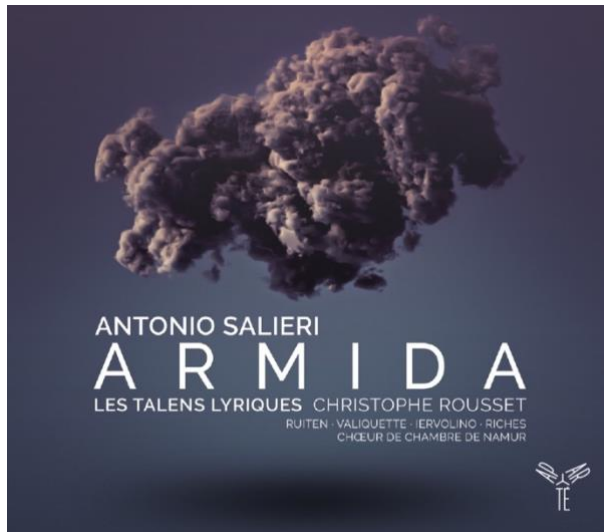


250 years after the premiere of Salieri's *Armida*, Les Talens Lyriques release first full recording and give first modern performances



Friday 22 January 2021

Aparté | AP244

Salieri Armida WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

30 January 2021

Théâtre de Caen

2 February 2021

Philharmonie, Paris

19 February 2021

Theater an der Wien, Vienna

With

Lenneke Ruiten Armida

Anna El-Khashem Armida (Vienna)

Teresa Iervolino Ismene

Florie Valiquette Rinaldo

Ashley Riches Ubaldo

250 years after its first performance at Vienna's Burgtheater in 1771, **Christophe Rousset** and **Les Talens Lyriques** revive **Salieri's Armida** with a **new recording** and the **first modern performances** of the composer's first breakthrough success.

Armida is released on disc on 22 January 2021 on **Aparté**, following recording sessions in July 2020. In concert, Les Talens Lyriques return *Armida* to Vienna (**Theater an der Wien**) on 19 February 2021, following performances at the **Paris Philharmonie** (2 February 2021) and in Caen (30 January 2021).

Based on a libretto by Marco Coltellini, *Armida* was inspired by Torquato Tasso's epic *Gerusalemme liberata*, and had been the subject of operas by Lully, Traetta and Handel among others. Salieri's three-act *dramma per musica*, written when he was just twenty years old, is located exclusively on the enchanted island where Armida holds the bewitched warrior Rinaldo prisoner. **Lenneke Ruiten** takes the title role (Anna El-Khashem in Vienna), with **Florie Valiquette** as Rinaldo.

Exploiting the melodic richness of Italian opera within the dramatic framework of French *tragédie lyrique*, *Armida* was much praised by critics and was one of the few Italian operas to be published in Germany in the 18th century. Despite the tarnished views of Antonio Salieri perpetuated in popular culture, the composer was 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.

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, Rousset released a landmark first recording of *La grotta di Trofonio*, and Les Talens Lyriques recently completed their critically-acclaimed series of Salieri's three blood-thirsty French operas: *Les Danaïdes* (2017), *Les Horaces* (2018), and *Tarare* (2019).

"If Salieri the opera composer needs rehabilitating, this is the way to do it."

Radio 3 Record Review on Les Talens Lyriques' *Les Horaces* CD

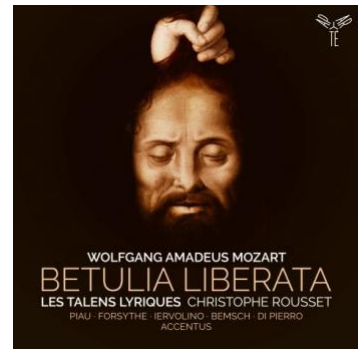
Recent recordings from Les Talens Lyriques have garnered immense success, with their recording of Gounod's *Faust* (Palazzetto Bru Zane, September 2019) named Opus Klassik's

"Lyric Recording of the Year" and nominated at the Gramophone and BBC Music Magazine Awards 2020. Lully's *Isis* (Aparté, December 2020) was nominated as Editor's Choice in Gramophone Magazine and Opera Choice in BBC Music Magazine, and the group's four latest recordings have been nominated in the International Classical Music Awards.

In September 2020, Les Talens Lyriques released **Mozart's electrifying *Betulia liberata*** on disc. Mozart's only oratorio traces the influence of the older composer Salieri on his younger colleague and was written when Mozart was only fifteen. The highly virtuosic arias feature a cast including Sandrine Piau and **Teresa Iervolino**, who appears as Ismene in Salieri's *Armida*.

"Perhaps the vocal discovery of the set comes in the form of Teresa Iervolino's Giuditta."

- Classical Explorer



Across their 2020-21 season, a growing emphasis on the works of Salieri's supposed rival also sees Les Talens Lyriques feature the composer in performance, exploring **Mozart's Symphonies no. 39 – 41** at **Linz's Brucknerhaus** (21 February). At the Opéra Royal de Wallonie, Liège, Christophe Rousset is the guest conductor in Jean Liermier's production of Mozart's *Così fan tutte* (14-22 May 2021), following previous appearances at the house with *Le Nozze di Figaro* (2018) and *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (2013).

In June 2021, Les Talens Lyriques return to Germany to perform **Mozart's Idomeneo**, a grand celebration for the centenary of the **Mozartfest Würzburg**. The performances (11-12 June 2021) will take place at the 18th-century Würzburg Residenz, a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Baroque palace. Mozart's operatic dilemma is performed in concert with a starry cast including Julian Prégardien as the titular King of Crete, Judith van Wanroij as the Trojan princess Ilia, and Myrtò Papatanasu as Elettra.

Les Talens Lyriques



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Cargocollective_Julien Vermeesch

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, 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.

Les Talens Lyriques' 2020-2021 season, ELLES, is to be a tribute to women. These various programmes have in common the fact of focusing on a female figure, as the main character in an opera or other work, and at the same time therefore on the female artist portraying that part. The Baroque and Classical periods are rich in strong, single-minded female figures. Courage, loyalty, devotion, unconditional love are virtues embodied by Ilia in Mozart's *Idomeneo* and the Virgin Mary in Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*, Bach's *St. John's Passion* and Händel's *Messiah*. Armida (*Armida* by A. Salieri) and Venus (*Ballet royal de la naissance de Vénus* by J.B. Lully, *La Naissance de Vénus* by P. Collasse) are among the figures who never ceased to fascinate during the Baroque period with their magnetic charm and the power they wield through their very emancipation and their certainty of overcoming their prey, however warlike.

For this new season, Christophe Rousset calls in remarkable female performers: Ann Hallenberg (*Music for a While*), Sandrine Piau (*Stabat Mater*), Judith van Wanroij (*Idomeneo*) and many others.

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. Released in September 2019, Gounod's *Faust* (PBZ) has received numerous awards: Gramophone Choice, *Presto Musical* editor's choice, Diapason d'or, Choc Classica 2019...

In 2020-2021, the Ensemble will be pleased to release recordings of masterpieces such as Mozart's *Betulia liberata* (Aparté), Armand-Louis Couperin's *pièces de clavecin* (Aparté), and Salieri's *Armida* (Aparté).

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).



Direction régionale
des Affaires culturelles
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lestalenslyriques.com

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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