



Ultravox – Louis Moinet’s first ever Hour-Strike

“The hour-strike complication is an extremely rare member of the strike mechanism family, and the layout used here is quite possibly unique. The mechanism has been revealed, enabling its complexity to be admired. The magic of watchmaking mechanics is embodied by the moving yokes and the engraved hammer that marks out the hours. Two hundred years ago, Louis Moinet’s clocks and pocket watches chimed the hours for leading figures of his day. Now, his name has been joined with that of Eric Coudray, a great present-day watchmaker, to create a new masterpiece in the same spirit.”

The hour-strike is a rare Fine Watchmaking complication, and rarer still when it is the product of a fully independent firm, based on an exclusive movement, and created *ex nihilo* – thus representing a markedly fresh approach.

The advent of the Ultravox coincides with the 250th anniversary of Louis Moinet’s birth in Bourges in 1768. Throughout his entire life, the inventor of the *Compteur de Tierces* chronograph, which dates from 1816, made a large number of striking clocks, many of which adorned the drawing rooms of the world’s greatest leaders, from Napoleon Bonaparte to Tsar Alexander I and presidents of the United States (among them Thomas Jefferson and James Monroe), as well as many others besides.

Asserting a style

Ultravox forges a link between a heritage and the future; between Louis Moinet himself and the Ateliers that are now restoring his renown. Unlike many brands, the Ateliers still have a very large number of clocks made by their namesake, Louis Moinet, in perfect working order. Some of them are at the Ateliers’ premises in Saint-Blaise, Neuchâtel, while others are still in or near the corridors of power they originally graced, for instance at the White House and the Hermitage Museum.

“Having this tangible heritage in our possession has enabled us to design an Hour Strike that draws inspiration from Louis Moinet whilst also being undisputedly rooted in the twenty-first century,” explains Jean-Marie Schaller. *“Louis Moinet was a scientist; a man of precision motivated by fine workmanship. With that in mind, in a world first we decided to lay bare all of the mechanics of this grande complication. It’s a natural extension of the watchmaking style that we originally implemented for *Memoris*, our chronograph watch which, for the first time, revealed all the workings of the chronograph on the dial side. Ultravox goes much further, unveiling its entire mechanism. It embodies the Louis Moinet style more than any other timepiece.”*



A watch bearing the “Eric Coudray & Co” name

Watchmaker Eric Coudray, winner of the Gaïa Prize – and, in Jean-Marie Schaller’s words, “*a magician!*” – is one of the greatest watch designers alive. The Ultravox bears the name of this Master and his outstanding team, without whom nothing could be achieved.

The Latin name “Ultravox”, the ‘strong voice’, is a nod both to the sound of the strike mechanism and to the neoclassical influences on Louis Moinet, whose clocks portrayed figures such as Minerva, Julius Caesar, and Cicero. Only twenty or so pieces will be made a year; indeed, no more could possibly be made, so complex is the piece.

The strike mechanism denotes each passing hour on the hour, marking out the appropriate number of chimes. A silencer mechanism also allows the wearer to disengage the chime, if they so wish.

A complication showcased altogether differently

To enhance the excellence of this creation, for the first time Louis Moinet has unveiled its entire mechanism on the wrist. A special plate had to be designed, including over 50 jewels, to engage the chime mechanism’s various components, whose arrangement is extremely complex. The central flirt triggers a system arming the hammer at twelve o’clock, and strikes out the hours on a gong arrayed around the movement. The function of the fly, meanwhile, is to channel power from the barrel, regulating the rhythm of the chime.

The Ultravox plate finish in “Moinet blue” is designed to reflect the light and offset the block polished and chamfered screws above it, showcasing the acoustic mechanism. The rear reveals a system with darkened, parallel double rotors. The first of these serves to generate force for the hours and minutes mechanism, while the second is wholly given over to the chime.

With a diameter of 46.5 mm, the Ultravox will be available this autumn, in a first limited edition of just 28 rose gold timepieces.

About Louis Moinet

*Ateliers Louis Moinet was founded in Saint-Blaise, Neuchâtel, in 2004. The fully-independent firm was established to honour the memory of Louis Moinet (1768-1853): master watchmaker, inventor of the chronograph in 1816 (certified by Guinness World Records™), and pioneer in the use of very high frequencies (216,000 vibrations per hour). Louis Moinet was a watchmaker, scholar, painter, sculptor, and teacher at the School of Fine Arts – as well as the author of *Traité d’Horlogerie*, a watchmaking treatise published in 1848 that remained a definitive work of reference for almost a century. Today, Ateliers Louis Moinet is perpetuating this legacy. The firm’s timepieces, produced in limited editions only, have won some of the most coveted honours, including a Red Dot Design Award (Best of the Best category), gold and bronze medals in the Chronometry Competition, a Robb Report “Best of the Best” award, a “Chronograph of the year” distinction from *Begin* magazine, Japan, and a recent UNESCO Award of Merit. Louis Moinet creations often make use of unusual materials, such as fossils and meteorites, combined with bespoke fine watchmaking complications in a unique creative approach. The brand’s core values are creativity, exclusivity, art and design.*