

its presence in a dialogue to a level that is at par with the piano. Still in 1781 and still in Vienna, the Fifth Edition of the “Parisian Sonatas” was published op. V by Luigi Boccherini. These pieces, composed in 1768 in Paris, drew such favor that, after the first printing by the publisher Vénier, they were re-published in Riga, London, Mannheim and Vienna. Boccherini had arrived in the French capital in 1767 together with the violinist friend Filippo Manfredi, at the end of a tour with the *Quartetto Toscano*. Their protector was the Baron of Bagge, a Freemason registered in the Olympic Lodge and the lodge called *Le Nove Sorelle*. This links us directly to Saint-Georges. Joseph de Boulogne was the first black Freemason in France initiated into the *Noeuf Soeurs* lodge. It was the same masons who in 1781 founded the orchestra *Le Concert de la Loge Olympique* of which the mixed-race musician became director. All this makes us suppose that there could have been an encounter also between Boccherini and Saint-Georges in Paris and the same Freemasonry could be another ring linking Saint-Georges and Mozart. To complete the circle on these three coeval musicians, let us remember that Boccherini’s sonatas were performed by Mozart in an academy in Florence a few years later. It was April 1770 and the then 14 year-old Wolfgang performed them together with the violinist Pietro Nardini, founder of the *Quartetto Toscano*.

The six Sonatas op. V are the only pages composed by Boccherini for the keyboard and violin. The curious history of the naming of these pieces testifies to the fundamental evolution of the keyboard instrument that happened towards the end of the 1700’s. Indicated originally as “Six Sonatas of the cymbal and obligated violin” then “for the harpsichord or pianoforte with an accompaniment for a violin or German flute”, they finally became for the violin and pianoforte. The progress in the expressive and technical use of the keyboard, evidently present, reveals a composer that is attentive to the future possibilities of the use of this instrument, perhaps informed by Bartolomeo Cristofori’s invention that showed the way towards the modern pianoforte.

*Monique Ciola*



ISTITUTO ITALIANO DI CULTURA  
NAIROBI



Joseph Boulogne – Chevalier de Saint Georges  
Known as “the black Mozart”

**“Il Mozart Nero” e la musica del suo tempo:  
Joseph Boulogne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges tra  
Boccherini e Mozart**

(“The black Mozart’ and the music of his time:  
Joseph Boulogne, Chevalier de Saint Georges between Boccherini  
and Mozart)

by

Michael Stüve (*violin*)

&

Monique Ciola (*piano*)



Michael Stüve



Monique Ciola

Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> March 2010

## Programme

### Luigi Boccherini

(1743 – 1805)

- Sonata in mi bem. Maggiore op. 5 n. 6  
Allegro maestoso  
Rondò. Allegretto

### Joseph Boulogne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges

(1745approx – 1799)

- Sonata in si maggiore op. 1(b) n. 1  
Allegro  
Tempo di Minuetto
- Sonata in la maggiore op. 1(b) n. 2  
Allegro moderato  
Andantino – Allegro minore
- Sonata in sol minore op 1(b) n. 3  
Allegro  
Rondo gracioso

## Interval

### Luigi Boccherini

- Sonata in sol minore op. 5 n. 5  
Allegro molto  
Andante lento  
Presto

### Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

(1756 – 1791)

- Sonata in sol maggiore K. 379  
Adagio – Allegro  
Andante cantabile  
Allegretto

Joseph Boulogne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges, was one of the most extraordinary figures of the Eighteenth century and also the first character of African blood to become famous and respected in Louis XVI's Paris. A virtuoso violinist, excellent swordsman and valiant military commander, his fame reached as far as America. Even so, after his death in 1799, his name and his work were forgotten for no less than two centuries.

Born in the colony of Guadalupe to a Senegalese slave and a French nobleman, he moved to France early to get an education in an elite boarding school and thanks to his intelligence and his multiple talents he earned a prestigious and respectful place in nobility. He studied the harpsichord and the violin. He was a pupil of Jean-Marie Leclair and François-Joseph Gossec. He was the first violinist as well as director of two important ensembles: *Le Concert des Amateurs*, the best symphonic orchestra of the time in Paris and perhaps in Europe, and *Le Concert de la Loge Olympique*, with which he performed, as a première, the six "Parisian" symphonies commissioned by Haydn.

He wrote operas of various genres in the style of Mozart and Haydn and was then nicknamed "Mozart Noir". It is quite probable that the two musicians personally met in Paris, during the travels of Mozart, since they frequented the same circles.

Furthermore, both were close to Haydn, and Mozart composed operas similar to those of Saint-Georges after his travels to the French capital. <<He is not exactly Mozart – writes Gabriel Banat, violinist and student of Saint-Georges – but his innovative violin techniques make him a bridge between Italian virtuosos, like Vivaldi and Locatelli, and Beethoven, in the style of composition for this instrument. He did a lot for the violin, making the Italian virtuoso techniques of the great maestros be known>>. His virtuosities were extreme for that era to say the least, and the audience was left impressed by the sentiment and expression that Saint-Georges put into his performances. The Sonata in G Major K 379 by Mozart saw the light in a fundamental year for the artist's life. It was 1781, the year when the composer took his leave from Archbishop Colloredo to move to Vienna, convinced that he could join the imperial court and thus enjoy the recognition of his talent as well as just payment. Mozart nurtured great enthusiasm and his desire to excel and be noticed led him to challenge the brilliant Italian harpsichord player Muzio Clementi in the competition that went down in history. It is in this emotional setting that Mozart composed the Sonata in G, in the hope of being listened to by the Emperor and <<perhaps the not-so-orthodox form and the character of the music reflect the way in which Mozart tried to impose himself and his music in the soirées organized by the Archbishop>> (S. Sadie). Though still being a sonata for 'the keyboard with accompaniment', the violin enhances