

**Laurence Equilbey and her vibrant Insula orchestra
tour to Basel in March, followed by a return to
Vienna for Mozart's *Lucio Silla* at the Theater an der
Wien featuring Franco Fagioli**



9 March 2016 | 7:30pm
Stadtcasino Basel
BEETHOVEN
Symphony No.3 "Eroica"
Piano Concerto No. 4

Nicholas Angelich *piano*
Insula orchestra
Laurence Equilbey *conductor*

27 April 2016 | 7pm
Theater an der Wien
MOZART LUCIO SILLA

Franco Fagioli *Cecilio*
Olga Pudova *Giunia*
Paolo Fanale *Lucio Silla*
Chiara Skerath *Lucio Cinna*
Ilse Eerens *Celia*
Arnold Schönberg Chor
Insula orchestra
Rita Cosentino *stage layout*
Laurence Equilbey *conductor*

Continuing their touring this season with London in September and Basel in March, French conductor **Laurence Equilbey** returns with her new ensemble **Insula orchestra** to Austria for Mozart's *Lucio Silla* in a semi-staged performance at the **Theater an der Wien** on **27 April 2016**. Acclaimed countertenor **Franco Fagioli** stars alongside soprano **Olga Pudova** and tenor **Paolo Fanale** in this performance, staged by Argentinian director **Rita Cosentino**. Insula orchestra is to become the vibrant resident ensemble at the **new Paris arts centre - La Cité Musicale de L'île Seguin** – under construction on the site of the former Renault car factory on an island in the Seine in the south east side of the French capital. Following their recent [Salzburg](#) and [London](#) debuts, the 2015/16 season continues to see **Insula orchestra** take to the international stage. Ahead of their Vienna debut with *Lucio Silla*, the orchestra takes Beethoven's *Eroica* to Basel on 9 March.

For Insula's upcoming tour Equilbey now combines **Beethoven's** revolutionary and popular **Symphony No.3 "Eroica"** with his **Piano Concerto No. 4**. Pianists **Nicholas Angelich** and **Kotaro Fukuma** join her and the Insula orchestra for performances in Aix-en-Provence, La Rochelle, Paris, Colombes, Mérignac and **Basel**, which brings the orchestra to Switzerland for the first time. Beethoven wrote his third Symphony for Napoleon Bonaparte in 1804 whom he held in high esteem at the time, withdrawing this dedication however as soon as Napoleon declared himself emperor by renaming the work *Sinfonia Eroica*. The funeral march of the second movement is often played in funerals, which was the case for the burial of Felix Mendelssohn, who trail blazed Beethoven's fourth Piano Concerto in 1836 which has been widely performed ever since.

Laurence Equilbey, naming Harnoncourt - who recorded *Lucio Silla* several times - as a key mentor, has conducted numerous ensembles such as Concerto Köln and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. In 2012, she founded **Insula orchestra** as specialists in music from the classical and pre-romantic eras on period instruments. Their first and much lauded CD of Mozart's *Requiem*, was recorded with naïve and last September the Insula orchestra released their second recording (a first on Deutsche Grammophon-Archiv Produktion) of **Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice***, with sopranos **Malin Hartelius**, **Emmanuelle de Negri** and acclaimed countertenor **Franco Fagioli**, who joins Insula orchestra in Vienna.



Lucio Silla, one of Mozart's earlier operas, which demonstrates clear signs of his later work, was only rediscovered in the 20th century and is still rarely performed to date. He wrote the work in his teenage years during one of his Italian trips in 1772 for a re-invitation to Italy following the success of *Mitridate* in Milan. He wrote to his sister about *Mitridate*: "My Opera, thank God, is popular, as the theatre is full every evening, which causes great surprise, for many say that during all the time they have lived in Milan they never saw any first opera so crowded as on this occasion."

The opera tells the story of Lucio Silla (sung by **Paolo Fanale**), based on general Lucius Cornelius Sulla Felix who ruled over Rome from c. 138 to 78 BC, and his infatuation for his enemy's daughter Giunia (**Olga Pudova**), who is in love with the exiled senator Cecilio. Mozart intended the opera as a showcase for the tenor role but due to late arrival of the soloists and the tenor in particular, the focus was redirected to the castrato role (here sung by **Franco Fagioli**). Mozart's father Leopold reports about this to his wife in a letter dated from 18 December 1772: "The tenor only arrived yesterday evening and today Wolfgang composed two arias for him and has still two more to do. [...] on Saturday the 26th, the very day on which you will receive this letter, we shall have the first performance of the opera. I am writing to you at eleven o'clock at night and Wolfgang has just finished the second aria for the tenor." As a result Mozart only managed to complete two arias for the tenor, not the original four he had intended when the opera was premiered at the Teatro Regio Ducal in Milan.

Director **Rita Cosentino** comments: "*Lucio Silla* is all about human contradictions, the vanity of power versus love and the decisions that make us who we are." Within her set she lets the soloists create new spaces by making use of adjustable panels and frames, which are dynamically positioned in various combinations on stage.

Future plans for Insula orchestra

Insula orchestra's new home, the **Cité Musicale de L'île Seguin**, will open in March 2017 as part of an on-going transformation of the former industrial area into a vibrant residential, cultural and commercial quarter, located in Boulogne-Billancourt. The renovation of this ten-acre site is an initiative of the Conseil Départemental des Hauts-de-Seine. Designed by architects **Shigeru Ban** and **Jean de Gastines**, the new carbon neutral arts centre takes the form of a boat on the River Seine.

The Auditorium – **Insula orchestra’s** smaller chamber concert hall - will seat 1,100 and takes the external shape of a golden nest with an adaptable sail with electricity-generating solar panels and on the inside a honey-comb ceiling. The larger hall with seating for 4,000 spectators will be predominantly used for pop music. Insula orchestra will perform 10 concerts in the Auditorium per season and the opening season will comprise of a Mozart festival and a special season dedicated to young people and family concerts. On 14 April 2016, there will be a press conference to announce details for the opening of the new arts centre.



Upcoming performances

5 March – 13 March 2016

Beethoven ***Symphony No.3 "Eroica"***

Beethoven ***Piano Concerto No. 4***

Nicholas Angelich *piano*, **Kotaro Fukuma** *piano**

Insula orchestra, Laurence Equilbey

5 March 2016 - Aix-en-Provence, Grand Théâtre de Provence

7 March 2016 - La Rochelle, La Coursive

8 March 2016 - Paris, Philharmonie 1

9 March 2016 - Basel, Stadtcasino (Switzerland)

12 March 2016 - Colombes, l'Avant Seine *

13 March 2016 - Mérignac, Le Pin Galant *

23 April – 2 May 2016

Mozart ***Lucio Silla***

Franco Fagioli *Cecilio*, **Olga Pudova** *Giunia*, **Paolo Fanale** *Lucio Silla*, **Chiara**

Skerath *Lucio Cinna*, **Ilse Eerens** *Celia*

le jeune chœur de paris, Arnold Schoenberg Choir *

Insula orchestra, Laurence Equilbey, Rita Cosentino *concept and stage direction*

23 April 2016 - Paris, Cité de la musique - Philharmonie 2

25 April 2016 - Le Havre, Le Volcan

27 April 2016 - Vienna, Theater an der Wien (Austria) *

29 April 2016 - Aix-en-Provence, Grand Théâtre de Provence

2 May 2016 - Versailles, Opéra Royal

Insula orchestra



Founded by Laurence Equilbey and the Hauts-de-Seine General Council in 2012, **Insula orchestra** has quickly gained an impressive number of enthusiastic reviews in its short history, helping to spread its name far beyond its home on the western edge of Paris. Appearances at major venues and high-profile festivals throughout France have earned the orchestra a reputation for artistic excellence.

Insula orchestra's repertoire ranges from the Classical to the Romantic eras, with Mozart, Schubert and Weber at its core in both symphonic and choral programmes. Performing on period instruments, its playing is adapted to the acoustics of today's large concert halls. The musicians, based around a core of renowned section leaders, also perform chamber music.

In the Hauts-de-Seine department, the orchestra is engaged in a wide range of cultural and educational activities whose aims include increasing the musical awareness of potential audiences and those who are new to classical music, as well as educational and outreach projects involving young people and schools.

As Laurence Equilbey explains:

*"Engaging younger audiences is one of our key motivations for creating this orchestra following the creation of the **accentus Chamber Choir** 20 years ago. We do this by using technology, social media, and inviting 15 young people to every concert we put on. We give them the best seats in the house and take them backstage afterwards to experience the informal spirit of our orchestra. What is important is the memory of that moment – it needs to be short and fun. Now we are taking the orchestra on tour to reach further audiences abroad."*

Insula orchestra pays particular attention to vocal soloists, with artists such as Sandrine Piau, Werner Güra, Franco Fagioli or Ann Hallenberg. The orchestra also performs with prestigious soloists on period instruments such as Antoine Tamestit (violinist), Abdel Rahman El Bacha and Kristian Bezuidenhout (pianists).

Insula orchestra's 2015/16 season began with a tour of their *Magnificat* programme in August and September to Arras, La Chaise-Dieu, London's Barbican Centre, Paris, Aix-en-Provence and Versailles. For this tour Equilbey's programme of choral masterpieces included trademark Mozart alongside his lesser-performed contemporaries. For Mozart's *Solemn Vespers*, Zelenka's *Miserere* and CPE Bach's *Magnificat*, they were joined by the critically-acclaimed accentus choir alongside soloists Judith Van Wanroij, Wiebke Lehmkuhl, Reinoud Van Mechelen and Andreas Wolf.

The orchestra regularly proposes innovative and fun web projects: Flashmobs'Art with principal dancers Marie-Agnès Gillot and Alice Renavand at the Château de Versailles in 2013, Take the baton in 2014, the Happening musical at the Salle du Jeu de Paume (Versailles) in 2015, and webseries Log book / Journal de bord around record releases (the webseries around Mozart's *Requiem* was seen almost 100 000 times).

Insula orchestra's first recording, Mozart's *Requiem*, with Sandrine Piau, Sara Mingardo, Werner Güra and Christopher Purves, was released in September 2014 on the naïve label. Recorded with the accentus choir and conducted by Laurence

Equilbey, it was acclaimed by the press. Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* with Franco Fagioli was released in September 2015 on the Deutsche Grammophon label (Archiv Produktion).

Insula orchestra is a division of erda / accentus.

Insula orchestra receives the support from Hauts-de-Seine General Council and is in residence at Carré Belle-Feuille at Boulogne-Billancourt.

Mécénat Musical Société Générale is the principal patron of Insula orchestra.

Insula orchestra's cultural and educational activities supported by Materne.

Laurence Equilbey



Conductor and musical director of Insula orchestra and accentus, Laurence Equilbey is acknowledged for her demanding, yet open-minded approach to her art. Her exploration of the symphonic repertoire has seen her conducting the orchestras of Lyon, Bucharest, Liège, Leipzig, Brussels Philharmonic, Café Zimmermann, Akademie für alte Musik Berlin, Concerto Köln, Camerata Salzburg, Mozarteumorchester Salzburg, etc.

Laurence Equilbey has studied music in Paris, Vienna and London, and conducted with Eric Ericson, Denise Ham, Colin Metters and Jorma Panula. She is an associate artist of the Paris Chamber Orchestra, an associate artist of the Grand Théâtre de Provence in Aix-en-Provence, a companion of the Philharmonie de Paris and Artistic Director and Director of Education at the

Department for Young Singers at the Paris Conservatory. She regularly conducts the Orchestra of the Opéra de Rouen.

In 2012, with support from the Hauts-de-Seine General Council, she founded Insula orchestra, an ensemble devoted to the classical and pre-Romantic repertoire, using period instruments. In 2014, she recorded with her musicians Mozart's *Requiem* on the naïve label and she continues to honor the Austrian composer in 2015-2016, with *Vesperae solennes de confessore*, and also *Lucio Silla*, including at the Theater an der Wien. Their second album - Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* with Franco Fagioli - was released in September 2015 on the Deutsche Grammophon label (Archiv Produktion).

With accentus, Laurence Equilbey continues to interpret the great vocal music repertoire. She conducts a Bruckner program in the spring with the Orchestra of the Opéra de Rouen Normandie. The extensive recorded work of accentus (on the naïve label) has received wide critical acclaim.

Past operatic engagements comprise Reynaldo Hahn's *Ciboulette* (Opéra Comique - April/May 2015), Britten's *Albert Herring* (Opéra de Rouen Haute-Normandie and Opéra Comique), Weber's *Der Freischütz* (Opéra de Toulon) and *Sous apparence* (Opéra de Paris).

Recent engagements included CPE Bach/Mozart at The Barbican Centre with Insula orchestra (September 2015), *The Messiah* with BBC NOW (December 2015) and guest conducting the Frankfurt Radio Symphony (HR Sinfonie Orchester) in Germany which was broadcast live on 18 December 2015.

Recordings

MOZART *Requiem*

Sandrine Piau, Sara Mingardo, Werner Gura, Christopher Purves, accentus Chamber Choir, Insula orchestra, conducted by Laurence Equilbey
Label Naïve, EAN 822186053706
Released in September 2014



"Insula is all about refinement, colour and flexibility – love those trumpets! – and the recording gives each instrument space and definition"

Sinfini Music, Amanda Holloway

"The wiry Insula orchestra is softened by basset horns and bassoons, while the accentus Choir has a light European texture".

The Observer, Nicholas Kenyon

GLUCK *Orfeo ed Euridice*

original version (Vienna 1762), including highlights of Vienna and Paris versions (1774)
Franco Fagioli, Malin Hartelius, Emmanuelle de Negri, accentus Chamber Choir, Insula orchestra, conducted by Laurence Equilbey
Label Archiv Produktion, 0289 479 531593
Released in September 2015



"a performance fired by historical values"

Sunday Times Culture section

"Equilbey and the Insula Orchestra [sic] are painstaking in their re-creation of Gluck's original sound world"

Gramophone Magazine, Tim Ashley

Praise for Insula orchestra

"Equilbey maintained light but effective control over all three pieces, encouraging her orchestra to display its range of colour with skill and confidence."

The Guardian - George Hall

"Accentus and Insula gave a noble and articulate reading of Mozart's Vesperae solennae de confessore, grand in scale and urgent in delivery."

The Arts Desk - Peter Quantrill

"Laurence Equilbey's three-year-old ensemble, hailing from Paris, showcases the best in period-instrument performance"

Financial Times - Hannah Nepil

"it is Laurence Equilbey's obvious integrity that comes across as her strongest asset, leaving little doubt that she, Accentus and Insula will be making strong waves on the Seine for many years to come."

Early Music Today – Brian Robins



www.insulaorchestra.fr/en

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