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# ORPHEUS & EURYDICE

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**LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO and LA OPERA  
PRESENT A NEW COPRODUCTION OF *ORPHÉE & EURYDICE*,  
FEATURING FIRST-TIME COLLABORATION  
WITH THE JOFFREY BALLET**

*Legendary choreographer John Neumeier directs, choreographs, and  
designs this new production of Gluck's classic masterpiece*

**Lyric's Civic Opera House, Chicago, September 23 - October 15, 2017**

**Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Los Angeles, March 10 - 25, 2018**

**Staatsoper Hamburg, February 3 - 19, 2019**

January 17, 2017 - **Lyric Opera of Chicago** and **LA Opera** announce a new coproduction of *Orphée & Eurydice*, composer Christoph Willibald Gluck's most popular work, to be directed by internationally acclaimed Director and Chief Choreographer of The Hamburg Ballet, **John Neumeier**. **The Joffrey Ballet** will be featured in performances at both Lyric Opera and LA Opera. This will be the first collaboration between Lyric Opera of Chicago, LA Opera and The Joffrey Ballet.

*Orphée & Eurydice* will be presented in the U.S. twice: first in Chicago at Lyric's Civic Opera House, opening the 2017-18 season, September 23 - October 15, 2017 and then in Los Angeles at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, March 10 - 25, 2018. Staatsoper Hamburg is a coproducer of *Orphée* and will present performances at Hamburgische Staatsoper during the 2018-2019 season with The Hamburg Ballet, February 3 - 19, 2019.

John Neumeier, a Milwaukee native and one of the most influential choreographers of our time, has worked with leading dance and opera companies around the world

including Paris Opera, American Ballet Theatre, Bolshoi Ballet and London's Royal Ballet. Most recently, Neumeier worked with The Joffrey Ballet upon whom he set the North American premiere of the full-length story ballet *Sylvia* in October 2015.

*Orphée & Eurydice* is as moving a drama as exists in opera. The reforms and changes in operatic composition represented by this work, in its distillation to what Gluck described as "beautiful simplicity," affected the entire course of this art form's development. Very little operatic repertoire positions the dance element as the equivalent to song, which are the hallmarks of the 1774 Paris version of this work. This revision found Gluck adding much important ballet music (including the riveting "Dance of the Furies" and the exquisite "Dance of the Blessed Spirits"), creating a vital dance element that immeasurably enhances the drama. Gluck also reworked *Orphée's* music – written for alto castrato – for the tenor voice. The composer's additions to the role include an aria in which Orphée declares himself ready to face the perils of the Underworld. Moments like this imbue the role with a degree of virtuosity that is formidably challenging for the singer, but also hugely exciting for audiences. The tenor voice gives Orphée the quality of heroism which is also vitally important in this work.

The presentation of the 1774 Paris version of this work is a first for both Lyric Opera and LA Opera.

Lyric's production of *Orphée & Eurydice* will feature Russian tenor Dmitry Korchak\* as Orphée, the luminous Canadian soprano Andriana Chuchman\*\* as Eurydice, and American soprano Lauren Snouffer as Amour. *Orphée* will be led by British conductor Harry Bicket, noted for his interpretation of baroque and classical repertoire. In both cities, the sets, costumes and lighting are designed by the director, John Neumeier. (\*Lyric debut, \*\*Ryan Opera Center alumna).

The LA Opera performances will be conducted by James Conlon, the company's music director, and the cast will be led by Russian tenor Maxim Mironov and American soprano Lisette Oropesa in the title roles. Mr. Mironov made his Los Angeles debut in 2011 as Don Narciso in Rossini's *Il Turco in Italia*. Ms. Oropesa made her first appearance with LA Opera in 2014, when she performed the role of Rosalba in Daniel Catán's *Florencia en el Amazonas*. The role of Amour will be performed by soprano Liv Redpath, a member of LA Opera's Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program.

Lyric Opera of Chicago will present *Orphée & Eurydice* in seven performances with The Joffrey Ballet September 23 - October 15, 2017 at Lyric's Civic Opera House (20 N. Wacker Drive, Chicago). Tickets will be available as part of a subscription package for Lyric's 2017/18 season, available on Tuesday, February 7 at [lyricopera.org](http://lyricopera.org) or at [312-827-5600](tel:312-827-5600) as Lyric announces its entire season. Individual tickets will go on sale in July, 2017.

LA Opera will present *Orphée & Eurydice* in six performances March 10 - 25, 2018 at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion (135 North Grand Avenue, Los Angeles). Tickets start at \$15 for adults and \$7.50 for children and will be available, as part of a subscription package, on Monday, January 23, 2017 at [LAopera.org](http://LAopera.org) or at [213-972-8001](tel:213-972-8001). LA Opera and Gloria Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center will each showcase The Joffrey Ballet at The Music Center during the month of March 2018. The entire 2017-18 LA Opera season will be announced in Monday, January 23, 2017. Individual tickets will go on sale in June, 2017.

Performances at both locations will be in French with projected English translations.

"I cannot imagine a more exciting way to open Lyric's 2017/18 season than with this new production of *Orphée & Eurydice*," says **Anthony Freud**, Lyric's General Director, President & CEO. "Lyric's first collaboration with The Joffrey Ballet represents a momentous partnership between two of Chicago's greatest cultural institutions. I have admired the work of John Neumeier for more than thirty years, and I am thrilled that he will be returning to Lyric 57 years after he made his debut as a dancer with the company (in the world premiere of Giannini's *The Harvest*). This is the first time in Lyric's history that a new production will be directed, choreographed, and fully designed (sets, costumes and lighting) by a single artist. John Neumeier is a true master in all these disciplines, as well as being one of the most iconic legends in the world of ballet and dance. Conducted by Harry Bicket, and with our wonderful cast, this production of *Orphée* will be unforgettable."

"It has been a longstanding dream of the artistic leadership of LA Opera to recruit John Neumeier to our ranks of supremely gifted collaborators," adds **Plácido Domingo**, the Eli and Edythe Broad General Director of LA Opera. "We have long admired the power of his visual storytelling, the refinement of his aesthetic taste and his supreme emotional sensitivity in his acclaimed work with The Hamburg Ballet. I will never forget my experience working under the direction of John for a truly memorable production of *Otello*, conducted by Carlos Kleiber. I know that he will bring a uniquely insightful, humane and poignant emotional interpretation to one of the operatic repertoire's most enduring tragedies. LA Opera is honored to collaborate with Lyric Opera in bringing Gluck's masterpiece to life on our stage; *Orphée* represents only the second time that these two important forces in American opera have come together to create a co-production. We are also especially thrilled to partner for the first time with The Joffrey Ballet, whose participation will make *Orphée* a truly magical experience for our audiences."

"This is an incredibly rare and special time for audiences worldwide to explore the unique choreographic language of John Neumeier," adds **Ashley Wheater**, Artistic Director of The Joffrey Ballet. "John understands dance as a living art form, frequently updating his work in a way that resonates with contemporary audiences. The story of *Orphée* is hundreds of years old, yet this production captures the humanity shared by all generations. After working with John to present the North

American premiere of his powerful story ballet *Sylvia*, I've seen firsthand his ability to make classic stories mean something to us today. We're thrilled to collaborate with John once again and look forward to a new partnership with the Lyric Opera this fall."

"As a choreographer, I've always been inspired by emotion as the primary source of movement in my choreography," said **John Neumeier**. "What originally drew me to *Orphée* was the fascinating discrepancy between an imaginary, mythical story and the very human, the very realistic emotional structure. It is love that ultimately proves to be Orpheus' strength as well as his fatal weakness. Melding chorus, moving scenery, realistic and fantastic costume and music with a strong focus on dance, I hope to emphasize the mythical element of the story while bringing it closer to audiences by giving the production a contemporary setting. I look very much forward to realizing this complex, many-faceted production combining the artists of these important cultural institutions: the Lyric Opera, LA Opera and The Joffrey Ballet."

#### **About Lyric Opera of Chicago**

Lyric Opera of Chicago's mission is to express and promote the life-changing, transformational, revelatory power of great opera. Lyric exists to provide a broad, deep, and relevant cultural service to Chicago and the nation, and to advance the development of the art form.

Founded in 1954, Lyric is dedicated to producing and performing consistently thrilling, entertaining, and thought-provoking opera with a balanced repertoire of core classics, lesser-known masterpieces, and new works; to creating an innovative and wide-ranging program of community engagement and educational activities; and to developing exceptional emerging operatic talent.

Under the leadership of general director, president & CEO Anthony Freud, music director Sir Andrew Davis, and creative consultant Renée Fleming, Lyric strives to become The Great North American Opera Company for the 21st century: a globally significant arts organization embodying the core values of excellence, relevance, and fiscal responsibility.

To learn more about Lyric's new season, go to [lyricopera.org](http://lyricopera.org). You can also join the conversation with @LyricOpera on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. #Lyric1617 #LongLivePassion

#### **About LA Opera**

In just three decades of existence, LA Opera has become one of America's most exciting and ambitious opera companies. Under the leadership of Plácido Domingo (Eli and Edythe Broad General Director), James Conlon (Richard Seaver Music Director) and Christopher Koelsch (President and CEO), the company is dedicated to staging imaginative new productions, world premiere commissions and inventive stagings of the classics that preserve the foundational works while making them feel fresh and compelling.

In addition to its mainstage performances at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, the company explores unusual repertoire each season through the LA Opera Off Grand initiative, performed in a variety of venues throughout Los Angeles. The company also presents a robust variety of educational programming and innovative community engagement offerings, experienced by more than 135,000 people each season. To learn more, please visit [LAOpera.org](http://LAOpera.org). You can join the conversation with @LAOpera on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. #LAO32

### **About The Joffrey Ballet**

Classically trained to the highest standards, The Joffrey Ballet expresses a unique, inclusive perspective on dance, proudly reflecting the diversity of America with its company, audiences, and repertoire which includes major story ballets, reconstructions of masterpieces and contemporary works.

The Company's commitment to accessibility is met through an extensive touring schedule, an innovative and highly effective education program including the much-lauded Academy of Dance, Official School of The Joffrey Ballet, Community Engagement programs, and collaborations with myriad other visual and performing arts organizations.

Founded by visionary teacher Robert Joffrey in 1956, guided by celebrated choreographer Gerald Arpino from 1988 until 2007, The Joffrey Ballet continues to thrive under internationally renowned Artistic Director Ashley Wheater and Executive Director Greg Cameron. To learn more, visit [Joffrey.org](http://Joffrey.org).

### **About John Neumeier**

John Neumeier, a Milwaukee native, trained in his hometown and created his first choreography at Marquette University. After completing his studies in Copenhagen and London, he joined Stuttgart Ballet in 1961. He enjoyed a hugely successful four-year tenure as director of Ballet Frankfurt before his appointment at the Hamburg Ballet, where he has been director and chief choreographer as the Hamburg Ballet since 1973. Neumeier has also worked as guest choreographer with many companies, including London's Royal Ballet, the Vienna, Munich and Dresden State Opera companies, Stuttgart Ballet, Royal Danish Ballet, Paris Opera, Tokyo Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, National Ballet of Canada, Mariinsky Theater, Bolshoi Ballet, and San Francisco Ballet, among others. Neumeier's many honors include the Dance Magazine Award, Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany, French Order of Arts and Letters and the Legion of Honour, Nijinsky Award for Lifetime Achievement, Herbert von Karajan Musikpreis, Deutscher Jubiläums Tanzpreis, Order of Friendship of the Russian Federation, and most recently the 2015 Kyoto Prize.

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