

LOOKING
CLOSELY



Giulio Cesare Procaccini (Bologna 1574 - 1625 Milan). *Allegorical Portrait of Flaminia (Orsola Posmoni Cecchini) as Venus*, ca. 1620-25, oil on canvas, 97.5 x 73.2 cm. Inscribed on the reverse of the canvas: “Sr A·D”

ITALY’S FIRST DIVA: Procaccini’s
Allegorical Portrait of the Actress
Flaminia as Venus

Orsola Posmoni Cecchini (ca. 1580–after 1633)—better known by her stage name, Flaminia—was one of the first women to find fame as an actress. A star of the commedia dell’arte, this prima donna delighted the theatregoers across Italy, while at the same time, episodes in her romantic life off-stage incited gossip, scandal, and perhaps even murder. Procaccini’s recently rediscovered portrait of the actress, shown in the guise of Venus, the ancient Goddess of Love, invites us to explore the spectacular world of the Italian Baroque theatre through the dramatic life of one of its foremost divas.

WATCH

*Our new video on Procaccini’s
portrait of Flaminia.*

READ

*Kimberly Chrisman-Campbell
and Virginia Brilliant’s study of the
actress’s life and Procaccini’s portrait.*

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*The V&A’s recent exhibition on
the history of opera.*

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The Metropolitan Museum of Art.*