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## ***Les Troyens in Concert* brings Berlioz's rarely heard grand opera to Seattle for the first time**

**Tacoma native J'Nai Bridges and superstar Russell Thomas make role debuts as Dido and Aeneas, led by conductor Ludovic Morlot**

**January 17 & 19, 2025  
McCaw Hall**

SEATTLE—Following the success of its recent concert presentation of *Samson and Delilah*, Seattle Opera presents this January a concert rendering of Hector Berlioz's [\*Les Troyens\*](#)—an epic tale of fate, love, and betrayal that is as grand in scope as it is rarely performed. This special pair of performances marks the first time *Les Troyens* will appear on the Seattle Opera stage.

The abridged performance features only the second part (Acts 3–5) of this vast two-part opera. Berlioz called this second part—the only portion of the opera he saw performed in his lifetime—***Les Troyens à Carthage***. Its action begins after the fall of Troy as Aeneas arrives in Carthage and falls in love with Queen Dido.

Berlioz's monumental, one-of-a-kind score will be performed by an equally monumental assemblage of musicians, including the 80-piece **Seattle Symphony**, the 60-member **Seattle Opera Chorus** under the direction of Chorus Master **Michaela Calzaretta**, and eight principal soloists.

Leading the musical forces is Seattle Symphony Conductor Emeritus **Ludovic Morlot**, who returns to Seattle Opera to take on *Les Troyens* for the first time in his career. "*Les Troyens* is the ultimate grand opera—there's really nothing like it," says Morlot, who grew up mere miles from Berlioz's hometown and has long championed Berlioz's music. "It's an opera Berlioz worked on throughout his life and that features everything he had to offer as a composer: incredible writing for the orchestra, sumptuous vocal melodies, and a depth of emotion that is remarkably ambitious. It's simply everything you could want in an opera."

Headlining the cast are two superstar performers both making their role debuts: mezzo-soprano and Tacoma native **J'Nai Bridges** as Dido and tenor **Russell Thomas** as Aeneas. Thomas, who was a Seattle Opera Young Artist during the 2002/03 season, returns to Seattle Opera for the first time since *Nabucco* ('15).

Bridges, whose company debut in 2023's concert presentation of *Samson and Delilah* dazzled audiences from around the Puget Sound, looks forward to returning to McCaw Hall to sing this rich and rewarding role for the first time.

"Returning to Seattle Opera is nothing short of a dream" says Bridges. "When I made my debut in 2023 singing the role of Delilah, I felt the biggest embrace from not only the company, but the audience and city as a whole. Returning to sing the role of Didon from *Les Troyens* is quite the luxury. This opera is rarely produced and it has been a dream of mine to embody this stunning musical language of Berlioz and character in a place I feel most comfortable. I feel very fortunate to have my first one with Seattle Opera. There's nothing like the power of storytelling through music, and I can't wait to share this incredible journey with such talented colleagues, a passionate audience and great company that I like to call home!"

Joining Bridges and Thomas are a strong cast of Seattle Opera regulars, with two debuts from mezzo-soprano **Kelley O'Connor** as Anna and tenor **John Matthew Myers** as Iopas. Returning to Seattle Opera are bass **Adam Lau** (60th Anniversary Concert, '24) as Narbal, bass **Andrew Potter** (*Samson and Delilah in Concert*, '23) as Panthous, soprano **Tess Altiveros** (*A Thousand Splendid Suns*, '23) as Ascanius, and baritone **Richard L. Hodges** (*X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X*, '24) as Mercury/the Ghost of Priam.

The stage concept is overseen by Director **Anderson Nunnelley**, who last appeared at Seattle Opera as Associate Stage Director for *A Thousand Splendid Suns* ('23), with work from Lighting Designer **Robert Aguilar** (*Orpheus and Eurydice*, '22) and Wigs, Hair, and Makeup Designer **Ashlee Naegle** (*Jubilee*, '24).

### **Events for *Les Troyens in Concert***

- **"The Music of Berlioz" with Ludovic Morlot**

*Saturday, January 18, at 7:00 PM, The Opera Center*

To enhance the experience of *Les Troyens in Concert*, conductor Ludovic Morlot will lead a one-session course on the engrossing and dramatic music of Hector Berlioz. With an eye to Berlioz's visionary musico-dramatic techniques, Maestro Morlot will offer audiences a deeper appreciation of what they will hear on stage, as well as a blueprint for further explorations into Berlioz's life and work. Tickets and info at [seattleopera.org/berlioz](https://seattleopera.org/berlioz).

### **Performance Information**

- In French with English subtitles
- Run time: 3 hours including one intermission
- Tickets start at \$35

### **McCaw Hall (321 Mercer Street, Seattle, WA 98109)**

Friday, January 17, at 7:30 PM

Sunday, January 19, at 2:00 PM

<b>Conductor:</b>	Ludovic Morlot
<b>Director:</b>	Anderson Nunnelley
<b>Lighting Designer:</b>	Robert Aguilar
<b>Wigs, Hair, &amp; Makeup Designer:</b>	Ashlee Naegle
<b>Chorus Master:</b>	Michaela Calzaretta

**Dido (Didon):** J'Nai Bridges

<b>Aeneas (Énée):</b>	Russell Thomas
<b>Anna:</b>	Kelley O'Connor†
<b>Narbal:</b>	Adam Lau
<b>Panthous (Panthée):</b>	Andrew Potter
<b>Ascanius (Ascagne):</b>	Tess Altiveros
<b>Iopas:</b>	John Matthew Myers†
<b>Mercury (Mercure)/Ghost of Priam:</b>	Richard L. Hodges

†=Seattle Opera debut

*Tickets and information at [seattleopera.org/troyens](http://seattleopera.org/troyens).*

### **About Seattle Opera**

Established in 1963, Seattle Opera is committed to serving the people of the Pacific Northwest through music, storytelling, and programs for people of all ages. Each year, more than 50,000 people attend the company's performances, and more than 100,000 people are served through school performances, radio broadcasts, and more. The organization brings opera to life in a number of different ways, offering artistic excellence through national and international collaborations. Seattle Opera strives to create an environment where artists, staff, behind-the-scenes workers, and members of the community feel a strong connection to the company, and to the art of opera. Follow Seattle Opera on Facebook, Twitter, SoundCloud, and on Classical KING.

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