

Antonio Maria Montanari

Violin Concertos

Antonio Maria Montanari (1676–1737)

World Premiere Recording

Concerto in C Major, 'Dresden'

01 Allegro	03:29
02 Largo	02:54
03 Allegro	03:32

Concerto in E-flat Major, *Op.1, No.6*

04 Adagio e staccato	03:38
05 Allegro	02:43
06 Largo	03:22
07 Allegro	04:29

Concerto in A Major, *Op.1, No.1*

08 Adagio	01:56
09 Allegro	03:15
10 Amoroso	02:21
11 Allegro	02:38

Concerto in C Major, *Op.1, No.5*

12 Allegro	02:41
13 Adagio	00:44
14 Allegro	02:40

Concerto in E Major, *Op.1, No.7*

15 Adagio	02:25
16 Allegro	02:25
17 Adagio	02:17
18 Allegro	02:38

Concerto in A Major, *Op.1, No.8**

19 Adagio	02:10
20 Allegro	02:08
21 Grave	02:46
22 Vivace	02:37

** This concerto has previously been recorded by the European Union Baroque Orchestra*

Ensemble Diderot

on period instruments

Solo Violin & Director:

Johannes Pramsohler

violin: P. G. Rogeri, Brescia, 1713

David Wish

violin: C. F. Ficker, Markneukirchen,
18th Century

Roldán Bernabé (4 - 22)

violin: R. G. Hargrave, 1992 (after G. Cappa)

Johannes Heim (19 - 22)

violin: Anonymus, Milan, 1730

Samuel Hengebaert

violin: Michael Stauder, 2008 (after J. Stainer)

viola: Tilman Muthesius, 1992 (after J. Stainer)

Gulrim Choi

cello: Joël Klépal 2013 (after G. Guarneri filius
Andrea 1692)

Youen Cadiou

violone: Northern Italy, 18th Century

Philippe Grisvard

harpsichord: Andrew Garrett & Richard
Clayson, 1975 (after G. Ridolfi 1665)

Jadran Duncumb

theorbo: Brendan Hirst, England, 1989

guitar: Stephen Murphy, France, 2002



Antonio Montanari: *A Master Restored to Favour*

“Antonuccio” steps into Arcangelo’s shoes

On 8 January 1713 Arcangelo Corelli died. With his passing the community of string players in Rome lost not only its most internationally famous violinist and composer but also its recognized *capo*: the person with the twofold task of directing major orchestral performances from the concertmaster’s desk and of recruiting (and managing the payment of) the players themselves. There were two obvious candidates to succeed him in the latter role. One, Matteo Fornari, had acted for several years as his co-leader and had deputized for him in his last few years, which were marked by failing health. The other, Giuseppe Valentini, was more a rival than a friend of Corelli, but was at least a regular “front desk” player and a very prolific composer with an original, if sometimes rather bizarre, musical style. In the event, both men were passed over in favour of a violinist somewhat lower in profile: Antonio Montanari, previously often known in Rome by the diminutive of his given name,

“Antonuccio”. (The relatively modest social status of most professional musicians meant that in accordance with Italian custom they were commonly referred to by their baptismal names, diminutives often serving to distinguish younger from older bearers of the same name.)

Montanari’s career path had to some extent followed Corelli’s. He is described as a subject of the duchy of Modena on the title page of his published concertos, but there is evidence that his formative years (he was born in 1676) were spent at least partly in the city of Bologna, then governed by a papal legate, as suggested by the presence of a sonata for violin and cello by him alongside similar works by local composers in an anthology engraved in Bologna by Carlo Buffagnotti around 1690, and also by a so-called *Sonata a 3* (in reality, a primitive concerto) from the same period that survives in the large portion of the musical collection of cardinal Pietro Ottoboni today preserved in Manchester. One report, published in the second volume of the *Lettres juives* (1738), a satirical commentary

on contemporary manners written by Jean Baptiste de Boyer, marquis d’Argens, claims that he was in fact a Corelli pupil (“élève du fameux Corelli, Père de l’Harmonie”), but this assertion should be treated with caution in the absence of corroboration, since older histories often assume an ‘apostolic succession’ from master to pupil where in fact there was none.

‘Antonuccio’ came to Rome soon after 1690 and gradually worked his way up the ranks. His earliest known engagement, as a rank-and-file violinist, was at the devotion of the Forty Hours (*Quarant’ore*) held at the Ottoboni church of San Lorenzo in Damaso in February 1693. He was employed as a salaried member of Ottoboni’s household only between 1709 and 1715, but throughout his career performed at special functions organized by the cardinal. Between 1705 and 1708 Montanari, succeeding Corelli after a short interregnum, was in the service of cardinal Benedetto Pamphilj. There are hints that soon after his arrival in Rome Montanari had been taken under the wing of cardinal

Carlo Colonna, and he later also performed often at functions, both secular and sacred, of the noble Borghese and Ruspoli families. For example, in 1708 he was co-leader (under Corelli) at the performance of Handel's oratorio *La Resurrezione*, given under Ruspoli auspices. After becoming *capo*, however, Montanari no longer needed, for financial or other reasons, to be attached to any particular household: existing records show that he performed – but always in Rome, never further afield – in an immense variety of locales and functions up to his death in 1737.

The stability of Montanari's residence in Rome – not for him, the life of touring virtuosi such as Vivaldi, Locatelli or Tartini in their younger years – made him a sought-after teacher of his instrument. Valentini may have studied with him, to judge from a manuscript sonata and a poem that the younger man dedicated to Montanari. The German violin virtuoso Pisendel, who visited Italy in 1716–17 partly to further his musical education (and augment his vast musical collection) and partly to provide

musical entertainment for his master, the Saxon-Polish crown prince, took lessons from him and came home with several manuscripts of his sonatas and concertos. However, his playing style did not please everyone. Boyer, while acknowledging his great reputation, preferred the playing of the Turinese violinist Giovanni Lorenzo Somis, and Charles Burney reported that in the early 1730s Montanari was mortified to be overshadowed in his own city by Tartini's pupil Pasquale Bini. Johann Joachim Quantz encountered him in Rome in 1724, acknowledging his excellence as a performer but slightly disparaging him as a composer. We are fortunate to possess a lively ink drawing of Montanari in the act of performing from the hand of the artist and keen amateur musician Pier Leone Ghezzi, who frequently entered into his sketchbooks the likenesses of the musicians who frequented the *accademie* held at his home. From this sketch we see that Montanari holds his instrument loosely against the collar bone, employs a bow rather long for the period (holding it, rather surprisingly,

in the traditional French manner with the thumb under the heel) and concentrates hard without adopting any particular facial expression.

Montanari's music and posthumous reputation

Relatively little of Montanari's music has survived. This is partly because so little of it was published. The apparent lack of effort to publish his own music may have been a deliberate strategy on Montanari's part, if he calculated that his *cachet* as a performer of his own works would suffer from their passing too freely into other hands (this was the very consideration that led Domenico Scarlatti to publish hardly any of his keyboard sonatas). It is significant that the group of eight concertos for one or two violins published in Amsterdam by Michel-Charles Le Cène around 1730 were not brought out at the behest of the composer but only "collected by" ("raccolti da") the publisher and bore no opus number on the title page, even though Le Cène added "Opera prima" in his catalogues.

Remarkably, the Le Cène print exists today only in a single known example, held by the library of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Wien. Two of the published concertos (nos. 6 and 8, both included on this recording) are found in Dresden in manuscript copies originating from Pisendel's visit to Rome (thereby showing that Le Cène was publishing music that had been in existence for a considerable time), while another (no. 7, also included) survives in the library of the counts of Schönborn at Wiesentheid. Other than these concertos, we know of only the misdescribed *Sonata a tre* already mentioned, two further works in Dresden – a violin concerto in F sharp minor copied in Rome by Pisendel and another in C major copied and collected by Quantz (on this recording) – plus a concerto for sopranino recorder in B flat major surviving in Rostock and attributed to Montanari, perhaps incorrectly, in the Breitkopf catalogues. (A violin concerto attributed to Montanari in Lund turns out to be Vivaldi's concerto RV 377.)

Montanari's known sonatas comprise three for violin from the Pisendel collection in Dresden, another violin sonata in Berlin, a sonata for two violins and bass in London and one for two oboes and bass in Lund, besides the "Buffagnotti" sonata already mentioned. The six sonatas by a certain "Francesco Montanaro" published by Le Cène have an entirely different composer, contrary to what one very often reads in reference works.

It is only in the last few years that Montanari's life and music have been investigated and evaluated by scholars. Two recent studies of the baroque concerto, respectively by Jehoash Hirshberg and Simon McVeigh (*The Italian Solo Concerto, 1700 – 1760*) and by Richard Maunder (*The Scoring of Baroque Concertos*), both published in 2004, speak extremely enthusiastically of the originality and musical quality of the concertos. I myself have written a long article on Montanari's life and sonatas ("A Successor of Corelli: Antonio Montanari and His Sonatas"), published in 2005 in the journal *Recercare*.

The purpose of the present recording is to give the CD-buying public for the first time a taste of Montanari's concertos in the hope of initiating their revival, a process that has already witnessed a degree of success in the case of his sonatas.

Montanari's concertos examined

Le Cène published Montanari's concertos in seven partbooks reflecting the typical Roman orchestral layout as a *concertino* comprising two solo violins and a solo cello plus a *ripieno* comprising two further violin parts (optionally doubled), a viola part and a basso continuo. This division, observable in much Roman orchestral writing from the 1660s onwards, partly reflected that between household musicians and musicians brought in from outside for the specific occasion. It remained a characteristic feature of music performed and published in Rome until at least the 1730s, acquiring a new lease of life by its "export" at that point to Britain, where it remained in vogue for a further fifty years.

To some extent, the seven-partbook arrangement was flexible. First, the designation of an individual part could vary from work to work within the same collection. Second, and irrespective of that designation, a part could be treated in a way not necessarily implied by its name. For example, a theoretically distinct *Violino secondo concertino* part could in practice play exactly the same notes as its *ripieno* partner, effectively reducing the number of parts. As a result of this doubling-up (or of a “tacet” direction, which appears in the fourth violin part for concertos 6 and 7), concertos 1 and 6–8 of Le Cène’s collection effectively become orthodox concertos for a solo violin (the solo part being renamed appropriately *Violino principale*). In Concerto 5, in contrast, a pattern resembling much more closely the “classic” *concertino/ripieno* division operates. Such flexibility reminds one of Vivaldi’s famous collection *L’estro armonico* of 1711, which, exceptionally for that composer, likewise juggles in complex ways with four violin partbooks.

Montanari employs a viola part only in the last three concertos. Roman and Neapolitan string music of the eighteenth century surprisingly often omits the viola, which one would expect to find routinely in a Venetian or Bolognese concerto. The omission may have been induced by the relative scarcity of this instrument, or could alternatively have arisen from a scarcity of players *tout court*, seeing that viola-playing was still a function of violinists (who would naturally also possess and play their principal instrument) rather than of a separate class of players. The cello part is similarly variable in nature. In concertos 2 (not included here), 6 and 7 it lacks the description “obbligato”, which means that it remains shackled to the continuo line. As regards the overall design of his concertos, Montanari usually opts for the typically Roman four-movement plan shared with other composers of the post-Corelli generation, such as Valentini, Locatelli and Mossi. This follows a Slow–Fast–Slow–Fast sequence of movements, and the opportunity is

taken to introduce a contrasting key in the internal slow movement. As also occurs with those composers, this contrasting key is sometimes a little remote from the home key. For instance, concerto 1 (in A major) employs D minor, and in concerto 7 (in E major) this movement starts in A minor. But on occasion Montanari adopts the more progressive three-movement (Fast–Slow–Fast) plan favoured by northern Italian composers such as Torelli, Albinoni and Vivaldi, as we find in concerto 5.

Montanari's opening slow movements are unusually long and intricate for their time. Most are cast in what, in a Vivaldian context, one would term *ritornello* form, where fully scored passages employing recurrent material alternate with lightly scored ones, free in their thematic invention, which bring the one or more soloists to the fore. Montanari's "light" textures are often very light indeed, consisting of a single strand on violins or in the continuo part. At their most extreme, the solo violin is totally unaccompanied for one or more bars. This delight in

the unaccompanied violin, its sound often enriched by multiple-stopping in polyphonic style, is a "trademark" feature of Montanari's musical language – one finds a classic instance of it in the final movement (*Giga*) of his D minor sonata for violin and continuo (in the Pisendel collection), which, unlike the movements preceding it, is unaccompanied from start to finish.

For his fast second and fourth movements Montanari has two main options: *ritornello* form as just described or a *concertante* fugue: i.e., a fugue in which the episodes are given over to the soloist and emphasize virtuosity rather than adhering closely to the subject. Exceptionally, the final movement of concerto 5 – the only one in the present recording to employ the traditional "concerto grosso" layout with paired *concertino* and *ripieno* violins – employs binary form with two repeated sections. This movement is unusual also by virtue of being in only two parts throughout: since the work omits viola, there is a blank space between the massed violins in the treble and the united bass

instruments. There is some precedent for this ultra-austere scoring in Vivaldi's concertos, but the closest parallel occurs in two late concertos (1761) by Francesco Geminiani "to be performed by the first and second violins in unison".

As well as testing the ability of the principal violinist to negotiate multiple-stopping, Montanari sometimes takes the part into the ultra-high register (up to B *in altissimo*). He also calls for rapid arpeggiation and wide leaps. The writing is not quite so demanding as in Vivaldi's or Locatelli's concertos, but it exceeds by a considerable margin what one finds in Corelli.

Montanari also has considerable lyrical gifts, shown to their best advantage in the internal slow movements. These sometimes employ a simple ritornello form but on other occasions are through-composed in almost improvisatory style. High points are the delicate, siciliano-like third movement of concerto 1 and the remarkably powerful third movement of concerto 6, where a stern unison ritornello in 12/8 metre

alternates with plaintive, recitative-like solo passages in 4/4 metre. The running dialogue between the principal and second violins in concerto 7, initially leisurely but later more urgent, recalls Albinoni while achieving a higher degree of expressivity.

The C major concerto collected by Quantz is possibly slightly later than the rest. It is the most "north Italian" – one might also say "mainstream" – in character, reminding one by turns of Vivaldi and (particularly in its slow movement) Albinoni.

One is left in no doubt that Montanari has a distinctive musical voice, recognizably but not narrowly Roman. He is less polished than Corelli, less facile than Valentini and less systematic than Locatelli, but he is perhaps the most adventurous and many-sided of them all, even on the evidence of such a small surviving production.

Where now for Montanari?

One is right always to be more than a little cautious about pleading in favour of the

admission of a previously ignored composer to the modern performing repertoire. Music does not become better from the sheer fact of being “rediscovered”. However, when Maunder can write that Montanari’s concertos 6 and 7 are “particularly original works that ought to be ranked with the best Italian concertos of the whole baroque period” and that this composer “has an understanding of long-range tonal planning that is normally associated only with later composers such as Haydn”, or Hirshberg and McVeigh can claim that “Montanari’s concertos rank among the most impressive achievements of the Italian repertoire”, one senses that a turning point in his fortunes cannot be long delayed. It is only to be hoped that the pioneering recording that these notes accompany accomplishes the vital breakthrough, and that further recordings as well as modern editions and public performances follow.

And one should not despair of discovering new pieces by Montanari. Rapid advances are being made all the time in the cataloguing of early music and the

digitalization of sources, with the result that in recent years several works have been added to the catalogue of composers as diligently studied as Vivaldi and Albinoni. But even if nothing more should come to light, enough remains to justify an honoured place for Montanari in the Pantheon of Roman musicians.

Michael Talbot, *Liverpool*, 2015

Ensemble Diderot

Ensemble Diderot was founded in 2009 by violinist Johannes Pramsohler. It dedicates itself to the exploration and performance of the Baroque trio sonata repertoire of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and performs on original instruments. The ensemble is based in Paris and owes its name to the French author, thinker, and philosopher Denis Diderot. The group has been regularly praised for its energetic and virtuosic playing and is undoubtedly one of today's most interesting and original chamber music groups in Europe.

In the past, the ensemble could be heard in Germany and France, and also in Great Britain, Spain, Italy, and Poland.

In addition, it was invited as ensemble-in-residence to Amilly, France and Aldeburgh, Great Britain. In 2010 the young musicians were in residence as the "Rheinsberger Hofkapelle" in the castle of Friedrich the Great and Prince Heinrich of Prussia at Rheinsberg, Brandenburg.

Since 2012 the ensemble has collaborated closely with the Théâtre Roger Barat in Herblay, France, where Monteverdi's *Combattimento*, supplemented by music of seventeenth-century Italian masters, was staged in a spectacular manner, based on texts by Torquato Tasso. The ensemble's residency at the Fondation Royaumont will see its first fruits in 2016 with the world premiere recording of the trio sonatas op 2 by Jean-Joseph Cassanéa de Mondonville.

Since 2015 the Ensemble Diderot performs also as an orchestra. A staged production of the opera *Falstaff* by Antonio Salieri will be followed by concerts of Bach and Handel cantatas in France and Germany with the soprano Maria Savastano.

Johannes Pramsohler

Born in South Tyrol and now living in Paris, baroque violinist Johannes Pramsohler has in recent years become one of the most versatile representatives of his profession. As artistic director and first violin of the Ensemble Diderot, which he founded in 2009, he brings to life unknown repertoire with a keen sense for significant rarities. The ensemble's debut recording of chamber music from the Dresden court of August the Strong received international acclaim.

As concertmaster, Johannes has collaborated with The King's Consort, Le Concert d'Astrée, the European Union Baroque Orchestra, the International Baroque Players, and as a guest of the Berlin Philharmonic with its early music ensemble Concerto Melante. As soloist, Johannes recently performed under Iván Fischer with the Budapest Festival Orchestra and with the Taiwan Baroque Orchestra. Recitals with chamber music partners such as Philippe Grisvard (harpsichord) and Jadran Duncumb (lute) take him to Europe's concert halls on a regular basis. His first solo CD, of world premiere recordings of violin

concertos from Dresden, was nominated for the International Classical Music Award.

A desire for artistic independence even in the recording studio led Johannes to found his own CD label in 2013. The first recording released by Audax Records, of works by Corelli, Telemann, Handel, Leclair, and Albicastro, was nominated for the Preis der deutschen Schallplattenkritik (German Record Critics' Award).

Johannes studied with such renowned teachers as Georg Egger, Jack Glickman, and Rachel Podger. His collaboration with Reinhard Goebel continues to the present day, and is an important source of inspiration for his work. He was a prizewinner at the Magdeburg International Telemann Competition.

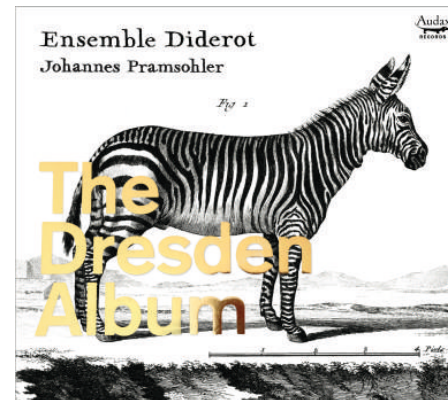
Since 2008, Johannes has had the honour of owning Reinhard Goebel's violin, a P. G. Rogeri made in 1713.

Audax Records Discography

The following CDs are available from audax-records.fr



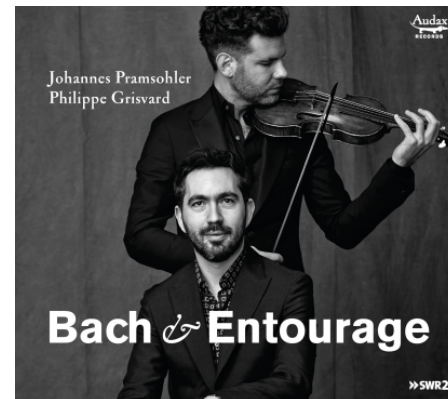
ADX13700 – Sonatas for Violin and Basso continuo by Corelli, Handel, Telemann, Leclair and Albicastro



ADX13701 – Trio Sonatas by Handel, Telemann, Fasch, Fux and Tuma



ADX13702 – Suites for Oboe by Marais



ADX13703 – Sonatas for Violin and Basso continuo by Bach, Pisendel, Krebs and Graun

Main Sponsor

Very special thanks to our main sponsor David Leppan
for his generous donation.



Thank You

Archiv der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Wien
Musikkonservatorium “Claudio Monteverdi” Bozen
Taiwan Baroque Orchestra and its director, Dr. Lan Ku Chen
Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden

Philipp Achammer, Philipp Bohnen, Brian Clark, Guido Erdmann, Oliver Geisler,
Serge Girardi, Reinhard Goebel, Florian Kasslatter, Vincent Lasserre, Simon McVeigh,
Christopher Palameta, Günther Rautz, Alessandro Sartori, Michael Stauder,
Michael Talbot, Gabriel von Toggenburg

Johannes Pramsohler would like to thank Mireille Durand and Anigüe Malignon
for their friendship, support and ceaseless energy. This project would not have been
possible without them.



STIFTUNG SÜDTIROLER SPARKASSE
FONDAZIONE CASSA DI RISPARMIO DI BOLZANO



HERBLAY

ADX13704

Recording Producer: Claudio Becker-Foss

Executive Producer: Johannes Pramsohler

Translations text: Susanne Meißner (German), Guillaume Nail (French), Simone Etna (Italian)

Translations interview: Howard Weiner (English), Franco Mattoni (Italian)

Photography & Design: Christian Möhring

Cover: Illustration based on a photograph taken in Toblach

Illustration p.4: Pier Leone Ghezzi, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana

Edition: Brian Clark, primalamusica.com

Fundraising & Project Coordination: Mireille Durand

Recording: 12 – 14 January 2015, Gustav-Mahler-Saal, Toblach

© and ℙ 2015 Audax Records

