Betting Against Oneself: A Textual and Contextual Reading of *Così fan tutte*

Long vilified as a misogynistic work, Lorenzo Da Ponte’s libretto *Così fan tutte* is now considered no more than an expression of a familiar antifeminist mode in comedy. This talk argues for an alternate reading of this uncomfortable yet widely acclaimed opera: excavating the libertine assumptions that underlie the Enlightenment context of the work, it suggests that Da Ponte slyly critiqued Petrarchan sexual politics in order to establish a new framework for gender equality.

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