

# SUSPENSION:

## A SERIES OF MUSICAL REFLECTIONS

### No:8

I hope you've been keeping well and enjoying the selections so far.

Today, on Holy Saturday, I've opted for something that sort of does what it says on the tin: François Couperin's *Élévation* (Tierce En Taille). I'm hoping you may recognise this one, as it is one of my own personal favourites, and I have on occasion offered this as a quiet opening 'voluntary' (the fancy term for an organ prelude or postlude) at our services.

This short, but exquisite piece, comes from the only collection of organ music written by the French baroque composer, harpsichordist and organist, his *Pièces d'orgue*. This source is comprised of two sets of Masses; the order of pieces within each set literally follows the shape of the Latin Mass. The first was intended for parishes and secular settings ('paroisses pour les fêtes solennelles') and the second for abbeys and convents ('couvents de religieux et religieuses'). Composed between the years 1689 and 1690, when Couperin would have been in his early twenties, he lacked the funding to get them published, but it has subsequently been recognised that they're one of the most important sets of French organ music (of which there's a lot) in existence. Pretty impressive really.

Now, my choice of a piece called *Élévation* during Holy Week will, I'm sure, seem pretty self-explanatory. The bracketed Tierce En Taille? Maybe less so. This refers to the almost nasal quality of the organ timbre selected for the tune. The 'tierce' is an organ stop which, when pulled out, opens up a series of pipes which are meant to create a sound similar to the baroque instrument called the viol, which is the predecessor of what we know now as the 'cello. You'll hear an almost out-of-tune version of the melody sort of floating above the texture - that's a part of the effect. It's sort of unusual and almost ethereal. See what you think.

**Something to listen out for in this piece:** the idea of elevation, or rising, is written into this piece. Throughout the movement we hear repeated sets of ascending quavers (short notes).

<https://youtu.be/dRE5Jazeg14>

Enjoy.  
Sarah.