

It was in the first half of 1780s that the theatre at Count Thun's palace hosted the Italian Opera, one of the leading musical institutions of 18th century Prague. And it was this period that saw operas by the Italian composer Pasquale Anfossi (1727-1797) strongly represented in its repertory. While Anfossi enjoyed success and popularity during his lifetime, the current awareness of his works is superficial and selective as the interest in his music has so far been limited mostly to comparison with Mozart due to his setting of *La finta giardiniera* (Rome 1774).

The present thesis seeks to shed light on some problematic issues in Anfossi's biography and analyzes his opera *Isabella e Rodrigo* (Venice 1776, libretto by Giovanni Bertati) produced in Prague in 1783. *Isabella e Rodrigo* represents a rare variant of the opera buffa featuring an adventure plot with an active female protagonist. In order to avoid forced marriage, Isabella flees her father's house, and at a later point - in Turkish captivity - tries to test the faithfulness of her fiancé. Compared with other works by Anfossi and his contemporaries, *Isabella e Rodrigo* seems unexceptional. Although Anfossi displays his skill in characterization of characters as well as his dramatic experience, some of the highly inspired passages appear side by side with routine, nearly trivial ones. Noticeable is the influence of the libretto which, for the better and worse, is significant from the point of view of the structure and lends the opera its dramatic and poetic qualities. The composer's achievement rests in finding an appropriate solution for the unconventional subject and for the atypical constellation of parts without so-called *parti serie*.

The results of the analysis of *Isabella e Rodrigo* complement and revise not only Volker Mattem's commentary made in the context of *La finta giardiniera* (1989), but also John Platoff's theory of *buffo finale* (1998).