

SPRING 2015

A F P O B
American Friends
of the Paris Opera & Ballet

Dear Friends:

During the first half of 2015, you helped us celebrate music, dance, and education! Your support and passion are what constantly help us find new ways to strengthen our role as a leader in French- American cultural exchange and I would like to specially thank those of you who joined us at the French Consulate in New York to welcome the new director of the Opera National de Paris, Stephane Lissner; at the dinner following a preview performance of Christopher Wheeldon's Broadway hit; and at a lunch in honor of Elisabeth Platel, Director of the Paris Opera Ballet School of Dance.

Looking ahead to the fall, it is with excitement that I invite you to join us at the Park Avenue Armory in New York for a new creation by Wayne McGregor featuring Etoiles and soloists from the Paris Opera Ballet, and then for an exceptional trip to Paris that will support the opening of Benjamin Millepied's first season with a grand gala evening which will celebrate French-American Friendship.

*With warm wishes-
Olivia Flatto, Chairman*



Nicolas Teste and Diana Damrau, during the dinner in honor of Stephane Lissner at the French Consulate in New York on February 19, 2015

OPERA
NATIONAL
DE PARIS

OPÉNING GALA

15/16

SEASON

BENJAMIN MILLEPIED - PARIS OPERA BALLET

SAVE THE DATE
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24TH 2015

PALAIS GARNIER

SAVE THE DATE
PARIS FALL ESCAPE
SEPTEMBER 24 TO 26, 2015

THE AMERICAN FRIENDS
OF THE PARIS OPERA & BALLET

INVITE YOU TO

AN EXCEPTIONAL CELEBRATION IN PARIS,
INCLUDING THE GRAND OPENING
OF BENJAMIN MILLEPIED 'S FIRST SEASON
AS DIRECTOR OF THE PARIS OPERA BALLET

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New York, NY 10075
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Honoring the new director of the Opéra National de Paris, Stephane Lissner

On Thursday, February 19, AFPOB organized a beautiful dinner at the French Consulate in New York to honor Stephane Lissner, director of the Opéra National de Paris. It was Mr. Lissner's first visit to New York since he took the helm of the 300 year-old cultural institution and an opportunity for him to share his vision and strategy with 80 privileged guests, who then enjoyed a private performance by world renowned singers Diana Damrau and Nicolas Teste. The reception was hosted by Bertrand Lortholary, Consul General of France and his wife Laurence Mezin, AFPOB's chairman Olivia Flatto,

Mary Sharp Cronson, Donna Corbat, the Honorable Sana Sabbagh and Maz Zouhairi (President and CEO of Lalique North America). It was an evening filled with charm, elegance, intimacy and glamour: an exquisite French-American experience.

Among those celebrating Mr. Lissner were many friends, artists and philanthropists: Peter Gelb, General Manager of the Metropolitan Opera, Adrienne Arsht, Jed Bernstein, President of Lincoln Center, Anne H. Bass, Melissa Biggs Bradley, Tim Fain, James de Givenchy, Peter Mattei and numerous Trustees.



*Olivia Flatto, Maz Zouhairi Diana Damrau, Nicolas Teste
Fe and Alessandro Fendi*



*Laure Vienot, Brian and Joanna Fisher Hal Witt, Marie Cronson
Gregory and Alexandra Landegger, Christophe Danzin*



*John and Jenny Paulson, Jean-Yves Kaced
Sana Sabbagh, Samantha and Nabil Chartouni, Adrienne Arsht*



*Consul General Bertrand Lortholary, Marie Sharp Cronson
Laura Zeckendorf, Tim Fain*



John Paulson, Serena Lese Anne Bass, Jed Bernstein



Peter Gelb, Olivia Flatto Helen Marx, James de Givenchy



*Marie Kellen, Marina Couloucoundis
Donna Corbat Tony Coles, Jed Bernstein*



*Kevin Kennedy, Dominique and Eric Laffont
Peter Mattei, Craig Rutenberg*

Preview performance and dinner with Christopher Wheeldon

On April 1, 2015 Christopher Wheeldon had graciously accepted an invitation to a private dinner with the American Friends of the Paris Opera & Ballet following a preview performance of “An American in Paris”. It was very special for the guests to hear him comment on the creative process and the history of the production in such an intimate setting.



Will Zeckendorf, Anne H. Bass, Carl Pascarella, Denise Sobel, Christopher Wheeldon, Yurie Pascarella, Robert Dewar

The production that premiered at *Le Châtelet* theater in Paris last fall, had already received a lot of praise, and its Broadway version prompted Terry Teachout to write in the *Wall Street Journal* “It’s been years—decades, really—since I last saw production numbers that were infused with the kind of rich, sustained creativity that Mr. Wheeldon gives us throughout “An American in Paris.” This is what musical-comedy dance can look like when it’s made by a choreographer who knows how to do more than just stage a song. Once you’ve seen it, you’ll know what you’ve been missing, and find it hard ever again to settle for less.”; while New York Times critic Charles Isherwood wrote it “weds music and movement, song and story with such exhilarating brio that you may find your own feet fidgeting under your seat before it’s over”.

“An American in Paris” has been nominated for 12 Tony awards, including “Best Musical”, “Best performance by an Actor in a leading role in a musical” (Robbie Fairchild from New York City Ballet), “Best performance by an Actress in a leading role in a musical” (Leanne Cope from The Royal Ballet), “Best Direction of a Musical” and “Best Choreography” (Christopher Wheeldon). We wish the whole team good luck in the award ceremony!

Luncheon with Elisabeth Platel

Ms. Platel, the incredible director of the Paris Opera Ballet School since 2004, makes very rare appearances in New York and had accepted this year to participate in the jury of the final competition week of Youth America Grand Prix.

The oldest dance school in the western hemisphere, *L’ecole Francaise de Danse* celebrated its 300th anniversary in 2013. To mark this milestone Elisabeth Platel opened the doors of the school to international students for the very first time by creating a Summer Intensive Program that AFPOB has been supporting since its inception through scholarships for young American dancers.

Ms. Platel’s visit to New York was a unique occasion for AFPOB to gather patrons and peers around her, which was made possible by Vice Chairman Serena Lese, who hosted the perfect lunch.



Elisabeth Platel, Serena Lese

Ms. Platel’s link with the American Friends of the Paris Opera & Ballet dates back to the creation of the organization as she was among those who starred in the very first tour to the US AFPOB supported in 1986. It has been a love story ever since then and we are very proud to be able to support her work with the Paris Opera Ballet School.

Save the Date

Ballet Season Opening in Paris September 24-26, 2015



Mark your calendar for the most exciting event of the Fall season in Paris: On September 24, 2015 the Paris Opera Ballet will launch its 2015/2016 season - the first season curated by Benjamin Millepied - with a grand gala night at the *Palais Garnier*.

The evening will include a new creation by Benjamin Millepied set to music by Nico Muhly; a work by his master George Balanchine; and the always-exciting *Grand Défilé*.

The gala will be celebrating the French-American friendship, as is the 2015/2016 season that includes new creations by American artists such as William Forsythe and Justin Peck.

The 3-day fall escape planned by the American Friends of the Paris Opera & Ballet will not only ensure patrons access to the gala, but also offer privileged experiences such as a master class with Benjamin Millepied, a private performance with Nico Muhly, a lunch with Maestro Phillippe Jordan, a tour of new *Philharmonie de Paris*, a visit of the School of Dance, as well as private and official receptions.

Details will be shared shortly, but kindly note that there will be limited availability. We suggest reserving as soon as possible: laure.vienot@afpob.org

New York Gala September 15, 2015



At the occasion of the premiere of Wayne McGregor's *Tree of Code*, the Park Avenue Armory and the American Friends of the Paris Opera & Ballet will host a gala evening.

Award-winning choreographer Wayne McGregor's groundbreaking work embraces dance, science, film, music, and technology to generate intriguing, expansive creations. For his new piece *Tree of Codes*, McGregor collaborated with artist Olafur Eliasson and producer/composer Jamie xx to create a contemporary ballet. **The evening-length work features 6 Etoiles and soloists from the Paris Opera Ballet** as well as members of and Wayne McGregor | Random Dance. After the Armory, the production will tour in London, Paris and Miami.

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