

Daphné SOUVATZI & François ARIA

Flamenco baroque duo & quartet



Daphné Souvatzi (mezzo-soprano)

François Aria (flamenco guitar, composition & arrangements)

With **Marie-Suzanne de Loye** (viola da gamba)

& **Stefanos Floras** (oud, vocals)

Selected Performances

Trinità dei Monti, Rome, 2024
Fosquets de Lithica, Menorca, 2024
Radio France Montpellier Occitanie Festival, 2023
Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert Festival, 2023
Royaumont Foundation, 2023
Sylvanès Abbey, 2023
Perpignan Sacred Music Festival, 2021
Les Dominicains de Haute-Alsace, 2020
Besançon International Music Festival, 2019
Café de la Danse, Paris – Album Release Concert, 2019
Rencontres de Vézelay – Cité de la Voix, 2019
Classica Festival, Montreal, 2018
Luxembourg Philharmonic, 2018
Samos Young Artists Festival, Greece, 2017
Villes des Musiques du Monde Festival, 2015

Artistic Statement

The encounter between Daphné Souvatzi (mezzo-soprano) and François Aria (flamenco guitar & arrangements) gave rise to a creative energy that naturally evolved into a bold, luminous, and unconventional musical adventure.

At first glance, these two artists come from seemingly opposing musical worlds. How can the purity and precision of classical singing coexist with the freedom and discipline of flamenco guitar, deeply rooted in Andalusian Romani culture? Their collaboration became an exploration of this very question. Through an extensive process of experimentation, they gradually developed a shared musical language and a series of daring arrangements.

This fusion is driven by an eclectic stylistic approach and a desire to create a common musical territory where both traditions can flourish. The result is vibrant, powerful, and deeply expressive: a rich lyric voice whose colors and harmonies resonate directly with audiences, paired with an exceptionally gifted guitarist capable of improvising while weaving flamenco's most iconic rhythms and melodies into the music.

Driven by a spirit of exploration, Daphné and François first set their course for Andalusia, tracing a path from classical music to flamenco. Along the way, they sought a common idiom between the two traditions, and **Federico García Lorca's famous Canciones** ("Songs") became the ideal starting point for building their first repertoire.

These emblematic works of Spanish classical music required new arrangements to infuse them with the fiery spirit of flamenco. To create a genuine fusion of genres, flamenco's characteristic rhythms and melodic gestures were incorporated into each piece. As a result, musical structures expanded, harmonies embraced new chords, and tempos became responsive to the expressive impulses of the voice.

The Quartet



Having built a rich musical vocabulary shaped by Spanish colors and sonorities, our two musical explorers continued their journey eastward, turning toward traditional Greek repertoire. Their artistic dialogue deepened as Daphné began singing in her native Greek, while François adapted the expressive language of flamenco guitar to this new musical landscape. Audiences discover magnificent songs from Greece, Cyprus, and Asia Minor—Mediterranean treasures passed down orally through generations. These songs speak of love, but also of historical memory, migration, and events such as the Fall of Byzantium.

Today, the crossing of musical traditions has become the project's defining signature. For this **new quartet**, Daphné and François are joined by Marie-Suzanne de Loye (viola da gamba) and Stefanos Floras (oud, voice). Their artistic choice is to bring together musicians from both worlds: traditional music and the Baroque tradition. Together they reinterpret Baroque masterpieces by Charpentier, Rameau, and Monteverdi alongside traditional songs from Greece, Cyprus, and the Black Sea.

The project draws inspiration from **Carl Sagan's Cosmic Calendar**, in which the entire span of human history since the Renaissance occupies only a single minute. Through the distinctive timbres of their instruments and François Aria's affinity for contemporary harmonies, arrangements, and composition, the quartet explores hidden resonances across centuries and throughout Mediterranean cultures.

Each piece becomes a fragment of time, an echo from ancient worlds conversing with the present. The quartet invites listeners to experience both the fragility and the intensity of our existence within the immensity of the cosmos—a threshold music, suspended just before midnight.

"Yiati Pouli"

From the traditional song of Constantinople following the Fall of Byzantium

"Why, little bird, do you no longer sing as you once did?"

"I can no longer sing as before, for my wings have been cut,

and my voice has been stolen."

Program

The Fall of Byzantium (Black Sea traditional)

Aherompasma (Cypriot traditional)

Yiati Pouli (Greek traditional)

Tu chantaïs – Jean-Philippe Rameau

Earos – Stefanos Floras (oud solo)

Ti Spareli's s't'Astarin (Black Sea traditional)

Lamento della Ninfa – Claudio Monteverdi

Encuentro – François Aria (flamenco guitar solo)

No hay en la Tierra – C. Tessier

¡Anda Jaleo! – Federico García Lorca

Ah ! Laissez-moi rêver – Marc-Antoine Charpentier

Les Folies d'Espagne – Marin Marais

Al Fonte al Prato – Giulio Caccini

The Artists

Daphné SOUVATZI (mezzo-soprano) trained at the Paris Regional Conservatory while earning a Bachelor's degree in Musicology at the Sorbonne University. Of Greek-Luxembourgish heritage and raised in a multicultural environment at the European School of Luxembourg, she is multilingual. She has been selected for masterclasses with renowned opera artists including N. Denize, C. Studer, R. Werner, and C. Lefilliâtre. Her warm, expansive voice has led her to perform roles such as Carmen, Dido, Cherubino, and Nicklausse. Thanks to her agility and wide vocal range, she also excels in coloratura roles including Cenerentola, Urbain, Ariodante, and Vagans. A laureate of the Royaumont Foundation, she has pursued further training in early music with Benjamin Bagby and in transcultural music with K. Chemirani, E. Lopez, and Khaled Dafri. In 2024, she earned her Advanced Diploma (DEM) in Baroque Singing from the Nanterre Conservatory. She has appeared as soloist with a mandolin orchestra under F. Calvo in *Les Noëls d'Orient* by A. Markeas, and performs with F. Vellas' Byzantine music ensemble. Teaching also plays an essential role in her career: she teaches vocal technique at the Paris Conservatory (CMA14) and at the Massy Opera for the Démon Orchestra program.



Although now recognized as a flamenco guitarist, **François ARIA** began his musical journey on electric guitar, developing his technique as a self-taught musician. His interests led him through blues, jazz, and classical music before discovering Andalusian flamenco at the age of eighteen. He abandoned the pick in favor of the independent finger technique characteristic of flamenco guitar on nylon strings. Extensive travels throughout southern Spain and years of dedicated study enabled him to accompany singers and dancers while composing his first works. In 2013, he received the Manuel de Falla First Prize for Musical Performance in Granada. In 2014, he became a finalist in the 3rd Albi Flamenco Guitar Competition and earned a Master's degree in Ethnomusicology from the Sorbonne (Paris IV). Since then, he has developed a career as a performer, creating several ensembles and collaborating with artists including Rusan Filiztek, Clara Ysé, Rosemary Standley, Nati James, Cécile Evrot, and Roxane Elfasci. As co-creator of four albums spanning hip-hop, classical, jazz, and Eastern influences, his work reflects the remarkable breadth of his musical background.

Marie-Suzanne de LOYE (viola da gamba) collaborates with artists from diverse musical backgrounds, constantly exploring the expressive possibilities of the viola da gamba. She has performed works by contemporary composers including Lionel Ginoux, Jean-Pierre Seyvos, Zad Moulataka, and Animal K. With the ensemble Chakâm (târ, qanun, and viola da gamba), she performs original creations inspired by Persian and Arabic traditions. She also performs with the Iranian music quintet Atine and collaborates with saz player Rusan Filiztek. Remaining deeply connected to her early music roots, she regularly performs and records with ensembles such as L'Achéron, La Tempête, and Marguerite Louise. In 2021, she joined the Kreiz Breizh Akademi (DROM) in Brittany, a program dedicated to modal music that combines singing, string orchestra, and electronic music. She is also a member of the Chant Funéraires collective, which performs music for secular funeral ceremonies.



Born in Paris to Greek parents, **Stefanos FLORAS** has been immersed in music from an early age. An oud player, singer, and composer specializing in Mediterranean modal music, he performs in numerous ensembles across the Paris music scene. In 2022, he co-founded the group Nima with Mélina Vlachos and Mahdi M'kinini. Their debut album, *Pistes*, was released in March 2023. In 2024, he began collaborating with Cretan composer and performer Antonis Leontidis, recording together the album *Asprougas*. As a composer, Floras co-wrote the score for the film *La Mauvaisinière* (Paul Gaillard, 2020), as well as music for circus and theatre productions including *Escaladant Eleusis* and *Roza*, recipient of the FoRTE 2021 award from the Île-de-France Region. In 2024, he composed the music for *Les Tisserandes* by Compagnie Dahlia Blanc and *Journal des Fouilles* by Compagnie Le TOC. His work reveals the richness and depth of Mediterranean traditional music while embracing a distinctly contemporary voice.

Contact

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