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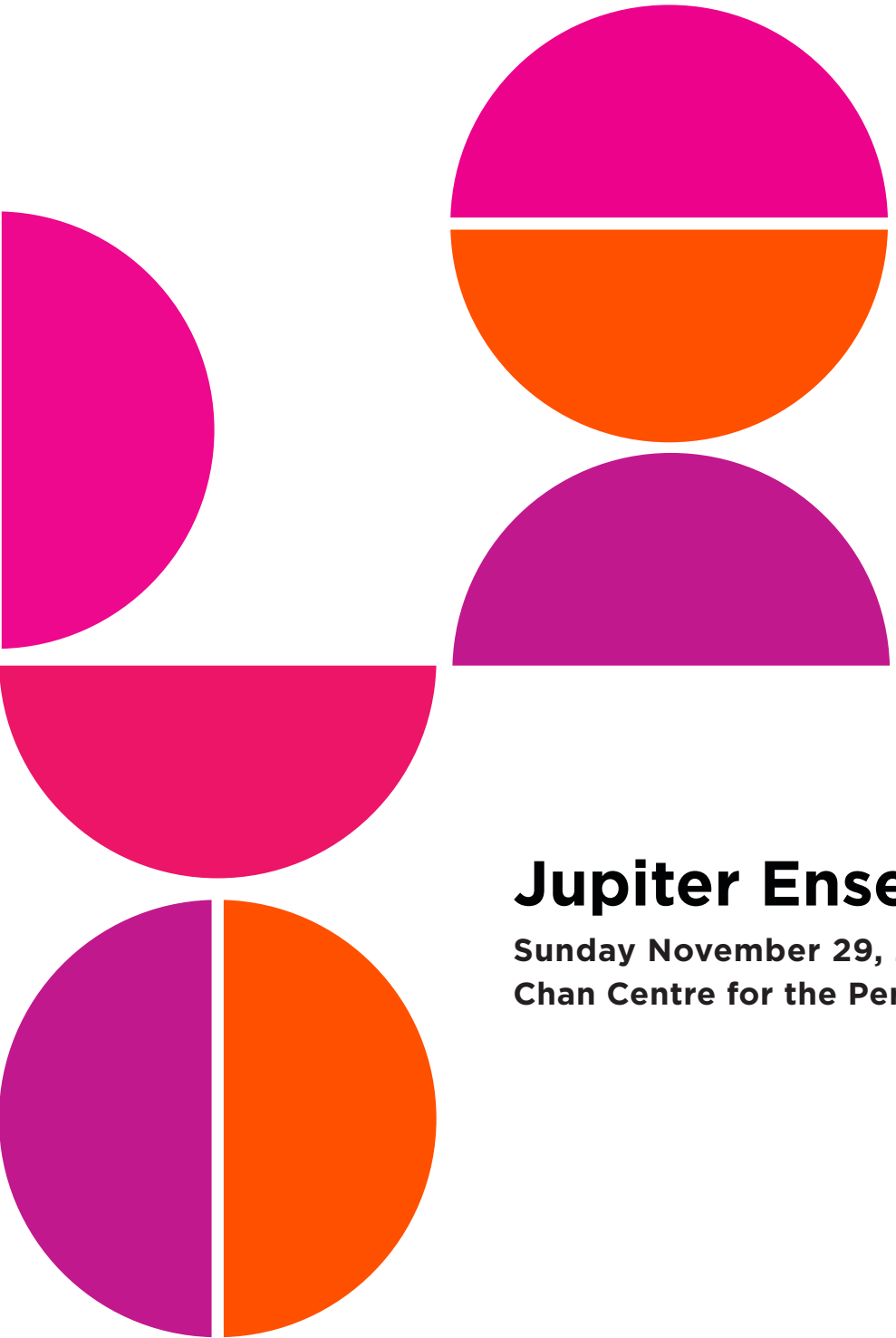

Jupiter Ensemble

Sunday November 29, 2026 at 3pm
Chan Centre for the Performing Arts

From the Artistic Director



Dear Friends,

We are delighted to once again welcome the Jupiter Ensemble to Vancouver. They are returning to the VRS after their captivating performance at the Chan Centre back in 2023.

Today's concert is thematically designed around a Baroque era obsession with the myth of the "Amazons", a race of warrior women who lived without men. The program also celebrates well- and lesser-known Baroque Opera composers. I am sure that, from the first notes, this wonderful group will have you riveted!

We would like to thank our Season Sponsor, GIANTS, and our two concert sponsors for today's performance, Elaine Adair and Lynn Kagan. Without their support, none of the extraordinary performances we present to you each season would be possible.

We are also grateful to the Chan Centre for its support.

Thank you for you being in the audience today.
We hope you enjoy a wonderful afternoon!





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Jupiter Ensemble

Sunday November 29, 2026 at 3pm
Chan Centre for the Performing Arts

Thomas Dunford
Artistic Director & lute

Lea Desandre
mezzo-soprano

Louise Ayrton
violin

Augusta McKay Lodge
violin

Manami Mizumoto
viola

Cyril Poulet
cello

Doug Balliett
double bass

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harpsichord & organ

Keyvan Chemirani
drums

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Amazone

This afternoon's program will be performed without an intermission.

FRANCESCO PROVENZALE (1624–1704)
Non posso far, from *Lo schiavo di sua moglie*

FRANCESCO CAVALLI (1602–1676)
Sinfonia to Act I, from *Ercole amante*

FRANCESCO PROVENZALE
Lasciatemi morir, stelle crudeli, from *Lo schiavo di sua moglie*

GIOVANNI BUONAVENTURA (1638–1692)
Muove il pie fuorie d'Averno, from *Mitilene, regina delle Amazoni*

GEORG CASPAR SCHÜRMANN (ca. 1672–1751)
Sinfonia pour la tempête, from *Die getreue Alceste*

CARLO PALLAVICINO (ca. 1640–1688)
Vieni, corri, from *L'Antiope*

NICOLAUS ADAM STRUNGK (1640–1700)
Sdegni furori barbari, from *L'Antiope*

ANNE DANICAN PHILIDOR (1681–1728)
Selections from *Les amazones*

Marche

Venez, troupe guerrière … Puisque tout est tranquille … Combattons, courrons à la gloire

MARIN MARAIS (1656–1728)
L'Ameriquaine

ANDRÉ CARDINAL DESTOUCHES (1672–1749)
Ô mort! Ô triste mort, from *Marthésie, première reine des amazones*

ANTONIO VIVALDI (1678–1741)
Allegro from Sinfonia to Act I, from *Ercole su 'l Termodonte,* RV 710

GEORG CASPAR SCHÜRMANN
Non ha fortuna il pianto mio, from *Die getreue Alceste*

ANTONIO VIVALDI
Andante from Sinfonia to Act I, from *Ercole su 'l Termodonte,* RV 710

GIUSEPPE DE BOTTIS (1678–1753)
Lieti fiori, from *Mitilene Regina dell'Amazzoni*

ANTONIO VIVALDI
Allegro from Sinfonia to Act I, from *Ercolesu 'l Termodonte,* RV 710

Onde chiare che sussurrate, from *Ercole su 'l Termodonte*, RV 710

Armatae face, from *Juditha triumphans*, RV 644



Photo: Angéline Moizard

Jupiter Ensemble

Created in 2018 by lutenist Thomas Dunford, Jupiter was born from the meeting and friendship between Thomas and young and brilliant musicians of his generation. The great freedom, listening, improvisation and energy acquired by each of them over the years, allow them to perform with passion, strength and emotion the different repertoires they play; from Vivaldi to Joaquin Rodrigo, through Handel, Destouches, Couperin, Mancini or original compositions by Thomas Dunford and Douglas Balliett.

Jupiter's first disc, released in autumn 2019 for the Alpha label, is dedicated to Vivaldi. Alternating extracts from operas and instrumental concerti, it highlights the different soloists of the Jupiter Ensemble. The awards received since then for this recording confirm the success of this first project (Diamant *Opéra Magazine*, Caecillia prize awarded by Union of the Belgian Music Press, International Classical Music Awards (ICMA), France Musique choice).

In September 2021, Jupiter released its second album, "Amazone," Lea Desandre's first recording recital, for the Erato-Warner Classics label. Composed of arias from French and Italian operas, this new album highlights arias from the 17th and 18thcenturies. This program, built in collaboration with musicologist Yannis François, gives pride of place to unjustly forgotten pieces, some of which have never been played since their creation.

In autumn 2022, Jupiter released a third CD "Eternal Heaven", dedicated to Handel's English oratorios, with soloists Lea Desandre and Iestyn Davies, again for the Erato Warner Classics label.

In 2025, Jupiter continued its exploration of the English repertoire, with a fourth disc, "Songs of Passion", dedicated to the composers John Dowland and Henry Purcell. The 2025-2026 season celebrated the release of this disc with a European tour (Bern, Wigmore Hall, Riga, Bozar, Sion, Arnhem, Spa and Rouen).

The 2025-2026 season was also marked by the Jupiter ensemble's very first opera premiere: Handel's "Theodora" (concert version), featuring leading soloists (Lea Desandre, Hugh Cutting, Avery Amereau, Laurence Kilsby, Alex Rosen), a choir formed for the occasion and 25 musicians from the Jupiter ensemble under the direction of Thomas Dunford. The "Theodora" tour consisted of performance at Le Théâtre du Capitole (Toulouse), L'Auditorio Nacional (Madrid), Le Théâtre des Champs Elysées, L'Opéra de Bordeaux (auditorium), La Chapelle Royale (Versailles), L'Opéra de Dijon (auditorium), L'Opéra - Comédie (Montpellier) and Bozar (Brussels).

The "Chasing Rainbows" program, created in 2023-2024, returned to the Opéra-Comique and Bozar in 2025-2026. This program celebrates the musical comedy repertoire (Sound of Music, Mary Poppins, Cindarella...). It gathers together Jupiter in an unconventional formation, Lea Desandre (soloist), Sophie Daneman (staging), Hubert Barrère (costumes) and Bertrand Couderc (lighting). Jupiter will also continue to tour its Handel program with Lea Desandre throughout the season (Bremen Musikfest, Champittet, Festival d'Auvers sur Oise, Wigmore Hall).

Jupiter is supported by Fondation Orange, Cartier, Centre National de la Musique (CNM), DRAC île de France, ADAMI and SPEDIDAM, and is in residence at Fondation Singer-Polignac. Jupiter is a member of FÉVIS and Scène Ensemble.

Jupiter Ensemble is represented by Arts Management Group, New York.

Program Notes

This afternoon's concert follows a Baroque era obsession: the myth of the Amazons, a race of warrior women who lived without men. For Baroque opera composers, these fierce, independent women offered a chance to stage female power at its most vivid, and then complicate it with love, jealousy, and spectacle. Across Italy, France, and Germany, composers returned to the same handful of Amazon heroines—Hippolyta, Antiope, Mytilene, and Thalestris—reworking their stories on the opera stage.

This program also celebrates lauded and lesser-known Baroque opera composers. Italian composers like Provenzale, Cavalli, Pallavicino, Viviani, and De Bottis brought both comedy and high drama to the Amazon myth, pairing virtuosic vocal fireworks with moments of vulnerability. In France, Philidor and Destouches gave the Amazons a more martial, ceremonial treatment, celebrating the women's military glory even as they, too, fell in love. German opera, represented here by Schürmann, absorbed both Italian and French influences, adding new characters and plot twists of its own. Vivaldi closes the arc with music that pushes against convention, using orchestral color and unconventional form to paint emotion with striking realism—including, in his oratorio *Juditha triumphans*, a biblical heroine whose one-woman triumph echoes the victorious Amazons. Together, these selections reveal how thoroughly the Amazons captured the Baroque imagination—as warriors, lovers, and symbols of a world imagined without men in charge.

FRANCESCO PROVENZALE (1624–1704)

Provenzale's *Lo schiavo di sua moglie* adapts its plot from Greek myths of Hippolyta, the Amazon queen. Theseus, Hercules, and Timanthes wage war against the Amazons, but fall into a love pentagon with Hippolyta and her sister, Melanippa. Written for the Neapolitan stage in 1672, Provenzale's opera combines the Venetian style with comic characters singing in a Neapolitan dialect. "Non posso far," from Act I, is sung by Lucillo, a page, who mocks the Amazons. In his view, they "transformed into men" because of their military prowess. The playful music and word painting on *ridere* ("laughter") highlight Lucillo's humorous perspective as a comic character.

Melanippa, sister to the Amazonian queen, sings "Lasciatemi morir, stelle crudeli" in Act I. She desires to perish rather than be captured. The subdued instrumental introduction sets the tone for her lament. An expressive vocal line soars above the accompaniment, which has a repeated harmonic pattern descending by half or whole step—typical of laments since Monteverdi's famous "Lasciatemi morire." The somber tone gives way to a brisk section emphasizing "Weapons are never true expressions of love" before returning to the impassioned lament.

FRANCESCO CAVALLI (1602–1676)

Ercole amante (1662), by Francesco Cavalli, celebrated the marriage between Louis XIV and Maria Theresia. King Hercules is smitten by the beautiful Iole despite being married to Deianira. The Sinfonia to Act I ushers in a melancholy atmosphere as the opera begins. Listen for the rich harmonic texture created by five-part strings (a French tradition) and the suspensions that build tension. The slow pacing leaves room for the instrumentalists to improvise ornamentation, something prized by French audiences.

GIOVANNI BUONAVENTURA VIVIANI (1638–1692)

Viviani's Amazonian opera, *Mitilene, regina delle Amazoni*, premiered in Naples in 1681. "Muove il pie fuorie d'Averno," sung by the Amazonian queen in Act III, explores female power through vocal virtuosity. A short instrumental introduction gives way to explosive and showy vocal runs that paint words like "serpents" and "venom of Cerberus coursing." Amazon myths offered composers a chance to unite theatrical spectacle with vocal and musical spectacle. In Naples, virtuosity was a trademark of the vocal technique, and this aria shows off the style, which would only grow more extravagant later in the Baroque era.

GEORG CASPAR SCHÜRMANN (ca. 1672–1751)

Opera spread quickly throughout Europe in the late 17th century. German opera blended traditions and techniques from all across Europe, adapting Italian-style *da capo* arias, more declamatory recitatives from French opera, and thrilling orchestral spectacle. Though largely based on Lully's opera *Alceste*, librettist Johann Ulrich König's *Die getreue Alceste* added the character of Hippolyta, an Amazon who disguises herself as a man in order to be near Hercules, whom she loves.

The opera's composer Georg Caspar Schürmann worked first in Hamburg as a singer and later oversaw the opera at the court of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel. In Sinfonia pour la tempête, instruments create the storm that appears at sea, just as Alceste is abducted from a ship. The rushing strings represent the winds whipping around the sails, and the percussive *basso continuo* accompaniment creates the waves slapping the sides of the ship.

In Act I, Hippolyta sings "Non ha fortuna il pianto mio" as she rues her unrequited love for Hercules, who bestows his affections on Alceste. Rather than a slow lament, this aria is up-tempo and contains some harmonically ambiguous twists and turns, revealing her internal emotional struggle.

CARLO PALLAVICINO (ca. 1640–1688) / NICOLAUS ADAM STRUNGK (1640–1700)

Although Pallavicino spent most of his career in Venice, *L'Antiope* premiered in Dresden, where he had an appointment as an opera composer. Pallavicino died just before the premiere; Nicolaus Adam Strungk finished the work. In the final scene, Antiope, the Amazonian queen, celebrates in the joyful aria with plenty of vocal fireworks, "Vieni, corri." An example of the early *da capo* aria, it begins with a fiery A section and virtuosic vocal runs to paint the text "Come, hasten, fly." The B section has a slower, more lyrical melody that revels in the "delight" of her heart. The return of the A section requires vocal embellishments that bring new interest to the melody and show off the singer's voice even more.

Earlier in the opera, Idaspe infiltrates the Amazonian island by disguising himself as Celinda—another Amazon—with the goal of winning Queen Antiope's hand in marriage; yet she has fallen for Theseus. The rage aria "Sdegni furori barbari" illustrates his jealousy, anger, and frustration. Immediately, the melody leaps from low to high. Florid vocal writing emphasizes pointedly words such as "where are you," "perfidious jealousy," and "sword." This aria is short and to the point, but nonetheless shows the concentrated emotion of Baroque arias at their best.

ANNE DANICAN PHILIDOR (1681–1728)

As an oboist, music librarian, impresario, and composer, Anne Danican Philidor experienced the entrepreneurial urge felt by musicians at the turn of the 18th century. His masquerade *Les amazones* (1700) offers a French take on the Amazonian myth, presenting loosely connected scenes featuring its heroines as they show off their military might and vocal prowess.

The selections from *Les amazones* bring together two important Amazons: Thalestris and Hippolyta. After a rousing Marche, Thalestris sings a short *récit*, "Venez, troupe guerrière," calling to the Amazonian warriors to leave the battlefield behind. Hippolyta responds with another, "Puisque tout est tranquille," supporting her queen. Then the duet "Combattons, courrons à la gloire" features the two singers harmonizing in thirds and trading off the melody. At the end, the voices show the power of the Amazons as they sing the opening refrain in unison: "Let us battle and hasten to glory!" During this afternoon's performance, however, Lea Desandre will sing both parts.

MARIN MARAIS (1656–1728)

Marais composed across many genres, including works for his instrument, the viol. "L'Ameriquaine" is a movement from his fourth book of *Pièces de viole*, which contained dance suites—similar to those for the harpsichord— with descriptive titles for many of his movements. In the *Suitte dans le goût étranger* (*Suite in an unfamiliar taste*), Marais experimented with viol virtuosity. "L'Ameriquaine" suggests an exoticized view of the New World, and that can be heard in its considerable ornamentation and its brisk and catchy melody.

ANDRÉ CARDINAL DESTOUCHES (1672–1749)

Destouches became a celebrated composer and head of the Paris opera after rising quickly in Louis XIV's favor. *Marthésie, première reine des amazones* (1699) centers on another Amazonian queen who leads her forces against the Scythians. She falls in love with their king, betraying her own vows of female independence. Thalestris sings "Ô mort! Ô triste mort" in Act III as she realizes she is also in love with the Scythian king. This lament is distinctly French; declamatory in style, the music rises and falls with Thalestris's emotions. The instrumental suspensions provide tension with the vocal line, drawing out her grief.

ANTONIO VIVALDI (1678–1741)

Although Vivaldi is best known today for his famous concertos, in his time he made his reputation on his career as an opera composer. *Ercole su 'l Termodonte* premiered in Rome in 1723 and tells the story of Hercules, who travels to Thermodon, the country of the Amazons, to steal a sword from Queen Antiope. The opening Sinfonia to Act I captures the essence of Vivaldi's instrumental style. With a focus on the lyrical melody played by the violins and replete with dissonance, the sinfonia sets the scene for a tender yet uneasy Act I. The Andante shows off an expressive melody by the violins gently accompanied by the continuo. Still, tension persists in the contrast between the minor mode and the lyricism of the violin line. As the music returns to C major, Vivaldi uses off-kilter hemiolas to reference dance in the final Allegro to usher the Sinfonia to a playful and happy conclusion.

In "Onde chiare che sussurrate" from Act II, Hippolyta sings of her love for the captive Theseus, whom Queen Antiope has pledged to kill. Hippolyta's lyrics paint a bucolic picture, and Vivaldi's music brings the text to life. The strings play bird calls, answered by the continuo. Hippolyta's melody provides musical color on words such as "babbling" and "murmuring," while a long coloratura passage draws out "my yearning." A more declamatory passage follows as she quotes the brook and birds. A dance-like section follows, before returning to the opening bird calls and an embellished version of the opening melody. Vivaldi's break with the typically *da capo* format in this aria illustrates his willingness to eschew tradition for emotional accuracy.

Vivaldi's oratorio, *Juditha triumphans*, departs from the Amazon theme but still celebrates female power. Its libretto tells the biblical story of Judith, who seduces Assyrian general Holofernes in order to decapitate him and save her people. "Armatae face" is a tour-de-force, showing off the singer's vocal agility, breath support, and power. Composed for the female musicians at the Ospedale della Pietà in honor of a recent Venetian victory over the Turks, Judith is not an Amazon, but she represents a one-woman army herself. She is clever and capable of besting any man—and in this aria, she proves it with her vocal fireworks.

GIUSEPPE DE BOTTIS (1678–1753)

Giuseppe de Bottis's *Mitilene Regina dell'Amazzoni* premiered in 1707 in Naples. Beyond this, very little is known about the opera, and today it survives in excerpts scattered throughout manuscript collections in Naples. Mytilene's aria, "Lieti fiori," presents the passionate, emotional side of the Amazonian queen. Almost dreamlike in quality, the gentle vocal melody floats above murmuring instruments.

—Alison DeSimone

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There are many ways to support the VRS including making a philanthropic gift, sponsoring a concert and/or including us in your estate plans. If you would like more information, please contact us at **604.602.0363.**



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Vancouver Recital Society acknowledges that we are on the traditional and unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples, including the territories of the xʷməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səl̓ílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.



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