Piccinni – Catone in Utica (2007)

1. Act I 2. Act II 3. Act III   Catone - Charles Reid Cesare - Robert Crowe Marzia - Cornelia Ptassek Fulvio - Marina Ivanova Emilia - Iris Kupke Arbace - Yanyu Guo   Orchester des Nationaltheaters Mannheim Reinhard Goebel - conductor   3. Februar 2007 in Nationaltheater Mannheim

Piccinni's setting follows the second version of Metastasio's text (see Catone in utica above), in which the suicide of Cato (tenor) takes place offstage. The opera may have been written for Naples, but no libretto has survived. --- oxfordindex.oup.com

Niccolo Piccinni was one of the most important composers working in the second half of the eighteenth century. His career in Italy and Paris spanned forty years and several style changes. The libretto for Catone in Utica was an early and controversial work (Rome, 1728) by the century's dominant librettist, Pietro Metastasio. Early audiences objected to the humiliating spectacle of the dying Catone in the tragic final scenes. Metastasio himself revised it, bringing it into line with prevailing taste, though he registered his preference for the original version by publishing it in the Paris edition of 1780-82. Piccinni's opera, composed in Naples and performed in Mannheim in 1770 without benefit of the composer's presence, offers layers of additions and revisions in the music as well as in the libretto. It invites comparison with Johann Christian Bach's identically titled opera on the same libretto produced in Naples in 1761 and poses questions of possible borrowings. Three of its interpreters later sang in Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Idomeneo. Anton Raaff, who sang the title role in both Bach's and Piccinni's operas, was Mozart's Idomeneo, Dorothea Wendling (Marzia) sang Ilia, and Elisabeth Wendling (Emilia) sang Elettra. ---thefreelibrary.com

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