

BOCCHERINI Flute Quintets, opp. 17, 19, 55 • Rafael Ruibérriz de Torres (fl); Francisco de Goya Str Qrt (period instruments) • BRILLIANT 96074 (3 CDs: 198:29)

During the 18th century, Luigi Boccherini was given the epithet "Wife of Haydn." We might wonder at its political correctness today, but back then it was an honorific that alluded to the fact that, musically, some regarded them as compatible in terms of musical style. This was only true to a point, given that their careers were quite different. Unlike the homebody Haydn, who only late in life was able to travel, Boccherini began his career at the age of 23 as the cellist in an Italian string quartet, possibly one of the first professional groups of this sort (the others were Pietro Nardini, Filippo Manfredi, and Giuseppe Cambini, all initially from Lucca). The reception of this group in Paris was not entirely positive, but both he and Manfredi were lured to Spain a year later. Here Boccherini stayed for the remainder of his life, though he always maintained close connections to Parisian publishers, where his published music achieved international fame. He was so well known both as a cellist and composer that he obtained the distant patronage of Friedrich Wilhelm, Frederick the Great's successor in Prussia. Boccherini is known for his approach to the string quintet, where instead of the traditional pair of violas, he used two violoncellos. Less known are some of his other chamber music such as the three sets of flute quintets: op. 17, op. 19, and op. 55, published in Paris in 1773, 1774, and 1797 respectively. Clearly, the gap between the first two and last is both stylistic and deliberate, as it seems the market for flute quintets may not have been particularly strong. Both the early sets are in a very French two-movement format, often eschewing the slower second movement, and mainly concluding with a minuet; the only exception is the D-Major Quintet (G 430) of op. 19, which corresponds to Boccherini's interest in depicting local color in his music. In this work, entitled "Las Parejas," the opening Entrada is repeated in truncated form after the Galope second movement. The other three-movement quintet, No. 5 in E^b from the op. 55, also has the same arrangement of a reprise of the opening movement as a colophon. The three discs have the following arrangements: **NOTE - see at Bottom of Review**

The music is always inventive and surprising in terms of stylistic variety. In the opening Quintet in D Major, the minuet is quite lyrical, the amoroso of the tempo indicating a gentle flow in the music. The D-Minor Quintet (op. 17/3) is moody and restless, with the flute acting less soloistically, and in the second movement Rondo the lines practically tumble over each other in the parallel major. The op. 19 set is stylistically identical to the op. 17, providing tuneful and lively quintets. The opening E^b first movement springs about easily with a nice energy, while its second movement minuet is less minuet-like; rather, it flows with some interesting

chromatic twists and sudden explosions of virtuosity amid the often oblique theme. The C-Major Quintet (op. 19/3) is gentle and has the flute float above the ostinato strings, and its Rondo movement trips right along in a sprightly jog. This is nothing compared to the scurrying of the *Presto* finale in the B \flat -Major Quintet (op. 19/5), which dashes hither and yon in a frantic pace. The final work begins with a rather arrogant march in which the couples ("Las parejas") take the floor for a dance, strutting about before the fluttery galop. One can just see them twirling about with some abandon, and then the fanfares of the march return as they exit the ball. The op. 55 set is also somewhat akin to the other two sets, which leads me to believe that they really all belong together, despite being published almost two decades later. It is as if Boccherini, in his conversations with Ignaz Pleyel (the publisher in Paris and a pupil of Haydn), dug these things out of his musicalia. In any case, there is a nice sense of liveliness about them, though there can be pensiveness as well. The latter is well demonstrated in the opening movement of the F-Major Quintet (op. 55/2) with its lyrical and lilting theme, which begins a bit softly and hesitantly. The concluding minuet is a bit jauntier than one might imagine, with hints of the Spanish in the whirling main theme. In the E \flat Quintet (op. 55/5), the opening *Andante lento* offers a more solemn entrada, again like a staid couple entering the dance arena with a passeggiata among the other dancers. The minuet, with its repetitious phrases, is more conventional, though there is a hint of a waltz in it. The final quintet of this set (No. 6) in D Minor is fraught with tension in the suspensive main theme of the first movement, and the restless triplet figures in the flute. The Spanish flavor seems to return in the final minuet movement with its juxtaposition of major and minor and a too abrupt ending. The performance by flutist Rafael Ruibérriz de Torres is excellent, with a good sense of style and intonation. The flute sound of the Grenser 18th-century instrument is full and resonant. The Goya Quartet too has an innate sense of Boccherini's sometimes quirky style, and the ensemble is equally excellent. This is a fine set of discs, and anyone who loves Classical-period chamber works ought to have them in their collection. Moreover, they would also be extremely fun to perform. **Bertil van Boer**

This article originally appeared in Issue 45:1 (Sept/Oct 2021) of *Fanfare Magazine*.

Disc 1 op. 17	Disc 2 op. 19	Disc 3 op. 55
No. 1 in D	No. 1 in E \flat	No. 1 in G
No. 2 in C	No. 2 in g	No. 2 in F
No. 3 in d	No. 3 in C	No. 3 in D
No. 4 in B \flat	No. 4 in D	No. 4 in A
No. 5 in G	No. 5 in B \flat	No. 5 in E \flat

No. 6 in E ^b	No. 6 in D	No. 6 in d
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Boccherini: Complete Flute Quintets

EarlyMusicReview Website Review

Rafael Ruibérriz de Torres, Francisco de Goya String Quartet

158:29 (3 CDs)

Brilliant Classics 96074

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Luigi Boccherini composed three sets of six flute quintets – namely his opera 17, 19 and 55 – the two earliest sets in 1773 and 1774, just after his appointment as chamber musician to Prince Luis Antonio de Bourbón in Spain. The two early sets, the product of a thirty-year-old composer, have a delightful freshness and individuality to them, with the flute playing the ensemble role of a primus inter pares rather than dominating the texture with virtuosity. The nevertheless demanding flute writing suggests the presence in the royal circle of a player of considerable technical and musical ability, but sadly he or she has not as yet been identified. Boccherini's reputation (in my opinion undeserved) as a composer of slight and often superficial music is belied but this constantly imaginative and beautifully crafted music, which is played with enormous flair on period instruments by flautist Rafael Ruibérriz de Torres with the Francisco de Goya String Quartet. There is a wonderful sense of ensemble, as well as a witty and fruitful interaction among the players, bringing out the full charm and elegance of Boccherini's music. Twenty-five years later, inspired by the flautist Gaspar Barli Boccherini returned to the flute quartet, composing his opus 55 set in 1797. What a lot has changed since the earlier sets! Boccherini has made the subtle but significant stylistic move from galant to classical, while he has fully embraced his adopted Spanish heritage, including no fewer than three fandangos in the set, as well as adopting a notably folk-related idiom elsewhere. He is also less coy about letting individual instruments, most notably the flute and his own cello, step out of the more homogenous textures into the spotlight. The result is music that sounds much more profound and rhetorically powerful, and the performers rise magnificently to the challenge with highly eloquent performances. Recorded in two dramatically contrasting venues (namely a church and a recording studio), the Brilliant engineers do a very fine job in creating the same lively and sympathetic acoustic for all three CDs, and the tone of the period strings and Signor de Torres' Wenner copy of an 18th-century Grenser flute is captured extremely vividly. This is a delightful set of recordings, adding valuably to our impressions of Boccherini as a composer of imagination and substance.

D. James Ross

EARLY, CLASSICAL AND BEYOND - WholeNote Website Review

Boccherini: Complete Flute Quintets - Rafael Ruibérriz de Torres; Francisco de Goya String Quartet

Written by Allan Pulker

Category: **Early, Classical and Beyond**

Published: 30 June 2021

Boccherini – Complete Flute Quintets

Rafael Ruibérriz de Torres; Francisco de Goya String Quartet

Brilliant Classics 96074 (naxosdirect.com/search/5028421960746)

Virtuoso cellist and composer, Luigi Boccherini, born in 1743 in the city of Lucca in Tuscany, Italy, only 92 kilometres west of Florence, received his musical education in Lucca and subsequently in Rome. He spent some time in his mid-20s in Paris, which led to his moving to Madrid and his appointment as a musician in the household of the Infante Don Luis, brother of King Charles III.

It was there in 1773 and 1774 that Boccherini composed the two sets of Six Flute Quintets Opp.17 and 19, recorded on the first two CDs of this three-CD set. The third CD is of the Flute Quintets Op.55, composed in 1797, either in Spain or in Berlin, where he was employed by King Frederick William II of Prussia.

These 18 quintets, while far from Boccherini's total output, reveal a very skilful and original composer, different from but not inferior to his much better-known colleagues, Haydn and Mozart. First and foremost is his gift for melodic invention, evident in everything on the CD, even in the third set, composed when he was in his mid-50s.

The flute would, you might think, be a bit of a fifth wheel when added to a string quartet, but not for Boccherini. He sometimes uses the flute as a soloist, as in Op.19, No.3, which is almost a concerto, the flute even having a cadenza; sometimes as an orchestral colour to bring out a series of modulations, as in Op.17, No.1; and sometimes as a source of contrast, as in Op.19, No.4, where the flute and the cello alternate as soloists.

The performers are the Spanish Francisco de Goya String Quartet and flutist, Rafael Ruibérriz de Torres. The quartet's playing is technically flawless, and their sensitivity to each other and to the flute is exemplary. Ruibérriz de Torres always sounds as if he belongs, and his facility on the period instrument is astounding during the virtuoso passages. Bravissimi to the five for giving us this first complete recording of these hitherto neglected works.

RST - Amazon Review - 5*/5*

Reviewed in the United States on March 24, 2021

Boccherini's guitar quintets are better known, but I do not think that they are superior, overall, to these 18 flute quintets. (My guess is that more listeners prefer the sound of a guitar to a flute than the other way around.) Erstwhile Fanfare reviewer Lynn René Bayley, who professed herself "an inveterate Boccherini-hater," admitted to being "pleasantly surprised" by a disc of Boccherini's op. 19 flute quintets, recorded by Auser Musici (Hyperion) and reviewed there in 2008. (I can't understand why anyone would hate Boccherini's music when there are so many more deserving targets, especially in recent times!) Contemporaries referred to Boccherini, at times, as "Haydn's wife." I am not exactly sure what that means, but if you are going to be "married" to a famous composer, you could do worse than Papa Haydn!

In any case, I think a reviewer's nobler purpose is to point listeners in the direction of music, performances, and recordings that are good, not to frighten them away from those that are bad. If I wanted to make a case for these flute quintets, I would sit the listener down and play for him or her the opening Allegro con moto from the first quintet of op. 19. This is a delightful confection, joyous in expression and energetic in movement, that chatters in delight until it comes to a surprisingly terse ending three minutes and 34 seconds later. The second movement, marked Minuè, also jumps off the train before it has come to a complete stop. Boccherini was a composer who understood the virtue of leaving his listeners wanting more. Pace Bayley, he never outstays his welcome. This is followed by the second quintet, now in a minor key, and that also pleases the ear, given the preponderance of major keys in these works. Boccherini inserts a note—several notes, really—of drama into the proceedings without making the atmosphere too Stürm-y or Drang-y. One is reminded of the old sitcom plot formula, which required the conflict-of-the-week to be introduced, developed, and resolved in 22 minutes.

Most of these quintets are in two movements, of which the second usually is a minuetto. The first two sets of six quintets were composed in 1773 and 1774, respectively, around the time that Boccherini turned 30. He had moved to Spain in 1768, and two years later was appointed composer and cellist to the royal chamber of Prince Luis Antonio de Borbón, himself a violinist and a music aficionado. These quintets were dedicated to Prince Luis. One assumes that there was an excellent flutist in Luis's employment, or not too far away, although we do not know who he or she was. Prince Luis died in 1785, and Boccherini secured a position as composer to Crown Prince Friedrich Wilhelm of Prussia. When Friedrich Wilhelm died in 1797, Boccherini was left without patronage, and he composed and dedicated the op. 55 quintets to a musician named Gaspar Barli who played both the oboe and the flute. As a result, these quintets have been played on either

instrument, although the only recording (as far as I know) with oboe instead of flute was made more than two decades ago for *Capriccio* by Lajos Lencsés and the Parisii Quartet. These quintets are more imposing than their predecessors. Listening to the opening *Allegro con vivacità* from the first quintet, for example, one might be fooled into thinking that there are more than five instruments playing. That impression is magnified by the rather reverberant environment in which flutist Rafael Ruibérriz de Torres and the Francisco de Goya String Quartet have been recorded.

All of these works have been recorded before, but this is the first time, I think, that all of them have been recorded by the same performers and released in a single set. As mentioned above, op. 19 has been recorded by Auser Musici. In op. 17, the alternative is Alexandre Magnin and the Janáček Quartet (Naxos), and in op. 55, one can turn to Michael Faust and the Auryn Quartet. The Francisco de Goya String Quartet is not identified as an ensemble whose members play period instruments, but the guttier and more nasal sound suggests that it is. Magnin and the Janáček Quartet create a rounded and more modern sound, and this will please some listeners better, although I think both groups understand what this music is about, and represent it well. In op. 19, the chief distinction between the present performers and Auser Musici is the latter's willingness to honor repeats. (This, more than the slightly slower tempos, makes Auser Musici's disc about 16 minutes longer.) Finally, in op. 55, I like the warmer timbres of Faust and the Auryn Quartet, a sound complemented by the fuller and more intimate engineering. I prefer them to the present performers, but that's not to say that Ruibérriz de Torres and the Goya Quartet are objectionable. Also, Brilliant's three-CD set is good value. It probably will cost you considerably more to acquire the Naxos, Hyperion, and CPO discs separately.

If you already know that you like Boccherini, you can acquire this set with the knowledge that the music is up to the composer's high standards, and that the performances, while not definitive, are very fine.

BOCCHERINI Flute Quintets: op. 19/1–6 • Auser Musici • HYPERION 67646 (69:07)

For someone like myself, who is an inveterate Boccherini-hater, I have to admit that I was pleasantly surprised with this disc. The music is typical Boccherini, charming and with a certain amount of energy, though scarcely innovative or memorable, but the performances by Auser Musici flow beautifully. They have both inner energy and a smile.

One thing I found interesting was that, considering these are flute quintets, the

flute is almost never the lead instrument. Rather, Boccherini scores it as an “extra” voice in ensemble, mostly filling in the harmony. Apparently he had no King Frederick the Great to write for, as did Quantz and C. P. E. Bach, but used the flute as a coloristic instrument as he did in his symphonies. These performances are also based on reproductions of the autograph scores, in which there are occasional thorough-bass figures in the cello line, which calls for the cellist to play double-stopped chords. This certainly adds an element of difficulty to music that is otherwise fairly straightforward to play, but I commend them on going back to the manuscripts.

I was particularly taken by the G-Minor Quintet (No. 2), in which the energy of the rhythm in the first movement is often complemented by a pervading feeling of sadness, quite an unusual departure for Boccherini. In addition, there are very dramatic transition passages that almost give it the feeling of a chamber symphony rather than a quintet. And in the Quintets in C (No. 3) and D (No. 4), both of which surprisingly start with slow movements, there are standout passages for solo cello—Boccherini’s own instrument—which certainly pulls the focus away from the flute and puts it on the cello, though Quintet No. 3 struck me as the least musically interesting of the set. It should also be noted that these performances are given at the pitch of A= 430, a little low even for that time but still within reasonable range. Three of the six sonatas (4–6), given on Claves 2202 by flutist Béatrice Jaermann and the Sine Nomine Quartet, are equally well played, but this is the only set of all the op. 19 quintets currently available.

I really liked this disc! Shocked, huh? So was I. **Lynn René Bayley**

This article originally appeared in Issue 31:6 (July/Aug 2008) of *Fanfare* Magazine.

Luigi BOCCHERINI (1743-1805) - MusicWeb Review - Auser Musici
Flute Quintets Op. 19

Quintet No. 1 in E flat (G 425) [10:14]

Quintet No. 2 in g minor (G 426) [11:35]

Quintet No. 3 in C (G 427) [14:01]

Quintet No. 4 in D (G 428) [09:53]

Quintet No. 5 in B flat (G 429) [11:31]

Quintet No. 6 in D '*Las Parejas*' (G 430) [11:45]

Auser Musici: (Carlo Ipata (transverse flute), Luca Ronconi, Francesco La Bruna (violin), Teresa Ceccato (viola), Luigi Puxeddu (cello))

rec. March–April 2007, Oratorio di S. Domenico, Pisa, Italy. DDD

HYPERION CDA67646 [69:09]

In the 18th century there were several reasons for composers to write music. Most were at the service of a church or a court, and delivered what was expected of them. But sometimes they wrote music for specific individuals, for instance a

musician who was a virtuoso on his instrument. Some composers were virtuosos themselves, and they composed music to play during private or public concerts. Luigi Boccherini's oeuvre reflects all these permutations.

Since 1770 he was at the service of Don Luis, Infante of Spain and brother of King Carlos III. He was an avid and apparently accomplished player of the cello which explains the large production of quintets with two cello parts - the first and most demanding cello part to be played by Boccherini himself. In the years 1773 and 1774 Boccherini wrote three collections of chamber music with parts for the transverse flute. It is not known why exactly he did so, but it is very likely there was an accomplished flautist at the Infante's court at the time. The role of the flute is different in these collections. The Divertimenti op. 16, for instance, were called divertimentos for two violins, flute obbligato, viola, two cellos (again!) and double bass (three of these divertimenti have been recorded by Piccolo Concerto Wien - Symphonia SY 01188). In the quintets recorded by Auser Musici the flute plays a more prominent role, but not as much as in most chamber music pieces for flute and strings by Boccherini's contemporaries. Remarkable is the role of the cello: in two movements, the first of the quintets 3 and 4, it plays a very prominent role. In these movements cello and flute are involved in a dialogue which puts the other instruments at the sideline.

Five of the six quintets are in two movements, fast - fast, slow (or moderate) - fast or fast - faster. This puts these quintets in the realm of the divertimento: most divertimento-like compositions of the second half of the 18th century were in two movements. This had also a very prosaic reason: pieces like this were relatively cheap and therefore commercially more interesting than longer works. As Marco Mangani writes in the booklet: "As disappointing as it may be to champions of art as a mission, that was the way Boccherini and his contemporaries treated the matter". The idea of 'l'art pour l'art' (art for art's sake) was still very far away.

The fact that these pieces are divertimentos doesn't make them easy to play. As already indicated two of the quintets contain sophisticated cello parts, and there can be hardly any doubt that these were to be played by Boccherini himself. But also in content these quintets are more than just easy-listening stuff. The first movement of the Quintet No. 2 is pretty dramatic, and the opening movements of the Quintets 3 and 4 contain a lot of expression.

The last quintets also have something special to offer. The Quintet No. 5 ends with a brilliant and exciting presto assai. The Quintet No. 6 is the only one with three movements, and has a descriptive character, like the famous 'Musica notturna di Madrid'. The title is 'Las Parejas', which means 'the couples'. The first movement is called 'Entrada - Marcia' (entrance - march), the second 'Galope' (gallop), which is followed by a repeat of the first movement. "The title refers to a typical Spanish horse race, in which two horsemen run hand in hand". The way Boccherini has set

this scene has almost orchestral traits, and one can only admire the vivid picture he is painting here with music.

The players apparently immensely enjoy this piece, as it is played with panache and fantasy. But the other quintets are realised just as well. The flautist Carlo Ipata plays his part with technical assurance and great feeling for the character of the music, sometimes delicate and almost tender, like in the first movement of the fourth quintet, sometimes firm, like in the last movement of Quintet No. 5. The cellist Luigi Puxeddu is excellent in dealing with the intricacy of his part. The ensemble as a whole has provided a very enjoyable recording of these fine quintets which shows how exciting diverting music can be if composed by a master like Luigi Boccherini and played by such an excellent ensemble as Auser Musici.

Johan van Veen

Bejart7092 - Amazon Review - Auser Musici - 5*/5*

Reviewed in the United States on April 10, 2016

Verified Purchase

As a virtuoso cellist, it is no surprise that the vast majority of the chamber works written by Luigi Boccherini (1743-1805) place his favored instrument front and center. But while employed at the Spanish court, he entered a period from 1773 to 1776 where he dedicated himself to an intensive exploration of the flute, composing at least 3 sets of chamber pieces with the soprano wind instrument as the lead voice. The 6 quintets of Op.19 are likely the third set of that series.

Five of the six contain just two movements and can be grouped in pairs. The first two adhere to a 'fast-fast' pattern with a minuet as the concluding section. Written in E Flat, the sunny 'Allegro con moto' seems at first to be a string quartet with the flute added as an afterthought. But the single wind soon assumes nearly as much melodic responsibility as this thoroughly engaging opening movement rolls on. Brief minor keyed interludes offer a bit of dramatic contrast without any plumbing of emotional depths before what is a rather abrupt end. Graceful and unhurried, the closing 'Minue' features a bigger presence from the lower strings, an elegant overlay from the flute, and a persistent minor keyed passage that creates a delicate tension.

That tension is heightened as the following quintet is in G Minor, the only work explicitly in a minor key. Deft interplay between the two top voices ushers in the opening 'Allegro', further marked 'e con un poco di moto'. While most of the interweaving between the flute and the first violin generates momentum through cooperation, there are more than a few instances that slide into friction and

conflict. Enhanced by the occasional dramatic silence, this striking 1st movement is one of the high points of the disc. With a sparkling flute supplying a feathery touch over the strings, a lyrical 'Minuetto con moto' closes the work.

Employing a 'slow-fast' format, the second pair of quintets offer a different approach. In the C Major Quintet, the flute emerges as the primary conveyor of the melody in the stately 'Andante non tanto' with the cello providing the main secondary voice. Using a sedate triple meter, Boccherini juxtaposes the dialogue across a wide divide of pitches, requiring virtuosic work from the bass voice in the instrument's highest register, and displaying an affinity for his beloved cello. Shifting to C Minor for the jaunty 'Rondeau grazioso', intricate solo lines for solo wind intermingle with the counter melody in the lower strings.

A reverential 'Adagio assai' sets up the 4th quintet, composed in D Major. With the bass voice presenting a broad, expansive theme, the flute supplies delicately filigreed embellishments while the upper strings fall into a gently supportive role. Often identified as 'flute and cello quintets', the label fits both this work as well as preceding quintet since the two instruments share the spotlight with near equal time and focus. Using rolling cascades of sequential runs, all 5 voices intertwine in the finale, a tender 'Minuetto con moto'. Slipping into D Minor for the contrasting trio, the overlapping runs reverse, rolling up the scale instead of down, creating a clever and effective connection.

The third and final pair of quintets each have unique characteristics. Penned in B Flat, the 5th quintet has a 'fast-faster' arrangement with the resolutely marching 'Allegro assai' featuring the middle strings as the main counterpoint to the solo wind. Frantic fiddling characterizes the closing 'Presto assai', a breathtaking romp that features pulsing syncopations from the violins as the flute soars overhead in an obbligato role in another highlight of the recording.

Structured in three sections and subtitled 'Las Parejas', the closing D Major Quintet deserves singular attention. Descriptive of a horserace, it opens with a 6 bar 'Entrada' in a choppy, prancing triple meter immediately followed by an imperial 'Marcia', probably suggestive of a parade of entrants around the track before the actual race. Propelled by strings with the solo wind along for the ride, the sprinting 'Galope' is in 6/8 time that gradually drifts to a surprisingly placid close. After a reprise of the 'Entrada', this time with 12 bars, the regal 'Marcia' also returns. While the description and arrangement may be innovative, the content is somewhat dull and repetitive, almost a working out of ideas to be fulfilled at a later date.

Recorded in 2007, the Hyperion release is excellent, sharp and finely detailed, with the microphones close enough in the slower movements to hear the breath intake and the finger placement of the strings. Carlo Ipata shines on flute while

special mention should be made of Luigi Puxeddu on Boccherini's favorite instrument, the cello. While these fine crafted works will never challenge the continuing popularity of the acknowledged Classical era masters, Boccherini was no slouch. They deserve more than an occasional listen.

Boccherini: Flute Quintets Op. 19 Review by James Leonard

AllMusic Review - Auser Musici - Rating: 3 1/2*/5*

When **Boccherini**'s six quintets for flute and string quartet were published in 1776, the composer described them as "opera piccolo" (little works) because of their generally brief character. But in these splendid performances by Italian **Auser Musici**, the flute quintets need no disclaimers, and they sound fully equal to the composer's string quintets. Flutist **Carlo Ipata** takes the lead, and his playing perfectly matches **Boccherini**'s sweet-toned but technically challenging music. Though the string players take a lesser role in the proceedings, violinists **Luca Ronconi** and **Francesco La Bruna**, violist Teresa Ceccato, and cellist **Luigi Puxeddu** are all admirable in ensemble, and in their willingness to support **Ipata**. As for the works themselves, they are lyrical, delightfully balanced, and strongly rhythmic -- qualities typical of the composer at his best. The sixth quintet, "Las Parejas (The Couples)," which is in three movements instead of two like the rest of the set, depicts a type of Spanish horse race run in pairs (hence the title). It is as charming a piece of program music as the composer's famous "La musica notturna delle strade di Madrid." Recorded in the Oratorio di S. Domenico in Pisa, Hyperion's digital sound is evocative, but a bit diffuse around the edges.

Boccherini Flute Quintets - Faust & Aurnyn Quartett

ClassicsToday Review

Review by: Victor Carr Jr *Artistic Quality: 9* *Sound Quality: 10*

Luigi Boccherini (1743-1805) was the leading Italian composer of chamber music during the last decades of the eighteenth century. His six Flute Quintets reflect the popularity of the instrument during his lifetime, both with professional and amateur musicians. The first and last quintets are the best of the set. No.1 is bright, lively and cheerful, with bouncy dotted rhythms in the first movement. No.6 is in D minor, a welcome change after so many major key dollops. It features more deeply considered themes and transitions (sounding interestingly like early Schubert), and quite naturally reverts to the major mode for the Allegretto's second subject

and the Minuetto's trio. The remaining four quintets are agreeably attractive works, with alternating Andantino and Allegretto first movements. This is perfect music for upscale gatherings (well heeled readers could use this disc for their next soirée, assuming they chose not to hire real musicians). Michael Faust plays with lovely tone, and colorful phrasing, aided by the amiable Auryn Quartett. The sound is clear and warm. In sum, an enjoyable disc of lightweight, well-crafted fluff.

Luigi BOCCHERINI (1743 - 1805) - MusicWeb Review - Faust & Auryn
Flute Quintets Op.55 58'34"

Michael Faust (flute) Auryn Quartet

Recorded February 12 -15 1996 Sendesaal. Germany. DDD **cpo 999 382-2**

The six Quintets for Flute and String Quartet on this CPO disc were written around 1797. Probably economic needs as much as artistic imperatives prompted their writing. The Italian composer was living in Madrid and using a Paris publisher to feed his public a prolific but repetitious diet of the chamber music scores his mainly middle class customers had wanted. As they became less in demand he continued to write but not publish and struggled to make a living. One of his richer Royal patrons died and Boccherini found that isolation and a lack of challenge had caused his work to stagnate stylistically. He died in poverty a few years later. There is a suggestion that the Quintets were written hoping that they would provide contact with titled patrons in Madrid through a noted oboist friend of Boccherini's who had entrée to these circles.

The Quintets were specifically written for either Flute or Oboe - a not uncommon practice at the time. Many purchasers of the published scores of the time were amateur performers and an option such as that would presumably increase the potential market for a piece of work.

There is an inevitable sameness - which is not the same thing as monotony - about the works, due mainly, I believe, to the limited dynamic range heard. The flute, because of its very nature, cannot dominate the sound in a small ensemble so even though the flute is busy throughout and one is always aware of its presence, there is never the feeling of a "flute plus strings". There is nothing very fast, nothing very slow and no memorable melodies emerge. As an established String Quartet one expects the Auryn to blend together well and the balance of the ensemble with the extra instrument and the way the engineers have captured it, without resorting to "close-ups" is first - rate. Michael Faust, the German flautist, has a lovely warm tone and his phrasing and breath control are exemplary.

No doubt few potential buyers would play the six works one after the other but rather dip into them as the need calls.

They will find undemanding, attractive music, easy on the ear, impeccably played and well recorded. The earth will not move while you listen but the time will pass

pleasantly.

Reviewer

Harry Downey



Boccherini: Flute Quintet No. 1 in F; Flute Quintet No. 2 in G; Flute Quintet No. 3 in C; Flute Quintet No. 5 In G; Flute Quintet No. 6 In B flat - Rampal

Our rating: 4.0 out of 5 star rating

By [**BBC Music Magazine**](#)

COMPOSERS: Boccherini LABELS: Sony

WORKS: Flute Quintet No. 1 in F; Flute Quintet No. 2 in G; Flute Quintet No. 3 in C; Flute Quintet No. 5 In G; Flute Quintet No. 6 In B flat

PERFORMER: Jean-Pierre Rampal (flute), Regis Pasquier (violin), Bruno Pasquier (viola), Roland Pidoux, Mathilde Sternat (cello)

CATALOGUE NO: SK 62679

This is the first recording of five unautographed flute quintets from the late 18th century which were recently discovered in Madrid. Although not yet authenticated as being by Luigi Boccherini, they are here attributed to him; if he didn't write them, then a composer with an equal passion for singable melodies and inventive instrumental dialogue did.

Each is scored for flute and string quartet comprising two cellos. Jean-Pierre Rampal (flute), Re'gis Pasquier (violin) and Roland Pidoux (concertante cello) seize Boccherini's virtuosic roles with confidence, giving the feel-good tunes the flamboyant treatment they deserve. All performers judge the heavier, Romantic moods of the middle movements with languorous precision.

Close miking means occasional audible sniffs, but this merely adds to the drama; with headphones you can hear an uncharacteristically husky tone from Rampal.
Kate Sherriff

Gramophone Review - Rampal Boccherini Flute Quintets

View record and artist details

Author: Stanley Sadie

These quintets come from a set of six in a Madrid manuscript with an attribution to Boccherini: they are not in Boccherini's own catalogue of his works, which doesn't necessarily exclude their authenticity (he noted in it most of his true chamber music, though not the cello sonatas or the keyboard ones); they sound as if they date from the 1780s, and the presence of an obbligato cello part does of course imply at least some link with him. This is claimed as their world premiere recording.

They are very agreeable and on the whole deftly written pieces, but to my mind don't quite have the ring of his style: their formal regularity, their sometimes motivic writing (the first movement of the G major work, for example), and the frequent spells of rather routine invention argue against his authorship, as does the three-movement form (he preferred, oddly, two-movement *opere piccole* or four-movement *opere grande*), the absence of minuets (a movement type he patently relished) and the presence of three very schematic variation finales (a type he avoided). The compiler of the Boccherini thematic catalogue thought that they had "formulas and turns of style which are characteristic of him", on reading through the parts, but since he evidently didn't notice that they were for flute, violin, viola and two cellos (as opposed to flute and string quartet) I am inclined to think the reading-through wasn't too rigorous.

By Boccherini or not, they make pleasant listening. They don't demand that special affection for detail or feeling for texture that the most characteristic Boccherini needs, and respond well to these direct, modern performances, neatly phrased, the dialogues gracefully executed. The first cellist, who has several flights into the upper reaches of his instrument, is very assured, and there is also the particular pleasure of Jean-Pierre Rampal's flute playing, as urbane as ever.'