

Cedille Records

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News

CD to be released Nov. 15, 2011

Trio Settecento's New Album Provides Passport to Baroque France

Period-Instrument Ensemble Performs 'A French Soirée' of Music by Lully, Couperin, Marais, Rebel, Rameau, and Leclair

Period-instrument ensemble Trio Settecento offers an evening's worth of entertainment from 17th- and 18th-century France on *A French Soirée*, the third and newest CD in the trio's musical grand tour of Baroque Europe (Cedille Records CDR 90000 129).

Violinist Rachel Barton Pine, violist da gamba John Mark Rozendaal, and harpsichordist David Schrader perform works by Jean-Baptiste Lully, François Couperin, Marin Marais, Jean-Féry Rebel, Jean-Philippe Rameau, and Jean-Marie Leclair on the new CD, to be released November 15.

In her preface to the CD's program notes, Pine offers her perspective on why French Baroque music is performed almost exclusively by specialists, while Italian and German music of the same period is much more widely played.

"I've come to the conclusion that French Baroque music is highly idiomatic to the instruments for which it was written," she writes, adding that the music requires knowledge of French Baroque ornamentation and rhythmic notation.

On *A French Soirée*, Pine performs on a 1770 Nicola Gagliano violin in original, unaltered condition, with an 18th-century replica bow by Louis Bégin. Rozendaal plays a 1743 basse de viole à sept cordes made by Jean Ouvrard, with bow by Julian Clarke. Schrader plays a replica of the

Dumont-Taskin harpsichord that resides in the Paris Conservatory's museum. The replica was built by Lawrence G. Eckstein of West Lafayette, Ind., in 1983.

The trio chose the tuning pitch of A=392Hz, which was customary when the music was written. "We made this decision not just for the sake of authenticity," Pine writes. "It brings the music to life in unexpected and glorious ways."

The works on *A French Soirée* illustrate the regal pomp and circumstance of Louis XIV's royal court at Versailles and also the more humanistic values of an opposing Paris coalition of disaffected nobles, wealthy bourgeoisie, artists, and free spirits.

In the CD's liner notes, Rozendaal explains that the king favored a conservative, authoritarian musical style that championed nationalism, militarism, order, and masculinity. The Parisian "counter-court" embraced music imbued with individuality — signified by flamboyant instrumental virtuosity — cosmopolitanism, themes of peace and love, and femininity.

The CD opens with *Divertissement*, a 29-minute mini-concert assembled by Trio Settecento from works by court composers Lully (1632–1687), Couperin (1668–1733), and Marais (1656–1728). The program is believed to be characteristic of the weekly chamber-music concerts staged at Versailles during Louis XIV's latter years. It includes excerpts from Lully's *Ballet Royal de Flore* of 1669, a court ballet in which the king himself danced. Couperin's contributions are "suffused with uniquely French *tendresse*, grace of melody, and emotional complexity," Rozendaal writes. Marais' *La Guitare* is an exquisite character piece for viola da gamba that cleverly alternates between emulating the guitar's raucous, suggestive, "Spanish" personality and its feminine, lute-like "French" alter-ego.

Following the *Divertissement* is Couperin's "Troisième Concert." Among its seven movements is a poignant chaconne that inverts the form's usual major-minor-major key scheme.

Rebel's Sonata in D Minor of 1713 represents a convergence of the refined, courtly French style and the extroverted, virtuosic Italian approach. A violinist and composer, Rebel (1666–1747) offers a dramatic prelude that exploits the extreme range of the violin and basse de viole, a courante indebted to Arcangelo Corelli, and a rondeau in the French gallant style.

The final two works on the program “breathe an entirely new spirit,” Rozendaal writes. These are products of a Parisian musical sensibility that embraced individual virtuosity and themes from everyday life.

Rameau (1683–1764), who never held a court appointment, broke from tradition in writing elaborate keyboard parts that engaged the violin and basse de viol in vigorous repartee. “La Pantomime” references the Commedia dell’arte, a troupe of Italian comedic performers once banned from France for offending Louis XIV. “L’Indiscrette” paints a musical portrait of a chatty gossipmonger. The self-referential “La Rameau” “appears to imitate the sounds of the composer’s busy household,” according to Rozendaal’s liner notes.

Leclair (1697–1764) learned violin under the tutelage of the Italian virtuosos Giovanni Battista Somis and Pietro Locatelli. Locatelli’s influence manifests in the left-hand pyrotechnics of Leclair’s sonatas, such as the Sonata en Sol majeur, circa 1740. Here, Leclair transforms the chaconne from a dance movement into a virtuoso vehicle for personal expression.

A French Soirée was produced by Cedille President James Ginsburg and engineered by Bill Maylone. The CD was recorded August 10–14, 2010, in Nichols Concert Hall at the Music Institute of Chicago, Evanston, Ill.

The Artists

Pine, Rozendaal, and Schrader first came together as an ensemble in 1996 to record Handel’s complete violin sonatas for Cedille Records. The Handel CD, released in 1997, became Cedille’s top-selling CD for most of the following decade. The artists enjoyed their collaboration

and decided to continue as a period-instrument ensemble, taking the name Trio Settecento (1700s Trio). The Handel disc led to invitations to perform throughout the U.S., including an acclaimed New York debut at the Frick Collection in 2006 and the ensemble's debut at the Boston Early Music Festival in 2007.

Trio Settecento launched its CD survey of the European Baroque on Cedille Records with the commercially and critically successful *An Italian Sojourn* (Cedille Records 90000 099), released in 2007. The ensemble's *A German Bouquet* (Cedille Records 90000 114), released in 2009, was equally well received. The trio's fourth and final installment in the series, planned for release in fall 2012, will focus on music of the British Isles. More about Trio Settecento is available at www.triosettecento.com.

Fanfare magazine has described violinist Pine as “one of the rare mainstream performers with a total grasp of Baroque style and embellishment.” *American Record Guide*, in its review of *An Italian Sojourn*, said the “truly wonderful survey of Italian Baroque violin music . . . allows Pine to show off the range of her skills: sweet but on-target tone, beautiful phrasing, tasteful embellishment, and sometimes hair-raising virtuosity.” Among her many awards and credits is a gold medal from the 1992 J.S. Bach International Violin Competition in Leipzig, Germany. Her Web site is www.rachelbartonpine.com.

Rozendaal specializes in performing and teaching stringed instrument music from the Baroque and Renaissance eras. He was founding artistic director of the Chicago Baroque Ensemble and has performed solo and continuo roles with many period instrument ensembles, including the Newberry Consort, Orpheus Band, Boston Early Music Festival Violin Band, the New York Consort of Viols, Repast Baroque Ensemble, and others. His website is www.jmrozendaal.com.

Schrader is equally at home in front of a harpsichord, organ, piano, or fortepiano. He has appeared with the Chicago, Dallas, San Francisco, and Colorado Symphony orchestras and at a host

of prestigious festivals and music conventions. He performs regularly with Chicago's Music of the Baroque, the Newberry Consort, and the venerable Bach Week Festival in Evanston, Ill. He is a founding member of Baroque Band, Chicago's premier period-instrument orchestra. His website is www.davidschrader.com.

Cedille Records

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A French Soirée
(Cedille Records CDR 90000 129)

**Music of Jean-Baptiste Lully, François Couperin,
Marin Marais, Jean-Féry Rebel, Jean-Philippe Rameau,
and Jean-Marie Leclair**
(Total Time: 78:55)

Trio Settecento