



**The Attainnant Consort**  
Kate Clark – Cantus  
Amanda Markwick – Altus  
João Carlos Santos – Tenor  
Giuditta Isoldi - Bassus

The Attainnant Consort's 3-CD set documenting the history and repertoire of the renaissance transverse flute was awarded a Diapason d'Or in 2013, and marked the ensemble as a leading exponent of this still little-known instrument.

All members of the ensemble are specialists on historical flutes from the renaissance to the romantic periods, coming together as the Attainnant Consort to share their deep love of the poetry, music, and spirit of the Renaissance. Starting from facsimiles of original manuscripts and printed part-books, **the consort performs all its programmes from memory**, reflecting the aural tradition of sixteenth-century instrumental practice, and freeing the musicians to improvise on the works, as their historical counterparts did.

<https://www.attainnantconsort.com>

## Madame d'amours

*"An enchanting collection ...a beautifully crafted, meticulously researched, generously presented and impeccably contextualized collection of attractive music – wonderfully played."*  
– Classical Net Review about the Attaignant Consort's 'Madame d'amours'

### Programme description

Music from the golden age of the renaissance transverse-flute consort, from the courts of Henry VIII, the Holy Roman Emperor Kaiser Maximilian, François I of France, the House of Hapsburg, and Medici Florence. This programme presents music from manuscripts and the earliest printed music for consort, from London, Nuremberg, Madrid, Paris, Florence, and Rome.

### Musicians

4 flutes

1 lute

1 harp (optional)

### Context and relevance

The elegant, keyless, cylindrical flute of the Renaissance – the simplest of all the flutes ever used in Western art music – had its golden age in the first five decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It was played in courts and chambers, indoors and outdoors, and from the north to the south of the European continent, by soldiers and nobles, peasants and kings. With its reedy, penetrating sound, it was closer to the cornetto than to any other wind instrument of its day. It had an impressive range of two and a half octaves, an evenness of tone quality that would not be matched again until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and a dynamic flexibility and responsiveness to articulation that could not be matched by the recorder.

The goal of the Attaignant Consort is to achieve the aspiration of Sylvestro Ganassi who wrote:

*"Just as a worthy and masterly painter imitates all things created in nature by [means of] the variation of colours, so can a wind or string instrument imitate the utterances made by the human voice ... And if the painter imitates the impressions of nature by means of varied colours, so the [wind] instrument imitates the expressions of the human voice by modulation of the force of the breath, and by inflection of the tongue, with the help of the teeth. And in this respect, I have had the experience of hearing other players render understandable with their sound, the words of that piece they are playing, such that one can truly say that this instrument lacks nothing but the form of the human body itself, just as one says of a beautiful painting that all it lacks is breath."*

Despite its outward simplicity, the renaissance flute is capable of a dazzling virtuosity. The enchanting sound of the renaissance flute consort will be unfamiliar to almost all modern listeners but was loved all over Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and played a full part in that distinctive sixteenth-century musical phenomenon: the instrumental consort.

### Highlights

- Tender and playful songs loved by Henry VIII: the anonymous **Madame d'amours**, Robert Fayrfax's **Farewell my joy**, and Henry's own **Pastyme with Good Companye**
- John Dowland's famous **Pavane Lachrime** and light-hearted **Fine knacks for ladies**
- From Georg Forster's *Frische Teutsche Liedlein*, love songs including **Ach Lieb mit Leid** and **Ich hab's gewagt**, and comic instrumental mimicry in **Das Jägerhorn**
- Works featuring two bass flutes, including Tomas Luis de Victoria's dark and melancholy **Tenebrae factae sunt**, and bicinia by Orlando di Lasso and Jacob Obrecht
- Pierre Sandrin's mournful **Doulce memoire**, and Clement Jannequin's hilarious **Le Rossignol: En escoutant**, full of bird imitations
- Solo ricercars by Diego Ortiz and Alfonso Ferrabosco