

2016 Rex Parade Notes/Links

The 2016 Rex Procession: "Royal Gardens•Horti Regis"

Tuesday, February 9, 2016
New Orleans, Louisiana

1. Rex, King of Carnival, Monarch of Merriment Rex's float carries the King of Carnival and his pages through the streets of New Orleans each Mardi Gras. In the early years of the New Orleans Carnival Rex's float was redesigned each year. The current King's float, one of Carnival's most iconic images, has been in use for over fifty years.

2. His Majesty's Bandwagon From this traditional permanent float one of the Royal Bands provides lively music for Rex and for those who greet him on the parade route. One of those songs will surely be the Rex anthem: "If Ever I Cease to Love," which has been played in every Rex parade since 1872.

3. The King's Jesters Even the Monarch of Merriment needs jesters in his court. Rex's jesters dress in the traditional colors of Mardi Gras – purple, green and gold. The papier mache' figures on the Jester float are some of the oldest in the Rex parade, and were sculpted by artists in Viareggio, Italy, a city with its own rich Carnival tradition.

4. The Boeuf Gras The Boeuf Gras ("the fat ox") represents one of the oldest traditions and images of Mardi Gras, symbolizing the great feast on the day before Lent begins. In the early years of the New Orleans Carnival a live Boeuf Gras, decorated with garlands, had an honored place near the front of the Rex Parade.

5. The Butterfly King Since the earliest days of Carnival, butterflies have been popular symbolic design elements, their brief and colorful life a metaphor for the ephemeral magic of Mardi Gras itself. The invitation to the 1882 Rex ball combined the butterfly image with that of the King of Carnival, creating the enduring image of "The Butterfly King." The Butterfly King float, introduced in 2012, is the first new permanent float to join the Rex Procession in many decades.

6. Title Float: “Royal Gardens•Horti Regis” The desire to be surrounded by beauty is as old as mankind itself. In every time and culture artists have arranged natural elements into gardens to please all of the senses. Emperors and Kings assured that their gardens were planned with as much care as their castles, and some of these gardens were counted among the wonders of the world. The 2016 Rex Procession takes us to splendid gardens known only from ancient illustrations and descriptions, and to others still providing beautiful sights to those who visit them.

7. Garden of the Majestic Clear Lake The Tang dynasty (618 AD-907 AD) was considered the First Golden Age of Chinese gardens. The Emperor Xuanzong’s Imperial Garden, the Garden of the Majestic Clear Lake, included pools, pavilions, and even replicas of mountains.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_garden

<http://hereditarius.blogspot.com/2015/02/the-growth-of-tang-dynasty-gardens.html>

8. Versailles Begun by Louis XIII in 1632, the elaborate formal gardens of Versailles occupy more than 1600 acres near Paris. Louis IX felt the gardens were as important as Versailles’ elaborate chateaux, or castle. Filled with sculptures, follies and fountains, Versailles remains a popular tourist destination today.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gardens_of_Versailles#Louis_XIII

<http://en.chateauversailles.fr/gardens-and-park-of-the-chateau->

9. Gardens of the Mughal Empire From the 16th through the 19th Centuries Mughal rulers controlled a vast empire including parts of what we now know as India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. With a strong Persian influence, Mughal gardens were geometrically composed, with terraces, reflecting pools and pavilions.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mughal_gardens

<http://www.mughalgardens.org>

10. A Streetcar Named Desire Streetcars are an important symbol of New Orleans, and this permanent float honors the best known of all of New Orleans’ streetcar lines. This iconic float depicts “The Streetcar

Named Desire,” made famous by the playwright Tennessee Williams. It is the only Rex float not pulled by a tractor.

11. Boboli Gardens One of the most popular attractions in Florence, the Boboli Gardens grace the Pitti Palace, the ancestral home of the great Medici families. Begun in the 16th Century, the Gardens are filled with extraordinary statues and fountains, a grand tribute to Florence’s artistic legacy.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boboli_Gardens

http://www.museumsinflorence.com/musei/boboli_garden.html

12. Elysian Fields In Greek mythology Elysium is the final destination of the gods and of those who are allowed to join them because they lived good lives. Virgil describes Elysium as a place of perpetual Spring, shady groves, crystal springs and shining fields.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elysium>

<http://www.britannica.com/topic/Elysium-Greek-mythology>

13. Perdita’s Garden Gardens played an important role in many of the works of William Shakespeare, whose 400th Anniversary the School of Design celebrates with this float. In “The Winter’s Tale,” Perdita is raised by a shepherd, even though she is the daughter of a King. Her rustic cottage garden is a symbol of her simple life, which by the end of the play is no longer so.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shakespeare_garden

<http://shakespeare400.org>

14. Vatican Gardens In 1279 Pope Nicholas III planted an orchard (*pomerium*), a lawn (*pratellum*), and a garden (*viridarium*) on Vatican Hill. Through almost a millennium, and through many revisions and re-plantings, the Vatican Gardens have been maintained as a place of beauty and contemplation.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gardens_of_Vatican_City

<http://www.vaticanstate.va/content/vaticanstate/en/monumenti/giardini-vaticani.html>

15. The Royal Barge Reminiscent of a grand Viking ship, and complete with Royal Gryphon, the Royal Barge is one of Rex’s iconic

permanent floats. This float is the last remnant of the Royal Navy, once a feature of each Rex Parade.

16. Floating Gardens of Xochimilco Founded over a thousand years ago, Xochimilco was an important island-city conquered first by the Aztecs and then by the Spanish. Land was scarce, so floating gardens (chinampas) were developed to grow crops. Some old waterways remain, and are a critical habitat for the Axolotl salamander.

<http://www.mexonline.com/history-xochimilco.htm>
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xochimilco>

17. Gardens of Lucullus Lucius Licinius Lucullus not only helped expand the Roman Empire into Persia, but he also discovered the beauty of Persia's gardens. When he returned to Rome around 60 BC he created a great garden at his villa on the Pincian Hill, now the site of the Villa Borghese gardens.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gardens_of_Lucullus
<http://www.maquettes-historiques.net/P43.html>

18. Garden of Eden Certainly one of the most familiar gardens of antiquity, the Garden of Eden is described in the book of Genesis as the place where God placed His creations, Adam and Eve. Tempted by the serpent, Adam and Eve were cast out of their first idyllic home.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garden_of_Eden
<http://www.ldolphin.org/eden/>

19. Xanadu The 13th Century explorer Marco Polo returned with a glowing description of the beauties of Kublai Khan's summer palace and gardens. Also known as Shangdu, this magical place continued to inspire artists and poets, including Coleridge: "In Xanadu did Kubla Khan / A stately pleasure-dome decree..."

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shangdu>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kublai_Khan

20. Ptolemy's Garden Claudius Ptolemy lived in the walled city of Alexandria, Egypt in the 1st Century AD. He excelled in geography, astronomy, mathematics and other disciplines. Alexandria attracted

many visitors, and Ptolemy's gardens influenced the development of ornamental gardens throughout the civilized world.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ptolemy>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexandria#The Temple of Taposiris Magna](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexandria#The_Temple_of_Taposiris_Magna)

21. Hanging Gardens of Babylon Likely built by King Nebuchadnezzar in 600 BC, these gardens were one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Many visitors described the beauty of the tiers of plants and trees rising up like a green mountain in the center of the dusty city.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanging Gardens of Babylon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanging_Gardens_of_Babylon)

<http://www.unmuseum.org/hangg.htm>

22. The Cloister Garth Attached to a cathedral or church, a cloister is the covered arcade or walkway enclosing a religious community and keeping them apart from the public. The quiet area within, the garth, often contained a well and a garden, a perfect place for reflection.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cloister>

http://www.mcah.columbia.edu/courses/medmil/pages/non-mma-pages/text_links/cloistergarth.html

23. New Orleans Botanical Garden New Orleans' first public formal garden opened in 1936, and occupies 12 acres of City Park. Sculptor Enrique Alferrez was one of the garden's designers and created many of its elegant sculptures.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Orleans_Botanical_Garden

<http://neworleanscitypark.com/botanical-garden>

24. Gardens of Alhambra Constructed by the Moors in Granada, Spain, the Alhambra is a 14th Century complex of palaces and gardens. Seeking to create "paradise on earth," the gardens' designers filled its courtyards with lush plantings, reflecting pools and fountains.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/21/arts/design/spanish-paradise-gardens-of-the-alhambra-at-the-new-york-botanical-garden-review.html>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alhambra>

25. Parco dei Mostri di Bormazo Pier Francesco Orsini created the “Park of the Monsters” was in Bormazo, Italy in the 16th Century. It is filled with dramatic and grotesque larger-than-life sculptures such as the open-mouthed Orcus, the God of the Underworld.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gardens_of_Bormazo
<http://www.bormazo.net>

26. Gardens by Olmsted Frederick Law Olmsted, considered by many to be the father of American landscape architecture, is best known for his work in creating New York City’s Central Park. His approach to design emphasized each site’s natural features, such as rocks and hills.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Law_Olmsted
<http://www.olmsted.org/the-olmsted-legacy/frederick-law-olmsted-sr>

27. Gardens of Adonis Among other roles, Adonis was the god of plants, especially grain and other food crops. Greek women celebrated him by planting wheat and other fast-growing plants in baskets and pots. After eight days these “Gardens of Adonis” were thrown into the sea along with effigies of Adonis, perhaps as an offering to assure a good harvest.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adonia>
<http://www.bartleby.com/196/80.html>

28. Temple of the Silver Pavilion Built near Kyoto, Japan in the 16th century as a retreat for the Shogun, this complex of Zen Buddhist temples and gardens is still a place of peace and contemplation. Its sand garden includes a sand sculpture said to represent Mt. Fuji.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ginkaku-ji>
<http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e3907.html>

His Majesty’s Royal Calliope The Calliope provides a lively and traditional musical counterpoint to the brilliant array of bands in the Rex Procession.