

A photograph of a man, Christopher Wilke, playing a theorbo. He is wearing a red and black striped shirt. The background is dark, and the lighting is dramatic, highlighting his face and the instrument. The title text is in the top right corner.

Charles Hurel:
Works For Theorbo

Christopher Wilke,
theorbo



The instrumental music of the French baroque, especially that for plucked strings, lives for us in a mysterious world in which the improbable combination of seemingly paradoxical aesthetic opposites exist in perfect balance: the reconciliation of Dionysian and Apollonian ideals. Thus, the music is at once sensual and cerebral, simple and complex, impulsive yet deliberate, genuinely heartfelt while being at the same time aloofly dispassionate, and gracefully entertaining yet deeply, even gravely profound.

The theorbo music of Charles Hurel along with that of the other French lutenists exists in this world. Hurel, who came from a family of instrument makers and performers, left his collection of pieces in a single manuscript owned by one Marie Du Port de la Balme which is now housed in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York. Clearly, the five suites in the book, copied in Hurel's own hand, were provided to her as a student as evidenced by the fact that the chaconne in the final suite bears the dedication "composed for Mademoiselle de la Balme by Hurel."

Like the vast majority of French instrumental music, the collection is made up predominantly of dances, each structured in two short sections, prefaced by a quasi-improvised prelude written down without meter or barlines. The pieces are arranged in suites grouped by key and each dance owes its character and gen-

eral rhythmic pattern to one of an international collection of styles including German, Italian, English, French, Spanish, perhaps even that of the New World.

Hurel's music makes for enjoyable listening, filled with rhythmic surprises, harmonic variety, and clever, unexpected turns of phrase. It can certainly be listened to on this level. However, what seems at first glance to be a repertoire of short, simple - and beautiful! - pieces reveals, on closer contemplation, a vast zen-like world constructed not by accident in which the musical figures themselves refer to a universal Platonic ideal that is only hinted at through constant allusion and gesture.

Christopher Wilke, 2006

CHRISTOPHER WILKE is an eclectic musician who concentrates on music for plucked strings, both modern and historical. As such, he plays electric and acoustic guitars, renaissance and baroque lutes, and theorbo. These fields of activity have naturally lead him to participate in such diverse areas of performance as contemporary music festivals, baroque operas, rock bands, and solo performances in North America and Europe.

In addition to his work as a performer, Mr. Wilke is also a published composer. He earned his MM from the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music and has studied lute privately with Nigel North.

Charles Hurel: The Theorbo Music

Christopher Wilke, theorbo



Suite en sol majeur	(16:35)	Suite en re majeur	(10:23)
1 Les preludes	3:21	22 Prélude	1:26
2 Allemande giguée	2:16	23 Courante	1:37
3 Courante	1:20	24 Autre courante	1:41
4 Autre courante	1:39	25 Sarabande	2:32
5 Sarabande "La Boulonnoise"	2:51	26 Les Pellerins de Mr. Lully (Ballet Royal)	1:40
6 Gavotte "La Lionne" - Gavotte pour Mlle. De Lionne - Gavotte "La Lionne"	2:55	27 Les Mattasins de Mr. Lully (Psyché)	1:24
7 Minuet de Poictou - Autre minuet - Minuet de Poictou	2:09		
		Suite en la mineur	(12:20)
Suite en ut majeur	(12:38)	28 Prélude	2:07
8 Prélude	1:34	29 Sarabande	3:11
9 Courante	1:33	30 Minuet de l'opera de Mr. Lully (Cadmus) et Chaconne "Composée pour Mlle de la Balme par Hurel"	6:59
10 Sarabande	2:48		
11 Autre courante	1:26		
12 Autre sarabande	3:56		
13 Gavotte	1:17		
		Total Duration:	67:26
Suite en re mineur	(15:37)		
14 Prélude	2:02		
15 Autre prélude	1:46		
16 Allemande	2:30		
17 Gigue	1:43		
18 Courante	1:43		
19 Sarabande	3:15		
20 Autre courante	1:15		
21 Gavotte	1:17		



All works by Charles Hurel except tracks 26, 27, and 30 which are Hurel's period transcriptions of pieces by Lully.

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Engineered by Darijus Spakauskas. Cover: Chris Theorbo by Joseph Rue.