

## L'Orgue Historique de Roquemaure-du-Gard

Achévé de construire en 1690 par les frères Jullien, l'orgue de Roquemaure-du-Gard est un exceptionnel témoin d'une facture beaucoup plus ancienne: la facture Renaissance.

La preuve en est l'unique progression de diamètres qui régit respectivement les tuyaux ouverts et les tuyaux bouchés. Autre fait important, pendant les années qui ont suivi sa construction, l'instrument n'a pas eu à subir les modifications qu'auraient pu lui infliger les organiers de l'Ecole de Paris. Cet orgue au clavier unique permet, avec des moyens somme toute modestes, de jouer du 16-pieds et, grâce à ses jeux coupés, offre à l'organiste la possibilité d'y interpréter des pièces nécessitant deux claviers.

Relevé avec un talent incomparable en 1969 par Pierre Chéron qui, après un important travail de recherche, reclassa tous les tuyaux mélangés à plusieurs reprises aux XIX<sup>e</sup> et XX<sup>e</sup> siècles, cet orgue de par la clarté et la finesse de ses timbres, offre à l'auditeur une polyphonie d'une rare transparence.

Ce sont ces qualités multiples et ces sonorités exceptionnelles qui nous ont conduits à choisir l'orgue de Roquemaure pour concerner avec Jacqueline Nicolas dans ces délicats Motets de Nivers.

## The Historical Organ of Roquemaure-du-Gard, France

Completed in 1690 by the Jullien brothers, the organ of Roquemaure-du-Gard is an exceptional example of a more ancient Renaissance-type construction.

It has the same progression of diameters which govern, respectively, the open and stopped pipes. Furthermore, in the years which followed its construction, it did not suffer any alteration which could have been made by the Paris School of organ builders. In spite of modest means (there is only one manual) it is nevertheless possible to play sixteen-feet and, due to its divided stops, the organist can interpret pieces which normally require two manuals. It was restored with incomparable talent in 1969 by Pierre Chéron who, after much research, reclassified all the pipes that had been interchanged at various times throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Its clarity and finesse of tone contribute to its rare and transparent polyphony.

Its qualities and exceptional sonorities have incited us to choose the Roquemaure organ to accompany Jacqueline Nicolas in these fine Nivers's Motets.

Composition de l'orgue / Specification of the organ: Montre: 8'; Prestant: 4'; Doublette: 2'; Fourniture: 2 rangs; Cymbale: 3 rangs; Bourdon: 8'; Flûte: 4'; Nasard: 2 2/3; Tierce: 1 3/5; Cornet: 5 rangs; Trompette: 8'; Flûte: 16'; Bombarde: 16'.



GUILLAUME GABRIEL  
**NIVERS**

1632 - 1714

**MOTETS  
POUR VOIX SEULE  
& PETIT CHOEUR  
PIECES D'ORGUE**

**JACQUELINE NICOLAS**  
SOPRANO

**FRANÇOIS-HENRI HOUBART**  
ORGUES HISTORIQUES DE ROQUEMAURE



# GUILLAUME GABRIEL NIVERS

1632 - 1714

## MOTETS

POUR VOIX SEULE & PETIT CHOËUR  
FOR SOPRANO & SMALL CHOIR

## PIÈCES D'ORGUE ORGAN WORKS

JACQUELINE NICOLAS

Soprano

MARIE-PIERRE FANJAT

Soprano 2

SYLVIE MALARDENTI

BÉNÉDICTE BORALY

NATHALIE MARÉCHAL

Petit Chœur

Small Choir

FRANÇOIS-HENRI HOUBART

Orgues Historiques de

Historical Organ of

Roquemaure-du-Gard

1 SUITE DU 6<sup>e</sup> TON DU 1<sup>er</sup> LIVRE  
Prélude, Fugue, Duo (3'38)

2 MOTET A LA SAINTE VIERGE POUR LE TEMPS DE PAQUES  
O Filii et Filiae (7'39)

3 SUITE DU 6<sup>e</sup> TON DU 1<sup>er</sup> LIVRE  
Cromorne, Basse de Trompette, Cornet, Grand jeu (4'32)

4 MOTET POUR L'ÉLÉVATION  
O Frumentum (2'16)

5 MOTET POUR LE SAINT SACREMENT  
Quis Mihi Det (4'51)

6 SUITE DU 4<sup>e</sup> TON DU 3<sup>e</sup> LIVRE  
Prélude, Fugue, Récit, Duo, Basse (5'25)

7 MOTET DU TEMPS DE CARÊME POUR LE SAINT SACREMENT  
Obsecro (2'58)

8 MOTET DU TEMPS DE NOËL POUR LE SAINT SACREMENT  
Descendit de Coelis (3'53)

9 MOTET FINAL DE TOUT OFFICE POUR LE ROY  
Domine Salvum Fac Regem (1'18)

10 SUITE DU 4<sup>e</sup> TON DU 3<sup>e</sup> LIVRE  
Echo, Dialogue, Fugue grave, Récit, Duo, Basse, Cornet,  
Dialogue à deux chœurs (11'49)

11 LITANIES A LA VIERGE MARIE (15'42)

12 SUITE DU 6<sup>e</sup> TON DU 1<sup>er</sup> LIVRE  
Plein Jeu (1'26)

Guillaume Gabriel Nivers naît à Paris en 1632 et meurt en 1714. Après la théologie, il étudie la musique avec Henry Du Mont et le clavecin avec Chambonnières. Il devient organiste à Saint-Sulpice en 1654. Afin de pourvoir les quatre postes d'organiste de la Chapelle Royale, un concours est organisé en 1678. Il est alors nommé organiste du Roy avec Le Begue, Thomelin et Buterne. En 1687, il accède au poste d'Organiste et Maître de la Musique de la Maison Royale de Saint-Louis, à Saint-Cyr.

L'institution de Saint-Cyr, protégée par Madame de Maintenon, accueillait les jeunes filles nobles et pauvres, afin de leur donner une éducation scientifique, culturelle, mais aussi et surtout religieuse. Elles y apprenaient les sciences, l'arithmétique, les arts et y reçurent une éducation religieuse très sérieuse. Suivant leurs dons, elles étudiaient la broderie, la poésie, la peinture, le théâtre ou la musique. Celles qui avaient une jolie voix travaillaient les cantiques et les motets écrits à leur intention, et pour leur niveau musical, par de nombreux compositeurs fort célèbres à l'époque, comme Moreau, Clérambault ou Nivers. Les Motets de Nivers furent souvent perçus comme "trop tendres" pour ces jeunes filles. Bien que considérés comme simples afin d'être interprétés sans difficulté par ces "amateurs" qu'étaient les jeunes personnes de l'Institution, on remarquera l'ornementation du Récit (soprano solo), ornementation très française (coulés, tremblement, ports de voix, accents) qui ne manque pas de rendre cette musique religieuse tout à fait émouvante, pour ne pas dire même sensuelle. Monsieur de Fénelon et le Duc de Beauvilliers furent du même sentiment que l'évêque de Chartres ; il y avait danger pour les âmes de ces jeunes filles à chanter cette musique et à jouer les pièces de théâtre qui les rendaient de plus en plus orgueilleuses (il ne faut pas oublier qu'Esther fut la première tragédie écrite par Jean Racine pour Saint-Cyr).

Ayant jeté le trouble dans l'esprit de Madame de Maintenon, ils obtinrent que l'Institution devienne un monastère régulier de l'ordre de Saint-Augustin, en 1692, à l'inverse de ce qu'avait désiré Louis XIV. Nivers avait bien du mal à obtenir quelques heures de répétition pour préparer les cérémonies religieuses. "La résolution que vous aviez déterminée (...) que vous ne deviez pas employer à apprendre la musique, ni de nouveaux chants, un temps que vous aviez promis à Dieu de consacrer à l'instruction et l'éducation des pauvres demoiselles auxquelles il ne serait pas moins dangereux qu'à vous de voir souvent ici des maîtres à chanter pour apprendre de nouveaux cantiques..." (Evêque de Chartres).

Les Motets de Nivers apparaissent comme des œuvres très courtes, intimistes, qui étaient chantées par un petit nombre de jeunes filles. Ainsi, Manseau, intendant de la Maison Royale, précise-t-il dans ses mémoires : "On apprend à chanter à celles qui ont de la voix les chants de l'église qui ont été composés particulièrement pour cette maison, ne tenant rien du plain chant ni de la musique".

Dans son recueil de 1689, Nivers compose des motets à une voix, deux voix ou une voix soliste (récit), dialoguant avec un petit chœur à l'unisson. Ils s'intégraient très bien dans l'office par leur courte durée : Communion, Elévation, pour le Saint Sacrement, pour la Vierge, pour le Saint du Jour etc, l'office se terminant toujours par le court motet "Domine Salvum fac Regem", la sortie se faisant ensuite en silence. Au cours de ces offices, l'orgue intervenait également en pièces très courtes à l'instar de ce que nous pouvons entendre sur le présent enregistrement. Aujourd'hui Nivers fait clairement figure de fondateur de l'école d'orgue française, bien qu'un recueil de Louis Couperin, découvert à Londres, il y a quelques années, nous présente un nouvel orgue orienté vers l'homophonie, le rythme de la danse et le phrasé du chant.

Les caractéristiques de l'orgue de Nivers impliquent des registrations très colorées et des timbres tout à fait uniques. On abandonne ainsi l'orgue plus tourné vers une polyphonie continue, comme dans les autres pays d'Europe. Ainsi, une des conditions premières pour restituer cette musique est de bénéficier d'un instrument comportant les jeux nécessaires, sans lesquels elle perd sa raison d'être. Dans les trois recueils d'orgue que composa Nivers en 1665, 1667 et 1675, on peut entendre la sonorité bien particulière des anches du Plein Jeu, du Cornet de Récit, du Cromorne, de la Basse de Trompette, de la Voix Humaine etc.

Le 1<sup>er</sup> Livre d'Orgue (1665) comprend "cent pièces de tous les tons de l'église". Nivers demandait "de marquer distinctement toutes les notes et d'en couler subtilement quelques-unes, (...) de consulter la méthode de chanter, parce qu'en ces rencontres l'orgue doit imiter la voix". Des douze suites de ce recueil, nous avons ici celle du 6<sup>e</sup> ton. Elle débute, comme toutes les autres, par un prélude (sur le plein jeu). Les différents versets de ces suites étaient destinés à alterner avec le chant. Le style nouveau apparaît déjà clairement : fugue en marge de la polyphonie, dialogue et récit qui font appel au solo (cromorne, cornet, trompette) qui font penser à la mélodie vocale et à l'ornementation du clavecin.

Le 3<sup>e</sup> Livre d'Orgue (1675), "sur les huit tons de l'église", comprend 105 compositions regroupées en 8 suites. Celle que nous entendons sur ce disque est celle du 4<sup>e</sup> ton et présente la même architecture que les autres de ce livre, à savoir un diptique : fugue, récit, duo, basse, écho, dialogue pour deux chœurs - fugue grave, récit, duo, basse, dialogue de récit (cornet), dialogue pour deux chœurs.

Nivers a le grand mérite d'avoir établi un modèle de base du livre d'orgue et d'avoir utilisé pleinement toutes les ressources sonores des nouveaux instruments.

Jacqueline Nicolas



Guillaume Gabriel Nivers was born in Paris in 1632 and died there in 1714. After theology, he studied music with Henry Du Mont and the harpsichord with Chambonnières. He became organist at Saint-Sulpice in 1654. A competition was held in 1678, to fill the four posts as organist at the Chapelle Royale. He was thus appointed King's organist with Le Bègue, Thomelin and Buterne. In 1678, he acceded to the post of Organist and Master of Music of the royal House of Saint-Louis, in Saint-Cyr.

The Institution of Saint-Cyr, under the protection of Madame de Maintenon, accommodated impoverished young girls of noble birth, in order to give them a scientific, cultural, and also, above all, a religious education. They were able to learn the sciences, arithmetic, the arts and they received a very serious religious education. According to their gifts, they studied embroidery, poetry, painting, theatre or music. Those who had a pretty voice practised the Hymns and Motets written specially for them, according to their level of attainment, by numerous composers who were very famous at the time, such as Moreau, Clérambault and Nivers. Nivers's Motets were often felt to be "too tender" for these young girls. They are purposely simple -they were, after all, intended to be interpreted without difficulty by "amateurs", the girls at the Institution- but we should note the ornamentation of the *Récit* (soprano solo), a very French ornamentation (slurs, quivering, portamento, inflexions), which makes this religious music extremely moving, even sensual. Monsieur de Fénelon and the Duc de Beauvilliers were of the same opinion as the Bishop of Chartres: the souls of these young girls were in danger when they were singing this sort of music and acting in plays, which were making them more and more proud (we must not forget that Jean Racine's very successful tragedy, "Esther", was written for Saint-Cyr).

Having sown confusion in the mind of Madame de Maintenon, they managed to change the institution into a regular monastery of the order of Saint Augustin, in 1692, contrary to the wishes of Louis XIV. Nivers had great difficulty in obtaining a few hours for rehearsal, to prepare the religious ceremonies. "The resolution you have made (...) not to employ, in the teaching of music or of new songs, the time that you promised God you would devote to the instruction and education of the poor young ladies, for whom it would be no less dangerous than for you to often see here singing masters for the learning of new hymns..." (Bishop of Chartres).

Nivers's Motets are very short, intimist works, that were sung by a small number of girls. Manseau, intendant of the Royal Household, explained in his memoirs: "We teach those who have a good voice to sing church songs, which were composed specially for this house, and have no element of plainsong or of music".

In his anthology of 1689, Nivers composed motets for one voice, two voices or a soloist voice (*Récit*) dialoguing with a small choir in unison. Because they were short, they fitted well into the church service: Communion, Elevation for the Blessed Sacrament, for the Virgin, for a Saint etc; the service always ended with the short motet "Domine Salvum fac Regem", and the congregation then left in silence. During these services, there were also very short organ pieces, like those that can be heard on this recording. Today, Nivers is clearly generally considered to be the founder of the French organ school, though an anthology by Louis Couperin, discovered in London a few years ago, presents us with a new organ that was moving towards homophony, the rhythm of the dance and the phrasing of singing.

The characteristics of Nivers's organ imply very colourful registrations and quite unique timbres. The organ that was more orientated towards continuous polyphony, as in the other countries of Europe, has to be abandoned. One of the first conditions for reconstructing this music is thus to have an instrument with the necessary stops, otherwise it loses its *raison d'être*. In the three organ anthologies that Nivers composed in 1665, 1667 and 1675, we can hear the very particular tone of the reeds of the Full Organ Stop, of the Cornet Stop, the Cromorne Stop, the Bass Trumpet, the Human Voice etc.

The first organ Book (1665) comprises "a hundred pieces for all Church Modes". Nivers asked the player "to clearly emphasise all the notes, and lightly run over some of them (...), to refer to singing methods, because the organ should imitate the voice". Of the twelve suites in this anthology, we have here the one for the 6th Mode. Like all the others, it begins with a prelude (on the full organ stop). The different verses of these suites were intended to alternate with singing. The new style is already clearly visible: a fugue that is almost polyphony, dialogue and *récit* that call for a solo (cromorne, cornet, trumpet), which are reminiscent of the vocal melody and the ornamentation of the harpsichord.

The 3rd Organ Book (1675), "for the eight Church Modes", consists of 105 compositions, grouped into eight suites. The one we hear on this record is the one for the 4th mode, and is the same structurally as the other ones in the book, i.e. a diptych: fugue, *récit*, duet, bass, echo, dialogue for two choirs - fugue, grave, *récit*, duet, bass, *récit*, dialogue (cornet), dialogue for two choirs.

Nivers has the great merit of having established a basic model for the organ book and of having made full use of all the possibilities of sound that the new instruments had to offer.

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