

## 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; 1:00 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***. The tour launched in Aix-en-Provence and is stopping in 14 European cities followed by two US destinations **with the Harris Theater presenting its U.S. Premiere.**

"To anyone who has been unfamiliar with Monteverdi until now, this trilogy should be heard. It will open up a whole new world." (*Frankfurter Allgemeine*)

April 10, 2017 – Festival de Paques, Aix-en-Provence, France  
April 12, 2017 – Colston Hall, Bristol, UK  
May 3, 2017 – Palau de la Musica, Barcelona, Spain  
May 8, 2017 – Colston Hall, Bristol, UK  
May 28, 2017 – Colston Hall, Bristol, UK  
June 16-21, 2017 – Teatro La Fenice, Venice, Italy  
June 24, 2017 – Duomo di Cremona, Cremona, Italy  
June 27, 2017 – Basilique St Denis, St Denis, France  
July 26-29, 2017 – Felsenreitschule, Salzburg Festival, Austria  
August 14-17, 2017 – Usher Hall, Edinburgh Festival, UK  
August 22-26, 2017 – KKL Lucerne, Lucerne Festival, Switzerland  
September 2-5, 2017 – Philharmonie, Musikfest Berlin, Germany  
September 7-8, 2017 – NFM, Wratislavia Cantans, Poland  
September 16-18, 2017 – Philharmonie, Paris, France  
October 6, 2017 – Duomo di Pisa, Pisa, Italy  
October 8, 2017 – Chapelle Royale, Versailles-Paris, France  
October 12-15, 2017 – Harris Theater, Chicago, USA  
October 18-21, 2017 – Alice Tully Hall, New York, USA



“...a crowning personal achievement in (Gardiner’s) long and distinguished career.” (*Sunday Times Culture Magazine*)

**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.

“The magic is uncontainable.” (*Culturebox*)

### **About the Operas:**

#### ***L’Orfeo***

Sir John Eliot Gardiner’s cycle of Monteverdi operas begins at the Harris Theater on Thursday, October 12 with *L’Orfeo* – opening night of the 2017-18 *Harris Theater Presents* season. Monteverdi’s first opera reenacts the famous story of Orpheus who descends to the underworld in an attempt to bring his dead bride, Eurydice, back to life. *Orfeo*, celebrated for its dramatic word painting and breathtaking orchestration, is widely considered to be the first masterpiece of the art form in its infancy. Gardiner’s ensemble cast features Polish tenor Krystian Adam “who sailed through the long and difficult part of Orfeo....” (*The New York Times*)

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*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***

40 years after the birth of opera, composers began creating works for paying audiences. Monteverdi’s *Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria* set a standard for public entertainment with its profound understanding of the human condition balanced with just the right amount of low-comedy and gratuitous violence. *Ulisse* is the epic story of the moving reunion of two highly virtuous characters – Ulysses and his ever-faithful wife, the Queen Penelope, after two decades of separation. *Ulisse* will be performed at the Harris Theater on Friday, October 13. The cast is led by “the great Ulysses of veteran baritone Furio Zanasi, master of the art of declamation.” (*EL PAÍS*)

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*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***

The final opera from Monteverdi shows a composer at the height of his powers, pushing the form and exploiting the potential of the sung drama. In one moment intoxicatingly melodic, in another trenchantly political, *L’incoronazione di Poppea* is based on the true story of the impudent Emperor Nero who recklessly abuses his power in pursuit of Poppea. As relevant now as it was in 1643, this opera still shocks audiences by rewarding impulse and ambition. *Poppea* concludes the Harris Theater engagement on Sunday, October 15 in a matinee performance (1:00PM). Returning to Chicago in the role of Nero is Korean-American countertenor Kangmin Justin Kim about whom *The Guardian* says “His countertenor often defies belief with an elegant tone, instrumental agility and nuanced expressive colouring. It’s a sound to die for...”

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