

# The tradition of Italian oratorio in Vienna in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries

Austrian Academy of Sciences,  
Austrian Centre for Digital Humanities and Cultural Heritage – Department of Musicology  
Vienna, 27–29 November 2024

The aim of the international conference is to conduct comprehensive and interdisciplinary research into the development of the oratorio in Vienna between the 17th and 18th centuries, with the productions of Nicolò Minato and Pietro Metastasio ideally serving as chronological boundaries.

From the era of Leopold I, the genre of sacred drama also spread in the imperial city as a spectacular element of an already rich liturgical calendar, particularly intense during the seasons of Advent, Lent and Holy Week.

Vienna soon became one of the most important centres for the production and dissemination of a wide variety of sacred dramatic forms such as the oratorio, the *componimento sacro*, the *azione sacra*, and the *sacra rappresentazione*, in particular those performed before the Holy Sepulchre.

The genre, which was associated with the idea of the splendour of the imperial court and the representation of the *pietas austriaca*, was cultivated by the most important poets active at court, including Minato, Apostolo Zeno, Pietro Pariati and Metastasio, as well as by composers such as Antonio Draghi, Giovanni Bononcini, Johann Joseph Fux, Antonio Caldara, Giuseppe Porsile, and many others.

The conference will be characterized by an interdisciplinary approach to the topic taking in the fields of musicology, Romance philology and theology.

Proposals for contributions to the following research areas are particularly welcome:

- the creation of the dramatic text: from the Catholic sacred tradition to the oratorio libretto (hagiographic and literary sources);
- the didactic function of the sacred libretto;
- the rhetoric of affects in the poetic text and the musical setting;
- the oratorio as a vehicle for political and ideological messages in connection with the glorification of the House of Habsburg;
- the places where oratorios were performed in Vienna: smaller centres such as women's convents and open-air theatres alongside the court chapel as the centre of liturgical worship for the imperial family;
- the production of sacred poetry in the socio-cultural context of the early Enlightenment.

The official languages of the conference are Italian, English and German.

Please send your proposals for contributions (with an abstract of 300 words and a short CV of 100 words) to the following address by 15 June 2024: [adriana.defeo@oeaw.ac.at](mailto:adriana.defeo@oeaw.ac.at)

A notification of acceptance will be sent by 30 June 2024.

The publication of a volume of selected papers presented at the conference is envisaged.

## Organising committee:

Elena Abbado (ÖAW)  
Adriana De Feo (Convenor, ÖAW)  
Elisabeth Hilscher (ÖAW)  
Alfred Noe (Universität Wien)  
Alexander Rausch (ÖAW)