

Leonardo Leo - Six Cello Concertos (Bylsma) (1986)

Written by bluesever

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1. Cello Concerto No. 2 in D major (1737): 1. Andante grazioso 2. Cello Concerto No. 2 in D major (1737): 2. Con bravura 3. Cello Concerto No. 2 in D major (1737): 3. Larghetto, con poco moto – mezza voce 4. Cello Concerto No. 2 in D major (1737): 4. Fuga. 5. Cello Concerto No. 2 in D major (1737): 5. [Allegro di molto] 6. Cello Concerto No. 5 in F minor (undated): 1. Andante grazioso 7. Cello Concerto No. 5 in F minor (undated): 2. Allegro 8. Cello Concerto No. 5 in F minor (undated): 3. Segue il cantabile – Largo e gustoso 9. Cello Concerto No. 5 in F minor (undated): 4. Allegro 10. Cello Concerto No. 4 in A major (1738): 1. Andante piacevole 11. Cello Concerto No. 4 in A major (1738): 2. Allegro 12. Cello Concerto No. 4 in A major (1738): 3. Larghetto e gustoso 13. Cello Concerto No. 4 in A major (1738): 4. Allegro 14. Cello Concerto No. 3 in D minor (1738): 1. Andante grazioso 15. Cello Concerto No. 3 in D minor (1738): 2. [Con spirito] 16. Cello Concerto No. 3 in D minor (1738): 3. Amoroso – mezza voce 17. Cello Concerto No. 3 in D minor (1738): 4. Allegro 18. Cello Concerto No. 1 in A major (1737): 1. Andantino grazioso 19. Cello Concerto No. 1 in A major (1737): 2. Allegro 20. Cello Concerto No. 1 in A major (1737): 3. Larghetto a mezza voce 21. Cello Concerto No. 1 in A major (1737): 4. Allegro 22. Sinfonia concertata (Cello Concerto No. 6) in C minor (1737): 1. Andante grazioso 23. Sinfonia concertata (Cello Concerto No. 6) in C minor (1737): 2. Molto presto 24. Sinfonia concertata (Cello Concerto No. 6) in C minor (1737): 3. Larghetto 25. Sinfonia concertata (Cello Concerto No. 6) in C minor (1737): 4. Allegro Anner Bylsma - Cello Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra Jeanne Lamon - Musical Director

Leonardo Leo (1694-1744) was one of the leading Neapolitan composers of his day, famed in particular for his theater and church music; most notable among his instrumental works are the six cello concertos.

Cellist Anner Bylsma is perhaps best known for his interpretation of music from the baroque and early classical periods. He is a member of outstanding ensembles as the Leonhardt Consort, La Petite Bande, and he forms a trio with Hans Brüggem and Gustav Leonhardt, one of Europe's best known chamber groups. Mr. Bylsma is among the most-recorded musicians in the world of

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early music. ---prestomusic.com

18th-century Neapolitan composer Leonardo Leo was best known for his operas and sacred music, but he also contributed some finely crafted, idiomatic, delightfully inventive instrumental works, including these six cello concertos from the late-1730s. The melodic writing shows the engaging style of a savvy opera composer, and likewise the slow movements exude an emotional range on the level of the period's more sophisticated arias. In this re-issue from a 1984 session, we hear cellist Anner Bylsma at the peak of his Baroque-cello interpretive powers, his cello's voice out-front, with big, singing tone, his style extrovert yet fully in the spirit of Leo's congenial solo writing.

And while the writing can be quite challenging for the soloist, these works aren't just show-off pieces spotlighting the cello, with the orchestra serving a secondary role. Indeed, the orchestra generally is a true partner, its function tightly integrated with the soloist's--and Leo further sustains our interest by varying structural and harmonic details from movement to movement and concerto to concerto. And speaking of orchestras: at this time Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra was among a handful of top period-instrument ensembles, and its contribution here is solid and sure, energetic and vibrant, even if the rhythmic precision and clarity of articulation isn't what we expect--and hear--20 years later from world-class groups such as Les Violons du Roy.

Also, the recording ambience, the domain of a Toronto church, is distractingly resonant, the sound characterized by an "artificial", processed quality that gives the instruments a larger-than-life presence. Still, this is very good playing of some very entertaining music that's well worth hearing, especially if you'd like a nice alternative to the late works of Vivaldi. ---David Vernier, ClassicsToday.com

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