



BACH'S
CIRCLE

ALLAN VOGEL
OBOE

music of
J.S. & J.C.F. BACH
TELEMANN
COUPERIN

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BACH'S CIRCLE

Telemann: Trio Sonata in E-Flat Major [10:54]

oboe, obbligato harpsichord, continuo harpsichord, viola da gamba

- 1 Largo (2:39)
- 2 Vivace (2:36)
- 3 Mesto (2:29)
- 4 Vivace (3:10)

J. S. Bach: Sonata in G Minor, BWV 1020 [11:10]

oboe, obbligato harpsichord

- 5 Allegro (4:09)
- 6 Adagio (3:10)
- 7 Allegro (3:51)

Couperin: Concert Royal No. 4 in E Minor [15:18]

oboe d'amore, flute, harpsichord, viola da gamba

- 8 Prélude (1:49)
- 9 Allemande (1:43)
- 10 Courante Française (1:52)
- 11 Courante à l'italienne (2:05)
- 12 Sarabande (3:12)
- 13 Rigaudon (1:31)
- 14 Forlane Rondeau (3:06)

J. S. Bach: Sonata in G Minor, BWV 1030b [17:04]

oboe, obbligato harpsichord, viola da gamba

15 Andante (7:22)

16 Siciliano (3:48)

17 Presto (5:54)

J. C. F. Bach: Sonata in C Major [14:31]

flute, oboe, obbligato harpsichord

18 Allegro (5:41)

19 Andante (4:03)

20 Rondo (Allegretto) (4:47)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 68:59

Allan Vogel, oboe and oboe d'amore

Janice Tipton, flute

Patricia Mabee, harpsichord

Mark Chatfield, viola da gamba

Nancy Sartain, continuo harpsichord (Telemann)

In his mature years, Johann Sebastian Bach's (1685 - 1750) circle of family, friends, students and colleagues was a large one. Bach was known to be a hospitable man who would often have concerts for this extended family in his own home. Such a concert is the inspiration for this recording.

Looking back some years to 1704, when Bach was nineteen, his circle was very much smaller. Both parents had died, and at that time his immediate family consisted of his two elder brothers. One of these brothers, Johann Jakob, is the subject of Bach's earliest well-known composition, "Capriccio on the Departure of a Beloved Brother." In my student days, when I first heard about this piece, I remember feeling sad that the orphaned composer was suffering the loss of his beloved older brother. I also remember my delight upon discovering that in this case "Departure" did not mean leaving this world. Bach's brother was in fact an oboe player who was departing for Sweden to join the king's honor band!

We can probably assume that over the years Johann Jakob would more than once have come to Leipzig to visit his

younger brother's home. If there were a house concert to celebrate such occasions, then of course some great oboe music would have been played.

Georg Phillip Telemann (1681 - 1767) was the best-known and -loved composer in Germany in the first half of the eighteenth century. In fact, Bach obtained his position in Leipzig only after Telemann had turned it down. Telemann's popularity stemmed partly from his huge and wonderful output of chamber music, written in a highly communicative style. Since he was godfather to one of Bach's sons, we can certainly imagine him in Bach's circle, and it seems entirely fitting to begin our concert with Telemann's music.

The **Trio Sonata in E-Flat Major** has a unique instrumentation. In a typical trio sonata the oboe would have a flute or violin as its conversation partner, with the harpsichord and gamba singing the bass line in unison. In this unusual work, the oboe's partner is an obbligato (solo) harpsichord; here we can enjoy the sonorous and scintillating sound of two harpsichords at once. The radiant key of E-flat major gives the opening *Largo* a golden warmth and a

rich and expansive mood. The second movement is a joyous romp, evoking the image of two children — or cats! — playing with and imitating one another. In the first section (which is repeated) we have a succession of energetic musical ideas developed with feeling and imagination in the movement's also-repeated second section. In the *Mesto* (mournful), we hear the continuo harpsichord on its lute stop; the combination of instruments evokes a complex sonority suited to the presentation of this deeply-felt and many-hued music. It is amazing how, in the finale, Telemann can once again catapult us into high-spirited and rhythmic joyfulness. Here the theme is reminiscent of hunting horns, and the movement is replete with outrageous accents and fun (after you've practiced!) fast passages.

We oboists usually refer to the next piece as Bach's "**little G Minor Sonata**" to distinguish it from his "big G Minor Sonata." The little G Minor is much shorter and simpler than the big one, so much so that some people question if indeed Johann Sebastian Bach actually wrote it. (Was it written by one of his sons or students, perhaps with the master's help?) On the

other hand, it is very similar to the flute sonata in E-flat major, which is known to have been written by J. S. Bach. The opening *Allegro* begins with a magnificent harpsichord introduction, and the fascinating interplay between the oboe and the keyboard develops with vigor and warmth. The second movement casts one of those sublime moods like the *Adagio* of the oboe and violin concerto (same key!) or the sixth Brandenburg *Adagio*, or, for that matter, the *Adagio* of the big G Minor Sonata. The finale is very exciting, with rustic rhythmical accents. My own feeling is that you should decide for yourself who you think wrote this piece, but that perhaps it doesn't really matter.

Leaving the whodunit aspects of this concert aside, we come to the **Concert Royal No. 4 in E Minor** by François Couperin (1668 - 1733), which is here played on a sublime instrument, the oboe d'amore. Couperin never sat in Bach's living room, but his music was a big influence on Bach during the latter's formative years.

Early in his career, Bach attended the court at Celle. Although Celle was in Germany, its prince was attempting to

imitate the court life of Louis XIV at Versailles, especially its music. Thus Bach had the opportunity to experience the tender and eloquent music of Couperin. Furthermore, at Celle, there happened to be one of the greatest oboists of the time, Johann Ernst Galliard.

The oboe was at that time a fairly new instrument, having been developed in France only a couple of decades before Bach was born. But soon another instrument was developed in Leipzig, the oboe d'amore, or oboe of love. Bach was enchanted with this instrument because of its soulful, mellow tone quality and gave it wonderful roles in the B Minor Mass, as well as the Passions and many of the cantatas. For me the oboe d'amore provides the perfect sound for this masterpiece by Couperin.

The Concert Royal is a dance suite: an exquisite prelude followed by six short dances in typical French manner. The *Prélude* acquaints the listener with Couperin's style; each subsequent movement reveals another wonderful facet. The greatest of the French Baroque composers is so eloquent and tender in the slow movements, and his faster dances have such character! Of special interest is

the *Sarabande* where Couperin adds an additional melody for the flute when each of the two halves is repeated.

Bach's monumental sonata that follows is most often played on the flute in the key of B minor. However, since the discovery of an eighteenth-century keyboard part in G minor, we oboists have been delving into the world of this unbelievable work. The exalted degree of contrapuntal genius in this music, along with psychological and spiritual understanding, is evident on first hearing, but ever more remarkable on further acquaintance.

The first movement begins with a subtle and expressive melody in the oboe while the harpsichord and viola da gamba provide sonorous support. The oboe then unexpectedly rests, highlighting the other two voices which play even sadder "sighing" motives. When the oboe returns to restate the theme, the bass voice descends a whole octave! Our trio of voices then introduces one meaningful musical character after another.

This long movement has a fascinating form, which seems to divide into five sections. The first, third and fifth are the "main" sections while the second and

fourth are lighter episodes. The expressive theme, which begins the piece, also begins the other “main” parts. All three main sections also end with the same closing statement, which can perhaps best be described as beginning with repeated high notes. The alternating episodes feature faster notes, lilting triplet rhythms, and the relaxing and satisfying series of harmonies known as the circle of fifths. For me, the mood of this movement could be described as “true to life” in the way, at least, it is lived on the cloudy days when our minds are the scene of different feelings and thoughts that alternate with each other, and develop themselves in an atmosphere of restlessness and melancholy. The most intense and painful moods come near the end of the second episode: a long trill is like an alarm bell signifying that we dare not continue in this way, and the expressive original theme, which immediately follows, is a true relief.

In Bach’s cantatas and other vocal music, the text makes it possible (with the aid of a German dictionary, if necessary) to know what the music is about. His instrumental music, while having no text, is nonetheless about the same states of mind, feeling and spirit.

If the *Andante* depicts not-so-cheerful days on earth, the second movement, by contrast, puts us into heaven-on-earth. Over beautiful comforting harmonies, Bach writes a gently elaborated cantilena, evoking a wisdom that can embrace sorrow. There are two halves, each of which is repeated. Thus we musicians have the opportunity to play at first more objectively, and then to repeat in a more personal way.

Only Bach could have written a final movement that does justice to the *Andante* and *Siciliano* that precede it. The theme of this vigorous, contrapuntal *Presto* is first stated in the oboe but soon repeated in the harpsichord treble and then in the bass voice. The theme dances energetically but also has tremendous underlying expressiveness. Again Bach is true to life: the dance floor is the scene not only of rhythm but also of emotion. After a trill and short breath, Bach reveals his unbelievable vitality by introducing a new dance featuring fascinating off-the-beat triplet rhythms. This sonata is thus brought to a most satisfying conclusion.

It is fitting that the youngest composer would have the last say. Johann Christoph

Friedrich Bach (1732 - 1795) — not to be confused with his famous younger brother Johann Christian — contributes a gem that displays refreshing, high-spirited and innocent energy. J.C.F. Bach was one of his father's younger children and his music is very forward-looking. From the very beginning, with the harpsichord's brilliant passages joined by the joyous blending of flute and oboe, we find ourselves in a very different musical world.

The *Andante* is truly a beautiful, multifaceted jewel, as wonderful as any other movement in this concert. It begins so sweetly, and constantly develops new moods and meanings.

A vivacious harpsichord solo raises the curtain on the Finale which is in *Rondo* form. As you will hear, the third and last episode is truly magical and would certainly have made Johann Jakob Bach most proud of his nephew. The last eight measures, the coda, sound totally established in a new style. In our rehearsals we joked that this heralded the unofficial beginning of music's classical period.

Allan Vogel

Allan Vogel is one of America's leading wind soloists and chamber musicians. Hailed as "an aristocrat of his instrument, an oboe virtuoso with few equals," (*Los Angeles Times*) and "undoubtedly one of the few world masters" (*San Diego Union*), he is solo oboist of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra. He has performed concertos with orchestras throughout the country and has been featured at the Chamber Music Northwest, Marlboro, Santa Fe, Aspen, Mostly Mozart, Summerfest, Sarasota and Oregon Bach festivals.

Mr. Vogel has been guest principal oboist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra for concerts in the major European capitals, Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, and Boston Symphony Hall. He has also performed with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and the Los Angeles and Berlin Philharmonic Orchestras. He has often been a guest with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center in New York City and has completed three tours of Japan. Allan made his concerto debut in Lincoln Center's Tully Hall with the New York Chamber Symphony and recorded as

soloist with the Seattle Symphony.

Another solo recording soon to be released on the Delos Label is entitled "Oboe Obsession." It will include virtuoso and romantic works.

Mr. Vogel is on the faculty of California Institute of the Arts and the University of Southern California. His former students hold many prominent orchestral and university positions throughout the country. He was born and raised in New York City, attending the High School of Music and Art. After attending Harvard College, he received a Doctorate in performance from Yale University where he studied with Robert Bloom and Ralph Kirkpatrick. He also worked with Lothar Koch in Berlin on a Fulbright Fellowship and with oboists Fernand Gillet, Josef Marx, Jean de Vergie, and Anton Maly. Mr. Vogel has recently been chosen to serve on the advisory board of the American Bach Society.

Flutist **Janice Tipton** has appeared as a soloist and chamber musician across the country. Hailed as "superlative" by the *Los Angeles Times*, Ms. Tipton has per-

formed as a soloist with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and the California Chamber Symphony, and in addition with the Angeles, St. Petersburg and Prague String Quartets. Janice has also had appearances at the chamber music festivals of Santa Fe, Chamber Music Northwest, La Jolla Summerfest, Sedona and New England Bach, as well as at the Oregon Bach Festival. Ms. Tipton has toured Costa Rica with the Valencia Trio and Eastern Europe with the vocal ensemble Cantori Domino. She is a member of Bach's Circle, the Valencia Trio and the Santa Clarita Chamber Players.

Patricia Mabee is Principal Keyboardist with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and New West Symphony. She has appeared as guest soloist in more than 20 works from the concerto repertoire under the baton of such celebrated conductors as Christopher Hogwood, Helmuth Rilling, Nicholas McGegan, Iona Brown, and Christof Perick. Her career as an ensemble player is equally distinguished, marked by regular appearances at many music festivals including the Casals Festival, the Oregon Bach Festival, the

Los Angeles Bach Festival and Chamber Music Northwest. She has also performed with The Academy of St. Martin in the Fields and the Pasadena, Glendale, and Long Beach Symphonies. She has recorded for the Angel, Nonesuch, Delos, and Telarc labels.

Ms. Mabee received a Masters degree in Keyboard Performance from California Institute of the Arts where she is currently a faculty member.

Violist da gamba **Mark Chatfield** has performed throughout North America and Europe and has appeared as soloist with many ensembles including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Los Angeles Opera, the Oregon Bach Festival, the St. Louis Symphony and the Vancouver Symphony. Critics have called his playing "virtuosic," "irrestistible," and "fiery and impressive." He is the principal cellist with Musica Angelica Baroque Orchestra and much in demand for his distinctive continuo playing. He is on the faculty at USC as a Lecturer in viola da gamba and baroque cello.

Nancy Sartain, harpsichordist, has received acclaim for her solo and ensemble performances throughout California and in Germany. She received a Master of Fine Arts degree in Music from UCLA with Dr. Frederick Hammond. She has been a frequent soloist in the Los Angeles Bach Festival and has given several recitals on the historical Kirckman harpsichord housed at the Huntington Library and Gardens in San Marino, California. She has appeared with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the Los Angeles Mozart Orchestra, the Los Angeles Baroque Orchestra, the Santa Barbara Chamber Orchestra and with the Los Angeles Philharmonic under the direction of Christopher Hogwood. As a soloist with the Bach Camerata, she was praised by the *Santa Barbara News Press* for playing "with impeccable taste and style." She has given several live performances on KFAC, KPFK, and KUSC and has recorded for Telarc, Warner Brothers and Delos.

Ms. Sartain now resides in Germany, where she is active as a performer and teacher.

Executive Producers: *Amelia S. Haygood, Carol Rosenberger*
Recording Producer: *Peter S. Myles*
Recording Engineer: *Stephen Basili*
Editing: *Peter S. Myles*

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Digital Editing: *Sonic Solutions*

Monitor Loudspeakers

Recording: *JBL 6208*

Postproduction: *Waveform Mach 13*

Microphones: *Sennheiser MKH-20, Neumann KM 84,
Neumann KM-140*

Console: *Soundcraft Spirit Folio*

Two Double Manual Harpsichords by Curtis Berak of Los Angeles, after French 18th Century models.

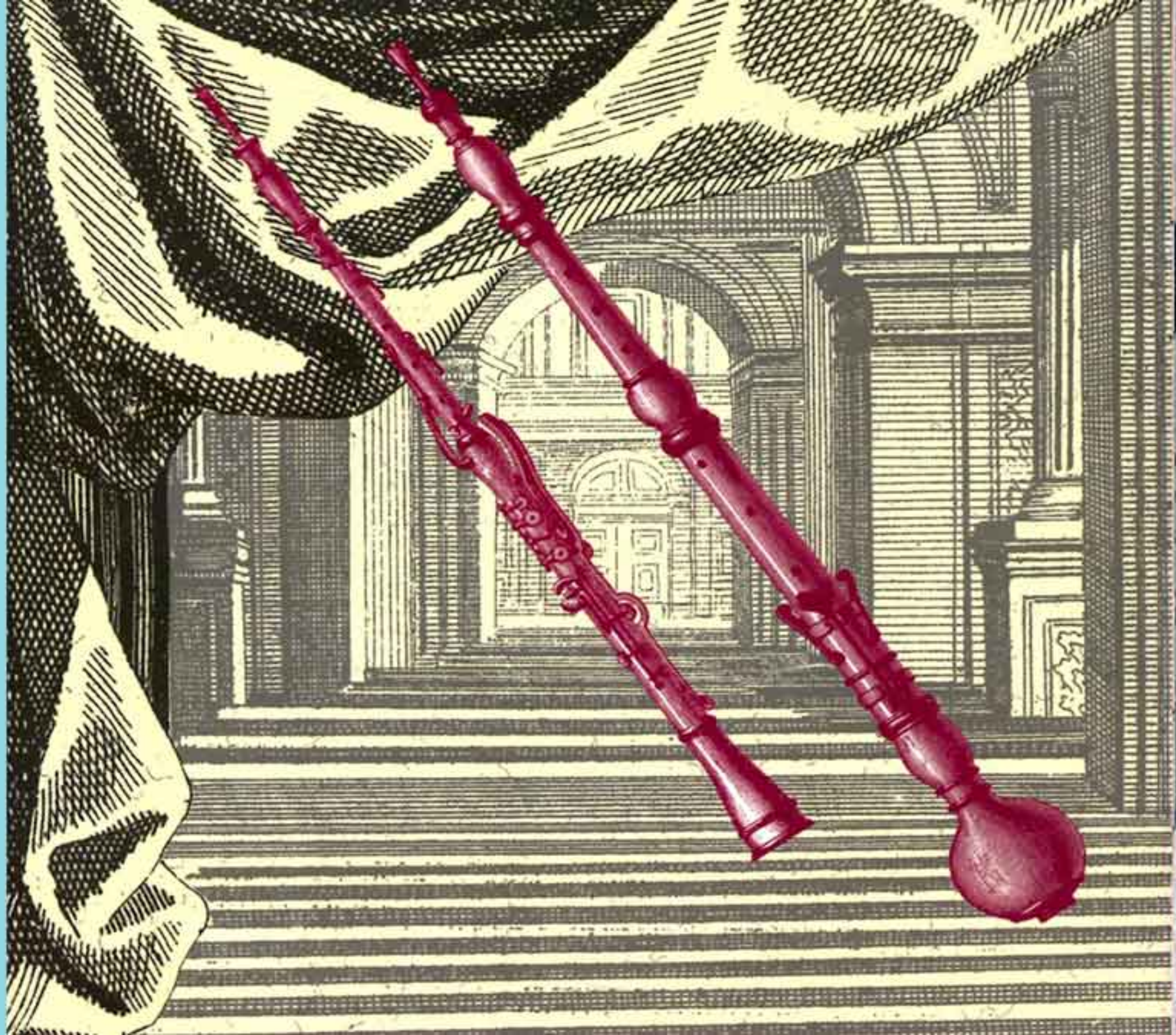
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