





## CONTENTS

WHAT IS BAROQUE?	1
THE GRAND TOUR OF EUROPE	6
MUSIC PUBLISHING IN EUROPE	14
Antonio STRADIVARI - Violin maker - Cremona	17
Tomaso ALBINONI - Italy	18
Arcangelo CORELLI - Rome	20
Francois COUPERIN ("the Great") - France	24
Johann Joseph FUX - Austria	25
Francesco GEMINIANI - Italy, England	26
George Frideric HANDEL - Germany, England	28
Henry PURCELL - England	34
Jean Philippe RAMEAU - France	36
Alessandro SCARLATTI (father) - Italy	38
Domenico SCARLATTI (son) - Italy, Spain	41
John STANLEY - England	43
Georg Philipp TELEMANN - Germany	45
Antonio VIVALDI - Venice	49
Unico Willem van WASSENAER - Holland	53
Jan Dismas ZELENSKA - Prague, Dresden	56
Johann Sebastian BACH:	
EISENACH - MÜHLHAUSEN	58
WEIMAR (second term)	64
CÖTHEN	66
LEIPZIG 1 - Cantor and Director of Music	70
LEIPZIG 2 - The Collegium Musicum	77
LEIPZIG 3 - The Introspective Years	82
BAROQUE KEYBOARD INSTRUMENTS	84
GOTTFRIED SILBERMANN: Master organ builder	88
BAROQUE MUSIC PERFORMANCE:	92

Produced by the editors at [www.BaroqueMusic.org](http://www.BaroqueMusic.org)  
where further detail on baroque music can be found.  
Additional material from [www.Baroque-Music-Club.com](http://www.Baroque-Music-Club.com)  
offering a catalogue of 100+ baroque music titles  
available as CDs or downloads.  
Two double-album samplers are also available,  
one covering the major baroque composers,  
the other, the works of J.S. Bach.  
Editor and copyright 2009: [arton@baroquemusic.org](mailto:arton@baroquemusic.org)



## WHAT IS BAROQUE?

*Baroque music expresses order, the fundamental order of the universe. Yet it is always lively and tuneful. Follow the development of music through this brief outline, from the earliest times to the present day, with baroque music set in historical context.*

The English word *baroque* is derived from the Italian *barocco*, meaning bizarre, though probably exuberant would be a better translation more accurately reflecting the sense. The usage of this term originated in the 1860s to describe the highly decorated style of 17th and 18th century religious and public buildings in Italy, Germany and Austria. No church-organ builder today would dare to grace his instrument with the

scantily-clad damsel banging away on her drums which decorates the Gottfried Silbermann organ completed in 1714 for the Cathedral in Freiberg, Saxony. And King Frederick's summer palace of Sans Souci in Potsdam, completed in 1747 and shown on our back cover, is representative of ornate, high-baroque decoration.

Later, during the early-to-mid 1900s, the term *baroque* was applied by association to music of the 17th and early 18th century, and today the term *baroque* has come to refer to a very clearly definable type or genre of music which originated, broadly speaking, around 1600 and came to fruition between 1700 and 1750. Strangely however, while exterior and interior baroque architecture was surely flamboyant, baroque music was almost the opposite, for its focus was on symmetry, order and form, expressing what eighteenth-century writers, artists and musicians saw as the fundamental order of the universe.

The story begins, however, with the earliest origins of music as we know it in the West today. Music of the 1200s and 1300s sounds relatively primitive in terms of melody and harmony. If we move to the 1500s we find a great difference, as Italian music began to blossom and English composers like Dowland, Morley and Tomkins produced the wonderful melodies and surprisingly sensitive poetry which accompanied them - or vice versa. A major theme underlying music at that time however was the exploration of form. There was still so much new to discover - new melodic lines and harmonic progressions to be explored, new combinations of instruments, and new forms in music such as the fugue, canon, and variations on a bass line, a popular tune or a chorale.

As the 1600s progressed, so these different musical forms took on definite shape, and the period from 1700 to 1750 can clearly be seen as the "high baroque", as well as the culmination of the development of the musical forms we know today.

Two geographical influences were at work here. In north Germany and Holland, composers such as Froberger, Kerll, and particularly Dietrich Buxtehude were concentrating mainly on the art of counterpoint, especially the fugue. Here, organ and voice were the major elements.

At the other end of Europe, in Rome, the instrumental forms of the sonata and concerto were formalized. Every period in music has certain recognizable clichés, and much of what is typical in baroque music, specific cadences and snatches of melody, can be traced back to one Arcangelo Corelli, who seems to have influenced just about everybody, from his Italian contemporaries and students to Handel who sojourned in Rome from 1704 to 1710.

From Rome, the "Italian" influences spread northwards while the stricter north German forms flowed southwards, intermingling to produce a common baroque vocabulary.

Indeed, the inter-mingling of musical trends from different parts of Europe was surprisingly extensive, considering the relatively primitive methods of travel and communication. Vivaldi, Geminiani, Corelli, Scarlatti, Handel and many others all met one another or were thoroughly conversant with one another's music.

Bach journeyed north from his "base" in Thuringia and Saxony, southern Germany, to hear Buxtehude, and his later travels included Dresden and Berlin. Bach owned and/or copied the music of many of his contemporary composers, often re-writing them for different instruments. Indeed this was a recognized method of study widely practised in baroque times.

It is also important, when studying the composers and their music of the baroque or indeed any age, to review the circumstances in which composers worked.

Take Vivaldi for example. Though he wrote many fine concertos (like the Four Seasons and the Opus 3) he also wrote many works which sound like five-finger exercises for students. And this is precisely what they were. Vivaldi was employed for most of his working life by the *Ospedale della Pietà*. Often termed an "orphanage", this *Ospedale* was in fact a home for the female offspring of noblemen and their numerous dalliances with their mistresses. The *Ospedale* was thus well endowed by the "anonymous" fathers; its furnishings bordered on the opulent, the young ladies were well looked-after, and the musical standards among the highest in Venice. Many of Vivaldi's concerti were indeed exercises which he would play with his many talented pupils.

Two major influences in Germany were the Church and the State, or rather, States. Neither Italy nor Germany existed then as we know them today. Germany was a complex mass of small princely states, each with its own Court and, with any luck, Court Musicians. Alliances came and went as princely families inter-married thus uniting, for a time anyway, their respective territories. That is why so many princely titles of those days were hyphenated, as for example, Anhalt-Cöthen or Saxe-Coburg. Many a composer's fortunes rose or fell with the status accorded to music at the court in which he was serving, and composer-musicians would try to seek a position in a city or court where music was known, for the time being anyway, to be thriving under the patronage of an enthusiastic king or prince.

The direction of Bach's music was influenced in his early years by several courts at which he was employed; the greater part of his working life however was spent in Leipzig where his position as Cantor of St Thomas' Church required church cantatas in abundance (200 have come down to us, some 100 more are supposed lost). And here of course was the other factor influencing music composition - the demands of the Church for devotional organ and choral music, from short cantatas to major Masses and Magnificats.

A brief look at the life of Handel illustrates both the mobility, and the influence of royal patronage on a composer typical of the baroque age.

Georg Friederich Händel was born in Halle (Germany), on February 23rd, 1685, just a month before JS Bach was born in Eisenach, not so far to the south. At the age of 18, in 1703, he traveled to Hamburg, where he took a job as violinist at the Hamburg Opera and gave private lessons to support himself. Whilst in Hamburg, Handel made the acquaintance of Prince Ferdinando de' Medici, son and heir of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, who invited Handel to visit Italy where he spent more than three years, in Florence, Rome, Naples and Venice. By 1704 he had reached Rome, where Marquis (later Prince) Francesco Ruspoli employed him as a household musician and where he also studied with Corelli.

Leaving Italy early in 1710 Handel went to Hanover, where he was appointed Capellmeister to the Elector, George Louis, soon through succession to become King George I of England. Moving to England and maintaining the royal connection, Handel thus became, as he was to remain, one of England's most celebrated composers.

In the music of JS Bach, the different forms and styles of the baroque came together and were brought to perfection. Johann Sebastian Bach came from a musical family stretching back through many generations, and the Bachs were well-known throughout their "home ground" of Thuringia in what is now southeast Germany. The Bach family members were church and court musicians, teachers, and one or two were instrument-makers.

Though Bach himself traveled less than some of his contemporaries, he seems to have been able to draw freely and widely on the developments taking place throughout the western musical world as indeed were all the other major composers.

Later in Bach's life, during his Leipzig years, his son Carl Phillip Emanuel wrote that "no musician of any consequence visiting Leipzig would fail to call upon my father". Leipzig was an important and cosmopolitan university and trading city, and visiting musicians would call upon Bach or stay at his apartments in the Thomas School building where they would make music together on whatever ensemble of instruments the occasion could muster. Many of Bach's later concertos were written or modified for such occasions - the 3 and 4 harpsichord concertos for example.

When Bach died in 1750 he left a legacy which summarized his art, his life's work in which he had, by general recognition, brought baroque musical forms to the peak of their development. He left Forty-eight Preludes and Fugues for the keyboard adopting the new "equal temperament" enabling all keys to be played equally and modulation between keys; he left us the Art of the Fugue (complete, though many deny this, attaching an incomplete fugue which is not part of the "Art"), and the Goldberg Variations, a set of thirty variations on a popular tune.

He also left numerous collections of chorale variations, canons, and fugues, as well as many pieces in more standardized form such as suites, preludes, sonatas and concertos. Add to that, some 200 cantatas, the Passions, and the monumental B-Minor Mass (plus the Four Shorter Masses which Bach "assembled" drawing upon what he considered as his finest cantata movements).

After Bach, music took a different turn. Even the music of his sons, with the possible exception of Wilhelm Friedemann, was quite different in character, expressing the new "gallant" style which was lighter, with less stress on pure form - and having its own set of "clichés"!

Here we find composers such as Haydn and Mozart, to be followed by the "romantic" composers such as Beethoven and Tchaikovsky. It was however in the baroque period that the essential language of music was defined, and it is interesting to note how successive composers would often "return to base", studying and playing Bach's works, writing fugues in the baroque style, or adapting the works of baroque composers. Mendelssohn led the Bach revival, while Mozart, Schumann, Beethoven and many others produced fugues in strict baroque style. Max Reger, as well as writing many pieces in baroque contrapuntal style, adapted Bach's Six Brandenburg Concertos for two pianos.

Many instruments reached the peak of their development at the height of the baroque era; the organs of Arp Schnitger (north Germany) and Bach's close friend Gottfried Silbermann (Saxony, south Germany) were among the period's finest and are still regarded as such today. Likewise the violins and other stringed instruments of the baroque Italian masters are the prized possessions of today's professional string players. The harpsichord, on the other hand, "disappeared" with the close of the baroque period, and had to be rediscovered.

The baroque age favored the harpsichord, in which the strings are plucked and the player cannot vary the tone through finger touch. After 1750 the piano took over, offering touch sensitivity, and developing later into the "iron grands" needed for concert-hall performances of the great romantic concertos by such as Beethoven. Interestingly however it was the organ builder Gottfried Silbermann, working with Bach, who contributed substantially to the development of the piano. King Frederick the Great is said to have owned no less than fourteen Silbermann fortepianos (as they were then called) in his palace at Potsdam, just west of Berlin, and it was ostensibly in order to "try out" such an instrument that JS Bach was invited to Potsdam in 1747. The result of this visit was the Musical Offering. Our back cover shows an original Silbermann piano in the king's music room at Potsdam.

The Baroque Spirit expressed in music is: Order, Pattern, and Form. Here there is to be no disorder, no atonal meandering, no shapeless movements. In the baroque musical repertoire we find Fugues, in which a given theme is repeated in different clefs, and the stricter Canon which is a 'round', each entry following or overlapping the previous one.

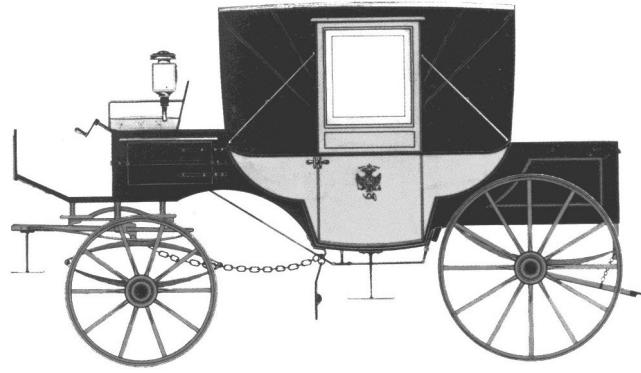
There is also a whole group of Variations: variations on a chorale melody, variations on a single, repeating bass-line (passacaglia), and variations on a popular theme - the Chaconne. In that the Chaconne belongs securely among the most orderly of baroque forms, yet is based on a recognizable melody, freer than the Passacaglia, much freer than the Fugue or Canon, it may justifiably be said that the Chaconne is the most readily enjoyable form among the typical Baroque musical idioms.

Both the Chaconne and the Passacaglia originated in dances, the Chaconne apparently in Spain where it was also considered to be of native South American origin. These were slow dances of three-beats-in-a-measure, usually based directly upon a ground-bass, or planned in short sections similar to those resulting from a ground bass. The Chaconne theme in baroque times was frequently derived from a popular tune. Thus the orderly forms into which baroque music is shaped, contain the basic ingredients of tuneful melodies and folk rhythms.

Music which is melodious yet so constructed as to reflect the "perfect order" of the universe: that is the essence of the baroque.

In the words of baroque composer and theorist Johann Joseph Fux: "A composition meets the demands of good taste if it is well constructed, avoids trivialities as well as willful eccentricities, aims at the sublime, but moves in a natural ordered way, combining brilliant ideas with perfect workmanship."

These days more and more people are seeking a return to music for the mind, music combining beauty with the order of an underlying architecture and structure. So we are witnessing a resurgence of interest in the baroque, and those who are fortunate enough to be as yet unfamiliar with it have a wonderful experience awaiting them.



## THE GRAND TOUR OF EUROPE

In 1668, an "Italian Voyage" by Richard Lassels was published, and the institution of the Grand Tour of Europe was born.

The Grand Tourist was typically a young man with a thorough grounding in Greek and Latin literature as well as some leisure time, some financial means, and some interest in art. Most Grand Tourists would set out upon the long journey full of expectation and curiosity, having already heard of the cultural wonders awaiting them. They would be accompanied by a teacher or guardian, and expected to return home with souvenirs of their travels as well as an understanding of art and architecture formed by exposure to great masterpieces.

The sons of English aristocrats were sent to further their education aesthetically and culturally - to learn about the art and culture of Europe, to become a *connoisseur*, and learn refinement at the hands of the supposedly more refined aristocrats of Europe. They might also learn the languages and customs of other European countries and prepare themselves for employment as ambassadors, so to participate in England's newly acquired role in world history. These gentlemen were to become the scientists, authors, antiquaries, and patrons of the arts.

Seventeenth century tourism was, however, somewhat different than today's luxury coach trip on smooth highways. The roads were unpaved, rutted and muddy. The mountain passes were often little more than mule tracks, their precipitous edges plunging down into distant ravines below and causing severe distress to those foolhardy enough to peer out of the muddy carriage windows. Springs and even axels would break, necessitating long waits while the coachmen improvised or expertly repaired.

Hostelries were not five-star hotels either; one might be expected to bed down with a room full of others, either on straw mattresses on the floor, or sharing a large bed. And travelers needed to keep their wits about them if they were not to be “taken for a ride” by sharp and wily innkeepers, porters and coachmen, not to mention the occasional highwayman!



London was a frequent starting point for Grand Tourists, and Paris a compulsory destination; many traveled to the Netherlands, some to Switzerland and Germany, and a very few adventurers to Spain, Greece, or Turkey.

The essential place to visit, however, was Italy. The British traveler Charles Thompson speaks for many Grand Tourists when in 1744 he describes himself as "being impatiently desirous of viewing a country so famous in history, which once gave laws to the world; which is at present the greatest school of music and painting, contains the noblest productions of statuary and architecture, and abounds with cabinets of rarities, and collections of all kinds of antiquities."

In addition to the more intellectual approach of many Grand Tourists from England, music-making was highly prized by many of the princely and kingly courts of northern Europe, and leading musicians would often be financed for their journeys south to bring back the latest styles and compositions.

Within Italy, the great focus was Rome, whose ancient ruins and more recent achievements were shown to every Grand Tourist. Here too, it may be said that baroque music was born. During the first half of the 1700s, baroque music adopted the Italian forms of the concerto and sonata, and with them, much of the Italian baroque "vocabulary" together with the latest Italian compositions.

As they did the Grand Tour through Europe's main attractions, these are some of the musicians the Tourists were likely to, or might have been fortunate enough to meet in the different countries they visited.



## ITALY

The papacy returned to Rome in 1377, and thereafter the city was to become a center of Renaissance culture enriched by massive papal patronage of the arts. Michelangelo, Donato Bramante, Raphael, and other artists worked for the popes, and construction of the new Saint Peter's Basilica progressed. The dense, confused medieval urban pattern was replaced by major streets radiating from the Piazza del Popolo to the center of the city. Squares and fountains were built, the Acqua Felice aqueduct restored, old churches were refurbished, and finally Saint Peter's dome was completed.

It was hardly surprising that music too should flourish against this rich visual background. Typical of baroque musicians active in Rome was the composer and violinist Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713), whose style of playing became the basis for the violin technique of the 18th and 19th centuries, and whose chamber music compositions were far-reaching in their influence.

His patron was Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni, (1667-1740), librettist and important music patron who as vice-chancellor of the church resided in the Palazzo della Cancelleria where Poetico-Musicali Accademie were held and operas and oratorios performed.

The most widely published and reprinted composer before the Austrian Joseph Haydn, Corelli was the first composer to gain an international reputation solely on the basis of his instrumental music. Many elements of his style became commonplace in the 18th century, and his works are early examples of the newly evolved system of major and minor tonality. As the preeminent violin virtuoso of the day, he taught many leading violinist-composers of the 18th century, among them the Italian Francesco Geminiani.

Many eminent composers of the baroque period, notably Handel for example, sojourned in Rome, and Corelli's influence was to spread itself throughout Europe, at first through the Grand Tourists, and later through the publication and distribution of music scores.



Venice, the great independent trading city-on-the-water in the north, was also a place of considerable wealth, architectural masterpieces, and musical influence, the most famous among its musical sons being Antonio Vivaldi. Venice also featured on the European nobility's "Grand Tour". In retrospect however we may, perhaps sadly, note that the economic power and wealth of Venice was already in decline, and by the end of Vivaldi's lifetime economic recession had set in from which Venice was never to recover.

An underlying, all-pervading and inspirational influence on Italian baroque music was provided by its violin-makers, mainly centered in Cremona - the Amati family in the 16th and 17th centuries, the Guarneri and Stradivari families in the 17th and 18th.

It might be suggested that in a similar way the great organ-builders of Germany, Arp Schnitger in the north and Gottfried Silbermann in the south, inspired and challenged composers such as Buxtehude and JS Bach to compose organ works which would exploit to the full the varied and majestic tonalities of these notable instruments.

### FROM ITALY TO GERMANY



The city of Dresden rose during the 1700s to become “the Venice of the west” with its fine new buildings fronting the scenic bend in the Elbe River. Lying on a well frequented trade route from Italy, Dresden was well placed strategically to acquire the latest in Italian music, and indeed, before it was bombed in the second world war, the Dresden State Library’s collection of Italian baroque music became one of the most substantial in Europe.

Johann Georg Pisendel (1687-1755) was not only one of the foremost German violinists of the 18th century, he was also a musical personality of international renown. At the age of 25 he entered the Dresden Court Orchestra, and in 1728 he was appointed as its leader, occupying that post with great distinction until his death. With the permission of the Court, Pisendel traveled to France in 1714 and to Italy in 1716/17. He studied under Vivaldi in Venice, also coming into contact with other prominent Italian masters of the day, and after his return to Dresden he introduced the latest Italian violin compositions.

Dresden was the capital city of the Electoral State of Saxony and the center of the German cult of Vivaldi, under whose influence J.S. Bach composed his organ concertos. The political and cultural links between Saxony and Italy were made even stronger by the coronation of Marie Amalia of Saxony as Queen of Naples.

The royal residences in Munich, Stuttgart and Hanover also allowed themselves the luxury of Italian musical establishments, and many of the smaller princely courts where the music was directed by Germans ordered the latest scores from Italy.

Though highly influenced by developments in Italy, Germany was in fact grafting these forms and styles onto its own indigenous traditions.

The Reformation, led by Martin Luther and formally begun in 1517, brought religion to the masses, both through Luther's translations of biblical texts into German, and through the extensive use of the chorale as an essential textual/musical accompaniment to the church service. From the traditional chorale melodies much of German baroque music was to grow and develop. Cantatas and Passions were frequently chorale-based, and if not, were simply extensions of the chorale tradition. Organists too would elaborate on the chorale for the week, either by adding interpolations between verses, or by composing whole sets of variations based on a specific chorale melody.

To this tradition must be added the instinctive German love of order, manifested still today in so many aspects of German life. Thus German composers were attracted to the fugue, the canon and passacaglia for their basis of fundamental form, pattern and unity.

One of several early baroque composers who contributed significantly to the marriage of chorale and counterpoint was Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707). His artistry on the organ was legendary, and his performance of sacred music, instrumental and vocal, made Lübeck a place of pilgrimage for musicians anxious to advance in their art, including a youthful Sebastian Bach who traveled two hundred miles to hear and learn from the Master.

## SPAIN

The Moorish presence (roughly 800-1500) gave Spanish music much of its distinctive flavor, bequeathing a legacy of complex Arabic rhythms, microtonic scales, and an ongoing love of the plucked instrument, the vihuela and the guitar. Itinerant gypsies would later add regional variety in rhythm and melody.

It was this rich and varied folk mixture which Domenico Scarlatti would later explore and exploit with such flare and enthusiasm; in his 500 or so Sonatas we find all the richness and excitement, the melodic and rhythmic variety of traditional Spain.

## FRANCE

The contribution of France to baroque music was comparatively small. This was due entirely to the influence of one Giovanni Battista Lulli (1632-1687), an Italian of noble birth who, as a young man, journeyed to France, taking up service in 1653 at the Court of Louis XIV. Here he used his influence with the king, combined with an aggressive sense of business, to create for himself a virtual monopoly over French music which was to last beyond his death and well into the early 1700s, it being only with Rameau and Couperin that France began to find itself musically once again.



The major influence which France did exert over the baroque age was one of courtly opulence. Louis XIV's court at Versailles, completed in 1682, was a palace of unprecedented magnificence. There was not a kingly or princely court in Europe which could match Versailles for the opulence of its gilded interiors, mirrors and chandeliers, its flamboyance of courtly ceremony, and there was not a kingly or princely court in Europe which did not, either openly or secretly aspire to match this model.

Though much of Europe's royalty was to make the pilgrimage to Versailles, no one was to know that Louis

and his country were overburdened by the debts which the costly Versailles imposed on them, while many a princely court in Germany was similarly bankrupted in its attempt to emulate Versailles.

French organ-building, meanwhile, had developed the rough and reedy tones which resound so magnificently in French cathedrals today

## ENGLAND



Returning Grand Tourists would bring with them new musical styles and ideas, with music scores gathered during their travels. During the last decades of the 1600s England had learned much about Italian and French musical styles from Purcell and the country would enter the new century warmly receptive to continental fashions. English musical life during the first half of the 1700s was dominated by the giant figure of Handel. In 1712 he settled in London, where he would remain for the rest of his life becoming, ironically, the baroque composer most associated with England. His music was able to draw upon a wealth of European styles.

Born and receiving early musical tuition in Germany, he too did the Grand Tour, spending more than three years in Florence, Naples, Venice, and Rome where he studied with Corelli. He may also have met Vivaldi in Venice on his way back. Thus he appealed to the Grand Tourists who returned home full of enthusiasm for the academies, theatres, opera houses and concert life which they had encountered in Europe. England, in short, became a welcoming host to foreign virtuosi, impresarios, singers and composers.

As the Hamburg theorist, critic and composer Johann Mattheson noted in 1713: "He who in the present time wants to make a profit out of music betakes himself to England".

In England the chief model for instrumental music was Corelli, whose compositions first became known in London towards the end of the seventeenth century. In 1715 John Walsh senior - he and his son were soon to become Handel's publishers - issued Corelli's 12 Concerti Grossi Op. 6, from which time they were performed, adapted, and from all accounts, universally loved.

The English music historian Sir John Hawkins mentions an occasion in 1724 when an enthusiastic group of amateurs, having just acquired Corelli's Op. 6 from a bookseller, "played the whole 12 concertos through, without rising from their seats". Concertos by Corelli's contemporary, Torelli, and the up-to-date fashionable Venetian concertos by Vivaldi were also published and became popular in England.

### From EUROPE to the NEW WORLD

As the 18th century progressed, European music was also becoming increasingly familiar in the United States, a particularly enthusiastic exponent being Thomas Jefferson, politician, diplomat, foreign minister to France, vice president under John Adams, two-term president of the United States, and of course, author of the Declaration of Independence. Thomas Jefferson, whose spirited pursuit of excellence has few parallels in American history, regarded music as "a delightful recreation through life" and "this favorite passion of my soul." Once again we encounter the ubiquitous Corelli, who is known to have been one of Jefferson's favorite composers.

### MUSIC PUBLISHING IN EUROPE

As the Grand Tourists returned home, bringing with them music scores which they had purchased, or themselves hand-copied, they created a demand for published scores which would keep them up to date with the latest compositions from continental Europe.

Despite its lead in the early forming of baroque musical forms, Italy remained backward in terms of music-printing. Though Italy had pioneered the printing of lined music manuscript paper, actual scores were still printed using movable type, which was expensive, cumbersome, and too inflexible to reproduce clearly all the ties and other markings which are essential if the composer is to convey his intentions to performers with any degree of accuracy.

Furthermore, printers were naturally unwilling to keep large blocks of type "standing", tying up a substantial investment in wood and lead. So after printing, the type was dismantled, and had to be re-set for any further reprints. Far superior in terms of cost, durability and above all legibility was the process of engraving music onto copper plates, and this process was developed, not in Italy, but in London by John Walsh and in Amsterdam by Estienne Roger.

Not only did these firms provide a printing service; they also acted as publishers and distributors. Whereas previously composers would need to find wealthy patrons to finance the printing of their scores then attend to their own distribution through personal friends and contacts, it now became possible for composers to have their scores printed and published at little or no cost to themselves, with the promise of royalties to follow.

In 1711 Vivaldi, who had previously had two works printed in Italy, sent his third, *L'estro armonico*, directly to Roger in Amsterdam - with a few disparaging remarks about Italian printers in the foreword. Other composers would quickly follow. Albinoni for example, published his Oboe Concertos Op.7 with Roger in 1715. Thus the quantity and choice of printed and published editions available throughout Europe was vastly increased. Another interesting side-effect was to spread Italian music throughout northern Europe, at the same time encouraging Italian composers to write for a wider musical taste.

Estienne Roger was perhaps the best-known, and almost certainly the best-organized printer/publisher of the baroque era. Born in 1665 or 1666 of a French Huguenot refugee family, Roger began his music printing business in Amsterdam in 1697, enhancing and widening his reputation mainly through the high quality of his copper engraving and processing, always remaining in the forefront of current printing techniques.

Numbering among his regular clients such great baroque names as Vivaldi, Albinoni, Corelli, Alessandro Scarlatti, Lully, Lebègue, and Marin Marais, he provided not only some of Europe's highest quality printing, but also a well-organized Europe-wide distribution and information system. Roger numbered his editions (about 500) and the books in stock, and issued catalogs between 1698 and 1716 which were distributed abroad and reprinted in newspapers. He authorized agents in Rotterdam, Liège and Brussels, London, Cologne, Hamburg, Halle, Berlin and Leipzig to sell his editions. Thus Bach for example would have been able to browse the catalog, possibly review scores, and order any which interested him in his own city of Leipzig.

Roger's publication in 1711 of Vivaldi's *L'Estro armonico* was to be the start of an important alliance which greatly expedited the dissemination of Vivaldi's music throughout Europe. *L'estro armonico* was followed by *La stravaganza* in 1714, Duo and Trio Sonatas Op 5 in 1716, the two collections of *Concerti a 5 stromenti* Op 6/7 in 1716-17, *Il cimento dell' armonia e dell'inventione* containing the Four Seasons Concertos Op 8 in 1725, and *La cetra* Op 9 (dedicated to Emperor Charles VI) in 1727. The first complete set of Flute Concertos ever to be published appeared in 1728 as Op 10, and the String Concertos Op 11/12 followed in 1729.

Estienne Roger died in 1722. Although his elder daughter was meant to have succeeded him in the business, she died in the same year, and the firm passed into the hands of Michel-Charles Le Cène who had married Roger's younger daughter. She in turn was to die a year later, but almost as active as his father-in-law, Le Cène continued to run the business energetically, adding to the company's catalog nearly 100 further editions of works by Geminiani, Locatelli, Handel, Quantz, Telemann, Tartini and others. These were issued jointly under the imprint of Roger & Le Cène. In 1743 Le Cène died and G. J. de la Coste took over the firm.

Meanwhile in London, John Walsh was providing a differently focused, though equally go-ahead printing and publishing service. Indeed the commercial activities of these two printer/publisher entrepreneurs were closely paralleled.

Born around the same time as Roger (1666?), Walsh began as an instrument maker, turning to publishing in 1695. At his premises in Catherine Street, Strand, Walsh began printing on a scale hitherto unknown. A shrewd businessman, he published popular music and cheap music tutors, advertised, and offered subscription issues - even free copies - and serialized music collections. To reduce costs Walsh used pewter plates instead of copper, and to speed up the printing process he used punches instead of engraving. His editions opened with standard stock title pages.



Newly arrived in London, Handel entrusted Walsh with the publication of *Rinaldo* in 1711, the same year in which Vivaldi had first printed with Roger.

To diversify his offerings further, Walsh pirated Amsterdam editions of continental music such as the Corelli sonatas; however from 1716 onwards he maintained a cordial working relationship with Estienne Roger.

Walsh was succeeded in the business by his son, John junior (1709-1766), who published all of Handel's later works, having astutely secured the exclusive rights for a period of 14 years beginning in 1739.

It was not until the beginning of the following century that Germany and Italy would enter the music publishing scene in a substantial way, with the founding of such names as C F Peters in Leipzig (1800) and Ricordi in Italy (1808).



## Antonio STRADIVARI

was born in the year 1644 (by some sources also in 1649 or 1650) in Cremona, Italy to Alessandro Stradivari and Anna Moroni. A luthier by profession (maker of violins and other stringed instruments), he was to set a standard for the design of violins and cellos which has never subsequently been superseded.

From 1667 to 1679 he probably served as a pupil in Amati's workshop.

In 1680 Stradivari set up for himself in the Piazza San Domenico, and his fame as a instrument-maker was soon established. He now began to show his originality, making alterations in Amati's model.

The arching was improved, the

various degrees of thickness in the wood were more exactly determined, the formation of the scroll altered, and the varnish more highly coloured.

His instruments are recognized by their inscription in Latin: *Antonius Stradivarius Cremonensis Faciebat Anno [date]* (Antonio Stradivari, Cremona, made in the year ...). It is generally acknowledged that his finest instruments were manufactured from 1698 to 1725 (peaking around 1715), exceeding in quality those manufactured between 1725 and 1730. After 1730, some of the instruments are signed *sub disciplina Stradivarii*, and were probably made by his sons, Omobono and Francesco.

Apart from violins, Stradivari also made harps, guitars, violas, and cellos - more than 1,100 instruments in all, by current estimate. About 650 of these instruments survive today. Antonio Stradivari died in Cremona, Italy on December 18, 1737 and is buried in the Basilica of San Domenico in Cremona.

Stradivari's instruments are regarded as amongst the finest stringed instruments ever created, are highly prized, and played by professionals today. Only one other maker, Joseph Guarneri del Gesù, commands the same respect among violin makers.

Photo: "Stradivari and Pupil". Statue in the Piazza San Domenico, Cremona.



### BAROQUE COMPOSERS: TOMASO ALBINONI

Tomaso Giovanni Albinoni was born in Venice in 1671, eldest son of a wealthy paper merchant. At an early age he became proficient as a singer and, more notably, as a violinist, though not being a member of the performers' guild he was unable to play publicly so he turned his hand to composition. His first opera, *Zenobia, regina de Palmireni*, was produced in Venice in 1694, coinciding with his first collection of instrumental music, the 12 *Sonate a tre*, Op.1. Thereafter he divided his attention almost equally between vocal

composition (operas, serenatas and cantatas) and instrumental composition (sonatas and concertos).

Until his father's death in 1709, he was able to cultivate music more for pleasure than for profit, referring to himself as "Dilettante Veneto" - a term which in 18th century Italy was totally devoid of unfavorable connotations. Under the terms of his father's will he was relieved of the duty (which he would normally have assumed as eldest son) to take charge of the family business, this task being given to his younger brothers. Henceforth he was to be a full-time musician, a prolific composer who according to one report, also ran a successful academy of singing.

A lifelong resident of Venice, Albinoni married an opera singer, Margherita Raimondi, and composed as many as 81 operas several of which were performed in northern Europe from the 1720s. In 1722 he traveled to Munich at the invitation of the Elector of Bavaria to supervise performances of *I veri amici* and *Il trionfo d'amore* as part of the wedding celebrations for the Prince-Elector and the daughter of the late Emperor Joseph I.

Most of his operatic works have been lost, having not been published during his lifetime. Nine collections of instrumental works were however published, meeting with considerable success and consequent reprints; thus it is as a composer of instrumental music (99 sonatas, 59 concertos and 9 sinfonias) that he is known today. In his lifetime these works were favorably compared with those of Corelli and Vivaldi, and his nine collections published in Italy, Amsterdam and London were either dedicated to or sponsored by an impressive list of southern European nobility.

Albinoni was particularly fond of the oboe, a relatively new introduction in Italy, and is credited with being the first Italian to compose oboe concertos (Op. 7, 1715). Prior to Op.7, Albinoni had not published any compositions with parts for wind instruments.

The concerto, in particular, had been regarded as the province of stringed instruments. It is likely that the first concertos featuring a solo oboe appeared from German composers such as Telemann or Handel. Nevertheless, the four concertos with one oboe (Nos. 3, 6, 9 and 12) and the four with two oboes (Nos. 2, 5, 8 and 11) in Albinoni's Op.7 were the first of their kind to be published, and proved so successful that the composer repeated the formula in Op.9 (1722).

Albinoni's published instrumental works.

- Opus 1 (1694): 12 Trio Sonatas
- Opus 2 (1700): 6 Sinfoniae & 6 Concerti a 5
- Opus 3 (1701): 12 Baletti de Camera (a 3)
- Opus 4 (1704): 6 Sonate da Chiesa for Violin & Bass
- Opus 5 (1707): 12 Concertos
- Opus 6 (1711): 12 Sonate da Camera for Violin & Bass
- Opus 7 (1716): 12 Concertos for strings / oboe(s)
- Opus 8 (1721): 6 Sonatas & 6 Baletti (a 3)
- Opus 9 (1722): 12 Concertos for strings / oboe(s)

Though Albinoni resided in Venice all his life, he traveled frequently throughout southern Europe; the European nobility would also have made his acquaintance in Venice, now a popular destination city. With its commercial fortunes in the Adriatic and Mediterranean in decline, the enterprising City-State turned to tourism as its new source of wealth, taking advantage of its fabled water setting and ornate buildings, and putting on elongated and elaborate carnivals which regularly attracted the European courts and nobility.

Apart from some further instrumental works circulating in manuscript in 1735, little is known of Albinoni's life and musical activity after the mid-1720s. However, so much of his output has been lost, one can surely not put our lack of knowledge down to musical or composition inactivity. Much of his work was lost during the latter years of World War II with the bombing of Dresden and the Dresden State library - which brings us to the celebrated Adagio.

In 1945, Remo Giazotto, a Milanese musicologist traveled to Dresden to complete his biography of Albinoni and his listing of Albinoni's music. Among the ruins, he discovered a fragment of manuscript. Only the bass line and six bars of melody had survived, possibly from the slow movement of a Trio Sonata or Sonata da Chiesa. It was from this fragment that Giazotto reconstructed the now-famous Adagio, a piece which is instantly associated with Albinoni today, yet which ironically Albinoni would doubtless hardly recognize.

Albinoni died in 1751, in the city of his birth.



## BAROQUE COMPOSERS: ARCANGELO CORELLI

The Italian composer and violinist Arcangelo Corelli exercised a wide influence on his contemporaries and on the succeeding generation of composers. Born in Fusignano, Italy, in 1653, a full generation before Bach or Handel, he studied in Bologna, a distinguished musical center, then established himself in Rome in the 1670s. By 1679 he had entered the service of Queen Christina of Sweden, who had taken up residence in Rome in 1655, after her abdication the year before, and had established there an academy of literati that later became the Arcadian Academy.

In 1679, Corelli mentions in a letter that "I am at present composing certain sonatas which are to be performed at the First Academy of her Highness in Sweden whose service I have entered as the Musico da Camera." The works he performed there were published in 1681 as his Opus I, destined to become a sensation throughout Europe. It went through more reprints than any other music until the time of Haydn, with more than 35 editions published up to 1785.

Thanks to his musical achievements and growing international reputation he found no trouble in obtaining the support of a succession of influential patrons. History has remembered him with such titles as "Founder of Modern Violin Technique," the "World's First Great Violinist," and the "Father of the Concerto Grosso."

His contributions can be divided three ways, as violinist, composer, and teacher. It was his skill on the new instrument known as the violin and his extensive and very popular concert tours throughout Europe which did most to give that instrument its prominent place in music. It is probably correct to say that Corelli's popularity as a violinist was as great in his time as was Paganini's during the 19th century.

Yet Corelli was not a virtuoso in the contemporary sense, for a beautiful singing tone alone distinguished great violinists in that day, and Corelli's tone quality was the most remarkable in all Europe according to reports. In addition, Corelli was the first person to organize the basic elements of violin technique.

Corelli's popularity as a violinist was equaled by his acclaim as a composer. His music was performed and honored throughout all Europe; in fact, his was the most popular instrumental music. It is important to note in this regard that a visit of respect to the great Corelli was an important part of the Italian tour of the young Handel.

Yet Corelli's compositional output was rather small. All of his creations are included in six opus numbers, most of them being devoted to serious and popular sonatas and trio sonatas. In the Sonatas Opus 5 is found the famous "La Folia" Variations for violin and accompaniment. One of Corelli's famous students, Geminiani, thought so much of the Opus 5 Sonatas that he arranged all the works in that group as Concerti Grossi. However, it is in his own Concerti Grossi Opus 6 that Corelli reached his creative peak and climaxed all his musical contributions.

Although Corelli was not the inventor of the Concerto Grosso principle, it was he who proved the potentialities of the form, popularized it, and wrote the first great music for it. Through his efforts, it achieved the same pre-eminent place in the baroque period of musical history that the symphony did in the classical period. Without Corelli's successful models, it would have been impossible for Vivaldi, Handel, and Bach to have given us their Concerto Grosso masterpieces.

The Concerto Grosso form is built on the principle of contrasting two differently sized instrumental groups. In Corelli's, the smaller group consists of two violins and a cello, and the larger of a string orchestra. Dynamic markings in all the music of this period were based on the terrace principle; *crescendo* and *diminuendo* are unknown, contrasts between *forte* and *piano* and between the large and small string groups constituting the dynamic variety of the scores.

Of all his compositions it was upon his Opus 6 that Corelli labored most diligently and devotedly. Even though he wouldn't allow them to be published during his lifetime, they still became some of the most famous music of the time. The date of composition is not certain, for Corelli spent many years of his life writing and rewriting this music, beginning while still in his twenties.

The Trio Sonata, an instrumental composition generally demanding the services of four players reading from three part-books, assumed enormous importance in baroque music, developing from its earlier beginnings at the start of the seventeenth century to a late flowering in the work of Handel, Vivaldi, Johann Sebastian Bach and their contemporaries, alter the earlier achievements of Arcangelo Corelli in the form. Instrumentation of the trio sonata, possibly for commercial reasons, allowed some freedom of choice. Nevertheless the most frequently found arrangement became that for two violins and cello, with a harpsichord or other chordal instrument to fill out the harmony. The trio sonata was the foundation of the concerto grosso, the instrumental concerto that contrasted a concertino group of the four instruments of the trio sonata with the full string orchestra, which might double louder passages.

Corelli's dedications of his Sonatas mark his progress among the great patrons of Rome. He dedicated his first set of twelve Church Sonatas, Opus 1, published in 1681, to Queen Christina, describing the work as the first fruits of his studies.

His second set of trio Sonatas, Chamber Sonatas, Opus 2, was published in 1685 with a dedication to a new patron, Cardinal Pamphili, whose service he entered in 1687, with the violinist Fornari and cellist Lulier. A third set of trio sonatas, a second group of twelve Church Sonatas, Opus 3, was issued in 1689, with a dedication to Francesco II of Modena, and a final set of a dozen Chamber Sonatas, Opus 4, was published in 1694 with a dedication to a new patron, Cardinal Ottoboni, the young nephew of Pope Alexander VIII, after Cardinal Pamphili's removal in 1690 to Bologna. Cardinal Ottoboni became Corelli's main patron, who made it possible for Corelli to pursue his career without monetary worries, and it would seem that no composer has ever had a more devoted or understanding patron.

Corelli's achievements as a teacher were again outstanding. Among his many students were included not only Geminiani but the famed Antonio Vivaldi. It was Vivaldi who became Corelli's successor as a composer of the great Concerti Grossi and who greatly influenced the music of Bach.

Corelli occupied a leading position in the musical life of Rome for some thirty years, performing as a violinist and directing performances often on occasions of the greatest public importance. His style of composition was much imitated and exerted a considerable and lasting influence on musical development through a wide dissemination of works published in his lifetime and subsequently. Corelli was also the first baroque composer to reach the New World; an accomplished violinist and musician, Thomas Jefferson regularly ordered the latest music scores from Europe, Corelli being one of his favorite composers.

Corelli died a wealthy man on January 19, 1713, in Rome in the 59th year of his life. But long before his death, he had taken a place among the immortal musicians of all time.





## BAROQUE COMPOSERS: FRANCOIS COUPERIN

François Couperin was born in Paris in 1668, the son of Charles Couperin (1638-79), the organist St Gervais in Paris. On his father's premature death the organist position was held by Lalande. François, an early musical genius, was already deputizing for Lalande at the age of ten, and on his 18th birthday he officially inherited his father's previous position. As his teacher, Lalande praised the young man's innovative 1690 collection of *Pièces d'orgue* as 'worthy of being given to the public' and no doubt helped to establish him as a Court organist in 1693. In 1700-17 he acquired the younger D'Anglebert's position as harpsichordist at Versailles.

Couperin divided his time between Paris and Versailles. He soon acquired heavy commitments to teach the harpsichord and organ which made it difficult to find time for the publication of his vocal and instrumental chamber music. After the appearance in 1690 of his *Pièces d'orgue* (in manuscript copies with engraved title pages), he wrote no further works for organ. Instead he turned his attention to the import of the Italian sonatas and cantatas being performed in private concerts during the 1690s; his own trio and quartet *sonades* in the Corellian style - some of which were absorbed into his 1726 collection *Les nations* - were initially circulated in manuscripts under an anagram of his name.

The discerning collector Sébastien de Brossard acquired copies and later described them in the catalog of his collection as 'good and most excellent music which requires only a good performance'.

Couperin's interest in the Italian style, as represented by Carissimi and distilled by Charpentier, influenced his sacred vocal music, particularly his motets, *versets* and *leçons de ténèbres*.

Meanwhile he was amassing a quantity of superlative harpsichord pieces, which began appearing in elegantly engraved editions only in 1713, well after those of his colleagues Clérambault, Dandrieu, Marchand and Rameau. Ever the individualist, Couperin chose to group his *pièces* into *ordres* rather than suites, and relied much less on dance movements than his contemporaries, preferring the freer and more evocative *pièces de caractère*.



Concerned that, in spite of the careful annotations made in the editions, his *pièces* might not be properly performed, Couperin published *L'art de toucher le clavecin* (1716) to elucidate the fingering, his use of ornaments (whose notation he standardized) and dotted rhythms or *notes inégales*, he also included eight preludes that could serve as introductions to the eight *ordres* of the first and second books.

A manuscript treatise, *Règle pour l'accompagnement*, offered rules for realizing figured bass and the treatment of dissonance.

In his publications of the early 1720s he offered a wide variety of ways in which the French and Italian styles might be united. In 1722 the *Concerts royaux* (for one to three players) were appended to the third book of harpsichord *ordres*. Two years later he issued the brilliantly assimilated *Apothéose de Corelli* within a second collection of concerts, aptly entitled *Les goûts-réunis*, in which the French and Italian elements are so subtly blended as to be barely extricable. The *Concert instrumental à la mémoire de Monsieur de Lully* (1725) allegorized the synthesis: Lully and Corelli are received by Apollo on Mount Parnassus, where together they conceive 'La paix du Parnasse' in the form of an integrated *sonate en trio*.

A more direct juxtaposition of French classical and Italian styles occurs in *Les nations* (1726) and in the exquisitely crafted suites for bass viols (1728), of which the first is a French *ordre* and the second an Italian *sonata da chiesa*. In his prefaces to these editions he further elaborated on his quest for a united style. Early in the century Le Cerf described Couperin as a 'dedicated servant of Italy'; but Couperin also epitomized - by his playing, his *pièces de clavecin*, and his place in French society - all that was admirable in the French classical tradition.

Couperin died in Paris in 1733.



## BAROQUE COMPOSERS: JOHANN JOSEPH FUX

Johann Joseph Fux (1660-1741) is remembered less for his music than for his famous textbook on counterpoint, the *Gradus ad Parnassum*. Yet his music is well worth remembering for its own sake; it was not for nothing that the Emperor Leopold I made Fux his court-composer and music-director.

But to begin at the beginning; Fux was born of peasant stock at Hirtenfeld in Eastern Styria, Austria, about 1660. Little is known of his youth, except that he became a student at Graz University when he was about twenty.

Again he disappears into obscurity, perhaps to study in Italy. When next heard of, he is the organist of the famous Scottish Church in Vienna, and on the highroad to imperial preferment. In 1696 he got married, and two years later was appointed Court Composer by the Emperor, an appointment usually reserved for Italian musicians. The Emperor evidently realized that Fux was a man of exceptional talent, to give him precedence over the all-conquering Italians.

Further high appointments were in store; in 1701 Fux became Capellmeister at St. Stephen's Cathedral, and ten years later, in 1711, Music Director at the Imperial Court itself - the highest musical position in Europe. Fux filled the post with distinction, composing and directing many operas and oratorios, as well as dozens of smaller pieces. His most famous stage work was the festival opera *Costanza e Fortezza*, performed in the most sumptuous and spectacular manner in Prague Castle in 1723 when the Emperor Charles VI was crowned King of Bohemia.

In 1725 Fux published his famous *Gradus ad Parnassum*, a textbook from which most of the composers of the next generation learnt their counterpoint - indeed Bach himself had a copy in his library. Some six years after the publication of the *Gradus*, Fux's wife died, and from then on he seems to have devoted himself more to sacred music. He himself died in 1741, at the age of 81.

As a secular composer, he was soon neglected, but his sacred works continued to be performed for many years, and his book maintained its hold over several generations of composers. Then, in the middle of the nineteenth century, Ludwig Ritter von Köchel, Mozart's cataloguer, became interested in Fux, and produced a biography and catalogue of works. This reawakened interest in the old court composer, developing as his works were reprinted in the Austrian *Denkmaler* series.



## BAROQUE COMPOSERS: FRANCESCO GEMINIANI

Francesco Geminiani was born at Lucca, in Tuscany, in December 1687. At an early age he showed considerable talent on the violin after being taught by his father. Later he studied the violin under Carlo Ambrogio Lonati in Milan and then in Rome under the celebrated master, Corelli. It is also considered possible that he studied composition with Alessandro Scarlatti whilst staying in Naples.

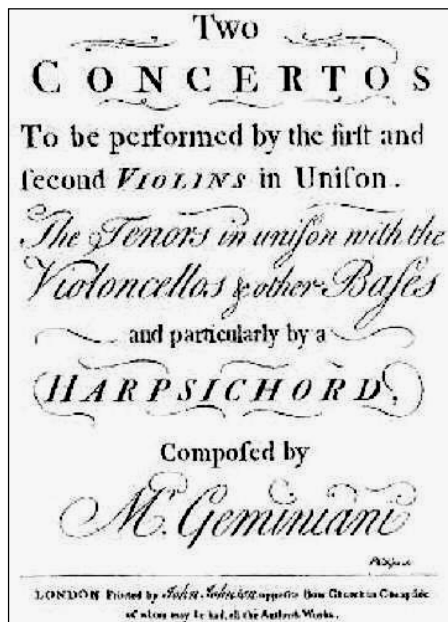
At the age of 20 he returned to his home town of Lucca where he played the violin in the Town Orchestra for three years. He then moved to Naples in 1711 to take up

the position as Leader of the Opera Orchestra. By this time he had become recognized as a brilliant violin virtuoso; indeed the orchestra appears to have experienced some difficulty in following him due to his improvisational virtuosity, or, as the music historian Dr. Burney put it, "his unexpected accelerations and relaxations of measure".

In 1714, he tried his fortune in England, where his brilliant violin playing immediately met with great success. London had become a major European music center, thanks in part to Handel, who had himself studied in Rome under Corelli and thus brought a measure of Italian musical style with him.

Geminiani gained much support from the aristocracy and leading figures at the Royal Court, and was invited to play the violin before George I, accompanied at the harpsichord by no less than Handel. He soon established himself in London as the leading master of violin-playing, with his concerts, his published compositions, and his theoretical treatises, the first and most important being "The Art of Playing the Violin" (1731) which included all the technical principles of essential violin performance.

He also had aristocratic pupils, among them the Earl of Essex who in 1728 tried unsuccessfully to arrange for Geminiani to become Master and Composer of the State Music of Ireland. It was also the Earl of Essex who had to rescue him from prison after he ran into debt through his consuming passion for art-dealing and collecting. This may have led him to leave London for a period in Dublin in 1733, where he rapidly built up a fine reputation as a teacher, performer, concert promoter and musical theorist. In that same year, he opened a Concert Room in Dublin, using the upstairs premises for music and the rooms below for trading in pictures. However, he was soon to return to London to make it his permanent home, although he did pay another visit to Dublin a few years later.



At this period of English musical life, as the essayist Roger North testified, Corelli's music had rapidly become the staple diet of players and music clubs alike: "Then came over Corelli's first consort that cleared the ground of all other sorts of musick whatsoever," wrote North in about 1726. "By degrees the rest of his consorts, and at last the concerti [Op. 6] came, all of which are to the musitians like the bread of life."

Whether out of respect for his teacher, or to "cash in on" his teacher's popularity is a matter of speculation; whatever his motive, Geminiani based his earliest published Concertos on Corelli's Sonatas for Violin and Continuo, Op.5.

He later made further concerto arrangements from Corelli's Trios Op.1 and

Op.3, as well as having made arrangements from his own Violin Sonatas Op.4.

His own Concertos, Op.2 and 3, appeared in 1732 and 1733, the Op.3 Concerti Grossi being amongst his most popular works at the time. He revised and reissued them in full score in about 1755. In the opinion of Burney - usually a stern critic of Geminiani - the Op.3 concertos "established his character, and placed him at the head of all the masters then living, in this species of composition."

He also published further Concertos as Op.7 (1746), and *The Enchanted Forest*, a staged pantomime scored for two violins and cello with an orchestra of two trumpets, two flutes, two horns, strings and timpani, was presented in Paris at the Tuileries palace in 1754.

Geminiani was undoubtedly fond of arranging his own works: among his transcriptions are Harpsichord versions (1741) of his Op.1 and 4 and Concerto Grosso versions of Op.4 (1743). His Op.5 Cello Sonatas (published in Paris), together with a transcription for Violin (issued in London and The Hague), appeared in 1746. In about 1755 he published 'modernized' versions of the Op.2 and 3 Concertos, and in 1757 a final arrangement of Op.1 in trio format.

He gained further fame from the publication of a series of practical treatises which were much reprinted, translated and paraphrased.

**CONCERTI GROSSI**  
 Con *Violini, Violoncelli, e Viola di Concerto*  
*Allegro, e due altri Violini, e Basso di*  
*Concerto Grosso ad arbitrio*  
 il **XXVI.** se potessero suonare con due Flauti  
*Traversieri, e due Violini, con Violoncelli.*  
*Talenti*  
**A SUA ECCELLENZA**  
**HENRIETTA**  
**Duchessa di Marlborough. &c.**  
*Da*  
**FRANCESCO GEMINIANI.**  
 Opera Seconda.  
**LONDRA.**  
*Printed for and sold by W. Walsh in Pall-mall near the Theatre.*

In addition to *The Art of Playing on the Violin*, Geminiani produced *Rules for Playing in a True Taste* (1748), revised a year later as *A Treatise of Good Taste in the Art of Musick, a Guida harmonica* with supplement (c.1754), *The Art of Accompaniment* (c.1754) - written from the soloist's point of view - and *The Art of Playing the Guitar or Cittra* (Edinburgh, 1760).

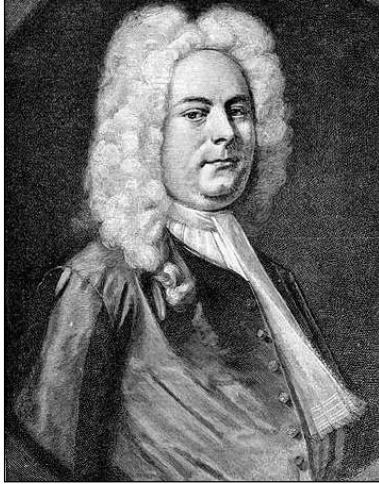
As a renowned violin virtuoso, he published several challenging collections of his Violin Sonatas which require dramatic flair from the player; indeed such was the difficulty of his Op.1 and 4 in particular that very few contemporary violinists dared play them in public.

Among the Sonata movements are fugues and double fugues, strong in imitative counterpoint, and idiomatic passages of multiple stopping.

Geminiani provided ornaments for both slow and fast movements as well as cadenzas; he advocated the use of vibrato 'as often as possible'. The expressiveness of his playing was much admired by both Hawkins and Burney; Tartini tellingly described him as 'il furibondo'.

He died in 1762.





## BAROQUE COMPOSERS:

### Georg Friederich HANDEL

was born in 1685, a vintage year indeed for baroque composers, in Halle on the Saale river in Thuringia, Germany on February 23rd.

Though his father had intended him for the law, Handel's own musical inclinations seem always to have been clear to him. At the age of 18, in 1703, he traveled to Hamburg, where he took a job as a violinist at the Hamburg Opera and gave private lessons to support himself. He became acquainted with Johann Mattheson (who later chronicled the known events of Handel's life during his stay there) and together they visited Buxtehude in Lübeck in that first year.

In the new year Handel's first two operas were produced, *Almira* and *Nero*.

### From Germany to England – via Italy.

Whilst in Hamburg, Handel made the acquaintance of Prince Ferdinando de' Medici, son and heir of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, who invited Handel to visit Italy where he spent more than three years, in Florence, Rome, Naples and Venice. By 1706 he had reached Rome, where Marquis (later Prince) Francesco Ruspoli employed him as a household musician and where most of Handel's major Italian works were composed. This visit was significant; baroque music, like that of any period, has its musical clichés, and much that is typical of baroque music can be traced back to Italy and particularly to Corelli, with whom Handel had studied. The influence of Italy was to show itself in Handel's lifetime preoccupation with opera - as well as Italian operatic "stars". His Concerti Grossi too, bear witness to the influence of Italy and Corelli.

Italy was a great center of musical activity particularly during the first 20 years of the 1700s, and Handel was to meet and exchange ideas with many of the leading composers, musicians and nobility of the time - and not only Italians, for it was obligatory for every cultural and music-loving person of any rank or nobility to do the Grand European Tour which naturally included the main Italian cultural centers. Thus on his travels around Italy Handel also made a number of useful contacts including the Duke of Manchester, the English Ambassador, and most significantly Prince Ernst August of Hanover, brother of the Elector (later King George I of England) who pressed him to visit Hanover. The Prince may also have intimated the possibility of a post at the Hanoverian court, for when Handel left Italy early in 1710 it was for Hanover, where he was in fact appointed Capellmeister to the Elector, George Louis, who immediately packed him off on a twelve months' leave of absence to visit England.

The Royal Houses of Britain and Germany had always been closely inter-related, and the Act of Settlement of 1701 which secured the Protestant succession to the Crown of England, had made Handel's Hanoverian employer George Louis' mother heiress-presumptive to the throne of Great Britain. Thus the Elector George Louis would have been anxious to have Handel spy out the land and report back to him on the London musical, social and political scene.

During this first London visit, lasting eight months, Handel was favorably received at Queen Anne's court, though his eyes were largely set on Vanburgh's new opera house, the Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket. *Rinaldo*, the first Italian opera specially composed for London, was performed there in 1711 and was a sensational success. Returning only briefly to Hanover in 1711, Handel was back in London by 1712 when he was invited to produce an English Court Ode for Queen Anne's birthday. The Queen normally took little interest in her composers, being (according to the Duke of Manchester) "too busy or too careless to listen to her own band, and had no thought of hearing and paying new players however great their genius or vast their skill". It is surprising, therefore, that she granted Handel a pension of £200 a year for life.

But the Queen's health deteriorated, and by September 1714 Britain had a new monarch. Thus it was that George Louis, Elector of Hanover and already naturalized by Act of Parliament in 1705, became King George I of England, initiating the Royal House of Hanover. One of the first engagements for the new George I was to attend morning service at the Chapel Royal where "a *Te Deum* was sung, composed by Mr Handel" - and Handel's position with the new ruler appears to have been secured. In addition to his royal duties for King and Court - his 'Caroline' *Te Deum* was performed by the Chapel Royal musicians at the king's first royal engagement - Handel became music master to the princesses, for whom he may well have composed the keyboard suites subsequently published in 1720. In the summer of 1717 the king requested a concert on the River Thames and Handel was commissioned to write 'Water Music', for wind and strings. With members of the court and musicians accommodated in barges, the evening's entertainment went on until the early hours of the morning.

### **From Royalty to Opera.**

Handel's great love of opera, its flamboyant singers and the challenge of inciting and maintaining the interest of a fickle public audience began to draw him away from the fairly constricted circle of the court and its music. Handel took an appointment as resident composer with the Earl of Carnarvon (from 1717 the Duke of Chandos) who maintained a complement of singers and instrumentalists for use in his two houses, one in central London, the other in the (then!) quiet countryside at Cannons, Edgware, north London. Handel would have been pleasantly surprised, as would any composer, at the quality of the Duke's musical establishment. As Paymaster General during the reign of Queen Anne, the Duke appears to have made good use of his position in directing a substantial portion of the nation's finances into his private purse, drawing considerable scandal in the process.

His musical establishment was of the highest order; directed by Pepusch, it included such names as Francesco Scarlatti, brother of Alessandro, and Johann Christoph Bach, cousin of J.S. The Duke wrote to his friend and court physician Dr Arbuthnot, that "Mr Handel has made me two new Anthems, very noble ones...".

Over the next two years (1717-18) Handel composed eleven anthems, a *Te Deum*, and two masques - *Acis and Galatea* and *Esther*. At the same time, during the winter of 1718-19 members of the nobility created an Italian opera company in London, initially funded by an eight-year subscription, calling it, with the king's permission, 'The Royal Academy of Music' with Handel as its music director. Recognizing the vital importance of employing only the very best singers and instrumentalists, especially in the lead vocal parts dominated by a handful of international "stars", Handel engaged the best English singers and instrumentalists, then went to Dresden in search of Italian stars of whom he always managed to claim a fair share. The Royal Academy's first season opened on 2 April 1720 with Giovanni Porta's *Numitore*, followed soon after by Handel's *Radamisto*. During the next eight years, almost half the performances were given over to Handel operas.

In 1727, shortly before the death of George I, Handel became a British subject, adopting his "new" names of George Frideric. Retaining his position as composer to the Chapel Royal (a post he had held since 1723), Handel composed four large-scale anthems for the coronation of George II and his consort Queen Caroline at Westminster Abbey on October 11th, 1727, "an occasion of great magnificence". The music which Handel provided for the occasion (the most famous, *Zadok the priest*, has been sung at every coronation since) was no less magnificent, and its reputation remained vivid for many years afterwards. Five years later, in 1732 the reputation of the coronation music was such that Handel advertised his first English oratorio performance in a London theatre with the explanation "The Music to be disposed after the Manner of the Coronation Service'.

A few months later, in January 1728, Gay's *Beggar's Opera* opened at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields. It was not a true opera but a play with songs made up from popular tunes (including some by Handel), and treated London's low life in a way that parodied current political and cultural events - not excluding Italian opera. Over 60 performances were given that year, eclipsing the final season of the Royal Academy. This was significant in that it marked the beginning of a change in London musical taste and fashion, away from Italian opera in favor of something less highbrow, more home-grown, and more easily intelligible.

Handel refused to forsake Italian operas however, and managed despite several dramatic failures, to continue writing and producing them. Many of Handel's friends and supporters tried their best to convert him to English opera, but to no avail. In 1733 some of his friends, colleagues, and former patrons decided to repay his arrogance by defecting from the Royal Academy to form what has come to be called the 'Opera of the Nobility', with the Prince of Wales at its head. At the end of the 1734 opera season, Handel suffered the indignity of having the King's Theatre let to the momentarily prosperous Opera of the Nobility.

### From Opera to Oratorio.

The move from Opera to Oratorio was not of course an instantaneous one. Handel's *Esther* composed around 1720 for the Duke of Chandos was performed not in the Chapel at Cannons but in the "grand saloon" as a costume-stage production, already a "halfway house" between Opera and Oratorio. In 1732 Handel revised this work and re-presented it at the Haymarket Theatre. Though it may reasonably be said that Handel "invented" the Oratorio, it was in fact at the instigation of the Bishop of London, who intervened at that point, banning any form of theatrical action on stage of a biblical subject. Through this puritanical censorship Handel was to discover that there was in fact an audience for unstaged biblical music-dramas. Handel then produced *Deborah* and *Athalia*, which Basil Lam has called "the first great English Oratorio". Thus on the one hand, the trend towards the Oratorio in Handel's compositional work was increasing, while his operatic activities were simultaneously diminishing - of necessity since the public was now quite tired of Italian opera.

In April 1737 Handel suffered a stroke or an injury which seriously affected his right hand. He was exhausted from the stresses of the last five years and his friends and patrons wondered whether he would ever play or compose again. He retired to Aix-la-Chapelle to take the vapor-baths; six weeks later he returned to London, miraculously restored. He was able to play the organ, and began planning his next works. Handel was still determined to write for the stage, but recognizing at last the realities of changing public tastes - and the economics of ignoring them - Handel turned to a form which he had gradually been developing over ten years: English oratorios, in many ways musically operatic, though far more reliant upon the chorus. *Alexander's Feast* was followed by *Il trionfo del Tempo e della Verita*, then *Saul*, and the biblical epic *Israel in Egypt* (1739). Handel's printer-publisher John Walsh took the unprecedented step of bringing out a full score of *Alexander's Feast*, thus confirming the popularity not only of the work but of the genre. At last Handel had recognized the public's preference for and taste in English choral works, thus giving himself a new creative lease of life.

During the late 1730s Handel also produced more orchestral music. Written primarily as interludes in his Oratorios, Handel's Organ Concertos became increasingly popular in their own right. Socialite Mrs. Pendarves wrote to her mother describing them as '*the finest things I ever heard in my life*'. Sir John Hawkins wrote of Handel: "*When he gave a concerto, his method in general was to introduce it with a voluntary movement on the diapasons, which stole on the ear in a slow and solemn progression; the harmony close wrought, and as full as could possibly be expressed; the passages concatenated with stupendous art, the whole at the same time being perfectly intelligible, and carrying the appearance of great simplicity. This kind of prelude was succeeded by the concerto itself which he executed with a degree of spirit and firmness that no one has ever pretended to equal.*"

Almost without exception every one of Handel's sacred and secular oratorios was to include at least one organ concerto - *Messiah* had them for performances in Dublin and London.

The Concerti Grossi Op 6 were composed during the autumn of 1739, and published in April 1740, by which time Handel's music was finding increasing favor at the Vauxhall Gardens, where patrons would stroll along the pathways, saunter among ornamental shrubs and flowers, and partake of refreshments, whilst enjoying extensive performances of instrumental and vocal music by leading composers and musicians. Handel's popularity at this popular social venue was attested by the installation of a marble bust of Handel by the sculptor Louis-Francois Roubiliac, commissioned by Jonathan Tyers, owner of the pleasure gardens.

During the summer of 1741 Handel received an invitation from the Lord Lieutenant in Dublin to compose a new sacred oratorio which would crown a series of performances of *Alexanders Feast*, *Acis and Galatea*, the *Ode for St Cecilia's Day* and *L'Allegro*, to be given at the New Music Hall, Fishamble Street, Dublin, in 1742. The commissioned work, on a biblical libretto devised by Jennens, was the *Messiah*. From its first performances in April 1742 (which included a charity preview) *Messiah* was an unqualified success, taking its place among the finest and best-loved works ever composed. Upon returning to London, Handel made arrangements for an oratorio subscription season beginning early in 1743. He hired Covent Garden, and in February inaugurated the series with *Samson*, which was warmly received, followed a month later by a performance of the *Messiah*.

Handel suffered another stroke in April. However he was only temporarily indisposed and soon amazed everyone by the steady stream of large-scale works, mainly oratorios, which he continued to produce. In 1749 he prepared the highly acclaimed *Music for the Royal Fireworks* to accompany the festivities at Green Park in celebration of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (a preview at Vauxhall Gardens was heavily attended). The first performance of *Messiah* at the Foundling Hospital (a London charitable institution of which he had been a Director since 1740) took place in April 1750, thereafter becoming an annual event. He then set about composing *Jephtha*, but in the course of working on the final Act II chorus, 'How dark, O Lord, are thy decrees. All hid from mortal sight', the sight in his left eye failed him, followed not long after by the failure of his right eye. Even when total blindness came in 1752 he continued to perform organ concertos and voluntaries between the parts of his oratorios, so great were his memory and powers of improvisation. He remained involved in the arrangements for performances of his works up to his death on April 14th, 1759.

Almost immediately Handel became a legend. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, his burial site marked by a monument, again by Roubiliac. Documents on his life began to flow, and on the 25th anniversary of his death in 1784 an unprecedented series of three commemoration concerts was organized at Westminster Abbey and the Pantheon, culminating on May 29th in a massed performance at the Abbey of the *Messiah*. Indeed it is perhaps most of all through this great work that Handel is best known today.



## BAROQUE COMPOSERS: HENRY PURCELL

Born in 1659, Henry Purcell was the finest and most original composer of his day. Though he was to live a very short life (he died in 1695) he was able to enjoy and make full use of the renewed flowering of music after the Restoration of the Monarchy.

As the son of a musician at Court, a chorister at the Chapel Royal, and the holder of continuing royal appointments until his death, Purcell worked in Westminster for three different Kings over twenty-five years.

In the Chapel Royal young Purcell studied with Dr. John Blow. Dr. Burney, the eighteenth century historian, is amusingly skeptical on this point: "..... he had a few lessons from Dr. Blow, which were sufficient to cancel all the instructions he had received from other masters, and to occasion the boast inscribed on the tomb-stone of Blow, that he had been 'Master to the famous Mr. Henry Purcell'." Legend has it that when, in 1679, Purcell succeeded Dr. Blow as organist of Westminster Abbey, the elder musician stepped aside in recognition of the greater genius, and it is true that on Purcell's death in 1695 Blow returned to the post, and would write a noble Ode on the Death of Purcell.

In addition to his royal duties Purcell also devoted much of his talent to writing operas, or rather musical dramas, and incidental stage music; but he would also write chamber music in the form of harpsichord suites and trio sonatas, and became involved with the growing London public concert scene. Indeed one of the most important musical developments in Restoration London was the gradual establishment of regular public concerts. Even the few meetings that began as private concerns were eventually prevailed upon to admit the general public, such as the group that gave concerts in the Castle Tavern. Whereas other organizations charged only a shilling, their admittance fee was more than twice that sum, and before long they had enough capital to equip a music room in York Buildings.

By the time Henry Purcell began to attend such concerts in the 1670s there were many highly skilled players of the violin, cello, and flute, as well as exponents of the (for London) relatively new art of playing continuo instruments, the most usual being the organ and the harpsichord. In 1683 a group of gentlemen amateurs, and professional musicians started a "Musical Society" in London to celebrate the "Festival of St. Cecilia, a great patroness of music" which any music-lover so desirous may still celebrate yearly on November 22nd. They asked Henry Purcell, then only 24, to be the first to write an Ode for their festivals; Purcell was to compose two more such Odes for the Society.

The writing of incidental theater music seems not to have been regarded by Purcell as embarrassing or beneath his dignity as Organist of Westminster Abbey. He was in the very midst of a tradition that not only permitted but actually encouraged well-known church musicians to provide lighter music for the theatre and opera, and this was an accepted practice in the great continental cities as well as in London. Most of Purcell's theatre music was written between 1690 and 1695 (the year of his death), and within that relatively brief period he supplied music for more than forty plays. Much of the instrumental music was published in 1697, when the composer's widow compiled *A Collection of Ayres, Compos'd for the Theatre, and upon Other Occasions*. This body of music, viewed as a whole, shows that Purcell gave to the theatre some of his happiest melodic inspirations, distributed among solemn overtures, cheerful or pathetic airs, and delightful dances of every imaginable kind.

There is hardly a department of music, as known in his day, to which Purcell did not contribute with true distinction. His anthems were long since accorded their place in the great music of the church; there are enough fine orchestral movements in his works for the theatre to establish him in this field; his fantasies and sonatas entitle him to honor in the history of chamber music; his keyboard works, if less significant in themselves, hold their place in the repertory; his one true opera, *Dido and Aeneas*, is an enduring masterpiece, and his other dramatic works (sometimes called operas) are full of musical riches. And, most especially, Purcell's songs themselves would be sufficient to insure his immortality. His sensitivity to his texts has been matched by few masters in musical history; when he had worthy poetry to set, he could hardly fail to produce a masterpiece.





## BAROQUE COMPOSERS: JEAN-PHILIPPE RAMEAU

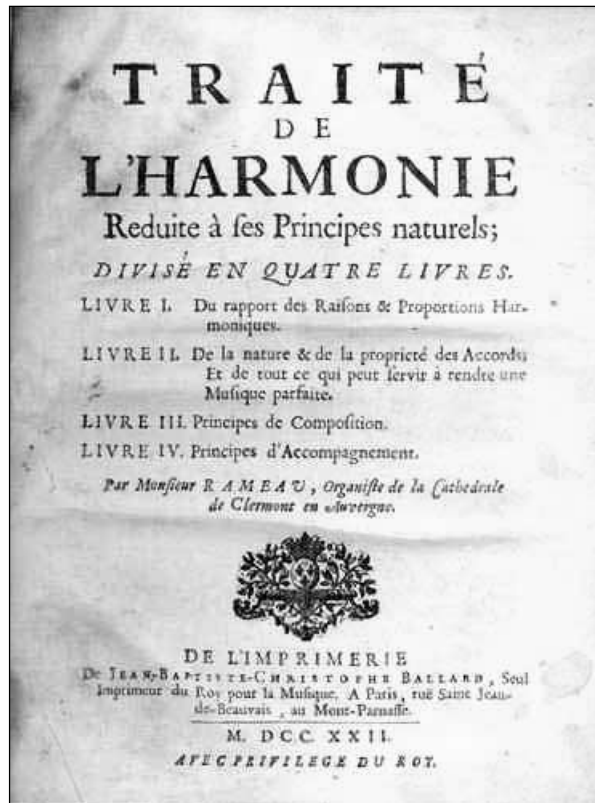
Born in Dijon in 1683, he spent the first 40 years of his life in the relative obscurity of the provinces. He made a short but important trip to Milan, and was for a time a violinist in the Lyons Opera. He held organ posts in Avignon, Clermont (1715-22) and Dijon and visited Paris from 1706 until 1709 - during which time he held two organ posts, was offered a third, and published his first book of harpsichord pieces. About 1713 he moved to Lyons, where he contributed *grands motets* to the *Lyons Concert* (1714).

In 1722 he settled permanently in Paris. With the publication that year of his *Traité de l'harmonie* he gained the immediate attention and respect of Parisian musicians. But while his music - harpsichord pieces, cantatas and music for the theaters - was also much admired, he was unable to win an organ post in Paris.

He took on pupils, among them the talented Marie-Louise Mangeot, who became his wife in 1726. Following the appearance of his third book of harpsichord pieces, which like his second (1724) was largely devoted to *pièces de caractère*, he published his *Observations sur la methode d'accompagnement pour le clavecin* in the *Mercure de France* (February 1730), drawing upon his own brilliant technique of improvising on a figured bass.

In 1727 he competed unsuccessfully with Daquin for the organ post at St Paul, bringing to a close his career as a church organist. By then he had published his second and more controversial harmony treatise, *Nouveau système de musique théorique* (1726), which led to disputatious exchanges with Montéclair in the pages of the *Mercure de France* (1729-30).

Rameau was to be embroiled for the rest of his life in controversies concerning his music and writings. His early operas, of which the first was produced in his 50th year, provoked a lengthy dispute between the old guard *Lullistes* and the forward-looking *Ramistes*. *Hippolyte et Aricie* (1733) was a stunning success, exciting strong passions because of the emphasis placed on music rather than plot. He was to write a further large number of successful musical dramas.



During this period Rameau found a pleasant haven at the home of the financier La Pouplinière, whom he served as *maitre de musique* from about 1735 until 1753. Rameau and his family lodged at his various residences and belonged to the stimulating circle of writers, artists and musicians gathered around La Pouplinière.

The rich musical resources - singers, players and dancers - of Paris were augmented by virtuoso clarinetists and horn players brought in from Germany and Bohemia, providing Rameau with a private forum. It was for this circle that the virtuoso *Pièces de clavecin en concerts* (1741) were composed.

Rameau gained an important foothold at the Royal Court during the 1740s. He became *Compositeur de la musique de la chambre du roy* in 1745 and composed a comédie-ballet, *La princesse de Navarre* (with Voltaire), and *Platée* for the celebrations of the dauphin's wedding. In 1748 Rameau and Voltaire produced *Les surprises de l'amour* for the *Théâtre des Petits-Cabinets* of Mme de Pompadour. By now, his place at Versailles secure, his works well received in Paris and in the provinces, his theories acclaimed by learned societies, Rameau had reached the height of his career.

From 1752 until his death in 1764 Rameau composed less music and wrote more theoretical treatises. He corresponded with Mattheson and Martini and strongly influenced Tartini, Marburg and Helmholtz. His theories of harmony still form the basis of the modern study of tonal harmony.

At his death in 1764, over 1500 people attended Rameau's memorial service in Paris, held at the *Pères de l'Oratoire*, with one hundred and eighty musicians from the *Opéra* and the *Musiques de Cour* performing pieces from his operas. A number of other memorial services were also held in Paris and in the provinces.



## BAROQUE COMPOSERS: ALESSANDRO SCARLATTI

Sicilian-born in 1660, Alessandro Scarlatti was trained in Rome. He married in 1678 and later that year was appointed Maestro di Cappella of San Giacomo degli Incurabili. His first large-scale oratorio-operatic works were performed there the following year when he was only 19. His patrons from the outset were of the highest rank, among them the exiled Queen Christina of Sweden who made him her *Maestro di Cappella*, Cardinal Pamphili, and the musically indefatigable Cardinal Ottoboni and, in Florence, Prince Ferdinando de Medici.

In 1684 at the age of 24 Scarlatti moved to Naples, where he was appointed Maestro di Cappella at the vice-regal court of Naples, at the same time as his brother Francesco was made First Violinist. It was alleged that they owed their appointments to the intrigues of one of their sisters with two court officials, who were dismissed.

For the next two decades over half the new operas given at Naples were by Scarlatti, producing over 40 works, which were first performed at the Viceregal Palazzo Reale (picture left, staircase 1722) and then at the public theatre of San Bartolomeo, where Scarlatti was employed as the director along with nine singers, five instrumentalists and a copyist.

In contrast to contemporary five-act Venetian operas, which continued to rely upon mythological characters and stage machinery, Scarlatti's shorter three-act 'Drammi per Musica' centered on the characterization of kings and confidants, lovers and servants. *Il Pirro e Demetrio* (1694) and *La caduta de' Decemviri* (1697) were particularly successful.



From 1695 his operas and 'musical dramas' incorporated three-movement sinfonias which soon became standard for all Italian operas. Indeed, the Italian opera overture, or sinfonia, contained most of the elements of the pre-classical and classical symphonies, and the symphony (or sinfonia), designed for concert performance, may be traced back to the Italian opera overture (or sinfonia) of Alessandro Scarlatti. It was in these overtures and last operas that he also began experimenting with orchestral (instrumental) color in the modern sense.

While resident in Naples Scarlatti occasionally returned to Rome to supervise carnival performances of new operas, contributions to pasticcis and cantatas at the Palazzo Doria Pamphili and the Villa Medicea (at nearby Pratolino), as well as oratorios at Ss. Crocifisso, the Palazzo Apostolico and the Collegio Clementino. Astonishingly, he also produced at least ten serenatas, nine oratorios and sixty-five cantatas for Naples.

By 1700 the War of the Spanish Succession was beginning to undermine the privileged status of the Neapolitan nobility, rendering Scarlatti's position insecure. In 1702 he left with his family for Florence, where he hoped to find employment for himself and his son Domenico with Prince Ferdinando de' Medici.

When these hopes failed, he moved back to Rome at the end of 1703, seeking a quieter life, as assistant Maestro di Cappella at S Maria Maggiore (the public theaters had been closed by papal decree since 1700, so operas were performed only occasionally and in private). In this capacity he was required to compose motets and Masses in both strict (Papal) and concertato styles, according to the occasion. To augment his income he renewed his connections with the cardinals and formed new ones with Marquis Ruspoli, concentrating now on oratorios, celebratory serenatas and cantatas.

In 1706 he was elected, along with Pasquini and Corelli, to the Accademia dell'Arcadia, where he must have met Handel in 1707. From 1702 until 1708 he sent Prince Ferdinando de' Medici quantities of oratorios and church music and four operas which the prince had performed at Siena, Livorno and Florence. Scarlatti also composed and directed two five-act tragedies for the 1707 Venetian Carnival. Upon his return to Rome he was made *Maestro di Cappella* at S. Maria Maggiore, but the salary was so meager that he was ultimately forced to return to his posts in Naples in 1709.

During the next decade he produced 11 operas employing greater instrumental resources, of which *Il Tigrane* (1715) was his Neapolitan masterpiece. His 'commedia in musica', *Il trionfo dell'onore* (1718), was also very successful.

He maintained his connections in Rome, returning there in 1718 to oversee his opera *Telemaco* at the Teatro Capranica, in 1719 *Marco Attilio Regolo*, and finally in 1721 for *La Griselda* (his last opera). He produced a lavish *Messa di S Cecilia* for soloists, chorus and strings, performed there in October 1720.

Meanwhile Scarlatti ventured into orchestral writing. The "*Six Concertos in seven parts for two Violins and Violoncello Obligate with two Violins more a Tenor and Thorough Bass, Compos'd by Sigr Alexander Scarlatti*", as they were first called, were published in London under the above title by Benjamin Cooke in 1740. Of these six Concerti, numbers 1, 2, 4, and 5 were composed so that they could also be performed as string quartets. Scarlatti called them specifically *Sonate a quattro*, and as such they represent some of the earliest forms of chamber music in this genre.

The fact that these Six Concertos were published some fifteen years after the composer's death was quite unusual for that time; it may be suggested that Benjamin Cooke was "cashing in" on the popularity of the Scarlatti name. Thomas Roseingrave had published in London the first edition of Alessandro's son Domenico's *Essercizii per gravicembalo* a couple of years before, and Domenico's work was also being popularized in London by Thomas Kelway and Thomas Arne. That Domenico's popularity continued is witnessed by the publication in 1743 by Charles Avison of his twelve Concerto Grosso arrangements of Domenico's harpsichord sonatas.



Alessandro's last years were spent in Naples, teaching (Hasse was his pupil from 1722), composing cantatas (which ultimately numbered over 600, mostly for soprano and continuo), a Serenata and a set of Sonatas for Flute and Strings, probably composed for Quantz, who visited him in late 1724 or early 1725.

Quantz (shown at left) describes the visit thus: "*I heard Scarlatti play on the harpsichord, which he knew how to play in a learned style although he did not possess as much finesse as his son. After this he accompanied me in a solo. I had the good fortune to win his favor, in fact so much so that he composed a few flute solos for me.*"

This comment would almost prove to be an epitaph, for Alessandro Scarlatti died on October 24, 1725.



## BAROQUE COMPOSERS: DOMENICO SCARLATTI

Giuseppe Domenico Scarlatti was born in Naples on October 26th, 1685. The high rank of his godparents is proof of the esteem in which his father, Alessandro Scarlatti, was held as *maestro di cappella*. Domenico's musical gifts developed with an almost prodigious rapidity. At the age of sixteen he became a musician at the chapel royal, and two years later father and son left Naples and settled in Rome, where Domenico became the pupil of the most eminent musicians in Italy. The originality of Bernardo Pasquini's inventions and his skill in elaborating them, and Francesco Gasparini's solid science and intense vitality united to form the basis on

which Domenico developed his own genius. His association with Corelli (Gasparini being a pupil of Corelli) also contributed to the evolution of his adolescent genius and soon Domenico Scarlatti became famous in his country principally as a harpsichordist.

He served for five years (1714-19) as *maestro di cappella* at the Cappella Giulia in the Vatican. He composed at least one oratorio (1709) and more than a dozen operas for his father's Neapolitan theatre, S Bartolomeo (1703-4), the Roman *Palazzo Zuccari* (1710-14), and *Teatro Capranica* (1715, 1718).

His patrons in Rome included the exiled Polish queen Maria Casimira (1709-14) and the Portuguese ambassador to the Vatican, the Marquis de Fontes (from 1714), who in 1720 was to succeed in winning Scarlatti for the patriarchal chapel in Lisbon (his serenade, *Applause genetliaco*, was performed at the Portuguese Embassy in 1714 and his *Contesa delle stagioni* at the Lisbon royal chapel in 1720).

Scarlatti was also a familiar figure at the weekly meetings of the *Accademie Poetico-Musicali* hosted by the indefatigable music-lover and entertainer Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni, at which the finest musicians in Rome met and performed chamber music. There Scarlatti met Handel, who had been born in the same year as Scarlatti. At the time of their meeting, in 1708, they were both twenty-three, and were prevailed upon to compete together at the instigation and under the refereeship of Ottoboni; they were adjudged equal on the harpsichord, but Handel was considered the winner on the organ. Thenceforward they held each other in that mutual respect which forms the surest basis for a life friendship.

Through Ottoboni, Scarlatti also met Thomas Roseingrave who became his enthusiastic champion and, back in London, published the first edition of Scarlatti's *Essercizi per gravicembalo* (1738-9) from which, in turn, the Newcastle-born English composer Charles Avison drew material from at least 29 Scarlatti sonatas to produce a set of 12 concertos in 1744. Joseph Kelway and Thomas Arne also helped to popularize Scarlatti's music in England.

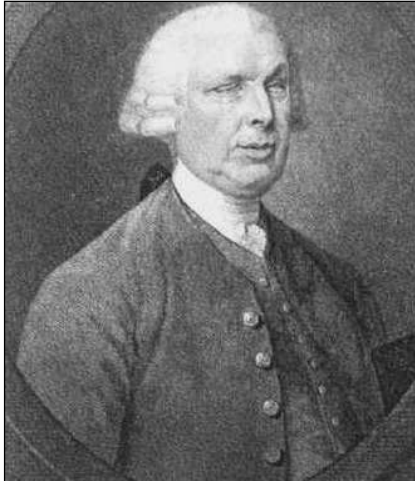
Attracted by the unknown, Scarlatti abandoned the post of *maestro di cappella* at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Natural curiosity and the fascination of distant countries induced him to undertake a voyage to London, where his opera *Narciso* met with only a moderate success. From London Scarlatti went to Lisbon (1720-28). As a harpsichordist at the royal court he was entrusted with the musical education of the princesses. The death of his father recalled him to Naples in 1725, but he did not long remain in his native town. His old pupil, the Portuguese princess, who had married Ferdinand VI, invited him to the Spanish court. Scarlatti accepted and in 1733 after a period in Seville (from 1729-33) he went to Madrid, where he lived until his death.

With the thorough musical grounding he brought with him from Italy, and his own brilliance on the harpsichord, Scarlatti immersed himself in the folk tunes and dance rhythms of Spain, with their distinctive Moorish (Arabic) and later gypsy influences. He composed more than 500 harpsichord sonatas, unique in their total originality, and the use of the *acaaccatura*, the 'simultaneous mordent', the 'vamp' (usually at the beginning of the second half of a sonata). The "folk" element is constantly present throughout these works.

In addition, Scarlatti also composed at least 17 separate sinfonias and a harpsichord concerto. He exerted a major influence on such Portuguese and Spanish contemporaries as Carlos de Seixas and Antonio Soler.

Scarlatti returned to Italy on three occasions. In 1724 in Rome he met Quantz and Farinelli, who himself joined the Spanish court in 1737. In 1725 he returned at the death of his father in Naples - where he met Hasse. And in 1728 he returned to Rome, where he met and married his first wife by whom he had five children (she died in 1739, and by 1742 he was married again, to a Spanish woman, by whom he had four more children). In 1738, sponsored by King John V of Portugal, he passed secret trials to become a Knight of the Order of Santiago, and about 1740 Velasco painted the portrait which heads this page, and for which he wore the full regalia of the Order.

He died in Madrid on July 23, 1757.



## BAROQUE COMPOSERS: JOHN STANLEY

John Stanley was born in London on 17th January, 1712. At about the age of two, he had the misfortune to fall on a marble hearth with a china basin in his hand, an accident which left him almost blind – apparently he was still able to distinguish colors and possibly some shapes.

He began studying music at the age of seven. Under the guidance of Maurice Greene, composer and organist at St. Paul's Cathedral, he studied "with great diligence, and a success that was astonishing" (Burney). At the age of

nine he played the organ, probably as an occasional deputy, at All Hallows, Bread Street. The organist died on 23rd September 1723 and exactly one month later eleven-year-old Stanley was appointed organist to the church at a salary of £20 per annum. The St. James's Evening Post reporting the event stated that Stanley "is become the Surprise of the Town for his ingenious Performance on the Harpsichord and Organ; and, in the opinion of good Judges, bids fair to equal, if not exceed the Merit of his celebrated Predecessor."

When he was fourteen "in preference to a great number of candidates" (Burney) he was chosen as organist at St. Andrew's, Holborn and at the age of seventeen became the youngest person ever to obtain the Bachelor of Music degree (B.Mus.) at Oxford University.

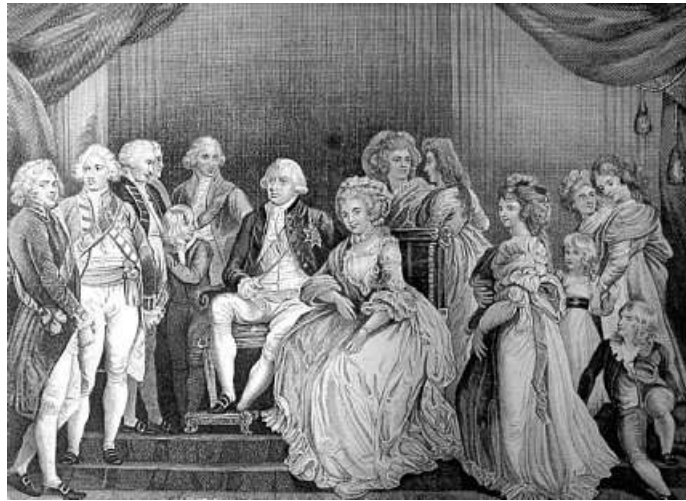
In 1734 he was appointed organist to the Society of the Inner Temple - a position he held until his death. It was at the ancient Temple Church that his brilliant playing upon the organ and harpsichord attracted the attention of many fine musicians including Handel who regularly visited the church to hear him. Stanley was also an outstanding violinist and led the subscription concerts at the Swan Tavern in Cornhill and at the Castle Tavern in Paternoster Row.

In 1738 Stanley married Sarah Arlond (daughter of Captain Edward Arlond of the East India Company) who brought him a dowry of £7,000 per annum. Sarah's sister Ann, who at this time lived with them, became the blind composer's copyist.

Though virtually blind, Stanley had a remarkable memory which helped him direct many of Handel's oratorios and to enjoy music-making and card games with his many friends. If he had to accompany a new oratorio he would ask his sister-in-law to play it through just once - enough to commit it to memory.

He frequently played the organ at the Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens and was first choice to play at charity events and at the launch of any newly built church organs. He even found time to teach. His oratorio *Jephthah* was first performed in 1757.

After Handel's death in 1760 Stanley began a partnership with the composer John Christopher Smith in order to continue with the performances of oratorios at Covent Garden. For the first season Stanley composed '*Zimri*'. Stanley accompanied all oratorios, and played a concerto during each interval. Also in 1760 he composed an ode in memory of the late George II and as homage to George III; it was first performed at the Drury Lane Theatre. On the occasion of the King's wedding in 1762 he composed a dramatic pastoral Oratorio, *Arcadia*.



King George III and Family

Handel had been a Governor of the Foundling Hospital, London. The Hospital's Chapel organ was Handel's gift, and Handel himself directed eleven performances of the *Messiah* there, so raising 7,000 Pounds for the charity. Continuing yet again in Handel's footsteps, Stanley was elected a governor of the Hospital in 1770, and from 1775 until 1777 he directed the annual performance of Handel's *Messiah* in aid of the hospital funds.

In 1779 Stanley succeeded William Boyce as Master of the King's Band of musicians. In this capacity he composed many New Year and Birthday odes to the King but unfortunately this music has not survived. Stanley's last work was probably an ode written for the King's birthday (4th June 1786). Stanley never heard its performance - he died at his home in Hatton Garden on 19th May, 1786 aged 74.



## BAROQUE COMPOSERS: GEORG PHILIPP TELEMANN

Born in Magdeburg in 1681, Georg Philipp Telemann belonged to a family that had long been connected with the Lutheran Church. His father was a clergyman, his mother the daughter of a clergyman, and his elder brother also took orders, a path that he too might have followed had it not been for his exceptional musical ability.

As a child he showed considerable musical talent, mastering the violin, flute, zither and keyboard by the age of ten and composing an opera (*Sigismundus*, on a text by Postel) two years later to the consternation of his family (particularly his mother's side), who

disapproved of music. However, such resistance served only to reinforce his determination to persevere in his studies through transcription and modeling his works on those of such composers as Agostino Steffani, Johann Rosenmüller, Corelli and Antonio Caldara. After preparatory studies at the Hildesheim Gymnasium, he matriculated in law (at his mother's insistence) at Leipzig University in 1701. That he had little intention of putting aside his interest in music is evident from his stop at Halle, en route to Leipzig, in order to make the acquaintance of the young Handel.

It was while he was a student at Leipzig University that a career in music became inevitable. At first it was intended that he should study language and science, but he was already so capable a musician that within a year of his arrival he founded the student *Collegium Musicum* with which he gave public concerts (and which Bach was later to direct), wrote operatic works for the Leipzig Theater, and in 1703 became musical director of the Leipzig Opera and was appointed organist at the Neue Kirche in 1704. While at the University he involved fellow-students in a great deal of public performance, to the annoyance of the Thomaskantor, Bach's immediate predecessor, Kuhnau, who saw his prerogative now infringed.

No doubt bored with the complaints of Kuhnau and impatient to make something more of his life, Telemann did not stay long in Leipzig. In 1705 he accepted an appointment as Kapellmeister to the cosmopolitan court of Count Erdmann II of Promnitz at Sorau (now Zary), where the vogue for the French and Italian styles provided him with a new challenge. His association with the Sorau Kantor and theorist Wolfgang Caspar Printz and the reformist poet Erdmann Neumeister as well as the proximity to Berlin and contact with Polish folk music all proved stimulating.

But Telemann's tenure was cut short by the imminent prospect of invasion by the Swedish army, causing the Court to be hurriedly disbanded. He visited Paris in 1707.

His next appointment was at Eisenach as court Konzertmeister in charge of singers, with Pantaleon Hebenstreit as leader of the orchestra. His appointment there (some time between 1706 and 1708) just overlapped with the presence of Bach, who left in 1708 to take up posts at the Weimar court. Telemann had every reason to assume that this would be a period of relative stability and accordingly plunged into composing church cantatas, occasional pieces, orchestral and instrumental chamber music. His marriage ended tragically with his wife's death in 1711.

A change of scene became necessary and so he went to the free imperial city of Frankfurt-am-Main to take up duties as Director of Municipal Music and also as Kapellmeister of the Barfüsserkirche. Together with his activities as director of the "Frauenstein", a musical society in that same city, which presented weekly concerts, Telemann's new posts suited his talents very well. He composed occasional music for civic ceremonies, five year-long cycles of church cantatas, oratorios, orchestral music and a wealth of chamber music, much of which was published; only the opportunity to produce opera was lacking, though he continued to supply works to the Leipzig Opera. During this period he was also appointed Kapellmeister to the Prince of Bayreuth. He married again (gaining citizenship through marriage) and became a family man.

While on a visit to Eisenach in 1716, he was honored with an appointment as a visiting Kapellmeister (he continued to send new works until 1729); he also served the court as a diplomatic correspondent. Further acknowledgment of his increasing stature came the following year when Duke Ernst of Gotha invited him to become Kapellmeister of all his various courts. This in turn forced improvements in his situation at Frankfurt. A trip to Dresden in 1719 for the festivities in honor of the newly married Prince Elector Friedrich August II and Archduchess Maria Josephia of Austria made possible a reunion with Handel, the opportunity to hear operas by Lotti and the dedication of a collection of violin concertos to the Konzertmeister and virtuoso violinist Pisendel.

Then in 1721, the coveted post of Kantor of the Hamburg Johanneum, a post that traditionally carried with it teaching responsibilities and the directorship of Hamburg's five principal churches, became vacant, and Telemann was invited to succeed Joachim Gerstenbüttel. Here, at last, was a prestigious post that would provide him with seemingly unlimited opportunities to compose and perform. As Kantor, he would be stretched as never before: he was required to compose two cantatas a week, annually to produce a new Passion, and to provide occasional works for church and civil ceremonies. And such was his vitality and creative impetus that, in spite of heavy responsibilities, he apparently eagerly sought and fulfilled additional commissions from home and abroad.

The prospect of being actively involved in the Hamburg Opera - his opera *Der geduldige Socrates*, had already been performed there earlier that year - was perhaps over-optimistic, for there was strong opposition among the city fathers to his participation.

Telemann reacted characteristically by threatening to resign: he applied for the post of Kantor of the Leipzig Thomaskirche, and in 1722 was chosen over Bach, Graupner and three other candidates. While the Hamburg City Council refused to grant his release, they were obliged to improve his salary and withdraw their objections to his association with the Hamburg Opera.

Telemann thereupon redoubled his activities at Hamburg, increasing the number of public concerts given at the churches, the Drill-Hall and at a tavern known as the 'Lower Tree-House', at which a wide variety of sacred and secular music was performed. They were patronized by prominent Hamburg citizens and supported by paid admission. More to the point, he was made music director of the Hamburg Opera, remaining in that capacity until its closure in 1738.

He produced both serious and comic works, many of which have been lost, or survive only as excerpts published in *Der getreue Musikmeister*. In addition to Telemann's own operas and those of Reinhard Keiser, Handel's London operas were performed there during Telemann's tenure.

*Der getreuer Musikmeister* ("The Faithful Music Master") was founded in 1728 by Telemann and J.V. Görner (not to be confused with J.G. Görner, organist at Leipzig and Bach's contemporary). Intended as a "home music lesson", this German music periodical, the first of its kind, appeared every two weeks in the form of a four-page *Lection* meaning a reading or a lesson. It consisted of actual music, new music just composed and given its first circulation in this unusual fashion. Much of it was by Telemann himself, but other contemporary composers were also represented, such as Keiser, Pezold, Görner, Bonporti, Zelenka, Ritter and Stoltzer. Unfortunately the individual issues were not dated, nor is it known how long the periodical appeared for. Twenty-five of these periodicals have come down to us with their contents.

Telemann remained in Hamburg until his death in 1767, being succeeded in that position by his godson, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, son of Johann Sebastian. Though it is with Hamburg that we customarily associate his name, Telemann traveled widely, making many trips to Berlin where he was exposed to strains of Polish music imported from the East, and to Paris in 1737 where he absorbed much of the French idiom then current.

Telemann's friendship with Handel continued: Handel corresponded with him on several occasions, and in 1750 went to the trouble of sending him from London "a crate of flowers, which experts assure me are very choice and of admirable rarity". His name appears (as 'Mr. Hendel, Docteur en Musique, Londres') on the list of subscribers to the most ambitious publication of Telemann's music during his lifetime, the *Musique de Table*, which appeared in three installments during the course of 1733.

An interesting side-note is that Telemann supervised the preparation of the engraved plates from which the parts were printed, these being made of pewter as opposed to the more usual and more expensive copper, by a new process apparently first employed in London about 1710 by Walsh and Hare, and introduced into Germany by Telemann himself.

Further proof of Handel's esteem for Telemann's music is provided by the fact that Handel used ideas from no less than sixteen movements in the *Musique de Table* in his own compositions. Handel would jokingly relate that Telemann "could write a church piece in eight parts with the same expedition another would write a letter".

As a composer Telemann was indeed prolific, providing an enormous body of work, both sacred and secular. This included 1043 church cantatas, and settings of the Passion for each year that he was in Hamburg, 46 in all. In Leipzig he had written operas, and he continued to involve himself in public performances in Hamburg, later taking on additional responsibility as musical director of the Hamburg opera. He was also commercially active in publishing and selling much of the music that he wrote.

A musical form which Telemann practiced with remarkable assiduity was the orchestral suite - the *Ouverture* and its succession of dance movements, which originated with Lully in France but which was in fact cultivated almost exclusively by German composers.

A contemporary German critic, Johann Adolph Scheibe, even declared in 1745 that Telemann was chiefly responsible for the enormous popularity of the orchestral suite in Germany, having begun by imitating the French style but soon becoming more expert in it than the French themselves. In an autobiographical article written in 1740 Telemann estimated that he had already composed six hundred suites - about a quarter of which have survived, nearly all in manuscript.

Key factors in Telemann's meteoric rise to power and wealth as the most famous musician in Germany were his sense of humor and likable personality. He had the good fortune to be admired and envied, rather than resented, for his relentless pursuit and acquisition of major Court and Church positions.

Telemann's self-confidence and productivity from an early age are extraordinary by any standard. Not only did he have the courage to challenge his superiors when they interfered with his plans to gain frequent performances and publication of his works, but there seemed to be no limit to the number of commissions he was willing and able to fulfill as composer. His salaried income at Hamburg was about three times what Johann Sebastian Bach earned at Leipzig, and he made a substantial profit on his many works published for sale to music enthusiasts.



## BAROQUE COMPOSERS: ANTONIO VIVALDI

Antonio Vivaldi was born in Venice on March 4th, 1678. Though ordained a priest in 1703, according to his own account, within a year of being ordained Vivaldi no longer wished to celebrate mass because of physical complaints ("tightness of the chest") which pointed to angina pectoris, asthmatic bronchitis, or a nervous disorder. It is also possible that Vivaldi was simulating illness - there is a story that he sometimes left the altar in order to quickly jot down a musical idea in the sacristy.... In any event he had become a priest against his own will, perhaps because in his day training for the

priesthood was often the only possible way for a poor family to obtain free schooling.

Though he wrote many fine and memorable concertos, such as the Four Seasons and the Opus 3 for example, he also wrote many works which sound like five-finger exercises for students. And this is precisely what they were. Vivaldi was employed for most of his working life by the Ospedale della Pietà.

Often termed an "orphanage", this Ospedale was in fact a home for the female offspring of noblemen and their numerous dalliances with their mistresses. The Ospedale (see front cover illustration) was thus well endowed by the "anonymous" fathers; its furnishings bordered on the opulent, the young ladies were well looked-after, and the musical standards among the highest in Venice. Many of Vivaldi's concerti were indeed exercises which he would play with his many talented pupils.

Vivaldi's relationship with the Ospedale began right after his ordination in 1703, when he was named as violin teacher there. Until 1709, Vivaldi's appointment was renewed every year and again after 1711. Between 1709 and 1711 Vivaldi was not attached to the Ospedale. Perhaps in this period he was already working for the Teatro Sant' Angelo, an opera theater. He also remained active as a composer - in 1711 twelve concertos he had written were published in Amsterdam by the music publisher Estienne Roger under the title *l'Estro armonico* (Harmonic Inspiration).

In 1713, Vivaldi was given a month's leave from the Ospedale della Pietà in order to stage his first opera, *Ottone in villa*, in Vicenza. In the 1713-4 season he was once again attached to the Teatro Sant' Angelo, where he produced an opera by the composer Giovanni Alberto Rostori (1692-1753).

As far as his theatrical activities were concerned, the end of 1716 was a high point for Vivaldi. In November, he managed to have the Ospedale della Pietà perform his first great oratorio, *Juditha Triumphans devicta Holofernis barbaric*. This work was an allegorical description of the victory of the Venetians (the Christians) over the Turks (the barbarians) in August 1716.

At the end of 1717 Vivaldi moved to Mantua for two years in order to take up his post as Chamber Capellmeister at the court of Landgrave Philips van Hessen-Darmstadt. His task there was to provide operas, cantatas, and perhaps concert music, too. His opera *Armida* had already been performed earlier in Mantua and in 1719 *Teuzzone* and *Tito Manlio* followed. On the score of the latter are the words: "music by Vivaldi, made in 5 days." Furthermore, in 1720 *La Conduce o siano Li veri amici* was performed.

In 1720 Vivaldi returned to Venice where he again staged new operas written by himself in the Teatro Sant' Angelo. In Mantua he had made the acquaintance of the singer Anna Giraud (or Giro), and she had moved in to live with him. Vivaldi maintained that she was no more than a housekeeper and good friend, just like Anna's sister, Paolina, who also shared his house.

In his Memoirs, the Italian playwright Carlo Goldoni gave the following portrait of Vivaldi and Giraud: "This priest, an excellent violinist but a mediocre composer, has trained Miss Giraud to be a singer. She was young, born in Venice, but the daughter of a French wigmaker. She was not beautiful, though she was elegant, small in stature, with beautiful eyes and a fascinating mouth. She had a small voice, but many languages in which to harangue." Vivaldi stayed together with her until his death.

Vivaldi also wrote works on commission from foreign rulers, such as the French king, Louis XV - the serenade *La Sena festeggiante* (Festival on the Seine), for example. This work cannot be dated precisely, but it was certainly written after 1720.

In Rome Vivaldi found a patron in the person of Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni, a great music lover, who earlier had been the patron of Arcangelo Corelli. And if we can believe Vivaldi himself, the Pope asked him to come and play the violin for him at a private audience.

Earlier, in the 1660's, musical life in Rome had been enormously stimulated by the presence of Christina of Sweden in the city. The "Pallas of the North," as she was called, abdicated from the Swedish throne in 1654. A few years later she moved to Rome and took up residence in the Palazzo Riario. There she organized musical events that were attended by composers such as Corelli and Scarlatti. Other composers, too, such as Geminiani and Handel worked in Rome for periods of time. Like them, Vivaldi profited from the favorable cultural climate in the city.

Despite his stay in Rome and other cities, Vivaldi remained in the service of the Ospedale della Pietà, which nominated him "Maestro di concerti." He was required only to send two concertos per month to Venice (transport costs were to the account of the client) for which he received a ducat per concerto. His presence was never required. He also remained director of the Teatro Sant' Angelo, as he did in the 1726, 7 and 8 seasons.

Between 1725 and 1728 some eight operas were premiered in Venice and Florence. Abbot Conti wrote of his contemporary, Vivaldi: "In less than three months Vivaldi has composed three operas, two for Venice and a third for Florence; the last has given something of a boost to the name of the theater of that city and he has earned a great deal of money."

During these years Vivaldi was also extremely active in the field of concertos. In 1725 the publication *Il Cimento dell' Armonia e dell'invenzione* (The trial of harmony and invention), opus 8, appeared in Amsterdam. This consisted of twelve concertos, seven of which were descriptive: *The Four Seasons*, *Storm at Sea*, *Pleasure* and *The Hunt*. Vivaldi transformed the tradition of descriptive music into a typically Italian musical style with its unmistakable timbre in which the strings play a major role.



These concertos were enormously successful particularly in France. Michel Corrette (1709-1795) based his motet *Laudate Dominum de coelis* of 1765 on the *Spring* concerto and, in 1775, Jean-Jacques Rousseau reworked it into a version for solo flute. "Spring" was also a firm favorite of King Louis XV, who would order it to be performed at the most unexpected moments, and Vivaldi received various commissions for further compositions from the court at Versailles.

In 1730 Vivaldi, his father, and Anna Giraud traveled to Prague. In this music-loving city (half a century later Mozart would celebrate his first operatic triumphs there) Vivaldi met a Venetian opera company which between 1724 and 1734 staged some sixty operas in the theater of Count Franz Anton von Sporck (for

whom incidentally, Bach produced his Four Shorter Masses).

In the 1730-1731 season, two new operas by Vivaldi were premiered there after the previous season had closed with his opera *Farnace*, a work the composer often used as his showpiece.

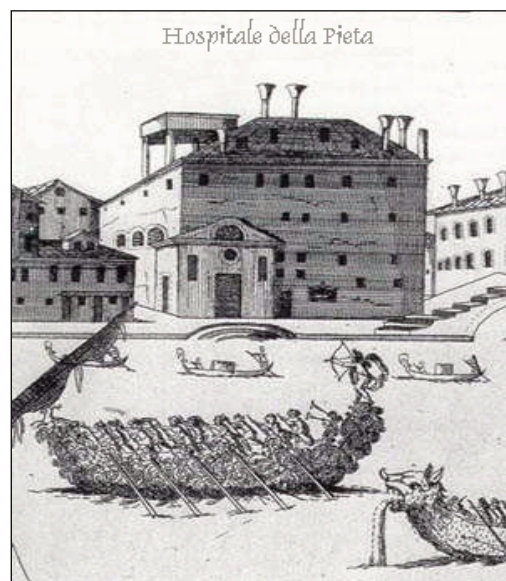
At the end of 1731 Vivaldi returned to Venice, but at the beginning of 1732 he left again for Mantua and Verona.

In Mantua, Vivaldi's opera *Semimmide* was performed and in Verona, on the occasion of the opening of the new Teatro Filarmonico, *La fida Ninfa*, with a libretto by the Veronese poet and man of letters, Scipione Maffei, was staged.

After his stay in Prague, Vivaldi concentrated mainly on operas. No further collections of instrumental music were published. However Vivaldi continued to write instrumental music, although it was only to sell the manuscripts to private persons or to the Ospedale della Pietà, which after 1735 paid him a fixed honorarium of 100 ducats a year. In 1733 he met the English traveler, Edward Holdsworth, who had been commissioned to purchase a few of Vivaldi's compositions for the man of letters, Charles Jennens, author of texts for oratorios by Handel. Holdsworth wrote to Jennens: "I spoke with your friend Vivaldi today. He told me that he had decided to publish no more concertos because otherwise he can no longer sell his handwritten compositions. He earns more with these, he said, and since he charges one guinea per piece, that must be true if he finds a goodly number of buyers."

In 1738 Vivaldi was in Amsterdam where he conducted a festive opening concert for the 100th Anniversary of the Schouwburg Theater. Returning to Venice, which was at that time suffering a severe economic downturn, he resigned from the Ospedale in 1740, planning to move to Vienna under the patronage of his admirer Charles VI. His stay in Vienna was to be shortlived however, for he died on July 28th 1741 "of internal fire" (probably the asthmatic bronchitis from which he suffered all his life) and, like Mozart fifty years later, received a modest burial.

Anna Giraud returned to Venice, where she died in 1750.





BAROQUE COMPOSERS:  
Unico Willem Van  
WASSENAER

*Score of my concertos, engraved by Signor Ricciotti. These concertos were composed at different times between 1725 and 1740. When they were ready, I took them along to the musical gathering organized in The Hague by Mr Bentinck, myself and some foreign gentlemen. Ricciotti played the first violin. Afterwards I allowed him to make a copy of the concertos. When all six were ready, he asked permission to have the engraved. Upon my refusal he enlisted the aid of Mr Bentinck, to whose strong representations I finally acquiesced, on condition that my name did not appear anywhere on the copy and that he put his name to it, as he did. Mr*

*Bentinck wanted to dedicate them to me; I refused absolutely, after which he told Ricciotti to dedicate them to him. In this way these concertos were published against my wishes. Some of them are tolerable, some middling, others wretched. Had they not been published, I would perhaps have corrected the mistakes in them, but other business has left me no leisure to amuse myself with them, and I would have caused their editor offence.*

In 1980 the Dutch musicologist Alfred Dunning was exploring the palace library at Twickel in the Netherlands. Here he discovered the scores for six concertos, with the foreword by the composer quoted in full above, which answered the two questions which had long puzzled musicologists: who had composed these concertos, and why had the composer not identified himself. Indeed the foreword revealed that the composer had deliberately concealed his identity. Dunning's researches are documented in his publication *Count Unico Wilhelm van Wassenauer. A master unmasked, or the Pergolesi-Ricciotti puzzle solved.* (Buren, 1980).

After years of mis-attribution, first to the Italian publisher/violinist Ricciotti, then later to Pergolesi, of the *Six Concerti Armonici*, the true identity of the composer was thus established beyond doubt, together with the probable reason for the anonymity and resultant confusion - simple modesty on the part of the author!

The Van Wassenauers were, and indeed are among the most distinguished families in the Netherlands, tracing their ancestry continuously back to 1200. The family had originally belonged to the country nobility, rising to power and influence during the Dutch rebellion against Spain from 1568-1648.

Thus Unico Willem was born, on November 2nd, 1692 in Delden (Netherlands), into a family of generals, admirals and personages holding high positions in the government of the Dutch Republic, gaining more and more wealth through marriage and their own influential positions.

His father was a general and later held diplomatic positions at different courts in Germany, where luxury and the arts flourished. He sometimes took his sons with him and no doubt they were influenced and inspired by their experiences. An early period of residence at Düsseldorf and a "grand tour" of Germany, France and possibly Italy (1717-18) provided the young Unico Willem with musical stimulus. He had also been a pupil of the then-famous Quirinus van Blankenburg; other members of the Van Wassenauer family also took lessons from this 'clavecymbel-meester' (cembalo teacher).

"Unico Willem and his older brother Johan Hendrik had an aunt, their father's sister Agnes, who helped raise them in the beginning after their mother's death. Agnes was a very artistic person, who painted, made music and was a great gardener. Her best friend was Mary Stuart II. In winter the family lived in The Hague in a beautiful house in the center of the town where Johan Hendrik had an substantial art collection. He owned several Rembrandts and Jan Steens, as well as a very extensive library, now in Twickel. His mother, who died very young, had brought Twickel castle into the family and in the summer the family often stayed there.

"Thus in addition to their wealth, and their high positions of political power and influence, the family lived in an atmosphere of art and inspiration. As his elder brother Johan Hendrik never married, Unico Willem inherited the family possessions, though he had to sell most of his brother's paintings. In spite of his musical education and love of music, Unico Willem did not take up music as a career. A number of the Counts at that time had been in the diplomatic corps; Unico became a diplomat in succession to his elder brother, and was active from the 1720s onward in high military, commercial and diplomatic positions, well respected in France both as diplomat and as musician."

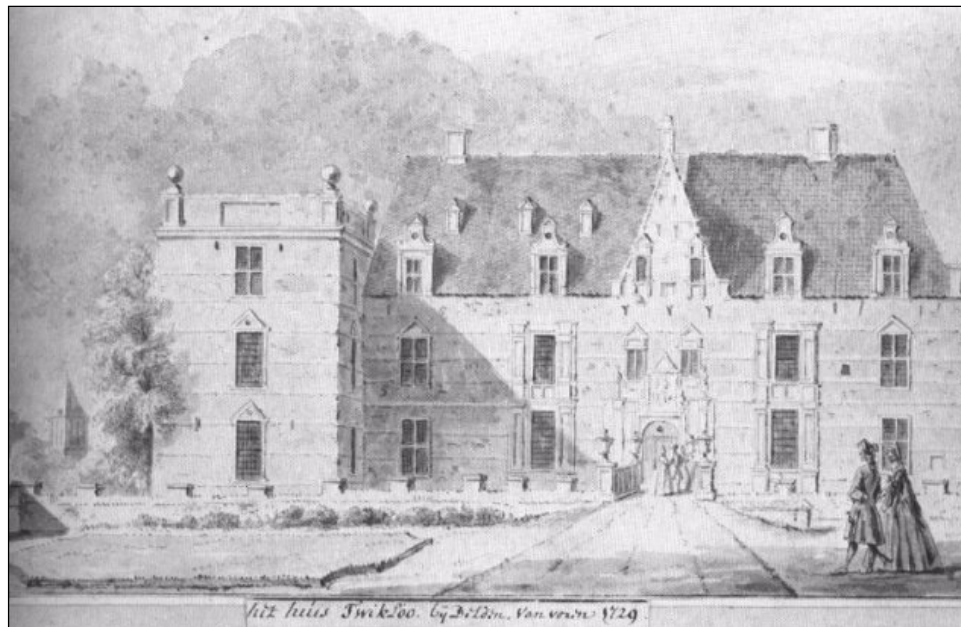
It is believed that Unico Willem composed his *concerti armonici* in The Hague where he could play them with his friends, including the Italian violinist/publisher/impresario Carlo Ricciotti (c1681-1756), and his friend and the dedicatee of his concertos, Count van Bentinck (1704-74).

Ricciotti was also known as Charles Bachiche, and was nicknamed Bacciccia. Working in The Hague, Ricciotti belonged to a French opera company there from 1702 to 1725, eventually becoming its director. In 1740 he was granted a patent to print six concertos which, though published anonymously, we now know to be the Concerti Armonici of Unico Willem. Later, in 1755 they were published by the London printer-publisher John Walsh who, being no doubt of the opinion that anonymous concertos weren't sufficiently commercial, took it upon himself to attribute them to Carlo Ricciotti, thus adding to latter-day musicologists' confusion!

“Unico Willem's two sons enjoyed the same background and the same sort of education as their father, surrounded by arts and music, and with the benefit of leading music teachers. His son Jacob Jan wrote an opera for his mistress, a French opera singer, based on the text of a very famous lady Belle van Zuylen. It seems Unico Willem was very sad that Jacob Jan did not marry this lady!”

After the Concerti were published many friends and musicians guessed the identity of their composer, suggesting that it would not be appropriate for such a person in his position to compose. However art flourished in those days, all the princes and nobility took music lessons and even composed themselves, so to seek the composer's only reason for not being identified we must inevitably return to his personal reticence and humility. As the composer himself wrote: *Some of them are tolerable, some middling, others wretched.....* Today's listeners may well have other opinions!

*The editor is indebted to Louise van Wassenaeer for her valuable insights on the family history. Her comments are placed in quotes above. The drawing below shows Twickel Palace in 1729.*





## BAROQUE COMPOSERS: Jan Dismas ZELENKA

The Dresden court attracted many foreign musicians under Heinrich Schütz, who developed a chapel of international repute during his long term of office as court *Capellmeister* from 1617 to 1672.

In the early 1700s, composers, impresarios, famous singers, and instrumental virtuosos came from all over Europe, including the eastern countries, and Dresden's display of splendor as the "Florence on the Elbe," the predominant center of music and the arts in 17th- and 18th-century Germany, reached its zenith during the reign of Augustus the Strong (1670-1733) as Elector of Saxony and King of

Poland. An example of the city's fine buildings is shown above, in Bernardo Bellotto's "The New Market Square in Dresden, 1749".

Born in Loudovice, Bohemia in 1679 and son of an organist, Jan Dismas Zelenka, of whom there is no known portrait, was educated at the Prague Jesuit College, with which he continued to remain in contact. In 1710, he moved to Dresden, where he became principal double-bass player of the Dresden court orchestra. Apart from specific journeys to Italy, Vienna and periodic returns to Prague, Zelenka would remain in Dresden for the rest of his life.

In 1697, the King-Elector Augustus the Strong of Saxony had assumed the Polish crown, a step that obliged him to adopt the Roman Catholic faith although Saxony was predominantly Lutheran. Thus the Royal Court at Dresden maintained two religious "faces", on the one hand honoring strictly Lutheran Bach with the title of *Royal Court Composer*, and on the other hand bestowing on Zelenka the title of *Court Composer of Church Music* for his numerous sacred works composed for the Dresden Catholic Church.

So we find in Zelenka's surviving compositions numerous sacred works, some 30 masses, psalms, and three oratorios with biblical subjects, totaling in all some 150 works, side by side with secular instrumental compositions reflecting his role in the Court Orchestra, of which he became conductor for five seasons.

From 1716 to 1719 Zelenka traveled to Italy, where he may have encountered Antonio Lotti and Alessandro Scarlatti. He also spent time in Vienna where he studied counterpoint with Johann Josef Fux, most probably composing his *Capriccios* there. During these years, he gathered a sizable study collection of works written in strict contrapuntal style which still survives in the Saxon State Library. In 1719 Zelenka returned to Dresden, taking up once more his position in the Court Orchestra and resuming his sacred compositions.

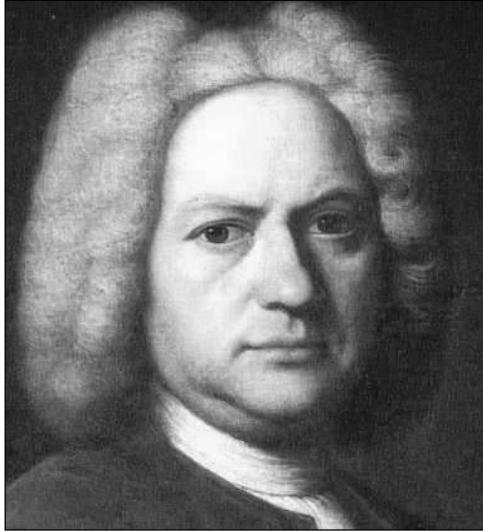
1723 was a particularly significant year for Zelenka. In this year the coronation took place in Prague of the Emperor Charles VI, for which occasion the Jesuits had commissioned Zelenka to compose suitably festive music. Monarchs and princes from all the surrounding territories converged on Prague for the occasion, bringing their retinues and orchestras with them. Zelenka conducted his own composition, the solo parts being sung by Czech noblemen. It was a glittering occasion, perhaps the high point of Zelenka's career.

Thereafter his life in Dresden continued uneventfully, with further sacred compositions, some commissions from Bohemian noblemen, and no doubt though undocumented, occasional visits to Prague. It was during the 1730s that he received his royal title of Church Music Composer, and he was well paid at Court. Bach too, based in nearby Leipzig and a frequent visitor to Dresden, was also awarded a Court Title at this time.

A well-known and greatly respected visitor to Dresden, Bach was undoubtedly on familiar terms with all the musicians and musical personalities of Dresden, including Zelenka. Bach would often take his son Wilhelm Friedemann with him on his visits to Dresden; Bach in fact instructed his son to copy one of Zelenka's works - the *Amen* from his *Magnificat* - for use in Leipzig at St Thomas's.

Zelenka's music is always fresh and creative. His instrumental works often surprise the listener with sudden turns of harmony, and performers are often challenged by demanding instrumentation. His choral works bear no relationship with those of Bach – indeed the two composers were writing for different religious traditions and idioms. Zelenka's choral works are difficult to place in time; in his eclectic mix of drama, counterpoint and depth of feeling one could almost be listening to a Schubert Mass. Here again as in his instrumental works, listeners should expect the unexpected!

Zelenka died in Dresden on December 23rd, 1745. Though some of his work has been lost over the years, and much was destroyed in Dresden during the last years of WWII, many copies were fortunately preserved in Prague. It was only during the last decades of the 1900s that Zelenka was truly "discovered", and unlike many "undiscovered treasures of the baroque" which might better have been left undiscovered, Zelenka's music undoubtedly rewards further exploration. In summary one might justifiably say of his compositional output, both instrumental and sacred, that it puts a fresh face on baroque music.



## BAROQUE COMPOSERS: JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

EISENACH: 1685-1695  
 OHRDRUF: 1695-1700  
 LÜNEBURG: 1700-1702  
 WEIMAR (first term): 1703  
 ARNSTADT: 1703-1707  
 MÜHLHAUSEN: 1707-1708  
 WEIMAR (second term): 1708-1717  
 CÖTHEN: 1717-1723  
 LEIPZIG 1: 1723-1729 -  
     Cantor and Director of Music  
 LEIPZIG 2: 1729-1740 -  
     The Collegium Musicum  
 LEIPZIG 3: 1744-1750 -  
     The Introspective Years

### EISENACH: 1685-1695

Johann Sebastian Bach was born on March 21st 1685, the son of Johann Ambrosius, court trumpeter for the Duke of Eisenach and director of the musicians of the town of Eisenach in Thuringia. For many years, members of the Bach family throughout Thuringia had held positions such as organists, town instrumentalists, or Cantors, and the family name enjoyed a wide reputation for musical talent.

The family at Eisenach lived in a reasonably spacious home just above the town center, with rooms for apprentice musicians, and a large grain store. (The pleasant and informative "Bach Haus" Museum in Eisenach does not claim to be the original family home). Here young Johann Sebastian was taught by his father to play the violin and the harpsichord. He was also initiated into the art of organ playing by his famous uncle, Johann Christoph Bach, who was then organist at the Georgenkirche in Eisenach. Sebastian was a very willing pupil and soon became extraordinarily proficient with these instruments.

When he was eight years old he went to the old Latin Grammar School, where Martin Luther had once been a pupil; he was taught reading and writing, Latin grammar, and a great deal of scripture, both in Latin and German. The boys of the school formed the choir of the St. Georgenkirche, which gave Johann Sebastian an opportunity to sing in the regular services, as well as in the nearby villages. He was described as having 'an uncommonly fine treble voice'. The Lutheran spirit would have been strong in Eisenach, for it was in the Wartburg Castle standing high above the town, that Martin Luther, in hiding from his persecutors, translated the New Testament into German.

Roads were still unpaved in the smaller towns, sewage and refuse disposal poorly organized, and the existence of germs not yet scientifically discovered. Mortality rates were high as a result. At an early age Johann Sebastian lost a sister and later a brother. When he was only nine years old his mother died. Barely nine months later his father also died.

Johann Sebastian and one of his brothers, Johann Jakob, were taken into the home of their eldest brother, Johann Christoph (born 1671) who had recently married and settled down at Ohrdruf, a small town thirty miles south-east of Eisenach. Johann Christoph, a former pupil of Pachelbel, was now well established as organist of the St. Michaeliskirche, Ohrdruf.

### OHRDRUF: 1695-1700

Johann Christoph was an excellent teacher - all of his five sons were to reach positions of some eminence in music, and he was a keen student of the latest keyboard compositions.

Johann Sebastian at once settled down happily in this household studying the organ and harpsichord with great interest under his brother, and he quickly mastered all the pieces he had been given. When a new organ was installed at the Ohrdruf church, Christoph allowed his young brother to watch its construction. He also encouraged him to study composition and set Sebastian to copying music by German organist composers such as Jakob Froberger, Johann Caspar Kerll and Pachelbel. An anecdote tells how Christoph punished his young brother when he discovered he had copied a forbidden musical manuscript by moonlight over a period of six months, and confiscated the precious copy.

During this period Johann Sebastian attended the Gymnasium (grammar school) of Ohrdruf, once a monastic foundation, which had become one of the most progressive schools in Germany. He made excellent progress in Latin, Greek and theology, and had reached the top form at a very early age. The scholars of the Gymnasium, as at Eisenach, were also employed as choir-boys, and their Cantor, Elias Herda, had a high opinion of Johann Sebastian's voice and musical capabilities. It was his excellent soprano voice that found Johann Sebastian a position in the choir of the wealthy Michaelis monastery at Lüneburg, which was known to provide a free place for boys who were poor but with musical talent. This was no doubt arranged by Elias Herda who had held a scholarship there himself.

In the Spring of 1700 Johann Sebastian set out with his schoolfriend, Georg Erdmann, who was also joining the choir, on the journey of a hundred and eighty miles north to Lüneburg. It is not known how they traveled; most probably the journey would have been undertaken largely on foot, relieved where possible with a lift on a river barge or farmer's cart. Doubtless the two boys would have been given free food and accommodation in the many monasteries along the route.

## LÜNEBURG: 1700-1702



When Johann Sebastian reached this North-German musical center, he was well received because of his uncommonly beautiful soprano voice, and was immediately appointed to the select body of singers who formed the 'Mettenchor' (Mattins Choir). Their obligations to sing were many, and Johann Sebastian thus had a unique chance to participate in choral and orchestral performances on a scale unknown in the poorer Thuringian towns of his homeland.

He was also freely permitted to study the fine library of music in the Gymnasium, which included some of the best examples of German church music. The growing lad soon lost his soprano voice, but was able to make himself useful as a violinist in the orchestra, and as an accompanist at the harpsichord during choir rehearsals.

During this period he was fortunate in meeting Georg Böhm, organist of the Johanniskirche at Lüneburg, who himself had been a pupil of the famous organist Jan Adams Reinken in Hamburg, and was a friend of the Bach family in Ohrdruf. Böhm introduced Johann Sebastian to the great organ traditions of Hamburg, to which city he made several pilgrimages on foot.

He also came under the influence of French instrumental music when, through his great proficiency on the violin, he played at the Court of Celle, 50 miles south of Lüneburg. Though distinctly German in its construction and outer appearance, Celle Castle was known as a 'miniature Versailles' for its rich interiors and then-current musical tastes.

When he was nearly eighteen, Johann Sebastian, considerably enriched by these musical experiences, decided he would try to find employment as an organist in his native Thuringia. He was greatly interested in an organ under construction in the new church of Arnstadt, and as members of his family had been professionally active in the district for generations, he felt he had a good chance of getting the post.

So in 1702 he left Lüneburg and returned South.

### WEIMAR (first term): 1703



While awaiting the completion of the organ at Arnstadt, Sebastian was offered, and accepted the post of violinist in the small chamber orchestra of Duke Johann Ernst, the younger brother of the Duke of Weimar. At Lüneburg he had already experienced church choir music, violin, continuo and organ playing, and musical composition and performance in the French style.

Here at Weimar he now came into contact with Italian instrumental music, and acted as deputy to the aging Court Organist, Effler, an old friend of the Bach family, thus having a chance to keep his organ playing in practice. His stay here was short, but he was to return later.

In July 1703 the Arnstadt Town Council invited young Bach to try out the newly finished organ in the 'New Church', so called as it had been almost totally rebuilt having been seriously damaged by fire. He so impressed the people of Arnstadt with his brilliant playing at the dedication that he was immediately offered the post of organist on very favorable terms.

### ARNSTADT: 1703-1707

At the end of 1703, 18-year-old Sebastian took up his post at the small town of Arnstadt, no doubt thrilled at having his own relatively large organ of two manuals and 23 speaking stops, and the responsibility of providing music for his own congregation. Though the present organ is not "Bach's", the original manuals, stops and pedals of Bach's organ are displayed in the Palm Haus Museum of this quiet historic little town, where the house in which Bach lodged can also be seen.

In October 1705, the Church Council granted Bach leave to visit the north-German city of Lübeck to hear the great organist, Dietrich Buxtehude. In Lübeck he took every chance to hear Buxtehude play, and to attend the famous evening concerts in the Marienkirche when Buxtehude's church cantatas were performed. Bach was so fascinated by these concerts, and by his discussions on the arts with the great master, that he remained in Lübeck over Christmas until the following February.

He returned to Arnstadt three months later, having also visited Reincken in Hamburg and Böhm in Lüneburg on the way, full of new ideas and enthusiasm which he immediately put into practice in his playing. The congregation however was completely surprised and bewildered by his new musical ideas: there was considerable confusion during the singing of the chorales, caused by his "surprising variations and irrelevant ornaments which obliterate the melody and confuse the congregation".

The Church Council resolved to reprimand Bach on his 'strange sounds' during the services, and they also asked him to explain the unauthorized extension of his leave in Lübeck. Bach did not attempt to justify himself before what must have seemed to him a group of narrow minded and conservative old gentlemen; yet the Council, knowing how skilled his playing was, decided to treat their young and impetuous organist with leniency.

However, new conflicts soon arose when Bach, citing a clause in his contract, refused to work with the undisciplined boys' choir which he had been required to train for the sake of Council economy. For this the Council further reprimanded him, adding the complaint that he had been "entertaining a strange damsel" to music in organ loft of the church. The young lady was probably his cousin, Maria Barbara, whom he was later to marry. Thus, what had been an exciting and promising start at Arnstadt, had now turned into recriminations and disputes; Bach no doubt decided it would be better to look around for somewhere new.

At the end of 1706, he heard that the organist to the town of Mühlhausen had died. Knowing that Mühlhausen had a long musical tradition, he applied for the post, and after yet another very successful audition at the imposing cathedral-like St Blasius Church on Easter Sunday 1707, he was accepted, again on very favorable terms. So in June 1707 he returned the keys of his office to the Arnstadt Council and left quietly with his few belongings for Mühlhausen.

## MÜHLHAUSEN: 1707-1708

Bach arrived at Mühlhausen, a small Thuringian town proud of its ancient foundation and independence, to take up the post of organist to the town. Unfortunately, a quarter of the whole town had recently been devastated by fire; it was difficult for him to find suitable dwellings, and he was thus forced to pay a high rent. Nevertheless, shortly after his arrival, he brought his cousin Maria Barbara from Arnstadt, and on October 17th 1707 he married her at the small church in the picturesque little village of Dornheim. Maria Barbara came of a branch of the musical Bach family, her father being organist at Gehren.

By now Bach had high ideals for the church music of Germany, and to start with, he began organizing the rather poor facilities of Mühlhausen; he began by making a large collection of the best German music available, including some of his own, and set about training the choir and a newly created orchestra to play the music.

The first result of these efforts was his cantata 'Gott ist mein König' (BWV 71), given in hitherto unknown splendor in the spacious Marienkirche to celebrate the inauguration of the Town Council in February 1708.

This success gave Bach the courage to put in a long and detailed report, proposing a complete renovation and improvement of the organ in the St Blasiuskirche. The Council agreed to carry out the renovation and improvements, and Bach was given the task of supervising the work, for not only was he now a brilliant player, he had also become an expert on the construction of organs.

However, before the organ was completed, a religious controversy arose in Mühlhausen between the orthodox Lutherans, who were lovers of music, and the Pietists, who were strict puritans and distrusted art and music. Bach was apprehensive of the latter's growing influence, in addition to the fact that his immediate superior was a Pietist. Music in Mühlhausen seemed to be in a state of decay, and so once more he looked around for more promising possibilities.

Former contacts made in Weimar were now useful; the Duke of Weimar offered him a post among his Court chamber musicians, and on June 25, 1708, Bach sent in his letter of resignation to the authorities at Mühlhausen, stating very diplomatically that not only was he finding it difficult to keep a wife on the small salary agreed to on his arrival, but that he could see no chance of realizing his final aim, namely the establishment of a proper church music 'to the glory of God'.

The Council had little option but to allow his departure. However, the situation was concluded quite amicably and Bach was asked that he should continue to supervise the rebuilding of the St Blasiuskirche organ. This he did, and some time in 1709 he came over to inaugurate its first performance.

### WEIMAR (second term): 1708-1717



Weimar was quite a small town with only 5000 inhabitants; yet Bach was to meet some very cultured people here. Not least was his employer, the Duke of Sachsen-Weimar, one of the most distinguished and cultured nobles of his time.

Bach's two-fold position as member of the chamber orchestra and as Organist to the Court offered him many opportunities for improvement.

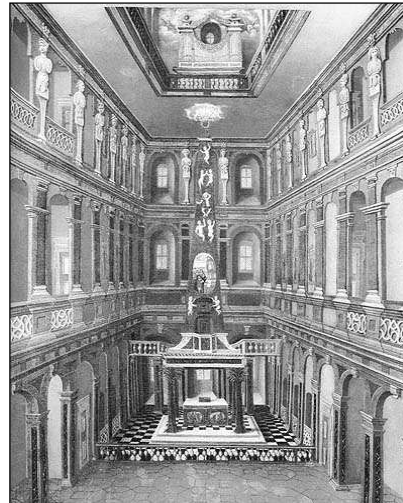
The Court Orchestra consisted of about 22 players: a compact string ensemble, a bassoon player, 6 or 7 trumpeters and a timpanist. Bach's function in the orchestra was mainly as a violinist, however he also played the harpsichord and occasionally wrote or arranged some of the

music. As was the custom in most 18th century Courts, the musicians also spent some of their time employed in household and domestic duties.

In 1714 Bach became the leader of the orchestra, and was now second only to the old and frail Capellmeister Johann Samuel Drese, whose duties he was gradually taking over.

As Court Organist, Bach had succeeded Johann Effler, a musician of some standing. The organ high up on the top gallery of the Court Chapel was new and not quite as large as the one at Arnstadt. After a few years, Bach declared that it was inadequate and should be rebuilt. It was in fact rebuilt at great expense according to his plans: proof of the high regard the Court had for his capabilities as organist and expert on organ construction.

During this period he wrote profusely for the organ, and he was rapidly becoming known throughout the country as one of the greatest German organists. Organ pupils came to him from far and wide, and he was asked to test or dedicate many organs in various towns. His tests were extremely thorough and critical. He used to say for fun 'Above all I must know whether the organ has a good lung', and, pulling out all the stops he produced the largest sound possible, often making the organ builders go pale with fright.



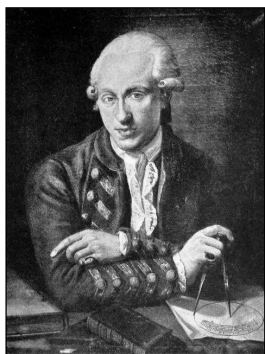
He would usually complete his trial by improvising a prelude and fugue: the prelude to test the organ's power, the fugue to test its clarity for counterpoint.

Constantin Bellermann describes his playing (during a visit to Kassel) in these words; *'His feet seemed to fly across the pedals as if they were winged, and mighty sounds filled the church'*.

Mizler's 'Nekrolog' states: *'His fingers were all of equal strength, all equally able to play with the finest precision. He had invented so comfortable a fingering that he could master the most difficult parts with perfect ease (using 5 fingers instead of the then normal 3). He was able to accomplish passages on the pedals with his feet which would have given trouble to the fingers of many a clever player on the keyboard'*.

On a visit to Halle in 1713, during which he gave a trial cantata (probably BWV 21), he was invited to become organist in succession to Zachau, a composer well-known, and Handel's early teacher. However, the conditions and salary were not sufficient for his growing family, so he was obliged to refuse the post.

On a visit to Dresden, Bach was invited to compete in a contest with the visiting French organist, Louis Marchand (shown at right), widely considered to be one of the best in Europe. However, so the story goes, on the day appointed for the contest, Marchand did not appear, and when servant went to his lodgings, found that he had withdrawn discreetly by taking the fastest coach available back to France. And so Bach gave an impressive solo performance before the assembled audience and referees, establishing himself as the finest organist of the day.



Bach made some very good friends at Weimar, among whom was the eminent philologist and scholar Johann Matthias Gesner, who expressed with great eloquence his admiration for the composer's genius. Bach was also a frequent visitor to the nearby 'Rote Schloß', the home of the former Duke's widow and her two music-loving sons. Here the interest was in the new Italian style of music which was then becoming the rage of Europe, one of the chief exponents being the Venetian composer Vivaldi. Bach and his cousin Johann Georg Walther, shown at left, transcribed some of the Italian instrumental concertos for keyboard instruments.

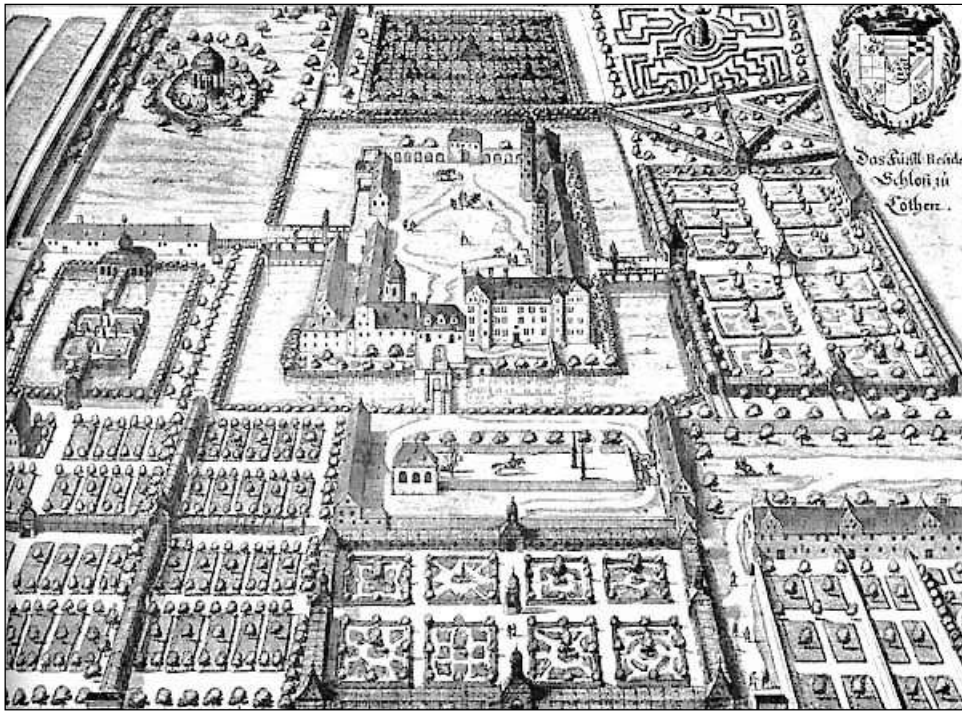
During 1717 a feud broke out between the Duke of Weimar at the 'Wilhelmsburg' household and his nephew Ernst August at the 'Rote Schloss'.

As a result of this, musicians of the first household were forbidden to fraternize with those of the second. Bach did his best to ignore what was, after all, merely an extension of a private quarrel. But the atmosphere was no longer so pleasant.

Added to this, the ancient Capellmeister then died, and Bach was passed over for the post in favor of the late Capellmeister's mediocre son. Bach was bitterly disappointed, for he had lately been doing most of the Capellmeister's work, and had confidently expected to be given the post.

Through the help of Duke Ernst August, Bach was introduced to the Court of Anhalt-Cöthen, and as a result he was offered the post of Capellmeister, which he accepted. This infuriated the Duke of Weimar, so that when Bach put in a polite request for his release, he was arrested and put in the local jail. However, after a month, he was released and given reluctant permission to resign his office. During this enforced rest, Bach typically used his time productively, and prepared a cycle of organ chorale preludes for the whole year, published later as the 'Orgelbüchlein'.

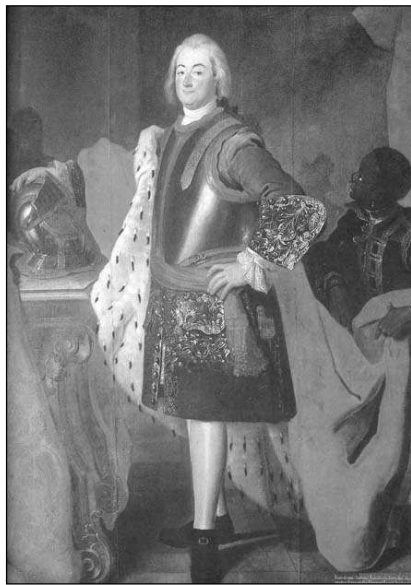
### CÖTHEN: 1717-1723



Bach arrived at the small Court of Anhalt-Cöthen to hold the position of Capellmeister, the highest rank given to a musician during the baroque age. His master was the young prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen, barely twenty-five years old, the son of a Calvinist.

As the Calvinists were antagonistic to the splendors of the Lutheran liturgy, there was no church music at Cöthen; however, the young Prince's religious beliefs did not bar him from enjoying a cheerful and cultivated style of living complete with secular cantatas and instrumental music featuring the latest styles and fashions.

Prince Leopold had already spent three years (1710-13) doing the Grand Tour of Europe, first to Holland and England, through Germany to Italy, returning by way of Vienna. So he would have been thoroughly familiar with the latest European fashions in music.



The young Prince stretched the limited budget of his miniature Court to provide an orchestra of eighteen players, all chosen for their high musical standards from all over the country, some from as far afield as Berlin. In fact it was during the Prince's Grand Tour in 1713 that news came to him of a golden opportunity: when Wilhelm I of Prussia came to power, he dismissed his father's Court Capelle, and Prince Leopold was able to tempt many of the best musicians from Berlin to Cöthen.

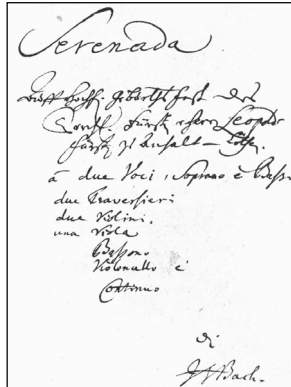
He had well-developed musical tastes, having traveled widely, particularly to Italy, where he studied Italian secular music with great interest; he returned from Italy determined to raise the standard of German secular music to an equally high level.

Unlike most Princes of his time, he was a player of considerable proficiency on the harpsichord, the violin and the viola da gamba, and contrary to current Court etiquette he played quite freely and informally with his Court musicians, treating them entirely as his equals. He soon became very friendly with his new Capellmeister, having a high regard for him, and would often ask his advice on various matters.

Life at Cöthen was informal and easy-going; in this happy atmosphere Bach's days were completely devoted to music. During this period he wrote much of his chamber music; violin concertos, sonatas, and keyboard music.

When the Prince traveled, Bach and some of the Court musicians (together with instruments, including an ingenious folding-harpsichord) would accompany him on his extensive journeys. Twice they visited Carlsbad, the meeting place of the European aristocracy, in 1718 and in the summer of 1720. It was on returning from this second visit that Bach received a serious shock; his wife, Maria Barbara, whom he had left in perfect health three months earlier, had died and been buried in his absence, leaving four motherless children.

Two months later he visited Hamburg and expressed an interest in the newly vacant post of organist in the Jakobskirche. This church contained the famous Arp Schnitger organ with four manuals and sixty stops. However, Bach left Hamburg for Cöthen before the audition, presumably because the conditions there did not suit him.



Bach continued with his work at Cöthen. He was asked to compose and perform cantatas for the Prince's birthday and the New Year; two each time, one sacred and one secular. A title page for one of the Prince's birthday serenades is shown at left. To perform these works there were singers under contract from nearby Courts, and one of these, Anna Magdalena, daughter of J.C. Wilcke, Court and Field-Trumpeter at Weissenfels, attracted Bach's attention with her fine soprano voice. In December 1721, Anna Magdalena and Bach married, she at the age of 20, and he 36.

Anna Magdalena was very kind to Bach's children, a good housekeeper, and she took a lively interest in his work, often helping him by neatly copying out his manuscripts. In the twenty-eight years of happy marriage that followed, thirteen children were born to the Bach family (though few of them survived through childhood).

A week after Bach's wedding, the Prince also married. But for Bach this was to be an unfortunate event, as the new Princess Frederica Henrietta, shown at right, was not in favor of her husband's musical activities and managed, by exerting constant pressure (as Bach wrote in a letter), to 'Make the musical inclination of the said Prince somewhat luke-warm'. Bach also wrote to his old school-friend, Erdmann, 'There I had a gracious Prince as master, who knew music as well as he loved it, and I hoped to remain in his service until the end of my life'.



But in any case, Bach was now having to consider his growing sons; he wished to give them a good education, and there was no university at Cöthen, nor the cultured atmosphere and facilities of a larger city.

So once more, Bach decided to look around for somewhere new. It may perhaps have been these circumstances which led Bach to revive an old invitation to produce what are now known as the Brandenburg Concertos. We know from the opening of this dedication, dated March 24th 1721, that Bach had already met the Margrave of Brandenburg, at which time Bach had been invited to provide some orchestral music.

*"Your Royal Highness; As I had a couple of years ago the pleasure of appearing before Your Royal Highness, by virtue of Your Highness' commands, and as I noticed then that Your Highness took some pleasure in the small talents which Heaven has given me for Music, and as in taking leave of Your Royal Highness, Your Highness deigned to honor me with the command to send Your Highness some pieces of my Composition: I have then in accordance with Your Highness' most gracious orders taken the liberty of rendering my most humble duty to Your Royal Highness with the present Concertos, which I have adapted to several instruments.... For the rest, Sire, I beg Your Royal Highness very humbly to have the goodness to continue Your Highness' gracious favor toward me, and to be assured that nothing is so close to my heart as the wish that I may be employed on occasions more worthy of Your Royal Highness and of Your Highness' service....".*

There is some internal evidence in the music itself that Bach was intending to visit Berlin in person for the first performance of these works. There are for example some musicological errors in the scores - hardly something Bach would permit were he seriously dedicating music to a dignitary, particularly with the hope of prospective employment.

The most noteworthy indication however is the missing middle movement of the third concerto. Bach, so his contemporaries frequently noted, would not even permit his performers to put in their own trills and elaborations; he would certainly not have left an entire movement to the whim of some distant performer about whose capabilities Bach knew nothing.

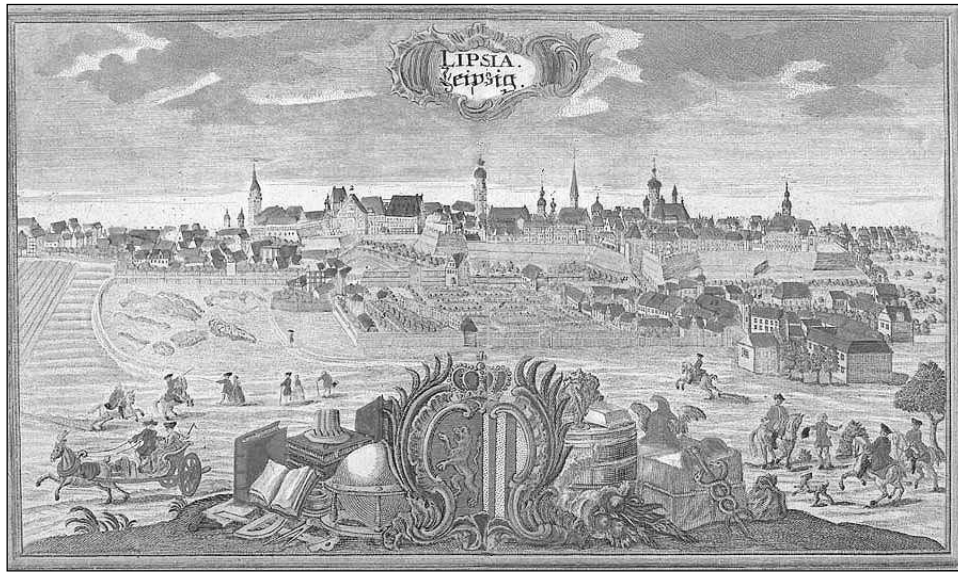
History shows no record of Bach's having subsequently visited the Margrave at his Brandenburg Court. There could be many reasons for this. The Margrave was not easily accessible as he was more frequently to be found in residence at his estates at Malchow than in Berlin.

Moreover the death of Johann Kuhnau, Cantor of the Thomasschule at Leipzig in June 1722 opened the possibility of an appointment for Bach at Leipzig, perhaps more attractive to him than Berlin. Leipzig was situated in familiar territory where he already had many musical and courtly connections; in addition it had a famous university, and the three-times-yearly Trade Fair gave the city a distinctly cosmopolitan atmosphere.

The merits of various candidates to succeed Kuhnau were considered, and the Council eventually nominated Georg Philipp Telemann. However, the authorities at Hamburg would not release Telemann, and so the candidature was left pending. This position of Cantor at Leipzig had been favorably described to Bach, and as the town offered the necessary educational facilities for his sons, he applied for the post. The Council, after trying unsuccessfully to get a certain Christoph Graupner, old boy of the Thomasschule and Capellmeister at Darmstadt, eventually settled for Bach as a reasonable alternative.

Bach applied for his dismissal at Cöthen, and the Prince, regretting his departure but not wishing to stand in his way, quickly consented. And so Bach left with his family and belongings for Leipzig, where he was to remain for the rest of his life.

### LEIPZIG 1: 1723-1729 - Cantor and Director of Music



Leipzig, with a population of 30.000, was the second city of Saxony, the center of the German printing and publishing industries, an important European trading center, and site of a progressive and famous university. It was also one of the foremost centers of German cultural life, with magnificent private dwellings, streets well paved and illuminated at night, a recently opened municipal library, a majestic town hall, and a vibrant social life. Outside its massive town walls were elegant tree-lined promenades and extensive formal gardens. The old-established university drew scholars and men of distinction from far and wide, and the famous book trade contributed much to the cultural life of the city. One of Leipzig's most important features was its international commerce. When the Leipzig Trade Fair was in progress, the respectable town was transformed into a show-ground mixing business with pleasure, and was popular with members of the Royal Court of Dresden. Many connections were established between nations on these occasions, and this in turn had a beneficial effect on the civic economy and culture as well as the international variety of its music.

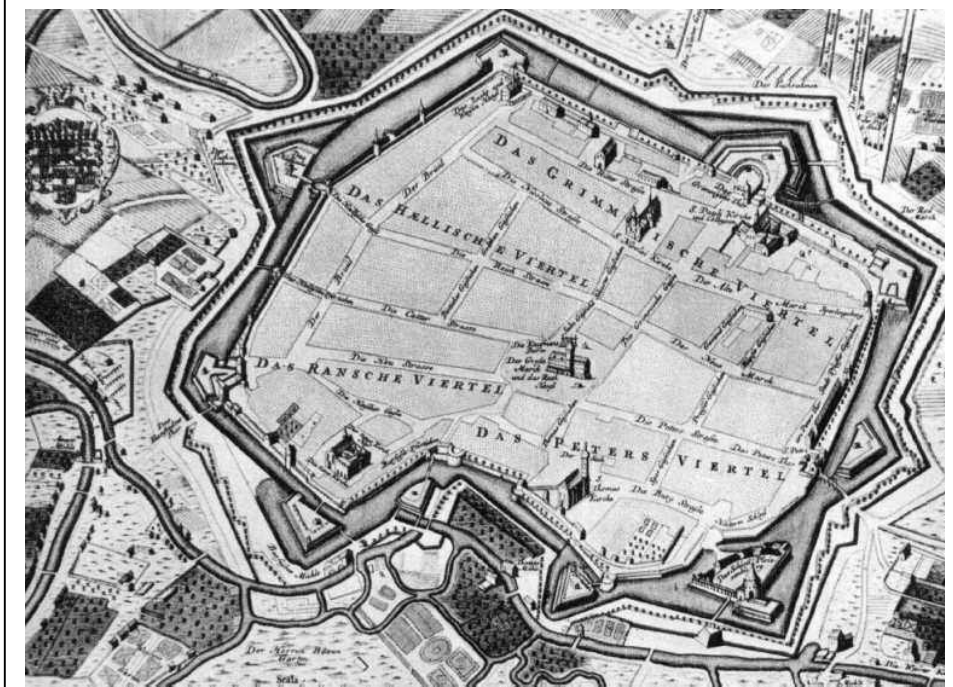
Bach moved to Leipzig on May 22, 1723, where for the remaining 27 years of his life he was to live and work as Cantor, or *Directore Chori Musici Lipsiensis* - Director of Choir and Music in Leipzig. He would have known the town from previous visits, as he had come, for instance, in December 1717 to test the large new organ (53 stops) in the University Church, the Paulinerkirche, just completed by the Leipzig organ builder Johann Scheibe.

Despite the Leipzig Council's almost disrespectful reticence in appointing him, Bach's arrival was clearly a major event in the musical and social world, and one North German newspaper described it in great detail: "*Last Saturday at noon, four carts laden with goods and chattels belonging to the former Capellmeister to the Court of Cöthen arrived in Leipzig and at two in the afternoon, he and his family arrived in two coaches and moved into their newly decorated lodgings in the school building*". The Bach family at that time comprised his wife and four children, of eight, nine, twelve and fourteen years of age. May 31, 1723, marked the inaugural ceremony for the new Capellmeister with the customary speeches and anthems, putting an end to six unsettled months for the city in filling the post.



In this engraving of 1735 we see Bach's "home neighborhood". The building facing us in the center is the recently rebuilt and re-styled Thomas Schule, with the great Thomas Kirche at right. The well in the square was supplied through a network of pipes with fresh water. The channels in the cobbled road surface were (unfortunately) for refuse water (of all kinds!) but these were removed in 1743. Through the little archway bordering the School on the left, Bach would have walked out onto a tree-lined promenade, there mingling with the fashionable and well-to-do merchants and their ladies. From there, as from the window of his *Componierstube*, his Composing Study, there were views over ornamental gardens and the Pleisse River to the distant rolling hills beyond.

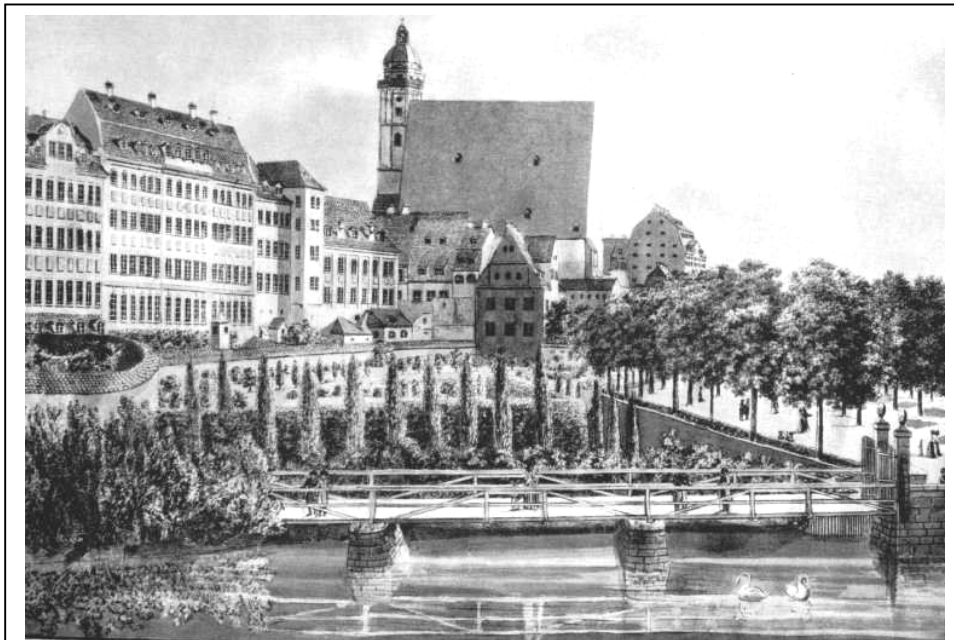
The school of St Thomas was situated on the western wall of the town, not far from the imposing Pleissenburg fortress with its large tower on the south-western corner of the town wall. The school had around 60 boarders, aged between 11 and early 20s, and provided the choirs for at least four city churches. These boarders were mainly from deprived backgrounds and were maintained at the school on a charitable basis, and they also occasionally had to sing outdoors at funerals and in the city streets for alms.



Leipzig Town Plan, 1720. Start at the bottom right-hand corner. Here you have the Vestung Pleissen-burg, built as a fortification. *Burg* means fortress, and the Pleisse is the river on which Leipzig sits. A little to the left is the Thomaskirche; just on the right of it, the Thomasschule. Bach looked out over the "moat" to the Promenade; he also had ready access through the little Thomas Gate. Moving upwards from the Thomaskirche we find the Market Place in the center, with the Town Hall. To the left is the Catherine Strasse with Zimmermann's Coffee House. Carrying on upwards and slightly right from the Market is Grimma Street leading to the Grimma Gate. To the left of it is the Nikolaikirche. Outside the Grimma gate was a garden in which Bach's Collegium Musicum played in summer.

Bach's apartment in the school was divided between the ground floor and the next two floors. From the window of his study (Componierstube) on the first upper floor of the Thomasschule, Bach would look out west over the town wall, to a magnificent view of the surrounding gardens, fields and meadows, a view about which Goethe later wrote "When I first saw it, I believed I had come to the Elysian Fields".

Adjacent to the Thomas Schule was the narrow St Thomas gate (Thomaspförtchen) set in the town wall with a small bridge over the town's moat leading to a popular walk bordered with lime trees which followed the town wall between the moat and the Pleisse river. Along here were some of the eight Leipzig garden Coffee-houses situated outside the town, where much of the musical life of the city took place during the summer.



The dominant roof and tower in the center mark the Thomaskirche. The large building slightly to the right of it and seen end-on is the Thomasschule. Note the height - this was after the 1732 remodeling and enlargement when extra floors were added. Bach looked out over the more formal city park to the rural scene beyond (which Goethe would later describe as *idyllic*). He would leave the inner city through the Thomas Gate with its own bridge connecting to the fashionable Promenade. Beyond were a number of extensive formal botanical gardens, the two earliest being laid out by the celebrated horticulturist Georg Bose in 1700, with the later addition of Herr Breiter's Garden which included a substantial glass Winter Garden. Further out were the rolling meadows along the Pleisse River.

Indeed the city was nicknamed 'Athens on the Pleisse', and offered many attractions for the summer holiday-makers in its well cared-for parks and pleasure gardens beside the river Pleisse and its idyllic surrounding countryside.

Though contemporary newspaper reports stated that the incoming Cantor's apartments were "newly renovated", the building itself, dating from 1553, was however, in a somewhat dilapidated condition; discipline was practically non-existent, the staff quarreled among themselves, and the living conditions were unhealthy. Parents were unwilling to send their children to a school where illness amongst the pupils was so prevalent, and consequently, there were only 54 scholars out of a possible 120. Bach had an unviable task ahead of him, which he was to approach with characteristic determination.

The Cantor's duties were to organize the music in the four principal churches of Leipzig, and to form choirs for these churches from the pupils of the Thomasschule. He was also to instruct the more musically talented scholars in instrument playing so that they might be available for the church orchestra, and to teach the pupils Latin (which Bach quickly delegated to a junior colleague).

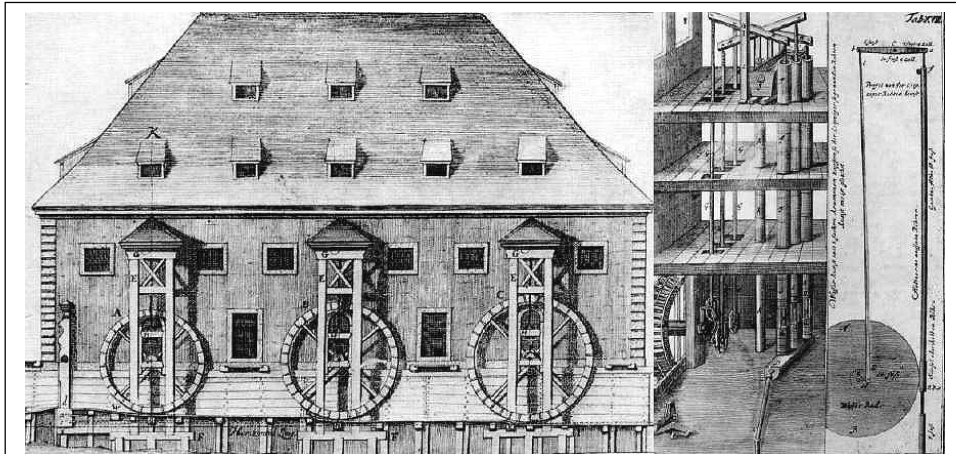
Out of the 54 boys at Bach's disposal for use in the different choirs, he stated, '*17 are competent, 20 not yet fully, and 17 incapable*'. The best singers were selected to form the choir which sang the Sunday cantata; one week at the Thomaskirche, the other week at the Nikolaikirche. A 'second' choir, of the same size but less ability, would sing at the church without the cantata. The 'third' choir of even less ability at the Petrikirche, the 'fourth' at the Neuekirche.



The orchestra used for the cantatas consisted of up to 20 players. The city had, for a century or more, maintained a Town Band (*städtisches Orchester*) consisting of four wind players and four string players. It may be assumed by the presence of the near-legendary Gottfried Reicha (left) among them both as wind and string player, and after 1719 their "senior", that they were players of a high standard. Surprisingly perhaps to present-day readers, they were expected to be proficient in the violin, reed, flute and brass families. They were under the control of the Thomaskantor.

Bach would certainly have taken steps early on to ensure that the instruments used were in top condition. We know that the stringed instruments used were maintained during the 1730s, and several of them built, by the celebrated Leipzig instrument maker (and Court Lute-maker) J C Hoffmann (Hoffmann's instruments are still in possession of and played in the Thomaskirche today). Hoffmann incidentally also built a viola pomposa, a tenor of the violin family, to Bach's orders.

Music-making was a popular pastime, and the regular concerts at Zimmerman's Coffee House and other musical venues would indicate that there were no doubt musicians in the town who could be invited to attend in the gallery for church performances. Thus once he was established in his church position and in the town musical community, it may be assumed that Bach could count on a fairly professional orchestra. Bach's many arias featuring oboe obbligato attest to the presence of a good oboist among the town's wind players (possibly Reicha himself?). The viola and violin obbligati Bach would normally play himself. It is highly unlikely that there was either a chamber organ or a harpsichord in the gallery - the main organ being used exclusively. The wealth and complexity of instrumentation in Bach's cantatas is evidence itself that musicianship of a high standard was not hard for him to obtain. His sons and pupils would also have participated, together with visiting musicians happy no doubt to have the honor of performing under the direction of the now famous Herr Bach.



The city of Leipzig in Bach's time was relatively sophisticated and developed. The Waterworks Building shown here was situated on the Pleisse River. The giant water wheels did not drive stone corn-grinders, but 50-foot high pumps (see section on right) which pumped a mix of river and spring water up to the header tank in the roof. This gave the necessary pressure to drive the water down, and through a network of pipes (*Röhrenfahrt*) which fed reservoirs in squares throughout the city. Ladles on chains (*Schöpfwerke*) were used to draw up water from these reservoirs. A network of "water mains" had existed in Leipzig since 1504; its precise location through the city's streets is still preserved on plans held by the city today. Some important buildings were connected directly to feeder pipes; during the 1720s and 30s there was much redevelopment in the City, and new buildings were all connected to the water supply.

In Leipzig there was none of the aristocratic ease of the Court of Cöthen, where Bach could make music as and when he liked; here he had to keep strictly to his duties within the organized life of church and school. Singing classes were held from 9 to 12 am on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. On Thursdays the Cantor was free, on Friday he taught in the morning. Rehearsals for the Sunday Cantatas took place on Saturday afternoons.

The Sunday services began at 7 a.m, with a motet, hymns, and an organ voluntary. The cantata, usually lasting about 20 minutes, preceded the hour-long sermon, or if the cantata was in two parts, it came before and after the sermon. The main service finished at about mid-day, after which there followed a communion service.

There were also week-day services for Bach to superintend at the four churches, also in one of the ancient hospitals and in a 'house of correction'. Although these services were simple and required only a few hymns, the Cantor had to organize a group of about nine singers to work on a rota system. Apart from this, he had to attend and compose music for funerals and various other occasions.

Bach also took a lively interest in the divine services at the University church, the Paulinerkirche. It was only after he had conducted eleven services up till Christmas 1725, that he discovered that the Cantor of Leipzig was no longer officially director of music in the University church, this position being given to the moderately talented organist of the Nikolaikirche. A long dispute between Bach and the authorities arose over this, and it was only after he had appealed to the Elector of Saxony at Dresden that a compromise was reached.

Bach nonetheless performed his duties as required, pursuing during these early years his long-held objective of providing a complete set of cantatas for every Sunday corresponding to the liturgical year. This self-imposed task was largely completed during his first 5 years, after which he produced cantatas with less regularity.

It may sometimes appear to listeners enjoying Bach's cantatas today, that some of the arias are - well - perhaps a little less imaginative than might be expected from such a great master. That this is in fact the case may be explained by recalling the educational customs of Bach's time. Much stress was placed on "learning by doing" - by copying or transcribing works of the masters, by copying part-scores for performances, by working out continuo parts... and by composing simpler recitatives and arias for performance. It should also be recalled that any duties enumerated as part of a titular position were to be fulfilled, but not necessarily by the incumbent personally.

Bach's position for example required him to provide instruction in Latin, which he did by delegation. Delegation was an accepted means of fulfilling obligations, and was also seen as means of instructing the more gifted pupils.

While Bach did in fact delegate the composition of some recitatives and arias to his pupils, he would always set the tone by composing an opening chorus reflecting the scriptural theme of the week. In the case of more important occasions he would compose the entire cantata himself.

The listener can usually be sure of Bach's personal authorship of a particular aria or recitative when it bears Bach's "signature" - accompaniment scored for strings, rather than simple figured bass.

One particularly special performance of a work by Bach was recorded in some detail: the cantata known as the Trauerode, BWV 198. It is worth following this in more detail, since it gives an insight into the actual progress of a cantata performance, albeit one of especial significance not only to Bach but to the city of Leipzig as a whole.

We also see here the complex interweaving of music, religion and politics.



In 1697, the Elector Augustus of Saxony assumed the Polish crown, a step that obliged him to adopt the Roman Catholic faith. His wife, Christiane Eberhardine, preferred her Lutheranism to her husband, however, so she renounced the throne and lived apart from him until her death on September 6th, 1727, an event which was deeply mourned in strongly Lutheran Saxony. Hans von Kirchbach, a nobleman student at the University of Leipzig, proposed to organize a memorial service in the Paulinerkirche during which he would deliver a valedictory address. Von Kirchbach commissioned a sometime librettist of Bach's, Johann Christoph

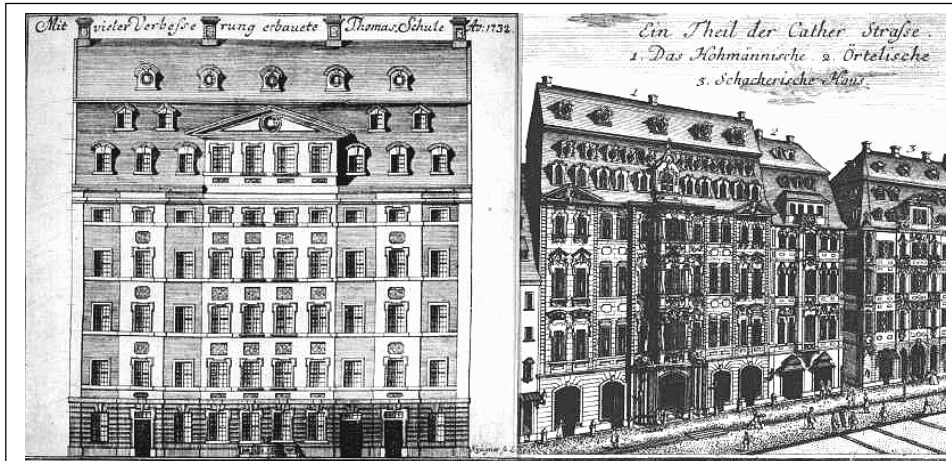
Gottsched, to write verses for a mourning ode, and Bach to set these verses to music.

A great catafalque bearing the Queen's emblems stood in the center of the crowded church, and the service began with the ringing of all the bells of the city. Kirchbach delivered his oration after the second cantata chorus. According to the program, the Ode was "set by Herr Bach in the Italian style." Herr Bach conducted the performance from a harpsichord, among the musicians in the gallery.

## LEIPZIG 2: 1729-1740 - The Collegium Musicum

Much is often made in current biographical notes, of Bach's disputes with the Council. When fuller, more detailed and more recent research is taken into account these records may perhaps give an unbalanced picture of Bach's life there at that time. There is no doubt whatsoever that he was widely respected as a composer, musician, teacher, organist, and specialist in organ construction. This respect was to grow steadily, as Bach's reputation widened, and as he gained the official title of Court Composer to the Dresden Court - the Elector of Saxony and King of Poland. This comfortable security of position combined with the fact that Bach had established, during his first six or seven years' tenure, a more than sufficient repertoire of cantatas (it has been suggested that he composed in total some 300), allowed him to widen his musical scope of activity.

Bach would now begin to devote more time to activities outside Leipzig; to examine for musical appointments, to advise on organ building, to lend support from time to time to such private establishments as at Cöthen and Weissenfels, where he was honorary Capellmeister from 1729-1736. In particular, Bach had become famous, not only as an organist and improvisator, but as an expert in organ construction. As a result he was frequently asked to advise on new organ specifications and to test newly completed instruments with a thorough and detailed examination and report, as was the custom of the time.



On the left is the architectural drawing of the "with much improvement rebuilt Thomas School Anno 1732". Bach's living conditions thereafter were much improved! On the right is "a part of the Cather(ine) Street". Zimmermann's Café which hosted Bach's Collegium Musicum was located in the center building labeled "2". It was in a fashionable street... and in good company: the Hohmann House on the left was the Military Governor's Residence, while the house on the right belonged to a Doctor Schacher. Note the quality of the buildings, the paved streets, and there was public lighting at the street intersections and on important buildings. During the mid-1700s approximately one-third of all the inner-city buildings were remodeled or rebuilt. Such was the quality of Leipzig's building facades that Amsterdam publisher Peter Schenk produced a book of engravings in 1722.

Bach developed a close working relationship with his contemporary, the celebrated Saxon organ-builder Gottfried Silbermann, who was also a personal friend of the Bach family and godfather to Carl Philipp Emmanuel. Bach may well have played any number of Silbermann's instruments, almost all of which were located in Saxony. In 1733 Bach petitioned the Elector of Saxony in Dresden for an official title, enclosing copies of the Kyrie and Gloria from the b-minor Mass; though unsuccessful, Bach tried again this time with the backing of his Dresden patron Count von Keyserlingk. Thereafter he received the title, and signed himself as Dresden *Hofcompositeur*. By way of acknowledgment Bach presented a two-hour recital on the new Silbermann organ in the Frauenkirche (tragically destroyed in the Second World War).

It is on record that the Council reprimanded Bach in August 1730 for leaving his teaching duties in the overworked hands of his junior colleague, Petzold; for not properly disciplining his choirs, and for his frequent unauthorized journeys away from Leipzig. Bach did not try to justify himself, which further annoyed the Council, and so they attempted to diminish his income.

This drove Bach to write to his school-friend Erdmann in Danzig, asking him to find him a 'convenient post' where he could escape the 'trouble, envy and persecution' which he had perpetually to face in Leipzig.

The city would have lost Bach if his friend Gesner had not intervened on his behalf. Gesner had just taken over the post of headmaster at the Thomasschule after the death in 1729 of the former headmaster, and he used his influence to settle the situation between Bach and the authorities, and to secure him better working conditions. The 1730s was a great period of new building and urban improvement in Leipzig and between May 1730 and June 1732 alterations and improvements were made to the Thomasschule buildings, including the addition of two upper floors and some exterior "restyling". Bach's own accommodations were much improved in the process. The choral forces were much diminished during this period and so Bach produced a number of solo cantatas. The school buildings were reopened on June 5, 1732 with a dedicatory cantata BWV Anhang 18. At the opening speech, Gesner stressed the need for music within the foundation - which must have given Bach some hope for a brighter future in the school.

Unfortunately however, Gesner left Leipzig in 1733 to take up an appointment as professor at the University of Göttingen. His successor was Johann August Ernesti, 29 years old, a former senior member of the Thomasschule staff. Ernesti had entirely new ideas on education: Classics and Theology were out of date, and there must be more stress on subjects that would be useful in secular life. This led to disputes with Bach who particularly wanted more time to train his choirs and musicians.

This renewal of the old disputes with the school and church authorities must have been a considerable discouragement for Bach; in any case it is apparent that from then on he appeared less and less eager to provide the Council with church music. Salvation came however in the form of the Collegium Musicum; when Bach became its permanent director in 1729 he began to receive official recognition of the high regard in which he was generally held. It is worth examining the activities of this musical group in some detail as it gives a closeup view of everyday cultural life in the Leipzig of the 1730s.

In Bach's time, the city of Leipzig already had an established tradition of Collegia Musica - secular musical organizations, run mainly by the students of the city's famed university - dating back at least to the middle of the preceding century, if not its beginning. Many of Leipzig's most famous musicians were connected with the students' musical activities (among them several Thomaskantors) and contributed music of the highest quality. Various such groups came and went. At the beginning of the 1700s, two new ones - which were to enjoy a comparatively long existence - were founded by two young men at the University who were eventually to number among the most celebrated composers of their time. One was established in 1702 by the redoubtable Georg Philipp Telemann; the other was begun six years later, by Johann Friedrich Fasch. Fasch's group ultimately fell to the direction of Johann Gottlieb Görner, the director of music at the University and a constant musical rival of Bach's. After Telemann left Leipzig the leadership of his Collegium was taken by Balthasar Schott, the Neukirche organist.

In the spring of 1729, Schott moved to a new position in Gotha, and Bach took over directorship of the *Collegium*.

The story of Bach's Collegium Musicum is closely bound to a Leipzig coffeeshop-proprietor named Gottfried Zimmermann. The concerts were given on Zimmermann's premises, probably under his auspices. During the winter, the group played every Friday night, from 6 to 8pm, in Zimmermann's coffee house on the Catherine Strasse, centrally placed close to the Marktplatz. In the warmer months, the music was moved outdoors, to Zimmermann's coffee garden "in front of the Grimma gate, on the Grimma stone road" - so the address is given in contemporary reports, with summer performances on Wednesdays, from 4 to 6pm.

That Gottfried Zimmerman was not only a restaurateur and impresario, but also a music-lover and quite possibly a competent musician, is indicated by the fact, as confirmed by several contemporary newspaper reports, that he frequently re-equipped his establishment with the latest musical instruments for use by the Collegium and other musical guests. One of his prize possessions in the late 1720s was "a clavicymbel of large size and range of expressivity" which was a Leipzig attraction in itself. It was replaced by an 'even finer instrument' in 1733.

German harpsichords were larger and fuller in tone than their Italian and French contemporaries, offering a much wider range of sound. The new instrument would certainly have had two, possibly three manuals, and may have been the work of the famous Hamburg builder Hass similar to his 1740 instrument with three manuals and five choirs of strings (2', 4', 8', 8' and 16'). There may well have been a separate organ-type pedalboard.

Two types of concerts were given: *ordinaire* and *extraordinaire*. The former were the standard performances; the latter were for special celebrations (king's birthdays and the like), and were usually marked by elaborate festive cantatas, with trumpets and drums in full splendor. (Bach adapted many of these works into church pieces; the Christmas Oratorio, BWV 248, for example, is made up largely of such adaptations).

About the regular concerts we know less; the Leipzig newspapers, in general, only announced the *extraordinaire* events. Presumably, instrumental music was heard, ranging from clavier solos through sonatas to orchestral works. It was doubtless here that Bach's concerti for one or several harpsichords received their performances, many of these having been adapted from earlier (eg violin) concertos, or from concertos by other composers (eg Vivaldi). Occasionally, too, vocal music might be given; such an example is the Coffee Cantata, BWV 211, first presented in 1732. It is also on record that works of Handel, Vivaldi, Telemann, Locatelli, Albinoni and others were performed.

Admission was charged for the *extraordinaire* concerts, and also for those occasional "special concerts" (*Sonder-konzerte*) which featured distinguished visiting artists. The regular concerts were probably free.

These concerts were serious events, given outside of the regular coffee shop hours, and were thus not merely an ornament to the usual culinary attractions. The performances of the Collegium were, in fact, hardly different from what we consider to be normal concert procedure today. Indeed, the word "concert" began to be used expressly in connection with the *Collegium* during its later years.

The schedule of weekly performances, the composition of new works, rehearsing them, arranging programs, etc., reveals that the *Collegium Musicum* was no mere diversion for Bach. The fact is that this was, for much of his later life, his central artistic activity, the church becoming almost peripheral. With the *Collegium* Bach satisfied a side of himself that certainly must have lain dormant since the happy and fruitful period at Cöthen. He remained its director from 1729 until the death of Gottfried Zimmermann in 1741.

Bach also enjoyed visits, often with his son Wilhelm Friedemann, to Dresden, where he would meet with friends in the Court Orchestra and perhaps visit the Opera. On one occasion he called upon his patron Count von Keyserlingk, whom he presented with the set of variations now known as the Goldberg variations after the count's harpsichordist.



This frontispiece to the Song Collection "The Singing Muse by the Pleisse", captures the lively and cultured atmosphere of the city in 1736.

### LEIPZIG 3: 1744-1750 - The Introspective Years

During the latter years of his life Bach gradually withdrew inwards, producing some of the most profound statements of baroque musical form.

In his own much improved apartments of the newly rebuilt Thomasschule Bach would welcome visiting musicians from all over Germany and many other countries. His son Carl-Phillip Emanuel was to write that "no musician of any consequence passing through Leipzig would fail to call upon my father". No doubt they and some of his sons would enjoy a private concert in Bach's large music-room, perhaps featuring concertos for 2, 3 or 4 harpsichords, for Bach kept six claviers and many other instruments.

In 1747, on his way to visit his daughter-in-law in Berlin who was expecting her second child to his son Carl Phillip Emmanuel, Bach stopped at Potsdam after two weary days of traveling. He had been invited to attend at the Royal Palace of King Frederick the Great where his son Carl Phillip Emmanuel was employed as Court Harpsichordist.



Frederick was about to begin his evening concert, in which he himself played the flute with the orchestra. This probably took place in the king's summer palace, Sans Souci, which had been completed a week before Bach's arrival. The music room at Sans Souci is shown in the picture at left, and on our back cover together with an original Silbermann piano. The king was given the list of people who had arrived at Court. Laying down his flute, he said to his orchestra, 'Gentlemen, old Bach is here'. Canceling his concert he invited Bach to try his new fortepianos built by Bach's organ-builder colleague and friend Silbermann.

The King owned several of these instruments, located in different rooms. After Bach had played on all the different instruments, moving with the King and musicians from room to room, Bach invited the King to give him a theme on which to improvise; Bach of course rose to the occasion, improvising at length and with amazing skill. On his return to Leipzig, to show his gratitude for the excellent reception he had received at Potsdam, Bach developed the King's theme into a sequence of complex contrapuntal movements, added a sonata for violin and flute (Frederick being a flute-player), entitled the whole 'A Musical Offering' and sent it to the Court with a letter of dedication.

On the day following the musical evening, a royal procession made its way around Potsdam, as Bach was invited to play on all the city's organs.

Bach then became a member of the Mitzler society, a learned society devoted to the promotion of musical science, whose members were expected on joining to display some token of their learning. Bach's opening contribution was a set of canonic variations on the Christmas hymn, 'Vom Himmel hoch'.

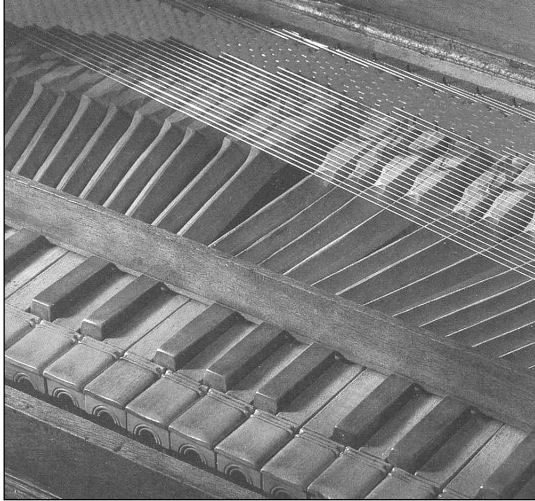
In these last years of his life, Bach's creative energy was conserved for the highest flights of musical expression: the Mass in b minor, the Canonic Variations, the Goldberg Variations, and of course the Musical Offering displaying the art of canon. His last great work is the complete summary of all his skill in counterpoint and fugue; methods which he perfected, and beyond which no composer has ever been able to pass. This work is known to us as '*Die Kunst der Fuge*' ('The Art of the Fugue', BWV 1080).

Bach had overworked in poor light throughout his life, and his eyesight now began to fail him. The Leipzig Council started looking around as early as June 1749 for a successor. On the advice of friends, Bach put himself in the hands of a visiting celebrated English ophthalmic specialist, John Taylor (who also operated on Handel) and who happened to be passing through Leipzig. Two cataract operations were performed on his eyes, in March and April 1750, and their weakening effect was aggravated by a following infection which seriously undermined his health.

He spent the last months of his life in a darkened room, revising his great chorale fantasias (BWV 651-668) with the aid of Altnikol, his pupil and son-in-law. It was in these circumstances that he composed his last chorale fantasia, based fittingly on the chorale "Before Thy Throne O Lord I Stand". He was also working on a fugue featuring the subject B-A-C-H (B in German notation is B flat, while H in German notation = B natural). He had often been asked why he had not exploited this theme before, and had indicated that, despite its thematic possibilities, he would consider it arrogant to do so. Appropriately, perhaps intentionally, it was left unfinished at his death. (This incomplete fugue, normally appended to the Art of the Fugue in performances, has no discernible connection with the Art of the Fugue, though the Art of Fugue theme can be made to fit, as Gustav Nottebohm pointed out in 1880.) The last great Triple Fugue of the Art (Contrapunctus XI) may also have been written during his final days.

Then, on the morning of the 28th of July, 1750, he woke up to find he could bear strong light again, and see quite clearly.

That same day he had a stroke, followed by a severe fever. He died *'in the evening, after a quarter to nine, in the sixty-fifth year of his life, yielding up his blessed soul to his savior'*.



## BAROQUE KEYBOARD INSTRUMENTS

Carl Philip Emanuel often stated that the clavichord was his father's favorite instrument – indeed he himself played it, with great passion according to several contemporary accounts, until his death. There are several important and unique features which distinguish this instrument.

First, as to the action itself. Press down on a key, and through the

action of a simple central pivot like a see-saw, the other end of the key moves upwards to strike the string. The strings of the clavichord are damped at one end. The keys which strike them are tipped with brass, so as the key strikes the string and as long as it is kept in place, the length of the string between the brass striker and the undamped end is free to vibrate. As soon as the key is released the string is automatically silenced again, since one end is damped.

Two features emerge from this simple system. First, the player can strike any key either hard or softly, thus permitting the dynamics of volume which we take for granted on the modern piano (but which are not possible on the harpsichord). Second, the other end of the key is striking the string directly, almost like the violinist's finger on the bow string. There is a little mechanical sideways play on each key, and when the key is moved gently, even minutely from side to side, it lengthens or shortens the vibrating length of the string, thus creating vibrato (called *Bebung* in German) much as the violinist does. So the clavichord player can vary the sound volume of individual notes, and create vibrato, a special singing quality which only the clavichord can produce. Indeed the complexities and rich variance of tonalities available on the clavichord make it a much more demanding, more critical instrument to play.

The harpsichord player depresses a key which causes a jack to rise up and pluck the string, damping it again as it falls back. The jack plucks according to its fixed regulation, and the player cannot adjust the volume by touch. Differences in volume needed to illustrate and clarify the architecture and internal structure of each piece are attained, much as with the organ, by terrace dynamics, moving from one manual to another or coupling two together. Normally on a German Harpsichord there will be two manuals (though three was not unknown in Bach's time), each manual having 8' and 4' sets of strings. The lower would probably have a 16' set as well, and the upper often a 2' set.

Though the lighter, smaller one-manual instruments with thin delicate sounds may have been the norm in baroque Italy and the low countries, German instruments were fairly robust, almost simulating an organ; indeed organists used their domestic harpsichords as practice instruments, and many were equipped with organ-type pedalboards.

The German harpsichords being more robust, gave out a fuller, richer sound than their Italian or Flemish equivalents. Bach however appears to have sought a gentler, richer sound, simulating the lute. It is not known whether Bach himself played the lute or not. However he used it as continuo in his passions for the more sensitive arias, and we know that Sylvius Weiss, perhaps the most famous lutenist of the time, was a frequent visitor to the Bach family apartments in Leipzig. Seeking the softer, richer tone of the gut-stringed lute and the depth of bass in the Theorbo (the bass of the Lute family), Bach arranged to have such an instrument custom-built to his own specification.

There were several builders experienced in such instruments, one being Johann Nicolaus Bach, a second cousin of Johann Sebastian, a composer, organist and instrument maker in Jena. He built several types of Lute-Harpsichord. The basic type closely resembled a small wing-shaped, one-manual harpsichord of the usual kind. It only had a single gut-stringed stop, but this sounded a *pair* of strings tuned an octave apart in the lower third of the compass and in unison in the middle third, to approximate as far as possible the impression given by a lute.

According to contemporary accounts, even this simplest of versions made a sound that could deceive a professional lutenist, a fact considered almost miraculous at the time. But a basic shortcoming was the absence of dynamic expression, and to remedy matters J. N. Bach also made instruments with two and three manuals, whose keys sounded the *same* strings but with different quills and at different points of the string, so providing two or three grades of dynamic and timbre. J. N. Bach also built Theorbo-Harpsichords with a compass extending down an extra octave.

It seems that for his own instrument Bach turned to Zacharias Hildebrandt, better known as an organ-builder and pupil of Bach's friend Gottfried Silbermann. In an annotation to Adlung's *Musica mechanica organoedi*, Johann Friedrich Agricola described a Lautenwerk that belonged to Bach:

"The editor of these notes remembers having seen and heard a 'Lautenclavicymbel' in Leipzig in about 1740, designed by Mr. Johann Sebastian Bach and made by Mr. Zacharias Hildebrandt, which was smaller in size than a normal harpsichord but in all other respects similar. It had two choirs of gut strings, and a so-called little octave of brass strings. It is true that in its normal setting (that is, when only one stop was drawn) it sounded more like a theorbo than a lute. But if one drew the lute-stop (such as is found on a harpsichord) together with the cornet stop [the 4' brass stop undamped?], one could almost deceive professional lutenists."

The inventory of Bach's possessions at the time of his death reveals that he owned two such instruments, as well as three harpsichords, one lute and a spinet.

Returning to the harpsichord, in Bach's Leipzig there was an established tradition of *Collegia Musica*, secular musical organizations run mainly by the students of the city's famed university, and contributing music of the highest quality. In the spring of 1729, Bach took over directorship of the *Collegium* founded in 1702 by Telemann, its performances given weekly in Zimmermann's Coffee House on the fashionable Catherine Strasse, centrally placed close to the Marktplatz.

Himself an enthusiastic amateur musician, Gottfried Zimmerman frequently re-equipped his establishment with the latest musical instruments for use by the Collegium and other musical guests. One of his prize possessions in the late 1720s was "a clavicymbel of large size and range of expressivity" which was a Leipzig attraction in itself. It was replaced by an "even finer instrument" in 1733.

Unlike the Flemish and French harpsichords, the baroque German harpsichord was a heavier, more solidly-built instrument with deeper sonority. The organ chorale, and organ music generally, played an important part in German religious life, and in terms of sonority the baroque German harpsichord could almost be considered as a domestic organ. Indeed Gottfried Silbermann, famed Saxon organ-builder, friend and contemporary of Bach, also built harpsichords in his Freiberg workshops.

Contemporary music critic and commentator Jakob Adlung wrote in 1738: "The most beautiful harpsichord which I saw was that which Herr Vogler, Burgomeister in Weimar, took me to see and hear, an instrument for which Herr Vogler had himself drawn up the specification. The harpsichord consisted of two choirs of 8' strings and one of 4', with a compass of six octaves. One of the 8' set was on the upper keyboard, and the others played from the lower keyboard. The sound board was so thick that it gave the impression of being unable to sound, and yet, I never heard an instrument which had a more beautiful sound than this one. The interior of the case was reinforced with many elements of iron, especially the side of the tail, where the tension of the strings is strongest." Burgomeister Vogler (1695?-1765) was a pupil and admirer of J.S.Bach. He was organist at the court of Weimar until appointed Burgomeister in 1735.

Recent musicological research has shown that Bach explicitly required a harpsichord with 16'-register for solo as well as for chamber music; he considered it important that music should have "fundament" - a good bass foundation. Thus he would most certainly have used the 16' register for the bass line when playing continuo or a sonata for harpsichord and violin or flute.

Bach was naturally familiar with the instruments of the major harpsichord builders of his time, including Hamburg builder Hieronymus Albrecht Hass, of the preeminent North German family of stringed keyboard instrument makers.



The 1760 Hass instrument here illustrated belonging to the Yale Collection, has two manuals with an extensive disposition of five choirs of strings (1x16', 2x8', 1x4', 1x2') with a separate soundboard for the 16' choir of strings. Buff stop on lower 8' and 16'. This fine instrument well represents the culmination of the German school, together with a fairly standardized specification.

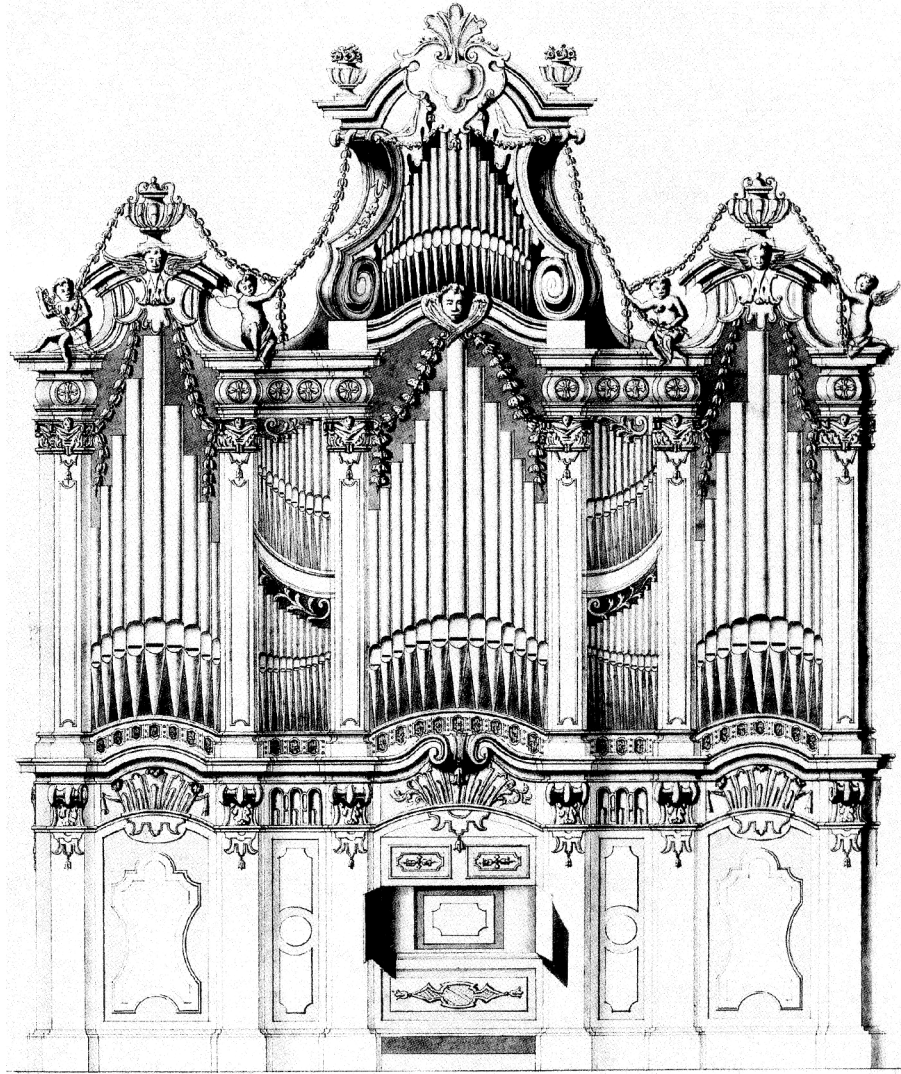
A pedal-harpsichord, that is, a harpsichord with an organ-type pedal-board, would have been found

in the home of most German organists during the baroque period. Organ practice in churches was difficult; some willing collaborator had to be found, and paid, to pump the organ, and the church could be very cold in winter. Additionally, several present-day organists have confirmed that practice on the pedal-harpsichord is infinitely more demanding in terms of accuracy and precision than on the organ.

Bach wrote his Six Trio Sonatas to improve the pedal technique of his son Wilhelm Friedemann. The manuscript of Bach's Passacaglia and Fugue, which according to Albert Schweitzer vanished in the mid-1800's, was apparently headed *Cembalo e pedale*, clearly indicating performance on the pedal-harpsichord. Jakob Adlung, in *Musica Mechanica Organoedi* (1768), describes clavichords and harpsichords with separate pedals like an organ pedal-board. Bach possessed three of these, and according to Forkel, Bach "liked to improvise on a two-manual clavier with pedal". Our front cover shows an illustration of an instrument currently in production by the firm of J.C. Neupert.



Recent research has established that for his weekly concerts at Zimmermann's Coffee House Bach had a double manual harpsichord (16', 3x8', 4') mounted on a pedal harpsichord (2x16', 3x8') made by Zacharias Hildebrandt, who was both harpsichord builder, and organ builder under the direction of Bach's friend and colleague Gottfried Silbermann.



Silbermann organ, Sophienkirche, Dresden, (1720-1945) where WF Bach was organist.  
JS Bach gave two recitals on this organ, in 1725 and 1731.

### GOTTFRIED SILBERMANN: MASTER ORGAN BUILDER OF THE GERMAN BAROQUE

Germany is exceptionally rich in historic organs. Try the door of any village church or city cathedral - chances are you will be rewarded with a fine historic instrument in resplendent casework. A particularly fruitful area for exploration is the state of Saxony in southeast Germany, with no fewer than thirty-one baroque instruments by Gottfried Silbermann, most of them in near-original condition.

Gottfried Silbermann (1683-1753) and Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) were contemporaries and worked together as colleagues and friends. They shared an interest and advanced knowledge of acoustics as applied to the voicing and location of organs.

They would also work together in their latter years on the escapement mechanism for the first Fortepianos - Silbermann was to make several for Frederick the Great, and it was in trying out one of these in the Palace of Sans Souci, Potsdam, that Bach elaborated on the King's theme for the Musical Offering. Just as Bach became Honorary Court Composer at Dresden, so likewise did Gottfried Silbermann receive the title of Honorary Court and State Organ Builder to the King of Poland and Duke of Saxony at Dresden.

On a personal level we may be certain that Silbermann was a frequent visitor at the Bach home in Leipzig - he was godfather to Carl Philipp Emmanuel who held him in high regard.

Gottfried's father was a craftsman-woodworker from whom no doubt the young Gottfried learned the precision woodworking, so vital to avoid any wind-leakage, which is one of the hallmarks of his instruments. From 1702 to 1707 he studied the arts of organ-building with his elder brother Andreas in Strasbourg, and for two of these years with Thiery in Paris. Andreas himself had been greatly influenced by the more "southern" ideas and sounds of the German/Italian builder Casparini, who built many fine instruments in northern Italy including Venice.

Casparini's finest instrument was built in Goerlitz on the (present-day) Polish-German border from 1697-1702. It has three manuals and 56 stops including a particularly large pedal section of 21 stops. This instrument is noteworthy in the present context as Andreas Silbermann played a major role in its construction, assisting the then 80-year-old Casparini.

A condition of his elder brother's tutelage was that Gottfried would not work in his brother's "territory"! So in 1710 Gottfried returned to his native Saxony and set up shop centrally in Freiberg, bringing with him qualifications and certificates which immediately established his reputation locally.

His first commission was for a small, one manual and pedal, 15-stop organ for his home town of Frauenstein, which Silbermann built "at cost", waiving his personal fee and thus displaying a business sense which would become a feature of his career.

So well-received was this first instrument, completed in 1711, that in the same year Freiberg Cathedral invited the young builder, then only 28 years old, to construct a new organ of three manuals and pedal with 44 registers. It was completed in 1714.

This splendid instrument remains in close to its original condition and may be heard in regular recitals, church services, and as part of the conducted tours around the cathedral.



The original design for the casework was by the then organist, Elias Lindner - see his sketch above. It was fairly closely followed in the actual construction, and the design was to influence Silbermann's entire production.

Business moved briskly thereafter, and Silbermann's instruments would finally total 45, all within the relatively narrow area of Saxony. Such did his reputation grow, that Gottfried Silbermann felt confident to request an official title from Frederick I, at that time King of Poland and Duke of Saxony. His request is dated 10th June 1723 and on the 30th June he was granted the privilege he had sought: "Honorary Court and State Organ Builder to the King of Poland and Duke of Saxony".

Perhaps the single most important feature of Gottfried Silbermann's instruments is their distinctive sounds. From the silvery flutes to the strong and reedy 16' Posaune in the pedal, Silbermann's sounds were unique, and indeed were constantly praised by organists in their testimonies of his instruments. Frequent reference is made to a play on his name, as organists praised his "Silberklang" or "Silvery Sounds". Mozart stated unequivocally: "These instruments are magnificent beyond measure".

Arp Schnitger is another of Germany's famous builders, working mainly in north Germany and Holland. Comparison between these two builders reveals major differences largely brought about by Silbermann's extensive knowledge of chemistry and physics. Thus in comparison to the work of Arp Schnitger for example, Gottfried Silbermann used larger proportions of tin in the pipe-metal and the tone of the pipes was thus brighter; the cornets made from ranks of pipes in harmonic series gave a striking reed imitation; and the general treatment of the tone mass in a Silbermann organ was more powerful and smooth than that of Schnitger's organs.

Silbermann was well-versed in the science of acoustics, and his instruments were carefully sited for maximum acoustical effect in each individual church. On first examination it would appear that many of Silbermann's smaller instruments are identical, and indeed they are both in appearance and specification. Deeper analysis however reveals major differences in final voicing and tuning, reflecting precisely the acoustical characteristics of each individual location. Gottfried also enjoyed an excellent appreciation and knowledge of music, which was essential if his instruments were to express with clarity the (largely contrapuntal) music of the time. J.S. Bach is known through contemporary comments to have himself been expert in organ construction, and the two no doubt exchanged ideas.

With his instruments gathered relatively closely together within or very close to the Saxon borders, Silbermann minimized the transportation costs for his materials. The savings thus made were put into a quality of workmanship which was legendary during his time, and which has been confirmed by organ-restorers ever since.

In addition to his village instruments, in 1736 Silbermann built a fine 3-manual, 43-stop instrument for the Frauenkirche, Dresden. The organ was dedicated on Sunday November 25. A week later, on December 1st, as the *Dresdner Nachrichten* reported, "the famous Capellmeister to the Prince of Saxe-Weissenfels and *Director Musices* at Leipzig, Mr. Johann Sebastian Bach, made himself heard from 2 to 4 o'clock on the new organ in the church of Our Lady, in the presence of the Russian Ambassador, Von Keyserlingk, and many Persons of Rank, also a large attendance of other persons and artists, with particular admiration, wherefore also His Royal Majesty most graciously named the same, because of his great ability in composing, to be His Majesty's Composer". Tragically, the Frauenkirche with its Silbermann organ was completely destroyed during the second world war, as was the Sophienkirche (page 88).

Gottfried Silbermann's last, and largest work was his 3-manual, 47-stop instrument for the Katholische Hofkirche, now renamed Trinity Cathedral, in Dresden. However Silbermann died during its construction, and the work was completed by apprentices, so the all-important final voicing, in which process Silbermann excelled, was not completed by the master.

For the organ-lover today, this close proximity of so many single-builder instruments of such fine quality makes a Gottfried Silbermann Organ Tour convenient and richly rewarding. A start might be made in the picturesque little town of Frauenstein located in the heart of Silbermann Territory, close to the village of Kleinbobritzsch where Silbermann was born and indeed the young Gottfried went to school in Frauenstein. The town is also home to the Gottfried Silbermann Museum, the only museum dedicated to one builder. Silbermann's many wonderful village organs, and the great Silbermann organ in Freiberg Cathedral remain as a lasting tribute to this Master Organ-Builder of the German Baroque, whose fame had spread during his lifetime well beyond his native Saxony, and whose "Silver Sounds" would be acclaimed by famous composers and musicians long after his death.

## BAROQUE MUSIC PERFORMANCE:

"Authentic" or "Traditional"

An examination of the essential issues involved.

It has become fashionable over the last ten years to talk of “authentic” performances as if others are not, though in truth, the attempt to rediscover baroque music and its spirit has been with us since the mid-1800s.

But if there is a need to rediscover it, how was it lost in the first place? There is much evidence that until Bach’s death in 1750 the musical tradition was very much continuous. The music played and sung in the Leipzig church services when Bach was Cantor (from 1723 until his death in 1750) was not confined to what we would now call *baroque*. Far from it. Interwoven into the service among Bach’s own compositions were chorales and plainsong chants going back one, two and three hundred years in an unbroken tradition.

After Bach’s death however, music took on a different style, and, perhaps for the first time in musical development, the older style was considered “unfashionable”. There was a major break with the past. The break was not complete of course, but it was such that baroque music could be “rediscovered” a hundred years later as something of a new revelation. Mendelssohn and his sister played Bach regularly in their home, their favorite works being the “48” Preludes and Fugues. And it was Mendelssohn’s promotion of the St Matthew Passion in 1829 which marked the beginning of the move towards what we would now call a baroque revival. The Bach Gesellschaft (Society) began in 1850 the task of publishing all Bach’s works (all that could be found that is), a project which they completed fifty years later in 1900.

In the early 1900s, Wanda Landowska “re-invented” the harpsichord, which had been almost completely supplanted by the piano for home and concert performance. To have the prestigious Paris firm of Pleyel temporarily abandon their piano manufacture in order to attempt a re-creation of this peculiar antique instrument was a major pioneering achievement in the rediscovery of the baroque. Landowska’s performances, though the recorded sound is not of today’s technical quality, are still exemplary, and Landowska’s interpretations are rarely matched today in their insight and technical precision.

So the movement of rediscovery gradually progressed. In 1950 the advent of the long playing record created a new vehicle and a new public for classical music, followed in 1960 by stereo with the parallel improvement both in recording equipment, and in the standard of home sound reproduction.

During the 70s and 80s further valuable research was conducted into the music and performance of the baroque, applied in practical recording and concert performance. It was during this period that performances began to bear the title “authentic” or “on period instruments”.

At the same time however, it should also be understood that performance to a major degree reflects the spirit of the times, and some of today's "authentic" performances have less to do with historical accuracy, attempting rather to produce a performance which, in John Eliot Gardiner's words, will "excite modern listeners". Thus it is that "authentic" performances, while aiming to please modern tastes, often make presumptions which lack historical authenticity and which fail to bring out the full potential inherent in the music.

Nor has "authenticity" fully percolated through to the recording and balance engineers, who are still failing to pay enough attention to contrapuntal clarity which requires very delicate balancing - the harpsichord particularly suffers consistently from adverse balancing treatment.

**Tempi, balance, and instrumental timbre:** these key issues of performance and recording practice may be reviewed one by one.

### Tempi

Many "authentic" performances of Bach's cantatas adopt a fast, almost racy tempo which would never have been considered or tolerated in the staid atmosphere of a Lutheran church service in 1730. Tempi if anything would have been slower and more deliberate than we today would probably want to accept. Likewise many "authentic" performances of orchestral and solo works adopt a tempo the speed of which may display the players' dexterity but obscures much valuable and enjoyable detail. The tempo should never be faster than that which will allow the fastest (=shortest-value) notes to be articulated clearly. In baroque music especially, clarity of counterpoint is vital.

Another issue of authenticity might also be considered in relation to tempi: the question of *relative* tempi as between movements of a concerto. Many believe that the ultra-slow middle movement contrasting with excessively fast and often hectic outer movements was a 19th century creation. The respected Romanian/French conductor/composer Georges Enesco believed that the three movements of a baroque concerto (or sonata for that matter) should be approximately equal in duration, that the slow movements should be faster than current practice, and the "fast" movements should be slower. He put this principle into practice in his wonderful Bach clavier concerto recordings, now thankfully reissued. Internal evidence of the music itself suggests that the difference between the two outer, and the middle movement was one of character not speed. The outer movements would be lively and outgoing, while the center movement would be more introspective or lyrical. Thurston Dart, a major pioneer in the search for authenticity in performance during the 1960s, was also of this view.

As a simple rule, "slow" movements should move along gracefully, never drag, while "fast" movements should never express haste, and should always respect the player of the fastest notes, so that every note is distinct. As Alessandro Scarlatti wrote in a letter to the Grand Duke Ferdinando de' Medici: *Where 'grave' is marked, I do not mean 'melancolico'; 'allegro' should be judged so that too much is not demanded of the singer.*

Many "authentic" performances also adopt unsteady tempi, so that the music seems to move in waves, or fits and starts, ignoring the fact that a regular tempo was universally accepted in baroque times when the major concern was keeping unruly players and singers together. Indeed it was quite usual for conductors to beat time with a heavy object on a desk, or, more commonly still, on the floor with a staff. The French composer Lully was conducting a *Te Deum* to celebrate Louis XIV's recovery from illness; he was banging loudly on the floor with a staff when he struck his foot with such force that it developed an abscess, from which the unfortunate Lully died shortly after. Slow, steady and deliberate tempi were the order of the baroque day. And clarity of contrapuntal line was paramount, which itself dictated a slow and deliberate rendition.

### Balance

The importance of contrapuntal clarity leads to the issue of *balance*. Many recording engineers and studios will record a harpsichord concerto one session and a piano concerto the next; in both cases there is a keyboard soloist set against the orchestral background. Yet while the piano is given prominence in the piano concerto, the harpsichord will be pushed into the soundscape background for the harpsichord concerto! It is not always easy to find recordings of Bach's harpsichord concertos in which the harpsichord is given correct prominence; and as for the poor Fifth Brandenburg Concerto, often (and rightly) billed as the world's first Triple Concerto, it seems impossible to find one recording from the zillions available in which the harpsichord is given the same prominence as the violin and flute, the other two solo instruments. The harpsichord is doing lots of wonderful things, but balance and excessive speeds usually render most of the player's work inaudible. When the harpsichord emerges into its beautiful solo cadenza it is barely audible; indeed in one recent "authentic" recording the harpsichord volume is actually turned up for the solo, either during the recording, the mixing or mastering - a shameful practice hardly worthy of any self-respecting recording company!

The tradition of the Inaudible Harpsichord is probably based on the perception of the harpsichord as being solely a continuo instrument, there only to keep the rhythm and to fill in the background harmony. While this may be a true reflection of the harpsichord's major traditional role, this fine instrument was obviously much more significant to Bach, who pioneered its use as a solo-in-concerto.

Another misunderstanding of the harpsichord's role can almost universally be found in his sonatas for keyboard and violin, flute or viola. These were written as 3-part Trio Sonatas, one part for each keyboard hand, and the third for the other instrument. But once again the harpsichord is generally relegated to the rear of the sound spectrum, the result being an almost solo violin with a faint tinkling in the background. Thus when the counterpoint moves from violin to harpsichord it is all but lost. In choral music too, balance is often inappropriate musically, when for example the choir is given prominence over the instruments, although baroque composers generally and Bach in particular wrote equally for instruments and voices, taking the musical lines freely from one to the other.

In the case of Bach's cantatas and choral works, most performances and recordings use a small portable organ for the continuo, ignoring the church's main organ in the gallery. This arrangement, while no doubt preferred by conductor and recording engineer, may be adequate for the accompaniment of arias and recitatives, but not for the opening choruses in cantatas such as 29 and 146 which feature what amounts to a solo organ concerto movement. Here the thin, almost pitiful sound of the little chamber organ is simply not up to the task. This is one fine aspect (among many others!) of Karl Richter's cantata recordings for Archive, where the big organ is always used. In the accompaniment of concluding chorales too, the big organ provides what Bach would call *gravitas*. A document in Meissen Cathedral written by JF Doles (1715-97) gives detailed organ registration recommendations for the performance of Preludes, and for the accompaniment of chorales sung by the congregation. Since Doles was a pupil of JS Bach for five years (1739-44) his recommendations may be presumed to reflect Bach's own views. Full organ is recommended for congregational accompaniment, including the 16' Posaune in the pedal. Doles incidentally, after a spell at Freiberg Cathedral, took over Bach's old post as Thomaskantor in 1755 which he held until his death.

### Timbre

The third major issue to be considered is that of *timbre*, or sound quality produced by the instruments, in particular the violin and the harpsichord.

The harpsichord sound generally associated with most "authentic" performances is, in the words of one outspoken reviewer, "tinny and jangly". Was this the sound Bach would have preferred from his own harpsichord? This is not a rhetorical or unanswerable question, for we can ascertain Bach's taste in harpsichord sound with some accuracy. To begin with, the harpsichords built today as copies of baroque instruments normally copy the lighter French and Flemish designs. German harpsichords of the baroque period however, were much heavier and more solid, giving a deeper, richer, rounder tone. Even this was not entirely satisfactory to Bach, whose ideal was a harpsichord more resembling the soft tone of the lute. In pursuance of this ideal, Bach had two "lute-harpsichords" custom-built with gut strings and other modifications rendering an even gentler, more rounded sound. It would seem fairly conclusive that this is the sort of sound Bach would have preferred.

Nor was Bach in any way opposed to the use of the 16' stop in harpsichord performance (as "authentic" performers imply); the inventory of Bach's possessions at the time of his death reveals that as well as two lute-harpsichords, he owned several harpsichords of which his main instrument had a 16' stop on its lower manual.

Also fashionable in "authentic" circles is to scorn such "bells and whistles" as foot pedals for registration changes, and - perish the thought - Venetian swell-shutters for volume variations. Once again however, "authentic" ideology disregards historical accuracy.

Among the instruments in the Fenton House Collection, London, is a harpsichord built by Burkat Shudi and John Broadwood in 1770. In addition to its six hand stops, it also has three pedals to control the lute, machine and buff stops for quick registrational changes. When the *machine* stop is put into the 'on' position the upper keyboard commands the upper eight foot stop, and the lower keyboard the three sets of strings. On depressing the *lute* pedal this combination is changed to: upper keyboard, the lute stop: lower keyboard, the lower eight foot. The case also contains a Venetian swell, an inner lid consisting of eleven hinged shutters covering the whole soundboard area. These shutters can be opened by depressing the *buff* pedal, which permits crescendo and diminuendo, and also alters the tone color.

Similarly in the case of the violin, the research movement into "authentic performance" has totally overlooked one very important aspect of baroque performance on stringed instruments generally: the ability of the performer to produce true chords, a technique which required a type of bow widely used in German baroque performance.

The German baroque violin bow was quite different from its Italian counterpart, reflecting differences in German musical taste. The Italian bow was slim, light, almost straight, and very similar to those in general use today. The German bow was heavier and deeply arched; the strings were loose, and the tension was maintained by the pressure of the player's thumb which was placed under the bow strings. The more cumbersome method of holding the bow which this required, would have dictated slower performance speeds. But more significantly, the tension, being maintained by the player's thumb, could be tightened for single-line melody, or loosened to play chords on three or all four strings simultaneously. Few these days are the performers willing to learn the difficult and unfamiliar technique of the "Bach Bow" which re-creates the alternation between chord and solo line which is such an important feature of Bach's solo string writing - all other performances play broken arpeggios which are not the same as true chords.

There need be no doubt as to the historical validity of the arched German baroque bow, with its associated technique of using the thumb to control tension and play chords or single line as required. The frontispiece to the *Musikalisches Lexikon* published in 1732 and edited by Bach's cousin Gottfried Walther clearly shows players using arched bows, their thumbs holding the tension of the bowstrings. And there is other documentation, as for example in the written comments by Georg Muffat (1698). A further point is that Bach was not the sort of slapdash musician who would write chords for an instrument incapable of playing them. His solo flute sonata has no "chords" which the player must replicate with arpeggios. Bach wrote chords in his solo string sonatas and partitas because chords were what he intended to be played and chords were what he himself would have played (he learned the violin at an early age and was very fond of the viola). In the absence of a revival of the baroque German bow and a fund of expertise in its use, the only way at present to render a truly authentic performance of Bach's solo violin and solo cello sonatas and partitas - authentic in the sense of how Bach visualized and would have heard them - would be to use a quartet.

Another very prominent feature of string playing in today's "authentic" performances is the almost total absence of vibrato, resulting in a flat, plaintive and lifeless tone. It seems quite unclear as to where this aspect of "authenticity" derived from, since much evidence supports quite the contrary view. A star pupil of Corelli, Geminiani moved from Naples to London in 1714 and was to become the most important Italian violin virtuoso resident in Britain, also teacher, composer and the author of an immensely influential treatise addressed to advanced players, *The Art of Playing on the Violin* (1751) as well as several other advanced musical treatises. He published several challenging collections of violin sonatas which require dramatic flair from the player. Geminiani provided ornaments for both slow and fast movements as well as cadenzas in his treatise; he advocated the use of vibrato '*as often as possible*', and the expressiveness of his playing was much admired by both Hawkins and Burney. Vibrato was also well known and much valued during baroque times in its application on the clavichord, known in German as *Bebung*. There are also many references in baroque musical literature, both to the importance placed on warmth and vibrato in vocal performance, and to the ideal in violin playing of replicating the human voice. A further, more practical consideration arises from the fact that musical instruments in those days were not maintained to the same high standard of tuning as they are today, since they were usually stored and often played in damp, cold conditions. It was recommended that instruments play in groups of at least three in order to minimize this problem, and vibrato likewise would have helped overcome the perception of imperfect tuning.

### **Period instruments**

A word or two might also be said about the use of the term "period instruments". Some rare and unusual instruments have indeed been revived, but with very few exceptions, these are more relevant in the performance of mediaeval music rather than baroque. The use of the (wooden and much softer) baroque flute is important, as opposed to its more strident metal counterpart - this is a matter of balance, between the flute and harpsichord or other instruments. In the case of stringed instruments however, few stringed instrument players of any standing have ever used an instrument produced more recently than the mid-1800s. The violin, viola and cello players recorded in the 1960s, 70s and 80s were all proud owners of original baroque instruments. Thus the use of the term "period instruments", while it may be indisputably accurate, should not be taken to imply that this is an exclusively modern-day revival phenomenon.

### **Clarity of diction in arias and recitatives**

It is important to understand that baroque listeners to cantatas and other sacred works were not there simply for the musical entertainment, as may be the case with today's listener. Bach's cantatas, for example, formed a major part of the lesson for the day, and his texts were expected to reflect the gospel and theme of the sermon. Arias and recitatives were an essential tool in the telling of a biblical story or the communicating of the lesson. Thus the diction would always have been clearly articulated, the voice projected from the front of the gallery so that the whole congregation, the majority of

which was probably illiterate, would be sure to get the message. In many performances of vocal works heard today it is difficult to tell what language the singer is using, let alone the precise words. Such a performance on the part of the vocalist is neither authentic nor useful.

### **The Baroque Spirit**

While the debate on authenticity in baroque performance will continue, certain essential characteristics should be present, if the performance is to reflect the true *baroque spirit*. The musicians must first and foremost show a respect and an affection for the music; this is most important. A violinist or singer performing with real sensitivity, even just for a few lines, immediately seizes one's attention. Tempi also are extremely important; if the tempo is too slow the piece drags; too fast and vital detail is lost as the musicians scramble to grapple with unnecessary challenges of physical dexterity. Too many performances today reflect this unseemly haste. Balance is vital too, so that everything can be heard.

In the performance itself it is very important, particularly in the works of JS Bach, to display the "architecture" of the piece, especially in his organ preludes and fugues, many of which are constructed in the form of an arch with side pillars at beginning and end, curves and a keystone at the top, with excursions into carved embellishments along the way. A good performer will study the architecture and reflect it in performance through changes in registration. Additionally, much of Bach's organ-writing was produced specifically for and at the request of students and colleagues who wanted pieces which would show off the full power and also the individual sounds of newly built organs which they had been invited to test and approve.

A good Bach performance and recording might be summarized in one simple objective: "if Bach wrote it, the listener should hear it".

There is a spirit to every age, every composer, and every piece of music. In baroque times secular and sacred life were very much inter-related, and music was to be enjoyed, but also respected as a spiritual gift. Bach spoke often of a piece, its performance, and the instrumentation or style with which it was performed as requiring *gravitas*. More importantly, the spirit of the baroque is characterized above all by clarity, for the music is very contrapuntal (fugal/canonic) and every note, every line has its place. Love and respect for the music, enjoyment in performance, and above all, clarity in the articulation, ensemble and recording balance. These are the true essentials of baroque music. If performance practices billed as "authentic" on "period" instruments can reveal these qualities and this spirit then that is true authenticity. If modern instruments can do the same, then that too is authenticity. It's the spirit that counts.

*"Perfection, which is the passion of so many people, does not interest me. What is important in art is to vibrate oneself, and make others vibrate" - Georges Enesco.*