

Ténèbres

« Semi-darkness » in music through the famous leçon de ténèbres, singing by men voices.

François Couperin : Leçons de Ténèbres

Marc-Antoine Charpentier : réponses de Ténèbres

Michel Richard Delalande : Miserere

ensemble Les Surprises

Paco Garcia, **countertenor**

Étienne Bazola, **basse-taille**

Juliette Guignard, **viola da gamba**

Etienne Galletier, **theorbo**

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

The audience is invited to dive into darkness, and semi-darkness. This intimist project is inspired by the famous music composed for the Tenebrae service ; which invite us to an introspection. In the XVIIth century, this musical style came up in France with the *Leçon des Ténèbres* ; and was known for its austerity and complexity. It was composed with enchanting vocal parts, enabling us to lost track of space and time.

The *Leçons de Ténèbres* are the highest point of baroque musical art. With a very intimate headcount (one or two voices, along with basso continuo), these « little masterpieces » enable composers to show us their whole color palette, and to guide us through authentic sacred dramaturgy ; a deploration theater. In the XVII and XVIIIth century, these pieces found their place in the « Tenebrae » religious services during the Holy Week. The services were codified and theatricalized ; the light and its advancing appaerence and disappaerence were almost as important as the music itself.

We decided to interpret these pieces with two men voices, just like François Couperin said in the publication of his *Leçon des Ténèbres* (« quoique le chant en soit noté sur la clé de dessus, toutes autres espèces de voix pourront les chanter »). Usually, these pieces are singing by sopranos ; the color bringing by then men voices gives another perspective to theses musical treasures.