Today the word conservatory connotes, as it has since Victorian times, an institution dedicated to conserving one of the classical performing traditions of European culture. Originally, however, a conservatorio was a Catholic charitable institution dedicated to conserving orphans, foundlings, and other destitute children. *I Poveri di Gesù Cristo* (The Poor Ones of Jesus Christ), the name of one of the early Neapolitan conservatories, was not just a religious metaphor. It summed up the plight and social standing of many of the students. In a world where family connections were paramount, a child without an intact family needed special assistance. If a fatherless boy could be taught a valuable skill, he might one day earn a living on his own.

1. THE CASE OF DOMENICO CIMAROSA

Domenico Cimarosa (1749-1801) was such a boy. His father, a stonemason in Naples, had died in a fall from the aptly named palace of Capodimonte (Mountaintop). His mother survived by washing clothes at a monastery. The monks took Domenico into their school, noticed his talent for music, and arranged for him to be transferred to the *Conservatorio di Santa Maria di Loreto* at age eleven or twelve.¹ There he began eleven years of intensive training that would prepare him for gainful employment. The boy learned his lessons very well indeed, and he eventually rose to become the maestro di capella for empress Catherine the Great of Russia and later for emperor Joseph II of Austria.

The Estense library in Modena has preserved a small book of partimenti—instructional basses—dated 1762 and catalogued as the earliest known work of Cimarosa.² The date and name are secure, given that the manuscript is clearly dated and bears several instances of the young Cimarosa’s signature. But the partimenti that it contains were all, or nearly all,³ composed by the great Neapolitan maestro Francesco Durante (1684-1755). The manuscript, rather than being a collection of original works by a precocious twelve-year-old, is in all likelihood Cimarosa’s

---

¹ Cimarosa was born December 17, 1749. He entered the conservatory in 1761. The exact date of his admission has not been established.


³ While many of the exercises are exact copies of Durante’s, others are abridgments or adaptations.
zibaldone, which could be translated variously as “commonplace book,” “notebook,” or “lesson book.” While dozens, perhaps hundreds, of partimento manuscripts have survived from the eighteenth century, very few were dated or signed. Cimarosa’s manuscript gives us a rare glimpse into what a famous composer, at a specific early age, was absorbing from lessons traceable to the recently deceased Durante. It also tells us what sort of lessons Cimarosa’s own teachers, the maestri Fedele Fenaroli (1730-1818), Antonio Sacchini (1730-1786), and Gennaro Manna (1717-1779), deemed fitting for the training of a bright student.

Some of the partimenti in Cimarosa’s lesson book were clearly designed to teach important compositional schemata like La romanesca and La folia. Example 1 shows the opening measures of the bass line and chord progression of La romanesca, best known today perhaps through Pachelbel’s Canon in D. The lower staff shows the partimento as given in the manuscript. On the upper staff I have indicated where La romanesca ends and the cadence begins, and I have notated the typical right-hand part that Cimarosa would have been expected to play. The figured bass for the cadence is in the hand of the original scribe. The many “5”s, which were self-evident to adults who knew that this bass required each chord to be in root position, are shown in parentheses to indicate that they are by a different scribe and may have been added by Cimarosa himself or a later hand.

Example 1. Bass staff: the Romanesca pattern and cadence as found in Cimarosa’s student notebook. Treble staff: a modern realization of this partimento. The figures for the cadence appear to be original. The figures for the Romanesca appear to have been added later (the parentheses are a modern addition to indicate the different hand).

---

4 Francesco Galeazzi, in his Elementi teorico-pratici di musica con un saggio sopra l’arte di suonare il violino analizzata, ed a dimostrabili principi ridotta, vol. 2, Rome 1796, pp. 54-55, refers to a student musician’s lesson book as a zibaldone.

5 Almost every major library with collections of eighteenth-century music has copies of partimenti by the great maestros of Naples and Bologna.

6 This bass pattern with its attendant harmonies, though frequently called La romanesca in the period from the later sixteenth through the seventeenth century, was also given different names at different times and places. No claim is made that the Neapolitans used this name for this pattern, though there is also no evidence that any other name was used.
Example 2 shows the opening measures of Durante’s partimento of La folia, a traditional pattern that served as the theme of twenty-four caprices for violin by Corelli, which in turn inspired many later variations like those by Liszt and Rachmaninoff. Again, the lower staff presents the partimento, and the upper staff presents a likely realization. The markings of “5/3” chords, again self-evident to an adult musician, were probably added by a student or a later hand. As these examples demonstrate, such traditional compositional schemata were directly taught to students through partimenti. The complete pattern was not, however, written down. The student had to internalize the pattern and had to be able to play the full pattern from the sole cue of the bass.

Example 2. Bass staff: the Folia pattern as found in Cimarosa’s student notebook. Treble staff: a modern realization of this partimento. The figures shown in parentheses appear to have been added later.

The example of La folia is found on the verso of the ninth folio in this manuscript. The recto side contains a longer partimento in 12/8 time and the key of A minor. In the process of learning Durante’s A-minor partimento, a talented boy like Cimarosa would surely have noticed an incongruity when a busy, interesting opening passage leads into a boring passage of isolated, almost static tones (Ex. 3).

Example 3. The opening measures of an A-minor partimento from Cimarosa’s student notebook. The first two measures, with their active eighth note in 12/8 time, lead first to a cadence and then
to a passage (mm. 4-5) with hardly any melodic interest.

Note that the redundant figures for the “boring” passage, “8” and “3,” do not add any information about harmony, since the intervals they represent are always assumed to be present in the absence of specific figures to the contrary. Instead, the redundant figures are meant to give clues to the position of an upper voice. Could the “interesting/foreground” passage transposed an octave higher (= “8”) combine with the “boring/background” passage to form a proper two-voice counterpoint? The answer is a definitive “yes,” as shown in Example 4.

Example 4. With regard to the partimento shown in Ex. 3, its “boring” passage of mm. 4-5 can serve as a contrapuntal accompaniment to the “interesting” passage of mm. 1-2.

On the verso side of *La Romanesca*, Cimarosa would encounter another Durante bass (Ex. 5),

```plaintext

Interesting / Foreground

Cadence

Boring / Background

Cadence

Note that the redundant figures for the “boring” passage, “8” and “3,” do not add any information about harmony, since the intervals they represent are always assumed to be present in the absence of specific figures to the contrary. Instead, the redundant figures are meant to give clues to the position of an upper voice. Could the “interesting/foreground” passage transposed an octave higher (= “8”) combine with the “boring/background” passage to form a proper two-voice counterpoint? The answer is a definitive “yes,” as shown in Example 4.

Example 4. With regard to the partimento shown in Ex. 3, its “boring” passage of mm. 4-5 can serve as a contrapuntal accompaniment to the “interesting” passage of mm. 1-2.

On the verso side of *La Romanesca*, Cimarosa would encounter another Durante bass (Ex. 5),
which is so similar to the one shown in Example 4 as to suggest that both share the same compositional schema—an opening 1–2–3 pattern extended to the fourth scale degree, or fa, and then followed by a cadence. As in Example 4, the bass in Example 5 features an “interesting/foreground” and a subsequent “boring/background.” And as one might now begin to expect, the foreground and background combine in proper two-voice counterpoint, as shown in Example 6.

Example 5. A G-minor partimento from Cimarosa’s notebook. Like the partimento in Ex. 3, this partimento begins with an “interesting” passage that, following a cadence, leads to a “boring” passage.

Example 6. With regard to the partimento shown in Ex. 5, its “boring” passage of mm. 3-5 can serve as a contrapuntal accompaniment to the “interesting” passage of mm. 1-2.

Whether Cimarosa was told which passages of a partimento to combine, or whether he was expected to intuit the correct combination by himself, one can easily infer that sooner or later the
game of combining passages in Durante *partimenti* would become well learned. On the page facing the *partimento* of Example 3, Cimarosa would have studied the passage shown in Example 7. There he would encounter an “interesting/foreground” passage followed by a cadence. Then he would find a passage of the same length but clearly “boring/background.” After a second cadence there comes a chain of 2–3 suspensions in the implied upper voices (one can infer the series from the figured bass and context). Other, similar sequences in Cimarosa’s notebook were called *caminare di* ... (traveling or progressing by, in this case, seconds and thirds). Again, it is difficult to imagine a musician with Cimarosa’s talent failing to recognize the same game of a contrapuntal *ars combinatoria*. Example 8 shows the “winning” combination.

*Example 7. A more elaborate G-minor partimento from Cimarosa’s notebook. Like the partimenti in Exx. 3 and 5, this partimento begins with an “interesting” passage that, following a cadence, leads to a “boring” passage. Following a sequence of 2–3 suspensions (*caminare di seconda*), the previous G-minor section is restated in B-flat major.*

Example 8. With regard to the partimento shown in Ex. 7, its “boring” passage of mm. 10-12 can serve as a contrapuntal accompaniment to the “interesting” passage of mm. 8-9.
It was through the experience of playing partimenti that this author first noticed the contrapuntal implications of the types of opening passages in Cimarosa’s notebook. When the “interesting” part ceased, one naturally wondered what ought to happen next. With the sound of the interesting, thematic part still in one’s memory, it was only a small step to connect that memory with the “boring” accompaniment. Many other authors, in discussing partimenti, have made general comments on the motivic and contrapuntal play implicit in them, and counterpoint is so obvious in the fugal partimenti as to require no special mention. But to my knowledge Tharald Borgir, in his dissertation of 1971, later adapted for his 1987 book *The Performance of the Basso*
Continuo in Italian Baroque Music, was the first modern author to point to specific opening passages in Durante partimenti that suggest contrapuntal combinations. His examples were taken from Durante’s partimenti diminuiti, while Cimarosa’s notebook contains selections from Durante’s regole and partimenti numerati, but the practice is similar in all these collections. Indeed, the practice seems to have been widespread among most of the Neapolitan maestros.

2. SELECTED PARTIMENTI OF NICCOLO ZINGARELLI

In his final years at the conservatory, Cimarosa was advanced to the chapel-master class of future composers, where his classmates were Giuseppe Giordani (1751-1798) and Niccolò Zingarelli (1752-1837). Zingarelli would go on to hold some of the most important positions in eighteenth-century Italy, including maestro di capella at the cathedrals of Naples and Milan, music director of St. Peters in Rome, and, in the early nineteenth century, director of the combined conservatories of Naples. He carried on the Durante tradition of composing a number of partimenti that call for the contrapuntal combination of different passages. In Example 9, taken from an early nineteenth-century print of more than a hundred of his partimenti, two measures of active eighth notes are followed by two measures of long tones marked imit (an abbreviation of imitazione, making explicit what was implicit in earlier collections). While it is fairly obvious that the opening, “interesting” eighth notes, which outline a type of Do–Re–Mi ascent, might be played in a soprano voice over the long, “boring” tones in the bass, it is visually unclear what follows. As it turns out, the two voices can continue in canon until the first cadence (see Ex. 10), after which the imitation begins again. For the cadence, the student could draw upon memories of any standard close, and the cadence shown in Example 10 is merely one suggestion.

Example 9. A simple A-minor partimento by Zingarelli. Its first two measures are active, while mm. 3-4 are relatively static.

---


Nicolò Zingarelli, Partimenti del signor maestro Don Nicolò Zingarelli..., Milan [ca. 1820s].
Example 10. With regard to the partimento shown in Ex. 9, its “boring” passage of mm. 3-4 can serve as a contrapuntal accompaniment to the “interesting” passage of mm. 1-2. In addition, the treble voice can continue in canon with the bass until the cadence of mm. 9-10. Then, in m. 11, the same canon begins again.

In Example 11, we encounter another instance of Zingarelli’s pervasive use of this type of counterpoint. Because I suspect the reader has by now become adept at guessing the combinations, only the final result is shown, where the lower staff presents the original partimento and the upper staff presents a reconstruction of the added part. As the example demonstrates, the combination of the “interesting” 1–2–3 rising melody against the “boring” long tones recurs over and over in these opening measures of the partimento. In measure 6, the expected melodic “E” fails to occur in the partimento, but emerges in the added part to fit the indicated figures perfectly. That melody can continue to rise, merging in measure 7 with the 1–2–3 theme now in F major.

demonstration first of how the “interesting” opening passage of the bass can serve as the melody in mm. 3-4, and second of how that passage fits well in each of the remaining measures.

In Example 12, Zingarelli presents a theme whose regular alternation of tonic and dominant harmonies allows for three-voice counterpoint, with a new entry of the flowing eighth notes occurring every two measures. To highlight the counterpoint, I show the example with two reconstructed upper parts, even though both could be played by a single hand. Note that a student needed to be constantly aware of the key and of upcoming modulations. In measure 18, for instance, the partimento moves toward the key of F minor, which requires a slight alteration (at the asterisk) in the melody. Once F minor is firmly established, the three-part counterpoint can begin again in the new key. There is a skilled pedagogy at work in such an exercise. Notice, for instance, how when the theme returns in measure 11, it rises and falls as before. But in place of the simple quarter note that previously concluded its descent, Zingarelli now presents a tied quarter note (mm. 13-14). He introduces a suspension in place of the simpler original theme. The student thus learns how the suspension works in context, without needing to be told the details of counterpoint. Moreover, the student absorbs the sense of a suspension as a decoration or ornament of the basic theme.

Example 12. Bass staff: a C-minor partimento by Zingarelli. Treble staves: a modern demonstration of how the “interesting” opening passage of the bass can serve as the source
material for three-part counterpoint.

3. THE PARTIMENTI OF GIOVANNI PAISIELLO

Cimarosa and Zingarelli learned the partimenti of Durante from students of Durante. Giovanni
Paisiello (1740-1816) had the opportunity to study with Durante himself during the maestro’s final year (1755). Paisiello, following his training in Naples, embarked on a highly successful career as an opera composer. His rising fame was noticed at the Russian court in St. Petersburg, and in consequence he was recruited into the service of Catherine the Great (1729-1796). He arrived in St. Petersburg in 1776 and remained until 1783 (Cimarosa would follow him later, serving from 1787 to 1791). Paisiello’s sojourn in Russia is perhaps best remembered for the production of his *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (“The Barber of Seville,” September 1782), whose character Figaro, from the French plays of Beaumarchais, would reappear to great effect in Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro* (May 1786) and Rossini’s *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (February 1816). But that same year Paisiello also published a book of *partimenti* (1782) for his student and patroness the grand duchess Maria Fyoderovna (1759-1828). While that name certainly looks Russian, she, like Catherine the Great, was born in the Prussian city of Stettin. To her second Christian name, Marie, was added the Russian patronymic “Fyoderovna,” meaning “daughter of Friedrich.” She was brought to Russia to marry Catherine’s son Paul and subsequently became the Tsarina upon Catherine’s death (1796). Thus the very high status of this “Grand Duchess of All the Russians” (as she was described on the title page of Paisiello’s *partimenti*) may in some way account for the unprecedented act of printing these exercises. Up to that time, *partimenti* had been known only through manuscript copies, even the universally lauded *partimenti* of Durante. The *partimento Regole* (Rules) of Fenaroli had been printed in Naples in 1775, but that edition included only the rules themselves, with the musical examples remaining in manuscript. To my knowledge, no Italian collection of the *partimenti* of a major maestro had been printed before Paisiello’s, and none would be printed again until the *partimenti* of Cimarosa’s teacher Fedele Fenaroli (1730-1818) appeared in the very early nineteenth century, both in Italy and in France.

This St. Petersburg edition of *partimenti*, all of which, according to its dedication page, were composed by Paisiello, followed the general outline of the large Neapolitan manuscript collections of Durante’s *partimenti*. There were typically four sections: (1) *regole* or rules, (2) *partimenti numerati* or figured basses with simpler realizations, (3) *partimenti diminuiti* or unfigured basses with more florid realizations, and (4) *fughe* or fugues. Paisiello’s print retains an obvious “rules” section, proceeds to figured basses, then to unfigured basses, and ends with a very large number of *partimenti* that contain obvious or openly marked points of imitation. Let us examine each section in turn.

3.1 RULES

The “rules” or *regole* of a *partimento* treatise are typically presented in the form of short

---

9 Giovanni Paisiello, *Regole per bene accompagnare il partimento*, St. Petersburg 1782.

definitions or exhortations. For example, Paisiello defines a pedal point as follows:

Una nota tenuta di piu battute ... [con] varij accordi ... vien chiamata pedale.\textsuperscript{11}

Each such rule, or set of related rules, is exemplified by a small *partimento*. In the case of the pedal point, he provides the *partimento* shown in Example 13 (from Paisiello’s p. 13). Perhaps because these simplest exercises presume an audience of beginners, the figures are given predominantly in a “literal” form with the vertical stack of numbers arranged like the stack of tones in the chords. That is, the top number represents the top or soprano tone, and the lower numbers represent lower tones.

Example 13. A G-major *partimento* by Paisiello. This is an exercise for beginners in figured bass. The student is given more figures than an expert would require. For instance, the first chord in m. 1—\(3/5/8\)—would normally receive no figures at all, since a simple triad was the default expectation.

The *partimento* of Example 13 gives opportunities for the student to attempt (in general terms) an opening presentation of a theme or subject, a modulation, a varied restatement of the theme in the new key, a digression, a sequence, an approach to the pedal point, the pedal point, and a succession of increasingly stronger cadences—skills that would later apply directly to composing a sonata, aria, or motet. These contexts are marked on Example 14, which is this author’s simple chordal realization of the Paisiello’s figured bass. This realization follows in the main the literal figures of Example 13, but departs from them when necessary to create smoother lines in the upper parts.

\textsuperscript{11} A (bass) note held for several beats ... with changing chords ... is called a “pedal.” from Giovanni Paisiello, *Regole per bene accompagnare il partimento*, St. Petersburg 1782, p. 13.
Example 14. A modern realization in a simple chordal style of Paisiello’s partimento from Ex. 13. The annotations above the treble staff indicate how this small partimento, while quite simple, nevertheless incorporates many of the important formal milestones of much larger pieces.

3.2 FIGURED BASSES

As the discussion passes from intervals to modulations, Paisiello introduces longer partimenti with complete figuring. For example, he notes how a raised forth or a lowered second can lead to a modulation:

La Quarte Maggiore hà la forza di far variare il Tono, così ancora è necessario sapere, che la Seconda Minore hà l’istessa forza, ...  

In these more advanced exercises the figures are now mostly in normal form with the highest number being placed highest regardless of the particular voicing of the chords. Yet occasionally the numbers do indicate particular movements in the upper parts. In Example 15 (from

---

12 The raised fourth [scale degree] has the power to alter the key, and it should be noted that the lowered second [scale degree] has the same power; ... from Giovanni Paisiello, Regole per bene accompagnare il partimento, St. Petersburg 1782, p. 21.
Paisiello’s p. 21), notice the emphasis on a four-tone descending motif (required by the figures “7 6 5 3”) that later returns preceded by three iterated eighth-notes (cf. the “8 8 8” in mm. 9 and 12).

*Example 15. A G-minor partimento by Paisiello. This more advanced figured bass uses over-specific figures, such as the opening 5/3/8, to indicate voicings. For instance, the suggested “5” in the soprano at the first chord connects will with the “7–6–5” descent indicated in the second half of m. 1. That descending pattern become a recurring motive in this partimento.*

![Illustration of a partimento by Paisiello](image)

Such *partimenti* look similar to ordinary figured-bass accompaniments. Yet the goal seems to have been broader: the inculcation of motivic and consequently contrapuntal thinking. As shown in this author’s realization of Example 16, the motivic interplay between melody and bass can become a pervasive feature of this *partimento*.

*Example 16. A modern realization, with two upper parts, of Paisiello’s partimento from Ex. 15.*
Paisiello begins his section of unfigured basses with small, plain exercises. But they are not simple to realize, given the many modulations. Learning to recognize the “affordances” of this bass—the set of accompaniment patterns that will match the shape of the bass—can help to simplify the task of interpreting this type of bass. The bass of Example 17 (from p. 23), for instance, may at first glance look like a wandering series of quarter notes and half notes, yet to the Neapolitan student it contained a clear chain of signals or cues to a set of stock patterns.

Example 17. An unfigured C-minor partimento by Paisiello. For students in Naples, figures were somewhat like training wheels on bicycles. Once one could get “up and running” with the figures, one moved on to unfigured basses. A student needed to know how to recreate a number of small contrapuntal-harmonic schemata for any typical passage in such a bass.
I have described in detail a set of stock patterns known to Neapolitan students in the monograph *Music in the Galant Style*. Example 18 presents a sample realization of Example 17 with annotations of the schemata described in that book. The Jupiter is a typical opening gambit, named after the opening of the last movement of Mozart’s “Jupiter” symphony. The Prinner, named after a seventeenth-century theorist, is the common riposte to an opening theme. Here the Jupiter-Prinner pair constitutes, in sonata terminology, the first theme, and it recurs in measures 4-7 as the second theme (in G major initially). Were this *partimento* a small sonata, the double bar would occur at the rests in measure 12. Like early sonatas, the first theme begins the second half of the movement, only in the key of the dominant (G major). The major-then-minor pattern named a Fonte by Riepel in 1755 (Italian for a well or spring; here a Prinner in D minor followed by one in C major) brings the tonality back to C major for the presentation of the final cadences. So although the bass of Example 17 looks quite simple on paper, it was intended as a microcosm of galant compositional technique, combining melody, harmony, counterpoint, and form.

*Example 18. A modern realization, with two (or occasionally three) upper parts, of Paisiello’s *partimento* from Ex. 17. The annotation above the treble staff indicate various phrase and cadential schemata characteristic of the galant style.*

---


Only five pages later (p. 28) the level of difficulty rises dramatically. One wonders how many courtiers in St. Petersburg could have managed to perform Example 19, an excerpt demanding a florid treatment in concerto style? The passage shown begins at measure 15, where the figures indicate a call-and-response exchange between melody and bass. In measure 20, at the soprano clef, Paisiello writes out a two-part solo. This is typical of Neapolitan partimenti, where, in the terminology of the concerto, soli were written out and tutti had to be realized from just a bass. The changing of clefs to indicate the entry of a soloist or other new part becomes more common as partimenti become more difficult, culminating in the partimento fugue. There each new entry of the subject or answer tends to be introduced with the clef appropriate for its range (the alto voice takes the alto clef, etc.).

Example 19. A largely unfigured C-major partimento by Paisiello. The figures in mm. 15-18 cue a call-and-response interplay between treble and bass. In m. 20, the switch to soprano clef indicates a fully notated solo passage, as in a concerto. The figures in m. 22 alert the player to the beginning of an ascending sequence.
Based on the concerto repertory of Paisiello and Durante’s time, it is clear that motives from the tutti reappear in the soli. For the listener, of course, the tutti come first, and the soli are perceived as making decorative variations on motives from the tutti. But in concerto-like partimenti, the performer must recreate the tutti from the clues of the soli. In other words, the performer needs first to study the whole partimento before essaying a realization. Example 20 gives this author’s realization of Example 19.

Example 20. A modern realization, with two upper parts, of Paisiello’s partimento from Ex. 19. The annotation above the treble staff indicate how this partimento mimics the solo and tutti passages of a concerto.
3.4 IMITATION

Paisiello replaces the typical final, fugal section of *partimenti* with a long section devoted to *imitazione*:

*N. B. L'imitazione s’intende, quando un Canto propone qualche passaggio, e da un’altro si risponde*
dell’istessa maniera: come si vedrà dall’esempie... 15

Nearly 60 percent of his book is devoted to the study of *imitazione*. Like Zingarelli, he placed that word on the score wherever he wanted to draw attention to the need for an imitative exchange between melody and bass. But many more opportunities for imitation are implicit in each *partimento*.

Example 21 (from p. 34) shows an elaborate *partimento* from this section on imitation. In schematic terms, an opening Romanesca (mm. 1-2) with Prinner riposte (mm. 3-4) leads into a long series of *movimenti*. *Movimenti* (It.: “moves” or “motions”) were sequential bass patterns whose preferred realizations were spelled out in the *regole* of Durante. The *movimento* of measures 1-2 was cued by a bass “falling a fourth, rising a second.” The *movimento* of measure 4 and following was “rising a fourth, falling a fifth.” In measure 26, the *movimento* of “rising a fourth, falling a third” receives an explicit indication of *imitazione*. It seems likely that the imitative upper part will initiate its upward leaps during the rests in the lower part. The suggested imitation in measure 48 presumably calls for the quarter notes of the previous measure to accompany the whole notes of measure 48.

Example 21. A large and complex D-major partimento by Paisiello. The few figures added to the bass indicate: mm. 1-2, a series of suspensions added to the Romanesca bass; mm. 4-7, a chain of seventh chords in a circle-of-fifths progression; mm. 24, a reminder of the local key (B min.); m. 33, a “tenor” cadence on the dominant (A maj.); mm. 35-37, a sequence to ornament the ascending scale in the bass; mm. 40-41, another sequence which can use the same motives as in mm. 35-37; m. 59, the approach to a cadenza or pedal point; and mm. 60-62, the details of a sequence above the dominant pedal point. The word *Imitazione* in mm. 28 indicates a sequential imitation in the upper voice of the two-note motive in the bass. By contrast, the same word in m. 47 indicates an imitation in the upper voice of the quarter-note passage from the previous measure.

15 “Note that one should understand “imitation” as occurring when one voice sets out a certain passage and then another voice responds to it in the same manner, as you will see in the examples [that follow] ...” from Giovanni Paisiello, *Regole per bene accompagnare il partimento*, St. Petersburg 1782, p. 29.
Example 22 presents this author’s realization of the *partimento* of Example 21. It is notated as four separate voices on two staves in order to bring out the imitative interplay between the voices. Note that the *partimento* of Example 21 was, after the first three measures, largely unfigured. The initial figures were to fix the specific suspensions of the Romanesca and to cue the following Prinner. Measures 35-36 are figured so as to cue one of the stock ways of realizing an ascending scale. This figuring might not have been necessary had Paisiello not wanted to make an explicit motivic connection with measures 40-41. Though not immediately obvious, the figures of measures 40-41 result in the same upper part specified by the figures in measures 35-36, thus reinforcing the close connection between these two different *movimenti*, both of which share the function of ascending sequences. The last complete set of figures is given to the pedal point. Pedal points were often figured because the bass alone gave no clue to the desired texture. These figures are essentially the same as those for the pedal point in the earlier Example 13.

This elaborate *partimento* helped the student to explore all manner of connections between a variety of melodic and bass motives. The *imitazione* required in measure 48, for instance, takes place over a descending fourth in whole notes. That is the same bass of the opening theme, meaning that the moving quarter notes of measure 47, the descending whole notes of measure 48, and the opening melody of measure 1 can all be combined in measure 50. The complete combination, shown in Example 22, is not contrapuntally flawless. But *partimenti* in the Durante tradition were meant to be performed, not transcribed and examined. The tradition encouraged combinations—the *ars combinatoria*. One can, for instance, take a version of the moving quarter notes of measure 47, combine it with the pedal point beginning in measure 60, and then add a version of the opening melody above this rich combination to create a type of climax of imitation and combination.

*Example 22. A modern realization of Paisiello’s partimento from Ex. 21.*
4. CONCLUSIONS

The period from Durante’s appointment as secondo maestro at the Conservatorio di Sant’ Onofrio a Porta Capuana (1710), one of the four original Neapolitan conservatories, to Zingarelli’s appointment as director of the consolidated Real Collegio di Musica (1813), which absorbed the remnants of the old conservatories, represents a century in which Neapolitan training appears to have given young composers an advantage over most of their European contemporaries, judging from the extraordinary number of important positions, commissions, and honors they received. When Charles Burney, for instance, named the four greatest composers of opera (“Jomelli, Galuppi, Piccini, and Sacchini”) in 1770, three out of the four had been
trained in Naples. Rigorous training in *partimenti* seems to have played a role in fostering excellence in composition, and perhaps it is not entirely coincidental that people outside of Naples with connections to training in *partimenti* were also among the most famous musicians of their day (Padres Martini and Mattei in Bologna trained students like J. C. Bach, Rossini, and Donizetti; and the Bach circle in central Germany gave their students fugal *partimenti* as evidenced by the Langloz manuscript\(^ {17} \)). *Partimenti* may have provided models for how to adapt principles of strict counterpoint to the prevailing galant style. The many opportunities for imitative counterpoint in *partimenti* helped the student discover how real melodies could be combined in an artistic manner. In this sense *partimenti* developed a student’s contrapuntal imagination through guided exploration of the *ars combinatoria*—the “art of combinations.”

It has always been evident that the apex of the *partimento* tradition involved the *partimento* fugue. Fugues came last in *partimento* manuscripts, suggesting that they were the ultimate exercises prior to attempts at professional-level composition. Perhaps that is why, for his amateur patroness, Paisiello did not include fugues in his publication. What has been much less evident is the degree to which the art of contrapuntal combinations and of simple patterns of imitation was already taught in the *partimenti* that a student would have learned prior to encountering *partimento* fugues. Fugue involves a particular type of formal, imitative counterpoint that, as the modern student may come to realize, can be almost impossibly difficult to write without a thorough background in the more general type of counterpoint taught in *partimenti*. The modern student, even if prepared by training in separate areas like harmony and species counterpoint, often lacks experience in integrating those domains. For the eighteenth-century student in Naples, by contrast, strict counterpoint, harmony through figured bass, and common types of imitation were all tightly integrated through training in *partimenti*. Composition and counterpoint became almost the same subject, a circumstance reflected in the term that eighteenth-century writers and musicians often used when referring to composers: *contrapuntisti* (contrapuntists). Though the conservatories of Naples enrolled some of the poorest, least educated boys in Italy, they graduated many of the most famous composers of that era. Today, to understand how such transformations were possible, we may need to study *partimenti* ourselves.
