Rameau, maître à danser

By Jean-Philippe Rameau
Les Arts Florissants

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House
Mar 1 & 2 at 7:30pm; Mar 3 at 3pm

Running time: approx. one hour and 55 minutes, including intermission

Musical direction by William Christie

Staging by Sophie Daneman
Choreography by Françoise Denieau
Restaging of choreography by Gilles Poirier
Costume design by Alain Blanchot
Lighting and set design by Christophe Naillet

2019 Winter/Spring is programmed by Joseph V. Melillo.

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Rameau, maître à danser comprises two “actes de ballet” by Jean-Philippe Rameau: Daphnis et Églé and La Naissance d’Osiris. These intimate and rarely staged works were composed for the “grand spectacles” danced at the court of Louis XV. Based on a libretto by Cahusac, La Naissance d’Osiris was commissioned to celebrate the birth of the Duke of Berry, the future Louis XVI; Rameau went on to use passages in his “tragédie lyrique” Zoroastre. Originally destined to liven up hunting parties at Fontainebleau, Daphnis et Églé is also proof—beneath its slight, yet utterly charming scenario—of Rameau’s artistic genius.

Thanks to a semi-staging which captures the spirit of the “théâtre de la foire” (fair theater) centered around a rural community, highlighting the idea of the pastoral idyll so beloved in France’s Age of Enlightenment, and the delicious choreography of the late Françoise Denieau, this production has achieved enormous public and critical success since it was first performed in France in 2014.

This revival is given in memory of Françoise Denieau, choreographer of this production.

Production: Théâtre de Caen. Co-production: Les Arts Florissants (with the support of the Selz Foundation), Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles. Executive Production of the revival: Les Arts Florissants with the support of Le Bureau Export.
SYNOPSIS

**Daphnis et Églé**

Daphnis and Églé consider themselves friends rather than lovers. Meeting in front of the Temple of Friendship, they plan to swear an eternal friendship that will ensure their happiness. A group of shepherds praise the god of Friendship, and the High Priest of the temple warns them against the unhappiness that Cupid brings. Just as Daphnis and Églé are about to enter the temple to perform their vow, thunder is heard. The High Priest, divining the true nature of their feelings, rebukes the couple and banishes them from the temple. Upset and confused, Daphnis and Églé exchange tender reproaches but remain unaware of the increasingly amorous nature of their sentiments. Cupid descends and explains that it is love rather than friendship that they feel. As the Pleasures and Sports enter and the Temple of Friendship is transformed into the Temple of Love, Cupid points out the moral: Love hides beneath a veil of friendship, and all friends are lovers when close to the object they adore.

**La naissance d’Osiris**

Outside the Temple of Jupiter in Egyptian Thebes, shepherds and townspeople sing in praise of Cupid, while waiting for an unspecified event that will complete their happiness. Pamilie and a companion extol love and constancy, and shepherds bring gifts into the temple. At the sound of thunder, the people scatter. But the High Priest calms their fears and announces the god’s imminent appearance. Jupiter, accompanied by Cupid and the Graces, descends in splendor and announces to the Egyptians the birth of the god Osiris—the hero for whom they have longed. The people celebrate the news. Jupiter ascends into the heavens, leaving behind Cupid and the Graces, who join in the general celebrations.

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WILLIAM CHRISTIE (musical director), harpsichordist, conductor, musicologist, and teacher, is a pioneer in the rediscovery and introduction of French Baroque music to a wide audience. Born in Buffalo, NY and educated at Harvard and Yale, the turning point in his career came in 1979 when he founded Les Arts Florissants. As director of this vocal and instrumental ensemble, major public recognition came in 1987 with the production of Lully’s *Atys* at the Opéra Comique in Paris (the production’s US debut was presented at BAM in 1989; its revival was presented at BAM in Sep 2011), followed by many other successes in the French and European Baroque repertoire. Notable among his recent operatic work are: Campra’s *Les Fêtes vénitiennes* in 2015 at the Paris Opéra Comique and at BAM; *Theodora* in 2016 at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées; in 2018, Handel’s *Jephtha* at the Opéra national de Paris, *Ariodante* at the Wiener Staatsoper, L’Incoronazione di Poppea at the Salzburg Festival, and John Gay’s *The Beggar’s Opera* on European tour. As a guest conductor Christie often appears at opera festivals including Glyndebourne (*Giulio Cesare* in 2018) and opera houses such as the Metropolitan Opera and Zurich Opernhaus. His extensive discography includes more than 100 recordings. The most recent, *Un jardin à l’italienne, Bien que l’amour,* and *Bach’s B Minor Mass* were released by harmonia mundi in the collection, “Les Arts Florissants.” Wishing to further develop his work as a teacher, in 2002 Christie created with Les Arts Florissants a biennial academy for young singers, Le Jardin des Voix. Since 2007 he has been artist in residence at The Juilliard School and at the Wiener Staatsoper, and since 2012, he has launched the festival *Dans les Jardins de William Christie* in his own gardens, located in the French village of Thiré in the Vendée. Christie has bequeathed his real estate assets to the Foundation Les Arts Florissants–William Christie, created in 2017.

**LES ARTS FLORISSANTS**

*William Christie, Musical Director, Founder Paul Agnew, Associate Musical Director*

An ensemble of singers and instrumentalists specializing in the performance of Baroque music on period instruments, Les Arts Florissants is renowned the world over. Founded in 1979 by the Franco-American harpsichordist and conductor William Christie, the ensemble, named after a short opera by Marc-Antoine Charpentier, has played a pioneering role in the revival of a Baroque repertoire that had long been neglected (including the rediscovery of countless treasures in the collections of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France). Today that repertoire is widely performed and admired: not only French music from the reign of Louis XIV, but also more generally European music of the 17th and 18th centuries. The ensemble is directed by William Christie who, since 2007, has regularly passed the conductor’s baton over to British tenor Paul Agnew. Since the 1987 production of Lully’s *Atys* at the Opéra Comique in Paris, which was triumphantly revived in 2011, Les Arts Florissants has enjoyed its greatest successes on the opera stage. Les Arts Florissants enjoys an equally high profile in the concert hall, as illustrated by its many acclaimed concert or semi-staged performances of operas and oratorios. Each season Les Arts Florissants gives around 100 concerts and opera performances in France—at the Philharmonie de Paris, where they are artists in residence, the Théâtre de Caen, Opéra Comique, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Château de Versailles, as well as at numerous festivals—and are an active ambassador for French culture abroad, regularly invited to New York, London, Brussels, Vienna, Madrid, Barcelona, Moscow, and elsewhere. The group has performed at BAM numerous times; its most recent presentations are *Les Fêtes vénitiennes* (2016), and *Atys* and *Le Jardin de Monsieur Lully* (2011). The ensemble has produced an impressive discography: nearly 100 recordings (CD and DVD) and its own collection in collaboration with harmonia mundi, under the baton of William Christie and Paul Agnew. In recent years, Les Arts Florissants has launched several education programs for young musicians. The most emblematic is the Academy of Le Jardin des Voix; created in 2002, it is held every two years and has brought a substantial number of new singers into the limelight. The Arts Flo Juniors program, launched in 2007, enables conservatory students to join the orchestra and chorus for the length of a production, from the first day of rehearsals up to the final performance. The partnership between William Chris-
tie, Les Arts Florissants, and New York’s Juilliard School has since 2007 allowed a fruitful artistic exchange between the US and France. Les Arts Florissants also organizes numerous events aimed at building new audiences at the Philharmonie de Paris, in the Vendée, in France and all around the world. Linked to each year’s concert program, they are designed for both amateur musicians and non-musicians, adults as much as children. In 2012, William Christie and Les Arts Florissants created the festival Dans les Jardins de William Christie, in partnership with the Conseil départemental de la Vendée. An annual event, the festival brings together artists from Les Arts Florissants, pupils from The Juilliard School, and finalists from Le Jardin des Voix for concerts and promenades musicales in the gardens created by Christie at Thiré, in the Vendée. In addition to the festival, Les Arts Florissants is working to establish a permanent cultural venue in Thiré. This anchorage strengthened in 2017 through some noteworthy events: the settlement of Le Jardin des Voix in Thiré, the creation of a Spring Festival (Festival de Printemps) directed by Paul Agnew, a new annual event at the Fontevraud Abbey, and the reward of the national title “Centre culturel de Rencontre” for Les Arts Florissants and Les Jardins de William Christie—an award which distinguishes projects associating creation, patrimony, and transmission. In 2018 Fondation Les Arts Florissants – William Christie was created. William Christie gifted his entire Thiré estate to the Foundation. arts-florissants.com

SOPHIE DANEMAN (staging) studied at the Guildhall School of Music and has established an international reputation in a wide-ranging repertoire. Her passion and affinity for the Baroque repertoire has led to her collaborate with many of the leading specialists in the field, in particular William Christie and Les Arts Florissants. An accomplished recitalist, Daneman has appeared at many of the world’s major recital venues, including Wigmore Hall, Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, Musikverein Vienna, and Carnegie Hall. Operatic engagements include the title role in Rodelinda, Theodora, Acis and Galatea, Ottone, and three volumes of Mendelssohn lieder. For EMI she has recorded Schumann lieder and Noel Coward songs; recordings with Les Arts Florissants include Grands Motets and Les Fêtes d’Hébé, and she recently recorded Masque of Moments (Linn Records). Daneman directs the double bill of La naissance d’Osiris and Daphnis et Églé for Les Arts Florissants, with performances in Caen, Luxembourg, Dijon, London, and Paris.

GILLES POIRIER (choreography restaging), after studying dance at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Lyon, debuted in 1992 with the company Ris et Dançeries under the direction of Francine Lancelot in the production Zarandanzas, and at Théâtre Baroque de France under the direction of Philippe Beaussant. From 1994 to 2004, he was a soloist with the Baroque dance company L’Eventail under the direction of Marie-Geneviève Massé, where he participated in 10 productions that toured internationally. From 2005 to 2013, he appeared as guest dancer in various operas with choreographers Ana Yepes, Françoise Denieau, Natalie Van Parys, Lucy Graham, and Jean Guizerix. In 2014, Poirier became assistant to the choreographer Françoise Denieau at Théâtre du Capitole de Toulouse (France), Opéra du Grand Avignon, Théâtre de Caen, Festival du Périgord Noir, and the Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles. He currently teaches classical ballet at the Conservatoires de la ville de Paris.

ALAIN BLANCHOT (costume design) studied art history and fashion design at Cours Berçot, and first worked in cinema and advertising before designing stage costumes for singers such as Brigitte Fontaine, Sapho, Anna Karina, and Ingrid Caven. In 2004, he began collaborating with stage director Benjamin Lazar, for whom he created costumes for numerous operas: Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme (Monière/Lully), Il Sant’Alessio (Landi) with Les Arts Florissants and William Christie, and Cadmus et Hermione (Lully). He regularly worked on Baroque opera productions, as well as for contemporary and classical operas in France and abroad, with stage directors such as...
as Louise Moaty, David Bobee, Ivan Grinberg, Robert Carsen, and more, while pursuing a career in theater. In 2010, he created costumes for Maison Guerlain. His costumes have been exhibited at the Centre National du Costume de Scène in various shows, notably on Les Arts Florissants, the Arabian Nights, fairy tales, and the history of the Paris Opéra Comique. His future projects include a production of *The War of Roses* (Warren Adler), *Arlequin serviteur de deux maîtres* (Goldoni) at the Avignon Festival, and a new opera production in Germany.

**CHRISTOPHE NAILET** (lighting design) has created lighting for composer Nicolas Frize and choreographer Didier Théron, as well as for the Festival d’Île-de-France, theater company La Mandragore, and Théâtre Jean Vilar in Montpellier. He is a frequent collaborator of stage director Benjamin Lazar: *La Vita Humana*, *Didon et Enée*, *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* (Molière and Lully, 2005), *Il Sant’Alessio* (Landi) with Les Arts Florissants in 2007, *Cadmus et Hermione* (Lully) in 2009, *Les Amours tragiques de Pyrme et Thisbé* (Théophile de Viau) in 2009, and *Cendrillon* (Massenet) in 2011. He has also worked with the ensemble Les Cris de Paris on the productions *LALALA*, *Memento Mori*, *Tout est Vanité*, *Egisto* (Cavalli), *Cachavaz*, and *Ricardo primo*. With stage director Louise Moaty, he contributed to the productions of *Rinaldo* (Handel), *Vénus et Adonis* (John Blow), *L’empereur d’Atlantis*, and *La Lanterne Magique*. He is a regular collaborator with Les Arts Florissants, for whom he designed the lighting of the productions *Rameau, maître à danser* in 2014 and *Orfeo* (Monteverdi) directed by Paul Agnew in 2017.

**ÉLODIE FONNARD** (soprano; Eglé) studied singing at the Conservatoire de Caen with L. Coadou. She made her professional debut with Le Concert d’Astrée (Emmanuelle Haim) and Le Poème Harmonique (Vincent Dumestre). A laureate of William Christie’s Le Jardin des Voix in 2011, she is a regular collaborator with Les Arts Florissants (Flore in *Atys*, Belinda in *Dido & Aeneas*, Galatea in *Acis & Galatea*, *Les Fêtes Vénitiennes*). With them, she performs in venues such as the Philharmonie de Paris, Opéra Comique, Festival d’Aix-en-Provence, Bolshoi in Moscow, Lincoln Center, Walt Disney Hall in Los Angeles, and Forbidden City Hall in Beijing. Recent highlights include the title role in *Orphée & Eurydice* at Opéra de Dijon, Diane in *Actéon* in Los Angeles, La Musica & Euridice in *Orfeo* with Les Timbres, Eurydice in *La descente d’Orphée aux Enfers* with Correspondances (Sébastien Daucé), and recitals with Les Musiciens de Saint-Julien (François Lazarevitch), Les Folies Françaises (Patrick Cohên-Akenine), and La Simphonie du Marais (Hugo Reyne). Fonnard contributed to various recordings. Her latest one, the Brossard & Bouteiller’s *Motets* with Les Arts Florissants and Paul Agnew, was released in 2018.

**MAGALI LÉGER** (soprano; Amour/Pamilie) began her vocal studies with C. Eda-Pierre before entering the Paris Conservatoire, where she also worked with C. Patard. Her career began in 1999 with the role of Philine (Mignon) at Opéra de Nantes. The next year she played Curly’s Wife in the European production of *Of Mice and Men*. Since then she has worked with many leading conductors and ensembles. Highlights in the opera house have included Blonde (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*) under Marc Minkowski; Coraline (*Le toréador*) at the Opéra Comique; Sophie (*Werther*) at Bologna’s Teatro Comunale; Adina (*L’elisir d’amore*); Minka (*Le roi malgré lui*) at Lyon Opéra; Ilia (*Idomeneo* under Jérémie Rhorer at the Beaune Festival; and Nadia (*The Merry Widow*) at Lyon Opéra. More recently, in Vienna, she sang Crobyle (*Thaïs*) and Princesse Laoula (*L’étoile* at Luxembourg’s Grand Théâtre). In concert, she has appeared with leading ensembles, including the English Concert and Kenneth Weiss.
and Les Paladins. Recent operatic highlights have included Leïla (Les pêcheurs de perles) and Thérèse (Les mamelles de Tirésias) at the Feldkirch Festival in Austria; Léonore (L’amant jaloux) at Opéra Royal de Versailles and Opéra Comique; and in Toulouse, Gabrielle (La vie parisienne).

Léger’s discography includes Fauré’s La bonne chanson and discs of Handel and Pergolesi with her Baroque ensemble RosaSolis.

REINOUD VAN MECHELEN (tenor; Daphnis) graduated in vocal studies from the Conservatoire Royal in Brussels (2012, class of D. Grossberger). In 2017 he was awarded the Caecilia Prize as Young Musician of the Year. In 2007 he performed at European Baroque Academy in Ambronay (France). In 2011 he was a member of Jardin des Voix and became a soloist with Les Arts Florissants. He guested with the ensemble at Festival d’Aix-en-Provence, Edinburgh Festival, Château de Versailles, Bolshoi Theatre, Royal Albert Hall and the Barbican Centre (London), Palais des Beaux-Arts (Brussels), the Philharmonie and Opéra Comique (Paris), and BAM (New York). Many renowned Baroque ensembles such as Collegium Vocale, Les Talens Lyriques, Pygmalion, L’Arpeggiata, B’Rock, Ricercar Consort, and Hespèrion XXI have engaged him. In recent seasons, he performed the title role in Rameau’s Pygmalion at Dijon Opera. The 2018—19 season highlights include debuts at Théâtre royal de la Monnaie (Tamino, Die Zauberflöte) and at the Staatsoper Berlin (Hippolyte, Hippolyte et Aricie). Van Mechelen’s CD- and DVD-productions include his first solo CD, Erbame Dich (arias by Bach) released by Alpha Classics in 2016. His second solo CD, Clérambault, cantates françaises (Alpha Classics) was released in 2018 to acclaim.

SEAN CLAYTON (tenor; Un berger) trained at the Birmingham Conservatoire with J. Pike and continued studies at the Royal College of Music in London with N. Mackie. A versatile tenor equally at home on both the opera stage and in concert, Clayton has performed all over the world including at Opéra Garnier, Opéra Comique and Théâtre des Champs-Elysées in Paris, Festival d’Aix-en-Provence, Opera National de Bordeaux, Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, BAM and Lincoln Center in New York, Radialsystem V in Berlin, Royal Albert Hall and the Barbican in London, Auditorio Nacional de Música in Madrid, Palau de la Música in Barcelona, Mozarteum in Salzburg, National Concert Hall in Dublin, and Wexford Festival Opera. In 2009, Clayton was invited to be part of Le Jardin des Voix, the young artists program of Les Arts Florissants directed by William Christie. Since then he has sung several roles and for numerous choral projects, including music of Scarlatti and Charpentier. Since 2011, he has been a part of Les Arts Florissants’ Monteverdi Madrigal project directed by Paul Agnew, performing the eight books all over Europe. Clayton has sung for many other ensembles including Le Poème Harmonique with Vincent Dumestre, Ensemble Correspondances with Sébastien Daucé, and Accentus with Laurence Equilbey. He is also a member of Ensemble Perspectives, a five-member vocal group that explores the
diversity of a cappella repertoire, from Tallis to the Beatles via Ligeti and Ellington. Recent opera engagements include: Shepherd in Orfeo with Les Arts Florissants directed by Paul Agnew; Don Carlos/Tacmas in Les Indes Galantes with Il Giardino d’Amore/Stefan Plewniak (Bydgoszcz Opera Festival, Lutosławski Concert Studio Warsaw); Messenger in Theodora (Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Paris); Démocrite in Les Fêtes Vénitiennes (Opéra Comique, Paris); Berger in La Naissance d’Osiris (Théâtre de Caen).

CYRIL COSTANZO
(bass; Grand prêtre/Le grand prêtre de Jupiter) trained at Toulon Conservatoire Régional with L. Coadou, studying technique with G. Laurens, U. Reinemann, Y. Minton, and M. Duthoit, and studied Baroque music at the Académie de musique ancienne at the Festival du Périgord Noir with M. Laplénie. An experienced ensemble musician, he sings as bass soloist in the vocal ensemble Les Voix Animées under the baton of Luc Coadou with whom he sings all kinds of repertoire, from Renaissance to contemporary. In 2013, Costanzo was selected to participate in the sixth Jardin des Voix, the academy for young singers of Les Arts Florissants, with whom he went on an international tour (New York, Amsterdam, Madrid, Paris) under the direction of William Christie and Paul Agnew. He has since become a regular collaborator with the ensemble, for various concert programs: the Sixth Book and Eighth Book of Monteverdi madrigals (dir. Paul Agnew); Rameau and Mondonville’s Motets solos (dir. William Christie); Bach’s Motets (dir. Paul Agnew), Monteverdi’s Selva Morale e Spirituale (dir. William Christie); and A Christmas Night (dir. Paul Agnew). He has also taken part in the stage productions of Monsieur de Pourceaugnac (Lully/Molière) conducted by Christie between 2016 and 2018, and of Monteverdi’s Orfeo directed by Agnew in 2017—18.

FRANÇOIS LIS (bass; Jupiter) earned a bachelor in musicology from Sorbonne University and studied at Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris (2003), the Mozarteum (Salzburg), and the Merola program (San Francisco Opera). Performances include King Arthur, Poppea, Les Boréades, Bâle, Platée, Colline, and La Bohème. Lis has sung in la Cenerentola (la Monnaie), Les Troyens (l’Opera du Rhin), Zuniga (Theatre du Capitole de Toulouse, Théâtre du Chatelet Paris), Escamillio (Skopje Festival), La Pietra del Paragone (Théâtre du Chatelet), Don Giovanni (Opera Fuoco), and more. He made his debut in the title role in le Nozze di Figaro with William Christie at Opéra de Lyon, which he reprised at Dublin Opera. He sang Hippolyte et Aricie (Capitole de Toulouse), Platée (Opéra national du Rhin), Dardanus (Lille), and Don Giovanni (Théâtre des Champs Elysées). In 2011 he debuted in the role of Marcel in Les Huguenots at la Monnaie. In 2012—13, he participated in Fénelon’s JJR, Citoyen de Genève, debuted at Glyndebourne Festival in Hippolyte et Aricie, and at the Hollywood Bowl as Zuniga in Carmen (Caracas; la Scala). At Opéra de Paris, productions include Alcina, Platée, Aridane auf Naxos, la Traviata, la Forza del Destino, and L’enfant et les Sortilèges. In 2018—19 Lis returns to the Dutch Opera in Oedipe and to Paris for Carmen. He sings Don Basilio (Il Barbiere di Siviglia) in Bordeaux and the roles of Osman and Ali (Les Indes Galantes) at the Grand Théâtre de Génève.