

THE MUSIC OF THE ROYAL COURT OF LOUIS XIV

Christophe Rousset & Les Talens Lyriques celebrate Couperin's
350th anniversary with a tour of North America, Canada, and
Mexico

FROM LIGHT TO DARKNESS
& SHADOW AND LIGHT



COUPERIN ANNIVERSARY TOUR

9 October 2018

Mexico University (UNAM), Mexico City

11 October 2018

Colburn School, Los Angeles

12 October 2018

San Diego Early Music Society, La Jolla

14 October 2018

Boston Early Music Festival

16 October 2018

Morgan Library, New York

18 October 2018

Library of Congress, Washington

20 October 2018

Salle Bourgie, Montreal

Marking **François Couperin's 350th anniversary**, **Christophe Rousset** and **Les Talens Lyriques** celebrate the music of the royal court of Versailles with a **tour of the US, Mexico and Canada in October 2019**. **Christophe Rousset** is a leading figure in performances of music of the French Court, and has frequently championed the work of Lully, Couperin, and Rameau, with 25 years of critically-acclaimed performances and recordings.

Two complimentary programmes – ***From Light to Darkness*** and ***Shadow and Light*** – with a chamber ensemble of **Amel Brahim-Djelloul, Eugenie Warnier, Gilone Gaubert-Jacques** and **Mikko Perkola**, will tour to **Mexico City, Los Angeles, San Diego Early Music Festival, Boston Early Music Festival, the Morgan Library** in

New York and the **Washington Library of Congress**, before ending in **Montreal** on **20th October**.

In a programme titled ***From Light to Darkness***, Christophe Rousset and Les Talens Lyriques will explore dualities in Couperin's works, evoking both the splendor and colour of the French court and the tensions and religious beliefs that lay beneath it. King Louis XIV is better known today as the Sun King, and Christophe Rousset and Les Talens Lyriques revive the same imagery from Couperin's world in their programme. The Sun King cultivated a foundation of artistic excellence at the Palace of Versailles. As the symbol and seat of a triumphant monarchy, Versailles was as much a political phenomenon as an artistic one. In a society where the outward show of the king was closely linked to the image of a god, in particular Orpheus, all the arts were harnessed to project the glory of Louis XIV's reign. Music was used to impress visiting nobles and impart the splendour of French culture to them. As Rousset explains:

"Listening to Couperin's music calls for close attention: it does not offer up its secrets 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".

Born into one of the best-known musical families in Europe, **François Couperin** (1668-1733) was inspired by the Italian composer Corelli and much of his music mixes between Italian and French styles. His compositions fit perfectly into Les Talens Lyriques season theme, 'The Temptation of Italy', which explores Italian influences on French Baroque writing.

Couperin spent much of his life in the Chapelle Royale, working under King Louis XIV after succeeding his teacher Thomelin as organist there. His third ***Concert Royal*** was written for the French Court, and was actually intended for listening more than dancing, written while chamber music was experiencing a particular vogue. The prelude and a succession of dances conjure up images of a carefree life in the shadow of the decadent French court: they represent the 'light' in Rousset's programme. Also representing the 'light' are two pieces – ***La Ménéteau*** and ***Les Amusements*** – from Couperin's *Second livre de pieces de clavecin*, a copy of which was owned and highly regarded by Couperin's more celebrated contemporary, J. S. Bach.



intertwining with ornaments and dissonances, is regarded as one of the undisputed peaks of baroque vocal music.

The 'darkness' in both programmes by Les Talens Lyriques is found in three pieces composed by Couperin for Holy Week in 1714, his ***Leçons de Ténèbres du Mercredi Saint***. Intertwining politics and religion, King Louis XIV reigned for so long that he soon saw references to the 'Lord' as references to himself and his monarchy of absolute power. The final *Leçon*, with both voices

Appearing in Montreal, ***Shadow and Light*** is a specially-extended version of *From Light to Darkness*, and Les Talens Lyriques will perform twice in one day, exploring 'darkness' in the afternoon concert and 'light' after the sun has set. Rousset is accompanied on the tour by a chamber ensemble of singers and strings, including sopranos **Amel Brahimi-**

Djelloul and **Eugénie Warnier**, violinist **Gilone Gaubert-Jacques** and gambist **Mikko Perkola**.

Christophe Rousset aspires to help the lesser-known repertoire of the Couperin family be discovered outside of Europe. Les Talens Lyriques will release **three discs** of music by François Couperin over the coming season, including **Les Nations, Les Concerts royaux**, and a Christmas recording: **Aimez-vous Couperin ?** (*Do you like Couperin?*) on the label **Aparté**. From the wider Couperin family, they release a further disc of music by Louis Couperin, uncle to François: **Pièces de clavicin**.

FULL LISTINGS

9 October 2018

Mexico University (UNAM), Auditorio San Ildesfonso, Mexico City

11 October 2018, 7:30pm

Colburn School, Los Angeles

12 October 2018, 7:30pm

San Diego Early Music Society, La Jolla

14 October 2018, 4:00pm

Boston Early Music Festival

16 October 2018, 7:30pm

Morgan Library, New York

18 October 2018, 8:00pm

Library of Congress, Washington

COUPERIN ANNIVERSARY – FROM LIGHT TO DARKNESS

François Couperin *Concerts royaux* – Troisième Concert

François Couperin *La Ménétoü & Les Amusements*

François Couperin *Pièces de viole* – Première Suite

François Couperin *Leçons de Ténèbres du Mercredi Saint*

Amel Brahim-Djelloul *soprano I*

Eugénie Warnier *soprano II*

Gilone Gaubert-Jacques *violon*

Mikko Perkola *viola de gamba*

Christophe Rousset *director, organ & harpsichord*

20 October 2018

Salle Bourgie, Montreal

COUPERIN ANNIVERSARY – SHADOW AND LIGHT

Shadow, 2:00pm

François Couperin *Première Suite* – *Pièces de viole*

François Couperin *Les Idées heureuses*

François Couperin *Les Ombres errantes*

François Couperin *Leçons de Ténèbres du Mercredi saint*

Light, 7:30pm

François Couperin *Les Goûts réunis* – Septième Concert

François Couperin *Trois Airs sérieux*

François Couperin *Second Livre de pièces de clavecin*

François Couperin *Concerts royaux* – Troisième Concert

Amel Brahim-Djelloul *soprano I*

Eugénie Warnier *soprano II*

Gilone Gaubert-Jacques *violon*

Mikko Perkola *viola de gamba*

Christophe Rousset *director, organ & harpsichord*

Christophe Rousset Harpsichordist, Conductor, Musicologist



The founder of the ensemble Les Talens Lyriques and internationally recognised harpsichordist Christophe Rousset is a musician and conductor inspired by a passion for opera and the rediscovery of the European musical heritage.

His studies (harpsichord) with Huguette Dreyfus at the Schola Cantorum in Paris, then with Bob van Asperen at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague

(winning the coveted First Prize in the Seventh Bruges International Harpsichord Competition at the age of twenty-two), followed by the creation of his own ensemble, Les Talens Lyriques, in 1991, have enabled Christophe Rousset to obtain a perfect grasp of the richness and diversity of the Baroque, Classical and pre-Romantic repertoires.

Christophe Rousset is now invited to appear with Les Talens Lyriques all over Europe (Opéra National de Paris, Opéra Comique, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Philharmonie de Paris, Opéra Royal de Versailles, Dutch National Opera, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Lausanne Opéra, Teatro Real Madrid, Vienna Staatsoper and Theater an der Wien, Théâtre Royal de La Monnaie and Bozar in Brussels, London's Wigmore Hall and Barbican Centre, and so on), as well as on tour in other parts of the world (Mexico, New Zealand, Canada, United States, etc.).

At the same time he continues to pursue an active career as a harpsichordist and chamber musician, playing and recording on some of the world's finest period instruments. His recordings of the harpsichord works of Louis and François Couperin, Rameau, D'Anglebert, Royer, Duphly, Forqueray, Balbastre and Scarlatti, and those devoted to J. S. Bach (Partitas, Goldberg Variations, Harpsichord Concertos, English Suites, French Suites, *Klavierbüchlein für Wilhelm Friedemann*, Well-Tempered Clavier) are regarded as references.

Teaching is of paramount importance to Christophe Rousset, who organises and gives many master-classes and academies (Paris Conservatoire CNSM, Ambronay, Fondation Royaumont, Operastudio Vlaanderen-Ghent, OFJ Baroque, Junge Deutsche Philharmonie-Berlin, Accademia Chigiana-Siena, Amici della Musica in Florence, Britten-Pears Orchestra at Snape Maltings) and, together with members of Les Talens Lyriques, plays an active part in introducing young secondary school students in Paris and the Île-de-France to music.

Christophe Rousset also appears regularly as a guest conductor: Liceu Barcelona, San Carlo Naples, La Scala Milan, Opéra Royal de Wallonie, London's Royal Opera House, Orquesta Nacional de España, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Orchestre du Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, etc.

He is active too in the field of research and writing, through critical editions, the publication of monographs devoted to Jean-Philippe Rameau and François Couperin (Actes Sud, 2007 and 2016, respectively).

2017 saw the publication of a series of interviews by Camille de Rijck in which Christophe Rousset shares his thoughts on music: *L'impression que l'instrument chante*, Éditions de la Cité de la Musique - Philharmonie de Paris (La rue musicale - Entretiens).

Christophe Rousset is a Knight of the French Legion of Honour, a Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters, and a Knight of the National Order of Merit.

Les Talens Lyriques



The ensemble Les Talens Lyriques, which takes its name from the subtitle of Jean-Philippe Rameau's opera *Les Fêtes d'Hébé* (1739), was formed in 1991 by the harpsichordist and conductor Christophe Rousset.

Championing a broad vocal and instrumental repertoire, ranging from early Baroque to the beginnings of Romanticism, the musicians of Les Talens Lyriques aim to throw light on the great masterpieces of musical history, while providing

perspective by presenting rarer or little known works that are important as missing links in the European musical heritage. This musicological and editorial work, which contributes to its renown, is a priority for the ensemble.

Les Talens Lyriques perform to date works by Monteverdi (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, *L'Orfeo*), Cavalli (*La Didone*, *La Calisto*), Landi (*La Morte d'Orfeo*), Handel (*Scipione*, *Riccardo Primo*, *Rinaldo*, *Admeto*, *Giulio Cesare*, *Serse*, *Arianna in Creta*, *Tamerlano*, *Ariodante*, *Semele*, *Alcina*), Lully (*Persée*, *Roland*, *Bellérophon*, *Phaéton*, *Amadis*, *Armide*, *Alceste*), Desmarest (*Vénus et Adonis*), Mondonville (*Les Fêtes de Paphos*), Cimarosa (*Il Mercato di Malmantile*, *Il Matrimonio segreto*), Traetta (*Antigona*, *Ippolito ed Aricia*), Jommelli (*Armida abbandonata*), Martin y Soler (*La Capricciosa corretta*, *Il Tutore burlato*), Mozart (*Mitridate*, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, *Così fan tutte*, *Die Zauberflöte*), Salieri (*La Grotta di Trofonio*, *Les Danaïdes*, *Les Horaces*, *Tarare*), Rameau (*Zoroastre*, *Castor et Pollux*, *Les Indes galantes*, *Platée*, *Pygmalion*), Gluck (*Bauci e Filemone*, *Alceste*), Beethoven, Cherubini (*Médée*), García (*Il Califfo di Bagdad*), Berlioz, Massenet, Gounod (*Faust*) and Saint-Saëns.

The re-creation of these works goes hand in hand with close collaboration with stage directors and choreographers such as Pierre Audi, Jean-Marie Villégier, David McVicar, Eric Vigner, Ludovic Lagarde, Mariame Clément, Jean-Pierre Vincent, Macha Makeïeff, Laura Scozzi, Natalie van Parys, Marcial di Fonzo Bo, Claus Guth, Robert Carsen, David Hermann, Christof Loy, Jetske Mijnsen, Alban Richard and David Lescot.

As well as opera, Les Talens Lyriques explore other musical genres: madrigal, cantata, air de cour, symphonies, and the vast corpus of sacred music (masses, motets, oratorios, *Leçons de Ténèbres*, and so on). In formations varying from a handful of musicians to more than sixty, representing every generation, they give performances all over the world.

In 2018-2019 Les Talens Lyriques return to their first love, with a season entitled "The Temptation of Italy". Vocality will be celebrated in works ranging from masterpieces by Monteverdi, Purcell, Handel (*Agrippina*) and Mozart (*La Betulia liberata*) to rarely heard or unpublished scores by Legrenzi (*La Divisione del mondo*), Salieri (*Tarare*), Leo and Porpora. After celebrating Telemann in 2017, the ensemble will be acting as François Couperin's representative abroad when they take his music to the American continent for the 350th anniversary of the composer's birth. "Couperin Year" will also be celebrated with recordings: *Les Nations* and the *Concerts Royaux* are to be released (in autumn and in December, respectively) on the Aparté label.

Les Talens Lyriques recorded the famous soundtrack for Gérard Corbiau's film *Farinelli* (1994), which sold over a million copies. The ensemble now has a discography comprising some sixty references, on various labels (Erato, Fnac Music, Auvidis, Decca, Naïve, Ambrosia, Virgin Classics, Outhere and Aparté). This season, it will conclude the cycle of French operas by Salieri with the release of *Les Horaces* in September 2018 (Aparté) and the recording of *Tarare* in the autumn (also for Aparté).

Since 2007 the musicians of the ensemble have been working to introduce schoolchildren to music, via a programme of ambitious artistic actions and innovative educational initiatives. They are in residence in schools in Paris and Île-de-France, where they have created a student orchestra with young secondary school pupils and a small choir ("Le petit chœur des Talens"). The three *t@lenschool* educational applications, downloadable free of charge, have met with much enthusiasm and have received several national and international awards.

The ensemble Les Talens Lyriques receives subsidies from the French Ministry of Culture and Communication and the City of Paris, and generous support from its Circle of

Patrons. The ensemble wishes to thank its principal Patrons, the Annenberg Foundation / GRoW - Gregory and Regina Annenberg Weingarten, and Madame Aline Foriel-Destezet.

Since 2011 Les Talens Lyriques have been associate artists, in residence at the Singer-Polignac Foundation in Paris. Les Talens Lyriques are founding members of FEVIS (Federation of Specialised Vocal and Instrumental Ensembles) and of PROFEDIM (Professional Union of Music Producers, Festivals, Ensembles, and Independent Distributors).



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