



Tartini & Veracini

Violin Sonatas

Rie Kimura *baroque violin*

Fantasticus



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Robert Smith *baroque cello*

Guillermo Brachetta *harpsichord*

About Rie Kimura:

'Baroque violinist Rie Kimura performs with striking flair and musicianship'
The Strad

'Rie Kimura commands a warm and husky gut-string sound, animating the tone so effectively'
International Record Review

Francesco Maria Veracini (1690-1768)

Sonata, Op. 2 No. 12

- | | |
|------------------------|--------|
| 1. Passagallo | [3:50] |
| 2. Capriccio cromatico | [3:03] |
| 3. Adagio – Ciaccona | [7:29] |

Giuseppe Tartini (1692-1770)

Sonata 'Il trillo del Diavolo'

- | | |
|---|--------|
| 4. Larghetto affettuoso | [5:57] |
| 5. Tempo giusto della Scuola Tartinista | [6:01] |
| 6. Andante – Allegro assai | [5:33] |

Francesco Maria Veracini

Sonata, Op. 2 No. 5

- | | |
|------------------|--------|
| 7. Adagio assai | [3:59] |
| 8. Capriccio | [4:38] |
| 9. Allegro assai | [2:30] |
| 10. Giga | [3:53] |

Giuseppe Tartini

Pastorale, Op. 1 No. 13

- | | |
|---|--------|
| 11. Grave | [4:00] |
| 12. Allegro | [3:05] |
| 13. Largo – Presto – Largo – Presto – Andante | [3:52] |

Total playing time [57:58]



Photography: Rudi Wells

Tartini & Veracini: Italian Violin Sonatas

One of the most observant musicians in eighteenth-century England was the historian Charles Burney who published his *General History of Music* in 1789. No recent composer or performer worth his salt escaped Burney's notice, nor often his censure. According to Burney, Francesco Maria Veracini (1690-1768) and Giuseppe Tartini (1692-1770) were celebrated by their contemporaries as '[...] the greatest masters of their instrument that had ever appeared; and their abilities were not merely confined to the excellence of their performance, but extended to composition, in which they both manifested great genius and science'. Yet Burney made the important observation that it was '[...] impossible for any two men to be more dissimilar in disposition: [...] Tartini was so humble and timid, that he was never happy but in obscurity; while Veracini was so foolishly vainglorious as frequently to boast that there was but *one* God, and *one* Veracini'.

In July 1716 Tartini heard Veracini play at a musical soiree in the Mocenigo palace in Venice. It was a life-changing experience. The young Tartini was so captivated by Veracini's style – especially his bowing – that he decided to retire from the world

(and his wife) and devote himself entirely to perfecting his own technique. Veracini, on the other hand, fed off the excitement of high society and unqualified adulation, and nowhere were the pickings richer than in early Georgian London. But not everybody was impressed. The music-writer and theorist Roger North heard one of Veracini's first public concerts given shortly after his arrival in 1714, and it sparked an extraordinary rant against what North perceived as the sudden and unwelcome influx of Italian violinists with more ambition than taste:

'[...] not better than insane; for sometimes they run, then they start, then they chatter, and not seldom fall into a whistling way of high arpeggio, much prized for the difficulty of handling, and then coming a little to themselves, incline to sleep out a short adagio, after which, stand clear; for tripla comes, and tripla upon that, and devious upon that, which snaps upon snaps like a dog in distraction. And after all ends with what should be a dance called a jig, but so swift, that no living man can run so fast as the measure is; it is impossible for a dancer to keep such time, and his whole action must be running about like a madman [...] And many persons that do not well distinguish between real good and evil, but are hurried away by caprice, as in a whirlwind, think such music is the best; and despise those who are not of the same opinion'

Veracini may have captivated many of his listeners with his whistling arpeggios and whirlwind caprices but the London public was not as gullible as North feared. Clearly able to distinguish between 'real good and evill' music, Charles Burney reckoned that discerning ears found Veracini's compositions 'too wild and flighty' compared with Corelli's much-loved sonatas which were widely regarded as 'models of simplicity, grace, and elegance'. Even so, when Burney heard Veracini play in later years, he found much to admire. 'By travelling all over Europe he formed a style of playing peculiar to himself', the main strengths of which were rapid trills, a firm bow-hand and 'a tone so loud and clear, that it could be distinctly heard through the most numerous band of a church or theatre'.

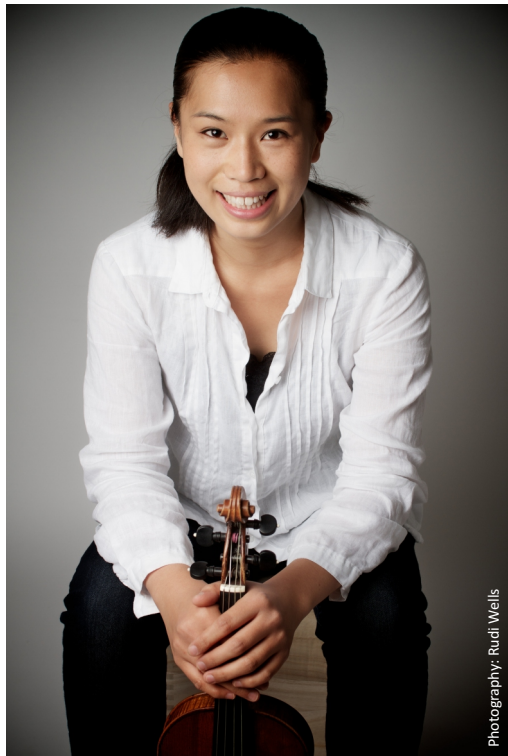
Burney's description of Veracini's playing, taken together with the evidence of his surviving music, actually paint a surprisingly conservative portrait. By the 1740s his 'loud and clear' tone might have struck some as a little old-fashioned, though the dynamic indications in his published music suggest he was also alive to the more nuanced and refined style currently sweeping Italy. Even so, many of his sonatas look back to mid-seventeenth century German fashions in their use of multi stopping and

tendency to combine a variety of movement types (i.e. dances alongside more abstract or academic styles).

The last of Veracini's four sets of solo violin sonatas were his twelve *Sonate accademiche*, Op. 2 issued in 1744 and dedicated to the Elector of Saxony, Augustus III. The designation 'academic' may refer both to their suitability for performance in private 'academies' as well as their inclination to the intellectual. It was this last quality which particularly impressed Burney, who considered that Veracini's grounding in solid counterpoint balanced his more eccentric flights of fancy – 'he built his freaks on a good foundation, being an excellent contrapuntist'.

Sonatas 5 and 12 from the Op. 2 set both contain richly contrapuntal capriccios. In Sonata No. 5 in G minor Veracini contrasts two different themes, an archaic, repeated-note *canzona* idea, first heard in the violin, and an answering, curvaceous figure, given in the bass. The themes are sociably exchanged between the parts and provide plenty of material for melodic elaboration. There's a hint, too, of the concerto with some brisk passage work and triple-stopping for the violin, articulated by bold unison phrases for treble and bass together. The twelfth and final sonata of the set is an early and ambitious attempt to achieve overall





Photography: Rudi Wells

structural unity by linking all the movements together with a common theme. This four-bar chromatic *passacaglia* subject is announced by the violin at the opening, and as well as being treated melodically it also appears as a repeating ostinato bass. In the 'Capriccio' the chromatic theme reappears (with a slightly different rhythmic profile) both in its familiar descending form and also in retrograde (i.e. backwards, and now ascending). The finale is a *tour de force* of ingenuity in which Veracini combines variations on both the chromatic *passacaglia* and *chaconne* ground basses in a single movement.

It seems that Tartini had two major changes of direction during his career: the first precipitated by his meeting with Veracini in 1716; the second in 1744 when, according to Charles Burney, '[...] he changed his style [...] from extreme difficult, to graceful and expressive'. Inhabiting a half-way house between the two is the 'bonus' piece he included at the end of his Twelve Violin Sonatas Op. 1 of c.1732. This *Pastorale* moves effortlessly between two worlds – town and country; virtuoso indulgence and rustic simplicity. We begin in civilised company with a gracefully inflected 'Grave', which leads into a hybrid movement contrasting simple multi-stopped chordal writing with faster-moving passage-work –

like the distant sound of the hunt and the elegant pursuit. Following this, a sequence of short sections – slow and fast – take us further into the countryside with hurdy-gurdy effects, droning shepherd's pipes and the lilting rhythms and piquant harmonies of *al fresco* music-making. To achieve the perfect rural timbre, Tartini tunes the bottom two strings of the violin up a tone.

The most famous programmatic violin sonata of the eighteenth century – and Tartini's only claim to fame in the nineteenth – was '*Il trillo del Diavolo*'. Surprisingly, perhaps, it remained unpublished in the composer's lifetime, and only saw the light of day in 1798 when it was included in J.B. Cartier's treatise *L'art du violon* (the edition used by Rie Kimura). Cartier claimed he had picked up a manuscript copy of the sonata in Rome from a violinist who had studied with Tartini's favourite pupil, Pietro Nardini. But this wasn't the first the musical world had heard of this dark sonata. Tartini's own colourful account of the circumstances surrounding its composition was quoted in J.G. de Lalande's *Voyage d'un François en Italie* in 1769.

'One night I dreamt that I had made a bargain with the Devil for my soul. Everything went at my command – my novel servant anticipated every one of my wishes. Then the idea struck me to hand him my fiddle and to see what he

could do with it. But how great was my astonishment when I heard him play with consummate skill a sonata of such exquisite beauty as surpassed the boldest flight of my imagination. I felt enraptured, transported, enchanted; my breath was taken away; and I awoke. Seizing my violin I tried to retain the sounds that I had heard. But it was in vain. The piece I then composed, the Devil's Sonata, although the best I ever wrote, how far below the one I heard in my dream!

Although Lalande claimed that Tartini's diabolic experience dated back to 1713, the style of the music suggests a date closer to the middle of the century. Tartini, a composer passionately interested in expressing programmatic ideas in his music, was equally committed to preserving their secrecy. Indeed, many of his autograph manuscripts bear coded inscriptions which preserved their mystery until just before the Second World War when they were finally deciphered to reveal cryptic mottos and verses from the poetry of Petrarch, Tasso and Metastasio. Cartier's manuscript of this sonata must have been more usually forthcoming, because he helpfully annotated the final movement of his printed score of 1798 to explain that the gentle 'Andante' represents the resting composer whose sleep is constantly disturbed by the 'Allegro assai' which

twice flowers into the graphic 'Trillo del diavolo al pie del letto' – The Devil's Trill at the foot of the bed.

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Dr Simon Heighes is a musicologist, critic and broadcaster with a particular interest in the music of the late Baroque and early Classical periods.



Rie Kimura *baroque violin*

Rie Kimura is a baroque violinist from Japan. She won the 2010 Premio Bonporti Baroque Violin Competition in Italy where she was also awarded the public prize. Her solo violin playing has been praised for it's 'strong personality imbued with expression and rhetoric' (*The Strad*), whilst her outstanding skills as a chamber musician mean that she is a violinist very much in demand. Alongside Fantasticus Rie plays regularly with the likes of the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra, Bach Collegium Japan, Apollo Ensemble and De Nederlandse Bachvereniging.

In Japan Rie studied baroque violin with Keiko Watanabe and Paul Herrera. She continued her studies with Lucy van Dael at the Amsterdam Conservatory where she graduated 'cum laude'. She has won numerous prizes throughout her career including the top prize in the 2008 Yamanashi Early Music Competition (Japan) and various ensemble prizes at the Bruges and Amsterdam Early Music Competitions.

www.riekimuraviolin.com

Robert Smith *baroque cello*

Robert Smith is an English baroque cellist and viola da gambist. Robert's ensemble, Fantasticus, has received wide critical acclaim for its recent recordings of stylus fantasticus and French baroque music. In 2014 Robert released his first solo recording of music for viola da gamba, 'Tickle the Minikin'. The recording received many enthusiastic reviews and was *BBC Music Magazine's* Instrumental Choice in August 2014.

Robert studied Viola de Gamba with Mienke van der Velden (Amsterdam) and Paolo Pandolfo (Basel). He also studied baroque cello with Wouter Möller, Jaap ter Linden and Viola da Hoog. He was principal cellist for the European Union Baroque Orchestra in 2005/6. Robert plays with the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra and the ensemble Fantasticus, amongst many others.

www.baroquebass.com

Guillermo Brachetta *harpsichord*

Guillermo Brachetta was born and grew up in Argentina and settled in The Netherlands in 1995. He graduated from the Conservatory of Amsterdam and has collaborated as a soloist and basso continuo player with many renowned orchestras including the Residentie Orkest, Nederlands Kamerorkest and The New Dutch Academy.

His debut solo recording, 'Ciaccona', has been released on Resonus Classics with enthusiastic reviews (*BBC Music Magazine* Instrumental Choice May 2014) followed by a recording of his own arrangement for two harpsichords of the opera *Platée* by Jean-Philippe Rameau together with Menno van Delft.

A co-founder of successful Ensemble Fantasticus, he recorded five albums with this critically acclaimed baroque trio.

www.brachetta.com

Fantasticus

Rie Kimura *baroque Violin*
Robert Smith *viola da gamba*
Guillermo Brachetta *harpsichord*

Originally from Japan, the UK and Argentina, the members all came to Amsterdam to study early music. Fantasticus played their first concert in May 2010 in the Bethaniënklooster in Amsterdam. Following that they began a highly productive recording relationship with Resonus Classics.

Their first recording, Baroque chamber works, in 2012 received glowing reviews including a recommendation in *The Strad* magazine. Their second recording, 'Sonnerie & Other Portraits' was released in 2013 to critical acclaim and was editor's choice in both *BBC Music Magazine* and *Gramophone*.

The coming season will see them play concerts across The Netherlands, France and the UK including their Wigmore Hall debut in June 2015 and the Festival Oude Muziek Utrecht in September 2015.

www.fantasticus.nl



Photography: Rudi Wells

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'[...] Fantasticus have established themselves as a white-hot addition to the early music scene. Fantasticus by name, fantastic by nature!'

BBC Music Magazine (Chamber Choice)

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by Gerhard Seghers (1591-1651) & Jan Wildens (1586-1653)

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