

# Loan of the musical instrument Viola d'Amore to Maestro Valerio Losito

Beneficiary: Valerio Losito  
Location: Italy, Europe  
Grant Cycle: 2024 – 2026  
Type of Grant: two-year loan  
Delegació a Catalunya, Promotion of Arts & Culture

The Viola d'Amore Ferdinando Gagliano 1775 is a unique solo stringed musical instrument belonging to the violin family. Owned by the **Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation - Delegació a Catalunya** (NaEPF) the instrument has been entrusted on loan to Maestro Valerio Losito since 2006, who plays it regularly at concerts and events around the world and guarantees its conditions with an annual certification from the master luthier Menantenu. The Viola d'Amore is a niche musical instrument that was played in high aristocratic contexts and courts of Baroque Europe, known for its unique harmony, it was popular until the late 18th century.

The Viola d'Amore Ferdinando Gagliano 1775 is a rare example of "Violetta all'Inglese", boasting 12 additional sympathetic strings instead of the canonic 6. This feature enhances the sound and produces a unique harmony, making it the only known and operating Viola d'Amore Gagliano "All'inglese". This precious musical instrument owned by the NaEPF was made in 1775 by violin maker Ferdinando Gagliano (1738-1804) active in Naples in the second half of the 18th century and renowned for his choice of materials and workmanship. Supposing it was made for a member of the high Spanish aristocracy and rarely played - this would demonstrate its precious craftsmanship and the splendid proportions that make it a masterpiece.

Maestro Valerio Losito, an Italian artist living in Rome, has played the instrument in more than hundred concerts since 2006, along with numerous important recordings and educational activities,

helping to maintain its value and musical quality. In 2021, Losito addressed a letter to Elsa Peretti in which he described his activity: "I am convinced that a musician today cannot be limited to being a mere performer, but that he should be involved in the rediscovery, dissemination and teaching of the repertoire and instrument."

During the years Losito worked on the Viola d'Amore repertoire by rediscovering and performing unreleased music from the past but also involving contemporary composers on new works composed especially for Viola d'Amore Gagliano and himself. In 2006, thanks to the support of the Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation, Losito has been able to form a small musical collection containing copies of manuscripts from libraries across Europe, it was the starting point for all subsequent research. The very first concert in which Losito played the Viola was during the Festival de Musica Antigua in Sant Martí Vell (2006), followed by notable concerts and recordings supported by the NaEPF, among them "Domenico Scarlatti, sonatas for Viola d'Amore and harpsichord" (2011), Viola d'Amore solo (2012) and ALIAS – AMOR (2020). Furthermore, since 2007 Losito has participated several times with the Viola in the oratory performance of "Juditha Triumphans" by Antonio Vivaldi that contains an aria in which Viola D'Amore plays as a soloist with the singer: in the duet, the two voices are of equal importance and they are accompanied by a thin bass line entrusted to only two violins. In 2017, Losito and the Viola d'Amore had the great opportunity to work with Sir Antonio Pappano within Orchestra dell'Accademia di Santa Cecilia in performing "Erwäge meine

Seele" from the Johannespassion by Johann Sebastian Bach. Recently, Losito collaborated with Orchestra Barocca Siciliana on the project "Nuovo Barocco Italiano", in which the missing part of the manuscript dedicated to Chiaretta, a 18th century soloist of Viola D'amore, teacher at the Della Pietà Hospital and student of Antonio Vivaldi, has been integrated by contemporary composer Elvira Muratore with the so-called "Restauro I".

To ensure the continuity of the use and dissemination of excellence produced by Viola d'Amore Ferdinando Gagliano 1775, the NaEPF has renewed the contract of the free loan of the musical instrument to Maestro Losito till May 2026.

Since I made my first notes on the Viola at the age of 25, I have understood its uniqueness and its great expressive potential. The fact that it was an excellent instrument meant that I had to practice assiduously, not only for the "contingent" study aimed at musical performances, but also to acquire a technique that would enhance the unique characteristics of this viola."

Mestre Valerio Losito

letter to Elsa Peretti, 2021