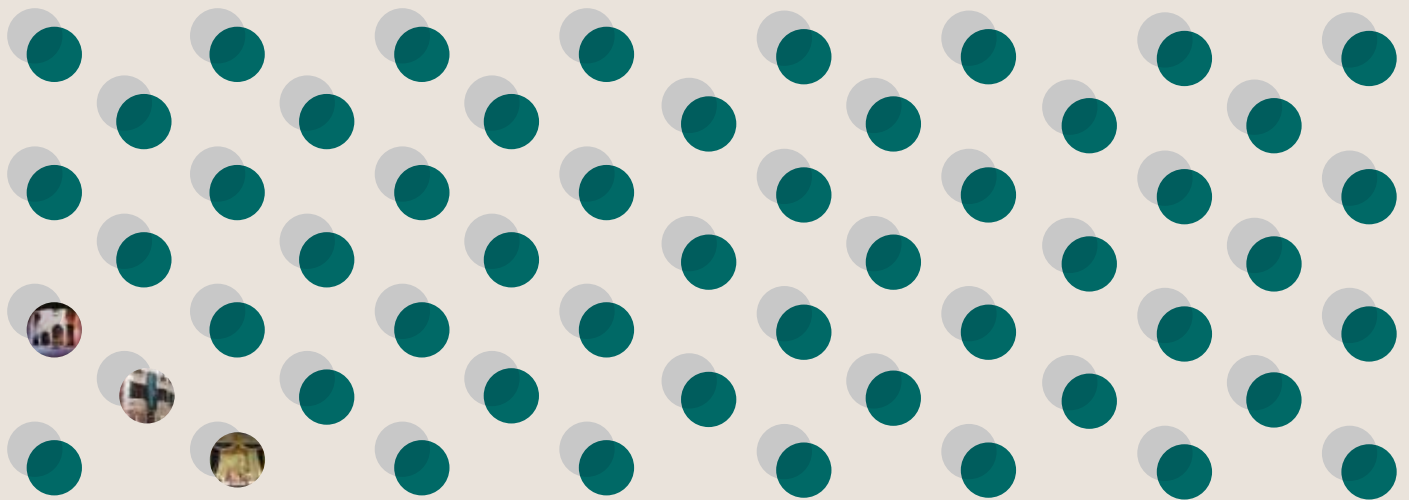


Fondazione  
Musei  
Civici  
di Venezia



—  
Carlo Goldoni's *House*  
*The Home of his Theatre*



**Self-Guided  
Museum Tour Booklet**

ENG

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The world is a beautiful book,  
but of little use to him who cannot read it.

# 01

**C**arlo Goldoni's life spans from Venice – where he was born in 1707, at Ca' Centanni – to Paris, where he died in 1793. A very gifted child, he expressed his passion for the theatre from a very early age. His father indulged his inclination and got him a puppet-show and soon, just after his eight birthday, the boy composed his first theatrical plot. His family affairs led him to travel frequently around Italy: Perugia, Rimini, Modena, Milan... He was also involved in military skirmishes and even in active warfare. Following various mishaps with tutors, schools, and colleges, he

**“No more ribaldry and weird plots, no more stock lines, few or no masks: enlightened and bourgeois, modern theatre was born at last.”**

eventually achieved a degree in Law in Padua, in 1731.

He then went on to practice as an assistant-clerk and lawyer, then a consul of Genoa to Venice. None of these professions appealed to him, his thoughts and his time always leaning towards satisfying his theatrical yearning.

He avidly read Italian and foreign playwrights, composing pieces in various genres (librettos for musical operas, tragicomedies, dramas, tragedies, satires and entr'actes, poetry).

He entered into direct contact with the theatre world: impresarios, authors, actors, stock characters and and innamoratas, female servants, masks, organisers; from 1734 to 1743 he worked for the Grimani's at the San Samuele theatre. In 1747 he met theatrical manager Gerolamo Medebach and signed a contract as in-house dramatist

at the Sant'Angelo theatre. His task of reforming Italian theatre therefore began at this point; his comedies would no longer be tangled mannerisms but true and 'modern' theatre texts, entirely scripted, with the various roles defined and assigned, line after line. No more ribaldry and weird plots, no more stock lines,

few or no masks: enlightened and bourgeois, modern theatre was born at last. In 1750 Goldoni engaged in a reckless challenge of a sort, composing 16 new plays in a single season. Goldoni managed his task, albeit at the cost of severe depression and among the new plays were some masterpieces like *La bottega del caffè* (*The Coffee-house*).

In those same months he penned *La famiglia dell'antiquario* (*The Antiquarian's Family*), *Il teatro comico* (*Comic theatre*), *Il Bugiardo* (*The Liar*).

Over the following decade, he authored fundamental plays such as *Il Campiello* (*The Public Square*),

*La locandiera* (*The Mistress of the Inn*), *Le donne curiose* (*The curious women*), *La casa nova* (*The Superior Residence*), *I Rusteghi* (*The Boors*), *Sior Todero Brontolon* (*Mr. Todero the Grumbler*), *Le baruffe chiozzotte* (*Squabbles in Chioggia*) (1762).

In 1753 he moved to Teatro San Luca, owned by Francesco Vendramin. By then, the topics of his plays were almost exclusively the world of the bourgeoisie, that new and increasingly characterised social class which was gradually outshining the old traditional aristocracy due to its dynamism, business acumen, cultural sensitivity and taste for modernity. Having been invited to Paris by the Théâtre-Italien, before leaving Venice Goldoni wrote *Una delle ultime sere di carnevale* (One of the last carnival evenings), a heart-rending farewell to his city. He reached Paris in November in 1762; he was to experience one last season of activity and success there, living between Paris and Versailles.

In 1771 he began writing his *Mémoires*, an ironical and amusing autobiography, in a detached and cultured spirit. He died in Paris on 6 February 1793 in total poverty.

Goldoni's theatre output includes five tragedies, sixteen tragicomedies, one hundred and thirty-seven comedies, to which must be added, in the service of music, two sacred pieces, twenty entr'actes, thirteen dramas, forty-nine *drammi giocosi*, three farces and fifty-seven scenarios.

### **ALESSANDRO LONGHI**

(Venice, 1733 – Venice, 1813)

### **Portrait of Carlo Goldoni**

18th century  
Oil on canvas  
Casa Goldoni, Venice



## Ca' Centani: the house where he was born

# 02

"I was born in Venice, in 1707, in a large and beautiful house situated between the Nomboli and Donna Onesta bridges, on the corner of Calle de Ca' Centanni, in the parish of San Tomà"

**"Je suis né à Venise, l'an 1707, dans une grande et belle maison, située entre le pont de Nomboli et celui de Donna onesta, au coin de rue de Ca' Centanni, sur le paroisse de S. Thomas."**

Thus, in the prologue of his *Memoires*, the eighty year old Carlo Goldoni – who had by then been in Paris for twenty-five years – recalled his first home.

Ca' Centani, or Centanni, better known as Carlo Goldoni's House, was built in the 15th century. It is a typical, not overly large, Gothic palace, which, despite several renovations, still displays the layout and typical elements of late-14th and early

15th century Venetian civil architecture.

The wide and well-proportioned façade curves to follow the bend of the narrow canal it overlooks. Its most striking element is its beautiful four-light mullioned window with slender columns and inflected arches, in correspondence with the main floor, or piano nobile.

The ground floor, where the typical terracotta flooring confers a pleasantly old-fashioned and multi-coloured appearance to the entire layout, is composed of the porticoed entrance hall towards the water-gate and the charming courtyard with its open stairway resting on progressively taller pointed arches, with a handrail in Istrian stone and simple small cylindrical columns, topped by small lions and pine-cones. The upper floors feature a small central hall (the traditional connecting "portego" of Venetian houses) onto

which the other rooms of the house open. However, the irregular floor-plan has partially stripped the portego of its central axis function, which it almost always has in this kind of building.

Owned by the Rizzi family (the hedgehog carved in relief on the family arms can be seen on the well inside the courtyard) the palace was rented to the Zentani or Centani family, from whom its future name stemmed. It also hosted a thriving artistic and literary Academy. Around the end of the 17th century Carlo Goldoni's paternal grandfather, Carlo Alessandro, a solicitor originally from Modena, settled here. The Goldoni family remained in this house, where Carlo was born on 25 February 1707, until 1719.

In 1931, Ca' Centani was donated to the Venice Municipality so that it might be restored and become a Goldoni museum and a centre for theatrical studies.



### **Ca' Centani**

15th century  
Gothic style  
San Polo, Venice

# 03



## portego – ground floor

You are now in the *portego*, the long hall connecting the water-gate on your right with the street-side entrance into the charming courtyard with its open stairway leading to the upper floor, resting on progressively taller pointed arches, with a handrail in Istrian stone and simple small cylindrical columns, decorated with small lions and pine-cones.

**T**his space with its typical terracotta flooring, now, as in the past, is used to load and unload goods. To your left you will see a wellhead with a hedgehog carved in relief, the coat of arms of the Rizzi family who had the palace built in the 15th century (Rizzo means hedgehog in Venetian).

Also displayed in the courtyard is a reproduction of the topographical map by Lodovico Ughi (1729), the most detailed ordnance-survey document showing the urban design of 18th century Venice: the highlighted areas depict the various town dwellings of Goldoni, as well as where many buildings which made Venice one of the capitals of theatrical culture in the 18th century stood.

## The houses where Carlo Goldoni lived

Carlo Goldoni spent only about thirty years of his long life in Venice, spread out over a period stretching from 1707 to 1762 - the year in which he left Venice for Paris. He lived in at least nine different houses, at various times, during the course of his Venetian life.

## Theatres in Carlo Goldoni's age

During the 18th century, Venice went through an animated season of innovation and transformation that involved many of the theatres operating in the city. Although a few playhouses were shut down either because they had become obsolete or were otherwise inadequate, others were inaugurated; the most important theatres were subject to renovation, updating and new decorating. In the age of Goldoni the city could still count on around fifteen theatres, which brought together playwrights, actors, singers, musicians, stage-designers – the main players in these extraordinary spectacles - in one intense show of quantity and variety.



## portego – first floor

You are now in the *portego*, the long connecting hall, on the piano nobile. This space was originally used both as a reception room and as a means of accessing the other rooms of the house from a central point. Your journey into the works of Carlo Goldoni starts here.



# 04

### The Sedan Chair

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*A way of getting around town comfortably and safely.*

**A**s a form of transport, the use of litters can be traced back to antiquity: according to Cicero and Juvenal it dates back to the Kings of Bithynia. In its most ancient form, it was used by the Greeks and Romans and was known as a *lectica* (lectus) - it consisted of a stretcher covered with mattresses and cushions on which the passenger reclined, carried by slaves by means of straps. The type of sedan chair visible here became popular in England in the second half of the 17th century and its use spread into Italy and France in the 18th century. It was used for short trips, carried by two porters by means of two sturdy side poles and consists of a small enclosed cabin with glass windows and a door for entering.

18th century ladies used chairs to go to ceremonies, or to mass, to take “the air” and to the coffeehouse. Sometimes they even travelled in the chair for shorter journeys. In Venice not only the ladies used them: the Doge descended the golden staircase of the Doge’s Palace upon a sedan chair in order to board gondolas.



### The Fake Patient

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*Scene from Act Two – scenes 5 and 6*

Despite suffering from the pangs of love, Rosaura has not lost her appetite, which she satisfies with figs she hides under her bed behind the backs of her friend Beatrice and her maidservant Colombina, who are worried about her.

The scene comprises a day-bed in carved wood, a 19th century imitation of an 18th century original; an Adrienne gown, a 20th century replica used as a stage costume; an 18th century silver mirror; a 19th century three-panel folding screen copy of an 18th century original, and four

faience pottery apothecary jars (1650ca. - 1749 ca.)

The floor features a marble tile with a carved spy hole that allowed the residents of the house to see who was coming into the portego from the canal-side entrance, not too dissimilarly from a present-day peephole

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### *The Play*

Presented successfully during the 1751 carnival season with the title "*The apothecary, or The fake patient*", this comedy plays on the comical theme of the Hypochondriac, or imaginary invalid, a recurrent character in stage traditions. From *The fake patient*, Goldoni created a *dramma giocoso* which was set to music by F. J. Haydn in 1768.

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### *The Plot*

Rosaura, Pantalone's daughter, is in love with Doctor Onesti and feigns being ill to receive the good doctor's ministrations, helped in this by her friend Beatrice who, having discovered the secret

of her friend's "illness", strives to make sure that she is given the "right medicament".

The main obstacle to the success of this design is represented by Doctor Onesti himself who, in spite of his great affection and consideration for Rosaura, has scruples in asking for her hand for fear of being accused of having seduced her during his visits, thus bringing discredit on his honour as a man and a doctor. But everything is eventually solved thanks to Beatrice's good offices.



### The Obedient Daughter

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*The scene shown here is inspired by Act Two – Scene 4, 5 - 6*

Rosaura, who is obliged to obey her father, who has betrothed her to Count Ottavio, decides to inform her suitor Florindo that even though her heart belongs to him, she will abide by her father's wishes. But how can she get the letter delivered to him? Her friend Beatrice will take matters into her own hands, leading Florindo right into Rosaura's chamber. The scene in the picture hanging on the wall is from volume 8 of the Pasquali Edition (1761-1766), and has been restaged with an 18th century console table and armchair with characteristics similar to the ones depicted.



## The Play

A comedy in three acts, performed for the first time in 1752, Comedy in three acts, represented the first time in 1752, incorporating many of the romantic elements that appealed greatly to the audiences of the time.

## The Plot

Florindo, the son of a merchant from Livorno, loves Pantalone's daughter Rosaura, but when his father gives him permission to marry her, she has already been betrothed by Pantalone to the rich and eccentric Count Ottavio. Florindo's plight intertwines with the distressed and anguished submission of Rosaura to the agreement her father has entered into with Count Ottavio. Pantalone also suffers, seeing his daughter being sacrificed in this manner. The background action features the affairs of Brighella, a somewhat degenerate father who has become rich due to the success of his daughter Olivetta, a ballerina, from whom a servant is stealing everything but is eventually exposed by Count Ottavio. After various mishaps Count Ottavio decides to release Rosaura from her promise, and she will finally be able to marry her beloved Florindo

**G.B. PIAZZETTA, M.A. PITTERI**

**Portrait of Carlo Goldoni with cap**

11

1754  
Etching

## Carlo's portraits

### *Portrait of Carlo Goldoni with cap*

This portrait dates back to the very early months of 1754, as can be inferred from the letter dated 17 July 1754, sent by Goldoni to Marco Pitteri. In this letter the playwright expresses a most sincere appreciation of his work, thanking Pitteri for "the loving care in making me truly eternal with the excellent work of your hands" and also giving a first critical evaluation of it: "Bizarre is this invention of a cap and my natural hair, making the resemblance more constant. The etching is moreover of such worth, that it will place this further work of yours alongside the most esteemed ones by your hand" and in truth, the etching is of the highest quality, characterised by noteworthy vitality and freshness in its engraving and particularly enlivened by the informal cap which conveys a jovial and youthful appearance to the then forty-seven year-old Goldoni. Unfortunately very few prints were made from this etching, because Pitteri altered the copper plate almost immediately, replacing the cap with a wig.

Filippo Pedrocchi



### *Portrait of Carlo Goldoni with wig*

This is – in fact – the second version of the portrait with the cap, the cap being substituted by the more formal wig. The reasons that led Pitteri to this decision are not clear; the most credible theory is Bottari's, who thinks that the makeover initiative may have been taken autonomously by Pitteri "for having changed his mind", perhaps wishing to avoid a break from the canons of "dignified" portraiture of the time. The effect of the cap replacement partly worsens the quality of the engraving, both due to the poor execution of the etched-over section, particularly where the wig hairline joins the forehead, and because in general the portrait lacks freshness, assuming a more formal tone, perhaps less attuned to Goldoni's personality.

Filippo Pedrocco

## The Venetian Lawyer

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*The scene shown here is inspired by Act One – Scene 1*

Alberto Casaboni, a Venetian lawyer, is at his desk, intent on studying with great concentration a lawsuit in which he is to defend Florindo against Rosaura, a client of Doctor Balanzoni's and the woman he has fallen in love with. The staging includes a desk and two small armchairs from the second half of the 18th century; two gilt wood wall mirrors with sconces; a 20th century man's dressing gown from the Martinuzzi Collection. On the wall is a portrait of Carlo Goldoni by Alessandro Falca called Longhi from the second half of the 18th century.



**G.B. PIAZZETTA, M.A. PITTERI**

**Portrait of Carlo Goldoni  
with wig**

1754  
Etching

## The Play

In *The Venetian Lawyer*, a comedy performed during the 1749-50 theatre season, Goldoni, not forgetting the profession he had practised in Pisa, presents the Venetian lawyer as a positive character, in contrast with theatre tradition which represented men of law as quibbling and meddlesome. He wrote in his Foreword: *"it was most just that I should convey to my much honoured profession that prominence, which rightly becomes it"*. The comedy was met with considerable success and was also performed abroad.

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## The Plot

Venetian lawyer Alberto Casaboni is at his desk, intent on studying with great concentration a lawsuit in which he has been called to defend Florindo against Rosaura, a client of Doctor Balanzoni's. He is torn, as he has feelings for the young woman, whom he happened

to see at her balcony.

The struggle between duty and passion will end in both virtues being triumphant: Rosaura loses the lawsuit but finds in Alberto a passionate and honest husband.



## Ermete Novelli

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Portrayed in this stage costume, worn by the actor for *"I Rusteghi"* (The Boors) and *"Il burbero benefico"* (The Surly Benefactor)



## The Boors

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### *The play*

Written in January 1760 at the end of the Carnival, and first performed at the San Luca theatre in Venice on 16 February with the title *La compagnia dei salva degghi* (The Cantankerous Men) or *I rusteghi* (The Boors), the comedy was an immediate success, so that in the 1762 Pasquali edition Goldoni wrote:

**“I can say that this play is one of my most fortunate ones; because it was well received not only in Venice, but everywhere, where it has been performed so far.”**

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### *The Plot*

The model of this comedy takes shape in the witty, even somewhat sarcastic, observation of the petty bourgeoisie in its everyday life, a small society with all its contradictions, its merits, its fads and foibles and all its most human impulses. Morbidly attached to the old traditions, four grumpy old men, who recognize unforgettable Sior Lunardo as their leader, stubbornly cling to their conservatism and

think and act in an unacceptably old-fashioned way according to their wives, from adorable Siora Felice to silly Marina, and their children, who keep hoping for happier times and are continually disappointed. It will be left to Siora Felice to solve the difficult situation created by the marriage designs involving Lunardo's daughter and the son of another “boor”, Maurizio, and then, at the end of the comedy, announce the victory of amiability and common sense over grumpiness and obtuseness.



## The Surly Benefactor

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### *The Play*

Written in French and performed in Paris on 4 November 1771, *Le bourru bienfaisant* became *Il burbero benefico* (The Surly Benefactor) in the first translation dated 1772, while the second version, translated by Goldoni himself in 1789, was given the title *Il burbero di buon cuore* (The Benevolent Curmudgeon).

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### *The Plot*

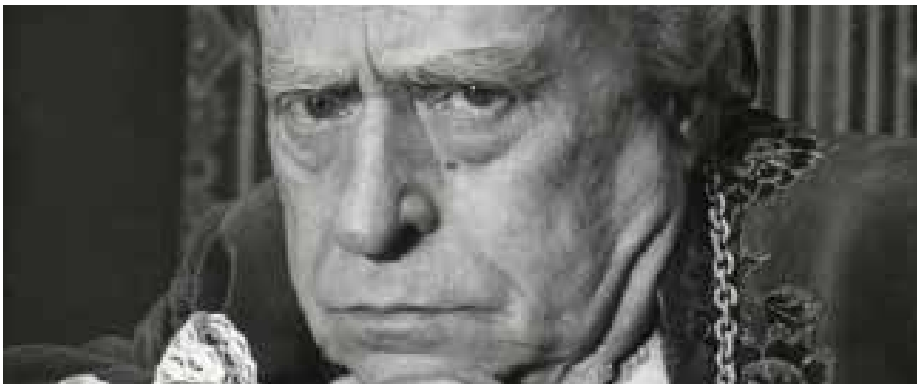
Geronte is a gruff and authoritarian man, but more in appearance than in substance. The fact remains that everyone in the house fears him, including the servants, who however

love him and respect him and his two young relatives, niece Angelica and nephew Dalancour. The girl does not dare to confess that she is in love with Valerio, and so Geronte, convinced he is doing right by his niece, promises her in marriage to his friend Dorval. But once the latter finds out about the love the girl feels for Valerio, he withdraws in good order and offers to act as the best man at the young lovers' wedding. The other nephew, Dalancour, is already married and is on the verge of bankruptcy, even risking prison because of expenses incurred to satisfy his wife's wishes. Grumpy yet generous, Uncle Geronte ends up settling his nephew's debts and giving Angelica's hand in marriage to Valerio.

## Cesco Baseggio

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Cesco Baseggio (Treviso 1897 - Catania 1971), played the character of Pantalone in the comedy *The Liar*. Baseggio debuted on the stage in 1913, almost by chance, playing a minor part in the comedy *The Mistress of the Inn*. Three years later he was inducted into the Army during the First World War and went on to direct the "soldier's theatre" in Albania. In 1921 he received an invitation to join the Giachetti stage company, "Ars Veneta" as a character and light comedy actor. There he fine-tuned his studies of this art and six years later, in 1926, established his own stage company. Later he took on the role of actor-manager, with his company mainly specializing in Goldoni's repertoire of prose comedies, for which, it turned out, he was a very talented actor.



## The Liar

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### *The Play*

Written in 1750, *The Liar* is one of Carlo Goldoni's most joyous and lively comedies. Inspired by Corneille's *Le Menteur*, who in turn based his plot on *La Verdad sospechosa* by the Spanish playwright Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, Goldoni's *Liar* borrows only a small portion of the French author's subject, giving a new colour and a warmer life to the play.

First performed in Mantua in 1750, it was subsequently printed in Florence in 1753.

### *The Plot*

Lelio, Pantalone's son, returns to Venice from Naples, the city where he grew up, and immediately comes upon a serenade that Florindo, Rosaura's shy suitor, secretly dedicates to her while she is standing with sister Beatrice on the balcony of her

house. Following his nature as an unrepentant liar, Lelio, assisted by his servant Arlecchino, comes forward, attracting the attention of the Doctor's daughters and attributing the merit of the singing tribute to himself. This is the start of a series of dazzling lies, a game of "witty inventions", as the imaginative protagonist defines his fibs: he passes himself off as a wealthy Neapolitan noble in love with Rosaura, he even deceives his own befuddled father, who does not recognize him, pretending he is a friend of his own self, and boasts with high-principled Ottavio, Beatrice's suitor, that he has enjoyed the favours of the two sisters. Even when confronted with the truth, he does not lose heart and quickly changes his story, weaving an even more outlandish web of lies. When, however, his exaggerations reach an unbearable level of immorality, his father and all the others turn from him in disgust, while in the play of theatrical convention the couples of lovers are recomposed.





## The chandelier

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*A gem of luminous manufacturing art*

Girasol glass chandelier with applications and flowers in polychrome glass paste. Solid glass arms with bobeches, it was subsequently electrified in the second half of the nineteenth century. While displaying eighteenth-century characteristics, it appears to be of nineteenth-century manufacture, when in fact, various Murano factories produced chandeliers in imitation of seventeenth and eighteenth century models so that it is often difficult to accurately date these pieces.





What I've always found most beautiful in a theatre, in my childhood and even now, is the *chandelier* – a beautiful object, luminous, crystalline, complicated, circular and symmetrical...

Charles Baudelaire

If you do not love me, leave me...

...and if you do not know how to love, learn.

## The puppet theatre room – first floor

### The puppet theatre

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As the 18th century dawned on Venice, the Republic found itself facing an increasing number of imponderables. It had by now been marginalized by European politics and reduced to an impotent and conscious spectator of its own inevitable decline. Yet the city still retained the incommensurable charm which made it the meeting ground of the cosmopolitan world of the time: music, publishing, journalistic initiatives, theatres, the visual arts, made its intellectual and artistic life reach peaks of high tension and prophetic modernity. Carlo Goldoni tried to reform an established Venetian institution such as the theatre, which, as an element of society and customs, also became a stimulus for other reforming initiatives. The theatre was associated with the music that propelled the name of Venice into the international spotlight and reached its zenith in the city with the activity of composers such as Benedetto Marcello, Vivaldi, Galuppi. In institutional playhouses as well as in aristocratic private theatres, comedians and singers were often upstaged by small wooden colleagues, replacing the artists in flesh and blood who were concealed in the wings and recited their lines to animate the performances of plays and opera musicata. String puppets, or marionettes, gave a great impulse to the development of the puppet theatre, and in the eighteenth



**“no longer worked the squares but more aristocratically played in small but more elegant theatres representing the Nebuchadnezzars and the Pharaohs ...”**

century many patrician houses boasted their own marionette theatre, with a repertoire that was getting richer and more varied with melodramas and pantomimes, farces, tragedies, and dances. The idea of setting up these small-scale theatres, accompanied by all the compendium necessary for the performance, including the opera librettos reproduced in a very small format to retain the harmony of proportions, was even sometimes improvised to provide entertainment for some illustrious guests, as at Ca 'Mocenigo in San Samuele in 1714 to honour the visit of the Elector of Saxony. There was a substantial difference between the glove puppets used in popular shows in booths set up in the squares and the string marionettes that “no

*longer worked the squares but more aristocratically played in small but more elegant theatres representing the Nebuchadnezzars and the Pharaohs...”* (Ricciotti Bratti, 18th century Marionettes). Unfortunately not much has remained of the puppet theatres of

# 05

the noble houses. One was reported at the Contarini house in San Barnaba, and one was allegedly in the Loredan house in San Vio, and outside Venice, in the Ravegnani house in Verona. A notable exception is the puppet theatre formerly in the Grimani ai Servi palace, visible again since 2001 at the Museo di Casa Goldoni - the most famous 18th century Venetian puppet theatre, equipped with the largest group of its original marionettes, recently increased by some other important acquisition. It was not by accident that it found a permanent home at Casa Goldoni. The material history of these puppets can be traced to characters and events that crossed paths with the playwright born in one of the rooms of this house in 1707. Goldoni was well acquainted with at least two members of the family the puppet theatre comes from, and went as far as to dedicate one of his comedies, *“L'amante di sé medesimo”* (The Man in Love with Himself) to Antonio Grimani. The playwright was also instrumental in introducing to the Grimani Pietro Longhi, who was to become the favourite painter of the patrician family. As witnessed by the records of its acquisition, the puppet theatre at Casa Goldoni came to the City of Venice through the bequest of the legacy of the Morosini-Gatterburg family, who had previously inherited

the estate of the extinct family line of the Grimani “ai Servi” : Loredana Grimani, Giovanni’s daughter, married a Morosini, while this line of the family died out in mid-nineteenth century with Countess De Gatterburg Morosini, Loredana’s granddaughter. Together with a *“proscenium already existing at Palazzo Morosini”*, the entry registers of the Venetian Civic Museums record the bequest of the *“Venetian puppets of the last century”* on 22 April 1896.

## Marcello Moretti

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Marcello Moretti (Venice 1910 – Rome 1961) was an actor whose seminal role is considered to be Harlequin in Harlequin the servant of two masters by Carlo Goldoni, directed by Giorgio Strehler, a part for which he was beloved by critics and applauded by audiences world-over during many tours. He was succeeded by Ferruccio Soleri, a devout pupil of Moretti’s in the technique of fine acting that Moretti displayed in the role of Harlequin.



## The Servant of two Masters

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### *The play*

Written in 1745 on request of the famed actor Antonio Sacchi, the comedy was performed in Milan and Venice in 1746 with great success. Goldoni, who had used a French plot in his first draft, rewrote it entirely in 1753 for the Pape-rini edition. In our times, G. Strehler's direction and a change of title to *Harle-quin, servant of two masters*, have contributed to earn this play international recognition.

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### *The Plot*

Following the news that her suitor Federigo has been killed in a duel by Florindo, Clarice is betrothed to Silvio by her father Pantalone. In the meantime, Federigo's sister Beatrice arrives, dressed as a man and using her brother's name, looking for her beloved Florindo, who ran off following the duel. Truffaldino, Beatrice's servant, also becomes Florindo's servant unbeknownst to her, and the comedy stems from the confusion and misunderstandings caused by Truffaldino. At the end all is cleared: Florindo marries Beatrice, Silvio marries Clarice, and Truffaldino marries Smeraldina, Clarice's maid.

The comedy is packed with comedic effects, such as when Truffaldino, trying to cover up one of his scams, makes Beatrice believe that Florindo is dead, while at the same time trying to convince Florindo that Beatrice is dead: a classic Goldonian trope.

## The Gambler

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### *Scene inspired by Act One – Scene 2 and 4*

After playing all night and surprisingly hitting a winning streak, Florindo wishes to sort out his small treasure-trove, but fatigue and tension overcome him, and he falls asleep at the gaming-table while counting the gold coins he has won. But he who is addicted does not know when to stop, therefore upon awaking he imagines further, much larger and more substantial gains compared to those of the night before, and this sparks a typical "Florindoesque" train of thought: "I play like a man, I know my quarter-of-an-hour, and it's impossible for me not to win in the long run." The exhibit features a small flip top table, four armchairs from the second half of the 18th century, faithfully reproduced playing cards and coins, the originals of which are in the Cor-ner Museum, and a man's suit with a stage cloak.



## *The Play*

It is one of the famous sixteen new comedies that Carlo Goldoni wrote and staged in 1750; in three acts, the play reprises themes and characters dear to the author's heart. Addiction and compulsive gambling, the heartbreak of losing, as opposed to the constant hopes of winning, the incessant anxiety for the next hand, the one that will surely be the "great hand", are the themes brought to the fore by the author, so real and entrenched in eighteenth-century Europe and still just as relevant today.

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## *The Plot*

Swept away by the frenzy of gambling, Florindo falls into the hands of Lelio, a dishonest gambler. Soon meeting his ruin, he loses his fiancée, Rosaura, his friends, and only the intervention of old Pantalone, who will force Lelio to return part of the ill-gotten gains, will save him from marrying Gandolfa, an elderly, frivolous and depraved aunt of Rosaura's.

## The parlour

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It is an "interior view" depicting the nuns' parlour of the convent of San Zaccaria, where relatives and friends could visit the Sisters: on these festive occasions, puppet shows were also organized for the younger guests.



**WORKSHOP OF  
PIETRO LONGHI**

**The Parlour**

mid-18th century  
Oil on canvas



## The conversation

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*The scene inspired by Act One- Scene 14*

Don Fabio arrives to scrounge yet another meal at Madama Lindora's house, but lunch is delayed by Lucrezia, who invites the guests to have fun with some games. The discussion on the choice of which would be the most entertaining for all the guests offers an insight into the customs as well as the leisure activities in vogue at the time.

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*The Play*

With music by maestro Giuseppe Scolari from Vicenza, this opera was staged at the San Samuele theatre during the 1758 carnival and performed by some of the best Italian artistes of the comic genre. In this *dramma giocoso* for music, Goldoni describes the conversation at Madama Lindora's house. Action is used sparingly but the scenes flow quickly, wittily, naturally and, with regards to the script, it is one of the best of Goldoni's compositions in this genre.

*The Story*

At Madama Lindora's, a merry widow, several characters gather to pass the time laughing, joking, shouting, fighting, and above all gambling and dancing. At this gathering, the participants include Monsieur Giacinto, a foppish traveller who uses a thousand languages out of context, the comic characters of Don Fabio, an impoverished aristocrat who resorts to "freeloading" his meals at Lindora's, and Sandrino, a rich plebeian, always bragging about his riches and ready to squander his money at any sort of game currently in vogue. Also present are the independently-spirited Lady Lucrezia and the bashful lovers Filiberto and Berenice.

## The biribissi

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This gambling game consists of a special board divided into thirty-six numbered pictorial compartments each with a figure that distinguishes them. The boxes correspond to an equal number of hollow wooden balls inside which are placed cards each showing the numbered versions of the pictures in the compartments. Once all the balls are put into a pouch, the bank-holder proceeds to extract one and then calls the number and figure out loud.

The winner is the person who has placed money on the box corresponding to the winning figure. The number of players can be unlimited.



# 06



## Avenging wrongs

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*The scene shown here is inspired by Act Two - Scene 7 and beginning of scene 8*

The guests trickle in making a jolly racket about the seating arrangement. The various courses will be spiced-up by their pranks and jests. Luncheon is over and Lissandro orders the waiters to clear the table and return later to collect the soiled tablecloths. *“Putti desparecchiè. Mettè tutto in quella credenza, piatti, possade, biancheria; mettè tutto là che po' li vegnirè a tor.”* (Lads, clear it. Put everything in that dresser, plates, cutlery, linen; put it all there and come back later to collect it). The scene takes place in a dining room furnished with a table, chairs and a large sideboard with doors that open against the end wall. We have tried to recreate the atmosphere of the painting *“La colazione in villa”* (Luncheon at the villa) hanging in the room and shown here on the right, by staging it with an 18th century dining-table, chairs, and wall console from the Veneto area, while the sideboard with chinoiserie decorations is an early 18th century English example.

## dining room – first floor



## The Play

The title for the printed edition of this comedy in three acts in the Venetian dialect was presented to the public at the San Luca Theatre on the evening of 5 January 1765 with the suggestive title *I chiassetti del carneval* (The carnival pranks). In this choral comedy, each character has a specific, well defined personality. According to contemporary accounts, it did not benefit from good acting and this was the main reason for its failure. Conversely, since the end of the 19th century it has been reappraised and is now a mainstay for many of the best companies performing in the vernacular in the Veneto.

## *The Plot*

Lissandro, a fake-bauble merchant, wishes to trick the stingy marriage-broker Gasparo, by making him foot the bill for a luncheon and allowing Zanetto to approach his beloved Cattina, Raimondo's daughter. To avoid raising suspicions, Zanetto pretends he is married, but he is exposed by Raimondo, who will not only get Lissandro to pay for the luncheon, but will bestow his daughter in marriage to Bortolo, Zanetto's rival.

## Mirabilia in the room

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Hanging between the two windows there is a large silk-screen print reproducing *the Portrait of Carlo Goldoni*, by Lorenzo Tiepolo. This portrait appears in the first volume of the 1761 Pasquali edition of the *Commedie*, and is taken from a black pencil drawing by Lorenzo Tiepolo, today at the Albertina in Vienna. The drawing, in turn, is a copy of a youthful painting by Alessandro Longhi.

Pitteri's etching reflects Lorenzo's original, partly accentuating his chiaroscuro play. The portrait was probably not appreciated by Goldoni, who denied any resemblance in his letter from Paris dated 3 December 1764 to Francesco Albergati Capacelli.

Filippo Pedrocco

### SCHOOL OF PIETRO LONGHI

#### Luncheon at the villa

Second half of the 18th century  
Oil on canvas  
Series: Pastimes at the villa,  
interior with dining room



### SCHOOL OF PIETRO LONGHI

#### La cucina

Second half of the 18th century  
Oil on canvas



## THE BAUTA

### Venetian mask

Reproduction.



## SCHOOL OF PIETRO LONGHI

### The Concert

18th century  
Oil on canvas



## SARTORIAL GOWN

Gown inspired by the  
dress of one of the  
marionettes in the  
Puppet Theatre Room

Contemporary creation.



## SCHOOL OF PIETRO LONGHI

### The woman from Friuli

18th century  
Oil on canvas



**SCHOOL OF PIETRO  
LONGHI**

**Portrait of Carlo Goldoni**

18th century  
Oil on canvas



**SCHOOL OF PIETRO  
LONGHI**

**The seller of fritters**

18th century  
Oil on canvas



**SCHOOL OF PIETRO  
LONGHI**

**The ball**

18th century  
Oil on canvas



# 07

## the library – second floor



For those interested in learning more about the plays and texts by Carlo Goldoni presented in this exhibition and broaden their knowledge on his entire theatrical production, it is possible to access the Library of the Centre for Theatre Studies located on the second floor of the Goldoni House. With over 30,000 works on theatrical art, today this is one of the top libraries specialising in this field. It represents one of the major international centres for drama studies, both due to the specificity of its books and documentary resources, and its position as an active cultural hub offering an information service and support to scholars.



Graphic design: Benedetta Virtute  
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Ma lascia, che rimiri le luci ancor di quella;  
se negli occhi suoi non vedo il tuo splendore,  
non te cresciuto il merito, crescerà in me l'ardore.

Ma la cìa, che rimiri le luci ancor di quella;  
se negli occhi suoi non vedo il tuo splendore,  
non te cresciuto il merito, crescerà in me l'ardore.

rimiri le luci ancor di quella

negli occhi suoi non vedo il tuo splendore,

non te cresciuto il merito, crescerà in me l'ardore.

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