

Curtis Opera Theatre Launches 2025–26 Series with Monteverdi's Landmark Opera *L'Orfeo*

Director John Matsumoto Giampietro and conductor David Stern lead a cast of rising young opera stars and members of the Curtis Symphony Orchestra at Philadelphia Film Center's Mainstage Theater

Philadelphia, PA—November 4, 2025— **Curtis Opera Theatre** opens its thrilling 2025–26 series with the groundbreaking opera *L'Orfeo* at the Philadelphia Film Center's Mainstage Theater on Friday, November 14, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. and Sunday, November 16, 2025, at 2:00 p.m.

Conceived by acclaimed director, educator, and playwright **John Matsumoto Giampietro**, Curtis' production of this historic masterpiece features a stellar cast of rising young stars of the Curtis Opera Theatre, including tenor **Harun Ellis Tekin** as Orfeo, soprano **Juliet Renée Rand** as Euridice, bass-baritone **Sebastian Wittmoser Herrera** as Plutone, soprano **Jennifer Robinson** as Proserpina, mezzo-soprano **Maisy Parker** as Speranza, tenor **Landry Allen** as Apollo, soprano **Maya Mor-Mitrani** as La Musica/Eco, bass-baritone **Edward Smith** as Cartone, and mezzo-soprano **Carlyle Quinn** as Messaggera.

Already a member of the Curtis faculty, **Mr. Giampietro** was recently named dramatic advisor, acting instructor, and resident stage director for the school's vocal studies and opera department starting with the 2025–26 school year. He previously directed Curtis' acclaimed production of *The Cunning Little Vixen* in May 2024.

"Our production of *L'Orfeo* centers around the psychic inheritance of ancient myths: ritual, symbol, and repetition in a contemporary and timeless context," says Mr. Giampietro. "We honor it as 'the first opera': the masterpiece that led to a new form of ritual, allowing audiences to witness the human experience through opera. The gift is that we continue to participate in this ritual over 400 years later with the creation of our own *L'Orfeo*, told from our perspectives and experiences, and with our bodies."

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The production also features a chorus of Curtis Opera Theatre young artists, joined by members of the renowned **Curtis Symphony Orchestra**, all under the baton of **David Stern**, founder of the Paris-based ensemble Opera Fuoco and music director of Palm Beach Opera. Stern previously conducted Curtis Opera Theatre's production of Handel's *Ariodante* in 2023.

Considered the first masterpiece of opera—and a groundbreaking work that shaped the genre—*L'Orfeo* moves beyond earlier recitative-dominated styles to create a more dramatic and emotionally-resonant experience. Premiered in 1607, it merges Renaissance polyphony with Baroque drama, placing raw human emotions at its core. Based on the Greek myth, the opera tells the story of Orpheus, a musician whose love for Eurydice drives him to challenge fate itself. Over 400 years later, this legendary work remains as powerful and moving as ever.

“To put the impact of *L'Orfeo* into perspective, we need to remember presenting this well-known story of myth with music was nothing short of revolutionary,” says Mr. Stern. “Since references in the story were well-known to audiences of the period, Monteverdi could capitalize on each detail to evoke the imagery of the text through instrumentation,” he continues. “To bring the score to life, we’re mixing modern and ancient instruments. For example, string players will be using baroque bows, so that they can express all the rhetorical subtleties of the score. We’re also mixing bassoons with trombones to evoke the buzz of the old sackbut, and oboes with trumpets to replace the cornetti.”

This innovative production is brought to life through the technical team of Tony Award-winning scenic designer **Alexis Distler**, costume designer **Audrey Nauman**, lighting designer **Kate Ashton**, and hair and makeup designer **Brittany Rappise**. It is choreographed by New York-based choreographer **Caili Quan**.

Curtis Opera Theatre returns to the stage on February 26, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. and February 28, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. at the Philadelphia Film Center's Mainstage Theater for *La Passion de Simone*, a meditation on faith, sacrifice, and resistance by Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho and librettist Amin Maalouf. The production will be presented in collaboration with Curtis New Music Ensemble. The 2025–26 opera series concludes with Shakespeare's spellbinding classic *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on April 30, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. and May 2, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. at the Kimmel Center's Perelman Theater. To learn more about these performances, as well as the Curtis Symphony Orchestra, Curtis New Music Ensemble concerts, Curtis Recital Series, and more, visit curtis.edu/calendar.

TICKETS

Tickets for both performances of *L'Orfeo* are currently sold out. To be notified when additional tickets become available, join the wait list for the [November 14](#) and [November 16](#) performances.

L'Orfeo *Curtis Opera Theatre*

Friday, November 14, 2025, 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, November 16, 2025, 2:00 p.m.

Mainstage Theater, Philadelphia Film Center

Claudio Monteverdi, music

Alessandro Striggio, libretto

CAST

La Musica/Eco	Maya Mor-Mitrani
Orfeo	Harun Ellis Tekin
Euridice	Juliet Renée Rand
Messaggera	Carlyle Quinn
Speranza	Maisy Parker
Caronte	Edward Smith
Proserpina	Jennifer Robinson
Plutone	Sebastian Wittmoser Herrera
Apollo	Landry Allen
Ninfa	Shikta Mukherjee
Pastore I	Sam Higgins
Pastore II	Henry Drangel
Pastore III	Brett Michael Hunter
Spirito I	Celestia Song
Spirito II	Kate Li
Spirito III	Isabella Hincksman

Chorus: Jeysla Rosario Santos, Shikta Mukherjee, Celestia Song, Isabella Hincksman, Sam Higgins, Maisy Parker, Kate Li, Carlyle Quinn, Brett Michael Hunter, Henry Drangel, Ross Macatangay, Ryan Jester, and Yulin Yan

David Stern, conductor

John Matsumoto Giampietro, stage director

Curtis Symphony Orchestra

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L'Orfeo is performed in Italian with English supertitles.

Curtis Opera Theatre is generously supported by the Ernestine Bacon Cairns Trust and the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation.

About Curtis Opera Theatre

Through innovative productions and extraordinary musicianship, the promising young artists of Curtis Opera Theatre work alongside renowned conductors, directors, and designers to present audiences with fresh and compelling performances from across the operatic repertoire. Under the visionary leadership team of Miloš Repický, Karen Slack, Amanda Majeski, and John Matsumoto Giampietro, Curtis' voice and opera students are cast regularly throughout the season, providing a unique level of performance experience to draw upon throughout their careers with top opera companies across the United States and Europe, including La Scala, Covent Garden, Paris Opera, the Vienna Staatsoper, Zurich Opera, Houston Grand Opera, the San Francisco Opera, and the Metropolitan Opera.

About the Curtis Institute of Music

At Curtis, the world's great young musicians develop into exceptional artists, creators, and innovators. With a tuition-free foundation, Curtis is a unique environment for teaching and learning. A small school by design, students realize their artistic potential through intensive, individualized study with the most renowned, sought-after faculty. Animated by a learn-by-doing philosophy, Curtis students share their music with audiences through more than 100 performances each year, including solo and chamber recitals, orchestral concerts, and opera—all free or at an affordable cost—offering audiences unique opportunities to participate in pivotal moments in these young musicians' careers. Curtis students experience a close connection to the greatest artists and organizations in classical music, and innovative initiatives that integrate new technologies and encourage entrepreneurship—all within an historic campus in the heart of culturally rich Philadelphia. In this diverse, collaborative community, Curtis' extraordinary artists challenge, support, and inspire one another—continuing an unparalleled legacy of musicians who have led, and will lead, classical music into a thriving, equitable, and multidimensional future. Learn more at [curtis.edu](https://www.curtis.edu).

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