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MOREL

Premier Livre de Pièces de Violle

Alejandro Marías
viola da gamba

La Spagna



Jacques Morel c.1700 - 1749
Premier Livre de Pièces de Violle

Suite No.1 in A minor*

1. Prélude. Lentement – Vite	3'47
2. Allemande	2'00
3. Courante	1'54
4. Sarabande l'Agréable	3'32
5. Gigue	1'10
6. La Bretonne. Gracieusement	3'25
7. Menuets I & II	2'05

Suite No.2 in D minor

8. Prélude	2'03
9. Allemande la Jolie	1'59
10. Courante la Dacier	1'28
11. Sarabande	3'03
12. Gigue l'Inconstante	1'14
13. Le Follet	2'16
14. La Fanchonnette	0'51

Suite No.3 in D*

15. Prélude	2'29
16. Boutade de Saint Germain	0'58

17. Allemande la Brillante & Double	2'54
18. Courante	1'26
19. Sarabande l'Aurore	2'06
20. Gigue à l'angloise	1'27
21. Gavotte	1'03
22. Fugue. Gayment	3'01
23. Échos de Fontainebleau	2'00

Suite No.4 in G*

24. Prélude. Lentement	2'00
25. Fantaisie. Gayement	0'57
26. Allemande	1'28
27. Courante	1'37
28. Sarabande	2'20
29. Gigue à l'italienne	1'20
30. Rondeau Dauphin	4'18
31. Menuet	0'38
32. La Guerandoise & Double	1'15
33. Chaconne en trio	7'05

* first world recordings

La Spagna

Alejandro Marías (*solo*) *viola da gamba* after Colichon by Charles Riché (1997)

Pablo Garrido (*continuo*) *viola da gamba* after Colichon by Judith Kraft (1992)

Alvaro Marías *traverso* after Rottenburgh by Alain Weemaels (1990)

Jordan Fumadó *harpsichord* 'à grand ravalement'
after Ruckers by Titus Crijnen (2013)

Recording: date + place t.b.c.

Recording, editing and mastering: Jesús Trujillo

Recording manager: Alberto Paulos

Producer: Lukos Records

Photographers: Jaime Massieu and Andrés Díaz [just Alvaro Marías' photo]

Cover: Jan Verkolje, A Youth with a Viola de Gamba, c.1672, Wawel Royal Castle, Krakow, Poland

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One day, while I was studying at Geneva's Haute École de la Musique, news reached the Early Music Department that Éditions Minkoff, renowned for publishing impeccable facsimiles of centuries-old scores, was to cease operation. Our initial sadness at this news turned to gratitude, however, because Minkoff's owners decided to donate their holdings to students at the music school. Through their generosity, many of us were able to acquire a collection of facsimiles that would otherwise have been beyond our means at the time. One of the scores I received was the *Premier Livre de Pièces de Violle* by Jacques Morel, a composer I then knew only for his famous *Chaconne en trio*.

The more I explored the suites, the more fascinated I became by them. We played Morel's music for Guido Balestracci and for Jordi Savall, and realised that, much to our disbelief, there were no recordings of these works, other than Philippe Pierlot's magnificent reading of the Second Suite. The dream that was born seemed utopian at first but has ended up coming true, thanks to our persistence and love of music, and the faith that so many people have put in this project.

I feel very privileged to have been the first person to have recorded this music, free of any influence other than the experience each of us as performers brought to it – I'm so grateful to Jordan Fumadó, Pablo Garrido and Alvaro Marías for their enthusiasm, artistry and professionalism. Jesús Trujillo achieved the sound quality I've always dreamed of, and we couldn't have hoped for a better producer than Alberto Paulos.

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Jacques Morel

Very little is known about Jacques Morel. His date and place of birth are unknown – as is his relationship, if any, to other musicians who share his surname – and there are virtually no references to him in contemporary sources. The most significant thing we do know is that he was a pupil of the “father of the viola da gamba”, Marin Marais, to whom he dedicated the *Premier Livre de Pièces de Violle*:

To Monsieur Marais, Ordinary of the music of the King's chamber

Sir, it is an act of presumption to present the public with pieces for the viol in the wake of those with which you have already endowed them, works which captivate daily the most delicate ears. But, sir, I enjoyed the invaluable advantage of being your pupil and have spent much time studying your incomparable and heaven-sent gift. I therefore believed that the pleasure I have taken in your music might have instilled within me some small part of the enthusiasm that is so admired in you, and which produced those wondrous pieces, worthy of the lyre of Apollo himself. Yet that which most encouraged me, dear sir, is that you did not disapprove of these, my first efforts, which allows the hope that what did not displease you may have something which will please everyone. If the melodies I have discovered have any charm or naturalness of expression, I owe these qualities to you, and I dedicate my work to you in gratitude and as public acknowledgement of the admiration in which I hold you and of the respect with which I remain your most humble and obedient servant.

Morel's *Premier Livre* was first published in 1709, two years before Marin Marais's *Troisième Livre de Pièces de Violle*. Naturally enough, Morel's music reveals the influence of his master, but he makes no attempt to conceal this, and indeed claims it as an asset.

That said, Morel was a generation younger and there are certain innovations to be found in the way he writes for the viol. The first of these leaps out as soon as you open the book: whereas Marais wrote the solo part in one volume and the continuo in another, Morel decided to set the two parts out in score, as would then become standard practice, so that each player could see what the others were playing. Another key characteristic of Morel's music is that he groups his pieces in a more systematic manner than did Marais – no dance is repeated within a single suite, and there is a move towards what, with Bach, would become the “definitive” order of movements: prelude–allemande–courante–sarabande–minuet/bourrée/gavotte–gigue. From the instrumental point of view, Morel's music is closely tied to French tradition, but there is a noticeable development in the viol fingerings, which are freer from the lute

tradition that had been such an influence on his predecessors.

The *Prélude* of the First Suite is slow and solemn to begin with but, as so often happens in the French repertoire, is transformed into a rapid, imitative movement. It is followed by an *Allemande* that makes great use of double stops, a *Courante* with dotted rhythms, the *Sarabande l'Agréable* (“the pleasant one”) and a *Gigue*. The suite ends with a rondeau entitled *La Bretonne* and a pair of *Menuets*, the first in the minor mode, the second in the major.

The Second Suite's *Prélude* seems to emerge from a long D minor pedal note then climb through all the registers of the instrument with abundant use of chords and double stops. Next come the *Allemande la Jolie* (“The pretty one”), the *Courante la Dacier*, a gentle, dream-like *Sarabande* and the *Gigue l'Inconstante* (“The faithless one”). Two character pieces bring the work to an end: a highly enjoyable rondeau, *Le Folet* (“The imp”), and *La Fanchonnette*, reminiscent of a gavotte in feel and structure.

The Third Suite is in D major – one of the brightest of key signatures as well as one of those best-suited to the viol – and has certain unique qualities. The opening *Prélude* is followed by a lively piece called *La Boutade* [caprice] de *Saint Germain*. Only then do we hear the appropriately dazzling *Allemande la Brillante* and its *Double*; these are followed by a distinguished *Courante*, the peaceful *Sarabande l'Aurore* (“The dawn”) and a *Gigue à l'Anglaise* which features long melodic lines and in which at one point the composer asks for a passage be played in the highest register of the lower strings, thereby achieving a much darker timbre than would be obtained from these notes played in the usual position. The suite continues with a *Gavotte* and a virtuosic *Fugue* – in which Morel explores every register of the viol and travels through the most unexpected tonalities – before ending with the picturesque *Échos de Fontainebleau*.

Suite No.4, in G major, seems to develop from an unmeasured improvisation above a long-held note in the bass. This is followed by a lighthearted *Fantaisie* that invites the use of the *inégalité* rhythmic convention, a noble *Allemande*, a nimble *Courante*, a

highly contemplative *Sarabande* and a rapid, concise *Gigue à l'italienne*. Next comes one of the most inspired pieces in the entire book, the delightful and catchy *Rondeau Dauphin* – dedicated to the Grand Dauphin, Louis of France, eldest son of Louis XIV and Maria Theresa, Archduchess of Austria. The suite ends with a *Menuet* and a brief final piece entitled *La Guerandoise*.

Morel's *Premier Livre* concludes in perfect style with the wonderful *Chaconne en trio pour une flûte traversiere, une Violle et la Basse Continüe*. Of all his music, this is the only piece that is still regularly performed: six short minutes of music that have saved our composer from being unjustly condemned to oblivion.

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Translation by Susannah Howe

Un día, cuando estudiaba en Ginebra, una triste noticia recorrió el Centre de Musique Ancienne: la célebre editorial Minkoff, que durante décadas había publicado lujosos e impecables facsímiles de partituras antiguas, cerraba de sus puertas. Sin embargo, la generosidad de sus propietarios tornó el disgusto en gratitud, ya que decidieron regalar sus fondos a estudiantes del Conservatorio. De esta manera, muchos nos hicimos con una colección de facsímiles que difícilmente nos habríamos podido permitir en aquella época. Entre las partituras que a mí me tocaron estaba el *Ier Livre de Pièces de Violle* de Jacques Morel, un compositor al que entonces sólo conocía por su famosa *Chaconne en trio*.

A medida que iba descubriendo aquella música me fue fascinando cada vez más. La tocamos para Guido Balestracci y para Jordi Savall, pero no dábamos crédito a que no existiera ninguna grabación de esta música genial, a excepción de la magnífica versión de la segunda suite a manos de Philippe Pierlot. De modo que así nació un sueño que al principio parecía utópico pero que el tesón, el amor a la música y la confianza de muchos acabaron haciendo realidad.

Me siento un privilegiado por haber sido la primera persona en grabar esta

música, sin más influencia que el bagaje de cada uno de los intérpretes, y agradezco a Jordan Fumadó, a Pablo Garrido y a Alvaro Marías el entusiasmo, el arte y la profesionalidad que han puesto en este disco, en el que Jesús Trujillo ha recogido el sonido al que siempre aspiré y que ha encontrado en Alberto Paulos el mejor director de grabación que podíamos imaginar.

© Alejandro Marías

Jacques Morel

Se sabe muy poco sobre Jacques Morel. Ignoramos cuándo nació ni si guarda algún parentesco con otros músicos del mismo apellido, y apenas se le hace alguna referencia en las fuentes de la época.

Lo más relevante que sabemos es que fue alumno de Marin Marais, “el padre de la viola da gamba”. A él está dedicado su *Premier Livre de Pièces de Violle*:

À Monsieur Marais, Ordinaire de musique de la Chambre du Roi.

Es un gran atrevimiento osar dar *pièces de Violle* al público después de aquellas con las que usted lo ha enriquecido, que hacen cada día las delicias y el encanto de los oídos más delicados. Pero, Señor, yo he tenido la preciosa ventaja de ser su alumno y me he aplicado durante mucho tiempo para estudiar ese genio incomparable que usted ha recibido del Cielo. He creído que aquello que me ha transmitido podría haber suscitado en mí una pequeña parte del entusiasmo que tanto admiro de usted y que ha producido esos cantos maravillosos, dignos de la misma lira de Apolo. Pero lo que más me ha animado, señor, es que usted no haya reprobado mis primeros intentos, y cabe esperar que lo que a usted no le ha desagradado podría complacer a todo el mundo. Si los cantos que he hallado tienen algo de aceptables y de naturales se lo debo a usted, y a usted los consagro para señalar mi agradecimiento y dar público testimonio de la admiración que le profeso y del respeto con el que soy, Señor, su muy humilde y obediente servidor.

El libro que integran las piezas de este disco fue impreso por primera vez en 1709,

dos años antes de que Marin Marais publicase su *Troisième Livre de Pièces de Violle*. La música de Morel está, naturalmente, muy influenciada por la de su maestro, y el autor no solo no oculta esta herencia sino que se jacta de ella.

Sin embargo, Morel es una generación posterior y sabe introducir ciertas innovaciones muy importantes en la escritura para viola da gamba. La primera de ellas salta a la vista nada más abrir el libro: mientras que Marais escribía la parte solista en un volumen y la parte del bajo continuo en otro, Morel decide escribir ambas voces en un mismo sistema, como se haría en lo sucesivo, de manera que cada intérprete puede ver lo que tocan los otros. Otra característica importante de la música de Morel es que agrupa las piezas de manera más sistemática que su maestro, sin repetir ninguna danza dentro de una misma suite y acercándose bastante al orden “definitivo” de la Suite, que cristalizaría en Bach con la sucesión preludio - alemana - corriente - zarabanda - minuetto/bourée/gavota - giga. Desde el punto de vista instrumental, la música de Morel está muy ligada a la tradición francesa, pero se puede apreciar una evolución en sus digitaciones, más emancipadas de la herencia laudística que tanto influyó en sus antecesores.

El libro abre con un preludio lento de carácter grave que se transforma, como tantas veces en la literatura francesa, en un movimiento rápido e imitativo. Continúan una *allemande* con numerosos pasajes en dobles cuerdas, una *courante* de ritmos *poinctés*, una *sarabande* llamada *l'Agréable* (“la agradable”) y una *gigue*, seguidas de un *rondeau* que lleva por título *la Bretonne* y de dos *menuets* igeros, el primero en modo menor y el segundo en mayor.

La segunda suite comienza con un preludio que parece surgir de una larga pedal de re menor para pasar por todos los registros del instrumento sin escatimar en el uso de acordes y dobles cuerdas. Siguen la *allemande la Jolie* (“la bonita”), una *courante* llamada *la Dacier*, una dulce *sarabande* de carácter ensoñador y una *gigue* titulada *l'Inconstante*. Termina con dos *pièces de caractère*: el divertidísimo *rondeau Le Folet* (“el duende”) y *La Fanchonnette*, que recuerda a una *gavotte* en estructura y carácter.

La tercera suite está en re mayor –una de las tonalidades más brillantes y

agradecidas para la viola da gamba– y presenta ciertas particularidades. Al prelude inicial lo sigue una pieza muy viva llamada *La Boutade* [capricho] de *Saint Germain*. Llega, ahora así, la *allemande la Brillante* –que hace honor a su título– y su doble, una distinguida *courante*, la pacífica *sarabande l’Aurore* y una *gigue à l’anglaise* de largas líneas melódicas en la que el compositor exige en un momento dado tocar un pasaje en la zona más aguda de las cuerdas graves, logrando así un timbre mucho más oscuro del que resultaría en la posición habitual. La suite continúa con una gavotte y una virtuosísima fuga, en la que Morel explora todos los registros posibles de la viola da gamba y pasa por las tonalidades más inesperadas, para acabar con la pintoresca pieza *Echos de Fontainebleau*.

La última de las suites, en sol mayor, parece surgir de una improvisación *non mesurée* sobre una larguísima nota del bajo. Lo sigue una alegre fantasía que invita a la *inégalité*, una *allemande* de carácter altivo, una ágil *courante*, una *sarabande* de lo más contemplativo y una *gigue à l’italienne*, rápida y concisa. A continuación, nos encontramos con una de las piezas más inspiradas del libro, un delicioso y pegadizo *rondeau* dedicado al Delfín, que, en ese momento, era Louis de France, *le Grand Dauphin*, hijo primogénito de Louis XIV y María Teresa de Austria. La suite termina con un *menuet* y una breve pieza titulada *La Guerandoise*.

El libro no podría concluir mejor que con la maravillosa *Chaconne en trio pour une flûte traversiere, une Violle et la Basse Continuë* que nos regala Morel al final de estas páginas. De toda su obra, es la única que se interpreta de forma habitual: 6 únicos minutos de música que han librado a nuestro compositor del olvido total, a nuestro juicio completamente injusto, por más que viviera entre dos gigantes.

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La Spagna

Taking its name from a traditional tune that was enormously popular throughout Europe from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century, La Spagna was founded by Alejandro Marías in 2009.

Most of the music it performs dates from the Renaissance, Baroque and early Classical periods and, depending on the repertoire, the size of the ensemble varies considerably – from a small chamber group to the fuller forces required for orchestral and operatic productions, for which it is joined by invited guest conductors. La Spagna’s players perform on period instruments, either originals or copies adapted to each style and era, and use historical performance techniques that help them to recapture the essence of the music and express the composer’s original intentions. They do this not as an exercise in musical archaeology, but for purely artistic reasons, working on the basis that the closer they can get to a particular composer, the more intensity they can bring to the emotion and spirit of his or her work.

The members of La Spagna are professional young musicians trained at Europe’s most prestigious music schools and they perform on a regular basis with the leading orchestras, conductors and soloists of the early music world. They represent a new generation of instrumentalists committed not only to giving flawless performances but also to respecting the historical and social context of each repertoire.

La Spagna has been awarded Spain’s GEMA prize for best young Early Music group. Among its recent projects is a critically acclaimed recording of concertos and suites for strings by Telemann (*A Tribute to Telemann*; Lukos Records). You can find out more about La Spagna on the ensemble’s Facebook page and on Twitter (@LaSpagna).





Alejandro Marías

Alejandro Marías was born in Madrid in 1984, and graduated in cello and viola da gamba from Madrid's Real Conservatorio Superior de Música, having begun his studies with Enrique Correa and Maria de Macedo. He moved to France to specialise in Classical and Romantic historical performance practice, before gaining a place at Geneva's Haute École de Musique, where he completed master's

degrees in both Baroque cello performance and viola da gamba performance, under the guidance of Bruno Cocset and Guido Balestracci respectively. He has also taken classes with such eminent cellists as Christophe Coin, Anner Bylsma and Jaap Ter Linden and gambists Wieland Kuijken, Jordi Savall and Hille Perl.

Alejandro Marías teaches viola da gamba at Seville's Conservatorio Superior de Música, as well as being artistic director of La Spagna and a member of the Cuarteto Francisco de Goya, and performing with groups such as Zarabanda and Forma Antiqua. He has appeared with different chamber ensembles in around twenty countries. As a soloist he regularly gives concerts and recitals and has made a number of recordings. He has been particularly highly praised for his performances of the viola da gamba solos in the Bach Passions.

He has worked with such leading conductors as Philippe Herreweghe, Marc Minkowski, Ton Koopman, Bruno Weil, Sigiswald Kuijken, Hervé Niquet, Lucy van Dael, Paul Agnew, Enrico Onofri and David Stern, and has made recordings for Warner, Winter & Winter and Columna Música, as well as for various radio and TV stations in Europe, America and North Africa. In 2017 he recorded his first album as soloist and conductor, *A Tribute to Telemann*, which includes three works for viola da gamba and orchestra, and has received worldwide critical acclaim.

Jordan Fumadó

Born in Tortosa in 1975, Jordan Fumadó studied harpsichord with Jordi Reguant at the Conservatori de Terrassa, continuing his studies with Jacques Ogg at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague and with Andrea Marcon and Jesper Christensen at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis. He has also been taught by Rinaldo Alessandrini, Kenneth Gilbert, Pierre Hantaï, Jan Willem Jansen, Davitt Moroney, Bob Van Asperen, Yves Rechsteiner and Guido Morini, and has worked with conductors including Jordi Savall, Neville Marriner, José Luis López Cobos, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos and Víctor Pablo Pérez. As well as appearing as guest harpsichordist with the Orquesta Nacional de España, Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia, Orquesta Sinfónica de Tenerife and European Union Chamber Orchestra, he is also a member of various Early Music groups, including Verba Chordis, La Galanía, Zarabanda, La Spagna, Carmen Veneris, La Dispersione and La Real Compañía de Ópera de Cámara. He currently teaches harpsichord and continuo at the Padre Antonio Soler Conservatory at San Lorenzo de El Escorial.





Pablo Garrido

Pablo Garrido was born in Madrid in 1984. He graduated in Baroque cello from the Toulouse Conservatory, where he was taught by Alain Gervreau and Tormod Dalen. He then continued his studies at the Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya, and worked with Bruno Cocset (Baroque cello) and Guido Balestracci (viola da gamba) to obtain two master's degrees from Geneva's Haute École de Musique.

He regularly performs with such ensembles as Insula orchestra (Laurence Équilbey), Capriccio Stravagante (Skip Sempé), L'Amorosa Caccia (Fabio Antonio Falcone), L'Armonia degli Affetti (Alessandro Urbano) and La Spagna (Alejandro Marías). He has also worked with Le Banquet Céleste (Damien Guillon), Ensemble Jacques Moderne (Joël Suhubiette), Anne-Sofie von Otter and Cappella Mediterranea (Leonardo García Alarcón), Ensemble Baroque du Léman, Le Moment Baroque, Les Passions (Jean-Marc Andrieu), Stradivaria (Daniel Cuiller), New Century Baroque, Ensemble baroque de Joux, Correspondances (Sébastien Daucé), Pygmalion (Raphaël Pichon), Cantatio (John Duxbury), Gli Angeli Genève (Stephan MacLeod), the Ensemble Vocal et Instrumental de Lausanne and Elyma (Gabriel Garrido).

Alvaro Marías

“Alvaro Marías’s flute sounds like a human voice.” This statement from the legendary Teresa Berganza sums up to perfection the artistic personality of one of the pioneers of historical performance practice in Spain. Flautist and recorder player, conductor, founder of the Zarabanda ensemble – with which he has toured Europe and America – teacher (at the Real Conservatorio de Madrid and the Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofía), essayist and lecturer, he has also made recordings for labels such as Philips, Erato and Warner and has inspired some of Spain’s leading composers (including Cristóbal Halffter, Claudio Prieto and Tomás Marco) to write for his instrument. For more than twenty-five years his concerts have been recognised by critics as major cultural events.

