

**MILAN 1790-1802:
MUSIC, SOCIETY AND POLITICS
IN THE CITY OF MANY REGIMES**



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**Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
2017**

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Image on the title page: 1800 engraving depicting the wax statue of Democracy melting under the sunrays emanating from the members of the Second Coalition (Austria, Russia, Portugal and the Ottoman Empire).

Abstract

Between the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the following one, the Napoleonic wars caused the whole of Northern Italy to live an unstable political era, the old absolutist regimes being replaced by republican states strongly subjected to France. In the case of Lombardy and its capital city Milan, for almost a century a part of the Habsburg Monarchy, this era was particularly intense and problematic: following the alternate outcome of the war, the government changed repeatedly from monarchy to republic over rather short time span. In a situation as such, rather unique in the history of the city, the various governments made a programmatic use of the arts and especially music for propaganda and control purposes.

In Milan, a prominent venue for operatic performances already during the second half of the eighteenth century, musical theatre was identified as the primary vehicle for the dissemination of the rapidly changing political and social values and the monitoring of public opinion: La Scala opera house, at the very centre of Milan's both musical and social life already in the Habsburg years, became the centre of diffusion of new cultural policies and social mechanisms. In addition to a carefully conceived and implemented plan of intervention within the theatre, new occasions were also found for the performance of appositely composed music outside the theatrical buildings in the city's public spaces, i.e. the great republican feasts, rather complex events mixing music, visual arts, celebrative elements and popular entertainment. Cultural and more specifically musical phenomena taking place both inside and outside the theatre also played a major part in shaping Milan's cultural environment and defining its role in the following Risorgimento years.

Drawing on both dedicated literature and an extensive research based on archival and primary sources, the present thesis aims at reconstructing the unique historical context of these years and its consequences on the Milanese society and cultural production, also analysing the effect that the repeated government changes had on Milan's musical environment not only in terms of repertoire, but also in the complex links established between politics, society and music. Traditionally overlooked, these years represent not only a complex transition between two very different historical and cultural contexts, but also a highly creative and vibrant period that had undeniable consequences on the following years.

Acknowledgements

The present thesis constitutes the arrival point of a very long and intense research journey. This experience would have not been possible without the help and support from many wonderful people and institutions, whom I would like to thank.

First of all, I wish to thank my supervisor, Prof. David Wyn Jones, for having first glimpsed the interest of this project and for assisting and supporting me during all the different, demanding phases of my research. Prof. Jones has also presented me with new, precious challenges and has given me invaluable guidance and insight not only into research methodologies, but also into many of the numerous faces of the academic world. Thanks to his tireless support and supervision, the experience of carrying out this doctorate at Cardiff University has been incredibly enriching.

I also wish to give special thanks to my second supervisor, Dr. Clair Rowden, who, despite her countless commitments, has always found time for me and, most of all, has showed me deep understanding and trust. It is thanks to her that I could not only complete my programme of study, but also undertake teaching and research commitments that have turned out to be challenging, but also invaluable for my growth as an academic.

A special acknowledgement also goes to the various members of staff, both academic and administrative, at Cardiff University, School of Music. So many people, each within his/her area of competence, have helped me making my experience as smooth and profitable as possible by untangling bureaucratic issues, discovering and exploiting various opportunities and much more. The department has rapidly become not only a place of study, research and growth, but also a friendly and supportive environment.

A significant part of the research connected to the present thesis also had to take place outside Cardiff, within numerous Milanese libraries and archives. My deepest gratitude goes to all those people who have helped me exploring those institutions and uncovering the treasures hidden within. In particular, I wish to thank Matteo Sartorio for having granted me access to the historical archive of La Scala theatre and having assisted me in finding my way through its monumental documentary corpus. Special thanks also go to Gianni Fidanza for letting me consult the precious Somma and Nosedà collections in the library of the Conservatory ‘Giuseppe

Verdi' of Milan and for helping me to retrieve even the most obscure documents. Finally, I wish to thank the librarians of the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Biblioteca nazionale Braidense, Biblioteca comunale centrale Sormani, Biblioteca of the Conservatorio 'Giuseppe Verdi' of Milan and of the Biblioteca 'Angelo Maj' of Bergamo who have kindly helped and assisted me in accessing and consulting specific literature as well as documentary funds.

In addition, I wish to offer my special thanks to those institutions that have allowed me (and often generously supported me) to take part in prestigious conferences where some of the findings coming from the present research project could be shared and discussed. The papers presented and the following debates have sometimes led to themed publications, which have also greatly helped me in developing a richer academic profile. In addition to the School of Music, I wish to thank the BSECS (British Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies), the Centro Studi Opera Omnia Luigi Boccherini of Lucca, the Music and Letters Trust and the RIdIM (Association Répertoire International d'Iconographie Musicale).

Finally, I would like to thank all those people who have supported me, both personally and financially, during the last four years in Cardiff, without whom this whole project would have been ultimately impossible. Special thanks go to my colleagues from the School of Modern Languages for their friendship and continuous interest in my work, and to my family for their tireless support and affection. Grazie, davvero.

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INTRODUCTION

RECONSTRUCTING THE MUSIC OF REVOLUTIONARY MILAN

The topic of the present thesis is that of the relationship between music, society and politics in the city of Milan in the turbulent period between the last years of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the following one. As convenient dates, I have chosen to indicate 1790, when the death of Emperor Joseph II had very important consequences for Lombardy, and 1802, a year that saw the proclamation of the so-called 'Italian Republic' in the provinces of Northern Italy currently occupied by the French troops. Between these two dates, a time span of just 12 years, Lombardy and its capital went through an extraordinarily complex series of social and political transitions, its government changing no fewer than five times.

Thanks to its position and wealth, Lombardy had always played an important role throughout the second half of the eighteenth century. One of the most prosperous provinces of the Austrian Monarchy, under the guide of the enlightened Habsburg governors Lombardy experienced a steady development within many fields, including the sciences and arts. In 1796, the century-long Habsburg era ended abruptly: following the outcome of the Napoleonic wars, Lombardy was conquered by the French Armée d'Italie and became part of Bonaparte's political plan. Despite the unstable consequences of the long wars, the city became and remained the capital and main administrative, economical and cultural centre of all the political entities created by Napoleon in Northern Italy.

Following the French occupation of 1796, the former Habsburg province was subjected to a republican regime: in 1797, the Cisalpine Republic was proclaimed, an allegedly independent state in truth deeply controlled and exploited by France. In 1799, following the outcomes of the War of the Second Coalition, Milan and its region were re-conquered by the allied Austrians and Russians and lived thirteen months of monarchical repression until 1800, when Napoleon managed to regain power on Northern Italy. The proclamation of the second Cisalpine Republic, greatly differing from the first one, followed shortly (treaty of Lunéville, 9 February 1801). Finally, the state was re-christened 'Italian Republic' in 1802 and given a newly informed political and administrative layout.

Throughout these changes, music and especially opera maintained a central position; moreover, while Milan was subjected to systematic military occupation and economic

exploitation, its status of capital city also granted it an unsurpassed level of centrality and attention for cultural and artistic production. Already during the Habsburg rule, the city had built a strong reputation for public operatic performances, the opera house being undoubtedly the centre of the social and artistic life. Archduke Ferdinand of Habsburg-Este, governor of Austrian Lombardy from 1771 to 1796, had been particularly theatre enthusiast, leading to unparalleled support of the city's opera house and even to the building of a new theatre destined to become a shining beacon of the Risorgimento, La Scala opera house. Following this development, opera continued to be at the centre of the cultural and social life also during the French occupation, being also chosen as the primary vehicle of propaganda.

The city of Milan can thus be described as a city where music (especially inside the theatre, but not exclusively) played a paramount role: this also reflected in the amount of attention that the various governments dedicated to the city's musical products. On the other hand, the criteria underpinning the conception, production, fruition and dissemination of these products repeatedly changed according to the transformations happening within the political and social spheres. My research aims at reconstructing and describing how the different political, governmental and administrative changes impacted on the various spheres of musical production and fruition.

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Despite their interest and complexity, these years have been greatly overlooked in comparison to the preceding and, even more, the following ones. The paramount role that Milan, its theatre and musical scene have played in the years leading up to and during the Risorgimento has largely inhibited musicology from venturing back into the previous century. Similarly, the prestige acquired by the city in the eighteenth century as centre of important reforms and cradle of the Lombard Enlightenment has often made the Napoleonic occupation resemble the end of an era. Even within the years of the Napoleonic domination, the republican experiences seem to play a minor role when compared to the luminous years of the Kingdom, when Milan was turned into Eugène de Beauharnais's vibrant capital.

Indeed, also the celebrity of the musical (and especially operatic) repertoire of both eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Milan has played a role in relegating the period in between as not deserving a deeper analysis. Although interesting due to its peculiar conception and role, the music of revolutionary Milan has not entered today's repertoire: the almost totality of it (most of

all in the case of occasional pieces) has not been performed again after its premiere. This lack of performances has translated into a proportional lack of interest not only in the musical sources (many incomplete or lost), but also in the artists involved. Names such as Mayr and Zingarelli, who achieved fame as opera composers in the previous and/or following years, have remained a rather stable though minor presence in both the repertoire and scholarship; on the other hand, the high majority of figures involved in the production of ‘republican’ music, even those who rose to the highest success such as Minoja, De Bailou and Federici, have been completely forgotten.

In contrast with the vast scholarship dedicated to Habsburg Milan, the Italian Kingdom and the Austrian restoration of 1815, there are almost no scholarly works specifically dedicated to the period 1790-1802. The only monograph expressively dedicated to musical theatre as a vehicle of propaganda from the first Napoleonic occupation until the end of the Italian Republic is *Il teatro giacobino ed antigiacobino in Italia (Jacobin and anti-Jacobin Theatre in Italy)*, published in 1887 by the theatre historian Antonio Paglicci Brozzi after decades of research in several Milanese archives.¹ Although quite dated and presenting several methodological flaws (first of all the lack of accurate referencing of much information and a clearly negative approach towards the republican regimes), this work can be considered very interesting due to its peculiar focus and the use of several primary sources, some also presumably lost. Furthermore, Paglicci Brozzi did not take into consideration Milan’s passage from the Habsburg era into the Napoleonic years, his focus also remaining mainly descriptive.

Another very useful publication, which appeared two years later, in 1889, is the work of Pompeo Cambiasi, musician, theatre historian, journalist and administrator of institutions such as La Scala opera house and the Casa di Riposo per Musicisti ‘G. Verdi’. Entitled *La Scala 1778-1889: note storiche e statistiche (La Scala 1778-1889: historical and statistical Notes)*, Cambiasi’s work essentially constitutes an inventory of the numerous documents preserved in the museum of La Scala theatre, transcribed and chronologically ordered.² Although the author simply presented the documentary material rather than attempting an analysis of it, his work constitutes an invaluable source of information and the outcome of a tireless research carried out in the

¹ See also Antonio Paglicci Brozzi’s other contributions to the history of Milanese theatres, for instance his *Contributo alla storia del teatro. Il teatro a Milano nel secolo XVII. Studi e ricerche negli archivi di stato Lombardi* (Milan: Ricordi, 1892) and *Il Regio Ducal Teatro di Milano nel Secolo XVIII: notizie aneddotiche 1701-1776* (Milan: Ricordi, 1894).

² A second publication also covering the years 1889-1906 was published in 1906 under the title *La Scala : 1778-1906: note storiche e statistiche*.

Milanese theatre:³ still today, Cambiasi's tome is recommended by La Scala's archivist as starting point of many research works.

In addition, several publications dedicated to single aspects or periods of Milan's musical life have been produced. Given the important role played by La Scala in the nineteenth century, monographs dedicated to its history and repertoire started as early as 1818 with Chiappori's *Serie cronologica delle rappresentazioni* [...] and continued with the *Notizie storiche* (1856). After the first centenary of La Scala (1878) was celebrated in the new born Italian state, the interest in its history and repertoire was rekindled, although the still fresh experience of the Risorgimento led to studies mainly dedicated to that period. Nevertheless, the last two decades of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth saw not only the already mentioned works by Paglicci Brozzi and Cambiasi, but also to publications exploring the wider description of Milan in the Napoleonic years; for instance, Bellorini's precious 'Disordini in teatro a Milano al tempo delle Repubbliche Cisalpina e Italiana (Turmoil in the Theatre during the Cisalpine and Italian Republics)' and Ferrari's *Il Teatro della Scala nella vita e nell'arte dalle origini ad oggi* (*La Scala Theatre in Life and art from its Origins to present Time*).

The twentieth century has also seen some relevant examples, also with an overall improved methodology, for instance:

- Guglielmo Barblan's 'Il teatro musicale a Milano nei secoli XVII and XVIII (Musical Theatre in Milan in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries)', part of the monumental project promoted by Treccani degli Alfieri which led to the publication of a 16-tome history of Milan. Barblan gives a general, but rather rich account of Milan's operatic life describing its general features and mentioning several artists and works.
- Guido Bezzola's and Giampiero Tintori's *I protagonisti della Scala nell'età neoclassica* (*La Scala's main Characters in the neoclassical age*), which attempts a history of the theatre in the nineteenth century through some of its main figures and anecdotes and tries to reconstruct its atmosphere.
- *La Scala di Napoleone* (*Napoleon's Scala*), ed. by Vittoria Crespi Morbio: explicitly dedicated to the years 1796-1815, this work gives a rather general account of some of the tendencies of musical theatre, both in its musical, visual and spectacular elements. The

³ Pompeo Cambiasi is also the author of the useful chronology *Rappresentazioni date nei reali teatri di Milano, 1778-1872* (Bologna: Forni, 1872).

volume is enriched by a precious iconographical appendix which has revealed interesting information.

- Davide Daolmi's 'Salfi alla Scala (Salfi at La Scala)', reconstructing in detail the activity of the journalist and writer F.S. Salfi in Milan and, by doing so, presenting a rich and vivid picture of the theatre's situation during the triennium 1796-1799.
- Remo Giazotto's *Le carte della Scala (La Scala's Papers)*; this work tries to tackle a rather thorny issue, that of the role and history of La Scala's impresarios reconstructed through the systematic collation of many administrative documents.
- Monica Nocciolini's 'Il melodramma nella Milano napoleonica: teatro musicale e ideologia politica (Opera in napoleonic Milan: musical Theatre and political Ideology)' and Claudio Toscani's 'Politica culturale e teatro nell'Italia napoleonica: I concorsi governativi (Cultural Policies and Theatre in napoleonic Italy: the governmental competitions': both works reconstruct and analyse in depth a specific aspect of cultural conception, production and dissemination in Napoleonic Milan, effectively linking the administrative and purely musical spheres.

Finally, special mention goes to the monumental work published in 1927 by Achille Bertarelli, creator and then curator of the biggest collection of iconographical materials still extant in Milan, the Civica Raccolta delle Stampe 'A. Bertarelli'. The publication, as his title *Tre secoli di vita milanese (Three centuries of Milanese Life)* communicates, constitutes a precious collection of iconographical sources regarding various aspects of Milan's social and cultural life, with focus also on some traditionally overlooked aspects such as popular culture, the city's exterior appearance and the modification of its public spaces.

The present research also had to deal with several sources having a strong historical focus. Because of the absence of literature specifically dedicated to the reiterated alternation between Austrian and Napoleonic regimes, literature encompassing longer parts of Milan's history had to be used. Works such as the monumental *Storia di Milano*, though dating from 1956, proved itself to be precious for its detailed depiction of the various historical moments and their interest towards the links between politics, society and culture. A particularly interesting group of sources is that constituted by eyewitnesses' memorials, and chronicles, or by later collections of memories, statements, anecdotes and other contemporary sources, for instance travel logs and the memoirs compiled by the politician and intellectual Giuseppe Gorani and the canon Luigi

Mantovani. Another valuable collection of contemporary sources, also trying to give voice to popular culture and satire, is the work of the Milanese historian Giovanni De Castro *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina giusta le poesie, le caricature ed altre testimonianze dei tempi* (*Milan and the Cisalpine Republic according to the Poems, Caricatures and other contemporary Sources*).

A task involving specialised sources has been the reconstruction of the catalogue of the opera and ballet performed in La Scala between 1790 and 1802. In addition to dedicated chronologies and chronicles (such as Chappori's, Romani's and Cambiasi's) the libretto holdings listed both in Sartori's monumental *I libretti italiani a stampa dalle origini al 1800* and in the catalogues and online databases of many cultural institutions (such as the Conservatories of Milan, Florence, Venice and Bologna and the Braidense, Ambrosiana and Sormani libraries of Milan) have been used. Moreover, various librettos have been directly inspected, the information contained in them being sometimes essential and not recorded in any other source. A full list of the librettos consulted is contained in the bibliography while additional information on the sources used is contained, together with the actual catalogues, in Appendix 1.

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

Because of the traditional overlooking of these years and the complexity of the transitional contexts within, numerous gaps and missing details have emerged from the literature described above, which had to be systematically complemented with several primary sources coming from the archives and the library of different Milanese institutions. The main groups of sources that have been inspected (some completely unexplored or studied with a completely different focus) are:

- 1) The State Archive of Milan (Archivio di Stato di Milano), specifically within the section labelled 'Spettacoli pubblici Parte Antica', folders n. 1, 2 and 17. These folders contain several manuscript and printed documents related to public feasts and republican celebrations during the Napoleonic period (1 and 2) and to Milan's opera houses, concerning performances, management and the organisation of events. (17).
- 2) The library of the Milan Conservatory 'Giuseppe Verdi' (Biblioteca del Conservatorio 'Giuseppe Verdi'), both the main collection and, more specifically, the corpus of the Fondo Somma (6 boxes). Created from the library and research materials of the historian

and musicologist Francesco Somma, the collection, in addition to several printed libretti, contains several printed and manuscript documents concerning mainly the events taking place inside the Milanese opera houses. In the case (rather frequent) of musical pieces of celebratory character that have not survived due to their highly politicized character, the documents of the Fondo Somma are currently the main and even only sources documenting their existence.

- 3) The library within the museum of La Scala theatre (Museo teatrale alla Scala e biblioteca 'Livia Simoni'), both the libretti collection and the documentary folders MAN and SAL. The first, MAN (from 'manifesti', i.e. posters) contains the biggest collections of flyers, posters and notes concerning La Scala's management, administration and communication with the audience. The SAL folder gathers the documents left by Count Lorenzo Salazar, first direttore (administrator) of La Scala, thus representing a very useful source of information regarding the years of the Habsburg domination.

THESIS OUTLINE

Chapter 1 'Music and society in the last Habsburg years' focuses on the description of Milan's cultural environment in the last years of the Habsburg domination. A reconstruction of the historical and social context of Milan and its region from 1790 to 1796 is first provided, these rather widely explored years analysed mainly focusing on those social, ideological and political mechanisms that could underpin Milan's cultural and musical practices. Such a reconstruction provides the reader with an appropriate background in order to contextualize and situate the information more specifically dedicated to the cultural and musical spheres. In addition, some of the key figures (such as Archduke Ferdinand) are introduced so that their role within Milan's musical environment can be better understood. The chapter then proceeds to a detailed description of Milan's musical environment, with a specific focus on the role music played within its society. Specific attention is dedicated to the role played by Ferdinand, his newly established court and the construction of La Scala theatre in the city's social and cultural life. After analysing in depth the role played by the opera house and the particularly strong involvement of the Milanese aristocracy in theatrical ownership and management, a more detailed description and analysis of the repertoire and theatre practices in force during these years follows, their links to the city's social life being also specifically addressed.

With Chapter 2, (Cultural and musical life of the Republics), the focus moves to the deep changes caused by the French invasion and the implementation of a new ideological framework based on the condemnation of the past and the exaltation of new republican values, figures and events. After a description of the wider changes at the level of cultural and social life during the republican triennium 1796-1799, a reconstruction of the great republican feasts follows, i.e. the most innovative events introduced by the government to newly inform public celebration and the production of culture and entertainment. After describing their primary ideological background, the chapter proceeds to the detailed analysis of these events on the Milanese soil, illustrating their complex, multi-layered nature, their main features and the role they played within the collective. The final part is specifically dedicated to the role music played within these celebrations and to the main features of their repertoire.

Chapter 3 (The Patriotic opera house) takes the reader from Milan's public spaces to the theatre, analysing the different levels of action undertaken by the republican regime within theatrical practices. With the repertoire itself not showing changes as significant as one might have expected, the governmental plan unfolded in a much subtler and more complex way, with simultaneous interventions on different levels of theatrical management, control and consumption. The chapter analyses the measures undertaken by the republican government at the level of theatrical management and modification of the theatrical space and practices, also contextualising them on the basis of the continuing debate on the role of theatre within republican society.

With Chapter 4 (The Patriotic repertoire), the focus moves to a deeper analysis of the changes actually implemented at the level of the repertoire, divided into the different genres in use at the time (serious and comic operas, ballets and occasional music). The links to both the old conventions, the Parisian models, the other experiences in French-occupied Italian cities and the constant exchange between theatrical and non-theatrical dimensions are also taken into consideration, a whole new idea of spectacle and theatrical practice emerging. Dedicated case studies using primary sources such as librettos and scores are also presented.

Finally, Chapter 5 (Old and new Governors) deals with the sudden and quick transitions Milan experienced between 1799 and 1801, when the unstable outcomes of the wars caused the Austrians to come back for just thirteen months before a further French occupation. The first

section is dedicated to the so-called Austrian interregnum of 1799-1800, with specific focus on the substantial difference from the enlightened government of the pre-1796 years and its consequences on culture and specifically music. The second and final section describes the features of the second Cisalpine republic (established after Napoleon's victory at Marengo) and attempts to pinpoint and describe the elements of both continuity and deviation from the 1796-1799 triennium at the level of society, public celebration and, naturally, operatic repertoire.

Two appendixes complement the text and provide the reader with useful consultation tools and repositories of information. Appendix I presents two catalogues of all the vocal works and ballets performed in La Scala between 1790 and 1802. Appendix II lists other events that took place in the Milanese theatres (Scala and Cannobiana) which are relevant for the present research, ones not connected to an opera or ballet performance.

CHAPTER ONE

MUSIC AND SOCIETY IN THE LAST HABSBURG YEARS (1790-1796)

1.1 Times of transition

*In the present circumstances, it is better
to either succumb or compromise.*
Leopold II, 1790.

*My God, I firmly believe that all French are mad,
that all philosophes are scum, that their plan is madness
and that they have to be destroyed.*
Pietro Verri, 1793¹

*I will guide you beyond those mountains,
where lies the richest valley in the whole of Europe.
There you will find riches, honour and glory.*
Napoleon to the soldiers
of the Armée d'Italie, March 1796

On 20 February 1790, Emperor Joseph II of the House of Habsburg died in Vienna after an illness that had consumed him for over a year. His younger brother and designated successor Peter Leopold, Grand Duke of Tuscany, inherited the imperial crown in one of the most difficult periods for the Habsburg Monarchy on both the national and international fronts. Just one year before his accession to the throne, in 1789, the Revolution had broken out in Paris, and the news coming from neighbouring France was threatening all the monarchs of Europe and undermining the very foundations of the established social order. At the same time, Joseph, mainly through the intense reforming activity which he had executed throughout his reign, had caused a simmering discontent which could be found in all the provinces of the Monarchy and within all social classes; the imperial throne was in fact the most uncomfortable and difficult position that could be found in contemporary Europe.²

¹ In a letter to his brother Alessandro, Verri wrote these words to describe the profession of faith expected by the Government from all good citizens; quoted in Carlo Capra and Domenico Sella, *Il Ducato di Milano dal 1535 al 1796* (Turin: UTET, 1984), p. 616.

² Franco Fava, *Storia di Milano* (Milan: Meravigli, 1981), 2, p. 6.

At the moment of his accession to the throne, Leopold was already 46 and not inexperienced as a ruler; his reign as Holy Roman Emperor had in fact been preceded by a rather long and successful mandate as Grand Duke of Tuscany, an office that he had taken in 1765 and uninterruptedly carried out for 25 years. Already during his brother's long agony, Peter Leopold had been praised all over the Monarchy's domains as one of the most skilled and enlightened politicians of his time, his Tuscany considered a model state.³ Although Joseph and Leopold



Fig. 1.1: Painting by Pompeo Batoni showing, left to right, Leopold and Joseph in 1769. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.

were sometimes opposed as the enlightened despot on one side and the careful ruler on the other, the two monarchs still shared a strong intellectual basis;⁴ in addition, both this traditional opposition and Leopold's political wisdom have recently been called into question.⁵

As young crown princes, both brothers had been educated with the principles of Enlightenment and Rationalism and their possible applications in ruling a state.⁶ As a result, they had gained a new concept of their position, a concept significantly different from that still embodied by their mother who still justified the ruler's position based on metaphysical grounds.⁷ Like their numerous siblings, who entered dynastic families all over Europe, Joseph and Leopold were

taught to be ordinary men. Similarly, their role as sovereigns, following the contemporary theory of the so-called 'social contract', was the result of an agreement between men: as active parts in that agreement, the sovereigns became servants of the State, their duty being a ceaseless work for

³ Giuseppe Gorani, *Storia di Milano dalla sua fondazione all'anno 1796* (Rome: Laterza, 1989), p. 269 and Adam Wandruszka, *The House of Habsburg: six hundred years of a European dynasty* (Westport Connecticut: Greenwood press, 1975), p. 157.

⁴ Giuseppe Gorani, *Memoires*, ed. by A. Casati (Paris: Gallimard, 1944), p. 222-225, C. Capra and D. Sella, *Il Ducato di Milano dal 1535 al 1796*, p. 594.

⁵ Hamish Scott, 'A Habsburg Emperor for the next Century', in *The Historical Journal*, 53/1 (2010), pp. 197–216 (p. 214).

⁶ Derek Beales, *Enlightenment and Reform in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co., 2005), pp. 28-31.

⁷ Francesco Valsecchi, 'Dalla pace di Aquisgrana alla battaglia di Lodi', in *Storia di Milano*, ed. by Giuseppe Treccani degli Alfieri (Milan, Fondazione Treccani degli Alfieri per la storia di Milano, 1956), 12, pp. 379-80.

the well-being of their subjects.⁸ Thus, Joseph's and Leopold's generation of Habsburg rulers started taking the welfare of their state and society as the main criteria measuring the success of their conduct and policies rather than the glory of their dynasty.⁹

The reforming processes carried out in Joseph's Lombardy and in Leopold's Tuscany have also been recognised as sharing many features, one of the most significant ones being the will to accompany economic and cultural reforms with a deep administrative and juridical re-organization of the ancien-régime state also resulting in the creation of an effective bureaucratic system.¹⁰ Significant elements differentiated, however, the two brothers as rulers. Having clearly recognized his mission as 'first servant of the State', and catalysed an already existing momentum for change, Joseph, after a rather cautious start, had seen no limitations to his work, which he had carried out tirelessly.¹¹ His ideal society featured the conception and application of a unified and equal set of norms, which he had tried to apply in every province of his multi-faceted Monarchy, and somehow represented the pure application of the Enlightenment principles and thus the real modern country, centralized and efficient, with no room for local particularities.¹²

On the other hand, Leopold had rather opted for a mediation between the monarch's will and the individuality of each country and invoked the practice of neutrality in international affairs, realizing that reform required a stronger social base to support its moral purpose.¹³ He openly disapproved of his brother's methods, and considered them a form of despotism and high-handedness.¹⁴ On 8 February 1790, when Joseph was already agonizing, Leopold even wrote to his main confidant, his sister Maria Christina (Regent of the Austrian Netherlands) that he did not wish to take part in the Monarchy affairs as long as his brother lived, otherwise people would could have thought that he represented the same principles and methods.¹⁵ In another letter sent a month earlier, he had openly declared that

[...] every country should have a legally defined relationship or contract established between the people and the sovereign which limits his power, so that when the sovereign

⁸ A. Wandruszka, *The House of Habsburg*, pp. 151-152.

⁹ Pieter M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire. A new History* (Cambridge MA; London: Belknap Press, 2016), p. 56.

¹⁰ Dino Carpanetto, *L'Italia del settecento. Illuminismo e movimento riformatore* (Turin: Loescher, 1980), p. 238.

¹¹ Robin Okey, *The Habsburg Monarchy, c. 1765-1918. From Enlightenment to Eclipse* (London: MacMillan, 2001), p. 41 and H. Scott, 'A Habsburg Emperor for the next Century', pp. 200-201.

¹² A. Wandruszka, *The House of Habsburg*, p. 159 and P. M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, p. 61.

¹³ R. Okey, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 60, D. Beales, *Enlightenment and Reform in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, p. 41 and P. M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, pp. 54-55.

¹⁴ G. Gorani, *Storia di Milano*, p. 353, Silvia Cuccia, *La Lombardia alla fine dell'Ancien Regime: ricerche sulla situazione amministrativa e giudiziaria* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1971), pp. 13-18, R. Okey, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 53 and Jean Béranger, *A History of the Habsburg Empire 1700-1918*, English transl. by C. A. Simpson (London; New York: Longman, 1997), p. 111.

¹⁵ F. Valsecchi, 'Dalla pace di Aquisgrana alla battaglia di Lodi', p. 380, S. Cuccia, *La Lombardia alla fine dell'Ancien Regime*, p. 19 and H. Scott, 'A Habsburg Emperor for the next Century', p. 214.

does not observe the law he actually forfeits his position [...] and it is no longer anyone's duty to obey him.¹⁶

Finally, Leopold has been described as possessing a much more robust attitude than Joseph towards social change, and manifested a stronger will of supporting bourgeois representation and limiting absolutist measures.¹⁷ Starting from the same theoretical principles, the two brothers had thus established different strategies in ruling and carrying on the reforming process: with Joseph having carried the so-called enlightened absolutism to its extreme consequences, Leopold had to take another direction in directing the reforming activity, not by stopping it, but rather by reshaping it.¹⁸

In 1790, Milan and its Duchy had been subjected to the Habsburgs for more than 80 years. The city had profited from a rather long period of stability and development from both the economic, cultural and social points of view. The Austrian rulers had also included Milan in the deep reforming process that had been carried out in all the lands of the Monarchy; the importance of this experience in the transition of Milan from an ancien-régime city, still characterized by oligarchies and privileges, into a modern one must never be underestimated enough. As the other, diverse provinces of the Monarchy, the Duchy of Milan constituted an individual political entity with its own distinctive characteristics;¹⁹ following a pattern already established elsewhere, Joseph applied the first reforms to the renewal of administrative and bureaucratic structures, which were still linked to the previous oligarchical government.²⁰ As a matter of fact, the hegemony of the aristocracy in the society and their dominance of high-ranking positions in the local administration, in the Church and in many professional and economical fields, has been recognized as one of the most distinctive traits of the Milanese society prior to the eighteenth-century reforms.²¹ As the foreign monarchs were often occupied elsewhere and their appointed transitory governors had little knowledge of Milanese society, the reigning aristocracy and its intricate and powerful coalition of local interests had been for a long time an accepted check on the official government, creating a dualistic structure of power.²² In

¹⁶ Quoted in D. Beales, *Enlightenment and Reform in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, p. 41.

¹⁷ R. Okey, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, pp. 53-54.

¹⁸ F. Valsecchi, 'Dalla pace di Aquisgrana alla battaglia di Lodi', p. 396.

¹⁹ H. Scott, 'A Habsburg Emperor for the next Century', p. 201.

²⁰ R. Okey, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 41.

²¹ Carlo Capra, 'Milano al tempo di Giuseppe Parini', in *La Milano del Giovine Signore*, ed. by F. Mazzocca e A. Morandotti (Milano: Skira, 1999), pp. 15-33 (pp. 27-28).

²² *Ibidem*, p. 28 and S. Cuccia, *La Lombardia alla fine dell'Ancien Regime*, pp. 6-7.

this situation, control over its administration could be considered one of the main key to political power in Lombardy.²³

The aim of the Habsburg reforms had thus been that of gradually replacing the old oligarchical system with a more modern and centralized one, in which local autonomies and intermediate powers were reduced or cancelled in favour of the sole authority of the State.²⁴ Starting from the 1760s, many important offices had also been entrusted to individuals not coming from the Milanese aristocracy, but rather from a lower class and/or from a different context: figures like Giusti (Venice), Pallavicini (Genoa), Cristiani (Liguria) and Firmian (Trento) owed their position and their importance not to their right of birth, but to their professional skills and loyalty to the governors.²⁵ The aims of centralization and efficiency were pursued within all sectors of the public administration, the reforming process gradually extended to the judiciary, financial and administrative systems, as well as the economy (for instance, trade, industry and agriculture).²⁶ With the manufactures and industries blooming and the agriculture and trade growing – also thanks to the introduction of the latest techniques and to a more liberal policy regarding customs, duties and border checks – Lombardy transitioned to a much more capitalistic economic system and experienced a steady growth throughout the second half of the century.²⁷

Even a traditionally rather delicate sphere, namely that of the relationship between Church and State, had been subjected to significant reforms.²⁸ Lombardy and especially Milan, the city of the celebrated post-Reformation bishop (later Saint) Carlo Borromeo, had always been a centre of intense faith and devotion, with an astonishing number of churches and other religious buildings.²⁹ Public services like high-class education and the management of orphanages and hospices were also almost completely entrusted to religious associations, orders or brotherhoods. Although Joseph had promulgated quite tolerant religious policies and did not oppose the Catholic Church, he saw faith as a personal issue which should not impact civic life:³⁰ regardless of the deep roots of faith and of the strong involvement of religious entities in public life, measures had been undertaken to weaken the Church's hierarchy and to eliminate both the privileges of the clergy and those manifestations of faith considered excessive or detrimental to

²³ Dylan Riley, 'Privilege and Property: The Political Foundations of Failed Class Formation in Eighteenth-Century Austrian Lombardy', in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 45/1 (January 2003), pp. 190-213 (p. 200).

²⁴ C. Capra, 'Milano nell'età delle riforme', p. 1323.

²⁵ Cinzia Cremonini, 'Vicende storiche e politiche. Milano e il suo Stato tra la fine del XVII secolo e la fine del XVIII', in *Il teatro a Milano nel Settecento. I contesti*, ed. by Annamaria Cascetta and Giovanna Zanolonghi (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2008), pp. 25-53 (p. 45).

²⁶ C. Capra, 'Milano nell'età delle riforme', pp. 1322-1325 and E. Verga, *Storia della vita milanese*, p. 157 and Carlo Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814. Testimonianze e documenti* (Bologna: Megalini, 2001), p. 10.

²⁷ D. Carpanetto, *L'Italia del settecento*, pp. 239-240.

²⁸ Alessandro Visconti, *Storia di Milano* (Milan: Ceschina, 1967), pp 546-565.

²⁹ Pierre-Jean Grosley, *Observations sur l'Italie et les Italiens. Tome premier* (London, 1770), p. 115.

³⁰ P. M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, p. 66.

the common good.³¹ Even the organisation of charity and public assistance, traditionally linked either to the aristocracy or to various religious institutions, had been assigned to a special commission entirely composed of government (and lay) personnel.³²

Significantly, in 1786 Joseph had operated what can be considered the complete abolition of all pre-existing institutions within the local government of Lombardy and had replaced them with one centralized body called the Consiglio di Governo.³³ The result had been a series of administrative bodies, each comprising hundreds of full-time employees ('secular priests', as Pieter Judson has defined them)³⁴ and several peripheral branches; from local administration to the highest-level offices, everything was inserted within a sole bureaucratic machine presided over by the plenipotentiary minister.³⁵

Although ideally continuing his mother's work and pursuing a higher ideal of social and political advancement, Joseph's growing centralism and authoritarianism had fomented quite widespread dissatisfaction and even obstructionism; in 1790, Pietro Verri commented

Joseph realised that the [current] system was faulty, but he did not understand that the complete destruction of a country's laws and practices is a cure worse than the illness itself. He did not care at all about [public] opinion, which still rules over the whole world, and he showed his subjects the unlimited power of a monarch who considers his own will as the only form of law.³⁶

The relative disregard for local autonomies and particularities had alienated in particular the support of the aristocratic and clerical cohorts, while the apparent incommunicability between Vienna and Milan had also slowly started to fuel the conscience of belonging to a different community.³⁷ If it was clear to many that a high degree of political liberty was unsuited to the Lombard context, even the most committed supporters of enlightened absolutism were disappointed by Joseph's actions.³⁸ Many of them (including Pietro Verri and Giuseppe Gorani) had found no way of integrating into the new state organization; in the voluntary departure of many Milanese intellectuals from public administration, one can also observe the growing utilitarianism inherent to the reforming process.³⁹

³¹ D. Carpanetto, *L'Italia del settecento*, pp. 234-235.

³² C. Capra, 'Milano nell'età delle riforme', p. 1324.

³³ G. Gorani, *Storia di Milano dalla sua fondazione all'anno 1796*, p. 374 and D. Carpanetto, *L'Italia del settecento*, p. 247.

³⁴ P. M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, p. 61.

³⁵ C. Capra, 'Milano nell'età delle riforme', pp. 1324-25, S. Cuccia, *La Lombardia alla fine dell'Ancien Regime*, p. 6 and D. Riley, 'Privilege and Property', p. 208.

³⁶ Quoted in D. Carpanetto, *L'Italia del settecento*, p. 287.

³⁷ H. Scott, 'A Habsburg Emperor for the next Century', p. 210 and A. Visconti, *Storia di Milano*, p. 566.

³⁸ D. Riley, 'Privilege and Property', p. 207.

³⁹ F. Valsecchi, 'Dalla pace di Aquisgrana alla battaglia di Lodi', p. 358, C. Capra, 'Milano nell'età delle riforme', p. 1321 and E. Riva, 'La corte dell'arciduca Ferdinando Asburgo Lorena', pp. 80-81.

On the other hand, Joseph's conduct is problematic to label as 'despotism' when we consider that the Austrian monarch, as almost all eighteenth-century governing authorities, was still exerting an absolute power and claiming the then-accepted right of changing the law in order to carry out reform; the Milanese political thinkers, though currently elaborating concepts such as 'despotism' and 'absolutism', had indeed put unconditioned trust first Maria Theresa and then Joseph for their ideas to be carried into some effect.⁴⁰ In addition, Joseph's ruling principle, also followed by his nephew Francis, was not that of following his own arbitrary will, but rather that of enforcing the law, whose rational procedures had to be always safeguarded and applied: all his actions, even the most controversial, had been carried out through the application of the imperial law.⁴¹ Besides, it is undeniable that Joseph carried out his reforming activity with stubbornness and refusal to compromise, especially in the last years of his reign, his reforms also somehow preparing for the later dissemination of revolutionary values.⁴² At the moment of the Emperor's death, years of reforms had thus affected every layer of the society: even if Lombardy was not openly revolting like contemporary Hungary or the Austrian Netherlands, dissatisfaction was deeply rooted.⁴³ Leopold – as Peter Judson commented – was left to pick up the pieces.⁴⁴

The new Emperor knew the situation in the province of Lombardy well; not only had he spent the majority of his adult life governing an Italian state, but he had also visited Milan and its region in 1784, and he had not hidden his disapproval towards Joseph's actions.⁴⁵ At the same time, his reputation as a moderate sovereign and his known tendencies towards constitutionalism had caused a massive outburst of both dissatisfaction and expectation, which he tried to exploit;⁴⁶ his choice, unlike his brother's, of attending the three traditional coronation ceremonies in Frankfurt, Pressburg (Bratislava) and Prague has already been considered a visible bow to renewed convention and trust.⁴⁷ With this situation within Lombardy, other provinces of the Monarchy openly rebelling and the worsening of the French menace, Leopold's actions had to be aimed initially at resolving the most urgent issues.⁴⁸ He still wished, however, to continue the experience

⁴⁰ D. Beales, *Enlightenment and Reform in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, p. 34 and pp. 48-49.

⁴¹ P. M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, pp. 106-107.

⁴² Ernst Wangermann, 'The Austrian Enlightenment and the French Revolution', in *Austria in the age of the French Revolution, 1789 – 1815*, ed. by Kinley Brauer and William E. Wright (Minneapolis: Centre for Austrian Studies University of Minnesota, 1990), pp. 1-10 (p. 1).

⁴³ F. Valsecchi, 'Dalla pace di Aquisgrana alla battaglia di Lodi', p. 380 and also S. Cuccia, *La Lombardia alla fine dell'Ancien Regime*, p. 19.

⁴⁴ P. M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, p. 85.

⁴⁵ C. Capra and D. Sella, *Il Ducato di Milano dal 1535 al 1796*, p. 594 and Ernst Wangermann, *The Austrian Achievement 1700-1800* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), p. 170.

⁴⁶ C. Capra and D. Sella, *Il Ducato di Milano dal 1535 al 1796*, pp. 594-595 and F. Fava, *Storia di Milano*, p. 6.

⁴⁷ Again, P. M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, p. 85 and J. Béranger, *A History of the Habsburg Empire*, p. 113.

⁴⁸ D. Carpanetto, *L'Italia del settecento*, p. 248 and D. Riley, 'Privilege and Property', p. 209

of both his mother and his brother, using Maria Theresia's caution and still not giving up Joseph's purpose of centralization and efficacy.⁴⁹

As many other European states, Austrian Lombardy was following the French events with fluctuating reactions: towards the end of 1789, the rebellion of the Third Estate and its re-establishment as the National Constituent Assembly had been seen by many, including the Habsburg governors, as the concretization of those enlightened principles that had been dominating throughout the closing century;⁵⁰ a similar impression was made by the Polish revolution led by the Stanislaus Poniatowski, whom Leopold himself greatly admired as an enlightened and non-despotic monarch.⁵¹ While newspapers and gazettes (whose number had been significantly increasing) had been spreading news from both Paris and Warsaw, some satirical verses - directed against the Archduke Governor and inviting the people to imitate the French example - had even been engraved on the walls of the Government Palace.⁵² On the other hand, with the political and social struggle intensifying and the revolution breaking out in its full power, that initially warm reception had cooled down. As Leopold himself reported in 1791, the city had, however, its own Jacobins, though just a small group forced to meet in secret in a small house near Piazza Fontana or inside the Ospedale Maggiore. Some of them, namely Melzi, Sommariva and Borghi, were also destined to become important public officers under Napoleon.⁵³

In the present conditions, pacifying some of the provinces by reshaping Joseph's actions was indeed the most impelling need.⁵⁴ In the case of Lombardy, Leopold had no other choice but trying to reconcile the privileged classes with the government, by giving them back at least part of what they had lost under Joseph.⁵⁵ Following some requests presented by a delegation of the aristocracy (efficiently allied with the Governor of Milan, Leopold's younger brother Ferdinand), the patrizi were given back many of their roles in public administration and justice and could; at the same time, the common people were wisely held back by restoring many religious practices abolished under Joseph, such as the solemn procession for the Corpus Domini, the celebrations of patron saints and the adoration of relics.⁵⁶

⁴⁹ F. Valsecchi, 'Dalla pace di Aquisgrana alla battaglia di Lodi', p. 382.

⁵⁰ E. Wangermann, 'The Austrian Enlightenment and the French Revolution', p. 3 and Charles Ingrao, *The Habsburg Monarchy 1618-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 220-221.

⁵¹ J. Béranger, *A History of the Habsburg Empire*, p. 113.

⁵² Diego Antonio Minola, *Diario storico-politico di alcuni avvenimenti del secolo XVIII, 1793-1797*, manuscript (Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana), vol. 8, p. 2 and G. Gorani, *Storia di Milano dalla sua fondazione all'anno 1796*, p. 382.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 593-594 and also F. Fava, *Storia di Milano*, p. 7.

⁵⁴ G. Gorani, *Storia di Milano dalla sua fondazione all'anno 1796*, p. 277 and R. Okey, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 52.

⁵⁵ E. Riva, 'La corte dell'arciduca Ferdinando Asburgo Lorena', pp. 90-91.

⁵⁶ C. Capra and D. Sella, *Il Ducato di Milano dal 1535 al 1796*, pp. 592-93, p. 598.

A significant point concerning Leopold's reign was the increase of Archduke Ferdinand's authority as Governor of Milan. Since the beginning of his mandate (1771), Leopold's younger brother had always had more a formal and symbolic role, the executive power being de facto held by the plenipotentiary minister and the various governing offices.⁵⁷ On the other hand, the governor and his wife, the Duchess Maria Beatrice of Este, had undoubtedly played an important role in the Austrian-ruled Milanese society by establishing a proper court in a city that had lacked one for almost two centuries, since the time of the House of Sforza (Fig. 1.2).⁵⁸ Unfortunately, very little is known about the internal organization of the Milanese court and, indeed, the very



Fig. 1.2: Painting (1776) showing Ferdinand, his wife Maria Beatrice of House Este and their daughters in Milan's Ducal Palace. Vienna, Schönbrunn Castle.

figure of Ferdinand of Habsburg, fourteenth child of Maria Theresa and Francis of Lorraine, still awaits an in-depth historical analysis. The majority of contemporary opinions are rather unflattering. Several reproaches can be already found in the letters sent to him by his mother Maria Theresa, who accused him of indolence, scarce devotion and presumptuousness.⁵⁹

The Empress also openly condemned her son's excessive

interest for artists, musicians and actors; this predilection would turn out to be very important in the context of Milan's musical and theatrical scene during the Archduke's mandate.⁶⁰ As to opinions of Ferdinand as a public figure, the general tone does not improve; the politician and intellectual Giuseppe Gorani, for example, described him mainly as a social climber and a profiteer, also rather unskilled in the military field.⁶¹ The power Ferdinand managed to seize

⁵⁷ C. Capra, 'Milano nell'età delle riforme', p. 1324, E. Riva, 'La corte dell'arciduca Ferdinando Asburgo Lorena', pp. 83-84 and Augusto Vicinelli, *Il Parini e Brera* (Milan: Ceschina, 1963), p. 18-19.

⁵⁸ E. Riva, 'La corte dell'arciduca Ferdinando Asburgo Lorena', pp. 92-93.

⁵⁹ *Briefe der Kaiserin Maria Theresia an ihre Kinder und Freunde*, ed. by Alfred Ritter von Arneth (Vienna: Braumüller, 1881), vol. 1, pp. 56-63.

⁶⁰ A. Wandruszka, *The House of Habsburg: six hundred years of a European dynasty*, p. 151.

⁶¹ G. Gorani, *Storia di Milano dalla sua fondazione all'anno 1796*, pp. 130-136 and pp. 256-257, and *Briefe der Kaiserin Maria Theresia an ihre Kinder und Freunde*, pp. 59-61.

under his brother and, later on, his nephew Francis, - Gorani continues – could even be considered one of the main reasons for Milan being helplessly lost to the French invaders;⁶² besides, according to other opinions, Ferdinand took great responsibility in defending Lombardy, trying to organize the army and continuously asking Vienna for financial and military help, the lack of which would ultimately cause Milan's loss.⁶³

Despite his appointment as Governor of Lombardy, Ferdinand had never had a precise role within Milan's government.⁶⁴ In fact, even Joseph had not hesitated in excluding his brother from the main offices;⁶⁵ the exclusion from the government of his own province had probably contributed to making Ferdinand a strong opponent both of his older brother and his supporters, as well as a natural ally for the disappointed aristocracy and clergy.⁶⁶ As a result of this prolonged exclusion, the role played by Ferdinand as Governor of Milan has also often been diminished (when not completely ignored) by historians.⁶⁷ Ferdinand's alliance with the upper class can, however, be considered more than a political move: as the new pole around which Milan's high society revolved, the governor had tried from the beginning to play his role in an autonomous way, more as an Italian prince than an Austrian Archduke, this arguably constituting the main reason why he left a very positive impression within the Milanese society. In fact, the memory of the governor did not grow dimmer even during the Napoleonic years. In 1816, when Ferdinand was already dead, his wife and son Francis IV, Duke of Modena, visited Milan; the Milanese aristocrats gave them a surprisingly warm welcome and competed for the honour of receiving them.⁶⁸

Following the measures undertaken by Leopold in 1790, Ferdinand saw his authority increasing. Even if Leopold's opinion towards his brother actually worsened throughout his reign, the Emperor did not live long enough to initiate another wave of reforms directed to a deeper transformation of the Milanese administration. At the same time, with the monarchs threatened, the situation of France was worsening rapidly: although his policy had been that of maintaining what has been described as an 'uneasy peace'⁶⁹ and despite his sympathies for the Polish patriots currently threatened by the Prussians, Leopold finally decided to sign, in cooperation with King Frederick William II of Prussia and Frederick August Elector of Saxony, a

⁶² G. Gorani, *Storia di Milano dalla sua fondazione all'anno 1796*, pp. 275-285.

⁶³ E. Riva, 'La corte dell'arciduca Ferdinando Asburgo Lorena', p. 92.

⁶⁴ S. Cuccia, *La Lombardia alla fine dell'Ancien Regime*, p. 20.

⁶⁵ E. Riva, 'La corte dell'arciduca Ferdinando Asburgo Lorena', pp. 73-74.

⁶⁶ C. Capra and D. Sella, *Il Ducato di Milano dal 1535 al 1796*, pp. 604-606.

⁶⁷ G. Gorani, *Storia di Milano dalla sua fondazione all'anno 1796*, p. 370.

⁶⁸ E. Riva, 'La corte dell'arciduca Ferdinando Asburgo Lorena', pp. 87-88.

⁶⁹ E. Wangermann, 'The Austrian Enlightenment and the French Revolution', p. 7.

rather controversial declaration of support of King Louis XVI of France against revolutionary forces known as the Declaration of Plinitz.⁷⁰

In Milan, those who still strongly supported reforms were more and more easily labelled as Jacobins, while border checks considerably tightened in order to locate and confiscate seditious publications.⁷¹ Censorship policies, rather lenient under Joseph, were consistently tightened.⁷² For the time being, the citizens of Milan and Lombardy were, however, pacified, Joseph's strongest measures seeming already forgotten.⁷³ The continuation of a programme of reform within that political and historical conjuncture demanded a strategy that Ernst Wangermann has aptly described as 'one step backwards, two steps forward';⁷⁴ unfortunately, Leopold's reign was too short to effectively try and make those steps forward, with regards to both Milan and the rest of the Habsburg dominions. The Emperor's premature death for pleurisy on 1 March, 1792 presents historians with questions that are very hard to answer: given a few more years, Leopold's achievements could have constituted the culmination of Enlightened Absolutism itself, some writers already regarding him, despite the brevity of his mandate, as the best of all *philosophe* kings.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, when Leopold died, the citizens of Milan were sincerely afflicted, members of all social classes agreeing that everybody could profit from the changes introduced by him after Joseph's rule.⁷⁶ A bronze statue of Leopold was placed in the Palace of Broletto, where the city council met, but it remained there for four years only: in 1796, the members of the first republican council reduced it into pieces.⁷⁷

⁷⁰ C. Ingrao, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 221 and R. Okey, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 69.

⁷¹ F. Fava, *Storia di Milano*, pp. 6-7.

⁷² P. M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, pp. 65-66.

⁷³ G. Gorani, *Storia di Milano dalla sua fondazione all'anno 1796*, p. 277

⁷⁴ Ernst Wangermann, *From Joseph II to the Jacobin trials. Government policy and public opinion in the Habsburg dominions in the period of the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 56.

⁷⁵ R. Okey, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 54 and D. Beales, *Enlightenment and Reform in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, p. 41.

⁷⁶ D.A. Minola, *Diario storico-politico...*, vol. 8, pp. 11 and 20.

⁷⁷ F. Fava, *Storia di Milano*, p. 8.

The gravity of the situation would have required a particularly skilled and careful politician, but instead it was Leopold's young and rather inexperienced son, who acceded to the imperial



Fig. 1.3: Painting showing Francis II in 1792.
Vienna, Schönbrunn Castle.

throne with the name of Francis II (Fig. 1.3).

At the time of his coronation, Francis was only twenty-four and, although well-travelled and cultivated, he had received a mainly conservative education (his main tutor being the sanctimonious and reactionary Count Colloredo-Waldsee) and lacked in self-confidence and experience.⁷⁸ Moreover, the beginning of Francis' reign almost perfectly coincided with Austria's declaration of war to France (20 April 1792), followed by the execution of King Louis XVI (21 January, 1793) and Queen Marie Antoinette, Francis's aunt (16 October, 1793): the death of the French monarchs made a particularly strong impression on all European rulers and played a major role in initiating or accelerating an

overall reactionary tightening which soon reached the level of a general 'anti-French hysteria'.⁷⁹

In terms of military affairs, Francis's attitude has been described as a rather complacent readiness to war, which could be seen on the one hand as originating from his father's great (possibly excessive) faith in the alliance with Prussia, on the other hand from an exaggerated notion of the French situation after the fall of the monarchy.⁸⁰ At the same time, unlike other rulers of central Europe, Francis never chose to fuel and exploit patriotism in order to strengthen the army and build a popular support for the war, fearing that popular enthusiasm, once unleashed, could not be completely controlled.⁸¹

⁷⁸ C. Ingrao, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 222.

⁷⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 225 and G. Gorani, *Storia di Milano dalla sua fondazione all'anno 1796*, p. 279

⁸⁰ E. Wangermann, 'The Austrian Enlightenment and the French Revolution', p. 7.

⁸¹ P. M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, pp. 91-92.

In the meantime, the last representative of the enlightened generation, the old Prince and Chancellor Kaunitz, deprived from real political power and disappointed by Francis' policy concerning the alliance with Prussia in the war against France, resigned in the summer of 1792, leaving all major Cabinet roles to rather reactionary figures.⁸² The Austrian Monarchy, was therefore subjected to a strong conservative switch, which could be perceived not only in the total abandonment of any project of reforms, but also in the embittering atmosphere of suspect and vigilance against supposedly revolutionary elements.⁸³ Political dissatisfaction and 'Jacobin' activities were daily denounced and led to arrests, detentions and even public executions (Fig. 1.4).⁸⁴

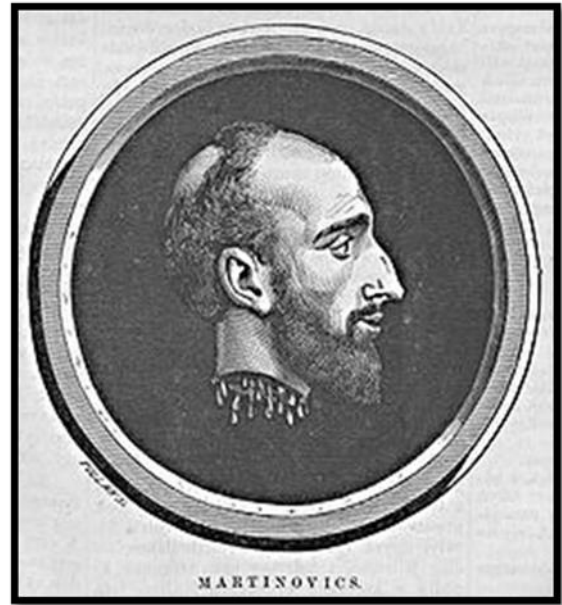


Fig. 1.4: Engraving distributed throughout the Austrian Monarchy showing the severed head of Ignaz von Martinovics, a Hungarian Jacobin executed in 1795.

If Leopold has been subjected to different opinions, almost all historians agree in considering Francis II the real initiator of a new era of reaction, somehow ending once and for all that reforming process that had been carried on since his grandmother's time.⁸⁵ On the other hand, it is also necessary to note that the situation in which he inherited the imperial crown was incredibly complex: the Revolution had in fact reached its most critical phase, threatening all European sovereigns and the very concepts of power and of social order in a way that did not allow any reaction other than a conservative tightening.⁸⁶ The state of war also partially justifies many of the measures undertaken, especially the strengthening of the police system which, besides, generated the strongest critique only later on, once peace had been re-established by the Restoration.⁸⁷ In a more stable situation, the young emperor, provided with undeniable strengths, would have doubtless continued his predecessors' enlightened agenda, but in the

⁸² E. Wangermann, *The Austrian Achievement 1700-1800*, p. 177-178 and C. Ingrao, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 224.

⁸³ F. Fava, *Storia di Milano*, p. 8 and C. Ingrao, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 222.

⁸⁴ S. Cuccia, *La Lombardia alla fine dell'Ancien Regime*, p. 145 and Wangermann, *The Austrian Achievement 1700-1800*, p. 184 and C. Ingrao, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 225.

⁸⁵ C. Capra and D. Sella, *Il Ducato di Milano dal 1535 al 1796*, p. 612 and S. Cuccia, *La Lombardia alla fine dell'Ancien Regime*, p. 135.

⁸⁶ F. Valsecchi, 'Dalla pace di Aquisgrana alla battaglia di Lodi', p. 399 and G. Gorani, *Storia di Milano dalla sua fondazione all'anno 1796*, p. 281.

⁸⁷ P. M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, p. 131.

present conditions, the desire for social justice had to succumb to the government's own survival and the restraint of French expansionism.⁸⁸

In the current situation, the court of Vienna started considering the government of Lombardy as a secondary responsibility. Even if, in November 1792, the Emperor, as it was customary for a new monarch, consulted with the governor and the plenipotentiary to gather information about the current state of the province and devise a possible plan for improvement, no further actions were actually planned.⁸⁹ The dismissal of any further project reform had its main supporter in Archduke Ferdinand, who immediately wrote to his nephew in order to discourage him from undertaking any changes; according to the governor, the atmosphere in Milan, due to the events in France, was in fact already characterized by a certain level of fermentation and the Emperor surely did not want to worsen it by introducing unnecessary actions.⁹⁰ Francis' rule therefore saw a certain degree of political paralysis:⁹¹ the period that spans from 1792 to 1796 has even been described as 'years without history, just of ordinary administration'.⁹² The only apparent purpose of Lombardy's government was that of surviving the revolutionary menace without excessive damage and trying to preserve the society asset as much as possible. Possibly, the only element worth noticing was a further increase in Archduke's Ferdinand authority: the governor became the undisputed chief of the political scene, thus reaching the culmination of a process started after Joseph's death.⁹³

The government and the administration of Milan devoted themselves to the fight against revolutionary dangers, both on the internal and the external fronts. The costs of fighting revolutionary France were tremendous, the financial deficit constituting the Austrian Monarchy's main issue during the Napoleonic wars.⁹⁴ As a province of the Monarchy, Lombardy was called to supply men, victuals and funds in enormous quantities; it has been calculated that in 1796, the debts contracted by the court of Vienna amounted to three times the annual income of the entire province.⁹⁵ At the beginning of 1792, intense revolts against taxation and requisitions perturbed the rural communities of several Lombard provinces.⁹⁶ Too often, these forms of dissatisfaction were given a revolutionary flavour, thus further worsening the atmosphere of suspicion and

⁸⁸ C. Ingraio, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 231 and R. Okey, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 69.

⁸⁹ S. Cuccia, *La Lombardia alla fine dell'Ancien Regime*, p. 135.

⁹⁰ C. Capra and D. Sella, *Il Ducato di Milano dal 1535 al 1796*, p. 613.

⁹¹ C. Ingraio, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 231.

⁹² F. Valsecchi, 'Dalla pace di Aquisgrana alla battaglia di Lodi', p. 391 and G. Gorani, *Storia di Milano dalla sua fondazione all'anno 1796*, p. 283.

⁹³ S. Cuccia, *La Lombardia alla fine dell'Ancien Regime*, p.150.

⁹⁴ C. Ingraio, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 233.

⁹⁵ F. Valsecchi, 'Dalla pace di Aquisgrana alla battaglia di Lodi', pp. 392-393 and S. Cuccia, *La Lombardia alla fine dell'Ancien Regime*, pp. 151-153.

⁹⁶ C. Capra and D. Sella, *Il Ducato di Milano dal 1535 al 1796*, pp 613-614.

fear;⁹⁷ besides, just a few weeks after the Napoleonic invasion, in 1796, the farmers of the Milan and Pavia provinces would rise again, this time against the French, the Jacobins and their allies.⁹⁸

Censorship policies, already revised under Leopold, were considerably tightened and expanded, their target being not only the varied publications aimed at all social classes, but also any sort of written medium and/or object.⁹⁹ While publications coming from Switzerland were now seized and burned ex officio, suspicious items were confiscated all over the province;¹⁰⁰ those caught in their possession were convicted to pay such high fines that even some members of the aristocracy, still very interested in receiving news from abroad, could not prevent some of their collaborators from ending up in prison.¹⁰¹ The approved newspapers – for instance, the *Corriere Milanese* – were cleverly exploited in order to drive the people's mood against the French revolutionaries and all the Jacobins, seen as conspirators spreading the revolutionary poison all over Europe.¹⁰² For what concerned the hunt for real or supposed Jacobins, following the contemporary tendencies in Vienna, a very harsh and oppressive police system was introduced.¹⁰³ In the embittered atmosphere of suspicion and fear, accusations of Jacobinism were controversially thrown at people belonging to varied and unrelated backgrounds, including former politicians, Jansenists, professors at the University of Pavia, intellectuals, celebrated citizens such as Pietro Verri and Cesare Beccaria and even the commander of the Austrian troops General Stein.¹⁰⁴

At the same time, the governor's attempts to control and strengthen the city against the revolutionary menace were destined to be completely frustrated without the establishment of an effective military strategy; furthermore, Lombardy and its inhabitants, after more than 40 years of peace, lacked discipline and organization.¹⁰⁵ The government's weak attempts at strengthening the local army – for instance by granting forgiveness to the deserters and promising competitive salaries to new recruits – were not particularly successful; even the alliance between local administration and the Church – with parish priests motivating peasants and workers to enlist – did not work.¹⁰⁶ During those 'years without history', the revolutionary menace was better dismissed as a temporary madness that would have ended soon enough, letting life continue as

⁹⁷ E. Verga, *Storia della vita milanese*, p. 162.

⁹⁸ C. Capra and D. Sella, *Il Ducato di Milano dal 1535 al 1796*, p. 614.

⁹⁹ D. A. Minola, *Diario storico politico...*, vol. 8, p. 37 and C. Ingrao, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 231.

¹⁰⁰ G. Gorani, *Storia di Milano*, p. 382.

¹⁰¹ S. Cuccia, *La Lombardia alla fine dell'Ancien Regime*, pp. 144-145.

¹⁰² E. Wangermann, 'The Austrian Enlightenment and the French Revolution', p. 9.

¹⁰³ S. Cuccia, *La Lombardia alla fine dell'Ancien Regime*, p. 146.

¹⁰⁴ C. Capra and D. Sella, *Il Ducato di Milano dal 1535 al 1796*, p. 615.

¹⁰⁵ G. Gorani, *Storia di Milano dalla sua fondazione all'anno 1796*, pp. 285-286.

¹⁰⁶ F. Fava, *Storia di Milano*, p. 8.

usual.¹⁰⁷ Besides, even if the French had actually tried to invade, the imperial army (allied with the troops of the King of Sardinia) would have pushed them out from the Monarchy's borders: on 7 April, 1793 a solemn Te Deum was sung in the Duomo to make God's blessing descend over the Austrian army, while the following year, on 18 August, public lamentations were recited in the cathedral to pray that the French stayed away from Lombardy.¹⁰⁸

On 2 March 1796, the pages of *Le Moniteur* reported news that a young Corsican by the name of Napoleon Bonaparte had been nominated General of the Armée d'Italie, the French battalion stationed in Liguria and tasked with the invasion of the Po valley.¹⁰⁹ In the space of a few of months, his leadership would cause his army to defeat the imperial and allied troops and conquer the whole of Northern Italy, including Lombardy, ending the century-long Habsburg rule and triggering a new, radically different wave of political, social and cultural change. Given the strong links between politics, society and culture (especially music) in Milan, the following sections will be dedicated to the description and analysis of the city's cultural, especially musical environment during the second half of the eighteenth century, arguably constituting the culmination of the Habsburg experience.

1.2 Milan in the second half of the eighteenth century: a 'second Renaissance'.

The second half of the eighteenth century represented one of the more fertile periods in the entire history of Milanese culture. Thanks to the long peace, the booming economy, the Habsburg's *buon governo*, the growing importance of the city as capital of a province and the dissemination of cutting-edge ideas and topics coming from Enlightenment debate, Milan's cultural and artistic life experienced a renewal and a steady development.¹¹⁰ The city rapidly became one of the most enlightened cultural centres in Italy, profiting from a unique synergy between the Austrian governors and some of the wealthiest citizens such as Cesare Beccaria,

¹⁰⁷ C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814*, p. 12.

¹⁰⁸ Ettore Rota, 'Milano napoleonica', in *Storia di Milano*, ed. by G. Treccani degli Alfieri (Milan: Fondazione Treccani degli Alfieri, 1956), p. 21.

¹⁰⁹ C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814*, p. 12.

¹¹⁰ Pierre-Jean Grosley, *Observations sur l'Italie et les Italiens* (London: s.n., 1770), vol. 1, p. 105, Augusto Vicinelli, *Il Parini e Brera* (Milan: Ceschina, 1963), p. 64 and Mariangela Donà, 'Milan', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by S. Sadie and J. Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 1980), vol. 5, pp. 387-395 (p. 388).

Pietro Verri and Giuseppe Parini, thus producing a particularly favourable environment for cultural development.¹¹¹

Two centuries of social and cultural torpidity had created a rather static society, whose criteria and rules appeared immovable;¹¹² under the Habsburg rule (specifically from the 1750s), the programme of reforms carefully aimed at changing that society also transformed culture, education and the urban environment, also vivified by the presence of a proper court.¹¹³ Milan became again, as it had been at the time of Ludovico Sforza, a brilliant city.¹¹⁴ Cultural, educational and administrative institutions like the collegium of Brera (with its art academy and collection, library and astronomical observatory), the Ambrosiana Library, the Palatine Schools, the University of Pavia and the pioneering Archivio di Stato (State Archive), reorganized (or, in some cases, founded) through the Habsburg reforms, became the object of admiration of both locals and foreigners.¹¹⁵ In 1782, Pietro Verri commented:

We are now a different country than the one we were used to be; everybody is encouraged to study and nobody can find useless knowledge anymore. We have amazing observatories, botanical gardens, physics and natural history cabinets; medicine, theology and law are taught differently than before.¹¹⁶

It was precisely in these years that Lombardy (identifiable with Milan) rose to become a propelling force for the cultural and political life of the whole country and aligning it with the bright international scene.¹¹⁷ While the political and administrative fields were subjected to a radical renewal, culture in all its forms was permeated by a strong desire for wider debates a larger cultural horizon of European level.¹¹⁸ Versatility, broadening interests and a spontaneous

¹¹¹ Maria Canella, 'Aspetti e figure della cultura milanese nel percorso verso la modernità', in *Il laboratorio della modernità: Milano tra austriaci e francesi* (Milan: Skira, 2003), pp. 79-89 (p. 81) and D. Carpanetto, *L'Italia del settecento*, pp. 280-281.

¹¹² Franco Valsecchi, 'Le riforme teresiane in Lombardia', in *Economia, istituzioni, cultura in Lombardia nell'età di Maria Teresa*, ed. by Aldo De Maddalena, Ettore Rotelli and Gennaro Barbarisi (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1982), pp. 27-40 (p. 27) and Nino Del Bianco, *Il coraggio e la sorte. Gli italiani nell'età napoleonica dalle Cisalpine al Regno Italico* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1997), p. 16.

¹¹³ Antoine C.P. Valéry, *Historical, literary and artistical Travels in Italy*, eng. transl. by C.E. Clifton (Paris: Baudry, 1839), pp. 57-58.

¹¹⁴ Giorgio Taborelli, *Milano capitale della musica* (Rome: Editalia, 2000), p. 117.

¹¹⁵ Charles De Brosses, *Lettres familières écrites d'Italie en 1739 et 1740* (Paris: Perrin, 1885), p. 93-94, *La cultura a Milano tra riformismo illuminato e rivoluzione*, ed. by Raffaele Degradà et alii (Milan: Vangelista, 1989), p. 17, Richard Schober, 'Gli effetti delle riforme di Maria Teresa sulla Lombardia', in *Economia, istituzioni, cultura in Lombardia nell'età di Maria Teresa*, ed. by Aldo De Maddalena, Ettore Rotelli and Gennaro Barbarisi (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1982), pp. 201-214 (p. 209), *Tre secoli di vita milanese*, ed. by Achille Bertarelli and Antonio Monti (Milan: Hoepli, 1927), pp. 259-261, *Maria Teresa e la Lombardia austriaca 1740-1780*, ed. by Archivio di Stato di Milano (Como: New Press, 1982), p. 126 and Ettore Verga, *Storia della vita milanese* (Milan: Libreria milanese, 1996), p. 172-174.

¹¹⁶ A. Vicinelli, *Il Parini e Brera*, pp. 65-66.

¹¹⁷ F. Valsecchi, 'Le riforme teresiane in Lombardia', pp. 27-28, M. Canella, 'Aspetti e figure della cultura milanese ...', p. 82 and *La cultura a Milano tra riformismo illuminato e rivoluzione*, p. 15.

¹¹⁸ *Non solo lirica*, ed. by Luisa Longhi (Milan: Nuove edizioni, 1996), p. 9.

participation in the cultural environment and development became characteristic not only of intellectuals, but of a larger and varied social group.¹¹⁹

Artists and intellectuals, coming not only from the aristocracy's ranks, but also from a new crowd of educated *minores gentes* (bourgeois) were re-discovering classicistic models and their application within newly informed contexts based on the critique of society and on public utility. At the same time, many intellectuals were looking at France and its social and cultural turmoil,¹²⁰ consequently, they were promoting and actively carrying on a process of deep cultural renewal directed towards the rejection of superficial beauty and formal emptiness in favour of the harmonization of culture with the precepts of *pubblica felicità*.¹²¹ Milan was also becoming a European city, with intellectuals and professionals being equally fluent in Milanese dialect, French and Italian. While French and Italian were used more in study and written communication, Milanese was widely used in spoken interaction and could boast a long-standing tradition of literature and poetry;¹²² on the other hand, German was not frequently used as a language of communication, all members of the Habsburg House and cabinet being proficient in Italian.¹²³

New concepts and ideas had started entering Milan through mode and fashion, with the interest for the events happening north of the Alps at first being mainly a form of affectation and then, gradually, generating a proper debate.¹²⁴ The gloomy and rigid Spanish etiquette had given way to a more relaxed and brilliant atmosphere.¹²⁵ The prestigious *salotti* (lit. salons, namely private gatherings) organized around some of the wealthiest and more educated members of the aristocracy became important cultural venues, where music, arts and literature were cultivated and debated, impressive private collections of books, artworks and antiques were assembled and studied and private clubs and academies gathered regularly.¹²⁶

¹¹⁹ Mariangela Donà, 'Dagli archivi milanesi: lettere di Ranieri de Calzabigi e di Antonia Bernasconi', in *Analecta Musicologica*, 14 (1974), pp. 268-285 (p. 270).

¹²⁰ F. Valsecchi, 'Le riforme teresiane in Lombardia', p. 33 and R. Schober, 'Gli effetti delle riforme di Maria Teresa sulla Lombardia', p. 201.

¹²¹ *La cultura a Milano tra riformismo illuminato e rivoluzione*, p. 16 and A. Bosisio, *Storia di Milano*, pp. 282-283.

¹²² M. Canella, 'Aspetti e figure della cultura milanese...', p. 81.

¹²³ G. Tadorelli, *Milano capitale della musica*, p. 118.

¹²⁴ E. Verga, *Storia della vita Milanese*, p. 173.

¹²⁵ *Non solo lirica*, pp. 17-18.

¹²⁶ C. De Brosses, *Lettres familières*, p. 95, A. Valery, *Historical, literary and artistical Travels in Italy*, p.56, A. Bosisio, *Storia di Milano*, pp. 283-284 and Nadia Torcellan, 'I luoghi della sociabilità', in *Il laboratorio della modernità: Milano tra austriaci e francesi* (Milan: Skira, 2003), pp. 91-99 (p. 93).

Among the most celebrated ones, one can find those of many women, for instance Margherita Calderara Litta, Maria Vittoria Serbelloni, Maria Litta Castelbarco (Fig. 1.5), Paola Castiglioni and Teresa Angiolini Fogliuzzi, also passionate readers, artists, musicians and theatre patrons.¹²⁷ Their invitees were often also joined by members of the government and important foreign politicians, artists and scientists of the time.¹²⁸ When visiting Lombardy already in 1739-40 and being invited



Fig. 1.5: Portrait of Countess Maria Litta Castelbarco represented as an artist and art patron. Milan, Civiche Raccolte Storiche Palazzo Moroggia.

to numerous private cultural events, the French politician and *homme de lettres* Charles De Brosses had commented that he considered Milan's high society the best in Italy, very well-educated, open-minded and similar to the Parisian one.¹²⁹ The British agriculturalist Arthur Young, visiting Italy in 1788 after an extensive journey to France, also observed a strong similarity between the customs and etiquette of the French and Italian aristocracy.¹³⁰

The Habsburg government also founded an official academy of arts and sciences, the Società Patriottica (Patriotic Society), in order to enhance and promote the development of arts and sciences through debate, international collaborations and governmental sponsorship

(e.g. through research grants, sponsored projects and public competitions, see Fig. 1.6).¹³¹ The Società, as its counterparts founded in many parts of the monarchy, provided an independent public space for the open and legitimate discussion of public issues, its members becoming highly respected activists who adhered to a shared behavioural code.¹³² It is within these various occasions for debate that many historians recognize the spark that ignited the civil

¹²⁷ C. De Brosses, *Lettres familières*, pp. 105-107 and M.T. Sillano, 'Maria Gaetana Agnesi', pp. 194-195.

¹²⁸ *Non solo lirica*, p. 17, Sergio Romagnoli 'Il Teatro e «Il Caffè»', in *Economia, istituzioni, cultura in Lombardia nell'età di Maria Teresa*, ed. by Aldo De Maddalena, Ettore Rotelli and Gennaro Barbarisi (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1982), pp. 299-318 (p. 303) and M. Canella, 'Aspetti e figure della cultura milanese...', pp. 80-82.

¹²⁹ C. De Brosses, *Lettres familières*, p. 103.

¹³⁰ Arthur Young, *Travels in France and Italy during the years 1787, 1788 and 1789*, ed. by Thomas Okey (London: Dent, 1915), p. 234.

¹³¹ *Maria Teresa e la Lombardia austriaca 1740-1780*, pp. 126-127 and D. Carpanetto, *L'Italia del settecento*, pp. 267-268.

¹³² P. M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, p. 140.

and political commitment of many intellectuals, scholars and officials, thus creating that luminous era of Lombard Enlightenment which would greatly inform both the republican and the Restoration experiences.¹³³

In these years, Milan thus assumed the leadership of a gradual, yet deep process of cultural, moral and social renewal that had started with the liberation from the Spanish obscurantism and would reach its completion only during the Risorgimento. The city thus became what historians have defined 'Italy's watchtower' and 'the modernity workshop': from the drowsy province of a declining monarchy, Milan was turned into a centre of primary importance, cutting-edge within Italy and with a strong European vocation.¹³⁴

Milan's society in the last years of the eighteenth century was, however, in the words of the historian Francesco Valsecchi, 'a new one, yet still an old one', with traditional practices and innovative elements coexisting in all layers of society.¹³⁵ The aristocracy, who traditionally held the political power and the public offices, was condemned to witnessing its

irreversible weakening; at the same time, a new social class was rising, that of the bourgeois *homines novi* who, after gaining economic power through investments, contracts and trade, were now in the position of buying a title and playing a significant role within the society.¹³⁶ The reform of customs and social life was in fact a lot slower than the one of economy. A significant part of the eighteenth century was still characterized by pomp and frivolity, both in real life and in the arts: with the wars gone and one of the longest ever periods of peace, stability and growth,

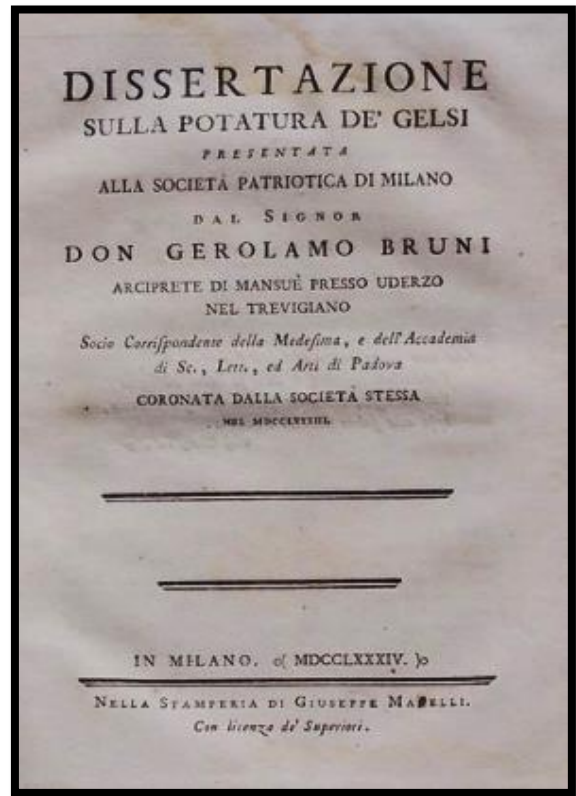


Fig. 1.6: Title page of a dissertation on the pruning of mulberry trees rewarded by the Società Patriottica in 1784. Milan, Biblioteca nazionale Braidense.

¹³³ See e.g. N. Torcellan, 'I luoghi della sociabilità', p. 93 and M. Canella, 'Aspetti e figure della cultura milanese...', pp. 81-82, although this concept is also present in the works of Carlo Capra and Dante Isella.

¹³⁴ A. Vicinelli, *Il Parini e Brera*, p. 237 and Carlo Capra, 'Austriaci e francesi a Milano: il laboratorio della modernità', in *Il laboratorio della modernità: Milano tra austriaci e francesi* (Milan: Skira, 2003), pp. 13-19 (p. 13).

¹³⁵ F. Valsecchi, 'Dalla pace di Aquisgrana alla battaglia di Lodi', p. 272.

¹³⁶ Maria Teresa Sillano, 'Maria Gaetana Agnesi: un impegno social in epoca teresiana', in *Economia, istituzioni, cultura in Lombardia nell'età di Maria Teresa*, ed. by Aldo De Maddalena, Ettore Rotelli and Gennaro Barbarisi (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1982), pp. 191-201 (p. 192) and R. Schober 'Gli effetti delle riforme di Maria Teresa sulla Lombardia', p. 205.

life for many aristocrats had become rather purposeless.¹³⁷ At the very top of the social pyramid, the idle and lascivious noblemen so effectively described in Giuseppe Parini's satirical works still existed, but were representing a declining system.¹³⁸

Many aristocrats, on the other hand, were aware of the distance still existing between cutting-edge political and social theories and the proportionally underdeveloped environment they lived in, thus becoming active reformers involved not only in the already mentioned cultural and intellectual activities, but also in the government of their own city and region as well as their financial and technical development.¹³⁹ The main conflicts within Milan's society and intelligentsia were not those among social classes, but rather between two generations, now unable to understand each other's language and thus facing the other as an enemy.¹⁴⁰ Thanks to the years of reforms and the improvements thus introduced, the general attitude towards change could be described as reforming rather than revolutionary.¹⁴¹ At the same time, the upper classes were still undoubtedly the only ones that could effectively constitute a propelling force, while the majority of the population could be considered as politically and culturally inactive.¹⁴²

Following the needs of a new political, economic and cultural capital, first Maria Theresia and then Ferdinand also triggered an intense process of renewal and embellishment of the city, thus employing a policy aimed at re-defining the physical appearance Milan had acquired during the Spanish domination.¹⁴³ As a major Counter-Reformation centre (with the celebrated Borromeo cardinals) and an oligarchical city, Milan had its most prestigious symbols in the religious and aristocratic palaces:¹⁴⁴ the Habsburg policies, on the contrary, aimed at transforming it not only into a beautiful and comfortable capital city, but also into a more efficient civic, administrative and cultural centre.¹⁴⁵ The governors put much effort into improving and modernizing the city through a series of practical interventions regarding, for instance, public hygiene (sewers and refuse collection), public lighting and house numbers.¹⁴⁶ The myth of the beauty of Milan, already described by travellers since the sixteenth century as a great and rich city, but always considered not particularly pleasant, was born precisely in these years. Thanks to the cooperation between

¹³⁷ *Non solo lirica*, p. 18 and N. Torcellan, 'I luoghi della sociabilità', p. 93.

¹³⁸ See e.g. the portrait of the *giovini signori* contained in Parini's satirical poems *Il Mattino* (or *Il Giorno*) and *Il Mezzogiorno*.

¹³⁹ E. Verga, *Storia della vita Milanese*, pp. 160-161.

¹⁴⁰ F. Valsecchi, 'Le riforme teresiane in Lombardia', p. 33.

¹⁴¹ *Idem*, 'Dalla pace di Aquisgrana alla battaglia di Lodi', p. 273 and R. Schober, 'Gli effetti delle riforme di Maria Teresa sulla Lombardia', p. 211.

¹⁴² A. Bosio, *Storia di Milano*, p. 281 and N. Del Bianco, *Il coraggio e la sorte*, p. 15.

¹⁴³ C. Cremonini, *Le vie della distinzione*, p. 44.

¹⁴⁴ A. Valery, *Historical, literary and artistic Travels in Italy*, pp. 38-39, P. Grosley, *Observations sur l'Italie et les Italiens*, p. 184 and C. De Brosses, *Lettres familières*, pp. 94-95.

¹⁴⁵ G. Ricci, 'La città rinnovata e gli edifici pubblici', p. 194 and Aurora Scotti Tosini, 'Le trasformazioni della città', in *Il laboratorio della modernità: Milano tra austriaci e francesi* (Milan: Skira, 2003), pp. 35-48 (pp. 35-36).

¹⁴⁶ A. Vicinelli, *Il Parini e Brera*, p. 67.

the governors and the citizens, Milan, even if still unable to compete with other Italian cities such as Florence or Venice, was gradually acquiring the exterior appearance of a capital.¹⁴⁷

1.3 The city and its music

Theatre is everything.
Pietro Verri to Alessandro Verri, 1768

*In this city, which is very large and populous,
music is much cultivated.*
Charles Burney, 1770

*Theatre is a beehive, boxes are cells,
youths are bees that make honey.*
Giuseppe Parini

Music was cultivated in Milan within a palette of different genres and occasions that went significantly beyond the opera house. The city, thanks to various factors (such as its geographical position, its prominence as the capital of the Ambrosian church, its rich, instrumental tradition and its well-balanced relationship between institutions and the private sphere), had developed a rich musical milieu. Although it was destined to develop more and more in the direction of a Europe-renowned opera centre, the late-eighteenth century saw Milan as one of the most prominent and progressive Italian centres for both musical performance and composition.¹⁴⁸

Sacred music was highly regarded and widely performed in the imperial chapel of Santa Maria alla Scala (moved to San Fedele after the church was destroyed to erect La Scala theatre) and the other numerous *cappelle musicali* of churches, convents, monasteries and educational institutes.¹⁴⁹ Milan's numerous churches were particularly famous for their tradition of Ambrosian liturgical chant, older and different from the Roman Catholic one,¹⁵⁰ also constituting a significant enticement for visiting musicians and scholars.¹⁵¹ Liturgical music was performed under the direction of maestri di cappella who used mainly polyphonic choirs with or without the accompaniment of the organ¹⁵². The cathedral or Duomo, for instance (Fig. 1.7), had two great instruments and was able to provide poly-choral oratorios during important holidays. The post of

¹⁴⁷ A.S. Tosini, 'Le trasformazioni della città', p. 35. Positive comments about Milan can also be found in the chronicles of travellers and visitors such as Charles De Brosses, Pierre-Jean Grosley, Jérôme Lalande and Arthur Young, see E. Verga, *Storia della vita Milanese*, pp. 162-176.

¹⁴⁸ C. Fertonani, 'Aspetti della musica strumentale a Milano nel secondo Settecento', pp. 859-860.

¹⁴⁹ *Notizie storiche e descrizione dell' I. R. Teatro alla Scala* (Milan: Salvi, 1856), pp. 6-7, P. Grosley, *Observations sur l'Italie et les Italiens*, p. 115 and C. De Brosses, *Lettres familières*, pp. 82-90.

¹⁵⁰ A. Valery, *Historical, literary and artistical Travels in Italy*, p. 39.

¹⁵¹ Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy* (London: Becket, 1773), pp. 79-80.

¹⁵² C. De Brosses, *Lettres familières*, p. 99.

organist was quite a prestigious one, also attracting foreign musicians (in the 1760s, for instance, Johann Christian Bach).¹⁵³ Musical practices and repertoire mainly drew from an ancient tradition, proposing a style that Burney described already in 1770 as ‘masterly grave’ as opposed to the vocal style heard in the opera house.¹⁵⁴ At the same time, performances of newly composed masses and oratorios, proposing a more modern compositional and performative style, took place with high frequency in different churches.¹⁵⁵ Sacred music concerts were usually free of charge, as everybody could enter the churches without paying. These concerts represented the only occasions in which a significant part of Milan’s population could hear live art music; as a result, the audience was often formed by lower-class people, while aristocrats and intellectuals did not usually attend. It was quite common to hear the same musicians (both instrumentalists and singers) perform in different contexts, for instance in the church, theatre and private concerts.¹⁵⁶



Fig. 1.7: The exterior of Milan’s cathedral or Duomo in the second half of the eighteenth century.
Milan, CRS ‘A. Bertarelli’.

Chamber music, both vocal and instrumental, was in fact practised in a plurality of private and public contexts. Concerts, often called ‘accademie’, took place generally within the aristocracy’s

¹⁵³ C. Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*, p. 80.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 81.

¹⁵⁵ Francesco Degradà, ‘Le esperienze milanesi di Mozart: una rivisitazione critica’, in *L’amabil rito: società e cultura nella Milano di Parini*, ed. by Gennaro Barbarisi et al. (Bologna: Cisalpino), II, pp. 731-750 (p. 734).

¹⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 90-102.

salotti, but also in the opera house, profiting from the contribution of both dilettanti and professionals.¹⁵⁷ The musicians involved also created a widespread network for the circulation of manuscript music that included works from different traditions and styles all over Europe.¹⁵⁸ Some of the private *accademie*, most of all those supported by the wealthiest and most enthusiastic patrons, reached the scale dimensions of public concerts, involving dozens of different performers and showing a very high standard of aristocratic dilettantism. In 1758, a society of aristocratic amateur musicians aiming at reaching professional standards had also been constituted in Milan under the name of ‘Accademia Filarmonica’.¹⁵⁹

Particular importance was assumed by the regular season of *accademie* organized by the members of the Pio Istituto de’ Professori di Musica, a major cultural institution founded in 1783 and gathering some of the most important professional musicians active in Milan, the majority coming from the orchestra of La Scala opera house. Among the founders of this institution, one can find some of the most prestigious names of Milan’s musical scene of the time, some destined to become leading figures during the Napoleonic years, e.g. Alessandro Rolla, Giovanni Battista Lampugnani, Luigi De Baillou and Carlo Monza.¹⁶⁰ Conceived as a welfare trust appointed with the assistance of destitute musicians and their families (on the model of Gesellschaft der Wiener Tonkünstler), the Pio Istituto received financial support both from the government and by claiming a percentage on the income from gambling in the opera house.¹⁶¹ In addition, its members played within a series of sixteen public concerts a year, ten during the Lent season and six in the other periods when operatic performances were usually suspended. Attendance to these concerts was subjected to an entry price, the income from the ticket sales constituting (together with the governmental support, the annual fees paid by the members and the occasional donations) the capital of the institution.¹⁶²

The repertoire performed in the *accademie*, both private and public, was very varied, drawing from both the operatic tradition and the various instrumental genres. Chamber music, from sonatas to ensemble pieces, was widely composed and performed, while concerts for solo instrument and orchestra were often performed to showcase the talents of both native and visiting musicians. In 1770, for instance, a series of *accademie* had been organized by the

¹⁵⁷ C. Fertonani, ‘Aspetti della musica strumentale a Milano nel secondo Settecento’, p. 870 and G. Tadorelli, *Milano capitale della musica*, pp. 118-119 and C. Fertonani, ‘Aspetti della musica strumentale a Milano nel secondo Settecento’, p. 866.

¹⁵⁸ C. Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*, pp. 94-95.

¹⁵⁹ C. Fertonani, ‘Aspetti della musica strumentale a Milano nel secondo Settecento’, pp. 870-871.

¹⁶⁰ Sergio Martinotti, ‘Orchestra a Milano nel Settecento’, in *La musica a Milano, in Lombardia e oltre* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2000), vol. 2, pp. 133-144 (p. 143).

¹⁶¹ *Annali universali di statistica, economia pubblica, storia, viaggi e commercio* (Milan: Società degli editori degli Annali universali), LXIV (April-June 1840), p. 190. Numerous programmes of the *accademie* performed by the members of the Pio Istituto can also be found within the museum of La Scala opera house and Biblioteca Teatrale ‘Livia Simoni’.

¹⁶² C. Fertonani, ‘Aspetti della musica strumentale a Milano nel secondo Settecento’, pp. 868-869.

plenipotentiary minister Count Firmian in order to present to the Milanese aristocracy the talent of the young Mozart, visiting Italy with his father, and to persuade the theatre impresarios to commission him an opera.¹⁶³

The presence of a high number of professional musicians in the celebrated orchestras of both the Teatro Ducale and La Scala, along with a fertile amateur tradition, made it also possible for a significant symphonic tradition to inform Milan's eighteenth-century musical environment.¹⁶⁴ Indeed, despite its rapidly declining status and the growing phenomenon of many Italian musicians emigrating abroad, Milan's tradition of instrumental music, personified in primis by the versatile Giovanni Battista Sammartini, was still significant not only at the local level, but at a European one. Sammartini's experience was also significant through his influence on composers such as Gluck and Johann Christian Bach, and through the intense circulation of his music all around Europe.¹⁶⁵

Despite the plurality of occasions briefly sketched above, opera-going was regarded by the Milanese belonging to all social classes as the main musical and, even more, social experience that the city could offer. Musical theatre had undoubtedly been deeply rooted within the city's (and indeed the whole region's) entertainment offering and practices for more than a century, the quality and quantity of operatic performances growing steadily throughout the decades.¹⁶⁶ During his travels to Lombardy in 1788, Arthur Young commented: 'The number of theatres in this part of Italy is astonishing: two great ones at Milan, one in Monza; in twenty miles, another in Lodi, in fifteen miles in one direction, Codogno, in ten in the another, Crema; ten miles south, another in Piacenza [...]'.¹⁶⁷ Moreover, opera-going was more important as a social phenomenon than as a musical one: apart from being a necessary symbol of the city's prestige and culture, the opera house was something utterly necessary for the society of the time, almost, as the theatre historian Giorgio Taborelli has described it, 'a society on its own'.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶³ F. Degrada, 'Le esperienze milanesi di Mozart', p. 733-734.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 737.

¹⁶⁵ Guglielmo Barblan, 'Il teatro musicale a Milano nei secoli XVII e XVIII', in *Storia di Milano*, ed. by G. Treccani degli Alfieri (Milan: Fondazione Treccani degli Alfieri, 1956), 12, pp. 948-996 (p. 983) and C. Fertonani, 'Aspetti della musica strumentale a Milano nel secondo Settecento', pp. 864-865 and 872.

¹⁶⁶ Giuseppe Barigazzi, *La Scala racconta*, ed. by Silvia Barigazzi and Franco Pulcini (Milan: Hoepli, 2010), pp. 4-5 and Roberta Carpani, 'Il teatro musicale a Milano: aspetti istituzionali nell'ultimo decennio del Ducale', in *L'amabil rito: società e cultura nella Milano di Parini*, ed. by Gennaro Barbarisi et al. (Bologna: Cisalpino), II, pp. 767-808 (p. 767).

¹⁶⁷ A. Young, *Travels in France and Italy*, p. 242.

¹⁶⁸ Laura Nicora, 'L'attività di Giuseppe Parini dal Teatro Ducale alla Scala', in *L'amabil rito: società e cultura nella Milano di Parini*, ed. by Gennaro Barbarisi et al. (Bologna: Cisalpino), vol. 2, pp. 911- (pp. 912-913), M. Donà, *La musica a Milano nel Settecento durante la dominazione austriaca*, p. 2, A. Valery, *Historical, literary and artistical Travels in Italy*, p. 65, A. Bosisio, *Storia di Milano*, p. 284 and G. Taborelli, *Milano capitale della musica*, p. 119.

For the aristocrats, living a highly ritualized and impersonal daily life, going to the opera represented the ultimate entertainment and occasion of social contact.¹⁶⁹ Even if musical theatre had lost its original court character, it still retained a strong aristocratic matrix, with the Milanese highborn citizens representing its main supporters and patrons.¹⁷⁰ Furthermore, a new society was gradually developing, based not only on the aristocracy, but also on the emerging higher bourgeoisie (wealthy merchants, bankers and other professionals) aiming at possessing or at least mimicking the aristocratic mentality and social rituals. By offering them occasions for cultural prestige, visibility and social interaction, the opera house could positively constitute an appropriate venue for the sociability needs of all the upper social strata.¹⁷¹ Consequently, a night out at the theatre was centred around a musical performance (an opera and one or two ballets), but involved much more: feste da ballo (dances), games of chance, refreshments and long breaks for social interaction shaped these nights into very long and complex events.¹⁷² The usual opera, whether serious or comic, with entr'acte ballets and entertainment lasted about six hours, and it was not uncommon for the theatre to close at dawn, especially during the Carnival Season. Games and dances sometimes lasted even well past dawn, causing gamblers and dancers to sometimes neglect church on Sunday morning to remain hidden in their salons.¹⁷³

The middle social strata, constituted by those professional people or lower bourgeois who could afford the steady entry price for a place in the stalls or in the upper galleries, were also a frequent presence in the theatre: within a society still dominated by the barriers between social groups, an opera performance represented a rare occasion on which partial contact between individuals belonging to different classes was allowed.¹⁷⁴ Moreover, in the case of particularly important celebratory occasions, the governors had the habit of offering the opera and ballet tickets at a much lower price, thus allowing a wider and more varied audience than usual to enter the opera house and enjoy what was undoubtedly seen as the highest social and musical privilege of the time.¹⁷⁵

At the other end of the social hierarchy, the members of the lower urban classes, apart from a few servants appointed with looking after their wealthy patrons, were usually not admitted to the opera house, although their needs for recreation and sociability were satisfied with forms of popular entertainment taking place in the streets or in temporary buildings. Popular spectacles

¹⁶⁹ K. Hansell, *Opera and ballet at the Regio Ducal Teatro of Milan*, p. 124 and L. Nicora, 'L'attività di Giuseppe Parini dal Teatro Ducale alla Scala', p. 913.

¹⁷⁰ G. Barigazzi, *La Scala racconta*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁷¹ N. Torcellan, 'I luoghi della sociabilità', p. 92.

¹⁷² K. Hansell, *Opera and ballet at the Regio Ducal Teatro of Milan*, p. 265.

¹⁷³ N. Torcellan, 'I luoghi della sociabilità', p. 117-118 and also C. Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*, pp. 83-84.

¹⁷⁴ Carlo A. Vianello, *Teatri, spettacoli, musiche a Milano nei secoli scorsi* (Milan: Libreria Lombarda, 1941), pp. 167-168.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 170.

included pantomimes, juggling and circus performances, *commedia dell'arte* plays performed by itinerant troupes and puppet theatre.¹⁷⁶ Religious feasts, often characterized by elements of public gathering and entertainment such as processions, fireworks and lighting, still represented the main occasions of recreation for the overwhelming majority of the city's population.¹⁷⁷

Governors and their advisors were perfectly aware of the strong bond between the opera house and the society, and of the fact that theatrical space was becoming more and more central within the city's life. Far from the concept of a scared and secluded temple of music, the Milanese opera house was in fact also a living space, significantly close to reality.¹⁷⁸ Moreover, as we will shortly investigate, the theatrical space was partially owned by the aristocrats themselves, thus making the Milanese opera house an interesting example of semi-public/semi-private venue.¹⁷⁹

Singers and dancers, on the other hand, became public, almost iconic figures, deeply involved in the city's social life and immortalized in sonnets, engravings and paintings. For instance, during his sojourn in Milan, Charles De Brosses observed a peculiar custom in the Teatro Ducale, that of printing short poems dedicated to singers or dancers on small coloured flyers and throwing those from the upper circle during the artist's performance (Fig. 1.8).¹⁸⁰ This tradition, recently analysed by John Rice, passed on from the Ducale to La Scala and was still widespread in the 1810s, while also persisting in Vienna well into the nineteenth century.¹⁸¹



Fig. 1.8: Sonnet and engraving dedicated to the dancer Santina Zanuzzi, distributed in the Teatro Ducale in 1761. Milan, CRS 'A. Bertarelli'.

¹⁷⁶ N. Torcellan, 'I luoghi della sociabilità', p. 93 and C. Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*, p. 111.

¹⁷⁷ Maria Teresa e la Lombardia austriaca 1740-1780, p. 127.

¹⁷⁸ *Non solo lirica*, p. 9.

¹⁷⁹ See K. Hansell, *Opera and ballet at the Regio Ducal Teatro of Milan*, p. 159, C. Burney, *Viaggio musicale in Italia*, p. 87 and *Notizie storiche e descrizione dell' I. R. Teatro alla Scala*, p. 7.

¹⁸⁰ C. De Brosses, *Lettres familières*, p. 423.

¹⁸¹ John A. Rice, 'Mid-Eighteenth-Century Opera Seria Evoked in a Print by Marc'Antonio dal Re', in *Music in Art*, 34 (2009), pp. 153–64 (p. 153); see also [Newspaper cutting], n.d., possibly 1813 (La Scala Archive, MAN 448).

The opera house was also a very visible space, where people's moods and inclinations were traditionally expressed and could be effectively observed and monitored. Members of the police corps and associated figures were a constant presence at the opera house and were responsible not only for keeping order and decency, but also for reporting any seditious or suspicious elements. It is not a coincidence that the first signs of revolutionary moods, triggering the tightening of surveillance and censorship, were detected at La Cannobiana opera house on the night of 10 December 1792. As Pietro Verri reported to his brother, in Act I, scene 6 of the play *Federico II di Prussia*, currently performed by the Polina comic troupe, the title character had invited a kneeling man to stand up, as all men were equal.¹⁸² These words had excited the audience, who had interrupted the actor with thunderous clapping and cries of 'Yes, bravo! Men are all equal'.¹⁸³ The captain of the police, overseeing the performance, was shocked by the fact and immediately reported it to his superiors, who, in response, doubled the surveillance in the theatres and tightened the censorship of theatrical works.¹⁸⁴

Many public figures were also directly involved in the glamorous social life connected to theatre attendance: it was the case, for instance, of the celebrated Prince Kaunitz-Rietberg, both Maria Theresa's and Joseph's main advisor, who had several protégées (some said lovers) among the opera singers; one of the most famous among them was the soprano Caterina Gabrielli, nicknamed 'Cochetta' (coquette) and celebrated for both her virtuosity and indiscreet private life.¹⁸⁵ In Milan, Count Firmian, the powerful plenipotentiary minister who exerted the supreme executive authority, was a great supporter and patron of the arts and especially of music and musical theatre: as that of a refined connoisseur and musical entrepreneur, Firmian's *salotto* was one of Milan's main venues for musical gatherings.¹⁸⁶ With the opera house being the main venue for the higher classes to gather and entertain themselves, it was a political and an economic matter of great interest for the governors to both support and control theatrical management and performances.¹⁸⁷

Within this context and in the development of the city's musical and cultural life, the personality and musical inclination of the different members of the Habsburg family directly or indirectly involved in the rule of Lombardy played an important role. Since the beginning of the

¹⁸² S. Romagnoli, 'Il Teatro e «Il Caffè»', p. 302 and Alessandro Verri and Pietro Verri, *Carteggio*, ed. Sara Rosini, part of *Edizione nazionale delle opere di Pietro Verri*, vol. 8, tome 1 (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2008), pp. 216-217.

¹⁸³ See C. A. Vianello, *Teatri, spettacoli, musiche a Milano nei secoli scorsi*, pp. 188-189.

¹⁸⁴ Giovanni Seregni, 'La cultura milanese del Settecento', *Storia di Milano*, ed. by G. Treccani degli Alfieri (Milan: Fondazione Treccani degli Alfieri, 1956), 12, pp. 569-639 (p. 634).

¹⁸⁵ M. Donà, *La musica a Milano nel Settecento durante la dominazione austriaca*, p. 8.

¹⁸⁶ See G. Barblan, 'Il teatro musicale a Milano nei secoli XVII e XVIII', p. 993, F. Degrada, 'Le esperienze milanesi di Mozart', p. 732 and also Giuliana Ricci, 'La città rinnovata e gli edifici pubblici' in *La Milano del Giovine Signore*, ed. by F. Mazzocca and A. Morandotti (Milano: Skira, 1999), pp. 192-195 (p. 195).

¹⁸⁷ Kathleen Hansell, *Opera and ballet at the Regio Ducal Teatro of Milan*, pp. 102-103.

Austrian domination, their patronage of the opera house had been considered a way of expressing the government's goodwill towards its subjects and, at the same time, an interesting occasion of collaboration between Vienna and Milan.¹⁸⁸ When the old Teatro Ducale burnt down in 1708, its reconstruction had been funded by the Austrian governors together with the main aristocratic families, who had thus become co-owners of it;¹⁸⁹ the State Archive of Milan still contains the documents showing how the aristocrats involved accepted to financially contribute to the reconstruction of the Ducale and in exchange obtained one or more boxes for which they would have to pay a yearly fee. The financial support given by the Austrian court, who had funded the construction of the roof and outer walls, was commemorated by two medallions inserted within the arch framing the Ducale's proscenium, one showing Charles VI's profile, the other a phoenix rising from the ashes and the motto 'Rediviva sub Optimo Principe Hilaritas Publica' (Public Gaiety revived under a good Prince).¹⁹⁰

Naturally, the patronage of musical theatre was not only a propaganda tool, but also an effective weapon of control. It is significant that, after the erection of La Scala and La Cannobiana (already doubling the offering of operatic performances in comparison to the times of the Ducale), the Habsburg government had forbidden the opening of further public theatres: Milan would have to wait for the years of the Napoleonic domination to see the number of its theatres increasing.¹⁹¹ Moreover, since the beginning of the Austrian domination in Northern Italy, a rich network had been established between Vienna (whose musical theatre was dominated by Italian artists) and Milan with regard to opera production and dissemination. The exchange of composers, librettists, singers, players, dancers and, naturally, scores and librettos was constant and remained constant throughout the second half of the eighteenth century.¹⁹² Italian musicians and artists were also directly chosen by members of the Habsburg house or court during their travels through the Monarchy's provinces; it was the case of the soprano Giuseppe Appiani, who had been noticed by Maria Theresa during her trip to Milan in May 1739 and immediately employed for Vienna.¹⁹³ While the cultural relationship between the Milanese aristocrats and the Viennese musical environment remained strong, an uninterrupted flow of theatrical news and chronicles connected the two capitals, with significant effects on the choices of repertoires,

¹⁸⁸ The people's entertainment would remain an important tool of both *buon governo* and control also during the Restoration; see Vittorio Ferrari, *Il Teatro della Scala nella vita e nell'arte dalle origini ad oggi* (Milan: Tamburini, 1921), p. 14.

¹⁸⁹ C. A. Vianello, *Teatri, spettacoli, musiche a Milano nei secoli scorsi*, p. 119 and G. Barblan, 'Il teatro musicale a Milano nei secoli XVII e XVIII', pp. 969-70.

¹⁹⁰ G. Taborelli, *Milano capitale della musica*, p. 146 and *Tre secoli di vita milanese*, p. 295.

¹⁹¹ *Notizie storiche e descrizione dell'I. R. Teatro alla Scala*, p. 11, R. Carpani, 'Il teatro musicale a Milano', p. 771 and V. Ferrari, *Il Teatro della Scala nella vita e nell'arte*, pp. 14-15.

¹⁹² F. Degrada, 'Le esperienze milanesi di Mozart', pp. 738-739 and John A. Rice, *Empress Marie Therese and Music at the Viennese Court, 1792-1807* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 3-4.

¹⁹³ G. Barblan, 'Il teatro musicale a Milano nei secoli XVII e XVIII', p. 978.

contracts, artists' wages, etc.¹⁹⁴ Finally, many Milanese intellectuals had emissaries in Vienna, appointed with informing them, among other issues, on the capital's main cultural events and on delivering and receiving musical materials.¹⁹⁵

Many of the Habsburg governors had a good knowledge of music themselves, e.g. Maria Theresia had inherited the disposition for this art from her father Charles VI and her grandfather Leopold I.¹⁹⁶ Although music had always represented mainly a form of personal entertainment and despite the massive political and economic problems she had had to face, Maria Theresia had always regarded musical performances as a costly but necessary expense in order to both maintain the court's decorum and control the people's mood.¹⁹⁷ In the case of Milan, the Empress had got directly involved in the musical and theatrical scene and dedicated a particular amount of attention (and funds) to it 1771, when Archduke Ferdinand married Maria Beatrice Ricciarda Este was subsequently appointed Governor of Lombardy.¹⁹⁸ Maria Theresia wanted her son's wedding to be celebrated with all the magnificence that suited a member of the Imperial House: unlike other occasions, the court of Vienna incurred the expenses for all celebrations and entertainments. The city was decorated with splendour beyond imagination, while members of different social classes could profit from a packed and varied programme of entertainments lasting two weeks and including banquets, parades, horse and cart races, greasy poles, and free opera and ballet performances.¹⁹⁹

The Archducal wedding also represented the most important occasion on which the Habsburgs made an extensive and innovative use of the city's public spaces: a new idea of functional and effective public celebration was implemented, moving away from the ephemeral pomp in use during the Spanish domination and stressing the bond between the enlightened governors and their subjects.²⁰⁰ As a consequence, the celebrations also involved a change in the city's ideal geography: Ferdinand's wedding procession, for instance, did not enter Milan through the traditional gate of Porta Romana (Roman Gate, pointing towards south-west), but rather through

¹⁹⁴ *Non solo lirica*, p. 9, M. Donà, *La musica a Milano nel Settecento durante la dominazione austriaca*, pp. 7-8 and F. Valsecchi, 'Le riforme teresiane in Lombardia', p. 37.

¹⁹⁵ It was e.g. the case of Baron Antonio Greppi, greatly involved also in the management of the Teatro Ducale; see M. Donà, 'Dagli archivi milanesi', p. 273.

¹⁹⁶ The Empress was an accomplished harpsichordist and singer herself and, in her youth, she had taken part in some operas conducted by her father; see *eadem*, *La musica a Milano nel Settecento durante la dominazione austriaca*, p. 6.

¹⁹⁷ See *ibidem*, pp. 2-3.

¹⁹⁸ On the importance of Ferdinand's wedding for the Imperial House's dynastic policies, see Carlo Mozzarelli, 'La Villa, la corte e Milano capitale', in *La Villa reale di Monza*, ed. by Francesco De Giacomo (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana, 1999), pp. 10-12.

¹⁹⁹ Giovanna Zanolighi, *Teatri di formazione. Actio, parola e immagine nella scena gesuitica del Sei-Settecento a Milano* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2002), p. 331 and Elena Riva, 'La corte dell'arciduca Ferdinando Asburgo Lorena', pp. 84-85.

²⁰⁰ Giovanna D'Amia 'La città fatta teatro: apparati effimeri ed 'embellissement' urbano nella Milano del Settecento', in *Il teatro a Milano nel Settecento. I contesti*, ed. by Annamaria Cascetta and Giovanna Zanolighi (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2008), pp. 97-124 (pp. 121).

Porta Orientale (East gate), facing towards Vienna (Fig. 1.9). Through charity and the offering of entertainment, the authorities also wished their attention towards public happiness; for instance, a special event, took place, entitled ‘banchetto delle spose’ (wives’ banquet), in which 500 newly-wed local women received a dowry of 150 lire each and were then invited to join their husbands at a sumptuous banquet whose setting had been realized by Piermarini in the gardens of Porta Orientale.²⁰¹

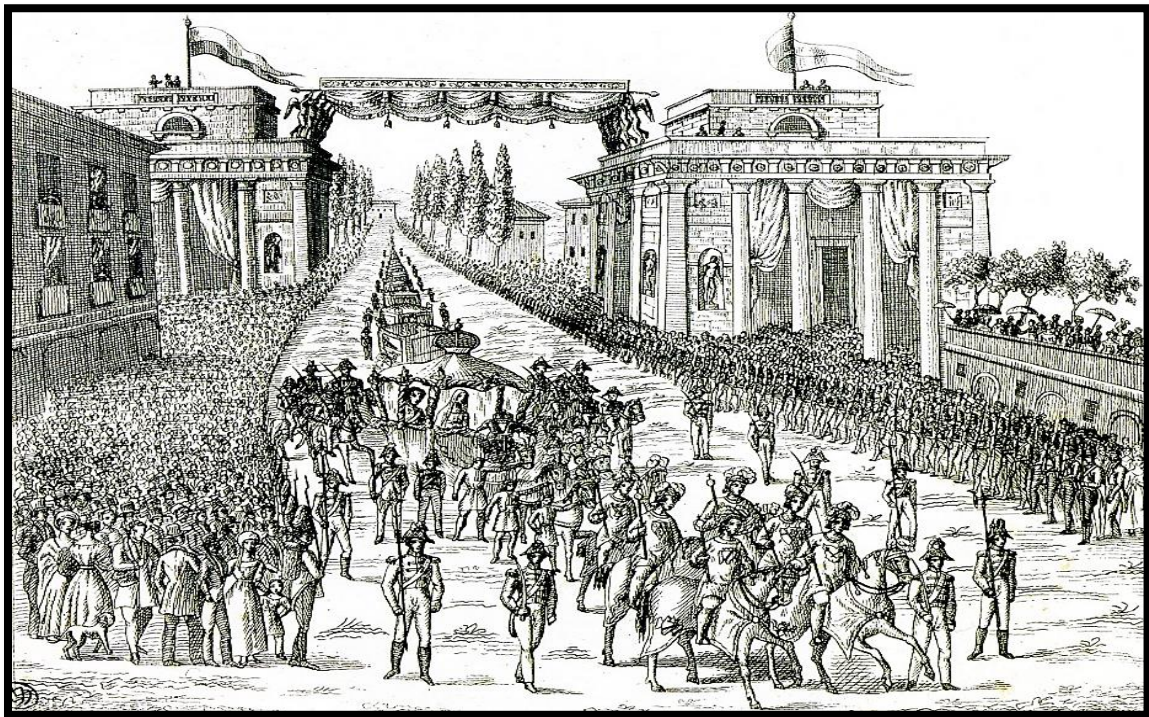


Fig.1.9: Ferdinand's wedding procession entering Milan through Porta Orientale on 15 October 1771.
Milan, CRS 'A. Bertarelli'.

With regard to the musical performances, a large-scale piece was directly commissioned by the Court for a performance in the Teatro Ducale in the days immediately following the wedding. Usually, Maria Theresia did not get directly involved in technical matters such as choosing a libretto or appointing a composer; moreover, the Empress supported neither the Milanese taste for majestic operas, nor the system of theatre management in use in Italy, which she saw as particularly prone to exaggerate expenditures.²⁰² Nevertheless, her son's wedding represented such an important occasion that she personally made all the choices she considered indispensable in order to offer the Milanese people an appropriate theatrical performance.

²⁰¹ *Tre secoli di vita milanese*, p. 218.

²⁰² F. Degrada, 'Le esperienze milanesi di Mozart', pp. 737-738 and M. Donà, *La musica a Milano nel Settecento durante la dominazione austriaca*, p. 7

The piece (premiered on 16 October) was *Il Ruggiero ossia L'eroica gratitudine* by Pietro Metastasio and Johann Adolf Hasse: by the time of the commission, both librettist and composer were rather old, representing an opera typology that had triumphed on the European stage two decades earlier and no longer met the Milanese audience's expectations.²⁰³ What patrons looked for in the opera house, even more on a celebratory occasion, was more a form of entertainment and recreation, exemplified by a performance comprising varied elements such as great choral pieces, majestic scenery, action scenes and dance numbers.²⁰⁴ The imperial commission, on the contrary, seemed to promise a rather monotone piece structured according to the old-fashioned alternation between recitatives and arias.²⁰⁵

The need for a second piece of music, written in a style which would be closer to the present taste of the audience, was not identified by the Court of Vienna, but by some of the local officers and theatre enthusiasts, first among them Firmian. Their choice fell on a very young Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, whose opera *Mitridate Re di Ponto* had opened the Carnival season of the Teatro Ducale barely three months before, and who was still sojourning in Milan. Instead of an opera seria, Mozart was commissioned to write a lighter festa teatrale, set in a pastoral and richly allegorical context which also effectively linked to the decoration of the city's public spaces.²⁰⁶ The libretto, written by the champion of the Milanese Enlightenment Giuseppe Parini, presented a great allegory of both the imperial wedding and the House of Habsburg's benevolence towards the state of Milan. The result, *Ascanio in Alba*, constituted a novelty in a city which, lacking the presence of a court since the Sforza, did not have a particularly strong tradition of celebratory music (such as serenade, cantate and feste teatrali) and gained a far greater success than *Il Ruggiero*.²⁰⁷ As the Viennese and the Milanese realized, the presence of a proper court in Milan was destined to deeply influence the city's life in many different aspects, not least that of cultural and musical environment.

²⁰³ Hasse himself apparently did not feel confident about composing another opera because he had not kept abreast of the current people's taste regarding musical theatre; see Kathleen Hansell, *Opera and ballet at the Regio Ducal Teatro of Milan, 1771-1776: a musical and social history* (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1980), pp. 30-31.

²⁰⁴ F. Degrada, 'Le esperienze milanesi di Mozart', pp. 737-738: apparently, Hasse himself was aware of the audience's expectations by commenting 'Here [in Milan] they would like a lot of spectacle and just a few recitatives'.

²⁰⁵ M. Donà, *La musica a Milano nel Settecento*, p. 16.

²⁰⁶ F. Degrada, 'Le esperienze milanesi di Mozart', p. 742 and G. D'Amia 'La città fatta teatro', p. 122.

²⁰⁷ M. Donà, *La musica a Milano nel Settecento*, p. 15, Kathleen Hansell, *Opera and ballet at the Regio Ducal Teatro of Milan*, pp. 52-54 and F. Degrada, 'Le esperienze milanesi di Mozart', p. 743.

1.4 Ferdinand, the court and the opera house

*Finally we have been granted a lineage of national monarchs,
and I rejoice as a good citizen of Milan, feeling Austrian in my heart.*
Pietro Verri, 1772.²⁰⁸

Archduke Ferdinand was only 17 when, performing his dynastic duty, he married Maria Beatrice of Este and undertook the role of Governor of Austrian Lombardy. From the very beginning of his rule, the Archduke proved himself to be skilled politically and administratively, talents which have been greatly underestimated by historians.²⁰⁹ He also rapidly became very sympathetic towards his subjects' needs and expectations: although he represented a lesser figure within the Habsburg pantheon, the young Governor tried to conduct his role in a zealous and independent way, rapidly integrating within the Milanese society.²¹⁰ On the other hand, the placement of a Habsburg governor in Milan has also been interpreted as part of a refined strategy used by the imperial court in order to counterbalance the breach the centralizing reforms had provoked in the relationship with the aristocracy.²¹¹ Despite the rumours spread by the revolutionaries of 1796, the truth was that the Milanese liked their governor, frequently considering him an ally against Joseph II or, more in general, a guarantor of their rights at the imperial court; the Archduke returned his subjects' favour with a sincere interest and commitment. Pietro Verri commented that Ferdinand learnt more about the Milanese in four months than Firmian in over ten years.²¹²

Thus, for the first time in several decades, Milan had a proper court. The importance of this element and its effects on the city's cultural and social life, foretold by many already in the 1760s, were exceptionally strong; for instance, Alessandro Verri writing to his brother Pietro: 'I think the atmosphere has deeply changed in the country [Lombardy] with the presence of the court. From a province city we have become a capital: now all oligarchical veneration will be focused only on the monarchy: senators and officers will receive slighter bows, the patron Saints less worship'²¹³ In fact, the presence of a Habsburg governor and his court was bound to re-define not only the city's layout, but also the relationship between the Austrian Monarchy and Lombardy, thus directly or indirectly affecting all aspects of Milan's social and cultural life.²¹⁴ The new court was also able to provide the aristocrats (deprived of their administrative and

²⁰⁸ From a letter to his brother Alessandro, quoted in C. Mozzarelli, 'La Villa, la corte e Milano capitale', p. 13.

²⁰⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 12 and Elena Riva, 'La corte dell'arciduca Ferdinando Asburgo Lorena', p. 74.

²¹⁰ M. Donà, *La musica a Milano nel Settecento*, pp. 17-18.

²¹¹ C. Cremonini, *Le vie della distinzione*, p. 45.

²¹² K. Hansell, *Opera and ballet at the Regio Ducal Teatro of Milan*, p. 101.

²¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 14.

²¹⁴ Aurora Scotti Tosini, 'Le trasformazioni della città', p. 38.

representative powers by Joseph's reforms) with a new environment for gathering and a new social status.²¹⁵ In truth, Ferdinand's role, squeezed in between Vienna's demands, the Milanese aristocracy's requirements and his own need to create a personal leeway as governor always remained a very difficult and complex one.

The presence of a court significantly influenced the exterior aspect of Milan: the creator of the new Milanese taste in terms of the relationship between court, architecture and public space was Giuseppe Piermarini, a former pupil of the famous Neapolitan architect Luigi Vanvitelli.²¹⁶ Following general criteria of harmonization, simplification and public utility, Piermarini revisited many old public spaces and created new ones.²¹⁷ The latter included the restoration and re-use of many buildings for administrative purposes and the realization of Piazza Fontana (Fountain Square), the first Milanese square not linked to a religious building, but rather presenting the citizens with a monumental fountain (Fig. 1.10).²¹⁸



Fig. 1.10: View of Piazza Fontana in 1788.
Milan, CRS 'A. Bertarelli'.

²¹⁵ C. Mozzarelli, 'La Villa, la corte e Milano capitale', p. 12.

²¹⁶ *Notizie storiche e descrizione dell'I. R. Teatro alla Scala*, p. 12.

²¹⁷ Aurora Scotti Tosini, 'Le trasformazioni della città', p. 39: examples of public spaces transformed and improved by Piermarini include the historical market of Porta Ticinese, Porta Romana and the palace of Brera.

²¹⁸ G. Ricci 'La città rinnovata e gli edifici pubblici', p. 194.

The architect also realized some of the most powerful symbols of Ferdinand's court, the first being the newly restored Archducal Palace. The building remained in its original location next to the *Duomo*, but the façade and adjacent square were re-oriented so that the palace did not directly face the cathedral anymore: the change was surely perceived as a very strong statement supporting a new conception of the relationship between religious and civil authorities.²¹⁹

Piermarini also realized the Archduke's magnificent summer residence, the Villa reale (Royal Villa), built in the neighbouring town of Monza (Fig. 1.11). Like Ferdinand's native Schönbrunn castle, the Villa reale was designed to fulfil the role of both an idyllic residence and an element of public representation.²²⁰ The choice fell on Monza for various and equally significant reasons: not only the town occupied a cardinal position on the road that connected Milan to Vienna and offered salubrious climate and greenery, but also shared a significant part of history with the Lombard capital. Monza was also very important from a symbolic point of view: the town's cathedral church of St John the Baptist in fact contained one of the most prestigious objects of power in the history of Christian Europe, the Iron Crown of Lombardy. In 1805, when Napoleon crowned himself King of Italy in Milan's cathedral, he used the Iron Crown as the most powerful symbol of legitimation and connection to the ancient dynasties of Italian rulers.²²¹

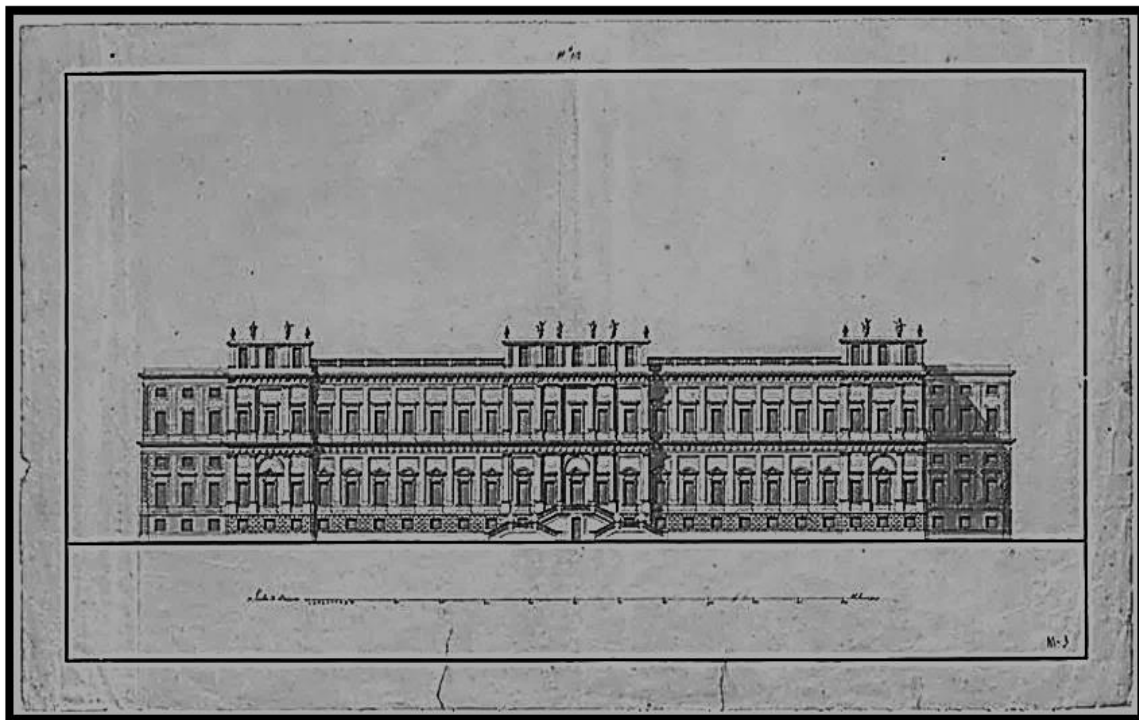


Fig. 1.11: Giuseppe Piermarini, drawing of the side of the Villa reale facing the garden.
Source : <<http://www.lombardiabeniculturali.it>>.

²¹⁹ C. Cremonini, *Le vie della distinzione*, p. 44.

²²⁰ A.S. Tosini, 'Le trasformazioni della città', p. 38.

²²¹ A. Valery, *Historical, literary and artistical Travels in Italy*, p. 73.



Fig. 1.12: Painting by unknown artist portraying Archduke Ferdinand and his wife Maria Beatrice setting at the fortepiano.

The governor also dedicated a significant amount of attention to cultural and artistic fields, the arts and especially musical theatre constituting one of his main interests and guiding many of his choices from the very beginning of his rule.²²² Following the success of *Ascanio in Alba*, Ferdinand even contemplated the possibility of employing Mozart as his court composer in Milan, although in the end he followed his mother's advice and did not appoint him.²²³

Both Ferdinand and Maria Beatrice were skilled musicians and music lovers, their court rapidly becoming a powerful catalyst for musical occasions (Fig. 1.12). Many

documents dating from the 1770s and 1780s clearly show the systematic involvement of several members of the Ducale's orchestra in various events organized and offered by the governors to their aristocratic guests.²²⁴ Among the most common events there were private *accademie*, dance feasts and banquets with the accompaniment of music; although of different nature, all these celebrations required a certain degree of musical offering.²²⁵

²²² G. Ricci, 'La città rinnovata e gli edifici pubblici', p. 195, K. Hansell, *Opera and ballet at the Regio Ducal Teatro of Milan*, p. 102 and C. A. Vianello, *Teatri, spettacoli, musiche a Milano nei secoli scorsi*, p. 120.

²²³ Maria Theresia's letter regarding Mozart's employment in Milan can be found in *Briefe der Kaiserin Maria Theresia an ihre Kinder und Freunde*, vol. 1, p. 93, while a detailed reading of it can be found in F. Degradà, 'Le esperienze milanesi di Mozart', pp. 745-747.

²²⁴ The documents mentioned here and below regarding musical events at the archducal court are all contained in the folder kept within La Scala Archive under the shelf mark SAL.

²²⁵ See e.g. the administrative documents detailing the pay of the musicians involved in *feste private da ballo* [private ball feasts] in 1768 (SAL 9), *feste da ballo* during the Carnival season 1772-73 (SAL 26) *feste de' balli di Corte* [ball feasts at the Court] in 1774 (SAL 2), etc.

Outside the halls of the archducal palace, the governor's main interest and involvement concerned musical theatre. At this point, in the late 1770s, Milan could not be yet considered a particularly dynamic venue for opera production, but rather an avid and eclectic receptive centre for different tendencies coming from varied neighbouring contexts, particularly Venice and Naples. The Milanese audience was also generally considered quite conservative and reluctant to novelties or experimentalism.²²⁷ At the same time, the European importance of Milan as a

Inporto della musica servita nella Grandi feste di Corte
il giorno 7. 14. 24. Feb. 1573.

Violini			
Luchino	150.	Somma retro	1241.
Borompino	150.	Oboi	
Contino Padre	150.	lentino	90.
Borghetto	23.	Burina	25.
Contino Padre	25.	Fedrizino	25.
Questorino	25.	Vigano	25.
Carlineto	48.	Yagotin	
Viscontino Giulio	60.	Vassano	25.
Arandino	25.	Gaetano Grossi	25.
Stenz	25.	Basin	
Angiolino	25.	Corbela	90.
Del Agua	25.	Bonzeli	25.
Cesarino	60.	Bilfier	25.
Roncheri	25.	Borone	60.
Eugenio	25.	Mazone	60.
Visconti Carlo	25.	S. Ambrosio	60.
Catelano	25.	Fromben	
Salata	25.	Erugola	90.
Vespa	25.	Buripino	60.
Marchino	25.	Francese	60.
Aszoffi	25.	Salmoirago	48.
Rossetti	25.	Borsari	25.
Casqualino figlio	25.	Marchese	25.
Borpi figlio	25.	Alberico	60.
Fiamenghino Papere	25.	Viberti	60.
Contino figlio	25.		
Questorino Belouatti	48.	Minueti noui	12654.
Castiglioni	25.	Copiaturo di Musica	
		Contatore Poueti	
		il sopra de sopra mento de prima	
		de la il Contorino e sopra il Contorino	

1241.

Fig. 1.13: Invoice compiled for the payment of the musicians who served in the 'Grandi feste di Corte (Great Court Feasts)' in February 1773. Milan, La Scala Archive.

²²⁷ See e.g. Ranieri De' Calzabigi's views on the general taste of the Milanese audience in M. Donà, 'Dagli archivi milanesi', p. 271.

catalyst of different operatic experiences and as an important centre for the formation of opera composers gradually became evident already in the last years of the Ducale.²²⁸

The choice of the operas to be performed within the various seasons was entrusted to the Cavalieri Associati, a group of aristocrats elected by the *palchettisti* (box owners) as representatives of their rights and demands as co-owners and thus main investors of the opera house. These *Cavalieri* (also called *Direttori*) had overseen the Ducale's offering since 1738, when the excessive eclecticism of the seasons (mixing Venetian and Neapolitan operas with comic intermezzi and French-style ballets) had required a major control and orderliness.²²⁹ The huge degree of control the aristocrats held over the operatic performances, a unique trait of Milan's situation, was destined to last for a long time as the palchettisti continued to exert their authority by nominating the company appointed with the organization of the operatic seasons throughout the nineteenth century.²³⁰ In fact, only in the early 1920s did the conductor Arturo Toscanini, working with the mayor of Milan Emilio Caldara, manage to dispossess the palchettisti and turn La Scala into an autonomous body in total control of all artistic choices.²³¹

The opera house employed its own poeta di teatro, a full-time writer and librettist who not only had to provide new librettos, but also revise and adapt pre-existing texts to the current taste of the patrons.²³² In 1769, for instance, it had been decided that the Carnival season should open with *Alceste*, the libretto by Calzabigi newly set to music by Pietro Guglielmi, but the original text was judged excessively heavy and not presenting enough characters to interest the notoriously inattentive Milanese audience. One of the Cavalieri Associati, Baron Greppi, asked Giuseppe Parini (poeta di teatro at the Ducale since the previous year) to heavily revise it; Calzabigi's words of disappointment and rage at the mutilation of his work form a precious document in order to understand how Milanese taste could be perceived within more broad-minded environments:

In Milan, they have done to my *Alceste* the same thing a person would do to a geometric figure if he started adding useless lines, trying to make it more round or more square for the simple purpose of making it prettier, in his own opinion, to the eye. The Poet of *Il Mattino* [Parini] is not for the evening, for the lights of the stage [...].²³³ He does not know the laws of theatrical

²²⁸ See e.g. the role of the Milanese experience in Mozart's formation as an opera composer, analysed in F. Degrada, 'Le esperienze milanesi di Mozart', pp. 732-733 and 738-739.

²²⁹ *Ivi*, pp. 977-978.

²³⁰ See also Firmian's struggle in making the Milanese aristocracy approve young Mozart's skills before appointing him with the composition of *Mitridate re di Ponto*, in F. Degrada, 'Le esperienze milanesi di Mozart', pp. 734-735.

²³¹ See Giampiero Tintori, *Divagazioni scaligere* (Milan: Nuove edizioni, 1975), pp. 15-16 and Irene Piazzoni, *Dal Teatro dei palchettisti all'ente autonomo: la Scala, 1897-1920* (Florence: La nuova Italia, 1996).

²³² See L. Nicora, 'L'attività di Giuseppe Parini dal Teatro Ducale alla Scala', pp. 914-915.

²³³ Here Calzabigi is referring to the title of Parini's work *Il Mattino*, meaning *The Morning*.

concatenation nor the dramatic vocabulary, so different from that of the *Canzonetta*, *Poemetto* or *Sonettino* [...]. This way, they turned the tragedy of Alcestis into an opera buffa [...].²³⁴

Parini himself had to deal with an enraged Calzabigi by declaring that his ‘corrections’ were aimed exclusively at adapting the opera to the unavoidable present circumstances of Milan’s theatre.²³⁵ Nevertheless, the effort (and expenditure) in providing the patrons with high-class cultural products was significant: on the stage of Milan’s Regio Teatro Ducale, one could see the magnificent scenery realized by the renowned Galliari brothers and hear renowned virtuosos and musicians performing music composed by some of the most important composers of the time.²³⁶ The orchestra, according to various contemporary witnesses, was among the best in Europe and a great amount of money was dedicated to casting some of the most celebrated singers available.²³⁷ A great deal of attention was also dedicated to the ballets, with choreographers such as Gasparo Angiolini and Jean-Georges Noverre being employed.²³⁸ As the historian Achille Bertarelli noted, the Ducale existed for only 60 years, but that period was enough to give Milan the importance and reputation in operatic performance that grew to characterize the city in the following years.²³⁹

Ferdinand held great expectations for Milan’s theatre, which he wanted to turn into one of Europe’s main opera houses. However, the Teatro Ducale, erected in 1717, although ‘very large and splendid’,²⁴⁰ was already quite old at the time of the Archduke’s wedding, when it had to undergo extensive restoration in order to host the musical performances connected to the celebrations.²⁴¹ Mainly because of its age, but also because of its inconvenient location, the theatre’s shape, stage design and acoustics were not particularly good.²⁴² Too narrow and long, the main hall could guarantee neither a good acoustics nor a good view of the stage from every seat; the theatre’s shape, similar to that of a shoe box, was also due to the Ducale’s location within the Ducal Palace (Fig. 1.14).²⁴³

²³⁴ M. Donà, ‘Dagli archivi milanesi’, p. 280 and L. Nicora, ‘L’attività di Giuseppe Parini dal Teatro Ducale alla Scala’, pp. 916-918.

²³⁵ M. Donà, ‘Milan’, p. 390.

²³⁶ E. Verga, *Storia della vita Milanese*, p. 174, F. Degrada, ‘Le esperienze milanesi di Mozart’, p. 737 and G. Barblan, ‘Il teatro musicale a Milano nei secoli XVII e XVIII’, pp. 977-980.

²³⁷ C. Fertonani, ‘Aspetti della musica strumentale a Milano nel secondo Settecento’, pp. 866-867 and F. Degrada, ‘Le esperienze milanesi di Mozart’, pp. 738-739.

²³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 734, M. Donà, ‘Milan’, p. 391 and K. Hansell, *Opera and ballet at the Regio Ducal Teatro of Milan*, pp. 119-120.

²³⁹ *Tre secoli di vita milanese*, p. 296.

²⁴⁰ C. Burney, *Viaggio musicale in Italia*, p. 86.

²⁴¹ M. Donà, *La musica a Milano nel Settecento*, p. 11.

²⁴² Evan Baker, ‘Italian Operatic Production during Mozart’s Travels in Italy 1770-1773’, in *Atti dell’Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati. Contributi della classe di Scienze umane, Lettere e Arti*, 244 (Rovereto: Accademia degli Agiati, 1995), vol. IV. A, pp. 19-40 (pp. 33-34).

²⁴³ See C. Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*, p. 108 and M. Donà, ‘Milan’, p. 388.

The stage, proscenium, backstage areas and scenic machinery were also quite old-fashioned when compared to other Italian opera houses.²⁴⁴ Moreover, the theatre's elongated shape and straight sides hid a spectacle which was as important as the one on stage, that of the other members of the audience: box owners could in fact have a clear view only of the people sitting in the boxes on the opposite side of the hall, but not of those in front or behind them.²⁴⁵ Following both the economic development and the growing importance of the theatre within Milan's social life, an increasing number of wealthy patrons also started to demand their own boxes, but it was physically impossible to build new ones in the old building.²⁴⁶ Finally, the theatre was in a rather inconvenient position, being located too close to the Archducal Palace and to the Government offices and archives. As Kathleen Hansell has noted, 'the last five years of the Royal Ducal Theatre's existence became a continually more unsatisfactory compromise between the antiquated edifice and the growing demands placed upon it'.²⁴⁷



Fig. 1.14: 1791 Engraving showing the inner courtyard of the Ducal Palace, where one of the entrances to the Teatro Ducale was located. Milano, CRS 'Achille Bertarelli'.

²⁴⁴ E. Baker, 'Italian Operatic Production during Mozart's Travels in Italy 1770-1773', p. 35.

²⁴⁵ K. Hansell, *Opera and ballet at the Regio Ducal Teatro of Milan*, pp. 135-136.

²⁴⁶ A. Bosisio, *Storia di Milano*, p. 279 and K. Hansell, *Opera and ballet at the Regio Ducal Teatro of Milan*, pp. 138-139.

²⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 135.

The Archduke and his advisors began discussions early on to build a new theatre, or even two, a larger one for more elaborate performances and a smaller one and resembling a true court theatre, for reduced-scale productions and other events.²⁴⁸ When, on 25 February, 1776, a fire destroyed the Teatro Ducale, the atmosphere resembled that of a general relief.²⁴⁹ Fingers were even pointed at the governor as the culprit, particularly due to the strange nature of the fire, which had completely burnt the theatre from the inside, but had not damaged the outside or the neighbouring buildings.²⁵⁰ In 1821, the celebrated poet Ugo Foscolo ironically commented:

That blessed fire was so judicious and prudent that, starting (nobody knows how) from the four principal corners of the building, chose the moment when no one was in it so that not only nobody was hurt, but it was also possible to prevent that even one among the buildings neighbouring that old, cold and badly-designed theatre suffered from any damage. Therefore, we can say that fire was the most useful and regular in history.²⁵¹

Nevertheless, it is undeniable that Ferdinand had become a staunch supporter of the Teatro Ducale and the performances taking place within as much as he could, also attending regularly with various members of his family.²⁵² Moreover, he had showed from the very beginning of his mandate a spontaneous interest in the opera house's management and had wished to get more involved through a strong association with the Milanese noblemen.²⁵³ Thus, both the governor's and the patrons' impulse to establish a truly excellent opera house at a European level meant that the five-year period from the Archduke's wedding to the fire can be considered the best in the theatre's lifetime with regard to the theatre's income and the quality of performances.

The only evident reason of conflict between Ferdinand and the theatre patrons was gambling, an immensely popular form of entertainment heavily practised within the theatre, in secluded salons called 'ridotti'. Gambling constituted first of all an important indicator of the participants' social status, not only serving as a gathering element for the higher classes, but also as a mean of separating them from the lower social strata. In fact, gambling also served as an important marker of social division not only between higher and lower social classes, but also between the noble and the wealthy: aristocrats were in fact allowed to access specific salons and playing specific games that were forbidden to even the wealthiest merchants.²⁵⁴ The income of the games

²⁴⁸ M. Donà, *La musica a Milano nel Settecento*, p. 19.

²⁴⁹ It was indeed the third fire that affected the theatre over a time span of barely 80 years; see G. Barigazzi, *La Scala racconta*, p. 9.

²⁵⁰ See M. Donà, *La musica a Milano nel Settecento*, p. 23 and also A. Paglicci Brozzi, *Il Regio Ducal Teatro di Milano nel secolo diciottesimo*, p. 103, G. Barblan, 'Il teatro musicale a Milano nei secoli XVII e XVIII', p. 994 and Giorgio Taborelli, *Milano capitale della musica*, p. 143.

²⁵¹ *Non solo lirica*, p. 21 and G. Barigazzi, *La Scala racconta*, p. 9.

²⁵² C. Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*, p.85.

²⁵³ K. Hansell, *Opera and ballet at the Regio Ducal Teatro of Milan*, pp. 131.

²⁵⁴ See *ibidem*, pp. 112-113.

also represented one of the main sources of financial income for the theatre. Ferdinand, like his mother before him, tried to fight or, at least, to limit this long-standing tradition, and many proclamations and decrees carrying his signature conserved in the State Archive, in the Conservatoire and in La Scala Archive bear witness to that struggle. Defeated, the Archduke had to finally desist.

Ferdinand's involvement in the Milan's theatrical life is best exemplified by the active role he played in the construction of the new theatres after the fire of the Ducale.²⁵⁵ As a refined connoisseur of both the court's and the Milanese aristocrats' expectations and financial demands, the governor acted as a tireless intermediary between Vienna and Milan.²⁵⁶ At the same time, he independently employed Giuseppe Piermarini to draw the project not only for a new opera house, but also for a second, smaller theatre. His purpose was not only to have public theatres built outside the Archducal Palace, but also to have for his capital an opera house greater and more sumptuous than the Paris Opéra, which he had recently seen in his travels.²⁵⁷ Piermarini was also entrusted with the requalification of the section occupied by the Teatro Ducale inside the archducal palace. Completely renewed, the vast space was converted into the palace's most prestigious hall, the Sala delle Cariatidi (Caryatids Hall), which, redecorated in neoclassical style, would become one of Napoleon's main artistic projects in his Italian capital (Fig. 1.15).²⁵⁸

When Maria Theresia refused to approve the construction of the second building and appointed Firmian to make sure that the new opera house was erected either where the old one had stood or close to the Sforza Castle, Ferdinand, backed up by the aristocratic palchettisti and by Piermarini, began a passionate campaign of persuasion. The Empress finally yielded on 15 July 1776, when an imperial decree authorized the erection of both buildings, endorsed both Piermarini's projects and granted several financial privileges for the actual construction.²⁵⁹ In order to build the bigger theatre, Maria Theresia authorized her son and the other investors to use the area in the so-called corsia del Giardino (today Via Manzoni) occupied by the church of Santa Maria alla Scala (Fig. 1.16), deconsecrated on 5 August 1776.²⁶⁰ The smaller theatre, on the other hand, could be built on the area close to the Scuole Cannobiane, a religious school founded

²⁵⁵ *Maria Teresa e la Lombardia austriaca 1740-1780*, p. 127.

²⁵⁶ See C. A. Vianello, *Teatri, spettacoli, musiche a Milano nei secoli scorsi*, p. 119: we cannot forget that the Milanese aristocrats were deeply interested in their opera house not only for social and entertainment purposes, but also because, as owners of the boxes, they saw the theatre as one of their most important financial investments.

²⁵⁷ G. Barigazzi, *La Scala racconta*, pp. 9-10.

²⁵⁸ *La sala delle cariatidi nel Palazzo reale di Milano. Ricerche e restauro*, ed. by Giovanni Carbonara and Michela Palazzo (Rome: Gangemi, 2012), pp. 18-19.

²⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 121-125 and V. Ferrari, *Il Teatro della Scala nella vita e nell'arte*, p. 11.

²⁶⁰ *Notizie storiche e descrizione dell' I. R. Teatro alla Scala*, pp. 5-6 and A. Paglicci Brozzi, *Il Regio Ducale Teatro di Milano nel secolo diciottesimo*, p. 104.

by Paolo da Cannobio.²⁶¹ Hence, the two theatres were to be called ‘Teatro Grande alla Scala’ and ‘Teatro alla Cannobiana’. The works, closely supervised and facilitated in all their aspects by the Governor, started and were carried out at amazing speed.²⁶²



Fig. 1.15 A photograph of the Sala delle Cariatidi at the beginning of the twentieth century.
Milan, Civiche Raccolte d'Arte, Fondo Scrocchi.

In the meantime, so strong was the city's need for opera performances that Piermarini also designed a temporary opera house, matching in size the Ducale, to be built entirely in wood;²⁶³ erected in the proximity of both the cathedral and the archducal Palace, this theatre - called Teatro Interinale (Interim Theatre) - was inaugurated on 13 September 1776 and served as Milan's main opera house until La Scala was opened.²⁶⁴ Anyway, Milan's high society could not even wait for the Teatro Interinale to be built: between March and September 1776, some opera and ballet performances took place in the much smaller and poorly equipped Teatrino del Collegio dei Nobili, built in 1574 by Carlo Borromeo and belonging to the Jesuits of Brera until their suppression ordered by Joseph in 1773; the theatre was appositely restored by Piermarini

²⁶¹ *Tre secoli di vita milanese*, p. 260.

²⁶² V. Ferrari, *Il Teatro della Scala nella vita e nell'arte*, p. 12.

²⁶³ G. Barigazzi, *La Scala racconta*, p. 10.

²⁶⁴ C.A. Vianello, *Teatri, spettacoli, musiche a Milano nei secoli scorsi*, p. 148 and G. Zanlonghi, *Teatri di formazione*, pp. 286-288.

himself.²⁶⁵ Unfortunately, like the previous theatres, the Teatro Interinale was also destined to burn down after a rather short life; the two new opera houses would also be the first ones to be built using cotto tiles instead of wood to prevent the danger of fire.²⁶⁶



Fig. 1.16: 1745 Engraving by Marc'Antonio Dal Re showing the church of Santa Maria alla Scala before its demolition. Milan, CRS 'Achille Bertarelli'.

After a triumphal acoustics check done with instruments and voices in spring 1778, the Teatro alla Scala was officially inaugurated on 3 August 1778 in the presence of Emperor Joseph II, the governor and his wife, Count Firmian and all the main aristocratic families of the city.²⁶⁷ The opera chosen for its inauguration was *Europa riconosciuta* by the current court composer at Vienna, Antonio Salieri.²⁶⁸ The Teatro alla Cannobiana was inaugurated about a year later, on 21 August 1779, again with a work by Salieri, the opera buffa *La Fiera di Venezia*. The Cannobiana was born

²⁶⁵ See Mariangela Donà, *La musica a Milano nel Settecento*, p. 21 and K. Hansell, *Opera and ballet at the Regio Ducal Teatro of Milan*, p. 109.

²⁶⁶ *Notizie storiche e descrizione dell'I. R. Teatro alla Scala*, p. 8.

²⁶⁷ G. Barigazzi, *La Scala racconta*, p. 11, C. A. Vianello, *Teatri, spettacoli, musiche a Milano nei secoli scorsi*, p. 138 and *Non solo lirica*, p. 21.

²⁶⁸ Giampiero Tintori and Guido Bezzola, *I protagonisti e l'ambiente della Scala nell'età neoclassica* (Milan: Il Polifilo, 1984), p. 7.

not only as a smaller theatre, but also as a less prestigious one:²⁶⁹ the piece chosen for its inauguration, as opposed to that of La Scala, not only was a comic opera, but also not a new commission, having already been performed in Vienna's Burgtheater in 1772 (Figs. 1.17 and 1.18).²⁷⁰

Ferdinand's passion for musical theatre was so strong that, in addition to the two new buildings, he also wanted a small court theatre to be built within his Villa reale in Monza.²⁷¹ The governor incurred himself all the expenses related to its construction and acted as its impresario.²⁷² The theatre was finished by the autumn of 1778, when it was inaugurated with *Il curioso indiscreto* by Pasquale Anfossi. Until late 1795, when the situation with the war against France started to significantly affect Lombardy's finances, the court theatre at Monza hosted small-scale, but regular opera seasons: one, like the Autumn Season at the Ducale, ran between August and November, while a second one took place in late June.²⁷³

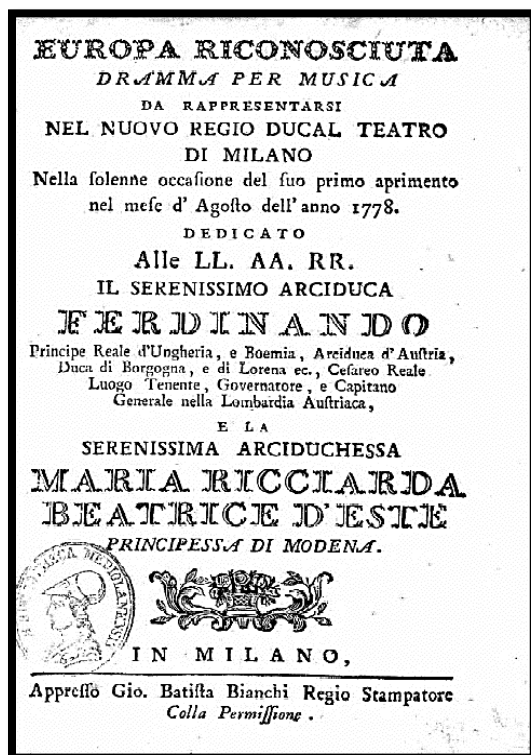


Fig. 1.17: Title page
of *Europa riconosciuta*'s libretto, 1778.
Milan, Biblioteca nazionale Braidense.



Fig. 1.18: Title page of the libretto
for *La Fiera di Venezia*, 1779.
Milan, Biblioteca nazionale Braidense.

²⁶⁹ K. Hansell, *Opera and ballet at the Regio Ducal Teatro of Milan*, p. 129.

²⁷⁰ G. Barigazzi, *La Scala racconta*, p. 12.

²⁷¹ C. Mozzarelli, 'La Villa, la corte e Milano capitale', pp. 18-36.

²⁷² G. Barigazzi, *La Scala racconta*, p. 11.

²⁷³ M. Donà, *La musica a Milano nel Settecento*, pp. 22-23.

The operas performed in Monza were mainly comic ones, chosen among those which had been successful in other venues in recent years and not including newly commissioned works. The list of the most featured composers includes many mainstream names of the time such as Pasquale Anfossi, Niccolò Piccinni, Domenico Cimarosa and Giovanni Paisiello. However, a closer look at the operatic repertoire in use in Monza reveals how that theatre, though small, located in a provincial little town and not capable of generating new operatic commissions, played an interesting role within the network established between Austria and Northern Italy regarding the circulation of operas. A particularly notable example is that of the 1787 performance of *Le Nozze di Figaro*:²⁷⁴ even if only the music of the first two acts was by Mozart – the rest being supplied by Angelo Tarchi –, this event assumes great importance because not only it constituted the opera's first performance in the Italian peninsula, but also, excluding juvenile works, the first Italian premiere of a Mozart opera during the composer's lifetime.²⁷⁵

Moreover, the Monza premiere was immediately followed by another performance of *Le Nozze di Figaro* which (although, again, with significant variants from the original score) took place at the Teatro della Pergola, in Florence, where Archduke Peter Leopold (future Emperor Leopold II) ruled.²⁷⁶ The limited success that *Le Nozze di Figaro* had enjoyed in Vienna could not justify the choice of this opera for international circulation: it could then be assumed, as Albert Einstein has already done, that Joseph, a renowned supporter of Mozart at that time, had recommended *Le Nozze* to his brothers.²⁷⁷ Both the Milanese and the Florentine librettos also clearly state how the opera performances were attended by the Royal Highnesses.²⁷⁸ Although the massive alteration of the score (probably due to the excessive length of the opera according to the Italian taste) also shows how little respect was paid to Mozart's music by the members of the Imperial House, the Italian performances of *Le Nozze di Figaro* constitute a suitable example of the cultural network that connected Vienna and the main cities of the Habsburg-ruled Italian states, a network that showed a particularly strong efficiency regarding operatic circulation and dissemination.²⁷⁹

Starting from the 1770s, Milan could thus profit from the presence of a governor who, apart from having brought back to Lombardy the brilliance and vivacity of a court environment, showed an exceptionally strong interest in musical theatre and its development. Among his main

²⁷⁴ Tim Carter, *W.A. Mozart: Le Nozze di Figaro*, 4th edn (Cambridge: CUP, 1987), p. 129.

²⁷⁵ Albert Einstein, 'Mozart and Tarchi', in *Essays on Music* (London: Faber, 1958), p. 189 and M. Donà, *La musica a Milano nel Settecento*, p. 23.

²⁷⁶ A. Einstein, 'Mozart and Tarchi', p. 187 and Michael Raeburn and Christopher Raeburn, 'Mozart Manuscripts in Florence', in *Music and Letters*, Vol. 40 No. 4 (Oxford: OUP, 1959), pp. 335-340.

²⁷⁷ Again, A. Einstein, 'Mozart and Tarchi', p. 188.

²⁷⁸ M. Raeburn and C. Raeburn, 'Mozart Manuscripts in Florence', pp. 336-337.

²⁷⁹ M. Donà, *La musica a Milano nel Settecento*, p. 25.

achievement was the construction of La Scala, destined to become not only the centre of Milan's musical and social life, but also the trigger and beacon of far wider artistic and political processes.

1.5 The Teatro alla Scala and the city

Our Teatro alla Scala is one of the largest and better-designed both for its shape and purpose and it also has more or less all those comforts that other theatres still crave for, so that, in this matter, it is unique.

Paolo Landriani, 1830.

La Scala is all the society of Milan.

Antoine Valery, 1839.

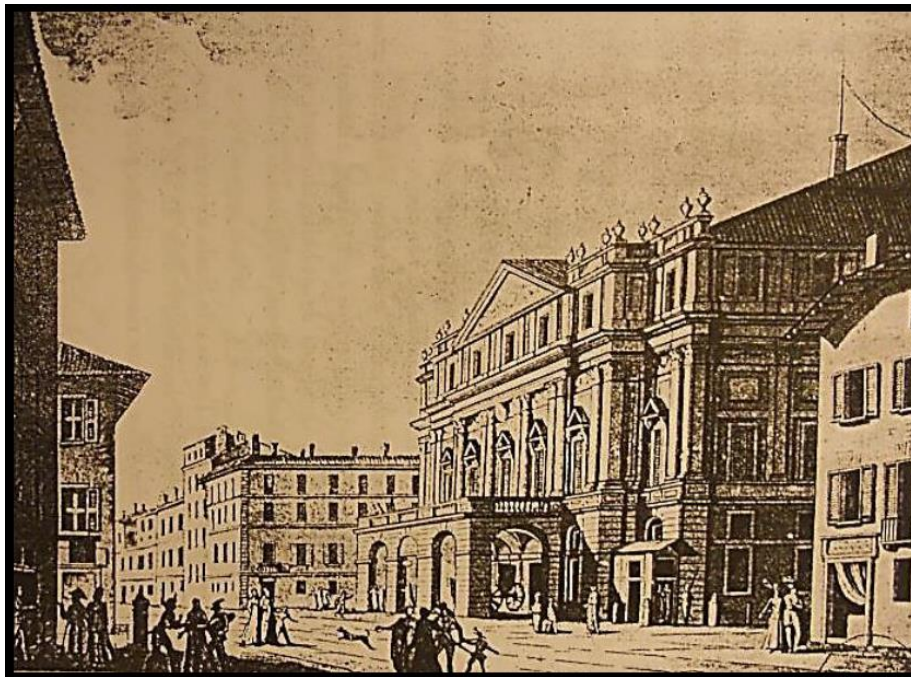


Fig. 1.19: View of La Scala's façade and square from the Corsia del Giardino.
Milan, La Scala Archive.

The new Teatro alla Scala, although not particularly impressive on the outside (Fig. 1.19), constituted what Giampiero Tintori has described as 'a wonderful sound box'.²⁸⁰ The theatre was horseshoe-shaped, splendidly decorated and perhaps disproportionately large to the size and wealth of the city. The British economist Arthur Young, visiting Milan in 1788, described it in these words:

²⁸⁰ G. Tintori and G. Bezzola, *I protagonisti e l'ambiente della Scala*, p. 132.

[...] a most noble theatre; the largest as well as handsomest I have seen; the scenes and decorations beautiful. Though it is Sunday, I look with amazement at the house, for it is three parts full, even while much of the world are in the country: - how can such a town as Milan do this ? [...] This is marvellous for an inland town without commerce or great manufactures.²⁸¹

One of the theatre's main characteristics was the synergy, carefully planned by Piermarini, between an excellent acoustics, a particularly rich decoration and a high level of comfort.²⁸² In addition, several of La Scala's characteristic elements, most of which had been inherited from the previous opera house, can be considered as tell-tale signs of theatre practices and a disposition

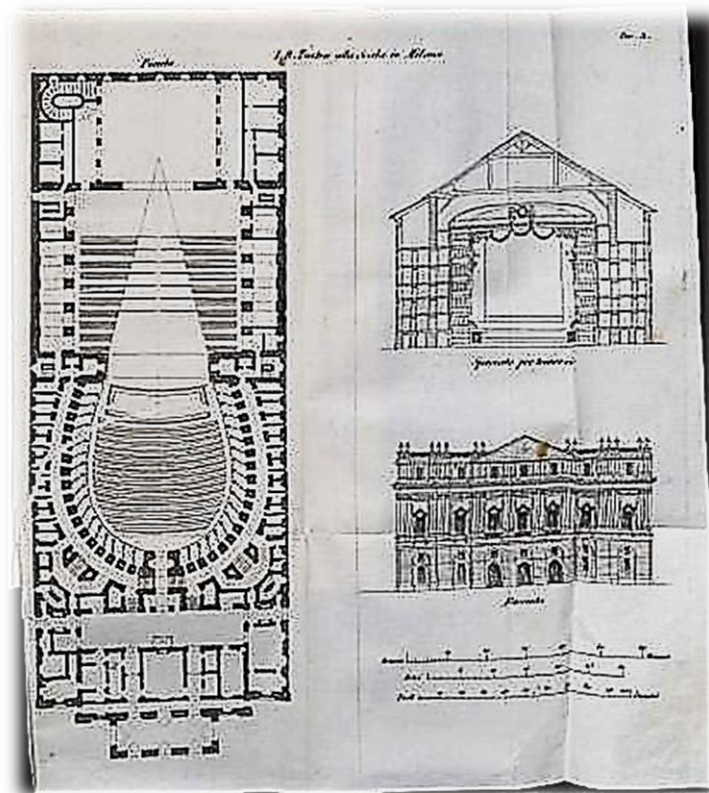


Fig.1.20 : Handmade copy of Piermarini's project, with the camerini visible in the first tier of boxes. Milan, Conservatorio 'G. Verdi', Fondo Somma.

towards opera-going, also revealing that the general behaviour of Milanese operagoers did not drastically change across the decades.

La Scala had five rows of boxes making a total of 194.²⁸³ As in the *Ducale*, the decoration and the furnishing of each box were left to the individual taste and necessities of its owners, the boxes often becoming miniature, beautifully decorated salons.²⁸⁴ Each aristocratic family had also been authorized to carve its coat of arms on the balustrade above its box.²⁸⁵ Moreover, every box was paired with a so-called 'camerino', an

antechamber positioned between the actual box and the outer corridor and

equipped with all necessary tools and personnel to provide refreshments and diversions, e.g. cooking equipment, cards and a fireplace, etc.²⁸⁶ The camerini are clearly visible already in the drawings Piermarini made of the stalls and first tier of boxes (Fig. 1.20).

²⁸¹ A. Young, *Travels in France and Italy*, p. 234.

²⁸² *Notizie storiche e descrizione dell'I. R. Teatro alla Scala*, pp. 17-18, Paolo Landriani, 'Osservazioni sull'Imperial Regio Teatro alla Scala in Milano', in *Storia e descrizione de' principali teatri antichi e moderni*, ed. by Giulio Ferrario (Milan: Ferrario, 1830), pp. 257-278 (p. 257) and A. Valery, *Historical, literary and artistical Travels in Italy*, p. 64.

²⁸³ See *Notizie storiche e descrizione dell'I. R. Teatro alla Scala*, pp. 14-15. The above mentioned total does not include the *Palco Imperiale*.

²⁸⁴ A. Young, *Travels in France and Italy*, p. 239.

²⁸⁵ G. Barigazzi, *La Scala racconta*, p. 16.

²⁸⁶ M. Donà, 'Milan', pp. 137-138 and C. Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*, p. 84.

Box owners, commented the celebrated architect Landriani, had to feel like they were in their own houses.²⁸⁷ This design, maybe the most unique trait of the Milanese opera houses, reveals that the audience, at least the aristocratic one, was accustomed to remain in the opera house for an unusually long time and to enjoy all sorts of comforts. The entertainment and social aspects connected to theatre-going, undoubtedly important within all Italian opera venues, were particularly strong in Milan. In the late-eighteenth-century Milanese society, owning a box at La Scala was at the same time an undeniable social necessity and the major tool of entertainment, like having a seat around the throne at Louis XIV's court in seventeenth-century France.²⁸⁸ Every aristocratic family had at least one in which to entertain its guests. Social practices such as visiting other boxes, partaking refreshments and conversations and carefully observing the general attendance and behaviour were among the main allures offered by a night at the opera.²⁸⁹ Finally, it was a very common practice among the wealthiest female patrons to attend the theatre accompanied by their lovers, called 'cicisbei' or 'cavalieri serventi' (knights on duty), whose post of honour was in the front of the box, sitting vis-à-vis their ladies;²⁹⁰ indeed, opera-going was also associated with erotic and voyeuristic elements.

Each box was appointed with silk curtains which the owners could pull across in order to signal their absence or to isolate their own personal space from the public domain.²⁹¹ Curtains, although impossible to draw across, were also used to decorate the *loggione* (upper circle), which was built above the fifth tier of boxes to give the impression of a sixth additional tier.²⁹² The effect of the boxes, their pillars and silk curtains on the acoustics of the building was not advantageous, but at the same time, their presence was necessary to the complex social ritual of opera going: Piermarini had in fact carefully designed the ceiling with a particular curve that was able to effectively reflect and thus reinforce the sound.²⁹³ As a result, visibility and acoustics were excellent from every point.²⁹⁴

The relationship between the aristocratic occupants of the boxes and the opera house was stronger in the Lombard capital than any other part of Italy because in Milan, unlike other cities such as Venice or Naples, boxes were not rented for a performance, a production or even a season, but were owned by their occupants. This convention, as already mentioned, dated back

²⁸⁷ P. Landriani, 'Osservazioni sull'Imperial Regio Teatro alla Scala in Milano', p. 269.

²⁸⁸ C. A. Vianello, *Teatri, spettacoli, musiche a Milano nei secoli scorsi*, p. 168.

²⁸⁹ S. Romagnoli, 'Il Teatro e «Il Caffè»', p. 300.

²⁹⁰ A. Young, *Travels in France and Italy*, p. 239.

²⁹¹ C. A. Vianello, *Teatri, spettacoli, musiche a Milano nei secoli scorsi*, pp. 169-170.

²⁹² The loggione had e.g. the same decorative pillars and curtains as the boxes; see Fig. 15 and G. Barigazzi, *La Scala racconta*, p. 16.

²⁹³ P. Landriani, 'Osservazioni sull'Imperial Regio Teatro alla Scala in Milano', pp. 259-260 and C. A. Vianello, *Teatri, spettacoli, musiche a Milano nei secoli scorsi*, pp. 140-141.

²⁹⁴ M. Donà, 'Milan', p. 391.

to 1708, when some of the wealthiest families, already united in a Society, had financially contributed to the construction of the Ducale and had been granted ownership of their boxes, for which they paid an annual fee.²⁹⁵ The system was almost exactly replicated seventy years later, with the palchettisti significantly funding the construction of La Scala: each of them financially contributed in proportion to the number and position of the boxes he owned in the Ducale and

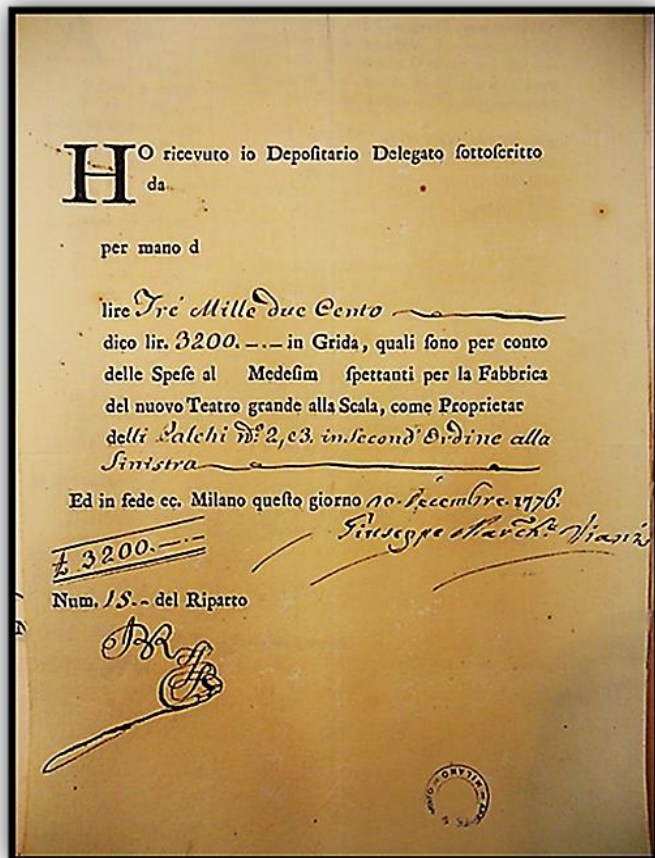


Fig. 1.21: Receipt issued on 10 December 1776 to an aristocrat giving his contribution of 3200 lire to the construction of La Scala as the owner of two boxes in the Ducale. Milan, State Archive.

received in exchange the ownership of similar spaces in the new theatre.²⁹⁶

The State Archive of Milan still contains some of the original receipts given to the palchettisti as a guarantee of their contribution and thus of the boxes' ownership (Fig. 1.21).²⁹⁷

The Society of the palchettisti also nominated three delegates who were task with representing the investors' rights in dealing with the governor and the plenipotentiary: their names, destined to be indissolubly linked to La Scala's early history, were Gian Galeazzo Serbelloni, Pompeo Litta Visconti Arese and Vitagliano Bigli.²⁹⁸ The amount of theatrical space thus owned by private citizens was considerable: four out of five tiers of

boxes were assigned to the investors (three out of four in La Cannobiana), with the exclusion of a few boxes that, like in the Ducale, had to be reserved for military and civil authorities or could be rented.²⁹⁹ The highest authority, the governor, had his own box called 'Palco imperiale' (Imperial box) or 'Palchettone' (Great Box), four times bigger than the average box, sumptuously

²⁹⁵ *Notizie storiche e descrizione dell'I. R. Teatro alla Scala*, p. 9.

²⁹⁶ Pompeo Cambiasi, *La Scala 1778-1889: note storiche e statistiche* (Milan: Ricordi, 1889), pp. 345-359.

²⁹⁷ Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folders 17-19.

²⁹⁸ G. Barigazzi, *La Scala racconta*, p. 11.

²⁹⁹ *Notizie storiche e descrizione dell'I. R. Teatro alla Scala*, pp. 8-9.

decorated and cleverly positioned in the very centre of the tier curve, thus having the ultimate central and visible position from both the stage and the hall (Fig. 1.22).³⁰⁰

The construction of La Scala thus represented a unique case of synergy between governors and subjects, the first profiting from a relevant financial contribution, the latter receiving an unusual degree of freedom and participation in the management of the opera house. In addition to the funds necessary for the purchase of the building area and the erection of the theatre, the Society in fact committed itself with the financial management of the performances for an initial period of twenty-three years and would have the faculty of nominating and supervising the impresarios.³⁰¹ The physical ownership of the theatrical space had significant consequences also in the attitude the box owners had towards the theatrical experience, reflecting in their uninhibited behaviour and expression of approval or disapproval or in their particularly strong pursuit of social and entertainment practices within opera-going.³⁰² As Katherine Hansell commented, ‘criticism of Italian audiences in general applied with double force to those at Milan’.³⁰³

Unlike the previous opera house, La Scala also had a few spare boxes which did not belong to specific families and which could be rented for variable amounts of time, although their cost put them out of reach for the majority of the population and available only for particularly wealthy visitors.³⁰⁴ Those who did not own a box, who could not afford one or were not privileged enough to be invited by aristocratic acquaintances paid a ticket for the single evening performance and obtained a numbered seat among the 900 in the stalls or a simple entry either to the rear stalls (capable of accommodating 600 additional people) or to the loggione;³⁰⁵ in fact, the majority of income from the evening’s box office came from the stalls and gallery seats.³⁰⁶ The difference in price between the boxes and stalls seats, the first being approximately 80 times greater than the latter, reflects, again, the significant difference in the social status of their occupants.³⁰⁷ Finally, the theatre impresarios frequently offered the possibility of subscribing for

³⁰⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 16, G. Barigazzi, *La Scala racconta*, p. 24 and Raffaella Bianchi, ‘Space and Hegemony at La Scala, 1776-1850s’, in *The European Legacy: Towards New Paradigms*, Vol.18, No. 4 (2013), pp. 730–774 (p. 734).

³⁰¹ See *ibidem*, p. 9 and also the numerous documents contained in La Scala Archive, bearing the signatures of members of the Society such as Carlo Ercole di Castelbarco, Bartolomeo Calderara, etc.

³⁰² C. Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*, pp. 85 and 106 and S. Romagnoli, in ‘Il Teatro e «Il Caffè»’, pp. 299–300.

³⁰³ K. Hansell, *Opera and ballet at the Regio Ducal Teatro of Milan*, p. 159.

³⁰⁴ A. Young, *Travels in France and Italy*, pp. 234–235. The price of a box in the first three rows in 1788 was 40 louis d’or, equivalent to 960 French livres. It was a truly astonishing price if we consider that, in Milan, Young could pay all the expenses related to accommodation and board with just over 6 livres a day.

³⁰⁵ *Notizie storiche e descrizione dell’I. R. Teatro alla Scala*, p. 16.

³⁰⁶ See C. Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*, p. 82.

³⁰⁷ See *ibidem*, p. 83. The price for a seat in the pit (although Young positively comments on their comfort and decoration) was just over 2 livres, while that for a seat in a box, considering that the average box seated 6 people, can be calculated around 160 livres.

a whole production or season: posters informing patrons in advance about the content of each season and promoting the available subscriptions can still be found in copious numbers within La Scala Archive.³⁰⁸



Fig. 1.22: La Scala box tiers and Palchettone seen from the stage around 1800.
Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Opéra Garnier.

The overall interior decoration of the theatre was very rich and elegant, also aiming at creating a general homogeneity, for instance by harmonizing the colours of the draperies in the boxes and loggione with the velvet seat covers of the pit. Great attention was also dedicated to proscenium and stage, framed by majestic Corinthian columns and architrave richly carved and decorated in white and gold (the same colours chosen for the boxes' parapets) and equipped with two painted curtains.³⁰⁹ Lighting was also taken into great consideration: the hall was illuminated by a great crystal chandelier (the so-called 'lumiera') 17.5 ft. tall and 9.8 ft. wide, supporting a number of candles that could vary depending on the occasion. The choice of crystal was also not a casual one, the material's translucency preventing the light to disturb the view of the stage.³¹⁰ Centrally-operated devices would allow a rather limited number of technicians to remotely control the light

³⁰⁸ See e.g. the documents marked MAN 493, MAN 502, MAN 503, MAN 2994, etc.

³⁰⁹ *Notizie storiche e descrizione dell'I. R. Teatro alla Scala*, pp. 19-20.

³¹⁰ P. Landriani, 'Osservazioni sull'Imperial Regio Teatro alla Scala in Milano', pp. 273-274.

provided by the chandelier as well as that of the stage, whose lighting not only guaranteed a good visibility, but also provided expressive effects such as sunrise and moonlight.³¹¹

Additional light came from the boxes, decorated with lamps and candle holders, the Palchettone being so sumptuous lit that it could almost constitute a show on its own.³¹² The fire hazard, most of all in the light of the previous opera house's destiny, was addressed very seriously not only through the constant monitoring of the audience, but also by providing a large set of hydraulic machines and even a rudimental security curtain in the form of a metallic cover which could be attached to the proscenium. A special unit called 'zappatori-pompieri' (diggers-firemen) was also present during performances and other events, ready to intervene in case of emergency. Finally, La Scala was equipped with several locales designated with different functions, many of which generated additional sources of income than the palchettisti's annual fees, ticket sales and governmental support. The theatre had its own café, pastry and drink shops, rooms where servants and coachmen could wait for their masters and, naturally, several ridotti dedicated to gambling.³¹³

Other issues affecting the performances in the Ducale, namely those of the obsolete stage design, machinery and scenery tools, were entirely solved with La Scala's stage and under-stage and technical equipment. Thanks to a complex system including tools such as interconnected floor boards rolling on apposite tracks, wings hanging from revolving scaffolds, walkable platforms and ramps and technical and utility rooms, the operatic and ballet performances could profit from swift and effective scene changes, finely decorated sceneries and a vast range of special effects.³¹⁴ The new stage's equipment, enriched by sceneries painted by the Galliari brothers, was fully displayed in the inauguration opera, Salieri's *Europa riconosciuta*, according to many contemporary witnesses quite a mediocre and convoluted work, but spectacular enough to persuade the investors that their money had bought something unique.³¹⁵

According to eyewitnesses such as Verri, the orchestra was huge for the time, numbering more than 70 players, and included some of the main musicians active in the city, many already employed within the Ducale.³¹⁶ During the performances, the orchestra, conducted by the lead violin, was not positioned in the pit (which would be built only the end of the nineteenth century), but rather played at the level of the stalls, clearly visible to the members of the audience. A wooden plank, called 'assata in pendio' (inclined board) separated the orchestra from the first

³¹¹ *Notizie storiche e descrizione dell'I. R. Teatro alla Scala*, pp. 21-22.

³¹² *Ivi*, p. 16

³¹³ P. Landriani, 'Osservazioni sull'Imperial Regio Teatro alla Scala in Milano', p. 257.

³¹⁴ *Notizie storiche e descrizione dell'I. R. Teatro alla Scala*, pp. 20-21.

³¹⁵ G. Barigazzi, *La Scala racconta*, pp. 18-19 and G. Tintori and G. Bezzola, *I protagonisti e l'ambiente della Scala*, p. 7.

³¹⁶ G. Tintori and G. Bezzola, *I protagonisti e l'ambiente della Scala*, p. 8.

row of benches, its inclination preventing the audience members from leaning forward against it.³¹⁷ Finally, opera and ballet performances could profit from a huge numbers of dancers, choir members and walk-ons, all dressed and equipped with great pomp and expenditure.³¹⁸

Built as the symbol of the Milanese citizens' and governors' struggle to own a theatre worth of an European capital, but also an adaptable and visible venue, La Scala undoubtedly possessed all the characteristics to play an important role in the history of the city and its musical and social offering. An overview of the quantity and quality of the performances offered within the theatre's walls will now hopefully complete the picture.

1.6 An overview of La Scala's operatic seasons 1790-1796

For the various reasons outlined above, La Scala constituted, as the Ducale did before its construction, the centre of Milan's social and musical life. Prestigious operatic venue, symbol of the city's prestige, guarantor of the alliance between government and aristocracy and showcase of the Milanese society, the theatre indeed played different, indissoluble and equally essential roles. Even La Scala's main structural characteristics can reveal several significant details concerning the theatre's role within late-eighteenth-century Milan; similarly, a deep and contextualized analysis of the musical repertoire and offering in the years that marked the end of the Habsburg rule and preceded the French invasion can provide with an insight into contemporary taste and social practices.

The main matrix of the opera house was an aristocratic one; therefore the main organisational criteria were modelled around the needs of Milan's higher classes. The main operatic seasons were situated within strategic periods of the year in order to accommodate the taste of the Milanese aristocracy for long periods of vacation during the warmest months and to follow the religious calendar. In fact, all the main aristocratic families spent long periods over the warmest seasons 'in villeggiatura', that is to say avoiding the heath in their magnificent villas built outside the city, so that the majority of boxes were left empty.³¹⁹ On the other hand, seasons were also tailored around the Ambrosian calendar proudly followed by all the Milanese churches: for

³¹⁷ Lorenzo Secchi, *1778-1798 Il Teatro alla Scala: architettura, tradizione, società* (Milan: Electa, 1977), p. 73.

³¹⁸ C. A. Vianello, *Teatri, spettacoli, musiche a Milano nei secoli scorsi*, pp. 141-142.

³¹⁹ C. Mozzarelli, 'La Villa, la corte e Milano capitale', pp. 17-18 and K. Hansell, *Opera and ballet at the Regio Ducal Teatro of Milan*, p. 194.

instance, the last opera of Carnival Season was performed on the last day of the religious festivities, on the Saturday after Ash Wednesday.³²⁰

The operatic year opened with the Carnival Season, traditionally beginning on 26 December and lasting until the last Saturday before Lent or 'Sabato grasso' (Fat Saturday).³²¹ Since the totality of the Milanese elite was in the city, the Carnival Season was by far the most prestigious (and expensive) during which serious operas were performed.³²² That of offering exclusively *opere serie* during Carnival in order to present the higher society with the most prestigious products and commissions can be identified as a traditional feature of the Milanese theatrical life, inherited from the years of the Ducale.³²³ At the same time, it can be observed how the practice of offering self-contained seasons in terms of comic and serious operas firmly roots the Milanese taste within the clear-cut division between operatic genres that, originated in the early decades of eighteenth century, had already been heavily criticised within more progressive environments.³²⁴ The Carnival season can be considered not only the most prestigious, but also the most traditional one, its structure being perfectly replicated throughout the years with little or no change whatsoever. Two *opere serie*, commissioned from leading composers, were performed throughout the whole season together with a variable number of ballets (usually five) divided between serious and comic.

The Milanese taste for opera, most of all regarding *opera seria*, was rather traditional and not well-disposed towards novelties. The inauguration of the new theatre in 1778 had certainly not ushered in a new, progressive operatic era: many aspects of musical theatre which had already contributed to revitalizing the long-established and already obsolete model of Italian opera did not find many supporters in contemporary Milan.³²⁵ In addition, as the musicologist Guglielmo Barblan has noticed, the political, social and economic stability of Austrian Milan was also strongly mirrored by the government's will to preserve the opera house's activities and its well-established tradition.³²⁶ La Scala was destined to play a more progressive role later on, during the first decades of the nineteenth century; in these years, on the other hand, the theatre was more about spectacle and entertainment than that about the quality and originality of the music.³²⁷ The Carnival season, with its long-established tradition and its highly prescriptive structure and

³²⁰ A. Valéry, *Historical, literary and artistical Travels in Italy*, p. 65.

³²¹ K. Hansell, *Opera and ballet at the Regio Ducal Teatro of Milan*, p. 186.

³²² C. Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*, p. 82.

³²³ K. Hansell, *Opera and ballet at the Regio Ducal Teatro of Milan*, p. 183.

³²⁴ Mercedes Viale Ferrero, 'Torino e Milano nel tardo Settecento: repertori a confronto', in *I vicini di Mozart* (Florence: Olschki, 1989), 2, pp. 99-117 (pp. 105-106).

³²⁵ K. Hansell, *Opera and ballet at the Regio Ducal Teatro of Milan*, p. 274.

³²⁶ G. Barblan, 'Il teatro musicale a Milano nei secoli XVII e XVIII', pp. 989-891.

³²⁷ G. Barigazzi, *La Scala racconta*, p. 26.

characteristics, constituted the most conservative part of the Milan's operatic offering; a brief analysis of the operas offered during Carnival in the years 1790-1796 can effectively vouch for this argument.

Season	Operas	Composers
1790-91	<i>La morte di Cesare</i> <i>La morte di Semiramide</i>	Nicola Zingarelli Giovanni Battista Borghi
1791-92	<i>Pirro re di Epiro</i> <i>Adrasto Re d'Egitto</i>	Nicola Zingarelli Angelo Tarchi
1792-93	<i>Cinna</i> <i>Egilia</i>	Bonifazio Asioli Giovanni Battista Borghi
1793-94	<i>Artaserse</i> <i>Demoofonte</i>	Nicola Zingarelli Marco Portogallo
1794-95	<i>Le Danaidi</i> <i>La Rossana</i>	Angelo Tarchi Ferdinando Paër
1795-96	<i>Apelle e Campapse</i> <i>Giulietta e Romeo</i>	Giacomo Tritta Nicola Zingarelli

It is significant that the model of two newly commissioned opere serie (most likely with ancient historical, mythological and/or tragic subject matter) did not change or even slightly vary throughout the years.³²⁸ Moreover, the composers appointed with the most prestigious commissions of the operatic year were selected within Italy's more traditional operatic contexts: it is not a coincidence if the high majority of the composers just presented were either originating from, educated in or well-established in Naples (which, incidentally, was also ruled by a Maria Carolina of Habsburg-Lorraine, Ferdinand's older sister). These choices, always supervised by the Cavalieri Associati, provided the Milanese patrons with performances perpetrating a model of musical theatre that was not only proudly perceived as Italian, but also perfectly suitable for the complex practices associated with theatrical experience.³²⁹

The theatre also had to provide other forms of entertainment to the aristocracy, desperate for novelties and notoriously bored after a few performances of the same opera.³³⁰ Both palchettisti and paying patrons could take part in a high number of feste da ballo (dances), which took place

³²⁸ In fact, the same model is also present within the Ducale's seasons; see K. Hansell, *Opera and ballet at the Regio Ducal Teatro of Milan*, pp. 183-185.

³²⁹ M. Viale Ferrero, 'Torino e Milano nel tardo Settecento', p. 102.

³³⁰ G. Barigazzi, *La Scala racconta*, p. 24.

late at night after the opera and ballet performances. These occasions, which frequently lasted until dawn, were apparently taken into great consideration by the theatre patrons.³³¹ posters and proclaims advertising current and perspective seasons always specified the exact numbers of feste da ballo offered, which also constituted an essential part of the subscriptions on sale.³³² During the feste da ballo, the stage and the stalls were joined together and especially decorated with tapestry, mirrors and lighting to form a vast ballroom, while participants, although with several limitations and rules, could use costumes and masks.³³³

The Carnival season did not usually see the operatic and ballet repertoire integrated with other forms of theatre. The only other performances that took place in La Scala between December and February/March were the instrumental and vocal accademie organized by the members of the Pio Istituto Filarmonico in order to raise funds for charitable purposes. The traditional number of accademie during Carnival was 12, providing the theatre's patrons with quite a rich and eclectic musical offering that included opera extracts, concerts for solo instruments and orchestra, and vocal and instrumental chamber music.³³⁴ The majority of performers were naturally the members of La Scala orchestra and choir and the singers currently employed for the season, although the concerts offered within the accademie often saw the participation of visiting artists from all over Italy and beyond.

After Sabato grasso, Milan's operatic year was segmented into other seasons, although it could be argued that Carnival was the only one having a clear and prescriptive structure. Second in order of hierarchy (and price) was the Autumn season, which opened in late summer and was usually centred around an offering of opere buffe; the comparison between the prices of the accordi (subscriptions) for the Carnival and Autunno seasons respectively, shows that the first cost more than three times more than the latter.³³⁵ Depending on the availability of artists and on the participation of the audience, the Autumn season could last until late October, mid-November or even early December and thus offer a variable amount of productions, though never below three. When the season lasted into late October or early November, it was customary to call the final weeks 'Autunnino' (Little Autumn); otherwise, if the performances

³³¹ See the document kept in La Scala Archive under the collocation MAN 489 and dated 1798, stating that balls traditionally began at midnight and finished at dawn.

³³² See the documents kept in La Scala Archive under the collocations MAN 461, MAN 485 and MAN 489.

³³³ See e.g. the documents kept in La Scala Archive under the collocations MAN 503 and MAN 506 and G. Barigazzi, *La Scala racconta*, p. 25..

³³⁴ *Un almanacco drammatico. L'Indice de' teatrali spettacoli 1764-1823*, ed. by Roberto Verti (Pesaro: Fondazione Rossini, 1996), 1, pp. 546, 613 and 678-679. The concerts are often described as the 'solite accademie' (usual accademie). Detailed lists of performers and pieces performed are often included.

³³⁵ See the documents kept in La Scala Archive under the collocation MAN 485, MAN 493 and MAN 496 and Mariangela Donà, *La musica a Milano nel Settecento*, p. 20.

continued until late November or early December, the latest part took the name of ‘Avvento’ (Advent).

While the rules governing the Carnival season were quite strict, the Autumn season was rather flexible both in terms of quantity and the kind of the theatrical offering, also including more eclectic combination of different theatrical genres. As the aristocrats, slowly returning to Milan from their summer residences, struggled to crowd the opera house during the still warm evenings, the Cavalieri and their impresarios usually chose to open the Autumn season not with a new commission, but rather with an opera that had already been particularly well received in another major operatic venue.³³⁶ Here is a list of the opere buffe chosen for the opening of the Autumn season in 1790-1795:³³⁷

Year	Opera	Composer	Premiere
1790	<i>La bella pescatrice</i>	Pietro Guglielmi	Naples, 1789
1791	<i>Le gare generose</i>	Giovanni Paisiello	Naples, 1786
1792	<i>Il fanatico in berlina</i>	Giovanni Paisiello	Naples, 1792
1793	<i>L'oro fa tutto</i>	Ferdinando Paër	-
1794	<i>La lanterna di Diogene</i>	Pietro Guglielmi	Venice, 1793
1795	<i>Gli artigiani</i>	Pasquale Anfossi	Venice, 1794

Once again, the impresarios' choices, with the only exception of Paër's new commission in 1793, focused on well-known operatic products and venues that guaranteed an unproblematic repertoire, the same the taste of the Milanese audience was still strongly rooted within; besides, Paër, a rather young composer born and educated in Austrian-ruled Parma and active in contemporary Venice and Padua, did not certainly constitute a progressive element.

Among the opere buffe presented in Autumn, there were also some new commissions, typically (but not always) presented in the weeks following the season's opening in order to profit from a larger audience. A comparative analysis of the composers appointed with new commissions at La Scala in the 1790-1795 Autumn seasons reveals how a relatively limited group of well-established artists (often also employed for the composition of opere serie e.g. Nicola Zingarelli and Angelo Tarchi) were usually entrusted with the production of 'appropriate' repertoire. A survey of all the opere buffe performed during the 1790-1795 Autumn seasons shows similar information: the repertoire in fact included many works by relatively senior

³³⁶ K. Hansell, *Opera and ballet at the Regio Ducal Teatro of Milan*, p. 196 and M.Viale Ferrero, 'Torino e Milano nel tardo Settecento', p. 104.

³³⁷ The 1796 Autumn season opened already under the French domination.

composers and/or premiered quite a long time before if compared to the rapid decay of operatic repertoire, i.e. in the 1780s and even 1770s.³³⁸

The more flexible Autumn season also allowed more eclectic theatrical combinations, generally realized in order to keep the entertainment offering rich and varied and to prolong the theatrical season as far as possible without leaving an excessively long gap before the start of the Carnival programme. Not only combinations of serious and comic genres were tolerated, but some seasons also saw the offering of both musical and spoken theatre.³³⁹ In 1789 and 1790, for example, the comic companies directed by the *capocomici* Nerini and Merli offered La Scala's audience tragedies and comedies from the end of the operatic performances until the end of November.³⁴⁰ Finally, the Autumn season also offered a large number of both vocal and instrumental *accademie* and *feste da ballo*.

In the periods of time not traditionally included either in the Carnival or in the Autumn seasons, the theatre remained open, but its offering was even less subjected to prescriptive rules. Minor operatic seasons such as the Lent, Spring and Summer ones took place with variable durations and contents, their main purpose to amuse the citizens who had stayed in the city with less ambitious operatic productions and with various forms of entertainment. As Kathleen Hansell revealed, it was only from 1779, with the opening of La Cannobiana, that Milan started to enjoy regular operatic seasons in the springtime: before that, the opera houses had been entirely devoted to spoken theatre programmes offered by touring French and Italian companies.³⁴¹ The summer, on the other hand, saw the almost totality of theatre patrons leaving the city; therefore, it was very common not to have an operatic season at all, but only cheaper and less prestigious entertainment.

As a consequence, these minor seasons lacked a clear structure and presented a rather eclectic offering. The only one that usually included operatic productions was the Lent/Spring one, its duration varying according to the position of Carnival and Easter religious holidays. The operas presented were only comic and usually quite dated ones, with no new commissions whatsoever.³⁴² Spoken theatre in all its forms, sometimes including *entr'acte* performances of

³³⁸ See e.g. *La virtuosa bizzarra* (premiered in 1785) and *Debora e Sisara* (1788) in the 1794 season and *Fra i due litiganti il terzo gode* (1782) and *L'Italiana in Londra* (1779) in the 1795 season.

³³⁹ In 1789, for example, the Autumn season had presented the audience with two *opere serie* and one *opera buffa*; see *Un almanacco drammatico*, 1, p. 747.

³⁴⁰ See *ibidem*, p. 820. La Scala Archive also contains the poster (collocation: MAN 493) advertising the Nerini comic company for the 1790 Autunnino season. According to the document, the company offered 'commedie di carattere e di maschere, tragedie e tragicommedie' (comedies, *commedie dell'arte*, tragedies and *tragi-comedies*).

³⁴¹ K. Hansell, *Opera and ballet at the Regio Ducal Teatro of Milan*, p.194.

³⁴² See e.g. *I finti eredi* (premiered 1785) *Axur Re d'Ormus* (1787) during the 1792 Lent/Spring season and *La frascatana* (1774) and *Giannina e Bernardone* (1781) in the 1795 Lent season.

ballet and instrumental music, was often offered during Spring and always during Summer.³⁴³ Finally, instrumental and vocal *accademie* were particularly popular during Lent, when the religious calendar greatly limited the occasions for operatic performances.

In Milan, the years from 1790 to 1796, despite the deep cultural renewal experienced by the city since the 1750s and the revolutions simultaneously happening (inside and outside the opera houses) within many European cultural centres, show a quite static theatrical society, still strongly based on well-established and rather dated traditions. Despite the construction of two opera houses (one of which – La Scala – destined to play a leading role in opera history) and an uncommonly high level of interest dedicated to musical theatre by both the city's governors and citizens, the actual repertoire performed in the years immediately preceding the French invasion shows a markedly conservative and static character. Far away from being uninteresting, these characteristics witness the struggle of a city where musical theatre was as important as society itself to preserve its traditions. Milan's governor, Archduke Ferdinand, and his subjects possibly pretended not to acknowledge the weight of the mechanisms that were criticizing and reforming musical theatre, the same way as they refused to acknowledge the advance of Napoleon's armies until they reached the gates of the city. When Ferdinand left the city, not only a historical era was coming to an end, but also a theatrical one, the events related to Napoleonic domination destined to throw Lombardy and Milan on a much wider and more complex stage.

³⁴³ See *Un almanacco drammatico*, 1, pp. 679, 747 and 820.

CHAPTER TWO

CULTURAL AND MUSICAL LIFE DURING THE REPUBLICS (1796-1799)

2.1 The Napoleonic invasion: the end of an era.

*A people going from the ruins of a recently destroyed monarchy
to a republican government represents the most interesting spectacle
ever for the philosopher and the observer.*
M. Gioia, 1798.¹

Napoleon Bonaparte was appointed commander of the Armée d'Italie at the beginning of the 1796; according to French Directory's tactical plan, his battalion had to constitute mainly a diversion keeping the Austrians busy on the Italian soil while other armies would march on Vienna; this was probably the reason why its troops were left badly equipped and supplied.² The change triggered by Napoleon's leadership and the consequent, huge success of the Italian campaign can be considered one of the first significant proof of its military and political skills.³ In less than a year, the Armée d'Italie, despite its original role, would in fact defeat the armies of the Emperor and his allies and would quickly and unexpectedly conquer Northern and Central Italy.

First of all, Bonaparte succeeded in earning his soldiers' trust and respect by replacing the comradeship and familiarity widely in use within the Republican army with a rigid formal discipline, cleverly combined with a propaganda completely devoted to the exaltation of his own figure on a populist basis.⁴ In order to fuel corp and campaign pride and catalyse the soldiers' admiration around his figure, Napoleon also exploited pre-existing tools and elements like the traditional proclamations to the troops and, most of all, newspapers and pamphlets, whose publication costs were covered with the huge war chest he quickly started to gain.⁵ From July 1797, for instance, a newspaper entitled *Le Courier de l'Armée d'Italie* started to be published in French in Milan (Fig. 2.1). Officially, such a newspaper presented the soldiers stationed in

¹ Melchiorre Gioia, *Quadro politico di Milano*, 2nd ed. (Milan: Pirrotta e Maspero, 1798), p. 3

² Jean Tulard, *Napoleone. Il mito del salvatore* (Milan: Rusconi, 1989), p. 182, C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814*, p. 13 and Giovanni De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina giusta le poesie, le caricature ed altre testimonianze dei tempi* (Milan: F.lli Dumolard, 1879), p. 54.

³ J. Tulard, *Napoleone. Il mito del salvatore*, p. 94 and Donald D. Horward, 'The proud Adversaries: Masséna and the Archduke Charles', in *Austria in the age of the French Revolution 1789-1815*, ed. K. Brauer and W.E. Wright (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), pp. 25-45 (p. 29).

⁴ E. Rota, 'Milano napoleonica', p. 18 and J. Tulard, *Napoleone. Il mito del salvatore*, p. 98.

⁵ C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814*, pp. 13-14 and E. Rota, 'Milano napoleonica', pp. 18-19.

Lombardy with daily news coming from France; in practice, it served the purposes of politically directing the soldiers towards Napoleon's interests and of reinforcing their devotion towards their leader.⁶ It was not the first time that the press was used for the sake of corps propaganda, but for sure it had never been exploited in such a systematic way. By also commanding an army that was quickly starting to perceive him as its idol, Bonaparte could undertake the Italian



Fig. 2.1: First issue of *Le Courrier de l'Armée d'Italie*, 20 July, 1797. Paris, BnF.

stood between the French army and the Lombard capital.⁹

In Milan, the news coming from the battlefield were received with incredulity, soon turning into anguish; while the imperial army and its allies suffered one defeat after the other, it started to become clear that a French invasion was actually possible.¹⁰ Milan did not have any army or fortifications; only a small contingent of Austrian soldiers had been left there, their headquarters having been set in the old stronghold of the Sforza castle.¹¹ With the government not being able to undertake any measure in order to protect or even just reassure the citizens, the only possible

campaign with renewed energy, the results he achieved constituting a proof that his propaganda strategy was indeed a winning one.

The military operations, starting on 9 April, were carried out with extraordinary rapidity and efficacy. After suffering a series of burning defeats, Vittorio Amedeo of Savoy, King of Sardinia, was forced to sign an armistice in Cherasco already at the end of the month.⁷ The Sardinian army was forced to withdraw from the war and to grant the French the right of safe passage through the Kingdom.⁸ Barely two weeks later, the Armée d'Italie already faced the whole of the Austrians forces near the city of Lodi, where only a bridge on the river Adda

⁶ J. Tulard, *Napoleone. Il mito del salvatore*, p. 99.

⁷ Alberto Banti, *Il Risorgimento italiano*, 4th ed. (Rome: Laterza, 2004), p. 3.

⁸ C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814*, pp. 14-15 and D. Howard, 'The proud Adversaries', p. 29.

⁹ See J. Tulard, *Napoleone. Il mito del salvatore*, p. 95.

¹⁰ D.A. Minola, *Diario storico politico*, vol. 8, p. 89.

¹¹ F. Fava, *Storia di Milano*, p. 10.

comfort was that of religion: the days of the Italian campaign were, as Franco Fava described them, ‘a whirlwind of novenas, psalms and processions’.¹² The Archbishop of Milan, Filippo Maria Visconti, ordered the Blessed Sacrament to be exhibited in all the churches of the city and special prayers to be recited in order to beseech the protection of God against the French invaders, described as the army of the Antichrist.¹³ The relics of the Patron Saints (Ambrogio, Gervasio, Protasio and former Archbishop Carlo Borromeo) were carried in procession: psalms and prayers were endlessly sung, thus further worsening the atmosphere of fear and distress.¹⁴



Fig. 2.2: Painting showing the battle on the bridge of Lodi on 10 May 1796.
In the distance, one can see part of the French troops fording the river Adda.
Versailles, Château de Versailles.

On 10 May, the Armée d'Italie met the Imperial army, led by General Vukosovic, near Lodi. The battle was long and tough for both sides; at a certain point, it even looked like the French were bound to be defeated, Napoleon himself having to fight in the front line in order to keep spurring on his soldiers.¹⁵ However, the French scouts located a shallow spot, not far from the bridge, where the river could be forded; part of the troops could then pass on the other side of

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 12.

¹³ D. A. Minola, *Diario storico politico*, vol. 8, p. 45.

¹⁴ C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814*, p. 14.

¹⁵ F. Fava, *Storia di Milano*, p. 11 and J. Tulard, *Napoleone, Il mito del salvatore*, p. 95.

the Adda and attack the Austrian deployments on the sides (Fig. 2.2). Vukosovic had no other choice to avoid encirclement than to order the retreat.

When news of the Austrian defeat on the bridge of Lodi reached Milan, it finally became evident that the French were just a few miles away from the city with nothing left to defend it. Governor Ferdinand, ‘without regrets and without hatred’,¹⁶ decided to leave Milan together with his family, court and main supporters.¹⁷ Watching the last representative of the Austrian government years abandoning Milan had a very powerful effect on the citizens, who witnessed the Archduke’s departure with disbelief and fear.¹⁸ Their mood can be effectively described with the following anonymous verses in Milanese dialect collected by the historian Giovanni De Castro:

Nessun de nun se pò desmentegà	No-one among us can forget
Del maledetto foff, ch’emm avùu tucc	That unbearable fear, that we all felt
Quand s’è vist i Todisch a tappascià	When we saw the Austrians run away
Lott lott’in troppa, e n’han piantàa in di gucc:	All in a rush, leaving us alone;
Poeù andæ via l’Arziduca, e in manch de quela	Then the Archduke left as well,
	and with him gone
No gh’è staa pù né Cort né sentinella. ¹⁹	There was no court or soldier left.

While Napoleon continued his march towards Milan, the inhabitants of Milan lived days of growing panic and uncertainty; even the most committed supporters of the French – such as Count Gaetano Porro and Galeazzo Serbelloni (future Minister of the Napoleonic Police and member of the Republican Municipality, respectively) did not dare to step forward to publicly show their allegiance.²⁰ The town council met twice a day, but without any results or real actions taken: discussed topics included the creation of a non-professional militia in order to try and defend the city as long as possible and even the establishment of a security plan for the endangered public heritage, but none of these plans was effectively implemented.²¹

With Napoleon and his army temporarily stationed in Lodi, the council finally voted to give up any military defence plan, deciding instead to send some delegates to the French encampment in order to present the General with Milan’s disinterested homage and to enquire on his intentions.²² The choice fell on some members of the historical city council, including the notable

¹⁶ G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina giusta le poesie, le caricature ed altre testimonianze dei tempi* (Milan: F.lli Dumolard, 1879), p. 60.

¹⁷ Carlo Cajmi, *Su e giù: scene milanesi dal 1796 al 1814* (Milan: Galli e Omodei, 1875), pp. 7-10 and F. Fava, *Storia di Milano*, pp. 10-12.

¹⁸ D.A. Minola, *Diario storico politico...*, vol. 10, p. 22.

¹⁹ G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina giusta le poesie, le caricature ed altre testimonianze dei tempi* (Milan: F.lli Dumolard, 1879), p. 60.

²⁰ F. Fava, *Storia di Milano*, pp. 10-11.

²¹ See *ibidem*, p. 12 and also C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814*, p. 14.

²² E. Rota, ‘Milano napoleonica’, p. 21.

aristocrat Francesco Melzi d'Eril who was destined to become one of Napoleon's most trusted persons and Vice-President of the future Italian Republic. A former officer of the Austrian government and a devote servant of the centralized state, but also a very sensitive individual to the recent changes within the intellectual and political climate, Melzi possessed skills that could be easily adapted to every regime, most of all to a transitional one.²³ Following his suggestion, the delegation sent to Napoleon's headquarters was assembled including members of different social classes, from professionals to higher bourgeoisie, aristocracy and clergy; 'It is advisable – said Melzi – that we show how we possess republican customs and virtues, already before and outside the Revolution'.²⁴ On the other hand, before the delegates left Milan in the early morning of 11 May, Archbishop Visconti ordered a new exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in all the city's churches to plead for the mission's successful accomplishment.²⁵

During the meeting, which took place in the Sommariva palace in Lodi, both Napoleon and Melzi tried to adopt a cautious, explorative approach, both obtaining negative results; the General, ignoring the delegates' direct questions about local administration, religious practices and government, made vague promises about freeing Lombardy from the centuries-old foreign tyranny, but also made very clear that the whole region would be directly controlled by the French Republic. As Melzi and other delegates commented after coming back to Milan, these statements could not conceal the real, opportunistic purpose of Lombardy's French occupation.²⁶

In the meantime, with the news of Napoleon's forthcoming arrival in Milan spreading, all the republicans, democrats and Jacobins who had been forced to hide during the Austrian rule gradually started to come to the fore and show their allegiance, while exiles and victims of political persecutions were quickly converging in the city from all over Northern Italy.²⁷ Among the latter, there was also Carlo Salvador, a demagogue and gazetteer who had worked in Paris by Marat's side during the days of the Terror and who had reached Milan the day after Archduke Ferdinand had left the city.²⁸ Salvador gathered around him those committed Milanese Jacobins that had been secretly active for some and founded the first republican club of Lombardy, called 'Società degli amici della Libertà e dell'Uguaglianza' (Club of the Friends of Freedom and

²³ G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina*, pp. 69-70.

²⁴ See C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814*, p. 14. The delegates included Francesco Nava (Vicario di Provvisione and aristocrat), Archbishop Visconti and the lawyer Filippo Pollini.

²⁵ E. Rota, 'Milano napoleonica', p. 22.

²⁶ F. Fava, *Storia di Milano*, p. 14.

²⁷ J. Tulard, *Napoleone. Il mito del salvatore*, p. 95.

²⁸ Davide Daolmi, 'Salfi alla Scala', in *Salfi librettista*, ed. by Francesco Paolo Russo (Vibo Valentia: Monteleone, 2001), pp. 133-177 (p. 134).

Equality).²⁹ The club members started to prepare the city for Napoleon's arrival and to convert its inhabitants to the republican faith. Imperial elements and symbols all over the city were removed or vandalized; in 1798, the notable politician and publicist Melchiorre Gioia would remember how Milan, though not having suffered from any fights or riots, was full of ruins.³⁰ At the same time, republican symbols started to be shown and promoted: while Salvador and his fellow club members paraded around Milan wearing and distributing three-coloured ribbons,³¹ the first Tree of Liberty was erected just outside Porta Romana, the city's south-west entrance on the way to Lodi.³² The town council was aware of these actions but, as a precautionary measure, chose to overlook them; in the meantime, the overwhelming majority of the people waited with an almost apathetic resignation for their new ruler, 'not regretting the defeated one, but not begging for the winner'.³³

On 14 May, General André Massena and a few vanguard cavalry squadrons reached Milan. As prescribed by the ritual, the council offered the victorious general the keys of the city and invoked his protection on religion and private property, but Massena, like Napoleon, replied with solemn, almost theatrical words.³⁴ The soldiers went through the city streets with the bells tolling and just a few Jacobins enthusiastically clapping their hands and shouting 'Evviva!', but they were not feeling safe: once reached the Broletto Palace, Massena needed to be about the people's good intentions.³⁵ In the meantime, the Jacobins started to disseminate news of Napoleon's heroism and victories, and spread various rumours, including that Milan would have been granted the right to choose its own form of government.³⁶ The curiosity and excitement for witnessing such an extraordinary moment did the rest in improving many people's mood and attitude towards the French.³⁷

Napoleon and the whole of the Armée d'Italie arrived the following day, 15 May, Pentecost Sunday; it is possible that his entry in Milan was appositely staged during a religious holiday in order to make it even more solemn.³⁸ There have been many depictions of that memorable day, each of them being shaped by the political inclination of the witness. One of the most celebrated and famous ones is that contained in the first chapter of Stendhal's *La Chartreuse de Parme*, which

²⁹ See G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina*, p. 69. As already mentioned, an underground Jacobin club already existed in Milan, in the form of secret gatherings, already under Leopold II, but its members had never publicly stepped forward.

³⁰ Quoted in D. Daolmi, 'Salfi alla Scala', p. 135.

³¹ F. Fava, *Storia di Milano*, p. 12.

³² E. Rota, 'Milano napoleonica', p. 24.

³³ G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina*, p. 68.

³⁴ D.A. Minola, *Diario storico politico...*, vol. 10, p. 25 and G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina*, p. 70.

³⁵ E. Rota, 'Milano napoleonica', pp. 28-29.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 30.

³⁷ C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814*, pp. 14-15.

³⁸ E. Rota, 'Milano napoleonica', p. 29.

describes a city literally immersed in hypocrisy, apathy and vice suddenly waking up to virtue, patriotic passions and truth:

On the 15 May, 1796, General Bonaparte made his entry into Milan at the head of that young army which had just crossed the Bridge of Lodi, thus showing the world that, after so many centuries, Caesar and Alexander [finally] had a successor. The miracles of bravery and genius which Italy witnessed in the space of just a few months had the effect of awakening a slumbering people; only a week before the arrival of the French, the Milanese still regarded them as a mere bunch of rascals, invariably bound to flee before the troops of His Imperial and Royal Majesty [...]. Suddenly, new and passionate habits sprung up. A whole people discovered, on 15th May, 1796, that everything they had respected until then was supremely ridiculous and even hateful. The departure of the last Austrian regiment marked the fall of the old ideas: to risk one's life became normal. After centuries of cloying pleasures, people [finally] realized that, in order to be truly happy, it was necessary to love the homeland with a real love and to seek out heroic actions. They [the citizens of Milan] had been plunged into the deepest darkness by the continuation of Charles V's and Philip II's possessive despotism; they overthrew these monarchs' statues and suddenly found themselves flooded with light [...].³⁹

Stendhal's depiction, though captivating, cannot be considered historically reliable.⁴⁰ In truth, a certain degree of excitement and curiosity in seeing the army and the General that had earned so many incredible victories entering Milan and in witnessing such a radical change in the government and its principles could be perceived: the crowd that gathered along the Corso di Porta Romana - the wide road that from the city gate stretched towards the Cathedral square – was immense (Fig. 2.3).⁴¹

Napoleon received the city's delegates: among them there were the town council members, Archbishop Visconti (the same that had ordered public prayers and processions against the French barely three weeks before) with his entourage of cloths and the republican Serbelloni.⁴² Once again, Napoleon chose to use republican eloquence and theatricality: instead of publicly meeting the delegates while surrounded by his shining cavalry, he received them within a simple farmhouse close to Porta Romana, and, taking the keys of the city, he proclaimed:

Taking possession, in the name of the French Republic, of the city of Milan and of its province, I reassure you that [...] everybody will be able to practise any religion that his conscience might suggest him, without the fear of being persecuted. The Republic will do everything in its power to make you happy and to wipe out any obstacles that might still stand in its way. Men will be judged only according to their merit, all being united in the same spirit of fraternity and equality. Everybody will be allowed to retain his properties [...].⁴³

³⁹ Stendhal (Marie-Henri Beyle), *La Chartreuse de Parma*, ed. by Ernest Abravanel (Genève: Cercle du Bibliophile, 1969), pp. 9-11.

⁴⁰ It should also be considered that in 1796, Stendhal was only a thirteen-year old boy and that he moved to Milan only almost twenty years later, in 1814.

⁴¹ See C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814*, p. 15.

⁴² E. Rota, 'Milano napoleonica', p. 30.

⁴³ See *ibidem*, p. 32 and F. Fava, *Storia di Milano*, p. 12.

The general did not reveal that the Directory had already deliberated not to keep Lombardy under the protection of the Republic, but rather to use it in future exchanges, nor he mentioned how he himself had promised his soldiers, back in Liguria, ‘the richest valley in Europe’;⁴⁴ those words had, however, the effect of temporarily reassuring both the clergy, the wealthy landowners and the patriots.⁴⁵



Fig. 2.3: Engraving depicting the entry of the Armée d'Italie in Milan through Porta Romana, 15 May 1796. Paris, BnF.

At the same time, the common people were won over by the aspect and behaviour of the French foot soldiers; young, badly dressed and equipped, but still so joyful and disciplined, singing the revolutionary tunes which would soon become familiar, they looked completely different from the imposing and almost statuesque Austrian ones.⁴⁶ Some anonymous verses in Milanese dialect, presumably written by a commoner, describe their appearance:

⁴⁴ C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814*, pp. 12-13.

⁴⁵ E. Rota, 'Milano napoleonica', p. 31.

⁴⁶ C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814*, p. 15 and Stefano Pivato, *Bella ciao. Canto e politica nella storia d'Italia* (Rome; Bari: Laterza, 2005), p. 10.

Quater strascion senza camisa,
 Senza s'ciopp, senza divisa,
 Senza scarp, senza colzett,
 Col cappell ross com'è i polpett,
 Cont ont strasc de valisin
 Del valor d'in quei sesin.⁴⁷

A few scarecrows without a shirt,
 Without a rifle, without a uniform,
 Without shoes, without socks,
 Wearing caps as red as meatballs,
 Carrying luggage made of rags
 Not worth a single dime.

Excitement, amazement and curiosity won over fear and anxiety and the people were conquered.⁴⁸ Napoleon also played his part: later on that day: everybody could enter the archducal Palace where the general, his officials and some of the main personalities of Milan were having a celebratory banquet, and listen to his promises and reassurances, again overflowing with republican oratory and not giving any clear information about the future.⁴⁹

The French promised to end slavery and tyranny and to bring freedom back to Lombardy, but almost nobody among the region's inhabitants was feeling at all like a slave; on the contrary, in the almost total lack of a national sentiment, many were able recognize the benefits that the long Austrian rule had brought within many fields. In this situation, gradual steps had to be taken by the new rulers in order to secure, control and direct the people's mood, to conceal the strong opportunistic purposes and to carefully manoeuvre the dawning Italian patriotism towards a favourable direction; it was indeed be a delicate mission, for which control of the performing arts and, more in general, of public spectacle, would soon assume paramount importance.

2.2 From the French to the Cisalpine Republic

Liberté, Fraternité, Egalité, *Freedom, Fraternity, Equality,*
I Franzes in carroccia e nun a pé. *the French on carriages and we on foot.*

Libertà e indipendenza *Liberty and independence*
fina al dazj de Porta Renza. *until the tolls at the city gates.*

Bosinade or short satirical poems in Milanese dialect, 1796-7⁵⁰

The entry of the French army in Milan on 15 May 1796 was destined to mark the beginning of an era of quick and deep changes. The long and pacific rule of Archduke Ferdinand gave way to a

⁴⁷ G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina*, p. 78.

⁴⁸ C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814*, pp. 15-16.

⁴⁹ E. Rota, 'Milano napoleonica', p. 32.

⁵⁰ Giovanni De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina*, p. 81 and Carlo Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814. Storia, testimonianze e documenti* (Brescia: Megalini, 2001), p. 17.

complex and unstable political and cultural situation. Historiography will never be able to agree how successful the new regime was in gaining the citizens' support. It has been noted how revolutionary ideas coming from north of the Alps were welcomed with some degree of interest and support, enriching the already fertile debate initiated by the Enlightened thinkers and governors. At the same time, the excesses and limits of the reforms and the conservative switch operated by many rulers (including the Austrian ones) in the aftermath of the 1789 Revolution, had persuaded many that improving the society needed other, possibly more radical channels.⁵¹

On the other hand, the Lombard society, as opposed to the French one, was not particularly prepared for a strong social change, such as the one hoped for by the new rulers. While the aristocracy had never been perceived as a terrible burden by the lower classes, decades of foreign domination and consequent national complacency had somehow contributed if not to the fusion, but to a measure of convergence between the different social classes.⁵² This phenomenon, in connection with the overall positive image associated to the Habsburg rulers, made the Milanese's attitude towards the revolutionary concepts and values sceptical if not aloof. As Giovanni De Castro summarised, people went around crying 'Death to the tyrant', but without a royal head to chop off.⁵³ At the same time, the strongest supporters of the Habsburg governors had left Milan, while a new, varied and sizeable crowd of individuals strongly connected to the new Republican exaltation, many expelled or fleeing from their countries, started to converge in Milan from all over the Italian peninsula and beyond.⁵⁴ A notable example is that of Francesco Salfi, banished from the Kingdom of Naples and destined to become one of the main activists of Republican propaganda.⁵⁵

The new governors thus preached a revolution that was understood and invoked by a relatively small number of people, and a sympathy towards the French Jacobins that was virtually non-existent.⁵⁶ Similarly, many of the concepts introduced and debated through the French experience were rather alien to the context of Lombardy, or even better to all the Italian states, and were destined to be dismissed and/or distorted.⁵⁷ Particularly, the idea of a free and independent nation was very far from any concretisation, although - as Alberto Banti has

⁵¹ Alexander Grab, *Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 153-154.

⁵² *Tre secoli di vita milanese*, ed. by Achille Bertarelli and Antonio Monti (Milan: Hoepli, 1927), p. 427.

⁵³ G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina...*, p. 90.

⁵⁴ Jean Tulard, *Napoleone. Il mito del salvatore* (Milan: Rusconi, 1989), p. 95 and Antonio Paglicci Brozzi, *Sul teatro giacobino ed antigiacobino in Italia* (Milan: Pirola, 1887), 1, p. 46.

⁵⁵ Davide Daolmi, 'Salfi alla Scala', in *Salfi librettista*, ed. by Francesco Paolo Russo (Vibo Valentia: Monteleone, 2001), pp. 133-177 (pp. 1-2) and *Termometro politico della Lombardia*, ed. by Vittorio Criscuolo, (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per l'età moderna e contemporanea: 1989), I, pp. 22-23.

⁵⁶ C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano*, p. 16

⁵⁷ Nino Del Bianco, *Il coraggio e la sorte. Gli italiani nell'età napoleonica dalle Cisalpine al Regno Italico* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1997), p. 45.

commented, this concept did not really apply to many contemporary European entities either.⁵⁸ Besides, it is undeniable that the introduction of concepts such as nation and constitutionalism into the Italian societies and intellectual communities, together with the challenging of traditional authorities, generated an innovative debate which played a paramount role in forming the cultural and societal base for the later unification movement (although the re-elaboration of the French models on an Italian scale, due to the chronical lack of occasions for a proper national debate, was rather slow).⁵⁹ Still, although the high majority of individuals residing in the Italian peninsula still had no other idea of *patria* (fatherland) or *nazione* (nation) than their regional homeland, the first sparks of a debate centred on the concept of a unified Italian state were ignited precisely in the first republican triennium, 1796-1799.⁶⁰

On the other hand, the years of the Napoleonic occupation were going to represent a period also characterized by difficulties and a general imbalance.⁶¹ The widespread diffidence towards the ideas and values praised through propaganda was intensified by the systematic theft and spoliation that the French undertook both with crops, riches and works of art, thus demonstrating to the Milanese that the new rulers were not so different from the Austrians and, even more, the Spanish.⁶² After all, at the beginning of the Italian campaign Napoleon had promised to his discouraged soldiers honour, glory and the richest valley of Europe using a rhetoric that, as the historian Francesco Cazzamini Mussi has drily commented, was not so dissimilar from that used by the barbaric hordes centuries before.⁶³ It is not a coincidence that the worst reactions to the French invaders were those of the clergy and the rural plebes, the latter reacting quite violently to both the anti-religious policies and the evident exploitation, and being ferociously repressed.⁶⁴ Reform and innovation were destined to be indissolubly connected to subordination and exploitation.⁶⁵

For the French Directoire, Milan and its region essentially constituted the prize for a successful military conquest; the city, ‘in accordance with the right of war and the obligation of friendship’ (these the words of General Saliceti) was subjected to an exorbitant tax to support war expenses, while ‘spontaneous’ contributions were continuously invited from private

⁵⁸ A. Banti, *Il Risorgimento italiano*, p. vi.

⁵⁹ N. Del Bianco, *Il coraggio e la sorte*, p. 48.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 11.

⁶¹ *Tre secoli di vita milanese*, pp. 427-428.

⁶² *Ibidem*, p. 429.

⁶³ Francesco Cazzamini Mussi, *Il giornalismo a Milano dalle origini alla prima guerra di indipendenza* (Milan: Famiglia meneghina, 1934), p. 118.

⁶⁴ A. Banti, *Il Risorgimento italiano*, p. 16.

⁶⁵ A. Grab, *Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe*, p. 19 and N. Del Bianco, *Il coraggio e la sorte*, pp. 45-6.

citizens.⁶⁶ In a letter of 7 April 1797, the members of the Directory, at that point still unsure whether it was in the French interest to ultimately keep Lombardy or to use it as exchange currency in the coming negotiations with Austria, had written to Napoleon:

The practice of sovereignty, at least for the time being, has to be exclusively in your hands [...]. If circumstances will force us to leave Milan and its territory to the Austrians in order to reach peace, we will not do it with dishonour because we did not promise nor guarantee anything: we just took provisional measures in order to safeguard the occupying army, which constitutes our full right within a conquered country.⁶⁷

Napoleon himself was particularly eager to exploit the Italian provinces in financial terms, as the more revenues he could collect there, the smaller support he needed from France, thus improving his personal image with the Directory.⁶⁸ Private palaces and public institutions such as the Brera and Ambrosiana libraries, the University of Pavia and numerous churches and museums were robbed of huge quantities of books, riches and works of art: every day, despite the pleas of intellectuals and artists, entire convoys loaded with the outcomes of the various spoliations took the road to Paris.⁶⁹ Napoleon himself participated in the raid of public and private art collections, sending numerous works of art to the Paris in an attempt to ingratiate both the members of the Directory and the French public opinion.

Meanwhile, the countryside was systematically raided for provisions, crops, carriages, horses, clothes and anything else that might suit the individual battalion commanders.⁷⁰ Lombardy was totally unaccustomed to the idea of maintaining a national army, which, besides, never existed: as it had already happened during the last phase of the Austrian rule, the rural plebes perceived the increased taxation and the recurrent requisitions as a form of vexation.⁷¹ Riots, immediately repressed, took place in the area of Porta Ticinese already on 23 May 1796, barely a week after Napoleon's triumphant entry. Meanwhile, intense revolts perturbed the rural areas of Binasco and Pavia, which were immediately ransacked and looted.⁷² At the same time, the newly

⁶⁶ G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina...*, p. 80, Franco Fava, *Storia di Milano* (Milan: Meravigli, 1981), II, p. 16 and C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano*, p. 45. The tax was calculated in 1 million of Francs, equivalent to about 20 millions of Milanese liras, a truly huge amount.

⁶⁷ See Ettore Rota, 'Milano napoleonica', in *Storia di Milano*, ed. by G. Treccani degli Alfieri (Milan: Fondazione Treccani degli Alfieri, 1956), 13, pp. 3-348 (p. 77).

⁶⁸ A. Grab, *Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe*, p. 27; it has been calculated that, following the principle summarized by Napoleon himself as 'war must support war', about half of the expenditures linked to the Napoleonic campaigns have been incurred by the conquered countries.

⁶⁹ N. Del Bianco, *Il coraggio e la sorte*, p. 65.

⁷⁰ C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano*, p. 17. The eyewitness Minola even reported that horse requisitions started already on 14 May 1796, after General Massena had entered Milan; see Diego Antonio Minola, *Diario storico politico di alcuni avvenimenti del secolo XVIII*, 10 (G.120.SUS), p. 26.

⁷¹ . Del Bianco, *Il coraggio e la sorte*, p. 66.

⁷² D. Daolmi, 'Salfi alla Scala', p. 2, G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina...*, pp. 84-85 and Augusto Vicinelli, *Il Parini e Brera* (Milan: Ceschina, 1963), p. 205.

established republican newspapers disseminated the false rumour that Archduke Ferdinand, before leaving Milan on 9 May, had robbed the public treasury of the wealth of the Lombard people and that the Savoy king of Piedmont systematically spoiled the countryside churches of their riches.⁷³ Conversely, according to an eyewitness like Antonio Diego Minola, already in the night of 19 May 1796 the French withdrew money and gold from Milan's main charity fund without leaving any receipts while the citizens were distracted by a public feast.⁷⁴ Within a month, the French had already plundered a sum estimable in 35 millions of liras, equivalent to what the Austrian government had collected in the space of two years.⁷⁵

Like all the Italian States conquered by Napoleon during his 1796-1797 Italian campaign, Lombardy was turned into a rather transitory republican state strongly subjected to France. Milan's administrative bodies were subjected to a series of both ideological and factual changes: concepts such as equality, popular sovereignty and the representation of the people's will through the actions of the government were introduced as the basis of the new democracy. As a result, the members of the government offices replacing all pre-existing institutions, as direct representatives of the people, gained a much greater power than the previous years.⁷⁶

In an attempt to keep the appearances as much as possible, the Napoleonic authorities tried to retain some features of the former Milanese institutions, at the same time carefully operating a deep reorganization of them. While all known supporters of the former regime and those considered its representatives were excluded from politics, Napoleon also ordered that the new government offices included the most moderate among the aristocrats who had stayed in Milan and some of the most prestigious citizens such as Pietro Verri and Giuseppe Parini.⁷⁷ Ironically, the idealized link between the champions of the Milanese Enlightenment and the new rulers was continuously stressed.⁷⁸

On the one hand, the radical re-organization of governing institutions and figures brought innovative elements within the relationship between citizen, state and administration: while the Austrian system had set precise criteria regulating the access of citizens to public offices, the French government offered a freer and more dynamic experience, but also a far more unstable and unpredictable one.⁷⁹ On the other hand, this newly organized town council was, however, merely a puppet to comply with the image of freedom and spontaneity sustained by the new

⁷³ *Termometro politico della Lombardia*, 1, p. 82 and 2, p. 298, respectively.

⁷⁴ D. A. Minola, *Diario storico politico...*, 10 (G.120.SUS), p. 30.

⁷⁵ N. Del Bianco, *Il coraggio e la sorte*, p. 67.

⁷⁶ Emauele Pagano, *Il Comune di Milano nell'età napoleonica* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1994), pp. 16-17.

⁷⁷ J. Tulard, *Napoleone*, p. 95 and C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano*, p. 16 and N. Del Bianco, *Il coraggio e la sorte*, p. 58.

⁷⁸ See e.g. the words contained in the first issue of the *Termometro* (25 June 1796) where intellectuals such as Beccaria, Longhi, Parini and Verri were described as heralds of the freedom and cultural renaissance brought by the French; see *Termometro politico della Lombardia*, I, pp. 81-85.

⁷⁹ N. Del Bianco, *Il coraggio e la sorte*, p. 60.

governors. The actual power was concentrated in the hands of a few French commissioners (some members of the Parisian Directory) and of General Hyacinthe François Joseph Despinoy, Comandante della piazza (Chief-in-command) of the battalions of the Armée d'Italie permanently stationed in Milan;⁸⁰ the latter was soon nicknamed 'Generale ventiquattro ore' (twenty-four-hours General) for his inflexibility regarding deadlines for the execution of his orders.⁸¹



Fig. 2.4: 1800 satirical engraving entitled *È questa l'Italia nell'epoca luttuosa della sua prima invasione l'anno 1796* (This is Italy in the sorrowful occasion of its first invasion in the year 1796) Milan, CRS 'Achille Bertarelli'.

Despinoy's notoriously arrogant attitude towards the Milanese officers can also reflect the actual power dynamics that regulated the government of Lombardy. In fact, the General not hide certain indignation towards any initiative suggested by local officers; he perceived them only as subjects to be indulged with a very limited amount of power.⁸² In addition, in May 1796, shortly after Napoleon had departed for Mantua, Despinoy was the first person to openly describe Lombardy as a French province.⁸³ Besides, all newly introduced institutions had a strong character of impermanence: the city's administration was strongly associated with war and the

presence of an army and the passage from the Austrian to the republican government was considered a transition from order into insecurity (see e.g. the engraving in Fig. 2.4). A clearer

⁸⁰ A. Grab, *Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe*, p. 154.

⁸¹ C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano*, p. 17.

⁸² F. Fava, *Storia di Milano*, p. 14.

⁸³ *Ibidem*, pp. 13-14.

and firmer system, although still characterized by a strong dependence on France, was introduced only with the proclamation of the Cisalpine Republic in July 1797.⁸⁴

After taking Milan and establishing there what the infuriated Verri described as a 'tragicommedia', Napoleon in fact continued with his campaign throughout Northern Italy.⁸⁵ The Duchies of Parma and Modena (Archduchess Maria Beatrice's homeland), the Republics of Genova and Lucca and the Grand-duchy of Tuscany fell one after the other following the Armée d'Italie's advance, in what looked like an inexorable process of conquest.⁸⁶ Everywhere, pre-existing governments were replaced with supposedly democratic and quite provisional institutions, while rather imposed-from-above celebrations covered a systematic policy of exploitation. In the meantime, Napoleon's continual success started to persuade the Directory that, following the General's advice, a series of satellite republics had to be created in Italy, with illusory concessions in the administrative field and a careful use of local patriotism as a major tool of control and monitoring.⁸⁷

Naturally, patriotism had to be appropriately channelled and directed towards pre-selected objects that did not threaten the French sovereignty in any way: republics would be born only if and when Napoleon wanted them. Besides, the geography implemented by the French conquests was carefully aimed at discouraging the formation of a unified Italian nation, rather opting for a series of controlled 'buffer states' reducing the military power of the imperial enemy.⁸⁸ Following the formation, in November 1796, of the Cispadane Republic (comprising territories from the former Duchies of Modena and Reggio and the two papal provinces of Ferrara and Bologna), vigorous protests took place in Milan: varied crowd of patriots declared popular sovereignty and the independence of Lombardy and even drafted up an official document authenticated by a hired notary. The French reaction was immediate: the doors of the Patriotic Society headquarters, inside the Cannobiana theatre, were sealed, the chiefs arrested, the crowd dispersed.⁸⁹

After Mantua surrendered, following a long siege, in February 1797, the gravity of the military situation called for an emergency meeting between Napoleon and the Imperial delegates. This took place in April of the same year in the Styrian town of Leoben, barely 100 miles from Vienna, where Napoleon's army had momentarily stopped its advance.⁹⁰ The meeting produced

⁸⁴ E. Pagano, *Il Comune di Milano nell'età napoleonica*, p. 55.

⁸⁵ E. Verga, *Storia della vita milanese*, p. 184.

⁸⁶ F. Fava, *Storia di Milano*, p. 16.

⁸⁷ E. Rota, 'Milano napoleonica', pp. 75-78.

⁸⁸ A. Banti, *Il Risorgimento italiano*, pp. 13-14.

⁸⁹ F. Fava, *Storia di Milano*, p. 16.

⁹⁰ A. Grab, *Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe*, p. 154.

the Treaty of Leoben, which officially ended the Italian Campaign.⁹¹ The treaty dictated that the Po valley would be split between France and Austria with the Po and Oglio rivers used as borders: Lombardy, despite the already mentioned sceptical attitude of the Directory, officially became Napoleonic. After the victorious conclusion of the campaign, the General came back to Milan, where the project of unifying all the French-occupied territories into a sole Republic slowly came to life. Napoleon's carefully planned concessions to the patriots, growing in number and strength all over the new republican provinces, responded to a utilitarian perspective: together with the control guaranteed by the military presence and the favour of the patriots, the creation of a nominally democratic and autonomous state with Milan as a capital could also create a bond between it and France.

Even the Directory was now persuaded of the utility of the creation of a Republic; already in January 1797, a letter addressed to Bonaparte declared:

It is of use, after all, that the Milanese choose a republican government, which is our government: there is no other way to keep them bound to us in case Lombardy should return to the Austrians. We will lay down a situation which will be very problematic for them, yet will remain very advantageous for us. Let us keep Lombardy close to us with favourable instructions, but also contain its excitement so that we will be able to exploit it even if we have to give it back [...].⁹²

It seems thus clear that the Directory, although in a perpetual state of uncertainty regarding the destiny of Lombardy, had developed some clearer ideas on what was useful for a more stable and rewarding treatment of the Italian provinces: a democratic government, but with the highest power in the hands of Napoleon or other French authorities, a more definite, yet always provisional administration, a frustration of the new-born Italian democracy through a refined system of simultaneous support and control.⁹³

The new Cisalpine Republic was proclaimed on 9 July 1797 during a public feast organized in Milan's Lazzaretto or Foppone, specifically renamed 'Campo di Marte' (Champ de Mars).⁹⁴ The fact that its creation stemmed not from a democratic assembly, but from Napoleon's initiative, itself constituted an important element conditioning its future.⁹⁵ Even the joy and patriotic feelings supposedly shared by the Milanese people were carefully dictated through solemn and multi-layered celebrations that were organized by the government and imposed on all citizens.⁹⁶

⁹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 6.

⁹² E. Rota, *Milano napoleonica*, pp. 67-78.

⁹³ *Ibidem*, pp. 77-78.

⁹⁴ F. Fava, *Storia di Milano*, p. 18.

⁹⁵ Ivan Tognarini, 'Le repubbliche giacobine', in *Storia della società italiana*, ed. by Giovanni Cherubini, (Milan: Teti, 1980), 13, pp. 59-82 (pp. 75-76).

⁹⁶ C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano*, p. 60.

Described as ‘free and independent’, the Cisalpine was equipped with a constitution reworked on the French one of 5 Fructidor Year III (22 August 1795) by the members of a commission nominated by Napoleon. Many of its fundamentals, though sounding highly innovative on paper, had a rather inconsistent application on the Cisalpine soil.⁹⁷ According to the preface of the document, its ratification by the new-born Cisalpine people marked the passage from a military regime to a constitutional one and the consequent French surrender of any demands on the Republic’s territory and income.⁹⁸ In fact, the character of subordination was maintained and even subtly sanctioned: while the Cisalpine citizens were directly invited to show an eternal feeling of gratitude to the French Republic,⁹⁹ the latter had enough authority to directly nominate the more influential government officers.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, the Directory would send its ambassador Charles-Joseph Trouvé to modify the Cisalpine Constitution only one year later, in 1798.¹⁰¹

At the same time, the proclamation of the Republic introduced many significant novelties such as civil marriage, equality of male and female heirs, abolition of mortmain and establishment of free internal trade.¹⁰² Similarly, between 1797 and 1798 a process of rationalisation and ‘secularisation’ of religion was implemented, with bishops obligated to pledge allegiance to the government and parish priests elected by public assemblies.¹⁰³ The newly instituted and advertised freedom of thought and speech attracted an extraordinarily large number of patriots and democrats to Milan, widening the political basis of the Republic, but also enriching the political debate within.¹⁰⁴ Politics became the topic of omnipresent debate in both traditional and new venues – for instance, the city’s squares – and by members of social groups previously excluded. This new political atmosphere has been indeed described as the most significant novelty associated to the birth of the Cisalpine and had a far longer life and stronger consequences than its government’s transitory actions.¹⁰⁵ While increasing both hopes and illusions, the French arrival pervaded Milan with a strong surge of cultural and political renewal: Lombardy was thus destined to become an example of extraordinary innovation in both politics and culture.¹⁰⁶

⁹⁷ A. Banti, *Il Risorgimento italiano*, p. 14.

⁹⁸ *Raccolta di Costituzioni italiane* (Turin: Tipografia economica, 1852), II, pp.95-96.

⁹⁹ See, again, F.Fava, *Storia di Milano*, p. 18. To solemnize the proclamation of the Republic, a temporary triumphal arch was erected at Porta Orientale with an inscription saying ‘Alla generosa nazione francese/il popolo cisalpino riconoscente’ (To the generous French nation/from the grateful Cisalpine people).

¹⁰⁰ E. Rota, ‘*Milano napoleonica*’, p. 85.

¹⁰¹ *Raccolta di Costituzioni italiane*, p. 147 and A. Grab, *Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe*, p. 156.

¹⁰² A. Grab, *Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe*, p. 155.

¹⁰³ A. Banti, *Il Risorgimento italiano*, p. 15.

¹⁰⁴ F. Fava, *Storia di Milano*, p. 20.

¹⁰⁵ N. Del Bianco, *Il coraggio e la sorte*, p. 60.

¹⁰⁶ A. Vicinelli, *Parini e il Brera*, p. 237.

On the other hand, Napoleon was well aware of the danger represented by an excessive strengthening of the local democrats, which could resolve in the autonomous proclamation of a unitary state comprising all of Northern Italy; both the General's and Directory's desire was instead that of firmly keeping the Cisalpine under the French hegemony. However, the General also acknowledged the importance of strengthening local patriotism, thus weakening the bond between the people and the old governors and projecting its political mood towards the future rather than the past. Nurturing a good relationship with the so-called Cisalpine (soon to become Italian) patriots constituted an effective source of power and control.

When, on 17 October 1797, Napoleon signed the Treaty of Campoformio, sanctioning the end of the Serenissima Republic of Venice by sacrificing it to Austria, even the most committed republicans struggled to accept its implications, that Napoleon was in fact ready to forsake the principles he and his governments were introducing in order to strengthen control on the Italian provinces.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, the Treaty also sanctioned the layout imposed on Northern Italy by the Napoleonic campaigns, a layout that was not destined to greatly change until the 1814 Restoration: it became equally evident that it was not a unitary and free Italian state that interested the French, but rather a series of strongly subjected and controlled provinces.¹⁰⁸ Campoformio represented the first of many evident signs of the deep incompatibility between the aspirations of the Italian democrats and the policy of the French government, an incompatibility that bred frustration.¹⁰⁹

Lombardy nevertheless became the centre of a significant political and cultural process, also experiencing an extraordinary acceleration in the transformation of society that had already started with the Habsburg reformism; although strongly linked to exploitation and consequent practical advantages, the Napoleonic regime indeed marked the transition from ancien régime to modern era and laid the foundations for the modernization of the state and society.¹¹⁰ Within this situation, the relationship between society, propaganda and culture was destined to acquire a greater and greater importance.

¹⁰⁷ Giulia Bologna, *Milano nei libri e nei documenti del suo archivio storico* (Milan: Comune di Milano, 1980), p. 137. The full text of the treaty is also contained in *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina dall'epoca della sua libertà ed indipendenza con un'Appendice di notizie diverse*, manuscript n.d. (Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan), vol. 1, tome 6, pp. 118-119.

¹⁰⁸ F. Fava, *Storia di Milano*, p. 20.

¹⁰⁹ I. Tognarini, 'Le repubbliche giacobine', p. 74.

¹¹⁰ A. Grab, *Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe*, p. 20.

2.3 Social and cultural life in republican Milan

*Priests and friars casting off their cassocks,
Soldiers parading their weapons,
Preachers of atheism;
While public wealth falls apart,
Scoundrels and washouts decide on feats:
This is the Cisalpine Republic.
Anonymous satirical poem, 1798¹¹¹*

As capital of the Cisalpine Republic, Milan entered a unique period characterized by chaos and countless discrepancies between propaganda and reality, but also by an extraordinary cultural and political effervescence. With control and monitoring becoming major necessities of the new regime together with the transmission of a new set of values, newly informed cultural products were immediately identified as powerful and invaluable tools.¹¹² At the same time, the transmission of the distant values coming from revolutionary France to a land that had no or little experience in terms of democracy and political freedom, determined that the first months of republican Lombardy were characterized by what Achille Bertarelli has described as a ‘*furia democratica*’ (democratic frenzy).¹¹³

The greatly advertised freedom of speech attracted republicans and democrats coming from various backgrounds to the Lombard capital: migrants coming from both France and parts of Italy such as Piedmont, Veneto and the Papal states soon turned the city into a major centre for republican celebration, also for political debate.¹¹⁴ A particularly active group came from Southern Italy, mainly from the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily: these were destined to become the most radical, even extreme of all political activists.¹¹⁵ Although with all the excesses and contrasts, became arguably the main and most active Italian centre for the coming together and exchange between different political tendencies and figures.¹¹⁶ The newly acquired freedom of the press caused the birth and extensive dissemination of newspapers and pamphlets: such an increase in the local press was unprecedented and remained a *unicum* within Milanese history.¹¹⁷ The primary purpose of many of the publications, most of all those directed to the lower strata

¹¹¹ See the *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina...*, vol. 3, tome 10. The poem had already been collected by Francesco Cazzamini Mussi in the 1930s, as noted in F. Fava, *Storia di Milano*, p. 21.

¹¹² Cesare Cantù, *Storia di cento anni (1750-1850)*, vol. 2 (Florence: Le Monnier, 1855), p. 30.

¹¹³ *Tre secoli di vita milanese*, p. 427.

¹¹⁴ Angelo Ottolini, ‘La vita culturale nel periodo napoleonico’, in *Storia di Milano*, ed. by G. Treccani degli Alfieri (Milan: Fondazione Treccani degli Alfieri, 1956), 13, pp. 401-440 (p. 401). I. Tognarini, ‘Le repubbliche giacobine’, pp. 68-69.

¹¹⁵ Gerardo Tocchini, ‘Dall’antico regime alla Cisalpina Morale e politica nel teatro per musica di F.S. Salfi’, in *Salfi librettista*, ed. by Francesco Paolo Russo (Vibo Valentia: Monteleone, 2001), pp. 19-81 (p. 44).

¹¹⁶ Alfredo Bosio, *Storia di Milano* (Milan: Giunti-Martello, 1958).

¹¹⁷ See, again, I. Tognarini, ‘Le repubbliche giacobine’, p. 71.

of the population, was not that of reporting or discussing contemporary news and issues, but rather of reshaping public conscience and opinion according to a new system of values.¹¹⁸ The strong link still perceived between Milan and its former Austrian governors, most of all Archduke Ferdinand and his wife, was systematically undermined and ridiculed: the French Republic had to become the only symbol of power and goodwill towards the people.¹¹⁹

In striking opposition to the newspapers of the previous years, the republican periodical publications were characterized by a rather artificial enthusiasm that soon degenerated into servility. Their editors and contributors, often lacking a strong literary background, made frequent use of a vivid and grandiloquent oratory in order to celebrate or violently attack mostly abstract concepts.¹²⁰ Extremely vivid (and sometimes coarse) language was widely present, together with a palette of expressive and supporting tools that typically included the frequent exploitation of literary and theatrical tools, and references to classical antiquity.¹²¹

The key concept of freedom, as an example, was continuously celebrated. According to the anonymous compiler of the manuscript *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina* [...],

The word 'libertà' [freedom] keeps being repeated as if the rulers were scared that the people would not realize having it and would not feel it: this is the reason why of all those long speeches, ornate expressions, title pages of books and newspapers, notes and posters proclaim that word until it becomes annoying. A casual observer could notice that this behaviour is typical of those who talk about something they do not really believe in, for whoever is really convinced of something, talks about it fervently, but rarely.¹²²

Arguably, one of the most fertile and creative hotbeds for republican celebration was the *Termometro politico della Lombardia*. Its compilers (first of all its main editor, the Calabrian immigrant Francesco Saverio Salfi) made a systematic use of tools coming from poetry, spoken and musical theatre, eloquence and even religious practices in order to make both the exaltation of the new government and the critique of the former one as effective and entertaining as possible.¹²³ Fictional dialogues, odes, canticles, poems, scientific dissertations and songs were thus interspersed between the news reported in the different issues. Some of the most notable examples included the *Discorso tra un milanese e l'Arciduca* (*Dialogue between a Milanese and the*

¹¹⁸ G. Tocchini, 'Dall'antico regime alla Cisalpina', pp. 44-45.

¹¹⁹ E. Verga, *Storia della vita milanese*, p. 185, and F. Fava, *Storia di Milano*, p. 13.

¹²⁰ F. Cazzamini Mussi, *Il giornalismo a Milano dalle origini alla prima guerra di indipendenza*, pp. 105-107.

¹²¹ See e.g. the systematic use of Latin epigraphs, appositely contextualized within Lombardy's current situation, in the title pages of the *Termometro politico*, the most widely used being the Virgilian 'Mens agitat molem' (Wisdom moves the grindstone) which symbolized the role played by the French invasion in rousing the Milanese people. See *Termometro politico della Lombardia*, 1, pp. 15-16.

¹²² *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina dall'epoca della sua libertà ed indipendenza con un'Appendice di notizie diverse*, vol. 1, tome 1, pp. 70-71.

¹²³ See Davide Daolmi, 'Salfi alla Scala', in *Salfi librettista*, ed. by Francesco Paolo Russo (Vibo Valentia: Monteleone, 2001), pp. 133-177 (pp. 133-134) and A. Paglicci Brozzi, *Sul teatro giacobino e antigiacobino in Italia*, pp. 46-47.

Archduke), republican Magnificats and homilies, a scientific dissertation on the symptoms of the 'aristocratic disease', Anacreontic poems dedicated to free Lombardy, and numerous fictional letters exchanged between Italian and French patriots.

At the same time, newspapers and periodicals cooperated with the government in spreading carefully selected information with vivid and often invented details and anecdotes that significantly altered both past and contemporary news. Already on 25 June 1796, just a few days after the French occupation, the *Termometro* published a fictional history of the period around Napoleon's arrival in Milan, trying to demonstrate that the germs of republicanism had been strongly rooted within the oppressed Milanese people for a long time. The same issue contained a pamphlet entitled *Disposizione del popolo milanese a rigenerarsi calcolata* [*Scientific evaluation of the disposition of the Milanese people to regeneration*] in which the agreement between the citizens of Milan and the principles of the French Revolution was demonstrated on 'scientific' grounds: 13 points analysed different attitudes and characteristics and the recent history of the Milanese concluding that, of all the people of Italy, they were the best inclined towards the acceptance of the revolutionary and republican doctrine.¹²⁴

A year later, in June 1797, following the continuous military achievements of the Armée d'Italie, Parma was annexed to the Cisalpine Republic; the news was reiterated so many times by the press that the above mentioned compiler of the *Giornale storico* commented:

Parma came to the Cisalpine [Republic]. What happened on that occasion has been told so many times and in so many different ways that we thought it was [just] an invention. A newspaper, for example, reported how an immense army of republicans, armed with only wooden sticks, had met in Parma pulling a cart with a Tree of Liberty.¹²⁵

In order to survive, compilers had to mediate between the need to report local and foreign news in the most objective way possible and to serve revolutionary propaganda, two unavoidable, yet conflicting aims which in fact originated and shaped all the periodical publications of the so-called 'Jacobin triennium' (1796-1799).¹²⁶ Compilers had to exercise self-censorship and reticence, lessening or ignoring some events and frequently resorting to a system of refined coding and disguising which was intelligible only to expert readers. Even in the years of 'liberty' and 'democracy', Milan could not boast a true tradition of political journalism: the construction of a free press within a regime of military occupation and strong dependence was a truly difficult, if not impossible matter.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ *Ibidem*, 1, pp. 82-90.

¹²⁵ *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina...*, vol. 1, tome I, p. 46.

¹²⁶ *Termometro politico della Lombardia*, 1, pp. 17-18.

¹²⁷ I. Tognarini, 'Le repubbliche giacobine', pp. 70-71.

Besides, the control the government exerted on the press always remained very strong. Those newspapers which referred to the freedom of speech to try and exercise a function of open critique and debate were often censored or suspended.¹²⁸ Already in the autumn of 1796, General Louis Baraguey d'Hilliers (one of the most important members of the French government of Lombardy) instituted a rather harsh censorship of the press. Between October and November, the publication of two the most influential and supposedly democratic newspapers, *Termometro politico* and the *Giornale degli amici della libertà e dell'eguaglianza*, was suspended for almost a month, while many writers were arrested and briefly imprisoned for having suggested that Lombardy should gain full independence.¹²⁹ Another notable example is that of Pietro Custodi, an important intellectual and economist and member of the first *municipalità*. In 1797, after the treaty of Campoformio, Custodi accused Napoleon of having betrayed the principles of democracy in his journal *Il Tribuno del popolo*; he was arrested, judged insane and confined to a mental hospital for several years before being reintegrated into the system for his abilities as an economist.¹³⁰

To what extent the press mirrored the public opinion is very difficult to determine, but it is possible that the majority of citizens did not agree either with the tireless and rather codified celebration of the French dominators or with the degree of violence and coarseness that characterized some authors. Many of the main intellectuals of the period, including Ugo Foscolo and Vittorio Alfieri, despised the journalists (frequently called 'pennaioli', amateur writers) and often kept their opinions within their private correspondences.¹³¹ Besides, it is undeniable that, in the tormented season Lombardy was entering, characterized by the almost frenetic alternation of different rulers and political frameworks, versatility more than quality could guarantee survival for intellectuals and artists. As Francesco Cazzamini Mussi commented in the 1930s,

The different phases of the Milanese journalism in that period [1796-1814] resemble the various *Te Deum* sung in the cathedral, Monti's works and the performances in La Scala [...]. It is in the imbalance between aspirations and historical reality that we have to look for the cause of the Cisalpine Republic's numerous problems.¹³²

A similar attitude was shared by the members of the numerous patriotic clubs, which sprung up everywhere following the declared freedom of association and started lively discussions on the future of the Cisalpine Republic.¹³³ Born as occasions for the democrats to meet and debate, these clubs often gathered the more extremist elements among the patriots; they were thus

¹²⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹²⁹ *Termometro politico della Lombardia*, 1, pp. 9-10.

¹³⁰ A. Ottolini, 'La vita culturale nel periodo napoleonico', p. 409.

¹³¹ F. Cazzamini Mussi, *Il giornalismo a Milano*, p. 110.

¹³² *Ivi*, pp. 128-129.

¹³³ F. Fava, *Storia di Milano*, p. 16 and *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina...*, vol. 1, tome 4, pp. 3-4.

looked at with doubts and almost hostility by both the French governors and the lower classes. While a real dialogue between the more extremist and more moderate trends was almost impossible, the democratic movement was in fact lost amongst a plethora of excesses, diatribes and polemics.¹³⁴ Far removed from the ‘respectable activists’ involved in the patriotic societies of the Habsburg time, the members of the patriotic clubs were systematically breaking all pre-existing behavioural codes and rules.¹³⁵ Moreover, at least a part of the actions undertaken seemed to have the main purpose of heralding the political change through the systematic disturbance of the traditional social behaviour: a notable example is that of the numerous night expeditions organized in the streets of Milan with torches, flags and loud slogans in order to disrupt the citizens’ sleep.¹³⁶

The hatred towards symbols and figures identified as bringers of tyranny and obstacles to freedom was omnipresent and translated into a plurality of spontaneous and violent speeches and actions, whose rhetorical and abstract character remained a significant weakness.¹³⁷

One of the most important clubs was the Società popolare of via Rugabella, instituted on 19 May 1796 under the protection of Napoleon himself and open to all citizens (including women).¹³⁸ This club became quickly famous for its violent attacks against the former authorities and its unconditional support of liberty and equality, often generating quite fantastic plans of action. Already on 24 May, its members (also called ‘clubisti’) covered the streets of Milan shouting ‘morte ai nobili, ai preti, ai frati, ai re!’ (‘death to the aristocrats, the priests, the friars and the kings!’) and inviting passers-by to do the same. The reaction of the majority was quite aloof, when not unfavourable: a violent argument even degenerated into a fight and a stampede in the Duomo square and necessitated military intervention.¹³⁹ Later on, members, for example, proposed that the highest pinnacle of the cathedral should be demolished in order to respect equality while another member, who wanted to save the pinnacle, proposed that instead they put a Phrygian cap on it to symbolize the importance of freedom above everything else. Luckily, the latter prevailed and the pinnacle stayed.¹⁴⁰

Another particularly strong group was the Club dei Patrioti, which had been granted the Cannobiana theatre as headquarters and gathered some of the main personalities of the period (such as Galeazzo Serbelloni, Gaetano Porro and Carlo Salvador) as well as many artists and literates (e.g. Giovanni Pindemonte). This association was particularly active in terms of both

¹³⁴ A. Ottolini, ‘La vita culturale nel periodo napoleonico’, p. 403.

¹³⁵ Pieter M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire. A new History* (Cambridge MA; London: Belknap Press, 2016), p. 140.

¹³⁶ G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina...*, p. 126.

¹³⁷ I. Tognarini, ‘Le repubbliche giacobine’, pp. 69-70.

¹³⁸ D. A. Minola, *Diario storico politico...*, 10 [G.120.SUS], p. 30.

¹³⁹ G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina...*, pp. 83-84.

¹⁴⁰ Francesco Cazzamini Mussi, *Aneddoti milanesi* (Rome: Formiggini, 1932), p. 20.

debate and initiatives; its members not only took part in frequent debates, but also organized democratic feasts and free theatrical performances which were exalting the republic and ridiculing former authorities such as the clergy with such violence that they have been described as a mix of 'theatre and delirium'.¹⁴¹ Moreover, on 14 November 1798, the members of the Club dei Patrioti who, organised a procession to the cathedral square in order to declare the will of the people to exterminate the aristocracy. The crowd gathered had even prepared a written declaration which was offered to Giuseppina Bonaparte so that she could send it to her husband. The violence of that particular action alarmed the French government: later on, members of the city police force burst into the Cannobiana theatre and arrested many of the club's members, including Salvador.¹⁴² It is evident that, as it was with the press, the French government and his supporters within Milan's higher offices exerted a high degree of control on the clubs, whose actions and proposals were constantly monitored and, if needed, limited and punished.

Clubs often counted journalists or other members of the press among their affiliates, who could guarantee a significant amount of both visibility and support.¹⁴³ In fact, a tireless war against the symbols and the figures related to the status quo preceding the Napoleonic invasion was carried on with amazing strength. While the Municipality promulgated a specific decree to expressly abolish titles and peerages, all visible crests, images and coat of arms representing either the aristocratic or the clerical enemies were banished.¹⁴⁴ Sculptures, paintings and applications were removed from public buildings, including the precious crest of Pope Braschi, which was chiselled away from the main door of the cathedral, and the statue of Philip II of Spain at the Palazzo Giureconsulti, whose head and sceptre were replaced with that of Marcus Junius Brutus and a dagger, respectively.¹⁴⁵

Religious images and practices, seen as obsolete and deceitful, were also strongly targeted; the republican triennium, most of all its initial phases, were characterized by a limitless iconoclastic enthusiasm.¹⁴⁶ A popular poem in Milanese dialect gives us a vivid picture of that tireless war:

Proibii che se portass el Viatic ai ammalaa	It was forbidden to bring communion to the sick,
Proibii che se portass el Signor per straa	To bring the statues in procession,
Proibii che se fass di devozion	To practise devotion,
Proibii i Sant in venerazion	To worship the Saints,
Proibii che se sonassen i campan	To ring the bells,
Proibii che se fass i fonzion dell'an	To administer the rites,

¹⁴¹ Raffaello Barbiera, *Vite ardenti nel Teatro(1700-1900): da archivi e da memorie* (Milan: F.lli Treves, 1931), pp. 37-38.

¹⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 39.

¹⁴³ F. Cazzamini Mussi, *Il giornalismo a Milano*, p. 123 and Noel Parker, *Portrayals of Revolution* (New York; etc.: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), p. 14.

¹⁴⁴ G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina...*, pp. 90-91.

¹⁴⁵ F. Fava, *Storia di Milano*, p.16.

¹⁴⁶ N. Del Bianco, *Il coraggio e la sorte*, p. 59.

Proibii ai mort l'accompagnament
Proibii ai fioeu i bon suggeriment.¹⁴⁷

To take the dead to the cemetery,
To give moral guidance to the young.

Those who dared to present any objections to the iconoclasm were immediately called reactionaries and persecuted, while the strongest supporters of the republican regime started to denounce many of their fellow citizens in secret. Priests were reported to administer the communion to the sick in secret carrying hosts in their pockets.¹⁴⁸ Sacred images and symbols, many of which held a special place within the people's faith, were not spared. A journalist reported how, in 1798, rumours had been spread among the lower classes of a statue of Holy Mary opening and closing its eyes and another of St. Ambrogio moving its whip against the Jacobins: the latter was removed from its pedestal and dragged through the streets with a rope around the neck before being destroyed.¹⁴⁹ In the night, public officers worked all around the city with torchbearers and painters so that in the morning the citizens found many icons and images painted over, their frames and shrines broken. Many newspapers reported the news with joy, for those images represented the 'long-standing tyranny' of the Church on the people.¹⁵⁰

The backbone of the Milanese intelligentsia, most of all those who had served during the previous regime and had worked for the development of the society within the government-supported, legal institutions, could not tolerate the degeneration of freedom into its numerous excesses.¹⁵¹ Many figures that represented the cream of the Milanese enlightenment were excluded from the newly informed social and cultural environment or chose voluntary exile. Giuseppe Parini, former Professor at the Academy of Brera and University of Pavia and poeta di teatro at the Ducale was initially selected for the Municipality, but later withdrew when he noticed that the crucifix had been removed from all council rooms.¹⁵² He then progressively detached himself from the public scene, though seizing many occasions to show his moderate attitude.¹⁵³

His last production also contains clear traces of the embitterment he experienced from the beginning of the French domination; after the proclamation of the Cisalpine Republic, he wrote a poem entitled *Il ciarlatano* (*The charlatan*) that can be seen as a pitiless caricature of the new rulers and their methods:

¹⁴⁷ Gio. Battista Fumagalli, *L'ultima messa celebrata nella chiesa della Rosa in Milano e servita dall'estensore, o sia Un racconto che fa conoscere cosa erano que' tempi 14 maggio 1796 epoca dell'arrivo de' francesi in Milano sino al 28 aprile 1799 ritorno delle armate austriache* (Milan: Dall'autore contrada del Boschetto, s.d.), p. 11.

¹⁴⁸ G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina...*, p. 130

¹⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 133.

¹⁵⁰ E. Verga, *Storia della vita milanese*, pp. 186-187.

¹⁵¹ A. Bosisio, *Storia di Milano*, p. 289.

¹⁵² C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814*, pp. 16-17.

¹⁵³ Francesco Cazzamini Mussi, *Aneddoti milanesi*, p. 94.

Un <i>filosofo</i> viene	A <i>philosopher</i> comes ¹⁵⁴
Tutto modesto, e dice:	All humble, and says
‘Si vuole a poco a poco,	‘One step at the time,
Pian pian, di loco in loco	slowly, a tiny bit in each place,
Togliere gli errori dal mondo morale:	We want to purge the moral world from
	mistakes;
Dunque ciascuno emendi	Therefore, everybody has to improve
Prima sè stesso, e poi degli altri il male.	Himself first, and then the others.
Ecco un altro che grida:	Here is another man crying out:
‘Tutto il mondo è corrotto;	‘The whole world is corrupted;
Si deve metter di sotto	We have to put down
Quello che sta di sopra, rovesciare	What was up, overthrow
Le leggi, il governare;	The laws and government;
Fuor che la mia dottrina,	We can save it [the world] only with my
	doctrine,
Ogni rimedio per salvarlo è vano.’	Everything else is in vain.’
Badate all’altro; questi è un ciarlatano.	Watch out for the latter: he is a charlatan. ¹⁵⁵

Another figure who was deeply shocked by the subversion of the social order and the violence of the attack against the former political and social values was Pietro Verri, who had served for more than 25 years within the Milan’s various offices. Also selected, like Parini, among the members of the Municipality, he tried to participate in its meetings, but failed to accommodate its newly informed purposes.¹⁵⁶ He died on 28 June 1797, without being able to witness the birth of the Cisalpine Republic.¹⁵⁷ His last literary production consists of four articles published on the *Termometro politico* in an attempt to use the contemporary press and its extraordinary development to disseminate some of his ideas and reflections. Unfortunately, his writings were subjected to a harsh revision and critique by the compilers, who also exploited his and Verri’s cooperation as an important proof of the success of their cultural initiative.¹⁵⁸

Milan’s cultural and social life was thus significantly shaken by the newly established regime, which deeply influenced every aspect of different tools and modalities of public gathering and information such as the press, the associations and the constant monitoring of the citizen’s behaviour and political allegiance. Naturally, such a deep change of political and social frame had to be accompanied by an appropriate plan for cultural production and dissemination, which would play a paramount role within the regime’s needs and investments: Milan’s cultural environment would then be significantly redefined, particularly the spheres of performing arts. At that time, music was undeniably at the centre of the city’s cultural offering and provided with

¹⁵⁴ The Italian term *filosofo* can indicate both a philosopher and the more Enlightenment-connected figure of the *philosophe*.

¹⁵⁵ Giuseppe Parini, *Poesie* (Florence: Barbera, 1808), pp. 397-398.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 401.

¹⁵⁷ A. Bosisio, *Storia di Milano*, p. 291.

¹⁵⁸ *Termometro politico della Lombardia*, 1, pp. 29-30.

numerous skilled figures and with the maximum degree of visibility: the French authorities would identify it soon enough as an unavoidable tool of control and celebration.¹⁵⁹ The process of appropriating and exploiting pre-existing contexts of musical production and dissemination and of introducing new ones will be discussed in the next paragraphs.

2.4 *Le pubbliche feste*: republican feasts and celebrations

*Man is the greatest object [existing] within Nature
and the most magnificent spectacle is that of a great people gathered.*
Maximilien Robespierre, *Rapport sur les idées religieuses et morales*, 1794¹⁶⁰

Among the desired effects of establishing a republican regime, the French rulers of Lombardy not only wanted to generate a new politic debate and stress the value of the newly found freedom the Republic had brought in opposition to the previous ‘tyranny’, they also wished to introduce a new set of values which would ideally link the Milanese to the revolutionary and republican cause. Therefore, a cultural programme, carefully binding together propaganda, control and respect for the existing tradition, had to be designed. The wide dissemination of cultural products that could express not only different values, but also a new relationship between culture, its producers and its consumers was immediately identified as a primary necessity; culture, in other words, was a necessary tool for the reconstruction of the social order.¹⁶¹ This need was particularly strong within a situation like that of Milan, where performing arts (especially musical theatre) played such a paramount role within the society and an extraordinarily strong association, as already discussed, had been built in the previous decades between the opera house, the rite of opera-going, the different social classes and the institutions.¹⁶²

The progressive subjugation of pre-existing cultural forms and rites, most of all within a propaganda line which always had to remain shaped around the concept of freedom, had to be conducted with care, also due to the extraordinarily high level of involvement of many Milanese citizens in theatrical management. At the same time, the new rulers looked for genuinely new occasions for cultural dissemination which would not only function as transmitters of new

¹⁵⁹ *Milano capitale della musica*, ed. by Giorgio Taborelli, pp. 155-157.

¹⁶⁰ ‘L’homme est le plus grand objet qui soit dans la nature, et le plus magnifique des spectacles, c’est celui d’un grand peuple assemblé; quoted in Mona Ozouf, *La fête révolutionnaire: 1789-1799* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), p. 238.

¹⁶¹ N. Parker, *Portrayals of Revolution*, p.1.

¹⁶² See the previous chapter and, as a summary, Raffaella Bianchi, ‘Space and Hegemony at La Scala, 1776-1850s’, in *The European Legacy: Towards New Paradigms*, Vol.18 No. 4 (2013), p. 3.

values, but also institute new forms of rites, gatherings and cultural reception. The Italian campaign, the idolization of Napoleon, both as a military genius and the bringer of freedom to the oppressed, and the inoculation of a completely new system of values demanded dedicated celebratory occasions, whose venue had to be set beyond the usual ones, so deeply connected to old and very conservative power structures. Their model, on the other hand, could not be traced back to the sporadic public celebrations held in the previous centuries by the different rulers to celebrate important dynastic events.¹⁶³

Public celebrations in ancien-régime Lombardy (as in almost every other Italian State) had in fact always had either a religious or an aristocratic matrix, depending on which authority was organizing and 'offering' them to the people. In both cases, the celebration itself was conceived mainly as a generous offer to the people and thus usually contained clear elements of exaltation and eulogy of the magnanimous figure or institution which, through it, pursued the double purpose of showcasing its goodness and celebrating itself.¹⁶⁴ With the advent of the republic, the necessity rose of representing a new social order: the focus shifted from the institutions to the people, consistently described as sovereign and sole creator of its destiny once the main secular and religious authorities had been not only deprived of their factual power, but also defamed.¹⁶⁵ The Revolution had operated a tabula rasa on which a new model of celebration could be constructed: under its regime(s), there would not be any more royal festivities or religious feasts.¹⁶⁶

Republican feasts, instituted in the early 1790s in post-revolutionary France and arguably constituting this period's only truly original cultural form, represented the perfect answer to this need for a new spectacle.¹⁶⁷ They had their main theoretical base in the works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and in their re-elaborations made in the later decades by some notable personalities of the French Enlightenment and Revolution such as Voltaire and Robespierre. One of the main results of their experience had been a strong critique of theatre, a corrupted form of spectacle that could not constitute a morally healthy experience for the people;¹⁶⁸ according to this theoretical framework, theatrical performances took place within big, morally degraded cities,

¹⁶³ See, among others, Giovanna D'Amia 'La città fatta teatro: apparati effimeri ed 'embellissement' urbano nella Milano del Settecento', in *Il teatro a Milano nel Settecento. I contesti*, ed. by Annamaria Cascetta and Giovanna Zanolighi (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2008), pp. 97-124 (pp. 97-98 and p. 121) and Carlo Mozzarelli, 'La Villa, la corte e Milano capitale', in *La Villa reale di Monza*, ed. by Francesco De Giacomo (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana, 1999), pp. 9-43 (pp. 13-15).

¹⁶⁴ Alain Pillepich, *Milan capitale napoléonienne: 1800-1814* (Paris: Lettrage, 2001), p. 392.

¹⁶⁵ N. Parker, *Portrayals of Revolution*, p. 38.

¹⁶⁶ Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, Eng. transl. by Alan Sheridan (Cambridge MA; London: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 8.

¹⁶⁷ N. Parker, *Portrayals of Revolution*, p. 50.

¹⁶⁸ Sirio Ferrone, '«La danse fut suspendue, ce ne furent qu'embrassements, ris, santés, caresses»', in *Lo spettacolo nella Rivoluzione francese*, ed. by Paolo Bosisio (Rome: Bulzoni, 1989), pp. 27-49 (pp. 35-36).

where the communal feeling and spontaneous participation was lost. The audience attending these performances very often did not reflect the real society, but was rather constituted by the sole elite, corrupted and prejudiced. This audience was then presented with a cultural experience that essentially stressed even more its prejudices and was capable of exciting only degenerated passions.¹⁶⁹

Instead of this corrupted model, Rousseau had proposed that of the public feasts and festivals taking place in smaller communities: these occasions saw the participation of the whole people gathering spontaneously and celebrating shared values which were thus true and morally healthy. Bound together in common and intimately felt celebration, the people was therefore contemplating and celebrating itself, also realizing that total participation into public life which, also according to Rousseau theory of the *contrat social*, constituted the basis of the whole society.¹⁷⁰ In addition, republican feasts also harked back the previous traditions of public celebrations, blending and contextualizing them within the new social order and propaganda needs. Both religious and court feasts in fact offered both the people and the higher classes a wide and varied palette of occasions, tools and modalities in order to celebrate carefully chosen values. Public celebrations were effectively building occasions in which values and concepts were solemnized and presented through various means and rules in order to make the whole event effective; thus, feasts could be described as both solemn occasions, ceremonies somehow close to highly detailed rituals and events specifically based on the communication of specific values/concepts. It is thanks to this complexity that we can ideally connect the celebrations introduced by the post-revolutionary governments, or at least some of their aspects, to many of the public feasts of the previous centuries.¹⁷¹

Many of the tools and techniques used within public celebrations and quickly adopted by the new rulers were tightly linked to those of theatre and other performing arts. Feasts could indeed be almost considered as spontaneous theatrical performances in which technical and expressive means coming from the higher forms of art were put at the service of the community.¹⁷² Similarly, thanks to the growing interest within many French-occupied territories for the feasts and the organization of a progressively growing number of them, the very concepts of 'theatre' and 'feast' started to draw nearer. Within republican celebrations, the borders of the performance and those of the spontaneous celebration were intentionally blurred: this merging, quickly becoming a characteristic of the urban cultural landscape within the French-occupied provinces,

¹⁶⁹ M. Ozouf, *La fête révolutionnaire: 1789-1799*, pp. 238-240.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 239.

¹⁷¹ E. Balmas, 'Dalla festa di corte alla festa giacobina', pp. 137-140.

¹⁷² *Ibidem*, p. 143.

could be almost seen as a return of public spectacles to a pre-Renaissance status, when the divisions between city-related anniversaries, street spectacles, secular and religious ceremonies was not particularly sharp.¹⁷³ While performing arts and especially musical theatre within traditional venues were also cleverly exploited, the revolutionary spectacle par excellence took place *en plein air*, in the streets and squares of the liberated cities and around the new republican symbols, where it addressed the whole people: both the corrupted emotions and the traditionally aristocratic matrix which had been deemed as characteristic of theatre were thus overcome.¹⁷⁴

Republican feasts also allowed going beyond another concept associated to the performing arts, that of a clear division between actors, subject matter and audience: within these events, those roles would indeed continuously interact and overlap.¹⁷⁵ There was another significant difference between festivals, where people exteriorized their feelings within an atmosphere of spontaneity and joy, and spectacles, where actors feigned them for an audience; that difference would be programmatically reduced until collapsing. Republican feasts would adopt some of theatre's tools and present some form of action, but also demand the active participation of the people gathered: they would in fact constitute a show for the people, but also by the people.¹⁷⁶ Individual passions and solitudes would make way for shared ardour, contributing in the formation of a truly collective feeling of belonging.¹⁷⁷ The citizens assembled within these inclusive and highly ritualized events would rejoice in celebrating those shared values, thus triggering that 'contemplation des citoyens par eux mêmes' (self-contemplation) which had been already described by Rousseau and re-proposed by Robespierre as the greatest of all spectacles.¹⁷⁸

Naturally, organizing republican feasts in French-occupied territories was different and somehow more difficult than in France itself, where public celebrations, although with a very high level of ritualization and control by the central authorities, retained a pretence of spontaneity. Besides, the original, utopic atmosphere of spontaneous gathering and celebration was in fact already lost before the Napoleonic invasion of Italy, with a steep increase in the level of careful planning and control of all symbols and rituals by the governing authorities. The act of transplanting this already corrupted model into lands having completely different ideological frameworks and traditions in terms of public celebrations and spectacles would in fact deprive it

¹⁷³ S. Ferrone, 'La danse fut suspendue...', pp. 29-30.

¹⁷⁴ Paolo Bosio, 'Un poeta al servizio di un nuovo modello di spettacolo: le cantate di Vincenzo Monti', in *Vincenzo Monti nella cultura italiana*, ed. by Gennaro Barbarisi and William Spaggiari (Milan: Cisalpino, 2006), 3, pp. 245-261 (p. 246).

¹⁷⁵ Fernando Mastropasqua, *Le feste della Rivoluzione francese: 1790-1794* (Milan: Mursia, 1976), pp. 18-19.

¹⁷⁶ James Livesey, *Making Democracy in the French Revolution* (Cambridge MA; London: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 212.

¹⁷⁷ M. Ozouf, *La fête révolutionnaire: 1789-1799*, p. 240.

¹⁷⁸ S. Ferrone, 'La danse fut suspendue...', pp. 38-39.

of any spontaneity and popular enthusiasm and turn it into a moment of solemn and standardized celebration of the newly instituted French rulers.¹⁷⁹

Finally, it has been noted how republican festivals were, already in their first conception, also a refined form of camouflage aimed at concealing the violent and intrusive character of the revolutionary movement, an element that was indeed unavoidable for the accomplishment of its purpose. In this context, also taking into consideration the Revolution's fascination for utopia, republican celebration can also be seen as incoherent and false, the supposed spontaneity and joy were in truth a refined construction of precautionary and coercive elements.¹⁸⁰ This camouflage element can be considered a particularly strong needed in the case of the Italian republics, where the components of intrusiveness and exploitation were particularly strong.

In Milan, arguably the most important and visible city of the Italian republics, a special office entrusted with the organization of public feasts was present since the beginning of the French rule. This took the form of a dedicated commission especially instituted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and called by many names, including 'Commissione per le Pubbliche Feste' and 'Commissione Delegata per le Feste'. It was alternatively instituted, discharged and then re-instituted many times during the Jacobin triennium and, judging by the copious documentation still extant within Milan's State Archive, carried out a very intense activity and could have copious funds and labour available throughout that whole period.¹⁸¹

For a feast organized on 1 May 1797, for example, the commission received an invoice detailing the expenses incurred (including several material goods and the fees payable to composers, copyists, performers, carpenters, construction workers, upholsterers and cleaners), amounting to a total of 4000 Milanese liras.¹⁸² It was indeed a truly significant amount, considering that the price an aristocrat would pay in those years for a ticket for the whole Carnival season at La Scala was 100 liras.¹⁸³ In general, it can be observed that republican celebratory events took place as early as the summer of 1796 and continued until 1799, when the Austrian army managed to temporarily re-conquer Milan. Once the French came back,

¹⁷⁹ P. Bosisio, 'Un poeta al servizio di un nuovo modello di spettacolo...', pp. 246-247 and also Bruno Bevan, *Musica e Rivoluzione francese: la vita musicale a Parigi dal 1774 al 1799* (Milan: Ricordi, 1986), pp. 25-36 and Antonio Carlini, '«Lo strepitoso risonar de' stromenti da fiato & timballerie» Modalità e modelli della musica pubblica a Venezia e in Italia negli anni della Rivoluzione francese', in «L'aere è fosco, il ciel s'imbruna». *Arti e musica a Venezia dalla fine della Repubblica al Congresso di Vienna*, ed. by Francesco Passadore and Franco Rossi (Venice: Edizioni Fondazione Levi, 2000), pp. 473-505 (p. 473).

¹⁸⁰ Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, p. 11.

¹⁸¹ See Spettacoli Pubblici Parte Antica (hence forward P.A.) especially folders 1-2 within Milan's State Archive. The documents include posters, notices, invoices and numerous private and public correspondences.

¹⁸² The invoice can be found in Spettacoli Pubblici, P.A., folder 1.

¹⁸³ See [Season programme], 1799 (La Scala Archive, MAN 485); the season ticket included all the serious operas in the bill and at least twelve balls. Prices ranged from 100 (aristocracy) to 24 liras (professionals such as doctors and lawyers).

in 1801, republican feasts would immediately resume: arguably, they had become both a necessity and a characteristic of the republican regime.¹⁸⁴

In fact, a public celebration took place on 19 May 1796, barely a few days after the entry of the French army in the city: although the Commissione per le Pubbliche Feste had not been yet established and thus the degree of organisation was quite low in comparison to the other events, this occasion already introduced some features that were to become quite popular in the following months. Citizens were ordered to illuminate their houses at their expenses: a procession crossed the city centre and ended in front of the opera house where a ball feast took place free of charge. Public jubilation was thus imposed from above at the expenses of the citizens, the majority of which reacted with indifference.¹⁸⁵

The documents kept in the State Archive provide evidence of the main characteristics of these feasts, seen as rather complex events bringing together several, heterogeneous elements. The main purpose of public feasts was naturally that of celebrating the newly instituted republican form of government and the values/figures associated with post-revolutionary France, presented in strong opposition with the past: all available means and tools had to be employed and exploited at their maximum for that purpose. Whichever the pretext for the feast, its ultimate purpose would be to create a communion of people around a chosen symbol or group of symbols.¹⁸⁶ The feasts thus brought together elements coming from different contexts and traditions, introducing a new, multi-layered form of public event. Performing arts, especially music played an important role as primary tools for expression and solemnization; all artists living in French-occupied Milan and willing to show their allegiance to the new rulers (not to mention earning a consistent wage) started very soon to be employed within the various events, both as suppliers of cultural products and performers.¹⁸⁷

The streets and squares of the city were turned into performance spaces, often with the construction of temporary structures that greatly altered the surrounding environment.¹⁸⁸ The urban space was in fact considered not only the mirror of contemporary politics, but also the place where a newly informed debate could take place and the new public opinion could arise and grow; nothing more than the moment of the feast in the city's street could symbolize the

¹⁸⁴ One of the first events we have evidence for took place on 5 July 1796 (17 Messidor Year IV), barely two months after Napoleon's entry in Milan. See the description of it in *Termometro politico della Lombardia*, pp. 121-122.

¹⁸⁵ C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814*, p. 20. Also, according to the *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina...*, vol. 1, tome 1, p. 18, the citizen's participation in illuminating their houses was quite limited.

¹⁸⁶ M. Ozouf, *La fête révolutionnaire: 1789-1799*, p. 245.

¹⁸⁷ See the numerous names listed in the [Invoices sent to the Commissione per le Pubbliche Feste], 1797-1799 (Milan's State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici, P.A., folders 1 and 2). The participation of celebrated artists within public feasts was very common already in 1790 Paris; see J. Livesey, *Making Democracy in the French Revolution*, p. 55.

¹⁸⁸ See also the transformation of Paris' Champ de Mars for the Feast of the Federation in July 1790 described in F. Mastropasqua, *Le feste della Rivoluzione francese...*, pp. 15-17.

new concepts of democracy and participation.¹⁸⁹ A significant part of the feasts was devoted (at least ideally) to the recreation of revolutionary history through a spectacular *mise en scène*, thus inviting all the people to rediscover its meaning by taking an active part in the event.¹⁹⁰ As opposed to the theatre, the performances in the street saw actors and audience brought together by communion and direct participation:¹⁹¹ in this sense, feasts can also be considered as a collective enactment of the life and shared values of the regenerated People.¹⁹² With the republican festivals, the whole city was turned into a theatrical space, a new concept of theatricality and spectacle being introduced and exploited.

Buildings and symbols coming either from the French Revolution or from classical antiquity were particularly popular. Classical elements had been re-interpreted in the light of republican patriotism already in early-1790s Paris, and interspersed with revolutionary symbols: the reference to antique themes, architecture and symbols, far from being a purely aesthetic matter, became a strong propaganda tool cleverly re-using the past to meet contemporary needs.¹⁹³ Particularly, the use of classical symbols and architectural elements evoking power and solemnity – for instance, triumphal arcs, columns and eagles– permeated the atmosphere of many republican festivals (Fig. 2.5).



Fig. 2.5: A depiction of the feast celebrated in Paris on 10 August 1793 to solemnize the acceptance of the republican constitution. The compresence of classical and revolutionary elements can be observed. Paris, BnF.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 23-28.

¹⁹⁰ M. Ozouf, *La fête révolutionnaire: 1789-1799*, p. 246.

¹⁹¹ S. Ferrone, 'La danse fut suspendue...', p. 42.

¹⁹² J. Livesey, *Making Democracy in the French Revolution*, p. 199.

¹⁹³ P. Bosisio, 'Un poeta al servizio di un nuovo modello di spettacolo...', p. 247 and Charlotte Stokes, 'Taming the Eagles: The Habsburg Monarchy's Use of the "Revolutionary" Neoclassical Style' in *Austria in the Age of the French Revolution*, ed. by Kinley Brauer and William E. Wright (Minneapolis: Centre for Austrian Studies, 1990), pp. 69-82 (p. 73).

The new governors also knew very well how strong the link between rite, celebration and visual representation was, therefore they made frequent use of allegorical elements, typically the personification of concepts such as Reason, Freedom and Despotism and the re-exploitation of famed figures of the glorious past such as Brutus, Caius Gracchus and even the Swiss patriot Wilhelm Tell.¹⁹⁴ Although auditory elements were also deemed effective, the sight was still considered the most immediate and less deceiving of all senses: the visual and spectacular dimension of republican festivals thus had to be controlled down to the tiniest detail.¹⁹⁵ Classical, ancient Egyptian and revolutionary visual elements often interacted together in what has been described a veritable ‘orgy of symbols’.¹⁹⁶ Indeed, as one of the main propaganda tools, the new system of symbols, images and models was constantly imposed and exploited as almost a displacement of or an alternative to religion.¹⁹⁷

As an example, in the occasion of the feast for the proclamation of the Cisalpine Republic (9 July 1797), the space of the old Lazzaretto (leper hospital) was transformed into a contemporary Champ de Mars by turning the Catholic chapel within into a shrine dedicated to Liberty.¹⁹⁸ On the same occasion, a colossal *arc de triomphe*, measuring 28x30 meters and entirely made of wood, chalk and canvas, was erected at the beginning of Corso di Porta Orientale.¹⁹⁹ Four years later, on 30 April 1801, a feast was organized to celebrate the Peace of Lunéville in the Foro Bonaparte (formerly Piazza Castello): on that occasion, a temple dedicated to Immortality and a giant statue of Victory were built (Fig. 2.6).²⁰⁰

Public space itself was thus turned into a tool for celebration of the newly acquired freedom through its association with new images, events and symbols often combined into majestic spectacles: it is feasible that the Milanese people, not accustomed to such a dense and carefully organized display of spectacular elements, were greatly impressed.²⁰¹ As an example, on the occasion of a feast on 17 February 1797 (29 Pluviôse Year V) the people assembled at the far end of Corso di Porta Orientale to witness the following spectacle bringing together all the tools discussed above:

The feast [...] has ended in the night with a firework display prepared at the end of Corso di Porta Orientale. It [the gate] was presented as a majestic arch erected to celebrate the triumph of the French army. At the top there was the statue of Liberty, in between two great obelisks in memory of the Lombard cohort, also worthy of praise [...]. At the

¹⁹⁴ A. Pillepich, *Milan capitale napoléonienne: 1800-1814*, p. 407.

¹⁹⁵ M. Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, p. 205.

¹⁹⁶ E. Balmas, ‘Dalla festa di corte alla festa giacobina’, p. 151.

¹⁹⁷ C. Stokes, ‘Taming the Eagles’, pp. 73-74.

¹⁹⁸ *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina...*, vol. 1, tome 1, pp. 98-99 and *Tre secoli di vita milanese*, p. 466.

¹⁹⁹ C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814*, p. 60.

²⁰⁰ *Tre secoli di vita milanese*, p. 470.

²⁰¹ P. Bosisio, ‘Un poeta al servizio di un nuovo modello di spettacolo...’, pp. 247-248.

bottom of the arch, a group of clouds has unfolded exactly in the moment of total illumination of the whole structure; from its centre, the goddess of Freedom has appeared while crashing with her spear and under her feet the vices of despotism. Meanwhile, coming from the eye of Reason, a bolt of lightning has struck an urn containing the remains of the aristocracy; from its ashes, a moulting eagle has risen, but, as soon as it flew high, it dissolved into smoke. At the end of this performance, the People have set a puppet resembling the Archduke on fire.²⁰²

The idea of modifying public spaces in order to both turn them into theatricalized venues and exploit them for propaganda and celebratory needs became a favourite tool of the Napoleonic regime, which would often employ it also during the years of the Italian Kingdom. On 15 August 1807, for example, the Emperor's birthday was solemnized with fireworks over a newly constructed Egyptian temple at Porta Orientale, while Napoleon's entry into Milan through Porta Romana in December that same year saw the gate turned into a full-scale triumphal arch (Figs. 2.7 and 2.8).



Fig. 2.6: The Foro Bonaparte during the feast celebrating the Peace of Lunéville, 30 April 1801. Milan, CRS 'Achille Bertarelli'.

²⁰² See the report in *Termometro politico della Lombardia*, 2, pp. 122-123.

Even the names of many of the city's spaces were replaced with new ones referring to revolutionary heroes, concepts or events.²⁰³ For instance, the vast area outside the Lazzaretto was first turned into Campo di Marte and then re-christened Campo della Federazione; similarly, many roads, traditionally dedicated to Saints, old corporations and/or geographical elements, were renamed after the members of the new pantheon of republican heroes, such as Themistocles and Brutus, whose names the majority of inhabitants had never heard.²⁰⁴

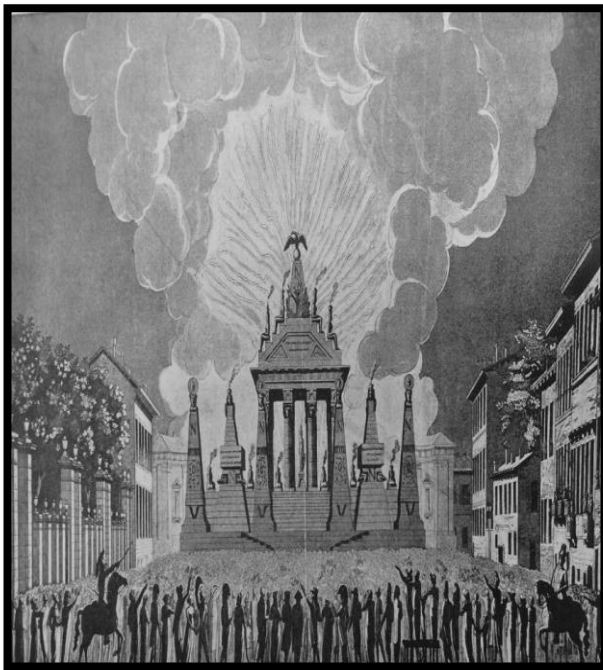


Fig. 2.7: Fireworks over the Egyptian temple built at Porta Orientale (or Riconoscenza), 15 August 1807. Milan, CRS 'Achille Bertarelli'.

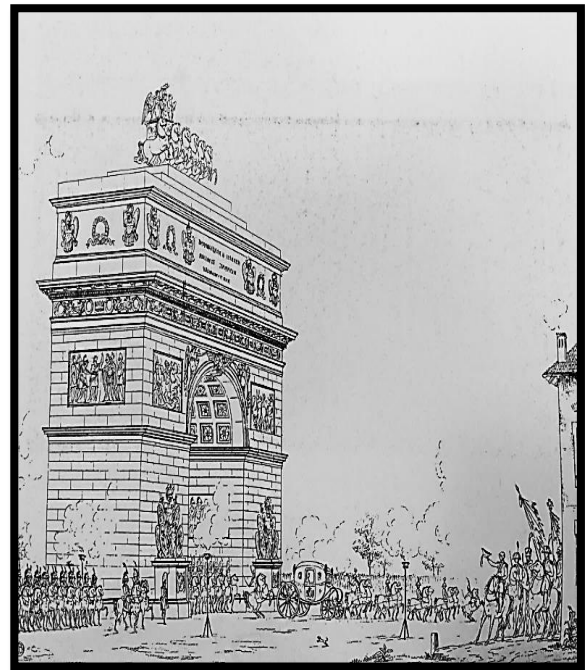


Fig. 2.8: Napoleon entering Milan through Porta Romana's triumphal arch, 15 December 1807. Milan, CRS 'Achille Bertarelli'.

At the same time, many the city gates, previously called in relation to geographical elements, were renamed. Porta Ticinese (Ticino Gate, pointing south towards Pavia and the Ticino river) was rebuilt incorporating many neoclassical elements and renamed as Porta Marengo to celebrate the homonymous battle and the peace treaty that followed. The State Archive of Milan still holds a bilingual poster officially announcing the rebuilding and renaming of the gate in honour of Napoleon's victory at Marengo with a solemn feast celebrated on 27 Prairial Year IX/16 June 1801. Similarly, Porta Orientale (East Gate, pointing towards Vienna) became known as Porta

²⁰³ The practice of renaming public spaces had, again, roots in the French feasts: in Paris, Place Louis XV (not far from the Champ de Mars) was rechristened Place de la Revolution; see F. Mastropasqua, *Le feste della Rivoluzione francese...*, p. 15.

²⁰⁴ N. Del Bianco, *Il coraggio e la sorte*, p. 59.

Riconoscenza (Gratitude gate) as a reference to the Lombard people's gratitude to the French for their liberation from despotism.²⁰⁵

Together with space, public feasts also aimed at altering the perception and management of time, traditionally associated to the religious calendar and festivities. Just a few days after the French army's entrance into Milan, the new republican calendar, already in use in France since 1793, was introduced.²⁰⁶ Starting from the day of the proclamation of the French Republic, the new calendar set the 22nd of September as the first day of the year and 1792 as Year I. It also introduced twelve new months, each having 30 days and a name coming from the natural elements associated to the different seasons; the missing five days were called 'complémentaires' and dedicated to personified republican symbols and concepts such as Virtue and Public Opinion. Thus the system of time organization that had remained untouched for centuries was de facto changed.²⁰⁷

In addition to altering the calendar, the republican government aimed at introducing a whole new system of public feasts and recurrences, thus effectively combining time management with propaganda strategies: not only the time, but also the whole concept of historical narrative was thus subjected to a deep reorganization.²⁰⁸ The occasions to be celebrated, programmatically replacing the most traditional religious festivities and carefully spread out throughout the whole year, were in fact all related to events and figures of the Revolution and the Italian campaign, the Cisalpine's own republican anniversaries also starting to be commemorated after 1797. Among the events indicated as celebrated recurrences, we can see, for instance, the first day of the republican year and anniversary of the proclamation of the French republic (1 Vendémiaire/22 September), the execution of Queen Marie Antoinette (25 Vendémiaire/16 October), the coup of 18 Brumaire (9 November), the execution of King Louis XVI (2 Pluviôse/21 January) and the storming of the Bastille (14 July). These events were then interspersed with the numerous and various victories that the Armée d'Italie kept earning throughout the whole 1796-1797 period.²⁰⁹

The new feasts were also greatly advertised through posters and proclamations, their link to the Lombard and Cisalpine people being continuously stressed and almost over-explained with an almost suspicious emphasis, possibly because of the unfamiliarity the majority of the citizens

²⁰⁵ See *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina...*, vol. 1, tome 2, pp. 118-121, and C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814*, p. 58.

²⁰⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 36.

²⁰⁷ Malcom Boyd, 'Preface', in *Music and the French Revolution*, ed. by Malcom Boyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. ix-x and Paul R. Hanson, *Historical Dictionary of the French Revolution* (Lanham MD; Toronto; Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, 2004), p. 278.

²⁰⁸ Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, p. 168.

²⁰⁹ See the numerous posters contained in Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folders 1 and 2.

felt towards these events.²¹⁰ Below is a selection of some of the very direct explanations provided by the government celebrations within posters affixed to the walls of the city on the day before a certain feast in order to justify public celebration:

First day of the Year V 22 September 1797	The anniversary of the foundation of the French Republic is going to be celebrated tomorrow [...] by the victorious cohorts of the <i>Armée d'Italie</i> . Cisalpines! We owe our regeneration to them [...]. The sacred fire of freedom, which burns in every Cisalpin chest, and the duties of gratitude, call us forward to the Altar of the Nation to celebrate together with our liberators the brightest era for all mankind.
First day of the year VI 22 September 1798	Let's gather here, citizens, [...] to commemorate the most memorable and glorious day for us as a free People, that day which unburdened the greatest of all Nations from servitude, which saw the French Republic coming to life [...]. On this day, our freedom was also born.
Anniversary of the execution of Louis XVI 21 January 1799	[...] this memorable day in which the delegates of the French People, after having crashed the throne and built on its ruins the everlasting palace of Freedom and Republic, made the head of the last French tyrant roll on the ground.
Anniversary of the coup of 18 Brumaire 9 November 1801	This day represents the most memorable moment of the French Revolution. In it, we can glimpse the first link of that great chain of events that brought our Republic back to life [...]. Citizens, the feeling of gratitude must encourage you to express that joy which fills the hearts of true republicans.
	With this gesture [the donation of food to the poor], the Government wishes to publicly show (as should all citizens and clerks as ministers of Peace) the joy and exultation because our Republic has been given back to this world by the First Consul of the French Republic, Napoleon Bonaparte, who had this purpose in mind when he undertook his military efforts. We should all pray God to keep our Republic for the sake of mankind [...].
Anniversary of the Battle of Marengo 16 June 1800	We will celebrate with this feast the anniversary of the battle of Marengo, a great and adventurous moment that called the Cisalpine Republic back to life and granted everybody's wish, that of Peace. ²¹¹

²¹⁰ C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814*, p. 20.

²¹¹ [Printed discorsi], 1797-1801 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folders 1 and 2).

Detailed lists of all the new occasions for public celebration were also printed in almanacs and calendars very popular among the lower classes, replacing in a very evident way the traditional religious holidays and feasts.²¹² A notable example is that of the 1798 *Nuovo Decadario per l'anno VI della Repubblica Francese corrispondente col calendario Romano. Corredato di epoche storiche di tutti i fatti più rimarchevoli dall'arrivo de' Francesi in Milano sino al presente* (*New ten-month calendar for the Year VI of the French Republic compared to the Roman calendar and enriched with historical details of all the main events that have occurred from the arrival of the French in Milan until the present day*), presenting a superimposition of the main dates of the Gregorian calendar with the republican feasts and detailing the reasons for the celebration of each of the latter.²¹³ Besides, the purpose of that product was already clear to the compiler of the *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina*, which bitterly described it as 'a fraud' and 'an almanac to tell us how we have to squander our hours and days'.²¹⁴ Besides, religious narrative and fascination were also deeply exploited. Almanacs such as that described above were accompanied by a plurality of other publications reinterpreting religious symbols and practices in the light of the new propaganda, such as republican transpositions of prayer books and religious pamphlets: for instance, a republican *Pater noster* and *Credo* are documented, the latter starting with the words 'I believe in the French Republic and in its son, Napoleon Bonaparte'.²¹⁵

Among the performing tools contextualized within the modified and exploited space and time, eloquence acquired a growing importance.²¹⁶ Various documents show how almost all the public celebrations in fact included a celebratory moment where the authorities and the people assembled would listen to several written speeches delivered by relevant public figures.²¹⁷ The 'verbose' character of republican celebration was also inherited from the French model, often imposing – in the description of Mona Ozouf – endless series of readings, recitations, declamation which ultimately failed in engaging their audiences.²¹⁸ The texts of the speeches were written using a variety of rhetorical devices, which made them particularly solemn and passionate, but also quite a simple language and with vivid images and metaphors that would allow also the lower classes to understand their meaning. The topic would refer to the specific

²¹² Herbert Schneider, 'The sung constitutions of 1792: an essay on propaganda in the Revolutionary song' in *Music and the French Revolution*, ed. by Malcom Boyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 236-275 (p. 236).

²¹³ The *Decadario* is contained in *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina...*, vol. 1, tome 4.

²¹⁴ See *ibidem*, p. 3 and p. 28, respectively.

²¹⁵ G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina...*, pp. 129-130.

²¹⁶ A speech celebrating the newly found freedom was publicly pronounced, printed and distributed among the people already on 18 May 1796, a couple of days after Napoleon's entry into Milan; see D. A. Minola, *Diario storico politico...*, 10 (G.120.SUS), p. 30.

²¹⁷ See e.g. the posters contained in Spettacoli Pubblici, P.A., folder 1, detailing the programme of the celebrations which often culminated in the delivery of a solemn speech.

²¹⁸ Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, pp. 212-213.

theme of the feast before moving to the more general praise of Napoleon and the French as bringers of freedom and justice in opposition to the tyranny previously oppressing Lombardy.²¹⁹

The tone remained that of homage and gratitude to the French, continuing after the Cisalpine Republic was proclaimed as a supposedly independent and free State and even later, well into the years of the Italian Republic. Two examples taken from the speeches pronounced within republican celebrations can provide evidence and also help reconstructing the general atmosphere:

Si smarrisce il pensiero nel contemplare [...] la fermezza dei difensori della Repubblica, e in questa contemplazione si perdono le parole, e non si trova nel fondo dell'animo, che un dolce sentimento d'ammirazione, e di rispetto. Quali esempi sono per noi di condotta e d'imitazione! Quali argomenti d'allegrezza e di gratitudine! Per noi, non più schiavi, non più Lombardi, ma liberi, ma Cisalpini; per noi, che tutta dobbiamo a questa grande e generosa Repubblica l'esistenza nostra politica, a questa Repubblica, che ci onora del nome de' suoi figli, e che simile a Dio nell'antica Scrittura ha impressa sul nostro volto la sua immagine e il suo carattere. [1797]

Grande Nazione! Che presenti ai re, ai monarchi, alle auguste maestà l'esempio di te stessa il più terribile, bastò, che dato un tuo sguardo compassionevole sui tiranneggiati Lombardi, e fortunatamente fremendo di così ingiusta loro sorte oppressiva, ti proponesti di chiamarli ad un felice destino, di risorgerli ai loro diritti, di portarvi la Libertà; che scese le Alpi l'Eroe liberatore, l'invincibile Genio di Marte, fuggate le alemanne coorti, e vinto l'austriaco dominatore; sventolando per ogni dove il libero Vessillo; eretto dai cuori rigenerati l'Albero sacro all'onore, alla fratellanza, ed alla virtù; infranti i ceppi del dispotico governo; distinta la dimenticata virtù, tutto in un istante cambiò di forma, e tutto di eguaglianza, di libertà. [1802]

Our thoughts are lost in contemplating [...] the determination of the protectors of the Republic [the French]; within this contemplation all words are lost and only a sweet sentiment of admiration and respect is left in the depths of our soul. They are such great examples for us to imitate and such objects of joy and gratitude! For us, not slaves, not Lombards anymore, but free, Cisalpines; for us, who owe our own very political existence to this great and generous Republic [France], to this Republic which honours us by calling us its sons and, similar to God in the Scriptures, has imprinted his image and character on our faces.²²⁰

Great Nation [France]! You, showing the kings, the monarchs, the august majesties your most terrible side; it was enough that you sympathetically gazed upon the oppressed Lombards and, luckily shuddering in disdain for their unfair destiny, you resolved in calling them to a better fate and bringing back to them their rights and Freedom; so the liberating Hero, the invincible Genius of War, came down from the Alps having defeated the German cohorts and the Austrian ruler; [he] made the free Standard wave over all the lands, erected from the regenerated hearts the Tree sacred to honour, brotherhood and bravery and shattered the chains of a despotic rule; and once resurrected the forgotten virtue, he changed everything into a new world of equality and freedom.²²¹

²¹⁹ Spettacoli Pubblici, P.A., folders 1 and 2 also contain celebratory printings of some of the speeches pronounced within particularly solemn occasions.

²²⁰ *Discorso* pronounced on 22 September 1797 to solemnize the first day of the year 5 according to the French Republican Calendar; a celebratory [Poster] reproducing the speech was also printed and affixed (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici, P.A., folder 1). The feast where the speech was given is also mentioned in C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814*, pp. 35-36.

²²¹ *Discorso* given on 22 September 1802 to celebrate the first day of the year 10, when the Italian Republic had already been proclaimed. The speech was printed in quarto and folded so it could be easily distributed; it is kept in Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 2.

Eloquence and patriotism were also effectively combined in what rapidly became one of the most popular moments within public celebrations, at least within the most solemn ones, i.e. the act of swearing a solemn oath to republican institutions or even theoretical concepts such as the Republic, the Nation and Liberty. The concept of swearing an oath not to one superior (God or king), but to the nation and/or the law had already quite a strong tradition in post-1789 France as the ultimate embodiment of the strength-through-unity principle, and was re-enacted through a variety of multimedia cultural products such as public spectacles, musical transpositions on and off the operatic stage (see Fig. 2.9) and works of art (for instance, David's celebrated *Serment du Jeu de Paume*).²²²

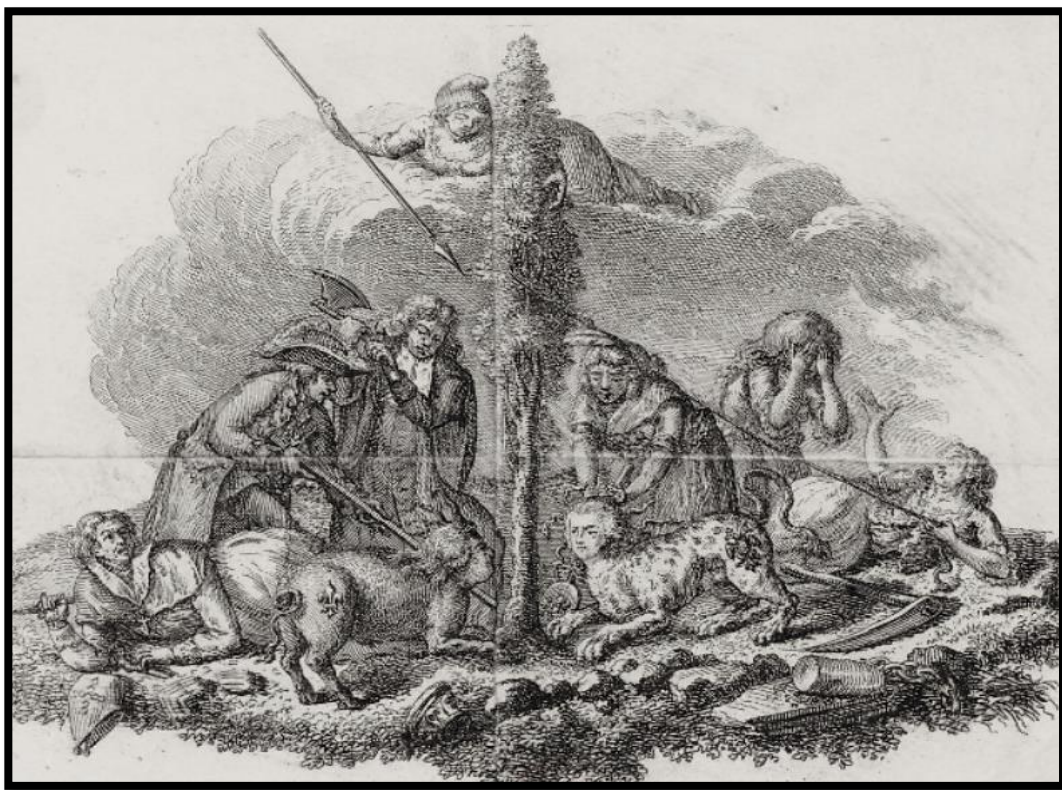


Fig. 2.9: Particular of a 1798 engraving graphically representing the content of a song entitled *Le 21 janvier, ou le Serment de haine à la royauté* (*The 21st of January or the Oath of Hatred towards Royalty*) which was sung in Paris on 21 January 1798 to celebrate the death of Louis XVI. Paris, BnF.

Besides, one of the first acts of occupied Milan, on 17 May 1796, had been the swearing of an oath of fidelity to the French Republic by the main civic authorities, although the poster publicizing the event hinted at its non-spontaneous character:

²²² E. C. Bartlet, 'The new Repertory of the Opéra during the Reign of Terror', pp. 120-122.

The Vicario di Provvisione (Dean), the Decurioni and the Assessori (members of the city council) of the city of Milan inform the citizenship that [...], in accordance with the orders received, they have sworn an oath of submission, obedience and fidelity to the French Republic in the person of General Bonaparte on behalf of all the inhabitants and provinces of this state.²²³

Solemn oath-swearing rapidly became popular within the Milanese feasts. On 14 July 1798, for instance, the anniversary of the storming of the Bastille was solemnized by all soldiers of the Armée d'Italie currently stationed in Milan publicly swearing an oath against all forms of monarchy and their supporters; flyers distributed in the barracks contained the text of the oath which had to be learnt and recited by heart:

[...] We swear on the souls of those heroes who died [fighting] next to us for Liberty, we swear on our new standards implacable war to the enemies of the Republic and of the Constitution of the Year III.²²⁴

Such oaths were usually sworn within a spectacular setting demanding a grand assembly of military and civic authorities: every detail, from the gathering of the assembly to the position of each figure/group, up to the description of each phase of the actual swearing was carefully detailed together with choreographic and sometimes musical elements. On 21 January 1799, for instance, the military and civic authorities assembled in the Sforza Castle to celebrate the anniversary of Louis XVI's death swore 'a solemn oath of fidelity to the Republic and of everlasting hatred towards Monarchy and Tyranny'.²²⁵ This moment was preceded by a solemn procession of all troops, which had to parade in a specific *ordre de marche* and finally form a grand diamond-shaped *bataillon carré* with all their musical bands in the centre. The oath, accompanied by cannon shots and drum calls, was first pronounced by the generals, battalion chiefs and civic authorities and then repeated in unison by all soldiers, surely creating an impressive visual and auditory spectacle.

Another element that played a paramount role within public feasts was the involvement of the lower classes, thus eliminating the element of social fragmentation inherent to the theatrical experience, making the participation of the people to the celebratory events as complete as possible and also widening the general consensus. Following the strategy of bread and circuses, but also the more recent practices implemented in the Parisian feasts, many celebrations included

²²³ [Poster], 17 May 1796, reproduced in C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814*, p. 32.

²²⁴ '[...] Jurons par les mânes des héros qui sont morts à coté de nous pour la Liberté, jurons sur Nos nouveaux drapeaux, guerre implacable aux les ennemis de la République et de la Constitution de l'an trois'; see [Flyer *Bonaparte Général en Chef de l'Armée d'Italie*], n.d. (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 2).

²²⁵ [Printed programme] in Italian and French, n.d. (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 1).

occasions for both charity and entertainment (Fig. 2.10).²²⁶ The first consisted of large-scale donations of money or food which were given to the poorest citizens usually through parish churches, thus also exploiting the deeply rooted network that the church had built especially among the lower classes.²²⁷ In addition, the act of sharing food, most of all that provided by the goodwill of the governors and offered within densely symbolical environments, was aimed at generating that spirit of brotherhood which was so important for republican propaganda; in this sense, the role of food donation was even explicitly associated to that played by charity meals traditionally offered by the Church.²²⁸



Fig. 2.10: Engraving showing a 'Repas fraternel à l'honneur de la Liberté' (Communal meal in honour of Liberty) in the streets of Paris, with music, dances and a tree of liberty also visible. Paris, BnF.

In some particularly solemn occasions, the republican government, as the Austrian rulers had done before, also offered relatively sumptuous banquets to a certain numbers of individuals selected among the poorest citizens.²²⁹ These events would usually take place within a carefully

²²⁶ A. Pillepich, *Milan capitale napoléonienne: 1800-1814*, p. 394.

²²⁷ See e.g. [List of churches for bread distribution] and [Avviso], 1797-1798 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici, P.A., folder 1) and also Fig. 3.6.

²²⁸ *Termometro politico della Lombardia*, 2, pp. 129-130.

²²⁹ See e.g. the 250-cover banquet offered in the occasion of the anniversary of the prise de la Bastille on 14 July 1797 reported in *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina...*, vol. 1, tome 1, p. 103.

organized symbolic context, typically around one of the trees of Liberty and with the accompaniment of patriotic tunes so to stress even more directly the link between the government and the wellbeing of the citizens (Fig. 2.11). On 30 Pluviôse Year V (18 February 1797), for instance, the recent victories of the Armée d'Italie were celebrated with a huge feast which included *banchetti civici* (community banquets) being organized in the city's eight districts. In each of them, the poorest citizens were invited to sit around the tree of Liberty and feast on bread, wine and meat, while the main civilian and military figures were gathered in the National (formerly Ducal) Palace for a 1500-cover banquet.²³⁰

On the other hand, the attention the authorities showed towards constantly offering numerous and varied forms of popular entertainment, constitutes a powerful evidence of the importance represented by the necessity of establishing a bond between the new rulers and the Milanese people. This need was even stronger if we remember that the people of Milan were quite conservative, lacking in any national or political conscience and still deeply linked to the traditional authorities of the monarchy, the aristocracy and, above all, the Church. The lower classes were also still mainly devoted to the



Fig. 2.11: Watercolour showing a public banquet given in Milan to celebrate the Feast of the Cisalpine Republic (9 July 1797).
Boulogne, Bibliothèque Marmottan.

satisfaction of their main needs and daily survival, therefore it is probable that, although commoners were taking part in the events organized and accepting the entertainment and goods provided, the ideas in the background did not take root.²³¹

Besides, the idea the French rulers had of the lower social strata can be effectively summarised by the bitter words Melchiorre Gioia wrote in his 1798 *Quadro politico di Milano*, a pamphlet which, after an initial success, caused him numerous difficulties because of its harsh critique towards both Milan's government and people:²³²

²³⁰ See the report of the feast in *Termometro politico della Lombardia*, 2, p. 122. A list of some particularly sumptuous banquets offered is also contained in A. Pillepich, *Milan capitale napoléonienne: 1800-1814*, p. 397.

²³¹ N. Del Bianco, *Il coraggio e la sorte*, p. 58.

²³² A. Ottolini, 'La vita culturale nel periodo napoleonico', p. 413-414.

[The people of Milan] are undisciplined, superstitious, faint-hearted and incapable of enthusiasm, ignorant and not prone to sublime ideas, not subject, but rather enslaved to ancient customs, steady because of passiveness, kind because of their temperament and, I would say, constitution, loyal without consideration (which is maybe a good thing), incapable of feeling real hatred (which is bad, for it is good to feel it against a crime), capable of complaining, but not of revolting, not very refined in their desires and thus not sensible to high ideals, gluttonous [...], generally more dominated by the body rather than morality [...]. The people know only one thing, natural instincts: when their condition shields them from misery and pain, they are content. Freedom is not something made for them for they ignore its advantages and own it only by prejudice [...]. They must be well fed, entertained without excess and led forward without them seeing the link [...].²³³

In this light, public celebrations took on the important role of showing the people the new government's attention and goodwill towards them through the material offer of goods and, most of all, entertainment: thus, the feasts also became a powerful tool of control and monitoring of the public opinion. The entertainment offering was constant and varied, bringing together elements coming from different traditions and occasions such as street theatre, popular festivals, processions and even sport contests. Among the most common activities, there was illumination of the public spaces (e.g. squares and gardens) which the people were invited to come and enjoy, very often in conjunction with music, dances and refreshments. For instance, on the occasion of a feast on 6 July 1796, Milan's public gardens were filled with tricolour lamps and colossal, illuminated statues representing allegories of Liberty and Republic.²³⁴ Games and contests related to physical activities and sports were also very popular, attracting many with the promise of exciting competitions and rich prizes.²³⁵ Some of the city's streets and squares of the city were turned into racing circuits for men, horses and carriages.²³⁶ In other occasion, extremely old and popular traditions having deep roots into the countryside life and festivals (e.g. the *albero della cuccagna*, or greasy pole) were re-situated and re-contextualized within solemn events and alongside other of both celebratory and entertaining elements.²³⁷

The spectacular display of military power was another important tool of propaganda and appeal; Napoleon remained in fact always associated to and revered for his extraordinary achievements in the Italian campaign, for which he was considered a genius of the battlefield.²³⁸ Besides, as already mentioned, numerous soldiers of the Armée d'Italie were permanently

²³³ M. Gioia, *Quadro politico di Milano*, pp. 40-42; the passage quoted here is also integrally transcribed in *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina...*, vol. 1, tome 8, pp. 229-237.

²³⁴ As reported in *Termometro politico della Lombardia*, 1, pp. 121-122.

²³⁵ A. Pillepich, *Milan capitale napoléonienne: 1800-1814*, p. 398.

²³⁶ See the numerous posters advertising various contests and detailing the prizes for the winners, e.g. that of 1 Vendémiaire Year VIII/23 September 1799 (Fig. 3.12)

²³⁷ Again, A. Pillepich, *Milan capitale napoléonienne: 1800-1814*, pp. 398-399.

²³⁸ See e.g. the numerous speeches, articles, poems and works of art exalting Napoleon's military skills, most of all in relation to the republican cause.

stationed in Milan, their stipends, lodging and equipment covered by the citizens' taxes and contributions. Starting from November 1796, the first Lombard cohorts were also created, to join the French troops in the still ongoing Italian campaign: during a solemn ceremony in the cathedral square, they received as official banner a green, red and white tricoloured standard, representing the first instance of what would become the Italian national flag.²³⁹ The French and Lombard troops' courage and virtue in liberating the oppressed people of Italy soon became a constant topic within propaganda and celebration. Parades, manoeuvres and weapon exhibitions were extremely common and popular and were often organized with a very high degree of detail and sophistication.²⁴⁰

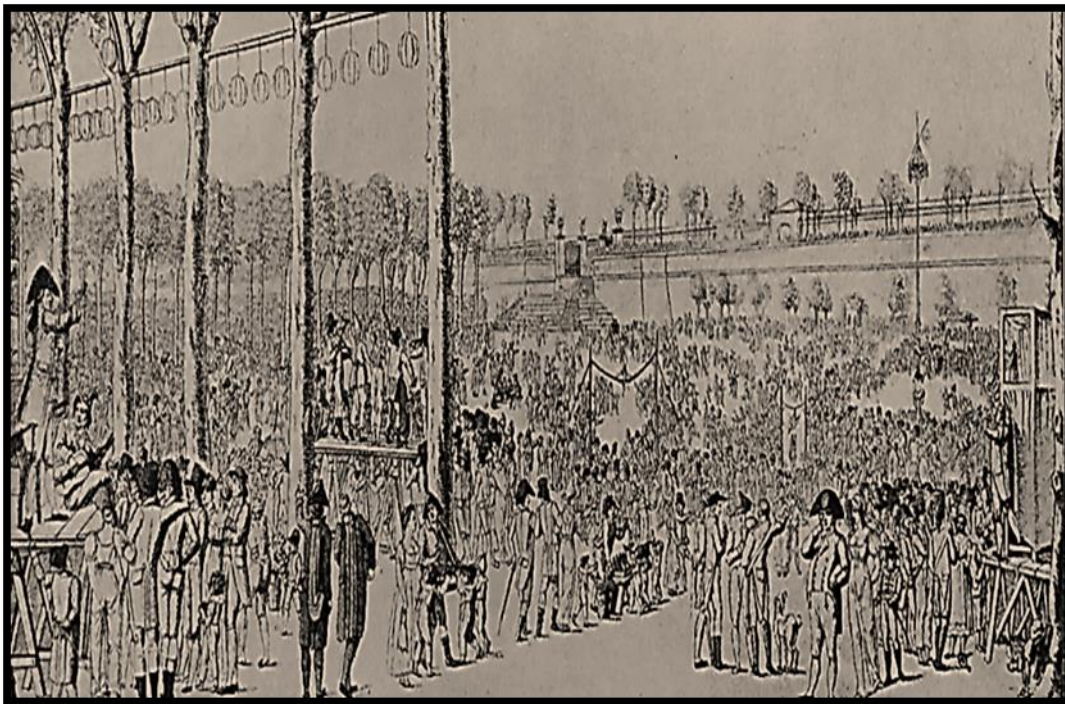


Fig. 2.12: Particular of an engraving showing a feast in Milan's public gardens, n.d. (after 1800). Several forms of entertainment can be seen, e.g. illumination, music, street theatre, greasy pole, a puppet show and some tightrope walkers. Milan, CRS 'Achille Bertarelli'.

Public feasts can therefore be considered as rather complex and multi-layered events which brought together numerous and varied elements, some more familiar than others, yet re-interpreted and re-contextualized to create completely new cultural products. These events programmatically altered the modalities in which their attendees traditionally perceived and experienced the surrounding environment and even the passing of time, carefully using different

²³⁹ Ettore Rota, 'Milano napoleonica', p. 63, F. Fava, *Storia di Milano*, p. 16 and C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814*, pp. 58-59.

²⁴⁰ See e.g. the detailed description of the *ordre de marche* contained in the *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina*, vol. 1, tome I, p. 101 (9 July 1797).

layers of symbolic associations and exploiting all available means of celebration, entertaining and public involvement (Fig. 2.12). As powerful tools for propaganda, education and control, republican feasts were planned and realized with the utmost attention and a huge expenditure of funds and labour.

While it remains very difficult to understand the response of the Milanese citizens to these rather imposed cultural and social occasions, it is likely that they were perceived as something rather alien.²⁴¹ Besides, these events quickly turned into rather standardized, almost over-organized occasions for the praise and exaltation of the new rulers, the original festive, carnivalesque element soon to be lost. The constant attention to the monitoring of the attendance to republican feasts, also among the higher classes, is clearly visible, for instance, in the innumerable letters tirelessly written and sent by the organizers to several figures (mainly public officers, aristocrats and members of the armed forces). As for the lower classes, their need to attend public celebrations is stressed and explained on posters and proclamations, with a frequency and emphasis that look rather suspicious: many of the posters advertising public feasts contain sentences such as ‘the attendance of the whole People is demanded’, ‘the whole People assembled will constitute this feast’s greatest decoration’, ‘it is the duty of every true Republican to attend’, etc.²⁴²

On the other hand, public celebratory events organized in the Jacobin triennium also provided the occasion for a general re-visitation and re-mix of different elements, repertoires and modalities for social gathering and cultural reception, thus pushing Milan’s environment out of its conservatism and forward into new experiences. Republican feasts also played a very important, yet complex role in modifying and/or loosening many of the mechanisms and dynamics inherent to cultural and more specifically musical production and reception, introducing many elements which would greatly influence the city’s musical environment. The next section will explore more in depth the use of music within republican feasts, casting new light on a rather unexplored field.

²⁴¹ See the bitter words written in *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina...*, vol. 1, tome 9, p. 33, describing the public feasts as being organized by ‘bricconi falliti’ (scoundrels and washouts).

²⁴² See the dozens of letters contained in Spettacoli Pubblici, P.A., folders 1, 2 and 7 within Milan’s State Archive.

2.54 The musical repertoire of the feasts

*I wish to direct especially the arts towards
subjects that will perpetrate the memory
of what we have done in the past 15 years.*
Napoleon Bonaparte, 1805²⁴³

Inserted within the newly defined spectacular setting, performing arts and especially music played a paramount role within public feasts as effective tools for both celebration and entertainment. Understandably, exaltation constituted the feasts' main purpose, to which all arts and their expressive means had to be subjected; this was particularly applicable to music (including ballet), which can arguably be considered as the performing art that had reached the highest level of sophistication and dissemination within Milan's cultural and entertainment offering. Furthermore, the intense musical life taking place not only in the two opera houses, but also in the numerous churches, salotti and aristocratic palaces, caused a notable number of artists to live or often sojourn in the city, thus constituting a precious resource for the new rulers. While the effects of the new regime on operatic and ballet repertoires performed within La Scala and La Cannobiana theatres will constitute the object of the following chapter, this section aims at sketch an overview of the different modalities in which music was used within the newly introduced public celebrations of republican matrix.

While all arts had to serve the celebratory purpose, performing arts were also particularly suitable for satisfying the equally important need of continuously entertaining public feasts patrons, especially those belonging to the lower classes. Furthermore, it was clear enough to the French rulers that images and especially sounds played a paramount role in triggering those identification mechanisms that were so important for the construction and control of new citizens. In lieu of a rational acceptance of the new concepts and principles, republican spectacles often promoted a diffused emotional and sensorial adhesion to them.²⁴⁴ In the case of music, this meant a completely new way of conceiving and using it, most notably mixing and continuously re-adapting different repertoires, both pre-existing and newly supplied. It also meant the use of music in conjunction with visual elements and symbols, creating very powerful 'auditory images' or 'phono-symbols' which were considered a powerful tool of popular education.²⁴⁵ It could be argued that through its use within public events such as republican feast post-revolutionary governments factually changed the status of music, originally destined to a proportionally limited

²⁴³ 'Mon intention est de tourner spécialement les arts vers des sujets qui tendraient à perpétuer le souvenir de ce qui s'est fait depuis quinze ans'; quoted in A. Pillepich, *Milan capitale napoléonienne*, p. 407.

²⁴⁴ A. Carlini, '«Lo strepitoso risonar de' stromenti da fiato & timballerie»...', pp. 473-474.

²⁴⁵ Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, p. 205.

group of elected people and/or associated with definite authorities, turning it into a mass-medium capable of reaching wider and more diversified social strata.²⁴⁶

Republican feasts often saw different musical events running in succession or even simultaneously, in order to cater for both the celebratory and the entertainment purposes. An overview of how different kinds of musical events could be used simultaneously within a republican feast can be seen, for instance, in the articles that Francesco Salfi, main editor of the *Termometro politico della Lombardia*, used to publish on the day following a particular celebration in order to inform the whole people of its (usually wonderful) outcome. For example, on 16 Messidor Year IV (4 July 1796), the journalist reported how ‘a triple feast with dance, instrumental and vocal music together with solemn speeches’ had taken place in Lodi’s public gardens which were illuminated as if it was daylight.²⁴⁷ Four days later, on Friday 20 Messidor (or 8 July), a majestic celebration took place in Milan’s public gardens, where several simultaneous events, many including music, were arranged. Here is how Salfi described that evening on the following day’s issue of the *Termometro*:

The feast already promised has been happily celebrated from 7pm until the break of dawn [...]. The whole area of the public gardens was completely covered with torches and tricolored lamps. Towards the far end, one could find two big pavilions, both for decoration and for the People’s entertainment [...]. Going further, two great ensembles competed in playing various vocal and instrumental pieces accordingly to the occasion. On one side, French bands made republican marches resound around; on the other, a choir of male and female voices [...] repeatedly sang that very celebrated song written by a Neapolitan patriot about human rights, but set to new, energetic music [...]. Within a more secluded area, a free theatre offered the more tranquil patrons the calm entertainment of the scene while, at the ground floor of an elaborately-decorated lodge, two instrumental ensembles invited the brightest youth to dance.²⁴⁸

Another article published almost two years later, on 16 May 1798, reveals how the main characteristics of the musical entertainment during public feasts essentially remained the same throughout the whole Jacobin triennium:

The promised feast was happily carried out in the Società Patriottica [...]. In front of the podium, there was an ensemble that, sometimes by singing, sometimes by playing appropriate pieces, regularly interrupted the sequence of poets and orators reciting excitable poems and passages of proses.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁶ A. Carlini, ‘«Lo strepitoso risonar de’ stromenti da fiato & timballerie»...’, p. 474.

²⁴⁷ *Termometro politico della Lombardia*, 1, p. 120.

²⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, 1, p. 121.

²⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, 2, p. 275.

Although there is no documentary evidence on the nature or origin of the vocal and instrumental pieces which would be deemed to be suitable for the occasion of these feasts, it is likely that they consisted of a mixture of pre-existing, newly arranged excerpts from contemporary repertoire (instrumental and vocal) and newly composed pieces. These excerpts were also juxtaposed with non-musical elements such as speeches and poetry declamations.

Pre-existing music, especially excerpts from the operatic repertoire, was variously cut, re-arranged and performed within various new contexts, being continuously mixed with patriotic tunes and with new pieces expressly commissioned and composed for republican celebration: the attention towards the original function of the music was subordinated to its utility in the context of both celebration and entertainment.²⁵⁰ It is understandable that, within such a standardized and conservative operatic society such as the Milanese one, the experience of hearing opera excerpts outside the theatre, in various arrangements and mixed with other repertoires was perceived as a striking contrast with the past. Besides, little respect to the integrity of the operatic repertoire was occasionally shown also in the more conservative space of the opera house, where, as will be discussed more in depth in the following chapter, several changes were made in order to make the musical offering more suitable to republican celebration. Finally, as already pointed out, the dissolution or radical reduction of the space separating the private/elitist and the public dimensions can indeed be identified as one of the main aspects of the post-revolutionary social experience;²⁵¹ this statement is surely applicable to the newly informed treatment of all arts, particularly to music.

²⁵⁰ Elizabeth C. Bartlet, 'The new Repertory of the Opéra during the Reign of Terror: Revolutionary Rhetoric and Operatic Consequences', in *Music and the French Revolution*, ed. Malcom Boyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 107-156 (p. 132).

²⁵¹ J. Livesey, *Making Democracy in the French Revolution*, pp. 199-200.

Among the most notable additions to the more traditional repertoire there were patriotic tunes, variously labelled as ‘chansons’, ‘hymnes’ and ‘chants’, to be both sung and danced. Their model was arguably brought to Lombardy by the French armies, who sang tunes destined to be also used as dance music, such as the *Carmagnole*, the *Marseillaise* and the *Ça ira*. Due to their



Fig. 2.13: Republican coat of arms designed by G.A. Ranza in 1797.
The title of the *Ça ira* is visible in the bottom medallions.
Milan, CRS 'Achille Bertarelli'.

widespread use as both songs and dance tunes, their popularity grew immensely, up to the point that their lyrics, despite being in French, also started to be used as republican slogans (Fig. 2.13).²⁵² The idea of spontaneous and often rather unconventional or even wild dance at the sound of a French tune and around a republican symbol rapidly became strongly associated with joy and republican fervor (Fig. 2.14).²⁵³ The act of dancing around the Tree of Liberty, the most popular symbol of republican regeneration, acquired a particular importance, its musical accompaniment consisting of popular tunes frequently played by military-style bands.²⁵⁴ Although supposedly retaining its spontaneous character, dance quickly

became a constant presence within republican festivals.²⁵⁵

Already in May 1796, Salfi proudly reported how an immense people, including a sixty-year-old theology professor, had danced the *Carmagnole* in Pavia.²⁵⁶ The following year, the most strenuous Milanese patriots, together with has been described by an eyewitness as ‘the city’s most miserable scum’, celebrated the Treaty of Leoben with a night procession and bacchanal. The crowd reached the Tree of Liberty in the cathedral square, where a lively ‘ballo repubblicano’ (republican dance) took place, its main feature being that of half-naked women crying ‘Death to

²⁵² Stefano Pivato, *Bella ciao. Canto e politica nella storia d'Italia* (Rome; Bari: Laterza, 2005), p. 10.

²⁵³ C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814*, p. 16.

²⁵⁴ A. Carlini, ‘Lo strepitoso risonar de’ stromenti da fiato & timballerie...’, pp. 496-497.

²⁵⁵ G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina...*, p. 117.

²⁵⁶ *Termometro politico della Lombardia*, 1, p. 119.

the tyrants'.²⁵⁷ Also, two years later, when a feast was celebrated at the Circolo costituzionale to commemorate the entry of the French in Milan, the Cisalpine patriots could not find a better way to demonstrate their joy and devotion to the French republic than dancing a series of 'danze festive' (festive dances) together with the French patrons.²⁵⁸ Finally, the erection of the Tree of Liberty in the town of Lugo di Romagna was accompanied by a dance at the sound of a French military band which, despite the bad weather, continued through the night until dawn.²⁵⁹



Fig. 2.14: French patriotic engraving showing a dance around the Tree of Liberty and the motto 'Il faut danser' (It is necessary to dance). Paris, BnF.

Patriotic tunes destined to be sung can be considered even more significant as they contributed to introducing a whole new idea of song deeply permeated by a political and often violent/aggressive spirit.²⁶⁰ The songs born in the streets of Paris in the early 1790s were in fact promoting the extremely polarized politics that was supposed to characterize any revolutionary society, and served very well some of the main purposes of republican propaganda in Milan,

²⁵⁷ *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina...*, vol. 1, tome 1, pp. 14-18. The above mentioned event took place on 7 April 1797.

²⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, 1, p. 275.

²⁵⁹ A. Carlini, '«Lo strepitoso risonar de' stromenti da fiato & timballerie»...', p. 497.

²⁶⁰ See P. R. Hanson, *Historical Dictionary of the French Revolution*, pp. 53-55 and C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814*, p. 15.

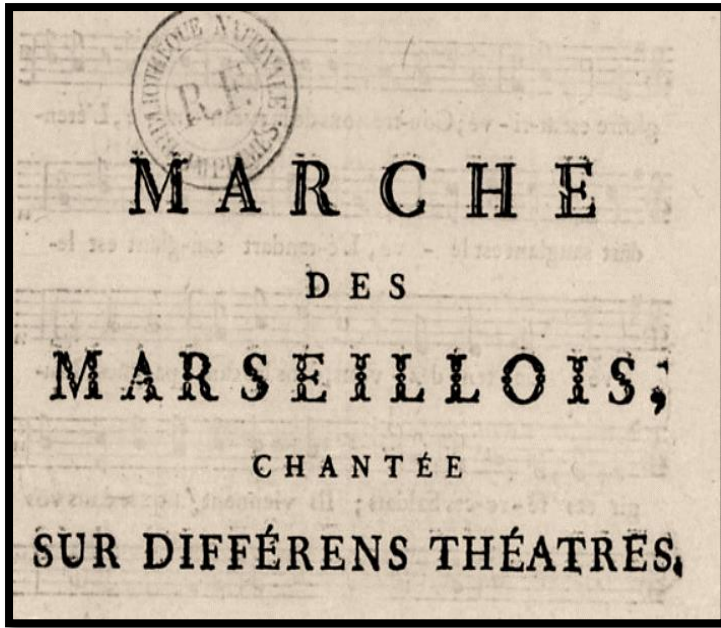


Fig. 2.15: Title page of a booklet containing the full text of La Marseillaise, which – as advertised – was ‘sung in different theatres’, 1792. Paris, BnF.

from the hatred towards the numerous enemies to the condemnation of the past.²⁶¹ In the context of post- revolutionary republican states, songs were exploited not only as effective tools for both propaganda and participation, but also as pedagogical/educational means also particularly capable of influencing the masses through their emotional appeal: they therefore can be effectively considered one of the most

successful art form of the Revolution.²⁶²

Finally, it is worth noting that, already in post-revolutionary France, the repertoire of songs and that of theatrical performances started to come significantly closer. It was very popular, for instance, to write patriotic songs centered on the parody of well-known melodies (or *timbres*), the majority coming from art music and especially musical theatre, with a preference for comic opera and vaudeville.²⁶³ In selecting the tunes to re-use, song composers and/or arrangers would understandably turn to the melodies which the people knew better. In the case of Milan, there was no doubt the main source of known and memorable tunes was represented by the long-standing and highly popular operatic tradition, although no musical sources remain to show the actual melodic material used. On the other hand, while operatic tunes had significantly informed the songs in the streets, revolutionary songs had also made their way into many theatres of the French capital, many entrepreneurs using them to ‘rejuvenate’ older plays and/or to make their programs more captivating.²⁶⁴

At the same time, in the period 1792-1795 patriotic songs were reported to be often sung during theatrical and operatic performances on all the major Parisian stages (for instance, at the Comédie- Italienne, Opéra Comique, Comédie Française and Opéra) following the initiative of

²⁶¹ Laura Mason, *Singing the French Revolution. Popular Culture and Politics, 1787-1799* (Ithaca NY; London: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 35.

²⁶² Herbert Schneider, ‘The sung constitutions of 1792: an essay on propaganda in the Revolutionary song’ in *Music and the French Revolution*, ed. by Malcom Boyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 236-275 (pp. 236-237).

²⁶³ *Ibidem*, pp. 249-250

²⁶⁴ L. Mason, *Singing the French Revolution*, pp. 35-36.

both actors, authors, impresarios and audience members (Fig. 2.15). These often improvised, yet very enthusiastic performances became gradually more politicized and triggered stronger reactions, up to the point of provoking upheavals and fights which had to be resolved by police or military forces.²⁶⁵ In 1796, the same year of the invasion of Northern Italy, the custom of playing patriotic tunes in the theatre had been standardized and subjected to the Directory's centralized control, which on 8 January prescribed that all musical theatres had to have their orchestra playing some 'airs chéris des républicains' before raising the curtain, and *La Marseillaise* and other *chansons patriotiques* during the interval.²⁶⁶ Finally, it has already been noted how many operas composed in Paris in the early 1790s were deeply influenced by the most popular revolutionary tunes, in terms of both tunes, structures and imagery: alongside direct quotations, one can find newly composed vocal pieces echoing the forms and styles of songs and hymns, by then also already very familiar to the audiences.²⁶⁷

Examples of a closer interaction between what happened inside and outside the theatre are also visible e.g. in the systematic use of the same musicians for both operatic performances and republican celebrations: choristers, instrumentalists and even celebrated soloists were in fact employed in both contexts.²⁶⁸ A notable example is that of the famed singer Cecilia Bolognesi, active in La Scala since the early 1790s, mostly as an interpreter of comic operas, but also described by Francesco Salfi as an enthusiastic performer within public feasts.²⁶⁹ In fact, Milan lacked a body of musicians specializing in the repertoire of the national festivals like those produced in Paris by institutions such as the Ecole Royale de Chant, the Ecole de Musique de la Garde Nationale and (from 1796) the Conservatoire, where performers were also trained by some of the most active composers of celebratory music, e.g. Gossec and Chénier.²⁷⁰ As a result, the majority of musicians who took part in the various musical occasions within republican festivals were those employed by the city's pre-existing institutions, *in primis* in the theatre.²⁷¹ The process of adaptation to a new repertoire and associated performance and listening conventions was surely difficult: it is documented, for instance, how the members of the orchestra of Lucca's

²⁶⁵ Constant Pierre, *Les Hymnes et les Chansons de la Révolution* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1904), pp. 9-11.

²⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 17.

²⁶⁷ E. C. Bartlet, 'The new Repertory of the Opéra during the Reign of Terror', p. 132.

²⁶⁸ Giuseppe Chiappori, *Serie cronologica delle rappresentazioni drammatico-pantomimiche poste sulle scene dei principali testri di Milano 1776-1818* (Milan: Silvestri, 1818), pp. 42-53.

²⁶⁹ *Termometro politico della Lombardia*, 1, p. 120.

²⁷⁰ Cynthia M. Gesele, 'The Conservatoire de Musique and national music education in France, 1795-1801', in *Music and the French Revolution*, ed. Malcom Boyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 191-220 (pp. 198-199).

²⁷¹ See e.g. the list of musicians employed for a patriotic festival in May 1797, detailed in the [Invoice], manuscript n.d. (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 2).

theatre reacted quite badly when they were forced to perform *arie patriottiche* during the intervals, some of them even ending up in jail for expressing too clearly their disappointment.²⁷²

In terms of repertoire, the separation between music for the stage and that for the street was also drastically reduced by the penetration of republican tunes in the theatre. In addition to the above mentioned practice of performing patriotic songs, pre-existing French tunes were also performed within operas performed in la Scala. It is the case, for instance, of *L'astuta in amore*, a comic opera performed within the 1796 autumn season, whose finale was altered by adding a patriotic hymn in French.²⁷³ Although there is no documentary evidence showing the actual tunes of the native Milanese patriotic songs, it is likely that many of them were modelled on operatic melodies; those could then be carefully juxtaposed or mixed with the increasingly popular revolutionary tunes.

As a general observation, it can be stated that musical elements were planned and advertised as a significant part of the programme of the feasts, but the archival documents reveal little of their detailed characteristics. In addition, no documentary evidence in the form of actual musical sources (such as scores or arrangements) has been found: although the archival sources often detail quite large-scale musical events involving a massive expense in terms of both performers and quantity of music, the actual music (or at least that newly composed for republican celebration) appears to be lost. This could be explained through the high patriotic and propagandistic value of these cultural products, which were possibly discarded during the Austrian interregnum or after the Restoration.

A closer look at the musical repertoire of the feasts can be taken through the documents relative to the work of the Commissione per le Pubbliche Feste, which also dealt with the organization of the musical events and with the commissioning of new products. A notable example is that of the series of celebratory events which took place in May 1797 and included many musical elements. An invoice sent to the members of the commission regarding the expenses incurred can provide significant information regarding both the repertoire and its formation and reception (Fig. 2.16); the entries in fact show thorough details regarding the performers involved in the musical events and their commensurate salaries.²⁷⁴ In addition, the information contained in the invoice can be cross-checked with that inferable from the correspondence between the commission members and the composer Ambrogio Minoja, specifically employed as music supplier.

²⁷² Gabriella Biagi Ravenni, 'The French occupation of Lucca and its effects on music' in *Music and the French Revolution*, ed. by Malcom Boyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 279-301 (p. 288).

²⁷³ Giuseppe Palomba, *L'astuta in amore, dramma giocoso per musica da rappresentarsi nel Teatro Grande alla Scala l'autunno 1796 sotto la protezione della Repubblica Francese* (Milan: Gio. Batista Bianchi, 1796), pp. 58-59.

²⁷⁴ [Invoice], manuscript n.d. (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 2).

A letter dated 10 Floréal Year V (29 April 1797), just a few days before the first event took place, shows the official appointment of Minoja as composer of all the music that would be needed for the incoming feasts:

Your well-known patriotism, as well as your wits and your valid skills in music, have determined that this commission gladly appoints you, together with citizen Rolla,²⁷⁵ with setting all those poems that will be needed for the new celebrations to music. Since the citizen Fugazza has been appointed with the mentioned poems, you can work together with him, so that both poetry and music can be completed as soon as possible. This is what the commission asks you, your fervour, your skills and your love for your country.²⁷⁶

Several elements are noteworthy, first of all the importance attributed to vocal music as capable of carrying a clear propaganda message through an appositely written text: the poet and librettist Adelmo Fugazza had in fact already been appointed to write different poems with a strong patriotic and celebratory content. The suggestion that the composer should work in close contact with poet also seems to stress the importance bestowed on the text. Besides, poetic works dedicated to Napoleon, the Republic and the deeds of the Armée d'Italie, were produced in great quantity in these and in the following years, often borrowing stylistic features from coeval rhetoric.²⁷⁷ Also, La Scala theatre, as we will shortly see, saw the performance of several newly composed patriotic cantatas, in which written poetic texts were set to celebratory music to create large-scale pieces. In the case of public feasts, the poems and pieces of music needed were probably shorter and more spectacular, thus designed to deeply involve and almost shock the listeners.²⁷⁸

Furthermore, this document testifies the very short time incurring between the commissioning of the music and the actual events: through the above mentioned invoice, we can in fact state that the first performance took place on 4 May, barely five days after the letter was sent. This information suggests the production of music of a rather occasional character and thus of not particularly high quality, which could also further explain its complete disappearance. It is Ambrogio Minoja, within another letter (undated, but with all probability dating back to the days immediately following the celebrations) who allows us to get a closer look at the music commissioned and performed (Fig. 2.17). The composer was in fact experiencing trouble in

²⁷⁵ Alessandro Rolla, celebrated musician and composer, at that time employed in La Scala as violinist and soon-to-become one of the leading musical figures of the Italian Republic and Kingdom of Italy.

²⁷⁶ [Letter Commissione per le Pubbliche Feste to Minoja], 29 April 1797 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 2).

²⁷⁷ See e.g. the various references to celebratory poems and sonnets contained in the *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina*, in *Termometro politico della Lombardia* and the numerous collections printed. Many works were created by notable poets such as Vincenzo Monti and Ugo Foscolo, or by writers also very active as journalists and librettists; see e.g. the works by Monti and Salfi contained in *Termometro politico della Lombardia*, 1, pp. 298-299 and 3, pp. 15-16, respectively.

²⁷⁸ A. Carlini, '«Lo strepitoso risonar de' stromenti da fiato & timballerie»...', p. 475.

getting paid and wrote to the commission detailing the work he had done and asking for fair recompense:

[...] Having I been tasked [...] with setting to music all those poems written for the new republican feasts, I have promptly and zealously performed my duty. My patriotic hymn [*inno patriottico*] referring to the freedom of Lombardy, was performed on the day of the feast in Corso di Porta Romana. My *concertato* choir [*coro concertato*] representing the victories of the Chief General was performed in La Scala opera house on the day of his return from the battlefield, and many other pieces of music not yet performed can still be found in the list belonging to copyist Scotti [...].²⁷⁹

From the information contained in the invoice, we can infer that the piece Minoja describes as ‘coro concertato’ had been premiered at La Scala theatre on 4 May 1796 by a group of 25 choristers and an ensemble of 12 players. Although the label ‘concertato’ is not univocal, it is feasible that this term indicated a choral piece bearing a closer resemblance to the operatic repertoire, i.e. presenting a strong melodic character and an instrumental accompaniment.

The term could also reveal the presence of antiphonal or polyphonic elements, as opposed to the mostly chordal and solemn writing of a hymn, which could also explain the choice of performing it at first within an indoor venue. The performance had in fact happened twice, the first time in La Scala opera house and then in a public space, in front of Napoleon’s temporary residence, the palace of Count Serbelloni on Corso di Porta Orientale. For this second, outdoor performance, a special instrumental ensemble called ‘banda’ (as opposed to ‘orchestra’) had accompanied the choir: the term with all probability indicates an ensemble mainly formed of brass and percussion instruments and thus having a particularly strong sonority; the role of bands will also be analysed more in depth later on.

The second piece mentioned, what Minoja calls ‘inno patriottico’, had been performed ten days later, on 14 May, during a public feast in Corso di Porta Romana: for that occasion, the same choir of 25 had been accompanied by much bigger instrumental forces, an orchestra of 36 players. Although no musical sources exist to show either the text or the music of this particular hymn, it was with all probability a substantial piece especially designed to solemnize that particular event. The model for this typology of pieces could be inferred on one hand from the already vast repertoire of revolutionary music, produced in France since the early 1790s by celebrated composers and writers such as Gossec, Grétry, Lebrun, Berton, Jadin, Cherubini and others, and including several *hymnes* and *chants patriotiques* or *républicains*.²⁸⁰ It is worth noticing that

²⁷⁹ [Letter Minoja to the Commissione per le Pubbliche Feste], manuscript n.d. (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 2).

²⁸⁰ For an essential overview of this repertoire, see collections such as *Recueil d'hymnes, stances, odes et chansons républicaines, à l'usage des fêtes nationales* (Paris: n.n., 1796) and Constant Pierre, *Musique des fêtes et cérémonies de la Révolution française* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1899).

much of the terminology used to describe the vocal pieces produced in the French revolutionary context is frequently used in a rather inconsistent way, with the same pieces being alternatively described as *airs*, *chants*, *chansons* and *hymnes*.

On the other hand, as already mentioned, excerpts from this particular repertoire started very early to be introduced also through more traditional venues and occasions such as operatic performances. In fact, these pieces quickly became very popular, if the anonymous compiler of the *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina* said, already in June 1797, that ‘patriotic songs and hymns were resounding everywhere’.²⁸¹ The case of the already mentioned hymn used within *L’astuta in amore* (autumn 1796) can help us in inferring some of the main characteristics of these pieces. While the libretto clearly shows the text of the hymn effectively performed, a copy of the score of the same time, still kept in Milan’s Conservatoire, does not present any alteration to the original finale: we could thus hypothesize that the original French hymn, both text and music, was simply juxtaposed to Fioravanti’s closing scene.²⁸² In that occasion, additional scores were possibly provided for both singers and instrumentalists. The text of the hymn, however, allows us trace back the main characteristics of the original French hymn, thus trying to establish a link between this music and the hymns composed for republican celebration in Milan.

²⁸¹ *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina*, vol. 1, tome I, p. 71.

²⁸² A score, manuscript, but not autograph, is kept in the library of the Conservatorio ‘Giuseppe Verdi’ of Milan under the shelf mark Noseda I.43-44.

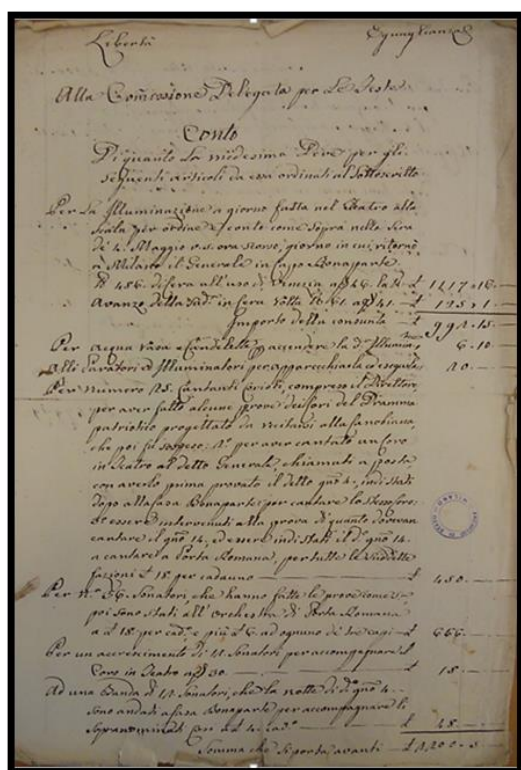


Fig. 2.15: First page of the invoice sent to the Commissione per le Pubbliche Feste after the celebrations of April-May 1797. Milan, State Archive.

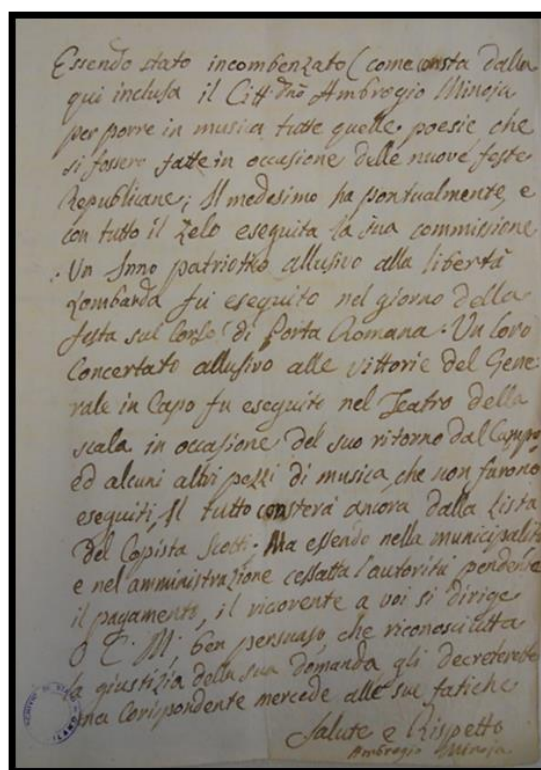


Fig. 2.16: Manuscript letter of Ambrogio Minoja to the members of the same Commissione, n.d (possibly late May 1797). Milan, State Archive.

The text is derived from that of a popular poem entitled *Ode sur le 10 août* (*Ode on the 10th of August*), written by Ponce D. É. Lebrun to be set to music and used within a republican feast organized, indeed, on 10 August 1795 to commemorate the storming of the Tuileries and the end of the French monarchy.²⁸³ The resulting piece, with music composed by Luigi Cherubini, was entitled *Chant républicain du 10 août* (*Patriotic Song for the 10th of August*) and, according to the score, featured an instrumental ensemble entirely made of wind and percussion instruments and a four-part mixed choir.²⁸⁴ In terms of writing, the piece was already described by Constant Pierre as a ‘Chœur à strophes identiques chantées alternativement, à l’unisson, par chaque voix, avec refrain en parties et accompagnement semblable pour chaque strophe’ (‘Choir with identical verses alternatively sung by each part in unison, refrains in part-writing and similar accompaniment for each verse’).²⁸⁵ The eight strophes were effectively set into a series of five couplets alternatively sung in unison by the different choir parts and interspersed with polyphonic, more demanding

²⁸³ The full text of the Lebrun poem can be found in *La Revue philosophique, littéraire et politique par une Société de Républicains*, tome 16 (Paris : Au Bureau de la Décade, 1795), pp. 484-489 and in *Recueil de Chants philosophiques, civiques et moraux, à l'usage des Fêtes Nationales et Décadaires* (Paris: Chemin, 1799), pp. 94-99.

²⁸⁴ C. Pierre, *Les Hymnes et les Chansons de la Révolution*, p. 380.

²⁸⁵ *Idem*, *Musique des fêtes et cérémonies de la Révolution française*, p. XXV.

sections. Judging by the text shown in the Milanese libretto, the parts chosen to be sung in La Scala were the unison ones, precisely couplets 1, 3 and 5 (see the third couplet in Fig. 2.18).

In terms of vocal writing, the tune of the couplets was rather simple and repetitive, featuring a range of one octave and fundamental harmonic progressions only. The text, already easy to follow thanks to the division into strophes, was also repeated in the case of particularly important lines. These features suggest that, when looking for music to insert within celebratory moments, the French authorities wished for memorable and solemn pieces that could deeply impress the audience, but also for simple tunes that could be easily followed and memorized, thus also transmitting their political content. Hence solemnity, but also simplicity thus had to constitute the main features of the music especially written for republican celebration.²⁸⁶



Fig. 2.18: Third couplet from the *Chant républicain du 10 août*, words by Le Brun, music by Cherubini.

This couplet was sung as a second verse in La Scala in autumn 1796.

Source: Constant Pierre, *Musique des fêtes et cérémonies de la Révolution française*.

The *inno patriottico* composed by Minoja for the May 1797 celebrations, as well as similar pieces produced in numerous other occasions, shared many features of its French counterparts and thus perfectly responded to the contemporary needs. The size of the accompanying instrumental ensemble and the topic chosen for the text (the freedom of Lombardy) also confirm this hypothesis. Finally, as the pieces used in the French feasts, the hymns and chants composed for

²⁸⁶ A. Carlini, '«Lo strepitoso risonar de' stromenti da fiato & timballerie»...', p. 475.

the Milanese celebratory occasions were destined to be performed mainly outdoors, thus demanding particularly strong sonorities: a choir of 25 people with all probability singing in unison/octaves and an ensemble of 36 players possibly including strong brass and percussion sections could indeed generate a sound volume capable of filling the outdoor space and deeply engaging, almost shocking the audience. In addition, this kind of music was capable symbolizing many key concepts and values: the imposing instrumental and vocal forces became the metaphor of the people, their playing and singing in unison and/or with a smooth melodic pace symbolized equality and strength.²⁸⁷ Arguably, the roots of a phenomenon so paramount within 19th-century Italian opera such as the centrality of massive choral pieces and their frequent link to the political dimension can be also traced back to events such as these.

The documents also allow us to introduce another key element, that of the growing importance of military music. As previously mentioned, the military sphere, thanks to both the constant presence in Lombardy of many French soldiers and the strong association between Napoleon and war power and between the military achievements of the Armée d'Italie and the newly found freedom of Northern Italy, gained a greater centrality within Milan's social life. Thanks to the numerous celebratory events involving parades, manoeuvres and exhibitions, the military sphere also gained numerous spaces and occasions for self-representation and self-reaffirmation; this was naturally valid also for the sonorous sphere.

Moreover, post-revolutionary France already boosted a vast tradition of instrumental pieces inspired by or dedicated to the military field, such as marches, fanfares and pas de manoeuvre. Many titles also used adjectives easily associated with the military sphere, such as 'militaire', 'funèbre' and 'victorieux'.²⁸⁸ The importance given to military elements within the music composed in France in the years following the Revolution was in fact unprecedented: the need for cultural products suiting a new propaganda, which played so much on the cult of strength, republican armies and military heroes, caused military music and its sonorities to experience a whole new wave of development that greatly influenced its composers and players and even the musical instruments used.

²⁸⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 476.

²⁸⁸ A comprehensive survey of this repertoire can be found in C. Pierre, *Musique des fêtes et cérémonies de la Révolution française*, pp. LXXVIII- LXXIX.

For instance, the list of instruments detailed by Constant Pierre for the performance of the already mentioned *Chant républicain du 10 août* (also possibly replicated, or at least imitated in the Milanese performances) included a large wind section with 2 flutes or recorders, 2 clarinets, 2 trumpets, 2 French horns in C, 3 trombones, 2 bassoons, serpent, buccin (a trombone with the bell shaped as a dragon's head), tuba curva (a large brass instrument created during the Revolution to imitate the tubae of the ancient Roman legions), cymbals and bass drum.²⁸⁹ Large



Fig. 2.19: 1793 engraving entitled *Musique Républicaine* and showing an allegory of the Republic surrounded by cherubs playing brass and military drums.
Paris, BnF.

curved brass instruments and bass drums were also frequently portrayed in contemporary iconography as the instruments most representative of ‘republican music’ (See e.g. Fig. 2.19). Finally, musical instruments and sounds associated to the military field, such as the serpent, the death knell and various military drums, had also been added to the standard orchestra and sonorous sphere of the main theatres such as the Opéra (formerly Académie Royale de Musique, now re-christened Opéra National).²⁹⁰

One of the main protagonists of this new musical field was the military band, an instrumental ensemble affiliated to a precise military corps and exclusively constituted of wind and percussion instruments. Many of the propaganda instrumental pieces composed in post-revolutionary France were in fact destined to be performed by bands or by bigger, yet similar ensembles, often featuring larger and more varied woodwind, brass and percussion sections than the average orchestra.²⁹¹ Together with patriotic songs, the battalions of the Armée d’Italie and their bands

²⁸⁹ *Idem*, *Les Hymnes et les Chansons de la Révolution* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1904), p. 378.

²⁹⁰ E. C. Bartlet, ‘The new Repertory of the Opéra during the Reign of Terror’, p. 133.

²⁹¹ See, again the description of the repertoire in C. Pierre, *Musique des fêtes et cérémonies de la Révolution française*, pp. LXXVIII- LXXIX, where numerous pieces, even those not traditionally associated with military music such as overtures and symphonies, show the indication ‘pour instruments à vent’ (for wind instruments only).

brought to Northern Italy not only a repertoire a popular band pieces, but also innovative tools and occasions for the use of new music and instrumental combinations.²⁹²

The newly founded military corps of republican Milan and, later on, of the Cisalpine Republic, such as the Cisalpine army and the Guardia Nazionale also developed their own bands which rapidly became very popular (Fig. 2.20).²⁹³ For instance, an *ordre de marche* disseminated in the occasion of the feast for the proclamation of the Cisalpine Republic in July 1797 specified not only the order in which the different corps had to march, but also which musical instrument each of them had to carry. The number of drums, trumpets and whole bands was detailed down to the single unit, thus suggesting a careful organization of the performative moments associated with military music.²⁹⁴ On numerous other occasions, military bands were mentioned as significant actors within the celebratory events and living symbols of republican virtues such as courage, unity and strength.²⁹⁵



Fig. 2.20 Napoleon inspecting the French and Cisalpine battalions on 9 July 1797.
A group of drummers is visible on the left-hand side.
Milan, CRS 'Achille Bertarelli'.

²⁹² See e.g. the role of the bands playing in the banquet to celebrate Napoleon's arrival in May 1796 in E. Rota, 'Milano napoleonica', p. 31.

²⁹³ *Ibidem*, p. 63 and C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814*, p. 58. See also the numerous references to military bands contained in the posters announcing public feasts and contained in Milan's State Archive.

²⁹⁴ The document is contained in *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina*, vol. 1, tome I, p. 101.

²⁹⁵ See e.g. the description of the feast contained in *Termometro politico della Lombardia*, 2, p. 122.

Bands and/or military ensembles such as groups of drummers were in fact protagonists of several moments within public feasts, most of all those numerous ones that were organized to solemnize military events. The archival documents previously presented allow us to describe in depth the role played by bands and military music within two specific events, the musical performances which took place on 4 and 14 May 1797. According to the invoice sent to the Commission for Public Feasts, a *banda* of 12 players was recruited to accompany the choir for the outdoor performance of Minoja's *coro concertato*, previously performed in La Scala. According to Minoja himself, the piece was dedicated to the Napoleon's recent victories, thus having a clear association to the battlefield.²⁹⁶ The sound of a band, so strongly associated to the military sphere, constituted an effective tool of expression and also guaranteed a strong, engaging sonority.

As for the second performance, the role of the band was even more prominent and the chosen ensemble more prestigious: in fact, the band of the Milanese Guardia Nazionale (a special battalion formed of volunteers which was permanently stationed in Milan and tasked with the defence of the city)²⁹⁷ was recruited to play a dedicated repertoire.²⁹⁸ While Minoja's *inno patriottico* was performed within the same event by a choir and a large instrumental ensemble, the invoice reveals that another favourite composer of the regime, Luigi de' Bailou,²⁹⁹ had been recruited to compose more traditional band pieces, i.e. *sinfonie* and *marce*.³⁰⁰

A few years later, in 1801, when a feast was organized to pay homage to the soldiers who had died in the recent military campaigns, the carefully planned musical performances followed exactly the same pattern as in 1797: a large choir performed a patriotic hymn dedicated to the heroes who had succumbed while an instrumental ensemble played some newly composed pieces of music.³⁰¹ The composer of both the hymn and the instrumental pieces was Francesco Salfi, main editor of the *Termometro politico*. Finally, the *banda* of the Guardia Nazionale played a paramount role in the ceremony for the renaming of Porta Ticinese into Porta Marengo, on 16 June 1801: especially listed in the *ordre de marche*, the band was appointed to play especially

²⁹⁶ See, again, the letter sent by Minoja to the members of the commission, kept in Spettacoli pubblici P.A. folder 2 within Milan's State Archive.

²⁹⁷ Emauele Pagano, *Il Comune di Milano nell'età napoleonica* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1994), pp. 68-69.

²⁹⁸ See page 2 of the previously presented invoice, specifying 'to the players of the band of the National Guard for rehearsals and performance at Porta Romana [...]'.
²⁹⁹ Kathleen Hansell and Carlo Bellora, 'Bailou, Luigi de', in *Grove Music Online*, accessible at <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/01798> (last accessed 24 January 2016). Despite his French-sounding name and education in Paris, Bailou had been born in Milan.

³⁰⁰ See, again, p. 2 of the above mentioned [Invoice], reading: 'to copyist Scotti for copying the music [...] of the hymns set to music by Maestro Minoja, of the symphonies and marches composed by Bailou and for extracting the orchestral parts'.

³⁰¹ See the [Poster] in French, detailing the programme of the feast, 1801 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 2). The same folder contains also the text of the hymn sung at the feast.

composed 'arie patriottiche' (patriotic tunes) and 'musica guerriera' (war music) to explicitly excite the people's enthusiasm during the crucial phases of the ceremony.³⁰²

Military music, with all probability based on the French model, but also arguably incorporating features influenced by the specific Italian tradition, thus became a constant need of the new musical production system, propelling a new and significant creative wave that would continue during the years of the second Cisalpine and Italian Republics. As many other musical and spectacular elements of republican celebration, military music also made its way to the operatic stage, infusing many particularly solemn scenes (for instance, triumphs, commemorations and

oaths) with precise musical patterns and sonorities such as fanfare-like and march-like tunes, choral homophony and the use of brass and covered timpani.³⁰³

Newly composed pieces, both instrumental and vocal, were commissioned and juxtaposed not only with pre-existing repertoires, but also with other non-musical elements in order to create new and unique combinations. One of the most common ones was that between music, speaking voices and military sounds, especially shots from fire weapons and cannons. The strong association between military sounds, music and the expression of shared joy and patriotism was also present already



Fig. 2.21: Engraving from 1792-1795 with the refrain of the *Carmagnolle* and a representation of music, dance and cannon fire. Paris, BnF.

in the lyrics of one of the most popular revolutionary tunes, the *Carmagnolle*, whose refrain read *Danzons la Carmagnolle, vive le son du canon!* (Let us dance the Carmagnolle, hurray for the sound of the cannon!); the song's popularity also led to the production of iconography directly connecting musical and extra-musical military sounds, mainly in the form of propaganda flyers directed towards the lower classes (see e.g. Fig. 2.21).

³⁰² See the detailed celebration's programme, again, in Milan's State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 2.

³⁰³ E. C. Bartlet, 'The new Repertory of the Opéra during the Reign of Terror', p. 133.

As previously mentioned, the display of military power also through weapon exhibitions was regarded as an important element within public events, sounds like cannon bangs rapidly becoming a tool for public celebration instead of the most traditional tolling bells. Very often, glad tidings and festive days were in fact announced through cannons being fired from fixed locations around the city. A notable case is that of the 1797 victories of the Armée d'Italie, publicly celebrated with gun and cannon fire so powerful that they shattered some of the cathedral's precious glass-stained windows.³⁰⁴ In addition, the idea, already evident in France, of confiscating the bells to melt them into fire weapons was possibly also considered for the Italian provinces: in May 1798 the commissaries of all the Cisalpine departments were notified to send a detailed list of all the bells currently present in their jurisdiction, complete with details of their weight and location.³⁰⁵ As a result, republican celebrations also caused significant changes within Milan's soundscape, greatly modified by the constant presence of new sounds, sonorities and associated images.

While military music experienced a steady development and gained a growing popularity, especially solemn events also saw the systematic juxtaposition of music with extra-musical elements, thus creating never-seen-before performances. These 'performances' were particularly demanded in conjunction with the swearing of solemn oaths, which, as already argued, became a climactic moment within many large-scale celebrations.³⁰⁶ A notable example is that of the feast for the proclamation of the Cisalpine Republic (destined to remain one of the most important and solemn celebrations). A celebratory pamphlet entitled *Per la solennità della Federazione Cisalpina* (*To solemnize the Cisalpine Federation*) was printed, detailing a peculiar musical performance which had to take place during the swearing of a solemn oath to the Republic and required the participation of both oath-takers, audience members and dedicated performers. The pamphlet contains three celebrative sonnets, one of which seems to commemorate the moment of the oath, sworn with the 'accompaniment' of musical instruments and military sounds. Two lines are particularly interesting:

Ecco i tuoi figli infra gli *evviva* e il liuto
Il gran patto giurar nel MARZIO
CAMPO

Here are your sons, in between *vivat* and lutes,
Swearing the supreme oath in the CHAMP
DE MARS

³⁰⁴ C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814*, p. 60.

³⁰⁵ *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina*, vol. 1, tome VII, p. 168. In truth, an invitation to all citizens to bring metal and powders to a newly instituted weapon factory by the Lazzaretto had been issued already on 16 May 1796, barely one day after Napoleon's entry into Milan; see D.A. Minola, *Diario storico politico di alcuni avvenimenti del secolo XVIII*, 10 [G.120.SUS], p. 27.

³⁰⁶ E. C. Bartlet, 'The new Repertory of the Opéra during the Reign of Terror', p. 121.

The anonymous author of the pamphlet even included a printed footnote specifying that in those verses ‘Si allude agli stromenti musicali, e ai suoni guerrieri preordinati ad alternare tra il giuramento dei federati e gli evvivi degli spettatori’ (We refer to the musical instruments and the war sounds destined to alternate the oaths of the federates and the *vivat* of the audience).³⁰⁷

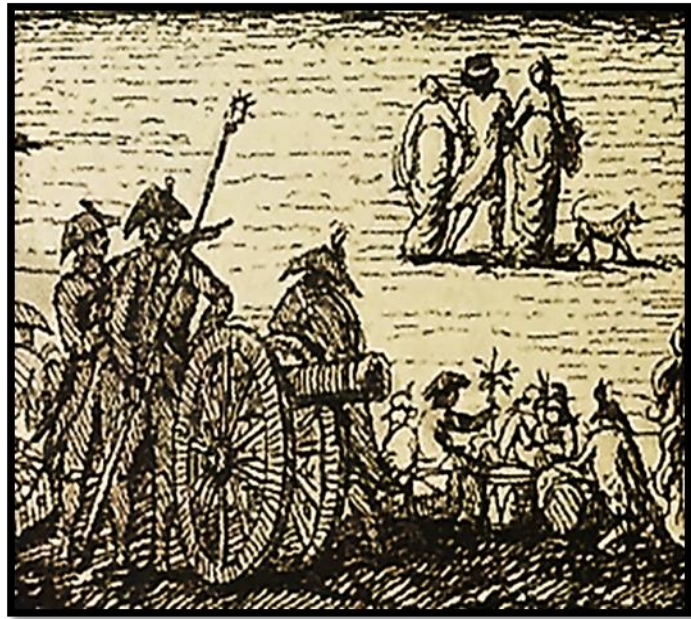


Fig. 2.22: Particular of an engraving showing drums and cannons ready to ‘perform’ together at the feast for the Peace of Lunéville, 30 April 1801. Milan, CRS ‘Achille Bertarelli’.

Another significant example is already mentioned feast celebrated in Milan on 21 January 1799 to solemnize the anniversary of Louis XVI’s death; while dedicated celebrations took place within the walls of La Scala theatre, a

great feast was organized at the Sforza Castle, where all the main public figures and military units (followed by their bands) were called to intervene. The programme, affixed on the city’s walls, detailed the order of events, including musical and extra musical ‘accompaniment’:

At 9am, five cannon shots will indicate the exact time where the tyrant’s (Louis XVI) head fell on the stage. At 10.00, 10.30 and 11.00, cannon shots will call for a general assembly [of the troops].

Once all troops have arrived [in front of the Sforza Castle], all their bands will converge to the centre to perform several *arie patriottiche*. The arrival of the generals together with the civic and military authorities will be marked by five cannon shots and by the beating of drums. A speech will be read, followed by an oath of faithfulness to the Republic and of hatred to all monarchs and tyrants which will be repeated by all troops. The oath will be announced by five cannon shoots, after which the bands will play the *Ça ira*.³⁰⁸

Musical elements were thus also extracted from their original context and used as kind of short intermezzos, together with sounds associated to the military sphere, in what constituted an innovative kind of performance (see also Fig. 2.22). In perfect accordance with the republican principles, performances like this also blurred the distinction between actors and audience and favoured the development of a strong feeling of unity and sharing. Even smaller-scale occasions saw the use of music juxtaposed with non-musical elements, often of clear military origin; a

³⁰⁷ *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina*, vol. 1, tome II, pp. 118-121.

³⁰⁸ [Printed programme] Italian and French, n.d. (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 1).

notable example is that of 17 Pluviôse Year V (5 February 1797), when Mantua's surrender was celebrated with a 400-cover 'pranzo patriottico' (patriotic meal) which featured a long series of solemn toasts. Each of them was called by the so-called 'presidente della tavola' (table president), introduced by a drum fanfare and followed by four cannon shots and a 'marcia d'istromenti' (instrumental march).³⁰⁹ The latter indicated with all probability a short march performed by a military band and thus easily associated to the sound of the cannons located in the square outside the palace, where the banquet was taking place. Again, a unique performance featuring spoken voices, military music and extra-musical sounds was generated, demanding a particularly high level of participation and thus making it impossible to distinguish between performers and simple attendees.

The varied and significant use of music within republican celebratory events can thus be considered as a rather complex and multi-faceted phenomenon that influenced Milan's cultural and more specifically musical environment in many ways. Many mechanisms and rather delicate balances such as that between the opera house and the public space outside it and between audience members and performers were deeply changed and generated innovative occasions for the performance and reception of musical products. At the same time, the systematic juxtaposition and mix of different musical repertoires, in conjunction with the introduction of several new elements, deeply changed quite a conservative musical environment that had in the strong association between venues and repertoires one of its main and more stable characteristics.

Napoleon and his subordinates understood that they could not completely destroy the carefully framed and hyper-conservative world of the opera house, although they would try to modify and exploit it as much as it was feasible. On the other hand, republican feasts constituted a completely imported cultural entity, a sort of free zone where experimentalism and cultural exploitation could be exercised without almost no limits. As a cultural phenomenon entirely conceived and realized for the sake of propaganda, republican feasts saw the production of many mediocre artistic products. Still, from the musical point of view, these events played a paramount role in facilitating new contacts between different repertoires, venues and performers and in somehow widening the social basis of the audience. Many of the processes initiated through the musical events at the republican feasts would also influence the music of the following decades, both inside and outside the walls of the opera house.

³⁰⁹ *Termometro politico della Lombardia*, 2, pp. 103-104.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PATRIOTIC THEATRE (1796-1799)

3.1 A Theatre for the People.

The Napoleonic government consciously used musical elements as a powerful tool of both propaganda and entertainment within public celebrations, events that were offered to the whole people and made new use of the city's public spaces. Within these celebrations, different tools and elements were paired up in order to build a product that would appeal to the different social strata, with a special focus on the lower ones: while prestigious private and semi-private events were dedicated to the highest ranks of the aristocracy, the local government, the military and the church, the general character of the republican feast, in compliance with post-revolutionary ideals, was that of a vast public gathering that had to involve all sections of the population. The dissemination of the revolutionary ideas, to put it in another way, had to happen not only horizontally (i.e. in the different lands under the French influence), but also vertically, penetrating within all social strata.¹ Therefore, the governors also had to design a way of rethinking the most prestigious, politicized and conservative space Milan offered, the opera house. Musical theatre, thanks to its popularity and immediacy, was identified as a particularly effective tool for the dissemination of the new republican values.² In addition, thanks to its paramount function within the aristocracy's entertainment and social needs, the theatre also offered the possibility of exerting a rather effective control over the city's politically active and influential force.³ The act of appropriation of the theatre equalled appropriating also its prestige and political effectiveness.⁴

As argued in the previous chapter, the theatre constituted not only an unavoidable social need, but also one of the aristocracy's main financial investments.⁵ One of the main consequences of this situation was the aristocracy's involvement within theatre patronage, which had also

¹ Monica Nocciolini, 'Il melodramma nella Milano napoleonica: teatro musicale e ideologia politica', in *Nuova rivista musicale italiana*, XXIX, 1 (January-March 1995), pp. 5-30 (p. 5).

² Antonio Paglicci Brozzi, *Sul teatro giacobino ed antigiacobino in Italia* (Milan: Pirola, 1887), 1, p. 42 and Claudio Toscani, 'Soggetti romantici nell'opera italiana del periodo napoleonico (1796-1815)', in *Aspetti dell'opera italiana fra Sette e Ottocento: Mayr e Zingarelli*, ed. by Guido Salvetti (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 1993), pp. 13-70 (p. 13).

³ Claudio Toscani, 'Politica culturale e teatro nell'Italia napoleonica: I concorsi governativi', in *L'aere è fosco, il ciel s'imbruna: arti e musica a Venezia dalla fine della Repubblica al Congresso di Vienna* (Venice: Fondazione Levi, 2000), pp. 71-98 (p. 72).

⁴ Mélanie Traversier, '«Transformer la plèbe en peuple». Théâtre et musique à Naples en 1799 de la proclamation de la République napolitaine à la Première Restauration' in *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, 335 (2004), pp. 37-70 (p. 42).

⁵ See, among many others, Carlo A. Vianello, *Teatri, spettacoli, musiche a Milano nei secoli scorsi* (Milan: Libreria Lombarda, 1941), p. 119.

represented a particularly strong tool of cooperation and a social bond between the Milanese and the Habsburg governors, most of all in the last years of Archduke Ferdinand's rule. La Scala, largely built thanks to the intervention of the Archduke, but also significantly funded by the aristocracy, had always constituted a shared space, where governors and subjects would re-assert and show their power and mutual relationship.⁶ In other French-occupied cities, the relationship between the theatrical buildings and the old order was visibly challenged by re-christening the theatres (in a similar fashion with other public spaces) with names declaring a supposed vicinity to republican concepts and rhetoric. In Naples, for instance, living six intense months as the capital of the short-lived Neapolitan Republic, the theatres built by the Bourbons were re-baptised immediately after the entrance of the French army (21 January 1799): the Teatro San Carlo became the 'Teatro Nazionale', the Teatro del Fondo the 'Teatro Patriottico'.⁷

The theatre's layout, with its tiers of individual, yet close and visible boxes culminating in the *palco reale*, constituted the physical expression of the complex power mechanisms at work within the opera-going experience.⁸ The involvement of the box owners in theatrical management and their confident behaviour during the performances made the whole experience even more a powerful tool of self-representation.⁹ Such a character/function was naturally unacceptable within the new republican experience: the principles of theatrical fruition had to be gradually oriented towards a fundamental transformation.¹⁰

The act of changing the features of the theatre-going phenomenon, from the structure and content of the operatic seasons up to the social mechanisms in force within that environment, therefore had a powerful political meaning. Changes would affect not only the character of the Milanese aristocracy's social life and the cultural stimuli they were subjected to; they would also interact with their economic interests and the role they played within the power organization. Although the theatre was very soon identified as a necessary tool of propaganda and monitoring of the public opinion, it was also a very delicate matter to gain full control over it. Moreover, Napoleon's propaganda was based, at least nominally, on the concept of freedom and non-invasion:¹¹ the French were in fact, as Antonio Paglicci Brozzi has defined them, 'merchants of freedom'.¹² The act of conquering the theatrical space thus needed to be carried out with the

⁶ Raffaella Bianchi, 'Space and Hegemony at La Scala, 1776-1850s', in *The European Legacy: Towards New Paradigms*, vol. 18 No. 4 (2013), p. 1.

⁷ M. Traversier, '«Transformer la plèbe en peuple», p. 41.

⁸ Giuseppe Barigazzi, *La Scala racconta*, ed. by Silvia Barigazzi and Franco Pulcini (Milan: Hoepli, 2010), p. 24.

⁹ Kathleen Hansell, *Opera and ballet at the Regio ducal teatro of Milan, 1771-1776: a musical and social history* (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1980), p. 119.

¹⁰ C. Toscani, 'Soggetti romantici nell'opera italiana...', p. 13.

¹¹ Carlo Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814. Storia, testimonianze e documenti* (Brescia: Megalini, 2001), p. 16.

¹² 'mercanti di libertà'; A. Paglicci Brozzi, *Sul teatro giacobino ed antigiacobino in Italia*, 1, p. 44.

utmost care and integrated into a wider propaganda plan to be carried out within a sensible time scale.¹³

For the theatre to become a proper *instrumentum regni* according to the principles underlying the new political system, the first important change had to affect the elitist character of the opera house by widening its audience, that is, by opening its doors to a greater number of visitors belonging to different social classes. Widening the basis of political consensus by stimulating the participation of the lower bourgeoisie and, in some cases, the lowest social classes, had worked quite well in the case of republican clubs and newspapers and nurtured the idea that the present government could be more good-willed than the previous one in terms of attention towards the traditionally neglected. At the same time, the Napoleonic authorities could not completely appropriate a space that was the property of some of the citizens; the safeguarding of private property had been guaranteed by Napoleon himself in his very first speech, at the gates of Milan on 15 May 1796.¹⁴

A plethora of occasions and tools were thus devised to link the theatre to the celebration of the new government, its rituals and images, in a similar, yet different fashion to what the Austrians had done in the previous decades.¹⁵ The unstoppable success of the Armée d'Italie started to be celebrated at first with the lavish lighting of La Scala or both theatres, also eased by the recent introduction of the so-called Argand lamps (with the flame protected by a glass bulb).¹⁶ The first of these events took place just a few days after Napoleon's entry into Milan, on 19 May 1796, where La Scala theatre was lit as if it were daylight (*illuminato a giorno*).¹⁷ As in the republican feasts, citizens were also asked to show their participation in the public jubilation by lighting their own houses accordingly, a rather expensive activity that never became popular (Fig. 3.1).¹⁸

¹³ M. Nocciolini, 'Il melodramma nella Milano napoleonica', p. 6.

¹⁴ Franco Fava, *Storia di Milano* (Milan: Meravigli, 1981), 2, p. 12 and Ettore Rota, 'Milano napoleonica', in *Storia di Milano*, ed. by G. Treccani degli Alfieri (Milan: Fondazione Treccani degli Alfieri, 1956), 13, p.30.

¹⁵ Vittorio Ferrari, *Il Teatro della Scala nella vita e nell'arte dalle origini ad oggi* (Milan: Tamburini, 1921), p. 24.

¹⁶ G. Barigazzi, *La Scala racconta*, p. 29.

¹⁷ Pompeo Cambiasi, *La Scala 1778-1889: note storiche e statistiche* (Milan: Ricordi, 1889), p. 23 and C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814*, p. 20. See also the original [Proclaim Municipality of Milan], 19 May 1796 (La Scala Theatre Archive, SAL 498).

¹⁸ See the *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina all'epoca della sua libertà e indipendenza* (manuscript, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan), vol. 1, tome 1, p. 18.

The lighting of the theatre was often proudly sponsored by the *Direzione dei Teatri*, an institution entrusted with the co-ordination and overseeing of the public theatres.¹⁹ This office already existed in the Austrian years, its director Bartolomeo Andreoli having taken the post ad interim after the previous director, 80-year-old Count Salazar, had retired; its main scope was that of dealing with the administrative side of theatrical management, while artistic choices, such as organising the seasons and casting the singers, were left to the impresario.²⁰ Given the importance of the theatres within the propaganda programme, the *Direzione dei Teatri* became very close to governmental institutions such as the Municipality, the Directory and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, with whom it maintained a thick correspondence throughout the whole triennium.²¹

Occasions also aimed at admitting a wider and more varied crowd into the theatre were progressively devised starting from the very first weeks of the French rule. The general layout of these events was that of an opera, ballet or theatre performance especially offered free of charge to the general public to solemnize a specific event related to the unfolding of the Italian campaign. On the same evening of Napoleon's entry into Milan (15 May 1796), the French demanded that La Scala was opened to the whole People with free entry and that *La Marseillaise* was performed in between the acts of the current performance in the presence of Napoleon himself.²² The mutated political and social situation was effectively symbolized with the opening of the doors of La Scala to 'a crowd of fanatics who yelled, inveighed and squalled'.²³ The actors of the Perelli comic troupe, working for the current spring season, performed a comedy in Italian



Fig. 3.1: Proclamation announcing the lighting of the theatre and inviting all citizens to light their own houses, 19 May 1796. Milan, State Archive.

¹⁹ See several examples contained in P. Cambiasi, *La Scala 1778-1889*, pp. 26-34.

²⁰ Ivano Bettin, *La volontà di riforma dei teatri milanesi durante il periodo napoleonico* (unpublished PhD dissertation, Università degli Studi di Milano, 2010), pp. 15-16.

²¹ Alex Visconti, *Milano d'una volta* (Milan: Treccani degli Alfieri, 1944), vol. 5, p. 46.

²² *Duecento anni alla Scala 1778-1978*, catalogue of the exhibition at palazzo Reale, Milan, 16 February-10 September 1978 (Milan: Electa, 1978), p. 13.

²³ '[...] una turba di esaltati che sbraitava, inveisce e schiamazza'; see Giampiero Tintori and Guido Bezzola, *I protagonisti e l'ambiente della Scala nell'età neoclassica* (Milan: Il Polifilo, 1984), p. 41.



Fig. 3.2: Poster advising a free performance at La Scala offering a 'republican tragedy' and a dance free of charge (*gratis*). Milan, State Archive.

whose words the numerous French soldiers flocked into the theatre could not grasp. Likewise, they could not understand the libretto of the opera buffa performed as intermezzo.²⁴ Anyway, it did not matter: that evening had to be mainly a celebration of the new conquerors within the city's most prestigious and visible space.

A few days later, on the evening of 19 May, the victory of the French army on the bridge of Lodi was celebrated with a lavish festa da ballo (dance) whose entrance, as generally advertised, was open to everybody and free of charge.²⁵ Ironically, that same night the French soldiers robbed Milan's charity fund of enormous quantities of gold, while shortly after the government would

order the city to pay an exorbitant tax of twenty millions francs.²⁶ Similar performances were offered to the citizens also in other French-occupied cities: in Naples, for instance, the Teatro Nazionale (former San Carlo) opened its doors free of charge to the citizens already on 28 January 1799, barely a week after the entrance of the French troops, offering patriotic ballets and hymns. The performance was constantly interrupted by republican slogans such as 'morte al tiranno' and 'viva la libertà'.²⁷

Feste da ballo, traditionally the occasions more specifically tailored to the entertainment needs of the aristocracy, also started to be offered free of charge to a significant wider number of patrons, although the more lavish ones, typically organized in La Scala, still required payment.²⁸ Only the most solemn celebrations, for instance the surrender of Mantua in February 1797, saw feste da ballo and musical performances organized in both La Scala and La Cannobiana theatres

²⁴ Giuseppe Chiappori, *Serie cronologica delle rappresentazioni drammatico-pantomimiche poste sulle scene dei principali teatri di Milano 1776-1818* (Milan: Silvestri, 1818), p. 53.

²⁵ P. Cambiasi, *La Scala 1778-1889*, p. 23 and Diego Antonio Minola, *Diario storico politico di alcuni avvenimenti del secolo XVIII* (Manuscript, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan), vol. 10, p. 30.

²⁶ D.A. Minola, *Diario storico politico di alcuni avvenimenti del secolo XVIII*, vol. 10, p. 30.

²⁷ M. Traversier, '«Transformer la plèbe en peuple»', p. 43.

²⁸ See e.g. [Avviso], 7 January 1797 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 1). A comprehensive list of these events is also contained in Appendix 2.

and offered to the people free of charge.²⁹ A good example is the series of events organized in the theatres to solemnize the first day of the republican Year IX (23 September 1800), a particularly important one since it marked the return of Lombardy to the republican regime after the ‘painful thirteen months’ under the Austrians. The events detailed in the manuscript report issued to the chief of the Police on 29 Fructidor Year VIII (17 August 1800) by the Ministry of Internal Affairs constituted a summary of the celebratory code developed during the 1796-1799 republican triennium:

The Government has decided that, in order to celebrate the first day of the upcoming Year IX of the republican era:

- 1) The opera currently staged at La Scala has to be offered to the public free of charge; the theatre will have to be lit as if it was daylight.
- 2) In La Cannobiana, equally lit, there will be a festa da ballo also free of charge.
- 3) Both theatres have to be lit also on the outside, as it is common practice in these occasions.

Please give the appropriate orders to the impresario, citizen Ricci, and affix the *Avviso* for the public.³⁰

It is rather difficult to establish whether on occasions like these the doors of La Scala were in fact opened to the whole people, including the lower social strata, or if a certain degree of control was maintained (also remembering that the aristocrats kept a significant amount of valuables inside their boxes). Under the repeated words ‘cittadini’ and ‘cittadinanza’ (citizens and citizenship) on the posters and proclamations of the Republican triennium indicate a varied audience, from the traditional aristocratic and higher bourgeois patrons to soldiers, public officers, shopkeepers, servants and much more.³¹

On the other hand, tickets for ‘regular’ performances would remain rather high, their prices remaining quite stable throughout the republican triennium. Government officers, as was the case within the previous management, benefited from a significant reduction on season tickets, paying less than half of the aristocracy and a consistently cheaper price than the rest of the citizens.³² In addition, higher-rank officers could profit from other advantages, thus re-stressing the importance of the theatre and its strong bond to the city’s political/institutional life. The members of the Directory of the Cisalpine Republic, for instance, could profit from what was

²⁹ [Avviso], 9 November 1800 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 12), *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina*, vol. 1, tome 2, pp. 118-121, P. Cambiasi, *La Scala 1778-1889*, p. 27 and G. Tintori and G. Bezzola, *I protagonisti e l'ambiente della Scala nell'età neoclassica*, p. 43.

³⁰ [Report Ministro degli interni to Commissario del Dipartimento d’Olona], 17 August 1800 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 2).

³¹ V. Ferrari, *Il Teatro della Scala nella vita e nell'arte...*, p. 20.

³² See e.g. the series of [Avvisi Teatro alla Scala to the audience], 5 November 1790 (La Scala Archive, MAN 1790), 16 February 1795 (MAN 503), 2 November 1795 (MAN 502), 24 August 1796 (MAN 496-7), October 1798 (MAN 488) and December 1799 (MAN 485), all detailing the prices for both single performances and season tickets.

considered one of the best positions within the theatre, being allocated the box previously used by the Plenipotentiary Minister of the Austrian Government.

Quite predictably, high-rank government officers, all belonging to the aristocratic layer of the society, quickly understood the importance of having a stable and prestigious position within the theatre: ironically, the members of the Directory (including major figures such as Serbelloni and Sommariva) themselves decided on the allocation of the aforementioned box. As the Minister of Internal Affairs reported to that the Police in early September 1797,

The Directory [...] has deliberated on the destination of the so-called 'institutional' boxes in the two city theatres. Among its decisions [...], there was that of designating the proscenium box in tier one on the right, previously used by the Plenipotentiary Minister, to the six Ministers of the Directory; they will be able to use it either in turns or at the same time, as they prefer. The citizen architect Canonica has already been charged with making six sets of keys to distribute among them.³³

In addition, more and more civil servants, members of the military and police corps, secretaries and clerks demanded a preferential treatment for access to La Scala, witnessing both the growing importance that the theatre had for the city's political and social life and, still, its elitist character. Free entry into the theatres being requested by an excessively large amount of people was already a well-known issue, experienced by the various personalities involved in theatrical management since the building of the Ducale.³⁴ During the 1770s and 1780s, despite the government's attempt to regulate the access to the opera house, the problem was still present, with the Viennese Court itself having to intervene: on 13 November 1787, for instance, Prince Kaunitz himself had to write to the impresario reminding him about the current rules concerning the Podestà (chief magistrate)'s exemption, that could be granted only when the latter was on duty.³⁵

Within the republican regime, benefiting from a significant discount on the theatre ticket price or from the total exemption became even more a symbol of social power. In addition to political figures and civil servants, military officers in particular demanded free regular access to La Scala, the members of the different corps and battalions openly fighting over the best possible conditions and turning theatre attendance into an element displaying social prestige.³⁶ Already during the first Carnival season under the French rule, in January 1797, the impresario of both

³³ [Letter Minister of Internal Affairs to the Minister of the Police], 3 September 1797 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 16).

³⁴ Antonio Paglicci Brozzi, *Il Regio Ducal Teatro di Milano nel secolo diciottesimo: notizie aneddotiche 1701-1776* (Milan: Ricordi, 1894), pp. 20-22.

³⁵ [Letter Prince of Kaunitz to La Scala management], 13 November 1787 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 16).

³⁶ G. Tintori and G. Bezzola, *I protagonisti e l'ambiente della Scala nell'età neoclassica*, p. 45.

Milanese theatres Gateano Maldonati wrote to the Amministrazione Generale della Lombardia,³⁷ lamenting how he had been asked to grant free entry to La Scala by the members of an entire office:

I have received a letter from the members of the second department of this Amministrazione, stating that all its members had to be exempted from paying for the theatre [...]. I can only mention the terms of my contract, where it is stated that everybody has to pay apart from three people, i.e. the Director of Theatres, the Official and the Magistrate who are on duty on a particular evening. With reference to the previous government, I can assure you that the Governor, the Plenipotentiary Minister, the city counsellors [...] and other officers that dealt with the theatre have always paid; if any of them (not more than one or two cases) has been exempted, he achieved that through dishonest means [...].³⁸

Throughout his mandate as impresario of La Scala and La Cannobiana, Maldonati, together with his colleague Andreoli, had to fight over the requests of various figures alternatively using their political or military power in order to gain a preferential position for access to and behaviour within the city theatres. The difficult cohabitation between French and Italian soldiers, the behaviour of specific corps such as the Hussars and the public demonstrations of power and arrogance were just some of the problems the direttore and the impresario had to face on a regular basis.³⁹ Not infrequently, these disputes lasted several months, some even continuing, through the Austrian interregnum, into the second Cisalpine Republic.

Getting free entry into the theatres also became the excuse for disputes informed by political and social rivalry: a notable case was that of the endless argument between the officials of the Guardia Nazionale of Lombardy and their French counterparts, the chiefs of the regular army battalions. The members of the Guardia Nazionale, especially after the proclamation of the 'free and independent' Cisalpine Republic, could not accept that their position regarding access to the theatres could be seen as inferior to that of the French officials, who were enjoying free entry into the theatre and even a dedicated box.⁴⁰ The summer and early autumn of 1797 saw a particularly voluminous correspondence being exchanged between the theatre impresarios, the Chief of the Guardia Nazionale Vergani and some of the more prominent political figures and institutions such as the members of the Milanese Direttorio esecutivo (Directory) and the Ministries of the Police and Internal Affairs.

³⁷ Until the proclamation of the Cisalpine Republic at the end of June 1797, the Amministrazione Generale would constitute the higher-rank office of the Government of Lombardy, the Municipality being the equivalent at the level of local administration.

³⁸ [Letter Maldonati to the Amministrazione Generale della Lombardia], 11 January 1797 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 16).

³⁹ I. Bettin, *La volontà di riforma...*, pp. 24-25.

⁴⁰ [Letter to Lombardy's General Administration], 31 December 1796, [Letter Chief Major Rossi to the Minister of the Police], 4 August 1797 and [Letter Chief Vergani to the Directory], 10 September 1797 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 16).

On 26 August, the Directory wrote to the Ministry of Internal Affairs reporting how Vergani had protested because his officials were not getting full exemption for theatre tickets, with such force that a temporary solution had to be devised. While the possibility of a definitive exemption still needed debating, the seven members of the Guardia Nazionale's general staff could enter the theatre without paying. However, a special note had to be written at the theatre's door and kept in case payment had to be made once the final decision was reached.⁴¹ Shortly after, on 10 September, Vergani himself wrote to the Directory lamenting that

It seemed to me rather improper and detrimental to [...] to the image of my general staff (and thus also to mine as Commander of the Guardia Nazionale), charged as they are with maintaining the order in this city and specifically in its theatres, that, while there are boxes destined to other authorities, there is not one reserved for them. They had one in the past, together with the French, when they held all of Lombardy under military control, and now that the fully sovereign Cisalpine Republic has been proclaimed, should not this state show the due respect to the chiefs of the Guardia Nazionale who serve it so willingly?⁴²

The members of the Directory were possibly intimidated by Vergani's complaints and aware of the power factually possessed by its officers. In addition, the link established between theatrical and political elements, invoking a cisalpine identity as opposed to the French one, proved itself to be a very effective argument: barely two days later, the Directory informed the Minister of Internal Affairs that Vergani and his officers could use the *Palco reale* itself, already reserved for the French *État-major*. Neither the direttore Andreoli, nor the impresario Maldonati could oppose this decision.⁴³

As a consequence of all this, a wider and more varied audience than ever before started to crowd the stalls and the gallery of the theatre, once more the centre of the city's political and social scene. Many citizens, traditionally excluded from the theatre-going experience, would see the interior of the opera house for the first time.⁴⁴ While a strong demagogic component was at play, it is also undeniable that these events caused and nurtured a significant process of re-shuffling of the theatrical audience. The republican regime and some of the occasions connected to its celebration indeed caused a democratization of some previously luxury goods, including theatre-going: although the lowest social strata's condition stayed mainly the same, the middle

⁴¹ [Letter Directory to the Minister of Internal Affairs], 26 August 1797 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 16).

⁴² [Letter Vergani to the Directory], 10 September 1797 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 16).

⁴³ [Letter Directory to the Minister of Internal Affairs], 12 September 1797 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 16).

⁴⁴ G. Barigazzi, *La Scala racconta*, pp. 28-29.

classes could gain access to a significantly wider range of experiences, both outside and inside the theatre.⁴⁵

The boxes remained the headquarters of Milan's richest and most powerful citizens. Because they remained a private, inalienable property, the government was not able to implement significant changes to their character and usage, nor to dispossess their owners, although the idea was floated. In 1798, for instance, a *Rapporto* (Report) published by the special Commission appointed with the re-organization of theatres proposed that 'within all theatres belonging to the Nation, the differences between box and box have to be eliminated; instead, one balcony has to be created, open to all the People'.⁴⁶ However, attempts were made in order to 'democratize' that particularly conservative sector as much as possible; first of all, already starting from late 1796, the Direzione dei teatri claimed the right of seizing any box left empty by the beginning of the performances and assigning it to the people.⁴⁷ As usual, it is not completely clear how wide the divide between the goodwill of the republican institutions and the reality was; no documentary evidence shows whether some of the boxes were actually left empty, nor which people, if any, could have access to them. It is possible that this practice, though advertised, was implemented rather rarely: as already mentioned, boxes were in fact almost appendices of the aristocrats' homes, thus being lavishly decorated and furbished, and used to store several valuable possessions. Finally, in accordance to the principle of equality, it was decided that all coat of arms had to be removed from the boxes, which could not show any sign of aristocratic power.⁴⁸

The government also tried to take greater control of the space that had a tighter link to the former authorities and constituted the most evident symbol of inequality within the theatre, i.e. the Palco Reale. It was initially decided that different military authorities, such as the members of the Guardia Nazionale, would share this box. However, in February 1799 the Minister of Internal Affairs reported how he intended to destroy the royal box and replace it with six regular boxes, some to be used by the 'Nation', some to be sold.⁴⁹ This plan was officially approved the following month and specific funds were allocated at the end of April.⁵⁰ The members of the Directory even ordered the performances to be interrupted after Easter so that the necessary works could be undertaken; however, since on 28 April the Austro-Russian troops entered Milan,

⁴⁵ I. Bettin, *La volontà di riforma...*, p. 14.

⁴⁶ The Report is contained in A. Paglicci Brozzi, *Sul teatro giacobino ed antigiacobino in Italia*, 1, pp. 179-184.

⁴⁷ See the the [Avvisi Direzione dei teatri], 16 November 1796, 18 January and 5 February 1797 (La Scala Theatre Archive, MAN492, MAN504 and MAN2940), also in P. Cambiasi, *La Scala 1778-1889*, pp. 26-27.

⁴⁸ R. Bianchi, 'Space and Hegemony at La Scala', p. 734.

⁴⁹ [Report Minister of Internal Affairs], 9 February 1799 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 17).

⁵⁰ [Letter Minister of Internal Affairs to the Directory] and [Letter Directory to the National Treasury], 20 April 1799 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 17).

the project was not completed.⁵¹ Attempts to physically ‘democratise’ the boxes, specifically the equivalent of the Royal Box, were also made in other cities occupied by the French army: in Lucca, for instance, the republican government proposed that the Teatro Pubblico was ‘adapted to the present system of government’ by redecorating the central box (equivalent to La Scala’s Palchettone) with tricolour flags and by bringing down the amphitheatre at the level of the stalls.⁵² Similar measures were proposed in Naples, where the local municipality was granted a grand box decorated with the new colours of the Neapolitan Republic (blue, yellow and red) and other unspecified ‘republican emblems’.⁵³

Another sector of the theatre started to acquire greater importance, namely the stalls. There, thanks to both the lower-price tickets and the free entry in the case of special events, the new audience occupied the benches whose number had to be constantly increased.⁵⁴ Lower bourgeoisies, shopkeepers, artisans and youngsters, dressed in everyday clothes, started to attend operatic and ballet performances with increasing frequency, so that the queues to enter the theatre became longer than ever before. An anonymous satirical poem reports how

[...] El correva a la Scala tutt Milan,
Tant che ciappà post boegnava ess là
Col disnà mezz in gora e mezz in
man.

[...] The whole of Milan rushed to la Scala,
So that, if you wanted to find a seat,
You had to queue while still eating your dinna.⁵⁵

This new, rather undisciplined audience quickly took and frequently re-asserted its possession of the theatrical space: the crowd positioned in the stalls loudly commented on what they did not like, from the aristocratic coat of arms still visible in the boxes to the singers or costumes on stage.⁵⁶ In addition, it was the stalls that for the first time initiated the applause and demanded encores without asking for approval from or waiting for the boxes.⁵⁷ Instead of looking up towards the Palco reale, now the singers would look down, towards the stalls.⁵⁸ The interference between audience and performance spaces became even greater and more difficult to control. On 23 November 1797, for instance, the police had to intervene to stop the encore of the prima

⁵¹ P. Cambiasi, *La Scala 1778-1889*, p. 34.

⁵² Gabriella Biagi Ravenni, ‘The French occupation of Lucca and its effects on music’ in *Music and the French Revolution*, ed. by Malcom Boyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 279-301 (p. 289).

⁵³ M. Traversier, ‘«Transformer la plèbe en peuple»’, p. 45.

⁵⁴ *Duecento anni alla Scala 1778-1978*, p. 14.

⁵⁵ V. Ferrari, *Il Teatro della Scala nella vita e nell'arte...*, p. 20.

⁵⁶ *Duecento anni alla Scala 1778-1978*, pp. 13-14.

⁵⁷ G. Barigazzi, *La Scala racconta*, p. 29 and I. Bettin, *La volontà di riforma...*, p. 5.

⁵⁸ R. Bianchi, ‘Space and Hegemony at La Scala’, p. 735.

donna's aria; the following day, La Scala's impresario had to remind the audience of the existence of a decree especially forbidding encores.⁵⁹

Such a significant widening of the audience also affected the possibility of controlling and monitoring the theatre, making safety a paramount issue. In 1797, for instance, several accidents were reported, involving unknown people trying to climb on the stage to harass female singers and dancers.⁶⁰ The Municipality had to arrange special police operations to be carried on in the

DELLA SCALA			DELLA CANNOBIANA		
Gior. del Mes.	UFFICIALI	PORTIERI	Gior. del Mes.	UFFICIALI	PORTIERI
1	Allegretti	Robi	1	Allegretti	Robi
2	Allegretti	Robi	2	Allegretti	Robi
3	Allegretti	Robi	3	Allegretti	Robi
4	Allegretti	Robi	4	Allegretti	Robi
5	Allegretti	Robi	5	Allegretti	Robi
6	Allegretti	Robi	6	Allegretti	Robi
7	Allegretti	Robi	7	Allegretti	Robi
8	Allegretti	Robi	8	Allegretti	Robi
9	Allegretti	Robi	9	Allegretti	Robi
10	Allegretti	Robi	10	Allegretti	Robi
11	Allegretti	Robi	11	Allegretti	Robi
12	Allegretti	Robi	12	Allegretti	Robi
13	Allegretti	Robi	13	Allegretti	Robi
14	Allegretti	Robi	14	Allegretti	Robi
15	Allegretti	Robi	15	Allegretti	Robi
16	Allegretti	Robi	16	Allegretti	Robi
17	Allegretti	Robi	17	Allegretti	Robi
18	Allegretti	Robi	18	Allegretti	Robi
19	Allegretti	Robi	19	Allegretti	Robi
20	Allegretti	Robi	20	Allegretti	Robi
21	Allegretti	Robi	21	Allegretti	Robi
22	Allegretti	Robi	22	Allegretti	Robi
23	Allegretti	Robi	23	Allegretti	Robi
24	Allegretti	Robi	24	Allegretti	Robi

Fig. 3.3: List detailing the police officers employed in La Scala and La Cannobiana between 1798-1799. Milan, State Archive.

theatres on a regular basis, as criminals and misfits were often infiltrating the performances profiting from the frequent free admission. A proclamation dated 8 Ventôse Year V (26 February 1797), for instance, reports how police officers had patrolled La Scala Theatre during the premiere of the pantomime *Il general Colli in Roma*, looking for the assassins of the King of Sardinia's emissary and also for several beggars and thieves (*vagabondi e borsaioli*) who often committed thefts and other crimes.⁶¹ As a result, the constant patrol of the theatres, already an important issue, became a priority of the government and was maintained and increased during the Cisalpine republic. The voluminous correspondence between important figures such as the Chief of the Police force, the Minister of Internal Affairs

and the members of the Direzione dei Teatri, still extant in La Scala Archive and in Milan's State Archive, documents a constant attention to the issue of inspecting and maintaining the order in both theatres.

A list compiled for the month of Nivôse Year VII (December 1798 - January 1799) shows how the theatres' surveillance had been attentively planned, with a set number of officers performing various duties (officer in charge, door and patrol) in both La Scala and La

⁵⁹ [Avviso Direzione dei teatri], 23 November 1797 (La Scala Theatre Archive, MAN 494) and V. Ferrari, *Il Teatro della Scala nella vita e nell'arte...*, p. 17.

⁶⁰ I. Bettin, *La volontà di riforma...*, p. 21.

⁶¹ [Avviso Municipality of Milan], 26 February 1797 (La Scala Theatre Archive, MAN 2954).

Cannobiana (Fig. 3.3).⁶² In addition, 40 members of the Guardia Nazionale and a group of French soldiers were supposedly on duty for every performance in La Scala, although many of them reportedly evaded their duties and focused on enjoying the social dimension of the evening (including taking part in the dances during the feste da ballo). Not infrequently, more soldiers than needed showed up at the theatre door, even accompanied by women in disguise.⁶³

The events organized in the Milanese theatres starting as early as May 1796 marked the moment in which the theatre programmatically became as a servant of the so-called patriotic movement and a propaganda tool of the new government, initiating a process destined to last throughout the whole republican experience.⁶⁴ The character and function of theatre-going and their complex role within the Milanese society were subjected to slow, yet constant and unavoidable changes. These changes would, on the one hand, radically modify the layout previously in force, on the other infuse the operatic world with new energy. Both the social mechanisms underpinning the theatrical experience, its regulation and the characteristics of the products offered within reflected the changes implemented by the new political and cultural agenda. The following sections will attempt to give a more detailed account of these issues.

3.2 Theatrical management during the Jacobin triennium.

Once theatre was identified as a powerful context and tool within the new social layout as it had been in the former one, the republican regime worked tirelessly in order to find new ways and occasions to both control and use it in the most effective way possible. Changing the criteria that regulated the access to the whole experience of theatre-going and creating new occasions that would better suit the social and celebratory needs of the new regime was naturally paramount; at the same time, it was also important to try to regulate the managerial and organisational aspects of theatres. In the context of Milan, a centralized regulation of theatrical management was particularly important. First, La Scala and La Cannobiana were part of a system (in force for many decades) where the theatre's survival rested on its possibility of pleasing the audience with an offering based more on celebrated performers than on the effective content (and often quality) of its performances.⁶⁵ Both impresarios and direttori had to make sure they cast the most

⁶² [List of police officers in Milan's theatres], December 1798 – January 1799 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 17).

⁶³ I. Bettin, *La volontà di riforma...*, p. 19.

⁶⁴ A. Paglicci Brozzi, *Sul teatro giacobino ed antigiacobino in Italia*, p. 45 and M. Nocciolini, 'Il melodramma nella Milano napoleonica', p. 6.

⁶⁵ V. Ferrari, *Il Teatro della Scala nella vita e nell'arte...*, p. 14.

prestigious artists available and then endlessly battle against singers (not mentioning their agents and family members) so they would honour their contractual conditions.⁶⁶

Secondly, Milan showed an extraordinarily tight link between aristocrats and theatrical management, with the box owners significantly interfering in many of the logistic and artistic choices and exerting their power over the opera house with their over-relaxed behaviour and physical ownership of the theatrical space.⁶⁷ In particular, within a very long-standing tradition, the *Cavalieri Associati* or delegates of the *palchettisti* played a paramount role in nominating the impresarios and overseeing the works to be commissioned for and performed in both theatres.⁶⁸ Alongside the impresario, the direttore arguably had the most delicate role: Andreoli's contract for 1795 shows how he had to care for both artistic and logistical aspects of theatrical management. The direttore's duties in fact included:

- 1) keeping the theatrical buildings clean, lit and heated
- 2) making sure that the theatres were kept safe from fire, in particular periodically checking that the hydraulic machines were fully operational⁶⁹
- 3) regulating the access to both theatres and avoiding any disorders during the performances
- 4) verifying that the works performed had successfully gone through the censorship process
- 5) making sure that all the artists involved in the operatic, ballet and musical performances obeyed their contract and met the audience's expectations and standards.⁷⁰

That of pleasing the audience, as already mentioned, had always been a paramount function, even a necessity within a theatrical system whose existence was deeply rooted in an aristocratic society and linked to a strong alliance between noblemen and governor(s); this function translated into a plurality of responsibilities, which Andreoli shared with his close colleague Maldonati.

With the passage, at least nominally, from an aristocracy-based patronage to a wider audience, this system had to undergo a significant transformation; furthermore, with the theatre consciously identified as a venue for propaganda and the education of the new citizens, the republican government started demanding a greater deal of power on the administration and management of both Milanese theatres. The quick transformation of the cultural and political framework demanded very sudden changes in the way the theatre was managed, which translated

⁶⁶ I. Bettin, *La volontà di riforma...*, pp. 16-19.

⁶⁷ P. Cambiasi, *La Scala 1778-1889*, pp. 345-359, K. Hansell, *Opera and ballet at the Regio ducal teatro of Milan*, p. 159 and G. Barigazzi, *La Scala racconta*, p. 11.

⁶⁸ Francesco Degrada, 'Le esperienze milanesi di Mozart: una rivisitazione critica', in *L'amabil rito: società e cultura nella Milano di Parini*, ed. by Gennaro Barbarisi et al. (Bologna: Cisalpino, 2000), II, pp. 731-750 (pp. 734-735).

⁶⁹ See also the detailed [Regolamento to observe in case of fire], 19 June 1796 (La Scala Theatre Archive, MAN 500).

⁷⁰ Egidio Bellorini, 'Disordini in teatro a Milano al tempo delle Repubbliche Cisalpina e Italiana (1796-1805)', in *Archivio storico lombardo*, 34, vol.8 (Milan: Cogliati, 1907), pp. 116-140 (pp. 117-18).

into constantly growing preoccupations for the *impresario* and *direttore*. As Vittoria Crespi Morbio has commented, ‘at the time of the Habsburgs, honouring a contract [in theatrical management] was like following a straight path whose direction was dictated by precise rules. Now [after 1796], this path became dangerously rough’.⁷¹

The *impresario* Maldonati and the *direttore* Andreoli were arguably the figures suffering the most from the change of government and framework. The necessity of frequently organizing a plurality of newly informed events to celebrate the new republican events and values, of welcoming into the theatre a wider and more varied audience, of constantly monitoring the buildings and of resolving the frequent contrasts and disorders made both roles more difficult than ever before. Often unable to make choices, but rather directly or indirectly forced to follow governmental orders to keep their positions, both Andreoli and Maldonati had to continually compromise and work within a situation characterized by endless uncertainty.⁷²

Bartolomeo Andreoli managed to keep his post throughout the Cisalpine Republic, although in a rather problematic way: the *direttore* was stripped of his title (Marquis) and given a proportionally low monthly salary of 100 liras.⁷³ He retained, at least nominally, all the duties listed in the 1795 contract, with the exception of the monitoring of the theatres and the prevention of disorders, for which a specific *Dicastero generale di Polizia* was created, at the direct orders of the Minister of Internal Affairs.⁷⁴ His responsibilities, on the other hand, grew substantially. Not only he still had to deal with the artists’ demands and the patrons’ expectations, but his aristocratic lineage and supposedly weak republican commitment were also often used as excuses to criticize his work. In August 1797, for instance, the soprano Genoveffa Canevassi Garnier, actually cast for the opera buffa *La pietra simpatica* within the autumn season, refused to sing a number which she judged a so-called ‘aria di sorbetto’, i.e. an ancillary number. The singer’s letter to Andreoli accused him of treating her unfairly, thus showing an attitude not appropriate for a true republican. In the same period, the capocomico Vincenzo Brocchetto, reprimanded because he went out late on stage, accused Andreoli of being an aristocrat and not respecting the principles of democracy.⁷⁵ Brocchetto was in fact one of the most strenuous supporters of the Republic and used more than once his patriotism and faith in the new regime as an argument to fight his battles against those who tried to impede his career.⁷⁶ Musicians were

⁷¹ Vittoria Crespi Morbio, ‘Archì di gloria’, in *La Scala di Napoleone: spettacoli a Milano 1796-1814*, ed. by Vittoria Crespi Morbio (Turin: Allemandi, 2010), pp. 15-44 (p. 16).

⁷² *Ibidem*, pp. 18-19.

⁷³ E. Bellorini, ‘Disordini in teatro a Milano...’, p. 117 and I. Bettin, *La volontà di riforma...*, p. 16.

⁷⁴ E. Bellorini, ‘Disordini in teatro a Milano...’, pp. 123-124.

⁷⁵ I. Bettin, *La volontà di riforma...*, p. 17.

⁷⁶ See, for instance, the [Letter Vincenzo Brocchetto to the *Direttorio Esecutivo*], 7 January 1798, transcribed in A. Paglicci Brozzi, *Sul teatro giacobino ed antigiacobino in Italia*, 1, pp. 63-65.

also a source of trouble: in July 1798, a group of 11 orchestral players declared to Andreoli that they had been dismissed because of the theatre managers' 'acts of despotism and irate, aristocratic desire of vengeance'.⁷⁷

Andreoli's position, continuously squeezed between different, incompatible demands, was a very difficult one. Gaetano Maldonati's situation, on the other hand, was also very problematic. According to his contract, the impresario was directly responsible for the theatres' material possessions and for its financial management.⁷⁸ With the theatrical stage becoming more and often the venue for large-scale events partially or totally dedicated to republican celebration and opened to a wide and varied audience, it became in fact increasingly difficult to keep both the material and financial aspects of the buildings under control. The Milanese audience was traditionally undisciplined; during the Jacobin triennium, thanks to both its wider size, varied composition and supposed freedom, it became even more unruly.⁷⁹

For instance, several members of the audience (including many soldiers) regularly tried to jump on the stage at the end of the performance, passing through the orchestra in order to get to the female performers (who sometimes even encouraged them). In 1797, the custom was becoming so frequent in La Cannobiana that special sentinels had to be positioned behind the sceneries.⁸⁰ The disruption of the performance and the invasion of the performance space by the audience members were sometimes even carried out in the name of the republican values. On 10 April 1798, for instance, some French officers jumped on the stage and interrupted the performance of the opera *Pirro* by Zingarelli/Gamerra because the costume worn by the soprano Maria Gazzotto (interpreting the role of the primo uomo)⁸¹ featured some black hackles, and black was the colour traditionally symbolizing England.⁸² The following evening, the singer appeared on stage with white hackles instead, but this colour also triggered angered reactions as it was associated to the aristocracy and the French monarchy.⁸³ In February 1799, the problem had not yet been solved, the comandante della piazza having to arrest a soldier because, during the ballet, he started shouting at the dancers wearing white-feather costumes.⁸⁴

The impresario was also forced to lend materials and structures for the staging of the public feasts, whose temporary structures, on the other hand, were often realised by the theatre's artists.

⁷⁷ 'uno dei soliti atti di despotismo e d'arrabbiata vendicativa aristocrazia'; E. Bellorini, 'Disordini in teatro a Milano...', pp. 119-120.

⁷⁸ As detailed in the contract between the impresario and the palchettisti, signed by Fagnani, Castelbarco and Calderari, in [Istromento camerale], 27 July 1778 (La Scala Theatre Archive, SAL 46), particularly VIII.

⁷⁹ E. Bellorini, 'Disordini in teatro a Milano...', p. 126.

⁸⁰ *Ivi*, p. 131.

⁸¹ G. Chiappori, *Serie cronologica delle rappresentazioni drammatico-pantomimiche...*, p. 58.

⁸² Giovanni De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina giusta le poesie, le caricature ed altre testimonianze dei tempi* (Milan: F.lli Dumolard, 1879), p. 211.

⁸³ A. Paglicci Brozzi, *Sul teatro giacobino ed antigiacobino in Italia*, 1, p. 113.

⁸⁴ E. Bellorini, 'Disordini in teatro a Milano...', p. 133.

The practice of employing artists active in the theatrical field to produce the apparatuses for public ceremonies dated back to the Austrian rule; for instance, in 1771 Piermarini had planned and realised the temporary structures and decoration at Porta Orientale to welcome Ferdinand's wedding procession.⁸⁶ Similarly, the real-size triumphal arch for the Feast of the Federation on 9 July 1797 was built by architects Piermarini and Canonica and decorated by painters and scenographers Landriani and Appiani.⁸⁷ In the same occasion, Maldonati also had to lend several wooden stalls and provide the Commissione per pubbliche feste with fabrics, ribbons and various objects in order to build and decorate various carriages and clothe the allegorical figures they were transporting. After the feast, several stalls were damaged or even missing, while the refund for the other materials had to be requested several times.⁸⁸ Therefore, the government's systematic use of the theatre and its resources for propaganda purposes made the financial and material management of both theatres very difficult when following a system of rules and figures coming from a system modelled on a significantly different patronage and function.

Moreover, the impresario had to pay the consequences of the numerous problems concerning the access to the theatres and the discipline and order within. Disputes about the payment for the attendance of theatrical performances and events lasted throughout the whole Cisalpine Republic, Maldonati constantly having to fight to prevent that a large number of people had free access to the theatres and thus caused profound financial losses.⁸⁹ Theatres were also subjected to the constant monitoring by military and police corps, whose members, rather than facilitating the impresario's work, often generated new problems.⁹⁰ Soldiers of all nationalities would often shamelessly neglect their duties and focus solely on enjoying the performances, while the constant rivalry between French and Cisalpine soldiers and officers also created tension and disorders: fights, sometimes making use of chairs and benches, became a daily feature of the soirees at the theatre.⁹¹

Entry fees, position within the hall, even weapons became a topic for harsh contrast: in late 1797, for instance, a soldier had to be specifically appointed to guard the Cisalpine soldiers' rifles as the French officers would often try to swap them with theirs, which were of worse quality.⁹² Dangerous conflicts also broke out between French soldiers and civilians, many of the latter carrying weapons in the theatre. Knives, representing the 'republican' weapon par excellence

⁸⁶ *Duecento anni alla Scala 1778-1978*, p. 57.

⁸⁷ *Tre secoli di vita milanese*, ed. by Achille Bertarelli and Antonio Monti (Milan: Hoepli, 1927), pp. 466-467.

⁸⁸ V. Crespi Morbio, 'Archi di gloria', p. 17.

⁸⁹ [Letter Maldonati to the Amministrazione Generale della Lombardia], 11 January 1797 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 16).

⁹⁰ [Letter Direttorio esecutivo to Maldonati], 16 August 1797 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 16).

⁹¹ *Duecento anni alla Scala 1778-1978*, p. 13 and I. Bettin, *La volontà di riforma...*, p. 19.

⁹² E. Bellorini, 'Disordini in teatro a Milano...', p. 124.

thanks to their association with the figure of Brutus, were immensely popular: several scuffles took place within the theatre walls, some even ending with victims on both sides.⁹³ Nor the rivalry between Cisalpine and French would die out after the triennium and the Austrian interregnum: in 1801, the Cisalpine soldiers, feeling overpowered by the French, even turned up at La Scala with their weapons loaded and only the prompt intervention of General Major Rossi prevented a large-scale battle to take place in the theatre.⁹⁴

In conjunction with Andreoli, Maldonati also had to deal with several problems related to the traditional, yet newly informed issue of liaising with and pleasing the audience. Within a situation based on the exaltation of the undifferentiated people as the sole theatre patron, this task became more difficult than ever. In particular, the audience's satisfaction became more and more important as the expression of the people's opinion, the responsibility for it resting on both the impresario and the direttore. In late 1798, for instance, the audience judged the performance opening the Carnival season on 26 December (*Il trionfo di Clelia* by Nasolini/Sografi and the republican ballet *Il Bruto milanese*) inappropriate (ingrato): the authorities took the matter very seriously, harshly reprimanding Andreoli, arresting Maldonati and ordering both to 'compensate the public with an appropriate spectacle'.⁹⁵ In the following days the whole cast had to undertake additional rehearsals and the whole performance was presented once more to the audience, this time successfully: the problem had apparently rested with the choreographer Garzia, who had not submitted the ballet's program to Andreoli and had not attended enough rehearsals.⁹⁶

Very precise directions were also given to Maldonati by the Dicastero centrale di Polizia in order to alert the audience should any of the artists involved in a performance fall ill. If the accident occurred before the actual performance, the impresario had to prepare appropriate avvisi stating who would not be performing and why; if, for any reason, a singer or a dancer became unable to continue with his/her role once the performance had started, the impresario himself or somebody appointed by him had to walk on stage and inform the public.⁹⁷ This was apparently an uncomfortable task, as the notoriously turbulent audience would often react quite badly; Maldonati looked for a person who could make the public announcement, promising free entry to the theatre and even a dedicated fee, but in vain. In January 1798, the impresario even

⁹³ A. Paglicci Brozzi, *Sul teatro giacobino ed antigiacobino in Italia*, 1, pp. 112-113.

⁹⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁹⁵ '... provvedere a risarcire il pubblico con uno spettacolo congruente'; [Avviso], 27 December 1798 (La Scala Theatre Archive, MAN 483) and P. Cambiasi, *La Scala 1778-1889*, p. 31.

⁹⁶ E. Bellorini, 'Disordini in teatro a Milano...', p. 114.

⁹⁷ 'Se finalmente per azzardo avvenisse che alcuno degli attori si inabilitasse a fare la sua parte durante la rappresentazione per cui ne risultasse difetto o all'opera o ai balli, sarà allora l'appaltatore tenuto di mandare sul palco scenico persona la quale ne avverta il pubblico accennando l'accidente sopraggiunto'; [Avviso Dicastero centrale di Polizia], 1 January 1798 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 17), also in P. Cambiasi, *La Scala 1778-1889*, p. 30.

wrote a letter to the Minister of Internal Affairs himself, imploring him to relieve him from this burden, but, again in vain.⁹⁸

Finally, in addition to the direttore and the impresario, other figures were involved in the monitoring of the public theatres, namely police officers (ispettori di polizia) whose duties were very often rather difficult to carry out.⁹⁹ The numerous issues related, for instance, to the turbulent and undisciplined audience, the arrogant officers and the frequent contrasts between Cisalpine and French soldiers made these ispettori, in the words of Egidio Bellorini, ‘real martyrs, forced to tolerate even the worst insults with the patience of Job and the resigned humility of a Capuchin friar’.¹⁰⁰ Theatrical management during the Jacobin triennium thus became a challenge for all the figures involved, mainly individuals who had been trained within a different system and who had to now deal with new, serious issues, as significant changes affected the frameworks underpinning the performances, the features and behaviour of the audience and the collapsing between the public and performative spheres. This context, already quite complex, was also characterized by a constant inability to implement clear rules. Significant attempts to provide the Milanese republican theatres with a specific role and framework be discussed in the next section.

3.3 Teatro patriottico: a new regolamento

*Who is not terrified upon seeing a tyrant?
Who can look at him and not remember
how much we suffered because of him?*
F.S.Salfi, *Virginia Bresciana*, Act I, scene 1.¹⁰¹

The republican government, both French and Cisalpine, entrusted the theatre with a paramount role as instrument of both propaganda and entertainment. The constant process of widening both the range of occasions in which the theatre was used and the audience that took part in the theatre-going experience generated new issues within a management system that had rested for decades on a socially and politically different context. Many figures already involved in theatrical management had to redesign their roles and competences through a constant process of compromise that often did not produce significant results. On the other hand, it became quite clear that new official regulations were also needed in order to try and discipline both theatrical

⁹⁸ [Letter Maldonati to the Minister of Internal Affairs], 21 January 1798 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 17).

⁹⁹ See e.g. [Report], 6 December 1797, transcribed in I. Bettin, *La volontà di riforma...*, pp. 73-74.

¹⁰⁰ ‘[...] veri martiri, obbligati talvolta a sopportare i peggiori insulti con la pazienza di Giobbe e la rassegnata umiltà d’un cappuccino’; E. Bellorini, ‘Disordini in teatro a Milano...’, p. 126.

¹⁰¹ ‘E a chi terror non desta l’aspetto di un tiranno? Chi guardarlo può sol, nè rimembrarne i tanti danni che ne soffrimmo?’; Francesco Saverio Salfi, *Virginia Bresciana* (Brescia: Dalla stamperia nazionale, VI. R.F., 1797), p. 6.

management and fruition and make the use of the theatre within the regime as effective and controlled as possible, a state-controlled theatre. Across all the Italian states, but specifically in the republican provinces of the North, the need for a general re-thinking of the whole theatre-making experience engaged several authors and legislators, the first supplying a newly informed repertoire for the patriotic theatres, the latter trying to conceptualize a new theatrical system and provide it with a stable regulation.¹⁰² In this sense, the years of the Jacobin triennium constituted the first period in which the governmental authorities and their delegates took action in order not to limit the theatrical activity (for instance in terms of moral or religion), but, on the contrary, to potentiate it.¹⁰³

Already on 26 July 1796, Francesco Saverio Salfi published in his *Termometro politico* an article entitled 'Norme per un teatro nazionale' ('Rules for a national theatre') in which he proposed and at the same time summarized the cornerstones for a supposedly democratic and highly educational use of the theatre.¹⁰⁴ According, to Salfi, theatre was a necessary institution within a republican society, most of all in a situation, such as Lombardy's, where a new democratic order had to be built:

If theatre's utility, despite the priests' conspiracies, has always been recognized, it is now time to realize its necessity. We have to educate the People, to cleanse it from those vices and prejudices that might cloud its vision for a new, rightful social order [...]. Now, there is no school more active or effective than theatre, whose revolution could trigger the People's revolution. The effects of theatre have always been miraculous [...]. Unfortunately, theatre had not been used until now for such a noble purpose as the freedom of a Nation [...]. Tyranny and superstition had chained it impoverish it. It is now time that theatre claims back its rights [...], that it plays its role in Lombardy's quiet revolution. I cannot think of a better mean to develop, realise and confirm it.¹⁰⁵

Salfi's vision of the theatre was therefore a pedagogical one, where the primary scope of the representation was that of communication of social and political values.¹⁰⁶ In accordance with republican principles and the cult of classical antiquity, he saw declamation as the primary instrument of education, declaring that 'the first theatre of the Republic has to be the spoken one; music and dance, being inferior, will be secondary'.¹⁰⁷ However, the most interesting aspect of Salfi's project, the first of its kind in the French-governed Italian provinces, was the

¹⁰² Milena Montanile, *I giacobini a teatro: segni e strutture della propaganda rivoluzionaria in Italia* (Naples: Società editrice napoletana, 1984), pp. 11-12.

¹⁰³ Francesco Saverio Salfi, *Teatro giacobino*, ed. by Rosanna Serpa (Palermo: Palumbo, 1975), pp. 16-17.

¹⁰⁴ C. Toscani, 'Politica culturale e teatro nell'Italia napoleonica', pp. 72-73.

¹⁰⁵ Francesco Saverio Salfi, 'Teatro nazionale', in *Termometro Politico* n. 10 (26 July 1797) transcribed in A. Paglicci Brozzi, *Sul teatro giacobino ed antigiacobino in Italia*, 1, pp. 48-50 and *Termometro Politico della Lombardia*, ed. by Vittorio Criscuolo (Rome: Istituto storico per l'età moderna e contemporanea, 1989), 1, pp. 161-165.

¹⁰⁶ Gerardo Tocchini, 'Dall'antico regime alla Cisalpina. Morale e politica nel teatro per musica di F.S. Salfi', in *Salfi librettista*, ed. by Francesco Paolo Russo (Vibo Valentia: Monteleone, 2001), pp. 19-81 (pp. 19-20).

¹⁰⁷ F.S. Salfi, 'Teatro nazionale' (Article XII).

conceptualization of a ‘national theatre’, i.e. a system in which theatrical management of all sorts had to be subjected to the governing authorities. In his article, Salfi dealt with different areas of theatrical management, the main ones being the necessity of a rigorous organization, the problem of an appropriate repertoire, the quality and training of the performers, etc. In conclusion to his article, Salfi stated that

The national theatre [...] must be supported, managed and protected by the municipalities or by those forming the governing authorities of the Nation. Given the fact that the theatre constitutes the most relevant school for the People, its management must thus be taken away from the venal claws of the impresarios, for they shamefully trade in theatrical filth.¹⁰⁸

Arguably, Salfi wrote these words also to show his patriotic attitude to Milan’s new governors and pave the way for a successful political career, but his proposal also had the merit of triggering an intense process of debate about the necessity of a re-conceptualization and re-organization of public theatre.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, despite having been repeatedly accused of excessive political opportunism, Salfi was an idealist and a firm believer of reformed theatre as an instrument of the republican government: while already fleeing the Austro-Russian repression in 1799, in 1805 he did not accept Napoleon turning the Italian Republic into a monarchy and left Lombardy forever.¹¹⁰

His idea of ‘national theatre’, moved very decisively away from the concept of theatre typical of the Enlightenment, that of an instrument of knowledge and moral education practised by the elitist circles of aristocratic amateurs and intellectuals. Although inheriting its pedagogical function, Salfi proposed a structural reformation of the theatre, which had to be professional, public and entirely devoted to the education of the whole People: the theatrical sphere, charged with a paramount civic role, was thus inseparable from the political one.¹¹¹ In this context the adjective ‘national’ (nazionale) did not mean ‘Italian’ or ‘not foreign’ (specifically not Austrian) as it would during the Risorgimento: on the contrary, Salfi meant it as ‘of the whole nation’, i.e. controlled and managed by the governmental area to play a cultural and political role, to positively impact on the society without indulging in elitism, mere entertainment or financial speculation.¹¹² Tightly linked to the governing authorities, public theatre had to replace the

¹⁰⁸ *Ibidem* (Article XIII).

¹⁰⁹ Davide Daolmi, ‘Salfi alla Scala’, in *Salfi librettista*, ed. by Francesco Paolo Russo (Vibo Valentia: Monteleone, 2001), pp. 133-177 (pp. 134-135).

¹¹⁰ F.S. Salfi, *Teatro giacobino*, p. 16.

¹¹¹ M. Montanile, *I giacobini a teatro*, p. 11.

¹¹² F.S. Salfi, *Teatro giacobino*, pp. 17-20.

religious institutions as tool of public education: interestingly, this passage was also symbolized by the act of edifying theatrical buildings on the sites of demolished churches.¹¹³

Surely, Salfi's ideas stemmed from the intense debate on the function of theatre permeating the Parisian environment in the early 1790s, which identified very clearly spoken and musical theatre as primary pedagogical tools for the education of the new republican People. One of its climatic moments was the petition disseminated by the management of the Opéra in February 1794, at the height of the Terror, proudly confirming the institution's role as 'Ecole de Patriotisme', and announcing that all its artists had joined ranks with the dramatic authors in order to present the audience with a new, appropriate repertoire.¹¹⁴ At the same time, Salfi's elaboration re-contextualized within the Cisalpine Republic can be considered the most significant experience on the Italian soil, and inspired similar debates and actions within other French-occupied Italian states. In Naples, for instance, the newly nominated Minister of Internal Affairs Conforti presented on 24 February 1799 (about a month into the French occupation) a petition expressing the need for a new theatrical repertoire that would eliminate pure entertainment and transmit only the purest republican morals. Theatre as a powerful instrument of popular education had to be managed and monitored exclusively by the State.¹¹⁵

Even if Salfi's proposal did not immediately translate into action, it prompted the authorities, to consider a state-led re-organization of public theatres and demanded the participation of the people through a series of public competitions (*concorsi*). This process was very new for a city, like Milan, that had been ruled for decades by foreign monarchs: even in the case of the Habsburg 'enlightened' reforms, changes had always come from above, the local authorities having just a peripheral role in their application, but not in their conception. The public competitions for the re-organization of the public theatres can also be considered as part of the wider phenomenon of debate and re-discussion that interested all the fields of cultural life in the Italian provinces occupied by Napoleon. These *concorsi* also represented the perfect application of the revolutionary principles of equality and involvement of the citizens in the development of society; the French government of Milan resolved to public competitions in numerous different areas of cultural, intellectual and civil life.¹¹⁶

For what concerned theatre, a first *concorso* was announced on 29 October 1797, when Salfi, in addition to a successful career as playwright and editor, had already become Minister of Public

¹¹³ 1776-1785. *Teatri a Milano (tra utopia e realtà)*, catalogue of the exhibition, Museo del Teatro alla Scala, 2 December 1972 – 3 January 1973, ed. by Giuliana Ricci (Milan: Museo teatrale alla Scala, 1973), p. 9.

¹¹⁴ M. Elizabeth C., 'The new Repertory of the Opéra during the Reign of Terror: Revolutionary Rhetoric and Operatic Consequences', in *Music and the French Revolution*, ed. Malcom Boyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 107-156 (pp. 108-109).

¹¹⁵ M. Traversier, '«Transformer la plèbe en peuple», p. 44.

¹¹⁶ C. Toscani, 'Politica culturale e teatro nell'Italia napoleonica', pp. 71-72.

Education.¹¹⁷ In the previous weeks, Salfi had been active in the neighbouring town of Brescia (also subjected to a republican regime), where he had tried to apply some of his ideas. In particular, he had written a tragedy based on local events and involving – in the Author's own words – 'the death of a wicked despot [...] and the desperation of a righteous father who is forced to sacrifice his own daughter in order to save her honour';¹¹⁸ the tragedy, entitled *Virginia Bresciana*, was dedicated to the People of Brescia (Fig. 3.4) and performed by the company directed by the notoriously Jacobin capocomico Broccoletto.¹¹⁹

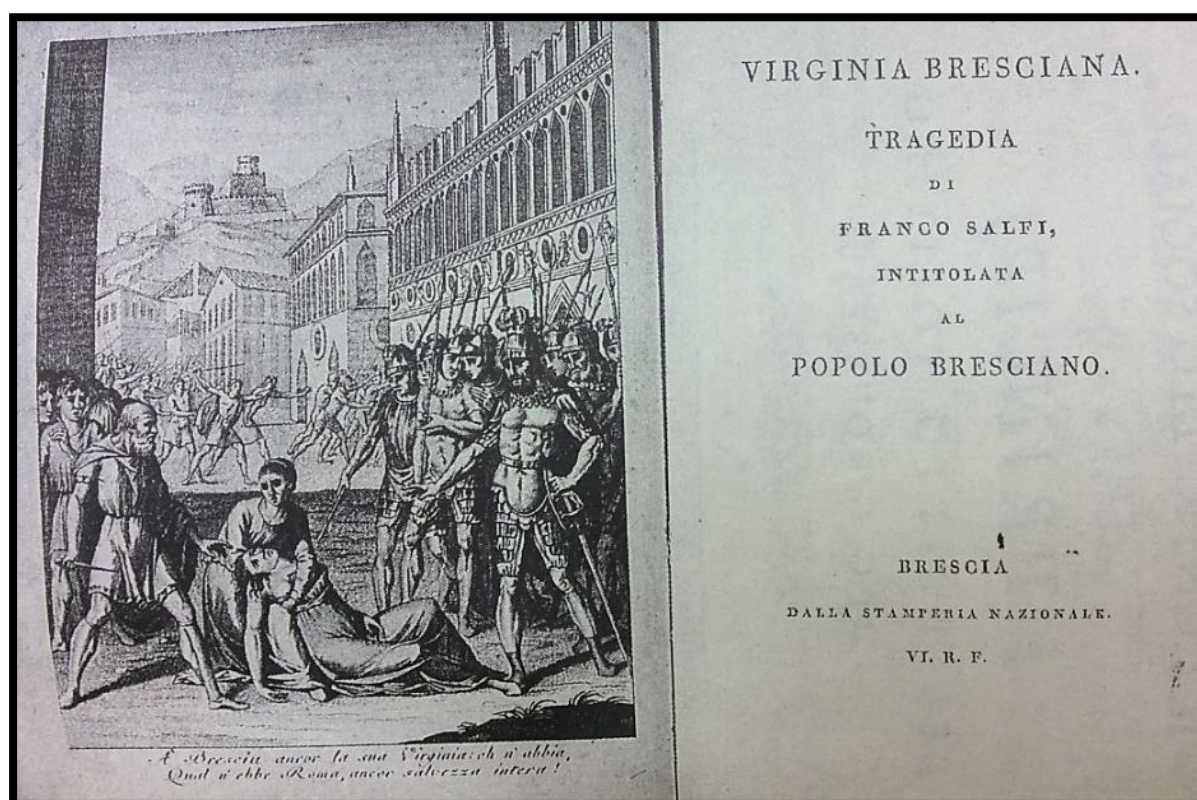


Fig. 3.4: Title page of the first edition of Salfi's *Virginia Bresciana* (Brescia, 1797).
 On the endpaper, a quotation is visible: 'May Brescia be saved through its Virginia as it was Rome before!'
 Milan, Biblioteca dell'Accademia dei Filodrammatici.

Shortly after, a Regolamento (Plan) modelled on the ideas previously expressed in the *Termometro politico* had been published by the Napoleonic government of Brescia. Although produced in a peripheral town, this Regolamento, in which Salfi undoubtedly played an

¹¹⁷ I. Bettin, *La volontà di riforma...*, p. 37.

¹¹⁸ 'la morte di un despota infame [...] e la disperazione di un padre virtuoso, costretto a sacrificare la vita della propria figlia onde salvarne l'onore'; see A. Paglicci Brozzi, *Sul teatro giacobino ed antigiacobino in Italia*, 1, p. 59.

¹¹⁹ Francesco Saverio Salfi, *Virginia Bresciana* (Brescia: Dalla stamperia nazionale, VI. R.F, 1797), pp. VII-VIII and Giovanni Azzaroni, *La rivoluzione a teatro: antinomie del teatro giacobino in Italia, 1796-1805* (Bologna: CLUEB, 1985), p. 53.

important role, has already been recognized as the basis for the State-led regulation of theatre within the whole Cisalpine Republic.¹²⁰

In fact, the Brescia Regolamentoo stated that

[...] because of all those monstrosities that, while pleasing the sterile spirit of the aristocrats, distort the People's common sense and suffocate its natural energy, we [the republican government of Brescia] declare that from now on, no operas can be performed on our stages [...] until their character, topic and music have been reformed according to the principles of reason and democracy [...].¹²¹

These general principles were complemented by a much longer list of practical rules devised in order to apply them within every aspect and moment of the theatrical experience. The compilers did not omit any detail, also dedicating some attention to musical elements. For instance, the orchestra employed in the theatre had to be composed of skilled musicians who also had to be sensible to the republican values: their role was in fact that of contributing to the performances by enhancing the passions and topics expressed by the actors/singers, but also that of keeping the audience engaged in the intervals in between acts by playing appropriate pieces of music.¹²² In general, the Brescia regolamento (although, once more, it is not clear how effectively it could be applied) programmatically put every aspect of theatrical management, choices and monitoring under the centralized control of the State, a totally new concept.

The government of Milan reacted quite quickly to the incentives offered by its neighbours. On 29 October 1797, following the proclamation of the Cisalpine Republic (29 June), the Minister of Internal Affairs Ragazzi (tightly connected to the theatrical sphere as chief of the Dicastero centrale di Polizia) published the following proclamation initiating the first public competition for the reorganization of public theatre:

Cisalpine citizens,

In this time, when all authorities are working very hard in order to devise a Plan for national education that can imprint into the Youth's minds the sacred principles of Liberty and Equality and into their minds the love for virtue and their Fatherland, the Minister of Internal Affairs has turned his attention towards theatre.

This useful institution, which has already taught many Nations morals and the art of both exciting and disciplining passions without fearing the excesses of fanaticism, had become for us the school of error, adulation and vice. Despots, preferring corrupted, ignorant and stupid citizens rather than virtuous, enlightened and reasonable ones, had willingly left this sentimental school (*scuola del sentimento*) in the hands of venal merchants [...].

The Direttorio Esecutivo wishes to bring back this most noble institution to its first dignified state and, following the examples of the masters of Freedom, the Greeks and the French, to incite the souls of the Cisalpine to compete in the name of the great [...]

¹²⁰ A. Paglicci Brozzi, *Sul teatro giacobino ed antigiacobino in Italia*, 1, pp. 67-68.

¹²¹ As one would expect, the Brescia Regolamentoo was published in Salfi's newspaper, precisely on 4 November 1797; see *Termometro politico della Lombardia*, 3, pp. 278-279.

¹²² *Ibidem* (Article VIII).

republican passions; I have thus been authorized to offer the prize of forty sequins to whom will have presented the Ministry of Internal Affairs with the best project for the organization of the National Theatres within a deadline of two months.¹²³

This was only the first of a series of public competitions proposed by the government of Milan, which continued to re-open the concorso for the re-organisation of public theatres until the arrival of the Austro-Russian forces in 1799. Each concorso saw the presentation of proposals that were judged either not appropriate or not applicable and the Jacobin triennium came to an end without the forty-sequin prize being officially awarded, nor the official selection and implementation of a specific plan.¹²⁴ Many of the projects presented were characterized by a strong moral component and were almost completely lacking in practical sense, for instance proposing to completely suppress the figure of the impresario and disband all companies of actors and singers. Others were focusing on the harsh condemnation of the system and repertoire in force until then, asking all existing plays and operas to be burned with the exception of those musical tunes that, for their intrinsic quality, could be effectively adapted to new subject material.¹²⁵

One way or the other, no effectively applicable plans were proposed through the public competition system within the Republican triennium. However, it is undeniable that the intense and widespread process of rethinking, questioning and debating caused different interesting ideas to emerge: comparative reading of some of the documents produced within this period allows several innovative concepts to be highlighted, ones that push several aspects of theatre forward. Particularly for what concerns the hyper-traditional world of musical theatre, the need for a newly informed system and the public competitions had the merit of making individuals with different backgrounds and abilities reflect on topics such as the theatrical purpose, organization and management. The main angle was understandably informed by a precise political agenda; however the debate produced some concepts that seem to generally hint at a more modern concept of theatre.

One of the main characteristics underpinning the new concept of theatre and its organisation as school of the People was that of being professional as a public institution, with total control over its management: this clashed with different aspects of the system in force throughout the eighteenth century.¹²⁶ In early 1798, when the process of reorganization of public theatres was already under way, Salfi reported from the columns of the *Termometro politico* that

¹²³ [Proclaim Minister of Internal Affairs], 29 October 1797, in P. Cambiasi, *La Scala 1778-1889*, p. 29.

¹²⁴ Remo Giazotto, *Le carte della Scala. Storie di impresari e appaltatori teatrali (1778-1860)* (Pisa: Akademos, 1990), p. 35.

¹²⁵ C. Toscani, 'Politica culturale e teatro nell'Italia napoleonica', pp. 73-74.

¹²⁶ G. Azzaroni, *La rivoluzione a teatro*, p. 49.

The theatrical reformation, desired by the virtuous, decreed by the government of Brescia, initiated [in Milan] by the Minister of Internal Affairs and then passed on to the whole Cisalpine Republic, starts to alarm all those who see in the resurgence of the appropriate morals the ruin of their own interests. The crowd of actors, singers, dancers and especially merchants, who nurture the general vice [...], is conspiring against the holiest of all institutions [...]. Theatre has to be reformed, as everything else that has any effect on our customs: it is needed by our laws, by our government [...]. Theatre must not be considered, as the impresarios profess, a mere object of entertainment. This was indeed the tyrants' conception [...] Bread and circuses, these were always the tools to mollify the slaves. Now that first duty of the People is that of caring for the public things as their own families, theatre [...] must become a school of politics and public education.¹²⁷

The necessity of disciplining this traditionally unruly world entirely devoted to entertaining the audience without causing a direct effect on their conscience, came from figures both inside and outside the theatre. In 1798, a Rapporto (Report) produced by the appositely nominated Commissione sui Teatri (Theatres Commission) stated that

In every civilized nation, the history of theatre has always marched parallel to that of its government: as a guarantor of its customs and an enemy of the tyrants [...], theatre represents the most reliable mirror of the people's spirit and moral character. This observation teaches us how theatre, which naturally takes its physiognomy from the government, is then able to transmit it to men; thus, it constitutes one of the greatest instruments of politics [...]. Freedom, born again among us, must finally claim its rights also on theatre. It is time that theatre is purged from the infamies coming from the tyrants' empire and comes back to the bright days of Athens. The Cisalpine people strongly demands this regeneration.

[...] Poetry, eloquence, music and rhetoric will not be anymore corrupted by an infamous slavery. We will not allow that any other cause is served if not that of the people's freedom. We will not recognize any other man apart from the citizen [...].

Across the territory of the Cisalpine Republic, theatre is destined to make public education pleasant for the People. All performance arts and tools must respond solely to this purpose, that is to say tragedies, comedies, music, dance and decorative elements [...].

Every year, the office in charge of the executive power will elect a Disciplinary Commission for the Theatre (Commissione di Disciplina Teatrale) which will be formed by ten citizens of great patriotism; they will be charged of regulating every genre of theatrical performance with reference to educational value, morals and good taste.

This office will also publish a yearly bulletin (nota) detailing all the pieces to be performed within the Republic and prescribing which music, decorations and ballets will have to be included in those performances. Besides, the Commission is also authorized to order the performance of any new pieces that are judged appropriate for the People [...]. Public competitions for the production of new pieces will be also regularly offered [...].¹²⁸

¹²⁷ *Termometro politico della Lombardia*, 4, pp. 9-12.

¹²⁸ [Rapporto della Commissione sui Teatri], 1 Giugno 1798 (Library of the Conservatory 'Giuseppe Verdi' of Milan, Fondo Somma, box 2).

Starting from 1797, numerous avvisi and proclaims also started to be produced to discipline various aspects of theatrical attendance and make theatre a more and more effective tool of public utility: new rules were created re: for instance, the use of masks during the dance feasts, the practice of gambling, the salaries of the orchestra players and the duties of soldiers and police officers.¹²⁹

In the same period, Bartolomeo Andreoli himself, possibly exasperated by the difficulties he was experiencing from the beginning of the republican regime and, at the same time, willing to show his good will in subjugating the theatrical world to a stronger discipline, wrote his own

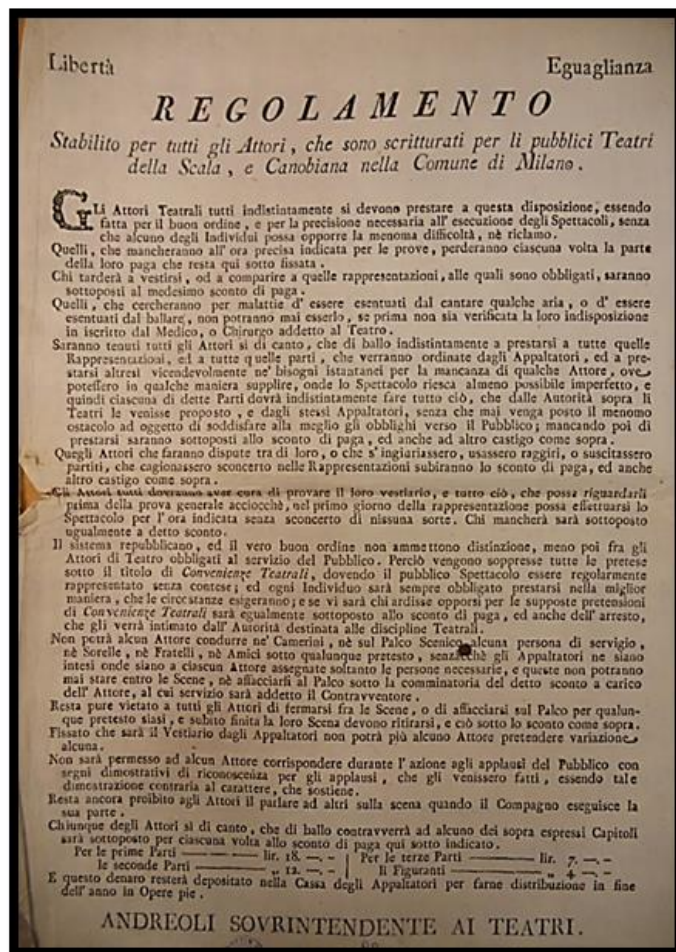


Fig. 3.5: Regolamento written and printed by Bartolomeo Andreoli, n.d. (late 1798). Milan, State Archive.

regolamento (Fig. 3.5)¹³⁰. The direttore had even tried to participate in the 1798 edition of the public concorso, but his plan, which has not survived, did not impress the judges.¹³¹

Andreoli's regolamento, spontaneously produced outside any public competition, offers an interesting insight into the point of view of the Direttore dei Teatri, one of the figures more directly involved into the management of public theatres and the changes caused by the mutated political conditions. It is sensible to wonder whether the issues raised by the direttore were solely motivated by his will of managing the theatres based on the principles of public utility and republican virtues or if he also tried to seize the occasion to try and further

control the rather unruly world he had been trying to discipline for more than a decade. As had been the case numerous times before, the republican authorities did not tolerate spontaneous

¹²⁹ R. Giazotto, *Le carte della Scala*, p. 35. See also the two [Regolamenti for the Feste da ballo], 14 January 1798 and 11 January 1799, in P. Cambiasi, *La Scala 1778-1889*, pp. 31-34.

¹³⁰ *Duecento anni alla Scala 1778-1978*, p. 14.

¹³¹ E. Bellorini, 'Disordini in teatro a Milano...', p. 121.

initiative outside the State-drawn borders: the regolamento, which Andreoli had printed and submitted to the Minister of the Police for approval, caused him to be harshly reprimanded.¹³²

Andreoli's attention seems to focus mainly on disciplining the artists, especially the singers. While he clearly stated that the rules he was proposing were motivated by republican values and that all performers were servants of the People, the problems he tackled are easily recognizable as issues every impresario and theatre manager experienced throughout the second half of the eighteenth century.¹³³ Particularly, Andreoli stated that

All theatre performers (*attori*) must obey these rules as they are made for the general order and for the discipline necessary so that performances can take place without any individual posing obstacles or complaints [...]. The republican system and the need for a real discipline (*ordine*) do not allow for any distinction, most of all among theatre performers, who are obliged to work for the public service. All demands known as *convenienze teatrali* are thus hereby suppressed, for the performances must take place without any contrast; every individual must serve in the best way possible based to the circumstances [...]. Should anybody protest, s/he will be punished with a fine or even arrested by the authority entrusted with the discipline the theatres.¹³⁴

Andreoli drafted a list of rules covering virtually every privilege and/or 'tradition' inherited by performers (especially singers) from the previous century: for the first time, they were harshly disciplined, their status being equalized to that of simple workers within the theatre. The list of both duties and prohibitions was long and detailed. For instance, singers had to rehearse, arrive on time both at the rehearsals and in the evening, sing everything that was included in their role, take part in all the performances and wear the costumes provided by the management. Absences or even delays were persecuted with harsh fines, without any excuse being accepted: when singers were ill and not able to perform, their condition had to be even certified by an accredited surgeon. It was also explicitly forbidden to fight with the other performers, to bring anybody behind the stage and in the dressing rooms without informing the management and to stay on the stage after the end of one's scene, even to receive applause.

As already mentioned, Andreoli's regolamento was rejected by the authorities, who did not allow him to go further and implement it within theatrical organization. Only at the end of 1799, after the fall of the first Cisalpine Republic and the return of the Austrians, would Andreoli (now Regio Direttore dei Teatri) manage to publish his regolamento, the republican cause replaced

¹³² *Ibidem*, pp. 121-122.

¹³³ John Rosselli, *L'impresario d'opera* (Turin: EDT, 1985), It. transl. of *The Opera Industry from Cimarosa to Verdi* (Cambridge: CUP, 1984), pp. 5-7.

¹³⁴ Bartolomeo Andreoli, [Regolamento stabilito per tutti li Attori che sono scritturati per li pubblici Teatri della Scala, e Cannobiana nella Comune di Milano], n.d., possibly early 1798 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli pubblici P.A., folder 17).

with justifications based on the persisting need for discipline and order.¹³⁵ On the other hand, it is once again very difficult to understand whether the direttore's rules were effectively applied, also because of the brevity of the Austro-Russian interregnum. With the public concorsi also failing to produce an official plan, the republican triennium factually ended without a proper re-organization of the Milanese public theatres. Specific actions were undertaken *ad hoc* either to solve specific situations or to tackle minor issues, but the general re-conceptualization wished for by the new regime did not happen. In addition, the ultimate brevity of the Jacobin experience made it even more difficult to implement long-lasting changes.¹³⁶ Anyway, these years constituted a very important moment in which, though in the name of a specific political ideology, the traditional system of theatrical management was opened by different figures to analysis and discussion. Some of the ideas resulting from this process, especially a different, more modern theatrical system and relationship between theatre and institutions, were to play a significant role in the years to come.

¹³⁵ Bartolomeo Andreoli, [Regolamento per tutti gli Attori che sono scritturati per li Teatri alla Scala ed alla Cannobiana di Milano], s.d. (late 1799), in P. Cambiasi, *La Scala 1778-1889*, p. 36 and Giorgio Taborelli, *Milano capitale della musica* (Rome: Editalia, 2000), p. 156.

¹³⁶ F.S. Salfi, *Teatro giacobino*, p. 49.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PATRIOTIC REPERTOIRE (1796-1799)

4.1 Teatro patriottico: old and new conventions

*Among all the fine arts, music is the one
that exercises the greatest influence on men, and is the one
which the legislator should most encourage.
A musical composition created by a master-hand makes an
unfailing appeal to the feelings, and exerts a far greater influence
than a good work on morals, which convinces our reason without
affecting our habits.*
Napoleon Bonaparte, 26 July 1797¹

It seems entirely logical that, with a regime willing to exploit musical theatre as a tool of both control and propaganda, the modification of the repertoire offered would be the first and most evident measure to be implemented. In post-1789 France, despite the strong association between the opera (most of all that serious works) and the court, the government of Paris had already promoted musical theatre as a form of self-representation, encouraging both the production of a repertoire celebrating the new republican values and the inclusion of non-operatic elements such as revolutionary tunes and symbols.² It can be argued that in France, opera was integrated into all major changes, from the absolute monarchy through the political turmoil of the revolutionary experiences, and used by the various ruling authorities as a symbolic representation of both the state and its government. As a popular social need also absolving a significant economical function, opera could be considered a symbol of continuity which had to find a place in the new order.³

With the law of 13 January 1791 according the freedom of theatre and the subsequent increase of institutions in the French capital (from three to more than 60 in just two years), the theatrical offering significantly grew, as did its importance within the propaganda system.⁴ On the one hand, the operas performed in all Parisian theatres were supposed to present subjects suitable for republican celebration; on the other hand, composers were expected (when not obliged) to provide music for public celebratory occasions outside the theatre.⁵ Even Paris's most elitist and royalist

¹ Letter written by Napoleon in Milan; see J.-G. Prod'homme and Frederick H. Martens, 'Napoleon, Music and Musicians', in *The Musical Quarterly*, vol. 7, n. 4 (October 1921), pp. 579-605 (p. 584).

² Robert C. Ketterer, 'Roman Republicanism and Operatic Heroines in Napoleonic Italy: Tarchi's *La congiura pisoniana* and Cimarosa's *Gli Orazi e i Curiazi*', in *Operatic Migrations. Transforming Works and Crossing Boundaries*, ed. by Roberta Montemorra Marvin and Downing A. Thomas (Burlington: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 99-124 (p. 99) and Ruth Berenson, *The Operatic State. Cultural Policy and the Opera House* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 106-107.

³ Winton Dean, 'Of Kings and Barricades', in *Essays on Opera* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 114.

⁴ 'Code des Codes', ed. by Adolphe Crémieux and François Balson, 1 (Paris: Fanjat, 1835), p. 284.

⁵ Anthony Arblaster, *Viva la Libertà! Politics in Opera* (London; New York: Verso, 1992), pp. 45-46.

theatre, the Opéra (former Académie Royale de Musique), which, more than any other institution, had been committed to the celebration of the monarchy, successfully transitioned into the new representational system: re-christened 'Opéra National', it remained the theatre of the new élite (i.e. the politically and economically active part of the population) with the new purpose of celebrating and serving the Republic.⁶ This 'freedom of theatre' was, however, destined to be short-lived: between 1806 and 1811, Napoleon, now Emperor of the French, decreed the closure of almost all public theatres and the subjugation of a few remaining ones (the so-called 'national theatres') to a centralized administrative system. Now representing the glory of the Empire, all opera theatres (the Opéra in primis) were heavily funded by the central government and expected to repay their investment and earn the city a great deal of money; Napoleon himself – according to contemporary commentators – had little taste for music and went very rarely to the opera, but was aware of the importance of musical theatre and funded it generously.⁷

In the case of Milan, as already argued, both the operatic repertoire and the theatrical building had also been constantly exploited by the governing authorities as the most popular cultural product and visible venue, respectively; in addition, the city's main theatre (the Ducale or La Scala) had traditionally been tightly linked to the cultural and social élites, which considered it not only a paramount social need, but also a significant financial investment. Within the republican experience heavily affecting many other cultural media, one could have expected at least a rather noticeable switch of the whole operatic and ballet repertoires towards more republican/democratic subject material, or even a significant importation of French repertoire or features. On the contrary, the analysis of the operas performed during the republican triennium does not reveal much change in the nature of the repertoire. The bold words contained in the newspapers, avvisi and drafts of regolamenti did not translate into a significant revolution of the repertoire. A similar situation, the theatrical repertoire showing no significant modifications as opposed to other genres such as religious music, is documented in French-occupied Lucca, thus confirming the resistance of the operatic sphere to external penetration.⁸

It is worth remembering that the Milanese theatres worked according to a system strongly embedded within a specific society: both seasons and their content were in fact shaped on the habits and activities of the aristocracy. One of the main struggles of the impresario was that of organizing the performances within the seasons, making sure that all the operas and artists

⁶ M. Elizabeth C. Bartlet, 'The new Repertory of the Opéra during the Reign of Terror: Revolutionary Rhetoric and Operatic Consequences', in *Music and the French Revolution*, ed. Malcom Boyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 107-156 (p. 108).

⁷ W. Dean, 'Of Kings and Barricades', pp. 115-116.

⁸ Gabriella Biagi Ravenni, 'The French occupation of Lucca and its effects on music' in *Music and the French Revolution*, ed. Malcom Boyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 279-301. (p. 284).

involved were rightly chosen according to the time of the year, and that each season also had the right amount of dances and banquets. In other words, in order to maintain his position, the impresario had to keep the aristocratic patrons entertained and satisfied by complying with the system and its rules as much as possible; it was an immensely complex job that very often did not translate into sound financial management.⁹ The republican regime and subsequent changes in both the patrons and supposed role of the theatre was naturally destined to modify also the way in which the repertoire was commissioned, realized and structured within the seasons: on the other hand, the case of the Milanese theatres was still a particularly complex one as the impresario and direttore were also acting as indirect delegates of the aristocratic patrons and owners of the theatre.¹⁰

At the time of the French occupation, the impresario of both Milanese theatres was still the already mentioned Gaetano Maldonati, whose contract was due to terminate in three years' time.¹¹ Despite the amount of attention dedicated to the theatre from the very beginning of the republican regime, the first document witnessing real changes in terms of repertoire dates to the end of 1798. With the end of Maldonati's contract approaching, the Minister of Internal Affairs struggled to look for his successor(s): two public calls ended without a candidate wishing to become impresario in the current conditions.¹² Finally, on 18 October, a new contract for the management of La Scala and La Cannobiana was stipulated between the government of the Cisalpine Republic and the citizens Francesco B. Ricci and Giovanni B. Gherardi and was valid until the 1806-1807 season.¹³ The two new impresarios had been chosen not only for their supposed financial skills, but also for their willingness to obey the numerous rules in terms of administration, discipline and artistic choices.¹⁴

The contract (signed, among others, by Salfi) provides many interesting information about the theatrical system and repertoire wished for by Milanese republican authorities, although, once again, it is rather difficult to assess whether these rules were successfully applied or not. The 1798 contract stated that

Concerning the performances at La Scala theatre, the impresario is obliged to offer three opere serie and four opere giocose; at least two out of the three serie and two of the four giocose have to be newly composed, while the others will be chosen among the works which have already been successfully performed in other democratic countries, and

⁹ J. Rosselli, *L'impresario d'opera*, pp. 3-4.

¹⁰ See e.g. the [Istromento camerale], 27 July 1778 (La Scala Theatre Archive, SAL 46), R. Giazotto, *Le carte della Scala*, pp. 8-10 and G. Barigazzi, *La Scala racconta*, p. 9.

¹¹ R. Giazotto, *Le carte della Scala*, pp. 29-30.

¹² D. Daolmi, 'Salfi alla Scala', pp. 155-56.

¹³ Agostina Zecca Laterza, 'Vincenzo Federici: un musicista per la Repubblica Cisalpina', in *D'un opéra l'autre: hommage à Jean Mongrédien*, ed. by Jean Gribenski (Paris: Université de Paris Sorbonne, 1996), pp. 331-338 (p. 331).

¹⁴ R. Giazotto, *Le carte della Scala*, pp. 40-41.

subjected to the Cisalpine government's approval; also, four newly composed balli eroici in addition to the usual [balli] giocosi and twelve feste da ballo. The opere serie must be performed in winter for a period of not less than three months, starting roughly from the [end of the] autumn holidays [...].

The impresario himself must choose and pay the best poets [librettists] available in Italy to write the serious and heroic dramas [librettos], which will be presented to the government for approval six months before their performance. Should the government itself choose a librettist [...], the impresario will be obliged to employ him. No ballet, opera, comedy or tragedy will be performed prior to its approval by the government. The subject matter must be patriotic, lead to the triumph of virtue and completely adhere to the values of the democratic government. The impresario cannot refuse to perform those patriotic works that will be given to him in due time, given that they are suited to the stage and do not cause an excessive expenditure.

In La Cannobiana, three operas, either serie or giocose, must be offered, of which at least two newly composed ones [...]. During the year, there will be spoken theatre offered alternately by an Italian and a French company. This will be organized so that the same piece will be performed first by the French and the following evening by the Italians: this alternation will introduce a sort of emulation and the passage of taste and skills from one to the other.¹⁵

It can be observed how, despite the republican rhetoric, the overall structure of the seasons did not change significantly from the previous years: the contract and several other programmes to be found in La Scala archive clearly show, for instance, how Carnival was still characterized by the performance of opere serie, and hosting the most prestigious premieres. Despite the republican regime, the impresario still had to wait for the autumn holidays to end and for the aristocrats to come back to Milan from their countryside palaces.¹⁶ Similarly, the seasons other than Carnival saw mainly comic works (opere giocose) being offered, including a small number of premieres.¹⁷ The role and features of the ballets within the different seasons were also kept roughly unchanged, with two 'heroic' (i.e. dramatic) works performed in addition to serious operas and one comic ballet (ballo giocoso) offered in conjunction to each opera buffa.¹⁸ Finally, all seasons also saw the offering of feste da ballo, the most lavish being offered, once again, during Carnival.

On the other hand, the role of spoken theatre, although already present in both theatres, grew more important, especially in La Cannobiana: here, the impresario had to create two stable companies of actors, one Italian and one French, who had to play alternately. Considering that the level of literacy among the lower strata was quite low, spoken theatre was in fact identified as a

¹⁵ [Contratto Ricci and Gherardi], 18 October 1798 (Milan State Archive, Notarile 46804), also in R. Giazotto, *Le carte della Scala*, pp. 41-42 and A. Zecca Laterza, 'Vincenzo Federici', pp. 331-332.

¹⁶ See also [Program for the 1800 Carnival season], 20 December 1799 (La Scala Theatre Archive, MAN 485).

¹⁷ See [Avviso for the 1793 Lent season] and [Program for the 1796 Autumn season] (La Scala Theatre Archive, MAN 2994 and 496, respectively).

¹⁸ See the catalogue of ballets performed in La Scala from 1790 to 1802, in Appendix 1.

particularly democratic vehicle of education for the people.¹⁹ The growing importance of theatre can also be observed in other French-occupied cities: a singular case is that Lucca, where comedies and plays started to be performed a lot more often than operas, up to the point that in October 1802, the aristocracy had to result to amateur musicians in order to stage the first operatic production since Carnival 1801.²⁰

In the case of Milan, a new theatrical tradition had to be set in motion, a tradition going behind the amateur experiences of the aristocrats, the moral theatre practised in the religious colleges or the inflamed monologues recited during the public feasts. La Cannobiana, already born as a less prestigious venue for musical performances, became more and more separated from La Scala: here, a smaller and ironically more educated audience came to watch some of first fruits of the Italian theatre together with the latest works triumphing on the French scenes.²¹ The circulation and dissemination of French theatrical texts, present in Northern Italy since the late 1770s, experienced a significant increase, with numerous translations (including the works of Voltaire and the so-called 'tragédies larmoyantes') and editions.²²

La Cannobiana also became an extremely politicized venue, hosting many performances given by the infamous patriotic club known as Società Patriottica: its members had received the former theatre of the Collegio de' Nobili, not far from La Scala, but were authorized to use La Cannobiana in particularly important or solemn occasions.²³ This theatre hosted some of the most extreme fruits of patriotic theatre; an infamous example is the comedy *Il conclave* by Antonio Ranza (1797), which can be considered the most anticlerical piece produced in the republican triennium. Set in 1774 during the conclave that elected the current Pope Pius VI, it pictured the cardinals as gluttonous villains devoted to fighting and fornicating.²⁴ Antonio Paglicci Brozzi caustically commented how

These performances, public and free of charge, constituted the occasions the republican authorities had long dreamed of; therefore the Società Patriottica (striving to disseminate and apply all the new ideas) realised them. Everybody was very excited to see an ignorant and enthusiastic audience frequently screaming 'Hail!' or 'Death!' depending on which passion was represented on stage. Outside the door, a republican guard covered with feathers and colours [...] invited passers-by to come in, addressing in particular the commoners.²⁵

¹⁹ C. Toscani, 'Soggetti romantici nell'opera italiana...', p. 13.

²⁰ G. Biagi Ravenni, 'The French occupation of Lucca...', pp. 290-291.

²¹ R. Giazotto, *Le carte della Scala*, pp. 41-42.

²² C. Toscani, 'Soggetti romantici nell'opera italiana...', p. 14.

²³ A. Paglicci Brozzi, *Sul teatro giacobino ed antigiacobino in Italia*, 1, pp. 46-47 and D. Daolmi, 'Salfi alla Scala', pp. 136-137.

²⁴ Antonio Ranza, *Il conclave del 1774 dramma rivoluzionario da recitarsi a cristiana istruzione in tutti i teatri dell'Italia rigenerata nel 1797* (Milan: Ranza, 1797).

²⁵ A. Paglicci Brozzi, *Sul teatro giacobino ed antigiacobino in Italia*, 1, p. 121.

The custom of offering free theatrical performances to the commoners in order to celebrate a certain ideological framework could be seen as dating back a long time before the Austrian rule and further into the Renaissance; however, their use to invoke a programmatic destruction of the former authorities was rather innovative.²⁶

While these events were taking place in La Cannobiana, La Scala remained and became even more the centre of Milanese life for musical theatre. The authorities directly encouraged the emulation and importation of French theatrical pieces; however the musical works had to be presented by Italian artists. What was needed was in fact the creation of a local repertoire that balanced the necessity to communicate new values and exalt the new rulers with the many traditional features embedded in the current theatrical system. In comparison to spoken theatre and ballet, the operatic repertoire showed only a few significant changes: as Giuseppe Barigazzi already noted, it was ‘just brushed lightly by the new times’.²⁷

4.2 A new repertoire?

*All arts have to celebrate Liberty, including music.
It is through singing that the People honour a deity,
and Liberty is the deity of all republican People.
Journal général de France, January 1794*²⁸

Still, some changes had to be implemented so that opera could also become an instrument of the regime and a vehicle of social and political values. In Paris, the backbone of the repertoire and theatrical system had not changed drastically in the first year of the Revolution, but after the fall of the monarchy (August 1792), the process of transition of the operatic theatre into an institution committed to the new order was subjected to a significant acceleration. In the name of the new regime, and complying with the theatre’s newly contextualized didactic purpose, the repertoire had been subjected to several drastic measures: old operas were revised, new ones, exploiting both classical and recent national history, were composed, ballets were heavily manipulated.²⁹ The conventions of opera seria, the genre which was more deeply rooted in the old world of aristocracy, had not been refused in toto, but had rather been revised and adapted to those of the *opéra comique*, e.g. through the inclusion of spoken dialogue in between musical numbers.³⁰

²⁶ 1776-1785. *Teatri a Milano*, p. 10.

²⁷ ‘L’opera era stata solo sfiorata dai tempi nuovi’; G. Barigazzi, *La Scala racconta*, p. 29.

²⁸ ‘Tous les Arts doivent célébrer la Liberté, & la Musique aussi. C’est par des chants que les Peuples honorent la Divinité, et la Liberté est la Divinité des Peuples Républicains’; quoted in E. C. Bartlett, ‘The new Repertory of the Opéra...’, p. 108.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 108-109.

³⁰ Anthony Arblaster, *Viva la Libertà! Politics in Opera* (London; New York: Verso, 1992), p. 46.

In Milan, the rather conservative system and management demanded a rather slow and careful implementation of changes. The first measure undertaken while working on longer-term changes was that of adding or juxtaposing republican elements to pre-existing repertoire; in similar fashion to what had been happening in the Parisian theatres,³¹ the 1798 Rapporto clearly stated that patriotic music had to be sung or at least played in between the acts of both operas and theatre pieces.³² Besides, this practice started well before 1798: a notable example is that of *L'astuta in amore*, a comic opera with music by Valentino Fioravanti and libretto by Giuseppe Palomba, which the French governors found already programmed for the 1796 autumn season. Very traditional in setting and story, the opera included a happy ending in which triumphing love was celebrated by all the characters and a choir of peasants. The libretto shows how a pre-existing patriotic hymn in French was artificially inserted into this final scene, regardless of the setting and language. In fact, the choir suddenly declares how 'un bel canto patriottico francese ('a nice French patriotic song') is the best way to show communal joy and starts singing the hymn (Fig. 4.1).³³

On the other hand, the contemporary manuscript score extant in the library of the Milan Conservatory shows no trace of this: the choir does not mention the French hymn at all, ending with the words 'andiamo a festeggiar' ('let us go to celebrate') followed by a very traditional finale and coda (Fig. 4.2).³⁴ This suggests that insertions like this had a rather occasional character and were quickly agreed upon and realised, thus often leaving no trace in the musical evidence. Besides, the performance of patriotic music in the Parisian theatres was already structured on the systematic re-use of pre-existing tunes, which were also quickly re-adapted to new lyrics and occasions: a flyer with the new text was then everything that was needed to trigger the audience's participation, the original tune being already familiar to everybody on and off stage (see e.g. Fig. 4.3). While ephemerality is typical of many celebratory elements implemented by the republican regime, it makes also rather difficult to establish how often such events took place.

³¹ Constant Pierre, *Les Hymnes et les Chansons de la Révolution* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1904), pp. 9-11.

³² [Rapporto della Commissione sui Teatri], 1 June 1798 (Library of the Conservatory 'Giuseppe Verdi' of Milan, Fondo Somma, box 2), p. 2 (Article 8).

³³ Giuseppe Palomba, *L'astuta in amore. Drame giocoso per musica da rappresentarsi nel Teatro Grande alla Scala l'autunno 1796 [...]* (Milan: Gio. Battista Bianchi, 1796), pp. 58-59.

³⁴ Valentino Fioravanti, *L'astuta in amore*, manuscript score s.d. (Library of the Conservatory 'Giuseppe Verdi' of Milan, Noseda I.43-44), 2, Finale.

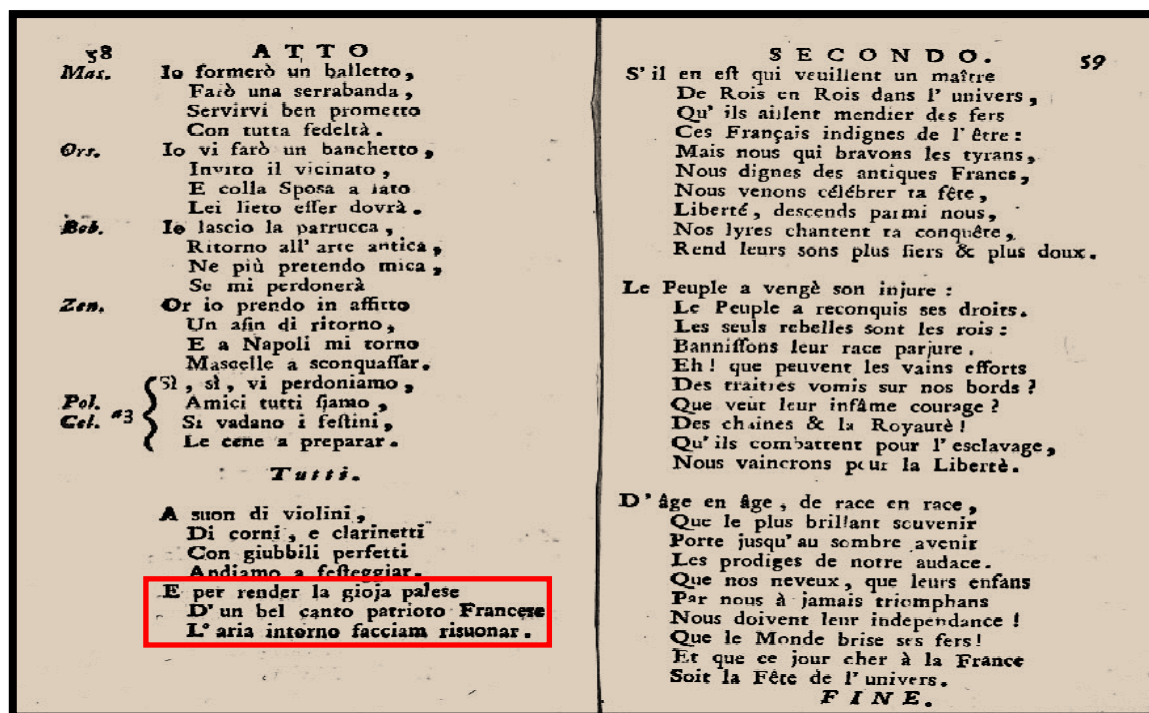


Fig. 4.1: Final page of the libretto of *L'astuta in amore* showing the passage from the traditional finale to the French hymn, August-September 1797.
 Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense.

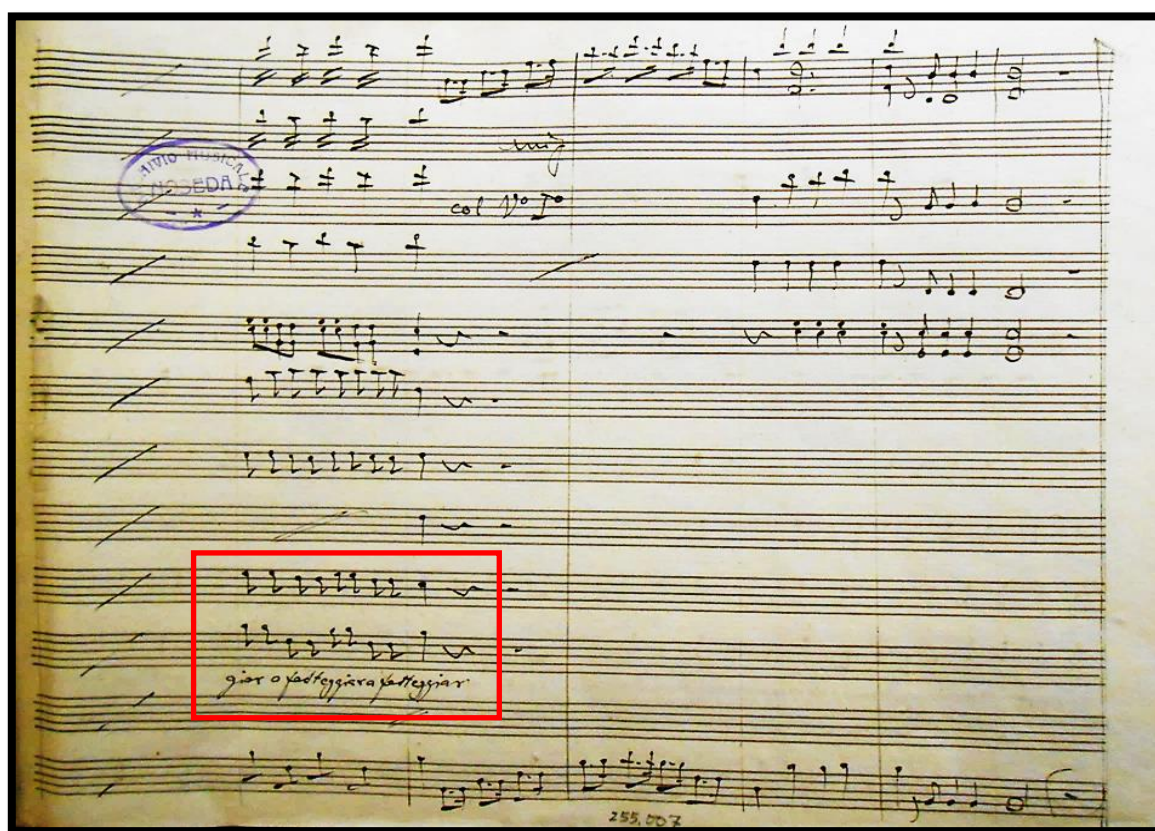


Fig. 4.2: Section of the score of *L'astuta in amore* showing the final phrase sung by the choir and coda.
 Milan, Conservatorio 'G. Verdi'.

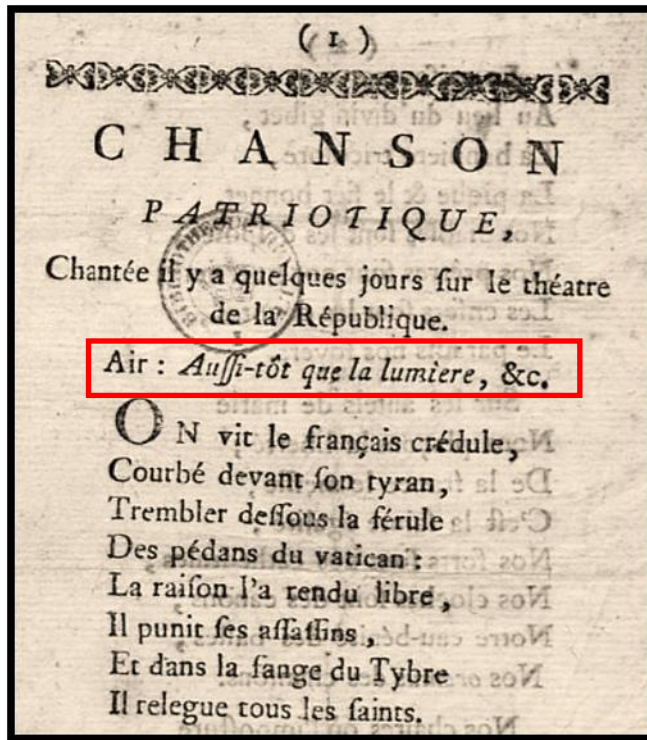


Fig. 4.3: Flyer publicizing a song recently sung in an unspecified Parisian theatre, indicating the tune to be sung (*Aussitôt que la lumière*) to the new lyrics presented. Paris, BnF.

When it came to the operatic repertoire, choosing easily exploitable subjects was one of the easiest actions to undertake, also considering that a lot of pre-existing material already contained suitable elements.³⁵ The Parisian institutions had already carried out years of experimenting with appropriate subjects, selecting several episodes in both ancient classical and recent national history that could showcase typically republican values and virtues.³⁶ The intense circulation of French (and, to a smaller extent, English) theatrical works provided librettists and composers with a plethora of appropriately republican figures and plots. A newly informed tradition of

Italian plays and librettos also started to be produced, some of its champions being Vittorio Alfieri and Ippolito Pindemonte: their tragedies and librettos, inspiring a whole generation of dramaturgs, can be considered the first attempts of Italy's theatrical tradition to comply with the new political ideas and to evolve into a morally uplifting art.³⁷

Furthermore, following the continuous re-adaptation of repertoires and genres fostered by the government within the Parisian scene, these years saw a rather innovative and fertile exchange established between spoken theatre, opera, and ballet: for instance, librettos of operas currently performed in Paris were translated and turned into patriotic plays. Similarly, the *argomento* (topic) of a successful ballet could be re-used as the subject matter of a new opera and/or viceversa. The numerous troupes of actors and dancing constantly travelling across Northern Italy and beyond also facilitated the dissemination and exchange of subjects. A notable example is that of the opera *Ginevra di Scozia*. The subject was first adapted for the theatrical stage in 1795 by Ippolito Pindemonte and successfully performed in Venice by the members of the comic troupe directed by the capocomico Fiorio. Thanks to the Fiorio and, later, the Battaglia troupes, the tragedy had

³⁵ G. Tocchini, 'Dall'antico regime alla Cisalpina', pp. 47-48.

³⁶ E. C. Bartlet, 'The new Repertory of the Opéra...', p. 110.

³⁷ R. C. Ketterer, 'Roman Republicanism and Operatic Heroines in Napoleonic Italy', p. 99.

travelled across the Italian peninsula, including Lombardy and Milan.³⁸ In December 1799, the subject of *Ginevra* was turned into a 'heroic' pantomime ballet choreographed by Gaspare Ronzi and performed in La Scala between the acts of Johann Simon Mayr's *Lodoiska*,³⁹ it was possibly then that the composer had become interested in the subject.⁴⁰ With a libretto created by Gaetano Rossi based on Pindemonte's tragedy, Mayr's *Ginevra di Scozia* inaugurated the Teatro Nuovo of Trieste in 1801 with a cast of stars including the celebrated castrato Luigi Marchesi in the role of the *primo uomo* Ariodante. Possibly through Marchesi, who was currently employed in Vienna, the opera reached the Austrian capital, where it played to great acclaim at the Kärntertortheater; it also became very popular among the aristocratic amateur musicians and even at the court, where Empress Marie Therese (second wife of Francis II and a gifted soprano) often enjoyed singing excerpts of it.⁴¹ In the same year, crossing again the borders between the French-controlled republics and the Austrian monarchy, the opera opened the Carnival season in La Scala.⁴²

Mayr's opera *La Lodoiska*, also destined to great international success, constitutes another example of the fertile exchange of subjects between languages and genres: the tale of the Polish princess had first been set to music by Luigi Cherubini, whose extremely politicized opéra comique had been performed at the Théâtre Feydeau (Salle des Tuilleries), in Paris, in 1791.⁴³ The opera had gained immediate success, with over two hundred performances straight away.⁴⁴ His intensity and compelling plot rapidly became popular also outside post-revolutionary France: Milan experienced it already in 1794-1795, when a heroic-tragic ballet entitled *La Lodoiska* and choreographed by Paolo Franchi was performed in La Scala in between of the acts of Paer's *La Rossana*.⁴⁵ The following year, the French libretto by Claude-François Fillette-Loraux was translated and re-adapted by Francesco Gonella and set to music by Mayr, his *La Lodoiska* premiering at La Fenice, Venice, in January 1796. Both the opera's plot (featuring an adventurous rescue and a tyrant being ultimately defeated by a young, virtuous couple) and its setting (a country, such as

³⁸ See the 'Notizie storico-critiche sulla Ginevra di Scozia', in Luigi Millo, *Il teatro moderno applaudito ossia raccolta di tragedie, commedie, drammi e farse che godono presentemente del più alto favore sui pubblici teatri, così italiani, come stranieri* [...] (Venice, s.n., 1796) vol. 7, p. 85.

³⁹ See the words of the choreographer himself in the preface to the ballet within Francesco Gonella, *Lodoiska. Dramma per musica da rappresentarsi nel Regio-Ducal Teatro alla Scala di Milano il Carnevale dell'anno 1800* [...] (Milan: Gio. Batista Bianchi, 1799).

⁴⁰ G. Chiappori, *Serie cronologica delle rappresentazioni drammatico-pantomimiche...*, p. 63. See also the ballet catalogue in Appendix 1.

⁴¹ John A. Rice, *Empress Marie Therese and Music at the Viennese Court, 1792-1807* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 71.

⁴² C. Toscani, 'Soggetti romantici nell'opera italiana...', pp. 15-16.

⁴³ Winton Dean, 'Opera under the French Revolution', in *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 94th session (London: Taylor & Francis, 1968), pp. 77-96 (pp. 82-83).

⁴⁴ A. Arblaster, *Viva la Libertà!*, p. 47.

⁴⁵ Paolo Franchi, 'La Lodoiska. Ballo eroico-tragico-pantomimo in cinque atti [...]', in Aureli Aurelio, *La Rossana. Dramma per musica da rappresentarsi nel Teatro alla Scala il Carnevale dell'anno 1795* [...] (Milan: Gio. Batista Bianchi, 1794), pp. 11-13.

Poland, recently torn by partitions and struggling to achieve freedom) made it a perfect work for republican theatres while also appealing other audiences.⁴⁶

In La Scala, Mayr's *La Lodoiska*, thanks to its success also outside the French-governed lands, was chosen to open the 1800 Carnival season, the first under the new Austro-Russian governors.⁴⁷ Besides, Milan's audience was already very familiar with the subject, as the 1794-95 ballet had also been offered again during the 1797 Carnival season.⁴⁸ Finally, the figure of Lodoiska had been deemed so appropriate for republican purposes that some passages had been extrapolated from the opera and sung alongside the most popular French patriotic tunes, thus also nurturing the already mentioned exchange between theatrical and non-theatrical space. During the public feasts, for instance, one could see and hear

[...] ballarin, omen e donn balland	[...] dancers, both men and women,
Fussen savi o pur porcon, cantand	Some sober, some drunk, singing
El Sairà, nos enfant de la Patri,	The <i>Ça ira</i> , 'Allons, enfants de la Patrie',
La Loduiska, la Carmagnola pel rest del di. ⁴⁹	<i>La Lodoiska</i> and <i>La Carmagnola</i> all day long.

The choice of the subject thus became one of the most effective tools in order to create a more 'appropriate' repertoire. In particular, the ancient world, with its numerous, morally edifying stories related to republican states, civic virtues, tyrants and heroes, represented a limitless source of suitable subjects: the ancient republics of Sparta, Athens and Rome and the various people of the Roman Empire were effectively assumed as models and symbols of a golden age of freedom and patriotism.⁵⁰ The various revolutionary and post-revolutionary regimes made constant use of ancient stories and figures within all forms of art and auto-representation: for instance, as already discussed, classical elements played a paramount role within the iconography and rituals in the republican feasts, in the patriotic speeches, in figurative arts, etc.⁵¹ Classical figures and their virtues were also already well-known by a significant portion of the audience through both literature and spoken theatre, and had already been widely used on the operatic stage. These years also saw the insurgence and development of the cult of Metastasio, whose many librettos set in the ancient

⁴⁶ Stephen Meyer, 'Terror and Transcendence in the Operatic Prison, 1790–1815', in *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, vol. 55, n. 3 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 477–523 (pp. 483–484).

⁴⁷ G. Chiappori, *Serie cronologica delle rappresentazioni drammatico-pantomimiche...*, p. 63.

⁴⁸ *Ivi*, pp. 54–55.

⁴⁹ Gio. Battista Fumagalli, *L' ultima messa celebrata nella chiesa della Rosa in Milano e servita dall'estensore, o sia Un racconto che fa conoscere cosa erano que' tempi 14 maggio 1796 epoca dell'arrivo de' francesi in Milano sino al 28 aprile 1799 ritorno delle armate austriache* (Milan: Dall'autore contrada del Boschetto, 1831), p. 7.

⁵⁰ Mara Fazio, 'Romanità e virtù repubblicane nel teatro della rivoluzione', in *Lo spettacolo nella Rivoluzione francese*, ed. by Paolo Bosisio (Rome: Bulzoni, 1989), pp. 221–232 (p. 221–222).

⁵¹ See e.g. Pierluigi De Vecchi and Aurora Scotti, '«Artefici di numi». Gli artisti e le istituzioni', in *I cannoni al Sempione. Milano e la «Grande Nation» (1796–1814)* (Milan: Cariplo, 1986), pp. 103–212 (p. 107) and Maria Domenica Genovese, 'Milano 1796–1805. Feste pubbliche e concorsi del primo periodo napoleonico', in *La cultura a Milano tra riformismo illuminato e rivoluzione*, ed. by Raffaele De Grada et al. (Milan: Vangelista, 1989), pp. 99–102 (p. 99).

classical world were not only emulated, but also re-used.⁵² The stage constituted the ideal venue to display the virtues showed by the great figures of the ancient world (both men and women) and to inspire their emulation.⁵³ Instead of sentiments and emotions, the features characterizing the main characters and ultimately propelling the plots became firmness, willpower and decorum;⁵⁴ as Monica Nocciolini has commented, the characters had a heart, but ‘it palpitated only at the rhythm of patriotic songs’.⁵⁵

On the other hand, unlike Alfieri’s theatre (but like many others’), numerous librettos of the triennium can be described as having a rather low quality.⁵⁶ Neither originality, nor intrinsic beauty were in fact often demanded to the librettist: on the contrary, what needed to be perfectly planned were the libretto’s ideological repercussions.⁵⁷ Many librettists involved in the production of both serious and comic works for La Scala were also experienced writers of theatre pieces with evident democratic characteristics. A notable example is the Venetian Simone Sografi, author of the librettos for both *Gli Orazi e i Curiazi* (Carnival 1798) and *Il trionfo di Clelia* (Carnival 1799). Following the Napoleonic occupation of Venice, Sografi, despite having been employed in La Scala for the opening of the last Carnival season under the Austrians (December 1795), had committed himself to producing several ‘Jacobin’ comedies and tragedies to satisfy the Venetian Municipality’s needs for popular education and propaganda. In order to reach out to the lower social strata, Sografi, like Salfi had done in Brescia, made a clever use of local history and even dialect.⁵⁸

4.2.1 Opere serie

Not only the character of the stories and figures, but also the highly educational purpose bestowed on the theatrical experience made classical subjects more suitable for serious operas than comic ones. In particular, an analysis of the operas performed in La Scala in the period 1796-1799 shows that all the works chosen to open the Carnival seasons had a classical setting, including newly composed works.

⁵² Paolo Rossini, ‘L’opera classicista nella Milano napoleonica (1796-1815)’. in *Aspetti dell’opera italiana fra Sette e Ottocento: Mayr e Zingarelli*, ed. by Guido Salvetti (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 1993), pp. 127-171 (p. 127). See also the Author’s words in the preface to Simone Sografi, *Il trionfo di Clelia*. [...] *Da rappresentarsi in musica nel Teatro Grande alla Scala di Milano il carnevale del 1799* [...] (Milan: Gio. Battista Bianchi, 1798), p. 5.

⁵³ M. Montanile, *I giacobini a teatro*, p. 13.

⁵⁴ *Ivi*, pp. 128-130.

⁵⁵ M. Nocciolini, ‘Il melodramma nella Milano napoleonica’, p. 9.

⁵⁶ F.S. Salfi, *Teatro giacobino*, p. 26.

⁵⁷ M. Nocciolini, ‘Il melodramma nella Milano napoleonica’, p. 8 and A. Paglicci Brozzi, *Sul teatro giacobino ed antigiacobino in Italia*, 1, p. 75.

⁵⁸ M. Montanile, *I giacobini a teatro*, pp. 17-28.

Season	Title	Composer(s)	Librettist	Premiere
Carnival 1797	<i>Ademira</i>	Various, including S. Nasolini, J.S. Mayr and A. Tarchi	Ferdinando Moretti	N
	<i>La congiura pisoniana</i>	Angelo Tarchi	Francesco Salfi	Y
Carnival 1798	<i>Gli Orazi e i Curiazi</i>	Domenico Cimarosa	Simone Sografi	N
	<i>Meleagro</i>	Nicola Zingarelli	Giovanni Schmidt	Y
Carnival 1799	<i>Il trionfo di Clelia</i>	Sebastiano Nasolini	Simone Sografi	Y
	<i>Gli Sciti</i>	Giuseppe Nicolini	Gaetano Rossi	Y

Despite its particularly prestigious position, that of inaugurating the first Carnival season in democratic Milan, *Ademira* was not a real premiere, but rather an altered version of an opera by Angelo Tarchi already performed in 1783-84.⁵⁹ Its plot and setting made it easily exploitable within the new republican theatre, as it presented the story of the Goth princess Ademira who had chosen to renounce his love for the Roman general Flavius Valentius in favour of her father and country. The original libretto by Moretti was systematically altered in order to soften some possibly controversial points and, on the contrary, stress particularly effective moments;⁶⁰ On the other hand, it is possible that the French government opted for a rather soft approach, pairing up a known (though modified) work with a new one.⁶¹

The other opera chosen for the Carnival season was in fact a premiere, *La congiura pisoniana*, whose libretto was written by Salfi himself (Fig. 4.4). Eager to show very clearly to the audience and the government that newly composed musical theatre had to play a specific within the overall educational and propaganda project, Salfi even published an apparently anonymous letter on the *Termometro politico* harshly condemning *Ademira*.⁶² Willing to present himself as the apostle and prophet of a new musical theatre, he also made a programmatic use of the preface to the libretto, traditionally destined to present the librettist's dedication to the governors and/or audience.⁶³ Salfi's words, on the contrary, read

Piso's conspiracy is worthy of being turned into an educational and interesting spectacle in this theatre and in the current circumstances. Citizen Legouv   has already presented it in

⁵⁹ Ferdinando Moretti, *Ademira, dramma per musica da rappresentarsi nel Teatro alla Scala il carnevale dell'anno 1784 [...]* (Milan: Gio. Batista Bianchi, 1783).

⁶⁰ M. Nocciolini, 'Il melodramma nella Milano napoleonica', p. 7.

⁶¹ D. Daolmi, 'Salfi alla Scala', p. 135.

⁶² The letter was dated 4 January 1797; see *Termometro politico della Lombardia*, 2, pp. 7-9.

⁶³ G. Tintori and G. Bezzola, *I protagonisti e l'ambiente della Scala nell'et   neoclassica*, p. 43.

his tragedy [*Epicaris et Néron ou Conspiration pour la Liberté*]⁶⁴ and I cannot but give a feeble imitation of its work in the present drama [...]. If we persist in singing to the ear without touching the heart, musical theatre will always be weak and sterile; it will be a great success when the subject matter [...] will be able to mend this fatal weakness and sterility [...]. May the Author of the music fix the flaws of the poet! May theatre rise up to that dignity that will crown both! I hope one day these vows will become reality, for the glory of Italy and the advantage of the People.⁶⁵

The librettist included all the elements characterising the use of musical theatre in the new republican city of Milan: the educational role of the spectacle, the emulation of the French repertoire and its adaptation to the local context, the careful choice of a classical episode and the submission of both words and music to a new dignified and moral theatre rather than to the

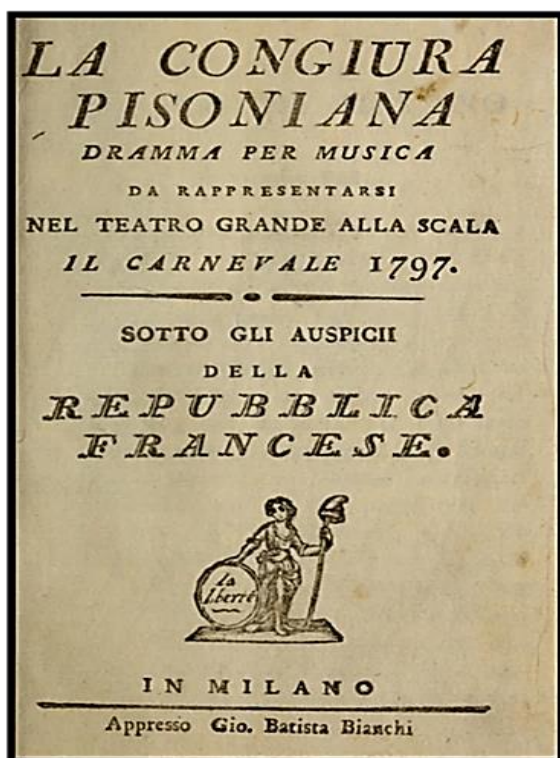


Fig. 4.8: Title page of the libretto of *La congiura pisoniana*, performed 'under the protection of the French Republic'. Milan, Conservatorio 'G. Verdi'.

traditional sentimentalism and entertainment. *La congiura pisoniana* can be thus considered as an important model for the local production of operas.

Salfi also set the example for what concerned the re-utilization of an episode in order to make specific figures/themes stand out.⁶⁶ His characterization of both positive and negative figures, based exclusively on the respect or disregard of republican values, made them easy targets for admiration or hatred and responded to the necessity of communicating the new morals in a direct way. The female lead, Ecaride, for instance, could easily be associated with the perfect republican woman, whose fervour, completely disregarding the emotional sphere, lied exclusively with patriotism and civic-

mindedness. Although not a citizen of Rome, the Greek woman (whose name could be seen as coming from εὖ and χάρις, i.e. 'rejoicing for a good reason'), is ready to sacrifice her life so that the city can be saved from the wicked tyrant Nero and rise again under a republican government:

⁶⁴ See the notice of its success at Paris's Théâtre de la République in *Journal des théâtres et des fêtes nationales*, ed. Marie-Émile-Guillaume Duchosal, 67 (1794), p. 534.

⁶⁵ Francesco S. Salfi, *La congiura pisoniana. Dramma per musica da rappresentarsi nel Teatro Grande alla Scala il carnevale 1797* [...] (Milan: Gio. Batista Bianchi, 1796), pp. 3-4.

⁶⁶ M. Nocciolini, 'Il melodramma nella Milano napoleonica', p. 8 and G. Tocchini, 'Dall'antico regime alla Cisalpina', p. 56.

Greca donzella, io sola [spero]
 Vendicar Roma. Del tiranno il sangue,
 Sparso per la mia mano,
 Risvegliarla potrà. [...]
 Son risoluta, e se sia d'uopo, ancora
 Saprò morir. Il sangue
 Già di Lucrezia e di Virginia un tempo
 Roma antica salvò: potrebbe il mio
 Salvarla ancor.⁶⁷

A Greek maiden, I only [hope to]
 Avenge Rome. The blood of the tyrant,
 Shed by the hand,
 Will make it rise again. [...]
 I am adamant and, if needed, even
 Ready to die. The blood
 Of Lucretia and Virginia, a long time ago,
 Already saved ancient Rome: thus could mine
 Save it again.



Fig. 4.5: 1789 engraving dedicated to the women marching to Versailles.
 Paris, BnF.

The figure of the female heroine had been gaining prominence since the very beginning of the 1790s, when the traditional virtues associated to female characters of ancient Greece and Rome times had been vivified by the active role many women played in the 1789 revolutionary events. Particularly, the celebrated women march on Versailles on the October Days showed that women could be inflamed by patriotic sentiments and show rather manly bravery (Fig. 4.5).⁶⁸

The use of female exempla within a plurality of artistic mediums, from theatre to figurative arts (see, for instance, Delacroix's famed *La Liberté guidant le peuple*) surely informed many celebratory practices in the Italian Republics, including the use of female allegories in iconography and festivals (e.g. la Libertà, la Repubblica Cisalpina) and the new prominence gained by female figures on the operatic stage. An example of this iconographical practice can be found on the very title page of *La congiura pisoniana*'s libretto, where stands a female figure symbolizing Liberty (see again Fig. 4.8).

Salfi's heroine Ecaride can be thus considered the first of a series of rather innovative figures, those of women inflamed by the republican doctrine and equipped with almost virile features and impulses. Unfortunately, the music of the opera is not extant, but it is possible to speculate how such an intense and exemplar role was transposed into a proportionally heroic and dramatic music.

⁶⁷ F. S. Salfi, *La congiura pisoniana*, p. 14 (Act I, scene 2).

⁶⁸ R. C. Ketterer, 'Roman Republicanism and Operatic Heroines in Napoleonic Italy', pp. 100-101.

Furthermore, it is a chorus of women that, at the end of the opera, presents Ecaride at the audience as the ultimate model of republican heroine:

Novella amazone d'alto valor,
Accogli il giubilo del nostro cor.
Donzelle, vittime di servitù,
Vi sia d'esempio la sua virtù.
Se fiere e libere sarete ognor,
Più care e amabili sarete ancor.⁶⁹

Young Amazon of great valour,
Accept the joy overflowing from our hearts.
You, women, who are victims of servitude,
Take her virtue as an example.
If you stay always fierce and free,
You will also be dearer and more lovable.

The figure of Ecaride, like that of Atalanta in *Meleagro*, of Semira in *Gli Sciti* and of the eponymous heroine in *Il trionfo di Clelia*, also reflects the importance that women were gaining within Milan's changing society, and their impulse towards a greater equality and independence, both reachable through a more active role within the new republican occasions.⁷⁰ In fact, women became significantly involved in the public feasts, the patriotic clubs and the theatre, where they would act in an independent, even proudly impertinent way: the dissolute behaviour of many female citizens, who would for example parade their half-naked bodies, dance amok and express rather extreme opinions, has already been commented on.⁷¹

As expected, the male lead Piso (Pisone) and his faithful companion Flavius (Flavio) also manifested in numerous occasions their commitment to the cause of liberty and social justice;⁷² on the other hand, the group of conspirers presented in a rather vivid choral scene what may be considered a clear metaphor of the role the French armies had allegedly played in bringing freedom to the oppressed people of Italy. The men, meeting in secret in a room adorned with the statues of philosophers and of Brutus murdering Cesar, declare:

Per noi vendetta intera
Sull'oppressor cadrà.
Da noi l'Italia spera
La pace che non ha.⁷³

Through us, tremendous vengeance
Will fall on the oppressor.
Through us, Italy hopes [to achieve]
The peace that it does not have.

Conversely, the figure of the emperor Nero is carefully presented as programmatically disregarding the rights of the people, whom he just wants to keep apathetic through both harsh repression and (ironically enough) the offering of occasional entertainment, thus incarnating the quintessential

⁶⁹ F. S. Salfi, *La congiura pisoniana*, p. 44 (Act III, scene 5).

⁷⁰ M. Nocciolini, 'Il melodramma nella Milano napoleonica', pp. 10-11.

⁷¹ See e.g. *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina*, vol. 1, tome 1, p. 17 and Gio. Battista Fumagalli, *L'ultima messa celebrata nella chiesa della Rosa in Milano ...*, pp. 6-7.

⁷² See e.g. F. S. Salfi, *La congiura pisoniana*, pp. 16-18 (Act I, scene 3) and p. 32 (Act II, scene 7).

⁷³ *Ibidem*, p. 23 (Act I, scene 10).

tyrannical governor stigmatised by the republican propaganda.⁷⁴ The burning of Rome is preceded by this inflammatory words:

Recitativo	Recitative
Dell'arsa Troja [voglio] Rinovar lo spettacolo. In un punto Il mio potere e lo spavento altrui Vo' contemplar. Va, [Tigellino] Roma tutta incendi [...].	[I want] To recreate the spectacle Of burning Troy. At the same time, I want to contemplate my power And the other people's terror. Go, [Tigellino], Burn the whole of Rome [...].
Aria	Aria
Già dal mio poter distrutta Tutta in cenere cadrà: Segno più non serberai Dell'antica libertà.	Destroyed by my power You will all fall in ashes: You will not anymore show Any sign of your ancient freedom.

The figure of Nero, whose excesses could also exert a certain fascination, already had a long tradition of operatic renditions: Salfi's treatment of his story can be seen not only as a condemnation of his corruption and oppressive rule, but also as an allegory of the end of the Austrian rule over Lombardy.⁷⁵ Nero's fall and the return of the 'libertade antica' invoked by Ecaride can then indicate quite directly the role invoked the French in having restored Lombardy's original free state prior to any foreign ruler.

Another feature presented in *La congiura pisoniana*, destined to be imitated, is the systematic use of the chorus, symbolizing the union and strong will either of the whole people or of other groups characterized by moral uprightness and/or noble purposes.⁷⁶ A strong shift from individual deeds to collective action was already present in many Parisian operas of the 1790s, tales of both military and civilian heroism being among the most popular subjects. After all, republican theatre had to provide their citizens with universal models of behaviour and republican practice which they were encouraged to imitate:⁷⁷ the process of emulation could be considered even easier with groups rather than with individuals.⁷⁸ Even within the Milanese repertoire, the proportion between solo and ensemble/choral numbers can be seen as switching significantly towards the latter: moreover, both the quantity of ensemble numbers and the amount of attention towards the chorus as a dramatic and expressive tool can be described as decisively increasing. The predominance of the solo arias was thus significantly undermined; for instance, *La congiura pisoniana* has 11 arias against six ensemble numbers and eight choruses. The following year, *Gli Orazi e i Curiazi* reduced the

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 20-21 (Act I, scene 9).

⁷⁵ R. C. Ketterer, 'Roman Republicanism and Operatic Heroines in Napoleonic Italy', p. 105.

⁷⁶ See e.g. F. S. Salfi, *La congiura pisoniana*, p. 25 (Act I, scene 10) and p. 35 (Act II, scene 10), respectively.

⁷⁷ Mélanie Traversier, '«Transformer la plèbe en peuple». Théâtre et musique à Naples en 1799 de la proclamation de la République napolitaine à la Première Restauration' in *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, 335 (2004), pp. 37-70 (pp. 45-46).

⁷⁸ E. C. Bartlett, 'The new Repertory of the Opéra...', p. 112.

number of arias down to 10 while presenting seven ensemble numbers and, again, eight choruses. Two years later, *Il trionfo di Clelia* had only nine arias, although ensemble numbers and choruses were also down to four and 6, respectively.⁷⁹

While it was already strongly rooted in the tradition to have an extended choral scene closing all acts and especially at the end of the opera, the use of the chorus as a voice stressing the will of a certain group, celebrating the achievements of the republican heroes, commenting on the events and/or providing the audience with moral guidance became rather programmatic within all parts of the drama. Following a celebratory code heavily implemented outside the theatrical walls, choral scenes centred on the swearing of solemn oaths of patriotic/republican content were also inserted quite often within storylines. In addition to symbolizing the individual's commitment to the republican cause, oath-swearing scenes also emphasised the pomp and spectacle and offered the opportunity of recreating on stage the solemn atmosphere and sounds of the festivals. The rhetoric inflaming the operatic choruses programmatically resembled that of the patriotic speeches and solemn oaths happening during the public feasts, or that of the tragedies of Vittorio Alfieri: the word 'Libertà', for instance, features 22 times in *La congiura* alone.⁸⁰ A few examples coming from the operas already mentioned above will provide even a clearer picture:

<p>Sul tiranno ognun prometta Viver libero o morir. Possa ognora egual vendetta Ogni barbaro soffrir! (<i>La congiura pisoniana</i>, Act III, scene 5)⁸¹</p>	<p>Everybody swear on the tyrant's body To either live in freedom or die. May every despot suffer From a similar vengeance!</p>
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<p>A te, o Duce, noi giuriamo Di morire o trionfar. In te, o Duce, noi speriamo: Deh ritorna a trionfar! (<i>Meleagro</i>, Act I, scene 10)⁸²</p>	<p>We swear thee, oh Leader, To either die or triumph. We trust thee, oh Leader, Come back in triumph!</p>
--	--

<p>Viva di Clelia il nome, L'ardore, il patrio amore. Sarà il suo bell'ardore Stupore ad ogni età. (<i>Il trionfo di Clelia</i>, Act I, scene 9)⁸³</p>	<p>May the name of Clelia, Her ardour and patriotism live on. Her virtuous deeds will make The People of all ages wonder.</p>
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<p>Vivi, donzella invitta, Vivi tra i chiari eroi, Vivi alla gloria, a noi; La tua virtù sia scritta</p>	<p>Live, you undefeated maiden, Live among the illustrious heroes, Live for your glory, for us; May your deeds be carved</p>
--	--

⁷⁹ Paolo Rossini, 'L'opera classicista nella Milano napoleonica...', p. 134.

⁸⁰ G. Tocchini, 'Dall'antico regime alla Cisalpina', pp. 57-58.

⁸¹ F. S. Salfi, *La congiura pisoniana*, p. 44.

⁸² *Ibidem*, p. 27.

⁸³ S. Sografi, *Il trionfo di Clelia*, p. 22.

Su i marmi in ogni età.
(*Il trionfo di Clelia*, Act II, scene 11)⁸⁴

In the marble of all ages.

Se ardisce il Perso indegno
Oggi sfidarne all'armi
Dei Sciti il fiero sdegno,
Tutto provar dovrà,
E al Tempio vincitore
Lo Scita tornerà.
(*Gli Sciti*, Act II, scene 1)⁸⁵

If today the ignoble Persian
Dares to challenge us on the battlefield,
He will have to suffer
The Scythians' proud scorn
And the Scythian [warrior] will come back
To the Temple as a victor.

Serious operas thus became occasions for public education, reflection on morals and the celebration of new figures and concepts. Librettists and composers made an innovative use of several expressive and structural tools in order to create effective moments of newly informed musical theatre whose importance in the current society was deemed paramount. On the other hand, despite the amount of attention and funds dedicated to their production and the use of the best artists available, the reception of these operas, as it was the case of *La congiura pisoniana*, was often barely lukewarm.⁸⁶

4.2.2 Opere buffe

As for comic opera, it can be generally observed that the republican governors dedicated a proportionally small amount of attention to this genre: due to its entertaining character and the traditionally subordinate position it occupied within the season system, it was seen as a less suitable and prestigious vehicle for the propagation of republican values. Moreover, while the repertoire of serious operas had to be integrated each year with new works, the audience seemed to tolerate a lot better pre-existing opere buffe.⁸⁷ Looking at the overall production of comic operas during the Jacobin triennium, almost no changes can be observed that could be attributed to a political and ideological switch.⁸⁸ Comic operas, as it had been the case in the previous decades, were excluded from the Carnival season and frequently interspersed with other forms of spectacles such as spoken theatre and farces. During the 1797 Lent season, for instance, spoken comedies were performed by the members of the Paganini troupe, while the following year saw the performance of *Il segreto*, a work in one act only described as a 'farsa' (farce).⁸⁹

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 53.

⁸⁵ Gaetano Rossi, *Gli Sciti. Nuovo dramma, da rappresentarsi in musica nel Teatro grande alla Scala di Milano, il carnevale del 1799* [...] (Milan: Gio. Battista Bianchi, 1798), p. 29.

⁸⁶ A. Paglicci Brozzi, *Sul teatro giacobino ed antigiacobino in Italia*, 1, p. 75.

⁸⁷ Mercedes Viale Ferrero, 'Torino e Milano nel tardo Settecento: repertori a confronto', in *I vicini di Mozart* (Florence: Olschki, 1989), 2, pp. 99-117 (p. 100).

⁸⁸ See the operas catalogue in Appendix 1.

⁸⁹ G. Chiappori, *Serie cronologica delle rappresentazioni drammatico-pantomimiche...*, pp. 55-58 and Giuseppe Foppa, *Il sedicente filosofo ed Il segreto. Farse giocose per musica ciascuna in un solo atto* [...] (Milan: Pirola, 1802).

The only exception to this practice seems to be the performance of the opera seria *Pirro* in the spring season of 1798, although this apparently atypical choice is explained by the circumstances of its performance in La Scala.⁹⁰ *Pirro* was not a newly composed opera: while the libretto by Giovanni De Gamerra had already been set to music by Paisiello and performed in 1787 in Naples, this version, with the music by Zingarelli, had been premiered in La Scala already in 1792.⁹¹ Secondly, in spring 1798 various celebrations were being carried out in Milan to solemnize the recent death of General Lazare Hoche, a hero of the French army and favourite of Napoleon, who had prematurely died in September 1797.⁹² The main celebration, overseen by Napoleon himself, was that of a competition of patriotic music dedicated to Hoche, which took place on 24 April in between the acts of *Pirro*.⁹³ Performing an opera based on the figure of Pyrrhus, a celebrated military leader and strategist, can thus be seen as a refined propaganda strategy: it was not the Epirot general who was glorified on stage (both during the opera and in between its acts), but rather Hoche himself.

In accordance with tradition, the number of premieres among the opere buffe was also proportionally much smaller than that of opere serie: in the period 1796-1799, out of 21 comic works performed, only three were newly composed. Moreover, the choice fell on many well-established composers and rather old titles:⁹⁴ for instance Zingarelli (*La secchia rapita*), Cimarosa (*Il convito*, *Gli Orazi e i Curiazi*), Paisiello (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Il Re Teodoro in Venezia*), Salieri (*Axur, re d'Ormus*) and Paër (*La molinara*, *La Griselda*). It could be argued that the very nature of comic opera made it a more difficult target for republican propaganda: not only was the comic element undoubtedly harder to discipline, but the power of traditional forms, characters and settings was particularly strong. Nevertheless, some changes can be observed even within this sphere.

Among the three newly composed opere buffe, two titles can be considered significant for the construction of a hypothetical republican comic opera, namely *I matrimoni liberi* (*The free weddings*) and *La città nuova* (*The new city*); both were performed in autumn 1798, following the rather politicized spring season described above (Figs. 4.6 and 4.7). As it was the case with serious works, both operas constitute an interesting attempt to blend the traditional elements with the newly found needs for propaganda and education. *I matrimoni liberi*, for instance, made a clever use of irony and ridicule to reinforce the well-established contrast between old/despotic and

⁹⁰ [Elenco dei drammi seri rappresentati nel teatro grande della Scala], manuscript s.d. (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 17) and G. Chiappori, *Serie cronologica delle rappresentazioni drammatico-pantomimiche...*, p. 58.

⁹¹ Giovanni De Gamerra, *Pirro re di Epiro dramma per musica da rappresentarsi nel Teatro alla Scala il Carnevale dell'anno 1792* [.../ (Milan: Gio. Battista Bianchi, 1791).

⁹² François P. Émile Boissonnet de Bonnechese, *Lazare Hoche* (Paris : Hachette, 1881), pp. 115-117.

⁹³ P. Cambiasi, *La Scala 1778-1889*, p. 31.

⁹⁴ M. Viale Ferrero, 'Torino e Milano nel tardo Settecento', pp.99-100.

young/cunning characters, a contrast that could culminate only in the latter's victory. This opposition was already clear in the names of the characters as shown in the libretto, where we find on one hand the young Clarice and Lindoro, on the other the old Babbione and Trastullo, with 'babbione' meaning 'fool' and 'trastullarsi' indicating 'idle' or 'lazy'. Moreover, the (anonymous) librettist added a short description of Babbione that read 'dumb and ridiculous citizen [...]'.⁹⁵

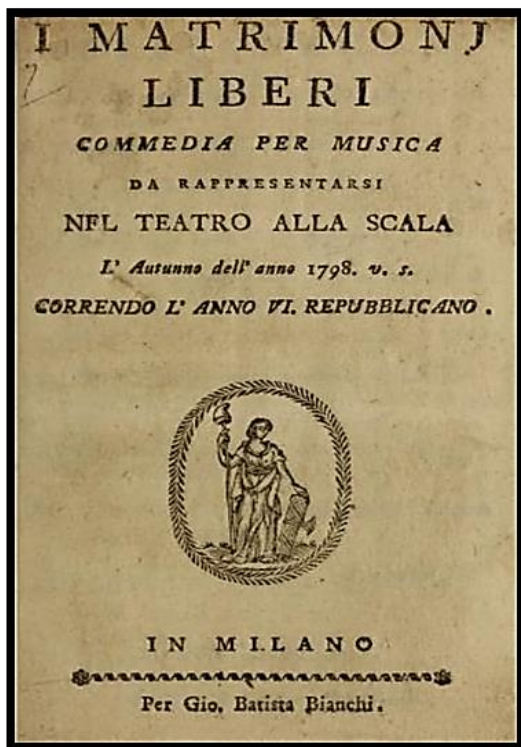


Fig. 4.6: Title page of the libretto of *I matrimoni liberi*, 1798. Milan, Conservatorio 'G. Verdi'.

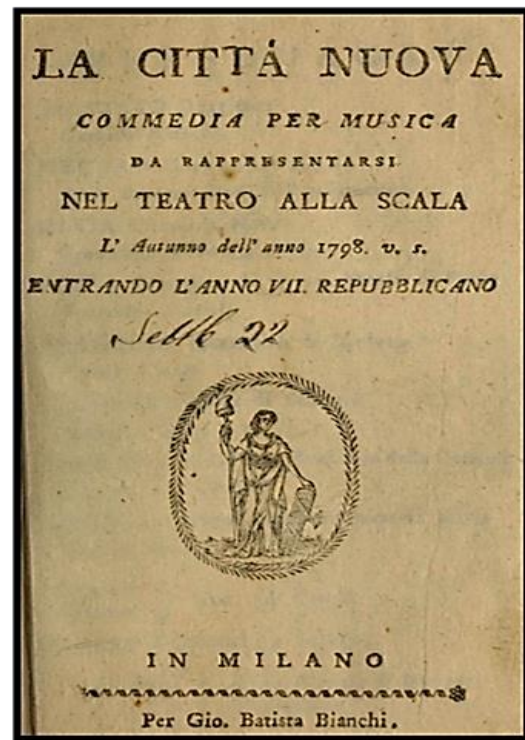


Fig. 4.7: Title page of the libretto of *La città nuova*, 1798. Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense.

The plot was on the one hand very traditional, focusing on the story of a cunning maiden (Clarice) whose despotic old uncle (Trastullo) wanted her to marry his idiotic, rich friend (Babbione) instead of her true love (Lindoro). On the other hand, both the librettist and the composer chose to focus on specific moments and exchanges so that Clarice's story could become an occasion to reflect on concepts such as tyranny, freedom and faithfulness. For instance, Act I, scene 1 already has the following dialogue between Trastullo and the two simple peasants Eurilla and Mengotto:

Trast. Io sono il suo tutor, sono il suo zio;
Si dovrà maritare a piacer mio.
Eur. Sarebbe tirannia.
Meng. Violentar non si può. Ne' matrimoni

Trast. I am her (Clarice's) guardian, her uncle;
She will have to marry whom I decide.
Eur. It would be tyranny.
Meng. You cannot use her violence. In weddings,

⁹⁵ *I matrimoni liberi. Commedia per musica, da rappresentarsi nel Teatro alla Scala l'autunno dell'anno 1798 [...]* (Milan: Gio. Battista Bianchi, 1798), p. 3.

La libertà ci vuole; onde chi brama
 Nei coniugi la pace,
 Lascia la scelta come a lor piace.⁹⁶

Freedom is needed, therefore who desires
 That spouses live in peace,
 Lets them choose as they see fit.

Clarice was not Clelia or Eucaride, nor was her struggle putting her in mortal danger or testing the ultimate devotion to her country, nevertheless her faithfulness and desire of freedom could become an example to emulate. Later on, in scene 8, Eurilla gives an excitable description of Clarice, almost characterizing her as a tragic heroine:

Non si rimuove.
 È libero il suo cuore; e non rinuncia
 A quella libertà, che a noi diè in dono
 Nel formarci Natura.
 Lindoro è l'amor suo,
 Lui vuole, oppur la morte;
 Sa unire all'alma amante un petto forte.
 [...] Obbligarla contro il diritto
 Da tiranno saria un tratto.
 [...] A lei toglier non potete
 La sua bella libertà.⁹⁷

She is immovable.
 Her heart is free; she cannot renounce
 That freedom that Nature gave us
 When it created us.
 Lindoro is her love,
 She wants either him or death:
 She has both a loving soul and a strong will.
 [...] To force her against her right
 Would be a tyrant's act.
 [...] You cannot take away
 Her precious freedom.

Performed within the same season, *La città nuova* can arguably be considered the comic work that more than any other succeeded in presenting a specifically republican atmosphere and setting. While the librettist (as that of *I matrimoni liberi*) remains anonymous, the composer Stefano Cristiani, today completely forgotten, tried on several occasions and contexts to create republican comic works: in 1799, for instance, his *L'amante democratico* (*The democratic lover*) was performed, always within the spring season, in the Teatro Carignano of Turin,⁹⁸ while the librettos of a farce dedicated to the celebration of Liberty is also known.⁹⁹

The story of *La città nuova* is set in America, in a recently founded European colony whose organisation and conduct resembles that of an exemplar republican city. The choice of subject was indeed an interesting one: after the American Revolution and the declaration of independence, the interest of many European intellectuals and politicians in the societies of Northern America and their supposed democratic character had intensified, triggering a process of observation and debate that would culminate in the Risorgimento years.¹⁰⁰ Besides, neither the connection between the French and the American revolutions, nor that between the independence wars of America and

⁹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 9.

⁹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 21.

⁹⁸ Giandomenico Boggio, *L'amante democratico. Dramma giocoso da rappresentarsi nel Teatro Carignano nella primavera dell'anno 7. repubblicano* [...] (Turin: Giacomo Fea, 1799).

⁹⁹ *La libertà incoronata. Farsa in musica* (Lodi: Giovanni Pallavicini, s.d.).

¹⁰⁰ Axel Körner, *America in Italy* (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2017), pp. 16-17.

those of Italy were considered linear ones, the American experience being able to appeal with equal strength and complexity both enlightened monarchs and republican patriots; Leopold II himself, for instance, had studied and made direct references to the Virginia Declaration of Rights (1776) in the process of drafting a constitution for the Grand Duchy of Tuscany.¹⁰¹ The setting of *La città nuova*, on the other hand, cannot be considered a direct reference to the American contemporary society, but the rather utopian representation of a community entirely founded on republican principles.

Deprived of any other title or personal specification, the main characters are described only by their role within the community.¹⁰² The male and female lead, for instance, are simply presented as 'giovine cittadino' (young citizen) and 'cittadina nubile' (unmarried female citizen); similarly, the figure of the governor Belsunto (whose name, coming from the Italian words 'bel' and 'sunto' could signify 'making good decisions') is presented as 'reggitore' (temporary ruler).¹⁰³ The city's appearance as described in the stage directions is also replete with republican features and symbols. The majority of scenes take place in the city's main square and centre of the public life, described at the very opening of the drama with these words:

The city's main square, showing the façade of the House of the Commune [Municipality]. This has a great door and a walkable tribune for the public announcements. On the two sides of the door, the walls are covered with proclamations and at the top of the façade there is a clock [...]. On the tribune, a town crier, a proclamation in hand, who, after a trumpet call, reads it.¹⁰⁴

Life in this utopian city flows very neatly, in accordance to the rules of democracy and in the respect of the public authority. Even weddings are regulated by the governor, who wishes to find a match for every woman, from the fairest to the ugliest:

[...] Ove regna
Libertade, uguaglianza, e che la Legge
Retta dai saggi, e probi
Comanda sol, quest'è quello che avviene.
[...] Vi son tra le fanciulle e belle, e brutte;
Un pian formai per maritarle tutte.
Vidi che ognun daria la preferenza
Solo alle belle; e l'altre
Potrian restare di marito senza;
Quindi pensai; che chi prendea la bella

[...] Where Liberty,
And Equality reign, where a Law
Is in force, administered only by the wise
And honest, here is what happens.
[...] Among maidens, there are fair und ugly;
I concocted a plan to marry them all.
I saw that everybody preferred
The fair ones; the others
Could remain without a husband.
So, I thought: he who takes the fair one

¹⁰¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 78-81.

¹⁰² As already noted in G. Azzaroni, *La rivoluzione a teatro*, p. 56.

¹⁰³ *La città nuova. commedia per musica, da rappresentarsi nel Teatro alla Scala, l'autunno dell'anno 1798* [...] (Milan: Gio. Battista Bianchi, 1798), p. 3.

¹⁰⁴ 'Piazza della Città con Casa della Comune in prospetto; con portone, e sopra balcone praticabile per gli bandi, e dale due parti del portone Proclami sulle pareti, e in cima della facciata Orologio [...]. E sul balcone il Banditore con un Proclama in mano, che dopo un suono di Tromba legge'; see *ibidem*, p. 7.

Più o men sborsasse un tanto,
 Quanto più o men la sua beltà valesse;
 E chi prendea la brutta un tanto avesse
 Più o men secondo che bruttezza fosse.¹⁰⁵

Has to pay in proportion,
 More or less depending on her beauty.
 He who takes the ugly one, will receive
 More or less depending on the woman's ugliness.

Although motivated by good reasons, the solution Belsunto proposes, that of a gathering in which all women are publicly inspected and bought by men for price proportional to their beauty, does not satisfy the desire of the various lovers involved. Both the composer and the librettist seem to resolve to a palette of rather traditional tools and situations so that the different couples can be finally wed, from the circulation of secret love notes to the disguise of a man as a woman, until the happy ending that sees true (and young) love triumphing. It is rather interesting that the lovers' union, although ultimately allowed by the governor and celebrated by the customary chorus who praise their virtue and loyalty,¹⁰⁶ is possible only through deceit and some violation of the rules. The presence of an 'enlightened' authority (in this case a governor) is still required to approve the lovers' final decisions and secure the happy ending;¹⁰⁷ on the other hand, the actions undertaken by Belsunto, although undoubtedly democratic, seem to work against the protagonists' feelings, which, according to the conventions of the genre, are destined to be rewarded.

The difficulties that the comic genre posed to those artists who tried to exploit it alongside the serious one were indeed significant; moreover, both audience and authorities seemed to regard comic operas as something mainly destined to entertainment rather than education, although some elements such as loyalty, spontaneity of feelings and (on the negative side) despotism could still be shown in the right light to trigger the people's reflection. Also, as in the case of *La città nuova*, the choice of embedding stereotypical republican features into the urban setting of a comic opera could be seen as suggesting its acceptance and emulation. Anyway, experiments such as Cristiani's seem not to have worked very well outside the context of their first performance: for instance, both *La città nuova* and *L'amante democratico* did not experience any further performances and/or circulation after their premieres.

4.2.3. Ballets

In addition to both serious and, to a smaller extent, comic operas, another genre widely performed and easily exploitable thanks to its popularity and proportionally looser conventions was that of the ballet. Together with the rising importance of the dance element within public events, the government could not ignore the growing importance and independence that ballet had gained in

¹⁰⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 9-10 (Act I, scene 2).

¹⁰⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 46-47 (Act II, scene 13).

¹⁰⁷ M. Montanile, *I giacobini a teatro*, p. 15.

relation to the operatic repertoire.¹⁰⁸ Thanks to the work of choreographers such as Georges Noverre and Gasparo Angiolini, active at La Scala during the second half of the eighteenth century, the ballet had risen from an entertaining intermezzo in between the acts of an opera to a genre having its own dramatic status and narrative power.¹⁰⁹ Within ballet performances, visual and spectacular elements had priority over the musical ones, making it a very powerful genre also in terms of emotional impact. Moreover, the rich tradition of historical and allegorical settings made it also very exploitable in terms of application to the republican themes.¹¹⁰

The independence possessed by the genre also meant that heterogeneous topics could be freely employed regardless of the topics of the operas the ballets were performed alongside: while operatic genres were routinely prescriptive, ballet guaranteed a high degree of freedom. As a consequence, both ballets and pantomimes (integrating further acting elements into the dance medium) rapidly became some of the most popular spectacles in the Milanese theatres.¹¹¹ Napoleon himself had apparently understood very early how effective ballets could be for both propaganda and the people's education: already in late 1796, he suggested to Salfi that he wrote the *argomento* for a balletto militare (military ballet) dedicated to the successful outcome of the Roman campaign.¹¹²

The variety and character of the ballets performed in the 1796-1799 triennium denote their programmatic use for republican propaganda at a level not reached within the fields of serious and comic opera.¹¹³ The titles alone reveal not only a variety of classical/historical themes, but also numerous cases in which the reference to republican themes, atmospheres and concepts could be very direct, without the need for an allegorical framework. Some examples can be seen here:

Year	Classical/Historical settings	Republican settings
1796-97	<i>Lucrezia ovvero l'espulsione dei Re di Roma</i> <i>Guglielmo Tell ossia la rivoluzione svizzera</i> <i>Lucio Giunio Bruto</i> <i>La Lodoiska</i>	<i>I due sindaci</i> <i>Il general Colli in Roma</i> <i>L'albagia in fumo</i> <i>Il buon patriota</i> <i>I patrioti repubblicani</i> <i>Amor fra l'armi</i>
1797-98	<i>La morte del re Danao</i> <i>Raollo di Crequì ovvero la tirannia punita</i>	<i>L'Italia rigenerata</i> <i>Reclutamento in un villaggio</i>

¹⁰⁸ C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814*, p. 16.

¹⁰⁹ Maria Nevilla Massaro, 'Il Ballo pantomimo al Teatro Nuovo di Padova (1751-1830)', in *Acta Musicologica*, vol. 57, n. 2 (July - December 1985), pp. 215-275 (pp. 216-217).

¹¹⁰ G. Tintori and G. Bezzola, *I protagonisti e l'ambiente della Scala nell'età neoclassica*, pp. 89-90.

¹¹¹ F.S. Salfi, *Teatro giacobino*, p. 47 and G. Taborrelli, *Milano capitale della musica*, p. 124.

¹¹² A. Paglicci Brozzi, *Sul teatro giacobino ed antigiacobino in Italia*, 1, p. 76.

¹¹³ Mercedes Viale Ferrero, 'Stage an set', in *Opera on Stage*, ed. by Lorenzo Bianconi and Giorgio Pestelli, English transl. by Kate Singleton (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 1-116 (p. 83).

1798-99

Il Bruto milanese
(*La congiura contro Galeazzo Maria Sforza*)

Le Amazzoni del secolo
I Francesi in Egitto

When not self-evident, the link between the argomenti and their patriotic utility was often explained in detail in the librettos, where the space dedicated to the ballets was also expanding. For instance, in the case of *Il Bruto milanese* (*The Milanese Brutus*), the heroic pantomime ballet performed in between the acts of *Il trionfo di Clelia* at the opening of the 1799 Carnival season, the choreographer Urbano Garzia sought the audience's approval by directly stressing the patriotic value of the ballet's topic.¹¹⁴ At the same time, a detailed presentation of the story and its patriotic implications was included in the *argomento*:

Galeazzo Maria Sforza, Duke of Milan, ruled over his subjects with the most atrocious tyranny. Ferocious despot, he sacrificed the sacred rights of his People to his desires. A squanderer of the public wealth, he lived in magnificent luxury while not caring for his subjects' poverty, who often starved to death. Insolent and libidinous, he used his power to betray and dishonour many families. Clever in creating always new cruelties, he surpassed Maxentius, Claudius and Diogenes. Girolamo Olgiati, who had chiselled in his heart the teachings of freedom and patriotism [...], could not endure anymore the Duke's despotism [...] and swore to kill him.

Settings and individual scenes included numerous republican elements, sometimes also directly prescribed in the stage directions; for instance, the only detailed indication for the setting of *L'albagia in fumo* (*Vanity destroyed*), the second ballet performed with *La congiura pisoniana* during the 1797 Carnival, was that of a garden with a Tree of Liberty.¹¹⁵ Similarly, the heroic pantomime *L'Italia rigenerata* and the comic ballet *Reclutamento in un villaggio*, both performed with *Meleagro* during the 1798 Carnival, saw on stage the Temple of Liberty and the Hall of the Community, respectively.¹¹⁶

Ballets also featured elements normally banned from operatic performances such as the violent condemnation of the monarchy and clergy, the use of visual and musical elements to ferociously ridicule unpopular figure and the direct targeting of the lower social strata. Possibly the most celebrated example is that of *Il general Colli in Roma*, a pantomime performed during the Carnival season. Notably, the *argomento* for this pantomime was written by Salfi, who, following the request of Napoleon himself, drew on the recent defeat, in Rome, of General Michelangelo Colli, head of the Pope's army.¹¹⁷ *Il general Colli in Roma* arguably rose to the highest popularity among all the

¹¹⁴ Urbano Garzia, 'Al rispettabile pubblico milanese', in S. Sografi, *Il trionfo di Clelia*, p. 29.

¹¹⁵ F.S. Salfi, *La congiura pisoniana*, p. 9.

¹¹⁶ G. Schmidt, *Meleagro*, p. 9.

¹¹⁷ Carlo Botta, *Storia d'Italia dal 1789 al 1814*, vol. 2, p. 125.

ballets produced during the republican triennium for its unrestrained propagandistic purpose and the violent ridiculing of the current Pope (Pius VI). On the other hand, this ballet's disproportional popularity and the numerous related anecdotes could also result from the attention that the popular nineteenth-century novelist Giuseppe Rovani dedicated to it in his work *Cento anni*.¹¹⁸

The words of the preface to the *argomento*, signed by the Salfi with his initials, constitute almost a profession of faith in the cathartic power of theatre (including dance) in leading the society on the path to democracy:

This pantomime, announcing the Kingdom of Reason, is not a mere invention, but is rather based on those events and figures which constitute the most interesting part of Rome's history. These facts, which are already very well-known to the audience and faithfully recorded in the pages of the *Termometro politico della Lombardia*, could be verified down to the tiniest details. May this first flash of truth dissolve any deceit and fanaticism and make [true] religion and peace triumph!¹¹⁹

The pantomime retold some of the events of the Roman Campaign through the republican lens that Salfi and his fellow journalists and dramatists had already used in several occasions to filter the truth and present it to the people. In this case, the Church's military defeat was presented as the occasion for the Pope to finally recognize the superiority of Republicanism and Freedom over Catholicism. In the triumphal finale, the Pope (previously presented as intoxicated with his own power and subjected to rather unholy vices such as lust) publicly replaced his white mitre with a red Phrygian hat.¹²⁰

The pantomime's premiere, taking place on 25 February 1797, constitutes a particularly notable occasion for republican propaganda in the Milanese theatre. The news of the 'Ballo del Papa', i.e. a ballet featuring the Pope himself, attracted such a vast audience that chairs and benches had to be removed from the stalls in order to accommodate as many people as possible;¹²¹ on the other hand, the audience included almost no aristocrats at all.¹²² According to republican sources, the success was enormous and triggered an unprecedented participation from the audience: at the end, the theatre patrons demanded and obtained first that the Pope danced a *périgourdine* (a traditional French country dance) with General Colli. The dancer Le Fèvre, playing the role of Pius VI, complied with the audience's will, not knowing he would have to suffer the harsh consequences. Quickly stigmatized by the whole of the Milanese aristocracy who stopped employing him as dance

¹¹⁸ D. Daolmi, 'Salfi alla Scala', p. 142.

¹¹⁹ F.S. Salfi, *Il general Colli in Roma. Pantomimo eseguito dal Cittadino Le Fèvre in Milano [...]* (Milan: s.n., 1797), p. 1.

¹²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 10 (Act V).

¹²¹ F.S. Salfi, *Teatro giacobino*, p. 48 and G. Barigazzi, *La Scala racconta*, p. 32.

¹²² Pietro Baldassarri, *Relazione delle avversità e patimenti del glorioso papa Pio VI negli ultimi tre anni del suo pontificato* (Modena: Soliani, 1840), p. 240.

master, his career in the Lombard capital ended abruptly.¹²³ Not satisfied, the audience requested an impromptu performance of the ‘nice patriotic song’ (bel canto patriottico francese) previously performed at the end of *L’astuta in amore*: the memorable evening thus ended with the orchestra and choir having to improvise Cherubini’s *Chant républicain du 10 août* while the audience screamed the words and danced around the theatre in an almost trance-like state.¹²⁴ The commander of the Police Dupuy, dreading further turmoil, had even the doors of the theatre sealed.¹²⁵ The *Ballo del Papa* also triggered the angered reactions of many, including Archbishop Visconti who wrote an irate letter to Napoleon himself. After a few evenings, also because the audience, despite the declarations contained in the *Termometro politico*, was too small, the performances were suspended.¹²⁶ Besides, the Police had to intervene in order to prevent a group of patriots from parading around Milan disguised as the Pope and the College of Cardinals to entertain those who could not see the pantomime.¹²⁷

With operas, both serious and comic, ballets, pantomimes and spoken theatre, the republican regime thus tried to exploit all available occasions for theatre and musical theatre performance, reaching different results depending on the various genres’ features and conventions. In addition, new occasions for musical performance inside the opera house would be created; this will be the focus of the following section.

4.3 Beyond opera and ballet.

The republican regime not only modified many social and regulatory aspects of the theatrical experience, but also progressively implemented some significant changes within the cultural and entertainment offering. These changes affected both the operatic and ballet repertoires, making them more suitable to both celebrate the Republic’s foundations and to educate its. Nevertheless, various elements such as the ultimately conservative nature of the operatic repertoire, the slow development of taste by the new audience and the complex mechanisms of power underpinning both the theatrical experience and its management arguably resulted in changes that were less radical than many republicans would have wished. Indeed the government needed more than

¹²³ A. Paglicci Brozzi, *Sul teatro giacobino ed antigiacobino in Italia*, 1, p. 108.

¹²⁴ Paul Gaffarel, *Bonaparte et les républiques italiennes (1796-1799)* (Paris: Alcan, 1895), p. 36.

¹²⁵ D. Daolmi, ‘Salfi alla Scala’, p. 147.

¹²⁶ G. Tintori and G. Bezzola, *I protagonisti e l’ambiente della Scala nell’età neoclassica*, p. 93.

¹²⁷ *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina all’epoca della sua libertà e indipendenza* (Manuscript, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan), vol. 1, tome 4, s.n.

operas and ballets featuring republican themes and features and the occasional changes and additions to pre-existent works.

The great republican feasts constituted the newest and most peculiar product introduced all over the Italian provinces by the post-revolutionary regimes. These celebratory events conquered the city's public spaces transforming them into newly conceived performance platforms and operated a dense synthesis of various cultural and entertainment elements. While drawing extensively on pre-existent models, the use these events made of both contexts and tools was underpinned by an original framework, which produced rather unprecedented experiences.¹²⁸ Situating these within the city's public spaces not only constituted a strong political act, but also a way of avoiding the strong conventions in force in other more traditional places. The opera house was undoubtedly the most visible and prestigious space for both artistic performances and the society's self-representation, but was also regulated by various layers of conventions. The general structure of the operatic and ballet seasons remained mostly intact, while the subject matter of the operas and, most of all, of the less conventional ballets shows some small, yet meaningful changes. Pushing the conventions in force further was arguably impossible, as it would have caused the delicate mechanism in force linking patronage, organisation and fruition to collapse.

On the other hand, the main purpose of the republican regime was that of controlling and re-educating its citizens not through the destruction, but rather through the re-interpretation of the existing genres and rituals. Introducing new cultural products not only evidently devoted to celebratory purposes, but also not belonging neither to the operatic, nor to the ballet genres in the hyper-conventional space of the opera house was thus arguably the most violent act the republican regime could carry out. Both theatres (especially during the so-called minor seasons such as summer, autumn and autunnino) already hosted performances of spoken theatre works, usually provided by touring companies.¹²⁹ In addition, the habit of giving regular instrumental concerts or accademie had been in force for decades.¹³⁰ Nevertheless, the backbone of the cultural offering at both Milanese theatres was still that of operas and ballets, organized into highly structured seasons that responded mainly to the aristocracy's routine.¹³¹

The Habsburg rulers had made use of the theatre for celebratory purposes; in the majority of cases, the events organized had followed a rather obsolete celebratory code, already declining

¹²⁸ E.g. the pubbliche allegrezze (public feasts) organized during the Spanish and Austrian regimes; see *Tre secoli di vita milanese*, pp. 14-17 and Giovanna D'Amia, 'La città fatta teatro: apparati effimeri ed "embellissement" urbano nella Milano del Settecento', in *Il teatro a Milano nel Settecento*, (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2008), I, pp. 99-100.

¹²⁹ See e.g. K. Hansell, *Opera and ballet at the Regio Ducal Teatro of Milan*, p.194 and *Un almanacco drammatico. L'Indice de' teatrali spettacoli 1764-1823*, ed. by Roberto Verti (Pesaro: Fondazione Rossini, 1996), I, p. 820.

¹³⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 546, 613 and 678, and [Avvisi Teatro alla Scala], 1772-1799 (La Scala Theatre Archive, MAN 505 and 512 and SAL 26 and 48F).

¹³¹ K. Hansell, *Opera and ballet at the Regio Ducal Teatro of Milan*, p. 186.

during the first half of the eighteenth century. In addition to varied forms of public entertainment, events such as births, betrothals, marriages and visits had been celebrated within the theatre with musical performances usually followed by lavish dances. The works commissioned in these occasions can all be described as pieces of musical theatre, i.e. combining music and dramatic action; however, a clearer definition has proven itself to be rather problematic. Alongside operas, labels such as cantata, *dramma*, *azione drammatica* and *festa teatrale* have been used, although they all have limitations.¹³² On the other hand, these works can be grouped based on significant common features, including the connection to a celebratory occasion, the use of highly allegorical subject material that could be easily connected to the celebration of the governing authority and a smaller-scale structure in comparison to a contemporary opera.¹³³

Throughout the whole eighteenth century, Milan had seen only a handful of these works, commissioned in the case of extraordinarily important events.¹³⁴ In 1739, for instance, Maria Theresia's visit to Lombardy had been celebrated with a performance of the opera seria *La Germania trionfante in Arminio*, appositely commissioned to the composer Giuseppe Ferdinando Brivio and revolving around the episode of the battle of the Teutoburg Forest, where the Germanic general Arminius had defeated the Roman army.¹³⁵ A few years later, in 1747, the birth of Archduke Leopold had been solemnized with the performance of a short and strongly allegorical *componimento drammatico* commissioned to the celebrated Sammartini and entitled *La Gara dei Genj* or *La Gara del Genio della Germania con quello dell'Italia*.¹³⁶ The performance had been followed by a dance, remembered by many as one of the most sumptuous of the whole century.¹³⁷ Finally, the last dynastic event linking Milan to the Habsburg dynasty, i.e. Ferdinand's wedding in 1771, had seen the commission of both an opera seria and a *festa teatrale*, namely *Il Ruggiero* by Hasse and *Ascanio in Alba* by Mozart. Arguably the last of its kind, Mozart's *festa teatrale* presented all the features typical of celebratory musical works, e.g. a mythological setting, a richly

¹³² Andrea Sommer-Mathis, 'Il Parnaso confuso e altre feste teatrali della corte viennese nel Settecento', in *La festa teatrale nel Settecento: dalla corte di Vienna alle corti d'Italia*, ed. by Annarita Colturato and Andrea Merlotti (Lucca: LIM, 2011), pp. 31-32.

¹³³ Mariangela Donà, *La musica a Milano nel Settecento durante la dominazione austriaca*, unpublished (Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan), pp. 10-11.

¹³⁴ K. Hansell, *Opera and ballet at the Regio Ducale Teatro of Milan*, pp. 52-54.

¹³⁵ Antonio Salvi, *La Germania trionfante in Arminio, drama da rappresentarsi alla presenza di Sua Altezza Reale la signora Arciduchessa primogenita dell'angustissimo nostro padrone e Gran-duchessa di Toscana [...]* (Milan: Giuseppe Richino Malatesta, 1739); the libretto is currently in the library of the Milan Conservatory. No specimens of the score have survived.

¹³⁶ Guido Riviera, *La Gara dei genj nel felice nascimento del serenissimo Arciduca d'Austria Pietro Leopoldo* (Milan: Giuseppe Richino Malatesta, 1747); the libretto, lavishly illustrated by Marc'Antonio Dal Re, is today at the Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan; see also a reproduction of the frontispiece in *Tre secoli di vita milanese*, Fig. 182. The music is lost apart from one aria con sinfonia sung by the character of Fama (Fame), today at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

¹³⁷ *Tre secoli di vita milanese*, p. 297.

metaphorical and allegorical context, a small-scale structure and the abundance of solo and choral laudatory numbers.¹³⁸

At the time of the French invasion, nobody could recall the events organized in the 1730s and 1740s and only a few citizens could remember the celebrations held in 1771, after which *Ascanio in Alba*, as it was the case with all musical works of encomiastic nature, had not been performed anymore. At the same time, the republican feasts introduced a new celebratory code and newly informed cultural products that were deemed to influence works aimed at the apology of the new governors and offered in different contexts. Finally, as already discussed, new models, appositely modified to suit the Milanese context, were imported from post-revolutionary France and integrated within different products and occasions, e.g. patriotic choral hymns, dance tunes, songs, etc. The republican regime made great use of celebratory events in order to solemnize a new series of events and figures. Instead of the monarchs and their lineage, the figures to praise became the heroes of the French Revolution and Napoleonic wars, with Napoleon becoming the Demiurge of a new world order; instead of dynastic events, the people would solemnize political and military achievements and a series of anniversaries linked to both the French and the Cisalpine Republics. With the public feasts becoming the most frequent and open celebratory events, the theatrical buildings, as it had been the case during the Austrian rule, became the place to solemnize only particularly important events, such as key victories and highly symbolic anniversaries.¹³⁹

In these occasions, both theatrical and non-theatrical spaces became tools and venues for celebration, the traditional divide between them becoming thinner and narrower. After all, the 1798 report by the Commissione dei Teatri specified that

9. Ne' giorni di Feste patriottiche le Rap-
presentazioni presentano qualche fatto accaduto
sulle circostanze, che hanno dato luogo alla
Festa.¹⁴⁰

9. On the occasion of public feasts,
theatrical performances should show a link
to the events that have informed the feast.

With all arts and expressive tools subordinated to the exaltation of the regime, venues and repertoires would converge in a way more evident than ever before: the report also clearly stated how

La poesia, l'eloquenza, la musica, la
declamazione non saranno più avvilita in

Poetry, oratory, music and declamation
will not be deadened by an infamous

¹³⁸ F. Degrada, 'Le esperienze milanesi di Mozart', pp. 745-747 and Giuseppe Parini, *Descrizione delle feste celebrate in Milano per le nozze delle LL.AA.RR. l'Arciduca Ferdinando d'Austria e l'Arciduchessa Maria Beatrice d'Este fatta per ordine della R. Corte l'anno delle medesime nozze 1771* (Milan: Società Tipografica de' Classici Italiani, 1825), p. 21.

¹³⁹ *Duecento anni alla Scala 1778-1978*, p. 13.

¹⁴⁰ [Rapporto della Commissione sui Teatri], 1 June 1798 (Library of the Conservatory 'Giuseppe Verdi' of Milan, Fondo Somma, box 2), p. 2.

un'infame servizio. Noi non soffriremo più,
che altra causa si predichi, che quella della
libertà dei Popoli.¹⁴¹

slavery. We will not anymore tolerate any
other topic apart from that of the
peoples' freedom.

In this context, the penetration of a new repertoire into the opera house played a key role within the overall propaganda strategy. Yet, while newly composed or arranged music (mainly in the form of large-scale choral pieces, patriotic songs, dance tunes and pieces for military bands) featured heavily within public feasts, the act of introducing a new, highly politicized repertoire in La Scala's musical offering was carried out with utmost care. The whole republican triennium 1796-1799 saw only a few, yet significant cases.

The first example can be considered significant not only because of the genre it belongs to – that of the symphony –, but also because it was commissioned as part of a refined propaganda strategy. The performance took place on the evening of 24 April 1798, when six so-called 'sinfonie funebri' (funeral symphonies) written by six different composers were performed in between the first and second act of the opera *Pirro* as a part of a government-sponsored competition.¹⁴² The aim was to exalt General Lazare Hoche, a revolutionary hero whose premature death for consumption on 19 September 1797 had greatly saddened Napoleon.¹⁴³

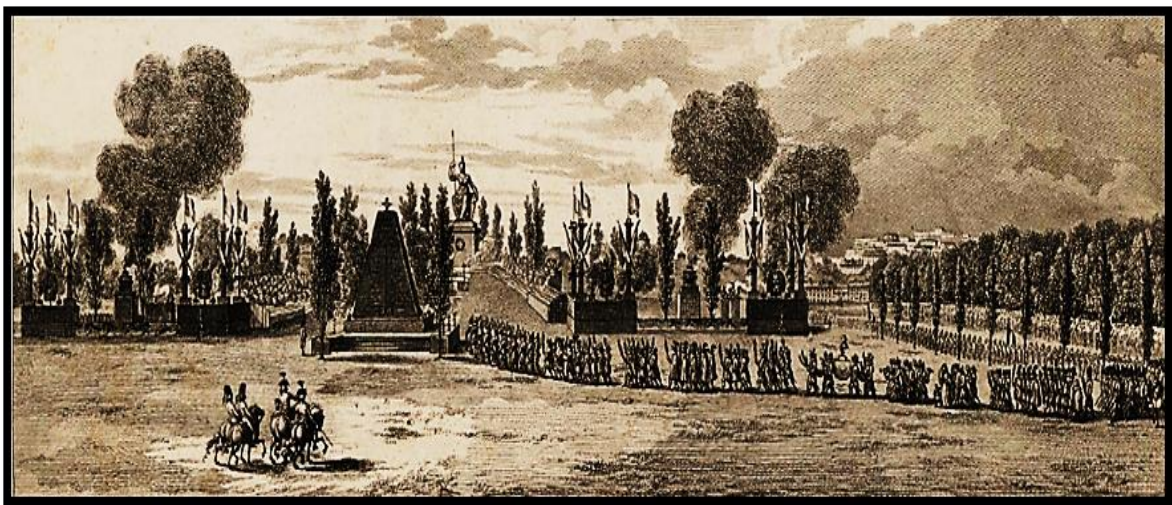


Fig. 4.8: Engraving showing the funeral pomp for General Hoche in the Parisian Champ de Mars.
Paris, BNF.

While great funeral celebrations were held in Paris (Fig. 4.8) with the contribution of composers such as Cherubini, the Italian republics also had to pay homage to the young martyr: Napoleon himself had addressed the cisalpine people already on 6 November 1797 inviting all composers,

¹⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 1.

¹⁴² G. Chiappori, *Serie cronologica delle rappresentazioni drammatico-pantomimiche...*, pp. 58-59.

¹⁴³ F. P. É. Boismormand de Bonnechese, *Lazare Hoche*, pp. 118-119.

both professionals and amateurs, to write either a march, an overture or another piece of instrumental music to solemnize the death of Hoche (Fig. 4.9).¹⁴⁴ The prize would have been a gold medal worth 100 zecchini (sequins). By instituting musical competitions such as this one, Napoleon showed once more to have perfectly realized music's great potential for both celebration and the formation of morals: rather than a simple amateur, he was indeed an attentive observer of music's effects and social utility.¹⁴⁵

The competition was managed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which was entrusted with receiving the entries and appointing the judges, witnessing once more the tight link established between the musical and political spheres.¹⁴⁶ The event that took place in La Scala on 24 April 1798 was the first of its kind in Milan.¹⁴⁷ While patriotic music was not infrequently performed alongside operas, no instrumental music had ever been performed within the opera house exclusively for celebratory purposes.

Three very active and politically exemplary composers, namely Giuseppe Gazzaniga, Carlo Monza (maestro di cappella in Milan's cathedral) and Angelo Tarchi, were appointed as judges. The winner of the competition was a symphony entitled *La morte del Generale Hoche* by Ambrogio Minoja, maestro al cembalo in La Scala and maestro di cappella at San Fedele, but more significantly an artist destined to rise to fame ultimately thanks to his contribution to 'patriotic' music for both the Austrian and Napoleonic regimes.¹⁴⁸ Minoja also played an active part in the process the government undertook to progressively control the public theatres, appearing as the

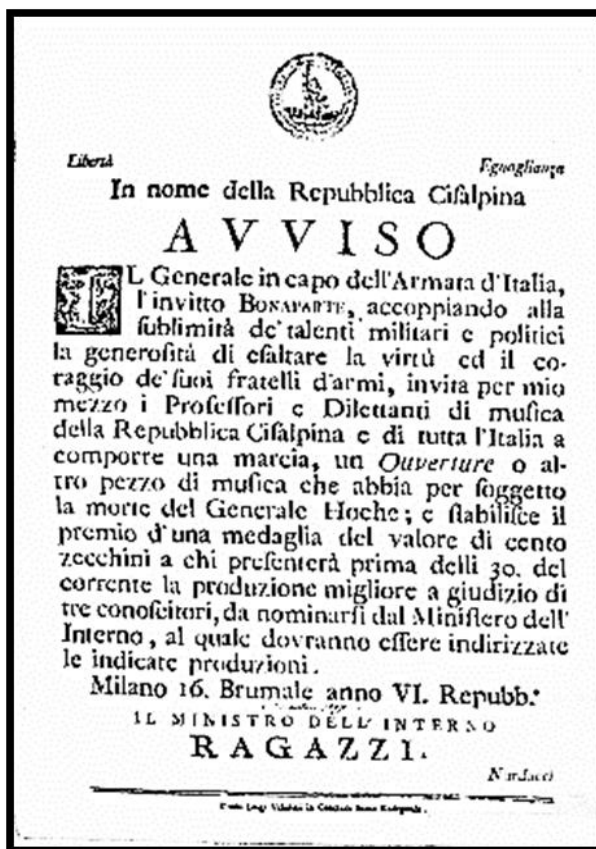


Fig. 4.9: Proclamation announcing the musical competition in honour of Hoche, 6 November 1797.
Milan, La Scala Theatre Archive.

¹⁴⁴ Margery Stomne Selden, 'Napoleon and Cherubini', in *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, vol. 8, n. 2 (Summer 1955), pp. 110-115 (p. 110).

¹⁴⁵ J.-G. Prod'homme and F. H. Martens, 'Napoleon, Music and Musicians', p. 584.

¹⁴⁶ [Poster] publicly announcing the competition, 6 November 1797 (La Scala Theatre Archive, MAN 2998).

¹⁴⁷ P. Cambiasi, *La Scala 1778-1889*, p. 31.

¹⁴⁸ Alessandra Palidda, 'Milan and the Music of Political Transitions in the Napoleonic Period: The Case of Ambrogio Minoja (1752-1825)', in *Music and War in Europe from the French Revolution to WWI*, ed. by Etienne Jardin (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), pp. 105-122 (p. 108).

signatory of several documents.¹⁴⁹ His intense involvement also in the production of music for republican feasts, for which he was repeatedly employed by the members of the Commissione per le Pubbliche Feste, seem to make the divide between theatre and other spaces/contexts even thinner.¹⁵⁰

A closer look to Minoja's symphony can also reveal some interesting information concerning the characteristics of the music demanded for republican celebration in this particular context. Already an experienced composer of opera, sacred, military and choral music, Minoja possessed a varied range of expressive tools and a refined knowledge of the governors' expectations. His symphony follows a scheme that seems to take a lot from various occasions of public celebration, with the constant alternation between the narrative and reflective moments. In this case, Hoche's story, carefully presented in its most instructive and/or dramatic moments, constituted the occasion for the audience to both be moved at the General's tragic destiny, admire his deeds and reflect on his legacy. Minoja thus proposed what can be described as a short programme symphony, a *spiegazione* (explanation) of the various *periodi* (sections) being given at the beginning of the piece:

1. Reflection on the universal destiny of all Men [C major, no tempo indication]
2. Warlike character and valour of the beloved General [C major, *Spiritoso assai*]
3. His illness and death [C minor – C major, *Larghetto – Andante soave*]
4. Funeral pomp [C major, *Tempo di Marcia lento – Tempo di Marcia giusto*]
5. His rest in Elysium [C major, no tempo indication]
6. The soldier's joy in emulating his example [C major, *Vivace assai*]¹⁵¹

As it was the case with many pieces of music composed or re-adapted for public celebration, each section of this symphony is characterized by specific expressive elements already widely used in different genres and repertoires. Section n. 4, for instance, contains a lengthy funeral march having a strong military character.¹⁵² Reminiscent of the music composed for and heard during many republican feasts, Minoja chose to employ a wind band in addition to the already substantial woodwind and brass sections; the instruments populating this band are not specified in the score, arguably indicating that the ensemble's actual composition could vary depending on available

¹⁴⁹ See e.g. the [Regolamento for the access to the theatre], 6 August 1797, the [Letter Dicastero centrale di Polizia to the Minister of the Police], 9 September 1797, the [Poster], 1 January 1798 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli pubblici P. A., folder 1) and the [Regolamento for the feste da ballo], 14 January 1798 (La Scala Theatre Archive, MAN 489).

¹⁵⁰ See e.g. the [Lettera Commissione per le Pubbliche Feste to Ambrogio Minoja], 29 April 1796 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli pubblici P.A., folder 2) and the [Invoice], May 1796 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli pubblici P. A., folder 1).

¹⁵¹ Ambrogio Minoja, *La Morte del Generale Hoche. Sinfonia a Grande Orchestra*, manuscript (Angelo Maj Library, Bergamo, MAYR Fald. 251/4), p. 1 (verso).

¹⁵² *Ivi*, p. 17 (recto) and following.

forces. Moreover, the presence of a large military drum can be noticed: in order to reach a greater expressive effect, Minoja also chose to have the players covering the instrument with cloth during the slower sections of the march ('tamburo coperto; tempo di marcia lento') and uncovering it during the more flowing ones ('tamburo scoperto; tempo di marcia giusto'). This section also had a strong visual component, the military drum having to be played with two sticks in unison and thus requiring that the player made quite dramatic gestures (Fig. 4.10).

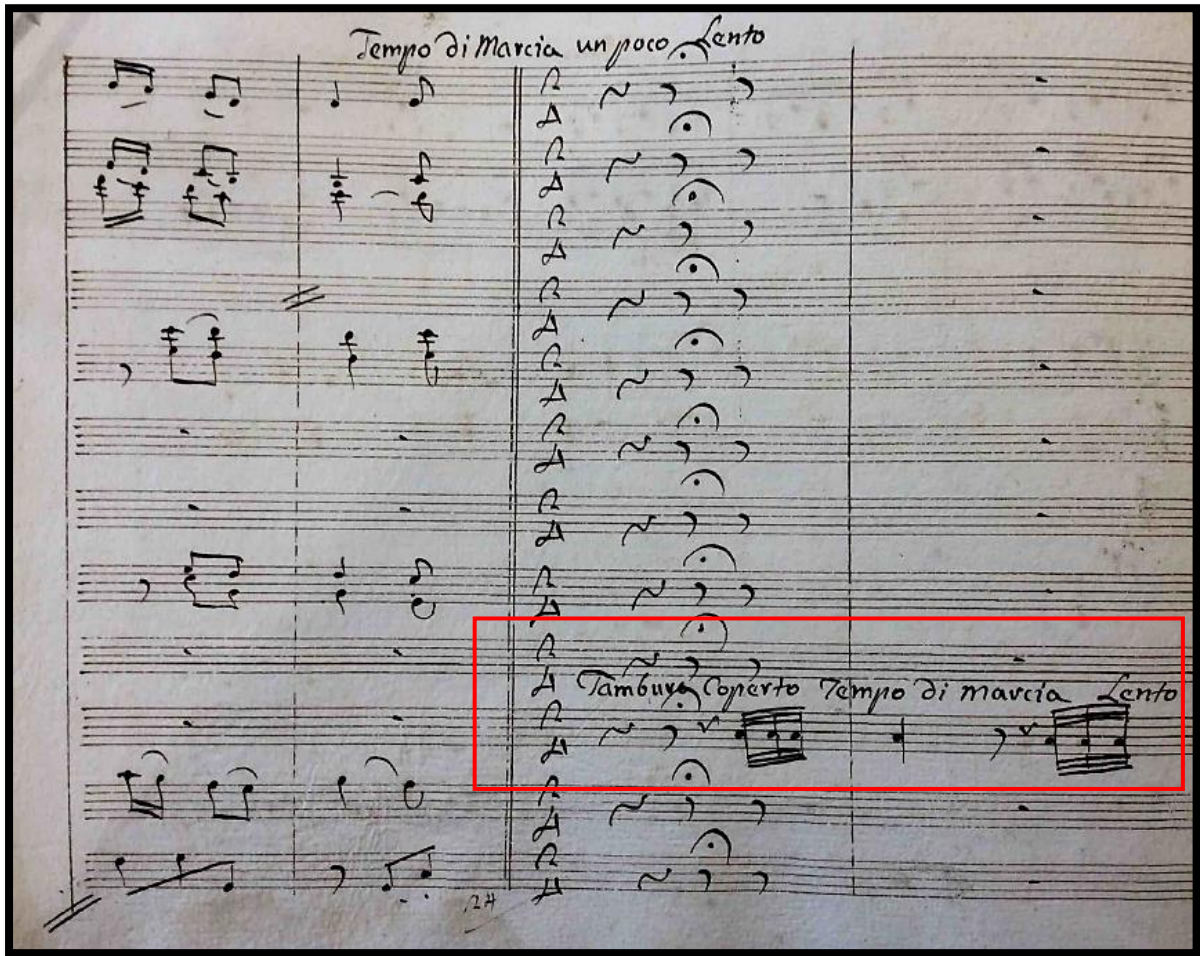


Fig. 4.10: A page of Minoja's symphony showing the beginning of the funeral march.
Bergamo, Biblioteca 'Angelo Maj'.

Section n. 6, on the other hand, depicts the excitement of the soldiers facing the opportunity of perpetuating their General's legacy. With the wind band still present, but intervening only during the last, triumphal bars, this section, marked 'vivace', is based on the progressive accumulation of short melodic cells which are repeated by the various instruments and superimposed, arguably symbolizing the voices of the increasingly excited soldiers.¹⁵³ While the occasion in which this

¹⁵³ *Ivi*, p. 24 (verso) and following.

symphony was composed can be described as innovative, it can be also argued that many of its musical features are not: in the funeral march, for instance, the key (C major) and many features in the use of percussion and brass instrument can be described as having quite a traditional character, harking back to both the Viennese conventions and the prominence of military music in the Parisian theatres.¹⁵⁴

The documentary evidence suggests that, within the Jacobin triennium, only another piece was commissioned and performed in La Scala with the sole purpose of exalting the republican regime.

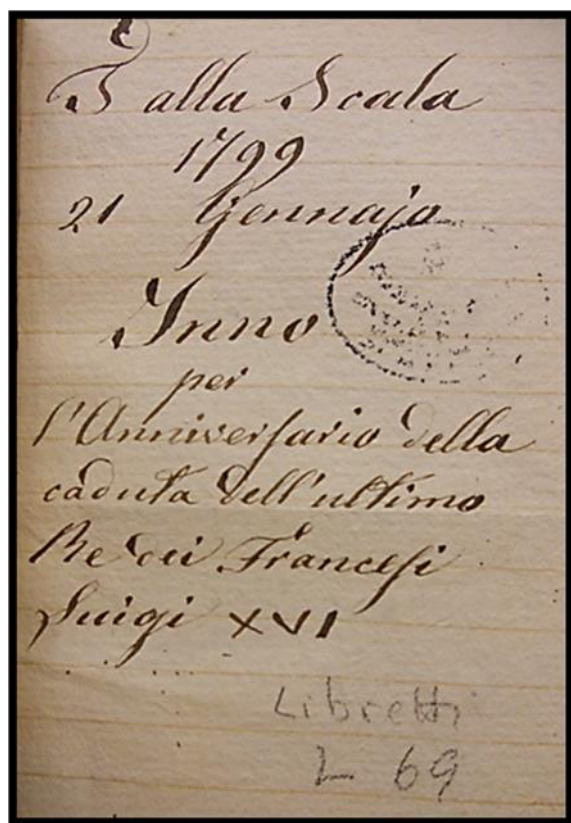


Fig. 4.11: Title page of the manuscript libretto of the hymn performed in January 1799. Milan, Conservatorio 'G. Verdi'.

The occasion this time was a highly symbolical one, that of celebrating the current government by exalting the defeat of one of its worst enemies, the last French king Louis XVI. On 21 January 1799, the anniversary of the king's decapitation was celebrated with the performance in La Scala of a newly composed piece, a hymn for choir and orchestra entitled *Inno per l'anniversario della caduta dell'ultimo Re dei Francesi Luigi XVI* (Hymn for the Anniversary of the Fall of the last French King Louis XVI) (Fig. 4.11).¹⁵⁵

Ambrogio Minoja, possibly because of both his success in the previous year's musical competition and his commitment to the production of music for the republican feasts, was once more appointed as composer. The words, on the other hand, were commissioned

from one of the most prominent poets available at the time, Vincenzo Monti, also deeply involved in the political arena: at the time he was Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Cisalpine Republic, by 1804 he was appointed 'poeta di governo' (poet laureate) of the Italian Kingdom.¹⁵⁶ With all probability, Monti had been among the first participants of the great republican feasts organized in Milan, where he had arrived in the summer of 1797; particularly, the poet had attended the great Feast of the Federation (Festa della Federazione) on 9 July, which had seen an unprecedented

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¹⁵⁵ P. Cambiasi, *La Scala 1778-1889*, p. 34 and G. Barigazzi, *La Scala racconta*, p. 31.

¹⁵⁶ Duccio Tongiorgi, '«Né io amo d'essere il cherilo d'Alessandro». Monti poeta del governo italiano', in: *Vincenzo Monti nella cultura italiana*, ed. by Guglielmo Barbarisi, vol. 2 (Milan: Cisalpino: 2006), pp. 159-185 (pp. 159-160).

display of symbolic/celebratory means.¹⁵⁷ His imagination and expressivity were greatly affected by the celebration of the new republican rituals at the presence of the assembled people; at the same time, his (in)famous versatility and ability to tailor his work around the current social and political needs soon made him compose verses dedicated to republican themes.¹⁵⁸

Already in October 1797, he had composed a *Canzone per la Pace* (Song for Peace), a poem dedicated to the celebration of the peace of Campoformio whose verses were sung during a civic banquet offered to the members of the Directory. Monti was surely very aware of the power and, at the same time, responsibility that performative arts (including poetry and declamation) had towards political celebration and education: verses 61-64 of the song read

[...] e sian scherno sulle scene
in catene trascinati
i tiranni detestati
dalla fiera gioventù.¹⁵⁹

[...] may the tyrants
despised by the proud people
be ridiculed in the scenes
where they appear carried in chains.

Unfortunately, almost nothing is known about the actual performance of the song and the music has not survived the turbulent years following the Jacobin triennium. However, it is possible to speculate that Monti's lyrics were set to a patriotic song tune similar to the *Ca ira* or to the numerous, nameless ones sang within public celebratory events;¹⁶⁰ their structure (quatrains of octosyllabic verses) makes them particularly fit for a simple strophic setting.

Both the occasion and the setting were naturally much more prestigious in the case of the hymn performed in La Scala in January 1799, which surely exhibited a higher degree of musical complexity than a patriotic song. For this occasion, Monti produced again a strophic composition, this time using longer and more solemn decasyllables.¹⁶¹ The tone was very solemn, yet very energetic; as it was typical of republican oratory, the author made use of an inflamed rhetoric and vivid images in order to emotionally stimulate the audience.¹⁶² For instance, the words invited Italian and French patriots to dip their fingers and swords in the freshly spilled blood of the king (vv. 11-12 and 15-16) and wished that Mount Etna killed the tyrants with thunders and fire (vv. 41-44). In addition, again in accordance with republican imagery, the hymn made constant

¹⁵⁷ For a description of the feast, see the See the *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina all'epoca della sua libertà e indipendenza* (Manuscript, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan), vol. 1, tome 1, pp. 98-101.

¹⁵⁸ Paolo Bosisio, 'Un poeta al servizio di un nuovo modello di spettacolo: le cantate di Vincenzo Monti', in *Vincenzo Monti nella cultura italiana*, ed. by Gennaro Barbarisi and William Spaggiari (Milan: Cisalpino, 2006), 3, pp. 245-261 (pp. 247-248).

¹⁵⁹ Vincenzo Monti, 'Canzone per la Pace', in *Antologia repubblicana* (Bologna: s.n., 1831), pp. 182-185 (p. 184).

¹⁶⁰ P. Bosisio, 'Un poeta al servizio di un nuovo modello di spettacolo', p. 251.

¹⁶¹ The printed libretto is contained in *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina* (Manuscript, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan) vol. 1, tome 4, s.n. (single printed page inserted into the volume) and in *Gazzetta Nazionale della Liguria*, n. 33 (26 January 1799), p. 267.

¹⁶² P. Bosisio, 'Un poeta al servizio di un nuovo modello di spettacolo', p. 254.

reference to classical antiquity and some of its heroic figures, namely Brennus (v. 45) and Brutus (v. 47). Finally, the poet made direct reference to one of the most powerful symbols of the regeneration that the revolution brought to the people, the Tree of Liberty, described as a plant that plunged its roots into the blood of kings and the remnants of shattered crowns (vv. 25-28).

Once again, the music is lost, but the manuscript libretto still extant in the library of the Milan Conservatory indicates the size of the musical forces assembled for the performance.¹⁶³ With three soloists (including the celebrated Elizabeth Billington), a choir of 28 and an orchestra of 61, the hymn was conceived as a large-scale piece. In addition, the piece seems to exhibit an alternation between solo and choral moments, partially resembling many French patriotic *hymnes à grand cœur* which were sometimes inserted within operatic performances. Within these pieces, each strophe was normally given to a single choir part and followed by a refrain sung by the whole choir.¹⁶⁴

Monti's text, divided into ten-verse strophes each made of two quatrains followed by two final verses, seem to imitate this pattern: the soloists would probably sing the two quatrains and the choir would conclude by singing the two conclusive verses.¹⁶⁵ This structure is further stressed by Monti's choice of having the final verse couples consistently beginning with similar words and representing the voice of the irate People against the tyrant(s); for instance:

strophe

1	Re, tremate: l'estremo decreto Per voi l'ira del cielo segnò.	Tremble, you kings: your foe Has already been decided by destiny.
3, 8	Re perversi, già trema, già cade Il poter che il delitto vi diè.	Oh vile kings, your evil power Now totters and falls.
4	Re spergiuro, ogni ciglio fu muto Sul tuo fato – né cuor sospirò.	You deceitful king, nobody wept For your fate – nobody lamented.

Despite the prestige of the occasion, the participation of celebrated artists and the employ of significant musical forces, the music was apparently of mediocre quality, the evening not gaining the success wished for.¹⁶⁶

It could be argued that cultural products such as this *Inno* were commissioned and valued more for their efficacy within celebratory events rather than for their intrinsic musical quality. In fact, despite its lukewarm reception, the piece could be performed again in Naples on 19 May 1799 to

¹⁶³ Vincenzo Monti, *Inno per l'anniversario della caduta dell'ultimo Re dei Francesi Luigi XVI*, manuscript, 1799 (Library of the Milan Conservatory, Libretti L69), s.n.

¹⁶⁴ Constant Pierre, *Les Hymnes et les Chansons de la Révolution* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1904), p. 380.

¹⁶⁵ P. Bosisio, 'Un poeta al servizio di un nuovo modello di spettacolo', p. 252.

¹⁶⁶ V. Ferrari, *Il Teatro della Scala nella vita e nell'arte...*, pp. 24-25 and G. Barigazzi, *La Scala racconta*, p. 32.

celebrate the defeat of King Ferdinand IV Bourbon.¹⁶⁷ Monti and Minoja had indeed created an effective and adaptable product: with the ‘tiranno caduto’ mentioned in the first strophe now indicating Ferdinand IV, the rest of the text and the musical features served very well the new celebratory purpose. Both the librettist and the composer of this piece would in fact rise to fame and receive the highest rewards the various governments could dispense not only for their skills in the production of artistic products, but also (or mainly) for their ability to develop their talent according to new celebratory codes and needs.

In order to survive as artists within these and the following years, individuals had to show a great degree of adaptability to the rapidly mutating political situation and an unprecedented level of participation in the political life. Napoleon himself made clever use of commissions, policies and titles to keep intellectuals and literates close to him and his agenda: this process, although more noticeable from the second Cisalpine into the Italian Republic and Kingdom, is already visible during the Jacobin triennium.¹⁶⁸ The historian Carlo Botta commented already in the 1830s that

Arts and sciences bloomed, although in a flattering rather than a spontaneous way. Those who wanted to talk freely were put somewhere when nobody could hear them. A special office was created solely for this purpose, to make those who wanted to speak remain silent, and was very dutiful. [...] Bonaparte [...] had indeed found a very good method of preventing writers [artists] from any mistake; it was that of making them rich and giving them the highest titles. They thought it was a great honour and, also valuing a quiet life, either remained silent or praised him.¹⁶⁹

While the case of Minoja will be described in detail in the next chapter, Monti’s attitude towards the changed nature of his work can be already discussed here. Unlike the composer, the poet remained faithful to the republican cause even when the Austro-Russian took Milan in 1799: also following the publication of the *Inno*, he thought it appropriate to leave Lombardy and take refuge in Paris. He returned to Milan only after the Treaty of Lunéville (9 February 1801) and the proclamation of the second Cisalpine Republic to be appointed to the highest cultural offices of the Italian Republic and Kingdom.¹⁷⁰

However, Monti’s attitude towards both the French monarchy and the Revolution had been very different in the earlier days: back in 1793, the poet, like so many of his contemporaries, had

¹⁶⁷ M. Traversier, ‘«Transformer la plèbe en peuple»’, pp. 37-38.

¹⁶⁸ Carlo Capra, ‘Intellettuali e potere nell’età napoleonica’, in *Vincenzo Monti nella cultura italiana*, ed. by Guglielmo Barbarisi, vol. 2 (Milan: Cisalpino: 2006), pp. 143-158 (pp. 151-152).

¹⁶⁹ ‘Le lettere e le scienze fiorivano, ma più le adulatorie che le libere. Chi voleva favellare con qualche libertà, era posto dove nessuno li poteva più udire. La consulta di stato, che per questo era stata creata, siccome quella che era docilissima, sapeva fare star cheto chi avesse voglia di parlare. Buon modo aveva trovato Buonaparte [...], perché gli scrittori non facessero scariere; questo fu di arricchirgli, e di chiamargli ai primi gradi. Pareva loro un gran fatto, ed accettando il lieto vivere, tacevano, o adulavano; Carlo Botta, *Storia d’Italia dal 1789 al 1814* (s.n., 1824), vol. 4, p. 119.

¹⁷⁰ P. Bosisio, ‘Un poeta al servizio di un nuovo modello di spettacolo’, p. 256.

been nothing but shocked. King Louis XVI's death had been seen by many as the event signifying the definite fall of the old world order and the beginning of a destructive season characterized by excessive political radicalism.¹⁷¹ In that same period, the French diplomat Nicolas Jean Hugon de Basseville, a renowned supporter of the Jacobin ideals, was attacked and killed by a crowd of commoners who despised his arrogance and disrespect towards the Church.¹⁷² The event had caused strong reactions on all sides and had convinced many literates to break their silence and express their political opinion.¹⁷³ Monti himself had written a long poem entitled *In morte di Ugo Bassville* (*For the death of Hugon de Basseville*), better known as the *Bassvilliana*. Conceived as a visionary, almost prophetic work, the poem described the soul of Basseville contemplating the murdering of his king from Heaven and being moved by the ferocity of the crowd and the bravery of the monarch until a complete repentance. The poem, also depicting some of the most celebrated *philosophes* as bloodthirsty figures and evil generators of the Jacobin heresy, constituted a very evident condemnation of the principles underpinning the 1789 Revolution, a sort of anti-revolutionary manifesto.¹⁷⁴

Monti experienced in fact numerous difficulties in cleaning his record in the eyes of the French supporters. Some years later, his fellow supporters of Napoleon (including Ugo Foscolo) even suggested that he had been forced to write the poem in order to protect himself against the then-dangerous accusations of being a French sympathizer.¹⁷⁵ In 1797, Monti himself wrote a letter to Salfi publicly abjuring his work, asking for forgiveness and professing his republican faith.¹⁷⁶ The letter, published on 12 July on the columns of the ever-faithful *Termometro politico*, offered the same excuse: 'I had no other possibility apart from that of hiding myself under a veil'.¹⁷⁷ From his arrival in Milan (1797), Monti made use of every possible occasion to celebrate the republican cause with his verses: in particular, he composed his poem *Prometeo*, in which he established a successful comparison between Napoleon and Prometheus, the mythological liberator of humankind;¹⁷⁸ Moreover, since his letter of repentance, Monti could count on the support of Salfi and his

¹⁷¹ Duccio Tongiorgi, '«E libertade/ in Erinni cangiò». Monti e la Rivoluzione', in *Laboratoire italien*, 9 (2009), pp. 135-150 (p. 145-146).

¹⁷² Vincenzo Monti, *Prose e poesie [...] novamente ordinate [...]* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1847), p. XIX and Leone Vicchi, *Vincenzo Monti: le lettere e la politica in Italia dal 1750 al 1830* (Faenza: P. Conti, 1879), vol. 3, pp. 73-75.

¹⁷³ D. Tongiorgi, '«E libertade/ in Erinni cangiò», p. 146.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 147 and Marco Testi, *Tra speranza e paura: i conti con il 1789. Gli scrittori italiani e la Rivoluzione francese* (Ravenna: Neri Pozza, 2009), pp. 58-59.

¹⁷⁵ *Prose e poesie [...] novamente ordinate [...]*, p. XXI.

¹⁷⁶ *Termometro politico della Lombardia*, 3, pp. 20-22.

¹⁷⁷ '[...] non mi rimaneva insomma altro espediente che il coprimi d'un velo'; *ibidem*, p. 21.

¹⁷⁸ *Prose e poesie [...] novamente ordinate [...]*, pp. 345-405.

newspaper.¹⁷⁹ In May 1798, Salfi, reporting how a sonnet by Monti had been recited during a public feast, already referred to him as the ‘sommo poeta’ (highest poet).¹⁸⁰

The text composed for the 1799 *Inno* constitutes somehow the proof of Monti’s complete rehabilitation in the eyes of the French government.¹⁸¹ The blood of the king, scattered across the European lands as a memento and a symbol of the common guilt in the *Bassvilliana*, became the liquid watering the Tree of Liberty and covering the People’s swords. Similarly, the French were not described anymore as ferocious instigators, but as rightful fighters armed with weapons infused with and destined to bring justice and freedom.¹⁸² From this moment onwards, Monti became Napoleon’s and his government’s bard, his verses tirelessly commemorating and exalting their figures, deeds and values. Despite the undeniable quality of his work and his firm commitment to the cause, the spectre of the *Bassvilliana* would always persecute him, together with the opinion (shared by many) that at least a part of his success was due to his ability of serving the winning front.¹⁸³ Monti’s and Minoja’s experience also allows us to draw interesting conclusions on the necessity, in those particular times, to adapt to the rapidly changing political situation. As the journalists and the public officers, the Milanese artists who wanted to continue their careers had to learn the art of compromise and contradiction.¹⁸⁴

With the theatre programmatically turned into an instrument of celebration, self-representation and popular education, the republican regime implemented several changes in the theatrical system in force in Milan. As the existing situation was rather complex and characterized by an overall conservatism, these changes needed to be carefully introduced within the different levels of the theatrical system, from management to monitoring, from repertoire to the ideological framework underpinning the role of the theatre itself. The balance between the unavoidable retention of some traditional elements and the strong need for innovative products and occasions informed the theatrical policy tirelessly carried on by the governing authorities. In the case of organisational aspects, the will of the republican regime to build a state-led system often brought it into conflict with the extreme traditionalism and the strong links between theatrical management and the Milanese high society. Similarly, the will, strongly underpinned by the omnipresent republican values, to make the theatre more democratic by expanding its access to a wider part of the

¹⁷⁹ *Termometro politico della Lombardia*, 3, pp.121-122 and pp. 148-150.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, 4, p. 275.

¹⁸¹ A. Ottolini, ‘La vita culturale nel periodo napoleonico’, pp. 435-6.

¹⁸² M. Testi, *Tra speranza e paura*, pp. 74-75.

¹⁸³ *Prose e poesie [...] nuovamente ordinate [...]*, pp. XXVII-XIX.

¹⁸⁴ A. Ottolini, ‘La vita culturale nel periodo napoleonico’, p. 441.

population went systematically against the criteria on which theatrical organisation rested, from the general structure and content of its cultural offering down to details of the theatre-going ritual.

The experience of Jacobin Milan did not last long enough to realize the effects the most strenuous supporters of the regime wished for; consequently, the majority of actions undertaken were so dependent on the unique political and social context of those years that they lost almost all effectiveness once that context changed. On the other hand, the amount of attention dedicated to all manifestations of theatre and spectacle and the genuine impulse to change many features of a theatrical system by then already obsolete by pushing it in a radically different direction had important consequences on the years to come. Even if in the name of republican propaganda, the Milanese theatre experienced new models and incentives that contributed to its development, also gaining that cultural effervescence and centrality that played a paramount role in the years to come.

CHAPTER 5

OLD AND NEW GOVERNORS (1799-1802)

5.1 The return of the Austrians: the ‘painful thirteen months’

<i>La bella Cisalpina,</i>	<i>The beautiful Cisalpine,</i>
<i>Vezzosa ballerina,</i>	<i>A charming dancer,</i>
<i>Protetta dalla Senna,</i>	<i>Protected by the Seine,</i>
<i>Scritturata per Vienna.</i>	<i>Cast for Vienna.</i>

Bosinada distributed in La Scala on 10 January 1799.¹

Milan's Jacobin season, together with the dreams of the cisalpine patriots, ended quite abruptly in 1799, while Napoleon and the backbone of its army were fighting England on the Egyptian soil: the general had left Lombardy already on 17 November 1797 and had turned his almost complete attention to the Egyptian campaign.² The command of the whole Armée d'Italie had been taken over by one of Napoleon's most faithful comrades, General Louis-Alexandre Berthier; however, the battalions based in Northern Italy had been assigned to the old general Barthélemy Louis Joseph Schérer, whom Napoleon himself had replaced as commander of the Armée d'Italie in 1796.³ Arguably, given the initial success of the Egyptian campaign, nobody expected that it would occupy the French for a long time: Schérer was thus chosen even his career already in its declining phase.

In accordance with the treaty signed in 1798 between the French and Cisalpine Republics, Lombardy not only had to accommodate an additional French garrison of 25000 soldiers, but also contribute to all campaigns with heavy financial contributions, men and weapons.⁴ In Milan, where operas, ballets, cantatas and public feats tirelessly celebrated the heroes and values of the revolution and Republic, the situation worsened rapidly. Despite the propaganda, the uncertainty and economical exploitation resulted in the rise of general discontent on the whole cisalpine territory, most of all among the lower social strata.⁵ In July 1798, for instance, a popular rebellion broke out in the valleys around Bergamo, with armed gangs of peasants attacking the city in the

¹ *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina all'epoca della sua libertà e indipendenza*, manuscript (Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan), part 1, vol. 4, s.n. (10 January 1799).

² Franco Fava, *Storia di Milano* (Milan: Meravigli, 1981), 2, pp. 20-22 and Francesco Cusani, *Storia di Milano dall'origine ai nostri giorni e cenni storico-statistici sulle città e province lombarde*, vol. 5 (Milan: Albertari, 1867), p. 188.

³ Carlo Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano: 1796-1814. Storia, testimonianze e documenti* (Brescia: Megalini, 2001), p. 98.

⁴ See the 'Osservazioni politiche' in *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina*, part 1, vol. 4, p. 72 and Giovanni De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina giusta le poesie, le caricature ed altre testimonianze dei tempi* (Milan: Dumolard, 1879), p. p. 192.

⁵ Cesare Cantù, *Storia di cento anni (1750-1850)*, vol. 2 (Florence: Le Monnier, 1855), p. 25.

attempt to expel the French oppressors. The intervention of patriotic troops repressed it in a massacre, and a feast was organized to celebrate ‘the courage of the people of Bergamo who had confronted, defeated and dispersed those endangering its sacred freedom’.⁶ Around the same time, riots broke out in the valleys surrounding Lake Como, where religious processions and the traditional adoration of sacred images had been forbidden: troops had to be sent from Milan to deal with the rebels.⁷

Despite journalists and members of the patriotic clubs carefully filtering the news and carrying out a harsh repression against anybody who spread alarmistic news, rumours about the possible defeat of the French and the return of the old governors were circulating everywhere, most of all among the commoners and in the province in general: in May 1798, for instance, a man was imprisoned for having spread rumours in a tavern in Samarate (not far from Legnano) about England’s recent victories. Around the same time, a woman was arrested in Crema for having publicly declared that an Austrian army was coming soon to ‘punish the French thieves’.⁸ In August of the same year, no fewer than thirty citizens were arrested because they dared questioning Napoleon’s military success.⁹ With the worsening of the situation, the authorities also tried to intensify republican propaganda through theatre and music: the tragedies of Alfieri (for instance *Virginia* and *Bruto*) were offered at the Teatro Patriottico, while the already mentioned hymn by Monti and Minoja was performed in La Scala at the end of a lavish celebration lasting the whole day.¹⁰ While the last patriotic songs still echoed in the streets, the walls of the city were even covered with fake news and boisterous proclamations, announcing, for instance, how an army of ten million republicans was coming from France to save the cisalpine independence.¹¹

Austria, on the other hand, had seen Napoleon’s involvement in Egypt as the perfect occasion for revenge after the shameful defeat suffered in the Italian campaign; with its best General and army occupied in a distant land and an exhausted financial situation, France was in a weak state.¹² A coalition formed with various states allowed Austria to deploy quite a large army; notably, this included a Russian contingent commanded by General Suvorov, who, together with the Austrian Feldmarschall Melas, took the lead in all the operations carried out on the Italian

⁶ De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina...*, p. 213.

⁷ Luigi Mantovani, *Quando Milano era capitale. Cronache milanesi dal 1796 al 1824*, ed. by Matteo Noja (Milan: La vita felice, 2014), p. 46.

⁸ *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina*, part 1, vol. 7, p. 162.

⁹ G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina...*, p. 212.

¹⁰ F. Cusani, *Storia di Milano dall'origine ai nostri giorni...*, pp. 244-245.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 227-230.

¹² C. Cantù, *Storia di cento anni*, p. 34.

soil.¹³ Ironically, the events of the war seemed to mirror those of 1796, the tide turning rather quickly in favour of the Austro-Russian forces. With the offensive in Northern Italy entering its most intense phase only in spring 1799, Brescia fell on 21 April, rapidly followed by Bergamo. A week later, a battle on the river Adda decided once more Milan's destiny: having broken the French lines not far from Cassano, Suvorov triumphantly entered Milan on 28 April.

As Archduke Ferdinand and his supporters, the most committed patriots had left the city a few days earlier and repaired to Piedmont or France. Among them, there were many important personalities and intellectuals such as Vincenzo Monti, Carlo Botta and Giovanni Pindemonte.¹⁴ The members of the Directory and municipality had left Milan already on 23 April, escorted by guards who protected them by a large crowd calling them 'thieves, liars and traitors':¹⁵ in the days prior to their departure, they had in fact doubled the taxes, sequestered and sold many goods and emptied the public treasury. On 26 April, one of the last proclamations disseminated by the government had attempted to convince the citizens that the French army, in full power and capacity, was just imposing a temporary truce before starting another series of victories.¹⁶

Some sources describe the people's reactions in watching the Austrian Hussars and the Russian Cossacks entering Porta Orientale as quite positive: the majority of the Milanese who had not fled the city, exasperated by the excesses of the French regime and mindful of the Habsburgs' *buon governo* welcomed the conquerors with enthusiasm, set aside a certain fear motivated by some rumours circulating on the cruelty of Suvorov and his soldiers.¹⁷ Almost intoxicated by the return of the former governors and with them the old traditions, religious practices and social order, many, most of all among the commoners, greeted the conquerors applauding and crying out 'Viva la Religione! Viva Francesco II!' ('Long live Religion! Long live Francis II!'), and quickly carried out a ferocious attack against the Jacobin symbols featured just a few weeks before during the public celebrations.¹⁸

On the very day of Suvorov's entry and shortly after, the patriotic club headquarters were looted, the trees of Liberty uprooted, the statue of Brutus in Piazza dei Mercanti reduced into

¹³ C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano*, p. 98.

¹⁴ Attilio Butti, 'I deportati del 1799', in *Archivio storico lombardo*, year 34, n.8 (Milan: Cogliati, 1907), pp. 379-429 (p. 390).

¹⁵ G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina...*, p. 230.

¹⁶ L. Mantovani, *Quando Milano era capitale*, pp. 48-49.

¹⁷ See e.g. Alessandro Visconti, *Storia di Milano* (Milan: Ceschina, 1967), p. 598, Alfredo Bosisio, *Storia di Milano* (Milan: Giunti-Martello, 1958), p. 293 and F. Fava, *Storia di Milano*, 2, p. 22.

¹⁸ Romualdo Bonfadini, 'La Repubblica cisalpina e il primo Regno d'Italia', in *Il Politecnico. Repertorio di studi letterari, scientifici e tecnici*, year 4, vol. 1 (Milan: Zanetti, 1866), pp. 355-379 (pp. 362-363) and Ettore Verga, *Storia della vita milanese* (Milan: Libreria Milanese, 1996), p. 188.

pieces, the republican signs removed from shops and public buildings.¹⁹ Similarly, the religious images which had been covered with paint and plaster were uncovered; crosses and coat of arms were seen reappearing everywhere around the city.²⁰ A painting by the Russian painter Adolf Iosifovich Charlemagne (1826-1901) even shows Suvorov being greeted in the cathedral square by an assembly of religious authorities (including the bishop) with standards and sacred images, the cathedral itself decorated with red velvet for what looked like a solemn celebration of joy (Fig. 5.1). Although the clergy had good reasons to welcome back the old governors (the Austrian government being far more benevolent towards religion than the republican one), the painting can be considered not entirely reliable: painted in the 1850s mainly to celebrate the figure of Suvorov, it shows, for instance, Milan's cathedral at a much more advanced state of construction than it was in 1799. Besides, in a dark corner in the foreground, the viewer can also spot some figures of commoners utterly terrified by the arrival of the Russians.



Fig. 5.1: A.I. Charlemagne, 'Ceremonial Reception of Field Marshal Alexander Suvorov in Milan in April 1799'. Saint Petersburg, Gatchina Palace.

¹⁹ Giacinto Ferrari, *I Francesi in Lombardia da Carlo VIII fino alla sempre memorabile giornata del 28 aprile 1799* (Milan: Pirotta e Maspero in S. Margherita, 1799), p. 97 and F. Cusani, *Storia di Milano dall'origine ai nostri giorni...*, pp. 257-258.

²⁰ C. Cantù, *Storia di cento anni*, p. 35 and Ettore Rota, 'Milano napoleonica', in *Storia di Milano*, ed. by G. Treccani degli Alfieri (Milan: Fondazione Treccani degli Alfieri, 1956), 13, pp. 3-348 (p. 116).

Particularly positive reactions are also described in the numerous poems that circulated, both printed and manuscript, after the return of the Austrians. Although the descriptions could be slightly biased by a clear antipathy for the republican regime, they contain interesting details, for instance the exasperation towards the overflowing of republican symbols and rhetoric and the nostalgia many felt for more ‘traditional’ religious and governing authorities; their register and language (dialect) also contextualize them within the lower social classes. An anonymous poet, for instance, commented how

Ma! Dio a vorsuu e in don moment
No ghe staa poeu pù nient
In staa battuu e in pezz tajaa
Tucc i Alber de la libertaa
Tutt i insegn republican
Causa di noster maa in Milan
E tucc gridaven cont gran calor
*Viva la Religion e l'Imperator.*²¹

But! God decided, and suddenly
Everything had vanished,
All the Trees of Liberty,
All the republican signs,
That caused so much pain in Milan
Were destroyed and reduced into pieces
And everybody cried out with great joy
Long live Religion and the Emperor.

Another one proclaimed

Oh Santo dì, propri mandaa da Dia,
Ti te se el font d'ogni consolazion!
Ti te see staa ai Frances de gran terror
E de gran spass al nost Imperatoor.²²

Oh blessed day, really sent by God,
You are the source of all our consolation!
You are a cause of fear for the French
And of amusement for our Emperor.

Several pamphlets written both in Italian and dialect had also been produced and disseminated in the days prior to the Austro-Russians' entry into the city, celebrating the long-awaited death of the Cisalpine and comparing her to a shameless prostitute at the service of the French.²³ A particularly notable case is that of a pamphlet clandestinely printed and disseminated at some point during the final phases of the war, programmatically entitled *Testamento della fu Repubblica Cisalpina* (*The Cisalpine Republic's last Will*, see Fig. 5.2).²⁴ The allegory of the dying Cisalpine, young daughter of Napoleon and France, was used to comment on many features of the past triennium, e.g. the falsity of concepts such as independence and freedom, the magniloquent propaganda and the continuous economic exploitation of Lombardy. The rather caustic irony used by its anonymous creator (judging by the language and metric structure, quite an educated man) indeed provides the reader with a vivid picture of the way in which the actions

²¹ Gio. Battista Fumagalli, *L'ultima messa celebrata nella chiesa della Rosa in Milano e servita dall'estensore, o sia Un racconto che fa conoscere cosa erano que' tempi 14 maggio 1796 epoca dell'arrivo de' francesi in Milano sino al 28 aprile 1799 ritorno delle armate austriache* (Milan: Dall'autore contrada del Boschetto, n.d.), p. 11.

²² *Interessant, e gustosa istoriela sora tutt quel, che han faa i Franceses in Milan e in di seou contorna dall'ann, che bin vegnuu chi, fina a quella benedetta giornata che han dovuu andassen via, cioè fina al dì 28. April 1799* (Milan: Giuseppe Tagliorati, 1799), p. 22.

²³ G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina...*, p. 231 and E. Rota, 'Milano napoleonica', pp. 116-117.

²⁴ See also the similar *Testamento della spirata libertà cisalpina* (Venice: Cordella, 1799).

undertaken by the French governors had been judged by many, although the propaganda machine had not allowed them to express their opinion in the open:

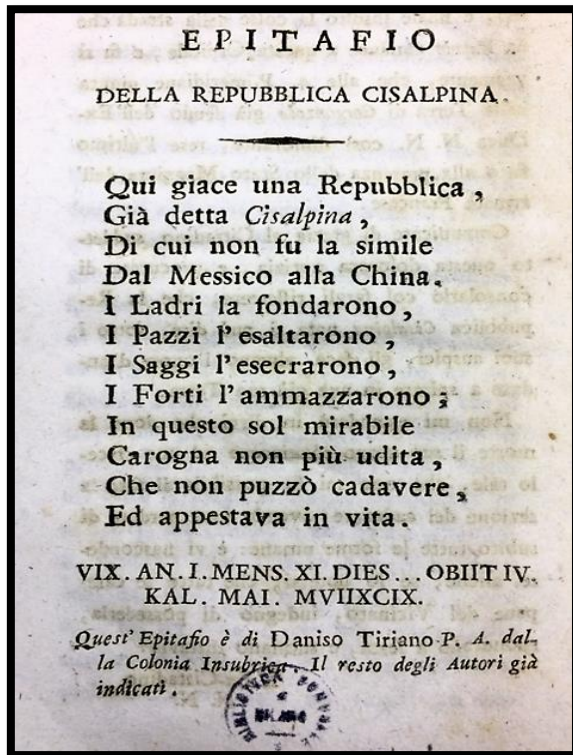


Fig. 5.2: Epitaph for the dead Cisalpine Republic contained in the *Testamento della fu Repubblica Cisalpina*. Milan, Biblioteca Sormani.

[...] because I found among my possessions three celebrated tomes containing three different Constitutions (each originally presented to me as immutable, perfect and eternal) [...], I leave them to those literates who, loving more abstract than concrete things, violently supported the values of the French revolution. I pass on my *Equality* to the mental hospital, hoping that its patients can appreciate it, given the fact that the wisest people of all Nations have agreed on the fact that it is not worth anything. I leave my *Indivisibility* to those valent patriots who having never studied geography, cannot risk to disbelieve this beautiful quality, which is founded exclusively on the word and a decree of the French Directory. I would like to also bequeath my *Liberty*, however, despite my good mother [France] claiming many times that she donated it to me, I never really realized I had received it and I looked for it among my possessions, but in vain; nor do I want to blame my tender mother because many claim that the poor woman, despite always talking about liberty, never possessed it in the first place.²⁵

The entry of the Austro-Russians was also celebrated, on the very evenings of 28 and 29 April, with the familiar lighting of La Scala and La Cannobiana and the invitation to decorate and light private houses;²⁶ some historians claim that, although public lighting had never been a popular practice, on this particular occasion, the whole people, animated by a new enthusiasm, even competed in decorating their homes.²⁷ The aristocrats, the clergy, the people inhabiting both the city and the countryside, everybody welcomed back what they thought was the 'mild and peaceful government' of the pre-1796 years for different reasons: the first and second had been deprived of honour, authority and wealth, the latter had seen their religious freedom frustrated and had been subjected to systematic spoliation and abuses.²⁸

²⁵ *Testamento della fu Repubblica Cisalpina, aggiuntavi la relazione uffiziale della di lei malattia e morte, spedita al Direttorio francese dal medico della defunta* (Milan: s.n., 1799), pp. 14-16; see also G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina...*, pp. 248-250.

²⁶ [Proclama Governo Provvisorio], 28 April 1799 and [Avviso Governo Provvisorio], 29 April 1799, in *Gridario generale, ossia Collezione di tutte le grida, editti, proclami pubblicati in Milano dal giorno 28 aprile 1799 [...] sino al 2 giugno 1800* (Milan: Veladini, 1800), vol. 1, pp. 2-5.

²⁷ G. Ferrari, *I Francesi in Lombardia da Carlo VIII...*, p. 99.

²⁸ F. Cusani, *Storia di Milano dall'origine ai nostri giorni...*, p. 260 and R. Bonfadini, 'La Repubblica cisalpina e il primo Regno d'Italia', p. 369.

In truth, the Austrians came back to Lombardy animated by different sentiments and intentions from those prior to the French invasion. Their aim was not simply that of restoring the status quo, but also of wiping out Milan's republican experience, also possibly avenging the rather apathetic reception the Milanese had shown towards the French conquest, regime and propaganda. What has been described by some historians as a 'psychological mutation' began in the months the Austrians spent in Milan, a mutation destined to last until the Risorgimento wars.²⁹ On the other hand, the rather harsh measures undertaken by the Austrians can also be framed within the state of emergency caused by the protracted war against revolutionary France, a war that was destined to last for many years to come and to constitute quite a traumatic experience.³⁰ Financially exhausted, involved in an apparently endless series of wars and conscious of the instability of the current situation, the Austrians were forced to treat Lombardy in a completely different way from the long and stable rule of the past century.³¹

The almost unconditioned support shown to the former governors by a people who had been mostly disappointed by the French regime was thus repaid with the harshest repression the city of Milan had known in a long time.³² After having been for three years the centre of republican celebration, the city became the capital of the most violent reaction.³³ Even Luigi Mantovani, a canon who certainly did not support the French regime, commented already on 21 May that 'it is impossible to discern in the present governors [...] any trace of friendship towards the people; on the contrary, they want to repulse it'.³⁴ The old Giuseppe Parini, whose frail health had already been compromised by the turmoil of the republican triennium, had also welcomed back the Austrians as the enlightened governors he had served for many years. He himself was not touched, in the contrary the imperial government, mindful of his services, granted him a monthly salary.³⁵ However, Parini witnessed the harsh repression and many of his former companions being persecuted and arrested, others resolving to false adulation.³⁶ His last verses, written on the very day of his death (15 August 1799) made us of a religious allegory to express the last desperate wish that the governors would not become tyrants themselves:

Vinse Davide, e stimolò gli ardit:
e il popol sorse, e gli empi al suol natio
Fe' dell'orgoglio lor andar pentiti.

David triumphed and inflamed the brave;
The People rose and sent the ungodly back
To their land, their pride frustrated.

²⁹ Augusto Vicinelli, *Il Parini e Brera* (Milan: Ceschina, 1963), p. 227.

³⁰ Enno Kraehe, *Metternich's German Policy*, vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 191.

³¹ Robin Okey, *The Habsburg Monarchy, c. 1765-1918. From Enlightenment to Eclipse* (London: MacMillan, 2001), pp. 68-69.

³² F. Fava, *Storia di Milano*, 2, p. 22.

³³ A. Bosisio, *Storia di Milano*, p. 294 and E. Rota, 'Milano napoleonica', p. 116.

³⁴ L. Mantovani, *Quando Milano era capitale*, p. 51.

³⁵ E. Rota, 'Milano napoleonica', p. 120.

³⁶ Cesare Cantù, *L'abate Parini e la Lombardia nel secolo passato* (Milan: Giacomo Gnocchi, 1854), pp. 267-268.

Or Dio lodiamo. Il tabernacol santo
E l'arca è salva. E si propone il tempio
che di Gerusalem fu gloria e vanto.

Now let us praise God, for the holy tabernacle
And the Ark are saved. And the temple that was
Jerusalem's glory and pride is rebuilt.

Ma splendan la giustizia e il retto esempio,
Tal che Israel non torni a nuovo pianto,
a novella rapina e a novo scempio.³⁷

[Now] May justice and uprightness shine,
So that Israel does not face new tears,
New thefts and new massacres.

Against Parini's dying wish, the thirteen months of the Austrian interregnum, from April 1799 to May 1800, brought unbearable economic exploitation, confiscations, violence, arrests and, in the worst cases, even deportations to Dalmatia and Hungary.³⁸ The criterion that seemed to underpin any public action was that of violent repression against any Jacobin element or person, although everybody who did not profess complete obedience towards the new governors was readily considered a Jacobin.³⁹

Although Austria had recognized the Cisalpine Republic with the Treaty of Campoformio, all those who had served in public offices lost their jobs and had their possessions confiscated.⁴⁰ At the same time, a witch-hunt against supposedly Jacobin elements and figures, reminiscent of that before 1796, but far harsher, was carried out in the whole territory of Lombardy. All public and private places were closely monitored, from private homes to squares, cafes and taverns: all unofficial gatherings were regarded with the utmost suspect.⁴¹ No books or journals could be published without having been approved by the imperial censors.⁴² The Police, newly established as early as 29 April and supported by a dense network of secret informers, arrested anybody who could be suspected of supporting the French, sometimes just based on anonymous and unverified reports.⁴³ Ironically, this campaign of repression and vengeance has already been compared by historians to the years of the French Terror.⁴⁴ Milan – commented an eyewitness – suffered more in those 'painful thirteen months' than in the three years of the French regime.⁴⁵ On the other hand, such a strong reaction can be also considered as motivated by the desperate necessity of maintaining control within a difficult and unstable situation.

³⁷ Carlo Cajmi, *Su e giù: scene milanesi dal 1796 al 1814* (Milan: Galli e Omodei, 1875), p. 107 and A. Ottolini, 'La vita culturale nel periodo napoleonico', p. 402.

³⁸ A. Butti, 'I deportati del 1799', p. 381.

³⁹ R. Bonfadini, 'La Repubblica cisalpina e il primo Regno d'Italia', p. 369.

⁴⁰ C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano*, p. 102.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 107.

⁴² F. Cusani, *Storia di Milano dall'origine ai nostri giorni...*, p. 262.

⁴³ C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano*, p. 99; see also [Proclaim General Melas and Count Cocastelli], 29 April 1799, in *Gridario generale*, pp. 3-4.

⁴⁴ Giovanni Melzi, *Memorie, documenti e lettere inedite di Napoleone I e Beaubarnais raccolte ed ordinate* (Milan: Fratelli Borroni, 1862), p. 226.

⁴⁵ A. Vicinelli, *Il Parini e Brera*, p. 227.

The war against the Jacobins started as early as the day following Suvorov's entry and could, at least initially, count on a strong popular participation:⁴⁶ one of the first actions of the new provisional government was in fact that of inviting the citizens to refrain from carrying out private attacks and revenges.⁴⁷ The weak or absent participation of the lower social strata in the republican ideology and experience indeed found its natural continuation in the violent repression.⁴⁸ Seduced by the promises of peace and order and full of hatred against those who had exploited them, many commoners resolved to raids and violence, being often incited by aristocrats and clerics. The palace of Serbelloni, where Napoleon himself had sojourned when in Milan, was among the first buildings to be looted and vandalized.⁴⁹ A new courthouse – 'di sangue' ('covered with blood'), as the historian Melzi called it - was established, its main scope being that of dealing with the arrest, conviction and punishment of political suspects.⁵⁰

For weeks, the Police rounded up the former patriots who did not manage to flee the city, arresting and deporting many of them in the city of Kotor (today in Montenegro), a former Venetian property which had become Austrian after Campoformio.⁵¹ Among them, there were also celebrated doctors, scientists and intellectuals.⁵² Those arrested in other provinces and waiting to be deported were frequently carried to Milan and marched in the public streets, covered in chains and exposed to the people's scorn; similarly, the former public officers of Brescia were carried around the whole city in open carriages so that the commoners could insult and even beat them.⁵³ The Cossacks also played their part: according to an eyewitness, it was common to see them spurring their horses in the narrow alleys of the old town while dragging a recently arrested man with a rope attached to their saddles.⁵⁴ The numerous patriots arrested and deported, some of which would never come back to Lombardy, have been even considered among the first Italian martyrs, ideologically not so far from those (more celebrated) of the following century.⁵⁵ Moreover, many of the intellectuals exiled in France were among the first who started, well before the 1815 and 1830 rebellions, to conceive the idea of a unified Italian State.⁵⁶

⁴⁶ R. Bonfadini, 'La Repubblica cisalpina e il primo Regno d'Italia', p. 369.

⁴⁷ [Proclaim General Melas], 29 April 1799, in *Gridario generale*, p. 3.

⁴⁸ C. Cantù, *Storia di cento anni*, p. 39.

⁴⁹ G. Melzi, *Memorie, documenti e lettere inedite...*, pp. 224-225 and R. Bonfadini, 'La Repubblica cisalpina e il primo Regno d'Italia', p. 363.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 227.

⁵¹ L. Mantovani, *Quando Milano era capitale*, p. 51 and C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano*, p. 116.

⁵² R. Bonfadini, 'La Repubblica cisalpina e il primo Regno d'Italia', p. 371.

⁵³ G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina...*, pp. 260-262.

⁵⁴ F. Cusani, *Storia di Milano dall'origine ai nostri giorni...*, p. 258.

⁵⁵ A. Vicinelli, *Il Parini e Brera*, p. 228 and E. Rota, 'Milano napoleonica', p. 119.

⁵⁶ F. Cusani, *Storia di Milano dall'origine ai nostri giorni...*, p. 231.

The new Austrian regime also carried out an extensive campaign against any traces and symbols of republicanism in all fields of public and private life. Caricatures and pamphlets were circulated to celebrate the power of the reaction and fuel popular hatred against the French infidels and thieves (Figs. 5.3 and 5.4). All cisalpine laws, proclaims and decrees were ridiculed and declared void, all private and public activities were closely monitored and even details such as hairstyle and clothing became grounds for arrest; the former republic was turned into a Police state.⁵⁷



Fig. 5.3: 1799 caricature entitled *Il patriottismo in viaggio verso la casa del Diavolo* (Patriotism on the Road to the House of the Devil). Milan, CRS 'Achille Bertarelli'.

Knowing that the people's support also rested on their opportunity, denied by the French, to carry out traditional religious practices, the provisional government also sought from the very beginning an alliance with the clergy. A lavish religious celebration was organized already on 29 April; while masses *pro Rege* and *pro gratiarum actione* (dedicated to the monarch and thanking God for the favorable events) were celebrated in all churches of the city, a solemn Te Deum was sung in the cathedral and attended by all the newly instituted military and civil authorities.⁵⁸ In the following days, the Archbishop himself, after having publicly praised the return of the Austrians,⁵⁹ carried the celebrated relic of the Holy Nail (kept in the cathedral) in procession throughout the city, to the great joy of the people who had not witnessed it for the past three

⁵⁷ C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano*, pp. 116-117.

⁵⁸ [Proclaim Secretary of the Archbishop], 28 April 1799, in *Gridario generale*, p. 3 and F. Cusani, *Storia di Milano dall'origine ai nostri giorni...*, p. 259.

⁵⁹ [Proclamation Archbishop Visconti], 3 May 1799, in *Gridario generale*, pp. 12-13.

years.⁶⁰ As a consequence, several ministers and religious figures publicly praised the Austrian governors and presented their return as an act of God, inviting all citizens to be thankful and obedient or, in the worst cases, inciting them to denounce or attack the former patriots.⁶¹ In truth, the alliance with the Church, initially celebrated as the end of a tyrannical era and the return of the old order, was just a device to temporarily pacify the people and the clergy.⁶² None of the promises initially made were kept: the goods confiscated during the republican regimes were sold, but the outcome enriched the current occupants rather than their former owners. Similarly, the salaries that had not been paid for months were not refunded, many clerics having to live on private charity.⁶³



Fig. 5.4: 1799 caricature representing the Cisalpine and French Liberty on the banks of the Acheron.
Rome, Biblioteca di storia moderna e contemporanea.

On the other hand, the systematic economic exploitation began immediately, afflicting a region already scarred by three years of military occupation.⁶⁴ In a very similar fashion to their French enemies, the Austrians ordered that Milan maintained and fed the ‘vittoriose truppe regio-imperiali’ (victorious royal-imperial troops): all butchers, bakers and wine merchants and

⁶⁰ G. Ferrari, *I Francesi in Lombardia da Carlo VIII...*, p. 104.

⁶¹ G. Melzi, *Memorie, documenti e lettere inedite...*, pp. 225-226 and R. Bonfadini, ‘La Repubblica cisalpina e il primo Regno d’Italia’, p. 369.

⁶² C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano*, p. 106.

⁶³ E. Rota, ‘Milano napoleonica’, p. 118.

⁶⁴ F. Cusani, *Storia di Milano dall’origine ai nostri giorni...*, pp. 264.

many more had to deliver huge quantities of victuals which would be paid according to the prices determined by the new government.⁶⁵ Similarly, on 30 April, the governors ordered half of all the wheat in the whole province to be delivered to the public authority. A month later, appointed *commissari* were already searching everywhere for wheat and other cereals and inviting the population to denounce any non-compliers with the promise of a prize and anonymity.⁶⁶

At the same time, the Cossacks systematically raided the countryside sequestering crops, animals and objects and paying with promissory notes written in German or Russian, not infrequently showing wrong prices or even insults towards the peasants.⁶⁷ Following the systematic exploitation and taxation, prices and taxes rose uncontrollably: for instance, the poll tax, already high during the Napoleonic regime at seven liras, reached 32 liras.⁶⁸ Despite the religious practices and the paternalistic tone of the decrees, the dissatisfaction among the peasants and commoners rapidly mounted: already by the early summer of 1799, many wished, both privately and in public, that the French would return.⁶⁹

Repression and vengeance were by far the strongest weapons of the government, while its attention towards self-celebration and the people's needs for entertainment and culture was dramatically reduced in comparison to the republican months. Cultural and artistic products harking back to the republican regime were targeted with great strength; as the historian Giovanni De Castro commented, people were arrested 'for a portrait of Bonaparte, for a male garment tailored a year before, for an aria in musica among their papers'.⁷⁰ Similarly, the members of the Teatro Patriottico were among the first to be arrested by Suvorov's Cossacks on the very day of their entry in Milan, their theatre and material goods confiscated.⁷¹ Although almost no specific documentary evidence survived to describe this process, it is likely that these weeks saw the systematic destruction of many artworks and cultural products; historians remember, for instance, how many literary and scientific volumes of allegedly seditious content were burnt in Brescia's main square in a blaze organized by the local bishop.⁷²

This process also included many theatrical and musical pieces produced for both the theatre and the public feasts. While the majority of librettos, printed in large numbers and widely disseminated, survived, no music of patriotic works is extant. Sporadic comments in the

⁶⁵ [Avviso Governo Provvisorio], 28 April 1799, in *Gridario generale*, p. 2.

⁶⁶ C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano*, pp. 112-113.

⁶⁷ F. Cusani, *Storia di Milano dall'origine ai nostri giorni...*, pp. 287-288 and G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina...*, p. 274.

⁶⁸ F. Cusani, *Storia di Milano dall'origine ai nostri giorni...*, p. 229.

⁶⁹ L. Mantovani, *Quando Milano era capitale*, p. 52.

⁷⁰ G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina...*, p. 257 and Vittorio Nivellini, *I 150 anni di un'accademia milanese* (Milan: Accademia dei Filodrammatici, 1948), pp. 37-38.

⁷¹ Antonio Paglicci Brozzi, *Sul teatro giacobino ed antigiacobino in Italia* (Milan: Pirola, 1887), p. 211.

⁷² R. Bonfadini, 'La Repubblica cisalpina e il primo Regno d'Italia', p. 372.

secondary sources reveal some comments on the quality or effectiveness of the music, although their subjectivity and lack of sources makes them rather unreliable. For instance, the historian Cusani stated that both the words and the music of *La congiura pisoniana* were dreadful, while Minoja's *Inno* had some remarkably lyrical pages.⁷³ On the contrary, other sources talk about the mediocrity of Minoja's music: Monti himself lamented how his piece had become famous as the 'inno di ghiaccio' (the 'ice-cold hymn').⁷⁴ Similarly, some pages of *La congiura* were described as memorable, namely a nocturnal serenade sung by Pison and the 'strepitoso cadenzato' (boisterously rhythmical) choir of the conjurors, 'Sul tiranno ognun prometta'.⁷⁵

As for the ballets, the situation is even more complex as the ephemeral choreography was by far the most important element; the music, whose composition was often entrusted to the theatre's concertmaster rather than to a composer, was not deemed worth conserving. On the other hand, extended *argomenti* were usually not printed apart from particularly important occasions: as a result, the only surviving trace of the existence of many ballets is in the opera librettos. Finally, the music composed for republican celebration, while frequently mentioned in the documents as requiring large forces and being offered within large-scale events, seems not to have survived.

Together with the caricatures of democrats and Jacobins, parodies of the patriotic hymns and songs produced during the triennium also appeared, a proof – Cusani caustically commented – that the reactionaries' fanaticism equated that of the Jacobins.⁷⁶ On 30 July 1799, for instance, the abbot Francesco Beccatini celebrated the capitulation of the castle with a text which parodied almost word by word the hymn Monti had written for La Scala in January. Using a repertoire of very similar, yet deeply modified images and allegories, the hymn by Beccatini addressed not the French, but rather the Italians, called to celebrate the return of the King. Not freedom, but calm and peace were exalted. Similarly, all Italians were invited to hate and rebel against those individuals who had wounded and destroyed the whole country, their swords still dripping blood.⁷⁷ A few examples of the correlation between the two texts can provide a clearer picture of Beccatini's harsh critique of the ideals and images used by Monti:

⁷³ F. Cusani, *Storia di Milano dall'origine ai nostri giorni...*, pp 108 and 244-245.

⁷⁴ Vincenzo Monti, *Lettere inedite e sparse*, ed. by Alfonso Bertoldi and Giuseppe Mazzatinti, vol. 2 (Turin; Rome: Roux Frassati, 1896), p. 271 and *La Bibliofilia. Rivista dell'arte antica*, ed. by Leo S. Olschki, vol. 8 (Florence: Olschki, 1907), pp. 295-296.

⁷⁵ Gio. Battista De Sanctis, *Francesco Saverio Salfi. Patriota, critico, drammaturgo* (Cosenza: Pellegrini, 1970), pp. 103-104 and Loredana Castori, *I troni in polvere. Salfi tra Alfieri e Monti* (Salerno: Edisud, 2009), pp. 115-116.

⁷⁶ F. Cusani, *Storia di Milano dall'origine ai nostri giorni...*, p. 267.

⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 267.

Vincenzo Monti, *Inno per l'anniversario della caduta [...]*, 21 January 1799.

Oh soave dell'alme sospiro,
Libertà che del cielo sei figlia [...]

Ma tua pianta radice non pone
Che fra brani d'infrante corone,
Nè si pasce di mute rugiade,
Ma di nembi, e del sangue dei re.
Cittadini, che all'armi volate,
In quel sangue le spade bagnate.
La vittoria ne' bellici affanni
Sta nel brando che i regi ferì.
Giù dal trono, crudeli tiranni,
Il servaggio del mondo finì.⁷⁸

You sweet pleasure of the soul,
Liberty, daughter of Heaven [...]

Your roots can only grow
Among the pieces of shattered crowns
And be watered not with dew,
But with storms and the blood of kings.
You citizens who run into battle,
Dip your swords into that blood.
The triumph on the battlefield
Is in the sword which wounded the king.
Down from the throne, you evil tyrants,
The world's slavery has come to an end.

**Francesco Beccatini, *Inno* (no title),
30 July 1799**

Oh soave dell'alme sospiro,
Della quiete del cielo sei figlia [...]

Ma la tua pianta radice sol pone
Sotto l'ombra d'auguste corone,
Irrigata dall'ampie rugiade
Sol profuse dal trono di un re.
Italiani, deh incontro volate
Alle spade di sangue bagnate
Di quel popol, che in mezzo agli affanni
Tutta Italia distrusse e ferì.
Son fuggiti i crudeli tiranni,
Dell'Italia il servaggio finì.⁷⁹

You sweet pleasure of the soul,
You are the daughter of Peace and Heaven.

Your roots can only grow
In the shadow of venerable crowns,
Being watered by the plentiful dews
Flowing from a king's throne.
You Italians, run against
The blood-dripping swords
Of that crowd that, with so much pain,
Wounded and destroyed all of Italy.
The evil tyrants have fled,
Italy's slavery has come to an end.

At the end of the same year, a flyer appeared advertising a theatre performance entitled *La Guardia Nazionale fallita* (*The unsuccessful National Guard*), to be performed 'in the extinct patriotic theatre';⁸⁰ while it seems unlikely that this performance actually took place, its advertisement sufficed in ridiculing both the Società del Teatro Patriottico and the Guardia Nazionale. Similarly, a parody of *La Marseillaise* appeared, the tune unchanged, the text now featuring the repetition of 'Viva Maria!' ('Hail Mary!');⁸¹ this verse had also become very popular as the battle cry of a Catholic rebellion whose champions had fought the French in Tuscany with standards bearing the image of Holy Mary (Fig. 5.5).⁸² The song would survive the years of the following Napoleonic domination up to the Austrian restoration and, after numerous reworks, become one of the most widespread tunes among the Catholic, anti-Unitarian peasants in the whole of the

⁷⁸ Vincenzo Monti, *Inno per l'anniversario della caduta dell'ultimo Re dei Francesi Luigi XVI*, printed in *Gazzetta Nazionale della Liguria*, n. 33 (26 January 1799), p. 267.

⁷⁹ G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina...*, p. 246.

⁸⁰ V. Nivellini, *I 150 anni di un'accademia milanese*, p. 38.

⁸¹ G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina...*, p. 257.

⁸² A. Paglicci Brozzi, *Sul teatro giacobino ed antigiacobino in Italia*, pp. 209-210.



Fig. 5.5: A prayer card showing Holy Mary and an Archangel chasing the French away. Arezzo, State Archive.

nineteenth century.⁸³ In the atmosphere of harsh repression and economic vexation, not only the governors, but also the majority of people had lost interest in the theatre, both spoken and musical. The members of the patriotic societies had been easily silenced, their main chiefs and inspirers (e.g. Salfi, Monti, Ranza, etc.) exiled, in hiding or forced to inactivity.⁸⁴

On the other hand, the opera house needed to be purged from at least the worst excesses of the previous regime: many of the changes implemented by the French regime were quickly dismantled. As early as 29 April 1799, for instance, the architect Leopoldo Pollack, a pupil of the old Piermarini, received a note from the members of the Governo Provvisorio

ordering him to restore the Palco Reale as it was before February that year, when the works to dismantle it had been approved by the Milanese Directory.⁸⁵ The works started immediately, with the theatre remaining unavailable through the majority of the spring season: many performances between May and June 1799 had to take place in La Cannobiana.⁸⁶

After the democratizing process that had taken place in the triennium, it became paramount to restore the calm and order within the theatrical buildings by newly regulating the access to them and monitoring the behaviour of the audience: many examples of the pre-1796 legislation were proposed again. On 3 August, shortly before the Autumn Season (the first beginning under the new regime) started, the newly established Commissione di Polizia disseminated an avviso containing a detailed Regolamento that directly quoted those published before 1796 and covered

⁸³ Stefano Pivato, *Bella ciao. Canto e politica nella storia d'Italia* (Rome; Bari: Laterza, 2005), pp. 27-28.

⁸⁴ A. Paglicci Brozzi, *Sul teatro giacobino ed antigiacobino in Italia*, p. 228.

⁸⁵ [Letter Governo Provvisorio to Leopold Pollack], 27 April 1799 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 17).

⁸⁶ See the librettos Angelo Anelli, *L' amor sincero. Dramma giocoso in musica da rappresentarsi alla Canobiana di Milano la primavera del 1799 [...]* (Milan: Gio. Batista Bianchi, 1799), idem, *La virtù al cimento. Melodramma per musica da rappresentarsi nel Teatro alla Canobiana di Milano la primavera del 1799 [...]* (Milan: Gio. Batista Bianchi, 1799) and Giovanni Bertati, *La donna di genio volubile. Dramma giocoso in musica da rappresentarsi nel Teatro alla Canobiana di Milano la Primavera del 1799 [...]* (Milan: Gio. Batista Bianchi, 1799).

several aspects of the theatrical experience.⁸⁷ In particular, after spending several articles on the rules to follow to approach and enter the building, the document read

It remains strictly forbidden to scream, whistle, vociferate or express disapproval in any other way, and also make noises with sticks or any other objects, both during the performances and in the pauses; it is also forbidden to ask for encores of the arias or any other part of the performance, or to call the performers on stage to receive applause more than once.⁸⁸

Another regolamento disciplined the feste da ballo, its purpose being to ‘eradicate every desire of rebellion and bring unanimous peace’.⁸⁹ In particular, the officers forbade any costume, mask or publicity material that could offend either religion or the government. Similarly, any substantial gathering, even during the most popular celebrations such as Carnival, had to be approved by the government and the police. Finally, Bartolomeo Andreoli, now ‘Regio’ (Royal) Direttore dei Teatri, profited from the mutated political conditions to publish the Regolamento he had written about two years earlier, trying to discipline the artists involved in all performances. Interestingly enough, the rules remained practically unchanged: only Andreoli’s new title and the references to a generic effectiveness of the theatrical system rather than to its democratic/republican character witness the passage from one regime to the other.⁹⁰

The access to the theatre was also newly restricted, the practice of offering free celebratory performances to a wider audience quickly dying out. On 12 May, a solemn Te Deum was sung in La Scala in the presence of the Austrian authorities, however the atmosphere was indeed very different from that of the celebrations organized to solemnize the entry of the French in 1796:⁹¹ the evening saw the aristocrats retaking full possession of their boxes and of the theatre’s foyer.⁹² Apart from the general lighting announced for both La Scala and La Cannobiana to celebrate the entry of the troops in Milan, no popular events were offered in the theatres across the whole Austrian interregnum; public jubilation had to be expressed through religious functions in the cathedral or other important churches.⁹³ In fact, the almost total absence of references to the city theatres in the legislation produced by the Austrian temporary government, as well as the lack of

⁸⁷ [Avviso Commissione di Polizia], 3 August 1799, in *Gridario generale*, pp. 89-90 and also Pompeo Cambiasi, *La Scala 1778-1889: note storiche e statistiche* (Milan: Ricordi, 1889), p. 35.

⁸⁸ *Ibidem* (Article XII).

⁸⁹ ‘perchè venga tolto ogni spirito di reazione e sia procurata l’unione degli animi’; [Regolamento per la decenza durante le feste da ballo], n.d., possibly late 1799 (La Scala Archive, MAN 480).

⁹⁰ Bartolomeo Andreoli, [Regolamento per tutti gli Attori che sono scritturati per li Teatri alla Scala ed alla Cannobiana di Milano], n.d. (late 1799), in P. Cambiasi, *La Scala 1778-1889*, p. 36 and Giorgio Taborelli, *Milano capitale della musica* (Rome: Editalia, 2000), p. 156.

⁹¹ P. Cambiasi, *La Scala 1778-1889*, p. 34.

⁹² Guido Bezzola and Giampiero Tintori, *I protagonisti e l’ambiente della Scala nell’età neoclassica* (Milan: Il Polifilo, 1984), p. 35.

⁹³ See e.g. [Avviso Nava], 17 August 1799, [Avviso Niccoletti], 13 November 1799 and [Avviso Nava], 6 December 1799, in *Gridario generale*, pp. 106-107, 206 and 223, respectively.

related documents in La Scala and the Milan State archives seem to corroborate Paglicci Brozzi's hypothesis that the painful thirteen months were quite uneventful for what concerns theatrical performances.⁹⁴

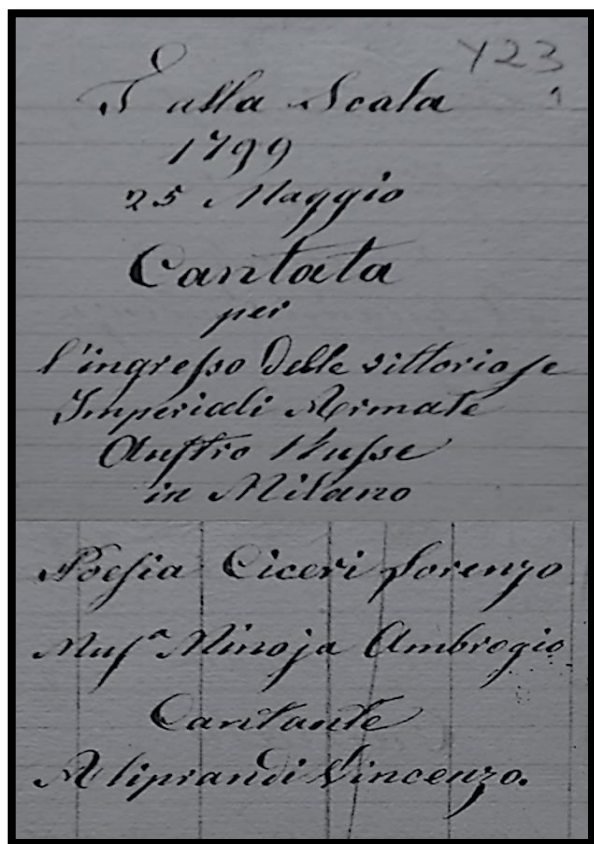


Fig. 5.6: Title page and cast list of Minoja's and Ciceri's cantata. Conservatory 'G. Verdi' of Milan, Fondo Somma.

performances.⁹⁴

Only one notable exception is worth of mention: a large-scale cantata was written and performed in La Scala to celebrate the arrival of the Austro-Russians and the re-opening of the theatre after a three-week break.⁹⁵ The work, rather perfunctorily entitled *Cantata per l'ingresso delle vittoriose Imperiali Armate Austro Russe in Milano* (*Cantata for the Entry in Milan of the victorious Imperial Austro-Russian Armies*), was premiered on the evening of 25 May and performed again on an unspecified number of evenings (Fig. 5.6).⁹⁶ The text was supplied by the priest Lorenzo Ciceri,⁹⁷ member of a religious order, that of the Barnabites, which had been persecuted by Napoleon and was thus very committed to the celebration of the new governors.⁹⁸

The music, on the other hand, was provided by that same Ambrogio Minoja who just four months earlier had composed the hymn to celebrate the fall of Louis XVI. The involvement in the production of this cantata constitutes the first example of Minoja's ability to shift allegiances depending on the governing authority. Despite arguably being the most active composer for the production of patriotic music and member of several governmental commissions during the republican triennium, Minoja became a protégé of the Austrian regime from its very first days.

The details of Minoja's actions in the aftermath of the 1799 occupation are not clear, however his signature shows up in many of the documents disseminated by the Governo Provvisorio from its very first day, thus revealing that the composer was not only pardoned for his behaviour in the

⁹⁴ A. Paglicci Brozzi, *Sul teatro giacobino ed antigiacobino in Italia*, p. 228.

⁹⁵ Pompeo Cambiasi, *Rappresentazioni date nei Reali Teatri di Milano* (Milan: Ricordi, 1872), pp. 12-13.

⁹⁶ Giuseppe Chiappori, *Serie cronologica delle rappresentazioni drammatico-pantomimiche poste sulle scene dei principali teatri di Milano 1776-1818* (Milan: Silvestri, 1818), p. 62.

⁹⁷ Gaetano Melzi, *Dizionario di opere anonime e pseudonime di scrittori italiani o come che sia aventi relazione all'Italia*, vol. 1 (Milan: Pirola, 1848), p. 447.

⁹⁸ See e.g. the *Orazione pronunciata dal P.D. Carlo Giuseppe Quadrupani Ch. Reg. Barnabita [...] in occasione del solenne rendimento di grazie all'Altissimo pel felice ingresso delle vittoriose Armate Austro-Russe [...]* (Milan: Gaetano Motta al Malcantone, 1799).

previous months, but also valued as a precious collaborator (see Figs. 5.7 and 5.8).⁹⁹ Minoja, already maestro al cembalo in La Scala theatre, maestro di cappella in several churches and active composer of occasional music for several years, immediately stood out in the eyes of the new governors as an experienced professional in various musical fields and a very useful ally in order to try and control Milan's musical environment.¹⁰⁰

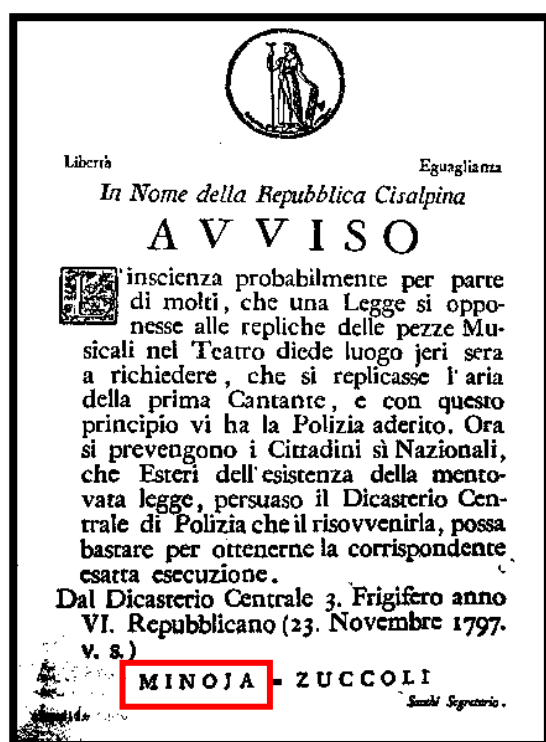


Fig. 5.7: Cisalpine proclamation restating the prohibition to encore musical numbers, 23 November 1797. Milan, State Archive.



Fig. 5.8: Proclamation inviting the citizens to light their houses on 28 April 1799 after the entry of the Austro-Russians. Milan, State Archive.

The music of this cantata is lost, however the comparison between Ciceri's words and the lyrics by Monti sung to Minoja's music barely four months before provides a vivid picture of the composer's changed allegiance:

⁹⁹ See e.g. the documents in *Gridario generale*, pp. 1-2 and also R. Bonfadini, 'La Repubblica cisalpina e il primo Regno d'Italia', p. 369.

¹⁰⁰ Ernst Ludwig Gerber, *Neues historisch-biographisches Lexikon der Tonkünstler*, vol. 3 (Leipzig: Kühnel, 1813), p. 434, Giovanni Bertini, *Dizionario storico-critico degli scrittori di musica*, vol. 4 (Palermo: Tipografia reale di guerra, 1814), pp. 98-99, Silvia Gaddini, 'Minoja, Ambrogio', in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani online*, <<http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ambrogio-minoja>> [last accessed 30 May 2017] and Sven Hansell, 'Minoja, Ambrogio', in *Grove Music Online*, <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/18742>> [last accessed 18 May 2017].

Vincenzo Monti, *Inno per l'anniversario della caduta [...]*, 21 January 1799.

Oh soave dell'alme sospiro,
 Libertà, che del cielo sei figlia,
 Compì alfine l'antico desiro
 Della Terra, che tutta è per te.
 Ma tua pianta radice non pone
 Che tra brani d'infrante corone;
 Né si pasce di mute rugiade,
 Ma di nemi, e del sangue de' re.¹⁰¹

Lorenzo Ciceri, *Cantata per l'ingresso delle vittoriose [...]*, 25 May 1799.

CORO

Inni di giubilo suonan per l'Etera.
 Grazie si rendono all'imperterrito
 Austriaco Genio Liberator.

GENIO AUSTRIACO

In turpi lacci avvinti
 Voi gemeste finora,
 D'ingiusta libertà schiavi non finti.

You sweet pleasure of the soul,
 Liberty, daughter of Heaven,
 Grant at last the ancient wish
 Of the Earth, that is all yours.

Your roots can only grow
 Among the pieces of shattered crowns
 And be watered not with dew,
 But with storms and the blood of kings.¹⁰²

CHOIR

Joyful hymns resound in Heaven,
 Let us give grace to the mighty
 Austrian Spirit of Liberty.

AUSTRIAN SPIRIT

Until now you have suffered,
 Bound by evil chains,
 True slaves of an unrighteous liberty

It is likely that this cantata, composed as a dialogue between a choir and a so-called 'genio' or 'spirit', was shaped on the allegorical pieces of the previous Austrian regime rather than on the large choral hymns popular in the republican triennium,¹⁰³ although Minoja was too young to remember the last *festa teatrale* performed in Milan (*Ascanio in Alba*, in 1771), more than a decade of work in the city's theatre and churches had surely put him into contact with that repertoire. On the other hand, the performance context, that of a piece especially written and publicly offered to celebrate a military victory and exalt the current governors as liberators and enemies of the previous regime, can be considered as a direct legacy of the republican triennium.

In terms of operatic and ballet repertoires, the thirteen months of the interregnum seemed to advocate a return to moderation and neutrality after what Paglicci Brozzi has defined the 'epileptic excesses' of the Jacobin years.¹⁰⁴ With the only exception of the cantata mentioned above, the structure and content of the 1799 seasons as well as the composers, librettists and artists employed in La Scala do not show any trace of governmental intervention.¹⁰⁵ The only evident change from the previous regime was implemented at the end of 1799, when the opening of the first Carnival season under the new regime constituted a very important occasion to make

¹⁰¹ V. Monti, *Inno per l'anniversario della caduta dell'ultimo Re dei Francesi Luigi XVI*, vv. 21-28.

¹⁰² Lorenzo Ciceri, *Cantata per l'ingresso delle vittoriose Imperiali Armate Austro Russe in Milano*, 1799, manuscript (Library of the Conservatorio 'Giuseppe Verdi' of Milan, Fondo Somma, Libretti Y.23).

¹⁰³ See e.g. Guido Riviera, *La Gara dei geni nel felice nascimento del serenissimo Arciduca d'Austria Pietro Leopoldo* (Milan: Giuseppe Richino Malatesta, 1747).

¹⁰⁴ A. Paglicci Brozzi, *Sul teatro giacobino ed antigiacobino in Italia*, p. 230.

¹⁰⁵ See the catalogue of works performed in *ibidem*, p. 229 and also in Appendix 1.

the newly assembled audience aware of the changed political and ideological framework. The opera chosen to open the season was not a complete premiere, but rather a reworking of *Lodoiska* by Johann Simon Mayr.

The subject of *Lodoiska* was equally appealing for both republican and monarchical governors, its plot and setting possessing features that could be differently interpreted and appreciated. In this case, the authorities chose it possibly because of its adventurous plot and familiar subject, but also to bring forward a new, promising composer whose connections to Austria and Southern Germany looked quite strong.¹⁰⁶ *Lodoiska* also gave the occasion to showcase the vocal skills of the castrato Luigi Marchesi, who, as proudly shown in the libretto, was currently employed by Emperor Francis II himself.¹⁰⁷ Marchesi's loyalty to the Austrian Court was undoubted: unlike other celebrated singers, in 1796 he had refused to sing in Milan to celebrate Napoleon's entry, thus becoming a symbol of integrity and opposition against tyrannical power.¹⁰⁸

On the other hand, the Bavarian-Italian Mayr had recently been employed in La Scala, but only for the production of comic works within minor seasons, namely *Un pazzo ne fa cento* and *Il segreto* (both for the 1798 Lent season).¹⁰⁹ The 1799-1800 performances of *Lodoiska* in Milan have been seen as a major turning point in both Mayr's career and compositional activity. Notably, Act I of the reworked opera showed the first recognizable example of that extended 'concertato' finale that elevated him above many of his contemporaries and was praised, among many others, by Rossini himself.¹¹⁰ After the Milanese *Lodoiska*, almost all his serious works would contain such finales, with the growing importance of choral scenes in the Milanese context identifiable as one of the elements having possibly inspired the composer along that path.

Mayr's *Lodoiska*, while clearly moving away from the operas chosen in the past Carnival seasons and presenting some politicized elements, also represents an interesting *trait d'union* with the past and the following years. In terms of subject and dramatic structures, this opera seems to establish a link to republican works; at the same time, the Milanese performance of *Lodoiska* constitutes the starting point of a career and compositional activity destined to outlive not only the short Austrian interregnum, but also the much longer Napoleonic domination.

¹⁰⁶ G. Bezzola and G. Tintori, *I protagonisti e l'ambiente della Scala nell'età neoclassica*, p. 23.

¹⁰⁷ Francesco Gonella, *Lodoiska. Dramma per musica, da rappresentarsi nel Regio Ducal Teatro alla Scala di Milano il Carnevale dell'anno 1800 [...] (Milan: Gio. Battista Bianchi, 1799)*, p. 7; see also P. Cambiasi, *La Scala 1778-1889*, p. 37.

¹⁰⁸ G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina...*, p. 73.

¹⁰⁹ G. Chiappori, *Serie cronologica delle rappresentazioni drammatico-pantomimiche...*, p. 58.

¹¹⁰ Mosco Carner, 'Simone Mayr and His *L'amor coniugale*', in *Music & Letters*, vol. 52, n. 3 (July 1971), pp. 239-258 (p. 240) and Scott L. Balthazar, 'Mayr, Rossini, and the Development of the Early 'Concertato' Finale', in *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, vol. 116, n. 2 (1991), pp. 236-266 (p. 250).

The Austrian interregnum, although very intense and in its own way significant, was too short to trigger the return to pre-1796 conditions it wished for. Although steps were taken in all the main fields of theatrical management and attendance, the governor's main attention was turned towards repressing the recent excesses rather than creating or re-establishing a valid alternative. Still, the experience of republican theatre, re-processed through the reactionary filter, triggered some long-term processes that would surely impact on the recent future, namely the programmatic use of musical products for occasional celebration and the incorporation of newly informed dramatic and structural elements in operatic composition.

5.2 The return of the French: from Cisalpine to Italian

The second Cisalpine Republic differed from the first as early-nineteenth-century France differed from the revolutionary one: the music was the same, for the maestro di cappella was the same [...].
Giovanni De Castro, 1879.¹¹¹



Fig. 5.9: Painting by David portraying Napoleon on the St Bernard Pass.
Vienna, Belvedere Museum.

In the spring of 1800, Lombardy's fortune changed for the third time in barely five years. After the end of the Egyptian campaign, Napoleon's attention turned once again towards Northern Italy, although the character of his plans had greatly changed since 1796: no longer a simple general, Napoleon was now First Consul of France, having overthrown the Directory and modified the pre-existing constitution in a rather totalitarian way.¹¹² While methodically re-conquering what he had lost in 1799, the general seemed to advocate and implement more moderate and centralized models of government rather than a strong republicanism. In the case of Northern Italy, this process initially

¹¹¹ G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina...*, p. 321.

¹¹² E. Rota, 'Milano napoleonica', p. 120 and F. Fava, *Storia di Milano*, 2, p. 22.

produced a republican state, though very different from the first Cisalpine Republic, before giving rise to a monarchy.

Napoleon's plan for the re-conquest of Lombardy was quickly designed and showed once more the general's tactical skills. With the help of the press, a quickly assembled battalion of new recruits and reserves deceived the Austrian general Melas, while Massena kept the imperial forces occupied in Liguria. At the same time, Bonaparte and the backbone of the French army, undisturbed, crossed the Alps through the Great St Bernard Pass.¹¹³ The epic crossing of the snow-covered pass in the night between 19 and 20 May, the carriages' wheels and the horses' hooves wrapped with straw and cloth not to alert the Austrian garrison stationed nearby and thousands of soldiers climbing the steep rocky paths, became one of the most celebrated among Napoleon's deeds.¹¹⁴ The figure of the general leading his army on the pass was also immortalized by David in a celebrated painting which, despite its historical inaccuracy, still dominates the iconography of the general (Fig. 5.9).

The news of Napoleon's unexpected descent from the Alps reached the former cities of the Cisalpine Republic almost at the same time as the actual troops came to dismantle the Austrian governments: Bergamo and Brescia were 'liberated' just a few days after the crossing.¹¹⁵ On 29 May, Count Coccastelli, imitating many before, left the city entrusting its government in the hands of a temporary regency. Even Archbishop Visconti, dreading Napoleon's reaction against his support to the Austrian government, fled Milan.¹¹⁶ On 2 June, having crossed the Ticino, the general staged a grand entry into Milan, clearly showing his changed attitude. With his brother-in-law Gioacchino (Joachim) Murat and General Monnier leading the cavalry and infantry through Porta Vercellina and Porta Ticinese, Napoleon himself entered Milan in the evening, on a triumphal chariot pulled by six horses and accompanied by the higher officials.¹¹⁷

The soldiers parading in the streets of Milan were very different from the 'quater strascion senza camisa' who had entered the city four years earlier: the French army, especially the officials in their high uniforms, were disciplined and imposing, instilling a much stronger trust than before.¹¹⁸ Among them, also marched a 17-year old Henri Beyle, destined to sing the praise of Milan and his theatres under the pseudonym of Stendhal.¹¹⁹ Astonished by a further revolution,

¹¹³ R. Bonfadini, 'La Repubblica cisalpina e il primo Regno d'Italia', p. 379.

¹¹⁴ C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano*, p. 120; see also the pamphlet *Cantico pel trionfo delle armate francesi discese dal monte S. Bernardo* (Milan: n.n., 1800).

¹¹⁵ E. Rota, 'Milano napoleonica', p. 123.

¹¹⁶ C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano*, p. 120.

¹¹⁷ E. Rota, 'Milano napoleonica', p. 123.

¹¹⁸ G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina...*, p. 307.

¹¹⁹ Giuseppe Barigazzi, *La Scala racconta*, ed. by Silvia Barigazzi and Franco Pulcini (Milan: Hoepli, 2010), p. 33 and Vittoria Crespi Morbio, 'Archi di gloria', in *La Scala di Napoleone: spettacoli a Milano 1796-1814*, ed. by Vittoria Crespi Morbio (Turin: Allemandi, 2010), pp. 15-44 (p. 22).

mindful of the republican excesses, but also of the more recent violence of the reaction, the people reacted in a rather apathetic way. Against Napoleon's wish, the city was rather silent: there were no applause and no enthusiastic cries of 'Evviva!', but also no protests.¹²⁰ Many reportedly doffed their hats showing respect to the general, who responded accordingly.¹²¹

Conscious that the thirteen months of the Austrian reaction had paved the way for an unproblematic re-conquest of the Milanese citizens, Napoleon was very careful in showing that the excesses of the republican triennium would not be repeated. The former patriots of the Cisalpine, perpetrators of those excesses, could not figure among his favourites anymore: the most extremist individuals, those who had survived the Austrian reaction or who had come back from the exile or deportation, were excluded from the high offices and/or carefully controlled.¹²² In order to pacify the lower social strata, on 5 June Napoleon met a delegation of parish priests, whom he reassured that no religious persecution would take place.¹²³ Similarly, in November 1801, he publicly invited Archbishop Visconti back to Milan promising him that his support to the Austrians would not be punished.¹²⁴ Not a few months, but a whole generation seemed to separate this behaviour from the proclamations and speeches of the republican triennium.¹²⁵

Napoleon's wise actions, together with the threat posed by a hypothetical Austrian victory, appealed to the vast majority of the people: when Bonaparte, on 17 June, came back to Milan after a triumphal victory over Melas on the battlefield of Marengo, he was welcomed as a real hero.¹²⁶ Only the most strenuous supporters of the Austrians did not take part in the general exultation, remembered as the most lavish within the whole of Milan's Napoleonic experience: for various reasons, both the common people, the former patriots and the moderate intellectuals were convinced that Marengo brought new, better times.¹²⁷ The whole city thus assembled to greet Napoleon entering from Porta Ticinese, soon to be renamed Porta Marengo. The streets overflowed with songs, applause and tricoloured ribbons, a general lighting was organized with unprecedented success. That same evening, a solemn Te Deum was sung in the Duomo in the presence of Napoleon himself, who, as it was custom for monarchs, came to the cathedral under a celebratory baldachin.¹²⁸ With the battle of Marengo, the destiny of Lombardy was perceived once more as linked to that of France: the link to Habsburgs, already weakened by the painful

¹²⁰ C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano*, p. 120.

¹²¹ G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina...*, pp. 298-300 and F. Fava, *Storia di Milano*, 2, pp. 20-22.

¹²² E. Rota, 'Milano napoleonica', p. 124.

¹²³ Franco della Peruta, 'Napoleone e Milano', in *I cannoni al Sempione. Milano e la «Grande Nation» (1796-1814)* (Milan: Cariplo, 1986), pp. 9-32 (p. 15).

¹²⁴ *Tre secoli di vita milanese*, ed. by Achille Bertarelli and Antonio Monti (Milan: Hoepli, 1927), p. 472.

¹²⁵ E. Rota, 'Milano napoleonica', pp. 124-125.

¹²⁶ F. Fava, *Storia di Milano*, 2, p. 24.

¹²⁷ F. della Peruta, 'Napoleone e Milano', p. 16.

¹²⁸ *Tre secoli di vita milanese*, p. 470 and G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina...*, p. 312.

thirteen months, was severed. A 15-year old Alessandro Manzoni celebrated the victory with these verses:

Né il vizio trionfò: l'infame tresca	And vice did not triumph: swords and virtue
Franse il ferro e 'l valor: gli addormentati	Destroyed the infamous plot: the sleeping spirits
Spiriti destarsi alfine, e la tedesca	Finally awoke, and the German beast
Rabbia fu doma e le fiaccò le corna	Was tamed, and its horns were shattered
la virtù cispalina e la francesca. ¹²⁹	By Cisalpine and French valour.

The battle of Marengo and the following peace treaty of Lunéville (9 February 1801) ended the war, re-established the Cisalpine Republic and seemed to bring a new stability, although the republican state re-established in Lombardy was at the same time very different from the previous one and very unstable. Supposed republican institutions such as the *Municipalità* and the various *commissioni* were replaced with a *Consulta* (council) of 50 members, including many moderates and aristocrats.¹³⁰ The *Consulta* was then downsized to nine members and finally replaced by a triumvirate consisting of Francesco Visconti, Sigismondo Ruga and Giovanbattista Sommariva, all fairly unpopular among the Milanese, but having powerful connections to the higher ranks of the French army.¹³¹ The government was closely supervised by the French minister Claude-Louis Petiet, entrusted with the power of ratifying or rejecting the triumvirate's measures. Despite the republican façade, these consecutive passages can be contextualized within a process of creation of a despotic Caesarism centred on a progressively smaller group in charge of the executive power and on the complete disregard for local autonomy.¹³² The moderate Count Melzi d'Eril, who had supervised the negotiations with Napoleon back in 1796, was officially invited to participate in the government of this new Cisalpine Republic: he refused, declaring that the proposed institutions were as strong as 'flowers grown in a greenhouse'.¹³³

While the hopes of both moderate and more extreme patriots were equally frustrated, the people's situation was not better: if the new French occupation did not reach the level of economic vexation of the painful thirteen months, the period from the battle of Marengo to the proclamation of the Italian Republic (26 January 1802) can be considered equally detrimental or even worse for the Lombard finances than the republican triennium.¹³⁴ As was customary, the support, lodging and equipment of the French army was forcibly entrusted to the cisalpine people, while new requisitions, contributions, taxes and increased duties damaged an already

¹²⁹ Alessandro Manzoni, *Opere*, ed. by Giuseppe Lesca, vol. 1 (Genoa: Società editrice Dante Alighieri, 1943), p. 38.

¹³⁰ F. Fava, *Storia di Milano*, 2, p. 26.

¹³¹ C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano*, p. 122.

¹³² F. della Peruta, 'Napoleone e Milano', p. 17.

¹³³ As quoted in E. Rota, 'Milano napoleonica', p. 126.

¹³⁴ C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano*, p. 123.

exhausted economy.¹³⁵ Following the rapid worsening of the living conditions and the growing scarcity of means of subsistence, many districts in Milan also became increasingly dangerous, with thefts and fights being a daily occurrence. ‘Oh diabolic republic, – commented once again the canon Mantovani – oh government! All your subjects will end up in the insane asylum’.¹³⁶

New conscriptions were also organized in order to send soldiers to the ongoing Napoleonic campaigns; while fear and desertions quickly intensified in the countryside, even the aristocrats could not afford the exorbitant fees demanded by mercenaries to replace the conscripts.¹³⁷ As shown in a contemporary engraving (Fig. 5.10), by September 1801 the French army could count on a substantial cisalpine contingent. Around the same time, the enthusiasm for Marengo had cooled down and dissatisfaction had spread, mostly among the urban commoners: already in November 1800, the angered people had assaulted and robbed several bakeries after another increase in the price of bread had been announced.¹³⁸ However, the people, greatly weakened by the continuous economical vexation and by the difficult living conditions and greatly disappointed by their former governors, their soldiers still fighting in the Napoleonic army and their ideals of independence frustrated, had neither the will neither the means to rebel.



Fig. 5.10: Joachim Murat inspecting the cisalpine troops in Monza, 17 September 1801.
Milan CRS ‘A. Bertarelli’.

¹³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 121.

¹³⁶ L. Mantovani, *Quando Milano era capitale*, p. 53.

¹³⁷ F. della Peruta, ‘Napoleone e Milano’, pp. 22-23.

¹³⁸ Mantovani, *Quando Milano era capitale*, p. 55.

In this troubled context, the need for public celebration was substantially different from the 1796-1799 triennium. Moderation and the taming of the previous excesses seemed the primary necessity; Napoleon himself, in the first public speech after his entry on 2 June, had declared that the new state had to be based on the values of 'religion, liberty, equality and order'.¹³⁹ No longer aimed at destroying all aspects of the current social order, values and events related to the new republican state were celebrated less often: just a few events related to exceptionally important occasions populated the short life of the second Cisalpine Republic.¹⁴⁰ Similarly, the position of the enemies targeted by the former propaganda had now changed: the Milanese's freshest memory of the Austrians was that of the repression rather than the *buon governo*, while the clergy had now become a powerful ally. Indeed, the anticlerical verses composed by many former patriots, were punished.¹⁴¹ The patriotic clubs closed by the Austrians did not reopen, the newspapers and pamphlets attenuated their tone, and no trees of liberty or republican trophies were worshipped.¹⁴²

The rhetoric and imagery underpinning the celebrations remained essentially similar to those in force during the triennium; the palette of activities and forms of entertainment offered during the feasts remained almost unchanged, with the familiar parades, military manoeuvres, races, food distribution, lightings and *feste da ballo*.¹⁴³ The newly established alliance between the government and the church made possible that the archbishop and the parish priests cooperated in advertising the various events, mostly in terms of public charity, even publicly praising Napoleon and the republic.¹⁴⁴ At the same time, the centre of the celebration seemed to become more and more the figure of Napoleon, now even more the supreme creator of Lombardy's newfound liberty; for instance, a lavish feast was dedicated, on 9 November 1800, to the anniversary of the Coup of 18 Brumaire, seen as the event that re-established the republic:

Tomorrow is the anniversary of the 18 Brumaire. This day constitutes the most memorable moment of the French Revolution; in it, one can recognize the first link of that great chain of events that caused the return to life of our republic. Bonaparte's idea brought back that of winning back [Italy]: this led to Marengo, and in Marengo the Cisalpine was born again.¹⁴⁵

¹³⁹ G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina...*, p. 322.

¹⁴⁰ See [Avviso Lachini], 22 September 1800, [Programme Pancaldi], 8 November 1800, [Programme Nivet], 28 February 1801, [Programme Pancaldi], 14 June 1801, [Programme Pancaldi], 7 November 1801 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 2) and *Raccolta di tutto ciò che si è stampato in occasione della gran festa del 10 fiorile anno 9 celebrata in Milano per la pace di Lunéville e per la collocazione della prima pietra nel Foro Bonaparte* (Milan: Veladini, 1801), p. 3.

¹⁴¹ G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina...*, p. 365.

¹⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 321.

¹⁴³ See e.g. [Avviso Lachini], 21 September 1800, the [Proclamation Pancaldi], 8 November 1800 and the [List of churches for the bread distribution], 9 November 1801 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 2).

¹⁴⁴ [Avviso Archbishop Visconti], 6 November 1801 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 2).

¹⁴⁵ [Proclamation Pancaldi], 8 November 1800 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 2).

Even the modification of public space seemed to assume a different character: the temporary apparatuses dedicated to the allegorical representations of revolutionary concepts were replaced by permanent structures showing a clear encomiastic purpose and the neoclassical taste which would dominate the years of the kingdom. Once again a prestigious capital, Milan also attracted architects from the whole Italian peninsula who wished to take part in grand projects within a European dimension.¹⁴⁶ For instance, several works were carried out to celebrate Napoleon's victory at Marengo, including the demolition of the old Porta Ticinese, its reconstruction in neoclassical style and renaming into Porta Marengo (Fig. 5.11).¹⁴⁷ A monumental stone plaque commemorating Napoleon's crossing of the Alps, vanquishing of the imperial troops and bringing of the long awaited peace was positioned outside the new city gate.¹⁴⁸



Fig. 5.11: Project for the new Porta Marengo in the neoclassical form of a temple and propylaea.
Milan, CRS 'Achille Bertarelli'.

Similarly, a great feast celebrated on 30 April 1801 for the treaty of Lunéville combined the celebration of peace with the demolition of the Sforza castle's outer fortifications, described as 'the bastions of old tyranny'.¹⁴⁹ The works, already begun in the summer of 1800, permanently modified one of Milan's oldest and most iconic landscapes and created a vast esplanade which was (and still is) called Foro Bonaparte (Fig. 5.12).¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Patricia Giudicelli Falguières, 'Espace privé et espace public à Milan', in *Villes et territoire pendant la période napoléonienne*, conference proceedings, Rome, 3-5 May 1984 (Rome: École française de Rome, 1987), pp. 261-284 (pp. 262-263).

¹⁴⁷ [Programme Pancaldi], 14 June 1801 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 2).

¹⁴⁸ *Tre secoli di vita milanese*, p. 470.

¹⁴⁹ P. Giudicelli Falguières, 'Espace privé et espace public à Milan', p. 262.

¹⁵⁰ *Tre secoli di vita milanese*, pp. 470-471.

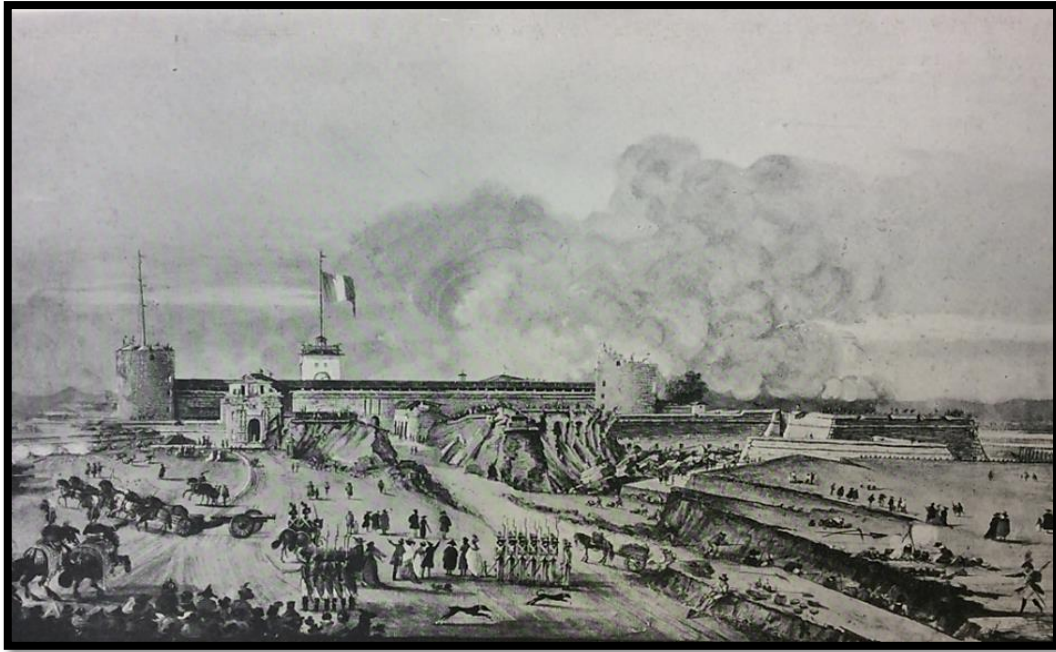


Fig. 5.12: The demolition of the Castle's fortifications in a contemporary engraving.
Milan, CRS 'A. Bertarelli'.

The feast took place in this newly realized Foro, populated with several temporary structures and all the typical features of republican celebration: music, patriotic speeches, gunfire, military parades and fireworks. Given the importance of the occasion (the peace treaty recognizing once more the existence of the Cisalpine Republic), a commemorative booklet was published both in Italian and French; the character and setting of the feast, strongly focusing on Napoleon's heroism and almost supernatural qualities, were described by the Minister of Internal Affairs, Pancaldi:

The treaty signed in Lunéville, resulting from the extraordinary victories gained by the armies of the Grande Nation, has to be celebrated by all people, but particularly by the cisalpine one, whose political existence is acknowledged [...]. The government, exponent of the national feelings, has decided upon a day to be consecrated to public joy, 10 Floréal Year IX [30 April 1801]. The government has also thought about combining the celebration of the peace with the collocation of the cornerstone of the Foro Bonaparte, whose realisation has already been announced as a homage owed to the magnanimous creator and restorer of the Cisalpine Republic, the immortal Bonaparte.

[...] In the centre of the Foro, a column covered with bas reliefs depicting the French army's descent from the Great St. Bernard and the event preceding Marengo, and on the top of the column, the statue of Peace. This monument will be flanked by a great amphitheatre and a tribune with a circular altar: at the basis of the latter, the cornerstone for the solemn ceremony of collocation. [...] On the right side of the Foro [...] a triangular funeral monument dedicated to the memory of the generals Joubert, Championnet and Desaix [...] On the left side of the Foro, there will be a circular temple

dedicated to Immortality, and on it the statue of Bonaparte and that of Victory crowning him; in between the temple's columns, busts of French generals will be positioned.¹⁵¹

The use of musical elements within public celebrations in the second Cisalpine Republic maintained the character and features of the 1796-1799 triennium, both the pieces of music performed and their function within the events remaining mainly unchanged. On several occasions, temporary structures were built in different public venues to host instrumental and vocal ensembles. For instance, the feast celebrated on 19 January 1801 in the public gardens to honour the recently fallen generals Dalton and Calvin required enough orchestral players and choristers to fill a big amphitheatre.¹⁵² Similarly, the celebrations for the second anniversary of the 18 Brumaire (9 November 1801) required an orchestra filling two three-tier tribunes.¹⁵³ In addition, military bands (especially the celebrated one from the Guardia Nazionale) were often present.¹⁵⁴

In terms of repertoire, the pieces of music, often interspersed with militaristic sounds (e.g. gunfire and drum rolls) and/or manoeuvres, speeches and ritual elements, bore a strong resemblance to the pre-1800 republican repertoire: hymns à grand chœur, short orchestral pieces of appropriate character, patriotic tunes and marches were essential ingredients of the majority of celebrations. On 1 March 1801, a hymn was performed in the public gardens to celebrate the soldiers fallen in the battle on the Mincio river. Two leading figures of musical life in the triennium contributed to it: while the words were written by Salfi and the music was supplied by Minoja, once again back on the winning side.¹⁵⁵ The programme of the feast reveals that its performance required several choirs.¹⁵⁶ Longer pieces for full orchestra described as symphonies (*sinfonie*) were also introduced, although, as opposed to the funeral works composed for General Hoche in 1797-1798, their character was mainly that of entertaining the assembled people.¹⁵⁷

With the public celebrations decreasing in frequency and the predominance of a moderate line, the centrality of the opera house in the social and cultural life of the city was not questioned by the changed political framework; on the contrary La Scala became more and more what the

¹⁵¹ *Raccolta di tutto ciò che si è stampato* ..., pp. 3-4.

¹⁵² [Programme Nivet], 28 February 1801 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 2).

¹⁵³ [Programme Pancaldi], 7 November 1801 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 2).

¹⁵⁴ [Programme Pancaldi], 14 June 1801 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 2).

¹⁵⁵ G.B. De Sanctis, *Francesco Saverio Salfi*, pp. 18-19 and Gerardo Tocchini, 'Dall'antico regime alla Cisalpina. Morale e politica nel teatro per musica di F.S. Salfi', in *Salfi librettista*, ed. by Francesco Paolo Russo (Vibo Valentia: Monteleone, 2001), pp. 19-81 (p. 70).

¹⁵⁶ [Programme Nivet], 28 February 1801 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 2).

¹⁵⁷ [Programme Pancaldi], 7 November 1801 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 2).

historian Giuseppe Barigazzi has described as ‘the clock that squandered Milan’s life’.¹⁵⁸ Although the size, variety and behaviour of the audience were carefully monitored, the democratization process triggered during the republican triennium showed its effects with individuals coming from all social classes (with the only exclusion of the commoners who could not afford a ticket for the loggione). The novelist Lady Sidney Morgan (née Owenson) commented after having attended several performances:

La Scala is the evening home of almost all ranks, the recreation of the tradesman, the exchange of the merchant, the closet of the critic and the rendezvous of the politician.¹⁵⁹

Despite the unstable living conditions, the aristocracy, whose ownership of the theatrical space was no longer questioned, crowded their boxes six days a week. Theatre became even more a constant accompaniment to their life: the high majority of days for Milan’s higher class ended with a performance in La Scala, sometimes preceded or followed by a dance in La Cannobiana;¹⁶⁰ ‘ci vedremo alla Scala’ (‘we will see each other in La Scala’) became the most common farewell.¹⁶¹ The French officers, despite still getting involved into occasional fights with their cisalpine counterparts, became once more a stable presence within Milan’s social life and opera house, where the mix of French and Italian traditions became stronger than anywhere else in the Italian peninsula.¹⁶² Every major event, every success Napoleon gained on the battlefield, every anniversary related to the city’s public life had its repercussion within the theatre walls. While the general’s entry into Milan on 2 June 1800 was celebrated with the familiar lighting of the theatre and houses, his victory at Marengo was officially announced from La Scala’s stage, during a performance of Mayr’s *Lubino e Carlotta*.¹⁶³

If the end of the suffocating thirteen months did not bring a much better financial situation, it certainly revived the interest for theatre and social life. Once again capital of a state destined to grow in prestige, Milan became the gathering point for people coming from all over Italy and for those who had been deported by the Austrians and had survived the disastrous conditions of the prisons in Kotor.¹⁶⁴ Intellectual and artistic fervour, inflamed by a new enthusiasm, poured out into the city’s social and theatrical life. Because of its cosmopolitan character, growing

¹⁵⁸ G. Barigazzi, *La Scala racconta*, p. 35.

¹⁵⁹ Sydney (Lady) Morgan, *Italy by Lady Morgan* (Paris: Galignani, 1821), vol. 1, p. 145.

¹⁶⁰ Rosita Levi Pisetzky, ‘La vita e le vesti dei Milanesi nel periodo neoclassico’, in *Storia di Milano*, ed. by G. Treccani degli Alfieri (Milan: Fondazione Treccani degli Alfieri, 1956), 13, pp. 639-686 (p. 649) and G. Bezzola and G. Tintori, *I protagonisti e l’ambiente della Scala nell’età neoclassica*, p. 146.

¹⁶¹ *Non solo lirica: il concertismo a Milano fra '700 e '900*, ed. by Luisa Longhi (Milan: Nuove edizioni, 1996), p. 28.

¹⁶² V. Crespi Morbio, ‘Archi di gloria’, p. 22.

¹⁶³ P. Cambiasi, *La Scala 1778-1889*, p. 37 and G. Bezzola and G. Tintori, *I protagonisti e l’ambiente della Scala nell’età neoclassica*, p. 35.

¹⁶⁴ G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina...*, p. 361 and C. Moiraghi, *Napoleone a Milano*, pp. 136-137.

population and intense social life, the Lombard capital became even known as ‘piccola Parigi’ (little Paris).¹⁶⁵ In the eyes of Stendhal, 1800-Milan was becoming ‘il luogo più bello della terra’ (‘the most beautiful place on earth’), a brilliant city, its refined taste, splendour and joy of living being particularly visible from the theatre boxes.¹⁶⁶

Once more, the aristocrats’ behaviour in their boxes, became rather relaxed, with several forms of social entertainment interacting with the actual musical performances, including food, visits, conversation, romance and gambling.¹⁶⁷ The bourgeois in the stalls and loggione, growing in number and prestige, also exhibited an unruly behaviour;¹⁶⁸ already in January 1801, the government had to publish two avvisi to remind the audience that in the theatre, among other things, it was forbidden to bring dogs, smoke, clap excessively, bang walking sticks against the floor, scream and whistle.¹⁶⁹

The patriotic enthusiasm depicted in those years seemed completely extinguished, and the government was not disposed to rekindle it: even the Società del Teatro Patriottico, once the catalyst of the worst excesses, seemed to have lost its appeal. Despite its new theatre (built by Leopold Pollack, again, on the site of a demolished church), the works frequently supplied by Monti and Alfieri and the concourse of important personalities such as Salfi, Teresa Pilker (Monti’s wife) and the old Piermarini, its theatrical performances were attended by a progressively scander and weaker audience.¹⁷⁰ On 2 July 1801, during a performance of Alfieri’s *Bruto*, a patron suddenly cried out ‘Long live Robespierre!’, an action that a few months earlier would have triggered the participation of the whole theatre (including those on the stage). This time the cry echoed in the hall, with nobody responding or even acknowledging it.¹⁷¹

The moderate political climate was also mirrored in the normalization of the cultural offering in the Milanese theatres, especially in La Scala, although a certain variety can still be observed; spoken theatre, for instance, was still present within operatic seasons. Given the strong French presence and its growing role within Milan’s social life, a greater space was dedicated to works in French, the connections between Milan and Paris seeming to become increasingly stronger. On 5 December 1801, for instance, the troupe of Paris’s Opéra Bouffon performed vaudevilles, opéra-vaudevilles and spoken comedies. The memorable performance, taking place in La Scala completely lit, had the rather high price of 45 soldi, was entirely in French and ended with the

¹⁶⁵ G. De Castro, *Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina...*, pp. 398-399.

¹⁶⁶ Henri Beyle (Stendhal), *Milano: architettura e musica*, ed. by Maria Antonietta Crippa (Naples: Guida, 1994), p. 9.

¹⁶⁷ S. Morgan, *Italy by Lady Morgan*, pp. 144-146.

¹⁶⁸ G. Bezzola and G. Tintori, *I protagonisti e l'ambiente della Scala nell'età neoclassica*, p. 144.

¹⁶⁹ [Avviso al pubblico], 15 January 1801 and [Regolamento teatri di Milano], 16 January 1801 (La Scala Archive, MAN 445 and 447).

¹⁷⁰ V. Nivellini, *I 150 anni di un'accademia milanese*, pp. 41-43.

¹⁷¹ A. Paglicci Brozzi, *Sul teatro giacobino ed antigiacobino in Italia*, pp. 234-235.

performance of an *ouverture* by one of the most celebrated composers of the Revolution, Étienne Mehul.¹⁷² Stronger connections with the Parisian were also advocated by the new direttore dei teatri, Ercole Silva, who replaced Bartolomeo Andreoli in December 1801. Seduced by the richness of the Parisian productions, Silva wanted La Scala's technicians and scenographers to be trained there, although the theatre's financial situation did not make it possible.¹⁷³

The remaining seasons of 1799-1800 after Napoleon's entry in June (summer and autumn) presented quite a standard programme, mainly comprising celebrated composers and rather old works, with just a few novelties. Alongside Paisiello's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and Cimarosa's *Il matrimonio segreto*, the audience could see Paër's *Gli intrighi del serraglio* and Mayr's new *L'equivoco*.¹⁷⁴ Strongly politicized works, such as *Il general Colli in Roma*, were not to be seen anymore; Napoleon himself took active part in the confiscation of all the copies of the pantomime's *argomento*.¹⁷⁵

Still, clues that the political climate had changed back to a republican framework were present: the very first work to be performed under the new regime, for instance, was *Il disertore*, with music recently composed by the Portuguese António Leal Moreira.¹⁷⁶ The production was based on a topic – that of military desertion- which had experienced great success from the late 1770s onwards. The work presented some unmistakably republican elements, for instance the abundance of military elements in both setting and characters and the contrast between duty and love.¹⁷⁷ The resolution of the moral dilemma was demanded not from noble and celebrated heroes, but from a common soldier, this showing that every individual, regardless of his social provenience, could obey high ethical values; this made *Il disertore* a very appropriate subject for a democratic (and bourgeois) audience.¹⁷⁸ Drawing on the already blooming tradition of rescue operas, the opera ended with the deserter Alessio, already in front of the fire squad, being spared thanks to the intervention of his lover Eugenia. Love and the traditional happy ending thus triumphed over duty and obedience: according to the stage directions, the battallion's colonel was 'being moved to tears, crying and, speechless, waving with this handkerchief to stop the execution'.¹⁷⁹ Many of the printed librettos also show the re-introduced republican calendar, while that for Mayr's *L'equivoco* also included a list of performers paired up with the familiar

¹⁷² [Programme], 5 December 1801, in French (La Scala Archive, MAN 2493).

¹⁷³ V. Crespi Morbio, 'Archi di gloria', p. 23.

¹⁷⁴ See the opera catalogue in Appendix 1.

¹⁷⁵ S. Morgan, *Italy by Lady Morgan*, p. 119.

¹⁷⁶ The work had been premiered just a few weeks earlier in Turin's Teatro Carignano.

¹⁷⁷ See e.g. Bartolomeo Benincasa, *Il disertore. Dramma giocoso per musica, da rappresentarsi nel Teatro alla Scala di Milano nell'estate dell'anno 1800* (Milan: Pirotta and Maspero, 1800), p. 3.

¹⁷⁸ B. Cipollone, 'Il soggetto operistico del Disertore tra Modena e l'Europa', p. 27.

¹⁷⁹ B. Benincasa, *Il disertore*, p. 45 (Act II, scene 19): 'S'intenerisce, piange, e col fazzoletto dà il segno di grazia'.

salutations of 'cittadino' and 'cittadina'; only the composer was presented as 'Maestro', the librettist Foppa being also described as 'cittadino' (Fig. 5.13).¹⁸⁰

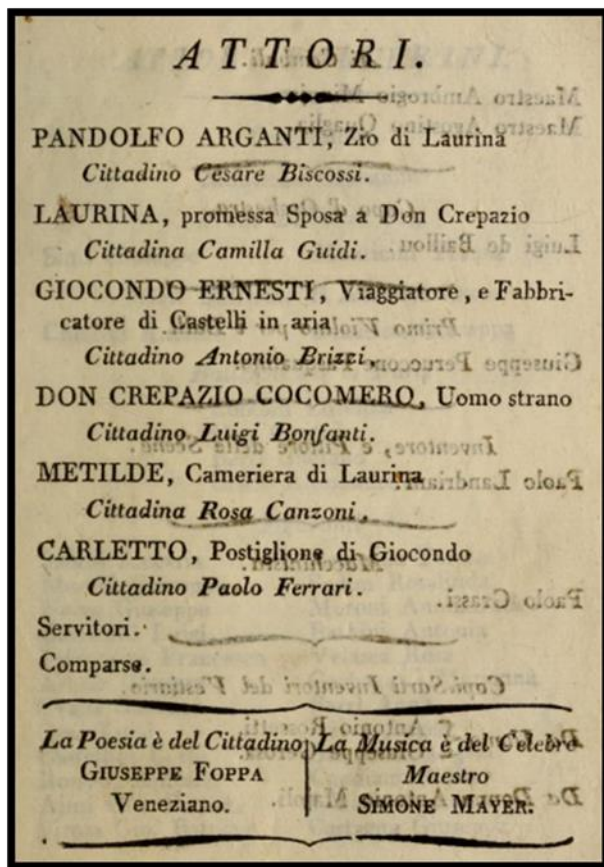


Fig. 5.13: The cast list of *L'equivoco* as shown in the libretto. Conservatory 'Giuseppe Verdi' of Milan.

The following cycle of seasons (1800-1801), was also quite standard both in structure and content, many celebrated names such as Zingarelli, Mayr and Gazzaniga dominating the operatic offering. The only different occasion was the opening of Carnival with *Clitennestra*, an opera seria on a libretto by Salfi, who had by now also become *revisore delle composizioni teatrali* (theatre inspector). While the role's implications are still not completely clear, Salfi, at least at the beginning, tried to exert a certain control over the choice of librettos to be performed in the Milanese opera houses, also coming into conflict with the impresarios.¹⁸¹ The choice, quite contentious, to open the first season of his mandate as *revisore* with his own work can be seen as a strong re-statement of his

power within the theatrical sphere after the year-long exile. The preface to the libretto seems to bring back the reader to the time of *La congiura pisoniana*, although the overall tone is more pessimistic:

Here is a melodramma, or better the sketch of a melodramma. Perhaps the topic's fame, the choice of the episodes and the composer's talents will compensate for the author's flaws and for the unavoidable holes created by the different speed of spoken dialogue. Because we want to enjoy singing and decoration [elaborate sceneries], the plot itself cannot be appropriately told; the topics that are analysed in depth within a play get barely sketched [in an opera], and it is already a lot when this happens. May the audience forgive this deficiency, typical of all operas [...].¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ Giuseppe Foppa, *L'equivoco* [...]. *Dramma giocoso per musica, da rappresentarsi nel Teatro alla Scala, l'autunno dell'anno 1800* (Milan: Pirola, 1800), p. 3.

¹⁸¹ Davide Daolmi, 'Salfi alla Scala', in *Salfi librettista*, ed. by Francesco Paolo Russo (Vibo Valentia: Monteleone, 2001), pp. 133-177 (p. 162).

¹⁸² Francesco S. Salfi, *Clitennestra. Melodramma in tre atti del cittadino Franco Salfi da rappresentarsi nel Teatro alla Scala, il carnevale dell'anno 1801* (Milan: Pirola, 1800), s.n. ('L'autore al pubblico').

By altering some of the original episode's figures and balances, the libretto also tried to bring back some rhetorical elements that were quite obsolete:¹⁸³ if the opera, in the end, was a huge success, it was thanks to Zingarelli's music.¹⁸⁴ At least one member of the audience questioned Salfi's attempt to re-introduce obsolete themes and values. A copy of the libretto, today in the Thomas Fisher collection at the University of Toronto, contains several satirical verses scribbled next to Salfi's original ones, imitating both their tone and meter, but caustically parodying the author's work and questioning his integrity:

F.S. Salvi, *Clitennestra*

Tacete; già il tempio,
L'altare si scuote!
Del fato invincibile
Son queste le note.
(Act I, scene 10)

Hush, now; the temple,
The altar totters.
These are the sounds
Of unbeatable fate.

Oh, che tremendo istante!
Più calma in sen non ho;
A tante pene, a tante
Più regger non si può.
(Act I, scene 11)

Oh, what a terrible moment!
I am completely agitated;
I cannot bear
So much pain.

Trionfi la gioia.
(Act II, scene 2)

May joy triumph.

Manuscript verses (Thomas Fisher copy)

Del lucido Apollo
Già il tempo si scuote
Di Salfi se suonano
Le barbare note.

Great Apollo's temple
Starts tottering
When Salfi's barbaric verses
Are heard.

Più misero pedante	Un canto sì seccante
Siammai non li mirò	Udir io più non vo'.
Pari a questo birbante	Volga di qua le piante,
Che i mezzi ci rubò	O ch'io lo porterò.

I have never seen	I do not want to hear
A more punctilious loser	Such an annoying piece.
Than this scoundrel	Make him go away
Who also stole so much.	Or I will carry him.

Oh numi, che noia!	Il Salfi deh moja. ¹⁸⁵
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Oh gods, so boring!	May Salfi finally die.
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Salfi himself probably understood that the grand plan for musical theatre he had devised in 1796 could not be realised in the present conditions: *Clitennestra* was his last work both in La Scala and the other Milanese venues. Besides, his mandate as revisore, undermined by the frequent conflicts with Ricci and Gherardi, ended abruptly after the colossal fiasco of *I Manli*, the opera Salfi had chosen to open the 1802 Carnival season possibly because of its libretto by the

¹⁸³ G. Tocchini, 'Dall'antico regime alla Cisalpina', pp. 71-72.

¹⁸⁴ Daolmi, 'Salfi alla Scala', p. 169.

¹⁸⁵ Francesco S. Salfi, *Clitennestra* [...] (Milan: Pirola, 1800), with manuscript annotations n.d. (University of Toronto, Thomas Fisher Library, itp pam 00984), pp. 11, 13 and 16, respectively.

former patriot Sografi. With the impresarios forced to reimburse the infuriated audience with a quarter of the ticket price, the government nominated a special commission to oversee the theatrical performances; its first members were the painter Andrea Appiani (soon to become Napoleon's favourite Italian artist) and the poets Angelo Petracchi and Carlo B. de Grianty.¹⁸⁶ The long and intense season of Salfi's presence in the Milanese theatres had thus reached an end: deprived of all power, this figure was condemned to witness the gradual obliteration of all republican values and the inescapable conversion of all patriots into bureaucrats.¹⁸⁷

As for the ballets, the strong excesses of the triennium appeared completely forgotten, the usual repertoire of historical, fantastic, pastoral and exotic topics featuring in La Scala in both the 1799-1800 and 1800-1801 seasons. A notable exception, although still greatly softening the tone used before 1799, was the tragic *Bianca de Rossi* (Carnival 1801), in which the central figure of Bianca chooses death rather than succumbing to the advances of the tyrant Eccellino.¹⁸⁸ The only work expressly dedicated to the celebration of a contemporary topic seems to be a ballet dedicated to the crossing of the Great St Bernard pass, which was performed in La Cannobiana in October 1801. The work, entitled *Il passaggio delle truppe pel monte San Bernardo* (*The troops' passage through the St Bernard*) was even conceived and choreographed by two cisalpine captains, the whole profit being donated to war widows.¹⁸⁹ Finally, elaborate dance elements started to be also introduced within the pieces of occasional music performed to solemnize specific occasions.¹⁹⁰

The practice of performing occasional music in the opera house did not die out; on the contrary cantatas and hymns, although with different focuses and increasingly complex structures, remained rather popular and were destined to populate the years of the Italian Republic and Kingdom.¹⁹¹ The second Cisalpine Republic saw some notable examples, which seemed to maintain the celebratory code introduced during the republican triennium, although public concorsi were not introduced anymore. A patriotic hymn (or cantata) was performed in La Scala already on 9 November 1800 during the celebrations for Marengo.¹⁹² While the names of the librettist (Angelo Petracchi) and composer (Carlo Bigatti) have survived, the music was

¹⁸⁶ [Avviso], 29 December 1801 (Milan State Archive, Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 17), also in P. Cambiasi, *La Scala 1778-1889*, pp. 39-40.

¹⁸⁷ G. Tocchini, 'Dall'antico regime alla Cisalpina', p. 77.

¹⁸⁸ Filippo Zamboni, *Bianca della Porta* (Florence: Giacomo Molini, 1862), pp. 5-7.

¹⁸⁹ G. Chiappori, *Serie cronologica delle rappresentazioni drammatico-pantomimiche...*, p.136 and V. Crespi Morbio, 'Archi di gloria', p. 24.

¹⁹⁰ Agostina Zecca Laterza, 'Vincenzo Federici: un musicista per la Repubblica Cisalpina', in *D'un opéra l'autre: hommage à Jean Mongrédien*, ed. by Jean Gribenski (Paris: Université de Paris Sorbonne, 1996), pp. 331-338 (p. 333).

¹⁹¹ A. Paglicci Brozzi, *Sul teatro giacobino ed antigiacobino in Italia*, p. 235.

¹⁹² The piece is described as 'cantata' in [*Cantata ricorrendo la festa del 18 Brumale anno 9*], manuscript title page, n.d. (Library of the Conservatorio 'Giuseppe Verdi' of Milan, Fondo Somma, Libretti Y.21) and as 'inno patriottico' in P. Cambiasi, *La Scala 1778-1889*, p. 38.

lost already in mid-nineteenth century.¹⁹³ The text (or at least part of it) consisted of two strophes of octosyllabic verses with a *rima incatenata* metric structure, thus being particularly fit for a choral setting, and celebrated the figure of Napoleon as the greatest of all heroes who decided the destiny of both France and Italy:

[...] D'ogni Eroe, l'Eroe maggior.

Senza te l'Italia misera
E la prode Francia istessa
Resterà tuttora oppressa
Dal Vandalico furor.¹⁹⁴

[...] The greatest of all heroes.

Without thee would Italy
And even brave France
Remain oppressed
By barbaric rage.

The great celebration of the peace of Lunéville also had its own cantata, *Il trionfo della pace* (*Peace triumphant*) lavishly performed in La Scala on the very day of the feast (30 April 1801) with the music of Francesco Pollini and the verses of Adelmo Fugazza.¹⁹⁵ Given the importance of the celebration, this work was conceived on a much larger scale than that of November 1800, with a much longer text and the alternation between recitatives, solo and choral moments; both its structure and allegorical characters resembled its predecessors of the triennium and, beyond, to the days of Austrian rule.

It can be observed how, starting from these years, a rather narrow group of artists started to be entrusted more and more often with the production of both music and poetry for the occasional cantatas and hymns, almost specializing in the genre. Alongside the already familiar Minoja and Monti, both very active throughout the whole Napoleonic domination, the name of the composer Vincenzo Federici became quickly associated with the production of occasional music. Federici, alongside Minoja, was entrusted with supplying the music for arguably the most important celebration held in Milan as capital of the kingdom, the coronation of Napoleon as King of Italy (1805).¹⁹⁶ Like Minoja, Federici was able to shape his compositional activity around the changing celebratory needs of the Napoleonic regime, writing music both for the celebration of the republic and for the coronation of a new king.

Still partially linked to the past, the years of the second Cisalpine Republic established a framework that, despite resting on the same general concepts, had a significantly different character from Milan's first republican experience: if the repression of the painful thirteen months had not managed to cancel the memories of the triennium because of its short duration,

¹⁹³ See the manuscript annotations by Francesco Somma on [*Cantata ricorrendo la festa del 18 Brumale anno 9*].

¹⁹⁴ P. Cambiasi, *La Scala 1778-1889*, p. 38.

¹⁹⁵ [*Il trionfo della Pace*], manuscript title page and description, n.d. (Library of the Conservatorio 'Giuseppe Verdi' of Milan, Fondo Somma, Libretti Y.21).

¹⁹⁶ See e.g. the cantatas *Il giudizio di Numa* (1803), *Licenza* (1804) and *Il trionfo della pace* (1806).

the return of the French did not see a return to those times either. While the majority of figures active in both the political and cultural fields had also been protagonists of the 1796-1799 triennium, their creativity and adaptability were pushed in a new direction, that of the growing centralization and absolutism that would reach full completion with the monarchical experience. Some artists active in different fields, such as Minoja, Monti and Gafforini, managed to shape their activities according to a new concept of music, its function and character; others, like Salfi, could not and had to withdraw from musical life. The troubled passage from the first to the second Cisalpine through the experience of the repression instilled new energy into the capital's social and theatrical life, gaining an increasing centrality also within a wider Italian context.

CONCLUSIONS

THE LEGACY OF CHANGE

At the beginning of the present project, the expectations of the author regarding the possible consequences of Milan's political and social vicissitudes on the city's cultural and more specifically musical contexts were different from the actual findings. It is often believed that the musical repertoire constitutes the first and most evident object of intervention by regimes based on military occupation, economical exploitation and the forced implementation of completely new ideological frameworks: this should have been even stronger in a case, such as Milan's, where music (especially musical theatre) played a paramount role within social and cultural life. As a consequence of the Napoleonic occupation of Lombardy and the establishment of a republican state - a sudden and dramatic change following almost a century of stable monarchical government - one might have expected a proportionally decisive switch in the musical repertoire. The contemporary operatic and ballet production in France presented several examples programmatically conceived within different musical genres for the celebration of the post-revolutionary values, including several theatrical pieces. On the contrary, in the case of both the first and second Milanese republican experiences, such an intentional switch was not detectable: some changes were carefully implemented within the different spheres of musical production and consumption, but the opera house, while not losing its centrality, was not targeted as strongly as might have been expected.

The peculiar character of this intervention on the Milanese musical environment revealed a much more complex and captivating context than first anticipated. It became clear that the research could not be legitimately limited to the theatrical sphere, but, on the contrary, needed to also encompass other contexts of music-making, especially that, newly introduced, of the public celebrations. These events, as opposed to theatrical performances, constituted the real object of importation from post-revolutionary France, and, as a cultural object imposed from above, caused deep changes within Milan's entire musical life. Moreover, a better understanding of the changes introduced within theatrical management, attendance and practices required a deeper analysis of the peculiar role the theatre played within the Milanese context.

Both directions of research have brought significant results. The case of Milan stands out as a unique case in the European panorama for the exceptionally tight link established between

aristocracy and theatre, a link that had paramount consequences on all levels of theatre practice. Not only did the birth of La Scala, as a consequence of the cooperation between subjects and governors, influence the behaviour of its patrons; on the contrary, it made the theatre a rather complex object to control. Its character as a private property and significant financial investment had deep consequences on the level of involvement that its patrons had on the management and the repertoire, making any decisive intervention a very invasive act. Moreover, the centrality of theatre within Milan's social life as a tool of both culture and entertainment and the peculiar character of the aristocrats' attendance and patronage formed a rather strong tradition regarding both repertoire and the structure of both single performances and whole seasons, thus making sudden and/or strong changes very difficult to implement.

The republican regime's intervention had to be implemented with utmost care: the strong ideological connection between the theatre and the Habsburg *buon governo* clashed with the necessity of depicting the former governors as tyrants and republican Milan as the ultimate free society. The attempts made to partially dispossess the *palchettisti* and democratise the opera house tried to weaken traditional practices and associations, but, in truth, these were too strongly embedded in the very conception of theatre to show long-lasting effects. Though interesting in their conception and application, the democratisation attempts made in the republican triennium 1796-1799 just scraped the surface of the complex theatrical world: while explicitly republican events catalysed the strongest needs for a changed cultural and social experience within the theatrical walls, the backbone of the musical offering remained essentially unchanged.

Similar conclusions can be inferred regarding the changes implemented within the actual repertoire, particularly interesting because of the parallel debate about the function of theatre in general. The work of both legislators and poets is indeed significant because, although in the name of the republic, it debated the role the theatrical experiences had to play within the society and the features they should possess. After the reformation advocated by Goldoni in the previous century, this was the first impulse to newly question many traditional features of theatre, an impulse that was also enriched by the intense contacts with the French tradition and repertoire. Figures such as Salfi's - journalist, translator, playwright, politician and theatre theoretician - played an important role in trying to modernise a rather conservative sphere such as that of musical theatre.

It is a striking fact that, unlike contemporary Paris, the operas produced in republican Milan did not manage to enter the permanent repertoire. However, they represent the realization of the ongoing debate and, at the same time, complex cultural objects underpinned by a newly informed network of ownership, tradition and expectation. It has to be pointed out that, in

proportion, the role played within this process by the composers is much more limited than that of the contemporary poets and theoreticians: while librettos could often express the newly informed subject material and values in a rather evident way, the actual music remained mostly linked to pre-existing conventions. Many composers (e.g. Tarchi, Paër and Zingarelli) could in fact live through the various political revolutions using the same musical forms: the only allegiance demanded from them (at least inside the opera house) was that of adapting their music to the changing subject matters. Still, elements such as the stronger association between stage and the political dimension, the claim that opera could express concepts such as patriotism and justice and the growing importance of ensemble and choral moments produced an effect on musical composition as well, an effect that would significantly inform the following period of the Milanese opera history.

It is off the stage and in the few carefully selected events when occasional music invaded the opera house that the impulse to change cultural offering and consumption radically reached its fulfilment. The unprecedented experience of the republican feasts, with the systematic imposition of new products especially designed for public celebration, represented the pure application of the republican principles within cultural dissemination. Naturally, their innovative character made it easier to implement them, the programmatic targeting of the lower social strata (traditionally excluded from the opera house) also representing an important tool of both control and propaganda. It is not a case that the republican triennium, as opposed to the second Cisalpine republic, saw an extraordinary commitment from the government and its commissioni to revolutionise the common perception of time and space and strongly tie cultural manifestations and entertainment to controlled celebration.

On the other hand, the walls of the theatre, though strong, were not completely impenetrable to the suggestions coming from the public feasts: an intense exchange of personnel, subject matter and musical/visual elements was soon established, together with the ongoing process of democratisation of the theatrical space allowing more and more people to participate in both spheres. Figures such as the impresario Maldonati, the composer and maestro al cembalo Minoja and the factotum Salfi, and elements such as the cult of classical antiquity and the military sphere, the practice of performing pieces for grand choirs and wind bands and the dissemination of dance and republican tunes affected even the traditional world of opera and ballet.

The chronic instability of the political framework and the brevity of Milan's republican experience pose interesting, though ultimately unanswerable questions. It is intriguing to speculate on the effects the republican reformation would have had on musical theatre if the first Cisalpine Republic had lasted longer; it was clear even for the most active patriots that the

implementation of systematic reforms needed far more than three years. Nevertheless, the initial reforming attempts concerning theatrical management, repertoire and the very function of theatre had the merit of triggering a wider process of re-thinking that, through the system of the public concorsi, involved both traditional and less traditional figures.

The various musical events of the first Cisalpine, both inside and outside the theatre, also highlighted at an unprecedented level the aptness of music as an effective tool of celebration and self-representation. A process of continual reuse of musical elements can be pinpointed, transcending genres and conventions, and leading, on the one hand, to the popularisation of culture the republican regime wished for, on the other to a greater experimentalism from musicians, literates and patrons. Some figures, first of all Minoja, but also Federici, rose to extraordinary fame mainly thanks to their expertise with the newly discovered celebratory repertoire, a repertoire that, despite its original character, did not fail to appeal also to Austrian rulers. The second Cisalpine and, even more so, the Italian Republic gradually softened the tone of republican celebration, decreasing the intensity and frequency of public feasts, but at the same time retained the practice of producing celebratory pieces to be performed in the more conventional space of the opera house. These works became even more frequent and grander during the Kingdom of Italy, the original republican cause being completely lost, but the need of celebration stronger than ever.

Despite the brevity of the first Cisalpine, some significant mechanisms had been set into motion; the Austrian repression contributed in toning down the excesses of the Jacobin experience, but, also because of its own briefness, could not revert to the pre-1796 status quo. Moreover, the violence of the repression inhibited any intervention on the cultural sphere apart from the rigid control of the repertoire: at the same time, the extraordinary interest towards theatre manifested in the republican years quickly died out, not producing any relevant novelty. An abyss separates the enthusiasm Archduke Ferdinand showed towards the theatrical sphere and the almost complete paralysis of the interregnum, mirroring the radical difference between the attitude of the pre-1796 and post-1799 Austrian rulers. The latter were no longer fatherly governors involved in the wellbeing of their subjects, but rather mere officers quickly perceived as foreign oppressors: this attitude deeply informed the Milanese context throughout the first half of the nineteenth century.

The return of Napoleon and the reinstatement of the republic provides another interesting context for a wider reflection on the role music and musical theatre played within a repeatedly changing political context. The period 1800-1801 cannot be treated as a simple return to the republican regime; on the contrary, it constituted a re-visitation of the democratic purpose in the

light of the recent vicissitudes. Unlike Cocastelli and his *governo provvisorio*, Napoleone acted in sensible way in order not only to control Lombardy, but also to link it tighter to his political plan, by then very different from his purpose during the Italian campaign. Both the theatrical repertoire and the network of occasions for musical performances devised during the Jacobin triennium were thus subjected to a substantial re-thinking according to more moderate criteria. With the public feasts reduced to a few events, celebration and self-representation tended to be confined once again within the walls of the theatre, also subjected to a process of re-appropriation from the aristocracy and, at the same time, opening its doors to the growing bourgeoisie.

The softening and reshaping of the republican enthusiasm, paired with gradual centralization, caused also the repertoire to partially revert to the pre-1796 experiences, although the heritage of the triennium was not completely lost. With celebratory events taking place within its walls and many operas (especially serious ones) showing some compositional and expressive tools developed with the republican experience, the repertoire still retained some politicized elements. With the theatre winning back and even increasing its centrality within Milan's social and cultural life, an overall normalization of the repertoire, deprived from the majority of extra-ordinary and/or excessively politicized elements, was implemented with utmost care; those, like Salfi and Sografi, who tried to revive practices and strategies from the triennium, were unsuccessful and ultimately excluded from theatrical life. La Scala, once again the theatre of a capital city, employing some of the best artists available at the time, producing a rich and transferrable repertoire and, at the same time, maintaining a certain politicized flavour, was heading towards the major role to be played in the years following the Austrian restoration.

On the eve of the proclamation of the Italian Republic (January 1802), Milan was still living through a season of deep transition affecting all spheres of its political, social and cultural life. The strong link between theatre, society and government caused an extraordinary amount of attention to be dedicated to culture, and especially music at various, interconnected levels. The delicate balance between local tradition and invasive measures and the needs of a constantly changing propaganda created a rather complex und unstable situation that, despite having been traditionally overlooked, played a major role within Milan's history and cultural development. Because of this underlying complexity, the path of the city's cultural reaction to the various social and political changes was not linear, but rather a tortuous one, presenting elements of both continuity and secession with the past.

The whole experience of these years pushed Milan away from a rather slow-moving traditionalism into a period of accelerated change, culminating in the city's key role in the

Conclusions

Risorgimento. Milan rose to a paramount political and musical position not only because of the musical repertoire produced, but also thanks to the centrality the theatre had within the society. The city showed a high level of consciousness in terms of both the role and management of theatre and had a very engaged and politicized audience. The role played by musical theatre within the various transitional contexts had also made clear that opera could constitute a powerful tool of celebration and self-representation, and catalyse issues related to group identity, patriotism and nationalism. With this legacy, Milan was indeed ready to take its role as one of the leading political and cultural centres of the Italian Risorgimento.

APPENDIX 1

CATALOGUES OF MUSICAL WORKS PERFORMED IN LA SCALA THEATRE 1790-1802

The present catalogue has been compiled from a number of primary and secondary sources. Several catalogues of the operas and ballets performed in la Scala since its opening already existed, the first dating back to the second decade of the nineteenth century, the most recent sponsored by La Scala theatre itself to celebrate its bicentennial in 1978.¹ A particularly important source of information lies in the works carried on by Pompeo Cambiasi across more than three decades of work in the theatre's archive and beyond, namely a catalogue of all musical performances (1870) and a rich collection of accessory documents such as programmes, posters, flyers, notes, etc. (1889).² Although more than a century old and exhibiting some methodological flaws, these works (especially the latter) still represent a valuable starting point to study the environment and cultural offering of La Scala.

The systematic cross-checking of these sources has allowed the drafting of a more accurate and comprehensive catalogue, though still with some slight inconsistencies and missing information. This draft has been completed based on some additional sources. Most important, the librettos of almost all the operas performed in La Scala in the years 1789/1790 to 1801/1802 have been taken into account, the majority in their original printed version within institutions such as the library of the 'Giuseppe Verdi' Conservatory and the Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense of Milan, others in digital format within online portals such as Internet Archive, Internet Culturale and Braidense Digitale. These librettos have provided useful information not always recorded in the catalogues, such as the ballets performed in conjunction with a specific opera, the names of choreographers, the descriptions of sceneries and settings and the content of the prefaces.

Another source of valuable information has been the archive of La Scala theatre, containing a section especially dedicated to posters, flyers and other forms of communication between the theatre management and the audience, some of which had not been recorded by Cambiasi.³ Useful documents, most of all in terms of vocal works not belonging to the operatic genre, have

¹ Giuseppe Chiappori, *Serie cronologica delle rappresentazioni drammatico-pantomimiche poste sulle scene dei principali teatri di Milano 1776-1818* (Milan: Silvestri, 1818) and Giampiero Tintori, *Duecento anni di Teatro alla Scala: Cronologia* (Gorle: Gutenberg Grafica, 1979), respectively.

² Pompeo Cambiasi, *Rappresentazioni date nei Reali Teatri di Milano 1778-1872* (Milan: Ricordi, 1872) and Idem, *La Scala 1778-1889: note storiche e statistiche* (Milan: Ricordi, 1889), respectively.

³ Museo teatrale alla Scala and Biblioteca teatrale 'Livia Simoni' (I-Ms), MAN and SAL folders.

also been found in the Somma collection (Fondo Somma) within the library of the ‘Giuseppe Verdi’ Conservatory of Milan, including precious manuscript librettos not extant in their original printed versions.⁴ The State Archive of Milan contains a rich collection of documents dedicated to both Milanese opera houses, which have been extensively used within the present research. A series of manuscript *dimostrazioni* (lists) compiled by an anonymous season pass holder for La Scala in the years 1778-1804 was particularly useful for the present catalogue, although their amateur character makes them a not wholly reliable source.⁵

Finally, some major reference literature, both in print and online, has been used to cross-check and enrich the catalogue with further detail, first of all the monumental catalogue of Italian librettos printed up to 1800 edited by Claudio Sartori.⁶ Online sources included the *Grove Music Online*, the central meta-catalogue of Italian libraries (*Opac SBN*) and the libretto database sponsored by the University of Bologna (*Corago*).

⁴ Library of the ‘Giuseppe Verdi’ Conservatory (I-Mc), Fondo Somma, boxes 1-6.

⁵ Milan State Archive (I-Mas), Spettacoli Pubblici P.A., folder 17.

⁶ Claudio Sartori, *I libretti italiani a stampa dalle origini al 1800: catalogo analitico con 16 indici* (Cuneo: Bertola & Locatelli, 1993), 7 voll.

1. CATALOGUE OF VOCAL WORKS

1790

Season	First performance in Milan	Title	Composer	Librettist	Genre	Premiere?	Notes
Carnival	26/12/1789	<i>Adriano in Siria</i>	Sebastiano Nasolini	Pietro Metastasio	Serio	Y	
Carnival	30-Jan	<i>Medonte re di Epiro</i>	Antonio Pio	Giovanni de Gamerra	Serio	Y	The Theatre was closed from 20/02 to 7/06 because of the death of Joseph II (20/02).
Summer	07-Jun	<i>La modista raggiratrice</i>	Giovanni Paisiello	Giambattista Lorenzi	Buffo	N (Naples, 1787)	
Summer	24-Jun	<i>Giannina e Bernardone</i>	Domenico Cimarosa	Filippo Livigni	Buffo	N (Venice, 1781)	
Autumn	11-Aug	<i>La bella pescatrice</i>	Pietro Guglielmi	Saverio Zini	Buffo	N (Naples, 1789)	
Autumn	18-Sep	<i>I zingari in fiera</i>	Giovanni Paisiello	Giuseppe Palomba	Buffo	N (Naples, 1789)	
Autumn	16-Oct	<i>La cifra</i>	Antonio Salieri	Lorenzo Da Ponte (after Petrosellini)	Buffo	N	

1791

Season	First performance in Milan	Title	Composer	Librettist	Genre	Premiere?	Notes
Carnival	26/12/1790	<i>La morte di Cesare</i>	Nicola Zingarelli	Gaetano Sertor	Serio	Y	
Carnival	09-Feb	<i>La morte di Semiramide</i>	Gio. Battista Borghi	Simone Sografi	Serio	Y	
Lent	March	<i>L'avaro</i>	Pasquale Anfossi	Giovanni Bertati	Buffo	N (Venice, 1775)	
Lent	Unknown (probably April).	<i>La molinara ossia L'amor contrastato</i>	Giovanni Paisiello	Giuseppe Palomba	Buffo	N (Naples, 1788)	
Spring	May	<i>Le vane gelosie</i>	Giovanni Paisiello	Gio. Battista Lorenzi	Buffo	N (Naples, 1790)	On 30 May, Leopold II attended the performance with his sons Charles Louis and Alexander Leopold, the theatre being appositely lit.
Autumn	13-Aug	<i>Le gare generose</i>	Giovanni Paisiello	Giuseppe Palomba	Buffo	N (Naples, 1786)	
Autumn	20-Sep	<i>La donna di spirito</i>	Marcello da Bernardini	Marcello Bernardini (after Goldoni)	Buffo	N (Rome, 1770)	

1792

Season	First performance in Milan	Title	Composer	Librettist	Genre	Premiere?	Notes
Carnival	26/12/1791	<i>Pirro Re di Epiro</i>	Nicola Zingarelli	Giovanni De Gamerra	Serio	Y	
Carnival	04-Feb	<i>Adrasto Re d'Egitto</i>	Angelo Tarchi	Giovanni De Gamerra	Serio	Y	
Lent*	26-Feb	<i>I finti eredi</i>	Giuseppe Sarti	Giovanni Bertati	Buffo	N (St. Petersburg, 1785)	Only one opera performed during Lent season because of the death of Emperor Leopold II in February. ⁷
Spring	16-May ⁸	<i>Axur Re d'Ormus</i>	Antonio Salieri	Lorenzo Da Ponte	Buffo	N (Vienna, 1787)	
Autumn	14-Aug	<i>Il fanatico in berlina</i>	Giovanni Paisiello	Giovanni Bertati	Buffo	N (London, 1791).	
Autumn	22-Sep	<i>Il mercato di Monfregoso</i>	Nicola Zingarelli	Unknown (from Carlo Goldoni)	Buffo	Y	

⁷ Leopold had died on 10 February; performances were interrupted from 1 March.

⁸ Because of the death of Leopold's widow (Maria Luisa of Spain) on 15 May, the performances were interrupted from 20 May onwards.

1793

Season	First performance in Milan	Title	Composer	Librettist	Genre	Premiere?	Notes
Carnival	26/12/1792	<i>Cinna</i>	Bonifazio Asioli	Angelo Anelli	Serio	Y	
Carnival	26-Jan	<i>Egolina</i>	Giovanni Battista Borghi	Angelo Anelli	Serio	Y	
Carnival	Unknown	<i>Pigmalione</i>	Francesco Sirotti	Unknown (from Rousseau)	Scena lirica	Y	
Lent	17-Feb	<i>Il matrimonio segreto</i>	Domenico Cimarosa	Giovanni Bertati	Buffo	N (Vienna, 1792)	
Lent	11-Mar	<i>Lo sposo di tre, marito di nessuna</i>	Francesco Gnecco	Antonio Palomba	Buffo	Y	
Autumn	August	<i>L'oro fa tutto</i>	Ferdinando Paër	Angelo Anelli	Buffo	Y	
Autumn	07-Sep	<i>La secchia rapita</i>	Nicola Zingarelli	Angelo Anelli	Buffo	Y	
Autumn	Unknown	<i>Lo sciocco poeta di campagna</i>	Pietro Guglielmi	Saverio Zini	Buffo	N (Naples, 1792)	
Autunnino	November	<i>La virtuosa bizzarra</i> (from <i>La virtuosa in Mergellina</i>)	Pietro Guglielmi	Saverio Zini	Buffo	N (Naples, 1785)	Performed by the troupe of Neapolitan actors ('giovineti napoletani') directed by Giovanni Bassi.
Autunnino	Unknown	<i>I due fratelli perseguitati</i>	Giuseppe Coppola	Giuseppe Palomba	Buffo	N (Naples, 1790)	Idem
Autunnino	Unknown	<i>Debora e Sisara</i>	Pietro Guglielmi	Carlo Sernicola	Serio	N (Naples, 1788)	Idem

1794

Season	First performance in Milan	Title	Composer	Librettist	Genre	Premiere?	Notes
Carnival	26/12/1793	<i>Artaserse</i>	Nicola Zingarelli	Pietro Metastasio	Serio	Y	
Carnival	08-Feb	<i>Demofonte</i>	Marco Portogallo	Pietro Metastasio	Serio	Y	
Lent	29-Mar	<i>La virtuosa bizzarra</i> (from <i>La virtuosa in Mergellina</i>)	Pietro Guglielmi	Saverio Zini	Buffo	N (Venice, 1791)	Performed by the Neapolitan troupe ('compagnia napoletana') directed by Giovanni Bassi.
Lent	02-Apr	<i>I due fratelli perseguitati</i>	Giuseppe Coppola	Antonio Palomba	Buffo	N (Crema, 1792)	Idem
Lent	02-Apr	<i>Il fanatico in berlina</i>	Giovanni Paisiello	Girolamo Tonioli	Buffo	N (London, 1791)	Idem
Lent	02-Apr	<i>La giornata critica di Don Giampicone gambastorta nel finto ospedale de' pazzi</i>	Giuseppe Coppola	Unknown	Buffo	N (Naples, 1785)	Idem
Lent	02-Apr	<i>Debora e Sisara</i>	Pietro Guglielmi	Carlo Sernicola	Serio	N	Idem
Autumn	09-Aug	<i>La lanterna di Diogene</i>	Pietro Guglielmi	Angelo Anelli	Buffo	N (Venice, 1793)	
Autumn	13-Sep	<i>Le nozze campestri</i>	Giuseppe Nicolini	Francesco Marconi	Buffo	Y	
Autumn	11-Oct	<i>I zingari in fiera</i>	Giovanni Paisiello	Antonio Palomba	Buffo	N (Naples, 1789)	

1795

Season	First performance in Milan	Title	Composer	Librettist	Genre	Premiere?	Notes
Carnival	26/12/1794	<i>Le Danaidi</i>	Angelo Tarchi	Gaetano Sertor	Serio	Y	
Carnival	31-Jan	<i>La Rossana</i>	Ferdinando Paër	Aurelio Aureli	Serio	Y	
Lent	22-Feb	<i>La frascatana</i>	Giovanni Paisiello	Filippo Livigni	Buffo	N (Venice, 1774)	
Lent	March	<i>Giannina e Bernardone</i>	Domenico Cimarosa	Filippo Livigni	Buffo	N (Venice, 1781)	
Autumn	12-Aug	<i>Gli artigiani</i> (from <i>Amore artigiano</i>)	Pasquale Anfossi	Giuseppe Foppa	Buffo	N (Venice, 1794)	
Autumn	02-Sep	<i>Fra I due litiganti il terzo gode</i>	Giuseppe Sarti	Carlo Goldoni	Buffo	N (Milan, 1782)	
Autumn	10-Oct	<i>L'impostura poco dura</i> (from <i>Le vicende d'amore</i>)	Angelo Tarchi	Unknown (from G. B. Pallavicino)	Buffo	Y	
Advent	05-Nov	<i>L'italiana in Londra</i>	Domenico Cimarosa	Giuseppe Petrosellini	Buffo	N (Rome, 1779)	
Advent	20-Nov	<i>Pigmalione</i>	Gio. Batt. Cimador(o)	Simone Sografi	Scena lirica	N (Venice, 1790)	

1796

Season	First performance in Milan	Title	Composer	Librettist	Genre	Premiere?	Notes
Carnival	26/12/1795	<i>Apelle e Campapse</i>	Giacomo Tritta	Simone Sografi	Serio	Y	
Carnival	30-Jan	<i>Giulietta e Romeo</i>	Nicola Zingarelli	Giuseppe Foppa	Serio	Y	
Lent	14-Feb	<i>La confusione nata dalla somiglianza</i> o <i>I due gobbi</i>	Marco Portogallo	Cosimo Mazzini	Buffo	N (Florence, 1793)	
Lent	05-Mar	<i>Gli amanti alla prova</i>	Luigi Caruso	Giovanni Bertati	Buffo	N (Venice, 1783)	
Spring	07-Jun	<i>La capricciosa corretta</i> (from <i>La scuola de' maritati</i>)	Vincenzo Martini ⁹	from Lorenzo Da Ponte	Buffo	N (London, 1795)	Performed as an intermezzo in between the comedies offered by the troupe directed by Luigi Perelli.
Spring	07-Jun	Unknown ¹⁰			Buffo		Idem.
Autumn	27-Aug	<i>L'astuta in amore</i>	Valentino Fioravanti	Giuseppe Palomba	Buffo	N (Naples, 1795)	
Autumn	21-Sep	<i>La secchia rapita</i>	Nicola Zingarelli, Francesco Bianchi ¹¹	Angelo Anelli	Buffo	N (Milan, 1793, Venice 1794) ¹²	

⁹ I.e. Vicente Martín y Soler.

¹⁰ The title of this intermezzo has been lost already in 1818, although all catalogues agree on the performance of an opera buffa in late spring 1796.

¹¹ Chiappori stated that the music from Act I was by Zingarelli, the one from Act II by Bianchi.

¹² Both Zingarelli and Bianchi had composed music for the libretto by Anelli: Zingarelli's version had been premiered in 1793, Bianchi's in 1794.

Autunnino	04-Nov	<i>Il convito</i> ¹³	Domenico Cimarosa	Filippo Livigni	Buffo	N (Venezia 1782)	
Autunnino	04-Nov	<i>Le vendemmie</i>	Giuseppe Gazzaniga	Carlo Goldoni	Buffo	N (Florence, 1778)	

1797

Season	First performance in Milan	Title	Composer	Librettist	Genre	Premiere?	Notes
Carnival	31/12/1796 ¹⁴	<i>Ademira</i>	Various	Ferdinando Moretti	Serio	Y	
Carnival	18-Jan	<i>La congiura pisoniana</i>	Angelo Tarchi	Francesco Salfi	Serio	Y	
Lent	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Performances given by the Paganini troupe.
Lent	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Idem.
Spring	27-Apr	<i>La moglie capricciosa ossia Chi la fa l'aspetta</i>	Vincenzo Fabrizi	Filippo Livigni	Buffo	N (Casale Monf.to, 1792)	
Spring	13-May	<i>I molinari</i>	Ferdinando Paër	Giuseppe Foppa	Buffo	N (Venice, 1794)	

¹³ In Cambiasi as *Il convitato di pietra*.

¹⁴ The inauguration of the season was postponed from the traditional 26 December to the 31st because the singer playing the lead role, the soprano Elisabetta Billington, was indisposed.

Spring	13-May	<i>L'albergatrice vivace</i>	Luigi Caruso	Giuseppe Palomba	Buffo	N (Venice, 1780)	
Summer	10-Jul	<i>Axur Re d'Ormus</i>	Antonio Salieri	Lorenzo Da Ponte	Eroicomico	N (Vienna, 1787)	
Autumn	26-Aug	<i>La pietra simpatica</i>	Silvestro Di Palma	Giambattista Lorenzi	Buffo	N (Naples, 1795)	
Autumn	September	<i>Il principe di Taranto</i>	Ferdinando Paër	Filippo Livigni	Buffo	Y	
Autunnino	05-Nov	<i>La bella pescatrice</i>	Pietro Guglielmi	Saverio Zini	Buffo	N (Naples, 1789)	
Autunnino	05-Nov	<i>Il barbiere di Siviglia</i>	Giovanni Paisiello	Giuseppe Petrosellini	Buffo	N (Saint Petersburg, 1782)	

1798

Season	First performance in Milan	Title	Composer	Librettist	Genre	Premiere?	Notes
Carnival	26/12/1797	<i>Gli Orazi e i Curiazi</i>	Domenico Cimarosa	Simone Sografi	Serio	N (Venice, 1796)	
Carnival	January	<i>Meleagro</i>	Nicola Zingarelli	Giovanni Schmidt	Serio	Y	
Lent	25-Feb	<i>Un pazzo ne fa cento</i>	Simone Mayr	Giuseppe Foppa	Buffo	N (Venice, 1796)	
Lent	March	<i>Gli amanti comici</i>	Valentino Fioravanti	Giuseppe Petrosellini	Buffo	N (Venice, 1797)	

Lent	March	<i>Il furbo contro furbo</i>	Valentino Fioravanti	Unknown ¹⁵	Buffo	N (Livorno, 1797)	
Lent	March	<i>Il segreto</i>	Simone Mayr	Giuseppe Foppa	Farce	Y	
Spring	08-Apr	<i>Pirro</i>	Nicola Zingarelli	Giovanni De Gamerra	Serio	Y (Milan, 1792) ¹⁶	On the evening of April the 24 th there was a competition of patriotic music in honour of General Lazare Hoche.
Autumn	25-Aug	<i>I matrimoni liberi</i>	Giuseppe Mosca	Unknown	Buffo	Y	
Autumn	09-Sep	<i>La città nuova</i>	Stefano Cristiani	Unknown	Buffo	Y	
Autumn	October	<i>La ballerina amante</i>	Domenico Cimarosa	Giuseppe Palomba	Buffo	N (Naples, 1782)	
Autunnino	05-Nov	<i>I filosofi immaginari</i>	Giovanni Paisiello	Giovanni Bertati	Buffo	N (Saint Petersburg, 1779)	
Autunnino	15-Nov	<i>La scuola dei gelosi</i>	Antonio Salieri	Caterino Mazzola	Buffo	N (Venice, 1779)	

¹⁵ From the play *Crispin rival de son maitre* by Alain-René Lesage.

¹⁶ The same libretto had also been premiered in Naples in 1787 with music composed by Paisiello.

1799

Season	First performance in Milan	Title	Composer	Librettist	Genre	Premiere?	Notes
Carnival	26/12/1798	<i>Il trionfo di Clelia</i>	Sebastiano Nasolini	Simone Sografi	Serio	Y	
Carnival	January	<i>Gli Sciti</i>	Giuseppe Nicolini	Gaetano Rossi	Serio	Y	
Lent	19-Feb	<i>Il Re Teodoro in Venezia</i>	Giovanni Paisiello	Giovanni Battista Casti	Buffo	N (Prague, 1784)	
Spring	May	<i>La virtù in cimento ossia La Griselda</i>	Ferdinando Paër	Angelo Anelli	Buffo	N (Parma, 1798)	The performances were interrupted between Easter (24 March) and June to replace the Palco reale with regular boxes. While La Scala was closed, the performances took place in La Canobiana.
Spring	May - June	<i>La donna di genio volubile</i>	Marco Portogallo	Giovanni Bertati	Buffo	N (Venice, 1796)	
Spring	May - June	<i>L'amor sincero</i>	Giuseppe Farinelli	Angelo Anelli	Buffo	Y	Possibly performed in both La Scala and La Cannobiana. ¹⁷
Autumn	20-Aug	<i>Il trionfo del bel sesso</i>	Giuseppe Nicolini	Luigi Romanelli	Buffo	Y	
Autumn	12-Oct	<i>Il ritratto</i>	Nicola Zingarelli	Luigi Romanelli	Buffo	Y	

¹⁷ Two identical librettos (but with the different indications of La Scala and La Canobiana) are extant.

1800

Season	First performance in Milan	Title	Composer	Librettist	Genre	Premiere?	Notes
Carnival	26/12/1799	<i>Lodoiska</i>	Simone Mayr	Francesco Gonella	Serio	N (Venice, 1796)	Reworked version of the 1796 premiere.
Carnival	13-Feb	<i>Idante ovvero I sacrifici d'Ecate</i>	Marco Portogallo	Giovanni Schmidt	Serio	Y	
Spring	20-Apr	<i>Fra id ue litiganti, il terzo gode</i>	Giuseppe Sarti	Gio. Battista Lorenzi	Buffo	N (Milan, 1782)	
Spring	06-May	<i>Lubino e Carlotta</i>	Simone Mayr	Gaetano Rossi	Farce	N (Venice, 1799)	
Summer	09-Jul	<i>Il disertore</i> (also <i>Il disertore francese</i>).	António Leal Moreira	Bartolomeo Benincasa	semiserio/ pasticcio	N (Turin, 1800)	
Summer	26-Jul	<i>Il barbiere di Siviglia</i>	Giovanni Paisiello	Giuseppe Petrosellini	Buffo	N (St Peterburg, 1782)	
Autumn	14-Aug	<i>Gli intrighi del serraglio</i>	Ferdinando Paër	Giovanni Bertati	Buffo	N (Venice, 1795)	
Autumn	11-Sep	<i>Il matrimonio segreto</i>	Domenico Cimarosa	Giovanni Bertati	Buffo	N (Vienna, 1792)	
Autumn	11-Oct	<i>L'inganno felice</i>	Giovanni Paisiello	Giuseppe Palomba	Buffo	N (Naples, 1798)	
Autumn	05-Nov	<i>L'equivoco ossia Le bizzarrie dell'amore</i>	Simone Mayr	Giuseppe Foppa	Buffo	Y	
Autumn	09-Nov	<i>Cantata per celebrare l'anniversario della battaglia di Marengo</i>	Carlo Bigatti	Angelo Petracchi	Cantata	Y	

1801

Season	First performance in Milan	Title	Composer	Librettist	Genre	Premiered	Notes
Carnival	26/12/1800	<i>Clitennestra</i>	Nicola Zingarelli	Franco Salfi	Serio	Y	
Carnival	21-Jan	<i>I baccanali di Roma</i>	Giuseppe Nicolini	Luigi Romanelli	Serio	Y	
Spring	07-Mar	<i>Che originali! ossia La musicomania</i>	Simone Mayr	Gaetano Rossi	Farsa	N (Venice, 1798)	Performed in the same evening as <i>Fedeltà ed amore alla prova</i> .
Spring	07-Mar	<i>Fedeltà ed amore alla prova</i>	Giuseppe Gazzaniga	Giuseppe Maria Foppa	Farsa	N (Venice, 1798)	Performed in the same evening as <i>Che originali!</i> .
Spring	07-Mar	<i>Il ciabattino o le donne cambiate</i>	Marco Portogallo	Giuseppe Foppa	Buffo	N (Venice, 1797)	
Spring	12-Mar	<i>Il podestà di Chioggia</i>	Ferdinando Orlandi	Angelo Anelli	Buffo	Y	
Summer	16-Jun	<i>Il fuoriuscito</i>	Vincenzo Pucitta	Angelo Anelli	Buffo	Y	
Summer	Unknown	<i>Gli opposti caratteri ossia Olivo e Pasquale</i>	Sebastiano Nasolini	Giulio Artusi	Farsa	N (Venice, 1799)	
Autumn	18-Aug	<i>Le due giornate</i>	Simone Mayr	Giuseppe Foppa	Semiserio	Y	

Autumn	September	<i>Il mercato di Monfregoso</i> (from <i>Il mercato di Malmantide</i>)	Nicola Zingarelli	Unknown (from Carlo Goldoni)	Buffo	N (Milan, 1792)	
Autumn	Unknown	<i>Il marito migliore</i>	Giuseppe Gazzaniga	Angelo Anelli	Buffo	Y	
Advent	November	<i>Il sedicente filosofo</i>	Giuseppe Mosca	Unknown	Farsa	Y	
Advent	November	<i>Che originali!</i>	Giuseppe Mosca	Unknown	Farsa	N	

1802

Season	Date	Title	Composer	Librettist	Genre	Premiere?	Notes
Carnival	26/12/1801	<i>I Manlii</i>	Giuseppe Nicolini	Simone Sografi	Serio	Y	
Carnival	January	<i>I misteri eleusini</i>	Simone Mayr	G. Bernardoni	Serio	Y	On 7 February, Francesco Melzi D'Eril attended the performance accompanied by Gioacchino Murat.

2. CATALOGUE OF BALLETS

1790

Season	Title	Coreographer (compositore)	Genre (when indicated)	Opera performed with (when indicated)	Notes
Carnival	<i>La morte d'Ercole</i>	Francesco Clerico	eroico tragico	<i>Adriano in Siria</i>	
Carnival	<i>La superba innamorata a suo dispetto</i>	Francesco Clerico	comico	<i>Adriano in Siria</i>	
Carnival	<i>La caduta di Troja</i>	Francesco Clerico	eroico-pantomimo	<i>Medonte re di Epiro</i>	
Carnival	<i>Il convalescente innamorato</i>	Francesco Clerico	comico	<i>Medonte re di Epiro</i>	
Summer	<i>Lodovico il moro</i>	Giuseppe Herdlitzka		<i>La modista raggiratrice, Giannina e Bernardone</i>	
Summer	<i>Il tutore ingannato</i>	Giuseppe Herdlitzka		<i>La modista raggiratrice, Giannina e Bernardone</i>	
Autumn	<i>Idante ed Asseli ossia La sposa fedele</i>	Pietro Angiolini		<i>La bella pescatrice</i>	Music by Luigi Gianella.
Autumn	<i>Rinaldo ed Armida</i>	Pietro Angiolini	eroico	<i>I zingari in fiera</i>	Music by Luigi Gianella.
Autumn	<i>Argent fait tout (Il denaro fa tutto)</i>	Pietro Angiolini	comico	<i>I zingari in fiera, La bella pescatrice</i>	
Autumn	<i>Una fiera</i>	Pietro Angiolini		<i>La cifra</i>	

1791

Season	Title	Coreographer (compositore)	Genre (when indicated)	Opera performed with (when indicated)	Notes
Carnival	<i>Edipo</i>	Giuseppe Traffieri	tragico pantomimo	<i>La morte di Cesare</i>	
Carnival	<i>Ballo fiammingo</i>	Giuseppe Traffieri		<i>La morte di Cesare</i>	
Carnival	<i>Le Danaidi</i>	Giuseppe Traffieri	tragico	<i>La morte di Semiramide</i>	
Carnival	<i>Rinaldo d'Asti</i>	Giuseppe Traffieri	eroicomico	<i>La morte di Semiramide</i>	
Carnival	<i>Guinguette</i>	Giuseppe Traffieri		<i>La morte di Semiramide</i>	
Lent	<i>Angelica e Wilton</i>	Giuseppe Herdlitzka		<i>L'avaro, La molinara</i>	
Lent	<i>Il tradimento scoperto</i>	Giuseppe Herdlitzka		<i>L'avaro, La molinara</i>	
Spring	<i>La schiava americana</i>	Giuseppe Herdlitzka		<i>Le vane gelosie</i>	
Spring	<i>La vendemmia</i>	Giuseppe Herdlitzka		<i>Le vane gelosie</i>	
Autumn	<i>Il falso profeta</i>	Antonio Muzzarelli	tragico pantomimo	<i>Le gare generose</i>	
Autumn	<i>Divertimento</i>	Antonio Muzzarelli		<i>Le gare generose</i>	
Autumn	<i>Lo spazzacamino principe</i>	Antonio Muzzarelli		<i>La donna di spirito</i>	
Autumn	<i>Festa da ballo in teatro</i>	Antonio Muzzarelli		<i>La donna di spirito</i>	
Autumn	<i>Telemaco nell'isola di Calipso</i>	Antonio Pitrot	pantomimo	Unknown	
Autumn	<i>La festa del signore del villaggio</i>	Antonio Pitrot		Unknown	

Season	Title	Coreographer (compositore)	Genre (if indicated)	Opera performed with (if indicated)	Notes
Carnival	<i>Amleto</i>	Francesco Clerico	tragico pantomimo	<i>Pirro re di Epiro</i>	
Carnival	<i>La donna capricciosa</i>	Francesco Clerico		<i>Pirro re di Epiro</i>	
Carnival	<i>La conquista del Vello d'oro</i>	Francesco Clerico	eroico	<i>Adrasto Re d'Egitto</i>	
Carnival	<i>I due vedovi allegri</i>	Francesco Clerico		<i>Adrasto Re d'Egitto</i>	
Carnival	<i>Divertimento</i>	Francesco Clerico		<i>Adrasto Re d'Egitto</i>	
Lent	<i>Melinto e Cleonice</i>	Giovanni Marsigli		<i>I finti eredi</i>	
Lent	<i>Amor creduto un cane</i>	Giovanni Marsigli		<i>I finti eredi</i>	
Spring	<i>Federico II re di Prussia</i>	Urbano Garzia		<i>Axur Re d'Ormus</i>	
Spring	<i>Divertimento</i>	Urbano Garzia		<i>Axur Re d'Ormus</i>	
Autumn	<i>Venere e Adone</i>	Antonio Pitrot	eroico pantomimo	<i>Il fanatico in berlina</i>	
Autumn	<i>Guinguette</i>	Antonio Pitrot		<i>Il fanatico in berlina</i>	
Autumn	<i>Adelasia</i>	Antonio Pitrot	eroico pantomimo	<i>Il mercato di Monfregoso</i>	
Autumn	<i>Le Amanti incantate ossia Don Chisciotte</i>	Antonio Pitrot	comico	<i>Il mercato di Monfregoso</i>	
Autumn	<i>Il Baccanale popolare</i>	Antonio Pitrot		<i>Il mercato di Monfregoso</i>	

Season	Title	Coreographer (compositore)	Genre (if indicated)	Opera performed with (if indicated)	Notes
Carnival	<i>Gli Sciti</i>	Filippo Beretti		<i>Cinna</i>	
Carnival	<i>Divertimento campestre</i>	Filippo Beretti		<i>Cinna</i>	
Carnival	<i>Andronico e Ramira</i>	Filippo Beretti	serio pantomimo	<i>Egilina</i>	
Carnival	<i>Giudice e padre</i>	Filippo Beretti	comico	<i>Egilina</i>	
Carnival	<i>Divertimento</i>	Filippo Beretti		<i>Egilina</i>	
Lent	<i>La fata Urgella</i>	Giovanni Monticini		<i>Lo sposo di tre, marito di nessuna</i>	
Lent	<i>I Pastori d'Arcadia</i>	Giovanni Monticini		<i>Lo sposo di tre, marito di nessuna</i>	
Autumn	<i>Mastino della Scala</i>	Vittorio Trento	tragico pantomimo	<i>L'oro fa tutto</i>	
Autumn	<i>La contadina astuta</i>	Giuseppe Banti		<i>L'oro fa tutto</i>	
Autumn	<i>Zima</i>	Giuseppe Banti	eroico pantomimo	<i>La secchia rapita, Lo sciocco poeta di campagna</i>	
Autumn	<i>Posillippo di Napoli</i>	Giuseppe Banti	comico	<i>Lo sciocco poeta del campagna</i>	
Autunnino					No ballets performed during the Autunnino season (performences of the Bassi comic troupe).

Season	Title	Coreographer (compositore)	Genre (if indicated)	Opera performed with (if indicated)	Notes
Carnival	<i>Elfrida</i>	Gaetano Gioja	eroico pantomimo	<i>Artaserse</i>	
Carnival	<i>Il Feudatario pentito</i>	Gaetano Gioja	comico pantomimo	<i>Artaserse</i>	
Carnival	<i>Teseo riconosciuto</i>	Gaetano Gioja	eroico pantomimo	<i>Demofoonte</i>	
Carnival	<i>Eufrosina ossia Il poter d'Amore</i>	Gaetano Gioja	eroico pantomimo	<i>Demofoonte</i>	
Carnival	<i>Divertimento</i>	Gaetano Gioja		<i>Demofoonte</i>	
Lent	Unknown	Francesco Damato, Francesco Sedinì			Titles lost already in 1818.
Autumn	<i>Erminia</i>	Gaspere Ronzi	eroico pantomimo	<i>La lanterna di Diogene, Le nozze campestri</i>	
Autumn	<i>La bella Calzolaia</i>	Gaspere Ronzi	comico	<i>La lanterna di Diogene</i>	
Autumn	<i>La Griselda</i>	Gaspere Ronzi	eroicomico pantomimo	<i>I zingari in fiera</i>	
Autumn	<i>L'Equivoco</i>	Gaspere Ronzi	comico	<i>I zingari in fiera, Le nozze campestri</i>	

Season	Title	Coreographer (compositore)	Genre (if indicated)	Opera performed with (if indicated)	Notes
Carnival	<i>Cora ossia La vergine del sole</i>	Gateano Gioja	eroico pantomimo	<i>Le Danaidi</i>	
Carnival	<i>La vendemmia ossia La contadina impertinente</i>	Gateano Gioja	comico	<i>Le Danaidi</i>	
Carnival	<i>La Lodoiska</i>	Paolo Franchi	eroico tragico	<i>La Rossana</i>	
Carnival	<i>Gli amori di Angelica e Medoro</i>	Paolo Franchi	eroico pastorale	<i>La Rossana</i>	
Carnival	<i>La pianella perduta</i>	Paolo Franchi		<i>La Rossana</i>	
Lent	<i>Il convitato di pietra</i>	Nicola Ferlotti		<i>La frascatana, Giannina e Bernardone</i>	
Lent	<i>Amore per industria</i>	Nicola Ferlotti		<i>La frascatana, Giannina e Bernardone</i>	
Autumn	<i>Il re pastore</i>	Gaspere Ronzi	eroico pastorale pantomimo in 4 atti	<i>Gli artigiani, Fra i due litiganti il terzo gode</i>	
Autumn	<i>La fanciulla mal custodita</i>	Gaspere Ronzi	comico	<i>Gli artigiani, Fra i due litiganti il terzo gode</i>	
Autumn	<i>Lauso e Lidia</i>	Gaspere Ronzi	eroico pantomimo	<i>L'impostura poco dura</i>	
Autumn	<i>Guinguette (La Ghinghetta)</i>	Gaspere Ronzi		<i>L'impostura poco dura</i>	
Advent	Unknown	Raimondo Fidanza			Titles lost already in 1818.

1796

Season	Title	Coreographer (compositore)	Genre (if indicated)	Opera performed with (if indicated)	Notes
Carnival	<i>La Didone</i>	Gaspare Ronzi	tragico pantomimo	<i>Apelle e Campapse</i>	
Carnival	<i>Le reclute d'amore</i>	Gaspare Ronzi	comico pantomimo	<i>Apelle e Campapse</i>	
Carnival	<i>Astarbea ossia Pigmalione vendicato</i>	Gaspare Ronzi	eroico tragico pantomimo	<i>Giulietta e Romeo</i>	
Lent	<i>Solimano secondo</i>	Carlo Bianciardi		<i>Gli amanti alla prova</i>	
Lent	<i>I due innamorati</i>	Carlo Bianciardi		<i>Gli amanti alla prova</i>	
Spring					No ballets performed during the Spring season (Perelli comic troupe).
Autumn	<i>Lucrezia ossia L'espulsione dei Re da Roma</i>	Filippo Beretti	serio	<i>L'astuta in amore, La secchia rapita</i>	
Autumn	<i>La calzolaja</i>	Filippo Beretti	comico	<i>L'astuta in amore, La secchia rapita</i>	
Autumn	<i>I solitari di Scozia</i>	Filippo Beretti		<i>La secchia rapita</i>	
Autunnino	Unknown	Nicola Ferlotti			Titles lost already in 1818.

Season	Title	Coreographer (compositore)	Genre (if indicated)	Opera performed with (if indicated)	Notes
Carnival	<i>Guglielmo Tell ossia La rivoluzione svizzera</i>	Paolo Franchi		<i>Ademira</i>	Music by Luigi De Bailou
Carnival	<i>I due sindaci</i>	Paolo Franchi	comico	<i>Ademira</i>	Music by Luigi De Bailou
Carnival	<i>Lucio Giunio Bruto</i>	Paolo Franchi		<i>La congiura pisoniana</i>	Music by Luigi De Bailou
Carnival	<i>L'albagia in fumo</i>	Paolo Franchi		<i>La congiura pisoniana</i>	
Carnival	<i>Amor non ha ritegno</i>	Paolo Franchi		<i>La congiura pisoniana</i>	
Carnival	<i>La Lodoiska</i>	Paolo Franchi		<i>La congiura pisoniana</i>	
Carnival	<i>Il general Colli in Roma</i>	Domenico Le Fèvre	pantomimo	<i>La congiura pisoniana</i>	<i>Argomento</i> by Francesco S. Salfi.
Lent	<i>Il buon patriota</i>	Vincenzo Cosentini			Performed in between the performances of the Paganini comic troupe.
Spring	<i>Il diavolo a quattro</i>	Eusebio Luzzi			
Spring	<i>Il geloso in cimento</i>	Eusebio Luzzi			
Summer	<i>Deucalione e Pirra</i>	Gasparo Angiolini	pantomimo	<i>Axur Re d'Ormus</i>	
Autumn	<i>La bella Zoraide</i>	Giuseppe De Rossy	serio	<i>La pietra simpatica</i>	

Autumn	<i>I due mulinari</i>	Giuseppe De Rossy	comico	<i>La pietra simpatica, Il principe di Taranto</i>	
Autumn	<i>La carovana del Cairo</i>	Giuseppe De Rossy	eroicomico	<i>Il principe di Taranto</i>	
Autumn	<i>I patrioti repubblicani</i>	Giuseppe De Rossy			
Autunnino	<i>Armida</i>	Domenico Grimaldi		<i>La bella pescatrice, Il barbiere di Siviglia</i>	
Autunnino	<i>Amor fra l'armi</i>	Domenico Grimaldi		<i>La bella pescatrice, Il barbiere di Siviglia</i>	

1798

Season	Title	Coreographer (compositore)	Genre (if indicated)	Opera performed with (if indicated)	Notes
Carnival	<i>La morte del re Danao</i>	Filippo Beretti	tragico	<i>Gli Orazi e I Curiazi</i>	
Carnival	<i>Chi la fa l'aspetta</i>	Filippo Beretti	comico	<i>Gli Orazi e I Curiazi</i>	
Carnival	<i>L'Italia rigenerata</i>	Filippo Beretti	eroico pantomimo	<i>Meleagro</i>	
Carnival	<i>Reclutamento in un villaggio</i>	Filippo Beretti	comico	<i>Meleagro</i>	
Lent	<i>Le figlie in ritiro</i>	Eusebio Luzzi			
Lent	<i>L'inganno punito ossia Amor vendicato</i>	Innocenzo Parodi			
Lent	<i>La figlia mal custodita</i>	Caterino Titus			
Spring	<i>Tarrare</i>	Luigi Dupen		<i>Pirro</i>	
Autumn	<i>Raul di Crequì</i>	Giuseppe Mosca		<i>I matrimoni liberi</i>	
Autumn	<i>Amore vince tutto</i>	Giuseppe Mosca		<i>I matrimoni liberi</i>	

Autumn	<i>La moglie virtuosa ossia Costanza Ragozzi</i>	Giuseppe Mosca	eroicomico	<i>La città nuova</i>	
Autumn	<i>Il calzolaio</i>	Filippo Beretti	comico	<i>La città nuova</i>	
Advent	<i>La vera giustizia nei patrioti</i>	Vincenzo Cosentini		<i>I visionarj, La scuola dei gelosi</i>	
Advent	<i>Campestre</i>	Vincenzo Cosentini		<i>I visionarj, La scuola dei gelosi</i>	

1799

Season	Title	Coreographer (compositore)	Genre (if indicated)	Opera performed with (if indicated)	Notes
Carnival	<i>Il Bruto Milanese ossia La congiura contro Galeazzo Maria Visconti</i>	Urbano Garzia	eroico pantomimo	<i>Il trionfo di Clelia</i>	
Carnival	<i>L'oracolo</i>	Urbano Garzia	favoloso	<i>Il trionfo di Clelia</i>	
Carnival	<i>Gozalvo in America</i>	Urbano Garzia		<i>Gli Sciti</i>	
Carnival	<i>I matrimoni per inganno</i>	Urbano Garzia		<i>Gli Sciti</i>	
Lent	<i>Le Amazzoni del secolo</i>	Urbano Garzia		<i>Il Re Teodoro in Venezia</i>	
Lent	<i>I Francesi in Egitto</i>	Urbano Garzia		<i>Il Re Teodoro in Venezia</i>	
Spring	<i>Demetrio Re di Tiannia in Grecia</i>	Giuseppe Cajani		<i>L'amor sincero</i>	
Spring	<i>Eugenia e Rodolfo</i>	Giuseppe Cajani	eroico pantomimo	<i>La virtù in cimento, La donna di genio volubile</i>	
Spring	<i>I finti filosofi</i>	Giuseppe Cajani	comico	<i>La virtù in cimento, La donna di genio volubile, L'amor sincero</i>	

Autumn	<i>Ottocaro re di Boemia</i>	Gaspere Ronzi		<i>Il trionfo del bel sesso</i>	
Autumn	<i>Il segreto</i>	Gaspere Ronzi		<i>Il trionfo del bel sesso, Il ritratto</i>	
Autumn	<i>Odervik</i>	Gaspere Ronzi		<i>Il ritratto</i>	

1800

Season	Title	Coreographer (compositore)	Genre (if indicated)	Opera performed with (if indicated)	Notes
Carnival	<i>Ginevra di Scozia</i>	Gaspere Ronzi,	eroico pantomimo	<i>Lodoiska</i>	Music by Ferdinando Pontelibero.
Carnival	<i>Ergasto ed Eurilla vinti dall'amore</i>	Gaspere Ronzi	pastorale	<i>Lodoiska</i>	Music by Ferdinando Pontelibero.
Carnival	<i>Zulima</i>	Gaspere Ronzi		<i>Idante</i>	Music by Ferdinando Pontelibero.
Carnival	<i>La volubile</i>	Gaspere Ronzi		<i>Idante</i>	
Spring	<i>Il solitario in Posnania ossia Lorenzo e Paolina</i>	Giovanni Marsigli		<i>Lubino e Carlotta,</i>	
Spring	<i>Campestre</i>	Giovanni Marsigli		<i>Lubino e Carlotta</i>	
Summer	<i>La sposa in cimento all'isola di Madagascar</i>	Giovanni Marsigli		<i>Il disertore, Il barbiere di Siviglia</i>	

Autumn	<i>Matilde ossia La donna selvaggia</i>	Giovanni Monticini	eroico	<i>Gli intrighi del serraglio</i>	Music by Antonio Capuzzi.
Autumn	<i>La forza dell'amore</i>	Giovanni Monticini			Music by Vittorio Trento.
Autumn	<i>La scoperta della Florida</i>	Giovanni Monticini			Music by Vittorio Trento.

1801

Season	Title	Coreographer (compositore)	Genre (if indicated)	Opera performed with (if indicated)	Notes
Carnival	<i>Bianca de Rossi</i>	Giovanni Monticini		<i>Clitemnestra</i>	
Carnival	<i>La vendetta d'amore</i>	Giovanni Monticini		<i>Clitemnestra</i>	
Carnival	<i>Sadak e Kalasrad</i>	Giovanni Monticini		<i>I baccanali di Roma</i>	
Carnival	<i>Marichita d'Alvaros ossia L'assassina</i>	Giovanni Monticini		<i>I baccanali di Roma</i>	
Spring	<i>Adelasia riconosciuta</i>	Luigi Dupen	eroicomico		
Spring	<i>Il sultano generoso</i>	Luigi Dupen			
Summer	<i>La dote</i>	Luigi Dupen		<i>Il fuoruscito, Olivo e Pasquale</i>	

Summer	<i>La Nina pazza per amore</i>	Luigi Dupen		<i>Il fuoriuscito, Olivo e Pasquale</i>	
Autumn	<i>Cleopatra</i>	Francesco Clerico			
Autumn	<i>Baccanale</i>	Francesco Clerico			
Autumn	<i>Agamennone</i>	Francesco Clerico			
Advent					Same ballets as in the Autumn season.

1802

Season	Title	Coreographer (compositore)	Genre (if indicated)	Opera performed with (if indicated)	Notes
Carnival	<i>La morte di Pirro</i>	Francesco Clerico	tragico	<i>I Manli</i>	
Carnival	<i>L'orfana nella grotta</i>	Francesco Clerico	favoloso	<i>I Manli</i>	
Carnival	<i>Macbeth</i>	Francesco Clerico		<i>I misteri eleusini</i>	
Carnival	<i>La sposa persiana</i>	Francesco Clerico		<i>I misteri eleusini</i>	
Carnival	<i>Il tamburo notturno</i>	Francesco Clerico		<i>I Manli, I misteri eleusini</i>	

APPENDIX 2

CATALOGUE OF OTHER MUSICAL OR POLITICAL EVENTS TAKING PLACE IN THE MILANESE THEATRES 1796-1802

In addition to the operatic and ballet performances, the changes presented in the political and ideological framework were also mirrored in a plurality of other events in Milan's theatres. From the performance of occasional works such as cantatas and *inni* to the use of the theatre stage and hall in order to disseminate news, up to the various levels of governmental control and monitoring of the audience, La Scala (and, on a much smaller scale, La Cannobiana) was tightly linked to the authorities currently in power. Given the constant centrality of the theatre, the various events taking place in both opera houses in the period from the first Napoleonic invasion (1796) to the proclamation of the Italian Republic (1802) can thus represent a faithful mirror of the political climate in force.

The information used to compile this catalogue comes from various, heterogeneous sources, both primary and secondary. The ephemeral character of many events caused many detail to be scattered around different documents, also triggering a process of re-interpretations of the information that sometimes caused losses or misconceptions. Most of the material is based on the archival documents of the Milan State Archive, the archive of La Scala theatre and the Conservatory 'Giuseppe Verdi' of Milan. A few references to specific events were also found in the manuscript chronicle *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina* [...], extant in the Ambrosiana Library. In addition to these primary sources, numerous information, although sometimes subjected to an interpretative re-working, were contained in the literature, especially in works having a compilatory character (e.g. Cambiasi's).

KEY TO THE SOURCES

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Bellorini	Egidio Bellorini, 'Disordini in teatro a Milano al tempo delle Repubbliche Cisalpina e Italiana (1796-1805)', in <i>Archivio storico lombardo</i> , year 34, n.8 (Milan: Cogliati, 1907), pp. 116-140.

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Cambiasi	Pompeo Cambiasi, <i>La Scala 1778-1889: note storiche e statistiche</i> (Milan: Ricordi, 1889).
CM, FS	Documents coming from the Fondo Somma collection at the Conservatory 'Giuseppe Verdi' of Milan (I-Mc).
Crespi Morbio	Vittoria Crespi Morbio, 'Archi di gloria', in <i>La Scala di Napoleone: spettacoli a Milano 1796-1814</i> , ed. by Vittoria Crespi Morbio (Turin: Allemandi, 2010), pp. 15-44.
De Castro	Giovanni De Castro, <i>Milano e la Repubblica Cisalpina giusta le poesie, le caricature ed altre testimonianze dei tempi</i> (Milan: Dumolard, 1879).
Ferrari	Vittorio Ferrari, <i>Il Teatro della Scala nella vita e nell'arte dalle origini ad oggi</i> (Milan: Tamburini, 1921).
Giornale storico	<i>Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina dall'epoca della sua libertà ed indipendenza. Con un'Appendice di notizie diverse</i> , 1797-1798, manuscript in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana (I-Ma).
Gridario generale	<i>Gridario generale, ossia Collezione di tutte le grida, editti, proclami pubblicati in Milano dal giorno 28 aprile 1799 [...] sino al 2 giugno 1800</i> (Milan: Veladini, 1800), vol. 1.
Mezzanotte-Bascapè	Paolo Mezzanotte and Giacomo C. Bascapè, <i>Milano nell'arte e nella storia</i> , ed. by Gianni Mezzanotte (Milan; Rome: Bestetti, 1968).
Minola	Diego Antonio Minola, <i>Diario storico politico di alcuni avvenimenti del secolo XVIII, 1793-1797</i> , manuscript in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana (I-Ma).
Paglicci Brozzi	Antonio Paglicci Brozzi, <i>Sul teatro giacobino ed antigiacobino in Italia</i> (Milan: Pirola, 1887).

1. REPUBLICAN TRIENNIUM (1796-1799)

Date	Event description	Source(s)
16 May 1796	A day after Napoleon's entry into Milan, <i>La Marseillaise</i> was performed in La Scala with free entry for all citizens.	Bezzola-Tintori
18 or 19 May 1796 ¹	Following the order of General Despinoy, La Scala was lit and citizens were ordered to light their own houses to celebrate the recent victories of the French army. A festa da ballo took place in the theatre with free entry.	Minola, Cambiasi, Paglicci Brozzi
August 1796	A group of amateur actors started to gather and organize theatrical performances based on both Italian and foreign works of highly republican value. The group called itself 'Società del	Paglicci Brozzi, Mezzanotte-Bascapè

¹ Paglicci Brozzi suggested May 18 rather than May 19, adding that, on the same day, the first Tree of Liberty was also erected in the cathedral square.

	Teatro Patriottico' (Patriotic Theatre Society) and was granted the former theatre of the Barnaby College or Longone. The first performance was the republican tragedy <i>Guglielmo Tell</i> .	
24 August 1796	A bilingual note Italian and French announced that the 1796 Autumn season will start as usual ('al solito' – 'selon la pratique') in La Scala. Prices for tickets and season passes, also unchanged, follow.	Cambiasi
21 September 1796	A great feast took place to celebrate the anniversary of the foundation of the French Republic. The celebrations included the lighting of the theatre and the houses.	AS
November 1796	The tragedy <i>Virginia</i> by Vittorio Alfieri was performed in the new teatro patriottico, within the former Collegio de' Nobili or Longone.	Paglicci Brozzi
24 November 1796	The republican tragedy <i>Bruto</i> and a ballet were performed in La Scala to celebrate the return of the first cohort of soldiers. The performance was free of charge.	AS Cambiasi
26 November 1796	A so-called 'republican performance' (rappresentazione repubblicana) of <i>Guglielmo Tell</i> took place in La Scala with the company of the young patriots (giovani Patriotti). The members of the Municipality also seized the occasion to announce another victory of the French army.	Cambiasi
20 December 1796	A bilingual note Italian and French announced that the 1797 Carnival season would start in La Scala in the usual way ('al solito' – 'selon l'usage du dit theatre... vieux style') on 26 December. Prices for tickets and season passes, also unchanged, follow.	Cambiasi
7 January 1797	The first festa da ballo of the Carnival season took place in La Scala. Neither the government nor the audience was satisfied with the quality of the current operatic performances ('nell'attuale circostanza di essere imperfette le rappresentazioni d'opera'). The audience was also reminded of the rules currently in force for the attendance to the dances, namely the prohibition of carrying masks and weapons.	AS

18 January 1797	To celebrate the recent victories of the republican army, the opera performance in La Scala was enriched by free lighting provided by the Direction. The entry to the Loggione (upper circle) was free of charge. The boxes that were not occupied by 8 pm were made available to the people.	Cambiasi
5-6 February 1797	On both days, La Scala and La Cannobiana were lit to celebrate Mantua's surrender. The opera and the ball feast that took place in both theatres each evening were free of charge. Citizens were also invited to light their houses. The boxes that were not occupied by 8 pm were made available to the people.	Cambiasi Bezzola - Tintori
16 February 1797	To celebrate the feast, both theatres were lit and both operas and dance feasts were free of charge for the whole people. ²	Cambiasi
25 February 1797	The premiere of <i>Il generale Colli in Roma</i> , also called <i>Ballo del Papa</i> , took place with lavish costumes and scenes and with free entrance. The performance, ended with an improvised dance that involved all characters on stage, including the Pope, and with the patriotic hymn already performed at the end of <i>L'astuta in amore</i> (Autumn 1796). Given the audience's excessive excitement, General Dupuy had the doors of the theatre sealed for about two hours.	Cambiasi De Castro Ferrari Tintori- Bezzola
February 1797	A festa da ballo with masks and costumes took place in La Scala. Several costumes shaped like religious garb were present. Also, a patriotic group wanted to intervene at the feast dressed like the Pope and a group of cardinals to amuse the citizens who could not see <i>Il generale Colli in Roma</i> . However the Chief of the Police forbade that.	<i>Giornale storico</i>
23 August 1797	The Arlecchino of the comic company currently working at La Scala delighted Milan's 'free audience' ('libero Pubblico') by offering a special performance after the comedy entitled <i>Il Giovedì Grasso di Venezia</i> . (<i>Maundy Thursday in Venice</i>). A live bull was unleashed on stage and chased by a pack of dogs.	Cambiasi Ferrari

² Possibly still linked to the fall of Mantua, although the majority of the celebrations had taken place between the 5 and 6 February; see also the *Giornale storico della Repubblica Cisalpina*, vol. 1, tome II, pp. 118-121.

3 November 1797	To celebrate Napoleon's arrival in Milan, La Scala was lit and the entry was free of charge.	Cambiasi
23 November 1797	In La Scala, the Police had to intervene to prevent the encore of the prima donna's aria. The audience, both Italian and foreign, was reminded of the existence of a specific law forbidding encores.	Cambiasi Ferrari
19 January 1798	Performances of the tragedy <i>Bruto</i> and the comedy <i>Il librajò</i> took place in the theatre 'of the French republicans' ('de' repubblicani Francesi'). ³	Cambiasi
10-11 April 1798	A group of French officers jumped on La Scala's stage and forced the soprano Maria Gazzotto to remove some black plumage (associated with England) from her costume. The following evening, the soprano came back, this time featuring white hackles, but she was forced to remove those as well, white being the colour of the French monarchy.	De Castro Paglicci Brozzi Bellorini
24 April 1798	Six funeral symphonies composed for the contest of 29 October were performed in la Scala and judged by a commission formed by the composers Gazzaniga, Monza and Tarchi. The winner was Ambrogio Minoja with a 'Sinfonia a grande orchestra' entitled <i>La morte del Generale Hoche</i> .	Cambiasi
9 June 1798	The entry to the dance feast at La Scala was free of charge to celebrate the visit of Minister Charles-Joseph Trouvé.	Cambiasi
November – December 1798	Theatrical performances in French took place at La Scala for the entire month of November and part of December.	Cambiasi
1-16 December 1798	Three performances of the comedy <i>Il volontario della Vandea</i> (<i>The Vendée's volunteer</i>) took place in La Scala. The comedy featured the execution by firing squad of two Capuchin friars.	Cambiasi
27 December 1798	The performance opening the 1799 Carnival season was deemed inadequate. The impresario was arrested and obliged to compensate the citizens with an appropriate alternative, which was presented a few days later.	Cambiasi

³ No further information on this theatre: it was possibly the teatro patriottico at the Longone.

Carnival 1799	Five theatrical performances in French took place at La Scala during the month of January.	Cambiasi
21 January 1799	To celebrate the anniversary of Louis XIV's death, La Scala theatre was lit. A hymn entitled <i>Inno per l'anniversario della caduta dell'ultimo re dei Francesi</i> was performed, with music by Minoja and words by Monti.	Cambiasi CM, FS.
February 1799	A French soldier was arrested in La Scala for interrupting a ballet performance: the dancers were wearing costumes featuring white feathers and white was associated to the French monarchs.	Bellorini
April 1799	The Directory ordered the performances to be interrupted after Easter to replace the Palco reale with six regular boxes. However, since the Austro-Russian troupes entered Milan on 28 April, nothing was changed.	Cambiasi

2. AUSTRIAN INTERREGNUM (1799-1800)

Date	Event description	Source(s)
28 April 1799	To celebrate the entry of Suvorov and the Austro-Russian troops, a general lighting was organized in both theatres. The citizens also lit their houses with unprecedented enthusiasm. The members of the Teatro Patriottico were arrested, their theatre and all its material goods confiscated.	AS <i>Gridario generale</i> Ferrari Paglicci Brozzi
29 April 1799	In La Scala, the works to destroy the Palco Reale stopped; Leopold Pollack was entrusted with restoring it. La Cannobiana was lit in the night to celebrate, once again, the arrival of the Austro-Russians.	AS <i>Gridario generale</i>
12 May 1799	A Te Deum was sung in La Scala with the intervention of the Austrian authorities.	Cambiasi Bezzola- Tintori
24 May 1799	The French troops in the Sforza castle surrendered: the event was celebrated with the lighting of the theatres and houses.	<i>Gridario generale</i>

25 May 1799 (and following days)	To celebrate the recent capitulation of the castle, a cantata entitled <i>Cantata per l'ingresso delle vittoriose Imperiali Armate Austro Russe in Milano</i> was performed in La Scala by the theatre's orchestral and choral forces. The words were by the Barnaby Ciceri, the music by Minoja. The cantata was performed for several evenings.	CM, FS De Castro
3 August 1799	A new regolamento was disseminated among the citizens, harshly disciplining their behaviour in the theatre.	<i>Gridario generale</i> Cambiasi
s.d. (late 1799)	A new regolamento was published concerning the feste da ballo, with particular focus on decorum and decency.	ALS

3. SECOND CISALPINE REPUBLIC (1800-1802)

Date	Event description	Source(s)
2 June 1800	To celebrate the entry of Napoleon and the French army into Milan, La Scala was lit together with the citizens' houses.	Cambiasi Moiraghi
15 June 1800	The announcement of Napoleon's victory at Marengo was given, both in French and Italian, from la Scala's stage during the performance of Mayr's <i>Lubino e Carlotta</i> .	Bezzola-Tintori Cambiasi
16 June 1800	To celebrate the return of Napoleon to Milan after his triumph at Marengo, all citizens were invited to light their houses, while La Scala was also lit.	Cambiasi
23 September 1800	To celebrate the first day of the republican Year IX, the opera in La Scala was given free of charge and a festa da ballo took place in La Cannobiana. An avviso reminded the patrons about the rules already established on 14 January 1798 (25 Nivôse Year VI) forbidding walking sticks, weapons and masks in the theatre.	AS ALS
9 November 1800	To celebrate the anniversary of the Coup of 18 Brumaire, Milan hosted a lavish complex of celebrations culminating with the lighting of La Scala. In addition, two feste da ballo were organized, free of charge, one in La Scala after the opera and the other in La Cannobiana. A patriotic cantata dedicated to Italy's	AS Cambiasi CM, FS

	newfound liberty was composed ad hoc by Petracchi and Bigatti and performed in La Scala.	
30 April 1801	Following a series of lavish celebrations for the peace treaty of Lunéville, the cantata <i>Il trionfo della Pace</i> (<i>Peace triumphant</i>) was performed in La Scala with music by Pollini and words by Fugazza. The lead soprano was Elisabetta Gafforini.	CM, FS Paglicci Brozzi
16 October 1801 ⁴	Two feste da ballo took place free of charge in La Scala (late night) and La Cannobiana (early evening) to celebrate the armistice and peace negotiated with England.	ALS Cambiasi
October 1801	A ballet entitled <i>Il passaggio delle truppe pel monte San Bernardo</i> (<i>The troops' passage through the St Bernard</i>), conceived and choreographed by two cisalpine captains, was performed in La Cannobiana. The entire profit was donated to war widows.	Crespi Morbio
9 November 1801	To celebrate the second anniversary of the Coup of 18 Brumaire, a series of feasts (including races, music, military evolutions and cuccagna) were organized, but could take place for the bad weather. In the evening, both theatres were lit and hosted <i>feste da ballo</i> . That in La Cannobiana took place in the early evening and was free of charge, while for that in La Scala, taking place after the opera and allowing the use of masks, tickets were sold at the door.	AS
5 December 1801 (Advent season)	The comic troupe of the Opéra Bouffon in Paris stopped in Milan on its way to Naples and gave a special performance of opera-vaudevilles, comedies and vaudevilles, all in French. The performance took place in La Scala especially lit and ended with the performance of an overture by Méhulle.	ALS Cambiasi
29 December 1801	Because the audience has complained about the performances opening the current Carnival season, all prices (for both single tickets and season passes) had to be reduced by a quarter of the original price. This measure was in force until 16 January 1802. Also, a special commission formed by Appiani, Grianty and Petracchi was nominated in order to devise appropriate solutions.	ALS Cambiasi Paglicci Brozzi

⁴ Cambiasi indicates 11 October.

8 January 1802	A very detailed regolamento regarding the use of masks in the feste da ballo during Carnival was disseminated among the citizens. In particular, any masks and costumes potentially offensive for either religious institutions or morals were forbidden.	Cambiasi
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