

NAXOS

DONIZETTI

L'aio nell'imbarazzo

FONDAZIONE
TEATRO
DONIZETTI

DONIZETTI OPERA

Alessandro Corbelli • Alex Esposito

Orchestra e Coro Donizetti Opera • Vincenzo Milletari, Conductor



Gaetano
DONIZETTI
(1797–1848)

L'ajo nell'imbarazzo

Melodramma giocoso in two acts (1824)

Libretto by Jacopo Ferretti (1784–1852) after Giovanni Giraud (1776–1834)

Critical edition by Maria Chiara Bertieri

Il marchese Giulio Antiquati **Alessandro Corbelli, Baritone**
Gregorio Cordebono **Alex Esposito, Bass-baritone**

Masterclass students of the Bottega Donizetti:

Il marchese Enrico **Francesco Lucii, Tenor**
Madama Gilda Tallemanni **Marilena Ruta, Soprano**
Il marchese Pippetto **Lorenzo Martelli, Tenor**
Leonarda **Caterina Dellaere, Mezzo-soprano**
Simone **Lorenzo Liberali, Baritone**

Coro Donizetti Opera
(Claudio Fenoglio, Chorus Master)

Hana Lee, Fortepiano

Orchestra Donizetti Opera
Vincenzo Milletari, Conductor

1 Sinfonia

Allegro vivace – Allegro moderato

Act I

No. 1. Introduzione

2 **Scene 1** Mi traduca dal volgare

(Gregorio, Pippetto, Leonarda, Simone, Chorus)

3 Recitative: Quando puoi, vien da me

(Leonarda, Pippetto, Gregorio, Simone)

No. 2. Cavatina

4 **Scene 2** Basso, basso il cor mi dice (Giulio)

5 Recitative: Questi miei figli un peso (Giulio, Gregorio)

No. 3. Recitativo e Duetto

Recitative: Amo, adoro i miei figli (Giulio, Gregorio)

6 Duet: Le dirò... così a quattr'occhi (Gregorio, Giulio)

No. 4. Scena e Cavatina

7 **Scene 3** Recitative: Che mai sarà di me? (Enrico) –

Cavatina: Nel primo fior degl'anni penar (Enrico)

8 Recitative: È ver che il grado è uguale (Enrico, Gregorio) –

Scene 4 Recitative: Ehi, chi è di là? – Comandi

(Gregorio, Simone)

No. 5. Scena e Cavatina

9 **Scene 5** Recitative: Qual azzardo!

A un mio cenno balza in piè (Enrico, Gilda)

10 Cavatina: Figlia son d'un colonnello (Gilda)

11 **Scene 6** Recitative: Sì, Enrico mio – Chi è là?

(Gilda, Gregorio, Enrico)

No. 6. Terzetto

12 Come, come, come, come? (Gregorio, Gilda, Enrico) –

Scene 7 Ma nessun servo in sala oggi è restato?

(Giulio, Gregorio, Gilda, Enrico)

13 **Scene 8** Recitative: Zitta – Vado?

(Gregorio, Enrico, Giulio)

No. 7. Aria

14 Deh! Scusate, perdonate (Giulio, Gregorio)

15 Recitative: Stacci, vecchio briccone!

(Gregorio, Enrico, Pippetto) –

Scene 9 Recitative: Don Pippetto – Leonarduccia

(Leonarda, Pippetto, Gregorio) –

Scene 10 Recitative: È il partito miglior... Enrico...

(Gregorio, Enrico, Gilda)

No. 8. Finale I

4:26 16 Cara mia, ci vuol pazienza (Gregorio, Gilda) 3:55

17 **Scene 11** Sentiste? Vedeste? (Leonarda, Pippetto) –
Scene 12 Papà viene. Nell'esofago (Pippetto, Giulio) 3:42

18 Come mai! Parmi impossibile! (Giulio) –
Scene 13 Son qua. Signor parlate (Gregorio, Giulio) 4:22

6:12 19 **Scene 14** Signor Gregorio con me discorrere
(Leonarda, Gregorio, Pippetto, Enrico, Chorus, Simone, Giulio) 4:48

2:04 Act II

6:41 20 **Scene 1** Recitative: Gilda mia, per pietà (Enrico, Gilda)
Scene 2 Recitative: Son qui signori (Gregorio, Gilda, Enrico) –

No. 9. Recitativo strumentato e Aria
Recitative: Bisogna fare un'azione da eroe
3:36 (Gregorio, Gilda, Enrico) 3:24

6:38 21 Aria: Zitta, zitta non piangete (Gregorio, Enrico, Gilda) 5:12

22 **Scene 3** Recitative: Quando avrò fra le braccia (Gilda, Enrico)

No. 10. Scena e Terzetto-Duetto
7:10 Aprite... aprite... (Giulio, Gilda, Enrico) 2:47

23 Terzetto: Signor... Se parli, o perfida
(Gilda, Giulio, Enrico) 2:51

2:56 24 Duet: Donna rea, mi leggi in fronte
(Giulio, Gilda, Enrico) 5:43

25 **Scene 4** Recitative: Gilda, Gilda son io
(Gregorio, Gilda, Giulio)

1:30 **Scene 5** Recitative: Che fate? Marchese (Gilda, Giulio, Gregorio)

4:14 **No. 11. Scena e Quintetto**
Alto là! Questo a me? (Gregorio, Giulio, Gilda, Enrico) 4:37

2:52 26 Alma rea! – Comincia male
(Giulio, Gregorio, Gilda, Enrico) 3:47

27 **Scene 6** Quintet: Dalle camere da basso
(Leonarda, Gregorio, Giulio, Gilda, Enrico) 5:14

6:15 28 **Scene 7** Recitative: Dunque... dunque... non è il signor Gregorio (Leonarda) 0:43

No. 12. Coro
3:17 29 Leonarda che fu? (Pippetto, Leonarda, Simone, Chorus) 1:13

30 Recitative: Ma zitto o più non parlo (Leonarda, Pippetto)
Scene 8 Ma di no, vi dico

(Giulio, Pippetto, Gregorio, Enrico, Gilda, Leonarda)

No. 13. Scena e Rondò Finale
No, caro padre, che tal ti chiamerò (Gilda) 4:57

31 Quel tuo sorriso, o padre
(Gilda, Giulio, Gregorio, Enrico, Simone, Chorus) 3:49

2:20 32 Donne care, qui fra noi
(Gilda, Giulio, Gregorio, Chorus, Enrico, Simone, Pippetto) 3:31



Alessandro Corbelli (Il marchese Giulio Antiquati)

Photo: Gianfranco Rota

Gaetano Donizetti (1797–1848)

L'aio nell'imbarazzo

A native of Bergamo, Donizetti was, for nearly a decade after the early death of Bellini in 1835, the leading composer of Italian opera. He had his first success with *Zoraida di Granata* in 1822. There followed a series of nearly 60 more operas and a move to Paris, where Rossini had been induced to settle to his profit. His final illness confined him to a hospital in France for some 17 months before his return to Bergamo, where he died in 1848. Donizetti was not exclusively a composer of opera; he wrote music of all kinds – songs, chamber music, piano music and a quantity of music for the church.

Donizetti the Great Playwright – A conversation with Vincenzo Milletari

Mattioli: Vincenzo Milletari is conducting for the first time *L'aio nell'imbarazzo*, the comic masterpiece of a 26-year-old Donizetti. We are in 1824, and anyone in Italy who composes for the theatre must deal with a giant, Rossini. *L'aio* has a Rossinian structure, but where can we see Donizetti's originality, if any is there to be found?

Milletari: Indeed, we can. Entirely Donizettian – and of the major Donizetti, not of the apprentice – are the melodies' themes, much longer and more developed than in Rossini. Rossini proceeds by micro-themes then developed and repeated. Think of the famous *allegro* of *Barbiere di Siviglia*'s sinfonia [he sings it, *editor's note*]: it is not a melody, just a hint. Donizetti, on the other hand, creates much longer phrases, writes true themes. I, for one, am totally in love with the one in the Gregorio/Gilda duet at the beginning of the first finale; which, incidentally, will be heard for the first time in Bergamo, for it is a recovery of the critical edition. It is a phrase of 16 bars, many even for the customs of Italian Romantic operatic composers. It might sound reckless to say this, but it is a melodic invention that would not seem out of place in an opera of the young Verdi.

Mattioli: The formal structure of the opera, however, appears of Rossinian orthodoxy.

Milletari: Indeed, it does, even though there is a strong predominance of ensemble pieces over the solo ones. If the cavatinas of the lovers, Enrico and Gilda, follow the codified formal rules, and the final rondo of the prima donna has almost an *opéra-comique* flavour, the only aria with a cabaletta is the first one of Don Giulio, it too 'new', for it was rediscovered and inserted in the critical edition. For the rest, duets, trios, concertati: it is an opera where the interaction between characters is continuous.

Mattioli: You are too young to have seen the most famous contemporary production of *L'aio nell'imbarazzo*, staged in Turin in 1984 ...

Milletari: I am. I have never seen any staging of *L'aio*, but I have seen a video of the Regio's production. What I can tell you is that what people will see at the Donizetti Festival is a different opera.

Mattioli: Why?

Milletari: The critical edition has shuffled the cards. Let us not forget that two years after the Rome 1824 premiere Donizetti, in Naples, practically re-wrote the opera, which even took a new title: *Don Gregorio*. As a result, the two versions have become contaminated, and the *L'aio* one normally hears in theatres, the few times this opera is staged, is the illegitimate child of two different works. The critical edition we are using in Bergamo goes back to the opera as Donizetti wrote it, at least as far as this is possible.

Mattioli: Are there no certainties?

Milletari: We do not have the autograph of the score but only a copyist's manuscript revised by Donizetti. We must not think of the mature Donizetti, that of the great repertoire masterpieces who knows what he wants and how to obtain it: this score has been re-written with many modifications and changes of mind; therefore, it requires in-depth study on behalf of the interpreters, which I am carrying out with the répétiteurs, singers, and musicologists of the Foundation. There are many unanswered questions, especially about the orchestration, with instruments that appear and disappear without any apparent reason, or accompaniments that suddenly stop. Which means that you are constantly going back to the manuscript. For a musician this is tiring work, but also very exciting and gratifying; you feel like you are getting into Donizetti's creative mind.

Mattioli: Who, unlike what people have often said, is very careful and creative in his choices of orchestration.

Milletari: Curiously, here Donizetti reminds me – more than Rossini who, in 1824, was undoubtedly an omnipresent influence on any young Italian composer – of the Italian Meyerbeer, the Meyerbeer who cut his teeth as an operatic composer in Italy before turning to Paris and *grand opéra*. I had the opportunity of conducting his rarely performed *Margherita d'Anjou* and I find in Donizetti's orchestral writing the same learned eclecticism, based on the great models of the Viennese Classical tradition he had absorbed from his teacher Mayr, but with a creativeness, in the search for originality, which recalls, indeed, the young Meyerbeer.

Mattioli: What is the major difference between the *Aio* that will be staged in Bergamo and the 'traditional' one, if we can thus call an opera that is certainly not a repertoire one?

Milletari: I believe the most intriguing and important novelties regard the character of Don Giulio, who almost ends up being the protagonist of the opera and is certainly the most multi-faceted and complex one, even from a musical point of view. He will have an extra aria, and his recitatives are also going to be more developed. We must not forget that the part was written for Antonio Tamburini, destined to be the most important bass of the 1830s to 1840s; Mercadante, Bellini and Donizetti himself wrote for him. Vocally, the part is a difficult one for a noble bass-baritone, with great extension towards the high range. Incidentally, our Don Giulio, the fine Alessandro Corbelli, took part in the Turin production we mentioned before: here in Bergamo, to all intents and purposes, he is singing a different part, one that is quite a lot more difficult.

Mattioli: Following the Donizetti Opera's custom, *L'aio nell'imbarazzo* will be staged without any cuts; it is not, incidentally, a long opera. How did you approach variations, cadenzas and the like?

Milletari: Our goal, allow me to repeat it, is to stage the opera in as close a form as what the Roman public of the 1824 Carnival season saw. But that, as those who know the performance practice of early 19th-century Italian opera realise, does not mean to perform everything as it is written. We agreed with the singers that the da capo of the cabalettas would be varied, and some cadenzas developed: Donizetti wrote some pause signs that more or less mean 'now see to it yourselves'. In general, Donizetti wanted to put singers at ease, writing parts ad personam or making modifications if they did not suit them. I think that putting singers in the best condition is the right approach.

Mattioli: In conclusion: why revive *L'aio nell'imbarazzo*?

Milletari: The great strength of this work, which is far from 'minor', lies in its dramaturgy. It is one of the first operas that reveals Donizetti's greatness as a playwright, able to etch the characters and situations with a music that becomes, in itself, theatre. Of course, apparently it is a satire – and a very amusing one at that, for Ferretti's libretto is excellent – of the closed and suffocating Conservative Order society, with its reactionary aristocrats scared of any novelty and contact with the outside world; but Donizetti's genius transforms it into a true human comedy, like Balzac's contemporary ones, creating genuine characters with which we can still identify ourselves. Let us think of the martial tone of Gilda's cavatina *Figlia son d'un colonnello*, which paints a very modern figure of young woman who, with resolve

and courage, takes her destiny into her own hands. Or of the aria of Don Gregorio, a fearful and God-fearing man who, out of the goodness of his heart, becomes courageous. They are no longer the stereotyped figures of *opera buffa* but real-life characters. The great comical Donizetti begins, indeed, with *L'ajo nell'imbarazzo*.

Alberto Mattioli

English translation: Daniela Pilarz

Synopsis

Act I

The action takes place in Rome, in the palace of the rigorous Marquis Don Giulio Antiquati, who is a widower. He has entrusted his two sons, Enrico and Pippetto, to a tutor, Don Gregorio. The two youngsters, the elder of whom is already 25, are being kept locked in the house and are strictly forbidden to mingle with women. In the first scene, Gregorio is teaching Pippetto, the Marquis's dumb younger son who has fallen in love with the elderly maid Leonarda [2]. Gregorio, who is a good and understanding man, is, however, especially worried about Enrico, who always appears sad and crabby [3]. Don Giulio has also noticed this, and he shares his concerns with the tutor [4–5], but when Gregorio suggests that the Marquis should give his son a little freedom and let him talk to women, he flies into a rage and forbids it [6]. When Don Giulio leaves to visit the Minister, Enrico, who is desperate, finally opens up to Gregorio [7–8]; he lets Gilda into the house, the daughter of the late Colonel Tallemanni [9–10]. She is a neighbouring girl with whom he has a relationship: as a matter of fact, he secretly married her, and they have even had a son, Bernardino [11]. Gregorio is shocked; but then, moved by the couple's pleas, decides to help them [12]. The Marquis returns earlier than expected [13–15].

Gregorio has barely the time to hide Gilda in Enrico's room – he slips her into his own apartment, where she will be safer [16]. But Leonarda has seen them. Believing Gilda to be the tutor's lover, she convinces Pippetto to report the tutor's betrayal to his father [17]. To get into Gregorio's apartment, the Marquis tells him that he needs the place for a visiting nephew [18]. Gregorio is at a loss, but it is lunch time, and they all go to the table [19].

Act II

In Gregorio's apartment, Gilda is worried for her child, who needs to be fed; however, she cannot leave the palace without risking being discovered [20]. Gregorio then accepts that Bernardino should be fetched, and brings him to his mother [21]. After Gregorio has left, someone violently knocks on the door of his apartment: it is the Marquis, who thinks he will find the tutor's lover [22]. When he discovers, instead, Gilda with Enrico, he flies into a rage [23–24]. At the return of Gregorio with their baby, Don Giulio's fury seems to have no limit. Gregorio can barely stop him from cursing his son. Enrico and his wife must leave the house and lead a penniless, wandering life: Don Giulio is inflexible [25–29]. At this point, Gilda has a surge of rebellion. She threatens to kill her son and then herself: after all, if a father can be so cruel as to want a son in disgrace, also a mother can go that far. She does have a point: finally moved, Giulio forgives his son, her, and Gregorio. If one marriage has been accepted, another one could be organised... Prodded by Leonarda, who has plans to become a Marquise, Pippetto asks his father to bless his union with the elderly maid, but Don Giulio categorically refuses, and Leonarda admits that she never actually loved the boy [30–31]. Gilda sings about the courage of women, and the opera ends in general jubilation [32].

Courtesy of Fondazione Teatro Donizetti

Alex Esposito (Gregorio Cordebono) and Alessandro Corbelli (Il marchese Giulio Antiquati)

Photo: Gianfranco Rota



Donizetti's *L'ajo nell'imbarazzo* ('The Embarrassed Tutor') is a *melodramma giocoso* in two acts, premiered to considerable acclaim in 1824. Its subject is the belated attempt by the elderly Marquis Giulio to keep his sons innocent of the ways of world and the comedy of errors that result. Two years later Donizetti drastically revised the opera, which duly appeared under the title *Don Gregorio*. This production uses the critical edition and restores the work, as far as possible, to Donizetti's original conception – including excised arias, and emphasising the composer's sparkling orchestration.



Gaetano
DONIZETTI
(1797–1848)

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1 Sinfonia 4:26 2–15 Act I 60:55 16–19 Act I (cont'd) 16:47 20–32 Act II 47:54

A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet.

The Italian libretto and an English translation can be accessed at www.naxos.com/libretti/660565.htm

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Critical edition by Maria Chiara Bertieri © Fondazione Teatro Donizetti, Bergamo

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