



## THE MIRACLE OF THE RECORDER

### Flanders Recorder Quartet

Tom Beets, Bart Spanhove, Joris Van Goethem and Paul Van Loey

*Sanpaku* (1992)  
*Zen*  
*Karate Canon*

(Jan Van Landeghem, °1954)

*Maske*  
*Estampie retrove*

(Hugh Ashton, c. 1485-1558)  
(ms Robertsbridge, 14<sup>th</sup> century)

*Vater unser, BWV 636*  
*Fuga in a, BWV 543*  
*Vater unser, BWV 737*

(Johann Sebastian Bach, 1685-1750)

*Concerto in C*

(Antonio Vivaldi, 1678-1741)

*Capriccio*  
*Volta*

(Anonymous, 1621)  
(Anonymous, 1621)

### *intermission*

*Isana, the little icebear* (2008)  
*Playing in the snow*  
*Drifting on a piece of ice to other land*

(Koen Dejonghe, °1957)

*Suite for Pipes* (1939)

(Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872-1958)

*Engels Nachtegaeltje*  
*Canzon La Marcha*  
*Canzon La Livia*

(Jacob van Eyck, 1589/90-1657)  
(Tarquinio Merula, 1594-1665)  
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*A taste of Korea* (2010)

(Flanders Recorder Quartet)

*Circus Renz* (1992)

(Jan Van Landeghem, °1954)

## The instruments of the Flanders Recorder Quartet

- a) **Virdung consort:** Unfortunately, no recorders have come down to us from before the sixteenth century. For works from 1520 and earlier, Flanders Recorder Quartet makes use of a very rare collection of instruments, made by the Amsterdam-based maker Adrian Brown. He has provided us with a small cylindrical consort based on the woodcut illustrations in the treatise of Sebastian Virdung (*Musica getuscht und angezogen*, 1511). Having this restricted basis of surviving instruments and using the woodcuts as a template, he constructed a speculative recorder consort at pitch  $a'=520$  (which is the pitch of the oldest still-sounding organs in northern Italy) consisting of a bass in F, tenors in c and altos in g. These recorders in walnut have a quite peculiar sound and an interesting and colourful articulation, which best suits this early repertoire.
- b) **“Bassano” consort:** There are around 200 surviving original recorders from the period 1500-1650, a time we could describe today as being the golden age of the instrument. It was the only period in the recorder’s history when it was considered as a serious musical instrument and when families of recorders were played in consort, principally to perform vocal music. Henry VIII (1491-1547) presumably was so enchanted by the instrument that he arranged for his agents to persuade members of the celebrated Bassano family to emigrate from Venice to England to play and make wind instruments at his court. An inventory of Henry’s collections made after his death in 1547, notes 76 recorders amongst the many musical instruments. Another example of the popularity of the recorder at this time is found in a 1531 inventory of the Antwerp town musicians, which lists no fewer than 28 recorders. Almost a fifth of these surviving recorders are found today in the *Kunsthistorisches Museum* in Vienna, but originate from the d’Este collection in the region of Padua. In spring 2000, Adrian Brown started a serious survey of these instruments, resulting in a new museum catalogue of all 43 recorders in the collection. This project gave him the freedom to minutely study the details of these instruments and this had an important influence on his work.
- The set of recorders used is based on instruments that were almost certainly made by members of the Bassano Family of London and Venice. The original instruments were probably made in the second half of the sixteenth century. Up to about 1700, all recorders, no matter how tall, were made in one piece. Because of this it is not an easy task to travel overseas with very large instruments. The lowest notes of this concert will thus be heard on yet another set of flutes:
- c) **Baroque consort:** This set of large baroque recorders was built between 1990 and 1995 by the Boston-based recorder maker Friedrich von Huene. The smaller instruments are highly personal favourites of the players, collected from all over the world, and made after various original models in various wood types. The pitch of baroque recorders is  $a'=415$ , being a semi tone below the modern concert pitch. Our set consists of many types, from sopranino through soprano, alto, voice flute, tenor, bass, great bass up to the man high contrabass in F, of which there are only three models in the world.

Tom Beets

