

Sonata No.5 in G minor

Joseph Bodin de Boismortier
(1689-1755)

I Allemanda: Allegro

II Aria: Affettuoso

III Adagio

IV Giga

Joseph Bodin de Boismortier was a prolific baroque composer born in *Thionville*, France in 1689. He obtained a royal privilege to publish his works in 1724 until his death and was one of the first composer to earn his living by composing without patrons. Now that his livelihood was dependent on selling compositions, he wrote a great deal of music and many of his compositions, intended for amateur ensembles, require only average technical skill and were written for various possible combinations of instruments. For example, the six sonata for flute, violin and basso continue, op.51, the six sonatas for two bassoons, op.14 and the *Cinq Sonates pour le Violoncelle, Viole, ou Basson, Opus 26* published in 1729. These five sonatas were originally composed for the cellist Labbé but can also be played on viol or bassoon. In tonight's performance, Sonata No.5 in G minor, opus 26 will be played on bassoon, contra bassoon and harpsichord.

This sonata is comprised of four movements. The first movement is an *Allemanda* in quadruple meter. The term *Allemanda* is from the French dance suite traditionally and is the first movement of a suite. Although allegro is marked on score, moderate tempo is more preferable by performer to show *Allemanda* as a dance in a grave and ceremonious manner. Music begins with an arpeggio in g-minor by bassoon and the whole movement is comprised of scales, arpeggios and a bit of syncopated rhythm in first section. Embellishments including appoggiaturas, trills and mordents are added by performer in repeated section.

The second movement is an aria beginning with a beautiful and lyrical theme in bassoon and echoed in contra bassoon. *Affettuoso* meaning with affection and tenderness is marked on score and the solitary and sad feeling created in this movement contrasts sharply with the previous dance. The theme is repeated three times with different embelishments added. Before the last return of theme, a passage with wide leaps in melody created a struggling feeling and reach the climax.

The next is a short movement marked *adagio*. It is in slow tempo and the simple melody in repeated note allows performer more freedom in choice of embellishments.

Where the first movement's term was French in nature, Boismortier used *Giga*, an Italian dance suite term as the title for his fourth movement. The Italian *Giga* differs from the French *Gigue* by having a more simplistic harmonic rhythm and continuous phrase structure. This movement is comprised of continuous arpeggios in bassoon accompanied by simple chords in harpsichord.