

3.11. Guido Olivieri (Austin, TX)

Rediscovering a Marginalized Repertory: Instrumental Music and String Virtuosi in 18th-Century Naples

Naples has long been recognized as a major center in the history of eighteenth-century music. Yet historiographical discourse has largely privileged opera and vocal genres, overlooking the significance of the city's rich instrumental tradition. This lecture presents the results of a wide-ranging study that seeks to recover this neglected, and until recently almost forgotten body of instrumental music. I also examine the development of pedagogical practices for string instruments in the Neapolitan conservatories and trace the careers of leading instrumental virtuosi within a broader social and cultural framework, revealing music-making as a potential avenue for social mobility.

By challenging the established view of Naples as marginal to the development of 18th-century instrumental music, this research calls for a reassessment of long-standing narratives, in particular, prevailing notions of 'center' and 'periphery'. Drawing on previously unexplored archival sources, the study reveals a vibrant and dynamic musical environment and sheds light on the extensive artistic networks that sustained instrumental activity in the city. Far from occupying a peripheral position, the Neapolitan tradition emerges as a pivotal and influential force in shaping 18th-century European instrumental repertoires and performance practices.

Guido Olivieri teaches musicology at The University of Texas at Austin, where he also directs the Early Music Ensemble "Austinato." He is the author of *String Virtuosi in Eighteenth-Century Naples. Culture, Power and Music Institutions* (Cambridge University Press, 2024) and the editor of three additional volumes. His critical editions include newly discovered works, such as previously unknown cello sonatas by G. Bononcini (SEDM, 2019) as well as 18th-century cello methods and sonatas. He is currently preparing the first critical edition of Domenico Cimarosa's *Il matrimonio segreto* (Bärenreiter). Olivieri's research examines the history of 17th- and 18th-century string repertory, historical pedagogy, performance practices, and historical soundscapes. His work has appeared in leading academic journals and edited collections, and he has contributed to the *The New Grove*, the *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (MGG), and the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*. Olivieri has presented papers at meetings of the American Musicological Society, the Italian Musicological Society, the Society of Eighteenth-Century Music, and the International Musicological Society, among others, and has lectured at numerous academic institutions internationally. A past president of the Society for Eighteenth-Century Music, Olivieri serves on the advisory boards of several journals and musicological associations. His groundbreaking research has played a key role in reviving interest in 18th-century Neapolitan instrumental music and musicians.