

**LORENZO
MATERAZZO PLAYS
SCARLATTI &
BACH**



AUSTRIAN
GRAMOPHONE

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MATERAZZO PLAYS
SCARLATTI &
BACH**



DOMENICO SCARLATTI (1685–1757)

KEYBOARD SONATAS

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|---|------------------------------------|------|
| 1 | Keyboard Sonata in D Minor, K. 1 | 2:09 |
| 2 | Keyboard Sonata in B Minor, K. 27 | 3:06 |
| 3 | Keyboard Sonata in A Minor, K. 54 | 4:09 |
| 4 | Keyboard Sonata in B Minor, K. 87 | 6:39 |
| 5 | Keyboard Sonata in G Major, K. 105 | 4:48 |
| 6 | Keyboard Sonata in A Major, K. 208 | 4:51 |
| 7 | Keyboard Sonata in E Major, K. 380 | 5:24 |

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)
FRENCH SUITE NO. 5
IN G MAJOR, BWV 816

8	Allemande	2:57
9	Courante	1:34
10	Sarabande	4:07
11	Gavotte	1:00
12	Bourée	1:06
13	Louré	1:53
14	Gigue	3:23

DOMENICO SCARLATTI & JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH: MASTERS OF THE KEYBOARD

Domenico Scarlatti was born in Naples on 26 October 1685 to a large family of musicians. He is best known for composing about 550 sonatas for keyboard, although he composed in many other genres, including opera. Scarlatti was also recognized as an incredible keyboard virtuoso during his lifetime; as a young man he competed against Georg Frideric Handel in an organ and harpsichord playing contest at the behest of Cardinal Piero Ottoboni. The contest's audience determined Handel was clearly a superior organist, although, given the high caliber of both

their performances they were mixed in opinion on whether Scarlatti or Handel was the better harpsichordist. Scarlatti began his career by working in several royal courts in Italy, but later moved on to working in the courts of Portugal and Spain. He composed his sonatas throughout his professional career, and it is difficult to date many of them precisely as they were only partially published while he was alive. Wider awareness of and interest in Scarlatti's music was achieved through the popularity of his *30 Essercizi (30 Exercises)* for keyboard, and the efforts of the "English Cult of Domenico Scarlatti", a group led by his contemporary composer Thomas Roseingrave, who published editions of his sonatas and promoted his works to other keyboardists.

Like Scarlatti, Johann Sebastian Bach was also born to a large family of musicians in Eisenach on 21 March 1685. Bach achieved great fame as an organist and keyboardist during his life, although we now know him as an innovative composer whose works blended many styles of and before his time. The *French Suite No. 5 in G Major* was written around the year 1722.

This was during the period in Bach's life when he was Kapellmeister at the court of Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Köthen. The position was not glorious, Köthen's court orchestra had only been established in 1707 at the initiative of the prince, but it paid well: Bach was the second highest paid official in the prince's court. Besides this and the other French Suites, Bach also completed the Brandenburg Concertos and began work on the *Well Tempered Clavier* around this year. Throughout his life Bach was interested in the development of better technologies for keyboard instruments, and his works usually specify which of the varied keyboard instruments of his time they were intended to be played on. In the 1730s he took interest in early pianos built by Gottfried Silbermann, and even suggested improvements that the instrument maker adapted. Given Bach's interest in the early piano and improvements to other keyboard instruments, it is clear that the composer hoped his works, while often targeted towards specific instruments of his era, could be adapted to newer improved instruments.

PERFORMING BACH AND SCARLATTI: AN INTERVIEW WITH THE PIANIST LORENZO MATERAZZO

by Riccardo Di Cesare
—Archaeologist and pianist,
University of Foggia, Italy

Domenico Scarlatti (Naples, 1685 — Madrid, 1757) and Johann Sebastian Bach (Eisenach, 1685 — Leipzig, 1750): Two contemporary lives, two Baroque composers (one Italian, the other German), both forerunners to the classical period, if not participants. What does the performance of this repertoire mean in our time?

Both Scarlatti and Bach were prophetic composers. The former founded a modern language for the keyboard. To perform his sonatas, independence of the fingers combined with new positions of the hands is required. In fact

Scarlatti was such a deep and polyhedric explorer of the possibilities of the harpsichord that his works seem to be composed for the modern piano, an instrument which offers a thousand possibilities. The art of the German composer [Bach], on the other hand, characterized by an elaborated harmonic language and a detailed polyphonic writing, encompasses all the compositional techniques of that period and even creates new ones. His music offers an absolute reference model until today for classical music and also for jazz. Thus the works of these musicians are still fresh and I think it is natural to perform and record them today.

As your performance shows, these two musicians have common traits. Even though the recorded works differ in genre and style, could we claim that both are blessed with essentiality and clearness?

Of course. Scarlatti and Bach's repertoire is not easy, nevertheless it reaches the listener directly and clearly. You do not need to be educated in music to appreciate their works, which are very modern. The rhythm of Scarlatti's sonatas is poignant and various, and it keeps

us constantly awake and curious. Bach's melody is simple and supreme, it has something heavenly and can enchant us with its purity.

Both Scarlatti and Bach wrote keyboard works. Nowadays, we are accustomed to performing them on the piano, more frequently than on clavichord or harpsichord. What is your approach in this respect? Do you believe that a philology or archaeology of the sound and of the performing style(s) of that epoch is to be preferred, or are we allowed to modernize the performance?

We should not be afraid of playing, for instance, an unexpected forte while performing the Gigue of Bach's French Suite No. 5. This does not mean that a careful philological approach is not necessary. These compositions can be updated well on the new instrument, otherwise playing them on the piano would make no sense. The contemporary interpreter, however, should always have in mind the performing style related to a particular historical period; he should act like a skilled archaeologist, trying to rediscover works produced in the past and enhance them using modern means.

16 **You performed Scarlatti providing each Sonata with peculiar timbre and dynamics.**

I have chosen seven Sonatas which are different from one another. Consequently, for each one I adopted a specific key to the interpretation. For the most technical, such as K. 1 or K. 27, I worked on rhythm and brilliance of sound. For the slower and melodic ones, such as K. 87 and K. 208, I focused on phrasing and polyphony.

The term “Suite” means a succession of movements, i.e. dances. Bach’s French Suite in G Major BWV 816 is among the brightest and, technically speaking, the most difficult because of the final Gigue.

I tried to give the Suite its brilliance working on the contrast between one dance and another. The polyphonic depth of the Allemande contrasts the simplicity of the Courante, yet one dance naturally follows the other, as with the other movements. In the Gigue, undoubtedly the most complex, various difficulties of execution, from the legato and staccato phrasing to the quite fast tempo, I tried to give it a very lively character.

LORENZO MATERAZZO

Pianist and musicologist Lorenzo Materazzo earned his piano diploma in 2000 with the highest marks under the guidance of Alessandro Cappella. He refined his piano skills under the guidance of Franco Scala in Imola, Italy and Aloys Kontarsky at the Mozarteum University Salzburg, Austria. He also attended masterclasses with Maurizio Pollini at the Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena, Italy, Garrick Ohlsson at the Royal Academy of Music, and seminars with renowned teachers and pianists like Roberto Cappello, Nicola Frisardi, Laura De Fusco, Oleg Marshev, Piotr Lachert, Lucia Passaglia, Piero Rattalino, Andrzej Jasinski. In 2001 he released the world premiere recording of *Improvviso*, a work by Jacopo Napoli, with the record company Mnemes. In 2006 he graduated with the highest marks in Musicology from Dipartimento di Musicologia e Beni Culturali in Cremona. In 2007 he

wrote, in collaboration with the artist Giuseppe Stampone, the music for the XV Quadriennale of Rome at Palazzo delle Esposizioni and music for two exhibitions at the Complesso Monumentale of Santo Spirito in Sassia. In 2008 at the Smeraldo Theatre in Milan and in 2011 at the Arena of Verona he was asked to open Deep Purple's concerts with the electronical formation *Ex.Wave*. In 2009 he was invited to play in Munich for the George Michael Foundation. In the same year he recorded his first album named *Apri gli Occhi* (Do it Yourself/EMI). His second recording, *Plagiarism*, came out in 2011 with Sony Music record label. He was also invited to play on many radio programs such as *Notturmo italiano* (Radio Rai 1), *Radio 3 Suite* (Radio Rai 3), *Start* (Radio Rai 1), *Taccuino italiano* (Rai Internazionale Radio). From January 2010 to June 2011 he was choir director of the Schola Cantorum Aristotele Pacini. In this role he was on tour in Ávila, Spain. His first solo recording, *Nowhere*, came out in 2013, while in 2014 his first book *Elementi di tecnica pianistica*, published by Armelin Musica Padova, was widely distributed. In 2016 he began a partnership with a Los Angeles agency for cinematographic synchronization for his fourth

recording, *Landscape*. In the same year he wrote and published his second book: *Musica classica e mezzo audiovisivo: il Documentario musicale – generi, forme e produzione*, again published by Armelin Musica Padova. In 2018 his classical recording *Lorenzo Materazzo plays Scarlatti & Bach* was released by the Austrian Gramophone label.



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