Le Poème Harmonique
Vincent Dumestre

LULLY, LANIER, DELALANDE...

VATEL

OR THE KING'S SUPPERS



Team : 25 people
3 soloists, 1 conductor,, 19 instrumentalists
1 production, 1 admin

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Vatel is perhaps the most famous chef in French history: a legendary figure to whom generations of the world's leading Michelin-starred chefs have traced their heritage, and whose extraordinary life has been celebrated in literature and film. Around this remarkable man and his outlandish yet tragic story, we have created a true musical tribute, featuring Lalande's orchestral suites from Les Soupers du Roy, alongside 17th-century French arias and songs. During the interval, if the venue permits, there will even be an opportunity to taste the famous crème Chantilly, traditionally attributed to Vatel himself !

In composing music for the King's royal suppers, Lalande followed in the footsteps of Lully and his predecessors. This ceremonial tradition had flourished since the late 16th century in France, Italy, Germany and England, and Lalande transformed it through the inventiveness of his orchestral writing, his remarkable sense of colour, and his innovative use of solo instruments. Rameau would later follow in his footsteps, while both Bach and Handel would draw inspiration from his musical language.

Against the backdrop of Lalande's magnificent orchestral masterpiece, this historical and gastronomic journey follows the life of Vatel, the celebrated chef of the French court: from his youth in Picardy, through the sumptuous banquets at Vaux-le-Vicomte and his flight to England, to the creation of the crème Chantilly, immortalized in song, and finally to his tragic death in 1671. As the story goes, Vatel took his own life after learning that the fresh fish destined for the King's table had arrived too late, leaving him convinced that he had failed in his duty. Thus, music, history and gastronomy come together to tell the extraordinary story of a man whose name has become synonymous with the art of the French table.