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CLASSICS

SIRET

THE FRENCH
HARPSICHORD
SUITES

Vera Alperovich
Daniele Luca Zanghì
harpsichord



Nicholas Siret 1663-1754
The French Harpsichord Suites

CD1	75'51		
Book I INS.1 c.1710		Book II INS.2 1719	
Suite in D *		Suite in G minor *	
1. I. Overture	3'45	17. I. Prelude	2'00
2. II. Allemande	5'11	18. II. Allemande	5'20
3. III. Premiere Courante	1'28	19. III. Premiere Courante	2'49
4. IV. Seconde Courante	2'07	20. IV. Seconde Courante	1'59
5. V. Sarabande grave	3'18	21. V. Troisieme Courante	2'15
6. VI. Gigue	1'23	22. VI. Sarabande	3'41
7. VII. Gavotte	1'25	23. VII. Gigue	1'41
8. VIII. Menuet	1'37	24. VIII. Premier Rigaudon	0'43
		25. IX. Seconde Rigaudon	0'41
Suite in D minor **		26. X. Premier Rigaudon I	0'44
9. I. Overture	4'36	27. XI. Premier Menuet	1'23
10. II. Allemande	5'06	28. XII. Seconde Menuet	1'34
11. III. Premiere Courante	2'23	29. XIII. Gavotte	1'20
12. IV. Seconde Courante	3'10	30. XIV. Entree Joyeuse	2'07
13. V. Sarabande	2'53		
14. VI. Gavotte	1'29		
15. VII. Menuet	1'36		
16. VIII. Passacaglia	5'50		

CD2	52'56		
Suite in G *		Suite in A **	
1. I. Prelude	1'59	16. I. Allemande	4'01
2. II. Allemande	4'33	17. II. Seconde Courante	2'36
3. III. Premiere Courante	2'01	18. III. Seconde Sarabande	2'52
4. IV. Seconde Courante	1'37	19. IV. Gavotte Rondeau	0'48
5. V. Sarabande	3'23	20. V. La Manon, Rondeau	1'39
6. VI. Menuet	1'22	21. VI. Chaconne	4'04
7. VII. L'Espagnole	1'19		
8. VIII. Gigue	1'49		
Suite in A minor **			
9. I. Allemande	3'57		
10. II. Premiere Courante	2'50		
11. III. Premiere Sarabande	2'31		
12. IV. Gavotte	1'09		
13. V. Chaconne	3'04		
14. VI. Rondeau Champetre	2'26		
15. VII. Seconde Partie du Rondeau	2'44		

*Vera Alperovich · **Daniele Luca Zanghì *harpsichord*

Siret's Place in French Music at the Turn of the Eighteenth Century

Nicholas Siret's life as a musician coincided with a particularly brilliant period in the history of French music. At the death of Louis XIII in 1643, his son had succeeded to the throne at the age of five. The infant Louis XIV was clearly reliant on the support of his mother, Anne of Austria, the Queen Regent, daughter of King Philip III of Spain. In her turn Anne, who was deeply interested in the theatre, could also count on the advice of Cardinal Mazarin, the cultured and influential court councillor who had been appointed chief minister. The young sovereign thus absorbed from an early age considerable artistic awareness, and it was this inclination that led him to transform his Versailles residence into a major centre of pleasurable pursuits that included music and the theatre. Personally he especially enjoyed ballet, becoming a skilled dancer himself, according to records of the period, occasionally taking part in the shows that were put on at court. One memorable occasion was the ballet written by the Florentine musician J. B. Lully, who at the time was the director of music in France: in 1660 he composed the dance interludes for Francesco Cavalli's opera *L'Ercole amante*, in which the Sun King himself was the principal dancer.

The influence of Lully was felt throughout the country. His concept of "total music" involving theatre, dance and acting helped shape French musical life in the second half of the 1600s, contributing to the style that developed at the turn of the 18th century. This culminated in forms of musical entertainment that included the genre known as the *comédie-ballet*, such as *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*, fruit of collaboration between Lully and Molière. However it also evolved into the operas composed by Robert Cambert on librettos by Pierre Perrin, as well as sacred music, where Lully and M. A. Charpentier were the leading lights.

During the 1700s, especially in the last part of Louis XIV's reign, the French musical scene was greatly enriched by a number of outstanding artists, including Rameau and the viola da gamba players Marin Marais and Antoine Forqueray. However, the quintessential instrument of the golden age of French music was the

harpsichord. From the mid-1600s great musicians such as Chambonnières, Froberger, L. Couperin, and above all F. Couperin, Rameau, D'Anglèbert and L. Marchand developed a distinctive style based on a combination of dances to create a suite. Alongside this was an approach to performance involving ornamentation and the *inégalité des notes* and *style brisé* of the lute tradition. Each composer presented his own "table" of embellishments, a sort of "key" for the players so that they could achieve the intended effect. Such collections of "*pièces de clavecin*" or *Suites* generally involved a prelude followed by a series of different dances, such as the *Allemande*, *Courante*, *Sarabande*, *Gigue*, *Gavotte* and so on.

Such was the setting surrounding the life and works of Nicolas Siret (1663-1754), who came from a family of musicians active in the city of Troyes. Nicolas never left his hometown, where he was employed as organist in various churches and at the cathedral.

He dedicated the first volume of the *Pièces de clavecin* to one of the most important harpsichordists of the time, a friend he greatly admired: François Couperin "Le Grand". The collection, which probably reached Paris between 1709 and 1710, comprises two suites that begin with an *Ouverture* in the French style, along the lines established by Lully. Some of the dances are accompanied by descriptive titles such as *Languissante* and *Luthée*, which was a fairly common practice at the time also shared by Couperin.

The second volume was published in 1719 and contains four suites, the first of which is particularly long and comprises one of the last examples in France of *Préludes non mesurés*, or bars free of tempi. Louis Couperin had been a major exponent of this trend in the previous century. The other suites are shorter and more agile, with no prelude or overture in the last two, which begin with an *Allemande*.

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Translation by Kate Singleton

La Musica in Francia tra XVII e XVIII secolo e l'opera di Siret

L'epoca in cui si sviluppa la vita musicale di Nicholas Siret coincide con il periodo di maggiore fulgore della musica in Francia sotto il regno di Luigi XIV. Il sovrano succede a Luigi XIII nel 1643 a soli 5 anni. Sua madre, Anna d'Austria, figlia del re di Spagna Filippo III, riesce a ottenere la reggenza per il figlio minorenni. Ama molto il teatro, e quando affida il governo al Cardinale Mazzarino, sa di poter contare su un uomo non solo influente, ma anche colto. Il nuovo sovrano, pertanto, sviluppa già da giovane una notevole sensibilità artistica, che nel tempo lo porterà trasformare la residenza di Versailles in un grande luogo dedito ai divertimenti, alla musica e al teatro. Egli stesso si dedica al balletto, diventando, secondo le cronache dell'epoca, un provetto artista, tanto da partecipare, in diverse occasioni, all'allestimento di spettacoli organizzati dalla corte. Storico il balletto scritto dal musicista fiorentino, divenuto sovrintendente nazionale della musica in Francia, J. B. Lully, che nel 1660 scrive le musiche per danza per l'opera di Francesco Cavalli *L'Ercole amante*, che vedeva proprio il "Re Sole" come ballerino protagonista.

Lully è il referente principale della musica in tutta la Francia e, grazie alla sua idea di "musica totale" in cui si mescolano musica, teatro, danza e recitazione, dà alla Francia musicale del secondo Seicento un'impronta indelebile, che influenzerà a lungo lo stile musicale francese tra XVII e XVIII secolo. Queste forme di spettacolo musicali sfociano nelle cosiddette *comédie-ballet* come *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, frutto della collaborazione Lully-Molière, ma all'orizzonte compare l'opera francese ad opera di Perrin con musiche di Cambert, così come un certo interesse della corte nei confronti della musica sacra, di cui M. A. Charpentier e Lully sono i principali compositori.

Il Settecento, ed in particolare l'ultimo periodo del regno di Luigi XIV, vede sulla scena francese artisti di grande spessore come Rameau, i violisti da gamba Marin Marais e Antoine Forqueray, ma è certamente il clavicembalo uno degli strumenti-simbolo della musica francese dell'età d'oro: a partire dalla metà del Seicento grandi musicisti come Chambonnières, Froberger, L. Couperin, e soprattutto F. Couperin,

Rameau, D'Anglébert, L. Marchand elaborano uno stile caratteristico basato sulla codificazione della suite di danze e una prassi esecutiva basata sull'ornamentazione, sull'*inégalité des notes*, sullo *style brisé* di derivazione liutistica. Ogni compositore presenta una propria "tabella" degli abbellimenti, una sorta di "legenda" sull'esecuzione e codificazione degli stessi e vari "pièces de clavecin" riuniti in raccolte o *Suites*, in cui accanto al preludio si susseguono una serie variabile di danze come *Allemande*, *Courante*, *Sarabande*, *Gigue*, *Gavotte* ecc.

In questo contesto musicale si inserisce la vita e l'opera di Nicolas Siret (1663-1754), proveniente da una famiglia di musicisti attivi nella città di Troyes. Nicolas ha prestato servizio di organista presso le chiese cittadine di s. Jean e presso la cattedrale ed è sempre vissuto nella città natale.

Il primo libro dei *Pièces de clavecin* è dedicato ad uno dei più importanti clavicembalisti del suo tempo, di cui era amico e che ammirava moltissimo: François Couperin "Le Grand". Questo primo lavoro appare a Parigi presumibilmente tra il 1709 e il 1710 e contiene due suites i cui incipit sono costituiti da un'Ouverture in stile francese secondo la struttura codificata da Lully. Non mancano, accanto ad alcune danze, titoli riferiti al carattere del brano stesso come *Languissante* e *Luthée*, secondo una consuetudine tipica, tra gli altri, dello stesso Couperin.

Il Secondo libro viene pubblicato nel 1719 e contiene quattro suites, di cui la prima, di notevoli dimensioni, contiene un degli ultimi esempi in Francia di *Préludes non mesurés*, brani senza battuta, liberi, di cui Louis Couperin, nel '600, è stato uno dei principali codificatori. Le altre suites, sono invece più brevi e agili, ed in particolare le ultime due mancano del preludio o ouverture per iniziare semplicemente con l'Allemande.

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The harpsichord used for this recording was built by Marco Brighenti of Parma and is a copy of an instrument made by Henry Hemsch (1700-1769) in Paris, now part of the Museum of Fine Arts collection in Boston.

Because the third number of the date inscribed on the soundboard is illegible (17_6), we cannot be sure exactly when the harpsichord was built. For a long time the missing number was thought to be a 5, since it was during the 1750s that Henry Hemsch, an outstanding craftsman of German origins who became a French citizen, produced most of the harpsichords that have come down to us. However, in-depth study of the instrument's characteristics has led specialists to view this conviction with scepticism. In fact our harpsichord differs in various ways from the others built by Hemsch. First and foremost, the strings are longer, which would suggest a lower pitch. Moreover, there are two unusual ties placed lengthwise with respect to the fibres of the soundboard, beneath the bridge at 8'. It is a solution reminiscent of the way ties were conceived and positioned during the previous century. So it may well be that the missing number is a 3, which would make the harpsichord one of the first that Hemsch built at the end of his curiously long apprenticeship in the workshop of his teacher, Antoine Vater, who was also a German naturalized French.

The extension of the two keyboards is FF-e^m, and the disposition is typical for the period: 2x8' and 1x4' with a drawer coupler between the two manuals.

Temperament: Rameau 1726

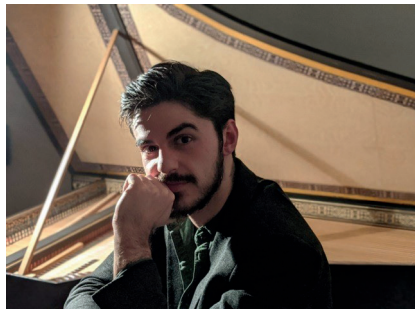
Pitch: A 392 Hz



Vera Alperovich was born in Moscow and studied piano at the Children's Music School AMC at Moscow Conservatoire before moving on to the Academic Musical College in 2003 and achieving her diploma with honours in 2007. The winner of numerous interstate and international competitions, she was soon performing in international festivals and in famous concert venues, including Moscow Conservatoire, the Slobodkin Concert hall in Moscow, the Glinka Chapels in St.-Petersburg, the auditoriums of Bryansk, Penza and Kaliningrad in Russia, and those of Rimini and Montefiori in Italy. She has also won awards for teaching and theory. She has performed as soloist with the Moscow Conservatoire orchestra under Vladimir Ryzhaev, the Academic Musical College and the Bryansk Philharmonic Society. In 2011 she took part in Academy Enarmonica and completed her studies at the Moscow Conservatoire in 2012. Since 2016 she has been attending classes held by Stefano Molardi and Vovka Askenazy at the Conservatorio della Svizzera italiana. She has attended master classes held by Igor Zhukov, Boris Berman, Carlo Pari, Margarita Feodorova, Vanessa Latarsh, Epifanio Comis, Boris Petrushansky, Vladimir Feltsman and Vladimir Viardo. In 2013 she took part in the Festival organized by the Academia Pianistica Incontri col Maestro in Imola, playing with Daniel Pollak in master classes. She won a scholarship to take part in the IKIF Academy summer festival in New York and a grant to study at the Northern College in Manchester. She has acquired extensive experience in ensemble performance. Since 2010 she has also been composing works of her own.



Daniele Luca Zanghi was born in Catania, Italy, in 1995. He began studying piano technique and interpretation with Pietro Piricone at a very early age, and then continued at the Istituto Superiore di Studi Musicali V. Bellini in Catania under the guidance of Luca Ballerini. He obtained his Diploma in Piano with honours and distinction during the academic year of 2013-14, and that same year graduated from high school in Catania as well. By 2017, he had also completed an MA in Music Pedagogy with honours at Conservatorio della Svizzera Italiana under Anna Kravtchenko, after which he began a further MA in Harpsichord Performance under Stefano Molardi. In 2018 he won a scholarship awarded by the Conservatorio della Svizzera Italiana Foundation as overall best student.



He has won prizes in various contests, including the Città di Barcellona Pozzo di Gotto piano competition and the Research section of Certamen Sebinum.

His has played in chamber ensembles and the basso continuo part in orchestras in numerous concerts, including the Second International Interactiv Music Radio Festival Trimontiada in Plovdiv (Bulgaria), the Sala Vanni in Florence with the Conservatorio della Svizzera Italiana orchestra conducted by Mario Ancillotti, the Istituto Superiore di Studi Musicali V. Bellini in Catania, the LAC Lugano (Lugano Arte e Cultura), the Organ Antegnati Festival of Bellinzona, the Marianischer Saal of Lucerne, the Musikschule Konservatorium in Zurich during a Swiss tour with the Camerata Luzern.



Recording: 28-29 August, Aula Magna of the Conservatorio della Svizzera Italiana - University School of Music, Lugano (Switzerland)

Sound engineer: Simone Bellucci

Artistic direction: Stefano Molardi

Cover: The Muses Urania and Calliope, by Simon Vouet and Studio, c. 1634, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, Samuel H. Kress Collection

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