

# OPERA | 15 ATELIER | 16

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## **Armide Kicks Off Opera Atelier's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season** ***Iconic production will return to the Palace of Versailles*** ***following its Toronto engagement***

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Toronto, ON (September 3, 2015) - Opera Atelier's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season begins with a magical production of **Jean-Baptiste Lully's *Armide***, the supreme operatic masterpiece of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Following its Toronto run, the production tours to the magnificent **Royal Opera in Versailles, France** to participate in the events commemorating 300 years since the reign of Palace creator King Louis XIV. This tour will mark the first presentation as part of Opera Atelier's **recurring engagement at the Palace of Versailles** where the company will present one of its Canadian-made productions at the famed Opéra Royal every second year. The Muslim and Christian worlds collide in ***Armide***, in which the invincible Christian knight Renaud and the Muslim warrior princess Armide play out their doomed love affair against a backdrop of hopeless obsession, jealousy and magic. ***Armide* runs October 22, 24, 25 (3:00pm), 27, 30, and 31 (4:30pm), 2015** (start times 7:30 pm except where noted) at the **Elgin Theatre**, 189 Yonge Street.

"We are proud to open our anniversary season with Opera Atelier's most iconic production, Lully's *Armide*," says Opera Atelier Founding Co-Artistic Director and *Armide* director **Marshall Pynkoski**. "We are revisiting this production because we consider it the finest achievement in Opera Atelier's 30-year history and, like all masterpieces, it offers audiences and artists alike new perspective and insight each time we encounter it. *Armide* still has so much to teach us!"

*Armide* is a haunting, magical tale about unlikely lovers from two different worlds – he is the invincible Christian knight leading his army to victory in the Crusades, and she is a Muslim warrior princess fiercely determined to protect her homeland. Both are powerful leaders renowned as much for their victories in battle as for their otherworldly charisma. Armide has power over the heart of any man, but soon finds she cannot control her own: her hatred of her nemesis Renaud quickly turns to longing and she cannot bring herself to conquer him. As the story unfolds, our two heroes prove to be more alike than different – though each falls hopelessly in love with the other, both are determined to set aside personal happiness in the name of duty and valour. First performed in 1686, *Armide* is composed by Jean-Baptiste Lully with a libretto by Philippe Quinault based on Torquato Tasso's epic poem *Jerusalem Delivered*.

***Armide*** will reunite the cast that created Opera Atelier's 2012 production, which enjoyed sold-out houses and critical acclaim in Toronto and Versailles. Reprising their roles as the ill-fated lovers are soprano **Peggy Kriha Dye** (Armide) and tenor **Colin Ainsworth** (Renaud), along with soprano **Carla Huhtanen**, bass-baritone **Olivier Laquerre**, soprano **Meghan Lindsay**, and tenor **Aaron Ferguson**. Joining the cast are **Stephen Hegedus** (Hidraot) and **Daniel Belcher** (La Haine & Aronte). The production will feature the full corps of **Artists of Atelier Ballet** and **Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra** under the baton of **David Fallis**. The creative team for *Armide* includes director **Marshall Pynkoski**, choreographer **Jeannette Lajeunesse Zingg**, set designer **Gerard Gauci**, and lighting designer **Bonnie Beecher**. *Armide* will be sung in French with English surtitles.

Tickets for *Armide* start at \$38 and can be purchased through Ticketmaster at **1-855-622-ARTS(2787)** or [www.ticketmaster.ca](http://www.ticketmaster.ca), or at the Elgin Theatre Box Office (189 Yonge Street). \$15 Operatix tickets may be purchased by patrons under 30 in person at the Elgin Theatre Box Office or online with the code OPERATIX. (Subject to availability. Valid I.D. required at pick-up.) Group discounts (10+ people) are available by calling 416-703-3767 x222. For more information, visit [www.operaatelier.com](http://www.operaatelier.com).

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Season Presenting Sponsor: BMO Financial Group  
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### **2015 Versailles Tour Sponsors**

Opera Atelier's tour to Versailles in November 2015 is generously supported by:  
William and Catherine Graham, Versailles Tour Underwriters  
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***Opera Atelier*** is North America's premier period opera/ballet company, producing the opera, ballet and drama of the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. While drawing upon the aesthetics and ideals of the period, *Opera Atelier* goes beyond "reconstruction" and infuses each production with an inventive theatricality that resonates with modern audiences. Led by founding artistic directors Marshall Pynkoski and Jeannette Lajeunesse Zingg since 1985, *Opera Atelier* has garnered acclaim for its performances at home as well as in the United States, Europe and Asia.

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