



LUIGI BOCCHERINI
STABAT MATER

for soprano and string quintet

String Quartet, Op. 52, No. 3

String Quintet, Op. 42, No. 1

Dominique Labelle Soprano

Sarasa Ensemble

Elizabeth Blumenstock Violin

Christina Day Martinson Violin

Jenny Stirling Viola

Timothy Merton Cello

Phoebe Carrai Cello

Luigi
BOCCHERINI
(1743–1805)

String Quartet in G major, Op. 52, No. 3, G. 234 (1795)		19:14
1	I. Allegretto con moto	8:14
2	II. Minuetto	3:10
3	III. Adagio	2:41
4	IV. Allegro giusto	5:09

Stabat Mater, G. 532, for soprano and string quintet (First version, 1781) (text: attrib. Jacopone da Todi, 1230–1306)		39:57
5	Stabat mater dolorosa (Grave assai)	4:41
6	Cujus animam gementem (Allegro)	2:22
7	Quae moerebat et dolebat (Allegretto comodo)	2:58
8	Quis est homo (Adagio assai – Recitativo)	1:24
9	Pro peccatis suae gentis (Allegretto)	4:07
10	Eja, mater, fons amoris (Larghetto non tanto)	6:31
11	Tui nati vulnerate (Allegro vivo)	4:37
12	Virgo virginum praeclara (Andantino)	4:38
13	Fac ut portem Christi mortem (Larghetto)	2:38
14	Fac me plagis vulnerari (Allegro comodo)	2:27
15	Quando corpus morietur (Andante lento)	3:39

String Quintet in F minor, Op. 42, No. 1, G. 348 (1789)		19:36
16	I. Allegro moderato assai	6:08
17	II. Minuetto con moto	3:04
18	III. Adagio cantabile	5:18
19	IV. Rondeau: Allegro giusto	5:06

Dominique Labelle, Soprano ⁵⁻¹⁵

Sarasa Ensemble

Elizabeth Blumenstock ¹⁻¹⁹, **Christina Day Martinson** ¹⁻¹⁹, **Violin**

Jenny Stirling, Viola ¹⁻¹⁹

Timothy Merton, Cello I ¹⁻⁴, ¹⁶⁻¹⁹, **Cello II** ⁵⁻¹⁵

Phoebe Carrai, Cello I ⁵⁻¹⁵, **Cello II** ¹⁶⁻¹⁹

Luigi Boccherini (1743–1805)

String Quartet in G major, Op. 52, No. 3, G. 234 • Stabat Mater, G. 532

String Quintet in F minor, Op. 42, No. 1, G. 348

'I know that music is made to speak to the heart of man, and this is the effect that I aim at producing, if it lies within my power. Music deprived of sentiment and of passions is meaningless, and consequently the composer achieves nothing without the performers.'

Luigi Boccherini

Luigi Boccherini composed music that emphasised melody, motivic repetition, dulcet inflection, and instrumental vibrancy. These qualities, when compared to the perhaps more 'intellectual' Viennese practices and leanings of his day, may have led his posthumous stature in music to be undervalued and escape serious attention. Boccherini nonetheless enjoyed great popularity during his lifetime both as a prodigious composer and a phenomenal cellist.

Born in the Tuscan town of Lucca as the third eldest of seven children, Boccherini displayed great aptitude and virtuosity on the cello at a young age. He initially learned music from his father, a double bass player who participated in the local civic orchestra. Leopoldo Boccherini created a home environment that especially embraced music and dance as daily activities for all of the siblings. Searching to make ends meet, the family moved frequently, living in Trieste and Venice, with a long sojourn in Vienna, where father and son often performed in orchestras together. Luigi's own career as a cellist catapulted him further, with engagements in London, Paris (a veritable hotbed of brilliant cellists), Cologne, Dresden and ultimately Madrid, where in 1770 he won a position to be court musician and composer to Don Luis Antonio Jaime de Borbón y Farnesio (1727–1785), a keen cellist and the younger brother of the Spanish king, Carlos III.

Over the course of his career as court composer in Madrid, Boccherini penned an impressive output, including 29 symphonies, 12 cello concertos, 90 string quartets, over 120 string quintets, 6 string sextets, and 12 piano quintets, as well as many beautiful vocal works, pieces for winds and solo sonatas. Sadly, following his death in 1805, Boccherini's music nearly vanished from the concert hall and from publishers' catalogues. The 19th-century musicologist François-Joseph Fétis commented:

'Rarely has a composer had the merit of originality, to a

greater degree than Boccherini. His ideas are always original, and his works are so remarkable ... that one would be tempted to believe that he has never known any other music but his own ... His harmony is rich in effects ... His adagios and his minuets are always delicious ... With a merit so remarkable, it is strange that Boccherini should not be better known today in France.'

Boccherini published his first set of six string quartets, *Op. 2*, in Paris (1761) around the same time Haydn's first foray into that genre was also circulating. He toured throughout Italy with perhaps one of the first bona fide professional string quartets during the 1760s, whose members included Filippo Manfredi, Giuseppe Bambini and Pietro Nardini. The four string quartets from the *Op. 52* set were written in 1795 for King Friedrich Wilhelm II of Prussia (1744–1797), a highly accomplished cellist, and for whom Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven also composed chamber music. According to Johann Friedrich Reichardt, Master of the Royal Chapel at Potsdam, 'the King loved Boccherini's compositions more than any others and played them continuously.'

In *String Quartet, Op. 52, No. 3, G. 234*, a bucolic sense of ease in the opening is interrupted almost immediately by a plethora of dynamic contrasts and varying motivic ideas. The technically demanding first violin part carries most of the work's leading melodic material, although some of its passagework blurs the distinction between melody and texture. The other instruments provide a rich rhythmic counterpoint and weave a colourful tapestry of contrasting elements. Some flashes of virtuosity from the viola in the opening movement offer a fine response to the first violin. Respectful of his patron, the final movement's boisterous attitude is put on hold by two lovely solos in the cello. The first movement's thematic material seamlessly resurfaces in the concluding movement, creating a pleasing arch of thematic connections.

Stabat mater dolorosa, a meditation on the suffering of Mary at the crucifixion of Jesus, is one of the most revered Latin hymn texts. Attributed to Jacopone da Todi (1230–1306), its true author remains unknown. Like many musicians of his day, Boccherini was familiar with the widely disseminated 1736 setting by Giovanni Pergolesi, as well as those by Antonio Vivaldi (1712), Alessandro Scarlatti (1724) and Joseph Haydn (1767). Boccherini, a devout Catholic, first set the text

in 1781, while employed by the Infante Don Luis. The particular occasion for which it was written remains unknown. It has been suggested that his wife, the soprano Clementina Pelicho, may have sung its first performance. Historically, previous settings of the *Stabat Mater* were largely written for multiple voices or choir, with or without instruments. Boccherini chose the intimacy of a chamber music setting, uniquely a solo soprano with a string quintet (two violins, viola and two cellos), in which to portray Mary's darkest moment.

In Boccherini's treatment, the eleven-movement work sustains an expression of power and depth, passion and pathos. The soprano voice requires a command of florid Italian vocal ornamentation and an ability to improvise short cadenzas with instrumental ease in what is a technically demanding role. Likewise, the string parts do not simply serve as mere accompaniment, but weave the fabric of the text's meaning. The first violin and vocal line most frequently respond to one another. Contrasting the dramatic recitative of *Quis est homo*, the music quickly melts into a gentle cradle of understanding in *Pro peccatis suae gentis*. An especially soulful cello solo takes centre stage in the *Eja, mater, fons amoris*, to which all the instruments react in kind. In the form of a fugue, *Fac me plagis vulnerari* assumes an added sense of gravitas. The expressive final movement is a breath-taking conclusion to an unjustly neglected masterpiece of vocal music.

Boccherini listed 125 string quintets in his thematic catalogue between 1771 and 1802, of which 113 were originally scored for two violoncellos and 12 for two violas. The cello quintets would have been played by Boccherini himself along with the Font family string quartet (father and three sons), who were also employed by the Infante at Las Arenas. The in-house ensemble gave ample reason for Boccherini to pursue this special instrumental combination.

Perhaps with high esteem for the material he composed in his *Stabat Mater* eight years earlier, Boccherini recycled some of its material in both his *String Quartet in C minor, Op. 41, No. 1, G. 214* (1788), and the *String Quintet in F minor, Op. 42, No. 1, G. 348* (1789), recorded here. The secondary theme of the quintet's first movement, *Allegro moderato assai*, is borrowed from the *Stabat Mater* movement, *Pro peccatis suae gentis*. The slow movement *Adagio cantabile* contains the F minor melody paired with the text *Lacrimosa* from the sacred works' first movement. The especially luxurious solo cello line was most likely played by Boccherini himself. The final *Rondeau* also contains an F minor interlude, extending the *Quintet's* close bond with the vocal work.

Boccherini's string quintets, in particular, present a wide variety of dynamic, articulation and special-effect markings, constituting an important source for the study of 18th-century performance practice. In this *Quintet's* trio movement, Boccherini creates a sort of laboratory for surprising experiments in string articulation. He features a curious *stracinando* effect (which literally means 'dragging' the bow) throughout the trio in all five parts. Now obsolete, the device *stracinato* often appears near cadences and with the dynamic marking *piano* or *pianissimo*; it is occasionally accompanied by the indication *sul ponticello*, a direction to play near the bridge.

For performers, Boccherini's musical language has a special appeal. It demands a vivid imagination, along with resistance to using a Germanic inflection, which influences so much music from the Classical era. With the merest change of gesture, Boccherini's music offers a wonderful kaleidoscope of colour and character.

Jennifer Morsches



Photo: Lino Alvarez



Photo: Eddie Frank



Photo: Carl Chow

Dominique Labelle

Dominique Labelle's passionate commitment to music-making has led to close and enduring collaborations with a number of respected conductors and composers, such as Nicholas McGegan, Jos van Veldhoven and Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Yehudi Wyner. She also treasures her long association with the late Robert Shaw. Appearances with Iván Fischer include performances of Mozart and Bach with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and the Orchestra of St. Luke's. She has also performed with Jean-Marie Zeitouni along with I Musici de Montréal and the Columbus Symphony Orchestra. Labelle is chair of voice area at the Schulich School of Music, McGill University, and has taught masterclasses at Harvard University, Smith College, and the University of Massachusetts. In 2018 she was a recipient of the Opera Canada Award ('The Rubies') for her significant contributions to the opera world. During the previous year, she was honoured at gala concerts by both Göttingen International Handel Festival and the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra for her extraordinary artistic contributions.

www.dominiquelabelle.com

Elizabeth Blumenstock

Elizabeth Blumenstock is a long-time concertmaster, soloist and leader with the San Francisco Bay Area's Philharmonia Baroque and American Bach Soloists, concertmaster of the International Handel Festival Orchestra in Göttingen, Germany, and artistic director of the Baroque Music Festival Corona del Mar. Her love of chamber music has involved her in several accomplished smaller ensembles including the Galax Quartet, the Live Oak Baroque Orchestra, Voices of Music, the Ars Lyrica Houston Chamber Players, and Severall Friends. Blumenstock teaches on The Juilliard School's Historical Performance Program, at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, the American Bach Soloists Festival and Academy, the International Baroque Institute at Longy, and the Valley of the Moon Music Festival. Blumenstock plays a 1660 Andrea Guarneri violin built in Cremona, Italy, on generous loan to her from the Philharmonia Baroque Period Instrument Trust.

Christina Day Martinson

Born in Saskatchewan, Canada, Christina Day Martinson serves as concertmaster for Boston Baroque, and is associate concertmaster for the Handel and Haydn Society. She has served as concertmaster under conductors such as Roger Norrington, Richard Egarr, Bernard Labadie, Nicholas McGegan, Lawrence Cummings and Harry Christophers, among others. In 2008 Martinson recorded Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* with Boston Baroque for Telarc, which received critical acclaim in *Gramophone* magazine. Martinson's performance of Heinrich Biber's *Mystery Sonatas* in 2013 was selected as one of *The Boston Globe's* top ten performances that year and one of Jeremy Eichler's top concerts. Recorded for Linn Records in March 2017, the release was chosen by the *Chicago Tribune* as one of the top albums of 2018, and was nominated for a GRAMMY® Award.



Photo: Katherine Stirling-Ellis

Jenny Stirling

Born in the UK, Jenny Stirling trained at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London. Diverting for a few years to explore her love of culinary arts, she resumed her musical studies, acquiring degrees at the New England Conservatory, and the State University of New York (SUNY), Stony Brook. Jenny played for many years with Craig Smith and Emmanuel Music, performing on their Bach cantata series, and for twelve years was principal violist of the New England String Ensemble. Currently a member of the Handel and Haydn Society orchestra, she also performs with the Sarasa Ensemble and other groups on both period and modern instruments. A passionate and dedicated teacher, Jenny tutors and coaches chamber music at the Concord Academy, the New England Conservatory preparatory school, and at her home studio.

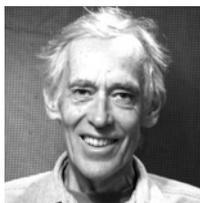


Photo: Hayden Lake

Timothy Merton

Timothy Merton's career as a cellist has spanned both sides of the Atlantic. His teachers have included Jean Goberman, Leif Rosanoff and Madeleine Foley. He studied at the Mannes College of Music in New York, and the Royal College of Music in London. From 1989 to 1996 he lived in England, where he performed with many groundbreaking early music ensembles and orchestras, including the English Baroque Soloists, the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, with whom he toured worldwide and recorded on the Sony Classical, Deutsche Grammophon and Philips labels. Fascinated by performing for diverse audiences, his travels have also taken him from Nanjing Radio, China, and the Dalit Peoples Organization, Bangalore, India, to positions with the Aarhus Symfoniorkester, Denmark, the Real Orquesta Sinfónica de Sevilla, Spain, and the Glyndebourne Festival orchestra, UK. Merton plays a Viennese cello from 1750. He is the artistic director and founder of the Sarasa Ensemble.



Photo: Tatiana Daubek

Phoebe Carrai

Phoebe Carrai completed her postgraduate studies in Austria with Nikolaus Harnoncourt, after receiving her bachelor and master of music at the New England Conservatory. She became a member of Musica Antiqua Köln in 1982, making over 40 recordings for Deutsche Grammophon. Carrai's teaching career in historical performance started at the Hilversum Conservatory of Music in the Netherlands and the Universität der Künste, Berlin. She is presently on the faculties of The Juilliard School and the Longy School of Music. Along with her solo and chamber music concerts, she directs the Harvard Baroque Chamber Orchestra and performs regularly with Philharmonia Baroque, the Arcadian Academy, Juilliard Baroque, the Boston Early Music Festival and the FestspielOrchester Göttingen. Carrai has released recordings of Bach and Friedrich August Kummer, and will release *Out of Italy* in 2019 on Avie Records. She has also recorded for Decca, Deutsche Grammophon, Aetme, Telarc and BMG. She plays on an Italian cello from c. 1690.

Stabat Mater

5 Stabat mater dolorosa
Juxta crucem lacrimosa,
Dum pendeat Filius.

At the Cross her station keeping,
stood the mournful Mother weeping,
close to her Son to the last.

6 Cujus animam gementem,
Contristatam et dolentem
Pertransivit gladius.

Through her heart, His sorrow sharing,
all His bitter anguish bearing,
now at length the sword has passed.

O quam tristis et afflicta
Fuit illa benedicta
Mater unigeniti!

O how sad and sore distressed
was that Mother, highly blest,
of the sole-begotten One.

7 Quae moerebat et dolebat,
Pia Mater, dum videbat
Nati poenas inclyti.

Christ above in torment hangs,
she beneath beholds the pangs
of her dying glorious Son.

8 Quis est homo qui non fletet,
Christi Matrem si videret
In tanto supplicio?

Is there one who would not weep,
whelmed in miseries so deep,
Christ's dear Mother to behold?

Quis non posset contristari,
Piam matrem contemplari
Dolentem cum Filio?

Can the human heart refrain
from partaking in her pain,
in that Mother's pain untold?

9 Pro peccatis suae gentis,
Vidit Jesum in tormentis,
Et flagellis subditum.

For the sins of His own nation,
She saw Jesus wracked with torment,
All with scourges rent:

Vidit suum dulcem natum
Morientem desolatum,
Dum emisit spiritum.

She beheld her tender Child,
Saw Him hang in desolation,
Till His spirit forth He sent.

10 Eja Mater, fons amoris,
Me sentire vim doloris
Fac, ut tecum lugeam.

O thou Mother! fount of love!
Touch my spirit from above,
make my heart with thine accord:

Fac, ut ardeat cor meum
In amando Christum Deum,
Ut sibi complaceam.

Make me feel as thou hast felt;
make my soul to glow and melt
with the love of Christ my Lord.

Sancta Mater, istud agas,
Crucifixi fige plagas
Cordi meo valide.

Holy Mother! pierce me through,
in my heart each wound renew
of my Savior crucified

11 Tui nati vulnerati,
Tam dignati pro me pati,
Poenas mecum divide.

Fac me tecum pie flere,
Crucifixo condolere,
Donec ego vixero.

Juxta crucem tecum stare
Et me tibi sociare
In planctu desidero.

12 Virgo virginum praeclara,
Mihi jam non sis amara:
Fac me tecum plangere.

13 Fac ut portem Christi mortem,
Passionis fac consortem,
Et plagas recolare.

14 Fac me plagis vulnerari,
Cruce hac inebriari
Et cruore Filii.

Flammis ne urar succensus,
Per te, Virgo, sim defensus
In die judicii.

Christe cum sit hinc exire,
Da per Matrem me venire
Ad palmam victoriae.

Inflammatum et accensus
Per te virgo sim defensus
In die judicii.

Fac me cruce custodiri,
Morte Christi praemuniri,
Confoveri gratia.

15 Quando corpus morietur,
Fac ut animae donetur
Paradisi gloria.
Amen.

attrib. Jacopone da Todi (1230–1306)

Let me share with thee His pain,
who for all my sins was slain,
who for me in torments died.

Let me mingle tears with thee,
mourning Him who mourned for me,
all the days that I may live:

By the Cross with thee to stay,
there with thee to weep and pray,
is all I ask of thee to give.

Virgin of all virgins blest!,
Listen to my fond request:
let me share thy grief divine;

Let me, to my latest breath,
in my body bear the death
of that dying Son of thine.

Wounded with His every wound,
steep my soul till it hath swooned,
in His very Blood away;

Be to me, O Virgin, nigh,
lest in flames I burn and die,
in His awful Judgment Day.

Christ, when Thou shalt call me hence,
be Thy Mother my defense,
be Thy Cross my victory;

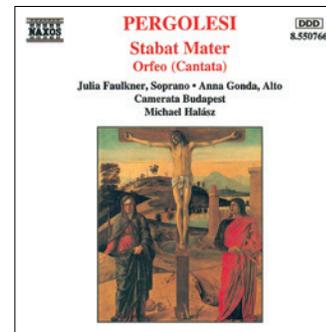
Lest I burn, set afire by flames,
Virgin, may I be defended by you,
on the day of judgement

Let me be guarded by the cross,
armed by Christ's death
and His grace cherish me

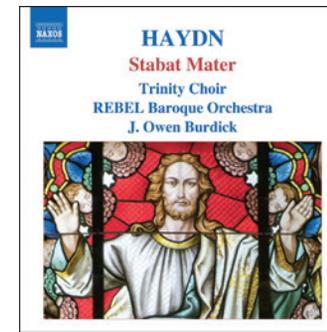
While my body here decays,
may my soul Thy goodness praise,
Safe in Paradise with Thee.
Amen.

Translation by Edward Caswall, Lyra Catholica (1849)

Also available



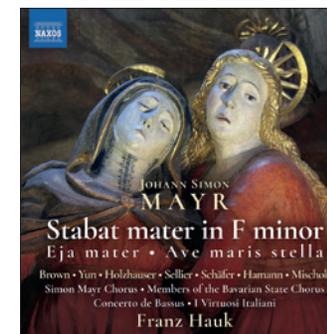
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Boccherini enjoyed enormous popularity during his lifetime thanks to music that emphasised rich melody, instrumental vibrancy and disarming beauty. He chose the intimacy of a chamber music setting for his *Stabat Mater*, writing for a solo soprano and string quintet with the instrumental textures weaving the fabric of the text's meaning. The result is passionate music with power, depth and pathos. As a virtuoso cellist he was perfectly placed to write chamber music. In the *Quartet, Op. 52, No. 3*, a colourful tapestry of contrasting events frames moments of bucolic excitement and lyric interlude, while the expertly structured *Quintet, Op. 42, No. 1* directly evokes the *Stabat Mater* in its themes.

Luigi

Playing Time

78:47

BOCCHERINI

(1743–1805)

1–4 String Quartet in G major,
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5–15 Stabat Mater, G. 532 for soprano and string quintet
(First version, 1781) (39:57)

16–19 String Quintet in F minor,
Op. 42, No. 1, G. 348 (1789) (19:36)

Dominique Labelle, Soprano **5–15**

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Elizabeth Blumenstock **1–19**, **Christina Day Martinson** **1–19**, **Violin**

Jenny Stirling, Viola **1–19** • **Timothy Merton, Cello I** **1–4**, **16–19**, **Cello II** **5–15**

Phoebe Carrai, Cello I **5–15**, **Cello II** **16–19**

A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet.

Recorded: 20–22 November 2014 **1–4**, **16–19** and 16–19 September 2015 **5–15** at the Chapel at West Parish, Andover, Massachusetts, USA • Producer: Frank Kelley • Engineers and editors: James Donahue, Joel Watts
Assistant Engineer: Edward Nixon • Mastering: Robin Bigwood • Booklet notes: Jennifer Morsches
Cover: Historical cemetery in Vigevano, Italy (Photo: Paolo Zeccara) • The sung texts and English translations are included in the booklet, and may also be accessed at www.naxos.com/libretti/573958.htm