

ensemble
Bonne
Corde

JANUARY 2025



String quartets of
J.P. de Almeida Mota

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Promo video

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L i s t e n h e r e !

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Synopsis

João Pedro de Almeida Mota is the author of the only set of Portuguese string quartets from the classical period. These quartets are now in manuscript at the Archive of Madrid's Royal Palace, making a total of 16 quartets (opp.5, 6 and 7), which occupy a central place in the Portuguese musical historiography. These quartets remain unjustly unknown, going beyond their intrinsic musical value of historical or musicological importance. Almeida Mota's writing, although derived from a classical matrix, presents avant-garde features, with sections of a marked pre-Romanticism, where the influence of Boccherini is noted but not dominant. Like what happens in similar repertoire of the period, there is a solo preponderance of the first violin role, but Almeida Mota does not underestimate the concertante capacity of remain instruments, assigning in all quartets solo passages to other instruments.

João Pedro de Almeida Mota (1744-1817) was born in Lisbon in 1744, where he probably received his musical education, and at the age of 17 he joined the Irmandade de Santa Cecilia, probably being a singer of the Royal Chapel at the time. Shortly after he goes to Braga, where he spent the only period of prolonged work in Portugal, at the service of D. Gaspar de Bragança, archbishop of Braga, as a musician of his personal chamber and singer of the Cathedral. In 1771 he went to Spain, spending relatively short periods in several cathedrals in northern Spain, such as Santiago de Compostela, Mondonhedo and Lugo. In uncertain date he moves to Madrid, and in 1793 he is appointed teacher of Rudimentos de Música "del Real Colegio de Niños", attached to the royal chapel in Madrid. The composer's career in the Spanish capital was of fast ascendance, since in 1789 his salary is increased "with the obligation to compose the music that is sent to the Royal Chapel". He remained until the end of his life in the service of the Spanish court and died in Madrid in 1817.

The concert presentation of these quartets is linked to the ongoing project of Ensemble Bonne Corde, developed in partnership with MPMP - Património Musical Vivo, of recording and edition of the complete Almeida Mota's quartets. The program is flexible and can include quartets in modern premieres.

STRING QUARTETS OF J.P. DE ALMEIDA MOTA

Musicians

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Alfia Bakieva

violin I

César Nogueira

violin II

Raquel Massadas

Viola

Diana Vinagre

cello & artistic direction

STRING QUARTETS OF J.P. DE ALMEIDA MOTA

Program

Quartet op.5 n.º 4, in B-flat Major

Allegretto

Larghetto

Minuetto | *Allegro*

Rondo | *Allegro*

Quartet op.5 n.º 3, in D Major

Largo | *Allegro*

Andantino

Tempo di Minuetto

Rondo | *Allegro*

Quartet op.6 n.º4, in c minor

Largo | *Allegro*

Polaca | *Allegretto*

Minuetto | *Allegro*

Rondo | *Allegro*

Duration: 68'

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Diana Vinagre

Diana started her studies in the Conservatory of Braga, her hometown, proceeding to study at the National Academy of Orchestra in Lisbon, in the class of Paulo Gaio Lima. After obtaining her Bachelor Degree, her passion for historically informed interpretation takes Diana to the Royal Conservatory of The Hague in the Netherlands. In the class of Jaap ter Linden Diana obtains both Bachelor and Master degrees in Historical Interpretation Practice with distinction, having received the Top Talent Scholarship, attributed by the Conservatories of The Hague and Amsterdam. She was a member of the European Union Baroque Orchestra and integrated the Jerwood Project with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.

Diana has an intense activity with several of the most renowned early music groups such as the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra, Cappella Mediterranea, L'Arpeggiata, Les Arts Florissants, Orchestra of the 18th century, Le Cercle de l'Harmonie, B'Rock, Ludovice Ensemble, Holland Baroque, Al Ayre Español, working under the direction of musicians such as René Jacobs, Bartold Kuijken Leonardo Garcia Alarcon, Ton Koopman, Enrico Onofri, Laurence Cummings, Christina Pluhar, Frans Bruggen, and Lars Ulrik Mortensen. She regularly performs in the most important concert halls in Europe, both in orchestral and chamber settings, including the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Opera Garnier and Opera Bastille in Paris, La Scala in Milan, Barbican Center, Palau de la Musica in Barcelona, Philharmonie de Paris and Barbican Center and Royal Albert Hall in London as well as at major ancient music festivals such as Utrecht, Aix-en-Provence, Ambronay and Brugges. Throughout her years of activity, Diana has participated in several recordings for different radio stations, such as Antena 2, Klara, BBC and France Musique, and specialized television channels such as Mezzo, Arte and Culturebox, as well as record labels as Alpha, Ricercare, Sony and Winter & Winter.

She is the founder and artistic director of Ensemble Bonne Corde, a group specialized in 18th century cello repertoire, both instrumental and vocal, working actively in the recovery of an unknown repertoire of the baroque and classical periods. In this context, the work of research and execution of Portuguese sacred repertoire of the second half of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries stands out, as this was the central subject of Diana's doctoral research at the Universidade Nova de Lisboa (INET-Md) under the guidance of Professor Rui Vieira Nery.

In 2021 he founded, together with double bassist Marta Vicente, the Lisbon based baroque orchestra Real Câmara which, under the direction of the Italian conductor and violinist Enrico Onofri, is dedicated to the recovery of Portuguese orchestral repertoire.

Diana is an integrated researcher at INET-md, Universidade Nova de Lisboa and the baroque cello teacher at ESMAE-Porto.



Ensemble Bonne Corde

Bonne Corde is an early music ensemble dedicated to the 18th-century repertoire, with a particular focus on solo cello works and the Portuguese musical heritage. Founded by cellist Diana Vinagre, the group brings together musicians united by a shared passion for historically informed performance and 18th-century music.

Following Diana's doctoral research on the role of the cello as an obbligato instrument in sacred vocal music, the ensemble has been committed to the recovery and performance of previously unknown works, both from the Portuguese and broader European contexts. Notable among these are the complete recordings of the Lamentations for Holy Week by Belgian composer J.-H. Fiocco (winner of the 2023 Play Awards for Classical Music) and the Concerti Grossi by Portuguese composer António Pereira da Costa — both released by the Belgian label Ramée (Outhere Music). The two releases received highly praised reviews from the European specialist press. The ensemble has performed regularly at festivals and concert venues in Portugal and abroad, and has recorded for Antena 2 and Klara.

Scheduled for release in 2025 by Ramée is the *Messa a 4 Voci* by António de Pádua Puzzi — not only a modern premiere, but also the first recording of a specific instrumental configuration characteristic of the Portuguese court at the end of the 18th century. This tradition reimagines the role of basso continuo instruments by assigning solo lines to two cellos and two bassoons, creating a texture that mimics the classical orchestral sound. This configuration was a recurring feature in the musical life of the court for several decades.

In partnership with MPMP – Património Musical Vivo, the ensemble is also preparing the release of both the recordings and the critical edition of the complete string quartets by Portuguese composer João Pedro de Almeida Mota. The first recording is scheduled for release in October 2025.

