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## Presentazione

Now that the study of musical practice in early modern female monasteries has extended over a generation of scholarship, it is a particular pleasure to welcome Angela Fiore's detailed work on some twenty-seven houses, plus the Conservatorio della Solitaria. Based on extensive archival research, and following on the work of historians such as Elisa Novi-Chavarria, Fiore is able to offer both a diachronic and citywide account of the conditions—teaching, liturgy, and not least role in civic ritual life—of music in these institutions, as well as detailed studies of each individual foundation.

In addition to these accounts of how female communities managed to maintain their traditions against a background of changing archiepiscopal decrees and the Spanish Habsburg-Austrian Habsburg-Bourbon transition in the city, Fiore also gives a comprehensive list of the sacred music written for monastic singers, by composers ranging from Caresana to Hasse to Leo to Porpora. By detailing these pieces for Mass, the Office, and other occasions, she is able to concretize at least some parts of what must have been a large repertory heard in urban houses. Furthermore, we gain a sense of individual voices by looking at the styles and pieces written for women in any given institution. Finally, her study contributes valuable new information on music education and the practice of teaching the *figlie di coro* inside houses, as well as the presence of the ducal Real Cappella in the liturgical life of the Solitaria as one of the Neapolitan conservatories. This monograph marks an important contribution to both religious history in the city as well as to the ever-growing panorama of nuns musicians in early modern Italy.

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