

Instrumental Music in Late Eighteenth-Century Naples

The music of early modern Naples and its renowned artistic traditions remain a fruitful area for scholars in eighteenth-century studies. Contemporary social, political, and artistic conditions had stimulated a significant growth of music, musicians, and culture in the Kingdom of Naples from the beginning of the seventeenth century. Although eighteenth-century Neapolitan opera is well documented in scholarship, historians have paid much less attention to the simultaneous cultivation of instrumental genres. Yet the culture of instrumental music grew steadily and by its end, became an exclusive area of focus for the royal court, a remarkable departure from past norms of patronage. By bridging this gap, Anthony R. DelDonna brings together diverse fields, including historical musicology, music theory, Neapolitan and European history. His book investigates the wide-ranging role of instrumental genres within late eighteenth-century Neapolitan culture and introduces readers to new material, including recently discovered instrumental works of Paisiello, Cimarosa and Pleyel.

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Politics, Patronage and Artistic Culture

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To my wife, Tina, and daughter, Alessandra.

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Acknowledgments

My interest in the present project stems from related research on early modern Naples and enduring, unresolved questions about the history of instrumental music in the capital city. It took flight several years ago through discussions with colleagues in Naples and an interest in emerging research about the pedagogical methodologies of the Neapolitan conservatories. Through these conversations, research time in Naples, and continued investigation, the focus turned to the end of the eighteenth century, the so-called Golden Age of the city. In particular, I was intrigued by the question of how the larger attendant culture of Naples and direct patronage of the Neapolitan court, above all that of Maria Carolina, spurred the cultivation and performance of instrumental music. Although there remains more work to be completed, this monograph illuminates a thriving sector of instrumental music in an artistic capital primarily known for its theatrical culture.

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