

## Brescia's Musical Treasures: The Fondo Prezioso at the “Luca Marenzio” Conservatory

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### RESEARCH UNIT

Conservatorio di Brescia “Luca Marenzio”

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### Project Overview

The Library of the Conservatory “Luca Marenzio” in Brescia preserves, alongside its current didactic holdings, a *Fondo prezioso* consisting of **manuscripts and printed music dating from the late eighteenth century**. Over time, this collection has expanded thanks to bequests from Brescian musicians and music enthusiasts. Beginning in 1890, Francesco Pasini—then steward of the “Venturi” Musical Institute (later transformed into today’s Conservatory)—meticulously registered the arrival of these donations.

The donors, all prominent figures in Brescia’s cultural life, offer a historical cross-section of the city’s musical world from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards: Francesco Rovetta, Paolo Chimeri, Carlo Porro, Antonio Grassi, Giovanni Premoli, Giacinto Conti, Carlo Baresani, Giuseppe Soncini, the noble Rota brothers, and Francesco Pasini himself. The archives of Brescia’s Società dei Concerti are also housed in the collection. Among the most recent additions are the bequests of Luigi Manenti (former Conservatory director, comprising all his works,

mostly autograph manuscripts), Torlaschi (including an important collection of libretti), Giulio Tonelli (another former director, with all his autograph compositions), and Giancarlo Facchinetti (whose complete works are preserved in autograph form).

Thanks to funding from Regione Lombardia and the Fondazione Banca Nazionale delle Comunicazioni, **a large portion of the *Fondo prezioso***—both manuscripts and printed editions—**has already been catalogued** and made accessible through the national SBN catalogue. Regional support has also enabled the digitization of a substantial part of the manuscript holdings as well as a significant portion of the printed materials. According to the most recent assessment, **6,806 volumes from the *Fondo prezioso* are now catalogued in SBN, 3,412 of which are manuscripts.**

The *Fondo Prezioso* of Brescia's Conservatory Library is unquestionably among the **most important musical collections in Lombardy**. After the Library of the Milan Conservatory, it stands as the most significant musical collection preserved in any regional conservatory or music school, serving as a crucial point of reference for musicians and musicologists from Italy and abroad.

**The project also aims to strengthen internal expertise through training in music cataloguing standards, addressing the urgent need for large-scale professional development in this specialised field**—a process that must begin within the Conservatories themselves.

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## Actions

Starting from an updated **survey of the Conservatory Library's *Fondo Prezioso***, work focuses on completing the **cataloguing of the remaining uncatalogued portions of the printed musical sources in SBN** and on **digitising these materials**.