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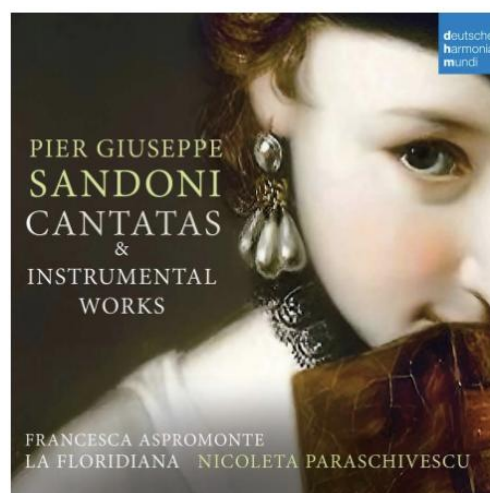
ARTISTS

## SANDONI Cantatas & Instrumental works

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Author: Lindsay Kemp

A search reveals that the name of Pietro (or Pier) Giuseppe Sandoni has never appeared in *Gramophone* before, so a quick introduction is in order. Born in Bologna in 1685, he made his name as an organist before moving in 1715 to London, where he became second harpsichordist at Handel's opera company. Sent to Italy in 1722 to fetch the star soprano Francesca Cuzzoni, he was her lover by the time they got back (they married three years later), and for the next few years made himself unpopular with London's musicians and promoters by his involvement in her diva-ish ways and, apparently, his own taste for 'lavishness, finery, jewellery, eating, drinking, bastards, debts and love affairs'. The couple left England in 1728, working around Europe until eventually settling back in Bologna in 1739. There they separated, and Sandoni died nine years later. Eager gossip in London that La Francesca had poisoned her husband seems to have been no more than that.



### SANDONI Cantatas & Instrumental works

Dimmi crudel

Prelude for Harpsichord

Six Sets of Lessons for the Harpsichord, Movement: Ciaccona in A Major

Sandoni wrote at least three operas and nine oratorios, but the only music of his that survives is a handful of thoroughly competent secular chamber cantatas, string sonatas and harpsichord pieces. Nicoleta Paraschivescu and her group offer examples of each, sensitively mixing published works with others from manuscript collections. The early, dutifully Corellian trio sonata is nothing exceptional but Sandoni's keyboard prowess (not to mention Paraschivescu's) is apparent from a *Ciaccona* and an extensive and imaginative set of *Folia* variations. Both are Handelian in tone with perhaps an occasional hint of Scarlatti, while another tantalising historical niche for the composer is intimated by the fact that two of his smaller pieces are the same as works attributed to Bach (BWV836 and 837) in the *Clavier-Büchlein für Wilhelm Friedemann Bach*. Paraschivescu has no doubts that Sandoni is their author.

The cantatas – unlikely to have been written for Cuzzoni – are typical of their kind, dealing prettily but not terribly deeply with aspects of love jilted, unspoken or blighted by doubt. Francesca Aspromonte's singing is naturally radiant and musical, and shows an easy agility in *Del timor d'un cor geloso*, the most extrovert of the three. Although clarity is slightly undermined by a ringing church acoustic, this is a pleasing introduction to Sandoni. His colleagues may have disliked him, but we can perhaps forgive him.

Corona di dodici fiori armonici,  
Movement: Sonata settima in  
E Minor

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Chi s'intende d'amar

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Six Setts of Lessons for the  
Harpsichord, Movement: Suite

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Six Setts of Lessons for the  
Harpsichord, Movement: Follia  
(with 23 Variations)

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Del timor d'un cor geloso

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