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Exemplified in
Selected Chamber Works of
Joseph Bodin de Boismortier
(1689-1755)**

by

Leone Karena Buyse

The Emporia State Research Studies

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EMPORIA, KANSAS

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The French Rococo Flute Style Exemplified in Selected Chamber Works of Joseph Bodin de Boismortier (1689-1755)

by

Leone Karena Buyse*

The flute was highly popular as a solo and an ensemble instrument during the rococo period. As the rococo style evolved, an outstanding group of French composers augmented the flute repertoire and helped shape the developing style: Michel Blavet, Pierre-Gabriel Buffardin, Michel de la Barre, Jacques-Christophe Naudot, and Joseph Bodin de Boismortier. Of these, Boismortier earned singular distinction as a result of his special interest in chamber music for multiple flutes.

In an era when many composers continued to designate works as being for either recorder (*flûte à bec*) or transverse flute (*flûte traversière*), Boismortier's preference for the transverse flute¹ is unusual, particularly since he, unlike his aforementioned colleagues, did not play the flute himself.² His *Six Concertos for Five Flutes, Opus 15* (1727) are unique pieces in the flute repertoire, being the only extant concertos for five flutes.

Boismortier also composed for viola da gamba, violin, cello, horn, trumpet, and for two rustic instruments which were currently in fashion: the *musette* (the French bagpipe of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) and the *vielle à roue* (hurdy-gurdy). In addition to his various chamber works he also wrote four opera-ballets, an assortment of motets, cantatas, and *cantatilles*, the theoretical treatise *Quinque sur l'octave ou Espèce de dictionnaire harmonique* (1734),³ and a flute method, *Principes de flûte* (Opus 90).

Little research has been concerned with French flute music of the 1720's and 1730's, a period of social elegance and political calm. Because Boismortier was such a prolific composer and treated the flute in so many diverse combinations, his music is an ideal source for an investigation of French rococo flute style. In the words of La Borde: "Although his works have been forgotten, one . . . would find there enough gold to make an ingot."⁴

*This study originated as a master's project under the direction of Dr. Kenneth W. Hart in the Department of Music at Emporia State University. The author is currently Assistant Principal Flutist of the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra.

¹Referred to henceforth in this paper as the flute.

²Ross Patrick Burden, "The Wind Music of Joseph Bodin de Boismortier" (unpublished D.M.A. essay, University of Iowa, 1971), p. 40.

³*Philosophy on the Octave, or Harmonic Dictionary*. This treatise is located in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*.

⁴Jean-Benjamin La Borde, *Essai sur la musique ancienne et moderne* (Paris: P.-D. Pierres, 1780), III, 394.

This study examines the development of the flute immediately prior to and during Boismortier's lifetime, the social factors in France which contributed to the evolving rococo style, and Boismortier's contributions to the flute repertoire. Three representative chamber works will be analyzed: *Sonata in G Major for Three Flutes, Op. 7, No. 5*, *Concerto in A Minor for Five Flutes, Op. 15, No. 2*, and *Concerto in E Minor for Flute, Violin, Oboe, Bassoon, and Continuo, Op. 37, No. 6*.

Knowledge of renaissance and early baroque flutes is based on descriptions and drawings found in four important treatises: Sebastian Virdung's *Musica Getutscht* (1511), Martin Agricola's *Musica Instrumentalis Deudsch* (1528), Michael Praetorius' *De Organographia* (1619, being the second volume of *Syntagma Musicum*, begun in 1618), and Marin Mersenne's *Harmonie Universelle* (1636). Virdung mentions a *zwerchpfeiff* which seems the equivalent of a fife; fife and drum ensembles were commonly used for military purposes in Germany and Switzerland during the late Middle Ages and Renaissance. Agricola mentions a family of four flutes and Praetorius draws clear distinctions between the flute (*querflöt*) [sic], fife, and recorder.

Father Mersenne discusses both the fife and the *flûte d'allemand* (transverse) and gives a charming account of materials from which the latter might be made:

Their material might be prunewood, or cherry and other woods which are easily pierced, but ordinarily one chooses a beautifully-colored wood which takes a pretty shine in order for beauty to accompany the instrument's goodness and for the eyes to be participants in the ears' pleasure. Ordinarily they are made of boxwood; they are also very good in crystal, glass, or ebony.⁵

The flute in the mid-1630's was a simple keyless cylindrical tube with six finger holes and one mouth hole, and could be played left-handed as well as right-handed. During the next sixty years the flute underwent a considerable evolution. However, no treatises were written during those years to document the important changes that occurred in the flute's design.

When Lully emigrated from Italy to France in the mid-seventeenth century, wind instruments were not being prominently used for chamber music outside of France. The vast improvements made during the second half of the seventeenth century on the flute, recorder, and oboe changed that situation rapidly.⁶ Lully may have introduced the flute into the orchestra in 1677 during performances of his opera, *Isis*.⁷

⁵Marin Mersenne, *Harmonie Universelle* (Paris, 1636), facsimile edition (Paris: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1963), III, 241, as translated by this author.

⁶Burden, p. 7.

⁷Hans-Peter Schmitz, *Querflöte und Querflötenspiel in Deutschland während des Barockzeitalters* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1952), cited by David Lasocki in his edition of Hotteterre's *Principles of the Flute, Oboe, and Recorder* (New York: Praeger, 1968), p. 9.

By 1690 the flute had acquired a closed D-sharp key, which enabled the instrument to produce the first half-step of its natural scale. It was about the same size as the alto and tenor members of the renaissance flute family, those two sizes having been almost identical. Now made in three sections, it had a conically-shaped body and produced a purer, less shrill tone. During the same period the recorder was also divided into three sections and given a conically-shaped body.

These all-important improvements can be attributed to a group of artist-craftsmen, most of whom served in the *Grande Ecurie* at the court of Louis XIV.⁸ Foremost among the innovators was the Hotteterre family, natives of a Norman village called La Couture-Boussey, where wood-turning was an art and whence the modern instrument firms of Buffet and Louis Lot trace their beginnings.⁹ Louis, Jean, Nicolas, and Jeannot Hotteterre are credited with having played both recorder and flute in Lully's performances of *Isis*.¹⁰

In the preface to his *Principes de la flûte traversière, ou flûte d'Allemagne* (1707) Jacques Hotteterre indicates that the flute had become very popular. Six years later we find the first printed indication that the flute was definitely replacing the recorder in *Das neu-eröffnete Orchester* of Johann Mattheson (1681-1764), where it is also mentioned that flute music was most commonly written in the keys of G major, D major, A major, and E minor, all tonalities that lay smoothly on the instrument.¹¹ Since the recorder favored the keys of F major and B-flat major, this information is helpful in determining whether an unmarked score might have been intended for flute or recorder.

Around 1720 the middle section of the flute was divided into two parts. Flutists commonly owned from three to six upper mid-sections, or *corps de rechange*, the longest of which was approximately a half-step lower in pitch than the shortest. Michel Corrette describes this practice clearly:

The most fashionable flutes are made in four pieces, so that they can be carried in the pocket more easily. All flutes are at the *Opéra* pitch. But as when playing concerts you sometimes find that the harpsichord is too high or too low, you normally have several *corps de rechange* of different lengths, to tune to the pitch of the harpsichord¹²

Johann Quantz offers some practical advice as to the use of *corps de rechange* in his essay *On Playing the Flute* (1752). He suggests using the longest piece when playing *allegro* movements in a concerto

⁸Philip Bate, *The Flute* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975), p. 78.

⁹Bate, p. 84.

¹⁰Schmitz, cited by Lasocki, p. 9.

¹¹Bate, p. 169.

¹²Michel Corrette, *Méthode pour apprendre aisément à jouer de la flûte traversière* (Paris, c. 1730), cited by Lasocki, p. 25.

with orchestra, thus enabling the flutist to blow harder and project better without being sharp. Conversely, in an *adagio* movement the shortest piece would compensate for natural flatness incurred when covering the embouchure hole for increased sonority, but woe to the flutist who forgot to change back to the longest joint before the final *allegro!*¹³ Quantz also explains that the cork in the headjoint must be properly adjusted to insure correct intonation of octaves. When the longest piece is used, the cork must be pressed closer to the mouth hole, and vice-versa.¹⁴

Corps de rechange were necessary because of the relatively primitive nature of the flute and its intonation. An even more pressing reason for their existence was the lack of pitch standardization among metropolitan areas in Europe. Between 1700 and 1790 pitch began to rise haphazardly throughout Europe. The extremes seem to have been between $a^1=376.3$ and $a^1=457.2$ vibrations per second, obviously presenting a problem for the traveling flutist.¹⁵

A new mood prevailed in Paris during the 1720's. Under Louis XV the pomp and glory of the "Sun King" disappeared but was replaced by a "subdued *galanterie*, a gregariousness of nature and a dislike of solitude."¹⁶ A new style of architectural ornamentation developed, based on decorated shell and artificial rock work. Its delicacy of structure and elaborate attention to small detail soon influenced other art forms, especially music. The new style came to be called rococo, derived from *rocaille*, meaning rock work.¹⁷

Rococo style flourished in Europe between 1725 and 1775 but appeared earlier in France, where François Couperin (1668-1733) represented a musical counterpart to the first major rococo painter, Watteau (1684-1721).¹⁸ Referred to as *style galant*, the light, elegant music of this era featured melody and accompaniment rather than polyphony. As the serious, massive structures of baroque music and architecture were disappearing, the salon began to replace the church as the cultural center.¹⁹

Frivolous subject matter was another element of rococo ornamentation which affected musical style of the period.²⁰ After Lully's death in 1687 melodic lines became shorter and lighter and more ornamenta-

¹³Johann Joachim Quantz, *On Playing the Flute*, trans. by Edward Reilly (New York: The Free Press, 1966), p. 197.

¹⁴*Ibid.* p. 32.

¹⁵Bate, p. 92.

¹⁶James Goodfriend, *Flute Concertos of Eighteenth Century Paris*, liner notes for the recording of the same name (New York: Connoisseur Society, 1962).

¹⁷Homer Ulrich, *Chamber Music*, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), p. 114.

¹⁸Willi Apel, *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1969), p. 736.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 339.

²⁰Ulrich, p. 115.

tion was used to vary repeated phrases.²¹ During the early 1700's dilettantism flourished and the amateur required a type of music within his technical and intellectual capacities.²² Consequently, standards of taste were lowered and a certain monotony of style resulted. Lionel de La Laurencie notes that composers became slaves to a "please the public" ethic and tended to produce simple, pleasant music for their patrons.²³ An excellent example of this practice is the number of airs from popular operas which were arranged for flute duet.²⁴

At its peak the rococo style was represented by Anet (a pupil of Corelli), Senaillé (a pupil of Tommaso Vitali), Aubert, Rameau, LeClair, Corrette, La Barre, Blavet, Boismortier, and Hotteterre.²⁵ Their works for instrumental ensembles incorporated both French and Italian stylistic elements. In general, French music tended to be more programmatic, often using such titles as *Réjouissance* and *Badinerie*. It also reflected the importance of the ballet as a cultural heritage; dance movements in such typically French forms as the *forlane*, *passepied*, *loure*, *chaconne*, *musette*, and *rondeau* appear repeatedly in French music of this era. Italian instrumental music, on other hand, was abstract, driving, and did not generally call for rhythmic alterations of the notation itself. The French interpreted lengths of notes very differently from Italians; their practice of *inégaie* and double dotting gave French music a special national character. The two styles differed also in treatment of ornamentation. Whereas Italians ornamented freely, particularly in aria-like slow movements, the French notated all ornaments precisely, often including a table for interpretation of ornaments as the preface to a work.

The eighteenth century was an age which idealized rustic life. Since the newly-improved flute had a delicate timbre, it was an ideal instrument to portray pastoral moods and was eagerly studied by the aristocracy. Parisian nobility (*noblesse de la cour*) and wealthy bourgeoisie supported composers and artists. In this era, the majority of compositions for flute (especially flute duets) were dedicated by composers to their pupils, many of whom were noblemen.²⁶

Provincial nobility (*noblesse campagnarde*) had been condemned to relative poverty and obscurity by Louis XIV; their fixed incomes during a troublesome period of currency devaluation did not allow them sufficient means to support music. As a result of this situation, French wind music of the early eighteenth century was written and performed

²¹Manfred F. Bukofzer, *Music in the Baroque Era* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1947), p. 248.

²²Ulrich, p. 114.

²³Lionel de La Laurencie, *L'Ecole française du violon* (Paris: Delagrave, 1932), pp. 208-9.

²⁴Louis Fleury, "The Flute . . . in the French Art of the 17th and 18th Centuries," trans. by Frederick H. Martens, *Musical Quarterly*, IX, (1923), 519.

²⁵Bukofzer, p. 250.

²⁶Fleury, IX, 519.

almost exclusively in Paris, whereas both Italy and Germany had numerous centers of musical activity.²⁷

During the second half of the seventeenth century Lully's brilliant new violin style had stimulated interest in the violin and French composers, influenced by works of Corelli and Vivaldi, had begun to write for the violin as a solo instrument. But by the 1720's the flute had reached a level of prominence in French chamber music equal to that of the violin. Publishers interested in financial gains indicated works as being for either violin or flute; composers such as Aubert, Marais, and Leclair designated their sonatas as being for either instrument.²⁸ The highly successful debut of Michel Blavet at the *Concerts Spirituels* on October 1, 1726 marked the beginning of a rivalry between the violin and flute as solo virtuoso instruments and clearly established the flute's supremacy over the recorder.²⁹ Neimetz wrote in 1727: "The instruments which are now the most popular in Paris are the harpsichord and the transverse or German flute. The French play these instruments with an unparalleled *délicatesse*."³⁰

The *Concerts Spirituels* were founded by Anne-Danican Philidor in 1725. Held in the *Salle des Suisses* at the Tuileries until 1791, these concerts were originally organized to present sacred vocal works on religious days when the *Opéra* was closed. Their scope soon expanded to include instrumental works, thus offering an audience accustomed to opera the opportunity to hear chamber music in a public setting.

Private concerts were held extensively in Paris during the rococo period and provided another arena of exposure for the flute. Although printed programs for such informal events were uncommon, educated guesses can be made as to the music performed by examining the private music collections of important patrons such as Alexandre-Jean-Joseph Le Riche de La Pouplinière (1693-1762). Many of these libraries include manuscripts and printed works of Blavet, Naudot, Boismortier, Loeillet, and Chédeville.³¹

Famous flutists were largely responsible for the level of prominence to which the flute had risen by the 1720's. The first flutist to be mentioned by eighteenth-century writers is Pierre Gaultier (d. 1697), a native of Provence who played with a touring troupe and wrote duos for flute and violin with *continuo*.³² None of his music remains.³³

²⁷Burden, p. 9.

²⁸Fleury, IX, 520.

²⁹Burden, p. 14.

³⁰Neimetz, *Séjour de Paris* (1727), cited by James R. Anthony, *French Baroque Music* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974), p. 326.

³¹Georges Cucuel, *La Pouplinière et la musique de chambre au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1913), pp. 356-61, cited by Newman, *Sonata in the Classic Era*, p. 54, cited by Burden, p. 14.

³²Paul Taffanel and Louis Fleury, "La Flûte," *Encyclopédie de la Musique*, Lavignac and La Laurencie (ed.), 1925, III (2^e partie), 1517.

³³Lionel de La Laurencie, "La Musique Française de Lulli à Gluck," *Encyclopédie de la Musique*, Lavignac and La Laurencie (ed.), 1921, III (1ère partie), 1529.

René Pignon Descoteaux (c.1646-1728) was flutist at the court of Louis XIV from 1664 to 1670 and taught Michel de La Barre.³⁴ His music also has been lost, as has that of Philibert Rebillé³⁵ known as Philbert, court flutist from 1670 to 1715 and another of La Barre's teachers.³⁶ Quantz says that Philbert was the first to achieve distinction on the one-keyed flute.³⁷

Michel de La Barre (1675-1743) is, in Fleury's opinion, the most perfect representative of French flute music until 1715, the year of Louis XIV's death.³⁸ A member of the royal chamber orchestra and the *Opéra* orchestra, he was the first to publish works for two flutes without *basso continuo*.³⁹

Michel Blavet (1700-1768), a native of Besançon, was a well-known virtuoso who also played bassoon. He played many concert tours and enjoyed the patronage of the Prince de Carignon. His reputation was such that Frederick the Great tried (unsuccessfully) to engage him.⁴⁰ From 1740 until around 1760 he played at the *Opéra*.⁴¹ Quantz became acquainted with Blavet during his visit to Paris in 1726-27 and praised Blavet highly in his autobiography.⁴²

The next flute soloist at the *Concerts Spirituels* was Pierre-Gabriel Buffardin (1690-1768).⁴³ A Marseillais, Buffardin served Friedrich August I, Elector of Saxony. He became principal flutist of the royal orchestra in Dresden around 1716 and taught Quantz in 1719.⁴⁴ He made other successful appearances in Paris and later manufactured flutes.⁴⁵

Finally, Jacques-Christophe Naudot (d. 1762), often incorrectly called Jean-Jacques, was a *protégé* of the Comte d'Egmont. He published works for flute between 1726 and 1749,⁴⁶ and was considered the best composer among the flutists of his generation.⁴⁷

These composers possessed a thorough knowledge of the flute and wrote idiomatically for their instrument, emphasizing its strong points.⁴⁸ Their works were published during their lifetimes; most were probably

³⁴Taffanel and Fleury, III, 1517.

³⁵LaLaurencie, "La Musique Française . . ." III, 1529.

³⁶Taffanel and Fleury, III, 1517.

³⁷Quantz, p. 30.

³⁸Fleury, IX, 528.

³⁹Anthony, p. 328.

⁴⁰La Laurencie, III, 1531ff.

⁴¹Fleury, IX, 535.

⁴²Quantz, p. 30, fn 10.

⁴³Fleury, IX, 532.

⁴⁴Bate, p. 88, fn 26.

⁴⁵Fleury, IX, 536.

⁴⁶François Michel, ed., *Encyclopédie de la Musique* (Paris: Fasquelle, 1961), III, 278.

⁴⁷Walter James Jones, *The Unaccompanied Duet for Transverse Flutes by French Composers, ca. 1708-1770* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1970), cited by Burden, p. 19.

⁴⁸Fleury, IX, 522.

never republished or heard again in public recitals for at least 150 years.⁴⁹

Joseph Bodin de Boismortier was born December 23, 1689 in Thionville, near Metz, and baptized two days later.⁵⁰ Nothing is known of his youth and little of his adult years. He married Marie Valette in Perpignan in 1720 and their daughter Suzanne was born two years later. Shortly thereafter Boismortier moved to Paris and in 1724 began publishing his own music.

Boismortier was a prolific and facile composer. He wrote a total of 112 musical compositions, ten of which are unnumbered. All 102 of his numbered works were published between 1724 and 1747. Of these, fifty contain woodwind instruments (flute, recorder, oboe, or bassoon) in their titles.⁵¹ Forty-four of those works include flute, either as a solo instrument, in multiple numbers, in combination with other instruments or as an alternate instrument. In fourteen of those forty-four compositions Boismortier suggests specific alternate instrumentation; the flute is first choice in six of these. In only six works is the recorder suggested as an alternate to the flute. [Beginning with Opus 37 Boismortier is less specific about nomenclature; he states simply "flute" (rather than *traversière* or *à bec*) for that work and for eleven titles thereafter.]

Fétis states that Boismortier "worked quickly in order to earn money, and his works cost him only the time of writing them."⁵² La Borde says that he also wrote a few verses, as was then fashionable.⁵³ The only examples of his verse which have survived are a few dedicatory lines printed on some of his flute sonatas.⁵⁴ We also know that Boismortier was a *maître de chant* at the *Opéra* and had at least one noble acquaintance, the Vicomte d'Andrezel (d. 1727), who was appointed ambassador to Turkey in 1724 and to whom Opus 1 (sonatas for two flutes without bass) were dedicated.⁵⁵

Although Boismortier's works were self-published, his music was also distributed by two publishers who did much to stimulate interest in wind music: Jean Le Clerc and François Boivin. Le Clerc (1694-

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, IX, 517.

⁵⁰A recent article by H. Tribut Morembert, "Bodin de Boismortier, notes sur un musicien Lorrain" (*Revue de Musicologie*, LIII/1, 1967, 41-52), definitively establishes Boismortier's birth year and other important dates in his life. Confusion previously existed as to the year of his birth; Dérézy's article in the *Dictionnaire de biographie française* (Paris: Letouzey, 1933-67), III, 761 gives 1682 as the year, following the discovery in 1914 of a birth certificate in Perpignan for one Joseph Beauducin, dated January 31, 1682. Other significant publications such as *MGG*, Fétis, Grove's, Thompson's *International Cyclopedia*, and Riemann's *Musik Lexikon* give 1691 as his birth year, as does La Borde's *Essai*. Burden summarizes this controversy in pp. 21-23.

⁵¹Burden states (p. 40) that forty-two works are for wind instruments. This author, however, has counted each piece which lists a woodwind as either first choice or alternate instrument in its title.

⁵²F.-J. Fétis, *Biographie universelle des musiciens et bibliographie générale de la musique* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1878), II, 9-10.

⁵³La Borde, III, 393.

⁵⁴Burden, p. 33.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, p. 35.

c.1760) had a shop on the Rue de Roule from 1713 to 1759 and seemed to have been especially interested in publishing flute sonatas, often giving priority to the flute when it was interchangeable with the violin or adding flute to the title of violin work.⁵⁶ François Boivin's business was located on the Rue St. Honoré from 1710 to 1733 or 1734. His widow continued to publish, using the titles "Veuve Boivin or "Madame Boivin," after his death.⁵⁷ Both Le Clerc and Boivin" published not only French composers but also such foreign composers as Handel, Quantz, Telemann, and Sammartini.⁵⁸

Boismortier died on October 28, 1755 at Roissy-en-brie. Since so few facts are known about his life it is interesting to examine commentaries and personal anecdotes recorded by contemporaries and historians. Apparently his skill at composition provoked disparaging comments from at least one critic who wrote:

Bienheureux Boismortier dont la fertile plume
Peut tous les mois sans peine enfanter un volume⁵⁹

La Borde and Fétis both state that Boismortier wrote good harmony, but Fétis adds that Boismortier thought little of his own works and was too "distracted" to conduct his own music.⁶⁰

Fétis describes Boismortier as "merry, inventive, amiable in conversation and occasionally poetic" and notes that he said to the directors of the *Opéra*:

Sirs, here is my score; do with it what you will because, as for me, I don't expect to be worth any more at the rehearsals than the smallest child in the chorus.⁶¹

Boismortier's works are written in one of two styles. Those in the French style have a French violin clef (with g^1 on the first line of the staff), dance movements of French origin and title (e.g., *gavotte*), tempo indications in French (e.g., *lentement*), whole numbers (rather than fractions) to indicate meter, *rondeaux* in the form ABACA, and, in the case of sonatas, four or more movements. Those works in Italian style have a modern G clef, Italian titles and tempo indications, fewer dance movements, and fractions for meter (i.e., $3/8$, $2/4$).⁶²

Although Boismortier composed mostly sonatas, after his *Six Concertos for Five Flutes, Opus 15* he did occasionally write additional

⁵⁶William Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1959), cited by Burden, p. 17.

⁵⁷Burden, p. 18.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁵⁹"Very happy Boismortier whose fertile pen can painlessly give birth each month to a volume." La Borde, III, 393.

⁶⁰Fétis, II, 9-10.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, II, 9.

⁶²Burden, p. 42.

concertos. In his comprehensive examination of Boismortier's wind music R. Patrick Burden has generally found the concertos to be more musically interesting than the sonatas. After Opus 15 more Italian influence may be noted in Boismortier's music.

Boismortier's sonatas are usually in four movements, slow-fast-slow-fast. All movements are generally in the tonic key except possibly the third, which might be in the relative minor or relative major with a final cadence on the dominant of the tonic key. One or more movements are dance movements and at least two movements are in binary form (open, assymetrical, not rounded).

Boismortier's concertos, on the other hand, have three movements, usually in the order fast-slow-fast. Solo and *ritornello* (a simple melodic line) alternate and often one movement is marked *da capo*. Rarely are binary form or dance movements found. The middle movement may be in a related key; the outer movements are generally marked quick (2/4 or 3/4 meter in the first movement) and very quick (3/8 or 3/4 meter in the first movement) and very quick (3/8 or 6/8 meter in the third movement).⁶³

Throughout his compositions Boismortier favors keys with one to three sharps, reflecting the easiest keys for the flute. Flat keys, except for G minor and D minor are rarely used.⁶⁴

The Sonata in G Major, Op. 7 No. 5 is one of six sonatas for three flutes without continuo published in 1725. It is the only sonata of the six to contain a movement (the third) in a key other than the tonic and has interesting fugal passages in the second movement. These sonatas are indicated as being for three flutes without continuo or three violins or three oboes, or for mixed flutes, oboes, and violins.

The opening movement is labeled *Allemande* and marked *modérément* (moderately). It is in binary form, the first section having twelve measures and the second, eighteen measures. Both sections are repeated. The first modulates to the dominant in m. 7 and cadences in D major. The second section opens in D major, moves to E minor in m. 14, cadences briefly in E minor in m. 18, and modulates to A minor, cadencing in A minor in m. 23. During m. 24, G major is reached once again and remains the tonal center until the end of movement.

These harmonic progressions, simple and predictable, recur throughout Boismortier's works, making detailed harmonic analysis not a particularly stimulating activity. What is rewarding is to note the manner in which Boismortier employs different voices to effect modulations, sometimes imitatively and sometimes together. Delightful antiphonal effects and a feeling of soloist (flute I) and accompaniment (flutes II and III) are noticeable in this *Allemande*.

⁶³*Ibid.*, pp. 42 ff.

⁶⁴Burden, p. 43.

The second movement, *Légerement* (lightly), is through-composed. It is in G major and forty-seven measures long. Unison sections (three in G major, one in D major, and one in E minor) alternate with four quasi-fugal sections based on the motive stated in unison during the first six beats of the movement.

Marked *Lentement* (slowly), the third movement is in E minor and presents an ideal opportunity for elaborate ornamentation. Through-composed and twenty-eight measures long, it is homophonic in texture and contains noteworthy modulations. G major is reached in m. 5, G minor in m. 10, A minor in m. 13, and B minor in m. 16. An emphatic cadence on B in m. 19 is followed by a return through G major to E minor. Dissonances from a 7-6 suspension and an anticipation are resolved in a final cadence on the dominant.

The final movement is a *gigue* in G major. Both sections are repeated; the first is fourteen measures long and the second contains thirty-eight measures. All three parts move together and the effect is dance-like, charming, and rhythmically vital. The first section modulates to the dominant in m. 6 but then slips back to the tonic in m. 9 and cadences on G. The second section begins directly in E minor, modulates to A minor in m. 19, returns to E minor in m. 24, and cadences in B minor at m. 30. In m. 31 the *gigue* theme is stated in an abrupt return to G major. From m. 44 to the end we hear an unexpected, eight-measure codetta in the parallel minor: four measures plus the same four measures, this time marked *doux* for an echo effect, which brings the sonata to a gentle and pleasant conclusion.

The *Concerto in A minor, Op. 15 No. 2* is one of six unique works. These concertos, written in 1727, are not only the sole examples in music literature of concertos for five flutes but are also the first works to be written in Italian concerto form by a Frenchman.⁶⁵ A three-movement work, (*Allegro-Adagio-Allegro*), the Italian concerto typically had a first and/or last movement in *ritornello* form, wherein solo passages of varying thematic material are contrasted against *tutti* passages based on identical material. The first clear model for the Italian concerto form in Paris was offered by the Italian expatriate Michele Mascitti (1664-1760) in 1727. His *Sonate a Violino Solo e Basso e quattro Concerti a sei* presents four genuine *concerti grossi* for a *continuo* of two violins and "basso del Concertino," plus a *ripieno* of violin, viola, and bass.

In James Anthony's opinion, Boismortier's concertos of the same year have thematic material which is more French than Italian. He states: "An occasional theme that begins in the style of Corelli or Torelli often reaches a cadence point before the forward drive has been consolidated." Anthony suggests that Corrette's *Six Concertos pour les flûtes, violons, ou hautbois, avec la basse chiffrée pour le clavecin, Op.*

⁶⁵La Laurencie, "La Musique Française . . .," III, 1534.

3 (1728) may rightfully be considered the first concertos written by a Frenchman that conform to the typical features of the Italian concerto, and that they were neglected by many authors because of their title.⁶⁶

In any case, French composers had earlier hesitated to adopt the Italian concerto form; it appeared in France twenty-five years after it had developed in Italy.⁶⁷ Following the aforementioned works of Boismortier and Corrette, the next compositions in Italian concerto form by Frenchmen were violin concertos written in 1735 and 1737 by Jean Aubert and Jean-Marie Leclair l'Ainé, respectively. Vivaldi's influence can be found in the *allegros* of those concertos; a French feeling of delicate ornamentation and the *air tendre* prevails, however, in the slow movements.⁶⁸

Boismortier's six concertos of Opus 15 all have three movements, two in the pattern slow-fast-fast and four in the pattern fast-slow-fast. All movements have Italian titles, and employ *ritornello* form. A note added to the title suggests that the fifth flute part, which is figured, can be a bass part.⁶⁹

The *Concerto in A Minor for Five Flutes* opens with a spirited *Allegro* marked by antiphonal entrances between individual voices and pairs of voices. Mm. 1-14 are *tutti*; they remain centered in A minor and then C major, with a brief excursion into E minor in mm. 11-12 and a strong unison statement in A minor in mm. 13-14. Flutes I and II are soloists in thirds from mm. 15-24, echoed by flutes III and IV in mm. 21-24. The *tutti* at m. 24 which begins in D minor soon modulates back to A minor and features flute I. The solo line played by flute I in mm. 32-35 cadences in C major, is echoed alone by flute II (mm. 35-37) and then, at a cadence in D minor, by flute III (mm. 37-39). Once again the unison theme of mm. 13-14 is heard, also in A minor, in mm. 39-40.

In mm. 41-44 flutes III and IV present the solo-line in alternating patterns of sixteenth notes, accompanied by quarter note chords. Flute I has the most important line in mm. 45-51. At m.52 begins the recapitulation, and exact repeat of mm. 1-14, followed by a seven-measure coda, mm. 66-72. The last three measures of the coda are a fourth and final statement of the energetic unison theme heard most recently in mm. 64-65.

The *Largo*, in 3/2 meter, features flutes I and II in a dotted-quarter and eight-note pattern designed for expressive ornamentation and supported by a chordal accompaniment. To vary the texture of this forty-two measure movement Boismortier twice interjects homophonic measures wherein all five parts have half notes (mm. 8-10 and mm. 27-29).

⁶⁶Anthony, p. 304.

⁶⁷Bukofzer, p. 248.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*

⁶⁹Burden, p. 64.

Flute V doubles flute IV throughout the movement, except in mm. 29 and 41.

Tracing the harmonic progressions in this movement we find modulations from A minor to C major (mm. 9-18, concluding with a cadence on C in m. 18), on to D minor (mm. 19-23), to C major (m. 23), to G major (m. 25), to E minor (m. 27). The cadence on E at m. 31 has a raised third and precipitates a succession of chords separated by fifths (E major, A major, D major, G major, and C major) which finally comes to rest on the dominant of A minor (m. 36). The final seven measures alternate between dominant and tonic.

The final *Allegro* is in 6/8 meter and assymetrical binary form. Flute I begins with a solo two-measure, *gigue*-like theme which is then imitated exactly in mm. 3-4 by flute II, and by flutes III, IV, and V in mm. 5-6. Throughout this movement flute V reinforces the line of flute IV, but also functions independently (mm. 9-13 and mm. 24-27). Flutes I and II once again have the predominant lines, either alone or supported by homophonic accompaniment.

Each of the two sections is marked with a repeat. The second section opens in E minor with the first theme stated imitatively. Boismortier employs unison between solo portions of a sequence in mm. 44-47 to emphasize fragments of flute I's line, and at the final cadences of both sections for a strong conclusion.

The *Concerto in E Minor for Flute, Violin, Oboe, Bassoon, and Continuo* (1732) is included in Opus 37 with five trio sonatas for one treble and two bass instruments. It is a thoroughly delightful work which features all four solo instruments, both alone and in pairs, throughout its three movements.⁷⁰

The opening *Allegro* is in ternary form with a return to the opening theme at m. 124. The first solo passage is given to the oboe (mm. 44-56), followed by a short *tutti* (mm. 57-59). In mm. 60-76 the flute is soloist. After another *tutti* section (mm. 76-82), the bassoon appears as soloist for fourteen measures. Flute and violin enter together at m. 96, followed by an oboe and bassoon response (mm. 100-104). All four instruments play a four-measure *tutti*, followed by a violin solo (mm. 107-124) which leads into the "recapitulation." Throughout the movement tonality stays within E minor and the closely related keys of G major, E minor, and D major.

The *Adagio* opens in G major, modulates to E minor in m. 18, and reaches B minor in m. 20. E minor is heard again in m. 23, D major in m. 28, G major in m. 29, and E minor once more in m. 33. A cadence on the dominant of E minor concludes the movement. Whereas the last nine measures are homophonic, the rest of the movement is imitative in texture.

⁷⁰Burden feels that this work and the six concertos for five flutes are unusually well written. See p. 93, fn. 12.

The last movement, *Allegro*, begins with a sixteen-measure *ritornello* in *E* minor which reappears at mm. 33, 93 (in *G* major), and 196. An eight-measure coda (mm. 211-219) is added to its final appearance. Boismortier varies texture in the *ritornello* by pairing of instruments: flute and violin in mm. 1-4, oboe and bassoon in mm. 5-8, flute and violin in mm. 9-12, and *tutti* in mm. 13-16. Brilliant solo passages built primarily on sequences are given to the bassoon (mm. 16-32), violin (mm. 76-92), oboe (mm. 109-124), and flute (mm. 137-156). *Tutti* interludes other than *ritornellos* are based on fragments of the *ritornello* theme.

Boismortier's tuneful music has great value for several reasons. First, it is exemplary of a style which was in vogue during an extremely important epoch in the flute's history. Secondly, the flute has been enjoying another period of popularity since the early 1960's, and as a result, larger numbers of amateurs and professionals are seeking worthwhile, lesser-known compositions to expand their chamber music repertoire. The music of Boismortier offers a refreshing contrast on recitals and is also excellent for ensemble training in the private studio.

Although the French flute literature from the rococo era is vast, no systematic study comparable to Lionel de La Laurencie's *L'Ecole française du violon* has yet been done.⁷¹ Perhaps such a study, beginning with La Barre's *Pièces pour la flûte traversière avec la basse continue* (1702) and continuing through Naudo's last sets of solo and trio sonatas, would enable the world to appreciate more fully the achievements of Joseph Bodin de Boismortier.



⁷¹Anthony, p. 327.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF BOISMORTIER'S FLUTE COMPOSITIONS*

- Opus 1. *Sonates à deux flûtes traversières sans basse.*
Paris: L'Auteur, 1724.
B.N., Rouen, L. C., P. Cons., Lund
- Opus 2. *Sonates à deux flûtes traversières sans basse.*
Paris: L'Auteur, 1724.
B.N., Br.M., P. Cons., L.C., Lund
- Opus 3. *Sonates pour la flûte traversière avec la basse.*
Paris: L'Auteur, 1724.
B.N., P. Cons.
- Opus 4. *Petites Sonates pour deux flûtes traversières avec la basse.*
Paris: L'Auteur, 1724.
B.N., Lyon, Grenoble, P. Cons., L.C.
- Opus 6. *Sonates à deux flûtes traversières sans basse.*
Paris: L'Auteur, 1725.
B.N., P. Cons., L.C.
- Opus 7. *Sonates pour trois flûtes traversières sans basse ou trois violons ou trois hautbois ou pour flûtes, hautbois et violons melangés.*
Paris: L'Auteur, 1725.
B.N., Agen Arch., Lyon, Grenoble, P. Cons., L.C.
- Opus 8. *Sonates à deux flûtes traversières sans basse.*
Paris: L'Auteur et Sr. Boivin, 1725.
B.N., P. Cons., L.C.
- Opus 9. *Sonates pour la flûte traversière avec la basse.*
Paris: L'Auteur, 1725.
B.N., Br. M., P. Cons.
- Opus 11. *Six Suites de pièces à deux museetes qui conviennent aux vieles, flûtes à bec, traversières et hautbois.*
Paris: L'Auteur, 1726.
B.N., Br. M., P. Cons.
- Opus 12. *Sonates en trio pour les flûtes traversières, violons, ou hautbois avec la basse.* Paris: L'Auteur, 1726.
B.N., Agen Arch., P. Cons., L.C.
- Opus 13. *Petites Sonates à deux flûtes traversières sans basse.*
Paris: L'Auteur, 1726.
B.N., P. Cons., Copenhagen

*For a complete list of Boismortier's compositions and their locations, the reader should consult Burden, Appendix A.

- Opus 15. *Six Concertos pour cinq flûtes traversières ou autres instruments sans basse.* Paris: L'Auteur, 1727.
B.N., Schwerin, Agen Arch., P. Cons., K. M. A., Rochester
- Opus 17. *Six Suites à deux musettes, qui conviennent aux vieles, flûtes à bec, flûtes traversières, et hautbois.* Paris: L'Auteur, 1727.
B.N., Br. M.
- Opus 19. *Sonates pour la flûte traversière avec la basse.*
Paris: L'Auteur, 1727.
B.N., P. Cons.
- Opus 21. *Six Concertos pour les flûtes traversières, violons, ou hautbois avec la basse.* Paris: L'Auteur, 1728.
B.N., Br. M.
- Opus 22. *Diverses Pièces pour une flûte traversière seule, avec des préludes sur tous les tons et des seconds dessus ajoutés, propres pour ceux qui commencent à jouer de cet instrument ou pour ceux qui sont dans le goût des brunettes.*
Paris: L'Auteur, 1728.
P. Cons.
- Opus 24. *Six Concertos pour les flûtes traversières, violons, ou hautbois avec la basse.* Paris: L'Auteur, 1729.
Br. M.
- Opus 25. *Six Sonates pour deux flûtes traversières sans basse.*
Paris: L'Auteur, Sr. Boivin, et Sr. Le Clerc, 1729.
B.N., Cardiff
- Opus 27. *Six Suites pour deux vieles, musettes, flûtes à bec, flûtes traversières et hautbois.* Paris: L'Auteur, 1730.
B.N., P. Cons., L. C.
- Opus 28. *Six Sonates en trio pour deux hautbois, flûtes traversières, ou violons avec la basse, suivies de deux concertos, dont le premier se joue avec la musette, la viece, ou la flûtes à bec.*
Paris: L'Auteur, 1730.
- Opus 29. *Six Sonates à deux dessus pour les hautbois, flûtes traversières, ou violons sans basse.* Paris: L'Auteur et Sr. Boivin, 1730.
Cardiff, P. Cons.
- Opus 30. *Six Concertos pour les flûtes traversières, violons ou hautbois avec la basse.* Paris: L'Auteur, 1730.
- Opus 33. *Six Gentillesses en trois parties pour la musette, la viece, et la basse qui peuvent se jouer aussi sur la flûte à bec, flûte traversière, hautbois, ou violon.* Paris: L'Auteur, 1731.
B.N., Br. M.

- Opus 34. *Six Sonates à quatre parties différentes et également travaillées pour trois flûtes traversières, violons, ou autres instruments avec la basse.* Paris: L'Auteur, 1731.
B.N., P. Cons.
- Opus 35. *Six Suites de pièces pour une flûte traversière seule avec la basse.* Paris: L'Auteur, 1731.
B.N.
- Opus 37. *Cinq Sonates en trio pour un dessus et deux basses suivies d'un concerto à cinq parties pour une flûte, un violon, un hautbois, un basson et la basse.* Paris: L'Auteur, 1732.
B.N.
- Opus 38. *Six Concertos pour deux flûtes traversières ou autres instruments sans basse.* Paris: L'Auteur, 1732.
B.N.
- Opus 39. *Deux Sérénades ou simphonies françaises en trois parties pour flûtes, violons et hautbois.* Paris: L'Auteur, 1732.
B.N., P. Cons., L. C.
- Opus 41. *Six Sonates en trio pour une flûte traversière et un violon avec la basse.* Paris: L'Auteur, 1732.
B.N., P. Cons.
- Opus 44. *Six Sonates pour la flûte traversière avec la basse.*
Paris: L'Auteur, 1733.
B.N., P. Cons., L.C.
- Opus 45. *Second Livre de gentilleses en trois parties pour les musettes, vieles, hautbois, flûtes à bec ou traversières avec la basse.*
Paris: L'Auteur, 1733.
- Opus 47. *Six Sonates pour deux flûtes traversières sans basse.*
Paris: L'Auteur, 1733.
B.N., P. Cons.
- Opus 51. *Six Sonates pour une flûtes traversière et un violon par accords, sans basse.* Paris: L'Auteur, 1734.
P. Cons.
- Opus 52. *Quatre ballets de village en trio, pour les musettes, vieles, flûtes à bec, violons, hautbois, ou flûtes traversières.*
Paris: L'Auteur, 1734.
B.N.
- Opus 64. *Concerto à trois flûtes sans basse.*
(Location unknown)
- Opus 68. *Noëls en concerto à quatre parties pour les musettes, vieles, violons, flûtes, et hautbois.* Paris: L'Auteur, 1737.
B.N.

- Opus 69. *Fragments mélodiques ou symphonies en trois parties mêlées de trio pour les musettes, vieles, flûtes, et violons avec la basse.* Paris: L'Auteur, 1737.
B.N.
- Opus 75. *Trio pour une viole et une flûte avec la basse.*
(Location unknown)
- Opus 78. *Sonates pour deux flûte traversières ou autres instruments avec la basse.* Paris: L'Auteur, 1738.
P. Cons., Cambridge
- Opus 80. *Duo de flûtes.*
(Location unknown)
- Opus 85. *Suites et sonates pour une flûte seule.*
(Location unknown)
- Opus 87. *Ballets en duo pour les flûtes.*
(Location unknown)
- Opus 91. *Sonates pour une flûte et un clavecin.*
Paris: L'Auteur, no date.
Personal library of Marc Pincherle
- Opus 96. *Pour une flûte et un violon avec la basse.*
(Location unknown)
- No opus number. *Menuets à deux flutes sans basse.*
- No opus number. *Pièces à deux cors de chasses, trompettes, flûtes traversières, ou hautbois.*
(Location unknown)

Abbreviations for libraries holding copies of Boismortier's compositions are listed below.

Agen Arch.: Agen, City Archives
 Br. M.: London, British Museum
 B. N.: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale
 Cambridge: Cambridge, King's College Library
 Cardiff: Cardiff, Public Library
 Copenhagen: Copenhagen, Royal Library
 K. M. A.: Stockholm, Kungliga Musikalska Akademien
 L.C.: Washington, Library of Congress
 Lund: Lund, Universitetsbibliothek
 Lyon: Lyon, Bibliothèque Municipale
 P. Cons.: Paris, Conservatoire National
 Rochester: Rochester, New York, Sibley Music Library
 Rouen: Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale
 Schwerin: Schwerin, Landesbibliothek

APPENDIX B

*MODERN EDITIONS OF BOISMORTIER'S FLUTE MUSIC**

- Sechs Sonaten für zwei Flöten oder andere Instrumente ohne Bass*, Vol. Vol. I (Opus 1), ed. Gotthold Frötscher. Heidelberg: Willy Müller, Süddeutscher Musikverlag, 1967.
- Zwei Sonaten für zwei Flöten* (Op. 1, No. 2 and Op. 6, No. 2), ed. Kurt Schlenger. Frankfurt: Wilhelm Zimmermann, 1934.
- Sechs Sonaten für zwei Flöten oder andere Instrumente ohne Bass*, Vol. II (Opus 6), ed. Gotthold Frötscher. Heidelberg: Willy Müller, Süddeutscher Musikverlag, 1967.
- Sechs Sonaten für drei Querflöten ohne Bass* (Opus 7), 2 vols., ed. Erich Doflein. Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1960.
- Sonata in F. Major, Op. 7, No. 1*, ed. Bergmann. London: Schott and Co.
- Sonata for Three Flutes, Op. 7, No. 5*, ed. Conrad Rawski. New York: Boosey and Hawkes, 1954.
- Sonata in E Minor, Op. 9, No. 1*, ed. J. Parkinson. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Leichte Duos für Altblockflöten (Sopranblockflöten, Querflöten, Oboen)*, Opus 11, ed. Jost Harf. Wilhelmshaven: Heinrichshofen's Verlag, 1971.
- Sechs Konzerte für fünf Flöten* (Opus 15), 2 vols., ed. Franz von Glasenapp. Leipzig: Hofmeister, 1955.
- Six Concertos pour cinq flutes traversières* (Opus 15). Paris: Billaudot.
- Sechs leichte Duette für Altblockflöten (Sopranblockflöten, Querflöten, Oboen)*, Opus 17, 2 vols., ed. Hugo Ruf. Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1967.
- 55 leichte Stücke in 18 Tonarten für eine Querflöte mit Begleitung einer 2. Flöte* (Opus 22), ed. Erich Doflein. Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1968.
- Six Little Suites from Opus 27*, ed. Erich Doflein. Kassel: Bärenreiter.
- Konzert A. moll "Zampogna" für zwei Oboen oder Querflöten/Violinen und Basso continuo* (Op. 28, No. 8), ed. Hugo Ruf. Lörrach/Baden: Deutscher Ricordi Verlag, 1956.
- Sonata in G Minor, Op. 34, No. 1* (three flutes and continuo), ed. Hugo Ruf. Kassel: Bärenreiter.
- Sonata in E Minor, Op. 34, No. 3* (three flutes and continuo), ed. Poulteau. Paris: Alphonse Leduc.
- Six Suites for Flute Solo, Opus 35*, ed. Hugo Ruf. Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne.
- Suite in E minor, Op. 35, No. 1*, ed. J. Veilhan. Paris: Alphonse Leduc.
- Suite in G. Major, Op. 35, No. 2* and *Suite in B Minor, Op. 35, No. 5*, ed. Hugo Ruf. Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne.

*Titles are given exactly as listed in the secondary sources which this author consulted.

- Sonate E-moll, Op. 37, No. 2 für Querflöte, Viola da gamba und Basso continuo oder für Oboe, Fagott und Basso continuo oder für Violine, Violoncello und Basso continuo*, ed. Hugo Ruf. Kassell: Bärenreiter, 1959.
- Konzert E-moll (Op. 37, No. 6)*, ed. Hugo Ruf. Lörrach/Baden: Deutscher Ricordi Verlag, 1956.
- Trio Sonata in G Major*, ed. Hugo Ruf. Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne.
- Konzert C-dur "Zampogna" für Altblockflöte oder Oboe/Querflöte/Violine, Oboe oder Querflöte/Violine und Basso Continuo (Op. 28, No. 7)*, ed. Hugo Ruf. Lörrach/Baden: Deutscher Ricordi Verlag, 1956.
- Sonates pour flûte et clavecin, Op. 91*, ed. Marc Pincherle. Paris: Heugel, 1970.

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