

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

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TERRACE THEATER

Wednesday, May 2, 2018, at 7:30 p.m.



presents

Visitors to Versailles

Inspired by The Metropolitan Museum of Art's exhibition
Visitors to Versailles (1682 – 1789)

A Concert Sung in French with English supertitles

This performance is approximately one hour.

Following the intermission, Daniëlle Kisluk-Grosheide, curator of The Met's exhibition, will take the audience on a virtual tour, providing an artistic and historic context for the concert, which will last approximately one half-hour and will take place fifteen minutes after the musical program.

Opera Lafayette is also funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts and the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, an agency funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.

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The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are not allowed in this auditorium.

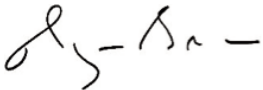
Letter from the Artistic Director

Dear Friends,

We are delighted to have been asked by The Metropolitan Museum of Art to create a musical program that complements the exhibition entitled "Visitors to Versailles (1682 – 1789)". Much of Opera Lafayette's work has been focused on music from this period, and we have been visitors to Versailles on two occasions when we were invited to perform in the Royal Opera house there, and thus are among the many captivated by this extraordinary place.

Our approach has been to divide the program into three sections, starting with the period just before the Revolution and going back in time to the reign of Louis XIV. The first section consists of works which speak to conflicting views of the monarchy, the second offers two beautiful divertissements emblematic of court life, and the third presents the final scenes of a poignant early pastoral tragedy. We close with a familiar encore which reminds us of Versailles' origins. After intermission, we invite you to join Daniëlle Kisluk-Grosheide on a virtual tour of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's 'Visitors to Versailles (1682 – 1789)' exhibition.

We hope you enjoy the program, and that it offers a musical, theatrical, and artistic perspective on the fascinating role Versailles played in history and the hold it continues to have on our imaginations today.



Ryan Brown

Program

Peut-on affliger ce qu'on aime?

Monsigny, from *Le Déserteur*

'How could one hurt that which one loves?'

Air de chasse

Le Bonheur est de le répandre...tout ce qu'ils ont droit d'en attendre

Monsigny, from *Le Roi et le fermier*

Happiness (of a sovereign) is to give...all that his people expect from him.'

Ô Richard, ô mon Roi, l'univers t'abandonne

Grétry, from *Richard, Cœur de Lion*

'O Richard, my king, the universe has abandoned you'

Aaron Sheehan, tenor, Victor Sicard, baritone

Both the Grétry and Monsigny 'Peut-on affliger' were performed on October 1, 1789, at Versailles during a banquet for soldiers brought to secure the chateau in the wake of the Parisians threatening it. 'Peut-on affliger' was also used, without words, by Jean Renoir in his 1939 film *The Rules of the Game* to underscore his aristocratic characters' obliviousness to the impending catastrophe in Europe. Monsigny's *Le Roi et le fermier* was a popular opera from 1762 in Paris which portrayed, for the first time on stage, a king speaking to a commoner, and was performed by Marie Antoinette and friends in her private theater at Versailles in 1780.

Excerpts from Acts II and V

Gluck, *Armide*

Plus j'observe ces lieux, et plus je les admire

'The more I view this (beautiful) place, the more it pleases me'

Trio: Au temps heureux où l'on sait plaire

'In happy times when one can take pleasure'

Choeur: Ah! quelle erreur, quelle folie, de ne pas jouir de vie

'What folly not to enjoy life....'

Solo et Choeur: C'est l'amour qui retient dans ses chaînes

'It is love who holds us in his chains'

Gracieux

Air sicilien

Solo et Choeur: Jeunes Cœurs

'Young Hearts'

Mr. Sheehan, tenor, Anna Reinhold, mezzo-soprano

Rosa Lamoreaux, Rebecca Kellerman, Rachel Barham, soprano trio

Program

Gluck's *Armide* was performed during the visit of Gustav III of Sweden in 1784. The libretto by Quinault was first set by Lully, and Lully's version performed frequently at Versailles before Gluck's, during both Louis XIV's and Louis XV's reigns. These excerpts are from the diversissements *Armide* creates to seduce and hold Renaud in her power, much like the pleasures of Versailles were intended

From Act III

Lully, *Acis et Galatée*

Enfin j'ai dissipé la crainte

'At last I have dispelled the fear'

Je sors de mes grottes profondes

'I come forth from my deep grottoes'

Que votre sang se change et devienne une eau pure

'Let your blood be changed and become pure water'

Sous ses lois l'Amour veut qu'on jouisse, un bonheur qui jamais ne finisse

'Under its laws Love wishes us to enjoy a never-ceasing happiness.'

Ms. Reinhold (Galatée), Mr. Sicard (Neptune), Mr. Sheehan (Acis),

Ms. Barham, Ms. Kellerman, Barbara Hollinshead, Ms. Lamoreaux, Nayades/chorus soloists

Performed frequently at Versailles, including for the Queen of England (wife of exiled James II) in 1695. A meditation on loss, the sea nymph Galatée slowly realizes Acis has been killed. Neptune comes forth and transforms Acis into a stream so that he and Galatée may be together forever.

À la chasse, à la chasse

Rameau, from *Hippolyte et Aricie*

Ms. Lamoreaux, soprano, James Rogers, bass-baritone

Versailles was originally a hunting lodge, and Louis XIV, and especially Louis XV, were fond of hunting. The text has followers of (the chaste goddess) Diana singing that the god of love should give way to the pleasures of the hunt.

Artistic Team

Conductor.....Ryan Brown
 Soprano.....Rosa Lamoreaux
 Mezzo-Soprano.....Anna Reinhold
 Tenor.....Aaron Sheehan
 Baritone.....Victor Sicard

The Opera Lafayette Orchestra

Violin I

Claire Jolivet
 (concertmaster)
 June Huang
 Theresa Salomon
 Elizabeth Field
 Nina Falk
 Leslie Silverfine

Violin II

Christof Richter*
 Leslie Nero
 Gesa Kordes (viola double)
 C. Ann Loud (viola double)

Viola

Kyle Miller*
 Paul Miller

Cello

Loretta O'Sullivan*
 Nancy Jo Snider
 Alice Robbins
 David Bakamjian

Bass

John Feeney*

Flute

Charlie Brink*
 Kathryn Roth

Clarinet

Nina Stern*

Oboe

Margaret Owens*
 Geoffrey Burgess

Bassoon

Anna Marsh*
 Clay Zeller-Townson

Horn

Todd Williams*
 Linda Dempf

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Michelle Humphreys*

Harpichord

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* principal

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Rosa Lamoreaux, *Artistic
 Director*

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 Rachel Barham
 Erika Rissi
 Barbara Hollinshead

Joan McFarland
 Hannah Baslee
 Roger Isaacs
 Jerry Kavinski
 Jason Rylander
 Andrew Brown

Robert Petillo
 John Murton
 Daryl Yoder
 Jay Tuttle
 James Rogers

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Stage Manager.....Raine Bode
 Supertitles.....Patrick Kilbride

Program Notes

Visitors to Versailles

1682-1789

By Julia Doe

In this program, Opera Lafayette offers a retrospective sampling of lyric works crucial to the entertainment of guests at Versailles—and to the cultural propaganda of the Bourbon monarchy, more broadly—moving backwards from the eve of the Revolution to the apex of the *roi soleil*. Taken together, these musical extracts chart the continuities and changes in ceremonial spectacle in the final century of the Old Regime. During this period, the royal family presented a myriad of diverse pleasures to its visitors but deployed them in the service of a common goal: that of the glorification of the reigning king.

The first set of excerpts dates from the second half of the eighteenth century and is drawn from the fashionable and cosmopolitan corpus of opéra-comique (comic opera with spoken dialogue). This genre had popular roots, originating at the seasonal fairs of Paris and often emphasizing the concerns of the nation's Third Estate. From the 1760s onwards, however, it was integrated into the court infrastructure to appease the tastes of Louis XV and, especially, Marie Antoinette, who famously staged examples from this repertory at her private theater at the Petit Trianon. The arias performed here thus balance two competing impulses: the direct and tuneful appeal of the comic style, on the one hand, and the affirmational demands of royal display, on the other. Notably, the operas of Pierre-Alexandre Monsigny and André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry foreground an enlightened ideal of monarchical accessibility—with plots that showcase the symbiotic (albeit strictly hierarchical) bonds between the ruler and the peasants who depend on him.

Le roi et le fermier (1762), for example, centers on a king who has lost his way while hunting and is taken in by a humble gamekeeper. If the peasant temporarily ensures the safety of his king, it is clear that the king takes care of his subject in a much larger

sense. The aria 'Le bonheur est de le répan-dre' is meant to confirm the paternalistic and humane character of the monarch: his true purpose, he declares, is to spread joy and prosperity amongst his constituents. Along similar lines, *Richard, Coeur-de-Lion* (1784) underscores the utter devotion that upstanding leadership might inspire. In 'Ô Richard, Ô mon Roi,' the servant Blondel pledges fidelity to his master (the medieval king Richard the Lionhearted) and vows to rescue him from captivity. This updated rhetoric of courtly symbolism would ultimately be of mixed utility for the Bourbon regime. Blondel's aria maintained strong royalist ties into the 1790s and beyond, with the opening 'Ô Richard' often replaced with 'Ô Louis' in performance, in tribute to the deposed Louis XVI. But both this extract and 'Peut-on affliger ce qu'on aime' (from Monsigny's *Le Déserteur*, 1769) also drew scorn from those critical of the monarchy. In October of 1789, these numbers were sung at a banquet for soldiers guarding Versailles from outside unrest—an evening rumored to have been marked by debauchery, excess, and the desecration of a revolutionary cockade. At this time, the arias were reinterpreted as emblems not of royal affection but of hypocrisy—of the manner that the king had become dangerously indifferent to the needs of his citizens.

The second set of excerpts, from Christoph Willibald Gluck's *Armide* (1777), dates from roughly the same period as the first and likewise reflects the patronage of Marie Antoinette. (The Habsburg-born queen studied keyboard with Gluck during her childhood in Austria and remained a staunch supporter throughout her time in France.) In contrast to the modernized subject matter of opéra-comique, however, *Armide* is in dialogue with a venerable—and highly symbolic—artistic legacy at Versailles. It is an example of the lavishly ceremonial and divertissement-laden genre of lyric tragedy (*tragédie lyrique*), and it forms a direct reference to a cultural touchstone from the seventeenth century: a setting of the same libretto by Louis XIV's favored composer, Jean-Baptiste Lully. The action of the opera

Program Notes

functions as a high-minded allegory for the proper conduct of the king. The heroic crusader, Renaud, is entranced by the exotic sorceress, Armide, but ultimately renounces this love to fulfill his honorable duties to his people. *Armide* was performed for a number of important diplomatic events at court—including the visit of Gustav III of Sweden in 1784. Yet it also serves as a reminder that at Versailles power and pleasure were perpetually, and often paradoxically, interlinked. If the plot of the opera endorses a sober political message (the importance of military honor over romantic entanglements), Gluck's music often seems to affirm the opposite view. Many of the work's most enchantingly beautiful moments—including the Act II and V extracts featured here—are reserved for those points in the action where the hero succumbs to, rather than disavows, the realm of earthly delights.

If Gluck's *Armide* represented an extension of the high baroque tradition into the age of *Lumières*, the Act III extracts from *Acis et Galatée* move us firmly back to the time of Louis XIV. The last completed opera of the court composer, Lully was commissioned in honor of the dauphin in 1686. While it had its premiere at Anet (the country chateau of the Duke of Vendôme), it would subsequently enjoy an extended performance history at Versailles. It was presented for the official reception of the ambassadorial party from Siam in the fall of 1686 and remained in circulation well into the eighteenth century.

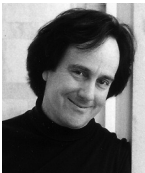
With a subject after the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid, *Acis et Galatée* reflects the conventions of the courtly pastoral; it emphasizes a love triangle of gods and mortals—in this case the shepherd Acis, the sea nymph Galatée, and the cyclops Polyphème, who comes between them. The music on this program is drawn from the final scene of the opera. After the jealous cyclops kills his romantic rival, the sea god Neptune intervenes to bring about the happy ending—transforming Acis into a river and reuniting him with his beloved Galatée for eternity. As is common within the ceremonial output of Lully, the work ends with a stately *pas-sacaille*—a series of elaborate variations over a strictly repeated bass line. This number serves as an apt metaphor for the aesthetic and protocol of Versailles itself—a luxuriously extravagant form of expression that belies a rigid formality of underlying structure.

Opera Lafayette's musical visit to the French court concludes with the ensemble, 'À la chasse, à la chasse,' from Jean-Philippe Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie* (1733). This chorus, a celebration of hunters in the forest grove of the goddess Diana, evokes at once the origins of the palace (as a hunting lodge) and the ways that this ideal was burnished and expanded over the course of the Old Regime—repeatedly reconfigured for the delight—and awe—of those that journeyed to experience it.

Meet the Artists

Opera Lafayette, an American period instrument company, has earned critical acclaim for its performances and recordings featuring The Opera Lafayette Orchestra and renowned singers for the interpretations of rediscovered 17th- and 18th-century operatic masterpieces. The company, known for its modern American and World Premieres, presents concert, semi-staged, and fully staged operas in imaginative and inventive productions of the historical repertoire, illuminating the contemporary relevance of the works together with their original appeal. Based in Washington, DC, where its three seasonal performances usually take place at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the company has expanded its horizons since 2014 to include New York City where its full season is now also regularly produced at venues throughout Manhattan.

Opera Lafayette gained international fame, when, at the invitation of Château de Versailles Spectacles, it performed twice, in 2012 and 2014, at the Opéra Royal in Versailles, France, closing with five sold-out performances. Central to the company's mission is creating a recorded legacy of the timeless repertoire Opera Lafayette brings back to life. Currently the company's discography on the Naxos label is comprised of twelve releases. Opera Lafayette's first video, Rameau's *Les Fêtes de L'Hymen et de L'Amour*, will be released in 2018. These recordings underscore the company's artistic mastery and are just one resource Opera Lafayette uses to build a public appreciation of this repertoire.



Naomi Reichert

Ryan Brown is the founder and artistic director of Opera Lafayette. Through his work with Opera Lafayette, he has gained an international reputation for his interpretations of French opera and for his role in the revival of significant works from 17th and 18th centuries. His repertoire and discography of twelve sound recordings for Naxos include operas by well-known 18th-century composers

(Gluck and Rameau) as well as rediscoveries of their contemporaries (Sacchini and Rebel/Francoeur), works which exemplify traditions established in the 17th century (Lully and Charpentier), and those which point the way toward the music of the 19th century (Monsigny and Grétry). He was widely lauded for the modern premiere and recording of Félicien David's 1862 *Lalla Roukh*, a seminal work of musical Orientalism. Mr. Brown's frequent performances of Italian works by Haydn, Mozart, Paisiello, and Cimarosa have also met with great acclaim. In 2014 Mr. Brown returned to the Opéra Royal in Versailles, leading Opera Lafayette in Philidor's *Les Femmes Vengées* and Mozart's *Così fan tutte*. In 2015, he conducted Vivaldi's *Catone in Utica* at the Glimmerglass Festival. In 2016 he led Opera Lafayette's modern premiere of Gaveaux and Bouilly's *Léonore, ou l'amour conjugal*, which was filmed for future video release. Mr. Brown is a recipient of *La Médaille d'Or du Rayonnement Culturel* from La Renaissance Française. He was raised in a musical family in California, and performed extensively as a violinist and chamber musician before turning his attentions to conducting. His teachers included Dorothy DeLay and Gustav Meier.

Gallery Voices brings passion and impeccable skill to the performance of a fascinating and beloved repertoire. Offering well-crafted programs sung with panache, the group is routinely hailed for vocal virtuosity and musical intelligence. Originally created as a vocal quartet, Gallery Voices have been in residence at the National Gallery of Art since 1985. Founding soprano Rosa Lamoreaux was named Artistic Director in 2004 while expanding the forces to embrace repertoire from the Middle Ages to the present for 6-12 voices. Each a distinguished soloist in his or her own right, ensemble members are all in demand for performances of oratorio, chamber music, and recital in major music centers in the United States and abroad. But their deep love of vocal chamber music continues to find expression through international touring performances, as well as in regular concerts

Meet the Artists

at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC.



David Rodgers Photography

Soprano **Rosa Lamoreaux** returns to Opera Lafayette. Highly-praised as a Bach soloist, she is featured regularly at the Bethlehem and Carmel Bach Festivals, and she appears frequently with such foremost choral groups as the Washington Bach Consort, the Cathedral Choral Society, the National Philharmonic Chorale, and The Choral Arts Society of Washington. Her orchestral credits include the Atlanta, Dallas, and Cincinnati symphony orchestras. Greatly in demand as a chamber music performer, she sings with the Folger Consort, Chatham Baroque, ArcoVoce, the Four Nations Ensemble, Hesperus, and Musica Aperta. She is artistic director of the National Gallery of Art Vocal Ensemble. Her art museum performance venues also include the Louvre, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Cloisters, the Smithsonian, the Corcoran Gallery, and the Phillips Collection. She has recently received her seventh Washington Area Music Association WAMMIE award as Best Classical Vocalist. Ms. Lamoreaux's numerous recordings reflect the breadth of her repertoire - from Hildegard von Bingen to today's Stephen Paulus - and her concerts are frequently broadcast over PBS, BBC, and CBC.



Charles Plumey

Anna Reinhold returns to Opera Lafayette after last singing the role of Marzia in the acclaimed production of Vivaldi's *Catone in Utica* in 2015. She made her debut on stage under the direction of William Christie; selected to be part of the Jardin des voix, Academy of Les Arts Florissants, she sings the role of Cybèle in the revival of mythical *Atys* by Lully at the Royal Opéra de Versailles and at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York. Her most regular collaborations these recent years remain undoubtedly with Capella Mediterranea, led by Leonardo García

Alarcón and with Jean-Claude Malgoire. This season with Capella Mediterranea, she is Speranza and Proserpine in the Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* on tour in Europe and Latin America. She also plays the role of Pandora in *El Prometeo* by Draghi at the Opéra de Dijon. With Jean-Claude Malgoire, after singing the title role in Rossini's *L'Italiana in Algieri* at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and in Tourcoing in 2016, she performs with him again this season in Bach's *Magnificat* in this same theater and plays *Mélysande* in *Pelléas et Mélysande* by Debussy, at the Théâtre de Tourcoing, two productions directed by Christian Schiaretti.



Kevin Day

American tenor **Aaron Sheehan** was last seen with Opera Lafayette in the 2013 production of Charpentier's *Actéon*. He sang the title role in Boston Early Music Festival's recording of Charpentier's *La Descente d'Orphée aux Enfers*, which won Best Opera Recording at the 2015 Grammy Awards. He made his professional operatic début with Boston Early Music Festival (BEMF) as Ivan, in the world premiere staging of Mattheson's *Boris Gudenow*, a role for which *Opera News* praised his voice as "sinuous and supple." He has since performed with BEMF in such leading roles as L'Amour and Apollon in Lully's *Psyché* and Acis in Handel's *Acis and Galatea*. He has appeared on many recordings, including the Grammy nominated operas *Thésée* and *Psyché* of Lully, and Agostino Steffani's *Niobe*, recorded with BEMF on the CPO label, as well as *Il ritorno d'Ullisse in Patria* with Boston Baroque.



Oliver Allard

Born in La Rochelle, France, **Victor Sicard** returns to Opera Lafayette after being seen as Adario in *Les Sauvages* from Rameau's *Les Indes Galantes* last season. His operatic repertoire includes the roles of Apollo and Pan in Charpentier's *Despente*

Meet the Artists

d'Orphée aux enfers and *Amor vince ogni cosa*, respectively, with the Concert d'Astrée - Emmanuelle Haïm, Dr Falke in *Die Fledermaus* for the National Opera of Linz, Demetrius in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Grand Theater of the Barbican, Povero in *Lo Spedale* at the Aldeburgh Festival, and for Guildhall productions Herr Fluth in *Die Lustigen Weiber von Windsor* and Gasparo in *Rita de Donizetti*, among others. He was part of William Christie's

Sixth Garden of Voices, accompanied by the Orchestra of Arts Florissants for an international tour. His collaboration with Les Arts Florissants and Christie continued until 2016 with a program on Louis XIV for an international tour. He also performed with other ensembles such as Le Concert Spirituel and Hervé Niquet, Ensemble Aedes and Mathieu Romano, Le Poème Harmonique, Vincent Dumestre, Vox Luminis, and Lionel Meunier.

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You, our generous donors, are the reason that for 23 seasons Opera Lafayette has been able to bring rediscovered early opera gems and historical masterpieces to the communities of Washington, DC, and, since 2007, New York City. Your support of our commitment to explore 17th- and 18th-century opera, its precursors, influences, and artistic legacy, through modern premieres, fresh interpretations, and inventive productions has been essential to our success.

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