

Drinking in Music

Arvid Niklas von Höpken's *// bevitore* (1755)

Alan Mauritz Swanson

Just when opera began in Sweden depends upon what one needs to have experienced in order to say that what one has seen is an opera. As early as 1701 there had been at least one completely musical, Swedish, theatre-piece, *Glädje Spel och Ähre-Sång* (Play of Joy and Song of Honour), almost certainly by Magnus Stenbock (1665–1717), with music possibly by Anders Düben (1673–1738). This was essentially a *ballet de cour*, and it seems to have yielded few immediate musical successors, save for a *Fête royale* in 1706. In January and February, 1734, there were four public performances, in Swedish, of Handel's *Acis and Galatea* (1718) in an arrangement by Johan Helmich Roman (1694–1758), the principal court composer and conductor. That seems to be about it in public terms, though there are also complete scores of several Lully operas in Swedish libraries (Moberg, 1932/33., pp. 123–32, esp. 127–28, fn 6).

An important reason for this, perhaps the central one, is that, in all its parts save geography, Sweden was, as it still is, a small country. In 1690, Stockholm had a population of around 55,000 and it had barely reached 60,000 by 1750. In 1700, Paris had a population of 515,000, and London claimed 530,000. Sweden did not get its first purpose-built theatre until 1753, rebuilt in 1766 after a fire, and it was out of town, at Drottningholm, and was for the use of the court when it was there in the summer. (Beijer, 1981, pp. 11–29) After using various rehabilitated spaces, the first purpose-built public theatre in Stockholm opened its doors in 1782.

In addition to audiences and spaces, a theatre requires people, the artists and artisans, on and off the stage, who make it work. The first residential *Swedish* theatre company began its work in Stockholm in 1737 and used several refurbished spaces for its performances until it ceased in 1754. It was not connected to any theatricals at the court. From what is known of its repertory, that company mounted no large-scale musical productions. This was almost certainly because it simply did not have the resources such productions demand (Byström, 1981). But even as one accepts that there is something called an opera, it is also useful to ask why there should be something called an *intermezzo*.¹

It seems to be the case that, until the building of new and larger theatres from around the middle of the nineteenth century, audiences did not normally leave the auditorium between the acts of longer theatre pieces. Most of those earlier theatres really had no place in which to promenade and, in any case, there were no toilets in the house. To compensate for this immobility, between acts of a play or an opera there was some sort of entertainment to hold the audience's continued attention: someone sang a song,

¹ A quick survey of the characteristics of the *intermezzo* is in Troy, 1979, pp. 35–40, 63–69.

played an instrument, did a dance. For grander court events, the French invented the *intermède*, a frequently extended or elaborate musical piece. But there were also occasionally practical reasons for an intermezzo: it gave the performers in the mainpiece a rest and, though many theatres were adding stage machinery to do the job, it gave the stage-workers time to change the set of a complicated piece.

The entr'acte we call an *intermezzo* today took its shape in Venice and drew heavily on the stereotypes found in *commedia dell'arte*. It flourished as a genre in Naples especially from about 1730 and quickly took a special place as a contrasting moment between the tensions in the movement of a serious opera (Robins, 2021).

In Stockholm, King Fredrik died in 1751, and there was a period of mourning which closed all public events. He was succeeded by his adopted son, Adolph Fredrik of Holstein-Gottorp, whose wife, Lovisa Ulrika, was the sister of Frederick the Great of Prussia. The new queen was deeply interested in theatre and, especially, in modern opera. There is a good list of the plays performed at court in 1753 and 1754 by 'Notre Troupe', which seems to have been members of the court, even of the royal household. By November of 1754, a French troupe had been installed in the re-purposed tennis court opposite the palace, and there is a good list of everything it performed from then until 1771, when it was dismissed. In that late-1754–1755 period, the court troupe played a number of one-act *opéras-comiques*, all performed as afterpieces (Beijer, 1989, pp. 36–42). Full operas, however, had to wait until the arrival of the newly-appointed court composer and conductor, Francesco Antonio Uttini (1723–95). As with all Uttini's operas until 1773, *L'isola disabitata* (1755), his first written in Sweden, was in Italian, as suited the queen's taste and Uttini's linguistic ability. It was produced at Drottningholm, and was thus, by inference, limited to those at the court (Beijer, 1989; NB: the register of performances does not include operas or intermezzos; Klemming, 1863–79, pp. 539ff).

It is not impossible that Arvid Niklas von Höpken's quick composition of two Metastasian libretti in 1752 and 1753, and an intermezzo in 1755, suggests that he had some knowledge of which way the regal wind was blowing. It also seems reasonable to suggest that *Il bevitore* was intended to furnish the now-established intention of performing operas with a useable entr'acte. While one cannot say definitively why *Il bevitore* was not used when operas began to be performed after Uttini's arrival, there is one circumstance which played an important role. Most of the newer-style Italian operas, by Uttini and others, performed at Drottningholm and in Stockholm, had only three acts instead of four or five, thus requiring only one or two intermezzi instead of von Höpken's three. Indeed, von Höpken's own two Metastasian operas have only three acts. That von Höpken's three intermezzi could be collapsed into two or, even, one intermezzo, or 'opera', is shown by that happening for their first and only known performances, twice in 1936.

This noted, it is also true that, from the information available, it would seem that court performances quickly shifted to the mainpiece/afterpiece format used in France. (Beijer, 1989, p. 37). To these two conditions, one has to add the possibility, even the likelihood, that a) for whatever reason, someone with decision-making ability simply

didn't like *Il bevitore*, or b) the very thought that a Swede could possibly write a credible Italian opera was beyond such a person's imagination, or c) serious musical composition by someone not a professional composer was beyond consideration, and/or that d) the composition of theatre-pieces was now understood to be Uttini's job. There is, in fact, a fifth possibility to be taken into consideration, as well: von Höpken's two operas and the intermezzo may never have been intended for performance in Stockholm but, rather, in Germany, where he was stationed.

There is only one indubitable fact known about the manuscript titled *Il bevitore, Intermezzi per Musica* [The drinker, Intermezzos in Music] and that is that it exists. Now in Musik- och teaterbiblioteket, Stockholm, it is a complete fair copy of the full score of a short musical theatre-piece in three parts, each called an *Intermezzo* (Musik- och teaterbiblioteket, ms. Z/Sv. Höpken, A.N.v. Il/Bevitore, / ... MS. Part. I:1 KMA). Everything else is assumption, possibility, probability, or likelihood.

The evidence for and against Arvid Niklas von Höpken's composition of two operas, *Il re pastore* (1752, possibly the second setting ever made of this popular Metastasian libretto) and *Catone in Utica* (1753, text also by Metastasio), and the intermezzo, *Il bevitore* (1755, author unknown), has been concisely discussed by Johanna Ethnersson Pontara, who concludes that, while we cannot know for certain, the composition of these pieces may well be by von Höpken (Ethnersson, 2003. pp. 71–73). Ethnersson Pontara also points out, however, that the handwriting is so completely consistent that it could well be that of a professional copyist and, thus, say nothing about who composed the music. This said, there are three small grammatical errors in the manuscript text that are hard to explain. Two could be simply an error of haste, for they are put correctly when they appear elsewhere. The third is more interesting, a clearly-written *gli* giorni instead of the expected article, *li* giorni. 'The two cords *li* and *gli*, were approximately interchangeable. However: the original librettist might have chosen the form *li giorni* for rhythmical reasons, or because he wanted the initial *g* in *giorni* to have a 'double' sound. This means that the Swedish copyist might simply be guilty of "ipercorrettismo", the attempt to correct and improve what he perceived as a spelling mistake. Definitely not a dialectical usage.' (E-mail, Prof. Alessandra Petrina, University of Padua, 26 October 2021.)

In practical terms, these errors are trivial, but they are correct in the (earlier) printed libretto. In terms of trying to discover who actually produced this physical score, they add to the uncertainty of its provenance. Thus, this is not quite the same as saying that von Höpken composed what he may have written down, but, together with other evidence, it is a reasonable inference. In any event, the two operas and the intermezzo certainly form a group physically, suggesting they may all have been copied at the same time. It is immaterial that they are also the earliest operas known to have been likely composed by a Swede.

Taking von Höpken (1710–78), then, as the composer of *Il bevitore*, it is useful that we know that he was professionally a military officer, eventually a general, and that he spent most of his life and career in Germany. How and when he became a skilled composer are questions to which there are at present no definitive answers. That he did

so is attested by the performance of some of his music in Stockholm, though not this piece, nor the two operas.² It is also amply demonstrated by the operas and by *Il bevitore*. They are not amateur work.

That von Höpken composed the three theatre-pieces in Sweden is possible, as he is thought to have been in Stockholm for much of the first half of the 1750s, as dated on the copies of the two operas and the intermezzi. The records in Krigsarkivet put him in Stralsund in January of 1753 and in March of 1754, almost as an exception (Krigsarkivet, in Riksarkivet: SE/KrA/1051/003/H/21 - A 0066447_00322). In any event, the composition of Metastasio's 1751 libretto, *Il re pastore*, had to have been quickly done, and was equally quickly followed by Metastasio's older libretto, *Catone in Utica*. That the three fair-copies of the full-scores were made at the dates assigned on their covers is not clear. The bindings are identical and the writing and ink is so consistent and identical that they seem to have been made as a group, and at the same time. The paper is mostly Dutch, as was common in Sweden at the time.

There is, further, no answer to the interesting question of why von Höpken chose to compose these libretti at all, as opera as a public spectacle did not then exist in Sweden and the few known performances to that point at court did not apparently require intermezzos. Ethnersson Pontara goes further and suggests that '[t]he most likely is that the operas were written to be performed in Stralsund or in a nearby city, since it was there Höpken was engaged during that particular period' (Ethnersson, 2003. p. 72).³ This could well be the reason there are no known parts or other performing material for the two operas and the intermezzi in Stockholm. Alas, there are apparently none in Stralsund, either.

Nonetheless, with all these complications, ifs, and buts noted, we have a complete manuscript score of three intermezzi titled *Il bevitore*.

We can usefully begin by asking where the words for this story come from. Though a definitive answer to this question is neither simple nor possible, there is some evidence which is suggestive and which can bring some nuance to the available material.

There was an Italian opera company in St. Petersburg from at least 1735, and visiting troupes also played in Moscow around that time. The head of the St. Petersburg Italian troupe was Francesco Araja (1709–1770), and the company had Rosa Ruvinetti-Bon (*fl.* 1730–62) and Domenico Cricchi (*fl.* 1726–59) in it (Krucsay, 2015, p. 38). Robert-Aloys Mooser reports a performance there of *Le fils ivrogne* on 9 February 1746, and this sounds suspiciously like *Il bevitore*, but he flatly contradicts this without saying why it could not be (Mooser, 1948–51, I: pp. 219–20). However, according to a letter by Baron Minnich, 18 February (O. S.) /1 March (N.S.) 1746, there had indubitably been an intermezzo called *Il bevitore* and it had Ruvinetti-Bon and Cricchi in it (Minnich,

² Johanna Ethnersson (2003, pp. 47–56) and Einar Sundström (1936, pp. 24–42) have a shorter and a longer presentation, respectively, of what we know of von Höpken's life. For performances, see Vretblad, 1918, pp. 155, 206.

³ 'Det troligaste är att operorna skrevs för att framföras i Stralsund eller i en närliggande stad eftersom det var där Höpken var engagerad under den aktuella perioden'.

1746). The letter implies it was performed in Italian. It is likely that many members of the court knew Italian. No script for this performance is known to exist and it was apparently never published.

Ruvinetti-Bon and her husband, Girolamo Bon, left St. Petersburg shortly after that performance and Minnich wondered whom they would get who could match the comic talent of Cricchi. Cricchi, too, eventually left, and he and the Bons came together again in Dresden.

The entry for Johann Adolf Hasse (1699–1783) in *The New Grove* gives a performance date for *Il bevitore* in Dresden of January 1747, when Hasse, mostly away from Dresden from July 1746 to June 1747, returned to the city to conduct one of his operas. Krucsay clearly puts Ruvinetti-Bon and Cricchi in Dresden in November 1746, while Mooser cites evidence that Cricchi left St. Petersburg by 23 May 1747 (Krucsay, 2015, p. 39; Mooser, 1948–51, I: 142, fn 9). In his extensive catalogue of opera performances in Dresden, Michael Hochmuth says the performances of *Il bevitore* there took place in the Opera House at the palace of Hubertusburg on 29 October 1747 and at the Mingotti Opera House in Dresden itself on 25 November 1747, which latter would have been a public performance (Hochmuth, 2019, p. 18).⁴ Clearly, there is a discrepancy in the Dresden performance date, but the point, however, is the libretto.

If Hochmuth's date for the Hubertusburg performance is correct, there would have been ample time for Cricchi to have given the libretto to someone there to set it, and there would have been time to make a German translation and to publish the whole thing.⁵ The difficulty is not that Hochmuth claims it was composed by Hasse but that he says the words were written by Giovanni Claudio Pasquini (1695–1763), who was attached to the Saxon court at that time. This is contradicted by the music historian, Ortrun Landmann, who argues it was not Hasse, because 1747 was an extremely busy year for him, and that the libretto is a pastiche which might have been assembled by Pasquini (Landmann, 1972, p. 427).⁶

But there is a further dimension to this matter, for the argument for Cricchi's authorship of *Il bevitore* is actually strengthened by a curious remark in the libretto itself, when Moscatello presents himself to Gingest in the opening scene of the first intermezzo.

Moscatello tells Gingest, 'Je m'appelle des Criqui, Mais a present le nom est plus joli, Je m'appelle de Muscatello' (My name is Cricchi, but at the moment, that name is quite funny. I call myself Moscatello). On the face of it, this seems to be an in-joke to make sure people know who the actor is. But, as his name as the actor is evident in the cast-list of the Dresden libretto, we might want to see this as Cricchi identifying himself to the reader as the otherwise un-named author.

⁴ It must be noted, however, that the Dresden libretto itself says it was performed at the Court Opera, but that statement may only have had relevance for the first performance.

⁵ 'Translation' is perhaps too specific a word for the often-inventive German text, which frequently completely recasts the Italian opposite it.

⁶ Interestingly, she also tells us that the repertory book gives the mute parts of Gingest and the waiter to Friederica Roeder and Mr. Burgschaller.

In St. Petersburg, on the other hand, as there was apparently no printed libretto available, Cricchi's name as playing Moscatello was presumably known in advance only from a poster or, perhaps, from general expectation. However, when the audience heard him say his name in that French context and sentence, it would have sounded close to the Russian word *Кpuku*, which means 'screams'.⁷ Thus, there is a bi-lingual joke that the name sounds 'funny' because the singer 'screams'. This can reasonably be understood as a word-play Cricchi would have had access to, and reason to use, only in St. Petersburg. Though both the Dresden printed libretto and the manuscript words in the score are spelled in French, von Höpken puts the stress in *Criqui* – which wants it on the second syllable in French – on the first, making the French sound Italian. The Potsdam libretto (see below), however, spells the name in the French text in Italian, as *Cricchi*.

It is, therefore, the argument here that the maker of *Il bevitore* is Domenico Cricchi, at least up to and including the Dresden libretto. Indeed, though Cipollina gets more music than Moscatello, that near-equality of station and kind of music resonates with the idea that Cricchi gave himself a nuanced and interesting part to play.

The words von Höpken used for *Il bevitore*, then, had been published at least twice before he set them, in Dresden in 1747 and in Potsdam in 1749. How, when, where, and why von Höpken got a copy or a derivation of the Dresden libretto is unknown, and there is no known copy of either the Dresden or the Potsdam published editions in Sweden. That von Höpken had a copy of its words as published in Dresden in front of him is clear.

To be sure, it is the music which is the focus for us in *Il bevitore*, and von Höpken set all of the Dresden libretto. Two small practical matters are worth noting at the outset. The Basso continuo is not figured, though this was not unusual: Telemann's *Pimpinone* (1725) has the figures but Pergolesi's *La serva padrona* (1733) does not, for instance. More interesting, however, is that, with one exception, there are no stage directions in this score. Again, this is not particularly unusual – neither *Pimpinone* nor *La serva padrona* have them – but as the printed text has many such directions in it, it does imply that that there needed to be a separate libretto at hand in order to perform this piece. This also suggests that there was also a prompt copy for use during a performance, but none has been found. It is, moreover, not unusual to find that there is no overture, and we can again instance *Pimpinone* and *La serva padrona*.

Il bevitore has three named characters, Cipollina, a vegetable-seller, Moscatello, the drinker, and Gingest, who does not speak, whose face we perhaps do not see, and who disappears during the first scene. There is also a waiter who comes in to collect the bill but says nothing. Both published libretti tell us that Cipollina was sung by Ruvinetti-Bon and Moscatello by Cricchi.

The story begins at once and moves as follows (the three parts are each called an intermezzo, and the bracketed numbers simply keep track of the arias and duets):

⁷ Alexander Kiryanko, [E-mail 18 December 2021], passed this information to me from the philologist, Dr. Anton Demin.

Intermezzo 1

We are at a table outside a café. The very first thing we hear is Moscatello calling his cards, almost as a trumpet signal, making a triumphant jump up from the dominant a⁰ to the tonic d¹ (Illustration 1). In a short passage, we follow him losing his last hand of pichetta (piquet) against Gingest. This opening calls attention to itself but is otherwise a fairly straightforward recitative. It livens up after Moscatello learns that Gingest is French, and a Gascon, from Bordeaux, whereupon Moscatello immediately begins to speak decent, if simple, French, and sings a song, also in French.

Illustration 1. *Il bevitore*, p. 1.⁸



⁸ All illustrations are from the manuscript of the intermezzo in Musik- och teaterbiblioteket, Stockholm [Z/Sv. Höpken, A.N.v. Il/Bevitore, / ... MS. Part. I;1 K.M.A.]. With thanks to Dr. Marina Demira of the library.

The song, the first surprise in this otherwise Italian play, begins with the line [1], *Chevalier de la Table ronde* [Knight of the round Table], which we in our day associate with a specific French drinking song of that title. That latter song, however, apparently first appeared in print later than this libretto. More importantly, the song in this libretto continues in an entirely different prosodic form from the common text, as we quickly see in the opening lines (spelling here and elsewhere as in the score):

Chevalier de la Table ronde	Chevaliers de la Table Ronde,
Verse du vin a tout le Monde	Goûtons voir si le vin est bon. [Repeat]
Et m'en garde un petit doit [Repeat]	
Puis qu'il faut faire a la ronde	Goûtons voir, oui, oui, oui, ...
Ah' qu'on est aise quand on boit...	
[<i>Il bevitore</i> 1]	[Chanson à boire, 1749?]

Now, these are both drinking songs and neither chevalier is an Arthurian knight, but the opening phrase itself is found at least as early as 1643 (Rosiers, 1643–44. *Chanson pour boire* 23). One wonders if even by then the phrase was not already simply available across the cafés and watering-holes of Europe as a synonym for heavy drinkers at a table. Apart from this, too, the libretto's words make it obvious that the music to them must differ from that for the known tune.

Moscatello's song has four measures of introduction and is in two sections, each of which is immediately repeated. This structure is used nowhere else in the intermezzo. The voice part stretches from A to d¹ and it is accompanied by strings and continuo.⁹ Indeed, all but two numbers in the whole intermezzo have this accompaniment. Though the first measure seems to suggest something like a march tune, it quickly moves into a cheerful melody with graceful appoggiaturas. What is of considerable interest, however, is that this happens over a rapidly-running bass-line through the whole piece, not the expected tread-like rhythm of a drinking song.

What happens technically is that we see von Höpken meeting the author's unusual opening to his story with a musical setting that makes unexpected play with the conventions of both a drinking song and an opera. This small complexity was almost certainly meant to give the sense of a drinking song, but von Höpken put it together in a curious way. By this, I mean less the outer form – A, repeated/B, repeated, a shape which is not unique – but rather that he breaks up the eleven lines of the text in an unexpected way. On paper, they are laid out to look like they should be seven lines of a verse and four of a refrain, but von Höpken takes the first three repeated and last eight repeated; rather elaborate, in fact, for a drinking song. What he has done is to take the probably well-recognized opening words as a kind-of signal of an expected drinking-song and then reshaped it into an arietta, something slightly more complex, and unexpected.

It is useful to ask at the start, then, what the spectator learns in a play which begins in this manner. On one level, it tells us that Moscatello is not simply a bland, conventional, tavern hound but someone who does unconventional things, someone of whom we

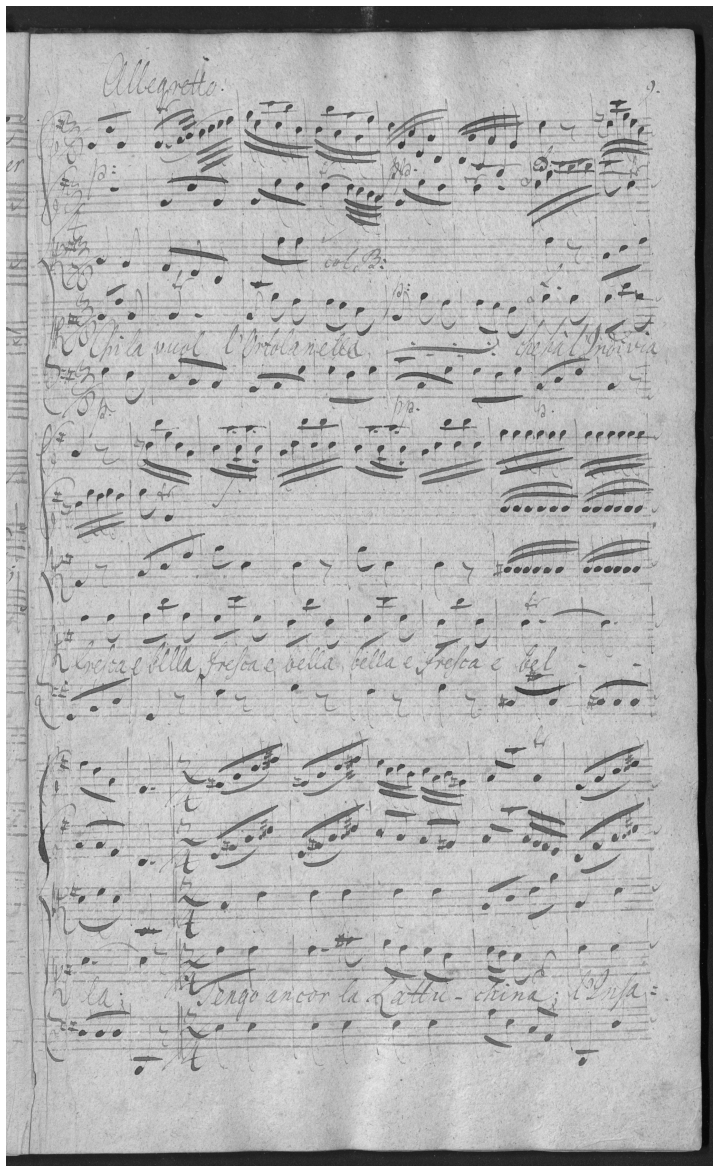
⁹ In this essay, the octave beginning with middle-C begins with 'c¹'.

must take account. On a purely musical level, von Höpken raises our expectations for the music to come.

Despite being offered more drink, Gingest leaves. Returning to Italian, Moscatello pays the waiter. He then draws attention to the purse of money he has, telling us he has received it from his father and he is determined to drink it up. This quite long recitative is fairly unemphatic, perhaps to help it move quickly along. Realizing, however, that he is drunk and losing his step, he sits down to take a nap and, in doing so, drops his purse.

Moscatello now fallen asleep, Cipollina enters and, with no introductory music, sings her first aria, hawking her wares [2], *Chi la vuol l'Ortolanella* [Whoever wants the Vegetable-lady] (Illustration 2). This is a complex, even a flashy, number in four sections, a brief first in 3/8, followed by a long section in 2/4 – a rhythmic relationship von Höpken uses several times – the whole repeated with considerable variation and written *fiorature*. The voice part stretches from d^1 to a^2 . As well as the voice, the violins, too, have great deal of dancing around to do.

Illustration 2. *Il bevitore*, p. 9.



And this in a song about selling vegetables! What we might infer about her from this florid song, is that she is capable and in charge of herself.

This striking aria, which quickly raises the temperature of the proceedings, also raises an interesting musical question. It is impossible to know who of the imported French troupe in Stockholm could have sung this aria if it were intended there, but there must have been someone because, in July of 1754, there was a performance of Uttini's two-act pastoral, *La Galatea*, at Drottningholm, followed in May of 1755 of his first Swedish opera, *L'isola disabitata. Il bevitore* is not a modest piece of work. If it was written with the intention of being performed in Sweden, then clearly there were singers available in Sweden by 1754 of the calibre to sing opera, but who they were and how good they were remains unknown.

After her aria, Cipollina complains about her work, and especially about the *spenditori insolenti* with nasty tongues and white teeth, and 'the cleverest of all who ask me for flowers but want fruit'. She sees Moscatello asleep, discovers the purse, takes it, and leaves. Moscatello wakes up and discovers his purse is missing. He is unhappy, and Cipollina comes in, singing a shortened version of her first aria [3], and then asks what is wrong. He says he is in a hurry but she wants him not to rush off. Maybe she can help him, she says. She suggests vaguely that she likes him; he is surprised, and pleased, but says he must still go.

Catching him before he leaves, her next aria is more explicit [4], *Per lei sono al laccio presa* [For you I am caught in the snare]. This interesting aria has an eighteen-measure introduction, marked at first just *Allegro* with *ma non tanto* apparently added later, and is also marked *da Capo dal segno*. Its range is considerable, c^1 - a^2 , and it is a showy piece of singing. Interestingly, the tessitura is mostly quite high, as if von Höpken wants to give the soprano a chance to show off that register (Illustration 3).

What is also interesting about both of Cipollina's arias is that, other than the surely expected cadential trills, von Höpken doesn't give any obvious places to show off ornaments. Indeed, he seems mostly to write in the *fiorature* he expects. That said, a good singer can find places to ornament almost anywhere, and there is no reason to imagine that Ruvinetti-Bon and Cricchi would not have done so. Indeed, this habit became a source of constant complaint well into the next century: it sprinkles the reviews in early issues of the important Leipzig music journal, *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, for instance, from its beginnings in 1798 on.

The following recitative exchanges are quite lively, bantering back and forth initially about the money and slowly moving at the close to speaking lightly of love. She suggests waiting a month and he insists he must find his purse. Following immediately upon this colloquy, without introduction, they sing the duet [5], *La borsa più non ho/Mi spiace in verità* [I don't have the purse anymore/I am really sorry], which closes the first intermezzo. This is a long duet with no tempo mark indicated, though the music suggests a rapid pace. This is also one of the few places where the accompaniment, strings and basso continuo, has dynamic markings, *piano*, rising quickly to *mezzo forte*, to arrive eventually at *forte*, as the two soloists trade off ornamented moments.

Illustration 3. *Il bevitore*, p. 27.



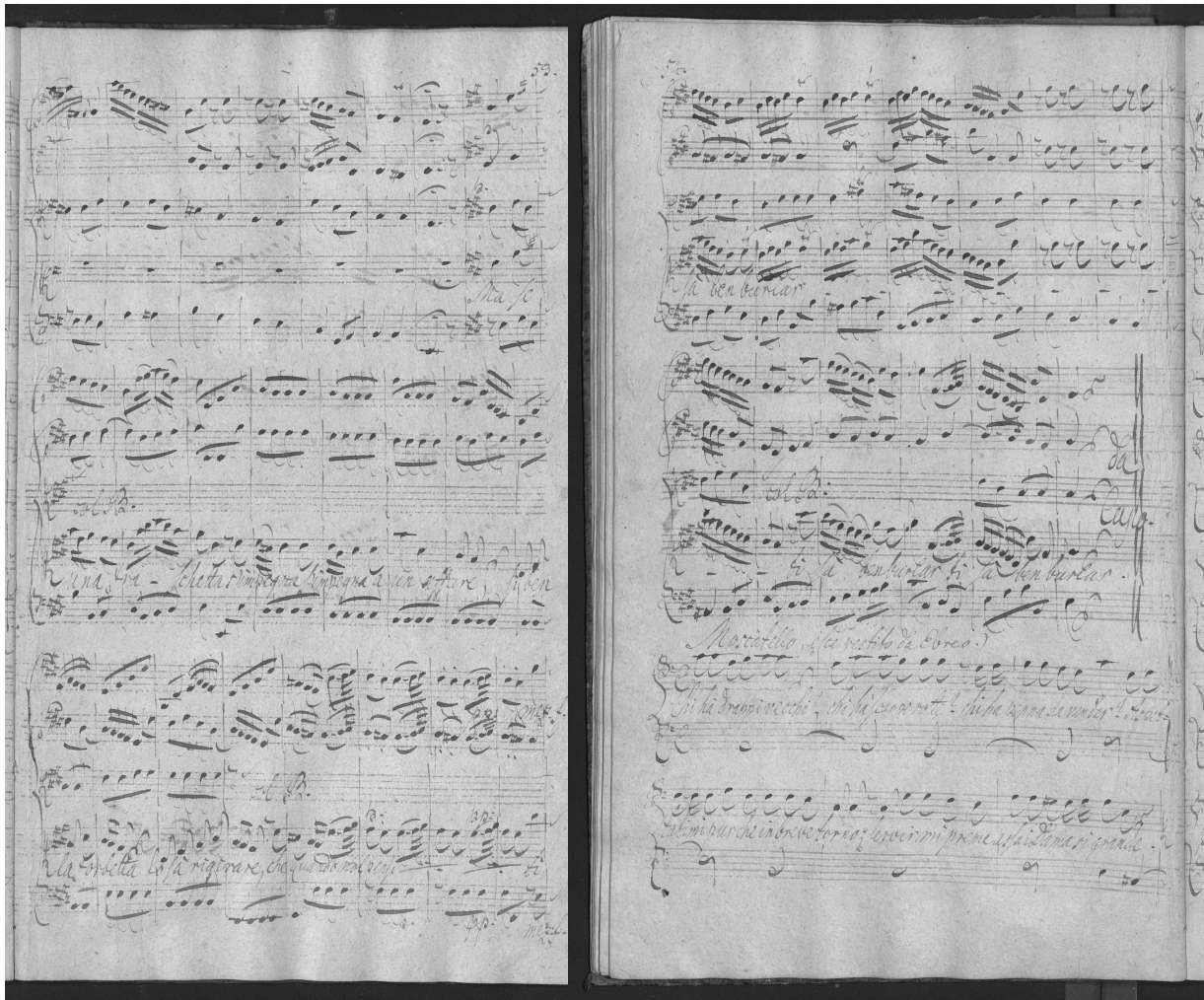
A great deal happens in this first intermezzo. Not only is the plot set immediately in motion and the characters introduced and given an initial individuality, as we would expect, the five numbers of the music give us four quite different forms, both in structure and expression.

Intermezzo 2

We are in a street. Cipollina exults that when the woman has the upper hand, she can play tricks on the man. She calls Moscatello a *sciocco*, a fool, and rejoices that she has the purse and that he can never find it, and that now others can spend their days selling whatever they want. From the side, however, Moscatello quietly sees this. Cipollina is smart enough to realize that she must invest this much money and heads off to the ghetto, where she knows two men who deal in money. In earthy language she girds herself for what she shall do. Moscatello, still out of her sight, says she shall meet someone else before she gets to them. Cipollina rejoices in her cleverness. The recitative sets up, and segues directly into, her aria [6], *Una Vecchia stordita* [A giddy Old Woman]), which is about how an older woman may not really understand how she can work things to get a bit of extra money on the side, while a clever girl, being very

smart, may pull off a crafty transaction, and have a good laugh. This aria begins with an introductory *Allegro* of 24 measures, the longest in the whole piece, which immediately drops into 4 measures of *Adagio*, on the first three words as above, then returns to *Allegro*, which again drops to three measures of *Adagio* on the opening words, before continuing *Allegro*. The B-section is short, but not without its points of display for the voice, and the Da capo brings back the entire A-section (Illustration 4).

Illustration 4. *Il bevitore*, pp. 53–54.



This showy and boasting aria seems intended to be the soprano's big moment and puts her case and another side of her personality clearly before us.

Moscatello enters, dressed as Giacobbe, a Jewish money-dealer, *esce vestito da Ebreo*. This, by the way, is the only stage direction in the whole score.¹⁰ In the long colloquy which follows the aria, Moscatello convinces Cipollina that he is Giacobbe, and that he can do good things for her with the money. He rounds off the transaction and sings an aria promising that result [7], *Vi prometto, ed assicuro* [I promise and assure you]. This long *da capo* aria begins with 18 measures of introduction and is clearly

¹⁰ This is also the point at which the Potsdam text of *Il bevitore* starts its considerable deviation from the Dresden version.

meant to give the male singer a major number to show off in and to provide a musical balance to the aria by Cipollina we have just heard, not least in the relatively short B-section (Illustration 5).

Illustration 5. *Il bevitore*, pp. 64–65.



After all the promises, he takes the purse and they close the second intermezzo with a duet, each expressing her and his joy at the prospects [8], *Ite a portar la Gioia/Tengo che mi una Gioia* [Go and bring Joy/What I hold is a Joy]. This *da capo* duet occasionally trades decorative moments back and forth between the singers, especially on the beginning words, which make obvious to the audience that each has her or his own idea of what will happen.

This scene is more important than I have perhaps let it sound, for it introduces a new narrative element. It shows us how Cipollina is capable of acting intelligently in her own interest, as has been suggested in the first intermezzo. But, importantly, we see that Moscatello is not just a passive or blustering fool. The music, too, supports a notion of equal importance and continues to offer new musical shapes.

Intermezzo 3

Perhaps a different street. Moscatello begins the scene with an angry arietta [9], *E troppo perfida* [It's too disloyal]. This raging aria, filled with dynamic markings, starts with fourteen measures of introduction in which the violins are intensely active, and this virtuosity is shared when Moscatello enters. In it, the audience hears his view of Cipollina (who, we recall, has let us know she considers Moscatello a fool). It gets the third intermezzo off to a quick and volatile start. It also provides the musical counterpart to Cipollina's mocking aria in the second intermezzo and underlines for us the equality of their interaction. Both are playing a game. In the immediately following recitative, we learn that he is angry with her pretending, but, at the same time, is looking forward to the coming joke. He goes aside and Cipollina comes in, worried that she cannot find Giacobbe, and fears she has lost the money. Moscatello arrives and offers to help her, and asks for whom she is looking. She says it is Giacobbe and he is about the same size as Moscatello. Moscatello says he knows him and will go and get him.

Cipollina admits she likes Moscatello. She sings a quite elaborate aria accompanied by two horns, two flutes, and the customary strings [10], *Piacemi quel bel brio* [I like that openness]. This is one of two places where the accompaniment is more than just strings, and the only one to have flutes. In the B-section of this *da capo* aria, von Höpken lets the strings and the flutes almost careen around before the repeat (Illustration 6).

Illustration 6. *Il bevitore*, p. 91.



It is worth remarking that the horns, flutes, and strings are all independent parts; the winds do not just double the strings.

Moscatello returns, dressed as Giacobbe. He pretends to have not quite remembered their agreement and she is furious and demands the purse back. He refuses and says it is his. The argument continues and she grabs hold of his beard. To her astonishment, it comes off; and he says, *Moscatello io son, ne son più Ebreo* [I am Moscatello, a Jew no more]. Cipollina is confused. Moscatello asks her to marry him. The long introduction to his ingratiating aria [11], *Bella mia, se son tuo sposo* [My darling, I am your husband], cools off the heat of the preceding moments, and has a tempo marking of *non tanto allegro*. Cipollina says yes, but then makes a condition that he must give up the bottle. He agrees, asks her to give him her hand, and there is a closing duet [12]: *Un'altra volta ancora/Son pronto, mia Signora* [One more time/I am ready, my Lady]. This Allegro is for horns and strings. Von Höpken also sees to it that singers and strings are given plenty of elaborate fiorature. Though not marked so, because of a fermata 21 measures from the end, one may want to expect that the last measures were intended as a race to the finish.

As a further twist to the verbal substance of this intermezzo, Ortrun Landmann points out that two of the numbers come from other intermezzos. 'Bella mia' [11] is also found in *Il finto pazzo*, 1746, but not Pergolesi's original version nor from the one performed in Dresden on 4 September 1747, a performance Cricchi took part in. The aria does, however, appear in a version of *La contadina astuta*, one of many reworkings of Pergolesi's *Livietta e Tracollo* (1734). The closing duet, 'Un'altra volta' [12] is also the closing duet in *La vedova ingegnosa* (1735) by Tommaso Marianai and Giuseppe Sellitti.¹¹ This sort of textual migration was fairly common in the eighteenth century, and not just in intermezzi. Once an opera or intermezzo got out of the author's and composer's hands, such movement was frequent. It happened to Mozart as soon as his operas got outside Vienna or Prague. In short, then, we cannot say exactly what words *Il bevitore* consisted of for that St. Petersburg performance on 9 February 1746. On the other hand, these arias are in the Dresden libretto of 1747 and were set subsequently in the Stockholm version dated 1755.

As it happens, [11] and [12] are not in the Potsdam libretto, which has a heavily rewritten second intermezzo/act and an all but completely new third, both extending the interplay of the two characters. In it, as Giacobbe, Moscatello begins by speaking the German of the translation, then a mélange of Italian and German. There are different arias and the whole is more sentimental. Who wrote this new mélange of *Il bevitore* is unknown, but that libretto tells us it was performed by Ruvinetti-Bon and Cricchi. Interestingly, on the title page of the copy of the Potsdam libretto in the Berliner Staatsbibliothek, a much-later hand has credited the music to Johann Adolph Hasse

¹¹ Landmann [E-mail: 30 November 2021] also sees 'Una vecchia stordita' [6] as out of character in *Il bevitore* and suggests it, too, comes from another libretto. It may well come from another libretto, but I have tried to show that it fits here. In addition to those whose work is cited above, I must also add the help given me here by the archivist, Frank Verbeek, at the Amsterdam Public Library.

even though, at that date and in that place, one might have expected Carl Heinrich Graun, the Prussian court composer, to have written it.

These days, the only intermezzo we seem to know, or know of, is Gennaro Antonio Federico's *La serva padrona*, set by many but most memorably by Giovanni Battista Pergolesi in 1733. It is almost the only one performed at all in our time and is the one everyone refers to when uttering the word 'intermezzo'. In its heyday and later, it was frequently embellished, rewritten, and re-composed. Its simple story is unassailable, its original music percolates with delight.

The story of *Il bevitore* does not much resemble that of *La serva padrona*, and the music responds to different claims. To be sure, von Höpken uses only two singing characters, but the whole relationship between them is different and, most importantly, it is not static. Rather, it unfolds for us during the three intermezzi. *Il bevitore* is neither a proto-feminist tract nor an assertion of man-knows-best. The two characters are fairly equal: we learn that both are intelligent, both make mistakes, both have feelings for each other, and both can play a trick on the other. Cipollina has a down-to-earth reality about her: she has her own business, a will of her own, and the clear understanding that she must do something quickly to secure the money she has stolen. Moscatello is friendly and generous and not without wit; he sees that he can get his purse back by playing a trick, but he yields to Cipollina's conditions and, in the end, both win. Though a photograph published with the review in *Dagens Nyheter* (17 September 1936, p. 13) of the only performances, in 1936, suggests a more conventional view, it is important to note that this intermezzo departs from the clear class disparity of *La serva padrona* and others like it and gives us two people of reasonably close social standing. In that sense, it was a good contrast to any opera seria it might accompany, filled as those often were with high sentiments from gods and goddesses, nymphs and shepherds, or despairing prima donnas, noble heroes, and ignoble villains.

At the same time, it can be seen as responding to the new, bourgeois, winds of the early Enlightenment. In this sense, it mirrors some of the comedies that emerged after the so-called *Querelle des Bouffons* (1752–54) in Paris, between those who favoured the serious, less-passionate, formal style thought to be French and those who favoured what they saw as the simpler and more direct, even sentimental, Italian style (Giroud, 2010, pp. 62–66). Though I think it likely that important Swedish court musical people knew of the quarrel – it all took place in print – its real resonance was in its French, especially Parisian, context. There is a sense, in fact, that the quarrel itself merely gave voice to changes that were already under way. This can be most obviously seen in comic opera, where, around the time of the quarrel, and *Il bevitore*, we can see the comic intermezzo beginning to merge with the *opéra-comique* to become the completely sung *opera buffa*. (Troy, 1979, pp. 123 ff.)

All of this noted, one must then be struck by the fact that a significant part of the opening scene of this Italian comedy, including the first song we hear, is in French. This is interesting in a number of ways, not least because it might have given the St. Petersburg audience, who almost certainly knew French, time to settle into what will turn into an Italian story, whose language many of them probably also knew, but for which, as far

as is known, there was no available text or translation. Then, too, the appearance of a significant part in French seems like a late echo of the linguistic mish-mash of Johann Philipp Praetorius' German reworking of a libretto by Tommaso Albinoni for Georg Philipp Telemann's *Pimpinone*, first performed in Hamburg in 1725, and published in 1728. *Pimpinone* is in three parts and most of the arias and concerted ensembles are in Italian, while the recitative and some of the concerted numbers are in German. It is also orchestrated only for strings and Basso continuo.

While we cannot know why *Il bevitore* begins the way it does, we can at least ask what happens when it does so.

We meet first a character who is congenial and generous, has some knowledge of the culture outside this place – Moscatello knows some French and something about France – has acquired some money, and likes to drink more than he should. In short, we meet someone we are meant to like. This is a contrast with the relationship between Telemann's *Vespetta* and *Pimpinone*, for example, or that between Pergolesi's *Serpina* and *Uberto*. Just why the second card player had to be French, and why the whole passage is in French, however, is not clear in any obvious way. However, it does suggest that the story takes place in a mildly international milieu, or, at least, with an international audience, perhaps, say, in St. Petersburg, or Dresden. As was typical for intermezzos, the Italian of this story is the standard Italian of its day (interview, Silvia Terribili, 25 August 2021). An interesting instance of the author's awareness of how to make language itself work, and one that would not have been lost on contemporary audiences, was that Moscatello and Cipollina address each other with formal pronouns – *voi* and *lei* – until the end, when Moscatello, having been discovered, asks Cipollina to marry him, and she finally accepts his offer, and they switch to *tu*.

Perhaps the principal question in front of us in our time is why we should pay any attention to this small, unknown, piece of comic theatre. After all, it was successfully ignored for almost two centuries. The answer must lie partly in the music to *Il bevitore* itself, and respond to issues of its musical, indeed, its inherent musical-theatrical quality. But the answer also lies in its history, and responds to issues of context.

Of its musical quality, one must begin by saying that, whatever von Höpken's daily work, his musical composition is fully professional. While not everywhere virtuosic, its musical numbers respond well to their words, even to the point of musical irony, as in Cipollina's first aria. Indeed, one of the attractions of this libretto might well have been its possibilities for eliciting a broad range of musical responses, from the drinking song which opens the story to displays of anger and of love, as well as of duets of contradiction and of unity. In short, in less than an hour, von Höpken gives us a complete display of comic musical-theatrical possibility. It is an anthology of music which allows von Höpken to show off his compositional versatility. The music historian, Lennart Hedwall, rightly calls von Höpken's music 'convincing and technically irreproachable' and directs attention to von Höpken's ability to find and develop 'pithy and rewarding melodic motifs'¹² (Hedwall, 1993, pp. 91–92). These are not

¹² '... övertygande och tekniskt otadligt, ... pregnanta och tacksamma musikaliska motiv'.

inconsiderable advantages and were so understood by professional musicians at the time, who performed some of his music at concerts, though not *Il bevitore*, as far as we know (Vretblad, 1918. pp. 33, 38, and entries 144, 147, and 475).¹³

The historical significance of *Il bevitore* is not that it is one of the northernmost intermezzi ever composed, a dubious distinction shared with the active musical theatre at the time in equally northern St. Petersburg. Nor is it of more than passing interest that its libretto is one of the relatively few published outside of Italy. That von Höpken can be said to be the first Swede to compose operas, in any sense in which we normally use that word today, is certainly cause for attention. Indeed, *Il Re pastore* and *Catone in Utica* are the first operas composed by anyone in Sweden. Whether or not *Il bevitore* is the only intermezzo composed in Sweden is unknown and is a peripheral question in any event. As we have seen, Uttini's first stage compositions seen in Sweden were two short operas, *La Galatea* (written earlier, in two parts) and *L'isola disabitata (azione per musica*, one act and written in Sweden) and whether they, or any others, were actually performed as intermezzos is doubtful. The queen was modern-Italian in her musical taste and French in her theatrical outlook, which preferred an opera seria to run uninterrupted by comedy.

All this noted, it defies reason that two major operatic compositions and the intermezzo have largely escaped contemporary attention until recently. It is an historical fact, however, that von Höpken's music generally, and his theatre music in particular, seems to have been ignored from the day its ink dried, and it was essentially completely forgotten after his death in 1778. His work, much of it collected by Johan Fredrik Hallardt (1726–94), was acquired by the Royal Swedish Academy of Music and is now in the national music library for music and theatre (Musik- och teaterbiblioteket). This does not approach the question of why it was ignored, the answer to which is obscured by the fact that we do not know who in a position of musical consequence decided to pay it no attention. Then, as now, an artist at any level needed a promotor.

Von Höpken's principal promotor seems not to have been his theatrically-interested brother, Anders Johan (1712–89), but Lars Samuel Lalin (1720–85), a singer who had yet to become Gustaf III's first principal bass soloist, by which time the sense of what was 'modern' had moved on in many important ways. While it is difficult to imagine that Lalin did not know of von Höpken's music generally – he moved in the social circles which included von Höpken's family – the complete absence of parts for the two operas and the intermezzo suggests that those scores may not have been in Stockholm for him to look at. If we push that suggestion further, we can also see that there was a clear preference there for the new, as exhibited by the preference, not only in the court, for new music, new operas, new plays (or, at least, new actors for them). This is self-evident in the choices and performances at the Swedish court from the accession of Adolph Fredrik and Lovisa Ulrika, in 1751, and became accelerated, but in a specifically nationalistic direction, at the accession of their son, in 1771.

The issue of 'modern' and of what a 'modern audience' would accept took a further turn in 1936. On September 16th of that year, there was a grand festive celebration in

¹³ This last was a '*Rec. och Aria*' sung by Johann Gottfrid Zaar, but what it was is unknown.

the palace theatre at Drottningholm.¹⁴ Part of the huge programme was a performance of *Il bevitore*, played in Swedish in one act as an ‘opera’. Reviews of this performance were roughly similar with respect to the libretto and the music, but also pointed to other interests. The two principal Stockholm broadsheets, *Svenska Dagbladet* [*SvD*] and *Dagens Nyheter* [*DN*], both harshly criticized the libretto. In two reviews, *SvD* called it ‘feeble-minded’ and said that it had ‘nothing which can hold our interest’.¹⁵ *DN* was of the opinion it was a ‘pleasantly unimportant piece’ which ‘offers a comedy which only music and literary historians can identify as comic, and is in its working-out (tempo) quite distant from 1936’ (*Dagens Nyheter*, 17 September 1936, p. 13, signed Bon [Staffan Tjerneld]). All, however, were enthusiastic about von Höpken’s music, about which one of *SvD*’s reviewers, the composer Moses Pergament, had considerably more to say than the others, calling it ‘fresh’ and ‘inventive’.

What is worth noting here, too, is that the reviewers’ own perspectives are, understandably, much of their own time. It is of interest, then, that the first reviewer for *SvD*, the poet and naturalist Sten Selander (1891–1957), thought that the reason a 1936 audience could not appreciate the story was that that audiences had been nurtured in a theatre aimed at realism instead of theatrical imagination. Indeed, as it happens, with the possible exception of Handel’s *Acis and Galatea*, performed four times in Sweden in 1734 and then nine times between 1773 and 1780, or Mozart’s *La clemenza di Tito*, performed only four times, in 1823, *opera seria* was an unknown experience for Swedish audiences, especially in 1936. The post-WW1 revival of interest in it had really only started to get under way in a larger sense. Thus, it is fair to say that the 1936 audience would not have had any experience with *opera seria* and the context in which *Il bevitore* was expected to take place or the contrast it afforded to any accompanying *opera seria*. Curiously, Selander was also of the opinion the text was ‘a sermon on temperance, surely extremely necessary in the 1750s’ [‘en på 1750-talet säkert ytterst behövliga nykterhetspredikan’].

That sermon, in whatever form delivered, would have gone nowhere, of course, as the songs of Carl Michael Bellman (1740–95) quickly demonstrated. But sermonizing is not what *Il bevitore* is about. It is what it is and nothing more nor less; a straightforward comic story in wonderful music meant to entertain us. Nor does it need some dark, underlying narrative to keep it alive, much less to make it ‘relevant’. It asks us to accept that laughter, intelligent laughter, is itself always relevant, even today.

In short, then, von Höpken’s use of this story, as opposed to any other he might have chosen to set, suggests, on the one hand, an awareness of the new dramatic possibilities of characters that are near-equals. On the other, that fact also gave him the possibility of exhibiting a complete range of the musical expressions of his day, and allowed him – and the singers – to show off what they could do musically and theatrically. Indeed, in his *SvD* review Selander commented that the ‘feeble-minded story is trilled and fiddled

¹⁴ Sveriges Radio broadcast a studio performance of the event a week later, but no recording of that broadcast was made (e-mail: Davidsson, 16 December 2021).

¹⁵ *Svenska Dagbladet*, 17 September 1936, p. 8, signed *S. S-r* (Sten Selander), and 21 September 1936, p. 11, signed *M. P.* (the composer, Moses Pergament, 1893–1977).

forth at an ultra-rapid tempo' ('sinnessvag handling drillas och kvintileras fram i ultrarapidtakt'). In a way, one might even want to see this comprehensive formal display in less than an hour as von Höpken's own in-joke.

Il bevitore is a fine piece of music-theatre. That it has an interesting historical position in Swedish musical history says nothing about its quality. Its compactly told and swiftly-moving story and its twelve arias and ensembles give us a complete, and comic, survey of all the standard operatic moments, sentiments, and resolutions of its day. And with real people. It's not a bad legacy. Shall we drink to that?

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Abstract

The name and music of Arvid Niklas von Höpken (1710–78) has largely been bypassed, though full-scores of his two operas and an intermezzo survive. The first performance of the intermezzo, in 1936, brought new and positive recognition of his music, and a doctoral dissertation by Johanna Ethnersson in 2003 gave a close discussion of the two operas. The focus here on the intermezzo complements Ethnersson's study. In this, the libretto has turned out to be of special interest because instead of presenting two characters of widely differing social standing, as in *La serva padrona*, for instance, it gives us two characters not too socially distant from each other. Each is smart and each plays tricks upon the other. The arias and duets provide an anthology in brief of all the major forms in mid-eighteenth-century opera. After a brief historical sketch of the context, the analysis follows the three scenes (each called an intermezzo) and twelve arias and ensembles in order. A secondary discovery has led to the probable author of the otherwise anonymous libretto.

Keywords: intermezzo, Swedish opera, aria/duet structures, libretto, manuscript score, Querelle des buffons, travelling opera companies, Domenico Cricchi, Rosa Ruvinetti-Bon, Arvid Niklas von Höpken.

The author

Having debuted at age 7, I can honestly say that my life has been spent on, behind, under, above, in the audience of, and around the theatre. I was born in Chicago (1941) but raised in Indiana. My degrees are from Indiana University and the University of Chicago. In between, I studied music and theatre history and composition for three years at Stockholms universitet. After teaching in the United States, I was appointed professor in the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, from which I retired in 2006. Much of my academic work has dealt with performance issues, and musical composition is all about performance. I have just submitted, to an American university press, a book about the first Mozart operas performed in Sweden. A collection organized by Bertil van Boer and me of articles by Swedish and American scholars about often-overlooked cultural aspects of the Gustavian period has just been published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing.