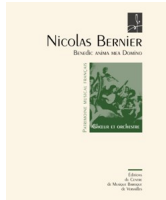


Nicolas Bernier - Les Grands Motets (2010)

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Nicolas Bernier - Les Grands Motets (2010)



I. Benedic anima mea II. Cum invocarem Concert donné le 13 octobre 2007, Chapelle royale du Château de Versailles
III. Laudate Dominum IV. Regina Caeli

Concert du jeudi 2 décembre 2010, Chapelle royale du Château de Versailles Les Pages et les Chantres du Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles The English Concert (I, II) Olivier Schneebeli – director

The work of the Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles (CMBV) has, in recent years, led to an important expansion and improvement in the availability of reliable editions of the works produced by the grand motet composers. The grand motet, the most important sacred form in France from the beginning of the reign of Louis XIV until the time of the French Revolution, has seen relatively few performances in the United States in the last half century, but an increasing number of performances and recordings, centered mostly in Europe, are leading to increased awareness of the importance and beauty of these works. Grands motets survive from about eighty composers of those who contributed to the genre over its 130-year history, and of those composers about two dozen can be listed as the leading figures, including most of the composers who served in the Royal Chapel as did Nicolas Bernier.

Nicolas Bernier (1665-1734) distinguished himself as a composer, clavecinist, theoretician, and pedagogue. He held great respect as a musician, and became perhaps the most distinguished teacher identified with the second generation of grand motet composers. Bernier is thought to have received his training in his hometown of Mantes-la-Jolie, about thirty miles downstream from Paris, and at the cathedral of Evreux, after which he studied in Rome with Caldara. He then successively served as maitre de musique at the cathedral of Chartres (1694-98), and at Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois (1698-1704) before accepting a post at Ste Chapelle in Paris (1704-26), where he succeeded Marc-Antoine Charpentier. In 1723 he was appointed to serve the Royal Chapel at Versailles, a post he held for the rest of his life. Bernier may be viewed as a

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progressive force in French music, one that forged a good balance of French and Italian elements in his works. He probably became most famous for his secular cantatas and petits motets that became available in print, but eleven grands motets survive. At least nine others have been lost.

We do not know when Bernier composed his *Benedic anima mea Domino*. It is among the shortest of his grand motets; there are five numbered movements, one of which, the fourth, appears in the original manuscript in a different copying hand along with the notation "Recit adjoutte que l'on peut dire si l'on veut". --- questia.com

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