



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Harris Theater Presents Music & Dance 2017-18 Season** **EXPERIENCE THE WORLD THROUGH EPIC MASTERWORKS**

U.S. Premiere of **Monteverdi 450**, featuring Monteverdi's three surviving operas led by **Sir John Eliot Gardiner**

**American Ballet Theatre** featuring **Misty Copeland's** Harris Theater debut  
**Mark Morris Dance Group** and **Silk Road Ensemble** performing centuries old love story, *Layla and Majnun*



*American Ballet Theatre's Stella Abrera in The Leaves are Fading; Photo credit Rosalie O'Connor*

**EXPLORE THE SEASON [HERE](#)**

CHICAGO – The **Harris Theater for Music and Dance** is pleased to announce its fourteenth season of *Harris Theater Presents* performances exploring companies and stories of epic magnitude. Experience the 400-year-old cycle of Monteverdi's last surviving operas sung by the **Monteverdi Choir** and led by **Sir John Eliot Gardiner**, **Mark Morris Dance**

Group's staged production of *Layla and Majnun*; the love story that has been told for centuries, and America's premier ballet company, **American Ballet Theatre**. Full performance details are outlined below.

"I am so fortunate to have inherited such a strong season from my predecessor, Michael Tiknis," said **Paul Organisak, Harris Theater President and CEO**. "This season, the Harris continues to bring the best in the world to its stage and we are humbled to create access to these legendary stories and artists for Chicago audiences."

**3-Pack Flex passes are on sale now.** Pick your three favorite *Harris Theater Presents* performances to customize the perfect Flex Pack for you. When you buy a 3-Pack Flex, additional *Harris Theater Presents* single tickets are discounted by 50%\* and you will receive an "Elite Seat" card. "Elite Seat" benefits include:

- FREE exchanges to other *Harris Theater Presents* performances in the season
- Exclusive reduced parking at Millennium Park Garage – \$16 for 8 hours (regularly priced at \$36)
- Discounts at select restaurants – receive 15% off your bill when you dine at any of our NEW Restaurant Partners, to be announced
- Purchase additional individual tickets to *Harris Theater Presents* performances before single tickets go on sale to the general public
- Invitations and early access to special Harris Theater events and receptions

\* On full price tickets and select performances only. Subject to availability.

**Current donors and subscribers will have access to the best seats available – please call the Harris Theater Box Office TODAY for concierge seating service.**

## **PURCHASE YOUR 3-PACK FLEX [HERE!](#)**

Full performance details of the *Harris Theater Presents 2017–18* music and dance season are below:

### **Monteverdi 450 – U.S. Premiere**

**Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Monteverdi Choir, and English Baroque Soloists**



#### **Three Surviving Operas by Claudio Monteverdi**

*Experience love, loss, and virtue in a trilogy of Monteverdi's great operas. Three tales of ancient Greece and Rome will take you on a powerful exploration of the human condition and the emergence of opera as we know it.*

**Thursday, October 12, 2017; 7:30 PM – *L'Orfeo***

**Friday, October 13, 2017; 7:30 PM – *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria***

**Sunday, October 15, 2017; 2:00 PM – *L'Incoronazione di Poppea***

Although **Claudio Monteverdi** (1567–1643) has long been recognized as the father of opera, only three of his contributions to the form survive. 2017 marks the **450th anniversary** of the Venetian master’s birth, and to celebrate this musical milestone, **Sir John Eliot Gardiner, the Monteverdi Choir, and the English Baroque Soloists** have announced an ambitious **international tour**, with concert performances of all three operas – *L’Orfeo*, *Il ritorno d’Ulisse in Patria*, and *L’incoronazione di Poppea* – in the UK, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France, Italy, Spain, and the USA, **with the Harris Theater presenting its U.S. Premiere.**



The tour will launch in Aix-en-Provence, where Gardiner – the winner of more Gramophone Awards than any other living artist – looks forward to leading *Ulisse* for the first time in his distinguished career. Additional European highlights include complete operatic trilogies in Paris and Bristol, as well as at the Berliner Festspiele, Lucerne Festival, and Venice’s La Fenice, before the tour culminates with accounts of all three operas in America. In honor of the anniversary, Gardiner has been chosen to grace the cover of *BBC Music* early next year; as the magazine recently blogged: “It will be an exciting 2017, not just for music-lovers, but for Gardiner too, ... who continues to stretch the boundaries of early music.”

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**Sir John Eliot Gardiner**, one of the most versatile and sought after conductors of our time, and his ensembles, the **Monteverdi Choir** and **English Baroque Soloists**, have undertaken a great number of pioneering projects all over the world. They have become renowned for their ambitious, large-scale tours lasting weeks or months, which aim to bring to life music from centuries past and make it relevant to modern audiences. By putting an emphasis on the historical context of the pieces and personal circumstances of the composers, the musicians are able to shed a new light on well-known (or lesser-known) repertoire, and to embark with their audiences on exceptional, intense musical journeys.

#### **About the Operas:**

##### ***L’Orfeo***

Eurydice, the wife of the demi-god Orfeo – son of Apollo, is bitten by a poisonous snake and dies in the pastoral fields of Thrace. Orfeo is determined to persuade the gods of the Underworld to allow Eurydice to return to life. Led by Hope, Orfeo descends to the Underworld, charms the ferryman Caronte, who carries the souls of the dead across the River Styx, to sleep, and ravishes Proserpina, the Queen of Hades, with his desperate song. Proserpina begs Plutone, the King of the Dead, to release Eurydice on the condition that as Orfeo leads her towards the light, he must not look back at her. Orfeo cannot resist the doubt of Eurydice following behind him and turns to check, thus returning to the upper world alone. In grief, Orfeo consecrates his powerful lyre to the memory of Eurydice. Apollo eases his son’s sorrow inviting him to leave the world and join him in the heavens where he can bask in Eurydice’s likeness in the stars.

*This presentation of L’Orfeo was made possible by the generous support of Abby McCormick O’Neil and D. Carroll Joynes, Performance Sponsor.*

##### ***Il Ritorno d’Ulisse in Patria***

It has been twenty years since King Ulisse departed from his homeland of Ithaca to fight in the Trojan War. He left behind his beloved young wife, Queen Penelope, and infant son, Telemachus. No word has been heard from him since

the war's end ten years prior. The queen clings to the hope that her husband will return. Penelope spends her days mourning the absence of her husband, weaving on her loom and then unraveling the day's work. Telemachus, now a young man, leaves Ithaca in search of his father. Ulisse finally returns to his homeland only to find, and the royal palace overrun with ambitious suitors seeking the crown of Ithaca and the prize attached to it – his beautiful and faithful Penelope.

*This presentation of Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria was made possible by the generous support of Abby McCormick O'Neil and D. Carroll Joynes, Performance Sponsor.*

### ***L'Incoronazione di Poppea***

In the Heavens, Virtue and Fortune are arguing over who between them is the most powerful. Amore (Love) interrupts to assert that it is he who reigns in heaven and on earth and wagers that he can defeat both of them.

Ottone, Poppea's lover, returns after a long absence to find her having an affair with the Emperor Nero. Ignoring the advice of his tutor Seneca, Nero vows to leave his wife, the Empress Ottavia to install Poppea on the throne. Seneca angers Nero in trying to dissuade him. Nero orders Seneca to commit suicide.

Ottavia persuades Ottone to assassinate Poppea. Drusilla, in love with Ottone, lends him her clothing as a disguise. Just as Ottone is about to stab the sleeping Poppea, Amore intervenes and Drusilla is accused of the attempted murder. Ottavia is revealed to have plotted the crime, freeing Nero to send his wife into exile and crown Poppea as the new Empress.

*This presentation of L'Incoronazione di Poppea was made possible by the generous support of Katherine Abelson, Performance Sponsor.*

## **American Ballet Theatre**

### **Two distinct programs from America's National Ballet Company**

*American Ballet Theatre makes its triumphant return to Chicago taking the stage exclusively at the Harris Theater. Journey through stories of love, time, and melancholy with one of the most lauded companies in the world performing acclaimed works from its vast repertoire.*

#### **Harris Theater Gala**

**Wednesday, February 21, 2018**

- ***Her Notes*** – Lang
- ***Thirteen Diversions*** – Wheeldon
- *Third work to be announced*

#### **PROGRAM A**

**Thursday, February 22 and Saturday, February 24, 2018; 7:30 PM**

- ***Serenade after Plato's Symposium*** – Ratmansky



Misty Copeland in *Her Notes*. Photo: Rosalie O'Connor

- *The Leaves are Fading*, pas de deux – Tudor
- *Thirteen Diversions* – Wheeldon
- Pas de deux – to be announced

## PROGRAM B

Friday, February 23, 2018; 7:30 PM and Sunday, February 25, 2018; 2:00

- *Her Notes* – Lang
- *New Ratmansky*
- *Additional works to be announced*



**American Ballet Theatre**, led by Artistic Director Kevin McKenzie, is recognized as one of the great dance companies in the world. Few ballet companies equal ABT for its combination of size, scope, and outreach. Recognized as a living national treasure since its founding in 1940, ABT performs for more than 300,000 people each year. The Company has also made more than 30 international tours to 50 countries as perhaps the most representative American ballet company and has been sponsored by the State Department of the United States on many of these engagements.

### **About the Repertoire:**

A self-proclaimed "visual artist whose medium is dance," choreographer Jessica Lang incorporates striking design elements and transforms classical ballet language to conceive a complete

universe. For *Her Notes*, Lang finds an intriguing inspiration for her "visual music" in a suite by Fanny Mendelssohn, whose most famous work, *Das Jahr (The Year)*, is a musical diary depicting the months of the year she spent in Rome with her family. At the end of each month, on different colored pieces of paper, she wrote a musical reflection of their experience. *Das Jahr* is 13 movements, one movement for each month and a final postlude that reflects the end of her year. [Gala, Program B]

Christopher Wheeldon's *Thirteen Diversions*, "full of handsome geometries and refreshing contrasts, its energies beautifully focused" (*The New York Times*), premiered at the Metropolitan Opera House in 2011. The piece is performed to and draws its name from Benjamin Britten's *Diversions* for Piano (Left Hand) and Orchestra, playing on the music's themes as it highlights the incredible grace and physicality of the American Ballet Theater dancers. [Gala, Program A]

Following its World Premiere performance in May 2016, *The New York Times* claimed, "Alexei Ratmansky's [*Serenade after Plato's Symposium*] is the most authoritatively original creation this bewilderingly versatile choreographer has given us and richly extends the nature of dance theater." Set to Leonard Bernstein's 1954 concerto of the same name, this ballet evokes the spirit of the debate and discourse of ancient Greece depicted in Plato's celebrated text. [Program A]



Scene from *The Leaves are Fading*. Photo: Rosalie O'Connor

One of choreographer Antony Tudor's final ballets, *The Leaves are Fading* was premiered by American Ballet Theatre in 1975. The piece's simple forest-like scenery and music from Dvořák's little-known *Cypresses* for string quartet set the stage for the wistful pas de deux, a contemplation of love, memory, and the passage of time. [Program A]

A new work from Alexei Ratmansky will round out Program B. This piece will have its world premiere in Fall 2017 – details forthcoming.

*American Ballet Theatre's engagement at the Harris Theater was made possible by the generous support of The Harris Family Foundation, Caryn and King Harris Dance Residency Fund through the Imagine Campaign, Engagement Presenting Sponsor.*

## Mark Morris Dance Group / Silk Road Ensemble Featuring mugham vocalists Alim Qasimov & Fargana Qasimova



### Staged production of the centuries-old love story, *Layla and Majnun*

*Layla and Majnun is the definitive story of being "possessed" by love, centuries before Romeo and Juliet; this work is the grandest retelling of the timeless classic to date.*

**Friday, March 16, 2018; 7:30 PM**

**Saturday, March 17, 2018; 2:00 PM  
7:30 PM**

Founded in New York City in 1980 by artistic director and choreographer Mark Morris, the **Mark Morris Dance Group (MMDG)** has been called "the preeminent modern dance organization of our time" (Yo-Yo Ma), its members receiving "highest praise for their technical aplomb, their musicality, and their sheer human authenticity." (*Bloomberg*)

News) Live music and community engagement are vital components of the Dance Group, which has toured with its own musicians, the MMDG Music Ensemble, since 1996.

This evening-length work will be just over an hour in length long and feature singers **Alim Qasimov** and **Fargana Qasimova** and musicians of the **Silk Road Ensemble** on traditional Asian instruments (kamancheh, tar, shakuhachi, and pipa) combined with Western strings (two violins, viola, cello, and contrabass) and a percussionist on stage with 16 dancers of the Mark Morris Dance Group.

Howard Hodgkin, the esteemed English painter and expert collector of antique Mughal miniature paintings, designed the decor based on a South Indian katcheri (classical music concert) with all the musicians and dancers sharing the stage space on platforms and in front of a backdrop. Morris describes it as “a visually, musically, and choreographically unified and self-contained concert piece. An enlightening tragedy.”



This production will not only introduce a beloved cornerstone of Middle Eastern folklore to a wide audience in the U.S. and abroad, but has the potential to engage new audiences drawn by the subject matter. The home territory of *Layla and Majnun* is located along the ancient Silk Route from India, Central Asia, and the Middle East to the eastern edge of Europe. This area, of current geopolitical focus and concern, is also the natal home of many immigrant communities in the US—South Asians, Iranians, Arabs, and Azerbaijanis, among others—that are not typically represented among modern arts audiences.

Though the story of *Layla and Majnun* has been reinterpreted in countless poems, paintings, plays, songs, musical compositions, television dramas, and films, an adaptation of this scale has never been presented in the West.

*Layla and Majnun* is a Mark Morris Dance Group/Cal Performances, UC Berkeley, Berkeley, California production in association with Harris Theater for Music and Dance, Chicago, Illinois; Hopkins Center for the Arts, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire; The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, D.C.; Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, Urbana-Champaign, Illinois; Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, New York, New York; Meany Center for the Performing Arts, Seattle, Washington; Melbourne Festival, Victoria, Australia; Sadler’s Wells, London, England; and University Musical Society of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

*The Mark Morris Dance Group engagement at the Harris Theater was made possible by the generous support of Abby McCormick O’Neil and D. Carroll Joynes, Engagement Presenting Sponsor, and Ravinia Festival, Engagement Presenting Partner.*

*Additionally, the presentation of Mark Morris Dance Group was made possible by the New England Foundation for the Arts’ National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.*

••• All programs, prices, and dates are subject to change •••

## **Sponsorship**

United Airlines is the official airline of the Harris Theater. The Theater gratefully acknowledges the Irving Harris Foundation for its leadership support of the Presenting Fund. All performances take place on The Elizabeth Morse Genius Stage at the Harris Theater.

## **About Harris Theater for Music and Dance**

The Harris Theater's primary mission is to partner with an array of Chicago's music and dance performing arts organizations to help them build the resources and infrastructure necessary to achieve artistic growth and long-term organizational sustainability. The Harris Theater's original group of 12 resident companies has grown to include 35 diverse organizations. Through these partnerships, the Theater has earned national recognition as a distinctive model for collaboration, performance, and artistic advancement.

Opened on November 8, 2003, the Harris Theater for Music and Dance was the first multi-use performing arts venue to be built in the Chicago downtown area since 1929. Today the Theater continues to host the most diverse offerings of any venue in Chicago, featuring the city's world-renowned music and dance institutions and the Harris Theater Presents series of acclaimed national and international artists and ensembles.

*Imagine: The Campaign for Harris Theater*, is a \$38.8M comprehensive fundraising effort supporting the Theater's multifaceted mission. The campaign ensures the continued growth and artistic development of the Harris Theater over the next 10 years.

The *Imagine* campaign is led by four transformational gifts: from The Irving Harris Foundation, Joan W. Harris; Alexandra and John Nichols; Chauncey and Marion D. McCormick Family Foundation, Abby McCormick O'Neil and D. Carroll Joynes; Caryn and King Harris, The Harris Family Foundation. Additional leadership gifts supporting programmatic and capital projects have been generously funded by Jay Franke and David Herro, The Crown Family, Jack and Sandra Guthman, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, The Neisser Family Foundation, The Northern Trust Company, Zell Family Foundation, Laura and Ricardo Rosenkranz, Christine and Glenn Kelly, Jim and Kay Mabie, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and Marilyn and David J. Vitale.

The Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust and Elizabeth Morse Genius Charitable Trust are the lead underwriters of fundraising for *Imagine: The Campaign for Harris Theater*.

The Harris Theater maintains a commitment to engaging Chicago residents of all ages and communities. Programs like the popular *Eat to the Beat* and *Exelon Family Series* advance access to, and understanding of, the performing arts. The Theater partners with health and human service agencies, K-12 schools, and community arts organizations, providing more than 8,800 underwritten performance tickets through the *Access Tickets Program* since 2009. The Theater also connects gifted young artists and students to presented artists through master classes, artist talks, and other enrichment activities.

To learn more about the Harris Theater, please visit [HarrisTheaterChicago.org](http://HarrisTheaterChicago.org). Call the Box Office at 312.334.7777 to request a brochure or additional information.

The Harris Theater for Music and Dance, Chicago's state-of-the-art 1,525-seat performance venue, can also be found on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

