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Unico

Dutch Recorder Sonatas from the early 18th Century



Teun & Teun

Teun Wisse recorder **Teun Braken** harpsichord



SUPER AUDIO CD

Unico

Dutch Recorder Sonatas from the early 18th Century

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JEAN-BAPTISTE LOEILLET DE GANT (1688 - ca. 1720)

Sonata No. 3 in G Major

from: XII Sonates a und Flute & Basse Continue Op. 1, Amsterdam ca. 1710

- | | |
|-------------------------|------|
| [1] I. Largo | 2:28 |
| [2] II. Allegro | 2:14 |
| [3] III. Adagio | 3:20 |
| [4] IV. Gavotta Allegro | 2:23 |

SYBRANDUS VAN NOORDT (1659-1705)

Sonata No. 1 à Fluto Solo è Basso Continuo. F Major

from: Mêlange Italien, Amsterdam ca. 1704

- | | |
|------------------|------|
| [5] I. Vivace | 0:54 |
| [6] II. Adagio | 1:37 |
| [7] III. Allegro | 1:43 |

WILLEM DE FESCH (1687-1761)

Sonata No. 3 in G Major

from: XII Sonate Op. 8, London 1736

- | | |
|---------------------|------|
| [8] I. Largo | 1:11 |
| [9] II. Allemanda | 2:35 |
| [10] III. Larghetto | 2:23 |
| [11] IV. Gavotta | 1:01 |

SYBRANDUS VAN NOORDT (1659-1705)

[12] Sonata No. 4 à Cimbalo Solo in A Minor

7:12

from: Mêlange Italien, Amsterdam ca. 1704

UNICO WILHELM VAN WASSENAER (1692-1766)

Sonata Prima in F Major

- | | |
|----------------------|------|
| [13] I. Grave | 2:02 |
| [14] II. Allegro | 3:38 |
| [15] III. Adagio | 1:22 |
| [16] IV. Giga presto | 1:30 |

Sonata Seconda in G Minor

- | | |
|----------------------|------|
| [17] I. Grave | 1:54 |
| [18] II. Allegro | 2:06 |
| [19] III. Adagio | 1:23 |
| [20] IV. Giga presto | 2:18 |

Sonata Terza in G Minor

- | | |
|----------------------------|------|
| [21] I. Grave | 3:03 |
| [22] II. Allegro | 2:36 |
| [23] III. Sarabanda, Grave | 3:07 |
| [24] IV. Giga presto | 1:12 |

Total time: 55:27



Jean-Baptiste Loeillet de Gant - Sonata No. 3 in G Major

The story of Dutch Baroque music is a story of cultural connections and of European history. While it may seem odd to start a CD featuring Dutch Baroque music with a sonata by a composer from Ghent, who spent most of his life in Lyon, France, we instead see Jean-Baptiste Loeillet de Gant and his music as examples of the strong international character of composition, instrument making, music printing and publishing, and of course musical performance. The Netherlands – and Amsterdam in particular – played a central role in this.

While Loeillet was born in Ghent and worked in Lyon for most of his life, his 48 sonatas for recorder and continuo were all published in Amsterdam between 1710 and 1717. In addition, Loeillet's writing is not in a French musical idiom, but, like most composers featured here, heavily Corellian. In the first movement of his Sonata No. 3 in G Major, the entrance of the top voice is postponed, after an initial presentation of a simple but effective bass figure that maintains its disciplined rhythmic structure throughout the movement. The recorder enters only two bars into the movement, where, with beautifully long phrasing, it gently spreads a singing melody over this disciplined but emphatic bass. After an upbeat second movement, the third movement, like the first, differentiates clearly between a strict bass and a lamenting, sighing melody, using this contrast to great dramatic effect. The sonata ends with a gavotte which, considering the influence of Corelli on the writing of Loeillet, can easily be imagined in a 'concerto grosso' orchestration, with its very distinctive textures, while the little echoes give a 'senza ripieni' effect.

Sybrant van Noordt - Sonata No. 1 à Fluto Solo è Basso Continuo. F Major

Less repertoire was originally written for recorder by Dutch composers than one would expect considering the extremely great production, in terms of both quantity and quality, of instruments by makers at the time, which we will speak about in more detail below. One of the explanations could be that instrumentation at the time was more fluent than later, so that works not originally written for recorder were often played on one. The Sonata by Willem de Fesch that is featured on this CD is an example of that practice: it was originally written for violin and continuo and we have adapted it for the recorder.

Yet there was no shortage of music, including repertoire for recorder, in Holland: Amsterdam was not only a centre of composition and instrument making, but also one of the most important centres for music publishing. Many of the most esteemed Italian composers had their work published in Amsterdam, making it available there earlier than in their own country. Dutch composers as well as other musicians of the time were thus ironically 'closer to the source' than many of their Italian colleagues. Whether this abundance of new music by the best and most popular composers from abroad suppressed the production of 'home-grown' Dutch repertoire must remain a matter of speculation, up to a point. What is absolutely certain, however, is that the music written by Dutch composers was heavily influenced by the Italian style.

Sybrant van Noordt is a perfect example of this 'Italomania'. Born into a Dutch family, he published his 'Sonate per il cembalo appropriate al Flauto & Violino

composta dal. Sigr. Sibrando van Noordt' in Amsterdam. One could find a copy 'in casa di Sebastian Petzold sopra il Rokin al insegna della tre Corone'. Not only the publication itself is Italianised to an almost hilarious degree, but the musical idiom is similarly in the style of the Italian masters of the time.

Van Noordt's Sonata No. 1 à Fluto è Basso Continuo opens with a lively vivace, in which the rhythmic texture is dominated by punctuated quavers, alternating between the top and bass voices. The second movement, *adagio*, is written as an instrumental recitative. Conventionally sung, since the traditional function is to convey a story line, the instrumental recitative appropriates this technique for specific effect. The vocal, melodic approach that lies somewhere between speech and song, combined with the great freedom in timing that is characteristic of this compositional form, allows for a dramatic movement that is highly expressive – a song without words, as it were.

The sonata, which consists of only three movements, ends with an *allegro* where the punctuated rhythms of the first movement return in a tertiary motive, creating somewhat of a frenzy: a festive ending to a festive piece.

Willem de Fesch - Sonata No. 3 in G Major

The recorder was an immensely popular instrument in 18th century Holland. In the 17th and 18th centuries, instrument manufacture flourished significantly in the Netherlands, and particularly in Amsterdam. Following the fall of Antwerp in the 1580s, a number of instrument makers travelled north and found employment there. Flemish instrument makers, particularly of stringed

instruments and harpsichords, moved to Amsterdam and set up shop. The production of wind instruments in the Netherlands only really got under way with the arrival of Richard Haka, an instrument maker who came to Amsterdam from London in about 1670. He established a large school of wind instrument makers there which continued until around 1770. Furthermore, highly capable and productive builders could be found particularly in the area to the east of the rivers Issel and Maas: there, the professions of cabinet-maker and woodturner were highly respected, and instrument makers were required to have a thorough grasp of these crafts before they became apprenticed to a maker of wind instruments. A number of them travelled from that area to Amsterdam, especially after 1700, since musical life there was particularly stimulating in the 18th century, with composers of instrumental music in this period including Hacquart, Locatelli, Van Blankenburg, De Fesch and Hellendaal.

The wind instruments by Hendrik Richters, who mostly made oboes but also recorders, which are remarkable for their fine form and splendid ivory turning, were much admired by the wealthy citizens of Amsterdam. These were precisely the sort of people who would attend one of the regular musical soirees for a select company of the high aristocracy at Count Van Wassenaer's Chateau Twickel. For us, not only the sound but also the refined turning and ornamentation of the instruments is a great inspiration, embodying the finesse and sense of proportion that is mirrored in the music they bring to life. The ivory carving of the soprano recorder in C by Richters, an image of which we include in this booklet, is very different from that of a German maker like

Johann Benedikt Gahn, who is known for his elaborate bird-motive carvings. It is in a way much more austere in the organisation of its form. That austerity makes it all the more remarkable that this fine shape is at the same time so organic in the lasciviousness of its little curves and bulges. The instrument manages to merge the structural shape with the finest ornament in a most masterful way, creating a thoroughly playful whole.

This happy marriage of structural simplicity and richness of detail, only achieved by great craftsmanship, applies perfectly to the sonata by Willem de Fesch, which we choose to perform on a copy of this exact original instrument by Richters. The opening movement of the Sonata in G major is around a minute long, yet a world, a microcosm, in itself, due to its compositional efficiency. Motifs that are disparate in character and otherwise rarely combined interlock within the structure of this piece in such an organic way that the ears immediately find a relationship between their distant affects.

The *allemanda* combines the typical 'flow' common to this dance form with a joyous and energetic character, where the melody is constantly dancing and jumping around, making the movement clearly Italian, as opposed to its French '*allemande*' counterpart. The *larghetto*, however, is much more ambiguous in its relationship to the classical dance forms of the suite. At first sight, it presents itself as a minuet, yet the general affect and tempo indication suggest a slower performance. This tension between the compositional form of a dance that is traditionally light and moderately fast on the one hand and the melancholy and hesitancy of the melody, an effect amplified by the slower tempo, on the

other hand, creates a fragility that renders the movement quite unique. We believe the soprano recorder by Richters suits this ethereal atmosphere very well. This short sonata, which at times seems to play a trick on time itself, or at least our perception of it, concludes with a festive gavotte.

Sydrandus van Noordt - Sonata No. 4 à Cimbalò Solo in A Minor

The title of Sydrandus van Noordt's composition leaves no room for misunderstanding as to what instrumentation is required: solo harpsichord, Sonata à Cimbalò Solo. However, we cannot recognise idiomatic harpsichord writing here. The piece is notated in the same way as was common for writing sonatas for a melody instrument with basso continuo accompaniment in the 18th century: an upper voice and a bass voice, with basso continuo scoring. That makes this composition unique: harpsichord sonatas were almost non-existent outside Italy at the beginning of the 18th century.

So, it is up to the musician himself to make this sonata suitable for the keyboard instrument, providing it with the necessary harmonic and rhythmic material to make the piece sound effective on the harpsichord. Very informed players who bought the 1710 publication of Van Noordt's sonatas from the renowned Amsterdam publisher Estienne Roger might have already been accustomed to the latest and soon to be wildly popular techniques serving this purpose, like the lush, abundant harmonies described by Francesco Gasparini in his 'Armoncio Pratico al Cimbalò' (Venice, 1708). Excitingly, the many different possibilities of realising the composition lead to vastly different interpretations of the same piece. We present you here with one version of many.



Unico Wilhelm van Wassenaer - Sonata Prima in F Major

Count Unico Wilhelm van Wassenaer is a central figure in our programme, which features all three of his sonatas for recorder and harpsichord. He was also a central figure in the political developments of his time, when music was a part of politics, as shown in this account by de Duke of Luynes, written in 1746 in Paris: 'As for M. Van Wassenaer, he has succeeded very well in this country: he is a man of at least sixty years of age, a little deaf on one side. But he has a lot of humour, politeness, kindness: he is neither tall nor small, his face a little long: he is kind, knows a lot; he is a great musician, even a composer, and he plays the harpsichord well.' Van Wassenaer, a prominent diplomat, had been sent to the French court by the States General, charged with a mission as extraordinary ambassador. The War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748) threatened to degenerate into a European war in which the Republic of the United Provinces would find itself embroiled. It was up to the Count to investigate whether it might be possible, through negotiations, to contain the danger of an imminent extension of the conflict.

We would not go as far as crediting the Sonata in F major for recorder and harpsichord with at least partly de-escalating the conflict. But thanks to the account by the Duke of Luynes, we can safely conclude that music was definitely part of Van Wassenaer's diplomatic skill set. For us, the sonatas clearly reflect the personality of their creator, as the Duke describes it: they are full of wit, humour, and have an undeniable 'noblesse'. The first movement of the first sonata, in the key of F major, is characterised by the simplest of bass lines that serves as a rhythmic motor and provides a simple harmonic and structural

groundwork, above which the recorder plays a richly ornamented, flourishing melodic line that artfully manages to combine beautiful long phrases and capricious jumps and turns. The second movement, reminiscent of a minuet, is thoroughly charming; it exudes the politeness and kindness the Duke of Luynes praises in the character of its creator, the 'gentilhomme hollandais' Unico Wilhelm van Wassenaer. The beautifully 'cantabile', singing third movement, with a refined structure built around the subtle melodic motive of an ascending minor second, invites the players to add lavish ornamentation, mirroring the embellishments that Van Wassenaer himself wrote out in the first movement. The Sonata ends with a jolly and light fast dance, a *giga*.

Unico Wilhelm van Wassenaer - Sonata Seconda in G Minor

We play the Sonata Seconda of Van Wassenaer on a recorder that is a copy of an instrument by Jan Steenbergen, a student of Haka. Its deep and sonorous tone fits the general affect of the first movement, with its dark atmosphere and punctuated slow rhythm in triple time, which give it a heavy and arduous, almost processional, character. The melody lies in a very low tessitura of the alto recorder that is imitated in the bass. The second movement brings the storm: almost nothing but rapid semiquavers in the upper voice, running up and down, sometimes in figures that seem to pile up on or interrupt each other, driven forward by a 'walking bass' – at this particular tempo perhaps better characterised as running – that amplifies the sense of urgency. If the second movement is thunder, then the third is lightning. The repeated notes almost literally 'strike' suddenly and violently, creating a very dramatic effect. There is a clear Corellian feeling to this: compare for example this

movement with the *adagio* from Corelli's Concerto Grosso Op. 6 No. 10. The Concerti Grossi were published in Amsterdam in 1714 by one of the world's leading music publishers, Estienne Roger, who published the music of a great other number of Italian composer as well, and must have been well known throughout the Dutch musical scene. The sonata ends similarly to the other two, in a fashion that can also be found in the Concerti Grossi (for example Op. 6 No. 11): with a *giga* using trochaic and tribachian rhythms combined with wide and energetic intervals.

Unico Wilhelm van Wassenaer - Sonata Terza in G Minor

A final account by one of the French officials with whom Van Wassenaer made his acquaintance on his trip to Paris around the middle of the 18th century describes him as 'a great composer and excellent harpsichord player. He performed several pieces by his own hand, which we found almost as good as those of Corelli.' It once again invalidates firstly the cliché that music in the Italian style was not highly appreciated in France (if we assume that it was not a backhanded compliment) and secondly that Van Wassenaer was secretive about his musical activities, a misunderstanding that might arise because the Concerti Armonici were not published under his name. While (commercial) publication of his pieces might not have been considered appropriate for a man of his stature, he did present himself as a musician and composer and received public recognition for his mastery. With this recording, we humbly hope to do our small part in adding to that recognition.

One fine example of Van Wassenaer's mastery, a piece which we agree is 'almost as good as Corelli', is Van Wassenaer's Sonata Terza, in G Minor. The first movement is more bittersweet and tender than its more magnificent counterpart in the same tonality in the second sonata. A fast second movement follows, in which the top and bottom voices often engage in imitation, both in the main theme, which is presented throughout the piece in several tonalities, each giving a different colour to the motive, and in faster passages, where the harpsichordist's left hand joins the dextrous party started by the recorder player. As if the harpsichordist is keen to take full advantage of his warmed-up fingers, the third movement – which is a *sarabanda* – has an ornamented bass line that moves in quavers. We decided to distil the 'original' bass line, presenting the piece first as a conventional *sarabanda* and then in its ornamented (which the French would call '*double*') version. Like all of the sonatas, the third and last concludes with a *giga*.

Teun Wisse



Teun & Teun

Recorder player Teun Wisse and harpsichordist Teun Braken met each other during their studies at the Utrecht Conservatory in 2012 and have since collaborated and performed in various European countries including Germany, Switzerland, Bulgaria, Scotland and the Netherlands, where they have played in numerous music festivals and concert series such as the *Utrecht Early Music Festival* and *Early Music Season* of the Dutch Early Music Foundation.

Since 2018, these musicians and good friends have been living and working in the Basel region of Switzerland, where they studied at the prestigious Schola Cantorum Basiliensis. The essence of their approach to music is from its cultural and historical context, creating the conditions for a convincing performance and appropriating the Baroque vocabulary as their own.

In their musical performances, Teun & Teun always try to leave scope for special musical moments by adopting an open attitude towards each other and the music. Their lengthy collaboration and intensive way of working lets them create space for spontaneity, resulting in a unique, lively, and captivating performance.

Teun Wisse, recorder player and pedagogue, currently lives in Basel, Switzerland. He gives concerts throughout Europe with numerous ensembles such as the Hassler Consort (Germany), Camerata Variabile (Switzerland), and Ensemble Locatelli (Italy). With harpsichordist Teun Braken, he forms the duo Teun&Teun.

Teun studied with Heiko ter Schegget at Utrecht Conservatoire, where he graduated *cum laude* in 2015. Supported by scholarships from VSB Fonds and the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds, he continued his studies at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis in Switzerland, where he graduated from his studies with Conrad Steinmann (musical performance), Katharina Bopp (music pedagogy) and Donna Agrell (historical bassoon).

As well as his performing activities, Teun holds a position at the Musikschule Konservatorium Zürich, where he is department leader of the recorder faculty. In that capacity, at an institutional level as well as in his own teaching, he is committed to furthering a sound institutional groundwork for music education (with a special focus on Early Music), and the development of talent.

One of the common threads in his approach to music making and teaching is the love for the instrument itself. Teun considers the wide variety of historical recorder models and sizes, all with their own entirely individual qualities, as a major source of inspiration. Two instruments hold a special place in his instrument collection: a soprano in B flat by Hartley and an alto in G by Gahn, both from the beginning of the 18th century.





Teun Braken, harpsichord and organ player, studied harpsichord and organ at the conservatoires of Utrecht and Amsterdam with Siebe Henstra, Reitze Smits and Menno van Delft. After finishing his Master's degree in Amsterdam, supported by the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds, he continued his studies in Basel at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, where he specialised in basso continuo playing and ensemble direction under the guidance of Prof. Jörg-Andreas Bötticher and organ with Prof. Tobias Lindner.

Teun has performed with many different Dutch ensembles, such as Concerto d'Amsterdam, Musica Amphion, the Dutch Bach Society, with whom he has recorded J.S. Bach's St John Passion, and La Sfera Armoniosa, with whom he has recorded 2 CDs of Dutch music.

Currently living close to Basel, Switzerland, he regularly performs with Capriccio Barockorchester Basel and several chamber music ensembles, works as a church organist in Frick and teaches basso continuo and harpsichord at the Conservatoire of Freiburg.

The golden thread of his musical life is the early music movement, taking his inspiration for taste and skill from historical sources and instruments from the 17th and 18th centuries.

The following instruments were used:

Soprano recorder in C after Hendrik Richters, Amsterdam 1683-1727 by Heiko ter Schegget, Doorn, 2021, kindly placed at our disposal by Heiko ter Schegget : Track 8-11

Alto recorder in F after Willem Beukers Sr., Amsterdam 1666-1750 by Heiko ter Schegget, Doorn, 2022: Track 5-7, 13-16

Alto recorder in F after Jan Steenberg, 1676-1752 by Heiko ter Schegget, Doorn, 2014, kindly placed at our disposal by Heiko ter Schegget: Track: 17-20

Alto recorder in F after Jan Steenberg, Amsterdam 1676-1752 by Guido M. Klemisch, Berlin, 1985: Track: 21-24

Alto recorder in F after Jean-Hyacinth Rottenburgh, Brussels 1672-1756 by Andreas Glatt, between 1972-1978: Track 1-4

Harpsichord after Hans Ruckers (1578-1642), Antwerp 1638, built by Titus Crijnen, Amsterdam, 1992: Track 8-11, 13-20

Harpsichord after Christian Vater (1679-1756), Hannover 1736 by Titus Crijnen, Amsterdam, 1991: Track 1-7, 12, 21-24

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to Heiko ter Schegget for lending us his inspiring instruments for our recording.



This High Definition Surround Recording was Produced, Engineered and Edited by Bert van der Wolf of NorthStar Recording Services, using the 'High Quality Musical Surround Mastering' principle. The basis of this recording principle is a realistic and holographic 3 dimensional representation of the musical instruments, voices and recording venue, according to traditional concert practice. For most older music this means a frontal representation of the musical performance, but such that width and depth of the ensemble and acoustic characteristics of the hall do resemble 'real life' as much as possible. Some older compositions, and many contemporary works do specifically ask for placement of musical instruments and voices over the full 360 degrees sound scape, and in these cases the recording is as realistic as possible, within the limits of the 5.1 Surround Sound standard. This requires a very innovative use of all 6 loudspeakers and the use of completely matched, full frequency range loudspeakers for all 5 discrete channels. A complementary sub-woofer, for the ultra low frequencies under 40Hz, is highly recommended to maximally benefit from the sound quality of this recording.

This recording was produced with the use of Sonodore microphones, Avalon Acoustic & Musikelectronic Geithain monitoring, Siltech Mono-Crystal cabling and dCS - & Merging Technologies converters.



NORTHSTAR
RECORDING
by BERT VAN DER WOLF



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Recording assistant: Martijn van der Wolf

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