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Francois Couperin And The French Classical Tradition

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Wilfrid Mellers

Travis & Emery



Synopsis

Wilfrid Mellers Francois Couperin and die French Classical Tradition ROY PUBLISHERS - NEW YORK Francois Couperin le Grand Copyright 1951, by Wilfrid Mellers PRINTED AND MANUFACTURED IN GREAT BRITAIN Contents PART I LIFE AND TIMES CHAPTER PAGE I The Life 17 II Values and Standards in the Grand Siecle 28 III Taste during the Grand Siecle 49 IV Music, the Court, and the Theatre 59 PART II THE WORK V The Organ Masses 83 VI The Two-violin Sonatas 97 VII The Secular Vocal Works 128 VIII The Church Music 146 IX The Clavecin Works 188 X The Concerts Royaux and Suites for Viols 234 XI Chronology, Influence, and Conclusions 272 PART III THEORY AND PRACTICE XII Couperins Theoretical Work, with Comments on Rhythm, Ornamentation, and Phrasing 291 XIII Couperins Resources and his use of them, with Comments on the Modern Performance of his Work 322 CONTENTS XIV Editions of Works by Couperin 337 Appendix A The Authorship of the Organ Masses 341 Appendix B The Organists of St Gervais 344 Appendix C Lord Fitzwilliam and the French Clavecin Composers 345 Appendix D On the Tempo of the Eighteenth-century Dance Movements 347 Appendix E Georg Muffat on Bowing, Phrasing and Ornamentation 350 Appendix F Notes on the titles of Couperins clavecin pieces 356 Appendix G Biographical Notes on the principal persons mentioned in the text 363 Catalogue Raisonn 374 Gramophone Records of Works by Couperin 390 Bibliography 395 Index 401 Illustrations I Portrait of Francois Couperin le Grand by Andre Bouys, engraved by Filbert 1735 Frontispiece II The Church of St Gervais Topographia facing page Galliae Vol. I, 1655 2 4 HI Veue de la Grande et Petite Ecurie et des deux Cours La Description de Versailles 48 IV Gardens of the Due dOrleans Topographia Galliae, 1655 74 V Dans le Gout Pastoral Cours de la Reine Mere Topographia Galliae, 1655 145 VI Dans le Gout burlesque Watteau, Portrait of Gilles Louvre 227 VII Watteau, Les Charmes de la Vie Wallace Collection 271 VIII The Organ of St Gervais 330 DC The Organ of the Chapelle Royale 330 The design on the title page is Couperins coat-of-arms To and to the illustrious memory of Francois Couperin le Grand Preface So FAR AS I am aware, this is the first book on Couperin le Grand in English indeed it is possibly the first comprehensive study of his work in any language, for of die three French books on him known to me, that of Bouvet is purely biographical while those of Tessier and Tiersot do not claim to be more than introductory monographs. As such, they are both admirable. I have divided this study of Couperin into three sections. The first gives the facts of his life and some account of the nature, values, and standards of his community. Of the facts of his life, little is known, and I have not indulged in speculation. For most of the information contained in my introductory chapter I am indebted to the biographical sections of the previous books on Couperin referred to above, with the addition of some

documentary evidence more recently published by M. Paul Brunold. The chapters on the values and standards of the grand siècle do not pretend to offer a revolutionary approach. My general attitude to the period is influenced by the miscellaneous writings of Mr Martin Turnell, published in Horizon, Scrutiny, and elsewhere 1 especially those on Racine, Moliere, Corneille, and La Princesse de Cleves, and by a most interesting essay by Mr R. C. Knight also published in Scrutiny, which was in part a criticism of Turnell's account of Racine. I have also found many hints worth following up, and much useful information, in Mr Arthur Tifleys two books, From Montaigne to Moliere and The Decline of the Age of Louis XIV. Most of the information in my chapter on the court theatre music is derived from the writings of the recognized authority on the period, M. Henri Prunieres. These books are listed in the bibliography...

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"Wilfrid Mellers" (1914-2008) was an English music critic, composer, and musicologist as well as professor emeritus of music at the University of York. He is the author of numerous books including "Celestial Music?: Some Masterpieces of European Religious Music, Singing in the Wilderness: Music and Ecology in the Twentieth Century", and "Between Old Worlds and New".

Mellers' standard biography of Couperin is basic if this topic is important to you. Others have attempted to displace this but it stands still has the core reference.

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 (Actes Et Colloques) (French Edition) Cello Music by French Composers from Couperin to Debussy
 for Violoncello and Piano by François Couperin, Marin Marais, Louis de Caix d'Hervelois,
 (1986) Sheet music Francois Couperin and 'The Perfection of Music' Francois Couperin Complete
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 Rameau (The New Grove Series) «L'Art de toucher le Clavecin» de François Couperin: Autour du doigt
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