The subtle charm of French music

French classical music has its own sound, is characterized by specific rhythms and operates with different harmonic solutions. Probably no one can perform this music as well as the French people. Recently there were two concerts, which presented two different faces of French music, however, presented a high level of performance.

This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the Accentus choir. During the current season, the ensemble will perform several times under the baton of its founder and leader Laurence Equilbey. Arguably one of this year's most interesting projects is Sky Burial. During this concert the following pieces were performed - works by Charles Gounod "Saint François d'Assise" and Gabriel Fauré's "Requiem." The Insula Orchestra played, while Amitai Pati, Samuel Hasselhorn and Lenny Bardet performed as soloists. The concert was illustrated with a video installation by British artist Mat Collishaw. The artist described the project as a meditation on death, ritual, humanity and nature. Arguably, after a pandemic this type of project takes on special importance. The Gounod piece was very interesting. In fact, it was a fragment of an unfinished oratorio, which was found only in the 1990s. The music, despite its sophisticated orchestration, has a certain naiveté, an immediacy that creates an emotional atmosphere. Faure's "Requiem," on the other hand is a rather unusual funeral Mass, as there is no pathos or drama here, the composer himself was to say that it is, in a way, a funeral lullaby. Laurence Equilbey conducted the Accentus and Insula Orchestra exceptionally well, under her baton one could hear precision, but also a kind of delicacy, tenderness. In this interpretation there were also quite thrilling contrasts. Equilbey has a great sense of dynamics, so her interpretation was expressive. Although Faure's "Requiem" is performed quite regularly, Equilbey was able to present an original and moving reading of this piece. Applause is due to Amitai Pati, who presented excellent vocal skills, and his voice had a warm, soft color. There was something seductive in that voice.