

A Last Version of *Napoli Milionaria*: Nino Rota's Revision Process after the Spoleto World Première

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The opera *Napoli Milionaria* represents the last important episode of the long artistic collaboration between Nino Rota and Eduardo de Filippo. Commissioned by the Festival dei due Mondi of Spoleto, it was first performed on 22 June 1977 and the opening night performance was video broadcast throughout Europe by the RAI: it was an unprecedented media event, meant to celebrate the important milestone of the Festival's first twenty years of activity. At the first performance the new work was received with warmth and enthusiasm by the public, yet during the following days it was attacked with almost unanimous vehemence by critics. Various reasons and arguments were put forward to belittle and demolish the artistic operation undertaken by Rota and De Filippo.¹ According to some, the bad reception of this new work was part of a premeditated media attack that gave vent to the '[...] preconceived negative judgment of virtually all the music and theatre critics present, even of personalities distant from each other in terms of artistic stance and political militancy'.²

Not long after the performances at the Spoleto Festival the composer began to revise some scenes of the opera, most likely bearing in mind the invitation to revive the work at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples.³ Actually, it seems that Rota

and De Filippo might have had other options of revival available beyond the one in Naples. An article appearing on 9 February 1977 in *Il Mattino* stated that after the initial production in Spoleto the opera was slated to be performed at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, where Bruno Bartoletti, the conductor of the first performance, was Music Director.⁴ In any case, both revival options failed to materialise: most probably the hostile attitude of the critics and the great controversy around the opera's reception later prevented the work from being revived shortly after its première.

Anyhow, even without the knowledge of further performance opportunities of *Napoli Milionaria* after the first production in Spoleto, Rota's decision to revise his work should not come as a surprise: the first run of performances on stage clearly allowed the composer to better evaluate the work accomplished, triggering the need for alterations and revisions. As one might expect, modifications and adjustments were already made during the rehearsals leading up to the first performance: proof of this are not only the numerous written traces found in the many handwritten and printed sources relating to the rehearsal phase in May – June 1977 in Spoleto (sources now preserved in the Fondo Nino Rota of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini in Venice),⁵ but also the direct witness of musicians who were personally involved in the rehearsal process of the world première in Spoleto.⁶

The changes made to the score during rehearsals in Spoleto mainly affected the adjustments of selected pitches in some vocal lines, little modifications of a few words and the insertion of some extra bars or fermatas on specific notes to facilitate the scenic action of the singers: those kind of changes can be easily explained as a direct result of needs emerging during the staging process. However, there were also a few instances of removal of portions of musical material; in certain cases they were very likely due to a significant re-evaluation of the dramaturgical-musical effectiveness of the relevant passages, but in some other cases the deletion of some musical phrases was decided because of much more practical and less elevated factors, such as the presence in the first cast of a few performers who were having trouble rendering the musical text as precisely and accurately as it had been conceived and written down by the composer.⁷ The major compositional change that took place during the final stage of work on the opera was the addition – upon soprano Giovanna Casolla's personal request – of an aria for the character of Amelia at the beginning of the third Act. Because it was a late addition (it can be dated at the end of May 1977)⁸ the music for this aria could not make it into the final version of the piano-vocal score which was used during the rehearsals in Spoleto.⁹

While preparing to conduct a series of performances of *Napoli Milionaria* originally planned in March 2020 for the Laboratorio Toscano per la Lirica, I

came across some suspect discrepancies between the currently available versions of the musical material of the opera, which led me to start a research whose aim was to shed light on such anomalies. More specifically, the musical version of some scenes as printed in the rental piano vocal score currently owned by the publisher Schott does not agree with the version of the same scenes as documented by the full score also rented from the same publisher; moreover, the musical version of those same scenes that one can hear in the recording of the first performance in Spoleto is in accordance with the text of the full score, but not with the musical version documented by the rental piano vocal score.

Upon careful evaluation, the high musical quality of the relevant scenes and various compositional details led me to believe that those different versions represent a significant musical-dramaturgical rethinking that took place after the first run of performances. After consulting the materials held in the Fondo Nino Rota at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini I was able to verify that the variants found in the piano vocal score are also to be found in some autograph sheets preserved there: not only the specific musical content of those pages, but also their layout convey the strong impression that they represent a newer version that in Rota's intention was meant to supersede the relevant passages in the Spoleto piano vocal score.¹⁰ Thus, I believe that these revisions represent an advanced musical version which bears witness to the revision phase that took place after the first run of performances in Spoleto and that most likely was meant to become the new textual base for a subsequent run of performances which unfortunately never materialised.

Albeit with different modalities and scope, Rota's revision process of *Napoli Milionaria* mainly focused on three sections of the opera: the scene of Brigadiere Ciappa in the Finale of the first Act, the scene of Peppe o' Cricco and Amedeo in the second Act and Amalia's aria at the beginning of the third Act. In the following paragraphs I will offer an analysis of these sections trying to cast some light on the extent and the rationale behind Rota's revision process.

THE REVISED SECTIONS

1. Act one: Brigadiere Ciappa's scene

Rota's most significant intervention concerns the rewriting of the section of Brigadiere Ciappa's scene between rehearsal numbers 109 and 113. The differences between the musical text of the most recent vocal score and the version shown in the Spoleto score are so significant that in this case we are facing a substantial

rethinking of this whole section. The new musical ideas exploited, their development and their elaboration represent a clear desire to rewrite this scene in a way very different from the one presented in Spoleto.

Actually, it is not surprising that one of Rota's main focuses in the revision after the Spoleto première would become the scene of Brigadiere Ciappa: by studying the materials preserved in the Rota archive it is possible to reconstruct the different stages of the compositional process of this scene, and in doing so one clearly realises how many rewritings and changes this scene had already undergone during the gestation phase of the opera (roughly between 1973 and 1977). In the preserved autograph materials it is in fact possible to identify at least three different original drafts for this scene, each one documented by more or less detailed sketches for voice and piano. The three drafts have a well-defined profile and make use of different musical ideas. At a certain point during the compositional process, however, each of these scenes was evidently discarded in favour of a new version – the fourth, therefore – which is testified by the Spoleto piano vocal score and the original orchestra full score.

This fourth version seems to have been the one used during the rehearsals in Spoleto; at a certain point during the rehearsal process, however, Rota deemed it necessary to cut twenty-one measures,¹¹ which in addition to eliminating a lot of musical material also cut some significant lines from the libretto:

[Ciappa:] *Ma se t'impunti a fingere
e rimaner buon'anima defunta...
Ascolta bene, morto,
sai che faccio?
Ti metto i ferri!
Ed abbine certezza,
ti porto a fare il morto
in una bella camera di sicurezza.*

According to Moretti's personal recollection,¹² this cut was made at an advanced stage in the rehearsal process solely to simplify the part of the baritone interpreting Ciappa, who apparently was having trouble performing the written part with the exactness and precision required by the composer. Therefore, as it is currently presented in the full score, this scene represents a shorter form of the fourth version, which however, in the composer's intentions, was originally meant to be longer and more articulated.

The last and most recent revision of this scene as it is documented by the autograph materials and the piano-vocal score revised after Spoleto thus represents

a fifth version. This new version is decidedly set apart from the preceding four in its use of different thematic material and in the overall musical setting. Compared with the preceding versions, one gets the impression of a significant improvement in both the musical quality and theatrical effectiveness of the scene. The first important fact that needs to be pointed out in this new version is the introduction of a musical idea characterised by a clearly defined rhythmical profile.

This musical idea consists of a rhythmic cell with a regular profile (marked by the letter X in FIGURE 1), which melodically is characterised by the rapid alternation of two notes, while harmonically it is punctuated by a descending progression of short and staccato chords.

In the second part of the theme we also note another regular rhythmic figure characterised by a descending melodic leap (marked by the letter Y in FIGURE 1).

FIGURE 1. Nino Rota, *Napoli Milionaria*, Schott rental piano-vocal score, Act I, 24 bars after rehearsal No. 107, pp. 97–98. © w.d., by Schott, Mainz.

The image shows a musical score for a vocal and piano piece. The vocal line is in 4/4 time and features a dotted rhythm with alternating two notes in stepwise motion. The piano accompaniment consists of descending harmonies in the bass and a quaver/semiquaver rhythm. Above the vocal line, four rhythmic cells are marked with 'X' and 'Y'. The lyrics are: 'Sei un truffa-to - re co - rag - gio - so e mat - to; sei pu-re sim-pa - ti-co per cui'.

The choice of this musical material appears to be very significant: as a matter of fact, this theme is derived from the musical idea presented by the orchestra during the first act aria sung by Gennaro ‘Tutti i tranvieri a spasso’. Note how this thematic material possesses all the main characteristics of the musical material subsequently entrusted to Ciappa (dotted rhythm with alternation of two notes in stepwise motion, descending harmonies in the bass, second part with quaver/semiquaver rhythm and descending leaps).

After a first presentation at the beginning of the aria, the theme is again taken up emphatically by the whole orchestra and associated with the words ‘If it is impossible to live by obeying to the laws of the regime, one must resort [...] to the shame of the damned and dirty black market business’ (FIGURE 4).¹³ It is therefore absolutely fitting that Brigadiere Ciappa would address the ‘brave and mad swindler [truffatore coraggioso e matto]’ Gennaro using a variant of

FIGURE 2. Nino Rota, *Napoli milionaria*, autograph manuscript (photocopy) of the revised music for Brigadiere Ciappa's scene, Act I, 18 bars after rehearsal No. 107. Fondazione Giorgio Cini (Venezia), Fondo Nino Rota.

I atto

(Ciappa ormai guarda Genaro con ammirazione e quasi divertito) (107)

Ciappa *Bravo!* *bravo di cuore,* *veramente*
mpolo sost.

(Hp)

Ciappa *bravo!* *Sei un truffatore coraggioso matto!*
Allarghetto calmo, un poco rubato

Genaro *Sei pure simpatico* *per cui* *stam-mia senti-re,*

X

1105
EXTRA

A LAST VERSION OF NAPOLI MILIONARIA

FIGURE 3. Nino Rota, *Napoli milionaria*, autograph manuscript of the revised music for Amalia's Aria, Act III, 14 bars before rehearsal No. 2E. Fondazione Giorgio Cini (Venezia), Fondo Nino Rota.

The image shows a handwritten musical score on aged paper, consisting of four systems of music. Each system includes a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (grand staff). The lyrics are written below the vocal line.

System 1:
Vocal: -na-ro? Em. be, tur-nasse: lle di-co tut-to,
Piano: Accompaniment with various chords and dynamics.

System 2:
Vocal: tut-to adda fa-re! lle di-co tut-to, e
Piano: Accompaniment with dynamics like *mf* and *p*.

System 3:
Vocal: tut-to ad-da ca-mi! si nun vo'ca-mi...
Piano: Accompaniment with dynamics like *sf* and *p*, and a tempo marking *(al tempo)*.

System 4:
Vocal: l'adda ca-mi. la che guar-de,
Piano: Accompaniment with dynamics like *sf* and *ff*, and tempo markings *lento* and *al tempo, con accento*.

the music previously associated with the very act of illegally running a black market business. It is important to note, however, that through this close thematic relationship, Ciappa's accusation against the 'truffatore' Gennaro is now coloured with humanity: the words that should accuse Gennaro and denounce his crime are actually sung on the same musical material that he himself had previously used to justify his actions; as Gennaro had earlier pointed out in his aria, in those hard times there is no other choice available, and 'one has to resort [ricorrere si deve]' to the illegal trade business.

FIGURE 4. Nino Rota, *Napoli Milionaria*, Schott rental piano-vocal score, Act I, rehearsal No. 55, pp. 51–52. © w.d., by Schott, Mainz.

The image shows a musical score for a vocal and piano performance. The top staff is the vocal line, written in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics are: "Se vi - ve-re è im-pos - si - bi-le os-ser - van - do le leg-gi del re - gi - me ri - cor-re-re si de-ve...". The bottom two staves are the piano accompaniment, with a treble and bass clef. The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some chords and rests. The score is marked with a forte (f) dynamic and includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and fermatas.

When compared to the fourth version, in this fifth and last version of the scene Rota seems to have completely rethought the core of this passage with the intention of replacing the earlier, more emphatic tone with a sense of human sympathy and possibly light humour. After all, the Brigadiere feels a sense of admiration for Gennaro's cunning and courage: this is explicitly indicated by De Filippo in the original play¹⁴ and finds its expression in the famous line: 'It is a sacrilege to touch a dead person, but it is a bigger sacrilege to arrest a living person of your kind'.¹⁵ Furthermore, considered from a literary point of view, this fifth version restores the text of the original libretto in its entirety as it had already been planned for in the fourth version before the last-minute amputation during the Spoleto rehearsals.

The quality and scope of Rota's revision intervention clearly suggest that the composer was not completely satisfied with this scene during the first series of performances in Spoleto. At the end of the revision process, and especially because of the cross-reference with the earlier Act one Aria of Gennaro, the new compositional choices made by Rota granted this fifth version a higher level of musical and dramaturgical cogency which is absent in the previous attempts.

This last version gives the Brigadiere a more refined and nuanced psychological characterisation which contributes to making Ciappa's relatively short cameo one of the most significant and memorable scenes of the opera.

2. Act two: The Peppe o' Cricco and Amedeo scene

The most significant revision intervention in Act two concerns the scene between rehearsal numbers 38 and 42; in terms of the sheer amount of new music composed, the dimensions of this intervention are slightly larger than those of Brigadiere Ciappa's rewriting. In the Spoleto version of the scene, Rota decided to spin the musical thread around two main thematic elements (see FIGURES 5 and 6).

FIGURE 5. Nino Rota, *Napoli Milionaria*, Schott rental piano-vocal score, Act II, rehearsal No. 34, pp. 33–34. © w.d., by Schott, Mainz.

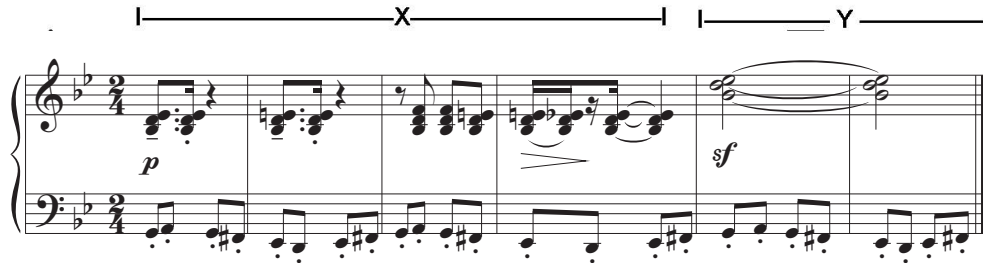
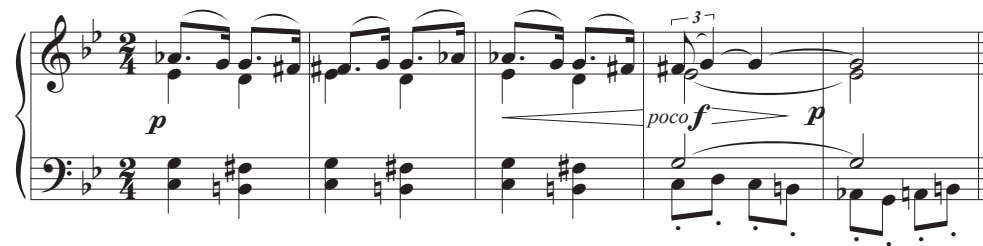


FIGURE 6. Nino Rota, *Napoli Milionaria*, Schott rental piano-vocal score, Act II, rehearsal No. 38, p. 36. © w.d., by Schott, Mainz.



The musical material of the first thematic element can be further divided into two distinct segments (marked with X and Y in FIGURE 5). As with other thematic elements in *Napoli Milionaria*, the material represented in FIGURE 5 had already been used years earlier by Rota in other scores: this theme appears both in *Rocco*

e i suoi fratelli by Luchino Visconti (1960) and in *Toby Dammit*, the episode signed by Federico Fellini in the collective film *Tre passi nel delirio* (1968). In both contexts, albeit with different nuances, this musical material is entrusted with the characterisation of shady environments and people with questionable morality; therefore, it appears to be perfectly fitting that Rota decided to reuse this material in association with the criminal world in which characters like Peppe o' Cricco, Errico and Amedeo move at ease. The main element that stands out after the revision of this scene is the inclusion of new musical material that had never been used up to that moment (FIGURE 7).

FIGURE 7. Nino Rota, *Napoli Milionaria*, Schott rental piano-vocal score, Act II, rehearsal No. 39, pp. 37–38. © w.d., by Schott, Mainz.

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system contains four measures of music. The piano part (left hand) has a steady bass line with chords, and the vocal line (right hand) has a melodic profile with dynamic markings *p*, *mf*, *p*, *mf*, *p*, and *mf*. The second system also contains four measures. The piano part continues with a steady bass line, and the vocal line has dynamic markings *p*, *mf*, *p*, and *f*. The second system includes a change in time signature to 3/4 and back to 2/4.

This theme is closely linked to the musical material of FIGURE 6: the melodic profile of the new element is nothing more than a contrary motion version of the incipit of that melody. Furthermore, considered harmonically, the profile of the new material is an inversion of the basic pattern of FIGURE 6: the succession of harmonies in parallel descending motion at the distance of a half-step is here reversed into an ascending motion and then reiterated at the distance of a major third on a steady pedal note in the bass. The importance that Rota attributes to the new musical material is such that, while in the Spoleto version the scene in question was based exclusively on the alternation between the thematic nuclei X and Y of FIGURE 5, in the new revised version the scene is based exclusively on the alternation between the material of FIGURE 6 and the material X of FIGURE 5.

In addition to the above-mentioned enrichment of the musical material, Rota's intervention also operates some changes in the distribution of the libretto lines between Peppe o' Cricco and Amedeo.

At first glance these changes appear to be minor adjustments, yet they actually have a very significant impact on the dramaturgical profile of the scene. While in the first version Amedeo limits himself to listening to Peppe o' Cricco's criminal

Spoletto Version

New Version

PEPPE

*Stanotte, Amedé,
possiamo fare fuori un'Alfa nuova.*

AMEDEO

Quella requisita dal Generale Clark

PEPPE

*Per l'appunto.
Lui la lascia davanti al suo portone.
Ci ha messo il guardiano.
Ma l'amico è d'accordo con noi.
Lo trovano legato mani e piedi
e con il fazzoletto a palla messo in bocca.*

PEPPE

A stanotte.

PEPPE

*Stanotte, Amedé,
possiamo fare fuori un'Alfa nuova.*

AMEDEO

Quella requisita dal Generale Clark

PEPPE

*Per l'appunto.
Lui la lascia davanti al suo portone.
Ci ha messo il guardiano.*

AMEDEO

Ci ha messo il guardiano?

PEPPE

*Ma l'amico è d'accordo con noi.
Lo trovano legato mani e piedi
e con il fazzoletto a palla messo in bocca.*

AMEDEO

E con il fazzoletto a palla messo in bocca.

PEPPE

A stanotte?

AMEDEO

A stanotte.

plan without showing much of an involvement in the partner's scheme, in the new version Amedeo keeps interrupting Peppe's narration, always repeating his last sentence to the letter, therefore clearly underlining the sense of complicity and understanding between the two. Compared to the first version, Amedeo thus appears much more involved in the partner's criminal plan by showing his approval for the smallest details of the plot with reiterated conviction.

Considered from a strictly musical perspective, Rota brings to the fore the criminal complicity between the two by entrusting Amedeo's repetition utterances

with the same musical material of Peppè's lines, but transposing them a third higher. In doing so, Amedeo's interventions acquire a sense of greater emotional tension and of barely repressed restlessness, as also underlined by the crescendo indications that Rota places at the end of the musical phrase and by the explicit expressive indication 'forte, soffocato [forte, muffled]'.

3. Act three: Amalia's aria

As mentioned earlier, Amalia's aria which opens the opera's third act had not been originally planned for by Rota and De Filippo: it was added at a very late stage of the compositional process to satisfy the request of the lead soprano, Giovanna Casolla.

Among the three scenes reworked after the first run of performances in Spoleto, Rota's intervention on Amalia's aria is the smallest in terms of size, but certainly not at all insignificant. The revision process was essentially focused on the modification of the rhythmic structure of a few phrases that set to music those lines of the libretto during which Amalia, in her soliloquy, starts addressing the statue of the Madonna:

*E tu che guarde?
Tu che me vuo' dì?
Che sò 'na chesta...
che sò 'na chell'ata.*¹⁶

In the Spoleto version the three last lines quoted above are declaimed through a regular series of eighth notes that bestow a sense of stasis and a markedly cantabile character on the passage (FIGURE 8).

In the revised version, Rota halves the original rhythmic values thus making the declamation of those lines proceed at a much faster pace (FIGURE 9).

Even though at first sight it does not seem very significant, this modification has actually very important repercussions on the dramatic effectiveness of the relevant lines: in the new version Rota decides to steer toward a declamation much closer to the spoken rhythm and characterised by an outrightness and an energy absent in the previous version. These phrases, which now seem to come straight out of Amalia's troubled soul, highlight her bitter outburst against the statue of the Madonna while at the same time creating a much more effective contrast with the great cantabile section that immediately follows these lines and which will then lead to the climax and to the dramatic conclusion of the aria.

A LAST VERSION OF NAPOLI MILIONARIA

FIGURE 8. Nino Rota, *Napoli Milionaria*, Schott rental full score, Act III, rehearsal No. 2E, pp. 470–471. © 2010, by Schott, Mainz.

Figure 8 shows a musical score for rehearsal No. 2E. It consists of two systems. The first system features a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in bass clef. The vocal line begins with a rest, followed by the lyrics: "E tu che guar-de? Tu che me vuò di? Che so' na". The piano accompaniment starts with a forte (*ff*) dynamic, which then softens to piano (*p*). The second system continues the vocal line with lyrics: "che-sta che so' na chel - l'a-ta E par-la fi-no_a mò__ che son-go sta - ta?". The piano accompaniment includes a *cresc.* (crescendo) marking and a *sfz* (sforzando) marking. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 2/4.

FIGURE 9. Nino Rota, *Napoli Milionaria*, Schott rental piano-vocal score, Act III, rehearsal no. 2E, pp. 2c–2d. © w.d., by Schott, Mainz.

Figure 9 shows a piano-vocal score for rehearsal no. 2E. It consists of two systems. The first system features a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in bass clef. The vocal line begins with a rest, followed by the lyrics: "E tu che guar-de? Tu che me vuo' di? Che so' na". The piano accompaniment starts with a forte (*ff*) dynamic, which then softens to piano (*p*). The second system continues the vocal line with lyrics: "che - sta... che so' na chel - l'a-ta E par - la, fi - no_a mò__ che son-go sta - ta?". The piano accompaniment includes a *cresc.* (crescendo) marking and a *sfz* (sforzando) marking. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The tempo marking "un poco animato" is placed above the second system.

A DISCARDED REVISION: THE RAGIONIERE SCENE OF ACT TWO

The archive materials relating to the revisions made by Rota after the performances of Spoleto also contain numerous pages of handwritten music and typescript pages of libretto that represent a very detailed sketch for a long scene centred on Ragioniere Spasiano. Based on the quality and the level of accuracy reached by those materials it seems that at a certain point Rota and De Filippo were considering the idea of restoring to the character of the Ragioniere the greater dramaturgical weight he had possessed in the original play of 1945.

Judging from the extant source materials, Rota had originally composed an extended scene for the Ragioniere in the first Act; at some point during the last stages of the compositional process (for reasons yet to be clarified) much of the scene was cut and therefore most of its music did not make it into the Spoleto score. After Spoleto, Rota tried to make room for a Ragioniere scene in Act two and decided to use some of the musical material that he had originally written for the Ragioniere's scene in Act one but which had subsequently been cut.

For reasons still to be investigated, even though the revision process on the Ragioniere scene in Act two seems to have happened at about the same time as the revision process of the three other sections described earlier,¹⁷ this idea was eventually discarded. The Ragioniere draft in Act two starts at a level of textual accuracy that one might be tempted to consider final, but it progressively disintegrates into a sketch-like level where most choices, both affecting musical material and libretto versions, are left open and undecided. As a consequence, while the revised piano vocal score contains the changes made to the other three scenes described above, there is no trace whatsoever of this attempted Act two Ragioniere scene.

OTHER MINOR INTERVENTIONS

In addition to the three significant revisions described above, the revised piano vocal score contains two other minor changes, both happening in Act two. The first concerns the addition of an empty bar five measures after rehearsal number 46; Errico's phrase was originally followed by Amalia's line without interruption, but now Rota decided to insert a moment of dramatic pause between the two utterances. The other moment concerns the pushing forward of Errico's phrase 'Stavo assetato [I was thirsty]' from 11 bars after rehearsal number 52 to 12 bars after 52; this version was the one actually performed during the première, as documented by the recording of that evening. Since it was very likely a change

decided during the rehearsals process, Rota later took care to include it in the revised version of the piano vocal score.¹⁸

REVISED VERSION VS. FIRST VERSION: SOME CONSIDERATIONS

As shown earlier, despite their differences in scope and impact, Rota's revisions are not just alterations of the musical surface but represent, as far as those scenes are concerned, a significant rethinking which has substantial repercussions on the dramaturgical level. The new versions were not dictated by the need for practical solutions to last-minute problems: they were rather the result of a thoughtful creative process. These interventions were carried out to replace the earlier versions in order to improve the musical substance of some scenes and to illuminate some moments of the dramatic action with a different light.

The analysis of the compositional interventions suggests that these changes represent a more recent and advanced version than the one performed in Spoleto: the new versions as documented by the rental piano vocal score should therefore be considered as an improvement and a replacement of the previous versions. After completing the process, Rota decided to have these revisions included in the new piano vocal score that he was preparing for future performances: the fact that the new versions, in his intentions, were meant to supersede the earlier ones, grant them an authoritative status that one cannot ignore.

This consideration triggers a series of very interesting questions about the details of the revision process documented by these fragments, and we hope that future musicological research will shed light on these aspects. In the meantime, I am convinced that it is necessary to let these new versions be known and made available to the public, not only because of their intrinsic musical value, but above all because these revisions represent Rota's explicit authorial will and the most advanced stage of the musical text of *Napoli Milionaria* available to us.

Yet these changes are only available in the piano vocal score that is in a reduced version for voice and piano. I doubt that in the future it will be possible to find an original orchestration of these revised scenes: most likely Rota did not live long enough to complete the work he had started. The orchestration process usually represents one of the very last steps in the creative process of an opera, and we also know that Rota used to orchestrate his music very close to the performance dates; as recalled by Maestro Moretti,¹⁹ for example, the orchestration of the third Act of *Napoli Milionaria* was completed by Rota only during the rehearsal phase leading up to the première in Spoleto, that is just a few weeks before the first performance. Assuming, as I believe, that the revisions took place after the run of performances

in Spoleto and possibly in anticipation of a second run of performances, Rota might have naturally thought of revising the substance of the musical text in the piano vocal score first, leaving the details of the orchestration for a later time, possibly once he would be closer to the start of the next production. As we know, the anticipated second run of performances unfortunately never materialised and Rota died in April 1979 – very likely without having had a chance to orchestrate the revised sections.

Some might argue that in the absence of an original orchestration the revised versions of Rota contained in the piano vocal score, if presented on stage with a reconstructed orchestration, would not represent a completely authoritative version. At the same time, however, it should be noted that, having acknowledged the significance of the revisions carried out by Rota after the first performances, choosing to represent the Spoleto version of the opera would force us to ignore the most recent artistic will of the composer, who with his revisions clearly wanted to nullify some sections of the first version by replacing them with a more advanced one. To perform the Spoleto version would therefore mean to consciously ignore Rota's most advanced artistic will by validating a version that in the composer's intentions, in those specific passages, was to be considered disallowed.

It is therefore necessary to at least acknowledge the problematic textual situation of *Napoli Milionaria* and to solicit a process of critical investigation of the opera as a whole. Given the current state of research and the remarkable quality of the revisions made by the composer, it is my firm belief that it should be our duty to perform Rota's revised version, even if this means having to resort, for the three sections described earlier, to a specifically made orchestration. The musical and dramaturgical advantages of this type of approach would be so many as to make this option decidedly preferable to the option of replicating the earlier Spoleto version, which – despite being complete from the point of view of the orchestration – in a few significant sections was clearly invalidated by the composer's last revision interventions.

Offering these revised scenes to the appreciation of the audience would also represent a unique opportunity to stimulate a process of re-evaluation and critical investigation of the opera *Napoli Milionaria*, a true masterpiece of twentieth century Italian musical theatre which unfortunately is not yet enjoying the recognition it deserves on the Italian and international stages.

Notes

- 1 A detailed sense of the critics' attitude can be grasped by reading the many articles that appeared in the main Italian newspapers of the period, as reproduced in Dinko Fabris and Bruno Moretti, 'Napoli milionaria, una lettura a quattro mani', in: *L'altro Novecento di Nino Rota. Atti dei Convegni nel centenario della nascita*, a cura di Daniela Tortora, Napoli: Edizioni del Conservatorio di Musica "San Pietro a Majella", 2014, pp. 143–194. See also Carlo Cavalletti, 'Oltre "Il cappello di paglia di Firenze". Considerazioni sul teatro musicale di Rota', in: *Nino Rota: un timido protagonista del Novecento musicale*, a cura di Francesco Lombardi, Torino: EDT, 2011, pp. 149–178.
- 2 Fabris–Moretti, *Napoli milionaria*, p. 152.
- 3 Fabris–Moretti, *Napoli milionaria*, p. 151.
- 4 Francesco Canessa, 'Nino Rota racconta la sua esperienza di compositore di "Napoli milionaria". Fare musica per Eduardo', *Il Mattino*, 9 February 1977 (https://archivi.cini.it/istitutomusica;JSESSIONID_OPAC_CINI=68E1B82075FCAC1F3232E28B4BB2D042/detail/IT-MUS-ST0009-000837/nino-rota-racconta-sua-esperienza-compositore-napoli-milionaria-fare-musica-eduardo.html). The article mentions a possible competition that apparently had happened between Spoleto and Naples to host the first production. Furthermore, the journalist mentions the presence in the opera of a love duet between 'Don Gennaro's son and his beloved one [il figlio di don Gennaro e la sua innamorata]'; the opera as we know it today does not include anything like that, and after looking into the preparatory materials I could find no evidence of this claim. It might well be that the journalist got this piece of information wrong, but then one also begins to question the truthfulness and accuracy of any other claim that was presented in this same article. Anyhow, it is to be hoped that a serious critical investigation about the early stage story of *Napoli Milionaria* will be able to shed more light on the many topics that still deserve careful research.
- 5 Nino Rota, *Napoli Milionaria*, Fondazione Giorgio Cini (Venezia), Fondo Nino Rota (henceforth FNR), Serie Composizioni 088. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Francisco Rocca for the valuable assistance provided during my research in Venice.
- 6 Personal recollections by Moretti and Scardicchio are found in Fabris–Moretti, *Napoli milionaria*.
- 7 This was for example the case of the end of Act I, from four measures before rehearsal number 96 to one measure after rehearsal numbers 97: some of the first interpreters were having a hard time lining up with the score and as a consequence some of the musical lines deemed to be too difficult were crossed out during the rehearsal process. For a similar instance, see here below the section concerning the revision to the scene of Brigadiere Ciappa. I am very grateful to Bruno Moretti for having shared his personal recollections of the rehearsal process leading up to the world première in Spoleto, providing me with a lot of valuable first-hand information.
- 8 The front page of this Aria bears the date '29 V 977'. Rota, *Napoli Milionaria*, Serie Composizioni 088 (FNR).
- 9 Exemplars of the piano-vocal scores used during the rehearsal phase in Spoleto are still preserved in the FNR.
- 10 As far as the page layout of those handwritten sheets is concerned, one can clearly see that it was specifically arranged to be meant as a substitution to be inserted in the already available edition of the piano vocal used in Spoleto. Besides the presence of rehearsal numbers which correspond to the relevant sections of the Spoleto vocal score, in the top right corner of the first page of every group of sheets pertaining to a specific revised section one can find the indications pointing to the exact page (and sometimes to the system) of the earlier Spoleto

piano-vocal score where the new music is supposed to start from (for example 'pag. 37, 2a riga' in the case of the Act II revision, or 'pag. 97', in the case of the Act I revision). Rota, *Napoli Milionaria*, Serie Composizioni 088 (FNR).

- 11 The relevant section starts at rehearsal number 108 and ends at rehearsal number 112.
- 12 Phone conversation with the author (12 February 2020).
- 13 'Se vivere è impossibile osservando le leggi del regime, ricorrere si deve [...] alla vergogna della dannata e sporca borsa nera'. Rota, *Napoli Milionaria*, Act I, rehearsal number 54.
- 14 A specific stage direction states that at this point 'Ciappa ormai guarda Gennaro con ammirazione'. See Eduardo De Filippo, 'Napoli Milionaria!', in: Eduardo De Filippo, *Teatro. Cantata dei giorni dispari*, Milano: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 2000, 2 vols.: I, Act I, p. 84.
- 15 'È sacrilegio a tuccà nu muorto, ma è cchiù sacrilegio a mettere 'emmane ncuollo a uno vivo comme a tè'. De Filippo, 'Napoli Milionaria!', Act I, p. 84.
- 16 'And you, what are you staring at? / What do you want to tell me? That I am this [kind of woman] ... / that I am that [kind of woman]'.
17 The planned Ragioniere scene in Act two was meant to immediately follow the revised Peppe o' Cricco and Amedeo scene and, in the revision materials preserved in the FNR, the two revised scenes are actually written one after the other on the same group of sheets.
- 18 Moreover, this little detail seems to further confirm the hypothesis that the versions contained in the rental piano vocal score owned by Schott represent a stage of revision which happened *after* the first series of Spoleto performances, and not, as one might be tempted to speculate, at a very late stage of the rehearsal process prior to Spoleto.
- 19 Personal communication with the author.

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