

# Rethinking Women in Theater

Isabella Andreini and Balzac's  
la Zambinella in "Sarrasine"



Presentation

by

**Eleonora Mancuso**

April 24, 2022

9:30am

Eleonora Mancuso is a PhD candidate in the Department of Romance Studies at Boston University. Her research interests include women writers in early modern French and Francophone literature with a focus on gender stereotypes and their deconstruction. This presentation will focus on two unique women in theater: commedia dell'arte actress Isabella Andreini and the character of la Zambinella in the nineteenth-century French novel "Sarrasine" by Honoré de Balzac. Andreini was a part of an internationally renowned commedia dell'arte theatrical company called "I gelosi" and was widely known as the first Italian woman on stage. She was an inspiring Renaissance writer of prose and poetry as well. "Sarrasine" is the eponymous story of a man who falls in love with a castrato opera singer called la Zambinella in eighteenth-century Rome. This presentation will compare these figures to trace the story of women in theater and to also rethink their roles by deconstructing the stereotypes that are attributed to them.

This presentation is part of a morning of fascinating talks by artists and scholars. To register for this and other April events, please go to

<https://sites.bu.edu/womenandmasks/events/schedule-for-april-weekend/>.

Please visit <https://sites.bu.edu/womenandmasks/> for more information about the conference.

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