

Biography | September 2025

Gabriele Palomba | artistic director

La Venexiana has been founded and developed by the internationally renowned counter tenor and Early Music expert Claudio Cavina. Under his dedicated artistic direction the group earned its worldwide reputation as one of today's leading Early Music ensembles.

The name of the ensemble La Venexiana is taken from an anonymous Renaissance comedy which counts as a masterpiece of Italian theatre for its use of language, a combination of literate Italian and dialect, and for its insightful rendering of society and manners. It was, in fact, a precursor of the *commedia dell'arte*. By taking on this name, La Venexiana attempts to convey in its musical interpretations all the theatricality, attention to language in all its subtlety, and celebration of contrasts between the refined and the popular, the sacred and profane that characterizes our culture today.

The members of La Venexiana are some of the most experienced European performers in the Early Music field, especially in the Italian Madrigal repertoire. They have been working together for many years, and have established a new style in Italian Early Music performance: a warm, truly Mediterranean blend of textual declamation, rhetorical colour and harmonic refinement. Besides the interpretation of Renaissance and Baroque music in historically informed performances the ensemble offers programmes which include jazz elements such as saxophone, drums and accordion. La Venexiana presented the very successful programme "Round M" among others in Munich and Stuttgart; a recording has been released in October 2010. In Halle they performed a programme called "Handel meets Jazz" in 2011.

By now, La Venexiana has performed with great success at almost all major festivals and concert series around the world including the Konzerthaus and the Musikverein's Golden Hall in Vienna, the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, the Konzerthaus in Berlin, the Laeiszhalle in Hamburg as well as festivals in Schwetzingen, Potsdam, Regensburg, Herne, Rheingau, Graz, Vevey, Cremona, Van Vlaanderen, De Singel in Antwerp and Brugge Festival. The ensemble has given concerts in Barcelona, Brussels, Utrecht, Strasbourg, Amiens, Barcelona, Madrid, Montpellier, San Sebastián, Mexico City, Bogotá and Tokyo. In the United States, it has performed, amongst others, in New York City, Ann Arbor, Chicago, St. Paul, St. Louis, San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle.

La Venexiana earned its reputation also due to the prizes it won for its highly commended records. The ensemble started recording in 1996 for the labels Opus 111 (Paris) and Cantus (Madrid). Since 1998, the ensemble has been recording exclusively for the Spanish label Glossa. Its recordings of madrigals by d'India, Luzzaschi, Marenzio, Gesualdo and the complete recording of Monteverdi's books of madrigals and his Orfeo have won much notice and critical acclaim worldwide, including the Gramophone Award, the Diapason d'Or, the Editor's choice of Repertoire, the Prix Amadeus 2000, the Caecilia Award, the Cannes Classical Award and the Preis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik. Recently, a recording of Luzzaschi's "Concerto delle Dame", a box-set of Monteverdi's madrigals (former recordings), a selection of duets by Cavalli ("Sospiri d'amore") and Bonocini, Steffani, Marcello etc. ("A due alti") and „La conversione di Maddalena" an oratorio by Giovanni Battista Bononcini have been released.

In 2007, La Venexiana performed Monteverdi's "Orfeo" in a half-scenic version all over the world and recorded the opera at the same time. This recording won the Gramophone Award in 2008. In 2010, the ensemble presented the contemporary premiere of Cavalli's "Artemisia" in Stuttgart, Regensburg and Paris and released its world premiere recording in 2011. In the same year, La Venexiana performed Monteverdi's "The return of Ulysses" in Regensburg, Stuttgart, Paris and Amsterdam. In the last seasons the ensemble was invited to Potsdam, Bonn, Styriarte Graz, Stuttgart (Liederhalle). La Venexiana has been invited back to the Händel Festival in Halle, to Klangvokal Dortmund, to Venice and Krakow, and to the Schwetzingen Festspiele in order to celebrate Monteverdi's 450th birthday with performances of his three operas. In the past seasons, the ensemble has performed at the Carinthian Summer, in Bratislava, at Berlin's Boulez Saal, in Cologne, Sankt Gallen as well as in Vevey, Istanbul and in Italy.

Coming highlights in the ensemble's concert calendar are concerts at in London, Katowice and Monte Carlo and the new collaboration with Teatri 35. The programme "Caravaggio and Monteverdi" whichs features works by Claudio Monteverdi accompanied by the scenic presentation of numerous paintings by Carravaggio as 'living pictures' - Tableaux Vivants - saw it's premiere at the Styriarte in Graz and will be performed among others in Vienna, Linz and Potsdam.

Short version

La Venexiana was founded by Claudio Cavina, who has left a lasting mark on the ensemble's artistic work and made it one of the world's leading specialist ensembles for Renaissance and Baroque music.

The name La Venexiana is the title of a famous anonymous Renaissance comedy, considered a masterpiece of Italian theatrical art. The members of La Venexiana have developed a special interpretative style that has led to great successes in all major concert halls and international festivals.

In addition to the historical performance practice of early music, La Venexiana also realises programmes, now under the leadership of Gabriele Palomba, in which music of the Renaissance and the Baroque is combined with jazz elements to create a completely new, surprising listening experience, or in which early music meets the scenic presentation of living paintings - Tableaux Vivants.