SEASON 2024 I 2025

INSULA ORCHESTRA

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PERIOD INSTRUMENTS
DIRECTION ARTISTIQUE ET MUSICALE LAURENCE EQUILBEY



SO FRENCH !

BIZET / MASSENET / GOUVY
AS PART OF THE BRU ZANE FESTIVAL

DIFFUSION

JUNE 12 - 18 2025

insulaorchestra.fr

SO FRENCH !

Georges Bizet
Carmen Suite
Jules Massenet
Fantasy for cello and orchestra
Louis Théodore Gouvy
Symphony n°3

Victor Julien-Laferrière, *cello*
Insula orchestra
Laurence Equilbey, *conductor*

Duration: 1h50 with intermission

Numbers: 52 musicians, 1 conductor, 1 soloist

Diffusion: June 12 - 18 2025

Central to the vocation of Laurence Equilbey and Insula orchestra is their desire to offer audiences w**orks that have slipped under the radar**. This programme, a total immersion in the French repertory of the second half of the 19th century, turns the spotlight on rarely performed orchestral works from **outside the opera genre** that was the sure path to success for any composer in the musical environment of the era.



So it was with Georges Bizet, whose opera Carmen was his passport to posterity. The work was also the swansong of a composer who died in 1875 at just 37, and it remains today **one of the most often performed worldwide**. Reflecting this huge success are the two orchestral suites by Bizet's close friend Ernest Guiraud, who wrote them after the composer's death, reworking its most celebrated tunes.

Jules Massenet was also one of the masters of French lyrical art during the Third Republic, but here again one of his less well known concert pieces is showcased here: the Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra, written in 1897. **Bubbling with virtuosity**, rich musicality and freedom, it will be interpreted here by a leading soloist: **Victor Julien-Laferrière, one of the finest cellists of his generation.**

Théodore Gouvy, meanwhile, is a truly fascinating figure. Born in the Sarre region of eastern France, he found himself buffeted between his native land and Germany, as the two countries locked horns in war. **This dual identity found expression in his music, performed alike in Paris and German musical powerhouses like Leipzig and Berlin**. His work won the admiration of his contemporaries and established him as one of the major symphonic composers of the mid-19th century. His Third Symphony, premiered in Paris in 1857, variously echoing Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Schubert, bears witness to the mastery and rich inspiration with which he passed on this musical heritage.

Nathan Magrecki

TO SEE / TO LISTEN

Insula orchestra, Laurence Equilbey

Louise Farrenc - Symphony n°2

Louise Farrenc - Overture n°2

IN THE PRESS

About the Fauré Requiem concert, La Seine Musicale, February 2023:

« Laurence Equilbey has always positioned herself as a vector of meaning and images. This expressive and sensual sacred music, which relates the death of the preacher to the birds (undoubtedly the saint closest to nature), is counterpointed by a black and white video, between grey skies with moving clouds and holes of light.»
Marie-Aude Roux, Le Monde, February 16, 2023

« Equilbey's period instruments markedly affect one's experience of a score, and that is particularly true here, not just in the raw drama of the opening bare octaves, but in the fragility of the textures (both orchestral and, for that matter, choral) of the 'Offertoire'. »
Colin Clarke, Seen and Heard, February 20, 2023

« Both pieces benefit from Laurence Equilbey's meticulous and fine direction. The Insula orchestra's attacks are scalpel-sharp, percussive but without «orchestral thunder», a restraint that allows the necessary contemplation of this repertoire to take place. The slightly softer sound of the period instruments also reinforces this feeling of reserve, which, far from stifling the fortissimi, only makes them more percussive when they appear, in the Sanctus and the Libera Me. »
Emmanuel Caclin, Olyrix, February 18, 2023

About the recording of Farrenc's symphonies No. 1 and No. 3 on Warner Classics:

« Laurence Equilbey plays with the fruity colors of the Insula Orchestra's «period» woodwinds, which sing in concert with the strings in a framework whose tension does not let up.»
***Gérard Condé, Diapason*, september 2021**



DISCOGRAPHY



FARRENC
SYMPHONIES N°1 & 3

Insula orchestra /
Laurence Equilbey

Warner Classics
july 2021



SCHUBERT
NACHT & TRAÜME

Stanislas de Barbeyrac
/ Wiebke Lehmkuhl
/ accentus / Insula
orchestra / Laurence
Equilbey

Warner Classics
november 2017

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CHARGEURS

CONTACTS

Samuel Serin, General Manager
s.serin@insulaorchestra.fr
06 03 21 13 67

David Bodou, External relations Manager
d.bodou@insulaorchestra.fr
06 87 88 26 32