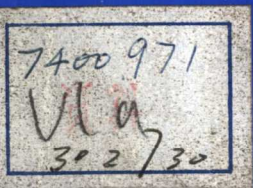


Ma MICHAEL TALBOT

TOMASO ALBINONI

The Venetian Composer and His World



CLARENDON PRESS
OXFORD

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MICHAEL TALBOT



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1990

Oxford University Press, Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6DP

Oxford New York Toronto

Delhi Bombay Calcutta Madras Karachi

Petaling Jaya Singapore Hong Kong Tokyo

Nairobi Dar es Salaam Cape Town

Melbourne Auckland

and associated companies in

Berlin Ibadan

Oxford is a trade mark of Oxford University Press

Published in the United States

by Oxford University Press, New York

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Talbot, Michael, 1943

Tomaso Albinoni: the Venetian composer and his world.

1. Italian music. Albinoni, Tomaso, 1671-1751

I. Title

780.92

ISBN 0-19-315245-2

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Talbot, Michael.

Tomaso Albinoni: the Venetian composer and his world

Michael Talbot.

Includes bibliographical references.

1. Albinoni, Tomaso, 1671-1751.

2. Composers—Italy—Biography.

I. Title.

ML410.A315T3513 1990 780'.92—dc20 89 49221

ISBN 0-19-315245-2

Typeset by Cotswold Typesetting Ltd., Gloucester

Printed in Great Britain by

St. Edmundsbury Press, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk

PREFACE

Asked to identify the composition by Albinoni that first sprang to mind, most music-lovers would probably name the Adagio in G minor for strings and organ, a piece originally published in 1958 and ever since a mainstay of record catalogues and chamber orchestra programmes. This is ironic, for the piece's actual composer, the musicologist and Albinoni scholar Remo Giazotto, has never claimed that the Adagio is based on more than a tiny original fragment; moreover, the existence of even that fragment has frequently been doubted since all efforts to trace it have failed. Whether this composition is minimally by Albinoni or not by Albinoni at all is of small concern; what matters is that its style is so totally unlike Albinoni's that it invites us to explore his music under false premises. Whereas the Adagio is unashamedly lachrymose, copying the idea of a pizzicato bass in striding octaves (evocative of sobbing) from a common way of performing Bach's so-called 'Air on the G string', Albinoni's real Adagio movements are dignified and classical in expression, even tending in his less inspired moments to dryness. The wonder is that Giazotto's Adagio has been so successful a catalyst in bringing Albinoni's instrumental works to the attention of the concert-going and record-buying public. Perverse as the basis of this achievement has been, it is none the less real.

When I first became an Albinoni enthusiast, also in the late 1950s, his sonatas and especially his concertos were well represented on record and in concert performances, and modern editions of his instrumental works were numerous. This heyday, which owed a lot to the advocacy of chamber orchestras such as I Musici and the Virtuosi di Roma, has now passed; in compensation, however, Albinoni's vocal music, which includes some of his greatest achievements, nowadays attracts more interest, particularly among the increasing number of singers who aspire to an authentic style of performance. If, as I hope, there is to be a second surge in Albinoni's popularity, it is likely to be the vocal music that leads the way.

My interest in Albinoni resulted first in a doctoral thesis (Cambridge, 1968) devoted to the instrumental music. Many years later, when I had revised some of my earlier conceptions and was far more familiar with the music of his contemporaries, I wrote a medium-length study of Albinoni's life and works. Circumstances caused it to appear not in English but in German, as *Albinoni: Leben und Werk* (Adliswil, Edition Kunzelmann, 1980). Eight years further on, I have continued, albeit more selectively, to

develop and sometimes review my ideas; in the mean time, I have made a few discoveries that are presented in these pages for the first time in any book. I imagine there will not be many people reading these words who have also had the opportunity to consult my earlier Albinoni study, but I can at least reassure them that they will not find the present book merely a rehashed version of the one they already know.

Like its predecessor, this is a study that considers both Albinoni's life and his works. Quite deliberately, however, the emphasis falls on the music, since in a book of fairly modest dimensions aimed at a wide readership this has to be the first priority. All the same, one cannot overlook the fact that, as a Venetian composer, Albinoni lived and worked in a very distinctive social and cultural environment that inevitably left a strong mark on him. For this reason I have found it necessary to discuss the Venetian background in some detail.

Since this volume represents not so much a new project as one that has occupied me intermittently over a period of more than twenty years, the list of people who have at various times given me assistance and encouragement would run to several dozen names. If I may be allowed to be selective and confine my thanks to those who have helped me with the preparation for the book in the most recent period, I should like to record my gratitude to Carlo Guaita for his donation of a copy of his illuminating thesis on Albinoni's cantatas, to Brian Crosby for facilitating my study of manuscripts in Durham Cathedral Library and answering my many questions, to Gastone Vio for keeping me informed of his work in progress on Albinoni's biography, to Maurizio Grattoni for supplying photocopies of some arias, to Colin Timms for his comments on Chapter 5, to Carole Taylor and Thomas Walker for their comments on part of Chapter 8, and to my wife Shirley for relieving me of many chores that would otherwise have caused me to rise guiltily from the word-processor.

Liverpool
1989

M.T.

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FAME, OBLIVION, AND REVIVAL

TOMASO ALBINONI, a Venetian, was originally a maker of cards, but having an early propensity to music, and having been taught the violin in his youth, he became not only an excellent performer on that instrument, but also an excellent composer (Hawkins, 1776).¹

Regarding the quality of his works, my study of some of his scores has shown me that his style is dry, his ideas dull or trivial, and the expression of the words in most of his operas almost nil (Fétis, 1835).²

Few musicians reveal such professional skill as composers. He wrote not a single movement which contains careless or even mediocre workmanship, and very few which fail to demonstrate an unusual command of organic form (Hutchings, 1961).³

As the above quotations illustrate, Albinoni's reputation over the last two centuries has described a curve whose shape is familiar from the posthumous experience of so many other composers of his generation. Indeed, the changes in the musical world's view of Albinoni after his death offer an exceptionally clear-cut example of the triad fame-oblivion-revival. The underlying reasons for these fluctuations deserve a brief discussion.

Most music of the eighteenth century and earlier was characterized by an inbuilt obsolescence. One reason for this was that the promotion of a composer's music was seen as primarily the responsibility of the composer himself in his role as performer or musical director. His removal from a locality might cause his works to disappear from the local repertory; his retirement from active performing might have a similar effect; and so, naturally, would his death.

A second reason was the subordination of the public's musical appreciation to a keen awareness of changes of fashion—changes that in Albinoni's middle and late years occurred very often. Speaking in particular of Italian operas, in which taste and style changed exceptionally rapidly to suit the demands of singers, an anonymous commentator in the *Mercur de France* observed in 1731 that such works 'die in the act of being

¹ Sir John Hawkins, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music* (5 vols., London, 1776), ii. 678.

² François-Joseph Fétis, *Biographie universelle des musiciens* (8 vols., Brussels, 1835-44), i. art. 'Albinoni (Thomas)'.

³ Arthur Hutchings, *The Baroque Concerto* (London, 1961), 136.

born and are never repeated, since the public always craves novelty';⁴ a similar situation was described in 1739 by the French traveller Charles de Brosse, who wrote to his friend de Blancey after a meeting in Venice with Vivaldi: 'To my great astonishment I discovered that he is not as highly regarded as he deserves to be in this country, where everything has to be up-to-the-minute, where his works have been heard for too long, and where last year's music no longer brings in money'.⁵ Stylistic evolution was less hectic in the domain of instrumental music, but its relevance to the present argument is illustrated by the reissue by the violinist-composer Francesco Geminiani in 1755 of comprehensively 'updated' versions of concertos (Opp. 2 and 3) that he had published only in 1732.

Both factors making for obsolescence, though no longer applicable to concert music, can be seen to operate with equal force today in the world of popular music, but a third important factor applies more exclusively to the period under discussion: the limited access of musicians and music-lovers to performing material. The high rate of perishability, through natural causes as well as neglect, of both manuscript and printed or engraved music meant that the most recently produced material was generally also the most accessible. One must remember that most music—including virtually all vocal music—circulated solely in manuscript, becoming reproduced in at most a few dozen copies; published music rarely sold in more than a hundred examples. For private individuals music for performance—even more so, music for study—was almost a luxury. De Brosse complained that in Italy 'music is never seen again, is never printed or engraved, with the result that the most famous pieces remain only in the memory; the rest is soon forgotten'.⁶

Of course, this rather gloomy picture admits of some qualification. Certain baroque composers, among whom Lully, Corelli, and Handel stand out, earned the status of 'classics' in their lifetime and continued to enjoy it for a considerable time afterwards. Many of their works remained in the active repertory, and their œuvre provided both approved models for younger composers and practice material for performers. Other composers maintained a place in the repertory by occupying special niches from which no successors sought to displace them. Benedetto Marcello's psalm paraphrases, the famous *Estro poetico-armonico*, and J. S. Bach's polyphonic motets exemplify this category. Composers with a reputation for being learned, like Bach, or for writing music of exceptional technical

⁴ 'Dissertation critique sur l'état présent de l'Italie, concernant les sciences et les arts', *Mercure de France*, Dec. 1731, p. 2742.

⁵ Charles de Brosse, *Lettres familières écrites d'Italie en 1739 et 1740*, ed. R. Colomb (2 vols., Paris, 1858), i. 193.

⁶ *Ibid.* ii. 316.

difficulty, like Locatelli, also had greater than average chances of survival, if only in the pages of treatises and primers.

By 1800, however, none of the composers born between 1640 and 1710 (who may be regarded as Albinoni's contemporaries in the wider sense) could be said to retain a presence in the general repertory—with the notable exception of Handel in the British Isles. However, during the nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth century there took place a remarkable process that ultimately transformed the concept of 'repertory': instead of consisting exclusively of works by living and recent composers, concert programmes began to contain works by the best (or most representative) composers of several generations, including ones at a considerable historical remove. Ultimately, the point was reached when a programme that failed to contain works from previous centuries was thought exceptional (which in some measure remains the case today).

One can distinguish several factors that combined to bring about this progressive revaluation of older music. Antiquarianism—the love of the old for the sake of its oldness—was the earliest strand to emerge; we find its beginnings, marked by the rise of concert societies such as the Academy of Ancient Music, already in the eighteenth century. A second strand was the rise, after Beethoven, of a concept of 'genius' that laid more stress on the individual attributes of a composer than on the style within which he worked; to a great extent this new concept neutralized the older idea of continuous progress and refinement in the art of music. Third, the study of musical history undertaken in universities and conservatories stimulated the not unnatural desire to hear the object under discussion *in vivo*. Ever since the nineteenth century musicology and music-making have interfered—most would say benignly—with each other. Finally, the growing permeation of culture by nationalist sentiment encouraged the revival of older music as a patriotic enterprise. In fact, the very remoteness in time of a Bach, a Rameau, or a Purcell made them all the more suited to be torch-bearers of a national heritage. Not by accident, the great collected editions of the nineteenth century and the first part of the present century were without exception published in each composer's home country.

Since the 1950s we have moved by stages into a new phase characterized by the splitting off from the mainstream of most kinds of early music. Specialization—of instruments, ensembles, styles, and performing techniques—is now the order of the day. One interesting and not altogether welcome result of this process is that attention has increasingly become focused on the manner of performance rather than the matter performed, and this has in turn brought about diminution of regard for what one may call the 'genius factor'. In the words of Adorno's caustic comment on

enthusiasts for early music: 'They say Bach but they mean Telemann'.⁷ Laurence Dreyfus uses the expression 'a grand *nivellement* of value' to make the same point.⁸ One related development is that the initiative for the revival of old music has now passed from critics, musicologists, collectors, and concert-goers to the performing community itself. The consolidation and further progress of the Albinoni revival must take account of this new situation.

Valid in some degree for all composers contemporary with Albinoni, the foregoing remarks constitute the background against which his rise to prominence, subsequent disappearance, and more recent partial return to favour have to be viewed. Let us now trace the story of his reception by commentators, musicians, and the lay public.

Particularly when considering Albinoni's standing in his lifetime and immediately afterwards, we have to take account of both explicit and implicit testimony. Explicit testimony in written form has the advantage of being concrete and mostly unambiguous but may, of course, be ill-informed or tendentious. Implicit testimony, such as the volume of sales of the composer's music, is less tangible but, if correctly interpreted, more objective. Both kinds of evidence have to be sifted in parallel.

The earliest known reference to Albinoni's musical talents is the compliment paid to his skill as a composer by the librettist of his very first opera, *Zenobia, regina de' Palmireni* (Venice, Carnival 1694). In his foreword to the printed libretto the poet Antonio Marchi addressed the public: 'You will hear as a remedy for my deficiencies the accomplished and delightful music of Signor Tomaso Albinoni, who through composing for delight attains the goals of the foremost masters'. Here Marchi's use of the words 'dilettevole' and 'diletto' alludes openly to Albinoni's status as a *dilettante* (in seventeenth-century usage this term means simply 'amateur' and has a positive rather than negative ring). In similar vein, at the end of his foreword to the libretto of *Il Tigrane, re d' Armenia* (Venice, Carnival 1697), the poet Giulio Cesare Corradi praised 'the talent of Signor Tomaso Albinoni, who causes one to wonder whether he should be honoured with the title of *dilettante* alone or deserves instead that of perfect master of music'. There is a hint of condescension in both eulogies, since librettists, who themselves were nearly always *dilettanti*, belonged to a higher social class (noble or citizen) than most musicians, who were members of the general populace (*popolani*). By drawing attention to Albinoni's amateur status, both poets flatteringly implied that he belonged to a higher stratum

⁷ Quoted in Laurence Dreyfus, 'Early Music Defended against its Devotees: A Theory of Historical Performance in the Twentieth Century', *The Musical Quarterly*, 69 (1983), 301-2.

⁸ *Ibid.* 302.

than was in fact the case (Albinoni belonged to the rare category of *popolano dilettante*); however, by stressing that his accomplishment was on a fully professional level, they confirmed his worthiness to be their collaborator. Although the librettists were certainly not neutral commentators, their remarks testify to the recognition Albinoni had already attained in his early twenties.

The famous librettist Apostolo Zeno paid Albinoni an even more generous compliment in a letter of 24 February 1703 to his Florentine friend Anton Francesco Marmi. Zeno reported hearing that the première of his new drama *Griselda* in Florence had been a great success. Disclaiming all personal credit, he paid tribute to 'the excellence of the music provided by Signor Albinoni, whom I admire enormously' and to the fine singers.⁹ Zeno had not witnessed the première personally, and in any case was notorious for his lack of musical sensibility, so this praise is probably a reflection of the general view of the Florentine audience.

By the early years of the next century Albinoni's sonatas, which were being republished in north-west Europe almost as quickly as they appeared in Venice, were beginning to make inroads into the transalpine repertory in the wake of Corelli's success. Jean Laurent Le Cerf de la Viéville, in his *Comparaison de la musique italienne et de la musique française* published in Brussels between 1704 and 1706, writes on the subject of sonatas (then a novelty in France): 'We are indebted to Italy for pieces of this kind; such men as Corelli, Albinoni, and Miquel [Mascitti], as well as many other great musicians, have produced works in this genre that will be immortal and within the attainment of only very few people, although a thousand others may wish to imitate them'.¹⁰ The special significance of this praise is that it comes from a fervent partisan of the French style.

The German composer and critic Johann Mattheson found a similar vogue in his own country, noting with regret: 'Albinoni's sonatas are unjustly preferred to [French] overtures'.¹¹ Five years later, in 1722, Mattheson printed in his periodical *Critica musica* a report of the gala performance of Albinoni's opera *I veri amici* at the Bavarian court in Munich.¹² His correspondent comments glowingly on the production, though it is hard to establish what part of the praise refers to the music itself rather than to the performance and staging. The report refers to the composer as 'the real Albinoni'; in an amusing footnote Mattheson explains why. Apparently, an impersonator had not long before toured

⁹ *Lettere di Apostolo Zeno* (2nd edn., 6 vols., Venice, 1785), i. 143.

¹⁰ Quoted in Johann Mattheson, *Critica musica* (2 vols., Hamburg, 1722-5), i. 199-200.

¹¹ *Id.*, *Das beschützte Orchestre* (Hamburg, 1717), 504.

¹² *Id.*, *Critica musica*, i. 255.

Germany before departing from Rostock for Sweden. Besides showing that Albinoni was sufficiently eminent to be worth impersonating, this episode may have some relevance to the exceptionally high incidence of spurious instrumental works in manuscript today preserved under Albinoni's name in northern European collections—and particularly in Germany and Sweden!

In 1728 the organist Johann Gottfried Walther, who was well acquainted with some of Albinoni's early works since he had prepared scores of two sonatas in the latter's Op. 1 and had arranged for solo organ two concertos in his Op. 2, brought out the first instalment of his pioneering dictionary of music.¹³ The entry for Albinoni is disappointing, since apart from terming him 'an excellent composer and violinist in the service of the Republic of Venice' (implying, incorrectly, Albinoni's holding of an official post), Walther merely lists in chronological order the nine published collections with opus number that had appeared up to then. This list proved very helpful to later lexicographers, who often reproduced it with minimal alteration, supplementing the information on instrumental collections with lists of Albinoni's operas culled from the famous bibliographies of libretti for Venetian productions published in 1730 and 1745 respectively by Bonlini and Groppo.¹⁴

In 1752 the wind player and theorist Johann Joachim Quantz acknowledged the importance of Albinoni to the history of the instrumental concerto, stating that although the actual inventor of the genre had been Giuseppe Torelli (1658–1709), it was Vivaldi, and, alongside him, Albinoni, who gave it 'a better form'.¹⁵ It is worth noting that Quantz, too, was intimate with Albinoni's music, since, quite apart from his visit to Venice in 1726, he had served between 1718 and 1740 in the Saxon court orchestra at Dresden. During the late 1720s and the 1730s, under the leadership of the violin virtuoso Johann Georg Pisendel, this famous orchestra placed Venetian concertos and sinfonias at the heart of its instrumental repertory. In addition to playing oboe and flute, Quantz served Pisendel as an auxiliary copyist, which must have broadened his musical knowledge and aided his later development as a composer. He betrays his good recall of at least one Albinoni concerto preserved in the Dresden collection (today belonging to the Sächsische Landesbibliothek)

¹³ Johann Gottfried Walther, *Musicalisches Lexicon oder musicalische Bibliothec* (Leipzig, 1732), art. 'Albinoni (Tomaso)'.

¹⁴ [Giovanni Bonlini], *Le glorie della poesia e della musica contenute nell'esatta notizia de teatri della città di Venezia* (Venice, [1730]); Antonio Groppo, *Catalogo di tutti i drammi per musica recitati ne' teatri di Venezia* (Venice, 1745).

¹⁵ Johann Joachim Quantz, *Versuch einer Anweisung, die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* (3rd edn., Berlin, 1789), 294.

by employing a close paraphrase of part of its unison opening as the fifty-third musical example in his treatise.¹⁶

Since we have already passed the year of Albinoni's death, it will be appropriate to retrace our steps for a moment to consider the implicit evidence relating to his reputation during his lifetime.

One can learn a great deal about Albinoni's success as an opera composer from plain statistics. The anonymous author of the previously mentioned *Dissertation critique* published in the *Mercure de France* for December 1731 reports a conversation in Venice with Albinoni, who told him that he never spent more than a month over the composition of an opera and had written more than 200 such works. This frankly incredible figure is belied by the claims printed, presumably with the composer's authority, in the libretti of Albinoni's operas *La Statira* (Rome, Carnival 1726) and *Candalide* (Venice, Carnival 1734), according to which these works were respectively his seventieth and eightieth operas. Italian composers of Albinoni's time were inclined, with little fear of being found out, to exaggerate their operatic productivity; it is possible that the true number does not exceed by much the figure of forty-nine operas whose existence is attested by libretti and in a few cases by surviving scores.

If we accept that a number around fifty is correct, Albinoni's tally is among the highest for its period. It falls short by some way of the totals achieved by his contemporaries Alessandro Scarlatti and Carlo Francesco Pollarolo, but approximately equals that of Francesco Gasparini and beats that of Antonio Vivaldi, his fellow Venetian, by a comfortable margin. Of course, the size of the figure has a lot to do with the quite exceptionally long duration (1694–1741) of his activity as a composer of opera. In the first four decades he averaged slightly over a dozen new works per decade; the only significant hiatus occurred between his penultimate (1734) and final (1741) operas.

Of the forty-nine known operas, thirty-seven were written for Venetian theatres and twelve for stages outside Venice. The predominance of Venice is a simple result of the fact that it was his permanent home, as well as being the acknowledged centre of Italian opera. Over the period his works were produced in six houses.

Sixteen operas, including a few revivals, were staged at the little Sant'Angelo theatre between 1698/9 and 1740/1. The double-barrelled form in which the year is given corresponds to the structure of the Venetian operatic season. This began in November, following the return of the nobility from their autumn vacation on the mainland, and continued until

¹⁶ This is the concerto identified in my catalogue as Co 2. For an explanation of the cataloguing system see appendix A.

the middle of December; after an obligatory break for the Christmas festival, the theatres reopened on Boxing Day (St Stephen's Day) and remained active until the evening of Shrove Tuesday. Although this period was conventionally divided by the period of rest before Christmas into an Autumn and a Carnival (or Winter) season, it can be helpful to conceive the entire period as one 'grand' season straddling two years, especially since the cast of singers normally remained unchanged throughout.

A lively but rather unfashionable house, Sant'Angelo, which was named in the customary Venetian manner after the parish in which it was situated, was leased on a year-by-year basis to various impresarios (one of whom was Vivaldi); it therefore followed no consistent artistic policy and employed no 'regular' composer. In certain seasons (1700/1, 1717/18, and 1729/30) two operas by Albinoni were performed there. Since a normal season would accommodate up to three or (more rarely) four consecutive operas, one of which would be given before Christmas, these can be regarded as seasons in which Albinoni was the dominant composer.

Between 1696/7 and 1727/8 thirteen operas by Albinoni, including one (*Engelberta*) written jointly with Gasparini, were staged at the San Cassiano theatre owned by the Tron family. Albinoni was the leading composer there in the 1697/8 and 1698/9 seasons, and again in 1701/2. Gasparini, who had arrived in Venice in 1701 to take up the post of choirmaster at the famous institution for foundlings, the Ospedale della Pietà, almost immediately assumed the dominant position at San Cassiano, retaining it until his departure from Venice in 1713. During this period initially Antonio Lotti, first organist at San Marco, and subsequently Albinoni acted as his auxiliary. Between 1713 and 1724 the theatre opened only for one operatic season, but in the first phase of its renewed activity (1724-8) Albinoni once again was prominent. Of all Venice's theatres, the San Cassiano house was perhaps the most hospitable to him.

In the later part of Albinoni's career, between 1722 and 1732, the San Moisè theatre owned by the Giustinian family staged nine of his operas, including one (*Antigono, tutore di Filippo, re di Macedonia*) written in collaboration with Giovanni Porta, the new *maestro di coro* at the Pietà, who was the dominant composer there.

Albinoni also worked for three Venetian theatres owned by the Grimani family. He provided an opera for the Santi Giovanni e Paolo theatre in both the 1694 and 1695 Carnival seasons. In 1724 and 1727 he supplied the Ascensiontide operas at San Samuele. That was quite a distinction since only one or two theatres were allowed by the Council of Ten to open during the short season coinciding with the Ascensiontide fair, during which each produced no more than one opera. However, this success must

be set against the fact that an Albinoni opera appeared only once, in Autumn 1717, at the San Giovanni Grisostomo theatre—Venice's grandest, most expensive to attend, and most fashionable. It was particularly at this theatre that the singers most in demand, such as Nicola Grimaldi, Carlo Broschi (Farinelli), Faustina Bordoni, and Francesca Cuzzoni, were accustomed to appear on their visits to Venice; here too that the new wave of composers trained in Naples (Vinci, Porpora, Leo, etc.) made their breakthrough in the mid-1720s.

Mention should be made, finally, of a revival of Albinoni's *Ciro* in Carnival 1728 at the little Santa Margherita theatre managed by the impresario Fabrizio Brugnolo.

What general impression emerges from this mass of detail? It is clear that Albinoni, though never a composer of first resort for any sustained period, was a greatly respected figure in the world of Venetian opera. More successfully than any contemporary Venetian composer except Vivaldi (and without the latter's ability to secure commissions for himself through parallel activity as an impresario), he managed to keep abreast of changes in style and fashion, surviving for many years the challenge of the Neapolitans. All the same, one senses that he was valued more for his reliability, and perhaps also his speed of composition, than for the intrinsic qualities of his music.

An interesting comment on his style appears in an account of Albinoni included in Francesco Caffi's manuscript notes towards a history of Venetian theatre music, the intended sequel to his famous history of music in the ducal chapel of San Marco.¹⁷ Caffi, who was writing around the middle of the nineteenth century, had an exceptionally good knowledge of documents from the previous century preserved in Venetian archives but was apt to elaborate fancifully on the information he derived from them. His statements must therefore be received with a degree of caution.

'Although his style lacked a certain finesse', Caffi wrote, 'it nevertheless met with much favour on account of its sinewy strength and popular quality.' And further on: 'Although his talent was smaller, he achieved greater success than his rival Gasparini.'

Concurrently with his operatic activity in Venice, Albinoni fulfilled commissions from theatres in other cities. The high points of this activity were the two operas he supplied to the Cocomero theatre of Florence in 1703 and the two for the Munich Hoftheater in 1722. He visited Florence and Munich at the invitation of their respective courts to attend these

¹⁷ Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Cod. It. IV-747 (10465), fol. 39^r. Caffi's published history is the *Storia della musica sacra nella già cappella ducale di San Marco in Venezia dal 1318 al 1797* (2 vols., Venice, 1854-5).

productions. At various times he supplied scores also to Bologna, Brescia, Ferrara, Genoa, Piacenza, Prague, Rome, and Treviso, although it is not certain whether these operations took him away from Venice.

Into another category altogether come the forty-four known revivals of Albinoni operas both inside and outside Venice. On delivering their commissioned scores to operatic managements, composers effectively relinquished control over their subsequent use. For later productions the original score might be cut down, expanded, or rearranged by hands other than the composer's; choice arias might be extracted and used in pasticcis, or patchwork operas stitched together from music by several composers. But however much Albinoni's music was altered for these new productions, and however little responsibility he had for these changes, the frequency with which his music was revived is an index of his reputation over a much wider area than that which he served directly through commissions. The earliest revival was a performance in Verona of his *L'ingratitude castigata* in 1701; his operas subsequently fanned out all over the Italian provinces. Even before 1710 his operatic music reached London, initially in the form of extracts appearing in pasticcis but later extending to productions of his *Lucio Vero* at the King's Theatre in the Haymarket in 1715 and again in 1716. In the 1720s, after the Munich visit, his operas briefly enjoyed success north of the Alps in Prague, Breslau (Wrocław), Raudnitz (Roudnice), and Linz. There is some irony in the fact that during this period Albinoni, like Vivaldi, was able to conquer provincial and remote outposts of opera at the very time when his prestige was beginning to slip at home.

In a wide sense one may consider also as 'operatic' music Albinoni's comic intermezzi, represented by three known works. Such intermezzi were conceived as groups of between two and four linked comic scenes inserted for light relief into the interstices of the serious opera that they accompanied: preferably between the acts, but sometimes *faute de mieux* in the middle of one. Albinoni's intermezzi for the two characters Pimpinone and Vespetta, first performed with his *Astarto* in 1708, belong to the most successful examples from the first generation of comic intermezzi, being revived in association with different operas at least thirty times up to 1740. Sadly for the composer, however, they cannot have increased his reputation, since neither the many libretti nor the scores that have survived ever cite his name.

Three dramatic cantatas, or serenatas, by Albinoni are known. These were occasional compositions in operatic style generally commissioned by private individuals and performed in celebration of a joyful event such as a birthday or wedding. Their literary texts were not always published separately (even if they were, the composer was not always identified), and