

NICOLAS DE GRIGNY

Récit de Tierce
en Taille

FOR ORCHESTRA

TRANSCRIBED BY
GEORGE BENJAMIN

(2004)

FABER *ff* MUSIC

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Written for the 2004 BBC Proms

The first performance was given by Ensemble Modern Orchestra, conducted by the composer,
in the Royal Albert Hall, London, as part of the 110th BBC Proms Season, on 23 July 2004

Duration: c.5 minutes

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ORCHESTRA

4 piccolos (all doubling alto flutes)

cor anglais

3 clarinets in B \flat

bass clarinet

contrabassoon

3 horns in F

4 trumpets

bass trumpet

2 trombones

tuba

percussion (3 players)

2 glockenspiels, bass drum

celesta

2 harps

5 violins

3 violas

8 double basses

The score is in C

Instrumental parts available on hire from the publishers

PERFORMANCE NOTE

The preferred string strength for this piece is 5 violins, 3 violas and 8 double basses. However, full orchestral violin and viola sections can also be employed, in which case the 5 violin parts should be distributed as follows:

parts 1, 2, 3 to Violins I (divided into 3)

parts 4, 5 to Violins II (divided into 2)

When full violin and viola sections are employed, the following distinctions between solo and tutti lines are suggested:

bars 1–6 *sol*

bars 12–15 *tutti*

bars 20–25 *sol*

bars 25 (from the ***sfzp*** chords)–37 *tutti*

bars 41–51 *sol*

bars 52–54 *tutti*

PROGRAMME NOTE

In his brief life the French composer-organist Nicolas de Grigny (1671–1703) published only one work, his *Livre d'Orgue*, yet this collection of 43 separate pieces impressed no less a figure than J. S. Bach, who assiduously made a hand copy of the first edition.

The *Livre d'Orgue* displays an impressive diversity of compositional skills, ranging from fugues to pieces of a highly free, almost improvisatory character, amongst these the *Récit de Tierce en Taille*. This movement is one of the jewels of Baroque organ music. Its extraordinary linear style, with its exuberant ornamentation, is supported by wonderfully sonorous harmony. The idiosyncratic registration is equally striking, with every note of the main melody doubled by an organ stop two octaves and a major third above – hence the title (*Recitative of the Third in the Tenor*).

I have orchestrated this piece for an identical ensemble to my *Palimpsests*, with the exception of an added cor anglais solo which is given some of the most intricate melodic passages. I have tried to capture the spirit of De Grigny's registration by frequently 'illuminating' the central melody with parallel harmonics which constantly change in depth and colour.

GB

Récit de Tierce en Taille

Larghetto

* multiple grace notes on the beat, all other grace notes (throughout) before the beat