

Anonymous, *Lo Spedale* (one-act dramma burlesco): Abstract

The sole surviving score of *Lo spedale* is found in a manuscript in the Contarini Collection of the Marciana Library, Venice. The work is significant first because of its subject matter which comprises a rare contemporary satirical representation of the care of the mentally afflicted. Also, the music is very fine but anonymous, and this poses numerous fascinating questions concerning its purpose, its choices of musical style and the context of its performance. What we do know is that the text was written by Antonio Abati (? – 1667) who designated the work as ‘dramma burlesco’.

This modern edition makes available once again a world full of dramatic and musical effects, and amusing characterizations. This one-act, through-sing ingenious work requires only limited forces – 6 singers (2 sopranos, 1 alto, 2 tenors and 1 bass) and Basso Continuo – which aids greatly its accessibility and can be performed by professionals, students and amateurs.