

Rameau - Five Concertos for the Harpsichord Flute and Viola da Gamba (1987)

Written by bluesever
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1. *Ier Concert, RCT 7* - *La Coulicam* - *La Livri: Rondeau Gracieux* - *Le Vézinnet*
2. *Ile Concert, RCT 8* - *La Laborde* - *La Boucon: Air Gracieux* - *L'Agaçante 1er and 2e Menuet* 3. *Ille Concert, RCT 9* - *La La Poplinière* - *La Timide: 1er Rondeau, 2e Rondeau* - *1er Tamourin, 2e Tambourin en Rondeau* 4. *IVe Concert, RCT 10* - *La Pantomime* - *L'Indiscrète: Rondeau* - *La Rameau* 5. *Ve Concert, RCT 11* - *La Forqueray: Fugue* - *La Cupis* - *La Marais* Yannick le Gaillard (harpsichord) Daniel Cuiller (violin) Philippe Allain-Dupré (flute) Marianne Muller (bass viola)

The "premier concert" from Jean-Phillippe Rameau's *Pièces de clavecin en concerts* was first published at Paris in 1741. It is the first in a series of five suites written for solo harpsichord with optional parts for violin or flute and violoncello or viol. Rameau was a prolific composer of opera and solo harpsichord music; however, these five suites represent his only contribution to the form of chamber music.

Contrary to the typical French suite of the period, which consist of six or seven movements, Rameau's "concerts" are short, consisting of only three to five pieces per suite. Rather than being titled in accordance with the names of dance steps, the *Pièces* are labeled with descriptive titles that are often rather obscure in their meaning. *Le Coulicam* is widely interpreted as meaning *The Kubla Khan*, or may be an anagram for something less delicate. It alternates drooping and leaping figures over a wide compass in the accompanying instruments, while the harpsichord keeps going on a continuous stream of notes. *La Livri* is the best known of the three pieces in the set; it was likely dedicated to the Count of Livri and features a falling progression that, though typically French and of the period, is not unlike similar gestures heard in popular music of the 1960s. The final movement, *La Vézinnet*, likely refers to the *Vézinnet Wood* once located about a mile from St. Germain de Paris; its lively rhythms and joyous spirit could indicate children at play.

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The immediacy and charm of this short suite have led to its status as a favored filler item for classical music radio programs in the United States. Nonetheless, the "premier concert" of Rameau's Pièces de clavecin en concerts has long been known to lovers of chamber music as a standard recital work, and before the period instrument boom of the 1980s was often played in its alternate scoring of flute, cello, and keyboard. ---Uncle Dave Lewis, allmusic.com

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