

The Palazzetto Bru Zane presents



# PHRYNÉ (1893)

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (1835-1921)

Opéra-comique in two acts.

Libretto by Lucien Augé de Lassus. Music by Camille Saint-Saëns.

Premiered at the Opéra-Comique on 24 May 1893.

1896 version with recitatives by André Messager

Éditions Durand

Recording at the Opéra de Rouen Normandie from 31 March to 2 April 2021.

**Release date: 4 February 2022**



Hervé Niquet *conductor*  
ORCHESTRE DE L'OPÉRA DE ROUEN  
NORMANDIE  
CHŒUR DU CONCERT SPIRITUEL

Florie Valiquette, Cyrille Dubois,  
Thomas Dolié, Anaïs Constans,  
François Rougier, Patrick Bolleire

1 CD / 164 pages (texts and libretto)

Label  
**Bru Zane**

Distribution  
**outhere**  
MUSIC

Recording available for download  
and streaming on digital platforms with  
libretto available for download online

BZ 1047

'FRENCH OPERA' SERIES – vol. 31

**CD-book: bilingual edition (English and French)**

Essays by Vincent Giroud, Pierre Sérié and Alexandre Dratwicky, and historical text by Félix Régner.

To mark the centenary of the death of Camille Saint-Saëns, the Palazzetto Bru Zane offers a chance to discover one of his most performed and admired operas in his lifetime, presented here in a rare version. Completed in 1893 and premiered the same year at the Opéra-Comique, the piece amusingly recounts the love affair between Nicias and Phryné, who dupes the old archon Dicephilus in order to avenge his cruelty. Its witty melodies and delightful orchestration made the opera an immediate success in Paris and then throughout France. It was enriched with recitatives composed by André Messager in 1896 to promote its career in theatres abroad. Hervé Niquet's dashing interpretation brings out to the full the qualities of the Orchestre de l'Opéra de Rouen Normandie and the Chœur du Concert Spirituel, thus providing a sparkling backdrop for the virtuosic soprano voice of Florie Valiquette, the refined lyricism of the tenor Cyrille Dubois and the vocal authority of Thomas Dolié's baritone.

## Removing the veils of oblivion

Alexandre Dratwicki

The posterity of musical works is a subject shrouded in mystery: the most curious case is that of works which, having enjoyed distinct and lasting success on the international stage, subsequently sink into oblivion. Now, in this category – to which Saint-Saëns's *Phryné* belongs – it should be noted that *opéra-comique* tops the list of works marooned by history. This is doubtless chiefly because, with its spoken dialogue that is so difficult to speak well, the genre suffers from its mixed status as both theatre and opera. Of course, the authors of *Phryné* adopted a solution that had already proved its worth in facilitating export of a bicephalous entity misjudged outside France: they transformed the dialogue into recitative, as had been done for *Carmen*, *Mignon* and *Lakmé*. And it is this version, completed by André Messager (at the request of Saint-Saëns), that the Palazzetto Bru Zane has decided to record for our sixth CD-book devoted to the composer. To resurrect this score today and ensure its qualities would be appreciated to the full, it was necessary, as always, to recruit singers experienced in the appropriate style, a purposeful conductor who would also be a lover of the voice and would favour theatrical élan over orchestral grandiloquence and take care to homogenise the performances of soloists and chorus, and a flexible, curious and committed orchestra, and an irreproachable qualitative partnership, which we found at the Opéra de Rouen Normandie. Our thanks go out to all of them, now that the lovely Phryne can once again take the stage to reveal beauties said to be more alluring than those of Venus herself.

## PUBLICATIONS ON CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS



Camille Saint-Saëns  
*La Princesse jaune* (1872)

ORCHESTRE NATIONAL DU CAPITOLE  
DE TOULOUSE  
Leo Hussain *conductor*

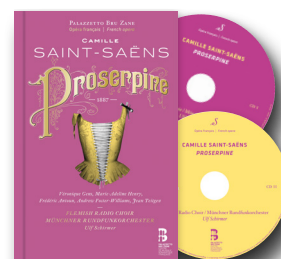
'French opera' series – vol. 29  
BRU ZANE – 2021



Camille Saint-Saëns  
*Le Timbre d'argent* (1864)

LES SIÈCLES  
ACCENTUS  
François-Xavier Roth *conductor*

'French opera' series – vol. 25  
BRU ZANE – 2020



Camille Saint-Saëns  
*Proserpine* (1887)

ORCHESTRE DE LA RADIO DE MUNICH  
CHŒUR DE LA RADIO FLAMANDE  
Ulf Schirmer *conductor*

'French opera' series – vol. 15  
BRU ZANE – 2017



Camille Saint-Saëns  
*Les Barbares* (1901)

ORCHESTRE SYMPHONIQUE  
ET CHŒUR LYRIQUE SAINT-ÉTIENNE LOIRE  
Laurent Campellone *conductor*

'French opera' series – vol. 8  
BRU ZANE – 2014



Camille Saint-Saëns et le prix de Rome

with the Brussels Philharmonic,  
Flemish Radio Choir, Hervé Niquet,  
Julie Fuchs, Marina De Liso

'Prix de Rome' series – vol. 2  
GLOSSA – 2010

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