



LE CLAVECIN FRANÇAIS



Balbastre • Duphly
Forqueray • Royer
Pièces de Clavecin

Adam Pearl, Harpsichord
Joannes Goermans (Paris, 1768)

PLECTRA
MUSIC

Balbastre • Duphly • Forqueray • Royer

Pièces de Clavecin

Adam Pearl, *Harpsichord*

Claude-Bénigne Balbastre (1724-1799)

from *Pièces de Clavecin, Premier Livre (1759)*

- | | |
|---|------|
| 1. La de Caze, <i>Fièremment et marqué</i> | 5:49 |
| 2. La d'Héricourt, <i>Noblement, sans lenteur</i> | 3:53 |
| 3. La Lugeac, <i>Giga: Allegro</i> | 4:02 |

Jacques Duphly (1715-1789)

from *Troisième Livre de Pièces de Clavecin (1756)*

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| 4. Les Grâces, <i>Tendrement</i> | 8:15 |
| 5. Médée, <i>Vivement et fort</i> | 4:46 |
| 6. La Forqueray, <i>Rondeau</i> | 5:44 |
| 7. Chaconne | 7:49 |

Jean-Baptiste Forqueray (1699-1782)

from *Pièces de Clavecin, Livre Premier (1747)*

- | | |
|---|------|
| 8. La Angrave, <i>Très vivement</i> | 3:31 |
| 9. La du Vaucel, <i>Très tendrement</i> | 3:30 |
| 10. La Morangis ou la Plissay, <i>Mouvement de Chaconne</i> | 8:20 |

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Joseph-Nicolas-Pancrease Royer (c1705-1755)

from *Pièces de Clavecin, Premier Livre (1746)*

- | | |
|--|------|
| 11. Allemande | 5:29 |
| 12. La Sensible, <i>Rondeau</i> | 4:43 |
| 13. La Marche des Scythes, <i>Fièremment</i> | 8:29 |

Total Time **74:22**

Executive Producer: Karen Flint

Producer & Engineer: Will Anderson

Post-session Producers: Will Anderson, Karen Flint & Adam Pearl

Audio Editor: Will Anderson

Production Manager & Design: Robert Munsell

Instrument tuned at $a^1=392$ Hz

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Coming of Age: Pièces de Clavecin

The French school of harpsichord music begun so successfully with the music of Jacques Champion Sieur de Chambonnières (1601/2-1672), was followed by works of Louis Couperin (1626-1661), Jean Henry D'Anglebert (1629-1691) and reached the height of its flowering with the music of François Couperin (1668-1733) and Jean Philippe Rameau (1683-1764). While it is commonly assumed that Couperin's and Rameau's music flowered during the reign of Louis XIV, it was actually after Louis' death in 1715 that many of their keyboard works appeared. During the reign of Louis' great-grandson, Louis XV (1723-1774) the harpsichord became highly popular, with the production of large numbers of two manual instruments and many brilliant compositions written for them.

During the 1750's, however, Rameau lived to witness the decline of the harpsichord. Italian style gained ascendancy over the French. With Johann Antonin Stamitz's (1717-1757) visit to Paris in 1754, there was a strong influence from the Mannheim Court that soon became the vogue. Johann

Schobert (c1735-1767) visited Paris in 1760 or 1761 and believed that his music completely destroyed the reputation of Jacques Duphly (1715-1789), Claude Balbastre (1724-1799) and Armand-Louis Couperin (1727-1789).

Rameau however, thought that music was going "to wrack and ruin; people are changing style at every instance." He looked to his compatriots to uphold the French tradition, which occurred with the publication of the *Pièces de clavecin* volumes by Duphly in 1744, 1748, 1756 and 1768, Joseph-Nicolas-Pancrease Royer in 1746, Balbastre in 1759 and Armand-Louis Couperin in 1751, 1765, 1772 and 1773. Their works were strongly French in character, although not traditional. These pieces are among the last eighteenth century works to be truly idiomatic for the harpsichord.

Claude Balbastre (1724-1799), probably received his first organ lessons from his father Bénigne Balbastre (d1737), who was organist at Saint-Etienne in Dijon. Claude succeeded Claude Rameau (younger brother of Jean-Philippe) as organist at Saint-Jean-de-Losne and may have studied with him.

As cathedral organist at Saint-Etienne in 1743 Balbastre composed organ and harpsichord works. At age 25, he went to Paris, arriving in October 1750 where he became friends with Jean-Philippe Rameau, studying composition with him. An anonymous source says that he also studied with Pierre Février, although if so, it must have been in Paris in the early 1750s. The *Mercure de France* in 1755 reviewed his performance at the *Concert Spirituel*:

M. Balbastre played an organ concerto of his own composition . . . his brilliant playing made this instrument sound in an authoritative manner. . . one cannot praise too highly . . . the singular talent of M. Balbastre.

Although he often played his own concertos at the *Concert Spirituel*, none of them survive. As a favored teacher in Paris, his compositions blossomed with the publication of his *Pièces de clavecin*, that was announced in the *Mercure* in February 1759. In the dedication to Madame de Caze, Balbastre writes:

Madame, I have composed these harpsichord pieces for your amusement, and my gratitude makes them yours. But

what disproportion between my homage and your kindnesses. The latter can be matched only by the profound respect with which I am, Madam, your most humble and obedient servant, Balbastre.

It is likely that Madame de Caze first studied with Duphly but switched to study with Balbastre when he arrived in Paris in 1750. The opening piece *La de Caze* is named for her. Many pieces in his harpsichord works are named for people that he knew. *La d'Héricourt* was most likely in honor of M. l'Abbe d'Hericourt, *conseiller de Grande Chambre*, who was given an honor by the king with the title Abbe and ten thousand livres. *La Lugeac*, a lively Italianate gigue, is most likely in honor of Charles-Antoine de Guérin, a page of Louis XV, who later became known as the Marquis de Lugeac.

In 1760 Balbastre was engaged as organist at Notre Dame for three months each year. He also became organist to Monsieur (brother of Louis XIV) until the Revolution. While at court he taught harpsichord to Marie-Antoinette and the Duke of Chartres and was organist at the royal chapel. He also taught the daughters of foreign dignitaries, including Thomas Jefferson.

Balbastre's *Noels en variations* at St Roch were so popular at midnight mass, that eventually the archbishop forbade him to play. Balbastre's keyboard pieces are varied in character, some following the tradition of François Couperin or Rameau and others in a more modern vein. Charles Burney, eager to meet and hear Balbastre, wrote this about a visit to his home:

[He owned] a fine Ruckers harpsichord which he had painted inside and out with as much delicacy as the finest coach or snuffbox I ever saw in Paris. On the outside is the birth of Venus; and on the inside the story of Rameau's opera, Castor and Pollux. . . . sitting on a bank in Elysium with a lyre in his hand, is the composer himself; the portrait is very like, for I saw Rameau in 1764. The tone of this instrument is more delicate than powerful; one of the unisons is buff, but very sweet and agreeable; the touch is very light, owing to the quilling, which in France is always weak.

Balbastre had one of his favorite compositions, the *Pastorale* in A, painted on the nameboard of his harpsichord, dated August 6, 1767. After the French Revolution and the fall

of the nobility, Balbastre was left without patronage and lived the rest of his life in poverty.

Jacques Duphly, (1715-1789), French harpsichordist and composer, was born in Rouen to Jacques-Agathe Duphly and Marie-Louise Boivin. The parish register of St Eloi where he was born, lists that *le sieur Duflig*, organist at the cathedral of Evreux, applied for a position at St Eloi in 1734. The register indicates that he was trained by François Daguin court at Rouen and went to Evreux c.1732 for his first appointment at age 19. At St Eloi he was locked out of the organ loft by his predecessor, but the church had the locks changed, so he could play. In 1740 he also became organist at the church of Notre Dame de la Ronde. His sister, also an organist, filled in for him when needed. In 1742 he left both those positions and moved to Paris, where he prospered as a harpsichordist. Pierre-Louis Daquin, son of the organist, said of *Duflitz* in 1752:

For some time he was organist at Rouen, but doubtless finding that he had a greater gift for the harpsichord, he abandoned his first instrument. . . .He has much lightness

of touch and a certain softness which, sustained by ornaments, marvelously render the character of his pieces.

Friedrich Marpurg, a German critic, remarked in 1754 that:

Duphly, a pupil of Dagincourt, plays the harpsichord only, in order, as he says, not to spoil his hand for the organ. He lives in Paris, where he instructs the leading families.

Duphly's first book of *Pièces de clavecin* was undated but advertised in the *Mercure* in 1744. His *Second livre de pieces de clavecin*, also undated, was advertised in the *Mercure* 1748 and printed by Walsh in London in 1764. His third book, again undated, was advertised in 1756 and the fourth and final book likewise in 1768.

In 1765, the harpsichord maker, Pascal Taskin, named Dufly as among the best teachers in Paris, along with Armand-Louis Couperin, Balbastre and Le Grand. Rousseau's *Dictionnaire* (1768) gives Duphly credit for being an excellent teacher who possesses perfection in fingering.

Duphly was part of an inner circle of professional players and music lovers, yet he was un-ambitious and led a simple life. Louis-Claude D'Aquin wrote that "his pieces are sweet and amiable: they take after their father." He seemed to drift away from the mainstream of life, and at one point in 1788 there was an article in the *Journal general de la France* asking what had become of Duphly. When he died the next year, no heirs appeared. His sister, Marie-Anne-Agathe, last heard of as an organist in Rouen, could not be found. He had been living in a small apartment overlooking the garden in the Hôtel de Juigné and paying 300 livres a year rent. Duphly apparently never married and his chief legatee was his manservant of 30 years, Nicolas Depommier. At his death, he did not own a harpsichord.

Duphly was greatly influenced by Rameau, even paraphrasing some of Rameau's harpsichord music, although there are other pieces that reflect the writing of his teacher, Dagincourt and Scarlatti. Many of these pieces are dedicated to the person named in the title. These works amount to a directory of Duphly's acquaintances. With nearly a quarter century separating the first and fourth books, Duphly merits inclusion

in the living history of French music, as much for his brilliant style, as for its “continuous vivacity and boldness of melody.” (A. Pirro).

Jean-Baptiste (-Antoine) Forqueray [le fils] (1699-1782), was a child prodigy, taught by his father, Antoine [le père] who was a very famous viol player. Forqueray, senior, gave lessons to members of the royal family and his solo reputation was equaled only by Marin Marais. His son, Jean-Baptiste, played for Louis XIV at the age of five or six. However, he suffered neglect and jealousy from his father, who had him imprisoned in 1715 and banished from the country in 1725. Jean-Baptiste had pupils who rallied to his support and his sentence was revoked. He returned to France in 1726 after a two-month exile.

Forqueray married Jeanne Nolson in 1732 and lived in the house of her brother-in-law Chevalier Etienne Boucon. Boucon’s daughter Anne and Jeanne Nolson were both accomplished harpsichordists. Jean- Philippe Rameau was also a member of the Boucon family circle. In 1737 Forqueray played Telemann’s “Paris Quartets” with the composer.

After his first wife Jeanne died, Forqueray married the celebrated harpsichordist Marie-Rose Dubois in 1741. Louis-Claude D’Aquin wrote: “everyone knows of the talent of Madame Forqueray: her reputation is magnificent.” Finally, in September 1742, Jean-Baptiste officially succeeded to his father’s court position, holding that until 1779. Most descriptions rank him as being almost his father’s equal on the viol. In 1760 he seems to have retired from playing and took up editing Italian works for publication with Mme Leclair as his engraver.

Jean-Baptiste published five suites in two separate volumes, one of *Pièces de viole* in 1747 by his father, Mr Forqueray le père, dedicated to his pupil Henriette-Anne the second daughter of Louis XV; and a second *Pièces de clavecin*, that was dedicated to Maria-Josepha of Saxony, who had married the Dauphin earlier the same year. The younger Forqueray admitted to adding the bass part, the figures and fingering the viol part. Three pieces that he claimed as his own work are *La Angrave*, *La du Vaucel*, and *La Morangis ou la Plissay*. It is unclear to what extent the other pieces are the work of the father or the son. Jean-Baptiste published them simultaneously in a version for solo harpsichord,

possibly made by Marie-Rose. These transcriptions reinterpret the material, making more use of counterpoint, octaves and arpeggiated bass lines.

In the *Preface* to the *Pièces de clavecin* Forqueray wrote:

As anyone who plays the harpsichord will be familiar with the signs Mr. Rameau uses for his ornaments, I felt I ought to make use of the same signs in my own publication. Some of the pieces may perhaps seem a little low, but I was unwilling for two reasons to transpose them: I wanted to keep their character and also to avoid inverting the harmony if they should be played with a gamba.

As the third suite did not contain enough pieces, I have had to add three of my own; these are marked with an asterisk.

Joseph-Nicolas-Pancrace Royer (c1705-1755), was born in Turin, Italy, where his father was sent by Louis XIV to tend the gardens and fountains at the court of Savoy. He returned to Paris as an infant, although he did not become a French citizen until 1751, four years before he died. As a composer, harpsichordist and organist, he was a central figure in Parisian musical life. His

responsibilities took him to court, the *Opéra* and the *Concert Spirituel*. He was known as a great harpsichordist and organist, and was a contemporary of Rameau, influencing his latter career. He held the position of *maître de musique de la chambre du roi*.

Royer was instrumental in enhancing the repertory of the *Concert Spirituel*, where he introduced symphonies by Graun, Hasse, Jomelli and Stamitz. His operas *Pyrrhus* (1730) and *Zaïde* (1739) were performed at the Paris *Opéra*. He started working on *Prométhée et Pandore*, a tragedy written by Voltaire in 1744. It was rehearsed in 1752 and 1754, but never performed. The music has since been lost.

Royer's only surviving book of virtuoso *Pièces de clavecin* (1746) has transcriptions of movements from *Zaïde* and *Le Pouvoir de l'amour*, a *ballet héroïque*. Excerpts from those operas were performed in the Esterházy court in 1759.

*Karen Flint
Wilmington, Delaware
November 2018*

From the Artist

As a young pianist, my conservatory studies included a course which focused on keyboard literature from 1600-1760. This was my first experience with the harpsichord, and I was immediately drawn to the instrument and its repertoire, especially the music of seventeenth and eighteenth-century France. The rich harmonies and colors, the pervasive use of dissonance as an expressive tool, the grace, elegance and sometimes exuberance of French music spoke to my very core. And the instrument itself! The feel of plucking strings through a keyboard, the warm resonance, an entire new world of articulation, touch and expressive tools — all of these things got me hooked. It seems fitting that my first solo recording is entirely French music, encompassing a broad range of characters and affects, from the melancholy and tender to the outright audacious. Rather than focus on the complete works of one composer, I have chosen some of my favorite pieces composed by several important figures of the late French Baroque.

From Claude Balbastre I have chosen three of his best works. They happen to be the first three pieces of late French Baroque music I learned on the harpsichord. *La de Caze* is passionate and dramatic, featuring dotted rhythms, plaintive phrases and left-hand flourishes. *La d'Héricourt* is a noble, yet dark and moody rondeau, containing a deceptive resolution to low A-flat that never ceases to be satisfying. The rollicking gigue, *La Lugeac*, exudes outrageous fun from beginning to end. I have always wondered if a composer's dedicated piece is intended to be a reflection of that person's personality. If so, I might like to have a drink with Lugeac!

The sheer beauty of Jacques Duphly's *Les Grâces* presents the perfect opportunity to explore the varied colors of the Joannes Goermans' two 8-foot stops. Duphly gives the unusual instruction that certain notes of the left hand should be played before the notes of the right hand. *Médée* is the harpsichord equivalent of a scorned woman's rage aria in opera — one can imagine the betrayed and vengeful sorceress flying in her dragon-pulled chariot. The brooding *La Forqueray* sits aptly in the low, dark range of the harpsichord, an homage to Forqueray's

non-transposed transcriptions of his father's viol suites. The *Chaconne* is a joyous set of continuous variations on a four-measure phrase. Like many chaconnes, this one in F major, has a middle section in the parallel minor. The major mode makes its triumphant return in the final section of the piece.

Jean-Baptiste Forqueray's *La Angrave* seems to present two different personalities. It begins joyfully and carefree, but an abrupt shift to the minor mode reveals a darker, more sinister side. In the repeat of the second half Forqueray provides the player with a passage of flamboyant arpeggiations. *La du Vaucel* is a simple, yet noble piece. The humble melody sits atop a *stile brisé* accompaniment that highlights the Goermans' rich lower register. *La Morangis ou la Plissay* is another chaconne of the continuous variation type, full of variety and virtuosity. In this piece the composer specifies which keyboard to play (a rare occurrence) — the grand clavier, presumably with an 8', 8' and 4' disposition, or the petit clavier with a single 8-foot.

Joseph-Nicolas-Pancrace Royer's *Allemande*, a grandiose and imposing piece, is hardly recognizable as a dance. Full of contrasts, it includes bold flourishes, gentle triplets, dotted figures and insistent descending arpeggiated passages. *La Sensible* is a character piece in rondeau form with a haunting and melancholy melody. *La Marche des Scythes*, marked *Fièremment*, or proudly, presents a fiery tableau evoking the ancient warlike Scythian people. With its virtuosic arpeggiation, rapid batteries and violent scales it displays the extravagance which characterized much of French music in the mid-eighteenth century.

I am incredibly fortunate to have been given the opportunity to use such an amazing instrument for this project. It is a great privilege not only to play, but to record on the Joannes Goermans, 1768 harpsichord. It is a stunning example of the type of harpsichord for which these pieces were written. Its abundant character, richness, warmth, sustain and variety were both inspiring and instructive throughout the process.

I owe my sincerest thanks to Karen and Peter Flint – first for

gathering together one of the finest antique harpsichord collections in the world; and second for making this recording possible. I remember vividly a phone call, many years ago, from Karen asking me if I would be interested in joining her and a few other esteemed harpsichordists to perform the complete Bach harpsichord concertos on antique instruments – what a dream come true! Since that time the collection has grown in scope and I have had the opportunity to experience a wide range of fantastic originals.

I also wish to thank John Phillips for restoring the Goermans harpsichord to all of its former glory; Robert Munsell for working his magic making everything run smoothly; and Will Anderson, who was an absolute pleasure to work with and who did such an amazing job with the editing. I offer one more thank you to both Will and Karen, whose voices from the booth continuously offered helpful encouragement.

*Adam Pearl
Baltimore, Maryland
November 2018*

Harpsichordist Adam Pearl is in demand as a performer of both solo and ensemble music. His performances have been described as “masterful” and “brilliant and expressive.” He has performed throughout the United States with many of the leading early music ensembles as well as in Europe, South America and Asia. Dr. Pearl has recorded on the Chandos, Dorian and Plectra labels.

Dr. Pearl is professor of harpsichord and historical performance at the Peabody Conservatory, where he also directs Baroque opera and the Peabody Renaissance Ensemble’s singers. He has taught at various early music workshops throughout the United States.

A lover of Baroque opera, Pearl has directed numerous productions from the keyboard including Blow’s *Venus and Adonis*, Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas* and *King Arthur*, Cavalli’s *La Calisto* and *La Didone*, Monteverdi’s *L’Incoronazione di Poppea*, Charpentier’s *David et Jonathas* and *La descente d’Orphée aux enfers*, Reinhard Keiser’s *Pomona*, and Handel’s *Acis and Galatea*, *Giulio Cesare*, plus fully staged productions of *Messiah* and *Jephtha*.

Pearl earned a Bachelor of Music degree in piano performance and both Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees in harpsichord performance from the Peabody Conservatory. His doctoral research was an exploration of the links between rhetoric, declamation and the harpsichord music of the French Baroque. He is a laureate of the 2001 Jurow and 2004 Bruges international harpsichord competitions.

Joannes Goermans Harpsichord, Paris, 1768

Joannes Goermans (1703-1777), also known as Jean I Goermans, was admitted as a master in the guild of instrument makers in Paris before 1730, and became one of the leading harpsichord makers there between 1743 and 1773. His third son, Jacques, was admitted to the guild in 1766 and set up his own workshop in his father's establishment. Joannes retired from making harpsichords in 1773.

The 1768 Goermans is the last known instrument signed "Joannes Goermans". With its refined and powerful sound and its supple action, it represents the apogee of eighteenth-century French harpsichord design. Its disposition is typical: two five-octave manuals (FF-f") with a coupler and two 8-foot and one 4-foot registers. It appeared in the sale catalogue of the Léon Savoye Collection in 1924 and was recently restored by John Phillips of Berkeley, California, in 2014.