

Vienna's Ursuline Convent and the *Via Allemagna*: Travel, Music, Letters

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Abstract

In the late 17th century and the early 18th, the Ursuline Convent in Vienna imported Italian theatrical traditions, libretti, and music. Musical works performed in the convent set Italian libretti, especially from Rome. The convent may have served as a conduit for music in the new Italian style, performing a cantata by Giuseppe Pacieri in 1692 and oratorios by Carlo Agostino Badia beginning in 1694. Correspondence between Madre Maria Arcangela Biondini, abbess of the Servite convent in Arco, and the Brescian composer Paris Francesco Alghisi documents her requests for music on behalf of the Viennese Ursulines and the musical preferences of the nuns.

Keywords

Convent music, Ursuline Order, Maria Arcangela Biondini, Petronilla Paolini, Paris Francesco Alghisi, Carlo Agostino Badia, Giuseppe Pacieri, Empress Eleonora II., Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni

After the Council of Trent, new, stricter rules kept most nuns immured securely within their convents.¹ There were some striking exceptions, one of whom, the Servite Abbess Maria Arcangela Biondini, will appear later in this paper. But being enclosed did not necessarily mean that nuns lost contact with the world—their engagement with it often continued, carried out through letters, conversation with visitors, and books, music, and other material items brought into the convent. If music was their passion, their means of religious expression and communication, it seems only natural that they would wish to acquire new music to fit their needs, and to keep up with trends outside. This seems to have been the case with the Ursuline nuns in Vienna during the late 17th century and the early 18th.

The Ursulines were among the new “service” orders that spread across Europe—indeed around the world—in the 17th century.² Dedicated to nursing or teaching, these nuns—unlike those of the older contemplative orders—had regular, close contact with people outside the convent. At the Ursuline convent in Vienna, this relative freedom extended to music. There, effective musical performance was valued above strict enclosure, the nuns regularly performing with male singers, organists, and brass players throughout the 18th century.³ This paper explores musical, literary, and theatrical connections between the Viennese Ursulines and Italy in the years around 1700, and the nuns’ engagement with musicians and music from beyond the Alps.

The Ursuline convent in Vienna was called into being by two empresses of Italian origin. Eleonora I, wife of Emperor Ferdinand II, had envisioned the order’s presence in Vienna, and her kinswoman Eleonora II, by then the widow of Ferdinand III, arranged for the settlement of a group of nuns from Liège (Lüttich) and Prague in the imperial city in 1660.⁴ The younger Eleonora visited the new convent and encouraged the music making there: during a visit shortly after the convent’s founding, she “*asked to hear the music, and we sang some motets for her*”, as the *Oberin* (Mother Superior) reported in a letter to another member of her order.⁵ Several other accounts of imperial visits to the convent in its early years record musical performances. By the 1680s, if not before, there were regular services sung in polyphony, and the nuns were accomplished musicians, singing and performing on a variety of instruments. Reported the Viennese cleric Johannes Matthias Testarello della Massa in 1685, “*in this convent is to be heard a so rare and pleasing music, both vocal and instrumental*”.⁶

1 MONSON, Craig A. The Council of Trent Revisited. *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 2002, vol. 55, no. 1, p. 1–37.

2 CONRAD, Anne. Die Ursulinen. In *Orden und Klöster im Zeitalter von Reformation und katholischer Reform, 1500–1700*. Friedhelm Jürgensmeier – Regina Elisabeth Schwerdtfeger (eds.). Münster: Aschendorff, vol. 1, p. 243–254.

3 PAGE, Janet K. *Convent Music and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Vienna*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014, p. 73–84.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 73.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 77–78: “[...] *après sa maiesté voulut ouïr la musique L. on luy chanta quelques motet*”.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 73, 250: “*Letzlichen ist in dießer geistlichen Schwestern Gottes Hauß eine so rare und annembliche, sowohl vocal alß instrumental music anzuhören [...]*”.

The Italian Convent *Commedia*

Eleonora II may have imported the Lenten oratorio from Italy to Vienna,⁷ and she may also have instituted, or at least promoted, Italian conventual theatrical traditions in the newly established convent.⁸ The empress, who had spent much her of youth in the Clarissan convent of Sant' Orsola in Mantua, was certainly familiar with the convent *commedia*, a popular form of entertainment there that often provoked the ire of the authorities. In a letter of 1650, the year before Eleonora left the city to marry Ferdinand III, the bishop of Mantua complained of excessive freedom at several female convents, listing, among other abuses, “*in Carnival, performing plays in costume*”.⁹ Performances at St. Ursula in Vienna date to the late 1660s; the only one whose subject is known was about St. Dorothea. According to an anonymous account of the convent's early years, in 1670, on the feast of St. Aloysius, 21 June,¹⁰ the convent schoolgirls performed a “*Comedi*”, “*in which they presented the story of St. Dorothea, to which the emperor gave gracious attention*”.¹¹

The tradition of staged *commedia* may have continued at St. Ursula in Vienna into the early 18th century, and intermixed with the Sepolcro tradition. *La Resurrezione di Giesu Cristo*, a Lenten oratorio presented there in 1702, includes stage directions in its libretto—either for the listener's imagination or for actual use—such as “*Dalla città vengono verso l'Orto Maria Maddalena, Maria Cleofè, e Maria Salomè con gli Aromati*” (From the city toward that place come Maria Maddalena, Maria Cleofè, and Maria Salomè with the [burial] spices), “*Vanno al Monte Calvario*”, and “*Cadono tramortiti, ò fuggono*” (they [the soldiers] fall down stunned or flee).¹²

7 FIDLER, Katharina. Mäzenatentum und Politik am Wiener Hof: Das Beispiel der Kaiserin Eleonora Gonzaga-Nevers. *Innsbrucker historische Studien*, 1990, vol. 12/13, p. 56–57. A survey of recent literature appears in SCHNETTGER, Matthias. Die Kaiserinnen aus dem Haus Gonzaga: Eleonora die Ältere und Eleonora die Jüngere. In *Nur die Frau des Kaisers? Kaiserinnen in der Frühen Neuzeit*. Bettina Braun – Katrin Keller – Matthias Schmetzger (eds.). Wien: Böhlau, 2016, p. 118, 127. See also DEISINGER, Marco. Mäzenin und Künstlerin: Studien zu Kunstbestrebungen der Kaiserin Eleonora II. am Wiener Hof (1651–1686). *Acta Musicologica*, 2013, vol. 85, no. 1, p. 43–74.

8 On these traditions, see WEAVER, Elissa B. *Convent Theatre in Early Modern Italy: Spiritual Fun and Learning for Women*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

9 PAGE, op. cit., p. 86.

10 Probably because Aloysius was a member of the Gonzaga family, the family of both Eleonoras, this feast was celebrated especially fervently at the convent. PAGE, op. cit., p. 85.

11 PAGE, op. cit., p. 87: “[...] *in welcher sie, die H. Dorothea vorstelleten, dero der Kayser ein gnadiges gehor gabe*”.

12 *La Resurrezione di Giesu Cristo. Oratorio da cantarsi dalle RR. MM. Orsoline nella sera del Sabato Santo al Santo Sepolcro. Posto in musica dal Sig. Carlo Agostino Badia [...]*. Vienna: Andrea Heyinger, 1702. The music does not survive.

Oratorio Texts and Music from Roman circles at St. Ursula

By the early 1690s, the practice of stational worship had reached its apex in Vienna. With pomp and splendor, the Imperial court processed to a church on its saint's day or some other day of religious importance, there to attend services. The music was often provided by the *Hofkapelle*, but some female convents provided their own for some or all of the services, as well as for the other entertainments of the day.¹³ The Ursuline convent, like most other female convents in Vienna, received two annual official visits from the emperor, a brief one on Holy Saturday, and a more extended one on St. Ursula's Day, 21 October. This longer visit expanded at St. Ursula and other convents to cover most of the day, including services, a mid-day meal with musical entertainment, and a special musical or theatrical-musical presentation.

The first such special musical entertainment known to have been presented at St. Ursula was an Italian import. Giuseppe Pacieri's *Il trionfo dell'Amor divino* (on a text by Paolo Francesco Carli)¹⁴ was, according to a note on the title page of a manuscript surviving in the Austrian National Library,¹⁵ "*Cantato dalle Madre Ursoline di Vienna L'Anno 1692*". The work had originated in Rome in 1687, as one of the series of "*recitamenti in musica*" performed at the Palazzo Apostolico on Christmas Eve in the presence of the Pope and Cardinals.¹⁶ Its length, florid vocal writing, and large-scale scoring reveal the convent's musical ambitions. The *sinfonia* calls for four separate violin parts, viola or an additional violin (the part is in second-line C clef), "viola" solo (in bass clef, cello or viola da gamba), and basso. There are five vocal parts: two sopranos, alto, tenor, and bass, all requiring skill in florid Italianate singing. As well as arias in ABA' form, strophic form, and based on *ostinatos*—arias are sometimes a combination of these types—it also includes several written-out *da capo* arias, in something approaching the new Italian style that would reach Vienna more definitively in the later 1690s through the music of Carlo Agostino Badia and the Bononcini brothers, Giovanni and Antonio Maria. *Il trionfo* has an extended final ensemble with counterpoint and florid vocal lines. Pieces of this sort were typical of Viennese convent oratorio, and they came to be performed by a chorus of choir nuns. That the score of *Il trionfo* belonged to Leopold's private library suggests that the score was presented to him, during the court's visit to the convent, probably on St. Ursula's day.

Pacieri moved in Roman circles that had literary links with Vienna. From 1679 he was in the service of Cardinal Alderamo Cibo, Secretary of State to Pope Innocent XI. Pacieri set several texts by Cibo's secretary Pier Matteo Petrucci, this according to Petrucci

13 PAGE, op. cit., p. 4–8. The musical duties of the Hofkapelle are documented in REINHARDT, Killian. *Rubriche Generali per la funzione Ecclesiastiche Musicali di tutto l'Anno 1727*, A-Wn, Mus. Hs. 2503. See also RIEDEL, Friedrich W. *Kirchenmusik am Hofe Karls VI. (1711–1740)*. München: Emil Katzbichler, 1977, p. 230–309.

14 GIANTURCO, Carolyn. "Cantate Spirituali e morali", with a Description of the Papal Sacred Cantata Tradition for Christmas 1676–1749. *Music & Letters*, 1992, vol. 73, no. 1, p. 16.

15 PACIERI, Giuseppe. *Cantata a 5 Voci Con istro:di (Il trionfo dell'Amor divino)*, A-Wn, Mus. Hs. 16584.

16 GIANTURCO, op. cit., p. 3–7.

himself.¹⁷ One of Petrucci's texts (although not known to have been set by Pacieri) was *Dell'uomo moribondo*, which was used, under the title *L'uomo infermo moribondo*, for an oratorio performed in Vienna in Empress Eleonora II's chapel in 1682 and the imperial chapel in 1687. The composer of the music is unknown.¹⁸ A second text by Petrucci, *La vendita del cuore umano*, was performed in the imperial chapel in 1692, under the title *Il prezzo del cuore umano*, in a setting by Giovanni Legrenzi.¹⁹

Another work from this circle, preserved anonymously in Vienna and not specifically associated with a convent, but with features that suggest it could have been performed in one, is a setting of *La Santissima Annuntiata*, a text by Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni first set by Alessandro Scarlatti (for the feast of the Annunciation) in 1700.²⁰ The Viennese score is not Scarlatti's setting, although it appears from its style to date from the early years of the 18th century.²¹ The scoring suggests convent rather than court, in its use of a pair of treble instruments, plus bass, rather than a four-part string ensemble for most numbers; its limited instrumentation; and its vocal complement of four sopranos and one tenor. *La Santissima Annuntiata* also has an aria set "con viola fagotto", a designation that appears also in an anonymous *Cantata sacra* performed at St. Ursula.²² The "viola di fagotto" was a bass stringed instrument used in the South German and Austrian region, having gut strings wound with silver so that it produced a buzzing sound resembling that of a bassoon.²³ It seems that there was a player of this instrument among the Ursuline nuns around this time.

17 SALVARANI, Marco. Pacieri, Giuseppe. *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*. 2014. [cit. 2017-09-15]. URL: [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giuseppe-pacieri_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giuseppe-pacieri_(Dizionario-Biografico)).

18 SARTORI, Claudio. *I libretti italiani a stampa dalle origine al 1800: Catalogo analitico con 16 indici*. Cuneo: Bertola & Locatelli, 1990–1994, no. 23279, 24280.

19 Two copies of the libretto survive in the Austrian National Library, as 406743-B.AdL and A-Wn, 406743-B. The text is identified as Petrucci's in MORELLI, Arnaldo. *Gli oratori di Pier Matteo Petrucci, circolazione e contesti*. In *Mistica e poesia: Il cardinale Pier Matteo Petrucci (Jesi 1636–Montefalco 1701)*. Atti del convegno nel terzo centenario della morte, Jesi, 20–21 ottobre 2001. Curzio Cavicchioni – Sabrina Stroppa (eds.). Genoa: Marietti 1820, 2006 p. 215–216. Scores survive in I-Moe, Ms. F. 1544 (ca. 1660), and I-Rvat, Chigi Q. VI. 89. Legrenzi died in 1690.

20 OTTOBONI, Pietro. *Oratorio per la Santissima Annuntiata. Fatto cantare nella Sala della Cancellaria nel giorno della Solennità della medesima l'Anno secolare MDCC*. Rome: Antonio de Rossi, 1700. Libretti der Musikgeschichtlichen Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom. Münchener Digitalisierungs Zentrum, Digitale Bibliothek. URL: <http://daten.digital-sammlungen.de/~db/0004/bsb00049581/images/index.html?seite=00001&l=de>.

21 *Oratorium de B. V. Maria*. A-Wn, Mus. Hs. 18509.

22 *Cantata sacra. Per il Sabato Santo Riposando l'Hostia Sacrosancta entro il Core di Gesù nella Chiesa delle RR. MM. Orsoline de Vienna*. A-Wn, Mus. Hs. 18698.

23 BROWN, Howard Mayer, and BONTA, Stephen. Viola di Fagotto. *Grove Music Online*, 2001. [cit. 2018-01-29]. URL: <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>.

Carlo Agostino Badia, House Composer to the Viennese Ursulines, and His Italian Connections

Carlo Agostino Badia, whose Italian connections are explored next in this paper, also set a libretto attributed to Ottoboni, *Giuditta*, performed at the Ursuline convent on St. Ursula's day 1704, in the presence of the imperial family.²⁴ Badia, who probably came from Verona, was appointed *Musik-Compositeur* to the court in Vienna in 1694, probably on the recommendation of his patroness, Eleonora Maria Josepha, half-sister of Emperor Leopold, whom he had served in Innsbruck from 1692, and who retired to Vienna in 1693. Badia served as house composer to the Viennese Ursulines from about the same time, and may have won his position there through her recommendation as well. As a daughter of Eleonora II, she had visited the convent with her mother and probably also attended plays and musical performances there during the period she spent in Vienna in the 1670s.²⁵ Badia dedicated both an opera and a convent oratorio to her.²⁶

With Leopold's approval, Badia went to Rome for further study, probably in 1695. The study-visit was apparently short. According to a report of 1702 on Badia's financial difficulties and request for a raise, the composer alleged that he had "*gone to Rome in the second year of his imperial service with the permission of the emperor for further study, but was not able to stay long for lack of means.*"²⁷

Badia's works of the 1690s for St. Ursula range from the old to the new Italian style. The most old-fashioned is *La Sepoltura di Christo*, performed there in 1698.²⁸ It is built of scene complexes of related material in the old style and has recitative that moves into arioso. The old-fashioned style may perhaps be accounted for by the nature of the work, but I suspect the work might perhaps have been written earlier and adapted for the nuns' use.

Badia's *S. Orsola vergine, e martire* of 1694 is a transitional work.²⁹ It has numerous da capo arias, but also some scene complexes of related material and recitative that flows into aria. It is scored for four or five-part string ensemble with bassoon, rather than the convent's preferred ensemble. The melodic material tends to be repetitive and lacking in distinction, and there is a lack of harmonic interest, even as expressive words are carefully treated.

Badia's *S. Orsola* oratorio of 1695 incorporates the newest Italian style, including a predominance of da capo arias, imitative style, and clear distinction generally between

24 [OTTOBONI, Pietro]. *Oratorio La Giuditta, cantato dalle RR. Madri Orsoline [...] nel giorno di S. Orsola dell'anno 1704. Posto in musica dal Sig.r Carlo Agostino Badia [...]*. Vienna: Andrea Heyinger, 1704.

25 This period followed the death of her first husband, Michal Korybut Wiśniowiecki, King of Poland, in 1673 and her marriage to her second, Karl of Lorraine, in 1678. PAGE, op. cit., p. 95.

26 Ibid., p. 95–96.

27 NEMETH, Carl. Zur Lebensgeschichte von Carlo Agostino Badia (1672–1738). *Mitteilungen der Kommission für Musikforschung*, 1955, vol. 4, p. 228.

28 BADIA, Carlo Agostino. *La Sepoltura di Christo. Oratorio*. A-Wn, Mus. Hs. 16891.

29 BADIA, Carlo Agostino. *S. Ursula vergine e martire*. A-Wn, Mus. Hs. 16906.

aria and recitative.³⁰ It uses the scoring favored by the Ursulines, of two violin parts and basso, including bassoon. In the first appearance in this autograph score of an aria in true da capo format, with the return of the A section performed from the same music as the initial presentation, he wrote “*Da Capo subito usque ad segnale*”, at the end of the B section, and added a little drawing of a hand with a pointing finger, the hand also appearing in the score at the end of the A section. Perhaps he feared that copyists or singers might become confused, although they should by now have been familiar with the form.

Badia's oratorio for Eleonora Maria, *L'Invenzione della croce*, dedicated to her and dated 1697, the year of her death,³¹ sets a text by the learned poet and writer Petronilla Paolini de Massimi, a member of several academies, including the Accademia dell'Arcadia in Rome.³² Paolini's life reads like a novel. Married at age ten to an abusive husband who kept her locked up in the Castel Sant'Angelo, she managed to escape in 1690. In 1695 she was living in the Spirito Santo convent in Rome.³³ Badia may have come into contact with her, as he set texts by her—apparently her earliest libretti—in 1696 and 1697.

L'Invenzione della croce has a topical Habsburg program concerning Eleonora Maria. Thus, it seems likely that this libretto was ordered, either in person through Badia or by letter, to honor the archduchess. *L'Invenzione della croce* is the tale of Santa Elena, empress, who finds the true cross. The text is an allegory of Eleonora's political goals. She fought to win for her son the return of her husband's hereditary lands of Lorraine and Bar, then held by the French, even petitioning the Deutsche Reichstag in person. Her aim was accomplished in the Peace of Ryswick, signed on October 20, 1697, through which her eldest son, Leopold, a “splinter” of the true Habsburg Cross, was confirmed as Duke of Lorraine and restored to his inheritance. The text also reflects Paolini's life in its themes of loss, sadness, and denial of rights: she was denied access to her children and lost her dowry when the authorities rejected her petition for divorce in 1697.³⁴

Letters from Italy

Another way that Italian culture and music reached St. Ursula was through correspondence with nuns in other convents. Surviving correspondence of Madre Maria Arcangela Biondini (1641–1712), one of the most important mystics of her age, reveals that she corresponded regularly with the Ursulines in Vienna in the early 18th century, and that she served as a musical go-between for them.³⁵ Biondini, born in 1641 into a noble Venetian family,

30 BADIA, Carlo Agostino. *Sant'Orsola, vergine e martire*. A-Wn, Mus. Hs. 18767.

31 She died on 17 December 1697.

32 PAOLINI, Petronilla. *L'Invenzione della croce* [...] *Cantato dalle RR. Madri Orsoline di Vienna* [...]. Vienna: Andrea Heyinger, 1696.

33 BRANCALEONI, Francesca. Paolini, Petronilla. *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 2014. [cit. 2017–10–01]. URL: [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/petronilla-paolini_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/petronilla-paolini_(Dizionario-Biografico)).

34 Ibid. She regained access her children, by then grown, only after the death of her husband in 1707.

35 CROSATTI, Remo. *Musicam docet amor: Il musicista bresciano Paris Francesco Alghisi (1666–1733) e l'epis-*

entered the Servite convent of S. Maria delle Grazie in Burano in 1655. She won a reputation for her “Lettere Spirituale” and was known to the imperial court for her religiosity and knowledge of doctrine. Leopold I made her a “spiritual confidante”. In 1689 she founded a Servite convent in Arco, which was supported by the emperor.³⁶ In 1707, Biondini traveled to Vienna to petition Emperor Joseph I for new privileges for her convent, and she lodged there with the Viennese Ursulines between May and September.³⁷ The location of Biondini’s convent and her own connections made a natural point of exchange between Italy and Vienna—Arco is on the *via allemagna*, just over the Brenner pass.

Among her correspondents were several musicians.³⁸ One of these was the Brescian composer and organist Paris Francesco Alghisi, a member of the order of San Filippo Neri and *maestro di capella* of their church from at least 1690, and from 1701 organist of the cathedral in Brescia. They wrote back and forth, mostly about spiritual matters, between 1704 and her death in 1712. Alghisi provided music for the Servite convent, and, through Biondini, he was asked to write some pieces for the Ursulines in Vienna. Wrote Biondini on 9 June 1708, “*the Ursuline nuns want two motets for four voices with instruments, one on the subject of the most sweet heart of Jesus and the other about St. Augustine, whose rule they follow. Thus I beg you to do this charitable thing*”.³⁹ Further letters report on the progress of the compositions,⁴⁰ and convey thanks from the Viennese nuns.⁴¹ Wrote Alghisi on 26 July 1708, “*this week I hope to have the good fortune to dispatch to you the motets to send to the Ursulines*”.⁴² There were also further requests for music, transmitted with exact specifications: they wanted some *Divote Canzonette* like the ones Biondini had for her own convent;⁴³ litanies, including one longer than usual to fit their needs;⁴⁴ and further motets.⁴⁵

tolario con madre Arcangela Biondini. Brescia: Starrylink Editrice, 2009, p. 495–496, lettere 126B, Biondini to Alghisi, 17 August 1709.

36 DE CARO, Gasparo. Biondini, Maria Arcangela. *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 1968. [cit. 2017–09–14]. URL: [www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/maria-arcangela-biondini_\(Dizionario_Biografico\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/maria-arcangela-biondini_(Dizionario_Biografico)).

37 CROSATTI, op. cit., p. 131, 456, lettera 99B, Biondini to Alghisi, Vienna, 14 May 1707.

38 She also corresponded with the court tenor Bucelini, who was from Brescia. CROSATTI, op. cit., p. 464.

39 CROSATTI, op. cit., p. 466, lettera 110B, Biondini to Alghisi, 9 June 1708: “*Le M.M. Orsoline vorerbero due moteti a quatro voci e suoni, uno al dolcissimo cuore di Giesu e L'altro a S.t Agostino Loro Legislatore. pero vi prego farle questa carita*”.

40 Ibid., p. 469–470, lettera 25A, Alghisi to Biondini, 9 July 1708. Some compositions were copied by a copyist in Roveto: lettera 106B, Biondini to Alghisi, 23 March 1708.

41 Ibid., p. 473–474, lettera 114B, Biondini to Alghisi, 31 August 1708.

42 Ibid., p. 472, lettera 26A, 26 July 1708: “*La settimana ventura spero, inviarvi gli mottetti da mandare alle M.M. Orsoline [...]*”.

43 Ibid., p. 27.

44 Ibid., p. 483–484, lettera 120B, Biondini to Alghisi, 20 April 1709: “*Ma io vi devo pregare di cuore per una gracia che Le M.M. orsoline di Viena mi ricercano che sono piu ordinarij ma io non ardivo portarvi disturbo, ma alla fine risolvo pregarvi, et è che esse vorerbero gli conponeste un altra volta Le Litanie al cuore di Giesu, ma Lunghie assai, perche quelle gli havete fatte gli paiono troppo brevif [...]*”, and p. 488, lettera 32A, Alghisi to Biondini, 27 June 1709: “*Manderò quanto prima le Letanie per le M.M. Orsoline, quali ho procurato di tenerle piu Longhe delle altre se avero incontrato, che sijno conforme il loro desiderio [...]*”.

45 Ibid., p. 495–496, lettera 126B, Biondini to Alghisi, 17 August 1709.

None of this music is known to survive, but one piece of Alghisi's sacred music is preserved, in a collection of Italian cantatas now in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (D-B, mus. Ms. 30049, pp. 45–51). *Suaves Accentus* is scored for canto solo, 2 violins, violetta, violoncello obbligato, and organ.⁴⁶ The scoring makes it unlikely to have been composed for the Viennese Ursulines, who preferred a texture of two violins and basso. The work is in the most modern Italian operatic style, the arias in late Baroque da capo form. The opening movement has the strings imitating trumpets and brilliant coloratura for the voice; the second aria has an instrumental obbligato for the violoncello.

This investigation suggests intriguing links among nuns, musicians, librettists, and members of the imperial family. With Pacieri's *Cantata*, the Viennese Ursulines were among the first to perform music in the new Italian style that came to Vienna in the 1690s through Badia and the Bonocini brothers. Indeed, through its connections with Badia, this institution was one of the conduits through which this music reached Vienna. The nuns continued to favor Italian style and composers and sought music from Italy into the early 18th century. This period of Italian influence lasted only a few decades, as by about the 1730s, they were favoring local composers.

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