

**Hydro  
Québec**  
Presents

in collaboration  
with

**LA  
PRESSE**

# FESTIVAL DE **lanaudière**



## ROSSINIMANIA

PRESENTED BY

**LA  
PRESSE**

ORCHESTRE MÉTROPOLITAIN

Lawrence Brownlee, tenor  
Rihab Chaieb, mezzo-soprano  
Michael Spyres, tenor  
Ariane Matiakh, conductor

**JULY 31, 2022 | 4:00 PM**

Amphithéâtre  
Fernand-Lindsay

# ROSSINIMANIA

## PROGRAM

---

Gioachino Rossini (1792–1868)

*La gazza ladra*, Overture

“Largo al factotum” from *Il barbiere di Siviglia*

“Una voce poco fa” from *Il barbiere di Siviglia*

“Deh! Scusa i trasporti” from *Elisabetta, regina d’Inghilterra*

“Donala a questo core... Teco or sarà” from *Ricciardo e Zoraide*

“Cessa di più resistere” from *Il barbiere di Siviglia*

INTERMISSION

Albert Roussel (1869–1937)

*Bacchus et Ariane*, Suite No. 2 Op. 43

Gioachino Rossini

“Mentre qual fiera ingorda” from *Zelmira*

“Numè! Se a’ miei sospiri...Qual pena in me già desta” from *La donna del lago*

“Tanti affetti in tal momento” from *La donna del lago*

“Asile héréditaire” from *Guillaume Tell*

“Ah! Vieni, nel tuo sangue vendicherò le offese...che fiero punto e questo”  
from *Otello*

Lawrence Browlee, tenor

Rihab Chaieb, mezzo-soprano

Michael Spyres, tenor

ORCHESTRE MÉTROPOLITAIN

Ariane Matiakh, conductor

## PROGRAM NOTES

---

### Gioachino Rossini: the apotheosis of bel canto

The expression *bel canto*, in the strictest and most rigorous sense, designates the vocal quality of Italian Baroque opera. *Bel canto* saw its first golden age at the time of Handel and Vivaldi, approximately between 1720 and 1740. Rossini’s operatic production at the beginning of the 19th century was modelled after this approach, instigating a second and ultimate golden age that lasted until about 1840. The art of *bel canto* lies at the antipodes of conformity to the rhythms, inflections, and accentuations of the natural spoken voice. In this vein, Rossini cultivated a highly stylized approach supported, among other things, by his unusually generous use of ornamentation. *Coloratura* singing, which is rich in agility and in the variety of ornaments employed, is clearly favoured over syllabic singing with little or no ornamentation. Whereas his Romantic successors sought a more direct expression of human passions, Rossini cultivated an approach to the voice that was purely instrumental but capable of expressing the affects in highly suggestive ways—although more indirectly.

This type of vocality requires sovereign technique and exceptional vocal capacities. Whatever the vocal type for which Rossini writes, the aria always unfolds from the richness of the notes in the voice’s middle range. If the high (or even high-pitched) or low notes are brought in, they are most often rapid and ornamental with respect to the main vocal line. This is *coloratura*, to be articulated with maximum clarity, precision, and flexibility; performers must avoid expedients

to simplify their task, especially with particularly perilous ornamental lines. Moreover, the Rossinian singers must cultivate what is called “analytical phrasing”. They must try to deploy a very rich palette of nuances, accents, and vocal colours to invest the sung phrase with maximum expressiveness. *Chiaroscuro* effects (the rapid passage from strong to weak intensity or vice versa) and *messa di voce* (a gradual increase and then decrease of volume on long notes) are some of its notable features.

Among the different vocal ranges dear to Rossini were two main types of tenor: the *tenore contraltino* and the *baritenore*. The *tenore contraltino* is a particularly high tenor, usually light in colour and in tone, excelling in the execution of extremely agile singing and requiring extraordinary ease in the high register. The *baritenore* is, conversely, a lower-lying tenor range, usually darker in colour and with a denser, fuller-bodied timbre, excelling in powerful declamation. But for this voice type, Rossini also requires virtuoso qualities and great agility. He employs both types of tenors in his operas, as he does in several of the duets on the program of today’s concert. The duets from *Otello*, *Ricciardo e Zoraide* and *Zelmira* were written for two of the greatest tenors of the time: Andrea Nozzari (*baritenore*) and Giovanni David (*tenore contraltino*). If the high tenor embodies the positive hero and the legitimate lover, the low tenor most often represents the darker and more negative figure of the opponent the usurping suitor.

Rossini’s bass types also included baritone voices, though the actual term *baritone* did not exist in his time. Nevertheless, he created roles for a voice type that would later be qualified as the “brilliant baritone”: this is the lyric baritone whose range is particularly adaptable and wide, capable of both ornamentation and fast or even ultra-fast syllabic singing. The role of Figaro in *The Barber of Seville* is certainly the most famous brilliant baritone role Rossini created. Figaro’s Entrance Aria is so high-pitched that it rivals the *baritenore* role of Almaviva. The latter originally featured a lengthy concluding aria in coloratura that was suppressed for decades, the main reason being the extreme difficulty of performing the long solo (recitative, aria and final rondo), compounded by its placement at the end of an opera lasting nearly three hours. Fortunately, since the *bel canto* revival instigated by Maria Callas has finally reached tenor voice types, performers capable of measuring themselves to this art have emerged in an impressive way.

The female vocal type favoured by Rossini was the coloratura contralto. It is for this type of voice, reminiscent of the old *castrato*, that Rossini conceived the role of Rosina in *The Barber of Seville*. If this agile contralto is most often the voice of the heroine in the *buffa* (comic) genre, in the *seria* (tragic) genre, as in *Otello* and *La donna del lago*, Rossini favours sopranos, though most of the time a low soprano closer to the mezzo-soprano range. In fact, Rossini composed his greatest soprano roles for his wife Isabella Colbran, a former contralto who evolved into a soprano but retained the lower voice’s richness in the middle range and the generous use of chest resonance. We must not forget that in Rossini’s time, the intermediate category of mezzo-soprano did not exist, which explains why some Rossinian contralto and soprano roles are sometimes performed by the same singer: a mezzo-soprano possessing great breadth and a blooming treble, who perfectly masters coloratura and who cultivates homogeneity of timbre across the full vocal range.

In the Overture to *La gazza ladra* we recognize Rossini’s predilection for wind and percussion instruments, his use of martial rhythms and his taste for orchestral crescendo effects, all of which earned him the nickname of “The Little German” in his day.

© Michel Veilleux



## DISCOVER THE ARTISTS

Click on the link or read the QR code  
with your smartphone camera





# Benoit Brière

## A passionate spokesperson

Mr. Brière is basically wedded to classical music, given that his spouse is a cellist—and in addition, Joliette-born. “A person who marries must adopt their wife’s hometown.” One might say that our Spokesperson is steeped in classical music everyday from morning to night!

“Don’t search for me this summer: I’ll be at the Festival de Lanaudière.”

Get to know him, his passion for acting and the importance of music in his everyday life. [READ+](#)



---

## THANK YOU TO

OUR DONORS

&

OUR PARTNERS



Click on the link [or](#) read the QR code with your smartphone camera

