



AMSTERDAM 1850 GEISLER ENSEMBLE

Florencia Gómez







FLORENCIA GÓMEZ & THOMAS REYNA flutes

FEDERICO FORLA hobo

ELIA CELEGATO clarinet

FEDERICO CUEVAS RUIZ horn

BERNAT GILI bassoon

LIENE MADERN-STRADINA fortepiano



AMSTERDAM 1850

Your ensemble is named after the maker of woodwind instruments Christian Gottfried Geisler, whose instruments are held in the highest regard and can be found in numerous international collections. Geisler was clearly a significant figure in his day but, unlike string instruments such as those by Stradivarius and others, early wind instruments have tended not to survive into the present, their modern descendants having changed so radically to render earlier designs obsolete. What, as far as you know, is the story of your Geisler flute?

Some time ago, Hans van der Laan's two daughters entrusted me with a very valuable object to them by giving me an old flute that had belonged to their father. Hans was a music lover who also had other instruments that he himself played, and he had received this instrument from his flute teacher in Leiden, a 9 keyed flute that was made in Amsterdam around 1850 by Christian Gottfried Geisler. Other instruments made by Geisler are currently kept in museums like the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the Kunstmuseum in The Hague and the Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments. I later found another one in a curiosa musical instruments shop in Amsterdam, and both instruments have been preserved in superb condition. Meike Schiereck-van der Laan, the woman who gave the instrument to me, said that her father appreciated high quality objects, and this flute provides ample evidence of this. Both wooden flutes are 9-keyed instruments. They play fantastically together and still have their own organic and vivid sound even after these many years.

Born in Maastricht in 1830, Mathieu-André Reichert counts as a Belgian flutist and composer and, though he ended up in Rio de Janeiro, his lovely Rêverie has none of the Brazilian influence in some of his other works. This is a piece that has virtuoso elements but is in the key of A minor, which is one of the more obliging tonalities for early flutes. The mid-1800s was the period in which Theobald Böhm's new system was emerging in popularity so, in technical terms, how does your Geisler flute compare? What are the freedoms and/or restrictions that a player would encounter with a 9-keyed flute when compared to modern instruments?

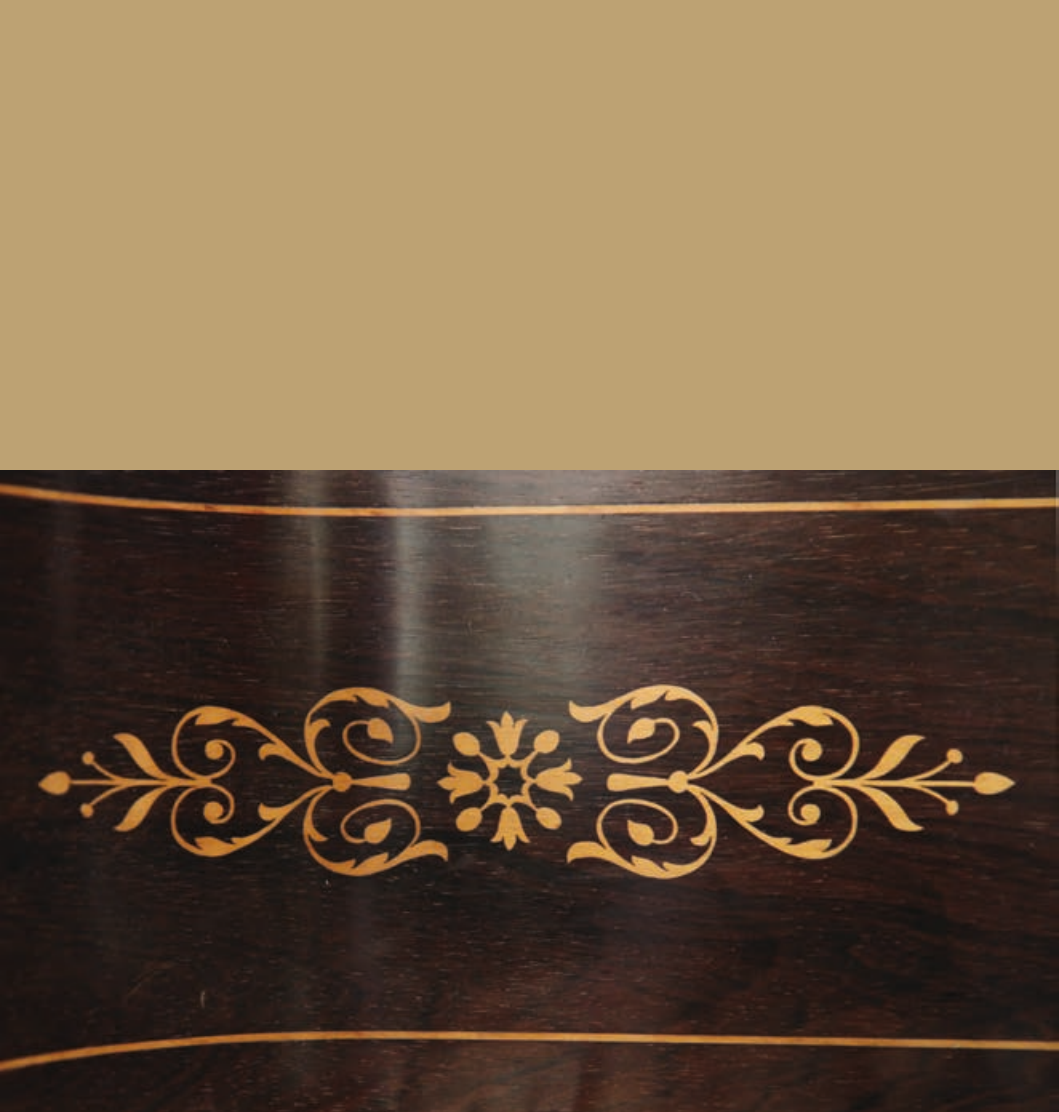
Reichert would later be an advocate of the Boehm flute, and though one might expect his works to function only on these types of instruments a rendition on conical simple system flutes is not to be discounted. The period, region and even the lyrical style of his writing for the flute mean that such performance is a valid, even a likely historical possibility. His virtuoso passagework is indeed challenging for a simple system flute but is still rewarding to play on such an instrument. His writing is generously vocal, and his piano accompaniment allows plenty of space for the simple system flute's warm, round, and gentle sound.

With the Duo Concertante by Berbiguier we have the privilege of hearing two Geisler flutes together, which has to be the summit of synergy when it comes to this kind of performing. Do you notice differences in timbre between the two instruments, and are there ways in which you adapt your sound differently in this context than when playing in other chamber music settings? Wood is a 'living' material and the qualities of sound in different violins has been the subject of much discussion. Are these aspects of resonance something that can be applied in a similar way to flutes, and how would you describe your Geisler instrument in this context?

Both instruments have the same pitch, and the same challenges with regard to intonation. Regardless of minor differences that might be due to improvements made through Geisler's experience in instrument construction, it is extremely easy to play them together. One of them has a slightly larger mouth hole and a slightly shorter head joint, which makes its sound more powerful, and we had to bear this in mind when recording the Berbiguier. We decided to record an early French duet, since these instruments resemble the flutes made in the Louis Lot workshop in France in the beginning of the 19th Century.

Johannes Meinardus Coenen is one of those names that has become neglected in today's musical life, though he was a well-known conductor and composer in his time, and you can find a Joh. M. Coenenstraat in Amsterdam – perhaps a little ironically an extension of the Beethovenstraat. It was in Amsterdam that Coenen made his name as a conductor for the theatre, for the renowned subscription concerts in Felix Meritis, and with the orchestra of the remarkable Paleis voor Volkslijdt, the professional qualities of which laid the foundations of the Concertgebouw orchestra. Coenen was a bassoonist who clearly





had a great deal of expertise in writing for winds, so I can imagine his joyous Wind Quintet is very satisfying to play. How did you come across this piece, and what can you tell us about it as an ensemble performing it on instruments from its period?

I had been searching in libraries for music written and published in this region and at that time. After discarding many options, his quintet (and his persona) seemed relevant enough to put in the effort to record this quintet on original instruments. The Nederlands Muziek Instituut was kind enough to send me a copy of their hand-written source, as we could find no publication of the quintet from that period. The virtuosity of his writing is a clear example of the elevated level of musical material he was able to deliver and perform. It was extremely satisfying to search for solutions to the questions his writing posed for the woodwind instruments on which we played.

With Coenen's Wind Quintet you bring together a former student of the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague, in his day known as the Royal Music School, with alumni from the same institute. Unfortunately, the Dutch National Archive only has student records from this school dating from 1865 and beyond so we can't check on Coenen's reports and exam results, but this synergy is another aspect that reinforces the foundations of this recording. Performance that seeks to recreate the music of a certain period always involves a certain amount of research, so what kinds of discovery can you add to our knowledge of the mid 1800s, alongside your experiences of making a recording using instruments of the time?

The flourishing atmosphere of music making in the region and the variety of instruments that could have been heard in Amsterdam in his day have opened our imagination to a whole world of possible sounds. There is so much needed when performing this repertoire on original instruments: flexibility, pitch-bending and control, the ability to shine in a solo, or to blend when playing in a unison... In this period all woodwind instruments were seeing such a speedy evolution that it is highly likely that the challenges we were confronted with represent those experienced by musicians at that time. Original instruments are extremely capricious and fragile, so finding each other in this chamber music work is an experience of deep friendship, hard work, patience, and joy in the results.

THE GEISLER ENSEMBLE & FLORENCIA GÓMEZ

The **Geisler Ensemble** is an international ensemble of wind players that has its main focus in the historically informed performance of music from the 18th and 19th Centuries. Each musician plays on original instruments or copies of original instruments, and the ensemble strives to find a fresh sound in old repertoire and in discovering new works to share with its audiences. Coming from diverse parts of the world, these musicians met during their years of study at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague, and they share, alongside a deep friendship, years of collaboration as members of other ensembles and in a variety of projects.

Florencia Gómez is a flute player who specialises in the performance of historical instruments. She has worked with ensembles and orchestras including the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra, Apollo ensemble, Holland Baroque Society, Dutch Baroque, Wrocławska Orkiestra Barokowa, Musica Amphion, La Folia Barockorchester, and the Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century. She earned her Bachelor and Masters Diplomas in early flutes at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague. As a guest lecturer she's been invited to teach at institutes including the Royal Music Association in London, the National University for the Arts of Argentina, the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts Brno, the Fontys Hogeschool voor de Kunsten in Tilburg, and the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki.

In the Royal Conservatoire she teaches courses and clinics about performance, methodology and didactics of early flutes in education, and on the historical development of the traverso and flute.





INSTRUMENTS

Pianoforte: played by Liene Madern-Stradina. The music on this CD concerns 19th century Dutch composers performed on Dutch wind instruments of the same period, so it was a logical choice to select a Dutch square piano for a recording of these chamber music works. An appropriate instrument was found in the Van Hees Collection: a Johan Baptist Duwaer made in Amsterdam in ca. 1830 – 1835. This is a six-octave instrument in the French style, with an ornate stand and beautiful wood inlay decorating its casing. Pianofortes were being made from the fourth quarter of the 18th century in the Netherlands and, surprisingly early, Dutch square pianos were made standard with a six-octave range (FF-f4). Dutch piano makers mostly made square pianos, building only a very few vertical giraffe or pyramid models. Well-known makers names were Van der Does, Van Raaij, Duwaer and Kadel. The instruments they made were constructed in a rather conservative way, but done so to very high standards of quality and with a beautifully clear and rather loud sound. They were therefore mostly played with the lid closed. When a pianoforte was used in chamber music at the end of the 18th and first half of the 19th century, it would invariably have been a square pianoforte. For that reason we decided that for the recording of Dutch chamber music from about 1850 a Dutch square piano from the same period was the only right choice.

Dr. Olaf S. van Hees

Bassoon: Bernat Gili plays an anonymous German instrument from the second half of the 19th Century.

Oboe: Federico Fòrla plays an instrument made by Theodor Poppe in Dresden, end of 19th Century, property of Taka Kitazato.

Horn: Federico Cuevas Ruiz plays a horn by Gambaro made in Paris, ca. 1830.

Clarinet: Elia Celegato plays on a B-flat clarinet made by Herman Sauerhering, Magdeburg, and an instrument in A by J. Kärner (Kaerner), Berlin, both from the second half of the 19th century.

Flute (Berbiguier): Thomas Reyna (see text).





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Recording Producer and Editing

Daan van Aalst

Recording Venue and dates

Lutherse Kerk Haarlem,

15, 17 January and 20, 21 February 2023

Graphic design

Ad van der Kouwe, Manifesta

Illustration

Print of the Amsterdam night watch for the

year 1849, Friedrich Robert Prinz,

Rijksmuseum Amsterdam

Photography

Daan van Aalst

Booklet text

Dominy Clements

Made possible by:

Petronella Andriessen Fonds and

Kolnaar-Mulier Fonds (het Cultuurfonds)

Adriana Jacoba Fonds

SENA muziekproductiefonds

Olaf van Hees Pianoforte Restauratie

Special thanks to:

Dr. Olaf S. Van Hees, MD, PhD

Charlotte van Hees-Frikkee, LLD

Stichting Historische Kamermuziek

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ROMANTIC MUSIC FOR WOODWINDS

JOHANNES MEINARDUS COENEN

(*The Hague, 1824 – †Amsterdam, 1899)

Windquintet in a

- 1 *Allegro*
- 2 *Andante*
- 3 *Scherzo*
- 4 *Finale: Allegro*

BENOÎT TRANQUILLE BERBIGUIER

(*Caderousse, 1782 – †Pontlevoy, 1835)

Duo Concertante, Op.2 No. 1

- 5 *Nobile*
- 6 *Rondo: Spiritoso mà con grazia*

MATHIEU-ANDRÉ REICHERT

(*Maastricht, 1830 – †Rio de Janeiro, 1880)

- 7 *Rêverie* for flute and piano