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# LO CAT ELLI

COMPLETE  
VIOLIN  
CONCERTOS

Igor Ruhadze  
*solo violin (leader)*

Ensemble Violini  
Capricciosi

ESSENZA · QUINAESENCIA · QUINTESSÊNCIA · QUINTESSENCE · QUINTESSENZ · QUINTESSENZA · QUINAESEN



**Pietro Locatelli 1695-1764**  
Complete Violin Concertos

**L'Arte del Violino**

Concertos for violin, strings and basso continuo Op.3

**Concerto in D Op.3 No.1**

1	I. Allegro	6'38
2	II. Largo	7'28
3	III. Allegro	8'18

**Concerto in E minor Op.3 No.8**

25	I. Andante	6'44
26	II. Largo	4'49
27	III. Allegro	8'02

**Concerto in C minor Op.3 No.2**

4	I. Andante	10'32
5	II. Largo	3'57
6	III. Andante	8'09

**Concerto in G Op.3 No.9**

28	I. Allegro	7'29
29	II. Largo	6'15
30	III. Allegro	7'30

**Concerto in F Op.3 No.3**

7	I. Andante	9'25
8	II. Largo	6'48
9	III. Vivace	7'00

**Concerto in F Op.3 No.10**

31	I. Allegro	6'11
32	II. Largo andante	5'20
33	III. Andante	6'56

**Concerto in E Op.3 No.4**

10	I. Largo	0'35
11	II. Andante	7'37
12	III. Largo	5'19
13	IV. Andante	7'56

**Concerto in A Op.3 No.11**

34	I. Allegro	7'35
35	II. Largo	3'37
36	III. Andante	7'47

**Concerto in C Op.3 No.5**

14	I. Largo	0'55
15	II. Andante	9'10
16	III. Adagio	3'58
17	IV. Allegro	7'00

**Concerto in D Op.3 No.12**

**'Il labirinto armonico'**

37	I. Allegro	7'24
38	II. Largo – Presto – Adagio	5'19
39	III. Allegro	13'26

**Concerto in G minor Op.3 No.6**

18	I. Largo	0'44
19	II. Andante	10'02
20	III. Adagio	4'37
21	IV. Vivace	6'27

**Concerto in A [without Op. No.]**

40	I. Vivace	3'45
41	II. Largo	4'49
42	III. Allegro – Andante – Allegro – Andante – Allegro	5'35

**Concerto in B flat Op.3 No.7**

22	I. Andante	7'48
23	II. Largo	5'34
24	III. Allegro	6'46

**Concerto in E [without Op. No.]**

43	I. Andante	5'11
44	II. Largo	4'42
45	III. Andante	4'39

Igor Ruhadze *solo violin (leader)*  
(David Tecchler, Rome, 1706, NMF)

**Violini Capricciosi**

Daria Gorban *violin I* (Hendrick Jacobs, Amsterdam, 1693, NMF)

Rebecca Huber *violin II* (Matthieu J.R. Besseling, Amsterdam, 2003)

Annemarie Kosten-Dür *viola I* (Op.3 Nos. 1–11;

Concerto in A; Concerto in E) (Jan Pawlikowski, Krakow, 2010)

Ivan Iliev *viola I* (Op.3 Nos. 8 & 12), *viola II* (Op.3 Nos. 9–11)

(Christo Georgiev, 2011, after Gasparo da Salo)

David Rabinovichi *viola II* (Op.3 No.12) (Anonymous, Mittenwald, 19th century)

Mark Dupere *cello* (Jacob Weiss, Salzburg, 1745, NMF)

Joannis Babaloukas *double bass* (Op.3 Nos. 1–10; Concerto in A;

Concerto in E) (Anonymous, France, 19th century, after Jacquet)

Tomoki Sumiya *double bass* (Op.3 Nos. 11 & 12) (Alessandro Ciciliati, Ferrara, 1997)

Vaughan Schlepp *harpsichord* (Joop Klinkhamer, after Zeil)



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### Pietro Locatelli, violin virtuoso

It is a rare privilege when one has the opportunity to participate in the revival of the works of a composer who has been largely but unjustly forgotten with the passage of time. Recordings such as this one are an attempt to restore the fame of a composer and violin virtuoso who was nothing short of an internationally renowned phenomenon during his own lifetime.

Locatelli was born in Bergamo, Italy in 1695. By the age of 14 he was already playing violin in the instrumental ensemble of the local cathedral, and a year later he acquired the official position of third violin. 1711 also saw him granted permission to study with Corelli in Rome – although in actual fact he ended up learning with a member of the prestigious circle of violin virtuosi that was associated with the renowned Corelli school of violin playing – and between 1717 and 1723 (a period when he was even under the protection of the papal chamberlain) there are numerous references to performances by Locatelli in and around Rome.

Between 1723 and 1729 Locatelli seems to have dropped out of the public eye and information about him becomes scarce; it is known that in 1725 he was in the service of the Landgrave Philip of Hesse-Darmstadt in Mantua, and in 1727 and 1728 he performed in Munich at the court of the Prince-Elector and in Berlin in the presence of the Queen of Prussia respectively. That he was also in Frankfurt during 1728 is confirmed by the inclusion of his signature on a page of a music album belonging to a Dutch-born businessman living there, and in the same year he is known to have played at the court of a Landgrave in Cassel where he met the well-known French violinist and contemporary Jean-Marie Leclair (with whom he later was to establish a cordial, professional relationship). Further stories about Locatelli from this period are based, at best, on deduction and, at worst, on conjecture. We know that he moved to Amsterdam sometime in 1729, not primarily to perform, but to take advantage of the country's flourishing music publishing firms which offered not only the latest in printing techniques but also an excellent commercial network guaranteeing wide, international circulation. Since 1721 he had already collaborated with the renowned Dutch publishing firm Roger & Le Cène in issuing his first published work, the 12 Concerti Grossi Op.1. This company was especially famous for its editions of music and was one of the pioneers in copper-plate engraving which not only increased

the quality of the engraving but also reduced the cost of printing. The firm was responsible for carefully prepared and attractive editions of the works of Albinoni, Corelli, Geminiani, Handel, Lully, Marais, Pepusch, Quantz, Alessandro Scarlatti, Tartini, Telemann, Torelli, Vivaldi and many others, including Locatelli, and several of these – Albinoni and Vivaldi among them – were so impressed with the work of Roger & Le Cène that they commissioned reprints of compositions from the firm which had already been published in Italy. The company's extensive business representation throughout Europe encouraged many musicians to compose as it assured circulation to a wide audience, and one of these was certainly Locatelli – his business acumen and desire for quality control further demonstrated by his personally taking charge of sales from his own home as well as by his obtaining permission from the States of Holland to print his own works. This permission was granted for a period of 30 years and was a kind of copyright protection *avant la lettre*, preventing unauthorised reprinting within Holland as well as the importation of foreign reprints. The 30-year period saw the composition and publication of his works from Op.2 through to Op.8; interestingly, his last compositions (Op.9), which were published in 1762 – a year after the expiration of this privilege – have been lost.

Locatelli lived in relative prosperity in a large canal house in Amsterdam where he had an impressive collection of works of art and musical instruments as well as an extensive library of books, often antique and in multiple copies, suggesting that he was commercially active as a collector. It was in this house that he gave regular Wednesday concerts, neither to a wide audience nor to professional musicians but most likely to wealthy amateurs and students. In his own words, he refused to 'play anywhere but with Gentlemen'. That he did not refer to his professional colleagues as gentlemen may have had more to do with their financial status than their breeding, although it is known that he never permitted 'professed musicians' into his concerts out of fear of their stealing his professional secrets.

Locatelli's performances were the subject of much discussion and are even described by such writers as Charles Burney and Denis Diderot. Indeed, his playing was apparently accompanied by such facial grimacing that listeners were often compelled to keep their eyes closed – although, in all fairness, grimacing was apparently reasonably common among the Italian violin virtuosi! – and after performing one of

his dazzling, pyrotechnical feats, he is said to have thrown his arms wide open and call out repeatedly: ‘Ah! What do you have to say about that?’ The aforementioned musical meeting in 1728 with the violinist Leclair in the court of a Landgrave in Cassel was also described by an eyewitness as resembling rabbits running up and down the violin; Leclair, with his practiced left hand and beautiful sound, knew how to steal hearts, whereas Locatelli, with his ability to play astoundingly difficult passages with total ease, was able to dazzle his audience. Together with this particular eyewitness describing Locatelli’s sound as ‘scratchy’ compared to Leclair’s, these various observations earned Leclair and Locatelli the nicknames ‘The Angel’ and ‘The Devil’ respectively. It was also said that when it came to playing steadily and rhythmically, Leclair was easily thrown off the saddle by Locatelli.

#### **The Violin Concertos**

Locatelli’s violin concertos present the solo violinist with some of the greatest technical challenges ever written for the instrument. While these concertos continue in the Italian Baroque tradition of Vivaldi and Corelli, they not only have a distinctive character of their own, but they take virtuosity and the innovative use of the violin to an entirely new level. Besides a formidable and facile technique, performance of these works demands great physical stamina, and even today most violinists avoid them.

The complete concertos recorded here comprise 14 works, two of which are previously unrecorded pieces that were not included in the 12 of Op.3 that were published in Amsterdam under the title ‘L’Arte del Violino’ in 1733. From the dedication, however, it is clear that they were written earlier, probably in the years 1723–1729 during Locatelli’s travels throughout Europe. In terms of form they follow the Italianate model used by Vivaldi: three movements, fast-slow-fast, with the occasional slow introduction to a fast movement. A unique feature of these concertos, however, is the inclusion of 24 solo capriccios, two of which could be inserted optionally into each of the 12 concertos near the ends of their two fast movements. They provide the violinist with technical challenges of unprecedented difficulty.

Historically, the term capriccio or caprice was, as its name suggests, used loosely to refer to any fanciful piece: it was not associated with any particular form or genre, and could be either instrumental or vocal. Although often used synonymously with

sinfonia or fantasia, the capriccio was generally more inventive and experimental, and Locatelli’s capriccios certainly fit this description, being often followed by cadenzas intended to bridge sections or embellish cadences. These cadenzas consisted of one or perhaps a few harmonies over which the performer must improvise; although they could be virtuosic, they were never notated, and thus they gave the violinist the opportunity to demonstrate his improvisational abilities, whereas the capriccios were fully written-out and were intended for the violinist to display his pyrotechnical skills. Many of Locatelli’s capriccios are quite long, and four of the 24 actually exceed the length of the movements to which they belong. A contemporary description of one of Locatelli’s performances of his ‘Labyrinth’ concerto (No.12) in 1741 recounts that the capriccio for the first movement was so long that it required seven notated pages. As there was nowhere to turn the pages, Locatelli glued all the sheets together, creating a part that was two metres wide.

In his violin concertos, Locatelli makes use of the same innovative, experimental technical difficulties that he uses in the solo sonatas, such as rapid leaps and stratospherically high writing, but takes them to even greater extremes. An example of this can be found in the capriccio intended for the third movement of Concerto No.11 in Op.3. While positions above the 7th were quite rare in the music of the time, this capriccio requires the 19th position – the C# produced is a half-tone higher than the highest note on the modern piano!

There are numerous other possibilities for improvisation, too, apart from the cadenzas, and several of Locatelli’s concertos containing sections or even entire movements that consist only of slow chords. (Locatelli almost certainly improvised over these chords, and Igor Rukhadze follows in this tradition.) Examples of such embellished movements can be found in the Adagio of Op.3 No.5, the Adagio of Op.3 No.6 and the Largo of Op.3 No.8.

Long after Locatelli’s death and well into the 19th century, the 24 capriccios continued to be published as well as to appear in violin methods. They were the direct inspiration for Paganini’s 24 Caprices, 70 years after the appearance of those by Locatelli.

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