

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-03643-6 - Opera in Portugal in the Eighteenth Century
Manuel Carlos de Brito
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Opera in Portugal in the Eighteenth Century

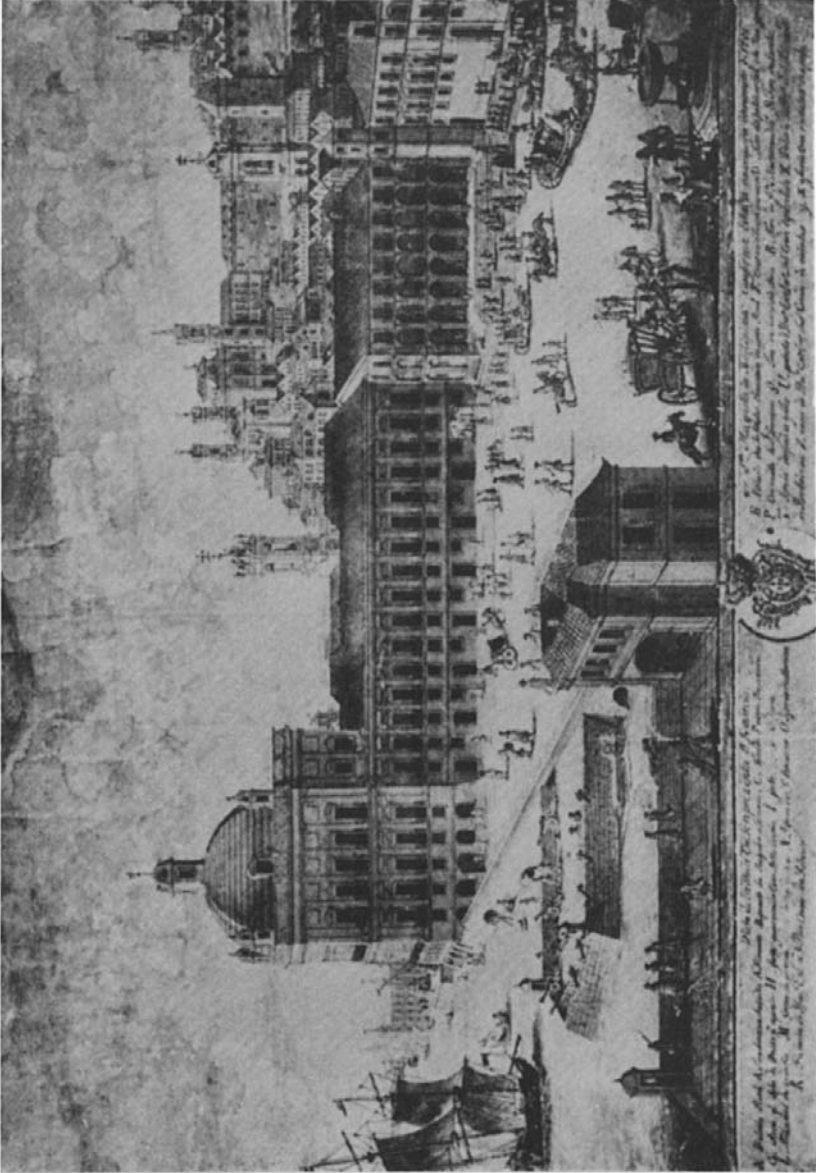
This is the first detailed documentary history of opera in Portugal from the beginning of the eighteenth century to the inauguration of the still-existing Teatro de S. Carlos in 1793. The study shows how the introduction of opera into the country at the beginning of the century was connected with the recruitment of Italian singers and players during the reign of João V, even though the court's interest in opera was small and the activity of public opera houses was hampered by the Church and by the King himself.

It was during the following reign, that of José I, that court opera flourished, with the construction of three court theatres and the fostering of work by a number of excellent native Portuguese composers. The book thus traces the historical context of the opera business in eighteenth-century Portugal from the rejection of the 'secular art of opera' by a reactionary court to its adoption by a more enlightened elite, dedicated to the growth of bourgeois and private enterprise in opera towards the end of the century.

This study is valuable not only as a much-needed authoritative and thorough history of the Portuguese musical theatre in the eighteenth century, paralleling existing studies for all other major European operatic centres of the time, but also for the significant contribution it makes to the study of Italian opera with which it interconnects, and of musical theatre in general.

The work also includes a chronological listing of the operas, serenatas and oratorios performed during the whole period with a record of the extant copies of librettos and scores preserved in Portuguese libraries. These provide essential reference material for the specialist in pursuit of further research.

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-03643-6 - Opera in Portugal in the Eighteenth Century
Manuel Carlos de Brito
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

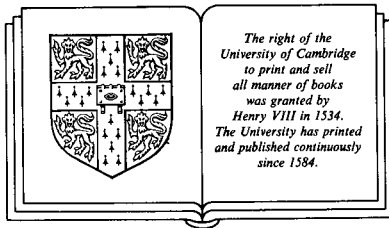


The Royal Palace and the Terreiro do Paço in Lisbon before the 1755 earthquake.

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-03643-6 - Opera in Portugal in the Eighteenth Century
Manuel Carlos de Brito
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

OPERA IN PORTUGAL IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Manuel Carlos de Brito



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge
New York New Rochelle Melbourne Sydney

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-03643-6 - Opera in Portugal in the Eighteenth Century
Manuel Carlos de Brito
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521353120

© Cambridge University Press 1989

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1989
This digitally printed version 2007

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Brito, Manuel Carlos de.
Opera in Portugal in the eighteenth century / Manuel Carlos de Brito.

p. cm.

Bibliography.

Includes index.

ISBN 0-521-35312-2

1. Opera – Portugal – 18th century. I. Title.

ML1748.B75 1989

782.1'09469 – dc19 88-16925 CIP

ISBN 978-0-521-35312-0 hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-03643-6 paperback

CONTENTS

<i>List of illustrations</i>	<i>page</i> vii
<i>Preface</i>	ix
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xiii
<i>Note on currency</i>	xv
<i>1 Opera during the reign of João V (1708–50)</i>	1
The general background. Spanish theatrical music at court	1
Italian court music: serenatas and operas	7
Opera in the public theatres	12
<i>2 Court opera during the reign of José I (1750–77)</i>	24
Court opera before the 1755 earthquake	24
The reorganisation of the operatic establishment	31
Purchase of scores, librettos, and theatrical costumes	
Hiring of singers, dancers, and players	34
Relations with Niccolò Jommelli and Carlo Goldoni	39
Calendars of performances and details of operatic productions	45
The repertoire. Total expenditure on the opera	51
<i>3 Court opera and music in the reign of Maria I (1777–92)</i>	57
Changes in court music after the death of José I	57
Serenatas, oratorios, and chamber music	
Correspondence with Italy. Hiring of new singers and purchase of scores	64
Calendars and details of operatic performances	69
The repertoire. Data on Portuguese court composers	77

Cambridge University Press
 978-0-521-03643-6 - Opera in Portugal in the Eighteenth Century
 Manuel Carlos de Brito
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Contents

<i>4 Commercial opera 1760–93</i>	80
The general theatrical scene and its repertoire	80
The Bairro Alto Theatre (1760–71)	83
The Rua dos Condes Theatre (1762–75)	90
The Rua dos Condes and Salitre Theatres (1778–93)	104
Opera in Oporto (1760–97)	110
<i>Chronology</i>	121
<i>Appendix: original texts of documents</i>	176
<i>Notes</i>	198
<i>Bibliography</i>	220
<i>Index</i>	237

ILLUSTRATIONS

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| The Royal Palace and the Terreiro do Paço in Lisbon before the 1755 earthquake. Drawing attributed to Zuzarte (Lisbon, Private collection) | <i>frontispiece</i> |
| 1 'Reggia con vedutta di Cartagine'. Set for <i>Didone abbandonata</i> by David Perez, Act I, Scene 1 (Teatro de Salvaterra, Carnival 1753). Drawing by Giovanni Carlo Sicini Bibiena (Lisbon, Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Fundo Antigo, Inv ^o 306) | <i>page 25</i> |
| 2 Plan of a theatre identified as the Casa da Ópera. Drawing attributed to Giovanni Carlo Sicini Bibiena (Lisbon, Academia Nacional de Belas Artes) | 26 |
| 3 'Padiglione d'Alessandro'. Set for <i>Alessandro nell'Indie</i> by David Perez, Act I, Scene 11 (Casa da Ópera, March 1755). Drawing by Giovanni Carlo Sicini Bibiena (Lisbon, Maria Keil do Amaral collection) | 29 |
| 4 Ruins of the Casa da Ópera. Drawing by Paris and Pedegache, engraving by Jacques Philippe le Bas, Paris 1757 (Lisbon, Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Inv ^o 915) | 30 |
| 5 The Teatro da Rua dos Condes, demolished in 1882. Postcard reproduction of a drawing by M. de Macedo, originally published in <i>O Occidente</i> , vol. 5, of 21 June 1882 (Lisbon, Manuel Ivo Cruz collection) | 90 |
| 6 The Teatro do Salitre, demolished in 1879. Postcard reproduction of a painting by P. A. Jorge (Lisbon, Manuel Ivo Cruz collection) | 105 |
| 7 The Teatro de S. Carlos. Late eighteenth-century engraving (Lisbon, Manuel Ivo Cruz collection) | 109 |

PREFACE

The first and so far the only general study of opera in Portugal in the eighteenth century was published by Teófilo Braga more than a century ago in one of the volumes of his *Historia do theatro portuguez*.¹

Notwithstanding the contribution of several later studies towards the clarification of particular aspects of the subject,² until now no extensive and systematic research of all the relevant sources has been attempted.

The main purpose of the present study is thus to offer a detailed documentary history of opera in Portugal since the first recorded operatic manifestations at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and up to the inauguration of the still existing S. Carlos Theatre in 1793. Taking into account the state of research in this area, and the problems involved in the identification and subsequent treatment of a wide variety of relevant data, an early decision was made not to include any detailed study of the repertoire and its sources. On the other hand I defined as one of my primary aims the establishment of an accurate and, as far as possible, complete chronology of operatic performances during the period, which would also include serenatas, oratorios, and other types of theatrical music whose authors were known.

Another early decision was that of limiting my field of research almost exclusively to those materials which were available in the country. A search for related documents which may still exist abroad, particularly in Italy, would have been too slow and costly and its relevance by no means predictable. I was fortunate enough to obtain the manuscript of an unpublished work by Manuel Carvalhais, 'Subsidios para a historia da

¹ [Vol. 3] *A baixa comedia e a opera no seculo XVIII*.

² They are discussed in M. C. de Brito, 'Fontes para a história da ópera em Portugal no século XVIII (1708–1793)'.

Preface

opera e da coreographia italianas em Portugal, no século XVIII. Carvalhais, as is well known, amassed one of the largest libretto collections in the world, which he sold before he died to the Accademia (now Conservatorio) di Musica S. Cecilia in Rome. His manuscript work, however, is a detailed list of all the Italian operas, serenatas, oratorios and *balli* which were performed in Portugal during the period, including a transcription of the title page and other relevant information contained in each libretto, as well as a list of all the Italian works of the same title which were composed in the eighteenth century. Carvalhais' work, which was made available to me through the courtesy of his descendant Manuel Carvalhais Vasconcelos Pimentel (to whom I hereby extend my thanks), is the only one among previous lists I used which is reliable. Several of his listed librettos are unique copies, as far as Portuguese libraries are concerned, and only very few extant librettos were not apparently included in his collection. I made use of his list therefore as a check-list for the identification of libretto collections in Portuguese libraries, and for the establishment of my own chronology.

Considerable time was spent in the identification of relevant sources and documents in over a dozen main Portuguese libraries and archives, through extended perusal of available catalogues. To give two examples, opera librettos in the Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa are listed (often inaccurately) in the main catalogue, mingled with every other species of printed books. Cataloguing of documents in the main national archives, the Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, is still very much in the state in which it was left by nineteenth-century librarians.

In these circumstances, the possibility that significant new sources may still come to light in the future cannot be ruled out altogether. This is, however, less likely as regards the first half of the century, in view of the widespread destruction caused by the 1755 earthquake. In my own research I was able to identify only a limited number of completely new sources. These include a few librettos and a certain number of documents in the Faculdade de Letras de Coimbra, the Biblioteca da Ajuda, the Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa, the Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo and the Teatro Nacional de S. Carlos. Among these I should mention the *Certidão de medição da obra do Officio de Pedreiro pertencente a Casa da Opera* (1759), the *Apolices dos accionistas* of the Sociedade para a Subsistencia dos Theatros Publicos de Lisboa (1771) and the *Reflexoens sobre O restabelecimento do Theatro Do Porto* by Ricardo Raimundo Nogueira (1778). On the other hand, collections of documents which had been used previously by other historians were for the first time submitted to a systematic scrutiny. This was the case for instance with the *Escripturas do Theatro da Rua dos Condes*, the *Contas do Principio do Theatro da Casa da Opera do Bairro Alto*, and in particular with the accounts of the Arquivo Histórico do Ministério das Finanças. It should be noted in passing that most earlier studies of the

Preface

subject were carried out by general or literary historians, or even by mere amateurs, who lacked the background and training which would have been needed for a correct interpretation of the source materials.³

I was less fortunate in my search for references to the operatic scene in contemporary literature, especially in travel books and published memoirs and diaries. As regards periodical literature, those few periodicals which were published in eighteenth-century Portugal only rarely include references to theatrical events, and theatrical criticism as such is almost non-existent.

In spite of the above-mentioned limitations, I hope that the present study, while offering a sample case of the European spread of eighteenth-century Italian opera, will also constitute a useful basis and a stimulus for future research in this area and in particular for the study of the works of Portuguese eighteenth-century opera composers which still lie forgotten in the Biblioteca da Ajuda or the Palácio Ducal de Vila Viçosa. A steady, albeit slow revival of these works began in the 1940s: 1985 saw the first modern production of *Lo spirito di contraddizione* by Jerónimo Francisco de Lima, and 1987 that of *Testoride argonauta* by João de Sousa Carvalho.

This study was originally presented as a thesis for the PhD degree of the University of London in 1985. I should like to thank my supervisor, Professor Reinhard Strohm, for his invaluable advice and criticism, which he first dispensed in London, and later from across the Atlantic, after his appointment as Professor of Music History at Yale University. I should also like to thank my examiners, Professors Brian Trowell, Michael Robinson and Jack Sage, for various suggestions and corrections which I incorporated in my final version, and Professor Marita McClymonds, who was kind enough to read my typescript, share her knowledge of the field with me and offer invaluable advice. Various other people have helped me at different stages of my work: my good friend and colleague David Cranmer read large parts of my manuscript, corrected my English, and offered valuable advice on several matters, while passing on to me any information related to my subject which he gathered during his own research on the S. Carlos Theatre; my friend Bernard Brauchli looked up for me L. E. Lindgren's thesis on the Bononcini in the Music Library of Harvard University; Maria da Conceição Carvalho Geda, of the Biblioteca da Ajuda, brought to my attention the letters of Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo on the castrato Gizziello and the *Osservazioni Correlative alla Reale, e Patriarcal Cappella di Lisbona*, and helped me in various ways while I worked in that library: Maria José da Silva Leal, of the Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, brought to my attention a number of rare librettos and documents in that archive; Emília Mariano, of the Biblioteca Geral da Universidade de Coimbra, procured information for me on a number of rare librettos;

³ Earlier literature on the subject is discussed in M. C. de Brito, 'Fontes para a história da ópera em Portugal no século XVIII (1708–1793)'.

Preface

Maria Fernanda Cidrais, of the Music Department, Gulbenkian Foundation, kindly allowed me to consult the Foundation's libretto collection, which is not yet available to the public; the staff of the Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa, the Biblioteca da Ajuda, and the Arquivo Histórico do Ministério das Finanças generally tried in various ways to make up for the technical deficiencies of those institutions. I should also like to express my gratitude to Professor Macario Santiago Kastner and Professor Pierluigi Petrobelli for their steady friendship and support during my research. I should finally like to thank Margaret Jull Costa and Penny Souster, of Cambridge University Press, for all the care and attention to detail they bestowed on the revision of my typescript. I shudder to think of all the small mistakes which would have gone unheeded without their help.

A final note about Italian names. First names of Italian musicians working in Portugal were usually 'portuguesified' (and conversely, first names of Portuguese composers were italianised in the librettos). To the best of my ability I have tried to restore the original Italian names.

Carcavelos, March 1988

ABBREVIATIONS

Libraries and archives (RISM siglas where available)

<i>B-Bc</i>	Brussels, Conservatoire Royal de Musique
<i>BR-Rn</i>	Rio de Janeiro, Biblioteca Nacional
<i>C-Lu</i>	London, University of Western Ontario, Lawson Memorial Library
<i>D-B</i>	Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz
<i>D-SWl</i>	Schwerin, Wissenschaftliche Allgemeinbibliothek (former Mecklenburgische Landesbibliothek)
<i>F-Pn</i>	Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale
<i>GB-Lbm</i>	London, British Library
<i>I-Bc</i>	Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale
<i>I-Vnm</i>	Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana
<i>P-Cug</i>	Coimbra, Biblioteca Geral da Universidade
<i>P-Cul</i>	Coimbra, Faculdade de Letras (Sala Dr Jorge de Faria)
<i>P-Em</i>	Elvas, Biblioteca Municipal
<i>P-EVp</i>	Évora, Biblioteca Pública e Arquivo Distrital
<i>P-La</i>	Lisbon, Biblioteca da Ajuda
<i>P-Lac</i>	Lisbon, Academia das Ciências
<i>P-Lan</i>	Lisbon, Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo
<i>P-Lcg</i>	Lisbon, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian (Serviço de Música)
<i>P-Ln</i>	Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional
<i>P-Lt</i>	Lisbon, Teatro Nacional de S. Carlos
<i>P-Mp</i>	Mafra, Palácio Nacional
<i>P-Pa</i>	Oporto, Ateneu Comercial
<i>P-Pm</i>	Oporto, Biblioteca Pública Municipal

Abbreviations

P-VV	Vila Viçosa, Palácio Ducal
IPPC	Lisbon, Instituto Português do Património Cultural (Departamento de Musicologia)
AHMF	Lisbon, Arquivo Histórico do Ministério das Finanças (Arquivo da Casa Real)
AHTC	Lisbon, Arquivo Histórico do Tribunal de Contas
TNM	Lisbon, Teatro Nacional D. Maria II

Others

b.c.	basso continuo
f., ff.	folio, folios
l	libretto
m	music
mod. edn	modern edition
sc	extant score
ov.	overture
p. sc.	piano score
pts	extant parts
t	text
rpt	repeat
rec.	recording
CX.	CAIXA
<i>Hebd. Lisb.</i>	<i>Hebdomadario Lisbonense</i>
<i>MGG</i>	<i>Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart</i>

NOTE ON CURRENCY

The monetary unit in eighteenth-century Portugal was the *real*, plural *réis* (rs).

$$1\$000 = 1,000 \text{ rs}$$

$$1:000\$000 = 1,000,000 \text{ rs ('um conto de réis')}$$

One *cruzado velho* was the equivalent to \$400 rs and one *cruzado novo* the equivalent to \$480 rs. Here amounts in *cruzados* have been conservatively estimated on the basis of the *cruzado velho*. The *moeda* was worth 4\$800 rs.

According to Twiss (*Travels through Portugal and Spain in 1772 and 1773*, p. 2), one *cruzado novo* in 1772 was the equivalent to 2s 8½d.