



## A DIALOGUE BETWEEN POLYPHONIES

The encounter between the Corsican group Tavagna and the Gilles Binchois Ensemble was born out of the desire to compare and contrast two musical traditions that, though having been established and developed in very different contexts, display enough common traits to prompt a dialogue between the two. The polyphonic languages brought to light during this exchange originate from the same embellishment of songs using simple polyphony.

On one hand, traditional Corsican music whose mediterranean vocal style, orally transmitted, is very closely linked to the social environment from which it draws its emulous style; on the other, a musical aesthetic connected to the churches and cathedrals of France, borne by singers trained in scholarly polyphony, plainchant and *cantar super librum*, and placed under the authority of the Church.

Today:

On one hand, a tradition that in the 1970s needed a fresh impetus in order to avoid being forgotten forever, a tradition searching for all possible clues that would help in rejuvenating an aesthetic and practices which were in danger of being lost to oblivion. On the other, the same 1970s witnessed a similar movement: the historic interpretation of heritage music and, as in this case, the rediscovery of a whole facet of church music (from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century) that thanks to this project becomes once again a living polyphonic practice.

We have based this programme on three important moments in church life. The Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and Vespers, which on Sundays and feast days concentrate the fervour of the faithful – indeed, these are the works that make up the majority of the traditional Corsican religious repertoire – and the Requiem mass, the funeral service being of course an important moment which brings together the parish as a whole. The Magnificat at the end of Vespers, the Dies Irae of the Requiem mass or the O Salutaris, a key element of the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, have all produced songs enshrined in religious fervour.

This concert will highlight the connections between the polyphonic systems used traditionally and adopted by the Tavagna ensemble and the different forms of French *Faux-Bourdon* technique here rediscovered using printed or manuscript sources from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It will also feature the monodies which are indicative of the richness of plainchant, and those that have been reclaimed in light of Corsican tradition.





### *Introducing the Ensembles*

For over twenty years the Tavagna ensemble has travelled through numerous artistic and musical worlds that are said to be isolated and cut-off from each other. They have done so with an open-mindedness that enables them to be innovative, creative, and even precursors, as they bring together tradition with jazz, baroque or organ music. Indeed, the field of singing is as vast as life itself and it is life which is being voiced through these various forms: song, which shows its strength and maintains and renews tradition at the same time; next, theatre, another means of expression for the same building blocks of our inner being; lastly, polyphonic song, which never ceases to surprise. A form which has sustained itself through thick and thin. A primordial song which reveals who we are and where we come from and which prepares us for new paths ahead, paths that the Tavagna Ensemble are always ready to travel on!

Ghjuvan Carlu ADAMI  
Tumasgiu CIPRIANI  
Ghjuvan Stefanu LANGIANNI  
Ghjuvan Petru LANFRANCHI  
Francescu MARCANTEI  
Mighele PAOLI

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Since 1979 Dominique Vellard has inspired and led the Gilles Binchois Ensemble. Over thirty-five years of research and concert performances have produced some of the essential recordings of medieval and Renaissance music. If Dominique Vellard's central role in the creation and subsequent flourishing of the *French School* of medieval music – notably his entirely new interpretation of the Gregorian repertoire – gave him the image of a medievalist, his interest in the other periods of ancient music is nonetheless unwavering. Alternating the repertoires that range from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century is a way for the ensemble to continually rekindle its enthusiasm, revitalise the artistic impulse of its members and avoid interpretations becoming too set in stone, too restricted.

Every year the ensemble are the guests of honour at the International Medieval Music Festival in Thoronet. The festival, created 25 years ago, enabled the ensemble to establish an academy dedicated to training young singers.

Over the last fifteen years, thanks to Dominique Vellard's passion for traditional music, the ensemble has developed projects with musicians from the north and south of India, Spain, Brittany, Corsica, Morocco and Iran. Dominique Vellard's contemporary creativity means that he devotes a part of his time to composition. To this end he draws inspiration from his own musical and spiritual training and from his experience and interest in traditional vocal monodies and polyphonies.

As a professor for a number of years at the *Conservatoire national supérieur de musique* in Lyon, Dominique Vellard has taught many French performers the repertoire of the Middle Ages. In 1982 he became professor of Medieval and Renaissance musical interpretation at the *Schola Cantorum Basiliensis* where students from around the world come to study and where many generations of performers have learnt the constituent elements of their style and the foundations of their knowledge. Dominique Vellard has recorded more than fifty records, around forty of them as director of the Gilles Binchois Ensemble.

David SAGASTUME, haute contre  
François ROCHE, ténor  
Dominique VELLARD, ténor et direction  
Cyprien SADEK, baryton  
Joel FREDERIKSEN, basse