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Some notes on the life of Jacob Cervetto

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Abstract

Born probably in Verona, Jacob Cervetto (c.1690–1783) was a leading performer on, and composer for, the cello in London during the middle decades of the eighteenth century. His career, while typical in some respects for an Italian musician resident in England, is unusual for the fact that he

was Jewish by birth. Cervetto profited from this connection and from his extensive Continental links generally, although his acceptance into the mainstream of English musical life was swift and complete. The article focuses on the known events of Cervetto's life, making several revisions and additions to the received account. It pays special attention to the role played by Cervetto in the popularization of the cello as a solo instrument in England from the 1730s onwards and examines closely the subscription lists of his first two published collections in order to shed light on the social and musical networks underpinning his activity.

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