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**The music of René Drouard de Bousset
(1703-1760):
a source study and stylistic survey, with emphasis on his
sacred output.**

by
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VOLUME ONE

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ABSTRACT

René Drouard de Bousset (1703-1760) was an admired composer and an organist of renown. This thesis examines this musician's life and work, and attempts to bring Bousset's music, hitherto largely unknown, to the attention of musicologists and performers today. Primarily a source study, the thesis makes a survey of all known copies of Bousset's published works, addressing questions of dates, reprints and corrections. Historical context and musical style are also discussed. Particular emphasis is given to Bousset's sacred music in the French language - two volumes of sacred cantatas and eight settings of *Odes sacrées* by Jean-Baptiste Rousseau - and its place within the French tradition of Psalm paraphrase settings. The figure of J.-B. Rousseau is also examined, as the librettist of Bousset's *Odes*, and as an important literary contributor to French music at the turn of the eighteenth century. The source study is supplemented by a catalogue in the style of the *Philidor-Oeuvres* database produced by the Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles, containing all Bousset's known works, extant and lost.

This exposition of Bousset's compositional output is prefaced by a biographical overview assembled principally from eighteenth-century publications and archival documents. Volume II of this thesis comprises a critical performing edition of Bousset's first volume of *Cantates spirituelles* (1739).

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TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

Source locations

| | |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| F-P arch. nat. | Paris – Archives Nationales |
| F-Pa | Paris – Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal |
| F-Pc | Paris – Bibliothèque du Conservatoire |
| F-Pn | Paris – Bibliothèque Nationale |
| F-V | Versailles – Bibliothèque municipale |
| GB-Lbl | London – British Library |
| GB-Lbm | London – British Museum |

Instrumentation

| | |
|------|----------------------------------|
| sol2 | Soprano voice (dessus) |
| ut1 | Mezzo-soprano voice (bas dessus) |
| fa4 | Bass voice (basse) |
| fl | flute |
| vl | violin |
| vle | viol |
| vcl | violoncello |
| vie | hurdy-gurdy (vielle) |
| mus | musette |
| bn | bassoon |
| bc | basse-continue |

PREFACE

René Drouard de Bousset was a respected composer and organist who made an important contribution to sacred repertoire in the French language at the end of the Baroque era. Though the surviving body of his published work is small in comparison to some of his more illustrious contemporaries, it is not insignificant, and his contribution to uncommon genres – the sacred cantata, music for hurdy-gurdy – marks him out as worthy of consideration. Because Bousset favoured these unusual genres his name is not entirely forgotten. The *Cantates spirituelles* warrant mention in most modern studies of the French cantata, while his *Concertos en trio* are known to hurdy-gurdy enthusiasts. For the most part, however, the name René de Bousset is almost entirely unknown to modern-day performers of baroque music.

The first part of this study is an attempt to reconstruct Bousset's life and career as a composer and organist. Much of this information has been gathered from archival documents and eighteenth-century accounts, though modern studies, particularly the brief articles in standard musical reference works, have naturally provided a much-needed starting point.¹ I am particularly indebted to the work of George Servières, which brought to my attention archival documents pertaining to Bousset's employment in Parisian churches.²

The chief component of Volume I, Part 1 of this thesis has been the location and description of extant copies of Bousset's work, for which the RISM *Einzeldrucke vor 1800* has naturally provided an invaluable starting point. The catalogue in Volume I, Part 2 is based on the format of the Philidor-Oeuvres database produced by the *Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles (CMBV)*. All known lost and extant works of René Drouard de Bousset are represented in as much detail as has been available for the present study. It may be assumed that this does not represent Bousset's entire output: the annual motets composed for the Saint-Louis day celebrations of the academies of

¹ Notably David Tunley and Catherine Cessac, 'Bousset, René [Drouart] de', in Sadie, S (ed.), *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Vol. 4. London: Macmillan, 2001, p. 121 and Georgie Durosoir, 'Bousset, René (Drouard)', *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Personal* Vol 3. Kassel: Barenreiter ; Stuttgart : Metzler, 2000, p. 566.

² Servières, Georges, *Documents inédits sur les Organistes français des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*, Paris: Schola Cantorum, 1923, p. 7.

sciences and inscriptions, for example, are lost along with any record of their existence. A major source of information on Bousset's other lost works has been the *Mercure de France*, particularly the references to Bousset's involvement in the *Concert spirituel* brought to light by Constant Pierre in his *Histoire du Concert spirituel*.³ All references to untitled lost works are treated as individual pieces and accorded a separate entry in the catalogue, though it is of course possible that two or more commentaries may refer to the same untitled work.

It has not been within the scope of this study to provide a detailed musical analysis of all Bousset's works. Instead, I have attempted to place Bousset's music within a larger context, and provide some insight into its standing amongst contemporary repertoire. It is hoped the edition of the first volume of Bousset's sacred cantatas, comprising Volume II of this thesis, will encourage performers to explore this little-known repertoire.

Throughout this thesis, the original spelling and punctuation has been retained in quotations from eighteenth-century French sources. Translations, unless otherwise attributed, are my own. Catalogue numbers (starting RdB or JDB) cited in Volume I, Part 1 refer to the catalogue, Volume I, Part 2.

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³ Constant Pierre, *Histoire du concert spirituel 1725-1790*. Paris, Société française de musicologie, 1975.