

GARY COOPER & RACHEL PODGER

Violin / Keyboard Duo



Chris Stock Photography

BIOGRAPHY

Gary Cooper and Rachel Podger

The Duo partnership of harpsichordist and fortepianist **Gary Cooper** and classical and baroque violinist **Rachel Podger** has taken them worldwide. They have not only enjoyed success through their complete Mozart Sonata recording project for Channel Classics which they began in 2004, but also through their diverse concert tours of the US and Europe of Bach Sonatas and baroque duo programmes. Volumes 1-6 of Mozart Sonatas have already enjoyed worldwide critical acclaim as well as receiving various accolades: Gramophone 'Editor's Choice' twice and the Diapason d'Or three times, and hailed as 'benchmark' recordings. Volumes 7 and 8 are to be released this year. Future plans for the duo include the Sonatas of Beethoven as well as Sonatas by Corelli and Biber. Their partnership also extends to orchestral projects, including a programme of Haydn symphonies, violin and keyboard concerti and they have also plans to record the Bach Violin Concerti for Channel Classics in 2010.

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Rachel Podger is one of the most creative talents to emerge in the field of period performance over the last decade. Rachel has established herself as a leading interpreter of the music of the Baroque and Classical periods. She was educated in Germany and in England at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama where she studied with David Takeno and Michaela Comberti.

After beginnings with The Palladian Ensemble and Florilegium, she was leader of The English Concert from 1997 to 2002. In 2004 Rachel began a guest directorship with The Orchestra of the Age of

Enlightenment, with whom she has toured throughout Europe and the USA. Rachel directed the orchestra in a televised concert at the BBC Proms in 2007. 2008 saw performances of Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante with violist Pavlo Beznosiuk and also a Haydn and JC Bach symphonic programme for the York Early Music Festival and a German high Baroque programme which toured Benelux and the US. Future plans with the OAE include Haydn and Mozart Violin Concertos to be released in 2009. Rachel has also enjoyed collaborations with Arte dei Suonatori (Poland), Musica Angelica and Santa Fe Pro Musica (USA), The Academy of Ancient Music and The European Union Baroque Orchestra.

Rachel's recordings of J.S. Bach's Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin and his Sonatas for Violin and Harpsichord (with Trevor Pinnock) were both awarded first place by the BBC's "Building a Library" programme. Rachel's recording of Telemann's Twelve Fantasies for Solo Violin won the prestigious Diapason d'Or and her 2003 recording of Vivaldi's 12 violin concertos "La Stravaganza" also received the Diapason d'Or as well as winning the 2003 Gramophone Award for Best Baroque Instrumental recording. Her Duo with harpsichordist and fortepianist Gary Cooper has not only enjoyed success through their complete Mozart Sonata recording project which they began in 2004, but also through their diverse concert tours of the US and Europe of Bach Sonatas and baroque duo programmes. Volumes 1-6 of Mozart Sonatas have already enjoyed worldwide critical acclaim as well as receiving various accolades: Gramophone 'Editor's Choice' twice and the Diapason d'Or three times. Volumes 7 and 8 are to be released this year. Future plans for the duo include the Sonatas of Beethoven as well as Sonatas by Corelli and Biber. There are also plans to record the Bach Violin Concerti with her newly formed ensemble Brecon Baroque for Channel Classics in 2010. In 2006 Rachel became artistic director of her own annual event, the Brecon Baroque Festival. Teaching is a significant part of Rachel's musical life; she teaches at The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, Cardiff; she is Visiting Professor of Baroque Violin and Fellow of The Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London and Visiting Professor at the Royal Danish Academy of Music, Copenhagen. In September 2008 she took up the newly-founded Michaela Comberti Chair for Baroque Violin at the Royal Academy of Music in London where she is also an Honorary Member.

"Podger's youth and Baroque experience combine to bring a charm and freshness of approach which suit these delightful pieces perfectly."

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Gary Cooper is now established as one of the foremost ambassadors of the harpsichord and fortepiano - in particular, as an interpreter of Bach's & Mozart's keyboard music - and as a director of period performance in concert, and in opera. Along with performances worldwide, he has made many recordings for TV, radio and CD, including an award-winning CD of Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier.

Gary's diverse recital programmes range from the music of the Elizabethan Virginalists to the harpsichord music of Bach and Scarlatti, from Mozart's Piano Sonatas to the music of Dussek, Clementi, Beethoven and Mendelssohn.

Adding to an extensive discography, solo recording projects with Channel Classics range from Bach's complete Keyboard Concerti and the Goldberg Variations, to Mozart's and Haydn's Piano Variations and Beethoven's Diabelli Variations & late Bagatelles, all on original keyboards of the period. He has recorded Schubert's *Die Winterreise* for Linn Records with baritone, Peter Harvey, and Haydn Symphonies with ensemble Arion for the Canadian label Early~Music.Com, and, most recently for Channel Classics, of Haydn : Late Piano Works – "Recommended without reservations!" (SA-CD.net)

The Duo partnership of Gary Cooper and Rachel Podger has taken them worldwide. Their recordings, with Channel Classics, of Mozart's Complete Sonatas for Keyboard & Violin has received countless awards and accolades, including multiple Diapason d'Or awards and Gramophone Editor's Choices, and hailed as 'benchmark' recordings. The Duo's repertoire includes music from Bach and Biber to Mozart and Beethoven. Their partnership also extends to orchestral projects, including curating a programme at London's Wigmore Hall of Haydn symphonies, violin and keyboard concerti. Other future plans include performances of all the Bach & Mozart Concerti.

Gary is also an established conductor, having worked with many ensembles. Recent operas include Handel's *Alcina*, *Orlando* and Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. He directs the Akademie für Alte Musik in Berlin, recently to great acclaim at the 2007 Potsdam Festival, where he returns in 2009; also the Irish Baroque Orchestra, the Hanover Band, and performs regularly in North America where he directs the leading Canadian period instrument ensemble, Arion, in Montreal.

Gary is 'Artist in Residence' of the exciting Belgian period instrument ensemble, B'Rock, directing orchestral and opera productions, recordings, and is guest artistic director of a new festival in Bruges. Gary appears at major festivals such as the Flanders Festival, the Bruges, Utrecht, Potsdam and Innsbruck Early Music Festivals and throughout the UK.

Gary currently teaches harpsichord & fortepiano at the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, Birmingham Conservatoire, is visiting professor of fortepiano at the Royal College of Music and regularly visits other conservatoires such as McGill University in Montreal.

"something of a genius" (The Times)

"music-making rarely comes as impressive as this" (The Sunday Times)

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