



Spice of Italy

CHACONNE

MUSIC FOR VIOLIN
AND CONTINUO

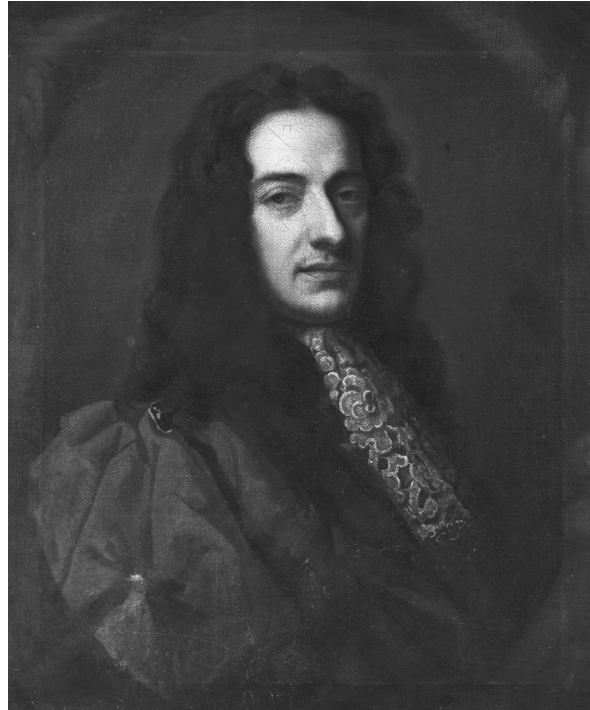
by Nicola Matteis and Son

DUO DORADO

Hazel Brooks *violin*

David Pollock *harpsichord • organ*

CHANDOS early music



Portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller (Godfried Kneller) (1646 – 1723), now in a private collection /
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Nicola Matteis Sr, 1682

Spice of Italy

Music for Violin and Continuo by Nicola Matteis and Son

Nicola Matteis Sr (c. 1645 – c. 1699)

Set of Movements*

9:14

in D minor • in d-Moll • en ré mineur

from *Ayres for the Violin* (1685)

1

Preludio in D la sol rè. Presto (Book 4, pp. 66, 67)

1:16

2

Fuga in fantasia. Presto (Book 4, pp. 68, 69)

2:13

3

Grave. Adagio (Book 4, pp. 70, 71)

2:41

4

Ground in D la sol rè per far la mano. Allegro (Book 4, pp. 72 – 75)

3:02

Set of Movements†

9:19

in E minor • in e-Moll • en mi mineur

from *Ayres for the Violin* (1685)

5

Preludio à due corde. Adagio (Book 4, pp. 42, 43)

2:51

6

Fuga a due corde (Book 4, pp. 46, 47)

1:38

7

Aria Amorosa. Adagio (Book 4, pp. 58, 59)

3:26

8

Aria. Presto (Book 4, pp. 48, 49)

1:23

	Set of Movements*	5:17
	in E minor • in e-Moll • en mi mineur	
	from <i>Ayres for the Violin</i>	
9	Passaggio à solo – Adagio (Book 4, 1685, pp. 50, 51)	3:12
10	Allegro (Book 1, 1676, pp. 26, 27)	2:04
	Set of Movements*	5:33
	in F major • in F-Dur • en fa majeur	
	from <i>Ayres for the Violin</i> (1685)	
11	Preludio. Prestissimo (Book 3, pp. 12, 13)	1:26
12	Un poco di Grave. Adagio (Book 4, pp. 62, 63)	2:00
13	Gavotta con divisioni (Book 3, pp. 16, 17)	2:07

Nicola Matteis Jr (c. 1667 – 1737)

Sonata (before 1700)[†] **8:30**
 in C minor • in c-Moll • en ut mineur
 (GB-Lbl Add. 31466, no. 18)

14	Adagio	2:06
15	Allegro	1:18
16	Adagio – Grave – Presto	5:06

Sonata (before 1700)* **5:26**
 in A major • in A-Dur • en la majeur
 (GB-Lbl Add. 31466, no. 21)

[Movement titles taken from Walsh and Hare, *Six Select Solos Collected out of the Choisest Works of Six Eminent Authors*, 1706]

17	Adagio	1:43
18	Allegro	0:57
19	[Untitled]	1:07
20	Grave	1:37

Nicola Matteis Sr

21	Variations on La Folia ‘N.M.’[†] (GB-Ob Mus. Sch. C. 61, pp. 16 – 19) [no tempo marking]	11:26
22	Ground after the Scotch Humour* in F major • in F-Dur • en fa majeur from <i>Ayres for the Violin</i> (1685) (Book 4, pp. 60, 61) Allegro	2:44
	Set of Movements[†] in G minor • in g-Moll • en sol mineur from <i>Ayres for the Violin</i> (1676)	10:23
23	Preludio in ostinatione (Book 2, pp. 18, 19)	1:09
24	Fuga (Book 2, pp. 30, 31)	2:15
25	Andamento malinconico (Book 2, pp. 20, 21)	3:25
26	Corrente da Orecchie (Book 2, pp. 24, 25)	1:47
27	Giga (Book 2, pp. 28, 29)	1:46

	Set of Movements*	9:39
	in G major • in G-Dur • en sol majeur from <i>Ayres for the Violin</i> (1676)	
28	Preludio (Book 2, p. 1)	1:14
29	Musica Grave – Presto (Book 2, pp. 2, 3)	2:32
30	Sarabanda. Adagio (Book 2, pp. 4, 5)	2:49
31	Ostinatione (Book 2, pp. 10, 11)	1:24
32	Giga. Al Genio Turchesco (Book 2, pp. 16, 17)	1:33
	TT 78:20	

Duo Dorado

Hazel Brooks violin

David Pollock harpsichord* • organ[†]

<i>violin</i>	Hazel Brooks	by George Miller, English, c. 1670 (Matteis Sr) by Joannes Georgius Thir, Vienna, eighteenth century (Matteis Jr)
<i>harpsichord</i>	David Pollock	double-manual, Flemish / French instrument, by Anne and Ian Tucker, 1999. Replica of Ruckers-Hemsch, 1636 / 1763
<i>organ</i>	David Pollock	continuo organ by Henk Klop Orgelbouw, 2007

Harpsichord and organ prepared and tuned by Keith McGowan

Pitch: A = 415 Hz

Temperament: 1 / 6 comma meantone

Eric Richmond



David Pollock and Hazel Brooks

Spice of Italy: Music for Violin and Continuo by Nicola Matteis and Son

It was say'd that he travelled thro'
Germany on foot with his violin under a
full coat at his back.

It is with this tantalisingly evocative sentence, which might have been lifted from a novel or fairy tale, that Roger North introduces the Neapolitan violin virtuoso Nicola Matteis, who burst into Restoration London from Italy before 1671. His dazzling technique and extremes of musical expression transformed the English violin-playing scene, as if from black-and-white to glorious technicolour. He serves as an inspiring model for any violinist, and his story has fired my imagination over many years of exploring his music. Matteis had a son of the same name ('Young Nicola'), another prodigiously skilled violinist, who, like his father, ventured abroad to seek his musical fortune. This recording showcases the extraordinary musical imaginations of these intriguing composers.

Nicola Matteis Sr

Nicola Matteis Senior probably arrived in London in the late 1660s, although the first written record appears in 1674, when an

admiring John Evelyn described Matteis in his diary as 'stupendious.' Despite his extraordinary talent, Matteis struggled in poverty at first, as he failed to ingratiate himself into musical society and was turned down for a court job. The problem, according to Roger North, a personal friend of his and our most detailed source of information about him, was that Matteis was 'inexpugnably proud'. He objected to people's talking whilst he performed, and was reluctant to play alongside unproficient amateurs, thus alienating potential benefactors and clients. Only after a serious pep talk from a group of musical colleagues and well-wishers did he curb his arrogance and start to find his financial feet. He began to teach extensively, performed at musical gatherings, and published music. As his playing became widely admired and his music immensely popular, 'plenty of Ginnys' came rolling in and he could improve his quality of life. As North continues, 'he took a great house, and after the mode of his country, lived luxuriously'. A court record naming Matteis as a witness shows that he mixed in court circles despite having no official position. He probably worshipped in

the Catholic Chapel of Catherine of Braganza, wife of Charles II, and even composed music for it. Matteis was nominated as violin teacher for the planned Royal Academy of 1695, alongside other illustrious musicians such as Purcell, Draghi, and Finger, although, sadly, this never went ahead. At the end of his life Matteis suffered ill-health and retired from playing. He died in the mid-to-late 1690s, although the exact date is unknown.

The majority of music on this recording is taken from the four printed books of *Ayres for the Violin* by Matteis Senior. Books 1 and 2 were published in 1676, followed by Books 3 and 4 in 1685. These are beautifully engraved and were widely bought and copied. Although not large, the books are laid out in a practical way to avoid page-turn issues. The violin part is on the left-hand page and the bass part on the right, so that the two players could share a copy without the violinist's scroll blocking the bass player's vision.

The books contain more than 210 movements. Most are dances, but other forms include grounds, fantasias, fugues, and florid *cantabile* movements. Some have descriptive titles such as 'Aria Amorosa', 'Andamento malinconico', and 'Corrente da Orecchie' (the latter intended to be heard rather than danced, in contrast to the following *corrente*, labelled

'da piedi'). Within each volume, movements are grouped by key into loose suites, presumably for practical purposes (perhaps to do with keyboard temperament). Occurrences of, for example, two consecutive preludes, suggest that performers were expected to construct their own suites from selected movements, as we have done. According to North, this is what Matteis himself did, and extant copies in manuscript sources bear this out.

North described the *Ayres* of Matteis as 'books of lessons for his scollars'. There is certainly no lack of material in them for honing violin technique and certain passages are specifically labelled 'per far la mano'. They are well written and idiomatic for the violin, but not always easy, which raised objections from consumers of the time, with whom I can indeed sympathise! Yet, according to North, the published music was considerably simpler than Matteis's own flamboyant performances of the same pieces, which were 'nothing like the prints show'. Sometimes Matteis offers easier and harder alternatives of the same piece, or indicates the double-stops as optional, to cater for a wider clientele. The bass lines also contain plenty of interest. As time went on, Matteis produced separate second violin and viola parts for some of the *Ayres*, but he seems

to have done so in response to market demand for sociable consort music and not because they were actually necessary.

The *Ayres* are colourful, tuneful, and appealing, yet full of musical depth, dripping with chromaticism and expressive harmonies. North's description of the reaction of the distinguished musician John Jenkins to the chordal movements of the G major suite from Book 2 (tracks 29 and 30) is telling:

He pulled off his spectacles, and clapt his
hand on the table, saying he had never
heard so good a peice of musick, in all
his life.

There is huge variation in the character of movements. Preludes range from the glorious fanfare-like opening of the F major suite, to the poignant and beautiful E minor 'Preludio à due corde', via the arpeggiated G major prelude and the improvisatory 'Preludio in D la sol rè'. Fugues vary from the upbeat 'Fuga a due corde' to the darker archaic-style 'Fuga in fantasia'. There are slow Italianate expressive movements laced with extravagant 'curling ornaments' (as North terms them), requiring refined bowing and dynamic shaping (the D minor 'Grave', the 'Aria Amorosa', and the slow section in the E minor suite which follows the brilliant 'Passagio à solo'), and pieces packed with double-stops,

whether slow and melodious (the G major 'Musica Grave' and 'Sarabanda', the F major 'Un poco di Grave'), or fiendishly fast, as in the breathless G major 'Ostinatione'. Some movements offer a distinct Purcellian flavour, such as 'Aria Amorosa' and the following canary-like 'Aria'. It is as likely that Purcell was influenced by Matteis's Italian style as Matteis by Purcell's.

The characterful 'Giga. Al genio Turchesco' is unusual. Although the movement is superficially a *giga*, the underlying rhythmic stress pattern is that of a march. Abundant use of trills cleverly lends this movement a flavour of the rattles, shawms, and drums of a Turkish military band. This early manifestation of *alla turca* ('perceived Turkish style', which became particularly popular in the eighteenth century, prompting examples by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven) may have been recognisable to central Europeans living near the Ottoman Empire. How many Londoners would have made the connection is less certain, although the exotic title would have added appeal.

Divisions feature in many dances. The F major 'Gavotta' is a fine example. More adventurous divisions are found in the grounds, including the effervescent 'Ground

after the Scotch Humour', which features quirky quaver-crochet syncopation, and the exuberant 'Ground in D la sol rè per far la mano', which rounds off the superb D minor suite. However, Matteis's most adventurous ground was never published. The set of variations on the popular harmonic pattern known as 'La Folia' has survived only in a manuscript in the Music School in Oxford, a music book copied from 1688 onwards and belonging to the viol player Francis Withy. The piece bears the initials 'N.M.'. Virtuoso, imaginative, and varied, it is a superlative example of what Thomas Mace described as 'Bravery, both of Invention and Hand' (*Musick's Monument*, 1676). The final variation was left unfinished, perhaps for the player to complete, or even continue, if he had any stamina left after such a thorough workout. North mentions Matteis's taking part in musical contests, specifically with the French violinist Michel Farinel. Farinel's division on 'La Folia' has survived in Playford's *The Division Violin* (1684). If this was pitted against the version by Matteis, it is small wonder that Farinel's reaction was simply to 'stand still, and stare at him'.

The playing of Matteis drew attention not only for its stunning virtuosity, but also for the way in which he held the instrument,

'almost against his girdle'. Possessing a tall build and long arms, he must have been an eye-catching sight. He used an Italian-style bow, considerably longer than typical English models of the time, and held it on the stick, unlike the French and English bowhold at the frog, with the thumb on the hair. This Italian bowhold would have allowed him to manipulate the bow in ways not familiar to the English, creating a hugely varied sound palette such as they had never previously experienced. Contemporary descriptions and his extant music attest to his highly refined bow technique. Most remarkable to his English audience, accustomed to the sedate viol, and for whom the violin as a high-art solo instrument (outside its dance-band function) was still a relatively new phenomenon, were the dramatic extremes of sound colour, emotion, articulation, and character, often rapidly juxtaposed (for example, the sudden burst of *giga*-style *prestissimo* in the middle of the D minor 'Grave'). Matteis's playing was apparently a textbook example of the Italian expressive *affetti* style, which aimed to persuade the listener with a range of emotions. North wrote that Matteis made the violin speak 'as it were with humane voice, saying to his scollars – *Non udite lo parlare?* [Do you not

hear how it speaks?])’ Small wonder that extant descriptions characterise Matteis’s performances as ‘ravishing’ (Evelyn), ‘with flights of humour not to be expres’t’, and able to ‘hold an audience by the ears’ (North).

Nicola Matteis Jr

It cannot have been easy for Matteis Junior to forge a career in the shadow of such a towering musical figure as his father. Perhaps for this reason Young Nicola, a virtuoso violinist, made his living at first by teaching singing and composing songs. Born around 1667, Young Nicola had grown up in England, being taught the violin by his father ‘from his cradle’, according to North, who heard him play whilst he was still young enough to be dressed ‘in coats’, i.e. in skirts. His first marriage, in 1692, produced several children of his own, although only two survived, including his son, John-Nicola, who also became a violinist. In 1700, his first wife barely cold in the grave, Young Nicola married a wealthy Catholic widow, Susanna Timperley, and moved with her to Vienna to take up a post at the Imperial Court, where records refer to him as ‘der engelländische Geiger’. He must have been a deeply religious man, because around fifteen years later he and his wife considered entering religious orders

in Saint-Omer. This plan was never realised and Young Nicola remained in Vienna until his death, in 1737. The fiendish difficulty of his surviving solo compositions from his Vienna period attest to his prodigious playing skill.

The two sonatas by Young Nicola on our recording are much earlier works, probably composed whilst he was still in England. Both sonatas appear in an English manuscript in the British Library, which was copied shortly after the turn of the century. This collection of sixty-six violin sonatas is a treasure-trove for players and scholars with an interest in violin repertoire circulating in late seventeenth-century London. In addition to Young Nicola’s sonatas, this manuscript includes works by leading composers of the day, such as Gottfried Finger, Martino Bitti, Daniel Purcell, Henricus Albicastro, Carlo Ambrogio Lonati, and Arcangelo Corelli, as well as a suite by Matteis Senior, compiled of movements from the *Ayres*. The A major sonata by Young Nicola was published by Walsh and Hare in 1704 and again in 1706, with a *gigue* by Daniel Purcell inexplicably tacked on the end. This sonata, notable for its sparkling toccata opening and dramatic finale, contrasts with the soulful dark tonality of the C minor sonata. Both represent a stylistic departure from the music of Matteis

Senior, although they clearly spring from this earlier style. There is a distinct similarity between Young Nicola's sonatas and those of Finger. This is unsurprising, given that the two composers would have known each other in London.

• • • • •

Following our exploration of violin sonatas by Finger (CHAN 0824), immersing ourselves in the music of his London contemporaries was a logical next step. Although not wholly unknown nowadays, both Matteis Senior and his son lack the full recognition that they deserve, being overlooked in their countries of origin because they emigrated, and in their new homelands because they were foreign. Determined to put this to rights, we spent innumerable hours exploring their music, spellbound by their vibrant and ever-varying musical worlds. It was a struggle to choose which pieces to record, and plenty more remain, which we sadly had to leave aside.

Violin playing today has its roots in the Italian style of players such as Matteis, and we take it for granted that the violin can move us with abundant expressive colours and effects. The situation in Restoration London was different. Musical style was largely French

and no one had heard playing like that of Matteis Senior before. The first significant Italian violinist to arrive in England, he must have seemed like a musical visitor from outer space. His influence, through his performing, teaching, and publications, cannot be overestimated. Violin playing and musical taste shifted wholeheartedly towards the Italian style, and in North's words, which inspired the title of this recording, 'nothing in town had a relish without a spice of Italy'.

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Duo Dorado

Duo Dorado

Hazel Brooks and David Pollock share a passion for bringing baroque repertoire to a wider audience. They have been performing together for most of their professional lives, appearing extensively across the UK and beyond. The duo has been praised for its dynamic presentation of a wide spectrum of music, from established classics to the almost completely unknown. Both are fascinated by the historical background of the music and by the process of turning dusty old manuscripts into living performances. Particularly interested in exploring lesser-known composers of the English baroque, they have

previously released three ground-breaking recordings in this area, showcasing the violin sonatas of William Croft, Daniel Purcell, and Gottfried Finger, which have received international acclaim.

Hazel Brooks is a violinist and early-music specialist, whose performing career has taken her all over the world. She studied at Clare College, Cambridge, the Hochschule für Musik, Leipzig, and Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London, where she won the Christopher Kite Memorial Prize and the Bankers Trust Pyramid Award. She works as a recitalist as well as with early music ensembles and orchestras. Leader-director of the City Bach Collective and principal violinist of Cappella Fede, she has also released a number of solo recordings. In addition to the violin, she plays the viola d'amore and is in demand as a mediaeval-fiddle specialist across Europe and America. She is also active in musicology, with a particular focus on seventeenth-century violin music, and her performances and recordings are informed by her research. Hazel Brooks holds a doctorate from the University

of Leeds where she recently completed a Leeds Arts and Humanities Research Institute post-doctoral fellowship. She previously held a visiting fellowship at the University of Southampton.

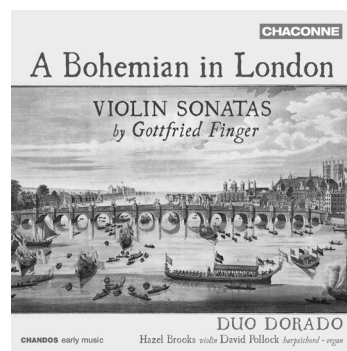
David Pollock studied at both the Royal College of Music and Royal Academy of Music, in London. He took up historical performance because of a longstanding love for the music of J.S. Bach and soon came to specialise in the harpsichord, winning the Croft Early Music First Prize, at the Royal Academy. The contemporary composers Colin Hand, Robert Page, and Gavin Stevens have written works specially for him. He has released three solo recordings: of French harpsichord music and of early English music, both on a replica of a double-manual instrument by Henri Hemsch; and another all-English programme on a muselar virginals, replicating an instrument made by Andreas Ruckers in 1620. David Pollock is harpsichordist with The Parnassian Ensemble and can be heard on a disc of English music from Queen Anne's London, *A Noble Entertainment*.



Keith McGowan

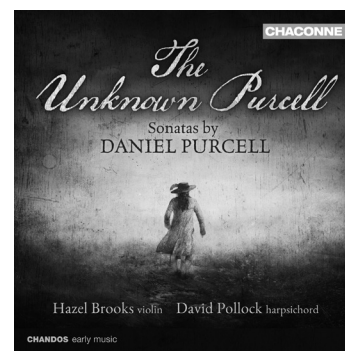
The performers during the recording sessions

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CHAN 0824

A Bohemian in London



CHAN 0795

The Unknown Purcell



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Chandos Records Ltd, Chandos House, 1 Commerce Park, Commerce Way, Colchester, Essex CO2 8HX, UK.
E-mail: enquiries@chandos.net Telephone: + 44 (0)1206 225 200 Fax: + 44 (0)1206 225 201



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SPICE OF ITALY – Duo Dorado

CHANDOS
CHAN 0831

CHACONNE DIGITAL

CHAN 0831

Spice of Italy

MUSIC FOR VIOLIN AND CONTINUO

by *Nicola Matteis and Son*

Nicola Matteis Sr (c. 1645 – c. 1699)

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|-------|---------------------------------------|------|
| 1-4 | Set of Movements* | 9:14 |
| | in D minor • in d-Moll • en ré mineur | |
| 5-8 | Set of Movements† | 9:19 |
| | in E minor • in e-Moll • en mi mineur | |
| 9-10 | Set of Movements* | 5:17 |
| | in E minor • in e-Moll • en mi mineur | |
| 11-13 | Set of Movements* | 5:33 |
| | in F major • in F-Dur • en fa majeur | |

Nicola Matteis Jr (c. 1667–1737)

- | | | |
|-------|---------------------------------------|------|
| 14-16 | Sonata (before 1700)† | 8:30 |
| | in C minor • in c-Moll • en ut mineur | |
| 17-20 | Sonata (before 1700)* | 5:26 |
| | in A major • in A-Dur • en la majeur | |

Nicola Matteis Sr

- | | | |
|-------|--|-------|
| 21 | Variations on La Folia 'N.M.'† | 11:26 |
| 22 | Ground after the Scotch Humour* | 2:44 |
| | in F major • in F-Dur • en fa majeur | |
| 23-27 | Set of Movements† | 10:23 |
| | in G minor • in g-Moll • en sol mineur | |
| 28-32 | Set of Movements* | 9:39 |
| | in G major • in G-Dur • en sol majeur | |

TT 78:20

Duo Dorado

Hazel Brooks *violin*

David Pollock *harpsichord* • organ†*

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Contact: Naxos Deutschland Musik & Video Vertriebs-GmbH, Gruber Str. 46b, DE-85586 Poing, Germany. info@naxos.de

SPICE OF ITALY – Duo Dorado

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