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Pieter Hellendaal – Six Grand Concertos Op.3 (2006)

Concerto I in G minor   *play*
Concerto II in D minor
Concerto III in F major
Concerto IV in E flat major
Concerto V in D major
Concerto VI in F major   *play*

Bohdan Warchal, violin
Petr Maceček, violin
Ján Cút, viola
Juraj Alexander, cello

Slovak Chamber Orchestra
dir. Bohdan Warchal

Pieter Hellendaal (1 April 1721 – 19 April 1799) was an organist and violinist, and one of the most famous composers of Dutch origin in the 18th century. At age 30, he migrated to England where he lived for the last 48 of his 78 years.

The "Concerto grosso" was eminently popular in Europe at the beginning of the 18th century, Arcangelo Corelli having set the trend with his Opus 6 published around 1710, but probably written much earlier. The main attraction seems to have been the possibilities opened up by having two groups of musicians in dialogue with one another. Like all other fashions, this one passed fairly quickly everywhere - except in Britain, where composers such as Handel and Avison breathed new life into a form which was, judging by the number of printed editions, well able to generate not inconsiderable turnover. Thus it was that the Dutch violinist-composer

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Pieter Hellendaal, a pupil of Tartini, could publish as late as 1758 a set of concerti grossi which, although largely forgotten until today, appear to have stood him in good stead at the time and supported his search for a salaried position in England. The six concerti consist of four or five movements each, usually in the order slow-fast-slow-fast plus an extra movement at the end: a menuet, a march, a pastorale, etc. The whole reminds one, indeed, of Handel's Opus 6, although the pieces are less richly instrumented (strings only) and the difficulty is kept at a level which would not put off the gentleman-amateur who would want to play this kind of material.

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