

## TROMBONE OBLIGATOS IN VIENNESE ORATORIOS OF THE BAROQUE

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The 18th century has long been regarded as a nadir in the history of the trombone—a fallow period separating the “golden age” of the late Renaissance/early Baroque from the revival of the instrument in the early Romantic period. This description is not applicable to Austria, however, for the trombone was cultivated extensively—and often in virtuoso fashion—in the lands dominated by the house of Habsburg, and particularly in their capital, Vienna. Studies by Bruce C. MacIntyre, Robert Wigness, and Richard Raum have demonstrated that trombones appear frequently in Austrian liturgical music of the 18th century, and that parts written for the instrument are not limited to *colla parte* doublings of vocal lines, but include elaborate obligato accompaniments to vocal solos as well.<sup>1</sup> The objective of this article is to demonstrate the existence of a parallel tradition of trombone obligatos in the realm of sacred dramatic music.

Musical life in Austria centered on the imperial court, which was blessed with monarchs who were not only music lovers, but in many cases composers as well. Frederick III (reigned 1637-57), Leopold I (1658-1705), and Joseph I (1705-11) were accomplished composers; Leopold was in fact a rather prolific one, particularly in the area of church music.<sup>2</sup> Charles VI (1711-40) is reported to have been a composer, though no works by him are extant. These music-loving emperors quite naturally maintained flourishing musical establishments: at its peak during the reign of Charles VI the number of instrumentalists in the court orchestra ranged from a low of 61 in 1718 to a high of 84 in 1720.<sup>3</sup>

Vienna's artistic inspiration came primarily from Italy. Italian poets, painters, and architects were much in demand; and talented musicians of all descriptions—singers, instrumentalists, composers—found both an agreeable artistic atmosphere and handsome

1. Bruce C. MacIntyre, *The Viennese Concerted Mass of the Early Classic Period*, Ann Arbor, MI, 1986; C. Robert Wigness, *The Soloistic Use of the Trombone in Eighteenth-Century Vienna*, Nashville, 1978; J. Richard Raum, “Extending the Solo and Chamber Repertoire for the Alto Trombone,” *International Trombone Association Journal*, xvi, spring 1988, pp. 11-23.

2. See Guido Adler, *Musikalische Werke der Kaiser Ferdinand III, Leopold I und Joseph I*, 3 vols., Vienna, 1892.

3. These totals include trumpeters, who formed a separate entity from the regular court “orchestra.” See Eleanor Selfridge-Field, “The Viennese Court Orchestra in the Time of Caldara,” in *Antonio Caldara: Essays on his Life and Times*, ed. Brian W. Pritchard, Aldershot, England, 1987, pp. 115-152, esp. pp. 124-25.

stipends in Vienna.<sup>4</sup> The position of court Kapellmeister was held by Italians, with but one short break, from 1619 to 1715, and that of court composer continued to be dominated by Italians until well into the second half of the 18th century. Italian was the artistic language of the court, and most vocal music—except for the liturgical variety—employed Italian text.

The Italians who migrated north across the Alps brought many native genres with them—sonata, cantata, opera, and eventually, oratorio. As a Catholic country, Austria was more receptive to the Italian oratorio style than were her Protestant neighbors. In the latter part of the 17th century oratorios became an important feature of musical and religious life at the Habsburg court. As we shall see, virtually all the leading court composers contributed to this genre, and libretti for them were provided by the court poets, including the illustrious Apostolo Zeno and Pietro Metastasio. Oratorios were customarily presented only during Lent. During Holy Week, however, a variant of this genre, the *sepolcro*, was often performed.<sup>5</sup> In the late 17th century, *sepolcri* were customarily given either on Maundy Thursday in the chapel of the Dowager Empress Eleanora, or on Good Friday in the imperial chapel.<sup>6</sup> The early Viennese *sepolcro* differs from the oratorio proper in consisting of one rather than two structural parts, and in requiring staging and scenery. For these performances, a representation of the Holy Sepulchre was constructed as a backdrop. The distinction between oratorio proper and *sepolcro* seems gradually to have disappeared in the 18th century, however. Many later sacred dramatic works designated to be performed *al Santissimo Sepolcro* are, like oratorios, in two structural parts, and were not acted out, though they might have been performed before a representation of the Holy Sepulchre. Generic labels for these works are extremely variable: *azione sacra*, *rappresentazione sacra*, *componimento sacro*, and *oratorio* are the most frequently used. The term *sepolcro* has become widely accepted in musicological literature, though in fact even works obviously belonging to this sub-genre are only occasionally so designated.<sup>7</sup> In this study the term “oratorio” is used to refer to all extended sacred dramatic works as a matter of convenience.

In many respects, Viennese oratorios are comparable to Italian operas. Almost all of them have Italian text, the emphasis is on solo singing, and each work consists primarily of elaborate arias, separated by recitatives. After the turn of the 18th century

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4. See Rudolf Schnitzler, “The Sacred Dramatic Music of Antonio Draghi,” Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1971, pp. 14-16.

5. See Howard Smither, *A History of the Oratorio*, vol. i, *The Oratorio in the Baroque Era: Italy, Vienna, Paris*, Chapel Hill, NC, 1977, p. 366.

6. Schnitzler, “Draghi,” pp. 51-59.

7. Smither, *Oratorio*, pp. 376-80.

almost all arias are in ABA form. Ensembles appear occasionally, and choruses generally are confined to the close of a structural part.<sup>8</sup> In later works independent instrumental numbers rarely appear, except as introductory numbers; but instruments continue to figure prominently in these works, as continuo arias only give way to those with elaborate instrumental obbligatos. Among the strings, the violin is the most common obbligato instrument; viola, cello, viola da gamba, baryton, theorbo, and *salterio* also appear. Of the winds, the bassoon is probably the most frequently used, followed closely by the trombone. The chalumeau makes an occasional appearance in an obbligato role, but oboes and trumpets, though fairly common in operas, are rare in oratorios. Conversely the trombone, though common in oratorios and church music, is absent from Viennese operas—to the best of my knowledge—during the period between Cesti's *Il pomo d'oro* (1668) and Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* (1762). The trombone, it seems, had definite religious associations for composers working in Austria.

I have identified some 43 arias with trombone obbligatos, from 38 oratorios, dating from 1666 to 1739 (see Table I). Some call for a single trombone—usually an alto, occasionally a tenor. Others call for a pair of trombones (alto/tenor or alto/alto) with the voice, while still others combine one or two trombones with other instruments. The solo vocal part in these arias is most often given to an alto, occasionally to a soprano or tenor, but only rarely to a bass. Four of the “arias” are actually duets, and one is a trio (See Table I).

I have divided composers of trombone arias into three “generations,” the first comprising the late 17th century; the second, 1704-08; the third, 1716-1739. This division is appropriate from a stylistic standpoint, even though the three groups are quantitatively unbalanced, consisting of two, five, and 31 oratorios respectively.

#### The First Generation: The Late 17th Century

The origins of the trombone aria tradition are problematic. Much material from the late 17th century has been lost, and many of the extant scores are incomplete. Leopold I's *Il Sacrificio d'Abramo* (1660) is perhaps the earliest Viennese *sepolcro*. A trombone is included among the instruments listed on the title page, but it is not otherwise indicated in the score.<sup>9</sup> In *Il pentimento, l'amor verso Dio* (1661) by Antonio Bertali, the final ensemble, “Se nutri di speranza,” is scored for two *cornetti muti*, trombone, violin, four violas, and continuo. The trombone part is quite simple and brief, however, and bears

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8. *Ibid.*, p. 409.

9. Score in Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, ms. 16596. I am grateful to Prof. Rudolf Schnitzler, of Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, for providing information on the initial performance of *Il Sacrificio d'Abramo*. The assistance of Schnitzler, whose catalogue of Viennese oratorios will be published shortly, has proved invaluable in the preparation of this article.

no comparison with the elaborate trombone obligatos of the next century. Giovanni Felice Sances' (c. 1600-79) *Lacrime di San Pietro* (1666) contains an aria, "O spirti di dite," which bears the superscription *aria con tromboni*, but the score shows parts for voice and continuo only. Two additional sacred dramatic works by Sances contain indications for trombone parts in instrumental numbers, but again, no music for the instrument appears in the score. Many of these early oratorios are preserved only in "shorthand" scores; instrumental parts were apparently separate and often have not survived.<sup>10</sup>

Our survey begins in earnest with the appearance of a *sepolcro* by Antonio Draghi, *Il libro con sette sigilli* (1694). This apparently is the earliest fully extant sacred dramatic work containing an elaborate obligato part for trombone. Draghi (1635-1700) was an enormously prolific composer whose compositions include 124 operas and 41 sacred dramatic works. Born in Rimini, he worked as a singer in Venice before entering the service of the Habsburgs in Vienna in 1658. The exact nature of his duties during the early years of his residence at court is not known, but by 1668 he was vice maestro di cappella at the court of the Dowager Empress Eleanora, becoming maestro di cappella the following year. By about 1674 he was director of dramatic music at the imperial court, while still retaining his position with Eleanora. In 1682 he became maestro di cappella to the court of Leopold I, a post he retained until his death. A poet as well as composer, he authored many librettos for his own musical works as well as those of other composers.<sup>11</sup> *Il libro con sette sigilli* contains a scene complex in which trombones and a bassoon are used—the only appearance of wind instruments in any of Draghi's sacred dramatic works. The scene complex begins with a dialogue recitative, followed by a *sinfonia* for three trombones, bassoon, and continuo<sup>12</sup>. The ensuing recitative and aria (Ex. 1) are sung by a character personifying "The Ungrateful Hate of Malchus." The aria is scored for bass voice with elaborate obligato parts for one trombone and a bassoon. Ungrateful Hate "is swallowed up by the earth because of his blasphemy and his rejection of the sacrifice of Christ";<sup>13</sup> he sings of the opening of the earth and his plunge into the terrible abyss. The trombone (and bassoon) seem to symbolize God's judgment, but it may be that Draghi also had in mind the equally familiar association of the trombone with the underworld. He must certainly have been aware of this tradition, if only through

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10. For much of the information concerning Viennese sacred dramatic works before 1700, I am again indebted to Rudolf Schnitzler.

11. See Schnitzler, "Draghi."

12. For an edition of this *sinfonia*, see *ibid.*, pp. 318-19.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 209.

Cesti's *Il pomo d'oro*.

Draghi's trombone aria, compared with later examples described below, is exceptional in several respects. It is the only aria in which the voice enters before the instrument(s), and it is one of only four arias for bass voice with trombone. It is furthermore the only trombone aria which is not in ABA form—probably because of its relatively early date. The form is abb'cc', with a motto beginning and an elaborate closing section for the instruments alone.

This scene complex demonstrates the transitional nature of Draghi's work. The *sinfonia*, with its rather simple writing for an ensemble of trombones (plus bassoon), looks backward to the mid-Baroque style of Heinrich Schütz and Emperor Leopold I;<sup>14</sup> while the aria with its soloistic writing presages 18th-century style. For the latter style, Draghi may have been influenced by the florid trombone parts in some early Viennese ensemble sonatas, such as those of Antonio Bertali (1604-69), who was Habsburg Kapellmeister from 1649 until his death (see Ex. 2).

The Second Generation: 1704-08

Our second group consists of a cluster of five oratorios that appeared in consecutive years beginning in 1704. Four of these are by Marc'Antonio Ziani, the fifth by an anonymous composer. Instrumental as well as vocal writing is more *cantabile* in style in this period than in Draghi's oratorios. Arias tend to be longer, and are invariably in ABA form.

Ziani made his reputation as an opera composer in Venice before coming to Vienna as vice-Hofkapellmeister in 1700. When Hofkapellmeister Antonio Pancotti died in 1709, Ziani was named his successor, though he apparently was not confirmed in this position until Charles VI became emperor in 1712. Ziani was quite imaginative in his use of instruments, being among the first to use the chalumeau in an opera. Moreover, he frequently included elaborate trombone obligatos in his liturgical music, as well as his sacred dramatic works.<sup>15</sup> Two of Ziani's oratorios—*Il mistico Giobbe* and *La morte vinta sul Calvario*—are exceptional in that each contains more than one trombone aria.

*Il Sacrificio d'Isacco* (1707), with music by Ziani and text by Pietro Antonio Bernardoni, demonstrates the manner in which Austrian court poets sometimes conflated Old Testament stories with New Testament concepts. The dramatic high point of the text

14. For examples of Leopold I's music with trombones, see Adler, *Musikalische*.

15. Regarding trombone obligatos in Ziani's liturgical music, see Camillo Schoenbaum, ed., *Geistliche Solomotetten des 18. Jahrhunderts, Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Osterreich*, vol. 101/102, Vienna 1962, pp. 3-18.

is reached as an angel appears, informing Abraham that God does not require the sacrifice of his son Isaac. In the aria "Fu pietá del mio Signore," Abraham expresses his gratitude for God's mercy. Then, to the accompaniment of a tenor trombone, the angel sings "Non é giunta ancor l'etá" (Ex. 3), in which the aborted sacrifice is interpreted as an omen, foreshadowing Christ's death on the cross:

(A section)

The time has not yet arrived when this mountain shall  
be stained with innocent blood.

(B section)

All of his [blood] will be shed, the divine merciful Son, and his body will one  
day pass away.

Thus the trombone aria appears, not at the most salient dramatic moment of the biblical story, but at the point where the theological message of the *sepolcro* is revealed. As is often the case, the trombone accompanies a pronouncement from God, revealed through an intermediary. The Christological twist to the story offered by the angel serves to justify the use of an Old Testament theme in a sacred work intended for performance during Holy Week (it was performed in the Hofkapelle on Good Friday<sup>16</sup>).

"Non é giunta ancor l'etá" is a typical Baroque da capo aria in many respects: its A section is tonally "closed," beginning and ending in D major, with an interior modulation to A. The shorter B section is tonally "open," moving from B minor to E minor. Voice and instrument perform successively more than they do simultaneously; vocal statements are interspersed with several trombone ritornellos, the longest of which are at the beginning and end of the A section. The aria has a modified "motto" beginning, more characteristic of 17th- than of 18th-century practice. Ziani's instrumental writing is very flexible and melodic, reflecting the full flowering of the mature Baroque style in contrast to Draghi's more abstract, conservative style.

Apart from Ziani's works, only one additional sacred dramatic work with a trombone aria can be identified in this second generation. This is an anonymous untitled *sepolcro* dated 1705.<sup>17</sup> It contains two trombone arias, one apparently by the anonymous composer himself, the other by Emperor Joseph I. Collaborative efforts were common in Vienna: Leopold I supplied several arias for Cesti's *Il pomo d'oro*, and Joseph himself contributed arias for operas by Ziani and Giovanni Bononcini. Joseph I's "Alme ingrata" was the first—and until fairly recently, the only—Viennese trombone aria ever to be

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16 . Information provided by Rudolf Schnitzler.

17 . Venice, Biblioteca nazionale marciana, ms. cl. It. IV, 572.

### Example 1

Antonio Draghi, *Il libro con sette sigilli* (1694)

### Example 2

Antonio Bertali, *Sonata a 3* (c1660). Modern ed. by Robert Wigness and Paul Block, London 1971.

### Example 3

Marc' Antonio Ziani, *Il Sacrificio d'Isacco* (1707)

published: Guido Adler included an edition of it in his *Musikalische Werke der Kaiser Ferdinand III, Leopold I und Joseph I* (Vienna, 1892).<sup>18</sup> It is apparently a "substitution" aria: another aria with the same text (but without trombone obbligato) appears in the manuscript, for which the emperor's aria serves as an alternate (see Ex. 4).

We can only speculate as to the identity of the composer of the other trombone aria in this *sepolcro*. Ziani, who composed sacred dramatic works with trombone arias in 1704, 1706, 1707, and 1708, would be a reasonable guess, but on the first folio of the manuscript there appears the inscription "di N.D.B." Unfortunately, these initials do not match those of any composer known to have been working in Vienna at the time. Carlo Agostino Badia (1672-1738), who worked at the imperial court from 1694 until his death, is a possibility, though only his last initial fits. Of the 39 sacred dramatic works which Badia produced for the Habsburg court, 19, like the present manuscript, are in the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana in Venice. The aria, "Una pietá silenta" (Ex. 5), is a graceful *andante* lament in triple meter; its text tells of the cruel nature of grief which cannot be openly expressed. The pattern of the filled-in descending tetrachord (see mm. 1-3, 4-6, 14-17, 19-21, and 22-24) suggests a relationship to the chaconne.

#### The Third Generation: 1716-39

No oratorios with trombone arias were produced during a hiatus extending from 1709 to 1715, but beginning in 1716, composers working in Vienna produced at least one every year until 1735 (see Table I). Two such works appeared in 1718, 1719, 1723, 1724, 1726, 1728, 1729, and 1733; and some works enjoyed revivals. In 1736 and 1737 no new works with trombone arias appeared, but the gap is bridged by revivals of Caldara's oratorios<sup>19</sup>. After 1739 the tradition seems suddenly to have died out. Composers from this third generation include a few fairly well-known names such as Johann Joseph Fux, Antonio Caldara, and Johann Georg Reutter Jr.; as well as such lesser-known composers as Francesco and Ignazio Conti, Giuseppe Porsile, and Luca Antonio Predieri. Few salient stylistic features clearly differentiate the works of the third generation from those of the second, though the formal distinction between oratorio proper and *sepolcro*, still discernible in the works of Ziani, gradually disappears in the later period. Later oratorios tend to be longer, and allegorical texts become less popular. The tenor trombone, a favorite of Ziani, gives way to the hegemony of the alto.

Johann Joseph Fux (1660-1741) is one of the few native Austrians in our group. Named court composer in 1698, he was sent to Rome in 1700 for study at the emperor's

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18. See also the more recent edition (of "Alme ingrata" only) by David Manson, Knowle Solihull, England, 1987.

19. *La Passione di Gesù Christo Signor nostro* (revived 1736) and *S. Elena al Calvario* (revived 1737). See Table I.

Andante non allegro

tbn

b.c.

**Example 4**  
Joseph I, aria from an untitled *sepolcro* (1705)

Andante non allegro

tbn

b.c.

Ni codemus [tenor]  
Ur- na pla- ta si- len- ta e a cru- del- ta si-  
mi ple- to- sa

**Example 5**  
Anonymous, untitled *sepolcro* (1705)

expense. Beginning in 1705 he held a concurrent appointment at the cathedral of St. Stephen's in Vienna. In 1715 Charles VI named him Hofkapellmeister, a post he held until his death. Fux is perhaps best known for his monumental treatise on counterpoint, *Gradus ad Parnassum* (1725). He is a champion of both the theoretical and practical approaches to imitative counterpoint, for he employs this style ably in his compositions.

Fux must have been particularly fond of the trombone, for he employed it in many church compositions, and in a few works for instrumental ensemble.<sup>20</sup> He wrote 14 oratorios, of which six contain trombone arias. He sometimes uses the trombone in combination with other obbligato instruments, notably the chalumeau. *Il fonte della salute* has an aria for soprano voice, chalumeau, alto trombone, and continuo ("Vedi che il Redentor;" see Ex. 6); *La cena del Signore*, a duet for soprano and alto with alto trombone, chalumeau, two violins, and viola; and *Il testamento di nostro Signor Gesù Cristo sul Calvario*, a duet for the same forces, minus the strings.<sup>21</sup> In "Vedi che il Redentor," fugal procedure pervades the chalumeau and trombone parts, but does not extend to the vocal part or the continuo. Triple meter, though seen in this aria, is not often present in trombone arias—perhaps because of its frequent association with dance; most trombone arias are serious in tone.

*Il fonte della salute* has an allegorical text. In the trombone aria the personification of Mercy (*La Misericordia*) addresses Obstinate Sinner (*Il Peccatore Ostinato*), advising him to "consider that the Redeemer from his wounded breast wishes to shed the water of life for you. Wipe away with this the sins of your heart and learn to weep, penitent soul."<sup>22</sup> The strongly affective nature of the text is characteristic of trombone arias.

Antonio Caldara (c. 1670-1736) held appointments in Mantua and Rome before taking up residence in Vienna in 1716 as vice-Hofkapellmeister. He was an enormously prolific composer whose *oeuvres* include some 43 oratorios. Twenty-four of these were written for Vienna, of which 11 contain trombone arias. Like Fux and Ziani, Caldara frequently wrote obbligato parts for trombone in his liturgical music.<sup>23</sup> Also like Fux, he was fond of combining the trombone with other obbligato instruments. He uses

20 . For Fux' sacred works with obbligato trombones, see Fux, *Sämtliche Werke*, ser. iii, vol. i, *Motetten und Antiphonen*, ed. Helmut Federhofer and Renate Federhofer-Königs, Kassel 1961, pp. 99-120. For an instrumental ensemble work with trombone, see Fux, *Mehrfach besetzte Instrumentalwerke*, ed. Guido Adler, *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich*, vol. xix, Vienna 1902. See also Wigness, "Soloistic," pp. 13-16, 28-30.

21 . As the plural form of the word—*chalumeaux*—appears almost invariably in Fux's oratorios, it may be that the instrument was doubled.

22 . "Vedi che il Redentor dal suo piagato seno vuole per te versar acque di vita. Tergi con quelle almeno le colpe del tuo cor e impara a lagrima, alma pentita." For assistance with translations of the Italian aria texts, I am grateful to Lawrence Rosenwald.

23 . See Selfridge-Field, "Viennese," pp. 131-32.

chalumeau with trombone in one aria from an oratorio, and bassoon with trombone in three more (see Table I).

*Joaz* (1726), set to a libretto by Apostolo Zeno, is one of Caldara's finest oratorios.<sup>24</sup> Of 15 arias in this oratorio, 13 require only strings and continuo; one calls for chalumeau, while "Cosí a fiume" requires alto trombone and bassoon in the A section (see Ex. 7), two violins and bassoon in the B section. This simile aria appears at a very dramatic point in the oratorio, and the trombone appears to represent the wrath of God. In the recitative preceding this aria the high priest, Jojada, informs Joaz of his true identity and calls upon the assembled priests to recognize him as the rightful king of Judah. He warns them of the wrath of the wicked queen Athalia, adding that while God is merciful, and slow to mete out punishment, He is ready to take revenge when necessary. In the trombone aria, Jojada proclaims God's readiness to punish the evildoers, represented—rather curiously—by shepherds and flocks:

(A section)

Like a river in which rigid ice blocks the waves once clear and flowing,  
shepherds and flocks insult the river, and it seems that it neither hears nor  
cares.

(B section)

But soon these waves break up, and the first one breaking on the shore pulls  
with it in triumph and revenge the shepherds, flocks, and hovels.<sup>25</sup>

"Quando amato non si pente," from Caldara's *Il Re del dolore*, is one of only six arias with two obbligato trombones—in this case an alto and a tenor (Ex. 8). Though exceptional in oratorios, pairs of trombones are commonplace in Viennese liturgical music. As the example shows, Caldara uses the two trombones in simple duet style in parallel thirds and sixths (mm. 1-6, 15-16), as well as in free imitative style (mm. 7-12).

Francesco Conti (1681-1732) was a theorbo virtuoso. Appointed associate theorbist at the court in 1701, he was promoted to principal theorbist in 1708. In 1713 he was elevated to the rank of court composer, filling a vacancy left by Fux when the latter was promoted to vice-Kapellmeister. Conti wrote 10 oratorios, four of which contain trombone arias.

Conti has a penchant for combining the trombone with strings. The aria "Fuggo

24. See Antonio Caldara, *Joaz*, facs. ed. with intro. by Howard Smither, New York 1986, p. [v].

25. "Cosí a fiume, cui rigido ghiaccio l'onde inceppa già chiare, e correnti, fanno insulto pastori, ed armenti, e par ch'egli nol senta, o nol curi. Ma fra poco si sciolgon quell'onde e la prima rompendo le sponde, tira seco in trionfo, e in vendetta i pastori, le greggi, e i tuguri."

chalmereaux

tbn

b.c.  
senza organo violone solo

5

10

15 chalmereaux

tbn

soprano

b.c.

20

Ve- di che il Re- den- tor

25

Ve- di che il Re- den-

### Example 6

John Joseph Fux, *Il fonte della salute* (1716)

Andante

5

10

15

20

25

Co- st a flu- me oui

**Example 7**  
Antonio Caldara, *Joaz* (1726)

d'una in altra selva," from *Il David perseguitato* (1723; Ex. 9), is scored for alto voice, alto trombone, unison violins and violas, and continuo. Conti's aria reveals a high degree of musical unity: the opening motive in the trombone is answered in stretto by the continuo, and subsequently by the voice in m. 6. The string part, which in general is subordinate to the trombone, does not share the opening motive, though it does engage in imitation with the trombone in mm. 3-4.

Francesco's son Ignazio Maria Conti (1699-1759) followed in his father's footsteps, becoming both a theorist and a composer. He was apparently less talented than his father, however, and he never obtained a major court appointment. He received no promotion beyond the title of *Hofscholar*, essentially an apprentice post, which was bestowed upon him in 1719. For the Habsburg court he produced seven oratorios, three of which contain trombone arias.<sup>26</sup>

Most of the Italian musicians who served in Vienna were from the northern regions of the peninsula, but Giuseppe Porsile (1680-1750) was a Neapolitan. He served in Spain under then King Charles III, moving to Vienna in 1713 after his employer had become Holy Roman emperor under the name of Charles VI. Between 1717 and 1737 Porsile produced 13 oratorios for the Habsburg court. Two of these—*Il zelo di Nathan* (1721) and *Il trionfo di Giuditta* (1723)—contain trombone arias.<sup>27</sup> Both of Porsile's trombone arias are for alto voice and alto trombone. In the aria "Caro trono ti abbandano" from *Il zelo di Nathan* (Ex. 10), the alto trombone part is quite elaborate, with several trills. In characteristic late-Baroque fashion, many of these trills are furnished with a notated upper appoggiatura, clearly indicating the starting note of the ornament. Like many Viennese arias in ABA form, the return of A is written out in full, even though it is identical to the initial statement. "Caro trono" is sung by Adonia, who speaks of abandoning her throne.

Georg von Reutter the Younger (1708-72) is one of only three native Austrians who composed trombone arias. His father served the Habsburg court as organist, but the son, who studied composition with Caldara, was initially blocked by Fux in his attempts to obtain a position at court. Reutter became Kapellmeister of the cathedral of St. Stephen in 1736. While recruiting choristers he engaged the young Joseph Haydn, who lived for a time in Reutter's house. On Fux' death in 1741, Predieri was appointed Kapellmeister. Reutter occasionally undertook Predieri's duties, anticipating an appointment as second Kapellmeister—a hope that was realized in 1747. In 1751 Predieri was pensioned off. Reutter took control of the court musical establishment, but was denied the title of court

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26 . I am indebted to Rudolf Schnitzler for information concerning Ignazio Conti's oratorios.

27 . Porsile's oratorio *Tobia* (1720; Vienna, Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, ms. III/15600) contains an aria (ff. 93-97) for soprano and an unidentified obbligato instrument in alto clef—possibly a trombone, but more likely a viola.

Andante

5

10

15

tbn I

tbn II

b.c.

tbn I

tbn II

tenor

Quan- do a- ma- to non si

b.c.

**Example 8**  
Antonio Caldara, *Il Ré del dolore* (1722)

violini e viole uniss. *Andante*  
piano

tbn

b.c.  
senza cembalo

vins e vias <sup>5</sup>

tbn

alto

b.c.

Fug- go d'u- na in al- tra

**Example 9**  
Francesco Conti, *Il David perseguitato* (1723)

Un poco adagio

tbn

b.c.

tbn <sup>5</sup>

alto

b.c.

Ca- ro tro- no t'ab- ban- do- no mi con-

**Example 10**  
Giuseppe Porsile, *Il zelo di Nathan* (1721)

Kapellmeister until Predieri's death. Music at the court underwent a serious decline under Reutter, but this was due more to financial conditions than to any lack of administrative ability on Reutter's part.

All four of Reutter's trombone arias require an alto trombone, although in *Gioas* this instrument is combined with a pair of violins. The opening measures of the aria "Quanto t'offesi," from Reutter's *Bersabea*, are shown in Ex. 11. Noteworthy features include the close imitation between voice and instrument (mm. 8-9) and the syncopation in the trombone part (mm. 5-6).

In this lament, David sings,

(A section)

The more I offended you the more I shall weep for you, and with my weeping  
I shall extinguish your disdain.

(B section)

Ah, I know not how to resist any more, for little by little the pain which slowly  
burns in my heart has formed a wound.<sup>28</sup>

Once again the trombone aria appears at a very affective moment of the drama.

Luca Antonio Predieri (1688-1767) was a violinist and composer who arrived in Vienna in 1737. By 1739 he was court vice-Kapellmeister, and on the death of Fux in 1741 he became first Kapellmeister. He retired in 1751, but retained his title until his death. He composed seven oratorios in all, but only two for Vienna, and only one of these contains a trombone aria. The graceful melodic writing and expressive use of chromaticism of "Dio sol ne porge aita," from *Il Sacrificio d' Abramo* (1738; Ex. 12) reveal Predieri as a composer of considerable talent.

The trombone aria occurs at an emotional point in the drama. Abraham, contemplating the sacrifice of his son, sings,

(A section)

God alone offers us help. God removes the bitterness  
and weariness of our lives, for he lacks neither  
power nor wisdom.

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28. "Quanto t'offesi tanto ti piangeró, e col mio pianto il tuo sdegno ammorzeró. Ahi, resister piú non so, che il dolore a lento foco nel mio core a poco a poco una piaga gia formó."

Adagio

tbn

b.c.

tr 5

tbn

3 3

tenor

b.c.

Quan- to t'of- fe- si tan- to tan- to di pian- ge-

## Example 11

Johann Georg Reutter, Jr., *Bersabea, ovvero il pentimento di David* (1729)

Andante ma non tanto

tbn

b.c.

piano

5 tr

7 6 6 1 6

tbn

10

alto

b.c.

DI- o sol- ne- por- ge a- li- ta

## Example 12

Luca Antonio Predieri, *Il sacrificio d'Abramo* (1738)

(B section)

Oh, let us take our repose in Him. In Him let us put our trust, O dear ones; as at the maternal breast one wraps oneself like a baby; as the traveler puts his trust in the expert guide.<sup>29</sup>

Predieri's other Viennese oratorio is *Isacco, figura del Redentore* (1740).<sup>30</sup> The sinfonia that opens this work is scored for two violins, viola, two alto trombones, bassoons/cellos/contrabasses (sharing a single line), and organ. The trombones are silent for roughly the first half of the sinfonia, but their parts are florid.

### Conclusion

The oratorios discussed here exerted little influence outside the narrow confines of the Habsburg court. They represent an important facet of court life, but apart from their librettos, none of them were published, and none are known to have been performed outside Vienna—nor even in other locations within Vienna.

The trombone parts in these arias bear close comparison with obbligato parts in Viennese liturgical music. In both repertoires, passages with trombone obbligatos are in common time, with moderate-to-slow tempos. Trombone parts are often florid, and replete with trills. The customary range for the alto trombone is  $g$  to  $c^2$ ; for the tenor,  $d$  to  $a^1$ .<sup>31</sup> Trombones are more likely to be used in pairs in liturgical music, and they also have more to play, because of the frequent instrumental doubling of voices in choral passages.

As we have seen, composers working in Vienna during the late Baroque used the trombone frequently and prominently in sacred music, both liturgical and dramatic, while they shunned it in secular vocal works. Mattheson observed that the "magnificent-sounding trombone ... [is] used very rarely, except in church pieces and solemn music;"<sup>32</sup> C.F.D. Schubart concurred, saying that "the trombone's sound is correct for religious and never for profane use."<sup>33</sup> The instrument had definite associations with

29. "Dio sol ne porge aita. Dio toglie a casi amari la stanca nostra vita, che a lui poter non manca, non manca a lui saper. Deh riposiamo in lui, a lui fidiamci, O cari. Come al materno petto s'avvolge il pargoletto, come all'esperta guida s'affida il passager."

30. Vienna, Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, ms. III/2066. This score is dated 1739, but Schnitzler, in his forthcoming catalogue of Viennese oratorios, notes that three other sources are dated 1740.

31. Slightly narrower ranges occur in some arias, but parts that exceed these limits are rare;  $d^2$  for the alto appears infrequently, and only in liturgical works.

32. Johann Mattheson, *Das neu-eröffnete Orchestre*, Hamburg 1713, pp. 266-67. Cited in David Guion, *The Trombone: Its History and Music, 1697-1811*, New York 1988, p. 25. "Die prächtigst-tönende Posaune ... ausser in Kirchen-Sachen und Solennitäten sehr wenig gebraucht werden."

33. Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart, *Ideen zu einer Aesthetik der Tonkunst*, Vienna 1806, p.

Christian worship dating back to the beginning of the 17th century and earlier, and the elaborate obbligato parts of late-Baroque Vienna may be considered a logical outgrowth of earlier, simpler *concertato*-style parts in the church compositions of such composers as Giovanni Gabrieli and Heinrich Schütz. But the inadequacy of this explanation becomes apparent if one considers the role of the violin during the same period. The violin appears far more often in Baroque church music than does the trombone, yet it is also a common feature of opera and dance music. Moreover, the trombone also had historic associations with the supernatural and the underworld, which could easily have been exploited in Viennese opera, but were not—at least during the century separating Cesti's *Il pomo d'oro* from Gluck's *Orfeo*. The associations evoked by the trombone were more than simply "religious" in a generic sense. David Guion observes that, in his German translation of the Bible, Martin Luther rendered the Hebrew term *shophar* and the Greek *salpigx* as *Posaune*, the German equivalent of "trombone." (Both words are translated as "trumpet" in the King James version.) In the Old Testament, many references to the *shophar* are associated with solemn pronouncements of the Lord, while in Revelations the *salpigx* heralds the Last Judgment.<sup>34</sup> Thus for readers of the Luther Bible, the *Posaune* was akin to the voice of God. Luther's influence on the German language was such that even the good Catholics of Vienna must have been familiar with this terminology. These biblical references may help to explain the role of the trombone at the intensely religious Austrian court: an instrument associated with the word of God was not appropriate for mere entertainment. Moreover, it may explain why trombone obbligatos in oratorios are usually reserved for moments of dramatic intensity, and in several cases are specifically associated with God's pronouncements.

The skill of the trombonists attached to the Habsburg court may also have influenced composers to write for the instrument in a virtuoso fashion. Unlike the composers, the court instrumentalists were primarily native Austrians. Trombone positions at the court

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317. Cited in Guion, *Trombone*, p. 86. "Der Posaunenton ganz für die Religion und nie fürs Profane gestimmt ist." Schubart wrote these remarks in 1784-85, though his work was not published until more than 20 years later. Schubart also states that "Only the Catholics in Germany still favor this instrument, and unless help is forthcoming from Vienna, we must fear the gradual and complete loss of this instrument." "Die Katholiken in Deutschland allein begünstigen indess diess Instrument noch, und wenn nicht in Wien Rath geschäft wird; su müssen wir fürchten, solches allmählig ganz zu verlieren."

34. Guion, *Trombone*, pp. 48, 55, 151-2. For representative passages from Luther's Bible, see Martin Luther *Die ganze Heilige Schrift Deudsch* (Wittenberg 1545; 2 vols.), ed. Friedrich Kur, Darmstadt 1972, *II Buch Mose* (= Exodus) 19:16; *Die Offenbarung S. Johannis* (= Revelation) 8:2.

were dominated by the Christian family (see Table II). At least some of the elaborate obbligato parts discussed here must have been performed by Leopold Christian Sr., who served the court from 1680 until his death in 1730. Fux described him as a "virtuoso who has no equal, [and] one can scarcely hope for more."<sup>35</sup> Leopold Sr. received 900 florins per year, a salary well below that of the Kapellmeister, vice-Kapellmeister, and virtuoso singers, but very close to that paid to most other "section leaders" of the court orchestra.<sup>36</sup> Leopold Christian Jr. followed in his father's footsteps, and Fux wrote that he was "such a virtuoso that his equal could not be found, neither in the past nor likely in the future."<sup>37</sup>

The tradition of the trombone obbligato aria in the Viennese oratorio is a relatively short one. It is entirely possible that earlier and/or later examples may be uncovered, but the 45 years that separate the earliest extant oratorio with trombone obbligato from the latest are very nearly covered by the professional career of a single composer, Fux. It is not surprising that trombone arias ceased to appear in sacred dramatic works after 1739. When Charles VI died in 1740, Maria Theresa ascended to the throne. Preoccupied with wars of succession and beset by financial difficulties, she greatly reduced the number of musicians in the Hofkapelle. In the span of a single year, from 1740 to 1741, the number of instrumentalists in the Hofkapelle orchestra dropped from 64 to 43; by 1765 it was further reduced to eight! (Ironically, the number of trombones was actually increased from four to five in 1741, but by 1764 only two remained.)<sup>38</sup> The production of sacred dramatic music declined as well. Neither Predieri nor Reutter composed oratorios after the death of Charles VI, though the former was active in court musical circles until 1751, the latter, until 1772.

Vienna seems to have stood nearly alone in its cultivation of the trombone aria in sacred dramatic music. The archives of the great Austrian monasteries are rich in

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35. Fux' remarks are dated 3 Jan., 1727. Cited in Ludwig Ritter von Köchel, *Johann Josef Fux, Hofcompositor und Hofkapellmeister der Kaiser Leopold I., Josef I. und Karl VI von 1698 bis 1740*, Vienna 1872, p. 410. "Ein solcher Virtuoso ist, der seines gleichen nit findet, auch schwärzlich mehr einer zu hoffen ist."

36. Köchel gives Leopold Christian Sr.'s salary as 900 fl., without specifying the year in which it was attained. (See *Die Kaiserliche Hof-Musikkapelle in Wien von 1453-1867*, Vienna 1869 [reprint ed., Hildesheim 1976], pp. 65-95.) But in 1727 Fux petitioned for an increase in the trombonist's salary from 750 to 1,000 fl., so that he would be relieved of the necessity of performing at St. Stephen's Cathedral in order to earn additional money.

37. Remarks dated April 21, 1721. Cited in Köchel, *Kaiserliche*, p. 389.

38. Selfridge-Field, "Viennese," pp. 124-25.

manuscripts of liturgical music with obbligato parts for trombones, as are a handful of churches in Vienna, but the oratorio was little cultivated in these locations. The small amount of information regarding the history of the oratorio in outlying provinces of the Empire suggests that the same is true of Bohemia and Moravia. Salzburg, however, is an exception: Kapellmeister Johann Ernst Eberlin (1702-62) used the trombone as an obbligato instrument in seven oratorios; Anton Cajetan Adlgasser (1729-77), his successor, in one.<sup>39</sup> The young Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart followed suit in his sacred cantata *Die Schuldigkeit des ersten Gebotes*.<sup>40</sup> As their titles indicate, the Salzburg works employ German rather than Italian texts.

As a body of musical literature these trombone arias, along with the obbligato parts in contemporary liturgical compositions, must be considered an important link in the history of the trombone. Since the instrument flourished in early 18th-century Austria while it languished elsewhere, it cannot be coincidental that composers working in Austria—Mozart and Beethoven prominent among them—were influential in the re-establishment of the trombone throughout Europe in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. But these trombone arias are not merely of academic interest, for they comprise a repertoire in melodic appeal and expressive blending of the trombone with the human voice, scarcely equaled in the instrument's history.

TABLE I  
VIENNESE ORATORIOS WITH OBLIGATO PARTS FOR TROMBONE

Date	Composer	Title & Ms. Number	Aria	Scoring <sup>a</sup>
1666	Sances	Le lachrime di San Pietro A-Wn 16914	O spirti di dite	???
1694	Draghi	Il libro con sette sigilli, A-Wn 18943	Si spezza il suolo	B, Atbn, bsn
1704	M.A. Ziani	Il mistico Giobbe A-Wn 18852	(1) Quel sembiante (2) Tempo verrà	S, Ttbn A, Atbn

39. For Eberlin, see Robert Haas, "Eberlins Schuldramen und Oratorien," *Studien zur Musikwissenschaft*, viii, 1921, pp. 9-44. See also Eberlin, *Oratorium: Die blutschwitzende Jesus; Stücke aus anderen Oratorien*, ed. Robert Haas, *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich*, vol. 55, Graz, 1960. For Adlgasser, see Constantin Schneider, "Die Oratorien und Schuldramen Anton Cajetan Adlgassers," *Studien zur Musikwissenschaft*, xviii, 1931, pp. 36-65.

40. See Mozart, *Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke*, ser. i, wg. iv, ed. Franz Giegling, Kassel, 1958.

TABLE I (cont.)

1705	Anonymous	Untitolo sepolcro I-Vnm cl. It. IV, 572	(1) Alme ingrate (Joseph I) (2) Una pietà si- lenta	S, Ttbn  A, Ttbn
1706	M.A. Ziani	La morte vinta sul Calvario, A-Wn 18751	(1) Ho già vinta (2) Or Iusinghiero (3) Cosí fa splendor	B, vlas, cti, tbns <sup>b</sup> B, vlas, tbns, bsn <sup>c</sup> B, Ttbn, bsn
1707	M.A. Ziani	Il Sacrificio d'Isacco <sup>d</sup> A-Wn 19133	Non é giunta	T, Ttbn
1708	M.A. Ziani	La passione nell'orto A-Wn 19128	Se dei pur senz'aita	A, Atbn
1716	Fux (rev 1721) <sup>e</sup>	Il fonte della salute A-Wn 18190	Vedi che il Redentor	S, Atbn, chal
1717	Caldara	Santa Ferma A-Wn 17089	Quell'amor	S, ATtbn
1718	F. Conti (rev 1725)	La colpa originale A-Wn 18151	Mia compagna io la credea	A, Atbn
1718	Fux (rev 1723)	Cristo nell'orto A-Wn 18195	Dal limbo	A, Atbn, 2vln
1719	F. Conti	Dio sul Sinai <sup>e</sup> A-Wn 18153	Or conosco	A, ?tbn, 2vn, va
1719	Fux	Gesu Cristo negato da Pietro, A-Wn 18196	Da Christo ch' é pio	A, Atbn
1720	Fux	La cena del Signore A-Wn 18198	O beata l'alme	SA, Atbn 2vn, va
1721	Porsile	Il zelo di Nathan A-Wn 18110	Caro trono	A, Atbn

TABLE I (cont.)

1722	Caldara	Il Ré del dolore <sup>f</sup> A-Wn 17116	Quando amato	T, ATbn
1723	Porsile	Il trionfo di Giuditta A-Wn 18123	La sovrana eterna	A, Atbn
1723	F. Conti	Il David perseguitato A-Wn 18159	Fuggo d'una in altra selva	A, Atbn, vn/va
1724	F. Conti	David A-Wn 18162	Di al mio Ré	A, Atbn, vn
1724	Caldara	Morte, e sepoltura di Christo, A-Wn 17120	(1) Deh scogliere (2) Lan- guire, morire	S, ATbn, bsn A, Atbn
1725	Caldara (rev 1729)	Le profezie evangeliche di Isaia, A-Wn 17122	Qual del Libano	A, AAtbn
1726	Caldara	Joaz <sup>8</sup> A-Wn 17129	Cosí a fiume	A, Atbn, bsn
1726	Fux (rev 1727)	Il testamento di nostro Signor Gesu Cristo al Calvario, A-Wn 18200	Venite, angioli	SA, Atbn, chal
1727	Reutter	Abele A-Wn 18121	Io ti do	A, Atbn
1728	Reutter	Elia A-Wn 18129	Offesi, il veggo	A, Atbn
1728	Fux (rev 1738)	La deposizione della croce A-Wn 18204	Chi ti conosco	SA, AAtbn
1729	Reutter	Bersabea, ovvero il pen- timento di David A-Wn 18131	Quanto t'offesi	T, Atbn
1729	Caldara (rev 1738)	Naboth A-Wn 18133	Dio, qual sia la ria sentenza	S, Atbn, bsn

TABLE I (cont.)

1730	Caldara (rev 1736)	La passione di Gesu Christo Signor nostro <sup>h</sup> A-Wn 18205	Dovunque il guardo	S, Atbn
1731	Caldara (rev 1737)	Santa Elena al Calvario A-Wn 17106	Dal tuo seglio luminoso	SS, Atbn, chal
1732	Caldara	La morte d'Abel A-Wn 18146	Del fallo m'avvedo	A, Atbn
1733	I. Conti	Ezechia <sup>e</sup> A-Wn 18172	???	???
1733	Caldara	Gerusalemme convertito A-Wn 17071	Buon Gesù	A, AAtbn
1734	Caldara	San Pietro in Cesarea A-Wn 17104	Dov'è già sviene	SST, ATtbn
1735	I. Conti	La Debbora <sup>e</sup> A-Wn 18174	???	???
1735	Reutter	Gioas, Ré di Giuda A-Wn 17304	Ah se o da vivere	S, Atbn, 2vn
1738	Predieri	I Sacrificio d'Abramo A-Wgm III/15328	Dio sol ne porge aita	A, Atbn
1739	I. Conti	La colpa originale <sup>e</sup> A-Wn 18180	???	???

*Notes*

- a Basso continuo included in all.  
 b 2 treble-clef parts for vlas/cti, 2 parts (AT clefs) for vlas/tbns. Information supplied by Rudolf Schnitzler.  
 c Same scoring as in note b, with two added bass-clef parts for bsns/tbns  
 d Facs. ed., intro. by Joyce L. Johnson, New York 1986.  
 e Information supplied by Schnitzler.  
 f Modern ed. by Vito Frazzi, Florence 1957.  
 g Facs. ed., intro. by Howard Smither, New York 1986.  
 h Facs. ed., intro. by Howard Smither, New York 1986.

TABLE I (cont.)

*Abbreviations*

rev = revised

*Library sigla*

A-Wgm Vienna, Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde

A-Wn Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek

I-Vnm Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana

TABLE II

TROMBONISTS AT THE HABSBURG COURT, 1679-1741<sup>a</sup>

Name	Tenure	Salary <sup>b</sup>
Matthias Joseph Hammer	1679-1711	30 fl.
Johann Fr. Fontana	1688-1707	30 fl.
Leopold Christian, Sr.	1680-1730	900 fl.
Christian Christian	1698-1712	540 fl.
Hans Georg Christian	1702-1721	540 fl.
Silvano Angelo Fontana	1709-1711	30 fl.
Leopold Christian, Jr.	1711-1760	600-800 fl.
Andreas Boog	1720-1763	500-700 fl.
Andreas Steinbruckner	1721-1724	440 fl.
Ignaz Steinbruckner	1725-1762	440-600 fl.
Stephen Tepser	1730-1767	400 fl.
Leopold Ferdinand Christian	1736-1771	300-400 fl.

*Notes*a Information based on Köchel, *Kaiserliche*, pp. 65-95.

b Where two different salaries are listed for the same player, the first represents his salary under Charles VI, the second, under Maria Theresa.

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