

the
curious
bards

THE ENSEMBLE



Since 2015, The Curious Bards has united five musicians, who love Gaelic and Celtic traditional music. These five musicians had an early music education and have studied in prestigious institutions in Lyon, Paris and Basel. Their musical paths have integrated traditional Irish and Scottish practise for many years.

The ensemble claims to offer an innovative and creative insight to this repertoire guided by extensive research. They are “bards” of modern times, eager to discover and expand their knowledge, and always exigent with their practise.

The Curious Bards were chosen, in 2015, as a Young Ensemble in Residency in la Cité de la Voix in Vézelay. They have also benefited, since 2016, from the project EEEmerging carried out by the Ambronay Festival, which supports young early music ensembles under the Creative Europe program. Since 2020, The Curious Bards receives the support of Caisse des Dépôts, main sponsor.

They recorded their first album, which has been released in October 2017 under the label Harmonia Mundi.

RESIDENCIES AND CONCERTS



Rencontres Musicales de Vézelay (Bourgogne)

Centre Musical International J.S. Bach (Drôme)

Festival d'Ambronay (Ain)

Au gré des arts (Charente)

Auditorium de Lyon (Rhône)

Festivalul Chei (Bucharest)

Seviqc Brezice Festival (Ljubljana)

Festival Baroque de Tarentaise (Savoie)

Festival de Ribeauvillé (Alsace)

Abbaye de Fontevraud (Maine et Loire)

CCR Les Dominicains de Guebwiller (Alsace)

La Courroie (Vaucluse)

Internationale Händel Festspiele (Göttingen)

Festival Labeaume en Musiques (Ardèche)

Concerts d'Anacréon (Maine et Loire)

Festival Toulouse Les Orgues (Midi-Pyrénées)

Abbaye Impériale de Baume les messieurs (Jura)

Festival Baroque de Pontoise (Val d'Oise)

Festival Vino Voce (Gironde)

Théâtre de Caen (Normandie)

Château Soutard (St Emilion)

Les Musicales de Redon (Ille et Vilaine)

Académie Bach (Normandie)

Espace James Chambaud (Pyrénées)

Festival Rheinvokal (Neuwied)

Festival du Thoronet (Var)

Festival du Comminges (Ariège)

Festival Via Aeterna (Mont St Michel)

Festival du Pays du Mont Blanc (Haute-Savoie)

Musica del Temps Passat (Ariège)

For next concerts click [here](#)

We will note the care brought to the historical investigation, as well as the practice (...) The instrumental brio is confined in the telluric exaltation of Lady Herriott Hopes! The melodies do not give up neither their charm, nor their shape for long. (the jig John Nugent). When the statement is more introvert (Raddir en Oughish) it is always made in a lively and articulated way. The flute of Bruno Harlé develops a variety of attacks (the most remarkable ones in the Rakes of Westmeath) to which responds the nervous violin of Alix Boivert."

Loïc Chahine - Diapason - 05/2019

"We will confess (...) a crush for The Curious Bards that revisit the traditional repertoire of Ireland."

La Croix - 12/09/2017

"The Curious Bards (...) resurrect these historical forgotten treasures. The result is accessible, captivating and of great quality."

Maria Goeth - Crescendo - 11/17/2017

"The musicians profit from this energy in order to show, always with a certain simplicity, their virtuosity and mastery of their instrument (...) After reading the booklet we understand that this recording is a result of a serious musicological and musical research. This approach is confirmed by the fact that after listening to the album, one is convinced that every aspect has been mastered." Emmanuel Derœux - Baroquiades - 01/02/2018

"Its [Ex]tradition album offers an earpricking melding of Gaelic and Celtic folk music with Baroque performance practice, and it is toe-tapping stuff - convivial, improvisatory-feeling (clearly delivered from memory), the music's dance roots honoured through crisp articulation and rhythmic precision, and the whole wrapped up in stylish prechinrest technique."

Charlotte Gardner - The Strad- 02/04/2018

"A great discovery ! (The Curious Bards) plunges us enthusiastically into this 18th century music."

Anna Sigalevitch - France Inter - 11/04/2017

"Amongst dancing rhythms, addictive melodies and plaints of love (like this poignant farewell to France presumably by Mary Stuart)- Ilektra Platiopoulou with a powerful voice and unequalled expressivity (...) and The Curious Bards are having a great time. The public as well."

Marie-Aude Roux - Le Monde - 10/04/2017

"The Curious Bards « [Ex]tradition » : flamboyant baroque folk music! (...) The sound is superb, the arrangements as well, some of which come from the great O'Carolan."

Alain Lambert - Musicologie.org - 12/13/2017

"A musical journey full of charm, extremely colorful and transporting. We discover plenty of new things(...) We absolutely adored these traditional and popular pieces !"

Gaëlle Le Gallic - France Musique - 10/28/2017

"Meticulous as well as committed, driven by historical interpretation but with a modern outlook, the first album of the baroque ensemble « The Curious Bards » is characterized by a rejoicing freshness throughout."

Charlotte Saulneron- Resmusica - 02/12/2018

"Listening to this repertoire, that is so meticulously researched and interpreted, we also feel all the vitality and energy of this music, as well as somehow the ambiance of a « live » performance. It is indeed a beautiful achievement, managing to transmit the ambiance of a concert but keeping a legible, exceptional quality of tone. It is very serious production, what these curious bards offer. It is as well, and it is worth mentioning, an extraordinary documentation work and musicological research. If the principal goal is to breathe life into the simple popular joy of the past, one has to recognize that the band of Alix Boivert manages it with Art and Science. A beautiful discovery."

Joël Chevassus - Audiophile Magazine - 12/04/2017

"The Curious Bards thrilled the audience in Göttingen. (...) The musicians offered a fascinating Irish and Scottish music accompanying program to the Handel Festival. (...) They gained many fans this evening."

Göttinger Tageblatt – 05/18/2017

"The Curious Bards (...) performed a beautiful programme of 18th century airs and songs with great control and enthusiasm. (...) The mezzo soprano Ilektra Platiopoulou enchanted the public with her strong vocal presence and great richness of expression. Such virtuosity and such refinement in the work of these artists, who know how to join together high quality and pleasure."

Le Dauphiné – 10/25/2016

"The Curious Bards have a lovely acoustic and refined sound that brings to mind the Edinburgh drawing room of the 18th and 19th centuries (...). I really like the sound they are creating and the specificity and nuance that goes into the arrangements and coordination between instrumentalists. (...). However they still manage to convey a very bright and pulse groove reminiscent of the spontaneity and dance influence of Cape Breton fiddling."

Joshua Dickson, Head of Traditional Music, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland – 06/16/2016

"The interpretation of this album is imbued with great spirit, it transmits the vitality of the simple folk with the spontaneity and flexibility of improvisation. (...) The bright tone of mezzo Ilektra Platiopoulou brings a luminous colour."

Victoria Okada – Toutelaculture.com – 01/28/2018

"The new album of the Curious Bards is breathtaking ; Their playing is dazzling (...) An excellent articulation and a thorough research of the sources, meet here on an immense joy of performing."

Jörg Lengersdorf – Südwestrundfunk 2 – 12/22/2017

"We often talk about the new generation of baroque musicians. The Curious Bards is a perfect example : musicology, research, individual qualities as well as group qualities, crossover and contemporaneity."

Nicolas Bucher, Head of Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles – 19/08/2016

"(...) The Curious Bards are a beautiful discovery (...) Irish and Scottish music and songs of the 18th century. Interpreted with rigour, but also enthusiasm and drive, under the direction of Alix Boivert (...) An original and beautiful musical moment that we can now find again on disc."

Destimed – 10/04/2017

“Great discovery”

L'Actualité du disque, France Musique – 09/26/2017

"The Curious Bards offer feel good music, taking us through the rich but unknown times of Ireland and Scotland. It is diversified, interpreted with precision and it arouses our curiosity."

Olivier Dénommée – Critique de Salon – 12/11/2017

"The magnificent instruments, the choice and the arrangement of the pieces, the virtuosity inspired and astonishing at the same time, make this album of superb quality, one of the most beautiful of its kind."

René François Auclair – Le Parnasse Musical – 01/20/2018

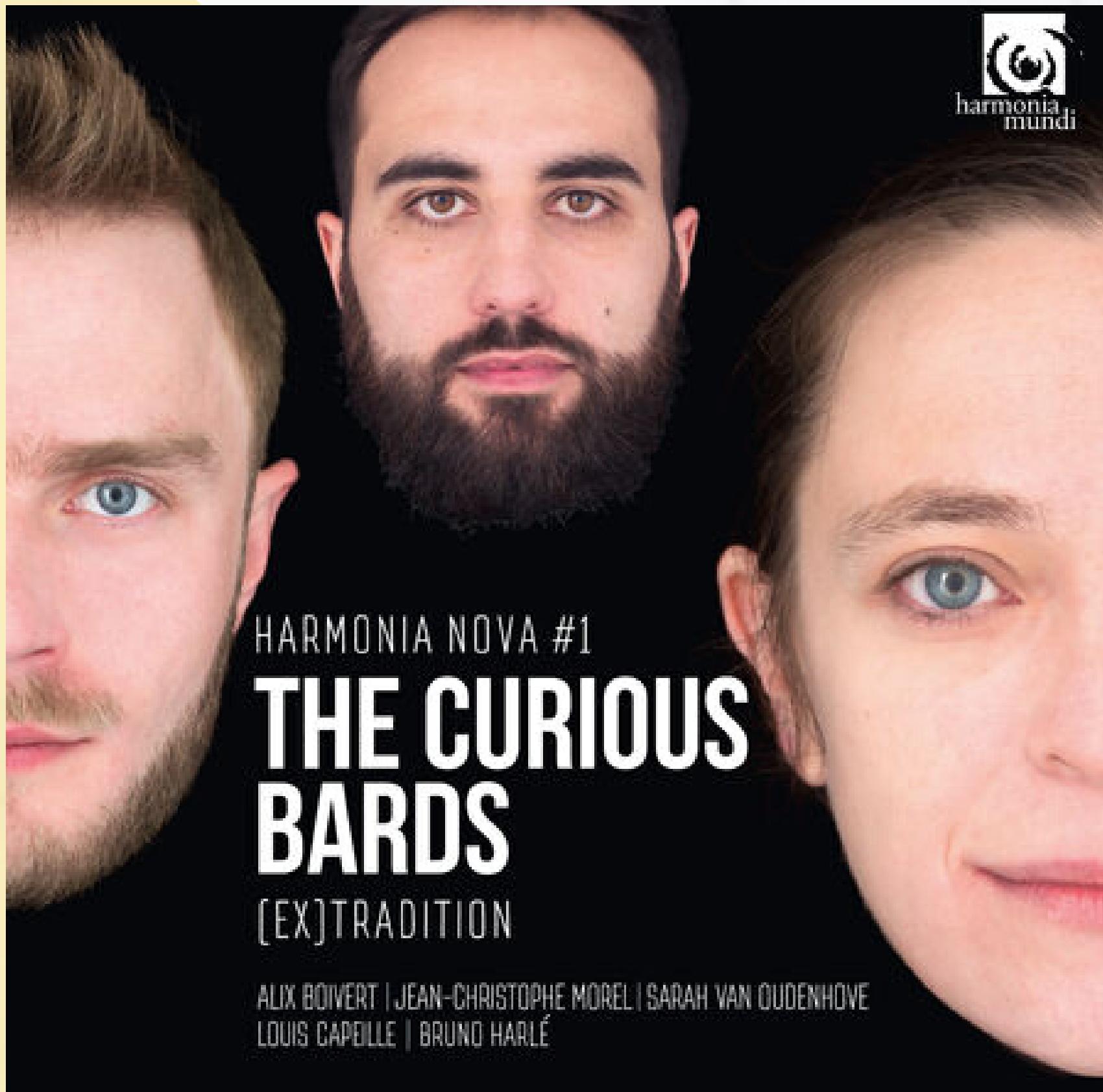
"The Curious Bards are indeed true to their name. Curious derives from the Old French word for diligence, and is akin to the Latin word cura meaning care. And so it is with forensic attention to detail – without drowning out the water of life of the artistic imagination – that this inspired ensemble turns with diligence and care to the early printed and manuscript sources of the music that draws out their curiosity. The result is a joyous sonic explosion as the sound opens out like a flower for the enlightened listener. It is a sound to swim in, to float on, and to sink back into. It is a sound that alerts the memory of the hands towards an energy release that is refreshing and empowering. It is a sound that invites your curiosity.."

Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin, Inaugural Chair of Music and Founding Director in Irish World Academy of University of Limerick (Ireland)

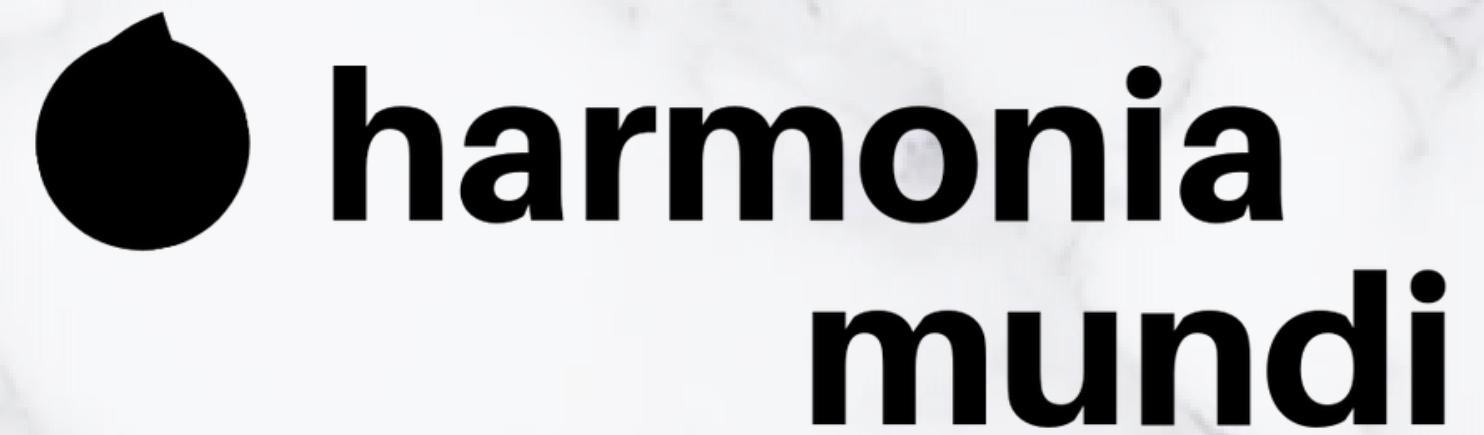
"Their programme (...) was put across with great accomplishment and verve. (...) [and] it must be confessed that said audience loved The Curious Bards."

Brian Robins, Early Music Review – 10/13/2016

DISCOGRAPHY



Released Autumn 2017*



* Top 10 best sellers "classical music"
in France for 2 months

VIDEOS



Video presentation (2016)



Residency Video (2019)



Album teaser (2017)



Live Video (2020)



Video clip (2018)

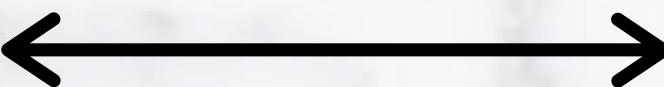
PROGRAMS



"By Moonlight on the Green"

This original programme makes us discover new horizons of irish and scottish songs. Many new elements, like songs in the gaelic language, drinking songs and military calling songs, round up this new programme. A new opportunity to discover a bit more the gaelic sounds of the 18th century with our guest singer Ilektra Platiopoulou.

New Programs 2020



"The Bard's Pocket Companion"

After a first instrumental programme based on the most known dances (jigs and reels), The Curious Bards now introduces a new programme that takes interest in dances that are less known, but have still resisted time. The scottish strathspey, with its strong temperament, the raging irish slip jigs or the hornpipes, very appreciated by Handel himself!

"The Gaelic Muse"

This instrumental program is an immersion into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries' Gaelic culture. All the pieces are extracted from melody collections that represent the cultural testimony of an entire population. "A Collection of the most celebrated Irish Tunes" (Neale, 1724), "A collection of Scots reels or country dances" (1757), "Hibernian Muse" (1770), "Caledonian country dances" (Johnson, 1748) and so much more. From an Irish jig to a wild Scottish reel (and some ballads and lamentations) you will be swept into the whirlwind of The Curious Bards!



"Since Sounding Voices"

In this concert, The Curious Bards includes a large part of Irish and Scottish culture: the songs. These songs collected in books from the eighteenth century, tell the story of these two countries, through their love, desperation and patriotic stories. The songs are taken from collections such as "Orpheus Caledonius" (1733), "Calliope or a musical miscellany" (1788), "A collection of Scots songs" (Bremner, 1757)... Ilektra Platiopoulou, the guest singer for this programme, will go from sobs to laughter and from passion to despair to help you access the Gaelic soul and spirit.

BIOGRAPHIES



Alix Boivert (Violin & direction)

After his studies with Robert Papavrami and then at the Conservatory of Bordeaux, in 2009 he entered the Conservatory of Lyon in the class of Odile Edouard where he obtained a Master's degree with first class honours in 2014. His studies are full of master classes with the great names of the violin: Amandine Beyer, Enrico Onofri, Chiara Banchini and Hélène Schmitt. He plays as a soloist in prestigious venues such as the Dublin National Concert Hall (2012) or the Auditorium of Bordeaux (2014) and with orchestras such as Le Concert Spirituel, Pygmalion, La Chapelle Harmonique, Correspondances, Amarillis, La Chapelle Rhénane... His first professional recording took place in 2013 with Ensemble baroque atlantique (label L'encelade), as a soloist in the Concerto BWV 1064 by Johann Sebastian Bach.

With several years of self-teaching in traditional Irish music, and spending a year in Dublin, he founded created "The Curious Bards" in 2015, where he explores compositions and publications of traditional music from the XVIIIth century in Ireland and Scotland. With this ensemble he recorded a first album under the label Harmonia Mundi (released in 2017).



Sarah Van Oudenhove (Viola da gamba)

From when she was six years old, Sarah began the viola da gamba in the class of Christian Sala at the Conservatory of Perpignan. In 1995, she joined the class of Coen Engelhard at the Toulouse Conservatory, and in 2003 the class of Marianne Muller at Lyon's Conservatory where she graduated in 2008. She has participated in many workshops and master's classes with the greatest of Early Music: Jérôme Hantai, Wieland Kuijken, Christophe Coin and Jordi Savall. Today she performs and records regularly with ensembles such as l'Achéron, les Sonadori, La Chapelle Rhénane, le Poème Harmonique, Clématis, L'ensemble Gilles Binchois, La Capella Mediterranea, Namur Chamber Choir. Alongside this well-supplied route, she is passionate about Irish traditional music. She undertakes a work of reflection and research on the interpretation of the ancient Irish and Scottish music on the viola da gamba. This interest and long-term work with ancient Gaelic music has led her to participate in many traditional music festivals in France (Celti'cimes, Tocane ...).



Bruno Harlé (Flutes)

Bruno Harlé began his musical path through the flute with Thierry Boiteux and Nels Lindeblad, near Paris. Subsequently, he decided to turn to the baroque flute and entered in the Paris Conservatory in the class of Pierre Séchet. He became the owner of the diploma of Early Music. At that time, he had the chance to discover new kinds of flutes through learning flute repertoire of the nineteenth century, but also traditional Irish music with François Lazarevitch. This expanded course offered him the opportunity to play concerts with La Grande Ecurie led by Jean-Claude Malgoire. In parallel, he continued his practice of playing the traditional flute in Breton and Irish dance repertoires, integrating the arSkolpenn band.

He was able to exercise his practice and deepen their experience of Irish music with great musicians: Kevin Crawford, Brian Finnegan and Cormac Breathnach. He teaches Irish flute and tin whistle (traditional flute) at the association "Irish flutes" in Lyon.

Jean-Christophe Morel (Cittern)



Jean-Christophe Morel started music with the violin at the Pierre Rode school of Robert Papavrami. He entered the Conservatory of Bordeaux in 2001, in the class of Manuel Solans, where he thoroughly learned the violin. He then entered the Conservatory of Lyon in 2009, and was in classes with Marie Charvet, Claire Bernard and Nicolas Gourbeix.

Very influenced by traditional Irish music, the following years mark a time of an intense practice of this repertoire, especially during the first year of master where he enjoyed the Erasmus in Dublin. The oral transmission of music and practice of improvisation has allowed him to develop a unique artistic personality, that is original, enabling him to understand and discover several musical styles and other instruments: the guitar, the mandolin, and the cittern.

He plays with several Irish music bands as The Jeremiahs, Onde and The Curious Bards, and also with classical orchestras as the Orchestre National Bordeaux Aquitaine, and Orchestre du Capitole of Toulouse... In 2015 he and Alix Boivert began researching the making of baroque citherns in the British Isles. He then collaborated with Frank Tate in the construction of a copy of an instrument made by William Gibson in 1772, currently exposed in the National Museum of Ireland in Dublin. This project was realized thanks to a grant provided by ADAMI.

Louis Capeille (Harp)



Louis Capeille approached the harp with Véronique Musson-Gonneaud and practised the Italian Baroque harp for several years with Marion Fourquier. He is passionate, from an early age, for traditional music and especially for the gaelic ones. In 2005, he joined the Schola Cantorum in Basel in the early harp's class of Heidrun Rosenzweig. In 2010 he obtained a bachelor and a master's degree and, both with honours in the baroque harp and continuo, respectively. In 2012 he left to follow the teachings of Maria Galassi and Xavier Diaz-Latorre at the ESMUC of Barcelona. In 2019, he obtains an Master of Musical Pedagogy , in the Schola Cantorum de Bâle. His career is also punctuated with master classes with Eugène Ferré, Gabriel Garrido, René Jacobs ... His experience has enabled him to perform in several countries to various groups: Hespérion XXI, Chant 1450, Les Alizés, Elyma, La Compagnie Barbaroque.. For recordings, he played under the direction of Andrew Lawrence-King, Jean Tubéry, Xavier Diaz-Latorre and Dominique Vellard. Besides his many activities, Capeille Louis is one of the founding members of all the Boz Galana.

Guest artist:



Ilektra Platiopoulou (Mezzo)

Born in Thessaloniki (Greece), Ilektra began her singing studies at the Neo V. Tsampali Conservatory in Thessaloniki. In 2004, she was admitted to the Schola Cantorum in Basel alongside Rosa Dominguez and Andreas Scholl. She received her early music master's degree in 2009. In the following year she joined the class of Marcel Boone at the Music Academy of Basel to deepen her technical skills and vocal repertoire. In same year, she was also a semifinalist in the Cesti competition in Innsbruck (Austria).

With the support of the opera academy network ENOA, she took part at the Academy of the National Opera of Poland (Warsaw) in May 2014. In October of the same year she performed at the Rossini residence of the Gulbenkian Foundation Lisbon. She sang the part of Virtu in L'incoronazione di Poppea by Claudio Monteverdi at the National Opera of Athens (Athens Festival in 2011, Head : Mr. Chryssikos , directed by A. Papadamaki).

She also sang Elvida in the opera by Alessandro Scarlatti, Penelope la Casta (Head : A. Marcon , directed by Manfred Weiss). In 2013, she gave a recital of Spanish Songs by Manuel De Falla, with the National Orchestra of Basel and then performed a one-month tour in Japan as a soloist.

The year 2014 was very important for her career, with notably her first title role (L'enfant) in L'enfant et les sortilèges of Ravel at the National Opera of Basel. That same year she was also selected for the role of Lucilla (La Scala di Seta of Gioacchino Rossini) as part of the Rossini Residence of the prestigious Academy of Lyric Art Festival of Aix en Provence.

In 2016, she is selected for the workshop Il viaggio a Reims (Gioacchino Rossini), directed by Stephan Grögler, at Fundation Royaumont.

She sings in 2017, in Macau (China) and Hong Kong, the role of Giunone in Ballet Royal de la Nuit recreated by Sébastien Daucé and his ensemble Correspondances then on stage during autumn 2017 in Caen, Versailles, Grenoble, Dijon, Toulouse, and Compiègne. She also had the opportunity to be invited on the first recording of the ensemble «The Curious Bards» released by Harmonia Mundi (autumn 2017).

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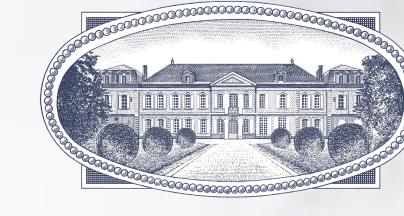
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