



Leone **SINIGAGLIA**

Violin Sonata, Op. 44

Cello Sonata, Op. 41

**Cavatina for violin and piano,
Op. 13, No. 1**

**Romanze for cello and piano,
Op. 16, No. 1**

**Solomia Soroka, violin
Noreen Silver, cello
Phillip Silver, piano**

FIRST RECORDINGS

LEONE SINIGAGLIA: CHAMBER MUSIC

by Phillip Silver

It is always a pleasurable surprise, both to performers and listeners, to discover a luminous body of unfamiliar music – as with the works of Leone Sinigaglia, a little known Italian-born Jewish composer whose life extended across the last thirty years of the nineteenth century and continued beyond the first four decades of the twentieth. Sinigaglia's current obscurity, though, is not entirely the result of artistic selection: it is also an outcome of censorship and barbarism. Beginning in the early 1930s dissolute racial policies – the hallmarks first of Nazism and then of Italian Fascism – resulted in an avalanche of cultural ruination which carved a wide swath of devastation across the European musical landscape. Music associated with the avant-garde, jazz and, most pointedly, composed by those who were wholly or partially Jewish by birth, was regarded as 'degenerate' and relegated to oblivion. Many composers and performers were either driven into exile or murdered in concentration camps. The continuing effort to revive this music and bring it once again to the attention of public awareness is vitally important in order to redress the decades-old damage inflicted upon the fabric of European culture.

There is a wider issue here, too: the exclusion from public life of many esteemed artists created what is in fact a lost generation whose absence altered the direction of twentieth-century musical development. A complete and accurate picture of the musical development of the past century will be attained only through the reintegration of this material into the active performance repertoire.

For the performer working with such composers there is an underlying question that has to be addressed – that of whether this music is actually worth reviving; that is, if it were not for its extra-musical historical context, would this material stand on its own as good art? The return to public awareness of music by Braunfels, Korngold, Schreker, Zemlinsky and others demonstrates that the answer is often an affirmative one. Familiarity with the music of Leone Sinigaglia has led those of us involved with this recording to feel that his music also deserves a place in the public arena.

The most memorable characteristics of Sinigaglia's music are its strong melodic elements and a sophisticated use of harmonic materials. These elements collectively create a broadly accessible ambience, one which eschews both superficiality and empty virtuosity. In an article on Sinigaglia's chamber music, his fellow-composer Alfredo Casella notes that 'Sinigaglia has not written many chamber works, but all are inspired by a high sense of dignity and a perfect sense of proportion, so that he is never at fault in matters of taste.'¹ There is lyricism, passion, playfulness, tragedy and *joie de vivre* in this music, a sentiment echoed by an article in *The New Encyclopedia of Music and Musicians*, which described Sinigaglia as an 'Eminent Italian composer [who] since about 1895 [is] increasingly prominent as a gifted and versatile instrumental composer.'²

This outlook was shared by many well-known musical giants of the day: Elman, Suggia and Toscanini recorded his music, and such celebrated artists as Barbirolli, Furtwängler, Kreisler, Stokowski, Thibaut and Ysaÿe performed it in concert. Gustav Mahler can be added to this list: in his final American performance, a concert given in Carnegie Hall, on 21 February 1911, he conducted the New York Philharmonic in a performance of Sinigaglia's overture to Goldoni's comedy *Le baruffe chiozzotte*. Sir Henry Wood wrote in *My Life of Music*:

The eighteenth season of the Promenades opened on August 17 and ran until October 26. I note the name of Sinigaglia for the first time when we produced his new suite called *Piemonte*. Sinigaglia's orchestral works have always been thought well of in England for their delicacy and for their Piedmontese atmosphere. He was friendly with both Dvorak and Goldmark, who considerably influenced his work. I remember Nikisch being full of the overture to Goldoni's comedy 'Le Baruffe Chiozzote' which he liked because it was so lively. 'Nothing gloomy about it,' he told me.³

Leone Sinigaglia was born into an upper-middle-class Jewish family in Turin on 14 August 1868, the second child of Abramo Alberto Sinigaglia, an authority on art, and Emilia Romanelli.

¹ *Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music*, Vol. 2, Oxford University Press, London, 1930, pp. 422–23.

² Ed. Waldo S. Pratt, Macmillan, New York, 1924, p. 757.

³ Sir Henry Wood, *My Life of Music*, Gollancz, London, 1938, p. 271.

Friends of the family included scientists, sculptors, writers and publishers, indicative of a home environment that would have provided strong cultural stimulation during his formative years. Not surprisingly Sinigaglia was well educated, a polyglot proficient in Italian, French, German and English who went on to study law at university. He was also an accomplished climber who, among other things, is credited with the first ascents on Croda Da Lago and Monte Cristallo in the Dolomites. His book, *Climbing Reminiscences of the Dolomites*, regarded as one of the seminal works of climbing literature, was published in English in 1898, not long after the original Italian edition.⁴

Sinigaglia's early musical training at the Liceo Musicale in Turin was overseen by Giovanni Bolzoni, an accomplished composer whose works were also championed by Toscanini. Under Bolzoni's tutelage Sinigaglia composed a number of pieces for voice, piano solo and chamber ensemble. Though derivative in nature they illustrated sufficient quality for him to consider a musical career.

Sinigaglia travelled often to Milan where he met and was befriended by Puccini, Catalani and Bazzini, among others. It was Bazzini who advised and ultimately convinced him that in order to mature he would have to travel outside Italy and experience cultural life in important European music centres. He acted upon this advice in 1891, visiting Munich, Bayreuth, Prague, Leipzig and Berlin.

In 1893 Abramo died and after observing a period of mourning Leone concluded that if he were going to acquire the skills necessary for a successful musical career it would be necessary to leave Italy for a more extended period. In spring 1894 he travelled to Amsterdam, Brussels, Munich, Berlin and ultimately Vienna where he would remain for the next five years. Among the many acquaintances made by Sinigaglia during his stay in Vienna were Johannes Brahms, Karl Goldmark (who took a strong interest in his budding career), Gustav Mahler, Theodor Leschetizky and Oskar Nedbal. Nedbal was a former student of Antonín Dvořák and one of the founding members of the Bohemian String Quartet as well as principal conductor of the Czech Philharmonic. In Vienna Sinigaglia's economic situation was a comfortable one, as ample family funds were provided to ensure his independence. He was able to indulge

⁴ Translated by Mary Alice Vials, T. F. Unwin, London, 1896.

himself by attending all the important musical events that made up the concert season while also becoming friendly with a number of the leading families of the city. Early in his stay he wrote to his sister:

I miss you all but I do not miss the sun and the blue sky. I feel very well, all bundled in my coat with a good cigar in my mouth. I feel very happy on those gray days when around four in the afternoon the lights start to come on in the snow-covered city.⁵

His decision to remain in the Austrian capital was motivated by the desire to study with Brahms, but he was to be disappointed: with the single exception of Gustav Jenner, Brahms never accepted private pupils in composition. But he did arrange for Sinigaglia to begin studies with his friend Eusebius Mandyczewski, at that time the archivist and librarian for the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde as well as the conductor of the Gesellschaft orchestra. Mandyczewski, who would later become the teacher of Hans Gál, developed a close relationship with Sinigaglia – not only did they often play billiards together, but he also arranged for several of Sinigaglia's compositions to be performed under the auspices of the Tonkünstlerverein.

It was while studying with Mandyczewski that Sinigaglia's Violin Concerto, Op. 20, was composed. His only concerto, it was the work through which he became known to a wider musical world. Premiered in Berlin in 1901 and performed by Arrigo Serato, the concerto was described as 'brilliant and very successful.'⁶ Leon Sametini, a pupil of Otakar Ševčík, recounted that although Ševčík disliked the Dvořák Violin Concerto and would never give it to his pupils, he 'paid me the compliment of selecting me to play Sinigaglia's engaging violin concerto, at short notice, for the first time in Prague.'⁷ 'Engaging', most assuredly, and quite substantial as well, the Concerto is close to forty minutes in duration.

It was most likely Oskar Nedbal who arranged, around 1901, for Sinigaglia's introduction to

⁵ Lidia Benone Giacometto, introduction to *36 Vecchie Canzoni Popolari del Piemonte*, Musiche Inedite e Rare del '900, Vol. 7, Zedde Editore, Turin, 2002.

⁶ *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. J. A. Fuller Maitland, Macmillan, London, 1904–10, Vol. 4, p. 525.

⁷ Frederick H. Martens, *Violin Mastery*, Stokes, New York, 1919 (republished BiblioBazaar, Charleston, South Carolina, 2007), pp. 141–42.

Dvořák – a meeting which culminated in Dvořák's acceptance of him, atypically, as a private pupil. Sinigaglia studied with Dvořák for nine months, the lessons being held several times a week, each lasting for an unspecified number of hours. Sinigaglia thus not only learned how to refine and enhance his method of orchestration but also to understand the importance of the folk-music of his native country. Sinigaglia would afterwards refer to Dvořák as a dear friend.

Upon his return to Turin, late in 1901, he began the project of collecting, transcribing and arranging Piedmontese folk-music, a project which would occupy him for the remainder of his life; indeed, it is this aspect of his work that has kept his name alive in musical circles, one that has been highly remarked upon and consistently praised in contemporary writings:

In Leone Sinigaglia, a native of Turin[, ...] Italy has a composer who has done for the folk-music of his province, if not his country, something akin to what such nationalists as Dvořák and Grieg accomplished. [...] These melodies of the people, indigenous material that has always proved a boon to gifted composers, have been treated by Sinigaglia with rare skill.⁸

It is, indeed, one of his chief merits that he showed the possibilities latent in Italian folk-song applied to music classical in form and spirit.⁹

Running parallel to this activity is a noticeable decline in the number of new concert works from his pen. With the exception of his renowned folk-song arrangements he composed only 23 more works between 1901 and his death in 1944, and of this number some fifteen were written by 1912. The absence of concrete information – Sinigaglia has yet to attract the attention of a systematic biographer – makes the reason or reasons for this considerable downturn in creative activity a source of conjecture. Much of the biographical information about Sinigaglia is derived from correspondence with his family and friends, and upon his return to Italy, whereafter he lived in close proximity to them, this source becomes sporadic at best. From the little that is known it appears that in 1907 Sinigaglia was a professor at

⁸ Daniel Gregory Mason (ed.), *The Art of Music: A Comprehensive Library of Information for Music Lovers and Musicians*, Vol. 3, National Society of Music, New York, USA, 1915, p. 390.

⁹ Casella, *loc. cit.*

the Milan Conservatory¹⁰ and that he spent a good deal of time travelling, both in Italy and abroad, all the while carrying out an active correspondence with many composers and performers. If his surviving correspondence with Toscanini is anything to go by, it would appear that attention was focused upon performances or hoped-for performances of his works rather than with details of his life. As a result of anti-Semitic legislation his last years were spent in isolation, withdrawn from the musical life of his beloved Turin.

The two major works on this CD are among the handful composed after 1912. The Sonata for Cello and Piano in C major, Op. 41, written in 1923, is Sinigaglia's most imposing chamber composition. There are four movements which explore a rich profusion of emotional states and colours. The first, a dramatic *Allegro*, also encompasses elegiac aspects, whereas the closing *Allegro con spirito* emphasises more extrovert characteristics, incorporating virtuosic contrapuntal material before coming to an impassioned conclusion. The two inner movements are sharply contrasting, the second a playful scherzo contrasting mercurial elements with a folk-oriented melody and the third a warmly lyrical *Adagio* in which an elegiac barcarol-like theme is contrasted with a strongly rhythmical and dramatic secondary subject, the whole suffused with a hauntingly bittersweet quality.

The Sonata for Violin and Piano in G major, Op. 44, composed in 1936, is Sinigaglia's last large-scale composition. The first of its three movements, marked *Allegro moderato*, is permeated with imitations of pealing bells, and the last, an *Allegro con spirito*, exudes joyous ardour; both make immense demands on the performers and decisively conclude in passages of true virtuosity. As in the earlier Cello Sonata, it is the slow movement, also an *Adagio*, which is the heart of the work, plumbing depths of sadness suffused with longing and nostalgia. This is music suggesting resignation to the dictates of fate and it ends with a brief coda that must be counted among the saddest and most bittersweet notes in the twentieth-century sonata- literature.

Not surprisingly, considering Sinigaglia's German-oriented education, both Sonatas use similar structural devices in the large outer movements, on the surface fairly orthodox sonata-allegro forms but with codas which serve as additional, if small-scale, development

¹⁰ *The Musical Times*, 1 November 1907, p. 739.

sections. The finales of both sonatas also incorporate extensive contrapuntal material, fugal in the Cello Sonata and canonic in the Violin Sonata. In both works Sinigaglia's harmonic imagination soars exuberantly in the development sections with a particularly outstanding example occurring in the opening movement of the Cello Sonata. In this instance, towards the end of the development section (bars 215–21), the harmony changes with each bar, moving from E flat minor to F major via B flat major, C sharp minor, F minor, a 'D7' chord built on D, F sharp, A and C (sometimes called a D dominant seventh), A flat major and E major.

In similar fashion the two smaller works on this disc, through the contrast of lyricism and sections of heightened drama and intensity, share a number of characteristics. The G major *Cavatina*, the first of the *Drei Romantische Stücke*, Op. 13, of 1902 begins with an expressive theme stated in the major mode which leads to a variant presented in the minor, this section culminating in an impassioned climax. A piano solo separates this emotional peak from the return of the opening material which now does not move into the minor mode. A brief coda rounds out the work.

The D major *Romanze*, the first of the *Two Pieces for Cello*, Op. 16, written in 1898, is much simpler structurally, being in a clearly recognisable ABA form. The B section is extensive, presenting a strong contrast to the opening lyrical theme. The return of the opening thematic material is accompanied by an undulating rising figure in the piano replete with understated intensity. The piece ends with a brief impassioned outburst for both instruments.

Sinigaglia's final years were not happy ones. By 1936, the year in which the Violin Sonata was composed, the alliance between Italy and Nazi Germany coupled with growing anti-Semitism within Italy had brought much anxiety to Italian Jews. Between September and December 1938 Dino Alfieri, Mussolini's Minister of Popular Culture, put anti-Semitic legislation into practice, with the expulsion of Jewish conductors and performers from the concert-stage. And from this point onward Jewish composers were unable to have their work published; pieces already in circulation were gradually confiscated and withdrawn from distribution.

What can one say about the senselessness of Sinigaglia's death? The violinist Aldo Zargani recalled in his reminiscences:¹¹

¹¹ *For Solo Violin: A Jewish Childhood in Fascist Italy*, Paul Dry Books, Philadelphia, 2002, pp. 146–47.

In their zeal to redeem humanity from the Jewish infection, the SS turned entire neighborhoods upside down. They moved about in trucks with an entourage of military Volkswagens and motorcycles with sidecars, fulfilling the mission that they believed history, with the passing of time, would come to understand and admire. The population was forced to witness the capture of old people and paralytics and the terrified expressions on the faces of old ladies wearing aprons and slippers as they were put onto the military trucks of the Third Reich. People saw as the SS went into hospitals and dragged away the ill and dying. The musicologist Leone Sinigaglia, who was born in 1868, died on May 16, 1944, when he was arrested at the Mauriziano Hospital in Turin, where he was a patient. He died of cardiac arrest in the hallway, as he vainly begged the officers not to hurt his wife.¹² He was a gentle old man who loved the songs of Piedmont; he had a beard like Freud's and he used to pat me lightly on the head, holding his hand motionless as if in a blessing.

Alfred Casella noted that Sinigaglia

was one of the pioneers in the revival of interest in instrumental music in Italy, [one who having] found no forerunner amongst the Italians of the past century, and in consequence fell back for inspiration on the classical and romantic German schools. His attachment to these models is betrayed in his compositions by his delight in the harmonic pattern evolved by the German romantics, and he adhered to the forms based on repetition and development.¹³

These characteristics are clearly evident in the music on this CD. Although these four works were composed over a 38-year period, the style is virtually unchanged from the earliest, the *Romance*, Op. 16, No. 1, composed in 1898, to the Op. 44 Violin Sonata of 1936. Sinigaglia's musical language was deeply rooted in late nineteenth-century Romanticism and it made no concession to contemporary musical developments. As *The New York Times* noted in a review of the overture to *Le Baruffe Chizzotte* performed by the La Scala Orchestra conducted by Arturo Toscanini in Carnegie Hall and published on 19 March 1921, Sinigaglia's 'brilliant and sparkling' music was 'the work of a composer not of the newest school, [one] content to work on old-fashioned lines' but 'with ideas'.

¹² Zargani's account of Sinigaglia's death is confirmed in other sources but his reference to Sinigaglia's wife is inconsistent with reports which state that the woman in question was his sister, Adina.

¹³ *Loc. cit.*

Solomia Soroka was born in Lviv, Ukraine. She earned her master's degree and completed her postgraduate studies in the Kyiv Conservatory, and later served on its staff in the department of chamber music. She also has a DMA degree from Eastman School of Music. She studied with Hersh Heifetz, Bohodar Kotorovych, Lyudmyla Zvirko and Charles Castleman. Solomia made her solo debut at ten, playing the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto with the Lviv Philharmonic Orchestra. She has appeared at concerts and festivals in Australia, Canada, China, France, Germany, Italy, New Zealand, Taiwan and Ukraine. Since her American debut in 1997, she has performed throughout the United States as well. She is a professor of violin at Goshen College, Indiana.

She has given the Australian and American premieres of a number of important contemporary Ukrainian compositions for violin, among them works by Lyatoshynsky, Skoryk and Stankovych. Her recording of four violin sonatas by William Bolcom for Naxos, made together with her pianist-husband, Arthur Greene, was selected as recording of the month by Classics Today with the highest ranking for both artistry and sound. Their recording of violin sonatas by Nikolai Roslavets (again for Naxos) also received international acclaim. For Toccata Classics she and Arthur Greene recorded a disc (TOCC 0089) of music by Arthur Hartmann (1881–1956): 'the performances are warm, sympathetic and very well recorded,' wrote Jonathan Woolf for MusicWeb International.

Phillip Silver studied with Katja Andy and Leonard Shure at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, Massachusetts, where he earned the degrees of Bachelor and Master of Music cum laude. He also earned the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Washington for his research into the music of Ignaz Moscheles.

Over the past decade Phillip has devoted himself to researching music and musicians affected by the Holocaust, presenting his findings in the form of lectures and recitals in venues across the United States, United Kingdom, Germany and Israel. He also works closely with a number of Israeli composers, bringing their music to a wider international public. As a member of the Jerusalem-based Van Leer Trio, he was a recipient of the prestigious Israel Prize for best performance of an Israeli chamber composition. He is an Associate Professor at the School of Performing Arts of the University of Maine in Orono.

Noreen Silver, born in Glasgow, studied at the Royal College of Music in London before spending a year in Geneva, studying with the great Pierre Fournier. Her studies later took her to the New

England Conservatory, where she met her husband-to-be, Phillip Silver. Noreen's performing career is centered around the cello-piano duo that she and Phillip formed while students. The Silver Duo has presented most of the standard cello-and-piano repertoire – and much non-standard material – in live performance and radio broadcast on three continents.

In addition to the duo repertoire, Noreen's love of chamber music is evident in the many performances she has given as a member of the Van Leer Trio – which was awarded the Israel Prize in 1990 – and, more recently, of Cadenzato, the faculty chamber ensemble of the University of Maine. Noreen is currently an adjunct faculty member at the University of Maine, teaching cello and chamber music.

MUSIC BY OTHER 'SUPPRESSED' COMPOSERS ON TOCCATA CLASSICS



The advent of Hitler sent Julius Burger, born in Vienna in 1897, into US exile in 1938; he died in New York in 1995. His music – in which one can hear something of Schreker and Korngold, his exact contemporary, as well as echoes of Mahler and Zemlinsky – shows a mastery of the late-Romantic orchestra. The two songs on this CD display an exquisite sense of melody, and his Cello Concerto – the slow movement of which was dedicated to his mother, who was murdered on her way to Auschwitz – shares with Bloch's *Schelomo* a concern with Jewish melisma.

TOCC 0001



In the first part of his career Günter Raphael (1903–60) enjoyed performances of his music by Germany's leading musicians, among them the Busch Quartet and Wilhelm Furtwängler. But declared a 'half-Jew' by the Nazis in 1934, he was forced from his prestigious teaching position in Leipzig. Confined to hospital by tuberculosis during the War years, he continued to compose while his doctors protected him from persecution. These violin works – strongly melodic and rhythmically vital – continue the mainstream of German Romanticism; the two solo sonatas have echoes of Bach.

TOCC 0122



Mieczyslaw Weinberg, born in Warsaw in 1919, became a close friend of Shostakovich in Moscow, after fleeing eastwards before the invading Nazis in 1939. His vast output includes 26 symphonies, seven operas, seventeen string quartets and much other chamber music and some 200 songs. His style has much in common with Shostakovich: fluent contrapuntal skill, a keen feeling for melody, often inflected with Jewish cantilena, and an acute sense of drama which combines a natural narrative manner with an extraordinary ability to create atmosphere. Since his death in 1996, his music is being discovered by musicians and listeners all around the world.

TOCC 0007



Romanze and Cello Sonata recorded 1 and 2 July 2008, Patrych Sound Studios, Bronx, New York
Recording Engineer: Joseph Patrych
Piano: Hamburg Steinway D Concert Grand

Cavatina and Violin Sonata recorded 25 and 26 November 2009,
Rieth Recital Hall, Gosham College, Gosham, Indiana
Recording Engineer: Matthias Stegmann
Piano: Steinway D Concert Grand

Booklet text: Phillip Silver
Photographs of Sinigaglia courtesy of Andrea Lanza,
Biblioteca del Conservatorio di Torino
Design: Peter Handley, Imergent Images Ltd

Executive producer: Martin Anderson

TOCC 0025

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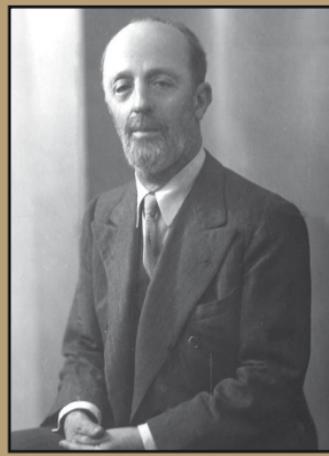
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Leone Sinigaglia, born in Turin in 1868, was a friend of Brahms in Vienna and a student of Dvořák in Prague, applying their classical techniques to the inspiration he found in Italian folksong: his music is marked by strong melodies and a sophisticated use of harmony. Championed by musicians of the standing of Barbirolli, Furtwängler, Kreisler, Stokowski and Toscanini, he was also a famous mountaineer, with two first climbs in the Dolomites to his credit. Sinigaglia, who was Jewish, died in Turin in 1944 as he was being arrested, at the age of 75, by the occupying Nazi forces. His tuneful chamber music bears witness to the happy life that preceded that tragic end.

LEONE SINIGAGLIA Chamber Music

Violin Sonata in G major, Op. 44	28:47
1 I. <i>Allegro moderato</i>	9:31
2 II. <i>Adagio</i>	10:39
3 III. <i>Allegro con spirito</i>	8:37
4 <i>Romanze in D major for cello and piano, Op. 16 No. 1</i>	3:54
5 <i>Cavatina in G major for violin and piano, Op. 13, No. 1</i>	3:17
Cello Sonata in C major, Op. 41	35:37
6 I. <i>Allegro</i>	10:13
7 II. <i>Intermezzo: Allegro animato</i>	6:28
8 III. <i>Adagio</i>	11:23
9 IV. <i>Allegro con spirito</i>	7:33
	TT 71:42



Solomia Soroka, violin
Noreen Silver, cello
Phillip Silver, piano

FIRST RECORDINGS



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