

# TIMPANI IN THE BAROQUE

Program Notes



**Two Drumming Moors Mounted on Mules, 1638**

Rembrandt Harmensz van Reijn (1606-1669)  
Pen and chalk on paper, British Museum, London

## ABOP Podcast Episode 13

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Host:

Raynor Carroll, ABOP Founder & CEO, Principal Percussion, Los Angeles Philharmonic (retired)

Guests:

Douglas Cardwell, ABOP Founder, Former Principal Timpanist, New Mexico Philharmonic

Michael Crusoe, ABOP Founder, Former Principal Timpanist, Seattle Symphony

### **INTRODUCTION**

Kettledrums

- Relatively smaller in size compared to modern drums.
- Shallow bowls made of copper, brass, or wood.
- Calf or goat skin heads.
- Typically in pairs tuned to the tonic and dominant (frequently D & A).
- Tuned by manually turning tension bolts.
- Limited playing range.
- Typically does not change pitches within a movement or a composition.
- Mallets made from wood, bone, or ivory.



**KETTLEDRUM**  
Italy, 17th Century  
Hofburg Palace, Vienna, Austria



**KETTLEDRUM  
TUNING ROD DETAIL**  
Italy, 17th Century  
Hofburg Palace, Vienna, Austria



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## **TIMPANI MALLET**

*Unsigned*  
Austria, ca. 1700  
SAM 715  
Donation: Prof. Josef  
Mertin, Vienna

*In the 18th century, tympani were played with mallets or sticks entirely made out of wood – the mallet displayed here, for example, was made of plum wood. The wooden head generated a particularly striking and distinctive beat. In contrast, the mallets that are normally used today are covered with felt and allow a softer playing.*



## **THREE TIMPANI STICKS**

*Unsigned*  
German region, 16th cent.  
SAM 257 – SAM 259

*These three timpani sticks are noteworthy for a number of reasons. Firstly, the use of the costly material of ivory is remarkable. The lower end of the handle can also be unscrewed, allowing messages in a hollow space to be transmitted by the player. At the upper end of the stick, the Austrian shield with the ducal hat and the chain of the Golden Fleece, carried out in relief, is visible.*

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### REPERTOIRE

4:55 *Thésée* (Act 1, Scene 9) by Jean-Baptiste Lully: The introduction of kettledrums into the orchestra



8:48 *The Fairy Queen* (Act 4, Symphony) by Henry Purcell: First orchestral solo passage for kettledrums



13:18 *Christmas Oratorio* (Part 1, No. 1) by Johann Sebastian Bach

(Tamburi in D & A)



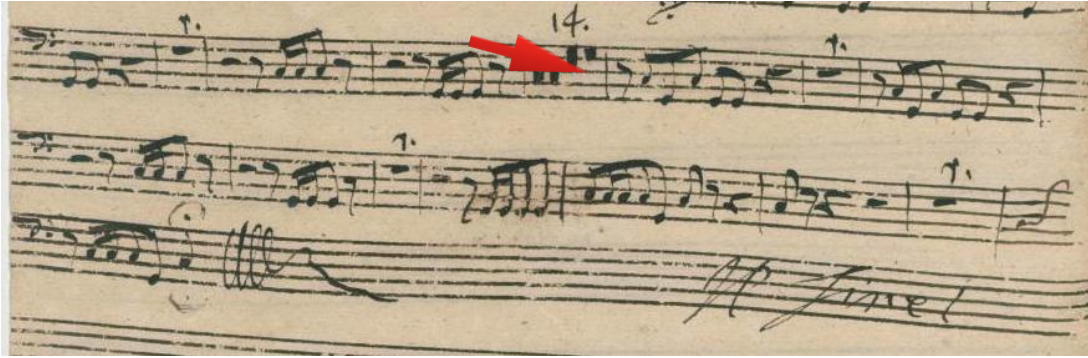
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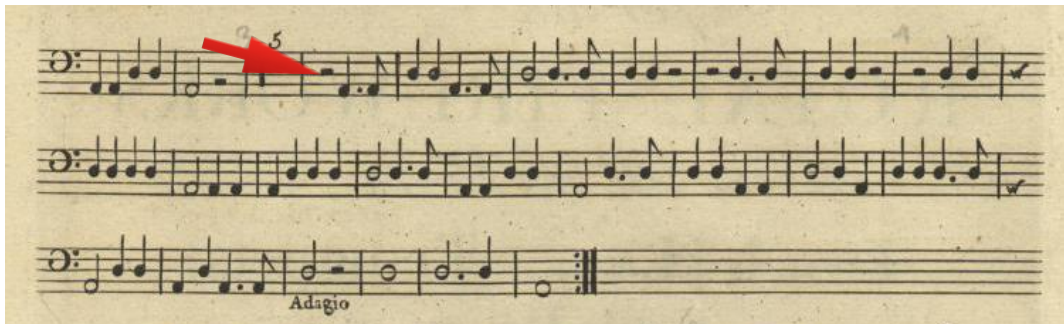
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28:33 *Christmas Oratorio* (No. 64) by Johann Sebastian Bach

(Tamburi in D & A)



31:18 *Music for the Royal Fireworks* (Overture) by George Frideric Handel



38:29 *The Messiah* (No. 44, Hallelujah Chorus) by George Frideric Handel

(Kettle Drums in D & A)



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### SELECTED RESOURCES

#### Music

Music in the public domain (free of copyright) is typically available in several published editions. Note that these editions may differ with dynamics, articulations, phrasing, rehearsal and bar numbers or letters, etc. A good source for free, public domain music, and the music presented in these podcasts is the International Music Score Library Project ([www.IMSLP.org](http://www.IMSLP.org)). This website allows you to search and download any free public domain music in their online library.

#### Books

James Blades, *Percussion Instruments and Their History*

Edmund A. Bowles, *The Timpani: A History in Pictures and Documents*

Edmund A. Bowles, *The Timpani Supplement: More Pictures and Documents*

Jeremy Mantagu, *Timpani & Percussion*