



fondazione
GIORGIO CINI ^{onlus}

Lettera da San Giorgio

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Editorial

During the press conference to present the Foundation's activities for 2004, in Milan last November, I pointed out several times how the Giorgio Cini Foundation cannot consider itself to be immune from the pressure of changes in society.

Today any cultural activity is expected to reveal its "usefulness", in the widest and loftiest sense of the word, by contributing to the growth and integration of the community. Intellectual and moral ideas thus must also be translated into practical objectives, and resources must be used in the best way possible to obtain those objectives.

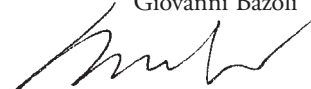
In this situation, support for culture cannot be given by public authorities alone. It is absolutely vital that private companies also take part through growing a commitment. This means going beyond the concept of simply sponsoring to the realisation that their task is a genuine ethical and moral duty.

In this sense, the successful initiative called "Gli Amici di San Giorgio" is an exemplary case of how relations can be created between private enterprises and cultural institutions. The "Amici di San Giorgio" are a small caring group of companies or institutions, represented by their leaders, providing support for the multifarious activities of the Giorgio Cini Foundation with the aim of developing mutually beneficial relations and the prospect of fruitful long-term collaboration. The brand names of these companies will appear in all official Foundation communication. Furthermore, three days every year the "Amici" can make use of the spaces in the Giorgio Cini Foundation monumental premises to organise initiatives in line with the values of the Foundation and in keeping with the image the companies wish to communicate.

Seven leading names have agreed to take part in the campaign: Alitalia, Banco Popolare di Verona e Novara, Cerved Business Information, Fondazione Prada, Gruppo Caltagirone, Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso, Lazard & Co. In addition to these seven are two long-standing friends of the Giorgio Cini Foundation: Banca Intesa and Fondazione Cariplo. This new approach to seeking partners does not change the essence of the Foundation. Indeed, it suggests a more modern interpretation of its role. And it is thanks to the renewed interpretation of its own role and its own needs that the Foundation can continue to provide a "safe haven" for thinkers, scientists, humanists and artists as a centre of culture and civilisation. In this way it will also continue to enjoy the worldwide fame for excellent scholarly standards built up through its activities pursued for over half a century.

President

Giovanni Bazoli



Main Future Activities



Renzo Biasion, *View of the Athens Acropolis*,
Giorgio Cini Foundation

Art at the Palazzo Cini, San Vio

Exhibition *Memories of war and prison: Renzo Biasion's drawings from the Giorgio Cini Foundation*

27 March – 30 May

Venice, Palazzo Cini Gallery, San Vio

This exhibition at the Palazzo Cini Gallery is dedicated to Renzo Biasion (1914-1996), who in the late 1980s presented the Giorgio Cini Foundation with a collection of drawings and watercolours – around seventy works – dating from 1941 to 1944.

The collection of drawings is unique, important documentation of a key stage in Biasion's human and artistic development. They are in fact mental notes, drawings, impressions and sketches made when the artist was a soldier on the Albanian and Greek fronts and then during a period spent as a prisoner of war in Holland, Poland and Germany.

The works are part of a much larger *corpus*, partly destroyed after the liberation of Italy on 8 September 1943, and partly lost. From the years of war and imprisonment, the works on show thus survived the troubled events during and after the war. Together with his memoirs – mostly published in the books *Tempi Bruciati* (1948) and *Sagapò* (1953) – they are precious documents enabling us to reconstruct historically and artistically important events which deeply influenced the artist.



A 20th-century Chinese poster

Study Conference *China and the challenges of the 21st century*

in collaboration with Ca' Foscari University, Venice

(Department of Eastern Asian Studies, Degree Course in Languages and Legal and Economic Institutions of Eastern Asia and Project CampusOne, Degree Course for Translators and Interpreters)

1 – 2 April

Venice, Island of San Giorgio Maggiore

On 1-2 April 2004 the “Venice and the East” Institute will hold two study days on the theme of “China and the challenges of the 21st century”. The proceedings will be divided into two seminars open to the public. In the first seminar – entitled “Science and Society in Contemporary China: Biotechnologies and Bioethics in the People's Republic of China” – experts from scientific and humanist disciplines will illustrate in a multi-

disciplinary approach the ethical and social implications of the current rapid developments in the biotechnologies in China. They will also deal with the philosophical and cultural background to the debate on bioethics and its most direct repercussions at international level. The aim of the second seminar – “China in transition: transformations in the legal, economic, and politico-institutional field” – is to encourage thinking and an exchange of views on how the processes of modernisation in China and globalisation have influenced the legal, economic and politico-institutional system in the People’s Republic of China.



Early 20th-century *Mevlevi* Dervishes accompanied by a *ney*

Workshop on the Ottoman-Turkish *Ney*

1 – 3 April

in collaboration with “Cesare Pollini” Conservatory, Padua
Padua, “Cesare Pollini” Conservatory

Thanks to an agreement with the “Cesare Pollini” Conservatory, Padua, and Ca’ Foscari University, Venice, the Intercultural Institute of Comparative Music Studies begins its instrumental courses for 2004 with its first ever workshop on the Ottoman-Turkish *ney* (reed flute). The workshop will be held in the Department of Ethnomusicology at the “Cesare Pollini” Conservatory, Padua, under the guidance of the well-known *neyzen* Stéphane Gallet, assisted by Giovanni De Zorzi.

Thousands of years old, over the centuries the *ney* became the only wind instrument to be used in the *ensembles* of classical Persian, Arab and Ottoman-Turkish music.

From the 10th century AD the *ney* was one of the few instruments used in the *Sufi* ceremony called *samâ’*, (“listening, or audition”). During this ceremony the participants listened to music and poetry with the aim of reaching moods, which may be defined as ecstasy or more precisely “enstasy”. In the 13th century the *ney* began to play a special musical and symbolic role in the confraternity of the *Sufi* called *Mevlevi*, better known in the West as the confraternity of the “whirling dervishes”, based on the example of the *Sufi* poet Jalâl-ud-Dîn Rumî (Balkh, 1207 – Konya, 1273), who wrote in *Mevlâna* Persian.

Stéphane Gallet is a *ney* maker and player. After studying Gregorian chant with Iégor Retznikoff, in the late 1970s he met the great Turkish *neyzen*, Kudsi Erguner and became his student and assistant. In the second half of the 1980s, Gallet began to cut and make *ney* and became the leading maker for all European *ney* players. Indeed, most perform on instruments made by Gallet. At the same time he set out on a career as a soloist. He also continued to teach the *ney* and Ottoman *Sufi* music at the Centre Mevlana in Paris, founded by Erguner. Gallet has gradually developed his own very recognisable personal sound, approach and style with the *ney*, which although highly original remains within the traditional canons.



Jean-Etienne Lyotard, *Marie Justine, composer and wife of the celebrated actor Favart*, Winterthur, Oskar Reinhart collection

Music and Gender Project: Women Composers Prize

2 April

Venice, Island of San Giorgio Maggiore

As part of the *Music and Gender Project*, the Institute for Music, in collaboration with other Veneto and Venetian institutions, has announced the third edition of the international “Competition for Women Composers”. The works of the finalists will be performed in the Sala Barbantini at the Giorgio Cini Foundation by musicians chosen by the MusicArtVenice centre. At the end of the presentation of the finalists’ compositions there will be a concert by the flutist Federica Lotti, who will play *Prima Sequenza* by Luciano Berio, *Ohne Worte* by the Parisian composer Betsy Jolas and two pieces for piccolo entitled *Nidi* by Franco Donatoni. The event will thus also be a fond tribute to the composers Berio and Donatoni, who died recently.

The international jury, made up of the musicians Fischer, Furlani, Maguire, Pasquotti and Zanettovich, will then announce the winning work, which will be given a second performance.

International Study Conference: Venice, the Fourth Crusade and the Arts

3 – 4 May

Venice, Island of San Giorgio Maggiore



To mark the eighth centenary of the Fourth Crusade (1204–2004), the Institute for Art History has organised an International Study Conference on the arts from Venice to Constantinople in the 12th-14th century.

Leading experts in the field will exchange views on the main themes in this topic ranging from the relations between Byzantium and Italy to the Mediterranean movements of the arts and the fascinating theme of the ‘spolia’ and ‘exemplar’.

Parallel to the conference, an exhibition will be held in the Palazzo Cini Gallery at San Vio, featuring some significant works specially chosen to illustrate the conference theme.



Paolo Paruta,
Della perfezione della vita politica,
Venice 1579, frontispiece

Historical Studies Seminar: *Writings by, to, and on Government*

10 – 12 May

Venice, Island of San Giorgio Maggiore

This year the Institute for the History of the Venetian State and Society continues with its now twenty-five-year-old annual spring appointment for aspiring young scholars and experts focused on new problematic approaches to an historiographic topic or problem, suitable for thematic analysis. As usual, the seminar is organised in five half-days chaired by five co-ordinators, one for each topic. The general title for the papers and discussion at the seminar is *Writings by, to, and on Government*. This may sound a little pedantic, but it seemed the best way of summing up in a phrase the effort to understand and distinguish between the formulas directly coined by government, those used by subjects in appealing to governments, and lastly the language used by those who reflect on the forms and contents of the exercise of power in Medieval and Modern Italy. This thinking on government may be by those directly involved in various area of government or outside it: i.e. the governed subjects, foreign ambassadors or simply foreigners and temporary residents.



Louis Boulanger, *The Virtuoso seen from behind*,
Déveria collection

“Egida Sartori” Early Music Courses: *Rediscovering Virtuosity*

12 – 16 July

Venice, Island of San Giorgio Maggiore

This year’s Early Music Course has been inspired by the idea of an exemplary ‘return’-to the *virtuoso*, by “beginning with Paganini” and his music for guitar – i.e. the *private virtuosity* of the celebrated musician – and the sphere of research into the reasons and values of the typical sensibility of *romantic virtuosity*.

In the main European languages all the adnouns describing an exceptionally gifted musician who enchants and amazes with his or her prodigious playing are derived from the Latin *virtus*.

A *virtuoso* was originally a musician or “divine creator” – or no less divine performer – who, aware of the values expressed by his art, added the capacity to demonstrate his own extraordinary skill.

Later the word *virtuoso* came to mean a performer inclined to over-indulge in technical brilliance to show off his skill. In this way *virtuoso* gradually came to have far from positive connotations and uses, and implied interpretative shortcomings in musicians too willing “to please”.

Despite this, the pyrotechnic element or hyperbolic performing has always been an indispensable requirement for any concert soloist.



Janos Jankò, *The furious virtuoso*, Liszt totally absorbed in the intricacies of an extremely difficult passage

“Beginning again (today) from Paganini”, the virtuoso of virtuosos, emblematic and proverbial because of his “skill on the guitar and violin” means starting from the myth which conditioned the training of another exemplary virtuoso, such as Liszt, but also pianists who suffer from and for virtuoso inventions, like Schumann. This is the task entrusted to the guitar of a latter-day virtuoso, Pavel Steidl, to investigate the wealth of meanings the word contains and summarises. Or, as Berlioz was fond of saying in trying to grasp the ungraspable, catch from the vibrations of the strings of a small instrument, “that sense of performance, that genius, that spirit, that vital spark which, when it dies out, leaves only darkness and darkness alone”.

Course for Italianists: *A Journey into 20th-century Italian Literature*

In collaboration with *Itals* Summer School for teaching Italian as a foreign language, Ca' Foscari University, Venice, Language Faculty
26 – 30 July

Venice, Island of San Giorgio Maggiore



Eugenio Montale and his wife Drusilla Tanzi at San Giorgio in the 1950s

The Course for Italianists in 2004 will be organised in collaboration with the Language Faculty at Ca' Foscari University, Venice.

As the title suggests – “A Journey into 20th-century Italian Literature” – the course wishes to explore the most significant writers and works in Italian literature in the last century. This is no attempt at an abstract historiographical reconstruction, which would inevitably require more time and be in danger of pushing the texts into the background. Here the choice has been to focus on a dozen great books – fundamental works which have deeply influenced 20th-century literary Italy – and to outline a possible “canon”, to some extent already established but partly still uncertain. Given by leading specialists in the field, the lessons are divided into two stages: lectures on the great books of 20th-century Italian literature (from the *Coscienza di Zeno* to *Adalgisa*, *L'allegria*, *La bufera e altro*, *Così è se vi pare*, *Vocativo*, etc.) and seminars in which short texts from these works will be analysed. The idea is to offer an Italian and foreign public an up-to-date thorough guide to the indispensable books for anyone interested in contemporary Italian culture.

Collections

Round Europe with Art Works from the Cini Foundation



Vigoroso da Siena, *The Twelve Apostles*,
Giorgio Cini Foundation

From the outset, Vittorio Cini's love of works of art was accompanied by an interest – quite natural in any passionate amateur and connoisseur – in the personality of the artist behind every painting, sculpture or artefact. This is evidenced by his encounters with the great art historians of his day. They were invited or simply welcomed to visit the art collections in the Venetian palace at San Vio – great names like Bernard Berenson and Federico Zeri. Those rooms with their paintings, sculptures, bronzes, furniture, tapestries, porcelain and silver offered the onlooker's gaze almost a "narrative of beauty". It was natural that guests establish a dialogue on the works of beauty, following the thread of affinities of taste, as well as a desire to study in greater depth. The interest in specialist studies aimed at identifying an artist or an exact circle of production arose from the living presence of the works of art. It also influenced the Institute for Art History, which Vittorio Cini wished to set up on the island of San Giorgio. Duly founded in June 1954, the Institute immediately held two exhibitions in its first year: *15th- and 16th-century Venetian Bindings* and, most importantly, *One*

Hundred Ancient Venetian Drawings. The latter included works from the personal graphic collections of the first director, Giuseppe Fiocco. They were later added to the Foundation's collections with the aim of making them available to scholars.

Then in 1960, thanks to the generosity of Vittorio Cini, systematic collecting began. It reflected the research and interests of the Institute: miniatures, antique books, drawings and engravings were added to the Foundation's art collections. Then in 1984, Cini's daughter, Yana Alliata di Montereale very kindly presented his collection of Tuscan School paintings, sculptures and art objects. They can now be admired in the residence at San Vio. In 1989, another daughter of Count Vittorio Cini, Ylda decided to contribute works to be displayed in the same palace: a group of fourteen paintings by Ferrarese Renaissance masters. This generous donation was very significant because the paintings came from Vittorio Cini's favourite group, dedicated to the figurative culture of his native region. This is the background then to the presence of the rich and varied art heritage at San Giorgio and San Vio. The collections were then given a suitable setting in the spaces created in the very refined restoration by Nino Barbantini, and even

more importantly, made available to specialist scholars, since they are considered to be such a fertile field for knowledge.

This explains why when a single “fragment” of these collections is loaned for an important high-standard exhibition it provides an opportunity for several levels of interpretation: from re-creating the privileged public-artwork relationship in excellent conditions for consultation to the possibility of making new direct comparisons and acquiring new critical data. It also provides an opportunity to reflect on the history of the collection itself from its formation and the choices of Vittorio Cini, which reveal a definite taste for beauty in all its manifestations.

This reconstructing the history of the works requested on loan from the Foundation from 2002 to 2003 by a dozen of European institutions for major exhibitions offers a chance to assay the cultural wealth and excellent scholarly standards characterising the collection as well as catch up with new developments in critical studies.

A fine initial letter on parchment – depicting the *Twelve Apostles* divided into four groups within the letter M – features in the exhibition *Duccio. The origins of Sienese painting* (Siena, Santa Maria della Scala-Museo dell’Opera). This miniature is part of a major collection of 150 cut-out initials and illuminated sheets, originally in Mediaeval and Renaissance liturgical books, collected by the famous publisher and bibliophile, Ulrico Hoepli. Vittorio Cini acquired the collection in 1939, pursuing the taste for the *primitivi* that characterised the interests of antiquarian-bibliophile circles at the time. The idea of including this miniature, defined by the scholars as a “declination of Cimabue” in the context of the very rich exhibition focused on the figure of Duccio di Buoninsegna and his followers, confirms the recent attribution to the late period of Vigoroso da Siena (the ninth decade of the 13th century) and allows us to compare it – on the basis of the refined use of colours – with another Cini miniature (*The Freeing of St Peter*). Although not included in the exhibition, according to the writer of the catalogue entry, this work shows the influence of another follower of Duccio – Guido di Graziano. A selection of 140 pieces from the magnificent collection of printed figurative books was included in an exhibition at the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana on 15th- and 16th-century Illustrated Printed Books, generating lively specialist interest. Acquired from one of the major scholars and collectors in the field, Victor Massena, Prince of Essling, and further enhanced with the collection of the dealer and bibliophile Tammara De Marinis, the exhibits (high standard books, very rare single sheets and works for daily use) splendidly document the development of printing, the qualitative standard of the artists and the taste of the patrons. The exhibition thus provided an indirect but no less real portrait of Renaissance society in Venice and Italy.

The album of Venetian caricatures by Anton Maria Zanetti – a leading dealer and collector in Venice, London, and Paris, as well as a skilful draughtsman and engraver – has always aroused constant interest in various places since arriving at San Giorgio in 1969 as Vittorio Cini’s splendid way of acknowledging the work carried out in the field of antique graphic studies by the Institute for Art History. Conceived for the world of



Anton Maria Zanetti, *Farinelli in evening dress*,
Giorgio Cini Foundation



Ercole de'Roberti, *Saint Jerome*,
Palazzo Cini Gallery at San Vio

opera, the exhibition entitled *The music rooms. Artists and musicians in Bologna from the 16th to 19th century* (Bologna, the Palazzo di Re Enzo and the Palazzo del Podestà) featured the iconography of the virtuoso Carlo Brioschi called Farinelli in two celebrated brown-ink portraits: the singer is portrayed dressed for the stage and a ball, but Zanetti's witty brushwork transforms into a kind of logo that "extraordinary talent" which had made such a deep impression on his contemporaries. In a much cruder interpretative key, the twelve engravings by Hogarth together with seven caricatures by Zanetti were chosen to describe some aspects of the *Great Theatre Of The World. The soul and face in the 18th-century* (Milan, Palazzo Reale).

A particularly important part of Vittorio Cini's collections of graphic art is the almost complete engravings by Giambattista Piranesi: thus the major exhibition on *Rembrandt. Paintings, engravings and reflections on 17th- and 18th-century Italy* (Rome, Scuderie del Quirinale) also testifies to the tormented imagination of the Venetian artist through the chiaroscuro poetics of the two drawings from the *Carceri d'invenzione* of 1761: *the Frontispiece and The giant wheel*.

Lastly, important recognition for the leading groups of work in the San Vio Gallery: Ferrarese and Tuscan paintings. The first were excellently dealt with by Andrea Bacchi in the 1990 catalogue, but the three small paintings by Ercole de' Roberti (*St Catherine of Alexandria, St Jerome and St George*) painted for the pilasters of the Griffoni polypych in the church of San Petronio, Bologna, are undoubtedly of great interest, especially since they were included in the context of an exhibition (*A singular Renaissance. The Este court in Ferrara*: Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts) exploring the collecting history of an exceptional dynasty. The reconstruction of the great altarpiece, dismantled in 1731, was by Roberto Longhi (1934), who realised that a series of saints scattered in various collections were images that Ercole de' Roberti had included in the side panels of the small pilasters. Vittorio Cini was obviously equally keen and determined to reconstruct a celebrated fragment of Ferrara figurative history in his collection, since it took almost fourteen years (1940–1954) to find the Griffoni panels.

A second celebrated Ferrara Renaissance master, Cosmè Tura appeared in an exhibition in Athens (*In the light of Apollo. The Italian Renaissance and Greece*) with an unusual St George, depicted like a centurion, convincingly deemed to be an internal element from a small altar used for private devotion. In 1838 the St George was part of the remarkable collection of Ferrara works owned by the Marchese Costabili who had successfully attempted to reconstruct – albeit only for a few decades – an art story already become legendary.

A very lyrical and intense *Madonna with Child, Saint, Angels and Donor* by Filippo Lippi, in excellent condition, leads us to the section of Tuscan paintings, described almost twenty years ago by Federico Zeri and Mauro Natale in a rigorous critical catalogue. Federico Zeri stressed in particular how the "vaguely Alberti-like" interior setting is unprecedented in 15th-century Italian painting and highlights the collecting history of the precious panels, recorded as early as the late 16th century as being in the collection

of the Grand Duke Ferdinando I of Tuscany. In the catalogue entry for the exhibition *Masaccio and the origins of the Renaissance* (San Giovanni Valdarno), Miklós Boskovits accompanies us in exploring this very rare painting, describing the language as being “learned, ornate and measured on the antique” and inspired by the great model of the Brancacci Chapel. Significantly, an inventory of the Tacoli Canacci Florentine collection, where the painting had ended up in the late 18th century, mentions it as being a work by Masaccio.

The painting entitled *Judgement of Paris* by Sandro Botticelli and his workshop, was requested by the Musée du Luxembourg, Paris, (*Botticelli, de Laurent Le Magnifique à Savonarole*). Probably a decorative element in the furnishings of a wealthy Florentine Renaissance residence, this work was also positioned as a wall frieze in the San Vio Gallery. The new catalogue entry reconfirms the opinions of Zeri and Natal, pointing out that in Florence in 1949 the painting – moreover rarely mentioned by scholars – was chosen to appear in an exhibition celebrating Lorenzo the Magnificent.

Chiara Ceschi



Sandro Botticelli and workshop, *Judgement of Paris*,
Palazzo Cini Gallery at San Vio

Portraits of Patrons

Renzo Biasion, artist and patron



Renzo Biasion in front of the Parthenon (1939)

Renzo Biasion (Treviso 1914 – Florence 1996) had a complex personality which came through in a number of very varied aspects. A painter, engraver, writer, art critic and journalist, he distinguished himself in a special way in each of these fields. To preserve the memory of his art work, in 1989 Renzo Biasion presented the Giorgio Cini Foundation with a collection of drawings and watercolours – around seventy-five works – dating from 1941-1944.

His artistic background was typically Veneto. He began his career in Treviso, where he attended evening drawing classes, and Venice, where he graduated from the art high school and frequented the studio of the painter Juti Ravenna. It was this major Treviso painter who initiated the young Renzo Biasion to the study of Matisse and Picasso, encouraging him to combine the evocative expressive power of colour with a solid formal approach. Renzo Biasion began exhibiting in 1939 and 1940 in some collective shows

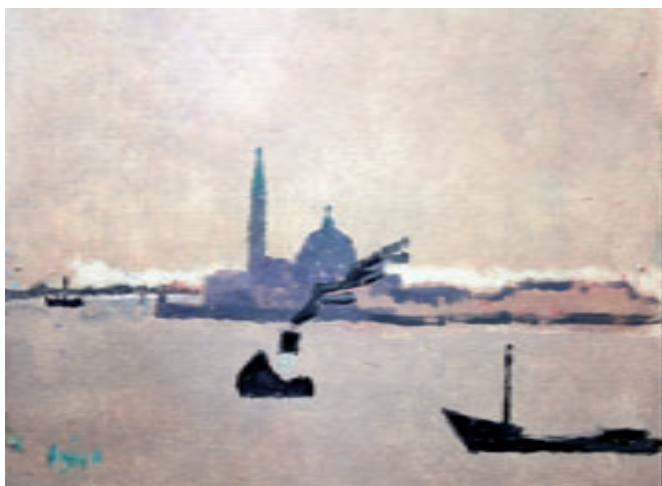
at the Opera Bevilacqua La Masa, Venice. But called to arms, he had to brusquely interrupt this activity. At the outbreak of war, he was sent to the Brenner Pass, and then on to the Greek-Albanian front and subsequently the island of Crete, where he was stationed for several months. After the liberation of Italy on 8 September 1943, he was imprisoned in Holland, Poland, and later Germany. This was the experience that was to affect him most harshly and deeply, as is clearly revealed by the collection of drawings and watercolours, made from 1941–1944, presented to the Giorgio Cini Foundation. Now the drawings will be shown in an exhibition entitled *Memories of war and prison: Renzo Biasion's drawings from the Giorgio Cini Foundation*, at the Palazzo Cini Gallery, San Vio from March to April. The works are divided into four groups following the various stages in Renzo Biasion's tough war experience.

The first group consists of the military drawings made by the young infantry lieutenant on the Greek-Albanian front. These works are the only drawings to survive, as the artist himself explains: "they [the drawings of that period] were lost. except for some (around 731), which by I gifted to officers in my division". The drawings do not portray war scenes or actions or individual deeds of heroism, destruction and horror, but rather the soldiers' everyday life. Renzo Biasion had no heroic ideal of war and his participation in the war and surrender is seen in fatalistic term, but without ever forgoing his own humanity.

The next section consists of the drawings and watercolours done by Renzo Biasion during the long march of occupation in Greece – natural landscapes of places like Olympia, Glifada, Piraeus, and the city of Athens with the Acropolis.

Although Biasion crossed Greece with the occupation troops and also witnessed the arrests of partisans, he never depicted these episodes. Refusing “to see” the horrors of war, he sought to find a way of surviving them and then concentrated on the quest for “beauty”. Renzo Biasion chose to draw landscapes and views, seeking to communicate the feeling of his visions, and the intense pleasure experienced from the contact with nature. Glancing through the drawings made in continental Greece we almost find a travelogue in which the artists wished to note on small sheets in a rapid but precise language the stages on his journey, so that he could later bring them back to life through memory. The largest group in the donation are the drawings made in Crete. After having participated in the advance on Greece, Biasion was transferred to the island of Crete, where he commanded a detached platoon with the task of defending the German-held

airfield of Heraklion. In terms of emotional intensity and graphic quality, the outstanding works in this group of drawings made during his stay on Crete are undoubtedly the “gallery” of portraits of island children. These kids wandered round the soldiers trying to find something to eat or earn some money by doing small chores. They are depicted exactly as they appeared to the artist: wane, ragged, and hungry with the sombre disenchanted look of those who had to grow up fast in the face of daily hardship. They are the unwitting harmless victims of the ongoing war. But Biasion does not stress this aspect: he is more interested in rendering their untidiness, oversize clothes, physical aspect and irregular somatic traits. The last group of drawings consists of those made in prison at Meppen, Biala Podlaska and Nuremberg. After



Renzo Biasion, *Bacino di San Marco with San Giorgio Maggiore*, Florence, private collection

the liberation of Italy on 8 September 1943 Renzo Biasion shared the fate of the Siena Division. Captured by the Germans, he then crossed Greece, Bulgaria, Hungary, Austria and Germany on his way to prison in Holland, Poland and Germany. As the artist recalls “almost all the prison drawings were made in the concentration camps of Biala Podlaska and Nuremberg. Many of the sheets from this series of soldiers and camp views from the inside looking out were also lost or gifted to private individuals immediately after the war.”

In this group, some drawings stand out for the simple continuous thin line depicting figures and objects. Made with the pen point, these works are essential, melancholic with no shadow or volume, and stripped of any superfluous details, thus giving a sense of emptiness, fragility, and precariousness accurately expressing life in the huts of the *Lager*. On his return to Italy, Biasion began to paint again and in January 1947 exhibited a series of “Interiors” in the Piccola Galleria, Venice, run by Roberto Nonveiller.

During the war Renzo Biasion had also begun writing, jotting down his memories, thoughts and reflections in small notebooks or on scraps of paper. In 1948 he published *Tempi bruciati*, his prison diary, which was greeted very favourably by the critics. The same year he showed a painting at the Venice Biennale, where he returned in



Poster for the film *Mediterraneo*, directed by Gabriele Salvatores



Renzo Biasion, *View of Argos*,
Giorgio Cini Foundation

1950 with three drawings. He then moved to Turin and began to work as a special reporter for the *Gazzetta del Popolo*. In 1953 he published a collection of short stories, *Sagapò* (Greek for “I love you”), with a foreword by Elio Vittorini in the prestigious Einaudi series “Gettoni”. This literary work – revived at the beginning of the 1990s after being the inspiration for the very popular film *Mediterraneo* by Gabriele Salvatores – was an immediate success and translated into various language, thus bringing Biasion international fame as a writer. At the same time he was appointed as the art critic for the weekly magazine *Oggi*. In the early 1950s he dedicated himself to his artistic activities again, which had never actually been interrupted, and held a major one-man exhibition at the Bussola Gallery, Turin (1953). His painting has a solid constructive formal approach shaped by a sharp awareness of graphic values and careful brushwork. His favourite themes are portraits, figures, urban landscapes, still lifes and interiors. From 1957 to 1971 he lived in Bologna and Emilia, where he continued to paint “peripheries”, giving rise to the series entitled the “Red Houses”. From the late 1950s to the early 1970s he painted a series of “Nights”. In 1963 an anthology of “Small Interiors”, was published by Scheiwiller with an introduction by Sergio Solmi. Meantime Biasion continued his writing, publishing several books, including: *Pasqualino Locoforte* (1965), *Lobbiettore di coscienza* (1966), and *Venezia lontana* (1981). He was appointed a member of the Accademia dei Cherubini, Florence, in 1966 and the same year he was awarded a prize at the *Exhibition of Figurative Art* held in Milan. In 1966 he was also appointed to the chair for figurative drawing at the Florence art high school. He moved to Florence in 1971 and continued to work there until 1979. He was then appointed a member of the historic Accademia delle Arti e del Disegno. In the early 1970s he began the series of “Mediterranean Notebooks”: luminous, limpid watercolours made during long travels from Venice to the Adriatic coast, Apulia, Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica and, later, to Liguria, Campania (including Ischia), Florence and Tuscany. For a number of years he was a special correspondent and collaborator for the Bologna-based daily newspaper, *Il Resto del Carlino*. He also wrote for the monthly publications *Arte* and *Antiquariato*. He was a member of the Association of Veneto Engravers, mainly working on etching. Recently, Giselda Benasciutti, wishing to honour the memory of her husband, generously donated 101 of his engravings to the A. Davoli Print Collection in the Biblioteca Panizzi, Reggio Emilia.

Giovanni Bianchi

Presences on San Giorgio

Homage to Vittore Branca



Vittore Branca at the Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa, holding his first book *Il Cantare trecentesco e il Boccaccio del "Filostrato" e del "Teseida"*, published by Sansoni (1936)

In September a photographic and documentary exhibition entitled *Homage to Vittore Branca* opened at the Palazzo Cini Gallery, San Vio. The exhibition was organised by the Giorgio Cini Foundation and curated by the Institute for Art History to celebrate the ninetieth birthday of the illustrious scholar. At the same time the exhibition illustrates the most significant stages in the cultural history of the Foundation, of which Branca was one of the most active promoters.

Divided into thematic sections seeking to reconstruct the human and professional story of the scholar by focusing on the key events in his life, the exhibition documents his contacts with leading figures in 20th-century Italian and international cultural and political life. A highly charismatic figure, Vittore Branca was in charge of the Foundation created by Vittorio Cini for almost fifty years.

In August 1952 San Giorgio hosted a major event, the "UNESCO Artistic Congress", promoted by Vittore Branca, who during this international meeting began his relationship with the Giorgio Cini Foundation.

From then on, Professor Branca always occupied leading positions in the Venetian institution, with duties involving great responsibilities. Under the presidency of Angelo Spanio (1953–1976), he was appointed general secretary, a position he held from 1953 to 1988. In addition to being vice-president for twenty-three years (1972–1995) he was president for a period of almost two years beginning in 1995. Appointed in the 1950s as the director of the Centre for Culture and Civilisation, the hub of all the cultural activities pursued by the Foundation, Branca promoted and collaborated in the organisation of exhibitions, conferences, international culture courses, plays and concerts.

In the form of the pictures showing him at the side of illustrious guests to the Foundation, the exhibition gives a small sample of the very interesting dense correspondence with protagonists in the intellectual world and the major publications he edited. All this material is explicitly testifies of the role and importance of Vittore Branca in Venetian, Italian and international cultural life but also in the history of the Giorgio Cini Foundation.

His multifaceted polymath capacity to build up relations is documented by the large number of pictures selected from all those in the Foundation archives. In fact the forty-one photos enable the visitor to reconstruct the life and career of Vittore Branca, involving contacts with popes, heads of state, statesmen and international scholars – a selection of episodes important for his personal history, and inextricably bound up with the most significant events in the Foundation.

The exhibition begins with an image from 1936 depicting a very youthful Vittore



Vittore Branca accompanying the Italian prime minister Alcide De Gasperi on a visit to the Giorgio Cini Foundation in September 1953



Vittore Branca and the American poet Ezra Pound, with his companion Olga Rudge, at the Giorgio Cini Foundation

Branca at the Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa. It was here the scholar set out on his career, and in the photo he is holding his first publication, *Il cantare trecentesco e il Boccaccio del "Filostrato" e del "Teseida"*. Other images from the 1950s depict Branca accompanying leading politicians of the day on official visits to the Giorgio Cini Foundation: prime minister Alcide De Gasperi (1953), the president of the republic Giovanni Gronchi, who came to Venice in 1958, and the senator Amintore Fanfani a year later.

In the same decade the photos document the official visits of illustrious figures, heads of state, spiritual guides and foreign ambassadors, mainly for the international conferences, always focused on highly topical themes. A photo from the late 1950s shows the Foundation directors in the Vatican visiting Pope John XXII, for the presentation of the book *San Lorenzo Giustiniani protopatriarca di Venezia*, published in 1959 and edited by the Foundation.

The 1960s begin with the visit of a number of eminent figures from the world of politics, such as defence minister, Giulio Andreotti in 1960, the president of the republic, Antonio Segni in 1962 and the prime minister Aldo Moro, in 1965. Vittore Branca was also one of the main sources of inspiration and promoters of the international culture course held annually by the Foundation. Some of the more significant photos portray him during the course in the company of leading philosophers, scientists and writers, such as Max Horkheimer, Roman Jakobson and Arthur Koestler.

In the 1970s the illustrious guests to the Cini Foundation included world figures like the Emperor of Ethiopia Haile Selassie, in November 1970. The next photo of 1972 captures the gift made by Pope Paul VI to the Foundation of a precious breast cross, once belonging to Pope Pius VII, who was elected in 1800 in the conclave actually held on the island of San Giorgio. Next to the photo recording this event is the cross, now preserved among the treasures of the Foundation.

Other images from this decade highlight the close links with the patriarch of Venice, Cardinal Marco Cè, of whom there is an autographed photo and the illustrious figures from the worlds of politics and culture who came to Venice for the seminars and conferences organised by the Venetian institution.

Vittore Branca was also a leading player when it came to organising the exhibitions and initiatives promoted by the Institute for Art History and its directors, first Giuseppe Fiocco and then Rodolfo Pallucchini. Thus, for example, in 1984 he attended the official opening of the Palazzo Cini Gallery at San Vio, along with major Italian art historians, including Federico Zeri.

There are also very many other important figures from the 1980s to the present-day: some of the pictures show the scholar beside leading politicians (such as Giovanni Spadolini, Bettino Craxi, Vincenzo Scotti and others) businessmen (Giovanni Agnelli), and cultural figures (like the writers Mario Soldati and Giorgio Bassani, the poet Ezra Pound and the painter Virgilio Guidi). Last in chronological order, are the illustrious visits by Pope John Paul II, and the president of the republic, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, who came to the foundation in September 2001.



The Ethiopian emperor, Haile Selassie I on a visit to the Giorgio Cini Foundation, accompanied by the prior of the abbey of San Giorgio, the mayor of Venice Giorgio Longo, and the secretary general Vittore Branca, on 13 November 1970

The second section of the exhibition consists of a selection of the most significant letters by Vittore Branca, evidence of his close links through work and friendship with some major figures in the 20th century. Among the writers we find André Malraux, the Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset and Giuseppe Prezzolini, while the leading Italian politicians include Aldo Moro, Pietro Ingrao and Giovanni Spadolini, and his links with the religious world are illustrated by his correspondence with cardinals Giambattista Montini and Karol Wojtyła. Other letters written by the Venetian musician Gian Francesco Malipiero and the film director Federico Fellini confirm Branca's interest in the world of music, theatre and cinema.

In the third and last section there is a compendium of publications by Vittore Branca, reflecting his own intense activity as a scholar, and other works which he edited for the Giorgio Cini Foundation.

Among his numerous writings (many translated into several languages) of fundamental importance are the works on St Francis, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Poliziano, Alfieri, Manzoni and various other aspects of Italian literature from the 13th century to the present day. Among his most recent books are: *Esopo toscano* (1989); *Esopo veneto* (1992); *Con amore volere. Narrar di mercatanti fra Boccaccio e Machiavelli* (1996); *Boccaccio visualizzato* (1999) and, lastly, *Protagonisti del Novecento* (2003), a collection of portraits of leading figures in political, cultural, social and religious life in the last century who had contacts with the illustrious scholar. Another key to interpreting his work is provided in the exhibition by an invaluable printed version (Venice 1492) of the *Decameron* by Boccaccio – Vittore Branca is one of the greatest living Boccaccio experts – and an autograph manuscript from the 13th century of Poliziano's *Miscellanea*, a work of fundamental importance in the history of humanist philology, once thought to be lost, and found by Branca himself, who published a critical edition of it in 1961.

Claudia Crosera



Vittore Branca meeting Pope John Paul II

Publications



Nello Forti Grazzini *Gli arazzi della Fondazione Giorgio Cini*

Marsilio Editori, Venice 2003

Illustrated with splendid colour plates, this book is the first systematic scholarly approach to the tapestries (15th to 18th century), previously in the Vittorio Cini collection and now preserved partly in the Giorgio Cini Foundation and partly in Monselice Castle, which since 1982 has been owned by the Veneto Region. The Cini tapestries form probably the largest of the few collections of antique tapestries put together in Italy in the 20th century. In an introductory essay the author reconstructs the creation of the collection by Vittorio Cini and the collecting history of the tapestries. He identifies the origin of the eighteen tapestries as being woven in Franco-Flemish, Flemish and French factories. The closely argued historical analysis of each piece is very interesting both in terms of the new results and fresh knowledge, which often turn out to be crucial for the study of many other fabrics in private Italian and European collections.



Filippo Maria Paladini *«Un caos che spaventa». Poteri, territori e religioni di frontiera nella Dalmazia della tarda età veneta*

Presente Storico. Saggi, no. 21

Marsilio Editori, Venice 2002

During the “reformist” years from the 1740s to 1790s the Venetian patriciate and the ruling circles of the “Double Province” of Dalmatia and Albania attempted to introduce various agricultural, administrative, community and legal reforms. The aim of the reforms was to integrate the new peripheries into the Venetian state, which in turn was by now on the periphery of the European stage and the world economy. Conditioned by Habsburg political and economic pressure and the model of the Croatian military territories, and driven by the international competition on the Austrian-Turkish-Venetian triple border, the reforms were thwarted by several factors: class friction in the provinces and in the *Dominante*, strong local resistance, contrasting constitutional

demands, and bitter rural and inter-religious conflicts. This led to the birth of new political languages. The study of the institutional dynamics and conflicts encapsulated in the sphere of law by the Venetian judicial methods provided an opportunity to compound the dichotomies. For various reasons in the 19th and 20th century through these dichotomies the rival historiographic traditions created rigid reconstructions of Venetian policies and conveyed a picture of a region fought over and often studied as a function of territorial claims.



Totalitarismo e totalitarismi

edited by Vittorio Strada
Presente Storico. Saggi, no. 25
Marsilio Editori, Venice 2003

A key concept for an understanding of 20th-century history, totalitarianism was at the centre of an intense ideological and historiographical debate. In the last decade, after the final crisis in Communism, thinking on totalitarianism, far from dying out, has been renewed thanks to the contributions of scholars from Central and Eastern Europe. The outcome of a meeting and exchange of views between Italian and Russian historians held at the Giorgio Cini Foundation (5 – 7 April 2001), the essays published in this book are a further stimulus for fresh research on a crucial aspect of our age.

Essays by Mario A. Cattaneo, Vadim Damié, Natal'ja Egorova, Nelly Komolova, Sergej Kulešov, Viktor Panejac, Irina Pavlova, Giorgio Petracchi, Vittorio Strada, Aleksandr Šubin, Nicola Tranfaglia, Victor Zaslavsky and Pier Giorgio Zunino.



«In quella parte del libro de la mia memoria». Verità e finzioni dell' «io» autobiografico

edited by Francesco Bruni
Presente Storico. Saggi, no. 26
Marsilio Editori, Venice 2003

While autobiography as a literary genre was born in the Modern age, speaking about oneself is as old as man and in the media society has enjoyed new, excessive popularity. Leaving aside this far too well-known modern aspect, the current collection of essays describes the art of drawing on the “book of memory”, and selects a rich series of examples from a very wealthy tradition – the Italian autobiography, with some incursions

into antiquity and European culture. “No such thing as autobiography exists, only art and lies.” There is no need to follow this provocative maxim to the letter to realise that autobiography is not necessarily the door to the secrets of a writer and the truth of the everyday. Indeed, autobiography may be seen as the place in which the self expands on his or her own merits, minimises or eliminates errors, distorts or conjures up events and feelings and even when sincere, considers a story or a milieu from a partial point of view. Moreover, literary fiction easily bends to autobiography, and autobiography, in turn, takes the guise of literature, so that invention and the hold on reality unveil a dialectic open to verifications full of surprises.

Essays by Luigi Alici, Gian Mario Anselmi, Lucia Battaglia Ricci, Andrea Battistini, Ugo Berti Arnoaldi, Francesco Bruni, Eugenio Burgio, Luciano Canfora, Giorgio Colussi, Arnaldo Di Benedetto, Michele Feo, Giuseppe Galasso, Elvio Guagnini, Giuseppe Langella, Gilberto Lonardi, Tina Matarrese, Jacques Misan-Montefiore, Paolo Murialdi, Jane Nystedt, Lucia Omacini, Emilio Pasquini, Gilberto Pizzamiglio, Mario Pozzi, Giorgio Pullini, Silvana Tamiozzo Goldmann, Maria Antonietta Terzoli, Sebastiano Vassalli, Claudia Villa, Roberto Vivarelli and Gabriella Zarri.



Central Asia. A decade of reforms, centuries of memories

edited by Giampiero Bellingeri and Giovanni Pedrini

Orientalia Venetiana, XV

Leo S. Olschki, Florence 2003

This book is a selection of the most significant papers given at the international conference organised a few years ago by “Venice and the East” Institute and the European Society for Central Asian Studies. The deep geopolitical and geo-economic changes that have affected and continue to affect Central Asia and its cultural identity, required considerable updating by the individual contributors and were supplemented by some fresh studies enhancing the three thematic sections in the book (“Space and Time in Central Asia History”, “Redrawing the Lines of Identity”, and “Reforms and Representations of Legitimacy”).

Saggi di: Saidakbar Saidovich Agzamkhodjaev, Jiří Bečka, Hansje Braam, Marc Vandamme, Suchandana Chatterjee, Paul Geiss, Manfred Lorenz, Lars-Erik Nyman, Giovanni Pedrini, Jadwiga Pstrusińska, Gianroberto Scarcia, Dov Yaroshevski, Mustafa Aydin, Giampaolo R. Capisani, M. Cristina Cesàro, Boris-Mathieu Petric, Raimjon H. Alimov, Elena Boikova, Guido M. R. Franzinetti, Lilia Moshina, Sevar Nurmukhamedova, Abdulkhalil A. Razzakov, Riccardo Redaelli, Rustem Zhangozha.



[Luigi Nono] Le musiche degli anni Cinquanta

edited by Gianmario Borio, Giovanni Morelli and Veniero Rizzardi

Studi di Musica Veneta. Archivio Luigi Nono. Studi, vol. II

Leo S. Olschki, Florence 2003

Interpreting an artist's work over longer periods often means adjusting the study to fit some preconceived ideas. But when scholars can rely on objective indispensable evidence, such interpretation may be usefully grafted to research carried out in a prudent well-documented approach.

In Luigi Nono's musical development, the period 1950–1960 coincides with an objectively well-defined stage in his career, and the second volume of studies in the *Archivio Luigi Nono* series offers a close examination of the decade beginning with the young Nono's debut in the international forum of the Darmstadt summer meetings, and a series of significant events: his polemical break with the avant-gardes; the difficult gestation of his first experience with opera, also his first real – albeit controversial – Italian success; the discovery of electronic music and a new world of compositional techniques. *Le musiche degli anni Cinquanta* (“The music of the 1950s”) is thus a simple but appropriate title for what is in many ways a fairly uniform subject, as is revealed by the documents. The four texts in the volume, by Veniero Rizzardi, Gianmario Borio, Erika Schaller and Angela Ida De Benedictis, form a compendium of research carried out using documents in the Nono Archives created in Venice ten years ago. The result is the richest and most detailed product of the archives so far. The four authors have divided up the decade, providing the reader with a detailed and unitary narrative of Nono's artistic career. The analysis of the scores is always to the fore, and is supported by an examination of the sketches and drafts highlighting how variations in stylistic features depend on a modification of compositional technique in which the instruments change with each new work: from the extended dodecaphony of *Variazioni Canoniche*, indebted to Schoenberg and Dallapiccola, to the development in Nono's music of a tendency to establish a dialogue with contemporary European experiences – the generalised serialism of Boulez, Stockhausen, and Pousseur – and lastly the creation of a sound world that comes through especially in the compositions of 1958–60 with the invention of a new, unprecedented vocality. At the same time, consulting written verbal documents, especially the letters, enables the authors to anchor the study of Nono's artistic career to a number of biographical details.



Gli Orazi e i Curiazi

Libretto by Antonio Simeone Sografi and music by Marcos Portugal

Facsimile edition of the opera score and an edition of the libretto, with an essay by Maria Giovanna Miggiani

Drammaturgia musicale veneta no. 29, voll. 2

Ricordi, Milan 2003



Cimarosa's *Gli Orazi e i Curiazi* was the climax in the search for a “new genre” of tragedy in Italian opera, and at the same time the emblematic key text for the development of new vocal personalities and dramatic roles identified by new kinds of vocality, especially the dramatic high contralto, like Giuseppina Grassini, and the new young heroic tenor, embodied by Matteo Babbini.

It is well known that *Gli Orazi* enjoyed an enduring success, but it is less well known that the Teatro La Fenice and the new Teatro Napoleonico of Ferrara jointly produced a second score for Sografi's libretto, for the same singers, but with music by a promising young composer, Marcos Portugal, whose style anticipated what we might describe as the pre-Rossinian development of serious vocal drama. The success of Cimarosa's *Orazi* was actually partly due to the inclusion of sections of the text set to music by Portugal, called for and encouraged by the singers.

This facsimile edition of Portugal's opera provides an opportunity to explore a key stage in the evolution of pre-Romantic Italian opera seen from the point of view of the original material reflecting the dynamics of its nascent state.



Gian Francesco Malipiero, “*C’era una volta un musicista*”

edited by Carmelo Alberti, with an appendix of theatrical texts and CD of the world premiere of *Capitan Spavento and Il Marescalco*

Angelo Colla, Vicenza 2003

“Hunting down librettos was my favourite pastime as a young man. Thrice I thought I had struck it lucky. But only after writing the music for three operas and having seen them staged did I realise I had been mistaken. My initial reaction was a kind of resentment towards opera and for five years I no longer wished to hear anything about music for theatre. But then one day a devil appeared to me in the guise of a musical playwright and I couldn’t resist the temptation. My music for theatre was born with the *Sette canzoni* and without dreaming up innovations that would shake the world, I had a starting place: the creation of subjects that couldn’t live without music and the almost total abolition... of the recitative, which has been and always will be the stumbling block for opera”. (Gian Francesco Malipiero).

Thirty-eight previously unpublished writings – on the relations between music and theatre, the dynamics of musical inspiration, and music as the most abstract art – teach us to observe through the imagination.



La danza barocca a teatro. Ritornelli a ballo nell’opera veneziana del Seicento

edited by Riccardo Carnesecchi

Studi e Ricerche sulla Cultura Popolare Veneta, nuova serie no. 22

Neri Pozza Editore, Vicenza 2003

Although there are many literary descriptions on the subject, 17th-century dance, especially in the second half of the century, is a rather neglected topic, mainly because of the dearth of music documents. This anthology entitled “Baroque Dance in Theatre” is intended for the experts in the field, but also for practical purposes, “to be played”, thus attempting to partly fill the lacuna. The book brings together over a hundred pieces of 17th-century music (of varying length, from a few bars to several pages) associated with dance and written by leading composers of the time (Cavalli, Cesti, Freschi, Legrenzi, Pallavicino, Sartorio, Ziani, etc.). The anthology is the outcome of research carried out in the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice, especially the Contarini Archives, an exceptional collection of 17th-century manuscript opera scores and a major source for studying period dance, mainly for theatre. Indications as to the type of dance are found on the

scores (from general terms like *ballo*, *balletto*, *danza*... to the specific names of dances like *Corrente*, *Ciaccona*, *Sarabanda*, and *Giga*). There is also mention of arias and instrumental pieces with danceable rhythms. The Baroque tended to occupy all the available space, both real and metaphorical, and dance could certainly also have been used to fill even further the already rich scenes.

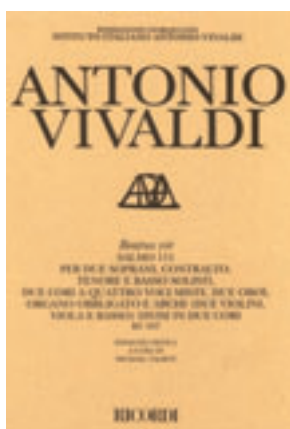


Antonio Vivaldi

Credo

for choir of four mixed voices, two violins, viola and basso, RV 591
Critical edition by Paul Everett
Edizione critica delle Opere vocali di Antonio Vivaldi
Ricordi, Milan 2003

Vivaldi's *Credo*, RV 591, for a choir of four mixed voices and strings, was one of the most successful works to come out of the Vivaldi revival begun by Alfredo Casella in 1939. Composed around 1715, the *Credo* is a companion to the less well known of two *Gloria* (RV 588). The climax to the four movements is the *Crucifixus*, when the music, overflowing with powerful effects, expresses the agony of Christ on the cross, at times using traditional means and at times original. The two fast movements (the first and the last) pulse with sparkling energy. Right at the end Vivaldi introduces a new theme in the guise of an apparent citation of a Gregorian chant (actually an original invention by the composer), deliberately added to stress the sacred nature of the composition.



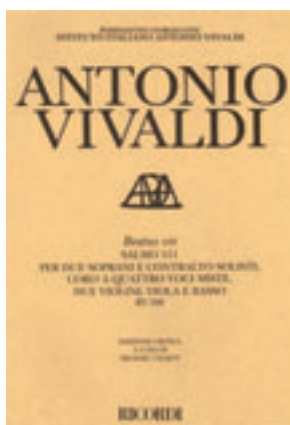
Antonio Vivaldi

Beatus vir

Psalm 111 for two sopranos, contralto, tenor and bass soloists, two choirs with four mixed voices, two oboes, organ obbligato and strings (two violins, viola and basso) divided into two choirs, RV 597
Critical edition by Michael Talbot
Edizione critica delle Opere vocali di Antonio Vivaldi
Ricordi, Milan 2003

Vivaldi composed at least four settings for the Psalm *Beatus vir*. Three of them (including RV 597) are alternative versions of the same work. Of the three variations, RV 597

is undoubtedly the most grandiose: it was conceived for a double choir and double orchestra with parts for soloists and obbligato instruments. We don't know why this extended version of the *Beatus Vir* saw the light, but it certainly belongs to that large group of sacred compositions featuring double choirs put together by Vivaldi in the 1720s and '30s. A particularly attractive aspect of RV 597 is the refrain, composed with the music of the first verse, which is inserted between one verse and another in the subsequent text. Made famous by Monteverdi a century earlier, this technique was only very rarely used by Vivaldi. As was often the case, a movement with a single instrument has an obbligato part and no orchestral accompaniment: this happens, for example, in the verse *Jucundus homo*, where the organ dominates in the flautina register.



Antonio Vivaldi

Beatus vir

Psalm 111 for two sopranos and contralto soloists, choir with four mixed voices, two violins, viola and basso, RV 598

Critical edition by Michael Talbot

Edizione critica delle Opere vocali di Antonio Vivaldi

Ricordi, Milan 2003

Beatus vir, RV 598, for two sopranos and contralto soloists and choir with four mixed voices is the longest single known movement in the whole of Vivaldi's music. Paradoxically this is not the Allegro of a concerto but the setting for a Vespers psalm, the type of movement with the most complex form of refrain in Vivaldi's output. A piece conceived as a single movement was called *piccolo* at the Ospedale della Pietà. Vivaldi composed this *Beatus vir* around 1715, but it is anything but a "reduction". The instrumental introduction has a great variety of highly imaginative themes and – without resorting to the double choir – exploits the vocal resources of the soloists and choir in a very varied way creating a powerful impact. Very few works by Vivaldi have such wide-ranging moods and formal rigour.



Antonio Vivaldi

Nisi Dominus

Psalm 126 for soprano and two contraltos, tromba marina, tenor chalumeau, viola d'amore, cello, organ obbligato and strings (two violins, viola and basso), RV 803

Critical edition by Michael Talbot

Edizione critica delle Opere vocali di Antonio Vivaldi

Ricordi, Milan 2003

This *Nisi Dominus*, a eight-movement setting for Psalm 126, was only found in May 2003. It had previously eluded the attention of scholars because the only source, a score preserved in Dresden, had been attributed to Galuppi rather than Vivaldi. But this is the “missing” work from the five psalms which Vivaldi wrote for the Ospedale della Pietà in 1739, two years before his death. It is a composition for a soprano, two contraltos, and as many as five obbligato instruments (viola d'amore, cello, tenor chalumeau, organ and tromba marina), strings and basso continuo. Each of the obbligato instruments is highlighted in one of the movements. This “exotic” instrumentation makes the *Nisi Dominus* the work with the most colourful timbres in Vivaldi's sacred vocal output, together with the oratorio *Juditha triumphans*. RV 803 is also of great importance because it illustrates how at the end of his life the composer was absorbing many features of the new stile galante, but all the while preserving his own artistic personality.



Antonio Vivaldi

Concerto for two choirs with two violins and two organs obbligati,

RV 584

Critical edition by Federico Maria Sardelli

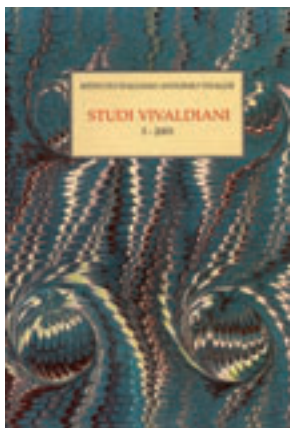
Edizione critica delle Opere incomplete di Antonio Vivaldi

S.P.E.S., Florence 2003

Of Vivaldi's works preserved in fragmentary form, the *Concerto for two choirs with two violins and two organs obbligati*, RV 584, stands out in terms of musical charm and structural complexity. With a sumptuous geometrical architecture, it was composed to solemnly mark two special contemporary events: the purchase in 1737 of a new grand organ for the Ospedale della Pietà and Vivaldi's return to the celebrated Venetian institution for foundlings for the last time as the *maestro dei concerti*. Since his first spell at the Pietà, Vivaldi had composed concerts for double choirs intended to accompany

major liturgical and celebratory occasions. He continued the old Venetian tradition of polychoral music in an instrumental context, composing six works which are unique Italian examples of this genre. Following in detail the course of the purchases and the repairs to the organs of the Pietà and linking them to Vivaldi's output for organ, the introductory essay for this edition provides a precise time line enabling the author to provide an almost exact date for the work. Thanks to this study, the date of the composition of the concerto RV 585, the first example of its kind, was established as being some time between September 1708 and February 1709. Exploring the "path of the organs" also offers the opportunity to present an anthology of documents from the Pietà casting light on the special relationship between Vivaldi, the governors and the foundling girls.

Although the whole work was certainly completed and in all likelihood performed by Vivaldi, today only the autograph score of the first large movement has survived. But this is enough to render justice to the quality and imposing structure of the work and so encourage new performances of it.



«Studi Vivaldiani»

Annual review of the Italian Antonio Vivaldi Institute

Nuova serie no. 3, 2003

S.P.E.S., Florence 2003

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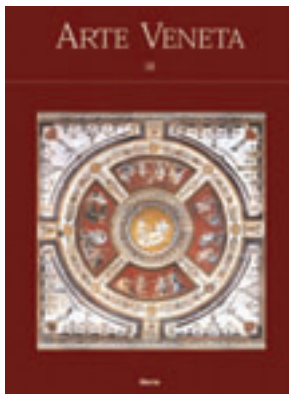
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