



# LES VIOLONS DU ROY

AVI AVITAL, MANDOLIN

LES VIOLONS DU ROY PHILADELPHIA DEBUT

AVI AVITAL ANNENBERG CENTER DEBUT

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**Music Director and Conductor** Jonathan Cohen

**Mandolin** Avi Avital

*There will be an intermission.*

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**Saturday, April 25 @ 7:30 PM**

Zellerbach Theatre

## PROGRAM NOTES

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**Mandolin Concerto in C Major, RV 425** by Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

Allegro  
Largo  
Allegro

**Mandolin** Avi Avital

**The Art of the Fugue, BWV 1080** (excerpts) by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)  
(Completed by Bernard Labadie after Davitt Moroney)

Contrapunctus I  
Contrapunctus IV  
Contrapunctus VII  
Contrapunctus IX  
Contrapunctus XI  
Contrapunctus XIV

**Violin Concerto No. 1 in A Minor, BWV 1041** by Bach  
(arr. for solo mandolin by Avi Avital)

Allegro  
Andante  
Allegro assai

**Mandolin** Avi Avital

### INTERMISSION

**Concerto for Lute and Two Violins in D Major, RV 93** by Vivaldi  
(arr. for solo mandolin by Avi Avital)

Allegro  
Largo  
Allegro

**Mandolin** Avi Avital

**Concerto for Two Cellos in G Minor, RV 531** by Vivaldi

Allegro  
Largo  
Allegro

**Harpichord Concerto No. 1 in D Minor, BWV 1052** by Bach  
(arr. for solo mandolin by Avi Avital)

Allegro  
Adagio  
Allegro

**Mandolin** Avi Avital

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

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### Les Violons du Roy

Les Violons du Roy (“The King’s Violins”) takes its name from the celebrated court orchestra of the French kings. It was founded in 1984 by Bernard Labadie, now styled “founding conductor,” and continues under music director Jonathan Cohen to explore the nearly boundless repertoire of music for chamber orchestra in performances matched as closely as possible to the period of each work’s composition. Its minimum fifteen-member complement plays modern instruments, albeit with period bows for Baroque and classical music, and its interpretations are deeply informed by the latest research on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century performance practice. The repertoire of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries receives similar attention and figures regularly on the orchestra’s programs.

Les Violons du Roy has been a focal point of Québec City’s musical life since it was founded in 1984, and in 1997, it reached out to enrich the cultural landscape of Montréal as well. In 2007, the orchestra moved into its permanent home base in Québec City’s Palais Montcalm while continuing to build on the worldwide reputation it has acquired in countless concerts and recordings carried by medici.tv, Radio-Canada, CBC and NPR, along with regular appearances on the festival circuit. Les Violons du Roy has performed dozens of times throughout Canada as well as in Germany, the U.K., Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Spain, the United States, France, Israel, Morocco, Mexico, Norway, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Switzerland, in collaboration with such world-renowned soloists as Magdalena Kožená (2006 and 2014), David Daniels (2001 and 2004), Vivica Genaux (2007), Alexandre Tharaud (2011, 2014 and 2016), Ian Bostridge (2011), Emmanuel Pahud (2012), Stephanie Blythe (2013), Marc-André Hamelin (2015), Philippe Jaroussky (2017), Anthony Marwood (2017), Isabelle Faust (2018) and Julia Lezhneva (2018). The orchestra has performed at the Berlin Philharmonie and iconic venues in London, Paris and Brussels, with two performances on invitation at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam.

Since Les Violons du Roy’s first trip to Washington, D.C., in 1995, its U.S. travels have been enriched with numerous and regular stops in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. Its seven appearances at Carnegie Hall include three with La Chapelle de Québec featuring the *Messiah*, the *Christmas Oratorio* and the *St. John Passion* under Bernard Labadie, founder and music director of the choir, and another featuring *Dido and Aeneas* under Richard Egarr. Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles has hosted the orchestra three times, once with La Chapelle de Québec in the *Messiah*, again under Bernard Labadie. Les Violons du Roy is represented by Opus 3 Artists and Askonas Holt.

The thirty-two recordings released thus far by Les Violons du Roy have been met with widespread critical acclaim. The twelve released on the Dorian label include Juno Award-winning recordings of Mozart’s *Requiem* with La Chapelle de Québec and of Handel’s *Apollo e Dafne* with soprano Karina Gauvin. A dozen more have appeared through a partnership between Les Violons du Roy and Québec’s ATMA label, including 2008 Félix Award winner *Water Music*, 2006 Juno Award-winner *Piazzolla* with conductor Jean-Marie Zeitouni, and three releases under the baton of Mathieu Lussier including a CD of Vivaldi violin concertos and another of Mozart’s horn concertos. Further recordings on Erato, Naïve, Hyperion, Analekta and Decca Gold include mezzo Vivica Genaux with arias by Handel and Hasse; C.P.E. Bach’s cello concertos with Truls Mørk; Marie-Nicole Lemieux performing opera arias by Mozart, Haydn, Gluck and Graun; Bach and Mozart piano concertos with Alexandre Tharaud; Haydn piano concertos with Marc-André Hamelin; arias by Handel and Philip Glass with Anthony Roth Costanzo; and albums with soloists Valérie Milot and Diane Dufresne.

Les Violons du Roy would like to thank the following partners: Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, Canada Council for the Arts, and Canadian Heritage.

### Jonathan Cohen (Music Director and Conductor)

Cohen has forged a remarkable career as a conductor, cellist and keyboardist. Well known for his passion and commitment to chamber music, Cohen is equally at home in such diverse areas as Baroque opera and the classical symphonic repertoire. He is Artistic Director of Arcangelo, Music Director of Les Violons du Roy, Artistic Director of the Tetbury Festival and Artistic Partner of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. Cohen guest-conducts leading period instrument ensembles,

including the Handel and Haydn Society and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, as well as symphony orchestras such as the Budapest Festival Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra and Orchestre de Chambre de Paris. He has also conducted *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Giulio Cesare* for Glyndebourne Festival Opera.

In 2010, Cohen founded Arcangelo, an ensemble that strives to present special musical projects of the highest quality. He has toured with the group to exceptional halls and festivals, including Wigmore Hall in London, Philharmonie Berlin, Kölner Philharmonie, Vienna Musikverein, the Salzburg Festival and Carnegie Hall in New York. Arcangelo made its Proms debut at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse in 2016 and returned to the Proms in 2018 to present Handel's *Theodora* to a sold-out Royal Albert Hall. The ensemble boasts an extensive, award-winning discography and has recorded with many fine soloists, including Iestyn Davies, Christopher Purves, Vilde Frang, Alina Ibragimova and Nicolas Altstaedt.

Cohen's first recording with Les Violons du Roy features the music of Handel and Glass and countertenor Anthony Roth Costanzo. It was nominated for a Grammy®.

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### **Avi Avital** (Mandolin)

"Much as Andrés Segovia brought the classical guitar into the concert hall, the Israeli virtuoso Avi Avital is doing the same with the mandolin." (*Los Angeles Times*)

"The words "superstar" and "mandolinist" still look odd next to each other. Yet in the classical world they are starting to be joined with some frequency.... Avi Avital was nothing short of electric." (*The New York Times*)

The first mandolin soloist to be nominated for a classical Grammy®, Avital has been compared to Andrés Segovia for his championship of his instrument and to Jascha Heifetz for his incredible virtuosity. Passionate and "explosively charismatic" (*The New York Times*) in live performance, he is a driving force behind the reinvigoration of the mandolin repertory. More than 100 contemporary compositions have been written for him, 15 of them concertos by Anna Clyne, Avner Dorman and Giovanni Sollima, and others, which will be premiered in 2019/20. Enhanced by his infectious spirit of adventure and the warm rapport he fosters with his audience, Avital's championship of his instrument is taking the mandolin center stage.

In 2019/20, Avital returns to Carnegie Hall, and makes his debut at Walt Disney Concert Hall as part of a North American tour with Les Violons du Roy, which also includes multiple stops in California and on the East Coast. Highlights of that season in the U.S. also include performances with the Baltimore and Vancouver Symphonies, as well as a two-week duo tour with harpist Bridget Kibbey. Recent appearances in the U.S. include his debut in Carnegie Hall's Stern auditorium with Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and performances with the Chicago Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Montreal Symphony, Detroit Symphony, San Diego Symphony, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and St. Louis Symphony, as well as play-directing the Seattle Symphony.

Highlights of his season back in Europe include the world premiere of Giovanni Sollima's *Mandolin Concerto* with the Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI while other concerto engagements brought him to the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana, Zurich Tonhalle Orchester and the Staatskapelle Weimar. He also returned to the Berlin Philharmonie, the Frankfurt Alte Oper and the Bozar in Brussels, where he is featured as Portrait Artist.

An exclusive Deutsche Grammophon artist, Avital has made four recordings for the label. The recently released *Avital meets Avital* (2017) with oud/bassist, Omer Avital, explores their shared cultural heritage and brings their differing classical and jazz musical backgrounds into dialogue. Earlier releases featured original concerti and transcriptions by Vivaldi (2015), his own Bach concerto transcriptions (2012) and *Between Worlds* (2014), a cross-generic chamber collection exploring the nexus between classical and traditional music.

Avital's inspired music-making has electrified audiences in performances around the world. He has

performed with orchestras such as the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Deutsche Symphonie Orchester Berlin, Tonhalle Zurich, Israel Philharmonic and the Dresden Philharmonic, and under conductors such as Zubin Mehta, Kent Nagano, Osmo Vänskä, Ton Koopman and Giovanni Antonini. Performances have taken him to Beijing's National Centre for the Performing Arts, London's Wigmore and Royal Albert Halls, Berlin Philharmonie, Zurich's Tonhalle, Barcelona's Palau de la Música Catalana, Paris Philharmonie, Vienna Konzerthaus, New York's Carnegie Hall and Palais de Versailles with a live telecast on TV Arte.

He is a favorite on the international festival circuit having appeared at the Aspen, Salzburg, Tanglewood, Spoleto, Ravenna, Cheltenham and Verbier Festivals, among others, and he was Portrait Artist at the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival in 2017 which involved over 20 performances of 10 different programs. He has collaborated with artistic partners in a variety of genres including Andreas Scholl, Juan Diego Flórez, Dawn Upshaw, Giora Feidman, Ray Chen, David Greilsammer, Richard Galliano, Ksenija Sidorova, percussionist Itamar Doari and the Dover and Danish String Quartets. He was featured artist in a Zeitsinsel at the Dortmund Konzerthaus, where he curated a weekend of programs featuring classical, jazz and improvisations as well as a new collaboration with the Venice Baroque Orchestra and Georgian puppet theatre, Budrugana Gagra.

Born in Be'er Sheva in southern Israel, Avital began learning the mandolin at the age of eight and soon joined the flourishing mandolin youth orchestra founded and directed by his charismatic teacher, Russian-born violinist Simcha Nathanson. He later graduated from the Jerusalem Music Academy and the Conservatorio Cesare Pollini in Padua, Italy, where he studied original mandolin repertoire with Ugo Orlandi. Winner of Israel's prestigious Aviv Competition in 2007, Avital is the first mandolinist in the history of the competition to be so honored. He plays on a mandolin made by Israeli luthier Arik Kerman in 1998 with strings by Thomastik-Infeld (154, Medium).

North American Management for Mr. Avital and Exclusive Tour Management for Les Violons du Roy:  
Opus 3 Artists, 470 Park Avenue South, 9th Floor North, New York, NY 10016  
opus3artists.com