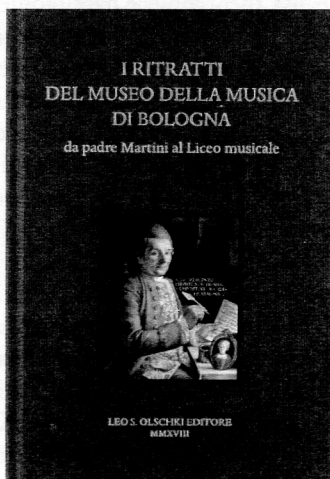


Lorenzo Bianconi, Maria Cristina Casali Pedrielli, Giovanna Degli Esposti, Angelo Mazza, Nicola Usula, and Alfredo Vitolo. *I ritratti del Museo Musica di Bologna: Da Padre Martini al Liceo Musicale*. Florence: Olschki, 2018. 684 pp. 385 figures in color. ISBN: 9788822263490. Hardcover. €90,00.

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Giovanni Battista Martini, also known as Padre Martini (1706–1784), was a Franciscan friar who spent most of his life in Bologna. A composer, teacher, bibliophile, and historian of music, he made his convent into a Mecca for musicians from all over Europe. His correspondence with musical colleagues near and far constitutes one of the most valuable sources of information about eighteenth-century music. Just as valuable is his collection of musical portraits, which he assembled over several decades, and which continued to grow after his death. He asked many of his correspondents to send him their portraits, and he added to his collection paintings of composers active in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and first half of the eighteenth centuries (many of these were newly commissioned works based on old prints).

Martini's portrait collection, like his library and correspondence, survives largely intact in the Museo Internazionale della Musica in Bologna. The collection and the library were the subject of an exhibition, "Collezionismo e storiografia musicale nel Settecento: La quadreria e la bibliotheca di padre Martini," that took place in Bologna in 1984 (marking the 200th anniversary of Martini's death). The catalogue of that exhibition (Bologna, 1984) includes reproductions of many of the portraits and some valuable essays.

A new catalogue, devoted exclusively to the portrait collection, has now superseded the earlier one. A team of six scholars has produced a book as remarkable for its beauty as for its intellectual rigor and wealth of easily accessible information.

The catalogue proper is preceded by several essays and a table listing almost 300 references to the portrait collection in Martini's correspondence. By far the longest of the introductory essays, at 51 pages, is Angelo Mazza's survey of the collection and of Martini's activities as a collector of portraits. The richly illustrated essay places the paintings assembled by Martini in the context of the much larger world of printed portraits. Two of the most remarkable paintings associated with Padre Martini are the subject of individual essays. Mazza explores Giuseppe Maria Crespi's wonderful *trompe l'oeil* picture of Martini's library shelves, heavy

with parchment-bound volumes—whose disarray communicates the activity of a busy scholar. Corrado Giaquinto's lavish portrait of Farinelli is the subject of an essay by Lorenzo Bianconi and Maria Cristina Casali Pedrielli. Finally, Giovanna Degli Esposti discusses the development of the portrait collection after Martini's death; the librarians who cared for the padre's collections continued to acquire musicians' portraits well into the twentieth century.

The catalogue is organized according to the musicians portrayed, rather than the artists. It consists of eight parts, each containing the portraits of musicians active during a single century or half-century. Within each part, the portraits are arranged in alphabetical order according to the names of the subjects, with portraits of unknown musicians presented last. Most of the musicians in the collection are composers or singers, but a wide range of instrumentalists are represented as well.

311 separate entries, the lion's share of which are the work of Casali Pedrielli, discuss every portrait in turn. The entries include information about the subject of the portrait, his or her relations with Martini (with reference to relevant passages in the padre's correspondence), the artist, the portrait's condition, and its history of restoration. All the portraits are illustrated in color. Most of the illustrations are small (about 3.5 x 2.5 inches) but that is enough to show most of the details. Just over 50 of the portraits—those judged by the authors to be the finest works of art, not necessarily the most important musicians—are beautifully reproduced as full-page illustrations. Following the main catalogue is an appendix consisting of further entries (illustrated when possible) on portraits that are badly damaged, destroyed, lost, or dispersed.

The most important part of the collection—both artistically and musicologically—is undoubtedly that containing the portraits of Martini's contemporaries. He was in direct contact with some of the most important musicians of his time, including Mozart. And the affection and respect that musicians felt for him led many of them to engage first-rate painters in response to his request for their portraits. Highlights of the collection (all reproduced in the larger format) include Gainsborough's portrait of Johann Christian Bach, Reynolds' portrait of Charles Burney, Luigi Crespi's portrait of the Bolognese composer Giuseppe Corsini, Sebastiano Ceccarini's portrait of the *musicista* Filippo Elisi, and anonymous portraits of the young Roman composer Maria Rosa Coccia and the *musicista* Giuseppe Millico. Another fine painting, entitled "Ritratto di cantante" (No. 95), although placed among the portraits of musicians of the first half of the eighteenth century, probably belongs in the following section, since Bianconi and Casali Pedrielli argue persuasively that the subject is the *musicista* Pietro Benedetti, *detto* Sartorino, who began singing only in the 1760s (and is known to Mozartians as the creator of the role of Sifare in *Mitridate re di Ponto*).

Among the many artists who contributed to Martini's collection during the second half of the eighteenth century, Angelo Crescimbeni stands out for his brilliance as a portraitist. His depictions of the composers Ferdinando Bertoni, Giovanni Domenico Perotti, and Thomas Christian Walter, the tenor Giovanni Ansani, the harpist Philipp Joseph Hinner, the amateur musician Eugenio di Ligniville, and Martini himself constitute—from a purely artistic point of view—the single most important and valuable group of works in Padre Martini's collection. We are lucky to have beautiful color reproductions of all these fine paintings, together with expert commentary, in one splendid book.