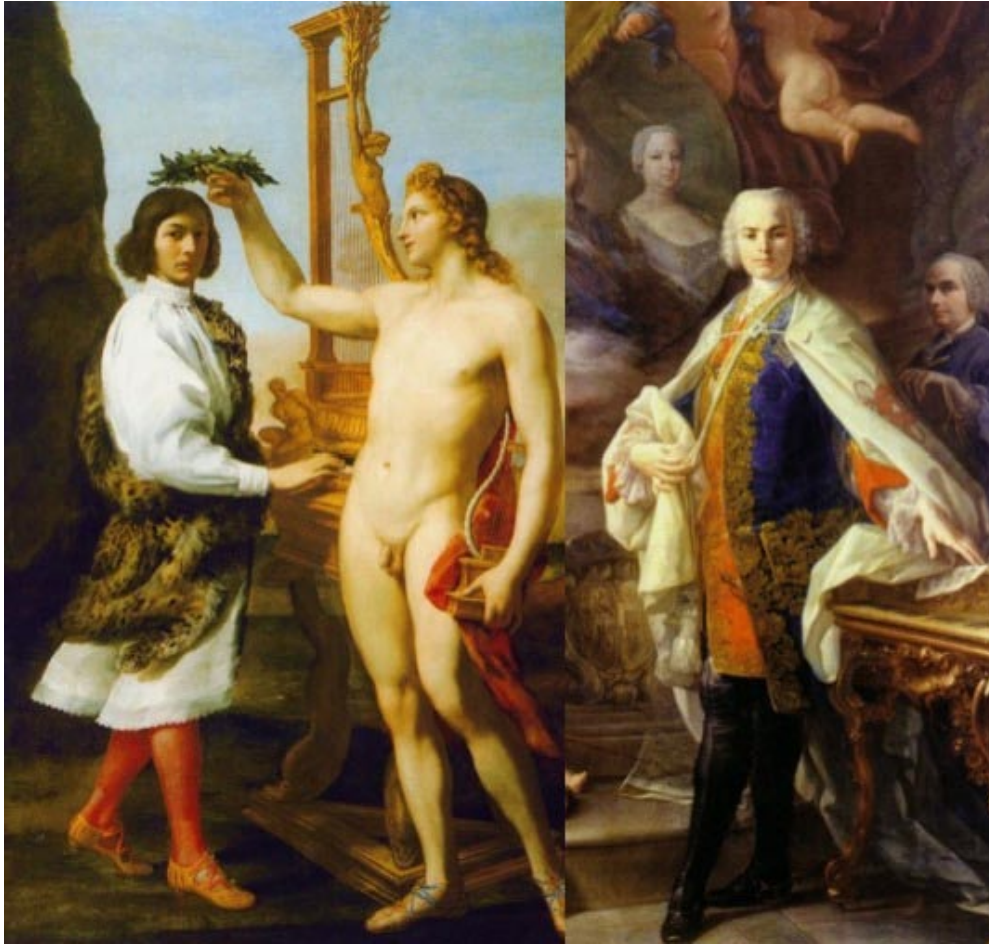


Mark Shephard

‘Gelding the Lily’

Italian Castrati and Their Portraits



Although their voices are lost forever, the likenesses of many seventeenth- and eighteenth-century castrati continue to attest to the fame, notoriety, and public success enjoyed by the castrato singer. This paper will focus on the portraits of two castrati in particular: Marc'Antonio Pasqualini and Carlo Broschi, better known as Farinelli. Recent scholarship has begun to re-examine contemporary perceptions of and responses to the ambiguous figure of the castrato in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe: as an emasculated male he was the object of vilification and derision; as a unique singer of exceptional range and power he was the object of adulation and even desire. This paper will address the visual evidence to explore the ways in which castrati were represented and, more significantly, the ways in which they chose to represent themselves.

Monday 23 April 6.45 pm
Room 148 Elisabeth Murdoch Building
All Welcome