

Ensemble Lucidarium

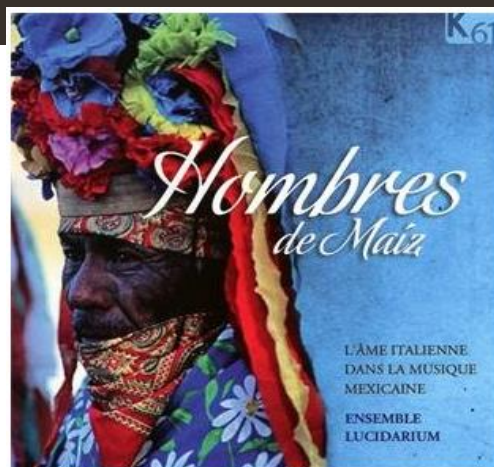
Hombres de Maiz The "Italian Connection" in Mexican Music

Listen to [*Hombres*](#) Read the [*liner notes*](#)

The title of this program: *Hombres de Maiz*, comes from the words that Latin American peasants have used to describe themselves since time immemorial. However, its meaning doesn't stop there: it could also have described many of the young men who travelled from Northern Italy to Mexico in the 16th and 17th centuries in search of fortune, whose main source



of nutrition was polenta. These sailors, peasants and friars who sailed the



seas brought their dances, *ostinati* and songs with them, the familiar sounds helping them to lift their spirits and keep homesickness at bay. The pop music of the era, it was played on anything that could be carried: harps, guitars, recorders, violins, drums, pipe and tabor. The sprightly tunes and simple harmonic patterns (as well as the European instruments) were quickly and enthusiastically adopted by the native population, who, in an early example of 'fusion,' blended the new discoveries with local styles and repertoires. Even today, traditional music from Mexico and Italy are often remarkably

alike, and many have kept tunes, harmonic structures and names that date back to the Italian Renaissance. In *Hombres de Maiz*, Ensemble Lucidarium combines traditional Italian songs and dances with their 16th and 17th century models – *Bergamasca, Ciascona, Mattacin*. The ensemble is joined by Barbara Ceron Olvera, a talented young Baroque and Renaissance harpist, who, going back to her roots, performs the powerful and touching music of her native Veracruz in a joyful musical melting-pot that preserves ancient sonorities while remaining surprisingly close to modern sensibility.

Read about *Hombres*:

Henry Lebedinsky, Fanfare Magazine

The sound is clear, close, and honest, and contributes to the illusion of a live concert performance. This album is meticulously researched, well conceived, and expertly presented. The liner notes by Francis Biggi lay out the concept behind the program in just enough detail. It achieves what, in my opinion, too many recordings of Medieval and Renaissance music do not, presenting an engaging and thoughtful concept in an elegant and entertaining way. Lucidarium captures the vibe of a concert on this disc. It is not an aural catalog of ancient and obscure repertoire, but a living, dancing presence. This disc is one of the few that I've heard recently that makes me want to jump up and dance—and hear this ensemble live in concert as soon as possible. Kudos.

Arianna Crawford, American Record Guide

This is a spectacular program: lively and extremely enjoyable. I highly recommend that you pick it up, put it on, and enjoy it.

Lucidarium



“unaffected, poetic and fresh” (Thüringer Allgemeine)

“vibrant and robust” (Early Music America)

“The variety of styles was intoxicating” (The York Press)

Working between historical sources and the oral tradition, **Lucidarium** is dedicated to a multicultural approach to early music, bringing the voices of the “others” – those who lived in the shadows of the great institutions - back to life in an entertaining, engaging way designed for 21st century audiences. Although the research for the various projects is the responsibility of its two directors, the final product is developed collectively, the result of rehearsals where each musician is fully involved in the creative process. This combination of cutting-edge research, creativity and an energetic, spontaneous performance-style has brought both popular and critical acclaim to the ensemble.

*“... 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, The Swiss Performers' Collective, 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), Houston Early Music, Freunde alter Musik Basel, the Getty Museum, the Toronto Consort Series, the Ashkenaz Festival and Yiddish Summer Weimar.

Recent collaborations include *The Babel Project* at Yiddish Summer Weimar featuring Sasha Lurje and Ilya Shneyveys of the Latvian Yiddish Lounge Band “forshpil” and *Shurûq*, 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 Conservatory of Music of Palestine.

Hombres de Maiz

Co-production Casa Musicale / Festivoce / K617 / Association Cuturale Lucidarium

Hombres de Maiz

THE MUSICIANS:

Barbara Ceron: voice, Veracruz Harp, Renaissance Harp

Gloria Moretti, Anna Pia Capurso: voice;

Jennifer Piggot: vielle, violin;

Avery Gosfield: recorder, pipe and tabor, **Marco Ferrari:** recorder, clarinet, bagpipe;

Francis Biggi: guitar, lute, viola da mano; **Massimiliano Dragoni:** hammer dulcimer, percussion.

THE PROGRAM:

I. The Bergamasca and its travels:

La Tarasca (anonymous, Veracruz)

La Bergamasca (Giovanni Battista Vitali (1632-1692), Gasparo Zanetti (? – 1645?), traditional, Emilia Romagna, anon., as played by Melchiade Benni (1902-1992)

"Vana Bergamascha" Francesco Ratis (165?),

II. The World Upside-down

Maledizioni (traditional, Tuscany)

Ballettu –Tarantella (traditional, Sicily)

Se Dio il tutto fece di niente (Music: Francesco Ratis (165?))

Son de fiesta (traditional, Chiapas)

Felo alegre (Anon. 17th century?, Milano, Bibl. Cons. Fondo S. Barbara di Mantova, 196/4)

Jarabe Loco: coplas a la muerte (anon., Veracruz)

III. Matachin, Matazi and other warriors

Matacino (Gasparo Zanetti?, ? – 1645?)

Matachin: La Guadalupana (traditional, Yaqui, Northern Mexico)

Matuzinàa (traditional, Lombardy)

Matlachines (traditional, Huasteca region)

Ciceronella (traditional, Campania)

El Guapo (traditional, Veracruz)

O Belle donne se volete (text: "Frottola nova de uno caligaro," Venezia, Giovanni e Gregorio De' Gregori, 1485 Music: Francesco Ratis (165?), **"Ruger Confuso"**)

Rugiero (Anon., Milano, Bibl. Cons. Fondo S. Barbara di Mantova, 171/2)

Ruggero (traditional, Emilia Romagna, as played by Melchiade Benni)

IV Songs of the Earth

Tammuriata "Bella Figliola" (traditional, Campania)

Viborita (Traditional, Guerrero)

Co' queste trezze (Text: Anon. or Placido Adriani (16??-17??); music: F. Ratis: **"Chiacona di Paradiso e inferno"**)

Gelosia (anon., Collezione De Micheli, Ms 101, Varzo, 1787)

E fa la nana (traditional, Emilia Romagna)

Spagnoletto (anon., as played by Melchiade Benni)

Mascherata di Coviello (text: "Mascherate e Capricci dilettevoli," Venezia, 1672 "da cantarsi sull'aria dello Spagnoletto;" Music: Francesco Ratis, **"Spagnoletto dishonorato"**)

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