

# INTRODUCTION

Geminiani's third and last set of original concertos was published on 4 February 1748, evidently after some delays. The title-page, as originally engraved (Facsimile 1), gives "LONDRA MDCCXLVI", but on 10 January 1747 the composer wrote in a letter to Joseph Kelway that the concertos were "already engraved but not yet printed, since the number of subscribers is not known; if possible, I would like to bring them out before winter is over".<sup>1</sup> This hope proved vain, for on 3 September 1747 an advertisement appeared in *The General Advertiser* whose wording hints at Geminiani's frustration at the postponement, perhaps caused by a poor response from potential subscribers: "In January next [1748] will absolutely be published; SIX Grand CONCERTOS, Compos'd By Mr. GEMINIANI". However, in the event even January was a little optimistic, for on 1 February 1748 the same newspaper carried a further advertisement stating that "On Thursday next Feb. 4, will be publish'd, (And delivered to the SUBSCRIBERS) THE New Concerto's of Mr. GEMINIANI, at the Cabinet-Makers near New Slaughter's Coffee-House, St. Martin's Lane".<sup>2</sup>

The parts were handsomely produced, with an engraved frontispiece and a quotation from Horace (Facsimile 2).<sup>3</sup> In order to protect his interests as composer and publisher, Geminiani included a "Royal Licence and Priviledge" dated 29 July 1739 (Facsimile 3), which awarded him the sole right to print and publish his work for a period of fourteen years within the "Kingdoms and Dominions" of King George II. It seems to have been Geminiani's intention to secure similar protection in Holland, as he had done for his Opus 5 sonatas by the grant of a Dutch *Privilegie* on 6 December 1746.<sup>4</sup> The *Privilegie* refers to *concerten* as well as *solos*, and requires a copy of each work to which it applies, "printed on large paper", to be deposited in the University Library at Leiden. There is indeed a copy of Opus 7 there, printed from the same plates as the London edition on paper measuring 39 × 27 cm. The frontispiece and dedication are included, but the Royal Licence is omitted and there is a new title-page on which references to London and George II are removed (Facsimile 5). This was presumably done to disguise the fact that Opus 7 was not an authentic first edition published in Holland, which would have made it virtually impossible to obtain a Dutch privilege for it.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless the Leiden copy lacks the privilege.

The concertos are dedicated to the Academy of Ancient Music (see Facsimile 4 for the full text). This was one of the leading London musical societies, founded on 1 March 1726 as the Academy of Vocal Music by a group of professional musicians - including Geminiani - and aristocratic amateurs: the society mounted regular concerts at the Crown and Anchor in the Strand.<sup>6</sup> Geminiani's statement that "in the composing of [the Opus 7 concertos] great Study and Application hath been used, to make them acceptable to the Public, and in particular to your Academy" is reminiscent of Gottlieb Muffat's preface to his *Componimenti Musicali per il Cembalo* (Augsburg, c1738-1739), which says that the composition was "laborious" and cost "much effort". Mozart's dedication of his "Haydn" quartets, likewise, speaks of them as "the fruit of long and laborious effort".

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<sup>1</sup> "sono di già intagliati ma non stampati, non sapendo il numero de sott[oscriven]ti che vi sono, desidererei poterli dar fuori se fusse possibile, avanti l'inverno sia passato". The complete letter is printed in the original Italian and in an English translation from *Caretti* in the Introduction to *Geminiani Opera Omnia*, Volume 5, pp. XIV-XV.

<sup>2</sup> The title-pages of some sets have II added to MDCCXLVI, to make the date 1748: see the Critical Commentary.

<sup>3</sup> The quotation is part of a line from *Epistles*, 1.1.12 where the poet balances the demands of patronage and inspiration: *Condo et compono quae mox depromere possim*. The tone seems appropriate to Geminiani's final concerto publication; "I am [storing up and] setting in order those things which soon I may bring out to use".

<sup>4</sup> For the full text in Dutch and in an English translation, see *Geminiani Opera Omnia*, Volume 5, pp. 106-107.

<sup>5</sup> I owe this suggestion to Rudolf Rasch.

<sup>6</sup> For more information on the origins and motives of The Academy of Ancient Music, see Christopher Hogwood "Gropers into Antique Musick" or "A very ancient and respectable Society"? Historical views of the Academy of Ancient Music" in *Coll'astuzia, Col giudizio: Essays in Honor of Neal Zaslaw*, ed. Cliff Eisen (Steglein Press, 2009), pp. 127-82.