

RAMEAU'S ORCHESTRA

French Baroque Masters of Orchestration

St. James' Church

Madison Avenue
at 71st Street

32nd Season
Saturday, 20 May at 8 PM

EARLY MUSIC FOUNDATION presents

EARLY MUSIC NEW YORK
FREDERICK RENZ – DIRECTOR

ORCHESTRA OF ORIGINAL INSTRUMENTS

Violin

Robert Mealy – Concertmaster

Heidi Powell – Principal

Dongmyung Ahn

Marika Holmqvist

Peter Kupfer

Amelia Roosevelt

Theresa Salomon

Mark Zaki

Viola

Daniel Elyar – Principal

Andrea Andros

Peter Kupfer

Alissa Smith

Violoncello

Christine Gummere – Principal

David Backamjian

Violone

David Chapman

Harpsichord

Dongsok Shin

Flute & Piccolo

Charles Brink

Anne Briggs

Oboe

Gonzalo Ruiz

Geoffrey Burgess

Bassoon

Andrew Schwarz

Horn

RJ Kelley

Douglas Lundeen

EARLY MUSIC FOUNDATION presents

EARLY MUSIC NEW YORK -- FREDERICK RENZ, DIRECTOR

RAMEAU'S ORCHESTRA

French Baroque Masters of Orchestration

Simfonie Nouvelle - *Les Éléments* (1737)

Jean-Ferry Rebel, 1666 - 1747

[Ouverture] - *Le Cahos*

Air - *Les Éléments*

Chaconne - *Le Feu*

Ramage - *L'Air*

Rosignols

Loure

Tambourin - *Leau*

Sicilienne - *Grassieusement*

Caprice

Opera-Ballet - *Les Fêtes d'Hébé* (1739)

Jean-Philippe Rameau, 1683 - 1764

Sélections des Airs de Ballet, Act III

Entrée - *Gai*

Menuet I - *Gai*, Menuet II - *Modéré*

[Bourrée] - *Vif*

Passepied I & Passepied II - *Animé*

Musette en rondeau - *Tendrement*

Tambourin en rondeau - *Vif*

Interval

Concert Simphonie (Oeuvre IV, #1, 1751)

Antoine Dauvergne, 1713 - 1797

Ouverture - *Grave, Presto*

Aria & Aria 2e - *Gratioso*

Allegro & Allegro 2e

Passacaille

Comedie Lyrique - *Les Paladins* (1760)

Rameau

Sélections des Airs de Ballet, Act I

Ouverture - *Très vive*

Menuet - *Lent*

Air - *Gay*

Loure

Pantomime - Gai/Vite

Contredanse

Sarabande - Sans lenteur

Menuet en Rondeau I & Menuet en Rondeau II

Air de furie - Très vif

Entrée très gaye de Troubadours

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

The music of **Jean-Ferry Rebel** more than that of any other composer highlights the particularly French preoccupation with both descriptive music and ballet. Jean-Ferry was the most famous member of the Rebel dynasty of musicians who for over one hundred years served in the corps of the king's musicians and in the opera. His knowledge of ballet and descriptive symphonies was a natural by-product of his close association with the Académie Royale de Musique where in 1700 he entered the orchestra and became its conductor some seventeen years later.

Out of this experience, Rebel created the first choreographic and programmatic symphonies which, if they were not to find issue during the eighteenth century, would serve as isolated monuments to one man's imaginative power and sense of fantasy.

Much the most spectacular of all is a veritable symphonic poem called "**Les Éléments**," *Simphonie Nouvelle*, of 1737. According to the *Avertissement*, this *symphonie* was printed in a manner that permits a performance *en concert* by two violins, two flutes and a bass. As is so often the case, however, the whole may be performed on a solo harpsichord or undoubtedly be converted into a *grande symphonie* by the addition of other instruments (which incidentally, are called for in any case).

The *Avertissement* gives us a capsule version of the program and the instruments as well as harmonies to be used for specific descriptive ends.

The introduction to this *Simphonie*...is Chaos itself, the confusion that reigned between the Elements before the instant when, obeying unchanging laws, they had taken the places assigned to them in the Natural order.

In order to designate each Element in the Chaos, I resorted to the most recognized conventions. The bass expresses the Earth by its slurred notes to be played with a tremolo (secousses); the Flutes by their melodic traits...imitate the course and the murmur of the Water; the Air is painted by the sustained sounds followed by trills played on the petites flutes; finally, the violins by their liveliness and brilliance represent the action of Fire.

The distinct characteristics of each Element can be recognized, separated or intermingled, in all or in part, and in the diverse repetitions that I have named Chaos (Cahos) which mark the efforts of the Elements to extricate themselves one from the other...

I have dared to undertake to join to the idea of the confusion of the Elements that of the confusion of the harmony. I have tried to have heard at first all the sounds mixed together, or rather, all the notes of the octave united in a single sound. Following this, these notes climb together in unison in an altogether natural progression and, after a dissonance, one hears a perfect chord.

The programmatic symphony is constructed in two large sections. The first, an introduction labeled "**Cahos**," has a total of seven 'chaotic' intrusions; all but the initial one are interspersed between airs and dances representing the autonomous Elements.

The second part titled “Les Éléments” is composed of a random collection of airs, dances and descriptive pieces exhibiting a wide range of instrumental scoring.

The Chaos episodes are perhaps without precedent in the eighteenth century. One thinks immediately of the more restrained ‘representation of chaos from Haydn’s “The Creation,” but it is not until Beethoven combined all the notes of the same d-minor scale in the chaotic opening chord of the Presto in the final movement of the Ninth Symphony that we have a sound complex of such descriptive power.

– James R. Anthony, *French Baroque Music*

Jean-Philippe Rameau’s “Les Fêtes d’Hèbé” aims at presenting three forms of art – poetry, music and dance – personified by Sappho, Tyrtaeus and a shepherdess, Eglé, pupil of Terpsichore. These are the three *talents lyriques* which give the ballet the subtitle under which it came to be known. Into this bottle any sort of wine could be poured, and Rameau gave it his best. No work of his contains more variety or gives so kaleidoscopically complete a view of his range in lyric, tragedy and pastoral.

On the first performance of “Les Fêtes d’Hèbé” it appears that the third *entrée* pleased the public most. Its theme is in-existent rather than commonplace; a shepherdess, through the excellence of her dancing, earns a place at the court of Terpsichore. To put a little stuffing into it, the librettist introduced Mercury and made him the shepherdess’s successful swain.

As the lovers’ avowals die away we hear the strains of pipes, heralding the shepherds who come to compete for the hand of her whose heart has already been given to the unrecognized god. From this moment on, the music is one long enchantment.

The entertainment is in two parts. In the first, shepherds and Eglé sing and dance; in the second Terpsichore and her court join them. E-major thereupon makes a brilliant intrusion; “the scene changes and shows an ornamental garden.” The first strains are heard off-stage and are interrupted by speech. The muse and her nymphs “appear dancing to the sound of their drum” and the orchestra strikes up a square-cut quick march, akin to the spirit of post-1752 *opéra-comique* rather than to *tragédie lyrique* or to *opéra-ballet*. The musettes are silent; flutes take the place of oboes. After the minuets ...the well-beloved “Musette” in E-major from the 1724 book of harpsichord pieces strikes up as Terpsichore’s own dance, scored with flutes and horns but no oboes. It is shorn of its last, clavieristic episode. The equally well-loved “Tambourin” from the same book follows it, for the same instruments and unchanged, save for the repeat of the last five bars, but much enriched by the addition of two inner parts.

Those few who have penetrated into Rameau’s world have been struck by the individuality of his pastoral music. In a period of some two centuries during which almost every composer, at one time or another, dealt in pastoral, it is remarkable how original his inspiration is. One would have thought it impossible, after so much dramatic pastoral in ballet and opera, to renew the themes and express the sentiments connected with it in so personal a manner. Yet Rameau’s shepherd symphonies, arias

and choruses are among his most original pieces; they impress us most strongly and remain with us longest.

Rameau is sometimes likened to Watteau and it is in his pastoral music that this comparison is most apposite. He, like Watteau, has a Hamlet-like detachment; like Watteau, he can be heart rending. Like him, he can hint at depths beneath the neat, formal pattern of his music. The pastoral ideal of Rameau's public was not more than one of infinite leisure, an endless round of love-for-love's-sake, elegance and careful avoidance of material discomfort; but behind that, he like Watteau, sensed and expressed a piercing melancholy.

– Cuthbert Girdlestone, *Jean-Philippe Rameau, His Life and Works*

Almost nothing is known of **Antoine Dauvergne's** early professional life, and indeed he is sometimes confused with this father. We still do not really know who taught him, even if it is sometimes maintained that Jean-Marie Leclair took him for violin lessons and Jean-Philippe Rameau for composition! The lacunae in the available information probably arise from a lack of knowledge of Dauvergne's compositions.

Antoine Dauvergne was born at Moulins, October 3, 1713. He was probably a violinist in the Concert de Moulins, where his father apparently held the post of first violin, before leaving his native town, staying some time in Clermont-Ferrand before arriving in Paris. He settled in the capital at the latest by 1739, which was the year in which he became a violinist in the *Chambre du Roi*, obtaining a royal privilege for the publishing of his Opus 1. In 1744 he joined the orchestra of the Académie Royale de Musique (the Opera), which he later directed from 1751 or 1752. Until then he had composed only instrumental music, but profiting from his work with the Académie he produced his first opera score, "Les amours de Tempé," a *ballet héroïque*. A year after the *Querelle des Bouffons* had broken out he gave a performance of "Les Troqueurs" in July of 1753. In the same year he repeated the operation with "La Coquette trompée." By this time, Dauvergne's success was spreading across the national borders, and at the height of his new fame he received in 1755 two awards; Louis XV granted him the post of Composer of Music of the Chamber following the resignation of François Rebel and he inherited also from Rebel the post of *Maître de Musique* of the *Chambre du Roi*.

It's puzzling that the composer did not follow up his first orchestral experience. His four *Concerts de Symphonies* are not only Dauvergne's first and last purely symphonic experiments; they also round off his instrumental output. It is true that his increasing activity and his interest for lyric music, and *opéra-comique* in particular, in which he had so large a hand from 1753 onwards, must have distracted his attention from a genre that was distinctly less remunerative and less glorious than the theatre. He did, however, possess an undeniable orchestral talent which could have placed him in the first rank of French symphonists.

Rameau's "Les Paladins," *comédie lyrique*, opened its first and only production at the Paris Opéra in February of 1760. After a run of fifteen performances, the production closed for the Easter recess, never again to be performed until 1967, when it was revived in Lyons. One of only three through-composed *comédies* to have been produced by the

Opéra up to that time, “Les Paladins” proved perplexing to many commentators for its mixture of comic and serious elements.

The opera was the first all-new multi-act work by Rameau to be performed in nearly a decade, although it seems probable that he had been working on it for several years. Numerous aspects of “Les Paladins” suggest that it is Rameau’s answer to the *Querelle des Bouffons*, which had raged in Paris for several years in the early 1750’s. Rameau himself is reported to have said that were he thirty years younger he would go to Italy and learn the style of Pergolesi. In “Les Paladins” we hear evidence that he had learned much about Italian style right in Paris.

The very presence of a succession of dances in each act clearly links this *comédie* to the more traditional *tragédie lyrique*. And even the eighteenth-century critics of this work praise “Les Paladins” for the beauty and novelty of much of its instrumental music. Many of the dances can be rated with the best that Rameau composed.

R. Peter Wolf

Thanks to Robert Mealy for making available a full score and parts of the Rebel; to Oliver Brewer for copying parts for the Dauvergne and to Peter Wolf for his transcription of the “Les Paladins” score.

ABOUT THE ENSEMBLE



Frederick Renz (director) is a unique figure in the early music movement. Equally adept in all forms of music and music drama from the 11th through the 18th centuries, he has reaped international acclaim for his work as conductor, producer, director and performer while leading EARLY MUSIC NEW YORK (EM/NY) to preeminence in the field. Among his numerous accolades are commissions from the Spoleto Festival, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine, NYC as well as multiple Producer's Grants from the National Endowment for the Arts. Most recently, the State University of New York awarded Mr. Renz an honorary Doctor of Music degree, and the Mayor of The City of New York presented a proclamation recognizing his thirty years of dedicated service to the arts.

EM/NY's orchestra of original instruments was founded in 1977 as the *Grande Bande*, and is New York's first orchestra of original instruments to present a subscription series at a major hall. In addition to its New York season, the orchestra has performed gala concerts at the Library of Congress in honor of J.S. Bach and Franz Josef Haydn, the Hong Kong Festival in honor Claudio Monteverdi and has toured throughout the United States. It opened the 1990 and 1993 Wolf Trap seasons and returned by popular demand in 1995 with a festive recreation of Handel's *Musick for the Royal Fireworks*.

EM/NY has performed at the Lincoln and Kennedy Centers, regularly performs at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and has toured throughout the United States and abroad, winning critical acclaim at many of the world's most prestigious music festivals including Athens, Brisbane, Edinburgh, Hong Kong, Jerusalem, Krakow, Paris, Regensburg, Spoleto, Tokyo, Caramoor, Charleston and Ravinia. Now celebrating its 32nd season, EM/NY has been profiled on the award winning national news programs, CBS Sunday Morning and ABC Nightline, and performs an annual subscription series in New York City at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine on the Upper West Side and on the East Side at St. James' Church on Madison Avenue.

EM/NY records for *Ex cathedra* Records, Lyrichord, Musicmasters, Musical Heritage Society, Nonesuch, and Foné, and has produced six recordings in collaboration with The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

ABOUT THE EARLY MUSIC FOUNDATION

Frederick Renz, with other members of the legendary New York Pro Musica Antiqua, founded the EARLY MUSIC FOUNDATION (EMF) in 1974. The mission of the Foundation is to enrich public understanding of western culture through the highest quality, historically informed performances and recordings of music and music drama from the 11th through the 18th centuries.

The Foundation presents the performances of EARLY MUSIC NEW YORK (EMNY), hosts an in-house recording label Ex cathedra Records, and functions as an advocacy service and not-for-profit umbrella for early music activity in New York City. The Foundation organized the first New York Early Music Celebration, featuring over 60 concerts throughout the City, in October of 2004.

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