

Occhi Sereni by Andrea Gabrieli (1532–1585)



A. Gabrieli

In 1566, Andrea Gabrieli was appointed organist at St. Mark's in Venice and remained there for the rest of his life. His grand polychoral compositions for ceremonial occasions in the huge byzantine basilica became famous throughout Europe and anticipated the baroque style to come. He also composed more than a hundred madrigals and motets in the traditional polyphonic renaissance style; *Occhi Sereni*, composed in 1575, is one of these.

Andrea was the uncle and teacher of Giovanni Gabrieli (1557–1612) who further developed the polychoral style and became even more famous than Andrea.

O Quam Gloriosum by Luca Marenzio (1553–1599)

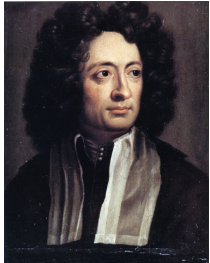
Marenzio was primarily a composer of madrigals and his compositions were influential throughout Europe, even in England where they inspired composers such as Thomas Morley to write madrigals. He worked primarily in Rome but also spent time in Florence and Poland. In 1595, John Dowland travelled to Italy to meet Marenzio after corresponding with him, but it is not known whether they actually met. Marenzio composed around 500 madrigals and was one of the first composers to mirror specific textual elements in his musical settings. Only a few of his compositions were *madrigali spirituali* or motets, but *O Quam Gloriosum* is one of these.



L. Marenzio

Trio Sonata in F (Op. 1, No. 1) by Arcangelo Corelli (1653–1713)

Corelli was initially successful as a violin player in Paris and Germany. But after publishing a set of 12 sonatas for two violins, cello and continuo as his Opus 1 in 1681, he became the most famous composer in all of Europe. Four more sets of sonatas by Corelli followed from 1685 to 1700, all enormously popular; the Opus 5 set of sonatas for solo violin and cello has been described as the most commercially successful music publication ever. Their success established the trio sonata as the most significant baroque instrumental form and every composer from Albinoni to Zelenka produced similar sets of Corellian sonatas. In England, Corelli's sonatas "cleared the ground of all other sorts of musick whatsoever" and were to musicians "like the bread



A. Corelli

of life,” according to Roger North. As late as 1747, trio sonatas by William Boyce were described by Charles Burney as being “more generally purchased, performed and admired than any productions of the kind in this kingdom, *except those of Corelli.*”

Corelli was the first composer whose fame was based exclusively on instrumental music. His pupils, including Francesco Geminiani (1687–1762) and Pietro Locatelli (1695–1764), who moved to England and Holland, respectively, helped spread Corelli’s music and violin techniques to all parts of Europe.

***Laetatus Sum* by Alessandro Scarlatti (1660–1725)**



A. Scarlatti

Alessandro Scarlatti was a prolific composer of operas and cantatas who worked primarily in Naples and Rome. From 1695, his operas incorporated three-movement instrumental *sinfonias*; this form eventually evolved into the classical symphonies of Haydn and Beethoven. He also composed purely instrumental music: six *concerti grossi* were published posthumously in London in 1740; several of these were playable as *sonate a quattro* and are among the earliest examples of music for string quartet. Except for a grand St. Cecilia Mass performed in Rome in 1721, liturgical music, such as the motet *Laetatus Sum* we hear today, was comparatively unimportant in his output. Alessandro’s

son Domenico Giuseppe (1685–1757) was a famous harpsichord virtuoso and composer of keyboard sonatas.

***Sinfonia* in G by Tomaso Albinoni (1671–1751)**

Albinoni was the eldest son of a wealthy merchant who recognized his son’s musical abilities and specified in his will that Tomaso was to be relieved of the responsibility of managing the family business so he could pursue his musical interests. Tomaso was a fine violinist and singer but, as he was not a member of the musicians’ guild, he was not allowed to perform in public. He thus began to focus on teaching and composition. It is thought that he composed as many as 81 operas, 99 sonatas, 59 concertos and 9 *sinfonias*. Almost none of his operatic music has survived but many of his instrumental compositions were published between 1694 and 1722. His Opus 7 and Opus 9 sets of concertos for one or two oboes and strings were the first publications of concertos for that instrument and are his most well-known works. The *Sinfonia* in G for two violins, viola and basso continuo was not published in his lifetime.



T. Albinoni

The famous “Albinoni Adagio” was composed in 1958 by Remo Giazotto, an Italian musicologist, allegedly based on a theme found on a tiny fragment of an Albinoni manuscript that survived the destruction of the Saxon State Library in Dresden during World War II.

Concerto in G (RV 532) by Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741)



A. Vivaldi

At the age of 25, Antonio Vivaldi began working at the *Pio Ospedale della Pietà*, a home for orphan children in Venice. This was not a Dickensian poorhouse for paupers: the children were mostly illegitimate offspring of wealthy nobles and the Republic provided very generous financial support. The boys learned a trade and the girls received a musical education from Vivaldi. During the 30 years he worked at the *Ospedale*, Vivaldi composed hundreds of lively and charming but not overly demanding works for the girls to sing and play.

The Concerto in G was originally composed for two flutes, two mandolins, two theorboes (bass lutes), two *salmò* (chalumeaux?), two violins and cello. In the middle of the 18th century, mandolins had six double courses of gut strings tuned like a lute and were played by plucking with the fingertips. The modern mandolin originated in Naples in the last years of the 18th century; they have four courses of steel strings tuned like a violin, and are played with a plectrum. It is not inappropriate that Vivaldi's compositions for mandolin are today generally performed with lutes or guitars.

Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina by G. B. Martini (1706–1784)

Giovanni Battista Martini (also known as *Padre Martini*) was an influential teacher, writer, and composer who was appointed *maestro di cappella* at the church of St. Francesco in Bologna in 1725, ordained as a priest in 1729, and elected to the *Accademia Filarmonica* in Bologna in 1758. His composition students included W. A. Mozart, Christoph Gluck, and J. C. Bach. Over his lifetime, Martini managed to amass a huge and valuable collection of some 17000 items of literature on music and some 300 portraits of contemporary musicians.

The cantata *Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina* demonstrates Martini's mastery of both homophonic and fugal choral writing.



G.B. Martini

***Sinfonia* by G. B. Pergolesi (1710–1736)**

Pergolesi was only 26 years old when he died of tuberculosis, but his compositions were very influential in the shift from Baroque to Classical style. He worked in Naples and was in his lifetime known primarily as a comic-opera composer. *Lo frate 'mmamorato* (“The Brother in Love”) is one of these; it was first performed in 1732.

Pergolesi composed only a few liturgical works, but his last composition, a *Stabat Mater*, established his reputation throughout Europe. In order that it could be performed in Leipzig, J. S. Bach adapted the music to a German psalm text.

After his death, the demand for music by Pergolesi was so intense that unscrupulous publishers began attaching his name to any suitable composition. Stravinsky thought that the music he composed for *Pulcinella* was adapted from trio sonatas by Pergolesi, but recent research has found that the trios were in fact composed by Domenico Gallo (1730–1768).



G. B. Pergolesi

***Missa Brevis* by Domenico Cimarosa (1749–1801)**

Cimarosa composed more than 80 operas in his lifetime, working in Naples, Rome, Florence, St. Petersburg and Vienna. During the occupation of Naples by the French army, Cimarosa joined the liberal party. When the monarchy was re-established, he and his political friends were condemned to death for treason. Influential friends interceded on his behalf and he was instead banished; he died in Vienna soon after.

In addition to opera, Cimarosa composed sonatas for keyboard and some *sinfonia*, concertos and quartets. He also composed a small number of sacred works; the *Missa brevis* to be heard today is one of these.



D. Cimarosa