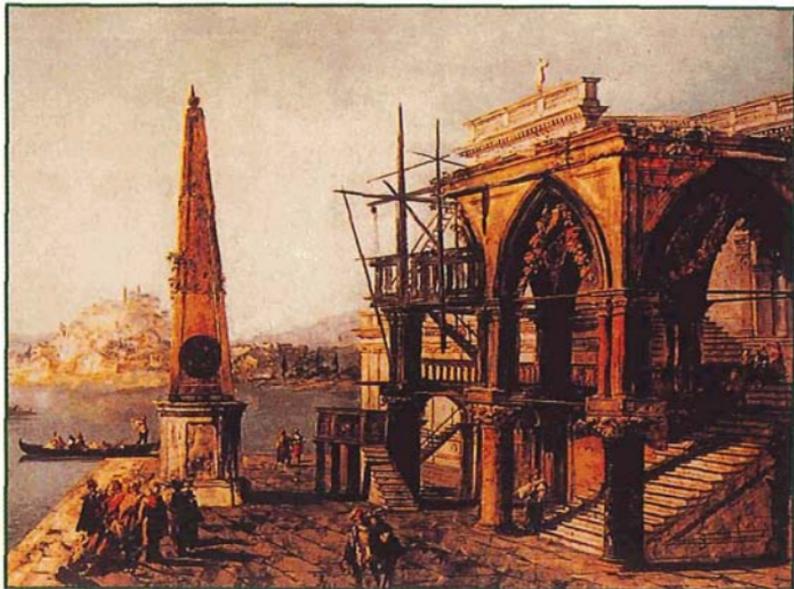


ITALIAN CONCERTI GROSSI

**Sammartini • Albinoni
Vivaldi • Locatelli • Manfredini
Corelli • Geminiani • A. Scarlatti**

**Capella Istropolitana
Jaroslav Kr(e)chek**



Italian Concerti Grossi

Sinfonia in A Major	Giovanni Battista Sammartini (1700 or 1701 - 1775)
Sonata a cinque in G Minor, Op. 2, No. 6	Tomaso Albinoni (1671 - 1751)
Concerto in A Minor con due violini obbligati Op. 3, No. 8, RV 522	Antonio Vivaldi (1678 - 1741)
Concerto Grosso in G Minor, Op. 1, No. 12	Pietro Locatelli (1695 - 1764)
Sinfonia No. 10 in C Minor	Francesco Manfredini (1684 - 1762)
Concerto Grosso in D Major, Op. 6, No. 4	Arcangelo Corelli (1653 - 1713)
Concerto Grosso in C Minor, Op. 2, No. 2	Francesco Geminiani (1687 - 1762)
Concerto Grosso No. 3 in F Major	Alessandro Scarlatti (1660 - 1725)

By the early eighteenth century Italy had become still more firmly established as the source of much European musical activity. Italian opera held a dominant position in the musical theatre, while Italian instrumental music and its performers were heard from Lisbon to London, St. Petersburg and Vienna. The Italian instrumental style found its most influential expression in the work of the violinist Arcangelo Corelli. Born in Fusignano in 1653, he studied in Bologna, before establishing himself in Rome in the 1670s, entering the service of Queen Christina of Sweden towards the end of the decade, and later benefiting from the patronage of Cardinal Pamphili, with regular performances at the latter's Palazzo al Corso. His principal patron for the last twenty years of his life was

the young Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni, nephew of Pope Alexander VIII. Corelli's influence was very considerable in a number of ways. He was greatly respected as a teacher of the violin, while his compositions, played by musicians disciplined under his direction, served as models for a coming generation. His published works include 48 trio sonatas, a dozen violin sonatas and, issued posthumously in 1714 in Amsterdam, a set of twelve concerti grossi, Opus 6. The fourth of these, the Concerto grosso in D major, is characteristic in form and content. A brief slow introduction, a call to the listener's attention, is followed by a lively Allegro, in which the two solo violins and solo cello of the concertino group are contrasted with the rest of the string orchestra, the ripieno players. There is a moving Adagio, a short fast movement and a final movement in the rhythm of a gigue, ending with a rapid and emphatic concluding section.

Alessandro Scarlatti, father of the prolific composer of keyboard sonatas, Domenico, and member of a family of musicians ubiquitous in Naples, was born in Palermo in 1660 and had his musical training in Rome, where he enjoyed the patronage of Queen Christina of Sweden. In 1684 he was appointed maestro di cappella to the Spanish Viceroy of Naples. There, for the next twenty years, he busied himself in the composition and performance of operas that enjoyed currency elsewhere in Italy and as far north as Brunswick and Leipzig. In 1702 he moved to Florence in hope of an appointment at the court of Prince Ferdinando de' Medici and then to Rome. He returned to Naples in 1708 at the invitation of a new Viceroy and it seems to have been in his later years, during which he maintained also his connection with Rome, that he turned his attention to purely instrumental music, after his long involvement with opera, serenatas, cantatas and church music. His Concerti grossi are relatively conservative in style, offering music that is attractive enough, but lacking the innovative spirit of his operas and their overtures, seminal examples of the Italian three-movement symphony.

Venice by the early eighteenth century lacked political power, but continued as a centre for foreign visitors, attracted by the beauty of the place and its delights and novelties, not least the music offered by the four charitable institutions for orphan, illegitimate or indigent girls. At one of these establishments, the Ospedale della Pietà, the red-haired priest Antonio Vivaldi was employed intermittently from the year of his ordination in 1703 until his departure in 1741 for Vienna, where he died shortly after his arrival. Vivaldi, also active as a composer of opera, was himself a violinist of great distinction, providing the Pietà with a vast quantity of concertos for various instruments, many of which enjoyed wide popularity abroad. A set of twelve concertos for strings and continuo, with varied numbers of solo violins, was published in 1711 with a dedication to Prince Ferdinando of Tuscany and under the title *L'estro armonico*, numbered Opus 3. The second concerto of the set, with a solo group of two violins and cello, the Concerto in A minor, in the newly established three-movement form, was later transcribed for organ by Johann Sebastian Bach. It is a lively and spirited work, its course interrupted by an expressive slow movement.

Prince Ferdinando did not outlive his father and barely outlived Corelli, dying in 1713. The Venetian composer Tomaso Albinoni also benefited from his patronage, although initially himself of independent means, the son of a well-to-do paper-merchant. He dedicated his first set of *sinfonie* and *concerti*, published in 1700, to another patron, the Gonzaga Duke of Mantua. These relatively early works continue the tradition of Corelli, with four movements, slow - fast - slow - fast.

Manfredini, Locatelli, Geminiani and Sammartini belong to another generation. Francesco Manfredini, born in Pistoia in 1684, like Corelli studied music in Bologna, in the musical establishment attached to the great Basilica of San Petronio, where he worked intermittently, with a period seemingly in the service of the ruler of Monaco. He spent the last 35 years of his life in his native city as *maestro di cappella* at the cathedral. His instrumental works belong to the

period before his return to Pistoia, written and published in Bologna in the first twenty years of the century. The Sinfonia in C minor follows the established pattern of the church sonata, an introductory slow movement followed by a contrapuntal faster movement. A second slow movement precedes a final rapid contrapuntal movement in compound metre.

Pietro Antonio Locatelli was born in Bergamo in 1695 and may perhaps have studied very briefly with Corelli in Rome in 1712. He enjoyed the early patronage of Cardinal Ottoboni and later of a patron of Vivaldi, the Habsburg Governor of Mantua, under whom he held the title of virtuoso da camera. In 1729 he settled in Amsterdam, restricting his own career as a virtuoso performer and directing his attention largely to gifted amateurs. His first collection of concerti grossi was published in Amsterdam in 1721 and revised eight years later, when he made his home in that city. Like Geminiani, he includes a viola in the concertino group, with two violins and cello, while adopting the order of Corelli's concerti grossi, eight church concerti being followed by four chamber concerti, sets of dance movements. The Concerto grosso in G minor, Opus 1, No. 12, includes the customary German dance, the Allemanda and a Sarabande, and ends, less usually, with a Gavotte.

The violinist and composer Francesco Geminiani, born in Lucca in 1687, was a pupil of Corelli and of Alessandro Scarlatti in Rome, but moved in 1714 to London, where he initially enjoyed the patronage of Baron Kielmansegge, who, as chamberlain to the King, had been instrumental in Handel's appointment in Hanover and his further acceptance by the new court in London. Geminiani had very considerable success in England and in Ireland both as a composer and as a performer. His treatises on various aspects of performance had wide circulation in his own time and have proved a valuable source of information for later scholars and players. He died in Dublin in 1762. The six concerti grossi that constitute Geminiani's Opus 2 were published in London in 1732 and follow Corelli in form and style.

The work of Giovanni Battista Sammartini leads forward to a new kind of instrumental music, the symphony, which had much of its development in Vienna and South Germany. Sammartini himself was probably born in Milan, the son of an emigrant French oboist, and spent his life in the city, where he enjoyed a reputation that in Italy was largely local, but abroad was very considerable. Some have suggested a strong influence on Haydn, who denied any such thing, although an uncontested case is made for Sammartini's influence on his pupil Gluck. His earlier symphonies, scored for strings and affected by the example of Vivaldi, are nevertheless pointing forward to a future age of classicism, a trait apparent in the Sinfonia in A major.

Capella Istropolitana

The Capella Istropolitana was founded in 1983 by members of the Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra, at first as a chamber orchestra and then as an orchestra large enough to tackle the standard classical repertoire. Based in Bratislava, its name drawn from the ancient name still preserved in the Academia Istropolitana, the orchestra works in the recording studio and undertakes frequent tours throughout Europe. Recordings by the orchestra on the Naxos label include The Best of Baroque Music, Bach's Brandenburg Concertos, fifteen each of Mozart's and Haydn's symphonies as well as works by Handel, Vivaldi and Telemann.

Jaroslav Kr(e)chek

The Czech conductor and composer Jaroslav Kr(e)chek was born in southern Bohemia in 1939 and studied composition and conducting at the Prague Conservatory. In 1962 he moved to Pilsen as a conductor and radio producer and in 1967 returned to Prague to work as a recording supervisor for Supraphon. In the capital he founded the Chorea Bohemica ensemble and in 1975 the chamber orchestra Musica Bohemica. In Czechoslovakia he is well known for his arrangements of Bohemian folk music, while his electro-acoustic opera Raab was awarded first prize at the International Composer's Competition in Geneva. He is the artistic leader of Capella Istropolitana.

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ITALIAN CONCERTI GROSSI

 Playing
Time:
66'12"

 Capella Istropolitana
Jaroslav Kr(e)chek

G. B. Sammartini: Sinfonia in A Major

- | | | |
|---|--------------|--------|
| 1 | Presto | (2:23) |
| 2 | Andante | (2:23) |
| 3 | Presto assai | (3:25) |

Tomaso Albinoni: Sonata a cinque in G Minor, Op. 2, No. 6

- | | | |
|---|---------|--------|
| 4 | Adagio | (1:13) |
| 5 | Allegro | (2:17) |
| 6 | Grave | (1:07) |
| 7 | Allegro | (1:49) |

Antonio Vivaldi: Concerto con due violini obbligati

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|----|-----------------------|--------|
| 8 | Allegro | (3:14) |
| 9 | Larghetto e spiritoso | (3:51) |
| 10 | Allegro | (2:56) |

Pietro Locatelli: Concerto Grosso in G Minor, Op. 1, No. 12

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|----|--------------------|--------|
| 11 | Largo | (1:34) |
| 12 | Allemanda: Allegro | (1:41) |
| 13 | Sarabanda: Vivace | (1:48) |
| 14 | Presto | (1:23) |
| 15 | Gavotta: Allegro | (2:23) |

Francesco Manfredini: Sinfonia No. 10

- | | | |
|----|-------------------|--------|
| 16 | Adagio e spiccato | (1:40) |
| 17 | Andante | (2:04) |
| 18 | Non tanto largo | (2:18) |
| 19 | Presto | (1:34) |

Arcangelo Corelli: Concerto Grosso in D Major, Op. 6, No. 4

- | | | |
|----|------------------|--------|
| 20 | Adagio - Allegro | (3:00) |
| 21 | Adagio | (2:23) |
| 22 | Vivace | (0:43) |
| 23 | Allegro | (2:55) |

Francesco Geminiani: Concerto Grosso in C Minor, Op. 2, No. 2

- | | | |
|----|---------|--------|
| 24 | Adagio | (1:30) |
| 25 | Allegro | (1:43) |
| 26 | Adagio | (1:17) |
| 27 | Allegro | (3:03) |

Alessandro Scarlatti: Concerto Grosso No. 3 in F Major

- | | | |
|----|---------|--------|
| 28 | Allegro | (0:40) |
| 29 | Largo | (0:54) |
| 30 | Allegro | (1:37) |
| 31 | Largo | (1:19) |
| 32 | Allegro | (2:12) |

Recorded at the Moyzes Hall of the Slovak Philharmonic in Bratislava in March, 1993.

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