
PROSERPINA RAPITA: AN UNKNOWN OPERA FRAGMENT*

Mary Térey-Smith

Sacрати, Francesco . . . Italian composer . . . was active in Venice as a composer of opera during the early 1640's . . . was highly esteemed by his contemporaries. Prince Matthias de Medici called him "one of the best composers around" . . . None of his works is known to survive.¹ [Walker 1980: 16/377]

The Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich houses a large manuscript collection of Baroque opera excerpts from the bequest of Adolf Sandberger, catalogued as "Opernfragmente, Mus. Mss. 5734."² Preserved in three separate portfolios, the fragments contain Italian, German, French and English selections spanning the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries by a wide range of composers, from the famous to the barely known. There is a special Venetian folder in the second volume, entitled "Opernfragmente, Venetianische Schule,"

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¹ In a recent correspondence Professor Lorenzo Bianconi (University of Bologna) informed me that he is preparing an edition of Sacрати's extant music. Apparently, a few pieces of his output survived, mostly in private collections.

² Adolf Sandberger (1864–1943), founder of the Musicological Seminar at the University of Munich, an early editor of *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Bayern* and the *Neues Beethoven-Jahrbuch*, was an outstanding leader in the development of modern historical musicology in Germany and the teacher of many internationally known music historians, Alfred Einstein, Karl Fellerer, Arnold and Eugen Schmitz among them. Sandberger's interests ranged from Lassus to Peter Cornelius, and Baroque opera had a special fascination for him. As the "Fragmente" suggest, he might have been contemplating a major study in this field but — beyond a number of individual articles — never got around to complete the project.