

INTRODUCTION BY GIULIO CATTIN

“Spirit of the Place”

The A.E.C. (European Association of Conservatories, Music Academies and Musikhochschulen) chose to set this event in Vicenza, a city which never had a courtship through the centuries (despite the nobility was close to imperial identity). Nevertheless the lords of Verona, Padua and Milan tried to conquer and subjugate Vicenza which ended surrendering to the Serenissima (the Republic of Venice).

Vicenza is the place where many great personalities were born: they were politicians, soldiers, writers, architects, artists and musicians.

The most important period for Vicenza was under the Venetian supremacy: the highest moment was during the XVI Century, when the Accademie dei Costanti e degli Olimpici were founded (1555).

During those years the famous architect Palladio renewed the whole city with frescos, churches, buildings and mansions and his masterpieces: the Basilica and the Olympic Theatre, which was defined as “the eighth wonder” even before the inauguration in 1584.

All this was possible with a deep study of architecture, acoustics, proportions and music.

It is well-known that theatrical performances were inspired by medieval religious dramaturgy, which was especially developed in southern Germany, Austria and Swiss.

Cividale, Padua and Venice are the northern Italy cities where we can find the majority of these sources.

Religious performances were connected to festivities like the Annunciation (25th March), the Good Friday with the visit at Christ’s tomb, the *planctus* of the Virgin, the Resurrection, the Pentecost. The texts are taken from the Volgata or the Officio and the dialogues are the best parts to be dramatized in music.

Thanks to his master Daniele Barbaro Palladio became a famous and esteemed architect and he designed the Theatre for the Accademici Olimpici: the building was completed after his death (1580) with the perspective scenes of Vincenzo Scamozzi (1552-1616). The inauguration was on 3rd March 1585 with the performance of the Sofocle’s *Oedipus the King*, in a transcription of Orsatto Giustiniani and with the choral music of Andrea Gabrieli.

In Venice, 1573 Silvio Belli, born in Vicenza, published a work concerning proportion and proportionality in architecture Palladio was strongly influenced by.

In Renaissance polyphony the most common intervals were unison, octave, fifth, fourth, major third, minor third and minor sixth; major sixth was not so used because it seemed dissonant.

Nevertheless, Palladio used it even though it was not common in the polyphony of XVI century.

In that period only the nobility could enjoy the Arts, because the rich could pay architects, sculptors, painters and musicians.

Nobility’s life was divided between the city and the countryside: in the city they managed public and private responsibilities (*negotium*), in the countryside they managed their properties (*otium*).

Banchieri used to say that *otium*, especially during the summertime in the countryside, should be filled with a simple remedy: painting, poetry and music.