

Christophe Rousset & Les Talens Lyriques complete their trilogy of Salieri's gory French operas composed in the looming shadow of the French Revolution



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Les Horaces

Release date: 31 August 2018
2 CDs Aparté (AP185)

Tarare

Thursday 22 November 2018, 8:00pm

Opéra Royal, Versailles

Saturday 24 November 2018, 7:00pm

Theater an der Wien

Wednesday 28 November 2018, 7:30pm

Cité de la Musique, Paris

Friday 9 December, 2018 5:00pm

Théâtre de Caen

**Coproduction with the Centre de musique baroque de Versailles.
*This project is generously supported by Mrs Aline Foriel-Destezet.***

"I am dazzled by the figure of Salieri! The challenge is most stimulating."
Christophe Rousset

Christophe Rousset and Les Talens Lyriques complete Salieri's trilogy of blood-thirsty operas written in French with a recording and performances of ***Tarare*** opening in Versailles on 22 November and continuing on tour to Vienna, Paris and Caen. On **31 August**, their CD of Salieri's ***Les Horaces*** recorded during highly-acclaimed performances in 2016, was released on **Aparté**, following their earlier recording of *Les Danaïdes*. All three operas were composed in the looming shadow of the French Revolution, and their gory political intrigues hint at the growing dissidence prior to the Terror.

Returning to the original location of its premiere, Salieri's *Tarare* will be performed in Versailles' Opéra Royal, which was inaugurated at the marriage of Marie-Antoinette to the future Louis XVI. Starring **Cyrille Dubois, Karine Deshayes, Jean-Sébastien Bou and Judith van Wanroij** under the keen eye of musical director Christophe Rousset, *Tarare* is Salieri's third and final French-language opera, composed just two years before the French Revolution, which the plot unwittingly overshadows. The libretto speaks out against power, church and king; the chorus sings: 'Mortal whoever you are, prince, priest or soldier, your greatness on his earth is not due to your state but because of your character.'



Composed to Beaumarchais' only libretto, *Tarare* was a popular triumph to follow his celebrated adaption of the *Marriage of Figaro*, famously set by Mozart. *Tarare* successfully mixes comedy, tragedy, and the exotic with a strong political message: a world of vice is revealed as the valiant soldier Tarare, seeking to rescue his wife, overthrows the tyrannous Sultan Atar and is proclaimed king by will of the people. Such a revolutionary tale could only appear hidden behind its exotic mask. Beaumarchais forbade access to rehearsals and created such high expectations that over four hundred guards were needed to channel crowds for the 1787 premiere in Paris. The production was eventually reworked with Da Ponte into a lucrative Italian version, *Axur, Re d'Ormuz*, which toured the world.

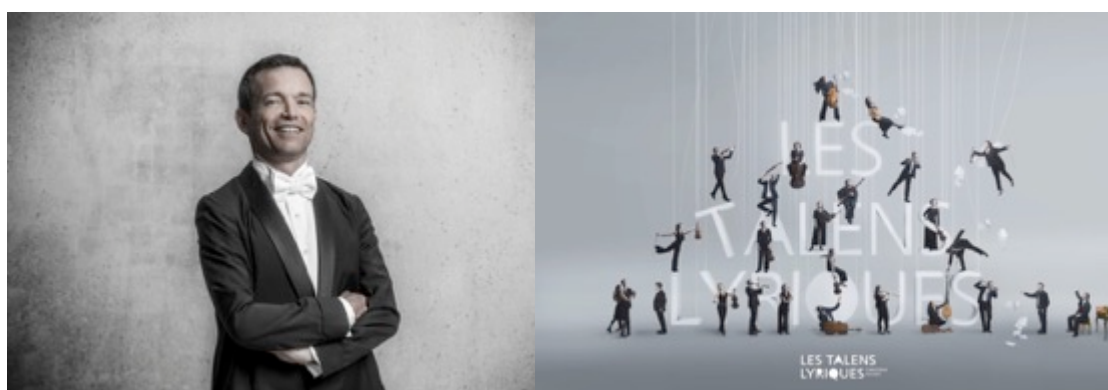
On **31 August**, the first recording of Salieri's *Les Horaces* is released on **Aparté**, with Dubois, Bou, and van Wanroij. With a specially commissioned edition by Nicolas Sceaux, this is the first complete recording. The recording was made in performance at the **Palace of Versailles** in October 2016. Both *Tarare* and *Les Horaces* are led by **Christophe Rousset**, with **Les Chantres du Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles** and **Les Talens Lyriques**.

Les Horaces is based on Corneille's *Horace*, with a libretto by Nicolas-François Guillard. The three sons of Horace are engaged to fight the three sons of Curiace, but each has a sibling engaged to the other side in a tragic dilemma between love and duty. The premiere took place at the Opéra Royal in Versailles in December 1786, but only three performances were given in Paris before the work was removed from performance. The opera's failure may have lain simply behind the hero's farcical-sounding name.

Despite tarnished views of Antonio Salieri as perpetuated in popular culture, the composer has in recent years been regarded as an increasingly respected composer, and he held the position of official court composer at the Hapsburg Court for nearly forty years. He is a pivotal figure in the development of late 18th-century opera, writing nearly forty such works in three languages, and his work inspired opera composers from Mozart to a young Berlioz.

Founder Christophe Rousset has acted as a “musical archaeologist” since his acclaimed soundtrack to the film *Farinelli*, and has long championed Salieri’s work in an effort to restore the misunderstood composer’s works to their rightful place. In 2005 he released a landmark first recording of *La grotta di Trofonio*, and his continued exploration of Salieri’s French operas complements Les Talens Lyriques’s season theme: ‘the temptation of Italy’.

An Italian composer writing for the French court, Antonio Salieri travelled from Vienna to Paris in order to compose the work that became the dazzlingly successful *Les Danaïdes* in 1784. Both *Tarare* and *Les Horaces* were then commissioned for the Académie Royale de Musique (Paris Opéra) under the patronage of Marie-Antoinette, the Queen of France, who would lose her life in the French Revolution just five years later.



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Cast list for *Tarare*

Tarare	Cyrille Dubois
Astasie	Karine Deshayes
Atar	Jean-Sébastien Bou
Nature, Spinette	Judith van Wanroij
Calpigi	Enguerrand de Hys
Arthénée, the Fire genius	Tassis Christoyannis
Urson, a Slave, a Priest	Jérôme Boutillier
Altamort, a Peasant, a Eunich	Philippe-Nicholas Martin

Les Chantres du Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles Les Talens Lyriques

Musical Director	Christophe Rousset
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Cast list for *Les Horaces*

Camille	Judith van Wanroij
Old Horace	Jean-Sébastien Bou
Curiace	Cyrille Dubois
Young Horace	Julien Dran
The Oracle, an Albin, Valère	Philippe-Nicholas Martin

**The High Priest, the Sacristan,
a Roman
A follower of Camille**

Andrew Foster-Williams

Eugénie Lefebvre

**Les Chantres du Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles
Les Talens Lyriques**

Musical Director

Christophe Rousset

2 CDs Aparté (AP185)

Reviews of *Les Horaces*

Schwäbische Zeitung – *“The subtly orchestrated score achieves stunning effects with reduced means. The soloists offered sensational vocal art: amongst others, Judith van Wanroij a dramatically glowing soprano (Camille), Cyrille Dubois a brilliant tenor (Curiace), and Jean-Sébastien Bou a powerful declamatory bass (old Horatio). The perfectly prepared choir (Les Chantres du Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles) contributed to the poignant drama.”*

Bachtrack – *“[The performance] captivated through a perfect cast and an excellent interpretation. [...] Again and again, he [Christophe Rousset] managed to extract the right colouring from the period orchestra, it was never too slow, neither too quick and dynamically always precise. [...] Let's hope that the Theater an der Wien will complete the Salieri-Paris cycle next year with Tarare!”*

Online Musik Magazin – *“Under the direction of Christophe Rousset, the ensemble Les Talens Lyriques rounded off the musically wonderful evening, culminating in great applause for all the performers, which was probably also the joy in hearing a performance of a work that has for almost 230 years lain dormant in the archives.”*

Reviews of *Les Danaïdes*

Watch the overture to *Les Danaïdes* here
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x59Gqjs9808>)

The Guardian - *“Certainly, it all coheres convincingly in this performance under Christophe Rousset, with imposing choral contributions from Les Chantres du Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles, and the usual fiercely involved playing from Les Talens Lyriques.”*

BBC Music Magazine - *“Les Talens Lyriques reveals the splendours in Salieri's writing.”*

Gramophone Magazine - *“The fever pitch atmosphere is wonderfully maintained. Les Talens Lyriques sound dark, baleful and at times startlingly, if appropriately raw.”*

Opera Magazine - *"It represents yet another impressive feather in Christophe Rousset's already handsomely adorned cap, a supremely well-played performance of huge dramatic compulsion that projects not only burning, thrusting conviction but also empathy for the tender lyricism of the scenes between Hypermnestre and her lover Lynceé."*

Christophe Rousset
Harpsichordist, Conductor, Musicologist

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.

Picture: Christophe Rousset / © Ignacio Barrios Martinez

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.

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 Communication 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, and Madame Aline Foriel-Destezet.

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).

Picture: Les Talens Lyriques / © Eric Larrayadiou
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