

FRANÇOIS COUPERIN

Pièces de viole

François Couperin (1668-1733) enjoyed great renown in his time: admired in particular by Johann Sebastian Bach, he is today considered to be one of the greatest exponents of French classicism in the key period at the end of the reign of Louis XIV and the beginning of that of Louis XV. He was a fervent advocate of opening up French taste to Italian innovations, wishing to show through numerous works (*Les Nations*, *Les Goûts Réunis*, the *Apotheoses* of Lulli and Corelli) that musical perfection could only be achieved by blending the styles of different European nations. This kind of humanist thinking gives an idea of the *honnête homme* Couperin probably was, an open-minded, elegant and refined man.

His last composed work was probably the *Pièces de viole* (1728), in which Couperin put these progressive concepts into practice with two Suites, the first grouping together the dances typical of the French *Suite de danses* and the second imitating the Corellian Sonata. These Suites were probably played by Antoine Forqueray, a friend of Couperin's and also a great advocate of the Italian style. As if to reinforce the testamentary significance of these *Pièces de Viole*, Couperin concludes them with a *Pompe funèbre* and a *Chemise blanche*: these two pieces, far from being grand orations in the image of Marin Marais's *Tombeaux*, are luminous and full of hope, of that joyful sadness so typical of French music of the period; the *Chemise blanche* is one of the most virtuoso pieces in the viol repertoire, describing the garment worn by the deceased in an elusive swirl of notes, like a flight of Couperin's spirit, a twirling elevation.

In his own words, François Couperin preferred 'what moves him to what impresses him': some of his *Pièces de Clavecin* here describe this sensitivity and state of mind. Between the twilight of this immense musician and the dawn of the Age of Enlightenment, this programme is at the heart of the night.



Yoann Moulin, harpsichord

Yoann Moulin began his musical training with Robert Weddle at the Maîtrise de Caen. There he discovered the harpsichord, which he studied with Bibiane Lapointe and Thierry Maeder. After being invited to the Villecroze Academy, he continued his studies at the Paris Conservatoire in the classes of Olivier Baumont, Kenneth Weiss and Blandine Rannou. At the same time, he discovered the clavichord with Étienne Baillot and improvisation with Freddy Eichelberger, and benefited from the teaching of Pierre Hantaï, Andreas Staier, Skip Sempé and Blandine Verlet.

Since then he has performed in recital, notably at the La Roque d'Anthéron international piano festival, Folles Journée de Nantes, Oude Muziek d'Utrecht, Muziekgebouw-Amsterdam, La Scala de Paris, MA Festival de Brugges, Festival de Saintes, and also accompanies several ensembles such as Les Arts Florissants, le Concert Spirituel, Les Musiciens du Louvre, Vox Luminis, the Ricercar consort, l'ensemble Clément Janequin, L'Achéron, la Guilde des Mercenaires, Capriccio Stravagante, Das Klub - Cabaret Contemporain and the jazz collective La Forge.

His first recording as a soloist, devoted to Girolamo Frescobaldi, was warmly received by the critics and published by L'Encelade. He is now recording for the Ricercar label a collection devoted to German keyboard music of the 17th century, the first opus of which, dedicated to Samuel Scheidt and Heinrich Scheidemann, was released in 2018. 'Stylus Luxurians', the second opus devoted to Matthias Weckmann, was awarded a Diapason d'Or. He has also taken part in numerous recordings for the Alpha, Harmonia Mundi, Pentatone, Ambronay, Château de Versailles Spectacle, Aparté, Passacaille and Paraty labels.