

SPEEDMEETING SUBSCRIPTION FORM

COMPANY : **LES MUFFATTI** – Brussels Baroque Orchestra

First name : Benoît / Emilie

Last Name : Vanden Bemden / Menz

email : benoit@lesmuffatti.be / emilie@lesmuffatti.be

www.lesmuffatti.be

www.facebook.com/LesMuffatti

Describe your company in a few words :

LES MUFFATTI, the brainchild of a group of Brussels-based musicians, was born in 1996 out of a desire to create a professional environment which would focus on baroque orchestral repertoire, and which would devote equal attention to the joy of performance, close musical study, and the demands of the craft in terms of accuracy with sophistication. The ensemble's blend of enthusiasm, dedication and idealism so impressed Peter Van Heyghen that he decided to become their mentor and conductor. Between 2004 (the year they welcomed Van Heyghen) and 2014, Les Muffatti made waves on the international stage, performing at a number of leading venues all over Europe. Over time, the group has developed a distinctive artistic identity, part of which involves sharing responsibility for artistic direction jointly among its members. Since 2015, each project is entrusted to a guest musician – the musical director of one project might be a soloist; the conductor or leader might take over the next. The orchestra is exploring a range of major projects over the coming years, including working with a writer in residence and showcasing rare instruments. At the same time, it is always sensitive to the need to maintain a balance between performing key repertoire and publicising hidden gems.

The group's name is a hat-tip to Georg Muffat (1653-1704), a cosmopolitan composer who played a key part in bringing the orchestra's founding members together. Muffat was among the first musicians to provide detailed descriptions of the main differences between the French and Italian Baroque styles, and fittingly the ensemble's first recording was devoted to his compositions. To date, Les Muffatti have released six Cds (Ramée – Outhere Music), all to widespread acclaim. In 2014 their latest release, Reinhard Keiser's *Brookes-Passion*, recorded in cooperation with the Vox Luminis vocal ensemble, was awarded three of Belgium's major music prizes: KLARA classical CD of the year, the CAECILIA PRIZE (*Union de la presse musicale belge*) and OCTAVE DE LA MUSIQUE CLASSIQUE.

Les Muffatti's interpretation and performance practice constantly strives for mastery of the theatrical quality so characteristic of Baroque art forms, an ambition which extends far beyond delivering a mere accurate rendition of a score. The ensemble takes the view that the theatrical gestures, mannerisms and rhetorical flourishes of Baroque music cannot be dismissed as products of a fundamentally Baroque aesthetic, but that they are instead essentially universal. Thorough knowledge of stylistic features, a grounding in period performance, and careful selection of appropriate instruments are not, in Les Muffatti's consideration, ends in themselves. In the ensemble's hands, such technical requirements constitute the means of making the historical repertoire which is so close to its heart come alive to touch, move, entertain and captivate contemporary audiences.

Wich project would you like to present during your speedmeting sessions :

LES MUFFATTI

PROGRAMMES FOR UPCOMING SEASONS 2016 – 2017 & 2017 – 2018

1. OUVERTURE, SUITES & CONCERTI FOR CHALUMEAU

Despite their shared etymology (both are reeds), the shawm and the chalumeau are distinct instruments. The shawm is a member of the oboe family, whereas the chalumeau is a direct ancestor of the clarinet. Although its range is limited, the chalumeau enjoyed great popularity between 1700 and 1740. Its fine timbre was appreciated by Rameau, Caldara, Steffani, Vivaldi, and many others, and it consequently featured in a large number of compositions until it was eventually replaced by the clarinet.

One of those who fell for the chalumeau was Johann Christoph Graupner, whose name, sadly, is now much more familiar to musicologists than musicians or music lovers. Nevertheless, Graupner's talent, the size of his oeuvre, and the reputation he enjoyed during his lifetime were all exceptional. His contemporaries Johann Friedrich Fasch and Georg Philipp Telemann were also entranced by the chalumeau's velvety tone, and included it in a number of their works.

In cooperation with the internationally renowned clarinetist **Nicola Boud**, Les Muffatti have compiled a programme which will propel the chalumeau and those who composed for it back from semi-obscurity into the limelight. The programme is designed to portray a true family likeness, featuring works for soprano, alto, tenor and bass chalumeaux.

Ensemble (15):

Soloists: Nicola Boud & N.N. – chalumeaux

Les Muffatti: 6 violins, 2 violas, 2 cellos, 1 double bass, harpsichord, theorbo

Programme:

Johann Christoph GRAUPNER (1683-1760)

Concerto for two chalumeaux (alto and bass), strings and basso continuo in C major (GWV 303)

Overture for strings and basso continuo in E flat major (GWV 429)

Johann Friedrich FASCH (1688-1758)

Concerto for soprano chalumeau, strings and basso continuo in B flat major (FWV L:B1)

Georg Philipp TELEMANN (1681-1767)

Concerto for two chalumeaux (alto and tenor), strings and basso continuo in D minor (TWV 52:d1)

Additional composition for two-part programmes:

Georg Philipp TELEMANN

Suite for strings and basso continuo in G major (*La Bizarre*) (TWV 55:G2)

2. FISCHER, KUSSER AND THE GERMAN LULLYISTS

Suites for strings (and brass) by German adherents of Lully

Towards the end of the 17th century, German instrumental music set off down an independent path, clearly inspired by two nations and two styles. Two composers perfectly capture the essence of these two different styles: Corelli for the Italian and Lully for the French. An impressive number of German composers studied with the two masters, subsequently returning to their own country to disseminate these styles among their own pupils. It is at this crossroads of influences that the mixed style, later christened *vermischter Geschmack*, was born, of which George Muffatt is the most representative composer. For this new project, we have focused specifically on the composers who introduced the French style to Germany.

« *This manner of playing airs de ballet, i.e. according to the unequalled genius of Mr Baptiste de Lully, here adopted in all its purity, and so warmly to be recommended by the esteem in which it is held by the best musicians in Europe, is an invention so exquisite that anything more precise, pleasant, or beautiful would be impossible to find.* »

« *Nothing disagreeable or coarse is to be heard; on the contrary, the combinations found there are marvelous: long lines (that is to say, bowstrokes) united with great speed, varied movements with a constant measure, tender sweetness married with the exuberance of play* » (Muffat, *Florilegium Secundum*, 1698).

Ensemble

(13 strings only – 16 or 17 with oboes & bassoon – 15 with trumpets – 19 everyone):

6 violins, 2 violas, 2 cellos, 1 double bass, 2 (or 3) oboes, 1 bassoon, 2 trumpets, 1 harpsichord/organ, 1 theorbo

Programme:

Suites for strings from:

Johann FISCHER (1646-1716)

Tafelmusik a 3, 4 (1702)

Johann Sigismund KUSSER (1660-1727)

Composition de musique suivant la méthode française (1682)

Johann Caspar Ferdinand FISCHER (1656-1746)

Journal du printemps (1695)

Optionnal : an alternative version of this program has two or three suites with brass, in collaboration with **Jean-François Madeuf**, the French expert on the natural trumpet.

3. GRAUPNER & TELEMANN

Late German Baroque music is often swept under Johann Sebastian Bach's protective shadow. However, this ignores the fact that Bach's music, despite its genius, was not widely understood or appreciated by his contemporaries; conversely, it consigns many other composers to oblivion, in some cases justifiably, given the predictability and lack of originality of their music, but in others unfortunately and indeed unfairly so.

Graupner and Telemann were contemporaries, but they had much else in common: both were paragons of musical elegance whose work perfectly suited the taste of their time. They were also both extremely prolific: Graupner, for instance, wrote more than 1,400 cantatas. Telemann has long been included in the musical pantheon, but Graupner is still languishing on the waste-heap of Western music history, despite the quality of his compositions, the reputation he acquired in his own lifetime, and the sheer quantity of the music he left behind.

This programme, which is designed to spread Les Muffati's enthusiasm for these two Baroque superstars, places the group in the very good company of this young internationally oriented Belgian soloist: **Reinoud Van Mechelen**.

Ensemble (16):

Soloists: Reinoud Van Mechelen – tenor & NN – oboe

Les Muffatti: 6 violins, 2 violas, 2 cellos, 1 double bass, 1 oboe, 1 harpsichord, 1 lute

Programme:

Johann Christoph GRAUPNER (1683-1760)

Fürwahr er trug unsre Krankheit,

Cantata for tenor, oboe, strings and basso continuo (GWV 1119/25)

Das Leben war das Licht der Menschen

Cantata for tenor, strings and basso continuo (GWV 1107/45)

Georg Philipp TELEMANN (1681-1767)

Oboe concerto Twv 51:c1

Suite for strings and basso continuo in G major (*La Bizarre*) (TWV 55:G2)

4. A BELGIAN SOIRÉE AT THE ESTERHÁZYS'

Joseph Haydn and his Belgian contemporaries Pieter Van Maldere and François-Joseph Gossec

Haydn spent many years of his life working at the court of the Esterházy princes. In addition to composing numerous symphonies for the court orchestra, he also conducted works by his contemporaries, including the Flemish composer Pieter Van Maldere, whose work then enjoyed great popularity at the courts of Europe, and his Walloon counterpart François-Joseph Gossec, regarded as the father of the French symphony and composer to the French Revolution.

Alessandro Moccia, Classical specialist and concert master at a number of orchestras, including the Orchestre des Champs-Élysées, takes on the solo role in Haydn's Violin Concerto in C.

Ensemble (19):

Soloist: Alessandro Moccia – violin

Les Muffatti: 8 violins, 2 violas, 2 cellos, 1 double bass, 2 oboes, 1 bassoon 2 French horns, 1 harpsichord

Programme:

Pieter VAN MALDERE (1729-1768)

Symphony nr. 16 (VR 43D, ca. 1760)

François-Joseph GOSSEC (1734-1829)

Symphonie concertante (RH 49, 1778)

Joseph HAYDN (1732-1809)

Violin Concerto in C major (Hob. VIIa:1, ca. 1765)

Symphony nr. 45 in F sharp minor (*Farewell*) (Hob. I:45, 1772)

5. ITALIAN CRAZE

At the beginning of the 18th century, Italian music launched an invasion of England. The first opera to be translated from Italian into English, Stanzani and Franceschini's *Arsinoë*, was staged in London in 1705. The performance was to mark a turning point in English music history (*Arsinoë* "was the first opera that gave us a taste of the Italian Music", wrote an influential London gazette); from then on, and for the rest of the 18th century, Italian opera would enjoy steady and unwavering success. Famous composers and Italian singers settled in London, playing a significant role in developing this new musical style, and other composers (such as Pepush and

Handel) did not escape the trend's unstoppable influence.

Handel's success now overshadows his contemporaries' reputations. The group's next CD may be devoted entirely to Handel, but Les Muffatti still believe that the music written and performed in England at that period includes some lesser-known gems which deserve wider attention.

Charles Avison, the only Englishman included in the programme, was a particularly popular composer; the group has selected a harpsichord sonata by Domenico Scarlatti rearranged by Avison for string orchestra. Giuseppe Sammartini, most of whose concertos and overtures were published posthumously, has also been unjustly forgotten. His works were once tremendously successful, even eclipsing Corelli's popularity. Sammartini's Overture in F major boasts a delectable galant style. Pietro Castrucci, one of the best-loved violinists of his generation, led Handel's orchestra for twenty years. His own compositions are highly individual and full of surprises. Francesco Geminiani, the most important violinist to work in England, arranged the sonatas from Corelli's Opus 5 for string orchestra. *La Follia* is still one of his best-known pieces.

Rachael Beesley, internationally renowned Australian violinist, director and concertmaster takes the lead of the ensemble.

Review of our last performance of this programme in La Libre Belgique (in French) :
fb.me/7vCwSxlZE

Ensemble (13):

6 violins, 2 viols, 2 cellos, 1 double bass, 1 harpsichord, 1 lute

Programme:

Charles AVISON (1709-1770)

Concerto in D minor nr. 5 (after D. Scarlatti)

Giuseppe SAMMARTINI (1695-1750)

Overture for strings and basso continuo in F major op. 10 nr. 7

Pietro CASTRUCCI (1679-1752)

Concerto grosso in A minor for strings and basso continuo op. 3 nr. 4

Francesco GEMINIANI (1687-1762)

Concerto grosso in F major, op.5 nr. 5

Concerto grosso in D minor op. 5 nr. 12 (*La Follia*) (after A. Corelli)