



Le concert de la Passion by Les Idées Heureuses

Description

At the gates of musical paradise, this concert marks the 250th anniversary of the death of Marguerite d'Youville

By **Luc Archambault**

Montréal, April 10, 2021

For the tenth consecutive year (the pandemic notwithstanding), **Les Idées Heureuses** presented their traditional **Concert de la Passion**. This year, this concert was thought around Marguerite d'Youville (Varenes, Québec 1701 – Montréal, 1771), founder of the Soeurs Grises and first canonized Canadian woman (1990), and Jean Girard (Bourges, 1696 – Montréal, 1765), Sulpician clerk and organist of the Notre-Dame parish, music master and Montréal's first professional musician. This serves also to celebrate Marguerite d'Youville's 250th anniversary of her death.



Geneviève Soly – photo: Isabelle Fexa

As part of **Geneviève Soly**'s musicological research work in the conventual archives of New France, this musical performance was organized around a historical reconstruction of a Holy Saturday mass such as could have been heard in the Notre-Dame parish under the French regime.

For the vocal part, Madame Soly called on the **Ensemble Scholastica**, this ensemble dedicated to the interpretation of medieval monophonic and polyphonic liturgical songs, and also specializes itself on New France's sacred music. It has been under the direction of **Rebecca Bain**, a specialist in medieval music, since 2012.

And this ensemble sounds just like a group of angels! Pure, crystalline voices, timbres in total harmony. By closing your eyes, it is more than easy to imagine yourself in New France, to forget the contemporary world and to let yourself be lulled by these haunting chants. Especially since the period pronunciation is put forward by these fairies... when one talks of authenticity!

And what about the two organists, **Dorothea Ventura**, on the small chamber organ, and **Geneviève Soly**, on the large chamber organ (and not a small chamber required for this gigantic instrument!). When the organ sounded, my ears were overwhelmed with happiness. The loudness of these marvels (the strength of the large organ, the subtlety of the small one), combined with the atmospheric performance by the Ensemble Scholastica, really brought me to a level of divine satisfaction. Only one catch, however: it seemed to me that the large chamber organ suffered



from a technical failure. At first, I thought there was a construction site near Bourgie Hall, a dull knocking sound being heard. Then I noticed that this low-pitched pulse faded as soon as Madame Soly stopped playing. Really the only sour note, albeit small, with this high-end concert.

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Relaunch of Montréal's cultural life?

With this concert, does the revival of the cultural life of Montréal renew itself and get back in the saddle? We only can pray to the Most-High that Art and Culture are allowed to express themselves, in spite of the restricted audiences admitted into these temples, such as **Bourgie Hall**. Not being fond of webcasting, I thrive on live concerts. I am of this dinosaurian breed. How else can one appreciate the mastery of soloist **Angèle Trudeau**, whose vocal timbre is of an almost incomprehensible purity? Or the magnificent playing of Geneviève Soly, who in addition to her in-depth research in the Soeurs Grises archives, manages to maintain an interpretive brio on which the musical reputation of Les Idées Heureuses is propelled to the upper stratosphere of the visible and invisible universe?

Upcoming concerts

The next concert of Les Idées Heureuses will focus on the 6 complete *Cello Solo Suites* by JS Bach (BWV 1007-1012), presented in two performances on April 25th, 2021.

The first part, at 11:00, will be based on *Suites No. 1-3-5* (BWV 1007-1009-1011), and the second part, at 17:00, *Suites No. 4-2-6* (BWV 1010-1008-1012). A performance by soloist **Elinor Frey**, baroque cello and five-string cello, with Les Idées Heureuses.

Please note that these concerts will be followed, in the near future, by the complete 6 violin solos (BWV 1001-1006), performed by soloist **Laura Andriani**.

Tickets can be reserved at 514-285-2000 #1 or by email at musee@mbamtl.org

Images : Courtesy of Les Idées Heureuses

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Luc Archambault, writer and journalist, globe-trotter at heart, passionate about movies, music, literature and contemporary dance, came back to Montreal to pursue his unrelenting quest for artistic meaning.

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