



BRILLIANT
CLASSICS



EARLY NEAPOLITAN
CELLO MUSIC



GRECO · FRANCONI

Matteo Malagoli *cello* · Irene De Ruvo *organ/harpsichord*

Schola Gregoriana Scivias Ensemble · Milli Fullin *conductor*

Early Neapolitan Cello Music

Rocco Greco c1650-c1718

Diminutions for cello and continuo

prefaced by Gregorian chant

1-2	Viri Galilaei	0'33/3'30
3-4	Loquebantur	0'51/2'13
5-6	Miserator Dominus	0'44/3'34
7-8	Dum esset Rex	0'33/3'02
9-10	Veni sponsa	0'27/2'54
11-12	Ecce sacerdos magnus	0'29/4'29
13-14	Non est inventus	0'27/4'21
15-16	Sacerdos Dei	2'17/5'15
17-18	Domus mea	0'25/3'44
19-20	Fidelis servus	0'28/3'48
21-22	Veni electa mea	0'22/3'50

Gaetano Francone c1650-1717

Passagagli for cello and continuo

23	No.1 in G minor/major	1'53
24	No.2 in A	1'41
25	No.3 in B minor	1'51
26	No.4 in C	1'45
27	No.5 in D minor	1'40
28	No.6 in E minor	1'29
29	No.7 in F	1'57
30	No.8 in G	1'35
31	No.9 in B	1'21
32	No.10 in F	1'29

First recordings

Matteo Malagoli *cello*

Irene De Ruvo *organ/harpsichord*

Schola Gregoriana Scivias Ensemble

Emanuela Bortoletto, Vanda Cettolin, Federica Pase, Mariagrazia Pastre,

Cinzia Rui, Giuliana Zanette

Milli Fullin *conductor*

As an autonomous city-state, the capital of a wealthy vice-royalty and one of the most populous urban areas in 17th- and 18th-century Europe, Naples attracted composers from across Italy and farther afield. Located within the city's cathedral, the Reale cappella del Tesoro di San Gennaro is a chapel dedicated to St. Januarius, patron saint



of Naples. The chapel sustained a musical culture of unrivalled splendour in terms both of vocal and instrumental works. Whether native or foreign, composers were supported by the resources and cultivated sensibility of the city's clergy and nobility. Thus Naples became a city of musical innovation, producing works in every genre which in due course prepared the way for the great 19th-century flowering of both symphony and melodrama.

© Msgr. Vincenzo De Gregorio

Abbot Prelate of the Reale cappella del Tesoro di San Gennaro, Dean of the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music

Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, hundreds of churches and religious houses across Naples employed musicians, singers and instrument makers. They competed with one another to present the most stylish or lavish liturgies and ceremonies for significant points in the church calendar. The *Stabat Mater* of Pergolesi is one such masterpiece but there are countless other, less familiar works which are slowly coming to light thanks to the efforts of both scholars and performers.

Around the beginning of the 18th century, the instrumentarium of well-resourced sacred institutions such as the *Reale cappella del Tesoro di San Gennaro* began to include replacements for the Baroque harp, cornet and viola da gamba. The Spanish composer Diego Ortiz (1510-1576) first brought the gamba to Naples during the 16th century. It occupied a prominent place in the chapel's music-making until 1717, when the chapel's last appointed violist, Rocco Greco, took up his post and introduced the relatively new violoncello to the chapel's instrumental ensemble. A Neapolitan cello school grew up, fostered by the arrival of the violinist Giovanni Carlo Cailò (c.1659-1722) from Rome as well as local teachers and performers such as Francesco Paolo Supriani (1678-1753) and Francesco Alborea called Francischiello (1691-1739).

Both Greco and his colleague Gaetano Francone (c.1650-1717) produced new music for the cello which was suitable for performance within the liturgy of the chapel. Rather as composers of alternatim organ masses wrote elaborations of chant for the organ to be played between the chanted verses of the liturgy, so Greco composed 11 virtuosic 'diminutions' which were elaborated from the bass part of vocal motets setting Vespers texts. In performing the diminutions, we have prefaced them with a chanted version of the Gregorian antiphon on which the motets were based – except in the case of *Sacerdos Dei* (track 16), which is prefaced with a responsory in honour of St Eligius, a 7th-century French bishop.

The identity of the original motet author(s) is now lost; all that survives is a copy of the continuo part, showing also the solo cello line, within an elegantly bound volume of music for cello, dating from 1699, which belongs to the library of the monastery at

Montecassino, 100km north of Naples. One theory attributes the motets to Erasmo di Bartolo (1606-1656), a Neapolitan musician and priest also known as Padre Raimo in the brotherhood of St Philip Neri; he served at the Girolamini Institute near both the Cathedral and the musical conservatoire run by the *Poveri di Cristo* monastic order, where Greco taught and his pupils served in the same institute. Di Bartolo wrote several collections of motets on antiphon texts, notably for the Forty Hours' Devotion before the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament during Holy Week.

Close in both practice and meaning to the English viol 'divisions' by Jenkins, Locke and Simpson, the Italian practice of diminution served to decorate the transition from one note of a melody to the next with passage-work, giving scope for virtuoso display and creating a melodic figure that replaces a long note with notes of shorter value. A treatise by Francesco Supriani transfers the aesthetics of diminution from gamba to cello; together with the 11 surviving diminutions by Greco, this represents the only proof of the application of this practice to the cello.

Francone, meanwhile, composed a collection of 10 short *Passagagli*. The ten pieces, based on the passacaglia bass pattern, are written for cello and basso continuo in a generically Iberian style, and they bring a violinistic level of virtuosity to writing for the instrument. Composed in a cycle of rising keys, they begin on G major/minor and arrive back there after eight pieces, closing out in B major and F major. Supriani's collection of 12 *Toccatas* for solo cello was composed according to the same structure, beginning in G but reversing D and E and ending in an unusual F minor.

Both collections are designed to be played on a four-stringed cello tuned in fifths, except for three of Greco's diminutions and one of Francone's *Passagagli* which require a fifth low string; the viola da gamba had not yet entirely outlived its usefulness.

© Matteo Malagoli



Having studied cello, viola da gamba and sacred music, **Matteo Malagoli** was awarded a PhD in Sacred Musicology by the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music. He was coached in chamber music by Piero Farulli, leader of the Quartetto Italiano, and won several first prizes as a solo and quartet cellist. As a member of chamber groups such as Gli Archi Italiani, Icarus Ensemble and I Solisti di Cremona he has given concerts across Europe, the US and north Africa. As a musicologist and recording artist he specialises in little-known 19th-century repertoire, having also published research on British and Italian organs and the era of Italian Baroque music between the gamba and the cello.

Irene De Ruvo studied keyboard, specialising in organ and early music, with Luigi Ferdinando Tagliavini, Lorenzo Ghielmi, Andrea Marcon, Guy Bovet, Edoardo Bellotti and Jean-Claude Zehnder in Basle, as well as attending conducting classes with Pierangelo Gelmini. Now pursuing a dual career as a performer and musicologist, she has given concerts throughout Italy and in Japan, as well as giving papers on the history of Milanese music and Italian organs. She has made recordings for the Stradivarius and Arcana labels and published a score with Il Levante. She is organist at the Chiesa di Santa Maria al Carrobiolo in Monza, and teaches organ at the Reggio Calabria Conservatoire.



Founded by Milli Fullin in 2011, the all-female **Scivias Ensemble** sings sacred music from the medieval era to the present day, including a new piece by Gianmartino Durighello. Organists who have played with the ensemble include Gianluca Libertucci, Giovanni Feltrin and Stefano Maso. Milli Fullin studied singing, chant and organ at the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music and the Centro Internacional de Música Medieval de la Valldigna. She has performed across Europe, Russia and North America and sung Luigi Nono's *La fabbrica illuminata*. She is also a soloist with the Ensemble Oktoechos, which in 2017 released 'Venezia Mundi Splendor' on the Tactus label.



*In memory of Dom Faustino Avagliano (1941-2013),
past Archivist - Montecassino's Abbey.
Thanks to Dom Mariano Dell'Omo, present Archivist - Montecassino's Abbey
Thanks to Giuseppe Serassi Cultural Association*

Recording: 3-4 September 2020, St Roche Church, Boretto; 9 October 2020, Zanotto's Red Studio, Silvelle, Italy
Recording, editing and mastering: Fabio Framba
2000 Wooden chest organ built for and supplied by Maene Pianos (Ruselede, Belgium)
Cover: Francesco Alborea (or Francischiello, 1691-1739), engraving by Johann Jakob Haid (1704-1767) from a portrait by Martin van Meytens (1695-1770) kept in Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek
Photos: Max Bedendi (Matteo Malagoli, Scivias Ensemble); Maria Chiara Demagistri (Irene De Ruvo)
© & © 2021 Brilliant Classics