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Hidden Heroines of the Baroque: the Figlie di Coro in the Time of Vivaldi

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The *Figlie di Coro* earned their place in music history, yet very little information about the women of the *Figlie di Coro* has come down to us across the centuries. Yet, unbelievably, we do know the names, ages, and the main instruments of many of the *Figlie di Coro* at the Pietà. Presented below is a list of the *Figlie di Coro* at the Pietà in 1716. It comprises 61 individuals, women who lived, worked, and performed together for most of their lives. Here are the hidden heroines of the Baroque, the extraordinary musicians who gave voice to the music of their most famous *Maestro*, Antonio Vivaldi.

The Figlie di Coro of the Pietà, 1716

Priora: Menghina, Violin, age 58.

- Agostina, Soprano, age unknown
- Anastasia, Soprano, age unknown
- Andriana, Theorbo, Maestra, age 53
- Angelica, Violin, Maestra, age 60
- Angelicata, Singer, age unknown
- Angioletta, Violin and singer, Maestra, age 73
- Anna II (Anneta) Singer, age unknown
- Anna III (also Anneta), Bass Singer, age 31
- Anna, Violin, age unknown
- Anna Maria I, Violin, age 20
- Antonia, Tenor, Maestra, age 42
- Anzoleta, Violin, Maestra, age unknown
- Apollonia (La Polonia) Soprano, age 24: JT Soloist

- Barbara (Barbaretta), Soprano, age 47: JT Soloist
- Barabara II (La Jamosa), Lute and Theorbo, age 40
- Bastiana, Violin, Maestra, age 64
- Bernardina, Violin, age 20
- Candida, Singer, Chalumeau (forerunner of the clarinet), and Viola, age 41
- Caterina (Cattarina), Violone, Coronet, Contralto, age 44: JT Soloist
- Catina, Viola, age 29
- Cecelia, Contralto, Maestra, age 37
- Clemenza I (Clementia, Clementina), Violin, age unknown.
- Clemenza II, Viola, age unknown
- Francesca, Organ, Maestra, age unknown
- Geltruda, Contralto, Theorbo and Viola, age 42

- Giulia, Organ and Singer, age 31: JT Soloist
- Lucieta II, Organ and Viola, Maestra, Scrivana, age 39
- Lorenza, Viola, age 17
- Lucieta I, Singer, age 66
- Lugrezia, Contralto/Tenor, Maestra, Scrivana, age 72
- Madalena, Soprano, age 39
- Madalena (Madalanetta), Violin, age 38
- Madalena IV, Contralto, age 54
- Marcolina, Violin, Maestra, age 67
- Margherita, Soprano, Maestra, age unknown
- Maria I, Instrument unknown, Maestra, age unknown
- Maria II, Viola, age 35
- Marina, Singer, age unknown
- Marta, Viola, Maestra, age 59
- Meneghina II, Viola and singer, age 27
- Michielina, Organ, age unknown
- Michielina I, Violin, Maestra, age 42
- Michielina III, Contralto, age 31
- Olivia, Soprano, age unknown
- Ortensia, Viola, Maestra, age 60
- Paolina I, Cello, Maestra, Sagrestana, age 61
- Paolina II, Tenor, age 44
- Pasqueta, Soprano, age 27
- Pastina, Soprano, Maestra, age unknown
- Pelegrina, Oboe and Violone, age 38
- Rosa, Maestra, age unknown
- Rosana I, Violin, Maestra, age 50
- Rosana II, Organ, age 31
- Silvia (Grande), Violin, age 38
- Silvia (Piccolo), Soprano, Maestra, Sagrestana, age unknown: JT Soloist
- Soprana, Contralto, age 44
- Stella I, Theorbo, Maestra, age 39
- Stella II, Organ, Maestra, Age 67
- Susanna, Violin and Oboe, age 28
- Vittoria, Tenor, age 54.
- Zanetta, Singer, Maestra, age 50

NOTES: Many of the women had the same names, so I, II, etc., are used to identify them further. Some had nicknames (such as *Piccola* or *La Polonia*), which, if known, are indicated.

Most of the women had other responsibilities at the Pietà. The list notes these positions if known, such as the *Priora* (the woman in charge of the *Figlie*), *Scrivana* (music copyist), and *Sagrestana* (keeper of the Sacristy in the church).

"JT Soloist" indicates one of the five vocal soloists in Vivaldi's opera, **Juditha Triumphans**.

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