

**INTERPRETATION AND TECHNIQUE COURSE ON PERIOD KEYBOARDS
(CLAVICHORD, HARPSICHORD, ORGAN)**

**from Monday 3 to Friday 7 January 2022
at La Chaise-Dieu (Haute-Loire)**

by Benjamin ALARD

A regular guest at La Chaise-Dieu, where he has performed several times as a soloist and chamber musician both at the international summer festival and during the “rendez-vous en saisons”, Benjamin Alard has established a special musical relationship with this abbey. Between two recording sessions of the complete keyboard works of Johann Sebastian Bach, which he is producing for the Harmonia Mundi label, he will be coming to share some secrets of his “art of playing” the harpsichord and organ in a friendly and studious atmosphere, offering a course for high-level young keyboardists at the end of their studies or at the beginning of their professional career.

What is teaching? Learning? Transmitting? Guiding?

My busy activity as a concert performer and titular organist, a constant stream of recordings which follow one another at a regular rate and demand a lot of preparation and rehearsals, and all the travelling I do prevent me from devoting the time I would like to the young musicians who regularly solicit my help. It is for this reason that I cannot find the time required to teach a class of students for whom I would be responsible. However, I do like to share, to listen, to try to understand the strong and weak points of these future musicians. These four days of exchange and sharing organised at La Chaise-Dieu for the beginning of January 2021 are intended for young musicians aged between 16 and 30, who are naturally progressing towards a professional musical career and with whom I would like to focus on the complementary practice of different historical keyboard instruments, as well as draw their attention to improvisation in given styles (from the beginning of the seventeenth century to the end of the eighteenth), which I believe indispensable for an understanding of music as a language we speak within the same family of instruments, the keyboards. A musician and composer like Johann Sebastian Bach, among other keyboard masters, played the clavichord as well as the organ and harpsichord. This complementarity, adaptability and richness brought to one instrument in relation to another, which he bequeathed to us, are identical for each family of instruments, the brass and strings, just like a violinist playing the viola da gamba as well as the viola d'amore or the viola. The same was true for singers, who were able to express themselves in several tessiture until fairly recently. This is why it seems natural to me to offer a course in interpretation and technique in the broadest sense of the term in this exceptional setting, bringing together several instruments with different keyboards in a variety of playing conditions. This is what La Chaise-Dieu offers us with its exceptional historical venue.

Benjamin Alard

- **Applications invited from:** keyboard students (harpsichordists, organists) of a high level, with a view to a professional career or at the very beginning of their career.
- **Number of students:** limited to 8 active trainees and 3 unregistered listeners.
- **Instruments available**
2 clavichords :
 - Clavichord after Friederici, made by Emile Jobin (2019) ;
 - Clavichord after Tannenberg, made by Jean Tournay (1996);
 4 harpsichords including :
 - Frédéric Bertrand harpsichord (2016) after Taskin (2 eight-foot stops, one four-foot stop + buff stop) ;
 - Marc Fontaine harpsichord(2003), copy of French seventeenth-century model (2 eight-foot stops, one four-foot stop);
 Historic organ of the abbey church of Saint-Robert de La Chaise-Dieu (1683 - 1727, Marin Carouge - 1995, Michel Garnier; see details on <https://www.abbaye-chaise-dieu.com/visites/lorgue/>).
- **Organisation of the course:**
 - Individual lessons in the morning ;
 - Group lessons in the afternoon ;
- **Organisation of personal study:** outside the group lessons, access to the instruments installed in the Auditorium Cziffra and to 3 individual study rooms within the abbey (Auditorium and West Wing).
- **Audition at the end of the course** from 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm on Friday, 7 January 2022 at the Cziffra Auditorium in La Chaise-Dieu.

Biography of Benjamin Alard:

The world of Benjamin Alard is that of the music of Johann Sebastian Bach and it is for this musical complicity that the jury of the Bruges International Harpsichord Competition awarded him his first prize in 2004. Attracted at a very young age to the mysteries of the organ, his first teachers were Louis Thiry and François Ménissier at the conservatories of Dieppe and then Rouen.

It is thanks to Elisabeth Joyé, with whom he studied in Paris, that he discovered the harpsichord repertoire. In 2003, he joined the Schola Cantorum in Basel to work with Jörg-Andreas Bötticher, Jean-Claude Zehnder and Andrea Marcon. Since 2005 Benjamin Alard has been the organist at the church of Saint-Louis-en-l'île in Paris, playing the Bernard Aubertin organ, where he regularly gives recitals arranged around the music of Bach.

On both the harpsichord and organ, he divides his time between recitals and chamber music (on two harpsichords with Élisabeth Joyé, for sonatas with the violinist François Fernandez and the flautist Emmanuel Pahud), and each season he is a guest of the leading early music centres around the world.

For Hortus, Benjamin Alard has recorded the "Andreas Bach Buch", transcriptions, the Bauyn Manuscript and a record of French music from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as well as J.S. Bach's Trio Sonatas for organ and the Clavier Übung I and II for Alpha. These recordings have been regularly acclaimed by the music press.

Benjamin Alard has begun recording the complete solo works for keyboards by Johann Sebastian Bach with Harmonia Mundi. This work of great significance will take several years to complete, with the first 5 volumes of a series of 18 now available. The release of volume 5 "Weimar 1708-1713 – Toccatas and Fugues" published in fall 2021, will be followed by the publication of the recording of the 1st book of the "Clavier bien tempéré" on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the book (March 2022). Then, Harmonia Mundi will publish a box set dedicated to the "Orgelbüchlein".

Benjamin Alard plays regularly in the main musical centers, from Paris to Moscow and at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, in Barcelona and Madrid but also in Belgium and Switzerland.

www.benjaminalard.net

Description		Cost	Number	Total
Association membership ¹	Over 25	€20		
	25 or less	€10		
Course registration fee	Active participant	€250		
	Unregistered listener	€100		
Contribution to costs (residence, meals) ²			€225	
			OVERALL:	

By taking part in the interpretation and technique course on period keyboards given by Benjamin Alard and organised by the "Festival de La Chaise-Dieu" Association,

- I accept the possibility that I may be photographed and/or filmed: Yes No
- I accept to receive mailings from the Festival de La Chaise-Dieu: Yes No
- I have read and accepted the following conditions

Date:

Signature (of the parents for minors):

¹ Membership of the "Festival de La Chaise-Dieu" Association provides coverage by the Festival's civil liability insurance.

² The contribution to the costs of the stay includes individual accommodation in the centre of the village (hotel or bed and breakfast), from Sunday 2/01 in the evening to Saturday 8/01 in the morning, as well as the midday and evening meals taken together (from the evening of Sunday 2/01 to the evening of Friday 7/01). If you wish, you may make your own arrangements for accommodation.

CONDITIONS

- After examination of your application form and the receipt of our agreement, registration is confirmed upon receipt of a €100 deposit by cheque payable to “Association Festival de La Chaise-Dieu”.
- In case of cancellation by the course participants, any sums paid in advance will not be refunded.
- The balance of the registration fee (registration fees and, if applicable, participation in the costs of the stay) must be paid before 3 January 2022.
- Participants who are not yet adult will benefit from increased supervision in the spaces in which the course is to be held, but will not be taken under the wing of the Festival. A parental authorisation is required to confirm their registration.
- The contribution to the cost of the stay is per person, and covers:
 - Accommodation, including breakfast, is for 5 nights in a single room (bed and breakfast or hotel) in the centre of the village of La Chaise-Dieu (from the evening of Sunday, 2 January, to the morning of Friday, 7 January);
 - Meals (lunches and dinners, excluding drinks) from Sunday, 2 January, to Friday, 7 January (dinner), inclusive.
- Participants may decide to provide for their own accommodation and food by contacting the Tourist Information Office on 04 71 00 01 16.

Information

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