STRING QUARTET OP. 1, NO. 4

JOSEPH BOLOGNE, CHEVALIER DE SAINT- GEORGES (1745-1799)

Joseph Bologne was a black composer who lived in Paris from 1753 to his death in 1799. He is often called "The Black Mozart" because he was a contemporary of and wrote music in the same classical style as Mozart. Like Mozart, he was a member of the Masonic order.

He was born in Guadeloupe, and was the son of Georges de Bologne Saint-Georges, a wealthy plantation owner, and Nanon, a black slave woman. Arriving in Bordeaux in 1753, his mother took him to Paris in 1755, where he received a formal education. He started fencing lessons in 1755 and became the best fencer in France. At the same time, he studied music and learned to play the harpsichord and the violin.

Joseph Bologne wrote musical comedies, at least on opera, string ensembles, violin concertos, and symphonic pieces. He was appointed the Conductor of Le Concert des Amateurs in 1773, and was considered for the post of Conductor of the Paris Opera Orchestra, but was rejected because of racist opposition from the singers.

Joseph was named Chevalier in 1763 and began using his father's title. Chevalier de Saint-Georges. His father died in 1765, and Joseph inherited considerable wealth.

An ardent supporter of the French Revolution in 1789, Joseph was appointed Colonel of a Black Regiment which fought for the Revolution and against Austrian invaders who opposed the democratic government. However, in spite of his patriotism, he gradually fell from favor. He was accused of embezzlement, but was acquitted. He died on 12 June 1799 in Paris.

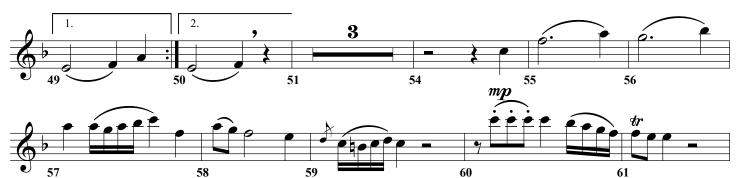
A biographical movie titled "Chevalier" about Joseph Bologne debuted in 2022 at the Toronto International Film Festival and will open in theaters in the US on 21 April 2023.

Playing time will be more than six minutes if all the repeats are used. Some performances omit the entire Rondo section but repeat the first section. Others play the first section only once and repeat all the other sections.

Bruce Evans, March 31, 2023

Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de St. Georges

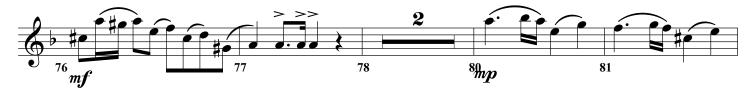




















2





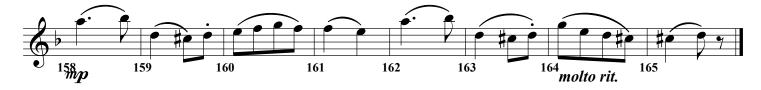












Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de St. Georges

























Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de St. Georges



©2023, Bruce Evans





Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de St. Georges



