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Handel's Acis and Galatea in Bhutan

CHADOR WANGMO, OCTOBER 04, 2013

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The Royal Textile Academy (RTA) in Thimphu will stage German composer George Frideric Handel's beloved opera Acis and Galatea on October 12.

The musical event will be the first time a live performance of opera in all of its dimensions is staged in Bhutan, and will involve singers, musicians, dancers, costume designers and other artists from Bhutan and abroad. The special

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feature of Acis and Galatea is the fusion between Bhutanese music, dance and culture with western opera.

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Handel's Acis and Galatea is based on an ancient myth that celebrates the triumph of compassion and goodness over anger, greed, and ignorance. It is an ancient story from Ovid's Metamorphoses that was later turned into an opera

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by Handel. The pastoral opera narrates an affair between two young lovers, Acis and Galatea, which is interrupted by the jealous Polyphemus, who destroys his rival by crushing him with a rock. Galatea, moved by grief, transforms the dead Acis into an everlasting stream whose ripples symbolise their eternal love.

Preston T Scott, the project coordinator, said western artistes are here to perform the opera—the first ever to be performed in Bhutan and the first in the world to incorporate traditional Bhutanese dance and cultural elements.

“The Opera Bhutan will be played based on the love story with happy ending,” he added. Collaboration among artists and other professionals from approximately ten countries including Bhutan, took nearly a decade.

“For the first time, different artisans from different countries are coming together,” said Preston T Scott. “New instruments which have never played before in Bhutan will be played for the first time in the country.”

The University of Texas at El Paso (USA) will sponsor the project to celebrate the nearly 100 years of respect and friendship with the people and culture of Bhutan. Assistance will also be provided by the Smithsonian Institution (Center of Folk life and Cultural Heritage) and supporters from Australia, Italy and the Netherlands.

The participating Bhutanese institutions and organisations are the Department of Culture, Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, Royal Academy of Performing Arts and the RTA.

**Tags:** Department Of Culture, University Of Texas At El Paso (USA), Ministry Of Home And Cultural Affairs, Royal Academy Of Performing Arts, The Royal Textile Academy

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