

Paganini in Paris



Guided by the search for ever more intimate chamber music, French musicians Raphaël Béreau and Jean-Samuel Bez, create an atmosphere of softness and subtlety arising from the combination of the timbres of the violin and the guitar.

Their program “Paganini in Paris” draws a parallel between the virtuosity of the great Niccolò Paganini—who was also, though less well known, a passionate guitarist and composer of a vast repertoire for violin and guitar—and the refined elegance of French Belle Époque music.

The duo creates their own arrangements of works by Gabriel Fauré, Maurice Ravel, Claude Debussy, as well as Cécile Chaminade, Mel Bonis, and Emmanuel Chabrier, whose adaptation for guitar reveals new colors and an enhanced delicacy of expression.

The program also includes tangos by Astor Piazzolla, the Argentine composer trained in Paris, along with contemporary works written especially for the duo. Paganini in Paris is conceived as an open, engaging, and vibrant performance, where virtuosity meets poetry, and where the musicians punctuate the concert with anecdotes and humor—true to the colorful spirit of Paganini himself.



Video : [Piazzolla : Psicosis](#)

Discography :

Secrets (Klarthe, 2025)

Entirely dedicated to French music at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, our cycle of arrangements explores the many shades of color revealed by the combination of violin and guitar. [listen here](#)

Works by Gabriel Fauré, Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, Camille Saint-Saëns, Cécile Chaminade, Charles-Marie Widor, Edouard Lalo, Emmanuel Chabrier, Mel Bonis et Mélanie Chasselon

recorded at Altes Rathaus Vienna (Austria), September 2023



The Duo's History

The duo, based in Vienna, was formed in the city where both musicians completed their musical studies. They were both students at the University of Music and Performing Arts: Raphaël in the guitar class of Alvaro Pierri, and Jean-Samuel in the violin class of Michael Frischenschlager.

Long-time friends, they first met in high school within Dijon's specialized music program. There, they founded a string and guitar quintet, performing across Burgundy for three years. Their first recording — a live performance of *Quintette Bichromie*, commissioned from composer Guy Leclercq and released by Delatour — marked the beginning of their collaboration. The ensemble went on to receive the PSIR Prize unanimously in Strasbourg in 2011 for a stage work combining quintet and dancer.

After leaving Burgundy, each pursued advanced training: Jean-Samuel studied in Italy with Igor Voloichine and at the conservatories of Rueil-Malmaison and Brussels; Raphaël continued his studies with Christian Rivet in Paris before enrolling at the University of Quebec in Montreal. This Canadian connection became significant for the duo, particularly through a project initiated by Jean-Samuel in 2016 with Quebec pianist Jean-Luc Therrien. Their recording, *Fantaisies*, released by Klarthe in 2022, received critical acclaim and led to three major tours across Europe and Canada. This period was also marked by international competitions, particularly in chamber music, where they won first prize at the Luigi Zanuccolli Competition. Raphaël achieved further success, earning first prizes at the Elche and Schweinfurt competitions alongside guitarist Tizoc Romero. Their ensemble, named R2T2, was invited to the Paris International Guitar Festival and completed two tours in India.

The duo also shares a passion for contemporary creation and today's composers, having received numerous dedications. In 2021, they contributed to an award-winning recording of Belgian composer Jacqueline Fontyn's trios with the Spilliaert Trio. This album, released by the German label Cybele, was honored with the 2023 Caecilia Prize.

Resolutely eclectic, the two musicians are involved in various stage projects. Raphaël collaborates with his father, double bassist Christophe Béreau, in the duo Aita Semea, whose debut album *Odyssea* is set for release in 2024. Meanwhile, Jean-Samuel has been performing with the Icelandic group Árstíðir since 2016. He is also a founding member, soloist, and co-director of The Sotiropoulos Camerata

