Program Notes

In this program, Jordi Savall wishes to celebrate once again the Celtic musical traditions by playing with musicians of great talent in tribute to the Celtic world from the North and South of Europe, especially Ireland, Scotland, French Brittany and Galicia. With the great musician Carlos Núñez, accompanied by two magnificent musicians, Pancho Alvarez and Xurxo Nunez, Jordi Savall will establish a surprising dialogue, together with his usual accomplices: the famous harpist Andrew Lawrence-King with the Irish harp or the psaltery and Frank McGuire one of today best players of bodhran.

This music, full of life and happiness is extremely modern, keeping all its great expressive and poetic power. As long as there are musicians who will make those pieces relive, they will continue to be a valuable witness of their essential function of identity and social, political, and cultural cohesion. They also become a universal message of harmony and beauty. Our concert is a fervent tribute to the art of transmission thanks to the talent of all those musicians who, throughout history, have created this wonderful heritage. Here is the homage to all of them, who were able to pass this marvelous music on from generation to generation and keep it fully alive.

Worldwide, Carlos Núñez is considered to be an outstanding musician. His charisma, his energy, his pioneering spirit have made him a very popular musician of Celtic music. His style and the sound of his flute or his gaita (bagpipes) are famous everywhere. After a first collaboration, a few years ago, when Carlos Nuñez contacted Jordi Savall to play in his compiling record “Un Gallego en Bretaña” (A Galician in Brittany), Jordi Savall invited him to play in a tour throughout the USA. Their concerts should remain engraved in the memories. These dialogues between Celtic historical traditions and oral heritage, between the old and the modern, between the Galician and Britton ballads, as well as Irish and Scottish folk songs (created in Europe or in America), will be the celebration of a true merger. Both musicians, Carlos Nuñez and Jordi Savall will honor Celtic music around the world, putting together in the spotlight oral traditions and historical sources.

Referring to the foggy Northern lands of Ireland, Scotland, Brittany and Galicia, the musical anthology of these concerts represents the atmosphere of people and community lives. It is sometimes suggested by slow and moving accents or a certain sadness and nostalgia; sometimes by the grace of traditional dances such as the frenzied jigs and reels, the joy and vitality of all these peoples. These concerts will give tribute to these men and women who since ancient times, have been able to withstand the forces of Nature and all the many difficulties and tragedies of Life itself, thanks to their ability to stay faithful to their origin and their culture.

The immense repertoire of Celtic music comes from various origins in time and space. Each element of it brings a very interesting information to us about its character, technique, ornamentation, style and ways to play it. The Celtic repertoire is currently kept in very different ways and throughout different patterns of interpretation. Written or oral, it mostly remains in the oral tradition. Unlike some Eastern cultures that developed above all in a space of oral transmission, in the Western world, the passage between musicians is usually written. However, there is a significant exception with the traditional, popular or folk music, because this music has been able to continue thanks to these same mechanisms of unwritten transmission.

All transmitted and orally preserved music is the result of a happy survival, following a long process of selection and synthesis. However, this process uses different paths of evolution and innovation: it is the result of a transformation when they undergo influences of other musical foreign styles, sometimes more modern or even far apart, but always leading to a new and legitimate way to interpret them.

These so varied origins make possible eco-friendly versions of interpretations respecting the historical context as well as innovation. In addition, we know that in music as in any art, there is evolution and development but not necessarily real progress. Tradition and innovation are intrinsically united in performances made by groups who have taken new paths. Each time, Celtic music is remodeled and made syncretic on every concert stage and venue.