FRENCH BAROQUE
WITH CIRCA

Sydney and Melbourne
July/August 2015

Paul Dyer  Artistic Director/Conductor
Yaron Lifschitz  Artistic Director, Circa
Claire Lefilliâtre (France) soprano
Performers of Circa
Members of the Brandenburg Choir
Mark Nowicki, Richard Sanchez, Philip Murray
Australian Brandenburg Orchestra

PROGRAM
Rameau Ouverture to Nais
Le Camus Laissez durer la nuit
Rameau Suite from Les Indes Galantes

Interval

A pasticcio created by Paul Dyer and Yaron Lifschitz
featuring Marais, Lully, Tessier, Boesset and more

Sydney
City Recital Hall Angel Place
Wednesday 22 July, Friday 24 July, Wednesday 29 July, Friday 31 July,
Saturday 1 August all at 7pm, Matinee Saturday 1 August at 2pm

Melbourne
Melbourne Recital Centre
Saturday 25 July at 7pm,
Sunday 26 July at 5pm

Chairman's 11
Proudly supporting our guest artists

The duration of this concert is approximately 2 hours including interval.
We kindly request that you turn off all electronic devices during the performance.
Macquarie is proud to be the principal partner of the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra for the 2015 concert season.

In French Baroque with Circa, the Brandenburg marries old and new, beautiful French baroque music with contemporary Australian circus. The result is an innovative collaboration between two organisations employing some of the most pre-eminent performers in their fields.

Presenting both classics of the baroque repertoire as well as unfamiliar compositions enables the depth of the baroque period to be shared with modern listeners. It is this ability of the ensemble to perform baroque pieces in as fresh and exciting a way as when they were first performed that is one of the most enticing aspects of a Brandenburg concert.

It is a privilege to continue our support for the Brandenburg and congratulations once again to Artistic Director Paul Dyer for creating a wonderful year of concerts. Our partnership with the Orchestra in bringing these works to life means the immense talents of its musicians and visiting artists can be widely enjoyed and appreciated. We commend this year’s program to you.

Shemara Wikramanayake
Chair, Macquarie Group Foundation
I walked into the huge towered rehearsal room and looked up. Feeling nervous and excited at the same time, the various props littered the room: soft cushioning, ropes, long silks cascading from the ceiling, rigging, mats and various singlets, arm bands and other items of clothing associated with an Acrobatic circus. I had entered the world of CIRCA.

This creative space had an air of danger, a space of physical exertion, sweat and energy …

Our worlds are different.

Walking into our creative Brandenburg space, organised chairs, music stands, instrument cases: our world is sound and tonight these two worlds will collide beautifully to bring something new.

A ravishing soprano from Paris, a contemporary Australian circus and an Australian period instrument orchestra fuse together to explore the beauty of the French Baroque. Exquisite music, breathtakingly beautiful artists – all transforming our stage with elegance and joy.

I have gathered the music from many different sources around the world designing twelve small pieces of music into my Pasticcio. Many of the pieces are rare and a few had to be arranged. Some are only fragments of music and my brilliant musicians work with me to improvise ‘in the French style’ around the small fragments that I’ve found. Each piece reflects various moods of the night through the eyes of our heroine, soprano Claire Lefiliâtre.

One of my great joys has been working with the Artistic Director of CIRCA, Yaron Lifschitz. It’s been a perfect combination of artistic minds exploring the mediums of ballet, theatre, traditional languages of circus and music. Yaron writes:

Paul’s vision for the pasticcio brilliantly mixes the longing of night with the playful side of the French Baroque. I have responded by creating a river of moonlight that divides the stage, reflecting singer and acrobât, musician and vocalist. In the interplay between delight and desire, between pleasure and abandonment we see a world created where bodies seamlessly meld into song, where lives and loves intermingle and where the simple magic of singing speaks clearly to the heart. Centred around our heroine’s dreams, the circus extends from metaphor to alternate reality to obstacle to finally a force of love and transcendence. Sinuous lines, marching beats, intricate arias, intimate songs and soaring rhapsodic textures create an eccentric, eclectic and ravishing surface through which we have weaved our acrobatics and physical languages. We aim to expand and enhance the wonderful flavours of the French Baroque – adding a little drama, some mystery, a touch of sensuality and a few thrills.
I am delighted that Accenture is the Digital Partner of the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra.

Our goal is to ensure that the ABO is as far reaching as possible and to help create the best experience for the ABO’s audiences.

By enhancing the ABO’s digital footprint we will give people of all ages and interests the opportunity to experience the creativity and inspired leadership that Artistic Director Paul Dyer continues to bring to Baroque.

The ABO and Accenture will work in partnership over the next three years to build the ABO’s digital presence. We will use our digital technology capabilities to ensure fans can enjoy the Brandenburg Orchestra’s music through multiple channels, as well as in person.

As a music enthusiast, I have enormous respect for the level of commitment and preparation of every musician performing today and I wish them every success for the concert series.

Jack Percy, Chairman and Managing Director, Accenture Australia and New Zealand
AUSTRALIAN BRANDENBURG ORCHESTRA
WITH CIRCA

Paul Dyer  Artistic Director/Conductor
Yaron Lifschitz  Artistic Director, Circa
Claire Lefilliâtre (France) soprano

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Australian Brandenburg Orchestra

Costume designs for the pasticcio by Libby McDonnell, Circa Creative Associate

The musicians on period instruments

**Baroque Violin 1**
Shaun Lee-Chen, Perth  
(Guest Concertmaster)¹
Matt Bruce, Sydney  
(Resident Concertmaster)*
Catherine Shugg, Melbourne
Skye McIntosh, Sydney
Matt Greco, Sydney
Rafael Font, The Hague

**Baroque Violin 2**
Ben Dollman, Adelaide**
Simone Slattery, Adelaide
Stephanie Eldridge, Bendigo
Shane Lestideau, Melbourne
Natasha Harvey, Melbourne

**Baroque Viola**
Monique O'Dea, Sydney**²
Marianne Yeomans, Sydney
Shelley Sörensen, Sydney
Christian Read, Melbourne

**Baroque Cello**
Jamie Hey, Melbourne**²
Anthea Cottée, Sydney
Rosemary Quinn, Sydney

**Baroque Double Bass**
Andrew Sinclair, Perth**³
Libby Browning, Perth

**Baroque Flute/Piccolo/Recorder**
Melissa Farrow, Sydney**²
Mikaela Oberg, Sydney

**Baroque Oboe**
Kirsten Barry, Melbourne**²
Owen Watkins, Bega

**Baroque Bassoon**
Peter Moore, Perth**²
Ben Hoadley, Auckland

**Baroque Trumpet**
Leanne Sullivan, Sydney*
Matt Manchester, Sydney

**Baroque Timpani/Percussion**
Brian Nixon, Sydney*

**Theorbo/Baroque Guitar/Classical Guitar**
Tommie Andersson, Sydney**²

**Harpsichord**
Paul Dyer, Sydney**²

**Vocalists**
Mark Nowicki, Sydney
Richard Sanchez, Sydney
Philip Murray, Sydney

**Circa**
Robbie Curtis, Brisbane
Jarred Dewey, Brisbane
Freyja Edney, Brisbane
Alex Mizzen, Brisbane
Paul O'Keeffe, Brisbane
Katheryn O'Keeffe, Brisbane
Billie Wilson-Coffey, Brisbane

* Denotes Brandenburg Core Musician
* Denotes Brandenburg Core Musician
+ Section Leader
1 Shaun Lee-Chen appears courtesy of West Australian Symphony Orchestra, Perth
2 Monique O’Dea appears courtesy of Presbyterian Ladies’ College, Sydney (staff)
3 Andrew Sinclair appears courtesy of West Australian Symphony Orchestra

Harpischord preparation by Geoffrey Pollard in Sydney
and Alistair McAllister in Melbourne
In January 2013 Paul Dyer AO was awarded the Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for his ‘distinguished service to the performing arts, particularly orchestral music as a director, conductor and musician, through the promotion of educational programs and support for emerging artists’ in recognition of his achievements as Co-founder and Artistic Director of the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra and Brandenburg Choir.

Paul Dyer is one of Australia’s leading specialists in period performance styles. He founded the ABO in 1990 and has been the orchestra’s Artistic Director since that time. Paul has devoted his performing life to the harpsichord, fortepiano and chamber organ as well as conducting the Brandenburg Orchestra and Choir.

Paul completed postgraduate studies in solo performance with Bob van Asperen at the Royal Conservatorium in The Hague, performed with many major European orchestras and undertook ensemble direction and orchestral studies with Sigiswald Kuijken and Frans Brüggen.

Paul appears as a soloist, continuo player and conductor with many major ensembles including the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, West Australian Symphony Orchestra, Queensland Orchestra, Australia Ensemble, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Opera Australia, Australian Youth Orchestra, Victorian State Opera, Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, the Pacific Baroque Orchestra, Vancouver, and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, London.

Paul has performed with many prominent international soloists including Andreas Scholl, Cyndia Sieden, Elizabeth Wallfisch, Andreas Staier, Marc Destrubé, Christoph Prégardien, Hidemi Suzuki, Manfredo Kraemer, Andrew Manze, Yvonne Kenny, Emma Kirkby, Philippe Jaroussky and many others. In 1998 he made his debut in Tokyo with countertenor Derek Lee Ragin, leading an ensemble of Brandenburg soloists, and in August 2001 Paul toured the orchestra to Europe with guest soloist Andreas Scholl. As a recitalist, he has toured Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and the United States.

Paul is an inspiring teacher and has been a staff member at various Conservatories throughout the world. In 1995 he received a Churchill Fellowship and he has won numerous international and national awards for his CD recordings with the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra and Choir, including the 1998, 2001, 2005, 2009 and 2010 ARIA Awards for Best Classical album. Paul is Patron of St Gabriel’s School for Hearing Impaired Children. In 2003 Paul was awarded the Australian Centenary Medal for his services to Australian society and the advancement of music. In 2010 Paul was awarded the Sydney University Alumni Medal for Professional Achievement.
Artistic Director Yaron Lifschitz is a graduate of the University of New South Wales, University of Queensland and National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA) where he was the youngest director ever accepted into its prestigious graduate director’s course. Since graduating, Yaron has directed over 60 productions including large-scale events, opera, theatre, physical theatre and circus. His work has been seen in 33 countries, across six continents by over 500,000 people.

He was founding Artistic Director of the Australian Museum’s Theatre Unit, Head Tutor in Directing at Australian Theatre for Young People and has been a regular guest tutor in directing at NIDA since 1995. He is currently Artistic Director and CEO of Circa.

With Circa, Yaron has created works such as by the light of stars that are no longer..., CIRCA, Wunderkammer, How Like an Angel, “S” Beyond Opus and most recently Carnival of the Animals which world premiered in 2014. His recent works have been reviewed as being “stunning”, “exquisite” and “the standard to which all other circuses can aspire”.

Yaron lives in Brisbane with his son, Oscar. His passion is creating works of philosophical and poetic depth from the traditional languages of circus.
From Brisbane, Australia comes a bold new vision of contemporary circus. A blending of bodies, light, sound and skills. A place where acrobatics and movement meld into a seamless whole. A celebration of the expressive possibilities of the human body at its extremes. Since 2006 Circa has toured to 33 countries across six continents. Circa’s work has been rapturously received by audiences, presenters and critics around the world. Critics have raved about Circa calling the work “stunning...exquisite... heart-stopping” and “electrically charged”.

Circa’s current touring shows span diverse contexts from works for families in traditional arts centres to European contemporary arts festivals. Its works are highly innovative genre-bending pieces that stretch the practice and perceptions of circus. Circa features a full time ensemble, a concentrated administrative team and a dedicated circus studio. In 2014 Circa performed over 366 performances to over 130,000 audience members locally, nationally and internationally.

Circa also runs a Training Centre with an impressive workshop program in Brisbane at their professional studio, in schools and with partners throughout Queensland and beyond. On top of their term-based and one-off training activities, Circa has an impressive track record of producing quality workshops for children, young people and adults in a range of community contexts. In 2014 Circa’s Training Centre programs reached an audience of over 11,000 people.
Passionate about singing and baroque expression - particularly the interpretation of French and Italian music of the seventeenth century - Claire Lefilliâtre received her vocal training from Alain Buet and Raphaël Sikorski, studied baroque gesture and declamation with Eugène Green and Benjamin Lazar, and Alexander technique as applied to stage movement with Agnès de Brunhoff.

Claire’s expertise in baroque repertoire has made her a favourite performer with several ensembles and led her to sing on many international stages including Opéra Comique, Opéra de Rouen, Opéra d’Avignon, Utrecht Oude Muziek Festival, Philharmonic Orchestra of Saint Petersburg, Palau de la Música (Barcelona), Academia Santa Cecilia (Rome), Művészeti Palotája (Budapest), Bozar Festival (Brussels), and the Concertgebouw (Amsterdam) as well as in New York, Buenos Aires, Tokyo and Shanghai.

Since 1999, Claire has been one of the principal performers in the group Le Poème Harmonique, directed by Vincent Dumestre. Her involvement in their highly-acclaimed productions has been consistently praised by the press. Claire’s roles with them have included the performance of sung intermezzi in Molière’s Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme in opera houses throughout Europe (between 2004 and 2011); the title role in Marco Marazzoli’s opera La Vita Humana (2006) in several venues; Hermione in Lully’s Cadmus et Hermione (2008–10) likewise; and Cavalli’s L’Egisto at both the Opéra Comique de Paris and Opéra de Rouen (2012–13).

Also well-versed in contemporary music, Claire has regularly collaborated with the stage director Benjamin Lazar, including his creation for the internet Au web ce soir, and in Ma Mère Musicienne, staged at the Scène Nationale de Quimper and at the Festival Mettre en Scène au Théâtre Nationale de Bretagne (Rennes 2012).

In 2013 Claire performed the roles of Messagiera and La Musica in Monteverdi’s Orfeo with Akadêmia led by Françoise Lasserre in New Delhi and the Cité de la Musique (Paris). She performed in chamber music, continuing her collaboration with the ensembles Le Poème Harmonique (Miami, Houston, Lyon, Madrid, Luxembourg); and La Fenice (Brussels, Paris, London). She was invited by Russian early music ensemble Pratum integrum to perform in a Rameau recital at Moscow’s Bolshoi Theatre.

In 2014, Claire sang at Karlsruhe Oper in the role of Pulcheria alongside the Argentine countertenor Franco Fagioli in Handel’s Riccardo Primo. She also performed with the ensemble Oxlays in Canteloube’s Chants d’Auvergne, Joseph Jonguen’s Melodies Françaises and in Mahler’s Fourth Symphony.

In 2015 Claire is performing across Europe. This autumn she will be performing in Monteverdi’s Orfeo in Paris with La Fenice.
The Triumph of Pleasure

On a beautiful summer afternoon in August 1661 Louis XIV, twenty-two years old and not long crowned King of France, set out from the royal palace of Fontainebleau to attend a party in his honour at Vaux-le-Vicomte, the newly completed chateau of the manager of the nation’s finances, Nicolas Fouquet. No-one had ever seen anything to rival Vaux-le-Vicomte. The cost had been astronomical, and every detail was meticulously planned to display the wealth and status of its owner, who had three villages razed to build it. Eighteen thousand men laboured for eight years to build the chateau and its brilliantly designed gardens which featured numerous tricks of perspective (making a square pond appear to be a rectangle, for instance), grottoes, cascades, a “water alley” with two hundred water jets, and a fountain which spouted a column of water five metres high and as thick as a man’s waist.

After a tour of the gardens (to which the King reportedly said, “I’m surprised!”), an elaborate dinner was served on gold plates to Louis and the other six thousand guests, while they listened to a string orchestra conducted by the King’s own music director Jean-Baptiste Lully. After dinner, an artificial rock broke open and turned into a shell from which a nymph stepped. To the guests’ surprise sculptures began to walk and trees to speak, and a comédie-ballet by Molière with music by Lully commenced. Afterwards, Louis’ emblem produced by a thousand fireworks glittered in the night sky, and a life-sized mechanical whale made of papier maché floated up Fouquet’s very own Grand Canal, shooting rockets across the water out of its sides. As Louis returned to the chateau hundreds of rockets shot up from its roof to light his path with a flaming arch.

Six weeks later Fouquet was arrested for treason. He was imprisoned for life, his wife exiled, and everything that could be taken from the chateau and the garden was – and removed to the royal palace of Versailles. It was now the property of the King: no-one was allowed to be richer or to throw a better party than Louis.

Louis XIV and the Power of Ritual

“Nothing is so sweet as to live at the court of Louis XIV, the most perfect of kings.”

from the libretto of Ballet des Muses
by Jean-Baptiste Lully, 1666

Louis XIV became king after years of internal dissension in France, and he was determined to establish control over the nobility, many of whom had rebelled against the monarchy in the 1640s. He set up a centralised system of government centred on himself as the source of power, and the nobility’s private armies which had provided their regional power bases were prohibited. The nobility became dependent
on Louis to receive the privileges and positions that were necessary to maintain their lifestyle and status, and so they were forced to spend extended periods of time constantly waiting on him at his court at Versailles. He devised elaborate rituals around his daily activities, in which the nobility had to take part. The rituals gave what he called a “very advantageous impression of magnificence, power, richness and grandeur”, and they also allowed him to keep a very close eye on who was at court – and more importantly who wasn’t. The nobility were entertained and distracted in extravagant luxury, and now they spent all their time partying instead of fomenting dissent, although just in case, Louis’s censors read their mail for any signs of insurrection.

Louis wrote:

“This Society of Pleasures, which gives persons at court a frank familiarity with us, touches them and charms them more than one realises … In this way we captivate their minds and their hearts, sometimes more strongly perhaps than by recompenses and gifts …”

Daily life revolved around the King’s schedule, which was timed down to the last minute and strictly observed. Every hour of the day had its own ritual, conducted, of course, in public. The day started with the “Levée” (“The Getting-up”), in which the King was woken, got up, bathed, dressed and had breakfast watched by one hundred of his closest male attendants, all members of the nobility. The day ended with a similar ritual, “Le coucher” (“Going to Bed”).

“At night the King would glance around the assembly to give someone the honour of carrying his candlestick. Gentlemen of the bedchamber on one side and gentlemen of the wardrobe on the other then removed his shoes, stockings and breeches. The royal breeches were immediately wrapped in red taffeta, while the prince of highest rank produced the royal night shirt. The first gentleman of the bedchamber assisted the king into the right sleeve, the first gentleman of the wardrobe into the left. The ushers then indicated for most of the crowd to withdraw, the king wiped his face with a napkin which a prince of the blood presented to him between two silver-gilt dishes, and retired to his bed, which was protected by a gilded balustrade and guarded by an officer”.

*Larousse Dictionary of Modern History*
The French Nobility

France was feudal until the French Revolution in 1789, and vassals still had to swear allegiance to their overlords. The nobility were, literally, a class apart from the great mass of the French population. They were the descendants of medieval warriors who served the king, so they paid no taxes, and in fact required taxes to be paid to them by their serfs. A different legal system applied to them, and only they could hold many official posts. Only members of the nobility were allowed to hunt, and to carry a sword. Out of a population of over twenty million people at the end of the eighteenth century 140,000 to 350,000 were nobles and could claim these privileges, compared to about 250 in Britain in the same period.

Over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the nobility’s powers were greatly reduced. Louis XIV was instrumental in creating a new class of nobles: senior positions in the civil service automatically conferred nobility, and these positions could be bought from the king. By 1789 over half the nobility consisted of people (or their descendants) who had acquired nobility by straightforwardly buying it.

Life at Versailles

It took over twenty years, thirty six thousand workers and an enormous amount of money to turn what had been the small hunting lodge of Versailles into a palace which could accommodate thousands of people. As well as apartments for the extended royal family and quarters for the enormous number of servants needed to run the palace and gardens, it had to provide room for thousands of courtiers and their retinues, and the civil servants who worked in the government offices because it was the centre of French government. The higher your status, that is, your birth, the closer your rooms were to the centre of the palace, the “Grand Apartment of the King”. For most of its residents though, Versailles would have been like a sprawling, constantly full hotel. There were three hundred and fifty apartments for the nobility, each numbered and with a key which had to be handed back when you left. The apartments in the palace were too small to live in for weeks at a time, especially for families, and many nobles were forced to buy houses in the town of Versailles.
Louis XIV’s Armchair

Strict rules of etiquette underpinned the ritual, and nowhere is this better demonstrated than in the seating arrangements at court. The King and Queen had a fauteuil, an armchair, but no-one else could sit on an armchair in their presence. Close relatives of the King sat on a chair with a back but no arms, while a duchess could sit on a padded stool. Everyone else stood. The King’s brother asked to have an armchair also, but the King refused:

It is in your interest, brother, that the majesty of the throne should not be weakened or altered; and if, from Duc d’Orleans, you one day become King of France, I know you well enough to believe that you would never be lax in this matter. Before God, you and I are exactly the same as other creatures that live and breathe; before men we are seemingly extraordinary beings, greater, more refined, more perfect. The day that people, abandoning this respect and veneration which is the support and mainstay of monarchies, -- the day that they regard us as their equals, -- all the prestige of our position will be destroyed. Bereft of beings superior to the mass, who act as their leaders and supports, the laws will only be as so many black lines on white paper, and your armless chair and my fauteuil will be two pieces of furniture of the selfsame importance.

Music, Politics and Spectacle

Deprived of any real political muscle, the nobility needed to occupy their time somehow, and Louis provided them with the means to do this in as frivolous a way as possible. The pursuit of pleasure became not just a way of life for the nobility, but part of their identity. At Versailles they hunted, boated on artificial lakes, feasted, and indulged in the elaborate spectacles provided for their entertainment. Performance based on the use of the body was an essential part of entertainment for the French, from the acrobats and tight-rope walkers at street fairs in Paris to the highly stylised dancers at the Opéra, and an integral part of every form of theatre was music.

Ballet became the main entertainment and recreation for the nobility to while away their times at Versailles, and they not only watched it but took part alongside the large number of musicians and dancers Louis permanently employed.

Louis was himself a very talented dancer. It had been one of his main occupations as a teenager and young man, and he performed eighty roles in forty major ballets. Dance and spectacle formed part of Louis’s political agenda: they not only provided entertainment for his courtiers, but he took part in them, playing the version of himself that he wanted to project. He believed in the divine right of kings, that his authority as king came from God, and so he took the roles of gods, heroes, and mighty conquerors like...
AUSTRALIAN BRANDENBURG ORCHESTRA

Shaun Lee-Chen
Guest Concertmaster

Matt Bruce
Resident Concertmaster

Catherine Shugg
Baroque Violin

Skye McIntosh
Baroque Violin

Matt Greco
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Rafael Font
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Shane Lestideau
Baroque Violin

Natalia Harvey
Baroque Violin

Monique O’Dea
Baroque Viola

Marianne Yeomans
Baroque Viola

Shelley Sörensen
Baroque Viola

Christian Read
Baroque Viola

Jamie Hey
Baroque Cello

Anthea Cotte
Baroque Cello

Rosemary Quinn
Baroque Cello

Andrew Sinclair
Baroque Double Bass

Libby Browning
Baroque Double Bass
Costume designs for the pasticcio by Libby McDonnell, Circa Creative Associate
Alexander the Great. He became known as “the Sun King” after he danced the part of Apollo, dressed completely in gold and rising up through the stage like the morning sun. By contrast, the members of the nobility who danced alongside Louis played versions of themselves as idle and fashionable, enjoying their noble privileges, even though some of those who danced had been noted soldiers.

Music enhanced the King’s prestige and glory, and accompanied his every activity – getting up, going to bed, returning from the hunt, having dinner – and it was a vital part of the pleasures and luxury of the court. Concerts were held in the evening three days a week, and music theatre pieces were composed especially to entertain the court. One, by the King’s dancing partner and music director, Jean-Baptiste Lully, lasted six days.

Jean Baptiste Lully (1632-1687)

As the King was absolute ruler of France, so Lully was absolute ruler of French music at the height of its glory under the Sun-King. He was in fact Italian, the son of a miller from Florence. He was chosen to be an Italian tutor for a cousin of Louis XIV and at the age of fourteen he left for Paris, where he learnt violin, harpsichord, and composition, but it was his dancing ability that stood out and earned him a place in Louis XIV’s household. As his dancing companion Lully was able to form a privileged relationship with the King and through him he obtained the exclusive right to perform opera in Paris. He composed, produced and conducted twenty operas and ballets, many in collaboration with Molière, and transformed French opera.

Lully was known as a fierce disciplinarian. He insisted that his orchestras rehearse (!), would not allow pregnant singers to perform at the Opéra, and, “more than once in his life, he broke a violin over someone’s back when they did not behave as he wished”.

Lully’s relationship with Louis soured after it became known that he had seduced one of Louis’s pages. Unfortunately for Lully it coincided with a period in which Louis, urged by his mistress Mme Montespan, paid more attention to morality than at other periods in his life. He was so displeased that he threatened that Lully would be burnt at the stake if there was a repeat offence, and he stopped attending his performances. When asked by Lully for more money for the Opera, Louis refused, saying that it would be better spent on the poor.

Shortly afterwards Lully died: he hit his toe with the point of the staff he used for beating time and developed gangrene. The only treatment was amputation, which he refused. Within France his dominance as a composer had been so complete that there was no natural successor.
Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764)

Rameau was France’s leading eighteenth century composer, as well as a music theorist renowned throughout Europe. Surprisingly, he did not compose his first opera until the age of fifty, and even though he was strongly influenced by Lully, audiences were shocked by his dramatic, forceful style and rich musical invention. Two fiercely opposed camps rapidly formed among Parisian opera-goers, those in favour of Lully (who by then had been dead for over forty years) versus the Rameau-ists.

A Lully-iste went to Rameau’s Les Indes galantes in 1735:

“Yesterday I went to the Opéra. … the music is a perpetual witchery in which nature has no part. Nothing could be so craggy or so rough: it’s like a path upon which you are constantly jolted … It’s too much! I am racked, flayed, dislocated by the devilish sonata of Les Indes galantes, and my head is turned completely upside down.”

Les Indes galantes (“the amorous Indies”) was an opera-ballet, a particularly French genre in which singing and dancing were equally important. The Indies meant any foreign land; here, there were four entrées (acts) set variously in Persia, a desert in the mountains of Peru, on a Turkish island in the Indian Ocean (!), and in a village in a forest in North America. Part of the spectacle of ballet was its setting in exotic locations, although neither composer nor audience had any real knowledge of the countries depicted. However in 1725 the Company of the Indies had brought six native American chiefs to France, and Rameau and doubtless some of his audience saw them dance at a theatre in Paris. Rameau based a harpsichord piece, called Les sauvages (the savages) on their war dance. The ballet entrée set in North America, also called Les sauvages, featured the native American ceremony of the Great Pipe of Peace.

Casanova at the Paris Opéra in 1750

… we found ourselves in good company, even though we had to stand; this form of entertainment is France’s favourite pleasure. … What I particularly liked at the French Opéra was the quickness with which scenes were changed, all together, at the blast of a whistle; this is something unheard of in Italy. I found the way the orchestra begins all together with the coup d’archet equally delightful, but the director waving his baton (sceptre) from right to left with such forceful movements that it was as if he had to make every instrument work by the vigour of his gestures alone was rather distasteful. I admired the silence of the audience also: it is such a novelty for an Italian.
FRENCH BAROQUE

Pasticcio with Circa created by Paul Dyer & Yaron Lifschitz

Tessier  Quand le flambeau du monde
Chance *  La lumière de nuit
Anonymous  La Blanche Biche (The White Doe)
Marais/Lully  Prelude from Alcyone, Entree from Les jeux pithiens
Marais  Ent’Acte from Ariane et Bacchus
Boesset  A la fin cette bergère
Archilei/Cavalieri  Dalle più alte sfere from La Pellegrina
Lully  Bourée du Mariage Forcé
Dyer  Les Fantômes
Viseur  Flambée Montalbaise
Rameau  Hymne à la nuit from Hippolyte et Aricie
Rameau  Les Sauvages/Forêts paisibles

* La lumière de nuit has been commissioned by the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, this is the premiere performance of this piece.
Pasticcio

Pasticcio is the Italian word for something made up of many layers. In music, a pasticcio is a work made up of pieces by a number of different composers. Pasticcio operas were commonly performed in the eighteenth century when opera seria (serious opera) was at its height. The public taste for new music put a strain on the resources of composers and the theatre impresarios who had to pay them, and it was simply practical to use what was already in existence. Pasticcio operas became a genre in themselves, and famous composers such as Handel and Vivaldi put together significant numbers of pasticcios made up of their own or other composers’ work. They did not have to consider copyright because it did not come into being until the very end of the eighteenth century.

Laissez durer la nuit
Let the night not end! It helps me hide my pain, and I still have not shed enough tears. Since my shepherd left, I can’t bear the light of day. Let me cry as much as I want, to honour my ghosts.

Quand le flambeau du monde
Sun, who rises to light the day, and shines on every living being, have you ever seen anyone so overcome with cares? I will ask the stars to bring back the night, to join me in my sadness.

La blanche biche – The White Doe
The narrator is a young woman, who turns into a white doe at night. She is hunted through the woods by nobles, led by her brother, and although she begs him to stop she is caught and killed. When the doe is skinned it appears to have blond hair and the breasts of a woman. In the end it is cooked and eaten by the nobles: “My blood is spilt all through the kitchen; my poor bones are burning on the hot coals”.

A la fin cette Bergere
Finally this shepherdess feels the pains that I have suffered, and her faith, previously weak, regains its strength. We live under the same law, because I hold her to me. I no longer have that fear that I had in the past, because she herself suffers in the same way that she made me suffer. My fire produced her flame, which made me equal to the gods. Love is in her soul, that was once only in her eyes. My love, rewarded, will no longer be unhappy. We have only one thought, one wish, one desire.

Dalle più alte sfere
From the furthest spheres of the heavenly sirens, I, Harmony, have come to you mortals, beating my wings against the flame of the sun. Never did the sun see so noble a couple as you, Minerva and strong Alcide.

Hymne a la Nuit
Oh night! Bring to the earth your calm enchantment. The shadows that bring you are so sweet, as is your voice which sings of hope; your power to change everything into a happy dream is so great.

Oh night! Let your spell of enchantment remain longer. Is there anything so beautiful as a dream? Is there a truth sweeter than hope?

Forêts paisibles
Peaceful forests, our hearts will never be troubled here by vain desires. Heaven has made them havens for innocence and peace. Can one be happy, wishing for something else?
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