

The Early Eighteenth Century in Italy and France (Chapter 18)

I. Europe in a Century of Change

A. Realignment and revolution

1. balance of power among strong centralized states
2. France had biggest army; Louis XIV's lavish spending depleted the treasury
3. Great Britain: union of England and Scotland, 1707; most powerful navy
4. Austro-Hungarian Empire increasingly influential
5. Prussia became a kingdom, 1701; Continent's largest, best-trained army
6. Prussia, Russia, and Austria divided Poland's territories
7. American Revolution (1775–83); French Revolution (1789–99)

B. Economic expansion after 1750

1. improved agricultural methods, growing food supply, population expanded
2. improved roads, more efficient intercity postal service
3. manufacturing and trade more lucrative; growing urban middle class
4. continent more urbanized, nature idealized, nostalgia for rural life

C. Education and learning

1. new schools founded for governmental elite and middle classes
2. London, 1702: daily newspapers published
3. novels became popular literature
4. broadening interest in learning
5. Enlightenment: Voltaire (1694–1778), analyzed social and political issues through reason and science

D. Demand for new music

1. support from growing middle class
2. expanding markets: printed music, instruments, teachers, performers

E. Changing styles

1. Baroque and Classic styles overlapped
2. changes in audiences and venues
3. debates between partisans of “new” and “old” styles

II. Music in Italy

A. Principal centers: Naples, Rome, and Venice

1. wealthiest patrons, most developed musical life
2. attracted most renowned and original composers
3. opera most prestigious; instrumental music gained ground

B. Naples

1. independent kingdom ruled by son of the Spanish king, 1734
2. four conservatories: homes for orphaned and poor boys
 - a. specialized in teaching music
 - b. took on paying students
 - c. pupils made careers all over Europe; spread Italian music across Continent
3. castrati
 - a. many conservatory students were castrati
 - b. late 17th century, leading male roles in opera
 - c. increased lung capacity; powerful, agile voices
 - d. Carlo Broschi (1705–1782), known as Farinelli: international superstar
4. opera at center of Neapolitan musical life
 - a. Alessandro Scarlatti, leading composer
 - b. new serious Italian opera emerged, 1720s; codified by librettist Pietro Metastasio (1698–1782)
 - c. comic and serious operas, Baroque standard practices: alternating recitatives and da capo arias

C. Rome

1. papal strictures against opera; forbade women from appearing on stage
2. rich patrons sponsored academies
 - a. performed cantatas, serenatas, sonatas, concertos
3. training ground for performers
 - a. attracted instrumentalists from all over Italy and Germany
 - b. virtuosos: Francesco Geminiani (1687–1762), Pietro Locatelli (1695–1764); spread Italian style to other regions

D. Venice

1. declining in political and economic power; remained most glamorous city in Europe
 - a. travelers spread its influence across Europe
2. wide variety of music
 - a. musicians sang on streets and canals
 - b. amateurs played and sang in private academies
 - c. public festivals, occasions of musical splendor
 - d. never fewer than 6 opera companies

III. Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741)

A. Best-known Italian composer of the early 18th century

1. virtuoso violinist, master teacher
2. born in Venice, trained for music and the priesthood
3. master of concerts at Pio Ospedale della Pietà
4. commissions: 49 operas; Venice, Florence, Ferrara, Verona, Rome, Vienna
5. major works: 500 concertos, 16 sinfonias, 64 solo sonatas, 27 trio sonatas, 21 surviving operas, 38 cantatas, 60 sacred vocal works

B. The Pietà: one of four “hospitals” in Venice

1. home for orphans, illegitimate, or poor boys and girls
 - a. careers not open to girls, education in music:
 - i. to occupy their time
 - ii. make more desirable for marriage
 - iii. prepare for convent life
 - iv. earn donations for the hospitals through performances
2. Vivaldi’s main position, 1703–1740
 - a. composer, conductor, superintendent of instruments
 - b. composed music for students to perform
 - c. wrote oratorios, music for Mass and Vespers
 - d. primarily wrote concertos for church festivals

C. Vivaldi’s concertos

1. the orchestra
 - a. 20-25 string instruments, harpsichord or organ continuo
 - b. strings divided: violins I and II, violas, cellos, double bass
 - c. sometimes included flutes, oboes, bassoons, or horns
 - d. coloristic effects: pizzicato, muted strings
2. the soloists
 - a. about 350 solo concertos; two-thirds for violin
 - b. many for bassoon, cello, oboe, flute, viola d’amore, recorder, mandolin
 - c. concertos for several solo instruments; opposition between virtuoso soloists and orchestra
 - d. about 60 orchestral concertos
3. three-movement structure; established standard
 - a. opening fast movement
 - b. slow movement in same or related key
 - c. final fast movement in tonic, shorter and livelier
4. ritornello form

- a. expanded Torelli's structure
- b. ritornellos for full orchestra alternate with solo episodes
- c. several small units in opening ritornello
- d. later statements of ritornello usually partial
- e. ritornellos are guideposts to tonal structure
- f. solo episodes are virtuosic
- g. style example: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in A Minor, Op. 3, No. 6 (NAWM 98)
 - i. individual character in each segment of ritornello
 - ii. each is separate harmonic unit
 - iii. later statements only partial; some vary motives
 - iv. new figurations introduced in episodes
- 5. slow movements
 - a. as important as fast movements
 - b. typically long-breathed, expressive, cantabile melody
 - c. performer added embellishments
 - d. through-composed, simplified ritornello, or two-part form
 - e. Op. 3, No. 6 (NAWM 98b), soloist accompanied by upper strings only
- 6. economy and variety
 - a. relatively long movement, small amount of material
 - b. sequences while dramatizing strong chord progression
 - c. variety and range of expression
 - i. spontaneity of musical ideas
 - ii. clear formal structures
 - iii. assured harmonies
 - iv. varied textures
 - v. forceful rhythms
- 7. publications, titles, and programs
 - a. commissions, money from publications
 - b. distribution in printed collections, manuscript copies
 - c. nine collections of concertos published in Amsterdam
 - d. fanciful titles to attract buyers including *The Four Seasons*
- D. Vivaldi's position and influence
 - 1. range of styles
 - a. conservative extreme: trio and solo sonatas, cantatas and serenatas
 - b. concertos: stylistic mainstream
 - c. operas reflect conventions of the time, wide appeal
 - d. sacred music influenced by operatic styles
 - e. progressive extreme: solo concerto finales, orchestral concertos, 16 sinfonias
 - 2. influence
 - a. codification of ritornello form, model for later composers
 - b. J. S. Bach, keyboard arrangements of nine concertos

IV. Music in France

- A. Paris was the only cultural center
 - 1. Académie Royale licensed theaters in provincial cities
 - a. new operas only premiered in Paris
 - 2. venues:
 - a. royally supported Opéra
 - b. Comédie-Français, Comédie-Italienne: subsidized by the king
 - c. Opéra-Comique, private theater
 - d. Concert Spirituel, public concert series founded 1725
- B. Reconciling French and Italian style

1. latest Italian music heard in Paris
2. French composers blended the two musical styles
 - a. Louis Nicolas Clérambault (1676–1749) cantatas: French style recitatives, Italianate arias
 - b. Jean-Marie Leclair (1697–1764): combined qualities in violin sonatas
- C. François Couperin (1668–1733)
 1. active proponent of blending French and Italian styles
 2. diffusion of patronage
 - a. organist to the king and church of St. Gervais in Paris
 - b. taught harpsichord to aristocracy; published his own works
 - c. output reflected venues for composition
 - d. *L'art de toucher le clavecin* (The Art of Playing the Harpsichord, 1716): important source for performance practice
 3. chamber music
 - a. admired music of Lully and Corelli: *Parnassus, or The Apotheosis of Corelli* (1724), *The Apotheosis of Lully* (1725)
 - b. trio sonatas
 - i. *Les nations* (The Nations, 1726) contains 4 *ordres*
 - ii. sonata da chiesa in several movements; suite of dances
 - iii. French agréments and Corelli-style harmonic progressions
 - c. *concerts*: 12 suites for harpsichord and various instruments
 - i. prelude and several dance movements in each
 - ii. *Les goûts-réunis* (The Reunited Tastes, 1724), joined styles
 4. harpsichord suites, 27 suites, or *ordres*
 - a. 4 books, 1713–1730
 - b. recreation for amateur performers
 5. *pièces de caractère* (character pieces): evocative titles depicted in music
 - a. suggest mood, personality, scene
 - b. built on tradition of previous generation (Gaultier)
 6. *Vingt-cinquième ordre* (Twenty-Fifth Order, 1730)
 - a. *La visionnaire* (The Visionary, or The Seer, NAWM 99a)
 - i. form and style of French overture, dotted rhythms and tirades
 - ii. tirades associated with powerful or supernatural
 - b. *La muse victorieuse* (The Victorious Muse, NAWM 99b)
 - i. leaping figures, changes of register depict victory dance of muse
 - c. *Les ombres errantes* (The Errant Shades, or The Lost Souls, NAWM 99c)
 - i. languid tempo, descending lines, sighing figures, plangent dissonances

V. Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683–1764)

- A. Most significant music theorist of his era, leading composer in France
 1. born in Dijon, received training as an organist
 2. positions as an organist before moving to Paris
 3. 1722 *Treatise on Harmony*, renown as a theorist
 4. achieved fame as a composer in his fifties
 5. major works: 5 tragédies en musique, 6 other operas, 7 opera-ballets, 7 ballets, harpsichord pieces, trio sonatas, cantatas, motets
- B. Theory of harmony
 1. inspired by Descartes and Newton
 - a. music as source of empirical data, rational principles
 - b. *Traité de l'harmonie* (Treatise on Harmony, 1722), one of the most influential theoretical works ever written
 2. acoustics and chords
 - a. triad and 7th chord primal elements of music

- b. both derived from natural consonances: P5th, M3rd, m3rd
- 3. fundamental bass
 - a. fundamental tone: equivalent to its root
 - b. fundamental bass: succession of fundamental tones
 - c. harmony defined by root progression, rather than lowest note sounding
 - d. e.g., *Hippolyte et Aricie* of 1733 (NAWM 100)
- 4. tonal direction
 - a. music driven forward by dissonance, resting on consonance
 - b. coined the terms tonic, dominant, subdominant
 - i. established those chords as pillars of tonality
 - ii. related other chords to them
 - iii. strongest progression: dominant 7th to triad on tonic
 - iv. recognized modulation
- 5. Rameau's impact
 - a. first to bring elements into unified system
 - b. harmonic practices could be described in universal laws
 - c. other writers popularized his ideas
 - d. approach was primary paradigm for teaching musicians
- C. Instrumental works
 - 1. three published collections of harpsichord pieces
 - a. dance movements, character pieces
 - b. virtuosic scales and figuration, brilliant textures: distinguished from his predecessors
 - 2. *Pièces de clavecin en concerts* (Concerted Harpsichord Pieces, 1741)
 - a. 5 suites for harpsichord accompanied by violin and bass viol
- D. Stage works
 - 1. greatest fame as composer of stage works
 - a. 1733, opera *Hippolyte et Aricie* produced in Paris; established his reputation
 - b. string of successes followed:
 - i. *Les Indes galantes* (The Gallant Indies, 1735), opera-ballet
 - ii. *Castor et Pollux* (1737), opera
 - iii. *Platée* (1745), comedy
 - iv. *Zoroastre* (1749), *Les Boréades* (1763), tragic operas
 - 2. comparison with Lully
 - a. works resemble Lully:
 - i. realistic declamation, precise rhythmic notation in recitatives
 - ii. mix recitative with tuneful airs, choruses, instrumental interludes
 - iii. both include long divertissements
 - iv. minimized contrast between recitative and air
 - b. Rameau introduced changes:
 - i. triadic melodic phrases; clear harmonic progressions
 - ii. orderly relationships within tonal system
 - iii. rich palette of chords and progressions, diversified style
 - iv. powerful musical depictions: graceful miniatures to broad representations
 - 3. *Hippolyte et Aricie* (NAWM 100, Act IV)
 - a. action and music are nonstop; sense of realism
 - b. rapid juxtaposition of styles
 - 4. Lullistes versus Ramistes
 - a. Rameau's operas stirred critical controversy
 - b. Lullistes attacked him as subverter of Lully's French opera tradition
 - c. Rameau's popularity sparked parodies of his operas
 - d. 1750s, Lullistes support Rameau in *Querelle des bouffons* (Quarrel of the Comic Actors)