

# CLASSICAL MUSIC

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MAGAZINE

## Les frères Francœur

Théotime Langlois de Swarte (violin), Justin Taylor (harpsichord) (Alpha Classics)

### Our rating

5.0 out of 5-star rating

Published: November 2, 2022

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### Les frères Francœur

Works by F, L and L-J Francœur; plus works by Anet, Durocher and Rebel

Théotime Langlois de Swarte (violin), Justin Taylor (harpsichord)

*Alpha Classics ALPHA895 78:29 mins*

Plaudits to violinist Théotime Langlois de Swarte and his Le Consort colleague, harpsichordist Justin Taylor, and Alpha Classics for this truly commanding documentation of 18th-century French music. *Les frères Francœur* presents a family tree in sound, with music by brothers Louis and François Francœur and Louis's son Louis-Joseph alongside works by compatriots Jean-Jacques-Baptiste Anet, François Rebel and Jean Durocher. Aided by authoritative booklet notes, the album takes us on an

enchanting journey through repertoire which to many will be unfamiliar. Indeed, 21 of the album's 31 tracks are world-premiere recordings.

Under the Bourbon King Louis XV, the Paris Opéra or Académie Royale de Musique was the city's most prestigious institution. The partnership of François Francœur and François Rebel demonstrates how the creation of works for the stage was often a collaborative and fluid process. We hear selections from six of their stage works, drawn from the range of French operatic genres they traversed. From *Pyrame et Thisbé*, their 1726 *tragédie en musique* for the Paris Opéra, we hear the warriors' air from Act I, an instrumental number and the ravishing 'Pour plaire l'art...' from Act II of the *ballet-héroïque*, *Le Prince de Noisy*, premiered in Versailles in 1749. Among the five sonatas, those by Anet and Louis Francœur afford new perspectives on the genre. Louis-Joseph's chaconne for his uncle François allows a glimpse of the musician celebrated for the high standards of musicianship he brought to the Opéra. This is unmissable listening.

*Ingrid Pearson*