



SALIERI

Complete Works for Harpsichord and Piano

FILIPPO PANTIERI
Keyboard Instruments

ENSEMBLE SEZIONE AUREA
LUCA GIARDINI, Concertmaster

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ANTONIO SALIERI (Legnago, 1750 – Vienna, 1825)

Complete Works for Harpsichord and Piano

Harpsichord Concerto in B flat major

27:28**01** Allegro moderato

12:42

02 Adagio

07:20

03 Tempo di Menuetto

07:26

Harpsichord Concerto in C major

20:58**04** Allegro Maestoso

08:51

05 Larghetto

06:43

06 Andantino

05:24

Keyboard Sonata in C major *

13:23**07** Allegro

02:26

08 Adagio

04:10

09 Non troppo allegro

01:03

10 Allegro

01:09

11 Un poco adagio

03:46

12 Un poco allegro

00:49

13 March in D major ***01:36**

Running Time

63:34

* World première recording

Filippo Pantieri, Keyboard Instruments

Luca Giardini, Concertmaster

Ensemble Sezione Aurea

Violins Luca Giardini, Francesca Camagni, Azusa Onishi / **Viola** Marta Fergnani

Cello Viola Mattioni / **Violone** Michele Alessandri

Oboe Claudia Anichini, Marco Del Cittadino / **French Horns** Giovanni Cacciaguerra, Luca Del Priori

First Violin Luca Giardini

Luca Giardini Violin by don Nicola Amati, Bologna 1730. Bow by Edward Dodd, 1780

Francesca Camagni Violin by anonymous maker, Klotz workshop, Mittenwald, ca 1780

Bow by Nicolas Leonard Tourte, ca 1775

Azusa Onishi Violin by anonymous maker, Mirecourt, France, ca 1710

(on the label: "Felice Beretta, Como 1780"). Bow by Nicolas Leonard Tourte, ca 1775

Marta Fergnani Viola by Francesco Petrucci, Vigarano Pieve, 2013 (Ettore Soffritti model, Ferrara school)

Bow by Nogucira, 2022, from 1740 iconography

Viola Mattioni Cello by anonymous maker, attributed to Nicolas Augustin Chappuy (workshop),

Mirecourt ca 1770. Bow by Nelly Poidevin

Michele Alessandri Violone by Riccardo and Adriano Coelati Rama, after an anonymous 17th-century maker

Bow by Emilio Slaviero, 20th century, copy of an anonymous 18th-century instrument

Claudia Anichini Oboe by Alberto Ponchio (Vicenza), after Grenser (ca 1750)

Marco Del Cittadino Oboe by A. Bernardini, copy of a Grundmann instrument (ca 1750)

Luca Del Priori French Horn by Jungwirth, copy of a Courtois instrument

Giovanni Cacciaguerra French Horn by Jiracek, copy of a Franz Weckert instrument, Prague

Filippo Pantieri

- Piano by an anonymous maker, late 18th-century Italian school, private collection (for the Concertos)

- Piano by Paul Mc Nulty, after Anton Walter (1792) (for the Sonata)

- Harpsichord by Roberto Livi, after Michael Mietke (first half of the 18th century) (for the March)

Transcription and revision Alessandro Vigilante and Giacomo Vignali

Cadenzas and diminutions Filippo Pantieri and Luca Giardini

Piano tuning and maintenance Francesco Zanotto, Flavio Liberalon and Filippo Pantieri

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For more than forty years now Antonio Salieri has been, in the collective imagination, the bitter character interpreted by Fahrid Murray Abraham in Milos Forman's film *Amadeus* (1984), inspired by the theatrical play by Peter Shaffer (1978), in turn very freely inspired by Pushkin's poetic drama *Mozart and Salieri* (1832). The US actor did an extraordinary job in presenting a wicked and hypocritical, prudish and sensual Salieri, a man driven by resentment before the – for him – inexplicable musical greatness of a foolish and naive young Mozart. The film, in itself very successful, has only one flaw: it presents a Salieri (and in many ways also a Mozart) who never existed. It is a brilliant free creation inspired by real events and characters. Unfortunately, the boundary between truth and falsehood has become more and more blurred in our modern world, and while the lifetime work of scholars who strive to ascertain truths that may be shared by all can take decades before being recognised, a successful film can influence the general opinion more than a thousand documented and incontestable specialist studies, and the damage can sometimes take years to be repaired.

The real Antonio Salieri was born in Legnago in 1750 and moved to Vienna at a very early age thanks to the good offices of the chapel master Leopold Gassmann, who had met him in Italy and, having recognised his musical talent, had wanted him in the Austrian capital. In

1773 Salieri composed two concertos: in B flat major B.3 and in C major B.2 (the numbering is that of Francesco Passadore's and Franco Rossi's *Catalogo Tematico delle composizioni strumentali di Antonio Salieri*, published in 2022). Salieri was then only twenty-three. He had great talent and a gift that no other composer of his day possessed: he scrupulously dated his compositions. The two concertos are written for instruments which, in the only two manuscripts that have survived and are archived at the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, are indicated as "cembalo" (Concerto in C major, autograph manuscript) and "clavicembalo" (Concerto in B flat major, manuscript copy). Unfortunately, we do not know for whom the two works were composed and the circumstances around their creation. Salieri's first biographer, Mosel, hints at "two ladies", without specifying whether they were professional musicians or simple amateurs.

Although we do not know which works of the previous and contemporary concerto literature for keyboard instrument Salieri was familiar with – from both the Viennese and extra-Austrian milieus, from Johann Schobert's concertos to Carl Philipp Emanuel's and Johann Christian Bach's – the stylistic relationship between the young Salieri's works and Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach's concertos, often brought into play by authoritative musicologists (for example Giovanni Carli Ballola), appears, to the eye and the ear, rather weak, unless we choose to acknowledge a direct link with the Hamburg Bach in the breadth of concept and harmonic

adventures of the first movements' modulating sections. Much more solid, despite the evident differences in taste and temperament, is the relationship with the works of Bach's other son, Johann Christian, with the concertos Op. 1 and Op. 7 which were a model even for Mozart, even though Salieri takes his distance from them by generally shunning the very lightness and pleasantness rightly highlighted by Carli Ballola in favour of a soberer and more structured discourse, therefore typically "Viennese" in its most traditional sense. Salieri's language, as a matter of fact, is very similar to that of the Haydn of the early Seventies, and for a good reason. It should be noted, finally, that the two concertos, despite being chronologically close, have rather different expressive and formal characteristics.

The *Concerto in B flat major*, which has come down to us as a non-autograph manuscript copy that also includes an original first-movement cadenza, is the broader and more developed of the two; it calls for an orchestra consisting of two oboes, two horns and strings, and its duration is around 25 minutes, much more than any concerto from Johann Christian Bach's above-mentioned collections and Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach's *Six concertos for concertato harpsichord*, published in 1772. As for Mozart, his first piano concerto of a broadness comparable to the two works by Salieri dates from December 1773 and is the concerto in D major KV 175, written in Salzburg upon returning from his summer stay in Vienna, where he sought in vain an engagement at court. Finally, in Haydn's concerto production, most-

ly for the harpsichord, a similar vastness of concept is only found in some works, particularly in the *Concerto in D major* Hob XVIII/11, perhaps his most famous one, which likely dates, however, from the early '80s. Salieri, therefore, inserts himself in the central-European keyboard concerto tradition in a position that is far from secondary or of mere replication of widespread forms and modes.

The first movement of the *Concerto in B flat major* B.3, *Allegro moderato*, is the broadest and most elaborate of the three. As Carli Ballola wrote, "here his mastery of the sonata form appears exceptional, as does his ability to process thematic data according to the principles of a symphonic rather than embryonic elaboration." From the point of view of formal structure, this first movement follows a model that we could define 'common' in Salieri's instrumental works: the orchestra only introduces the first theme, which is picked up by the soloist who then exposes also the second theme, typically in galant taste, at the dominant. There follows a rich modulating development in which both themes are used, and a reprise of the sole second theme. A short coda leads to the cadenza, of fine quality, entirely in Salieri's hand, and then to the conclusion of the piece. Johann Christian Bach's influence appears even clearer in the slow movement, a delicate *Adagio* in E flat major full of trills and embellishments, in which the soloist is accompanied by the muted violins while the winds are silent; this *Adagio* is a surprising reminder of some of the slow movements from the London

Bach's concertos (for example the *Andante* of the concerto in D major Op. 1 No. 7). The finale is a *Tempo di Menuetto* with variations. The final movement in the form of theme and variations, already used by Salieri in the concerto for oboe, violin and cello, was far from a novelty; Johann Christian Bach had provided a famous example of it with the concluding *Allegro moderato* of the mentioned Concerto in D major Op. 1 No. 6, in which he had varied the theme of the English anthem *God Save the King*. The theme, first exposed by the orchestra, is picked up by the piano and then followed by a series of variations, ornamental and not particularly virtuosic in character, the last of which (*Più mosso*) is a lively Turkish passage that immediately calls to mind the final rondo of Mozart's famous *Sonata in A major* KV 331 (composed in 1778).

Written for identical orchestral forces to those of the *Concerto in B flat major*, the *Concerto in C major* B.2 has come down to us through an autograph score. It differs quite significantly from the work in B flat major for its expressive mood, which is less inclined to galant accents, something that is already evident in the first movement, a stormy *Allegro maestoso* of boiling dynamism, much shorter than the *Allegro moderato* of the concerto in B flat major (139 bars versus 324) and simpler in formal structure.

The slow movement, a *Larghetto* in A minor, is a sort of Sicilian in 12/8 in which the keyboard is accompanied by the strings alone, initially in pizzicato. This is the concerto's most original passage, and, stylistically speaking, also

the most 'modern' one. It should be noted that also this movement, like the initial *Allegro maestoso*, has room for a cadenza, which unfortunately Salieri did not write (or which has not come down to us). The concerto ends with an *Andantino*, a sort of fast menuet in rondo form with gracious and witty traits.

Lastly, we have two works for solo instrument. The first one, *Sonata* C. 14, is a composition consisting of six pieces, autograph and not dated, which the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek's online catalogue lists as "Sonate in C" für Klavier, and also Passadore and Rossi's thematic catalogue calls it such. This work's character, however, seems that of a series of short independent pieces reunited in a sort of suite. The six pieces, all in C major, were written, perhaps, for one of the many pupils Salieri had in his long career as a teacher. Once again, the lack of information on the potential addressee and the pieces' very simple writing in two parts makes it impossible to formulate any sensible theory on their destination and use. Finally, the very short march C. 15 in D major, recently rediscovered, has come down to us through a single non-autograph manuscript copy kept in the archive of Berlin's Sing-Akademie.

Danilo Prefumo

The ensemble **Sezione Aurea** was formed by Luca Giardini and Filippo Pantieri with the idea of bringing together some of the best musicians active in the European concert and recording scene. The ensemble's objective is to study the Italian vocal and instrumental repertoire from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. The spirit of research and revival of many musical pieces that are still unknown requires the support of a musicological equipe, which the ensemble consults before each project. The ensemble have availed themselves of the prestigious collaboration of composer Cesare Picco; of the theatrical groups Motus and Anagoor; of art historians Vittorio Sgarbi, Pietro di Natale, and Tiziano Panconi. Sezione Aurea has a philologically informed approach, and uses musical instruments and set-ups as close as possible for period and territory to those of the researched repertoire. The ensemble debuted in the Concentus Moraviae season (Czech Republic). Since then, they have performed in Italy, Europe and Japan, appearing at the most prestigious venues.

Sezione Aurea engage in various activities related to educational projects of music specialisation. They are the organisers of the "Marco Uccellini" competition of Forlimpopoli, dedicated to 17th-century violin repertoire. During the pandemic years, the ensemble expanded their activity to some famous museum exhibits: Mart in Rovereto, San Domenico Museums in Forlì, and Palazzo de' Rossi for the Pistoia Museums.

Sezione Aurea has made première modern recordings and performances, particularly of

works from the Emilia Romagna region. Notable is their award-winning recording of Ignazio Cirri's six Sonatas for violin and harpsichord with Luca Giardini and Filippo Pantieri, and one of arias from the opera "La Finta Savia" by Filiberto Laurenzi. Recently, they have released a CD on the figure of soprano Anna Renzi, "the first diva in the history of opera", with Roberta Invernizzi; soon to be released, a CD with cellist Christophe Coin on the birth of the cello in the Emilia region.

In 2020, Sezione Aurea and counter-tenor Carlo Vistoli recorded the CD "Amor Tiranno", which won the "Diamant d'Opera" of Opéra Magazine.

Translated by Daniela Pilarz



Ensemble Sezione Aurea

Photo: © Gilberto Crociani



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