

# Venezia, il paradiso di dolci suoni

## Flanders Recorder Quartet

Tom Beets, Bart Spanhove, Joris Van Goethem and Paul Van Loey

### *L'Estro Armonico*

- Concerto in a opus 3/11  
allegro-grave-fuga-largo-allegro
- Antonio Vivaldi  
& Johann Sebastian Bach

### *Musica Poetica*

- Amours amours
  - E qui le dira
  - Helas ce nest pas
  - Dit le burguygnon
- Hayne van Ghizeghem  
Heinrich Isaac  
Johannes de Stokem  
Anonymous

### *Intermezzo antiquo*

- Czaldy Waldy
  - La Manfredina
  - La Rotta della manfredina
- Anon.  
Anon.  
Anon.

### *Capricci musicale*

- Sonata settima
- Johann Rosenmuller

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### *Les fêtes Venetiennes*

- Summa Parenti Gloria
  - Engels Nachtegaeltje
  
  - Canzon La Marcha
  - Canzon La Livia
- Michael Praetorius  
Jacob van Eyck  
  
Tarquinio Merula  
Tarquinio Merula

### *Ciacole*

- canzon *La spiritata*
  - canzon deta Suzanne un iour  
met diminuties van Andrea Gabrieli
- Giovanni Gabrieli  
Orlandus Lassus

### *Finale!*

- Concerto in d opus 3/8  
allegro-larghetto-allegro
- Antonio Vivaldi  
& Johann Sebastian Bach



"... combining the breathy timbre of a portative organ  
with the expressive interplay of a fine string quartet..."  
(NY Times, 2006)

## Venezia, *Il paradiso di dolci suoni* *The paradise of sweet sounds*

Venice stands for mystery, amazement, contrast, unexpected discoveries, incredible beauty and *la dolce vita*. This Northern Italian city will eventually disappear in the water as the level of the Adriatic Sea is vastly rising, but its divine music will never cease to exist. Early improvisation, renaissance top hits, prima and seconda prattica with music of anonymous composers, Isaac, Agricola, Ciconia, Merula and others.

To quote an astonished Franz Liszt: “*Venice, such a deep enchantment*”

*"Printing has lately become an art in which many fine gentlemen have been trying to outdo each other every day, but no one has ever been able to find a way to print measured music. Yet we can neither praise God nor celebrate weddings without such music, which is indeed called for at every joyous occasion in life", Ottaviano Petrucci wrote in the dedication of the **Harmonice musices odhecaton**, first published in 1501. What Petrucci achieved in this volume entirely changed the face of European music; he was the first in history to invent a successful method to mechanically print polyphonic music. Music could now be made in hundreds of elegant copies and distributed internationally.*

The wonderful odhecaton manuscript includes music by the most famous composers of the time, including Johannes Ockeghem, Josquin des Prez, Antoine Brumel, Jacob Obrecht and many others, and is a faithful and reliable testament to the popularity of the chanson in northern Italy during the first years of the sixteenth century. This anthology of about one hundred works was a cornucopia (horn of plenty) of *top hits*. Odhecaton includes many textless works, based on vocal models, thus arguably intended for performance on consort instruments such as gambas or recorders. FRQ has carefully combined five love-related pieces that suit their instruments best. The recorders used are handcrafted copies of surviving instruments made by the Venetian-English Bassano family, which can be seen in *Kunsthistorisches Museum* in Vienna.

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The first literary traces of monophonic **dance music and estampitas** are to be found around 1100. First musical examples include such famous melodies as *Kalenda Maya* (Reimbaut de Vaqueiras) and the four *estempida* by Cerveri de Girona. Occitania and the region north of Paris are the geographical centers up to 1350. Roughly, from 1400 on the Italian *istanpitte* (now preserved in London, British Library add.29987) set the tone for the future evolution of dance melodies. The *istanpitte* manuscript probably comes from Umbria, or possibly Perugia or even Venice. It's a visually rather sober manuscript in Italian notation that contains eight instrumental pieces with programmatic titles, of which we present you a selection:

***La Manfredina*** is a complex and repetitive melody, of which we have no textual clues or indications. It's a dance in two parts, followed by a *rotta*. ***La Rotta*** is comprised of similar musical material, although here the slow melody turns into a dance. From the same manuscript also comes the ***Lamento di Tristano***, a musical interpretation of the original Celtic Saga of the famous singer Tristan, who is passionately in love with Isolde. A solemn

exception to this Italian story is the melody *Czaldy Waldy*, which is the earliest preserved Czech dance. The title may be a garbling of the Turkish *saldy maldy*, meaning *to start dancing*.

What we propose in our medieval dances and istanpitte is an attempt – inspired by a historically multicultural awareness – to recreate a certain art of sounding the recorder during that medieval period. The collection of istanpitte and improvisations may be considered as a tribute to all the jongleurs and poet-musicians who sincerely believed that, through music, the soul could be stirred to boldness and valour, magnanimity and liberality – qualities that give dignity to the human condition.

*Ut eorum anomos ad audaciam et fortitudinem  
Magnanimitatem et liberalitatem commoveat,  
Quae omnia faciunt ad bonum pregiment.*

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At the start of the seventeenth century instrumental music became the equal of vocal music in quality and quantity. The forms used were not yet standardised and exhibited many facets but later developed into idiomatic works, often exhibiting virtuosic features and ornamentation.

Initially the compositional features of the Renaissance remained and were faithful to vocal counterpoint and imitation. The canzona was the most prevalent instrumental genre. It has an interesting history which is demonstrated in this concert programme by combining the imitative and typically instrumental two-part *Canzon La Spiritata* by Giovanni Gabrieli, with the rather old-fashioned, but brilliantly vocally decorated, *Canzon deta Suzanne un iour* by Andrea, Giovanni's uncle. The two other examples of the canzona presented here are by the hand of Tarquinio Merula, a well-trained organist and violin virtuoso who worked as bandmaster and director of church music in Cremona, Bergamo and Venice. In his late *canzone* (1637), he adhered to the early advocates of the sonata di camera and di chiesa and was one of the most advanced composers of the time. Merula's works are to be found in numerous instrumental prints during the seventeenth century. *La Marcha* and *La Livia* are taken from the first book of canzonas and are striking examples of the new instrumental style, which was released from any vocal associations. The preface of this 1615 adds the text '*per sonare conogni sorti de strumenti musicale*'. FRQ chooses four expressive recorders to perform this music '*per movere l'affetto dell'animo*'.

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*L'Estro Armonico* is a title that suggests the right combination of genius and fantasy that prompted Estienne Roger, the shrewdest of the 18th-century publishers, to issue this set of twelve concertos in 1711. Prior to this, **Antonio Vivaldi's** only printed works had been two sets of sonatas published in Venice: twelve trio sonatas (Opus 1) in 1705 and twelve solo sonatas (Opus 2) in 1709, both stemming from his activities as violin teacher at the *Conservatorio dell' Ospedale della Pietà*. It was the publication of Opus 3, however, that made Vivaldi's reputation in Europe, and the collection was soon reprinted by John Walsh, in London and by Le Clerce Cadet in Paris, with the title somewhat bizarrely rendered as *Les Troharmónico*. Quantz heard them for the first time in Pirna, near Dresden, in 1714: "*as musical pieces of a kind that was then entirely new, they made no small impression on me. I was eager to accumulate a good number of them, and Vivaldi's splendid ritornelli served as good models for me in later days.*" So as Bach pays tribute to Vivaldi by transcribing and

arranging many of his concerti, and FRQ does the same in 2012: they've been arranging the Bach transcriptions of the 8th and 11th concerto of Vivaldi's Opus 3 for four recorders.

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**Johann Rosenmüller** (1615-1684) was a German trombone player, composer and organ player. Due to problems with his sexual preference, he was expelled from Leipzig, where he was working as an organist at the Thomas- and Nikolaikirche, in 1655. Having fled to Venice, we find Rosenmüller working as a trombone player at the magnificent San Marco. In this context he realized the synthesis of the German and Italian instrumental style. Many of Rosenmüller's published instrumental works are dance suites, including *Paduanen*(1645), *Studenten-Music*(1654), and *Sonate da camera*(1667). From this bundle we have chosen the seventh sonata, renown for its breathtaking rising lament motive in the opening phrase.

### The instruments of the Flanders Recorder Quartet

- a) **“Bassano” consort:** There are around 200 surviving original recorders from the period 1500-1650, a time we could describe today as being the golden age of the instrument. It was the only period in the recorder's history when it was considered as a serious musical instrument and when families of recorders were played in consort, principally to perform vocal music. Henry VIII (1491-1547) presumably was so enchanted by the instrument that he arranged for his agents to persuade members of the celebrated Bassano family to emigrate from Venice to England to play and make wind instruments at his court. An inventory of Henry's collections made after his death in 1547 notes 76 recorders among his many musical instruments. Another example of the popularity of the recorder at this time is found in a 1531 inventory of the Antwerp town musicians, which lists no fewer than 28 recorders. Almost a fifth of these surviving recorders are found today in the *Kunsthistorisches Museum* in Vienna, but originate from the d'Este collection in the region of Padua. In the spring of 2000, Adrian Brown started a serious survey of these instruments, resulting in a new museum catalogue of all 43 recorders in the collection. This project gave him the freedom to minutely study the details of these instruments which had an important influence on his work. The set of recorders used is based on instruments that were almost certainly made by members of the Bassano Family of London and Venice. The original instruments were probably made in the second half of the sixteenth century. Up to about 1700 recorders, no matter how tall, were made in one piece.
- b) **Baroque consort:** This set of large baroque recorders was built between 1990 and 1995 by the Boston-based recorder maker Friedrich von Huene. The smaller instruments are personal favourites of the players, collected from all over the world, and copied from original models in various wood types. The pitch of baroque recorders is  $a'=415$ , being a semi tone below the modern concert pitch. Our set consists of many types, from sopranino through soprano, alto, voice flute, tenor, bass, great bass up to the man-high contrabass in F, of which there are only three models in the world.