



Ensemble Molière

Sacred Reflections

The Quire, Beverley Minster

Friday 26 May 1.00pm

Ensemble Molière

Flavia Hirte *flute*

Alice Earll *violin*

Kate Conway *viola da gamba*

Catriona McDermid *bassoon*

Satoko Doi-Luck *harpsichord*

Ouverture pour le sacre d'un évêque, H.537

Marc-Antoine Charpentier

1643-1704

(arr. Satoko Doi-Luck)

Symphonies pour un reposoir, H.508

Charpentier

(arr. Satoko Doi-Luck)

Ouverture

Tantum Ergo

Amen

Allemande Grave

Sonnerie de Sainte-Geneviève du Mont de Paris

Marin Marais

1656-1728

from Pièces d'orgue, Messe pour les Paroisses

François Couperin

1668-1733

Récit de Chromhorne, 3^e Couplet

Tierce en Taille, 6^e Couplet

Dialogue en trio du Cornet et de la Tierce, 8^e Couplet

Offertoire sur les Grands jeux

Symphonies pour un reposoir, H.515

Charpentier

Ouverture dès qu'on voit la bannière

Pange lingua

In supremae pour le petit choeur

Tantum ergo pour les violons

Amen pour les violons

Ouverture pour le sacre d'un évêque, H.537 **Marc-Antoine Charpentier**
(arr. Satoko Doi-Luck)

This work has a very clear function written into the title, 'le sacre d'un évêque', translating as 'the consecration of a bishop'. In spite of this we are still unclear of the precise occasion for which this piece was composed. It was certainly written during the period 1687–1698 in which Charpentier served as the *maître de musique* to the Jesuits at the *collège* of Louis-le-Grand and subsequently the church of Saint-Louis. The most probable explanation is a possible performance at the enthronement of Louis-Antoine, Cardinal de Noailles, the new Archbishop of Paris, which took place at the Jesuit Collège Louis-le-Grand on 9 December 1695.

The work is composed in the usual French overture style; instrumental pieces written for a specific ceremonial function were unusual at this time in France, so it is perhaps unsurprising that Charpentier drew on a familiar form from the world of theatre. A grand and stately opening section is followed by a more playful, contrapuntal fast passage, and the key of F major lends the whole work a very bright and sunny feel, reflecting the joyous nature of the occasion!

Symphonies pour un reposoir, H.508

Ouverture

Tantum Ergo

Amen

Allemande Grave

Charpentier

arr. Satoko Doi-Luck

Charpentier's *Symphonies pour un reposoir* also form part of the rare French baroque body of instrumental works composed for a specific religious function. These pieces were intended for performance during the procession when the Holy Sacrament was carried to an altar of repose, a temporary altar where Communion hosts consecrated on Maundy Thursday are placed, or 'reserved' overnight, for use on the following day, Good Friday. These temporary altars are often constructed outdoors and the music seems to have been performed at an outside ceremony, given that there are no figured bass markings in the score which suggests that indoor instruments such as organ or harpsichord were not present. We have taken the liberty of reintroducing the harpsichord in our performance, in order to maintain the necessary sense of grandeur with our reduced forces.

Each movement of the work accompanies a specific part of the ceremony, clearly marked in the score. The opening *Ouverture* is heard alongside the raising of the host from the high altar and the procession to the altar of repose. The *Tantum Ergo*

is played as the host is lowered into place at the altar of repose, and features four contrapuntal lower parts which move around a slow cantus firmus of the *Tantum Ergo* Gregorian plainchant played here by the flute. Priests would then sing the first verse of the *Tantum Ergo* plainchant, after which follows a short fugue based on the opening five notes of the chant. After a rendition of the second verse of the plainchant by the priests, there is a polyphonic amen. Finally, the ceremony ends with the return procession to the main altar, accompanied by Charpentier's stately *Allemande Grave*.

Sonnerie de Sainte-Geneviève du Mont de Paris

Marin Marais

We now enter the virtuosic world of Marin Marais, arguably the most highly regarded viola da gamba player of his day. As a student, Marais' studies with the viola da gamba virtuoso and pedagogue Monsieur de Sainte-Colombe lasted only six months before Sainte-Colombe declared that he had outranked him. Marais went on to become a member of Lully's orchestra in 1676, and in 1679 became the King's *Ordinaire de la chambre du Roi pour la viole*, a position which held until his retirement 46 years later.

This hypnotic work is based on a three-note ostinato of D, F, E representing the three bells of the abbey of Sainte Geneviève du Mont, a church familiar to Marais from his childhood spent in the nearby neighbourhood of St Médard. Both the violin and the viola da gamba play around this ostinato with increasing virtuosity, the gamba unsurprisingly shining foremost!

from Pièces d'orgue, Messe pour les Paroisses

François Couperin

Récit de Chromhorne, 3^e Couplet

Tierce en Taille, 6^e Couplet

Dialogue en trio du Cornet et de la Tierce, 8^e Couplet

Offertoire sur les Grands jeux

François Couperin was a celebrated organist, taking up the position of organist at Saint-Gervais, Paris at the tender age of 18, although he started work there unofficially as early as aged 15. It is perhaps surprising then that he only wrote two complete organ Masses, which are also his only compositions for organ. Couperin was still only 21 when these pieces were published, with the help of his teacher Michel Richard Delalande whose approval is included on the title page, stating the music to be 'very beautiful and worthy of being given to the public'.

Couperin's two Masses were written for different settings, the *Messe pour les Couvents*, for use in the Convent, and *Messe pour les Paroisses*, from which these excerpts are taken, for use in parish churches. The verses and plainsong of this parish Mass are all kept simple, so that they could be sung by the congregation, but the organ part by contrast is highly challenging and complex, designed for the professional organist. The *Récit de Cromhorne* is part of the Kyrie and the *Tierce en Taille* and the *Dialogue en trio* part of the Gloria. The offertory is the longest and grandest of the movements of the Mass and consists of three large sections, with a grand prelude being followed by a minor fugal section and finally a major fugue on a gigue-inspired subject.

Symphonies pour un reposoir, H.515

Charpentier

Ouverture dès qu'on voit la bannière

Pange lingua

In supremae pour le petit choeur

Tantum ergo pour les violons

Amen pour les violons

Taken from the same set of pieces as the earlier *pour un reposoir* symphony, this work serves the same ceremonial function. In the *Pange Lingua* the bassoon plays a cantus firmus of the *Pange Lingua* plainchant, in the bass. *Tantum Ergo* is a later verse of the *Pange Lingua* and in the *Tantum ergo pour les violons* we hear another full rendition of the same cantus firmus but this time transferred to the treble part in the flute.

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Ensemble Molière

Ensemble Molière has gained a reputation as an established early music ensemble. The unique combination of instruments provides memorable and creative programmes from the repertoire of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, all performed on historic instruments.

Ensemble Molière was selected as the first-ever BBC Radio 3 New Generation Baroque Ensemble for two years from October 2021. This new scheme is run in partnership by BBC Radio 3, the National Centre for Early Music and the Royal College of Music. Finalists at the York Early Music International Young Artists

Competition and Future Baroque Artists at the London Festival of Baroque Music, the ensemble has given concerts throughout the UK and Europe, including the MAfestival fringe in Bruges and the Oudemuziek Fringe Festival in Utrecht.

The ensemble has also premiered a cross-arts opera project, *Pygmalion*, part-funded by Arts Council England and supported by Stroud Green Festival and Brighton Early Music Festival. Ensemble Molière has been invited to perform live on BBC Radio 3's In Tune on several occasions. To celebrate the 400th anniversary of French playwright and actor Molière, the ensemble joined forces with two clowns to create a new music-theatre show, an exploration of Molière's world through his words and the music of his time. The show's London premiere took place in July 2022 and it was also performed at the York Early Music Christmas Festival in December.

ensemblemoliere.com/



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