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Doctor Burney and Padre Martini: Writing a General History of Music

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BY about 1769 Charles Burney had decided to write a General History of Music,¹ and after the publication of his *An Essay Towards a History of the Principal Comets that have appeared since the Year 1742* (London, 1769) he devoted himself almost exclusively to this task. However, he was nervous about the undertaking, which he saw as a "chaos to which God knows whether I shall have life, leisure, or abilities to give order."² Since he had already "got together and consulted an incredible number of Books and Tracts on the subject with more disappointment and disgust than satisfaction," he felt the need to "fly to Italy this summer, and to allay my thirst of knowledge at the pure source."³ His purpose was twofold: "to get, from the libraries to the *viva voce* conversation of the

¹ See Roger Lonsdale, *Dr. Charles Burney: A Literary Biography* (Oxford, 1965), p. 80.

² From a letter to William Mason, May, 1770 (see Lonsdale, p. 83).

³ Letter to Mason (Lonsdale, p. 84).

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learned, what information I could relative to the music of the ancients; and the other was to judge with my own eyes of the *present state* of modern music in the places through which I should pass, from the performance and conversation of the first musicians in Italy."⁴

Burney prepared a "plan" of his book, translated it into French and Italian, and set out for the Continent on June 5, 1770. In addition to his "plan,"⁵ he was armed with many letters of introduction to "ambassadors and ministers from our Court," as well as "to those who, then, stood highest in learning, in the sciences, and in literature."⁶ The details of this fascinating trip are well known as set forth in the published volumes of Burney's *The Present State of Music in France and Italy: or, The Journal of a Tour through those Countries, undertaken to collect Materials for a General History of Music* (London, 1771).⁷ One of the most important stops on Burney's itinerary was Bologna where he visited Padre Giambattista Martini. The subsequent relationship of these two men is the subject of this essay.

The first city Burney visited in Italy was Turin, and three days after he left, the composer Quirino Gasparini wrote to Padre Martini about the English writer who "is traveling throughout Italy to find out about famous composers, singers, and musicians of the past and present, in order to publish a genealogical history."⁸ Because Gasparini, *maestro di cappella* of the Royal Chapel in Turin and

⁴ From a letter to David Garrick, October 17, 1770 (see Percy A. Scholes, *The Great Dr. Burney* [London, 1948], II, 291).

⁵ Lonsdale and Scholes were not aware of the existence of a copy of the Italian translation of the plan made and fortunately preserved by Padre Martini; this has recently been brought to light by Vincent Duckles and published in facsimile (Giambattista Martini, *Piano generale per una storia della musica di Charles Burney con un catalogo della sua biblioteca musicale* [Bologna, 1972]).

⁶ Fanny Burney (Mme d'Arblay), *Memoirs of Doctor Burney* (London, 1832), I, 221.

⁷ Scholes published a conflation of the text of the second edition with a previously unpublished travel journal, as *Dr. Burney's Musical Tours in Europe*, Vol. I: *An Eighteenth-Century Musical Tour in France and Italy*; Vol II: *An Eighteenth-Century Musical Tour in Central Europe and the Netherlands*, ed. Percy A. Scholes (London, 1959). Burney made another copy of his travel journal, with minor variants, and this has recently been published as *Music, Men, and Manners in France and Italy 1770*, ed. H. Edmund Poole (London, 1969).

⁸ Letter, "Torino 17 Luglio 1770," Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale.

former student of Martini, was out of town during Burney's visit, he asked Martini to ensure that he not be excluded from Burney's book; and he is briefly acknowledged there.⁹

During several days in Padua (July 30–August 2), Burney obtained a copy of the first volume of Martini's *Storia della musica*: "I wanted much to read it, ere I conversed with the author, and indeed before my own plan was unalterably settled."¹⁰ This volume of Martini's *Storia* though it bears the publication date 1757 did not actually appear until sometime between September, 1760, and February, 1761. It seems odd that Burney had been unable to get a copy during the ten previous years — probably it had no circulation in England, though it was widely known on the Continent.

Burney arrived in Bologna on August 21.

My chief business in this city was to see and converse with the learned *Padre Martini*, and the celebrated Signor *Farinelli*, the former being regarded by all Europe as the deepest theorist, and the other as the greatest practical musician of this, or perhaps any age or country; and, as I was so fortunate as to be well received by both, I shall make no apology for being minute in my account of two such extraordinary persons.¹¹

The following day Burney and Martini met for the first time. Burney came to this meeting armed with the following:

1. Letters of introduction from Grétry¹² and Abate Zanotti.¹³
2. A copy of Abbé Pierre Joseph Roussier's *Mémoire sur la musique des anciens* (Paris, 1770), given to Burney by the author in Paris for presentation to Martini.¹⁴

⁹ Scholes, *Tours*, I, 55.

¹⁰ Scholes, *Tours*, I, 106.

¹¹ Scholes, *Tours*, I, 145.

¹² André Ernest Modeste Grétry, who had studied with Martini about four years earlier, gave Burney this letter when they met in Paris on June 22. At that time, Burney found the composer "in appearance and behavior very agreeable" (see Scholes, *Tours*, I, 31).

¹³ The composer Giovanni Calisto Andrea Zanotti, a student of Martini, and nephew of the noted Bolognese scientist and scholar Francesco Maria Zanotti. Burney had a letter to Zanotti from his friend Joseph Baretta in London; the letter is excerpted in Francesco Vatielli, *La Biblioteca del Liceo Musicale di Bologna* (Bologna, 1916), pp. 8-9. Upon presenting the letter to Zanotti, Burney "entreated him to write a word or two of recommendation to Padre Martini, whom it was absolutely incumbent on me to see ere I left Bologna. He was necessary to my plan in all its ramifications" (Scholes, *Tours*, I, 145).

¹⁴ Scholes, *Tours*, I, 31.

3. "Compliments" from Padre Giovanni Battista Beccaria, the noted physicist, whom Burney had visited in Turin on July 14.¹⁵

The following account of their meeting comes from Burney's journal; he excluded this portion in the published version:

When, in the evening, I went to Padre Martini at the Franciscan Convent [San Francesco], of which he is Organist and Maestro di Cappella; I presented him a letter from the Abate Zanotti, in which he had inclosed that of Mr. Baretti to him. I found he had been apprised of my journey and its object from Turin and Milan, and was pleased to say that he was very glad to know a person of such merit and of such an uncommon curiosity. I presented him the Abbé Roussier's *Memoir sur la Music des Anciens Grecs*, from the author, and a letter from M. Grétry, who had received instructions from him.

We presently became very well acquainted, and went to business. I shewed him my plan in Italian, in perusing it at several places he nodded and smiled approbation — *bravo! pulito!* etc. I then enquired after the II vol. of his own work (I had already procured the first, at Padua). He told me it was in great forwardness, and would be published in two months.¹⁶

The published version of this meeting has often been quoted, but is worth repeating here in its entirety:

He [Padre Martini] has many years been employed in writing the History of Music, of which the first volume only has, as yet, been published. Two editions, one in folio, and one in quarto, were printed at the same time in Bologna, 1757; a second volume is in the press, and he proposes finishing the work in five volumes. The first volume is chiefly employed in the History of Music among the Hebrews; the second and third will comprise that of the ancient Greeks; the fourth, the Latin or Roman music, with the history of music in the church; the fifth and last volume will be appropriated to modern music, with some account of the lives and writings of the most famous musicians, and engravings of their heads.¹⁷ We reciprocally agreed upon an open and cordial correspondence, and a mutual promise of confidence and assistance; but it is greatly to be lamented that the good Father Martini is far advanced in years [he was then 64], and is of infirm constitution, having a very bad cough, swelled legs, and a sickly countenance; so that there is reason to fear he will hardly have life and health sufficient to complete his learned, ingenious, and extensive plan.

It is impossible, by reading his book, to form a judgment of the character of this good and worthy man. As yet he has treated only the driest and most abstruse part of the subject, in which he had great opportunities to shew his reading and knowledge, which are deep and extensive, but none to display the

¹⁵ Scholes, *Tours*, I, 59-60.

¹⁶ Scholes, *Tours*, I, 145-46.

¹⁷ As is well known, only the first three volumes appeared before Martini's death in 1784.

excellence of his character, which is such as inspires not only respect but kindness. He joins to innocence of life, and simplicity of manners, a native cheerfulness, softness, and philanthropy.

Upon so short an acquaintance I never liked any man more; and I felt a little reserve with him after a few hours conversation, as with an old friend or beloved brother; it was impossible for confidence to be more cordial, especially between two persons whose pursuits were the same: but though they are the same with respect to the object, yet they are different with respect to the way; I had advanced too far to retreat before I could procure his book, and when I had found it, my plan was so much digested as to render the adoption or imitation of any other very inconvenient. Besides, as every object may be approached by a different route, it may also be seen in a different point of view: two different persons therefore may exhibit it with equal truth, and yet with great diversity: I shall avail myself of P. Martini's learning and materials, as I would of his spectacles, I shall apply them to my subject, as it appears to me, without changing my situation; and shall neither implicitly adopt his sentiments in doubtful points, nor transcribe them where we agree.¹⁸

Besides his immense collection of printed books, which has cost him upwards of a thousand sequins, P. Martini is in possession of original MSS. which no money can purchase, as well as copies of MSS. in the Vatican and Ambrosian libraries, and in those of Florence, Pisa, and other places, for which he has had a faculty granted him by the Pope, and particular permission from others in power. He has ten different copies of the famous *Micrologus* of Guido Aretinus, and as many made from different manuscripts of John de Muris, with several other very ancient and valuable tracts in MS. He has one room full of them; two other rooms are appropriated to the reception of printed books, of which he has all the several editions extant; and a fourth to practical music, of which he has likewise a prodigious quantity in MS.

The number of his books amounts to seventeen thousand volumes, and he is still encreasing it from all parts of the world. I had frequently surprised booksellers on the continent with the list of my own books on the subject of music, but, in my turn, I was now surprised. Though Padre Martini has had many presents made him of scarce books and MSS. yet he has often paid a great price for others, particularly for one written in Spanish, 1613, which cost him a hundred ducats, about twenty guineas, at Naples, where it was printed.¹⁹ He shewed me several of his most curious books and MSS. upon which I communicated to him the catalogue of mine. He was surprised at some of them, and said they were extremely rare; of these he took down the titles, and, at my second visit, he was pleased to think my plan worth borrowing to transcribe, which he did with his own hand.²⁰

¹⁸ In one of his travel journals Burney wrote: "'We are both on the same seal' says he; 'Yes, but we steer different courses,' I said, 'and shall carry our goods to different markets'" (Poole, p. 88).

¹⁹ *El Melopeo y maestro* by Pedro Cerone.

²⁰ This is the copy mentioned in n. 5 (Scholes, *Tours*, I, 145-46).

This laudatory account of Martini is tempered slightly by scattered comments in Burney's journal, some of which are not included in the publication. For example, when in Padua, before arriving at Bologna, Burney met with Padre Francesco Antonio Vallotti, *maestro di cappella* of San Antonio:

I find that P. Vallotti is not quite satisfied with it [the first volume of Martini's *Storia*]; which he says, though called a history, consists of dissertations and matters of doctrines and science more than of narrative or history. But it does not seem to clash with, or preclude my plan, even in Italy, where alone it seems hitherto to have been circulated and read. In this Vol. which is a thick 4^{to}. I find only 8 pages of History.²¹ But I must peruse it critically, and, if possible, converse with the celebrated author, before I form a judgment of so elaborate a work.²²

When Burney wrote in his published account, "As yet he has treated only the driest and most abstruse part of the subject," he was being most polite. For herein lies a fundamental difference between the two men and their respective histories, and Burney's true feelings about Martini's first volume (which are applicable to all three volumes) emerge from these various unpublished items. For example, on September 19 he visited the famous castrato Tommaso Guarducci at his home near Montefiascone; Burney wrote in his journal of Guarducci's "expectations that I should make not only a useful work but one still more general and pleasing than that of P. Martini, which he and most people think rather dry and too learned for the generality of readers."²³ In addition to these journal entries, Burney wrote in a letter to Christoph Daniel Ebeling at Hamburg dated November, 1771: "I will go further, and confess that the History of the good Padre Martini, so replete with learned authorities, is what his countrymen frequently call it, a *seccatura* [that is, very dry, a bore]."²⁴ Actually, Burney must have felt quite relieved when he finally did see Martini's work, for he had confirmation then that he would in fact write a very different kind of book.

Burney spent ten days in Bologna, and was with Martini almost every day. The journal entry for Thursday, August 23, the day after their first meeting, reads: "Again this morning with the good Father

²¹ Burney is certainly exaggerating here (see n. 116).

²² Scholes, *Tours*, I, 106.

²³ Poole, p. 127.

²⁴ Scholes, *The Great Dr. Burney*, I, 202.

Martini — 'tis a title I have great reason to give him."²⁵ That very morning Farinelli, responding to Burney's message to him, came to San Francesco to greet him:

Upon my observing, in the course of our conversation, that I had long been ambitious of seeing two persons, become so eminent by different abilities in the same art, and that my chief business at Bologna was to gratify that ambition, Signor Farinelli, pointing to P. Martini, said, "What *he* is doing will last, but the little that I have done is already gone and forgotten."²⁶

Farinelli left after inviting both men to dinner on Saturday. Burney "staid a good while longer with the good padre — and talked writ and rummaged very comfortably the whole time."²⁷

Friday, August 24. Again at night to S. Francisco [*sic*] — read — transcribed and borrowed.²⁸

Saturday, August 25. Spent the morning with P. Martini in his library till we went together in Signor Farinelli's chariot to dine with him.²⁹ This was a delightful and memorable day, spent in an open, cordial, and friendly manner, with two persons the most eminent and celebrated in Europe, for Musical Science and Talents!³⁰

Sunday, August 26. All this morning writing and reading in Padre Martini's Library.³¹

Monday, August 27. After dinner I went to make extracts from the books and head of P. Martini.³²

Tuesday, August 28. Purchasing old books, and reading and transcribing from MSS. in Padre Martini's Library. . . . I intended setting out for Florence the next day, 29th, but was told by several people that there would be the most famous musical performance at Bologna on Thursday the 30th which happens in the whole year; and this was confirmed by P. Martini, who told me that considering my errand there, it would be very wrong not to stay; as on that day would be the annual performance of the members of the Philharmonic Society, which had subsisted above a hundred years. This determined me to stay as much as if I had heard the same words uttered by the Oracle of Delphos.³³

²⁵ Poole, p. 90.

²⁶ Scholes, *Tours*, I, 148.

²⁷ Poole, p. 91.

²⁸ Poole, p. 92. This does not agree with the account in *The Present State*, according to which Burney went to the theater that night.

²⁹ Poole, p. 92.

³⁰ Scholes, *Tours*, I, 157.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Poole, p. 95.

³³ Scholes, *Tours*, I, 160-61.

After dinner I went to my Daddy good P. Martini who was so kind to lend me his MSS canons of which I copied what I wanted — he had before lent me for that purpose old Doni,³⁴ which is an exceeding scarce book [in dialogue].³⁵ I made extracts from that too.³⁶

Thursday, August 30. I had been desired by P. Martini to attend to the performances at the Church of S. Giovanni in Monte, where he did not choose to go himself, the members of the Philharmonic Society being chiefly, if not all, his disciples; and said he wished to have the opinion of an unprejudiced professor, an utter stranger to them all.³⁷

In the church Burney met “the celebrated little German, Mozart . . . [and] had a long conversation with his father.”³⁸ Burney goes on with a brief account of Mozart’s successes in Italy and concludes: “But there is no musical excellence which I do not expect from his extraordinary quickness and talents, under the guidance of so able a musician and intelligent a man as his father, who, I was informed, had been ill five or six weeks at Bologna.”³⁹

It is amazing that Burney did not seek out the Mozarts in Bologna during his visit, at least to hear how young Wolfgang, who six years earlier had “astonished all hearers in London by his premature musical talent,”⁴⁰ had progressed since that time. But then Burney was single-mindedly concentrating on “the present state of music in Italy,” and furthermore his appreciation of Mozart’s music came only very late in his life.

After a detailed discussion of all the pieces played at the concert (in two parts, morning and evening), Burney concluded:

³⁴ Antonfrancesco Doni, *Dialogo della musica* (Venice, 1544). Scholes and Poole incorrectly interpret this as a reference to Giovanni Battista Doni, but Burney, in his *History*, specifically refers to the *Dialogo* by A. Doni, which is “among the *Libri rari*. I have never seen it, except in the library of Padre Martini, where I transcribed a considerable part of it” (Burney, *A General History of Music*, 4 vols. (London, 1776-89; modern ed., 2 vols., ed. Frank Mercer [London, 1935; reprint, New York, 1957], II, 134).

³⁵ Scholes, *Tours*, I, 166.

³⁶ Poole, p. 98.

³⁷ Scholes, *Tours*, I, 161. An additional reason, possibly the principal one, for Martini’s not attending the annual concert may have been his running feud with the Accademia filarmonica, culminating in his resignation in 1781.

³⁸ Scholes, *Tours*, I, 162.

³⁹ *Ibid.* But compare Burney’s quote two years later from an unnamed correspondent from Salzburg to the effect that Mozart “is one further instance of early fruit being more extraordinary than excellent” (Scholes, *Tours*, II, 238).

⁴⁰ Scholes, *Tours*, I, 162.

After these performances were done I went to take leave of the very good Father Martini who waited for me in his study, it being late, beyond the monastic hour of seeing people. He was quite prepared for me with 3 recommendatory letters one for Florence, one for Rome, and one for Naples, found still more curious books to shew me of which I took the titles, in hopes of meeting with them one time or other. He had told me the day before that as he should not be at the Philharmonic meeting himself, he should rely on my judgment and account how matters went off and were conducted — and now, after it was over I told him my feelings at every single piece: after this I was going to take leave when he says “won’t you stay for the words to be written to those canons?” I had the day before sung with a young franciscan his scholar⁴¹ out of a prodigious large book of his canons, several very pleasing ones for 2 voices only, of which I seemed to express a desire to have one or two, and this excellent father remembered it and had set a person to work for me — who was writing when I came into the study — but as he has usually 2 or 3 amanuenses there I did not mind him. Well we parted, on my side with sorrow and on his with a recommendation to be careful of my health and to write to him often.⁴²

What a vivid and rare account of these meetings between the forty-four-year-old, widely traveled Englishman, and the hermitic, sixty-four-year-old Italian monk, who had traveled no farther from Bologna than to Rome, but whose cell was a mecca to all travelers in Italy interested in music. We can imagine the talk about books and manuscripts, about their respective histories, and probably about a subject neglected by Martini in his writings, namely “the present state of music.” At several places in his book, Burney fills in details about his visit with Martini. He tells us that Martini had permitted him to transcribe the famous *Miserere* of Gregorio Allegri, and that Martini had obtained his copy “by express order of the late Pope.”⁴³ Burney also notes that Martini told him that “there were never more than three copies of it made by authority, one of which was for the Emperor Leopold, one for the late king of Portugal, and the other for himself.”⁴⁴

In Florence, Burney’s next stop after Bologna, Martini’s letter gained him a meeting with “Mr. Perkins, an English gentleman,

⁴¹ Probably Padre Stanislao Mattei, Martini’s disciple and successor as *maestro di cappella* at San Francesco, and subsequently teacher to Donizetti and Rossini.

⁴² Poole, p. 99. In his publication (*The Present State*), Burney has a footnote here as follows: “Padre Martini has composed an amazing number of ingenious and learned *canons*, in which every kind of intricacy and contrivance, that ever had admission into this difficult species of composition, has been happily subdued.”

⁴³ Scholes, *Tours*, I, 181. This was probably Benedict XIV, a fellow Bolognese.

⁴⁴ Scholes, *Tours*, I, 232-33.

who has resided a considerable time in this city and in Bologna, [and] is likewise a good musician."⁴⁵ He also met Angelo Bandini, librarian of the Biblioteca Mediceo-Laurenziana, who "shewed me the only book of MSS upon music in the library."⁴⁶ This volume contained treatises by Guido d'Arezzo, Tinctoris, Boethius, Jean de Muris, and others; Burney, after itemizing the treatises in his diary, adds, "I was hurried and could write no more — but Padre Martini has had the whole book copied and I saw it at Bologna."⁴⁷

In Rome, through a letter from Martini, Burney met the castrato Giuseppe Santarelli, "chief conductor of the Papal Chapel. . . . He has studied Music and its history, particularly in the Church, more profoundly than any one with whom I had hitherto conversed, not excepting Padre Martini, who in the historical part of his work mentions nothing for which he cannot cite the authority of the Fathers or some Orthodox Ecclesiastical writer on Canto fermo or counterpoint."⁴⁸ (This implicit criticism of Martini was not included in the published volume.)

Burney arrived in Naples on October 16, bearing a letter from Martini to Niccolò Jommelli, who, however, was then out of town. On October 20, Burney wrote his first letter to Martini (their entire correspondence is in Italian):

LETTER I

Most Reverend and Venerated Father,

I have not, until now, expressed my gratitude for all the favours you bestowed upon me while I was in Bologna lest Society be deprived of the time you spend

⁴⁵ Scholes, *Tours*, I, 182. About this William Perkins little is known other than Burney's description of him as the author of an essay "on the capacity and extent of the violoncello, in imitating the violin, flute, french-horn, trumpet, hautbois, and bassoon." This must be the rare work, *Facile Difficile, or Mysterys of the Violoncello exposed in IX. sonatas or duets* (London, n.d.). In a footnote in his *History* Burney describes Perkins as "an English gentleman, settled at Bologna, and a great admirer of the compositions of Perti; [he] kindly furnished me with an admirable printed mass by this master, in eight real parts" (*History*, II, 536).

⁴⁶ Poole, p. 115. Bandini, who had described the library's holdings in a published catalogue (1764-78), had an extensive correspondence with Martini (see P. P. Scattolin, "Ricostruzione del Carteggio di Padre G. B. Martini con G. Tirahoschi, A. M. Bandini, P. M. Paciaudi, e I. Affò," *Rivista italiana di musicologia*, VIII/2 [1973], 225-53).

⁴⁷ Poole, p. 115.

⁴⁸ Scholes, *Tours*, I, 210. Santarelli, who had written a history of church music, was, according to Burney, "prevented from publishing his work which has been printed off ever since 1764 for want of a patron" (Poole, p. 141) — which probably means that the book was critical of church musical practices and urged reforms.

to its advantage. Your countless courtesies are so imprinted in my heart that I will never forget them; and will always consider as the most fortunate and gratifying event, not only of my voyage in Italy but of my life, the honor of knowing you.

I met in Florence many knowledgeable men who were embarrassed by my questions, which only shows how your great work renders futile in Italy any other attempt at a *History of Music*.

I gave your letter of introduction to Sig. Perkins, who received me most politely and did many things for me while I was in Florence. I have established in this city a correspondence with Sig. Giuseppe Molini,⁴⁹ who will attend to the two editions of the second volume of your stupendous work and will advise anyone you commission about the price, once the books are ready. The hope of finding them in Florence around the middle of November is my reason for passing again through this city on my way back to England.

Among the many learned and enlightened men who were of assistance to me in Rome, no one was more helpful in my research than Chevalier Santarelli, whose kindness, understanding, and benevolence cannot be imagined, for which I am entirely indebted to you as they were the consequence of your letter which introduced me to this accomplished musician.

I arrived in Naples on the 16th of this month and I first inquired after Sig. Jomelli,⁵⁰ whom I did not find, however, since he had left for the country some miles away, on vacation. He will not return until the middle of next week but I could no longer defer assuring you of my respect and gratitude. I will save my account of Sig. Jomelli's reception for another letter after receipt of the second volume of your work.

I will remain in Naples until the 5th or 6th of November to hear an opera set to music by Sig. Jomelli for the Royal Theater, and then, after a week's stay in Rome I must return at once to England by way of Florence, Pisa, Genoa, Antibes, Lyons, and Paris.

If I am not fortunate enough to find in Florence the second volume of your *History*, I will consider my collection of books to be very incomplete. If it is possible to find a way to send it to me so I can bring it myself to England, it would give me great pleasure, and how much more pleasant if it were accompanied by a most precious letter from you.

Most impressed by the profound expression of your erudition, piety, and goodness of heart, I remain, Most Reverend Father,

Naples 20 October 1770

Your Most Humble and Obligated Servant,
Charles Burney⁵¹

⁴⁹ Molini was "brother to Mr. Molini the language master in London [and] likewise brother to the eminent bookseller at Paris" (Scholes, *Tours*, I, 176).

⁵⁰ Jommelli, whom Burney regarded as a "truly great composer" (*History*, II, 927), always signed his name with two *m*'s.

⁵¹ Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale; I am grateful to the library and its director, Dott. Sergio Paganelli, for permission to publish these letters.

On October 26, Burney "first had the pleasure of seeing and conversing with Signor Jommelli, who arrived at Naples from the country but the night before. . . I gave him Padre Martini's letter, and after he had read it we went to business directly."⁵² Jommelli, after perusing Burney's plan, said that "the part which I had undertaken was much neglected at present in Italy" (probably a reference to Burney's intention of treating "the present state of music"). He also "mentioned to me a person of great learning" (Saverio Mattei), who, in the course of writing a "dissertation on the music of the ancients, [had] differed in several points from Padre Martini."⁵³

Naples was the southernmost point of Burney's tour. On his way back to London he was disappointed not to find the second volume of Martini's *Storia* waiting for him in Florence. From there Burney went to Pisa, where on November 24 he met with Christian Joseph Lidarti, who "had heard of me at Bologna from Padre Martini, with whom he had been since I was there. From Lidarti I learned a reason for P. Martini not keeping his word with me in sending the second volume of his history to Florence by the time I returned there, which greatly disappointed me, as it was the chief reason of my returning through that city — But I find the dedication to the Grand Duke had not been received, which prevented other copies being issued out."⁵⁴

In Paris on his return home Burney finally met Rousseau: ". . . the reception was far better than I expected — I begun immediately to tell him of my journey and errand into Italy — and the account seemed to catch his attention — After a little time I told him that I was very much pleased to find his Dictionary in all hands there, and that P. Martini in particular *en faisoit le plus grand cas* — He said he was very glad of that, as the Italians were the best judges of its merit."⁵⁵

* * *

After having been abroad for almost seven months, Burney arrived in London in time to spend Christmas Eve with his family. On January 16, 1771, he received his first letter from Martini:

⁵² Scholes, *Tours*, I, 258-59. On Jommelli's relations with Martini, see my article "Jommelli e Padre Martini: Aneddoti e realtà di un rapporto," *Rivista italiana di musicologia*, VIII/I (1973), 132-46.

⁵³ Scholes, *Tours*, I, 259. Mattei was a friend and the first biographer of Jommelli.

⁵⁴ Scholes, *Tours*, I, 305.

⁵⁵ Scholes, *Tours*, I, 313-14.

LETTER 2

Monsieur

Through Sig. Perkins I am sending you a copy of the second volume of my History of Music, which has just been published. I pray you to accept it as a token of my respect. I beg you to keep me always in your most precious good graces, and with veneration I declare myself

Bologna 16 January 1771

Your Most Humble, Devoted, and Obligated Servant,
Fr. Giambattista Martini⁵⁶

Thus Burney received the long-awaited second volume of Martini's *Storia*; but according to another letter from Martini dated April 7, 1771 (see Plate I), Burney had not yet acknowledged receipt of the book:

LETTER 3

Monsieur

Having been favored with a most appreciated visit by Sig. Baretto,⁵⁷ who is on his way back to London, I have the opportunity of renewing my respectful devotion. I hope that by now you have received a copy of the second volume of my History of Music. I pray you to keep me in your good graces, and if you come upon English books on music, please send them to me; and with all respect I consider myself

Bologna 7 April 1771

You Most Humble, Devoted, and Obligated Servant,
F. Giambattista Martini⁵⁸

It was, however, a very busy time for Burney. In February, 1771, he had been ill for several weeks,⁵⁹ and throughout these months he was absorbed in preparing for publication the fruits of his journey, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*. It appeared on May 3, 1771, and Burney's daughter Fanny wrote in her diary: "My father has been honoured with letters from the great Rousseau, M. Diderot, and Padre Martini, three as eminent men, as the age has produced, I believe, upon his book."⁶⁰

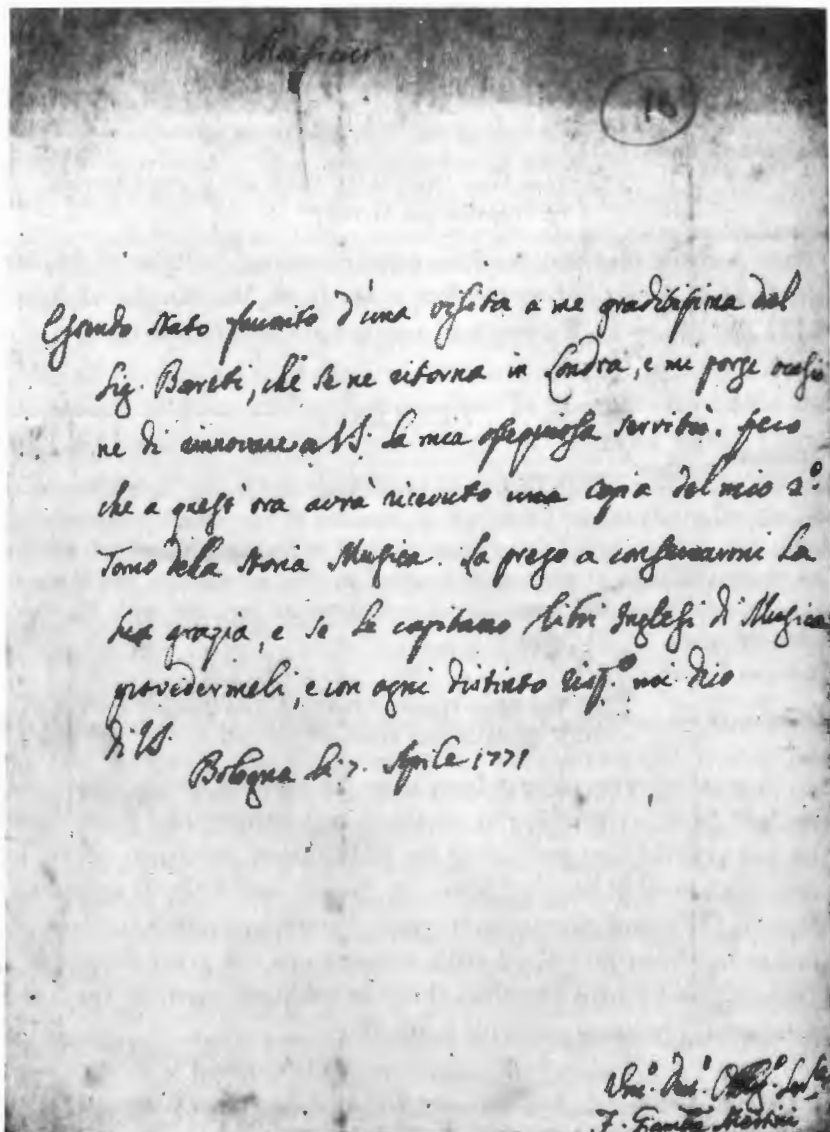
⁵⁶ Osborn Collection, Yale University Library; I am grateful to the late Mr. James M. Osborn for permission to publish these letters here.

⁵⁷ Joseph (Giuseppe Marc'Antonio) Baretto, friend of Burney, and also a member of the Johnson circle.

⁵⁸ Osborn Collection, Yale University Library.

⁵⁹ See Lonsdale, *Burney*, p. 100.

⁶⁰ Frances Burney (Mme D'Arblay), *Early Diary, 1768-1778*, ed. Annie Raine Ellis (London, 1907), I, 123-24, entry of June 3, 1771.



Letter from Martini to Burney, April 7, 1771.

There is no extant letter by Martini from 1771 referring to *The Present State*; in fact, his next letter to Burney is dated August 19, 1775, and seems to represent Martini's first encounter with Burney's book.

LETTER 4

Monsieur

The favors you have deigned to bestow on me, by sending through Sig. Parsons⁶¹ your most erudite work in three volumes, which contains notices of Professors of Music gathered during your voyage, oblige me to render you most distinct thanks; above all for the remembrances of my humble person in many places. I do not merit such honor, since I recognize in myself no skill; thus I can only attribute this to the kindness you bear toward me. I hope for opportunities to reciprocate, and even more to demonstrate the esteem and homage with which I have the honor of declaring myself

Bologna 19 August 1775

Your Most Humble, Devoted, and Obligated Servant,
 F. Giambattista Martini

P.S. I have recently formed a collection of portraits in painting of Professors of Music, and therefore I beg you to deign to send me your portrait, which will enrich my collection.⁶²

The first volume of Burney's *History* appeared in January, 1776, and Martini is listed as one of the subscribers. Martini acknowledged receipt of it in his next letter.

LETTER 5

Monsieur

I have received by means of Sig. Long, the most beautiful work of yours, the first volume of your *History of Music*, which I assume to be truly renowned, only I regret not being able to understand it, since I do not know the language; therefore to appreciate its merit I am forced to seek help from someone who

⁶¹ William Parsons, who, in 1786, succeeded John Stanley as Master of the King's Band of Music, a position Burney himself coveted (see Scholes, *Burney*, II, 23-24). Burney had met Parsons on his return through Rome, and, according to his *Memoirs*, recommended that he study with Rinaldo di Capua and Santarelli (see Fanny Burney D'Arblay, *Memoirs of Doctor Burney* [London, 1832], III, 79). There is a manuscript note by Martini in Bologna as follows: "William Parsons, eccellente suonatore di cembalo e cantante di tenore, mi favorì nel mese di agosto 1772" (William Parsons, the excellent performer on the harpsichord, and tenor, so honored me in the month of August 1772) (see Corrado Ricci, *Burney, Casanova e Farinelli in Bologna* [Milan, 1890], p. 17).

⁶² Osborn Collection, Yale University Library.

does understand the language. I will send you through Sig. Vergani the two volumes of my work *Saggio di Contrappunto*.⁶³

Since you left Bologna I have begun a collection of portraits of Professors of Music, both ancient and modern; I would be greatly honored to have your portrait, therefore I beg you to do me this kindness. I wish also to have portraits of others, which I ask you to help me obtain. If you have the chance to see Sig. Bach,⁶⁴ urge him to send me his portrait, as I asked him for it some time ago. Honor me with your commands, and always at your disposal, I remain

Bologna 13 January 1778

Your Most Humble, Devoted, and Obligated Servant,
F. Giambattista Martini⁶⁵

Burney replied (see Plate II):

LETTER 6

Most reverend Father and honoured patron,

As I hold no more cherished memory than that of your Reverence, I should not have left your letter of January 13 unanswered had I not been immersed in unavoidable business of various kinds. But as I am now somewhat less engaged, and can take advantage of the civility of Signore Roncaglia,⁶⁶ who proposes shortly to start for Bologna, I should indeed be failing in proper feeling were I to neglect the opportunity to assure you of my respect and veneration, and to thank you, as the present deserves, for the most esteemed gift of your *Saggio di Contrappunto*, to whose arrival I look forward with the utmost impatience. The copy entrusted to Signore Vergani for me has not yet come to hand, but I hope shortly to receive it, as I urgently require it, since the booksellers can supply it only after several months' delay. The third volume of your learned and indispensable *Storia* would vastly aid me in the composition of my own History were it already in print. I trust that the public's impatience, and my own, will soon be allayed by the appearance of that invaluable work.

Had I been sooner informed of Signore Roncaglia's intention to proceed direct to Bologna, I should have felt highly honoured in acceding to your flattering request for my portrait. Before long, however, I hope to find occasion to send you a likeness of some sort. Meanwhile, I have delivered your message to Signore Bach, who, as he promised, has had himself painted.

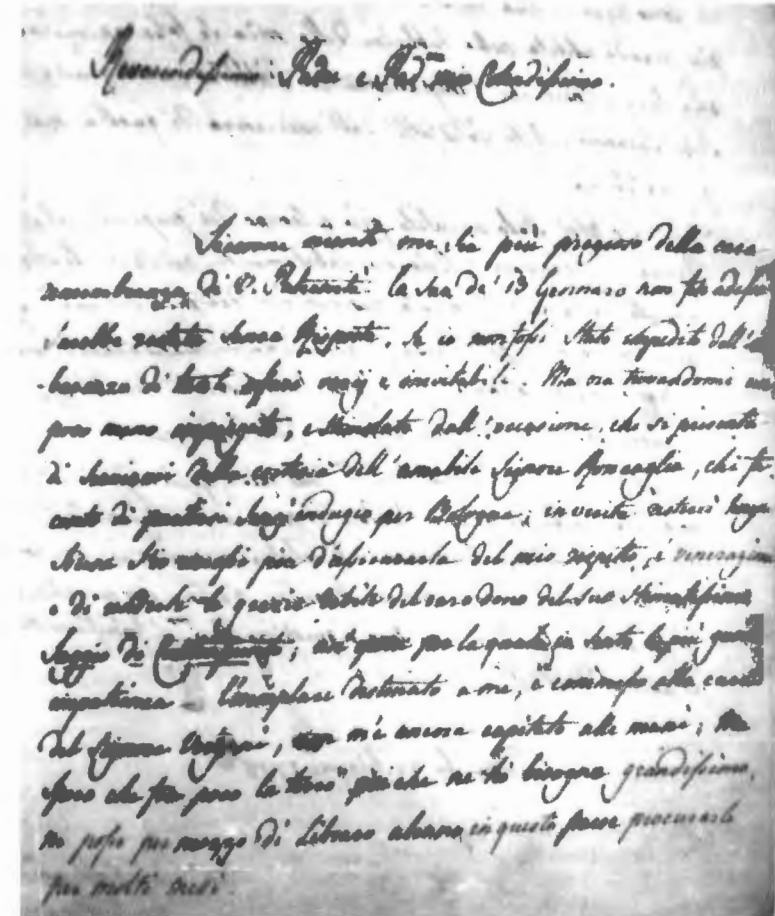
Be assured, reverend sir, of my prayers, along with those of every lover of music, learning, and virtue, that Providence may grant you life, health, and endurance to complete your tremendous labours, and thereby make your name

⁶³ Martini's *Esemplare ossia Saggio Fondamentale pratico di contrappunto*, 2 vols. (Bologna, 1774-75).

⁶⁴ This was, of course, Johann Christian Bach, then in London, but who had studied with Martini in Bologna almost two decades earlier.

⁶⁵ Osborn Collection, Yale University Library.

⁶⁶ Francesco Roncaglia, well-known castrato who appeared in many of J. C. Bach's operas in London. Roncaglia wrote to Burney from Bologna on August 29, 1778, telling him he had delivered the letters to Martini, who "asked me to greet you warmly" (Osborn Collection, Yale University Library).



First page of letter from Burney to Martini, June 22, 1778.

and fame known to posterity, as they are today, most reverend and distinguished Father, to

London 22 June 1778

Your Most Humble, Devoted, and Obligated Servant,
Carlo Burney⁶⁷

Burney must have interceded with J. C. Bach, for a month later Bach wrote to Martini that he was sending to him with Roncaglia "an excellent portrait of myself by one of our best painters"⁶⁸ — hardly an overstatement, since it is the famous portrait by Gainsborough now in Bologna at the Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale.

A week later Burney wrote again to Martini:

LETTER 7

Most reverend Father and honored Patron,

Having written to your Reverence a few days ago, by means of Sig. Roncaglia, to thank you for your kindness in sending me your excellent *Saggio di Contrappunto*, which I have not yet received, I am afraid that this note is an imposition. However, having forgotten to make an urgent request, I trust that you will forgive this second letter.

If the Reverend and most venerated Father would be so kind as to inform me, by mail, of the difference between Ambrosian Chant and Gregorian Chant, it would be of great assistance to me in the writing of my History of Music. The writers on music speak clearly neither on the ancient Ambrosian Chant nor on that practised today in the Duomo of Milan, where, it is said, the manner in which the Holy Office is sung, in the Ambrosian style, is preserved in its pristine purity. However, I do not know if the tones, or the Ambrosian ecclesiastical modes are eight in number, as in Gregorian Chant; or if the difference consists in the clefs, the *Cantilena*, or the finals of the tones. A very brief example, written in notes, of the difference would be a favor for which I do not dare to hope. However, if it will not be too bothersome I would dare to pray that, at your leisure, you resolve this doubt of mine. With full respect, I declare myself

London 29 June 1778

Your Most Humble and Devoted Servant,
Carlo Burney⁶⁹

Martini's reply is not extant, but we know something about its contents from a note of Burney's in his History, on the subject of

⁶⁷ Translated in C. S. Terry, *John Christian Bach* (London, 1929); 2nd ed., foreword by H. C. Robbins Landon (London, 1967), pp. 159-60.

⁶⁸ Terry, *J. C. Bach*, p. 160.

⁶⁹ Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale.

Ambrosian Chant: "I then applied to the learned Padre Martini, who, with his accustomed kindness and spirit of communication, honoured me with a long letter on the subject; in which, after acknowledging that the *Cantilena Ambrosiana* is, in general, the same as the *Canto Romano*, except in the *Finals*, he has favoured me with copious extracts from a scarce book, entitled *Regolo del canto fermo, Ambrosiano dal Camillo Perego, in Milano, 1622, in 4^{to}*."⁷⁰

Burney thanked Martini:

LETTER 8

Most reverend and learned Father,

The invaluable letter, and also the most excellent *Saggio di Contrappunto* of your most esteemed Reverence, were delivered to me by Sig. Mattei⁷¹ some time ago; and I, full of appreciation and gratitude for your kindness, would have been quicker to thank you if there had not been the lack of an occasion to send you a letter. Now thanks to a very worthy friend of mine, a fine gentleman, very knowledgeable about antiquity and the fine arts, I have the honor of writing. This gentleman, returning from London to Rome where he has lived for 14 years, and whose name is *Giacomo Byers*,⁷² will pass through Bologna soon, and is most desirous of paying his respects to someone as renowned as you.

Since your reverence is always most curious to know all the extraordinary circumstances regarding music I have the honor of sending you with this gentleman a little essay put out at the request of our royal society, on a musical phenomenon with whom the English public has been much taken.⁷³ I am sorry I do not have time to make a translation of it in the Italian language, but I hope it will not be difficult to find a friend of yours, knowledgeable in our language, who will explain it to you.

It is a while since the first volume of my General History of Music came off the press, and that I have begun to have the second printed; but writing of obscure centuries, interesting materials are difficult to find, and when they are found, still more difficult to put in order.

⁷⁰ Burney, *History*, I, 416 (see also, Riccardo Allorto, "Il Canto Ambrosiano nelle lettere di G. B. Martini e di Charles Burney," *Festschrift für Erich Schenk, Studien zur Musikwissenschaft, Beihefte der Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich*, XXV [1962], 1-4).

⁷¹ Luigi Mattei Marchetti, husband of the singer Signora Marchetti (about whom see Burney, *History*, II, 880).

⁷² James Byers, Scottish antiquarian who lived in Rome for forty years, and with whom Burney spent a good deal of time during his visit to Rome. (On Byers, see Brinsley Ford, "James Byers, Principal Antiquarian for the English Visitors to Rome," *Apollo*, XCIX [June, 1974], 446-61).

⁷³ *Account of an Infant Musician* [William Crotch] (London, 1779).

But after my travels in France, Italy, Germany, etc., I am determined to look for musical manuscripts in my own country, and for this I have visited our Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and also the British Museum, etc., where there are copies of rare and unusual manuscripts relevant to my work: for example, those of Hucbald, of St. Odo, Guido, Franco, Giov. di Muris; besides these, there are writings of my compatriots, such as John Cotton, Walter Odington, monk of Evesham in the 13th century — of Thomas of Tewkesbury, Simon Tunstede, Lionel Power, Johannes Torkesey, Thomas Walsingham, and many others of the 14th and 15th centuries of whom I will write in my second volume. But I hope ardently to be enlightened by the third volume of your history before finishing my work.

I have found Signor Mattei, husband of La Marchetti, a man truly worthy of the praise with which your most venerated Reverence has honored him. Now he is in Scotland, together with his much esteemed wife.

Until now the professors of Violin which your Reverence recommended to me have not arrived in London, therefore the opportunity has been lost to me to be of some assistance to these gentlemen. Unhappily in time of war the theaters and other places of recreation do badly, and now there are more Professors of Music in England than can find bread.

As to my portrait, which your Reverence has done me the honor of requesting, I have been recently so occupied with various tasks that I have not had the time to have myself painted; but I hope now to gratify your flattering request — meanwhile I have the honor of sending with Sig. Byers a print of our Doctor Boyce, recently deceased, but formerly maestro di cappella of the Royal Chapel, a distinguished gentleman, good contrapuntist, and very knowledgeable in church music.⁷⁴

I cannot conclude this letter without telling you how precious to me was your information on Ambrosian Chant and also your *Saggio di Contrappunto*, a most useful and learned book.

Accept, most venerated Father, with your customary kindness, my gratitude, and please, sometime, give me the honor of your most appreciated remembrance. I beg you to give me opportunities to reciprocate for so many obligations which I profess to you, offering you proof of my obedience in the execution of your commands; at the same time allow me, with all the respect and homage due you, to declare myself

London 20 October 1779

Your most Humble, Devoted, and Obligated Servant,
Carlo Burney, doctor of music.⁷⁵

Burney's letter overlapped in time with the following letter from Martini:

⁷⁴ William Boyce died on February 7, 1779.

⁷⁵ Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale.

LETTER 9

Most Illustrious, Excellent, and Honored Patron,

On the occasion of the return home of two Englishmen I do not wish to fail to renew my devotion to your Excellency, and at the same time to ask you to honor my collection of portraits by sending me your portrait, which will adorn my collection.

I sent various letters with a certain Sig. Marchetti,⁷⁶ who went last year with his wife to England to sing; but I have had no verification that the letters were delivered. Keep me in your most precious good graces, and remember who holds you in such esteem and veneration, declaring myself, of your most Illustrious and excellent Reverence,

Bologna 7 November 1779

Your most Humble, Devoted, and Obligated Servant,
F. Giambattista Martini⁷⁷

The following year Burney, busily at work on the second volume of his *History*, once again wrote to Martini expressing his eagerness to see the next volume of Martini's work. This is the last letter we have from Burney to Martini:

LETTER 10

Most learned and venerable Father:

More than eight months have passed since I had the honor of writing you so long a letter, which I sent with Sig. Byres,⁷⁸ a most worthy Scotsman and friend of mine who, returning to Rome by way of Bologna, promised to deliver it to you; he was moved above all by the desire of meeting so renowned a person as Your Reverence. I would be most distressed and ashamed if said letter, containing my most humble thanks for your most valuable letter on Ambrosian Chant, and also for your most learned *Saggio di Contrappunto*, had not been received.

Now that La Marchetti is returning to Bologna with her husband I make it my duty to greet Your Reverence, and to tell you that these most worthy beings correspond in every way to the goodness of which you spoke. Poor Marchetti, however, did not have good luck in this country, not for lack of talent but for reasons of health, since she was ill almost all winter. They are truly warm-hearted people, much cherished by my family as well as myself; it will always be my great pleasure to show them my friendship.

Word has it that Your Reverence has happily finished your great work, the

⁷⁶ See n. 71.

⁷⁷ Osborn Collection, Yale University Library.

⁷⁸ See n. 72.

Storia della Musica.⁷⁹ This news gives me great pleasure, and makes me very impatient to see the new volumes before I publish the second volume of my History, of which more than half has already come off the press. I have commissioned my book dealer to secure your last volume as quickly as possible; however, the foreign book trade is very slow and difficult in time of war; therefore, if there is someone coming from Bologna I pray that you do me this favor.

It would give me great pleasure to read the results of your research, Reverend Father, on music, since I am employed in the very same type of work. *But in the pursuit of my plan I rely so much on the learning, correctness of citations, and the various unusual and precious material found in your writings, which I find indispensable.* [Italics mine]

I pray that you give me the opportunity of demonstrating my gratitude for so many obligations which I owe only to your kindness, and that you consider me with all due respect, for I am honored to declare myself

London 1 June 1780

Your most Humble, Obligated, and devoted Servant,
Carlo Burney⁸⁰

Burney makes no mention of the portrait Martini had requested, and the Franciscan pursued the matter in his next letter:

LETTER 11

Monsieur

This letter will be given to you by Sig. Salvatore Bertezén of Malta, who is going with a gentleman to live in London. I hope that on meeting with this worthy writer on music, and reading his book entitled *Principii di Musica Teorico-Pratica*⁸¹ you will recognize an unusual man, who has penetrated the fundamentals of music; and therefore I recommend him to you without hesitation.

I pray you then to favor me, as I have requested in other letters, with your portrait, since I am very eager that it be in my collection of portraits, to add significantly to its worth. Please keep me in your very good graces, and full of respect and esteem I declare myself of your most Illustrious Reverence

Bologna 24 June 1780

Your most Humble, Devoted, and Obligated Servant
F. Giambattista Martini⁸²

About three months later, Martini wrote again; he still had not received Burney's portrait:

⁷⁹The third, and unfortunately final, volume of Martini's *Storia* did not come out until the following year.

⁸⁰Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale.

⁸¹Published in Rome in that year.

⁸²Osborn Collection, Yale University Library.

LETTER 12

Most esteemed Doctor Burney, most honored Patron:

By means of Sig. Ferdinando Bertoni⁸³ I have received three portraits with which your most esteemed and excellent Reverence has deemed with most singular kindness to favor me, and for which I render you most distinct thanks.⁸⁴ But since you with such kindness have remembered me, permit me to remind you how in my preceding letters I have begged you to honor my collection of portraits with your own portrait, which would be one of the most valuable in my collection, which grows day by day; grant me this pleasure, which I so desire, being certain that I will always remember such a special favor.

This letter will be delivered to you by Sig. Giovanni Ansani, famous tenor of our times,⁸⁵ whom I recommend to your patronage.

I hope that you will kindly honor my request, and I will never fail, with all humility, to declare myself of your most Illustrious and Excellent Reverence

Bologna 18 September 1780

Your most Humble, Devoted, and Obligated Servant
F. Giambattista Martini Min. Conventuale⁸⁶

In the spring of 1781, Burney had news of Martini from other sources. The opera singer Pacchierotti⁸⁷ wrote in English to Burney's daughter Fanny as follows: "I am sorry my letter from Bologna is lost, but it is of no consequence, for I may repeat again the Intelligence concerning P. Martini's history, who on account of his infirmities, I fancy shall never be able to compose the last Vol."⁸⁸

But scarcely two months later Pacchierotti wrote again to Fanny, announcing the imminent appearance of "il seguito" of Martini's *Storia*.⁸⁹

On May 22, 1781, Luigi Mattei Marchetti (husband of La Marchetti) wrote to Burney that "I delivered the letter to Padre Maestro Martini, and he told me he had not received your other letter."⁹⁰

⁸³Ferdinando Bertoni, who had been a student of Martini, was in London for several opera seasons during these years.

⁸⁴These portraits were prints, as we learn from a letter to Burney from Bertoni, August 11, 1780, Venice: "I will not fail to send to Padre Maestro Martini next Saturday the prints . . ." (New York Public Library, Berg Collection).

⁸⁵See Burney, *History*, II, 891.

⁸⁶Osborn Collection, Yale University Library.

⁸⁷Gasparo Pacchierotti, a good friend of the Burneys during his visits to London, is extravagantly praised by Burney in his *History* (II, 887-89).

⁸⁸"Venice the 18th of April 1781"; Osborn Collection, Yale University Library.

⁸⁹Letter of June 10, 1781; Osborn Collection, Yale University Library.

⁹⁰Osborn Collection, Yale University Library.

Thus within a two-month period alone we have reference to two lost letters. This may explain the lack of extant replies by Burney to Martini's last five letters.

In October, 1781, Martini wrote again about the portrait:

LETTER 13

Most Esteemed Sir:

If the departure of the bearer of this letter not be too soon, I will have the pleasure of sending you the third volume of my History of Music, which will, I hope, in a few days see the light; otherwise, I will not fail to get it to you by some other means. I recommend for your protection Sig. Andrea Morigi,⁹¹ from whom you will receive this letter; by general agreement he is valiant in his profession, and is a friend and compatriot, sufficient reasons obliging me to recommend him to your attention.

I desire a favor of your Reverence, become by now so famous. My collection of portraits of musicians lacks one in particular, namely your portrait, which would serve to adorn the collection. Therefore, I beg you to favor me with your portrait, so that I will have before my eyes the representation of a man who has become so famous in Music by means of his publications. Grant me then this pleasure, and I shall always render you homage and declare myself of your most Esteemed Reverence

Bologna 6 October 1781

Your most Humble, Devoted, and Obligated Servant,
F. Giambattista Martini, Min. Conventuale⁹²

Finally the famous portrait of Burney by Joshua Reynolds and Volume II of Burney's *History* (which appeared in May, 1782) were dispatched to Martini, who acknowledges their receipt in the following letter:

LETTER 14

Most Illustrious and Excellent Sir, Most Honored Patron:

My indebtedness to you is infinite, for favoring me with the second volume of your History, and for the portrait, delivered by Sig. Ferdinando Bertoni. In the second volume I note your explanation of the modern Greek musical notation of the time of St. John Damascenus, which I sought for so long.⁹³ As to the

⁹¹ Bolognese opera singer, who performed in London at this time.

⁹² Osborn Collection, Yale University Library.

⁹³ Martini is referring here to the discussion and accompanying table in Burney, *History*, I, 442-45.

portrait, I can assure you that all our Painters admire it and consider it an astonishing and unusual portrait.⁹⁴ Therefore thousands and thousands of thanks to you for such favors rendered me.

It is wonderful to have discovered the modern Greek musical notation, since that before the time of St. John Damascenus is difficult if not impossible to decipher, except for some unexpected accident which offers us a favorable opportunity.

Your Most Illustrious and Excellent Reverence has the convenience of the famous Library of Oxford, with its many manuscripts, especially Greek; I am fortunate to have the index of this collection. I ask you, when you have time, to study the ancient Greek musical notation.

Again I give you my thanks, and full of esteem and veneration I declare myself of Your Most Illustrious and Excellent Reverence

Bologna 2 December 1783

[Signature cut out of letter]⁹⁵

The final letter of their correspondence was written by Martini less than six months before his death on August 3, 1784:

LETTER 15

Most Illustrious and Excellent Doctor:

A short time ago I acquired a copy of the famous book entitled *Catalogi Librorum MSS. Angliae et Hiberniae in unum collecti* printed in Oxford (Sheldonian Theater) in 1697 in folio. In looking through the many music manuscripts listed I noted some Greek mss. which seem to explain the notation. I believe you have looked at these and discussed the notation in the second volume of your History, which you had the kindness to send me, and which I have greatly enjoyed.

It is likely that many other codices have been added to the collection since 1697, and I should like to know if a supplementary catalogue has been published, because I should like to have a copy. But if the entire catalogue together with the additions has been reprinted, please let me know because in that case it would be much too costly for me. This is the favor I ask you now, because I am having a very difficult time transcribing this notation.

I should also like to know the whereabouts of Sig. Salvatore Bertezen who, after having published in Rome in 1780 a book entitled *Principii di Musica Teorico-Pratica*, in 12, stopped off in Bologna some time ago on his way to London with a gentleman who had taken him in his entourage.

⁹⁴ The Reynolds painting must have had quite an effect in Bologna, since in no other letter of Martini's does he acknowledge receipt of a portrait in such enthusiastic terms.

⁹⁵ Osborn Collection, Yale University Library.

I beg you with this letter of mine, aware of the favors I ask of you, and full of respect and esteem for you, to allow me to declare myself of Your Most Illustrious and Excellent Reverence

Bologna 16 February 1784

Your Most Humble Devoted and Obliged Servant,
F. Giambattista Martini Min. Conventuale⁹⁶

After Martini's death, Burney, the bibliophile, was naturally very curious about the fate of Martini's library. In October, 1789, he wrote to his brother-in-law Arthur Young, then in Italy, urging him to "try to get intelligence of the disposal of Padre Martini's papers, books, and sequel of his 'History of Musick' at Bologna."⁹⁷

Young replied:

At Bologna I made enquiries about Padre Martini's papers etc. I got introduced to Padre Mattei, Maestro di Cappella of the Franciscan Convent, who informed me that he was himself in possession of all those MS, that they amounted he believed to materials for another volume, which he had thoughts of publishing; they were however absolutely without arrangement; they concern the history of Music from the commencement of the Church to the time of the Troubadours. In the library of the Institute I looked at the printed volumes for their dates; that of Vol. 2 is 1770, and Vol. 3^d, 1781, all folio. I mentioned you to Padre Mattei. He knows you well by reputation, and immediately presented Vallotti's treatise and a print of Martini which I shall bring you. Here ends my researches which I wish had been more satisfactory.⁹⁸

But Burney did not give up so easily; in 1792 he had his friend Joseph Cooper Walker, Irish author and antiquarian, make further inquiries while he was in Italy about Martini's library and the fourth volume of his history. In a letter to an unknown correspondent, Walker wrote from Venice:

My friend Doctor Burney, Author of the History of Music, is very desirous of drawing further Information from the m.s. remains of the late Padre Martini. Will you have the goodness to inform me, whether or not the Doctor might hope for permission to have the m.s.s. copied; or whether or not the successor of the Padre, if he does not mean to publish them, could be prevailed upon to sell them. The present Maestro di Capella [*sic*], with grave politeness, showed me the m.s. of the 4th Vol. of the Padre's History, but he gave me no reason to

⁹⁶ Osborn Collection, Yale University Library.

⁹⁷ Scholes, *Burney*, II, 242.

⁹⁸ "Bologna 5 Dec. 1789"; Osborn Collection, Yale University Library.

expect I should see it in print. It is pity so valuable a work should be withheld from the Public.⁹⁹

Martini's disciple and successor at San Francesco, Padre Stanislao Mattei, did not have the ability to organize his mentor's material and complete the history. Later, early in the nineteenth century, Martini's numerous books and manuscripts formed the basis of the superb library of the Liceo Musicale, now known as the Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale.¹⁰⁰ But the unfinished fourth volume has remained an object of inquiry into the twentieth century.¹⁰¹

* * *

What is the relationship between Martini's and Burney's histories of music? Martini nowhere refers to Burney in his *Storia*, though he might have done so in the third volume, which appeared in 1781. Furthermore, Martini could not read English, as he acknowledged in his letter to Burney of January 13, 1778. Burney, on the other hand, makes frequent reference to Martini throughout his four volumes, to Martini's *Storia* and *Saggio di Contrappunto*, and to his personal contact with the Italian through correspondence and his visit to Bologna.

Martini might have cited Burney had he completed his fourth and fifth volumes; for example, on English music and theorists, or on later Greek music and notation (see his letter to Burney of December 2, 1783). Fundamentally, however, the two men were different in background, education, character, method of work, and philosophical outlook.¹⁰² Burney was a product of the Enlighten-

⁹⁹ "Venice, 15th Mar. 1792"; Osborn Collection, Yale University Library.

¹⁰⁰ On the history of the founding of this library, see the preface by Federico Parisini in Gaetano Gaspari, comp., *Catalogo della Biblioteca del Liceo Musicale di Bologna*, I (Bologna, 1890; reprint, Bologna, 1961); and F. Vatielli, *La Biblioteca del Liceo Musicale di Bologna* (see n. 13).

¹⁰¹ Fétis, with Rossini's intervention, examined Martini's materials and concluded that they were not ready for publication (see Fétis, *Biographie universelle des musiciens*, 2nd ed. [Paris, 1860-65], art. "Martini"). Anselm Pauchard, *Ein italienischer Musiktheoretiker, Pater Giambattista Martini: Eine literarische Quellenuntersuchung zur "Storia della Musica"* (Lugano, 1941), pp. 138-74, presents a reconstruction of the volume in outline form.

¹⁰² For further references, see Elisabeth Hegar, *Die Anfänge der neueren Musikgeschichtsschreibung um 1776 bei Gerbert, Burney und Hawkins* (Strasbourg, 1932); Warren Dwight Allen, *Philosophies of Music History*, 2nd ed. (reprint, New York, 1962); and L. Lipking, *The Ordering of the Arts in Eighteenth-Century England* (Princeton, 1970).

ment and believed in the "progress" of music (with its culmination in eighteenth-century Italian opera). He also considered music an "innocent luxury" and respected the work of Rousseau, Voltaire, and the Encyclopedists. Martini, on the other hand, was a devout Franciscan monk with an unshakable belief in the supremacy of church music (in an increasingly secular age). He was always dependent on outside authority ("replete with learned authorities," as Burney wrote in his letter to Ebeling quoted above).

Martini in his three volumes did not go beyond ancient Greek music; in fact the entire second and third volumes are devoted to it. Burney, in contrast, dealt with ancient Greece in only 290 pages (out of 1840 in the modern edition), while he wrote about 400 pages on eighteenth-century music alone. Burney, in his chapter on sixteenth-century Italian music, quotes extensively from Martini's *Saggio di Contrappunto*, and the index to Burney's book shows at least fifty references to Martini. I will cite here only a few of the more significant entries; for example, from Burney's discussion of the frequently debated question of "Whether the Ancients had Counterpoint":

That diligent enquirer, father Martini of Bologna, whose learning and materials have afforded me great assistance in my musical researches, ranks himself among the opponents of ancient *counterpoint*. The opinion of this respectable judge must have great weight with all those who consider that he has spent the chief part of a long and laborious life in the study of music, and musical literature; that all the repositories, all the archives of Italy, where the most precious reliques of antiquity are treasured up, have been opened to him; that his knowledge and materials are equally uncommon; and that the native candour and purity of his mind are such as exempt him from all suspicion of prejudice or partiality.¹⁰³

It is, however, the opinion of the learned Padre Martini, to which the Prince Abbot of St. Blasius [Martin Gerbert] subscribes, that the music of the first five or six ages of the church, consisted chiefly in a plain and simple chant of unisons and octaves, of which many fragments are still remaining in the Canto Fermo of the Romish missals.¹⁰⁴

In reference to Tinctoris, and his *Proportionale Musices*, Burney writes:

I shall insert here an extract which I made at Bologna, from an inedited tract by John Tinctor, and preserved, with other MS. treatises of the same author,

¹⁰³ Burney, *History*, I, 126-27.

¹⁰⁴ Burney, *History*, I, 426.

in the library of the canons regular of S. Saviour, in that city; to which P. Martini referred me, upon asking him by what nation he thought music in parts, or simultaneous harmony, was first cultivated.¹⁰⁵

On the subject of canons, Burney wrote:

P. Martini has given curious canons, perhaps the most unexceptionable and the best that have ever been composed, as head and tailpieces to every chapter of his *History of Music*, besides publishing vocal duets in canon [*Duetti da camera*, Bologna, 1763], and treating largely of the art of composing canons of every kind, in his *Saggio di Contrappunto*.¹⁰⁶

And he called this treatise (and the *Arte pratica di contrappunto* by Martini's pupil Giuseppe Paolucci) "works which contain admirable precepts and examples for ecclesiastical composition of every kind."¹⁰⁷

After the publication of the last two volumes of his history in 1789, Burney completed two more large-scale musical projects. He first wrote *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Abate Metastasio* (3 vols., London, 1796), and in the first decade of the nineteenth century he contributed many articles on music and musicians to the thirty-nine volumes of Rees's *Cyclopaedia*. In both of these works Martini's name frequently appears; I cite here only the most significant references.

In the Metastasio work, Burney calls Martini "the most learned Contrapuntist of the present century,"¹⁰⁸ and a "venerable and worthy musical monk."¹⁰⁹ In reference to Martini's duets, set to texts by Metastasio, Burney wrote: "they are in an early mixed chamber style, in which ancient and modern passages are agreeably interwoven."¹¹⁰ Burney prints a number of letters from Metastasio to Martini, introducing them as follows: "Though the poet's letters to the learned and worthy *Padre Martini* contain nothing of importance to general literature, yet to lovers of Music and its history, nothing that concerns the venerable *Maestro di Capella* [*sic*], can be indifferent."¹¹¹

¹⁰⁵ Burney, *History*, I, 711.

¹⁰⁶ Burney, *History*, II, 416.

¹⁰⁷ Burney, *History*, II, 418.

¹⁰⁸ Burney, *Memoirs of Metastasio*, III, 172.

¹⁰⁹ Burney, *Memoirs of Metastasio*, II, 299.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ Burney, *Memoirs of Metastasio*, III, 102-3.

In Rees's *Cyclopaedia*, in the article "Composer," Burney wrote: "Padre Martini says, that no one can be a good composer without singing in good taste, and playing well upon the organ. His rules are for a real *maestro di cappella*, an ecclesiastical composer; but for secular music he would have said it was necessary to sing and play well on the harpsichord or piano forte."¹¹²

In a very long article on "Counterpoint," Burney writes about Martini's *Saggio di Contrappunto*:

Padre Martini's instructions are excellent, as far as they go; but the compositions which he gives in illustration being all rigidly formed on the ecclesiastical modes and canto fermo, few of them are applicable to secular music of the present times. We shall, however, give his authority for some of the rules laid down in this article and occasionally quote him.¹¹³

Finally, Burney's article on Martini himself, like many of his entries, is rather diffuse and rambling¹¹⁴ (Burney was in his late seventies at the time), and more than half of it is devoted to summaries of Martini's books. I quote only the most significant portions:

MARTINI, Fr. Giambatista, minor conventuale of the order of St. Francis, member of the Institute and Philharmonic Society at Bologna. This worthy and learned father was well known all over Europe by the title of Padre Martini, and regarded, during the last 50 years of his life, as the most profound harmonist, and the best acquainted with the history and progress of the art and science of music in Italy. All the great masters of his time were ambitious of becoming his disciples, and proud of his approbation. And young professors within his reach never thought themselves, or were thought by others, sufficiently skilled in counterpoint, till they had received lessons from this deep theorist, and most intelligent and communicative instructor.

No history of music has been attempted in Italy, since that of Bontempi appeared in 1695, till Padre Martini, in 1757, published in 4to. the first volume of his "Storia Musica," upon so large a scale, that though the chief part of his life seems to have been dedicated to it, only three volumes were published before his decease in 1783 [1784].¹¹⁵

The first volume of this elaborate work only contains 61 pages of history,¹¹⁶ which advance no further in the progress of the art, than what the sacred writings

¹¹² *The Cyclopaedia: or, Universal Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Literature*, ed. Abraham Rees (London, 1802-19).

¹¹³ Rees's *Cyclopaedia*, Vol. X, article, "Counterpoint."

¹¹⁴ See Scholes, *Burney*, II, 189-201.

¹¹⁵ This paragraph derives, essentially unchanged, from Burney's *History*, II, 939.

¹¹⁶ Compare Burney's journal entry above (n. 21), when he first saw Martini's *History* in Padua, to the effect that there were only eight pages of history.

have told us concerning its use and cultivation among the Hebrews, Chaldeans, and Egyptians. The rest of the volume is filled with dissertations. The first is an enquiry what kind of melody mankind is inclined to by nature, untaught by rules or example.

. . . . Much musical erudition is manifested in this dissertation concerning the music of the ancients.

Dissertation II. On what kind of consonance was used by the ancients, or, in other words, whether they had simultaneous harmony, or that kind of *harmony*, or music in parts, which the moderns call *counterpoint*. The subject is well discussed, the opinions pro and contra fairly given, with specimens of early attempts at harmony, and progressive improvements in counterpoint from the time of Guido. Infinite pains have been taken in this profound enquiry. *No writer was ever more timid in assertion than the worthy Padre Martini. Not a sentiment has escaped him on the authority of his own opinion or conjecture, all is confirmed by the most curious specimens and citations from the most ancient and respectable writers on the subject. . . .* [Italics mine]

"Storia della Musica," tomo secondo da F. Giambatista Martini, in Bologna, 1770, 4to.

Though thirteen years had elapsed between the publication of the first volume and this, the learned and laborious author has advanced but a little way in the history even of ancient music. The first volume adheres more closely to the subject of his history than this, which is more miscellaneous. Chronologically, the author advances no further in this volume, which is wholly confined to Greek music, than the institution of the Olympic games. So that the period which he describes is limited to fabulous times. . . .

"Storia della Musica," tomo terzo da F. Giambatista Martini, in Bologna, 1781, 4to.

It is much to be lamented that this was the last volume of his elaborate work, which the learned author lived to publish! It is the more to be lamented, as this indefatigable ecclesiastic had, with incredible pains and considerable experience, collected materials sufficient for the completion of his whole plan. And this third volume advances no further in the history of ancient music, than the period between the establishment of the Olympic games of Greece to the time of Alexander the Great. The history of Roman music only was to have occupied the fourth volume. From the materials of which P. Martini was in possession, there is reason to believe that the history of music in Italy, where the present system throughout Europe had its rise during the middle ages, and from the time of Guido to the present period, would have been the most valuable present to all Europe which the good father could make; but in writing the history of ancient Greek and Roman music, he had no other means of information than those of which others were in possession; the classical writers and their commentators. Of these, indeed, P. Martini has availed himself, it will perhaps be said, to an excessive degree. . . . This volume will probably be thought tedious by those who

have read, or are able to read, the original authors whence its materials are derived; to others it is a valuable Thesaurus of all that can be extracted concerning music, from the chief writers of high antiquity and authority, that are come down to the present times.

It is but justice to extend the account of this important work beyond the general limits of the short analysis given of other literary musical articles. The style has been said to be dry and prolix. It is indeed enlivened by no extraneous matter, or ingenious reflections; but each page is replete with information on the subject in question: and the notes abound in curious passages from scarce books. The road through which the good father leads us, if not strewn with flowers, is not barren, but frequently affords a glimpse, at least, of incipient cultivation, which excites a wish and eagerness to advance out of twilight, into regions where the sun of science shines with more luster, to which, alas! the author did not live to lead us.

Between the publication of the second and third volumes of his "Storia Musica," P. Martini published a work, entitled "Essempiare o sia Saggio di Contrappunto," Bologna, two volumes, folio, 1774 [and 1775].

The excellent treatise, though written in defence of a method of composing for the church upon canto-fermo, now on the decline, yet has given the learned author an opportunity of writing its history, explaining its rules, defending the practice, and of inserting such a number of venerable compositions for the church by the greatest masters of choral harmony in Italy, from the beginning of the sixteenth century to the middle of the last, that we know of no book so full of information concerning learned counterpoint, so rich in ancient and scarce compositions, nor so abundant in instructive and critical remarks, as this. . . .

In 1769 Padre Martini drew up and gave to his disciples a very short tract, entitled "Compendio della Theoria de numeri per Uso del Musico di F. Giambatista Martini, Minor Conventuale." In this tract, the good father defines the three principal calculations, rations, and proportions necessary for a musician to know in the division of the monochord and in temperament. . . .

See *Progression* and *Proportion*, where the English reader will find the several progressions and proportions used in harmonics more clearly explained than in this small tract of Padre Martini, in Italian, or even in a translation of it. . . .

Burney concludes his article with references to two works critical of Martini, Eximeno's *Dubbio di D. Antonio Eximeno sopra il Saggio di Contrappunto del Giambattista Martini*, and Manini's *Trattato in Genere Teorico*. He defends Martini against Eximeno's attack, and cites the anonymous *Giudicio di Apollo*, the counterattack to Manini's work.

Though not the kind of comprehensive article one would look for in an encyclopedia today, nonetheless Burney's appraisal of Martini's work (though he nowhere makes any reference to Martini's

music, other than his canons) is, I believe, a fair and balanced one. On the negative side, Martini was "timid in assertion," lacking in "ingenious reflections" or "his own opinion or conjecture," and his style was "laborious, dry and prolix." On the other hand, he is "worthy and learned," a "deep theorist, and most intelligent and communicative instructor," and the writer "best acquainted with the history and progress of the art and science of music in Italy." Therein lies Burney's and our frustration. Martini did not complete his work, nor did he give us what would have been so much more useful to future historians, namely the history of music from the Middle Ages to his own time, the fruits of his most extensive research, a distillation of the massive amounts of materials he collected right up to his death.

The relationship between Charles Burney and Padre Martini spanned a fourteen-year period, from the days they spent together in Bologna in 1770, through their correspondence until Martini's death in 1784. In focusing in such detail on these two very different men engaged in similar pursuits, and in publishing their correspondence,¹¹⁷ I have sought to increase our knowledge and understanding of these important eighteenth-century figures, to illustrate aspects of music historiography in the age of Enlightenment, and to contribute a chapter to the ongoing study of the extensive and fascinating cultural relations between England and Italy.

¹¹⁷ It is to be hoped that the missing Burney letters will someday come to light.