

Instrumental Music Lifts Off

THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY SYMPHONY; HAYDN

PARTY MUSIC GOES PUBLIC

In one or another linguistic variant, the term "symphony" (*symphonia*, *sinfonia*) has been in the European musical vocabulary since the ninth century. At first it meant what we now call "consonance," a term that merely substitutes Latin roots for Greek ones meaning "together-sounding" (*con* = *sym*; *sonus* = *phonos*). By the turn of the seventeenth century, the term had resurfaced as a prestigious "humanistic" (pseudo-Greek) cognate to the homelier *concerto* in the original meaning of the word, designating a composition that mixed vocal and instrumental forces over a basso continuo, as in Gabrieli's (and later Schütz's) *Symphoniae sacrae*.

By the beginning of the eighteenth century, the term had become attached to the Italian opera, where it designated what the French called the *ouverture*, or opener, the orchestral curtain-raiser. As we may recall from chapter 4, the Italian *sinfonia avanti l'opera* as employed by the theater composers of Alessandro Scarlatti's generation was a short three- or (very occasionally) four-movement suite akin to what the string-players of Corelli's generation might have called a *concerto da camera* (see Ex. 4-4). Being meant for the larger space of a theater rather than an aristocratic salon, it was usually scored for oboes and horns or trumpets in addition to strings. The brass instruments set limits on harmonic complexity.

But still the term, and the associated genre, would not stay put. By the end of the eighteenth century, 16,558 symphonies had been written (probably many more: the number is merely the sum total of items listed in the *Union Thematic Catalogue of Eighteenth-Century Symphonies, c1720-c1810*, compiled in the 1960s and 1970s under the direction of the American musicologist Jan LaRue). That is many times more than the number of operas. Symphonies were living a life of their own, as free-standing three- or four-movement orchestral compositions, and were being produced in unprecedented quantities.

Immense production, of course, implies immense consumption. A new pattern of consumption implies a new demand; and a new demand implies a change of taste (or "esthetic"). Such changes have social as well as esthetic causes. And that will be the key to understanding what the term-and-genre "symphony" came to mean over the course of the eighteenth century. For as Jan LaRue has pointed out, the term "symphony" was not uniformly associated with the genre that now bears the name. It only gradually won out over a welter of synonyms that included, in a fashion that can seem bewildering

to today's musicians who are used to hard-and-fast dictionary definitions, "overture" and "concerto," as well as many terms no longer associated with orchestral music, such as "sonata," "partita," "trio," "quartetto," "quintetto," and so on practically ad infinitum. Neither was the genre of free-standing symphony strictly distinguished from that of *sinfonia avanti l'opera*. Sometimes opera overtures were detached from their operas and performed as symphonies. Sometimes symphonies got attached to operas and were performed as overtures. Sometimes symphonies that never had any operas attached were called overtures out of habit, or because they opened concert programs.

But if we tend to rely on textbook or dictionary definitions for our idea of genres, eighteenth-century musicians and listeners identified them by their contexts and uses. For them, and so for us, a symphony will be any multimovement orchestral piece performed at certain kinds of social occasions. A crucial hint to the nature of the social occasions at which those thousands of free-standing symphonies were performed comes by way of some other early synonyms for the term in its new usage, including "divertimento," "scherzando," "serenata," "notturmo," and "cassatione." "Divertimento" comes from the Italian verb *divertire*, and means "entertainment music." "Scherzando" comes from *scherzare*, to have fun. "Serenata" comes from *sera*, evening; "notturmo" from *notte*, night. "Cassatione," though disguised as an Italian word (suggesting an improbable derivation from *cassare*, to dismiss or rescind, or an even more improbable one from the French *casser*, to break) actually comes from the Austrian German noun *Gasse*, meaning street: hence, "street (or outdoor) music."

To sum up, then, the free-standing orchestral symphony, produced in great numbers all over Europe beginning in the 1720s and 1730s, was originally a genre of entertainment music, usually performed in the evenings, sometimes out of doors. In short, the term meant aristocratic party music, which over the course of the century, responding to forces of urbanization and the economic empowerment of the bourgeoisie, became more and more available to public access. In the course of its becoming public it became more and more the pretext for the occasions at which it was performed, rather than their mere accompaniment. Thus, finally, the growth of the symphony paralleled the growth of the concert as we know it today — a growth that in turn paralleled a vastly increasing taste for esthetically beguiling or emotionally stirring instrumental music, sought out for the sake of its sheer sensuous and imaginative appeal, and listened to, increasingly, in silent absorption. This was indeed a momentous esthetic change, indeed a revolution. Its beginnings, however, were modest and artistically unpretentious in the extreme.

CONCERT LIFE IS BORN

The word "concert," originally, was merely the French form of the word "concerto." And it was in France — in 1725, to be exact — that the word was first used in its modern sense. It was in France, then, the cradle of Enlightenment and "civilized" taste, that the modern vogue for public instrumental music — "concert music" — was born. That first French usage was associated with the earliest significant and lasting European concert series, the Concert Spirituel (literally, "sacred concert"), organized in Paris by

the minor court composer Anne Danican Philidor (1681–1728), son and brother to several other Parisian musicians, including François-André Philidor, who although a successful composer of operas was (and remains) much better known as one of the greatest chess players of all time.

The Concert Spirituel was intended as an excuse for musical entertainments on religious holidays, and especially during the Lenten season, when opera houses were closed. It had a remote ancestor in London, that great mercantile city, where an enterprising musician named John Banister rented a public building and put on what seem to have been rather shoddy musical programs almost fifty years earlier; it did not catch on (see Weiss and Taruskin, *Music in the Western World*, 2nd ed., No. 58). At the much more lavishly endowed Concert Spirituel the staple fare was pious cantatas and concerted (vocal-instrumental) *grands motets* in keeping with its "spiritual" nature; but since it was a substitute for opera, it began with an overture—that is, a *sinfonia* or "symphonie"—which thus at the outset retained its traditional position as festive curtain-raiser.

At the very first concert spirituel, 18 March 1725, Corelli's famous "Christmas Concerto" (Ex. 5-8) served this purpose, which certainly illustrates the fluidity of genres and terms at this early period of concert life. But specially composed symphonies after the Italian operatic model quickly became the order of the day; indeed, it was the existence of the concert series that stimulated their production. The sacred vocal works were likewise interspersed with virtuoso instrumental solos, often composed and performed by the great Italian-trained violinist Jean-Marie Leclair, the "French Vivaldi."

The Concert Spirituel, which lasted until 1790, thus set the tone for concert programs throughout the eighteenth century. Almost always, and almost everywhere, concerts were variety shows mixing vocal music with instrumental and sacred with secular. A typical concert program from Vienna, dated 16 April 1791, printed in both German and Italian (Fig. 10-1), begins with a "grande Sinfonia della composizione del Sig. Mozart" as curtain raiser, followed by some opera arias by Mozart and Paisiello; a cello concerto by Ignatz Pleyel, a former apprentice of Haydn then working in Strasbourg; a choral *Alleluja* by the Vienna court composer Johann Georg Albrechtsberger, the most famous music pedagogue of the day; and *per finale*, a "harmonie," or wind-band partita "first performed in honor of the coronation of his Imperial Majesty" Leopold II, by Georg Druschetzky, a famous regimental musician of the day.

Except for outdoor band concerts consisting entirely of partitas like Druschetzky's (alias serenatas, cassations, nocturnos, and the like), there were no all-instrumental concerts until the first decade of the nineteenth century. The idea of what we now call a "symphony concert," with the audience paying rapt attention to one orchestral work after another, was unheard of; the symphony was just one of the ingredients and almost always the opener. (In the opera house, free-standing symphonies were eventually performed from the pit as entertainment or sonic wallpaper between the acts; according to contemporary witnesses, they were usually ignored by the audience.)

The Viennese concert listed above was actually not called a concert but an *Akademie* or *academia*—a term that goes back to sixteenth-century Italy, where it

Dienſt Sonabend den 16. — und Sonntag den 17. April 1791.
M I B

im kaiſerl. königl. National- Hof- Theater
von der vereinigten Tonkünſtlergeſellſchaft
zum Vortheil ihrer Wittwen und Waiſen

eine große muſikaliſche Akademie,
abgehalten werden, die aus folgenden Stücken beſteht:

- 1) Eine große Sinfonie von der Verſonung des Hrn. Mozart.
- 2) Ein Waſer aus der Oper: *Hydras*.
Es werden dabei ſagen:
Die Niſe der Niſide Hrn. Mozart.
Die Niſe des Lepellet Hrn. Krieger.
Die Niſe des Leſart Hrn. Krieger.

C h o r.

Die Niſe ſich dem Hrn. Johann Dreyſch, mit Aufſicht der Niſe, welche
Woh. Franz Kay, mit der Kompoſition des Hrn. Mozart ſil.

- 3) Ein Waſer auf dem Klavier von der Kompoſition des Hrn. Pleyel, welches Hr. Kay
im Geſicht, als ſonſt von Herrn angeſprochen wurde, ſehen ſich.
- 4) Der ſehr ſeltene große Chor: *Mitteilungen* von Hrn. Georg Albrechtberger, k. k.
Schultheiſer und Mitglied der Niſide.
- 5) Zwei Quartette aus dem *Parthenon* von 21 Melodien ſonſt beſehen, von Herrn
Kay, des Hrn. Dreyſch, die in Verſonung des Hrn. Mozart, Hr. Kay, des Hrn. Krieger auf
geſetzt wurde, und von beiden Seiten J. J. Dreyſch des Hrn. Krieger
Chorſatz und Geſangsſatz ſonſt ſehen.

Die Niſe, Sinfonien und Geſangen geſehen, ſich von nicht mehr als 100 Perſonen ausgeſehen.

Die Eintrittepreiſe ſind folgende:

Erſter Platz	1 fl. 50 kr.	Schöneſter Ort	1 fl. 50 kr.
Zweiter Platz	1 fl. 40 kr.	Dritter Platz	1 fl. 30 kr.
Vierter Platz	1 fl. 20 kr.	Fünfter Platz	1 fl. 10 kr.

Die Niſe Offiziere von der Garniſon werden abſehen, ſich für die Quartette 30 kr. zu bezahlen.

Das von der Niſide, welche ſonſt ſehen ſich von ſonſt geſprochen abſehen
Ergeß nicht beſehen werden, werden abſehen, ſich von ſonſt beſehen ſehen zu ſehen.

Die Niſe von Waſer ſich ſehen ſonſt beſehen ſich für 10 kr. zu haben.

Der Anfang iſt um 7. Uhr.

Oggi Sabbath il 16, e Domenica il 17. Aprile 1791.
nel Teatro Nazionale
ſi darà
DALLA SOCIETÀ DI MUSICA
A BENEFIZIO DELLE LORO VEDOVE ED ORFANI
**UNA GRANDE
ACADEMIA DI MUSICA,**
nella quale ſi eſeguirà

- 1) Una grande Sinfonia della compoſitione del Sig. Mozart.
- 2) Un' Estratto dell' Opera: *FEDRA*, dove canteranno nella Parte
dell' *Aria* il Sig. Lang.
dell' *Spolia* il Sig. Colvelli.
dell' *Torſe* il Sig. Nardini.

C O R O.

*La Musica ſi dal Sig. Giovanni Paisiello ſonſt dall' *Aria*, che canta la Signa. Lang, di
dal Sig. Mozart.*

- 3) Un Concerto ſul Violoncello, compoſto dal Sig. Pleyel, ed eſeguito dal Sig. Cajer. Gattilo, un Virtuoso nuovamente arrivato di Fiorenza.
- 4) Il tanto gradito gran Coro: **ALLELUJA** del Sig. Albrechtberger, Maſco di quella Ceſarea Corte, e membro di quella Società.
- 5) Per il Finale farà proferta dai Virtuosi in actual ſervizio di S. M. I. A. i Signori Principi d'Efſen und Großherzog **UNA NUOVA ARMONIA**, compoſita da 21 ſtrumenti da fatto della compoſitione del Sig. Dreyſch, che ſi eſeguirà in Preſburga in occaſione dell' incoronazione di S. M. I. e R.

La Musica fra Cantanti e Suonatori farà eſeguita da più di cento cantanti Perſone.

I prezzi per l' ingresso ſon i ſiguenti:

Al Parterre nobilit.	1 ſcor. 50 kr.	ſedia chiedo al terzo piano	1 ſcor. 30 kr.
Al Parterre	1 fl. 40 kr.	Al quarto Piano	1 fl. 30 kr.
Al ſecundo Parterre	1 fl. 30 kr.	Una Loggia	1 fl. 20 kr.
Al terzo piano	1 fl. 20 kr.		

Li Signori Offiziali della Garniſione ſi compoſeranno di pagare per l'intera ciaſcheduno 30 kr.

Quegli però della Nobiltà, che non ſono intenzionati di tener loro ſedili abbonati, ſono ricercati, di avviſare a tempo il Maſtro delle Loggie.

I libretti dell' Estratto ſi trovano dal Maſtro delle Loggie a 10 cent. l' uno.

Si comincerà alle ore 7.

FIG. 10-1 Bilingual handbill for a Tonkünstler-Sozietät concert in Vienna, 1791.

already designated aristocratic house concerts. And northern Italy was, after France, the next great venue for public concerts in the eighteenth century. A particular center was Milan, where Lenten "academie di sinfonia e di canto" were a fixture beginning in the 1730s. Their director, Giovanni Battista Sammartini (or San Martini, 1700–75), was both the *maestro di cappella* at the Milan cathedral and a leading composer of operas for the city's ducal theater. At first he adapted his operatic *sinfonie* for use at concerts, later he wrote them especially for concert use, in great quantities. Sixty-eight such works by Sammartini survive, making his the first big name in the history of the genre.

A "Sinfonia del Signor S^e Martini" (Ex. 10-1), now found in a Paris manuscript collection assembled in the 1740s, probably dates from the previous decade, making it one of the earliest free-standing concert symphonies now extant, and one that very likely served its festive purpose both in its city of origin and in the French capital. It is in four movements, of which all but the tiny second one (little more than a snatch of chordal connective tissue) are cast in binary form. The third and fourth movements, respectively a gigue and a minuet, are traditional dance-suite (or *concerto da camera*) items. Their harmonically defined form—the usual pendular swing from tonic to dominant and back (the return trip by way of a FOP)—plays itself out through a parallel thematic structure, as one would find in a suite by Bach, at this time (lest we forget) still very much alive and working in Leipzig.

Their style, however, has been modified by their Italian operatic background in ways that Bach would have despised ("the little Dresden tunes!"), but that his sons were

much drawn to, as we have known since chapter 8. These telltale traits include their relatively homophonic texture and their relatively slow and regular “harmonic rhythm” (rate of chord change) — which, however, by no means precluded an interesting phrase structure. The concluding minuet, with its varied reprise standing as a middle section, is reminiscent of the keyboard sonatas examined in chapter 8.

EX. 10-1A Giovanni Battista Sammartini, Sinfonia in G, from Fonds Blancheton, mm. 1–17

Allegro ma non tanto ♩ = 69

Vln. I
f *mf*

Vln. II
f *mf*

Vla.
f *mf*

B.C.
f *mf*

p *mf* *p*

cresc. *mf* *mf* *mf*

EX. 10-1A (continued)

Musical score for Example 10-1A (continued), consisting of three systems of four staves each. The first system shows a full orchestral texture with dynamics ranging from *pp* to *f*. The second system features a melodic line in the upper staves and rests in the lower staves. The third system shows a melodic line in the upper staves and chords in the lower staves.

EX. 10-1B Giovanni Battista Sammartini, Sinfonia in G, from Fonds Blancheton, mm. 23–34

Musical score for Example 10-1B, Giovanni Battista Sammartini's Sinfonia in G, from Fonds Blancheton, mm. 23–34. The score shows dynamics ranging from *p* to *cresc.* and includes various musical notations such as slurs and accents.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC LIFTS OFF

EX. 10-1B (continued)

The musical score consists of three systems, each with four staves. The first system begins with a melody in the upper staves marked *mf* and *cresc.*, and a rhythmic accompaniment in the lower staves also marked *mf* and *cresc.*. The second system continues the melodic and harmonic development. The third system features a dynamic marking *f* and includes a woodwind-like melodic line in the upper staves and a rhythmic accompaniment in the lower staves.

It is the first movement that differs most strikingly from anything J. S. Bach could ever have written and reminds us most of his sons' work—or rather, the work his sons would later produce under the influence of music like Sammartini's. Although in dance-form, it is not a dance. In rhythm it resembles a march, and the brassy fanfarelike chords at the outset, so appropriate to a concert symphony's festive function, strengthen the military association (or "topic," to use a properly eighteenth-century term) even though only strings are used.

Like the work of Bach's sons, the opening section (Ex. 10-1a) moves not through a continuously developing or "spun out" melodic line (such as Bach the Father might have provided), but through a series of well-articulated, contrasting ideas (mm. 1–2,

3-5, 6-7, 9-11, 12-14). The last two measures close the section off with a reference to the opening music, but with its scoring as if "reversed." There is a noticeable inclination to "dramatize" the harmony: for example, the short sequence leading to the dominant (mm. 9-11) culminates in a complete diminished-seventh chord, rather a spicy harmony to use without any textual motivation.

The second half begins as if it were going to parallel the thematic structure of the first, but after four measures a long bout of modulating sequences sets in (Ex. 10-1b), putting continuity in place of contrast and dramatizing the onset of the journey to the Far Out Point. The journey is vividly contrasted in direction, with a passage of sharpward-leaning chromaticism (introducing D# as leading tone to vi, the FOP) not only followed but strongly contradicted by a flatward-leaning cascade that gets as far as the previous limit's enharmonic equivalent, E \flat (functioning here as the third of a minor subdominant triad), before veering in toward home.

As in the work of Bach's sons (and also Domenico Scarlatti), "home" means not only a returning key, but a returning theme as well: the "double return" has now already become fully established in Sammartini's style as the normal procedure for rounding off the opening movement of an orchestral *sinfonia*, whether intended for theater or "academy." From now on we will call the expanded binary form with dramatized key contrasts and double returns the "symphonic binary" form in recognition of its origin in the operatic *sinfonia* and its concert offshoot.

And now recall the overture (or *sinfonia*) to Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, discussed in the previous chapter, and notice that in form it is in all essentials identical to Sammartini's first movement, albeit far more elaborately worked out. The process of that elaboration—the evolution of the symphonic binary form (more commonly known today as "sonata form") over the course of the later eighteenth century—is one of the things this chapter will trace with particular zeal, for it gave rise to what would be the dominating genre of instrumental music for more than a century, a genre that would reach levels of development, both as to dimensions and as to elaborated content, that could never have been predicted before the advent of the concert symphony.

The spread of that magnificently fertile genre was facilitated by a number of political and social factors. During the eighteenth century Milan, Sammartini's city (along with all the rest of northern Italy, then called "Lombardy and Venetia"), was under Austrian rule. Musical developments there spread rapidly to Vienna, the Hapsburg capital, thence outward to all the other cities and courts within the Hapsburg ("Holy Roman") realm. Musical academies with their brilliant orchestral adornments became a site of conspicuous aristocratic, then (beginning in the 1770s) public, musical consumption throughout the Empire. Though practiced and supported elsewhere, and although it had other centers (notably Paris), the concert symphony became the Austrian genre *par excellence*, and the virtuoso orchestra (also emulated in Paris) became an Austrian specialty.