

**Palazzetto Bru Zane releases CD-Book of Benjamin Godard's *Dante*, starring
Edgaras Montvidas and Véronique Gens**

NEW RELEASE OUT NOW



DANTE | Benjamin Godard (1890)

**Palazzetto Bru Zane Volume XVI
'French opera' series**

**Munich Radio Orchestra
Ulf Schirmer *Conductor*
Bavarian Radio Choir
Stellario Fagone *Choirmaster***

**Véronique Gens *Béatrice*
Rachel Frenkel *Gemma*
Edgaras Montvidas *Dante*
Jean-François Lapointe *Bardi*
Andrew Foster-Williams *Virgil's shadow*
Diana Axentii *Schoolboy*
Andrew Lepri Meyer *Un Héraut d'armes***

**Bilingual CD-Book in French and
English: 143 pages
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Palazzetto Bru Zane releases a recording of **Benjamin Godard's *Dante***, conducted by **Ulf Schirmer**, following performances in **Munich** and **Versailles** last year. The album stars Lithuanian tenor **Edgaras Montvidas** in the title role alongside **Véronique Gens** as *Béatrice*. This CD is accompanied by texts from musicologists **Gérard Condé**, **Hélène Cao** and **Pierre Sérié** and historian **Pierre Véron**.

Benjamin Godard (1849-1895) wrote this lesser-known lyrical drama very much in the French tradition, and it shows echoes of Gounod's *Faust* and Berlioz's *The Damnation of Faust*. The four-act opera, with a libretto by Édouard Blau, premiered at the Opéra-Comique on 7 May 1890 in Paris. Palazzetto Bru Zane have since produced a modern edition of the concert score for the performances and recording. The goal of Palazzetto Bru Zane is to promote and rediscover French music, and Benjamin Godard, who composed eight operas, five symphonies and more than a hundred songs, has often been neglected in the performance canon.

Dante Alighieri, born in Florence in 1265, was at once a poet and an important political figure of his time. His celebrated *Divine Comedy* relates his supposed descent to Hell and slow ascent to Paradise. Godard's operatic treatment of Dante's life skillfully juxtaposes the political milieu – crowd scenes in Florence and the quarrel between Guelfs and Ghibellines – with the expression of the courtly love he feels for Beatrice, betrothed to his friend Bardi. The most remarkable element of the opera is the integration of a 'Vision' that is nothing less than

a synthesis of the *Divine Comedy* set to music. Its third act is built around a fantasy 'Hell' and 'Paradise', featuring an *Apparition of Virgil*, *Chorus of the Damned*, *Infernal Whirlwind*, *Divine Radiance* and *Apotheosis of Beatrice*. Godard is here at the peak of his melodic inspiration and compositional mastery, in a style that brings Gounod up to date.

PALAZZETTO BRU ZANE CENTRE DE MUSIQUE ROMANTIQUE FRANÇAISE

The guiding principle of Palazzetto Bru Zane – Centre de musique romantique française is the rediscovery and promotion of the French musical heritage from 1780 to 1920 and bring this music to a wider recognition, through research, publishing scores, making recordings, education projects, programming and co-producing concerts and opera productions. Founded in 2009, the Centre combines its artistic vision to high standards as part of the Fondation Bru dedicated to education and heritage.

The centre of operations is at Palazzetto Bru Zane in Venice – formerly Casino Zane, built between 1695 and 1697, nearby the Basilica dei Frari. The Foundation restored the building including the magnificent frescoes by Sebastiano Ricci and have opened up the double-heighted salon as a concert venue for chamber music seating an audience of one hundred. The magnificent coved ceiling bears a fresco of Hercules with Fame and Virtue at its centre. The room is reached via a grand staircase decorated with frescoes.

Over the past 9 years, Palazzetto Bru Zane has rediscovered forgotten works by well-established composers such as Saint-Saëns, Gounod and Massenet as well as presenting music of lesser-known composers such as Hérold, David, Onslow, Méhul and Reicha in its regular series and annual festivals in Venice. Five years ago, Palazzetto Bru Zane established a summer festival in Paris, each year choosing a different composer to focus on. Most recently, it has introduced a new festival in Berlin. It collaborates regularly with the Ravel Academy, Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel as well as many opera houses and concert halls across Europe.

In addition to the digital resources in the [Bru Zane Mediabase](#), Palazzetto Bru Zane also has its own webradio: [Bru Zane Classical Radio](#).

“Palazzetto Bru Zane, dedicated to the rediscovery of French musical heritage from 1780 to 1920, is fast becoming a rival for Opera Rara as a purveyor of luxury editions of little-known operas. This recording of a concert performance is a triumph of scholarship and makes a strong case for the opera.”

Limelight (review of Gounod's *Cinq-Mars* by Nick Fuller - Oct. 2016)

bru-zane.com

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