



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 4, 2025

Opera Atelier Marks 40th Anniversary Milestone with Toronto Premiere of 17th-Century Masterpiece, *David and Jonathan*

***The production's Toronto debut follows critically acclaimed premieres
at the Royal Chapel in Versailles and the Potsdam Music Festival***

Toronto, ON – Opera Atelier presents the Toronto premiere of the company's internationally acclaimed production of Marc-Antoine Charpentier's French Baroque masterpiece, ***David and Jonathan***, at **Koerner Hall's TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning**, from **April 9-13, 2025**. Fully staged and choreographed by Opera Atelier Co-Artistic Directors Marshall Pynkoski and Jeannette Lajeunesse Zingg, the biblically-inspired opera explores the explosive relationship between Saul, the King of Israel, his son Jonathan, and David, the young hero and slayer of Goliath.

"Charpentier's *David and Jonathan*, which premiered in Paris in February 1688, is recognized as one of the most profound psychological dramas of 17th-century French lyric theatre," says Opera Atelier Co-Artistic Director Marshall Pynkoski. "Jeannette and I are thrilled to bring this masterpiece to Toronto audiences, following the premiere of our fully-staged production of *David and Jonathan* to sold-out audiences at the Royal Chapel in Versailles in 2022 – a first in that superb space renowned as the pinnacle of French 17th-century architecture."

The opera's story is taken from the Hebrew Bible's books of Samuel, and closely follows King Saul's jealousy of the youthful warrior, David. Despite the loving relationship between David and Saul's son, Jonathan, the two friends are eventually forced to join opposing armies in the opera's final battle. Both Jonathan and Saul are mortally wounded and die in David's arms. In a bittersweet victory, a devastated David is acknowledged as the new King of Israel.

Hailed for its "choral and choreographic elements...projected with pinpoint precision" (Musical America Worldwide), Opera Atelier's Toronto premiere of *David and Jonathan*, sung in French, will feature a cast of Opera Atelier audience favourites, joined by two of the principal soloists from the original Versailles production. French baritone David Witczak, one of France's most important interpreters of French Baroque repertoire, will make his North American debut singing the role of Saul, and tenor Antonin Rondepierre returns to Opera Atelier to sing the role of the villain Joabel.

“Both of these singers are artists of extraordinary drama and versatility,” adds Pynkoski. “We are honoured to have them reprise their Versailles roles for Opera Atelier’s Toronto production.”

Witczak and Rondepierre will be joined by tenor Colin Ainsworth in the role of David and soprano Mireille Asselin as Jonathan. Other featured soloists include mezzo-soprano Mireille Lebel as the Pythonisse, baritone Christopher Dunham as Achis and bass-baritone Stephen Hegedus as the Ghost of Samuel. The production will also feature an onstage ensemble of soloists with musical accompaniment by Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir under the baton of Opera Atelier Music Director David Fallis.

David and Jonathan will feature the full corps of the Artists of Atelier Ballet, including Edward Tracz and Dominic Who, who appeared in the company’s original production in Versailles. Dominic Who will also serve as fight director.

The Toronto production will showcase costumes by the award-winning Canadian costume designer Michael Gianfrancesco and lighting by Kimberly Purtell. Koerner Hall will be transformed into a unique performance space by designer Gerard Gauci thanks to an extraordinary ongoing gift by Toronto philanthropists Jerry and Joan Lozinski. Their gift has been titled, “The Opera Atelier Reimagined Project at Koerner Hall.”

Following its Toronto debut, the production will be remounted in Versailles by Pynkoski and Lajeunesse Zingg in May 2025.

Tickets and information at [OperaAtelier.com](https://www.operaatelier.com).

Opera Atelier gratefully acknowledges the ongoing support of The Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, and the City of Toronto through the Toronto Arts Council and the Consulat Général de France à Toronto.

Production and Education Sponsor: BMO Financial Group

About Opera Atelier ([OperaAtelier.com](https://www.operaatelier.com))

Opera Atelier is North America’s leading opera/ballet company dedicated to creating period productions realized as complete artistic statements - with equal attention given to music, dancing, acting, and design. With productions performed in partnership with award-winning period-instrument orchestra, Tafelmusik, Opera Atelier has toured to major opera houses and festivals internationally. Opera Atelier is dedicated to equity, diversity and inclusion, the education of youth and young artists, and offers a robust slate of education, enrichment and outreach opportunities to engage audience members of all ages. Since 1985, Opera Atelier has been led by co-founding Artistic Directors Marshall Pynkoski and Jeannette Lajeunesse Zingg, who most recently, were both named members of the Order of Canada and Officers of the Order of Arts and Letters (Officiers dans l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres) by the French Republic.

LISTING INFORMATION

Opera Atelier presents *David and Jonathan*

Dates & Times:

April 9, 10 & 12 at 7:30pm; April 13 at 2:30pm

Venue:

TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning, Koerner Hall
273 Bloor St W, Toronto

Ticket Prices:

\$85 to \$280 + fees

Ticket Link:

OperaAtelier.com

Website:

OperaAtelier.com

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