

Christophe Rousset & Les Talens Lyriques indulge in Handel's operatic masterworks



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Agrippina in **Dortmund** (8 June) and **Halle** (10 June)
Giulio Cesare & Agrippina in **Bucharest** (20 & 21 September)
Giulio Cesare in **Paris** (24 September)
Ariodante in **Vienna** (8-15 November)
Saul in **Paris** (21-31 January)

Christophe Rousset and Les Talens Lyriques embark on a ravishing season of Handel operas as they trace the composer from his first great success, *Ariodante*, to the dramatic oratorio *Saul* composed at the other end of the composer's life. Their journey takes them from Dortmund and Halle with mezzo-soprano **Ann Hallenberg** in June to Bucharest's **Enescu Festival** in September for back-to-back concert performances of *Giulio Cesare* and *Agrippina* with **Christopher Lowrey** and **Karina Gauvin**. *Giulio Cesare* is repeated at the **Théâtre des Champs Elysées** on **24 September**.

Les Talens Lyriques return to the **Wiener Staatsoper** in November with a revival of David McVicar's production of *Ariodante*, followed by *Saul* as the first staged operatic production in the recently refurbished **Théâtre du Châtelet** in January, revived from Glyndebourne's critical acclaimed production by Barrie Kosky, and starring **Christopher Purves, Karina Gauvin, Anna Devin, Benjamin Hullet** and **Christopher Ainslie**.

The orchestra frequently champions the works of Handel, with Christophe Rousset recently conducting *Semele* with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment to great success:

"That it can work miraculously without the trappings of the theatre was triumphantly vindicated by this performance. Christophe Rousset's vividly theatrical conducting of a galvanised OAE on one of their edge-of-the seat showings made this Semele something to wonder at. Rousset's direction of both the orchestra and its Associate Choir of the Enlightenment bristled with drama and colour." Hugh Canning, Opera Magazine



Les Talens Lyriques begin their Handel season with **Agrippina** at the Klangvokal Musikfestival, Dortmund and Handel Festival, Halle. Leading mezzo-soprano **Ann Hallenberg** takes the title role on 10 June as the manipulative mother of Nero, plotting the downfall of the Roman Emperor Claudius to promote her son to the throne. The opera was a decided success at its premiere during the 1709-10 Venetian Festival, and ran for 27 performances. As Handel's first stage success, it paved the way towards his future operatic compositions. Hallenberg returns to the role of *Agrippina* on **21 September** at the **George Enescu Festival** in Bucharest for a special late-night concert performance, joined by a cast including **Christopher Lowrey** and **Karina Gauvin**.



Les Talens Lyriques' two-night stay in Bucharest sees *Agrippina* preceded by a late-night concert performance of Handel's **Giulio Cesare in Egitto** on **20 September**, with Lowrey in the title role beside Hallenberg's Sesto. This same line-up returns to Paris for a concert performance of *Giulio Cesare* at the **Théâtre des Champs Elysées** on **24 September**.

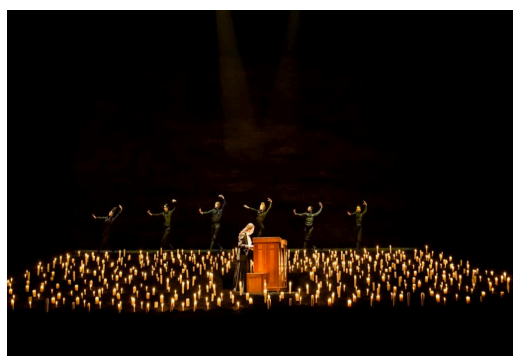
A passionate story of desire and revenge, *Giulio Cesare* is widely regarded as one of Handel's finest musical dramas, and tells of the changing alliances as Julius Caesar arrives at the Egyptian court. The opera premiered at the King's Theatre in the Haymarket in 1724 with the leading castrato Senesino in the title role. A staunch success, it was revived in subsequent seasons, where *"The house was just as full at the seventh performance as at the first."*

Christophe Rousset and Les Talens Lyriques return to the **Wiener Staatsoper** on **8 November** in **Ariodante**, their third Handel opera of the season. **Stephanie Houtzeel** stars as Ariodante in the revival of the commended production by **David McVicar**, alongside **Chen Reiss** as Ginevra and **Hila Fahima** as Dalinda.

Composed for the new Theatre Royal in Covent Garden, *Ariodante* included dance sequences for the first time following the engagement of a troupe led by the celebrated Marie Sallé. Following its premiere season, where it received 11 performances, *Ariodante* fell into oblivion for 200 years, despite its mesmerising aria 'Scherza infida'; it is now frequently performed on modern stages.



On **21 January**, Les Talens Lyriques present Handel's dramatic oratorio ***Saul***, in the first staged operatic production in the recently refurbished **Théâtre du Châtelet** in Paris, revived from Glyndebourne's critical acclaimed 2015 production by **Barrie Kosky**. **Christopher Purves** returns to star as Saul opposite **Christopher Ainslie** as David, with Saul's daughters Merab and Michal sung by the returning **Karina Gauvin** and **Anna Devin**. **Laurence Cummings** conducts Les Talens Lyriques while Christophe Rousset makes his debut at Houston Opera House.



With a libretto by Charles Jennings, *Saul* was first performed at the King's Theatre in London in 1739, and revived in subsequent seasons following its initial success. Handel employed extra-large military kettledrums from the Tower of London alongside three trombones and a carillon for the tale of jealousy, love, and madness found in the Biblical narrative of David and Saul.

Featured Listings

Saturday 8 June, 19:00
Klangvokal Musikfestival
Orchesterzentrum NRW,
Dortmund

Handel *Agrippina* (in concert)

Maite Beaumont Agrippina
Arnaud Richard Claudio
Ève-Maud Hubeaux Nerone
Eugénie Warnier Poppea
Paul-Antoine Bénos-Djian
Ottone
Ray Chenez Narciso
Douglas Williams Lesbo

Etienne Bazola Pallante

Christophe Rousset director
Les Talens Lyriques

Monday 10 June, 15:00
Halle Handel Festival
Concert Hall, Ulrichskirche, Halle

Handel *Agrippina* (in concert)

Ann Hallenberg Agrippina
Arnaud Richard Claudio
Eve-Maud Hubeaux Nerone
Eugénie Warnier Poppea

Paul-Antoine Bénos-Djian

Ottone

Ray Chenez Narciso

Douglas Williams Lesbo

Etienne Bazola Pallante

Christophe Rousset director

Les Talens Lyriques

Friday 20 September, 22:30

George Enescu Festival

Romanian Athenaeum, Bucharest

Handel *Giulio Cesare* (in concert)

Christopher Lowrey Giulio

Cesare

Karina Gauvin Cleopatra

Eve-Maud Hubeaux Cornelia

Ann Hallenberg Sesto

Kacper Selażek Tolomeo

Ashley Riches Achilla

Christophe Rousset director

Les Talens Lyriques

Saturday 21 September, 22:30

George Enescu Festival

Romanian Athenaeum, Bucharest

Handel *Agrippina* (in concert)

Ann Hallenberg Agrippina

Etienne Bazola Claudio

Kacper Selażek Nerone

Karina Gauvin Poppea

Christopher Lowrey Ottone

Ève-Maud Hubeaux Narciso

Douglas Williams Lesbo

Ashley Riches Pallante

Christophe Rousset director

Les Talens Lyriques

Tuesday 24 September, 19:30

Théâtre des Champs-Élysées,

Paris

Handel *Giulio Cesare* (in concert)

Christopher Lowrey Giulio

Cesare

Karina Gauvin Cleopatra

Eve-Maud Hubeaux Cornelia

Ann Hallenberg Sesto

Kacper Selażek Tolomeo

Ashley Riches Achilla

Christophe Rousset director

Les Talens Lyriques

8, 11, 13, 15 November, 17:00

Wiener Staatsoper, Vienna

Handel *Ariodante* (staged)

David McVicar director

Christophe Rousset conductor

Les Talens Lyriques

Stephanie Houtzeel Ariodante

Chen Reiss Ginevra

Hila Fahima Dalinda

Max Emanuel Cencic Polinesso

Josh Lovell Lurcanio

Peter Kellner Il Re di Scozia

Vicki Mortimer set & costumes

Paule Constable lighting design

Colm Seery choreography

Gustav Mahler-Choir

**21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31 January,
20:00**

Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris

Handel *Saul* (staged)

Barrie Kosky director

Laurence Cummings conductor

Les Talens Lyriques

Christopher Purves Saul

Karina Gauvin Merab

Anna Devin Michal

Benjamin Hullet Jonathan

Christopher Ainslie David

Stuart Jackson High Priest

John Graham-Hall Endor's witch

Otto Pichler choreography

Katrin Lea Tag set & costumes

Joachim Klein lighting design

Les Talens Lyriques



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The ensemble Les Talens Lyriques, which takes its name from the subtitle of Jean-Philippe Rameau's opera *Les Fêtes d'Hébé* (1739), was formed in 1991 by the harpsichordist and conductor Christophe Rousset.

Championing a broad vocal and instrumental repertoire, ranging from early Baroque to the beginnings of Romanticism, the musicians of Les Talens Lyriques aim to throw light on the great masterpieces of musical

history, while providing perspective by presenting rarer or little known works that are important as missing links in the European musical heritage. This musicological and editorial work, which contributes to its renown, is a priority for the ensemble.

Les Talens Lyriques perform to date works by Monteverdi (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, *L'Orfeo*), Cavalli (*La Didone*, *La Calisto*), Landi (*La Morte d'Orfeo*), Handel (*Scipione*, *Riccardo Primo*, *Rinaldo*, *Admeto*, *Giulio Cesare*, *Serse*, *Arianna in Creta*, *Tamerlano*, *Ariodante*, *Semele*, *Alcina*), Lully (*Persée*, *Roland*, *Bellérophon*, *Phaéton*, *Amadis*, *Armide*, *Alceste*), Desmarest (*Vénus et Adonis*), Mondonville (*Les Fêtes de Paphos*), Cimarosa (*Il Mercato di Malmantile*, *Il Matrimonio segreto*), Traetta (*Antigona*, *Ippolito ed Aricia*), Jommelli (*Armida abbandonata*), Martin y Soler (*La Capricciosa corretta*, *Il Tutore burlato*), Mozart (*Mitridate*, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, *Così fan tutte*, *Die Zauberflöte*), Salieri (*La Grotta di Trofonio*, *Les Danaïdes*, *Les Horaces*, *Tarare*), Rameau (*Zoroastre*, *Castor et Pollux*, *Les Indes galantes*, *Platée*, *Pygmalion*), Gluck (*Bauci e Filemone*, *Alceste*), Beethoven, Cherubini (*Médée*), García (*Il Califfo di Bagdad*), Berlioz, Massenet, Gounod (*Faust*) and Saint-Saëns.

The re-creation of these works goes hand in hand with close collaboration with stage directors and choreographers such as Pierre Audi, Jean-Marie Villégier, David McVicar, Eric Vigner, Ludovic Lagarde, Mariame Clément, Jean-Pierre Vincent, Macha Makeïeff, Laura Scozzi, Natalie van Parys, Marcial di Fonzo Bo, Claus Guth, Robert Carsen, David Hermann, Christof Loy, Jetske Mijnsen, Alban Richard and David Lescot.

As well as opera, Les Talens Lyriques explore other musical genres: madrigal, cantata, air de cour, symphonies, and the vast corpus of sacred music (masses, motets, oratorios, *Leçons de Ténèbres*, and so on). In formations varying from a handful of musicians to more than sixty, representing every generation, they give performances all over the world.

In 2018-2019 Les Talens Lyriques return to their first love, with a season entitled "The Temptation of Italy". Vocality will be celebrated in works ranging from masterpieces by Monteverdi, Purcell, Handel (*Agrippina*) and

Mozart (*La Betulia liberata*) to rarely heard or unpublished scores by Legrenzi (*La Divisione del mondo*), Salieri (*Tarare*), Leo and Porpora. After celebrating Telemann in 2017, the ensemble will be acting as François Couperin's representative abroad when they take his music to the American continent for the 350th anniversary of the composer's birth. "Couperin Year" will also be celebrated with recordings: *Les Nations* and the *Concerts Royaux* are to be released (in autumn and in December, respectively) on the Aparté label.

Les Talens Lyriques recorded the famous soundtrack for Gérard Corbiau's film *Farinelli* (1994), which sold over a million copies. The ensemble now has a discography comprising some sixty references, on various labels (Erato, Fnac Music, Auvidis, Decca, Naïve, Ambrosia, Virgin Classics, Outhere and Aparté). This season, it will conclude the cycle of French operas by Salieri with the release of *Les Horaces* in September 2018 (Aparté) and the recording of *Tarare* in the autumn (also for Aparté).

Since 2007 the musicians of the ensemble have been working to introduce schoolchildren to music, via a programme of ambitious artistic actions and innovative educational initiatives. They are in residence in schools in Paris and Île-de-France, where they have created a student orchestra with young secondary school pupils and a small choir ("Le petit chœur des Talens"). The three *t@lenschool* educational applications, downloadable free of charge, have met with much enthusiasm and have received several national and international awards.

The ensemble Les Talens Lyriques receives subsidies from the French Ministry of Culture and the City of Paris, and generous support from its Circle of Patrons. The ensemble wishes to thank its principal Patrons, the Annenberg Foundation / GRoW - Gregory and Regina Annenberg Weingarten, Mrs Aline Foriel-Destezet and Mécénat Musical Société Générale.

Since 2011 Les Talens Lyriques have been associate artists, in residence at the Singer-Polignac Foundation in Paris. Les Talens Lyriques are founding members of FEVIS (Federation of Specialised Vocal and Instrumental Ensembles) and of PROFEDIM (Professional Union of Music Producers, Festivals, Ensembles, and Independent Distributors).



Christophe Rousset Harpichordist, Conductor, Musicologist



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The founder of the ensemble Les Talens Lyriques and internationally recognised harpsichordist Christophe Rousset is a musician and conductor inspired by a passion for opera and the rediscovery of the European musical heritage.

His studies (harpsichord) with Huguette Dreyfus at the Schola Cantorum in Paris, then with Bob van Asperen at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague (winning the coveted First

Prize in the Seventh Bruges International Harpsichord Competition at the age of twenty-two), followed by the creation of his own ensemble, Les Talens Lyriques, in 1991, have enabled Christophe Rousset to obtain a perfect grasp of the richness and diversity of the Baroque, Classical and pre-Romantic repertoires.

Christophe Rousset is now invited to appear with Les Talens Lyriques all over Europe (Opéra National de Paris, Opéra Comique, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Philharmonie de Paris, Opéra Royal de Versailles, Dutch National Opera, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Lausanne Opéra, Teatro Real Madrid, Vienna Staatsoper and Theater an der Wien, Théâtre Royal de La Monnaie and Bozar in Brussels, London's Wigmore Hall and Barbican Centre, and so on), as well as on tour in other parts of the world (Mexico, New Zealand, Canada, United States, etc.).

At the same time he continues to pursue an active career as a harpsichordist and chamber musician, playing and recording on some of the world's finest period instruments. His recordings of the harpsichord works of Louis and François Couperin, Rameau, D'Anglebert, Royer, Duphy, Forqueray, Balbastre and Scarlatti, and those devoted to J. S. Bach (Partitas, Goldberg Variations, Harpsichord Concertos, English Suites, French Suites, *Klavierbüchlein für Wilhelm Friedemann*, Well-Tempered Clavier) are regarded as references.

Teaching is of paramount importance to Christophe Rousset, who organises and gives many master-classes and academies (Paris Conservatoire CNSM, Ambronay, Fondation Royaumont, Operastudio Vlaanderen-Ghent, OFJ Baroque, Junge Deutsche Philharmonie-Berlin, Accademia Chigiana-Siena, Amici della Musica in Florence, Britten-Pears Orchestra at Snape Maltings) and, together with members of Les Talens Lyriques, plays an active part in introducing young secondary school students in Paris and the Île-de-France to music.

Christophe Rousset also appears regularly as a guest conductor: Liceu Barcelona, San Carlo Naples, La Scala Milan, Opéra Royal de Wallonie, London's Royal Opera House, Orquesta Nacional de España, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Orchestre du Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, etc.

He is active too in the field of research and writing, through critical editions, the publication of monographs devoted to Jean-Philippe Rameau and François Couperin (Actes Sud, 2007 and 2016, respectively).

2017 saw the publication of a series of interviews by Camille de Rijck in which Christophe Rousset shares his thoughts on music: *L'impression que l'instrument chante*, Éditions de la Cité de la Musique - Philharmonie de Paris (La rue musicale - Entretiens).

Christophe Rousset is a Knight of the French Legion of Honour, a Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters, and a Knight of the National Order of Merit.

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