

Preface

Les Baricades Mistérieuses was published in the *Second Livre de pièces de Clavecin* by François Couperin. This book contains *ordres* six to twelve. The sixth *ordre* (therefore the first in the book) contains eight pieces in the key of B♭ major: *Les Moissonneurs* (The Reapers, p. 1), *Les Langueurs-Tendres* (Tender Languors, p. 2), *Le Gazouillement* (Warbling, p. 3), *La Bersan* (p. 4), *Les Baricades Mistérieuses* (The Mysterious Barricades, p. 6), *Les Bergeries Rondeau* (The Sheepfolds, p. 8), *La Commère* (The Gossip, p. 10) and *Le Moucheron* (The Gnat, p. 11). If we were required to define the atmosphere of this collection of pieces, the titles chosen by Couperin could be said to suggest a pastoral and gallant style. The rondeau form predominates as the composer has used it for four of the eight pieces (*Les Moissonneurs*, *Le Gazouillement*, *Les Baricades Mistérieuses* and *Les Bergeries*).

The publication date of the *Second Livre* has long been debated.¹ Although Couperin had received a royal privilege to publish on 14 May 1713, publication was delayed by several years, probably until around 1717. This date seems most likely, given Couperin's allusions in his preface to the book *L'Art de toucher le clavecin* (published in 1716) and Marin Marais' book of viol pieces, which was published in the same year and (like the *Second livre de pièces de clavecin*) was engraved by François Duplessis.²

Fifteen reprints of the *Second Livre* have been identified, dating from 1717 to 1745. We know that the print runs were small, but the use of engraved plates made it easy to reprint and sometimes to insert a re-engraved page if the plate had degraded.³

Unlike *Les Bergeries*, *Les Baricades Mistérieuses* was not widely distributed in manuscript form during the eighteenth century; it only appeared in the vast compilation made after 1742 by Fr. Alexandre-Guy Pingré.⁴ However, its style is a relic of the

period, recalling that of lute music.⁵ Although Couperin did not mark this piece '*Luthé, et lié*' (lute-like and legato) as he did *Les Charmes* (in the ninth *ordre*), its style is based on broken chords and especially on the systematic use of suspensions and syncopation (or as Couperin himself put it, '*les parties luthées et syncopées*') to create its characteristic harmonic instability. In some of the pieces, this type of writing is reminiscent of his uncle, Louis Couperin.

In this edition, the rondeau refrain has been written out in full (in the original edition it appears as repeats). The original engraving has very few ornaments, those that are included appearing only at the concluding cadences of the rondeau and each couplet. The three types of ornaments or '*agrèments*' can be realized according to the table provided by Couperin at the end of his first *Livre de clavecin*: *pincé simple* (bars 9[a+b], 29, 43, 65), *tremblement* (bars 4, 35, 38, 68), *tremblement fermé* (bar 16) and *doublé sur tremblement* (bar 21).⁶

If in doubt about the character of the piece, simply follow the tempo indication chosen by Couperin: '*Vivement*' (briskly), which will avoid the pathos sometimes heard in modern interpretations of the piece. According to Antoine Furetière's *Dictionnaire universel*, the term 'barricade' means a 'Defence and fortification or entrenchment constructed in haste using barrels, carts, joists or felled trees in order to bar a route. Barricades are also made behind the door to a room, blocking it with bolts, bars, chests, etc. *Les Barricades de la Ligue* were those built during the La Fronde war in Paris in August 1648.'⁷ Although at the end of the seventeenth century the term was a military one, there is no reason not to add the idea of enclosure that is perhaps suggested by Couperin's perpetuation of the melodic formula to which he so expertly returns.

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(Translation: Rebecca S. Mynett)

¹ François Couperin, *Pièces de clavecin – 2. Deuxième livre*. Published by Maurice Cauchie and revised from the original sources by Kenneth Gilbert, Monaco 1980 (Œuvres complètes de François Couperin II).

² François Couperin, *Pièces de clavecin. Second livre (1717) avec 8 Préludes et l'Allemande de L'Art de toucher le clavecin (1716–1717)*, edited by Denis Herlin, Kassel et al., 2018.

³ Kenneth Gilbert, "Les livres de François Couperin. Note bibliographique", *Revue de musicologie*, 58, n° 2 (1972), p. 259.

⁴ Now held in Paris, Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, Ms. 2379, pp. 200–201. Bruce Gustafson and David Fuller, *A Catalogue of French Harpsichord Music 1699–1780*, Oxford 1990, pp. 92, 319.

⁵ David Ledbetter, *Harpsichord and Lute Music in 17th Century France*, London 1987.

⁶ See Table of Ornaments, p. 7f.

⁷ Antoine Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel, contenant généralement tous les mots françois tant vieux que modernes, et les termes de toutes les sciences et des arts*, The Hague and Rotterdam 1690, no page numbers, image 198, left column (online: BnF Gallica).

Les Baricades Mistérieuses

RONDEAU

François Couperin (1668–1733)

Vivement

The first system of musical notation for 'Les Baricades Mistérieuses' consists of two staves. The upper staff is in bass clef with a 2/4 time signature and a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It begins with a treble clef and contains a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, many beamed together, with some notes marked with accents. The lower staff is also in bass clef and contains a series of quarter and eighth notes, some beamed together, providing a harmonic accompaniment.

The second system of musical notation continues the piece from measure 5. It features the same two-staff structure as the first system, with the upper staff containing a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes and the lower staff providing a steady accompaniment.

The third system of musical notation begins at measure 9 and includes a first ending bracket labeled '1.' and a second ending bracket labeled '2. 1er COUPLET'. The notation continues with the same two-staff format, showing the development of the melodic and harmonic lines.

The fourth system of musical notation starts at measure 12. It continues the piece with the same two-staff structure, featuring intricate rhythmic patterns in the upper staff and a supporting accompaniment in the lower staff.