

Volume 14

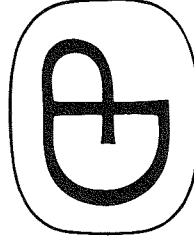
DER RAUCHFANGKEHRER

ANTONIO SALIERI

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Introduction by THOMAS BAUMAN

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GARLAND PUBLISHING, INC. • NEW YORK & LONDON • 1986

4-7-86

This facsimile is made from the autograph score in the
Musiksammlung of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna,
Mus. Hs. 16.611.

The libretto for *Der Rauchfangkehrer* is given in Volume 21 of this series.

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Salieri, Antonio, 1750-1825.

Der Rauchfangkehrer.

(German opera, 1770-1800 ; v. 14)

Opera.

German and Italian words.

Libretto by Leopold von Auenbrugger.

Photoreproduction of ms. in the Musiksammlung of the

Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna (Mus. Hs. 16.611.).

Includes synopsis and bibliographical references.

I. Operas—Scores. I. Auenbrugger, Leopold, 1722-1809.

II. Title. III. Series.

M1500.S19R3 1986 85-753513

ISBN 0-8240-8863-8 (alk. paper)

The volumes in this series have been printed on acid-free, 250-year-life paper.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

INTRODUCTION

On 16 March 1781 Mozart arrived at Vienna from Munich. A month later the three-year-old National Singspiel reopened its doors after the Lenten hiatus, and on 30 April it presented a new German opera that became the hit of the season, *Der Raubfangkehrer* (*The Chimney Sweep*). Its music came from an unusual source, Emperor Joseph II's court Kapellmeister Antonio Salieri (1750–1825). He had returned to Vienna from a two-year stint in Italy one year earlier, in April 1780, to be greeted soon thereafter with an imperial request that he compose a German opera for the Burgtheater.¹

Joseph II had been following the fortunes of the National Singspiel very closely since its inauguration in 1778. He himself had played a major role in its creation as an adjunct to the Viennese National Theater for spoken drama, founded two years earlier. A National Theater, by definition, traded in works written by native authors for native audiences and reflecting the national character, tastes, and morals. But the National Singspiel at Vienna was continually faced with a nearly empty cupboard when seeking out worthy new works by Austrian poets and composers. From the beginning its repertory had to be filled out for the most part with translations of the best French opéras comiques

and Italian opere buffe, genres with which Viennese audiences had long been familiar. Now the emperor turned to his talented Italian underling Salieri for something to bolster the original German-language offerings of the enterprise.

At first, Salieri wanted a translation of an opera buffa to set, but such was not the emperor's wish. In the end he settled for a new German text by a local writer, but one steeped in the Italian buffist traditions that not only formed the lifeblood of Salieri's comic style, but also proved, in the long run, an indispensable ingredient for satisfying Viennese operatic taste. One of Joseph II's crucial moves paving the way for the founding of the National Singspiel had been the dismissal of the buffists in 1777, for direct competition with comic opera in Italian would have proved disastrous for the National Singspiel. As it was, when the enterprise collapsed after the 1782–83 season, the Burgtheater reverted to exclusive devotion to opera buffa.

The motivation of Joseph II in requesting a German opera of his Italian Kapellmeister, then, is not difficult to understand. Except for the operas of the National Singspiel's music director, Ignaz Umlauf,² works written by local composers directly concerned with the enterprise or hailing

from the lower echelons of Vienna's musical establishment had amounted to little more than one failure after another. By the summer of 1780 the pattern was quite clear—only translations of French and Italian operas were pleasing audiences at the Burgtheater. That July the company introduced an instantly popular production of Gluck's *Die unvermuthete Zusammenkunft*, a translation of his French comic opera *La Rencontre imprévue*, first given at Vienna in 1764. Gluck was by this time too old and infirm to compose much any more, but this revival apparently suggested to those running the National Singspiel that improving the sorry figure cut by most of the operas of local vintage meant looking higher up in the city's musical infrastructure. Four months later, on 31 October 1780, the Viennese dramatist Tobias Philipp von Gebler wrote to his friend at Berlin, Friedrich Nicolai, that Gluck's serious opera *Iphigénie en Tauride* was soon to see production by the German theater and that Salieri was at work on setting a German text. He added, "It is to be noted that Gluck and Salieri are Court Kapellmeisters, and do not actually belong to the National Theater."³

The production of Gluck's *Iphigenia in Tauris* was delayed until October of 1781. Salieri's new German opera, too, already in rehearsal for a planned premiere in December of 1780,⁴ was not mounted until 30 April 1781, a delay occasioned by the death of Empress Maria Theresia, which closed the Burgtheater from 24 November 1780 to 21 January 1781.

While there can be little doubt of Salieri's primary dedication to opera buffa, the extent of his interest in the National Singspiel and enthusiasm for fulfilling the em-

peror's request for an opera in German from his pen is unclear. As a member of the imperial court he had little use for the German language, but in 1775 he had married Theresia Helfferstorfer, the daughter of a middle-class Viennese financier. One of the witnesses at this ceremony was the physician Leopold von Auenbrugger, and it was to him that Salieri turned for a libretto in 1780 when Joseph II insisted upon a new German text rather than a translation of an opera buffa.

Auenbrugger, noted even today for his development of the percussion method of examining vital organs in the chest cavity,⁵ had hitherto confined his pen to writing medical treatises in Latin. Salieri's predicament prompted him to the creation of his sole stage work, *Der Raucherkehrer*, and in writing it he clearly jettisoned any personal literary ambitions in favor of a libretto as congenial to his collaborator as possible. In late 1783 Mozart procured a copy of Salieri's score for his father, but warned him in a letter of 10 December that the text was "a German and—moreover—a wretched original piece" and reminded Leopold of how earlier Ludwig Fischer (for whom Salieri had written the part of Herr von Bär) had publicly satirized Auenbrugger's effort.⁶

The characters and intrigue Auenbrugger invented, though set in an unspecified German capital, are modeled directly on those in the comic librettos of Goldoni, Petrosellini, and Bertati. The title part—Volpino, an expatriate Italian—presents an unabashed *furbo* with his sly, opportunistic, and virtuosic machinations. Auenbrugger allows him to mangle German to his heart's content; further, as an Italian, Volpino possesses a considerable musical gift,

which not only furnishes a vehicle for his intrigues but also provides Salieri with an opportunity to set several Italian arias (Nos. 6, 12, 27, and 29). There is a vein of satire aimed at German opera, too. The rival ladies—the vain, imperious young widow Frau von Habicht, formerly a German opera diva, and her stepdaughter Fräule Nannette—may trace their dramatic lineage back to Contessa Isabella and her daughter-in-law Doralice in Goldoni's *La famiglia dell'antiquario* (1750), but in execution they betray failings meant to be specifically German. In one scene the ladies discuss singing with their suitors, Bär and Wolf, and give themselves airs by denigrating their native tongue.⁷ Bär has made a present of some printed German songs to the Fräule and asks how she likes them:

Fräule: They are full of expression and beauty; it's too bad they're in German.

Hr. v. Wolf: Perhaps you'd like them better if they were in French.

Fr. v. Habicht: That language is as tasteless for singing as German. — Italian! Italian is what they should be, that's the language which animates the music and can be understood when sung.

Hr. v. Wolf: Forgive me! That is not the fault of the language but of enunciation, which most German opera-singers neglect to the point of annoyance.

But in act three, when Volpino gives singing lessons to Frau von Habicht and the Fräule, each lady sings an Italian aria that she obviously does not understand, for in each case it portrays her situation as Volpino's dupe in the developing scheme of deception.

An anonymous adapter of *Der Rauchfangkehrer* for the Berlin production of the Döbbelin company in 1783 offered his reaction to Auenbrugger's text in the preface to the printed Berlin libretto.⁸ He refuses to believe that it is an original German piece, what with its careless speech and structure, and he speculates that it "arose from the wreckage of an Italian opera buffa, or else from the incorrect pen of an Italian-German intermezzist." Yet, he adds, to correct the plan would have meant writing a new work, so he settled for reshaping the dialogue, sharpening the characters, and improving where possible "the wretched songs, which are so anxiously forced onto the music."

This Berlin adapter ventured to guess that the opera had found favor elsewhere because of its fine music and comic situations. Such seems to have been the case at Vienna. Michtner cautions that one must not underestimate "Salieri's position of pre-eminent power which made it possible for him to bring his own works to the stage for repeated performances, even if they found little applause, and to consign to the deep operas of other masters, even if they pleased."⁹ Yet Salieri's interests and connections were such that he scarcely would have felt compelled to expend such efforts to manipulate the German musical stage at Vienna, in which, as we have seen, he played no role save as the composer of *Der Rauchfangkehrer*. Nor does Michtner's surmise gain any credibility from the success Salieri's opera enjoyed on many other German stages throughout the 1780s.

The closure of the Viennese theaters occasioned by the death of Maria Theresia afforded Salieri and his singers the opportunity to lavish more than usual care on the prepar-

ation of *Der Rauchfangkehrer*. The National Singspiel had by far the best singers of any German stage in Europe (the emperor himself had taken an active role in their recruitment¹⁰), and their singing left nothing to be desired on this occasion. An anonymous observer was also struck by the strides they had all made in their acting abilities, which in general were not regarded with favor.¹¹ Such considerations were paramount for the role of Volpino, who must act as skillfully as he sings if the drama is to come off. Gottfried Heinrich Schmidt created this part in the premiere: "The poet may thank him for having taken on this role," wrote the observer just mentioned, who then praised his fine acting, "in which he does not descend to a low prankster, but also allows no comic opportunity to slip by him."

The two most accomplished singers in the cast were to figure prominently a year later in Mozart's *Entführung aus dem Serail*. Catarina Cavalieri, a native Austrian (her real name was Franziska Kavalier), was a singing pupil of Salieri himself and had been one of the first singers Joseph II had sought out when the National Singspiel was founded in 1778. Her *aria di bravura* in the opera (No. 26, "Wenn dem Adler das Gefieder"), while no match for Mozart's "Märtern aller Arten," also in C major, was clearly written for a virtuosa of no common stamp. No other part in the opera has anything to compare to it.

Salieri similarly tailored the first aria of Herr von Bär (No. 11, pp. 75–98) to Ludwig Fischer's *basso profondo*. Again, he uses the same features Mozart was to lavish on Fischer in enlarging the part of Osmin for him in *Die Entführung*, but with less exaggeration (a sustained low F near the end; long,

repetitive patter passages demanding a single breath). In Auenbrugger's menagerie of character-types (Bär, Wolf, Volpino, and Habicht ["hawk"]), the part of the grumbling, surly Bär accords perfectly with Fischer's voice and thick figure.

The score of *Der Rauchfangkehrer* reproduced in this volume—one of three copies in the Austrian National Library—has been identified by Angermüller as Salieri's autograph.¹² It shows a typically Italian contempt for instrumental items. Not only is the overture missing (found in other copies of the score), but the "Symphonie" called for in the libretto between Nos. 13 and 14 is also absent in Salieri's autograph. Werner Bollert, apparently working from the manuscript copy of the opera at Berlin, remarks that the dramatic quintet on the abduction of Ganymede, whose preparations on stage this number accompanies, "corresponds in its development exactly with that of the *sinfonia*."¹³

When this manuscript was bound, the title page and overture were apparently removed, and a later hand has squeezed the title of the opera into the right-hand margin of the first page of No. 1 (the ink then having bled onto the preceding blank wrapper-page). The order of the folios was also disturbed in act three between page numbers 290 and 307 so that most of No. 26 comes before No. 25.¹⁴ We have restored the manuscript's original foliation in the present facsimile. Salieri has dated the score on its first page "in viēna l'anno 1782." It shows, however, no deviations of any substance from the libretto printed in 1781 for the original production of the opera.

It appears that Salieri worked very closely with his friend

Auenbrugger to get the sort of text he wanted. Indeed, one is tempted to speculate that Salieri himself may have written the texts of the five Italian arias in the opera, every one of which is an instance of dramatically motivated onstage singing.

Volpino sings three of them in act one. The second one (No. 6) originally carried the number of the third (No. 12), as seen on page 43, and was apparently later promoted to its present position, a crucial one in the opera. Volpino, sitting alone at the clavier, must ensnare the hearts of the two ladies who are to overhear this mysterious, fascinating foreigner as he sings. Salieri turns here to the purest cantabile style of opera buffa, drawing on such tried-and-true elements as a gently animated 6/8 accompaniment figure played pizzicato by the strings (to imitate Volpino's playing), a solo oboe doubling the voice, and direct but spacious vocal roulades crowning each half of the aria.

A counterpoise to this Italianate style comes at the beginning of the next act with the opera's most distinctively Germanic feature, a melodrama—by 1781 already well known as a means of highlighting an intense or eerie moment in an opera. The situation Salieri chose for this technique, however, is anything but intense (see pages 167–73). Bär and Wolf are pondering the motives of Volpino over dessert, with Wolf scraping his teeth and humming along with the music. In this obvious satire on the fashion for melodrama segments in German operas, Salieri sticks doggedly to a single figure until the irrepressible Wolf remembers the scene made by the “kitchen-dragon” Lisel and bursts out laughing. The number does not really connect with the following duet, as the obbligato character

of a melodrama in an operatic scena fairly demanded, but dissolves into dialogue after Wolf sings the end of Volpino's second Italian aria to underscore his conviction that Volpino is really in it for the money. The melodrama cost Salieri some labor, as seen in the autograph's many cancellations.

This parodistic ploy must have delighted audiences at the Burgtheater, who were used to seeing the melodrama taking itself very seriously indeed with the performances of the National Theater's two greatest tragediennes, Johanna Sacco and Theresia Jaquet, in Georg Benda's *Medea* and *Ariadne auf Naxos*. The high dramatic pretensions of the genre were exacerbated into hopelessly stiff formality in these Viennese productions by the retention of eighteenth-century costing—by now closely associated with *tragedie classique* and opera seria—as opposed to the more or less authentic Greek costuming that enhanced the realistic impact of North German productions of these melodramas.

Unlike Salieri's Italian comic operas, *Der Raubfangkehrer* includes a considerable number of musical items—thirty-three—many of them quite short. For the secondary roles of Johann, Franzl, and Lisel, this is to be expected, but even the two leading ladies introduce themselves with little songs. Nos. 7 and 8 (pp. 53–59) consist of two stanzas sung to the same melody by Frau von Habicht and the Fräule, respectively, with Volpino accompanying them at the keyboard. Auenbrugger conceived these tandem stanzas as a simple German Lied, to judge from his adopting the most common poetic verse form of the *Romanze*, the so-called “Chevy Chase” quatrain (abab, alternating lines of iambic tetrameter and trimeter). Salieri, however, transforms these hapless verses into an exquisite Italianate canzonetta in

cavatina form (A₁A₂). The pizzicato accompaniment he carries over from the preceding number, Volpino's second Italian aria, to imitate the clavier once again, and he chooses the "amoroso" key-tempo combination of A major and Andantino un poco sostenuto. To Salieri and his Viennese audiences, it was less important to produce a plausible specimen of the sort of Lieder Frau von Habicht would have received in the post that week than it was to portray in effective musical terms the infatuation with Volpino that each lady seeks to communicate through her song.

NOTES

1. The major work on Salieri's life and operas is the three-volume study of Rudolph Angermüller, *Antonio Salieri: Sein Leben und seine weltlichen Werke unter besonderer Berücksichtigung seiner "grossen" Opern* (Munich, 1974).
2. *Die Bergknappen* (1778), *Die Apotheke* (1778), *Die schöne Schusterin* (1779), and *Das Irrlicht* (1782). The first of these, the one-act inaugural opera of the National Singspiel, appears in volume 36 of *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Oesterreich*, edited by Robert Haas. The third appears in facsimile in volume 13 of the present series. Umlauf's last opera for the enterprise, *Welches ist die beste Nation?* Mozart disparaged unreservedly in a letter of 28 December 1782 ("I don't know whether the poet or the composer will win the prize for wretchedness with it," he wrote to his father); in fact, it turned out to be a rare failure among Umlauf's Viennese operas.
3. *Aus dem Josephinischen Wien: Geblers und Nicolais Briefwechsel*, ed. Richard Maria Werner (Berlin, 1888), p. 103.
4. Otto Michtner, *Das alte Burgtheater als Opernbühne von der*

Einführung des deutschen Singspiels (1778) bis zum Tod Kaiser Leopolds II. (1792) (Vienna, 1970), p. 98.

5. See the entry in Constant von Wurzbach's *Biographisches Lexikon des Kaiserthums Oesterreich*, vol. 1 (Vienna, 1856), p. 85.
6. *Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen, Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Wilhelm A. Bauer and Otto Erich Deutsch, vol. 3 (Kassel, 1963), p. 296. The context makes it clear that Mozart refers only to the text, not the opera as a whole, as Michtner would have it (*Das alte Burgtheater*, p. 100). Mozart certainly would not have spent six ducats for the score and then have sent it to Leopold had he considered Salieri's music "wretched."
7. See the facsimile of the libretto published in volume 21 of this series, p. 29.
8. Reprinted in part by Angermüller, *Antonio Salieri*, vol. 2, pp. 59–60, n. 1. The preface is dated "Berlin, den 12^{ten} August 1783."
9. *Das alte Burgtheater*, p. 100. Michtner goes so far as to suggest that the scheduling of the opera's premiere on 30 April 1781, just four days after that of Franz Mitscha's *Adrast und Isidore*, represents a stratagem on Salieri's part (p. 98).
10. Gebler wrote to Nicolai in a letter dated 9 February 1778 that the emperor had insisted on "nothing but true musical virtuosos, and not Lieder-singers" (*Aus dem Josephinischen Wien*, p. 92).
11. *Meine Entfindungen im Theater* (Vienna, 1781), an extended extract from which appears in Michtner, *Das alte Burgtheater*, p. 99. A month earlier another anonymous observer had written a far harsher judgment on the acting of the singers in the National Singspiel: "Bemerkungen über das Pariser und Wiener Theater," *Deutsches Museum* 1781:2, pp. 527–28.
12. *Antonio Salieri*, vol. 1, p. 158. Angermüller also mentions an aria in autograph score at the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna, an aria for Peter, "Von ihr sollt ich mich trennen." This text does not occur in Auenbrugger's libretto, however, nor does

Peter sing anywhere in the opera except in the choral portions of the finales to acts one and three.

13. "Antonio Salieri e l'opera tedesca," *Musica d'oggi* 20 (1938): 123. The textual variants from Auenbrugger's original libretto in

many of the verses Bollert cites suggest that he based his study on a manuscript connected with the Berlin revision of the opera.

14. The Vienna autograph has the relevant pages bound in the following order: 290, 297-300, 291-96, 305-06, 301-04, 307.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

FRAU VON HABICHT, a young widow	<i>soprano</i>
FRÄULE NANNETTE, her stepdaughter, now of age	<i>soprano</i>
JOHANN, a servant	<i>bass</i>
FRANZL, a chambermaid	<i>soprano</i>
LISEL, a cook	<i>soprano</i>
HERR VON BÄR, lover of Frau von Habicht	<i>bass</i>
HERR VON WÖLF, lover of Fräule Nannette	<i>tenor</i>
JAKOB, servant of Herr von Bär	<i>bass</i>
PETER, servant of Herr von Wolf	<i>tenor</i>
VOLPINO, a journeyman chimney sweep	<i>baritone</i>
HERR TOMASO, a master chimney sweep	<i>bass</i>
JOURNEYMEN AND APPRENTICES TO HERR TOMASO	<i>tenors &</i> <i>basses</i>

Synopsis of DER RAUCHFANGKEHRER

Act I. At the home of the wealthy young widow Frau von Habicht the Italian chimney sweep Volpino and the cook Lisel are secretly engaged to be married. At the same time, two soi-disant nobles, Bär and Wolf, hope to enlarge the fortunes they won in a lottery by marrying the widow and her stepdaughter, Fräule Nannette. Volpino lays before Lisel a plan that will bring them a handsome dowry. Both ladies love music (the widow Habicht, once a German opera singer, met her husband while employed as the Fräule's singing teacher). Volpino will use his own musical skills and native cunning to make both women fall madly in love with him. He allows them to overhear him singing an Italian song at the clavier, then fabricates a story of his misadventures: he was once the Marchese d'Intrighi, but was forced to flee Italy after killing a man at the faro table. He now travels around Germany as a chimney sweep. Both ladies offer to help him recover his title and lands. Volpino tells them he awaits any moment good news from an uncle about a suit filed in his behalf back in Italy. He accompanies each lady in singing a German aria; each becomes smitten with him and asks him to be her singing and Italian instructor. A jealous rivalry flares up between the widow and stepdaughter.

The servant Johann reports Volpino's success to Bär and Wolf. The ladies greet their lovers with cold indifference and call in Volpino to sing them all an Italian aria. Frau von Habicht suggests that they all perform a quintet she has among her music, "The Abduction of Ganymede." In it Ganymede, hunting on Mount Ida, encounters two nymphs and falls in love with both. But while each is trying to win his heart for herself alone, Jupiter's eagle seizes the youth and bears him to Olympus to be the god's cupbearer. The idea plays directly into Volpino's hands. At the crucial moment in the presentation, Lisel on Volpino's instructions flies in from the kitchen, breaks up the amorous dalliance of Ganymede (Volpino) and the nymphs (Frau von Habicht and the Fräule), and demands he return to cleaning the kitchen flue at once. General mirth erupts.

Act II. Wolf and Bär discuss whether Volpino is seriously in love with the ladies or up to some lucrative deception. Volpino comes at their request. They congratulate him on his holding sway over no less than three female hearts. Volpino suggests that he auction all three of them off then and there. He alone bids on Lisel, who becomes his for a mere five Gulden. Volpino puts the widow on the block

next and helps the bidding along himself until Bär wins her for five hundred ducats. Volpino promises that he shall have her consent by that evening. Wolf offers a like sum for the Fräule, if Volpino can really deliver her to him as his bride.

While Volpino busies himself with writing several letters, Bär and Wolf learn from Lisel that she and Volpino are actually betrothed and that he has instructed her to be the *entremetteuse* between him and the two ladies and to swear to each that her own wild behavior during the quintet had been at Volpino's request and bribing. Thus he could determine by their jealous reactions which loved him the more deeply. Volpino has Lisel inform each lady that he has won his court case in Italy and hopes to make her a marchesa. He reassures Bär and Wolf that, if they proceed with pluck and determination, all will turn out well.

Act III. Lisel carries Volpino's message to each lady, with the further injunction that, to save appearances, each must behave coldly toward him and show exceptional partiality toward her former suitor, Frau von Habicht to Bär and the Fräule to Wolf. Volpino himself comes to give each a lesson in Italian and singing. He takes this opportunity to give each in turn a letter, supposedly bearing the good news concerning his suit to recover his title and lands in Italy. He

explains separately to each that he has concocted a plan with his master for a chimney fire to start, which Volpino alone will extinguish. Then, covered by a damp cloak, in which he will descend the chimney to put out the fire, he will receive her hand as his bride. Master Tomaso arrives with his apprentices, the fire breaks out, and after much commotion Volpino's brave deed is duly announced. Frau von Habicht bids him be brought in, damp cloak and all, then gives her hand to the cloaked figure. Bär cannot believe that she would ally herself with a chimney sweep; in reply she produces the letter Volpino had given her and stands by her intention against Bär's earnest remonstrances. Wolf emerges to report that the scene has repeated itself with the Fräule and another Volpino in the next room. Wolf and Bär compare the two identical letters, and the ladies come to realize that each has been deceived. Tomaso takes the floor and lays the blame for these events squarely on the ladies' pride, stubbornness, and quarrels. The two chimney sweeps, who turn out to be the servants of Bär and Wolf, free the ladies of their matrimonial promises, and they in turn offer their chastened hearts and considerable fortunes to Bär and Wolf. The gentlemen consider themselves rewarded richly enough with the former, however, and allow the ladies to keep their fortunes. Everyone readily forgives Volpino his prank, and the ladies offer to enrich Lisel's dowry when they learn of her betrothal to Volpino.

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