

# PRINTEMPS SACRÉ

Printemps sacré, Vivre | Mourir | (Re)naître  
Motets sacrés d'Heinrich Isaac | Chants liturgiques  
de Géorgie



Lila Hajosi | Direction  
Octuor mixte a cappella



*With this new program, the Irimi Ensemble brings East and West into dialogue through music that bears witness to catastrophes: that of the composer Heinrich Isaac forced into exile and that of the Georgian liturgy, resisting various invasions.*

*Creating an unexpected bridge between the 15th century and our time, the program takes us to the heart of this movement which shapes History and our lives: life, death, (re)birth.*

# INTERVIEW - LILA HAJOSI



## *How did you come to this idea ?*

Since 2020, I have witnessed a series of collapses, first in our history, with the pandemic and our situation today, but also in my life: I lost my voice and I had to stop my career as a singer. Living, dying, being (re)born, it's this cycle that everyone experiences one day: we stumble, we fall and maybe we will manage to get up again. At the end of this cycle, everything seems the same and yet everything has changed.

## *Why this dialogue between Heinrich Isaac and Georgia ?*

This cycle is also the one experienced, each in their own way, by the composer Heinrich Isaac and Georgia in the 15th century and to which their music bears witness. Isaac loses his patron and his friend, Lorenzo de Medici, and must leave Florence while Georgia is split into three after bloody wars.

## *How is this program organized?*

*Printemps sacré* has 3 acts : the first part "Life" lets us hear music based on Solomon's Song of Songs, it's

*a moment of joy, of great sensuality, a celebration of spring.*

*In the second part, "Death" there are funerary works. Everything is silent: Isaac's play for the funeral of Lorenzo de Medici says it very well: "now everything is deaf, everything is silence". I think we all experienced this during the pandemic, this loss, this vanished carefreeness.*

*The last part "(Re)birth" is a new celebration but less sensual, more mystical with songs from the Orthodox Easter liturgy and the grandiose motet of Isaac composed for the coronation of Emperor Maximilian. In this rebirth, something has definitely changed.*



## **Why this title ?**

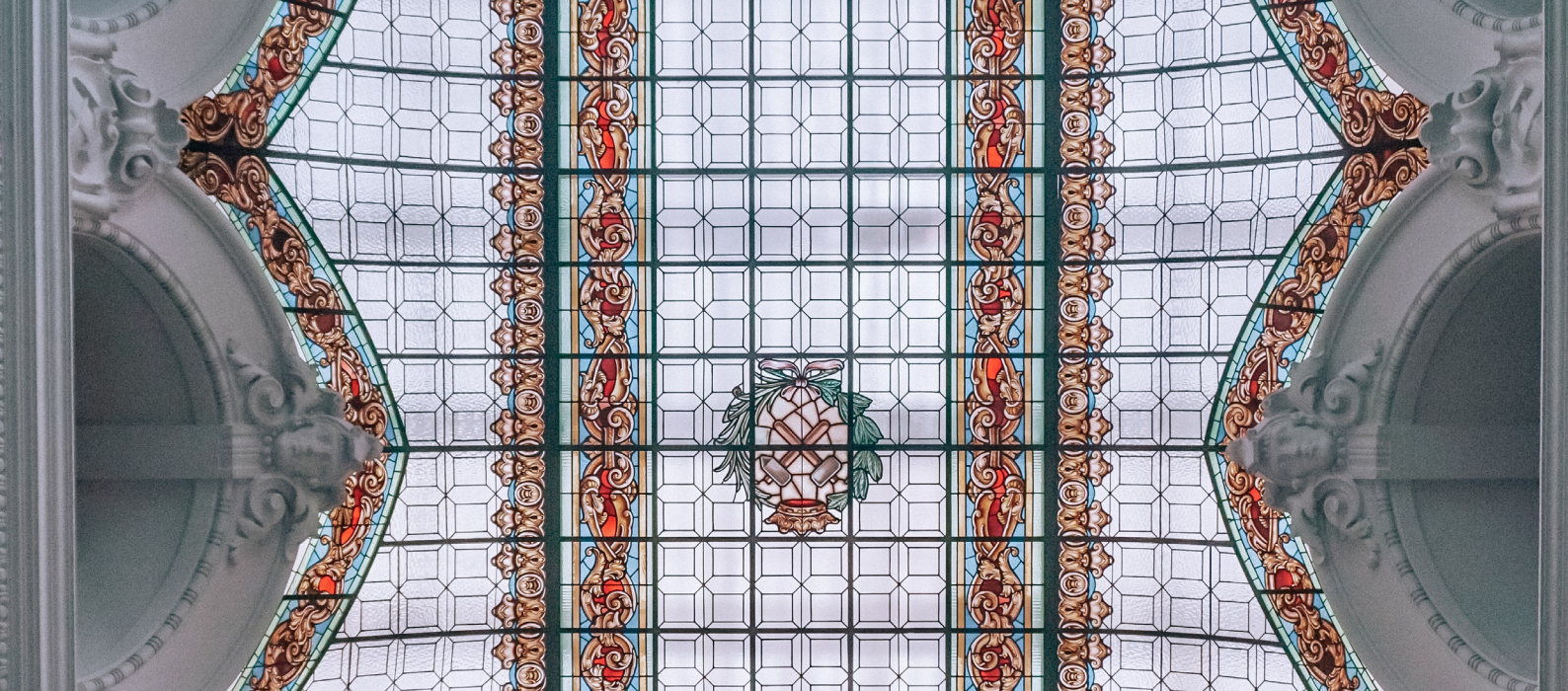
*The title refers to the ancient tradition of the "Ver Sacrum" but also to the seasons. This cycle of nature in which we have so much confidence today once seemed less obvious:*

*was the sun going to rise, spring coming? This movement of renewal, whether personal, collective or ecological, can never be taken for granted: we have our role to play.*

*I believe that this is also what happens during the concert: the audience is transported by the force of this music, by this story that they are told, and does not leave the same as they entered.*

## **Sacred Spring or "Ver Sacrum", what is it ?**

*It is an Italic tradition that dates back to the 7th century BC. After a catastrophe (a defeat or a famine), the children who were born the following spring were consecrated to Mars and, once they became adults, had to leave the city to settle elsewhere. An image of this power of resilience of men throughout the ages that this program celebrates, bringing together Antiquity, the Renaissance and even our time in its most burning questions.*



# PROGRAMME

Through the themes of Life, Death and Resurrection, a dreamlike journey between the monumental works of Isaac, a true Bach of the Renaissance, and extracts from the majestic Georgian Orthodox Liturgy.

## I. VIVRE

*Tota pulchra es*, Heinrich Isaac c.a 1495

*Shen khar venakhi* (Tu es le vignoble), XIIe s., cérémonie nuptiale orthodoxe géorgienne

*Saidumlo samotkhe khar* (Tu es un paradis mystique) Irmos 9, liturgie géorgienne

*Anima mea / Invenerunt / Filiae Hierusalem*, Heinrich Isaac, c.a 1500

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## II. MOURIR

"Kyrie", *Missa de Martyribus*, Heinrich Isaac, c.a 1500

*Ts'midata tana ganusvene* (Avec les Saints donne le repos) Cérémonie de mise en terre orthodoxe, Hymne ton VIII, Géorgie

*Vgodeb da viglovme* (Je pleure et pleure) Cérémonie de mise en terre orthodoxe, Hymne ton VIII

*Saukunod iq'avn khseneba* (Mémoire Eternelle) Cérémonie de mise en terre orthodoxe

*Quis dabit capiti meo aquam ?* Heinrich Isaac, 1492, Tombeau de Laurent de Médicis

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## III. (RE)NAÎTRE

*Arasada davdumnet* (O Théotokos), Paraklesis à la Mère de Dieu, Ton IV, Géorgie

*Gikharoden shen* (Réjouis-toi Sainte Reine), Irmos 9 ton IV

*Virgo Prudentissima*, Heinrich Isaac, 1507

## *Heinrich Isaac – the eternal comeback*

### *Protégé of Laurent de Médicis*

In 1486, Heinrich Isaac entered the service of Laurent de Medici with whom he established deep ties. It was he who established him in Florence, found him a wife, and entrusted him with the musical education of his children. However, everything changed with the death of the prince in 1492: faced with general hostility, inflamed in particular by Savonarola, the Medici fled. The composer then had to go into exile with his Florentine wife and go to Austria where he entered the service of Maximilian I, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire.

### *Coming back*

In 1502, Isaac returned to Italy and tried to find employment in Ferrara but he preferred a certain Josquin Desprez. Finally, the Medici returned to Florence in 1512: Isaac obtained permission from the aging Emperor to return, the sovereign even continuing to pay him his pension. He then worked for the new Pope Leo X, his former student, and it was in this rediscovered Florence that the composer died in 1517, after 21 years of exile.

### *A musical apex*

Carrying the heritage of Dufay and Binchois, Isaac's music embodies this writing from the end of the Middle Ages, with its modal counterpoint of extreme refinement, which will soon be succeeded by the Madrigal era. There are no frills about him, each note is worked like a clockwork: his music manages to be both technical and uniquely sensitive. Against certain traditions, the Irini Ensemble attempts to restore its true medieval colors.

## *Georgian liturgy – Resistance*

### *A troubled time*

At the time Isaac was exiled from Florence, Georgia, the last Christian bastion east of the Black Sea, had just been brutally separated into three kingdoms at the end of bloody wars against the Turks and Muslim Persians. A troubled period followed, which notably saw the fire in 1510 of the Ghélati monastery by the Turks, one of the great cultural and intellectual centers of the region.

### *Images of the Trinity*

Georgian sacred music is unique in the Orthodox world because it is the only one that is truly polyphonic. Where Byzantine music is built around a single melodic line to which a drone responds, Georgian music is written in three voices, each inseparable from the others, the image of the Trinity. A particularity which will be maintained despite the regular attempts at assimilation by Byzantium or later, Russia.

### *A musicological quest*

However, although many musical manuscripts survive, we have almost no indication of their musical performance. It is thanks to the research of Georgian and international ethnomusicologists that we can attempt to reconstruct this music today. An art which testifies to a culture constantly annexed, assimilated but which has not disappeared, a true symbol of resilience.

# ENSEMBLE IRINI

The Irini ensemble today imposes a unique sound in early music: with a polymorphous roster, without soprano, the ensemble nevertheless illuminates the Orthodox repertoire or the compositions of the Renaissance with new, warm and deep colors. From “Maria Nostra” (2015) to “Janua” (2023-24) via “O Sidera” (2018) and “Printemps Sacré - Vivre, mourir, (re)naître” (2022), Irini opens in his programs of dialogues between the sacred East and West, between the wisdom of yesterday and the upheavals of today, faithful to its name which means “Peace” in Greek. If the ensemble is today invited to the Philharmonie de Paris and supported by the Société Générale Foundation, it is thanks to the passionate energy of its director, Lila Hajosi as well as to a solid team, both artistic and administrative. First a singer and then leader of the ensemble, Lila Hajosi manages to embody her musicological and aesthetic reflections in fascinating concerts, which carry us away almost in spite of ourselves.

““ *“For me, there is no easy or difficult music, there is only one way to present it and make it accessible through the passion with which we share it.”* (Lila Hajosi) ””





Lila Hajosi - *Direction*  
Eulalia Fantova - Clémence Faber: *mezzos*  
Julie Azoulay - Lauriane le Prev: *contraltos*  
Matthieu Chapuis - Olivier Merlin: *ténors*  
**Guglielmo Buonsanti - Sébastien Brohier- basses**

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Octuor mixte a cappella  
1h sans entracte

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## CONTACT

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