

***Charamelas, Royal Shawms and the Music  
of Portugal's Court Trumpet and Kettledrum Corps.***

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Johann Altenburg's 1770 manuscript described privileges, protections, and ultimately the decline of royal trumpet and kettledrum guilds. As Altenburg was writing his treatise, Lisbon, Portugal was rebuilding an earthquake-devastated city. Silver trumpets were either built or modified with ornamented garlands dated 1761 (with eventually two more dated 1785) and an entire collection of music of Portugal's Royal Trumpet and Kettledrum Corps was copied into leather-bound part-books.

Sparse musical examples exist that fully illuminate Altenburg's description of the majesty and ceremony of court trumpet and kettledrum corps. The surviving part books located in the *Museu Nacional dos Coches* of Portugal's Court Trumpet and Kettledrum Corps are an original, musical record of Altenburg's descriptions, and of royal ceremony provided by court trumpet and kettledrum corps.

As each of the 26 part-books contain all 54 compositions, it is possible to compare 1404 individual parts of the 54 compositions for decisions regarding articulation and dynamic markings. It is also possible to trace evolutions of complexity pertaining to composition, tonalities, and technical demands throughout the 54 compositions. The information revealed by observing personal musical decisions made by trumpeters from the 18th century is unparalleled. No comparable music or collection exists that allows such an in depth and intimate examination of court trumpeters and kettledrummers.

Changes and evolutions that occur throughout the 54 compositions; frequency, types, and manners of dynamics, varieties of articulations, specificity of note lengths, tonalities, and harmonies indicate that the full music collection was amassed over a period of years or decades and preserved in the existing part-books. The part-books are a primary-source working record of the largest royal trumpet and kettledrum corps of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Nearly fifty years have past since the part-books of Portugal's Court Trumpet and Kettledrum Ensemble were "rediscovered;" only 13 of 54 compositions have been available for study and performance.

The use of the term *Charamela Real*, *Sonatas*, and the dating of the music collection are existing postulations that were assigned to Portugal's Trumpet and Kettledrum Corps and they continue to hinder a full awareness of the music and instrument collection and the importance of this specific trumpet and kettledrum corps.

The music of Portugal's Trumpet and Kettledrum Corps serves as an aural companion to Altenburg's treatise even as it demonstrates evolutions of trumpet ensemble music beyond those known to Altenburg in 1770. Trumpet and kettledrum formations in Portugal have a history dating back to 1347. 22 silver natural trumpets with ornamented garlands of 1761 and 1785 still exist today as does the original repertory of Portugal's Trumpet and Kettledrum Corps. It is time that full recognition and exposure to the remarkable music is afforded to this singular primary source collection that exhibits the grandeur, creativity, and evolution, of court trumpet and kettledrum corps.

### **Bibliography**

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