

MONO

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FM 3652

THE AMERICAN BRASS QUINTET

MUSIC OF THE RENAISSANCE AND BAROQUE

FOR BRASS QUINTET

SONATA FROM "DIE BÄNKELSÄNGERLIEDER" / ANON.
CANZONA PRIMA A CINQUE / GIOVANNI GABRIELI
SIX SEVENTEENTH CENTURY DANCES / JOHANN PEZEL
LA MI LA SOL / HEINRICH ISAAC
CANZONA "BERGAMASCA" / SAMUEL SCHEIDT
GREINER ZANNER / HENRICH FINCK
FOUR FLEMISH DANCES / TIELMAN SUSATO
DER HUND / HEINRICH ISAAC
THREE DANCES / JOHN DOWLAND
BATTLE SUITE / SAMUEL SCHEIDT



DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

Side 1

Sonata from "Die Bänkelsängerlieder" (2:12)
Canzona Prima a Cinque (3:15)
Six Seventeenth Century Dances (7:05)
La Mi Sol La - Part 1, Part 2 (2:24)
Canzona "Bergamasca" (4:47)

Side 2

Grenier Zanner (The Grumbler) (1:22)
Four Flemish Dances (5:00)
Der Hund (The Dog) Part 1, Part 2, (4:29)
Three Dances (5:02)
Battle Suite (5:21)

COVER DESIGN

BY

RONALD CLYNE

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Album Notes by Arnold Fromme

INTRODUCTION

Although the use of brass instruments for chamber music may seem to be a twentieth century innovation, in reality, the almost forgotten fact is that prior to the seventeenth hundreds, brass instruments were much more frequently used in chamber music and in small ensembles than they are today or were during the classic and romantic periods. Before approximately 1600, and for a good many years afterwards, most instrumental music was written "to be played with any kind of instruments" (Gabrieli), or "for Viols, Violins and other Musically Winded Instruments" (Holborne). There is considerable literary and pictorial evidence, contemporary to those times, showing that performance of these "open score" works by brass instruments was very much the rule.

Historically, the use of brass instruments in small ensembles reaches back to at least the fourteenth century. This is even before the Violin or Oboe as such existed. During the sixteenth century, ensembles of purely brass began to appear ("His Majesty's Cornetts and Sackbuts"), and in the seventeenth century, the Brass Quintet, consisting of two Cornetts and three Trombones, alto, tenor and bass, became one of the standard instrumental ensembles of that time. The Cornett, one of the important virtuoso instruments of that period, must not be confused with the modern Cornet. The former was a leather-covered wooden Trumpet, and though curved, it was similar in appearance to a Recorder. It had the same seven finger holes of the latter, but produced the sound by means of a trumpet mouthpiece.

After 1600, composers such as Gabrieli, Locke, Adson, Pezel, Schutz, Scheidt, Reiche, Monteverdi and Bach began to compose more and more music specifically for the brass. After Bach, and coincidental with the development of the Violin and woodwinds and the abandonment of polyphony, the brasses underwent a period of decline that lasted until practically the twentieth century. Skills disappeared, instruments such as the Cornett went out of existence and past glories were forgotten.

This recording is more or less a cross section of this vast literature of instrumental chamber music of the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Excepting the Trombone, the instruments used in those times are today either obsolete or greatly changed. Of our modern chamber music groups, barring the very few early music ensembles that use the actual instruments of the past, many feel that the Brass Quintet gives the most effective, colorful and authentic performance of the music of these periods. They are probably the closest to the colors and articulations the composers had in mind. The rediscovery and popularity of this music is one of the contributing factors to the expanding modern renaissance of the Brass Quintet.

Today, the American Brass Quintet is helping bring back to life these unjustly neglected works that in their day, gave life to Brass Chamber Music.

THE MUSIC

side one

- I. Sonata from "Die Bankelsangerlieder" Anonymous
(c. 1684)
- II. Canzona Prima a Cinque Giovanni Gabrieli
(1557-1612)
(from "Canzoni e Sonate", Venice, 1615)
- III. Six Seventeenth Century Dances Johann Pezel
(1639-1694)
(from "Funff-stimigte blasende Music,"
Frankfort, 1685)
- IV. La Mi La Sol Heinrich Isaac
(c. 1450-1517)
Part One; Part Two
- V. Canzona "Bergamasca" Samuel Scheidt
(1587-1654)
(from "Paduana, Galliarda,
Couranta, Allemande..." Hamburg, 1621)

side two

- I. Greiner Zanner (The Grumbler) Heinrich Finck
(1445-1527)
- II. Four Flemish Dances Tielman Susato
(c. 1500-1560)
(from "Dansserye, Het derde Musyck
boexken", Antwerp, 1551)
Ronde - Salterelle "Pour Quoy" (Why)
Pavane - "Si Par Souffrir" (If By Suffering)
Gaillard - "Mille Ducats" (A Thousand Ducats)
- III. Der Hund (The Dog) Heinrich Isaac
(c. 1450-1517)
Part One; Part Two
- IV. Three Dances John Dowland
(1562-1626)
(from "Lachrimae or seaven teares etc.,"
London, 1605)
M. Thomas Collier, his Galliard
Lachrimae Coactae
M. Nicholas Gryffith, his Galliard
- V. Battle Suite Samuel Scheidt
(1587-1654)
(from "Paduana, Galliarda,
Couranta, Allemande..." Hamburg, 1621)
Intrada
Courant
Galliard Battaglia

PROGRAM NOTES

SONATA FROM "DIE BANKELSANGERLIEDER" ANONYMOUS (c. 1684)

This anonymous seventeenth century German work, scored specifically for Trumpet, Cornett and alto, tenor and bass trombones, was discovered at the end of a collection of vocal pieces published in 1684, under the title of "Die Bankelsangerlieder." The term "bankelsänger" or bench singer referred, at that time, to an itinerant musician who often performed in the local taverns while standing on benches. The Sonata, in this case, is not to be confused with the classical sonata of Haydn and Mozart. At this period, it was one of the several instrumental forms that eventually evolved into both the fugue and the classical sonata. The earlier seventeenth century sonata made much less use of imitation than did its companion forms, the canzona and the ricecar. The word sonata is derived from the Italian "sonare," meaning to play or to sound, as opposed to cantata from "cantare," to sing. This lively work is unusual in the ebullient quality of its themes and even more so in the antiphonal effects produced by the answering back and forth between various groupings of two and three instruments, foreshadowing the later concerto.

CANZONA PRIMA A CINQUE by GIOVANNI GABRIELI (1557-1612)

The prolific Venetian composer, Giovanni Gabrieli, can truly be said to have been the culmination of the Italian Renaissance period and the beginning of the Baroque in that country. He was one of the first composers to specify instruments and dynamics and to develop a distinctly instrumental idiom in his compositions, as opposed to a vocal style. Gabrieli is mainly known for his works employing large groups of antiphonal vocal and instrumental forces. The Canzona Prima a Cinque is one of his earlier pieces and the only one extant to be composed for five instruments.

For a composition occurring so early in musical history, this work has several interesting features. One is the fact that each new theme develops from material in the previous theme, obliterating the impression of separate sections in the work, in favor of a feeling of continual organic development. This even holds true at the end of the piece, when it is concluded by a recapitulation of the opening theme, itself an unusual practice for this period. Most unusual, is the use at the climactic part of the composition, of homophonic block chords instead of counterpoint.

As originally published in 1615, "Canzonas and Sonatas... to be Played with any Sort of Instruments," no instrumentation was specified. The character of the themes, however, in addition to Gabrieli's known use of Cornetts and Trombones, makes a performance by the Brass Quintet quite authentic as well as exciting.

SIX SEVENTEENTH CENTURY DANCES by JOHANN PEZEL (1639-1694)

The name Johann Pezel, more than that of any other composer, has always been intimately associated with the term "Tower Music." In fact, practically all of his compositions that have come down to us today come under this category and were written for the Brass Quintet of that time, the ensemble of two Cornetts and three Trombones. As the chief "Stadtppfeifer" or Muni-

cipal Musician of Leipzig, Pezel was a contemporary of Buxtehude, Krieger and Biber. Although not quite of their stature, he was one of a small group of musicians, more than competent but less than great, that kept German Music alive during the devastation of the Thirty-Years War and the period immediately following.

The term "Tower Music" goes back to the Middle Ages, when the watchmen on the towers of the city walls signalled to each other and sounded the hours and alarms by means of musical instruments. Eventually fanfares, ceremonial and festive music and even concerts became part of the official duties of the watchmen. Obviously only skilled musicians could qualify for the job. By the fifteenth century, the duties of watchman were separated from those of the performers. They were now the Municipal Musicians known in Germany as the "Stadtppfeifers" or "Turmblaser," "Waits" in England and "Pifari" in Italy. They were usually organized into strong Guilds and it became a highly respected profession. Their regular concerts soon became the most important of their activities and due to the outdoor nature of the music, brass instruments, naturally, were much in evidence. In Pezel's Leipzig, there were two concerts daily, still performed from the tower of the "Rathaus" or Town Hall.

As Chief "Stadtppfeifer," Pezel's duties consisted of composing and performing music for the two daily concerts or "Abblasen" as they were called, as well as for all civic ceremonies and festivals. Leipzig being one of the great musical centers of Germany, the audiences, and therefore the concerts and music, were of a much more sophisticated character than those found elsewhere in that country. Pezel's works were considered important and popular enough, during his own lifetime, for him to have had three large collections of Sonatas and Dances published.

The Suite of Dances in this recording were all taken from his "Funff-stimigte blasende Music," or Five Part Wind Music, published in Frankfort in 1685. The dance forms he used were, at this period, not meant for dancing, but were considered vehicles for concert and chamber music as were Bach's more familiar Sarabandes and Bourees. Although skillfully using all the compositional techniques of his time, the outstanding characteristic of Pezel's works was his tunefulness. Profundity may be lacking here, but charm, character and excitement is abundant.

LA MI LA SOL; DER HUND (The Dog) by HEINRICH ISAAC (c. 1450-1517)

Heinrich Isaac must be accorded the stature of a giant among composers of all periods. In his own time, he was overshadowed only by the extraordinary genius of Josquin des Pres. The neglect of Isaac's works during the past three hundred years, is almost unbelievable. His career took him from his native Netherlands, through France and Germany, to Italy. With unusual versatility, he has left us masterpieces in almost every conceivable medium, form, style and language of his period.

"Der Hund" is a contrapuntal three-voice instrumental carmen in two parts, based on a popular song of the day. The continuous flow of melody, the use of imitation and long sequential passages and the shifting of the main melodic material from voice to voice, is all typical of Isaac's style and skill as a contrapuntalist. His marvelous sense of humor appears with his quotation of other folk tunes such as "Au Claire de la Lune," and in

the passage in Part One depicting the barking of dogs, all of this referring to the text of the original song. At a time in history when most music was composed "to be played or sung," this work is indicative of an emerging instrumental style. In order to achieve the independence, and at the same time the equality of voices, so characteristic of Renaissance music, the instrumentation used here by the American Brass Quintet consists of a Trumpet, a Bass Trombone and the rarely used Eb Alto Trombone.

The composition "La Mi La Sol," on the other hand, appeared in three versions with different titles. Two of them had texts and were obviously meant for vocal performance or more likely for combinations of voices and instruments. As a Motet, it was called "Regamus Te," however the same work appears in the Credo of his Mass "O Praeclara." "La Mi La Sol" is the title appearing on the version without text, indicating an instrumental performance. The work is based on the four note motif of the title that is used as a Cantus Firmus, appearing in the tenor part in a variety of rhythmic arrangements. In both these compositions, the division into two parts affords the composer the opportunity of using two different contrapuntal schemes in the treatment of the same material.

CANZONA "BERGAMASCA"; BATTLE SUITE by SAMUEL SCHEIDT (1587-1654)

Samuel Scheidt was one of a great quartet of "S's," the others being Schein, Schutz and Sweelinck, all of whom were so highly influential in the development of German music during the early part of the Baroque era. Scheidt was a pupil of Sweelinck and spent most of his life as a church organist in Halle, in central Germany. Primarily known today for his organ music, Scheidt's compositions are characterized by lively rhythmic and contrapuntal inventiveness that, in the two works here recorded, is advantageously displayed by performance on brass instruments.

The "Canzona 'Bergamasca'" is a chain Canzona similar to the Canzonas of Gabrieli in form, with contrasting sections being linked together. In this Canzona, the material from the first section reappears several times, rondo-like, including in a recapitulation at the end. There is a tripla section (the rhythmic unit consisting of three beats instead of two) in the middle providing additional contrast. The "Bergamasca" of the title was, at this period, a composition whose melodic material was based on the harmonies of an Italian folk song from the region of Bergamo.

From Clement Jannequin's (c. 1500-1560) composition, "La Guerre" to Beethoven's "Wellington's Victory" and Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture," "Battle" pieces have always found popularity. They have ranged from musical imitations of battle sounds to the actual use of cannon, muskets and church bells. Scheidt's "Battle Suite" ("Galliard Battaglia") is not of the programmatic variety, but is abstract music taking its title from the trumpet-like character and anti-phonical (answering) effects of the flourishes in the upper voices. The trumpeters of The American Brass Quintet employ small D Trumpets in this work, to enhance the natural brilliance of the piece.

Both of these compositions were taken from a collection of works by Scheidt, published in Hamburg in 1621, entitled "Paduana, Galliarda, Couranta, Allemande, Intrada, Canzonetto. . .".

GREINER ZANNER (The Grumbler) by HEINRICH FINCK (1445-1527)

Henrich Finck was a prolific German composer of largely secular works, during the period before the Reformation. He spent many years in the service of the Polish Court in Cracow and ended his days as musical director of the Imperial Court in Vienna. He was a skilled and imaginative composer and an excellent contrapuntalist, making considerable use of imitation. Thirty years after his death, a great-nephew, Hermann Finck, said of him: "He excels not only in talent but also in learning, but his style is hard."

Typical of his instrumental works is "Greiner Zanner," a contrapuntal treatment of a popular German song of the time. Each instrument takes a turn at playing fragments of the melody while all the others are simultaneously busy with their different counterpoints. The effect, despite or because of this great complexity of texture, is one of great liveliness, humor and excitement.

FOUR FLEMISH DANCES by TIELMAN SUSATO (c. 1500-1560)

Tielman Susato, the Flemish trumpeter, instrument dealer, flutist, composer, arranger and copyist won renown mainly as one of the most important European music printers of his day. He is responsible for the survival of many a masterpiece by other composers.

These four dances were taken from a collection he published in Antwerp in 1551, entitled: "Dances, The Third Little Music Book." Most of these dances were reworkings of popular tunes of the time, or of well known chansons by other composers. Some of them were composed by Susato himself. Regardless of the origin of these pieces, Susato's skill and musicality as an "arranger" cannot be overlooked. Lively, charming and characteristic of the style and spirit of his times, these pieces transcend the barrier between functional dance music and absolute chamber music, as they serve both purposes eminently well.

THREE DANCES by JOHN DOWLAND (1562-1626)

John Dowland, one of the most outstanding of the Elizabethan composers, achieved particular renown, even in his own time, for his songs. His "Flow My Teares" gained such popularity, that references to it appear in numerous passages of literature contemporary to him. He was also one of the outstanding lutenists of his time and a good part of his compositions consists of works for the Lute. He is most remembered for his many poignant songs of lament and for his more serious forms, where his genius for lovely and dramatic melody comes to the fore.

The "Three Dances" are taken from a collection of twenty-one pieces he published in London, in 1605, entitled: "Lachrimae or seaven teares Figured in seaven Passionate Pavans, with divers other Pavans, Galliards and Allemands; set forth for the Lute, Viols or Violons in five parts. . . ." The "seaven Passionate Pavans" of the collection are all based on his "Flow My Teares."

Even though the title page states "for Lute, Viols or Violons," it is known that these and similar works were often performed by consorts of instruments other than those specified. The performance here, by a consort of brasses, is as characteristic and lovely as can be

heard on any modern instruments.

These pieces are dances in name only. Although based on the forms and characteristic rhythms of the old dances, they are really highly sophisticated and complex pieces of chamber music. The first dance is the simplest; a sprightly tuneful Galliard. The second is an intricate contrapuntal reworking of "Flow My Teares" in the form of a Pavan. It is filled with unusual dissonances, delayed resolutions and avoided cadences. The final piece is another Galliard, only this time it is extremely complex rhythmically, with constantly shifting meters and at times the individual parts not only play in different meters, but with different rhythmic stresses (downbeats).

THE ARTISTS

THE AMERICAN BRASS QUINTET

Organized in 1960, The American Brass Quintet is a pioneer in the rebirth of Brass Chamber Music. A unique ensemble of virtuoso instrumentalists, the group's formation was the fruition of over a decade of individual devotion to this ideal. They have appeared on radio, television and in twenty-five New York recitals and have toured frequently throughout the United States and Europe receiving the unanimous acclaim of musicians, audiences and critics. Their performances of early music, enhanced by extensive research into the ornamentation and performance practices of these periods, have been frequently acknowledged as both authoritative and unusually exciting. The ensemble's own editions of Renaissance and Baroque music, in addition to many premieres and commissioned works by outstanding contemporary composers, enhance a repertory of unusual variety and quality.

RONALD K. ANDERSON, TRUMPET

A former faculty member of Teachers College, Columbia University, Mr. Anderson performs regularly with the New York City Ballet Orchestra, the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the Symphony of the Air and other New York ensembles. He was a member of the New York Pro Musica Renaissance Wind Band and a specialist in Baroque Trumpet playing. He is much sought after for performances of contemporary music, and has recently launched an additional career as a Trumpet recitalist with a highly acclaimed debut concert at New York's Town Hall. Mr. Anderson is currently taking a Doctorate in Higher Education at Teachers College, Columbia University.

ROBERT E. BIDDLECOME, BASS TROMBONE

Mr. Biddlecome, Bass Trombonist with the New York City Ballet Orchestra, is also an accomplished Euphonium player, having played Solo Baritone with the United States Army Band and the Goldman Band. His forte, however, is the Bass Trombone on which he has performed with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, the American Symphony Orchestra, the Symphony of the Air, the Orchestra of America, the Columbia Group for Contemporary Music and many other organizations. He is a graduate of the Juilliard School of Music, and is presently an instructor in brass chamber music at that institution.

ALLAN J. DEAN, TRUMPET

A free-lance trumpeter in the New York area and also a specialist in high Baroque Trumpet playing, Mr. Dean has played with the Columbia Group for Contemporary Music, the Festival Orchestra, the Musica Aeterna Chamber Orchestra and other ensembles as well as with various Broadway Show Orchestras and Fred Waring's Pennsylvanians. He studied at the State University of Iowa and has Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from the Manhattan School of Music.

ARNOLD FROMME, TENOR TROMBONE

A member of the New York Pro Musica Renaissance Wind Ensemble, Mr. Fromme has performed as solo Trombone with the San Antonio Symphony, the New York City Ballet Orchestra, the American Ballet Theatre Orchestra, the Esterhazy Orchestra, the Festival Orchestra, the Little Orchestral Society, the Orchestra of America, the R. C. A. Victor Symphony and others. He has also performed with the New York Philharmonic, the Symphony of the Air, the Columbia Symphony Orchestra and other organizations. He is on the faculty of the Windham College Summer Collegium of Early Music, where he teaches and performs on historic brass instruments. He is also on the staff of, and appeared as soloist with, the Bennington Composers Conference and the Columbia Group for Contemporary Music. An alumnus of the Juilliard School of Music, the Paris Conservatory, Tanglewood and the American School of Fontainebleau, Mr. Fromme has written articles on Brass Chamber Music and published editions of early music for brass.

RICHARD A. HAPPE, FRENCH HORN

Much in demand as a free-lance artist in New York, Mr. Happe has appeared with the American Ballet Theatre Orchestra, the New York City Opera Orchestra, the Orchestral Society of Westchester, the Rye Chamber Orchestra, the Band of America, the Columbia Group for Contemporary Music, the Manhattan Woodwind Quintet, the Bennington Composers' Conference, Broadway Show Orchestras and other groups. He attended Indiana University, the Juilliard School of Music and the Manhattan School of Music.

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