesangskunst: Eine gesangsphysiologische, kultur, und musikhistorische Studie* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1927), 101.

⁴ Curtis Price, Judith Milhous, and Robert D. Hume, *The King’s Theatre, Haymarket: 1778-1791*, vol. 1 of *Italian Opera in Late Eighteenth Century London* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 401.

⁵ James Boaden, *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble, Esq., Including a History of the Stage from the Time of Garrick to the Present Period* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1825), 1:447-8.

⁶ [Anon.], *Lodi caratteristiche del celebre cantore Signor Luigi Marchesi* (Siena: Vincenzo Pazzini Carli e Figli, 1791), iv: “...potendosi dire che nella sua voce sa sentire tre voci diverse, l’acutissima di soprano, quella di mezzo di contralto robustissima, e la più virile e toccante di tenore...” English translation by Rosaria Mangiavillano.

⁷ John A. Rice, *Mozart on the Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 203.

and full of dignity.”⁸ The *London Chronicle* agreed, reporting that “his voice is exquisitely fine, particularly his lower tones.”⁹ Innocenzo della Lena judges the singer more harshly, though his assessment does confirm Marchesi’s frequent use of his low register:

Even if he is young, he already lost his very beautiful and skillful voice. This is so evident that now he is forced to use lower tones, not being able to support a perfect tone of a soprano anymore.¹⁰

Reviewers also admired Marchesi’s effortless negotiation between contrasting ranges. For example, the *London Chronicle* praised “the most beautiful transitions” between registers.¹¹ The anonymous author from Siena wrote that Marchesi “sings the aria in a way that the passage from one kind of voice to the other doesn’t produce any harshness to the delicate ear, but instead homogenous harmony which is very exceptional.”¹² The *musico*’s stamina was notable, and “when the listener thinks he should be tired, he ends with a more vigorous voice and strong spirit, as if he was about to start singing.”¹³ Such breath control allowed Marchesi to leap with

⁸ Charles Burney, *A General History of Music, from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period* (1789) (New York: Dover Publications, 1957), 902.

⁹ Petty, Frederick C. Petty, *Italian Opera In London, 1760-1800* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1979), 257.

¹⁰ Innocenzo della Lena, *Dissertazione ragionata sul teatro moderno* (Venice: Presso Giacomo Storti, 1791), 89: “Marchesi sebben sia giovane, ha perduto in gran parte i pregi della sua bellissima, ed agilissima voce. Questa degradazione è tanto sensibile, ch’è costretto adesso a cantar sempre facendo prefominaire i suoni bassi, non potendo più reggere la voce in tuono di perfetto soprano.” English translation by Rosaria Mangiavillano.

¹¹ Frederick C. Petty, *Italian Opera In London, 1760-1800*, 257.

¹² [Anon.], *Lodi caratteristiche*, iv: “cantando però le arie in maniera che il passaggio dall’una all’altra voce non rende al delicato orecchio dell’uditore crudezza alcuna, ma anzi un’eguaglianza de armonia singolare assai rara.” English translation by Rosaria Mangiavillano.

¹³ *Ibid.*, vii: “che l’uditore non comprende quand’ ei ripiglia siato, e segno, che quando credesi che ei debba esserstanco termina ciò che vuole con maggiore spirito e cantare.” English translation by Rosaria Mangiavillano.

agility, “and often with a speed which is not heard, and which doesn’t let distinguish the number of voices he touches.”¹⁴

“His voice is perfectly pure and silvery,” wrote Ernst Ludwig Gerber.¹⁵ The *London Chronicle* commended the *musico* for being “totally free” of “the nasal intonation so frequent in the Italian school, and which is so unpleasing in their best singers.”¹⁶ The author of *Lodi caratteristiche* offers a more detailed description of Marchesi’s low timbre:

When he sings in some chords, his voice is a little veiled (husky), so that the voice is not perfectly clear, but the listeners aren’t bothered by it, because, on the contrary, maybe sometimes it produces the same effect as a muted violin.¹⁷

William Beckford was astonished at the quality of Marchesi’s sound when he heard the *musico* perform “some of the poorest music imaginable, with the clearest and most triumphant voice, perhaps, in the universe.”¹⁸ “Brilliance” and “triumph” were frequently evoked to describe the *musico*’s voice. The Earl of Mount Edgcumbe found Marchesi, when compared to his peers Gasparo Pacchierotti and Giovanni Rubinelli, “the most brilliant,” with a “florid and spirited” style.¹⁹ The flattering description of Marchesi’s voice found in *Lodi caratteristiche* argues that

¹⁴ Ibid., vi: “e spesso con una velocità non più udita che non lascia distinguere il numero delle voci che tocca...” English translation by Rosaria Mangiavillano.

¹⁵ Pleasants, *The Great Singers*, 88.

¹⁶ Petty, *Italian Opera In London, 1760-1800*, 257.

¹⁷ [Anon.], *Lodi caratteristiche*, iv-v: “Quando canta in alcune corde la sua voce è un poco velata e non può dirsi chiara, ma bensì d’un velamento tale che non dispiace agli ascoltatori, producendo forse alcune volte nel suo canto effetto che produce il sordino nel violino.” English translation by Rosaria Mangiavillano.

¹⁸ William Beckford of Fonthill, *Dreams, Waking Thoughts and Incidents* (Cranbury, NJ: University Press, 1971), 202.

¹⁹ Edgcumbe, *Musical Reminiscences*, 71-2. This is not to say the Earl preferred Marchesi over the others. His issues with Marchesi will be discussed later.

while the *musico* was an accomplished performer of both cantabile and bravura styles, it is in the bravura where Marchesi's "brilliant" voice was most "sublime."²⁰

In spite of the praises heaped on the range and quality of Marchesi's voice, critics disagreed about the singer's expressive abilities. At least in recitative, Marchesi's expression and emotion were commended. Burney found the *musico's* recitatives "grand and full of dignity."²¹ The Earl of Edgcumbe applauded his "recitative and scenes of energy and passion," calling them "incomparable."²² A London newspaper reported that Marchesi's "manner of recitative gives it all the truth and beauty of the finest declamation."²³ Gerber agreed that the singer's declamation was "the loveliest."²⁴ Marchesi's anonymous advocate in Siena found that "he pronounces the recitative very well and with an exceptional expression, combining even the complicated singing with the most perfect syllabification."²⁵ Marchesi is "wonderfully great," raved the *Morning Herald*, who found that "his recitative was given with all the energy and passion of a perfect tragedian."²⁶

While Marchesi excelled at "energy and passion," his musical expression in more emotionally poignant numbers may not have been so effective. In his comparison of Marchesi, Rubinelli, and Pacchierotti, the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe did find Marchesi "brilliant," but he found "Pacchierotti the most touching singer."²⁷ The Earl attended *Giulio Sabino* during Marchesi's London debut, but he had previously enjoyed private recitals in Italy where

²⁰ [Anon.], *Lodi caratteristiche*, v.

²¹ Burney, *A General History*, 902.

²² Edgcumbe, *Musical Reminiscences*, 61.

²³ Petty, *Italian Opera in London, 1760-1800*, 257.

²⁴ Pleasants, *The Great Singers*, 88.

²⁵ [Anon.], *Lodi caratteristiche*, iv: "Dice bene i recitativi, e con rara espressione, combinando anche col cantar complicato la sillabazione la più perfetta." English translation by Rosaria Mangiavillano.

²⁶ Petty, *Italian Opera in London, 1760-1800*, 266.

²⁷ Edgcumbe, *Musical Reminiscences*, 72.

Pacchierotti, creator of the role, performed the same arias. “I missed [Pacchierotti’s] tender expression,” he wrote, bothered by Marchesi’s “over-flowery” rendition.²⁸ A review in the *World* concurs:

But for the portamento...to heart-felt effects— all the charm of expression on his part, and impression on the hearer, it was on Saturday in vain to search... We shall be glad to hear of any body that shed a tear or raised a sigh.²⁹

By far the most famous elements of Marchesi’s performances were his abundant and varied ornaments. The *musico* was able to offer a seemingly endless variety of stunning embellishments. Reported the *Public Advertiser*:

What made [*Giulio Sabino*] appear most brilliant Saturday night was the appearance in it of Signor Marchesi. Though it must be always understood that the modulations, flights, and variations which he utters are his own, and not the master’s. The connoisseurs were convinced that his style of singing is peculiar to him and superior to what has ever been heard. How much more will they be surprised when on the following nights they will hear him vary his music (whereof he gave a specimen last Saturday in the repetition of the aria) which he has been known to do on many running nights with the greatest ease. That circumstance proves him to be the greatest professor and far above all his contemporaries.³⁰

The anonymous author of *Lodi caratteristiche* agrees. “He adorns his aria in a variety of ways,” he writes, amazed that Marchesi’s “flamboyant” ornamentation could be achieved “with a wonderful easiness.”³¹ That same author concludes that the *musico* must be “truly a genius of performance...because his talent...makes him able to create immediately; his imagination coming from his exquisite taste.”³²

²⁸ Ibid., 62.

²⁹ Price, Milhous, and Hume, *The King’s Theatre, Haymarket*, 401-2.

³⁰ Petty, *Italian Opera in London, 1760-1800*, 258.

³¹ [Anon.], *Lodi caratteristiche*, vii: “Marchesi veramente genio di musica esecuzione canta con quanti modi e vuole, perchè il suo igeigno combinatore crea subtro, la sua immaginazione diretta dal suo gusto squisito...” English translation by Rosaria Mangiavillano.

³² Ibid.

Michael Kelly's tale about the disagreement between Marchesi and Nancy Storace over a "bomba" emphasizes one type embellishment Marchesi favored.³³ Patricia Louise Lewy Gidwitz asserts that a bomba "rises through a double octave of articulated semitones and culminates in a forceful held note. Such an ornament could only have been inserted at a fermata."³⁴ Kelly was not the only one to hear Marchesi's bomba. "The trick called the semitonal run," Boaden writes, [Marchesi] really executed with distinction."³⁵ *Lodi caratteristiche* provides another description of such a run:

Sometimes he uses the scale touching all the notes with distinction in a very precise tempo so that he is able to produce wonders and particularly in the performance of the division he does between tones and semitones, touching sometimes a high note and sometimes a low.³⁶

Marchesi was a master of flashy running passages. Burney speculated that the *musico* "must have studied with intense application to enable himself to execute the divisions and running shakes from the bottom of his compass to the top, even in a rapid series of half notes."³⁷ This control extended to trills and vibrato, even on the most rapid passages:

³³ Few copies of the cavatina "Sembianze amabile del mio bel sole" are available. I am extremely grateful for the assistance of Otto Biba of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, as he was able to both confirm the cavatina's existence in cataloguing at the A-Wgm, as well as supply me with a copy of the aria. None of Marchesi's embellishments are notated in this version, and the specifics of his bomba are left to the imagination.

³⁴ Patricia Louise Lewy Gidwitz, "Vocal Profiles of Four Mozart Sopranos" (PhD diss., University of California Berkley, 1991), 166.

³⁵ Boaden, *Memoirs*, 448.

³⁶ [Anon.], *Lodi caratteristiche*, v-vi: "...ora vi va con la scala col toccare tutte le note con una distinzione a tempo precisissimo che rende maraviglia ed in particolar modo nell'esecuzione della divisione che fa dei tuoni ai semituoni toccando or nell'acuto, or nel grave." English translation by Rosaria Mangiavillano.

³⁷ Burney, *A General History*, 902.

Among the most peculiar things he performs, one observes that in his passages in sixteenths (semiquavers) of a battuta, he vibrates the first of four of each, fading gradually the other three.³⁸

While the *Enciclopedia dello spettacolo* calls Marchesi's trills "technically formidable," Barbier reports that the singer, "taking only one breath, could execute a perfectly loud and clear chromatic trill, over six or seven successive notes."³⁹

Whether Marchesi's taste was exquisite or excessive was subject to debate. Most criticism of Marchesi's voice centers on his elaborate embellishments. The boundary between virtuosity and vulgarity was a fine one, and the same lavish and varied ornamentation that amazed audiences occasionally resulted in disapproval instead. The aforementioned criticisms of Marchesi's lack of heartfelt expression may have been the result of his tendency to vigorously embellish melodies performed more simply by other singers. Boaden defends Marchesi's bombastic approach, as the *musico* "labors to astonish, rather than delight."⁴⁰ Less generously, the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe found Marchesi's "over-flowery style" offensive and "lamented" the destruction of simple and sweet music, warning that such a "flowery style was absolute simplicity to what we have heard in latter days."⁴¹ In an otherwise glowing review of *Giulio Sabino*, the *London Chronicle* found that if Marchesi "had a fault, it is that he embellishes with too many grace passages which do not seem to require ornament."⁴² A review in the *Morning Post* appeared the same month, and congratulated British audiences for their ability to "[improve] the talents of foreign performers:"

³⁸ [Anon.], *Lodi caratteristiche*, vi: "Tra le cose più singolari che ei eseguisce nei suoi passaggi si offerva che in sedici semicrome d'una battuta la prima delle quattro d'ogni tempo la vibra, sfumando le altre tre." English translation by Rosaria Mangiavillano.

³⁹ Rudolfo Celletti, *Enciclopedia dello spettacolo* (Florence: G.C. Sansoni, 1960), 7:102. Barbier, *The World of the Castrati*, 97.

⁴⁰ Boaden, *Memoirs*, 448.

⁴¹ Edgcumbe, *Musical Reminiscences*, 62.

⁴² Petty, *Italian Opera in London, 1760-1800*, 257.

Marchesi is another proof of the justice of this remark, for his embellishments were at first so extravagantly numerous as entirely to smother the original composition; but the little success of so decorating a style induced him to lop off some of his redundancies on Saturday and therefore his abilities were more advantageously exerted. Marchesi, recommending his talents by the charm of simplicity, won more on the heart and had his first and last song encored.⁴³

The occasional critical descriptions of Marchesi's embellishments, however, are vastly outnumbered by praises of the same, and it was his unparalleled reputation for variation and coloratura that shaped his vocal legacy.

Unfortunately it was unusual for composers to notate the complex ornamentation sung by a *primo uomo* like Marchesi, as it was the singer himself who created and controlled the individual performance of each aria. Instead the performance scores and the individual manuscript copies of Marchesi's arias include only the original unadorned music. As was a common practice at the time, particularly in London, publishers frequently sold editions of the *musicos*'s most popular numbers as souvenirs, and these publications also included only the composer's original melody. By compiling a list of as many arias as possible, both published and in manuscript, that were specifically attributed to Marchesi, I was able to determine which arias could be considered his "hits." Repeated publication, sometimes throughout the length of Marchesi's career, as well as publication both in England and Italy, would indicate that an aria was one of the singer's "hits," and would have been eagerly anticipated by audiences.⁴⁴

An examination of the vocal range in all eight arias reveals that estimations of Marchesi's range at three octaves may not have been unreasonable. Three of the eight span over two octaves, and several more come close. The individual range of each aria is not unusually large, but when the various starting and ending pitches of each range are combined the total range

⁴³ Ibid., 259.

⁴⁴ See Table 2.7.

covered by the arias is two and a half octaves from G3 to C6. When the two sets of variations are considered the range increases by a whole step to encompass between F3 and C6

Table 2.1
Selected Arias Composed for Marchesi

Date	Composer	Title	Pitch Range ⁴⁵	Total Range
1783	Felice Alessandri	“Sperai vicino il lido”	A3–B-flat 5	m16
		“Nel partir da te ben mio”	A3–B-flat 5	m16
1784	Luigi Cherubini	“Quanto è fiero il mio tormento”	A3–B-flat 5	m16
		“Quanto è fiero il mio tormento” variations	F3–C6	Octave+P12
1784	Domenico Cimarosa	“Se cerca, se dice”	B3–A5	M14
		“Superbo di me stesso”	B-flat 3–C6	Octave+M9
1785	Antonio Salieri	“Pensieri funesti”	B-flat 3–G5	M13
1792	Niccolò Zingarelli	“Cara, negl’occhi tuoi”	G3–F5	m14
		“Cara, negl’occhi tuoi” variations	F3–B-flat 5	Octave+P11
1805	Giuseppe Sarti	“Lungi dal caro bene”	A3–E5	P12

“Quanto è fiero il mio tormento”

Luigi Cherubini’s *Alessandro nell’Indie* premiered in Mantova during the spring of 1784 with Marchesi creating the role of Poro. None of Marchesi’s arias were published at that time, and there is little information about the success or reception of “Quanto è fiero il mio tormento.” Various manuscript copies of the aria survive in Italy and Austria. The rondò is, however, extremely significant to any analysis of Marchesi’s voice as it is one of very few surviving examples of the specific ornaments sung by the *musico*. The Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna houses a manuscript version of the rondò, with as many as fifteen carefully notated variations in some parts.⁴⁶ In his *Aufführungspraxis der Musik*, Robert Haas includes a partial edition of the Viennese manuscript. The manuscript in Vienna is in full score for voice with

⁴⁵ In the quotations cited above, I quoted the ranges as they are given in the sources, without attempting to standardize nomenclature. In my chart and analysis, however, I have used the following system: middle c is noted C4, the octave below it C3, and the octave above C5 and so on.

⁴⁶ A-Wn, Mus.Hs 3920. An abbreviated version was published in Robert Haas, *Aufführungspraxis der Musik* (Potsdam: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion, 1931), 225-30.

variations, two flutes, two horns, two violins, viola, and continuo, while Haas presents only an orchestral reduction.

A two-tempo rondò, “Quanto è fiero” opens with a slow section, marked *largo sostenuto*, and concludes with an *allegro* section. By the late eighteenth century, according to John A. Rice, such rondòs had become the *primo uomo*’s “primary vehicle for the display of virtuosity [and] improvisatory brilliance.”⁴⁷ The two-tempo rondò, as opposed to previous rondos defined by their ABACA form, consisted of two large sections of contrasting tempos, slow then fast. The text was typically three quatrains, though Rice indicates that there was some flexibility in the syllabic arrangement of each verse.⁴⁸ “Quanto è fiero” consists of three quatrains, the first two set in the *largo* tempo, and the third in the contrasting *allegro*.

The rondò’s notated variations are stacked in full score, allowing for an easy comparison between the various vocal lines. Marchesi’s variations on the opening three bars of the vocal part demonstrate his improvisational prowess (see Example 2.1). The original melody, consisting of quarter-notes and dotted figures, is relatively simple both rhythmically and harmonically. In variation one, Marchesi adds a 32nd-note turn and a grace-note figure. In variation two, the opening repeated quarter notes are subdivided into eighths, and a dotted figure is reduced to 16th-notes. Additionally, Marchesi’s trademark subdivided chromatic alterations begin to appear in the form of C-sharps and B-naturals. In this variation, only pitches in major seconds are changed and only when the original rhythm has been subdivided, thereby transforming slower eighth-note motion between C and D and between B-flat and C into more rapid chromatic passages. Marchesi embellishes the third variation further, subdividing the

⁴⁷ John A. Rice, *Antonio Salieri and Viennese Opera* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 354.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 357, and John A. Rice, “Sense, Sensibility, and Opera Seria: An Epistolary Debate,” *Studi musicali* 15 (1986):121-3.

opening rhythm as it leaps an octave. Additional dotted figures and altered articulations create more contrast. The fourth variation's opening bar returns to the melody's original two quarter-note rhythm, though a descending octave leap is added. In his final variation on the opening bars Marchesi returns to the triadic figure from variation three, though now sung in descending order.

5
4
3
2
1
La Parte Cantante
colle Variazioni
Orch.

Quan - to fie - roil mio tor - men - to nel ve

Example 2.1 Cherubini, “Quanto è fiero,”⁴⁹
Opening Bars with Variations

When the same material returns later, Marchesi offers yet another set of elaborate variations (see Example 2.2). In variation three of A', the original dotted eighth-note figures have been replaced with dotted 16th-note figures. Rather than the original sustained A4 in the third bar, the melody leaps from A4 to C5 before a rapid 32nd-note run descends to F4.

⁴⁹ *Aufführungspraxis der Musik* (Potsdam: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion, 1931), 225.

Marchesi's sixth variation features ascending leaps of a fifth and sixth, embellished with trills, in place of the original half step motion from A4 to B-flat 4. Variation six features a staccato sextuplet scale, and trilled leaping dotted eighth-note figures. A rapid 32nd-note lower neighbor sequence is introduced in variation seven. The original dotted eighth-note figure has been replaced with chromatic sextuplets in the eighth variation.

Example 2.2 Cherubini, “Quanto è fiero,”⁵⁰
A' with Variations

⁵⁰ *Aufführungspraxis der Musik* (Potsdam: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion, 1931), 225.

Multiple cadenzas in “Quanto è fiero” display a breathtaking variety of Marchesi’s embellishments. Example 2.3 shows eight cadenzas in addition to the original, which is composed of a sequenced 32nd-note run and four trilled quarter notes. In variation one, Marchesi sings a series of thirteen disjunct trilled half-notes, sometimes leaping as far as an octave between each note. The second variation is highly chromatic and concludes with a full octave chromatic scale brought to a dramatic close with sustained trills alternating between B4 and C5. Marchesi’s third cadenza includes sustained trilled half-notes similar to those in the first variation, which leap between octaves until forming another chromatic scale. This variation moves suddenly from half-notes to 32nd-note arpeggios. Variation five consists of rapid 32nd-note neighbor figures that change from duple to triple meter. A descending 32nd-note pattern in the sixth variation begins on F5 moves in a sequence to G5 then A5. Variation seven demonstrates a complete change of articulation, with a series of slurred 32nd-note turns that sequence by seconds from C5 to F5. Marchesi’s final cadenza begins with rapid arpeggios and concludes with a prolonged sequence of trilled half-notes.

The original vocal line of “Quanto è fiero” has quite a wide range, reaching from A3 to B-flat 5. Marchesi stretches this range in his variations, spanning two octaves plus a perfect fifth between F3 and C6. Much of this range is displayed in a single cadenza at measure twenty.

La Parte cantante colle Variazioni

Orch.

Example 2.3 Cherubini, “Quanto è fiero,”⁵¹
Cadenza With Variations

Table 2.2
Extant Copies of “Quanto è fiero il mio tormento”
 * indicates version examined

Date	Source	Location and Details
1784	ICCU	VR0131, manuscript with no variations
1784	ICCU	MI0334, manuscript with no variations
1784	ICCU	PG0080, manuscript with no variations
1784	ICCU	MN0052, manuscript with no variations
1784	RISM A/II, 850.001.324	Manuscript with no variations
1784	RISM A/II, 851.000.383	Manuscript with no variations
1784*	A-Wn, Mus.Hs, 3920	Manuscript with variations

⁵¹ *Aufführungspraxis der Musik* (Potsdam: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion, 1931), 229.

“Cara, negl’occhi tuoi”

During Carnival 1792, Niccolò Zingarelli’s *Pirro, re d’Epiro* premiered in Milan, with Marchesi creating the role of Pirro. Czech composer Vacláv Pichl recorded four variations on Zingarelli’s original melody “Cara, negl’occhi tuoi” as sung by Marchesi in performance, and his edition of the aria was published in Milan that same year (RISM A/I, Z 302). Various manuscript versions of Pichl’s notation of Marchesi’s ornaments also survive.

“Cara, negl’occhi tuoi” demonstrates the extent of Marchesi’s compositional creativity, as the contrasts between variations in the aria are more extreme than those in “Quanto è fiero.” Instead of merely adding subdivisions or grace notes, in many instances Marchesi completely alters the original rhythmic material (see example 2.4). In the third complete measure of the vocal part, for example, each variation has a distinctly different rhythm, and all are in contrast to Zingarelli’s original rhythm of a dotted quarter note followed by two descending 16th-notes. In variation one a single eighth-note is followed by six sets of slurred 64th-notes. The rapid slurred passage alternates between the same two pitches, and may have sounded like a simple trill, though the precise notation by Pichl suggests otherwise. The second variation includes a tie over the second eighth-note beat, as well as a fourth beat dotted eighth figure. Additionally, the range of these measures, from F4 to G5, is much greater than the line’s initial range of a perfect fourth between F4 and B-flat 4. The only continuity between the openings of variation two and the original vocal line comes from their identical starting and ending pitches. Returning to relative simplicity in variation three, Marchesi sings an eighth–quarter–eighth-note figure. Though not as intricate as the first two, this variation is rhythmically independent from the original material. In his final variation Marchesi syncopates the eighth-note rhythm by beginning the simple triadic passage on a single sixteenth note.

Example 2.4 Zingarelli, “Cara, negl’occhi tuoi,”⁵²
Vocal Part Bars 1-3

In his variations on “Cara, negl’occhi tuoi” Marchesi relied on his extensive range and flexibility to embellish Zingarelli’s original material (see Example 2.5). In bar seven of the aria’s Maestoso section, the original melody begins on F4, ascends to A4, and descends back down to C4 before concluding on E4. In his four variations Marchesi never strays far from these pitches, but instead moves in and out of the original register. Variation one begins an octave higher on

⁵² “Aria, e Rondo dell’Opera di Pirro, Musica del Sig. Nicola Zingarelli...colle Variazione dal Sig. Venceslao Pichl” (Milan: Giovanni Battista Giussani, 1792). RISM A/I, Z 302. I am grateful to the Koninklijk Conservatorium, B-Bc, for providing me with a copy. Excerpts of Pichl’s transcription are also included in Will Crutchfield, “Voices,” in *Performance Practice: Music After 1600*, ed. Howard Mayer Brown and Stanley Sadie (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1989), 303-4.

F5 and descends to the original pitches on beats two through four. Variation two maintains the initial two pitches, but moves upward with sequences of grace-note scales and finishes on C5. In his third variation, Marchesi takes both strong beats up an octave, and in his fourth does the exact opposite, raising beats two and four an octave instead.

The image shows a musical score for a vocal piece. It consists of six staves. The top four staves are numbered 4, 3, 2, and 1 from top to bottom, representing different vocal variations. The fifth staff is labeled 'Pirro' and contains the lyrics: 'vra per tuo di - spet - to Io'. The bottom staff is labeled 'Cembalo' and represents the keyboard accompaniment. The music is in common time (C) and the key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The score is divided into two measures by a vertical bar line. The vocal parts show various melodic lines, including grace notes and scales, as described in the text. The keyboard part provides harmonic support with chords and single notes.

**Example 2.5 Zingarelli, “Cara, negl’occhi tuoi,”⁵³
Maestoso Bars 7-8**

“Cara, negl’occhi tuoi” has a wide range. The original Zingarelli vocal line does not have an unusual range and spans only a minor fourteenth from G3 to F5. Marchesi’s variations, however, reaches nearly two and half octaves, reaching from F3 to b-flat 5. It was certainly arias like this one that moved critics to marvel at Marchesi’s vast compass.

⁵³ “Aria, e Rondo dell’Opera di Pirro, Musica del Sig. Nicola Zingarelli...colle Variazione dal Sig. Venceslao Pichl” (Milan: Giovanni Battista Giusaani, 1792). RISM A/I Z 302.

Table 2.3
Extant Versions of “Cara, negl’occhi tuoi”

Date	Source	Location
1792	ICCU	MI0334, manuscript without variations
1792	ICCU	MI0334, manuscript with variations
1792*	RISM A/I Z 302	B-Bc, published with variations
1792	RISM A/II 451.511.984	D-Wa, Manuscript with variations
1792	ICCU	NA0059, manuscript with variations
1792	ICCU	NA0059, manuscript with variations”

“Lungi dal caro bene”

Composed by Giuseppe Sarti, “Lungi dal caro bene” most likely originally appeared in the score of his opera *Armida e Rinaldo*. Marchesi created the role of Rinaldo in St. Petersburg where the production was part of the inaugural celebrations at the Hermitage in January 1786.⁵⁴ Two years later “Lungi dal caro bene” resurfaced in another production, this time Sarti’s *Giulio Sabino*, for Marchesi’s 1788 London debut.

Rather than sing “Pensieri funesti” during the first scene as he had in Vienna, Marchesi substituted instead the cavatina “Lungi dal caro bene.” The key of the preceding recitative was changed to lead logically into the new aria, written in G major, but the aria itself is not included in the London score. It was, however, published by Longman and Broderip, who “accidentally labeled the voice part ‘Rinaldo,’ thereby betraying the aria’s origin.”⁵⁵ On April 7, 1788, the *Morning Post* praised Marchesi’s performance of the cavatina, as “it was said to be his own composition, and it is well adapted to display his voice.”⁵⁶ In Longman and Broderip’s published version, Sarti is credited with the aria’s composition, and Marchesi only with the composition of the accompanying harp part. According to Price, Milhous, and Hume,

⁵⁴ Sven Hansell, “Luigi Marchesi,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., edited by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001), 15:824.

⁵⁵ Price, Milhous, and Hume, *The King’s Theatre, Haymarket*, 403.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

performers frequently “tried to claim copyright of substitute arias by composing or having someone else compose such accompaniments,” and Marchesi was most likely following this practice with the cavatina in hopes of maintaining copyright control over his hit.⁵⁷

Possibly Marchesi’s most popular aria, “Lungi dal caro bene” was published by at least eight companies in London between 1788 and 1810. Many of these published versions include Marchesi’s own harp accompaniment beneath the solo vocal part. In addition to the original Italian text below the melody, several of the publications include an English translation, though it is far from the literal Italian.⁵⁸ Despite the numerous available versions of the aria, it is difficult to imagine exactly how Marchesi sang “Lungi dal caro bene,” as the published music does not include his ornaments. Domenico Corri’s *The Singer’s Preceptor* includes an embellished version of the aria, but there is no indication that the ornaments are those sung by Marchesi.⁵⁹ In any case, the relatively minimally embellished vocal line in the Corri pales in comparison to other more elaborately ornamented arias sung by the *musico*.

The 1805 publication by Theobald Monzani, titled “Lungi dal caro bene: Aria del Sigr. Giuseppe Sarti col’accompagnamento d’Arpa del Sigr. Luigi Marchesi” differs only slightly from Corri’s edition, though most of Corri’s ornaments are omitted in the Monzani. At only 47 bars, “Lungi dal caro bene” is a brief composition in ternary form, which corresponds with John Rice’s description of a cavatina as “a relatively short aria, usually in a slow or moderate tempo.”⁶⁰ The twelve-bar A section in G major follows a four-bar harp introduction. The B section moves to the dominant key before returning to G major ten bars later as the original

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Both the Corri and Monzani versions translate “lungi dal caro bene” to “love thou hast enchain’d my heart,” rather than “far from my dear beloved.”

⁵⁹ Domenico Corri, *The Singer’s Preceptor*, vol. 2, (London, ca. 1780-1810), facsimile reproduction, vol. 3 of 4 vols. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995), 2:3.

⁶⁰ Rice, *Antonio Salieri*, 97.

melodic material and text reappear. Except for an additional four bars of closing material, the A' section is an exact repetition of A.

The cavatina's relatively narrow range does little to exploit Marchesi's reported multiple octave range as it spans only a twelfth between A3 and E5. Though it moves predominately in stepwise motion, there are a few leaps between the tonic and dominant pitches in both the A and B sections. The largest leap occurs at bar 23 where the vocal line descends from G4 to A3 quite unexpectedly.

Table 2.4
Editions of “Lungi dal caro bene”

Date	Publisher	Source
[1788]	Longman and Broderip, London	RISM A/I, S 990
[1798-1801]	Longman, Clementi, and Co.	RISM A/I, S 990
[1800]	Rt. Birchall	RISM A/I, S 992
[1805]*	Theobald Monzani	A-Wn, GB-Ob
[1805]	Bland and Wellers Music Warehouse	US-CAt
[1807]	Goulding, Phipps and D'Almaine	RISM A/I, S 993 ⁶¹
[1808]	J. Dale	US-CAt
1810	Goulding, D'Almaine, Potter, and Co.	GB-Cu

“Se cerca, se dice”

Creating Megacle in the 1784 production of Domenico Cimarosa's *Olimpiade* was not a unique experience for Marchesi, as he had previously created the role in both Josef Mysliveček's and Francesco Bianchi's settings of the opera. The July 1784 premiere at Vicenza was followed immediately by an August production in Lucca, and over the next decade Marchesi would sing Cimarosa's *Olimpiade* nine times, making it one of his most frequently repeated roles.

⁶¹ According to US-CAt, their collection's version includes “additional annotations to the vocal link in ink and pencil” as well as manuscript bars attached to the bottom of pages 6 and 7.

After the premiere of *Olimpiade* in Vicenza, the Venetian company Antonio Zatta e Figli published “Se cerca, se dice,” along with “Misero me,” the recitative that precedes the aria. Both are published in full score with the vocal line accompanied by two violins, viola, and continuo. After Marchesi sang Cimarosa’s *Olimpiade* in London four years later, Longman and Broderip also published the aria. The Italian publication lists Cimarosa as the number’s sole composer, while the British version names both Cimarosa and Sacchini.⁶² In 1808 another edition was published in London by G. Walker. “Se cerca, se dice” was well-received in London, in fact the *World* reported that the aria was “encored with a violence of applause seldom heard, and the second time was much varied and more brilliant than then first.”⁶³

A typical two-tempo rondò, “Se cerca, se dice,” opens with a triadic motive embellished by a delicate four note turn, a gesture that is repeated several times throughout the rondò. The opening slow section is in C major before “an adventurous excursion into A-flat major” provides contrasting material.⁶⁴ The slow section closes with a brief quotation of the initial C major melody. As is typical in a two-tempo rondò, Cimarosa’s slow section is followed by brief transitional section closing in the dominant key.⁶⁵ In the case of “Se cerca, se dice,” this transition to G major occurs in the initial four bars of the rondò’s allegro section. After a return to the tonic halfway through the allegro, the opening theme is quoted briefly only once before the rondò’s conclusion. The Longman and Broderip edition includes the indication “ad libitum” at

⁶² Presumably referring to Antonio Sacchini who died in 1786, but had composed his own setting of the opera in 1763. A review in the *World* sheds some light on the authorship of the rondò, reporting that “the third part, the short and spirited allegro in the air, is added to Cimarosa’s air by Marchesi from the music of Sacchini.”

Petty, *Italian Opera in London 1760-1800*, 260.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Price, Milhous, and Hume, *Italian Opera in London, Haymarket*, 405.

⁶⁵ Rice, “Sense, Sensibility, and Opera Seria,” 121.

the return of the slow theme, but there is no such marking in the Italian edition, though a tempo contrast is established by the *piu allegro* section that follows.⁶⁶

“Se cerca, se dice” spans almost two octaves between B3 and A5. Unlike the smooth step-wise melodic motion in Sarti’s “Lungi da caro bene,” Cimarosa’s melody is disjunct, with frequent ascending and descending leaps. 16th-note scales colored with chromatic alterations, occurring twice on the word “piagendo,” allude to Marchesi’s tendency to chromatically embellish.

Table 2.5
Editions of “Se cerca, se dice”

Date	Publisher	Source	Details
[1784]*	Antonia Zatta e Figli	RISM A/I, C 2390	Recit+aria in full score
[1788]	Longman and Broderip	RISM A/I, C 2391	“Sacchini and Cimarosa”
[1808]	G. Walker	US-CAt	“Sacchini and Cimarosa”

“Superbo di me stesso”

Also from Cimarosa’s *Olimpiade*, “Superbo di me stesso” was published by Antonia Zatta e Figli in 1784 in full score for solo voice, oboes, violins, viola, and continuo. Filled with elaborate melismatic passages and sudden leaps, the aria is much more virtuosic than Cimarosa’s “Se cerca, se dice.” David R. B. Kimbell writes that in this aria Cimarosa:

wishes to express the duality of Megacle’s emotion—the pride in what he can himself achieve, and the tender affection with which he places this in the service of Licida—there seems none of the dimensions of music that is not brought into play: contrast of melodic line and rhythmic flow, of texture, harmony, and even dynamics.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Price, Milhous, and Hume, *Italian Opera in London, Haymarket*, 405.

⁶⁷ David R.B. Kimbell, *Italian Opera* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 276.

The aria is filled with running sixteenth note scales and arpeggios, as well as four-note turns similar to those in “Se cerca, se dice.” The most impressive phrase, “come mi stà nel cor,” spans two octaves, the aria’s entire range. Marchesi lingers on the syllable “stà” for twelve bars while singing sequenced passages of sixteenth note scales and arpeggios. After reaching the number’s highest pitch, C6, the melody leaps downward more than an octave to G4. When the same text returns towards the aria’s close, “stà” is again prolonged for twelve bars. After four bars of arpeggiated 16th-note figures, Cimarosa has added a dazzling sequence of alternating leaps between sustained half-notes, beginning with an ascending leap from D4 to A-flat 5.

Table 2.6
Extant Versions of “Superbo di me stesso”

Date	Source
1784	RISM A/II, 851.000.410
1784*	RISM A/I, 2395
1784	RISM A/II, 452.008.086
[1784]	RISM A/II, 400.065.944

Table 2.7
Arias Known to Have Been Sung By Marchesiⁱ

DATE	TITLE	COMPOSER	OPERA	SOURCE
[1779] ⁱⁱ	Rondo del Gius... [Mia speranza io pur vorrei]	Sarti	Achille in Sciro	RISM A/II, 190.019.305
[1779]	Mia speranza io pur vorrei: rondo...	Giuseppe Sarti	Achille in Scirro	RISM A/I, S928
[1779/81]	Tergi o caro il dolce pianto/ Rondo	Bianchi		A-Wn, MusHs 10275
[1780]	Ah perche se mia tu sei, Rondo	Francesco Bianchi		RISM A/II, 450.014.607 and 452.003.837
1781	Teco resti, anima mia, Rondo	Giuseppe Sarti	Demofonte	RISM A/II, 190.019.325
1782	Recaglia quell'acciaro	Felice Alessandri	Ezio	RISM A/II, 840.000.127 and 840.000.128
1782	Recagli quell'acciaro	[Alessandri]	[Ezio]	RISM A/II, 850.008.114
1783	Sperai vicino il lido	Felice Alessandri	Demofonte	RISM A/II, 102.007
1783	Nel partir da te ben mio: rec[itati]vo e rondo	Felice Alessandri	Demofonte	RISM A/II, 103.411
1783	Scena e Rondo/ Deh Serena il mestro ciglio	Luigi Cherubini	[Quinto Fabio]	ICCU Ms.
1783	Crudel poiche degg'io	Luigi Cherubini	[Quinto Fabio]	ICCU Ms.
1783	Aria [Pensa a serbarmi o cara]	Felice Alessandri	[Ezio]	RISM A/II, 190.009.446
1783	Ah per che fra tante pene, scena e duetto	Giov Batta Borghi	[Piramo e Tisbe]	RSIM A/II, 190.009.890
1784	Quanto e fiero il mio tormento Recc:o e Rond	Luigi Cherubini	Nell'Alessandro Nelle Indie	ICCU Ms.

DATE	TITLE	COMPOSER	OPERA	SOURCE
1784	Recitative e Rondo...Basta ti credo” and “Quanto e fiero il mio tomento	Luigi Cherubini	Alessandro nell’Indie	RISM A/II, 851.000.383
1784	Vedrai con tuo/Aria	Cherubini	Alessandro nell’Indie	RISM A/II, 705.000.989
1784	Ecco reciso al fine/ Quanto è fiero il mio tormento	Luigi Cherubini	Alessandro nell’Indie	RISM A/II, 850.001.324
1784	Rondo/ quanto e fiero il mio tormento “colle variazione”	Luigi Cherubini	[L’Alessandro nell’Indie]	A-Wn, Mus. Hs 3920 Mus
1784	“Quanto e fiero il mio tormento nel vederti lacrimar” and “ecco reciso al fine”	Luigi Cherubini	[Alessandro nell’Indie]	ICCU
1784	Superbo di me stesso	Cimarosa		RISM A/I, C 2395
1784	Nel Lasciarti o prence amato	Domenico Cimarosa	[Olimpiade]	RISM A/II 102.272
1784	Seria Superbo di me stesso ...	Domenico Cimarosa	Nell’Olimpiade	RISM A/II, 851.000.410
1784	Superbo di me stesso	Domenico Cimarosa	Olimpiade	RISM A/II, 452.008.086
[1784]	Arie seria, se cerca, se dice	Cimarosa	Olimpiade	RISM A/I, C 2390
1785	Recvo, e rondo “Cari oggetti del mio core”	Angelo Tarchi	Arminio	RISM A/II, 400.013.192
1786	Rondo/ Quanto Barbaro il Dolore	Sarti		ICCU Ms.
1787	Cavatina/ De puri affetti miei	Tarchi		ICCU Ms.
1787	Aria /Caro ben nel Fiero Istante	Tarchi	[Il Conte di Saldagna]	ICCU Ms.
1787	Cavatina... “Del Ciel felice dono rieda la pace”	Tarchi		ICCU Ms.
1787	Cavatina, De puri affetti miei	Angelo Tarchi	Il Conte di Saldagna	RISM A/II, 400.013.196, and 701.002.738

DATE	TITLE	COMPOSER	OPERA	SOURCE
1788	Rondo che finisce in duetto [Questa non era o cara nel mio felice amor]	Luigi Cherubini	[Ifigenia in Aulide]	RISM A/II, 851.000.391
[1788]	Cari figli un' altro amplesso	Sarti	Giulio Sabino	RISM A/I, S 971
[1788]	Lungi dae [<i>sic</i>] caro bene	Giuseppe Sarti	Giulio Sabino	RISM A/I, S 990
17888	La tu vedrai chi sono	Giuseppe Sarti	Giulio Sabino	GB-Ob Published by Henry Holland
[1788]	Rondo "In quel barbaro momento"	Giuseppe Sarti	Giulio Sabino	RISM A/I, S 987
[1788]	In quel barbaro moment [<i>sic</i>]	Giuseppe Sarti	Giulio Sabino	RISM A/I, SS 987a
[1788]	Questa non era o' caro:	Sarti	Olimpiade	RISM A/I, S 1012
[1788]	Se cerca se dice	Domenico Cimarosa, Antonio Sacchini	Olimpiade	RISM A/I, C 2391
[1789]	A voi torno sponde amate	Luigi Cherubini	Iffegenia in Aulide	RISM A/I, CC 2028 I, 308
[1789]	Nel lasciarti amato bene	Tarchi	Iffigenia	RISM A/I, T 165
[1789]	Quel labbro vezzoso	Tarchi	Generosita d'Alessandro	RISM A/I, T 161
[1789]	Se possono tanto	Tarchi	Generosita d'Alessandro	RISM A/I, T 163
[1789]	"Se mai pici [<i>sic</i>] saro geloso"	Tarchi	Generosita d'Alessandro	RISM A/I, T162
[1789]	A quei cari amati accent	Tarchi	Il desertore	RISM A/I, T 158
[1790]	Rondo, sung by Sigr. Marchesi at the Ladies Concert [Compredo amico]	Carlo Pozzi		RISM A/I, P 5305
[1790]	Prudente mu chiedi	Federici	L'usurpator innocente	RISM A/I, F 169
[1790]	Sposa amata a questa addio: a favorite rondo	Vincenzo Federici	L'usurpator innocente	RISM A/I, F 172
[1790]	Misero, misero pargoletto	Federici	L'usurpator innocente	RISM A/I, F 168

DATE	TITLE	COMPOSER	OPERA	SOURCE
1791	Preghieria, Dell alma i voti ardenti	Tarchi	Apoteosi d'Ercole	RISM A/II, 450.011.344
1791	Cavatina/Spiegate le vele	Sig Gaetano Andreozzi	Angelica e Medoro	RISM A/II, 455.016.174
[1791]	Scena/ dell'Aria Marcia/ Con le Variazioni del/ Celebre Sigr Luigi Marchesi	Zingarelli	Pirro	ICCU Ms.
1791	Cavatina...Prudente mi credi...	Gaetano Pugnani	Demofoonte	RISM A/II, 118.400
1791	Non temer bell'idol mio	Angiolo Tarchi	Demofoonte	RISM A/II, 852.033.224
1792	Cara negli occhi tuoi... che la variazione del Sig.r Luigi Marchesi	Zingarelli	Pirro	ICCU Ms.
1792	Aria e rondo dell'opera di Pirro...	Nicolà Zingarelli	Pirro	RISM A/I, Z 302
1792	Aria, e Rondo dell'opera di Pirro...	Nicolà Zingarelli	Pirro re d'Epiro	RISM A/II, 451.511.984
1793	Cavatina, A'voi Torno, o Sponde amate	Angelo Tarchi	Ezio	RISM A/II, 450.011.345
1793	Cavatina, Prudente mi chiedi	Gaetano Pugnani	Demofoonte	RISM A/II, 450.010.706
1794	Rec:vo ed Aria/ Misero Pargoletto	Portogallo		ICCU Ms.
1794	Scena indi Rondo/ Nel Mirarla in tal periglio...	Marcello da Capua [Bernardini]	Achille in Sciro	ICCU Ms.
1794	...Cavatina con Cori/ Se un Core Annodi...	Marcello da'Capua [Bernardini]	Nell'Achille	ICCU Ms.
1794	Aria "Involarmi il mio Tesoro"	Marcello di Capua [Bernardini]	Nell'Achille	RISM A/II, 118.400
1794	Aria/ Involvarmi il mio tesoro"	Marcello da Capua [Bernardini]	Nell'Achille	RISM A/II, 850.040.846

DATE	TITLE	COMPOSER	OPERA	SOURCE
[1794]	Cavatine, se un Core annodi...	Marcello da Capua [Bernardini]	Nell'Achille	RISM A/II, 118.680
1794	Scena indi Rondo, Nel Mirarla in tal periglio	Marcello di Capua [Bernardini]	Nell'Achille	RISM A/II, 118.850
1795	Sol m'affana, o mio speranza e.t.c./ Rondeau/ Con scena Stromenta	Nicolà Zingarelli	Nel Conte di Saldagna	ICCU Ms.
1795	Scena indi rondo, Sol m'affana o mia Speranza	Nicolà Zingarelli	Nel Conte di Saldagna	RISM A/II, 118.850
1795	Sol m'affana o mia speranza: scena e rondo nel Conte di Saldagna	Nicolà Zingarelli	Conte di Saldagna	US-Eu
[1795]	Aria Saprai che sono audace...	Nicolo Zingarelli	Conte di Saldagna	RISM A/II, 850.002.809 and 706.000.326
1790s	cavatina Lungi dal caro bene	Sarti	[Giulio Sabino]	RISM A/I, S 992
1796	Scena e Cavatina/ Debbo penar cosi/	Zingarelli	[Ifigenia]	ICCU Ms.
1796	Scena, e Rondo/ Resserena il mesto ciglio [also "Che dici del caro amico]	Simone Maijr	[Lodoiska] "nella Lodoviska"	ICCU Ms.
1796	Scena e Rondo/ Rasserena il mesto ciglio/...	Simon Majer	[Lodoiska]	ICCU Ms.
1797	Rasserena il mesto ciglio, recitativo von Strumenti e Rondo	Simone Majer	La Lodoiska	RISM A/II, 400.014.546
1797	Pietosa a miei Lamenti, recitativo con stromenti e Polacca	Simone Majer	Lodoiska	RISM A/II, 400.014.54
1797	Contento il cor nel seno: polacca	Mayr		BUCEM p. 663
[1797]	Contento il cor nel seno: a polacca	Giovanni Simone Mayr	[Lodoiska]	RISM A/I, MM 1493 I, 80

DATE	TITLE	COMPOSER	OPERA	SOURCE
1798	L'Eroe. Cantata a due voci eseguita nel Nob. mo Teatro La Fenice...	Catterino Cavos		A-Wn, Mus Hs. 10108.Mus
1798	L'eroe, cantata a due voci	Catterino Cavos		ICCU, Published by Valvasense, Venezia
1798	Contento il Cor/ Scena Strum: e Pollacca	Simon Majer	Lodoiska	RISM A/II, 450.506.510 and 451.506.510
1799	Rondo [includes "Prencipe amato"]	Vincenzo Federici		RISM A/II, 850.008.118
[1798-1801]	Cavatina, Lungi dae caro bene,	Sarti	Giulio Sabino	US-CAt
[1800's]	Contento il cor nel seno: a polacca	Mayr	[Lodoiska]	RISM A/I, MM 1439 I, 79
1803	Si Sapro nel gran cimento et c/ Cembalo	[Simon Mayr]	Ginevra [di Scozia]	ICCU Ms.
1803	Abonnement musical/ Ah! che per me non v'e/ Cavatina seria per soprano	Simone Mayer	Ginerva di Scozia	RISM A/II, 701.002.394
1803	Dopo il fremente nembo	Weigl, [Joseph or Vienna] and [Mayr, Johann Simon]	Ginevra di Scozia	RISM A/II, 450.016.179
[1801]	Cari figli un'altro amplesso	Sarti	Giulio Sabino	RISM A/I, S 971
[1805]	Lungi dal caro bene: aria	Giuseppe Sarti	[Giulio Sabino]	GB-Ob
[1805]	Cavatina Lungi dae caro bene	Sarti	Giulio Sabino	US- CAt
[1807]	Cavatina, Lungi dal caro bene	Sarti	Giulio Sabino	RISM A/I, S 993

DATE	TITLE	COMPOSER	OPERA	SOURCE
[1808]	Cavatina, Lungi dal caro bene:	Sarti	Giulio Sabino	US-CAt, Published by J. Dale
[1808]	Se cerca se dice: sung by	Cimarosa And Sacchini	Olimpiade	US-CAt, Published by G. Walker
1808	Siz ariettes italiennes; avec accompagnement de forte-piano	Musique del signor Luigi Marchesi,	Paroles de Metastase	B-Bc, Published by Godfrey, Paris
1810	Cavatina, Lungi dal caro bene:	Sarti	Giulio Sabino	RISM A/I, S 993
1820	An Italian duet [Il piacere, O Nice amica] with an accompaniment for the piano forte or harp...	Luigi Marchesi		GB-Gu
1828	Le Ore ad Euterpe. Almanacco Musicale Pel 1828	[includes 3 canzonetta del Sig:Luigi Marchesi]		A-Wn, SA 77 F 21 G. Ricordi
[1784]	Aria Seria Superbo di me Stessa	Domenico Cimarosa	Olimpiade	RISM A/II, 400.065.944
No Date	Rendi o caro il prence amato: rondo con recitativo...	Giuseppe Sarti	L'Olimpiade	RISM A/I, S 1013
No Date	Aria/ Non vedi il mio periglio/	Sarti		RISM A/II, 851.001.287
No Date	Cavatina...Per voi fra l'armi intrepido...	Mayr	Ginerva di Scozia	RISM A/II, 706.000.253
No date	Scena, e Cavatina alla Polacca/ Piesto a miei lamentietz	Simone Mayer	Lodoiska	A-Wn, Mus.Hs. 10531 Mus
No Date	Scene e rondo/ Rasserene il mesto ciglio	Simone Mair	[Lodoiska]	ICCU Ms.
No date	Lungi del Caro Bene	Giuseppe Sarti		A-Wn, MS45370. Mus
No Date	Aria, Sperai vicino al Lido	[Federici]	Demofonte	RISM A/II, 452.017.341 and 131.230

DATE	TITLE	COMPOSER	OPERA	SOURCE
No Date	Aria Seria/ Sperai vicino il lido con Recitativo	Alessandri	Demonfoonte	RISM A/II, 800.238.453
No Date	[Ma che vi fece oh stelle] and [Sperai vicino al lido]	Sarti	[Demofoonte]	ICCU Ms.
No Date	Clavir auszug von dem Rondo/ In quel barbaro momento...	Von H. Sardi	Julio Sabino	A-Wn, Mus.Hs. 10736 Mus
No Date	Cantata in lode della caccia a voce sola di soprano con violini/ viole/ oboe/ flauti e corni oblig.ti.	Fraeco Bianchi cremonese		ICCU Ms.
No Date	Da un grato Giublio/ (di Marchesi)	Luigi Marchesi		ICCU Ms.
No Date	Sei ariette italiane coll'accompgamento di pianoforte o chitarra	Luigi Marchesi		RISM A/I, M 486
No Date	Rec.o e Rondo/ Cari oggetti	Angelo Tarchi		ICCU Ms.
No Date	Rec.vo e Rondo... Or che il Cielo a me ti rende] and [Signoro adesso intendo quel decreto immortal]	Angelo Tarchi	[Alessandro nell Indie]	ICCU
No Date	Semblanze Amabili Del Mio Bel Sole/ Luigi Marchesi	Luigi Marchesi	[belong to Ariette/Luigi Marchesi]	ICCU
No Date	Ah Furbicel D'Amore/ Luigi Marchesi	Luigi Marchesi	[belong to Ariette/ Luigi Marchesi]	ICCU
No Date	Son Vicino Al Ben Che Adoro/ Luigi Marchesi	Luigi Marchesi	[belong to Ariette/ Luigi Marchesi]	ICCU
No Date	Se Guido Il Gregge Al Prato/Luigi Marchesi	Luigi Marchesi	[belongs to Ariette/Luigi Marchesi]	ICCU
No Date	Nice Mia Oh Dio Ramenta/Luigi Marchesi	Luigi Marchesi	[belongs to Ariette/ Luigi Marchesi]	ICCU

DATE	TITLE	COMPOSER	OPERA	SOURCE
No Date	Che Ciasun Per Te Sospiri/ Luigi Marchesi	Luigi Marchesi	[belongs to Ariette/ Luigi Marchesi]	ICCU
No Date	Sei ariette con accompagnamento piano forte or harpa del Sig Luigi Marchesi	Luigi Marchesi		RISM A/II, 850.006.333 and 852.030.969
No Date	Sei ariette, with piano or harp	Luigi Marchesi		RISM A/I, M 481
No Date	Sei ariette, with piano or harp	Luigi Marchesi		RISM A/I, M 482
No Date	Sei ariette	Luigi Marchesi		RISM A/I, M 484
No Date	Sei ariette	Luigi Marchesi		RISM A/I, M 485

ⁱ Spelling of the aria titles, composers, and operas are taken directly from the source.

ⁱⁱ Brackets indicate information not included on the actual music, but provided by the library or database.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

Retiring from the stage in 1805, Luigi Marchesi left a lasting impact as a teacher, philanthropist, composer, and exceptional performer. His students found success, his ariettes and canzonettas were published several times, and his charitable foundation exists even today. More difficult to capture and analyze are the unique qualities of his performances that audiences found so amazing and appealing.

Marchesi enjoyed tremendous celebrity. In demand as a performer in the courts of empresses and kings, the *musico* earned salaries and benefits sometimes twice those of his co-stars. His eagerly anticipated debut in London demonstrated the extent of Marchesi's reputation, as it was the subject of negotiations and rumor for years, before inspiring record ticket sales and a packed house. Considered the most handsome of the *musici*, Marchesi was particularly highly regarded by his female fans, and between the affections of the married Maria Cosway and Empress Marie Therese, the singer could be considered a bit scandalous when it came to his relationships with women. The biography of Marchesi in Chapter 2 reveals the extent of his prolific career as a performer.

More significant than the *musico*'s celebrity, however, was his voice. Reported to have been three octaves, Marchesi's range was at least two and half octaves as established in the relatively small sampling of arias I examined, and therefore could have been even greater. The scope of the table of extant music composed specifically for Marchesi indicates that composers

were eager to provide him with material. The repeated publication of his “hits” over several decades in Italy, England, and Austria demonstrates their timeless appeal. The commentary on Marchesi’s voice in Chapter 3 is drawn from newspaper reviews, correspondence, and memoirs, and together it creates a detailed account of the singer’s “brilliant” and “triumphant” sound, as well as his vocal pyrotechnics. Based on these sources, we can conclude that Marchesi was a gifted performer of coloratura, had a distinct and flexible voice, and gave captivating and inventive performances night after night.

Despite the abundant reports of Marchesi’s elaborate embellishment, actual examples of the music he sang in performance are extremely difficult to come by. As modern performers attempt to undertake roles sung by *musicisti*, they are at a significant loss for authentic music. The annotated variations of arias by Cherubini and Zingarelli are among very few examples of the types of ornamentation performed by castrati in opera seria, and they shed significant light on the mysteries of Marchesi’s voice, and are subsequently invaluable performance practice tools requiring further study. Such incredible embellishments and contrasting material are indicative of the virtuosity for which Marchesi was known. It is only through analysis of these examples and the recorded commentary of those who witnessed the singer’s performances that the unheard voice of the Marchesini can be revealed.

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