

*Musical Education
in Europe
(1770–1914)*

*Compositional, Institutional,
and Political Challenges*

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MUSICAL LIFE IN EUROPE 1600–1900

CIRCULATION, INSTITUTIONS, REPRESENTATION

edited by

Christoph-Hellmut Mahling, Christian Meyer, Eugene K. Wolf †

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Uncovering the origins of the Milan Conservatory: the French model as a pretext and the fortunes of Italian opera^{*}

Davide Daolmi

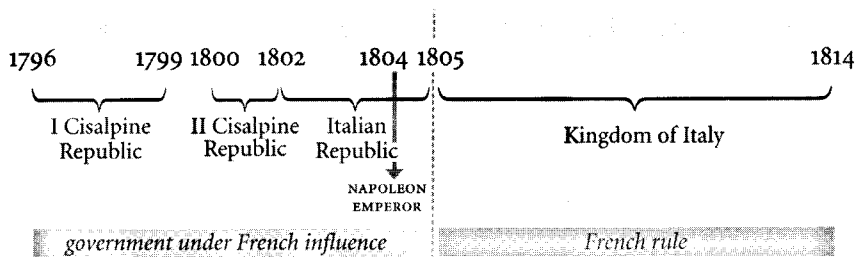
The belief that the birth of the Milan Conservatory (18 September 1807) was dependent on that of Paris (3 August 1795) is based primarily on three factors: the proximity of the foundation dates, the presence of a French government in Italy in those years, and an association between the French Revolution and a new direction in music teaching in Europe. This view – prevalent since the first important history of the Milan Conservatory, by Lodovico Corio – has never been debated seriously.¹ However, a critical investigation, not conditioned by traditional historiography, casts the issue in a new light, even if it does not entirely overturn the argument. Influences from Paris cannot be disregarded, but this dependency is only superficially and ambiguously valid, and overinsistence upon it hides the peculiarities that, at least at first, distinguished the two conservatories, and prevents understanding the very different cultural climates and histories of music teaching in the two Napoleonic ‘capitals’, Paris and Milan.

Musical institutions in Napoleon’s Italy

When Napoleon drove the Austrians out of Milan and chose the city as the capital of the Cisalpine Republic (1796–99), the cultural situation was in ferment. The Austrian government was essentially benign but had the fault of being foreign. Napoleon was seen as a liberator – the very high taxes imposed by France seemed to be the inevitable price of freedom. But when the French general crowned himself emperor and transformed the Italian Republic into an Imperial kingdom, all hope of independence was lost. The period of French rule can be divided into a republican and a monarchical phase:

^{*} In writing this article, I have benefited from the advice of Fabrizio Della Seta, Alessandro Di Profio, Emilio Sala, and Agostina Zecca Laterza. I offer them all my sincerest thanks. I would also like to thank the research team that recently published *Milano e il suo Conservatorio*, ed. Guido Salvetti (Milano, 2003), for a profitable exchange of ideas. I have made available via the internet several unpublished documents for which there was no space in this article, at the following address: www.examenapium.it/conservatorio. All sources cited in relation to the Paris Conservatoire can be found in Constant Pierre, *Le Conservatoire national de musique et de déclamation. Documents historiques et administratifs recueillis ou reconstitués* (Paris, 1900).

¹ See the select bibliography at the end of this article.



The distinction is not simply a formal one. Although the Republican years experienced the difficulties of change, they were marked by a collective euphoria, and a will to put into practice the Enlightenment ideas that had spread under the Austrians. The years of the Kingdom, however, were difficult ones, in which intellectuals once more felt deeply disappointed. The appointment of the same government officials for a third time was an obvious symptom not only of political uncertainty, but also of an external master who cared little about local concerns. For many at this time, loyalty to the government became a synonym for betrayal of the homeland. All 'republican' enthusiasm had vanished.²

The idea of a conservatory in Milan was probably already under discussion in the Austrian period, but only became concrete in 1803, as part of the activity and change that characterised the years of the Republic. However, the crisis following the birth of the Empire caused many projects to be abandoned and Count Brentano de Grianty, who had previously promoted the conservatory, threw in the sponge. It seems surprising that out of this doomed situation should spring in 1807 what was to become Italy's most important music school, especially considering that the cultural motivations were no longer those of the past. What had happened?

The key to our understanding of this situation is not music education, but the state of Italian opera. Since Milan was Italy's political and cultural centre in those years, the flowering of opera in the rest of Europe with Italy's best composers caused its people acute embarrassment. From the middle of the eighteenth century, opera produced in Italy had settled comfortably into a fixed model that had little new to say (and that would not change at least until Rossini). There was widespread feeling – particularly in Milan, where the internationally renowned La Scala theatre inevitably occupied the forefront of operatic production – that, from a cultural point of view, the most interesting developments were taking place beyond the Alps. There, they not only had revolutions, but had also for some time been devising new music-theatrical languages, beginning with those of two non-Italian composers, Gluck and

² On the situation of Milan during the Napoleonic occupation, see Carlo Zaghi, *L'Italia di Napoleone* (Torino, 1989).

Mozart.³ For its part, the French government saw opera as an extraordinary instrument of propaganda, and was keen to support the national rehabilitation so fiercely demanded by the intellectuals. It soon realised that the fortunes of Italian opera would be improved only by training more professional musicians. What better or clearer signal of willingness to overcome the theatrical crisis than a prestigious school of music?

Despite the Theresian Reform of 1773, which had integrated mass education (or *istruzione popolare*, as it was termed) into the state's political project, music remained – at least in northern Italy – beyond the government's educational system, because it was considered a product of *genio* and redundant to the training of officials or craftsmen.⁴ Reinforcing the divisions of class society, the study of music was aimed at artistic accomplishment for the aristocratic ruling group, rather than a professional career.⁵ Professional musicians continued to come from the less wealthy classes, and if they were ever included in the state's social system, it was almost exclusively after they had played in a theatre orchestra.⁶

The older system of education became outmoded when some enlightened individuals, especially during the revolutionary period, recognised that opera was politically important, that music was useful to the military, and that the training of professional musicians could consolidate the production of music useful to the state. In such political or other, more abstract, terms, the French

³ Friedrich Lippmann (ed.), *Die stilistische Entwicklung der italienischen Musik zwischen 1770 und 1830 und ihre Beziehungen zum Norden (Analecta Musicologica, 21)* (Köln and Laaber, 1982).

⁴ Eleuterio China, *La riforma scolastica Teresio-Giuseppina nello Stato di Milano e le prime scuole elementari italiane* (Milano, 1939); earlier published in: *Archivio Storico Lombardo* (1934, 1937, and 1938). On the extent to which the success of industrial production was tied to the spread of craftsmen's schools (organised according to the same principles as the future Milan conservatory), see Eleuterio China, "Dalle antiche botteghe d'arti e mestieri alle prime scuole industriali e commerciali in Lombardia", *Archivio Storico Lombardo* (1932), p. 437-554; Eleuterio China, *L'istruzione pubblica e privata nello Stato di Milano dal Concilio Tridentino alla Riforma Teresiana (1563-1773)* (Firenze, 1953).

⁵ This emerges for instance from the manuscript regulations of the Collegio dei Nobili, Milan's most prestigious school throughout the eighteenth century: "The other arts [...] serve wonderfully to soften the spirit and to create good taste, especially civil and military architecture, painting, and music. If the nobles have intelligence and good taste, they can promote these in their own lands, and protect the deserving artists skilled in them." From: *Piano d'interno regolamento del Collegio Imperiale de' Nobili di Milano, abbassato dal reale governo a' padri della congregazione di San Paolo, direttori del medesimo* (n. p., n. d. [1770]), part I, § 17 (*Arti nobili*, chapter III), in: *Archivio di Stato di Milano, Studi parte antica*, cart. 49; cited in Davide Daolmi, "I balli negli allestimenti settecenteschi del Collegio Imperiale Longone di Milano", in: Giovanni Morelli (ed.), *Creature di Prometeo. Il ballo teatrale: dal divertimento al dramma* (Firenze, 1996), p. 1-86, at p. 21.

⁶ On the training of musicians for the theatre, see Elvidio Surian, "L'operista", in: Lorenzo Bianconi and Giorgio Pestelli (eds.), *Storia dell'opera italiana. I sistemi* (Torino, 1987-1988), vol. 4, p. 293-345; and John Rosselli, *Il cantante d'opera. Storia di una professione (1600-1990)* (Bologna, 1993).

model became central in justifying the government's sudden interest in questions of music teaching. However, in contemporary France, the discipline of music was considered important above all because it was thought to shape its citizens by employing them in an arousing activity.⁷ Italy, on the other hand, lacked France's ethical and social concerns, and was geared almost entirely to strengthening its operatic merchandise by making it competitive at a European level. This significant difference is evident precisely in the years of Napoleonic domination (1796-1814), which coincided in France with Sarrette's directorship of the Conservatoire. However, the transfer of French principles to Italy, first in a theoretical and elitist way through readings, salons, and debates,⁸ and then through a more or less forced grafting by the French government, laid the foundation for the changes that enriched nineteenth-century musical culture.

Even discounting the high-profile case of the Milan Conservatory, it is clear that under Napoleon Italy was keen to include music teaching within the government's educational system. Although Paris encouraged the founding of musical institutions, the primary Italian motivation was a socio-political renewal attentive to the needs of the less prosperous classes. The newly founded conservatories (as well as those created later in the century) wanted above all to meet two demands: the care of the poor, and the professional training of opera singers. This is to say, the new institutions followed the main aims of the old Italian conservatories. An exemplary case is that of Bergamo, where Simone Mayr founded a prestigious school for 12 pupils in 1805. Its name, *Lezioni caritatevoli di musica*, emphasises its charitable purpose.⁹ Elsewhere, apparently large changes were in fact superficial, and only nominal. In Lucca, between 1805 and 1808, the new French-influenced government suppressed the Cappella Palatina, the seminaries of San Michele and San Giovanni, and the confraternity of Santa Cecilia, but was forced to restore them under other names, such as Cappella di Camera, and Cappella Municipale, and supported a private initiative of Domenico Quilici, who in 1809 founded what would in 1812 become the free Scuola Comunale. A new Istituto Musicale was opened in 1839.¹⁰

That the necessity for music schools was felt in Italy in these years, irrespective of Paris, is also shown by the high number of schools founded after the French abandoned the peninsula. Following an attempt in 1818, a music school was opened in Parma that would become the present-day Conservatory.¹¹ In Padua, despite the presence of three musical institutes, the music Accademia was created in 1822, and 1839 saw the founding of another

⁷ See n. 25.

⁸ Marco Meriggi, *Milano borghese. Circoli ed élites nell'Ottocento* (Venezia, 1992).

⁹ Angelo Meli, *L'istituto musicale G. Donizetti, ieri, oggi, domani* (Bergamo, 1956).

¹⁰ Gabriella Biagi Ravenni, "The French Occupation of Lucca and its Effects on Music", in: Malcolm Boyd (ed.), *Music and the French Revolution* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 279-301.

¹¹ Lodovico Gambara, *Il Conservatorio di musica 'A. Boito' di Parma* (Parma, 1958).

Scuola Musicale, which in 1970 became the current Conservatorio Statale.¹² Likewise, in 1824, the Istituto Filarmonico of Udine was founded to teach music for free, and a Scuola gratuita di canto was established in Genoa in 1829.¹³

There was genuine involvement from the French government in only four cities besides Milan: Bologna, Verona, Turin, and Rome, but only the Bolognese project was completed. Bologna had scarcely become the capital of the Cispadane Republic when, in 1797, it was also to be the location for an Istituto Nazionale di Scienze, Lettere e Arti, with a music department for the holdings of the Accademia Filarmonica, the archive of San Petronio, and the libraries of Padre Martini and Stanislao Mattei. However, the difficulties of the time and, above all, the union of the Cispadane and the Cisalpine Republics (1798), forced the transfer of the Istituto Nazionale to the new administrative centre of Milan. It was thus necessary in 1804 to found a Liceo Musicale in Bologna, both to unite the city's literary and archival holdings and to support the activities of the Teatro Comunale.¹⁴

In Verona there was only one, unsuccessful attempt, in 1810, to found an Ateneo, intended to unite the city's various educational initiatives, including those relating to music.¹⁵ The case of Turin is different. Because Piedmont became a region of France in 1799, Turin was not simply under French influence, like Milan or Bologna, but became to all intents a French city. As such, it was included in Sarrette's plan to create provincial conservatories. In 1801, Carlo Botta, an official in the Ministry of Education, proposed establishing a conservatory in Turin that would be an ideal stop-gap between Naples and Paris. The organisation was to be substantially the same as Paris with 15 teachers, 120 pupils, no boarders, and a library. There were continual difficulties in realising such an ambitious plan until finally, with the Russian campaign of 1811, Paris no longer had time to concern itself with Turin's musical institutions.¹⁶

Events in Rome, during the five years in which it was a French Imperial city (1809-14), were largely identical. A plan was put forward, along the lines of the Turin Conservatory, but the proposal remained embryonic.¹⁷ The specificity of Milan, where, as will be seen, local traditions were not

¹² Sergio Leoni, *L'istituto musicale 'C. Pollini' (Florence, 1941).*

¹³ Alberto Alfare and others, *Musica e teatro a Udine: 1595-1866* (Udine, 1999); Salvatore Pintacuda, *Il Conservatorio di musica 'Nicolò Paganini' di Genova: storia e documenti dalle origini ai nostri giorni* (Genova, 1980).

¹⁴ See Elvidio Surian and Graziano Ballerini, "Bologna", in: Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London, 2001), vol. 3, p. 831-840.

¹⁵ Enrico Paganuzzi and others, *L'Accademia Filarmonica di Verona e il suo teatro* (Verona, 1982).

¹⁶ Alberto Basso, *Il Conservatorio di musica 'Giuseppe Verdi' di Torino: storia e documenti dalle origini al 1970* (Torino, 1971).

¹⁷ I am grateful to Bianca Maria Antolini, who discovered some documents relating to the matter, for bringing these hitherto unknown events in Rome to my attention.

neglected, is revealed precisely by comparison with Turin and Rome, which were clearly following Paris, albeit on Italian soil.

Why a music school in Milan?

Our understanding of the cultural background to the opening of the Milan Conservatory is impeded by the almost total lack of specialised studies on opera and music teaching in Napoleon's Italy.¹⁸ Thus, particularly precious is a detailed report by the Director-General of Education,¹⁹ Giovanni Scopoli, which was presented on 13 January 1812 to the Home Affairs minister, Luigi Vaccari. This unpublished document, which appears to have begun life as a report on the music schools in Brescia and Bologna, soon turns its attention to the question, "why the art of music in our land has for some time needed special provisions to prevent it from falling from the illustrious place that it has occupied for centuries".²⁰ This opinion on the crisis of Italian music, which clearly related to opera, was a factor behind the creation of the Milan Conservatory, and returns persistently in all government documents concerning the theatre from the time of Napoleon's entry into Italy onwards.²¹ Scopoli's claims were based on Giovanni Agostino Perotti's recently published *Dissertazione*, which had been commissioned by the Istituto Nazionale di Scienze, Lettere e Arti with the aim of finding cures for the degeneration.²²

Perotti's proposals were mainly unworkable (theatre costs to be borne by the government, lower wages, censorship of ballets, *opere buffe*, and crude libretti, etc.). Scopoli had no difficulty countering them one by one, guided by the opinions of Bonifacio Asioli, *censore* (director) of the Milan Conservatory, Alessandro Barca, philosophy and law professor,²³ Stanislao Mattei,

¹⁸ I agree here with Fabrizio Della Seta, *Italia e Francia nell'Ottocento (Storia della musica*, vol. 9) (Torino, 1993), p. 379 and 384.

¹⁹ Education did not have its own ministry at that time, but was a division of Home Affairs.

²⁰ Archivio di Stato di Milano, Studi parte moderna, cart. 296 (13 January 1812). There follows a summary by Vaccari for the Italian viceroy, Eugène de Beauharnais, with the latter's observations annotated on the back (*ibid.*, 10 March 1812). Both are reproduced on-line (see introductory note).

²¹ For further examples, see Federico Mompellio, *Il Regio Conservatorio di Musica 'Giuseppe Verdi' di Milano* (Firenze, 1941), p. 8ff., and Gabriele Manca, "Conservatorio: nascita di un'istituzione", in: *Il Conservatorio di Musica per la cultura milanese dal 1808 al 1860: nascita di una biblioteca musicale pubblica* (Milano, 1980). The latter was published in conjunction with the exhibition, "Istruzione musicale e professionalità del musicista nella riforma della scuola", Milan, 17-19 January, 1980.

²² Giovanni Agostino Perotti, *Dissertazione [sullo stato attuale della musica in Italia]* (Venezia, 1811). A French translation was issued by the Genoan publisher Bonaudo in 1812 (*Dissertation sur l'état actuel de la musique en Italie*). This was perhaps due to the ministerial report generating interest in the *Dissertazione* amongst the French authorities in Italy.

²³ Around 1810, Barca compiled his *Memoria sullo stato attuale della musica* at Vaccari's request. The text remained in manuscript. See Giovanni Maironi Daponte, *Orazione recitata*

director of the Liceo Musicale in Bologna, and Simone Mayr, director of the Scuola di Musica in Brescia. On such solid foundation, Scopoli could assert all the more strongly that the only effective solution was targeted music teaching (so opportunely begun with the establishment of the Milan Conservatory), along with a few other small adjustments to theatrical organisation (shorter operas, suppression of minor roles, etc.). Minister Vaccari could have contested some of these issues, but he certainly shared, albeit reservedly, the opinions in favour of teaching. In summary, these concerned: a) the inclusion of courses in acting and declamation; b) the increase of pupil numbers; c) a distribution of prizes at the end of the course; d) the promotion of musical works through publications (but not at the expense of the government); e) the writing music textbooks, which was underway in any case.

It should cause little surprise that, in 1812, when Scopoli wrote his report, education was seen as almost the only way to renew Italian opera. By that time, the music schools of Brescia and Bologna, the Accademia in Rome, as well as the Milan Conservatory were already open, and other new institutions, such as those in Verona and Venice, were flourishing.²⁴ But none of these schools yet existed in 1803, when the idea of founding a conservatory in Milan was first proposed. At the same time, the older conservatories in Venice and Naples, as well as Padre Martini's Bolognese school languished, and there is no concrete evidence that educational theories in support of a conservatory already circulated in Milan.

The sole point of reference remained the newly opened Paris Conservatoire. But who, in the early days of the Italian Republic, would have thought that the force that gave rise to such a monumental structure could be transferred to Milan? In Paris, at least in the early years, the most pressing matter was to train a generation of homogeneous musicians, who could make a sort of 'national school', and, at the same time, give the government a docile instrument of political representation.²⁵ Neither of these two factors was felt in Milan, and if they had been, the establishing of a conservatory would not have been seen as a remedy. Nor would anyone have thought to link musical training, which had always been individual, or domestically based, with military structures, which were traditionally non-existent in Austrian Lombardy, and laboriously transplanted only with Napoleon.

nelle solenni esequie del P. D. A. Barca (Bergamo, 1814), p. 21; also Gilda Grigolato, "Contributo a una storia della Biblioteca del Conservatorio", *Annuario del Conservatorio di Musica 'G. Verdi' di Milano* (1967-68), p. 219-27, at p. 225 n. 5.

²⁴ On Verona, see n. 15. On Caffi's Istituto Filarmonico in Venice, see Helen Geyer's article in this volume, p. 47, n. 44.

²⁵ For arguments in favour of this, see Cynthia M. Gesele, "The Conservatoire de Musique and National Music Education in France, 1795-1801", in: Boyd (ed.), *Music and the French Revolution*, p. 191-210; Jérôme Thiébaux, "De l'Institut national au Conservatoire. Idéologie et pédagogie révolutionnaire", in: Emmanuel Hondré (ed.), *Le Conservatoire de Paris. Regards sur une institution et son histoire* (Paris, 1995), p. 39-53, in particular p. 43; and Emmanuel Hondré's contribution to this volume.

Establishing a conservatory for the benefit of opera was not an obvious solution to the problem. Nonetheless, there was someone who gambled on this possibility. And this person understood that a music school would be a solution only if its framework were different from that used in France (his project was in fact very distant from Parisian educational guidelines). The man was Count Carlo Brentano Grianta, who, even under the Austrians, signed himself “Grianty”, in the French style, as a testimony to his prominent interest in transalpine matters. Although now only fleetingly remembered in histories of the Milan Conservatory, in his life-time he was very highly esteemed by both Italian and French ministers as a man of letters, a theatre enthusiast, and the real driving-force behind the theatrical system in Napoleonic Milan. For the entire second phase of the French occupation, Grianty was responsible for the administration of Milan’s theatres. Beginning with La Scala, he promoted a cultural direction that was moderately francophile and extremely receptive to possibilities for renewing Italian opera. To mention one episode amongst many: it was he who called Rossini to Milan for the first time. But like many great and powerful men, he often acted in secrecy, leaving very few traces of himself. On his death, which coincided with the downfall of Napoleon, it was easy to forget him, together with the disappointments of the French oppression.²⁶

Grianty’s role in the conservatory project

On 24 August 1803, when Grianty, as Director General of the Royal Theatres and Spectacles, proposed the opening of a conservatory “to prevent the threatened complete degeneration of the art of music”,²⁷ he was certainly not motivated by an interest in education, nor did he hope to solve problems of public order by keeping the children of less well-off families occupied. He wanted only one thing: to carry out his tasks as director of theatres to the best of his ability. Quite the opposite of Sarrette’s revolutionary ideals.

Having obtained the approval of Francesco Melzi d’Eril, the vice-president of the Republic, Grianty presented a plan for the conservatory on 5 September.²⁸ His organisational structure, foreseeing a boarding-school for 36 pupils (24 boys and 12 girls), studying for a period of 10 years, was based on the administrative rules of traditional Italian orphanages. More specifically, it followed the structure of Milan’s only boys’ orphanage, San Pietro in Gessate,

²⁶ I hope shortly to publish an article on Grianty and his influence on Milanese culture.

²⁷ From Grianty’s report, kept in Archivio di Stato di Milano, Studi parte moderna, cart. 296 (25 August 1803), noted by Lodovico Corio, *Ricerche storiche sul Regio Conservatorio di Milano* (Milano, 1908), p. 22-23, and Mompellio, *Il Regio Conservatorio*, p. 8-9. The cited letter of 24 August does not survive.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, but in an unnumbered file. I have published Grianty’s entire project on-line (see the introductory note).

which, following the reforms of Maria Theresia and Joseph II, was set up to train its young inhabitants in different manual and artisanal activities. This orphanage, which was restored to its original function in 1803,²⁹ had published its ordinances in 1778,³⁰ and it is not hard to relate these to Grianty's plan.

The range and precision of the plan, forecasting, amongst other things, costs, timetables, courses, linens, equipment, salaries, and responsibilities, show that it was in all respects ready for implementation. Furthermore, the extent to which it was derived from the orphanage model is clear from the proposal of housing the pupils in a former monastery, just as San Pietro in Gessate was located in a former Benedictine monastery of the same name. It is not by chance that Grianty repeatedly refers to the conservatory as *luogo pio*, a term which is out of place in relation to a music school, even a free one, and refers implicitly to its charitable origins.³¹

Indeed, for Italians, the word *conservatorio* was synonymous with 'orphanage', and not 'school of music'. The use of the term in the latter meaning was spread by the highly prized music teaching in just four of the more than 100 orphanages in Naples, all of which were called *conservatorio*. When Grianty used the word, it was first and foremost precisely because he was thinking of founding an orphanage. Only secondly was he perhaps reclaiming the name from Paris, where it had been inappropriately imposed by the Revolutionary authorities. Comparing the organisational plans of the Milanese orphanage and Grianty's conservatory, the overlap is near-total.

Plan of the orphanage of San Pietro in Gessate

Grianty's plan for a new conservatory

	Chapters	Articles
Internal personnel		
• Director (catered for at the institute's expense)	III & XV	• Director "facendosi cucina però a sue proprie spese [catered at his own expense]" 2/x & x
• Six deputies, from amongst which the prior is chosen	I	• List of music teachers 2/x

²⁹ In 1796, Napoleon had cleared the orphanage, so that it could be used as a military hospital. It was reopened as an orphanage in 1803. See [Francesco Pesenti], *Monografia dell'Orfanotrofio maschile di Milano* (Milano, 1906), p. 12. The coincidence of the dates suggests that it could actually have been the orphanage's reopening that prompted Grianty's conservatory proposal. This need not exclude the possible influence of reports from France in favour of the Conservatoire.

³⁰ Maria Theresia established San Pietro in Gessate in 1772, by merging the various Milanese orphanages. Its first set of ordinances was from 1772 ([Gaetano Balbi], *Piano dell'Orfanotrofio di Milano* [Milano], 1772). These were later expanded and detailed, as specified in article 17 of the original prescriptions; see *Piano dell'Orfanotrofio di San Pietro in Gessate di Milano* (Milano, 1778).

³¹ See articles 1/iii, 1/v, 2/vii and 2/xii of his plan.

- | | | | |
|---|---------|--|---------------|
| • Three priests, to teach reading and writing, and to accompany the inmates on public outings | IX | • Two chaplains, to teach reading and writing, and to accompany the pupils on public outings | 2/iv and viii |
| • Various servants (for cooking, children's welfare, a porter, etc.) | XIX-XXV | • Eight servants (inspector, porter, governor, cook, cook's hand, three chamber-boys) | 2/v |

External Personnel

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|--------|
| • Medical personnel | XVIII | • Medical personnel | 2/vi |
| • Treasurer, cashier, accountant | XIII, VIII, & XVI | • Book-keeper, treasurer, cashier | 2/vii |
| • Maintenance engineer | XVI | • people to maintain the building | 2/xiii |

Pupils

- | | | | |
|--|-----|---|---------------------------|
| • Orphans aged between 7 and 10 | II | • Pupils aged between 10 and 14 | 4/iv |
| • Healthy and strong | III | • Healthy and strong | 4/iii |
| • Housed until 18 years old, and not beyond | IV | • Housed for not longer than 10 years | 4/x |
| • Given a uniform | IV | • Given a uniform | 2/ii & 4/viii |
| • One or more priests should watch the dormitory at night | IV | • Must sleep in a dormitory with a chaplain | 4/ii |
| • Rules for discipline and punishments | V | • Rules for discipline and punishment | 4/vi & xvi |
| • Encouragement to learn craftsmen's skills through termly exams and annual prizes | X | • Exams, concert-societies, pupil concerts, and prizes to encourage study | 1/vi, 3/viii, 4/xi, & xii |
| • Outside activity for the older boys (earnings to the orphanage) | XI | • Outside activity for the more skilled (a third of earnings to keep, the rest to the conservatory) | 1/iii & 4/xv |

Administration

- | | | | |
|--|-----|--|----------------|
| • Food quality prescribed | V | • Food costs calculated, and a weekly menu | 2/iii, and xii |
| • Lesson timetables | VII | • Lesson timetables (differing in summer and winter) | 4/1 & 3/iii |
| • An archive for administrative documents and pupils' drawings | XII | • Music and text-books kept in library | 4/xiv |

The two plans obviously differ in some respects. Grianty lingers on the teachers' responsibilities, wages, and duties (3/i-ix and xi-xii), whilst this is totally absent from the orphanage's *Piano*. All of Grianty's first note is dedicated to ways of limiting costs. Some of the solutions, such as entrusting certain duties to more gifted pupils, and outside professional activity during student years, are typical of Italian schools, whilst others, such as taxes on small theatres, or on reduced-price seats, were drawn from Grianty's experience as a theatrical director. Furthermore, there are observations concerning relations with parents (4/viii and ix), specific aspects of musical tuition (3/x, 4/vii and xiii), and, given the presence of both sexes, the necessary precautions for keeping them apart (1/v, 2/i, 4/ii and v). This last aspect is the only true point of contact with the regulations of the Paris Conservatoire.³² Grianty may simply have thought it necessary to educate singers of both sexes because women were also needed on stage (the girls were excluded from the instrumental classes).³³ However, it is also possible that the equanimity with which the presence of girls was planned was justified by the French precedent.³⁴ What certainly had no ties to Paris was the reference to the library, which was adapted from the orphanage's administrative archive. Sarrette's library,³⁵ on the other hand, was a completely new conception, following the most up-to-date ideas of musical conservation, albeit with a nationalist aim.³⁶ The Milan Conservatory library, which only later became a library in the modern sense, is considered today to be among the most important in Italy because of its size and cataloguing initiatives.³⁷

³² Point III of the law founding the Paris Conservatoire, from 3 August 1795, states, "Six cents élèves des deux sexes reçoivent gratuitement l'instruction dans le Conservatoire [six hundred students of both sexes will receive free instruction in the Conservatoire]"; Pierre, *Le Conservatoire*, p. 125.

³³ Harpsichord classes were an exception, being obligatory for singing students, but they were seen as a complementary study, so that the singers could accompany themselves. Both Grianty and the definitive regulations are clear on this point. Paris, on the other hand, foresaw no instrumental practice for singers.

³⁴ On the other hand, for France too, it is clear that mixed-sex teaching was exceptional, and due to the specific nature of music: "A la différence des autres grandes écoles qui s'ouvrent à Paris à la fin du XVIII^e siècle, le Conservatoire est donc le seul établissement admettant les femmes au nombre de ses enseignants et de ses élèves. [In contrast to the other *grandes écoles* that were opening in Paris at the end of the eighteenth century, the Conservatoire was the only establishment admitting women amongst its teachers and its students]". Jean Mongrédien, *La Musique en France des Lumières au Romantisme 1789-1830* (Paris, 1986), p. 18.

³⁵ Paragraphs X and XI of the law of 3 August 1795; in Pierre, *Le Conservatoire*, *sub data*.

³⁶ See Mongrédien, *La Musique en France*, p. 20, and Catherine Massip, "La bibliothèque du Conservatoire (1795-1819): une utopie réalisée", in: Anne Bongrain and Yves Gérard (eds.), *Le Conservatoire de Paris, 1795-1995. Des Menus-Plaisirs à la Cité de la musique* (Paris, 1996), p. 117-31.

³⁷ See Grigolato, "Contributo", and Agostina Zecca Laterza, "Nascita di una biblioteca musicale pubblica", in: *Il Conservatorio di Musica per la cultura milanese* (cited in n. 21).

The Milan Conservatory and the shadow of the Parisian model

The covering letter for Grianty's project does not survive, but its contents are reflected in the numerous reports that followed in the four years it took to issue the Conservatory's founding decree. It is worth retracing the succession of events, even though they have been recounted elsewhere,³⁸ because, on the one hand, it is important to understand Grianty's conception of the conservatory, and, on the other, the modifications to the original project demonstrate the interference from the Parisian regulations.

In the summer of 1803, Grianty, as Director of the Theatres, gave vice-president Melzi a plan in five *note* for establishing a conservatory in Milan. As far as is known, the plan received no response from the government. In June of the following year, Grianty discharged himself of all his duties for reasons unknown. In summer 1804, shortly after Napoleon declared himself emperor, the new Home Affairs minister, Daniele Felici, repropounded Grianty's plan as it stood, and gained approval for it on 13 September. Again the plan suffered delays. Felici obtained the regulations of the Naples Conservatory, and, with the help of the Foreign Minister, Ferdinando Marescalchi, those of Paris. Marescalchi provided another project (lost), drawn up by Luigi Lambertenghi, which seems not to have had the immediate practicability that Grianty's offered. On 26 May, the Kingdom of Italy was declared, and the country passed from simple French influence to being a dominion of the Empire. The project for a conservatory was forgotten.

On 6 November 1806, the Director of Education, Pietro Moscati, repropounded Grianty's plan for a third time, transforming it into a draft charter in 23 points, making no mention of Grianty, and presenting the plan as his own. Only following a fourth request was the plan finally approved on 25 July 1807. The vice-regal decree for the Conservatory's foundation was published on 18 September 1807. On 27 October, the Home Affairs minister Luigi di Breme signed the institution's *Regolamento*, and the Conservatory was inaugurated on 11 February 1808. It should be noted that, after Grianty had initially presented the project, and it had been abandoned for unspecified reasons, he did not approach the issue again, nor was he consulted, even when he regained his former duties upon the declaration of the Kingdom. In fact, Grianty was excluded from August 1804, when the project was definitively entrusted to the Public Education department at Melzi's request.

The extent to which Grianty believed in his proposal may be judged from his second *nota*, point IX, which sets the founding of a conservatory into a cultural context. Further evidence may also be drawn from Felici's letter to Melzi in support of Grianty's plan, which was probably copied from the now-lost original covering letter to the *note*. On the one hand, Grianty flat-

³⁸ Mompellio, *Il Regio Conservatorio*, p. 10ff; the documents are in Archivio di Stato di Milano, Studi parte moderna, cart. 296.

tered Melzi, who could boast about the initiative, and on the other, he underlined the exceptional nature of the moment: "There has never been, there is not, and there is unlikely ever again to be a moment more favourable than this for founding a music conservatory in this city".³⁹ As Milan had become a capital city and enjoyed privileged attention from France, it should set an example for the rest of Italy, and lead the rebirth of opera. It was a city with a prestigious theatre, La Scala, and accommodated, according to Grianty, the best musicians in the country (he cites their names in full).⁴⁰ Grianty, who clearly spared no rhetorical effort, could have drawn attention to similar solutions successfully adopted in Paris, but he did not. Either he did not believe in the French model's ability to revitalise the opera houses, or he was aware of the ideological distance between the two institutions.

The first reference to Paris appears in a request for a copy of Sarrette's regulations made by the newly appointed Home Affairs minister Felici (a creature of Napoleon, and little-valued by Melzi). The terms in which Felici wanted to take the Paris plan into account are unclear, because the subsequent declaration of the Kingdom, and other issues, caused the total suspension of the Milan Conservatory proposal. What the request itself probably caused were more delays. The Foreign Minister, Marescalchi, swiftly responded, and it was most likely due to the opening of this international channel that a plan by Lambertenghi, a Parisian colleague of the minister, came into existence. A resolution was quite possibly postponed precisely by the opposition of two different plans. Be that as it may, nothing was done about the lost Lambertenghi plan. Still, when Felici obtained government approval and presented his "Progetto di decreto" to viceroy Eugène de Beauharnais, he dutifully made reference to Paris:

It only remains for me to strongly hope that this project gains the superior esteem of Your Imperial Highness, who will certainly not disapprove of ideas and intentions that, with due proportion, imitate and adapt from those more grand and far-reaching ones that are practised with such success in the famous Paris Conservatoire.⁴¹

But did the project, drawn up by Moscati, the Director of Education and Napoleon's highly esteemed personal doctor, really take the regulations of the Paris Conservatoire into account? Not at all. There was not even a distinction between the decree of statutes and the internal regulations. Paris had observed this distinction but Milan would emulate it only later. The sole novelty in relation to Grianty's original plan was a reduction in pupils' numbers from 36 to 24 (12 boys and 12 girls). Everything else – admission, courses, timetables, personnel, student concerts, prizes, etc. – was exactly like the

³⁹ From Grianty's report, beginning of *nota* 2, point IX (see n. 27 and 28).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, *nota* 1, point IX.

⁴¹ Milano, Archivio di Stato, Studi parte moderna, cart. 296 (undated ms., autumn 1807).

earlier plan, even down to collecting revenue through taxes on smaller theatres and on reduced-price seats (art. 23).

The first departures from Grianty's plan, partially influenced by the Parisian regulations, are found only when we compare this provisional decree and the final one from 18 September 1807.⁴² The differences in relation to Moscati's plan are not many in number, but they are significant. First, the final decree had only 13 articles and excluded those specifications that properly belong to internal regulations.⁴³ Then, alongside some marginal finishing touches, a general guarantee was requested of the pupil's good character. This had been overlooked by Grianty, who perhaps supposed it to be implicit, and was probably suggested by the abundant directives for student admission in the Paris regulations.⁴⁴ Most importantly, two extra courses of study were added, declamation and dancing.

It is not difficult to imagine that these additions to the curriculum were, perhaps unconsciously, intended to follow Grianty's lead in the preparation of new recruits for the theatre: study of both was vital for opera. However, two problems arise at this point: why did Grianty not include them, and how does their addition affect Milan's relationship with Paris, where the regulations of 1800 made provision for declamation, but not for dance? It is worth separating the two problems. Declamation indicated all the skills needed for recitation, thus not only diction and voice projection, but also gesture, movements on stage, and choosing the most 'expressive' positions. We can suppose that Grianty, preoccupied with limiting costs, meant it to be implicit in the singing course. After all, the singing teacher traditionally taught basic acting skills. In any case, an exchange between the Education Department and the Home Office, of which traces remain in two documents from 1812, shows that specific training in declamation was felt to be a necessity.⁴⁵ This was particularly so in Milan, where the presence of La Scala made the training of virtuosi, and not just chorus members, more important than in the provinces.⁴⁶ For Scopoli, the Director of Education (and, consequently, for Vaccari, the Home Affairs minister), declamation was an aspect of musical training in general, and not necessarily only for the theatre. Singers needed skills in both declamation and acting (*mimica*), even when performing at a concert-society or in an oratorio. Thus, the Home Affairs minister had no difficulty in rectifying this gap in the Conservatory's curriculum.

⁴² The final statutes are published in Mompellio, *Il Regio Conservatorio*, p. 16-18.

⁴³ Article 13 explicitly states that "particular regulations will be made for the order of studies and the internal discipline of the conservatory".

⁴⁴ The five articles of *titre II* are dedicated to the "Admission des élèves" (Pierre, *Le Conservatoire*, p. 231). The regulations considered here are the second set, signed by Sarrette on 8 March 1800. It was certainly these which arrived in Milan.

⁴⁵ See n. 20.

⁴⁶ On Milan in relation to other centres, see the pertinent observations in Sergio Durante, "Il cantante", in: Bianconi and Pestelli (eds.), *Storia dell'opera italiana*, vol. 4, p. 397-415, at p. 395-96.

Paris had introduced declamation only in the new regulations of 1800.⁴⁷ With the entrance of boarders six years later,⁴⁸ the course was increased by three classes of declamation in addition to those already existing (art. IV). Both steps, the boarding-school and the addition of classes, had the same aim: training opera singers. In Italy, there was already a widespread belief that the competitiveness of the virtuoso professional demanded more intensive training, and it was for this reason that the Milan Conservatory did not much care for day-pupils.⁴⁹ Italy's model was not determined by the change of direction in Paris (which was symptomatic of a rapid decline in revolutionary ideals), but by a recognition of customary practice. At root, the addition draws close to the original proposals of Grianty, who conceived of the Conservatory as an element in the civic theatrical system. Nonetheless, it is undeniable that the specific idea of a course in declamation separate from that in singing was not part of Italian tradition, and probably derives from Parisian practice.

The question of dancing is more complex. Although Grianty did not plan a specific dance course, he did not exclude dance tuition entirely. In allowing such classes into the school, however, he seems almost embarrassed:

It may also be necessary to add a dance teacher to those mentioned above. He would give two lessons per week to the girls, who, having one day to present themselves to the public, should be able to do this respectably.⁵⁰

A glance at the cultural climate of the time sheds some light on the situation. Dancing in the theatre had for some time enjoyed the unconditional favour of the public, and would continue to do so. Indeed, it was often the main attraction of an operatic spectacle.⁵¹ However, within more progressive society, it was seen with distrust. Although dance could be a 'popular' element, it was still an expression of the aristocratic class (it had been the central part of artistic training in the eighteenth-century colleges for the nobility).⁵² It was not by chance that Sarrette excluded it entirely from his Conservatoire, and that, in Paris, its admission had to wait until the decree of 22 August 1807.⁵³ It should be said that, by the end of the eighteenth century, professional dancing had reached a very high level of virtuosity, and that the increasingly

⁴⁷ See the *Dispositions principales* in the regulations of 8 March 1800 (Pierre, *Le Conservatoire*, p. 230).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, n. 283 (decree of 3 March 1806).

⁴⁹ See director Annoni's report on the state of the Conservatory written on 8 June 1819, cited in Mompellio, *Il Regio Conservatorio*, p. 36.

⁵⁰ From Grianty's report (see n. 27), *nota* 3, point X.

⁵¹ Kathleen Kuzmick Hansell, "Il ballo teatrale e l'opera italiana", in: Bianconi and Pestelli (eds.), *Storia dell'opera italiana*, vol. 5, p. 178-306, § 7.

⁵² Milan provides an exemplary case of the latter (see my article cited in n. 5).

⁵³ Marie-Françoise Christout, "La danse au Conservatoire de Paris", in: Bongrain and Gérard (eds.), *Le Conservatoire de Paris*, p. 289-303, at p. 291.

widespread dance-dramas had little to do with the steps that the old dance-masters taught to the offspring of wealthy families. However, whilst the grace and elegance of aristocratic ballet could still be valued in a girl's education, the same cannot be said in the case of boys who did not want to take to the stage.⁵⁴ Probably Grianty judged the training of male dancers more as an athletic activity than a part of musical culture, and thus did not include it in his plan, despite it being an integral part of the theatre. Even as far as the female pupils were concerned, he thought of dance more as training in deportment than as a professional activity. Similarly, although dance was included in the Parisian regulations of 1808, it was available only to the singers who boarded, and was intended to teach the movements of acting, rather than train dancers.⁵⁵ It should be borne in mind that some people, even if they were enlightened, saw dancing as one of the causes of opera's degeneration. As mentioned above, Perotti held this view, and suggested major changes in his *Dissertazione*. When Scopoli re-examined this proposal, he seems largely to have agreed, but knew that it would be difficult to win a battle against popular opinion.

Article XIII of the decree of 18 September 1807 stated that "particular regulations will be made for the order of studies and internal discipline of the conservatory". These were first published on 27 October 1807 and again, with some additional clarifications, on 7 March 1808. The regulations' covering letter, signed by minister Breme, makes it explicit that the French example was taken into account:

For the most correct compilation of the same [articles], I have consulted appropriate people, as well as the various regulations already adopted by the most famous conservatories. Those of Paris in particular provided me with some articles relating to the ordering of teaching, the division of courses, etc. I have used these, with modifications appropriate to each case.⁵⁶

Indeed, the threefold division of the *classi*, or what we would call courses or grades, is undoubtedly adopted from the fourfold division used in Paris. A comparison makes this clear⁵⁷:

⁵⁴ Already in 1770, Giovenale Sacchi, a learned musicographer, and supporter of dance-teaching, warned of the damage that may be caused to some boys if they were taught this activity, which was held to be "cosa rea e viziosa in se stessa e negli effetti nociva [a wicked and vicious thing in itself, and dangerous in its effects]"; Giovenale Sacchi, *Della divisione del tempo nella musica, nel ballo e nella poesia* (Milano, 1770; repr. Bologna, 1969), p. 29.

⁵⁵ See the "Sommaire des dispositions réglementaires du pensionnat" in: Pierre, *Le Conservatoire*, p. 245.

⁵⁶ Archivio di Stato di Milano, Studi parte moderna, cart. 296 (27 October 1807).

⁵⁷ The definitive and complete version of the regulations is in Mompellio, *Il Regio Conservatorio*, p. 89-99; the Paris regulations are in Pierre, *Le Conservatoire*, p. 231-232 (titre III).

Paris Conservatoire Regulations

The teaching is divided into four *degrés*

Premier degré

Study of music's elementary principles, solfège, and preparation for singing

Second degré

Study of singing, declamation, and instruments

Troisième degré

Study of scenes sung with orchestral accompaniment, vocal and instrumental study of ensemble pieces in private and public, study of harmony and composition

Quatrième degré

Additional courses, in public, dealing with the relations between physical, mathematical, philosophical, and poetic sciences and music

Milan Conservatory Regulations

The teaching is divided into three grades

First grade

Study of music's elementary principles, solfège, and preparation for singing and playing

Second grade

Study of singing, dancing, declamation, and instruments

Third grade

Study of scenes sung with orchestral accompaniment, vocal and instrumental study of ensemble pieces in private and public, study of composition

Apart from the *quatrième degré* and the already-mentioned addition of dance to the second grade, this introductory part of the Milan regulations copies Paris exactly. Nonetheless, it must be said that these subdivisions give the impression of being entirely theoretical. Unfortunately, there is no further information on study methods in Milan in these years, so it is not possible to say how, or, above all, *if* the organisation into grades was put into practice. Many questions are raised: how did the grades relate to the ten years of study? Did they have fixed durations? Was it possible (for example, for composers) to move directly from the first to the third grade? Did ensemble music belong only to the last years of study? And so forth. One senses that the regulations' author wanted, or found it convenient, to use 'French' forms, but that these did not influence reality, which still used a system entirely centred on the private relation between master and pupil.

A further observation concerns Milan's lack of interest in the complementary materials planned in Paris's final *degré*. Paris's provision of this course makes it clear that there was a willingness in that city to develop a theoretical framework that would contribute to giving French music an iden-

tity.⁵⁸ This was done not by studying it in practice, but by giving it a recognisable degree of respect (it was not for nothing that these courses were held publicly). However, although the make-up of this fourth level seems to look forward to defining a renewed French music on the basis of its theoretical principles, the *quatrième degré* was never put into practice in Paris. In any case, Milan obviously had no similar interest in defining its musical identity. It had, as it were, a more short-term vision. On the one hand, it was not concerned with creating a style (national or otherwise), because it already had one, and on the other, with only 24 boarding pupils, it could not claim to decide what should or should not belong to music history.

The regulations signed by Breme differ in a small number of other ways from previous plans: the number of singing teachers was increased to two, "because one alone could not teach both the boys and the girls at the same time"; singers were forbidden from being copyists, "such exercise damaging the chest, and thus the strength and clarity of the voice";⁵⁹ and a harp course was added. This last, which was unknown at the Paris Conservatoire, apparently sprang from an internal necessity:

Since the young girls do not study instruments, the more frequent practice of singing, as well as of the harp could compensate for the lack in their studies.⁶⁰

Studying the harp is thus presented as a distraction from monotony for the girls, who were able to dedicate themselves only to singing (or dancing). However, this cannot be true, for it would make the harp exceptional and a female privilege. It would be more reasonable to see the introduction of the harp as a possible instrumental option conceded to girls who did not want to, or could not, study singing. But probably even this was not the case. A marginal note, added later to the minister's letter (when the lessons had already been assigned),⁶¹ not only shows that the boys were barred from studying the harp, but also suggests a possible answer for the addition. It reads:

But as for the harp, it will not be possible for this study to take place in the first years, considering the youthfulness of the girls, for whose teaching Signor Andreoli will only receive the wage of a double bass teacher. Thus, harp teaching cannot take place until later, although it has been proposed.⁶²

⁵⁸ This aim was also certainly behind the opening of the public library, which possessed, according to the decree of 1795 (art. X), "a complete collection of scores and books treating this art [music]" (Pierre, *Le Conservatoire*, p. 125).

⁵⁹ Archivio di Stato di Milano, Studi parte moderna, cart. 296 (27 October 1807).

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Apparently after 23 April 1808, the date of issue for the decree with the names of the teachers chosen; see Mompellio, *Il Regio Conservatorio*, p. 27-28.

⁶² Archivio di Stato di Milano, Studi parte moderna, cart. 296 (27 October 1807).

If the course was not available in the first years, then it would not have been possible for the male pupils to take it. It was as unusual in the early nineteenth century as it is today for a single teacher to be able to offer courses both in harp and double-bass, and one is led to suppose that the Conservatory simply wanted to profit from the teacher's abilities by adding a course that was not thought to be essential.⁶³

For the rest, Breme adopted all of Grianty's proposals without significant alteration. In promoting Grianty's ideas, and making them his own, it is slightly disturbing that he did not credit their originator, and even more troubling is his claim to have derived some of Grianty's solutions from the French system. This is so, for example, with the docking of wages in the event of absence, and the provision of 15 days' holiday per year.⁶⁴

Differences between the Paris Conservatoire and the Milan Conservatory

The Milan Conservatory opened in 1808 with 18 pupils (12 boys and 6 girls), all boarding at the government's expense, and 16 teachers offering 14 courses (*solfeggio*, composition, singing, harpsichord, violin and viola, cello, horn, clarinet, bassoon, harp, oboe and flute, double-bass, declamation, and dancing).⁶⁵ An initial and obvious difference from Paris is the one-to-one relationship between teachers and pupils, typical of the apprenticeship-style training of the Italian didactic tradition.

The following year, Napoleon offered the Milanese the Conservatoire's 12 textbooks in French.⁶⁶ They were in folio-format, sumptuously bound in leather and finished in gold, and fit within the imperial policy of extending its borders. However, the volumes seem to have almost never been opened in nearly 200 years (they still make an attractive display in the office of the current director of the library). Only three of them were translated into Italian, once the Austrians returned: those for singing, clarinet, and bassoon. The translation of the bassoon method was limited to two reprints,⁶⁷ but the Italian translation of that for clarinet was republished throughout the nineteenth

⁶³ In fact, real harp classes were only begun in 1850, with the teacher Angelo Bovio (who ran them continually until 1901); see Mompellio, *Il Regio Conservatorio*, p. 103.

⁶⁴ Grianty had planned for these in *nota* 3, points V and VII.

⁶⁵ Mompellio, *Il Regio Conservatorio*, p. 23-24; it is not stated if all the teachers were active immediately.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 57; also Grigolato (p. 222), and Manca (p. 15-16), cited respectively in n. 23 and n. 21.

⁶⁷ Etienne Ozi, *Nouvelle Méthode de basson adoptée par le Conservatoire pour servir à l'étude dans cet établissement* (Paris, an XI [1803]); Italian trans., Etienne Ozi, *Metodo per fagotto composto espressamente per il Conservatorio di Parigi* (Milano, ca. 1832; ²Milano, 1841; ³Milano, 1895).

century, and even boasts an edition from recent years.⁶⁸ For the singing treatise, which was expressly derived from the methods of the Italian school, only the introductory pages were translated.⁶⁹

The neglect of the French methods should be set against a massive enterprise to produce similar books undertaken, from the Conservatory's early years, by Bonifacio Asioli, first teacher and director of the Conservatory, as well as master of the Royal Chapel, and an outstanding figure in the musical landscape of Napoleonic Milan.⁷⁰ In the course of twenty years, he wrote more than a dozen treatises and manuals, amounting to one for every subject, intended for use in the school's teaching. These text-books were the early nineteenth century's real didactic reference-point, but they should not be over-valued. Even in the conservatories, Italian music-educational practice still remained tied to face-to-face teaching. The use of manuals was marginal: real teaching took place *ad personam*. Many of Asioli's treatises were written at the end of his career, almost as a final testimony to his activities, and were probably never adopted in the classroom.

Nonetheless, the distance between Asioli's treatises and the French methods is symptomatic. Asioli has a direct style, based on practical advice and good sense. He often avoids use of conscious educational theories. The French methods, on the other hand, linger on historical issues and theoretical questions. They often justify practice as the result of more or less general musical principles. Once more, this reveals the distance between Paris and Milan. For France in these years, manuals, right down to their glossy appearance, aimed to confirm musical competence (today we would say professionalism), even ahead of being educational tools. In Italy, on the other hand, they neither tried to confirm anything, nor were they much used in standard practice. Their spread in the post-Napoleonic, or Austrian, years, was mainly in emulation of, if not direct transfer from France. A pupil's training, however, was still left to direct contact with the teacher.

⁶⁸ Details of the numerous Italian reprints of the method, by Jean-Xavier Lefèvre (1803), published in Italian from 1833, are given by Marina Vaccarini, in Salvetti (ed.), *Milano e il suo conservatorio* (see the bibliography at the end of this article).

⁶⁹ Translated in 1825, in the printing-house of Antonio Carulli, as *Metodo di canto del Conservatorio di Parigi adottato dall'I.R. Conservatorio di Milano*. The more than 200 pages of musical examples in the *Méthode de chant du Conservatoire de Musique* (Paris, [1803]) were almost entirely drawn from Italian composers. With non-Italian composers, the pieces chosen had Italian texts. On Carulli, "editore nell'I. R. Conservatorio", see Gilda Grigolato, "Editori musicali nel Conservatorio di Milano", *Annuario del Conservatorio di Musica "G. Verdi" di Milano* (1965-66).

⁷⁰ On Asioli, see the bibliography published in Agostina Zecca Laterza, "Bonifacio Asioli maestro e direttore della Real Musica", *Chigiana*, 26-27, n.s. 6-7 (1971), p. 61-76, at p. 76. Asioli's first biography lingers at length on the problems of writing methods for the conservatory, but at no point mentions the French treatises; see Antonio Coli, *Vita di Bonifacio Asioli da Correggio* (Milano, 1834), p. 62ff. See also Bonifacio Asioli, *Il maestro di composizione ossia seguito del trattato di armonia. Opera postuma* (Milano-Firenze, n.d. [post 1832]), p. I-XXXIX.

Milan's willingness to imitate Paris increased greatly in the course of the nineteenth century. On the one hand, the Paris Conservatoire lost some of the rigidity of a military institution, and gradually approached the Italian model, whilst, on the other, Milan returned to Austrian control after 1814, but this was no longer the enlightened government of the eighteenth century. The city became ever more disposed to cultural exchanges with France, and to absorbing its cultural ideas. Typical in this respect is the publication, in the 1840s, of Alberto Mazzucato's translations of Fétis's treatise on harmony, and Berlioz's on orchestration.⁷¹

When it began, the Milan Conservatory was just a small school. Unusual in being under state control, it was only slightly larger and more organised than the innumerable private or family-run music schools, which were the true educational foundation of music in Italy. The Conservatory was created to help improve opera, and, in this, it certainly did its part – it is no accident that the fortunes of Italian opera rose a few years later. Nonetheless, the Conservatory cannot be credited with being the primary driving-force being this renewal. Rather a collective will pushed opera to emerge from the crisis with Rossini. If anything, the Conservatory is the offspring of the same force, and the extraordinary prestige that it would attain in the following years is tied above all to the new opera's good-fortune. The best musicians in the country converged on Milan because its opera house was particularly alert to productions from beyond the Alps (for geographical reasons). Milan's state-run music-training centre was one further element that characterised the city's professional attention to the art. For its part, the Conservatory enjoyed a continual relationship with La Scala, to which it offered musicians and singers, and from which it drew teachers. However, at least in the early years, it gained more prestige through reflection from the more famous theatre than through contributing to artistic quality. A final key element in opera's turn-around was the city's very large number of music and singing teachers. The theatrically targeted Italian musical system would continue to be supported for the rest of the century by the proliferation of family-based teaching. Currently, however, we lack a detailed history of private music schools.

⁷¹ François-Joseph Fétis, *Traité du contre-point et de la fugue contenant l'exposé analytique des règles de la composition musicale depuis deux jusqu'à huit parties réelles* (Paris, [1824]); Italian trans., François-Joseph Fétis, *Trattato completo della teoria e della pratica dell'armonia* (Milano, [1844]). Hector Berlioz, *Grand traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration modernes* op. 10 (Paris, 1843); Italian trans., Hector Berlioz, *Grande trattato di strumentazione e d'orchestrazione moderne [...] tradotto da Alberto Mazzucato* (Milano, [1844]).

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