

PARTHENIA

Rosamund Morley, treble viol

Lawrence Lipnik, tenor viol

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HOUSE OF HABSBURG

The Habsburg empire created a magnificent musical dynasty, leaving a wealth of riches to present in concert for viol ensemble

La dama le demanda

Pavan

Two fantasias

A la Bataglia

Antonio de Cabezón (1510-1566)

Luis de Milán (c.1500-1561)

Francesco da Milano (1497-1543)

Heinrich Isaac (1450-1517)

Mille regretz

Response: Les miens aussi brief

Vray dieu d'amour

Josquin des Prez (c.1450-1521)

Tielman Susato (c.1510-c.1570)

Antoine Brumel (c.1460-c.1520)

Carmen lamentatio

Soubz ce tumbel: *Epitaph de l'amant vert*

Der Hund

Ludwig Senfl (c.1486-1543)

Pierre de la Rue (c.1452-1518)

Isaac

Three settings of "J'ay pris amours"

Anon. (late 15th century)

Isaac

Jacob Obrecht (c.1457-1505)

BRIEF PAUSE

Pavana Prima

Gagliarda Ottava

Carlo Farina (c.1604-1639)

Farina

Three Spagnolettas

Giuseppe Giamberti (1600-1663)

Hetorre della Marra (fl.1620)

Michael Praetorius (1571-1621)

Hespañoletta

Anon. (17th century)

Pièces à 3 viole da gamba

Theodorus Schwartzkopff (1659-1732)

Intrada

Allemande

Courante

Boureè

Gigue

Chaconne

PROGRAM NOTES

“The Emperor understood music, felt and tasted its charms; the friars often discovered him behind the door, as he sat in his own apartment near the high altar, beating time and singing in part with the performers.”

So wrote the biographer of Charles V (1500–1558), Duke of Burgundy, King of Castile and Aragon, King of Naples, Count of Hainault and Flanders, Duke of Guelders, Holy Roman Emperor, and bearer of fifteen more titles, describing the Emperor’s retirement at the monastery of Yuste. But Charles’s musical abilities and tastes were not exceptional among members of the Habsburg family; for over a century they were not just connoisseurs, but often singers and instrumentalists in their own right.

Sorting out the powers, residences, and relationships of the vast and enduring House of Habsburg (1273–1916) is a daunting enterprise, not the least because their titles are so misleading: Margaret of Austria, for instance, spoke French, ruled the Netherlands, and hardly ever set foot in Austria; the supreme rulers of Germany from 1273 were always called Kings of the Romans; the King of Bohemia and Hungary had his seat in Vienna; and it was extremely rare for any Holy Roman Emperor – an elected post but necessarily held by a Habsburg – to show his face in Rome. Charles himself was King of Spain for fifteen years before he actually moved there from his home in Brussels.

Much of the earlier music on our program comes from four of the greatest Habsburg patrons of music: the Emperor Maximilian I (1459-1519); Philip the Fair (1478-1506) and Margaret of Austria (1480-1530), Maximilian’s only children to survive into adulthood; and his grandson Charles V (1500-1558). It was Maximilian, King of the Romans from 1486 and Holy Roman Emperor from 1493 until his death in 1519, who consolidated the power of the Habsburgs in most of Europe by marrying Philip and Margaret’s mother, Mary of Burgundy in 1477. It was he also who instituted the policy of intermarriage among

the Habsburgs in order not to dilute their political power – a practice that would prove their demise.

During his reign, Maximilian cemented Vienna as perhaps the most important musical center in Europe. He hired the best musicians of the day, enlarged the chapel choir, and engaged the best composer/musicians to lead it. Heinrich Isaac was invited to serve in 1492, and was named court composer five years later; Ludwig Senfl arrived in Vienna as a choirboy in 1496, and succeeded Isaac as Hofkomponist. Senfl can be spotted among the musicians of the court in Hans Burgkmair’s celebrated series of woodcuts *The Triumphal Procession of Maximilian* (1512–1519), singing and playing their lutes, viols, flutes, trumpets, drums, organs, shawms, and krummhorns. Though Isaac’s “A la Bataglia” was likely written for a battle between warring Italian princes, it might well have described Maximilian’s many military campaigns (Machiavelli praised him as a great general), he was known for his war-loving “heart of steel” and the political savvy by which he consolidated Habsburg power.

The viol was a relative newcomer to the musical scene in Maximilian’s time. However, between 1511 and 1546, German printing presses in Habsburg lands produced eight books in which descriptions of the viol and its music appeared—more references in print to the viol than any other region in Europe. Hans Gerle’s 1532 treatise, *Musica Teusch*, which was revised, expanded, and renamed *Musica und Tabulatur* in 1546, was the first real primer for the viol. Many of Senfl’s songs are preserved in these treatises. But although much instrumental music was derived from vocal music, there was a robust tradition of virtuoso instrumental performance derived from improvisations on pre-existing melodies or repeating harmonic patterns such as the *basse dance*. Our group of pieces on “J’ay pris amours” and Isaac’s “Der Hund” attest to this tradition.

Antonio de Cabezón first entered Habsburg service as organist in the chapel of Charles V's wife, Isabella of Portugal. His organ fantasias on popular tunes are composed in such clear four-part writing that a consort of four instruments can perfectly express the counterpoint. In pieces like "La dama le demanda," virtuoso passage-work takes precedence over the kind of imitative polyphony heard in the work of Luís de Milán and Francesco da Milano. Luis de Milán, resident in Valencia most of his life, wrote books on many subjects; his last was a treatise on courtly games and behavior dedicated to Philip II. His pavans are not categorically different from fantasias, nor are they worked out in such strict four-part writing as Cabezón's pieces.

Josquin's beautiful "Mille regretz" is a setting of a lute solo by Narváez, a musician at the royal chapel in Spain. Called the "Canción del Emperador" (Song of the Emperor), it was known to be the favorite work of the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V. Josquin's music was famous throughout Europe; Tielman Susato wrote and published a response to Josquin's setting in Antwerp.

Isaac, Josquin, Obrecht, Brumel, and Pierre de la Rue are all composers whose works are found in two sumptuous manuscripts now known as the "Chanson Albums of Margaret of Austria" and which give us a picture of the musical life of her court. Twice widowed and suffering the loss of her beloved brother, Philip the Fair, before she was 26 years old, Margaret of Austria was known as the "Lady of Mourning;" a large number of the pieces in these manuscripts are songs of loss and regret. Heard here instrumentally, the poem "Soubz ce tumbel" by Jean Lemaire de Belges (c.1473— c.1525) and set by Pierre de la Rue is an imagined letter from a beloved pet parrot to Margaret, lamenting her departure and predicting his own death from grief at her absence.

In the seventeenth century many Italian composers took positions north of the Alps just as their Franco-Flemish musical ancestors had done in reverse more than a century earlier. Carlo Farina was a Mantuan violinist

who moved to Dresden to be the concertmaster there and whose colleague Heinrich Schütz interested him in composing. Tonight's Pavana is a beautiful example of an instrumental form that was falling out of fashion in Italy but still loved at Habsburg courts. As a virtuoso violinist, he is credited with expanding the technique of violin playing, using double stops and imitating animal sounds with his bow. During his career he moved back and forth between Italy and Germany, and finally settled in Vienna, the center of the Habsburg Empire, where he is said to have died of the plague.

Though Philip III had inherited the Flemish and Spanish chapels of his grandfather and father when he came to power in 1598, it was music for the dance that captured his attention. One type, the spagnoletta, was essentially a chord pattern along the lines of the romanesca or passamezzo antico and widely used for songs and variations since its introduction in Italy in 1581. It recurs in Spanish guitar manuals from 1626 throughout the seventeenth century. The late anonymous Hespánoletta comes from a four-volume collection of organ music compiled by Antonio Martín y Coll in the early eighteenth century.

Our last offering is by Theodorus Schwartzkopff who came from a family of organists in Ulm and was himself an organist before taking a post as a singer, organist, and composer at the court in Württemberg in the southwestern part of the Holy Roman Empire. By the time he was promoted to Kapellmeister, he was devoting his efforts almost exclusively to stage entertainments and dramatic music, the echoes of which may be heard in this instrumental sonata. He was sent for a time to study in Paris, and his suite of stylized dances in the French mode offer the rich French sonority of the lowest viols playing together. We conclude the suite with the Chaconne, variations in triple meter over a short repeating bass pattern, a dance that was characteristically and satisfyingly the grand finale of the French operas that Schwartzkopff must have enjoyed during his sojourn in France.

— Lucy Cross and Rosamund Morley

ABOUT THE VIOL

The viol, or viola da gamba, is a family of stringed instruments celebrated in European music from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment. Today on both sides of the Atlantic, soloists as well as viol groups—known as “consorts”—have rediscovered the lost repertoire and ethereal beauty of this early instrument. The viol was first known as the “bowed guitar” (vihuela da arco), a joint descendent of the medieval fiddle and the 15th-century Spanish guitar. Unlike its cousin, the arm-supported violin (viola da braccio), the viol is held upright on the leg (gamba) or between the legs; its bow is gripped underhand; and its body is made of bent or molded wood. These characteristics lend a distinctive lightness and resonance to viol sound that have inspired a wave of new works by 21st-century composers and a growing enthusiasm on the part of international audiences.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The viol quartet **PARTHENIA** brings early music into the present with its repertoire that animates ancient and fresh-commissioned contemporary works with a ravishing sound and a remarkable sense of ensemble. These “local early-music stars,” hailed by *The New Yorker* and music critics throughout the world, are “one of the brightest lights in New York’s early-music scene.” Parthenia is presented in concerts across America, and produces its own series in New York City, collaborating regularly with the world’s foremost early music specialists. The quartet has been featured in prestigious festivals and series as wide-ranging as Music Before 1800, the Harriman-Jewell Series, Maverick Concerts, the Regensburg Tage Alter Musik, the Shalin Lui Performing Arts Center, the Pierpont Morgan Library, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Yale Center for British Art, Columbia University’s Miller Theatre, and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Parthenia’s performances range from its popular touring program, *When Music & Sweet Poetry Agree*, a celebration of Elizabethan poetry and music with actor Paul Hecht, to the complete viol fantasies of Henry Purcell, as well as the complete instrumental works of Robert Parsons, and commissions and premieres of new works annually. Parthenia has recorded *As it Fell on a Holie Eve - Music for an Elizabethan Christmas*, with soprano Julianne Baird, *Les Amours de Mai*, with Ms. Baird and violinist Robert Mealy, *A Reliquary for William Blake*, *Within the Labyrinth*, and *The Flaming Fire*, with vocalist Ryland Angel and keyboard player Dongsok Shin. Parthenia’s newest CD release features composers Kristin Norderval, Frances White, and Tawnie Olson: *Nothing Proved: New works for viols, voice, and electronics*.

Parthenia is represented by GEMS *Live!* Artist Management and records for MSR Classics. More information about Parthenia’s activities can be found at parthenia.org