



For Immediate Release

***LA BELLE ET LA BÊTE***  
***(Beauty and the Beast)***

**PHILIP GLASS' ACCLAIMED OPERA SET TO JEAN COCTEAU'S ICONIC FILM  
STAGED IN A BOLD MULTI-MEDIA OPERA PARALLÈLE PRODUCTION  
PRESENTED IN COLLABORATION WITH SFJAZZ, JULY 14 – 17, 2022;**

**TICKETS NOW ON SALE**

<https://www.sfjazz.org/tickets/productions/philip-glass-la-belle-et-la-bete/>

SAN FRANCISCO (June 17, 2022) — **Opera Parallèle (OP)**, in collaboration with **SFJAZZ**, will present **Philip Glass' opera (*Beauty and the Beast*)** based on the epic 1946 romantic fantasy film by French poet and filmmaker, **Jean Cocteau**. This surreal new interpretation on a timeless tale, fusing opera and film live on stage will be performed July 14, 15, 16 and 17 at SFJAZZ, 201 Franklin Street. These performances will be presented in celebration of the composer's 85<sup>th</sup> birthday.

*La Belle et la Bête* is the second in a trilogy of works Glass intended as an homage to Cocteau. With this production, Opera Parallèle will complete performances of all three operas, having performed *Orphée* in 2011, and *Les Enfants Terribles* in 2017.

Once upon a time, in a world of magic and wonder, the true love of a beautiful girl finally dispelled the torment of a feral but gentle-hearted beast. Jean Cocteau's sublime adaptation of Mme. Leprince de Beaumont's fairy-tale masterpiece is a landmark of motion picture fantasy, with unforgettably poignant performances by **Josette Day** and **Jean Marais**. Plaudits for Cocteau and cast were universal by film critics; distinguished film authority Roger Ebert said it was "One of the most magical of all films." This timeless icon of cinematic wonder served as the inspiration for Philip Glass' 1994 opera.

For this groundbreaking fusion of opera and cinema, Glass stripped the original soundtrack to integrate his own music, to be performed live with the film. The new score incorporates the original spoken dialogue, now sung to match the on-screen action. By transforming the characters of both *La Bête* and *La Belle* from childlike figures to complex adult characters living in a surrealistic dream

world, Cocteau transforms the tale into a dreamlike vision of death and desire, while exploring themes that continue to resonate today - identity, compassion and inner beauty.

Glass' initial concept was for the opera to be performed by four singers taking on multiple characters along with a small instrumental ensemble while the film is projected in the background. With the exclusive permission of Philip Glass, the Philip Glass Ensemble and the Cocteau Estate, Opera Parallèle has been allowed to develop a new hybrid approach for this production. This interpretation will blur the boundaries of film and opera even further to create a music theater experience - honoring two of the great artistic minds of modern times, Cocteau and Glass.

Opera Parallèle's Director and Concept Designer **Brian Staufenbiel** commented,

“The synergy of film and opera is deep in the DNA of Opera Parallèle's aesthetic and history of past productions. Our privileged relationship with Philip Glass has inspired us to finish his Cocteau-trilogy with this new version of *La Belle et la Bête*. OP's approach has been to respond to the dream-like conscious and subconscious elements with our own filmed sections and live action on-stage. We explore the questions —like Cocteau— of what is *true* beauty, and in the greater context of this dream-tale, what is good and evil? Cocteau understood what it was like to live with a mask, in fear of showing his true self and sexual orientation, hence his greater allegorical question: can we go beyond external appearances and categories (the conscious, the beast) and discover what beauty lies inside the soul, (the subconscious). When I take this mask off, will you love me for who I am?”

The Opera Parallèle cast features soprano **Vanessa Becerra** in her San Francisco operatic debut as *La Belle* and baritone **Hadleigh Adams** as *La Bête/Le Prince/Avenant*. In a casting update, the roles of *Le Père/Ludovic /L'Usurier* will be sung by baritone **Eugene Brancoveanu** and soprano **Sophie Delphis** will now sing the dual roles of *Félicie/Adelaïde*.

Performing the Philip Glass score will be members of the **MANA Saxophone Quartet**; keyboardists **Keisuke Nakagoshi** (OP's resident pianist), **Kevin Korth** and **Taylor Chan**; with **Kjell Nordeson** on percussion.

The updated creative team includes **Nicole Paiement**, *conductor*; **Brian Staufenbiel**, *director and concept designer*; **David Murakami**, *projection designer and director of photography*; **Natalie Barshow**, *costume designer*; **Y. Sharon Peng**, *hair & makeup designer*; **Mextly Couzin**, *lighting designer*; **Jacques Desjardins**, *assistant conductor*; **Tanika Baptiste**, *assistant director*; **Jay Cruz**, *electric sound designer and programmer*; **Kristof Moy**, *French language coach*; and **Sam Clevenger**, *VFX Artist*.

Sung in French with English subtitles, the 90-minute *La Belle et la Bête* is performed without intermission. Four performances are scheduled for Thursday, July 14, 2022 at 7.30 p.m.; Friday, July 15 at 7.30 p.m.; Saturday, July 16 at 7.30 p.m.; and Sunday, July 17 at 3 p.m. Tickets begin at \$55 and are available online at <https://www.sfjazz.org/tickets/productions/philip-glass-la-belle-et-la-bete/> or calling the SFJAZZ Box Office, (415) 788-7353. All performances are presented at Miner Auditorium,

SFJAZZ Center, 201 Franklin Street, San Francisco. Following the July 14 performance, the audience is invited to attend a meet-the-cast reception with a no-host bar.

SFJAZZ requires proof of vaccination against COVID-19 prior to entering the SFJAZZ Center. All patrons must provide proof of having completed the initial course of vaccination, and a government issued photo ID to enter the SFJAZZ Center. (A student ID for individuals under the age of 18 is acceptable). All audience members are required to wear a mask while watching the performance.

Opera Parallèle has previously collaborated to great success with SFJAZZ with the presentation of **Terence Blanchard's** acclaimed opera, *Champion* in 2016, and again with the double-bill of **Leonard Bernstein's** *Trouble in Tahiti* and **Jake Heggie's** *At the Statue of Venus* in 2018.

As part of OP's Bullhorn community programming, on Wednesday, June 29 at 6.30 p.m., Opera Parallèle, in collaboration with The Academy SF, will present a public panel exploring the themes of identity and perceptions of beauty in the LGBTQ+ community. Entitled, "**A Tale as Old as Time: Exploring Queer History and Identity Through Beauty and the Beast,**" the conversation will be moderated by OP's Community Programs Ambassador **Michael Mohammed**, with **Dr. Ellie Zara Ley** from San Francisco's Gender Confirmation Center and baritone **Hadleigh Adams**. The public is requested to reserve their attendance; visit [www.operaparallele.org/labelle-labete](http://www.operaparallele.org/labelle-labete). The Academy SF is located at 2166 Market Street.

To enhance the public's experience of *La Belle et la Bête*, OP's Community Programs Ambassador Michael Mohammed has curated a selection of background materials including videos, suggested readings, music, and more, on the company's website: <https://operaparallele.org/lblbenhance/>.

Major support for *La Belle et la Bête* has been provided by **Gordon Getty, Stephen & Diane Heiman**, and **Horizons Foundation**, with support from the **Hulisch/Flechtheim Fund, Future Fund, Dillonwood Arts**, and **Anne Sterling Dorman LGBT Fund**. Additional support has been provided by **Elizabeth McMillan & George Varian, Susan & Mark Geyer**, and Producers Circle members **Donna Dubinsky & Len Shustek**.

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Please connect for interview, photos and press credentials.