

NAXOS

PAISIELLO

# La finta amante

Tsvetkova De Prospero Bernheim

Estrin Orchestra

Stefano Parisse



Giovanni  
**PAISIELLO**

(1740–1816)

# **La finta amante**

*Opera buffa* in two acts (1780)

Libretto attributed to Giovanni Battista Casti (1724–1803)

**Camilletta**..... **Elena Tsvetkova, Soprano**

**Gelino** ..... **Daniele De Prosperi, Tenor**

**Don Girone**..... **Antoine Bernheim, Baritone**

**Estrin Orchestra**

**Stefano Parisse, Harpsichord, Conductor**

The Italian libretto can be accessed at [www.naxos.com/libretti/660563.htm](http://www.naxos.com/libretti/660563.htm)

1	Sinfonia	4:55	17	<b>Scene 6</b> Recitative: Voglio partir pria che si volti a me ( <i>Don Girone, Gelino</i> )	0:28	
	<b>Act I</b>					
	<b>No. 1. Introduzione</b>					
2	<b>Scene 1</b> A qual trista condizione ( <i>Camilletta, Gelino</i> )	5:15	18	Aria: Questa casa, e questa piazza ( <i>Gelino</i> )	3:06	
3	Recitative: Camilletta, buon giorno ( <i>Gelino, Camilletta</i> )	2:27	19	<b>Scene 7</b> Recitative: Misero me, fatto sarò tabacco... ( <i>Don Girone, Camilletta</i> ) –		
	<b>No. 2. Cavatina di Gelino</b>			<b>Scene 8</b> Recitative: Poder del mondo! ( <i>Gelino, Don Girone, Camilletta</i> )	2:21	
4	Cavatina: Deh pensa, amato bene ( <i>Gelino</i> )	3:31		<b>No. 10. Finale I</b>		
5	Recitative: Teme Gelin', che non gli sia fedele ( <i>Camilletta</i> )	0:28	20	Voi dovete giù calare ( <i>Camilletta, Gelino, Don Girone</i> )	7:03	
	<b>No. 3. Cavatina di Camilletta</b>					
6	Cavatina: Se vedesse il ben che adoro ( <i>Camilletta</i> )	1:51		<b>Act II</b>		
7	Recitative: Oh! Già vengono entrambi ( <i>Camilletta</i> )	0:18	21	<b>No. 11. Duetto di Gelino e Don Girone</b> <b>Scene 1</b> Duet: Tu non capisci ( <i>Don Girone, Gelino</i> )	3:05	
	<b>No. 4. Cavatina di Don Girone</b>			22	Recitative: Tante grida padron ( <i>Gelino, Don Girone</i> )	2:21
8	<b>Scene 2</b> Cavatina: Come ché, son io signore ( <i>Don Girone</i> )	2:20		<b>No. 12. Aria di Camilletta</b>		
9	Recitative: Mi capisci alla fin ( <i>Don Girone, Gelino, Camilletta</i> )	2:58	23	<b>Scene 2</b> Aria: Quanto sciocchi amanti siete ( <i>Camilletta</i> )	2:43	
	<b>No. 5. Duetto di Camilletta e Girone</b>			24	Recitative: Lacchè, sembrami allegra ( <i>Don Girone, Gelino, Camilletta</i> )	1:47
10	Duet: Camilletta cara cara ( <i>Don Girone, Camilletta</i> )	2:25		<b>No. 13. Aria di Gelino</b>		
11	<b>Scene 3</b> Recitative: Voglio con questa spada ( <i>Don Girone, Gelino</i> )	1:12	25	Aria: Dal tuo labbro amor tiranno ( <i>Gelino</i> )	4:10	
	<b>No. 6. Cavatina di Gelino</b>			26	Recitative: Io pur voglio parlar, capisci? ( <i>Don Girone, Camilletta</i> )	1:41
12	Cavatina: Badate bene ci vuol politica ( <i>Gelino</i> )	2:04		<b>No. 14. Duetto di Camilletta e Don Girone</b>		
13	<b>Scene 4</b> Recitative: Insolente lacchè! ( <i>Don Girone, Camilletta</i> )	1:16	27	Duet: Oh Dio! Ahi quanti mali... ( <i>Camilletta, Don Girone</i> )	1:59	
	<b>No. 7. Aria di Don Girone</b>			28	<b>Scene 3</b> Recitative: Briccon! Birbante! ( <i>Gelino, Don Girone, Camilletta</i> )	2:02
14	Aria: Certa smania, io sento addosso ( <i>Don Girone</i> )	4:09		<b>No. 15. Aria di Camilletta</b>		
15	<b>Scene 5</b> Recitative: Si fermi galantuomo ( <i>Gelino, Don Girone, Camilletta</i> )	1:52	29	Aria: Ferma, tiranno e barbaro! ( <i>Camilletta</i> )	4:08	
	<b>No. 8. Aria di Camilletta</b>			30	<b>Scene 4</b> Recitative: La lasciasti fuggir? ( <i>Gelino, Don Girone</i> )	0:59
16	Aria: Ah non siate si sdegnato ( <i>Camilletta</i> )	3:49				

<b>No. 16. Recitativo e Aria di Don Girone</b>		<b>No. 19. Scena</b>		
31	Recitative: Che dovrò far? – Aria: Fra l'amore e fra il timore ( <i>Don Girone</i> )	5:56	35 <b>Scene 6</b> Duet: Fra l'orror di notte oscura... ( <i>Don Girone, Camilletta</i> )	5:12
32	<b>Scene 5</b> Recitative: Più bel piacer non ho provato mai ( <i>Camilletta, Gelino</i> )	1:44	<b>No. 20. Scena</b>	
	<b>No. 18. Duetto di Camilletta e Gelino</b>		36 <b>Scene 7</b> Trio: Chi va là? – Ohimè la ronda! ( <i>Gelino, Don Girone, Camilletta</i> )	4:32
33	Duet: Caro ben, dolce mia vita ( <i>Gelino, Camilletta</i> )	4:18	<b>No. 21. Finale II</b>	
34	Recitative: Oh qual contento mai provo nell'alma mia! ( <i>Camilletta</i> )	0:32	37 Scena ultima: Fermate! Olà costoro! ( <i>Don Girone, Camilletta, Gelino</i> )	2:12
			38 Tu ancora finta amante! ( <i>Don Girone, Camilletta, Gelino</i> )	7:30

## Giovanni Paisiello (1740–1816)

### La finta amante

Giovanni Paisiello enjoyed a very considerable international reputation during much of his career, winning the favour of rulers including Catherine the Great in St Petersburg, Joseph II in Vienna and later Napoleon in Paris, testimony to his musical prowess and his skill in dealing with those who held power. Born in 1740 in Taranto, he had his schooling there with the Jesuits, before moving to Naples to study at the Conservatorio di Sant'Onofrio and embarking on his first professional employment in 1763 with the impresario Carafa di Colobrano. 1764 brought his first operas: *Le virtuose ridicole*, with a libretto by Goldoni, for Parma, *La moglie in calzoni* for Modena, *Il ciarlone* for the Teatro Marsigli Rossi in Bologna, and *I franceschi brillanti* for the same theatre, each of the four works described as *dramma giocoso*. He went on to write further works for Venice and Modena, also taking on the task of arranging operas by other composers for performances there. In 1766 his *Le finte contesse* was staged in Rome for Carnival, and by spring that year he was back in Naples for the first of many operas he was to write for staging there, first at the Teatro Nuovo and other smaller houses. *L'idolo cinese*, a work that some years later was a favourite of Lady Hamilton, whose husband was British ambassador in Naples from 1764 until 1800, made a favourable impression on King Ferdinand IV, when it was staged at the Teatro dei Fiorentini in spring 1767. This success was followed by *Lucio Papirio dittatore*, with a libretto by Apostolo Zeno, at the Teatro di San Carlo, in the summer of the same year, and *Olimpia* there in January 1768. What seems to have been a case of breach of promise led to the temporary forfeiture of royal favour and imprisonment, from which he was soon released when he made good his proposal and married. He only regained the favour of the King in 1774 with his *Il divertimento de' numi*, described as a *scherzo rappresentativo per musica*, staged in the Palazzo Reale. His career as a composer of opera continued, however, with a series of works for the smaller opera houses in Naples, while he did his best to cultivate influential supporters.

The year 1776 brought Paisiello to the second phase of his career, when he was recommended to Catherine II of Russia as a successor to Traetta as *maestro di cappella* at the Russian court in St Petersburg. His duties would involve dealing with the orchestra and singers of the court establishment and the composition of operas for the court theatre, more particularly *opera seria*, which at first suited the intentions of the Empress. He also provided a more varied operatic repertoire for some of the smaller theatres of the capital. His first contract of three years was renewed and a third contract was offered and accepted by Paisiello, before his return to Naples, for which he pleaded his wife's health as an excuse. His period in Russia brought about some modifications in his style. The Empress placed restrictions on the length of works to be performed at the court theatre and the fact that the language of the libretti would not have been readily

intelligible to audiences led to a greater emphasis on musical characterisation. At the same time Paisiello made attempts to reform opera, endeavours that had their contemporary parallel in Vienna and then in Paris.

In 1783 Paisiello was appointed *compositore della musica de' drammi* to the court in Naples, a position that enabled him to give up any idea of returning to Russia. His return allowed him, on the way back, to spend time in Vienna, where his opera *Il re Teodoro in Venezia* was performed at the Burgtheater in August 1784. He reached Naples in September, working on a new opera commissioned by King Ferdinand, *Antigono*, on a libretto by Pietro Metastasio, staged in January 1785 at the Teatro di San Carlo. The same year brought him an exclusive contract from the court that obliged him to write one *opera seria* a year for the Teatro di San Carlo, in addition to other possible royal commissions. The new contract bound Paisiello to Naples and brought a return to his earlier, lighter style. In 1787 he became *maestro della real camera* and continued as the leading composer of his time in Naples, permitted eventually to write for theatres abroad, with operas staged in Padua, London and Venice. In 1792 he collaborated with Ranieri de' Calzabigi in a new opera, *Elfrida*, at the Teatro di San Carlo, but in the following years wrote rather less, giving time rather to administrative and practical changes in musical institutions in Naples and to the composition of sacred music, in 1796 becoming *maestro di cappella* at the cathedral. At the same time it was increasingly necessary to confront the various political challenges of the time, in the aftermath of the French Revolution and the execution of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, sister of the Queen of Naples. In January 1799 the royal family were exiled, taking refuge with their followers in Palermo. Paisiello chose to remain in Naples in the service of the new republican regime as *maestro di cappella nazionale*. On the return of the royal family in July of the same year he was deprived of his various positions. Napoleon, who admired Paisiello's music, saw in him one who might help in the process of musical reform in France. In 1801 Paisiello was reinstated in Naples, and was able in 1802, with the permission of King Ferdinand, to travel to Paris, where he became *maître de chapelle* to Napoleon, commissioned to write two operas a year and a march every month. His only opera for Paris, staged there in 1803, *Proserpine*, was not successful. In 1804 he returned to Naples, continuing to write sacred music for Napoleon and his family, for which he received continued payment. He was in the service of Joseph Bonaparte, after the expulsion of the King again from Naples in 1806, and of Napoleon's brother-in-law Murat, and it was under the French that he wrote his last opera, *I pittagorici*, in 1806. When the Bourbons were restored to the throne in 1814 Paisiello benefited from a general amnesty and kept his earlier positions until his death in 1816.

Paisiello's very considerable contemporary reputation rested on his 80 or more operas, works that presented a challenge to Mozart in Vienna. His orchestral works include eight keyboard concertos, the first two of which belong to his years in St Petersburg, the second of the three periods of his creative life that he distinguished in his autobiographical note of 1811 for Choron and Fayolle's *Dictionnaire historique des musiciens*. These works seem to have been written for patrons, rather than as vehicles of display for his own keyboard prowess.

**Keith Anderson**

### **La finta amante**

In the spring of 1780 a huge convoy left St Petersburg headed to Mogilev (now in Belarus).

Catherine II travelled with great pomp with her whole court, including the orchestra, three singers, set designers and costume designers of the Imperial Theatres, in order to meet the Emperor of Austria, Joseph II.

The political meeting took place in the residence of a local nobleman, and on the sidelines of the summits there were celebrations, and spirits were rested with the performance of a new *opera buffa*, commissioned for the occasion to the famous composer Giovanni Paisiello, who at the time was at the service of the Tsarina.

In these circumstances *La finta amante* was born, an *opera buffa* in two acts, written for a light, perhaps 'travelling', ensemble of three singers, and an orchestra comprising strings, two oboes, two horns, and a harpsichord for the recitatives.

The composer conducted the performance from his harpsichord with such great success that Catherine publicly honoured him at the end of the show with many gifts.

*La finta amante* is a jewel that, after that evening, was performed with great triumph first in the court theatre of Hermitage, and later in the most important theatres of Europe.

Unfortunately, in the second decade of the 19th century, the opera fell into oblivion.

The main reason is that the score was unpublished, but in the meantime, the public taste was changing: the great success of Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, written in 1816, the same year of our composer's death, rapidly obfuscated the fame of the opera of the same name by Paisiello.

In 2009 *La finta amante* was commissioned by the 39th Festival Barocco di Viterbo, and the manuscripts that had been kept in the archive of Mariinsky Theatre in St Petersburg, were restored, after having been forgotten for centuries, in a critical edition curated by the musicologist Domenico Carboni.

I had the honour of being invited to work there as assistant conductor, répétiteur and harpsichordist, discovering a musical treasure which fascinated me.

Enthusiastic about the success obtained by the opera that evening, I had the strong desire and aspiration to contribute to its rediscovery, and even to take it back to Russia.

The dream came true on 22 September 2017 when, owing to complicity with the St Petersburg Philharmonia, I conducted the opera in concert form in the splendid Michael Glinka Chamber Hall, in front of a wonderful audience which, thanks to the accurate synopsis in the concert programme, could follow the story attentively, and had much fun, falling in love with the opera by the end of the first act.

That concert and this studio recording have been made possible by people to whom I am grateful: the musicologist Domenico Carboni, who allowed me to use his critical edition; the great, late Yuri Temirkanov who approved the project as artistic director of the St Petersburg Philharmonia; Ilya Kozlov; Dmitry Koryavko and the whole orchestra, who played with amazing taste and precision; the sound engineer Alexei Barashkin; the soloists Elena Tsvetkova, Daniele De Properi and Antoine Bernheim; and the fundamental support of my friends Martine Vaffier, Lev Klychkov (concertmaster of the St Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra); and my colleague Victor Levchuk.

Paisiello wrote *La finta amante* without reusing previous material: it is a completely new composition that sounds fresh, immediate and has consistency thanks to that peculiar sense of the theatre that contributed to the success of the author, honoured by the admiration of Mozart, who collected and studied his scores.

Echoes of the Neapolitan taste, for example in the duet *Camilletta cara cara* are memories of Paisiello's studies at the Conservatorio di Sant'Onofrio in Naples, and his immersion in that musical environment.

The author of the libretto is unknown; but a series of clues leads us to believe that it was Abate Giovanni Battista Casti, who, together with Pietro Metastasio and Lorenzo Da Ponte, was one of the most appreciated and requested authors of that time. In the year of the composition of the opera he was accredited to Catherine's court, undertaking diplomatic assignments and also carrying out, in an unofficial way, the duties of court poet. He also contributed to the successful realisation of the meeting between Catherine and the Austrian Emperor. Casti was probably also a spy at the service of Joseph II. (R.A Mooser: *Annales de la musique et des musiciens en Russie au XVIIIe siècle*)

I present the listener with this small musical masterpiece, hoping that it can delight, promote laughter and someday regularly return to the theatre repertory.

## Synopsis

### Act I

Camilletta earns her living by weaving lace [2]. Her boyfriend, Gelino, has just found a new job as a servant with Don Girone, a rich, socially awkward and mature man, who has been showing interest in the girl for some time. The betrothed decide to stage an innocent deception to make fun of him and fund their wedding [3]. Camilletta pretends to reciprocate Girone's ardent love and flirts with him; Gelino tries to warn his master against this insane feeling, and warns him that Camilletta has an impetuous brother who is very protective and jealous of her [4]–[11]. Girone doesn't want to listen to him and mistreats him as usual, mumbling disjointed sentences. In a game of disguises, Gelino appears on stage in the role of the elusive brother [12]–[15], threatens poor Don Girone who is increasingly falling in love [16]–[18], and locks Camilletta in the house as punishment. The first act ends with a daring scene: Camilletta invites Girone to go up to the house by climbing onto the balcony with a ladder she carries, but her brother discovers them and Don Girone finds himself on the staircase threatened both by Gelino with a sword, and with a gun by Camilletta, who pretends to change her attitude in awe of her brother's fatal anger. Girone vows not to get close to Camilletta again [19]–[20].

### Act II

Don Girone tells Gelino about the mishap that has occurred to him and reproaches him for having been absent in the moment of danger [21]–[22]. They meet Camilletta, and Girone tries to talk to her; Gelino approaches his beloved, pretending to act as a mediator, and gives her instructions [23]–[24]. As he goes to take on the role of his brother, he sings with a hint of regret about his love for the girl, overshadowed by his employer's attempt to deceive him [25]. Girone approaches Camilletta and asks her why she threatened him; she feigns illness [26]–[27]. While the man comes to her aid, her brother appears, who stages a burst of jealousy and under threat asks Don Girone to kill Camilletta [28]. She implores him not to and puts him in a state of more and more confusion, intoning a magnificent dramatic aria [29]; Girone lets her escape. The old man is confused, conflicted [30]–[31], and turns to the lackey. Gelino suggests that he go and see Camilletta, as night approaches and his brother has left to do some business. The two finally meet in front of her house [32]–[35], but Gelino suddenly bursts in as a captain of the guards on the night watch. He has to fulfil his duty by arresting the two. Girone, as suggested by Camilletta, manages to bribe him with a bag full of money [36]. After leaving, Gelino and Camilletta rejoice in their deception and mock Girone, but a comrade has betrayed Gelino. Girone is aware of everything. He returns, accompanied by the other servants, showing a letter and the work suit that Gelino has left at home, rips off his fake moustache, and gives vent to his anger [37]. The young people beg for forgiveness, revealing that they are close to marriage and very poor. After some hesitation, Girone is moved to compassion and forgives them, accepting their offer to work as servants in his house [38].

**Stefano Parisse**



Photo © Mikhail Nikiforov

### **Elena Tsvetkova**

Soprano Elena Tsvetkova studied at the Lomonosov Moscow State University, and has participated in masterclasses held by Valentina Dalskaya, Fiorenza Cedolins, Maria Pia Ionata, Michael Paul and Susan Ormont, among others. As a soloist of the opera company at the Musical theatre of the Republic of Karelia (2009 to 2012) she sang under conductors Sergei Inkov, Victor Levchuk, Marco Boido and Stefano Carlini. She appeared in the roles of Mimì (*La Bohème*, 2013); Micaëla (*Carmen*, 2012); Rosalinda (*Die Fledermaus*, 2011), Tatiana (*Eugene Onegin*, 2011) and Pink Parrot (Lvovich's opera *Black Chicken* for children, 2010), among many others.



Photo © Emanuele Surace

### **Daniele De Prosperi**

Tenor Daniele De Prosperi studied with Giuseppina Dalle Molle, Daniela Dessì, Inés Salazar, Walter Cataldi-Tassoni and Michela Sburlati. His professional career began with his debut as Count Almaviva in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* in Rome. In 2020 he won the Spazio Musica competition, and in 2022 was awarded the Orchestra Erasmus prize at the Ponte competition. In 2023 he was selected to perform in a staging of *La Fille du régiment* organised by the Tito Gobbi Musical Association. In 2019 he reprised the role of Gelino in *La finta amante* at the Giovanni Paisiello Festival in the composer's hometown of Taranto.



Photo © Jose Pazos

### **Antoine Bernheim**

Swiss bass-baritone Antoine Bernheim studied singing in Geneva with Nicole Buloze and Gloria Davy, and in 1994 sung his first role in Sion as Don Alfonso in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*. Since then he has performed roles not only in Switzerland but also in Germany, Italy, England, Greece, France, the Czech Republic, Russia, Bulgaria and Kazakhstan. His large repertoire of over 60 roles includes the title roles of Verdi's *Falstaff*, Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, Gluck's *Le Cadi dupé*, Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* as well as Leporello (*Don Giovanni*), Bartolo (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*) and Dulcamara (*L'elisir d'amore*), among many others.



Photo © Annesa Izmaylov

### **Estrin Orchestra**

Established by the violinist and artistic director Dmitry Koryavko, the Estrin Orchestra is a project comprising members of the legendary St Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra, brought together under the direction of Stefano Parisse. Named after Mikhail Zalmanovich Estrin, who was a violinist and professor at the St Petersburg State Conservatory, the orchestra plays regularly at the D.D. Shostakovich St Petersburg Academic Philharmonia.





Photo © Andrea Villani

### Stefano Parisse

Born in Rome, conductor Stefano Parisse studied at the Conservatorio di Musica Santa Cecilia, graduating in piano, collaborative piano and orchestral conducting. After his apprenticeship serving in various productions at the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma with conductors such as Nello Santi, Donato Renzetti and Renato Palumbo, he began concert activities as a pianist and conductor that reflected his wider musical interests. He has performed at the St Petersburg Philharmonia, the 39th Festival Barocco di Viterbo (now Festival Alessandro Stradella of Viterbo and Nepi), recorded for Rai Radiotelevisione italiana, and appeared as a pianist at Sapienza Università, Teatro Palladium and Teatro Ghione in Rome. The 2009 *Annuario EDT-CIDIM dell'opera lirica in Italia* mentions his performance of the original piano version of Chabrier's chamber opera *Une éducation manquée*.

[www.stefanoparisse.it](http://www.stefanoparisse.it)

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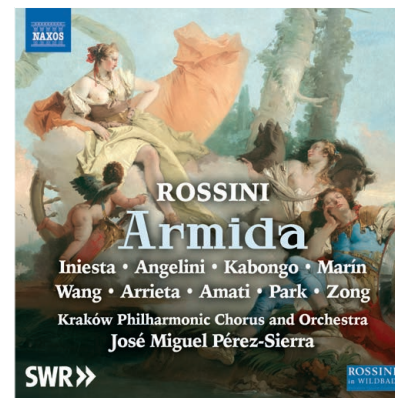
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Giovanni Paisiello enjoyed a considerable international reputation during much of his career, with 80 or more operas that presented a challenge to those of Mozart in Vienna. *La finta amante* was composed during Paisiello's time at the Russian court of Catherine II and it soon became a triumph throughout Europe for its elegant and luminous music. With just three characters, captured forcefully by Paisiello's innate sense of theatre, the comedy revolves around Camilletta who, alongside her boyfriend Gelino, deceives the older but wealthy Don Gironi in games that inevitably lead to dangerous consequences.

**Giovanni  
PAISIELLO**  
(1740–1816)

**La finta amante**

*Opera buffa in two acts (1780)*

**Libretto attributed to Giovanni Battista Casti (1724–1803)**

**Camilletta..... Elena Tsvetkova, Soprano**

**Gelino..... Daniele De Prospero, Tenor**

**Don Gironi..... Antoine Bernheim, Baritone**

**Estrin Orchestra**  
**Stefano Parisse, Harpsichord, Conductor**

**WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING**

<b>1</b>	<b>Sinfonia</b>	<b>4:55</b>	<b>21–38 Act II</b>	<b>57:07</b>
<b>2–20</b>	<b>Act I</b>	<b>49:12</b>	<b>Playing Time</b>	<b>1:51:14</b>

A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet.

The Italian libretto can be accessed at [www.naxos.com/libretti/660563.htm](http://www.naxos.com/libretti/660563.htm)

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Producer: Stefano Parisse • Engineer: Alexei Barashkin • Booklet notes: Keith Anderson, Stefano Parisse

Critical edition by Domenico Carboni, prepared for the first modern performance at the 39th Festival Barocco di Viterbo (2009)

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