

## SPEEDMEETINGS SUBSCRIPTION FORM (English)

COMPANY : ENSEMBLE OBSIDIENNE

First name : BONNARDOT

Last name : EMMANUEL

e-mail : ensemble.obsidienne@orange.fr

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### Describe your company in a few words :

In its frequent connections with poetry, drama or dance, sometimes on the fringes of contemporary or traditional repertoires in music and song, Obsidienne carries on breaking new ground in hitherto unpublished or little known areas of music from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, and lays particular emphasis on the restitution of the medieval body of instruments, inspired by the paintings of the great masters. The ensemble sometimes splits up into smaller groups, which allows for a more specialised, intimate and personalized type of work. The full ensemble can bring together up to 16 performers, which lends it greater powerfulness and allows the alternation of soloists and choir that is required by the great medieval repertoire. This flexibility and versatility have provided Obsidienne with a longevity and relevance that have enabled it to reach an outstanding level of musical quality.

With Obsidienne, medieval music turns into a repertoire to invent, to recreate, an uncharted territory to be imagined, an unknown planet to travel to.

Obsidienne is first and foremost an ensemble of musical creation that draws its inspiration from medieval and Renaissance music with the constant care to bring it back to life.

Reviving a repertoire that is often identified with the folk tradition of a time long gone, but which still appeals to our contemporaries by its wealth and diversity, which speaks to sophisticated music lovers as well as to untrained audiences.

As an ensemble in residence in Sens since 2009 on the theme of « songs from the Middle Ages to our era », Obsidienne has consolidated its work on the song repertoire through the centuries. Songs have no borders, whether in time or space ; they are to be experienced as a continuum. Through its musical shows, between dance and/or drama and music, Obsidienne explores the history of songs and their resonance in the contemporary repertoire.

Obsidienne has based the greater part of its research on vocal polyphony and improvisation. It is one of the very few specialists that can recreate the techniques of early polyphonic improvisation, which were in common use among singers at the time.

Obsidienne is supported by the DRAC of Burgundy (regional board of cultural affairs), the Regional Council of Burgundy, the General Council of the Yonne department, for its participation in various musical events in France and abroad (Festival of Ambronay, Festival of the Flanders, Festival of Wallonia, Festival of Île-de-France, Festival of Haut-Jura, Radio-France, Schubertiade, etc...)

Its many recordings with Calliope and Opus 111 have been awarded numerous prizes by the French and international press (Grand Prix du Disque, Diapason d'or, 'Choc' by Le Monde de la Musique, '10' by Répertoire, 5 stars by Goldberg, 'Recommended' by Classica, 'Bravo' by Tradmagazine, ...).

To discover [Obsidienne](#)

[Website](#)

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## Which project would you like to present during your speedmeeting sessions :

### I - CONCERT CELESTE (8 musicians)

#### *Répertoires sacrés et improvisations*

#### *Du chant grégorien aux premières polyphonies de la Renaissance.*

This program retraces a musical adventure in connection with the construction of our cathedrals, and particularly that of Sens, a medieval capital of ecclesiastical France where the *Obsidienne* ensemble has been in residence since 2009. This has been for the ensemble the opportunity to highlight the diversity of its skills in the interpretation of a repertoire that spans several centuries, from Gregorian neumes to Renaissance polyphonies. From a conservative harmonization at the fifth to the elaboration of a full organum, *Obsidienne* colours and ornates these melodies with improvised polyphonies that have become the hallmark of the ensemble.

Medieval music is characterized by its keen sensitivity to melody, which is the foundation of a whole architecture of lines and interlacing that eventually developed into the art of counterpoint. Among the selected pieces, the subtlety of early music lies in its constant mixing of popular music with art music ; popular in the universality of the great themes of Christmas or Epiphany celebrations, as well as its directly accessible melodic sense ; scholarly also, as we should not be misled into thinking that behind these musical treasures there are no great composer-craftsmen and improvisers, musicians of whom we aim to be the distant heirs.

### II - THE GARDEN OF DELIGHTS (6 or 8 musicians)

#### *Songs from the early Renaissance--15th century*

The fanciful triptych "The Garden of Delights", by Hieronymus Bosch has provided the inspiration for this concert devised as a musical stroll through the Europe of the early Renaissance, with a programme that intermingles the purity and innocence of songs from two of the greatest composers of the Renaissance, i.e. Dufay and Desprez, with the more roguish repertoire of the manuscript of Bayeux.

Solo voices happily blend with a great number of instrumental colours from the Middle Ages, as well as the sounds of new instruments invented at the end of the 15th century (medieval fiddle, lyres, cornets...), which had the favour of the courts, particularly for domestic usage, along with chamber music.

The musicians make arrangements, improvise and switch from vocals to instruments (psaltery, viols, fiddles and rebecs, recorders and bagpipes...) alternating monodic folksong with the intricate polyphonies of the composers of 15th-century Europe, between the late Middle Ages and the early Renaissance; thus they help us discover the various aspects of the musical universe of that era when music was a convivial art of participation for the members of high society.

[Extract of the program.](#)

### III - FEMMES TROUVERES (5 musicians)

#### *A hymn to female writers, poets...*

Inspirational muses, female trouvères, women authors and composers

The singers and instrumentalists of *Obsidienne* introduce us to women artists in a musical journey covering almost three centuries... This is the opportunity to discover

or rediscover the musical works of female trouvères, composers and authors, and to celebrate several legendary women, genuine muses to male artists. Femmes trouvères is a homage to such inspirational women as Marie de France, Hildegard of Bingen, Christine de Pisan, Isolde or Joan of Arc, a musical and poetical invitation in the style of musical fantasies, a hymn to women writers and minstrels.

#### **IV - ¡ Miracle ! Les chemins de St Jacques (7 musicians)**

Miracles sung and narrated on the way to Santiago de Compostela

Obsidienne makes itself narrator as well as musician so as to restore to the miracles of the pilgrims of Compostela their original extravagant, entertaining and poetic character.

In the 13th century, Gautier de Coinci in France, then Alfonso el Sabio in Spain sing praises to the Virgin Mary ; they « find »(trobar) and compose, in the then new vernacular, songs about the famous miracles of the Holy Virgin. The Codex Calixtinus, written in France, had travelled down to Santiago de Compostela. Obsidienne journeys south on a pilgrimage from France to Galicia, exploring three of the major musical works of the 12th and 13th centuries, narrating or singing of miracles, to the sound of instruments, in the playful and inventive mood that is the hallmark of its interpretations.

[Extract of program.](#)

#### **V - Other projects available:**

European repertoire of medieval and renaissance music.

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