



COMMUNICATION: CONFERENCE REPORT

## Giuseppe Tartini (1692–1770): European Paths, Networks, Legacy

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This three-day conference took place in the splendid baroque setting of the Meerscheinschlössl in Graz. Funded by Austrian, Slovenian and Italian institutions under the patronage of both the Italian Ministry of Culture and the Italian Society of Musicology, the event brought together scholars from France, Austria, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, Portugal and Switzerland to exchange views on the state of the art in Tartini research and discuss performative, historiographical, philological and editorial matters. Assembled were both veterans of Tartini research and more recent recruits. To welcome the important gathering, the participants were greeted not only by local academic personalities, but also by the Styrian minister Barbara Eibinger-Miedl and members of the conference committee: Pierpaolo Polzonetti (University of California Davis), Sergio Durante (Università di Padova) and me (Cristina Scuderi, Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz).

Opening the meeting was a keenly awaited keynote lecture from Durante, the director of the Edizione nazionale delle opere musicali di Giuseppe Tartini. In his address, entitled ‘Tartini the Philosopher’, Durante analysed how the development of Tartini’s ideas affected his compositions, and explored the degree to which his views had a genuine impact on the life of Tartini the man, given that the reception of the composer as a philosopher seems to have reached a dead end. The discussion generated by these questions was followed by a first session devoted to presenting work in progress on the ‘School of Nations’. More particularly, I presented a new international project, the launch of which is supported by start-up funding from the Universität Graz. The project, on the transmission of musical knowledge in the eighteenth century, aims to investigate the networks among Tartini, his students and the various patrons active at important European courts in the period concerned. The court of Stuttgart was the subject of the paper offered by Gesa zur Nieden (Universität Greifswald), who examined with great insight the impact of Tartini’s school on the city’s musical and theatrical practices. These two papers were then complemented by a presentation on the new opportunities provided by the digital humanities for coordinating the data collected during such research. The director of the Zentrum für Informationsmodellierung of the Universität Graz, Georg Vogeler, explained what the application of advanced methods of network analysis can actually contribute to the understanding of biographies and social networks. He introduced some projects that have already used large prosopographic databases and discussed how those same methods can be applied to this new Tartini project.

Of a different nature were the subjects treated in the following session, when performative and philological issues were accorded full consideration. Agnese Pavanello (Schola Cantorum Basiliensis; Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz) focused on the link between melody and its ornamentation, showing how the study of this relationship can be a useful tool for understanding Tartini’s compositional thinking. Her discussion was enhanced by recorded examples, which helped to guide the audience through her exposition. Musical examples, this time performed live, were also

a salient characteristic of the presentation on Tartini's 'voice' and instrumental language given by Enrico Gatti (Conservatorio di Bologna; Koninklijk Conservatorium Den Haag). Using both Tartini's writings and an analysis of his music, Gatti reconstructed an ideal path running from the moment the notes are composed and traced in ink on paper to the time when they are played on the violin, and, subsequently, during the passage from the player's fingers to the ear of the listener. In this task he was assisted by the Italian musicians Pietro Battistoni (violin), Cristiano Delpriori (viola) and Cristina Vidoni (cello). Later, Gatti, accompanied by the Ensemble Aurora that he himself had founded, appeared in a much-applauded concert that included quartets and a trio by Tartini and his pupils Pietro Nardini, Maddalena Lombardini Sirmen and Raffaele Sirmen. In this way the subjects discussed in the papers were effectively complemented by performances that put the listeners in direct contact with Tartini's legacy, and also gave them an excellent opportunity to appreciate the works of the composers examined.

Attention then turned to female professionalism as Iskrena Yordanova (Divino Sospiro-Centro de Estudos Musicais Setecentistas de Portugal; Universidade Nova de Lisboa) gave an impassioned talk on Tartini's student Maddalena Laura Lombardini Sirmen (whose music had featured in the concert), tracing the profile of an independent woman whose success was also helped by the network of Tartini's pupils. Discussion of Lombardini's Duets for Two Violins, Op. 4, highlighted both the virtuosity displayed and their delicate chamber textures. Yordanova examined the form of these works and the evolution of their musical style, and also investigated the differences in dynamics and phrasing to be found in the various eighteenth-century editions. This dense first day of the conference ended with a reception organized by the local authorities at the City Hall of Graz, where everyone had the opportunity to visit the Rathaus and receive an introduction to the activities and history of this institution from city councillor Max Zirngast.

Work resumed the following day with a session dedicated to possible additions to the Tartini thematic catalogue. Paolo Da Col (Conservatorio di Venezia; Ensemble Odhecaton) directed our attention to Tartini's sacred output, reawakening our interest in this lesser-known repertoire by discussing a corpus of manuscripts from the library of the Conservatorio di Venezia (of which Da Col is director). He raised the anything-but-simple questions of why Tartini had composed this music (and also in that particular style) and for whom it was written. Next, Peter Stadler (Universität Paderborn), who is engaged in various projects relating to the digital humanities, addressed the subject of MerMEId, a platform for cataloguing capable of offering diverse modes of data consultation and interrogation, which is being used by the present Tartini catalogue. Continuing with the topic of catalogues and collections, François-Pierre Goy (Bibliothèque Nationale de France) offered a general overview of the Tartini material preserved at the Bibliothèque Nationale, laying particular emphasis on the less familiar titles. These include the French copies of concertos that belonged to Julien Sauzay (1839–1908), or perhaps even to his grandfather Pierre Baillet (1770–1842), and a collection of twenty-eight violin sonatas that was catalogued only in 2023, along with other materials that signal a continuous interest in Tartini extending over three generations.

The following session was conducted by a trio of skilled young musicologists from the Università di Padova, beginning with Gabriele Taschetti, whose paper was dedicated to the fate of the Tartini manuscripts preserved in the musical archive of the Veneranda Arca di Sant'Antonio in Padua. According to a decision made by a commission consisting of Giuseppe Martucci, Cesare Pollini and Oreste Ravanello, these manuscripts were due to be given a printed edition at the turn of the twentieth century, but in the end they were not published. The telling of this story drew attention to a scarcely known aspect of Tartini reception. Problems of reception were again the subject of the talk by Federico Lanzellotti, devoted to the spread of Tartini's works in Sweden. The composer was well known within specific aristocratic networks and was performed in both public and private concerts in Sweden, as well as in northern Europe more generally. Little-known vistas were thus opened up in an area that is yet to be fully explored. Chiara Casarin, on the other hand, focused the audience's attention on the stylistic categories into which Tartini's music has been placed

over the years. Her paper had the great merit of clarifying the limitations of these categories – we need to rethink what is more generally presented as an all too linear and evolutionary narrative in the history of music.

Immediately afterwards a second musical event took place in the form of a lecture-recital by Manuel Staropoli (Conservatorio di Trieste). Staropoli spoke about the manuscript of Quantz's *Solfeggi*, within which fragments of duets by Tartini are to be found. The question was raised whether these are genuinely original duets for two flutes or rather transcriptions from the violin, and indeed also whether they should really be attributed to Tartini. Together with Noela Ontani (Conservatorio di Trieste), Staropoli gave a very first performance of these flute duets, hence adding an element of complete novelty to the composer's more familiar repertoire.

In contrast, the third day of the conference opened with a reflection on Tartini's theoretical thinking by Nejc Sukljan (Univerza v Ljubljani), who took his cue from the unpublished manuscript 'Quadratura del circolo'. His paper provided an opportunity to review the key concepts of Tartini's harmonic theory as well as to analyse how Tartini defined them and used them to solve mathematical problems. What emerged from the discussion was not only the distinct need to tackle this type of study in synergy with colleagues from other disciplines, but also the need to preserve unique documents like the manuscript in question. Doctoral student Camilla Rubagotti (Conservatorio di Trieste; Univerza v Ljubljani) then outlined her research on Tartini's text of the 'Regole per arrivare a saper ben suonare il violino' in relation to similar contemporary writings and pedagogical issues from the period.

The final session aimed to cover the activities of the institutions that today pursue and promote studies and initiatives of various kinds connected with Tartini. Giulio D'Angelo (Conservatorio di Trieste), coordinator of the Centro Studi Tartiniani Trieste, reported on the centre's activities, which include the two most important Interreg Europe Italy–Slovenia projects of recent years. The most recent project, called *Tartini bis*, showcases the work of a group of scholars engaged in the recovery and analysis of archival documentation principally from the Veneto. Furthermore, D'Angelo reminded us of the existence of the website [discovertartini.eu](http://discovertartini.eu), both as a repository for diverse research materials (digitized documents, bibliographies, audio files and so forth) and as a virtual environment where it is possible to consult the thematic catalogue of the composer's works. Finally, a lively address from Andrej Rojec (Associazione Comunità degli Italiani Giuseppe Tartini di Pirano) closed the meeting by testifying to the commitment of the Casa Tartini in Pirano to organizing events aimed at promoting a better understanding of the great violinist. The programme of the Casa Tartini is indeed a rich one, fully capable of attracting a multilingual and multiethnic public.

Strategies for and problems involved in the dissemination of Tartini research, issues concerning the spurious attribution of certain scores, the positioning of Tartini's theoretical and philosophical ideas within the culture of the Enlightenment, and the exchanges between Tartini and key personalities on the European musical scene – these were just some of the other topics touched on in the many discussions that emerged during the conference. Music scholars engaged in dialogues with performers, with each drawing the maximum benefit from the others' skills, demonstrating how the involvement of both parties is fundamental to present-day scholarship. As is customary (and as was duly announced at the end of the meeting), the papers delivered during the conference will be collected in a volume of proceedings.

Over the three days of the conference, participants also had a chance to visit the exhibition 'Maestro of the Nations: The Shared European Cultural Heritage of Giuseppe Tartini', which had already been shown at the European Parliament in Brussels. They therefore had an excellent opportunity to look closely at the texts of the assorted panels (drawn up in English, Italian and Slovenian by Sergio Durante, Nejc Sukljan and Boštjan Udovič) that illustrated the multifaceted personality of one of the most important figures of eighteenth-century Europe. It is hoped there will be further meetings on Tartini in the near future (dates for further workshops and potential conferences

are already anticipated) – activities that can be ascribed to an increasingly broad network of scholars and enthusiasts eager to make a positive contribution to a decidedly reinvigorated area of research.

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