

Nina

Anonymous

previously attributed to Giovanni Battista Pergolesi

"Nina" was first heard in London in 1749. It has been variously attributed to Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, Legrenzio Vincenzo Ciampi and Rinaldo di Capua, but twentieth century research disputes these attributions and no composer has been credited. The aria remains a mystery. Attribution to Pergolesi was not uncommon in the eighteenth century. During Pergolesi's short lifetime he attained little success, but following his death was recognized as a leader in Italian comic opera. He became revered throughout Europe for the opera *La serva padrona*, which by 1755 had been performed 200 times in Paris. The *Stabat Mater* grew to enormous popularity as well. Little was known about the Italian composer that had died so young. By mid-eighteenth century Pergolesi's name had such appeal that sometimes impresarios and publishers credited him with scores by various and unknown composers in order to draw audience and sales. The practice later extended to small instrumental works. The name "Pergolesi" nearly became a catch-all for any anonymous work of the eighteenth century, and many spurious publications resulted with that attribution.

"Nina" was included in a 1749 British publication *The Favourite Songs in the Opera called Li tre cicisbei ridicoli*, attributed to Pergolesi but almost surely not by him, but rather a compilation of pieces by various unknown composers.

In a 1949 article in *Music and Letters* Frank Walker states:

'Tre giorni son che Nina' was attributed generally to Pergolesi until Spitta, in 1887, claimed it for Rinaldo di Capua, on the grounds that it appeared in *La Bohémienne*, a French adaptation of Rinald's *La zingara*, performed in Paris in 1755. Barclay Squire demolished Spitta's claim for Rinaldo by demonstrating that the song was introduced into *La Bohémienne* from a comic opera, *Li tre cicisbei ridicoli*, performed in London in 1749. This opera, first produced at Bologna in 1748 and revived at Venice in 1748 and 1752, is by the obscure Milanese composer Natale Resta. 'Tre giorni,' however, does not appear in the librettos of either the Bologna or the Venice performances. It seems certain that it was introduced into Resta's *Li tre cicisbei ridicoli* by Vincenzo Ciampi, who was maestro to the opera company responsible for the London performances. But that is not to say that the song was composed by Ciampi. It is used as a serenade by one of the characters in the opera, with a second verse which does not appear in any of the MS versions of the song. There is no character called Nina in *Li tre cicisbei ridicoli*. It seems likely that 'Tre giorni' was a popular song, possibly but by no means certainly composed by Pergolesi, familiar to Ciampi from his Neapolitan days, and introduced by him into Resta's opera in London, with the addition of a second verse to give it some connection with the plot.

"Nina" did not appear in Parisotti's *Arie antiche*. It was published by Schirmer as early as 1904, but the source is unknown. It was later included in the 1948 Schirmer publication *24 Italian Songs and Arias of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*.

tre	'dʒor ni	son	ke	'ni na	in	'let: to	se ne 'sta
Tre	giorni	son	che	Nina	in	letto	se ne sta.
three	days	are	that	Nina	in	bed	herself stays

For three days Nina has been in bed.

'pif: fe ri	'tim pa ni	'tʃem ba li	zveʌ: 'ka te	'mi a	ni 'net: ta
Pifferi,	timpani,	cembali,	svegliate	mia	Ninetta,
fifes	drums	cymbals	awaken	my	dear Nina

Fifes, drums, cymbals, awaken my dear Nina,

at: 'tʃə	non	'dɔr ma	pju
accid	non	dormia	più.
so that	not	she may sleep	more

so that she will sleep no longer.

Nina

Canzonetta

English version by
Dr. Theodore Baker

Attributed to
Giovanni Battista Pergolesi*
(1710-1736)

Andantino

Voice

Tre gior - ni son che Ni - na, che Ni - na, che
For three long days my Ni - na, my Ni - na, my

Piano

Ni - na in let - to se ne sta, in let - to se ne
Ni - na up - on her bed has lain, up - on her bed has

sta.
lain. Pif - fe - ri, tim - pa - ni, cem - ba - li, sve - glia - te mia Ni -
Loud - er and loud - er, ye play - ers all! A - wak - en my Ni -

* Although this song was long attributed to Pergolesi, it was composed by Legrenzio Vincenzo Ciampi (1719-?)

net - ta, sve - glia - te mia Ni - net - ta, ac - ciò non dor - ma
 net - ta, a - wak - en my Ni - net - ta, that she may sleep no

più, ac - ciò non dor - ma più, sve - glia - te mia Ni - net - ta, sve -
 more, that she may sleep no more, A - wak - en my Ni - net - ta, a -

glia - te mia Ni - net - ta, ac - ciò non dor - ma più.
 wak - en my Ni - net - ta that she may sleep no more.

più, ac - ciò non dor - ma più.
 more, that she may sleep no more.

pp. a piacere

f *dim.* *pp colla parte*

