



The Rediscovery of Lauro Rossi's Farces: *Un Maestro e una cantante* and *Lo zigaro rivale*

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IAML Congress, Salzburg, July 9th, 2025



The Casta Diva Project: Preserving Italian Musical Heritage



Collaborative Initiative



A partnership of twelve Italian institutions of Higher Education in the Arts, including conservatories, fine arts academies, and universities.



European Support

Funded by the European Union and NextGenerationEU through resources provided by the PNRR (National Recovery and Resilience Plan).



Focus on Women

Aims to explore new readings and interpretations of female figures in Italian musical theater, highlighting their roles both on stage and behind the scenes.



The project emphasizes the fundamental role of opera in disseminating Italian language and culture internationally. In 2023, Italian opera singing was declared an intangible cultural heritage of Humanity by UNESCO, recognizing its significant cultural value.

The *Giudici e Strada* Archive: A Treasure Trove of Lost Works

Archive History

The music publisher Giudici e Strada was a reference point for musical theater in the Turin area from 1859 until the end of its activity in the early 1900s. The archive was transferred to the Banca Cattolica of Parma and then donated in 1928 to the library of the Liceo Musicale of Piacenza, now the "G. Nicolini" Conservatory.



Unique Characteristics

The archive is not merely a collection of published works but a working archive intended for theater rental, containing autograph manuscripts, copies, scores, parts, and production materials.

Lauro Rossi: A Forgotten Master of Italian Opera



1810

1

Born in Macerata, Italy. Rossi would become a significant composer and educator in 19th-century Italian music.

2

1834

Composes *La casa disabitata* for Milan's Teatro alla Scala, later revived as *I falsi monetari* (1844).

3

1850-1870

Serves as director of the Milan Conservatory, becoming a leading figure in music education and supporting young talent.

4

1867

Composes the farces *Lo zigaro rivale* and *Un maestro e una cantante* collaborating with the Turin publisher Giudici e Strada.

5

1871

Leaves Milan to become director of the Naples Conservatory, succeeding Saverio Mercadante.

6

1885

Dies after a significant career as both composer and educator, leaving behind a substantial catalog of works.

Rossi composed mainly comic and semi-serious operas in the Italian tradition with a particular talent for comic plots. His most successful works included "Il domino nero" (1849) and "Gli artisti alla fiera" (1868). In his later years, he turned to opera seria with "La contessa di Mons" (1874) and "Cleopatra" (1876), before ending his career with the unsuccessful "Biorn" (1877), based on Macbeth by Shakespeare.



Casta Diva: an international Research and Production Digital Platform on Women in Italian Musical Theatre

DITTICO DI LAURO ROSSI

LO **ZIGARO RIVALE**
Farsa di Salvatore Cammarano

UN **MAESTRO** ED UNA **CANTANTE**
Scherzo comico di Lauro Rossi

18 MAGGIO 2025 ore 16:00
Teatro Municipale, Piacenza

Orchestra sinfonica "Antonino Votto"
del Conservatorio di Piacenza città verdiana

Direttore
GIUSEPPE CAMERLINGO

Regia
ROBERTO RECCHIA

Personaggi e interpreti

LO **ZIGARO RIVALE** (1867)

Susanna JISOO HAN

Timoleone ENSHI WANG

Genoveffa CHIARA BIONDANI

UN **MAESTRO**

ED UNA **CANTANTE** (1867)

Il maestro SHUAIKE GAO

La cantante HANSOL KIM

Coordinamento artistico
PATRIZIA FLORIO



Filippo Carcano, Il passatempo (1871)

Ingresso gratuito fino a esaurimento posti
Biglietti disponibili presso il Teatro Municipale dal 29/04/2025
tel. 0523 385720 / 385721 - e-mail: biglietteria@teatripiacenza.it

The **Lauro Rossi** Diptych: Rediscovering Forgotten Operatic Gems

The Conservatory "G. Nicolini" brings
Lo zigaro rivale e
Un maestro e una cantante
back to the stage for a new audience

A unique opportunity to rediscover
forgotten operatic works, restoring to
them the dignity and visibility they
deserve.

The Philological Recovery and Modern Revival



Collection and Analysis

The research process began with gathering and analyzing the original sources from the Giudici e Strada Archive at the Conservatorio Nicolini Library.

Transcription for Staging

The scores were transcribed with a rigorous philological approach to ensure the respect for Rossi's original intentions.

Production

The staging involved both faculty and students from the Conservatory, including international participants, creating *The Lauro Rossi Diptych*

Un Maestro e una cantante:

Musical sources



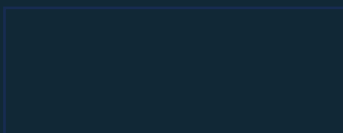
Autograph Manuscripts

Original Full score manuscript in
Archivio Giudici e Strada

Bound in autograph manuscript for
the Libretto and the Preude

Published Materials

Vocal score published by
Giudici e Strada



Un Maestro e una cantante

Gallery

Composer as Librettist

Rossi wrote both music and libretto for this work

Libretto and Score

Preserved in the Library of Conservatorio Nicolini

Vocal Score

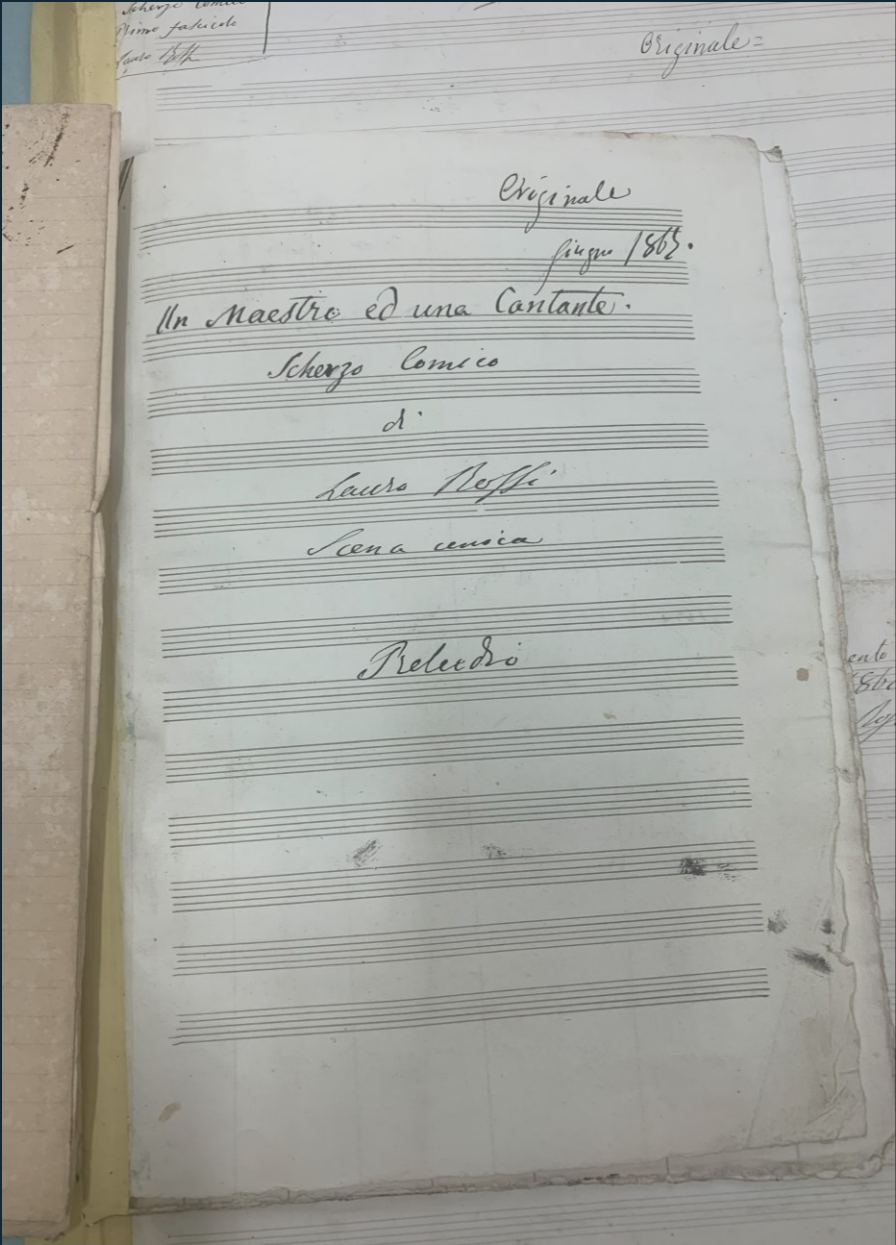
Torino, Giudici e Strada
n. Lastra 9292-9295



Score

bound fascicles:

Libretto – Preludio – Full Score



Lo Zigarò Rivale

Musical sources

14

Autograph Manuscripts

Original manuscript in Archivio Giudici e Strada

Separate autograph manuscript for the Overture

Vocal score and parts in manuscripts at Conservatorio S. Pietro a Majella di Napoli



Other Manuscripts

Copy manuscript for the Overture



Published Materials

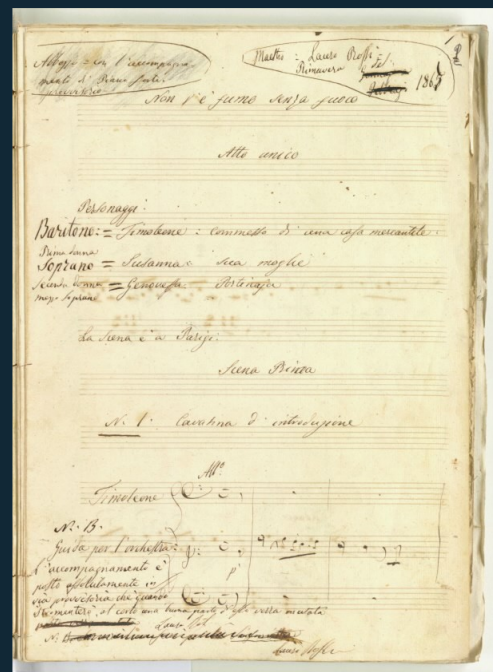
Libretto and vocal score published by Giudici e Strada

Only 2 fascicles survive today (in Milano and Firenze)



Libretto

Torino, Giudici e Strada



Vocal Score

Autograph "Abozzo"
I-Nc



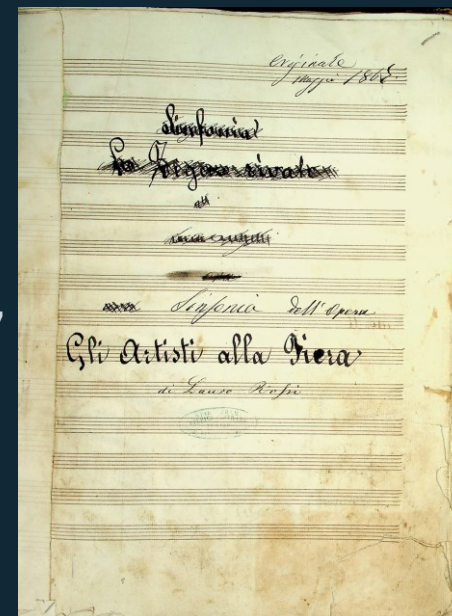
Vocal Score

Torino, Giudici e Strada
n. Lastra 9221-9228
N. 1 I-Mc
N. 5 I-FN

Lo zigarò rivale Gallery

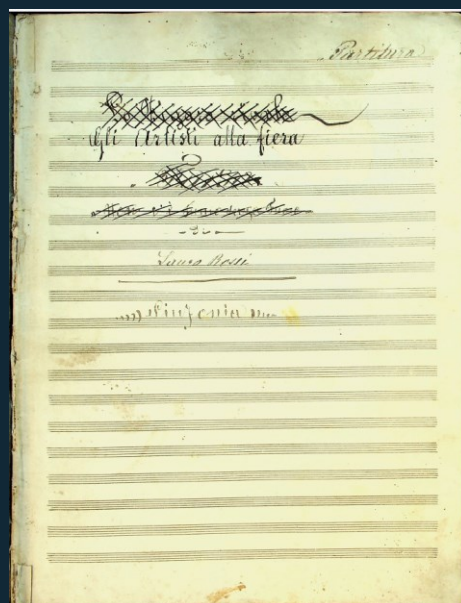
Score

Autograph "Sinfonia"

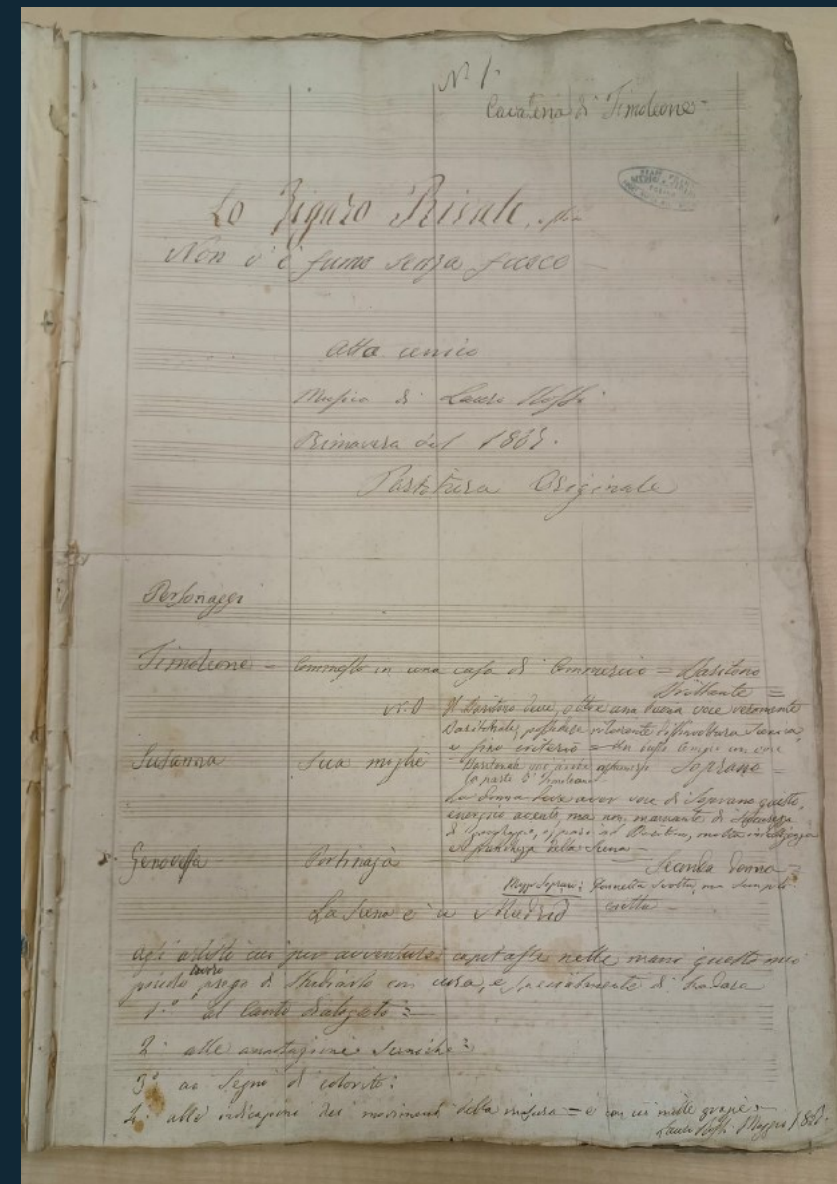


Score

Manuscript copy
"Sinfonia"



Full Score
Autograph



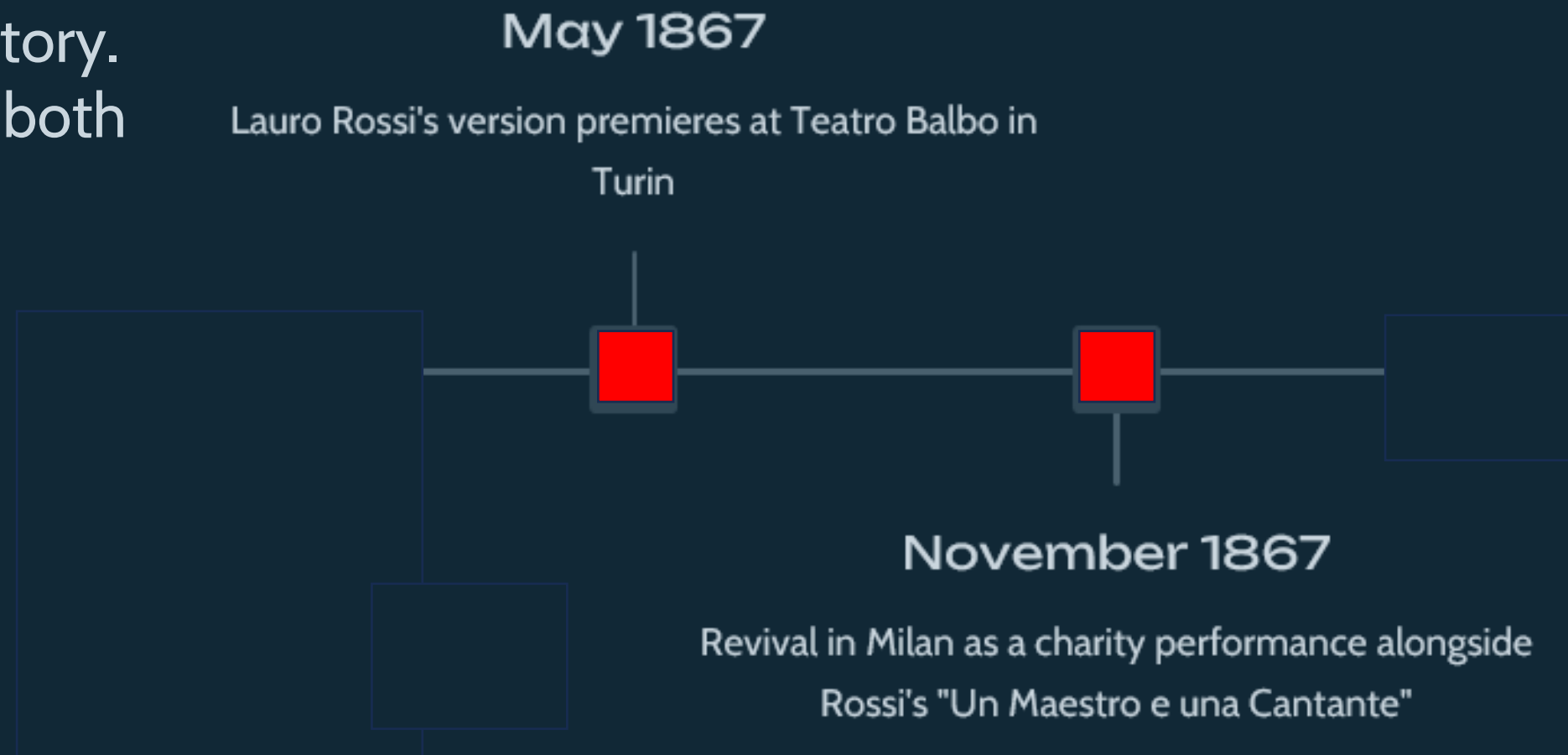
Un Maestro e una Cantante

Scherzo comico

Background

Composed in 1867, this "**scherzo comico**" was written by Lauro Rossi for the students of the Milan Conservatory. Unlike *Lo zigaro rivale*, Rossi wrote both the music and libretto himself, completing the work in June 1867.

Performance History



Un Maestro e una Cantante

A Satirical Look at Musical Life

Satirical Elements

The opera satirizes the musical world through caricatures of two stock figures:

- the **pompous music teacher**
- the **ambitious singer**

The maestro is portrayed as vain, pedantic, and intellectually dishonest—stealing melodies from famous composers while claiming them as his own.

The singer boasts of technical ability and linguistic versatility but makes ridiculous mistakes.



Un Maestro e una Cantante:

Illusion of Originality

The Maestro is portrayed through to create original melodies. However, these improvisations are not his own but are borrowed from renowned composer like Rossini, Donizetti, Verdi highlighting his tendency to appropriate others' work.

In the manuscript libretto Rossi highlights the musical quotations:

G. Verdi *Il Trovatore*

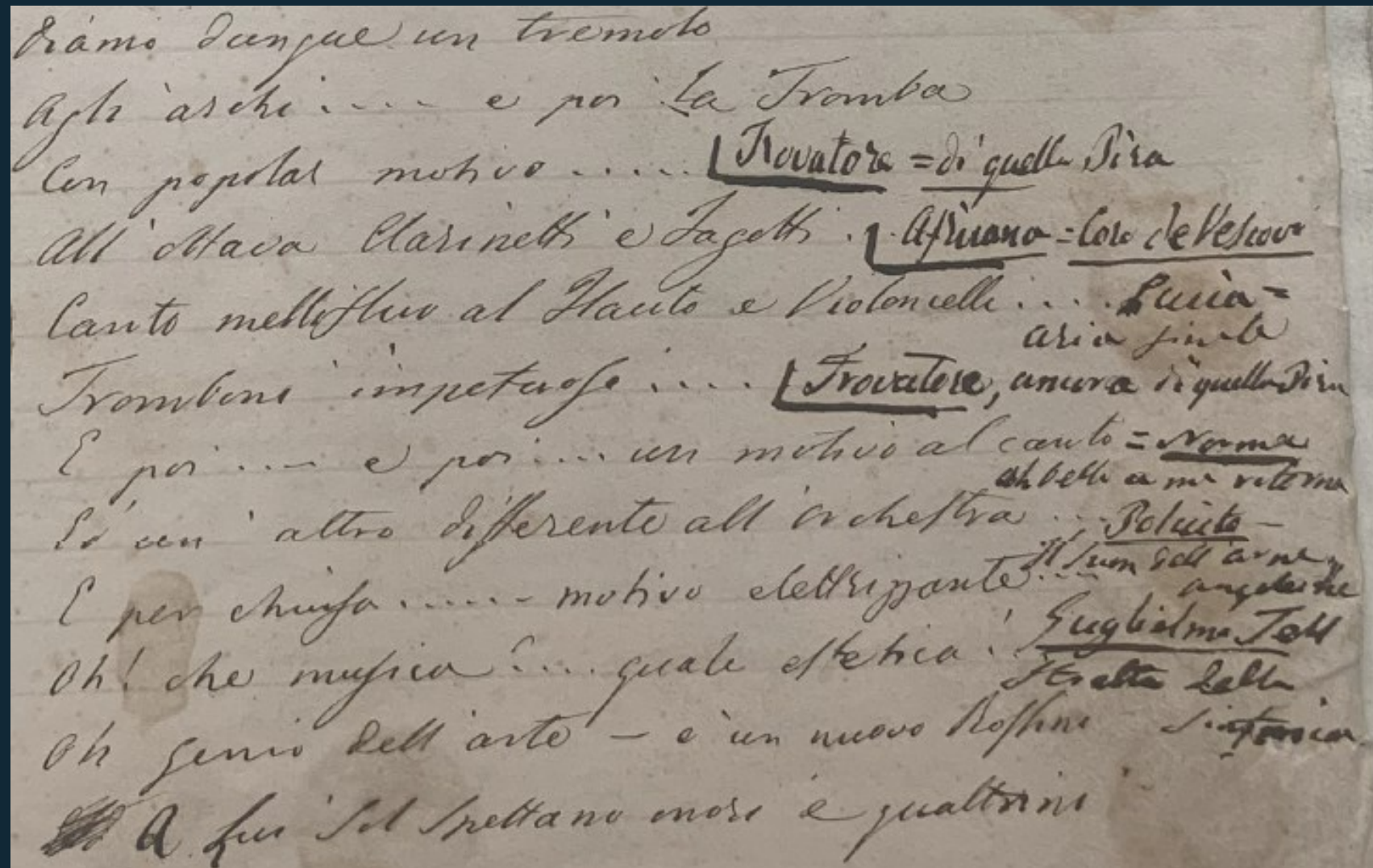
G. Meyerbeer *L'Africaine*

V. Bellini *Lucia di Lammermoor*

V. Bellini *Norma*

G. Donizetti *Poliuto*

G. Rossini *Guglielmo Tell*



dramo d'angue un tremoto
agli archi... e poi La Tromba
Con popular motivo... Trovatore = di quella Dira
All'ottava Clarinetti e Fagotti... Africano = Core de Vesuvio
Canto mellofluo al Flauto e Violoncelli... Lucia =
aria fine
Trombone impetuoso... Trovatore, ancora di quella Dira
E poi... e poi... un motivo al canto = Norma
oh bella a me ritorno
So' con altro differente all'orchestra... Poliuto -
Il suo bel canto
E per chiusa... motivo elettrizzante... Guglielmo Tell
Oh! che musica... quale estetica!
Oh genio dell'arte - e' un nuovo Rossini
Stretta bella
A fur l'el spettano onori e quattrini

Un Maestro e una Cantante: Musical Parody

Through comedy, Rossi delivers a profound critique of the cultural system of his era: an environment often more concerned with appearances than substance, where true talent risked being overshadowed by self-promotion and imitation rather than originality.

The score cleverly incorporates themes from Verdi, Donizetti, and other composers, which the teacher presents as his own compositions. This musical citation becomes central to the comedy, while also offering a critique of widespread plagiarism in the musical world of the time.



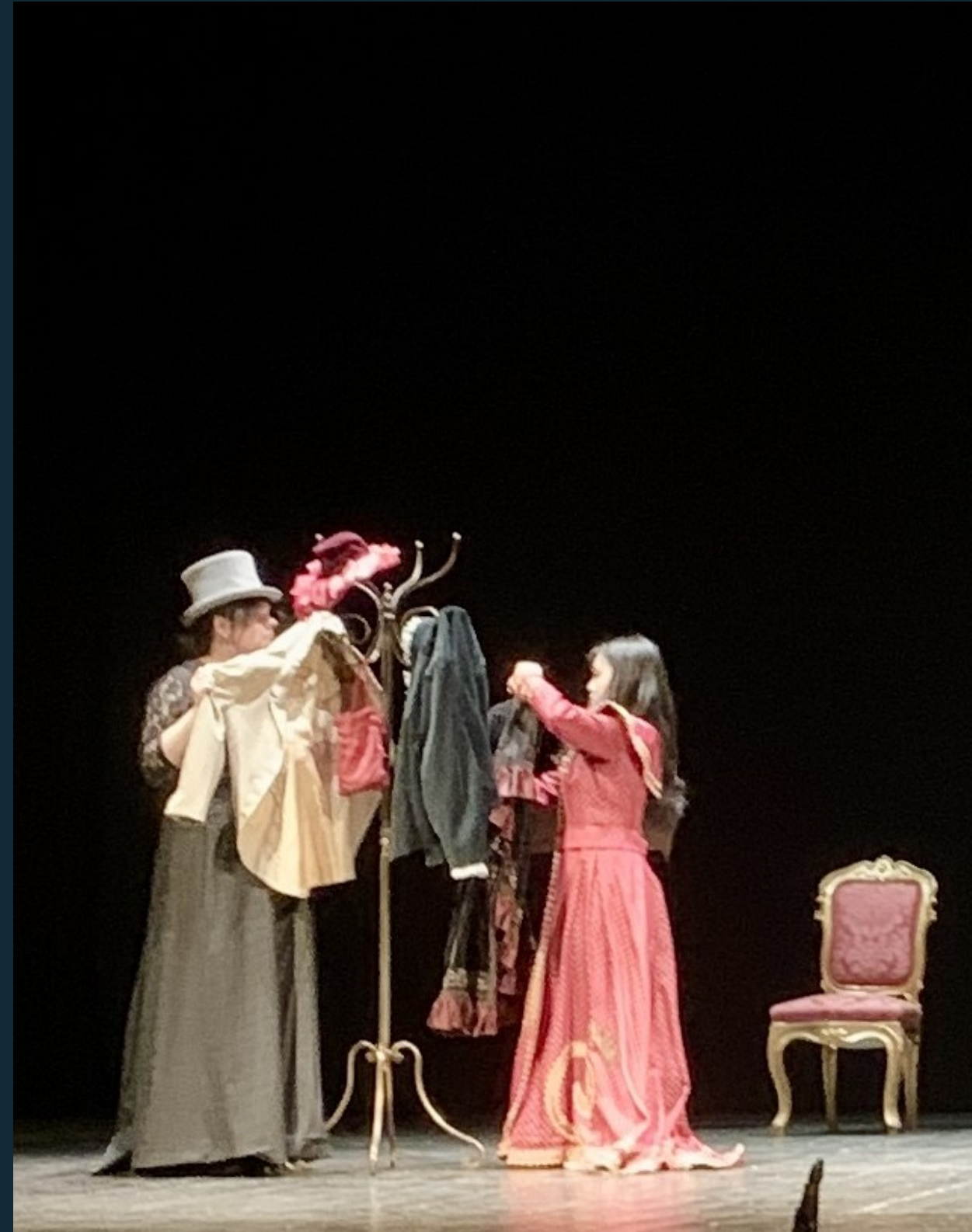
Lo Zigarò Rivale (1867)

Genesis

A delightful farce originally titled *Non v'è fumo senza fuoco* (No Smoke Without Fire)

Rossi revisited Salvatore Cammarano's libretto in 1867, which had previously been set to music by Luigi Cammarano in 1850

The work premiered at **Turin's Teatro Balbo** on **May 18, 1867**, following Rossi's decision to "once again venture into operatic composition" while maintaining his position as Conservatory Director. The plot humorously revolves around cigarette smoking and jealousy - a precursor to Wolf-Ferrari's *Il segreto di Susanna*.



Lo zigaro rivale

Performance History

1850

Original version by Luigi Cammarano premieres at Teatro del Fondo in Naples as "Non v'è fumo senza fuoco"

1

2

1855

Revival at Teatro San Carlo following the deaths of both Salvatore Cammarano and Luigi Cammarano

May 1867

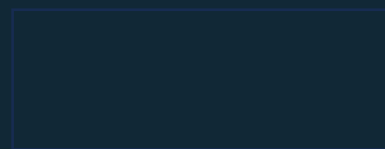
Lauro Rossi's version premieres at Teatro Balbo in Turin

3

4

November 1867

Revival in Milan as a charity performance alongside Rossi's "Un Maestro e una Cantante"



Lo Zigarro Rivale:

A Comic Case of Mistaken Jealousy

Plot Summary

Set in Madrid, the story centers on Timoleone, a clerk who suspects his wife Susanna of infidelity just three weeks after their marriage. The smell of smoke in their home leads him to believe she is meeting a lover. Really, Susanna's secret is simply that she enjoys smoking—an activity considered scandalous for women at the time.

Characters

Timoleone (Baritone)

A jealous clerk in a trading house

Susanna (Soprano)

His wife with a secret passion for smoking

Genoveffa (Mezzo-soprano)

A lively servant



The Female Smoker: Symbol of Pleasure and Transgression



Theatrical Precedent

Amilcare Belotti (1820-1875) introduced the theme of the female smoker to Italian stages with his adaptation "Quanto è bestia mio marito! Ossia il puzzo del sigaro" ("How Beastly My Husband Is! Or, The Stench of the Cigar"), which likely inspired Cammarano's libretto.



Visual Arts Connection

The theme became a subject in visual arts, exemplified by Filippo Carcano's 1871 painting "Il passatempo" ("The Pastime"), depicting a young woman smoking a prominent cigar (now in Milan's Museo Martinitt e Stelline).



Lasting Influence

The theme resurfaced in Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari's 1909 opera "Il segreto di Susanna" ("Susanna's Secret"), showing how "Lo zigaro rivale" anticipated later works examining gender identity and personal freedom.



Dramaturgical Innovation: The "Smoke Song"

A key musicological contribution of these works is the development of the "smoke song"—a specialized aria where the act of smoking is both staged and explicitly thematized in the music.

Musical Characterization

Composers employed specific tonal colors and rhythmic patterns to evoke the ritualistic nature of smoking, often using staccato notes to suggest puffs of smoke.

Vocal Techniques

Singers were required to employ specialized breathing techniques to simulate smoking while maintaining vocal control, creating a unique performance challenge.

Theatrical Staging

Stage directions called for specific choreography of hand gestures and smoke production, integrating visual elements with musical expression.

<https://www.conservatorionicolini.com/casta-diva>

<http://progettocastadiva.com/>

Thank you

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