

*Musical Theatre*

Original article

UDC 782.7

<https://doi.org/10.56620/2587-9731-2025-2-049-081>

EDN [ZGHSCP](#)



***La finta giardiniera* by Pasquale Anfossi  
and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart:  
Versions of two opera capitals  
(Rome and Munich)**

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**Abstract.** The article considers issues that arise when comparing Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's opera *La finta giardiniera* (Munich, 1775) and the opera of the same name by Pasquale Anfossi (Rome, 1774), which appeared a year before Mozart's. This kind of comparison, which is a traditional subject for Mozart studies, has been undertaken repeatedly. However, almost 40 years have passed since the publication of Volker Mattern's most extensive study on this topic (1989). During this time, views on the musical context of the 1770s, as well as ideas about the specifics of the operatic genres of that era and the norms of their poetics, have changed noticeably. The article re-formulates the features

of the sentimentalist variety of opera buffa, clarifies the extent to which the anonymous libretto *La finta giardiniera* corresponds to them, and, using the example of a comparison of the music of several key numbers, demonstrates the extent to which Anfossi and Mozart followed the genre canon or the dramatic innovations proposed by the librettist. As a result, Mattern's main conclusion about the "individual style" that first clearly manifested itself in this Mozart opera is supplemented by significant comments and subject to critical revision.

**Keywords:** *La finta giardiniera*, Pasquale Anfossi, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Niccolò Piccinni, Carlo Goldoni, Italian opera buffa, sentimentalism, poetics of opera libretto

**For citation:** Lutsker, P. V. (2025). *La finta giardiniera* by Pasquale Anfossi and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: Versions of two opera capitals (Rome and Munich). *Contemporary Musicology*, 9(4), 49–81. <https://doi.org/10.56620/2587-9731-2025-4-049-081>

Музыкальный театр

Научная статья

**«Мнимая садовница»  
П. Анфосси и В. А. Моцарта:  
версии двух оперных столиц (Рима и Мюнхена)**

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**Аннотация.** Проблематика статьи фокусируется на вопросах, возникающих при сопоставлении оперы В. А. Моцарта «Мнимая садовница» (Мюнхен, 1775) и одноименной оперы П. Анфосси (Рим, 1774), написанной за год до моцартовской. Такого рода сравнения — предмет, традиционный для моцартоведения, они предпринимались неоднократно. Однако с момента публикации последнего самого обширного исследования Ф. Маттерна на эту тему (1989) прошло почти 40 лет, и взгляды на музыкальный контекст 1770-х годов, представления о специфике оперных жанров той эпохи и нормах их поэтики заметно изменились. В статье заново формулируются особенности

сентименталистской разновидности оперы *buffa*, выясняется, насколько соответствует им анонимное либретто «Мнимой садовницы», и на примере сопоставления музыки нескольких ключевых номеров демонстрируется, в какой степени Анфосси и Моцарт следовали жанровому канону или драматургическим новациям, предложенным либреттистом. В итоге основной вывод Маттерна об «индивидуальном стиле», впервые явственно заявившем о себе в этой опере Моцарта, дополняются существенными комментариями и в чем-то подвергаются критическому пересмотру.

**Ключевые слова:** «Мнимая садовница», Паскуале Анфосси, Вольфганг Амадей Моцарт, Никколо Пиччинни, Карло Гольдони, итальянская опера *buffa*, сентиментализм, поэтика оперного либретто

**Для цитирования:** Луцкер П. В. «Мнимая садовница» П. Анфосси и В. А. Моцарта: версии двух оперных столиц (Рима и Мюнхена) // Современные проблемы музыкознания. 2025. Т. 9, № 4. С. 49–81. <https://doi.org/10.56620/2587-9731-2025-4-049-081>

Introduction

The opera buffa *La finta giardiniera* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) retains an unclear status in modern musicology and performance practice.<sup>1</sup> Premiered in Munich on 13 January 1775, when the composer was not yet 19 years old, it was written to a libretto that had already served as the basis for Pasquale Anfossi's opera, staged in Rome in 1774. These works were compared in musicology more than once. In Mozart's operatic legacy, *La finta giardiniera* stands at the border between adolescence and maturity. Some researchers consider it one of Mozart's successful early experiences as an opera composer, not least because he turned again to the comic genre,<sup>2</sup> in which his achievements were universally recognised. Hermann Abert, for instance, stresses the opera's greater independence and considers it Mozart's first, though not flawless, attempt to master Italian buffoonery [1, p. 463].<sup>3</sup> Alfred Einstein, however, expresses a more cautious opinion: in his view, *La finta giardiniera* stands closer to *La finta semplice*, written at the age of twelve, than to *Le nozze di Figaro*; he describes it as created "still in a state of utter innocence, so to speak" [2, p. 413].

The most recent and extensive information and opinions about this opera are presented in the Volker Mattern's book [3], a publication of a doctoral dissertation defended at the University of Heidelberg. However, almost 40 years have passed since its publication. During this time no fundamentally new sources have been discovered that directly relate to Mozart's opera or to its Italian prototype by Anfossi. However,

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<sup>1</sup> In the original libretto for the production of Anfossi's opera in Rome (carnival 1773–1774), the genre is designated as *dramma giocoso*. No printed or handwritten libretto for the Munich production of Mozart's opera has yet been discovered. The same notation appears on one of the surviving copies of the score (*Kopie Naměšt* from the Moravian Regional Museum in Brno A 17 036a-c). In Mozart's correspondence, in letters from contemporaries, and also in another surviving handwritten copy of the score, the designation *opera buffa* appears both as a synonym and simultaneously (*Archiv der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Wien*, Q 1663 [alt: IV 18916]).

<sup>2</sup> Mozart's earlier opera buffa *La finta semplice* was written in 1768 for a Viennese production, but was rejected by the theatre management. The performance took place in Salzburg on May 1 (?) 1769.

<sup>3</sup> Abert considered it likely that Mozart was familiar with Anfossi's score — an assumption that today seems unlikely [1, p. 463].

information about the history of Italian opera of this period has become significantly more accessible and diverse, as a result of which views on the musical context of the 1770s have noticeably changed, allowing to introduce a new emphases on the interpretation of both Mozart's operas and the relationship between the musical and theatrical traditions of the two operatic capitals of the second half of the 18th century — Munich and Rome.<sup>4</sup>

### *Libretto*

For a long time, most researchers attributed all the shortcomings of Mozart's *La finta giardiniera* to the weakness of its libretto.<sup>5</sup> The tradition of critical perception of this text goes back to Abert, who considered the opera part of the sentimentalist fashion that flourished in the 1760s and 1770s thanks to the unprecedented success of Niccolò Piccinni's *La buona figliuola*, set to a libretto by Carlo Goldoni (Rome, *Teatro Delle Dame*, 1760). However, Abert assessed the libretto of *La finta giardiniera* in comparison with its prototype in a sharply negative way, believing that the clear and dramatically well-motivated action of Piccinni's opera "ist hier durch allerhand Zutaten, die ihr mehr sensationelle Würze geben sollte, verdunkelt und oft geradezu ins Geschmacklose verzerrt worden" [1, p. 460–461]. Mattern softens Abert's reproaches: in general, he tries to follow a more objective position, avoiding his own verdicts and, whenever possible, focusing on the realities of Mozart's era (or trying to reconstruct them). He proceeds from the assumption that, at least, Anfossi's *La finta giardiniera* was considered to be a great success, and therefore corresponded to the tastes of the 1770s. Consequently, the modern researcher should accept their evaluation. However, Mattern's study lacks any comprehensive comparative analysis of the libretto itself.

In general, the problems of the libretto *La finta giardiniera* are concentrated around two main questions. The first one concerns its authorship, which is still a subject of debate. Since the 19th century, the text has often been attributed, without strong evidence, to Ranieri de' Calzabigi. However, in 1976, while preparing the *Neue Mozart Ausgabe* (NMA) edition of *La finta giardiniera*, the Austrian musicologist Rudolph Angermüller carefully re-examined the anonymous

<sup>4</sup> The phrase "music and theatre capital" has recently become a common descriptor for European centers with a significant operatic tradition. See, for example, [4].

<sup>5</sup> Stefan Kunze adheres to this point of view in a relatively recent work [5, p. 56].

libretto published for Anfossi's premiere in Rome (1774) and suggested that its author was the librettist Giuseppe Petrosellini [6, p. 1 ff.]. Angermüller drew attention to the dedication of the opera, addressed to the public: "*La protezione, che vi degnaste accordare l'anno scorso all' Incognità perseguitata, ci muove Nobilissime Dame, ad offrirvi il presente Dramma giocoso della FINTA GIARDINIERA.*"<sup>6</sup> Angermüller regarded the mention of *L'incognità perseguitata* (*The Pursued Stranger*) by Anfossi in the libretto by Petrosellini (1773) as an indirect reference to the authors of the current comedy; this assumption was considered plausible, and since the late 1970s, Petrosellini has generally been considered as the probable author of the libretto *La finta giardiniera*.<sup>7</sup>

It is worth mentioning, however, that the Dedication in the Roman edition of the libretto was signed *Gli Interessanti* (*The Interested Party*), which is associated not only with the authors, but primarily with the impresario and his entourage. Moreover, although Anfossi's music, written for the carnival of 1773, was most likely new,<sup>8</sup> the libretto of *L'incognità perseguitata* was created by Petrosellini a decade earlier for the Venetian *Teatro San Samuele*, where it was first staged with music by Piccinni. Moreover, Petrosellini wrote many librettos especially for Rome, but collaborated mainly with the *Teatro Valle* (owned by the Capranica family), and there was intense competition at that time between this theatre and the *Teatro Delle Dame* (the place of *La finta giardiniera*'s premiere). Thus, it is far from certain that the same librettist was involved in both productions (*L'incognità perseguitata* in 1773 and *La finta giardiniera* a year later). Many Italian scholars remain sceptical, and the question of authorship is still open.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> [s. A.] *La finta giardiniera. Dramma giocoso da rappresentarsi nel teatro Delle Dame nel Carnevale 1774*. [1774]. In Roma, per Giovanni Bartolomichi, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> In the book *Mozart and His Time* (2008, 2015) [7] we also adhered to this assumption, but at present is inclined to consider it not entirely reliable.

<sup>8</sup> While copies of this libretto as set to music by Anfossi for an earlier production in Barcelona in 1770 are extant (see Sartori, C. (1991). *I libretti italiani a stampa dalle origini al 1800. Catalogo analitico con 16 indici: Vol. III, E–K*. Bertola & Locatelli, p. 428), little is known about this opera. In any case, it did not have the resonance that accompanied the Roman production of 1774.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, the article by Lorenzo Mattei from the *Dizionario Biografico degli italiani* (Vol. 82, 2015), reproduced in the online encyclopedia Treccani: [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giuseppe-petrosellini\\_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/?search=PETROSELLINI%2C%20Giuseppe%2F](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giuseppe-petrosellini_(Dizionario-Biografico)/?search=PETROSELLINI%2C%20Giuseppe%2F) (date of access 05/11/2025).



It is also worth taking into account some stylistic arguments that arise from the comparison of *La finta giardiniera* and *L'incognita perseguitata*. Both librettos follow a dramatic structure that goes back to the already mentioned *La buona figliuola* by Goldoni. The action revolves around a central female character who appears to occupy a fairly lowly position in the social hierarchy. However, despite this, the heroine attracts admirers of various social ranks, from peasants or servants to aristocrats.<sup>10</sup> However, there is a significant difference. In Petrosellini, as in Goldoni, the class barrier between the girl and the gentlemen in love with her initially seems insurmountable and disappears only when it suddenly becomes clear that the orphan has noble roots. Nevertheless, both the characters themselves and the audience remain in the dark about them right up until the moment of the denouement. In *La finta giardiniera*, the gardener Sandrina is in love with Podestà Don Anchise (the owner of the estate where she works) and Contino Belfiore, the fiancé of Arminda, a noble Milanese lady and niece of Don Anchise. However, in this case, the audience already knows from the very beginning that Sandrina is in disguise the Marchesa Violante, the former fiancée of the hot-tempered and fickle Belfiore, who went to look for him after he wounded her in a fit of jealousy and disappeared.

This difference leads to significant contradictions in the dramaturgy of *La finta giardiniera*. In the preceding librettos, the logically constructed plot line is aimed first at revealing the severity of the class conflict, and then, after clarifying the true origin of the main character, at resolving all misunderstandings. Here it loses its clarity and consistency. Don Anchise's courtship, not of a modest and pretty servant girl, but of a marchioness standing several steps above him on the social ladder, humiliates her dignity. The obstacle to reuniting with the flighty Belfiore, who already at the end of the first act recognises Violante in Sandrina and tries to beg for forgiveness throughout the subsequent action, is not the danger of violating class norms, but the resentment and offended mistrust of the amorous aristocratic damsel. As a result, instead of acute socially motivated dramatic or comedic situations the action gravitates toward melodramatic turns imbued with a spirit of pathetic exaltation.

<sup>10</sup> In Goldoni's classic libretto, the worker Mengotto and the Marchese Conchiglia compete for the attention and hand of Cecchina; in *L'incognita perseguitata* Petrosellini, the old Baron Tarpano, his son Count Asdrubal, and the estate manager Fabrizio seek the favour of the orphan Gianetta.



Mattern may be right in disagreeing with Abert's reproach that the librettist mixes "touching" and "comic" motifs, and in pointing out that Goldoni does the same in the classic *La buona figliuola* [3, p. 33]. However, the main problem with *La finta giardiniera* is not so much this mixture, but rather the weight and the degree of pathos in which the melodramatic component<sup>11</sup> is reached, when both central characters lose their minds from an excess of feelings at the climax scene. One can, of course, refer to the fact that in the 18th century the custom of perceiving episodes of madness from a comical side had not yet disappeared, and characters (mostly heroic-comic) seized by "noble madness" appeared on the stage from time to time, mostly depicted in a parodic manner.<sup>12</sup> But such a comedic perspective on the perception of madness seemed natural when it arose from the rational delusions of the characters, involving an inadequate assessment of themselves and the world around them due to aberrations of their own imagination or due to external influences (instilled prejudices, beliefs or the effects of witchcraft). However, it is a completely different matter when crazy impulses or mental disorder were the result of emotional overstrain, the intensity of feelings. In Goldoni's *La buona figliuola*, the worker Mengotto, who is in love with Cecchina, decides to commit suicide in despair following her banishment. This scene does not invite a comical treatment. However, when the brave soldier Tagliaferro, like a skilled recruiter, talks Mengotto down — why take your own life for no reason, if you can do it profitably by becoming a soldier? — Goldoni demonstrates a virtuoso comic way out of a melodramatic situation. Clearly, in 18th-century comedy, such a solution is only possible

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<sup>11</sup> Of course, there is no connection here with melodrama as a stage device of "speech against the background of music," which arose and became noticeably widespread at the same time, and even became the basis for a special musical-dramatic genre (for example, Georg Anton Benda's *Ariadne auf Naxos*, 1775). In sentimental comic opera, melodramatic situations are intended to provoke a strong emotional reaction in the characters.

<sup>12</sup> Particularly well-known examples include the comic opera adaptations of the stories of Don Quixote (Giovanni Paisiello's *Don Chisciotte della Mancia*, libr. Giovanni Battista Lorenzi) or the knight errant Guido (Tommaso Traetta's *Il cavaliere errante*, libr. Giovanni Bertati), where the motif of madness is played out in a parodic manner. Traits of a similar interpretation can also be traced in *La finta giardiniera*, when in the scene of madness Sandrina and Belfiore represent each other as Thyrsis and Clori, then as Medusa (Sandrina) and Alcides (Belfiore).

for low-ranking characters. In a sentimental opera, portraying love madness comically — especially when it concerns aristocrats — implies ambiguity in relation to *sensibility*, which is the basis of its poetics.

Here we encounter the second problem concerning the libretto of *La finta giardiniera*. It has features that go beyond the typical range of motifs and situations of sentimentalist opera and give it a somewhat experimental character: the main character, who is supposed to make a leap, a flight from ordinary obscurity into the circle of high society and who must confirm her moral right to this, going through the path of “testing virtue,” turns out to be knowingly beyond the conflict. The trials that befall her ultimately appear not as a moral justification for her rise, but as an excess of fate and a way to regain the attention of her frivolous lover by teaching him a lesson in gallant ethics. Therefore, albeit with reservations, it seems we should agree with Abert’s critical assessment of the libretto and treat it not as a model that fully complies with the genre norms of its time, but to a certain extent as an eccentric experiment.

Sentimentalist opera as a type of musical comedy arose in the wake of the librettist Goldoni’s experiments in creating of a “middle genre” — a search, relevant to the Age of Enlightenment, for ways beyond the classical norms of theatrical poetics (with its clear division into tragedy and comedy) toward greater verisimilitude. There was also a related incentive: the rapid growth of public interest in opera buffa and the genre’s promotion to the stages of major Venetian theatres. Goldoni obviously considered that one of the means to enhance the scale of the spectacle was to include among the performers the stars of the great, heroic opera seria — castrati and prima donnas. The poetics of comic opera itself gave rise to the potential for genre blending, since singers of this profile were usually associated with roles of high social rank. Their appearance became one of the indicators of a certain type of “middle genre,” in which the comic and the sublime-ethical spheres are fundamentally separated and have little intersection in the action. Most of his librettos of the 1750s already reflect this structural differentiation: in the list of the *dramatis personae* he frequently marks certain roles as *parti serie* and others as *parti buffe*. Between these poles, however, he identifies

an intermediate zone — *mezzo carattere* — a region where individual characters from both groups may enter.<sup>13</sup> These characters are often confidants close to the aristocrats (sometimes even servants), since the aristocrat himself cannot allow behaviour that threaten his dignity. At the same time, it is possible for some aristocratic characters to “descend” into this intermediate zone, usually incognito under someone else’s guise (as, for example, in the libretto *Il conte Caramella*<sup>14</sup>) or because of admiration for female beauty, breadth of character and a peculiar understanding of knightly duty (as Il Marchese della Conchiglia in *La buona figliuola*). However, a significant limitation is that such liberty to disregard (usually temporarily) one’s own status is permissible and acceptable only for male characters, but it is extremely undesirable for aristocratic women. Therefore, the very image of the Marchesa Violanta, who turned into the gardener Sandrina in *La finta giardiniera* is a step away from the concept of the “middle genre” in the poetics of the comic performance of the second half of the 18th century.<sup>15</sup>

However, the observance of all these norms specific to the operatic “middle genre” does not automatically lead to the emergence of a sentimentalist genre variety. A sentimental conflict arises when the group of *mezzi caratteri* includes a female character of low or unclear origin, who claims to move into the upper class. Of course,

<sup>13</sup> The peculiarities of dramatic solutions in comic opera with *mezzi caratteri* attracted attention long ago, even in the works of Wolfgang Osthoff — Osthoff, W. (1973). Die Opera buffa. In W. Arlt, E. Lichtenhahn, H. Oesch, & M. Haas (Eds.), *Gattungen der Musik in Einzeldarstellungen: Gedenkschrift Leo Schrade* (pp. 678–743). Francke Verlag. Recent researchers have also shown close attention to these peculiarities, as well as to the associated norms of the poetics of Goldoni’s librettos [8, pp. 74–82]. The main angle from which these features are usually interpreted is the strengthening of realism in comic opera under the influence of the ideas of the Enlightenment and in line with Goldoni’s experiments in his literary comedy. In the present work, we will try to focus more on how new dramatic patterns emerge or how familiar ones are transformed in opera compositions.

<sup>14</sup> For an analysis of the dramatic approach in the libretto *Il conte Caramella*, see my article *Gomer, Addison, Goldoni — o syuzhetnykh istokakh libretto “Graf Karamella”* [*Homer, Addison, Goldoni: On the Plot Sources of the Libretto ‘Il conte Caramella’*] [9].

<sup>15</sup> Indeed, in the dramatic structure of *La finta giardiniera* one can quite clearly see traces of the adventurous-adventurous concept of the Neapolitan musical comedy of the first half of the 18th century, where the motif of “incognito” was not yet correlated so clearly with the principles of social hierarchy as in the mature opera buffa. In this sense, the libretto of *Giardiniera* does not so much continue Goldoni’s line as contradict it. For more information see [7, p. 248].

the only real grounds for this could be undoubtedly established aristocratic roots, which became clear at the turning point of the action. But the question of the moral grounds for such a leap, as well as the whole series of tests designed to demonstrate them, becomes the impetus and basis for the development of a precisely sentimentalist storyline. In Goldoni himself, a playwright who has managed to put the concept of the “middle opera genre” into practice more than once (and quite convincingly at that), his truly sentimentalist solution is a great rarity. In fact, the only exemplary case is his *La Cecchina, ossia La buona figliuola*.<sup>16</sup>

*Parti serie and mezzi caratteri*

The relationships in the sentimentalist opera between characters of different ranks and between the class spheres they represent create a certain balance of stylistic musical devices and techniques. Since the predominance of any one sphere can theoretically shift the work toward either comedy or melodrama,<sup>17</sup> it is quite reasonable that the analysis of *La finta giardiniera* by Mozart and its comparison with the opera by Anfossi become, in essence, the identification of the proportion between different musical stylistic components. While it is not possible in this article to make such a comparison as exhaustively as in Mattern’s dissertation, it is sufficient — in order to establish the principal tendencies — to focus on the most relevant examples.

The obvious differences between Mozart and Anfossi are already evident in the interpretation of the style associated with the parts of noble characters – or *parti serie*. In *La finta giardiniera* these include the niece of the Podestà Arminda and the cavalier Ramiro, who is in love with her but remains rejected until the denouement in the finale of the opera. Particularly illustrative is Ramiro’s “aria of jealousy” *Và pure ad altri in braccio* from Act III (No. 26). There is every reason to compare its interpretation by both authors with the aria of Piccinni’s La Marchesa Lucinda from *La buona figliuola*. Although Piccinni’s aria is sung by an angry woman (also a character from the *parti serie*)

<sup>16</sup> It is followed by its continuation — *La buona figliuola maritata*, which follows in the same vein, but, of course, is no longer considered a model.

<sup>17</sup> This line of possibilities in genre history was further developed and led to the emergence of the so-called opera semiseria or “opera of salvation” at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries during the French Revolution.

When comparing the music in the arias, it is impossible not to notice how closely Anfossi follows Piccini's prototype (*Examples 1* and *2*).



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In both cases, the poetic form is typical of the exposition sections of Italian arias: a couplet with a repetition of the second line. Similar musical features include a fast tempo and a quadruple meter with pulsation ( ) | — ) — ) — | — —. There is also a similarity in the arrangement of phrases in the theme — *abb'c* in Piccinni's aria and *aab* in Anfossi's one. In the latter, it sounds simpler and more laconic due to the exact repetition of the first musical phrase (*a*) with a new text, while in Piccinni everything is more varied and richer due to the triple (not double) presentation of the second verse, each time with a varied musical arrangement. Finally, both arias are written in a major key, which emphasises the *cold rage* in their expression.

Mozart's interpretation of the aria, although using some common features, is fundamentally clearly different (*Example 3*).

**Allegro agitato**

Và pu - re ad al - tri in brac - cio, per - fi - da don - na in - gra - ta,

per - fi - da, in - gra - ta, per - fi - da don - na in - gra - ta.

*Example 3. W. A. Mozart. La finta giardiniera. Aria Ramiro (III, 6, № 26)*

This difference is already noticeable in the tempo marks, where the clarification *agitato* (“excitedly”) appears. The triple meter and beginning of the melody on a strong beat give the opening phrase more purposefulness; its rhythm is more flexible than the precise rhythmic periodicity of Anfossi's theme. The structure of the theme is also more complex and sophisticated. Repeating, like Piccinni, the second poetic line twice, in bars 7–8 he omits the word “*donna*” — *perfida*, [...] *ingrata* — thereby disrupting the unity of the verse in terms of its metrical structure. As a result, this phrase falls out of the coherent melodic line; it appears as if recitative lines have been introduced into it. The melody seems to be interrupted by a surge of feelings. The descending second intonations add a touch of complaint to the expression of burning reproach. In addition, the C minor key of the aria carries an element of pathos,



which further emphasises the line separating it from the major arias of Anfossi and Piccinni. In addition to indignation, Mozart also emphasises the feeling of pain, which makes the effect more complex and dynamic, evoking a more vivid emotional response from the listener.

Exactly the same difference can be found in Arminda's "revenge aria" *Vorrei punirti indegno* (II, 2 in Anfossi, II and No. 13 in Mozart). Anfossi writes a completely traditional full-length opening act solo number adorned with abundant virtuoso coloraturas in an energetic B major, while Mozart writes an aria in G minor, filled with confused syncopations and mood swings between forte and piano.

Since both numbers under consideration are taken from the parts of characters who, despite their high rank, act rather in the background in the overall development of the opera, the expressive means in their arias should not particularly stand out to attract attention. Piccinni in his *La buona figliuola* follows exactly this principle, and is followed by Anfossi in this regard. As for Mozart, in his opera the musical and dramatic accents in these parts are so strong that the essentially background figures are brought to the forefront, implying that we are talking not about noble yet secondary characters of a comedy, but rather about the main characters of the opera seria.

Even more important is the maintenance of figurative and musical-stylistic balance in the sphere of *parti di mezzo carattere*. Mattern believes that Anfossi's arias are "weisen bestimmte gemeinsame stilistische Merkmale auf. Sie sind weder dem Seria- noch Buffa-Stil zuzuordnen, sondern es handelt sich vielmehr um 'Mezzo carattere-Arien'" [3, p. 38]. In our opinion, it is not entirely justified to single out *mezzo carattere* as a separate, stylistically homogeneous layer. When the characters in a comedy of the "middle genre" are divided into groups, they are, of course, associated with a certain expressive registers — sublime and noble on the one hand, or down-to-earth and everyday on the other. However, this register does not represent any stylistic unity (seria or buffa style). The protagonists of seria can burn with anger or, on the contrary, languish with love, and these affects are expressed so differently that they have very little in common. Moreover, in the role of the comic shepherdess one can find a pastoral aria, which is quite capable of embellishing the role of the sublime heroine. This means that in some areas these registers may overlap. Therefore, it seems more



appropriate and correct, when discussing serious, comic or *mezzo carattere* parts to speak of certain ranges of stylistic means. While in some areas they may overlap, at the same time each of them has a clearly defined centre and its own boundaries, resulting in internal balance.

In *La finta giardiniera*, the group of *mezzo carattere* parts includes the gardener Sandrina herself (the Marchesa Violanta in disguise) and her fickle lover Contino Belfiore — a disposition that practically repeats the one found in Piccinni/Goldoni's *La buona figliuola*, where this group includes the gardener Cecchina and the Marchese Conchiglia, who is not indifferent to her. Both Conchiglia and Belfiore represent the already mentioned type of noble characters for whom the limits of their class ethics prove to be too narrow. However, Belfiore's reason for going beyond its limits is not chivalrous gallantry and broad-mindedness, like the Marchese, but excessive ardour and eccentricity of nature. It is worth recognising, however, that Belfiore's status in *La finta giardiniera* as *mezzo carattere* is motivated much less convincingly than Conchiglia's in Goldoni's libretto. When Belfiore begins to court Sandrina, he hardly compromises his class honour, since he immediately recognises his beloved Marchesa in the unknown gardener. Therefore, Belfiore's "lowering" is carried out rather through indirect and not incontrovertible methods to emphasise the eccentric traits of his character, including immaturity or even infantilism.

His first long aria, *Da Scirocco al Tramontana* (I, 8), is indicative, in which he unfolds before the astonished Don Anchise a picture of his genealogy, going back to Cato, Mucius Scaevola, Tiberius, Caracalla, Scipio, Marcus Aurelius — a whole host of ancient and later heroes, rulers and influential nobles. "You're laughing! Don't you see?" Belfiore's line, right in the text of the aria, gives all this pompous grandeur an extremely comical, parodic meaning. Of course, in the entire part of the Marchese Conchiglia, Piccinni does not express such a degree of burlesque in any number. In both Anfossi and Mozart, this text gives rise to arias of grand scale (208 and 168 bars, respectively, with the use of pairs of oboes, French horns, and even trumpets in the orchestra), in which the parodic comic intensity almost upsets the balance acceptable for the *mezzo carattere* character.

The other pole in Belfiore's part is marked by the scene of Act II, consisting of the accompanied recitative *Ah, non partite* and the aria *Già divento freddo, freddo* (II, 12). After Sandrina-Violante rejects him and orders him to give his hand and heart to Arminda, the Countino is overcome with great excitement and his mind becomes clouded. He feels like he is losing his mind, complains of icy sweat running down his face, the breath of wind makes him think of the “fields of Elysium” — it seems to him that his soul has already crossed the brink of death. While these details in the text could also give rise to a grotesque or parodic interpretation, neither Anfossi nor Mozart introduce bright comic accents here (however, in some places during the course of the music they are allowed in the performance). Both composers interpret the scene as a whole in a spirit of high pathos, although the degree and nature of expressiveness in both again differ noticeably. It is enough to compare how the opening phrase is presented musically: *Già divento freddo, freddo* (*I am getting colder and colder*) (Examples 4 and 5).

**Allegro comodo**

Già di-ven-to fred-do, fred-do, tre-ma il piè, s'ar-re-sta il san-gue, tre-ma il piè, s'ar-re-sta il san-gue.

Example 4. P. Anfossi. *La finta giardiniera*. Aria Belfiore (II, 12)

**[Adagio]**

Già di-ven-to fred-do, fred-do, già di-ven-to fred-do, fred-do, tre-ma il piè, s'ar-re-sta il san-gue, man-ca il fia-to, il cor già lan-gue.

Example 5. W. A. Mozart. *La finta giardiniera*. Aria Belfiore (II, 12, № 19)

This time, both Anfossi and Mozart choose the major key, but the tempo and character are very different. In Anfossi, an energetic *allegro* is combined with a cantilena-like opening that expresses elevated, but rather generalised, affect. No more obvious specification of the emotional state emerges; such intonation can equally well represent either restrained joy or restrained indignation. Anfossi offers for the words “*trema il piè*” (*trembling in the legs*) a variant of the phrase an octave lower — a colourful register contrast that allows for a comic highlighting of the “trembling” of the voice, since the lower limit of the tenor’s range is used. He further enhances this effect by singing the phrase twice (typical ‘*abb*’ structure). Nevertheless, the singer may instead choose another option in the middle register, and in this case any potential comic overtone disappears.

The melody in Mozart’s aria is of a completely different nature. At a slower tempo, it is dominated by speech-like prosody typical of the agitated *parlando* arias in opera seria. Its emotional colouring is revealed much more clearly — both by the somewhat hectic rhythm and the expressive “sliding” over small seconds, so that the feeling of uncertainty and fear takes on a very distinct musical shape. Mozart repeats precisely this first phrase of the text, which determines the general character of the aria; moreover, the “trembling in the legs” and other signs of malaise receive no special musical emphasis. The performer is, of course, free to exaggerate certain details for comic effect, but there are no indications of this in Mozart’s score.

In general, it can be stated that Anfossi does not highlight the affected, melodramatic component in this aria (even allowing for slight caricature), while Mozart, on the contrary, does not ignore it. As a result, the very boundaries that outline the stylistic range of this *mezzo carattere* figure turn out to be different for the two composers. Anfossi strives to maintain a “middle” balance; the exaggerated comic-burlesque side is balanced by a sphere of moderate, generalised pathos. In Mozart, the range is clearly wider, again, even within the “middle” part, capturing areas of melodramatic intensity and thereby shifting the balance in that direction.

*Sandrina's Part*

Of fundamental importance is the way in which the central character from the *mezzo carattere* group, Sandrina-Violanta, is treated in *La finta giardiniera*. The peculiarities of this interpretation are also most clearly revealed by comparison with the figure of Cecchina from *La buona figliuola* by Piccinni/Goldoni.

Cecchina's Cavatina *Che piacer, che bel diletto* (I, 1) opens the opera by Piccinni. Its idyllic, pastoral character depicts the heroine in her native element, tending to flowers. *La finta giardiniera*, however, is constructed quite differently at the level of the libretto: it begins with an ensemble introduction in which all the characters (except Belfiore, who has not yet arrived) praise the wonderful day. However, in her short solo sentence, Sandrina appears not so much in harmony and peace with herself and her surroundings, but in emotional dissonance: *Sono infelice, son sventurata, mi vuol oppressa la sorte ingrata* (*Oh, I am unhappy, I am oppressed by an unmerciful fate*). Here, a fundamental difference between the two heroines is already outlined: Cecchina still has to pass through a sequence of dramatic turns that will radically change her situation, while Sandrina-Violante has already experienced the main blow in the backstory, and only one turn awaits her — the restoration of her lost well-being.

The first extended number in Sandrina's part, *Noi donne poverine* (I, 4), apparently continues the line of complaints, but both Anfossi and Mozart resolve set it in a rather gallant and playful tone. Sandrina's lamentations about the universal fate of women forced to endure the suffering of love have nothing to do with the turbulent events of her past, but they are caused by the irrepressible courtship of old Don Anchise. This number clearly outlines the boundaries of the heroine's "middle" position, endowing her character even with humorous features, since it latently contains a hint of gallant pretence. A number of similar character and function in Cecchina's role is the Cavatina *Poverina tutto il dì* (I, 5), although it looks different in appearance, it also outlines with great clarity the "middle" boundaries in the stylistic range of the means that characterise it. In her heartfelt *siciliana*, Cecchina also complains about the fate that condemned her, such a fragile girl, to the arduous work of a gardener. But even in this number there is a hint of gallant cunning, since Cecchina strives to impress the Marchese Conchiglia with her grace and at the same time hide her embarrassment at his overly frank signs of attention.

The next aria in Cecchina's part, *Una povera ragazza* (I, 12), is the central number of the entire opera and, overall, one of the most famous — one might even say iconic — arias of its time. Piccinni succeeded in concentrating here the most characteristic features of the sentimentalist trend in the opera genre. Its weight and significance are primarily determined by its place in the development of the plot, it marks the beginning of those very “tests of virtue,” when, on the unfair slander of envious maids, the mistress decides to remove the girl from the castle.<sup>19</sup> In *La finta giardiniera* there are no prerequisites for such a plot twist. Sandrina's next aria is not so much a reaction to the dramatic event as anticipating it; almost immediately after it, fate brings the disguised Marchesa face to face with her runaway fiancé Belfiore, thus beginning the Finale of Act I. Of course, in the overall dramatic logic of the opera, this aria of Sandrina also plays an important role: it closes the rather peaceful stage of the exposition and, like a meaningful caesura, hangs before the beginning of the stormy development of events. But there is no plot motive for its appearance, and the librettist, apparently without much thought, chose a completely conventional and rather formulaic “bird metaphor” as the main theme for its text: *Geme la Tortorella* (I, 10) — a dove, separated from her mate, moans and complains about her fate. Such a text could hardly inspire any composer to create a significant number, let alone one comparable to Cecchina's aria. Both Anfossi and Mozart, acutely aware of the dramatic situation, wrote the best possible cavatinas under such circumstances, touchingly idyllic and very similar in mood and expressive means; in Mozart's case, it also proved to be marked by a special, outstanding compositional mastery. However, neither aria produced any resonance in the development of the genre comparable to that which accompanied the famous aria of Cecchina.

However, arias like *Una povera ragazza*, where the heroine is overcome by conflicting feelings, doubt and despair, were already considered an integral attribute of the central figure of sentimentalist opera. That is why in *La finta giardiniera* there is a place for it — although quite far from the beginning of the action, in the middle of Act II. A delicate moment was chosen for its appearance, when Podestà witnesses the heated explanations between Sandrina-

<sup>19</sup> This aria has already been analysed in detail by the present author in an earlier work [10, pp. 8–15].

Violanta and Contino Belfiore and, overcome with jealousy, showers the “gardener” with reproaches. The situation turns out to be ambiguous, since Sandrina, although slipping for a moment in her recitative into an indignant rebuke, cannot yet reveal her incognito to her master and is forced to play the role of a servant flattered by his attention. As in *La buona figliuola*, the librettist proposed an extended text of the aria consisting of several stanzas, in which some moods and images in the heroine’s soul are replaced by others. In Goldoni, Cecchina first complains about the injustice done to a poor orphan, then asks her owners to let her leave the house where they don’t believe her, then a picture arises in her mind of kind people giving her alms, and finally, she is overcome with the certainty that heaven will not leave without protection those who are innocent and purehearted. In the aria from *La finta giardiniera* the motifs are similar, but their order is mirror-opposite: Sandrina first expresses hope that the master’s heart is full of kindness, then that his eyes only look angry, but pity shines through them; then, however, the girl is seized by panic, and it seems to her that the master does not listen to her and leaves, abandoning her to the mercy of fate; and, finally, she turns to the young ladies in the audience, calling on them to sympathise with her grief and console her.

<i>La buona figliuola</i> (I, 12)	<i>La finta giardiniera</i> (II, 6)
<p>Una povera ragazza, padre e madre che non ha, si maltratta, si strapazza, questa è troppa crudeltà.</p> <p>Sì signora, sì padrone, che con vostra permissione voglio andarmene di qua.</p> <p>Partirò, me ne andrò a cercar la carità, poverina la Cecchina qualche cosa troverà.</p> <p>Sì signore, sì padrona, so che il ciel non abbandona l’innocenza e l’onestà.</p>	<p>Una voce sento in core, Che mi dice pian pianino: Il tuo caro padroncino Tutto è pieno di bontà.</p> <p>E in quel volto, in quegl’occhietti Che pur sembran sdegnosetti Vi si sorge la pietà.</p> <p>Ah, mi fugge, non m’ascolta, Gia divien con me tiranno; Dalla smania, dall’affanno Io mi sento lacirar.</p> <p>Fanciulette che m’udite, Se pietà di me sentite, Una figlia sventurata Infelice, abbandonata, Deh venite a consolar.</p>



Once again, Anfossi and Mozart approached the musical realisation of this text in different ways. The difference in length is indicative: Anfossi's aria lasts only about two minutes, which is noticeably shorter than the aria from Piccinni's *La buona figliuola*, while Mozart's is comparable in scale and lasts about five minutes. Anfossi musically divides the text into two sections: a calm, cantabile *Andante* for the first two stanzas and a lively, stormy *Allegro con spirito* for the final two. Anfossi clearly understands that this number in Sandrina's part has a special significance, since in the first section he uses solo parts for oboe, bassoon — and even, at one point, French horn in the manner of a *sinfonia concertante*. In Mozart's aria, the orchestration is simple, with only a string section, which is evidence that the composer did not specifically single her out in Sandrina's part. Mozart's number is made up of several separate contrasting sections: *Grazioso* (two stanzas) — *Allegro* (third stanza) — *Grazioso* (first stanza) — *Andante con moto* (the last fourth stanza). As can be seen, the initial "gallant" section is repeated, and the stormy third stanza and the fourth with its appeal to the audience are set apart into separate constructions. Overall, the aria appears less organic and firmly composed than Anfossi's — not to mention Piccinni's — prototype.<sup>20</sup> Mozart's main emphasis is on the sharp contrast in the third stanza, marked not only by the change of tempo, but also by the change of key (the juxtaposition of A major and A minor). At the same time, the groaning seconds (on the word *tiranno*) and the affected chromatic move at the end are again clearly highlighted (*Example 6*).



Example 6. W. A. Mozart. *La finta giardiniera*. Sandrina's aria (II, 6, № 16)

<sup>20</sup> Piccinni's aria *Una povera ragazza* is a rare example of unity and organic structure, where all four stanzas are combined into a single composition with clearly defined features of sonata form.



Anfossi also played on the contrast of tempos, but retained the major key; in the character of the melody for the same text, he did not highlight the details, limiting himself instead to a general expression of agitation (*Example 7*).

**Allegro con spirito**

Ah mi fug-ge, non m'a-scol-ta, già di - vien con me ti - ran-no; dal-la sma-nia, dall' af-  
fan-no io mi sen-to la - ce - rar, io mi sen - to la - ce - rar, la - ce - rar, la - ce - rar.

*Example 7. P. Anfossi. La finta giardiniera. Sandrina's aria (II, 6)*

The final solo number in Sandrina's part goes quite far beyond the stereotypes accepted not only in comic opera, but also in 18th-century opera in general. The librettist largely encouraged this by constructing her solo scene on the eve of the Finale of Act II in a rather unusual way. The servants of the angry Podestà escort the hapless gardener to a wild, deserted place and leave her alone. The scene opens with her aria, filled with prayer, despair and fear of the approaching darkness. This is followed by a recitative in which Sandrina tries to decide where to go to seek shelter. Then comes a short Cavatina — the girl complains that she has no strength left from tears and sobs, followed by a final recitative. A composition like this — an opening aria, interrupted by a recitative, then moving into a cavatina — is a great rarity.

Both Anfossi and Mozart responded to the librettist's original idea, and both took another, equally innovative step. They did not interrupt the orchestral accompaniment between the aria and the cavatina, but preserved it in the recitative fragment turning this recitative into *accompagnato*. Mozart went even further, orchestrating the recitative at the end of the scene, as a result of which it directly transitioned into the ensemble Finale. There was nothing like it in opera buffa of the 1770s, either before or after the both *Giardiniera*. As a distant analogue, but only in the Italian opera seria, one can mention Niccolò Jommelli's *Armida abbandonata*, which was staged shortly before (May 30, 1770) on the stage of the Neapolitan *Teatro San Carlo*.

It is difficult to say whether it could have served as a model for Anfossi (after all, he did separate Sandrina's scene and the Finale with a short *secco recitative*), but Mozart is known to have witnessed the Neapolitan premiere of Jommelli's opera and, judging from his letters, it made a strong impression on him.

In Goldoni's libretto, the main character did not experience such extreme trials, although it is quite possible that the novel by Samuel Richardson could have provided reasons for them. Thus, Sandrina's scene — not only because of its unusual composition, but also in terms of plot motifs and dramatic situation — deviates significantly from the canons of sentimentalist opera, thus particularly vividly demonstrating the extraordinary features of its poetics.

Evidently, it will no longer be a surprise that Anfossi and Mozart have different solutions for this scene. Anfossi, although pushing off in the aria from the initial angry cries, very soon subordinates the presentation to a rounded cantabile metric and song structure (abb), as well as preferring to remain in the major mode again (*Example 8*).



Example 8. P. Anfossi. *La finta giardiniera*. Sandrina's aria (II, 15)

As for the cavatina, these qualities even increase there. Neglecting the references in the text to "tears" and "sobs,"<sup>21</sup> Anfossi constructs two-bar rounded phrases on the intonations of agitated request and entreaty, which are very close in style to the melody of Cecchina's aria *Una povera ragazza* (*Example 9*).

<sup>21</sup> Literally — throat spasms, *singhiozzo*.

**Andante con moto**

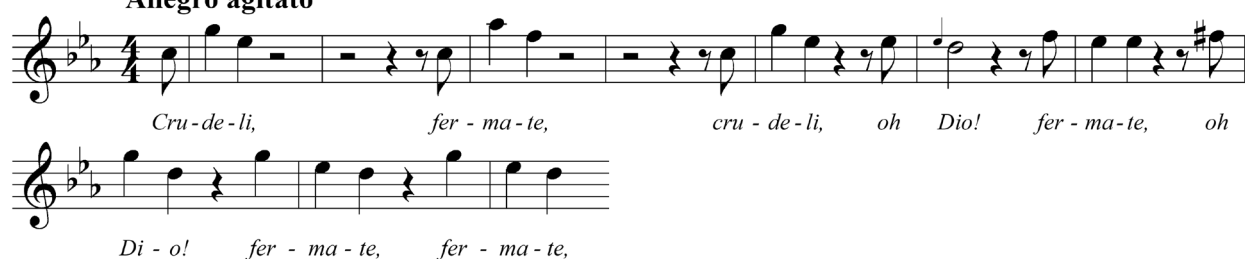


Ah dal pian-to, dal sin-ghioz-zo re-spi-rar io pos-so ap-pe-na, re-spi-rar io pos-so ap-pe-na: non ho vo-ce, non ho le-na, l'al-ma in sen-man-can-do v&agrave.

Example 9. P. Anfossi. *La finta giardiniera*. Sandrina's Cavatina (II, 15)

Mozart, on the contrary, in both cases again prefers the minor mode and a circle of emphatically pathetic intonations. The vocal part consists of a series of excited exclamations, almost on the verge of screaming (Example 10).

**Allegro agitato**

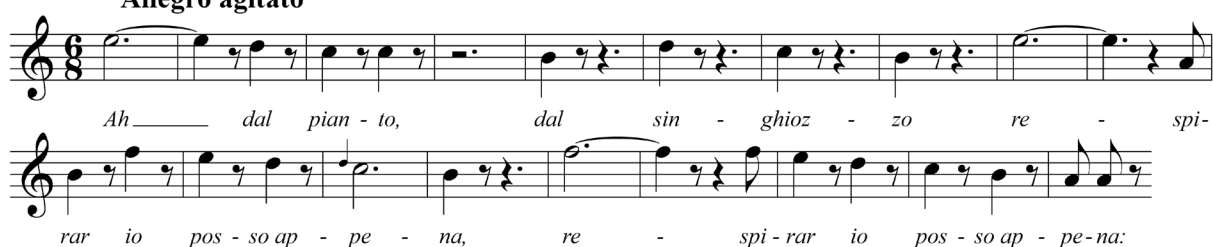


Cru-de-li, fer-ma-te, cru-de-li, oh Dio! fer-ma-te, oh Di-o! fer-ma-te, fer-ma-te,

Example 10. W. A. Mozart. *La finta giardiniera*. Sandrina's aria (II, 15, № 21)

In the cavatina, in contrast to Anfossi, he concentrates attention precisely on the intermittent speech, the stifled breathing, which destroys not only the coherence of sounds in the melody, but also transforms the metric periodicity and symmetry (Example 11).

**Allegro agitato**



Ah dal pian-to, dal sin-ghioz-zo re-spi-rar io pos-so ap-pe-na, re-spi-rar io pos-so ap-pe-na:

Example 11. W. A. Mozart. *La finta giardiniera*. Sandrina's Cavatina (II, 15, № 22)

*Ensembles*

In addition to solo numbers, ensemble scenes also make a significant contribution to the general appearance of the genre and the interpretation of individual characters; however, a detailed analysis of them is hardly possible in this article. Let us mention just a few particularly eloquent points. For example, in the Finale of the first act, the librettist brings together two couples for the first time — and in a situation of dramatic discord: Sandrina and Belfiore, Arminda and Ramiro. The second pair belongs to the group of *parti serie*, and the first to *mezzi caratteri*, but in fact at this moment all their actions and reactions are transferred to the highest dramatic register. Anfossi predictably tones down the pathos in both, giving the music an impersonally effective character that describes the overall dynamics and unexpectedness of the situation. Mozart, on the contrary, does not shy away from pathetic accents, while clearly emphasising the parallelism of reactions: surprise and confusion in the men and excitement and even fear in the women. Thus, Sandrina's and Belfiore's involvement in the world of hot and sublime passions is revealed with full force, and the boundaries of the “middle” register are once again expanded uncontrollably.

In the interpretation of the second Finale, the strategy is largely repeated. Let us recall that, according to the librettist's plan, the emotional intensity by the end of the act reaches its extreme point when the main characters lose their minds. The dramatic tension builds in several stages. The action moves from a moment of comic confusion, when in pitch darkness the characters are divided into strange pairs (Belfiore with the maid Serpetta, assuming that it is Sandrina, and the Podestà with Arminda, also assuming that it is the gardener), to a situation of general confusion, when everyone realizes that Belfiore and Sandrina are in the grip of madness.

Anfossi approaches the decision as if from the position of an outside observer. His main guideline is the general characteristics of the events and the gradual increase of tension, which he expresses with the help of a chain of musical episodes with a change of tempo and dynamics: *Comodo* (at the beginning of the scene) — *Allegro* (from the moment when the confusion is revealed by the light of the torch) — *Allegro con spirito*, 4/4 (when the Podesta and Ramiro, seeing a rival in the Contino, try to challenge him to a duel) — *Allegro con spirito*, 3/4 (when the insanity of the main characters becomes obvious to everyone). To maintain the overall rising tide, Anfossi

cuts some passages in the text that don't quite fit into this rhythm — in particular, the scene where the heroes imagine themselves as Chloe and Thyrsis, enchanted by the singing of the sirens and Orpheus's lyre, and then Belfiore proclaims himself the fearless Alcides.

Mozart's Finale also consists of several episodes; however, his attention is drawn not so much to the general escalation of movement as to the clash of contrasting dramatic situations and their more detailed depiction. Therefore, he does not hesitate to preserve details that demonstrate clear signs of the characters' madness — despite the possibility that they can bring the whole situation to the brink of the grotesque, which Anfossi clearly avoids.

Another important ensemble in the opera is the duet of the main characters in the last act. Its prototype can again be found in Goldoni's and Piccinni's *La buona figliuola*. However, in *La finta giardiniera* its place and meaning were significantly transformed. The duet between Cecchina and the Marchese Conchiglia in the third act is one of the central numbers in the opera: the heroine first learns of her origins and gradually comes to terms with the idea that a happy change has occurred in her destiny. In the duet of the third act *La finta giardiniera* everything is different: a quarrel flares up between the lovers again, and Violanta insists on separation, but gradually the couple comes to reconciliation. Unlike the duet from *La buona figliuola*, there is little that is new in this plot structure; it reproduces the stereotypical "quarrel-reconciliation" situation that is widespread in both serious and comic opera. The most important plot point for a sentimental opera — involving the rise of a lowly gardener to aristocratic rank — cannot be realised here; for this reason, everything turns out to be only the end of a serious misunderstanding and the reunion of the lovers.

The duet is preceded by a short recitative, in which the heroes, finding themselves in a calm environment in the bosom of nature, gradually unburden themselves of their mental disorder and come to their senses. While both Anfossi and Mozart chose orchestral accompaniment, their decisions again differ markedly. Anfossi thematically designed only the beginning of the scene, subsequently accompanying the characters' lines with rather typical passages of the string section. Mozart wrote a *ritornello* with gentle phrases of oboes and gentle line of French horns, which sounds throughout the dialogue. The stage is entirely decorated with orchestral accompaniment and coloured with exquisite sound painting, thereby losing the character of a transition

between musical numbers — and, on the contrary, acquiring the integrity and weight of a separate number. This short recitative fragment in Mozart recalls the magical pastoral scene from Jommelli's *Armida abbandonata*, where the knights, having escaped from the power of the sorceress, make their way through the enchanted forest. It is especially symptomatic that Mozart, as a prototype, focused on the newest and very “progressive” for its time version of opera seria.

### Conclusion

Summarising the analysis and returning to the question of possible ways of interpreting the controversial plot of *La finta giardiniera*, we come to the conclusion that each of the composers chose his own way of interpreting it. Anfossi remained true to the general idea of a stylistically balanced sentimental opera and tried not to exaggerate excessively melodramatic details, while Mozart did the opposite, not missing the opportunity for sharp pathetic accents. Mattern, who also considered this point to be fundamental in his work, defined the difference between the methods of Anfossi and Mozart as the difference between “Gattungsstil” (in the former) and “Personalstil” (in the latter) [3, pp. 524–546]. While this formula captures important aspects, it still requires significant clarification.

In Mattern's view, all the main prerequisites for revealing the genre poetics of *La finta giardiniera* were already contained in the libretto, which he considered to be traditional and typical, since Anfossi's opera was generally well received by the public. It seems to us that this understanding is not entirely correct, since a comparison with the exemplary work for the genre — Goldoni's *La buona figliuola* — shows that the libretto actually deviates quite noticeably from the accepted conventions of sentimentalist opera. In this regard, Anfossi's position should be assessed not as an obedient — and, to a certain extent, passive — following of the line already laid down in the libretto, but, on the contrary, as a very active correction of its features. The Italian composer, of course, had a certain relevant genre model, but he was guided not by how this genre was realised in the libretto, but by certain conventional norms of comic sentimentalist opera. Moreover, since he regarded these norms as a kind of musical–compositional ideal, he does not stop



at transforming the libretto in the direction of this ideal through smoothing and balancing. Mozart, by contrast, follows the intentions of the libretto creator much more consistently, responding vividly to all of his innovations. However, in following the librettist, he brought the stylistic and compositional unity of the sentimentalist opera to the dangerous brink of destruction.

Since the question of the reasons for such differences is very complex, it is hardly possible to claim a definitive solution. Nevertheless, we are prepared to agree with Mattern — at least with regard to Anfossi — that the conventional “Gattungsstil” (taking into account the above clarifications) basically determined his approach to creating the opera. As for Mozart, the assertion of the German researcher about “Personalstil” as constituting the decisive factor that determined his method [3, p. 524], in relation to *La finta giardiniera*, does not seem entirely convincing. While Mozart undoubtedly displays a special and highly individualised musical-dramatic sense in his mature and late works, it can hardly be extended to this early opera. As mentioned, Mozart’s solutions here in most cases are directly based on the positions and situations proposed by the librettist. Unlike Anfossi, he did not feel the need to make any changes to the text, although later, beginning with *Idomeneo* (1781), this became one of the most obvious indicators of that very specific Mozartian dramatic flair. In our opinion, Mozart’s uncritical acceptance of the libretto *La finta giardiniera* rather indicates that by that time he was not yet deeply immersed in the development of the comic opera tradition and did not have sufficient experience to clearly understand the essence of its poetics. At that time, opera buffa probably still seemed to him a genre that did not deserve much attention. “Es gibt auch ... im Frühling, Sommer und Herbst da und dort eine opera buffa, die man zur Übung, und um nicht müssig zu gehen, schreiben kann. Es ist wahr, man bekömmst nicht viell, aber doch etwas...” he wrote to his father from Munich just two years later.<sup>22</sup> And shortly afterwards he admits that the unconditional priority in his interests is for serious opera, not the buffoonish variety — “serios nicht Buffa.”<sup>23</sup> It should therefore come as no surprise that

<sup>22</sup> Letter dated October 11, 1777. Bauer, W. A., Deutsch, O. E., Eibl J. H., & Konrad, U. (Eds.). (2005). *Mozart W. A. Briefe und Aufzeichnungen: Gesamtausgabe: In 8 Vols. Vol. 2: 1777–1779*. Bärenreiter; DTV, pp. 45–46.

<sup>23</sup> Letter dated February 4, 1778. Bauer, W. A., Deutsch, O. E., Eibl J. H., & Konrad, U. (Eds.). (2005). *Mozart W. A. Briefe und Aufzeichnungen: Gesamtausgabe: In 8 Vols. Vol. 2: 1777–1779*. Bärenreiter; DTV, p. 254.



Mozart responded with great enthusiasm to situations and numbers that closely resembled the style of opera seria.

Another reason can be considered the fact that *La finta giardiniera* was composed by Mozart for Munich, not for the main court stage (Cuvilliés-theatre), but for the old theatre on Salvator Square, which was practically no longer intended for opera performances. Opera buffa appeared in Munich only occasionally, perhaps influenced by the fashion for some foreign novelties, was performed by visiting artists only in the court theatre, and did not have a stable tradition on which Mozart could have based his interpretation. The circumstances of his commission remain unclear. And although the already quite old and ailing Bavarian Elector Maximilian III Joseph attended the performance, overall, the appearance of Mozart's opera in the Bavarian capital seems to be a chance event without any significant consequences. After three performances, Mozart's *La finta giardiniera* left the stage.<sup>24</sup> Unlike Mozart, Anfossi already had a decade of active work in the comic opera genre behind him, having collaborated extensively with the Roman *Teatro Delle Dame*, where musical and theatrical life had flourished since the late 1750s in fierce competition with another Roman theatre — the Capranica. He knew all the established conventions and the latest fashionable tendencies, as well as the tastes of the public, and operated confidently with them, as evidenced by the continuous commissions for new works.

Overall, *La finta giardiniera* was a great success in Anfossi's career, strengthening his authority as a master of the sentimental comic genre and his position as the successor to Piccinni, with whom the young master had entered into competition. His new opera, although it did not surpass the popularity of its predecessor — the acknowledged masterpiece *L'incognita perseguitata* — stood almost on par with it. This can be considered an indirect confirmation that Anfossi was not mistaken in his desire to soften the somewhat extreme experiments undertaken by the librettist. Although Mozart's *La finta giardiniera* occupied a more modest place in the history of the genre, its role in the creative destiny of the author himself is difficult to overestimate. Although its overall musical and dramatic concept may not yet appear fully conscious, logical and proportionate, from a musical and compositional point of view, Mozart demonstrates in it a talent already completely mature,

<sup>24</sup> Mozart's Italian-language opera was not performed anywhere else during the 18th century; however, by the 1780s it had been adapted into a German Singspiel and appeared from time to time in the repertoire of German companies.

full of youthful energy and inexhaustible inventiveness. These qualities prevent the work from being relegated to archive shelves and from time to time bring it onto the stage, to the delight of music lovers and the general public.

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The article was submitted 23.10.2025;	Статья поступила в редакцию 23.10.2025;
approved after reviewing 10.12.2025;	одобрена после рецензирования 10.12.2025;
accepted for publication 22.12.2025.	принята к публикации 22.12.2025.