

Laurence Equilbey *Season 2020-21 Biography*

Founder & Music Director of the **Insula** orchestra and the **accentus** choir, **Laurence Equilbey** is one of the leading French conductors of today, recognized as possessing a distinct artistic vision, with a demanding yet open-minded approach to her art.

Equilbey first rose to prominence as Founder & Music Director of **accentus** – an award-winning chamber choir based in Paris. In 2012, with generous support of the *Département des Hauts-de-Seine*, she then became the Founder & Music Director of the **Insula** orchestra - an ensemble devoted to Classical and pre-Romantic repertoire performed on period instruments.

Equilbey is a champion of contemporary creation as well - renowned for her innovative programming and stage-craft in particular for bringing new life to canonic works with artistic flair and innovation - the staged productions of Haydn's *Creation*, Mozart's *Requiem*, and Weber's *Der Freischütz* (soon to be released on DVD).

In 2017, Insula became the first Orchestra-in-Residence of **La Seine Musicale**, the state-of-the-art multi-disciplinary arts venue located on the Île Seguin, to the South-West of Paris. In her position as **Artistic Director**, Equilbey oversees the classical music programming of the 1,150-seater auditorium, including a major international orchestras series.

Together, Equilbey and Insula have garnered exceptional critical acclaim, made numerous recordings, and toured extensively throughout Europe – currently holding a three-year residency at the Barbican Centre in London. Their joint discography includes recordings for the Naïve and Deutsche Grammophon labels, and – since 2017 – Equilbey enjoys an ongoing relationship with **Warner Classics/Erato**, covering major repertoire by Mozart, Schubert, and Beethoven, amongst others.

Recently, Equilbey and *accentus* gathered together in Salzburg for a Dusapin/Gubaïdulina program, with the Camerata Salzburg and the *österreichisches ensemble für neue music*. This 2020-21 season, Laurence Equilbey will appear with the Insula orchestra for concerts of *Magic Mozart* (recording released on Warner Classics/Erato) and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with *accentus*. In May 2021, Laurence Equilbey explores with Antonin Baudry the ultimate ballads of Schumann (*La Nuit des Rois*).

In addition, Equilbey works at the highest levels in the field of opera. With Insula, Equilbey partnered with La Fura dels Baus to create a new and ground-breaking production of Haydn's *Creation*, making their North American debut at Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival in 2018 and touring to the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Grand Théâtre de Provence, and Theater an der Wien, amongst others. She also received great critical acclaim for her work on Britten's *Albert Herring* (Opéra de Rouen-Normandie, Opéra de Paris), the Marie-Agnès Gillot ballet *Sous apparence* (Opéra de Paris), as well as Reynaldo Hahn's *Ciboulette* and Gounod's *La nonne sanglante* (Opéra Comique).

Beyond her work with Insula, Equilbey's exploration of the symphonic repertoire has brought her to major stages throughout Europe. She works regularly in France, with such leading orchestras as the Orchestre National de Lyon and Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg. Recent and upcoming European highlights include the BBC NOW, Brussels Philharmonic, Göteborgs Symfoniker, the Gulbenkian Orchestra, HR-Sinfonieorchester Frankfurt, Orquestra

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Simfònica de Barcelona i Nacional de Catalunya, and London's Philharmonia Orchestra. In North America, she makes her debut with the Handel and Haydn Society (Boston).

Equilbey is also recognized for her outstanding skill with chamber orchestras, working regularly with such ensembles as the Camerata Salzburg, Kammerphilharmonie Potsdam, Mozarteum Orchester Salzburg, and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, as well as the period ensembles Akademie für Alte Musik (Berlin) and Concerto Köln.

Laurence Equilbey holds the positions of Artistic Director & Director of Education at the Department for Young Singers at the Paris Conservatoire. She is Artist-in-Association of the Grand Théâtre de Provence and also maintains a privileged relationship with the Philharmonie de Paris.

"Ms. Equilbey drew lithe, impressively natural playing from the excellent orchestra. And the great final chorus of praise, a stirring fugue, could not have been better."

Anthony Tommasini, New York Times

"The production is proof of Ms. Equilbey's stubbornly individual approach to leading her orchestra, the resident ensemble at La Seine Musicale...She has made a name for herself by tenaciously embarking on unusual projects like "The Creation", embracing technology and programming neglected repertoire, particularly the works of female composers."

Roslyn Sulcas, New York Times

"In the pit, Laurence Equilbey knows exactly how to combine flexibility and energy to obtain an exemplary commitment from Insula orchestra."

Pierre Gervasoni, Le Monde

"The orchestra itself was responsive to each and every subtlety thanks to the direction of Equilbey. The standard of performance on period instruments was astonishing, especially the horns."

Colin Clarke, Seen and Heard International

"In the pit, Insula orchestra and its conductor Laurence Equilbey give life to the score with sharpness and energy, maintaining tension and emotion from the first to the last bar. The very rich color palette benefits from a somptuous finish given by the period instruments."

Jean-Marc Piriou, Bachtrack

"Equilbey and Insula offered depth and richness, painting sonic slashes of red through Bobee's monochromes, and balancing the heady brilliance and agility of Spyres' tenor with meaty instrumental weight."

Alexandra Cohan, The Arts Desk