Polymath of the Baroque: Agostino Steffani and His Music

COLIN TIMMS

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Agostino Steffani as suffragan bishop of Münster: oil painting, 1714, by Gerhard Kappers
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To the memory of Sue

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Preface

I first heard of Steffani on a Saturday morning in 1963 or 1964, when Philip Radcliffe mentioned his name and played a few bars of his music—on the piano—in one of his famous 'history' lectures to music undergraduates at the University of Cambridge. My interest in Italian composers was later encouraged there by Michael Talbot, then working on Albinoni, and at King's College London by Thurston Dart, who supervised my M.Mus. on Severi and my earliest researches into Steffani. The presence of the latter's autograph scores in the British Library made him an obvious choice for a Ph.D. dissertation on his chamber duets. I knew little of his operas, solo cantatas, or sacred music when I decided, in the 1990s, to embark on this book: the work that was required to make good these deficiencies explains why it has taken so long to complete.

Over the years I have incurred debts of gratitude to many people for assistance, encouragement, or advice. In addition to those named above, I am particularly grateful to Brian Trowell, for continuing supervision and support. The late Alec Hyatt King and especially Oliver Neighbour granted me liberal access to the Royal Music manuscripts in the British Library and to much else besides. Many other librarians, archivists, and curators, in this country, Europe, America, and elsewhere allowed me to examine their holdings in person, answered written enquiries, supplied photographic reproductions, and granted permission for them to be reproduced: I cannot name all of them here but gratefully acknowledge their assistance. Lowell Lindgren drew my attention to a new Steffani cantata and generously shared his discovery of the composer's letters to Giuseppe Riva. Rebecca Herissone alerted me to the Steffani transcriptions in the Magdalene College partbooks. Other information or material was kindly given or lent by Donald Burrows, Tim Crawford, Victor Crowther, Elizabeth Dunstan, Harry Diack Johnstone, the late J. Merrill Knapp, Pierluigi Petrobelli, Howard Picton, Dorothea Schröder, Marianne Tilch, and Peter Wollny. For assistance of other kinds I am indebted to Andrew Barker, Benedict Benedikz, Eddy Bénimédourène, Irena Cholij, Desmond Costa, Norbert Dubowy, Nigel Fortune, Anna Greig, Rainer Heyink, Anthony Hicks, Ian Ledsham, Andrea Luppi, Monika Pfützenreutter, Paul and Lucia Roberts, Ruth Taylor, Richard Verdi, and John Whenham; I apologize to anyone inadvertently omitted. Jenny Whenham typed the first draft of chapters 1–6; Michael Talbot read and improved them and chapter 7; Duncan Fielden produced the music examples.

The research on which this study is based was made possible by financial assistance from many sources. I am grateful to the Italian government and the University

of London for funding research in Italy and the purchase of microfilms, respectively; to the Faculty of Arts, School of Performance Studies, School of Humanities, and Department of Music of the University of Birmingham for travel and research grants; to the British Academy, for overseas conference grants and small personal research grants; to the University of Birmingham, for periods of study leave; to the Arts and Humanities Research Board, for the period of research leave during which the first draft of this book was completed and the research grant that facilitated the inclusion of many music examples and illustrations; to the Handel Institute, for assistance with reproduction fees; and to the Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft and Bärenreiter Verlag for permission to reprint material from *Händel-Jahrbuch*, 46; to colleagues, friends, and family, for patience and support; and to those at Oxford University Press who have assisted in the production of this volume.

My greatest debt, however, is to my late wife, Sue, and our children, Naomi and Christopher. For many years Steffani was virtually a member of the family, and sometimes a very demanding one. Sue would have loved to see this book.

C. T.
Birmingham
February 2003

Contents

List of Abbreviations

Bibliographical Abbreviations

CE	*The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton, 1907–22)
DBI	*Dizionario biografico degli italiani,* directed by Alberto Maria Ghisalberti (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1962–)
DTB	Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Bayern (= Denkmäler Deutscher Tonkunst, Zweite Folge), 30 vols. (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, then Augsburg: Filser, 1900–31)
Grove	*The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* 2nd ed., ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell, 29 vols. (London: Macmillan, 2001)
MGG	*Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart,* ed. Friedrich Blume et al., 16 vols. (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1949–79)
NCE	*New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1967–79; reprint Palatine, Ill.: Jack Heraty, 1981)
Opera Grove	*The New Grove Dictionary of Opera,* ed. Stanley Sadie and Christina Bashford, 4 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1992)
RISM	*Répertoire international des sources musicales* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, and Munich: Henle, 1960–)

Libraries and Archives

Libraries and archives are generally referred to by *RISM* sigla (which are listed also in *Grove*); the British Library, for example, is *GB-Lbl*. Two additional sigla have been devised:

D-Mbsa	Munich, Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv
I-Rscge	Rome, Sacra Congregatio pro Gentium Evangelizatione seu de Propaganda Fide

Other Abbreviations and Conventions

A	alto
B	bass
bc	basso continuo
bsn	bassoon
C	cantus
M	mezzo-soprano
MS(S)	manuscript(s)
org	organ
rec	recorder(s)
S	soprano (male or female)
T	tenor
va	viola(s)
vn	violin(s)
Acts/scenes:	II/6 means Act II, scene 6.
Clefs:	G2 denotes a treble clef, C4 a tenor, etc.
Keys:	upper case denotes a major key, lower case a minor.
Dates:	Catholic countries employed New Style, which had been introduced by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582, but protestant Hanover and England used Old Style until 1 March 1700 and 14 September 1752, respectively; Old Style was ten days behind New in the seventeenth century and eleven days behind in the eighteenth (Hatton, *George I*, 13).

Letters perform various symbolic functions in this book. A poetical rhyme scheme is shown by a run of lower-case letters (for example, abba). Italic letters denote musical forms: lower case (*aba*) for internal (movement) form, upper case (*ABA*) for external (work) form. Melodic phrases in a piece of music are labelled in parentheses—(a), (b), etc.—in the text but without parentheses in the tables. Letters in single quotes ('a', 'b', etc.) refer to the aria types defined in Chapter 7 and shown in Appendix C, Table A.3.

In quotations from sources, abbreviations, when first used, are expanded, letters added being shown in italic; added words or explanations are given in square brackets. For translations from Latin I am grateful to Desmond Costa and Ruth Taylor; those from French, German, and Italian are my own.

A Note on Currencies

One cannot study the life of such a cosmopolitan figure as Steffani without considering the relative value of the currencies used in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe. The information that follows is taken largely from the articles on 'Coins' and on individual currencies in the first edition of Chambers, *Cyclopaedia* (1728), and partly from Fuld, *The Book of World-Famous Music*.

South Germany and Austria used the gold and silver florin (or gulden) and the copper kreuzer and pfennig: there were 8 pfennigs to a kreuzer and 60 kreuzer to a florin. Central and northern Germany also used the silver thaler ('dollar' or 'rixdollar'), which was worth 100 kreuzer; furthermore, the thaler was worth 30 groschen (or 300 pfennigs) in Leipzig and 3 marks (or 48 schillings) in Hamburg or Berlin. The florin (or gulden) was roughly equivalent to 3 shillings sterling, the thaler to 4s. 8d. (in Nuremberg) or 4s. 6d. (in Hamburg); there were therefore just under 4.5 thalers to the pound. Steffani wrote in 1711 that 3 thalers were worth about one-third of a pound, or 6s. 8d. In Venice the silver ducat (or justin) was worth 4s. 9d., that is, just under three-quarters of a Roman scudo; the gold zecchino (sequin) was worth about 9s., or 2 thalers.

It is hard to establish the purchasing power of such amounts. According to de Vries, who shows that exchange rates were relatively stable between 1650 and 1750, 'the daily wage of skilled manual labor in Holland, where wages may well have been the highest in Europe, were usually near 1 guilder per day throughout most of the 17th and 18th centuries' (*Economy of Europe*, p. x). If a Dutch labourer worked for 330 days, his annual earnings (330 guilders) must have been equivalent to £30 sterling, or 135 thalers. Steffani's annual salary as Kapellmeister at Hanover was 1,200 thalers, plus expenses of 18 thalers per day. In 1690 his employer, Duke Ernst August, paid 9 thalers for a pair of boots with buckles; at the same time, a calf cost 1 thaler 6 groschen, a goose cost 6 groschen, sixty eggs cost 8 groschen, and a pound of beef cost 14 pfennigs (Fischer, *Musik in Hannover*, 23).

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Introduction

Steffani was a remarkable figure. Born in 1654 at Castelfranco, on the Venetian terra firma, he was taken to Germany at the age of thirteen and, apart from three years in Italy, remained there—at the courts of Munich, Hanover, and Düsseldorf—for the rest of his life. He began as a musician—singer, organist, harpsichordist, and composer—but like many other artists became an accomplished courtier and diplomat. Unusually, however, he proved so adept in these roles that at Hanover he was given major diplomatic responsibility and at Düsseldorf was appointed president of the Palatine government. A prominent politician and administrator in middle age, in later years he was essentially a man of the church. Alongside music and diplomacy, and threading through both, he had pursued an ecclesiastical career that culminated in his appointment as bishop of Spiga and apostolic vicar of north Germany. He thus was deeply involved in affairs of church and state at a time of great upheaval in Europe.

It would be difficult for one person to write a truly comprehensive account of such a versatile and industrious figure. The emphasis in this book is on Steffani's musical activities and compositions: his diplomatic and ecclesiastical careers are discussed, but mainly to round out a portrait of the man, gain insight into his character, and thus inform an assessment of his musical works. One justification for this approach, perhaps, is that while his achievements as a diplomat and bishop have been overtaken by subsequent events, his music survives and can still be performed and enjoyed. During his lifetime his musical activities probably helped to smooth his path in public life, while his eminence as a man of affairs lent his compositions a curiosity value that they would otherwise have lacked. He may have been regarded as a phenomenon, but he was widely loved and respected. He was also extremely well known.

Today he is little more than a name in the histories of music, and his compositions are largely unknown. The neglect is entirely unjustified: Steffani was one of the finest composers of his age. Alfred Einstein described him as 'obviously the greatest Italian composer between Carissimi and Scarlatti';[1] for Scarlatti one might substitute Handel. A wonderful melodist and skilled contrapuntist, he also possessed a finely tuned ear for harmony (horizontal as well as vertical), texture, and the sonorities of voices and instruments. Sensuous beauty, elegance, and grace are the hallmarks of his music, which also displays a scrupulous attention to the rhythm, sound, and meaning of words, and to the subtleties of dramatic situation. He made a decisive contribution to the development of opera in Germany and was universally admired for his cham-

ber duets, 'the smoothly finished counterpoint of which even Handel could only imitate but not surpass'.[2] In an age when Italian musicians found employment all over Europe, Steffani was one of the most enduring links between his native land and the north—not just Germany, but England as well (he was president of the Academy of Vocal, later named Ancient, Music)—and one of the earliest and most effective channels through which the French style was disseminated in Germany and combined with the Italian to form the musical language of Handel and Bach. In historical terms he was a bridge between the mid- and the late Baroque and between the French and Italian styles, both of which he cultivated on German soil. Handel and Bach are only the greatest of the composers who came under his influence in the early eighteenth century.

Information on Steffani began to appear soon after his death: Mattheson listed some of his operas in his chronology of Hamburg productions in *Der musicalische Patriot* (1728) and praised him in *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (1739); Walther drew on Mattheson for his entry on Steffani in his *Musicalisches Lexikon* (1732). But a major milestone was reached with the publication in about 1750 of the *Memoirs of the Life of Sig. Agostino Steffani, some time Master of the Electoral Chapel at Hanover, and afterwards Bishop of Spiga*. Since these predate Mainwaring's *Memoirs of the Life of the Late George Frederic Handel* (1760), they may be regarded as the earliest biography of a composer; unlike Mainwaring's *Memoirs*, however, they were anonymous, undated, and printed in large oblong format for binding into manuscripts of their subject's duets. They were reprinted in 1761 in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, with a letter identifying their author as John Hawkins. A note in a copy of the *Memoirs* in the British Library states that they were 'Probably printed by John Johnson, [Cheap]side, London'.[3] According to Walpole, they were published in 1758, but they must have been printed by mid-August 1750, when Hawkins sent a copy to James Harris, a supporter of Handel and father of the first earl of Malmesbury.[4] Hawkins's principal source, as he himself wrote, was 'Mr Handel, to whose laudable concern for the memory of this great genius [Steffani], as also to that of the truly learned Dr Pepusch, the author of these memoirs is indebted for the greater part of his information'. Hawkins gathered his information in 'the early part' of his life[5]—that is, probably the 1740s, when he became a member of the Academy of Ancient Music and acquainted with Pepusch (his interest in Steffani may have been quickened by the latter's association with the academy). Factual details in the *Memoirs* are occasionally garbled or suspect (the memories of Handel and Pepusch could be unreliable), but the portrait of Steffani that emerges is broadly accurate and sympathetic.

The first substantial account of his life in Italian was published in Venice in 1779. Its author, the music theorist, mathematician, and architect Count Giordano Riccati, may have been prompted to write his account by the commendation of Steffani that had appeared in Padre Martini's *Esemplare, ossia Saggio fondamentale* (1774–75), although he did not rely on it. As a native of Castelfranco, he may also have been motivated by local pride, for he made use of local historical information and of the collection of Steffani's papers in the archives of the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide in Rome (now known as the Fondo Spiga). Given the nature of these sources, it is understandable that Riccati's account is rather patchy, but it remains, nevertheless, an original and valuable contribution.

A new era in the history of Steffani studies was opened by Friedrich Chrysander, whose discussion of the composer in his biography of Handel (1858–67) is still one of the most comprehensive accounts of his life and works. Drawing on archives and libraries in north Germany, Chrysander examined Steffani's sacred music and chamber duets in some detail and sought to establish his output of operas at Hanover. Discussion of the latter was hampered, however, by the fact that Chrysander knew only two of the scores: *Le rivali concordi* and *La lotta d'Hercole con Acheloo*. Access to the Steffani sources in the Royal Music Library was enjoyed by W. G. Cusins, author of the remarkable article on him in the first edition of Grove's *Dictionary*. A performer, composer, and Master of the Queen's Music, Cusins responded enthusiastically and perceptively to Steffani's works: it was he, not Chrysander, who recognized *La lotta* as a piece from which Handel had borrowed in *Theodora*.

Further light was shed on Steffani's life in the decades around 1900. Between 1885 and 1899 Franz Wilhelm Woker painted a detailed picture of his ecclesiastical career, providing a context for Adolph Tibus's account (1862) of his period as suffragan of Münster. The background to his achievements as a composer was sketched in histories of music or opera at Munich, Hanover, and Düsseldorf, and Arthur Neisser's dissertation on his opera *Servio Tullio* was published in 1902. The same decades witnessed the edition of archival materials relating to Steffani, including correspondence with patrons, and culminated in Einstein's detailed study (1910) of his Munich years. Acquaintance with his music was encouraged by the publication in 1905, 1911, and 1912 of three volumes in the Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Bayern: one contained chamber duets, cantatas, and motets; another, the opera *Alarico il Baltha*; and the third, extracts from his other operas. The third volume also included an essay by Hugo Riemann on 'Steffani as Opera-composer'. An assessment of his cantatas, by Eugen Schmitz, followed in 1914.[6]

Since World War II the volume of research on Steffani has grown significantly. In 1951 and 1952 Josef Loschelder published extracts from letters in the Fondo Spiga, and five years later William Baxter Jr. completed a dissertation on his life and works. New biographical information was found by Nicoletta Billio D'Arpa (1991–92); the Fondo Spiga was inventoried by Michael Feldkamp (1992), and Steffani's correspondence with Giuseppe Riva was edited (Timms, 1998; Lindgren and Timms, forthcoming). His operas, too, attracted increasing attention. Gerhard Croll edited *Tassilone* (1958), completed a bibliographical study of his life and dramatic works (1960), produced an essay on his Düsseldorf operas (1962), and contributed the 'Steffani' article to *MGG* (1965). Three years earlier, Andrea Della Corte had discussed *Alarico* and *Tassilone*; three years later, Philip Keppler investigated Steffani's Hanover operas, later the subject of a dissertation by Candace Marles (1991). The political background to these operas had been provided by Georg Schnath in his monumental *Geschichte Hannovers* (1938–82), while the artistic context was painted by Heinrich Sievers (1961, 1979), Schrewe and Schmidt (1971), Wallbrecht (1974), and Schneider (1986). Two of Steffani's Hanover operas have been published in facsimile editions—the two that were known by Chrysander.

The time is now ripe for an assessment of Steffani's music in relation to its contexts. The study presented in this volume is partly a work of synthesis, partly the fruit

of original research. The biographical chapters are indebted to the findings of earlier scholars, but they also incorporate new material from archives, especially those in Munich, Hanover, and Rome, and the discussion of Steffani's music is based on personal examination of the scores and librettos. As the first published book on Steffani's life and music, this volume must serve an introductory purpose. It is hoped that it will increase awareness and appreciation of the composer and his works and stimulate interest in both among scholars, performers, music lovers, and those interested in Italian culture in northern Europe in the years around 1700.

It will not be the last word on its subject. As I finished writing, I acquired a copy—too late in one sense—of Claudia Kaufold's 340-page book (1997) on Steffani's diplomatic activity at Hanover. A similar volume could be written on every other phase of his extraordinary career. Letters from Steffani, and documents about him, must be lying, awaiting discovery, in many of the courtly archives of Europe. If his Hanover operas seem likely to yield a crop of new Handel 'borrowings',[7] the production of *La libertà contenta* at the Barber Institute, University of Birmingham, in November 2000 showed that his stage works have the power to move and entertain a modern audience.[8] Further research remains to be done, and it promises to yield important and exciting results.

Part I
The Life

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I

Castelfranco and Padua 1654–1667

Castelfranco is a pleasant, fortified town, situated in the fertile plain to the northwest of Venice and marking the intersection of several important routes—from Venice to Bassano, Trent, and Bolzano; from Padua north to Asolo and Belluno; and from Treviso west to Vicenza. Less than 10 kilometres to the north the land begins to rise toward the foothills of the Dolomites; from there the River Lástego flows down via Castelfranco to join the Brenta near Padua.

The town is dominated by its handsome castle surrounded by a moat, with its straight walls and imposing tower over the east gate (Fig. 1.1). The fortress was built in 1199–1209 by the *comune* of Treviso as a defence against the Paduans, who responded by building a similar castle at nearby Cittadella. Almost perfectly square in design, the fortress of Castelfranco had four gates and bridges and eight towers. When it was finished, Treviso sent a colony of one hundred noble families to occupy it, granting them houses and farms free of taxes and charges: hence the name 'Castelfranco'. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the most turbulent period in its history, the city was dominated by a variety of powers, but in 1388, along with Treviso, it finally came under the jurisdiction of Venice. It remained so until the fall of the Venetian Republic in 1797. Apart from the years 1509–17, following the League of Cambrai, and despite the later wars of succession in Spain and Poland, in which Venice was neutral but her territories were traversed by belligerents, these four centuries of Venetian rule were a period of relative peace and stability.

The tallest tower of the castle still proudly displays the symbol of Venice, the lion of St Mark, which was brought to Castelfranco by the Venetian patrician Pietro Gradenigo in the sixteenth century. Inside the castle walls, in the centre, stands the cathedral of San Liberale. One of its chapels houses a celebrated painting of the *Virgin Enthroned with Saints George and Francis* by Giorgione, who was born in the town in about 1477. It is here, in the (then) church of Santa Maria e San Liberale, on 26 July 1654, that Steffani was baptised.[1] He was one day old. His parents were Camillo and Paolina de Stievani; there were two godfathers—Gherardo Gherardini and Domenigo Rubini—but apparently no godmother. Steffani never forgot that he was a subject of the Most Serene Republic of Venice.

Information on his background is found in a manuscript 'Catalogo historico cronologico . . . di Castelfranco', compiled between 1724 and 1735 by Nadal [Natale] Melchiori,[2] an artist who was born there in 1671. 'Stievani' was the local dialectal form of the family name, of which the normal spelling would have been 'Stefani', with the

FIGURE 1.1 Castelfranco in the eighteenth century (*La cinta muraria di Castelfranco*): oil painting, studio of Pietro Longhi (Comune di Castelfranco Veneto; by permission)

stress on the first syllable. Agostino inserted an extra 'f' when he settled in Germany, to ensure that this stress would be retained. His ancestors moved to Castelfranco in about 1570 from Padua, but more distant forbears can be traced to Venice. In 1545 a certain Giulia Fermana (or Perina) Da Ponte left them some houses in the *contrada* (district) of San Marcuola, in the vicinity of the Ghetto; the deeds later fell into the hands of the Labia family, and Steffani tried to retrieve them when he was in Padua in 1724.[3] Shortly after his death in 1728, his cousin, Antonio Scapinelli, archpriest of Castelfranco, drew up a family tree in support of his claim to a share of Steffani's estate (Fig. 1.2).[4] From this it emerges that Agostino's father married twice. His first wife, Helena, bore a daughter, Helena Perina (born 29 June 1645) but died in childbirth or shortly thereafter. His second wife, Paolina Terzago, who may have been a cousin, bore seven children, of whom the only ones to reach maturity were her first son, Ventura Giacomo (born 2 January 1648); her fifth, Agostino; and her only daughter, Ippolita (born 19 July 1656). Agostino appears to have been named after his closest brother, Agostino Francesco (born 3 December 1652). Their father probably died in 1682,[5] but their mother lived for a further ten years, attaining the age of seventy-two.[6]

There is little information on the family's status or circumstances. Even the occupation of Steffani's father remains unknown. Hawkins, presumably relaying information from Handel, wrote that the composer's parents 'were not distinguished for their rank in life',[7] but the document nominating him as bishop in 1706 states that he came from a respectable Catholic family ('ex Catholicis honestisque parentibus'),[8] and Steffani's autobiographical letter of that year spells out what kind of luxury the word

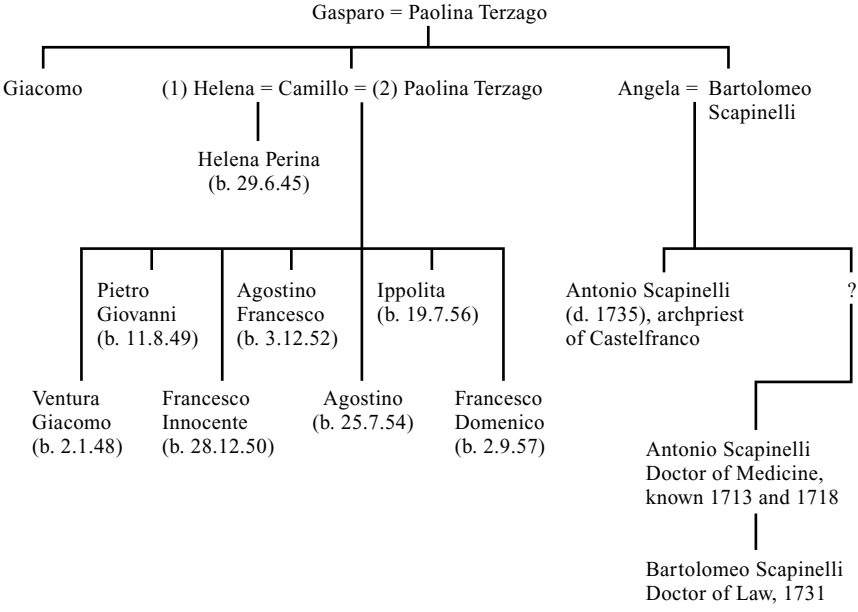

FIGURE 1.2 Steffani's immediate family in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

'honestus' could imply.[9] Melchiori included the family in a register of those 'who were, and are, of good standing in the generality of the citizens ('cittadini') and accustomed to enter the councils of the community'.[10] If the *cittadini* of Castelfranco belonged to the layer of society immediately below the patriciate, as did those of Venice, the Steffani were probably a professional family and reasonably well off. This was evidently the case with the Terzago, and apparently with the Scapinelli, with whom, also, the Steffani were related by marriage: Antonio's cousin, another Antonio, was a doctor of medicine and was elected 'cavalier di comun' at the first attempt in 1713; his son Bartolomeo graduated as a doctor of law at the University of Padua in 1731.

It was with Ventura and Agostino, however, that the Steffani achieved distinction. Melchiori's account of the family is concerned almost exclusively with these brothers. Like Agostino, Ventura studied music as a boy; in 1667, at about nineteen years of age, he published a book of poetry. At some stage he was adopted by his wealthy maternal uncle Marc'Antonio Terzago, 'collaterale' (treasurer or chief cashier) of Padua, whose surname he used throughout his distinguished career and whose fortune he inherited. How much money Ventura possessed is not known, but when Venice attempted to raise funds to finance the War of Candia (1667–69), his friends tried in vain to persuade him to purchase noble status at a cost of 100,000 Venetian ducats. Like his younger brother, he also served two electors of Bavaria as librettist, secretary, and counsellor; Steffani set four of his librettos. In 1687 Ventura himself was appointed 'collaterale' of Padua, whither he returned in 1688 to discharge his responsibilities 'con prudenza e splendore'.[11] He died of a fever at Brugine on 21 October 1693 at the age of forty-five.[12] Agostino assumed, since Ventura did not marry,

that he would be his brother's principal heir, but he seems to have inherited little of his fortune.[13]

Though Castelfranco saw his birth, Padua is the place that Steffani came to regard as his home town ('patria'). An ancient city and the see of a bishop, Padua had long been an important religious, cultural, and commercial centre. In addition to the Giotto frescoes in the Scrovegni chapel (the Madonna dell'Arena, built in 1303), the city could boast one of the oldest universities in Europe and the famous Basilica del Santo. At the university, founded in 1222, Prosdocimus de Beldemandis had taught music in the fifteenth century and Galileo had been professor of mathematics for eighteen years (1592–1610). Dante, Petrarch, Bembo, and Tasso had been counted among its students, who in the seventeenth century numbered roughly 6,000. The basilica is the shrine of St Anthony, a Franciscan friar and priest, celebrated for the eloquence of his preaching, who died at Padua in 1231 at the age of thirty-six. Building began in 1232 and continued into the fifteenth century; bronzes for the high altar and a choir screen of marble were furnished by Donatello. The choir itself, the 'cappella', was officially established in 1487; two great organs were completed in 1498, and a third was added in 1544. Secular music was encouraged in the sixteenth century by a variety of learned academies and in the seventeenth by Pio Enea degli Obizzi, a local nobleman and generous patron of the arts.[14] Opera came to Padua, in the shape of Domenico Gabrielli's *Mauritio*, at the relatively late date of 1691.

Steffani was sent to school in Padua and there made a number of life-long friends. Riccati's statement that his first studies were undertaken 'in patria' with teachers maintained by the *comune*[15] may refer to his early years in Castelfranco, but the composer himself informs us that he studied in Padua 'with many other boys'.[16] Among these was the young Count Girolamo Frigimelica Roberti, who as a poet was to write librettos for Carlo Francesco Pollarolo, Alessandro Scarlatti, and Caldara and to become *principe* of the Accademia dei Ricovrati in Padua, and as an architect designed villas in Padua, Vicenza, Modena, and Stra. Steffani recalled their childhood in a letter of 1715: 'I should be all the more sensible of such a dear memory, for neither the passing of fifty years, nor the distance of a thousand miles, nor the horrible parapet of the frozen Alps has been able to make me forget the consideration with which Your Most Illustrious Lordship honoured me at the beginning of my adolescence'.[17] Another schoolfriend, Angelo Maria De' Lazzara, became a canon of the Basilica del Santo; on 4 March 1716 Frigimelica Roberti wrote to Steffani from 'la stanza del nostro S*ignor* Ab*bat*e Lazara' in Venice.[18] Melchiori says that Steffani maintained a palace ('teneva di continuo palaggio') in Padua, but this seems unlikely: in 1723 he stayed in Ca' Contarini and in the palace of Frigimelica Roberti, who was then in Modena,[19] before finding accommodation of his own.

It was also in Padua that Steffani embarked in earnest on his musical education and career. From October 1664 to July 1667, when he was between the ages of ten and thirteen, he was a treble in the choir of the Basilica del Santo.[20] The *cappella* during this period comprised about sixteen singers, three violinists, two players of the viola and one or two of the violone, one bassoonist, and three organists; in 1665 and 1667 there was also a theorbist. The *maestro di cappella* was Antonio Dalla Tavola, who had published a collection of Masses for three to eight voices and continuo (Venice, 1634)

and composed the music for *L'amor pudico*, an equestrian ballet devised by Pio Enea degli Obizzi and performed in Padua in 1643.[21] Dalla Tavola was highly regarded at the Santo as a musician and organizer of musical events. When he died in 1674, he owned over two hundred manuscript compositions and about one hundred printed collections of music, including works by such north Italian composers as Costanzo Porta, Giovanni Croce, Monteverdi, Alessandro Grandi, and Giovanni Rovetta, and the Roman Orazio Tarditi. He presumably introduced Steffani to some of this repertory, as well as to the rudiments of music: the hexachords and solmization, the church modes, and the intricacies of mensural notation. Such experience as a choirboy was decisive for Steffani's development as a composer: it explains why his works are nearly all vocal and how he became such a master of melody.

His talent was clearly prodigious. He must have shown before going to Padua that he had a promising voice and an aptitude for music, as well as a high level of general intelligence. At his audition for the *cappella* of the Santo he sang with 'vivacity' and to the 'great satisfaction' of all present. Even at the age of ten, he was paid at a relatively high rate. During some months of his employment, he and a falsettist, Anselmo Marconi, were the only sopranos available, although there should have been four, which was the average number of singers in each of the other voice ranges. He must, therefore, have had a strong voice, possibly a beautiful one, with accurate intonation and a reliable technique. That he was better than the average choirboy of his age is suggested by the fact that he was frequently asked to sing on special occasions elsewhere—for example, in Ferrara on the feast of the Finding of the Holy Cross (May 1665, at the request of 'Marchese Obizi' [probably Pio Enea], and May 1667), in Vicenza (May 1665), in Monselice on the feast of St James (July 1665 and 1666), and at two churches in Padua, the Eremitani (August 1665 and May 1667) and the Gesuiti (Good Friday, 1667). There may have been other such occasions, for he was often recorded as absent.

At the ages of eleven and twelve he also sang in opera in Venice. The opportunity for this arose from the presence at the basilica of Carlo Pallavicino, who was roughly twenty years older than Steffani and about to make his name as an opera composer. Pallavicino has long been known as an organist in Padua from December 1665 to August 1666, prior to his appointment as vice-Kapellmeister at Dresden, but it is now known that he was active at the Santo from as early as 1646, first as a treble, then from 1651, after his voice had broken, as a tenor. During carnival 1655 he sang in an opera in Venice, and in late February he was appointed third organist in Padua, a new post entitled 'organista ai concerti'. In January 1666 he wrote to the 'Presidenti dell'Arca', the governors of the basilica, requesting permission to take Steffani, Antonio Viviani (bass), and Nicolò Piva (violin) to Venice, to appear in an opera of his own composition; he promised that they would be back in Padua for the celebration of the 'Santissima Lingua', the feast of the Translation of the Tongue of St Anthony, on 15 February. Permission was granted, and the threesome presumably took part in the première of Pallavicino's first opera, *Demetrio*, at the Teatro San Moisè; Steffani probably sang one of the two 'young' roles—Aurilla, the daughter of Demetrio, or Zerbillo, a page[22]—and thus became familiar at an early age with the musical style and the world of Venetian opera.

His performance must have made a good impression, for in the following December one of the 'presidenti', Ubertino Descalzo, acting on behalf of the *podestà* (the Venetian governor) of Padua, Carlo Ruzini, asked his colleagues to allow Steffani to sing in Venice again, in an opera during the forthcoming carnival. Permission was granted, as before, but this time the prodigy did not arrive back in time for the 'Santissima Lingua' and was consequently suspended from duty. Apologizing to the 'presidenti', he insisted that he had wanted to honour his commitment but had been prevented from returning by a very important person ('sogetto riguardevole'): maybe a nobleman had so enjoyed his performance in the theatre as to command him to sing again, possibly on more than one occasion and possibly in private. Steffani asked to be reinstated in his post, and his request was granted on account of his long and good service ('longa servitù et buon servitio'). The episode suggests that, even at the tender age of twelve, he had a good idea of his own worth, could see that the authorities at the basilica needed him, and knew how to elicit the desired response from his superiors—a skill that would prove useful in later life.

The last document relating to him at the Santo is a simple statement of his leaving to enter the service of the elector of Bavaria: '1667. Luglio [Agostino da Castelfranco] Andò a servir l'Altezza Serenissima del Duca di Baviera'. Hawkins conjectured that Steffani had, 'in his infancy, been a singer in the choir of some neighbouring cathedral church, or chapel' and asserted that the youngster 'had not served above two years in the choir, when a nobleman of Germany, who had been at Venice to be present at the diversions of the carnival, happened, upon some public occasion, to hear him sing, and was so pleased with his voice and behaviour, and those signs of genius, which by this time he began to discover, that upon application to the chapel-master, he procured his discharge from the choir, and took him to Bavaria, the place of his residence'.[23] This account, which presumably was passed on by Handel, is confirmed by Steffani in his autobiographical letter of July 1706 to Count Antonio Maria Fede, the Tuscan and Palatine diplomatic resident in Rome during the Saxon's years in the city: 'I was taken to the first [court] as a boy by the late Elector Ferdinand Maria who, when I was presented to him in Padua, where I studied with many other boys, was attracted by a certain something about me—to what end I do not know—and, having taken me to Munich with him, placed me in the care of Count Tattenbach, his then master of the horse'. [24]

Elsewhere in this letter Steffani claimed to have served the Bavarian court for twenty-two years, which, since he left there in 1688, would mean that he arrived in 1666. Ferdinand Maria had planned to go to Italy that year, but his visit was postponed to 1667. The electoral party left Munich on 18 April, travelled via Trent and Verona, reached Padua on 11 May, and arrived in Venice on 17 May.[25] On 3 June they left again for Padua, where they stayed, in the Castello Cattaio, until 9 July; during these five weeks they went to Mass and Vespers at a number of local churches, including the Basilica del Santo. It is probably here that they heard Steffani sing, not on the stage in Venice and not during carnival.[26] His statement that he was presented to the elector in Padua is unequivocal and credible, but the idea that he did not know why the elector was interested in him is a self-effacing fiction reflecting the fact that,

when he wrote this letter, he was on the verge of nomination as a bishop and anxious to conceal his musical past.

That the electoral party travelled back to Munich via Castelfranco lends further weight to the accounts of both Steffani and Hawkins. Before taking the boy to Munich, the elector presumably wanted to consult his parents. The latter must have been apprehensive: Agostino was very young, and they could not know what would become of him in a foreign land. But they may also have felt honoured and excited: at Munich he would receive a good Catholic education, make contacts at court, and have far greater opportunities for advancement than he would, as their younger son, at home. The offer could hardly be refused, and five years later Steffani's father evidently felt that the family had been right to accept it.[27] The party continued its journey with little delay, travelling via Bassano, Trent, Bressanone (Brixen), Innsbruck, and Tegernsee. They reached Munich on Monday, 25 July 1667, Steffani's thirteenth birthday.

2

Munich 1667–1688

Munich must have made an immediate impression on the thirteen-year-old Steffani.[1] Founded in the twelfth century by Henry the Lion, duke of Saxony and Bavaria, who fortified an ancient monastic settlement ('Mönche' [Ger.]: monks) that had grown up on the banks of the River Isar, the city had been the seat of the ruling Wittelsbach dukes for more than four hundred years and capital of Bavaria for over a century. The elevation of the duchy to an electorate—the eighth in the so-called Holy Roman Empire—in 1623 had made the Wittelsbachs one of the most powerful dynasties in Europe (an elector was one of the small number of German princes entitled to take part in the election of the emperor). The prestige of the Wittelsbachs was displayed in the splendid buildings of the electoral residence ('Residenz': Fig. 2.1), which were enlarged and improved in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and housed a magnificent library and art collection. Music at the court had flourished in the later sixteenth century under Orlande de Lassus, with whom both Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli had come to work, but the establishment had been reduced on the accession of Maximilian I in 1597. During the Thirty Years' War (1618–48) Munich had been occupied by Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, and the population of the city had fallen from 22,000 to 17,000; it had recovered by 1680. After the war, however, the chapel had been restored and the foundations laid for Munich's illustrious tradition of opera. North of the Alps only Vienna and Paris, and possibly Dresden, could rival Munich in the later seventeenth century as a place where the talents of a musical and intelligent Italian youth could be developed.

The cultural orientation of the court during this period reflected political and geographical factors. The Wittelsbach electors were hungry for power and anxious to be regarded as rivals of the Austrian Hapsburgs; they bolstered their position by repeatedly entering into alliance with the French. On the other hand, when Vienna was threatened by the Turks, Bavaria came to her aid. The Wittelsbachs were sandwiched between Hapsburgs and Bourbons, the Empire and France, but lacked the power to stand up to either. Their position was reflected in, and reinforced by, the electors' marriages: Maximilian I and his grandson Maximilian II Emanuel espoused Austrians in 1635 and 1685, respectively, while in 1652 Ferdinand Maria, Steffani's patron, married Henrietta Adelaide of Savoy, a cousin of Louis XIV (Figs. 2.2 and 2.3).

During the second half of the century the Wittelsbachs adapted and erected buildings in the Munich Residenz and in the city and its environs.[2] In preparation for Ferdinand Maria's wedding celebrations, Maximilian I converted a granary into an

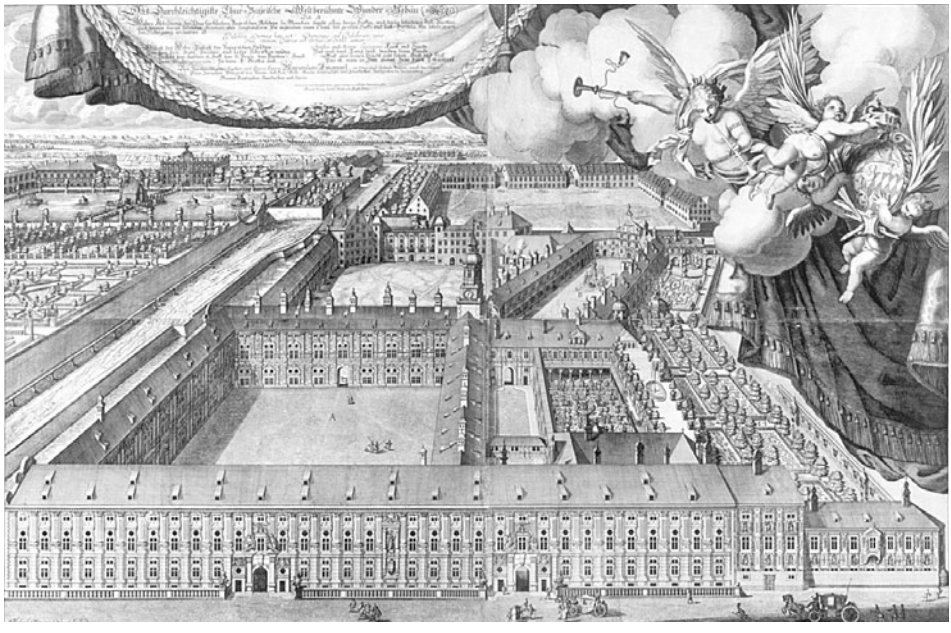

FIGURE 2.1 The electoral residence ('Residenz') in Munich: engraving, ca. 1697, by Michael Wening (Münchner Stadtmuseum; by permission)

opera house, a development completed in 1654. Ferdinand Maria expressed gratitude (and relief) at the birth of Maximilian Emanuel in 1662 by commissioning the construction, just outside the Residenz, of an enormous new church dedicated to Cajetan, a founder of the Theatine order and patron of Bavaria since 1572; the church was inspired by that of Sant'Andrea della Valle in Rome and built between 1663 and 1690 (the façade was added in the 1760s). Construction had scarcely begun before the elector started work on a magnificent new summer residence, the Nymphenburg palace, in the country to the west of the city. St Cajetan (the 'Theatinerkirche') and the Nymphenburg palace were both being built when Steffani arrived. Seven years later the Residenz was damaged by fire; the process of restoration extended over thirty years—the last five of Ferdinand Maria's life (1674–79) and the first quarter-century of his son's reign. Maximilian II Emanuel also instigated the building, on the north side of Munich, of the miniature Lustheim palace, modelled on the Palazzo Madama in Rome, and the extensive palace of Schleißheim, which was inspired by Versailles. French cultural influence grew stronger than Italian in the eighteenth century, predominating in the work of the two François Cuvilliés, father and son.

Munich was one of the first places north of the Alps where Italian opera was embraced.[3] Drama with music had been known there for a very long time: medieval school dramas had been followed by the Latin plays of the Jesuits, who had been invited to settle by Albrecht V in 1559; Italian *commedia dell'arte*, with music by Lassus, had been presented in 1568 on the wedding of Duke Wilhelm and Renée of Lorraine; and

FIGURE 2.2 Elector Ferdinand Maria of Bavaria: oil painting, ca. 1670, studio of Stefano Bombelli (Residenzmuseum München, Foto BSV; by permission of the Bayerische Verwaltung der staatlichen Schlösser, Gärten und Seen)

a five-hour comedy with four changes of scene had been sung in the Residenz in February 1651. But it was Ferdinand Maria and Henrietta Adelaide who introduced opera. Only sixteen when she married, Henrietta was an amateur singer, guitarist, and poet, and, having been brought up in Turin, essentially Italian in outlook. In 1651, the year of his accession, Ferdinand Maria appointed as court chaplain and harpist an Italian, Giovanni Battista Maccioni, who both taught the young electress to play the harp and collaborated with her on a number of librettos. Two years later, for a visit of Emperor Ferdinand III, Maccioni wrote the words and music of a dramatic cantata, *L'arpa festante*, that laid the foundations for the history of opera in Munich.

FIGURE 2.3 Electress Henrietta Adelaide: oil painting, ca. 1670, studio of Stefano Bombelli (Residenzmuseum München, Foto Schmidt/Nietmann [BSV]; by permission of the Bayerische Verwaltung der staatlichen Schlösser, Gärten und Seen)

The cultivation of opera, ballet, and music in general was strongly encouraged by the elector and electress, and especially by Henrietta Adelaide, who attracted numerous Italian musicians, *literati*, architects, painters, and craftsmen to the court. Dramatic works were performed, from 1654, in the converted granary, the earliest large, free-standing theatre building in Germany. Known at first as the 'Comœdihaus' and later as the 'Salvatortheater', it was inaugurated as an opera house by *La ninfa ritrosa*, composed possibly by the court singer Pietro Zambonini. *Oronte*, the first opera by the Kapellmeister, Johann Caspar Kerll, was produced in 1657. In the next ten years, and in most decades after Steffani's arrival, there was at least one new opera a year.

Only three of the librettos name Kerll as composer, but he probably wrote about eight. The birth of Maximilian Emanuel in 1662 was celebrated by a threefold musico-dramatic extravaganza: a 'drama regio musicale' *Fedra incoronata* (opera), a 'drama guerrieroso' *Antiopa giustificata* (tourney), and a 'drama di foco' *Medea vendicativa* (fireworks display).[4] Having returned to Italy in 1661, Maccioni assisted, as Bavarian agent in Rome, in the recruitment of Kerll's successor, Ercole Bernabei, who, together with his son Giuseppe Antonio, composed all the Munich operas and tourneys between 1674 and 1680. Munich's achievements in opera during the third quarter of the century would bear comparison with those of any city other than Venice.

Information on the court's musical establishment may be gleaned from the 'Besoldungsbücher'—annual ledgers recording payments to court employees of all kinds.[5] The entries in each book are grouped according to administrative department. Musicians appear under two headings—'Musicanten' and 'Instrumentisten und Trometer' (or 'Trombpetter', etc.—the spelling varies). One might assume that the 'Musicanten' were singers, but the categories are not entirely separate: the instrumentalist and singer Johann Christoph Pez appears as a 'Musicant',[6] while the 'Cam*m*er Musicus und Harpfenist' (harpist) Diego Calvani is listed among the 'Instrumentisten'. When Kerll became Kapellmeister in 1656, the musical establishment comprised nineteen singers, three organists, seventeen instrumentalists, and fifteen to twenty trumpeters.[7] The figures were very similar in 1674, when Kerll was succeeded by Ercole Bernabei, although by then there were slightly more singers and marginally fewer instrumentalists. Eleven of the 'Musicanten', including Bernabei and Steffani, were Italians; two of the 'Instrumentisten' were harpists, one a lutenist, and another a cornettist; none of the musicians was a woman. During the 1680s, increases in some areas were largely offset by reductions in others, but there was also a significant change: between 1681 and 1688, the period of Steffani's Munich operas, the number of bowed string instrumentalists rose from three to eight.[8]

The ledgers also indicate the relative value attached to the various posts and their incumbents. The extremes are represented by the Kapellmeister (1,180 florins per annum) and the choirboys (78 florins each). An exceptionally high salary of 993 florins was paid to a small number of selected 'Musicanten' described as 'first-class' ('di prima Classe'),[9] but most instrumentalists, including trumpeters and string players, received between 104 and 450 florins; a court organist could count on 300. Salaries were paid quarterly; a *pro rata* payment was calculated precisely when an employee arrived or left during a quarter, and his wife or heir normally received his salary for the quarter in which he died.

Many musicians regularly received an 'addition'—an extra payment or a fee for some special duty. Franz Zeiller was given 50 florins extra in 1674 and 1676–77 for teaching the 'discantist' Alexander Hackh or Hagge the viola da gamba;[10] the organist Georg Zellner received 100 florins for tuning keyboard instruments;[11] Johann Carl Seyringer earned 50 florins for maintaining the instrument room, 24 for copying scores and parts, and 70 for stringing theorboes and violins.[12] Zambonini and d'Ardespin were among a number of musicians employed also as valets ('Cammerdiener') at a salary of 200 florins per annum. Some musicians were given supplementary rations of bread, beer, or wine (in addition to staple fare), or were allotted extra

money for them. Italians were occasionally helped with the expense of travelling to or from their native land, and the 'violist' (or violinist) Dominicus Mayr was enabled to visit Paris.[13] The impression conveyed by the ledgers is that Munich valued its musicians and treated them fairly and generously. Steffani was fortunate to be at a court where he would be well looked after and given opportunities to contribute to a distinguished musical and operatic tradition.

Court and Chamber Musician

On his arrival in July 1667 the thirteen-year-old Steffani was placed in the care of Count Gottfried Wilhelm of Rheinstein and Tattenbach, a chamber counsellor ('Kammerrath') and Master of the Horse. Although the court was Catholic and the electress Italian, and despite the presence of Italian musicians and artists, Steffani must have found the language and customs of Munich entirely foreign, even if also somewhat exciting or fascinating. In addition to some German, the count presumably taught him about the life and history of the court. Having been recruited as a singer, Steffani doubtless put his talent to good use. He is not listed as a salaried musician during his first year, nor is there any evidence that he was a member of the orchestra.[14] Nevertheless, in early 1668 he was given 36 florins for the New Year and 'the other thing'. Einstein suggested that this 'other thing' was an appearance on 6 November 1667 in Kerll's tourney *Le pretensioni del sole*, in which the role of Aurora was sung by the 'gratioso et gratiosissimo Soprano' Agostino.[15] It is not certain that Steffani was the singer in question, but he had been a treble in Padua and there was no other Agostino at Munich who could have taken the part. Be that as it may, his musical ability became so apparent that, after a year, Count Rheinstein and Tattenbach was reimbursed his expenses[16] and Steffani was transferred into the care of the Kapellmeister.

From July 1668 to October 1671—between the ages of fourteen and seventeen—Steffani was given organ lessons (and board and lodging) by Kerll, for which the latter received the considerable sum of 432 florins per annum on top of his salary.[17] From the same date Steffani was appointed a court and chamber musician ('Hof- und Cam*m*er Musico') and granted a daily allowance of one and a half measures of wine and two loaves.[18] He presumably was given a general education and required to perform musical duties, but there is no documentary evidence of either. He may have been expected to sing in the chapel choir, which was only a little larger than that in the Paduan basilica, but he was never listed as one of the 'Cantorey Knaben', who were all German. He was doubtless an ambitious and diligent pupil, and fortunate in having such an eminent teacher. Kerll, who had been a pupil of Giovanni Valentini in Vienna and of Carissimi, and possibly Frescobaldi, in Rome, was one of the finest organists, harpsichordists, and composers of his day. That Steffani made excellent progress and became an accomplished performer is suggested by his subsequent activity as an organist and by later reports of his harpsichord playing. In addition to keyboard performance, Kerll probably taught him figured bass and counterpoint and gave him his first instruction in composition.

A further indication of Steffani's progress is the fact that, after just over two years with Kerll, his salary was raised to 300 florins per annum.[19] That by the age of sixteen he was earning the same as the court organist is a sure sign of the esteem in which he was held. His salary remained at this level for four years. During the same period, however, he was also given an annual allowance for clothing and linen. In autumn 1670 he submitted a request for a long list of items, including a coat of Dutch wool, breeches, a waistcoat, silk stockings, two hats, a sword, eight shirts, four vests, six bed-covers, and six night-caps.[20] Before an answer could be given, the chamberlain's and tailor's offices were asked for estimates of the costs, and a statement was drawn up of the expense of maintaining Steffani during the previous year (Table 2.1).[21] A similar statement was drawn up for 1670, when the total, excluding gratuities from the elector, amounted to 997 florins, of which clothing and linen accounted for over 396. Steffani must have needed new clothes, for he was in his mid-teens and probably growing fast. Nevertheless, the treasury was concerned about the cost of maintaining him and the scale of his demands. After due deliberation, it was decreed that as from 1 October 1670 he should be given an annual allowance of 300 florins, paid in quarterly instalments, with which to purchase all his clothing and linen.[22]

Steffani's request reveals something of his character during his teenage years. He presumably felt that he needed, deserved, or maybe had a right to the clothing and other items that he listed, and he was willing to ask for them outright. That his petition was cast in the first person singular, however, rather than the third, betrays a degree of brashness or arrogance, suggesting that he had not yet acquired the modesty and diplomacy characteristic of his maturity. His request also implies that he was socially and financially ambitious. Such ambition could have been fired by the example of Kerll, on whom the emperor had conferred a title of nobility in 1664 and Ferdinand Maria had bestowed the status of counsellor, and may help explain why relations between Steffani and his teacher came to an end.

Musical considerations may also have played a part, for Kerll's progressive ideas on composition created such friction between him and other musicians in Munich that he resigned in 1673 and moved to Vienna. Although Steffani was by this time in Rome, his relationship with Kerll does not appear to have improved. The latter's name is conspicuously absent from the preface to his former pupil's first publication, and

TABLE 2.1 Cost of Steffani's maintenance in 1669

Specification How much the Court and Chamber Musician Agostino Steffani costs per year	
To the Kapellmeister, for subsistence and tuition	fl. 432
1½ measures of wine and 2 loaves daily	fl. 124, kr. 12
Clothing from the tailor's department	fl. 308
Linen from the chamberlain's office	fl. 39
Total for the year 1669	fl. 903, kr. 12

in September 1674, when Steffani was back in Munich, he persuaded the treasury to withhold payment of 150 florins that were due to Kerll; only when Steffani stated that he had received satisfaction from Kerll, in December 1678, was the money released.[23] The two men also appear to have been reconciled in August 1686, when Steffani witnessed the attestations of several Roman composers in respect of Kerll's Litanies for six voices.[24] It is not known whether Steffani had fallen out with Kerll by autumn 1671, but on 1 October, after three and a quarter years with him, he was transferred into the care of a treasury official and valet named Augustin Sayler. An experienced and trusted courtier, Sayler was presumably expected to take the Italian teenager in hand, in exchange for expenses of 39 florins per quarter.[25] Meanwhile, arrangements were made for Steffani's musical education to be continued elsewhere. After exactly a year with Sayler, at the beginning of October 1672, the young musician was sent to Rome, 'there, in accordance with your [the elector's] most gracious wish and command, to perfect himself further in his art'.[26]

If asked where he would most like to continue his education, Steffani might well have answered 'Rome'. The Eternal City in the later seventeenth century afforded unparalleled opportunities for a young musician to study and practise his art, hear a wide range of works by other composers, observe the most accomplished performers in Italy, and come into contact with wealthy princes of church and state, vying with each other in their patronage of the arts. An army of choirmasters, organists, and singers were employed in the city's churches, of which many were being rebuilt or refurbished in Baroque style. As the bulwark of the Counter-Reformation, Rome was inevitably the bastion of the *stile antico*, but it also resounded to sacred works for two or more choirs and others for a handful of solo voices. Although opera had initially been staged in private or semi-private theatres, a public opera house, the Tordinona, was inaugurated in 1670 and remained open for four years. The oratorio and secular cantata were flourishing more abundantly in Rome than anywhere else at the time, along with the kind of orchestration that was to lead to the concerto grosso. In the early 1670s Carissimi, Stradella, Pasquini, Corelli (from at least 1675), and Alessandro Scarlatti—some of the greatest Italian composers of the period—were all to be found in Rome.

Steffani was to be there for a year and three-quarters. His travel and subsistence expenses were paid by the Munich exchequer, and on Friday 15 September 1673 he was sent 50 crowns extra to help with the cost of an illness.[27] He may have travelled in the company of Matteo Salvietti, a 'first-class' chamber musician who had been in Munich since 1669[28] but was now leaving, or of the eminent Theatine preacher Padre Agostino Bozzomo. On 14 October 1672, apparently, Ferdinand Maria wrote to Bozzomo, saying that he was glad that he had arrived safely in Rome, grateful for the news that he had sent about Steffani, and hopeful that the young musician would return to Munich.[29] The latter appears to have travelled via Castelfranco, for on 27 October his father wrote to the elector, thanking him for all that he had done for his son.[30] This was probably Steffani's first visit home in five years, and his family appears to have been pleased with his development.

He arrived in Rome bearing a letter of introduction from Electress Henrietta Adelaide to Cardinal Paluzzo Altieri.[31] She could hardly have chosen a more presti-

gious patron for her protégé. A cardinal since 1664, Altieri experienced a meteoric rise to power after the election of the Altieri Pope Clement X in 1670.[32] Then, or soon after, Paluzzo was made archbishop of Ravenna; vicar of Rome; chancellor to the pope; secretary of briefs; prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda; protector of the Santa Casa at Loreto; protector of Ireland and of the Augustinian, Carmelite, and Dominican orders; legate of Avignon and Urbino; and governor of Tivoli. Within a very short time, he had become 'the most considerable person' ('il più riguardabile soggetto') in Rome, with an annual income of over 100,000 scudi. Assisted by generous subsidies from the pope (2,000 scudi per month for six years), he made the Palazzo Altieri one of the grandest residences in the city. It is not known whether he responded to Henrietta Adelaide's request for patronage of Steffani, but he certainly took an interest in other musicians, and his brother Gaspare was a patron of Stradella.[33] Steffani could have served him as a singer, harpsichordist, or composer and may have been introduced by him to fashionable Roman society.

Steffani's teacher was to be Ercole Bernabei, whom Munich presumably had approached in advance via Maccioni.[34] A pupil of Orazio Benevoli, and possibly of Stradella, Bernabei was one of the most distinguished church musicians in Rome. In the 1650s and 1660s he had been organist at San Luigi dei Francesi and *maestro di cappella* at San Giovanni in Laterano, and from 1665 he had assisted each year in the performance of oratorio at San Marcello. Although he had published a book of secular works (*Concerto madrigalesco*) in 1669, most of his music was liturgical and composed in the *stile antico* or the polychoral idiom. In June 1672, largely through the influence of Queen Christina of Sweden, Bernabei succeeded Benevoli as director of the Cappella Giulia at the Vatican. He was thus at the pinnacle of his career when Steffani went to him for lessons. He may have given his young pupil further instruction on the organ, but the focus was on composition.

As a musician in Rome it was perhaps inevitable that Steffani should have become a member of the Congregazione dei Musici di Roma, an organisation that had been founded in the late sixteenth century and was to develop, as the Congregazione (later Accademia) di Santa Cecilia, into one of the most important musical institutions in the city. In the seventeenth century it tried to establish a monopoly of the profession, which only papal singers were not required to join. The members provided music on a regular basis in the church in which the organisation was housed at the time, and they mounted an annual celebration of the feast of St Cecilia (22 November), the patron saint of music. Steffani was given the task of visiting the sick and had to minister to his teacher; he also composed a polyphonic antiphon setting, *Triduanas a Domino*, for St Cecilia's day in 1673.[35]

This piece, three psalm settings, and another sacred work (*Sperate in Deo*), all from the same period, are preserved in a manuscript in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (Mu MS 94), most of which appears to be in Steffani's hand. In Rome he seems also to have written the secular solo cantata *Occhi miei, lo miraste*, which survives in a contemporary Roman manuscript (*D-HVs*, Kestner vol. 76). But the principal fruit of his study with Bernabei was his *Psalmodia vespertina volans octo plenis vocibus concinenda* (Rome, 1674), a printed collection of thirteen vesper psalms, with Magnificat, scored for two choirs and organ. Since the dedication to the Bavarian elector and elec-

tress is dated 1 January, the settings must have been composed in 1673, probably before the Fitzwilliam pieces. An undated payment from Munich of fl. 20 kr. 50, 'in order that in Rome he may have various musical things copied out',[36] may refer to the preparation of fair copy for the printer. Steffani paid tribute in the preface to the example set by his teacher, 'whose style I pride myself on imitating not in part but totally'.[37] At the same time, however, he referred to the rapid progress he had made in composition. That he wrote so much in little over a year suggests that he had started to compose during his time with Kerll and makes the omission of the latter's name from the preface very pointed; it could also explain why Steffani was ill in September 1673. While it seems that he had indeed made rapid progress, to state this twice, in both preface and dedication, was immodest and immature. But then, as he proudly proclaimed on the title page, he was only nineteen.

A vivid impression of his character at this age is conveyed by the following epigram, with double acrostic, which appeared at the beginning of the *Psalmodia*:

Augeat *Augustine* augusta sorte,	Suprema
Ut merito debet praemia, fama,	Tibi
Germine ab *Herculeo* iam germen germinat.	Edit
Virtus virtutem; lumen, & inde,	Faces
Sors tua nunc virtus est; dum fati aemula	Floret
Tanti operis luci, gloria maior	Adest
Inclita si peperit iuventus germina;	Nomen
NOmini & augustum firmat, et auget	Opus.

[May your reputation increase, Agostino, with a noble destiny / As it owes you deservedly outstanding rewards. / From a Herculean seed now a shoot is sprouting. / Excellence produces excellence, light and then torches. / Your destiny is excellent now; / while, a rival of fate, it flourishes, / Greater glory attends the light of such a great work, / If youth has brought forth its celebrated seeds. / Reputation attends a name, establishes it as noble and increases its work.]

This is an extremely self-conscious creation, marked in structure and style by a profusion of literary conceits. The epigram is an example of ring composition with a chiastic structure, 'augeat . . . augusta' returning at the end as 'augustum . . . auget'; these same words, and 'germine . . . germen germinat', exemplify the device of paronomasia; line 4 exhibits polyptoton ('virtus virtutem'), and lines 7–8 ('nomen / nomini') display both polyptoton and traductio.[38] Then there is the double acrostic. The author clearly possessed an admirable command of Latin and rhetorical figures of speech and was highly skilled in the composition of verse; he was also very conscious of his poetical talent and Steffani's musical ability and itching to exhibit them both. If the epigram was written by the composer himself, as seems likely, it displays exuberance, arrogance, and unawareness of the impression that ostentation might make—all signs of youth.

Steffani's return to Munich was bound up with the appointment of Bernabei as Kapellmeister there. As soon as Kerll resigned and moved to Vienna, in 1673, Maccioni was ordered to try to find a replacement in Rome.[39] He first approached

Giuseppe Corsi ('il Celano'), a pupil of Carissimi who had been *maestro di cappella* of several Roman churches; but he declined. On 19 August 1673 Maccioni recommended Giuseppe Spoglia, who was 'young, well-born, placid, God-fearing, and amenable, to the extent of being capable of becoming *maestro di cappella*'; but Ferdinand Maria was afraid that he might be too young or would lack the authority to direct a Kapelle of temperamental individuals and so advised Maccioni to look for somebody older. The latter then proposed Bernabei. The elector approved, advising Maccioni in autumn 1673 to conduct negotiations without the knowledge of Steffani, who, as an ambitious young man, might have set his sights on the appointment and might 'with some art entertain his master on the subject'.[40] Inevitably Steffani discovered what was afoot. Just as negotiations were drawing to their close, in March 1674, he told Bernabei, wrongly, it seems, that the salary on offer was less than what Kerll had been paid. Whether Steffani thought he was right or wrong, whether he was trying to protect his master's interests or attempting to scupper the negotiations, the elector's caution had been well-placed. Fortunately, Maccioni was able to reassure Bernabei, who resigned from the Cappella Giulia on 15 April; he also reported that Bernabei planned to set off for Munich about 8 May and that his pupil wanted to return with him and act as his interpreter. The elector agreed and hoped that they would leave as soon as possible. They travelled via Venice, where Steffani received 357 scudi for expenses, presumably visited Castelfranco, and eventually reached Munich on 7 July.[41] Steffani had come a long way in less than two years.

After his return to Munich, Steffani became active as a court organist. It is uncertain, however, when he was appointed to such a post. He is described as a 'court and chamber organist' ('Hof und Cam*m*er Organisten') in a decree dated 4 July 1678,[42] and Woker suggested that his appointment took effect on 1 March 1675,[43] but Steffani had already described himself as 'musico-organista' to the elector and electress of Bavaria on the title page of his *Psalmodia vespertina* (1674). This was probably not an empty boast. There had been two organists at Munich in 1672–73, when the composer was in Rome, and there were three from 1685 to at least 1688, when he left Munich for good; between 1673 and 1685, however, there was only one organist on the books at a time—Georg Zellner to 1676 and André Rauscher from 1677.[44] It is tempting, therefore, to suggest that Steffani was appointed second organist from the date of his return and that he assisted first Zellner then Rauscher. Maybe one player was responsible for the court chapel and the other for the tiny 'Rich Chapel' or 'Secret Chamber Chapel', originally the private oratory of Maximilian I. Steffani may also have helped Bernabei write music for chapel services. Hawkins stated that he composed 'several masses, motets, kyries, magnificats, and other essays in the church style, which . . . were occasionally performed in the chapel at Munich';[45] some such music may have survived in his *Sacer Ianus quadrifrons* (1685), but if Hawkins was right, a considerable amount has been lost. He also wrote that 'the direction of his [Steffani's] musical studies . . . was committed to Sig. Ercole Bernabei, then chapel-master to the elector of Bavaria',[46] but there is no evidence of formal tuition continuing in Munich.

Soon after returning, Steffani asked the elector for a further increase in his emoluments.[47] The reason he gave is that his family would soon be joining him in Munich and would add significantly to his expenses, but he presumably felt also that his grow-

ing experience, and activity as an organist, should be more amply rewarded. His request was approved: from 7 July his salary was doubled to 600 florins, and he was also given an annual allowance of fl. 170 kr. 20 for wine and beer and a daily supplement of two rolls and two loaves.[48] His salary, which remained at this level until 1681, was now twice that of the official court organist and nearly half that of the Kapellmeister. Despite his standing, however, and the fact that he was now twenty-one years old, he was apparently still in the custody of Augustin Sayler, for on 20 September 1675 the latter was granted 100 florins to enable Steffani to make a journey.[49] The payment suggests that the latter returned to Italy that autumn, perhaps to make arrangements for his parents' removal. His father transferred to Munich in 1676; his mother, brother, and sister moved there in early 1677.[50] His half-sister, Helena Perina, was placed in a convent ('Monastero delle Zitelle') in Padua; she later moved in with a family named Franchini and died in 1716. Steffani's sister, Ippolita, entered the Convent of the Visitation in Munich, with whose first four members he had first crossed the Alps; she was Mother Superior in 1719 and two years later met Durastanti.

Steffani's brother, Ventura Terzago, was initially employed as a replacement for the court poet Domenico Gisberti, who had returned to Venice in 1675. He was appointed on a temporary basis from 1 April 1677 to provide 'certain compositions'; his salary was 400 florins per annum.[51] After a year his appointment was confirmed and his salary increased to 600 florins.[52] On 1 July 1679, however, after making a visit to his 'patria' to put his affairs in order, Terzago succeeded Carlo Begnudelli Basso as a privy councillor and secretary, with a salary of 800 florins.[53] In this capacity he made several further journeys to Italy—to Rome in early 1682 and to Venice in 1683 and 1684. In spite of these additional responsibilities, however, he wrote the librettos of virtually all the Italian operas and tourneys performed in Munich between 1678 and 1686 (Table 2.2).[54] He may also have adapted Apolloni's *La Dori*, first set by Cesti (Innsbruck, 1657), for Giuseppe Antonio Bernabei in 1680: he certainly wrote a new prologue and signed the dedication.

The arrival of Steffani's family may have prompted Ercole Bernabei to consider the position of his own two musical sons, Giuseppe Antonio and Vincenzo, with whom Steffani had presumably become acquainted in Rome. Giuseppe Antonio was

TABLE 2.2 Librettos by Ventura Terzago

Date	Title	Genre	Composer
1678	Alvilda in Abo	Opera	G. A. Bernabei
1679	Enea in Italia	Opera	G. A. Bernabei
1680	Giulio Cesare ricovrato all'ombra	Tourney	G. A. Bernabei
1680	L'Ermione	Opera	G. A. Bernabei
1680	Il litigio del cielo e della terra conciliato dalla felice Bavaria	Tourney	E. Bernabei
1681	Marco Aurelio	Opera	Steffani
1685	Solone	Opera	Steffani
1685	Audacia e rispetto	Tourney	Steffani
1686	Servio Tullio	Opera	Steffani
1686	Erote ed Anterote	Tourney	E. Bernabei

about five years older than Steffani and had succeeded his father as *maestro di cappella* of San Luigi dei Francesi and organist for the oratorios at San Marcello. In 1677 he was invited to follow his father to Munich and serve as vice-Kapellmeister.[55] Maccioni approved, reporting that he was counted in Rome 'amongst the foremost *virtuosi*, both as a keyboard player and as a composer for church, chamber, and theatre' and that his artistry was combined with a fear of God, 'for he is a good priest'. On 17 April Bernabei sent the Bavarian elector an example of his recent work, a motet for four basses, and requested permission to dedicate a collection of such pieces to him. The book is not known to have been published, but the composer arrived in Munich on 24 June. His brother Vincenzo, an outstanding keyboard player about six years younger than Steffani, was appointed a court organist in 1685.[56]

The appointment of Giuseppe Antonio as vice-Kapellmeister had implications for Steffani's career. These may have struck him as bleak at the time, but with hindsight he may have regarded the appointment as a blessing in disguise. Bernabei was immediately given a significantly higher salary than Steffani (1,080 florins), commissioned to set Terzago's librettos, and assured of succeeding his father as Kapellmeister. Steffani doubtless felt angry and hurt at being passed over in this way, and the episode clearly caused friction between him and the Kapellmeister's son. This may be one reason why Ferdinand Maria sent Steffani abroad for a second period of study. That his destination on this occasion was Paris may have been due partly to the fact that Henrietta Adelaide, a cousin of Louis XIV, had died in 1676. Steffani probably left Munich soon after 4 July 1678, when he was granted 400 florins '*ex gratia* for a certain purpose';[57] if, as seems likely, he went straight to Paris and left there in May 1679, he could have spent as long as nine months in the French capital.

This period was of vital importance for his personal and musical development and for his future career. In culture as in politics, France was one of the most powerful forces in Europe. Patronage of the arts was not dispersed, as in Rome, among a multitude of aristocrats, prelates, and foreign residents but concentrated overwhelmingly on the court of Louis XIV. Every branch of cultivated activity—including architecture, drama, music, dance, manners, and dress—was governed by the concept of 'good taste' ('bon goût') that emanated from the king himself. The influence of French style was felt throughout Europe, but nowhere more strongly than in the neighbouring courts of western Germany and the Low Countries; England and Italy were not unaffected. For Steffani to be sent to the fountainhead of French culture was a natural step. Other musicians from Germany had gone there recently, including Georg Muffat, Johann Fischer, Johann Caspar Ferdinand Fischer, and Johann Philipp Förtsch, all of whom had been there in the 1660s or 1670s but left, and Johann Sigismund Kusser, who studied with Lully for six years between 1674 and 1682; Kusser may have met Steffani in Paris before going on, in the 1690s, to stage his operas in Hamburg and elsewere in Germany. Italians, too, went to Paris: the bass viol player and composer Theobaldo di Gatti moved there in about 1675 and remained, as a naturalized French citizen, for the rest of his life; the composer Paolo Lorenzani arrived there only weeks after Steffani and stayed for nearly twenty years.

Very little is known of Steffani's activities in Paris. The musical life of the court in 1678–79 was completely dominated by Lully, who was then at the height of his

powers. Together with Colbert Lully had prevented the performance of Italian music for over ten years, making room for his own *tragédies lyriques*, *ballets*, *comédies-ballets*, and sacred music. The only stage work by him to have been premièred during Steffani's visit is *Bellérophon*, a *tragédie* that was first performed at the Académie Royale de Musique on 31 January 1679; Steffani may have been present, for 'all Paris was there'.[58] Even if he was not, he may have attended a later performance and certainly became familiar with Lully's musical style—his overtures, dances, orchestration, and rhythmic conventions. He may also have attended the *comédie italienne* and met the Venetian actress, singer, and poet Brigida Bianchi (1613–1706), who lived in Paris from about 1659. Six of his chamber duets are settings of poems by her that were published in Paris in 1659 and 1666. If he found the texts in her books, he is more likely to have done so in Paris than anywhere else.[59] Steffani does not appear to have purchased the volumes, for they are not in the 'registro' of his library drawn up in 1718. This catalogue does, however, include over forty French titles published before 1679, which he could have acquired in Paris; most of them are historical or biographical works, including memoirs, but there also are editions of Montaigne and Paul Scarron.[60]

All that is known for certain about Steffani's sojourn in Paris is that he played before the king, presumably on the harpsichord. The evidence for this appears in a report of his visit to Turin, where he stopped on his way back to Munich. The court of Savoy may have taken a special interest in a musical visitor who had known Henrietta Adelaide in Bavaria. On 20 May 1679, the Bavarian resident, Johann Bartholomäus Schalck, wrote as follows to Ferdinand Maria:

> Agostino Steffani, Your Electoral Highness's court musician, has arrived in Turin in the past few days. I have presented him to *Madama Reale* [Marie Jeanne Baptiste of Savoy-Nemours, regent of Savoy 1675–84] and told her at length of his *virtù*. She therefore desires to hear him at the next opportunity. In France he had the honour of playing before the king. Yesterday he played to Cardinal [d'Estrées]; his skill and dexterity were admired by the entire assembled company. As soon as *Madama Reale* has heard him, he will immediately set out on his journey in order to be back in Munich as soon as possible.[61]

A week later the diplomat wrote:

> Yesterday Agostino Steffani . . . was heard by *Madama Reale* in the *Camera di Parada*. His elegant and delicate playing was approved by the entire court, and *Madama Reale* said to him two or three times: 'Vous jouez fort bien, vous jouez parfaitement bien'. He will now begin his journey as soon as possible and most dutifully instal himself at home again.[62]

These are the only known accounts of Steffani's playing. The earlier report suggests that he was detained in Turin so that 'Madama Reale' could hear him. Both draw attention to the dexterity and delicacy of his style and imply that the quality of his fingerwork was exceptional. In addition to the organ he must have studied the harpsichord and possibly also the clavichord. What music he played in Paris or Turin is a matter of speculation. Since he left no keyboard works of his own, he may have per-

formed music by one of his teachers—Kerll is the obvious candidate; perhaps in Paris he had studied the works of the *clavecinistes*; perhaps he simply improvised. Be that as it may, while Steffani entertained his hosts in Turin, Ferdinand Maria died in Munich. If the former was unaware of his patron's demise, the latter may never have known how effective an ambassador his court and chamber musician could be.

Director of Chamber Music

The electorate of Ferdinand's son, Maximilian II Emanuel (Fig. 2.4), brought major advances in Steffani's career as a musician and courtier. Although Max Emanuel is remembered above all as a soldier—he helped defeat the Turks at Vienna in 1683, at Ofen (Budapest) in 1686, and at Belgrade in 1688—he was also exceedingly interested in the arts and an extremely generous patron. Steffani had known him and his sister Violanta Beatrice since they were children. Both were active lovers of music. Max Emanuel, who had studied with Kerll, d'Ardespin, and maybe Steffani, played the flute, guitar, and bass viol (not only in private) and also sang as a tenor.[63] Having known him for so long, Agostino may have been hoping for special consideration. This could not come at once, for the son and heir was only seventeen, and Ercole and Giuseppe Antonio Bernabei had been asked to compose the three dramatic works that would mark the two major court events of 1680—Max Emanuel's attaining the age of majority and his sister Maria Anna Christina's marriage to the dauphin Louis of France.[64]

Steffani's position vis-à-vis Giuseppe Antonio was reviewed by Max Emanuel later that year. An undated chit among the Steffani papers in Munich—showing that his salary (600 florins) plus allowance for wine and beer (fl. 170 kr. 20) amounted to fl. 309 kr. 40 less than Bernabei's salary (fl. 1,080)—clearly relates to this process.[65] As a result of the review Steffani was appointed from 1 January 1681 to the new post of director of chamber music ('Camer *Music Director*'), with a total salary ('all in') identical to that of the vice-Kapellmeister. If the appointment put the twenty-six-year-old Steffani in charge of part of the court's musical life, the decree also confirmed Bernabei as his senior in the musical hierarchy:[66] the arrangement was designed to reward both men and create equilibrium. But it did not work. It was now Bernabei's turn to feel jealous and aggrieved, and these feelings must soon have been intensified—in February, when Steffani's first opera, *Marco Aurelio*, was produced; in October, when it was revived; and in 1682, when Steffani composed a serenata for the wedding of Countess Preysing.[67] The opera, based on the life of the Roman emperor-elect Marcus Aurelius, is concerned with the attitude of a man in authority to his duties and his wife: it may have been intended as an object lesson for the new elector, who was beginning to contemplate marriage.

The influence of the director of chamber music around this time may be illustrated by the experience of August Kühnel, an outstanding bass viol player at the court of Zeitz.[68] Kühnel visited Munich in 1680, was liked by the elector and the musicians, and, despite being a Lutheran, was offered a post from 28 September for a year at the exceptionally high salary of 1,000 florins;[69] his name and salary were en-

FIGURE 2.4 Elector Maximilian II Emanuel of Bavaria: oil painting, after Joseph Vivien (1710) (Residenzmuseum München, Foto BSV; by permission of the Bayerische Verwaltung der staatlichen Schlösser, Gärten und Seen)

tered into the ledger for 1681.[70] Soon after his appointment, however, he seems to have gone back to Zeitz to arrange for the removal of his family, and on 27 February his payment at Munich was stopped. The reason for this appears to have been his religion, which Steffani had led him to hope would not prevent his appointment. Kühnel wrote to him but received no reply. On 6 September 1682 he wrote to a court secretary, enclosing a further letter to Steffani, who had promised to respond; but again no answer was forthcoming. The reason for Steffani's silence is apparently that he was waiting to see whether Max Emanuel would marry Princess Eleonore Erdmuthe of Eisenach, who was a Lutheran; the implication is that if this marriage went ahead,

Kühnel would be permitted to take up his appointment. Steffani may not have done anything wrong, but he does not emerge from this episode with credit. The most important point, however, is that as director of chamber music he had authority to engage and dismiss musicians. In fact, he may have started doing this before his new appointment took effect: the travel expenses from Rome (110 florins) of the court and chamber musician Francesco Cagliaroli, who was appointed on 18 July 1680, were first paid by Steffani, then reimbursed to him.[71]

Steffani's rivalry with Bernabei and his treatment of Kühnel were undoubtedly related to the fact that he had recently been made a priest. Bernabei, a priest himself, must have regarded Steffani's ordination as a further threat, while Kühnel was apparently a victim of the latter's religious zeal. The earliest reference to Steffani as a priest dates from 3 November 1680, when he was also described as the 'court and chamber musician and organist, and faithful and well-beloved Agostino Steffani'.[72] On his claim for Cagliaroli's travel expenses he signed his name as 'D. A. Steffani': the 'D.' (for 'Don') suggests that he was a priest when he submitted the claim, which, though undated, must have originated in the summer of 1680. Perhaps he was ordained around 25 July, his twenty-sixth birthday. The path to the priesthood must have begun about ten years before, however, and we may assume that he was trained by the Theatines, to whom the spiritual life of the colony of foreign artists in Munich had been entrusted since the period of Lassus.[73]

The Theatine order, or Congregation of Regular Clerics, had been founded in 1524 by Giovanni Pietro Carafa, bishop of Chieti (Theate), Gaetano di Thiene (Cajetan), and others.[74] Carafa, later Pope Paul IV, was the first superior, but the brotherhood owed much to Cajetan, its superior from 1527. In an age of widespread corruption, it was dedicated to asceticism and apostolic work under vows of chastity, obedience, and absolute poverty. Although it was eventually eclipsed by the Jesuits, founded in 1537, the Theatine order spread throughout Italy and across most of Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, building churches, oratories, and hospitals. They collaborated in the foundation of the Urban College in Rome, under the auspices of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, and were the first to establish papal missions overseas. The presence of the Theatines in Munich was consolidated by the building of the Theatinerkirche, which was commissioned on Max Emanuel's birth in 1662 and consecrated on his thirteenth birthday.[75] During its construction, in 1671, Cajetan was canonized.

Steffani's ordination marked the beginning of a long and distinguished career in the church. He did not voluntarily espouse the Theatine ideal of poverty, but during the last quarter of his life he was responsible for much of the missionary work of the church in north Germany. In the early 1680s Max Emanuel made representations in Rome in the hope of securing him a benefice. On 4 December 1682 he informed his diplomatic resident, Abbate Pompeo Scarlatti, that he had received the papal bull appointing Steffani abbot of Löpsingen, a small parish in the county of Oettingen-Wallerstein, north of Augsburg;[76] the parish was protestant, but the benefice had remained in Catholic hands and was held as a sinecure alternately by the chapter of Augsburg Cathedral and the count of Oettingen. The appointment of Steffani and his retention of office were not achieved without struggle. The cathedral chapter was