

The Italian Cultural Institute
presents
Ensemble Lucidarium

Ora Vien, O Bella Sposa
the Feminine Figure in the Era of the Venice Ghetto

The German Church of Helsinki
Bernhardinkatu 4, 00130 Helsinki
Sunday, 28 January 2018, 5pm



Gloria Moretti, Anna Pia Capurso: voice
Avery Gosfield: recorder, pipe and tabor
Élodie Poirier: nyckelarpa, 'cello
Fabio Accurso: lute

The concert is free and open to all
RSVP iichelsinki@esteri.it

This program is a celebration of the musical and poetic legacy of the Jewish communities of Renaissance Italy: a vast, entertaining and cohesive repertoire, the exuberant result of a fertile crossover fed by the confrontation between different cultures, made possible by one of the rare moments of peaceful cohabitation and mutual respect between Jews and their neighbors. During the 16th century, the Venetian Ghetto was a place whose residents spoke over a dozen different languages. Cooking smells from three continents wafted through the air, blending with the sounds of songs, dances and liturgical melodies of the native Italians, German immigrants, and Jews from Spain, Portugal, Turkey, Russia, Greece, and beyond, who came because Northern Italy was a place where Jews were largely able to live according to their beliefs and traditions. The Ghetto was a microcosm of the city surrounding it: the *Serenissima* was home to Greeks, North Africans, Germans, French and Albanians, to name just a few, who came to Venice as refugees or in search of economic opportunity. Although most of its citizens were Catholic, Venice was also a multi-faith center, with good-sized Greek Orthodox, Protestant and Muslim communities.

Ora Vien, O Bella Sposa reunites songs in Italian, Hebrew, Yiddish and Spanish, (the languages used by the various *nationi d'ebrei* who lived throughout Northern Italy) with the dances that Jew and Gentile alike would have enjoyed while celebrating a baptism, circumcision, or wedding - whether it took place under a chuppah or inside of a church - as well as *canti carnascialeschi* and the *villanelle ebraiche* that give a glimpse of how Jews were viewed by their neighbors.

A particular accent is placed on the women's role in Jewish society, with songs by, for, and about women, as well as ones designed for the rituals, such as weddings, where they played an essential role. As they did in Jewish society, especially during the Italian Renaissance, where, next to their domestic responsibilities, women are often found standing beside their husbands or fathers (or working independently) as traders, shopkeepers or musicians; keeping salons, writing poetry, participating in artistic and spiritual life on various levels.

Lucidarium



“unaffected, poetic and fresh” (Thüringer Allgemeine)

“vibrant and robust” (Early Music America)

Lucidarium specializes in bringing little-known repertoires from the Renaissance and Middle Ages back to life in an entertaining, engaging way designed for a 21st century public. This unique combination of cutting-edge research and high-energy, spontaneous performance-style has earned them kudos from the international press:

*“... in **Ensemble Lucidarium**'s interpretation, the music did not seem at all 'historical:' relaxed and lustfully played, it seemed as fresh as on the first day.” (BLZ Basel)*

“The whole group works like a perfectly-oiled machine, where everyone knows exactly what to do, changing improvisational style from piece to piece with an expertise that left the public astounded and delighted.” (Messaggero Veneto)

Based in Geneva and Milan, **Lucidarium** has been awarded grants from the European Association for Jewish Culture, the Rothschild, Brandeis/Hadassah and Ernst Goehner Foundations, Pro Helvetia, the City and Canton of Geneva, and regularly collaborates with Swiss and Italian institutions around the world. The ensemble has made six prize-winning CDs, dozens of radio recordings, as well as documentaries for Dutch, Italian, French and Swiss television.

Next to hundreds of concerts to date in important early music festivals, **Lucidarium** makes frequent “crossovers” into Jewish, world and classical music venues. A selection of appearances includes: The Boston Early Music Festival, Vienna Konzerthaus (3 concerts), Holland Early Music Festival/Network (over 20 concerts), Ashkenaz (Toronto – 2 concerts), Seattle Early Music Guild, Flanders Festival, the National Gallery and Italian Embassy (Washington D.C.), Santander Festival, Primo Levi Center (New York), the Jewish Heritage Museum, the Regensburg Early Music Festival, York Early Music Festival (3 concerts), Royaumont Foundation (6 concerts), Freunde alter Musik Basel, Getty Museum, the Toronto Consort Series and Yiddish Summer Weimar.

Recent performances include “The Babel Project” at Yiddish Summer Weimar featuring Sasha Lurje and Ilya Shneyveys of the Latvian Yiddish Lounge Band “forshpil” and *Shurùq*, a program exploring the links between the traditional Arab repertoire and the music of the Italian *trecento* featuring Osama Abu Arafah and Muhammed Ghosheh, two young musicians from the Edward Saïd Nationa Conservatory of Music.

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