

Maurice Steger **The Corelli Project**

About the music

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear music lovers,

We are pleased to present the new project of recorder soloist Maurice Steger: "Mr. Corelli in London"

Let us take you on a trip to baroque England to listen to music unlike anything you have heard before! Together with a group of musicology experts, Maurice Steger scoured collections all over Europe for unknown manuscripts and was able to unearth some truly unique gems. The handwritten sheet music they discovered allows us to bring an almost-forgotten style of musical performances back to life.

Maurice Steger and his musicians show us that cover versions and jam sessions are not just modern-day phenomena. Awaking Arcangelo Corelli's music from centuries of hibernation, it resounds in the new style of a solo performance. Not just a journey of discovery, but a real adventure!

London around 1730: Georg Friedrich Händel, the German master composer, attracts musicians from all over Europe like a magnet. Italians in particular are drawn to the city on the river Thames. The virtuosos are wooing English audiences, but they soon find out that there's someone they cannot compete with: Arcangelo Corelli.

Although he never set foot on English soil and his compositions are already half a century old, Corelli is the absolute darling of London's society. The musicians close to Händel soon realize that they are far more likely to succeed if they incorporate Corelli's themes as opposed to only performing their own works. Variations on Corelli and new versions of his older pieces soon fill up their repertoire. Over the course of the next few years, Corelli's violin sonatas Opus 5 are complemented by large number of virtuoso adaptations. This music corresponds perfectly to the musical taste of the times and although originally composed for the violin, the sonatas are soon performed in almost every conceivable instrumentation. In today's popular music, it's called a cover version; back then it was standard practice. Well-known melodies are used and adapted to the player's technical abilities and the prevailing trends of the times.

Francesco Geminiani, James Paisible, Pietro Castrucci, John Loeillet, William Babell, Robert Valentine....

Theses are just a few composers who adapted Corelli's music and through variations, ornamentations and orchestrations left their mark on the originals. Francesco Geminiani's orchestral version of the Opus 5 sonatas serves as the basis for Maurice Steger's current project. The recorder soloist uses this beautiful fabric of sound to perform the original variations, which survived as handwritten sheet music. They come to life as wonderful lyrical or virtuoso adaptations that sometimes test the boundaries of what's technically possible. Outlandish, bizarre or just crazy flourishes that musicians use to demonstrate their skills are performed over the gentle fabric of Corelli's solid compositions and bring the listener back to reality.

Set for release in the spring, this CD is truly a sensation and offers a chance to listen to a select choice of baroque cover versions of Corelli's music for the first time. You can sample some exclusive tracks here and let yourself be taken away to the pubs and concert halls of 18th century London!

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