

The Myth of Lucrezia

Georg Friedrich Haendel, *Cantata « Lucrezia »*

Johann Sebastian Bach, *Partita VI for harpsichord* (extracts)
Toccata, Allemande, Corrente, Sarabande

Arcangelo Corelli, *Sonata III for viola da gamba and continuo*
Adagio, Allegro, Adagio, Allegro

Domenico Scarlatti, Sonata K.132

Alessandro Scarlatti, *Cantata « Lucretia Romana »*

Ensemble Les Surprises

Eugénie Lefebvre, soprano
Juliette Guignard, viola da gamba
Louis-Noël Bestion de Camboulas, harpsichord

This program is an invitation to dive right in the heart of early 18th century music and in a baroque Europe wholly influenced by Italian masters. A mirrored look between two great German composers Haendel and Bach and their Italian contemporaries Corelli and Scarlatti.

The Mythe de Lucrèce as a guiding thread: set to music by Haendel, this piece offers to discover him in his Italian period. At this time if one wanted to perfect their training, be it musical, pictorial, or otherwise, it was customary to travel to Italy, recognised as the country of Art. Georg-Friedrich Haendel, left at the age of 21 to travel to Florence, Rome and Venice where he would meet the greatest musicians: Corelli, Alessandro Scarlatti and maybe even Vivaldi! This stay would strongly influence his composing as proven by his cantata Lucrezia, true testament to this Italian style.

As a response to this piece of Haendel, we will introduce another cantata on the same subject : Lucretia Romana by Alessandro Scarlatti. This Cantata, with its long recitative passages and Aria episodes in between, is a good representation of the tragic and complex destiny of Lucretia.

Alongside those vocal pieces, we will play instrumental pieces from Johann-Sebastian Bach, Arcangelo Corelli and Domenico Scarlatti (son). Those sonatas and Partitas aptly represent the peak of the baroque period alternating between virtuoso allegros, tender and lyrical adagios and fast-paced dance movements.

L'ensemble Les Surprises

‘Tact, a relaxed elegance, intensely expressive but without insistence, radiating with rhythmic vitality: we eagerly await the next concert of Les Surprises.’

– Alain Cochard, ConcertClassic

Founded in 2010 by Juliette Guignard and Louis-Noël Bestion de Camboulas, the ensemble Les Surprises seeks to convey its passion for the music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries through varied and original programs. Borrowing its name from the opéra-ballet by Jean-Philippe Rameau *Les Surprises de l'Amour*, the ensemble has placed its destiny under the lucky star of this composer, with the aim of exploring operatic music in all its shapes and forms ! The work of the ensemble is anchored in a process of musicological and historical research ; Louis-Noël Bestion de Camboulas wishes to highlight scores that have never been released since the 18th century, thanks to music libraries such as the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF) or the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra de Paris.

Les Surprises is an ensemble of variable size, which can transform from a chamber group to orchestral dimensions. Its members were all trained in top European conservatories.

In 2014 Les Surprises received the « Révélation musicale » (new discovery) prize awarded by the French critics' circle for the performing arts (« Syndicat professionnel de la critique de théâtre ») musique et danse.

The ensemble Les Surprises have released two records under the label *Ambronay Éditions*, in 2013 *Rebel de père en fils*, and in 2016 *Les Éléments*, and both were warmly praised in the national and international press (Diamant d'Opéra-Magazine, 5 de Diapason...)

Les Surprises has also begun a partnership in 2017 with the label *Ambronay Éditions*, to release one record a year within 2019.

Since its foundation, the ensemble has played in different concert halls and festivals through Europe, including the Versailles Chapelle Royale, the Opéra de Massy, Radio France and Ambronay festivals, Sanssouci Festival (Potsdam, Germany), the Bozar season (Brussels), Monteverdi Festival (Cremona, Italy), Pavia (Italy), Monaco, and the Sacred Music Festival of Palestine in Ramallah and Jerusalem.

Since 2016, Les Surprises has been « ensemble en résidence » in the Festival Baroque de Pontoise. It will pursue to 2018.

The Caisse des Dépôts is the main sponsor of the ensemble Les Surprises, which is also supported by the Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication – Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles d'Aquitaine, the City of Bordeaux, the Conseil Général d'Aquitaine, the Conseil départemental de la Gironde and ponctually by the ADAMI, SPEDIDAM, the Institut Français and the CMBV (Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles). The ensemble is a member of the FEVIS and PROFEDIM.