



Louis-Gabriel Guillemain
Flute Quartets Op.12

Wilbert Hazelzet baroque flute
FANTASTICUS

Louis-Gabriel Guillemain (1705–1770)

Flute Quartets, Op. 12

Wilbert Hazelzet *baroque flute*

Fantasticus

Rie Kimura *baroque violin*

Robert Smith *viola da gamba*

Guillermo Brachetta *harpsichord*

About Fantasticus:

*'The performances of Fantasticus are confident, stylish,
beautifully articulated and convey a sense of genuine rapport'*
Gramophone

*'[...] Fantasticus have established themselves as a white-hot addition
to the early music scene. Fantasticus by name, fantastic by nature!'*
BBC Music Magazine

DISC ONE

Sonata No. 1 in G major, Op. 12, No. 1

1. Allegro moderato [4:13]
2. Aria: Grazioso [5:18]
3. Allegro, ma non presto [4:13]

Sonata No. 2 in B minor, Op. 12, No. 2

4. Allegro moderato [4:35]
5. Aria: Grazioso [6:04]
6. Allegro [3:19]

Sonata No. 3 in D minor, Op. 12, No. 3

7. Allegro moderato [3:33]
8. Larghetto [4:00]
9. Aria: Grazioso [2:56]
10. Allegro [3:57]

Total playing time [42:13]

DISC TWO

Sonata No. 4 in A major, Op. 12, No. 4

1. Allegro moderato [5:04]
2. Aria: Grazioso [4:33]
3. Allegro [4:02]

Sonata No. 5 in F major, Op. 12, No. 5

4. Allegro moderato [4:57]
5. Aria: Grazioso [3:58]
6. Andante [1:54]
7. Allegro, ma non presto [4:45]

Sonata No. 6 in C major, Op. 12, No. 6

8. Allegro moderato [5:07]
9. Aria: Grazioso,
un poco allegro [5:42]
10. Allegro [4:35]

Total playing time [44:44]



**Louis-Gabriel Guillemain:
Flute Quartets, Op. 12**

History is cruel, and the history of music is no exception. Composers venerated as heroes in their own lifetimes can later become mere trivial names for even the most widely read, and conversely, figures who were relatively unimportant can emerge as forgotten gems centuries after their death. Furthermore, considering that until the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, music of living composers dominated the concert stage – many important figures were erased from concert programs immediately after passing away; their fame dwindled, their names were forgotten and consigned to history books.

Such has been the fate of Louis-Gabriel Guillemain (1705–1770), a celebrated composer and violinist in his own time, whose name today only triggers the memory of music historians and ‘Baroque’ violinists aiming to broaden their repertoire and unearth treasure troves of forgotten repertoire. Yet, as the French writer Pierre-Louis d’Aquin de Château-Lyon (1720–1796) wrote of Guillemain in the sixth letter of his 1752 *Lettres sur les hommes célèbres* (reprinted in 1754 as *Siècle littéraire*

de Louis XV): ‘his hand was dazzling’, and he was ‘perhaps the most nimble and extraordinary violin[ist] one could hear’.

Not much is known about Guillemain’s early life. Probably born on 15 November 1705 in Paris, Guillemain grew up in the household of the Count de Rochecouart in Paris. After initial violin studies in Paris, he went to Turin to study with the celebrated violin pedagogue Giovanni Battista Somis (1686–1763), among whose other students were Jean-Marie Leclair (1697–1764), Jean-Pierre Guignon (1702–1774), and Gaetano Pugnani (1731–1798). Somis’s students were instrumental in establishing the French violin school in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. By the age of twenty-four, Guillemain was in Lyon for a brief period, playing as a *symphoniste* in the opera orchestra. Guillemain subsequently moved to Dijon, where he was appointed first violinist of the Académie de Musique (active 1725–38). Sponsored by Monsieur Chartraire de Bourbonne, the wealthy *président à mortier* of Bourbonne at the Dijon Parliament, Guillemain made another trip to Italy during his stay in Dijon, but the details of this trip are not known to us. Guillemain was included in Chartraire de Bourbonne’s will, and he dedicated his first opus to his patron.

A few years after publishing his first work in Dijon in 1734 (*Premier Livre de Sonates a Violon Seul avec la Basse Continue*) Guillemain moved to Paris, where he became a *musicien ordinaire* to Louis XV, a rather insignificant position that only indicated that a person was in the service of the king's chapel and/or chamber music. However, later in his life, Guillemain became one of the most respected and highest-paid musicians at the court. In 1750, due to his loyal service to the court and his popularity, Guillemain received a pension of 500 livres from Louis XV. Despite this pension, his increasing fame as a composer and violinist, and his connections to the court, Guillemain's later years were replete with financial problems, the most likely reason for the sparsity of his compositions from this period. His penchant for extravagant purchases and his love of fine tapestry and furniture slid him into large debts, putting him on the verge of bankruptcy on multiple occasions.

He seems to have resorted to alcohol and his eventual death in 1770 is still shrouded in mystery. Some contemporary accounts describe it as an act of suicide, which involved the composer stabbing himself fourteen times at the foot of a willow tree. Although the veracity of all the

details of this account is questionable, it seems certain that the cause of his death was indeed suicide and that he was buried hurriedly on the day of his death on 1 October 1770.

Guillemain's works were performed a total of nineteen times at the famed *Concert Spirituel* in Paris. These were mostly his larger orchestral works as well as two concertos, only one of which was played by Guillemain himself on 18 May 1750. Guillemain's rare public appearances have been attributed to his timid nature, often recounted in contemporary accounts. His published oeuvre – all of which is instrumental – does not exceed eighteen works, and spans approximately thirty years from his first opus published in 1734, to his last published work (Op. 18) published in 1762 in Paris. These works include works for unaccompanied violin (Op. 18), violin and keyboard (Opp. 1, 3, 11), trio sonatas (Opp. 10, 15), quartets (Opp. 12, 17), and concertos (Op. 16, now lost).

Although some of Guillemain's works have achieved a certain notoriety for the dazzling virtuosity embedded in many of them (his solo caprices have even been dubbed as possible sources of inspiration for Niccolò Paganini's (1782–1840) caprices), not all

his compositions were showcases for his virtuosity. In fact, in part due to his financial hardships and the need to reach a more general public, he purposefully lessened the technical difficulty in his chamber works and announced this fact in the prefaces to their scores. His numerous chamber and orchestral works testify to his skills as a composer of melodic originality, steeped in the prevalent *galant* idioms of the time.

Perhaps no other work by Guillemain shows these features better than the **Six Sonates en Quatuors, Op. 12**, published in 1743 in Paris. This is the first of two sets that Guillemain composed for this combination of instruments: transverse flute, violin, bass viol, and basso continuo (the other set being Op. 17, published in 1756). In these 'quartets', the violin part is – unsurprisingly – the most technically challenging part, with many runs, double stops, and arpeggios. In comparison, the viola di [sic] gamba part rarely deploys double stops and uses generally slower figures. However, with regard to melodic material, Guillemain strikes an admirable balance between the different parts (especially the three melodic instruments) and gives equal footing to all instruments in imitations.

This is in line with the collection's subtitle: 'Galant and entertaining conversations between a transverse flute, a violin, a bass viol, and the continuo', which emphasizes the equal interplay between the instruments by calling the pieces 'conversations'. Guillemain dedicated the volume to His Serene Highness the Duke of Chartres.

The original 1743 print bears a prefatory notice (*avertissement*), customary of French scores of the time, in which the composer (or is it the publisher?) presents some of his remarks on the performance of this set of pieces. The author of this *avertissement* advises one instrument to be used per part (as opposed to the common practice of doubling parts with multiple instruments in France at the time), and cautions against rushing in the allegros and dragging in the arias. The author further suggests using the upper manual ('le petit Clavier') for accompaniment and playing the chords simultaneously (as opposed to the regular French arpeggiated manner, known as *style brisé*) in the manner of the Italians.

All six pieces in the set start with a fast movement, the tempo indication in all of them being 'Allegro moderato'. The first, second, fourth, and sixth quartets follow a fast-slow-fast scheme, in which the middle movement is always an aria.

Including an additional slow movement, the third and the fifth quartets have four movements, with the fast-slow-slow-fast scheme. Except for the third sonata, which has a fugal opening, all first movements in this set employ some kind of early sonata-allegro form, including primary and secondary themes, closing section, transitions, and even what has been termed *medial caesuras* (cadences that end the transition after the primary theme and mark the arrival of the secondary theme). The joyful exchange of motives and melodic material and the *galant* idioms interspersed throughout these sonatas make for very charming pieces and provide a source of 'enlightened' pleasure for amateur listeners, musicians, and students of music alike.

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Wilbert Hazelzet (Baroque flute)

The Dutch flautist, Wilbert Hazelzet, has dedicated himself since 1970 exclusively to the Baroque flauto traverso. He studied the ancient instrumental techniques and the performance of the music from the eighteenth century according to contemporary treatises about flute playing and singing. Considered by many as the world's leading Baroque flute player, in 1978 he became a member of Musica Antiqua Köln, and with this world-famous ensemble he appeared in Japan, India, China, the USA, Canada, and all over Europe, from Finland to Portugal and from Ireland to Russia.

Wilbert has formed permanent duos with harpsichordist Jacques Ogg and with lutenist Konrad Junghänel. He has been first flautist of Ton Koopman's Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra as well as a regular guest soloist with the Ensemble Sonnerie, London Baroque, Music For Awhile and the Passamezzo Trio Bilbao. He is a member of the Corelli Ensemble, in which Tini Mathot and Reine-Marie Verhagen also participate. Among his other chamber music partners have been harpsichordists Tini Mathot, Laura Dearmas, Malcolm Proud and Hendrik Bouman, gambist Jaap ter Linden,

and violinist Maya Homburger.

Wilbert has appeared for numerous radio and TV stations across the world and has recorded for several companies such as Archiv-Deutsche Grammophone, Erato, Harmonia Mundi Deutschland, Philips, Globe, and, in recent years, Glossa Music.

Wilbert teaches at the Conservatories of The Hague and Utrecht; his masterclasses take place at the universities of Salamanca, Granada, Seville, Vancouver, London and Minneapolis.

Fantasticus

Fantasticus plays Baroque music on historical instruments. When Fantasticus performs it is an act of creation that gives old music an immediacy and a relevance to today's listeners. The group believes in connecting with their audiences and sees each concert as a joint journey of discovery, passing peaks of intensity and intimacy along the way. Knowledge of the style, skill with instruments and a passion to tell the story are trademarks of a Fantasticus performance.

The ensemble is based in Amsterdam and, since 2010, has been performing in important halls and festivals around Europe. They have also recorded a number of highly praised albums with Resonus Classics. *BBC Music Magazine* likened Fantasticus to 'the young Andrew Manze and his collaborators' and dubbed them 'a white-hot addition to the early music scene'. The recording *Tartini & Veracini* received a rare five-star review in Dutch national newspaper, *De Volkskrant*.

The name of the ensemble refers to its biggest source of inspiration – the mysterious and virtuosic music from the middle of the seventeenth century

known as the 'stylus fantasticus'. Buxtehude and Biber feature prominently in their repertoire, as does music for violin and viola da gamba in general.

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RESONUS LIMITED – UK

info@resonusclassics.com

www.resonusclassics.com

