

Cellists' Corner

Brief Career Details of Important Cellists

prepared by David Johnstone from public information

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SPECIAL FEATURE on FRANCESCO ALBOREA

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Birth: 7th March 1691 - Naples, Italy

Death: 20th July 1739 - Padova, Italy

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Alborea was an Italian cellist, also known as 'Franciscello' or 'Francischello'. He was the son of Emanuele and Aloisa Bassano, and at the age of ten was admitted to the Conservatorio S. Maria di Loreto where he studied music for twelve years under Gian Carlo Cailò. He must have become highly competent during these years., Alborea became member of the Regia Cappella di Napoli until 1727, with the support of Alessandro Scarlatti. He shared the cello desk with Francesco Supriani.

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In that same year - 1727 - he moved to Vienna, where was employed as cellist at the imperial court, with a salary of 1260 florins, until his death. Alborea may be considered one of the first ever solo virtuoso cellists. He was praised, among others, by Johann Joachim Quantz, Franz Benda and Martin Berteau, who, according to Fétis, left the viola da gamba for the cello after hearing Alborea playing. As referred by Ernst Ludwig Gerber and François-Joseph Fétis, Francesco Geminiani reported that in 1713, in Rome, Alborea played the cello in a cantata with violoncello obbligato composed by Alessandro Scarlatti, the author playing the harpsichord. At the end of the piece, Scarlatti declared that only an angel, in human form, could play in such a charming way.

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Possibly, we owe him the greatest role as a cello soloist; because while Corelli gained fame as a violinist, placing this instrument as the most capable of performing the melodic function, our cellist made a place for himself in his musical sphere, giving our instrument a place of much greater importance, above that known up to this point, namely as a continuo bass. Another of the debts we have with Franciscello is the undoubted influence he had on other musicians such as Martin Berteau.

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In a large painting by Nicola Maria Rossi representing the celebration of the "Four Altars", the musicians of the Cappella Reale of Naples are portrayed, among them Francesco Mancini, Domenico Sarro....and Francesco Alborea playing his celebrated violoncello

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Of the music written by Franciscello, two sonatas have survived to this day, preserved today in a manuscript preserved in the National Library of the Czech Republic; however his output was surely much greater....



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