

Equipped with cellos and a generous selection of different-shaped bows, winners of the 2013 Friends of York Early Music Festival prize Duo Domenico return along with the Italian cellist and composer Luigi Boccherini. They situate his compositions against the backdrop of the influences that formed him - Italian cello virtuosi, Viennese opera and ballet music - as well as of the musical developments which he influenced in Spain and across Europe.

Boccherini's Influences

Stefano Galeotti (1723-70)
Sonata in D major Op. 1 no. 3
Allegro - Andante - Allegro

Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714-87)
Viennese opera arias and ballet music arranged for two cellos

(?) Luigi Boccherini (1743-1805)
Sonata in C minor ("Sonata de Barcelona")
Andantino - Adagio - Allegretto

(?) Luigi Boccherini / (?) Jean-Baptiste Janson (1742-1803)
Sonata in C major (G.3)
Allegro - Andante - Minuetto

This programme paints a portrait of a truly pan-European Boccherini, by exploring some of the musical influences on the Italian cellist-composer, as well as the influences which he himself exerted on the world around him.

Twenty years Boccherini's senior, the virtuoso cellist Galeotti visited Boccherini's hometown of Lucca on several occasions. Both cellists were employed in Vienna at the same time, where Stefano's fees were three times higher than Luigi's. One imagines the younger cellist looking up to - and listening intently to - the older and more established Italian.

Luigi's sister Maria Ester Boccherini danced in Gluck's narrative ballet *Don Juan* of 1761 - the inferno scene of which Luigi Boccherini quotes directly in his symphony G. 506 ("La Casa del Diavolo"). It is easy to think of Luigi attending performances of Viennese opera and ballet during his employment in Vienna, and (consciously and subconsciously) recycling its manifold qualities in his own compositions.

The sonata in C minor belongs to a set of six sonatas by various anonymous composers, collated in a manuscript recently discovered in a basilica in Barcelona (Arxiu Parroquial de Santa Maria del Pi. APSMP-M1530). One of the other sonatas is a version of Boccherini's Eb sonata G.10, whose identity as a genuine Boccherini

composition is assured. The similarity in style of this C minor sonata either speaks of a hitherto undiscovered Boccherini sonata, or of a nascent Spanish tradition of cello sonatas by another composer who was undoubtedly familiar with Boccherini's music.

The C major sonata known as Boccherini's G.3 sonata is now suspected to be, at very least in its first and third movements, the work of Boccherini's French contemporary Janson. Along with the Duport brothers, Janson was one of the foremost cello virtuosi in Paris at the time of Boccherini's visit to Paris in 1767. All of these cellists appeared at the *Concerts Spirituels*, performing their own ever-more virtuosic and expressive compositions in a bid to achieve cellistic eminence in a fiercely competitive musical climate.

What is clear from the confusion about the authorship of these two sonatas is the fact that in this very particular 18th-century musical tradition it was the performance, not the composition, which really mattered. The repetitive structures and harmonic simplicity of this compositional style allowed the performer a unique form of creative and improvisatory freedom in the heat of the moment, which was diminished as composers became increasingly prescriptive, eager to establish the composition (eternal!), rather than the performance (fleeting!), as the thing of greatest value.

The performance will be accompanied by spoken introductions, and questions or observations from the audience are welcome!

Programme notes by Jonathan Rees

Duo Domenico

Vladimir Waltham and Jonathan Rees, cellos

Duo Domenico explores the 17th-century music written for the rich diversity of four-, five- and six-stringed bass instruments of the period, as well as the virtuosic showpieces written in the eighteenth century for the instrument which supplanted them - the violoncello.

Named after Domenico Gabrielli, the first composer to publish works naming the violoncello as a solo instrument, the duo delve into his works and those of his contemporaries, and experiment with bizarre tuning systems along the way; they also happily take on the technical — and musical — challenges set by 'cello virtuosi such as Boccherini, Barrière and Abel, ensuring that the upper reaches of the instrument's range are put to good use.

Individually, they intersperse this varied duo repertoire with selected solo suites and other works for cello or viol by J.S. Bach, Abel and others.

Vladimir and Jonathan both play regularly with leading period instrument groups such as the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Academy of Ancient Music, Gabrieli Consort, Dunedin Consort, Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique and La Serenissima. They formed the group in 2012, playing in multiple venues in the London area and studying with Joseph Crouch and Alison McGillivray. In the spring of 2013, the group took their programme on tour to venues in London, Bristol, Somerset and Devon, before appearing in the finals of the York Early Music International Young Artists Competition, where they were awarded the Friends of the York Early Music Festival Prize (the closest thing to an audience prize). This year includes performances in Bristol's Really Classical Relay, as well as in Oxford, London and Berlin.