

THE FLANDERS RECORDER QUARTET

Ambassadors of the recorder.



The Flanders Recorder Quartet was founded in 1987. With more than 1.500 concerts on five continents under its belt, the ensemble has become a prominent fixture in the world of Early Music. The group has performed in major concert venues such as the Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), Opera City Hall (Tokyo), the Cloisters, the Frick Museum and the Morgan Library (New York), Spivey Hall (Atlanta), the Orchesterhaus Salzburg, to name a few. Flanders Recorder Quartet concerts are a regular feature at Early Music festivals from Helsinki, Paris, Tokyo, Hawaii, Salzburg and Ljubljana to Mexico City, Boston, Vancouver, Singapore and Taipei.

The quartet is made up of the four well-known recorder players, Bart Spanhove, Tom Beets, Joris Van Goethem and Paul Van Loey. There have been many memorable moments during the long career of the Flanders Recorder Quartet. Among these milestones are the first prize, in 1990, from the prestigious *Musica Antiqua* competition in Bruges, Belgium.

In 1997 the ensemble was taken on board by the OPUS 111 record label in Paris. Their three record releases, *Armonia di Flauti*, *Viva l'Amore* and *Magic* were singled out and distinguished with a 'Repertoire 10' rating. *Magic*, moreover, was awarded the coveted 'Tech-Art Prize 2002' and was received with great excitement and praise by the international professional journals. In 2004 a new recording, *Consort of Fower Parts* with music by Matthew Locke, was released on the German 'Aeolus' label, with which the quartet has an exclusive contract. In September 2005 the label brought out a new Bach recording with fugues, concerti and fantasias. In 2007 FRQ issued the CD *Banchetto Musicale* for their 20th anniversary!

The FRQ spotlights the recorder, so often underrated for 200 years, and lets it shine again in all its glory. In a wide variety of programmes, the quartet performs with great virtuosity, using appropriately chosen instruments from its unique collection, thus making each and every concert an unforgettable event. Some of the most intriguing recorders in the collection are the Virdung (1511) copies crafted by recorder maker Adrian Brown, ten recorders copied from the collection of Henry VIII, the 2.30 metre (7ft 6in.) tall baroque sub-bass designed and built by von Huene in Boston and modern recorder models made by Coolsma of Utrecht in the Netherlands. Such an array of unique and very rare specimens provides a feast for the eyes and the ears, as well as providing a convincing argument in favour of the instrument.

With contagious enthusiasm, the charismatic members of the FRQ display their pedagogical skills during demonstration performances and persuasive master-classes. Their teaching activities have resulted in the publication of a book, *The Finishing Touch of Ensemble Playing* written by Bart Spanhove (Alamire Editions, 2000).

The FRQ is highly praised for its fine arrangements, and for the inspiration it has been to a large number of modern composers, which has resulted in more than 40 compositions being written for the ensemble. The German music publishing company, Heinrichshofen, has launched a series of publications entirely dedicated to the group and aptly called the *Flanders Recorder Quartet Series*. Their acclaimed arrangements are well represented in these editions.

The New York Times commented: "The players swayed and swooned, combining the breathy timbre of a portative organ with the expressive interplay of a fine string quartet".