



Gabriele Pieranunzi plays a 1762 Ferdinando Gagliano violin, kindly provided by the Fondazione Pro Canale Onlus.
Francesco Fiore plays a 1987 Etienne Vatelot viola.
Francesco Solombrino plays a 2012 Jens Norskov viola.
Danilo Squitieri plays a 1919 cello made by Francesco Guadagnini.
Ermanno Calzolari plays a 1922 Biagio Caruana Marsigliese contrabass

AULIUS
CLASSICS
LIVE

ALC 0146

Hummel Piano Quintet, Op. 87 • Mendelssohn Piano Sextet, Op. 110

J. N. Hummel Quintet for piano, violin, viola, cello and double bass in E flat minor op. 87

Pieranunzi, violin - Solombrino, viola - Squitieri, cello - Calzolari, double bass - Cannavale, piano

01. Allegro e risoluto assai	10:27
02. Menuetto	05:32
03. Largo e finale	07:42

F. Mendelssohn Bartholdy Sextet for piano, violin, 2 violas, cello and double bass in D major op. 110

Pieranunzi, violin - Fiore, viola - Solombrino, viola - Squitieri, cello - Calzolari, double bass - Cannavale, piano

04. Allegro vivace	12:11
05. Adagio	04:51
06. Minuetto	02:28
07. Allegro vivace	10:38

Total Time: 53:52

Concert recorded on November 2024, at Villa Pignatelli, Naples,
as part of the "Settimana di Musica d'Insieme"
organized by the Alessandro Scarlatti Association,
supported and promoted by the Municipality of Naples | Sound engineer **Gianni Ruggiero**
Producer Manager, Artistic Direction and postproduction **Rosella Clementi**
Publishing supervisor **Romano Di Bari**
Artwork **Chiara Gimmelli**

Special thanks to the Municipality of Naples, the Regional Directorate of Campania Museums
and all the staff of the Diego Aragona Pignatelli Cortes Museum.

A special thanks to M^o Dan Ettinger, chief conductor Orchestra Teatro San Carlo - Naples

Nightingale Songs & Lyrics Ltd 17 Demosthenis Severis Avenue - Nicosia (Cyprus)

Representative Office: Circonvallazione Clodia 15 - 00195 Rome (Italy)

Phone +39063722209 | Fax +390637516970 | Email info@aulicusclassics.com | www.aulicusclassics.com

PGC 2025

ASSOCIAZIONE
ALESSANDRO
SCARLATTI
fondata
nel 1918

AULIUS
CLASSICS
LIVE

Hummel Piano Quintet, Op. 87

Mendelssohn Piano Sextet, Op. 110

Gabriele Pieranunzi, *violin*
Francesco Fiore, *viola*
Francesco Solombrino, *viola*
Danilo Squitieri, *cello*
Ermanno Calzolari, *double bass*
Antonello Cannavale, *piano*

In his day—between the late 18th century and the early decades of the 19th—Johann Nepomuk Hummel was considered one of the finest pianists alive, as well as a major composer. He began his studies in Vienna in 1786, at the age of eight, under none other than Mozart, who was so impressed by the boy's talent that he gave him free lessons and welcomed him into his home for several months, treating him almost like a son. The two were often seen strolling through Vienna, playing billiards, and mingling with figures such as Haydn and Lorenzo Da Ponte. Hummel's international reputation began with a five-year European tour that started in 1788, accompanied by his musician father. In Britain, the young virtuoso was even asked to teach older pianists. Back in Vienna, he studied composition intensively with renowned teachers like Salieri, and supported himself by teaching. During this time, he encountered Beethoven, the rising star of the new pianistic style. Viennese audiences became polarized: Hummel's admirers appreciated his elegance and delicate touch, while Beethoven's fans were drawn to his dramatic intensity and revolutionary vigor. Although the two composers were sometimes at odds, their relationship alternated between respectful collaboration and occasional tension. Hummel's mature fame as a concert artist was solidified after a triumph during the Congress of Vienna in 1814. Soon after, at the court of Weimar - where he had the opportunity to spend time with Goethe - he experienced the most beautiful and productive period of his life, serving as Kapellmeister. As a virtuoso, he helped shape a new kind of audience, different from the cultured amateurs who had influenced the musical tastes of the Ancien Régime, an audience that sought to be dazzled by spectacular performances. As a composer, he remained within the stylistic boundaries of Classicism, as championed by Haydn and Mozart, and when the Classical style declined, his works - lacking striking expressive contrasts - gradually lost favour. His Piano Quintet in E-flat major, Op. 87, composed in 1802 but not published until the 1820s, features a striking instrumentation: instead of the standard string quartet with piano, Hummel replaces the second violin with a double bass, a choice later echoed by Schubert in his "Trout" Quintet. Schubert greatly admired Hummel and dedicated his final three piano sonatas to him, hoping they would be performed by the older master - though this never happened. The first movement, *Allegro e risoluto assai*, highlights the piano's brilliance with a prominent and virtuosic part built on two contrasting themes - one bold and assertive, the other more gracious. The following *Menuetto*, lively and effervescent, more closely resembles a scherzo in Beethovenian style than a courtly dance. The *Largo* offers a delicate, highly ornamented piano melody, evoking an operatic aria accompanied by a supportive orchestral texture - an anticipatory gesture toward Chopin, who would later draw much from Hummel's pianistic language. The final movement, *Allegro agitato*, has an almost folk-like spirit, brimming with energy and charm. Felix Mendelssohn was just fifteen years old when he composed the Piano Sextet in D major, Op. 110, in 1824. By then, the young prodigy from a wealthy banking family had already revealed his astonishing musical gifts. He had begun studying composition at age ten under Carl Friedrich Zelter, director of Berlin's Singakademie, an institution dedicated to preserving 18th-century sacred choral repertoire. Zelter - also Goethe's trusted musical advisor - encouraged Mendelssohn to study the works of older masters, from Bach to Mozart. When he introduced the boy to Goethe in Weimar, where Hummel also lived, a strong rapport was immediately established between poet

and prodigy. During his teenage years, Mendelssohn produced a remarkable number of compositions, many written for domestic performances at the family's musical salons - gatherings that became a key cultural event in Berlin from 1822 onward. His early catalog includes choral works, *Singspiele*, sonatas, trios, quartets, concertos, twelve string symphonies, the famed String Octet, and the *Overture to A Midsummer Night's Dream*, both regarded as his first masterpieces. The Sextet, written the same year Zelter declared Mendelssohn's formal training complete, shows the young composer beginning to distance himself from his teacher's classical strictures. Mendelssohn explored the expressive freedom of Beethoven and Carl Maria von Weber, the latter a key figure in early German Romanticism. Nonetheless, Mendelssohn's music retained a measured emotional tone, formal elegance, and a luminous clarity that often aligned him with classical ideals, earning him the label of "happy Romanticism." Published posthumously in 1868 (Mendelssohn himself did not consider the work interesting enough for publication), the Sextet features a distinctive, dark-hued string ensemble: one violin, two violas, cello, and double bass. What appears on paper to be a timbral imbalance becomes a vehicle for rich, expressive color. Rather than showcasing individual instruments, Mendelssohn allows a radiant and fluid ensemble sound to shine. The first and final movements, both marked *Allegro vivace*, are expansive and structurally foundational. The first is driven by lyrical yet urgent themes, flowing with unrelenting forward momentum. The *Adagio* provides a contemplative respite, echoing the styles of Mozart and Haydn rather than indulging in Romantic introspection. The *Menuetto agitato* is, in reality, a disguised scherzo, mirroring the transformation of the minuet form in Hummel's quintet. The finale introduces a playful, Rossini-like energy before launching into a breathless race toward the finish. A reprise of the scherzo's main theme near the end unifies the work - an approach borrowed from Beethoven - before culminating in a fiery *Allegro con fuoco*.

Gregorio Moppi

Among the many concerts and musical experiences we live through, there are always some we wish we could hold onto - moments we'd love to relive. But memory can be fleeting, and too often we regret that no recording was made using the many technologies now available to us. For this reason, the Alessandro Scarlatti Association, in collaboration with the prestigious Aulicus Classics record label, has taken up the task of preserving significant concerts - whether for the rarity of the music performed, the excellence of the artists, or the special atmosphere of a particular evening. This CD is a fine example of that effort, capturing a memorable performance during the 2024 "Settimana di Musica d'Insieme". It serves not only as a cherished memento for those who attended, and for our members and subscribers, but also as a shared document - accessible to a global audience through digital platforms. In this way, the Alessandro Scarlatti Association extends its reach, sharing its work with listeners far beyond Naples and Italy.

Oreste de Divitiis
President Alessandro Scarlatti Association

Thanks to our collaboration with the renowned Aulicus Classics record label, we are beginning to release a series of live recordings from the concert seasons of the Alessandro Scarlatti Association. Encouraged by Maestro Gabriele Pieranunzi, this is the second installment in what we hope will grow into a small but meaningful collection of CDs highlighting our artistic activity. Once again, the material comes from performances during the *Settimana di Musica d'insieme*, held at Villa Pignatelli between late November and early December 2024. The featured artists - Gabriele Pieranunzi (violin), Francesco Solombrino and Francesco Fiore (violins), Danilo Squitieri (cello), Ermanno Calzolari (double bass), and Antonello Cannavale (piano) - perform two rarely heard yet richly expressive works: the Piano Quintet Op. 87 by Johann Nepomuk Hummel, and the Piano Sextet in D major, Op. 110 by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy. The *Settimana di Musica d'insieme* initiative was founded on the vision of Salvatore Accardo and Gianni Eminente, and from its debut in 1971 at Teatro Sannazaro, it became a space where celebrated musicians - often meeting for the first time - could share the joy of music-making. The event pioneered the concept of open rehearsals, offering audiences a unique window into the creative process. After a long hiatus following 2010, the Week was revived in 2019 with a renewed format that brings together seasoned international artists and emerging talents, including many from Naples. A further interruption occurred in 2020 due to the pandemic, but in 2022, thanks to the support of the City of Naples (as part of the City of Music project), and with the cooperation of the Campania region's Directorate General for Museums and now the Directorate of Naples' Royal Palace Museum, the event has found new life once again at its historic home, Villa Pignatelli.

Tommaso Rossi, Artistic Director of the Alessandro Scarlatti Association