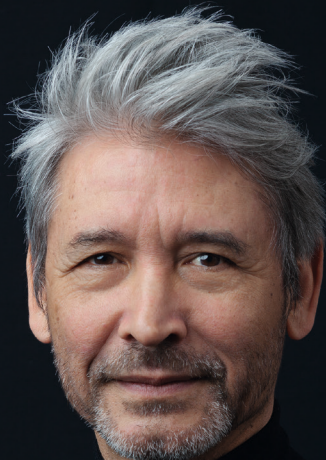




**NORTHSTAR**  
RECORDING  
by BERT VAN DER WOUF



**UNICO WILHELM VAN WASSENAER**

VI Concerti Armonici

**La Sfera Armoniosa**

**Mike Fentross** conductor



**Live  
recording**

**UNICO WILHELM VAN WASSENAER**

VI Concerti Armonici

**La Sfera Armoniosa**

**Mike Fentross** conductor

## UNICO WILHELM VAN WASSENAER (1692-1766)

### Concerto I

[1] I. Grave	1:45
[2] II. Allegro	2:57
[3] III. Un poco andante	3:46
[4] IV. Allegro	2:15

### Concerto II

[5] I. Largo andante	3:51
[6] II. Da capella presto	1:46
[7] III. Largo affettuoso	2:06
[8] IV. Allegro moderato	1:56

### Concerto III

[9] I. Grave sostenuto	0:38
[10] II. Da capella - Andante mordante	2:35
[11] III. Largo andante	3:01
[12] IV. Vivace	2:54

### Concerto IV

[13] I. Largo	2:10
[14] II. Da capella non presto	1:48
[15] III. Largo affettuoso	3:31
[16] IV. Allegro	2:09

### Concerto V

[17] I. Adagio- Largo	2:56
[18] II. Da capella	1:58
[19] III. A Tempo Commodo, con Sordini	3:31
[20] IV. A tempo giusto	1:33

### Concerto VI

[21] I. Affettuoso	2:33
[22] II. Presto	1:38
[23] III. Largo	1:10
[24] IV. Vivace	2:38

Total time 57:20

**Unico Wilhelm van Wassenaer** (1692-1766) is one of the most remarkable personalities in Dutch music history. Until 1980, his music - the six 'Concerti armonici' - was well known to every lover of early music, but not his name. These works were universally understood to be by Giovanni Battista Pergolesi or by Carlo Ricciotti, who published them in 1740 but did not compose them. Unico Wilhelm van Wassenaer was well known to Dutch historians as a descendant of the renowned noble Van Wassenaer family, but nobody knew that he was also a composer. Thanks to a lucky find by the Dutch musicologist Albert Dunning in 1980, man and music could be connected with one another.

Unico Wilhelm van Wassenaer was born in 1692, the son of Jacob van Wassenaer Obdam. His life went entirely as one might expect of an eighteenth-century nobleman in the Dutch Republic. He grew up in The Hague and took music lessons there. During the summer he probably spent a lot of time at Twickel Castle, a family home in the province of Overijssel. From 1723 onwards, he gained more and more appointments to official positions.

In 1740, a collection of six concertos for strings and basso continuo, in seven parts - four violins, viola, cello and basso continuo - was published in The Hague under the title *VI Concerti armonici*. Three names appear in the print: those of Willem Bentinck as dedicatee, Carlo Ricciotti, who signed the dedication and looked after the publication, and 'Alexis Magito fils', the engraver of the music. There is no mention of a composer. The text of the dedication letter does not help us any further. It says that the works

were composed by 'an illustrious hand'. The composer must have been well known to Bentinck and to Ricciotti, but not beyond this small circle, so that the anonymity of the works lasted for no fewer than 240 years.

Because the works are clearly of a high musical level, several attempts were made over those 240 years to attribute them to a composer. In the first English reissue of the works by the London publisher John Walsh, Ricciotti was elevated to the status of composer. Early manuscript copies attach the names of Pergolesi, Handel and Geminiani to the works. In the twentieth century, various musicologists have tried to solve the problem of their origin. The names suggested included those of Antonio Vivaldi, Jean-Marie Leclair, Johann Adam Birkenstock, Frederick Charles Count of Erbach, Albrecht Wolfgang Count of Schaumburg Lippe, Fortunato Chelleri, and Willem de Fesch. Really, an illustrious company!

These speculations, however, were ultimately dismissed on the discovery of a handwritten score of the concertos in the library at Twickel Castle. The manuscript contains a sheet pasted in, with a short explanation of the origin of the works and the circumstances surrounding their printing. It is true that the name of the composer is not mentioned explicitly, but the handwriting is clearly that of Unico Wilhelm and he refers to himself as the composer.

The *Concerti armonici* can be associated with musical performances that took place in the 1720s in The Hague, both at Unico Wilhelm's home and that of the

young Willem Bentinck. We know this from the letters that Bernège, Willem Bentinck's governor, wrote from The Hague to Bentinck's mother, the Countess of Portland, in London. On 30 November 1725, Bernège wrote:

The collegium musicum took place last Monday in the Bentinck house. The gentlemen had had enough of the Admiralty for a while. I have the honour to tell you the names of those who were there and who will be with Mr Twickel [Unico Wilhelm] next Monday. As for the ladies, they are Mrs Twickel, her sister Miss Goslinga, Mrs Falaiseau and her daughter, Mrs and Miss Saint-Auban, Mrs von der Reck and Miss Wassenaer. Among the gentlemen were Messrs Finch, Twickel, Chancour, Osorio, Messrs Saumaise, and Mr Saint-Auban. There was a lot of music, a lot of tea and a lot of coffee.

It is interesting to take a closer look at this company. There are three groups. Firstly, several Wassenaers: Unico Wilhelm ('Mr Twickel'), his wife Dodonea Lucia van Goslinga ('Mrs Twickel'), his three sisters Agnes ('Mrs [=widow] Von der Reck'), Amadea ('Miss Wassenaer'), and Charlotte ('Mrs Saint-Auban'), the latter with her husband Guido Pape, Marquis of Saint-Auban ('Mr Saint-Auban'). There was also one of Unico's wife's two sisters, either Anna Juliana or Agatha Rixt. The second group comprised diplomats: William Finch, English envoy in The Hague, and Giuseppe Osorio Alarcon, minister in The Hague on behalf of the Kingdom of Sardinia. The third and last group consists of well-to-do inhabitants of The Hague who were of French, often Huguenot, descent. The Samaises are certainly the brothers Louis Théodore and Charles. 'Chancour' is probably Jean Girardot de Chancourt,

an English-born Huguenot. Madame Falaiseau is Marie Madeleine Harenc, wife of Michael Falaiseau and mother of Marguerite Marie Falaiseau. And finally we must not forget the host, Willem Bentinck.

Unico Wilhelm's musical interests and pursuits were thus well-known to his family and friends. Why then did he attach such importance to the anonymity of his works when they were published? The answer must lie in his high social position. In the eighteenth century, it was not fitting for a gentleman in charge of public office to publish music in print, as if he were a music master, a craftsman. He was allowed to engage in music, in fact, he *had* to engage in music, because it formed part of the education of a gentleman of rank, but he was never allowed to let this take on a professional status.

The note that Unico Wilhelm added to the preserved score of the Concerti armonici confirms this. In that note, he writes that Ricciotti, leader of his collegium musicum, wanted to publish the concertos. He refused. Ricciotti then enlisted Bentinck's help and Unico Wilhelm relented, on condition that his name would not appear in the edition. Ricciotti then wanted to dedicate the publication to Unico Wilhelm, but the latter did not think that this was a good idea. Bentinck resolved the situation by proposing that the publication would be dedicated to him, and we know that this is what happened.

It is therefore thanks to Ricciotti's and Bentinck's perseverance that the six Concerti armonici by Unico Wilhelm van Wassenaer have been able to take their place in musical history.

Rudolf Rasch



**Mike Fentross** artistic director & conductor

Basso continuo: theorbo, baroque guitar

Conductor and lutenist Mike Fentross has largely earned his credits as an early music specialist. He is working all over Europe as a conductor, soloist and basso continuo player and he is professor of lute and basso continuo at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague. In 2006 he founded the baroque orchestra La Sfera Armoniosa with which he performed extensively in the Netherlands and abroad. He forms a duo with jazz-musician Maarten Ornstein. For their adventurous musicianship and extraordinary collaborations they received in 2022 the prestigious Willem Breuker Price. Fentross studied conducting with Stefan Pas.

Mike Fentross conducted in many festivals and concert halls like the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Festival van Vlaanderen, Festival d'Ambronay, Festival Oude Muziek Utrecht, Musikfestspiele Potsdam Sanssouci, Paradiso Amsterdam, Monteverdi Festival Cremona, Festival de Musica Portico de Zamora, Festival Musica Antiqua Brugge, Vantaa Early Music Festival, Bayreuth Barock and Muziekcentrum Vredenburg in Utrecht. For two times he had the honour to conduct in the presence of Queen Beatrix of Holland.

Early in his career Mike Fentross won the Van Wassenaer Competition in Amsterdam with violinist Helene Schmitt. Which led to many collaborations

and playing chamber music with musicians as Yo Yo Ma, Ton Koopman, Janine Jansen, Marion Verbruggen, Andreas Scholl, Maria Bajo, Wilbert Hazelzet, Bruce Dickey, Lucy van Dael, Philippe Jarousski, Eduardo Lopez Banzo, Skip Sempe and Gerard Lesne.

As conductor he debuted in 1999 with *La Dafne* from Marco da Gagliano in a production of the New Opera Academie in Amsterdam. In 2006 he conducted in the presence of Queen Beatrix the modern world premiere from the opera *l'Ipermestra* from Cavalli in a prestigious jubilee production from the Utrecht Early Music Festival and in 2008 he conducted a second unearthed Cavalli opera *La Rosinda* in a production from the Musikfestspiele Potsdam Sanssouci Potsdam. In 2009 he conducted for the first time in the big hall from the Amsterdam Concertgebouw and in the same year he was musical director in the production *Granida* performed in the presence of Queen Beatrix.

About his debut as conductor from the Dutch Chamber Choir in 2010 in the Concertgebouw the press wrote: *"Conductor Mike Fentross rivalled Caravaggio with the score of the Maria Vespers. His first time conducting the Nederlands Kamerkoor was a resounding success."*

Mike doesn't only conduct Early Music, in 2004 he conducted *Pierrot Lunaire* from Arnold Schoenberg. The press wrote: *"There was great enthusiasm for Mike Fentross as conductor of a double bill consisting of Monteverdi's Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda and Schoenberg's Pierrot lunaire. Mike Fentross gave a performance of Pierrot lunaire that 'appeared to come from another planet'"*

Since the 2010's Mike made his Austrian debut in the Haydn Festival Eisenstadt with great success in a program with coloratura soprano Simone Kermes, conducted the pre jubilee concert for the Concertgebouw in a program with soloists Lucy van Dael (violin), Henk Neven (bariton) and Andreas Scholl (counter-tenor), the Paradiso Orchestra with Beethoven's *Eroica*, the Netherlands Chamber Choir in the Purcell's *Fairy Queen* and in a Bach-Faure program live broadcast on national radio and curated the Dutch Masters series for Challenge Records highlighting almost forgotten composers from the 17th and eighteenth century.

Mike Fentross is regularly conducting the baroque orchestra and choir of the Royal Conservatory.

**Lidewij van der Voort** (violin, concertmaster) grew up with baroque music. After studying modern violin in Amsterdam she specialised with Sigiswald Kuijken in Brussels and with violinists such as John Holloway, Enrico Gatti and Roy Goodman. She was first violin of the European Union Baroque Orchestra and soon played, often as concertmaster, with the major European baroque orchestras: Academy of Ancient Music, Les Musiciens du Louvre, Musica Antiqua Köln, Anima Eterna, De Nederlandse Bachvereniging, B'Rock, The King's Consort, La Sfera Armoniosa, and Capriccio Sragagante. Among her musical partners are Rachel Podger, Lars Ulrik Mortensen, Jos van Immerseel and Richard Egarr and Skip Sempé. Lidewij van der Voort was co-founder and concertmaster of the Dutch baroque orchestra Holland Baroque Society. Lidewij plays on an Amsterdam violin by Hendrik Jacobs from the late 17th century.

**Kano Imada** (violin) is originally from Miyagi, Japan. After studying modern violin at the Aichi University of the Arts in Japan, he continued to study baroque violin with Gottfried von der Goltz at the Freiburg Musikhochschule and with Shunske Sato and Sayuri Yamagata at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam. As a baroque violinist Kano Imada plays with many renowned baroque orchestras and ensembles in Europe such as the Nederlandse Bachvereniging, Freiburger Barockorchester, and Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin. With La Petite Bande he plays both as a violinist and Violoncello da Spalla player.

**Tomoe Badiarova** (violin) enjoys a versatile performing career specializing in period performance as a soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral leader, from Early Baroque to Late Romantic repertoire. Tomoe Badiarova is founding member of Les Esprits Animaux which has performed numerous concerts in all Europe, as well in Japan. With Tomoe as 1st violinist the ensemble has swept all four prizes of Van Wassenaer Competition 2016. As leader of the Bremer Barockorchester she has shared many stages with wonderful guest soloists and Tomoe Badiarova also performed with leading European orchestras and ensembles such as the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra and La Petite Band.

**Anna Lester** (violin) has appeared with other internationally-acclaimed period instrument ensembles including the Internationale Händel Festspiele Göttingen Orchestra, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the English Baroque Soloists, The English Concert, The Gabrieli Players, L'Arpeggiata, Vox Luminis, PRJCT Amsterdam, and the Luthers Bach Ensemble. She is also member of Holland Baroque and the Butter Quartet, a string quartet selected

for the prestigious eeemerging+ professional development scheme for young European ensembles. Her chamber performances have brought her to stages from the Concertgebouw Amsterdam to the Smithsonian Institute to the Festival Oude Muziek Utrecht.

**Esther van der Eijk** (viola) studied viola with Else Krieg and Jürgen Kußmaul in the Netherlands and continued her studies at the Scuola di musica di Fiesole with Antonello Farulli. She played in the Radio Symphony Orchestra for several years, but she also specialised in the Historical Performance Practice with violinist Lucy van Dael and toured Europe with the European Union Baroque Orchestra. Esther van der Eijk has played with many renowned baroque orchestras since. In 2005 she co-founded the Holland Baroque Society and, as a member of the artistic team, she was responsible for the Society's adventurous concerts. In 2020, Esther founded PENTA Quintet. Esther plays a beautiful viola from 1700 (Pieter Rombouts) which is made available to her by the National Musical Instrument Fund.

**Octavie Dostaler-Lalonde** (violoncello) is a versatile musician whose repertoire spans from the late 17th to the 20th century. Her main focus is historical performance practice. After studying modern cello under Denis Brott and Carole Sirois at the Conservatoire de Musique de Montréal, Octavie received the Prix avec Grande Distinction in 2011. Given her interest in historical performance practices, she continued with a study of baroque cello under Susie Napper in Montreal and under Viola de Hoog in Amsterdam. As a baroque soloist, she received the second prize at the international "Concours Corneille" in France in 2016. In Europe Octavie performs with groups such as



Ensemble Masques, Vox Luminis, Camerata RCO, Amsterdam Corelli Collective, Terra Nova and the Nieuwe Philharmonie Utrecht.

**Jacopo Ristori** (violincello) studied in Genova at the Conservatorio “N. Paganini” with Nevio Zanardi and he graduated in Alessandria with Claudio Merlo in 2010. With Antonio Meneses he took lessons and masterclasses for two years for improving his musical and technical skills. Jacopo Ristori completed his studies at the Utrecht Conservatory in June 2019 under the guidance of Viola de Hoog. In his chamber music playing he stands out for the harmonic and rhythmical freedom which is a result of ongoing research into the historical musical taste connected to each of the musical styles. Jacopo is active in various ensembles such as Concerto Köln and the Nieuwe Philharmonie Utrecht. Recently he was part of the internship organized by Collegium Vocale Gent led by Philippe Herreweghe.

**Severiano Paoli** (double bass) studied in Italy, Germany, France and the Netherlands and also specialized in early music with Margaret Urquhart and Robert Franenberg. In 2018 he won the Viennese bass days competition (Amsterdam), in the category historical instruments. Severiano Paoli is a musician with a broad experience and profound knowledge of the role of the double bass and collaborates with various orchestras all across Europe performing a wide variety in musical styles. He plays a.o an anonymous late 19th-century Tyrolean double bass with a baroque mount and a violone in G built by Gianluca Pierozzi, with a Coen Engelhard bow.

**Teun Braken** (harpsichord and organ) studied both harpsichord and organ at the conservatoires of Utrecht and Amsterdam with Siebe Henstra, Reitze Smits and Menno van Delft. After finishing his Master degree in Amsterdam, Supported by the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds, he continued his studies in Basel at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, where he currently specializes in the basso continuo playing and ensemble-leading under the guidance of Prof. Jörg-Andreas Bötticher. Teun has performed with many different ensembles like Concerto d’ Amsterdam, Musica Amphion and the Dutch Bach Society, with whom he has recorded J.S. Bach’s Johannes Passio

## PREVIOUSLY RELEASED ON CHALLENGE CLASSICS

Other albums in Dutch Masters Series by La Sfera Armoniosa.  
Check [www.challengerecords.com](http://www.challengerecords.com) for availability



CC72911  
**PIETER HELLENDAAAL**  
Six Grand Concertos Op. 3  
**La Sfera Armoniosa**  
**Mike Fentross** conductor  
**Lidewij van der Voort** concertmaster



CC72829  
**WILLEM DE FESCH**  
Concerti Grossi and Violin Concerto  
**La Sfera Armoniosa**  
**Lidewij van der Voort** violin  
**Mike Fentross** conductor



CC72783  
**HENRY PURCELL**  
Symphony while the swans come forward  
**La Sfera Armoniosa**  
**Mike Fentross** conductor  
**Johannette Zomer** soprano



CC72774 - 3 CD set  
**FRANCESCO CAVALLI**  
L'Ipermestra  
**La Sfera Armoniosa**  
**Mike Fentross** conductor

This Recording was Produced, Engineered and Edited using the 'High Quality Musical Mastering' principle with the use of Sonodore microphones, Avalon Acoustic & Musikelectronic Geithain monitoring, Siltech Mono-Crystal cabling and dCS - & Merging Technologies converters.



**NORTHSTAR**  
RECORDING  
by **BERT VAN DER WOLF**



[www.northstarconsult.nl](http://www.northstarconsult.nl)

This production is also available as High Resolution digital download at [www.spiritofturtle.com](http://www.spiritofturtle.com)

performers  
**Sena**



Recorded at: Theater De Vest, Alkmaar The Netherlands

Recording dates: 30 October 2022

Recording: Northstar Recording Services bv

Producer, engineer, editing & mastering: Bert van der Wolf - Oude Avenhuis

Recording assistant: Martijn van der Wolf

A&R Challenge Classics by Marcel Landman, Valentine Laout & Mario Morese

Liner notes: Dr. Rudolf Rasch

Cover photo: Juan Carlos Villarroel

Product coordination & booklet editing: Boudewijn Hagemans

Graphic design: Natasja Wallenburg & Juan Carlos Villarroel

[www.challengerecords.com](http://www.challengerecords.com) / [www.lasfera-armoniosa.com](http://www.lasfera-armoniosa.com)

