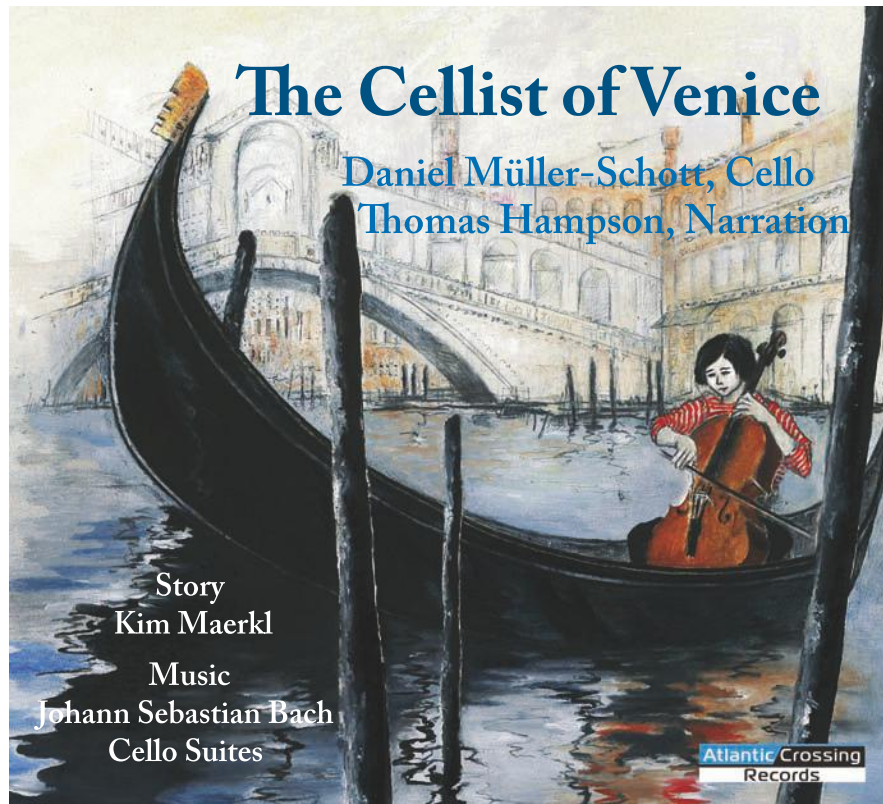


Teacher's Guide

The Cellist of Venice

for

Narrator and Cello Solo



The Cellist of Venice transports us to Italy in the year 1725, and conveys the love a Venetian family has for the music of Bach.

Adelina grew up in the Pietá, an orphanage and a magnificent music school for girls. One day, her teacher Maestro Vivaldi, gives her the opportunity to perform in a Venetian Palace. After the concert, a German prince presents her with a gift; the Suites for Cello composed by his court composer, Johann Sebastian Bach. Years later, tragedy forces Adelina's son, to leave his home. The boy's sole possessions are his cello and the music of Bach.

Let the enthralling narration of opera star Thomas Hampson and the uniquely beautiful playing of world renowned cellist Daniel Müller-Schott take you on a mystical journey to Venice.

“Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind,
flight to the imagination and life to everything.”

Plato

**Atlantic Crossing
Records**

www.atlantic-crossing.com

Johann Sebastian Bach lived from 1685-1750 during a time known as the Baroque era. He was born in Eisenach, Germany and is one of the greatest musical geniuses that ever lived. He composed the Suites for Solo Cello while employed as the court composer for Prince Leopold of Cöthen. A court composer is a musician who works for a royal family. Bach also composed a vast amount of music for the church. Additionally, he was an impressive organist, a conductor, a musical director of church services and a teacher.

Venice is a city in northern Italy that includes a group of 118 small islands linked by canals and bridges. A gondola is a type of boat used in Venice for transportation. The person rowing the boat is called a gondolier.

The Ospedale della Pietà was a convent, orphanage, and music school for girls. Its students performed many concerts for aristocratic audiences. In 1703 the composer Antonio Vivaldi was appointed to teach violin at the Pietà. In addition, he composed much of his vocal and instrumental music for performance by the students of the Pietà.

Listen to the CD and Discuss the Story

What did the man place in the alcove?

A Baby

What is the Ospedale della Pietà?

An orphanage and a music school for girls

What instrument does Adelina play?

Cello

Who was Adelina's teacher at the Pietà?

Vivaldi

After Adelina's performance in a Venetian palace, who presented her with a gift?

Prince Leopold of Germany

What was the gift he gave to Adelina?

The Bach Cello Suites

Why did Prince Leopold have a copy of the Cellos Suites?

He received them from his court composer: Johann Sebastian Bach

Who did Adelina marry?

Giacomo

What was Giacomo's profession?

Gondolier

Adelina and Giacomo had a child, what was his name?

Giacomo Bambino

Why did Giacomo leave home to live on his father's gondola?

His parents passed away

In the middle of the gondola was a cabin. What is this cabin called?

Felze

What music did Giacomo like to play in the gondola?

The Bach Cello Suites

The people of Venice adored secrets and disguises. What did they like to wear on their faces?

Masks

What is the name of the island in Giacomo's dream?

Murano

Why is Murano called the island of fire?

There are large furnaces on the island for making glass

Gondoliers wear special velvet slippers on their feet. Giacomo bought a pair of slippers.

What are they called?

Furlane

Every year Venetians celebrate the end of the plague with a special festival called: *The Feast of the Redentore*. What are some of their celebration activities?

Decorating boats with colorful ribbons, and fireworks

Giacomo's gondola caught fire during the fireworks, what happened to his cello?

He threw it into the water

Was the cello lost forever?

A man in a golden mask rescued the instrument

Giacomo was also rescued by the man in the golden mask. What was his true identity?

Giacomo's grandfather

What was the grandfather's profession?

Woodcutter

Who made Giacomo's cello?

Stradivari

Why did Giacomo's grandfather return to Venice?

To find his daughter Adelina

Where does Giacomo go at the end of the story?

To the Forest of the Violins with his grandfather

Vocabulary Words

Ospedale della Pietà - orphanage

Gondola - Venetian boat

Gondolier - person who rows the gondola

Alcove - hollowed out space

Bellissima - beautiful

Felze - cabin on the gondola

Canal - waterways in Venice

Solace - comfort

Molten liquid - melted liquid

Fragile - delicate

Discuss the Music

What instrument do you hear on the CD?

Cello

Who composed the music you hear on the CD?

Johann Sebastian Bach

Where was the composer born?

Germany

The Cello is a stringed instrument. Can you name other stringed instruments?

Violin, viola, double bass, guitar

Did you like the music? Did it portray the mood of the story?

What is your favorite piece on the CD? Can you describe your favorite piece: happy, sad, exciting, quiet...

What kind of music do you listen to? Discuss your favorite music and describe why you like it.

Worksheets

Map of Italy

Facts About the Cello

Facts About J.S. Bach

Draw a Scene from the Story

Parts of the Cello

Draw a Cello

Pretend You are a Music Critic and Write a Review of the CD

Learn to be a great narrator! The story manuscript is included.

Poster for the Classroom

Venice is the city in Italy where the story takes place.

Can you find Venice on the Map?



Italy is located on the continent of _____

Facts about the Cello

The cello - also called violoncello - has four strings and a hollow wooden body with two sound holes. The strings are made of animal gut, nylon, or steel.

Cellists play the instrument seated and hold it between their knees.

The word cello comes from the Italian term *violoncello*, which means little *violone*.

The cello belongs to the violin family.

The plural of cello is either celli or cellos.

A long pin called the endpin extends from the bottom of the cello to the floor and supports the weight of the cello.

The cello can be plucked or bowed.

The average cello is almost 4 feet tall.

The cello is used as a solo instrument as well as in chamber music and symphony orchestras.

A person who plays the cello is known as a cellist or violoncellist.

Among the most famous works for cello are the Bach Cello Suites for solo cello.

Fill in the blanks using the following words:

Seated Celli Violin Animal gut Violoncello Endpin
Bowed Four Symphony Bach Cellist

The cello has four strings and a hollow wooden body with two sound holes.

The strings are made of _____, nylon, or steel.

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The word cello comes from the Italian term _____, which means little *violone*.

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Among the most famous works for cello are the _____ Cello Suites for solo cello.

Facts about Johann Sebastian Bach

Bach was born in 1685 and died in 1750. He was a German composer and musician of the Baroque period.

He became an orphan before he was 10 years old.

He wrote over 1,000 pieces of music, but was also an excellent organist and violinist.

Bach composed much music for the church. Some of his most famous church pieces are the St. Matthew Passion, the B-Minor Mass, and the St. John Passion.

Some of Bach's most famous instrumental works are the Brandenburg Concertos, Air on a G String, the Well-Tempered Clavier (for piano), and the organ work Toccata and Fugue in D Minor.

In 1717, Bach accepted a position with Prince Leopold in Cöthen. Many of Bach's great instrumental works were composed while he was working in Cöthen, including the cello suites you hear on this CD.

Bach often wrote in a contrapuntal style. Counterpoint is when two or more independent lines are played simultaneously.

Bach was the father of 20 children.

Bach had problems with his eyesight. In 1750 he had eye surgery and became totally blind. After that he suffered a stroke and died.

When Bach died, his music was not well known and only a few pieces had been published. In 1829 the composer Felix Mendelssohn arranged for Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* to be performed and the audience was so excited with his music that it began to gain recognition and fame.

He was buried at the St. Thomas church in Leipzig.

Fill in the blanks using the following words:

Orphan 20 Organist Well - Tempered Clavier German
B-Minor Mass Contrapuntal Eyesight 1829 St. Thomas

Bach was born in 1685 and died in 1750. He was a _____ composer and musician of the Baroque period.

He became an _____ before he was 10 years old.

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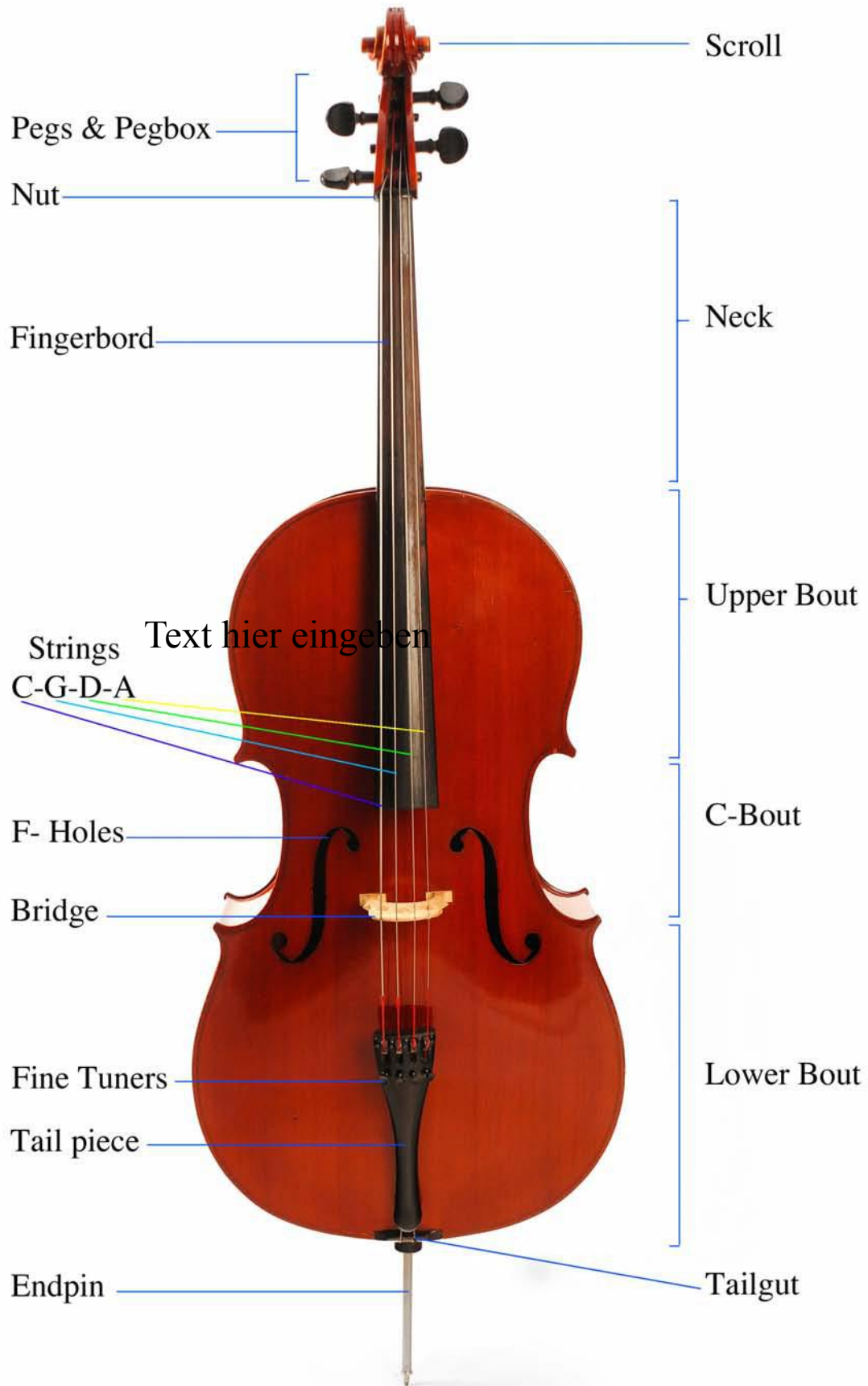
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He was buried at the _____ church in Leipzig.

Draw a Scene from the Story

Parts of the Cello



Draw a Cello and Name Five of its Parts

Pretend to be a music critic and write a review of the CD.

Narration

Narrating a story is an art.

What makes a great narrator:

A narrator should draw the listener into the story by speaking slowly and clearly.

A narrator must use correct pronunciation for all the words in the story.

A narrator should be able speak at many different volumes from soft to loud. The words must come to life and should be spoken expressively.

A narrator should hold the attention of the listener through his interpretation of the words. We must hear the words smiling or crying. The mood of the story must be expressed through inflections in the voice.

Use a colored pen to write instructions above the words in the story: soft, loud, fast, slow, happy, sad, angry. This will help you to remember to speak expressively when narrating in front of an audience.

What did you like or dislike about the narrator on the CD? Take turns narrating a few paragraphs of the story.

Discuss ways to improve the narration of each student, as well as complimenting the positive aspects of each narration.

The Cellist of Venice

Kim Maerkl

Music: Johann Sebastian Bach • The Cello Suites

for a Cellist and an Actor

Venice, Italy in the year 1725.

A young man carrying a cello on his back and a small bundle in his arms stumbled through the dark streets of Venice. The cold wind stung his face and dried his tears. He shuddered at the task that lay before him, already he felt an overpowering sense of grief. At the end of the street was the Ospedale della Pietá, the place where his journey would finish. It took only a moment for him to spot the little alcove chiselled out of the facade. His heart was pounding as he kissed the bundle and gently placed her inside the hole. A ringlet of brown hair escaped from the warm blanket and danced in the wind. The man untied the cello from his back and leaned it against the building. A card hung from the neck of the instrument, "*For my dear Adelina,*" it said. He took one last glance at the baby and ran, he ran as fast and as far as his legs could carry him.

Music 1

Adelina grew up in the Ospedale della Pietá, an orphanage, and a magnificent music school for girls. It was there that she learned to play the cello and by the age of sixteen, she had grown into a beautiful girl and a splendid musician. One day the music director, Maestro Vivaldi, summoned her with a request.

"Adelina," he said excitedly, "You are one of the brightest stars of the Pietá, you may play my A minor cello concerto in the palace of the prince next month."

"I would be honored," replied Adelina with a racing heart. Secretly, she had always longed to perform in a grand Venetian residence.

Adelina rose before dawn and practiced diligently. On the day of the concert, she entranced the audience with her playing. Her tone was as lush as her chestnut colored hair, and the music was as thick and sweet as late summer honey.

After the concert a gentleman approached her and said, “I am Prince Leopold from Germany, your performance was very moving.” Then he handed Adelina an exquisitely bound volume of music. “These are cello suites composed by Johann Sebastian Bach, my court composer. Please accept them as a token of my gratitude.”

Adelina bowed her head and said, “Thank you, I will always treasure them.”

That night she asked Sister Maria if she could play one of the Bach pieces before going to sleep.

“Yes, but only one movement, it is late,” replied the nun.

Adelina began to play, and sparkling sounds filled the darkness like little wishing stars. The children closed their eyes and let the tender touch of the cello lull them to sleep.

Music II

Outside, Giacomo bobbed in his gondola beneath the window. He listened with a yearning heart, for he loved Adelina and he knew that she loved him back. The girls of the Pietà always traveled in Giacomo’s gondola, and whenever Adelina was in the boat her eyes spoke to him with longing, love passing silently between them. *Tomorrow, I will ask the nuns for permission to marry her*, he thought excitedly.

At sunrise he knocked on the door of the Pietà. Sister Maria let him in and showed him to the room of the prioress. Giacomo was trembling as he asked for Adelina’s hand in marriage. The nun agreed to the match, and summoned Adelina, “Do you wish to marry the gondolier?” she asked. “I do,” answered Adelina with a smile. Giacomo reached for her hands and twirled her in a circle until they were dizzy with delight.

Giacomo and Adelina were married in the Church of the Pietà.

Giacomo never tired of listening to Adelina play the cello. Music filled their apartment and wrapped him in a cloak of happiness. One day he said, “Come, play your cello on my gondola, you can share your music with the world.”

Adelina was apprehensive, but Giacomo’s excitement awakened her curiosity and she consented. He set up a little chair for her on the front of the boat and rowed through the canals of Venice. The girl played her cello, and cries of Bellissima filled the waterways.

Music III

A tiny miracle entered Giacomo and Adelina’s world on a sunny day in the year 1725. Giacomo Bambino greeted the Earth with a shriek, and a cry. Proudly, Papa Giacomo paddled his family through the canals of Venice. One morning, he lifted his son high above his head and cried, “Look how beautiful he is!” Giacomo Bambino’s eyes twinkled, and his father kissed him.

“Be careful Giacomo,” cautioned Adelina. “He is still so small.”

Giacomo Bambino grew into a lively boy with long arms and strong fingers perfect for playing the cello. He begged for lessons, and his mother delighted in teaching him. Each day Giacomo practiced for many hours. On his fifteenth birthday Adelina gave him the Bach cello suites. Carefully, he opened the yellowed pages and took a deep breath, then he placed his bow on the strings and reached into his soul. The music poured from his cello, warm and glowing.

Music IV

The following winter the winds were cruel, and the snow swirled on their harsh breath. Day in and day out cold paralyzed the city. Giacomo’s parents were stricken with a frightening illness. The doctor came, but his medicine did not help. Giacomo Bambino played his cello wishing for the music to lift their spirits and heal them. But, they did not get well, and when spring flowers began to bloom, his parents passed away. The boy’s heart froze, and he wondered if the ice inside him would ever melt. Giacomo packed a

bag, gently wrapped his cello in a blanket and left home. He stepped inside his father's gondola, and floated away.

In the middle of the gondola was a cabin called a felze. Giacomo slept in the little room with his arm wrapped around his cello. In the morning, a flock of noisy birds woke him and he stepped out of the felze to watch the sun rise over the lagoon. The water was silvery, and rippled softly in the morning breeze. Giacomo placed the long, thin paddle into the oarlock and began to row. The motion of the oar pushing through the water made him think of his cello bow gliding over the strings. He coaxed the boat into the Grand Canal; a waterway lined with colorful palaces. Then, he sat down on the chair in the prow of the boat and began to play his cello. A young girl standing on the balcony of a pink villa smiled at this most curious boy, and listened to his mysterious music.

Music V

When he finished playing, the girl tossed him her lace kerchief. Giacomo raised his bow and the little trifle of cloth fluttered onto the tip. He waved it like a flag and nodded to her in gratitude. Giacomo held the square of lace up to the sunlight and admired its beauty, a single thread was looped, woven and braided into a magnificent design. *It is like the cello suites*, he thought, *just one silken thread, a cello alone weaving a delicate, yet powerful pattern of lace.* The boy's discovery lent his heart a strange new warmth.

A man in a golden mask stood on the Rialto bridge clapping loudly, and the applause jolted Giacomo from his reverie. The people of Venice adored secrets and disguises and they delighted in wearing extravagant and ghostly masks. The boy smiled at the man and then paddled away. Tirelessly, he rowed through the canals of Venice and found solace in the familiar sounds of the city; barking dogs, crying children, and women singing as they hung their laundry to dry.

At night Giacomo rowed to the open water of the lagoon. He lay down on the prow of the boat and reached up to touch the stars dotting the heavens. *I wonder if Bach can see the same stars*, he thought as he closed his eyes. Water sloshed against the gondola, and the sound of his mother's cello rose up from its depths.

Music VI

In his dream horses flew above the sleeping water of Venice and landed in the square of San Marco. Horses were not permitted in the city, so people pushed them into the canals where they swam in silence. Venice was built on hundreds of islands, but it looked as if it had simply grown up from the bottom of the sea. The horses crawled through the water with eyes glowing like lanterns. They swam to the island of fire, called Murano, where giant furnaces melted sand into glass, and glass blowers breathed fragile shapes into the molten liquid.

The horses climbed ashore. A glass blower saw them and cried, “The animals have come to steal our secrets.” He turned the beasts into glass in one hot breath and proclaimed, “Now, the horses shall guard Murano forever.”

Giacomo awoke trembling. The morning light comforted him, and he paddled down a canal beneath the *Bridge of Sighs*. It was here that criminals crossed from the palace to the prison and glimpsed the world for the last time. An old man hobbled across the arch and looked down at Giacomo. The boy played his cello for him and for all prisoners of sadness wherever they might be.

Music VII

Again, the man in the golden mask appeared on the bridge applauding.

“Who are you and why are you following me?” cried Giacomo.

The man did not answer, and the boy quickly paddled away.

Giacomo rowed to a floating shop where they sold furlane, the velvet slippers worn by gondoliers. The shoes came in an array of colors, and were made for standing securely on the gondola. Giacomo bought a pair in dark green velvet, the color his father had once worn. As he slipped them onto his feet, the ghost of his father whirled past him. Giacomo was not afraid, he often felt the mystical presence of his parents when he was alone in the gondola.

Soon, the people of Venice were calling Giacomo *Cellista Bellissimo*. He was exotic and beautiful, just like Venice and they grew to love him. Waving from the edge of the canals they shouted, “Give us a ride, Cellista. Play for us, we will pay you well.”

The boy merely smiled and waved in return, he did not wish for any passengers.

The Bach cello suites opened the door to all that was hidden in his heart. Everything he felt, all that was good and all that was lost to him, came pouring out of his cello. The suites were filled with magic, they were an explosion of light and energy, yet like life itself they still held many secrets.

Music VIII

Every year Venetians celebrate the end of the plague with a festival called the feast of the Redentore. Boats are decorated with colorful ribbons, and the city swells with visitors. Food and sweets are abundant, and fireworks crown the night.

Giacomo was tying a ribbon to his gondola when a stranger from a passing boat dropped a kitten into his lap. “A gift for good luck, Cellista,” said the man. Giacomo scooped up the little cat and held it in his hand, her heart beat rapidly against his palm. *I will call you Consolata, it means comfort and consolation*, he whispered to the tiny animal. Brushing her soft fur across his face, he breathed in her delicate scent.

Near nightfall Giacomo placed Consolata in his pocket and rowed to the basin in front of San Marco to watch the fireworks. The wind whirled aimlessly, and churning water rocked the boat. Venice was bathed in a mystical red light when a rocket burst into the air and a rainbow of sparks showered upon the city. “The stars are falling,” cried the children excitedly. Fountains of light swirled above the heads of the crowd, and fiery bouquets of Dahlias and Peonies bloomed in the sky. An enormous willow tree spread its purple arms above the islands of Venice.

Suddenly, flames burst from the stern of Giacomo’s gondola. He pulled his cello from the felze and tossed it into the lagoon. The fire spread and engulfed the cabin, its curtains feeding the flame that shot up from the boat like a fountain. Consolata trembled inside

his pocket. Giacomo jumped from the boat and water washed over him as he struggled to breathe. He pulled the kitten from his pocket and held it high above his head. Desperately, he watched his cello float away. The fireworks flashed, and the sky swung between light and dark, disorienting Giacomo. In the next burst of light he could see the man with the golden mask hovering above him. He plucked the kitten from Giacomo's raised hand and then pulled the boy into his boat. Giacomo was choking on saltwater and coughing. "My cello!" he sputtered. The masked man pointed to the felze, where the rescued instrument lay drying on a blanket. Giacomo collapsed, and his world was swallowed up by darkness.

When he awoke, he was lying in a strange bed. A man sat in the corner of the room with his head in his hands. The golden mask lay on the floor next to his chair.

Giacomo asked, "Who are you?"

The old man got up, walked over to Giacomo's bed, and took the boy's limp hand in his own and said, "I am your grandfather."

Giacomo pulled his hand away, "I don't have a grandfather. My father's parents died long ago, and my mother was an orphan."

"Please forgive me Giacomo, I didn't have a choice, I had to give Adelina to the Pietá."

"Why?" Giacomo asked, and his eyes filled with tears.

"My wife Caterina died giving birth to your mother. I am a woodcutter, and I felled the tree from which your cello was made. I agonized over what to do with the baby, but I was young and alone and knew nothing of caring for children. The Pietá had the best reputation in all of Italy for educating girls in music, and taking good care of them. What could I have given Adelina, nothing... but love. I didn't think it was enough. I am sorry, Giacomo, I regret my decision. I returned to Venice to find my Adelina. When I saw you playing the cello, I knew that you must be her son. You look so much like your grandmother Caterina that it made my heart stop. I also recognized your cello, it was made by a man named Stradivari. I supplied him with the wood he used to make that

instrument. Come home with me Giacomo, come home with me to the *Forest of Violins*, to my little home in the mountains.”

Giacomo stroked the sleeping kitten and said, “Maybe I can come for a visit, Grandfather.” The word felt strange on his tongue. “I think I would enjoy a trip to the mountains. I will also need a quiet place to make a new manuscript of the cello suites; they were lost in the fire - but not lost forever, because I know them by heart.”

The old man reached for the boy’s hand, and this time Giacomo did not pull away. “I would like to ask you something Grandfather, why did you wear the golden mask?”

“That, my child, is a story we will save for the ride home. Try to rest, we have a long journey ahead of us, and many stories to tell.”

“Good night Grandfather,”said Giacomo, and he felt the last piece of ice melting in his heart as he closed his eyes.

Music IX

Kim Maerkl

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