A New Chronology of Venetian Opera and Related Genres, 1660-1760

Song and Season: Science, Culture, and Theatrical Time in Early Modern Venice

Eleanor Selfridge-Field

"What a wonderful resource for lovers of *La Serenissima*. These books give one a terrific sense of the place and its vibrant culture. One wants to travel back in time to be a part of it." —Nicholas McGegan, Music Director, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra

A New Chronology

Trom 1637 to the middle **◄** of the eighteenth century, Venice was the world center for operatic activity. No exact chronology of the Venetian stage during this period has previously existed in any language. This reference work, the culmination of two decades of research throughout Europe, provides a secure ordering of 800 operas and 650 related works from the period 1660 to 1760. Derived from thousands of manuscript news-sheets and other unpublished materials, A New Chronology provides a wealth of new information on about 1500 works. Each entry in this production-based survey provides not only perfunctory

reference information but also a synopsis of the text, eyewitness accounts, and pointers to surviving musical scores. What emerges, in addition to secure dates, is a profusion of new information about events, personalities, patronage, and the response of opera to changing political and social dynamics. Appendixes and supplements provide basic information in Venetian history for music, drama, and theater scholars who are not specialists in Italian studies.

Song and Season

wo systems of timekeeping were in concurrent use in Venice between 1582 and 1797.

Song and Season defines the many ways in which time was discussed, resolving a long-standing fuzziness imposed on studies of personnel, institutions, and cultural dynamics by dating conflicts. It is in this context that the standardization of timekeeping coincided with the collapse of the *dramma* per musica and the rise of scripted comedy and the opera buffa. Selfridge-Field discloses fascinating relationships between the musical stage and the cultures it served, such as the residues of medieval liturgical feasts embedded in the theatrical year. Such associations were transmuted into lingering seasonal associations with specific dramatic genres. Interactions between culture and chronology thus operated on both general and specific levels. Both are fundamental to understanding theatrical dynamics of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries.

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Eleanor Selfridge-Field is Consulting Professor of Music and Co-Director of the Center for Computer-Assisted Research in the Humanities at Stanford University. She is the author of many books and articles in various fields, including Beyond MIDI (1997); The Music of Benedetto and Alessandro Marcello (1990); and Venetian Instrumental Music from Gabrieli to Vivaldi (1975).

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