

**Christophe Rousset and Les Talens Lyriques conjure up the court of the Sun King of Versailles in a celebration of Couperin Le Grand's 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary at the Barbican Centre on 14 January**



**Sunday 14 January 2018**

Milton Court, Barbican Centre | London, UK

**2pm *Lumière***

*Les goûts-réunis, Cinquième concert*

*Trois Airs sérieux*

*Pièces de claveçin, Septième ordre*

*Troisième concert royal*

**4:30pm Panel Discussion with Andrew McGregor**

**7pm *Ombre***

*Pièces de Viole, première suite*

*Les idées heureuses*

*La Garnier*

*Trois Leçons de ténèbres*

**Céline Scheen** *Soprano I*

**Eugénie Warnier** *Soprano II*

**Gilbert Gaubert-Jacques** *violin*

**Kaori Uemura-Terakado** *viola da gamba*

**Christophe Rousset** *musical director, harpsichord & organ*

**Christophe Rousset** and **Les Talens Lyriques** will celebrate the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Francois Couperin's birth with a half-day exploration of his music at the **Barbican Centre's**

**Milton Court on 14 January 2018.** Titled **Lumiere et Ombre**, these two programmes explore the dualities of light and dark in Couperin's works, and evoke the splendor and colour of the court of King Louis XIV. This year Rousset plans to release the complete chamber works of Couperin.



Couperin often gave his works atypical titles (*Les idées heureuses*, *La Garnier*). This is a feature of Couperin's music that has both fascinated and frustrated musicologists and commentators. The purpose of Couperin's titles is not to evoke images in the listener, but to be a compositional tool. Couperin himself explained that he always had an image in mind when composing his works, but did not explain these titles or their sources as they had already served their purpose in inspiring *him*. Couperin kept his muses, whether they be object or person, a secret, and the audience is drawn into the guessing game.

As Rousset explains:

*"Listening to Couperin's music calls for close attention, it does not offer itself up easily, we have to be vigilant. A loyal court musician to the ageing Louis XIV, Couperin made music which harked back to the splendor of a bygone sovereignty. He exhausts a poetic subject with his music in the same way Proust did with his literature".*

The first programme, titled **Lumiere**, begins with **Cinquiemeni concert** from **Les Gouts-Reunis**. Published in 1724, this set of works each contains a prelude and a succession of dances, which intended to unite the Italian and French styles, celebrating the internationalism of Louis XIV's court. The programme will also include **Trois Airs sérieux**, **Pièces de claveçin: Septième ordre** and the **Troisième concert royal**.

*Septième ordre* was written in honour of Mademoiselle de Ménétoü, an aristocratic child prodigy who played music for King Louis XIV, and in 1691, at age twelve, became the youngest female composer to have her works printed. It is a celebration of childlike joy, a series of dances which conjure up images of a carefree life in the shadow of the decadent French court.

Following the afternoon concert, BBC Radio 3 'Record Review' presenter Andrew McGregor will chair a panel discussion on Couperin's works.

The evening programme, **Ombre**, begins with the first suite of **Pièces de Viole**, followed by more keyboard works in **Les idées heureuses** and **La Garnier**. The day will culminate in a performance of **Trois Leçons de Tenebres** by candlelight.



Marking Couperin Le Grand's 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Rousset will also tour to Genoa's Teatro Carlo Felice and Reggio Emilia's Teatro Valli, and will also complete the discography of the composer's chamber music with **Pièces de Viole** and **Les Nations**.

## **Christophe Rousset**

### **Harpichordist, Conductor and Musicologist**

Founder of the period instrument ensemble Les Talens Lyriques, Christophe Rousset is an inspirational musician and conductor specialising in the baroque and classical repertoire. Particularly inspired by European music of the 17th and 18th centuries, Rousset has rediscovered forgotten operas such as *Antigona* by Traetta, *La Capricciosa Corretta* by Martin y Soler, *Armida Abbandonata* by Jommelli, *La Grotta di Trofonio* by Salieri and *Temistocle* by Jean-Christien Bach.

His many recordings include the complete harpsichord works of François Couperin, Jean-Philippe Rameau, d'Anglebert and Forqueray, and his interpretations of works by J. S. Bach (*Partitas*, *Goldberg Variations*, Harpsichord Concertos, *English Suites*, *French Suites*, *Klavierbüchlein für Wilhelm Friedemann*, *Well-tempered Clavier* are regarded as references. With his ensemble Les Talens Lyriques, his great successes on disc include Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*, Mozart's *Mitridate*, several operas including most recently Rameau's *Zais* and Salieri's *Les Danaïdes* as well as many critically acclaimed recordings of operas by Lully including *Persée*, *Roland*, *Bellérophon*, *Phaeton*, *Amadis* and *Armide*. Christophe Rousset has received honorary awards from the French government for his pioneering efforts work in classical music.



### **Les Talens Lyriques**

The vocal and instrumental ensemble Les Talens Lyriques was founded in 1991 by Christophe Rousset. By choosing the name, the conductor attested to his passionate interest in an 18th century music repertoire which he has fortunately begun to re-introduce to the public. Rousset, however, has in no way neglected composers of the previous century.

The repertoire ranges from Monteverdi (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*) to Handel (*Scipione*, *Riccardo Primo*, *Rinaldo*, *Admeto*, *Giulio Cesare*, *Serse*, *Tamerlano*, *Alcina*, *Ariodante*), Lully (*Persée*, *Roland*, *Bellérophon*, *Phaeton*, *Amadis*, *Armide*), Cimarosa (*Il Mercato di Malmantile*, *Il Matrimonio Segreto*), Traetta (*Antigona*, *Ippolito ed Aricia*), Jommelli (*Armida abbandonata*), Martin y Soler (*La Capricciosa Corretta*) and even Mozart (*Mitridate*, *Re di Ponto*).

Les Talens Lyriques has recorded for DECCA (Universal Music), Naïve, Ambrosie, Aparté and Virgin Classics. In 1994, the ensemble has realised the original soundtrack of the film *Farinelli il Castrato*. In 2001, it won the Classical Music Victory.

Les Talens Lyriques are supported by the **Ministry of Culture and Communication** and the **City of Paris**. In addition, the ensemble is grateful for the generous support of the **Annenberg Foundation / GRoW - Gregory and Regina Annenberg Weingarten** and the **Friends of the Cercle des Mécènes**.

**For more information on any of the above, please contact:**

**Nicky Thomas Media**

**101 Bell Street, London NW1 6TL**

**+44 (0)20 3714 7594 | +44 (0)20 7258 0909**

[info@nickythomasmedia.com](mailto:info@nickythomasmedia.com)

[www.nickythomasmedia.com](http://www.nickythomasmedia.com)