

Research and Analysis

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MUSI 102

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27/04/2018

Part 1 Research: Annotated Bibliography

Kolneder, Walter. Antonio Vivaldi: his life and work. Univ of California Press, 1970.

Kolneder (1970) documents the life and work of Antonio Vivaldi beginning with his life and music as well as his contribution to the concerti genre during his life. The author begins by defining the musical era of Antonio Vivaldi and identifies the composers before him and those that came after him. In a systematic manner, the book follows the life of Vivaldi while identifying every aspect of his life that lead to his great compositions. The author identifies Vivaldi's style and documents his concertos, their inspiration as well as their contribution to the developments of instrumental music in the 17th century. The author makes a huge contribution by assembling all the works of Vivaldi and assigning a timeline to each work. The author identifies Baroque and offers a keen analysis of Vivaldi's input into the domain. The ability of the author to gather all this data and chronologically document Vivaldi's data makes this book a great resource.

Talbot, M. (2001). Vivaldi, Antonio. Grove Music Online. Retrieved 27 Apr. 2018, from

<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000040120>.

Talbot, a music historian, provides a keen analysis of the musical contribution of Vivaldi. He begins by identifying his background and the contribution of the environment he grew up into his music. He goes ahead to follow him from his early life to years of travel and finally his point of style. Talbot documentation is unique as it critically assesses the point of style of Vivaldi and provides well-founded facts on his works in instrumental and vocal music. The author clearly alludes the development of Venice as a European center of music to Vivaldi and also his

concertos as defining pieces that shaped the genre. The author relates Vivaldi to European music and aligns all resources to support his arguments and statements. The Music Historian provides an expert review on the musical great as his contribution is massive and well organized. From the article of Vivaldi, one clearly understands the musical sense of Vivaldi, Europe and the Baroque era.

Talbot, Michael. "The Concerto Allegro in the Early Eighteenth Century II." *Music & Letters* 52, No. 2 (1971): 159-172.

Talbot (1971) article focusses on the growth of Concerto and its practice in the early eighteenth century. The expert author begins by identifying the source of interest around the genre of Concerto and identifies the progress of Concerto during these years. The author is keen on the input of Vivaldi in popularizing concerto and the primary role of defining the structure of concerto. The authors point out the reasons why this historical time defined Concerto and the specific attributes of Concerto that made it momentarily popular in Europe. The author historically argues along pioneer authors on the genre and uses different concerto works and attributes to make comparisons. The author plays a critical role in defining the historical times of this musical genre and informs more on the genre. The text is well versed and offers a proper explanation of this historical times and how they were the peak of the Concerti genre.

Zohn, Steven. "The Baroque Concerto in Theory and Practice." *Journal of Musicology* 26, no. 4 (2009): 566-594.

Zohn (2009) authors one of the most informative review essays of Baroque Concerto and identifies the contribution of main definers such as Vivaldi, Bach and Mozart. The author is keen

on the musical genre and clearly identifies the boundaries of the genre in a bid to define it and make it exceptional. The author reviews the works of different authors who have documented deeply in the genre of Concerto and alienates misconceptions associated with the genre especially the 800 solo concertos by Vivaldi. The text is a brilliant documentation that identifies the history of concertos, its growth and the composers that greatly defined the genre. This essay is imperative as it defines the genre and designs its history through secondary sources. However, its unique capabilities are embedded in its identification of Vivaldian concertos and how others artist such as Bach borrowed his aspects and advanced the genre. It is a resourceful essay that encompasses works of many other authors and provides an exceptional and well-informed review.

Part 2: Analysis

Introduction

La Stravaganza is one of the early sets of Concertos composed by Antonio Vivaldi. Written in his early days as a composer and a teacher, this set played a critical role in the advancement of Concerto as a genre. In detail, Op.4, Concerto No 12 G major RV 298 features an eloquent movement from Spiritoso e non-presto to Largo and finalizes with Allegro¹. This movement denotes the composer's high regard for structure and pattern. Even though the legacy of the composer grew past this piece, it is one of the few pieces that introduced Vivaldi to his audience. The masterpiece reflects the composers approach towards concerto as it features unorthodox forms and original types of configurations similar to his later works such as Four

¹ Talbot, M. (2001). Vivaldi, Antonio. *Grove Music Online*. Retrieved 27 Apr. 2018, from <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000040120>

Seasons. The uniqueness of his composition and melodic formats of his works brightened the formal and rhythmic structure of concerti and exemplified music of the Baroque period.

The Baroque era of music and associated architecture began in the seventeenth century and concluded in the middle of the eighteenth century². This musical era is believed to have been epitomized by the various composers who majored in genres such as the concerto advanced by Antonio Vivaldi and the Concerto Grosso developed by Arcangelo Corelli. The works of various composers defined the growth of concerto with celebrated composers such as J.S. Bach and Antonio Vivaldi producing numerous works. The unique feature of the Baroque era was the exploration of the violin as well as the progression on concerti beyond Northern Italian borders³. Even though previous works used the violin, works of Vivaldi who was an excellent violinist and violin teacher exposed the capabilities of the violin as the main instrument. In his over 500 concertos, the composer wrote over 230 violin compositions and led to the realization of the harmonic capabilities of the violin⁴. This also led to the adaptation of the violin as the main instrument by prolific composers and conductors. J.S. Bach. Bach studied Vivaldi's work and borrowed his adaptation of the violin as well as his rhythmic exploration and pattern in performance. His works advanced the role of violin in concerto and expounded the capabilities set in place by Vivaldi.

Besides instrumentation, Vivaldi had a distinct style that catapulted his music to popularity⁵. While working on the *La Stravaganza* which contains this piece, Vivaldi defined his spectrum of music with his innovative approach being more evident in some of his works. The

² Burrows, D. (1973). *Style in Culture: Vivaldi, Zeno, and Ricci*. *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 4(1), 1-23

³ Landon, H. R. (1996). *Vivaldi: Voice of the Baroque*. University of Chicago Press.

⁴ Kolneder, W. (1970). *Antonio Vivaldi: his life and work*. Univ of California Press

⁵ Talbot

productive composer incorporated ingenious textures and exploratory forms that defined his point of style⁶. The ability to explore different melodic lines within his works defined his style as an innovative composer. This innovative attribute influenced various European composers such as Bach. The composer's abilities are well elaborated by his works that are still celebrated to this day. Through his fresh concertos, he expounded different variations of the concerti and created an original pattern that defined concerto in the baroque era⁷. This definition of style propagated Vivaldi to success in Europe even though the concerti was predominately studied to be advanced as an Italian mantra⁸. Thus, composers in the late Baroque era were drawn from other music-loving countries such as Austria, Germany and France.

Talbot notes that the style and artistic expression of Vivaldi laid the foundations for mature Baroque Concerto as he maintained a general pattern but examined different aspects of within the pattern⁹. As noted from the G major Op 4 No 12 RV 298, his concertos began with a grand opening with a high momentum and then followed by a relaxed lyrical movement that utilized slow and calm rhythms. In this second part, he traversed over levels of depth that were unorthodox at the time and introduced new harmonies. In the last segment, he reintroduces the high and upbeat tone that registers an exciting finale¹⁰. The emphasis of Vivaldi on this pattern fine-tuned his compositions and created a recognizable sound that defined concerto during his

⁶ Talbot

⁷ Arnold, D. (1965). Instruments and instrumental teaching in the early Italian conservatoires. *The Galpin Society Journal*, 72-81.

⁸ Zohn, S. (2009). The Baroque Concerto in Theory and Practice. *Journal of Musicology*, 26(4), 566-594.

⁹ Talbot, Michael. "The Concerto Allegro in the Early Eighteenth Century II." *Music & Letters* 52, No. 2 (1971): 159-172.

¹⁰ Heller, K., & Vivaldi, A. the Red Priest of Venice, trans. *David Marinelli (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1997), 201.*

era. Unlike his predecessors such as Giovanni Gabrielle, Vivaldi introduced structure and consistency into Concerto. This was later emulated by J.S Bach and Joachim Quantz in their works.

The baroque period featured various composers, but the exclusive participation of the red hair Priest defined the history of the era. Even though Vivaldi's works were easily forgotten with the rise of newer sounds, its fluency and eloquence can be felt even in modern performances¹¹. The La Stravangaza piece is a symbolic work that shows the freedom of performance a concerti composer enjoys. The composer uses the violin technique close associated with his other works and confidently transverses various forms and invents as many combinations as he could. He effectively uses the instruments to showcase the versatility of concerto compositions and explore deep ends of the musical genre. Ideally, he explores violin combinations in a bid to break away from tradition and display all the forms of the instrument¹². This work showed variations with works such as L'estro Armonico in which he had set boundaries. The progress of Vivaldi can be noticed and ideally aligns with the progress and popularity of Concerti¹³.

Like any other music form, it is necessary to explore different musical sounds and determine the ability to create a rhythm¹⁴. La stravaganza Op 4 is a rhythmic exploration that indicates that the composer was researching on different elements of the violin instruments. The piece features his favorite pattern and indicates his little regard for the traditions that existed in Concerti. The works display an adventurous composer who uses his abilities as well as those of

¹¹ Heller, K., & Vivaldi 201

¹² Kamien, R., & James, N. (1988). *Music: an appreciation*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

¹³ Burkley, F. (1968). Priest-Composers of the Baroque: A Sacred-Secular Conflict. *The Musical Quarterly*, 54(2), 169-184.

¹⁴ Kamien, R., & James, N

his talented orchestra to broaden the concerto genre. The specific Concerti plays a significant role in defining the structure of Concerti and highlights the influence of Vivaldi.

Conclusion

The Concerto genre has been themed differently over time. The modern form of Concerto was advanced through the works of different composers¹⁵. The willingness of these composers to break norms and explore each instrument and its capabilities, as well as different combinations, created a foundation for the genre. Through works such as *La Stravaganza* and daring composers such as Vivaldi, genre grew tremendously as these works were reference points for later works and composers. The adherence to structure, instrumentation and emphasis on freedom of performance created a fundamental platform for development and popularity of Concerti in the Baroque era.

¹⁵ Talbot

Sources

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