

**ELISABETH JACQUET DE LA GUERRE**  
(1665-1729)

- 1 **Prélude in D minor** 2:17  
*Les Pièces de Clavecin* (1687)
- 2-8 **Pièces in D minor**  
*Pièces de Clavecin* (1707)
- 2 La Flamande et Double 4:35  
[Allemande]
- 3 Courante et Double 2:06
- 4 Sarabande 2:13
- 5 Gigue et Double 3:17
- 6 2e Gigue 3:22
- 7 1er et 2e Rigaudon 3:22
- 8 Chaconne 4:31

**FRANÇOIS COUPERIN**  
(1668-1733)

- 9 **Prélude in D minor** 1:19  
*L'Art de toucher Le Clavecin* (1716)
- 10-22 **From Second Ordre in D minor**  
*Premier Livre* (1713)
- 10 Allemande 4:41  
La Laborieuse
- 11 Première Courante 1:36
- 12 Seconde Courante 2:10
- 13 Sarabande la Prude 1:52
- 14 Canaries et Double 1:47
- 15 Rigaudon 1:39
- 16 La Charoloise 0:46
- 17 La Terpsicore 3:27
- 18 La Garnier 3:51
- 19 Les Idées heureuses 5:44
- 20 La Diligente 1:50
- 21 La Flateuse 3:06
- 22 Les Papillons 1:35

Total time 61:23

# LE CLAVECIN FRANÇAIS



## La Terpsicore

Elisabeth Jacquet de La Guerre  
François Couperin

Arthur Haas

Harpsichord

Nicolas Dumont (Paris, 1707)

## La Terpsicore

François Couperin and Elisabeth Jacquet de La Guerre were in the forefront of musical taste in France in the early decades of the eighteenth century. The music they wrote reflects a great love of the dance and an ability to combine elements of both French and Italian styles in their harpsichord compositions in the most expressive and convincing fashion. This recording samples some of the dance music and character pieces written for harpsichord in early eighteenth-century France by both these monumental composers. Many connections, both professional and personal, between these two great *clavecinistes*, led to this recording of their music.

Evrard Titon du Tillet's *Le Parnasse François*, 1732, is a book dedicated to the great personages of letters, artists and musicians in France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There is only one engraving honoring a woman in the whole book. It shows a medal struck in 1729. One side of the coin depicts a woman seated at a harpsichord, with a scattering of scores lying on the floor around her. The edge of the coin bears the inscription "*Aux grands compositeurs, j'ai disputé le prix.*" (Among the great composers, I vied for the prize). On the other side of the coin there is a likeness of the composer who is being honored, Elisabeth-Claude Jacquet de La Guerre. It is not a surprise that La Guerre was held in such high esteem. She had been a favorite at the court of Louis XIV since she was a small child where the *petite Mlle Jacquet* was called a prodigy and a miracle by all who heard her sing. Throughout her life she was lauded for her compositions which

spanned all the genres of the time: secular and sacred music, instrumental and vocal, including an opera, *Céphale et Procris*, 1694.

La Guerre holds a special place among French harpsichord composers since she, along with Marchand, are the only ones who published books of harpsichord pieces in both the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (*Pièces de Clavessin*, 1687 and *Pièces de Clavecin qui peuvent se Jouer sur le Violon*, 1707). Her first book comes the same year as Lebègue's second volume and predates d'Anglebert's (1689) book by two years. Works by Marchand (1699 and 1702), Clérambault (1703 and 1704) and LeRoux (1705) come before her second book, which coincides precisely with François Couperin's pieces in a 1707 anthology. Although the works in her second volume are for solo harpsichord, they could presumably also have been played either as pieces for violin and continuo or as pieces where the violin and right hand of the harpsichord double each other. She published a more traditional set of sonatas for violin and harpsichord in the same year.

The second set of harpsichord works, dated 1707, was her first publication after a series of personal tragedies. Sometime in the late 1690s, her adored only son, considered a brilliant, precocious musician, died at the age of ten. Her father, Claude Jacquet died in 1702, followed by her husband, Marin in 1704 and by her beloved brother, Nicolas in 1707. The harpsichord pieces and violin sonatas of 1707 were followed by two volumes of sacred cantatas based on scripture, various secular cantatas, occasional airs and a grand Te Deum for large choir.

The D minor suite consists entirely of dances, most of which have variations or *doubles* attached. The simple versions of the dances are very French in character, marked by *stile brisé* or broken lute style passages (especially in the allemande, *La Flamande*) and copious ornamentation as in the sarabande. La Guerre's preference for accompanying the dances with Italianate *doubles* shows that she, along with Couperin, was part of the wave of Italian style that swept through France in this period. These *doubles* are marked by chains of quick notes, long harmonic sequences and written-out melodic ornamented lines similar to those of Corelli or Telemann, such as the virtuosic *double* of the first gigue.

Another hallmark of La Guerre's style is the constant change between major and minor, an unusual yet highly expressive device in this period. This can be seen especially in the first few measures of the sarabande where the opening statement, clearly in D major, is suddenly transformed into minor where the movement remains for most of the rest of the dance. Similarly, in *La Flamande* most of the piece is in D minor until the last ten measures which move decisively into the major mode. The two giges are very much in contrast to each other: the first more typically French (in 6/4 with accent patterns clearly on the first and third quarters) and the second, a gigue *lourée*, a slower and more affective dance with less marked accent patterns and a slower harmonic rhythm.

The suite ends with a chaconne, one of La Guerre's great masterpieces, combining both French and Italian characteristics. Its

form is that of a French rondeau chaconne: the reprise, adhering loosely to a chaconne bass line, returns after each interior couplet. Each return of the rondeau is modified by either the addition of ornaments, or remarkably by a complete change of note values, from eighths and sixteenths to triplets. In addition, there is wide variety among the couplets. The first two are imitative and resemble the rondeau in melodic and harmonic writing, although the first is in major and the second in minor. These are filled with French ornamentation: *ports de voix*, *pinçés*, *tremblements*, among others. The third and fourth couplets are more Italianate and virtuosic with the third in triplets and the fourth in constant running sixteenths. Between these two last couplets La Guerre inserts the rondeau in triplets.

The composer thus combines French and Italian styles in a most effective way in this suite. The dances are French in affect in their simple versions and Italianate in the *doubles*, and the chaconne acts as a culmination of the entire suite by synthesizing these two disparate styles in one piece. Traditionally, French dance suites opened with an unmeasured prelude. La Guerre does not write preludes for the two suites in her 1707 collection, but does in the 1687 set. I have chosen the D minor prelude *non-mesuré* from the earlier collection to begin this suite.

François Couperin's *Second Ordre*, published in his first book of *Pièces de clavecin* in 1713, represents his earliest keyboard writing from the first decade of the eighteenth century. Several of the pieces from both the first and second *ordres* were published in an anthology of

keyboard music around the time of La Guerre's publication in 1707. Couperin uses the term *ordre* to indicate a collection of pieces centered around a key, not necessarily meant to be played one after the other as they would be in a suite. In the Book I *ordres*, a set of dances is typically followed by a number of character pieces. The movements chosen for this recording show a variety of affects and styles and hint strongly at connections between Couperin and La Guerre.

Couperin's four books of *Pièces de Clavecin* are the crowning achievement of his rich composing life. His dances combine strong accents that mirror whirling dance patterns with clear melodies. Sophisticated strings of ornaments are set in balanced phrases unparalleled in the literature. All this is tied together with an unflinching sense of emotion and taste. The opening *Allemande La Laborieuse*, is one of the few places where a composer actually indicates *notes inégales*, the French performance practice concept in which consecutive step-wise melody notes should be played unequally despite being written equally. He writes that the sixteenth notes in this piece should be played in a very slightly dotted fashion (*un tant soit peu pointées*).

The character pieces either describe a person (*La Garnier*, the organist Charles Garnier), a character trait (*La Prude*, *La Diligente*), an emotion or set of feelings (*Les Idées heureuses*) or an object at the court (*Les Papillons* – a probable reference to the jeweled pins that women wore in their hair at court balls). This *ordre* runs the gamut of styles and feelings from lively dances to serious and heartfelt character traits, and ends with a delightful and vivacious romp transporting us to a

glittering court ball in Versailles. As with the La Guerre suite, I place Couperin's D minor prelude from *L'Art de toucher Le Clavecin*, 1716, before the pieces from his *Second Ordre*.

François and Elisabeth probably knew each other from childhood. Almost exact contemporaries, she was born in 1665 and he in 1668. They both came from grand French musical dynasties of performers and instrument builders, Couperin and Jacquet. Elisabeth married into yet a third important French musical family, La Guerre. For generations these families had held positions as organists within walking distance of each other in Paris: Couperin at Saint-Gervais in the Marais, Jacquet at Saint-Louis-en-l'Île on the Ile Saint-Louis and La Guerre first at Saint-Séverin in the Latin Quarter and then at the Sainte-Chapelle on the Ile de la Cité. The two composers were related through marriage as well. Elisabeth wed Marin de La Guerre in 1684, and Louise de La Guerre (first cousin of Marin) was married to François Couperin (I), the uncle of François *le Grand*. Couperin and Marin de La Guerre also had a strong professional connection. Both fought together against the stranglehold that the guild of the Ménéstrandise had on musicians in the seventeenth century. They and the other harpsichordists in Paris ultimately won their battle to gain more freedom from the guild's rigid rules as parodied in Couperin's *Les Fastes de la grande et ancienne Mxnstrxndxxx* from his *Onzième Ordre*.

Couperin and La Guerre had similar musical tastes. In the 1680s and 90s, the Abbé Nicolas Mathieu held weekly concerts of Italian music in Paris. Music of Carissimi, Cavalli, Luigi Rossi, and Corelli,

among others, was premiered in these sessions. Sébastien de Brossard, speaking about taste in the last decade of the seventeenth century, mentioned that all the Parisian composers, especially the organists, were mad about the new Italian music at that time (*Catalogue des Livres de Musique*, 1724). This was an early exposure for the French musical *cognoscenti* to Italian music. For La Guerre and Couperin, it proved profoundly influential. Both introduced Italian elements into their compositions. Couperin's early chamber works (*La pucelle*, *La visionnaire*, and *L'astrée*) were sonatas in the current fashionable Italian style. La Guerre's earliest violin sonatas, dating from c.1695, also illustrate Italian stylistic traits.

In Couperin's first volume of harpsichord pieces, the *Premier Ordre* was a tribute to Louis XIV, as one might expect. I believe that the *Second Ordre* in D minor was written in homage to La Guerre, many of whose pieces might well be related to her pieces in D minor from the 1707 collection. Numerous aspects point to a connection between these two D minor works. Couperin wrote pieces in the same style, named several of his pieces in a way, albeit veiled, that seem to refer to her and directly quoted passages from her 1707 works in some of his own movements.

*La Terpsicore*, the central piece in Couperin's *Second Ordre*, contains a direct quote from the chaconne that ends La Guerre's D minor suite. *La Terpsicore* was a nickname for her, coined during the publication of her first set of harpsichord pieces in 1687. A poem, written in Elisabeth's honor and printed in the front of her book states that she

is Terpsichore, one of the nine muses, or "if not then we need to augment the number of muses to ten to allow her place on Mt. Parnassus."

*La Terpsicore* and the chaconne start out with the same imitative dotted rhythms alternating from one hand to the other. They both contain sequences within the next several measures that use exactly the same harmonic language. It could be said that Couperin pays La Guerre the ultimate compliment by quoting her directly and possibly by naming *La Terpsicore* after her. Other strikingly similar passages come at the beginning of this *ordre*. The first piece, *La Laborieuse*, starts with the same melodic motive as the beginning of her courante. Finally, there is another close melodic similarity to her courante (measures 5-7) in the second half of his second courante (measures 17-21). It is hard to imagine that so many similarities could be merely coincidental.

Both composers include pairs of rigaudons in their works – the first in D minor, the second in D major. This would not be unusual, except that this is the only set of rigaudons in all of Couperin's harpsichord works. La Guerre's suite includes two giges; the second is a gigue *lourée*, a slower, more contemplative piece in triplet rhythm. It is rare to find this in solo harpsichord works, yet Couperin's *La Charoloise* also in this *ordre* is written in exactly the same gigue *lourée* style with the same poignant affect.

In *La Garnier* Couperin pays tribute to the organist Charles Garnier with a most expressive harpsichord piece. He does not honor any other organist in this fashion, and perhaps this piece serves as an indirect compliment, an elegy for Elisabeth's late husband, Marin de La Guerre. Even the titles of some of the pieces in Couperin's *Second Ordre* could be seen as an homage to La Guerre's character or perhaps even as expressions of his feelings towards her.

Couperin may even allude to La Guerre in *La Laborieuse* and *La Diligente*. In the seventeenth century, *laborieuse* refers to a difficult, almost painful dedication to work. The term *diligente*, according to Molière, describes a person who is faithful and zealously attached to great detail. La Guerre's recently identified portrait shows her with quill in one hand, music in the other. The artist, François de Troy, portrayed her hard at work. The *Sarabande la Prude* could also refer to La Guerre. *Prude* is, according to seventeenth-century definition, a person who is virtuous to a fault and rejects any kind of pleasure. Flattery (*La Flateuse*) had a distinctly pejorative meaning in the seventeenth century, yet this piece is marked *affectueusement*. Couperin is thus showing a sympathy towards a maligned character trait. Another piece from this *ordre*, *La Voluptueuse*, although not on this recording, might also refer to La Guerre. De Troy's portrait of La Guerre shows her to be a woman of stunning beauty and charm.

Finally we come to *Les Idées heureuses*, a piece obviously of great importance to Couperin, as it was featured in his official portrait. It is one of the most ravishing pieces Couperin ever wrote – poignant,

touching, almost painful in its inability to resolve harmonic ideas. It uses all the most sophisticated French Baroque performance practice techniques: *notes inégales*, non-simultaneity between the hands, tempo flexibility, a plethora of ornamentation and much over-legato to maximize dissonance. The mixing of consonance and dissonance shows Couperin at the height of his powers. The meaning of the title is obscure; fantasy, nostalgia, and perhaps thoughts of love are depicted here in this masterpiece. We can only speculate as to the real nature of the relationship between Couperin and La Guerre. Arguably it was profound and meaningful, combining great respect with strong and true emotions.

These two composers occupy a prominent place in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century French music. Each understood the importance of dance in French cultural life and devoted their *œuvres* to a marriage of both French and Italian styles. Both composers were much *fêtés* in their lifetimes, and for Couperin, La Guerre may well have represented *La Terpsicore*, one of the muses.

ARTHUR HAAS  
New York City, April 2007



**Arthur Haas**, one of the most sought after performers and teachers of Baroque music today, holds a master's degree in historical musicology from UCLA, where he studied harpsichord with Bess Karp. He also studied with Albert Fuller at the Juilliard School and with Alan Curtis in Berkeley and in Amsterdam. Mr. Haas received the top prize in the Paris International Harpsichord Competition in 1975, and then lived in France

until 1983, performing in many of the major European early music festivals and teaching at the Ecole nationale de musique in Angoulême.

In 1985, his formal American debut at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall was highly praised by the New York Times. He is a member of the Aulos Ensemble and Musical Assembly, with whom he has recorded sonatas and suites from *Les Nations* of Couperin. Mr. Haas participated in the premiere recording of the Bach Goldberg Variation Canons with Alan Curtis, and has also recorded suites for two harpsichords by Gaspard LeRoux with William Christie. His solo CDs of *Pièces de clavecin* of Jean-Henry d'Anglebert, *Suites de clavecin* of Forqueray, and music by Purcell and his contemporaries have received critical acclaim in the press.

Known for his expertise as a continuo player, Mr. Haas has toured with such distinguished early musicians as Marion Verbruggen, Jaap ter Linden, Julianne Baird, Laurence Dreyfus, Bruce Haynes, and Phoebe Carrai. A new recording of Bach's Cantata 199 and songs of Henry Purcell with soprano Dawn Upshaw was recently released. Annual summer workshop and festival appearances take him to the San Francisco Early Music Society's Dominican Baroque Workshop, the Eastman Continuo Institute, the International Baroque Institute at Longy, and the Amherst Early Music Festival where he has served as artistic director of the Baroque Academy since 2002.

Mr. Haas is professor of harpsichord and early music at the State University of New York at Stony Brook and is also on the faculty of the Mannes College of Music. For many years he taught at the Eastman School of Music.

HARPSICHORD BY NICOLAS DUMONT  
CELEBRATING 300 YEARS 1707-2007



The Parisian harpsichord builder Nicolas Dumont was active from 1675 until at least 1707. Nothing is known of his life other than that he married in 1673 and became a master in the guild of instrument makers in 1675. Three Dumont two-manual harpsichords are known to survive, dated 1697 (Paris, Musée de la musique), 1704 (Paris, private collection) and this 1707 instrument. The 1697 was originally a small Flemish-inspired instrument, but has since been enlarged. The 1704 and 1707 instruments are the earliest examples of what became the standard model for eighteenth-century Parisian harpsichords. The 1707 is the first with a five-octave (FF-e3) range, and is in substantially original condition. Formerly at the Château du Touvet in France, it was acquired by its present owners in 2000.

**Portrait of Elisabeth-Claude Jacquet de La Guerre, c.1694-1695  
by François de Troy (1645-1730): private collection, London**

The younger son of the painter Antoine de Troy (1608-1684), François de Troy left his native Toulouse for Paris where he worked in the studios of Nicolas Loir (1624-1679) and the portraitist Claude Lefebvre (1632-1675) before his admission to the Academy in 1674. A protégé of Mme de Montespan, he gained renown as the senior exponent of portraiture during the reign of Louis XIV. His talents were in demand with a wide variety of celebrities. He painted royalty, artists and architects as well as musicians. Dominique Brême, *François de Troy*, Paris, 1997, identifies the sitter as Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre and dates the work around 1694-1695.

François de Troy would have known Mme de la Guerre from their years in the circle of Mme de Montespan whose patronage they shared. In his portrait he depicted the beautiful young woman confident in her accomplishments. An inkstand is set on the harpsichord at which she sits, and she holds a sheet lined with blank staves and a feather pen at the ready to fill in the notes of her own composing.

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