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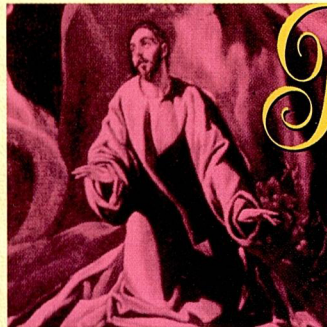
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Deux motets

« Laudate Dominum »
« Miserere mei Deus »



NICOLAS
BERNIER

1664
1734

Isabelle Poulenard • Alain Zaepffel
Jean-Claude Orliac • Michel Verschaeve
Ensemble Vocal de Bourgogne
Ensemble d'Instruments Anciens
Direction : Jacques Échivard

NICOLAS BERNIER

Nicolas Bernier stands out as one of the most remarkable composers in a remarkable period—that of the late 17th and early 18th century. It was then that a quite new musical flowering appeared in France, spreading out thanks to the combined inspirations of the most brilliant of the French and Italian schools. A special charm sprang from the individual reactions of musicians who broke with their usual compositional techniques and habits. Their inspiration could play around with former limits concerning the permitted styles and colours. They could amuse themselves with a discovery either by touching lightly on it or else by insisting on its novelty. This newly acquired liberty was not without risks: a bridle around the neck encouraged a tendency to be disparate. But a new charm came even from these inconveniences: that of somewhat naive enthusiasm of discovery, like a communicative gaiety.

Music flourished in Europe at that time, with names such as Purcell, Lalande, Grigny, Des-touches, Jean-Féry Rebel, Dieupart and François Couperin, and the following generation included Rameau, Bach, Domenico Scarlatti and Handel.

Bernier was a contemporary of 'the great' Couperin. His baptismal certificate tells us that he was born in 1664 at Mantes-la-Jolie (probably in the Rue du Cloître Notre-Dame). From then onwards, no records are known either of his childhood or

LAUDATE DOMINUM (PSAUME 147)

1 LAUDATE DOMINUM

Récit ténor et petit chœur

Laudate Dominum, quoniam bonus est psalmus. Deo nostro sit jucunda, sit decora laudatio.

2 AEDIFICANS JERUSALEM

Chœur

Aedificans Jerusalem Dominus dispersiones Israelis congregabit.

3 QUI SANAT CONTRITOS CORDE

Récit soprano

Qui sanat contritos corde et alliga contritiones eorum, qui numera multitudinem stellarum et omnibus eis nomina vocat.

4 MAGNUS DOMINUS

Trio haute-contre, ténor, baryton

Magnus Dominus et magna virtus ejus et sapientiae ejus non est numerus.

5 SUSPICIENS MANSUETOS DOMINUS

Récit baryton

Suspiciens mansuetos Dominus, humilians autem peccatores usque ad terram.

6 PRECINITE DOMINO

Chœur, ténor, et duo haute-contre, baryton

Precinite Domino in confessione, psallite Deo nostro in Cythara, qui operit caelum

LAUDATE DOMINUM (PSAUME 147)

LAUDATE DOMINUM

Récit ténor et petit chœur

Louez le Seigneur puisque le chant est bon. À notre Dieu, que la louange soit agréable et appropriée.

AEDIFICANS JERUSALEM

Chœur

En construisant Jérusalem, le Seigneur rassemblera Israël dispersé.

QUI SANAT CONTRITOS CORDE

Récit soprano

Il guérit ceux dont le cœur est accablé et bande leurs blessures. Il compte la multitude des étoiles et donne à toutes un nom.

MAGNUS DOMINUS

Trio haute-contre, ténor, baryton

Grand est le Seigneur et grande est sa vertu, et sa sagesse ne se mesure pas.

SUSPICIENS MANSUETOS DOMINUS

Récit baryton

Le Seigneur soutient les doux de cœur mais abaisse les pêcheurs jusqu'à terre.

PRECINITE DOMINO

Chœur, ténor, et duo haute-contre, baryton

Chantez le Seigneur en signe de reconnaissance. Jouez pour notre Dieu sur la

LAUDATE DOMINUM (PSALM 147)

LAUDATE DOMINUM

Tenor and small chorus

Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely.

AEDIFICANS JERUSALEM

Chorus

The Lord doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.

QUI SANAT CONTRITOS CORDE

Soprano

He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.

MAGNUS DOMINUS

Countertenor, tenor, baritone

Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite.

SUSPICIENS MANSUETOS DOMINUS

Baritone

The Lord lifeth up the meek; he casteth the wicked down to the ground.

PRECINITE DOMINO

Chorus, tenor, and countertenor, baritone duet

Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God: who covereth the

his education, musical or otherwise. He is thought to have studied in Italy, but that, too, remains shrouded in mystery. We do know, however, that he was auditioned in November 1693, at the age of twenty-nine, for the position of maître de musique at Rouen cathedral, but he was unsuccessful. In 1694 he was appointed to a similar position at Chartres cathedral, where he remained for four years. He then returned to Paris, where he took up the duties of maître de musique at St Germain l'Auxerrois in 1698. In 1704 he succeeded Marc-Antoine Charpentier at the Sainte-Chapelle. He made a fine contribution to the excellent Nuits de Sceaux (a series of musical festivities organised by the Duchesse du Maine), in the form of a book of cantatas, bearing the same name and dedicated to the duchess. Later, he was recommended to Louis XV by Lalande to succeed him as sous-maître at the king's chapel at Versailles. Bernier shared the position with his friends André Campra and Charles-Hubert Gervais.

We know relatively little about Bernier's private life, other than that he was friends with Antoine Forqueray and Marin Marais, whose daughter he married in 1712. His life was one of hard work but he was comfortably off. He enjoyed a resounding success; he had a school of great renown, with many pupils, including the future organist and composer Louis-Claude Daquin (1694-1772).

Bernier's known output includes twelve grands motets, forty-six petits motets and about the same number of cantatas, songs and a treatise entitled

nubibus et parat terrae pluvium ; qui producit in montibus faenum et herbam servituti hominum ; qui dat jumentis escam ipsorum et pullis corvorum invocantibus eum.

7] NON IN FORTITUDINE

Récit baryton

Non in fortitudine equi voluntatem habebit, nec in tibiis viri bene placitum erit ei.

8] BENE PLACITUM EST

Chœur

Bene placitum est Domino super timentes eum et in eis qui sperant super misericordia ejus.

MISERERE MEI DEUS (PSAUME 57)

9] MISERERE MEI DEUS

Récit baryton

Miserere mei Deus quoniam in te confidit anima mea et in umbra alarum tuarum sperabo donec manserit iniquitas.

cithare, lui qui recouvre les cieux de nuées et prépare la pluie pour la terre ; lui qui fait pousser le foin sur les monts et l'herbe au service des hommes ; qui donne au bétail sa nourriture et aux petits des corbeaux qui l'appellent.

NON IN FORTITUDINE

Récit baryton

Il n'aura pas de bienveillance pour la force du cheval et les jarrets de l'homme ne lui plairont pas.

BENE PLACITUM EST

Chœur

Le Seigneur aime ceux qui le craignent et ceux qui espèrent en sa miséricorde.

MISERERE MEI DEUS (PSAUME 57)

MISERERE MEI DEUS

Récit baryton

Aie pitié de moi, Seigneur, puisque mon âme a confiance en toi. Et à l'ombre de tes ailes, j'espérerai jusqu'à ce que mon iniquité disparaisse.

heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains. He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.

NON IN FORTITUDINE

Baritone

He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man.

BENE PLACITUM EST

Chorus

The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.

MISERERE MEI DEUS (PSALM 57)

MISERERE MEI DEUS

Baritone

Be merciful unto me, O God, for my soul trusteth in thee: in the shadow of thy wings I will make my refuge until these calamities be overpast.

Principes de composition de Mr Bernier which exists only in manuscript form. The works presented here are two grands motets, the manuscripts of which are in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris: *Laudate Dominum*, under classification mark H 470, and *Miserere mei Deus*, H 474.

Bernier's motets were very popular in Italy. Some of his compatriots found him somewhat 'aloof' in his musical language, however; but we must not forget that at that time, in France at least, people were not always prepared to hear and understand true counterpoint with its independent parts, its fugal entries, canons etc. This lack of understanding was expressed a generation later by a so-called musician by the name of Jean-Jacques Rousseau: 'I therefore conclude [...] that any type of music which uses several simultaneous melodies is bad [...]. It makes us realise the value of those marvellous pieces in which one tune serves as accompaniment to another.' (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de Musique*, in the article entitled 'Unité de mélodie').

Modern music lovers will appreciate the wealth and variety that is to be found in these pieces. The music is skilfully and finely blended with the text. The composer brings it to life with a language in which the art of counterpoint never detracts from the profound expressiveness of the biblical words. This is particularly remarkable in the grands chœurs (which are often highly developed), whose nobleness and balance prefigure the works of Rameau

Antoine GEOFFROY-DECHAUME
Translated by Mary PARDOE

10 CLAMABO AD DEUM

Chœur

Clamabo ad Deum altissimum qui benefecit mihi. Misit de coelo et liberavit me. Dedit in opprobrium conculcantes me.

11 MISIT DEUS MISERICORDIAM

Récit haute-contre

Misit Deus misericordiam tuam et veritatem tuam et eri puit animam meam de medio catulorum leonum. Dormivi conturbatus.

12 FILII HOMINUM

Chœur

Filii hominum dentes eorum arma et sagittae et lingua eorum gladius acutus.

13 PARATUM COR MEUM

Récit soprano

Paratum cor meum, Deus. Cantabo et psallum dicam.

14 EXURGE GLORIA MEA

Récit soprano et petit chœur

Exurge gloria mea, exurge psalterium et cythara. Exurgam diluculo. Confitebor tibi in Populis Domine et psallum dicam tibi in gentibus, quoniam magnificata est usque ad coelos misericordia tua et usque ad nubes veritas tua.

15 EXALTARE SUPER COELOS

Chœur

Exaltare super coelos, Deus, et super omnem terram gloria tua.

CLAMABO AD DEUM

Chœur

Je crierai vers le Dieu très haut qui m'a été bienveillant. Il a envoyé quelqu'un du ciel et m'a libéré. Il a mis dans l'opprobre ceux qui me maltraitaient.

MISIT DEUS MISERICORDIAM

Récit haute-contre

Dieu a envoyé sa miséricorde et sa vérité et il a arraché mon âme aux jeunes lions. Je me suis endormi dans l'inquiétude.

FILII HOMINUM

Chœur

Les fils des hommes, leurs dents sont des armes et des flèches, et leur langue est une épée acérée.

PARATUM COR MEUM

Récit soprano

Mon cœur est prêt, mon Dieu. Je chanterai et je dirai un cantique.

EXURGE GLORIA MEA

Récit soprano et petit chœur

Éveille-toi, ma gloire. Éveillez-vous, harpe et cithare. Que je m'éveille à l'aurore. Je te célébrerai parmi les peuples, Seigneur, et je chanterai pour toi un cantique dans le pays parce que ta miséricorde est glorifiée jusqu'aux cieux et jusqu'aux nues ta vérité.

EXALTARE SUPER COELOS

Chœur

Dieu, élève-toi sur les cieux et sur toute la terre ta gloire.

CLAMABO AD DEUM

Chorus

I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me. He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up.

MISIT DEUS MISERICORDIAM

Countertenor

God shall send forth his mercy and his truth. My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them...

FILII HOMINUM

Chorus

The sons of men whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.

PARATUM COR MEUM

Soprano

My heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise.

EXURGE GLORIA MEA

Soprano and small chorus

Awake up, my glory; awake psalter and harp: I myself will awake early. I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations. For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and they truth unto the clouds.

EXALTARE SUPER COELOS

Chorus

Be thou exalted. O God, above the heavens: let thy glory be above all the earth.

ENSEMBLE VOCAL DE BOURGOGNE

L'Ensemble Vocal de Bourgogne, fondé en 1971 par Bernard Tétu, est dirigé depuis 1980 par Jacques Échivard. Il regroupe une quarantaine de chanteurs de la région (Dijon, Beaune, Chalon-sur-Saône, Le Creusot). Dès 1975, il remporte le Premier Grand Prix des Rencontres internationales de chant choral de Tours. Depuis sa création, il n'a cessé de s'affirmer comme acteur essentiel de la vie musicale régionale.

Plusieurs directions de travail expliquent la diversité de ses activités :

- l'approfondissement de la formation vocale et musicale des choristes pour aborder les styles les plus variés
- la recherche de répertoire peu connu, voire inédit comme par exemple les *Motets* de Nicolas Bernier
- la redécouverte du *Cancionero de Uppsala*, chef-d'œuvre de la Renaissance espagnole, donné au Festival Estival de Paris en 1987
- la collaboration avec des formations et des artistes de haut niveau (tels que l'Ensemble Baroque de Nice, Georges Pludermacher, Henri Ledroit, Catherine Dubosc, Jean-Paul Fouchécourt...)
- l'ouverture vers d'autres formes d'expression artistique : danse et théâtre (en 1994-1995, création du spectacle musical Shakespeare-Purcell «La Nuit des Rois» en

collaboration avec le Grenier de Bourgogne et le Centre Dramatique de la Courneuve, et qui donna lieu à une tournée régionale et à 25 représentations au Festival d'Avignon en 1996).

Plusieurs de leurs prestations ont été retransmises sur les ondes de France Musique ou France Culture.

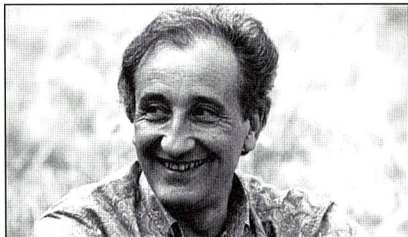


Photo Marie-Claude Bouter

JACQUES ÉCHIVARD

Jacques Échivard est né à Dijon. Parallèlement à une formation scientifique universitaire qui le conduit à l'agrégation, il effectue ses études musicales au Conservatoire de Région de Dijon (Premier Prix d'éducation musicale et d'harmonie) et à l'École Nationale de Musique de Chalon-sur-Saône (Prix d'analyse dans la classe de Camille Roy). Après avoir travaillé la direction d'orchestre auprès de Jean-Sébastien Béreau à Strasbourg, Jacques Échivard a poursuivi sa formation au Chœur de l'Opéra de Paris, au Chœur de l'Orchestre de Paris et auprès de Philippe Herreweghe. Depuis 1987, il est chef de chœur agréé par le Ministère de la Culture.

ENSEMBLE VOCAL DE BOURGOGNE (Vocal Ensemble of Burgundy)

The Ensemble Vocal de Bourgogne, which was founded in 1971 by Bernard Tétu, has been conducted since 1980 by Jacques Échivard. It comprises about forty singers from the Burgundy region (Dijon, Beaune, Chalon-sur-Saône, Le Creusot). In 1975 the ensemble won the Premier Grand Prix at the Rencontres Internationales de Chant Choral at Tours. Since its creation, it has constantly played an active part in the musical life of its region.

The ensemble's activities are very diverse. For convenience, we present them here in list form:

- The training of the choir members is such that they are able to approach a wide variety of styles.
- The ensemble aims to present a repertoire of works that are not very well known or have never been previously recorded, as is the case with these *Motets* by Nicolas Bernier.
- The ensemble also aims to rediscover forgotten works: a fine example is the *Cancionero de Uppsala*, a masterpiece of the Spanish Renaissance, which was performed at the Festival Estival in Paris in 1987.
- Collaboration with first-rate ensembles and artists (e.g. the Ensemble Baroque de Nice, Georges Pludermacher, Henri Ledroit, Catherine Dubosc and Jean-Paul Fouchécourt).

● Interest in other forms of artistic expression: dance and theatre—in 1994-95, production of 'Twelfth Night' (Shakespeare-Purcell) in collaboration with Le Grenier de Bourgogne and the Centre Dramatique de Courneuve. The production was later taken on tour, with twenty-five performances at the Avignon Festival in 1996.

Several performances by the Ensemble Vocal de Bourgogne have been broadcast on the French radio stations France Musique and France Culture.

JACQUES ÉCHIVARD

Jacques Échivard was born in Dijon. While studying science at university (to agrégation level), he also studied music at the Regional Conservatoire in Dijon (Premier Prix for musical education and harmony) and at the National Music School in Chalon-sur-Saône (Camille Roy's class; First Prize for musical analysis). After studying conducting with Jean-Sébastien Béreau in Strasbourg, Jacques Échivard continued his training with the Chorus of the Paris Opéra, the Chorus of the Orchestre de Paris and with Philippe Herreweghe. In 1987 he became a choirmaster (registered by the French Ministry of Culture).