

"The Golden Age of Harpsichord Music" Works by Besard, Couperin, Francisque, Scarlatti, Freixanet, Bach, Bull, Byrd, Philips, Peerson, and Albéniz - Rafael Puyana (har)Mercury SR90304

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The harpsichord, sometimes disrespectfully referred to as a plucked instrument with keys, left its stamp on the musical language of the Baroque as no other. Whether employed as a continuous bass to accompany delicate chamber music, or heard in heady open-air concerts, or just as a solo instrument, its bright sound, rich in overtones, was highly esteemed by all important composers and musicians of the era. Due to the construction of the instrument it is not possible to play with a differentiated volume of sound, so performers made a virtue of necessity in that they concentrated upon lively phrasing and a well-considered choice of register.

In the present recording Rafael Puyana plays a two-manual Pleyel harpsichord and interprets a wide and varied range of European keyboard works from the 17th and 18th centuries. Along with compositions by Louis Couperin and Domenico Scarlatti's, both of whom had a great influence on style in their day, this compilation has at its heart works by the English composers John Bull, William Byrd and Peter Philips, which are taken from the most famous collection of all Baroque compositions, the "Fitzwilliam Virginal Book". Short notes on the back cover provide useful information on the works' historical context.

Recording: ?April and May 1962 at Ballroom Studio A of Fine Recording, New York City, by C. Robert Fine and Robert Eberenz

Production: ?Wilma Cozart-Fine and Harold Lawrence

