

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

Sunday, April 24, 2022, 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. 5 no. 1.....Arcangelo Corelli (1653–1713)

Grave - Allegro - Adagio
Allegro
Allegro
Adagio
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. 2 no. 12.....Giovanni Battista Somis (1686–1763)

Adagio
Allegro
Allegro

Sonata in D Major, op. 2 no. 1.....Giuseppe Tartini (1692–1770)

Andante Cantabile
Allegro
Affetuoso
Allegro assai

Fin

Program Notes

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.

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.

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.

Giuseppe Tartini (1692-1770) was born in Pirano, Istria, which is now part of Slovenia but was then part of the Republic of Venice. His father Giovanni Antonio was a wealthy Florentine salt merchant, and wanted Giuseppe to join the Franciscan order to become a priest. He sent Giuseppe to the University in Padua, where he excelled at the violin, law and fencing. Against his family's wishes, he married a woman of lower birth in 1710, and subsequently had to go into hiding. He then dedicated himself to the practice and pursuit of the violin for another 6 years. Without financial support from his family, he had to support himself by teaching and performing. One of his first students helped him secure a job as the concertmaster of the orchestra at S Antonio in Padua in 1721. He traveled to Prague for three years with his cellist friend Antonio Vandini, but returned to Padua for health reasons, and stayed for the rest of his life. He then started a music school in Padua, and dedicated himself to teaching, to great success. He published two treatises on music, but they were criticized by the Venetian community of music theorists as being too vague and erudite.

Tartini wrote over a hundred violin sonatas, concertos and trio sonatas, published by several different publishers all over Europe. He avoided assigning dates to these works, and frequently revised them, only submitting them for publication a handful at a time. Today's sonata comes from a collection of 12, published as op.2 in Rome (1745) and op. 3 in Paris (1747); a separate op. 2 of six sonatas was published in Amsterdam. This sonata, like many of Tartini's works, explores Tartini's unique ideas about harmony and "combination tones", where playing two notes causes the listener to hear a third note. In form, it is very similar to Corelli's *Sonatas da Chiesa*, which Tartini openly acknowledged as his model, with very lyrical slow movements, a contrapuntal second movement and a lively final Allegro.

—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. Since 2021, he teaches for Palaver Strings After-School Program in Portland, Maine, and appears with Portland Bach Experience.

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 Baroque, L'Esprit Baroque, Musica Angelica Baroque Orchestra, Los Angeles Baroque, Eudaimonia, Harvard Baroque Chamber Orchestra, Harvard Early Music Society, New Bedford Symphony, New England Classical Singers, Lizzie and the Flakjackets, and the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras throughout California and New England, in Ontario, Estonia, Latvia, and at Shostakovich Hall in St. Petersburg, Russia. Sylvia holds 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 and at Palaver Music Center, Stone Coast Music, and Powers Music School and has substitute taught for Irvine Unified School District, including four months as Orchestra Director at Grammy-winning Woodbridge High School.

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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