



# Scherzi Melodichi

A collection of trio sonatas for violin, viola and fondamento by  
Georg Philip Telemann

## ENSEMBLE SYMPOSIUM

The *Scherzi Melodichi*, published by the author in Amburgo in 1743, is a collection of seven suites for the unusual combination of violin, viola and fondamento. Each Suite is named after a day of the week and, indeed, each Scherzo was originally performed on its corresponding day within a week's time during one of Telemann's stay at spa town Bad Pyrmont, before being collected and published in Hamburg on the 19th of June 1734.

A perfect example of Gebrauchsmusik, the Scherzi were written to cheer up the spa's guests during the afternoons. Telemann's memoirs and his dedication to Karl August Friedrich, Prince of Waldeck and Pyrmont, on the title page of the Scherzi confirm that he was a regular visitor of this resort: he had most certainly been there on three occasions before 1734 (he also performed in concert in Arolsen Hofkapelle in 1731) and, after, in 1736, 1742 and 1751 to cure a not well specified condition, which Telemann mentioned in his *Zwei Geistliche Kantaten* of 1730. The frontispiece of the Scherzi indicates "Settimana Prima" (First Week), which could imply that Telemann had in mind an ambitious long-term project in Bad Pyrmont. The introductory letter, curiously written in Italian, gave some good elements of reflection on the nature of these compositions. In this letter, Telemann says that these "pezzetti" (little pieces), as he called them, were composed only to praise the prodigious effects of the mineral waters of Pyrmont. He goes on saying that he has combined the "stile scherzante" and the sweetness of Italian music so as to express sublime ideas – a most appropriate comment since the most fascinating element altogether of listening to these suites is the sweet melodic line that prevails in the sarabands, adagios allegros and vivaces. As had been the case for *Tafelmusik* (1733), perhaps as a means to support the character of destination of the music, here Telemann chose to favour the suite form over the four-movement Corellian sonata da chiesa form (adagio – allegro – adagio – allegro), which was very common in the instrumental music at the time. This allowed him to compose with much more freedom of expression, to introduce not well defined musical forms and to use elements from folk music.

For example, 'Saturday' starts with a Gigue, and one can thus find in each 'day' at least one movement with a pastoral character. Every suite is composed of a long allegro or vivace introduction, in binary or triple metre, followed by six elegant and refined dance movements, each of which is characterized by a clear compositional style, well defined melodies and the use of regular rhythmical

units. The usual tempo indication is often replaced by ambiguous elements: Dolce is used in ‘Saturday’ for a quite vibrant dance and in ‘Sunday’ for a restful cantabile, almost in pastoral style, Tempo giusto appears in ‘Monday’ for a 6/4 movement in between two allegros, and in ‘Friday’, in order to end a very fizzy day, the last movement is a 6/8 Allegro allegro – although this “più allegro” might indicate that this dance is meant to be played faster than the previous movements. The only suite that differs from the general style is ‘Sunday’. Composed mostly of andantes and cantabiles, only the final allegro in 3/4 brings us back to the context of the joyful dance. The first movement seems an Overture, with a solemn Largo in 3/2, where violin, viola, violone and keyboard play all together, followed by a presto in 4 in a fugato style.

The basic element of Telemann’s composing philosophy was simplicity as a natural process of composing to express and to arouse human feelings. As in most of his instrumental production virtuoso passages, large melodic leaps and difficulty of articulation are absent from the Scherzi, in which the emphasis is put rather on the dense dialogue between a vivid upper melodic line and the other instruments. We can thus but imagine, today, the beneficial effects this music had on the guests at Bad Pyrmont, who were lucky enough to listen to this wonderful music during the spring of 1734.

The *Scherzi Melodichi* were recorded by Ensemble Symposium in 2013 for Brilliant Classics (world premiere on original instruments). This album received several enthusiastic reviews from the international music press.

## Ensemble Symposium

Eva Saladin, violino

Simone Laghi, viola

Marco Lo Cicero, violone

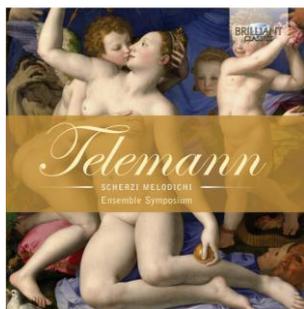
Federica Bianchi, clavicembalo

## Program

- Sonata Prima *Lunedì* TWV42:A4
- Sonata Seconda *Martedì* TWV42:B3
- Sonata Terza *Mercoledì* TWV42:G5
- Sonata Quarta *Giovedì* TWV42:Es2
- Sonata Quinta *Venerdì* TWV42:e4
- Sonata Sesta *Sabato* TWV42:G3
- Sonata Settima *Domenica* TWV42:D7

# Portfolio

- G. P. Telemann – Scherzi Melodichi (Brilliant Classics, world première on original instruments)



**Recommended by Fanfare Magazine (March 2014)**

**5/5 Stars on Fonoforum.de (December 2013)**

*“The Ensemble Symposium plays with energy and adroitness. I am particularly impressed by the cohesive ensemble, which, since everything is spot on in tune, allows for the subtle nuances of Telemann’s music to emerge.”*

Bertil van Boer, Fanfare (March 2014)

*“Das tun die Musiker freilich sehr beschwingt, sehr tänzerisch und agil. Charmant!”*

Remy Franck, pizzicato.lu (March 2014)

*“All told, this is a most entertaining and genial set of music, performed with character and energy.”*

Jonathan Woolf, www.musicweb-international.com (May 2014)

- B. Campagnoli – Six String Quartets (Brilliant Classics, world première)

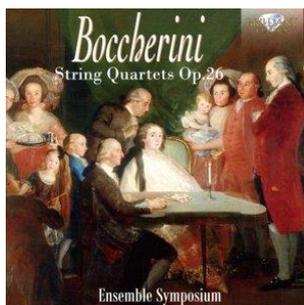


**Cd of the month on CdClassico.com, 5/5 stars (January 2015)**

*“Così, oggi, nel nuovo anno, scopriamo che anche un italiano contribuì in modo significativo all’affermazione del quartetto per archi e la musica che qui ci viene proposta con grande gusto e maestria assoluta da questo giovane quartetto ne è una bella dimostrazione. Da ascoltare assolutamente.”*

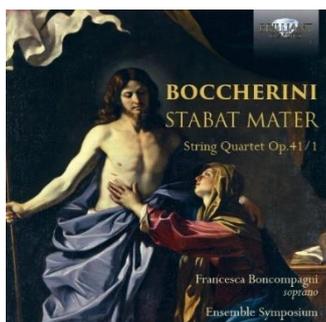
Gabriele Formenti, CdClassico.com

- L. Boccherini - Sei Quartetti Op. 26 G195-200 (Brilliant Classics, January 2016)



**“Click de Fevriér” 2016 on Classiquenews.com**

- L. Boccherini – Stabat Mater (1781), Quartetto Op 41 n. 1



Based on the new Critical Edition prepared by the Cento Studi Opera Omnia Luigi Boccherini (Lucca, Italy)

**5/5 Stars on Amadeus (August 2016), review by Cesare Fertonani**