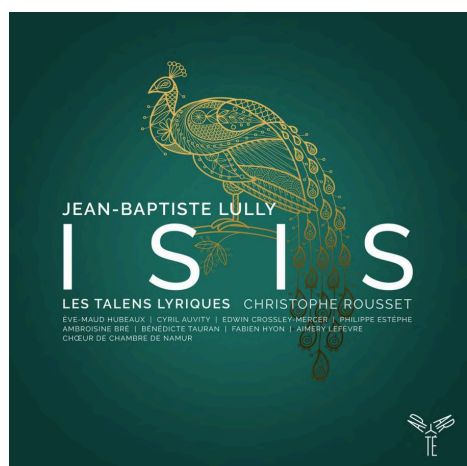


Les Talens Lyriques release new recording of Lully's *Isis*: the opera behind a royal scandal

Ahead of performances in Paris, Versailles, and Vienna



Friday 15 November

Aparté | AP216

Jean-Baptiste Lully *Isis*

Les Talens Lyriques

Christophe Rousset director

Chœur de Chambre de Namur

Ève-Maud Hubeaux, Bénédicte Tauran, Ambroisine Bré, Cyril Auvity, Philippe Estèphe, Fabien Hyon, Edwin Crossley-Mercer, Aimery Lefèvre

Friday 6 December

Théâtre des Champs-Élysées
Paris

Tuesday 10 December

Opéra Royal
Versailles

Saturday 22 February

Theater an der Wien
Vienna

Revisiting the opera which caused a royal scandal at the Court of Louis XIV, **Christophe Rousset** and **Les Talens Lyriques** release **Lully's Isis** on disc with **Aparté** on **15 November**. *Isis* is the eighth Lully opera released by Les Talens Lyriques, continuing their highly-renowned survey of the composer's operas. The disc was recorded in Beaune in July 2019.

"Christophe Rousset is indisputably the outstanding Lully conductor of our day, or indeed perhaps any other day"

Opera Magazine, July 2017

A distinguished cast includes **Ève-Maud Hubeaux** and **Bénédicte Tauran** as Io and Juno, and **Edwin Crossley-Mercer** as Jupiter. The CD release precedes performances in **Paris** (Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, 6 December), **Versailles** (Opéra Royal, 10 December) and **Vienna** (Theater an der Wien, 22 February).

Jean-Baptiste Lully's opera, which had its premiere on 5 January 1677 at the Royal Court in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, mixes Roman and Egyptian mythology as Jupiter pursues the nymph Io, much to the wrath of his wife Juno, who imprisons and tortures her.

The libretto by **Philippe Quinault** alluded strongly to the Louis XIV's love affairs, with the King as Jupiter, and Juno and Io his two mistresses, Madame de Montespan, the King's long favourite, and Mademoiselle de Ludres.



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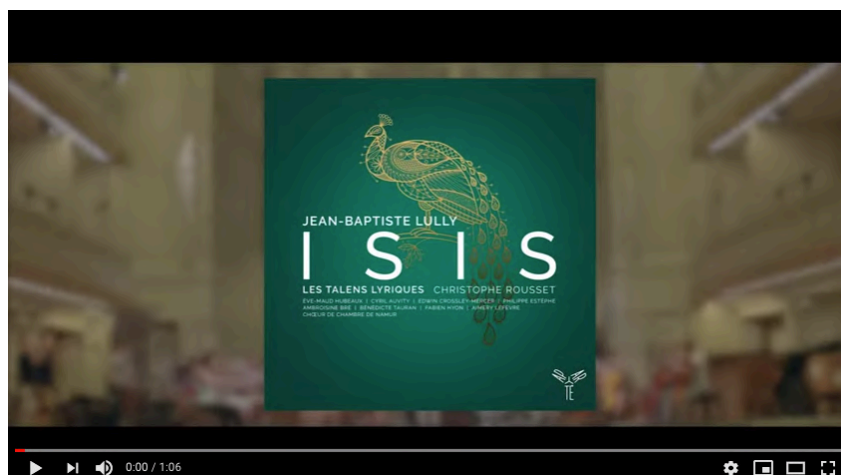
Scandal ensued at the premiere, leading to the expulsion of Quinault from the Royal Court. Following its first public performances in Paris, *Isis* was revived only once more in Louis XIV's lifetime, yet history would play out as Quinault had imagined, with Mademoiselle de Ludres soon banished to a convent:

*"I'm no longer in his memory,
He can't hear my cries nor see my tears.
Having delivered me to the cruellest misfortunes,
He is calm, at the height of his glory,
He abandons me in the midst of my pain.*

Io, Act V

As the symbol and seat of a triumphant monarchy, the Royal Court was as much an artistic one as a political phenomenon. In a society where the outward show of the king was closely linked to the image of a God, all the arts were harnessed to project the glory of Sun King's reign.

Transcending its ill-fated roots, Lully's refined *tragédie lyrique* offers vividly scenic portrayals, especially in the 'trembling' chorus of freezing inhabitants, which would later inspire Purcell, Vivaldi, and Salieri.



[Listen to a preview of Isis here: https://youtu.be/hELxzuHTFIQ](https://youtu.be/hELxzuHTFIQ)

Born Giovanni Battiste Lulli in Florence, **Jean-Baptiste Lully** (1632-1687) arrived as an immigrant in France in 1646, entering the service of Louis XIV in 1652 and rising to a position of great intimacy with the King, who shared tastes in music, ballet and mythology. By the age of 30 Lully was in charge of all royal music, soon obtaining the sole patent to present opera. His *tragédies lyriques* comprised a prologue followed by five acts, with ballet an essential component. Of the thirteen *tragédies lyriques* he composed, Philippe Quinault collaborated with him on eleven.

Les Talens Lyriques wishes to warmly thank Mrs. Aline Foriel-Destezet for her support.

Listings

Friday 6 December, 19:30

Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Paris*

Tuesday 10 December, 20:00

Opéra Royal, Versailles*

Saturday 22 February, 19:00

Theater an der Wien, Vienna**

Jean-Baptiste Lully *Isis*

Les Talens Lyriques

Christophe Rousset director

Chœur de chambre de Namur

Ève-Maud Hubeaux Thalie, Isis/Io

Bénédicte Tauran La

Renommée/Malpomène,

Mycène/Junon

Ambroisine Bré Calliope,

Iris/Syrinx/Hébé

Robert Getchell* Apollon,

Pirante/La Furie

Cyril Auvity** Apollon, Pirante/La

Furie

Philippe Estèphe Neptune, Argus

Fabien Hyon Mercure

Edwin Crossley-Mercer Jupiter/Pan

Aimery Lefèvre Hierax

Les Talens Lyriques

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.



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Cargocollective_Julien Vermeesch

Championing a broad vocal and instrumental repertoire, spanning the period 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 with 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.

The repertoire of Les Talens Lyriques includes 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*, *Isis*), 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*), Martín 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*), Saint-Saëns, and others.

The re-creation of these works goes hand in hand with close collaboration with stage directors and choreographers: 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, David Lescot.

Les Talens Lyriques explore not only opera, but other genres as well: secular madrigals, cantatas, *airs de cour*, symphonies, and the vast corpus of sacred music (masses, motets, oratorios, *Leçons de Ténèbres* and so on). Varying in size from just a handful of musicians to over sixty, representing every generation, the ensemble appears all over the world.

The 2019-2020 season goes under the title of "Nations", for Europe and its nations are particularly prominent in the programmes and travels of Les Talens Lyriques. French music is represented by Jean-Baptiste Lully (*Isis*) and François Couperin (*Les Nations*), Italy by Monteverdi (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*) and a programme entitled "Les Larmes de la Vierge", consisting of beautiful but little known works depicting the grief of the Virgin Mary as her son dies on the cross. Johann Sebastian Bach and his son Carl Philipp Emanuel represent Germany with their *Magnificat* settings and other pieces, while that universal figure and great traveller, George Frideric Handel, represents several nations with his music; his operas *Agrippina*, *Giulio Cesare* and *Ariodante* and his oratorio *Saul* will be performed this season. The different aesthetics of these composers clearly illustrate the move towards humanism and the Age of Enlightenment, with which Christophe Rousset feels such an affinity.

The idea of "Nations" is also reflected in the diversity of the ensemble's venues this season: in France, the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, the Royal Opera at Versailles, and the Beaune Festival; in Austria, the Vienna Staatsoper and the Theater an der Wien; in Germany, the Leipzig Bach Festival; and for the first time Les Talens Lyriques will be travelling to Romania to take part in the Enescu Festival in Bucharest, and will be performing in Colombia's capital, Bogota.

The Ensemble's rich discography comprises some sixty references on various labels (Erato, Fnac Music, Auvidis, Decca, Naïve, Ambroisie, Virgin Classics, Ediciones Singulares (Palazzetto Bru Zane), Outhere and Aparté). Les Talens Lyriques recorded the famous soundtrack for Gérard Corbiau's film *Farinelli* (1994), which sold over a million copies. In 2019-2020, the Ensemble will be pleased to release recordings of masterpieces such as Gounod's *Faust* (PBZ), Lully's *Isis* (Aparté), Mozart's *Betulia liberata* (Aparté) and Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* (Outhere).

Since 2007 the musicians of the ensemble have been working on a project aimed at introducing schoolchildren to music through a programme of ambitious artistic actions and innovative educational initiatives. They are in residence in schools in Paris and the Paris region (Île-de-France), where they have created an orchestra class and a small choir, known as "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).



www.lestalenslyriques.com

Christophe Rousset **Harpichordist, Conductor, Musicologist**



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

His studies (harpichord) 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 Harpichord 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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