



The King's Playlist

ENSEMBLE MOLIÈRE



MENU

TRACKLIST

ENGLISH

BIOGRAPHIES



The King's Playlist

ENSEMBLE MOLIÈRE

FLAVIA HIRTE baroque flute

ALICE EARLL baroque violin

KATE CONWAY viola da gamba

CATRIONA MCDERMID baroque bassoon

SATOKO DOI-LUCK harpsichord

Instruments

Flute Copy of a Bizet flute (c. 1730 Paris) by Giovanni Tardino

Violin Benoist Fleury, rue des Boucheries, Faubourg St. Germain à Paris, 1759

Viola da gamba 7-string viola da gamba after Bertrand by Jane Julier, Devon, England, 1997

Bassoon Copy of an instrument by the Viennese maker M. Deper by Paul Hailperin

Harpsichord Double manual harpsichord after Goermans-Taskin (1783) by Michael Johnson, 1997

Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643-1704), arr. Satoko Doi-Luck
Les Arts Florissants, H. 487

1. Ouverture 2:05

Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687), arr. Satoko Doi-Luck
Phaëton

2. Premier Air et Deuxième Air 2:23

François Couperin (1668-1733)
Concerts Royaux, Deuxième Concert en ré majeur

3. Prélude 2:37
4. Allemande fuguée 2:02
5. Air tendre 2:40
6. Air contrefugué 1:47
7. Échos 3:59

Michel-Richard Delalande (1657-1726), arr. Satoko Doi-Luck
Symphonies pour les soupers du Roy, Première Suite

8. Prélude 1:32
9. Air grave 1:58
10. Trio 1:35
11. Gigue 1:13
12. Petit air 0:33
13. Passacaille 5:24

Anonymous, arr. Satoko Doi-Luck
Ballet Royal de la Nuit

14. Ouverture 2:21

Jean de Cambefort (c. 1605–1661)
Ballet Royal de la Nuit

15. Récit de la Nuit: 'Languissante clarté, cachez-vous dessous l'onde' 3:57

Anonymous, arr. Satoko Doi-Luck
Ballet Royal de la Nuit

16. Le Roy représentant le Soleil levant 1:47

Marin Marais (1656–1728)
Pièces en trio 'Trios pour le coucher du Roy',
Excerpts from Suite en sol mineur

17. Prélude 2:01
18. Sarabande 1:54
19. Rondeau 2:26
20. Plainte 2:50
21. Menuet 2:05

Total Running Time 49:15

A luxuriant and varied selection of French Baroque music to accompany Louis XIV, the Sun King, in his daily life.

‘Released from the depths of a Stygian night
Le Roi Soleil is woken, bathed in glorious light’

The composer Marc-Antoine Charpentier spent many years in service to Mademoiselle de Guise, a first cousin of Louis XIV. It was during this time, under the protection of de Guise, that Charpentier wrote and performed many of his chamber operas in obvious defiance of the monopoly Jean-Baptiste Lully held over this genre. Written in 1685, *Les Arts Florissants* is a short chamber opera in five parts about the eponymous Arts, shown flourishing under the magnificent and peaceful reign of Louis XIV. The opera draws heavily on aspects of mythological and natural symbolism, as was popular at the time. The *Ouverture* is a typically French affair, characterized by Charpentier's distinctive use of harmony.

‘A burnished sky flecked with gold and red
A fiery intensity that draws him from his royal bed’

It would be remiss to curate a programme dedicated to Louis XIV and not shine a light on the operas of Jean-Baptiste Lully. Born in Italy, Lully's music is now considered to be the epitome of the French Baroque style, especially within the operatic genre. Lully became known to Louis XIV in 1653, reportedly catching the eye of the King during a performance of *Ballet de la Nuit* in which both men

danced. From that point onwards Lully amassed numerous royal positions, most notably in 1672 when he was appointed the director of the Académie Royale de Musique. *Phaëton* premiered in 1683 at the height of Lully's popularity. In the opera, Phaëton convinces his father to allow him to drive the sun-chariot for one day. In the course of his flight he loses control of the horses, threatening the earth beneath with fiery destruction, and ultimately falls to his death. Louis XIV chose to portray himself as the Sun, the ultimate power which gives life to all things, and as such, *Phaëton* can be read as an allegorical depiction of the punishment awaiting those mortals who dare to raise themselves as high as the 'sun'.

'A luminous warmth suffuses his chambers
As the mortals go about their labours'

François Couperin was an exceptional composer, organist and harpsichordist. Although he came to the fore late in Louis XIV's reign, he made a great impact on the keyboard and chamber music at court and in 1713 was given royal assent to publish his music. His involvement in the musical activities at court may have lessened to a degree after Louis XIV's death in 1715, but he still became Ordinaire de la musique de la chambre du Roy pour le clavecin in 1717, which was one of the highest possible appointments for a court musician. The *Concerts Royaux* were written in 1714 and published in 1722, and are a series of chamber music suites each consisting of a *Prélude* and a succession of dances. Although the suites are perhaps intended for listening more than for dancing, the music reflects the great love and appreciation of dance within the court. The suites also present a wonderful opportunity to explore the many possibilities of instrumentation within our ensemble.

‘Before a grand audience, the supper he savours
The courtiers line up awaiting their favours’

Michel-Richard Delalande was a composer and organist; a contemporary of Lully and Couperin, he taught music to the King’s daughters and was director of music at the Chapelle Royale from 1714 to his death in 1726. Delalande wrote his *Symphonies pour les soupers du Roy* in 1703, to be performed at special meals attended by Louis XIV. These were formal occasions which took place before an invited audience, where the music was key in reinforcing the King’s magnificent self-image. Although mostly unknown today, Delalande’s relative obscurity does not come from a lack of published music, as indeed the *Symphonies* alone consist of ten suites, totalling around 160 movements. Delalande composed up to 300 other pieces of this type, using traditional dance models or presenting character pieces as was popular at the time. Described as quintessentially French in style, Delalande went on to revise a lot of his work, focussing on increased polyphonic counterpoint and Italianate melodic lines. The resulting music is truly captivating, and movements such as the *Passacaille* encapsulate grandeur, intimacy, an innate Frenchness and a simultaneously unique harmonic language.

‘For he is Apollo and when he descends
All are in awe as worldly arts he transcends’

The *Ballet Royal de la Nuit* was a court ballet, organized by the poet Isaac de Benserade, with music by Jean de Cambefort, Jean-Baptiste Boësset, Michel Lambert and possibly others. The entertainment was divided into four parts described as *veilles* (‘watches’), each representing a period of the night; it

was said to have taken thirteen hours to perform from dusk to dawn. Both the *Ouverture* and *Récit de la Nuit*: ‘*Languissante clarté, cachez-vous dessous l’onde*’ (Languishing light, hide yourself beneath the billows) from the first *veille* revel in the darkness of night, but it was the culmination of the fourth and final *veille* that carried the true message. In the final extract *Le Roy représentant le Soleil levant* (The King representing the rising Sun), Apollo, danced by the 14-year-old Louis XIV, banishes the spectre of gloomy night as dawn arrives. This served as a very obvious political allegory for the end of the Fronde rebellion, and was a truly spectacular musical and political statement.

‘Make way for the loveliest Night of the world
Approaching with great strides until wholly unfurled’

Marin Marais was a composer and virtuoso viol player, pupil of Jean-Baptiste Lully and musician at the royal court, appointed in 1679 as Ordinaire de la chambre du Roy pour la viole. Relatively little is known of Marais’ life. He found moderate success at the court, although his legacy is as the man who ‘founded and firmly established the empire of the viol’ (Le Blanc), and as such it is his music for solo viol that is still most widely played today. His *Trios pour le coucher du Roy* (1692) are some of the earliest trio suites published in France. They are harmonically more sophisticated than those of his teacher Lully, and seem to have been intended specifically as *musique de chambre*, written to amuse Louis XIV with allusions to theatre music as opposed to repurposing already extant music for the stage.

ENSEMBLE MOLIÈRE

Ensemble Molière have gained a reputation as an established early music ensemble. Their unique line-up of instruments provides memorable and creative programmes from the repertoire of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, all inspired by the music of the French Baroque.

Ensemble Molière were selected as the first ever BBC Radio 3 New Generation Baroque Ensemble for two years from October 2021, in partnership with BBC Radio 3, the National Centre for Early Music and the Royal College of Music. They have performed throughout the UK and Europe, including concerts at the Buxton International Festival, Beverley Early Music Festival, Lammermuir Festival, MA Festival Fringe in Bruges and Festival Oude Muziek Fringe in Utrecht. The group made their debut at the London Festival of Baroque Music under the 'Future Artists' scheme, and are also former members of the BREMF Live! programme. In 2017, they reached the finals of the York Early Music International Young Artists Competition.

Ensemble Molière's first cross-arts project, *Pygmalion*, was part-funded by Arts Council England and featured an innovative combination of opera and digital media. More recently, the group joined forces with two clowns to create a music theatre show, *Good Soup*, to celebrate the 400th anniversary of their namesake, the French playwright and actor Molière. The production explored Molière's world through his words and the music of his time, and premiered in London in July 2022 in the intimate and theatrical surroundings of Sands Films Studio.

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Philip Hobbs

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Julia Thomas

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Timothée van der Stegen

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This album is supported by BBC Radio 3 as part of the New Generation Baroque Ensemble scheme. The scheme showcases and nurtures exceptional UK-based groups working in the Baroque music sphere, as they take the first steps in their careers. It supports them to reach the next level of professionalism and artistry over a two-year period, using the range of expertise, performance and recording opportunities available through each of the partner organisations – BBC Radio 3, the National Centre for Early Music and the Royal College of Music.



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