I MUSICI

In 1952 twelve young and promising Italian musicians, mainly Roman, and mostly graduates of the master-classes at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia, got together “inter pares” to create a unique chamber orchestra comprised of six violins, two violas, two celli, one double bass and one harpsichord, with the intent of revitalizing the string repertory, particularly that of the Italian composers of the “settecento”.

They called themselves simply “I MUSICI” (“The Musicians” in the Italian of the 18th century) and they decided very deliberately to shape an ensemble without conductor. They did so in order to create an egalitarian relationship among the twelve colleagues and friends, which would bring to their music-making a unanimity on technical and interpretative questions. It was a very unconventional but unexpectedly suitable procedure. Notably, maestro Arturo Toscanini, on hearing them rehearsing in April 1952 at the Italian Radio studios, enthused over the young orchestra in front of journalists and musical personalities, and dedicated his photograph to the group with the words “bravi, bravissimi …no! la musica non muore”. (bravo, the music will not die)

A few weeks earlier, on the 30th of March 1952, their public debut was an enormous success at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia; it was the starting point of an astonishing career, which in a short time catapulted them to the ranks of the great international performers.

I MUSICI’s remarkable quality has always been, since its beginning, to extract from its ensemble all the required soloists – individually and in diverse instrumental combinations, so its programs offer a rich balance in styles and tonal colors.

I MUSICI has an astonishing list of recordings – from the first 33 rpm LP’s to modern CD’s – enriched on several occasions by the collaboration of renowned wind virtuosi (Severino Gazzelloni, Frans Bruggen, Aurèle Nicolet, Maxence Larrieux, Heinz Holliger, Maurice Bourgue, Klaus Thunemann, Marco Constantini, Maurice André, Håkan Hardenberger, Guy Touvron, Bernard Soustrot) and awarded many times with prizes: Grand Prix de l’Académie Charles Cros
Grand Prix International du Disque
Edison Award
Deutsche Schallplattenpreis
Grand Prix des Discophiles

Their masterful interpretation of Vivaldi’s Four Seasons is a perennial best-seller and was an important part of the Baroque revival. It has been recorded in six successive versions (PHILIPS):
1955 soloist: Félix Ayo LP33 Mono
1959 soloist: Felix Ayo LP33 Stereo
1969 soloist: Roberto Michelucci LP33 Stereo
1982 soloist: Pina Carmirelli CD
1990 soloist: Federico Agostini CD, VHS & Laser Disc Video
1995 soloist: Mariana Sirbu CD bitstream

Today I MUSICI’s recording production is a huge collection of compositions from authors of the 18th, 19th and 20th Centuries.
The present formation (with their instruments) is:

**Violins:**
- Antonio Pérez             Floreno Guidantus – 1736 Bologna  
- Antonio Anselmi           Gio. Gagliano – 1730 Napoli  
- Pasquale Pellegrino       Paolo Antonio Testore – 1720 Milan  
- Gian Luca Apostoli        G. Gagliano, Napoli – 1732 Napoli

**Violas:**
- Massimo Paris             Pietro Guarnieri -1697 Montua  
- Silvio Di Rocco           Lorenzo e Tomaso Carcassi – 1748 Florence

**Celli:**
- Francesco Strano          Carlo Tononi – 1730 Venice  
- Vito Paternóster          Lorenzo Carcassi – 1780 Florence

**Bass:**
- Lucio Buccarella          Antonio Mariani – 1678 Pesaro

**Harpsichord:**
- Francesco Buccarella Garatti  Fred Bettenhausen – 1993 Haarlem  
  (copy: Ruckers; on tour, as provided by concert hall)

The chamber playing art of I MUSICI has been patent for half a century: total dedication, respect for the style and taste of each composer and, at the same time, a free interpretative liberty alien to any academic dogmatism. With these qualities I MUSICI develops and narrates the aspirations, sentiments and emotions of those composers who lived in an epoch full of conventions and bonds, but who nevertheless transmit through their sublime art a universal and eternal message.

I Musici is pronounced “ee MOOZ-ee-chee”