

press release

A new CD by Carlo Aonzo and Elena Buttiero
Il Mandolino Italiano nel Settecento
(The Italian Mandolin in the Eighteenth Century)

Inspired by the success of their recent tour and of their concerts throughout Italy, Carlo Aonzo (mandolin) and Elena Buttiero (spinet) have recorded a collection of songs from their repertoire. These selections represent some of the most important eighteenth-century music for mandolin and spinet.

This record, under the Devega label, traces the fortunes of the mandolin in Italy as well as in Europe, during the period in which it was becoming popular as a concert instrument. It affirms the importance of this very Italian instrument in music history.



In the second half of the century, the Neapolitan mandolin came into being as a fusion of elements from several existing instruments. The tuning was based on that of the violin, while the bowl-shaped sound box was already a feature of other mandolin varieties. The headstock, the movable bridge, and curved face were features of various types of guitars of the period.

The Neapolitan mandolin did not originate as a folk instrument, but rather as a concert instrument. It also became popular in the musical training of young aristocrats and was widely played among the nobility.

The elegant inlays of surviving instruments from that period, the evidence we have from art of the period, and the variety of original compositions all prove that the mandolin was a court instrument and, above all, a concert instrument.

The musicians

Carlo Aonzo performs regularly in Europe and the United States, where he has established himself as a principal proponent of the classical mandolin.

Graduating with honors from the conservatory in Padua, he has played with several musical institutions such as the Philharmonic Orchestra of La Scala in Milan and the Nashville Chamber Orchestra.

Among his awards are the “Vivaldi” first prize at the Vittorio Pitzianti National Mandolin Competition in Venice, and first prize at the Walnut Valley National Mandolin Contest in Winfield, Kansas.

He has recorded a concert video on the history of the solo mandolin repertory for Mel Bay (*Carlo Aonzo: Classical Mandolin Virtuoso*). His CDs include *Serenata* (Acoustic Music, Germany), *Traversata*, (Acoustic Disc, USA) and *Vivaldi – Concerti per mandolino*, and *Kaze*, with guitarist Katsumi Nagaoka, which they performed on their concert tour of Japan in 2007.

He leads the annual Manhattan Mandolin Workshop in New York and in 2006 he began the International Italian Academy for the Mandolin.

As a researcher, he has worked on the origins of his instrument. He has collaborated with the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* and has edited books on music for Bèrben publishers.

He has given presentations on the iconography of the mandolin at institutions such as Boston University and the National Instrument Museum in Rome.

Elena Buttiero earned her degree in piano from the Cuneo Conservatory. She has performed in many cities throughout Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Ireland, France and Serbia.

She recorded two CDs, on which she plays the harp, with the Birkin Tree: *Continental Reel* (Robi Droli, Cgd East, 1996) and *A Cheap Present* (Felmay, 1998), which is distributed in Europe, Asia and America.

In the field of music pedagogy, she has published a *solfeggio* method, *Il Centone* (Caruso Ed. Musicali, 2006). Since 1990 she has been a piano instructor on the faculty of the Scuola Media ad indirizzo musicale di Savona (Savona’s music-oriented middle school).