

BOISMORTIER

MUSIC FOR FLUTE,
VIOLA DA GAMBA
AND B.C.

Umbra Lucis Ensemble
Stefano Bagliano
Fabrizio Lepri
Stefano Lorenzetti



Joseph Bodin de Boismortier (Thionville 1682 – Roissy-en-Brie 1765)

Ballet de village in G Op.52 No.1

for two recorders and b.c. (1734)

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|--------------------------|------|
| 1. Gaiment | 2'29 |
| 2. Gracieusement | 1'43 |
| 3. Vivement | 1'43 |
| 4. Modérément | 2'21 |
| 5. Mouvement de Chaconne | 2'22 |

Pièces de clavecin Op.59 (1736)

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|-------------------|------|
| 6. La Caverneuse | 2'55 |
| 7. La Transalpine | 1'38 |

Trio Sonata in E minor Op.37 No.2

for recorder, viola da gamba and b.c. (1732)

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| 8. Allegro | 2'22 |
| 9. Adagio | 2'11 |
| 10. Allegro | 1'48 |

Pièces de clavecin Op.59

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| 11. La Valétudinaire | 3'13 |
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Sonata in F Op.91 No.1

for recorder and harpsichord (1741)

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| 12. Sicilienne | 3'02 |
| 13. Gaiment | 2'18 |
| 14. Gracieusement | 2'07 |
| 15. Gaiment | 3'17 |

Suite in D Op.31

for viola da gamba and b.c. (1730)

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|---------------------------|------|
| 16. Prelude | 1'03 |
| 17. Gavotte | 1'43 |
| 18. Sarabande | 2'16 |
| 19. Courante | 1'51 |
| 20. Rondeau La Maiesteuse | 4'11 |
| 21. Rondeau. Le Brut | 3'07 |

Pièces de clavecin Op.59

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|--------------------|------|
| 22. La Sérénissime | 3'20 |
| 23. La Frénétique | 1'57 |

Sonata in C minor Op.34 No.6

for three recorders and b.c. (1731)

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|---------------------|------|
| 24. Adagio | 1'25 |
| 25. Allegro | 1'43 |
| 26. Largo – Allegro | 3'56 |

“The fertile Monsieur Boismortier [...] composed light and pleasing things and his opera *Daphnis & Chloé* did not displease [...]. All that he gave to the public was quickly sold. He came at the right time: people, in fact, were avid for these pleasant *badinages*, which have a very attractive effect on the flutes and musettes: he took advantage of the current fashion, and made double use of his talent”.

These few words by D'Aquin de Chateau-Lyon in his *Lettres sur les hommes celebres*, published in 1754, effectively synthesize the characteristics of man and the destiny of the composer.

Joseph Bodin de Boismortier, in fact, was one of the few French composers of the period to pursue a career substantially freed from aristocratic patronage. His compositions enjoyed wide favour among the public, beginning with his first printed collections, the *Sonates à deux flutes traversieres sans basse*, published in 1724.

Born in Thionville, he spent his youth first in Metz and then in Perpignan before taking up permanent residence in Paris around 1723. In September 1724, he took out a royal privilege to engrave his works and began the process of publishing them, which ceased only on his death. According to the *Mercure de France* (October 1747), his works were very profitable, bringing him over 500,000 *écus*.

A refined and worldly man, he embodied the model of the eighteenth-century *homme du monde*, member of the most prestigious salons of the Parisian aristocracy. His music always reflects the social conviviality and the ‘good taste’ that permeated every aspect of the Parisian society of the time.

The *Ballet de village in G Op.52 No.1*, is part of a collection of four *ballets en trio*, published in 1752. The traditional series of dance movements are treated in a subtle and charming manner, alternating solo and tutti, and exploring the fascination of the *concertato* style. The flamboyant final chaconne is, at the same time, a stunning example of refinement, grace and virtuoso writing.

The *Triosonata in E minor Op.37 No.2*, published in 1732 is an example of the composer's personal blending of the French and Italian styles, here developed through a constant dialogue between flute and viol, the continuo sometimes also participating.

Umbra Lucis Ensemble

Stefano Bagliano *recorder* · Fabrizio Lepri *Viola da gamba*
Stefano Lorenzetti *harpsichord*

Fabiano Martignago *recorder* (1-5, 24-26)
Manuel Staropoli *recorder* (1-5, 24-26)
Teresa Peruzzi *viola da gamba continuo* (16-21)

A more decisive Italian vein is deployed in the *Sonata in F Op.91 No.1, for recorder and harpsichord*, especially in the *Siciliana* and in the first *Gaiement*, while the other two movements, the *Gracieusement* and the second *Gaiement*, seem to counteract the Italian influence with a more pronounced French mood. The most striking aspect of the piece is the careful balance between the *concertato* harpsichord and the recorder, completely merged one into another, neither prevailing.

The Italian taste prevails also in the *Sonata in C minor Op.34 No.6, for three recorders and basso continuo*, which deploys a contrapuntal writing rarely found in the works of the composer. The piece seems inspired to the Corelli's *Triosonate*. The *Adagio* and *Largo*, which display a frequent use of suspensions and thematic incipit shared among all the voices, recall the Italian melodic shape. The first *Allegro* opens with a *canzona* motif subject, conferring a vaguely archaic flavour, while the last *Allegro* is a lively movement in triple time in the modern fashion.

The *Suite in D la re Op.31 for viola da gamba and basso continuo* and the pieces for harpsichord, instead, are completely conceived according to the French style. Probably, the models more or less consciously chosen are, respectively, Marin Marais and François Couperin. The *suite in D* really appears as an homage to Marais, subtly rewritten emphasizing the aspects of the most immediate cantability and sensuality, probably with the contribution of one of the most intimate friends of Boismortier, the Parisian Louis de Caix d'Hervelois, an author almost exclusively of viol music, who will share the same address as Joseph: rue du Jour, in front of the portal of Saint Eustachio to the swan of the cross.

The collection Op.59 for harpsichord constitutes another important chapter in the history of French keyboard music. The music fits perfectly under the fingers, displaying all the distinguishing features of the *style brisé* and of idiomatic harpsichord writing: for clarity, refinement and expressive power these pieces are really comparable in form and inventiveness to the pieces of François Couperin, from who he also takes the habit of adopting for each piece a feminine title, many of these seem to refer to specific ladies in the composer's circle.

The music of Joseph Bodin de Boismortier is not only elegant, witty and charming, as frequently stated. His near contemporary, Jean-Benjamin La Borde, wrote of his work in 1780 that “whoever takes the trouble to search through this abandoned mine will find enough bits of gold to make an ingot.” If more profoundly investigated, this ingot of gold contains other dimensions, which reveal hidden aspects of the social order of the time: the society that appreciated so much Boismortier's music was a society apparently without shadows, but permeated by a veil of melancholy that can be perceived under the limpid elegance, and the joyous nonchalance of human conviviality. It is precisely this veil of melancholy that this music brings to the surface of perception, revealing to us the deep anxiety of a society which tried to hide the difficulties of living with the implementation of a complex code of social rituality synthesized by a paradigmatic expression: *politesse mondaine*.

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Umbra Lucis Ensemble. A New Early Music Experience

The birth of a new group implies new stimuli, new requirements, new necessities. After years of activism, the promoters of this new adventure feel an urgency to renew the original spirit of the research movement in early music, restoring the evocativeness of sound to the centre of the performance.

The centrality of sound, in fact, is the ideal and real paradigm of a rediscovery of period instruments and techniques, as well as of historical areas: spaces that nourish the noble senses of sight and hearing through a perceptual experience of overwhelming beauty.

Consistent with the natures of the group's founders the ensemble promotes a constant dialogue between the most advanced findings of historical musicology and their application to the performance practice, with the aim to render the music ever more alive and 'speaking' to a contemporary perspective: it is the past that speaks to the present and the present that looks to the past.

Stefano Bagliano is one of the flautists (blockflute/recorder) who are today achieving a growing appreciation at an international level. He performed intensively as a soloist for prestigious festivals and institutions in all Europe, USA, Canada, Japan, China, Israel, Turkey, such as Carnegie Hall of New York, Moscow Conservatory, Ishibashi Memorial Hall Tokio, Beijing and Tianjin Conservatories, Gasteig of Munich, Universitat fur Musik of Vienna, Lubiana International Festival, Sounding Jerusalem Festival, Amici della Musica of Florence, Società del Quartetto di Milano/Musica e Poesia a San Maurizio, Concerts of Palazzo Venezia in Rome broadcasted by the Italian Radio Rai 3, etc., always with a great success.

Founder of the Collegium Pro Musica, the Baroque Orchestra of Genoa, as a conductor of his ensemble he performed with famous singers like E. Kirkby, R. Invernizzi, G. Bertagnolli, K. King. As a soloist with orchestra he performed with formations such as Les Boreades of Montreal, Solisti della Scala of Milan, Moscow Chamber Orchestra, Mainzer Kammerorchester, Academia Montis Regalis Turin,

Ensemble Baroque de Nice, Orchestra Toscanini of Parma, Accademia I Filarmonici Verona, Istanbul Chamber Orchestra, Izmir Yasar University Chamber Orchestra.

Bagliano made several recordings (more than twenty of them as a soloist, with works by Vivaldi, Telemann, J.S. and C.P.E. Bach, Sammartini, Fiorenza, Marcello etc.) for labels among them Brilliant, Stradivarius, Dynamic, ASV Gaudeamus and for the Italian musical magazines CD Classics, Orfeo and the prestigious Amadeus, achieving thus enthusiastic appreciations from the international critics. Among the last recordings, the complete Vivaldi Chamber Concertos (3 CDs for Brilliant Classics), received some 5 stars reviews: on the American magazine “Fanfare” (USA) James Altena wrote “Bagliano is as fine a virtuoso on his instrument as I’ve ever heard”.

He is the art director of the International Festival of Chamber Music “Le Vie del Barocco” of Genoa, the director of the Early Music Department (the bigger in Italy), and professor of blockflute and early ensemble music, at the State Conservatory “Pedrollo” of Vicenza, Italy.

Stefano Lorenzetti studied organ and harpsichord with Kenneth Gilbert and earned his Ph. D. in History and Civilization at the European University Institute of Florence. His dual vocation as a musician and musicologist led him to explore forgotten practices, experienced in several recordings devoted to Italian Renaissance composers which have found favour with the international critics. His scholarship includes numerous journal articles on the history of ideas, on the Italian liturgical music and on the relationship of music and the art of memory. The monograph *Musica e identità nobiliare nell’Italia del Rinascimento. Educazione, mentalità*, immaginario published by Olschki in 2003, has enshrined him as one of the most significant and innovative scholars of Renaissance music. He has given concerts and conferences throughout Europe and the United States, and in particular at the Accademia Chigiana in Siena, at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa, at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris, at the Centre d’Etudes de la Supérieures Renaissances in Tours, at

University of California, Davis (Valente lectures), at Villa I Tatti (Harvard University) and at Stanford University (Ron Alexander Lectures). The Early Music Review named his latest recording of music for organ by Giovanni Gabrieli: “a masterclass in timing, he judges spread chords notated with very great subtlety.” Currently, he is professor of the History of music at Conservatory of music of Vicenza, and teaches harpsichord at the International master classes of Chiusi della Verna. Stefano Lorenzetti is former fellow of *The Italian Academy for Advanced Studies in America* at Columbia University in the City of New York.

Fabrizio Lepri after completing the study of classical bowed instruments, viola da gamba and performance practice on historical instruments at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels, attending courses by Wieland Kuijken, Gustav Leonhardt, Philippe Herreweghe, Bartold Kuijken, Anner Bylisma, Jos Van Immerseel, Andreas Staier and Paul Van Nevel. At the end of his academic studies, he received his master in viola da gamba and, the corresponding Italian academic diploma with honors. He carries out an intense concert activity in many European countries: Germany, France, Switzerland, Belgium, Holland, Russia, etc., at prestigious concert halls such as the International Centre of Culture (Brussels), the Neus Theater (Monaco of Bavaria), Sheremetev Palace (San Petersburg), Palace Roerich (Moscow), the Accademia Belgica (Rome), the Accademia Bartolomeo Cristofori (Florence), the Flanders Festival, the Festival of Ticino, the Sagra Musicale Umbra, the Macerata Opera Festival, etc., collaborating with musicians and ensembles such as Erik Van Nevel, Rene Van Lake, Marco Ferrari, Andrea Damiani, Sigrun Richter, Cappilla Flammenca, Salon des Musiques, Partibus Orientis, etc. He has made recordings for radio RAI Radio 3, RTBF 2, Bayerischer Rundfunk 4 Klassik, and he has recorded several CDs as a soloist for Discovery Label, and in chamber music ensembles, for GAM UT. He teaches Viola da Gamba at the Conservatory of music of Perugia and Consort and Baroque music at the International Master Classes of Chiusi della Verna.