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Italian Theater Pieces of the 1790s

Ephemeral, Occasional, Not meant to survive



1.

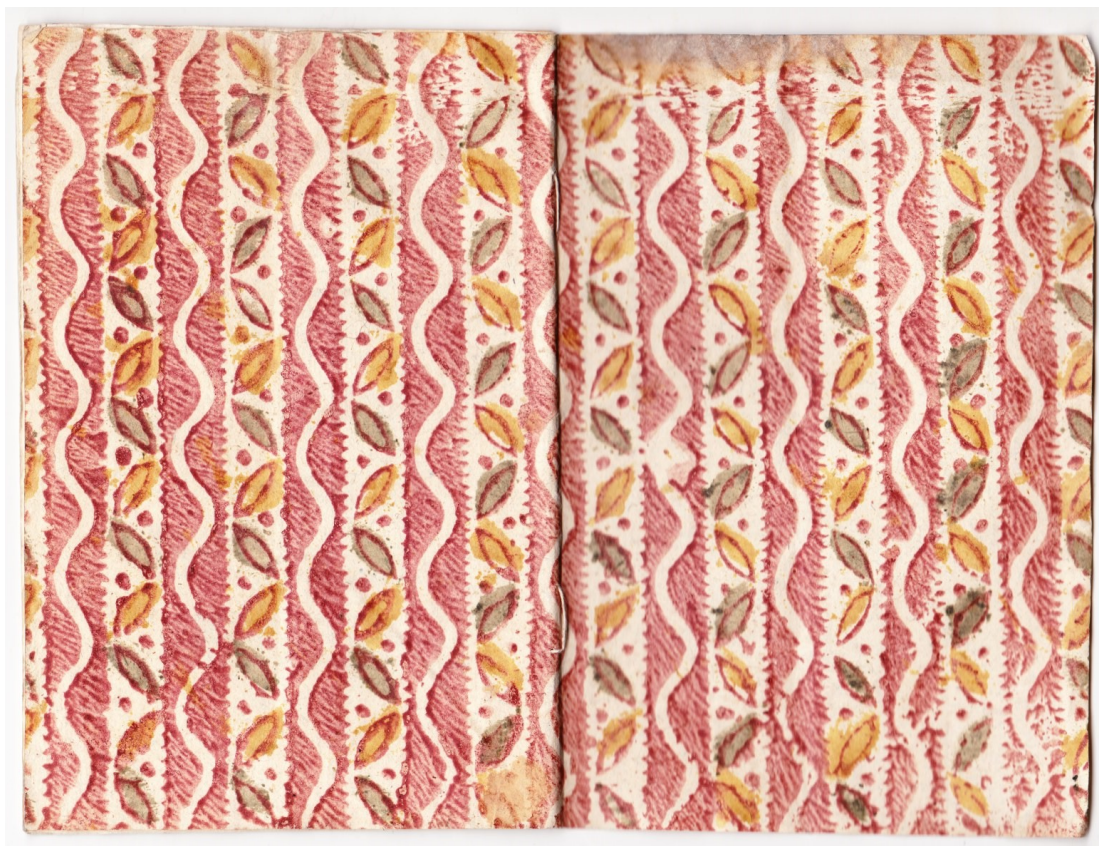
Donizetti's Teacher with a Venice Premier

Mayr, Johann Simon; [Giuseppe Maria Foppa]. **David in spelunca Engaddi. Actio sacra pro filiabus chori S. Lazari Mendicantium....** Venice: n.p., 1795.

Octavo (19 cm); 20 pages. Woodblock vignette on title page. Text in Latin. Bound in red, green, and gold woodblock-printed decorated wraps finished by hand. Stain across upper margin, mostly on first and last pages. Old vertical fold.

Libretto of the 1795 oratorio (David in the Cave of Engedi) by the German-born composer Simon Mayr who emigrated to Italy at age 25 and, as choirmaster at Bergamo, was Donizetti's music teacher. The current oratorio debuted in Venice with this libretto, apparently by Giuseppe Foppa (according to Franz Steiger, *Opernlexikon*, I, 301). Bound in genuine Remondini 3-color woodblock wraps (illustrated in Milano and Villani, *Le carte decorate della Raccolta Bertarelli*, #59).

\$500



2.

An Opera Buffa for Carnivale

[Palomba, Giuseppe, 1765-1825]; [Domenico Cimarosa, 1749-1801]. **Chi dell'altrui si veste presto si spoglia.** **Dramma giocoso per musica da rappresentarsi nel nobile teatro Roncale di Rovigo il carnovale dell'anno 1793 dedicato alle nobilissime dame di detta città.** Padova: Carlo Conzatti, 1793.

Octavo (185 mm), [2], 46 pages in a single gathering (A²⁴). Lyre and lute device on title page. In two-tone "carta dorata e goffrata," that is, bronze-toned paper embossed with a fruit and floral pattern (including pomegranates, grapes, thistles, blueberries, daffodils, and other blossoms) highlighted in brick. Minor blemishes on lower wrap.

A road production of Cimarosa's comic opera of 1784, here performed for Carnivale in Rovigo (near Venice) and dedicated to the "noble ladies of the town." The title is not easy to translate, but basically means "Let others dress you and they will quickly undress you." The librettist, Giuseppe Palomba, achieved enormous success during his lifetime and frequently worked with fellow-Neapolitan Cimarosa. However we have scant biographical notice of him, and all that remains are his bubbly and very funny works. This edition is enclosed in fine embossed and embellished paper produced in the Veneto region primarily by the Remondini family in Bassano.

\$900

CHI DELL' ALTRUI SI VESTE
PRESTO SI SPOGLIA
DRAMMA GIOCOSO PER MUSICA
DA RAPPRESENTARSI
NEL NOBILE TEATRO RONCALE
DI ROVIGO
Il Carnovale dell' Anno 1793.
DEDICATO
ALLE NOBILISSIME DAME
DI DETTA CITTA'



IN PADOVA A S. BARTOLAMMEO

NELLA STAMPERIA DI CARLO CONZATTI

Con Lic. de' Superiori.



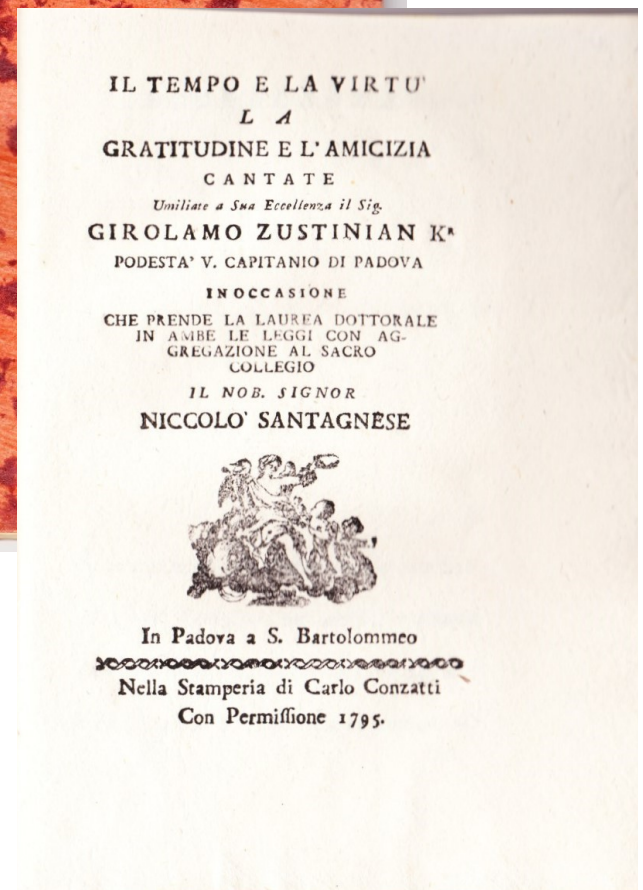
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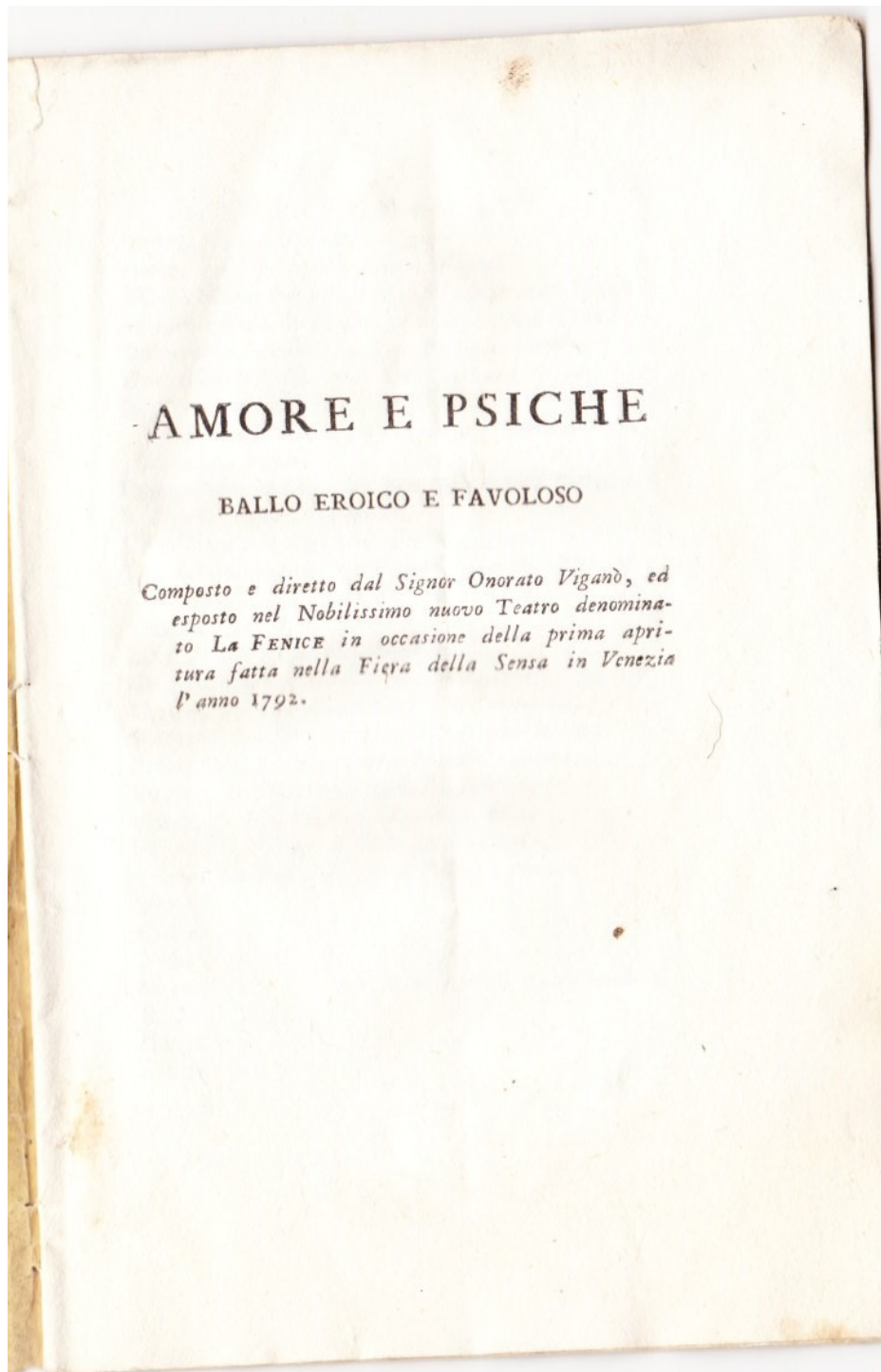
[Paresi, Brunoro]. **Il tempo e la virtù / la gratitudine e l'amicizia / cantate... in occasione che prende la laurea dottorale ... il nobile signor Niccolò Santagnese.** Padova: Carlo Conzatti, 1795.

Original edition. Octavo (16 cm); 29, [3 blank] pages, in one gathering (A\16). Woodcut device on title page, two woodcut headpieces showing putti in architectural setting. Bound in unusual red and orange mottled pastepaper. Slight blemishes to lower edge of wraps. No references found, no other copies located. Author's name from dedicatory letter.

All of the information we have about the two cantatas collected here comes from internal evidence. We find no external records except for the presence of a manuscript in library in Rome of a symphony and an opera by one "Paresi," no first name given. The texts here were ostensibly performed for the "podestà" (effectively, the mayor) of Padua, Girolamo Giustiniani, who must have attended graduation festivities for young Niccolò Sant'agnese, of one of Padua's prominent families. The verse (in my judgement) is unmemorable, but we cannot tell how it sounded when set to music (now lost). Carlo Conzatti's page design and printing is, as usual, skilled work, very pleasing to the eye, bound in decorated paper.

\$300





4.

Inaugural Dance at Teatro La Fenice in Venice

Viganò, Giulio. **Amore e Psiche: ballo eroico e favoloso.** [Venice]: [Gran Teatro La Fenice], [1792].

Original edition. Octavo (19cm); 16 pages. In speckled wraps.

The first dance performance of the inaugural season of one of the great theaters of Europe, the GranTeatro La Fenice. Rising out of the ashes of an earlier theater consumed by fire, La Fenice opened during the Feast of the Ascension (La Festa della Sensa) in 1792 with an opera (*I giuochi d'Agrigento*) and what today we would recognize as a ballet, or a dance entertainment, based on Apuleius's *Cupid and Psyche*. The theater program offered here opens with a proud statement that this dance was "composed and directed by the honorable mister Viganò for the most noble new theater called La Fenice on the occasion of the inaugural opening at the Fiera della Sensa in Venice, 1792." There follows a list of the dancers and their characters, a brief introduction by Viganò ("I'm not in the habit of annoying the audience with program notes, but in this case it seems a brief summary of the main points is necessary..."), and then a not-so-brief account of the very intricate plot of the ballet, with its 28 distinct characters who may or may not appear in disguise. A great survival from the opening night of a great theater.

\$700

