INSULA ORCHESTRA

bien dans son époque.

SEASON 2024 I 2025

INSULA ORCHESTRA
PERIOD INSTRUMENTS
DIRECTION ARTISTIQUE ET MUSICALE LAURENCE EQUILBEY



SCHUMANN
PARADISE AND THE PERI

STAGE OR CONCERT VERSION

DIFFUSION
MAY 19 - 25 2025

insulaorchestra.fr

SCHUMANN
PARADISE AND THE PERI

Robert Schumann
Paradise and the Peri

Johanni van Oostrum, *soprano*
Benjamin Bruns, *tenor*
accentus
Insula orchestra
Laurence Equilbey, conductor

Daniela Kerck, *stage direction*
Astrid Steiner, *video*

2H20 with intermission

Numbers: 4 soloists, Insula orchestra (52), accentus (36), 1 conductor

Diffusion: May 19 - 25 2025

Concerts at La Seine Musicale on May 14, 16 and 17, 2025

With *Paradise and the Peri*, Insula orchestra and Laurence Equilbey invite us to rediscover one of Robert Schumann's **most singular and moving works**.



This vast profane oratorio draws an astonishing range of influences: the Anglo-Irish writing of Thomas Moore, which inspired the libretto; the fantastic world of old German folklore and legend, of which Schumann was such a fan; finally, the distant Orient of the plot, sourced from Arab-Persian mythology and **revisited by 19th century Romanticism.**

The plot is especially lush: **to regain the right to return to Paradise, a banished spirit called the Peri must appease the gods by bringing back a worthy offering**. Each of the three parts of the oratorio is devoted to one of these gifts: the blood of an Indian hero who died for his fatherland will not do; no more than the love of an Egyptian virgin who has sacrificed herself to reunite with her beloved, a plague victim, in death; ultimately only the tears of a Syrian sinner, moved to penitence by the sight of a child at prayer, sway the deities.

Riding on a momentum on a par with the great oratorios of Mendelssohn and Berlioz, *Paradise and the Peri* is striking through its innovation (Schumann's arioso prefigures Wagner's "continuous melody") and rich orchestration. **We could not have asked for a better interpreter than the soprano Johanni van Oostrum**. Using period instruments from the era contemporary with its inception, Insula orchestra and Laurence Equilbey restore the work's sparkle and invite us to rediscover its inestimable musical beauty.

Nathan Magrecki

IN THE PRESS

About the Schumann Night of Kings concert:

«How great is this ravishingly idiosyncratic, dramatic-romantic music, charged to the top? And why doesn't anyone take it out of the niche as passionately as the French conductor Laurence Equilbey did with her Paris Insula Orchestra, the Accentus Choir and a handful of great soloists?»
Hamburger Abbenddlatt – may 2023 – Joachim Mischke

«*Laurence Equilbey conducts, with sensitivity and freshness, these works that often remind us of Weber and Wagner's Lohengrin. At the head of her Insula Orchestra, she makes the evening a sort of great dream, the pieces following one another without interruption. The Accentus Choir plays an important role in the smoothness and finesse of the musical line, with a whole range of nuances in the different interventions.*»
Opéra Magazine – july 2021 – Patrick Scemma

«*The voices of the soloists will be joined by those of the accentus chamber choir, an ensemble remarkable for its precision, accuracy and homogeneity. (...) Instigator of the project, Laurence Equlbiey expresses her joy to welcome again the public to La Seine Musicale, residence of her orchestra Insula Orchestra. Under her baton, the ensemble sounds precise and clear. She favors incisiveness (appropriate for the overlaps) and a beautiful palette of nuances.*»
Olyrix – may 2021



DANIELA KERCK

Born in Germany Daniela Kerck studied stage design at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna in the master class of Erich Wonder. Already at that time she was awarded various prizes, including the Meisterschulpreis of the Academy of Fine Arts, among others. Her university studies were followed by assistance periods for Erich Wonder at the Opernhaus Zurich, at the San Francisco Opera, at the state opera Berlin and Munich as well as the Teatro della Scala in Milan by directors Luc Bondy, Johannes Schaaf and Peter Mussbach.

Since 2004 she has been working as a lecturer at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna and as a freelance stage designer. She has been working closely and regularly with the directors Peter Mussbach, Jerome Savary and Veit Güssow as well as the costume designer Andrea Schmidt-Futterer, e.g. for “Lost and Found” by Lars Noren at the Nationaltheater Mannheim and the opera “Rusalka” at the Latvijas Opera in Riga, for which she was awarded the first prize of the Camerata Nuova. Further productions include “Norma” at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris and Luzern, “Neither” in the Teatro Zarzuela Madrid. 2014-2017 she studied opera direction at the University of Music in Karlsruhe by Prof. Andrea Raabe and Prof. Stephan Mösch, Germany where she attended masterclasses in directing by Peter Konwitschny and Tatjana Gürbaca. At De Netherlands Opera in Amsterdam she was a scholarship holder of the directing workshop with Monique Wakemarkers and the Woman Opera Directing Workshop with Katie Mitchell at the Academy Festival Aix en Provence. She is semi-finalist of the RingAwards ‘15 for the interpretation of Der Freischütz and won the first prize of the European Opera Director’s Prize for the opera Rusalka, which was performed in Riga. In 2019 she staged the opera Aida at the Tyrolean Festival in Erl. In 2021 she staged her first play Admissions by Joshua Harmon at the Hessian State Theater in Wiesbaden. This is followed by the German premiere of Tracy Lett’s ‘The Minutes’ and Jörg Widmann’s opera Babylon, which opened the May Festival in Wiesbaden in 2022. In 2023 she staged the world premiere of Oryx and Crake by Sœren Nils Eichberg. the novel by Margret Atwood and Rusalka by Antonin Dvorak together with soprano Olesya Golovneva, who also sings the title role. She teaches as a senior lecturer at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna.



ASTRID STEINER

Astrid Steiner is based in London and designs video projections for the stage - from electronic music to opera.

Astrid's career in visuals began in 2003 in Vienna's techno clubs as part of the artist duo Luma. Launisch and has now continued on international stages and museums such as the Mozarteum Salzburg, the Staatstheater Wiesbaden, the Chelsea Art Museum NY, the Expo 2010 in Shanghai or the Benaki Museum in Athens.

In her commercial and TV work Astrid has contributed as video editor to many award-winning productions:

The Eurovision Song Contest Opener which was watched by more than 200 million viewers from around the world won Gold at the Corporate Media Awards in Cannes, Gold at the World Media Award in Hamburg and the Golden Award of Montreux. (2016)

Brands and TV channels Astrid has worked for include Sotheby's, the FA Cup, the Rugby Football Union, TUI, London 2012, ORF (Austrian Broadcasting Corporation), Fox Sports Net and Red Bull TV.



JOHANNI VAN OOSTRUM

South African Johanni van Oostrum embodies the great roles of Weber, Wagner, Strauss and Janacek. She sang La Maréchale (Le Chevalier à la rose) under the direction of Simon Rattle at the Amsterdam Opera and Alan Gilbert at the Stockholm Opera, as well as at the Vienna Staatsoper. At the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich, she successfully sang the Countess (The Marriage of Figaro, Mozart) and Elsa (Lohengrin, Wagner). She also played the title role of Salomé (Strauss) in Graz and Marietta (La Ville morte, Korngold) at the Limoges Opera. De Weber, she sang Agathe (Le Freischütz) with Insula Orchestra and Laurence Equilbey at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées and on European tour, with CD and DVD recording at Erato; she reprized the role at the Amsterdam Opera in a staging by Kirill Serebrennikov. She also sang Leonore (Fidelio, Beethoven) with Adam Fischer and the title role of Jenůfa (Janáček).

In 2022/2023, she will sing Chrysothemis (Elektra, Strauss) in Hamburg, Eva (Les Meistersinger de Nuremberg, Wagner) in Tokyo, under the direction of Marek Janowski, the title role of Rusalka (Dvorak) in Amsterdam and Le Freischütz at the Semperoper in Dresden. Johanni van Oostrum has worked with conductors such as Ivor Bolton, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Antonello Manacorda, Oksana Lyniv and directors such as Harry Kupfer, Barrie Kosky, Tobias Kratzer or Vera Nemirova. In his concert repertoire: Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Four Last Lieder by Richard Strauss, A German Requiem by Brahms, Elias by Mendelssohn, Lyric Symphony by Zemlinsky, Requiem by Verdi. She is also very attached to the interpretation of melody by South African composers.



TO LISTEN

Schumann : *Night ok kings*
Recording of the concert at the Auditorium of La Seine Musicale, May 19, 2021
Insula orchestra and accentus conducted by Laurence Equilbey
Staging, Antonin Baudry

DISCOGRAPHIY



MOZART, REQUIEM
2014

W.A. Mozart, Requiem

Sandrine Piau / Sara Mingardo / Werner Güra / Christopher Purves / accentus / Insula orchestra / Laurence Equilbey, direction



W.A. MOZART, MESSE DU COU-RONNEMENT
VÊPRES SOLENNELLES
D'UN CONFESSEUR
2017

Sandrine Piau / Renata Pokupić / Benjamin Bruns / Andreas Wolf / accentus / Insula orchestra / Laurence Equilbeyaccentus, Insula orchestra



MAGIC MOZART
2020

W.A. Mozart

Sandrine Piau / Jodie Devos / Loïc Félix / Stanislas de Barbeyrac / Florian Sempey / Laurence Equilbey, direction

SUPPORTERS

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LA SEINE MUSICALE

avec le généreux soutien de Aline Foriel-Destezet

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