

The Birth of the Orchestra

HISTORY OF AN
INSTITUTION, 1650–1815



John Spitzer

AND

Neal Zaslaw

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Chapter Four

Corelli's Orchestra



Rome in the seventeenth century resembled Paris in several respects. Like Paris, it was a capital city. The Pope ruled as temporal and absolute sovereign over the Papal States, stretching from Rome and the Campagna across the Apennines to Bologna and on to the Adriatic. In addition, Rome functioned as the capital and administrative center for the worldwide operations of the Catholic Church. Rome, like Paris, was a magnet for wealth. Money flowed into the papal coffers from taxes and duties within the Papal States and also from the sale of ecclesiastical offices and papal dispensations.¹ Besides the income of the Pope, money came to Rome from the religious orders, whose headquarters were located in the city, and from foreign countries that maintained embassies there. The cardinals, most of them drawn from the Italian nobility and almost all of them living in Rome, were entrusted with the upper administrative positions in the Papal Curia and played the role of courtiers at the papal court.² Local landed gentry and foreign dignitaries also swelled the ranks of the aristocracy. Rome in the seventeenth century, like Paris, had become the site of an aristocratic culture, centralized in a capital city under autocratic rule.

Differences between seventeenth-century Rome and Paris were also significant. In Paris there was essentially a single patron, the King. He or his ministers sponsored and paid for a great part of the theater, dance, painting, music, and literature in Paris. The Popes did not maintain this kind of cultural monopoly. They sponsored painting, architecture, devotional literature, and vocal music, but they avoided arts that were perceived as excessively secular, like theater, dance, and instrumental music. In addition, the succession to the papacy by election rather than by inheritance meant that several Italian families nurtured papal ambitions and maintained papal pretensions

¹ Jean Delumeau, *Rome au XVI^e siècle* (Paris, 1975), 189 ff.

² Laurie Nussdorfer, *Civic Politics in the Rome of Urban VIII* (Princeton, 1992), 41–43.

during the seventeenth century. Consequently, patronage in Rome was more diffuse than in Paris. Wealthy, ambitious cardinals competed with one another to sponsor literature, architecture, art, and music. Foreign legates sought to advance the interests of their governments by cultural as well as political means.³ Churches and charitable foundations, many with substantial endowments, constituted further centers of patronage for the arts.⁴

These differences between the character of patronage in Rome and in Paris led Roman orchestras toward organizational forms quite different from the Vingt-quatre Violons du Roy and musical results different from Lully's ballets and operas. Whereas in Paris the orchestra came into being as a "court orchestra," a part of the royal household, the Roman orchestra developed in the context of a city-wide market for instrumentalists and instrumental music. The Popes' hostility to secular entertainments meant that resources that in Paris went into opera and ballet, in Rome were funneled into cantatas, oratorios, and instrumental music.⁵ Because of the diffuseness of patronage in Rome, instrumentalists could find work in many venues for many employers.⁶ Roman churches often kept a pair of violinists and a bass player on the payroll to play at Mass and Vespers; for feast days and special occasions they hired additional string players. Other instrumentalists found positions in the households of cardinals, foreign dignitaries, or Roman nobility. Thus, a pool of instrumentalists formed in Rome over the course of the seventeenth century, performing in a variety of contexts for a variety of patrons.

ROMAN ENSEMBLES BEFORE CORELLI

Instrumental ensembles in Rome did not look much like orchestras until the last three decades of the seventeenth century. Although violin-family instruments became more common over the course of the century, they were not organized into large ensembles with several on a part but into multiple choirs with singers and instrumentalists one on a part (see Ch. 2). However, beginning around mid-century four new trends began to manifest themselves: instrumental ensembles got larger; they were dominated increasingly by violin-family instruments; instrumentalists separated themselves from singers; and multiple choirs were consolidated into unitary groupings.

The growth in size and the increasing importance of bowed strings can be traced in the ensembles for the annual Feast of St. Louis at the Church of S. Luigi dei Francesi, the French church in Rome. Lists of musicians for this event are summarized in Table 4.1. In 1660 four violins and two violone players were hired for the

³ Ibid. 39 ff.

⁴ Delumeau, *Rome*, 68–69.

⁵ Popes Innocent XI (1676–89) and Innocent XII (1691–1700) repeatedly closed Roman theaters; indeed Innocent XII ordered the Tordinona destroyed in 1697.

⁶ Peter Allsop, *Arcangelo Corelli: New Orpheus of our Times* (Oxford, 1999), 29.

The other composers who wrote oratorios for S. Giovanni dei Fiorentini in 1675 had the same string ensemble at their disposal as Stradella had used in *San Giovanni Battista*, but the scores of their oratorios have not been preserved, so there is no way to tell whether they used concerto grosso techniques. *Sinfonie* by Lelio Colista, a lutenist and composer active in Rome in the mid-seventeenth century, with their slow harmonic rhythms and homophonic passages, look as though they might have been composed for string ensembles with several players on a part, but they do not call explicitly for part doubling, nor for a concertino and a concerto grosso.¹⁹ Violinist-composers, such as Carlo Ambrogio Lonati and Carlo Manelli, led string ensembles in Rome during the 1670s, but their *sinfonie* emphasize melody and violin virtuosity rather than exploiting the power of an ensemble of massed strings.²⁰ By the 1670s, then, the elements for an orchestra and an orchestral style of composition and performance were in place in Rome, but the orchestra had not yet emerged as an institution.

CORELLI'S CAREER

The birth of the orchestra in Rome was closely linked to the career and the compositions of Arcangelo Corelli.²¹ From about 1680 until his retirement in 1709 Corelli organized orchestras, directed orchestras, and composed music for orchestras to play. "He was the first," wrote Crescimbeni,

to introduce Rome to ensembles [*sinfonie*] of so large a number of instruments and of such diversity that it was almost impossible to believe that he could get them to play together without fear of discord, especially since wind instruments were combined with strings, and the total very often exceeding one hundred . . .²²

Corelli's achievement in Rome was similar to Lully's in Paris. Like Lully, Corelli used the patronage of the wealthy and powerful to dominate the musical life of his generation. Like Lully, he organized and led his own orchestra and composed music for that orchestra to play. Corelli, in addition, played in his orchestra as violin soloist. Corelli's orchestra, like Lully's, was based on a pre-existing tradition of string ensembles, and his musical style was based on the procedures of his predecessors (including Lully). He synthesized these procedures into a successful style of composition for orchestral ensembles that, like the Lully style, served as a model for several generations to come.

¹⁹ See Peter Allsop, *The Italian Trio Sonata* (Oxford, 1992), 310; id., "Problems of Ascription in the Roman *Sinfonia* of the Late Seventeenth Century: Colista and Lonati," *Music Review*, 50 (1989), 39.

²⁰ For examples of works by Lonati and Manelli, see Allsop, *Italian Trio Sonata*, 315–19.

²¹ For Corelli's biography, see Allsop, *Corelli*.

²² G. M. Crescimbeni, *Notizie istoriche degli Arcadi morti* (Rome, 1720), i. 250. Quoted in Mario Rinaldi, *Arcangelo Corelli* (Milan, 1953), 132.

Born in the small town of Fusignano near Ravenna, Corelli was trained as a violinist in Bologna, and during the first part of his career in Rome he was known as "Arcangelo Bolognese" or simply "il Bolognese." Much has been made of Corelli's background, since Bologna in the seventeenth century was a center of instrumental music, particularly of music for large ensembles. However, the search for Bolognese antecedents may be misdirected. Roman ensembles were already incipient orchestras, and concerto grosso techniques had appeared in Rome before Corelli arrived there in the 1670s.²³ Unlike almost all other composers of his time, Corelli did not compose vocal music.²⁴ He concentrated his energies as a performer and composer entirely on instrumental music—music for solo violin, music for string trio, and music for orchestra.

The first mention of Corelli's presence in Rome occurs on the list of performers for Masini's *San Eustachio* in 1675 (see Doc. 4.3): "Il Bolognese," near the bottom of the "Violini del Concerto Grosso" is almost certainly the 22-year-old Corelli. Most likely he also played in Stradella's *San Giovanni Battista* later that spring in the same series at S. Giovanni dei Fiorentini. Thus, from the beginning of his career Corelli was involved in the proto-orchestral activities characteristic of Roman instrumental music. He was acquainted with Stradella, Colista, Manelli, and other composers working in this milieu, and he played the music they wrote for string ensembles. Other places where he played during the 1670s include the church of San Marcello (again as a member of a string ensemble with several on a part), San Luigi dei Francesi, Santa Maria Maggiore, and the Capranica theater in a small ensemble for opera.²⁵

Building his reputation as a violinist with freelance jobs like these, Corelli soon garnered aristocratic patronage. In a letter of 1679 he reports that he has "entered into the service" of Queen Christina and that he is composing sonatas for academies at her palace.²⁶ Sometime in the mid-1680s Corelli entered the service of Cardinal Benedetto Pamphili, nephew of Pope Innocent X and one of the outstanding musical patrons of his time. By 1688 Corelli was listed among the Cardinal's "famiglia della casa" with a monthly salary of 10 scudi. Another member of the Cardinal's

²³ Peter Allsop argues cogently against the significance of Bolognese "influences" on Corelli (*Italian Trio Sonata*, 227 ff.; *Corelli*, 143 ff.)

²⁴ Franco Piperno believes that Corelli may have composed a cantata called "La Fama" for the first festival of the Academy of Design in 1702 (Franco Piperno, "'Anfione in Campidoglio': presenza corelliana alle feste per i concorsi dell'Accademia del Disegno di San Luca," in *Nuovissimi studi corelliani: Atti del Terzo Congresso Internazionale*, ed. Sergio Durante and Pierluigi Petrobelli (Florence, 1982), 151–208 at 164). The evidence for this intriguing hypothesis is circumstantial.

²⁵ Liess, "Materialien," 155 ff.; Lionnet, "La Musique à Saint-Louis," ii. 143 ff.; Luca Della Libera, "La musica nella basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore a Roma, 1676–1712: nuovi documenti su Corelli e sugli organici vocali e strumentali," *Recercare*, 7 (1995), 87–157 at 108 ff.; Allsop, *Corelli*, 27 ff., 42 ff. Corelli did *not* travel to France during the 1670s, as Rousseau mistakenly reported, nor did he travel to Germany (Allsop, *Corelli*, 5–6).

²⁶ Letter of 13 May 1679 to Fabrizio Laderchi, quoted in Adriano Cavicchi, "Corelli e il violinismo bolognese," *Studi corelliani* (Fusignano, 1968), 33–47 at 39. The sonatas presumably became Corelli's Opus 1 trio sonatas, published in 1681 and dedicated to the Queen.

household was Matteo Fornari, Corelli's student and intimate friend, who played second violin to Corelli's first in nearly every documented performance by Corelli from the 1680s on. As a member of Pamphili's household, Corelli not only composed music and performed on the violin, he organized ensembles for musical events that the Cardinal sponsored, and he led these ensembles in performance.²⁷

When Pamphili moved to Bologna in 1690, Corelli, along with Matteo Fornari, entered the service of Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni, nephew of Pope Alexander VIII. From 1690 until the end of his life, Corelli remained a member of Ottoboni's household; during much of that time he lived in an apartment in the Cardinal's palace, the Cancelleria. Ottoboni presided over a small but wealthy court, where there was continual demand for instrumental ensembles. At the Cardinal's titular church, S. Lorenzo in Damaso, adjacent to the Cancelleria, large ensembles were required for the feast of San Lorenzo in August, as well as for the "40 Hours" at the beginning of Lent and midnight mass on Christmas Eve.²⁸ Ottoboni also put on oratorios in the Cancelleria, at the Chiesa Nuova, and at the Seminario Romano. In addition, the regular Monday "academies" that the Cardinal gave at his palace sometimes involved instrumental ensembles that were orchestral in size and scope.²⁹ Corelli was responsible for recruiting instrumentalists, arranging for their transportation, composing music for them to play, rehearsing and leading them, and paying them their wages.³⁰ Thus, he was not simply a composer or simply a violin virtuoso. He was composer, conductor, contractor, soloist, orchestra leader, and musical personality all rolled up in one—the seventeenth-century equivalent of a modern bandleader.

Corelli's activities were not restricted to events sponsored by Cardinal Ottoboni. He provided orchestras and orchestral music for feast days at Roman churches, for outdoor public celebrations and festivities, and for other patrons, including Queen Christina, Cardinal Pamphili, and Prince Ruspoli. From the early 1680s through the first decade of the eighteenth century just about every performance in Rome by an ensemble of 10 or more instruments documented in surviving records was led by Corelli. Whether by virtue of his talent, his position, his reputation, or some other means, he was the only person who could recruit, organize, and lead a Roman orchestra, and in most cases the orchestra played at least some music that he had composed. In a real sense, all Roman orchestras from 1680 to 1713 were "Corelli's orchestra."

²⁷ Hans Joachim Marx, "Die 'Giustificazioni della Casa Pamphili' als musikgeschichtliche Quelle," *Studi musicali*, 12 (1983), 121–87, *passim*.

²⁸ Id., "Die Musik am Hofe Pietro Kardinal Ottobonis unter Arcangelo Corelli," *Analecta musicologica*, 5 (1968), 104–77 at 107–10.

²⁹ Examples of academies that involved large orchestras: 2 May 1694, 13 June 1694, 27 Mar. 1695 (Marx, "Kardinal Ottoboni," 142, 147).

³⁰ Marx, "Kardinal Ottoboni," *passim*. Corelli customarily countersigned the paylists for the instrumentalists. Often he signed for receipt of the money, indicating that he functioned as paymaster.

VENUES AND PERFORMANCES

Contemporary records document performances by Corelli's orchestra in a variety of contexts. It played for private and semi-private entertainments given by patrons in their palaces and gardens. In February 1687, for example, Queen Christina held a gala "academy" in her palace to celebrate the ascension of James II, a fellow Catholic, to the English throne:³¹

When the signal was given, the royal festival began with a grand symphony comprising one hundred and fifty instruments of all sorts, played by master musicians, and directed and led by the famous Arcangelo Corelli, the Bolognese. . . . When [the overture] had finished, there began the most beautiful music that has ever been heard, composed by Bernardo Pasquini in alternation with Corelli and divinely sung by the excellent members of the choir of the Queen's Academy . . .³²

During the long conclave of cardinals that followed the death of Alexander VIII in February 1691, Cardinal Ottoboni provided entertainment in the form of a "bellissima serenata," which was performed in the Belvedere courtyard immediately outside the Vatican walls. Pay records show that Ottoboni's serenade was accompanied by a small orchestra of six violins, two violas, two violoni, and lute, led, as usual, by Corelli.³³ As secular music, the serenata was not performed inside the Vatican proper, but it aroused opposition nonetheless:

Prince Savelli, Marshall of the conclave . . . spoke from the little window and complained about the serenata, saying that if he had been informed of it in advance, he would have had all the singers and instrumentalists thrown in prison. The performers were greeted with volleys of stones thrown from the windows of the Conclave. A stone hit one of the instrumentalists in the leg, and he was the last to return home.³⁴

For a cantata in the garden of the Ruspoli palace in August 1694, Corelli put together a considerably larger orchestra: 38 violins, five violas, and 26 violoni, cellos, and double basses.³⁵

Corelli's orchestra often performed in churches, usually for special occasions like the festival of a patron saint or a votive mass. When Queen Christina celebrated her recovery from a serious illness in 1689 with a *Te Deum* at the church of S. Maria di Loreto,

³¹ The celebration was belated. James II became King in Feb. 1685. He ruled until Dec. 1688, when he fled to France.

³² Quoted in Andreas Liess, "Neue Zeugnisse von Corellis Wirken in Rom," *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, 14 (1957), 130–37 at 133–34. The figure of 150 instrumentalists seems inflated, but it is repeated in a second account (*ibid.* 131).

³³ Marx, "Kardinal Ottoboni," 128.

³⁴ *Avvisi Marescotti*, 26 May 1691, quoted in Griffin, "The Late Baroque Serenata," 179–80.

³⁵ Marx, "Kardinal Ottoboni," 143.

The celebrated Signor Arcangelo Corelli, Virtuoso of her Majesty, also made an appearance and played a newly composed symphony with trumpets. It was played by a large number of the most accomplished string players [*professori di arco*] of this city.³⁶

At the Feast of San Lorenzo at Cardinal Ottoboni's church of S. Lorenzo in Damaso each August, the orchestra played "symphonies" during the mass. In 1699, for example,

Cardinal Ottoboni, always the creator of novel and beautiful things, . . . had mass sung by a large number of singers . . . and to the mass two fine motets were added, as well as a grand symphony by Arcangelo [Corelli].³⁷

The orchestra for this event numbered over 35, including two trumpets.³⁸ An English visitor, who attended midnight mass on Christmas eve at S. Lorenzo in 1699, reported that he heard "Paluccio, an admired young eunuch, singing, and Corelli, the famous violin, playing in concert with at least 30 more; all at the charge of Cardinal Ottoboni."³⁹ The estimate is a little low. Records show that 53 instrumentalists, all string players, were engaged for the performance.⁴⁰ At other occasions in church Corelli's orchestra was smaller. For the Festival of St. Louis at S. Luigi dei Francesi the orchestra usually numbered 15–20, sometimes with trumpets, sometimes without. At S. Maria Maggiore, on the other hand, Corelli played in the old non-orchestral style, as one of a pair of solo violins, assigned to the first choir in a polychoral setting.⁴¹

Corelli assembled his largest orchestras for the oratorios given by Pamphili, Ottoboni, and other Roman patrons. *Santa Beatrice d'Este* by Giovanni Lorenzo Lulier was commissioned by Cardinal Benedetto Pamphili to honor a visit of Cardinal d'Este to Rome in 1689. An account of its performance at the Pamphili palace conveys an idea of the level of magnificence at such events:

The great hall in which the oratorio was given was hung with shiny brocade, richly worked with gold embroidery . . . One part of the room was taken up by a stage as in a theater, on which there was a broad stairway covered with Turkish-style silk carpets. Here eighty musicians [*suonatori*] with their instruments were artfully displayed.

Columns rose from the stairs, shaped like lilies and like eagles, allusions to the house of Este. They supported the lights and also served as stands for the music of the instrumentalists. At the foot of the stairway was a platform . . . for the singers and the harpsichords and other instruments necessary for accompaniment. . . . At the other end of the room a structure was erected for another group of twenty instruments, raised six feet above the floor and decorated in a similar fashion. . . . The fullness of the instrumentation, with so many contrabasses for

³⁶ Quoted in Liess, "Materialien," 136.

³⁷ Quoted in Griffin, "The Late Baroque Serenata," 295.

³⁸ Marx, "Kardinal Ottoboni," 155 (18 vn, 5 vla, 7 violoni, 6 cb, 2 trpt).

³⁹ Samuel Pepys, *Private Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers of Samuel Pepys, 1679–1703*, ed. J. R. Tanner (London, 1926), i. 257–58. The visitor was John Jackson, Pepys's nephew.

⁴⁰ Marx, "Kardinal Ottoboni," 155 (32 vn, 6 vla, 8 violoni, 6 cb, 1 lute).

⁴¹ See Della Libera, "Santa Maria Maggiore."

a foundation and with trumpets too, created such a resonance [*rimbombo*] that the whole room seemed to echo.⁴²

The Pamphili account books pertaining to this performance show that 79 instrumentalists were paid a total of 279.50 scudi for four rehearsals and a performance.⁴³ Corelli played solo violin, led the orchestra, and composed an instrumental *sinfonia* for Lulier's oratorio.⁴⁴

Handel's *La Resurrezione*, commissioned by Prince Francesco Maria Ruspoli for Palm Sunday in 1708, was produced on an equally grand scale. A *teatro* was built in the great hall of the Palazzo Bonelli, with four rows of curved risers for the orchestra and a special raised podium for the "Concertino de' Violini."⁴⁵ The orchestra numbered approximately 45, with Corelli leading the violins and Handel playing one of the two harpsichords.⁴⁶ Handel's score made extreme demands on Corelli's ensemble, with solos for violin, oboes, recorders, flute, viola da gamba, and theorbo, as well as tutti-solo alternation in both the strings and the oboes.⁴⁷

Finally, Corelli's orchestra played for many of the public festivities and outdoor events that enlivened civic life in Baroque Rome. In 1687, for example, Cardinal d'Estrées, the French ambassador, staged a festival in the Piazza di Spagna to celebrate the recovery of Louis XIV from a severe illness. Figure 4.2, an engraving by Vincenzo Mariotti, depicts the proceedings. Where the Spanish steps are now, a wooded path leads up to the Trinità dei Monti, whose façade is elaborately decorated for the occasion. Above the church burst fireworks. Corelli's orchestra appears in the middle of the picture, seated on risers on a large platform, labeled with the letter "K," which, an accompanying legend explains, indicates the "stage for the instrumentalists and singers, where they performed a grand concerto and cantata." Wind instruments and drums were placed apart from the other instruments on the rooftops of neighboring buildings (labeled "P" in the engraving). According to a contemporary account,

The fireworks were accompanied by the sound of drums, trumpets, and wind instruments [*pifferi*]. Opposite the two galleries where those instruments were placed, there was a large platform for the singers and instrumentalists, who began with a beautiful *sinfonia* for concerted instruments composed by the famous Arcangelo Bolognese, who had assembled together all the best string players in Rome. Then two vocalists, accompanied by the orchestra

⁴² Quoted by Cavicchi, "Prassi esecutiva," 116–17.

⁴³ Marx, "'Giustificazioni,'" 157–58 (43 vn, 10 vla, 17 violoni, 7 cb, 1 lute, 1 hpschd).

⁴⁴ Corelli's *sinfonia* for *Santa Beatrice d'Este* survives in a single manuscript. It is printed in Arcangelo Corelli, *Werke ohne Opuszahl*, ed. Hans Oesch and Hans Joachim Marx (*Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe*, 5; Cologne, 1976).

⁴⁵ Ursula Kirkendale, "The Ruspoli Documents on Handel," *JAMS* 20 (1967), 222–73 at 234. For depiction of such a podium, see Fig. 4.1.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 256–57 (22 vn, 4 vla, 6 violoni, 6 cb, 4 ob, 2 trpt, 1 trb).

⁴⁷ Ibid. The pay records for *La Resurrezione* do not include performers on flute, bassoon, theorbo, or viola da gamba, all required by the score.

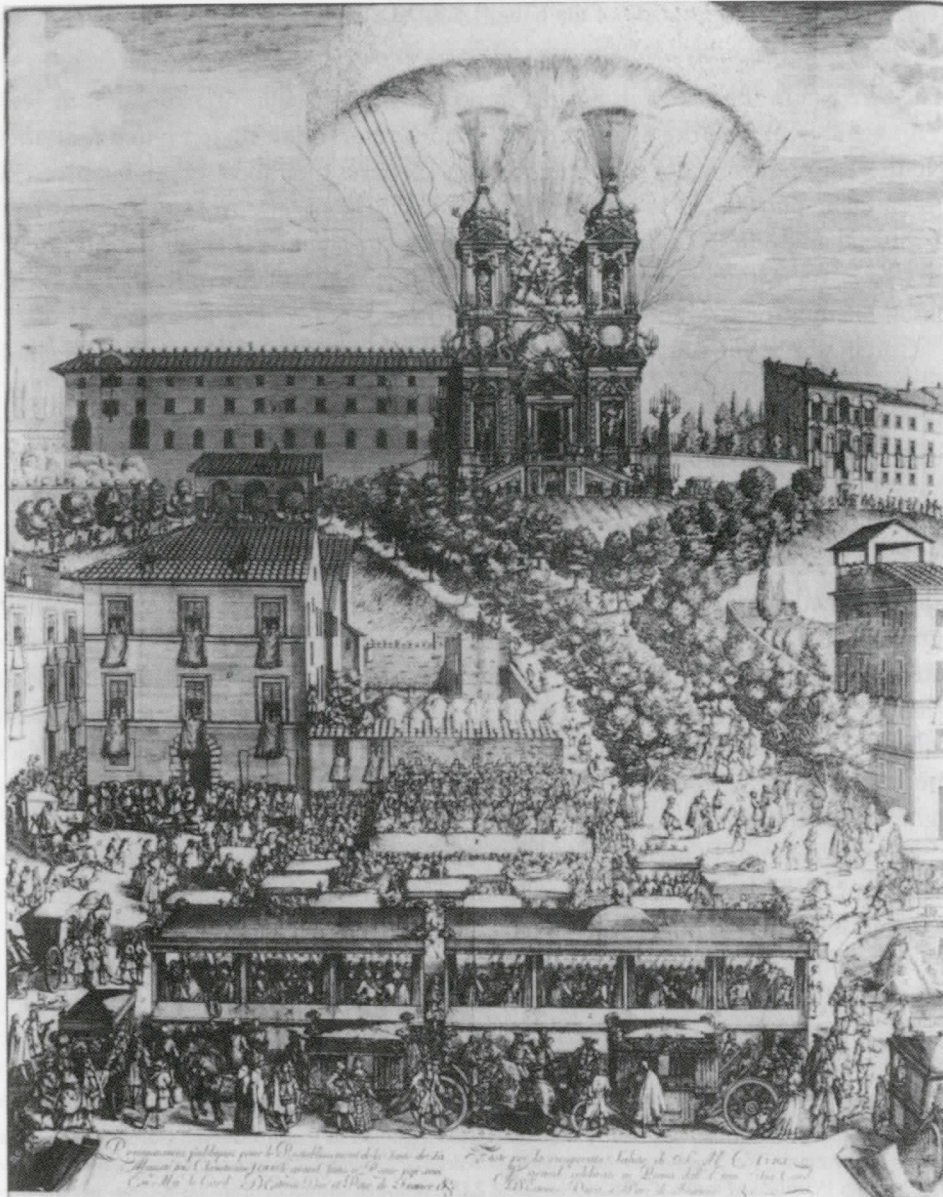


FIG. 4.2. Festival in the Piazza di Spagna, Rome, 1687

[*sinfonia*], sang a poem in praise of the King [Louis XIV]. The audience listened in profound silence.⁴⁸

The serenata in the Piazza di Spagna in honor of the Queen of Spain, also in 1687 (Fig. 4.1 above), was the Spanish Ambassador's response to these French festivities. Neither the engraving nor the contemporary accounts mention Corelli, but given his preeminent position, it is hard to imagine that anyone else in Rome could have organized an orchestra as big as the one in Fig. 4.1. If this is a depiction of Corelli's orchestra, then the two violinists standing on the raised platform to the left of the ensemble must be Corelli and Matteo Fornari.

Corelli was documentably the leader of "more than 100 instrumentalists, the most distinguished in Rome on both strings and trumpets and other wind instruments," who played for an outdoor public performance of Alessandro Scarlatti's oratorio *Il regno di Maria assunta in cielo* in August 1705.⁴⁹ In the courtyard of his palace, the Cancelleria, Cardinal Ottoboni had erected a large stage [*teatro*] with painted backdrops, a platform for the singers, and seven risers for the instrumentalists. Stage and courtyard were brilliantly illuminated with torches, chandeliers, and colored lights. Carriages had been drawn into the courtyard, unhitched, and packed side by side to serve as boxes for the cardinals, princes, ecclesiastical dignitaries, and noble ladies in attendance. Behind them masses of ordinary Romans stretched through the palace gates all the way to the Piazza de' Pollaroli. Even with an orchestra of 100, the music could not be heard this far away, but the account reports that people could at least see the lights.⁵⁰ The performance was repeated the following night, with even more lights and even larger crowds.

Another example of performances by Corelli's orchestra at public festivities was the Accademia del Disegno di San Luca, held each spring in the Capitoline Palace. This celebration, at which prizes were awarded for architecture and design, was attended by the nobility and "a great multitude of common people."⁵¹ Each year from 1702 to 1709 Corelli assembled and directed an orchestra for the Accademia del Disegno, and after Corelli's retirement, Matteo Fornari continued the tradition for several years.

⁴⁸ Anon., *Raguaglio dele sontuose feste . . .* (Rome, 1687), quoted in Renato Bossa, "Corelli e il Cardinal Benedetto Pamphilj," in *Nuovissimi studi corelliani: Atti del Terzo Congresso Internazionale*, ed. Sergio Durante and Pierluigi Petrobelli (Florence, 1982), 211–23 at 222. Although the account makes it clear that the fireworks were accompanied only by trumpets and drums, not by strings, the engraving shows fireworks bursting overhead and Corelli's orchestra playing at the same time. This seems to be an example of the "telescoping" typical in 17th- and 18th-c. engravings of official spectacles and festivities. In order to include all significant aspects of the event in a single picture, the artist depicts events that take place one after another as happening simultaneously. See Barbara Russano Hanning, "The Iconography of a Salon Concert: A Reappraisal," in Georgia Cowart (ed.), *French Musical Thought, 1600–1800* (Ann Arbor, 1989), 129–48.

⁴⁹ The event is described in a contemporary manuscript account (I-Rvat Urb. Lat 1706) transcribed in Gioia Sofia Serafina Brunoro, "The Life and Works of Giovanni Lorenzo Lulier" (Ph.D. diss., Victoria University of Wellington, 1994), 555 ff.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 560.

⁵¹ Piperno, "'Anfione in Campidoglio,'" 154.

The orchestra opened the festivities with a *sinfonia* to accompany the ceremonial entrance of the cardinals; it also played after the oration of the principal speaker.

At all these venues—private entertainments, churches, oratorios, and public festivities—the role of Corelli's orchestra was limited. It did not play throughout, and in particular it seldom accompanied singers.⁵² In an oratorio, for example, the orchestra usually played a *sinfonia* at the beginning and another *sinfonia* to open the second half. When there were instrumental interludes between arias, these may also have been played by the full ensemble.⁵³ The rest of the oratorio seems to have been accompanied by a reduced ensemble. The *sinfonie* that the orchestra played were usually composed by Corelli, rather than by the composer of the oratorio. Thus, for *Santa Beatrice d'Este* at the Pamphili palace in 1689, Giovanni Lorenzo Lulier composed the oratorio, but Corelli composed the *sinfonia*, and Corelli's name was featured prominently on the title page of the libretto printed for the occasion. Similarly, for a performance during Holy Week 1702 of Alessandro Scarlatti's setting of the Lamentations of Jeremiah the orchestra played a "superb concerto for basses, contrabasses, violas, and violins, composed by Arcangelo."⁵⁴ Another example is the pastorale *Amore e gratitudine*, with text by Ottoboni and music by Flavio Lanciani (1690).⁵⁵ According to Ottoboni pay records, the pastorale was performed 10 times, accompanied by an ensemble of five violins, two violas, two violoni, a bass, and a harpsichord.⁵⁶ During the prologue two trumpets also played. Two of the performances were enhanced by an additional "sinfonia nella pastorale," probably composed by Corelli, for which a large number of bowed strings and a trombone were added to the ensemble: 21 violins, six violas, nine violoni, five double basses, and a trombone.

In these examples as well as others like them, Corelli's orchestra—that is, the massed strings of the concerto grosso—was idle during most of the performance. Rather than accompanying the piece, the orchestra framed it—highlighting the extraordinary character of the occasion, setting the featured text and/or composition apart from its surroundings, and providing a visual backdrop for singers, orators, and other performers. The sudden entry, the full sound, and the unified execution of so large a group of instruments was a glorious special effect, like the fanfares and the fireworks at some of the same events.

⁵² The only suggestion that the full orchestra accompanied singers is the account of the festival for Louis XIV in 1687 mentioned earlier, where two vocalists were accompanied by the *sinfonia*.

⁵³ Gloria Staffieri, "Arcangelo Corelli compositore di 'sinfonie': nuovi documenti," in *Studi corelliani IV: Atti del Quarto Congresso Internazionale*, ed. Pierluigi Petrobelli and Gloria Staffieri (Florence, 1990), 335–57 at 344.

⁵⁴ *Avvisi di Roma* (Munich), 11 Apr. 1702. Quoted in Griffin, "The Late Baroque Serenata," 359–60.

⁵⁵ See Franco Piperno, "Le orchestre di Arcangelo Corelli. Pratiche musicali romane. Lettura dei documenti," in Giovanni Morelli (ed.), *L'invenzione del gusto: Corelli e Vivaldi* (Milan, 1982), 42–48 at 47–48.

⁵⁶ Marx, "Kardinal Ottoboni," 126.

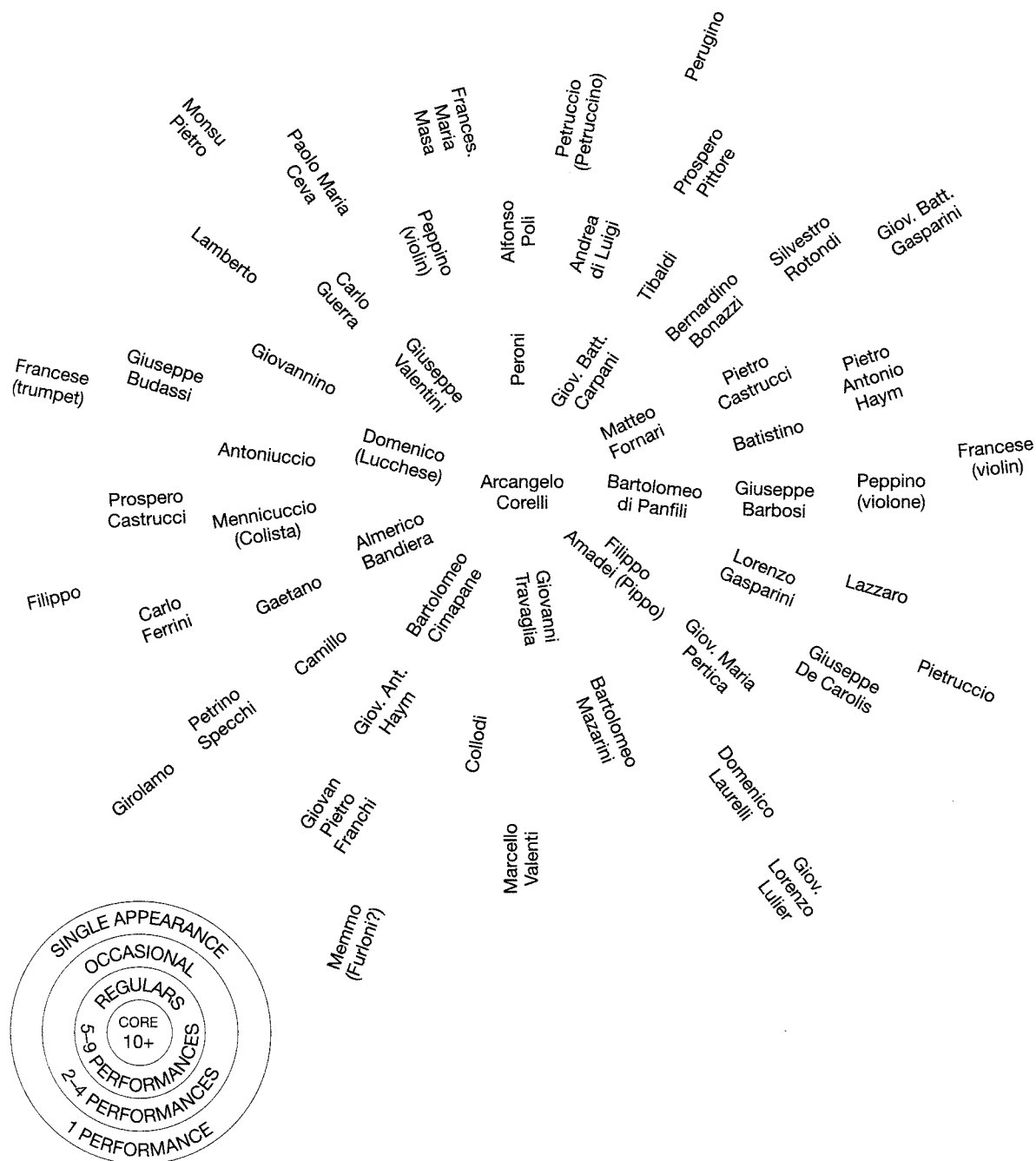


FIG. 4.3. The structure of Corelli's orchestra (1702-5)