

94154

BRILLIANT
CLASSICS



Robert de Visée
La musique de la Chambre du Roy

MANUEL STAROPOLI
MASSIMO MARCHESE
CRISTIANO CONTADIN



Robert de Viséé

Little is known of Robert de Viséé. Even his birth and death places and dates are uncertain. We may say he was one of Francesco Corbetta's student; he played the guitar, the lute, the theorbo, the viola da gamba; he was a singer and a composer. Our first source dates from 1680 when he was known as a 'Célebre Jouer de Théorbe' and his name was partnered with such prestigious musicians as Mouton, Chambonnière, Couperin and Sainte Colombe. He became chamber musician to Louis XIV, and then guitar teacher to Louis XV. His main task was that of playing the guitar when the King was going to retire at night.

Among his extant compositions are these 'Pièces de Théorbe et de Luth mises en partition, dessus et basse' published in Paris in 1716. The collection consists of 10 varied suites gathered according to their tonality in which there is a great variety of pieces, chosen at the performer's will during his performances.

Our choice of instruments, leaving out the harpsichord, is based on a search for an atmosphere that is even more appropriate to chamber music. The theorbo, thanks to its versatility and its low register, made the composers use it even as a favourite instrument for the realization of a *basso continuo* able to exalt the singing part without being too pushy. On this point we think it is interesting to cite the opinion of an outstanding contemporary flute player, Michel de la Barre, who, in his note to his *Pièces pour la Flûte Traversière* says:

'If you want to play them completely, you will absolutely need a viola da gamba and a theorbo or a harpsichord, or both together; but I don't think theorbo would be better than harpsichord because I believe that the gut strings' sound is more suitable to transverse flute than the brass strings' one.'

The question has obviously been widened to recorder whose use was at the height in that period. De Viséé entitled this work 'Pièces...' but he does not specify on its title page which instrument is allocated to *dessus* though in the *Avertissement* he recommends the harpsichord, the viola da gamba and the violin. Still on this matter, an important source from that time, *Premier Livre de Pièces pour la Flûte Traversière* (Paris, 1708) by Jacques-Martin Hotteterre says:

'Even though these *Pièces* are composed for the transverse flute, they could be suitable for all the instruments which play the dessus such as recorder, oboe, violin, and viola da gamba'.

The recorder has been used throughout with its original tonalities; the range of the *dessus* is very well-aimed also for the use of wind instruments, perfect for the transverse in each suite, but possible for the recorder too without any transposition, as it was the most widely-used instrument of the late-Baroque period. Together with it, two other musical instruments of the same family have been played: the soprano recorder and fifth flute, a fifth higher than contralto and the flûte de voix, with the same range as the flûte traversière.

Some of these pieces had already been present in previous editions for theorbo and for guitar, but only in this edition the so-called tablature is absent, with the *basso* and the *dessus* parts being written on separate staves. This may have been a choice due to the waning use of tablature notation, as De Visée states in his *Avertissement*.

The theorbo used in this recording has the same characteristics as the one used by De Visée himself: 14 strings, 6 of which are on the keyboard and 8 chromatic, on the long head, called drones. The most important feature of the theorbo is its tuning called *rientrante* which consisted in keeping the first two strings one octave low. This device allows the performer to play sonorous closed harmonies and to obtain the so-called ‘campanellas’, very particular virtuoso effects.

© Manuel Staropoli, Massimo Marchese, 2011

Manuel Staropoli

Manuel Staropoli obtained his diploma for recorder at the Tartini Conservatory of Trieste where he studied with Stefano Casaccia; he continued his studies with Kees Boeke and Lorenzo Cavasanti. In 2000 he obtained a further degree at the Scuola di Alto Perfezionamento Musicale of Saluzzo. He also obtained a Master's at the Giuseppe Verdi Conservatoire, where he studied with Francesca Odling, and continued his studies with Barthold Kuijken. He has given more than 400 concerts in Italy and abroad. As a soloist of the Academia del Ricercare he has collaborated with Academia Bizantina, Tripla Concordia, Collegium Pro Musica, the Icarus recorder quartet, and the orchestras Terg Antiqua and Montis Regalis. He has a duo with Manuel Tomadin, the organist at the Cattedrale San Giusto in Trieste.

He has made recordings with the Italian ensemble Rhapsody of Fire, and for various record companies including Stradivarius, Tactus, Amadeus, Pizzicato, Rugginenti, Carrara. He has contributed articles on early music to various magazines such as Orfeo, CD Classics and FaLaUt.

He teaches recorder at the Scuola Civica Musicale of Turin, at the Leone Sinigaglia musical institute of Chivasso (Turin) and for the Academia del Ricercare at Settimo Torinese and S. Raffaele in Turin. He also teaches recorder at the Agostino Stefani Conservatoire of Castelfranco Veneto (Treviso) and is professor at the Nicolò Paganini Conservatoire of Genoa. Since 2008 he has led early-music masterclasses with the harpsichordist and organist Manuel Tomadin at the Mannheim Musik-Hochschule. Since 2005 he has been director of the Corso Internazionale di Musica Antica of the Accademia del Ricercare.

Massimo Marchese

The lutenist Massimo Marchese was born in Savona. He studied initially with Federico Marincola and then Jakob Lindberg, obtaining his diploma at the Royal College of Music in London. He continued his studies with Massimo Lonardi and took a Master's degree from the Franco Vittadini Istituto Superiore di Studi Musicale in Pavia. He has taken part in masterclasses with Paul O'Dette and seminars with Nigel North and Hopkinson Smith. In 1980 he started to play both as a soloist and as a permanent member of numerous ensembles.

He has collaborated with Jakob Lindberg, Nigel Rogers, Danilo Constantini, Gaetano Nasillo, Patrizia Pace, Pietro Spagnoli, Enrico Gatti, Lorenzi Girodo and Flavio Emilio Scogna. He has played in Milan, Turin, Bologna, Parma, Genoa, Siracusa, Cagliari, etc., and in France, Switzerland, Spain, Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Scotland and England. He has appeared in festivals including Settembre Musica, Piemonte in Musica, Festival Internazionale delle Arti barocche, the Festival of Sacred Music in Tenerife, and the Musical Weeks of Sofia.

In 2009 he made a successful solo tour of Peru. He has recorded for Italian and Bulgarian radio, and record companies including RCA, Bongiovanni, Stradivarius, Tactus and Solstice. He was a member of the Dodekachordon orchestra of lutes group, directed by Jakob Lindberg.

He has studied teaching methods such as Orff and Goitre and worked on many educational projects. From 1993 to 2000 he was the president of the SIEM (Società Italiana per l'Educazione Musicale) in Alessandria and participated in the 1997 Landeskongress der Musikpädagogik in Stuttgart. He has written papers and lectured at musical conferences, and been artistic director and consultant for numerous festivals and musical seasons. In 2004 he founded the Centro Italiano di Musica Antica di Alessandria (Italian Centre for Early Music in Alessandria) through which he has

organised and conducted the European Festival for Early Music. He taught lute at the international summer courses for Early Music in Prato and Ravello and he was Ottavio Dantone's assistant at the International Courses of Pamparato. From 1993 to 1996 he taught and conducted the Accademia di Musica Antica in San Giovannini, Alessandria. He was professor of lute at the Vivaldi Conservatoire in Alessandria and he has taught at the Lorenzo Perosi State Conservatoire in Campobasso.

Cristiano Contadin

Cristiano Contadin first obtained a diploma for the piano and then for the viola da gamba. He has worked with various Italian early-music groups including Accademia Bizantina, Il Giardino Armonico, Accademia Strumentale Italiana and Accademia Dià Pasón. He has also appeared with Ensemble Elyma, the Orchestra Filarmonica del Teatro alla Scala di Milano, the Orchestra del Teatro Comunale of Bologna, Radio Svizzera Italiana, I Barocchisti, Ensemble Il Suonar Parlante and musicians including Uri Caine, Diego Fasolis, Enrico Onofri, Ottavio Dantone, Gabriel Garrido, Andrew Lawrence King, Lorenzo Ghielmi, Gloria Banditelli, Roberta Invernizzi, Alberto Rasi, Filippo Bressan, Stefano Montanari, Vittorio Ghielmi, Guillemette Laurens, Christopher Hogwood and Sigiswald Kuijken.

He is a member of the viola da gamba ensemble Il Suonar Parlante; their 2006 album 'Full of Colour' won the Diapason d'Or, Le Choc de la Musique and the Deutscher Schallplattenpreis. Besides the typical repertory for violin, he also delves into contemporary music as a soloist and with Il Suonar Parlante, performing scores written by famous jazz-players and composers like Kenny Wheeler, Uri Caine, Don Byron, Vanni Moretto, Francesco Hoch, Ernst Reijseger and Markus Stockhausen.

He has made recordings for Winter & Winter, Universal (Deutsche Grammophon) EMI Classics, Brilliant Classics, Glossa, K617 Records, Tactus, Stradivarius, Bongiovanni, Naxos, Capriccio and various European radio stations. He made the Italian translation of *The Early History of the Violin* by Ian Woodfield, published by EDT Turin in 1999, and he is the artistic director for the series on the viola da gamba of the publishing house MUSEDITA. He is professor of viola da gamba at the Benedetto Marcello Conservatoire of Venice and at the Incontri Internazionali of Nervi, Urbino Salice and Gabicce.

Manuel Staropoli

Suite in C: Descant recorder after Thomas Boekhout (1666–1715), copy made by Thomas Prescott
Suite in A minor: Voice flute after Peter Bressan (1663–1731), copy made by Luca De Paolis
Suite in G: Alto recorder after Peter Bressan, copy made by Hans Schimmel
Suite in G minor and D minor: Baroque flute after Jacob Denner (1681–1735) copy made by Philippe Allain-Dupré

Massimo Marchese

Theorbo after Mattheus Buechenberg (d. 1628), copy made by Stephen Gottlieb

Cristiano Contadin

Viola da gamba, French, 7 strings, after di H. Jacobs, copy made by Nicola Vendrame

Recording: 26–28 February 2010, Ancelle della Carità, Rome,

Pitch: A = 415Hz

Producer and engineer: Giovanni Caruso

Editing: Massimo Marchese

Mastering: Rosella Clementi

Cover image – Jan Miense Molenaer (1610–1668):

A Young Man Playing a Theorbo and a Young Woman Playing a Cittern, c.1630–32 (oil on canvas)

Photo: National Gallery, London/The Bridgeman Art Library

© and © 2011 Brilliant Classics