

COMMUNICATIONS



REPORTS

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EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY SYMPHONY ARCHIVE, NOW ONLINE

Of the astonishingly large output of symphonic works of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, numbering perhaps as many as twenty thousand, only a small fraction is known. Symphonies were used to introduce operas, enhance court festivities, provide interludes for church services and to lend substance to the programmes of the new and rapidly expanding public concert. Hundreds of composers were busy writing these works, not only in the major symphonic centres of Milan, Vienna, Mannheim, Paris and London but also in Poland, Portugal, Russia, Scandinavia and even the infant United States. With the exception of specialists, most musicians will have heard the names of relatively few of these composers and have even less experience with their music. Eclipsed by Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and a few others such as Sammartini, Stamitz and C. P. E. Bach, the rich palette of personal styles and public tastes revealed in the symphonies of many composers of the period has often been overlooked.

The reason is, in part, that it was not the custom in the eighteenth century to publish scores. The composer's autograph was the source for copying out the initial set of parts, which would then be recopied over and over or printed and disseminated. Orchestras and ensembles had, of course, no conductor in the modern sense, but were directed either by the first violinist or by the continuo player from the keyboard; thus a score was not needed for this purpose, and most of them simply disappeared. Unless a composer's autograph score survived through special circumstances, symphonies of the eighteenth century have come to us primarily in parts. Consequently, there has been no easy way to gain access to or knowledge about this vast body of literature.

One of Barry S. Brook's many projects was to collect these symphonic scores and parts and to publish them. This resulted in the sixty-volume series *The Symphony 1720–1840*, which contains the full scores of 549 symphonic works written by 244 composers from Abel to Zingarelli – composers who worked in music centres from Naples to Warsaw to Rio de Janeiro. This grandiose publication was conceived in 1955, when Brook was looking for sources for his seminar on the history of the symphony. Twenty years later, Garland Publishing made the series possible. In 1979 and 1980, after three years of planning and with the assistance of Barbara B. Heyman and a distinguished panel of advisors, contributing editors and scholarly institutions, the volumes began to appear. The final volume was published in 1986. (Brook's introduction to this series is the source of much of the information contained herein.)

To collect the scores, researchers sought surviving autographs, copyists' parts, early printed editions and the working scores of many twentieth-century scholars who had written monographs or dissertations on specific composers and of conductors who sought out little-known symphonies from early sources and then edited them for performance. The resulting repository encompasses all decades and many countries; they also include a sampling of antecedent and related genres (*sinfonia*, *overture*, *symphonie concertante*) as well as a number of works by little-known composers of the generations contemporary with and immediately following Beethoven.

Many interesting details emerged as the collection was being prepared. The contents provide valuable source material for the history of orchestration and the sociology of music. In addition, they offer information



on the use of symphonic material for chorus with orchestra and on pot-pourris of well-known tunes of the period.

Researchers gathered several thousand scores and sets of parts over the years the volumes were being prepared. The resulting 'Score Bank' was established at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York in order to facilitate further study by interested scholars and musicians. Ruth Halle Rowen's *Symphonic and Chamber Music Score and Parts Bank: Thematic Catalogue of the Barry S. Brook Facsimile Archive* (Stuyvesant: Pendragon, 1996) has served as a print catalogue to the collection. Occasionally a conductor or researcher would request a copy of something in the catalogue, which was provided for a small fee, or would come to the Brook Center to study the collection. In 2013, when former RILM editor Murray Citron volunteered to help, the project to prepare an online catalogue of the collection – a project that I (Michele Smith) had wanted to tackle for some years – began under my leadership. With Murray Citron performing the bulk of the data entry, each envelope containing a score was examined for information. In addition to title and composer name, the scores' library designations, approximate number of pages (often difficult to ascertain accurately as some pages contained sections of more than one part), orchestration and key were recorded. Most of the scores and parts are facsimiles, and many are faded or illegible; digitizing them before they deteriorated further was urgent. Therefore, once the basic information was entered into the online catalogue, those sources that were not copyrighted were scanned. A little over half of the 3,600 catalogue entries now contain links to PDFs of scores and parts, all freely available online through the Brook Center for Music Research and Documentation web page: <https://brookcenter.gc.cuny.edu/the-18th-century-symphony-archive/>. Scores that were not scanned are available for viewing at the Graduate Center. For enquiries please contact Michele Smith.

MICHELE SMITH
msmith@rilm.org



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MORE ON THE ACCADEMIES AT ESZTERHÁZA IN HAYDN'S TIME

In my article 'On the Venues for and Decline of the *Accademies* at Eszterháza in Haydn's Time' (*Eighteenth-Century Music* 13/2 (2016), 253–281) I surveyed the various venues for music-making found at Eszterháza according to various genres, using an abundance of archival sources. I concluded that the default venue for 'serious' concerts or *accademies* was the court theatre or opera house; furthermore, I detected that concerts as separate events had become extremely rare by the 1780s and that their function was partly taken over by pieces of instrumental or vocal music performed before or between the acts of operas.

Since the publication of my article I have come across some data that complete the picture I had drawn up of the venues at Eszterháza. Two of the contemporary reports quoted below are widely known – still, for the sake of completeness, I should have mentioned them.

Three of these reports are connected with various occasions of local music-making. The earliest, widely known one is a diary entry by Count Zinzendorf, published by Edward Olleson in his article 'Haydn in the Diaries of Count Karl von Zinzendorf' (*Haydn Yearbook* 2 (1963–1964), 46). This is the earliest eyewitness report of Eszterháza, written a few weeks before the visit in July 1772 of Prince Rohan, the French ambassador to Vienna at that time. It is also interesting because it offers a tangential but unique insight into the interior of