



**ITALIAN CONCERTOS
& SONATAS**

Lucia Swarts cello

Teatro Lirico / Stephen Stubbs

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CD1**GIOVANNI BENEDETTO PLATTI** (1697-1763)**Concerto for violoncello and strings in C major**

[1] Allegro	2:49
[2] Largo	1:49
[3] Presto	2:33

NICOLA ANTONIO PORPORA (1686-1768)**Concerto for violoncello and strings in a minor**

[4] Largo	3:02
[5] Allegro	3:04
[6] Adagio	1:17
[7] Allegro	3:41

ANTONIO VIVALDI (1678-1741)**Concerto for two violoncellos and strings in g minor, RV 531**

[8] Allegro	3:40
[9] Largo	2:45
[10] Allegro	3:18

GIUSEPPE MARIA JACCHINI (1667-1727)**Concerto for violoncello and strings in F major op. 4 no. 9**

[11] Presto	1:34
[12] Grave	0:53
[13] Presto e solo	1:40

GIOVANNI BENEDETTO PLATTI (1697-1763)**Concerto for violoncello and strings in c minor**

[14] Adagio e staccato - Allegro	4:45
[15] [Largo]	4:08
[16] Presto	4:40

LEONARDO LEO (1694 - 1744)**Concerto for violoncello and strings in d minor**

[17] Andante grazioso	4:32
[18] Col Spirito	3:20
[19] Amoroso	3:10
[20] Allegro	3:40

total time 60:20

Lucia Swarts plays on a Pieter Rombouts cello, Amsterdam 1705

CD2

LUIGI BOCCHERINI (1743-1805)

Sonata no. 3 (G. 5) in G major for violoncello and continuo

- | | |
|----------------------------|------|
| [1] Allegro alla Militaire | 5:17 |
| [2] Largo | 3:32 |
| [3] Menuetto | 3:50 |

Sonata no. 1 (G. 13) in A major for violoncello and continuo

- | | |
|----------------------|------|
| [4] Allegro moderato | 5:00 |
| [5] Largo | 3:41 |
| [6] Allegro | 3:55 |

Sonata no. 4 (G. 10) in E flat major for violoncello and continuo

- | | |
|---------------|------|
| [7] Allegro | 5:16 |
| [8] Adagio | 4:33 |
| [9] Affetuoso | 4:24 |

Sonata no. 2 (G. 6) in C major for violoncello and continuo

- | | |
|-----------------------|------|
| [10] Allegro | 4:47 |
| [11] Largo | 5:52 |
| [12] Allegro moderato | 5:14 |

total time 55:30

Lucia Swarts plays on a Johannes Cuypers cello, Den Haag 1763

CD1

Lucia Swarts cello

TEATRO LIRICO

Stephen Stubbs director

Miloš Valent, Mimi Mitchell, Heidi Erbrich first violin

Dagmar Valentová, Eva Salonen, Giovanni Anaya second violin

Tolbjörn Köhl, Peter Spišský viola

Juraj Kováč, Erin Headley violoncello

Richte van der Meer violoncello (on track 8-10)

Jenny Westman violone

Alexander Weimann harpischord

Andrew McGinley lute

CD2

Lucia Swarts violoncello

Stephen Stubbs baroque guitar, baroque theorbo

Richte van der Meer violoncello

CD1: The Cello's March of Conquest during the Baroque Period

At the beginning of the seventeenth century the violin set out on its march of conquest as a solo instrument. Before then the violin was not thought highly of, but the French theorist Martin Mersenne (1588-1648) called it the king of instruments and praised it for its versatility. It lasted almost a half century before the expressive potential of the (violon)cello, the lyrical tenor and sonorous bass of the same family of instruments, was discovered.

The earliest important solo literature for the cello originated in Bologna in the last decades of the seventeenth century. This northern Italian town was the birth place of and centre of activity for Petronio Franceschini (1651-80), Domenico Gabrielli (1659-90) and Giuseppe Jacchini (1667-1727), all three of whom were

renowned composers and cello virtuosos. Jacchini, Gabrielli's star pupil, applied himself so well to the cello that he soon was the equal of his teacher. His popularity was increased by his affable personality, described in one eighteenth-century source as "upright" and "straightforward". In 1689 he was admitted to the orchestra of the municipal church of San Petronio in Bologna. Jacchini was recommended for this position by Count Pirro Albergati, to whom he was to dedicate his opus 4, the *Concerti per camera à 3 e 4*, twelve years later. This work, which appeared under the imprint of the Bolognese publisher Marino Silvani, is made up of ten short concertos, of which six contain an important solo part for the cello. The ninth concerto of the collection is particularly distinguished for its virtuoso solo part and some attractive dialogues between the cello and the first violin. Jacchini's harmonic

vocabulary is somewhat limited and this is undoubtedly one of the reasons why the three movements are rather loosely constructed.

In Bologna the impetus was given for the development of the three-movement solo concerto, which reached its first high point in the works of Giuseppe Torelli (1658-1709) in the years around 1700, after which the torch passed to Venice.

Not without justification, the significance of Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741) for the concerto has been compared to that of Haydn for the symphony. In Vivaldi's concertos the orchestra and the solo instrument(s) are allotted clearly distinguished and contrasted roles, in which alternation and balance are both ensured. According to some eighteenth-century theorists Vivaldi's significance lay in the perfecting of this so-called ritornello

form; others, however, maintained that the balance in Vivaldi's concertos was destroyed by the wild and outrageous character of his harmonic and rhythmic inventions. The concerto for two cellos, strings and continuo RV 531 is the only one in Vivaldi's output for this combination. (Of his concertos for solo cello and orchestra no less than twenty-six complete and two incomplete survive.) A study of the autograph has demonstrated that RV 531 must have been composed around 1717. It is not known for whom it was written, though the Ospedale della Pietà seems a likely candidate. In this hospice for foundlings, sick children and orphans a choir and orchestra made up of women and girls was maintained in order to provide the musical adornment of the chapel services and to give concerts for patrons and tourists. With some inevitable interruptions the 'red priest' - Vivaldi's nickname because of

his bright red hair - was employed by this institution as a violin teacher and composer from 1703 to 1740.

Already in Vivaldi's lifetime Venice lost its position in the musical vanguard to Naples. In the years around 1730, even in the most distinguished Venetian theatres, it was usual to hear operas by composers who, whether or not they were born in Naples, had received their training at one of the city's famous conservatories. Leonardo Leo (1694-1744) and Nicola Porpora (1686-1768) are typical representatives of this Neapolitan school, in which Vivaldi's vitality and virtuosity yield place to a sweet bel canto, that penetrates not only the two masters' operas but also their few instrumental works. In this respect Porpora's four-movement cello concerto in A minor, discovered in 1979 by the Italian musicologist Carlo Vitali, is a transitional work, because old and new elements

still intersect. The work probably dates from between 1726 and 1733, when Porpora was working as *maestro di coro* at the Venetian Ospedale degli Incurabili. This institute, just like Vivaldi's Ospedale, was known far beyond its borders for its women's choir and orchestra.

Incidentally, this cello concerto is ascribed in a Neapolitan source to another Neapolitan composer, Nicola Fiorenza, but it is fairly certain that Porpora is its real author. The manuscript, bearing Porpora's name, was written out by a copyist with whom Porpora collaborated frequently and intensively.

Leonardo Leo was, like Porpora, an international celebrity during his lifetime, not just as a composer of theatre and church music, but also as a theorist and teacher. In the years 1737 and 1738, at the behest of the

amateur cellist Domenico Marzio Caraffa, Duke of Maddaloni, he wrote six splendid concertos for cello, two violins and continuo. Leo lets the cello sing as no one else in this period knew how.

If the already mentioned Duke of Maddaloni was responsible for the origin of the six concertos by Leo, the German Duke Rudolf Franz Erwein von Schönborn (1677-1754) was most probably the one who stimulated the Venetian composer Giovanni Benedetto Platti to write as many as twenty-eight cello concertos. This is not surprising, as the count was a passionate lover of music in general and of the cello in particular. For fifty years this amateur cellist collected musical editions and manuscripts from all directions, the result being that his library eventually grew to contain 149 printed editions and nearly 500 manuscripts. The count cherished

Italian music and musicians and was a great admirer of Platti, who from 1722 until a few years before his death in 1763 served at the nearby court of Würzburg as a composer and virtuoso chamber musician. Platti appears to have been an outstanding player not only of the oboe but also of the violin, cello, flute and harpsichord. For this last instrument he composed a number of sonatas that point towards the future and which gave him the reputation of an important innovator. By contrast, the two cello concertos on this CD are still strongly rooted in the late Baroque style.

The theme of the finale of the concerto in C major is derived from a minuet theme that Vivaldi used in at least four compositions around 1715. The concerto in C minor, too, looks back rather than forward: the first movement is an interesting blend of fugue and ritornello form, of which

Vivaldi's work also contains a few fine examples.

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Translation: James Chater



CD2: God's Own Favourite: Luigi Boccherini

The words *Citius, Altius, Fortius* have caused a stir as the slogan of the Olympic Games, but they could sound equally impressive as the motto of music history. For throughout the centuries musicians have had to play Faster, Higher and Stronger in order to realise in sound the composer's ideas. In music too the searing moments when a record has been broken can be indicated with a fair degree of precision.

Thus Antonio Vivaldi set the height record for the cello, which in late 17th century Italy had not exceeded the fourth position, at the fifth and sixth positions – around *g''* (an octave and a fifth above middle C). This revolutionary record held for several years and resulted in a series of fine compositions with a hitherto unknown wealth

of musical vocabulary. Then came Luigi Boccherini, a cellist but above all a visionary composer. He introduced the thumb position and thereby established a new historical record with *b''* flat as the highest note.

Luigi Boccherini (19 February 1743 - 28 May 1805) was already a celebrity during his lifetime. This contemporary of Mozart made his *début* as a cellist at the age of 13 in his native town of Lucca and soon became a respected virtuoso in local musical circles. The rudiments of cello were instilled among others by his father, a singer and double-bass player who was well respected locally.

To complete his studies young Luigi was sent to Rome, where he came under the powerful influence of Corelli and Palestrina. Arcangelo Corelli (1653 - 1713) had died several decades before, but his profound

and expressive manner of composing still predominated in Rome. Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (?1525 - 1594) was of an even older generation, but in Rome the performance of his church music especially stood on a high level. How far-reaching Boccherini's encounter with Palestrina's work must have been is suggested by the fact that polyphonic interweaving of voices in his last vocal work, the *Stabat mater*, is a classic example of the Palestrina style.

Returning to Lucca, Boccherini accepted positions as a cellist in several orchestras in the town. But the local job circuit could only satisfy him in part. Increasingly he undertook concert tours (with the violinist Filippino Manfredi among others) in far-flung destinations. He played at the imperial court in Vienna and visited Paris several times, where in about 1767 he also established a reputation as a

composer – so much so that several publishers offered to acquire his works. The publishers Venier and La Chévardière did a roaring trade selling Boccherini's trios and quartets, plenty of which were played by advanced amateurs.

In 1769 Boccherini performed for the first time at the court of the king of Spain; a short time afterwards he found employment there as court composer to the Infante Don Luis, on whose death he entered the service of King Carlos IV himself. Although Boccherini in a formal sense remained in stable employment in Madrid, he was able, from 1787, to work also for King Friedrich Wilhelm II of Prussia, himself a creditable cellist.

Tradition has it that both Carlos and Wilhelm enjoyed playing chamber music with Boccherini. The story goes that Wilhelm once asked Boccherini

who played better, he or his Spanish counterpart. Boccherini is said to have replied diplomatically: 'Sire, King Carlos plays like a monarch, but you, Your Royal Highness, play like an emperor!' Whether true or not, the fact that similar anecdotes about Boccherini have been handed down naturally says something about his status as a composer. Thus his music seems to have elicited the following comment from a contemporary: 'If God were to choose to speak to men, he would perhaps do it with the sounds of Haydn. However, if he wanted to hear an earthly musician, he would undoubtedly choose Boccherini'.

However successful or valued Boccherini was, his fine career brought him no wealth. On the contrary, he was in straitened circumstances when died in Madrid in 1805. More than a century later, in 1927, his remains were repatriated to Italy and laid to

rest in the church of San Francesco in Lucca.

Boccherini was an extraordinarily fertile composer, especially of chamber music. With unremitting diligence he wrote nearly 100 string quartets, 125 string quintets, more than 50 string trios and dozens of sonatas for cello and continuo. However, despite these impressive quantities, it is only since 1969 that we have had a good impression of the dimensions of Boccherini's output. In that year the French musicologist Yves Gérard, after many years of diligent research, finally published his long awaited *Thematic, Bibliographical and Critical Catalogue of the Works of Luigi Boccherini*. But it was obvious that this scholarly inventory was by no means the last word on Boccherini's work. This was again underlined when in 1982 three cello sonatas by Boccherini not documented in Gérard's 'bible' were found in a Milanese library.

Boccherini's cello sonatas especially constitute a problematic, even hermetic part of his oeuvre. The composer himself makes almost no mention of them. It is as if these sonatas meant hardly more for him than a daily stretching exercise for an experienced cellist, as if they were mere finger exercises by a composer who had mastered this instrument in all its subtleties. This would explain how this particular genre underwent a sort of diaspora in the hands of the much-travelled Boccherini. Scattered over countless libraries in the western world are manuscripts, early editions and partially preserved sketches. It would take many a musicologist more than a day's work to sort out what belongs where, what is duplicated and what is original. For this reason the exact dimensions of his work will probably always remain a mystery.

In any case about 32 sonatas are known, and they have been passed down in various ways. As early as about 1775 the Scot Robert Bremner prepared an edition of a set of six sonatas, to which an apocryphal seventh was later added. Bremner's collection appeared at about the same time as a collection published in Paris by Louis Balthazard de la Chévadière, who transcribed the same pieces for violin and bass. Later the well-known publisher Ricordi prepared yet another edition of these sonatas. It is pretty obvious that the performing musician of today faces a difficult choice.

An even more radical decision that has to be made is the choice of scoring. For example, the Ricordi edition of the *Sei Sonate per Violoncello* adds a part for keyboard. However, it is not certain if these sonatas were ever performed with harpsichord or piano accompaniment. We know from

Boccherini's and Manfredi's concert programmes that the sonatas were in fact played, but the programmes throw no light on the scoring. Another of the possibilities is to assign the bass part to a second cello – the alternative preferred by the Zanibon edition (1984); baroque guitar or lute accompaniment is also possible.

The last two options are the ones chosen for this CD. The second cello together with the guitar and theorbo play a harmonized version of the bass part. The choice of this scoring is first and foremost motivated by musical considerations, says the cellist Lucia Swarts. 'The baroque guitar gives these trio sonatas a serene, transparent sound. Boccherini often writes in high positions and this suits the combination of cello and guitar extremely well, it makes for a very ethereal sound. The second cello, with its sonorous deep register, has a modest accompanimen-

tal role, affording a wonderful contrast'. The movement order is another area in which it is necessary to hack through musical and musicological knots. Here it was decided to place the slow movements of the four early sonatas in the middle, between the faster outer movements. The *Largo* of Sonata no. 3 in G (G 5) is framed by a martial *Allegro alla Militaire* and a driven minuet. The *Largo* of Sonata no. 1 in A (G 13) comes between two allegros, of which the first is extraordinarily lyrical and contains prominent trills. The *Adagio* of Sonata no. 4 in E flat (G 10) is preceded by an opening *Allegro* and is followed by a strongly sequential finale marked *Affetuoso*, and Sonata no. 2 in C (G 6) also contains a *Largo* which comes between two allegros.

Lucia Swarts is a passionate enthusiast of this music: 'In Boccherini's sonatas there are quite a few long, sustained

passages which undergo all kinds of subtle changes of harmony and colour before suddenly giving way to a quick tempo. With his many syncopated passages Boccherini is also very interesting from a rhythmic point of view. Everything indicates that he knew the instrument very well. Vivaldi wrote some very special pieces, but as far as I'm concerned Boccherini leaves him far behind. That cantilena, that Italian singing style, Boccherini could bring it out with greater prominence than any other composer. In the past the cello functioned as a bass instrument. With Vivaldi it acquired something of a tenor voice, but in the end it was Boccherini who knew how to use it as a perfect alto instrument. For us cellists Boccherini is supremely important'.

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Translation: James Chater

Lucia Swarts studied with Anner Bijlsma at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague where she earned her solo diploma in 1982. In the same year she made her debut as a prize winner in the Amsterdam Concertgebouw in the New Vintage series for talented young musicians.

In addition to her many solo appearances she has devoted herself to playing chamber music from all the periods of music history. She gives concerts with such musicians as Johanette Zomer, Leo van Doeselaar, Siebe Henstra, Michael Chance, Ryo Terakado, and Harry van der Kamp.

Since 1983 she has played in the ASKO Schoenberg Ensemble, The Amsterdam Bach Soloists, the Nieuw Ensemble, the Anima Eterna Trio and the Wallfish Band. She is solo cellist in the Baroque Orchestra of the Netherlands Bach Society

(<http://www.bachvereniging.nl>). With these ensembles she recorded many CD's and DvD's, with conductors such as Riccardo Chailly, Reinbert de Leeuw, Oliver Knussen, Gustav Leonhardt and Jos van Veldhoven.

Her five solo CD's include: Vivaldi cello sonatas, 19th century cello-piano works (with pianist Leo van Doeselaar), Italian cello concertos and Boccherini's cello sonatas. Lucia Swarts teaches both classical and baroque cello at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague. Furthermore she has taught Master Classes in the Netherlands and abroad, including the annual early music festival in Daroca (Spain), and the Dordts Cello Festival.

CD1

Executive Producer: Marcel Schopman

Recording Producer: Ted Diehl

Engineering & Editing: Bert van der Wolf

Mastering: Oscar Meijer

Recording Dates: March 3 - 6, 1998

Recording Location: Doopsgezinde Kerk, Haarlem NL

CD2

Executive Producer: Marcel Schopman

Recording Producer: Ted Diehl & Oscar Meijer

Engineering: Bert van der Wolf & Fir Suidema

Editing: Oscar Meijer

Recording Dates: June 28, 30, July 1, 1999

Recording Location: Doopsgezinde Kerk, Haarlem NL

