

Biographies Tempo la Cetra

The ensemble Tempo la Cetra was founded in 2007 by Maximilian Ehrhardt and Francesca Thompson. They met during studies at the Conservatorium of Amsterdam and the Koninklijk Conservatorium Den Haag, and have since been making an impression on audiences in the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland and Italy. Having worked with such renowned musicians as Lucy van Dael, Mara Galassi, Lorenzo Ghielmi, Jaap ter Linden and Paolo Pandolfo, the members of Tempo la Cetra give a fresh outlook to so-called early music, and delight in presenting both well- and lesser-known works to audiences. Amongst a broad repertoire of English, French, German, Italian and Spanish music, the group specializes in early Italian Baroque music, for which the setting of recorder and Baroque harp is ideal.

The ensemble also has a deep interest in early Jewish art music, for which programmes and lectures are planned for the 2011-12 season. In addition, Max and Francesca are committed to the performance of contemporary music alongside early music, and, as well as including both early and contemporary improvisation in their programmes, they are active in commissioning new works for Tempo la Cetra.

Future concerts are planned in the Netherlands, in cooperation with Stichting Musicians Worldwide and Mediamatic, in Germany, Switzerland and the UK. The group will also be performing at the World Harp Congress in Vancouver in 2011. Individually, the members of Tempo la Cetra perform with Capella Cracoviensis, the Kings Consort, Holland Baroque Society, the Cologne Opera Orchestra and the Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg, and in festivals and concerts Europe-wide.

Francesca Thompson (recorder) has appeared in many guises throughout Europe and the USA, including recent performances at the BBC Proms, Cadogan Hall, Cheltenham Festival, Urbino Early Music Festival, Telemann Festtage, Music in Ancient Krakow Festival, Davos Festival, the Gaudeamus Muziekweek and Amherst Early Music Festival (U.S.A.). As concerto soloist, she has appeared with the Internationale Bachakademie Stuttgart (DE), with members of Capella Cracoviensis (PL), the Al-Kamandjati Camerata (IL) and with orchestras throughout the UK. Following selection by the Park Lane Group as one of their Young Artists for the 2011/12 season, she made her critically acclaimed London debut recital in the Purcell Room in January 2011.

Francesca studied with Walter van Hauwe at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam, generously supported by the Leverhulme Trust, the Countess of Munster Musical Trust and the Musicians' Benevolent Fund. Prior to this, she studied at Cambridge University and at the Royal College of Music in London, graduating with honours. Whilst at the RCM, she won the College Concerto Competition, the first recorder player ever to do so. A recipient of numerous awards, Francesca won second prize at the International Competition for Contemporary Music 2009 in Krakow, Poland, and in 2006 was awarded the first prize of the Zinetti Competition/Masi Foundation. With her chamber ensembles, she also won the Century Early Music Prize 2004, and third prize at the Internationale Telemannwettbewerb in 2007.

Maximilian Ehrhardt (harp) was born in 1982 in Tettwang (Germany). From young age on he followed classical singing, harp and piano lessons at the “Musikschule Württembergisches Allgäu” of his home town. He started his studies of the harp as a young talent at the “Landeskonservatorium für Vorarlberg” (Austria) and continued in the preliminary course with Una Prella at the “Konservatorium der Stadt Zürich” in Switzerland. From 2003 until 2009 he studied with Erika Waardenburg at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam (the Netherlands) from which he graduated with the Master's Degree. Since 2008 he is also a student of Mara Galassi at the “Accademia Internazionale della Musica di Milano”, where he started the Master Degree's Programme for historic harps in October 2009. Max has also followed masterclasses with Maria Graf, Godelieve Schrama, Emila Moskvitina, Brigitte Sylvestre and Emma Kirkby.

Max performs regularly in solo recitals, theatre productions, in chamber music ensembles and as principal harpist with orchestras such as the Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg, the Gürzenich-Orchester of the Cologne Opera, the Sweelinck-Orchestra or the Amsterdam Jazz Symphony Orchestra. He has recently performed all over Europe, including in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Poland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Turkey and Italy.