

OLDE FOCUS RECORDINGS

Duo Gelland was founded in 1994 by the spouses **Cecilia Gelland** and **Martin Gelland**, bringing their individual perspectives on contemporary and early repertoire to the ensemble. This recording of their interpretations of four **Antonio Vivaldi's Sonatas for Two Violins** celebrates the Red Priest's physical, virtuosic approach to the instrument. Duo Gelland fills their performances with daring, lithe ornamentation and expressive subtlety and variation not often heard in contemporary readings of these works.

Track List

Sonata RV 71 in G major

- | | |
|------------------|------|
| 1. I. Allegro | 3:51 |
| 2. II. Larghetto | 3:45 |
| 3. III. Allegro | 4:06 |

Sonata RV 70 in F major

- | | |
|-----------------------|------|
| 4. I. Allegro | 3:18 |
| 5. II. Larghetto | 4:28 |
| 6. III. Allegro molto | 3:26 |

Sonata RV 77 in B flat major

- | | |
|-----------------|------|
| 7. I. Allegro | 4:28 |
| 8. II. Andante | 6:23 |
| 9. III. Allegro | 2:58 |

Sonata RV 68 in F major

- | | |
|------------------|------|
| 10. I. Allegro | 3:30 |
| 11. II. Andante | 2:27 |
| 12. III. Allegro | 3:07 |

Duo Gelland: Cecilia Gelland and Martin Gelland, violins

Total Time: 45:47

Program Notes

Antonio Vivaldi was a great violinist, as was his father, Giovanni Battista Vivaldi. It is no coincidence that Antonio Vivaldi's first publication op. 1 in 1705 was a collection of sonatas for two violins and basso continuo. He dedicated most of his instrumental output to the violin, writing sonatas for one or two violins and concerti for up to four solo violins further writing compositions where the violin appears as a second main character alongside other instruments or voice. The violin constitutes a kind of nucleus in the art of Vivaldi congruent to his mastery of idiomatic violin technique, but he also had a deep and intimate understanding of the human voice. This enabled an ongoing original osmosis of vocal cords and bowed strings where he imbued his violin writing with the lyrical inflections and manners of a singer while at the same time expanding his vocal writing with the vocabulary of instrumental virtuosity.

These four sonatas treat the two violins as equals, with a continuous interchange of the same material, in playful chiasmus, where the order of musical cells is reversed, as well as in imitative counterpoint and in passage work where the violins move parallelly. The ever changing flow of the dialogue with a hint of "competitiveness" offers rich thematic, tonal and rhythmic variation and lyrical glimpses sounding like echos of opera arias.

Antonio Vivaldi: Suonate a 2 violini, da camera, da suonarsi anche senza il basso

A recording of Antonio Vivaldi's four sonatas for two violins by Duo Gelland

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Featured Track	Track 1

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NEW FOCUS RECORDINGS



Duo Gelland

Antonio Lucio Vivaldi

1678–1741

Quattro sonate per due violini

Four Sonatas for two violins

RV 71, 70, 77, 68

Duo Gelland

Cecilia and Martin Gelland, violins

Vivaldi played a fantasia that quite astounded me, since no one can ever have played like that, nor ever will, his fingers just a straw's breadth from the bridge, leaving no room for the bow, thus playing fugues on all four strings with an unbelievable speed.
von Uffenbach's diary, 1715

TT: 45:50

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Antonio Vivaldi's writing, in spite of its orderly structure, is strikingly inventive and versatile. The parts jump across two or three strings in large intervals employing bariolage techniques and many different means of creating subtle contrasts in dynamics and articulation. The ornamentation is varied and increases the virtuosic character in the fast movements while taking on an intensely expressive character in the slow movements. These sonatas appear denser than the concerti for two violins which partly is a consequence of incorporating bass fragments in a kind of virtual counterpoint making it possible to follow the harmonic patterns. The virtuosic interweaving of the two lines is freed of the basso continuo's rhythmic-harmonic framework, yet flowing with great freedom and ease, highlighting an instrumental dialogue full of contrast and wit.

Each one of the slow movements has a very different vocal, arioso character. The expressive, almost pleading theme of the Andante of Sonata RV 68 comes with long progressions of ascending and descending scales, interrupted by short moaning phrases. Sonata RV 70, the slow movement, sings a cantabile melody with an introspective character rich in ornamentation and bold vocal contrasts called *chiaroscuro*. Once the second part starts the music suddenly turns into four-part harmony with simultaneous double stops. The intimate yet heavier character of the *Larghetto* in B minor of Sonata RV 71 is marked from the very first bars by its dotted rhythm, its wide intervals and the delicate passages played together by the violins. The pace is mournful in the Andante of Sonata RV 77, the violins constantly switching roles in an increasingly dense and embellished interplay.

The fast movements, on the other hand, seem to be the ideal setup for daring experiments like in the finale of Sonata RV 68, where instrumental figures in wide intervals create a texture that coagulates into very fast sequences with parallel thirds, intentionally leaving long pauses in the bass line. The opening *Allegro* of Sonata RV 70 with its nervous bowing and abundant use of double and triple stops also offers surprises, such as a brief passage of empty fifths and pedal D, almost the echo of a bagpipe. In the stomping dance steps characterising the final movement, *Allegro molto*, of the same sonata, the material consists of repeated notes and arpeggios, to which rapid semiquavers in parallel thirds, again, are added as well as trills and hammering figures. The sudden thematic shifts of the *Allegri* of Sonata RV 77 generate a fanciful, somewhat bewildered atmosphere exploding into pyrotechnic effects. The virtuosic potential of the two violins is exploited to the full in the Sonata in G major RV 71, where the writing appears more whimsical and less contrapuntal, full of abrupt motivic gestures. In the first *Allegro* the two voices respond to each other like echoes, with little overlapping, wide leaps and sharp dynamic contrasts. The third movement, *Allegro molto*, is based on the brilliant interweaving of arpeggios and rapidly descending scales leading into a relaxed melody in the second violin enveloped by the ample resonant arpeggios of the first violin, an enchanting conclusion, the pedal D giving it a musette-like flavour. In short, the music in these sonatas is richly imaginative, with an "inspiration" and an "inventiveness" that seem to dominate the balance of

"harmony". This is music capable of surprising the listener with the unexpected turns of its themes and unusual phrase structures. In its very concentrated form evoking a vast range of emotions from exuberantly gesturing capriciousness to melancholic, introverted singing, it already looks beyond Baroque aesthetics, at times prefiguring the "gallant" style.

The wealth of ideas contained in these sonatas, and the instrumental textures as they are notated, offer great freedom of interpretational approaches well beyond the choice of performing them with or without basso continuo. In interpreting these sonatas, arranged on the CD according to character or "brightness", placing at the extremes those with a more terse and light character (RV 71, RV 68), Cecilia and Martin Gelland demonstrate a perfect symbiosis, the result of a mature collaboration of over 25 years.

– Gianluigi Mattioli (translation Cecilia Gelland)

Bio

Duo Gelland was founded in 1994 by the spouses Cecilia Gelland and Martin Gelland, each contributing their quite different cultural and musical backgrounds, upbringings, mother tongues and personalities. They made a virtue of "never becoming alike" while at the same time living the artistic vision, that "anywhere you can go, I can come along" stating that "What inspires us the most is the never ending adventure of building on each other's artistic ideas". Thus the violinists' different assets widen their duo's frames of concepts, sounds, emotions, interpretations and improvisations far beyond what any one of them would have been able to do alone. They owe much of their interest in historical music to Roy Goodman who was the chief conductor of the orchestra they left in 2002 in order to be Duo Gelland full-time.

Already in 1997 the label BIS had asked them to record Allan Pettersson's profound, wild and hair-raisingly demanding one hour duo cycle. It received high international acclaim and started a renewed interest in the violin duo. Duo Gelland has since then received and premiered over 300 dedications from composers born in different parts of the world, mostly duos but also a great number of double concerti with orchestra, wind ensemble or choir.

In this recording Cecilia and Martin Gelland, switching parts between the different sonatas, play their formidable 18th century Italian violins, a Giovanni Battista Gabbriellini from 1750 and a Giovanni Battista Rogeri from 1703, in modern setup on gut strings and with Baroque bows by Walter Mettal.