*Bel Piacere ch’è la Caccia*

Serenata by Pietro Scarlatti

There are two versions of the modern score. One formatted for standard European office paper ([A4](http://www.ascarlatti2010.net/main_page/bel_piacere/bel_piacere_a4.pdf)), a second for North American paper ([US Letter](http://www.ascarlatti2010.net/main_page/bel_piacere/bel_piacere_letter.pdf)). There is little difference between them and most printers will handle either with no trouble.

No printed libretto for the serenata is known to exist. The [libretto](http://www.ascarlatti2010.net/main_page/bel_piacere/bel_piacere_libretto.pdf) here was created from the single surviving manuscript score in the Noseda Collection preserved in the Library of the Milan Conservatory.

The manuscript score lacks a proper title page, nor is there an opening *sinfonia*. On the upper right corner of the [first page](http://www.ascarlatti2010.net/main_page/bel_piacere/PICT0004.JPG) is found the attribution "? Scarlatti" in the hand of the copyist. At the exact spot where the composer's first name should have appeared, the page has been cut and ripped, evidently with the intention of obscuring the composer's first name. The score bears the property stamp of the Noseda collection as well as stamps indicating the manuscript to be an autograph.

The question, of course, remains: Whose autograph? The music closely resembles that of Alessandro Scarlatti, but in many places seems strangely inferior. The hand of the copyist also resembles that of Alessandro, but in fact is that of Alessandro’s first child Pietro Scarlatti, who should now be identified as the composer of this serenata. Pietro’s hand can be seen in the score of the serenata (here are images of pages [2](http://www.ascarlatti2010.net/main_page/bel_piacere/PICT0005.JPG) and [3](http://www.ascarlatti2010.net/main_page/bel_piacere/PICT0006.JPG) of the ms) as well as in several keyboard works ([*Toccate*](http://www.ascarlatti2010.net/main_page/bel_piacere/p_scarlatti_toccata.jpg)) also in the Milan Conservatory library.

The manuscript score bears no indication of date or place of performance, but a reference to Partenope in the text of the incomplete Aria 23 indicates that it was written for Naples. (Partenope was the mythological siren credited with the foundation of that city.) In this aria Amore expresses the hope that Diana may give birth to offspring, now that she has found her handsome companion and set aside her love of hunting. The goddess Diana therefore was a covert allusion to an aristocratic lady at Naples, and thus the serenata was an *epithalamium*, or entertainment honoring a bride and bridegroom. Their identities, however, remain to be discovered.