

—— Magnus Tessing Schneider, »A Song of Other Times. The Transformation of Ossian in Calzabigi's and Morandi's *Comala* (1774/1780)«

—— A B S T R A C T ———

The opera libretto *Comala* (1774) by Ranieri Calzabigi has traditionally been regarded as one of the poet's lesser creations. It has sometimes been dismissed as being too closely based on Melchiorre Cesarotti's influential Italian translation from 1763 of the eponymous dramatic poem, which James Macpherson included in his 1762 collection of the songs of Ossian, adapted or translated from Gaelic oral poems. In the present article, however, the author argues that Calzabigi's *Comala* was not only an independent adaptation but also a highly original attempt to translate the peculiar poetic and cultural features of the Ossianic world – its savagery, sublimity, melancholy, and psychological obscurity – into theatrical terms. In this experimental musical drama, Calzabigi depicts the mysterious death of the overstrung heroine as the culmination of a process of withdrawing physically from the other characters and ultimately from the stage itself, as a metaphor for her gradual withdrawal from life and reality. The article ends with a discussion of Pietro Morandi's setting of the libretto, performed in Senigallia in 1780, in which Calzabigi's dramatic choices are translated into music. Adhering closely to the principles of Gluck's and Calzabigi's Viennese operas, Morandi's *Comala* is the first example of a »reform opera« written specifically for Italy.

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■—Magnus Tessing Schneider—■

■—A SONG OF OTHER TIMES. The Transformation of Ossian in Calzabigi's and Morandi's *Comala* (1774/1780)—■

■—EARLY ITALIAN RECEPTION OF OSSIAN'S 'COMÁLA'—

The publication of *Fingal, an Ancient Epic Poem, in Six Books: together with several other Poems, composed by Ossian the Son of Fingal, translated from the Galic Language by James Macpherson* (1762), was one of the great literary sensations of the eighteenth century. The Gaelic oral poems, which Macpherson in his prose »translations« attributed to a third-century Scottish bard, proved a revelation to artists and intellectuals all over Europe, brought up on the Greek and Latin classics and the neoclassical traditions deriving from them. While the exact extent to which Macpherson had reshaped the collected materials was debated right from the start, *A Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian, the Son of Fingal* (1763) by Scottish scholar Hugh Blair, which from 1765 was included in all editions of the poems, offered academic credibility to his effort and greatly influenced the reception of Ossian.¹ Situating the poems in a cultural as well as in a literary context, Blair pointed out that 'mankind never bear such resembling features, as they do in the beginnings of society', even if 'climate and genius' occasion some diversity.² In this savage state, he claimed, the passions of people 'have nothing to restrain them: their imagination has nothing to check it. They display themselves to one another without disguise: and converse and act in the uncovered simplicity of nature. As their feelings are strong, so their language, of itself, assumes a poetical turn.'³ Peculiar to Ossian's poetry, furthermore, was the strong emphasis on tenderness and sublimity, which naturally appealed to the Age of Sensibility. 'Homer's sublimity is accompanied with more impetuosity and fire', wrote Blair; 'Ossian's with more of a solemn and awful grandeur. Homer hurries you along; Ossian elevates, and fixes you in astonishment. Homer is most sublime in actions and battles; Ossian, in description and sentiment. [...] No poet knew better how to seize and melt the heart. With regard to dignity of sentiment, the pre-eminence must clearly be given to Ossian. This is indeed a surprising circumstance, that in point of humanity, magnanimity, virtuous feelings of every kind, our rude Celtic bard should be distinguished to such a degree, that not only the heroes of Homer, but even

those of the polite and refined Virgil, are left far behind by those of Ossian.⁴

One of the texts included in the collection was the dramatic poem 'Comála', which was of particular interest to playwrights and composers, as Macpherson maintained in one of his scholarly footnotes that the 'variety of the measure shews that the poem was originally set to music, and perhaps presented before the chiefs upon solemn occasions.'⁵ That Macpherson's sources were dramatic in form is highly doubtful, however: in this case, he is more likely to have taken inspiration from the Greek tragedies. Set by the river Carron in 211, at the end of the Roman invasion of Caledonia, the action of 'Comála' centres on the title heroine, the daughter of Sarno, king of Inistore (Orkney Islands), and the lover of Fingal, king of Morven (Argyll). Fingal has sent his warrior Hidallan to tell her that he has defeated the army of Caracalla in battle, but the messenger, who is himself in love with Comála, tells her that Fingal has died. Hence, when the latter eventually turns up, she first takes him for a ghost, and realizing her error, she is so overwhelmed with emotion that she dies during the victory celebrations.

It is a peculiar feature of the poem that the psychological impulses of the characters are covered in obscurity. From one of Macpherson's footnotes we learn that Hidallan lies to Comála 'to revenge himself on her for slighting his love some time before,'⁶ but this does not appear from the dramatic dialogue, and nor is it clear how he intends to act when she discovers the truth. Also, Comála's fatal inner turmoil barely finds expression in the text. The few sentences she says after realizing that Fingal is alive are almost practical in tone: 'He is returned with his fame; I feel the right hand of his battles. – But I must rest beside the rock till my soul settle from fear. – Let the harp be near; and raise the song, ye daughters of Morni.'⁷ Apparently in the full view of the audience, she then dies during the following chorus, which is interrupted by Melilcoma, Comála's companion and one of the two daughters of Morni (a chief in Morven): 'Descend, ye light mists from high; ye moon-beams, lift her soul. – Pale lies the maid at the rock! Comala is no more!'⁸ Fingal's reaction to the terrible news is similarly blank, his shock immediately giving way to detached reflections: 'Is the daughter of Sarno dead; the white-bosomed maid of my love? Meet me, Comala, on my heaths, when I sit alone at the streams of my hills.'⁹

Blair saw such blank spots in the texts as a feature of savage poetry in general, and of Ossian's in particular, in which enthusiasm and sublimity dominate over correctness and accuracy. Here there are no 'artful transitions; nor full and extended connection of parts; such as we find among the poets of later times, when order and regularity of composition were more studied and known; but a style always rapid and vehement;

in narration concise even to abruptness, and leaving several circumstances to be supplied by the reader's imagination.'¹⁰

In 'Comála', the speeches almost become a kind of non-dialogue, which essentially makes the poem more epic than dramatic. However, some eighteenth-century readers were so impressed with Macpherson's alleged discovery of a Gaelic tragedy from the third century that they failed to take full account of its non-theatrical nature. This was the case with the Paduan scholar Melchiorre Cesarotti who already in 1763 published the first part of a versified Italian translation of Ossian's poems, which remained hugely popular even into the nineteenth century. Praising 'Comála' for the regularity of its dramatic construction, for its variety of affections, and for its simple and passionate style, he did not shy away from comparing it to the tragedies of Aeschylus, clearly hoping that a modern composer would find his translation attractive. 'Set to music by a learned master, and adorned with appropriate decorations,' he imagined, 'it could be an opera in a new taste, which would produce an enormous effect even in our times.'¹¹ In order to imitate the 'variety of the measure' mentioned by Macpherson – and perhaps also to make the text workable as an opera libretto – Cesarotti distinguished between passages intended for closed numbers and passages intended for recitative setting, priding himself on his innovative use of poetic metres, with which he meant to capture 'the extremely concise, tight, and rapid manner that is the pervasive character of Ossian's style.'¹²

Not wholly insensitive to the dramaturgical problems posed by the psychological lacunae of the original, Cesarotti tried to make the text more theatrical by filling in some of them. In order to make the conduct of Idallano (Hidallan) more understandable, he expanded his brief speech in the final scene, letting him admit that he lied to Comala about Fingal's death because he wanted, 'Con la vana sua doglia / Farle più dolce inaspettata gioja' (through her idle grief, to prepare her a sweet, unexpected joy) (l. 335-36). In order to make Comala's sudden death more comprehensible, he adorned her final speech with the standard exclamations of Italian opera, before letting her go behind a rock to die, suitably, off-stage:

Oh che veggio? che ascolto?
No non m'inganno; egli è Fingallo, ei vive,
Ei torna pien della sua fama; io sento
La man delle battaglie: oimé, oimé,
Che vicenda improvvisa,
Che tumulto d'affetti
M'affoga il cor! Sento ch'io manco: è d'uopo
Che a riposarmi io vada
Dietro di questa rupe,
Finché la foga della affannata alma
Ha posa, e calma. (l. 238-48)

Oh, what do I see? What do I hear?
No, I am not deceived: it is Fingal, he is alive,
he returns with his fame; I feel
the hand of his battles. Alas, alas,
what an unexpected event,
what emotional turmoil
is drowning my heart! I am fainting.
I must go and rest
behind this rock
till the heat of my breathless soul
is settled and calm.

Fingal's laconic reaction to her death received similar treatment, possibly to prevent a grotesque effect on stage. If Cesarotti's streamlining of Macpherson's dramatic poem made it more performable, it thus also toned down the sense of absence and non-communication, of obscure and unarticulated emotional worlds, and hence of one of its essential aesthetic qualities, which perhaps explains why no composer felt tempted to set his version to music.

Ranieri Calzabigi's *Comala*, on the other hand, which appeared in the first volume of his *Poesie* from 1774, reveals a more profound understanding of the dramaturgical problems posed by Macpherson's text. Like Cesarotti, however, Calzabigi was deeply impressed with Ossian's poetry: he reproached Voltaire for comparing the Celtic bard to the Italian *improvisatori*, and for finding little more than bombast and chimaeras in his poetry,¹³ and he echoed Blair when describing Ossian's inspiration as 'sublime but savage', whereas the inspiration of Homer and Virgil was 'chastened'.¹⁴ His most substantial comment on Ossian dates from 1789:

'Ossian (unless Macpherson has defrauded Europe) was preceded by many other bards. He cleaned and polished their roughness and rose to the point to which Celtic poetry was able to arrive, considering the scarcity of knowledge among that people, their lack of culture, and their still savage customs. That age was the golden age of Caledonian poetry: it did not develop any further, but declined because the Celts soon declined and went extinct themselves. With Ossian's picturesque poetry, which is just as picturesque as Homer's (taking into consideration the major and minor cultures of the Greeks and the Celts), they would have reached the fine arts too, but the upheavals that annihilated them did not give them the time. They were left with their shapeless towers and rough halls: they did not paint or sculpt the beauties of which they sang. I will not speak of their gods: the Caledonians had no religion, which is another cause of their failure to advance towards and reach the fine arts, which are the product of religion, of a gay and pictorial theology, and of beautiful poetry, which is their mother. Before Raphael and Michelangelo we had Dante and Petrarch; before Le Sueur, Puget, and Mansart the French had Malherbe and Corneille; the English had Milton before their quite renowned artists. Poetry always comes first: nations without great poets remain in the dark.'¹⁵

For the observations that the Scots at the time of Ossian had no religion and were ignorant of the art of painting, and that they were cultivated by the poetry of the bards, Calzabigi drew on Macpherson's prefatory dissertations.¹⁶ However, the notion that the fine arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture are born from poetry derives from neither Macpherson nor Blair, and it assigns to Ossian a civilizing role that goes beyond the one assigned to him by the Scottish writers.

Unlike Cesarotti, Calzabigi seems to have realised that the fragmentary character of Ossian's 'Comála' did not simply call for a free translation to become stageworthy, but for a creative reimagining that translated its peculiar aesthetic features into theatrical terms. Hence, he announced on the title page that his own dramatic poem was an 'imitation' – rather than a translation – 'of the eponymous one by Ossian, the ancient Celtic poet.'¹⁷ Nevertheless, scholars have long discussed whether Calzabigi was really familiar with both Macpherson's and Cesarotti's versions, and also the extent to which his own *Comala* can be regarded as an independent adaptation of Macpherson's English original.¹⁸ In that context, it seems significant that the first lines he gave to Idallano seem to reflect Macpherson's revised version, found in the two-volume edition of *The Poems of Ossian* that he published in 1773.¹⁹ This not only suggests that Calzabigi knew the English version, but also that his own *Comala* was written in 1774, i.e. immediately before its publication, since the 1773 edition of *The Poems of Ossian* was withheld by the publisher until 20 March 1774.²⁰ Unlike Cesarotti, who did not read English and had depended on a native English-speaker's literal translation for his own verse translation of Macpherson,²¹ Calzabigi read English very well and had no need for an Italian translation. The few but distinctive echoes of Cesarotti's version in his own attempt to adapt the Ossianic 'Comála' for the operatic stage should probably be regarded as intertextual references that serve to highlight the difference between their approaches.²²

STAGING OBSCURITY: CALZABIGI'S COMALA

Like Cesarotti, Calzabigi translated Macpherson's prose into Italian verse (though without adopting Cesarotti's metrical experiments); and he also distinguished between passages intended for recitative setting and passages intended for closed numbers. Furthermore, he continued Cesarotti's effort to let the dialogue reflect the motivations and inner lives of the characters, though far more consistently than his predecessor had done. As for Idallano's conduct, it now clearly appears that he lies to Comala because he hopes to carry her off, but that his plan is ruined by the sudden return of Fingallo (Fingal).²³ As for Comala's final speech, Calzabigi provided her with a fifteen-line soliloquy, which depicts her emotional transition from surprise, anger and numbness to confusion, trembling and mortal languor:

Lo viddi! l'ascoltai Vive Fingallo!
 Mi parlò Mi rispose! Ah! si ritorna
 Nello splendor della sua fama oh come
 Il perfido Idallano
 M'ingannò, mi tradì! Fingallo è in vita,
 Ed io stupida! ed io
 Non corro, non m'affretto,
 Non volo ad abbracciarlo ah qual sugli occhi
 Confuso velo a me si adombra! Il piede
 Qual m'affrena importuno
 Tremito vacillante! E qual d'affetti
 Tumulto impetuoso
 Mi scuote il sen, mi serra il cor Mi sento:
 Cader mancar languire E nel martoro
 Nell'affanno crudel ... Misera ... Io moro ... (*cade*)
 (II.3)

I saw him!.... I heard him.... Fingal lives!....
 He spoke to me.... He answered me!.... Ah,
 he is returned in the splendour of his fame....
 Oh, how the faithless Hidallan
 deceived me, betrayed me!..... Fingal is alive,
 and I am numb!.... And I
 don't run, don't hasten,
 don't fly to embrace him.... Ah, what
 hazy veil shades my eyes!.... What unrelenting,
 faltering tremor restrains my foot!....
 And what impetuous
 emotional turmoil shakes my bosom
 and clutches my heart.... I feel like falling....
 fainting.... languishing.... And in my agony,
 in my cruel anxiety.... wretched me.... I die...
 (*she falls*)

The lines, 'E qual d'affetti / Tumulto impetuoso / Mi scuote il sen, mi serra il cor', clearly echo Cesarotti's translation, Calzabigi's corrective »borrowing« perhaps suggesting that it takes more than a few exclamations to make the situation dramatic. Similarly, in order to give full expression to Fingallo's reaction to Comala's death, Calzabigi restructured and expanded the entire final scene, so we see him going from incredulity, silent shock and moaning realisation to passionate grief, impetuous anger, mournful acceptance and quiet weeping. The concluding funeral chorus, 'Oh! la più amabile, la più vezzosa', no longer centres on Comala's afterlife as a ghost, but on Fingallo's loss and on the rising spring sun that his beloved will never see. Some scholars have seen here a conventionalizing bow to the brighter vision of the neoclassical Accademia degli Arcadi,²⁴ but in fact Calzabigi based the dirge of the bards on Ossian's poem 'Dar-thula', from which he seems to have borrowed a great deal of imagery.²⁵

The »savagery« of the ancient Caledonians is apparently reflected in Calzabigi's retention of some of the similes and epithets in which the Ossianic text abounds, in clear contrast to the unadorned language found in the librettos he wrote for Gluck. As Blair observes, an extensive use of imagery is typical of the 'rude ages', in which people 'describe every thing in the strongest colours; which of course renders their speech picturesque and figurative.'²⁶ In the libretto, the verbal images help to establish a mood of almost ritualistic solemnity, but they also tend to underpin Calzabigi's characteristic use of *chiaroscuro*: the recurring contrast between light and darkness, between extrovert joy and introvert grief, between life and death.²⁷ While Fingal tended to be described with light metaphors already in the Ossianic poems, Calzabigi enhances this association. From the beginning of the drama, Fingallo's awaited return is thought to coincide with the break of day, his weapons reflecting the bright rays of the sun (I.1). When questioning Idallano about the identity of the fallen warrior, Comala compares Fingallo's blond hair to a light mist gilded by the sun, his laughter

to the rainbow, and his eyes to stars (I.2). And when he finally arrives, he is compared to the gleam of lightning, and to the white foam of the torrent (I.3). As a contrast, Comala addresses Idallano as 'figlio della notte' (son of the night) (I.2), an epithet adopted from the original; he himself asks to be covered in a dense and dark mist upon entering (I.2); just as Comala asks for a deep darkness to cover the memory of the Roman emperor who is allegedly guilty of Fingallo's death (I.3). Comala herself stands in an intermediary position, as the embodiment of the *chiaroscuro* principle. Calzabigi suppressed Ossian's several references to her white arms and hands but retained references to her white bosom (II.1, II.4), and he added references to the bright and gleaming light of her eyes (I.1, II.2, II.4). On the other hand, Fingallo describes her hair as blacker than the raven (II.1), which is not a feature of the original Comála, but of a number of other Ossianic heroines, who were Calzabigi's probable source for the image,²⁸ creating a contrast between the visual appearances of the lovers. In Comala's final soliloquy, she compares the approach of death to a veil shading her eyes, adopting a metaphor previously used to describe the cloudy night (I.1), and the earlier-mentioned funeral chorus evokes the bright and dazzling dawn, which she will not behold (II.4).

A particularly innovative feature of Calzabigi's adaptation is his translation of the Ossianic sense of non-communication into theatrical terms. For this purpose, he used the spatial layout of the stage to portray Comala as a character apart, who withdraws from the others into a state of nocturnal and misty obscurity. While these can be regarded as features of the Ossianic world as such, in Calzabigi's drama they are also specific features of the title heroine, the dark and savage Caledonian setting emerging as a theatrical metaphor for Comala's mental world. It is in this sense that the opera becomes an interior drama, a theatricalisation of the recesses of a delusional mind.

In Ossian, for example, it is Melilcoma who has seen a deer with a burning antler, and Dersagrena who interprets this as a sign of Fingal's death. Without challenging the interpretation, Comála keeps hoping she is wrong until hearing Hidallan's report. In Calzabigi, however, it is Comala herself who has seen and interpreted the omen, while Desagrena (an Italianisation of Dersagrena; Melilcoma has been left out) in vain tries to reassure her (I.1).²⁹ In Ossian, the news of Fingal's alleged death is communicated in a dialogue between Hidallan and Comála, which is almost antiphonal in its ritualism: with increasing desperation, she questions the messenger who is equivocal about the identity of the fallen warrior, but after receiving certainty, she rebukes him for not withholding the fatal news longer, to spare her feelings. In Calzabigi, however, Comala and Desagrena, who see Idallano approaching from afar, hide among the branches, so the princess avoids confrontation with

her unwanted admirer (I.1). Idallano, who pretends not to see and hear them, then delivers his report as a pseudo-soliloquy while ignoring the questions Comala asks from her hiding place (I.2). Here, Comala's withdrawal to the margins of the stage scenically mirrors her withdrawal from life: obsessed with the thought of Fingallo's death, she merely seeks confirmation of her presentiments. In the following scene, Calzabigi replaced Comála's grieving addresses to Hidallan, to his attendants, and to a druid in the chorus, with a soliloquy that conveys the heroine's growing isolation (I.3). Furthermore, in her aria, 'Ombra dolente', he gave expression to her death wish – not found in the original – and generally heightened her emotionality: when she beholds Fingallo approaching in the distance and takes him for his own ghost, she is 'agitated and almost out of her mind'.³⁰ As in Macpherson, she then hides from him, but the action of hiding from Fingallo now repeats and enhances the action of hiding from Idallano in the previous scene: this time, she disappears from the stage altogether.

Part Two of the opera opens with Fingallo's and the bards' celebration of the end of the war (II.1), the victory chorus 'Scorri superbo, o fiume', which mirrors Desagrena's and the bards' celebration of the end of the hunt that opened Part One, the cavatina and chorus 'Vaga donzella'. As in the opening scene, Comala's non-participation is felt, so Fingallo goes out to find her and sees her standing on the top of a rock, having withdrawn even further from her interlocutors. The distressed heroine hovering above the stage while singing a duet with her beloved whom she thinks dead is a striking image. Echoing her non-dialogue with Idallano, she opens the duet by addressing Fingallo as 'Caro figlio della morte' (lovely son of death) (II.2). However, the scenic layout seems to rely on a creative misreading of Ossian. In the original, Fingal summons his hidden lover with the following words: 'Look from thy rocks, my love; and let me hear the voice of Comala.'³¹ In the 1762 edition, Macpherson had added a quotation from the Song of Songs in a footnote, which suggests that he meant Comála to hide in a *crevice* in the rock, rather than standing *on top* of the rock: 'O my dove *that art* in the clefts of the rock, in the secret *places* of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice.'³² In the 1773 edition, however, the Biblical reference was omitted, which perhaps explains why Calzabigi missed this point:

Ah! guarda,
Guarda dalla tua rupe,
Vezzosa cacciatrice; ond'io te miri,
E i raggi de' tuoi lumi; e le vivaci
Rose delle tue guance; e le tue nere
Chieme scherzose all'agitar de' venti:
E meglio ascolti i tuoi graditi accenti. (II.2)

Ah, look,
look from thy rock,
charming huntress, so I can see thee
and the rays of thine eyes, and the lively
roses of thy cheeks, and thy playful black
locks waving in the winds:
so I can better hear thy pleasant accents.

Notably, Calzabigi adds visual to the aural perceptions, as if to enhance the sense of distance between the lovers. Indeed, in Comala's following soliloquy, her immovable position on the top of the rock becomes a visual metaphor for the psychological paralysis that takes hold of her body and finally leads to her death, the non-embrace echoing Desagrena's suggestion in the opening scene that she should fly to gather Fingallo in her arms. In the Ossianic text, the heroine dies on stage in silence, but in Calzabigi she is seen falling on the top of the rock at the end of her soliloquy, which coincides with her falling out of the view of the spectators. This is not simply a question of maintaining scenic propriety, as in Cesarotti, but of completing Comala's gradual withdrawal from the stage, as a metaphor for her gradual withdrawal from life into mental darkness, and ultimately into death. In the mirror structure of the drama, Fingallo's reaction to Desagrena's report on Comala's death (II.4) corresponds to Comala's reaction to Idallano's report on Fingallo's death in Part One.³³ Ending up appealing to a phantom Comala, Fingallo has switched places with her, existentially as well as physically on stage. Having communicated but once in the opera – and across a vast distance – the lovers are only united through the parallel between their states of isolation. This corresponds to what Juliet Shields has recently described as the 'de-personalised' or 'inter/changeable' representation of Ossianic characters, which suggests a 'generality of experience' that makes the pervasive sense of melancholy accessible to the readers/listeners: 'In Ossian, mourning does not end with the mourner's death: instead, it is a perpetual state and a form of life in death.'³⁴

— OSSIAN THE CIVILISER: MORANDI'S COMALA

Calzabigi's libretto was set to music in 1780 by the Bolognese church composer Pietro Morandi, a pupil of Giovanni Battista Martini and a member of the Accademia Filarmonica di Bologna, who since 1778 had been *maestro di cappella* at the Cathedral of Senigallia. *Comala* was not the thirty-four-year-old composer's first venture into opera: so far he had written a comic intermezzo and a *dramma sacro* as well as three *componimenti drammatici* and three cantatas (mostly short occasional works on allegorical themes). From 1783, furthermore, he sometimes figures as the *maestro al cembalo* in the opera performances of the local theatre during the summer,³⁵ and after *Comala* he also wrote four full-scale operas.³⁶ Nevertheless, he seems an odd candidate for writing such a ground-breaking work, though he may have been motivated to the choice by Martini, an admirer of Gluck. While the three Gluck-Calzabigi operas had all been performed in Italy by 1780, *Comala* marks the culmination of a process, in

which the musical principles of »reform opera« were associated with a non-classical – and in a sense »modern« – subject for the first time.³⁷

The only known performance of Morandi's *Comala* took place at the Teatro dei Signori Condomini in Senigallia on 2 April 1780, on the occasion of the wedding of Marchese Antonmaria Grossi and Catterina Baviera. A report in the *Gazzetta universale* tells us that *Comala*, which Morandi had set to music 'most appropriately', was performed in the 'beautifully illuminated' theatre, and that 'the numerously gathered nobility greatly applauded this *fiesta* as much for the chosen music as for the good taste and novelty of the style.'³⁸ From a report in the *Gazzetta di Pesaro*, furthermore, we know that Francesco Rastelli (Rastrelli) – who in 1787 was listed as the *primo violino* of the opera orchestra³⁹ – played a 'Concerto di violino' between the two parts of the tragedy, and that the eighteen-year-old soprano castrato Girolamo Crescentini sang the title role.⁴⁰ Crescentini had made his debut in 1776, only appearing in female roles so far.⁴¹ From an entry in the *Indice de' teatrali spettacoli*, we also know the names of the remaining cast members who were all male, including the eight-person chorus, even though women were allowed to perform in Senigallia.⁴² We are not told which roles were sung by whom, but the female roles were sung by Crescentini and Giacomo Milani, and the male roles by Pietro (Petronio) Grechi, Luigi Bassi, and Agostino Catalani. Milani was apparently a mezzosoprano: in 1790 he was listed as an alto in the Senigallia opera chorus,⁴³ and in 1791 he was the *secondo soprano* in opera seria productions in Perugia;⁴⁴ Petronio Grechi, a Bolognese tenor who had made his debut in 1778, occasionally sang in minor Italian opera houses during the 1780s;⁴⁵ the thirteen-year-old Bassi, a local resident and Morandi's singing pupil,⁴⁶ was a bass-baritone prodigy who had already sung adult male roles in his native Pesaro in the 1779 Carnival and in Senigallia in the 1780 Carnival.⁴⁷ He would later go down in opera history as Mozart's first Don Giovanni. Catalani, finally, was a local tradesman who seems to have been a gifted amateur: he sang bass roles in several opera productions between 1779 and 1798, both in Senigallia and elsewhere.⁴⁸ Of the five soloists, Crescentini, Grechi, and Catalani are known to have been members of the cathedral choir directed by Morandi,⁴⁹ but this was probably the case with all thirteen singers, which would explain the use of an all-male cast.

The distribution of voice types agrees with the copy of the score held by the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (the »Paris score«).⁵⁰ Apparently, Desagrena (alto) was sung by Milani, Fingallo (tenor) by Grechi, and Idallano (bass-baritone) by Bassi, while Catalani must have sung one of the two solo bards (tenor and bass) in the victory chorus. The musical

forces were probably adapted to the size of the Senigallia theatre,⁵¹ the orchestra consisting merely of two oboes, two horns, one bassoon, and strings, but Morandi's setting of the libretto nevertheless follows the lead of the revolution in opera dramaturgy initiated by Gluck and Calzabigi, his dedication of the *azione teatrale* to the bridal couple drawing heavily on the famous preface to Gluck's *Alceste* (1769).⁵² None of the numbers adopt the conventional da capo form of opera seria, and the recitatives are accompanied by the orchestra throughout.

One remarkable feature of the score is the numerous tone paintings, which imitate such natural phenomena as the sleep of tired beasts, the playful gambolling of a deer, the thunder of the torrent, the gentle murmuring of the winds, the sun gilding the light mist, the rainbow in the midst of a storm, the calm descent of the night, or the moon rending the dark veil of the clouds, but also such human activities as the echo of a hunting horn, the shooting of an arrow, or the fierce din of a battle.⁵³ The musical »pictures« correspond to what Calzabigi calls 'Ossian's picturesque poetry', and like the verbal imagery they help create the atmosphere of a »primitive« society. However, the tone paintings vanish with Comala's death: they are strikingly absent both from Desagrena's report and from Fingallo's grieving reaction, in agreement with what Blair describes as one of the 'principal rules which respect poetical comparisons', viz. 'that they be introduced on proper occasions, when the mind is disposed to relish them; and not in the midst of some severe and agitating passion, which cannot admit this play of fancy'.⁵⁴

No less singular are the musical means that Morandi uses to prepare Comala's death. In the opening scene, after Desagrena has suggested that they all spend the night celebrating, her bright D major cadence is succeeded by a totally unexpected E flat major chord, after which Comala states that she is not in the mood for festivities due to the evil omen she saw. The key of E flat major remains associated with the deaths of Fingallo and Comala throughout the opera. When Desagrena asks her to describe the omen, the orchestra introduces a motif in that key (Ex. 1), which recurs in a simpler form after Comala has described the death of the deer. Later in the scene, when Comala's fears are renewed at the sight of the approaching Idallano, the motif is heard several times in the orchestra in a slightly varied form (Ex. 1b), suggesting that she sees his arrival as a fulfilment of the prophecy, and the key of E flat major returns when she questions him about the identity of the fallen warrior (I.2). In his pseudo-soliloquy, Idallano compares the slain Fingallo to a fallen tree, the orchestra illustrating the image with a falling motif before it is specified by Idallano with a falling interval on the word 'Cadde' (He fell), which is highlighted through repetition (Ex. 2).

Adagio

vln + ob, cor

p

vla, vc/cb

Adagio

vln + ob, cor

p

vla, vc/cb

Ex. 1 (left). The »presentiment motif« (original version); Morandi, *Comala*, I.1 (Naples score). Ex. 1b (right). The »presentiment motif« (altered version); Morandi, *Comala*, I.1 (Naples score).

Idallano

Presto

archi f

Cad-de, Cad-de qual pian-ta etc.

Ex. 2. Idallano's narration; Morandi, *Comala*, I.2 (Naples score).

Comala

(Andante)

vln + ob, cor

archi p

vla, vc/cb

Cad-rà, Cad - rà spi - ran - te... etc.

Ex. 2b. Comala's cavatina; Morandi, *Comala*, I.3 (Naples score).

Comala

(Andante)

vln + ob, cor

archi p

vla, vc/cb

Ca - drà Ca - drà spi - ran - - te... spi - ran - - te...

calando

Ex. 2c. Comala's cavatina; Morandi, *Comala*, I.3 (Naples score).

Comala

(Adagietto)

archi f

Io... mo - - ro.

Ex. 2d. Comala's death scene; Morandi, *Comala*, II.3 (Naples score).

Comala

Ba - sta ad uc - ci - der-mi, Bas - ta ad uc - ci - der-mi,

(Presto)

archi *pp*

Ex. 3. »Comala's death motif« (Comala's aria); Morandi, *Comala*, I.3 (Naples score).

Comala

Ba - sta ad uc - ci - der-mi, Ba - sta ad uc - ci - der-mi

(Affettuoso assai)

archi *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

+ fl, cor

Ex. 3b. »Comala's death motif« (Comala's aria, altered version); Morandi, *Comala*, I.3 (Naples score).

Adagio assai

Flauti

Fagotto

Violini I

Violini II

Viole

Violoncelli e Bassi

Mi sen-to Ca - der... man - car... lan - gui - re...

Adagio assai

p *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf*

mancando

Ex. 3c. »Comala's death motif« (death scene); Morandi, *Comala*, II.3 (Naples score).

Flauti

Fagotto

[Fingallo]

Violini I

Violini II

Viole

Violoncelli e Bassi

La chia-mo, e più non fo-do! Che fù? Do - ve n'an dò?..

Adagio assai

p *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf*

Ex. 3d. »Comala's death motif« (Fingallo's entrance); Morandi, *Comala*, II.3 (Naples score).

Ex. 3e. »Comala's death motif« (sinfonia); Morandi, *Comala* (Naples score).

After Idallano's exit, when Comala sings what is formally speaking the last stanza of his aria (I.3), she adopts this image in the last line but now applies it to herself, 'Cadrà spirante...' (she shall fall, expiring), highlighting the word 'Cadrà', likewise through repetition and a falling interval (Ex. 2b). While this suggests the extent to which Comala connects her own destiny to Fingallo's, the broken vocal line to which the word 'spirante' is set in the repeat (Ex. 2c) anticipates the broken line with which she will deliver her last words in the opera, 'Io moro' (I die) (Ex. 2d). In a sense, Comala dies already in this moment, which Morandi has even emphasised visually by having her sit down on a rock at the end of the line,⁵⁵ anticipating her final fall later in the opera. In her aria, which concludes Part One, the ominous key of E flat major returns, but as Comala's fears have now been confirmed, the »presentiment motif« gives way to a new motif, which may be described as her »death motif«, set to the last two lines: 'Basta ad uccidermi / Il mio dolor' (my grief is enough to kill me) (I.3) (Ex. 3). Like the presentiment motif, the death motif is marked *adagio* and *piano* in the orchestra, except when it recurs with an altered rhythm in the faster closing section of the aria (Ex. 3b). It recurs in Comala's death scene (II.3), which returns to the key of E flat major, here suggesting that Comala indeed is killed by her grief, as she anticipated in her aria. This time, however, it is commenced by the orchestra in the ellipses in her lines '.... Mi sento: / Cader mancar languire' (.... I feel like falling fainting languishing), while Comala herself completes the melodic line (Ex. 3c). The motif then returns in the orchestra in the moments after she has fallen out of the sight of the audience, during Fingallo's anxious search: 'La chiamo, e più non l'odo! / Che fu? Dove n'andò? ..' (I call her, but I don't hear her anymore! What happened? Where did she go? ..) (II.3). In this moment it depicts the sound of Comala expiring in Desagrena's arms, which he hears off-stage (Ex. 3d). His grieving aria (II.4), 'Neri giorni ed infelici', then returns to E flat major, which was not only the key of Comala's death but also the key in which she grieved for him,

suggesting that they have now switched places in the drama, in line with the interchangeability of Ossianic characters discussed by Shields. Here Morandi seems to obey a cue in the text, Fingallo's rhymes (*vivrò, passerò, amor, cercherò, chiamerò, dolor*) echoing the rhymes of Comala's intervention into Idallano's aria (*vivrà, avrà, dolor, amor*) (I.3), suggesting that her grief and love 'shall live' in her lover from now on.

While these features show Morandi at his most innovative, it has been pointed out, however, that the closed numbers in the Paris score often tend to emphasise vocal display at the expense of dramatic credibility.⁵⁶ This is less the case with the other extant score of the opera, which is held by the Conservatorio di Musica San Pietro a Majella (the »Naples score«), and which, according to its frontispiece, was commissioned in 1780 by the author – i.e. Calzabigi – for the Nobile Accademia dei Cavalieri in Naples:⁵⁷ an institution that had mounted private productions of his and Gluck's *Paride ed Elena* and *Alceste* in 1777 and 1779. The differences between the two scores are substantial: Desagrena and Fingallo are here transposed or rewritten for sopranos, and Idallano for a tenor, while the orchestra has been enlarged with two flutes, two trumpets, two trombones, and an extra bassoon, as well as harp and timpani.

Interestingly, the music here shows clear signs not only of being accommodated to a larger performance venue with more accomplished singers, but also of conforming more strictly to the principles of Gluck's and Calzabigi's so-called »reform«.⁵⁸ Along with the provenance of the score, this perhaps suggests that the poet himself had spurred Morandi to revise the opera, probably with a view to a public or private production in Naples of which we have no evidence. It is possible, however, that *Comala* was performed in the private setting of the Nobile Accademia dei Cavalieri. While the recitatives in the two versions of the score are essentially the same, apart from the required transpositions and the expanded orchestration, the few variations tend to enhance the dramatic effect. For example, some of the orchestral interludes in Comala's death scene have been cut, which intensifies its emotional impetus, and the two statements of Desagrena's line 'Comala non è più... Comala è morta' (Comala is no more... Comala has died) (II.4), which open and conclude her messenger's report, have been set identically in the Naples score. In the Paris score, the first statement was set to different music, but the refrain-like repetition of the line in the Naples score creates a sense of tragic inevitability. Desagrena's aria, 'Come spianta le selve più altere', has been tightened, allowing fewer word repetitions, and the ending of Comala's aria has become less virtuosic; but the most heavily revised numbers are the ones involving Fingallo: the refrain of the victory chorus, which in the Paris score involves a vocal contest between Fingallo and

the four-part chorus, has been rewritten as a contest between two four-part choruses, imitating the tumbling waters of the Carron as a metaphor for the battle; his duet with Comala has been replaced with a much shorter setting, which is less repetitive, melismatic, and virtuosic; and Fingallo's aria, which ends with a conventional bravura display in the Paris score, has been rewritten as a rondo in which the grief-stricken opening theme recurs twice, bestowing on the entire final scene a sense of exalted melancholy. The funeral chorus, too, including Fingallo's solos, has been simplified.

In his important analysis of Fingallo's aria in the Naples score, Lucio Tufano has pointed to its several textual and musical echoes of Orfeo's famous rondo 'Che farò senza Euridice' in Gluck's and Calzabigi's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, in which the hero also mourns the death of his beloved.⁵⁹ The symbolic connection between Fingallo and Orfeo might have been strengthened if Morandi's rondo was sung – which may have been the intention – by the famous soprano castrato Giuseppe Millico who counted Orfeo among his most acclaimed portrayals. No other contemporary singer was as devoted to the Gluck-Calzabigi operas as Millico who had sung the leading male roles in all three of them in Vienna; who is likely to have repeated his portrayals of Paride and Admeto in the Gluck performances mounted by the Nobile Accademia dei Cavalieri;⁶⁰ and who became one of Calzabigi's closest collaborators in Naples where they both lived in retirement in the 1780s. The possibility of having Fingallo sung by one of the stars of the Gluckian opera revolution may explain why Morandi, in the Naples score, changed the emphasis from ornamentation to colour as a primary means of vocal expression, in line with the general change from rhetorical to psychological acting that defined Enlightenment theatre. The Naples score abounds in detailed expressive markings, calling for a nuanced and emotionally emphatic style of singing.⁶¹ The markings sometimes serve to highlight the effect of *chiaroscuro*, e.g. in the contrast between Desagrena and Comala in the opening scene. Now sung by a high soprano rather than an alto, Desagrena's cavatina and aria are both set in the bright key of D major, whereas Comala's first speech, in which she introduces the baleful key of E flat major, is marked '*tetra*' (gloomy) in the score. The use of vocal colours might even carry symbolic weight, however, as in the parallelism between Comala's and Fingallo's orders, in I.3 and II.4, respectively, that a grave should be dug for the other, both of which are sung '*con afflizione*' (mournfully). Like the verbal and tonal connections between the grieving lovers, the similarity in vocal colour might help suggest their interchangeability.

In line with the »reform« principles, the festive and rather conventional sinfonia in the Paris score was replaced in the Naples score with a new piece, which more clearly anticipates

the drama. Right after the opening, Comala's death motif is played piano by the flutes and violins, with which instruments it will continue to be associated throughout the opera (Ex. 4e). Notably, both the scoring and the rhythm in the second part of the motif are identical with Ex. 4d. Otherwise, the outer sections of the sinfonia are dominated by the timpani in conjunction with loud *tutti* statements, which suggests what Calzabigi referred to as the »roughness« and »savagery« of the pre-Ossianic Caledonians. As a contrast, the middle section introduces a harp solo, which clearly refers to the 'lightly-trembling harp' of the Caledonian bards, including Ossian who, with his 'songs of other times', gave his listeners 'the joy of grief'.⁶² According to Blair, this famous expression means 'to raise the strain of soft and grave musick', which 'finely characterises the taste of Ossian's age and country.'⁶³ The symbolic contrasting of the timpani and the harp also echoes the use of these instruments in *Paride ed Elena*, however, in which they depicted the contrast between the »rough« Spartans and the »soft« Trojans, which again suggests that Calzabigi was a guiding force behind Morandi's revision.⁶⁴ In *Comala*, however, roughness and softness are not attributes of two cultures but are two sides of the same culture. In consequence, the harp and the timpani appear together in the first three of the bardic choruses, while the timpani are only heard without the harp in Desagrena's warlike aria and at Fingallo's no less warlike entrance. The only number in the opera that features the harp without the timpani, on the other hand, is the concluding funeral chorus. It is here, with the bards' translation of the painful experience of Comala's death into poetry, that the audience encounters what Calzabigi describes as Ossian's ability to »clean and polish« the roughness of savages. With the conclusion of the dramatic action and 'the abolition of the category »time«' in the final chorus of the bards,⁶⁵ the opera itself becomes an Ossianic song, the Caledonian bard gaining the status of a civiliser on a par with Orpheus of the classical tradition.

■ — ENDNOTES —

I would like to thank Sergio Durante, Howard Gaskill and Mark Tatlow for their valuable suggestions during my work on this article.

1 The dissertation is also included in the critical edition of the poems, *The Poems of Ossian and Related Works*, ed. by Howard Gaskill (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), pp. 343–408.

2 Blair, 'A Critical Dissertation', p. 347.

3 Blair, 'A Critical Dissertation', p. 345.

4 Blair, 'A Critical Dissertation', p. 358.

5 'Comála, a Dramatic Poem', in *Poems of Ossian*, pp. 105–9, 436–37 (p. 436).

6 *Poems of Ossian*, 'Comála', p. 436.

7 *Poems of Ossian*, 'Comála', p. 108.

8 *Poems of Ossian*, 'Comála', p. 108.

9 *Poems of Ossian*, 'Comála', p. 109.

10 Blair, 'A Critical Dissertation', p. 354.

11 'Adattata alla Musica da un dotto maestro, e fregiata delle decorazioni convenienti, ella potrebbe essere un'Opera d'un nuovo gusto, e far grandissimo effetto anche ai tempi nostri.' Melchior Cesarotti, 'Comala, poema drammatico', in *Poesie di Ossian figlio di Fingal, antico poeta celtico, ultimamente scoperte, e tradotte in prosa inglese da Jacopo Macpherson, e da quella trasportate in verso italiano*, 1 (Padua: Giuseppe Comino, 1763), pp. 243–78 (p. 246).

12 '[...] la maniera estremamente concisa, serrata, e rapida, ch'è il costante carattere dello stile di Ossian.' Cesarotti, 'Comala', p. 249.

13 See 'Anciens et modernes', in Voltaire, *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie, par des Amateurs*, 1 (1770), pp. 277–305 (p. 300); *La ragione dei 'buffoni': La Lulliadie di Ranieri de' Calzabigi* (1789), ed. by Gabriele Muresu (Rome: Bulzoni editore, 1977), p. 277.

14 'Di quest'estro, ma castigato, son ricchissimi Omero e Virgilio. [...] d'un altro sublime ma selvaggio Ossiano ci porge l'esempio.' 'Risposta che ritrovò casualmente nella gran città di Napoli il Licenziato Don Santigliano di Gilblas y Guzman y Tormes y Alfarace' (1790), in Ranieri Calzabigi, *Scritti teatrali e letterari*, ed. by Anna Laura Bellina, 2 (Rome: Salerno editrice, 1994), p. 534.

15 'Ossiano (quando non abbia imposturata l'Europa il Machferson) fu da altri molti bardi preceduto; egli ripulì, lustrò la rozzezza loro e si elevò a quel segno al quale giunger poteva la celtica poesia nella scarsezza delle cognizioni di que' popoli, la poca loro coltura, il costume ancora selvaggio. Il secolo fu il secol d'oro della poesia calidonia; non andò più in là, decadde perché i Celti subito dopo decaddero anch'essi e si estinsero; con quella pittoresca poesia d'Ossiano, e pittoresca al pari di quella d'Omero (presa in considerazione la maggiore e minor coltura de' Greci e de' Celti), sarebbero anche questi arrivati alle bell'arti; le rivoluzioni che li annientarono non ne diedero loro il tempo. Non ebbero però, come i Greci posteriormente ad Omero, né pittura, né scultura, né architettura. Rimasero colle infirmi loro torri e rozze sale: non dipinsero, non scolpirono le bellezze che cantarono. Non parlo de' loro dei: non avevan religione i Caledòni, altro motivo per non istradarsi e giungere alle bell'arti che sono il prodotto d'una religione, d'una teologia gaia e pittorica e della bella poesia che è loro madre. Prima di Raffaello e di Michelangelo

ebbeme [sic] noi Dante e Petrarca; prima di Le Sueur, di Puget, di Mansard ebbero i francesi Malherbe e Corneille; ebbero Milton gl'inglesi prima de' loro alquanto rinomati artisti. La poesia precede sempre; le nazioni che non hanno gran poeti restano nella oscurità.' Calzabigi, *La Lulliade*, p. 276.

16 James Macpherson, 'A Dissertation concerning the Antiquity of the Poems of Ossian', in *Poems of Ossian*, pp. 43–52 (pp. 45–46, 48); Macpherson, 'A Dissertation', in *Poems of Ossian*, pp. 205–224 (p. 208).

17 'Comala. Componimento drammatico per Musica. Imitato da quello d'Ossian antico Poeta Celtico, che va sotto lo stesso nome', in Ranieri Calzabigi, *Poesie*, 1 (Livorno: Stamperia dell'Enciclopedia, 1774), pp. 173–88 (p. 173).

18 For discussions of the relation between Cesarotti's and Calzabigi's versions, see Ghino Lazzeri, *La vita e l'opera letteraria di Ranieri Calzabigi: Saggio critico con appendice di documenti inediti e rari* (Città di Castello: Casa tipografico-editrice S. Lapi, 1907), pp. 89–91; Manuela Jahrmärker, *Ossian: Eine Figur und eine Idee des europäischen Musiktheaters um 1800* (Cologne: Studio-Medienservice und Verlag Dr. Ulrich Tank, 1993), pp. 295–96; Matthias Wessel, *Die Ossian-Dichtung in der musikalischen Komposition* (Laaber: Publikationen der Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hannover, 1994), pp. 161–62; Paola Ranzini, *Verso la poetica del sublime: L'estetica 'tragica' di Melchiorre Cesarotti* (Pisa: Pacini Editore, 1998), pp. 267–70; Enrico Mattioda, 'Ossian in Italy: From Cesarotti to the Theatre', in *The Reception of Ossian in Europe*, ed. by Howard Gaskill (London and New York: Thoemmes Continuum, 2004), pp. 274–302 (p. 293); Lucio Tufano, 'Orfeo in Caledonia: Primitivismo e intensità delle passioni nella *Comala* di Calzabigi e Morandi', in *Le arti della scena e l'esotismo in età moderna*, ed. by Francesco Cotticelli and Paologiovanni Maione (Naples: Turchini edizioni, 2006), pp. 597–622 (pp. 598–614); Franco Piperno, 'Cesarotti all'opera: Appunti sulla librettistica ossianica', in *Scrittori in musica: I classici italiani nel melodramma tra Seicento e Novecento*, ed. by Antonio Rostagno and Silvia Tatti (Rome: Bulzoni editore, 2016), pp. 137–59 (pp. 146–47). Lazzeri, Ranzini, Tufano, and Piperno maintain that Calzabigi depended heavily on Cesarotti, Lazzeri even dismissing the work as a 'slavish remake that sometimes verges on reproduction' ('rifacimento pedissequo, che a volte rasenta la riproduzione') (p. 89). On the other hand, Jahrmärker, Wessel, and Mattioda point to the substantial differences between the two versions and discuss Calzabigi's *Comala* as an independent adaptation. For a comparison of the versions by Ossian and Calzabigi, which ignores entirely the possibility of the latter being influenced by Cesarotti, see Anton Ranieri Parra, *Sei studi in blu: Due mondi letterari (inglese e italiano) a confronto dal Seicento al Novecento* (Florence: Società editrice fiorentina, 2007), pp. 95–100.

19 In the 1762 edition of Macpherson's 'Comála', Hidallan says 'Roll, thou mist of gloomy Crona, roll' (*Poems of Ossian*, 'Comála', p. 106). In his 1763 edition, Cesarotti translated this as 'O dalle cime del funesto Crona / Densa nebbia precipita' (O let a dense mist *hasten* from the top of gloomy Crona) (Cesarotti, 'Comala', l. 85–86). In his 1773 edition, however, Macpherson changed the line to 'Dwell, thou mist of gloomy Crona, dwell' (*Poems of Ossian*, 'Comála', p. 437), but Cesarotti does not seem to have taken Macpherson's changes into account in his own subsequent editions of the translation, and in his adaptation from 1774 Calzabigi gave the passage as 'Sulle sponde del Crona / Nebbia oscura si stenda' (Let a dark mist *lie* on the banks of Crona): Calzabigi, 'Comala' (1774), I.2. Underlining and italicisation are mine.

20 Sebastian Mitchell, 'Macpherson, Ossian, and Homer's *Iliad*', in *Ossian and National Epic*, ed. by Gerald Bär and Howard Gaskill (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2012), pp. 55–71 (p. 61).

21 Mattioda, 'Ossian in Italy', p. 276.

22 For some echoes of Cesarotti in Calzabigi's 'Comala', see Piperno, 'Cesarotti all'opera', pp. 146–47.

23 In fact, this solution had already been suggested as a possibility by Cesarotti; see his 'Comala', pp. 277–78.

24 Ranzini, *Verso la poetica del sublime*, p. 268; Mattioda, 'Ossian in Italy', p. 294.

25 Cf. 'Dar-thula: A Poem', in *Poems of Ossian*, pp. 140–47 (p. 147).

26 Blair, 'A Critical Dissertation', pp. 346–47.

27 Calzabigi has already signalled the emphasis on *chiaroscuro* with an intertextual echo of Cesarotti's translation in Desagrena's first lines after the opening cavatina, 'Vaga donzella', which correspond to the opening lines of the drama in Macpherson and Cesarotti. In Macpherson, Desagrena says: 'The chace is over. – No noise on Ardven but the torrent's roar!' (*Poems of Ossian*, 'Comála', p. 105). Cesarotti translated this as follows: 'Già la caccia è compita; / Altro in Arven non s'ode, / Che 'l romor del torrente' (Now the chase is over. No noise is heard on Ardven but the torrent's clamour) (Cesarotti, 'Comala', l. 1–3). Calzabigi, on the other hand, expanded her observation, to establish a contrast to the gloomy Comala: 'Sì, la caccia è compita. Altro non s'ode / A questi boschi intorno, / Che il fragor de' torrenti; / Che di placidi venti / Il lieve mormorar' (Yes, the chase is over. No noise is heard around these woods but the crashing of the torrents, but the soft murmuring of the peaceful winds): Calzabigi, 'Comala' (1774), I.1.

28 Cf. 'Dar-thula', in *Poems of Ossian*, p. 140. I am grateful to Howard Gaskill for pointing out to me that Calzabigi's 'Comala' frequently incorporates imagery found in other Ossianic poems.

29 This change is signalled with an intertextual reference to Cesarotti's translation. In Macpherson, Dersagrena says: 'Let the night come on with songs, and our joy be great on Ardven' (*Poems of Ossian*, 'Comála', p. 105). Cesarotti translated this as follows: 'La notte avanzisi / Tra dolci cantici, / Tra feste, e giubili / E larga spandasi / Per Arven tutto la letizia nostra' (Let the night come on with sweet songs, with feasts and celebrations, and our joy be great on all of Ardven) (Cesarotti, 'Comala', l. 8–12). Calzabigi transferred the third – non-Ossianic – line to Comala, however: 'Di giubbilo, di festa / Desio non ho' (I have no desire for celebrating or feasting): Calzabigi, 'Comala' (1774), I.1.

30 'Agitata, e come fuori di se': Calzabigi, 'Comala' (1774), I.3.

31 *Poems of Ossian*, 'Comála', p. 108.

32 *Poems of Ossian*, 'Comála', p. 437.

33 The parallel is signalled by a number of verbal echoes in the text. Comala's initial response to Idallano's report: 'Di che parli?' (Of what are you speaking?) (I.2). Fingallo's initial response to Desagrena's report: 'Che parli?' (What are you saying?) (II.4). Comala: 'Dunque spento è Fingallo / Di scudi spezzator! Freddo sepolcro / Si prepara per lui' (Then the breaker of shields has expired! Let a cold grave be prepared for him' (I.3). Fingallo: 'Dunque è spenta per sempre / l'amabil cacciatrice [...] / Or la tomba s'inalzi / All'estinta donzella' (Then the lovable huntress has forever expired [...]) Now let a tomb be raised for the deceased maiden) (II.4): Calzabigi, 'Comala' (1774).

34 Juliet Shields, 'Reviving Ossian's Female Corpses: Mourners and Warriors', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 39/2 (2016), 211–21 (p. 215).

35 Gabriele Moroni, *Teatro in musica a Senigallia: Repertorio degli spettacoli 1752–1860* (Rome: Fratelli Palombi editori, 2001).

36 For an overview of Morandi's dramatic works, see Gabriele Moroni, 'Pietro Morandi', in *Pietro Morandi: 12 Concerti per l'Organo* (CD cover notes) (Macerata: E lucevan le stelle SNS Music Productions, 1992) pp. 5–6; Claudio Sartori (ed.): *I libretti italiani a stampa dalle origini al 1800: Catalogo analitico con 16 indici*, 7 vols. (Cuneo: Bertola & Locatelli, 1990–94).

37 I am indebted to Sergio Durante for this observation.

38 'SINIGAGLIA 15. Aprile. / Per sempre più festeggiare le nozze di questo Sig. Marchese Antonio Maria Grossi Ciamberlano di S. M. il Re di Pollonia con la nobile Sig. Caterina Baviera, nella sera di Domenica de' 2. corrente in questo Teatro vagamente illuminato fu rappresentata la *Comala*, azione teatrale, adornata di Cori del celebre Sig. Ranieri de Calsabigi: il Maestro di Cappella Sig. Pietro Morandi fu quei che la messe in musica, e la fece eseguire con tutta la proprietà: la numerosa nobiltà concorsa vi applaudì moltissimo questa festa sì per

la scelta musica, che per il buon gusto, e novità dello stile.’
Gazzetta universale o sieno Notizie istoriche, politiche, di scienze, arti, agricoltura, ec., 7/33 (22 April 1780), p. 261.

39 Moroni, *Teatro in musica a Senigallia*.

40 Moroni, *Teatro in musica a Senigallia*, p. 46.

41 Sartori: *I libretti italiani a stampa*.

42 *Un almanacco drammatico: L'indice de' teatrali spettacoli 1764–1834*, ed. by Roberto Verti, 1 (Pesaro: Fondazione Rossini, 1996), p. 374.

43 Moroni, *Teatro in musica a Senigallia*. In the 1785 Senigallia production of Angelo Tarchi's *Ifigenia in Aulide*, he was listed as *secondo tenore*, however (Moroni, *Teatro in musica a Senigallia*, p. 48), but this probably relies on a confusion with one Giuseppe Milani who sang in the theatre in the same season.

44 Sartori: *I libretti italiani a stampa*.

45 Sartori: *I libretti italiani a stampa*; Moroni, *Teatro in musica a Senigallia*.

46 Till Gerrit Waidelich, 'Don Juan von Mozart, (für mich componirt.) Luigi Bassi – eine Legende zu Lebzeiten, sein Nekrolog und zeitgenössische *Don Giovanni*-Interpretationen', in *Mozart Studien*, 10, ed. by Manfred Hermann Schmid (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 2001), 181–211 (p. 201).

47 Sartori: *I libretti italiani a stampa*; Moroni, *Teatro in musica a Senigallia*.

48 Sartori: *I libretti italiani a stampa*; Moroni, *Teatro in musica a Senigallia*.

49 See Giuseppe Radiciotti, *Teatro, musica e musicisti in Sinigaglia: Notizie e documenti* (1893) (Bologna: Arnaldo Forni editore, 1973), p. 131. Petronio Grechi is mentioned in Pietro Morandi's letter to Padre Martini of 16 April 1784; see Anne Schnoebelen, *Padre Martini's Collection of Letters in the Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale in Bologna: An Annotated Index* (Pendragon Press, 1979), letter 3411.

50 *Comala | Azion Teatrale | Del Sig.^r Ranieri de' Calzabici | Consigliere delle LL. MM. II. RR. AA. ec. | Posta in Musica | Dal Sig.^r D. Pietro Morandi Bolognese*, 2 vols, No. FRBNF43163874, Bibliothèque Nationale de France. The score formerly belonged to King Ferdinand IV of Naples; see <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb43163874s> (visited 19 July 2016).

51 For details about the size and appearance of the theatre, see Marinella Bonvini Mazzanti, 'Il Teatro nella storia di Senigallia', in *Il Teatro a Senigallia*, ed. by Alfio Albani, Marinella Bonvini Mazzanti, and Gabriele Moroni (Milan: Electa, 1996), pp. 11–105, 201–3 (pp. 38–42).

52 Ranieri Calzabigi, *Comala, azione teatrale [...]* *da cantarsi in Senigallia nel Teatro de' Sig. Condomini* (Senigallia: Settimio Stella, 1780), pp. 1–2. For a comparison of the two prefaces, see Tufano, 'Orfeo in Caledonia', pp. 617–18.

53 On these tone paintings, see Wessel, *Die Ossian-Dichtung in der musikalischen Komposition*, p. 165; Andrea Chegai, *L'esilio di Metastasio: Forme e riforme dello spettacolo d'opera fra Sette e Ottocento* (Florence: Casa Editrice Le Lettere, 1998), p. 158.

54 Blair, 'A Critical Dissertation', p. 383.

55 'siede sopra un sasso': Calzabigi, *Comala* (1780), I.3.

56 Wessel, *Die Ossian-Dichtung in der musikalischen Komposition*, p. 166.

57 *Comala | Azione Teatrale del sig.^e Consigliere | Ranieri de Calsabigi | Posta in musica | Dal | sig.^e | Pietro Morandi | Bolog. acc.^{co} filarmonico | Copia Per ord.^e d<e>ll'aut.^{re} per | La Nobil Accademia | dei Sig.ⁱ | Cavalieri | di | Napoli | 1780, NA0059 20.8.13, Biblioteca del Conservatorio di musica San Pietro a Majella, Naples.*

58 I owe this observation to Mark Tatlow who in 2016 conducted the modern premiere of *Comala* (the Naples version), as I am in general indebted to him for many of my remarks on the music.

59 Tufano, 'Orfeo in Caledonia', pp. 620–22.

60 As the creator of Paride and the admired interpreter of Admeto he would be the obvious choice for these roles, since he lived in the city at the time. *Paride ed Elena* was performed in 1777 (probably in December) and on 24 July 1779; *Alceste* on 16 November and 19 December 1779; see Lucio Tufano, 'La »riforma« a Napoli: Materiali per un capitolo di storia della ricezione', in *Kongressbericht: Gluck der Europäer: Nürnberg, 5.–7. März 2005*, ed. by Irene Brandenburg and Tanja Gölz, *Gluck-Studien*, 5 (Kassel/Basel etc.: Bärenreiter, 2009), pp. 103–44 (pp. 111–13). Millico is known to have gone to Naples in the spring of 1777; see *Gazzetta universale*, 4/31 (19 April 1777), p. 247. In April 1778 he is known to have been a teacher at the Conservatorio di Sant'Onofrio a Porta Capuana; see Francesco Florimo, *Cenno storico sulla Scuola musicale di Napoli*, 1 (Naples: Tipografia di Lorenzo Rocco, 1869), p. 350.

61 Cf. Tufano, 'Orfeo in Caledonia', p. 618.

62 Cf. Chegai, *L'esilio di Metastasio*, p. 158.

63 Blair, 'A Critical Dissertation', p. 382.

64 Cf. my article 'The Judgement of Rousseau: *Paride ed Elena* by Gluck and Calzabigi (Vienna, 1770)', in *Rousseau on Stage: Playwright, Musician, Spectator*, ed. by Maria Gullstam and Michael O'Dea (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2017), pp. 255–84 (p. 259).

65 'Das vergebliche Warten auf der Verstorbene bedeutet den endgültigen Stillstand der Handlung und damit eine Aufhebung der Kategorie »Zeit«.' Wessel, *Die Ossian-Dichtung in der musikalischen Komposition*, p. 167.