



## PRESS RELEASE

August 2016

# Academy of Ancient Music releases Dario Castello's *Sonate Concertate in Stil Moderno, Libro Primo*

**Catalogue Number: AAM005**

**Label: AAM Records**

**Worldwide Digital Release: 30 September 2016**

**UK & US Release: 30 September 2016**

On 30 September 2016 the **Academy of Ancient Music** (AAM) releases Dario Castello's *Sonate Concertate in Stil Moderno, Libro Primo*, the fifth disc on its own label AAM Records. The AAM's Music Director **Richard Egarr** directs from the harpsichord and organ and is joined by leading musicians, violinists **Pavlo Beznosiuk** and **Bojan Čičić**; **Josué Meléndez** on Cornetto; **Joseph Crouch** on Violetta; **Benny Aghassi** on Dulcian; **Susan Addison** on Trombone; and **William Carter** playing Theorbo.

Dario Castello was an Italian composer and instrumentalist from the early baroque period who worked and published in Venice. There is little biographical information about Castello, even his birth and death dates are unknown, although it is thought he may possibly have died during the great plague of 1630 as he published no new music after this date. As a composer, he was a late member of the Venetian School and had a role in the transformation of the instrumental canzona into the sonata. It is not clear whether he played the cornetto or the bassoon but records indicate that he led a Venetian company of *piffari*, a band that could include trumpets, trombones, cornetts, shawms, bagpipes, drums, recorders and viols. Other records also detail that he worked at St. Mark's Basilica where Claudio Monteverdi was *maestro di capella*, an association which is consistent with Castello's use of the *stile concitato*.

Richard Egarr has long championed the work of Castello after having discovered the *Sonate Concertate* during his studies at The University of Cambridge. Egarr played the sonatas alongside Andrew Manze, Robert Ehrlich and Mark Levy, as part of The Cambridge Musick, quickly learning that the music was utterly boundless in its virtuosity, imagination and colour and could take anything he could throw at it in performance.

Egarr commented, "*For the last 34 years I have been playing these amazing works, trying at every turn to bring them to the wider public. I cut my 'baroque' teeth with these sonatas and Castello's work still remains some of my favourite music to play. The chance to record them with my fabulous partners from the AAM is really a dream come true.*"

Having not left a large-scale composition, Castello has not been recognised in the same way as his colleague Claudio Monteverdi: indeed, only two books of instrumental music, equalling just 30 sonatas, constitute his known output. Despite this, the works are full of incredible musicality and this disc is an opportunity to reveal his genius to all.

In keeping with the AAM's commitment to authentic period performances, a high "Venetian" pitch is used for this recording which has implications, both technically and sonically, for all of the instruments involved. Such tuning adds spice and colour to the Italian composer's often pungent melodic and harmonic turns. Similarly, the recording keeps with Castello's specific stipulations with regards to instrumentation: using only violins, cornetto, trombone, violetta and organ and harpsichord for the continuo in varying ensemble formations.

Egarr and the AAM give a performance of a selection of the Castello sonatas, alongside Monteverdi's motets, on **7 December** at Milton Court, London and on **9 December** at West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge.

***Sonate Concertate in Stil Moderno, Libro Primo***

**AAM005 – released 30 September 2016**

**Academy of Ancient Music**

**Richard Egarr** *Director, harpsichord & organ*

**Pavlo Beznosiuk** *Violin 1*

**Bojan Čičić** *Violin 2*

**Josué Meléndez** *Cornetto*

**Joseph Crouch** *Violetta*

**Benny Aghassi** *Dulcian*

**Susan Addison** *Trombone*

**William Carter** *Theorbo*

**Notes to Editors**

**AAM Records**

Since its foundation in 1973 the AAM has released over 300 CDs, predominantly on the Decca and Harmonia Mundi labels. In 2013 the orchestra launched AAM Records, its own in-house label, allowing it to take full control of its future recording catalogue by producing a range of recordings which matches the orchestra's artistic plans and its commitment to the historically-informed performance of baroque and classical music. By moving the production of its recordings in-house the AAM will have complete freedom to bring its trademark scholarship and insight to the music. As part of AAM Records, the orchestra will develop a range of supplementary materials, from specially-commissioned liner notes to films and podcasts, giving listeners deeper insights into the music. Furthermore, AAM Records will allow the AAM to expand its presence in key strategic territories worldwide, including developing its work in the Far East, America and Australia, as well as cementing its presence in Europe and the UK.

**About the AAM**

For more than 40 years the Academy of Ancient Music has enriched the lives of thousands the world over with historically-informed performances of baroque and classical music of the highest calibre. Under the direction of Richard Egarr since 2006, a leading light in the next generation of early music exponents, the AAM enjoys a global reputation; performing on period instruments, and taking inspiration from the forgotten sound-worlds of the past, the orchestra combines scholarship with superb musicianship to create performances acclaimed for their vitality and immediacy.

Though international in its outlook, the AAM is rooted "at home" in London and Cambridge, where it has a regular season and promotes some of its most ambitious and innovative music-making. The AAM is Associate Ensemble at London's Barbican Centre and is also Orchestra-in-Residence at the University of Cambridge. Founded in 1973 by the late Christopher Hogwood and originally established as a recording orchestra, the AAM has an unrivalled catalogue of more than 300 CDs which has reached millions globally and garnered countless accolades, including Brit,

*Gramophone*, Edison and MIDEM awards. On its own in-house label, AAM Records, the orchestra has released four critically acclaimed studio recordings, most recently the original 1727 version of JS Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, dubbed "a triumph" by *Gramophone* magazine.

The AAM's 2016-17 season celebrates Richard Egarr's ten years as Music Director with a three-year cycle of Purcell operas, directed by Egarr, beginning with *The Fairy Queen*; Monteverdi's *Vespers* marking the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the composer's birth; and classical programming featuring Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. Other highlights of the season include renowned early music expert Jordi Savall making his debut directing the orchestra; the continuation of the AAM's principal player focus; and tenor James Gilchrist directs the AAM for the first time.

Visit [www.aam.co.uk](http://www.aam.co.uk) to find out more.

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