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CLASSICS

# Behind Closed Doors

Brescianello, Vol. 1  
*Opus 1: Libro Primo*  
*Ouverture-Suite in B $\flat$*

La Serenissima  
Adrian Chandler *director/violin*

# BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

Giuseppe Antonio Brescianello (c. 1690-1758), Vol. 1

*Opus 1 Concerti & Sinfonie: Libro Primo*

*Ouverture-Suite in B $\flat$*

## Concerto I for violin, strings & continuo in F

1	Allegro	[4.10]
2	Adagio	[2.22]
3	Allegro assai	[4.26]

## Sinfonia I for strings & continuo in D

4	Allegro – Adagio	[2.58]
5	Presto	[4.03]

## Concerto II for violin, strings & continuo in a

6	Allegro	[3.30]
7	Adagio ed à tempo giusto	[2.32]
8	Allegro	[3.49]

## Sinfonia II for strings & continuo in G

9	Allegro – Adagio	[3.29]
10	Presto	[2.49]

## Concerto III for violin, strings & continuo in B $\flat$

11	Allegro	[4.23]
12	Adagio e cantabile	[2.14]
13	Allegro	[4.00]

## Sinfonia III for strings & continuo in C

14	Allegro – Largo	[6.04]
15	Allegro	[2.49]

## Ouverture-Suite in B $\flat$

16	Ouverture – Fuga	[4.13]
17	Gavotte	[1.12]
18	Aria – Andante	[1.25]
19	Bourrée	[2.05]
20	Aria – Adagio	[1.24]
21	Menuet – Trio – Menuet	[1.52]
22	Rondeau	[1.44]
23	Gigue	[2.04]

Total timings: [69.37]

LA SERENISSIMA

ADRIAN CHANDLER DIRECTOR/VIOLIN

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GIUSEPPE ANTONIO  
BRESCIANELLO (c. 1690–1758)

**Behind Closed Doors:** Notes from a pandemic

The title for this recording was inspired by the situation in which many ensembles and musicians found themselves after the arrival of the devastating Coronavirus pandemic in 2020. Countries were locked down; concerts and recordings were cancelled; musicians everywhere were out of work.

On 18 February 2020, a small contingent of La Serenissima finished recording the album *Settecento*. This was to be the last music the ensemble would play until reconvening to record this first volume of Brescianello's Opus 1. Although *some* musical events were able to go ahead during the summer's brief respite from the pandemic, La Serenissima's entire schedule was either cancelled or postponed. This was a most uncertain period for our musicians. Our first act after the nationwide lockdown was to set up a hardship fund for members past and present; we then set about preparing the ensemble to survive a year of silence. Despite everything, there were positives: musicians finally had all the time in the world to practice, and I found that the enforced sabbatical period enabled me to focus on the

study and editing of many Vivaldi concertos, a project that was long overdue.

Trying to second-guess the inevitable effects that the pandemic would have on our industry made us all wish for a crystal ball. Although the rhetoric from the British government was mainly upbeat concerning the re-opening of the economy, those of us whose heads weren't in the clouds could see another wave of Covid-19 brewing on the horizon that would inevitably disrupt the following concert season of 2020-21.

For an entirely freelance orchestra, with no geographical bias or 'home' for the band to work from, the pandemic was particularly hard-hitting. The stagnation of La Serenissima's schedule endangered the visibility of the ensemble and threatened decades of work that had been spent building our style and tightknit ensemble playing. We desperately needed a project to address these concerns, and just as importantly, we needed a project to improve our team's mental health and financial prospects. As concerts were out of the equation, we turned our attention to creating a patch of recording sessions.

How we were going to pay for these sessions was another issue, particularly as La Serenissima did

not receive any grant from the UK government's Cultural Recovery Fund in 2020. Furthermore, opposition parties had begun clamouring for a 'circuit-breaker' lockdown in response to the deepening crisis as we headed into the autumn period. Despite the supposition that musicians would still be able to meet in order to rehearse and record in such an event, the threatened closure of the hospitality industry would have scuppered all our plans, as a daily commute to Somerset would have been impossible for our far-flung team. With so much uncertainty in the air, the project was organised late in the day; even the musical editions were finished in the final fortnight leaving precious little time to learn our notes!

In spite of everything, and with the support of some notably generous individuals – to whom we are hugely indebted – 5 days of rehearsals and recording finally went ahead observing strict Covid-19 protocol. The Brescianello took 4 days; a fifth day was spent working on a future release of Vivaldi. Working together for the first time in 8 months *with* social-distancing on entirely new repertoire was a tall order, but one that was hugely enjoyable after months of silence.

It wasn't just the viability of the project itself that was uncertain, but the choice of repertoire too.

There was already a fully-funded Vivaldi project ready to go, but this would have required several artists to travel from countries then deemed unsafe by the British government; there were also options for programmes of instrumental music by a medley of other composers. In the end, I felt that the first half of Brescianello's Opus 1 (with one of his orchestral suites) was the right musical choice. We have never previously recorded a whole opus by any composer, as I have felt this approach to be a little sterile; instead, we have always focused on programmes that have hitherto been brought to the concert platform, giving more variety to the listener. Furthermore, the obvious collections that a group like La Serenissima might choose to record, such as Vivaldi's Opus 3, 4, 8 – 12, have already been recorded many times; Brescianello's Opus 1 on the other hand, has seldom seen the light of day.

Compared to Vivaldi, Brescianello is a composer whose music languishes in relative obscurity. Whilst the mists of time have claimed some composers' music for justifiable reasons, Brescianello's music presents many compelling arguments for its restoration. Having first included Brescianello in our 2014 season, we have since staged his opera *Tisbe*, recorded a violin concerto (Extra Time, SIGCD641), a trio sonata (Settecento,

SIGCD663) and other works. Thanks to the Coronavirus pandemic, we have now been given the opportunity to start our exploration of this wonderful publication.

Relatively little is known about Brescianello's early life. He is understood to have been born in Bologna but the earliest documentary evidence concerning his whereabouts finds him in Venice (1714) working as a valet for Therese Kunegunde Sobieska, the music-loving exiled electress of Bavaria. Once activities at the Bavarian court resumed following the Treaty of Baden at the end of the War of the Spanish Succession, the electress wrote to her husband Maximilian II Emanuel, proposing that he should employ Vivaldi as his *Kapellmeister*. Although this idea was dismissed on grounds of cost, Theresa was able to return to Munich in 1715 with Brescianello amongst her retinue; the court records list him as a violinist in the Bavarian Hofkapelle.

It wasn't long before Brescianello was on the move again. Following the death in 1716 of Johann Christoph Pez, *Oberkapellmeister* of the Württemberg court (in Stuttgart), Brescianello successfully applied for the post of *Director musices*. Even though his initial brief was to take charge of the court's chamber music,

Brescianello, perhaps with one eye on the post of *Oberkapellmeister*, decided to dedicate his 'opera pastorale' *Tisbe* to Duke Eberhard Ludwig in January 1718; he eventually succeeded to his preferred position in 1721. Although Brescianello's fortunes ebbed and flowed in tandem with those of the court (he lost his post completely between 1737 and 1744), he remained in nearby Ludwigsburg until his death in 1758.

He was not a prolific composer by the standards of the time, but his surviving output is of an exceedingly high quality. It is surprising that the Opus 1 was the only set of works that Brescianello chose to publish; collections such as these would surely have spread the news of his talents far and wide. Indeed, one such ambassador of virtuoso violin music, Johann Georg Pisendel (leader of the Dresden court orchestra and pupil of Vivaldi) had access to this set and several other works by Brescianello.

The collection was published in Amsterdam (c1727) by Le Cene, arguably the most in-demand of the contemporary European musical printing houses, sought after by the likes of Albinoni, Corelli, Tartini, Valentini and Vivaldi. The set is made up of 12 works that are divided into

two books, each consisting of 3 concertos for violin and strings, and 3 *Sinphonie* for strings alone (although the slow movement of the final *Sinphonia* is scored for solo violin and upper strings). The works show a strong debt to Vivaldi – in particular the concertos of *L'Estro armonico* (Opus 3) and *La Stravaganza* (Opus 4) – but are also fused with a Germanic thoroughness in their harmonic outlook.

Unsurprisingly, the dedication is inscribed to his patron and employer Eberhard Ludwig, Duke of Württemberg and hunting fanatic. Having fought on the side of the Austrians against the French during the War of the Spanish Succession as field marshal of the Swabian troops, it is unsurprising

that the music of his court looked more towards Italy rather than France. That said, Eberhard was no stranger to the French style as he is reported to have visited Louis XIV at Versailles shortly before 1700; one wonders if this visit made a profound impression upon his artistic tastes, perhaps prompting Brescianello to compose a collection of 6 orchestral suites and a stand-alone chaconne in the French style. Like the other works in the set (apart from the D major suite that concludes with a massive *Ciaccona*) the B $\flat$  major suite is made up of a French overture followed by a suite of dances, finishing with a lively *Giga* or *Gigue*.

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## LA SERENISSIMA

La Serenissima is recognised as the UK's leading exponent of the music of eighteenth-century Venice and connected composers. Uniquely, the group's entire repertoire is edited from source material, and it has been praised for its 'glorious and all-too-rare ability to make one's pulse race afresh with every new project' (Gramophone). La Serenissima has become synonymous with virtuosity, dynamism and accessibility, uncovering a plethora of new repertoire and making it available to all through live performance, high calibre recording work, education and outreach initiatives.

Since the first album was released in 2003, La Serenissima's recordings have been applauded by numerous publications and have attracted multiple awards, besides being chosen to feature in international advertising (*Versace* 2018) and film (*Portrait of a Lady on Fire* 2020). In 2010, *The French Connection* won the Gramophone Award for 'Baroque Instrumental'. *The Four Seasons* was released in 2015, spending several weeks in the UK Specialist Classical Chart and selected as Editor's Choice (Gramophone) and Concerto Choice (BBC Music Magazine). In 2017, *The Italian Job* won a further Gramophone Award.

The ensemble's album *Vivaldi x2* topped the UK Classical Chart upon release in 2018, with The Sunday Times writing that 'under Adrian Chandler, the playing, vibrant yet polished to perfection, is superb.' Album *Extra Time* was released during the first UK lockdown in 2020 with Gramophone remarking that 'the music-making is top-drawer and joyous'. Most recently, La Serenissima's album *Settecento* with rising star Tabea Debus received exhaustive radio play from all major UK radio stations and clocked up over 500,000 streams in the first month of release. The group's recording legacy was featured on Sveriges Radio P2 every Sunday morning as part of *Söndagsmorgon*.

La Serenissima has performed throughout the UK and internationally in both urban and rural venues: many projects have reached new audiences through project funding from Arts Council England. In 2018 the group gave the first modern performance of Brescianello's opera *Tisbe* for the Buxton Festival. In 2019 La Serenissima opened the London Festival of Baroque music, debuted at the Snape Proms and gave the modern premiere of Caldara's opera *Lucio Papirio Dittatore* in Buxton; they also launched a new animateur-led outreach programme for key-stage 2 children as part of *The Godfather* tour. The group performed





for audiences at Valletta International Baroque Festival and in Cedars Hall, Wells early in 2020, before Covid-19 put a halt to its live music-making for over a year; La Serenissima was invited to perform in the Wigmore Hall's prestigious live-stream series in March 2021.

La Serenissima is proud to have as its Honorary Patron, His Excellency The Italian Ambassador to the UK.

[www.laserenissima.co.uk](http://www.laserenissima.co.uk)

## ADRIAN CHANDLER

Born on Merseyside in 1974, Adrian Chandler is recognised internationally as a leading interpreter of Italian baroque music with an 'avant-garde approach that would have awed Hendrix' (The Guardian). His 'electrifying playing' and 'real richness of sound' (Classical Music) have captivated listeners for over 25 years. Adrian founded La Serenissima in 1994, whilst a student of Rodney Friend at the Royal College of Music, channelling his love affair with Vivaldi into a lifetime's mission.

With La Serenissima, he has performed a host of recitals, concertos and operas for major festivals including Bruges, Buxton, Cheltenham, Lake District Summer Music, Lichfield, Spitalfields and York, as well as for concerts in Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Malta, Mexico and Spain. His performances have been broadcast by BBC Radio 3, Classic FM, Scala Radio and by radio stations throughout the world.

Adrian has driven La Serenissima's ambitious and highly acclaimed recording work, creating an extensive catalogue encompassing music by Albinoni, Bach, Brescianello, Caldara, Corelli, Dall'Abaco, Legrenzi, Locatelli, Lotti, Montanari, Navarra, Pisendel, Porta, Sammartini, Scarlatti, Tartini, Telemann, Torelli, Valentini, Vandini, Veracini, Vivaldi and Composer X. These recordings have been widely praised through repeated award nominations, regular focus from specialist and broadsheet press and radio, and frequent rave reviews. He has had the honour of accepting two Gramophone Awards in the 'Baroque Instrumental' category for La Serenissima's albums *The French Connection* (2010) and *The Italian Job* (2017).

The Arts and Humanities Research Council awarded Adrian a fellowship at Southampton University to research the development of the North Italian violin concerto 1690 – 1740; this research culminated in the release of the third album in La Serenissima's North Italian Violin Concerto series. He subsequently held a two-year post at Southampton as Turner Sims Professor. During the first 2020 UK lockdown, Adrian edited a Vivaldi violin concerto daily: the campaign reached fans, musicians, scholars and Vivaldi enthusiasts across the globe via social media.

Adrian has been guest director/soloist with a range of other groups throughout his career, demonstrating versatility in working with musicians on both period and modern instruments; most recently being invited to direct projects for Concerto Copenhagen (Denmark) and Deutsche Philharmonie Merck (Germany).

A lifelong Everton fan, Adrian devised the concept for the album cover of *Extra Time* which showcased an array of Italian composers' names emblazoned on his team's football shirts. He was chosen as the subject of BBC Music Magazine's *Rewind* feature in February 2021.



## LA SERENISSIMA PERFORMERS & INSTRUMENTS

### **Adrian Chandler – violin/director**

Rowland Ross, Guildford, 1981, after Amati

### **Oliver Cave – violin I**

Martin Hilsden, UK, 1985 after anonymous c.1650

### **Agata Daraskaite – violin I**

Anon, c.1780

### **Simone Pirri – violin I**

Pietro Paolo de Vitor, Venice, 1730-1740 on generous loan from the Harrison Frank Family Foundation

### **Camilla Scarlett – violin II**

Rowland Ross, Hampshire, 1996, after Amati

### **Simon Kodurand – violin II**

Christopher Rowe, UK, 1993, after Guarneri del Gesu

### **Claudia Norz – violin II**

Georg Aman, C18

### **Magdalena Loth-Hill – violin II**

Anon, Venice, late C17

### **Thomas Kirby – viola**

Bernd Hiller, Germany, 2006

### **James O'Toole – viola**

Eric Mawby, UK, 2012 after Guarneri

### **Thomas Kettle – viola**

Jan Pawlikowski, Krakow, 2011, after Stradivari

### **Vladimir Waltham – continuo cello**

[1](#) – [13](#) & [15](#) – [23](#)

Nicola Gagliano, Italy, c.1770 on generous loan from the Jumpstart Jr. Foundation

### **Sarah McMahon – continuo cello**

[14](#)

Thomas Smith, London, c.1740

### **Carina Drury – cello**

Maker unknown, Italy, c.1850

### **Peter McCarthy – double bass**

Anon, Iberian peninsula, C18

**Lynda Sayce – theorbo & baroque guitar**

Theorbo in A: Michael Lowe, Wootton-by-Woodstock, 2000, after iconography c.1700

Baroque guitar: Ivo Magherini, Bremen, 2002, after Giovanni Tesler, Ancona, 1620

**Robin Bigwood – harpsichord**

Andrew Wooderson, London, 2001, after Grimaldi (1697)



## THANK YOU

La Serenissima wishes to acknowledge the patronage of His Excellency The Italian Ambassador to the UK and the generous support of its Friends, Patrons, Chair Sponsors and The Ambassador's Circle.

The recording sessions, which took place in October 2020, were made possible by the generosity of a number of individuals, including:

Antoine Bommelaer\* · Niall Hoskin · Jonathan Julyan\* · Mary Kane & Tony Loader  
Ben Mazower · Hilary & Grant McGowan · Ian Pollock · William Roberts\*  
Ted Wake · Mark West\* · Seán & Janet White · Emma Wilkinson  
& other anonymous donors

\* We are particularly grateful to the following donors for their major support which enabled the making of this album: Jonathan Julyan *Album sponsor* · Mark West *Concerti*  
Antoine Bommelaer *Symphonie* · William Roberts *Ouverture*

The release costs for this CD have been supported by a crowdfunding campaign through Global Giving [www.globalgiving.org](http://www.globalgiving.org) : La Serenissima is extremely grateful to our 'crowd' for supporting this vital aspect of the project.

If you would like to support future recordings, including the follow-up album to this one – Brescianello Op. 1 Vol. 2 – please contact Camilla Scarlett, General Manager,  
[camilla@laserenissima.co.uk](mailto:camilla@laserenissima.co.uk)

### La Serenissima

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Recorded in Johnson Hall, Milfield School, Somerset, UK from 26th to 29th October, 2020  
Recording Engineer and Producer – Simon Fox-Gál

Editions – Adrian Chandler  
Keyboard instrument provision – Simon Neal  
Pitch – A = 440Hz  
Tuning Temperaments – Vallotti and Young prepared by Robin Bigwood

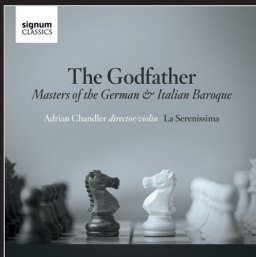
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*"La Serenissima's performances are characterised by liquid melodies and supple embellishments, lithe rhythms and eloquent phrasing."*  
BBC Music Magazine

*"The great news is that 'Extra Time' is bristling with all the elegantly zesty joie de vivre familiar from those previous albums... while La Serenissima know how to raise a roof with panache, there's also all manner of softer moments to savour"*  
Gramophone



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Giuseppe Antonio Brescianello (c. 1690-1758), Vol. 1

*Opus 1 Concerti & Sinfonie: Libro Primo*

*Overture-Suite in B $\flat$*

1 - 3	Concerto No. 1 for violin, strings & continuo in F	[10.58]
4 - 5	Sinfonia No. 1 for strings & continuo in D	[7.01]
6 - 8	Concerto No. 2 for violin, strings & continuo in a	[9.51]
9 - 10	Sinfonia No. 2 for strings & continuo in G	[6.18]
11 - 13	Concerto No. 3 for violin, strings & continuo in B $\flat$	[10.37]
14 - 15	Sinfonia No. 3 for strings & continuo in C	[8.53]
16 - 23	Overture-Suite in B $\flat$	[15.59]
	Total timings:	[69.37]

LA SERENISSIMA  
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