



Christophe Rousset

Harpsichordist, Conductor and Musicologist

Founder of the period instrument ensemble Les Talens Lyriques, Christophe Rousset is an inspirational musician and conductor specialising in the baroque and classical repertoire. Initially fired by an interest in archaeology, he diverted his exploration of the past to music. His distinct brand of musical archaeology has led him to uncover and breathe life into so much forgotten repertoire.

Growing up in Aix-en-Provence, Christophe Rousset developed a passion for the Baroque aesthetic. Attending rehearsals at the Festival d'Art Lyrique, he developed a love of opera and the stage, which became a life-long passion.

At the age of thirteen he took up the harpsichord. He progressed to the Schola Cantorum in Paris, where he studied with Huguette Dreyfus, then to the Royal Conservatory in The Hague, to work with Bob van Asperen. At twenty-two he won the prestigious First Prize, as well as the Public Prize, in the Seventh Bruges Harpsichord Competition (1983).

Christophe Rousset's performances as a harpsichordist soon attracted the attention of the international media and record companies. Initially joining orchestras such as Les Arts Florissants and then Il Seminario Musicale, Rousset decided to form his own ensemble,

Les Talens Lyriques, in 1991. Firing the Orchestra with his enthusiasm as a conductor and musicologist, he established himself amongst the front-runners of the period instrument movement, creating historically-informed performances.

Christophe Rousset quickly established his reputation as a highly- talented conductor and musicologist with a flare for the voice and opera, tutoring his own ensemble in forgotten performance practices. He was invited to create the soundtrack to the film *Farinelli* about the famous castrato. This brought further acclaim and led to numerous recordings for Harmonia Mundi, L'Oiseau-Lyre, Fnac Music, Emi-Virgin, Decca, Naïve and Ambroisie.

Particularly inspired by European music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (opera, cantata, oratorio, sonata, symphony, concerto, suite...), Rousset has rediscovered forgotten operas such as *Antigona* by Traetta, *La Capricciosa Corretta* by Martin y Soler, *Armida Abbandonata* by Jommelli, *La Grotta di Trofonio* by Salieri, *Temistocle* and by Jean-Christien Bach.

His many recordings include the complete harpsichord works of François Couperin, Jean-Philippe Rameau, d'Anglebert and Forqueray, and his interpretations of works by J. S. Bach (*Partitas*, *Goldberg Variations*, *Harpsichord Concertos*, *English Suites*, *French Suites*, *Klavierbüchlein für Wilhelm Friedemann*) are regarded as references.

With his ensemble Les Talens Lyriques, his great successes on disc include Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*, Mozart's *Mitridate*, *Overtures* by Rameau, *Persée* and *Roland* by Lully.

Christophe Rousset has received honorary awards from the French government for his pioneering efforts work in classical music.



Les Talens Lyriques

The vocal and instrumental ensemble Les Talens Lyriques was founded in 1991 by harpsichord virtuoso conductor Christophe Rousset. The conductor's choice of title for his orchestra attests to his passionate interest in the repertoire of the 18th Century, in particular operas many of which had been forgotten and which Les Talens Lyriques has re-introduced to audiences. Further more, his strong held belief, born out of a lifetime in the theatre, is that every instrument should be treated in the same way as the voice.

Their operatic repertoire ranges from Monteverdi (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*) to Handel (*Scipione, Riccardo Primo, Rinaldo, Admeto, Giulio Cesare, Serse, Tamerlano, Alcina, Ariodante*), Lully (*Persée, Roland*), Cimarosa (*Il Mercato di Malmantile, Il Matrimonio Segreto*), Traetta (*Antigona, Ippolito ed Aricia*), Jommelli (*Armida abbandonata*), Martin y Soler (*La Capricciosa Corretta*) and even Mozart (*Mitridate, Re di Ponto*).

Integral to success of these operatic performances has been Les Talens Lyriques' collaboration with a wide range of directors including Jean-Marie Villégier, Philippe Lénéaël, Jean-Claude Berutti, Pierre Audi, Jean-Pierre Vincent, Lindsay Kemp, Marco Arturo Marelli, Éric Vigner, Jérôme Deschamps, Marcial di Fonzo Bo, Francisco Negrin, Irina Brook and Lukas Hemleb.

Les Talens Lyriques' repertoire extends beyond opera to other musical genres from the same period, such as motets (Dumont, Daniélis), madrigals, cantatas (Clérambault, Brossard, Montéclair) and French court arias (Dumont, Lambert, de La Barre). In exploring this repertoire, Christophe Rousset surrounds himself with a regular group of singers and instrumentalists who have come to symbolize the "new baroque generation". By building these close partnerships with individual artists, this enables the ensemble to

perfect specific stylistic details and adapt them for both the sacred or secular repertoire of the period.

One of Rousset's key aims is to illustrate some of the masterpieces of their French musical heritage, specially music created along the Paris-Naples axis.

Les Talens Lyriques has recorded for DECCA (Universal Music), Naïve, Ambrosie and Virgin Classics. In 1994, the ensemble has realised the original sound track of the film *Farinelli il Castrato*. In 2001, it won the Classical Music Victory.

Les Talens Lyriques are supported by the French Department of Culture and Communication. They also receive support from the City of Paris and from the Annenberg Foundation. The ensemble is member of the FEVIS and PROFEVIS (Fédération et Syndicat des Ensembles Vocaux et instrumentaux Spécialisés).



Les Talens Lyriques

The vocal and instrumental ensemble Les Talens Lyriques was founded in 1991 by Christophe Rousset. By choosing the name, the conductor attested to his passionate interest in an 18th century music repertoire which he has fortunately begun to re-introduce to the public. Rousset, however, has in no way neglected composers of the previous century.

The repertoire ranges from Monteverdi (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*) to Handel (*Scipione, Riccardo Primo, Rinaldo, Admeto, Giulio Cesare, Serse, Tamerlano, Alcina, Ariodante*), Lully (*Persée, Roland*), Cimarosa (*Il Mercato di Malmantile, Il Matrimonio Segreto*), Traetta (*Antigona, Ippolito ed Aricia*), Jommelli (*Armida abbandonata*), Martin y Soler (*La Capricciosa Corretta*) and even Mozart (*Mitridate, Re di Ponto*).

Les Talens Lyriques is the result of Christophe Rousset's passion for the opera and, as we said above, especially for the 18th century. As a harpsichord player, he maintained that an instrument should be treated in the same way as the voice. Furthermore, his theatrical approach is indissociable from the interpretation aspect as illustrated in his work with producers such as Jean-Marie Villégier, Philippe Lénaël, Jean-Claude Berutti, Pierre Audi, Jean-Pierre Vincent, Lindsay Kemp, Marco Arturo Marelli, Éric Vigner, Jérôme Deschamps, Marcial di Fonzo Bo, Francisco Negrin, Irina Brook and Lukas Hemleb.

Along with the attention given to opera goes the work of exploration of other musical genres from the same period, such as the motet (Dumont, Daniélis), madrigals, cantatas (Clérambault, Brossard, Montéclair) and French court arias (Dumont, Lambert, de La Barre). In exploring this repertoire Christophe Rousset surrounds himself with singers and instrumentalists belonging to the "new baroque generation". A regular collaboration enables thorough work on style specific to each particular music, be it sacred or secular, of this period.

One of the aims of Christophe Rousset is to illustrate a portion of the French musical heritage, along the Paris-Naples axis, a highlight of 18th century European music.

Les Talens Lyriques has recorded for DECCA (Universal Music), Naïve, Ambroisie and Virgin Classics. In 1994, the ensemble has realised the original sound track of the film *Farinelli il Castrato*. In 2001, it won the Classical Music Victory.

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