

LECTURES AT THE ACADEMY



Tuesday, February 8, 5:00 pm
Italian Academy for Advanced Studies
1161 Amsterdam Avenue (at 117th Street)

RSVP email: itacademy@columbia.edu or by phone: 212.854.4437

Free Admission with Reception to Follow

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ABOUT THE LECTURE: The first Italian performers who arrived in Paris at the beginning of the eighteenth century played a crucial role in the dissemination of Italian instrumental music in France. Sponsored by influential members of the new aristocracy, their successful careers illustrate the socio-political changes that had made Paris a prominent center of European intellectual life: arbiter of the aesthetic taste was no longer the court of Louis XIV in Versailles, but the emerging aristocracy and bourgeoisie of Paris. The performances of the Italian virtuosi became the main attractions of the musical soirees organized by French wealthy financiers.

The lecture focuses on the impact that Italian music made on French audiences. The flood of Italian sonatas and cantatas that overwhelmed Paris divided the intellectual circles between advocates of the naturalness of French music, and champions of the passionate and virtuosic Italian instrumental music. The distinctive performance style of the Italian virtuosi not only had a significant effect on the development of the French instrumental tradition, but also influenced the reception of Italian music in France and ultimately played a critical part in the formation of a new aesthetic sensibility.