



# Opera Observed: Views of a Florentine Impresario in the Early Eighteenth Century

*William C. Holmes*

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**Opera Observed: Views of a Florentine Impresario in the Early Eighteenth Century** William C. Holmes

William C. Holmes provides a rare look behind the scenes into the world of early eighteenth-century Italian opera. Based on a rich store of newly recovered documents, mainly the personal papers of Luca Casimiro degli Albizzi, this social history illuminates the complexities of staging opera in the 1720s and '30s: the role of the impresario in planning an operatic season, financial and artistic difficulties, the importance of patronage, the power of individual singers and composers, considerations of set design, and the practice of altering librettos.

A member of an illustrious Florentine family, Albizzi (1664-1745) served as one of the principal impresarios of the Pergola, Florence's earliest and greatest opera theater. He also carried on an active correspondence with impresarios in other cities, freely giving his advice on various economic and artistic concerns. Holmes uses the Albizzi family archives—the most abundant and varied material yet available about an eighteenth-century impresario and his theater—to deepen our knowledge of an extraordinary but little understood period in Italian opera.

This book will appeal to anyone curious about operatic history.

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