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Book

I ritratti del Museo Della Musica di Bologna da padre Martini al Liceo musicale

📅 December 7, 2018 👤 EMR2015 💬 0 Comments 📌 Musical portraits

Historiae Musicae Cultores CXXIX

xvii + 684pp €90.00

Leo S. Olschki Editore, 2018

ISBN 978 88 222 6349 0

Most musicologists with an interest in 16th- to 19th-century music will be well acquainted with the extensive collection held in Bologna that once belonged to Giambattista (Padre) Martini, a man more renowned these days for his epic History of Music and reputation as an outstanding teacher of the laws of counterpoint than for his own compositions. That another – equally as impressive and extensive – collection has his name attached to it may be less well known; this time a fascinating array of portraits of musicians (composers, singers, instrumentalists), including celebrated impressions of J. C. Bach, Gluck, Handel, Haydn and Mozart, as well as a far greater number of less well-known characters, and a



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well as more detailed studies of individual subjects (such as a chapter on Farinelli). Then it discusses and reproduces 311 paintings (mostly in full colour and slightly under quarter page sized, but some full page) in the main sequence, followed by a further 22 that have been relegated to an appendix for various reasons. The organisation takes a little bit of getting used to: eight chronological sections, each ordered alphabetically (with names beginning with Della listed under D, just in case you wondered!)

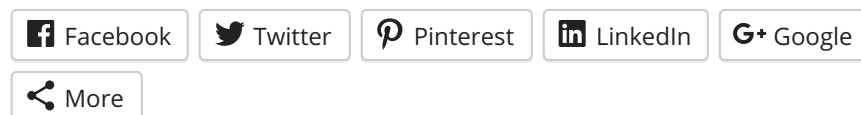
I was pleasantly surprised that the volume was not exclusively male; not that there were that many female sitters – one, in particular, caught my eye: Maria Rosa Coccia, who scraped a living as a composer. I may even be inspired to seek out some of her unpublished music. Another portrait once and for all exposes the inaccuracy of an image that is widely circulated on the internet purporting to be Alessandro Grandi; it turns out to be another composer of the same name from a younger generation. (A similar situation surrounds an image of Johann Rosenmüller, though that has nothing to do with the present book!)

The commentary on each painting (by a variety of authors) is exhaustive from the arts perspective, describing the provenance of each, the accuracy of the identification of both the sitter and the artist, its restoration history and a thorough bibliography.

This book is a very impressive production, as important for art historians as it is for musicologists, and as at home on the shelves of a research library as a coffee table offering for visitors. At such an incredibly reasonable price, it is difficult not to commend it too highly!

Brian Clark

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