



Furioso

Fury, madness & virtuosity of a baroque hero

« The myth of **Orlando furioso**, created [by Ariosto] in the 16th century, is one of the richest literary sources for dramatic and musical imagination. Combining chivalric heroism, amorous torment, and psychological instability, it offered Baroque composers exceptional material for embodying the tension between reason and madness, order and chaos.

In this theatrical program, I wish to explore the many faces of Orlando through excerpts from operas by Vivaldi, Handel, Steffani, Fux, and Porpora. Each of these composers, in his own way, draws on the expressive power of the voice and the orchestra to heighten the drama: the recitatives become charged with psychological tension, the arias reveal the character's inner anguish, and the instrumental movements evoke the landscapes of the soul and the turbulence of passion. [...] »

– Franck-Emmanuel Comte

« For me, Orlando also represents the modern man in constant motion. [...] He runs, flees, is always on the move in pursuit of his desire. [...] He loses himself in his utopia, where reality and illusion merge [until madness becomes the only] way to ease the pain. Our concert [is] a journey into madness, which penetrates the self to reveal its inner workings. »

– Xavier Sabata, 2024



Le Concert de l'Hostel Dieu
Franck-Emmanuel Comte

Program



Arias and Sinfonias from:

- 1 **Orlando generoso** (1691)
Agostino Steffani (1654-1728)
- 2 **L'Angelica vincitrice di Alcina** (1716)
Johann Joseph Fux (1660-1741)
- 3 **L'Angelica** (1720)
Nicolò Porpora (1686-1768)
- 4 **Orlando furioso** (1727)
Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)
- 5 **Orlando** (1733)
Georg Friedrich Handel (1686-1759)

Cast



- **Xavier Sabata**, countertenor
- Le Concert de l'Hostel Dieu
(**Minori Deguchi**, solo violin)
- **Franck-Emmanuel Comte**,
harpsichord and direction

On stage



ORCHESTRAL VERSION

15 instrumentists : 10 strings, 2 oboes, bassoon, theorbo, harpsichord + 1 vocal soloist

CHAMBER VERSION

7 instrumentists : 5 strings, theorbo, harpsi-chord + 1 vocal soloist

Duration



1 H 30 with intermission

Xavier Sabata

Countertenor



The Catalan countertenor Xavier Sabata first trained as an actor at the Institut del Teatre in Barcelona before studying voice at the Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya and the Musikhochschule in Karlsruhe.

His operatic career has taken him to many of the world's leading opera houses, including the Teatro Real in Madrid, the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, the Staatsoper Unter den Linden in Berlin, the Theater an der Wien in Vienna, La Fenice in Venice, the Grand Théâtre de Genève, and the Vienna State Opera. In 2019, Xavier was named *Best Male Singer* at the International Opera Awards.

His repertoire ranges from Cavalli and Monteverdi to contemporary works, with a particular affinity for the heroes of Baroque opera seria. Among his recent roles are Bertarido in *Rodelinda* with Claus Guth, conducted by Stefano Montanari at the Opéra de Lyon and the Teatro Municipal de Santiago de Chile; Ottone in a revival of *L'incoronazione di Poppea* under Diego Fasolis at the Staatsoper Unter den Linden; Endimione in *La Calisto* at the Teatro Real in Madrid; the world premiere of *L'enigma di Lea* at the Liceu; and the title role in *Rinaldo* on a European tour with Christophe Rousset and the Kammerorchester Basel.

He has appeared with renowned ensembles such as Les Arts Florissants, Europa Galante, Collegium 1704, the Venice Baroque Orchestra, Il Pomo d'Oro, the Orquesta Barroca de Sevilla, and La Folia Barockorchester. His concert performances include appearances at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Barbican Centre and Wigmore Hall in London, Lincoln Center in New York, the Kennedy Center in Washington, the Tchaikovsky Concert Hall in Moscow, the Auditorio Nacional in Madrid, and the Palau de la Música in Barcelona. He has also performed at the Halle Handel Festival, the Salzburg Festival, the Aix-en-Provence Festival, the Innsbruck Festival of Early Music, and the Dresden Music Festival.

His extensive discography, released under major labels such as Virgin Classics/EMI, Decca, Harmonia Mundi Iberica, and Aparté, includes recordings of Handel's *Faramondo*, *Arminio*, and *Ottone*, as well as two multi-award-winning productions, *Alessandro* and *Tamerlano*.

Franck-Emmanuel Comte

Harpsichord & Direction

A conductor specializing in the interpretation of the Baroque repertoire on period instruments, **Franck Emmanuel Comte** seeks above all to share his passion with the widest possible audience.

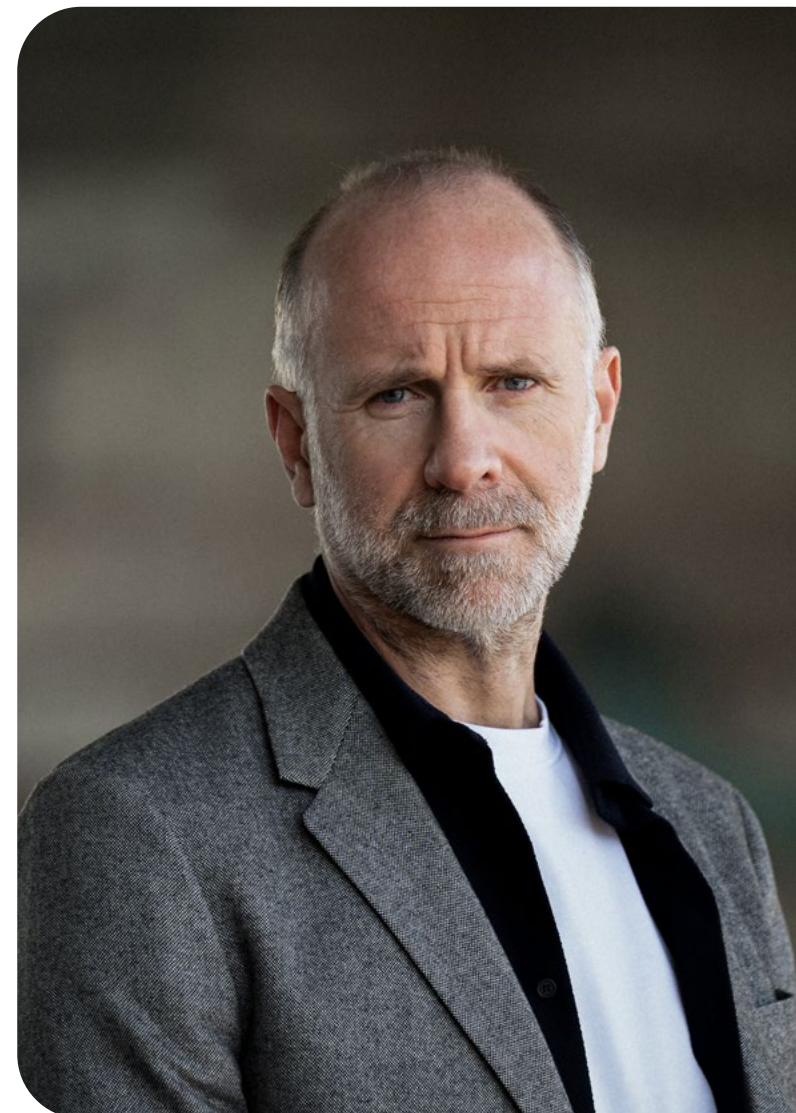
After graduating from the CNSMD in Lyon, he quickly held key positions and received invitations from major opera houses (Nantes, Lyon, Paris Opera Studio...) and orchestras (Orchestre des Pays de Savoie, Ensemble Orchestral Contemporain, University of Auckland Orchestra, Collegium Musicum Riga, Arion Baroque Orchestra in Montreal...).

Regularly invited to conduct in major European and international capitals (Barcelona, London, Moscow, Montreal, New York, Washington, Helsinki, Krakow, Rome, Brussels, Madrid, Tel Aviv, Beijing...) and at numerous international festivals (Ambronay, La Chaise-Dieu, Halle Handel Festival, Bayreuth Baroque Festival, Bruges Early Music Festival, London Baroque Festival, Granada Sacred Music Festival...), Franck-Emmanuel Comte is deeply passionate about Baroque music as well as cross-disciplinary or unconventional projects—such as *Folia*, a dance production co-created with choreographer Mourad Merzouki, performed before more than 150,000 spectators in 160 shows.

In 1993, he founded **Le Concert de l'Hostel Dieu (CHD)**, a Lyon-based ensemble of international renown, of which he remains the Artistic Director. He has conducted the ensemble in over **1,800 concerts** and recorded around twenty albums. *The Ghost of Hamlet*, his latest recording released on the Arcana/Outhere label, has received wide acclaim from the international press.

In 2025, he became Artistic Director of **La Trinité**, a concert season dedicated to early and “irregular” music, co-organized by Le Concert de l'Hostel Dieu and Superspectives. Franck-Emmanuel Comte is also Artistic Director of the **Centre Musical International J.-S. Bach** in Saint-Donat and the **Festival baroque du Pays du Mont-Blanc**.

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Released in April 2026

↔ [Available on streaming platforms](#)

Xavier Sabata, countertenor

Le Concert de l'Hostel Dieu

Franck-Emmanuel Comte, conductor

Le Concert de l'Hostel Dieu

Minori Deguchi, solo violin

Florian Verhaegen, violin

Véronique Bouilloux, violin

Sayaka Shinoda, violin

André Costa, violin

Martyna Grabowska, violin

Aurélie Métivier, viola

Myriam Cambreling, viola

Aude-Walker Viry, cello

Nicolas Janot, double bass

Augustin d'Arco, bassoon

Maria Raffaele, oboe

Elisabeth Passot, oboe

Ulrik Gaston-Larsen, archlute & baroque guitar

Franck-Emmanuel Comte, harpsichord

Press review

DE VOLKSKRANT (NL) | 04/10/2026 – Jenny Camilleri

Countertenor Xavier Sabata, trained as an actor, weaves together a repertoire of well-known and lesser-known works about the historical figure Orlando to create a striking portrait of a tormented hero. With impeccable technique and a keen psychological insight, he uses variations in vocal timbre to convey the fragility of Orlando's mind. *Le Concert de l'Hostel Dieu* does not merely accompany him; it fully shares his delirium.

MERKER, DIE INTERNATIONALE KULTURPLATTFORM (DE) | 04/25/2026 – Dr. Ingobert Waltenberger

With his naturally soft-toned countertenor voice, Xavier Sabata is able to probe the darkest abysses of the soul, revealing sharp-edged inner demons and overwhelming, storm-like emotional surges. He is accompanied by the brilliant French orchestra *Le Concert de l'Hostel Dieu*, whose sound is richly layered and whose virtuosity is remarkable, marked by impeccable stylistic precision, and conducted with passion by its long-standing artistic director, Franck-Emmanuel Comte.

OPUS / OPUS D'OR (FR) | 04/24/2026 – Jean-Jacques Millo

[...] Xavier Sabata, whose dark and supple voice excels in expressing extreme emotions, embodies an Orlando who is alternately noble, hallucinatory, imploring, or vengeful. Around him, *Le Concert de l'Hostel Dieu* unfolds a nervous continuo, finely chiselled instrumental colours, and a dramatic energy that propels each scene like a fragment of miniature opera. [...]

DIAPASON / 5 DIAPASONS (FR) | 05/04/2026 – Adrien Cauchie

One absolutely must listen to the splendid "Lo dunque senz'armi" taken from Steffani's *Orlando generoso*. The countertenor's phrasing, combined with the delicacy of the accompaniment, keeps these magnificent pages balanced on a knife's edge [...].

REVISTA MUSICAL CATALANA – RMC (ES) | 05/12/2026 – Xavier Pujol

« [...] His entire concert [at the Palau de la Música] was magnificent, but it was not in the agitated and furious passages of the arias that Xavier Sabata shone the most, but rather in the soliloquies, the melancholy, and the moments of inner pain offered to him by the scores. Who knows—perhaps he too has inhaled a divine fragrance coming from the Moon? »

CLASSICA NUVOL, EL DIGITAL DE CULTURA (ES) | 05/13/2026 – Elsa Alvarez Forges

"Xavier Sabata, unquestionably one of the greatest countertenors of our time, offered us on May 11 at the Palau de la Música a sumptuous and flamboyant theatrical banquet centered on Orlando, a myth and character that has inspired many Baroque operas. But Sabata was not alone. At his side, the magnificent ensemble *Le Concert de l'Hostel Dieu*, directed from the harpsichord by Franck-Emmanuel Comte, formed the other half of a concert imbued with raw emotion. [...]"

TOTAL BAROQUE (FR) | 05/13/2026

"[...] The strength of *Furioso* lies precisely in the way it tightens the vast material of Ariosto around a character in crisis. The recording highlights the virtuosity of Baroque singing without separating it from what drives it: the instability of a hero driven out of himself by love. A condensed, theatrical and deeply inhabited journey through one of the great myths of amorous madness."

Le Concert de l'Hostel Dieu

Le Concert de l'Hostel Dieu is a leading ensemble on the French Baroque scene. It stands out for its sensitive and dynamic interpretations of 18th century vocal and instrumental repertoire, consistently guided by a historically informed and philological approach.

Under the direction of **Franck-Emmanuel Comte**, the ensemble is particularly committed to exploring the originality and distinctiveness of Baroque manuscripts preserved in the libraries of the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region, producing numerous reconstructions and editions of previously unpublished works that reflect Lyon's historic ties with Italy.

Transposing the richness and diversity of Baroque music into the contemporary world is also one of the ensemble's key artistic focuses. Through stimulating collaborations, Le Concert de l'Hostel Dieu fosters encounters between Baroque aesthetics and artists or traditions from a wide range of cultural backgrounds.

Education and outreach lie at the heart of the ensemble's creative work, with concert experiences complemented by numerous programs designed to engage diverse audiences.

Under Franck-Emmanuel Comte's direction, the ensemble has performed over **1,700 concerts** in major European and international capitals and at leading festivals worldwide.

Their recordings have been widely acclaimed by the international press.

*Le Concert de l'Hostel Dieu's projects are supported by **Ville de Lyon**, the **Région Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes**, the **Centre National de la Musique**, the **SPEDIDAM** and the **ADAMI**.*



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