

THE ARIAS COMPOSED FOR CATARINA CAVALIERI:

A PEDAGOGICAL EXAMINATION

by

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(Under the Direction of Dorothea Link and Stephanie Tingler)

ABSTRACT

Catarina Cavalieri (1755-1801) was a virtuosa singer in 18th Century Vienna. She was born Caterina Magdalena Josepha Kavalier in Vienna on March 18, 1755. Her father, Joseph Karl Kavalier, spent much of his career as a church musician, and from 1781 to 1787 served as music director at the k.k. Großer Redoutensaal. Cavalieri received her first music studies at home and in the church, but in 1775 she became a singing pupil of Antonio Salieri (1750-1825) and remained under his tutelage for the remainder of her career.

Cavalieri and the arias composed for her have traditionally been classified as coloratura. Her earliest repertoire is typical of the kinds of bravura arias sung by light dramatic or dramatic coloratura sopranos. As she matured, however, her repertoire shows distinct shifts in her vocal profile. This essay will argue that the arias composed for Cavalieri over during her career together with the contemporary accounts of her singing suggest that the real voice of Cavalieri may have been a lyric soprano rather than a coloratura soprano. The essay will give a brief biography of Cavalieri and will then outline a generally accepted pedagogical criteria for voice classification. Seventeen arias

composed for Cavalieri between the years of 1775 and 1789 will be analyzed in light of these criteria. The findings will have striking implications for the roles that Cavalieri created, most notably, the Mozart roles Constanze in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1782) and Madame Silberklang in *Der Schauspieldirektor* (1786,) since these roles are usually cast with coloratura sopranos. As will be shown, arias of other Mozart roles that Cavalieri adopted, such as Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*, 1788) and the Countess Almaviva (*Le nozze di Figaro*, 1789) support the theory that Cavalieri's *Fach* may have been heavier than previously thought. The differences between the lyric and the coloratura sopranos will be illustrated through a comparison between the roles of Madame Silberklang, created by Cavalieri, and Madame Herz, created by lyric coloratura soprano Aloysia Lange (1760-1839) in Mozart's *Der Schauspieldirektor*.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my husband Dr. Ron Brendel and to my daughter Anna Marie Brendel who are my *raison d'être*: first to my husband for being my sounding board, my encourager, my mentor, my example, my rock, and the love of my life, then to my daughter who has kept me young as we moved together through our academic pursuits. I am continually challenged and renewed by her love of life and her joy in work.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Catarina Cavalieri (1755-1801), and the arias composed for her, have traditionally been classified as coloratura.¹ The singer's earliest repertoire is typical of the kinds of bravura arias sung by light dramatic or dramatic coloratura sopranos. As she reached vocal maturity, however, her repertoire shows a distinct shift in her vocal profile. This essay will seek to show that the arias composed for her and the contemporary accounts of her singing together suggest that the real voice of Cavalieri may have been that of a lyric soprano rather than that of a coloratura soprano. This finding has striking implications for the roles Cavalieri created, most notably, the Mozart roles Constanze (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, 1782) and Madame Silberklang (*Der Schauspieldirektor*, 1786) since these roles are generally cast with coloratura sopranos.² As will be shown, arias of other Mozart roles that Cavalieri adopted, such as Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*, 1788) and the Countess (*Le nozze di Figaro*, 1789) support the theory that Cavalieri's *Fach* may have been heavier than previously thought. The differences between the lyric and the coloratura soprano will be illustrated through a comparison between the roles of Madame Silberklang, created by Cavalieri, and Madame Herz, created by lyric coloratura soprano Aloysia Lange (1760-1839.)

The work represented in this essay is possible because of the detailed research of musicologist Dorothea Link. She provided the initial concept for the study as well as many of the scores consulted in the essay. Her guidance and direction in this project are deeply appreciated.

¹Richard Boldrey, *Guide to Operatic Roles and Arias* (Dallas: Pst . . . Inc, 1994), 412.

² Rudolf Kloiber, *Handbuch der Oper*, 2 vols. (Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag, 1973), 1:336, 338.

CHAPTER 2

About Cavalieri

General Biographical Information

For a singer whose virtuosity attracted the attention of such luminaries as Mozart and Antonio Salieri, there is a relative scarcity of writing on Cavalieri. What is known about this remarkable singer will be assembled here in such a way as to show who she was and how she fit into the Viennese musical environment in the second half of the 18th century. She was born Caterina Magdalena Josepha Kavalier in Vienna on March 18, 1755³ and was baptized in the Lichtenthaler Pfarrkirche.⁴ Her father, Joseph Karl Kavalier, spent much of his career as a church musician, and from 1781 to 1787 served as music director at the k.k. Großer Redoutensaal.⁵ Cavalieri received her first music studies at home and in the church, but in 1775 she became a singing pupil of Antonio Salieri (1750-1825) and remained under his tutelage for the remainder of her career.⁶ The soprano performed her first operatic role that year as Sandrina in Pasquale Anfossi's (1727-1797) *La finta giardiniera* and soon after performed the secondary role of Vanesia in Salieri's 1775 opera *La finta scema*. The successes of 1775 garnered enthusiastic

³ Patricia Lewy Gidwitz, "Cavalieri, Catarina," in *Grove Book of Opera Singers*, edited by Laura Macy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 81.

⁴ Daniel Brandenburg, "Cavalieri, Caterina," in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 2nd ed., edited by Ludwig Finscher (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2008), 2:462- 463.

⁵ Karl Maria Pisarowitz, "Mozart's 'Geläufige Gurgel' und ihr Anhang," *Mitteilungen der internationalen Stiftung Mozarteum* 16, no. 1-2 (1961): 16.

⁶ Rudolph Angermüller, *Antonio Salieri: Dokumente seines Lebens*, 3 vols. (Bad Honnef: Verlag Karl Heinrich Bock, 2000), I:88, 91.

reviews⁷ and eventually led to a singing career of nearly two decades in the Viennese court theatres.⁸

1776 began a spectacular eighteen-year run of Vienna's Nationaltheater.⁹ The court-operated program was instituted by Emperor Joseph II after the theater had gone into bankruptcy.¹⁰ Under Joseph's direction, it became an "instrument of social policy which aimed to educate and keep the citizenry in good order by providing high quality works in the language of the people."¹¹ Just as the Nationaltheater was establishing itself, Cavalieri was beginning her career. A unique scenario charged with opportunity presented itself for her: a burgeoning talent of significant proportions, the opportunity to study with a teacher and composer of the stature and position of Salieri, and a newly reorganized state theater fueled by the energy, ideology, and innovation of Joseph II. The years of operation of the Nationaltheater (1776-1994) almost exactly spanned Cavalieri's career which extended from 1775 to 1793. As late as 1776, she was singing with Vincenzo Fanti's Italian troupe of singers. It was perhaps during this association that she began using the name Cavalieri; for at least part of 1775, she was still using the original German spelling, Kavalier.¹² In 1778, when Joseph II established the Nationalsingspiel, he engaged Cavalieri as a house singer in the new company. She maintained her

⁷ Gidwitz, Cavalieri, Catarina," 81- 82.

⁸ John A. Rice, *Antonio Salieri and Viennese Opera* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 289.

⁹ Dorothea Link, *The National Court Theatre in Mozart's Vienna: Sources and Documents 1783-1792* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 1.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Rice, *Antonio Salieri and Viennese Opera*, 287.

affiliation with the Nationaltheater until she retired at the end of the 1792/93 season.¹³ She died in Vienna in 1801 at the age of 46.

Cavalieri in the Context of 18th Century Vienna

Cavalieri's niche in this new era of Viennese theater may first be thought of in the context of the newly established Nationalsingspiel (1778) through which Joseph II hoped to further a sense of German national identity. The inaugural work was Ignaz Umlauf's singspiel *Die Bergknappen*, which premiered that year at the Burgtheater, and Catarina Cavalieri was chosen by the emperor himself as *prima donna*.¹⁴ "Squarely in the center of [Umlauf's] inaugural opera, as the tenth of twenty numbers was a big showpiece for La Cavalieri as heroine – a long coloratura aria in allegro moderato, common time, and in the key of C major – an outburst in which she sang roulades up to high D. . ."¹⁵ The aria was "Wenn der Himmel lacht" and it was the first large-scale success that established Cavalieri as integral to the new court-sponsored theater and to the Nationalsingspiel in particular. Dorothea Link observes that "Emperor Joseph II valued Cavalieri for her willingness to sing whatever role she was assigned, whether in German or Italian opera, while he acknowledged her lack of versatility."¹⁶

¹³ Link, *The National Court Theatre*, 423, 442.

¹⁴ Hermann Abert, *W. A. Mozart*, translated by Stewart Spencer, edited by Cliff Eisen (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 618.

¹⁵ Daniel Heartz, *Mozart, Haydn and Early Beethoven 1781-1802* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2009), 17.

¹⁶ Dorothea Link, liner notes to *Divas of Mozart's Day*, sung by Patrice Michaels, conducted by Stephen Alltop with the Classical Arts Orchestra, Cedille CDR 90000 064, 2001, CD, 6.

Joseph's establishment of the Nationaltheater and subsequently the Nationalsingspiel resulted in the revival of a resident troupe.¹⁷ Although he was willing to use local singers, he also looked abroad, especially to Italy, for native German singers who had experience in Italy singing *opera seria*.¹⁸ He certainly found them in such singers as German tenor Valentin Adamberger (1740-1804), Viennese soprano Elisabeth Teyber (1744-1816), whose sister Therese Teyber (1760-1830) had already sung with Joseph's troupe,¹⁹ and bass Ludwig Fischer (1745-1825.) Cavalieri, who had quickly become an audience favorite, was engaged in 1778 as a member of Joseph's troupe at an annual salary of 1,200 florins.²⁰

In 1779, Aloysia Weber Lange (1759- 1839), Mozart's sister-in-law, joined the troupe.²¹ By 1781, her salary of 1,706 florins had surpassed that of Cavalieri, which remained at 1200 florins.²² A German singer and formidably accomplished coloratura soprano, she had been a student of pedagogue Georg Joseph Vogler (1749-1814).²³ She debuted as Hännchen in a German adaptation of *La rosérie de Salency*.²⁴ Her marriage in 1780 to popular court actor Joseph Lange helped to ensure her success to some degree in the Viennese theatres, although problems with salary disputes, absences from

¹⁷Rice, *Antonio Salieri and Viennese Opera*, 281.

¹⁸ Ibid., 284.

¹⁹ Ibid., 284-285.

²⁰ Pisarowitz, 16.

²¹ Patricia Lewy Gidwitz, "Weber, Aloysia" in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., edited by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001), 27:134.

²² Abert, W. A. *Mozart*, 620.

²³ Angermüller, 91.

²⁴ Gidwitz, "Weber, Aloysia" 27:134.

performances, and disagreements regarding role assignments created a rocky relationship for her with the theaters.²⁵ Nevertheless, during the next several years Cavalieri maintained a secure status in the singspiel company and enjoyed great success in such principal singspiel roles as Nannette in Salieri's *Der Rauchfangkehrer* (1781) and Constanze in Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1782).

In 1783, building on the strengths of the singspiel's success, Joseph upgraded it to an *opera buffa* company.²⁶ Cavalieri and Lange, who had been the highest paid female singers in the singspiel (Cavalieri still at 1,200 fl., Lange at 1,706 fl. in the 1782/83 season),²⁷ were retained but Joseph began to look abroad again, this time for the finest international singers available.²⁸ These imported singers commanded hefty salaries and took the highest positions, relegating Cavalieri and Lange to second-tier.²⁹ Despite their skill and popularity, they were considered to be not in league with the foreign singers Joseph employed for the new *opera buffa*.³⁰

Among the foreign singers was Nancy Storace (1766-1817), who became a sensation almost instantly. An English soprano and sister of composer Stephen Storace, she had begun her singing career at the age of twelve as a student of Venanzio Rauzzini (1746-1810).³¹ Importantly, she had distinguished herself as a singer of *opera seria*, a

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Dorothea Link, "Mozart in Vienna," in *Cambridge Companion to Mozart*, edited by Simon P. Keefe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 24.

²⁷ Ibid., 405.

²⁸ Rice, *Antonio Salieri*, 335.

²⁹ Link, *The National Court Theatre*, 12.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Rice, *Antonio Salieri*, 335.

qualification that Joseph greatly valued.³² In the first season, 1783/84, she was the highest paid female singer at 3,247 florins per annum. Salaries for Cavalieri and Lange remained unchanged from the previous season.³³ The new *opera buffa* was wildly successful and in 1785 Joseph saw conditions as favorable to bring back and subsidize the singspiel alongside the *buffa* company.³⁴ At this time, most of the German singers in the *buffa* company were returned to the revived singspiel company, with the exception of Valentin Adamberger (c. 1740-1804) and Cavalieri, who remained in the *buffa* company.³⁵

Celeste Coltellini (1760-1829), daughter of librettist Marco Coltellini (1724-1777), is another example of the kinds of foreign singers Joseph recruited. He had not been terribly impressed by her singing at first, but sought to bring her to Vienna for her first-rate skill as an actor, her comic versatility, and ability to learn roles quickly.³⁶ She was engaged in 1785 at an annual salary of 4,071 florins which, in that season, was equal to that of Storace.³⁷ By this time, Cavalieri's salary had increased to 1,400 per annum, nearing Lange's 1,706³⁸ but it appears that she was still considered second- string.

³² Ibid.

³³ Link, *The National Court Theatres*, 409.

³⁴ Ibid., 2.

³⁵ Link, *The National Court Theatre*, 12.

³⁶ Rice, *Antonio Salieri*, 339.

³⁷ Link, *The National Court Theatre*, 415.

³⁸ Ibid.

In the spring of 1788, the singspiel company was once again dissolved, largely as a result of the impending war with Turkey and Joseph's required absence from Vienna.³⁹ That season, the highest paid sopranos in the *buffa* company were Anna Morichelli (c. 1750-1800), who had been retained on a one-year contract at 4,000 florins,⁴⁰ and Luisa Laschi Mombelli (c.1750-c.1790), who had created the role of the Countess in *Le nozze di Figaro* (1786), at 3,375.⁴¹ Cavalieri's salary had risen to 2,133 florins and remained there until she retired at the end of the 1792/93 season.⁴² Catarina Cavalieri was a highly celebrated and virtuosic local singer; however, in the broad scheme, she lacked the international experience and reputation to compete with the imported Italian opera *buffa* singers.

Important Associations

The most important professional relationship for Cavalieri was her connection with Antonio Salieri. That she was a student of Salieri is indisputable. Much of the scholarship on Salieri assumes that Cavalieri was also his mistress. It is clear that they had a long and mutually profitable professional relationship but what is less clear is what their relationship was beyond that. The assumption that they had a romantic liaison seems to be based on three bits of information.⁴³ First, librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte (1749-1838) and Salieri had been great friends. A rivalry between Da Ponte's mistress Adriana

³⁹ Ibid., 4.

⁴⁰ Dorothea Link, "Anna Morichelli, Vicente Martín y Soler's Champion Singer," (http://dlink.myweb.uga.edu/articles/Morichelli_article.pdf (accessed February 26, 2012)).

⁴¹ Link, *The National Court Theatre*, 421.

⁴² Ibid., 435.

⁴³ Rice, *Antonio Salieri*, 289.

Ferrarese and Cavalieri had caused a rift in the friendship between composer and poet, a fact that Da Ponte later deeply regretted, stating that Salieri had been like a “brother” to him.⁴⁴ However, in his memoirs, he confirmed his belief in Salieri’s “too great affection for Cavalieri.”⁴⁵ Second, when, after Joseph’s death, Leopold II dismissed Da Ponte and demoted Salieri,⁴⁶ he referred to Cavalieri as Salieri’s “bella.”⁴⁷ He exclaimed that he would be happy to be rid of both Salieri and his “German woman.”⁴⁸ Da Ponte confirmed in his memoirs that Leopold’s reference was, indeed, to Cavalieri.⁴⁹ The third is found in a letter Mozart wrote to his wife Constanze in October of 1791 after the premiere of *Die Zauberflöte*. He related that he had called for Salieri and Cavalieri together in his carriage and took them to his box at the Burgtheater for the premiere.⁵⁰ The limited evidence for their liaison is suggestive but not conclusive. Her supposed position as paramour may certainly have influenced Salieri to compose for her, but it would seem that her virtuosity was as much responsible for her success as the relationship.

Cavalieri may have benefited most from her association with Salieri as his pupil. Her opportunity to study singing with a court composer of Salieri’s stature and acumen for vocal writing could only have contributed to her rapid success. Had she not been the virtuosa that she apparently was, this relationship may have not benefited her as much as

⁴⁴ Lorenzo Da Ponte, *Memoirs*, translated by Elisabeth Abbott, edited and annotated by Arthur Livingston, preface by Charles Rosen (London: J. B. Lippincott, 1929), 164-173, 210.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 166.

⁴⁶ Link, *The National Court Theatre*, 4.

⁴⁷ Rice, *Antonio Salieri*, 289.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 504.

⁴⁹ Da Ponte, *Memoirs*, 185.

⁵⁰ W. A. Mozart, *Mozart’s Letters, Mozart’s Life: Selected Letters*, translated and edited by Robert Spaethling (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000), 442.

it did. Moreover, she may not have found herself under the tutelage of Salieri at all. When she began her study with Salieri is unclear, but it is likely that she became his student in July of 1775.⁵¹ In September of that year, she created the role of Vanesia in his opera *La finta scema*. Whether their professional alliance gave Cavalieri special consideration by Salieri can only be speculated. However, tenor Michael Kelly complained that she seemed to be especially favored as Salieri's student.⁵² Salieri's skill as a composer, especially of vocal music, and his intimate understanding of Cavalieri's voice and its individual disposition must have placed her in a position that poised her for success.

Cavalieri's situation in the singspiel company combined with her exceptional skill made her a logical choice to sing roles by composers such as Mozart. When he arrived in Vienna in 1781, Mozart found that "at least some of the city's performing artists were of an excellence that placed no restrictions on a composer's imagination. The foremost among these singers was Catarina Cavalieri"⁵³ In a letter to his father in February of 1783, he related that the German singers, including Cavalieri, were at least as good as the foreign singers he had heard.⁵⁴ During his decade in Vienna, Cavalieri created the role of Constanze in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1782), and the role of Mme. Silberklang in *Der Schauspieldirektor* (1786.) Though it was never finished, Mozart began *Lo sposo deluso* in 1784 with Cavalieri in mind for the *seconda* role of Bettina. The roles of Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*, 1787) and the Countess (*Le nozze di Figaro*, 1788) were revised

⁵¹ Angermüller, *Antonio Salieri: Dokumente seines Lebens*, 88.

⁵² Abert, W. A. *Mozart*, 809.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 619.

⁵⁴ Hertz, *Mozart, Haydn and Early Beethoven*, 40.

for their Vienna premieres to showcase her distinctive abilities. Though Mozart composed prolifically for other sopranos such as Lange, Storace, Josepha Hofer (1758-1819), and Adriana Ferrarese (1755-1804), it seems that he was “eager to ingratiate himself with Cavalieri and her protector, the court composer Salieri.”⁵⁵

General Vocal Profile

Catarina Cavalieri, in recent years, is thought to have been a coloratura soprano. In 1961, German musicologist Rudolf Kloiber (1899-1973) published *Handbuch der Oper* (Handbook of Opera). Kloiber outlines the German *Fach* system, catalogues known opera roles up to 1961, and lists their suggested *Fächer*. It is still used as the definitive casting guide in opera houses internationally, especially in Europe. Although Kloiber’s book does not specifically refer to Cavalieri as a coloratura soprano, it does refer to the roles of Constanze and Madame Silberklang as “Koloratursoubrette.”⁵⁶ Renowned American opera coach Richard Boldrey, in his useful book *Guide to Operatic Roles and Arias* (1994), which seems to draw on Kloiber’s work, classifies Cavalieri as “light dramatic coloratura soprano.”⁵⁷ An in-depth discussion of soprano voice classifications and their distinguishing characteristics is included later in this essay. In the most general of terms, the hallmarks of the coloratura soprano are a high tessitura as compared to other soprano types and comfortable access to a full upper extension register. This voice type also possesses a natural proclivity for rapid coloratura throughout the range, although this

⁵⁵Gidwitz, “Cavalieri, Catarina” 82.

⁵⁶ Rudolf Kloiber, *Handbuch der Oper*, 2 vols. (Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag, 1973) 2:336, 338.

⁵⁷ Richard Boldrey, *Guide to Operatic Roles and Arias* (Dallas: Pst . . . Inc. 1994), 412.

feature is not unique to the coloratura soprano but can also be present in other voice types. Voices in this category often exhibit slender vocal weight and bright timbre.

Unfortunately, detailed descriptions of Cavalieri's voice are few. A 1775 review by Prince Khevenhüller of her debut in Anfossi's opera stated that she had a "very strong chest voice" and that she received "well deserved approbation."⁵⁸ In 1778, Tobias Philipp von Gebler reported that she was a singer whose organ is extraordinary, with high notes and low notes together with a strong chest [voice.]⁵⁹ In an anonymous review of one of Cavalieri's performances in 1781, her voice was described as "strong" but "most peculiar in quality."⁶⁰ Count Karl Zinzendorf was in attendance in 1785 at a performance of Sarti's *Giulio Sabino*. He complained that, during a duet, he could not hear castrato Luigi Marchesi for Cavalieri's "shouts."⁶¹ He later acquitted her in a subsequent performance of the same work by conceding that she screamed less.⁶² Mozart described her voice as "flexible"⁶³ and Salieri characterized her singing on his autograph of "*Se spiegar potessi appieno*" as a "most beautiful voice" that "pleased greatly."⁶⁴

From the sparse information available and a perusal of arias such as "Martern aller Arten" (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, Mozart, 1782) and "Staremo in pace" (*La scuola de gelosi*, Salieri, 1783) we can conclude at the very least that she possessed a

⁵⁸ Gidwitz, "Cavalieri, Catarina" 82.

⁵⁹ Rice, *Antonio Salieri*, 282.

⁶⁰ Otto Erich Deutsch, *Mozart: A Documentary Biography*, translated by Eric Blom, Jeremy Noble, and Peter Branscombe (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1965), 194.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Link, *The National Court Theatres*, 250.

⁶³ Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *The Letters of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1769-1791)*, translated by Grace Jane Wallace, vol. 2 (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1865), 86.

⁶⁴ Rice, *Antonio Salieri*, 288.

voice of considerable size and stamina. In pedagogical terms, the phrase “chest voice” in the eighteenth-century usually referred to the register below head voice and could encompass most, if not all, of what is termed in modern pedagogical language as “middle register.”⁶⁵ Gebler’s separate references to her low notes and her chest notes support this concept. Whether Khevenhüller’s comment referred to Cavalieri’s lowest register or to her middle voice (the latter is likely), the implication is that below head register she was capable of strong, resonant singing.

As is apparent in her repertoire, especially the early arias, she was capable of producing rapid coloratura. In fact, this seemed to have been her strong suit as a result of Salieri’s training.⁶⁶ This aspect of her singing, in addition to her top range, is a quality that distinguished her from singers such as Nancy Storace. Her range spanned from around B3 to D6, although the highest pitch she sustained was C6. Her approximate tessitura was F4 to F5. The repertoire composed for Cavalieri holds the real clues as to her specific vocal characteristics. Although we will never be able to distinguish her vocal color, her arias can tell us much about this magnificent voice.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ James Stark, *Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 60, 61.

⁶⁶ Rice, *Antonio Salieri*, 289.

⁶⁷ Gidwitz, “Ich bin die erste Sängerin,” 574, 575.

CHAPTER 3

Cavalieri's *Fach*

Description of Voice Classifications

The first priority in analysis of any voice is to understand voice classifications. Malthilde Marchesi (1821-1913), singing teacher in Vienna from 1854-61 and then from 1868 - 78⁶⁸ whose work stood firmly on the shoulders of the Garcias, is “historically considered unrivaled as a teacher of the female voice.”⁶⁹ She and her teacher Manuel Garcia II (1805-1906) were the first of the important pedagogues to recognize the existence of three registers and the resultant two *passaggi* for female singers. The pedagogy of Marchesi and those like her laid the foundation for subsequent research and discovery in the concept of classifications and sub-classifications for singers as dependent upon *passaggio* locations. During her career, there was an international rise of interest in the science of singing, particularly in acoustics and physiology. Innovations such as the invention of the laryngoscope in 1855 by Manuel Garcia II (1805-1906), studies such as Emil Behnke's (1836-1892) excellent treatise *The Mechanism of the Human Voice* (1881), and the work of scientist-teachers such as Emma Seiler (1848-1929) reflected a rapid increase in understanding of the physiological mechanics of singing. This, in turn, informed singing teachers who still had their roots in the art of the

⁶⁸ Berton Coffin, *Overtones of Bel Canto* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1980), 23.

⁶⁹ Berton Coffin, *Historical Vocal Pedagogy Classics* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1989), 32.

old Italian school of *bel canto*. The union of art and science in singing led to our modern concepts in vocal pedagogy, including voice sub-classification.

Pedagogical voice classifications are based almost entirely on physiological characteristics. Eminent pedagogue Richard Miller (1926-2009) states that “the category (*Fach*) of each female voice is largely determined by the physiology of the instrument itself, the location of voice-register demarcations, and adherence to specific tonal concepts.”⁷⁰ An interesting consideration (though perhaps a subject for another complete study) is the fact that much historical operatic repertoire can now be categorized in terms of classification although penned centuries before these classifications were recognized. For example, although the roles of Cleopatra (*Giulio Cesare*, Handel, 1724) and Belinda (*Dido and Aeneas*, Purcell, 1688) were both scored for high female voices, examination of their arias shows that two very different voices are indicated.⁷¹ We know that composers wrote for specific singers and that the singers’ distinct profiles shaped the style of vocal writing for them. As virtuosic singers of all physiological categories appeared at random, especially female singers after the decline and eventual disappearance of the *castrati*, styles of vocal writing became more diverse. By the end of the 19th century, a wide range of roles existed from those for the lightest coloratura sopranos such as Lakmé (*Lakmé*, Délibes, 1883) to the heaviest possible dramatic roles such as the obvious example of Brünnhilde (*Die Walküre*, Wagner, 1876). While it is certainly a stretch to assert that voice classifications entirely dictated compositional styles

⁷⁰ Richard Miller, *Training Soprano Voices* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 5.

⁷¹ Boldrey, 46, 54.

in vocal writing, it is plausible to say that the voice types of accomplished singers available to the composers may have shaped their styles of vocal writing to some extent.

Nevertheless, singers up to the late nineteenth century were not classified as they are today. Boldrey asserts that “*soprano, tenor and bass* were the only designations used for the roles of most early operas. Even as late as the nineteenth century, *soprano* was still being used by some composers to designate any female singer, including *mezzo sopranos*. Before the age of the modern orchestra, in the second third of the nineteenth century, all singers were trained to sing almost anything.”⁷² Miller affirms, however, that “in four hundred years, the singing instrument itself has not undergone significant change. Truly historically informed performance cannot ignore these enduring physiologic factors,”⁷³ especially as they relate to the singers for whom the roles were composed.

There exists a variety of valid perspectives on specific voice classification as they relate to opera roles. This discussion is concerned specifically with the *Fach* system and its cognates. Miller notes that “range and tessitura capabilities are of less importance to professional *Fach* designations than are individual voice color and the requirements of dramatic portrayal.”⁷⁴ Yet Kloiber is clear on specific range qualifications for the individual categories. Kloiber and Boldrey, as well as the modern pedagogical community at large, generally agree that the criteria discussed below be used for voice classification. These criteria will be applied to the voice of Cavalieri.

⁷² Boldrey, 6.

⁷³ Miller, *Training Soprano Voices*, 6.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

Range

Though a singer's range (the highest and lowest performable notes) can provide clues, it is one of the least reliable of the criteria for the classification of voices.⁷⁵ Range can be definitive, as in the cases of either a true bass or high coloratura soprano, both of whose *Fach* designations depend largely upon the existence of auxiliary registers. Notable is the fact that both Boldrey⁷⁶ and Kloiber⁷⁷ confirm the existence of upper-extension registers in their descriptions of coloratura sopranos. Range can be misleading, however, if used as a means to distinguish the more subtle differences between *Fächer* such as high baritone and tenor or lyric soprano and lyric mezzo-soprano. Range should be used as an indicator as it relates to other factors.

The best quotation to illustrate Cavalieri's wide range was made by Tobias Phillip von Gebler. Around 1781 he ascribed to her "a strong and pleasant voice in both the high and the low notes, a combination which one seldom encounters."⁷⁸ Her top note was D6; however, it was most often represented as a quick articulation of the climax of a melisma.⁷⁹ The highest note a singer can sustain should be considered the top pitch of her range. The highest sustained pitch for Cavalieri was C#6 - just once in "Staremo in pace," (*La scuola de gelosi*, 1783). Most often, the highest sustained note was C6 or below. An interesting feature of Cavalieri's range is that *Der Rauchfangkehrer* (1781) shows a

⁷⁵ Barbara M Doscher, *The Functional Unity of the Singing Voice*, 2nd edition (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1994), 196.

⁷⁶ Boldrey, 17.

⁷⁷ Kloiber, 2:758-760

⁷⁸ Deutsch, 194.

⁷⁹ Gidwitz, "Ich bin die erste Sängerin," 568.

downward expansion in her performable range marking the addition of a strong chest register. Up to this point, her lowest notes were around D4. In “Wenn dem Adler das Gefieder,” however, we see a drop in her performable low range with an orchestrally doubled, arpeggiated descent to B-flat 3, while her upper range remained strong and stable.⁸⁰ These characteristics tend to confirm Gebler’s observation around the same time. By the age of 26, she would have fully reached physiological maturation and have settled into her natural *Fach*.⁸¹ Often when a young soprano develops a strong low register with no lowering in her upper range, it signifies a move toward a heavier *Fach* within a general classification, especially in the context of a slight downward shift in *passaggio* positioning. Although we do not have enough information to discern the positioning of Cavalieri’s *passaggi*, the other criteria can provide a reasonably clear idea of her voice.

The most important characteristic of Cavalieri’s range is that she at no time in her career exhibited evidence of a full upper extension register. The fact that her highest sustained pitch was consistent with the established parameters for the lyric soprano, together with the fact that Salieri rescinded his inclusion of E6 in “Ah, non lasciarmi” (1781) seems to confirm this supposition.⁸² Subscribers to the *Fach* system define all types of coloratura sopranos as those having ranges that extend to F6. In cases such as that of Cavalieri where there is a proclivity towards melismatic singing but there is no upper extension, a conflict arises. We must either recognize that other *Fächer* can possess

⁸⁰ Cavalieri’s arias are all discussed in detail below in the section entitled “The Repertoire.”

⁸¹ Doscher, 197.

⁸² Gidwitz, “Ich bin die erste Sängerin,” 575.

natural agility, as Miller and Mancini contend, or we must reevaluate the criterion of range for the coloratura soprano.

Tessitura

Twentieth-century American pedagogue Barbara Doscher defines tessitura as “that compass of notes to which a particular singer’s voice inclines.”⁸³ In contrast to range, tessitura is perhaps one the most reliable elements in classifying vocal instruments. The higher the tessitura, the higher the voice classification will be. For example, tessitura can be an important determinant in distinguishing between sopranos and mezzo-sopranos, or in the case of developing singers, to distinguish between light and full lyric voices. It is natural to extrapolate, given Doscher’s definition, that the tessitura of a vocal instrument is the area in which singers experience the greatest degree of stamina.

Arnold Rose, Australian twentieth-century pedagogue, was renowned for incorporating scientific testing into his voice pedagogy to produce beautiful sound by means of efficient and accurate acoustical production. Through spectrographic analysis, he measured the tessituras of the various voice categories.⁸⁴ He defines the tessitura for the lyric soprano as F4-F5, and that of the coloratura soprano as A4-A5. For the purposes of the present study, based on Rose’s work, tessitura will be discussed in the terms “high” (A4-A5) “medium-high” (F4-F5) and “medium” (C4-C5).⁸⁵

Clearly, Cavalieri was capable of high-tessitura singing throughout her career. The arias from the early operas *Die Bergknappen* (1778) and *Die Rauchfangkehrer*

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Arnold Rose, *The Singer and the Voice: Vocal Physiology and Techniques for Singers*, 2nd edition (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), 251.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

(1781) are typical of what one would expect for a high coloratura soprano in that they lie high in the voice and contain lengthy passages of rapid coloratura. Again in 1782, Constanze's arias from *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* represent high-tessitura singing, especially "Ach, ich liebte," as does "Col zeffiro e col rio" (*La fiera di Venezia*) of 1785. However, even considering the floridity and relatively high tessitura of "Credei, credei da cruda morte" (1789), the general trend seems to have been towards a generally lower tessitura as Cavalieri came into maturity as a singer. That she was capable of high-tessitura florid singing does not preclude the fact that the preponderance of her repertoire shows decidedly the development of lyric qualities and the absence of an upper extension. This trend may have been foreshadowed by Prince Khevenhüller's review of her 1775 debut saying that she "possessed a very strong chest voice."⁸⁶ It is common for a young singer of twenty or younger to have a higher tessitura and a lighter voice than she would have in her mid-twenties and beyond. Doscher maintains that tessitura changes with training and age.⁸⁷ The strong middle register to which Khevenhüller refers may have indicated the potential size of Cavalieri's vocal instrument at maturity. We can track the relative drop in the tessitura of her voice between the ages of twenty and twenty-six, a fact which implies that the most comfortable area of singing for her was lower than it had been at the outset of her career. Arias that lend credence to this theory are pieces such as "Impresso ho nell' alma" (1787) and "Mi tradi quell' alma ingrata" (1788).

⁸⁶ Gidwitz, "Cavalieri, Catarina," 81.

⁸⁷ Doscher, 197.

Vocal Weight/Size

The size of a vocal instrument is defined in terms of its capacity for resonance. A fully trained dramatic tenor is naturally capable of much more dynamic resonance than is a light lyric tenor. The ability to sing above a full, late-Romantic orchestra is not as much a question of skill as it is of the singer's innate voice type. In the cast of *Le nozze di Figaro*, the singer cast for Susanna may possess a similar range and tessitura as the singer who takes the role of the Countess, yet the Countess must have a larger vocal instrument and the accompanying warmth of vocal color because of the orchestral textures and dramatic demands of the role. It should be noted that vocal weight designations such as "lyric" and "dramatic" do not carry exactly the same connotations between the coloratura and non-coloratura *Fächer*. For instance, the dramatic coloratura soprano possesses a sizeable voice for her *Fach*, but is certainly not equal in size to the dramatic soprano.⁸⁸

The contemporary accounts regarding this aspect of Cavalieri's voice are perhaps more compelling than any other. In addition to Gebler's quote regarding the strength of her voice, the anonymous review of 1781⁸⁹ compares Cavalieri's voice to that of Lange, whose repertoire shows very clearly that she was a high coloratura soprano. The review says of Cavalieri that her voice was "incomparably stronger" than that of Lange.⁹⁰ Although there are varying weights of coloratura sopranos, the heaviest coloraturas tend to be lighter in weight and higher in tessitura than their lyric counterparts.

⁸⁸ It should be noted here that the term "lyric" is used in the context of vocal pedagogy to describe size and fullness in vocal weight.

⁸⁹ Deutsch, 194.

⁹⁰ Christopher Raeburn, "Catarina Cavalieri," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, edited by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), 4:60.

We can see from the repertoire that this certainly must have been a sizeable voice for several reasons. The first is her remarkable stamina. This feature is typically associated with larger vocal instruments partly because of the sheer mass of the vocal folds. Other factors include size of pharyngeal resonating cavities and overall physical strength. These characteristics enable singers to manage long roles replete with demanding arias and lavish orchestrations. To illustrate, the Queen of the Night (*Die Zauberflöte*, Mozart, 1791) is thought by most pedagogues to be best sung by a light dramatic coloratura soprano because of its blazing coloratura, plentiful extension notes, and strong dramatic content. Lighter coloratura sopranos, however, will often sing this role because of its brevity and minimal endurance requirements (two arias and one short ensemble.)

The second indicator of Cavalieri's vocal size can be seen in the kinds of vocal writing for her. Although the first aria that seemed to define her as a coloratura soprano, "Se spiegar potessi appieno," included high, rapid melismas in sixteenth-note figures, these features may have been representative of her physiological immaturity combined with her remarkable virtuosity. Five measures of strongly orchestrated, sustained E5, complete with a fermata (mm. 112-116), however, show that this voice already possessed strong resonance in upper-middle voice, an area which would be problematic for a true coloratura soprano, especially set in this way. As she matured, the vocal writing became comparatively less florid. It is helpful to remember that although all voices can master coloratura, the lighter the vocal weight, the more naturally agile a voice tends to be. The early writing for Cavalieri as compared to that in her later career suggests that as her voice became more sizable, she was less predisposed to agility. Arias such as "Col zeffiro

e col rio” (1785), “Impresso ho nell’ alma” (1787) and “Ombra dolente” (1789) were not florid at all and represented a much more cantabile style of singing than some of the bravura arias for which she was acclaimed. Those later arias that were quite florid less often utilized the rapid sixteenth-note passages, but instead tended to employ eighth-note melismas, such as those found in “Mi tradi quell’ alma ingrata” (1788).

The third strong indicator of Cavalieri’s vocal power is the tendency of the composers, as she matured, to score more heavily under the voice. In “Se spiegar potessi appieno” (1775), Salieri was careful to use the strongest orchestrations at times when the voice was at rest. By 1781 in “Wenn dem Adler das Gefieder,” he used a thicker texture throughout and in all areas of Cavalieri’s range, at times doubling the voice with strings and sometimes brass. An example of this can be found right at the start of “Wenn dem Adler das Gefieder” (mm. 29-35). Again, at measure 70, we see doubling in the strings, but this time in the rapid coloratura. Especially since this melismatic passage begins in Cavalieri’s middle register, this instance provides evidence she was capable of strongly resonant melismatic singing in addition to soaring legato lines. Salieri’s treatment of the voice here supports the idea that she possessed a strong, powerfully resonant vocal instrument.

Vocal Color

Color, or timbre, is unquestionably the most subjective element in evaluating voice classification, but, taken in consideration with the other criteria, it can support their implications. For example, since the lyric mezzo and the lyric soprano may have the same range, and in some cases, a similar tessitura, a warm, dark vocal color can suit the singer

to high mezzo roles such as Cherubino and Dorabella.⁹¹ Timbre is an important gauge, but can be misleading if used as a definitive feature.⁹² To illustrate, natural warmth of color in a very young singer can suggest the possibility of a larger instrument when full maturation is reached, rather than indicate a lower voice type.

Almost nothing is known about the color or timbre of Cavalieri's voice. An anonymous review of 1781 describes her as having a voice of a "most peculiar quality."⁹³ This and the many reviews that describe her singing as beautiful are the only hints available. Unfortunately, they tell us very little.

Passaggio Locations

The *passaggi* are the bridges or transitions that lead from one register to its neighboring register. The locations of the *primo* and *secondo passaggio* are all-important in defining a singer's voice classification.⁹⁴ Each individual *Fach* exhibits a subtle but distinct difference in the location of these registral transitions as compared to other *Fächer*. Situations in which range and vocal color could indicate more than one general voice classification, the locations of the *passaggi* in the context of the other criteria are conclusive. It is important to note that vocal immaturity and registral imbalance due to faulty technique can cause these locations to fluctuate. Careful training in *bel canto* will create stability and enable proper evaluation. The higher the instrument, the higher the *passaggi* lie. For example, the *secondo passaggio* of a lyric soprano generally lies from D5 to F-sharp 5 (the *primo passaggio* is approximately an octave below the *secondo*.)

⁹¹ Miller, *Training Soprano Voices*, 12.

⁹² Doscher, 196-197.

⁹³ Deutsch, 194.

⁹⁴ Richard Miller, *The Structure of Singing* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1996), 134.

That of the lyric coloratura is usually a half step higher.⁹⁵ The coloratura also experiences another short transition around B5 leading into her upper extension (approximately C-sharp 6-F6.) In the context of this discussion, this is important to understand because many coloratura sopranos experience a distinct difference between D6 and E-flat 6. For many sopranos, E-flat 6 is the first note to lie fully in extension register. Some lyric sopranos find that they are able to sing D6 although they do not possess full upper extension registers. Since the locations of the *passaggi* seem to determine the tessitura of a voice, the positions of these transitions together with the tessitura can confirm accurate classification.

Without actually hearing Cavalieri sing, we cannot ascertain the exact location of her *passaggi*. Tessitura, however, can suggest possibilities since it is linked to registration and is influenced by changes in range. A change in tessitura in a classically trained singer is usually the result of a change in range and a corresponding shift in *passaggi* location. The downward shift in Cavalieri's tessitura corresponds with the addition of a workable chest register and suggests a drop in *passaggi* positioning as well, which, in turn, supports the possibility of a move toward a heavier *Fach*. Her adjusted tessitura by age twenty-six is suggestive of a trend towards a lyric quality in Cavalieri's voice.

Agility

Some pedagogues place more importance on this feature than do others. Although Kloiber does not recognize agility as a definitive criterion for voice classification, Boldrey states that "agility and range are the main determiners that distinguish a *lyric*

⁹⁵ Shirlee Emmons and Constance Chase, *Prescriptions for Choral Excellence; Tone, Text, Dynamic Leadership* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 128.

coloratura soprano from a *lyric soprano*.”⁹⁶ Yet, earlier he makes the point that before the late nineteenth century, all singers were expected to “produce fast florid passages.”⁹⁷

Richard Miller contends that skill for rapid agility is not only possible for all voice types, it is essential. He states that “no matter how sizeable or dramatic a soprano instrument, it needs flexibility to perform rapid movement. If a singer is unable to freely move the voice in swift melismas, there will be a corresponding lack of freedom in slow, sustained passages.”⁹⁸ He continues that “with patience and fortitude, the larger soprano voice will be able to acquire agility skill.” This concept has been taught since Pier Francesco Tosi (1653-1732) and the *castrati* and was apparently espoused by Salieri, who appears to have taught agility as a standard feature of his pedagogy.

The idea that agility was the pinnacle of technical proficiency was integral to contemporary pedagogy in Cavalieri’s time, as seen in the teaching of Giambattista Mancini (1714-1800) who is said to have been an “apostle of agility” in the tradition of Tosi and Antonio Bernacchi (1685-1756).⁹⁹ Mancini stated that “every wise and diligent teacher knows that any voice which has a natural tendency towards agility, whether the voice is small or large, can be trained in a style suitable to itself, as Nature suggested.”¹⁰⁰ The point should be made that, although all voices are capable of learning (and should learn) agility, the *coloratura soprano* has a natural inclination for it because of her

⁹⁶ Boldrey, 8.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 6.

⁹⁸ Miller, *Training Soprano Voices*, 56.

⁹⁹ William Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings in Music History*, revised edition, edited by Leo Treitler (New York, W. W. Norton, 1998), 5:866.

¹⁰⁰ Giovanni Battista Mancini, *Practical Reflections on the Figurative Art of Singing*, translated by Pietro Buzzi (Boston: Gorham Press, 1912), 148.

relatively light vocal weight, and can manage an extreme degree of intricacy and velocity that heavier voices may not be able to master. Even so, we may conclude that all voice types are capable of achieving rapid agility as well as portamento singing.

There is no question that Cavalieri possessed great agility and flexibility. What is unclear is how much of her agility can be attributed to Salieri's teaching and how much was innate. With the exception of "Credei, credei da cruda morte" (1789), which appeared late in Cavalieri's career, the repertoire composed for her, shows a gradual relaxation in the intensity of the coloratura seen in the early arias. Even "Märtern aller Arten" (1782), though requiring enormous stamina, is a bit less intricate in its coloratura than are arias such as "Wenn dem Adler das Gefieder" (1781).

The best illustration of the change in coloratura writing for Cavalieri begins with Mozart's famous quotation regarding "Ach ich Liebe." In a letter to his father on September 26 of 1781, he wrote "I have rather sacrificed Constanze's aria ['Ach ich liebe'] to the flexible throat of Mlle Cavalieri... I have endeavored to express her feeling so far as an Italian bravura aria will admit of it."¹⁰¹ This implies that he sacrificed a bit of the truthfulness of the scene to highlight Cavalieri's talent for agility and flexibility. These characteristics are abundantly displayed in the extravagant leaps and plunges between head and chest registers, and the brilliant coloratura flourishes. Yet his 1789 revision of "Dove sono i bei momenti" does not match the requirements for agility of "Ach, ich liebe."

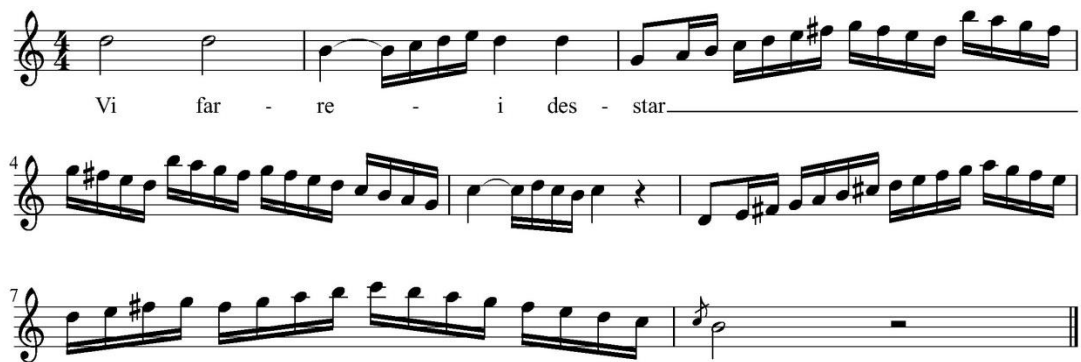
The application of these criteria presents the following vocal profile for Cavalieri: she possessed a range of B-flat 3 to C6 (often touching D6) confirming the absence of an

¹⁰¹ Emily Anderson, *The Letters of Mozart and His Family*, second edition, edited by A. Hyatt King and Monica Carolan (London:MacMillan, 1966), II:768.

extension register, her tessitura settled into a that of medium/high, and her voice was quite large and capable of remarkable stamina. It has also been demonstrated that Salieri valued agility as a part of his pedagogy and trained Cavalieri specifically in agility, as he did his other students. It has been established that, as she matured in her early to mid-twenties, her voice underwent a downward expansion in range while maintaining its high compass, thus lowering the overall tessitura of her voice. Her earliest repertoire shows extreme floridity but, with few exceptions, the styles of coloratura written for her became markedly less intense and intricate as she matured. Below, Examples 1 and 2 show a comparison between the most intense representations of coloratura passages in “Se spiegar potessi appieno” and “Mi tradi quell’ alma ingrata,” respectively.

Example 1

“Se spiegar potessi appieno,” *La finta scema* (Salieri, 1775), mm. 59-66



Example 2

“Mi tradi quell’ alma ingrata” *Don Giovanni* (Mozart, 1787), mm. 107-114



Example 1 shows six measures of a rapid melisma on sixteenth-note figures that include ascending and descending scales, many of which soar through the upper *passaggio*. This high-tessitura passage culminates on high C and then rapidly descends to the tonic note. Example 2 shows something very different. Its tessitura is distinctively lower than that of example one with a top note of a mere a-flat. The melismatic writing is slower and more expansive in eighth-note figures. These clear contrasts do not seem to reflect a decline in Cavalieri’s singing. On the contrary, in 1787, Count Zinzendorf, whose accounts of Cavalieri’s singing were at other times ambivalent, declared that she sang marvelously in *Gli sposi malcontenti*.¹⁰² The profile described seems to show that the voice of Cavalieri matured into a powerful lyric vocal instrument capable of the dramatic expression required for such roles as the Countess and Donna Elvira, but still able to manage the demands of agility and flexibility for “Credei, credei da cruda morte” (1789).

The interrelationship between these criteria for voice classification cannot be overstated. Range is linked to tessitura and *passaggio* positioning in that when there is a

¹⁰² Link, *National Court Theatres*, 293.

drop or lift in range, there is a corresponding change in tessitura and *passaggio* positioning. Voices with lower ranges and tessituras tend to be warmer and darker in color than higher vocal instruments since they possess longer pharyngeal resonating spaces, which in turn, reinforce lower overtones. Table 1, below, shows each of the soprano voice classifications (excluding mezzo categories), their ranges, tessituras, typical *passaggi* locations, vocal weight and general characteristics.

Table 1
Soprano Voice Classifications¹⁰³

<u>Classifi- cation</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Tessitura</u>	<u>Secondo Passaggio</u>	<u>Vocal Weight/Color</u>	<u>Characteristics</u>
Soubrette	C4- C6	medium-high	E-flat 5- G5	light/bright	strong high/ middle adequate low
Lyric Coloratura	C4-F6	high	E5-G- sharp 5	light/bright/can be metallic	naturally agile, flexible, brilliant high, soft middle, weak low
Light Lyric	B-flat 3-C6	medium-high	E-flat5-G- sharp 5	medium/warm	natural legato, strong high, medium/strong middle, adequate low
Light Dramatic Coloratura	C4-F6	high	E5-G5	strong/penetrating	naturally agile, extension register, powerful high strong middle adequate low
Full Lyric	B-flat 3-C6	medium-high	D5-F- sharp 5	strong/warm	natural legato, dramatic power, strong in all registers
Dramatic Coloratura	C4-F6	high/medium- high	E5-G- sharp-5	strong/penetrating/metallic	naturally agile, extension register, powerful high

¹⁰³ The information in this table represents my own pedagogical opinions drawn from experience working with many singers in consultation with a variety of pedagogical resources.

					strong middle/low
Lirico Spinto	B-flat 3-C3	medium-high	D5-F- sharp 5	heavy/bright or metallic	soaring phrases, strong, bright resonance in all registers
Dramatic	G3-B- flat 5	medium	D-flat5- F5	heavy/warm	strong, powerful in all registers
High Dramatic	G3- C6	medium-high	D5-F- sharp-5	heavy/warm	strong, powerful in all registers

Physiological Considerations

A few observations should be made regarding the physiological life of the female voice as they relate to Cavalieri. Much of the singing life for a woman is governed by hormonal events. A fascinating study was conducted in 1998 at the Université de Paris by otolaryngologist Dr. Jean Abitbol.¹⁰⁴ The conclusion was that cells from the vocal fold mucosa and cells from vaginal mucosa behave identically at any given time in the reproductive life of a woman. Vocal health and responsiveness in females are largely dependent upon reproductive hormones. John Leake (d. 1792), an English medical doctor specializing in women's health produced a treatise *Medical Instructions Towards the Prevention and Cure of Chronic Diseases Peculiar to Women* (1781). In it, he describes the average age of menarche in Europe at that time to be approximately fifteen years of age and the onset of menopause to be around the age of forty-five.¹⁰⁵

The first event for the female singer is menses. Though less dramatic than the changes seen in boys, puberty brings alterations in the female voice. The fundamental

¹⁰⁴ Jean Abitbol, "Sex Hormones and the Female Voice," *Journal of Voice* 13, no. 3 (September, 1999): 424.

¹⁰⁵ John Leake, *Medical Instructions Towards the Prevention and Cure of Chronic Diseases Peculiar to Women*, 6th edition (London: Baldwin, 1781), 48-49.

frequency drops by approximately the interval of a third¹⁰⁶ and the voice begins to mature. Though singers mature at different rates, most females do not reach full physiological vocal maturity until around twenty-two years of age.¹⁰⁷ Since the average age of menarche has declined worldwide since the eighteenth century, it is reasonable to extrapolate that Cavalieri would have reached vocal maturation even later. The effects of this maturation are evident in such characteristics as warming of vocal tone, increase in vocal weight, stabilization of range, tessitura and *passaggi* and increased stamina.¹⁰⁸ It is for this reason that singing teachers are reluctant to classify voices until they have sufficiently matured into adulthood. Even after the singer reaches physiological maturity, her voice continues to warm and deepen to varying degrees throughout her life. It is important to recall that Cavalieri was already singing bravura arias around the age of nineteen and made her operatic debut at the age of twenty on heavily florid, high-tessitura repertoire. In the light of these physiological considerations, classifying Cavalieri's voice based on her earliest repertoire is problematic.

The next large-scale hormonal shift in the life of a female singer is pregnancy. Since we have no record of Cavalieri ever having been pregnant, we can quickly dispense with this concern, so for her, it would have been that of menopause. This event marks the end of a woman's reproductive years and induces physiological changes that can negatively affect the female larynx and vocal folds.¹⁰⁹ Loss of muscle tone, calcification

¹⁰⁶ Lynne Gackle, "The Adolescent Female Voice: Characteristics of Change and Development," *Choral Journal* 31, no. 8 (March 1991): 19.

¹⁰⁷ Doscher, 197.

¹⁰⁸ Gackle, 19, 21-22.

¹⁰⁹ Jean Abitbol, "The Voice and Menopause: Twilight of the Divas," *Contraception, fertilité, sexualité* 26, no.9 (September 1998): 649.

of the laryngeal cartilages and dry mucous membranes due to a dramatic drop in estrogen can cause loss of upper range, virilization of the voice, brittleness of tone and especially, lack of resonance and control in middle register.¹¹⁰ Though it is quite possible to sing successfully through menopause and beyond, many female singers find the challenges presented during this time to be difficult to overcome. Cavalieri retired from singing at the age of 39. Since the average age of menopause at that time was 45, it is possible but unlikely that she would have been faced with this problem. Her aria “Credei, credei da cruda morte” at the age of 34 suggests that her voice was certainly not deteriorating at that time.

At her retirement, Cavalieri seems to have fit the profile of a singer who was fully mature, but in her prime. In fact, there is no evidence to suggest that her retirement was due to any decline in her singing abilities, but was related to her association with Salieri and his demotion when Leopold II assumed control of the theaters.¹¹¹ On the contrary, “Ombra dolente” (*Il natal d’Apollo*, Righini, 1789) was apparently composed for a singer who had strong command of middle register, great flexibility and a secure upper range. The years between physiological maturation and menopause are the most vibrant and productive years for the female singer. Operatic singers are considered by many to be young until at least the age of thirty (beyond for heavy voices.)¹¹² As will be discussed later in this essay, Cavalieri’s repertoire shows distinct changes in her vocal profile during the course of her career, but they do not seem to reflect any decline in her

¹¹⁰ David L. Jones, “Vocalizing Through Menopause: Regaining Lost Vocal Function,” <http://www.voiceteacher.com/menopause.html> (accessed March 2, 2012).

¹¹¹ Rice, *Antonio Salieri*, 504.

¹¹² Doscher, 197.

singing, age-induced, physiological or otherwise. As late as 1790, a review in the *Grundsätze für Theaterkritik* hailed Cavalieri as a “very good singer.”¹¹³

Pedagogical History

Salieri's Pedagogy

Catarina Cavalieri's earliest musical training began at home with her father, who was a professional musician. As far as can be determined, formal voice study began for her in the studio of Antonio Salieri sometime during 1775 at the age of twenty. That year, she debuted as Sandrina in Anfossi's *La finta giardiniera* and as Eurilla in Salieri's *La sconfitta di Borea*. Since Eurilla was composed for Cavalieri, there must have been at least some professional collaboration with Salieri before she began study with him. How they met is unclear, though it is logical to speculate that Salieri may have known of Cavalieri in the context of her Vienna debut.

Salieri's great intuition and giftedness as a composer of vocal music are without question. His understanding of vocal pedagogy deserves a bit more scrutiny. Salieri began his music study with his half-brother Francesco, who taught him on the violin. At sixteen years of age, after the deaths of both parents, Salieri became a ward of family friend and nobleman Giovanni Mocenigo, with whom he went to live in Venice in 1766. He studied composition with Giovanni Battista Pescetti, organist and composer of opera, but only for a few months. Pescetti died shortly after Salieri began lessons with him. Important to this discussion is the fact that, during that time, he also studied singing with tenor Ferdinando Pasini, who lived in Mocenigo's palace and received his patronage.

¹¹³ Raeburn, 4:60.

Pasini, a tenor and singer of *opera seria*, seems to have given Salieri his early foundation in vocal technique. Since Pasini's career was apparently not stellar and he is not known as an historical pedagogical figure, his pedigree is unknown. During the Ascension Festival of 1766, he was engaged to sing the role of Licomede in Florian Gassmann's opera *Achille in Sciro*. Gassmann had succeeded Gluck as court composer and conductor in Vienna, but had made a visit to Venice in 1766 to compose Italian opera during the period of mourning following the death of Emperor Francis and the subsequent closing of the court theaters.¹¹⁴

Pasini took this opportunity to introduce his students, including Salieri, to Gassmann and have them perform for him. Gassmann was immediately taken with the talented young Salieri and asked permission of Mocenigo to take him in as student and apprentice. The boy Salieri came to love Gassmann as a father and received the remainder of his music training from him.¹¹⁵ Gassmann returned to Vienna during the summer of 1766 with Salieri, and there they both remained for the rest of their careers. Though Salieri's skill as a singing teacher must have been shaped to some degree by Pasini, he was far more influenced by Gassmann than any other teacher. Though there is little information on Gassmann's instruction in singing beyond childhood study with the local chorus master in his native Brück, it seems certain that neither he nor Salieri studied to any significant degree with an established specialist in singing technique.

¹¹⁴ Link, *The National Court Theatre*, 14-16.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 6, 17.

In 1816, Salieri produced *La scuola di canto*, a short treatise, mostly written in verse and intended to be sung, presumably using a variety of vocalises.¹¹⁶ It is largely concerned with musicianship and performance practice but it does mention specific singing techniques. Salieri must have had considerable instinct for singing. The distinguished pedagogue Giambattista Mancini described him in 1774 as a good pupil of Gassmann and a “virtuoso chamber singer at the Imperial Court.”¹¹⁷ In *La scuola di canto*, Salieri stressed concepts such as the importance of training on the piano forte for beginning students, that *solfeggio* should be a central element in voice training, and that all singers should be trained to sing in Italian first and foremost. His writing on singing reflects his emphasis on agility as integral to good singing. He stated that the voice should not lack agility and the natural trill (also central to the pedagogy of Mancini.) He emphasized that were these two elements lacking, it would be a great lack indeed.¹¹⁸

Salieri advocated a strong healthy body, a deep, strong breath, and the avoidance of both nasal and throaty tones (which may be interpreted as *chiaroscuro* or balanced resonance).¹¹⁹ He taught that the student should stand straight with free limbs and an elevated chest, the face should be lifted and the mouth should be used well but with decency and grace. He advocated a clear, well-placed tone that flowed freely on the air and stresses that good intonation was essential. He believed that every singer’s technique

¹¹⁶ Rudolph Angermüller, “Antonio Salieri und seine ‘Scuola di Canto,’” in *Beethoven-Studien: Festgabe der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zum 200 Geburtstag von Ludwig van Beethoven* (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1970), 40-41.

¹¹⁷ Mancini, 174.

¹¹⁸ “Agilità e trillo naturale: Queste due ultime qualità, se mancano, manca molto . . .,” Angermüller, *La scuola di canto*, 41.

¹¹⁹ “Sanità e perfezione di corpo in generale, petto forte e largo: Voce intonato a priva dei difetti di gola e di naso. . .” Ibid.

should be clothed in expression.¹²⁰ This pedagogy represents a concise, classic description of the basic principles of *bel canto*.

Salieri's approach to Cavalieri's lessons may have been dictated as much by personal taste as by pedagogy. Cavalieri was not the first for whom he had written high coloratura arias.¹²¹ Clementina Baglioni had been an earlier recipient of the kinds of bravura arias Salieri began to compose for Cavalieri.¹²² Gassmann had two daughters, both of whom studied with Salieri, and one, Therese, was trained by him in high coloratura.¹²³ John Rice, in his work on Cavalieri, suggests that other composers such as Mozart, Umlauf and Righini may have written florid arias for Cavalieri based on Salieri's early arias for her such as "Se spiegar potessi appieno."¹²⁴ He goes on to state that "part of Cavalieri's vocal profile can be ascribed to Salieri's teaching, a suspicion strengthened by the fact that . . . Therese Gassmann later made a specialty of performing a bravura aria that Salieri had written for Cavalieri."¹²⁵ He asserts that the heavily florid, high-tessitura aria "Se spiegar potessi appieno" "documents Cavalieri's vocal personality as shaped and exploited by Salieri."¹²⁶

¹²⁰ "Man muß stehen bleiben, mit freyen ungezwungenen Gliedern: die Brust muß heraus, und das Gesicht ein wenig in die Höhe gehoben werden . . . An seinem Platze muß Athem geholt werden . . . Das Ohr" muß auf die reinste Intonation aufmaerkfam seyn . . und das ganz mit einem Ausdruck zu bekleiden. Ibid. 46, 47.

¹²¹ It is noteworthy that Salieri considered the general scope of the soprano voice to be C-4 to A-5. Ibid., 43.

¹²² Rice, *Antonio Salieri*, 289.

¹²³ Ibid., 540.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 289.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

CHAPTER 4

The Repertoire

An examination of seventeen arias known to have been composed for Cavalieri will be conducted in terms of the following criteria: range, tessitura, vocal weight demands, and agility requirements.

Arias Composed for Cavalieri and Examined Here¹²⁷

1. 1775 – “Se spiegar potessi appieno” (*La finta scema*, Salieri)
2. 1778- “Himmel, hör jetzt meine Bitte” (*Die Bergknappen*, Umlauf)
3. 1778- “Wenn mir der Himmel lacht” (*Die Bergknappen*, Umlauf)
4. 1781 – “Wenn dem Adler das Gefieder” (*Der Rauchfangkehrer*, Salieri)
5. 1781 – “Ah, non lasciarmi” (*Der Rauchfangkehrer*, Salieri)
6. 1782 – “Ach, ich liebte” (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, Mozart)
7. 1782 – “Martern aller Arten” (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, Mozart)
8. 1783 – “Staremo in pace” (*La scuola de gelosi*, Salieri)
9. 1785 – “Tra l’oscure ombre funeste” (*Davidde penitente*, Mozart)
10. 1785 – “Per pietà deh ricercate” (*L’incontro inaspettato*, Righini)
11. 1785 – “Vorrei sprezzar la sorte” (Insertion aria by Salieri in *Giulio Sabino*, Sarti)
12. 1785 – “Col zeffiro e col rio” (*La fiera di Venezia*, Salieri)
13. 1786 – “Bester Jüngling!” (*Der Schauspieldirektor*, Mozart)
14. 1787 – “Impresso ho nell’alma” (*Il sogno*, Martín y Soler)

¹²⁷ Much of the information on this list derives from Dorothea Link’s unpublished research, as do the unpublished scores examined below.

15. 1788 – “Mi tradi quell’alma ingrata” (*Don Giovanni*, Mozart)
16. 1789 – “Dove sono i bei momenti” (*Le nozze di Figaro*, Mozart)
17. 1789 – “Credei, credei da cruda morte” (*Il natal d’Apollo*, Righini)

1. 1775, “Se spiegar potessi appieno”¹²⁸

La finta scema; commedia per musica in three acts by Antonio Salieri to a libretto by Giovanni di Gamerra; Vienna 9 September 1775.¹²⁹

The first performance of *La finta scema* was not terribly successful.¹³⁰ Salieri blamed the fiasco on the poor singing of the principal singers. In fact, earlier that year in a letter to his brother Leopold, Joseph II had declared the *buffa* troupe to be detestable.¹³¹ It was partly this issue that led to the bankruptcy of the impresario Count Joseph Keglevich and the Emperor’s subsequent reorganization of the theaters. Although the singing in *La finta scema* was, overall, reported to be of low quality, Salieri was apparently quite happy with Cavalieri’s singing in the role of Venezia. He wrote on the autograph of “Se spiegar potessi appieno” that “It was sung marvelously by a most beautiful voice and pleased greatly.”¹³²

Range: D4-D6 (highest sustained pitch B5)

¹²⁸ Score used: Antonio Salieri, *La finta scema*, manuscript score, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Musiksammlung, Mus HS 17842.

¹²⁹ Angermüller, I:89.

¹³⁰ Rice, *Antonio Salieri*, 240.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Rice, *Antonio Salieri*, 288.

The range of this aria supports its high tessitura. Repertoire for the high coloratura voice type often sidesteps the lowest part of the soprano range, since this is often its weakest area. For the most part, the piece stays just above the first notes of chest register, although it quickly touches D4 in a descending melisma. The fioratura ascends to a quickly articulated D6 in measure 79.

Tessitura: High

The relatively high tessitura is such that the bulk of the piece hovers around the soprano's *secondo passaggio* and above. This tessitura fits very nicely into that of the lyric coloratura soprano.

Vocal Weight Requirements:

Scored for trumpets, violins, cellos, bassoons and basso, the piece combines elements of legato singing and lengthy passages of intricate coloratura. The orchestral textures are generally transparent. Brass and high-sonority winds are used more liberally in the introduction than in the body of the aria, at which time they are used in harmonically supportive and percussive roles. The textures are generally light during the coloratura passages for the soprano. The most obvious technical challenge here is that of vocal stamina. The sheer length of the piece, 116 measures of singing, requires considerable vocal energy. For example, most of the melodic material is written largely in and around the *passaggio*, often featuring rapid coloratura in this area. This kind of vocal writing is naturally taxing and makes these coloratura passages more difficult to execute.

Another example of the requirement for vocal fortitude can be found late in the piece in measures 112-116. After much of the energy needed to sustain this allegro aria

has been expended, the soprano is asked to sustain E5 for five measures. Although not especially high in her range, this *passaggio* pitch area is often a weak spot for the soprano, especially the coloratura soprano. The held E5 is more challenging in this context because it is doubled by horns and accompanied by full orchestral textures. Cavalieri's young age taken into consideration, Salieri's careful attention to spare orchestration at other times in this aria may speak less to her voice classification than to her physical maturity as a singer. We will see in *Der Rauchfangkehrer* that his later approach revealed her ability to produce powerful resonance in all areas of her voice combined with her skill for coloratura.

Agility Requirements:

The aria is brilliantly florid and requires formidable agility skill. The melismas are in sixteenth-note figures and include intricate sequential passages in measures 72-76, and rapid scalar patterns in measures 61-68, and 78-79. The scale culminating in the short D6, shown in example 3, was Cavalieri's signature and would be a staple feature of the bravura arias written for her. Example 3, shown below, shows a typical setting of this. John Rice considers this aria to be evidence of Salieri's emphasis on agility training for Cavalieri.¹³³

¹³³ Ibid., 288, 289.

Example 3

“Se spiegar potessi appieno,” *La finta scema* (Salieri, 1775), measures 77-79.



2. “Himmel, hör jetzt meine Bitte”¹³⁴

Die Bergknappen; singspiel in one act by Ignaz Umlauf to a libretto by Paul

Weidmann; Vienna, Burgtheater, 17 February 1778.¹³⁵

Ignaz Umlauf (1746-1796) was a Viennese composer and violist in the Viennese court orchestra from 1772.¹³⁶ In 1776, he was appointed Kapellmeister of the newly established Nationalsingspiel for which he wrote the inaugural opera, *Die Bergknappen*.¹³⁷ The role of Sophie was composed for Cavalieri and helped to establish her prominence in the singspiel company.¹³⁸

Range: D4-B-flat 5

Tessitura: High

¹³⁴ Score used: Ignaz Umlauf, *Die Bergknappen*, edited by Robert Haas, Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich 36 (Graz: Akademische Druck-und Verlagsanstalt, 1959), 59-65.

¹³⁵ Thomas Bauman, “*Die Bergknappen*,” in *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/O006689> (accessed February 26, 2012).

¹³⁶ Peter Branscombe, “Ignaz Umlauf,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, edited by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1992), 4:863-864.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Hertz., 17.

Most of the piece lies between primo and secondo passaggi and shows a lyric tessitura.

Vocal Weight Requirements:

This *allegro molto con spirito* reflects Sophie's anger and frustration. Scored for oboes, violins, cello and clavier, its textures are thick, especially as the aria progresses, emphasizing a driving eight-note pulse. At measure 52, Sophie sings a descending scale marked forte and doubled by the entire orchestra save the oboes. Near the end of the aria at measures 56 and 57, she sustains an F5 for two measures over frenetic and full orchestral writing. The tempest of emotions culminates in a vocal line that sweeps through middle register and soars into head voice in half-note values. The aria is written for a substantial voice with a strong resonant middle and a secure head register.

Agility Requirements:

The aria, lyric in scope, presents no real challenges for agility with the exception of a few ascending and descending scalar figures in eighth-note rhythms.

3. "Wenn mir der Himmel lacht"¹³⁹

Die Bergknappen, Umlauf (see description for aria no. 2)

"Wenn mir der Himmel lacht" is a prototype of the kinds of bravura arias for which Cavalieri became known. As the tenth of twenty numbers, it amply provides a brilliant centerpiece for the opera. Its forces are large and the aria is lengthy.

Range: D4-C6 (highest sustained pitch D6)

¹³⁹ *Die Bergknappen*, 70-77.

The range here is similar to that seen in the previous two arias. Though there are a few forays into her lowest register, they are generally short and few. As was typical throughout her career, the aria touches high D.

Tessitura: High

Though the range is wide, most of the aria lies a bit higher than does “Himmel, hör jetzt meine Bitte” especially in the melismatic passages.

Vocal Weight Requirements:

In allegro moderato, “Wenn mir der Himmel lacht” is scored for oboes, C trumpets, violins, cellos and basso. The long introduction features a florid oboe obbligato. Later in the aria, the oboe is heard in melismatic duets with the voice over brilliant and robust orchestral writing. The aria requires vocal size and endurance to manage this lengthy piece. It contains rapid coloratura, wide leaps, long legato lines both in middle and head voice, and vigorous middle-register singing above a heavily orchestrated accompaniment.

Agility Requirements:

The coloratura portions are most often presented as short, intermittent figures in sixteenth-note motion with ascending and descending scalar contours (mm. 71-73 and 94-99.) The piece requires the skill to quickly negotiate between legato singing and vigorous coloratura.

4. “Wenn dem Adler das Gefieder”¹⁴⁰

Der Rauchfangkehrer: musikalisches lustspiel: singspiel in three acts by Antonio Salieri to a libretto by Joseph Auenbrugger; Vienna, Burgtheater, 30 April 1781¹⁴¹

After Salieri’s Italian tour (1778-1780) he was immediately commissioned by Joseph II to compose a German opera for the new singspiel company.¹⁴² “Salieri used the commission as an opportunity to enter the debate over whether the German language was suitable for singing”¹⁴³ since the narrative of the opera takes on this issue. Here, the character Nanette sings triumphantly of her love for a man whom she believes to be an Italian nobleman but who is in reality a German chimneysweep.

“Wenn dem Adler das Gefieder” shows some contrast with Salieri’s earlier approach to writing for Cavalieri. Like “Se spiegar potessi appieno,” it begins with a long and glorious orchestral introduction of twenty-eight measures, replete with brass and timpani in a fanfare style. Similar in length to “Se spiegar potessi appieno” it is an allegro ABA aria with many of the same melodic features. At approximately 26 years of age, Cavalieri would have shown significant vocal development since the writing of *La finta scema* and would have certainly reached physiological maturation.

Range: B-flat 3-D6 (highest sustained pitch C6)

¹⁴⁰ Score used: Antonio Salieri, *Der Rauchfangkehrer*, introduction by Thomas Bauman, German Opera 1770-1800: A Collection of Facsimiles of Printed and Manuscript Full Scores, 14 (New York: Garland Publishing, 1986), 293-318.

¹⁴¹ John A. Rice, “*Der Rauchfangkehrer*,” in *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/O904289> (accessed February 26, 2012).

¹⁴² Rice, *Antonio Salieri*, 295.

¹⁴³ Link, *Divas of Mozart’s Day*, 7.

This element of Salieri's vocal writing in "Wenn dem Adler das Gefieder" shows an important shift in range for Cavalieri. It is apparent that her top range remained intact, but this aria also shows the addition of strong chest-voice singing. The seemingly insignificant addition of a few notes signals a new security in open-chest singing. Depending on the approach, D4, the lowest note written in the *Die Bergknappen* arias, can be sung in chest register or can be approached as the bottom of *primo passaggio* and sung with a chest-middle mixture. B-flat 3, however, especially in competition with an orchestra, is unquestionably a chest tone.

The melodic lines in "Se spiegar potessi appieno" only briefly touched Cavalieri's lower middle register. In "Wenn dem Adler das Gefieder" the melodic line descends to E4, C4, and B-flat 3. Long, legato lines no longer hover at the top of the staff but now soar through middle voice with sweeping ascents through the upper *passaggio*. It is clear that she was at that time capable of producing strong resonance in this register as can be seen in measures 45-50, with sustained melodic material in the staff. The intervallic content clearly shows expansion. There are many large leaps that span more than one register, often from chest to head, by-passing middle. Also seen are large-scale arpeggios that begin in head voice or upper *passaggio* and end in chest register. In measures 119-121, after a series of gymnastic ascending and descending melismas, the soprano has a descending arpeggio beginning on B-flat 5 and ending on B-flat 3, yet she still had easy command of a sustained high C with coloratura reaching to D6.

Tessitura: Medium/High

With a downward expansion of range comes a natural drop in tessitura. Although much of the aria still shows Cavalieri's powerful head register, the bulk of the piece lies a

bit lower than does “Se spiegar potessi appieno.” The tessitura of this aria is generally consistent with that of the lyric soprano voice.

Vocal Weight Demands:

Scored for trumpets, oboes, bassoons, violins, cellos, timpani, and basso, “Wenn dem Adler das Gefieder” exhibits many of the elements of “Se spiegar potessi appieno,” not the least of which is the requirement of vocal stamina. Though Salieri included many of the same general features found in the earlier composition, this aria contains some important differences. In “Se spiegar potessi appieno” we see light supportive orchestration that rarely pairs the voice with brass and almost never doubles the melody. In the present aria, we hear a strong orchestral presence throughout the aria. In this aria, measures 32-37 show that the C trumpets provide sustained, chordal harmonic texture in their lower range and then ascend an octave in percussive figures to compliment the soprano’s three-measure sustained F4. Most high-tessitura coloratura sopranos would be daunted by the demands of sustaining this *passaggio* note with brass reinforcements. During this cadential passage, the strings and winds either double the soprano’s melody or move with it in thirds. These features, together with the fact that Salieri made ample use of Cavalieri’s top notes, C6 and D6, seem to suggest that her voice had not lost its range, but may instead have expanded in size.

Agility Requirements:

Salieri’s expansion of the range and lowering of the tessitura in “Wenn dem Adler das Gefieder” is evident in his treatment of his melismatic writing. Rather than confining the coloratura to the upper *passaggio* and head voice, as is the case with “Se spiegar potessi appieno,” the melismas span much of the compass of the piece. Descending scales

and half-scales are relentlessly repeated at the same pitch levels. There are long passages of repeated scalar ascents and descents, such as those seen in measures 61-72. An interesting innovation in this piece for Cavalieri is the introduction of melismatic repeating figures which contain neighbor motions at a half step apart in the upper *passaggio*, such as those in measure 67. This device is seen later in Mozart's "Bester Jüngling!" (*Der Schauspieldirektor*, 1786). "Wenn dem Adler das Gefieder" certainly supports Gidwitz' description of Cavalieri's singing as "athletic."¹⁴⁴

5. "Ah, non lasciarmi"¹⁴⁵

Der Rauchfangkehrer, Salieri, (see description for aria no. 4)

"Ah non lasciarmi" is one of the four arias Salieri composed in Italian for *Der Rauchfangkehrer*.¹⁴⁶ This short cantabile with recitative is not the showpiece that "Wenn dem Adler das Gefieder" was intended to be. As a song outside the action, the words are taken from Metastasio's opera *Didone abbandonata*. This text was set by many composers, including Mozart who set it as a concert aria, K. 486a.

Range: E4-E6 (highest sustained pitch B5)

The range of this aria presents compelling evidence for the absence of an upper extension register for Cavalieri. The piece presents an impressive range with the inclusion of E6, a pitch heretofore unperformed by Cavalieri. However, it appears that

¹⁴⁴ Gidwitz, "Ich bin die erste Sängerin," 566.

¹⁴⁵ *Der Rauchfangkehrer*, 357-360.

¹⁴⁶ Link, *Divas of Mozart's Day*, 7.

Salieri later transposed the aria down. Gidwitz asserts that “Salieri wrote an [E6] for Cavalieri in his single German opera for Vienna, *Der Rauchfangkehrer*. The autograph, however, transmits a version of the aria with a marking to transpose the piece down a major 2nd, an indication that . . . Salieri had initially miscalculated her capacities.”¹⁴⁷ The fact that Cavalieri was apparently unable to sing E6 is a strong indicator that she did not possess the characteristic coloratura extension register. None of her later repertoire includes a note higher than D6 and that note seldom, if ever, appears as a sustained pitch.

Tessitura: Medium

The high tessitura of this piece is more similar to Salieri’s earlier compositions for Cavalieri than “Wenn dem Adler das Gefieder.”

Vocal Weight Demands:

Scored for violins, violas and basso, the texture is comparatively light. The violins have a three-note figure on each beat above the melody that provide a delicacy of sonority and support the plaintiveness of the text. Though Cavalieri’s singing is generally characterized by power and volume, the finesse needed for such an aria is reported to have been more characteristic of a singer such as Lange than it was for Cavalieri.¹⁴⁸ Though Cavalieri was certainly best known for her powerful, athletic, and agile singing, the requirements of this aria may attest to the possibility that she was indeed capable of a less forceful approach.

Agility Requirements:

¹⁴⁷ Gidwitz, “Ich bin die erste Sngerin,” 575.

¹⁴⁸ Gidwitz, “Ich bin die erste Sngerin,” 566, 568.

The main technical challenge of this piece for Cavalieri is that it contains high tessitura melismas that slowly meander rather than fire in rapid succession. For any singer, regulating air speed to control relatively slow, measured, and legato melismas, especially in upper voice, demands considerable technical skill.

6. 1782, “Ach, ich liebe”¹⁴⁹

Die Entführung aus dem Serail; singspiel in three acts, K. 384, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart to a libretto by Christoph Friederich Bretzner, adapted and enlarged by Gottlieb Stephanie the Younger; Vienna, Burgtheater, 16 July 1782.¹⁵⁰

Catarina Cavalieri is probably best known as Mozart’s first Constanze in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. “Ach, ich liebe” begins with a short adagio followed by an extended allegro. Though not the tour de force that is “Martern aller Arten,” it commands formidable skill in its own right. It was this aria that precipitated the comment from Mozart to his father that “I have rather sacrificed Constanze’s aria ‘Ach ich liebe’ to the flexible throat of Mlle Cavalieri... I have endeavored to express her feelings so far as an Italian bravura aria will admit of it.”¹⁵¹ This aria expresses Constanze’s pain and despair at being separated from her beloved Belmonte and being forced to join the harem of Pasha Selim. Its floridity, as Mozart suggested, tends to belie the text.

Range: F4-D6 (highest sustained pitch B-flat 5)

¹⁴⁹ Score used: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, edited by Gerhard Croll, *Neue Mozart Ausgabe*, series 2, workgroup 5, vol. 2 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1982), 119-131.

¹⁵⁰ Julian Rushton, “*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, edited by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1992), 2:53.

¹⁵¹ Anderson, *The Letters of Mozart*, II:768.

“Ach ich liebte” is similar in range to the early arias, with the exception that it does not include a sustained high C, but a B-flat 5. Of Cavalieri’s arsenal of skills, the only one not exploited here was her command of chest register.

Tessitura: High

The arpeggiated opening in the Adagio moves from F4 to F5, leaping from lower to upper *passaggio* over a pulsating sixteenth-note chordal texture in the strings. The first twelve measures of the Allegro lie almost exclusively in middle register, accompanied by robust orchestration, with a few brief forays into head voice on A-flat 5. At measure 27, however, the tessitura abruptly shifts upwards and a series of high melismas follows.

Vocal Weight Demands:

“Ach ich liebte” is akin to earlier repertoire for Cavalieri, in that it demands stamina for its length, in its requirement for strong resonance in middle register, and in its medium/high and high tessitura singing. Its scoring for oboes, B clarinets, B trumpets, violins, violas and basso provides an ample but not excessively thick accompaniment texture.

Agility Requirements:

Most of the coloratura found here is set in eighth-note figures. However, measures 43-45 show the sixteenth-note figures Cavalieri had sung in Salieri’s compositions. Even so, there is less of the intricate coloratura that was seen in the early arias composed for her by Salieri. The aria demands one hundred measures of allegro singing with strong middle-voiced, melismatic sections that involve repeated ascending scales such as seen in measures 109-110. Measure 36 shows repeated staccato notes on D6. Overall, its

melismatic characteristics are somewhat less strenuous than had been present in “Wenn dem Adler das Gefieder,” “Se spiegar potessi appieno” or “Wenn mir der Himmel lacht.”

7. “Martern aller Arten”¹⁵²

Die Entführung aus dem Serail, Mozart, (see description of aria no. 6)

“Martern aller Arten” may well be the centerpiece of Cavalieri’s career. Sixty measures of allegro orchestral introduction inaugurate this enormous and quintessential soprano showpiece. Written in C major and scored for C clarinets, bassoons, C trumpets, C trombones, timpani, flutes, oboes, violins, violas, cellos and basso, it is in four sections: *allegro*, *allegro assai*, *primo tempo*, and *allegro assai*. The principal features of this aria are energetic mid-range singing over strong orchestral accompaniment and coloratura that encompasses most of Cavalieri’s range. Depending on tempi and cuts, the average performance length of this aria is approximately nine minutes. It demands the vocal power and dramatic intensity in all registers that are characteristic of a full lyric soprano, yet requires accomplished coloratura skill and flexibility to sustain wide leaps spanning all three registers.

Range: B 3-D6 (highest sustained pitch C6)

Tessitura: Medium/High

Constanze’s initial entrance in the first allegro outlines a C major triad, squarely in middle register and doubled by the entire string section. Although the general tessitura of this section is low compared to Salieri’s arias for Cavalieri, it certainly reflects the expansion in range seen in “Wenn dem Adler das Gefieder.” Measures 118-128 show an

¹⁵² *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, 186-229.

excellent example of medium/high-tessitura singing above busy orchestral textures in that the soprano is asked to carry a melody line that sits in middle and lower-middle areas above an orchestral sixteenth-note ascending scale spanning several octaves and shared by strings and winds. The tessitura of the allegro assai is a bit higher, providing an opportunity for somewhat lighter, less taxing singing.

Vocal Weight Demands:

The real difficulties with this extended aria center not so much around agility as they do on endurance and power. The tempi are “fast” and “faster” and the soprano is not given much opportunity to rest once she begins. In addition to this, she is expected to push the limits of her compass with a range of B3 to D6, all the while soaring above the orchestra in all areas of her voice, often with wide leaps and dramatic plunges.

Near the end of the first allegro section, the soprano is asked to maintain a sustained descending line in amply orchestrated whole notes from E4 to B3. The singer has only a few measures to rest at the end of the first allegro before she begins the allegro assai. The tessitura of this section is a bit higher, lying in upper middle voice and upper *passaggio*, yet the orchestral textures are thicker and even more energetic than in the allegro. The elevated tessitura in this section attests to Mozart’s astuteness concerning the voice. Although *passaggio* singing is taxing, it is less so for a soprano than the demand to produce strong resonance in middle voice above an orchestra, such as we saw in the allegro. Though the tessitura here is generally higher than in the first section, we see a similar whole-note motion leading to B2, as in the allegro. This is immediately followed by an ascending melisma, repeated staccato eighth notes on B5, culminating in four measures of sustained C6 above a full orchestra.

Agility Requirements:

The coloratura sections found in “Marten aller Arten” are rigorous and difficult. Each section contains both coloratura flourishes and sustained singing. At the end of this technically demanding aria is a climax with a twelve-measure succession of rapid eighth-note melismas which dip into lower middle voice and ascend to C6, all doubled by the entire string section. The sixteenth-note melismas found in this aria tend to be presented in shorter passages, similar to those seen in “Wenn mir der Himmel lacht,” and separated by legato singing or held upper-register notes. The longest coloratura passage is at the end of the aria set vigorously in a relentless succession of eighth notes. The importance of the eighth note melisma as contrasted with rapid sixteenth note coloratura is that the eighth note figures require heavier, more dramatic production and are often accompanied by thick orchestration. This extended aria demands both types. The voice cadences in “Marten aller Arten” appropriately with the text “der Tod” moving from G5 to C5.

8. “Staremo in pace”¹⁵³

La scuola de gelosi; dramma giocoso in two acts by Antonio Salieri to a libretto by Caterino Mazzolà, Venice, 1778;¹⁵⁴ Vienna, 22 April 1783.¹⁵⁵

La scuola de gelosi, composed in 1778, was revived in Vienna in 1783 for the inaugural performance of Joseph’s new *buffa* company.¹⁵⁶ “Staremo in pace” was

¹⁵³ Score used: Antonio Salieri, *La scuola de gelosi*, manuscript score, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Musiksammlung, A-Wn KT 220.

¹⁵⁴ John A. Rice, “*La scuola de gelosi*” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, edited by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1992), 4:278.

¹⁵⁵ Angermüller, I:218.

composed as an insertion aria for Cavalieri who adopted the role of Ernestina. By 1783, at 28 years of age, her vocal characteristics and general technique would have been well set and she had established herself as a young professional singer. The aria is in three sections: *allegro spiritoso*, *larghetto* and *tempo primo*. After a short, energetic orchestral introduction, the aria takes off in much the same manner as the showpieces she had become accustomed to singing. Its tessitura and range are similar to those of “Wenn dem Adler das Gefieder.”

Range: C4-D6 (highest sustained pitch C#6)

Here, Salieri employs some of the same devices found in his early arias for Cavalieri such as melodic intervals characterized by wide leaps and descents spanning two or more registers, long, strenuous legato lines and full orchestral textures that often double the melody line.

Tessitura: Medium/High

Although the tessitura of the allegro section is high, the larghetto section shows a slight drop so that this aria does not maintain a high tessitura throughout.

Vocal Weight Demands:

The aria is scored for trumpets, oboes, violins, violas, bassoons and basso. The orchestral texture in the larghetto is limited to strings and the melody is not doubled. The sparseness of the accompaniment, the lower tessitura, and the absence of difficult coloratura would certainly give the singer an opportunity to rest considering the rigorous, hefty singing needed for the allegro and tempo primo sections. The tempo primo employs the bravura elements of long soaring legato lines, wide leaps to C5 and D5, and powerful arpeggios.

¹⁵⁶ Rice, *Antonio Salieri*, 309.

Agility Requirements:

Some interesting contrasts from Salieri's earlier writings for Cavalieri are evident. A striking departure can be seen in his treatment of the coloratura. Previous arias such as "Se spiegar potessi appieno" and "Wenn dem Adler das Gefieder" were marked by wildly florid, sometimes lengthy coloratura passages that, especially in the case of "Wenn dem Adler das Gefieder," spanned several octaves. In this aria, the difficulty level of the coloratura has clearly been scaled back. In the allegro, there are moments of high coloratura, but they are short. Measures 37-40 show this kind of writing with doubling in the strings. Melismatic passages that are longer than one measure are composed as neighbor-tone triplet figures that are, in essence, simple embellishments of a core quarter-note melody. These triplet figures, similar to those seen in Mozart's "Der Hölle Rache kocht in meinem Herzen" and Mme. Silberklang's allegro section in the Der Schauspieldirektor trio, are impressive, but do not demand the skill that some of Cavalieri's earlier, more intricate coloratura passages required. The larghetto section contains almost no coloratura with the exception of a small section at measures 72-74 that employs a triplet figure or two.

9. 1785, “Vorrei sprezzar la sorte”¹⁵⁷

Aria composed by Salieri for insertion in *Giulio Sabino*; *dramma per musica* in three acts by Giuseppe Sarti to a libretto by Pietro Giovannini, Venice, 1781; Vienna, 4 August 1785.¹⁵⁸

“Vorrei sprezzar la sorte” was composed by Salieri as an insertion aria for Cavalieri’s 1785 performance as Epponina in Sarti’s *Giulio Sabino*. This lovely aria is in a larghetto tempo and is considerably less extensive than some of the other arias written for her.

Range: E4-A5 (highest sustained pitch A5)

The range of this aria is short, only reaching to A5, in contrast to her characteristic ascents to D6. It stands in stark contrast to previous arias such as “Wenn dem Adler das Gefieder” and “Martern aller Arten.”

Tessitura: Medium

The medium tessitura of this aria certainly does not exploit the arsenal of the typical high coloratura soprano. Although middle-voiced, cantabile singing should be the domain of all voice types, the best writing for coloratura soprano does not sit almost exclusively in passaggio and below.

Vocal Weight Demands:

The melodic line lacks the soaring legato characteristic of Cavalieri’s typical virtuoso pieces but exhibits rhythmically punctuated, sometimes fragmented melodies that follow a generally descending motion. Although the orchestration calls for trumpets,

¹⁵⁷ Score used: Antonio Salieri, “Vorrei sprezzar la sorte,” insertion aria in Giuseppe Sarti, *Giulio Sabino*, manuscript score, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Musiksammlung, A-Wn KT 188.

¹⁵⁸ Link, *National Court Theatre*, 66.

bassoons and oboes, violins, violas and basso predominate. The general quality of the orchestration is transparent, although Salieri consistently asks forte of the orchestra. This is possibly attributable to the fully lyric quality that had developed in Cavalieri's voice.

Agility Requirements:

The aria demands little of the athleticism seen in earlier arias but is of a more delicate, declamatory nature. Its demands are not dissimilar to those of "Ah, non lasciarmi" in that it requires a certain delicacy of vocal production. It characterizes far less agility and flexibility than did some of Cavalieri's earlier repertoire.

10. 1785, "Fra l'oscure ombre funeste"¹⁵⁹

Davidde penitente; oratorio for three soloists, chorus and orchestra by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, K. 469 to a text likely by Lorenzo Da Ponte,¹⁶⁰ Vienna 13 March 1785.¹⁶¹

Davidde penitente was composed for an Easter benefit concert of the Tonkünstler Societät, a fund-raising organization for the widows and orphans of musicians.¹⁶² Material for the cantata was taken from Mozart's Mass in C minor, K. 427 (417a) with a

¹⁵⁹ Score used: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Davidde penitente*, edited by Monika Holl, *Neue Mozart Ausgabe*, series 1, workgroup 4, vol. 3 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1987), 78-92.

¹⁶⁰ "Davidde penitente" in *The New Oxford Companion to Music*, edited by Denis Arnold (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 1:540.

¹⁶¹ Angermüller, I:298.

¹⁶² Link, *Divas of Mozart's Day*, 6.

different text by Lorenzo Da Ponte.¹⁶³ “Tra l’oscure ombre funeste” was a new composition written for the cantata specifically with Cavalieri’s voice in mind.¹⁶⁴

The aria requires the vocal characteristics of stamina, a resonant middle register, a powerful chest voice, and a secure top range while at once requiring skill for agility, and flexibility. It is in two sections, an andante in C minor and an allegro in C major. It features lovely, elegant melodies in the andante section that are characterized by wide leaps and drops between head and chest tones. It also includes slow melismas.

Range: B-flat3-C6

Cavalieri’s signature ascent to a short D6 is not present here. Characteristically, melismatic arias for Cavalieri include this feature. However, “Tra l’oscure ombre funeste” shows similar treatment, but this time culminating in high C. This reflects a slight lowering of the tessitura of this piece as related to some of the earlier arias.

Tessitura: Medium/High

The medium-high tessitura features plunges from head register into low chest voice.

Vocal Weight Demands:

Scored for flutes, oboes, bassoons, C trumpets, violins, violas and bassi, the orchestration is dense, particularly under the areas of low chest singing. Measures 42 - 49 show especially thick orchestral textures at points of the lowest melodic material for the soprano. The aria highlights Cavalieri’s reputation as having had a strong low register. The allegro, though fast in tempo, requires sustained legato singing in middle and upper voice as well as a preponderance of long held notes in *passaggio* and above. The

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

orchestration in the allegro tends to be lighter in texture than in the andante, which could suggest that, because of the ample size of her voice, it was necessary for her to scale back a bit to sing the allegro section. Here, the accompaniment is often limited to strings and employs richer orchestral flourishes when the voice is silent.

Agility Requirements:

There are moments of rapid coloratura, although this element is not an outstanding feature of this aria. Measures 130-136 illustrate short ascending and descending sixteenth-note figures separated by rests. These figures are generally high in tessitura and often quickly touch C6.

11. “Per pietà deh ricercate”¹⁶⁵

L'incontro inaspettato; commedia per musica in two acts by Vincenzo Righini to a libretto by Nunziato Porta; Vienna, 27 April 1785¹⁶⁶

“Righini was the most sought-after voice teacher in Vienna in the 1780s . . .”¹⁶⁷

Aurora’s aria “Per pietà deh ricercate” is a lovely example of Righini’s compositions for Cavalieri. It is in two sections, larghetto and allegro assai. The aria in B-flat begins with an extended orchestral introduction that includes a clarinet obbligato. In the larghetto, the soprano begins an elegant and legato ascending melodic line. The high-tessitura, falling

¹⁶⁵ Score used: Vincenzo Righini, *L'incontro inaspettato*, manuscript score, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Musiksammlung, A-Wn KT 220.

¹⁶⁶ Angermüller, I:299.

¹⁶⁷ Link, *Divas of Mozart's Day*, 7.

and swelling melody features some melismatic movement. The opera employs a plot also used by Mozart (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*), Gluck, Haydn, and others.

Range: E-flat 4-D6 (highest sustained pitch C6)

This aria suggests that Cavalieri, at thirty years of age, must have certainly maintained her range and flexibility. The melodic contour is, in general, arpeggiated or stepwise, including a breathtaking leap from G4 to C6 near the end of the *largetto*.

Tessitura: Medium/High

The piece features slow melismatic movement that lies in the soprano upper *passaggio*. This is challenging for the singer because of its tendency to tax the voice. Cavalieri apparently had the skill to spin high, slow melismas such as that found in measures 29-33 and again in measure 38, shown below in Example 4. This passage encompasses two full octaves from D4 to D6.

Example 4

“Per pietà deh ricercate,” *L'incontro inaspettato* (Righini, 1785), mm. 37-40



Vocal Weight Demands:

“Per pietà deh ricercate” is scored for clarinet, bassoon, B trumpets, violins, violas and basso. The accompaniment in the *larghetto* is almost exclusively restricted to light string and basso texture with the addition of the clarinet. The *allegro* section employs thicker orchestral textures than in the *larghetto* and the voice is often doubled by the horns, especially in the final measures of the aria. An example can be seen in measures 106-110. “Per pietà deh ricercate” demands substantial vocal stamina for its length and, at times, its thick accompaniment texture.

Agility Requirements:

What is particularly interesting about this aria is the *allegro assai*. As has been shown, Cavalieri’s early career was distinguished, in part, by her ability to sing rapid coloratura. However, this *allegro* section contains almost no coloratura. It features legato singing in half and quarter-note motion. In measures 53-57, we see movement in a passage of eighth-note figures whose contour follows an ascending and descending scalar pattern, but there is nothing in this section that at all resembles the coloratura composed for her in her early twenties.

12. “Col zeffiro e col rio”¹⁶⁸

La fiera di Venezia; commedia per musica in three acts by Antonio Salieri to a libretto by Giovanni Boccherini; Vienna, Burgtheater,¹⁶⁹ 1772; revival, 12 September 1785¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Score used: Antonio Salieri, *La fiera di Venezia*, manuscript score, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Musiksammlung, A-Wn Mus. HS. 16185.

“Col zeffiro e col rio” was composed for Cavalieri in the role of Colloandra that she adopted for the opera’s 1785 revival. This lovely *adagio ma non molto* aria employs a shimmering accompaniment of strings, winds and basso. The phrases are short or punctuated by rests, partly to depict the sighing and sobbing indicated in the text, but also to support pacing of the breath and vocal energy in this difficult piece.

Range: F4-C6

Tessitura: High

Much of Cavalieri’s repertoire up to this point included high-tessitura melodies. This aria has a compactness of tessitura in that it hovers between C5 and F4. Its cantabile melody is punctuated by small sixteenth-note figures. Most of the aria lies in or around the soprano upper *passaggio*, which can be fatiguing for any singer. Although the aria is not terribly long in comparison to some of the earlier bravura arias, only 50 measures of singing, its slow tempo and somewhat high tessitura require careful pacing.

Vocal Weight Demands:

Scored for violins, violas flutes, oboes, trumpets, bassoons and basso, the accompanying textures are fairly transparent. However, the relentless movement of the melody through the soprano upper *passaggio* is strenuous and requires strong vocal energy. On the whole, however, this aria does not require the endurance of arias such as “Martern aller Arten” or “Per pietà deh ricercate.”

¹⁶⁹ John A. Rice, “*La fiera di Venezia*,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, edited by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1992), 2:187.

¹⁷⁰ Link, *National Court Theatre*, 68.

Agility Requirements:

The melodic line is often quite melismatic. Measures 36-39 show an ascending scalar figure that begins two measures of melisma. For the most part, the coloratura in the aria is confined to the upper half of Cavalieri's range. In measures 59-63, the piece ends with an extended thirty-second-note melisma that reaches its climax in a sustained C5 just before the singer's final cadence. It is important to note that all of the coloratura in this aria is written in the context of an adagio tempo. The great flexibility and skill required for the control of such high melismatic singing cannot be overstated, yet again we see an aria written for Cavalieri that seems to avoid the rapid coloratura of earlier compositions for her. As in some of her later arias, she had clearly maintained her range, stamina and flexibility. However, this aria supports a possible move towards less rapid coloratura and more lyric singing for Cavalieri.

13. 1786, "Bester Jüngling!"¹⁷¹

Der Schauspieldirektor; comedy in one act with music by Mozart, K. 486, written by Gottlieb Stephanie the Younger; Vienna, Schönbrunn Orangerie, 7 February 1786.¹⁷²

"Bester Jüngling!" is one of five musical numbers composed for *Der Schauspieldirektor*. The play, performed by the German troupe, was one of two entertainments commissioned by Joseph II and presented in honor of the Governor-

¹⁷¹ Score used: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Der Schauspieldirektor*, edited by Gerhard Croll, *Neue Mozart Ausgabe*, series 2, workgroup 5, vol. 15 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1958), 34-40.

¹⁷² Julian Rushton, "Der Schauspieldirektor," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, edited by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1992), 1:213.

General of the Netherlands at Schönbrunn Palace.¹⁷³ The other was Salieri's one-act opera *Prima la musica e poi le parole*, performed by the *buffa* troupe. Cavalieri sang the role of Madame Silberklang.

Range: E-flat 4-B-flat 5 (highest sustained pitch B-flat 5)

In comparison to the top range (D6) of "Da schlägt das Abschiedsstunde" for Mme Herz, "Bester Jüngling!" shows continued evidence of the lyricism that Cavalieri's voice had acquired. Though logically there would be a contrast in the music between the two characters as evidenced in their music, the fact remains that Cavalieri was given the lower part. Her top range was not equal to that of Aloysia Lange, for whom Mme Herz was scored, nor, as we have seen, did she enjoy the professional status that Lange did, who was chosen to sing the prima donna role in this opera. Yet Mme. Silberklang's showpiece did not exploit either extreme of Cavalieri's range. If indeed it had, she could still have taken the lower part to Lange, whose range reached G6.

Tessitura: Medium/High

Although the aria frequently reaches into Cavalieri's head range, most of the piece lies between the primo and *secondo passaggi* in middle voice.

Vocal Weight Demands:

This aria is scored for B clarinets, bassoons, trumpets, violins, violas, cello and basso. The orchestral accompaniment is sparse at the beginning of the aria, but as it builds in intensity and moves towards the climactic flourishes near the end, the sonorities become thicker. At measure 18, we see a gradual thickening of accompanying texture. This is especially evident after measure 48. The voice is required to manage sweeping ascending arpeggios, strong middle register singing, and wide leaps.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

Agility Requirements:

This aspect is perhaps the most telling feature for Cavalieri. Although the entire piece requires flexibility to accommodate leaps and ascending arpeggios, there is virtually no agility required before measure 65. Three measures follow that include sixteenth-note figures, but they are short and are separated by eighth-note segments. The aria is a wholesale departure from pieces such as “Martern aller Arten” and “Ach, ich liebte.”

14. 1787, “Impresso ho nell’alma”¹⁷⁴

Il sogno; cantata for three sopranos by Vicente Martin y Soler to a libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte; Vienna 17 March 1787¹⁷⁵

Spanish composer Vicente Martin y Soler (1754-1806) composed in Vienna from 1785 to 1788.¹⁷⁶ “The period in Vienna was the peak of Martin’s career and also a high point in the Italian opera under Joseph II”¹⁷⁷ producing his popular operas *Una cosa rara*, *L’arbore di Diana* and the cantata *Il sogno*.

“Impresso ho nell’ alma” is a short larghetto aria of medium tessitura and range. It lies mostly in the middle register, although there are a few wide leaps. Although this lovely little piece certainly was not composed for the purpose of exploiting Cavalieri’s

¹⁷⁴ Score used: Vicente Martin y Soler, *Il sogno*, vocal edition by Johann Gottfried Schicht (Leipzig: Breitkopf, ca. 1790), 19-21.

¹⁷⁵ Link, *National Court Theatre*, 101, 523.

¹⁷⁶ Dorothea Eva Link, “The Da Ponte Operas of Vicente Martín y Soler” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1991), 9-11.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.

virtuosity, it is interesting that this is but one of several arias of this type composed specifically for her. Delicacy and finesse are not attributes generally ascribed to Cavalieri, yet arias composed for her such as “Vorrei sprezzar la sorte” and “Ah, non lasciarmi” seem to contradict Gidwitz’s thesis that Cavalieri was capable only of forceful, vigorous singing.¹⁷⁸ The composers of these arias must have understood her to be capable of nuance.

Range: E-flat 4-G5

Given Cavalieri’s immense capabilities, the range of “Impresso ho nell’ alma” is curiously restricted.

Tessitura: Medium

Although Cavalieri had a strong middle register, the tessitura of this aria is more consistent with that of a mezzo-soprano.

Vocal Weight Demands:

Scoring and tessitura make this piece suitable for most soprano voices. The accompaniment texture is thick at times. This, combined with the lowered tessitura, suggests that a lyric voice is indicated. A lighter vocal instrument may have difficulty with strong resonance in the middle register, but by this time, Cavalieri had more than adequately demonstrated her capabilities in this regard.

Agility Requirements: None

¹⁷⁸ Gidwitz, “Ich bin die erste Sngerin,” 568.

15. “Mi tradi quell’alma ingrata”¹⁷⁹

Don Giovanni; opera buffa in two acts by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart K. 527 to a libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte; Prague 1787; Vienna 7 May 1788¹⁸⁰

Compared to the arias written for Constanze, the Silberklang music from *Der Schauspieldirektor* shows a slight downward shift in range and tessitura and a significant reduction in agility requirements. “Mi tradi quell’alma ingrata” shows a further step in Mozart’s apparent move towards less florid and more lyric writing for Cavalieri. If “Martern aller Arten” is the centerpiece aria of Cavalieri’s career, “Mi tradi quell’alma ingrata” may represent her coming of age. The aria represents full lyric singing that reflects the dramatic complexity of Donna Elvira. Though she knows Giovanni’s true character, she feels pity for him and feels compelled to warn him of danger.

Range: D4-B-flat5

The aria was originally scored in E-flat major, but was transposed to D major, thus lowering the range to C# 4-A5. The aria appears to have been a late insertion, probably in Vienna and possibly as late as one week before the Vienna premiere.¹⁸¹ Dexter Edge speculates that although it is possible that Mozart could have misjudged Cavalieri’s capabilities, it is far more likely that the transposition was related to the

¹⁷⁹ Score used: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Don Giovanni*, edited by Wolfgang Plath and Wolfgang Rehm, *Neue Mozart Ausgabe*, series 2, workgroup 5, vol. 17 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1968), 511-523.

¹⁸⁰ Julian Rushton, “*Don Giovanni*” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, edited by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1992), 1:1203.

¹⁸¹ Dexter Edge, “Mozart’s Viennese Copyists” (PhD diss., The University of Southern California, 2001), 1806.

sequence of keys in the opera.¹⁸² On this premise, Edge refutes Gidwitz' suggestion in "Ich bin die erste Sngerin" that the aria was transposed as a result of a decline in Cavalieri's singing and her inability to sing B-flat 5.¹⁸³

Tessitura: Medium/High

Whether the aria was performed in the original or the transposed key, it presents a lower tessitura than had been written for Cavalieri earlier in her career. Though "Ach, ich liebe" (1782), for example, has B-flat 5 as its highest sustained pitch, it has passages of high coloratura that linger in secondo *passaggio* and above. "Mi tradi quell' alma ingrata" contains melismas with longer note values that sweep through middle voice, barely reaching above secondo *passaggio*.

Vocal Weight Requirements:

Compared to the coloratura display pieces in Cavalieri's early repertoire, including "Martern all Arten," the demands for vocal size in this aria are considerable. Julian Rushton observes that "for Cavalieri (Donna Elvira) Mozart directed her 'flexible throat' to supremely dramatic ends" in "Mi tradi quell' alma ingrata."¹⁸⁴ It is an allegretto aria, characterized by ascending arpeggios followed by descending scales and features dramatic leaps and driving eighth-note melismas. The aria is scored for clarinets, oboes, violins, bassoons, cello and basso. After a lengthy and substantially orchestrated recitative, the soprano is asked to compete in her middle range with sweeping arpeggios and scalar figures in the orchestra, especially in the B section, which are often in unison.

¹⁸² Ibid., 1807.

¹⁸³ Gidwitz, "Ich bin die Erste Sngerin," 575.

¹⁸⁴ Julian Rushton, *Mozart* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 159.

The demands of strong mid-range singing, medium high tessitura, and dramatic intensity indicate a large vocal instrument capable of agility.

Agility Requirements:

The melismatic writing in “Mi tradi quell’alma ingrata” would be challenging for a lyric coloratura because of its relatively long (eighth as opposed to sixteenth) note values, its tessitura, and its full orchestrations. In fact, this style of writing is best suited to the fully developed lyric. Though a coloratura soprano could certainly manage these melismas as easily as an agile lyric could sing rapid coloratura, the appropriateness of vocal weights, given dramatic content and sheer carrying power, must be taken into consideration.

16. “Dove sono i bei momenti”¹⁸⁵

Le nozze di Figaro; *commedia per musica* in four acts by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart K. 492 to a libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte; Vienna, 1 May 1786;¹⁸⁶ revival, 19 August 1789.¹⁸⁷

“Dove sono i bei momenti” was originally composed in 1786 but was revised for the Vienna revival in 1789 for Cavalieri who adopted the role of the Countess.¹⁸⁸ The aria

¹⁸⁵ Score used: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, “Dove sono i bei moment,” in “*Le nozze di Figaro*”: *Eight Variant Versions*, edited by Alan Tyson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 31-38.

¹⁸⁶ Julian Rushton, “*Le nozze di Figaro*,” in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/O003136> , (accessed February 26, 2012).

¹⁸⁷ Link, *National Court Theatre*, 125.

¹⁸⁸ Alan Tyson, preface, “*Le nozze di Figaro*.” *Eight Variant Versions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

is in two sections, an andantino and an allegro. In the original andantino, the original theme returns after a cadence in the dominant key. In the revision the return to the original melodic theme is omitted and the dominant cadence ends the section. At the beginning of the allegro in the revision, seven transitional measures are added that lead to the allegro taken from the original version. These measures contain sustained ascending vocal line through the middle register above sixteenth-note figuration in the strings. Later in the allegro, eleven measures are added, most of which are similar to the eighth note melismatic style found at the same point in the original version. This revised aria is consistent with Mozart's writing for Cavalieri at this point in her career. For the coloratura soprano, the revision of this aria not only fails to exploit her strongest attributes such as facility for rapid coloratura and high-tessitura singing but instead, requires sustained singing in her lower-middle range over sometimes thick orchestral writing. For the lyric soprano, on the other hand, this type of composition highlights her strengths such as the dramatic presence of a strong, resonant middle register and a vocal instrument of a somewhat lower tessitura than that of a lyric coloratura.

Range: E-flat 4-A5

It is curious that the revision of this aria specifically for Cavalieri neglected her strong head register. The top range of the piece reaches just above the top of the soprano upper *passaggio*.

Tessitura: Medium

The tessitura of the original "Dove sono i bei momenti" was a bit higher than that of the revision. For example, in the first version, the Countess had sung "di cangiar" in measures 85 and 89 on a sustained A5. However, in the adaptation, Mozart inserted an

extension of the text “mi portasse una speranza” in an eighth-note pattern leading to two-and-a-half measures of sustained G5, a full step lower than in the first version. The revised aria is of similar tessitura to Mozart’s aria of 1788 “Mi tradi quell’ alma ingrata.”

Vocal Weight Demands:

The soprano who sings this aria must have a substantially weighted voice. She must manage full-voiced singing in her middle register and sustained pitches in the *passaggio* area above ample orchestration consisting of oboes, bassoons, violins, violas, cello and basso. It is difficult to imagine that this aria was revised for the type of soprano later known as the coloratura.

Agility Requirements:

The passage in this revision that displays coloratura is found in measures. 44-81. Its eighth-note motion lies mainly in the staff with a single ascending flourish to A5. Compared to the agility requirements of “Martern aller Arten” its demands are minimal.

17. 1789, “Credei, credei da cruda morte”¹⁸⁹

Il natal d’Apollo; cantata for four voices and orchestra by Vincenzo Righini,¹⁹⁰

Vienna 22, December 1789¹⁹¹

Il natal d’Apollo was originally written for a Tonkünstler-Societät concert.¹⁹²

“Credei, credei da cruda morte” is an abrupt and important departure from the style

¹⁸⁹ Score used: Vincenzo Righini, *Il natal d’Apollo*, manuscript score, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Musiksammlung, A-Wn OA 456.

¹⁹⁰ Dorothea Link, editor, *Arias for Calvesi: Mozart’s First Ferrando* (Middleton, Wisc.: A-R Editions, Inc., 2011), 117.

¹⁹¹ Link, *National Court Theatre*, 149.

composed for Cavalieri by Mozart in her later years. It is of the type and scope of her early bravura arias. Its appearance at this point in her career soundly refutes the idea that Mozart's style of composition for Cavalieri, seen in "Mi tradi quell' alma ingrata" and "Dove sono i bei momenti," shows a decline in her singing, as Gidwitz suggests.¹⁹³ Instead, it may hint at the possibility that Mozart chose to explore the lyric qualities that had become evident in her voice. "Credei, credei da cruda morte" confirms that Cavalieri had maintained her range, stamina, and agility and shows compelling evidence for the supposition that the previous arias of lyric quality composed for her revealed the true lyric capabilities of her voice.

Range: D4-D6 (highest sustained pitch C6)

In contrast to "Dove sono i bei momenti," Righini makes full use of Cavalieri's two-and-a-half octave range in this aria. The larghetto begins with only string accompaniment. Although much of the melody lies above B-flat 4, early in this section is a leap from D4 to A-flat 5. Another wide leap to B-flat 5 inaugurates the first allegro section. As is typical of her earlier coloratura show-pieces, D6 is included but not sustained; as usual, C6 is the highest sustained pitch.

Tessitura: Medium/High

The allegro exhibits a higher tessitura than does the larghetto and it is here that the coloratura is present. Rapid coloratura is often easier to negotiate at a relatively high tessitura because of the naturally lighter mechanism.

¹⁹² In the original cast for the 1789 Tonkünstlergesellschaft, Josepha Hofer took the highest role, Erifile, which, incidentally, reached F 6. Cavalieri sang the lower soprano part, Alceo, and Vincenzo Calvesi (1777-1811) took the tenor role, Adrasto. Ignaz Saal (1761-1836) sang the baritone role of Elpenore. Link, *Arias for Calvesi*, 117.

¹⁹³ Gidwitz, "Cavalieri, Catarina," 82.

Vocal Weight Demands:

The aria's requirements are immense. It demands legato singing in middle-range and chest voice, and large leaps from chest range into head register. The orchestral textures include oboes, bassoons, trumpets, violins, violas and basso with brass often doubling the voice. The allegro section culminates in a sustained high C with full orchestral doubling. This feature alone attests to the size of the vocal instrument required for this aria and is reminiscent of the challenges found in "Wenn dem Adler das Gefieder" and "Martern aller Arten."

Agility Requirements:

"Credei, credei da cruda morte" represents a return, albeit temporarily, to the former aria style that had been Cavalieri's specialty. This aria in B-flat is lengthy and in four sections, largo, allegro, tempo primo and allegro. It contains many of the features found in her early arias such as "Se spiegar potessi appieno" and "Wenn der Himmel lacht" and is significantly more melismatic than Righini's earlier aria for her, "Per pietà deh ricercate." Measures 41-58 show a sixteen-measure coloratura passage in the allegro. "Credei, credei da cruda morte" illustrates that Cavalieri was certainly still capable of singing bravura-style coloratura arias at the age of thirty-four, although this kind of classic coloratura showpiece had not been written for her since Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in 1782.

Table 2, shown below, lists the seventeen arias composed for Cavalieri, their ranges, tessituras, highest sustained pitches, and the chronological age of Cavalieri when she first performed them. The table shows arias composed for her over the span of fourteen years (1775-1789) and between the chronological ages of 20 and 34. The

examination of the repertoire shows arias that are generally coloratura in composition but reveal a downward shift in tessitura and broadening of coloratura movement beginning in 1781 with “Wenn dem Adler das Gefieder.” Arguably the most strenuous and most definitive of the coloratura roles was that of Constanze in 1782 for which Mozart composed “Märtern aller Arten” and “Ach, ich liebte.” It represented the pinnacle of stamina and agility requirements for Cavalieri. Curiously however, by the 1788 Vienna revival of *Don Giovanni* and subsequent revival of *Le nozze di Figaro* in 1789, we see something quite different. Both “Mi tradi, quell’ alma ingrata” and the revision of “Dove sono, i bei momenti” reflect a much more fully lyric style of vocal writing than had been seen in Cavalieri’s earlier years, and they were lower in tessitura.

Since Cavalieri was in her mid-30s by then, it could be argued that age had diminished her range and rendered her no longer capable of the agility necessary to sing the demanding florid arias of her youth. In this theory, the conclusion would be that Cavalieri was a coloratura soprano who could no longer manage the repertoire. However, in 1789 Vincenzo Righini composed for Cavalieri “Credei, credei da cruda morte.” It was of the style of the early arias with rapid floridity in long sixteenth-note flourishes and featured the characteristic ascent to D6. This aria list suggests that Cavalieri was trained with Salieri’s pedagogy which emphasized agility. As the voice began to settle into its natural Fach, it began to take on full lyric qualities, as evidenced in “Mi tradi, quell’ alma ingrata” and “Dove sono, i bei momenti,” but was, throughout her career, capable of the agility so prized by the teachers of the Italian bel canto of this time period.

Table 2

No	Date	Aria	Range	Tessitura	Highest Sustained Pitch	Age
1	1775	“Se spiegar potessi appieno”	D4/D6	High	C6	20
2	1778	“Himmel, hör jetzt meine Bitte”	D4/B-flat5	High	B-flat5	23
3	1778	“Wenn mir der Himmel lacht”	D4/D6	High	B-flat5	23
4	1781	“Wenn dem Adler das Gefieder”	B-flat3/D6	Medium/High	C6	26
5	1781	“Ah, non lasciarmi”	D4/E6	Medium	B4	26
6	1782	“Martern aller Arten”	B3/D6	Medium/High	B-flat5	27
7	1782	“Ach, ich liebte”	F4/D6	High	C6	27
8	1783	“Staremo in pace”	C4/D6	Medium/High	C-sharp6	28
9	1785	“Vorrei sprezzar la sorte”	E4/A5	Medium	A5	30
10	1785	“Tra l’oscure ombre funeste”	B-flat3/C6	Medium/High	C6	30
11	1785	“Per pietà deh ricercate”	E-flat4/D6	Medium/High	C6	30
12	1785	“Col zeffiro e col rio”	F4/C6	High	C6	30
13	1786	“Bester Jüngling!”	E-flat4/B-flat5	Medium/High	B-flat5	31
14	1787	“Impresso ho nell’alma”	E-flat4/G5	Medium	G5	32
15	1788	“Mi tradi quell’ alma ingrata”	D4/B-flat5	Medium/High	A-flat5	33

16	1789	“Dove sono i bei momenti”	E-flat4/A5	Medium	A5	34
17	1789	“Credei, credei da cruda morte”	D4/D6	Medium/High	C6	34

CHAPTER 5

Der Schauspieldirektor: Cavalieri and Lange

Defining Catarina Cavalieri as an agile lyric soprano opens new possibilities for casting the roles composed for her, especially those in the operas of Mozart. One such interesting role to consider is Madame Silberklang in *Der Schauspieldirektor*, K. 486. For the event planned to take place in the Schönbrunn Orangerie, Joseph commissioned a one-act opera, *Prima la musica e poi le parole*, composed by Salieri and performed by the buffa troupe and a play *Der Schauspieldirektor* with five musical numbers composed by Mozart, performed by the German actors and singers. Joseph's penchant for musical rivalry was evident here in that it pitted Mozart against Salieri, the German spoken and sung theater company against the Italian buffa company, and within *Der Schauspieldirektor*, Cavalieri against Lange, between whom there already existed competition.¹⁹⁴ Gottlieb Stephanie's comic libretto tells the story of an impresario who is starting a new opera company. His struggle with the temperaments and political ploys of two divas, Madame Herz (Lange) and Madame Silberklang (Cavalieri), is the dramatic focus of Mozart's music for the play. Each insists that she should enjoy the status of *prima donna* and the battle of the sopranos ensues.

Patricia Lewy Gidwitz's article "Ich bin die erste Sängerin," provides the framework for the following discussion of *Der Schauspieldirektor*, in which I compare Lange and Cavalieri. Gidwitz notes that Lange's range extended to G6 which confirms

¹⁹⁴ Rice, *Antonio Salieri*, 377.

that she possessed an upper extension register.¹⁹⁵ From among the arias written for Lange, Mozart's "Vorrei spiegarvi, O Dio" (K. 418, 1783) includes a sustained E6 and his "Popoli di Tessaglia" (K. 316, 1779) reaches to G6. Umlauf composed an A6 for her in his singspiel *Das Irrlicht* (1782).¹⁹⁶

Gidwitz states that "the tessitura of their music was different: Lange's most characteristic range was [B4] to [F-sharp 5] while Cavalieri's was somewhat lower, [G4] to [D5]."¹⁹⁷ It is unclear if Gidwitz intends these pitch designations to show tessitura areas. If so, they are arguable but they do show that Cavalieri's voice was of a lower tessitura than was Lange's. She observes the differences in their vocal weights by asserting that "the care that Mozart always took to provide Lange with transparent accompaniment suggests that hers was a light voice, whereas in the arias of Cavalieri, there is much instrumental doubling of her line, and vigorous concertante treatment of strings and/or winds – all indications of her vocal power."¹⁹⁸ This distinction in size differences between their voices is confirmed in the 1781 anonymous review. That comparison stated that Cavalieri's voice was "incomparably stronger" than Lange's.¹⁹⁹

The factors of range, tessitura, and size seem to indicate that Lange was a coloratura soprano complete with high tessitura, upper extension register, and light vocal weight. In light of this, an examination of Cavalieri as a lyric soprano in the role of Mme.

¹⁹⁵ Gidwitz, "Ich bin die erste Sngerin," 566.

¹⁹⁶ Thomas Bauman, *W. A. Mozart, "Die Entfhrung aus dem Serail"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 5.

¹⁹⁷ Gidwitz, "Ich bin die erste Sngerin," 566.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Deutsch, 184.

Silberklang provides an opportunity to contrast her music with Lange, a true coloratura, to highlight the distinctive features and strengths of Cavalieri's voice.

Evidence to support the idea of Cavalieri as a lyric soprano can be found in a comparison of the arias for the two characters. Lange's aria as Mme. Herz, "Da schlägt die Abschiedsstunde," is interestingly similar to the early arias Salieri wrote for Cavalieri except that it is narrower in scope and shorter in length, and therefore requires less endurance than the bravura arias written for Cavalieri. After a mid-voiced larghetto, a brilliant, rather high-tessitura allegro follows with two three-measure passages of rapid sixteenth-note fioratura reaching but not sustaining D6. In contrast, Cavalieri's aria as Mme. Silberklang "Bester Jüngling!," in two parts, andante and allegretto, lies mainly in middle voice, with a few flourishes of coloratura. Below, Examples 5 and 6 compare the coloratura elements of each aria. Notice that Lange's coloratura is characterized by a long sixteenth-note melisma reaching to D6. This passage is almost immediately repeated. In contrast, Cavalieri's coloratura is in a lower tessitura and range and contains short sixteenth-note flourishes interspersed with rests and eighth note movement.

Example 5

Mme. Herz (Lange), no. 1. ariette, "Da schlägt die Abschiedsstunde," mm. 60 – 65

Ba

nd nicht trennt - das fest - ge-knüpft - te Band

Example 6

Mme. Silberklang (Cavaliere), no. 2. rondo, “Bester Jüngling!,” mm. 65 – 71



A second important contrast can be seen in the trio. Each soprano, in turn, takes the stage to prove that she is worthy of top billing. Mme. Herz steps forth and sings the virtues of adagio (see Example 7.) It could be argued that the slow tempo and cantabile style here are indicative of heavier lyric writing, but the orchestration is light and the tessitura high. The centerpiece of her passage, shown below, is the breathtaking leap to a sustained E-flat 6 followed by another leap from D4 to A5. Lange’s ability to sustain E6, together with her light vocal weight and facile agility places her easily in the coloratura *Fach*.

Example 7

Mme. Herz, “Adagio,” mm. 1-8



Mme. Silberklang, not to be outdone, spins out an allegro flourish with a passage of coloratura in triplet movement (see Example 8.) Although the coloratura lies in the secondo *passaggio*, it is of the type that can be managed by virtually any voice type with agility skills, and the general tessitura of her music is lower than that of Mme. Herz. The range reaches to C6 and the orchestral textures, especially in middle-register, are thicker than those of Mme. Herz demanding more vocal substance in mid-range than Lange may have had at her disposal.

Example 8

Mme. Silberklang, “Allegro assai,” mm. 1-10

Al - le - gro, Al - le - gris - si-mo, Al - le

5

8

gro, Al le gris - si-mo!

A comparison of these two excerpts shows the definitive feature of Lange’s music that distinguishes it as written for a coloratura soprano: the sustained E-flat 6. Cavalieri’s music certainly demands flexibility and agility, attributes that were hers in abundance, yet the style of coloratura betrays her fully mature voice size. Eighth-note-triplet coloratura passages are less demanding than the sixteenth-note melismas of her early career even while giving the effect of rapid coloratura.

Later in the trio, the two voices sing in duet. In measures 132-133, they sing a fast ascending flourish as the piece climaxes (see Example 9.) Each soprano presses the limits of her range, Lange with F6 and Cavalieri with D6. The setting here is interesting, for Cavalieri did not have a sustained D6. The top notes are simply touched and followed immediately by an arpeggiated descent. This passage highlights the high ranges of both sopranos and further supports the assertion that Cavalieri was of a lower and heavier *Fach* than Lange, and did not have access to an upper extension register, as Lange did.

Example 9

Mme. Herz

a - deln, ich steh' von mei - ner Ford' rung

Mme. Silberklang

a - deln, ich steh' von mei - ner Ford' rung

S.

ab,

S.

ab,

Mme. Herz and Mme. Silberklang, “Trio,” mm. 132-133

A final contrast can be found in the Finale. In this movement, each soprano has a final chance to speak, this time to extol the virtues of art and to affirm, albeit reluctantly, the idea that selfish ambition should be set aside. Mme. Silberklang opens the finale with a short and spirited allegro. Set in C major, her music lies mainly in middle voice and features eighth-note melismatic movement. At the end of her section, she sings a quick sixteenth-note scale from A4 to C6 and then descends to C5. After the ensemble states

the main theme, Mme. Herz takes the stage. Still in the allegro tempo, her section is much more legato than that of Mme. Silberklang. She finishes with a quick ascending scale similar to Mme. Silberklang's, but more elaborate, and this time in F major. Her top note is F6.

The contrast in Mozart's writing for the two sopranos not only tends to affirm the lyric quality of Cavalieri's voice as compared to that of Lange, but also suggests that Mozart may have recognized Cavalieri's versatility for not only agile singing but also dramatic vocal portrayal. Thinking of Cavalieri as a lyric soprano implies that Mozart had in mind the tessitura, weight, and color of a full lyric soprano in the role of Mme. Silberklang just as he surely must have heard those of a lyric coloratura soprano for Mme. Herz. It would be a stretch to say that coloratura sopranos should not sing Mme. Silberklang and other florid roles that Cavalieri created. In fact, Aloysia Lange adopted the role of Constanze in 1784.²⁰⁰ The fact remains, however, that Cavalieri, for whom these roles were composed, appears not to have been a coloratura soprano. Therefore, historically informed performance would cast the agile lyric soprano instead of the true coloratura soprano in the role of Madame Silberklang.

²⁰⁰ Rushton, *Mozart*, 106.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

To postulate a possible *Fach* for Cavalieri, the process in this essay has been to establish and explain the long-accepted criteria for voice classification and, in the context of contemporary accounts, recent research, and examination of scores, to apply them to the voice of Cavalieri and to her repertoire. The results show her vocal profile to be that of an agile lyric soprano rather than a coloratura soprano on the following grounds:

- 1) Range: she did not possess an upper extension register. Her performable range was B-flat 3 to D6, though her highest sustainable pitch only reached C6. Her range showed the addition of a strong chest register as she matured, while still maintaining her high compass.
- 2) Tessitura: The tessitura of her voice was higher at twenty years of age than it was in her mid-twenties and beyond. The repertoire clearly shows a general lowering as she matured.
- 3) Vocal Weight: She appears to have had a large, resonant voice from the start of her career. This was evident as early as the writing of “Wenn mir der Himmel lacht,” although her repertoire beginning in her mid-twenties shows even more lyric composition for her than had previously been composed for her. These lyric features include an increase in scope of the arias, a thickening of orchestral textures, a marked expansion of intervallic content, and a trend towards relaxation of agility requirements.

4) *Passaggio* Positioning: although we cannot track the actual positioning, we can conclude that the *passaggio* positions dropped with the downward expansion of range and subsequent drop in tessitura.

5) Agility: As Miller has established, all voice types have the capacity to learn rapid coloratura, although coloratura sopranos are more predisposed to agility than are other soprano classifications.²⁰¹ Rice has confirmed that Salieri trained Cavalieri in agility.²⁰² We have seen from the repertoire that her coloratura skill was a great strength throughout her career, but we see a general inclination toward a relaxation of intensity in florid writing for her. In fact, there is significant representation of cantabile vocal composition, especially in the later arias.

Cavalieri's repertoire certainly can be (and is) sung by coloratura sopranos. It may be, however, that this is not the *Fach* the composers had in mind for Cavalieri's roles. Through historically grounded pedagogical analysis, the great voices of the eighteenth century may yet be rediscovered.

²⁰¹ Miller, *Training Soprano Voices*, 56.

²⁰² Rice, *Antonio Salieri*, 288.

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APPENDIX

Chronological List of Quotations about Cavalieri's Voice and Singing²⁰³

Prince Khevenhüller, 19 June 1775, diary entry regarding Cavalieri's performance in *La finta giardiniera*, Anfossi, 1774.²⁰⁴

"[Cavalieri] possessed a very strong chest voice and met with 'well deserved approbation.'"

Joseph Philip von Gebler to Friedrich Nicolai, 9 February 1778, regarding Cavalieri's performance in *Die Bergknappen*.²⁰⁵

"Mlle. Cavalieri, a singer whose organ is extraordinary, with high notes and low notes together with a strong chest, will take the principle role."

²⁰³ Many thanks to Dr. Dorothea Link for her help in compiling this list.

²⁰⁴ Gidwitz, "Cavalieri, Catarina," 81.

²⁰⁵ Rice, *Antonio Salieri*, 282.

Anonymous review, 1781, *Deutsches Museum*.²⁰⁶

“Mlle. Cavalieri’s is incomparably stronger [than Lange’s] but most peculiar in quality; apart from that she is frightfully ugly, has only one eye and both of them act pitiaably.”

M. A. Schmitt, 1781, *Meine Empfindungen im Theater* (review of *Der Rauchfangkehrer*).²⁰⁷

“Demoiselle Cavalieri, who has the reputation among connoisseurs of being one of the first singers, and who through her beautiful singing also pleases the ordinary man, played the girl. Her acting is improving daily and it is noticeable how much more trouble she takes if she is playing with others whose own acting contains more animation and accuracy, and a firmer assurance. In speech she is not yet natural enough: she overemphasizes final syllables and clips the last words of her speeches so much that she becomes unintelligible. Her arms are still a little too stiff, bent too far forward and not loose enough: but she has already considerable expression in her bearing, has fine deportment, and soon will delight us as an actress as much as she does with her voice.”

²⁰⁶ Deutsch, 194.

²⁰⁷ Raeburn, 4:60

W. A. Mozart to Leopold Mozart, 26 September 1781 regarding the composition of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*.²⁰⁸

“I have rather sacrificed Constanze’s aria [‘Ach ich liebte’] a little to the flexible throat of Mlle Cavalier – ‘Trennung war mein banges Loos’ I have endeavored to express her feelings so far as an Italian bravura aria will admit it. I have changed the Hui into schnell so now it stands thus – ‘Doch wie schnell schwand meine Freude.’”

Joseph Martin Kraus, 1 April 1783, diary entry regarding an academy concert on which Cavalieri performed.²⁰⁹

"Signorina Cavalieri has adequate skill and a small, yet well-sounding voice. The first aria in A Major was by Salieri. The bravura was well-composed and well-sung."

Count Karl Zinzendorf, 26 July 1784, diary entry regarding Cavalieri’s performance in *Le vicende d’amore*, Guglielmi, 1784.²¹⁰

“Dela au Spectacle. *Le vicende d’amore*, la Storace fort enrouée, la Cavalieri chanta parfaitement.”

²⁰⁸ Anderson, *The Letters of Mozart*, II:768.

²⁰⁹ Bertil van Boer, “The Travel Diaries of Joseph Martin Kraus: Translation and Commentary,” *Journal of Musicaology* 8, no. 2 (Spring 1990), 266-290.

²¹⁰ Link, *The National Court Theater*, 231.

“From there to the theater, *Le vicende d’amore*, la Storace was very hoarse, la Cavalieri sang perfectly.”

Karl von Zinzendorf, 4 August 1785, diary entry regarding Cavalieri’s performance in *Giulio Sabino*, Sarti, 1781.²¹¹

“Dans le duo la Cavalieri etouffoit la voix de March. [Luigi Marchesi] par ses cris.”

“In the duo, La Cavalieri drowned out Marchesi’s voice with her screaming.”

Karl von Zinzendorf, 6 August 1785, diary entry regarding Cavalieri’s performance in *Giulio Sabino*, Sarti, 1781.²¹²

“la Cavalieri cria moins.”

“Cavalieri screamed less.”

Karl von Zinzendorf, 7 February 1786, diary entry regarding Cavalieri’s performance in *Der Schauspieldirektor*.²¹³

“La Cavalieri et la Lang chanterent. Le tout etoit fort mediocre.”

²¹¹ Ibid., 250.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid., 263.

“Cavalieri and Lange sang. All was quite mediocre.”

Joseph II to Count Rosenberg, 29 September 1786.²¹⁴

“Pour la Cavalieri il n’y a qu’à l’employer là ou l’on voudra, elle sera toujours bonne, et ce ne sera point facilement qu’on en aura une meilleure.”

“As for Cavalieri, she can be used wherever you would like, she will always be good. And one cannot easily find a better [singer].”

Karl von Zinzendorf, 30 April 1787, diary entry regarding Cavalieri’s performance of *Gli sposi malcontenti*, Storace, 1785.²¹⁵

“La Cavalieri chanta a marveille.”

“La Cavalieri sang marvelously.”

Joseph II to Count Rosenberg 11 June 1788, regarding the casting of *L’arbore di Diana*, Martin y Soler, 1787.²¹⁶

²¹⁴ Rudolph Payer von Thurn, ed., *Joseph II als Theaterdirektor: Ungedruckte Briefe und Aktenstücke aus den Kinderjahren des Burgtheaters* (Vienna: Leopold Heidrich, 1920), 69.

²¹⁵ Link, *The National Court Theatre*, 293.

²¹⁶ Payer, 78.

“Faites éprouver par curiosité l’Albore di Diana par la Cavalieri, peut être qu’elle s’en tirera, puisque le rôle est plutôt sérieux, il n’y a que le moment où il s’agit de faire des yeux tenders qui sera un peu difficile.”

"Out of curiosity, test Cavalieri in *L'arbore di Diana*; perhaps she can manage it since the role is rather serious. Only when she has to make tender eyes will it be a bit difficult."

Joseph II to Count Rosenberg, 25 June 1788, regarding the casting of *L'albore di Diana*.²¹⁷

"J'ai reçu votre lettre. Si les autres personnages ne sont point faits pour réussir dans l'opéra de Diane, je pense qu'il ne faut pas en sacrifier la Musique ni la Cavalieri dans ce rôle, mais plutôt laisser reposer cette pièce."

"I received your letter. If the other singers cannot be successfully cast in the opera Diana, I think that we should sacrifice neither the music nor Cavalieri in this role, but rather let this piece remain dormant."

Karl von Zinzendorf 31 August 1789, diary entry regarding Cavalieri's performance in *Le nozze di Figaro*.²¹⁸

"Charmant duo entre la Cavalieri et la ferrarese."

²¹⁷ Ibid., 79.

²¹⁸ Link, *The National Court Theatre*, 339.

“Charming duet between Cavalieri and Ferrarese.”

Grundsätze zur Theaterkritik, 1790.²¹⁹

“She passes everybody in musicianship, and in elevated roles, is a very good singer.

What a pity that her insight is limited merely to music.”

²¹⁹ Raeburn, 4:60.