



THE TEATRO SANT'ANGELO AT THE TIME OF ANTONIO VIVALDI (1700-1740) International Conference

Fondazione Ugo e Olga Levi, Fondazione Giorgio Cini
Venice, 16 –18 November 2023

Scientific committee:

- Research group “La drammaturgia musicale a Venezia (1678-1792)”, Fondazione Ugo e Olga Levi, Venice;
<https://www.fondazionelevi.it/ricerca/la-drammaturgia-musicale-a-venezia-1678-1792/>
- Istituto Italiano Antonio Vivaldi, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice;
<https://www.cini.it/istituti-e-centri/antonio-vivaldi>
- Research group “WoVen”, Norwegian University of Science and Technology – NTNU;
<https://www.ntnu.edu/music/woven>

The Teatro Sant’Angelo occupied a unique place in the operatic landscape of Venice in the first half of the 18th century. The theatre was built in 1676 by architect Francesco Santurini, who was also its first manager. Unlike other Venetian theatres, the Teatro Sant’Angelo was never managed directly by the owners, the families of Capello and Marcello. Its history saw many a name alternate in the management of the theatre, including that of Antonio Vivaldi. Archival sources document this history and its many legal wars; they illuminate not only the history of this theatre as a ‘business’, but also its repertory and generally the practice of opera in Venice in the 18th century.

This conference focuses attention on operatic practice at the Teatro Sant’Angelo from the beginning of the century until the late 1730s. This time frame includes the years of Antonio Vivaldi’s involvement with the theatre. Many aspects of Vivaldi’s practice as an opera composer *cum* organiser, director and producer of his own operas and those of others are still unclear. These activities were so intimately connected that it is often difficult to distinguish between revivals of his own works, arrangements of other composers’ works (for which he may have written new recitatives to suit a new cast), or pasticci, as well as the degree of involvement that he had in each production.



To clarify Vivaldi's and other operisti's activities at the Teatro Sant'Angelo will cast light on the practice of opera at a time of change. These are the years that saw the 'birth' of the comic intermezzo, the years dominated by librettists such as Zeno, Silvani, Lalli, Salvi and the so called 'first reform' of opera; the years that saw the influx of singers and composers from the south of Italy to Venice, and the massive spreading of 'Italian' opera beyond the Alps.

These were important years in the cultural history of women too. Maria Gaetana Agnesi's defense of women's learning (1727) – a landmark in the public Enlightened discourse about women – and the first documented female authorial voice on the (public) stage of Venice, that of Luisa Bergalli, highlight the growing visibility of women in the public arena. The commercial theatres of Venice functioned as a versatile medium for shaping public opinion about women. To explore the practice of 'operatic' women as opera singers, managers, patrons, librettists and objects of the spectators' gaze, will enrich our understanding of operatic practice in Venice in the 18th century and illuminate the ways in which opera offered women opportunities for agency, autonomy and social mobility.

The conference will include three principal sessions:

1. *The Teatro Sant'Angelo during the first half of the 18th century*. Coordinated by the research group "La drammaturgia musicale a Venezia (1678-1792)", Fondazione Ugo e Olga Levi, Venice;
2. *Antonio Vivaldi impresario at the Sant'Angelo*. Coordinated by the Istituto Italiano Antonio Vivaldi, Fondazione Cini, Venice;
3. *Women at the Teatro Sant'Angelo*. Coordinated by the research group "WoVen", Norwegian University of Science and Technology – NTNU;

We welcome papers within these thematic areas related to the Teatro Sant'Angelo:

- The Teatro Sant'Angelo and the Venetian theatre system
- Vivaldi impresario and opera producer
- Female singers and the representation of femininity
- Hiring of singers and cross-gender casting
- Dramaturgies of dramma per musica and music theatre
- Sources and methodologies for the history of theatre
- Performance practice
- Staging, acting practices and performativity
- Patrons and patronesses
- Female audiences, public opinion and reception history

