

JOSEPH TOUCHEMOULIN

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Here is another neglected composer and one we know little about him.

The BBC played a Sinfonia in C around 2005 and it was very enjoyable and I set out to find out about him but that was not very successful.

He was a French composer born at Chalon-sur-Saone in Burgundy on 23 October 1727. His father, Louis was an oboist. His mother was Jeanne Roulot.

Joseph studied in Italy with Guiseppe Tartini. Later Joseph became a violinist in the capelle at the Court of Bonn and therefore in the employ of the Prince Elector and Archbishop of Cologne. He was obviously successful and well-liked for by 1753 he has a salary estimated at a thousand florins. In 1754 one of his symphonies was performed at the Concert Spirituel in Paris: the BBC said it could have been the one I heard!

He was invited back to Bonn and appointed Master of the Chapel in February 1764 but the Prince Elector died a few days later. His successor reduced the musicians salaries and so Touchemoulin became a violinist for the Prince of Thurn and Taxis at Regensburg, Bavaria where the rivers Regen and Danube meet.

This Court were incredibly fastidious and the orchestra had to perform at many varied Court functions including official ceremonies and church services. They were the pride of the Court.

Among the people Touchemoulin met and knew was Franz Xavier Pokorny, the virtuosic oboist Giovanni Palestrini, and others. He succeeded Joseph Riepel as Master of the chapel in 1782.

Some of Touchemoulin music is preserved at Regensburg but not that much. He wrote symphonies most of which have disappeared, harpsichord concertos and concertos for flute and violin respectively. There were two operas, a Missa solemnis in G minor, a Requiem in C minor and chamber music.

His music may not have the wit and sparkle of Haydn but it is well-written and elegant.

While he was working in Germany he would regularly receive wines from his area in France.

He died on 25 October 1801. He was 74.

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