



GEORG PHILIPP TELEMANN

Les Nations - Overtures & Oboe Concertos

Bach Concertus - Ewald Demeyere

Vinciane Baudhuin oboe



SUPER AUDIO CD

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GEORG PHILIPP TELEMANN (1681-1767)

'Ouverture des Nations anciens et modernes' in G major TWV 55: G4

[1] Overture	3:06
[2] Menuet 1 & 2	2:05
[3] Les Allemands anciens	1:30
[4] Les Allemands modernes	1:16
[5] Les Suédois anciens	2:27
[6] Les Suédois modernes	0:51
[7] Les Danois anciens	1:21
[8] Les Danois modernes	0:49
[9] Les vieilles femmes	1:32

Oboe Concerto in C minor TWV 51: c2

[10] Adagio	2:18
[11] Allegro	1:21
[12] Adagio	1:57
[13] Allegro	1:52

Overture 'La Gaillarde' in D major TWV 55: D13

[14] Overture	3:22
[15] Sicilienne	1:06
[16] Anglaise	1:22
[17] Musette	1:42

[18] Batelière	0:46
[19] Polonoise	1:39
[20] Menuet 1 & 2	2:22

Oboe Concerto in C minor TWV 51: c1

[21] Adagio	1:25
[22] Allegro	2:24
[23] Adagio	1:46
[24] Allegro	2:58

Overture 'Völker' in B flat major TWV 55: B5

[25] Overture	4:02
[26] Menuet 1 & 2	3:42
[27] Les Turcs	2:18
[28] Les Suisses	1:40
[29] Les Moscovites	0:54
[30] Les Portugais	2:11
[31] Les Boiteux & Les Coueurs	3:45

total time 62:30

The Musical Nationalities of Georg Philipp Telemann

As few other composers, Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767) successfully drew on all the national styles and prevailing genres of his time in creating his enormous body of work, for which he received immediate acclaim. All in all, he produced more cantata cycles, oratorios and masses than his illustrious contemporary Johann Sebastian Bach, and more operas, orchestral and chamber music than that other 'great' composer of the late Baroque, George Frideric Handel. What is more, Telemann mastered the art of combining busy agendas as a teacher, conductor, public figure and publisher, while still finding time to enjoy himself playing the violin, the cello, various keyboard instruments, the oboe, the flute and the chalumeau. In short, in Telemann we encounter one of the most versatile composers of the first half of the 18th century, an artist more than worthy of a record with text and explanations.

Oboe Concertos in C minor (TWV 51: c1 and c2)

Although Telemann is known to have composed around 125 concertos for between one and four soloists, he himself admitted that works of this genre "have never really come straight from the heart. ... At the least, this is true: that mostly they have a whiff of France. It may well be that Nature herein wished to deny me something, since we cannot all be able to do everything, but there is probably at least one other reason, namely that most of the concertos I have encountered contained numerous difficulties and crooked leaps, but little harmony and even poorer melody. The former I hated, for they were uncomfortable for my hand and bow, and the latter qualities, to which my ear had become accustomed through French music, were so clearly lacking, that I could neither love nor wish to imitate." (Autobiography, 1718)

Telemann's unfavourable opinion of concertos did not, however, result in compositions that lacked taste, on the contrary. It might well be precisely because he was not caught up in the Vivaldian rage of the time that his concertos stand out as original compositions among the pseudo-Italian scores of many of his German contemporaries, a fact well illustrated by his two solo concertos for oboe, strings and basso continuo in C minor, probably composed between 1708 and 1712. Both concertos are made up of four movements (slow-fast-slow-fast), using a free pattern of spontaneous exchanges between soloist and orchestra rather than the habitual sequence of alternating orchestral ritornellos and solo episodes.

Concerto TWV 51: c2, presumably the older of the two, opens with an *Adagio* that indeed appears to have "come straight from the heart" and shows how much of a vocally-inspired composer Telemann was. The cantabile oboe line allows long notes to swell above the beating heart of the accompanying strings. The following *Allegro* contrasts with a second *Adagio* in E flat major, while the second, lively *Allegro* demonstrates Telemann's counterpoint skills above the running engine of the bass lines.

Concerto TWV 51: c1 also starts with an *Adagio*, albeit with a prelude introduced by a sharp dissonance. In the *Allegro*, the strings echo the oboe, as does the oboe the strings. Again, there is no sign of a ritornello structure. A short *Adagio* in E flat follows a sarabande in 3/2. Telemann finishes with an *Allegro* in 3/4.

Overture 'Völker' in B flat major (TWV 55: B5)

Unlike the concerto, the suite was a genre that Telemann fully embraced. He wrote between 125 and 135 orchestral suites, 118 of which are preserved in full. Unfortunately, only six of them are autographs. For the others, we depend on contemporary copies made, among others, by chapel masters Christoph Graupner and Johann Samuel Endler. Although it is, in most cases, impossible to date the concertos, we know that Telemann composed them between 1705 (the year in which, according to his own records, he started writing orchestral suites) and 1765 (date of one autograph), which means that they span his entire career.

We know from Johann Adolph Scheibe (see below) that Telemann played an important role in popularizing the French-style suite. In Jean-Baptiste Lully and his contemporaries, Telemann found models whose works appealed to him for reasons of character, structure and non-musical themes. A beautiful example of this is the *Overture in B flat major* for strings and basso continuo (composed prior to 1723), to which Adolph Hoffmann gave the name 'Völker' in 1969. As in Lully's *Ballet des Nations* and Molière's *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* (1670), in which Swiss, Spanish and Italians appear, and also André Campra's famous opera-ballet *L'Europe galante* (1697), which brings France, Spain, Italy and Turkey to the stage, the 'Völker' suite introduces us, in turn, to French courtiers (in the overture and the minuets), to Turkish Janissaries, to Swiss, Muscovites and Portuguese, and funnily enough also to horses, both lame and running! The overture to the suite is remarkable for its central section: instead of the usual fuga(to), we find a gigue with no counterpoint ambitions, a musical

choice resulting, however, in a middle part that is anything but ordinary. Here, Telemann's ingenuity comes into its own again, for example in the passages where the first violin abandons the 6/8 in order to play semiquavers in 2/4, which means that at certain moments four notes collide with three. The two elegant minuets are followed by *Les Turcs*, a movement that in terms of its metre bears little resemblance to the typical 2/4 time signature of an *alla turca*. After all, we are listening to a gigue in 6/8. That did not prevent Telemann from putting some noisy and strange melodies through a series of unexpected twists and turns, bringing them together at the end in a unison cadence. After that, it is the turn of *Les Suisses*, whose themes are expressed though alternating 3/2 *Grave* and 3/4 *Vite* – drunkenness set to music? *Les Moscovites* play a *Sonnerie* in 3/4 above an ostinato bass that repeats the motif B flat-C-D 34 times, and *Les Portugais* alternate between a fervent *Grave* in 3/4 and a fast rigaudon in 2/2. To round off the suite, Telemann chose to portray the 'nation' of the horses (?), now lame (*Les Boiteux*), now running (*Les Coureurs*), translated musically into a loure in 6/4 and an exhilarating 6/8 respectively.

Overture des Nations anciens [sic] et modernes in G major (TWV 55: G4)

That some 18th century copyists (in this case scribe E from Darmstadt) were less than meticulous about grammar is borne out by the title of this work, which should of course have been *Overture des nations anciennes et modernes*. This suite, which may have been composed before 1721 (after all, the first movement corresponds to the overture of Telemann's comic opera *Der geduldige Socrates* which premièred on January 21st, 1721), offers us yet another taste of Telemann's imaginative prowess. The overture opens on a Lullian *Grave*

(dotted rhythms, slowly progressing melody and bass lines, sumptuous affect) followed by a fugato in 2/2. The double minuet serves as a prelude to another wholly unconventional series of 'nations', put to music in 'old' (read: slow) and 'modern' (read: fast) variations. The *Allemands*, both old and young, march in a 4/4 time signature, albeit at a moderate and at a fast tempo, respectively. The reason why we do not hear any allemandes here is presumably because of the historical situation of Prussia, ruled between 1713 and 1740 by the culture-hating – but Telemann-loving – 'Soldier King' Friedrich Wilhelm I. Apart from the slow-fast contrast, there is no obvious explanation why Telemann chose a sarabande for *Les Suedois anciens* and a bourree for the *modernes*, nor why *Les Danois* are portrayed in airs in 4/4. As in the *Overture 'Völker'*, Telemann's musical scenario does not conclude with yet another nationality, but with something resembling a scene, probably drawn from Gregorio Lambranzi's illustrated *Neue und Curieuse Theatralische Tantz-Schul*, a well-known collection of dances from 1716: two doddering *vieilles femmes* shuffle back and forth, scratching their bellies, while a young man laughs at them, a farce to which Telemann gave voice through a gavotte with chromatic sighs.

Overture 'La gaillarde' in D major (TWV 55: D13)

The last suite for strings on this record carries an epithet that might also have been the brainchild of the Darmstadt copyists. 'La gaillarde' starts in medias res with a cadence formula, not in D, which would have been expected, but in G major, continues with a *Sicilienne* in 3/4, and moves on to an alla breve (2/2) *Angloise*. The drone of the bourdon basses marks the *Musette* in 6/8, the *Batelière* ('boatwoman') moves in 2/4, and the *Polonoise*, naturally, in 3/4. At the end, we hear two minuets.

Telemann's Nationalities

In an instalment of his much talked-of periodical *Der Critische Musicus*, which was published in 1745, Johann Adolph Scheibe expressed his surprise and admiration about the fact "that Telemann practises almost all musical genres and national styles with the same ease and eloquence, without confusing or corrupting his taste in the least." In the oboe concertos and orchestral suites discussed above, Telemann does indeed deploy, to his heart's content, an entire wardrobe full of different (dance) costumes for his playful encounters with (other) nations, yet he never stoops to tackiness. It is this gift that sets him apart from his contemporaries and makes him such a fascinating figure among the protagonists who shaped the landscape of our musical history.

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With thanks to Ewald Demeyere for his many suggestions.

Bach Concertus

Caroline Bayet (leader), Annelies Decock, Mika Akiha – violin 1

Michiyo Kondo, Ann Cnop, Maia Silberstein – violin 2

Kaat De Cock, Manuela Bucher – viola

Ronan Kernoa, Michel Boulanger – violoncello

Elise Christiaens – violone

Vinciane Baudhuin – oboe

Ewald Demeyere – harpsichord & direction

With special thanks to Bert van der Wolf, Bettina Jessen and Jerry Aerts.



deSingel, a site of grandeur and adventure

deSingel is an impressive architectural project on the outskirts of Antwerp, designed by Léon Stynen (1899-1990) and Stéphane Beel (°1955) with love and respect for the arts. Thanks to their brilliant architecture, scale and experiment encounter one another here in music, theatre, dance and architecture, in performances, concerts and exhibitions, in art education and research. deSingel is a place for the contemporary, critical and cross-border canon and a breeding ground for artistic creation, new trends and insights.

This High Definition Surround Recording was Produced, Engineered and Edited by Bert van der Wolf of NorthStar Recording Services, using the 'High Quality Musical Surround Mastering' principle. The basis of this recording principle is a realistic and holographic 3 dimensional representation of the musical instruments, voices and recording venue, according to traditional concert practice. For most older music this means a frontal representation of the musical performance, but such that width and depth of the ensemble and acoustic characteristics of the hall do resemble 'real life' as much as possible. Some older compositions, and many contemporary works do specifically ask for placement of musical instruments and voices over the full 360 degrees sound scape, and in these cases the recording is as realistic as possible, within the limits of the 5.1 Surround Sound standard. This requires a very innovative use of all 6 loudspeakers and the use of completely matched, full frequency range loudspeakers for all 5 discrete channels. A complementary sub-woofer, for the ultra low frequencies under 40Hz, is highly recommended to maximally benefit from the sound quality of this recording.

This recording was produced with the use of Sonodore microphones, Avalon Acoustic monitoring, Siltech Mono-Crystal cabling and dCS - & Merging Technologies converters.



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