

## 2019 Rex Parade Notes/web links

### The 2019 Rex Procession: "Visions of the Sun" Tuesday, March 5, 2019 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 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 fattened 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. The Boeuf Gras returned in 1959 as a magnificent papier mâché sculpture.

**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 added butterfly wings to 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: "Visions of the Sun"** Throughout human history the sun has been regarded with awe and wonder. Early cultures ascribed to the sun the qualities of deity and sought to describe its powerful place in daily life by creating elaborate stories to explain its daily life-giving arc across the sky. Throughout the ages the sun has been a source of wonder and inspiration to poets, writers, artists, and storytellers. "Visions of the Sun" beautifully portrays these legends, myths and colorful images.

**7. Shamash** The Mesopotamian god of the sun, Shamash exercised the power of light over darkness and evil. He was also considered to be the god of justice. Hammurabi, the great Babylonian king, received his code of laws from Shamash.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Shamash>  
<http://www.ancientpages.com/2016/01/11/shamash-mesopotamian-god-sun-truth-justice-healing/>

**8. Houyi** Ten suns threatened the world. The great archer Hou-Yi saved the world by climbing Mt. K'un Lun and shooting down nine of the suns with his magic arrows. His wife was Chang' er, the Moon Fairy.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hou\\_Yi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hou_Yi)  
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hou-Yi>

**9. The Midnight Sun** During summer months in lands north of the Arctic Circle or south of the Antarctic Circle, the sun shines until midnight and beyond. Seemingly endless day is balanced by seemingly endless night in the winter.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Midnight\\_sun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Midnight_sun)  
<https://www.alaskacenters.gov/explore/attractions/midnight-sun>

**10. A Streetcar Named Desire** Streetcars are an important symbol of New Orleans, and this iconic 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. Joshua Stops the Sun** This Old Testament story describes the battle between Joshua's Israelites and the armies of the Amorites. Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, giving his army time to win the battle.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joshua>  
<https://www.gotquestions.org/sun-stood-still.html>

**12. Ra** Often depicted with the head of a falcon, with the solar disc on his head, Ra was the Egyptian god of the sun. In Egyptian mythology mankind was created from the tears of Ra, the great god of the sun.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ra>  
<https://www.ancient-egypt-online.com/egyptian-god-ra.html>

**13. Garuda** In Hindu mythology the course of the sun across the sky is compared to the flight of a bird. The bird-like incarnation of the great god, Vishnu, is Garuda.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Garuda>  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garuda>

**14. Solar Eclipse** We know now that the moon's shadow can sometimes eclipse the sun's light. But, for the ancients, that event carried great import, and they struggled to understand and explain this supernatural event.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solar\\_eclipse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solar_eclipse)  
<https://www.timeanddate.com/eclipse/solar-eclipse-myths.html>

**15. Inti** The patron deity of the Inca culture, Inti was the son of Virachocha, the god of all creation. His sister, Mama Killa, was the goddess of the moon. Inti's solar symbolism is seen today in the flags and coats of arms of Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inti>  
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Inti-Inca-Sun-god>

**16. Amaterasu** A major deity of the Japanese Shinto religion, Amaterasu is the goddess of the sun and the universe and the ruler of the High Celestial Plain. Her name derives from "amateru," which means "shining in heaven."

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amaterasu>  
<https://www.ancient.eu/Amaterasu/>

**17. Little Brother Snares the Sun** This elaborate Native American legend describes a time when animals were the chiefs. Two children, a brother and sister, worked together to snare the sun, terrifying the animals and preserving the future of all humankind.

<https://www.firstpeople.us/FP-HTML-Legends/Little-Brother-Snares-The%20Sun-Winnebago.html>  
<https://one-elevenbooks.com/Little-Brother-Snares-the-Sun/>

**18. Liza** The siblings Liza (or Lisa) and Mawu are the offspring of the mother-god Nana Buluku. They are regarded by the Fon people of West Africa as the gods of the sun and the moon. Great powers of life and fertility are attributed to them.

<http://www.godchecker.com/pantheon/african-mythology.php?deity=MAWU-LISA>  
<https://www.encyclopedia.com/environment/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/mawu-lisa>

**19. Freyr** The ancient Norse god of the sun and fair skies, the benevolent god Freyr bestowed peace, pleasure and prosperity on his people. Sacrifices to Freyr were offered to assure fertility and good harvests.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freyr>  
<https://norse-mythology.org/gods-and-creatures/the-vanir-gods-and-goddesses/freyr/>

**20. Saule** One of the most powerful deities in Baltic mythology, Saule is the goddess of the sun and one of the most powerful deities. She is carried through the sky on a copper chariot pulled by horses that never tire.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saulė>  
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Saule>

**21. The Sun King** Louis XIV, the great *Roi Soleil*, ruled France from his extravagantly gilded palaces from 1643 until his death in 1715. A great patron of the arts, Louis XIV presided over a glittering court while making France the dominant European power of that age.

<https://www.history.com/topics/france/louis-xiv>  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis\\_XIV\\_of\\_France](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_XIV_of_France)

**22. Belenus** The Celtic sun god, Belenus is one of the oldest and most important Celtic deities. Called “the Shining God,” he rode across the sky in a chariot and was celebrated with festivals of fire.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belenus>  
<http://celtsandmyths.mzzhost.com/belenus.html>

**23. Golden Apples of the Sun** This is the last line of the 1899 poem “The Song of Wandering Aengus” by William Butler Yeats. The preceding line, “Silver apples of the moon,” was the title of a float in the 2007 Rex parade, “The Lunar Realm.”

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/W.\\_B.\\_Yeats](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/W._B._Yeats)  
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/55687/the-song-of-wandering-aengus>

**24. Zhulong** Also known as the “torch dragon,” Zhulong is the giant solar dragon of Chinese mythology. When Zhulong opens his eyes there is daylight; night arrives when they close.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhulong\\_\(mythology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhulong_(mythology))  
<https://www.theworldofchinese.com/2015/06/the-legend-of-the-candle-dragon/>

**25. Helios** The ancient Greek god of the sun, Helios is often portrayed in his chariot, pulled across the sky by a powerful team of winged horses. His sisters were Selene (the Moon) and Eos (the Dawn).

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helios>  
<http://www.theoi.com/Titan/Helios.html>

**26. Phaeton and Cygnus** The son of Helios, Phaeton took his father’s sun chariot but lost control and scorched the earth. Zeus killed Phaeton with a thunderbolt, and he fell into a river. Cygnus, Phaeton’s friend, mourned his death and was turned into a swan by Zeus so he could dive and visit Phaeton.

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

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cygnus\\_\(constellation\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cygnus_(constellation))

**27. Maui** This powerful Hawaiian god's mother complained that the days were too short, and her bark cloth would not dry. Maui made a rope from his sister's hair and roped the sun and held it until the sun agreed to make each day longer.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Māui\\_\(Hawaiian\\_mythology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Māui_(Hawaiian_mythology))  
<https://greenglobaltravel.com/hawaiian-mythology>

**28. 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.

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