



A Day with Marie Antoinette

ARS
LYRICA
HOUSTON 

Saturday, May 19 at 7:30 pm

Zilkha Hall, Hobby Center for the Performing Arts

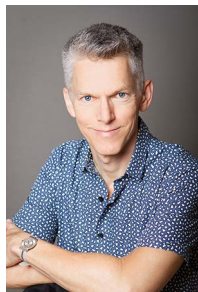
MATTHEW DIRST | *Artistic Director*

FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Good evening and welcome to *A Day with Marie Antoinette*. Tonight's program, the grand finale to our season of *Artful Women*, recreates a day full of music *chez* France's most famous queen. We're delighted to welcome to the Zilkha Hall stage violinist Cynthia Roberts, who debuts with Ars Lyrica in a violin concerto by Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges. A Mozart quartet features Ars Lyrica's principal flutist Colin St-Martin, and the full ensemble offers a dance suite by Christoph Willibald Gluck and Haydn's "La Reine" Symphony.

In 2018/19 Ars Lyrica celebrates ambition and innovation with an *Out of the Box* season, including our first full-length opera: Handel's *Agrippina*. The best benefits expire this evening, so subscribe tonight for either the four- or six-concert package to enjoy a full range of exceptional music from the Baroque and early Classical eras. For the most up-to-date offers and concert information, consult the Ars Lyrica website www.arslyricahouston.org or stop by our table in the Zilkha Hall lobby.

With many thanks for your support and best wishes for the summer.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew Dirst".

MATTHEW DIRST
Artistic Director

DESIGN: FIELD OF STUDY

PROGRAM

Suite from *Orphée et Eurydice*

Christoph Willibald Gluck
(1714–1787)

Gracieux
Gavotte
Air vif
Menuet

Concerto in D Major, Op. 3, No. 1

Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges
(1745–1799)

Allegro maestoso
Adagio
Rondeau

Cynthia Roberts, *violin*

INTERMISSION

Quartet in D Major, K. 285

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756–1791)

Allegro
Adagio
Rondeau

Colin St-Martin, *traverso*
Cynthia Roberts, *violin*
James Dunham, *viola*
Barrett Sills, *cello*

Symphony No. 85 in B-flat Major
("La Reine de France")

Franz Joseph Haydn
(1732–1809)

Adagio–Vivace
Romance (Allegretto)
Menuetto (Allegretto)–Trio
Finale (Presto)

PROGRAM NOTES

Tonight's program conjures a day with Marie Antoinette of France through the diverse musical activities of her world, including intimate chamber playing, court and theatrical dance, and orchestral concerts. Dance suites, the defining mode of French Baroque musical practice, appeared in many guises by the late eighteenth century, from keyboard sources to theatrical spectacles. Our program begins with the latter variety: a suite from Christoph Willibald Gluck's first "reform opera," which sets the story of Orpheus, the great musician, and Eurydice, his ill-fated bride.

Gluck created his *Orfeo ed Euridice* in Vienna in 1762. This work was a new kind of opera, one that rejected the convoluted stories and gratuitous display of Italianate *opera seria* in favor of a dramatically coherent plot and nobly simple music. Empress Maria Theresia (mother of Marie Antoinette, who was then seven years old) attended its premiere. In 1774—the same year Louis XVI ascended to the throne and his wife, Marie Antoinette, became Queen of France—Gluck restaged this opera in Paris. With a revised and expanded libretto in French, *Orphée et Eurydice* entranced Parisian audiences, including Marie Antoinette, partly because of its additional French-style dance music. From that revised score, tonight's program begins with four short dances in contrasting styles.

The violinist Joseph Bologne, son of a French plantation owner in Guadeloupe and his African mistress, was sent at age seven to France for schooling. A precocious student, the young Joseph mastered multiple disciplines, including music and fencing. Upon graduation in 1766 from the *Académie royale polytechnique des armes et de l'équitation* (swordsmanship and horsemanship, respectively), he was awarded a place at court and became Chevalier de Saint-Georges (his father owned a plantation by that name). A virtuoso musician and courtier, this chevalier travelled in the highest social circles—from salons to boudoirs, apparently—and was one of the leading violinist/concertmasters of his day. In the 1770s he became a favorite of Marie Antoinette, who invited

Saint-Georges regularly to her intimate chamber salons, where she accompanied his violin playing on the fortepiano.

During the same decade, Saint-Georges published fourteen violin concertos, which remain his most popular works. The D-major Concerto, Op. 3/1, comprises three movements in the familiar "fast-slow-fast" format of eighteenth-century concertos. An opening *Allegro maestoso* sets a noble tone for the whole with balanced phrases, full textures, and abundant virtuosic display for the solo violin. The central *Adagio* features a highly expressive solo line set above muted and occasionally pizzicato strings. An elegant Rondeau brings the work to a close with the rhythm of the minuet and several short cadenzas.

Mozart's flute quartets came about thanks to a commission from a wealthy amateur flautist from Holland named De Jean, who met Mozart in Mannheim in 1777, during an extended visit that had cost the Mozart family much more than planned. The twenty-one-year-old Wolfgang and his parents were thus grateful for the generous commission for multiple flute concertos and quartets. Though Mozart famously complained about the flute and failed to write all the works he had promised, his extant works for this instrument are beautifully calibrated to take advantage of its liquid tone color and delicate ability to interact with string instruments especially. His three flute quartets are among his highest achievements in writing accessible music for amateur players.

The D Major Flute Quartet, Op. 85, opens with a sunny and whimsical movement that establishes right away the relationship among the instruments, with the flute taking the lead and the three strings serving mostly as lively accompaniment. Its central *Adagio*, a Serenade in all but name, is based on an old French song that one might imagine being sung beneath some beloved's balcony, complete with guitar-like strumming from the pizzicato strings. A spirited *Rondeau* brings the work to a jolly close, with figuration that shuttles between cantabile expression and cheeky flirtation.

In his capacity as music director of the *Concert de la Loge olympique*, Joseph Bologne conducted the first French performances of Haydn's

six “Paris” symphonies in 1786. This was just a few years before the Revolution brought a sudden end to virtually all such activities in Paris; the Chevalier’s highly esteemed orchestra was but one of many artistic casualties. At the very least, his commission of this set of Haydn symphonies ensured a valuable legacy for this concert organization, whose brief 1780–1789 lifespan produced few other notable monuments.

One of the “Paris” Symphonies sports a nickname: No. 85 in B-flat major, dubbed “La Reine de France” (“The Queen of France”) by its publisher Imbault in 1788, apparently because Marie Antoinette admired it more than the others. What took her fancy? This symphony’s second movement *Romance* is a limpid set of variations on a French folksong whose melody and words can be traced back to the medieval Troubadours. By contrast, the work’s first movement is almost ostentatiously ambitious, with a solemn slow introduction leading to an imposing main section with considerable dramatic flair. The Menuet & Trio (mvt. 3) and Finale (mvt. 4) serve up what Haydn did best: toe-tapping tunes with odd surprises here and there, just to make sure we pay attention until the very end!

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ARS LYRICA HOUSTON

Matthew Dirst, *Artistic Director*

A DAY WITH MARIE ANTOINETTE ARTISTS

Colin St-Martin	<i>traverso</i>	Alan Austin	<i>violin 2</i>
Meg Griffith		Kana Kimura	
		Andrés González	
Meg Owens	<i>Baroque oboe</i>	Joanna Becker	
Pablo Moreno		Nadia Lesinska	
James Wilson	<i>natural horn</i>	James Dunham	<i>viola</i>
Loren Tayerle		Erika Lawson	
		Arita Acton*	
Patty Fagan-Miller	<i>Baroque bassoon</i>		
Ellis Reyes-Montes		Barrett Sills	<i>cello</i>
		Eric Smith	
Cynthia Roberts	<i>violin 1</i>		
Maria Lin		Deborah Dunham	<i>violone</i>
Danilo Bonina*			
Stephanie Raby		Matthew Dirst	<i>harpsichord & conductor</i>
James Andrewes			

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Special thanks to the Moores School of Music, University of Houston, for use of its Florentine-style harpsichord by John Phillips (2006) and to St. Philip Presbyterian Church for providing rehearsal space for this program.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



Cynthia Roberts is one of America's leading baroque violinists and has appeared as soloist, leader, and recitalist throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. She has served as concertmaster of the New York Collegium, Apollo's Fire, Concert Royal, and Les Arts Florissants. She performs regularly with the Boston Early Music Festival, Tafelmusik, and the American Bach Soloists. She has appeared with the London Classical Players, Taverner Players, Clarion Music Society, and Smithsonian Chamber Players. Her playing was featured on the soundtrack of the film *Casanova* and she has performed live on the Late Show with David Letterman. She recently toured South America as concertmaster of the Los Angeles ensemble Musica Angelica with actor John Malkovich in *The Infernal Comedy: Confessions of a Serial Killer* and appeared as guest soloist and concertmaster with the New World Symphony conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas. Ms. Roberts also teaches at the Juilliard School and the Oberlin Baroque Performance Institute. She has given master classes at Eastman, the Cleveland Institute, Cornell, Rutgers, the Minsk Conservatory in Belarus, and for the Jeune Orchestre Atlantique in Santes, France. Her recording credits include Sony, Analekta, BMG/Deutsche Harmonia Mundi, and Electra.

At age 12, Ms. Roberts debuted with Chicago's Grant Park Symphony, performing the Mendelssohn Concerto, and three years later appeared as soloist with the Boston Pops. Recent highlights include recordings of sonatas and trios with fortepianist Christoph Hammer, a national broadcast on NPR's Performance Today of Bach's Fourth Brandenburg Concerto, a solo performance of Bach's Sonatas for Violin & Harpsichord at the Mostly Mozart Festival, recordings of the complete Brandenburg Concertos and Monteverdi's Orfeo with Apollo's Fire, chamber music at the Prague Festival and the Boston Early Music Festival. She has made more than fifty recordings on such labels as Sony Classical, BMG/Deutsche Harmonia Mundi and Electra, as well as numerous broadcasts for NPR, CBC and WDR.



Colin St-Martin, who since childhood was interested in 17th and 18th century European culture, began playing the traverso at the age of 14. His studies took him to Brussels, Belgium, where he obtained a First Prize (bachelor of music) from the Royal Conservatory of Music under the tutelage of the renowned master, Bart Kuijken. He returned to the US to complete graduate work at the Early Music Institute at Indiana University. Currently, Mr St-Martin is busy as a performer and recording artist with many early music ensembles across the US in addition to being sought after as a master teacher.



Ars Lyrica Founder & Artistic Director **Matthew Dirst** is the first American musician to win major international prizes in both organ and harpsichord, including the American Guild of Organists National Young Artist Competition (1990) and the Warsaw International Harpsichord Competition (1993). Widely admired for his stylish playing and conducting, the *Dallas Morning News* recently praised his "clear and evocative conducting" of Handel's *Alexander's Feast*, which "yielded a performance as irresistibly lively as it was stylish." Dirst's recordings with Ars Lyrica have earned a Grammy nomination and widespread critical acclaim. His degrees include a PhD in musicology from Stanford University and the *prix de virtuosité* in both organ and harpsichord from the Conservatoire National de Reuil-Malmaison, France, where he spent two years as a Fulbright scholar. Equally active as a scholar and as an organist, Dirst is Professor of Music at the Moores School of Music, University of Houston, and Organist at St Philip Presbyterian Church in Houston. He is the author of *Engaging Bach: The Keyboard Legacy from Marpurg to Mendelssohn* (Cambridge University Press, 2012) and the editor of *Bach and the Organ* (University of Illinois Press, 2016).

Artful Women HONOREES



German born mezzo soprano **Sonja Bruzauskas** enjoys an active career in opera and concert, education, art administration and mothering. Sonja has sung and lectured at institutions such as Cal Arts, Vanderbilt, LSU, Rice University, the University of Houston, the Philosophical Society of Houston as well as numerous health institutions. Sonja's philanthropic efforts focus on the creation of artistic events to support the community and to raise awareness of the arts. One of her creations is **pARTnerschools**, an organization that connects schools from different socioeconomic backgrounds through the arts. Sonja has served on the board of directors for the Houston Chamber Choir, the Philosophical Society at Rice, the Houston Tuesday Musical Club and the German Center Houston. Sonja has two daughters, Clara Sophie and Emilia Marie.

"The arts stimulate my creative approach to mothering and they help me in my quest to make valuable contributions to our community. By the same token, I aim for my own artistic contributions to inspire creativity in others."



Mexican born, **Cecilia Duarte** is an active and versatile singer in the Houston area. She created the role of Renata in the Mariachi opera “Cruzar la Cara de la Luna” which has travelled nationally and internationally with great acclaim, due to its originality and its story, which addresses the issue of immigration. Most of Cecilia’s work revolves around early music, with Ars Lyrica Houston and Mercury Houston, as well as the premiering of new chamber operas including *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*, *Some Light Emerges*, *After the Storm*, and *A Way Home*, with Houston Grand Opera and jazz. Cecilia has worked with several outreach programs in the city bringing music to Houston communities for all ages.

“I believe that art heals, and keeps universal values alive. Art is my life, I live of it, and I like sharing that with those that don’t have easy access to it. I have been blessed in this city to be able to develop myself as an artist, and I am glad to use my talents to help others in different ways. It is my hope that my daughter develops her sense of compassion, and altruism, through art.”



Dr. Rachel Ellsworth was born in Annapolis, Maryland and completed undergraduate and medical school training in Baltimore. Rachel relocated to Houston for her surgical training in the Texas Medical Center and achieved board certification in both General Surgery and Colon and Rectal Surgery. Rachel is Assistant Professor in the Department of Surgery at Houston Methodist Hospital and is married to Dr. Warren Ellsworth, a plastic surgeon. Together, they are avid supporters of the performing arts in Houston and have leadership roles with Houston Grand Opera, Houston Chamber Choir, and Ars Lyrica to name just a few. Their love for opera stems from a deep connection to Wagner, as Warren’s father was a heldentenor, famous for his role as Parsifal. Rachel and Warren were thrilled to welcome their daughter, Isabel, into the world almost two years ago. The arts have been an incredible force in Rachel and Warren’s life and they look forward to nurturing these important roots to help shape Isabel’s future. As children of artists, Rachel and Warren believe that:

“understanding the effort and sacrifice made by those involved in the arts sets a good example by which to live.”



Sara Loperena is a native Houstonian and lifelong lover of the arts. She earned bachelor’s degrees in English and Theology from Marymount University and an MA in Theological Studies from St. Thomas University. Sara’s passion for reading led her to found The Book Cycle, Inc. a 501(c)(3) organization that works to create a community of book lovers in Houston and beyond, organizing events where people can donate and take away books, all for free. Sara and her husband Gabriel have passed on their love of music and art to their two children, Gabriel (4) and Nina (3), who regularly attend opera, theatre and musical performances with them.

“Children are naturally empathetic and creative. I believe that music and art nurture those qualities and form the basis of who they are as people, and as members of a community.”



Dominique McCormick is a lyric soprano from New York known for her “superlative vocals complimented with wonderful expressiveness and impeccable comic timing” (Houstonia). She received her undergraduate and master’s degrees from the Eastman School of Music. She continued her education and professional experience in France performing oratorio and operatic works with, l’Orchestre Nationale des Pays de la Loire, Théâtre d’Asnières, Théâtre du Tambour-Royal and upon her return to the United States, singing with Ars Lyrica and Opera in the Heights in Houston. She is currently finishing her doctoral dissertation on the vocal works of Marital Caillebotte. She is also proud to be the Co-Founder/owner and Artistic Director of Century Fine Arts, a music and fine arts school in Sugar Land, TX. The school’s mission is “Planting the Seeds of Creativity”. Not only does Century Fine Arts offer high quality private and group lessons but provides a free public concert series for Senior Living Centers, hospitals and small gatherings in the Fort Bend Area. Bringing musical performances and arts showcases to the community in a format that is open, welcoming and free.

“Even as a singer/musician, it wasn’t until my role as a mother that my contribution to the artistic world became clear. Having children, and being a mother made me a stronger, more generous and altruistic artist. Giving music to others in the form of performing, teaching and philanthropy is one of the most fulfilling aspects of my life, thus creating a positive example for my son and daughter.”



Yvonamor Palix, of French and Mexican origin, her father a former diplomat was Consul General of Mexico. Yvonamor has been an International Art Gallerist and curator for over 25 years owning galleries in Paris, Mexico City and Houston. Her passion and expertise have led her gallery to be recognized by prestigious art institutions, these include select art fairs such as Basel, FIAC, ARCO, Chicago, MACO and Miami Basel. In her 25 years of activity she has helped launch the careers of many young artists several being presented in the most important museums and official art biennials: Venice, Istanbul, Lyon, Site Santa Fe and Havana. In her spare time she collaborates with musicians, developing the concept of pairing classical music with specific paintings by artists from all around the world. Her “pièce unique” concerts garnered rave reviews. Through her association with music ensembles such as Ars Lyrica who not only perform exquisitely curated repertoires, but also foment music history she has continued to develop her taste in classical music. Yvonamor is an active board member of TFAA-Texas French Alliance for the Arts, EFGH-Education Francaise Greater Houston, TAFS-Texas Association for French Solidarity, PART Pan American Round Table-Houston Chapter and she curates fund raiser art events for associations such as the CAC-The Children’s Advocacy Center. Yvonamor, her husband Mark and daughter “Oli” support the music arts in Houston through small ensembles because in Yvonamor’s words,

“Small ensembles provide the public with intimate concert halls, uncommon programs rich with unique elements such as period instruments and including personal commentary by the music director, thus rendering the concerts an enriching experience for people of all ages and stratus.”



Dr. Ishwaria Subbiah is an oncologist and palliative care physician at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. Through her patient care and research, she has developed an expertise in symptom management and preservation of quality of life through treatment for cancer. Outside of her profession, she is an avid runner and hiker, enjoying the outdoors with her husband Vivek, also an oncologist at MD Anderson, and their children, Sasha (6), Nathan (4), and Ari (18 months). Ishwaria is a passionate supporter of the performing arts in Houston, serving as a Trustee of the Houston Symphony and the Houston Grand Opera. She chairs the Steering Committee of the Young Associates Council of the Houston Symphony and spearheads the children’s initiatives of the Houston Symphony League.

“I recognize the impact of the arts on community building and am committed to engaging the next generation of art lovers.”



Stephanie von Stein is a single mother of 3 beautiful children. Victoria Grace (age 16), Werner James III (“W.J.” age 15), and William Page (age 4). She has had a lifelong career in luxury retail, fashion, and jewelry spanning from CHANEL, Bottega Veneta, Neiman Marcus, Saks Fifth Avenue, Jil Sander, Ultimo, and now is the Director of Bulgari in Houston, Texas. Stephanie lived in San Francisco, California for several years and during her time on the West Coast she served as President of the Maiden Lane Committee, Executive Board Member of the Union Square Association, and was an active member of the San Francisco Ballet Auxiliary. She has served on Texas boards including Texas Ballet Theater in Fort Worth and Dallas. Through her positions in luxury retail Stephanie has touched many arts, charity, and philanthropic organizations. Stephanie is an avid advocate for domestic violence and has worked with Crimestoppers, AVDA (Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse), and DAYA.

“I believe that the arts are a way to heal and transport one’s mind into a world of peace, harmony, and culture to show the beauty and restore faith in others.”



Connie Kwan-Wong is an entrepreneur, magazine publisher, and philanthropist who combines her many endeavors with her passion for charitable work. Connie has had the good fortune of being influenced by several different cultures during her life’s journey. She was born in Hong Kong and resided there until the age of eleven when her parents moved the family to Australia. At twenty-one, she moved to the US to pursue her academic studies and launched her career as a pediatric sonographer, specializing in congenital heart diseases. Connie currently lives in Houston, Texas with her husband, Stephen Wong, and their two lovely daughters, Zoe (3) and Elly (1). Connie established the Connie Kwan-Wong Foundation to help with her charitable works, especially those organizations serving children, to serve as a bridge between the wonderful Houston community and the reputable charitable organizations in the area. Connie’s CKW collection, a skincare and accessories company helps fund the foundation. In 2015, she launched a philanthropic, inspirational, and quality living magazine to reinforce her passion for charity called CKW LUXE Magazine. She has received multiple congressional recognitions, and in 2015 Connie was named one of the Top 30 Influential Women of Houston and in a gesture to honor the benefactress, the City of Houston recently proclaimed May 26, 2017 as CKW (Caring, Kindness, and Wisdom) Day.

“Music is good for the soul and makes children more compassionate and well-rounded.”

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ABOUT ARS LYRICA

Founded in 1998 by harpsichordist and conductor Matthew Dirst, **Ars Lyrica Houston** presents a diverse array of music from the 17th and 18th centuries on period instruments. Its local subscription series, according to the Houston Chronicle, “sets the agenda” for early music in Houston and it also appears regularly at major festivals and conferences, including the 2014 Berkeley Early Music Festival & Exhibition. Ars Lyrica’s distinctive programming favors Baroque dramatic and chamber works, and its pioneering efforts have won international acclaim: the ensemble’s world première recording of Johann Adolf Hasse’s *Marc’Antonio e Cleopatra*, hailed by Early Music America as “a thrilling performance that glows in its quieter moments and sparkles with vitality,” was nominated for a Grammy Award® for Best Opera 2011.

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