



## Dear Trustees of The Leche Trust

We are writing on behalf of Ensemble OrQuesta to extend our thanks to you for the grant that you gave us to support our performances of **Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre's *Céphale et Procris* at The Cockpit from February 7<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> 2023.**

**The overall aims of the project:** to champion the work of an early female composer, give training to young opera students, offer creative, musically authentic performance experiences to early career artists and specialist early musicians, and prepare a new edition. Jacquet de la Guerre was musically innovative for her time and the opera offered a challenging range of previously unknown roles and 'new' instrumental music to explore.

### Pride in our high standards and artistic aims for this project:

♪ Our productions aim to be of the highest quality both in terms of musical rendition and dramatic representation; we strive to honour the composer's original intentions and work to make interesting contemporary interpretations without compromising original text or musical authenticity.

♪ Giving exposure to the work of a female composer addresses the current shortcoming in classical music whereby barely 3% of work performed is written by women - championing an under-recognised group demonstrates to the new generation that creativity is not just a male preserve.

♪ Preparing and making publicly available a practical new edition including sample continue realisation and clarification / translation of ancient French text, enables other groups to access this work with greater ease. This neglected little-known early baroque composer was musically innovative for her time – this unique and unusual early baroque music deserves recognition and dissemination.

♪ Providing expert coaching in language, stagecraft, vocal technique, and style, and high quality imaginative but musically authentic performance opportunities for early career singers alongside period instruments will further young artist training in baroque style and enhance early career progress.

♪ Offering ensemble performance experience for young early music instrument specialists, with high-grade guidance in baroque style will help to develop their careers.

♪ We firmly believe that EO's reasonable ticket prices, its unique reputation, and innovative approach is making a positive impact in broadening the appeal of opera. We want early music to be part of this reawakening.

♪ Our cast members are selected with the utmost care from the ranks of outstandingly talented early career professionals to match specific roles in the opera. To add to our strong EO Company members we are always on the look-out for new talent. Some cast members have recently graduated from postgraduate courses or opera schools at main conservatoires, some are still attending courses. Cast members are given extra coaching in language and baroque style.

### Delivering the project:

We undertook **five performances** of the opera: 7th, 9th, 10th, 11th, February at 7:30pm, and 11th February at 2.30pm. Marcio da Silva and Cédric Meyer held a **Q&A session** about the new edition and aspects of the performance between the matinée and evening performances on the 11<sup>th</sup>.

Brazilians Marcio da Silva (voice), Flavio Lauria (guitar) and two friends Boyan Ivanov (clarinet) and Emmanuel MacDonald (percussion) held a **fund-raising** 'bossa nova' concert on February 8<sup>th</sup>.

Intensive training and rehearsals took place in the eight days preceding the performances at The Cockpit itself, with our stage and music director Marcio da Silva offering skilled coaching in all aspects of performance, stagecraft, musical style, language, and vocal technique to our young artists with the additional support of Predrag Gosta and Cédric Meyer. Marcio also offered each singer several individual online coaching sessions prior to the intensive rehearsal period to ensure that each singer had requisite opportunities to be trained in finer aspects of language, vocal technique, and style prior to beginning movement and staging work and rehearsals with the musicians.

The project involved six young professional singers at the onset of their careers, four young singers who received additional academy coaching, and four early career specialist early-music instrumentalists. Because we had received your support for our young artists, we were able to use other funds to bring in an additional early music specialist, the eminent Predrag Gosta, on the harpsichord, a specialist lutenist to support the rehearsal of our instrumentalists and singers, and an additional recorder player.

Our production manager worked extremely hard on publicity pre-, during, and post- production. This was important in terms of extending our audience base, increasing our press impact, and maximising publicity for our young artists. Our extended support team ensured that the programme, website information, and flyers were of a professional standard.

We thought you might like to access various things about the production to see the importance we attach to **high standards** in all aspects of our work.

There is a page on our website which gives all the original **information** about our production [here](#).

There is also a page which includes the **full reviews** of the production [here](#).

If you would prefer to access just some **sample quotes** from the reviews you can find these [here](#).

The **programme** for the production can be downloaded as a **pdf** [here](#).

The **programme** can also be viewed as a **Flipbook** if you prefer, [here](#).

**Photos** of the production can be viewed [here](#).

#### **Impact: audience.**

We were quite pleased with the number of tickets sold overall. On the first night, audience was **60%** of capacity. Audience numbers on the Friday night were higher at **65%**, but performances on the Saturday had lower attendance - the Saturday afternoon performance sold just **30%** of capacity. We sold almost **800** tickets overall.

We believe strongly in the importance of **The Cockpit** as a significant fringe venue for opera. This theatre lies within easy reach of Marylebone Station and can seat around 150 in our favoured configuration. It was built in the late 1960s as a community theatre and is notable as the first purpose-built theatre in the round since the great fire of London.

We have an excellent relationship with the team at The Cockpit, and they are very supportive of our work, enabling us to offer access to our opera performances at reasonable prices in an unusual and intimate performance space where the proximity of audience and performers fosters a deep engagement with both music and drama.

Céphale was an unknown work for audiences. Although we hoped that there would be some interest in our venture as the UK premiere of the first opera written by a French female composer, it was difficult to know what the response would be both in terms of audience take-up and reaction.

We were delighted to receive a strongly positive ★★★★★ review from **The Stage** on our first night. This was written by Claire Seymour – a renowned academic who is often highly critical of performances she attends. Her multi-faceted and appreciative appraisal was greatly appreciative. Subsequently, Tim Hochstrasser from Plays to See also published his ★★★★★ review in **Plays to See**. Tim is also an academic with a strong reputation, and we were delighted that he was fulsome in his praise.

**Claire Seymour** headed her review: '**Eloquent: Musical and dramatic integrity spiced with invention.**' She noted that the music was 'beautifully sung' and praised the 'superb' seven-piece instrumental ensemble for playing with 'dynamism and élan'.

**Tim Hochstrasser** applauded a '**thoroughly enjoyable and absorbing evening**', noting that 'one of the great merits of this production that the emotional and visual palette is made as diverse as possible.' He commented that 'there are genuine moments of comedy and satire too, elegant choreography to ensure that there is always some visual stimulus and variety to the action, and careful consideration of costume', and he was full of praise for the singers.

From the increase in our mailing list and from audience feedback received we know that we reached a range of new audience members with this production.

#### **Impact: young artists.**

1. As noted, the intensive rehearsal period included coaching for young artists in all aspects of stagecraft, language, technique, musical style, and vocal technique as needed. The presence at many rehearsals of an early

music specialist on the harpsichord and a specialist lutenist ensured an opportunity for our young artists to embed their understanding of the music of the period and feel secure in all aspects of the baroque style.

2. Since our reviewers were so favourably impressed by what they saw, this resulted in excellent reviews and first-rate exposure for our young artists.

### Young Artist Feedback:

We asked our young artists for feedback following their experience. We have collected points under four headings and then have included their final 'summary' comments in full.

#### Musically:

'It was really challenging for me working on baroque opera repertoire for the first time – Marcio was so **helpful and supportive**.'

'I initially found the baroque ornamentation very difficult. Marcio was so **patient** in helping me to work on individual passages so that I gained in confidence.'

'It was very **exciting** singing with a small group of specialist musicians in such an intimate space. They were so good at working with us to support difficult passage work.'

'I loved being able to sing the solo lament sections with just an archlute and gamba – that was an amazing feeling.'

'I was surprised at the variety in the music and how challenging it was. Jacquet de la Guerre seemed to be 'in touch' with a full range of emotions from passion to intense rage, to jealousy, to despair and regret, with evil threads and seduction thrown in along the way. She conveyed so much within simple lines of music and the experience of singing her music was incredibly **intense and hard work, but so rewarding**. I think I developed a great deal as I worked on my role.'

'I was delighted when I returned home after the production to find I had **more confidence** in my vocal technique day-to-day and the quality of my voice seemed to have more **consistency**. A rehearsal process in which you have to get warmed up at the same time every morning for consecutive full days of rehearsal requires deliberate focus on how you get the voice ready and moving every day. This had an incredible impact on my **technical advancement**.'

#### Dramatically:

'This role was one of the most challenging I have had to do in terms of sustaining the **intensity of the characterisation and emotion**. It took a lot of careful preparation and I think this will have been very good for progressing my abilities as a singer.'

'It was good for me to take on a more villainous character, especially whilst still singing in the baroque style. Marcio helped me to think about how to **control** emotion within my vocal technique and in my movement.'

'There was so much more **movement** in this production than I have ever undertaken before. I really had to lose my inhibitions and think about working **collaboratively** with the other team members. I have learned a lot.'

'This was really my first full experience of challenging myself to move away from choral singing into bringing baroque music alive on stage in a **complete role**. It was so exciting to work on arias and ensemble pieces and to think about how to match movement and music to bring the characters to life.'

'I was surprised that there was such a **range of styles and characters** in this opera. It was **hard work** but great fun – I enjoyed working on elements of comedy and satire as well as threat and darkness.'

#### Professionally:

'I have learned so much about acting and movement'.

'The excellent reviews have really helped to progress my career.'

'Being part of a UK premiere was exciting and important for my career progression.'

'Taking part in the Céphale et Procris project was an **extremely enriching experience** for my development as a dramaturge and a researcher on opera staging, particularly of the Baroque period.'

#### Personally:

'More than anything else, I am blown away by how **caring and supportive** the cast and team of Ensemble OrQuesta were throughout the Cephale et Procris production. From pumping each other up before going on stage and getting each other energized, to applauding each other's successes through the rehearsal process, the entire team was lovely all around and **wonderful to work with**.'

'The great thing about working with Ensemble OrQuesta is that you learn so much in such a **collaborative and supportive** environment - and you have fun.'

'I loved this experience'.

'I have post-production blues.'

'Everyone was so **encouraging**.'

#### Summary comments in full:

'Taking part in Céphale et Procris was a **hugely valuable experience** for me. It was a real privilege to be part of

bringing to life such a rarely performed work by a female composer. Working with a new edition produced from different manuscript sources was especially **exciting!** Being involved in a UK premiere with excellent reviews will also be useful for my **career progression** as a young artist. As always, **Ensemble OrQuesta's dedication to authentic early Baroque style and ornamentation is hugely rewarding as a performer.'**

'I'm so grateful to Ensemble Orquesta for giving me the opportunity to participate in this **incredible production** of Céphale et Procris. Almost no one stages French baroque operas let alone ones composed by female composers. Marcio was **a fantastic music director**, and we got **a unique opportunity** to immerse ourselves in the French baroque style and work on ornamentation with him even before in-person rehearsals started.'

'As an academy student, I learnt so much about acting and movement from watching the other professional singers. Moreover, the whole process felt very **collaborative**, and everyone was so **encouraging**. **I honestly felt like I got more practical experience out of this one production than a whole year of conservatoire!**

'First of all, can I please say thank you for this experience - this opera deserves to be heard more and thank you for the opportunity as a lover of French baroque music, to explore and to debut the title role of Céphale in the UK. I am a company member of Ensemble Orquesta and **I continue to learn so much** from each production that I am lucky enough to take part in – **the high artistic standards of performance and production have helped me to progress my career**. The feedback I received was glowing about the music and the production itself and I look forward to revisiting it in the future.'

'Taking part of in an Ensemble Orquesta production **helps me to develop as an artist so much**. The style created by conductor and director Marcio da Silva makes movement almost as important as singing, which is very avante garde in terms of opera. The very warm way the audience welcomes this new conception makes me sure we are in the right path to keep this form of art alive, which supports its constant change and evolution.'

'The ensemble's approach to movement and spatialization represents an innovative solution to the challenges of staging French Baroque opera, with its strictly codified musical and dramatic conventions, and its application to this specific work was particularly successful. The mise en scène escaped the pitfalls of dry and gratuitous formalism as well as of superfluous and redundant illustration of the music and words. Though it is self-asserting and deliberate, it never got in the way of appreciating the music and word themselves. It was an important learning experience to follow the construction of the mise en scène along a number of rehearsing sessions and, particularly, to witness the Ensemble's method of rehearsing, which is firmly structured around a strong and precise conception of the words and music, while open to input and collaboration from all members of the team.'

'These kinds of experiences in which we get a run of five or so performances are very **important in helping us to really develop as opera singers**, because we are able to **reflect** on our performances and we have multiple opportunities to **improve** the things that went poorly and to **build on** the things that have gone well. We also learn how to maintain positive energy levels through the run. Most other student and young artist opportunities only run for one or two performances, so we are unable to learn and practise these skills that benefit us in the long term.'

#### **Audience feedback:**

'A really entertaining evening, with great performances by singers and band.'

Jill H, 07/02/23

'Fascinating to see the UK premiere (after at least 330 years) of Céphale et Procris by Élisabeth-Claude Jacquet de la Guerre.'

Yehuda S 07/02/23

'Heading home from the fantastic Ensemble OrQuesta production of Céphale et Procris by Elizabeth-Claude Jacquet de la Guerre. Wonderful to hear a baroque opera by a female composer. A revelation. Marcia da Silva, and the group are baroque heroes.'

Jonathan D 09/12/23

'It was brilliant! Hugely well done to all. So glad my Morley College opera class decided to do an outing - much to discuss when we reconvene!'

The Opera Makers 12/02/23

'Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the production. We were there the first night and enjoyed it very much. It was worth the effort to put it on although not easy to stage. It was sung and played with great conviction and brought to life a piece by an almost completely unknown composer. All credit especially to the singers and everyone concerned.

Keep up the good work.'

Iain J 16/02/23

'I'd like to stress how much I enjoyed myself this evening - as usual. The music – as always – was wonderful, but I did rather feel that, while the characters were very powerfully drawn, there was a certain lack of dramatic action. I was left intrigued by the omission of the fight between Céphale and Borée which led to the death of Procris, which might be thought of as a climactic moment. I look forward to your next production.'

Alan T, 10/02/23

'Since this was the only stage work of France's first female composer, and since this was a premiere - in other words no-one had taken much interest in this work in the UK for hundreds of years - I think we expected some rather dull music and some uninspiring drama. We were therefore genuinely surprised to find both the music and the drama so gripping, and we suspect this is in no small part down to the artistic imagination of Marcio da Silva and the inspired musical decisions he makes. Under his guidance Jacquet de la Guerre's music blossomed, and a rather unexceptional libretto was brought into vibrant life by an exceptionally talented array of young singers and musicians – I loved the archlute and was pleased to hear the gamba this time.'

Janet M, 16/02/23

'I enjoyed it very much. I went on the last night as I had had flu that week. The second half I enjoyed more (I had no idea that it was a full-length opera) when I moved closer to the orchestra where I could hear more detail. Since it's the music that is the value - and not the libretto, as you rightly comment - and since the production had no frontality, that really enhanced my enjoyment. Thanks also for inviting open feedback, rather than a dumb form'.

Roger M, 17/02/23

'Nuance of movement and character interaction, exceptional singing (from the passionate to the heart-rending) and rapid and effective changes of mood from a dynamic instrumental ensemble, made for a mesmerising evening, with Marcio's subtle layers of symbolism encouraging us to consider themes of jealousy, domination, rejection, self-sacrifice, and regret. You never really imagine that a baroque opera can really 'speak' to a 21st century audience whilst maintaining musical authenticity, but time and time again Ensemble OrQuesta manages to do just that. This is in no small measure due to Marcio's artistic vision and creative imagination. We wish more people would come to see these productions and that someone somewhere would invest some serious money in his company.'

David M, 16/02/23

'Very much enjoyed the performance and the very good singing and playing, just a little disappointed in the music which I didn't find as interesting as I'd hoped. It's quite likely I would find more in it on a second hearing, and I hope to get to it at Grimeborn.'

Jane K 17/02/23

We were also pleased to receive constructive comments relating to:

- ♪ the positioning of the sur-titles,
- ♪ requests for further clarification regarding some symbolic elements of the staging, and
- ♪ some desire to receive printed programmes if possible (in preference to QR codes and online downloads).







Some highlights:





**Our 2023 production at  
The Cockpit was  
Jacquet de la Guerre's  
Céphale et Procris**

**EO Ensemble  
Orquesta**

**★★★★ 'Eloquent.  
Musical and dramatic integrity  
spiced with invention.'  
Claire Seymour,  
The Stage, 07/02/23**

**★★★★ '...a thoroughly engrossing  
and absorbing evening.'  
Tim Hochstrasser,  
Plays to See, 13/02/22**

**★★★★ 'it is one of the great merits of this  
production that the emotional and visual  
palette is made as diverse as possible.'  
Tim Hochstrasser, Plays to See, 13/02/23**

**★★★★ 'Jacquet de la Guerre's  
music is beautifully sung.'  
The Stage, 07/02/23**




**★★★★ 'The superb seven-piece  
instrumental ensemble play with  
dynamism and elan.'  
Claire Seymour, The Stage, 07/02/23**

**★★★★ 'multitasking stage and music director  
Marcio da Silva creates an idiomatic decorum –  
movement and music are stylised but never  
mannered – and generates tension by  
throwing a few modernities into the mix.  
Claire Seymour, The Stage, 07/02/23**

**★★★★ 'There are genuine moments of comedy and  
satire too, elegant choreography to ensure that  
there is always some visual stimulus and variety to  
the action, and careful consideration of costume.'  
Tim Hochstrasse, Plays to See, 13/02/23**

**★★★★ 'The cast are accompanied by an  
excellent seven-piece orchestra of individual  
and collective panache.'  
Plays to See, 13/02/23**

**CÉPHALE ET PROCRIS**  
JACQUET DE LA GUERRE  
7<sup>TH</sup> - 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023



**THE COCKPIT**  
EO Ensemble Orquesta

**CÉPHALE**  
Kieran White

**CÉPHALE ET PROCRIS**  
JACQUET DE LA GUERRE  
7<sup>TH</sup> - 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023



**THE COCKPIT**  
EO Ensemble Orquesta

**PROCRIS**  
Poppy Shotts

**CÉPHALE ET PROCRIS**  
JACQUET DE LA GUERRE  
7<sup>TH</sup> - 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023



**THE COCKPIT**  
EO Ensemble Orquesta

**AURORE**  
Helen May

**CÉPHALE ET PROCRIS**  
JACQUET DE LA GUERRE  
7<sup>TH</sup> - 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023



**THE COCKPIT**  
EO Ensemble Orquesta

**DORINE**  
Anna-Luise Wagner


**CÉPHALE ET PROCRIS**  
JACQUET DE LA GUERRE  
7<sup>TH</sup> - 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023



**THE COCKPIT**  
EO Ensemble Orquesta

**ARCAS**  
Marcio da Silva

**CÉPHALE ET PROCRIS**  
JACQUET DE LA GUERRE  
7<sup>TH</sup> - 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023



**THE COCKPIT**  
EO Ensemble Orquesta

**BORÉE**  
Jack Lawrence-Jones

**CÉPHALE ET PROCRIS**  
JACQUET DE LA GUERRE  
7<sup>TH</sup> - 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023



**THE COCKPIT**  
EO Ensemble Orquesta

**FLORE**  
Tara Venkatesan

**CÉPHALE ET PROCRIS**  
JACQUET DE LA GUERRE  
7<sup>TH</sup> - 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023



**THE COCKPIT**  
EO Ensemble Orquesta

**PAN/ ERICITÉE**  
Flávio Lauria

**CÉPHALE ET PROCRIS**  
JACQUET DE LA GUERRE  
7<sup>TH</sup> - 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023




**THE COCKPIT**  
EO Ensemble Orquesta

**IPHIS**  
Lydia Ward



**CÉPHALE ET PROCRIS**  
JACQUET DE LA GUERRE  
7<sup>TH</sup> - 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023



**THE COCKPIT**  
EO Ensemble Orquesta

**JALOUSIE**  
Jay Rockwell

**CÉPHALE ET PROCRIS**  
JACQUET DE LA GUERRE  
7<sup>TH</sup> - 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023



**THE COCKPIT**  
EO Ensemble Orquesta

**NERÉE**  
John Twitchen

**EO Ensemble Orquesta**  
**THE COCKPIT**



**CAST ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**CÉPHALE ET PROCRIS**  
JACQUET DE LA GUERRE  
7<sup>TH</sup> - 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023

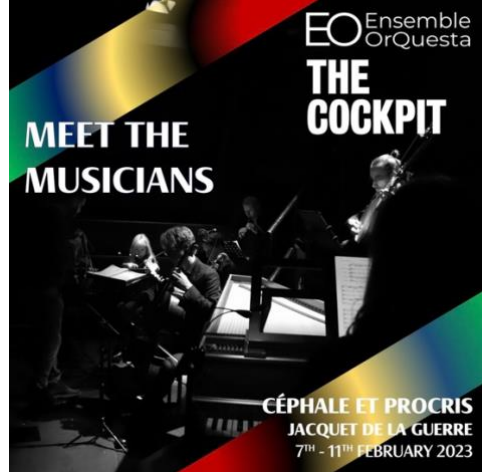
**EO Ensemble Orquesta**  
**THE COCKPIT**



**CAST ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**CÉPHALE ET PROCRIS**  
JACQUET DE LA GUERRE  
7<sup>TH</sup> - 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023

**EO Ensemble Orquesta**  
**THE COCKPIT**



**MEET THE MUSICIANS**

**CÉPHALE ET PROCRIS**  
JACQUET DE LA GUERRE  
7<sup>TH</sup> - 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023

**CÉPHALE ET PROCRIS**  
JACQUET DE LA GUERRE  
7<sup>TH</sup> - 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023



**THE COCKPIT**  
EO Ensemble Orquesta

**HARPSICHORD**  
Predrag Gosta

**CÉPHALE ET PROCRIS**  
JACQUET DE LA GUERRE  
7<sup>TH</sup> - 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023



**THE COCKPIT**  
EO Ensemble Orquesta

**ARCLUTE**  
Cédric Meyer

**CÉPHALE ET PROCRIS**  
JACQUET DE LA GUERRE  
7<sup>TH</sup> - 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023



**THE COCKPIT**  
EO Ensemble Orquesta

**VIOLIN**  
Edmund Taylor

**CÉPHALE ET PROCRIS**  
JACQUET DE LA GUERRE  
7<sup>TH</sup> - 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023



**THE COCKPIT**  
EO Ensemble Orquesta

**VIOLIN**  
Christopher McClain

**CÉPHALE ET PROCRIS**  
JACQUET DE LA GUERRE  
7<sup>TH</sup> - 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023



**THE COCKPIT**  
EO Ensemble Orquesta

**CELLO**  
Nathan Giorgetti

**CÉPHALE ET PROCRIS**  
JACQUET DE LA GUERRE  
7<sup>TH</sup> - 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023



**THE COCKPIT**  
EO Ensemble Orquesta

**OBOE / RECORDER**  
Kate Bingham



The whole production was judiciously managed by our core team, with attention to health and safety and the well-being of performers. We are pleased to report no incidents of virus transfer. All aspects of budgeting were prudently handled and monitored, and the project came in within budget.

This was a uniquely demanding project since it involved the development of a new edition, and it was a UK premiere of the only stage work of an early unknown French female composer. This placed unique demands on the team in terms of accomplishing our usual high musical standards, devising creative and distinctive staging, co-ordinating complex aspects of production, and maximising publicity opportunities.

Opera still tends to be associated with posh venues and black-tie expensive picnics. By contrast **The Cockpit** is a modest but vibrant theatre venue. By producing opera in this setting, we have offered 'alternative' opera for ordinary people in unpretentious surroundings. Yet we passionately believe that people who attend such performances deserve high-quality music. Thanks to the support of your grant, we were able to pay first-rate singers to give outstanding performances of this ground-breaking and unique opera in this accessible venue. The reviews and feedback demonstrate that we were able to provide an evening that many considered both absorbing and uplifting. Fringe venues such as this have a vital role in offering accessible high-quality performances for ordinary people to enjoy.

We would like to thank you whole heartedly for your generous support of the work of Ensemble OrQuesta. It has made a meaningful difference to us. We are extremely proud of this production and delighted at the achievement of our young artists. We believe that we made a tremendous impact in terms of increasing the audience and appeal of early music, as demonstrated by the excellent reviews of our work, and the positive audience feedback.

Although it is undoubtedly a challenge to champion the work of an early unknown female composer, we believe that such effort is artistically valid and important, and our performers and audience clearly found it to be a musically interesting and enriching experience.

With our renewed thanks.

**The Trustees of Ensemble OrQuesta.**