

Guts Baroque Duo presents:  
**Italian Virtuosi II:**  
The Influence of Arcangelo Corelli

Sunday, November 29, 2020, 4:00 P.M. PDT/7:00 P.M. EDT  
YouTube Live



*Portrait of Arcangelo Corelli by Hugh Howard, 1697*

***featuring:***

Sylvia Schwartz, baroque violin  
John Ott, baroque cello

# Program

Sonata in D Major, op. 2 no. 12.....Giovanni Battista Somis  
(1686–1763)

Adagio

Allegro

Allegro

Sonata in A Minor, op. 1 no. 2.....Francesco Maria Veracini (1690–1768)

Adagio

Allemanda Larghetto

Siciliana Cantabile

Aria Allegro

- Intermission -

Sonata in D Major, op. 5 no. 1.....Arcangelo Corelli (1653–1713)

Grave - Allegro - Adagio

Allegro

Allegro

Adagio

Allegro

Fin

# Program Notes

**Giovanni Battista Somis** (1686-1763) was born to a musical family in Turin. His father was a violinist, and his mother's brother was the famous violinist Paolo Canavasso. At the age of 10 he was performing violin in the court of Duke Vittorio Amedeo II of Savoy. As a teenager, Somis was sent to Rome to study with the great Arcangelo Corelli. Upon his return to Turin, he gradually progressed to the top of the musical establishment there, becoming the orchestra director in 1737. As part of the Duke's entourage, Somis visited Paris several times, and was well-known and respected there. Several notable violinists studied with him, including Jean-Marie Leclair, Pierre Guignon, the brothers Canavas, the brothers Miroglio, Louis-Gabriel Guillemain, Gaspard Fritz, Gaetano Pugnani and Felice Giardini.

Today's sonata is the 12th and last of Somis's collection of *Sonatas da Camera a Violino Solo, e Violoncello ô Cembalo*, op. 2. This was Somis's second collection of solo violin sonatas, published in 1723. In this collection, Somis writes three-movement sonatas, leaving out the middle Adagio. This new three-movement form would dominate later Italian sonatas. Somis's op. 2 collection survives in a manuscript hand-copied by Johann Georg Pisendel.

**Francesco Maria Veracini** (1690-1768) was born to a Florentine family of violinists, including his grandfather Francesco de Niccolò and his uncle, Antonio. He was taught at first by his uncle, with whom he performed often. In 1711, he left to make his mark in the world, stopping in Venice, London and Düsseldorf. Along the way, he is alleged to have met and studied with Corelli, though some of his biographical information is unreliable. Pietro Locatelli is said to have studied with Veracini in Florence, and an anecdote is given that the great violinist Giuseppe Tartini heard Veracini play in Venice, after which he spent three months practicing bow technique before appearing in public again. From 1717-1723, Veracini was employed in Dresden by Prince Elector Friedrich August of Saxony. After returning to Florence for 10 years, Veracini returned to London, where he enjoyed considerable success as a violin soloist, often being employed by Handel for his operas. In 1755 he returned to his home in Florence, where he continued performing and conducting until his death,

Veracini's Sonata 2 comes from his op. 1 collection, published in Dresden in 1721. This sonata is in the da Camera form, with dance movements. A short introductory Adagio in dotted rhythms sets up a stately Allemande. A gentle Siciliano follows, with its distinctive rhythm. The last movement is titled Aria, implying a vocal quality.

**Arcangelo Corelli** (1653-1713) was born to a prosperous noble family in Fusignano, near Ferrara. He traveled to Bologna as a teenager to study with the great Bolognese violin masters, and at age 17 was admitted into the Accademia Filarmonica. By 1675 Corelli was employed as a violinist in Rome, and after a few years was considered one of the best. By the 1690s he was conducting orchestras as well as playing violin, and many of the next generation of great violinists studied with him. However, his reputation as a composer was far greater than as a player. Though he published only six collections of music, four of trio sonatas and one each of violin sonatas and concerti grossi, his works were wildly successful, and published and republished throughout Europe. In fact, they are the earliest works that have been continually published until the present day. His sonatas were written in two forms, sonatas da chiesa (of the church) and sonatas da camera (chamber sonatas). The difference is that sonatas da camera have dance movements, and the sonatas da chiesa have more serious contrapuntal music designed to be listened to and appreciated.

Corelli's Violin Sonata I is from his op. 5 collection, published in 1700. This collection is divided into two parts: Sonatas 1-6 are sonatas da chiesa, and Sonatas 7-12 are sonatas da camera. Sonata I is a Sonata da Chiesa, meaning its movements are not dances, but rather serious works designed to be able to perform in church. The first movement is an exploration of D major and its dominant, A major. The second movement is a complex fugue in three voices. A sprightly Allegro sets the stage for a tender Adagio. The final movement is another fugue, this one joyful in a swinging 6/8 time.

—John Ott

## About Us

Cellist and gambist **John Ott**, a native of Los Angeles, received his Bachelor of Music degree in cello performance from UC Irvine in 2004, studying with Dr. Margaret Parkins, and in 2016 completed his Master of Music degree in Early Music, viola da gamba at the Longy School of Music in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he studied with Jane Hershey. In between, he performed with Symphony Irvine, Dana Point Symphony, Montage Civic Orchestra, and South Orange County Chamber Orchestra, played in the string quartet Elegie Quartet, and played chamber music all over Los Angeles and Orange County. During his two years in Massachusetts, aside from his Longy ensembles, he performed with Boston Camerata and Boston Opera Collaborative. He has played with the Orange County-based early music group L'Esprit Baroque since 2014. He maintains a large teaching studio, primarily at Vienna Music Institute in Irvine, CA, and has been the cello coach for three high schools in Irvine Unified School District.

Fascinated and deeply inspired by the relationship between music, movement, and dance, violinist and Dalcrozian-in-training **Sylvia Schwartz** is a passionate chamber musician in both modern and historical performance practices. A native of Boston, Sylvia has performed with Guts, L'Esprit Baroque, Musica Angelica Baroque Orchestra, LA Chamber Chorale, The Meistersingers, Eudaimonia—A Purposeful Period Band, Harvard Baroque Chamber Orchestra, Harvard Early Music Society, New Bedford Symphony, New England Classical Singers, and Lizzie and the Flakjackets throughout the United States and Canada, in Estonia, Latvia, and at Shostakovich Hall in St. Petersburg, Russia. Sylvia earned a M.M. in Violin Performance from the Longy School of Music, where she studied violin with Laura Bossert and early music with Dana Maiben, Na'ama Lion, Vivian Montgomery, and Ryan Turner. She also holds a B.S. in Engineering from Olin College. Sylvia teaches privately in person and online, for the Irvine Unified School District, and at Vienna Music Institute in Irvine, California, and concertizes frequently with Guts and L'Esprit Baroque.

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## About Historically-Informed Performance Practice

The mission of Guts is to bring the music of the Baroque era to vivid life, recreating the distinct sound of the time in which it was composed. In tonight's program, Sylvia will be playing a baroque violin, constructed in 2016 by Douglas Cox to replicate a Guarneri violin of the early 1700's, with a long baroque bow made by Louis Bégin. John will play an early 20th-century French cello, with a baroque bow also made by Louis Bégin. Both instruments are strung with pure-gut strings, the way they would have been in the 18th century. Gut strings sound warmer, though quieter, than their modern metal equivalents, and baroque instruments are under less tension, so they sound more open, though not as projecting. Like most Baroque music, all of the music on tonight's program has a basso continuo line forming the foundation of the ensemble, typically shared by the cello or gamba and the keyboard, usually a harpsichord or organ. We are presenting these works without a keyboard instrument for this concert.

As performers, we will be adding ornaments such as trills and turns to the music as we play. The practice of decorating music was unique to the performer and to the circumstances of performance, and helped each musician put their own stamp on a piece of music. Decorating this way both adds to the expressiveness of the music and allows us to share our personalities as performers with our audience. Also, since the music of this time is generally imitating sung text, even though the music we are playing has no specific text we will be shaping our phrases and melodies as if they were sung with words. For this particular repertoire, the Adagio movements are intended to be played with a lot of improvisation, particularly in the solo line.

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