



(LEMS 8030)

THE RECORDER

Four Centuries of Recorder Music

Pro Arte Recorder Ensemble

Tracks:

1. Misc. & Unidentified Cantigas, 2 Canticles - 2:25
2. Royal Estampie, No 7 - :55
3. Le Ductia - 0:45
4. Saltarello - 1:21
5. Danse - 1:42
6. Royal Estampie No. 5 - 1:05
7. Royal Danse - 1:10
8. Lonc le rieu de la fontaine - 1:14
9. Tant con je vivrai, rondeau for 3 voices - 2:14
10. Or est Baiars en la pasture, rondeau for 3 voices - 1:31
11. La Bernardina, song for 3 parts - 1:06
12. Fantasia - 1:55
13. Fantasia, for 2 basses - 1:20
14. If Love Now Reigned for 3 voices - 1:30
15. En Vray Amoure for 4 voices - 0:53
16. Torre de la nina; Meu Naranjedo - 2:11
17. Pavanne et Gaillarde D'Angleterre - 2:06
18. Suite 5 - 5:13
19. La Alfonsina - 1:05
20. Canon ad Nonam - 1:31
21. Une fillette bien gorriere - 0:49
22. Holla Hoi - 1:05

23. Basse Danse - 3:02
24. Caroubel Gavotte & Branle Gai - 3:35
25. Der Fluyten Lust-hof, Boffons - 1:38
26. Variations on a figured bass - 3:19
27. Harpsichord Sonata in D minor, SF. 721a - 7:20
28. Noce champetre - 4:53
29. Le Rossignol-en-amour, for harpsichord (Pices de clavecin, III, 14e ordre) - 4:47
30. Chrétiens qui suivez l'glise, for organ (Nouveau Livre de Nols) - 4:37

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The Recorder: Its History and Its Music

Notes by Mario A. Videla

Flutes are among the oldest and most widely used of all instruments. Historically, all flutes fall into essentially two categories: the upright flute, or recorder, and the transverse flute, known simply as the flute. The recorder approached its definitive form at the end of the Middle Ages. During the 16th century recorders were made in different sizes, forming complete "families" that imitated the range of human voices in a chorus: soprano, contralto, tenor and bass. In the early part of the 18th century only one size of recorder was used: the contralto recorder in F. This was called the "flauto" by J.S. Bach and most of his contemporaries, to distinguish it from the flute, called "flauto traverse" or simply "traverse." (The Second and Fourth Brandenburg Concertos for example use the recorder.)

At the beginning of the 20th century, after 150 years of neglect, a renewal of interest in the recorder was brought about by Arnold Dolmetsch, and Germans, Swiss and Americans began making them on a large scale.

Modern recorders are manufactured in six basic sizes: sopranino, soprano, contralto, tenor, bass and contrabass. Different kinds of wood are used and sometimes even ivory or plastic. Occasionally an even smaller instrument than the sopranino is made, called exilente, as well as one that is larger than the contrabass, known as the granbasso.

The resurgence of the recorder in our times has not only contributed to the rebirth of early music, but it is proving invaluable in music studies since it can be so successfully adapted to teaching on so many different levels of accomplishment.

The Recorder in France

Some of the richest recorder repertory (and much of the recorder music represented on this CD) comes from France. According to Curt Sachs, the first recorder appeared in an 11th Century French miniature. Many 12th and 13th Century engravings, paintings and sculptures depict three, four and even eight-hole recorders in the hands of minstrels and court musicians. The three-hole, "one-hand flute," known in France as the tort or galoubet, was very characteristic of the Middle Ages, usually played along with a small drum that the musician beat with the free hand.

Guillaume de Machaut (1300-1377), a well-known poet and musician, mentions in his Remede de fortune and his La Prise d'Alexandrie the words: flahute brehaingne, flaiot de sous, fistule, pipe and flauste, probably all different types of recorders since the flute was clearly already described

as flautes traverseinnes. Describing the celebrations honoring the King of Cypress's visit to Prague in 1364 Machaut writes;

"La avoir de tous instruments
Et de flaios plus de X paires,
Cette a dire de XX manieres,
Tant des fortes corn des legieres..."

This leads one to imagine that recorders were played in pairs or larger groups, a practice that was common later on in the 15th and 16th Centuries when instruments were made in "families" of three, four and more distinct sizes.

In the 16th Century the recorder was known in France as the Flute a neuf trous, or recorder with nine holes. This instrument was none other than our eight-hole recorder, with its lowest opening reachable by either the little finger of the left, or right hand. When this hole was not used, it could be closed by filling it with wax. According to early chronicles, the minstrels of the court of King Francis I of France, the recorder was played as well as the flageolet, trumpets, cornet, harps, lutes, violas, drums and oboes.

P. Marin Mersenne, in his *Harmonie Universelle* (Paris, 1636) describes the combination of various sizes of recorders in an ensemble or consort. In this book he distinguishes between a small one (*petit jeu*) and a large one (*grand jeu*), the large one beginning where the small leaves off. The small ensemble of four instruments is one octave higher than the normal register: *dessus*, *taille*, *hautcontre* and *basse*. In the 16th Century the *faille* and the *hautcontre* were played on the same recorder, equivalent to our tenor in C: the *dessus* corresponded to our contralto in F and the *basse* to our bass in F.

In the large ensemble the bass recorder of the small consort is actually the treble instrument (le *dessus*). This group comprises a bass recorder, two contrabasses and a grand bass (with the lowest two holes played by means of a pedal, due to its large size). The two types or groups could be combined, according to Mersenne, to produce the range of an organ. He mentions, in a curious paragraph, that "it is possible to play a little tune or song on the recorder and simultaneously sing the bass part, provided that the air that comes out of the mouth is forceful enough to make a sound on the recorder so that one man can perform a duet."

Seventy years after Mersenne's treatise appeared in France, Jacques Hotteterre's book, *Principes de la flute* was published in Paris in 1707. The technical possibilities of the instrument, the fingering, articulation, vibrato, of trills etc. suggest the advanced level achieved during this period.

The examples on this recording are offered as a condensed panorama of the vast and interesting repertory of the recorder from the Middle Ages to the Baroque .

Medieval Recorder Music

During the Middle Ages and Renaissance the recorder was used as much in the courts as in bourgeois homes and for simple popular music. The first musical examples appropriate for the recorder may be found in the secular music of the 13th and 14th Centuries. Examples of purely instrumental music have been found as well. These are principally dance music, known by such different names as the *estampida* *estampida*, (*stampede*), *dance royel* (*royal dance*), *trotto* (*trot*), and *saltarello*.

The first piece on the disc, Alphonso El Sabio's Two Canticles, is a recorder adaptation of two of Alfonso's (ruler of Spain from 1252 until 1284) Las Cantigas de Santa Maria. Tracks 2 through 4 are representative of several dance pieces of the 13th Century. (The complete collection of works from the Visconti and other Manuscripts can be heard on the Lyrichord Early Music Series' Istanpitta Volumes 1 & 2 by New York's Ensemble for Early Music directed by Frederick Renz: LEMS 8016 and 8022.) Three anonymous dances (Tracks 5,6, and 7) belong to a series of pieces included in the famous Chansonnier du Roi, a collection of troubadour and trouvère songs compiled at the end of the 13th Century. Within this collection of troubadour songs with texts, there are about ten instrumental pieces called Royal Estampie, or sometimes Danse and Royal Danse.

The two-voice motet (Track 8) *Lone le rieu de la fontaine-Regnat*, is an example of polyphonic writing. The motet was a typical form of polyphonic music in the Middle Ages, characterized by the superimposition of melodies of different texts; one of which, considered a tenor, could adopt a predetermined rhythmic scheme.

Adam de la Halle "the hunchback of Arras," was the last of the trouvères of Northern France, He was considered one of the most important composers at the end of the 13th century. Two of his compositions have been selected here: (Tracks 9 and 10) These rondeaux are written for three voices a tenor middle voice or 'carrier' of the melody Both pieces originally had texts, *Tant Con je Vivrai* (As Long as I Live) and *Or est Baiars en Hure!* (Baiars is in the Pasture!), but the performance of purely instrumental versions was frequent during this period.

Renaissance Recorder Music

With the development of polyphonic music the practice of playing several instruments from the same family (recorders, violas da gamba etc.) was established. At the same time new instrumental forms such as the canna, [the fantasia and the ricercare developed also.

A good deal of the music of the Renaissance lacks specific directions concerning instrumentation. Often, typical performance instruction is: "to sing or play on any kind of instrument." For this reason, much of the music of the 15th and 16th centuries is very suitable for recorder ensembles.

The different stages of contrapuntal art are heard here by three distinct schools, the Franco-Flemish, with Josquin des Pres (Track 11), the Italian, with Julius de Modena (Track 12), and the English, with Thomas Weelkes (Track 13). The two instrumental pieces of Henry VIII (Tracks 14 and 15) and the Two Spanish Christmas Songs ("villancicos"} excerpted from the Songbook of the Court of the Catholic Kings, Isabella and Fernando, ("Cancionero de los Reyes Catolicos") clearly represent the secular court music of the 15th and 16th centuries. Although accompanied by poetic texts, these songs can be played on instruments (Track 16).

Baroque Recorder Music

During the 17th and 18th centuries the recorder gained new dimension as a solo instrument. A strong tendency toward individualistic expression caused the gradual abandonment of polyphonic music in favor of a one-line melody that attained dominance, relegating the other voices to mere accompaniment. This was the origin of the "basso continuo," a practice that developed over more than 150 years, until the end of the Baroque period around 1750. The basso continuo generally consists of one harmonic instrument (harpsichord, clavichord, organ, lute) which brought out the

chords of accompaniment. To this was added a stringed instrument (viola da gamba, cello or bassoon) which reinforced the bass melodic line.

The art of ornamentation and variation play an important role in Baroque music, impelling the musicians to develop a high degree of virtuosity. This can be seen from the variations on a theme entitled "Boffons of J. van Eyck" (Track 25) taken from his famous collection *Der Fluyten Lust-Hof* ("The Eden of the Flutes".)

In England the variations were called "divisions" and a favorite form was that of creating variations on a "figured bass" or ground which repeated itself constantly in an unchanging form. In the example here by Godfrey Finger, (Track 26) taken from the collection "The Division Flute" (circa 1700) the ground bass is presented first as a solo by the viola da gamba, then later with the chords of the harpsichord serving as a base for the different variations carried by the recorder.

Sonata in D Minor by Marcello (Track 27) illustrates another of the typical Baroque forms: the sonata da chiesa with its four characteristic movements (lento - rapido - lento - rapido) which, along with the sonata da camera or suite, and the concerto grosso comprise the most important forms of instrumental music of that era.

Jacques Hotteterre (c. 1680-1761), came from an important family of musicians and instrument makers. He was not only a gifted recorder player but also played the viola da gamba and bassoon which won him his admittance to "La Grande Ecurie du Roy." In addition to his *Principes de la Flute Traversiere, de la Flute a bee, et du Hautbois*, edited in 1707, he published several suites and other pieces for one or two instruments with a "ground bass" accompaniment. *Les Delices - Le Champetre* (Track 28). are duos for contralto recorders, harpsichord, and viola da gamba. They are excerpted from his *Premier Livre de Pieces*, published in 1715. Their complete titles are: "Les Delices, ou le Fargis" and "Rondeau le champiin., inuiv. par le Ruy: les Ecos".

Francous Couperin le Grand (1668-1733) was the most important member of a distinguished musical family. He was the organist of Louis XIV at Versailles, and organist of St. Gervais in Paris. His collection of pieces for harpsichord assembled in 27 Suites stand out as France's most important written music for the harpsichord. In some of the pieces Couperin indicates the potential for other instruments such as flutes, oboes, and violins to play. His *Le Rossignol en Amour* (Track 29), is performed here on soprano recorder and harpsichord.

Louis Claude D'Aquin (1694-1772) occupied an important position in the French music world throughout his long lifetime. He started performing as a child prodigy before Louis XIV. All of Paris gathered to listen to his famous "noels", of Christmas songs based on old popular melodies that D'Aquin elaborated and enriched with appropriate harmonies, and brought together in interesting variations for organ, harpsichord and other instruments. Heard here is his *Noel VII* for bass recorder, contralto recorder, contralto viola da gamba, and harpsichord (Track 30).

CONJUNTO PRO AKTE DE FLAUTAS DULCES

(Pro Arte Recorder Ensemble)

M. Videla, G. Samela, D. Alpert
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The increased usage of the recorder in the recent times led two outstanding Argentinian musicians and educators, Profs. Mario A. Videla and Gustavo Samela, to form an ensemble dedicated to performing music originally composed for the recorder. The Pro Arte Recorder Ensemble has undertaken an extensive repertory that includes works from the Middle Ages, Renaissance, Baroque, as well as interesting works by contemporary composers. Seven different types of recorders are used, from the smallest, or exilent, to the largest, the contrabass. Other instruments, percussion, harpsichord and viola da gamba are sometimes used.

In 1971 the Conjunto Pro Arte de Flautas Dukes (Pro Arte Recorder Ensemble) received high praise in the United States for its recording of "Espectros, 1970", by Eduardo A. Alemann, which received first prize in the "Art Composition Competition" in New York. This work for four recorders was judged to be "the most original and interesting" of all the seventy entries from all over the world.

Conjunto Pro Arte de Flautas Dulces carries an extensive repertory that includes music from the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Baroque as well as contemporary works. For this seven different sizes of recorder are used: from the smallest or exilent, measuring 10 cm., followed by the sopranino, the soprano, the contralto, the tenor, the bass, and largest or grand bass, that reaches 1,30 meter in size. Percussion instruments to accompany early dances and occasionally a clavichord and a viola da gamba we are also used for works from the Baroque period.



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