Other activities
There were, of course, opportunities to appreciate the hospitality of our Italian hosts, and the ambiance of the Lago di Como. The opening session in the Teatro Sociale was followed by a wonderful reception, and a concert by the Baroque Ensemble under the direction of Alan Curtis. There was an evening excursion by boat on the lake, sailing as far as Bellagio, at the middle of the lake, with a buffet dinner on board, during which we admired some of the magnificent villas on the shores. On an afternoon excursion to Milan we saw the fresco of the "Last Supper" by Leonardo da Vinci, in the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie, built by Bramante. After a visit to the Library at the Conservatorio di Musica "G. Verdi" di Milano, there was a concert of works by Gastoldi and Palestina, and another well-catered reception. Returning to Como, the bus drove past La Scala, and a spectacularly-floodlit Duomo. The highlight of the farewell dinner at the Villa Olmo must surely have been the "Libro de Musica" or Cake Book, iced with an unidentified neumatic incipit.

The post-conference excursion was to the old walled town of Bergamo, which forms the nucleus of a community which has gradually expanded through the centuries on to the plain below, where the modern centre of the town is now. Lunch was taken at the ristorante La Pergola, situated on the hillside overlooking the plain, and definitely Michelin 5 (or more) star. After toying with some rather delicious hors d'oeuvres assisted by Ferrari Spumante, we sat down to a splendid eight-course meal, the main dish of which was veal cordon bleu, all accompanied by a seemingly endless supply of Soave Purporan and Chianti Fattoria La Quercie. All this took about three hours! after which we were presented with the restaurant's personal plate, and the Proceedings of the 1st international Donizetti conference (1974), in two volumes, boxed, ("How on earth do I get all this home?" was the unspoken question on the faces of all present!), thus introducing a new measurement of weight - the Donizetti! Following this, a visit to the birthplace of - you've guessed it - and the Donizetti Museum, and then some time to browse around Bergamo before returning to Como. I expect that some Como hotel managers were subsequently to find, like a Gideon Bible, a Donizetti proceedings in every room, and next year in East Berlin there will surely be a special session entitled "What I did with my Donizetti", with a prize for the most ingenious solution. Seriously, though, it really was a splendid conference, and our Italian hosts are to be both thanked and congratulated for their arrangements and hospitality.

-Alison Hall, President

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