



Wolfgang Amadé Mozart (1756-1791)  
Pietro Lichtenthal (1780-1853)  
**IL RATTO DAL SERRAGLIO**

*Opera semiseria* in two acts translated from the German [*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, 1782] and adapted for the Italian stage [1838] mostly with music by Mozart

Filippo Morace  
Francesco Marsiglia  
Sandra Pastrana  
Gabriele Sagona  
Carlos Natale  
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I POLIFONICI VICENTINI  
ORCHESTRA DEL TEATRO OLIMPICO  
Conductor **GIOVANNI BATTISTA RIGON**  
*Live recording,  
Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza, May 2012*

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**First recording**

The esteem in which we hold Mozart's operas today is something that developed slowly during the 20th century. In the 1700s, Mozart was considered nothing more than one of the many composers of the day and was actually less-famous and less-performed in Europe than his Italian colleagues Jommelli, Salieri, Sarti and Paisiello.

In the early years of the 1800s, in Milan, two people struggled to have the works of this composer performed at La Scala. They were Pietro (Peter) Lichtenthal (1780-1853), a physician and musicologist of Hungarian birth, and Carl Thomas Mozart (1784-1858), the second of the six children of Wolfgang. Among Mozart's major operas, in the 1830s, two of his works remained unknown, considered the most "difficult" because they did not conform with contemporary Italian tastes: the Turkish-style *singspiel*, *Il ratto dal serraglio* and the tragedy of Gluckian influence, *Idomeneo*.

In order to avoid the Milan debacle of the *Flauto magico*, Lichtenthal soon realized that for the *Ratto dal serraglio* a massive reworking of the original score would be necessary to adapt it to then-current Italian tastes. In a November 4, 1840 article in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* he talked about this recently-completed project: "This opera... was no longer suitable for performance on an Italian stage. First of all, it is comprised primarily of short pieces; secondly, it does not have a Finale [in other words, a major concertato piece in the middle of the opera]; thirdly, one of its main characters, the Pasha, does not sing [it is a spoken role]; fourthly, experience has taught us that in this country, simply translating German works has little or no success... Therefore, in order to adapt the *Ratto dal serraglio* to contemporary Italian tastes in opera, what was needed above all was to create extended vocal pieces and give the Pasha a major sung role, while completely reworking the text that was based on an extremely simple plot and providing music for it written by Mozart himself. I suggested to La Scala that they undertake this extremely difficult task if they intended to bring this opera to the stage.

So, while Selim Pascià, now a singer (bass), benefited from the addition of a duet with Constanza (lifted whole from the opera *Etelinda* by Winter, Milan 1818), as well as a duet with Osmin (music by Weigl; but the *stretta* made use of Osmin's raging aria, "O, wie will ich triumphieren!"), it was the role of Constanza that was completely turned on its head, losing the three original arias (the last extremely difficult, and the other two not very "Italian"). Numerous other sections were shortened or cut, but summing up the entire operation, Lichtenthal minimized how much was actually done, stating that "... only a very limited number of parts have been removed from the original score..." However, he was correct when he stated that, "Aside from Winter's duet and the fragment by Weigl, as well as a number of *recitativi instrumentati* and *parlanti* [i.e., "dry" with only harpsichord accompaniment], everything in this 'new *Entführung*' is by Mozart", even if it was music created by Mozart for completely different purposes.

Actually, La Scala never staged this adaptation of the opera. The musical material prepared by Lichtenthal, preserved in the library of the Milan Conservatory of Music, was only heard for the first—and perhaps, last—time at the Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza in May 2012.

Notes  
Italian, English

CD 1 T. T.:  
62'54"

CD 2 T. T.:  
58'28"

Original language  
ITALIAN

