

This conference is organized within the framework of the five-year research project “Women, Opera and the Public Stage in Eighteenth-Century Venice” (WoVen), funded by the Norwegian Research Council and based at the Music Institute, NTNU. The conference brings together leading specialists in the fields of musicology, history and opera, theatre and literary studies, as well as junior scholars in these fields, to explore the role of women in European operatic culture in one of the most important centres of the Enlightenment: Venice—a hub for critical debate, an important proto-feminist centre and a prominent operatic centre of international significance.

The papers presented explore public and operatic life in the Serenissima, the network of women (Venetian and non) who, as singers, managers, patrons and audience members, participated in the operatic life of the city, and how opera-going contributed to women’s increased visibility in contemporary culture and society. The conference contextualizes these activities within historical knowledge of women’s rights and the wider contemporary critical discourse about women’s education and place in society.

The conference features sessions dedicated to female singers, their careers, individual vocal qualities, and practice of ornamentation, as well as acting techniques, costumes, dramaturgy, dramatic roles, and different modes of representation of the feminine. It explores the practice of cross-gender casting and the interaction among stage role and public persona, questions of agency, and the mechanisms of celebrity’s creation in the eighteenth century. Women in authorial and leadership roles provide a lens through which to explore how such activities may have functioned as platforms for claiming a female authorial voice in the male-dominated space of theatre direction and libretto writing.

A round table at the end of the conference discusses the challenges and opportunities of staging eighteenth-century opera today. The impact on the audience of the ‘seen’ and ‘heard’ body on the stage invites discussion around the thorny issue of authenticity, ‘period’ vs ‘historically informed’ performance practices, and the creative opportunities in costume design. It includes an interview with opera director and choreographer Deda Cristina Colonna and fashion designer Silvano Arnoldo.

While the conference’s focus is on operatic women in eighteenth-century Venice, discussions and reflections are encouraged to go further to assess the female role in the transnational literary and gender history of early modern Europe. By reconstructing careers, activities, and acting practices of female singers and their impact on opera production, and by shedding new light on how Italian opera was practiced and how it accompanied the life of women of the past, the papers presented here aim to enhance our understanding of Italian opera’s impact on the construction of gender roles and models over the long “century of women.”

Denne konferansen arrangeres innenfor rammen av det femårige forskningsprosjektet «Kvinner, opera og den offentlige scene i 1700-tallets Venezia» (WoVen), finansiert av Norges Forskningsråd ved musikk instituttet, NTNU. Konferansen samler ledende spesialister innen musikkvitenskap, historie og opera, teater og litteraturvitenskap, samt juniorforskere innen disse feltene, for å utforske kvinners rolle i europeisk operakultur i et av de viktigste sentrene i opplysningstiden: Venezia – et knutepunkt for kritisk debatt, et viktig proto- feministisk senter og et fremtredende operasenter av internasjonal betydning.

Innleggene som presenteres utforsker det offentlige og operalivet i Serenissima, nettverket av kvinner (venetianske og ikke-venetianske) som, som sangere, managere, mesener og publikummere, deltok i operalivet i byen, og hvordan operadrift bidro til kvinners økte synlighet i samtidskultur og samfunn. Konferansen kontekstualiserer disse aktivitetene innenfor historisk kunnskap om kvinners rettigheter og bredere samtidskritiske diskurser om kvinners utdanning og plass i samfunnet.

Konferansen inneholder sesjoner dedikert til kvinnelige sangere, deres karrierer, individuelle vokale kvaliteter og praktisering av ornamentikk, samt skuespillerteknikker, kostymer, dramaturgi, dramatiske roller og forskjellige representasjonsmåter av det feminine. Den utforsker praksisen med rollebesetning på tvers av kjønn og samspillet mellom scenerolle og offentlig persona, spørsmål om *agency* og mekanismene for fremveksten av celebritet i det attende århundre. Kvinner i forfatter- og lederroller gir en linse for å utforske hvordan slike aktiviteter kan ha fungert som plattformer for å kreve en kvinnelig forfatterstemme i det mannsdominerte rommet for teaterregi og librettoskriving.

En rundebordsdebatt på slutten av konferansen diskuterer utfordringene og mulighetene ved å sette opp 1700-tallsopera i dag. Virkningen på publikum av den "sette" og "hørte" kroppen på scenen inviterer til diskusjon rundt det vanskelige spørsmålet om autenticitet, "periode" kontra "historisk informert" fremføringspraksis, og de kreative mulighetene i kostymedesign. Det inkluderer et intervju med operaregissør og koreograf Deda Cristina Colonna og motedesigner Silvano Arnoldo.

Da konferansens fokus er på operakvinner i Venezia på 1700-tallet, oppfordres diskusjoner og refleksjoner til å gå videre for å vurdere kvinnerollen i den transnasjonale litteratur- og kjønns historien til det tidligmoderne Europa. Ved å rekonstruere karrierer, aktiviteter og skuespillerpraksiser til kvinnelige sangere og deres innvirkning på operaproduksjoner, og ved å kaste nytt lys over hvordan italiensk opera ble praktisert og hvordan den fulgte livet til kvinner fra fortiden, har innleggene som presenteres her som mål å forbedre vår forståelse av italiensk operas innvirkning på konstruksjonen av kjønnsroller og modeller gjennom det lange «kvinner århundre».

Thursday, 11 April

Venue: Dokkhuset

8:30 Arrival and Registration

9:00-9:20

Nora B. Kulset (NTNU) Welcome

Melania Bucciarelli (NTNU – WoVen) The WoVen Project

9:20-10:40

The Century of Women

Chair *Melania Bucciarelli*

Anna Bellavitis (Université de Rouen)

Gender and Agency in Early Modern Venice

Keynote 1

Irene Zanini-Cordi (Florida State University)

Bridging Social Capital. Women's Education and Cultural Networks in Eighteenth-Century Venice

Keynote 2

Questions

10:40-11:00 break

11:00-12:30

Women's Participation in the Opera Business

Chair *Christine Jeanneret*

Adriana De Feo (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vienna)

Luisa Bergalli as Librettist and the Correspondence with Apostolo Zeno

Giovanni Polin (Conservatorio "Antonio Vivaldi", Alessandria)

The Entrepreneur's Trial: Teresa Colonna and the Grimani Theatres in 1762

Katja Radoš-Perković (University of Zagreb)

Vainglorious and Poor. Opera Singers in Goldoni's oeuvre

Questions and Discussion

12:30-14:15 – Lunch break

14:15-16:30

Performing Celebrity on the Venetian Stage I

Chair *Magnus Tassing Schneider*

Berta Joncus (Goldsmiths, University of London) and Myriam Guglielmo

Promoting Celebrity: Venetian Opera Singers in the Pages of the Gazzetta Urbana

Veneta Keynote 3

Questions

Margaret Butler (University of Wisconsin, Madison – WoVen)
Celebrity Culture and Its Musical Prints: Luigi Marescalchi as Media Worker in Late Eighteenth-Century Venice

Clorinda Donato (California State University, Long Beach)
The Fate of the Commediante in Novels, Treatises and Correspondences in Eighteenth-Century Italy

Elena Abbado (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vienna)
Elizabeth Billington a Foreign 'Primadonna' in Late Eighteenth-Century Venice

Questions and Discussion

16:30-16:50 break

16:50-18:20

Performing Celebrity on the Venetian Stage II

Chair *Britta Kägler*

Christine Jeanneret (University of Copenhagen – WoVen)
Body Technology: Operatic Costumes, Acting Techniques and Eloquence

Paologiovanni Maione (Università della Campania “Luigi Vanvitelli”)
Lucia Facchinelli nell'orbita di Nicolino tra Napoli e Venezia

Anne Desler (University of Edinburgh)
«Con non poca pena di chi l'ha diretto»: Nicola Grimaldi 'Nicolino' and the Enactment of Celebrity in the Venetian dramma per musica

17:50-18:20 Questions and Discussion

Friday, 12 April

Venue: Dokkhuset

9:00-9:40

Main Keynote Address

Reinhard Strohm (University of Oxford)

The Question of Agency in Italian Opera Productions, 1700-1740. Singers, Composers, Poets, Patrons and 'Bears'

Questions

9:50-10:50

Singers, Roles and (Musical) Dramaturgy I

Chair *Berta Joncus*

Francesca Menchelli-Buttini (Conservatorio “Gioachino Rossini”, Pesaro – WoVen)
Roles and Aria Types for Vittoria Tesi on the Venetian Stage

Judit Zsovár (WoVen)

Maria Camati detta 'La Farinella': A Venetian Soprano on Venetian Stages

10:35-10:50 Questions and Discussion

10:50-11:10 break

11:10-12:30

Singers, Roles and (Musical) Dramaturgy II

Chair *Alene Mari Holder*

Melania Bucciarelli (NTNU – WoVen)

Si può cosa bramar, ch'ei non ti doni? Faustina Bordoni and the 1729 Carnival Season

Francesca Greppi (Università di Bologna)

Virtuose at the San Giovanni Grisostomo Theatre in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century: Margherita Durastanti and Diamante Maria Scarabelli. An Example of Soprano Pairing

Brad C. Sisk (NTNU – WoVen)

A Fate Worse than Death? Banishment, Political Tragedy, and the 'Addio Roma' Topos in the Venetian Collaborations of Orlandini and Bordoni

Questions and Discussion

Lunch break 12:30-14:00

14:00-16:10

Women's Roles and Images of Femininity on the Venetian Stage I

Chair *Margaret Butler*

Wendy Heller (Princeton University)

Penelope's Progress

Keynote 4

Questions

Berthold Over (Zentrum für Telemann-Pflege und -Forschung, Magdeburg)

A Mirror for Princesses? Images of Femininity and Power in Il vincitor generoso and La principessa fedele (both Venice 1709)

Bella Brover-Lubovsky (Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance)

The Virtue of Epponina: Sarti's Giulio Sabino

Questions and Discussion

15:40-16:00 break

16:00-17:30

Women's Roles and Images of Femininity on the Venetian Stage II

Chair *Tatiana Korneeva*

Magnus Tessing Schneider (Aarhus University)
The World Upside Down: Gender Reversals in Eighteenth-Century Venetian Opera

Mari Holder (NTNU – WoVen)
Maria Maddalena Pieri and her Interpretation of Male Roles in the Operas of Antonio Vivaldi

Ruhama Santorsa (Università di Firenze)
Portrayals of Women in One-Act Operas: Unveiling Femininity in Late Eighteenth-Century Venetian Musical Theatre

17:00-17:30 Questions and Discussion

Saturday, 13 April

Venue: Suhmhuset

9:00-10:30

Audiences and (Musical) Collections

Chair *Francesca Menchelli-Buttini*

Tatiana Korneeva (NTNU – WoVen)
Nobilissime Dame di Venezia: Female Patrons and Audience of Opera

Silvia Urbani (Conservatorio “Benedetto Marcello”, Venice)
A Collection of Opera Arias from the Fondo Correr in Venice

Britta Kägler (Universität Passau – WoVen)
German Courts as Training Centres and Career Springboards, but Venice as Destination of Success: ‘la Bevarese’ and Other Singers and Musicians in the Eighteenth Century

Questions and Discussion

10:30-10:50 Break

10:50-11:30

Performing (Gender in) Eighteenth-Century Opera Today I

Chair *Brad C. Sisk*

Deda C. Colonna (Schola Cantorum Basiliensis – WoVen)
The Impossible Escape from History: Staging Graun’s Adriano in Siria in Potsdam, 2024

Silvano Arnoldo & Christine Jeanneret (University of Copenhagen – WoVen)
(Re)sources: Historical Research and Costume Design Creativity

Anne Desler (University of Edinburgh)
Vocal Ornamentation in Early Eighteenth-Century Drame per Musica: Period Performance Practice versus Historically Informed Performance Practice

11:40-11:50 short break

11:50-12:50

Performing (Gender in) Eighteenth-Century Opera Today II: Round Table Discussion

Chairs *Melania Bucciarelli & Brad C. Sisk*

with Silvano Arnoldo; Deda C. Colonna; Anne Desler; Paul Goring; Wendy Heller; Sigurd Imsen; Christine Jeanneret; Reinhard Strohm; Magnus Tessing Schneider; Martin Wåhlberg; Judit Zsovár

12:50-13:00

Conclusion. Reinhard Strohm; Melania Bucciarelli

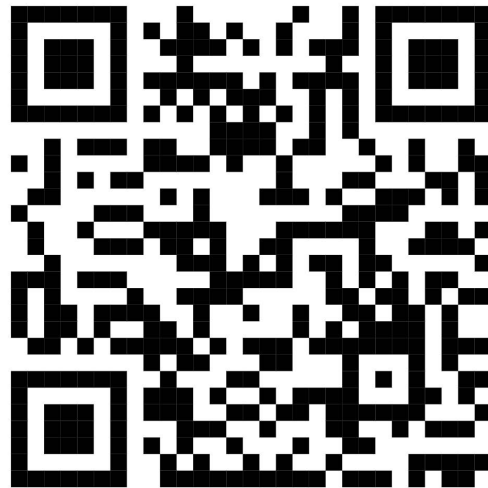
Kammersalen, Olavskvartalet

14:45-15:30

Alene Mari Holder (NTNU – WoVen)

Forskningskonsert (Research concert) *Heroic Feminine*

Abstracts and Biographies



Scientific Committee

Melania Bucciarelli; Tatiana Korneeva; Francesca Menchelli-Buttini

Orgelsalen, Olavskvartalet. Kjøpmannsgata. 4th floor (no lift from Kjøpmannsgata entrance)

Festsalen, Katedralskole. Munkegata 8

Dokkhuset. Dokkparken 4

Suhmhuset. Elvegata 6

Kammersalen, Olavskvartalet. Entrance from Brattørgata or Kjøppmannsgata

<https://www.ntnu.edu/music/woven>

<https://www.ntnu.edu/web/music/woven-international-conference>