



MAGICIANS IN THE TIME OF THE SUN KING

Lully. Desmarests. Charpentier. Collasse. Rossi. Cavalli

Paris, 1650. The regency of Anne of Austria was gradually ending, between the rebellion and the Thirty Years' War. Cardinal Mazarin organized Peace in Europe through the signing of the treaties of Westphalia, the Pyrenees and the organization of the marriage of Louis XIV. Ultramontane composers are associated with the most ambitious royal entertainments, while for French artists "the trip to Italy" remains an indisputable initiation rite.

Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, called Molière, travelled the roads of France, and lead his first career with his company the "Théâtre Illustre". His reputation was growing between commedia dell arte, trestle theater, farces and character comedies. At the same time, the Duke of Guise noticed a young cantor in Florence whom he brought to France in 1646. Giovanni Battista Lulli arrived in Paris and was quickly recognized for his talents as a violinist, composer and dancer. He began a dazzling career in the service of the young monarch. He was naturalized in 1661, becoming the most French of composers of all time: Jean-Baptiste Lully.

From 1664 the two "Jean-Baptiste" collaborated, and the very national genre of the Comédie Ballet was born from this union, where theatre, dance and music were connected in the service of a complete spectacle, as shown by "Le Mariage forcé" and "Les Plaisirs de l'île enchantée". At the Palace of Versailles, entertainment grew and Louis XIV used the arts to raise himself and represent his absolute power. This era bears the mark, aura and grandeur of a "King turned Sun".

Mythological figures

At the heart of the tragédie lyrique repertoire of Lully and his competitors (Pascal Collasse, Henry Desmarest and Marc-Antoine Charpentier), large opera scenes echoed the more Mediterranean influences of Luigi Rossi and Francesco Cavalli.

Emphasizing their almost carnivalesque madness and the strength of their characters, these historical figures, fascinating and fantastic, borrow from the greatest texts of antiquity. Tasso, Ovid and all of mythology were put into poetry by Molière and other associated librettists such as Sieur Quinault and Madame de Saintonge, as recitatives, dramatic scenes and semi-ariosos.



Program

Royal Ballet de la Nuit

- « Atys » by **Jean-Baptiste Lully**, scene from *Cybèle*
- « Circé » by **Henry Desmarest**, final scene of *Circé*
- « Ercole Amante » by **Francesco Cavalli**, scene of *Giunone*
- « Armide » by **Jean-Baptiste Lully**, Passacaglia and monologue by Armide
- « Idoménée » by **André Campra**, aria of Venus
- Passacaglia by **Luigi Rossi**
- « Médée » by **Marc-Antoine Charpentier**, scene from *Médée*

Musical direction, harpsichord Sébastien d'Hérin

Soprano Caroline Mutel

Instrumental ensemble 2 violins, 1 viola, cello, cello piccolo, theorbo, recorder, bassoon and percussion