

Culture, Our Shared Treasure

In 1793, the Louvre Museum opened its doors amid the revolutionary turmoil. The artworks once owned by the aristocracy during the *Ancien Régime* became the people's property. Several institutions further articulated and solidified this ambition: the Popular Front's Houses of Culture in 1936, the 1944 "Jours Heureux" program – created in secret by the National Council of the Resistance – and the Ministry of Culture, entrusted to André Malraux by Charles de Gaulle in 1959. **All aimed to ensure that culture, in its highest form across all fields of art and thought, belonged to everyone.**

Since then, cultural institutions have had a threefold mission. First, the preservation and transmission of universal heritage that has entered history. Second, the creation of works that will nurture future heritage. Third, sharing our treasures with the community, all of which represents quite the endeavour. With public subsidies ensuring they remain free from commercial interests and that ticket prices are always affordable for all, cultural institutions are a public asset. The purpose of the subsidies is not to allow the Opera to exist, but to make sure citizens experience the best of lyrical and choreographic creation. It is essential that art and culture be part of the joys to which everyone is entitled.

The Lyon Opera fulfils its role as a public institution of creation, production, and dissemination of lyrical and choreographic performances, which leave a lasting impression on the audience, sometimes to the point of transforming them. The works come from both our universal heritage and creations that reflect contemporary issues. Opera and dance – like other arts – only remain legitimate when they challenge conventions, tastes, and expectations. As Jean Vilar wrote, "Art only plays its role for humanity if it shakes off collective habits, fights its sclerosis, and tells it, like Father Ubu: Merdre!"

The artistic impact of the Lyon Opera is primarily the result of its vital spark : 61 musicians in the orchestra, 34 choristers, 30 ballet dancers, 100 students in the Children's Choir, and 5 soloists from the Lyon Opera Studio, as well as the teams in the set and costume workshops, the stage, technical, administration, communication, reception, restoration and building maintenance teams. In total, more than 350 employees work alongside 882 temporary workers, 70% of whom live in our Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region, which makes the Lyon Opera a driving force for the local economy.

Thanks to this collective of highly skilled men and women, our institution is highly regarded on an international level. Last season's *The Queen of Spades* was awarded the prestigious *Opernwelt* magazine's Best Opera Production Prize. Christof Loy, who was a guest director in May 2025 with *Peter Grimes* and this season with *Louise*, won the Opera Awards' Director of The Year Prize. These recognitions make the Lyon Opera a leading European lyrical and choreographic institution.

To further develop this international dimension, we will welcome world-renowned voices this season, such as Dmitry Ulyanov in *Boris Godunov*, Joshua Guerrero in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, Paul Appleby in *Billy Budd*, and Chiara Isotton in *Manon Lescaut*. We will also feature the finest French lyrical artists, including Patricia Petibon, Sophie Koch, Sabine Devieille, Elsa Dreisig, and Ludovic Tézier. This season, we've built lyrical partnerships with London, Brussels, Bilbao, Hanover, Abu Dhabi, Sydney, Venice, Paris, and Aix-en-Provence. These are all essential co-productions for our opera house, providing an opportunity for intercultural dialogue. And let's not forget our Ballet's tours across France, Europe and the United States. We will also host some of the greatest names in contemporary choreography, from Lucinda Childs and William Forsythe to Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker and Marlene Monteiro Freitas. Finally, the Opera Underground season, with its eclectic program of artists from various cultures and aesthetics, is a constant testament to our influence and diversity, reflecting the world to which we belong.

And, as the ultimate expression of its artistic vitality, the Lyon Opera is firmly rooted in its local community. In addition to our Opera on the Road productions, we continue our wide-ranging cultural initiatives in health, justice, education, and social development – reaching an ever-growing audience to bring opera to unconventional places. Our public service mission is to be present across all territories, which means more than merely showing up. Last season, you were 217,840 to take part in the life of the Opéra de Lyon, with 27% being under 29 years old, and you are 88% living in our region. This success is the most beautiful proof that **our Opera belongs to you.**

Richard Brunel
General and Artistic Director