

RYAN BROWN, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

OPERA

Lafayette

Scarlatti's *Erminia* & Geminiani's *La forêt enchantée* (*The Enchanted Forest*)

Friday, February 2, 2018 | 7:30 p.m.
Gerald W. Lynch Theater | John Jay College



Julia Dawson



Allegra De Vita



Asitha Tennekoon



André Courville

OPERA IS... **POETRY & DANCE**

LETTER FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



Dear Friends,

Pairing Scarlatti's *Erminia* and Geminiani's *The Enchanted Forest* is an opportunity to experience two wonderful works, the Scarlatti perhaps for the first time, and the Geminiani in a new way, similar to how it was conceived in the 18th century.

The two works are complementary in that both are based on the same literary romance, set during the Crusades, and both employ a dark forest as a crucial plot element. Only the music for Act I exists of the Scarlatti, but the extant act ends with mysterious visions in the forest, similar to how the Geminiani begins. The works are of course very different as well; the Scarlatti is sung, and develops at a leisurely pace, whereas the Geminiani is danced and often moves at lightning speed.

Kalanidhi's Indian dance traditions employ pantomime and storytelling remarkably similar to French dance traditions. After asking Anuradha Nehru to choreograph *The Enchanted Forest*, we decided to change the location of the stories. By moving the action to India, in both *Erminia* and *The Enchanted Forest*, the conquering Christians become Mughals, and the defending Muslims become Hindi Marathas.

Erminia, one of Scarlatti's last works, exhibits great musical sophistication. Though there is no evidence that it was originally staged, it is divided into distinct scenes which invite such treatment. Geminiani's *The Enchanted Forest*, on the other hand, was commissioned for the stage, but is usually heard today only as an instrumental composition. In our staging, we focus more on the storytelling of the ballet than on the scenic surprises the theatrical designer Servandoni invented in 1754. We hope that this conception, coupled with a contemporary appreciation of Geminiani's mature composition, will give the piece a new life in the 21st century as it offers a window into the dance pantomime of an earlier age.

We thank you for your support and hope you enjoy this extraordinary evening!

Ryan Brown

Upcoming Performances

Opera in Versailles

A musical journey through the reigns of Louis XIV, XV, and XVI. Inspired by The Metropolitan Museum of Art's exhibition *Visitors to Versailles (1682 – 1789)* on view at The Met Fifth Avenue April 16–July 29, 2018.

May 3, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. | The Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium | The Metropolitan Museum of Art

RYAN BROWN, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

OPERA
Lafayette

Gerald W. Lynch Theater, John Jay College
Friday, February 2, 2018, 7:30 p.m.

presents

Erminia

Music by Alessandro Scarlatti
and

La forêt enchantée
(The Enchanted Forest)

Music by Francesco Geminiani



Both works based on Torquato Tasso's epic poem
La Gerusalemme liberata (Jerusalem Delivered)

A New Production Sung in Italian with English Supertitles

This performance is approximately one hour and forty-five minutes
with one additional fifteen-minute intermission.

Opera Lafayette is grateful to the Wage Foundation for their generosity
as lead sponsor of this production.

Opera Lafayette is also funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.

OperaLafayette.org
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Patrons are requested to turn off cell phones and other electronic devices during performances.
The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are not allowed in this auditorium.

PROGRAM

Erminia

(in order of appearance)

A forest, in front of which is a pastoral clearing

Erminia.....	Julia Dawson
Pastore	André Courville
Polidoro.....	Asitha Tennekoon
Tancredi	Allegra De Vita

Cello continuo.....	Loretta O'Sullivan
Harpichord continuo	Charlotte Mattax Moersch

Offstage Chorus

Soprano	Rosa Lamoreaux
Soprano	Rebecca Kellerman
Alto.....	Ms. De Vita
Tenor	Mr. Tennekoon

Intermission

La forêt enchantée (The Enchanted Forest)

As the production of this ballet is transposed to the times of the Mughal and Maratha wars, the names of the warriors are followed in parenthesis by their equivalent in Tasso's epic poem *Jerusalem Delivered*.

Act 1 - in the forest at night

Maratha Spirits	Keerthana Adapa, Ankitha Durvasula, Chitra Kalyandurg, Ritika Reddy, Lavanya Thamire, Pragnya Thamire
Maratha Wizard Uday Singh (Ismeno)	Saisantosh Radhakrishnan

Act 2 - in the Maratha court

Maratha Ruler Shivaji (King of Jerusalem).....	Smitha Hughes
First Council Bahadur Shah.....	Kavya Smrithi Adabala
Second Council Murarbaji.....	Rashi Narain
Uday Singh (Ismeno)	

Act 3 - in the forest at dawn

Mughal Leader Dilir Khan (Alcasto).....	Vijay Palaparty
Mughal Warrior Jai Singh	Sharugash Swargaloganathan
Mughal Warrior Mahabat Khan.....	Puneet Panda
Maratha Spirits	

Act 4 - in the Mughal camp

Mughal Leader Dilir Khan (Alcasto)	
Mughal Warrior Jai Singh	
Mughal Warrior Mahabat Khan.....	Saisantosh Radhakrishnan
Mughal Warrior Rustam Zaman (Rinaldo).....	Puneet Panda

PROGRAM

Act 5 - in the forest at day

Mughal Warrior Rustam Zaman (Rinaldo)

Maratha Spirits

Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb (Godfrey)..... Vijay Palaparty

ARTISTIC TEAM

Conductor Ryan Brown

Director, *Erminia* Richard Gammon

Choreographer and Director, *La forêt enchantée* Anuradha Nehru

Assistant Choreographer, *La forêt enchantée* Chitra Kalyandurg

Scenic Designer Richard Ouellette

Costume Designer Meriem Bahri

Lighting Designer Rob Siler

THE OPERA LAFAYETTE ORCHESTRA

Violin I

Claire Jolivet
(*concertmaster*)

June Huang
Theresa Salomon
Elizabeth Field
Nina Falk

Violin II

Christof Richter*
Leslie Nero
Gesa Kordes
C. Ann Loud

Viola

Paul Miller*
Henry Valoris

Cello

Loretta O'Sullivan*
Nancy Jo Snider
Alice Robbins

Bass

Anthony Manzo*

Flute

Sandra Miller*
Kathryn Roth

Oboe

Margaret Owens*
Geoffrey Burgess

Recorder

Nina Stern*
Anna Marsh

Bassoon

Anna Marsh*
Marc Vallon

Horn

Todd Williams*
Linda Dempf

Trumpet

John Thiessen*
Dennis Ferry

Harp

Charlotte Mattax
Moersch

* principal

PRODUCTION STAFF

Technical Director Todd Mion

Stage Manager Laura R. Krause

Production Assistant Raine Bode

Recording Engineer Antonino d'Urzo

Supertitles Patrick Kilbride

Stitcher Elizabeth Chapman

MUSICAL NOTES

Alessandro Scarlatti

(Palermo, 2 May 1660 – Naples, 22 October 1725)

Alessandro Scarlatti, the second child of the tenor Pietro Scarlatti and Eleonora d'Amato, was born in Palermo in 1660. It was there that he received his first musical training. In 1672, a terrible famine forced the family to move to Rome, where Scarlatti's talent, assisted by powerful relations, gave him entrance to the highest levels of Rome's artistic world. In 1678 he married Antonia Maria Vittoria Anzaloni; the couple lived in an apartment in the palace of Gian Lorenzo Bernini. Scarlatti was appointed *maestro di cappella* of San Giacomo degli Incurabili, where he composed his first oratorios. Following the success of his short comic opera, *Gli equivoci nel sembiante* (1679), he became the *maestro di cappella* of Queen Christina of Sweden (who, having converted to Catholicism and having abdicated the throne, was living in Rome). In 1682 he left San Giacomo to become *maestro di cappella* at San Girolamo della Carità. In 1676 Pope Innocent XI (1676-1689) had closed all theaters in Rome (including opera theaters), considering them centers of vice and immorality. Consequently, opportunities to hear operas were limited to private performances in the homes of aristocratic patrons who were not afraid to defy papal displeasure. The fact that between 1679 and 1683, Scarlatti had six operas performed is a measure of his success. Nevertheless, Scarlatti's ambition led him to accept the post of *maestro di cappella* of the royal chapel in Naples in 1684, succeeding Pietro Andrea Ziani (1616-1684). His activities as a composer of operas made Naples in 1700 the rival of Venice. Scarlatti's operas were performed in Rome (privately) and in Florence and many cities throughout Italy. From 1703 to 1705, Scarlatti traveled to Rome, Florence, Venice, composing masses, operas, serenatas, and oratorios, but his severe compositional style was appreciated neither in Florence nor in Venice, making his efforts to find better employment unsuccessful. He returned to Naples, regained his post of *maestro di cappella* of the Royal chapel in Naples and spent the remainder of his life composing operas, oratorios, and cantatas for Naples and for the roman aristocrats. His serenata *Erminia* was composed for the wedding of Don Fernando Colonna, Prince of Stigliano, to Donna Maria Luisa Caracciolo, Princess of Santo Buono and was performed in the Palazzo Stigliano in Naples on June 13, 1723. It is one of his last major secular works that can be precisely dated. Unfortunately, the three surviving scores of the serenata from the 18th century preserve the music of only the first of the two acts. It is also in this last period of his life that he turned to instrumental music, composing his 12 *Sinfonie di concerto grosso* and his seven *Toccate per cembalo*.

Francesco Saverio Geminiani

(Lucca, December 5, 1687 – Dublin, September 17, 1762)

Baptized on December 5, 1687, and probably born two days earlier, the feast day of Saint Xavier, Francesco Geminiani was the son of a violinist, probably his first teacher, in the Cappella Palatina of Lucca. He was in Rome from April 1704 to December 1706, where he studied with Alessandro Scarlatti and Archangelo Corelli, was hired as violinist at the Teatro dei Fiorentini in Naples from 1706 to 1707 and may have remained there until 1714, when he left for England. There, he was admired as a violin virtuoso and violin teacher. He

MUSICAL NOTES

published his violin sonatas, Op. 1, in 1716, which were very successfully received, and later became a founding member of the Philo-Musicae et Architecturae Societas (1726) and of the Academy of Vocal Music (1726). The former organized a subscription, joined by the leading members of the English nobility, to publish Geminiani's concerto arrangements of the first Six Sonatas of Corelli's Op. 5 (1726). The arrangements of the last Six Sonatas appeared in 1729. In 1731-1732, he organized a series of 20 subscription concerts lasting five months, which helped him publish his own concerti grossi in the manner of Corelli (Op. 2 and 3 in 1732). His Concerti Grossi Op. 3 became a classic, ensuring his fame. In 1732-1733, he traveled to Paris, where he started a business as an art dealer, buying paintings there and selling them in England. In December 1733 he traveled to Dublin in the retinue of Charles Moore, Baron of Tullamore, to perform. Geminiani remained there until 1740, except for a stay in London in 1734-1737, composing in Dublin his second set of violin sonatas, Op. 4 (1739). returning to London in 1741, he made concerto arrangements of his violin sonatas, Op. 4, directed an unsuccessful pasticcio opera, *L'inconstanza delusa* (1745), composed his concerti grossi, Op. 7, and his Cello Sonatas, Op. 5, the last two of which were both published in the Netherlands in 1746. They proved to be unsuccessful, so Geminiani devoted himself to theoretical writings: *Rules for Playing in True Taste* (1748), *A Treatise of Good Taste in Music* (1749), and *The Art of Playing the Violin* op. 9 (1751). In the early 1750s he was again in Paris where he oversaw the production of his only ballet, *The Enchanted Forest*, which was created at the Theater of the Tuilleries on March 31, 1754. He published it as a concert piece in London (1756) and then returned to Dublin where he was the music master of Charles Coote, Count of Bellomont. His last public appearance was in a concert on September 17, 1762.

PROGRAM NOTES

Tonight's program is composed of two works inspired by the epic poem by Torquato Tasso (1544-1595), *La Gerusalemme liberata (Jerusalem Delivered)*, which he completed in 1575 and which was first published in 1581. More specifically, the two works are based on three different episodes involving the characters of Tancredi, Armida, and Rinaldo.

Since the epic poem of Torquato Tasso may not be familiar to all, I have summarized the events leading to the episodes illustrated in tonight's program, quoting occasionally from the beautiful translation by Edward Fairfax first published in 1600, itself a little gem of Elizabethan poetry. Tancredi d'Altavilla is a noble paladin (warrior) follower of Godfrey of Bouillon, the General of the First Crusade (1096-1099). The historical character was Tancredi de Hauteville (ca. 1072-1112), an Italian Knight of Norman descent. Tancredi besieged and conquered Antioch in June of 1098. During the siege of Antioch, Tancredi seeks a place to rest from combat in a shady grove near a stream where he happens on a beautiful maiden in full armor save her head with her unbound hair. He is struck by her beauty and stays rooted in his place gazing as she puts her helmet back and hastily departs. Thus Tancredi meets Clorinda and falls in love with her.

Tancredi successfully conquered Antioch. Erminia, the daughter of the King of Antioch, was taken prisoner, but Tancredi freed her, allowing her to depart with all her jewels and treasures. Erminia

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left for Jerusalem, but, profoundly moved by Tancredi's generosity, fell in love with him.

The crusaders pursue their conquest, arriving before the walls of Jerusalem. They fight the army of the King of Jerusalem. A single combat is arranged between Tancredi and Argante, the General of the King of Jerusalem. The two fight valiantly, but there is no winner by nightfall; it is decided that they will resume their combat in a week. Erminia, having followed the combat all day, decides to escape during the night to go to heal Tancredi's wounds by using her knowledge of healing herbs.

Erminia

This is the point where the *Serenata* of Scarlatti, *Erminia*, begins. Erminia dons the armor of Clorinda and escapes with her trusted servant, whom she sends to the crusaders' camp to tell Tancredi that his mistress comes to cure his wounds. The servant manages to be introduced to Tancredi who listens to him but remains perplexed and full of doubts.

As she awaits the return of her messenger, Erminia is spotted by Poliperne (Polidoro in Scarlatti's work) and his brother Alicandro, whose father Clorinda had slain. Polidoro, recognizing Clorinda's armor, pursues her while Alicandro informs Godfrey of Bouillon of the incident. This news goes throughout the Christian camp and Tancredi, hearing it, is convinced that it was Clorinda who sent him the messenger and whose life is now in danger, so he hastily leaves to go to her aid. In the meantime, Erminia has fled and tries to hide in the forest where she manages to escape from Polidoro. Erminia finally arrives in a clearing by the Jordan river, where a shepherd and his children are living peacefully. She accepts their hospitality and exchanges her armor for a shepherdess's clothes.

The anonymous author of the libretto to Scarlatti's *Erminia* – it is probably an early libretto by Metastasio – imagines that Polidoro eventually happens upon the shepherdess Erminia, as she is watching her flock, and asks her if she has seen a warrior. She claims she has not and urges him to return to Godfrey's camp. Instead Polidoro is so smitten by her beauty that he is ready to forget his pursuit of Clorinda and to stay by the beautiful shepherdess. A little further away, Tancredi stumbles on the discarded armor of Clorinda and asks the nearby shepherd the whereabouts of its owner. Threatened with death, the shepherd tells him that they belong to a woman who is now tending the flocks with his daughters and guides him to them. Tancredi is certain he will find Clorinda with the daughters of the shepherd. On their way they meet Polidoro, who tells Tancredi that he had been pursuing Clorinda, his father's killer, but had lost trace of her; instead he had found a beautiful shepherdess, with whom he has fallen in love. Tancredi, believing that the shepherdess is Clorinda, becomes jealous and berates Polidoro for leaving the glorious path of war to seek the love of a shepherdess. Polidoro sings a loving description of Erminia and asks Tancredi to follow him to the meadow where Erminia is. Tancredi sings of the cruelty of jealousy. Alone in the meadow, Erminia laments her fate. This marks the end of the first act of Scarlatti's *Erminia*, what remains of the work.

In Tasso's poem, Polidoro never finds Erminia, returning empty-handed to the camp, while Tancredi loses his way in the forest. His path brings him to the castle of the enchantress Armida, where he is ensnared and made prisoner, along with a great number of his fellow

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crusader knights. Armida, the beautiful daughter of the King of Damascus, Hidraort, had gone to the crusaders' camp on the pretense of asking for their help in reclaiming her kingdom from an usurper. All the knights, except Rinaldo, fell in love with her and offered to follow her to defend her rights. She led them out of their camp, bewitched them and cast them in prison in her castle in the middle of the forest where shortly thereafter Tancredi is trapped.

Some time later, Hidraort sent an escort of one hundred horsemen, guided by one of his barons, to lead all the prisoners in their fetters to the King of Egypt. On their way, they are met by the crusader knight Rinaldo who single handedly routs the horsemen and their baron and frees his fellow crusaders. The poem continues with further battles, the burning of the crusader's wooden siege towers by Argante and Clorinda, and the famous combat scene between Tancredi and Clorinda, the subject of Monteverdi's *Il combattimento di Tancredi et Clorinda* which Opera Lafayette presented earlier in this season.

La forêt enchantée

To prevent the crusaders from rebuilding the siege towers, Ismeno, the enchanter, casts a spell on the forest. Here starts the dance pantomime *The Enchanted Forest* which the architect and "stage director" Giovanni Nicolo Servandoni (1695-1766) devised, based on Tasso's epic poem, and for which he commissioned Geminiani to compose the music. Servandoni's dance pantomime is in five acts, each comprised of a set of short musical movements by Geminiani resembling a concerto grosso.

Act I takes place in the forest at night, which Tasso describes thus:

"But when the sun his chair in seas doth steep,
Night, horror, darkness thick, the place invade,
Which veil mortal eyes with blindness deep,
And with sad terror make weak hearts afraid.
Thither no groom drives forth his tender sheep
To browse, or ease their faint in cooling shade;
Nor traveler nor pilgrim there to enter
(So awful seems that forest old) dare venture."
(T/F, XIII. 3)

Tasso's description of the menacing darkness of the forest at night is well characterized by the music of the opening number of Geminiani's score to *The Enchanted Forest*. The second movement depicts witches and sprites assembling for an infernal ceremony. The third and fourth movements include the appearance of the enchanter Ismeno, who casts a spell on the forest:

"Keep ye this forest well, keep every tree;
Number'd I give you them, and truly told;
As souls of men in bodies clothed be,
So every plant a sprite shall hide and hold:
With trembling fear make all the Christians flee,
When they presume to cut these cedars old."
(T/F, XIII. 8)

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Servandoni changes the scene for Act II to the interior of a mosque in Jerusalem. The change of set was done, as if by magic, before the very eyes of the spectators, and so the music of this last movement dovetails into the music of the first movement of the second act, which depicts the interior of a lamp-lit mosque at night. The King of Jerusalem has gathered his advisers to ask them what best course to take to banish the crusaders. In the second and third movements, the advisers first discuss various possible courses of action, after which Ismeno re-enters and informs the assembly of the spell he has cast on the forest, preventing the crusaders from building siege machines.

In Act III, the scene changes back to the forest, now during the day. Godfrey will not renew an assault on the city until he is able to rebuild the towers and the rams. The first movement of Act III describes one of the crusaders, Alcasto, entering the forest with his men. The second movement illustrates the crusaders' vain attempts to fell the trees; discouraged they sit down to rest. In the slow third movement, a cloud of smoke with spirits eerily rises. As the smoke intensifies in the final movement, the spirits become more threatening and aggressive. Alcasto and his men flee in fright, while the spirits build a wall of fire to prevent access to the forest.

Act IV takes place in the crusaders' camp. The first movement depicts a scene in which the heat had become so intense that all streams dried up and all plants withered. Animals died of thirst. The crusaders are tired and discouraged. The second movement may represent the rebellious troops attempting to desert the camp. It is followed by a martial sounding movement portraying the arrival of Rinaldo. The original program of 1754 states about Rinaldo:

“This valiant knight, after killing the Prince of Norway, had fled to escape the rigours of the punishment that Godfrey had prepared for him; but the Hermit, who has foreseen that the spell over the forest can be broken only with Rinaldo's aid, has sent two warriors to search for him, and these finally brought him back to the camp.”

Indeed, as we saw earlier, while he was wandering away from the camp, Rinaldo happened on the train of crusader knights made prisoners by Armida and freed them. Enraged, Armida, with enchantments, lulled Rinaldo to sleep with the intent of murdering him. Instead, she falls in love, whisking him away to her enchanted island, where they spend blissful days together, until the two warriors sent by the Hermit break the spell and bring Rinaldo back to the camp. This episode has been the subject of several operas, most notably *Armide* of Lully and *Armide* of Gluck, both of which have been performed by Opera Lafayette. The former has also been recorded by Opera Lafayette (Naxos: 8.660209/10).

In the last movement of Act IV, the 1754 program informs us that “Godfrey pardons him (i.e. Rinaldo), fits him with the sword an angel had given him for this purpose, and orders him to destroy the spells that the demons use to defend the approaches to the forest.” While he is receiving this command, the Hermit, raising his hands to Heaven, prays fervently, and a welcome rain pours down, ending the scorching heat.

Act V is composed of a series of quickly changing scenes. We are again in the forest but at early dawn: the light comes weakly at first, gradually grows stronger and finally heralds a fine sunny day. As Rinaldo enters the forest, he comes across a torrent in full spate, which he crosses. On the other side he sees the myrtle tree, which he is to cut down. The tree has a nymph with the face of Armida enclosed within it. Surprised, Rinaldo walks toward the tree, but nymphs sur-

PROGRAM NOTES

round him and try to seduce him. The nymphs change to Cyclops, whom he attacks and puts to flight, and then the victorious Rinaldo cuts down the tree:

“(…) Then fled the spirits all, the charms ended:”
“The heav’n grew clear, the air wax’d calm and still,
The wood returned to its wonted state;
Of witchcrafts free, quite void of spirits ill ...”
(T/F, XVIII. 37-38)

To round up the dance pantomime, Servandoni imagines an elaborate triumphal finale.

PRODUCTION NOTES BY RYAN BROWN

For the purposes of this production, Opera Lafayette and Kalanidhi Dance have transported the epic to India at the time of the Mughal conquest of the Maratha Empire in the late 17th century.* In effect, the Christians become the Mughals, and the Muslims become the indigenous Marathas of India. Nonetheless, our production owes much to the research of Geminiani’s biographer Enrico Careri, and largely follows his interpretation concerning the coordination of Servandoni’s 1754 program to the original Tasso poem and to Geminiani’s music. We have, however, occasionally diverged from Careri’s suggestions or Servandoni’s program, when it fit our interpretative purposes.

*The Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb’s daughter was said to have been named Lalla Roukh. The opera *Lalla Roukh* by Félicien David was the first collaboration undertaken by Opera Lafayette and Kalanidhi Dance, and Opera Lafayette also made the premiere recording of the opera. (Naxos 8.660338-39)

MEET THE ARTISTS

Opera Lafayette, an American period instrument company, has earned critical acclaim for its performances and recordings featuring The Opera Lafayette Orchestra and renowned singers for the interpretations of rediscovered 18th- and 19th-century operatic masterpieces. The company, known for its modern American and World Premieres, presents concert, semi-staged, and staged operas in imaginative and inventive productions of the historical repertoire, illuminating the contemporary relevance of the works together with their original appeal. Based in Washington, DC, where its three seasonal performances usually take place at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the company has expanded its horizons since 2014 to include New York City where its full season is now also regularly produced at venues throughout Manhattan.

Opera Lafayette gained international fame, when, at the invitation of Château de Versailles Spectacles, it performed twice, in 2012 and 2014, at the Opéra Royal in Versailles, France, closing with five sold-out performances. Central to the company’s mission is creating a recorded legacy of the timeless repertoire Opera Lafayette brings back to life. Currently the company’s discography on the Naxos label is comprised of twelve releases. Opera Lafayette’s first video, Rameau’s *Les Fêtes de L’Hymen et de L’Amour*, will be released in 2018.

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These recordings underscore the company's artistic mastery and are just one resource Opera Lafayette uses to build a public appreciation of this repertoire.

Kalanidhi Dance, a dance ensemble committed to the ancient Indian classical style of kuchipudi, is taking its choreography in new and exciting directions. *The New York Times* has called Kalanidhi a “combination of bright energy, full bodied sweetness and rapid precision,” and “a rare amalgam of prime dance virtues.” Central to the company's artistic philosophy is the belief that dialogue with artists of other genres nourishes creativity.

The company performs frequently at well-known venues in the U.S. and around the world, including The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center, Wolf Trap, National Theatre, Smithsonian Institution, National Geographic Society, Joyce SoHo, the Erasing Borders Festival, Drive East, Singapore Arts Alliance, and Kalakshetra Foundation, among others. Kalanidhi toured India and became the first foreign-based ensemble to perform at Delhi's prestigious Ananya Festival. According to a national Indian newspaper, *The Hindu*, its performance “took the audience by storm.”

©Naomi Reddert



Ryan Brown is the founder and artistic director of Opera Lafayette. Through his work with Opera Lafayette, he has gained an international reputation for his interpretations of French opera and for his role in the revival of significant works from 18th and 19th centuries. His repertoire and discography of twelve sound recordings for Naxos include operas by well-known 18th-century composers (Gluck and Rameau) as well as rediscoveries of their contemporaries (Sacchini and Rebel/Francoeur), works which exemplify traditions established in the 17th century (Lully and Charpentier), and those which point the way toward the music of the 19th century (Monsigny and Grétry). He was widely lauded for the modern premiere and recording of Félicien David's 1862 *Lalla Roukh*, a seminal work of musical Orientalism. Mr. Brown's frequent performances of Italian works by Haydn, Mozart, Paisiello, and Cimarosa have also met with great acclaim. His teachers included Dorothy DeLay and Gustav Meier. In 2014 Mr. Brown returned to the Opéra Royal in Versailles, leading Opera Lafayette in Philidor's *Les Femmes Vengées* and Mozart's *Così fan tutte*. In 2015, he conducted Vivaldi's *Catone in Utica* at the Glimmerglass Festival. In 2016 he led Opera Lafayette's modern premiere of Gaveaux and Bouilly's *Léonore, ou L'amour conjugal*, which was filmed for future video release. Mr. Brown is a recipient of *La Médaille d'Or du Rayonnement Culturel* from La Renaissance Française. He was raised in a musical family in California, and performed extensively as a violinist and chamber musician before turning his attentions to conducting.



An award-winning kuchipudi artist, **Anuradha Nehru** is the founder and artistic director of Kalanidhi Dance. As a choreographer, her work draws on her training in kuchipudi, but goes beyond its traditional boundaries. She has taught and developed new generations of kuchipudi dancers in the United States for over a quarter-century and has guided the growth and development of Kalanidhi Dance into the force it is today. Her constant quest for new avenues of expression through dance has led her to collaborate with other artists across genres and tour around the world. Some major productions include, *Rasa*, *Yaatra*, the historical ballet *Bhagmati*, and *Why We Dance*. *The Enchanted Forest* is Ms. Nehru's third collaboration with Opera Lafayette.

MEET THE ARTISTS

Photo: Jonathan Timmes



Richard Gammon directs Scarlatti's *Erminia*, having just been seen with Opera Lafayette as the creator for the mise en espace for *An Evening of Monteverdi*. Previous directing highlights include the East Coast premiere of Jack Perla's *An American Dream* at Opera Maine SAP, *Susannah* for Charlottesville Opera, the *CARE Monologue Film Project* at Cleveland Play House, *Much Ado About Nothing* for the Kentucky Shakespeare Festival, and the world premieres of Jorge Sosa's operas *Tonatzin* and *The Lake* at ArtSounds. He was the creative associate for the world premiere of *Dream'd in a Dream* at the BAM Next Wave Festival with the Seán Curran Company and directed the Kansas City workshop of J. Ashley Miller's performance art piece *Echosis* with Atemporchestra. He has directed multiple productions at the Manhattan School of Music, Carnegie Mellon University, and the University of Kentucky Opera Theatre, including Ned Rorem's *Three Sisters who are not Sisters*, Paul Hindemith's *Sancta Susanna*, *La traviata*, *Così fan tutte*, and *Sweeney Todd*. He is the director of Opera Maine's Studio Artist Program and has worked with the young artist programs of Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Wolf Trap Opera, Virginia Opera, Charlottesville Opera, and Opera North. He works closely with 2017 TONY award winner Baayork Lee and the National Asian Artists Project (NAAP). He has been on the staging staff of LA Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, Fort Worth Opera, Palm Beach Opera, and the Lyric Opera of Kansas City. Mr. Gammon is a graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music and the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music and Dance. richard-gammon.com



An accomplished performer, **Chitra Kalyandurg** joined Kalanidhi Dance in 1994 as a student. When the Kalanidhi Dance Company was formed in 2004, she was one of its original members, and has performed regularly with the company ever since. She manages Kalanidhi's development, marketing, and communications efforts, and assists with annual artistic programming and choreography. She is currently pursuing a Master's in Public Policy at the University of Maryland, College Park, where she is focusing on non-profit management, leadership, and the arts.

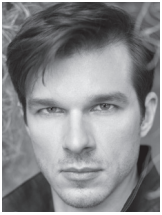
Photo: Barbara Aumuller



Hailed by Opera News as "strikingly lovely" and the *Los Angeles Times* as a singer who "can release roulades of coloratura with a shimmering sound," rising Canadian mezzo-soprano **Julia Dawson** enjoys increasing exposure both on the opera stage and in the concert hall. She is portraying the title role in *Erminia*, returning to Opera Lafayette where she was last seen as Emilia in Vivaldi's *Catone in Utica*. In the 2017-2018 season, she additionally returns to Oper Frankfurt as an ensemble member, with roles including Angelina in *La Cenerentola*, Goffredo in Ted Huffman's new production of *Rinaldo*, and the Second Witch in *Dido and Aeneas*. The 2016-2017 season saw Ms. Dawson in her second year as an Oper Frankfurt studio member, where she sang Dorotea in Verdi's *Stiffelio*, Countess Ceprano in *Rigoletto*, and Moppet, a Cat, and Wild Goose in a new production of Britten's *Paul Bunyan*. A 2015 George London Award Competition winner, she received the Anny Schlemm Preis from Oper Frankfurt, an honor given to a singer associated with the company once every five years. She has received fellowships from the Aspen Music Festival and the Music Academy of the West, and has sung in a masterclass with James Levine at Carnegie Hall under the auspices of Marilyn Horne's The

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Song Continues festival. She holds a Bachelor of Music degree from Oberlin Conservatory and a Master of Music degree from Rice University's Shepherd School of Music. She recently completed studies at the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia, earning a performance certificate.



Praised by Opera News for his “splendid, lush bass-baritone,” **André Courville** is quickly establishing himself as one of America's foremost young singers. He sings Pastore in *Erminia*, returning to Opera Lafayette after being last seen as Dom Alvar in *Les Indes Galantes*. This season additionally brings debuts with The Dallas Opera and Austin Opera, and a return to the Philadelphia Orchestra under the baton of Yannick Nézet-Séguin. Last season included debuts in Europe at Karlsruhe's Badisches Staatstheater as the title role in *Le nozze di Figaro*, at the Spoleto Festival USA in Mozart's *Great Mass in C minor*, and with the Rochester Philharmonic as Colline in *La bohème*. From 2013-2017, he was a resident artist at the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia where he garnered critical acclaim for performances of many important roles including Méphistophélès in *Faust*, Mustafà in *L'Italiana in Algeri*, and Leporello in *Don Giovanni*. An equally busy concert performer, he has appeared at Carnegie Hall for the past four seasons with Opera Orchestra of New York. Other recent performances include the title role in Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with the Columbus Symphony Orchestra, the bass solo in Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with The Cecilia Chorus of New York, and Bach's Cantata 150 with the Philadelphia Orchestra. A Louisiana native, he is the recipient of top awards in eight national and international vocal competitions, including First Prize in the Loren L. Zachary National Vocal Competition and Top Prize in the Gerda Lissner Foundation International Vocal Competition.



Photo: Dabitha Katz

Since moving to Toronto in the fall of 2014, Sri Lankan tenor **Asitha Tennekoon** has firmly established himself as a versatile singer and actor, performing in a wide range of repertoire. He makes his Opera Lafayette debut in *Erminia*, singing the role of Polidoro. He drew critical acclaim as Paul in Scottish Opera/Tapestry Opera's co-production of *Rocking Horse Winner* and received the Dora Award for Best Male Performance. As Gernando in Haydn's *L'Isola disabitata* in his debut with Voicebox: Opera in Concert, he was “clearly an artist on the fast track to stardom, a singer gifted with a brilliant, incandescent instrument and appealing stage manners.” (Ian Ritchie, *Opera Going Toronto*). Mr. Tennekoon began the 2017-2018 season in *A Song for All Seasons*, in recital with soprano Erin Wall at the Royal Conservatory of Music. He will join the cast of the world premiere of *The Overcoat* (Panych/Rolfe) in a co-production with Tapestry Opera, Canadian Stage Company, and Vancouver Opera. He has appeared as a soloist with Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, Toronto Bach Festival, Theatre of Early Music, and Toronto Classical Singers. While a Vocal Performance student at the Jacobs School of Music, Indiana University, he was a guest soloist with Indianapolis Baroque Orchestra, Indianapolis Symphonic Choir, and Columbus Indiana Philharmonic. In Toronto, he completed the Artist Diploma at Glenn Gould School of Music and holds Licentiate Diplomas in Voice and Piano from Trinity College of Music, London and the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, London.

MEET THE ARTISTS

Photo: Arielle Doneson



Mezzo-soprano **Allegra De Vita** makes her Opera Lafayette debut singing the role of Tancredi in *Erminia*, and is in her second year as a member of Washington National Opera's Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program. At WNO, she was seen as Ruggiero in the Emerging Artist Performance of *Alcina*, Cherubino in the Emerging Artist Performance of *Le nozze di Figaro*, The Fox in *The Little Prince*, Kate Pinkerton in *Madame Butterfly*, and in the title role of Mohammed Fairouz's *The Dictator's Wife*. She made her Opera Philadelphia debut performing the role of Isaura and covering the title role in *Tancredi*, and she sang Olga in *Eugene Onegin* with Opera Syracuse. In the spring, she will play Tebaldo in *Don Carlo* and Rosina in the Emerging Artist Performance of *Il barbiere di Siviglia* at WNO. With the Glimmerglass Festival she has performed Arsemenes in *Xerxes*, Pippo in *La Gazza Ladra*, and Fulvio in the American premiere of Vivaldi's *Catone in Utica*. While a resident artist at the Academy of Vocal Arts, she performed the roles of Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* and Charlotte in *Werther*. She is a 2015 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions Grand Finalist. She has also performed the title role of *Ariodante*, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, Erminella in *Volpone*, and Romeo in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*. She earned her Master's Degree in vocal performance at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music and holds a BS magna cum laude in biology, with a neuro-science concentration from Sacred Heart University.



An award-winning performer, **Saisanthosh Radhakrishnan** has performed around the world. He has worked with several leading performers and has trained in bharatanatyam with Guru Adyar K. Lakshman and Deepa Babaprasad. He currently trains in the expressive dance technique of abhinaya with Bragha Bessell. A graduate of Columbia University, he works at Amazon.



Smitha Hughes began her kuchipudi training with Anuradha Nehru 27 years ago. Ms. Hughes was one of Ms. Nehru's first students and became one of the original members who formed the Kalanidhi Dance Company. Ms. Hughes has performed at a number of international venues, including at the Ananya Festival in India, the Atlas Performing Arts Center in Washington, DC, and the Joyce SoHo in New York City. She works as an educator with Baltimore City schools, and used her training to help develop the now hugely popular Kalanidhi Kid Camp program.



Kavya Smrithi Adabala learns and practices dance at Kuchipudi Kalakshetra and trained with Guru Sri Hari rama Murthy for 16 years in Visakhapatnam, India. An accomplished dancer, she has performed widely, including at Kalanidhi's 25th-anniversary celebrations. A postgraduate student at George Mason University, she is currently working as a Software Developer at Gravy Analytics in Northern Virginia.

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Rashi Narain is an award-winning Bharatanatyam dancer and choreographer based in Silver Spring, Maryland. She has also explored other world dance forms including Oriental (belly) dance, which she trained in at Caracalla Dance Theater in Beirut, Lebanon. In 2011, she founded Sharanya, to impart training in Bharatanatyam to students of all ages. Currently, she collaborates with the Spilling Ink Project in Washington, DC in its season performances as well as in its arts education and outreach work in the Washington, DC metropolitan area.

She is a Lead Associate at Booz Allen Hamilton.



Founder and Co-Artistic Director of Spilling Ink, **Vijay Palaparty** is a Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi dancer and choreographer. Through Spilling Ink, he produces and presents literary, visual, and performing arts projects. He was awarded two artist fellowships for artistic excellence from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities. He was also recognized through DCCA's Young Artist program, which commends young people of Washington, DC who create art and contribute to the vitality of the city. He is a senior communications specialist at the Federal Reserve Board of Governors.

He is a senior communications specialist at the Federal Reserve Board of Governors.

Sharugash Kriuba is a Bharatanatyam dancer with considerable experience who is currently training with Dr. Janaki Rangarajan. He performed with Dakshina in their productions of *Tulsi* and *Chakra*.

A vibrant performer, **Puneet Panda** has been applauded by dance critics for his rare combination of energy and elegance while staying true to the tradition-bound purity of the Bharatanatyam style of Indian classical dance taught by his famed gurus, the Dhananjayans. An ophthalmic surgeon by profession, he is a deft nattuvanar (musician) and has accompanied many of today's prominent Bharatanatyam artists.



Richard Ouellette is a graduate scenic design candidate at the University of Maryland, College Park. He has worked as lead scenic assistant for Daniel Conway on productions at Signature Theater, Roundhouse Theater, Studio Theater, Hartford Stage, and Southeast Repertory Theater. Prior to his move to the greater DC area, he lived in Boston, Massachusetts, where he designed and worked as a scenic artist at the American Repertory Theater.



Meriem Bahri is a French and Tunisian costume designer making her Opera Lafayette debut. After completing a PhD in science (2010, Université de Lille), she finally turned to her great passion for costumes when she moved to the USA. Her work has been described by the *Wall Street Journal* as "spectacular," and as "gorgeous and ornate" by the *Chicago Tribune*. She collaborates regularly with two groups specializing in opera: as costume designer for Haymarket Opera Company (Chicago) since 2011, and as assistant to the costume designer for the Boston Early Music Festival since 2013. She has also brought her designing skills to the Beethoven Festival, the Laboratory School, Wheaton College, Elements Contemporary Ballet, Balam Dance Theater, International Voices Project, the Joffrey Academy of Dance, and the

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Newberry Consort. Her 2017-2018 season includes new collaborations with Ensemble Dal Niente (Chicago) and Nordic Baroque Dancers (Sweden).

Rob Siler is a lighting designer based in Washington, DC, specializing in theater, dance, and opera with a passion for close collaboration. Across the country, his designs have been seen at the Abrons Arts Center, Maryland Opera Studio, Weathervane Repertory Theatre, Monumental Theatre Company, University of Maryland, Ocean State Theatre Company, and Riverside Theatre, among others. He received his BFA from Shenandoah University and his MFA from the University of Maryland, where he studied under Brian MacDevitt.

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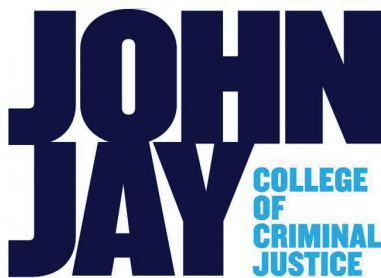
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