

## Women as Agents for the Pan-European Mobility of Italian Opera in the Eighteenth Century

The eighteenth century was a time of significant change and growing independence for women across Europe. With better access to education and a variety of professions, women became central to widespread public debate about their role in society. In the realms of opera and theatre, unprecedented opportunities for agency, autonomy, and social mobility opened up for women – whether as singers, actresses, dancers, theatre directors, or patrons. Their activities, both on stage and behind the scenes, challenged traditional gender roles, reshaped perceptions of female artists, and advanced the process of women's emancipation.

As powerful public media, opera and theatre played a crucial role in disseminating ideas and shaping cultural and gender identities across Europe. Italian opera, in particular, dominated the cultural landscape of major cities, with its practitioners acting as a catalyst for discussions about the women's roles as they travelled across the continent. Yet, despite extensive research on the pan-European spread of Italian opera and theatre, the pivotal role of women in the history and within the transformations of opera and theatre exported to European courts and cities remains significantly underexplored.

This conference aims to shed light on the contribution of women to opera and theatre from a transnational perspective. Scholars from Italy and abroad will explore the careers and activities of Italian female performers at European courts and theatres, their acting techniques, their influence on musical dramaturgy, and the representation of femininity in musico-dramatic works. Additionally, the conference will examine activities of women theatre directors and women's patronage networks and their role in shaping the social perception of women. By addressing these themes, it seeks to deepen our understanding of female agency in Italian opera performed across Europe and its broader cultural significance in the history of women.

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### Scientific committee / Comitato scientifico

Melania Bucciarelli  
Richard Erkens  
Tatiana Korneeva  
Piermario Vescovo

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### Il ruolo delle donne nella mobilità paneuropea dell'opera italiana nel Settecento-

19–20 February 2025 / 19–20 febbraio 2025

Organized by / organizzato da:

Tatiana Korneeva & Britta Kägler



Women, Opera  
and the Public Stage  
in Eighteenth-Century  
Venice



Università  
Ca' Foscari  
Venezia  
Dipartimento di Filosofia  
e Beni Culturali



Con il sostegno di



Dipartimento di Economia  
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The conference is supported by / Il convegno è finanziato da:

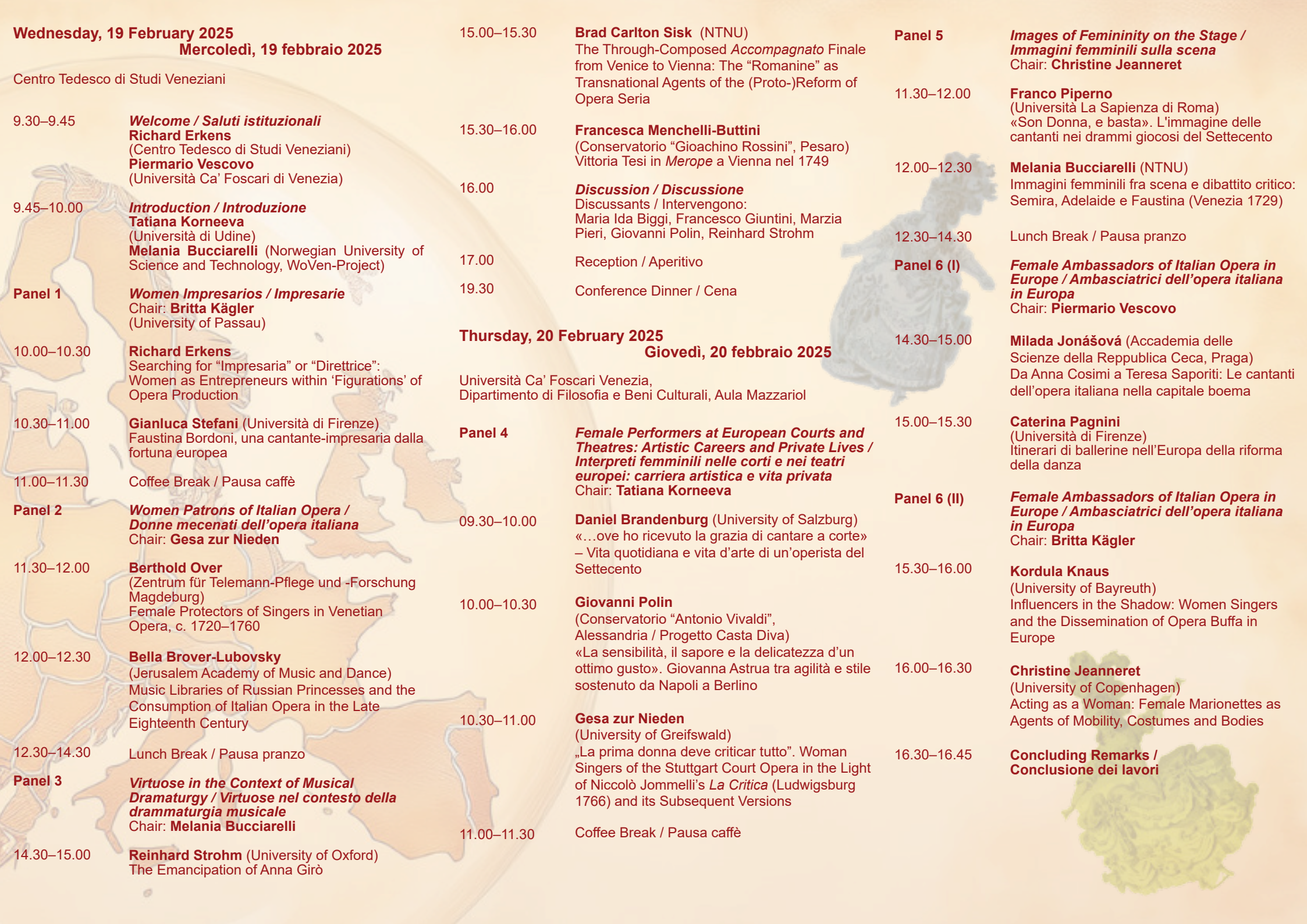
Fritz Thyssen Stiftung – PRIN 2022 & DISME ("A mapping of dissemination of the Italian model of spectacle in 18th century Europe")



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Conference programme  
Programma del convegno





**Wednesday, 19 February 2025**  
**Mercoledì, 19 febbraio 2025**

Centro Tedesco di Studi Veneziani

9.30–9.45 **Welcome / Saluti istituzionali**  
**Richard Erkens**  
 (Centro Tedesco di Studi Veneziani)  
**Piermario Vescovo**  
 (Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia)

9.45–10.00 **Introduction / Introduzione**  
**Tatiana Korneeva**  
 (Università di Udine)  
**Melania Bucciarelli** (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, WoVen-Project)

**Panel 1**  
**Women Impresarios / Impresarie**  
 Chair: **Britta Kägler**  
 (University of Passau)

10.00–10.30 **Richard Erkens**  
 Searching for "Impresaria" or "Direttrice":  
 Women as Entrepreneurs within 'Figurations' of  
 Opera Production

10.30–11.00 **Gianluca Stefani** (Università di Firenze)  
 Faustina Bordoni, una cantante-impresaria dalla  
 fortuna europea

11.00–11.30 Coffee Break / Pausa caffè

**Panel 2**  
**Women Patrons of Italian Opera /  
 Donne mecenati dell'opera italiana**  
 Chair: **Gesa zur Nieden**

11.30–12.00 **Berthold Over**  
 (Zentrum für Telemann-Pflege und -Forschung  
 Magdeburg)  
 Female Protectors of Singers in Venetian  
 Opera, c. 1720–1760

12.00–12.30 **Bella Brover-Lubovsky**  
 (Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance)  
 Music Libraries of Russian Princesses and the  
 Consumption of Italian Opera in the Late  
 Eighteenth Century

12.30–14.30 Lunch Break / Pausa pranzo

**Panel 3**  
**Virtuose in the Context of Musical  
 Dramaturgy / Virtuose nel contesto della  
 drammaturgia musicale**  
 Chair: **Melania Bucciarelli**

14.30–15.00 **Reinhard Strohm** (University of Oxford)  
 The Emancipation of Anna Girò

15.00–15.30 **Brad Carlton Sisk** (NTNU)  
 The Through-Composed *Accompagnato* Finale  
 from Venice to Vienna: The "Romanine" as  
 Transnational Agents of the (Proto-)Reform of  
 Opera Seria

15.30–16.00 **Francesca Menchelli-Buttini**  
 (Conservatorio "Gioachino Rossini", Pesaro)  
 Vittoria Tesi in *Merope* a Vienna nel 1749

16.00 **Discussion / Discussione**  
 Discussants / Intervengono:  
 Maria Ida Biggi, Francesco Giuntini, Marzia  
 Pieri, Giovanni Polin, Reinhard Strohm

17.00 Reception / Aperitivo

19.30 Conference Dinner / Cena

**Thursday, 20 February 2025**  
**Giovedì, 20 febbraio 2025**

Università Ca' Foscari Venezia,  
 Dipartimento di Filosofia e Beni Culturali, Aula Mazzariol

**Panel 4**  
**Female Performers at European Courts and  
 Theatres: Artistic Careers and Private Lives /  
 Interpreti femminili nelle corti e nei teatri  
 europei: carriera artistica e vita privata**  
 Chair: **Tatiana Korneeva**

09.30–10.00 **Daniel Brandenburg** (University of Salzburg)  
 «...ove ho ricevuto la grazia di cantare a corte»  
 – Vita quotidiana e vita d'arte di un'operista del  
 Settecento

10.00–10.30 **Giovanni Polin**  
 (Conservatorio "Antonio Vivaldi",  
 Alessandria / Progetto Casta Diva)  
 «La sensibilità, il sapore e la delicatezza d'un  
 ottimo gusto». Giovanna Astrua tra agilità e stile  
 sostenuto da Napoli a Berlino

10.30–11.00 **Gesa zur Nieden**  
 (University of Greifswald)  
 „La prima donna deve criticar tutto". Woman  
 Singers of the Stuttgart Court Opera in the Light  
 of Niccolò Jommelli's *La Critica* (Ludwigsburg  
 1766) and its Subsequent Versions

11.00–11.30 Coffee Break / Pausa caffè

**Panel 5**  
**Images of Femininity on the Stage /  
 Immagini femminili sulla scena**  
 Chair: **Christine Jeanneret**

11.30–12.00 **Franco Piperno**  
 (Università La Sapienza di Roma)  
 «Son Donna, e basta». L'immagine delle  
 cantanti nei drammi giocosi del Settecento

12.00–12.30 **Melania Bucciarelli** (NTNU)  
 Immagini femminili fra scena e dibattito critico:  
 Semira, Adelaide e Faustina (Venezia 1729)

12.30–14.30 Lunch Break / Pausa pranzo

**Panel 6 (I)**  
**Female Ambassadors of Italian Opera in  
 Europe / Ambasciatrici dell'opera italiana  
 in Europa**  
 Chair: **Piermario Vescovo**

14.30–15.00 **Milada Jonášová** (Accademia delle  
 Scienze della Repubblica Ceca, Praga)  
 Da Anna Cosimi a Teresa Saporiti: Le cantanti  
 dell'opera italiana nella capitale boema

15.00–15.30 **Caterina Pagnini**  
 (Università di Firenze)  
 Itinerari di ballerine nell'Europa della riforma  
 della danza

**Panel 6 (II)**  
**Female Ambassadors of Italian Opera in  
 Europe / Ambasciatrici dell'opera italiana  
 in Europa**  
 Chair: **Britta Kägler**

15.30–16.00 **Kordula Knaus**  
 (University of Bayreuth)  
 Influencers in the Shadow: Women Singers  
 and the Dissemination of Opera Buffa in  
 Europe

16.00–16.30 **Christine Jeanneret**  
 (University of Copenhagen)  
 Acting as a Woman: Female Marionettes as  
 Agents of Mobility, Costumes and Bodies

16.30–16.45 **Concluding Remarks /  
 Conclusione dei lavori**