

The Met Celebrates the Holiday Season

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New York City, NY - The Met continues a beloved holiday tradition with the presentation of its ***Christmas Tree and Neapolitan Baroque Crèche***, which will be on view from November 20, 2018–January 6, 2019. Magnificently set in front of the 18th-century **Spanish choir screen from the Cathedral of Valladolid** in the Museum's Medieval Sculpture Hall (**gallery 305**), the tree has become a must-see holiday favorite of both New Yorkers and visitors from around the world. Recorded Christmas music in the gallery adds to the enjoyment of the holiday display.

The towering 20-foot blue spruce is gracefully lit and adorned with 19 cherubs and 59 angels, while at the base an additional 71 figures represent the three elements of Nativity scenes that were traditional to 18th-century Naples: adoring shepherds and their flocks, the procession of the three Magi, and spirited peasants and townspeople. Enhancing the display are nearly 50 delightful animals and background pieces that create a dramatic setting for the Nativity; these include the ruins of a Roman temple, several quaint houses, and a typical Italian fountain.

The exhibit of the crèche is made possible by gifts to The Christmas Tree Fund and the Loretta Hines Howard Fund.

History of the Tree Display

The annual Christmas display has evolved through the generosity, enthusiasm, and dedication of the late Loretta Hines Howard, who began collecting crèche figures in 1925. Mrs. Howard conceived the idea of presenting the elaborate Neapolitan Nativity scene under a Christmas tree— tradition rooted in Northern Europe—with angels swirling upward to the crowning star, and was later ably assisted by her daughter Linn Howard. Over many decades, Linn Howard contributed to the tree's great beauty by adding and improving details that are fundamentally reflected in the current display.

This unusual combination was first presented to the public in 1957, with The Met's exhibition of Mrs. Howard's collection. Since 1964, more than 200 Neapolitan crèche figures from the 18th century have been given to the Museum by Loretta Hines Howard and displayed in the galleries each holiday season.

The Met Fifth Avenue

Eastern European Silver Menorah

In conjunction with the celebration of Hanukkah, a magnificent, 19th-century silver Menorah made in Lviv, Ukraine, will be on display in The Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Galleries (Floor 1, European Sculpture and Decorative Arts, Gallery 556). Made in 1866–72 for the Great Synagogue in Lviv, the ceremonial lamp, which is cast, chased, and engraved with elaborate motifs, is one of the largest silver Hanukkah lamps known. The Menorah is on loan from The Moldovan Family Collection.

The eight-branched Hanukkah Menorah commemorates an important moment in Jewish history: the triumphant Maccabean revolt against the oppressing Seleucid Empire and the re-consecration of the Jewish Holy Temple in 165 B.C. The lamp's eight branches reference the miracle in which the last jug of pure olive oil, which should have lasted only one day, kept the Temple Menorah lit for eight days.

Exhibitions

Exhibitions on view at The Met Fifth Avenue throughout the holiday season include: ***Jewelry: The Body Transformed*** (through February 24, 2019), ***Delacroix*** (through January 6, 2019), and ***In Praise of Painting: Dutch Masterpieces at The Met*** (through October 4, 2020). For the complete list of exhibitions, please refer to The Met's **website**.

Performances, Programs, and Events

The Met Fifth Avenue celebrates the holiday season with a variety of **concerts and performances**, including:

For the Miracles: A Holiday Celebration

Sunday, December 9, 3 p.m., the Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium

Young People's Chorus
Elizabeth Núñez, conductor

Each of the eight short movements in Samuel Adler's *The Flames of Freedom* represents one of the eight lights of Hanukkah. The work was written for three-part, treble-voice choir to provide a counterpoint to Britten's Christmas cantata, *A Ceremony of Carols*. In this family-friendly concert, the two joyous works are juxtaposed.

Tickets start at \$65.

Handel and Lang

Saturday, December 15, 7 p.m., the Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium

The Choir of Trinity Wall Street and Trinity Baroque Orchestra
Julian Wachner, conductor

The Grammy-nominated Choir of Trinity Wall Street returns to The Met with a stunning double bill. *Dixit Dominus* (The Lord Said), Handel's powerful setting of Psalm 110, is paired with David Lang's Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Little Match Girl Passion*, a "tender and mysterious" (*The New York Times*) contemporary choral work based on the classic fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen.

Tickets start at \$65.

Christmas on Sugarloaf Mountain: An Irish-Appalachian Celebration

Sunday, December 16, 2 p.m., the Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium

Apollo's Fire
Jeanette Sorrell, conductor

Hailed as "one of the pre-eminent period-instrument ensembles" (*The Independent*, London), Apollo's Fire is a collection of creative artists led by the award-winning harpsichordist and conductor Jeannette Sorrell. In this new program celebrating the Celtic roots of an Appalachian Christmas, the beloved troupe is joined by additional singers, dancers, and instrumentalists to perform pieces that range from the mystical Gregorian chant of old Scotland to folk carols and hymns.

Tickets start at \$65.

ASEFA: Delacroix's Moroccan Nights: Judeo-Islamic Soundscapes from City to Village

Friday, December 21, and Saturday, December 22, 5–8 p.m., the Great Hall Balcony Bar

Dr. Samuel Torjman Thomas, vocals, oud, nay, lotar
Laura Lassy Townsend, vocals
Jeremy Brown, violin
John Murchison, qanun, bass, guimbri
Jeremy Smith, percussion
Daniel Kurfirst, percussion

Samuel Torjman Thomas, Ph.D, brings Delacroix's paintings to life in a two-night journey of Moroccan musical cultures. The first night highlights sounds of city life; the second night highlights sounds of village life. Featuring vocals, oud, violin, qanun, nay, lotar, guimbri, and percussion. Presented in conjunction with the exhibition *Delacroix*, on view at The Met Fifth Avenue through January 6, 2019.

Family Programs

School Break Programs

Wednesday, December 26; Thursday, December 27; Monday, January 21; Wednesday, February 20; and Thursday, February 21, 1–4 p.m.

EmptyMet Tours

EmptyMet Tours—the opportunity to see The Met Fifth Avenue before it opens to the public—are available throughout the holiday season.

Dining and Shopping

A variety of **dining options**, from fine food in The Dining Room overlooking Central Park to casual fare at The American Wing Café, are offered at The Met Fifth Avenue. Cocktails, appetizers, and live music—including performances by Ethel and Friends in December—are available every Friday and Saturday evening at the Great Hall Balcony Bar.

Visitors can delight in an enchanting winter holiday scene sculpted in sugar and fondant. Handcrafted by The Met's James Beard Award-winning Pastry Chef Randy Eastman, the display will be on view from Tuesday, November 27, through Saturday, January 5, near the entrance to the Public Cafeteria.

Also, through December 31 enjoy a warming cup of Pastry Chef Randy Eastman's hot chocolate or handcrafted mulled wine and spiked apple cider; available at The Balcony Lounge, the Dining Room, and the Great Hall Balcony Bar.

The Met Store—located within the Museum's three locations and online—offers a wide selection of holiday gifts inspired by The Met collection, including greeting cards, calendars, jewelry, and more. In celebration of the current exhibition *Jewelry: The Body Transformed*, The Met Store introduced responsibly sourced jewelry made in the U.S.A. into its offering; fair trade gemstones and recycled metals are featured. Purchase proceeds support the collection of 5,000 years of art and its study, conservation, and presentation.

Holiday Morning Hours for Members and Patrons

Members and Patrons are invited to join us for Holiday Morning Hours from 9 to 10 a.m. on the Friday and Saturday before and after Thanksgiving and Christmas (November 16–17 and 23–24, and December 21–22 and 28–29). Holiday Morning Hours give Members and Patrons the chance to enter the Museum before the Museum opens to the public on some of our busiest days of the year. Enjoy exclusive access to major exhibitions, including *Delacroix*, *Armenia!*, *Jewelry: The Body Transformed*, *Epic Abstraction: Pollock to Herrera*, and *In Praise of Painting: Dutch Masterpieces at The Met*.

The Met Cloisters

At The Met Cloisters—the branch of the Museum in northern Manhattan that is dedicated to the art, architecture, and gardens of medieval Europe—decorations with a medieval theme and concerts of early music will ring in the season.

Medieval 'Christmastide' Decorations

December 13 through January 6, visitors to The Met Cloisters will experience a unique Museum tradition that

revives festive, medieval culture. Arriving guests will first pass under a great arch of holly boughs bright with red fruits, which symbolize light, warmth, and welcome. Above all other plants, holly is associated with the medieval feast.

Once inside, visitors will be greeted in the Main Hall with grand arches bedecked with fresh ivy locally sourced in Fort Tryon Park. The gardeners dress each of the ivy arches with hand-polished, New York Lady apples, hazelnuts, rosehips, and pinecones.

Elsewhere, throughout the halls, cloisters, galleries, and arcades, visitors will be treated to verdant displays of topiaries, garlands, and wreaths. Candelabras will be swaddled with ivy and adorned with roses. Windows will be filled with potted fragrant and flowering plants such as citrus, rosemary, and cyclamen. Each plant is a symbol and celebration of the season.

Programming at The Met Cloisters

Holiday-themed concerts by renowned performers, special gallery talks, and programs for the whole family are among the holiday offerings at The Met Cloisters. Programming includes:

Nativity Reconsidered

Friday, December 21, and Saturday, December 22, 5:30 p.m., The Fuentidueña Chapel

Julia Bullock, soprano
J'Nai Bridges, mezzo-soprano
Anthony Roth Costanzo, countertenor
American Modern Opera Company (AMOC)
Christian Reif, conductor

An all-new chamber music version of con-temporary master John Adams's Christmas oratorio, *El Niño*, arranged for the American Modern Opera Company (AMOC) and adapted for the intimate setting of The Met Cloisters.

Tickets start at \$65.
Julia Bullock is the 2018–19 Artist in Residence

Spanish Christmas at The Met Cloisters

Sunday, December 23, 1 and 3 p.m., The Fuentidueña Chapel

2018–19 Ensemble in Residence *Sonnambula*
With special guest Esteban La Rotta, lute and guitar

Celebrate Christmas with a program of inti-mate *Canciones* (popular tunes with poetic texts), joyful *Villancicos* (songs with rustic themes), and virtuosic instrumental pieces, all drawn from the *Cancionero Musical de Palacio*, a manuscript found at the Royal Palace of Madrid that exemplifies the Spanish Golden Age of music.

Tickets start at \$65.

Family Programs

(Free with Museum admission)

Family Afternoons—Winter Wear

Sunday, December 30, 1–4 pm

Family Tour

Saturdays, December 1 and 15, January 5, 1–2 pm

Gallery Talks**The Saints of Christmas**

Sunday, December 2, 12 p.m. and 2 p.m.

Winter Is Coming: The Medieval Change of Season

Saturday, December 15, 12 p.m. and 2 p.m.

The Met Breuer

Exhibitions on view at The Met Breuer throughout the holiday season include ***Everything Is Connected: Art and Conspiracy*** (through January 6, 2019).

#MetChristmasTree

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WHERE :

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