

How did the Italian style influence French music for the traverso between 1699-1750'?

Italian elements in French music for traverso by J.M. Leclair and M.Blavet

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Content

Introduction	2
1 Definition of French and Italian style	3
1.1 Sources	3
1.2 Characteristic of both styles – resume.....	12
2 Social circumstances and painting of the background	14
2.1 Musical life in Versailles.....	14
2.2 Concert Spirituel	15
2.3 Music in salons and private houses	16
2.4 Philippe II, Duke of Orléans (Duke of Chartres) and the role of musical patronage	17
3 How do the Italian and French styles mix in the music for traverso by Leclair and Blavet	20
3.1 The famous French flute school. Predecessors of Blavet.....	21
3.2 Michel Blavet	21
3. 2. 1 The description of Blavet’s playing by contemporary sources	23
3. 2. 2 Jean Marie Leclair	25
3. 2. 3 The evidences of the mixture of the style in French flute music	26
Conclusion: “Les Goûts réunis”	28
List of sources	29

Introduction

French music is a major part of the flute repertoire as it is rather vast. It is also my favourite type of flute music.

By the end of 17th and beginning of 18th century the flute in France had its “golden age”. This period was marked by a strong interaction and influence of Italian art in general. In 17th century many artists went to Rome in order to accomplish their mastery by studying or simply observing Italian cultural life. The foundation of French Academy in Rome in 1666 by Louis XIV is one of the examples of this rich cultural exchange.

My research question arises while studying flute sonatas by Jean - Marie Leclair and Michel Blavet. The title page of a second book of sonatas for flute and bass by Blavet says “*Sonates mêlées de pièces*” (Sonatas mixed with the *pièces*) which is a great example of the mixture of Italian and French style. The *Sonata*, as an instrumental form, came from Italy during the end of 17th and beginning of 18th century, influenced and later took over a typical French instrumental form, the *Suite*, which consists of *pièces* or/and *dances*. The titles of the movements of Blavet’s sonatas vary in character. Some movements are called a type of dance and some are titled using someone’s name or character which is very typical of French music. Some movements have an Italian indication for tempo such as Allegro, Andante, etc., and there are those with both an Italian and French title.

The specific time period I chose to focus on is between 1699 and 1750 which is very significant. 1699 is the year Jacques Martin Hotteterre, known as “Le Romain”, returned to Paris from Rome and who as a “founder” of French flute school influenced Blavet. From 1750’s, the interest in flute decreased in France for the next twenty years.

In my research I would like to accomplish a deeper understanding of how to interpret French music of this time. In order to do this, I need to clarify what the difference is between French and Italian styles. To be able to distinguish both styles I need to uncover the context surrounding these two composers. I chose Blavet in particular because he was a traverso player and there is a lot of existing evidence of his beautiful playing. Blavet also composed for the traverso and his music is full of Italian elements. The other composer I decided to focus on is Leclair because he studied in Italy and this had a great influence on his music.

I will describe a musical life in Paris which was according to Nemeitz’s *Séjour de Paris* one of the richest in Europe at that time where we can hear everything. The *Concert Spirituel* founded in 1725 was one of the first public concert series in Europe where many Italian musicians were invited to play. I will discuss other important institutions such as *L’Académie Royale de Musique* (Paris Opera), *Comédie Italiennes* and musical life at the court of Luis XIV and XV. I should not omit the various kinds of private concerts and lots of music making by aristocrats and amateurs and music in the salons which had an influence on mixing both styles as well. I would like to personify the figure that is Philippe II, Duke of Orléans, as he played an important role in the society, was a great supporter of the musicians and influenced the debate between French and Italian style with his own prejudices and power.

“Mister Duke of Orléans, since regent, honoured by his presence, the fight of French and Italian harmony, and holds the door by himself, for entering only the distinguished amateurs, or elite of those who execute: so that Forcroi the father is estimated very happy that his Royal Highness wanted to leave him outside.”¹

¹ Le Blanc, Défense de la bass de viol, p. 2 “Monseigneur le Duc d’Orléans, depuis Régent, honoroit de sa présence, les Combats de l’Harmonie François et de l’Italienne, et tenoit la porte lui-même, pour ne laisser entrer que les Amateurs insignes, ou l’élite de ceux qui exécutoient: si bien que Forcroi le Père s’estima très heureux que son Altesse Royale voulût bien le laisser en dehors.” (translated by Radka Kubínová)

1 Definition of French and Italian style

The distinction and characteristic of Italian and French style is very important for understanding their mixture in the pieces of music. All the sources I'm using for this purpose, are contemporary books by French authors written in the span of around forty years and they demonstrate very different approaches. Even though they are written in a very subjective way, from most of them we can get a clear idea about the Italian and French characters.

1.1 Sources

I will mention the sources in a chronological way, describe them and provide information about the author as well.

Raguenet, François. (1702) *Paralele des Italiens et des François en ce qui regarde la musique et les opéras*. Paris: Barbin

Raguenet (1660-1722) was a French priest, author of treatises on theology and many works about history such as description of monuments in Rome. He went to Rome in 1698 and spent two years studying and observing Italian architecture and music. After his return he published a dissertation *Paralele des Italiens et des François en ce qui regarde la musique et les opéras* which caused a lively controversy because of its author's manifested preference for Italian music. Raguenet's *Paralele* is an important document about 18th century musical politics and aesthetics and was the object of much discussion.

In the *Paralele* Raguenet speaks mostly about the opera as the biggest musical genre common for both Italians and French. As in all mentioned sources below he glorifies Lully as one of the biggest musical genius in France and advises the French musicians to go to Italy to study. In general he thinks Italian music requires more skills than French for the performer as well as the listener. Italians violate the rules while French follow them religiously.

1) Use and suitability of both languages in opera:

“The Italian language has a great advantage above the French language for being sung, its vowels are all sonorous whereas more than the half of the French are mute or at best bear a very small part in pronunciation; in the first place, no cadence, or beautiful passage, can be formed upon the syllables that consist of those vowels; and in the next, the words are expressed by halves; we are left to guess at what the French are singing, whereas the Italian is perfectly understood.”²

Although this quotation is favoring Italian language in opera, on the other hand Raguenet admires the diversity and colors of French voices especially the low *bases contres*

² Raguenet, *Paralele*, p. 23-25 “La langue Italienne a un grand avantage sur la langue Française pour être chantée, en ce que toutes ces voyelles sonnent tres-bien, au lieu que la moitié de celles de la langue Française sont des voyelles muettes qui n’ont presque point de son; d’où il arrive premièrement qu’on ne sçauroit faire aucune cadance ni aucun passage agréable sur les syllabes où se trouvent ces voyelles; & en second lieu, que on’entende qu’à demi les mots; de sorte qu’il faut deviner la moitié de ce que chantent les François & qu’au contraire on entend tres-distinctement tout ce que disent les Italiens.” (translated by Radka Kubínová)

and criticizes the Italian castrati saying that that French female singers have such voices that the castrati are not needed.

Raguenet makes comparison between French and Italian music by drawing connections to prose and poetry. For him, French music represents the poetry and Italian music represents the prose.

According to him, French opera is built with continuity, good sense for the story and its roles are very well characterized. This he compares to the French suite. Italian opera, on the contrary, is made by various poets and the text lacks continuity.

2) Characteristic of instrumental music:

„As to the instruments, our masters touch the violin much finer, and with a greater nicety than they do in Italy. Every stroke of Italian bow sounds hard if broken, and disagreeable if continued. Moreover, besides all the instruments that are common to Italians, we have the Haut-bois, which by their sounds, equally mellow and piercing, have infinitely the advantage over the violins in all brisk, lively airs, and the flutes, which so many of our great (Philibert, Philidor, Descoteaux and the Hotteterres) artists have taught to groan in such a moving manner in our moan full airs, and sigh so amorously in those that are tender.”²

Raguenet exalts a lot French woodwind players such as oboists and flutists who had a great level at that time in France. At the end of 17th and the beginning of 18th century, transverse flute was very much associated with tender airs of melancholic and sad character so frequently found in French music.

3) Character of interpretation and composition:

According to Raguenet, Italian players employ a lot of different characters. They are much faster with and more sensible towards the passions. Everything is brighter, higher and impetuous. The players became sometimes so furious that they do not have control anymore of what they are doing. However they have the same success in the slow movements by using very slow bow and the notes going very low. On the other hand, the French were searching for simplicity, sweetness, continuity and unity. Every surprise is prepared so everything is predictable. According to Raguenet, French music is not surprising and exciting and the French would feel lost if they would do something against the rules, while the Italians are as sure about themselves as if they would be the ruler of the world. The Italian's mastery of technique allows them to break the rules when it suits their purpose, and their use of dissonances gives their music more variety, causing the listeners greater pleasure.

Regarding the instrumental music, he mentions the *Trio sonata* as the Italian form where all the parts (both top voice(s) and bass) are equally elaborated while in French music the most beautiful is the first *dessus* and the rest is made with less care.

Le Cerf de La Viéville, Jean-Laurent. (1704,1705 and 1706) *Comparaison de la musique italienne et de la musique française, où, en examinant en detail les avantages des spectacles et le mérite des compositeurs des deux nations, on montre quelles sont les vraies beautés de la musique*. Bruxelles

Le Cerf (1674-1707) was a magistrate and musicologist known by his polemics about music, history and literature. In 1705 he answered on Raguenet's *Parallèle* with a *Comparaison de la musique italienne et de la musique française*, which in turn elicited a rebuttal, *Défense du Parallèle*, from Raguenet in the same year, being a sort of preamble to

the “War of the Buffoons” which was to erupt fifty years later. (Le Cerf is so critical, that he even remarks on Ragueneau’s bad autography).

The book consists of three parts. The first one is a dialogue and letter. The second part contains a new letter, a collection of opera verse extracts and new dialogues about history of music and opera, life of Lully, a refutation of treatises by Claude Perrault on the music of ancient and *Traité du bon goût en musique*. In 1705, Ragueneau responded with *Défense* and in 1706, Le Cerf replied with the third part where he speaks about sacred music and Bononcini.

This book is not only about two styles and the battle between ancient and modern, it is a moral struggle.

In the fictive dialogue, Ragueneau uses the personage of three fashionable nobles with a lady in the centre of two gentlemen’s attention; the three go to performances and discuss them. Curiously, some discussions are about Italian and French cuisine as well - the dialogues are thus both aesthetic and social commentary. Aristocracy is described here as a traditional and conservative essence of noble ideas. Italian music with its modern elements, is a symbol of rejection of ancient authority.

Ragueneau attacks not only what he saw as the ruin of taste caused by the craze for Italian music but also the degradation of *honnêteté*³ and nobility in itself. He aimed at those like the Duke of Orléans and their “bizzar” individualism and criticized courtiers who do not say what they think but parrot the Duke. Le Cerf considered the Duke to be a corruptive influence on the taste and saw the acceptance of Italian music by the Duke’s followers as a danger for the taste itself.

French music represented for him the “natural” – so effortless and spontaneous, and Italian music was for him artificial and affected – as were the manners of bourgeois. The difficulty in performing Italian music is for Le Cerf for its own sake:

“...all of these bold ornaments, vicious in themselves and against the rules, need to be prepared and sustained with great care, and I believe that Italian music masters do this, persuaded as I am of their skill and ability, with which I am myself familiar. However, these kinds of beauties should not be squandered, and in squandering them as the Italians do by constantly violating the rules, they are deprived of their merit and become the Italians' worst flaws.”⁴

“The Italians who know how to condemn the disparate of their music, theirs supposedly beautiful leaps which so easily degenerate into extravagance, its affected and too-often repeated slurs, and the licenses with which it is burdened, all of which, in keeping with the ardent and passionate temperament of the Italians, expresses their passions admirably well, and in terms of our own colder and less expressive temper produces music of the lowest sort, gutter music.”⁵

³ *Honnêteté* – was an ideal of a nobleman whose manners had to follow the etiquette of French aristocracy

⁴ Le Cerf, *Comparaison*, vol. 1, p. 37 “...tous ces ornemens hardis, vicieux en eux-mêmes, & contre les règles, veulent être préparés & soutenus avec une grande adresse : & je crois qu’ils le sont : persuadé que je suis de la science & de l’habileté des Maîtres Italiens, que je connais par moi même. Mais ces sortes de beautés ne veulent pas être prodiguées, & en les prodiguant, comme font les Italiens qui violent les règles à tout moment, on leur ôte tout leur mérite, & on leur rend leur premier défauts.” (translated by R. Kubínová)

⁵ Le Cerf, *Comparaison*, vol. 2, p. 9 “Les Italiens qui savent condamner les disparates de leur musique, ses prétendues belles fautes qui tournent en extravagances, ses détonations affectées, et trop souvent répétées, et les licences dont elle est chargée, qui font une musique de gouttieres.” (Ibidem)

As well as Raguenet, Le Cerf complains about the lack of treatises on compositions in France, and about their quality—they are full of dry rules, technical issues and too scholar.

Raguenet, François.(1705) *Défense du Paralele des Italiens et des François en ce qui regarde la musique et les opéras*. Paris: Barbin

As I mentioned above this treatise was a reaction on Le Cerf's writing. Raguenet criticizes Le Cerf's way of writing which is mostly based on using the word *natural* and not based on any serious philosophical arguments. Both Raguenet and Le Cerf were familiar with the patronage of Duke of Orleans and cited him as one of Italian music's most powerful and influential proponents. Both noted that it was his position as a prince—whose likes and dislikes set the tone for those who sought his approval—and as a famous connoisseur that made him either a danger or a worthy model to imitate. Le Cerf, sensing the political challenge in the duke's move away from the classical ideals embodied by Lully, tried to demonstrate the powerlessness of the duke's taste against that of Louis XIV. Raguenet, however, recognized the duke's symbolic importance as a bulwark against claims by critics that Italian music represented a "corrupt taste":

"For myself, I would not know anyone in France who has composed an opera in the Italian taste except one of our Princes whom I will not name here out of respect. He is one of the most learned that we have. No one honors the arts more than he does, and his declared taste for Italian music is a prejudice in favor of that music which will give you not a little difficulty, M. le Chevalier (i.e. Le Cerf). You say that it is an outrageous and corrupt taste: while I am always hearing the most clever people in the realm say that it is not possible to have a more exquisite and sure taste than this great prince has."⁶

Le Blanc, Hubert. (1740) *Défense de la basse de viole contre les Entrées du violon et les Prétentions du violoncel*. Amsterdam: Pierre Mortier.

Le Blanc was an amateur viol player, doctor of law and abbot. He was apparently seen by his contemporaries as a strange and eccentric person. The treatise *Défense de la basse de viol* was written while the viol playing was getting out of fashion in France. The way of writing contains some specific elements such as use of a mythological personage and allegorical characters.

The book consists of three parts. In the first part, the author discusses new Italian form of *Sonata* coming from Italy versus typical French *Pièces* and examines their advantages and characteristics connected with the instruments. The second part of the book speaks about the use of viol being taken over by new coming instrument from Italy – the violoncello. He speaks about new acoustic requirements on the instruments related to the larger concert halls versus salons and discusses the tuning as well.

⁶ Raguenet, *Défense*, p. 51 "Pour moi je ne sache personne en France qui ait encore composé d'Opéra dans le goût Italien, qu'un de nos Princes que je ne nomme pas ici par respect; c'est un des plus savans que nous ayons; personne ne fait plus d'honneur que lui aux beaux arts; et son goût déclaré pour la musique Italienne est un préjugé en faveur de cette musique, lequel ne vous embarrasse pas peu, M.le Chevalier. Vous dites que c'est un goût outré et corrompu: D'un autre côté j'entens tous les jours dire aux plus habilles gens de Royaume qu'in ne sauroit avoir, pour les arts , un goût plus exquis et plus sûr, que la ce grand prince."(translated by R.Kubínová)

“...the viol was less cultivated than violin in the sense of the composition...This instrument does not perform anymore in the grand places. We do not play in the temples, theatres, neither in extremely full concerts.”⁷

Sonata versus *Pièces*:

Sonata is described by La Blanc as a new form coming from Italy, founded by Corelli, suiting better the violin and having a good commercial use. There are several reasons for this opinion. First he compares sonata with the prose which is easier to read, the second is a characteristic of the violin as an expressive, showing off instrument good for playing virtuoso passages sonata was full of, while the viol was seen as an introverted instrument, charming for its colours rather than technical skills. The *Pièces* are characterized as a typical French form suiting very well the viol or other French instruments such as transverse flute and harpsichord. *Pièces* are compared with the poetry. He mentions the example of the first writing of the humans which was in verse (Hymns for a God) and he sees the same in music. The *pièces* and airs were the first forms and the ornaments in the music are there to imitate the singers, animals, birds, nature, paintings, dactylic imitation of the dance-regularity of certain measures or rondo with regularly repeated refrain.

As I mentioned above, Le Blanc speaks about some acoustic aspect of the instruments which went hand in hand with the new concert locations and new expectations from the audience.

“...the violin, piercing and hard, turns into better qualities in vast scene, where his hardiness was flooded by the violoncello, which hold all its iniquity, and the sound lacking the resonance being substituted by the open strings of a harpsichord. Finally the nature of his high register will soften in the middle of metal sound of a harpsichord.”⁸

The viol was the perfect instrument for small rooms such as salons and was a fashionable instrument for noble men.

Le Blanc compares many times flute and violin and makes the remarks about the sound:

“The violin...having the strings short and thick, the bow bites with the pain, it gave me the impression that the violin is tiring to play; and an extraordinary tension of the strings, being barely heard, made them garish. If we would make a cadence we would have to cache the string for defeat its resistance, it can never be pearly, as that of the flute.”⁹

⁷ Le Blanc, Défense, p. 115 “...la viole ait été moins cultivée que le Violon, à l’égard de la composition...Cet instrument ne produit point dans les grands endroits. On n’en joue ni aux temples, ni sur les théâtres, ni dans les concerts extrêmement remplis.”(translated by R.Kubínová)

⁸ Ibidem, p. 46-47 “...violon, d’être perçant & dur, lui tournoient en bonnes qualités dans un endroit vaste, ou sa dureté étoit noyée par celle du violoncel, qui portoit toute l’iniquité,& son manque de résonnance supplée par les cordes à vuide du clavecin. Enfin sa nature de son aigu gagnoit de l’attendrissement au milieu de la ferraille du Clavecin.” (Ibidem)

⁹ Ibidem, p. 32-33 “Le violin...avoit senti que ses cordes étant courtes et grosses, l’archet y mordait avec peine, il étoit besoin d’une pression qui le rendoit fatigant au jouer; & la tension extraordinaire des cordes ayant peu d’étendue, le rendoit criard. Si l’on faisoit des cadences, il falloit écacher la corde pour vaincre sa résistance, elles ne pouvoient jamais être perlées, comme celles de la flute.” (Ibidem)

“Of which beauty would be a violin playing having for its disposition the strength of the St.Cloud’s fountain! What an inflating or decrease will have to do? How we would be capable of supporting the whole note or more which is a ground of the violin, and the triumph of the voice and flute.”¹⁰

The interesting quotations I will mention here are mostly about musical discourse and taste:

“We employ the inflating in the end of every musical phrase.”¹¹

“...the instrument, whose sound is getting sustained in the manner of the voice, is diminished imperceptibly...”¹²

“The irregularity in the composition, where one idea denials other, the taste is becoming variable, we employ one year of contrary expressions of whose we followed the previous year.”¹³

About continuo instruments:

La Blanc explains that viol took over the theorbo, guitar and harp. Now, the violin, violoncello and harpsichord are taking over the viol.

“...because the violin and violoncello are separated too much by the double octave.

The accompaniment of the base by another viol is richer of charm and attraction, the result is incomparable sweetness of harmony.”¹⁴

In the third part of the book, he tries to find a way how to adopt the viol into the new style with all the new technical and interpretational demands. Should this instrument remain an instrument of antiquity with its airs and *pièces*?

“While the viol overslept and fall down into the lethargy..., the masters of violin, flute and violoncello won the prodigious advance ...”¹⁵

The value of this writing lies also in description of some figures and musicians of that time such as Blavet, Leclair, Marais, Forqueray, Duc d’Orleans, Luis XIV and others.

¹⁰ Le Blanc, Défense, p. 24 “De quelle beauté seroit le jeu de violon, qui auroit en sa disposition la force du Jet d’eau de St.Cloud! Quel enflé ou diminué il y auroit à faire? Comment on seroit capable de soutenir une ronde ou plusieurs, qui est l’échouement du Violon, & le triomphe de la voix et de la flute.”(translated by R.Kubínová)

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 22 “ On emploie l’enflé à chaque sens, auquel’finit une phrase de musique.”(Ibidem)

¹² Ibidem, p. 21 “...l’instrument, dont le son soutenu étant rendu continu, à la manière de celui de la voix, on se retrouve maître de le diminuer imperceptiblement...” (Ibidem)

¹³ Ibidem, p. 39 “L’irrégularité dans les compositions ou une idée démentoit l’autre, le goût devenu variable , on employoit une année des expressions contraires à celle qu’on suivoit la précédente. ”

¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 104-105 “...car le violin et le violoncel coupent trop par la distance de leurs tons à la double octave. L’accompagnemet de la basse en taille par une viole envers une autre viole est plus rempli de charmes et d’attrait, il en résulte une douceur d’harmonie sans égale.”(Ibidem)

¹⁵ Ibidem, p. 121 “Pendant l’assoupissement de la basse de viole entretenue par les pièces dans une vrai létargie..., les maitres de violon, de flute & de violoncell ont gagné une avance prodigieuse...”

“The viol was favored by the king Luis XIV in his childhood, father Marais for his *Pièces*, and father Forcroi for his preludes. One has been seen as an angel, the other as a devil. The regent of the realm cultivated its possession and the monarch Louis XV made its enjoyment.”¹⁶

Bollioud De Mermet, Louis.(1746) *De la corruption du goust dans la musique françoise*. Lyon.

Bollioud (1709-1793) was born in Lyon where he was a secretary of Academy. He is author of several writings about music and literature. His book *Corruption du goust* was written 44 years after Ragueneau's *Paralele*, and yet the topic was still very actual. Bollioud is obviously on French side and very clearly describes *bon goût* - the term so often used by many French writers and musicians to characterize French style. Bollioud saw the new coming Italian style as decadent that corrupts the good taste of French music.

“...we changed so greatly the constitution of our music, that we would say we ceased to be French, or we have been transported in another region!”¹⁷

The author thinks that the progression in the arts should be based on previous generations and their appreciation. He shows his admiration especially for Lully, de Lalande, Marais, Couperin and Lambert but also for Corelli, although sometimes he criticises him:

“They make a very strange mixture and ill assorted taste of French and Italian: while they refuse to value the first, and for which they have a talent from their birth. Because we should not think that we imitate well the Italians: we cannot judge it. But the Italians feel very well the distance we have from their genius and their taste which for us will be always impossible to seize. We would however find this idea ridiculous if the Italians would copy the French music. We would laugh. In this moment the Italians are wiser than us. We don't hear that they would imitate us in this genre.”¹⁸

The book starts with a very nice thought on ideal musician and I would like to mention it here:

“The first function of a musician is a composition: if he wants to excel in his art, he should be a harmonist by the rules and principles. The qualities the most indispensable of the composer are genius, the method, the taste. The goal he has to suggest for his work is the

¹⁶ Ibidem, p.59 “La viol s'étoit favorisée par la Roi Luis XIV dans ses nourrissons, le Père Marais pour ces pieces, & Forcroi le Père pour ses préludes tirans sur la sonate. L'un avoit été déclaré jouer comme un ange et l'autre jouer comme un diable. Le régent de royaume avoit cultivé sa possession ; & la monarque Louis XV avoit fait cas de sa jouissance.” (translated by R.Kubínová)

¹⁷ Bollioud, De la corruption, p. 14 “...on a changé si considérablement la constitution de notre musique, qu'on diroit qu'à cet égard nous avons cessé d'être François, ou que nous avons été transportés dans une autre région!”(Ibidem)

¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 43-44 “Ils font un mélange bizarre et mal assorti du goût François et de l'Italien: tandis qu'ils négligent de faire valoir le premier, comme le talent que la naissance leur a donné, et pour lequel ils ont plus de dispositions. Car il ne faut pas se flater jusqu'au point de croire que nous imitions bien la manière Italienne: Il ne nous est pas possible d'en juger. Mais les Italiens sentent bien la distance qui nous éloigne de leur génie et de leur goût qu'il nous sera toujours impossible de saisir. Nous pouvons cependant nous former une idée du ridicule de cette fausse imitation par celui que nous trouverions dans un Italien qui voudroit copier la musique Française. Il nous serviroit de risée: portons de nous- même ce jugement. Au reste, cette Nation est en ce point plus sage que la nôtre. On n'entend pas dire, à parler généralement, qu'elle tende à nous imiter en ce genre.”(translated by R.Kubínová)

imitation of the nature, flatter for the ears, to touch, to move the heart, to lift up the passions, to give the soul and expression for his singing, to render them new and various, by the ornaments, by the choice of the chords and the subjects, with the elegance sense of the lyrics, if he compose the vocal music; so to say the lyrics in accord with the sound, if he works for instruments, imitate by the fast traits and animated, the tender and natural of the voice.”¹⁹

As in many other treatises of that time, Bollioud speaks about instruments imitating the voice – this was seen as the most natural approach. He says that now the things are going the other way – the singers try to imitate the instruments – and this cause the spasm. He criticizes the musicians for going over the range, producing unnaturally high sounds, not always being in tune, playing with too much effort – whereas before, the natural range of the voice was adapted by the instruments and every instrument had its own character perfectly reflected in the piece written for it. The instruments do not follow their natural way anymore and the public admires anything bizarre, surprising and noisy more than the simple touching emotions. The composers neglect the rules, force the character and try to overwhelm the main voice melody by ornamenting it instead of letting it sound. The cantabile passages are full of superfluous ornaments and the fast passages are played too fast, the ear cannot understand anymore what is being played. Everything became more interesting for the eyes than the ears. The intonation is not so pure and instead of making somebody cry and touching him, musicians are shocking.

“What touches the heart, what seduce the soul is not fashionable. We admire what is strange, what is unique, what surprises, what astonishes.”²⁰

“The harmony the most natural and the most complete is less touching, in the feeling of the plurality, than a composition charged of work, ruffled of difficulties, which make just a lot of noise rather than an impression.”²¹

“Bon goût” according to Bollioud:

“...the good taste is what congruent to the nature; what is approved by the reason; what is not outré nor affected, which pleased to our senses; what seduce our heart, what interests us; where we found nothing shocking, revolting, what the most famous artistes practice everywhere; what the real connoisseurs estimate. All the rest which doesn’t have these qualities has a bad taste.”²²

¹⁹ Bollioud, *De la corruption*, p. 7 “La première fonction du musicien est la composition: s’il veut exceller dans son art, il faut nécessairement qu’il soit harmoniste par règles et par principes. Les qualités les plus indispensable du compositeur sont le génie, la méthode, le goût. Le but qu’il doit se proposer dans son travail, est d’imiter la nature, de flater l’oreille, de toucher, d’élever le coeur; d’excite à son gré les passions; de donner l’ame, de l’expression à ces chants; de les rendre nouveaux et variés, par les tours, par le beau choix des cordes et de sujets; avec élégance le sens des paroles, s’il compose de la musique vocale; de prêter, pour ainsi dire, des parols aux sons, & de la vie aux chordes, s’il travaille pour l’instrumentale, en imitant par des traits vifs & animés, le tendre, le naturel de la voix.” (Ibidem)

²⁰ Ibidem, p. 14 “Ce qui touche le coeur, ce qui séduit l’ame n’est plus de façon. On admire ce qui est bizarre, ce qui est singulier, ce qui surprend, ce qui étonne.” (Ibidem)

²¹ Bollioud, *De la corruption*, p. 15 “L’Harmonie la plus naturelle & la plus complete est moins touchante, au sentiment de la pluralité, qu’une composition chargée de travail, hérissée de difficultés, qui se réduit à faire beaucoup plus de bruit quo d’impression.” (translated by R. Kubínová)

²² Ibidem, p. 48 “...le bon goût est ce qui est conforme à la nature; ce qui est approuvé par la raison; ce qui n’est, ni outré, ni affecté, ce qui plaît à nos sens; ce qui séduit notre coeur, ce qui nous intéresse; ce en quoi nous ne trouvons rien qui nous choque, rien qui nous révolte, ce quo les fameaux artistes ont le plus universellement

“Finally, we change the form of our music, because we aspire too much the imitation of foreigners. That is a stumbling-block of our musicians. The Italian taste seduced them so much that they integrate it into their playing and compositions. They often borrow from the Italians the defaults they even do not have. The good Italian music is not so bad as we suppose.”²³

pratiqué; ce que les vrais connoisseurs estiment. Tout ce qui n’a pas ces qualités ne peut être que de mauvais goût.”(Ibidem)

²³Ibidem, p. 42 “Enfin, l’on change la forme de notre musique, parce qu’on aspire trop à l’imitation des étrangers. C’est là l’écueil de nos musiciens. Le goût Italien les séduit tellement, qu’ils le répandent sans discernement dans leur jeu & dans leurs compositions. Ils prêtent même souvent aux Italiens, en voulant les imiter, des défauts qu’ils n’ont pas. La bonne musique Italienne n’est point si bizarre qu’on nous la suppose.”(Ibidem)

1.2 Characteristic of both styles – resume

Having described the sources in previous chapter, I will resume the characteristics of each national style.

I will characterise the Italian and French styles in following aspects: instruments, forms, composition and interpretation

French style:

The composition is often compared with the poem for its rhythm - dactylic imitation of the dance, structure - regularity of certain measures or rondo with regularly repeated refrain and ornaments – imitating the birds so the nature. The piece is usually titled by the name of the place or a person or has simply a direct character indication.

A French composition conforms to the rules; it deviates from them only in extreme cases to express something truly special.

The instruments often used in France at the beginning of 18th century were the viol, traverso and harpsichord. The viol and traverso were very suitable instruments for expressing the introverted and sweet character of French music, especially in the intimate atmosphere of salons or small rooms, and they were the perfect imitators of the voice.

French music was often criticized for following the compositional rules dogmatically, its lack of harmonic surprises and too much focus on the melodic line.

The term “bon gout” is described as a natural flow, effortlessness and simplicity in order to please and touch.

The French nation has a difficulty to receive anything new because of its very conservative aristocracy and its absolutistic monarch Luis XIV.

An interesting aspect is found also in the notation of French music: the violin clef on the first line of the staff is used to notate the *dessus* parts.

Italian style:

In France, Italian music signified something new.

The new coming forms from Italy were solo and trio sonata at the end of the 17th century, and the concerto at the beginning of the 18th century.

The structure of Italian music is often compared with the prose for its irregularity in form, violation of grammatical rules and over-ornamentation. Italian music was full of new tonal relationships and tonal diversities. It introduced new vocabulary of dissonances and their expressive use, chromatics, counterpoint complexity and virtuosic “showing off” passages. Italian musicians were not afraid of breaking the rules and going over the range of their instruments. By the conservative part of French musicians, Italian music has been seen as rude, extroverted, disgusting, frightening and violent. By the “moderns”, it was accepted as something interesting that enriches French music and makes it progress.

By the end of 17th century, the French violin players could not compete with their Italian colleagues. According to Corrette, it was apparently too hard to find a violin player in Paris who can play the double stops of Corelli’s sonatas:

“At the time, Corelli published his fifth opus, a masterpiece of the art. The mister Duke of Orléans, formerly the regent of the kingdom, was extremely curious about music, wanted to hear these sonatas, but could not find any violins in Paris capable of playing chords. He was obliged to have them sung by three voices. However, this sterility of the violin did not last long. Some worked night and day to learn these sonatas, so that after several years there

appeared three violinists who performed them: Chatillon, who was also an organist, François Duval and Baptiste Anet.”²⁴

Violoncello was another instruments coming from Italy suiting much better to the technical demanders of “new” music and acoustical requirements of big concert hall.

²⁴ Michel Corrette, *Le Maître de clavecin pour l'accompagnement, méthode théorique et pratique* (Paris: auteur, Bayard, Le Clerc and Castagnere, 1753), preface: “Dans le même tems Corelli donna son 5e Oeuvre, Chef d'Oeuvre de l'art. Feu Monsieur le Duc d'Orleans depuis Régent du Royaume étant extrêmement Curieux de Musique voulut entendre ces Sonates mais ne pouvant trouver alors aucun Violon dans Paris capable de jouer par accords. Il fut obligé de les faire chanter par trois voix. Mais cette sterilité de Violon ne dura pas longtems. Chacun travailla jour et nuit a apprendre ces Sonates; de sorte qu'au bout de quelques années parut trois Violons qui les executerent. Chatillon qui étoit aussi Organiste, Duval et Baptiste.”

2 Social circumstances and painting of the background

The cultural interaction between Italy and France has a very long history.

Italy raised its prosperity mainly during the Renaissance times between 14th and 16th century and became a model for the rest of Europe. Rome was a centre of art in general and in 17th and 18th century many musicians, painters and sculptors went to Italy in order to accomplish their studies or simply observing the Roman art. The foundation of French Academy in Rome in 1666 by Louis XIV was one of the examples of such an exchange. French Academy was there to provide the scholarship for French talented artists who won the prestigious Prix de Rome and could study in Rome. At the beginning this scholarship was only for architectures, painters and sculptures and from 1803 for musicians as well. The artists passing through Rome then usually used the surname “La Romain” as well as for distinguishing themselves from the large families of the same profession. This was the case of J. M. Hotteterre or his contemporaries such as engraver Etienne Picard or painter Jacques Dumont.

On the other hand there were many Italian artists coming to France mainly through the Concert spirituel or other engagements in the aristocratic houses. They enrich French culture but caused as well many controversial opinions about their art.

The French aristocracy headed by Luis XIV was very conservative and closed to anything new. On the other hand Lully, who was considered as one of the greatest French composer was Italian and was very much supported by the king. But Lully himself tried to become French and refused any impact in the Italian influences on French music.

The progressive part in the society open to anything new was represented by Philip II, Duke of Orléans, very controversial person who had a great power in the society and influenced the reception of Italian music in France.

Although the long-standing scholarly tradition that attributes the negative French view of a certain segment of the French musical public, there was however, another factor at work in the reception of Italian music: the attitude of that ideal audience, *les honnêtes gens*. Their requirement that art reflects their emphasis on presenting a refined person and an effortless ease in all aspects of life played an important role not only in the success of French opera, but also in the resistance to the two often criticized Italian qualities: fiery passions and complex musical science.

The other completely new medium influencing the taste was *Mercure de France*-a weekly newspaper founded in 1672 by writer Jean Donneau de Visé for publishing the news from the court, the small poems and anecdotes as well as the critics of the concerts. *Mercure* was mostly pro-Italian music. This periodic continued until 1825.

2.1 Musical life in Versailles

During the reign of Luis XIV (1638-1715), Versailles as a targets royal palace in the world, became a centre of aristocracy and cultural life which replaced the dispersed salons of Paris. Luis XIV was a big music lover, amateur harpsichord and guitar player. Music have been apparently heard every day and everywhere in Versaille during his reign.

„La Musique de Roy“ consisted of:

La Chapelle Royale - the music in the royal chapel was mostly religious such as grand motetes played by all the “Musique du Roy”. The music masters were Charpentier,

Lully, Delalande, Campra, Mondoville and Couperin as a *sous-maitre* for the liturgical festivities.

La Musique de la chambre - consisted of composers, singers, instrumentalists, *Grand Bande* (vingt-quatre violon du Roi), *Petit Band* vingt-et- un, a harpsichord player (Chambonnières or d'Anglebert) and musicians of the cabinet.

La Grande Ecurie – consisted of winds, brass, drums and occasional flutes and violins. Music mostly for outdoors festivities such as military music, huntings, fanfares, receptions of ambassadeurs and background music.

The typical French orchestra of the time was a standard Lullian five-part string orchestra:

Le dessus, haute-contre, taille, quinte and basse de violon, whose parts are written in French violin, soprano, mezzo-soprano, alto and bass clefs. This group combines with doubling or independent winds for particular coloristic effects. The orchestra can also alternate with smaller trio-textured groups made up of solo instruments: two violins or flutes and continuo, or a trio of oboes with two oboes and a bassoon. This trio texture was used preferentially for double-continuo airs and for instrumental introductions entitled “ritournelle.”

Any artistic activity was patronized by the crown itself and only king had a power on influence the musical taste. Although the king's taste was highly influential, it did not entirely stop the performance of Italian music at court under the patronage of its enthusiasts. In the 1680's and '90's, an influential group of young amateurs formed around Louis XIV's only son, the Grand Dauphin who, as the next king was a natural patron of choice for the younger generation waiting for their taste of power and privilege. This group, whose members were in many cases interested in the Italian style, began to play an increasingly important role in the cultural life of Versailles during the years in which Louis withdrew from court entertainments. Madame Maintenon (second wife of Louis XIV) was very pious and had an influence on musical taste of Louis XIV, so in the end of his life he avoided the opera and theatre. Finding fewer and fewer *fêtes* at court, they began staging many of their own events. This group became central in organizing and participating in the heady round of balls, plays, masquerades and musical performances. It was in association with the musical events of this period—many of them held by this group—that reports of Italian music began to multiply. Members of this group also acted as patrons to composers who incorporated Italian musical elements into the French style. The music was mostly by André Campra for the *Fêtes galantes* reflected in Watteau's paintings.

The death of Louis XIV in 1715 marked the end of an era in French music. The musical life in Versailles represented the by the absolutist monarchy moved in Paris which became in 18th century a centre of a cultural life.

2.2 Concert spirituel

Concert spirituel, one of the first public concert series in Europe, was founded by Anne Danican Philidor in 1725 and lasted until 1790. Philidor was an oboe player of Royal Chapel. The main purpose of this series was to provide an entertainment during the religious holidays when the other spectacles such as Paris Opera, Comédie Française and Comédie Italienne were closed. The program, especially at the beginning, consisted mainly of sacred choral works such as grand motets and virtuosic instrumental pieces particularly for the violin but also for the flute and other instruments presented at almost every concert. The concerts

took place in Salle des Cent Suisses in the Tuilleries Palace. They started at six o'clock in the evening and were primarily attended by the bourgeois, the lower aristocracy, and foreign visitors.

As *Mercure* reports, often two virtuosos appeared on the same program usually playing separate pieces of symphonies or concertos, sometimes in collaboration in duos. On the violin often performed were: Anet, Guignon, Senallié, Rebel, Francoeur and Leclair.

Among flute virtuoso we could find Blavet, Lucas, Taillart, Guilleman, Buffardin and German flutist Wendling. The musicians are much better recorded than compositions they played. Blavet and Leclair were playing very often together.

2.3 Music in salons and private houses

Another important factor in the reception of Italian music was the attitude of the "ideal" audience so called "*honnête gens*". The concept of noble civility played a big role especially during Louis XIV. The *honnête gens* were meeting in "bienséance" following the etiquette which reflected so much in the character of French music.

- perfect but invisible self control
- proper behaviour for a particular class of person, grace
- the content didn't matter so much for them but the way how the things were presented
- balance between learned and natural, civility, politeness, noble nature, constant self control
- standards of behaviour had an important implications for artistic reception
- words that show too much technique and pomp were considered as unnatural
- *honnêteté* = good taste in spite of breaking rules
- the refined and an effortless ease in all aspects of life
- rejection of fiery passions and complex musical science- represented by Italians

There were different rules for executing the music in the salons. It should reflect the values of *honnêtes gens*. Bertrand de Bacilly although distinguish 2 kinds of singing: One operatic and other in salon. Even if his writing *Discours qui se rapporte à la critique* is from 1669, the aesthetic requirements of the salons stayed until 18th century. "Many people imagine that singing, taking after declamation and having the aim of expressing the passions, must be executed with much affectation, which others would call exaggerated song. I myself believe that it is only for Recitative-that is, for the theatre-that this great affectation, which is often accompanied by a grimace, was introduced into singing. For song that is practiced in the salon, however, I maintain that its agreement is enhanced by avoiding this too turgid manner of singing that takes away all its grace and delicateness...it's therefore necessary to conclude in favour of gallant and delicate singing and to say that the other (manner) is more appropriate in the mouth of a professional singer whose aim is to delight a gathering of listeners, than in that of a lady who only sings for her own amusement ²⁵

²⁵ Bacilly, *Discours*, p.11-13: "Plusieurs s'imaginent que le Chant tenant de la Declamation, et ayant pour but d'exprimer les Passions doit estre executé avec beaucoup d'affection que d'autres appelleroient Outrer le Chant; pour moy je tiens que ce n'est pas avoir adjouté au Chant que cette grande affectation qui souvent est accompagnée de grimace, si ce n'est pour le Recitatif, je veux dire pour le Theatre; mais pour le chant qui se pratique dans les Ruelles, je soutiens que c'est adjoûter de l'agrément que d'en retrancher cette façon de chanter trop ampoulée qui en oste toute le mignardise, et tout la delicatesse, ...il faut donc conclurre en faveur du Chant galant et delicat, et dire que l'autre fied mieux dans la bouche d'un Maistre Chantre, qui a pour but de regaler une assemblée d'Auditeurs, que dans celle d'une Dame qui ne chante que pour son divertissement."

On the other hand the music sessions in some private houses of progressive burgoise where centre of performing Italian music. Such as the largest and best privats concerts in Paris during this period were held at the house of the wealthy tax farmer La Pouplinière between 1731 and 1762 (Rameau conducted them). Of special interest is a salon concert given in 1739 in which Blavet played “une parodie sur un menuet italien d’Endel extremement travaillé” in the house of M.d’Adore.

Reunion musical in the house of Pierre Crozat who took over after Duke of Orléans starts to be formed as a particular musical foyer. One’s a month there were the renoméd artists from whole word, mainly Italians. The most of the music was in Italian taste and forms “à la mode” such as cantatas and sonatas. Besides the religious music there were many duetti da camera and the cantatas by Bononcini, Stradella or Clérambault. We could hear other composers such as Bassabi, Gabrieli, Zuccari, Somis, Corelli, Albinoni, Locatelli, Scarlatti. Only few French pieces were performed there such as excerpts of Lully’s Operas, Pièces de viole and Pièces en trio by Marais and Sonatas by Mondoville.

2.4 Philippe II, Duke of Orléans (Duke of Chartres) and the role of musical patronage

Philippe II was the most important patron of Italian music in France and one of the first supporters of Italian music.

He was a member of a Royal family - his father was a brother of Luis XIV and house of Orléans has been one of the most powerful and influential noble families in the history of France since the middle ages. Philippe was born in 1674 in the palace Saint-Cloud and died in 1723 in Versailles. He served as a regent between 1715 and 1723. After the death of his father in 1701, Philippe became the Duke of Orléans and inherited the long-standing institution of father’s household music, the largest corps of musicians of any noble house in France after that of the king. Not content with the spectacle of the Opera, Philippe organized numerous gatherings and *fêtes* in which music played a role, particularly at St-Cloud, his palace outside Paris.

Duke was described as a very controversial person. In his childhood he received very broad and remarkable education and excels in many disciplines. Among of his biggest interests was music. He was fascinated by everything which is new which undoubtedly grew out of his personal and political frustration with the staid conservatism of the aging Louis XIV. He was one of the first persons in France who owned an “Echomètre,” Sauveur’s device for measuring musical tempo in seconds and was fascinated by many mathematical aspects of music and other filisophical topics of that time.

From his early age he had a rebellion mind and was frustrated by the hypocritical behaviour of the courtiers around Luis XIV, which causes many exceses in his social life.

The musical education of the Duke was very broad. He played transverse flute, viol, harpsichord, he also sang and studied a composition.

There is a hypotheses that his flute teacher could have been Hotteterre since Hotteterre did have some kind of connection to the Duke, such as including the rondeau entitled “Le duc d’Orléans” in his *Livre de pièces pour la flûte traversière* (1708) or Allemande “La cascade de Saint-Cloud” from the same book and dedicated his collection of trio sonatas (1712) to Philippe. But we don’t have any proof Hotteterre was a teacher of the Duke.

Sonates en Trio pour les flûtes traversières, flûtes a bec, violons, hautbois, &c. Dediées a Son Alteße Royale Monseigneur le Duc d’Orleans ... Op. 3 (Paris: the author and Foucault, 1712), dedication:

“ The good taste which YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS allways witnessed for the fin Arts, and the protection for which it is honoured, could not have been contributed for emulation which we see nowadays par those who does it as a profession. The honor to please to such a illuminated prince redoubled the application and the efforts of those who dare to aspire it. Indeed, Monseigneur, the surprising progresse you have made when you amused yourself during the destined moments to relax from your heroic work, make you able to judge it. The music is honoured by your attention. I was a witnesse of your savants compositions in the concerts. Also, MONSEIGNEUR, the aprobation of YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS, is the principal object where I dare to care my ambition, happy if it does not please to YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS, and if it deigns to receive this little work as a fidèle witnesse of the respect from my soul...Hotteterre.”²⁶

Philippe’s gamba teacher was Forqueray who was a well-known devotee of Italian music.

“Forqueray appeared in the world in the moment when Itlaian excited by their surprising emulation in 1698. He was tempted to do everything they did on their violin on his viol. The unique strings and the features the most striking of the good Italian authers seemd to him be so familiar...”²⁷

Forqueray continued to perform for the duke and enjoy his support in the period of his Regency. Indeed, one of Forqueray’s *Pièces de viole mises en pièces de clavecin* is entitled “La Régente.” Another stunning French gamba player Marais dedicated to Duke also many pieces.

Charpentier was Philippe’s teacher of composition. The Duke’s composition lessons were thoroughly influenced by Charpentier’s own Italianate training under Carissimi and were very much in keeping with the rest of Philipp’s modernist education.

Duke’s patronage:

Philippe’s hiring of Italian-influenced French musicians and his importation of Italians was certainly a product of his curiosity about the strengths of and differences between the two musics. He was also evidently a party to the controversy concerning the merits of French and Italian opera that would appear in the writings of Raguenet and Le Cerf. While much of the Duke’s patronage seems to have been motivated largely by his own personal curiosity about how the French and Italian musical styles might be reconciled, the music of his court nevertheless had a considerable influence on the wider French musical world. The most influential aspect (and the most important record) of the musical activities of Philippe’s court

²⁶ “Le goût que VOTRE ALTESSE ROYALE a toujours témoigné pour les beaux Arts, et la protection dont Elle a bien voulu les honorer, n’a pas peu contribué a l’emulation que l’on voit regner aujourd’huy parmi ceux qui en font profession. L’honneur de plaire a un Prince aussi éclairé a redoublé l’application et les efforts de ceux qui se sentoient assés de courage pour y aspirer. En effèt, Monseigneur, les progrès surprenans que vous y avés faits lorsque vous vous y estes amusé dans les momens destiné a vous delasser de vos heroïques travaux, font assés connoitre combien vous estes capable d’en juger. La Musique n’a pas eu le moins de part a l’honneur de votre attention. J’ay été témoin des sçavantes compositions de VOTRE ALTESSE ROYALE, dans les Concerts ou Elle m’a fait la grace de m’appeller. Aussi MONSEIGNEUR, l’aprobation de VOTRE ALTESSE ROYALE, est le principal objet où j’ay ôsé porter mon ambition, heureux si elle ne deplaît point a VOTRE ALTESSE ROYALE, et si Elle daigne recevoir ce petit Ouvrage en temoignage fidelle du zele respekt avec lequel je suis....Hotteterre” (translated by R.Kubínová)

²⁷ D’Anquin, *Siècle littéraire*, p. 143 “Forqueray parut dans le monde au moment que les Italiens exciteront en France une émulation étonnante vers l’année 1698. Il tenta de faire sur sa viole tout ce qu’ils faisoient sur leur violon, et il vint à bout de son entreprise. Les cordes singulières et les traits les plus frappans des bons Auteurs d’Italie, lui étoient tellement familiers...”(Ibidem)

was the publication of the compositions by his musicians. The music thus exposed in print was primarily written in a mixture of the Italian and French styles.

As one of the most princely patrons of Italian music in France during this period, the Duke of Orléans was an influential exponent of the new ideas. Orléans encouraged Italian and Italianate music in France largely by supporting the activities of individual musicians. This support came in a number of forms: employment in his service (whether on an irregular or permanent basis), recommendation for positions with other institutions, financial contributions to publications, and the granting of pensions or gifts. Musicians associated with Philippe undoubtedly also benefited by the mere appearance of being favored by such a powerful and musically knowledgeable prince. Long-term employment of musicians was certainly the most important among the duke's various means of support, and Orléans's hiring of Italians as well as Italian-trained or Italian-influenced musicians had a considerable effect on French musical culture. This was due not only to the concerts and publications of his musicians but also to reports in the press. During his most active years as a patron, a number of pieces were published in the *Mercure galant* that not only describe his activities but also laud his taste. In 1743 on the role of Italian instrumental music in France, Titon du Tillet listed a number of the musicians and their patrons who were influential in establishing the new taste. The musicians he lists were almost to a man connected in some way to the Duke, through either employment, dedication, personal contact or a combination of factors.

Some of the musicians hired by the Duke: violonist Guido, Chatillon, Duval, Anet, Mascitti, cellist and composer Stuck and the Italian-influenced Frenchman, Morin as well as singers coming from Italy such as Pasquini.

Duval was considered as one of the best violin players in France being able to perform Corelli's sonatas and write in Italian style. He performed with Couperin Concerts Royaux in 1715.

Couperin did compose a musical portrait of Philippe, a superb, highly contrapuntal and dissonant allemande which appears in his third book of *Pièces de clavecin*, entitled "La Régente, ou la Minerve."

Philippe's position in a "querelle":

Philippe was involved in the arguments between "the ancients" who valued tradition, faith, and an aesthetic based on the imitation of classical models, and "the moderns" who questioned received truth, believed in progress through reason, and upheld modern developments in the arts. Philippe cultivated his diverse interests through conversation with the many different figures attracted to his court by his reputation as an important patron and astute amateur. His artistic interests, in particular, show that his position in the aesthetic dimension of the *Querelle des anciens et des modernes*, while certainly influenced by many modernist ideas, admitted the merits of both sides and sought reconciliation between them.

3 How do the Italian and French styles mix in the music for traverso by Leclair and Blavet

“Mais revenons au Concert spirituel, où nous l’avons laissée en 1735, méritant aux côtés de Leclair l’éloge suivant qu’inséraient les Nouvelles littéraires de l’abbé Porée: Leclair et Blavet sont plus grands consolateurs qu’Epictète et Boèce.”²⁸

As I mentioned in the chapter about Concert spirituel, Leclair and Blavet performed very often together. They represent for me a nice union of both styles.

As it was said before Paris in 18th century was a big centre of music and cultural life. The music could have been played and heard not only in Concert spirituel and Opera but in private houses full of music making by aristocrats and amateurs.

As Nemeitz describe in his *Journal* the most famous instruments of that time were traverso and harpsichord. In 1727, Ernst Gottlieb Baron wrote that the instruments on which the French excelled were the viola da gamba, traverso and oboe. This evidence comes also from the number of published music and Hotteterre’s *Princips de la flute traversière* (1707) when he writes in the preface that flute is “un instrument des plus agréables, et des plus à la mode”. Hotteterre’s Princip was the first flute method which was reedited many times. The popularity of the instrument can be seen also in amounts of paintings including flute players. The interest in traverso became in this time a fashion which could have been explained by a practical size of the instrument suiting to the outdoor situations and easy to care. On the other hand, as it was described in the first chapter, traverso suited somehow very well to French music performed in smaller places such as salons and small rooms rather than large concert halls. After the death of Louis XIV the musical centre moved from Versailles to Paris and the interest in traverse grows even more up till 1750’s . At that moment the flute had a decline in the number of composers, mainly among those who were not performers themselves. During the reign of Louis XV the flute became less important, even if the king apparently played this instrument.

By the end of 17th and beginning of 18th century the main compositional form for flute was a suite. Most of the composers of flute music of that time were flutists attached to the court and in some cases they were the instruments makers as well-such as famous Hotteterre’s family. Around 1725, the principal form became a sonata, and the leading composers were flutists who starred as soloists at public concerts, gave lessons to wealthy students on the instrument and were employed in the services of aristocrats and bourgeois. Flutists were more active in the city rather than in the court and the sonata continue to be a principal form of flute music. Flute had a difficulty to adapt towards a new stylistic changes such as the beginning of gallant style and their new requirements and another expression maybe more relevant for the violin. The beginning of larger formations such as a quartet, quintet or symphonic orchestra gave another role to the instruments as well. The other reason could be a natural decline in the fascination about the instrument as we could see in the case of viola da gamba or other instruments of 17th century.

²⁸ Lionel de la Laurencie in “Deux imitateurs Francois des Bouffons: Blavet et Dauvergne,” L’Année musical, 1912, p.70-71

3.1 The famous French flute school. Predecessors of Blavet

The two leading composers and flute players of the first generations of French flute players was Michel de La Barre who was a 1st flute player in Paris Opera and Jacques-Martin Hotteterre the flutist “de la chamber du roi”.

As many musicians of that time, Hotteterre played as well many other instruments and began his career in Grand Ecurie as a basse de hautbois and basse de violon player between 1705 and 1707. Around 1708 he became a flutist “de la chamber du roi” and dedicated many of his pieces to Louis XIV but also to the Duke of Orléans as well as to his chamberlain who took the flute lessons with Hotteterre. Hotteterre dedicated him *Deuxième suite de pièces à deux dessus* in 1717. Hotteterre and his surname “le Romain” was one of the first reasons of my question about Italian influences in France. From 1698 till 1700 Hotteterre was hired by marquis Ruspoli in Rome who was very interested in winds especially in traverso. Corelli played in his house as well so he could meet Hotteterre. Hotteterre in his *Art de prelude* gives some examples of Corelli’s music.

Other flute players associated with the “musique du roi” were Philidors. One of them Anne Danican Philidor, founder of Concert spirituale, was a great performer on the flute appointed as “flutist de la chamber” in 1712. Pierre Philidor was a great oboe and flute player and one of the Philidors played Concerts Royaux with Couperin in 1714/15.

The following generation of French flute players around 1720’s is marked by publication of sonatas and entire new generation of composers such as Boismortier and Corrette - none of them flute players nor attached to the court and independent of patronage. The first flutist in this generation writing for the flute was Naudot who wrote first solo concertos for flute in France followed by Blavet.

“ Différents Auteurs ont donné des principes de la flute traversiere M.Hotteterre le Romain a été le premier qui a traité cette matiere, ses Principes qui sont tres excellents, ne laissent rien a desirer dans le temps qu’ils ont paru mais a present que la flute est portée au plus haut degrez et que la Musique Italiene a pris le dessus ces principes ne suffisent plus...”²⁹

3.2 Michel Blavet

Blavet has been considered, according to the contemporary sources, as the most brilliant flute virtuoso in the first half of the 18th century in France. His first public presentation was in 1726 in Concert spirituel where he appeared many times during twenty years always with great success. He raised the level of flute playing to the new heights of virtuosity and succeeded in establishing the flute on the level of the violin as a solo instrument. His breath taking playing, highly praised for its rich, pure tone, moving expressiveness and perfect intonation as well as for its technical virtuosity, undoubtedly excited other flutists to emulation and increased the popularity of the flute immeasurably. Blavet was credited with the transformation of flute technique from something languorous and easy to an exciting, exact and brilliant art. His remarkably full career included over forty

²⁹ Mahault Antoine, *Nouvelle Methode pour apprendre en peu de tems a jouer de la flute traversière*. Paris, De La Chevadière – Lyon ,Legaux ,s.d.=1759, p. 2

years in the service of various aristocrats in Paris, more than 30 years in the “musique du roi”, and about 20 years in the orchestra of Paris opera.

Born in Besançon in March 1700, Blavet taught himself at an early age to play almost all instruments, particularly the traverso and bassoon. He played the flute left handed which was maybe the cause of self-tutoring.

„Blavet est un virtuose parmi les plus grands et le fait qu'il joue de son instrument en le tenant sur la gauche ajoute encore à sa réputation.“³⁰

In 1718 Blavet was invited to go to Paris but he put off this offer until 1723 when he followed the Duke of Lévis. Three years later he made his debut at the newly-formed Concerts spirituels along with the flutist Lucas with a very good critic. In November of the same year, Blavet played again at Concert Spirituel “des concerto sur la flute traversiere, qui firent un extreme plaisir a la nombreuse Asssemblée qui s’y trouva.”³¹ and in March 1727 he performed there with “justesse”, “vivacité” and precision admirable”. In August 1728, he and the violonist Jean Marie Leclair “jouerent separement des concerto sur le violon et la flute, qui furent tres-goutez et don’t l’execution parut d’une grand precision.” In 1728 and 1729 Blavet played alongside other distinguished violinists - Guignon, Senallié and Aubert as well as Leclair and on Decembre 24 and 25 1728 he joined Battistin, the cellist and Guignon in a trio. Blavet and Leclair continues to be associated throughout the years 1731-35 on the same concerts programs at the Salle des Tuilleries, where the Concerts spirituels were held, and they were always enthusiastically received. Around 1726, Blavet left the service of the Duke of Lévis and became one of the musicians in the household of the Prince of Carignan. In 1731/32 he joined the post for Count of Clermont. In 1730’(1736) Blavet entered in the “musique du roi”. He played the “Concerts devant la reine” in January and March of 1736, and in the same year, the Mercure de France called him an “Ordinaire de la Musique de la Chambre”. Besides his posts with the Count of Clermont and at the court Blavet was first flutist in the Paris Opera orchestra from 1740-1759. He was sought in private concerts afterwards as well.

Blavet continue to appear regularly in Concerts Spirituels along the violonists: Guignon, Aubert and Cupis, the bassoonist Ruault and the flutist Lucas. In 1742 he began to play on the same program with the violinist Mondoville. The Mercure often describes the pieces he played as Concerto or pieces de simphonie but it seldom specified the particular works or their composer. In June 1745, however, it reported that Blavet played some Telemann quartets on 4 separate occasions with the famous bass violist Forqueray, the Italian violinist Marella, and cellist l’Abbé. Although during Telemann’s visit of Paris in 1737-38 his quartets were played by Blavet, Forqueary, Guignon, Edouard:

“ L’art accompli avec lequel les quatuors furent joués par le flûtiste Blavet, le violoniste Guignon, le gambiste Forqueray le jeune et le violoncelliste Édouard mérite une mention particulière si les mots peuvent le premettre. Leur interprétation a littéralement

³⁰ Marpurg Friedrich Wilhelm (1718-1755), Historisch-kritische Beyträge. Berlin, J. J. Schützen Witwe [G. A. Lange], 1754-1778

³¹ Mercure Nov.1726, p.2579

subjugué l'auditoire de courtisans et de citadins et m'a valu presque instantanément une réputation quasiment universelle accompagnée d'une incroyable civilité.”³²

Earlier an art considered particularly adept at expressing only the tender and sad emotions, according to Ragueneau and Brossard, flute playing in Blavet's hands became an exciting turbulent affair. He helped to raise the popularity of flute even more (pieces by Buffardin, Loeillet, Leclair, Chéron)

3. 2. 1 The description of Blavet's playing by contemporary sources

“La hasard a fait trouver à M.Blavet, en promenant le trou de l'embouchure sur ses levres, un endroit à sa bouche, entre le milieu et le coin, si favorable, qu'il est toujours sûr d'en tirer les plus beaux sons. Sans cette heureuse conformation locale, il s'y seroit donné bien de la peine, ou bien il auroit été obligé de renoncer à la Flûte, qu'il n'avoit choisie que parceque le Basson, dont il jouoit supérieurement, lui incommodoit la poitrine. ”³³

“On conviendra aussi, si l'on est sincere, qu'il est très difficile de jouer just de cet instrument. J'aurois cru même la chose impraticable à ceux qui ont exercé le plus longtems, si l'inimitable Blavet ne m'avoit prouvé le contraire, en l'entendant exécuter des morceaux difficiles, choisis dans les tons dieze et bémol, qu'il joue à la satisfaction complete de l'oreille la plus scrupuleuse: son exactitude, son embouchure pleine et nourrie, et son goût lui ont acquis la premiere place. Parmi les Etrangers, Bufardin a été un des meilleurs que nous ayons entendus. Quantité d'autres, François, Allemands et Italiens ont paru avec succès au Concert spirituel, et Taillard y a été applaudi avec justice. Les petites Flûtes, les Flageolets même seront utiles au compositeur quand il les placera à propos. La longueur de certaines Opéra nous fait éprouver chaque jour, combien la variété des Instruments leur est nécessaire. ”³⁴

“...M.Blavet, qui de l'aveu de tous les sçonnaisseurs, ne connoit personne au dessus de lui pour l'exécution des Sonates et des Concertos. L'embouchure la plus nette, les sons les mieux filés, une vivacité qui tient du prodige, un égal succès dans le tendre, dans le voluptueux et dans les passages les plus difficiles : Voilà ce qu'est M.Blavet. Je suis sûr que le public ne me dédira point et qu'il ratifiera mes éloges. ”³⁵

“Le mercredi les sieurs Rebel & Francouer, de l'Académie royale de musique, jouèrent une pièce de symphonie à deux violons, qui fit beaucoup de plaisir. Les sieurs Blavet et Lucas jouèrent aussi séparément sur la flûte allemande des concerto qui furent très applaudis. ”³⁶

“Cependant, malgré tous ces avantages, le violon rencontra dans la flûte traversière une émule, au point où il ne s'attendais pas, et qui rabattait bien de la bonne opinion qu'il avait conçue de son propre mérite, & donnée aux autres sur la nature du son qu'il tirait. La flûte se

³² Telemann, Grundlage einer Ehren-Pforte,

³³ Anonyme : Découverte de l'embouchure, p. 2

³⁴ Ancelet, Observations sur la musique, p. 28

³⁵ d'Aquin : Letters sur les hommes celebres, p.150

³⁶ Mercure de France 1726

trouva mieux déclamée que le violon, être plus maîtresse d'enfler ou faire des diminutions. Après la fin du concert on en remporta cette opinion, que la flûte jouée par Blavet, s'entend, est préférable au premier violon, lorsqu'il s'agit d'imiter la voix, qui ne saurait, comme chacun sait, faire plusieurs tons à la fois.”³⁷

“Mr Blavet prit pour fonds l’admirable composition de Mr. Michel la deuxième Sonate du second Livre. Dans le prélude il fit des remplissage de l’une à l’autre note par compartimens, lesquels, l’harmonie étant conservée toute entière, prévenoient seulement l’ennui d’une trop grande simplicité... Il remplit l’oreille de sons moileux, étoffés d’une rondeur sans pareille, déclamés avec dignité, avec affection , d’une beauté ravissante. La noblesse de l’expression se trouva répandue dans toute la manière de jouer, dont on ne pouvoit rien détacher qui affectât un mérite particulier: lorsqu’en esprit on s’attachoit à quelque endroit ,on sentoit que cela faisoit partie d’un beau tout, mais qu’il n’en résultoit non plus une figure isolée, que si on détachoit quelque morceau de la divine façade du Louvre, il seroit soupçonner mille fois plus ...”³⁸

“Blavet, Lucas, les frères Braun jouèrent de la flûte traversière; Blavet fut le plus admirable.”³⁹

“On n'avait jamais entendu, sur la flûte traversière, que de très petits airs dénués d'expression qui ne demandaient qu'un peu de naturel et d'aisance que donne l'habitude. On ne soupçonnait pas même la perfection dont cet instrument était susceptible et dont il fut redevable à M. Blavet. Cet illustre musicien sut en tirer tous les accords les plus agréables dans ces sonates et concertos, avec une exécution nette et rapide, exacte et brillante dont personne encore n'avait donné l'idée. En un mot, les sons de la flûte traversière devinrent sous ses doigts, l'imitation parfaite d'une belle voix, et le charme des oreilles sensibles.”⁴⁰

“Réunissant de bonne heure la théorie et la pratique de son art, il fut bientôt jouer de presque tous les instruments, et particulièrement de la flute traversiere...”⁴¹

³⁷ Le Blanc, *Défense*, p.42

³⁸ Ibidem, p. 99-101

³⁹ Quantz, *Versuch einer Anweisung*.

⁴⁰ de Neufchâteau, *Éloge*, p.309

⁴¹ Ibidem, p.1

3. 2. 2 Jean Marie Leclair

Leclair was born in Lyon in 1697. He studied dance and violin with Somis, a student of Corelli, in Turin. Upon his return in Paris in 1723 he played many times in Concert spirituel where he executed very often with Blavet. In 1733 he was named *ordinaire de la musique* by Louis XV but resign in 1737 and went in Holland. From 1738-1748 he was engaged by the Princess of Orange in Den Haag as a private *maestro di cappella*. In 1743 he returned back to Paris and until his death served to the Duke of Gramont.

Leclair is a very good example of the synthesis of these two styles. He was called a “French Corelli” not only for his mastery of violin but mainly for his compositional style. He composed mostly concertos and sonatas- typical Italian instrumental forms. He wrote first violin concerto in France including double stops and other Italian elements such as use of contrasts, variation of ideas, richer collaboration between the base and “dessous”.

On the other hand he was seen as a French composer especially because of following aspects: some movements remind the dances or character of the *pièces*, demands of *inegalité*, written out ornamentation while in the slow movements of Italian sonatas the player is expected to improvise.

Some examples of the critics on Leclair’s playing:

“ On 6th of May, the day of Ascension, we sang two motets by M.de la Lande, and master Le Clerc played two Sonatas which were strongly applauded. ”⁴²

“Masters Le Clerc and Blavet, whose we had already the occasion to speak about them with praise, played separately the concertos on flute and violin, which was very tasteful whose execution appeared with a grand precision.”⁴³

“Masters Le Clerc and Blavet, played separately the concerto on violin and flute, which charmed the numerous assemble, that such a subject didn’t miss the attraction. ”⁴⁴

“Master Leclair played a sonata with such a accuracy possible, the same as a master Blavet in execution of a concerto which he played with accompagnement.”⁴⁵

Leclair’s sonatas and trios are admirable monuments.

„Ses sonnates et ses trio ne sont d’admirable monumens. Il nous venges des Italiens, en les forçant à lui rendre justice. Ils firent plus, ils adopterent et bien aupérieure a tou autre. On scait quo Leclerc porta lui meme l’execution aussi loin que la composition. Son jeu étoit

⁴² Mercure de France, Avril 1728, p. 856: “Le 6 Mai, jour de l’Ascension, on chanta deux Motets de feu M.de la Lande, et le sieur Le Clerc joua deux Sonates qui furent très –applaudies.” (translated by Radka Kubínová)

⁴³ Mercure de France, 1728 : “Les sieurs Le Clerc and Blavet, dont on a déjà eu occasion de parler avec éloge, jouerent séparément des concerto sur le violon et flute, qui furent très-goûtez et dont l’execution parut d’une grande precision.” (Ibidem)

⁴⁴ Ibidem: “Les sieurs le Clerc et Blavet , jourent séparément des Concerto sur violon et la flute, qui charmerent la nombreuse Assemblé, que tant d’excellens sujets ne manquent guères d’attirer.”(Ibidem)

⁴⁵ Mercure 1732, January, p.166: “Le sieur Leclair joua une sonate avec toute la justesse possible, de meme que le sieur Blavet dans l’execution d’un concerto qu’il joua avec accompagnement.”(translated by R.Kubínová)

sage, mais cette sagesse n'avoit rien de timide; elle provenoit d'un excès de goût plutôt que d'un défaut de hardiesse et de liberté."

3. 2. 3 The evidences of the mixture of the style in French flute music

The first pieces for traverso were airs, brunettes and chansons-so mostly vocal music. By the end of 17th century the first pieces written for traverso were suits with their typical French structure starting by prelude or allemande and having at least from five up till seventeen movements.

The first publication of pieces with the indication of flute and basso continuo was pieces by Michel de la Barre in 1702. The Italian influence was mostly in the structure and character of the movements. They consisted usually of four movements following the structure of the first French sonatas by Duval or Mascitti. They kept the prelude at the beginning and some movements had the name of a person or place indication. Some of them included Italian gigue and greater amount of imitations. As we can see, at the beginning there was not clear difference between these two forms. One of the first example of such a multi movement works is de la Barre's second book containing Quatrieme suite-Sonate(1715) their structure is: prelude-allemande-courante,grave ,gigue-grave and courant-Italian but prelude and gigue typically French. The second book include also suite called "Sonate l'Inconnue" and is the first French piece for solo flute and basse to be called sonata(1710). Neither the designation of "sonate" nor that of L'inconnue has any obvious origin in the music itself since the movement is a French ouverture and chaconne in form and style.

The trio sonatas by de la Barre and Hotteterre inclined towards Corellian *sonata da chiesa* with the 4 movement structure: Prelude-fugues or courante –grave and giges. Most of the other flute sonatas of the period emphasized dance movements and were scarcely different from the suites of the time. The violin sonata as form was pretty clear by the end of 17th century - the first French sonatas were Trios by Couperin (around 1692) written for violin. The Italian sonata contrasts further with the suits in their paucity of dance movements, inclusion of numerous fugues and the second movements in different key while French suite kept the unity of keys. Antoine Dornel's *Sonates a violon seul et suits pour la flute traversiere avec la basse*(1711) includes a difference in style between the violin and flute.

The technical features such as marching bass line and brilliant broken chord melodies also attest to the influence of Italian style. Thus, for French flute literature the early 18th century was a time of wavering between French and Italian stylistic traits and between older and newer styles, the major emphasis still being upon the French rather than the Italian if not on the old more than the new. From the middle of 1720's the picture was change dramatically.

By 1720's there was a new generation of flute players, composers and new forms such as concerto, trio sonata and solo sonatas. The concerto and sonata of 1720 and 30's became so popular that over took of suite. New generation of composers such as Blavet, Naudot, Leclair, Boismortiere, Loeillet, Corrette, Chéron began to bring the sonatas. Their setting was the same which means solo instrument with basso continuo or trio settings as the suits before but Boismortiere introduce a trio for unaccompanied flutes (1725). In 1722 the first entire book of sonatas for flute and bass appeared by: M.R.?(J.J.Rippert?) and in 1724 Boismortier adopted the term Sonata to two books of pieces for two flutes without bass.

The first concerto in France following Vivaldi's model was Boismortiere's Concertos for 5 flutes from 1727 followed by Naudot's set of solos concerto's for flute (around 1735) and Corrette's concerto for flute in 1730, followed by concertos from Leclair and Blavet.

Flute music from 1740-1750 had its decline in popularity and amount of the pieces especially solo sonatas. This period is marked by the beginning of gallant style introducing some new elements such as new dynamical devices, etc. In the trio sonatas the flute could not substitute the violin so easily anymore although the publishing of flute sonatas by Sammartini, Cannabich and Wendling in Paris continued. The Sonata broke into 3 movements form rather than 4 or 5 movements and only menuet stayed from old suits. The descriptive titles disappeared.

A new coming solo sonata for harpsichord accompanied by a flute was not well accepted in France. French flute music has a “problem” to adopt towards new stylistic changes.

New fashion of the duets without basso continuo was very popular form especially for making house music and for pedagogical purposes. The Trios for flute, violin and cello and quartets by Sammartini, Gullemain or Gossec’s were popular forms. According to the contemporary comments the flute didn’t suit to the concertos and sonatas so well and the best compositions stays little airs and brunettes.

Among many pieces written in “the mixture” I would like to mention : *Recueil de trio italiens et françois des meilleurs auteurs, pour deux flutes traversieres ou violins avec la basse chiffrée* (before 1709) by Michel Pignolet de Montéclair and “*Les pieces qui composent ces concerts sont les unes dans le gout Francois, les autres dans le gout Italien.*” The two different “gouts” show up in courantes, gavottes, and gigue à la Française and à l’Italienne and in airs in the ancient taste among others.

Conclusion: “Les Goûts réunis”

I would like to conclude my thesis with more than significant title of “Les Goûts réunis”.

I borrowed the title for my last chapter from the book of the same name by François Couperin published in 1724. The title represents for me the best conclusion of a stylistic interaction between French and Italian styles in the end of 17th and the beginning of 18th century.

In the preface, Couperin expresses his admiration for Lully who represents for him the best and biggest composer in France as well as the homage to Corelli. In Couperin’s youth when the new Trios Sonatas by Corelli came in France, he was influenced by them and was criticized for his Italianisms. But Couperin was far too individual a composer to slavishly adhere to any style, and his great achievement was to seek the reconciliation in between two styles.

The book includes two grand sonatas en Trio: The Apotheosis of Lully and Apotheosis of Corelli. In taking the two greatest protagonists of the opposing styles for his subject matter, the Corelli Apotheosis is scored in standard trio sonata form for two violins and continuo. There are seven movements, which, as in the Lully piece, are given picturesque titles and are clearly programmatic. The first movement finds the great Italian composer at the foot of Parnassus, gravely asking the Muses to admit him. The music has a typical Corellian breadth and seriousness. He is accepted and expresses his joy in a fugal movement. In the third movement Corelli relaxes by a fountain to long, sustained notes and suspensions. After a rapid movement recalling Corelli's virtuosity, he falls asleep to a "Sommeil," a dreamlike movement typical of those found in many Italian "church sonatas" of the period. He is awakened by the Muses to another lively movement, before finally expressing his thanks in a florid and dynamic fugue. Couperin’s supreme achievement in the Corelli Apotheosis is to pay tribute to Corelli while never for one moment allowing us to forget that he is a French composer achieving a true reunion between the two styles- that’s his true mastery.

In the opening movement of the Apotheosis of Lully in the Elysian field, there is a grave discourse with the shades that inhabit it. Later, Couperin depicts gestures typical of those found in Lully's operas (flashing scales to depict the flight of Mercury). While never losing its elegance, the music is often full of humour, as in the movement in which Lully is elevated to Parnassus. Here, little Italianate gestures remind one that Lully, the great champion of French music, was himself Italian-born. On Parnassus, Lully and Corelli meet and are persuaded by Apollo that the reunion of French and Italian music will achieve a musical perfection hitherto unknown. After each plays an air in his own style (Lully, first violin, and Corelli, second violin) in the final movement, "The Peace of Parnassus," the Muses of Italian and French music come together to produce the desired union. The Parnassus is of course in this context has a mythological is a residency of the muses in the head with Appolon.

“La Parnasse François” is the title of the biographical chronicle by Titon du Tillet published in 1732 and the sculpture in bronze of the same name made in 1718. The book is describing famous artists of the time under the reign of Louis XIV such as Lully, Couperin, Molère but Corelli Is the sculpture in bronze with people such as Luis XIV, Couperin, Lully, Molière and many others.

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