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Elements in Music and the City

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OPERA IN WARSAW

A City of the European Enlightenment

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Opera in Warsaw

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Abstract: A microcosm of busy operatic life during the reign of the enlightened King Stanisław August Poniatowski (r. 1764–95), Warsaw reveals complex processes and entanglements affecting dissemination of opera in the late eighteenth century. To the fun-loving city torn by whimsical contradictions, imported as well as domestic opera provided attractive and increasingly accessible urban entertainment, while also serving important utilitarian functions prescribed by local initiatives. Warsaw's participation in transnational circulations of works and performers encompasses both ideological and pragmatic factors that had far-reaching consequences not only for the city itself but also for Europe's shared cultural space.

Keywords: opera, Enlightenment, Warsaw, eighteenth-century music, singers

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