



WALTON MOLINELLI

Cello Concerto
(arranged for viola)

Viola Concerto
'Lady Walton's
Garden'



ANNA SEROVA, VIOLA
HAYDN ORCHESTRA OF BOLZANO AND TRENTO
ROBERTO MOLINELLI

Sir William Walton (1902–1983)		
Cello Concerto (1956)		
(arr. Anna Serova for viola and orchestra, 2018)		30:15
❶	I. Moderato	8:12
❷	II. Allegro appassionato	7:00
❸	III. Theme and improvisations	14:59
Roberto Molinelli (b. 1963)		
Lady Walton's Garden (2017)		26:47
❹	I. Ginkgo Biloba	5:32
❺	II. Victoria Amazonica	13:24
❻	III. Palo Borracho	7:51
❼	William's Rock	
	for viola, viola d'amore, electric guitar and orchestra (2018)	13:55
❽	The Missing E	
	for viola, quena, mandolin, bandoneon, guitar and percussion (2022)	4:34

Recorded: 6–10 September 2018 at the Auditorium di Bolzano ❶–❷, 11 November 2022
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Executive producer: Anna Serova

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Sir William Walton (1902–1983) • Roberto Molinelli (b. 1963)

Concertos for Viola

Sir William Turner Walton (Oldham, 1902 – Ischia, 1983) is considered one of the greatest English composers of the 20th century.

The distinguishing feature of the music he composed, initially neo-Classical and Stravinskian in inspiration, and then later characterised by a more marked use of counterpoint, is its adroit blend of various kinds of stylistic trends all within a highly individual musical manner.

A turning-point in his life was his encounter with Susana Valeria Rosaria Gil Passo (1926–2010), 22 years his junior, whom he met during a trip to Argentina, and married not long after. The couple decided to live in Italy, a country Walton had visited in 1919, and where, in 1936, he had written his *Violin Concerto*, commissioned by Jascha Heifetz.

The Waltons chose the island of Ischia as the place to spend the next 35 years of their lives, fashioning and developing their delightful home La Mortella with its wonderful garden laid out amid picturesque volcanic rock formations. The Giardini La Mortella cover an area of around two hectares and are still today considered some of the most captivating gardens in the world, and are where the Waltons' ashes are preserved.

After the success achieved by the *Violin Concerto*, it was at La Mortella that Walton worked on his *Cello Concerto*, commissioned by the Russian-born, naturalised American Gregor Piatigorsky, one of the leading cellists of the 20th century.

Walton himself considered his *Cello Concerto* of 1956 to be the best of the three concertos he wrote for string instruments (the other two are the *Violin Concerto* of 1939 and the *Viola Concerto* of 1929), and as he was working on it he was in close correspondence with Piatigorsky, following his advice and suggestions while writing the solo part.

'Dear Grisha, I am so very happy that you should think the whole work "wonderful". It is in my mind, the best of my now, three concertos, but don't say so to Jascha!'

Musically, the concerto has a wonderful sense of balance in the way it embraces highly contrasting elements; these range from Romanticism and lyricism to the most challenging rhythms, from a chamber-music intimacy to an entirely 20th-century exuberance, from the most lyrical melody to the pull of atonality, offering performers continuous virtuoso fireworks in passages across the various registers.

What gives the concerto, with its wealth of contrast and extremes, its artistic significance is the fact that subjectivity and impartiality, the intimacy of chamber music and theatrical exuberance, philosophical depth and virtuosity can co-exist within the same stretch of music.

The *Cello Concerto* consists of the following three movements:

I. Moderato

The first movement is one of the most atmospheric and inspired parts, full of Romanticism, with a broad expressive melody for the solo instrument accompanied by a delicate orchestral ostinato.

II. Allegro appassionato

The key of the second movement is ambiguous, and it contains many chromatic passages. Similar to a scherzo, it has spectacular, virtuosic episodes, using high harmonics, pizzicato chords, and surprising effects that Walton marks 'strepitoso' and 'scherzando' in the score. Two cadenzas for the solo instrument change into short lyrical phrases which are in turn suddenly interrupted by a return to the initial virtuosity.

III. Tema ed improvvisazioni

The longest of the three movements consists of a lyrical, introspective Theme played by the muted solo instrument accompanied by string pizzicatos, and four 'improvisations' followed by a coda.

As requested by Piatigorsky, Walton made the second and fourth improvisations cadenzas for the solo cello, with the orchestral variation in the middle. The slow, radiant coda reprises the theme of the first movement: 'It rounds off the work in a satisfying and logical way and should sound beautiful, noble, dignified, etc., though it ends on a whisper. Sometimes (and I hope this is one of them) an ending such as this one, is in every way just as impressive and evocative as a more spectacular and loud one, especially in this case, as I feel there is no other solution.'

On this album, the rarely performed *Cello Concerto* is heard for the first time in a version for viola. Anna Serova's transcription, which fully exploits the timbral and virtuosic possibilities of the viola while remaining faithful to the original, is an important addition to the viola repertoire.

As a homage to Sir William's eclectic output, to Susana's creativity, to their garden at La Mortella and the couple's love for one another, I have created three pieces that bring together various styles and genres in a bold and innovative experiment.

The viola concerto '*Lady Walton's Garden*' is dedicated to Lady Susana Walton, and is made up of three movements, each one bearing the name of one of the garden's exotic plants:

I. Ginkgo Biloba – Allegro marcato e deciso

The *Ginkgo Biloba* is an extremely ancient plant whose origins date back 200 million years. To describe this 'living fossil' I use only minor chords, creating an epic mood.

II. Victoria Amazonica – The white damsel – Beetle dance – The red gentleman

Victoria Amazonica is the undisputed queen of water lilies. With its intoxicating scent, it is a hermaphrodite plant that is born female and white in colour. After being pollinated by a beetle, it dies the following day as a male plant, turning red and sinking into the water. Hence the name of the sections of the second movement, where the Romantic opening theme for the solo viola develops into the 7/8 'Beetle dance' of the central episode, before closing with the noble, decisive theme of the last part, dissolving in the harp's final arpeggios.

III. Palo Borracho – Tango: Allegro molto marcato – Lento – Allegro

Palo Borracho (*Ceiba speciosa*) is a tree of Argentinian origin with a spiny trunk that swells when, in the rain, it absorbs water (hence the name, which translates as 'drunken tree'). This movement is written in the style of an Argentinian tango in homage to Susana's origins, and the score calls for the involvement of a tango dancer to dance with the soloist in the final part of the concerto.

The piece *William's Rock* for viola, viola d'amore, electric guitar and orchestra is a rock passacaglia dedicated to William's Rock, a natural stone pyramid that was once a boulder marking a border which Walton said was 'his stone' on the day the property was purchased, and which is where his ashes are now held. The character of the piece is given by the Baroque passacaglia bass given to the electric guitar to accompany the solo viola's heart-wrenching melody, while the rock-style cadenza is given to the viola d'amore. In the final part of *William's Rock*, we find a reference to the opening bars of Walton's *Viola Concerto*.

The Missing E, for viola, quena, mandolin, bandoneon, guitar and percussion, is dedicated to the Nymphaeum, the memorial to Susana Walton which she herself created, and which now houses her ashes. The piece is inspired by a spelling mistake carved in the marble around the fountain, 'This green arbour is dedicated to Susana, who loved tenderly, worked with passion and beli(E)ved in immortality.'

The missing 'E' in the word 'believed' corresponds to the musical note E, and inspired me to write a piece where it is entirely absent. The E appears only at the end of the work, like the song of a hoopoe, a bird typical of the island of Ischia.

The choice of instruments used, typical of South America and Naples and its surroundings, is intended as a homage to Lady Walton's country of birth and adopted country.

Roberto Molinelli

Translation: Kenneth Chalmers

Sir William Walton (1902–1983) • Roberto Molinelli (n. 1963)

Concerti per viola

Sir William Turner Walton (Oldham 1902 – Ischia 1983) è considerato uno dei maggiori compositori inglesi del Novecento.

La sua produzione, inizialmente d'ispirazione neoclassica e stravinskiana ed in seguito caratterizzata da un più marcato uso del contrappunto, si distingue per l'abile fusione di tendenze stilistiche eterogenee all'interno di un personalissimo discorso musicale.

Determinante nella sua vita fu l'incontro con Susana Valeria Rosa Maria Gil Passo (1926–2010), di ben 22 anni più giovane di lui, che conobbe durante un viaggio in Argentina e che sposò dopo pochi giorni dal loro incontro. La coppia decise di vivere in Italia, paese che Sir William aveva visitato nel 1919 e dove nel 1936 aveva scritto il *Concerto per violino e orchestra* su commissione di Jascha Heifetz.

I Walton scelsero l'Isola di Ischia per trascorrere i successivi 35 anni della loro vita, plasmando forma e vita dell'incantevole proprietà La Mortella, con il suo meraviglioso giardino disegnato tra le pittoresche formazioni rocciose di origine vulcanica. I Giardini La Mortella si estendono per un'area di circa due ettari e oggi sono considerati tra i parchi più affascinanti del mondo e accolgono le ceneri dei coniugi Walton.

Dopo il successo ottenuto dal *Concerto per violino e orchestra*, fu a La Mortella che William lavorò al *Concerto per violoncello e orchestra*, commissionato da Gregor Piatigorsky, russo naturalizzato statunitense, uno dei principali violoncellisti del XX secolo.

Considerato dallo stesso Walton il migliore dei tre concerti da lui scritti per archi (*Concerto per violino e orchestra* del 1939, *Concerto per viola e orchestra* del 1929), il *Concerto per violoncello e orchestra* (1956) è stato creato in stretto contatto epistolare con Piatigorsky, seguendo i suoi consigli e suggerimenti durante la scrittura della parte solistica.

“Dear Grisha, I am so very happy that you should think the whole work “wonderful”. It is in my mind, the best of my now, three concertos, but don't say so to Jascha!”.

Esso è testo musicale che abbraccia con mirabile equilibrio elementi fortemente contrastanti, dal romanticismo e lirismo ai ritmi più sfidanti, dall'intimità della musica cameristica ad un'esuberanza tutta novecentesca, dalla melodia più cantabile alla tentazione atonale, consentendo agli esecutori un continuo fuoco d'artificio virtuosistico nei passaggi tra i diversi registri.

Il *Concerto per violoncello e orchestra* è composto dai seguenti tre movimenti:

I. Moderato

Il movimento rappresenta una delle pagine più suggestive e ricche d'ispirazione, colma di romanticismo e con un'ampia melodia espressiva dello strumento solista accompagnata da un delicato ostinato dell'orchestra.

II. Allegro appassionato

La tonalità del secondo movimento è ambigua e con molti passaggi cromatici. Simile ad uno scherzo, presenta passaggi virtuosistici e spettacolari, con uso di armonici in alto registro, pizzicati di accordi, effetti sorprendenti con annotazioni di 'strepitoso' e 'scherzando' richiesti dallo stesso Walton in partitura. Due cadenze per strumento solo si trasformano in brevi frasi liriche che a loro volta si interrompono improvvisamente per ritornare ai virtuosismi iniziali.

III. Tema ed improvvisazioni

Il più lungo dei tre movimenti consiste in un Tema lirico ed introspettivo suonato dallo strumento solista con sordina, accompagnato dai pizzicati degli archi e da quattro “improvvisazioni” seguite da una coda.

Su richiesta di Piatigorsky, Walton ha introdotto la seconda e la quarta improvvisazione in forma di cadenza per lo strumento solista, con una variazione orchestrale in mezzo. La coda, lenta e luminosa, riprende il tema del primo movimento: “it rounds off the work in a satisfying and logical way and should sound beautiful, noble, dignified etc though it ends on a whisper. Sometimes (and I hope this is one of them) an ending such as this one, is in every way just as impressive and evocative as a more spectacular and loud one, especially in this case, as I feel there is no other solution.”

In questo album, il *Concerto per violoncello e orchestra*, brano di raro ascolto, è proposto per la prima volta in una versione per viola. La trascrizione di Anna Serova, che valorizza appieno le possibilità timbriche e virtuosistiche della viola pur restando fedele alla stesura originale, sicuramente contribuirà ad un importante arricchimento del repertorio violistico.

I tre brani successivi sono stati composti dal sottoscritto come omaggio all'eccellente produzione di Sir William, alla creatività di Susana, ai loro Giardini La Mortella e all'amore dei coniugi Walton, unendo generi e stili musicali diversi.

Il *Concerto per viola e orchestra "Lady Walton's Garden"* è dedicato a Lady Susana Walton e formato da tre movimenti, ognuno dei quali porta il nome di una delle piante esotiche del Giardino.

I. *Ginkgo Biloba* – Allegro marcato e deciso

Il *Ginkgo Biloba* è un albero antichissimo le cui origini risalgono a 200 milioni di anni fa. Per descrivere il "fossile vivente", ho utilizzato un impianto armonico formato da soli accordi minori, creando un clima di epicità.

II. *Victoria Amazonica* – The white damsel – Beetle dance – The red gentleman

Victoria Amazonica è la regina indiscussa del regno delle ninfee: dal profumo inebriante, è un fiore ermafrodita che nasce femmina di colore bianco. Dopo essere stata impollinata da un coleottero, il giorno successivo muore maschio, cambiando il colore in rosso ed immergendosi nelle acque. Da qui i nomi delle parti del II movimento, dove il romantico tema iniziale della viola solista evolve nella briosa 'danza del coleottero' in 7/8 dell'episodio centrale, per terminare nel tema fiero e deciso della parte conclusiva, dissolvendosi negli arpeggi finali dell'arpa.

III. *Palo Borracho* – Tango: Allegro molto marcato – Lento – Allegro

Palo Borracho (Ceiba speciosa) è un albero di origine argentina con il tronco pieno di spine, che si gonfia accumulando l'acqua durante la pioggia (da qui il suo nome, che può tradursi come 'palo ubriaco'). Il movimento è scritto nello stile del tango argentino, in omaggio alle origini di Lady Walton, e la partitura prevede la partecipazione di un ballerino di tango che danza con la solista nella parte conclusiva del brano, in un brioso finale affidato alla sola orchestra che li accompagna.

Il brano *William's Rock* per viola, viola d'amore, chitarra elettrica ed orchestra è una 'passacaglia rock' dedicata alla Rocca di William, una piramide naturale di pietra che un tempo era demarcazione di confine. William Walton, il giorno in cui acquistò la proprietà, la nominò la 'sua pietra', e che ora custodisce le sue ceneri. Il brano si caratterizza per un basso di passacaglia barocca affidato alla chitarra elettrica che accompagna la struggente melodia della viola solista, mentre la cadenza nello stile rock è affidata alla viola d'amore. Nella parte finale di *William's Rock* sono citate le battute iniziali del *Concerto per viola e orchestra* di William Walton.

The Missing E per viola, quena, mandolino, bandoneon, chitarra e percussioni è dedicato al Ninfeo, memoriale di Susana Walton, creato da lei stessa, che oggi conserva le sue ceneri. Il brano trae l'ispirazione da un errore grammaticale scolpito sul marmo intorno alla fontana: "This green arbour is dedicated to Susana, who loved tenderly, worked with passion and beli(E)ved in immortality."

La 'E' mancante nella parola believed, che in musica corrisponde alla nota 'mi', mi ha ispirato la scrittura di una composizione totalmente priva della nota 'mi' in partitura. Il 'mi' appare solo nel finale del brano, ma non è suonato da nessuno degli strumenti bensì cantato dal verso di un'upupa, uccello tipico dell'isola di Ischia.

La scelta degli strumenti usati, tipici dell'area Sudamericana e Partenopea, vuole omaggiare il paese di nascita e il paese d'adozione di Lady Walton.

Roberto Molinelli

Haydn Orchestra of Bolzano and Trento



Photo: Fondazione Haydn Stiftung

The Haydn Orchestra of Bolzano and Trento was founded in 1960 by the provincial government and local authorities of Trento and Bolzano. Its repertoire ranges from Baroque to contemporary works. The orchestra has participated in numerous international festivals, including the Bregenz Festival and Tyrol Festival Erl in Austria, Maggio Musicale Fiorentino in Florence, Sagra Musicale Umbra in Perugia, Rossini Opera Festival in Pesaro, Anima Mundi in Pisa, MITO SettembreMusica in Turin and Biennale Musica in Venice, as well as across Germany, Japan, Hungary and the United States. It has also performed at the Mozarteum in Salzburg and the Musikverein in Vienna. The orchestra has appeared with many great conductors, such as Claudio Abbado, Riccardo Chailly, Jesús López Cobos, Neville Marriner, Riccardo Muti and Jeffrey Tate. Andrea Mascagni served as artistic director for almost 30 years, and was succeeded by Hubert Stuppner, Gustav Kuhn and Daniele Spini. Giorgio Battistelli is the current artistic director. www.haydn.it

Roberto Molinelli

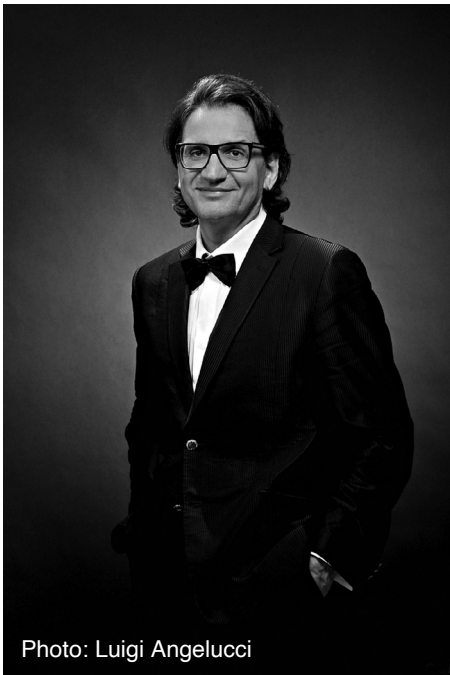


Photo: Luigi Angelucci

With a career spanning over two decades, Italian conductor, composer and violist Roberto Molinelli is a versatile and eclectic musician who is recognised internationally for his ability to compose and realise projects across various musical genres, from classical to jazz and pop to rock. As a conductor, composer and arranger, he has collaborated with numerous prestigious artists including José Carreras, Andrea Bocelli, Celine Byrne, Gaston Rivero, Erwin Schrott, Gustav Kuhn, Cecilia Gasdia, Anna Maria Chiuri, Giovanni Sollima, Andrea Griminelli, Federico Mondelci, Enrico Dindo, Anna Serova and Corrado Giuffredi. Many of his compositions, such as his concerto for saxophone and orchestra *Four Pictures From New York*, concertos for cello and orchestra *Twin Legends* and *Iconogramma* and concerto for accordion and orchestra *Il bosco della Musica*, have expanded the repertoire of their respective instruments, and are currently performed worldwide. Molinelli currently holds the positions of principal guest conductor of the Russian Philharmonic Orchestra, director of special projects of the Istituzione Sinfonica Abruzzese and director for innovation of the Orchestra Sinfonica G. Rossini. www.robertomolinelli.it

Anna Serova

Violist Anna Serova (b. 1973) has had several compositions dedicated to her in recent years by notable contemporary composers, including Azio Corghi, Boris Pigovat, Roberto Molinelli, Roberta Vacca and Vittorio Montalti, among others. After studies with Vladimir Stopicev at the St Petersburg Conservatory, Bruno Giuranna at the Stauffer Academy of Cremona and Yuri Bashmet at the Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena, she began a brilliant career as a concert musician, and has appeared in some of the most prestigious concert seasons and festivals in Italy and abroad.

Very much in demand as a chamber musician, she has collaborated with artists including Ivry Gitlis, Bruno Giuranna, Salvatore Accardo and Rocco Filippini. Serova has made many recordings including two dedicated to the Rotary International *End Polio Now* campaign, playing the Amati Viola 1615 'La Stauffer'.

She is professor of viola at the 'E.R. Duni' Conservatory in Matera and Fondazione Accademia Perosi in Biella, and also frequently holds viola and chamber music masterclasses.

www.annaserova.com



With his distinctive blend of incisive drama and lyrical expressiveness, Sir William Walton was one of the greatest English composers of the 20th century. He and his wife Susana made their home on the Italian island of Ischia where he composed the *Cello Concerto* – a work he considered to be the best of his three concertos for string instruments – heard here for the first time in a stunning transcription for viola by Anna Serova. The Italian composer Roberto Molinelli pays homage to Susana’s Argentine roots and the beautiful garden she created, La Mortella, with his concerto *Lady Walton’s Garden*, displaying a colourful use of South American and Neapolitan instruments. *William’s Rock* and *The Missing E* are also dedicated to La Mortella.

Sir William
WALTON
(1902–1983)

Roberto
MOLINELLI
(b. 1963)

1–3 **Cello Concerto** (1956)

(arr. Anna Serova for viola
and orchestra, 2018)

30:15

4–6 **Lady Walton’s Garden**

(2017)

26:47

7 **William’s Rock** (2018)

13:55

8 **The Missing E** (2022)

4:34

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDINGS

Anna Serova, Viola

Sigi Velásquez, Quena, Quenacho **8** • **Donald Maurice, Viola d’amore** **7**

Riccardo Bertozzini, Electric Guitar **7**

Gianluca Persichetti, Guitar, Cavaquinho **8**

Sonia Maurer, Mandolin **8** • **Antonio Ippolito, Bandoneon** **8**

Stefano Rossini, Percussion **8**

Haydn Orchestra of Bolzano and Trento **1–7**

Roberto Molinelli, Conductor **1–7**, **Electronics** **8**

A detailed track list and full recording and publishers’ details can be found inside the booklet.

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