



CORELLI
Concerti Grossi Op. 6
Nos. 1 - 6

DDD
8.550402

Capella Istropolitana
Jaroslav Kr(e)chek



1990 Recording

Playing Time : 65'44''

Arcangelo Corelli (1653 - 1713)

Concerti Grossi Op. VI, Nos. 1 - 6

Arcangelo Corelli was born at Fusignano in 1653 into a family that had enjoyed considerable prosperity since the fifteenth century. Legend even suggested descent from the Roman general Coriolanus and further improbable anecdotes surround a childhood during which he seems to have taken music lessons from a priest at Faenza, continued at Lugo, before, in 1666, moving to the famous musical centre of Bologna, where he was able to study the violin under teachers of the greatest distinction, their precise identity subject to various conjectures. The basilica of S. Petronio in Bologna boasted a musical establishment of considerable prestige under Maurizio Cazzati, with some 33 musicians. In addition the city had been the home of a number of learned academies since the middle of the sixteenth century, largely replaced in 1666 by the Accademia Filarmonica, an association that came to exercise wide influence.

By 1675 Corelli was in Rome, his presence recorded in various lists of violinists employed in the performance of oratorios and in the annual celebrations of the feast of St. Louis of France. Stories of a visit by Corelli to France before this, and of the jealousy of Lully, are generally considered apocryphal. In Rome, however, Corelli's career is well enough documented. He served as a chamber musician to Queen Christina of Sweden, at least intermittently, until her death in 1689, and in 1687 directed a large body of musicians, with 150 string players and 100 singers, in a concert in honour of the ambassador of King James II, Lord Castlemaine, entrusted with negotiations for the return of England to the Catholic faith. At the same time he received even more significant patronage from Benedetto Pamphili, great-nephew of Pope Innocent X, created Cardinal in 1681 and an exact contemporary of the composer. In 1687 Corelli became maestro di musica to the Cardinal and took up residence in his Palazzo on the Corso, with his pupil,

the violinist Matteo Fornari and the Spanish cellist Lulier, his colleagues in many performances. While normally responsible for an orchestra of some ten players, there were occasions when very large groups of musicians were assembled.

In 1690 Cardinal Pamphili was appointed papal legate to Bologna and Corelli moved to the Palazzo della Cancelleria, of the newly created Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni, the gifted young great-nephew of Pope Alexander VIII, who had acceded to the papacy in 1689. Cardinal Ottoboni remained Corelli's patron until the latter's death in 1713, thereafter behaving with generosity to his heirs. In Rome Corelli was held in great respect as a violinist and as a composer, although stories of less satisfactory performances during a visit to Naples, where he was defeated by the violin-writing of his colleague Alessandro Scarlatti, and of his inability to cope with the allegedly French style of the young Handel, suggest, at least, some technical limitations. At his death Corelli left a large collection of pictures, bequeathing a painting of his own choice to Cardinal Ottoboni and a Brueghel to Cardinal Pamphili, with his musical instruments and manuscripts going to Matteo Fornari. By special papal indulgence he was buried in the Pantheon in Rome in a part of the church holding the remains of artists, sculptors and architects, his epitaph the work of his patron.

The surviving compositions of Corelli are relatively few in number but disproportionately far-reaching in their influence. He published four sets of a dozen trio sonatas each, in 1681, 1685, 1689 and 1694. *In 1700 he dedicated his Opus 5 solo violin sonatas, a set of twelve, to Sophia Charlotte, Electress of Brandenburg.* All these works were re-published extensively during the composer's life-time and in the following years and widely imitated. The set of twelve Concerti grossi was finally published posthumously, with a dedication to the Elector Palatine Johann Wilhelm. The concertos represent a collection of compositions that seem to have been known in Rome at least since the early 1680s.

The concerto grosso of the later seventeenth century owes a great deal to Corelli, whose compositions in this form served as a model for many imitators. The concerto is essentially an expansion of the trio sonata, a composition either in the form of a dance suite or a weightier church form for two melody instruments and a basso continuo shared by a chordal and a bass instrument. The Concerto grosso contrasts the small trio sonata group, known as the concertino, with the fuller string orchestra, the concerto grosso of ripieno players.

The first eight of Corelli's concerti grossi are in the form of concerti da chiesa (church concertos), with fast movements generally in fugal form. The remaining four of the collection are concerti da camera (chamber concertos), dance suites. The concertos were published in seven part-books. Georg Muffat, who heard something of these compositions of Corelli in Rome in 1682, imitated them and prefaced a 1701 edition of his selected compositions by detailed instructions for the performance of works of this kind.

The first of the Opus 6 Concerti grossi, in D major, opens with a slow introduction played by all the musicians. This leads to an Allegro opened by the small concertino group, with imitative violin entries over a busy cello bass part, punctuated by the main body of the orchestra, marking the cadences. The concertino players open the following Largo and all join together in a rapid Allegro. The concertino carries the ensuing B minor Largo and leads into a fugal Allegro, capped by the concertino triplet rhythms of the closing movement.

The second concerto has a brief and emphatic introduction, marked *Vivace*, before the concertino launches into an initially imitative Allegro. An Adagio passage, in F minor, leads to the re-appearance of the opening section, now in C major, followed by the return of the Allegro, with its fugal imitation, the movement led to its conclusion by the concertino in a final section marked *Largo andante*. There is a fugal Allegro, and a brief transitional Grave, leading

to an Andante largo shared by the whole orchestra, before the concertino moves into the final dance-like Allegro.

Concerto No. 3, in C minor, has a slow and imposing introduction, after which the solo group leads into a fugal Allegro. A moving Grave in F minor is followed by a lively section in which concertino and ripieno groups are contrasted, and there is a final Allegro in the compound rhythm of a giga.

The fourth of Corelli's concerti grossi, in D major, starts with the shortest of slow introductions, itself a brief contrast in dynamics. The concertino then embarks on a fugal Allegro, during which the ripieno players make occasional interjections in support. There is a moving B minor Adagio, its atmosphere immediately dispelled by the following Vivace, and the concerto ends with an Allegro that makes use of the compound rhythm of the giga, leading to a dramatic conclusion.

Concerto No. 5, in B flat major, allows the whole orchestra to join in a slow introduction, leading, without a break, to a fugal Allegro. The subsequent Adagio is succeeded by a fugal movement started by the first Allegro, with its contrasting compound and simple rhythms.

The sixth concerto starts with a more extended slow introduction with its own dynamic contrasts. The concertino group starts the fugal Allegro, after which solo cello and ripieno viola introduce a Largo, in which the parts enter one after another in telling imitation. There is a Vivace of giga-like rhythm and a closing Allegro that is a dance in all but name.

Capella Istropolitana

The Capella Istropolitana was founded in 1983 by members of the Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra, at first as a chamber orchestra and then as an orchestra large enough to tackle the standard classical repertoire. Based in Bratislava, its name drawn from the ancient name still preserved in the Academia Istropolitana, the orchestra works in the recording studio and undertakes frequent tours throughout Europe. Recordings by the orchestra on the Naxos label include The Best of Baroque Music, Bach's Brandenburg Concertos, fifteen each of Mozart's and Haydn's symphonies as well as works by Handel, Vivaldi and Telemann.

Jaroslav Kr(e)cek

The Czech conductor and composer Jaroslav Kr(e)cek was born in southern Bohemia in 1939 and studied composition and conducting at the Prague Conservatory. In 1962 he moved to Pilsen as a conductor and radio producer and in 1967 returned to Prague to work as a recording supervisor for Supraphon. In the capital he founded the Chorea Bohemica ensemble and in 1975 the chamber orchestra Musica Bohemica. In Czechoslovakia he is well known for his arrangements of Bohemian folk music, while his electro-acoustic opera Raab was awarded first prize at the International Composer's Competition in Geneva. He is the artistic leader of Capella Istropolitana.

Arcangelo Corelli (1653 - 1713)

Concerti Grossi Op. VI, Nr. 1 - 12

Arcangelo (Erzengel) Corelli wurde 17. Februar 1653 in Fusignano nahe Ravenna geboren. Mit etwa 13 Jahren ging er nach Bologna, um dort sein Violinspiel zu vervollkommen. Mit noch nicht einmal 17 Jahren wurde er Mitglied der erlauchten "Accademia Filarmonica", Sammelpunkt der berühmtesten Musiker ihrer Zeit. Nur Mozart wurde noch jünger aufgenommen (1770 mit 14). Kurz darauf ging Corelli nach Rom, wo er seine Kompositionstechnik ausbilden ließ. Dort gewann er als Geiger und Komponist hohes Ansehen, und hatte in der in Rom residierenden Königin Christina von Schweden und dem Kardinal Pietro Ottoboni mächtige und finanzkräftige Förderer. Etwa im Jahr 1710 zog er sich krankheitsbedingt aus dem Musikleben zurück, bevor er am 8. Januar 1713 starb. Corelli gab zu Lebzeiten fünf Kompositions-Bände mit Sonaten heraus, sein sechster und letzter Werkblock wurde, von ihm schon weitgehend abgeschlossen, erst nach seinem Tode veröffentlicht. Dieses Opus 6 bringt die noch junge Form des barocken Concerto Grosso in seine klassische Form und zu einem ersten Höhepunkt. Das Concerto Grosso als Gattung lebt von der Gegenüberstellung von zwei Orchestergruppen: eines meist dreiköpfigen Solisten-Ensembles, dem Concertino, und dem vollen Orchester, dem Ripieno oder auch Concerto Grosso. Bei Corelli bilden zwei Violinen und ein Violoncello die Solistengruppe, wobei ein Cembalo den Generalbaß, das harmonische Fundament, übernimmt. In den Partituren stehen für diese Stimme übrigens lediglich Ziffern bei der obligaten Cello-Stimme, der begleitende Cembalist muß daraus seinen Part ableiten. Das Orchester bilden zwei weitere Violinen, eine Bratsche (Viola) und Baß, oft ergänzt durch weitere Generalbaß-Tastinstrumente. Diese Instrumente sind nicht selbständig, sie verstärken oder kommentieren lediglich das Concertino. Corellis zwölf Concerti Grossi lassen sich in zwei Sparten einteilen: Die ersten acht Konzerte sind Concerti Grossi da Chiesa, Kirchenkonzerte, was lediglich eine formale

Charakterisierung bedeutet, die Konzerte wurden auch zu nicht-kirchlichen Anlässen gespielt. Die Satzstruktur entspricht der Kirchensonate, die vier oder fünf Sätze zeigen in den schnellen Abschnitten imitatorische Feinheiten: Die Violin-Solisten wechseln sich stets ab oder die Stimmen wandern geschickt verarbeitet durch die Lagen. In den langsamen Sätzen kommt sehr viel Ausdruck zum Tragen. Die letzten vier Konzerte entsprechen dem Typ des Concerto da Camera, des Kammerkonzertes, wo ein Präludium eine Folge von Tanzsätzen (zum Beispiel Allemande oder Courante) nach sich zieht, unterbrochen von einem langsamen Satz. Nur in den Concerti Nr. 10 und 12 kommen in je einem schnellen Satz ohne Tanzrhythmus aus. Im letzten Konzert dominiert die erste Violine des Concertino; Corelli wurde hier zu einem Wegbereiter des Solokonzertes, auf das der eine Generation jüngere Antonio Vivaldi seinen Weltruhm baute.

Hartmut Walter

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CORELLI: Concerti Grossi Op. 6, Nos. 1 - 6

NAXOS



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STEREO

CORELLI

Concerti Grossi Op. 6, Nos. 1 - 6

Anna and Quido Hölbling, Violins
 Ludovít Kanta, Cello
 Daniela Ruso, Harpsichord
 Capella Istropolitana
 Jaroslav Kr(e)chek

DDD

 Playing
 Time :
 65'44"

NAXOS

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Concerto No. 1 in D Major

- | | |
|--------------|--------|
| 1. Largo - | (1:08) |
| 2. Allegro - | (1:22) |
| 3. Largo - | (1:32) |
| 4. Allegro | (1:14) |
| 5. Largo | (3:51) |
| 6. Allegro | (1:37) |
| 7. Allegro | (1:55) |

Concerto No. 2 in F Major

- | | |
|--|--------|
| 8. Vivace - Allegro - Adagio - Vivace - Allegro -
Largo andante | (3:58) |
| 9. Allegro | (1:40) |
| 10. Grave - Andante largo - | (1:54) |
| 11. Allegro | (2:06) |

Concerto No. 3 in C Minor

- | | |
|-------------|--------|
| 12. Largo - | (2:23) |
| 13. Allegro | (2:05) |
| 14. Grave - | (1:30) |

- | | |
|-------------|--------|
| 15. Vivace | (2:17) |
| 16. Allegro | (2:13) |

Concerto No. 4 in D Major

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------|
| 17. Adagio - Allegro | (3:19) |
| 18. Adagio - | (2:41) |
| 19. Vivace | (1:10) |
| 20. Allegro - Allegro | (3:06) |

Concerto No. 5 in B Flat Major

- | | |
|----------------------|--------|
| 21. Adagio - Allegro | (3:30) |
| 22. Adagio | (1:50) |
| 23. Allegro | (1:56) |
| 24. Largo - Allegro | (3:15) |

Concerto No. 6 in F Major

- | | |
|--------------|--------|
| 25. Adagio - | (2:04) |
| 26. Allegro | (1:57) |
| 27. Largo | (4:07) |
| 28. Vivace | (2:08) |
| 29. Allegro | (2:58) |

Recorded at the Moyzes Hall of the Slovak Philharmonic in
 Bratislava from January to June 1990.

Producers: Karol Kopernicky, Hubert Geschwandner

Music Notes: Keith Anderson

Cover: Arcangelo Corelli
 (Painting by Carlo Maratti)

