



**Carl  
STAMITZ**

DDD

8.550865

**Cello Concertos  
Nos. 1 - 3**

**Christian Benda, Cello  
Prague Chamber Orchestra**



## **Carl Stamitz (1745 - 1801)**

### **Cello Concertos Nos. 1 - 3**

An army of generals, equally qualified to plan a battle as to win it, was Charles Burney's verdict on the famous orchestra at Mannheim, the seat of the Elector Palatine. The town had been chosen as capital by the Elector Carl Philipp in 1720, who built there a palace of great splendour and established a body of musicians, by 1723 numbering as many as 56, to match this magnificence. With the succession of Carl Theodor in 1742 the arts received still greater attention, with a musical establishment that by 1778 numbered ninety instrumentalists and singers. The orchestra, one of the most famous of its time in Europe, owed much of its brilliance to the violinist Johann Stamitz, who seems to have joined the Mannheim Hofkapelle in 1742. The Mannheim style that developed under Stamitz was based on strong orchestral discipline. In particular the Mannheim crescendo became an important feature, with other more sudden dynamic changes. The crescendo has come to be known as the Mannheim roller or, popularly but less accurately, steamroller, derived perhaps from Italy, rather than an original development. Other features frequently mentioned include the Mannheim rocket, an ascending triadic figure in the melody, with the sigh, a feeling use of the appoggiatura. While these elements may not have been the exclusive property of Mannheim, they nevertheless became a marked feature of the style of instrumental composition favoured there.

Johann Stamitz was himself a considerable performer and composer, compared by Burney in a high flight of imagination to Shakespeare. His two sons Carl and Anton, members of the second generation of Mannheim composers, contributed very significantly to instrumental repertoire. Carl, the older of the two, was first trained by his father and then, after the latter's death in 1757, by Christian Cannabich, Holzbauer and Richter. He played the violin in the orchestra until 1770, when he and his brother moved to Paris, Carl entering the service of the Duc de Noailles. After 1777 he travelled as a virtuoso, visiting London, The Hague, Hamburg, Leipzig and Berlin, in the last place apparently securing a contract to

ensure payment for any work written for the royal orchestra there. In spite of considerable success, he suffered some straitening of circumstances in later life, a situation that his earnings as Kapellmeister at Jena during his last few years was unable to ameliorate. The fate of his brother remains unknown. It seems that he remained in France and is heard of in 1780 as the teacher of Rodolphe Kreutzer, but there are no direct references to his existence after 1789, apart from a complaint in 1809 from his widow, whose promised pension had not been paid.

The two Stamitz brothers made a very significant addition to concerto repertoire, particularly for the viola, an instrument that they did much to popularise in France. The arrangement that Carl Stamitz had come to with the court at Potsdam seems to have led to the composition of a series of cello concertos for the cello-playing King Friedrich Wilhelm II, for whom Mozart and Beethoven both wrote. The three concertos, in G major, A major and C major, are clear examples of the instrumental form favoured by Stamitz, with first movements in the now customary sonata-allegro form, but with a third, recapitulation section starting with the more lyrical second subject rather than, as expected, the first subject. The orchestra introduces each work, with first and second subject presented before the entry of the soloist with versions of the same thematic material, which is later developed. The lyrical slow movements of Stamitz were much admired and are heard in their characteristic form in the cello concertos, followed by lively final rondo movements, with the necessary variety of contrasting episodes.

In this recording the cadenzas are composed by Sebastian Benda.

## **Christian Benda**

The cellist and conductor Christian Benda belongs to a family of Czech musicians whose earlier members established in the eighteenth century a dynasty of composers, musicians at the court of Frederick the Great. His early musical training was at home. Supported by Paul Tortelier, he was launched on a solo career by Pierre Fournier, at first in Bohemia with the Prague Symphony Orchestra and the violinist Josef Suk, with whom he played the Brahms Double Concerto and later collaborated as soloist and conductor with the Suk Chamber Orchestra. Engagements with major orchestras in Eastern Europe were followed by appearances elsewhere. He has recorded for broadcasting the concertos of Lalo, Haydn, Boccherini and Villa-Lobos, with Bloch's Schelomo, the Double Concerto of Brahms and the Triple of Beethoven, and a number of other recordings on compact disc. He plays a cello by Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume.

## **Prague Chamber Orchestra**

The Prague Chamber Orchestra was established in 1951 and during the forty years of its existence has won a distinguished international reputation, with appearances at major European festivals and tours abroad to the Americas and throughout Europe, as well as to Japan. The orchestra has collaborated with soloists of the greatest distinction, including Accardo, Badura-Skoda, the Beaux Arts Trio, Gilels, Gulda, Hendricks, Holliger, Michelangeli and others of similar eminence. There have been more than a hundred recordings, with a Golden Record award after selling a million discs and on three occasions the Grand Prix du Disque de l'Académie Charles Cros as well as the Austrian Wiener Flötenuhr.



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STEREO

# Carl STAMITZ

## Cello Concertos

Christian Benda, Cello  
Prague Chamber Orchestra

DDD

Playing  
Time:  
61'33"

### Concerto No. 1 in G Major

- |   |                     |         |
|---|---------------------|---------|
| 1 | Allegro con spirito | (10:34) |
| 2 | Romance: Andantino  | (5:23)  |
| 3 | Rondo: Allegro      | (5:07)  |

### Concerto No. 2 in A Major

- |   |                     |        |
|---|---------------------|--------|
| 4 | Allegro con spirito | (9:50) |
| 5 | Romance: Andantino  | (6:53) |
| 6 | Rondo: Allegretto   | (4:21) |

### Concerto No. 3 in C Major

- |   |                       |        |
|---|-----------------------|--------|
| 7 | Allegro con spirito   | (8:59) |
| 8 | Andante poco moderato | (6:02) |
| 9 | Rondo: Allegro        | (4:04) |

Recorded in cooperation with Bohemia Video Art  
at the Chapel of the Brethren Church, Prague,  
in January, 1993.

Producer: Milan Slavicky

Engineer: Jan Kotzmann

Music Notes: Keith Anderson

Cover Photo: Prague (Archiv für Kunst und Geschichte)



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