

Méditations

These « little musical masterpieces » take us to a time where theatricality, smoothness and sacred mix and combine.

Marc-Antoine Charpentier : Méditations pour le Carême
and

Marin Marais : Prélude en ré du I^{er} livre pour viole de gambe et basse continue

Robert de Visée : Tombeau des demoiselles de Visée pour théorbe

Sébastien de Brossard : Motet pour basse *O Plenus Irarum Dies*

Henry Du Mont : Pavane pour clavecin

Sébastien de Brossard : Motet pour deux ténors *Salve Rex Christe*

ensemble Les Surprises

Paco Garcia, **haute-contre**

Martin Candela, **taille**

Étienne Bazola, **basse-taille**

Juliette Guignard, **viola da gamba**

Etienne Galletier, **theorbo**

Louis-Noël Bestion de Camboulas, **organ, harpsichord and direction**

As in the *Leçons de Ténèbres* that become theatrical in the XVIIIth Century and attract socialite people ; French music reveals a dramaturgy close to the opera. Sometimes, it gets to such a rich harmony and smoothness that the most pious one can be shocked.

This program highlights the pieces written for men voices and continuo at the end of XVIIth Century and the beginning of the XVIIIth. This size of orchestra was appreciated back then for its intimistic dimension : thanks to the possibilities of the spectrum of voices, it can switch from a dark tint to a powerful and luminous one.

This size of orchestra presents a great theatrical dimension because the different voices embody biblical parts (the Soul, Jesus, the Man...) successively.

The *Meditations pour le Carême* by Charpentier have been saved from forgetfulness by Sébastien de Brossard. This great musician and collector had a very important musical library, with bought or copied sheets. He actually copied the Meditations by Charpentier ; that is the only version that survived. His library was filled with French music, but also by German and Italian music, which he particularly liked. His music is a mix of the different European styles, as « melted tastes » (as Francois Couperin would have said).



Ensemble Les Surprises – artistic direction, Louis-Noël Bestion de Camboulas

« Les Surprises have ideas, talents, a repertoire to explore. An ensemble that gives, and promises even more. » (*Muse Baroque*).

The ensemble Les Surprises is a baroque and multifaceted ensemble, founded in 2010 on the initiative of Juliette Guignard, violist, and Louis-Noël Bestion de Camboulas, organist and harpsichordist.

In borrowing its name from the opera ballet *Les Surprises de l'Amour* by Jean-Philippe Rameau, the group has placed its destiny under the lucky star of this composer, with the aim of exploring operatic music in all its shapes and forms !

By taking the ensemble artistic direction, Louis-Noël Bestion de Camboulas wishes to participate to the baroque repertoire rediscovery and its improvement with new interpretations but also to explore the sounds richness offered by a baroque instrumentarium.

The work of the ensemble is anchored in a process of musicological and historical research. Indeed Louis-Noël Bestion de Camboulas endeavour to highlight scores that have never been released since the 18th century, thanks to music libraries such as Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF) or Bibliothèque de l'Opéra de Paris. The latest records *Passion* with Véronique Gens and *Rameau chez la Pompadour* are good examples of this will.

In 2014, Les Surprises received the “Révélation musicale” (new discovery) prize awarded by the French critic’s circle for the performing arts (“Syndicat professionnel de la critique de théâtre, musique et danse”).

Les Surprises recorded six discs for the Ambronay Editions label. All have received warm praises from international and national press. The ensemble also begun a partnership with the Alpha Classics label in 2020 (*Purcell-Tyrannic Love*, *Passion* with Véronique Gens, *Rameau chez la Pompadour*, *Nuit à Venise*), the next record *Te Deum*, dedicated to Charpentier and Desmarests, will be released in 2024. All have received warm praises from international and national press.

Since the beginning of its activities, the ensemble performed on multiple stages and festivals all over Europe and worldwide : Opéra royal de Versailles, Opéra de Massy, Auditorium de Radio France, Opéra de Montpellier, festival d’Ambronay, festival Sinfonia en Périgord, festival de Saintes, Rencontres Musicales de Vézelay, festival Sanssouci (Potsdam – Allemagne), saison des Bozar (Bruxelles – Belgique), Saint John’s Smith Square (Londres – UK), Salle Bourgie (Montréal), Beirut Chants Festival (Beirut – Liban), Singapour...

Team : **Juliette GUIGNARD** – general direction
Delphine NAISSANT – administration
Eléonore MINOT – production

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