

Les Talens Lyriques release new recording of Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* with Sandrine Piau and Christopher Lowrey



Friday 13 March
Alpha | ALPHA449

Pergolesi *Stabat Mater*
Leo *Beatus vir* **FIRST RECORDING**
Porpora *Salve Regina in G* **FIRST RECORDING**

Sandrine Piau soprano
Christopher Lowrey countertenor

Les Talens Lyriques
Christophe Rousset director

In the approach to Easter, **Christophe Rousset** and **Les Talens Lyriques** release a new recording of Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*, featuring soloists **Sandrine Piau** and **Christopher Lowrey**. The disc is released on **Alpha** on **Friday 13 March** alongside two unpublished motets by Neapolitan compatriots Leonardo Leo and Nicola Porpora, presented here in their first recordings. The Neapolitan school is one of Christophe Rousset's first musical loves, and the Pergolesi *Stabat Mater* is a work that has long been in Les Talens Lyriques' repertoire.

Christophe Rousset said:

"The Neapolitan repertoire shows a vocality and a harmonic world that I adore, and to which I am very receptive. I am always very happy to be able to return to it: I would like to do so more often!"

Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* is an emblematic work of the eighteenth-century Neapolitan repertory, commissioned for Good Friday by the Confraternita dei Cavalieri di San Luigi di Palazzo in Naples to replace a setting by Scarlatti. *Stabat Mater* was written in the final weeks of Pergolesi's life as the young composer grew ill from tuberculosis, succumbing to the disease at just 26.

The piece achieved great popularity following Pergolesi's death, becoming the most frequently printed musical work of the 18th century. As part of the group's 2020-21 season, Les Talens Lyriques will next perform the *Stabat Mater* at London's Wigmore Hall during Easter weekend, Saturday 3 April 2021.



[Watch Les Talens Lyriques perform the opening to *Stabat Mater* here:](https://youtu.be/_onjfgiq6A)
https://youtu.be/_onjfgiq6A

Pergolesi's final work is framed on disc with unpublished motets by two great exponents of the Neapolitan school, both contemporaries of Pergolesi. A leading theatre and church composer of the 'old' Neapolitan school, **Leonardo Leo's** writing was skilled and dignified in contrast to the passion and sentiment of Pergolesi. Les Talens Lyriques offer the first recording of his ***Beatus Vir***, setting Psalm 112, sung by Christopher Lowrey.

Nicola Porpora, famous as a teacher to both Farinelli and Haydn, wrote eight settings of the Marian antiphon *Salve Regina* for solo voice. Les Talens Lyriques and Sandrine Piau include his first ***Salve Regina in G major***, likely written for a young performer at the Venetian Ospedale degli Incurabili. Both Porpora and Leo appeared on Les Talens Lyriques' *Farinelli – A Portrait* disc (Aparté, November 2016) with Ann Hallenberg.

Frequent collaborators soprano **Sandrine Piau** and director Christophe Rousset are joined by American countertenor **Christopher Lowrey**, who appeared in the group's recent performances of Handel's *Giulio Cesare* and *Agrippina* at the George Enescu Festival and the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées.

Upcoming discs from Les Talens Lyriques include Mozart's *Betulia Liberata* on Aparté in September 2020. Mozart's only oratorio traces the influence of the older composer on his younger colleague and was written when Mozart was only fifteen. The highly virtuosic arias feature Sandrine Piau, Teresa Iervolino, Amanda Forsythe, Pablo Bensch and Nahuel di Pierro.

Recent discs from Les Talens Lyriques have garnered success, with a recent nomination at the BBC Music Magazine Awards 2020 and winning the Belgian critics' Caecilia Prize 2019 for their Gounod's *Faust* (Palazzetto Bru Zane, September 2019). Lully's *Isis* (Aparté, December 2020) was nominated as Editor's Choice in Gramophone Magazine (January 2020) and as Opera Choice in BBC Music Magazine (February 2020).

Les Talens Lyriques' new season is a sweepingly European venture that sees the ensemble take Bach to the Thomaskirche for the first time on 13 June, as they perform in a new production of Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea* directed by Stephen Langridge at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées.

Les Talens Lyriques



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The ensemble Les Talens Lyriques, which takes its name from the subtitle of Jean-Philippe Rameau's opera *Les Fêtes d'Hébé* (1739), was formed in 1991 by the harpsichordist and conductor Christophe Rousset.

Championing a broad vocal and instrumental repertoire, spanning the period from early Baroque to the beginnings of Romanticism, the musicians of Les Talens Lyriques aim to throw light on the great masterpieces of musical history, while providing perspective with rarer or little known works that are important as missing links in the European musical heritage. This musicological and editorial work, which contributes to its renown, is a priority for the ensemble.

The repertoire of Les Talens Lyriques includes works by Monteverdi (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, *L'Orfeo*), Cavalli (*La Didone*, *La Calisto*), Landi (*La Morte d'Orfeo*), Handel (*Scipione*, *Riccardo Primo*, *Rinaldo*, *Admeto*, *Giulio Cesare*, *Serse*, *Arianna in Creta*, *Tamerlano*, *Ariodante*, *Semele*, *Alcina*), Lully (*Persée*, *Roland*, *Bellérophon*, *Phaéton*, *Amadis*, *Armide*, *Alceste*, *Isis*), Desmarest (*Vénus et Adonis*), Mondonville (*Les Fêtes de Paphos*), Cimarosa (*Il Mercato di Malmantile*, *Il Matrimonio*

segreto), Traetta (*Antigona, Ippolito ed Aricia*), Jommelli (*Armida abbandonata*), Martin y Soler (*La Capricciosa corretta, Il Tutore burlato*), Mozart (*Mitridate, Die Entführung aus dem Serail, Così fan tutte, Die Zauberflöte*), Salieri (*La Grotta di Trofonio, Les Danaïdes, Les Horaces, Tarare*), Rameau (*Zoroastre, Castor et Pollux, Les Indes galantes, Platée, Pygmalion*), Gluck (*Bauci e Filemone, Alceste*), Beethoven, Cherubini (*Médée*), García (*Il Califfo di Bagdad*), Berlioz, Massenet, Gounod (*Faust*), Saint-Saëns, and others.

The re-creation of these works goes hand in hand with close collaboration with stage directors and choreographers: Pierre Audi, Jean-Marie Villégier, David McVicar, Eric Vigner, Ludovic Lagarde, Mariame Clément, Jean-Pierre Vincent, Macha Makeïeff, Laura Scozzi, Natalie van Parys, Marcial di Fonzo Bo, Claus Guth, Robert Carsen, David Hermann, Christof Loy, Jetske Mijnsen, Alban Richard, David Lescot.

Les Talens Lyriques explore not only opera, but other genres as well: secular madrigals, cantatas, *airs de cour*, symphonies, and the vast corpus of sacred music (masses, motets, oratorios, *Leçons de Ténèbres* and so on). Varying in size from just a handful of musicians to over sixty, representing every generation, the ensemble appears all over the world.

The 2019-2020 season goes under the title of "Nations", for Europe and its nations are particularly prominent in the programmes and travels of Les Talens Lyriques. French music is represented by Jean-Baptiste Lully (*Isis*) and François Couperin (*Les Nations*), Italy by Monteverdi (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*) and a programme entitled "Les Larmes de la Vierge", consisting of beautiful but little known works depicting the grief of the Virgin Mary as her son dies on the cross. Johann Sebastian Bach and his son Carl Philipp Emanuel represent Germany with their *Magnificat* settings and other pieces, while that universal figure and great traveller, George Frideric Handel, represents several nations with his music; his operas *Agrippina, Giulio Cesare* and *Ariodante* and his oratorio *Saul* will be performed this season. The different aesthetics of these composers clearly illustrate the move towards humanism and the Age of Enlightenment, with which Christophe Rousset feels such an affinity.

The idea of "Nations" is also reflected in the diversity of the ensemble's venues this season: in France, the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, the Royal Opera at Versailles, and the Beaune Festival; in Austria, the Vienna Staatsoper and the Theater an der Wien; in Germany, the Leipzig Bach Festival; and for the first time Les Talens Lyriques will be travelling to Romania to take part in the Enescu Festival in Bucharest, and will be performing in Colombia's capital, Bogota.

The Ensemble's rich discography comprises some sixty references on various labels (Erato, Fnac Music, Auvidis, Decca, Naïve, Ambroisie, Virgin Classics, Ediciones Singulares (Palazzetto Bru Zane), Outhere and Aparté). Les Talens Lyriques recorded the famous soundtrack for Gérard Corbiau's film *Farinelli* (1994), which sold over a million copies. In 2019-2020, the Ensemble will be pleased to release recordings of masterpieces such as Gounod's *Faust* (PBZ), Lully's *Isis* (Aparté), Mozart's *Betulia liberata* (Aparté) and Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* (Outhere).

Since 2007 the musicians of the ensemble have been working on a project aimed at introducing schoolchildren to music through a programme of ambitious artistic actions and innovative educational initiatives. They are in residence in schools in Paris and the Paris region (Île-de-France), where they have created an orchestra class and a small choir, known as "Le petit chœur des Talens". The three t@lenschool educational applications (downloadable free of charge) have met with much enthusiasm and have received several national and international awards.

The ensemble Les Talens Lyriques receives subsidies from the French Ministry of Culture and the City of Paris, and generous support from its Circle of Patrons. The ensemble wishes

to thank its principal Patrons, the Annenberg Foundation / GRoW - Gregory and Regina Annenberg Weingarten, Mrs Aline Foriel-Destezet and Mécénat Musical Société Générale.

Since 2011 Les Talens Lyriques have been associate artists, in residence at the Singer-Polignac Foundation in Paris. Les Talens Lyriques are founding members of FEVIS (Federation of Specialised Vocal and Instrumental Ensembles) and of PROFEDIM (Professional Union of Music Producers, Festivals, Ensembles, and Independent Distributors).



www.lestalenslyriques.com

Christophe Rousset **Harpichordist, Conductor, Musicologist**



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The founder of the ensemble Les Talens Lyriques and internationally recognised harpsichordist Christophe Rousset is a musician and conductor inspired by a passion for opera and the rediscovery of the European musical heritage.

His studies (harpsichord) with Huguette Dreyfus at the Schola Cantorum in Paris, then with Bob van Asperen at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague (winning the coveted First Prize in the Seventh Bruges International Harpsichord Competition at the age of twenty-two), followed by the creation of his own ensemble, Les Talens Lyriques, in 1991, have enabled Christophe

Rousset to obtain a perfect grasp of the richness and diversity of the Baroque, Classical and pre- Romantic repertoires.

Christophe Rousset is now invited to appear with Les Talens Lyriques all over Europe (Opéra National de Paris, Opéra Comique, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Philharmonie de Paris, Opéra Royal de Versailles, Dutch National Opera, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Lausanne Opéra, Teatro Real Madrid, Vienna Staatsoper and Theater an der Wien, Théâtre Royal de La Monnaie and Bozar in Brussels, London's Wigmore Hall and Barbican Centre, and so on), as well as on tour in other parts of the world (Mexico, New Zealand, Canada, United States, etc.).

At the same time he continues to pursue an active career as a harpsichordist and chamber musician, playing and recording on some of the world's finest period instruments. His recordings of the harpsichord works of Louis and François Couperin, Rameau, D'Anglebert, Royer, Duphy, Forqueray, Balbastre and Scarlatti, and those devoted to J. S. Bach (Partitas, Goldberg Variations, Harpsichord Concertos, English Suites, French Suites,

Klavierbüchlein für Wilhelm Friedemann, Well-Tempered Clavier) are regarded as references.

Teaching is of paramount importance to Christophe Rousset, who organises and gives many master-classes and academies (Paris Conservatoire CNSM, Ambronay, Fondation Royaumont, Operastudio Vlaanderen-Ghent, OFJ Baroque, Junge Deutsche Philharmonie-Berlin, Accademia Chigiana-Siena, Amici della Musica in Florence, Britten-Pears Orchestra at Snape Maltings) and, together with members of Les Talens Lyriques, plays an active part in introducing young secondary school students in Paris and the Île-de-France to music.

Christophe Rousset also appears regularly as a guest conductor: Liceu Barcelona, San Carlo Naples, La Scala Milan, Opéra Royal de Wallonie, London's Royal Opera House, Orquesta Nacional de España, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Orchestre du Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, etc.

He is active too in the field of research and writing, through critical editions, the publication of monographs devoted to Jean-Philippe Rameau and François Couperin (Actes Sud, 2007 and 2016, respectively).

2017 saw the publication of a series of interviews by Camille de Rijck in which Christophe Rousset shares his thoughts on music: *L'impression que l'instrument chante*, Éditions de la Cité de la Musique - Philharmonie de Paris (La rue musicale - Entretiens).

Christophe Rousset is a Knight of the French Legion of Honour, a Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters, and a Knight of the National Order of Merit.

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