

Thursday 13 July 2017, 7.30pm

LONDON



CONCERT
CHOIR

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA

Programme £2

Cadogan Hall,
5 Sloane Terrace,
London SW1X 9DQ



WELCOME TO CADOGAN HALL

In the interests of your comfort and safety, please note the following:

- Latecomers will only be admitted to the auditorium during a suitable pause in the performance.
- Cadogan Hall is a totally non-smoking building.
- Glasses, bottles and food are not allowed in the auditorium.
- Photography, and the use of any video or audio recording equipment, is forbidden.
- Mobiles, Pagers & Watches: please ensure that you switch off your mobile phone and pager, and deactivate any digital alarm on your watch before the performance begins.
- First Aid: Please ask a Steward if you require assistance.

Thank you for your co-operation. We hope you enjoy the performance.



facebook.com/londonconcertchoir



[@choirlcc](https://twitter.com/choirlcc)



Programme notes © Frances Cave 2017

Programme designed by Stephen Rickett and edited by Eleanor Cowie

Text of *The Rake's Progress* reproduced by permission of Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd. Solely for the use of London Concert Choir.

London Concert Choir - A company limited by guarantee, incorporated in England with registered number 3220578 and registered charity number 1057242

Registered Office 7 Ildersly Grove, Dulwich, London SE21 8EU



Thursday 13 July 2017
Cadogan Hall

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA

Mark Forkgen *conductor*

Erica Eloff *soprano*

Jeanette Ager *mezzo soprano*

Alexander James Edwards *tenor*

Peter Willcock *baritone*

London Concert Choir

Southbank Sinfonia

There will be an INTERVAL of 20 minutes

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA

Passion, criticism, adoration, and heated comment: opera has probably provoked more of these than any other musical genre. Its entertainment value stems from the mixture of music and drama that goes right back to opera's dual origins, Court and Church, the first with its secular festivities and the amusement of royalty, the second with its medieval Mystery Plays and the liturgical drama of the 11th and 12th centuries.

Myth and allegory play an important part in the blend. The popularity of this music-drama genre has lasted ever since. Concert performances of opera provide the music in which the drama can flourish.

The featured operas in tonight's concert are:

Mozart: *The Magic Flute*

Stravinsky: *The Rake's Progress*

Bizet: *Carmen*

Verdi: *La traviata*

Wagner: *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Die Zauberflöte (The Magic Flute)

Mozart wrote *Die Zauberflöte* in 1791 and it was first performed two months before his death. In Paris two years earlier the revolutionaries had stormed the Bastille, while in Mozart's Vienna the talk concerned the possible restoration of the French monarchy as an unsettled populace wondered about its own country's future.

The libretto was written by the impresario Emanuel Schikaneder and based on a book of Oriental fairytales. Schikaneder, like Mozart, was a Freemason but not as deeply involved; both men's work was influenced by their solemn Masonic beliefs. Mozart was indebted to the Freemasons from whom he had borrowed money on occasions.

The quasi-religious-comic theme of the opera is at the root of its almost pantomime complexity of an amusing and confusing Oriental fantasy written in the popular dramatic style known as *Singspiel* (literally 'sing-play'). This German blend of sung and spoken text was used by Mozart elsewhere and also by Beethoven in *Fidelio*. Mozart's Viennese version of *Singspiel* was more operatic in nature and very suitable for the fairytale plot of *Zauberflöte*.

Early in the opera Prince Tamino is rescued from a serpent and receives a portrait of the beautiful Pamina, daughter of the Queen of the Night. Accompanied by Papageno the bird-catcher, Tamino immediately determines to seek out Pamina. The Queen of the Night tells him that her daughter is in the power of Sarastro, High Priest of the Egyptian gods Isis and Osiris, and that Tamino must rescue her. He is provided with a magic flute to keep him from harm, while Papageno is given a chime of magic bells.

Tamino learns that Sarastro is really a wise priest in disguise and that the Queen of the Night is the evil character. Pamina and Papageno are told to use his magic bells to bewitch their captors and make their own escape.

In Act Two, the priests give Sarastro their permission to initiate Tamino into the Brotherhood so that he can receive the spirit of wisdom. However, there are trials he must undergo before he can enter the Temple of Light. Papageno wishes more simply for a love of his own.

His desire is granted by an old crone who magically turns into Papagena, a beautiful girl who immediately vanishes. Meanwhile Pamina and Tamino pass together through trials of fire and water protected by the magic flute. Eventually Papageno is reminded to use the magic bells and Papagena returns to become his wife.

Under cover of darkness the Queen of the Night and her attendants storm the Temple and take their revenge. As dawn breaks, Sarastro captures them and casts them into eternal darkness. Once the forces of evil have been driven away, the newly initiated are welcomed and a hymn of thanks and praise is sung to the gods by the Priests of Osiris.

Overture

Mozart begins by introducing references to Freemasonry in the Overture. The number three had a mystical significance to Masons, hence he wrote the Overture in the key of E flat with its three flats. The opening chords of the slow introduction are played three times during the Overture. Complex fugal composition with agile flutes and sparkling ascending chromatic scales bring the important, if miniature work to its conclusion.

Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja: Papageno (baritone)

In Act One, the comic and clumsy Papageno almost bounces onto the scene with an exuberantly self-confident introduction. His aria is chirpy and bright and at its end he also shows his tenderness, as he sings lovingly of his need for a wife. His personality shines through this jaunty little masterpiece.

Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja,
Stets lustig heisa hop-sa-sa!
Ich Vogelfänger bin bekannt
Bei alt und jung im ganzen Land.
Weiß mit dem Lokken umzugehn,
Und mich aufs Pfeiffen zu verstehn!
Drum kann ich froh und lustig sein,
Denn alle Vögel sind ja mein!

*The bird-catcher, yes that's me,
Always cheerful, hip hooray!
As a bird-catcher I'm well-known
To young and old throughout the land.
I know how to lure birds
And how to play the fife well!
That's why I can be merry and cheerful,
For all the birds are surely mine.*

Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja,
Stets lustig heisa hop-sa-sa!
Ich Vogelfänger bin bekannt
Bei alt und jung im ganzen Land
Ein Netz für Mädchen möchte ich,
Ich fing sie dutzendweis für mich!
Dann sperrte ich sie bei mir ein,
Und alle Mädchen wären mein.

Wenn alle Mädchen wären mein
So tauschte ich brav Zucker ein,
Die welche mir am liebsten wär,
Der geb ich gleich den Zucker her,
Und küsste sie mich zärtlich dann,
Wär sie mein Weib und ich ihr Mann.
Sie schlief an meiner Seite ein,
Ich wiegte wie ein Kind sie ein.

*The bird-catcher, yes that's me,
Always cheerful, hip hooray!
As a bird-catcher I'm well-known
To young and old throughout the land.
I should like a net for girls,
I'd catch them by the dozen for myself!
Then I'd lock them up with me,
And all the girls would be mine.*

*If all the girls were mine,
I'd barter plenty of sugar:
The one I liked the best,
I'd give her the sugar at once.
And if she then kissed me tenderly,
She would be my wife and I her husband.
She'd fall asleep at my side,
And I would rock her to sleep like a child.*

Dies Bildnis ist bezaubernd schön: Tamino (tenor)

The second solo is sung by Tamino the young prince when his rescuers tantalise him with a portrait of a beautiful girl who turns out to be Pamina. He sings his heart out at her enchanting loveliness and his desire for her presence. The 'portrait' aria in sonnet form is romantically sweet and slow. The 'Masonic Three' is depicted here by the opening and closing in the key of E flat major – the home key of the whole opera.

Dies Bildnis ist bezaubernd schön,
Wie noch kein Auge je geseh'n!
Ich fühl' es, wie dies Götterbild
Mein Herz mit neuer Regung füllt.
Dies' etwas kann ich zwar nicht nennen,
Doch fühl' ich's hier wie Feuer brennen.
Soll die Empfindung Liebe sein?
Ja, ja, die Liebe ist's allein.
O, wenn ich sie nur finden könnte!
O, wenn sie doch schon vor mir stände!
Ich würde, würde, warm und rein,
Was würde ich?
Ich würde sie voll Entzücken
An diesen heissen Busen drücken
Und ewig wäre sie dann mein.

*This portrait is enchantingly lovely,
Such as no eye has ever beheld.
I feel how this heavenly picture
Fills my heart with new emotion.
Though I cannot name what this is,
Yet I feel it burning here like fire.
Could this sensation be love?
Yes, yes! It can only be love!
Oh, if only I could find her!
Oh, if she but stood before me now!
I would ... would ... warmly and chastely ...
What would I do?
Full of rapture, I would press her
to this ardent breast,
And then she would be mine for ever.*

Bei Männern welche Liebe fühlen: Papageno and Pamina (baritone and soprano)

The duet epitomises the opera's moral message that the true happiness of two lovers approaches the divine. With the simple accompaniment, the message comes across with complete clarity.

Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen,
Fehlt auch ein gutes Herze nicht.

Die süßen Triebe mitzufühlen
Ist dann der Weiber erster Pflicht.

Wir wollen uns der Liebe freun
Wir leben durch die Lieb allein,

Die Lieb versüßet jede Plage,
Ihr opfert jede Kreatur.

Sie würzet unsre Lebenstage,
Sie winkt im Kreise der Natur.

Ihr hoher Zweck zeigt deutlich an,
Nichts edlers sei als Weib und Mann,
Mann und Weib und Weib und Mann,
Reichen an die Gottheit an.

*In men who feel love,
A good heart is not lacking.*

*Sharing these sweet desires
Is then women's first duty.*

*We want to be happy in love;
We live through love alone,*

*Love sweetens every trouble;
Every creature sacrifices to it.*

*It seasons our daily lives,
It beckons us into the cycle of nature.*

*Its high purpose clearly shows
That nothing is nobler than woman and man.
Man and woman and woman and man,
Are almost godlike.*

Heil sei euch Geweihten: Priests of Osiris (chorus)

Good has overcome evil; light has banished darkness and in the final chorus of *Zauberflöte* – in E flat major as at its beginning – the priests praise the courage of Tamino and Pamina in overcoming the trials that have kept them apart, giving thanks to the gods Isis and Osiris for their courage, beauty and wisdom.

Heil sei euch geweihten!
Ihr dranget durch Nacht.
Dank! Dank! Dank sei Dir, Osiris!
Dank! Dank dir, Isis gebracht!

Es siegte die Stärke
Und krönet zum Lohn
Die schönheit und Weisheit
Mit ewiger Kron!

*Hail to you who are consecrated!
You have penetrated the night.
Thanks! Thanks! Thanks be to you, Osiris!
Thanks! Thanks be brought to you, Isis!
Strength has triumphed
And crowns as a reward
Beauty and wisdom
With an eternal crown!*



Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)

The Rake's Progress

Stravinsky's opera *The Rake's Progress* is a moral fable with frills brought bang up to date for 1950s London by his utterly untraditional music. The narrative was inspired by a series of eight engravings of the same name about the sins of old London by William Hogarth in the 1730s. Stravinsky viewed these in Chicago in 1947 and realised they would be the perfect basis for the opera that had been hovering in his mind since he had arrived in the United States. Stravinsky approached the poet W H Auden who, with his American friend Chester Kallman, agreed to write the libretto and the opera was first performed in Venice in 1951.

Stravinsky was best known for ballets such as *The Firebird* and *The Rite of Spring* and religious works such as *Symphony of Psalms*. But after his 'Russian Period' he looked back to Mozart while at the same time producing something new and different in a neo-classical style. *The Rake's Progress* was his last work in this genre and its jagged, spiky, sometimes quirky music perfectly fitted his characters. The unexpected dissonances and complicated rhythms beautifully describe the players in the almost back-to-Aesop moralising of the libretto.

In the country, Tom Rakewell (The Rake) and his fiancée Anne Trulove are young and in love, though Anne's father is dubious about Tom's idleness and unsuitability as a son-in-law. Out of the blue, Tom hears that he has inherited a fortune from an unknown uncle. The bringer of this good news is the mysterious Nick Shadow, who offers Tom his services without payment for a year and a day.

In London Tom is accompanied by the ever-present Shadow, under whose seductive powers he will remain for the rest of the opera. The manipulating Shadow introduces his new master to the sleazy aspects of London life and is always at Tom's shoulder as he marries a bearded lady and loses his fortune in a phony invention which uses stones to make bread.

After a year, Tom has had a surfeit of idle pleasure and has lost everything. The Faustian Shadow reveals himself as the Devil and demands Tom's soul. They agree to stake everything on a game of cards, which Tom wins. But Shadow's revenge is to steal Tom's sanity and Tom ends up in the madhouse that was Bedlam, and is mocked by the other inmates. Anne, hoping to rescue her love, visits him there, but in vain: Tom dies of his madness. In an epilogue the characters all agree that the Devil finds work for idle hands.

Act 1 Scenes 2 & 3

Tom is accompanied by Nick Shadow to a London brothel run by the madam, Mother Goose, and frequented by Whores and Roaring Boys. The bawdily suggestive words and music depict the characters' thoughts on life in general and sexual performance in particular.

Chorus of Whores and Roaring Boys

With air commanding and weapons handy,
We rove in a band through the streets at night.
Our only notion, to make commotion
And find occasion to provoke a fight.

In triumph glorious, with trophies curious,
We return victorious from love's campaigns.
No troops more practised in Cupid's tactics,
By feint and ambush the day to gain.

For what is sweeter to human nature
Than to quarrel over nothing at all,
To hear the crashing of furniture smashing
Or heads being bashed in a tavern brawl?
With darting glances and bold advances
We open fire upon young and old.
Surprised by rapture, their hearts are captured,
And into our laps they pour their gold.

A toast to our commanders then
From their irregulars;
A toast, ladies and gentlemen, To VENUS and to MARS!

Recitative: Nick Shadow (baritone)

[Sisters of Venus], Brothers of Mars,
Fellow worshippers in the Temple of Delight,
it is my privilege to present to you
a stranger to our rites,
who, following our custom,
begs leave to sing you a song
in earnest of his desire to be initiated.
As you see, he is young;
as you shall discover, he is rich.
My master, and, if he will pardon the liberty,
my friend, Mister Tom Rakewell.

Having committed himself to following nature rather than rules and to seeking beauty and pleasure above all, Tom is distracted into a reflection on love, which he feels he has betrayed. However, he does not resist Mother Goose's invitation to spend the night with her, as the Whores and Roaring Boys sing a nonsense song.

Aria [Cavatina]: Tom Rakewell (tenor)

Love, too frequently betrayed
For some plausible desire
Or the world's enchanted fire.
Still thy traitor, in his sleep
Renews the vow he did not keep.
Weeping, he kneels before
thy wounded shade.
Love, my sorrow and my shame,
Though thou daily be forgot,
Goddess, O forget me not.
Lest I perish, O be nigh,
In my darkest hour that I,
Dying, may call upon
thy sacred name.

Whores

How sad a song, but sadness charms.
How handsomely he cries.
Come, drown your sorrows in these arms.
Forget it in these eyes, upon these lips.

Mother Goose (mezzo soprano)

Away!
Tonight I exercise my elder right
And claim him for my prize.

Whores, Roaring Boys

The sun is bright, the grass is green.
Lanterloo, lanterloo.
The King is courting his young Queen.
Lanterloo my lady.

They go a walking. What do they see?
An almanack in a walnut tree.

They go a riding. Whom do they meet?
Three scarecrows and a pair of feet.
What will she do when they sit at table?
Eat as much as she is able.

What will he do when they lie in bed?
Lanterloo, lanterloo.
Draw his sword and chop off her head.
Lanterloo, my lady.

Nick

Sweet dreams, my master. Dreams may lie, but dream.
For when you wake, you die.

Meanwhile, back in the country, as night falls Anne wonders why she has not heard from Tom. She knows somehow that he is in danger, and sets out for London, determined to find him.

Recitative: Anne (soprano)

No word from Tom.
Has love no voice, can love not keep
A May-time vow in cities?
Fades it as the rose
Cut for a rich display? Forgot!
But no, to weep is not enough.
He needs my help.
Love hears, love knows,
Love answers him across the silent miles and goes.

Aria

Quietly, night, O find him and caress,
And may thou quiet find his heart,
although it be unkind. Nor may its beat confess,
Although I weep, it knows of loneliness.
Guide me, O moon, chastely when I depart.
And warmly be the same he watches without grief or shame;
It cannot be thou art a colder moon upon a colder heart.

Recitative

My father! Can I desert him and his devotion
for a love who has deserted me?
No, my father has strength of purpose,
while Tom is weak and needs
the comfort of a helping hand.
Oh God! protect dear Tom,
support my father, and strengthen my resolve.

Aria [Cabaletta]

I go, I go to him.
Love cannot falter, cannot desert.
Though it be shunned,
Or be forgotten, though it be hurt.
If love be love it will not alter.
O should I see my love in need,
It shall not matter what he may be.
I go, I go to him.
Love cannot falter, cannot desert.
Time cannot alter
A loving heart, an ever-loving heart.



Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)

La traviata (The Fallen Woman)

One of the most popular of Verdi's operas, *La traviata* was first performed in 1853. The libretto by Francesco Maria Piave was derived from the play *La Dame aux Camélias* by Alexandre Dumas the younger, which had drawn on Dumas' relationship with the Parisian courtesan Marie Duplessis. It may also contain echoes of the composer's own relationship with the soprano Giuseppina Strepponi. Verdi intended his three-act opera to be set in mid-nineteenth-century Paris, but for its premiere in Vienna he was compelled to shift the period to the 17th Century to placate the censors.

Our heroine, Violetta Valéry, is a high-class courtesan. At one of her select parties she is introduced to Alfredo Germont, who has long admired her. She is ill, and she knows it, but when she almost faints, she brushes off attention. Alfredo falls in love with her but she says she is not worthy of him, wanting the freedom to go on enjoying life in her own way. After he has left, however, she realises that she could in time grow to return his love.

In Act Two the couple have set up home outside Paris when Alfredo's father calls on Violetta while his son is out. He begs her to give up her relationship with Alfredo as the scandal is threatening his own daughter's engagement. Violetta, though heartbroken, agrees to do this and leaves their home while Alfredo is out, asking her maid to hand him a farewell letter.

She returns to Parisian high society and to her partner, the Baron Douphol. At a fashionable gathering where entertainment has been arranged by her friend Flora, the jealous Alfredo turns up and publicly accuses her of deceit and fortune hunting.

In Act Three, it is evident that Violetta has been seriously ill with consumption for some time and is soon to die. Alfredo's father has told him the truth and he comes to beg her forgiveness. They swear to be forever together and, near death, she recalls the happy times they spent with each other. Alfredo sends for a doctor, but it is too late and Violetta dies in his arms.

Prelude to Act One

This seems to introduce the story in reverse.

Gypsy Chorus and Matadors' Chorus

In Act Two, guests are being entertained at Flora's house to which Violetta has fled. The hostess has arranged for two groups of singers and dancers to enliven the evening. A group of Gypsies who dance and sing about how they can see into the future are followed by a band of Matadors ('the heroes of the bullring'). These two favourite choruses are cheerfully high-spirited and fast, full of back-slapping good humour.

Noi siamo zingarelle: Chorus, Flora (mezzo soprano) and Marquis (baritone)

Women

Noi siamo zingarelle
venute da lontano;
d'ognuno sulla mano
leggiamo l'avvenir.
Se consultiam le stelle
null'avvi a noi d'oscuro,
e i casi del futuro
possiamo altrui predir.
Vediamo –
Voi, signora, rivali alquante avete.
Marchese, voi non siete model di fedeltà.

*We are gypsy girls
come from afar;
the fortunes of all
we can read in their hands.
When we call upon the stars,
nothing is hidden from us,
and we can tell you all
what the future holds in store.
Let's see –
You, Madam, have many rivals.
Marquis, you are scarcely a model of fidelity.*

Flora

Fate il galante ancora?
Ben, vo' me la paghiate.

*So you still play the gallant?
Fine - I'll make you pay for this.*

Marquis

Che diamin vi pensate?
L'accusa è falsità.

*What the devil are you thinking?
It's a bare-faced lie.*

Flora

La volpe lascia il pelo,
non abbandona il vizio.
Marchese mio, giudizio,
o vi farò pentir.

*The fox may moult,
but never abandons his cunning.
Take care, my dear Marquis,
or you'll be sorry, I swear.*

All

Su via, si stenda un velo
sui fatti del passato;
già quel ch'è stato è stato,
badiamo/badate all'avvenir.

*Come, let's draw a veil
over the actions of the past;
what's been has been,
think only of what's to come.*

Di Madride noi siamo mattadori: Chorus

Di Madride noi siam mattadori,
siamo i prodi del circo dei tori,
testé giunti a godere del chiasso
che a Parigi si fa pel Bue grasso;
È una storia se udire vorrete,
quali amanti noi siamo saprete.

Sì, sì, bravi; narrate, narrate:
con piacere l'udremo.

Ascoltate.

È Piquillo un bel gagliardo
biscaglino mattador:
forte il braccio, fiero il guardo
delle giostre egli è signor.
D'Andalusa giovinetta
follemente innamorò;
ma la bella ritrosetta
così al giovane parlò:
"Cinque tori in un sol giorno
vo' vederti ad atterrar;
e, se vinci, al tuo ritorno
mano e cor ti vo' donar."
Sì, gli disse, e il mattadore,
alle giostre mosse il piè;
cinque tori, vincitore,
sull'arena egli stendé.

Bravo, bravo il mattadore,
ben gagliardo si mostrò,
se alla giovane l'amore
in tal guisa egli provò!

Poi, tra plausi, ritornato
alla bella del suo cor,
colse il premio desiato
tra le braccia dell'amor.

Con tai prove i mattadori
san le belle conquistar!

Ma qui son più miti i cori;
a noi basta folleggiar.

Sì, allegri. Or pria tentiamo
della sorte il vario umor;
la palestra dischiudiamo
agli audaci giuocator.

*We're matadors, from Madrid,
the champions of the bullring.
We've just arrived to join in the fun
of carnival time in Paris;
if you'll hear our story to the end,
you'll know what great lovers we are.*

*Yes, yes, good! Tell us, tell us:
we'll hear your story with pleasure.*

Listen, then.

*Piquillo is a strapping young man.
A matador from Biscay:
strong of arm and fierce of eye,
he is the lord of the bullring.
He fell for an Andalusian lass,
madly in love fell he;
but the stubborn little miss
answered him this way:
"I want to see you bring down
Five bulls in a single day;
and if you win, when you return,
my heart and hand are yours."
"Yes, yes." said he, and off he went,
to the bullring straight away;
five bulls our conquering hero met,
and killed them all that day.*

*Bravo, bravo, this matador -
he showed himself such a champion,
and, in so doing,
he proved his love!*

*Then, amidst the applause,
he went back to his love,
and there received his reward
in the arms of his sweetheart.*

*It is with tests like this that matadors
sweep lovely women off their feet!*

*But here the thing is simpler;
it's enough for us if we can frolic.*

*Yes, with carefree gaiety. Now first
let's try the humour of Fortune;
we'll open the ring
to the fearless gamblers.*

Parigi, o cara, noi lasceremo: Alfredo (tenor) and Violetta (soprano)

In this poignant duet from Act Three, Violetta and Alfredo sing of their hopes for the future and their dreams of the past. Written in simple, lilting waltz tempo but full of sadness, the two come together lovingly at the end, before the music fades sorrowfully away.

Alfredo

Parigi, o cara, noi lasceremo,
la vita uniti trascorreremo.
De' corsi affanni compenso avrai,
la tua salute rifiorirà.
Sospiro e luce tu mi sarai,
tutto il futuro ne arriderà.

*Dearest, we shall leave Paris,
And together we'll go through life.
In reward for your past sorrows,
You'll bloom into health again.
You will be breath and light to me,
All the future will smile on us.*

Violetta

Parigi, o caro, noi lasceremo,
la vita uniti trascorreremo.
De' corsi affanni compenso avrai,
la mia salute rifiorirà.
Sospiro e luce tu mi sarai,
tutto il futuro ne arriderà.

*Dearest, we shall leave Paris,
And together we'll go through life.
In reward for your past sorrows,
I'll bloom into health again.
You will be breath and light to me,
All the future will smile on us.*

Brindisi: Soloists and chorus

To round off the first half of the concert we go back to Act One of *La traviata*, where Parisian merrymaking is in full swing. Our hero Alfredo in convivial mood sings *Brindisi* (Italian for a toast), which is the popular drinking song *Libiamo*. Violetta and the party guests, join in enthusiastically, bringing the first act to its cheerful conclusion.

Alfredo

Libiamo ne' lieti calici,
che la bellezza infiora;
e la fuggevol ora
s'inebrii a voluttà.
Libiam ne' dolci fremiti
che suscita l'amore,
poichè quell'occhio al core
onnipotente va.
Libiamo, amore, amor fra i calici
più caldi baci avrà.

*Let's drink from the merry glasses,
adorned with beauty
and the fleeting hour
will be intoxicated with pleasure.
Let's drink to the sweet tremblings
arising from love,
for these eyes, all-powerful,
pierce us to the heart.
Let's drink, my love, for wine
will warm the kisses of love.*

All

Ah! Libiam, amor fra' calici
più caldi baci avrà.

*Ah! Let's drink, for wine
will warm the kisses of love.*

Violetta

Tra voi saprò dividere
il tempo mio giocondo;
tutto è follia nel mondo
ciò che non è piacer.
Godiam, fugace e rapido
è il gaudio dell'amore;
e un fior che nasce e muore,
nè più si può goder.
Godiam!
C'invita un fervido
accento lusinghier.

All

Ah! Godiamolo!
La tazza e il cantico
la notte abbella e il riso,
in questo paradiso
ne scopra il nuovo dì.

Violetta (to Alfredo)

La vita è nel tripudio.

Alfredo (to Violetta)

Quando non s'ami ancora...

Violetta (to Alfredo)

Nol dite a chi l'ignora.

Alfredo (to Violetta)

È il mio destin così.

All

Ah! sì, godiamo...
La tazza e il cantico
la notte abbella e il riso,
in questo paradiso
ne scopra il nuovo dì.

*Among you I can share
such happy times.
Everything in life is folly
which does not give us pleasure.
Let's enjoy life, for love
is a fleeting and short-lived joy.
A flower which blooms and fades,
and we can no longer enjoy it.
Let's enjoy life!
An ardent, charming voice
invites us.*

*Let's enjoy life!
Wine and song
and laughter beautify the night,
until the new day's dawn
finds us in this paradise.*

Life is just a celebration.

Only if one hasn't known love.

Don't tell someone who doesn't know.

Such is my fate.

*Ah! yes, Let's enjoy life!
Wine and song
and laughter beautify the night,
until the new day's dawn
finds us in this paradise.*

INTERVAL – 20 Minutes



Georges Bizet (1838–1875)

Carmen

A French opera set in Spain, composed in the Italian *verismo* style and premiered in Paris in 1875, gave the opera-going public a massive shock. Its composer, Georges Bizet, was asked to write a new work for the Paris Opéra-Comique, who were in the habit of staging light pieces with definite moral overtones. Bizet, a realist, chose to be different and wrote in *Carmen* about the non-heroic and the underclass. His characters (shockingly to many at the time) were factory workers, cigarette-smoking, liberated women, gypsies and others. This deeply upset public proprieties – the characters were the antithesis of what was considered proper at the time. *Opéra comique* was not what we might think of as comic opera, but a French version of the German *Singspiel* featuring spoken dialogue between the sung sections. Before the premiere Bizet had noted “I have written a work that is all clarity and vivacity, full of colour and melody.” Sadly, after the first performance, he was also to say he foresaw “a definite and hopeless flop” and he was still full of pessimism when he died suddenly of a heart attack three months later, never to know that *Carmen* would become one of the world’s most popular operas.

The libretto was written by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy after Prosper Mérimée’s novel of the same name. Set in Seville in about the 1820s, the four-act opera is full of passion and violence.

In Act One the alluring gypsy girl Carmen comes off shift at the local cigarette factory and flirts with the soldiers, who have been changing the guard. There is one (Corporal Don José) who ignores her, but this merely intrigues her and she tosses him a flower. After she returns to work there is a stabbing at the factory and Carmen is blamed and arrested. She taunts José and begs him to put love before duty and contrive her release. He gives in and lets her get away, but is arrested and jailed himself.

Act Two is set outside Seville in a tavern which is a haunt of smugglers. Carmen wants to meet José, who has just been released; she pleads with him not to go back to barracks. Escamillo, a handsome toreador, enters the tavern and takes

Carmen's fancy. She loses her temper when José has to leave against her wishes, but he has kept her flower and she will remember him.

By Act Three, Carmen is deeply attracted to Escamillo, the macho toreador. She again teases the hapless José and the two men fight. It is clear that the bullfighter is Carmen's choice and that José has lost her. In Act Four, outside the bullring in Seville, Escamillo is waiting to take part in that afternoon's important bullfight. Once again Carmen plays fast and loose with the jealous José who, patience snapping at last, stabs her to death. As the crowd celebrates Escamillo's victory, José, the real victim of the piece, gives himself up. The 'Fate' theme which has heralded Carmen's appearances all through the opera is there for her at the end, with the haunting fragment of melody sounding over shimmering strings.

Prelude to Act One

The Prelude introduces some of the themes in the opera, including the Toreador Song, but ends on a note of tragedy when we first hear a fragment of the 'Fate' theme from the cellos. The tantalising chromatic sequence will become very familiar during the piece.

Habanera: Carmen (soprano), Cigarette Girls, and Men (chorus)

This popular Cuban dance is in duple time, with catchy dotted rhythms in a peculiarly Spanish style. It started life in Havana but was imported by returning Spanish sailors and is still often heard in southern Spain. In the opera it is sung in Act One by Carmen, who is showing off to her scattered audience in a Seville square, captivating the soldiers and assorted men going about their working day. She sings about the fickleness of love.

L'amour est un oiseau rebelle
Que nul ne peut apprivoiser,
Et c'est bien in vain qu'on l'appelle
S'il lui convient de refuser.

*Love is a rebellious bird
That no-one can tame,
And you call him quite in vain
If it suits him to refuse.*

Rien n'y fait, menace ou prière.
L'un parle bien, l'autre se tait.
Et c'est l'autre que je préfère.
Il n'a rien dit mais il me plaît.
L'amour! L'amour! L'amour! L'amour!

*Nothing helps, neither threat nor prayer.
One man talks well, the other is silent.
And it's the other that I prefer.
He says nothing but he pleases me.
Love! Love! Love! Love!*

L'amour est enfant de Bohême,
Il n'a jamais jamais connu de loi.
Si tu ne m'aimes pas, je t'aime.
Si je t'aime, prends garde à toi!

*Love is a gypsy's child,
It has never, never known the law;
If you do not love me, I love you;
If I love you, watch out!*

L'oiseau que tu croyais surprendre
Battit d'aile et s'envola.
L'amour est loin, tu peux l'attendre.
Tu ne l'attends pas, il est là.

*The bird you hoped to catch
Beat its wings and flew away.
Love stays away, you wait and wait;
When least expected, there it is!*

Tout autour de toi, vite vite,
Il vient, s'en va, puis il revient.
Tu crois le tenir, il t'évite.
Tu crois l'éviter, il te tient.
L'amour! L'amour! L'amour! L'amour!

L'amour est enfant de Bohême,
Il n'a jamais jamais connu de loi.
Si tu ne m'aimes pas, je t'aime.
Si je t'aime, prends garde à toi!

*All around you, swiftly, swiftly,
It comes, goes, and then returns.
You think to hold it fast, it flees you
You think to flee it, it holds you
Love! Love! Love! Love!*

*Love is a gypsy's child,
It has never, never known the law;
If you do not love me, I love you;
If I love you, watch out!*

Danse Bohème (Gypsy Dance): Carmen (soprano) and soprano chorus

Carmen's friends are at the tavern outside Seville with two of the army officers enjoying rest and relaxation. They are watching two gypsy girls dancing in the centre of the room. Carmen, at her most seductive, gets up and joins them. Backed by the choir soprano section, her friends join in while she sings her traditional song with its chattering instrumental accompaniment as the piece works up to a frenzy.

Les tringles des sistres tintaient
avec un éclat métallique,
et sur cette étrange musique
les zingarellas se levaient.
Tambours de basque allaient leur train,
et les guitares forcenées
grinçaient sous des mains obstinées,
même chanson, même refrain.
Tralalalala...

Les anneaux de cuivre et d'argent
reluisaient sur les peaux bistrées ;
d'orange et de rouge zébrées
les étoffes flottaient au vent.
La danse au chant se mariait,
d'abord indécise et timide,
plus vive ensuite et plus rapide,
cela montait, montait, montait!
Tralalalala...

Les bohémiens à tour de bras
de leurs instruments faisaient rage,
et cet éblouissant tapage,
ensorcelait les zingaras!
Sous le rythme de la chanson,
ardentes, folles, enfiévrées,
elles se laissaient, enivrées,
emporter par le tourbillon!
Tralalalala...

The rods of the sistrums were jingling
with a metallic clatter,
and at this strange music
the zingarellas leapt to their feet.
Tambourines kept time
and the frenzied guitars
ground away under persistent hands,
the same song, the same refrain.
Tralalalala...*

*Copper and silver rings
Shone on swarthy skins;
Orange- and red-striped
dresses fluttered in the wind.
The dance became one with the song,
at first timid and hesitant,
then livelier and faster
it grew and grew!
Tralalalala...*

*The gypsy men stormed away
on their instruments with all their might,
and this dazzling uproar
bewitched the zingaras
With the rhythm of the song,
passionate, wild and feverish,
they let themselves be carried away,
intoxicated, by the whirlwind!
Tralalalala...*

**a kind of rattle*

La fleur que tu m'avais jetée: Don José (tenor)

Later at the tavern, Carmen and Don José have been left alone and he produces the faded flower she had previously tossed to him, which he has safely kept. His love song tells her of his yearning for her while he was imprisoned – an outpouring that seems to fall on deaf ears as Carmen has by now made up her mind about him. A subtle modulation of keys from major to minor reflects his love and his changing moods. This 'Flower Song' is one of the most lyrical moments in the opera.

La fleur que tu m'avais jetée,
Dans ma prison m'était restée.
Flétrie et sèche, cette fleur
Gardait toujours sa douce odeur;
Et pendant des heures entières
Sur mes yeux, fermant mes paupières,
De cette odeur je m'enivrais

Et dans la nuit je te voyais!
Je me prenais à te maudire,
À te détester, à me dire :
Pourquoi faut-il que le destin
L'ait mise là sur mon chemin?
Puis je m'accusais de blasphème,
Et je ne sentais en moi-même,
Je ne sentais qu'un seul désir,
Un seul désir, un seul espoir:
Te revoir, ô Carmen, oui, te revoir!

Car tu n'avais eu qu'à paraître,
Qu'à jeter un regard sur moi,
Pour t'emparer de tout mon être,
Ô ma Carmen!
Et j'étais une chose à toi
Carmen, je t'aime!

*The flower which you threw to me
Stayed with me in my prison.
Withered and dry, this flower
Still kept its sweet fragrance;
And for hours at a time
Before my eyes, on closing my eyelids,
This fragrance intoxicated me
And in the night I would see you!
I took to cursing you,
Detesting you and saying to myself:
Why did destiny have to
put her there, in my path?
Then I would accuse myself of blasphemy,
And within myself I felt,
I only felt one sole desire,
One sole desire, one sole hope:
To see you again, O Carmen,
yes, to see you again!
For you would only have had to appear,
To toss one glance at me,
To capture my entire being,
Oh, my Carmen!
And I would be your own!
Carmen, I love you!*



March and Song of the Toreador: Escamillo (baritone) and chorus

Surely this must be one of the best-known tunes in the world. Escamillo describes the course of a bullfight and proudly reminds us of a lover who is watching and waiting for him. The chorus, enter in the rousing refrain that modulates from the key of F minor (perhaps depicting the risk to his life and the blood on the sand of the bullring), switching to F major in celebration of his victorious bravery.

Votre toast, je peux vous le rendre,
Senors, senors car avec les soldats
oui, les toréros, peuvent s'entendre;
Pour plaisirs, pour plaisirs,
ils ont les combats!

Le cirque est plein, c'est jour de fête !
Le cirque est plein du haut en bas;
Les spectateurs, perdant la tête,
Les spectateurs s'interpellent
À grand fracas!

Apostrophes, cris et tapage
Poussés jusques à la fureur !
Car c'est la fête du courage !
C'est la fête des gens de cœur!
Allons! en garde!
Allons! allons! Ah!

Toréador, en garde! Toréador! Toréador!
Et songe bien, oui, songe en combattant
Qu'un œil noir te regarde,
Et que l'amour t'attend,
Toréador, l'amour, l'amour t'attend!

Tout d'un coup, on fait silence,
On fait silence... ah! que se passe-t-il?
Plus de cris, c'est l'instant!

Le taureau s'élançe
en bondissant hors du toril!
Il s'élançe! Il entre, il frappe!...
un cheval roule,
entraînant un picador,
"Ah! Bravo! Toro!" hurle la foule,
le taureau va... il vient...
il vient et frappe encore!

En secouant ses banderilles,
plein de fureur, il court!
Le cirque est plein de sang!
On se sauve... on franchit les grilles!
C'est ton tour maintenant!
Allons! en garde! allons! allons! Ah!
Toréador, en garde! , etc.

*Your toast, I can give it to you
Sirs, sirs, for with the soldiers
Yes, the Toreros can agree;
For pleasure, for pleasure
They have battles!*

*The bullring is full, it's a feast day!
The bullring is full from top to bottom;
The spectators, losing their heads,
Challenge one another
With a great din.*

*Rude shouts, cries and uproar
grow into a frenzy!
For this is a celebration of courage!
It is the celebration of strong-hearted men!
Come on, on guard!
Come on! Come on! Ah!*

*Toreador, on guard! Toreador, Toreador!
And think, yes, think as you fight,
That a dark eye is watching you,
And that love awaits you,
Toreador, love, love awaits you!*

*All of a sudden, people fall silent
People fall silent ...ah, what is happening?
No more shouts! The moment has come!*

*The bull charges forward
Bounding from the Toril!
He charges forward! He enters.
He strikes! A horse rolls,
Dragging a picador,
"Ah, Bravo! Bull!" the crowd roars!
The bull goes, he comes,
He comes and strikes again!*

*Shaking his banderillas,
Full of fury, he rushes!
The arena is full of blood!
People are fleeing, they jump over the railings
It is your turn now. Come on!
On guard! Come on! Come on! Ah!
Toreador, on guard! etc.*



Richard Wagner (1813–1883)

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg (The Mastersingers of Nuremberg)

Die Meistersinger was first performed in 1868. Wagner had told his friends that it was to be a comic opera to follow his tragic *Tannhäuser*, just as the ancient Greeks always followed tragedy with comedy. This opera, with a libretto by the composer himself, makes a powerful statement of Wagner's views on the importance of music to society in general.

Set in late-sixteenth-century Nuremberg, the story revolves around the city's Guild of Mastersingers. The town is full of excitement about a singing contest in which new members will compete to enter the guild. One of the main characters, the cobbler-poet Hans Sachs, is based on a historical figure. Sachs realises that a love affair is developing between Walther (a young knight from out of town) and Eva, daughter of the city's wealthy goldsmith Veit Pogner, who has decided that the winner of the contest will be the one to win Eva's hand.

The guild has a craftsmanlike attitude to the contest, setting strict rules for composition and performance. As a newcomer, Walther has little hope of learning the details but is determined to win and marry Eva. However, his pre-contest song, with a free-form melody not abiding by the rules, is rejected by Beckmesser, the judge of the contest.

Next morning, Walther comes to tell Sachs of a wonderful dream he had the night before. He creates a song which Sachs writes down, but it still lacks a final verse.

On the day of the contest the townsfolk are gathered and the apprentices process formally to the festival followed grandly by the Mastersingers themselves. When Walther sets eyes on Eva he is inspired to complete his song. Sachs persuades him to perform it with the extra verse and his performance wins the prize and Eva's hand in marriage.

Walther is still smarting from his previous rejection, but Sachs comes forward, persuading him to accept the prize, and explaining the real purpose of the Mastersingers in honouring the art of German song to the world.

Prelude to Act One

An extract from the Prelude leads into the final scene of the opera.

Wach' auf! Es nahet gen den Tag: Apprentices and People (chorus)

After the grand procession, the apprentices call for silence and the crowd sings the praises of Hans Sachs (whose name day it is) in words written by the historical Sachs himself.

Apprentices

Silentium! Silentium!
Macht kein Reden und kein Gesumm'!

*Silence! Silence!
No talking and no murmuring!*

The People

Ha! Sachs! 's ist Sachs!
Seht, Meister Sachs!
Stimmt an! Stimmt an! Stimmt an!

*Ha! Sachs! It's Sachs!
Look, Master Sachs!
Begin! Begin! Begin!*

All

“Wach' auf, es nahet gen den Tag;
ich hör' singen im grünen Hag
ein wonnigliche Nachtigall,
ihr' Stimm' durchdringet Berg und Tal:
die Nacht neigt sich zum Occident,
der Tag geht auf von Orient,
die rotbrünstige Morgenröt'
her durch die trüben Wolken geht.”

*“Awake! the dawn is drawing near;
I hear a blissful nightingale
singing in the green grove,
its voice rings through hill and valley;
night is vanishing in the west,
the day arises in the east,
the ardent red glow of morning
approaches through the gloomy clouds.”*

The People

Heil! Sachs! Heil dir, Hans Sachs!
Heil Nürnbergs teurem Sachs!

*Hail! Sachs! Hail to you, Hans Sachs!
Hail to Nuremberg's dear Sachs!*

Verachtet mir di Meister nicht: Hans Sachs (baritone)

Sachs strongly urges Walther not to scorn the Masters' Guild, nor to undervalue the importance of the art he has created to the people who have heard it.

Finally, the people burst out in joyful praise of Hans Sachs to bring the opera, and this concert, to an end.

Verachtet mir die Meister nicht,
und ehrt mir ihre Kunst!
Was ihnen hoch zum Lobe spricht,
fiel reichlich euch zur Gunst.
Nicht euren Ahnen noch so wert,
nicht eurem Wappen, Speer noch Schwert,
dass ihr ein Dichter seid,
ein Meister euch gefreit,
dem dankt ihr heut' eu'r höchstes Glück.
Drum denkt mit Dank ihr dran zurück,
wie kann die Kunst wohl unwert sein,
die solche Preise schliesset ein?

*Do not scorn the Masters,
But honour their art!
What makes them so praiseworthy
Works abundantly in your favour too.
Not to your ancestors, however worthy,
not to your coat-of-arms, spear or sword,
but to the fact that you are a poet,
and that a Master has admitted you –
you owe today your highest happiness.
Therefore, think back to this with gratitude:
how can art be unworthy
when it involves such prizes?*

Das uns're Meister sie gepflegt
grad' recht nach ihrer Art,
nach ihrem Sinne treu gehegt,
das hat sie echt bewahrt:
blieb sie nicht adlig, wie zur Zeit,
da Höf' und Fürsten sie geweiht,
im Drang der schlimmen Jahr'
blieb sie doch deutsch und wahr;
und wär' sie anders nicht geglückt,
als wie wo alles drängt und drückt,
ihr seht, wie hoch sie blieb im Ehr':
was wollt ihr von den Meistern mehr?

Habt Acht! Uns dräuen üble Streich':
zurfällt erst deutsches Volk und Reich,
in falscher wälscher Majestät
kein Fürst bald mehr sein Volk versteht,
und wälschen Dunst mit wälschem Tand
sie pflanzen uns in deutsches Land;
was deutsch und echt, wüss't' keiner mehr,
lebt's nicht in deutscher Meister Ehr'.

Drum sag' ich euch:
ehrt eure deutschen Meister!
Dann bannt ihr gute Geister;
und gebt ihr ihrem Wirken Gunst,
zerging' in Dunst
das heil'ge röm'sche Reich,
uns bliebe gleich
die heil'ge deutsche Kunst!

The People

Ehrt eure deutschen Meister,
dann bannt ihr gute Geister;
und gebt ihr ihrem Wirken Gunst,
zerging' in Dunst
das heil'ge röm'sche Reich,
uns bliebe gleich
die heil'ge deutsche Kunst!

Heil! Sachs!
Nürnberg's teurem Sachs!

*That our Masters have cared for it
rightly in their own way,
cherished it truly as they thought best,
that is what has kept it genuine:
even if it has not remained noble,
as when courts and princes blessed it,
under the stress of evil years
it has remained German and true;
and indeed has flourished
where all is stress and strain,
you see how highly it is regarded:
what more would you ask of the Masters?*

*Beware! Evil blows threaten us:
if the German people and Empire decayed
under a false, foreign rule
soon no prince would understand his people;
and foreign mists with foreign vanities
they would plant in our German land;
what is German and true none would know,
if it did not live in the esteem of German Masters.*

*Therefore I say to you:
honour your German Masters,
then you will conjure up good spirits!
And if you favour their endeavours,
even if the Holy Roman Empire
should dissolve in mist,
for us there would yet remain
our holy German Art!*

*Honour your German Masters,
then you will conjure up good spirits!
And if you favour their endeavours,
even if the Holy Roman Empire
should dissolve in mist,
for us there would yet remain
our holy German Art!*

*Hail, Sachs!
Nuremberg's dear Sachs!*



NEXT CONCERT:

Thursday 19 October 2017, 7.30pm
Cadogan Hall, Sloane Terrace, SW1

SCHUBERT

Mass No. 6 in E flat
Symphony No. 8 'Unfinished'

MENDELSSOHN

Verleih uns Frieden

Mark Forkgen conductor

Raphaela Papadakis soprano | **Amy Lyddon** mezzo soprano

Bradley Smith tenor | **James Way** tenor

Laurence Williams bass

London Concert Choir | **Counterpoint**

Tickets £30, £25, £20, £16, £12

Mark Forkgen *conductor*

This season Mark Forkgen celebrated 20 years as the Music Director of London Concert Choir. He is also Music Director of Canticum chamber choir, Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor of Kokoro (the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's New Music Group) and Director of Music at Tonbridge School. He has conducted major UK orchestras, including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, City of London Sinfonia, English Chamber Orchestra, English Northern Philharmonia and Manchester Camerata, appearing at major venues, including the Royal Festival Hall, the Barbican and the Royal Albert Hall.



A specialist in the field of choral and contemporary music, Mark has given the first performances of more than 100 works. He has also conducted stage works with the Trestle Theatre Company and Britten Sinfonia, and contemporary opera with the Unicorn Theatre Company and an ensemble from the Philharmonia, at the Linbury Studio, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

Mark's wide range of conducting also includes performances with Deep Purple for the Henley Festival and recreating Pink Floyd's *Atom Heart Mother* in the Chelsea Festival. He also enjoys an active life as a pianist, focusing on twentieth century and contemporary music.

He has been Conductor and Artistic Advisor for highly acclaimed festivals including: Sir Peter Maxwell Davies' 70th Birthday; Stravinsky, 'A Festival of Britten', 'Music of the Americas', 'Britain since Britten' and 'East meets West'. Outside the UK he has conducted in Denmark, Spain, France, Belgium, Germany, Holland, Eire, the Czech Republic and Italy (including Handel's *Messiah* in Sienna and *Israel in Egypt* at the Viterbo Early Music Festival), Bulgaria (concerts broadcast for National TV and Radio) and Hong Kong.

Highlights of the current season include composer projects for New Music South West, the Bournemouth Festival, and the EU Old Hispanic Office initiative conducting twenty first performances; Rachmaninov's *Vespers* with Canticum, a production of Stephen Sondheim's *Into the Woods* and, as a pianist, performances of Shostakovich's Second Piano Trio and works by Stravinsky, Bartok and Debussy.

Erica Eloff *soprano*

Over the last few years, Erica Eloff has steadily built her career on the concert platform to become a sought-after soloist and recitalist. Praised in the media for her vocal authority and technical control, and a voice that is bright and well-produced across its range with great power at the top, she is a passionate and deeply musical performer.



Erica's wide-ranging repertoire includes all of the major choral compositions including several lesser-known works. As an active chamber musician and passionate performer of Lieder and contemporary music, Erica has presented world premieres of works by American, Argentinian, English and South African composers, including works specifically written for her by composers James Wilding, Augusto Arias and Hannes Taljaard.

As winner of the London Handel Singing Competition, Erica had the privilege of collaborating with Laurence Cummings and the London Handel Players on several occasions, including performing Handel's *Messiah* at St. George's. Her operatic experience includes the roles of Farnaspe (*Adriano in Siria*), Flowermaidens (*Parsifal*), Giovanna (*Ernani*), Chloë (*Gruta de Ninfas*), Ottone (*Griselda*), Galatea (*Acis and Galatea*), Meleagro (*Atalanta*), Euridice (*Orfeo ed Euridice*), Ilia (*Idomeneo*), Fiordiligi and Despina (*Così fan tutte*), First Lady and the Queen of the Night (*Die Zauberflöte*), Violetta (*La Traviata*), Tatyana (*Eugene Onegin*), Kate Pinkerton (*Madama Butterfly*), Dido and Belinda (*Dido and Aeneas*), Frasquita (*Carmen*), Adèle (*Die Fledermaus*) and Adina (*L'elisir d'amore*).

Erica's engagements for the 2016-17 season include her debut in the title role in Puccini's *Tosca* at Theater Lübeck, as well as Donna Anna (Mozart's *Don Giovanni*) for Lautten Compagnie Berlin at the Würzburg Mozart Festival. She continues her collaboration with Opera Settecento for a performance of Handel's pastiche *Elpidia* at the Halle International Handel Festival, as well as joining The Hanover Band for several collaborative projects throughout the year.

When not occupying herself with all things musical, Erica runs a busy family shuttle service and spends a lot of time cooking, cleaning and listening to her children singing, rhyming, arguing and relaying all sorts of random facts.

Jeanette Ager *mezzo soprano*

Jeanette Ager was awarded an Exhibition to study at the Royal Academy of Music and has won the Gold Medal in the Royal Over-Seas League Music Competition, the Richard Tauber Prize and an award from the Tillet Trust's Young Artist Platform.



Jeanette's operatic roles have included Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro* (Mozart); Dido in *Dido and Aeneas* (Purcell); The Marquise of Birkenfield in *La Fille du Régiment* (Donizetti); Rosina in *The Barber of Seville* (Rossini); Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* (Puccini) and Thea in *The Knot Garden* (Tippett). She recently appeared as one of the Apprentices in Wagner's *Die Meistersinger* at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

As a soloist, Jeanette's concert and oratorio work has included: recitals and other appearances at the Wigmore Hall; Handel's *Messiah* at St David's Hall, Cardiff; Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* at the Queen Elizabeth Hall; Tippett's *A Child of our Time* at the Royal Festival Hall; Verdi's Requiem at Gloucester and Hereford Cathedrals; Mendelssohn's *Elijah* at The Barbican Hall and Mozart's Mass in C minor at the Cadogan Hall. Jeanette's concert work has taken her to Bermuda, the Czech Republic, Spain, Libya and China.

Jeanette sang the Angel in the first performance of Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* in China. She has also performed at the Three Choirs Festival, singing Britten's *Spring Symphony* and John McCabe's *Songs of the Garden*.

Recently Jeanette has become more involved with the training of choirs in her local area and helped one choir to succeed at the Watford Festival.

Jeanette takes after her mother and enjoys sport and especially racing. Much of her spare time is taken up with training for triathlons and she hopes to travel to Australia to race in Perth in the future.

Alexander James Edwards *tenor*

Born in Essex, Alexander James Edwards began singing as a chorister at St Paul's Cathedral, continuing his studies at the Royal Northern College of Music and the Royal Academy of Music, later joining the Young Artists Programme at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

Other companies he has worked with include the Théâtre du Châtelet, ENO, Gothenburg Opera, Grange Park Opera, Iford Arts, Opera Holland Park, the Opéra Royal de Wallonie and the Salzburg Landestheater. Recordings and broadcasts include *The Carmelites* for Chandos and *Friday Night is Music Night* for BBC Radio 2.

His concert engagements have included performances with the Academy of Ancient Music, the BBC Philharmonic, the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, the Brighton Philharmonic Orchestra, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the Hallé, Huddersfield Choral Society, the Israel Camerata, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Mikkeli Symphony Orchestra, the Orion Orchestra, the Oxford Philomusica, the Royal Choral Society, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Royal Northern Sinfonia, the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, the Southbank Sinfonia and the Wexford Sinfonia. He has also been Featured Soloist at the Battle Proms and at the Leeds Castle Classical Open Air Concert.

Current engagements include Cavaradossi in *Tosca* for English Touring Opera, further performances as Foresto in *Attila* at the Theater Lübeck and Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with the Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra. For Raymond Gubbay Ltd, he appears in the *BT Christmas Concert*, *Classical Spectacular*, *Last Night of the Christmas Proms*, a *New Year's Eve Gala* and *Spectacular Classics*. At the National Concert Hall, Dublin, he appears in *Callas – The Show* and *The Life and Music of Luciano Pavarotti – The Man Behind the Voice*.

In 2011, Alexander James Edwards was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music by the Governing body of the RAM for distinguishing himself in the field of Opera.



Peter Willcock *baritone*

Peter Willcock, originally from Worcestershire, moved to London to study at Trinity College of Music where he was supported by numerous scholarships and bursaries and left with the vocal department silver medal and a first class honours degree.



Since then he has worked as a soloist and chorister for the Royal Opera House, English National Opera, National Theatre, Grange Park Opera, Garsington Opera, Pimlico Opera and other small opera companies.

Standard roles include Dulcamara in *Elixir of Love* for Pavilion, Escamillo in *Carmen* for Pimlico Opera, Monterrone in *Rigoletto* for Pimlico/Grange Park Opera, Aeneas in *Dido and Aeneas* for Garden Opera, Nettuno in *Idomeneo* for Dartington Festival, Billy Jackrabbit and Sid in *La Fanciulla del West* for Grange Park Opera, Noah in *Noah's Flood* for the Cheltenham Festival, with other roles including Papageno, Zuniga, Grimbald, Herman/Crespel/Schlemil.

Contemporary roles include Owl in Terry Jones and Anne Dudley's *The Owl and the Pussycat* for ROH/Olympics; Elephant/Father in *Naciketa* for Opera Circus; Rover/Chairman in Jones/Dudley *A Doctor's Tale* at ROH, Fritz in *Clockwork* for the Unicorn theatre/ROH; Angel (cover) in Macmillan's *Clemency* at ROH and Scottish Opera, and most recently Salieri's Cook/Opera soloist in Peter Schaffer's *Amadeus* at the National Theatre.

Peter also works a great deal in opera education as an amateur and performer for companies including Streetwise Opera, ROH and ROH Thurrock, Opera North and Garsington Opera – working in schools, homeless shelters, prisons, universities and community centres.

He is currently touring the country with Pop-up Opera singing the role of Geronimo in Cimarosa's comic opera *Il Matrimonio Segreto* and is in the ensemble of *Turandot* at the Royal Opera House. Future engagements include numerous oratorio/concerts, *Aida* at English National Opera and a revival of *Amadeus* at the National Theatre.

Peter's Last engagement with the London Concert Choir was as Colonel Pickering in *My Fair Lady*. He is delighted to return.

London Concert Choir

London Concert Choir, founded as the Brompton Choral Society in 1960, now has around 150 members of a wide range of ages. With Music Director Mark Forkgen the choir regularly appears at all the major London concert venues and in cathedrals and churches in and around the capital, as well as touring abroad. The choir's broad range was illustrated in its 2016 visit to Krakow, where concerts of unaccompanied Hymns to the Virgin alternated with performances of jazz standards and items from Will Todd's *Mass in Blue* with Mark Forkgen on piano.

Previous concert performances of opera have ranged from Gluck's *Orfeo* to Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* and the London premiere of *The Chalk Legend* by Stephen McNeff.

LCC celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2010 by performing Britten's *War Requiem* at the Barbican and in Salisbury Cathedral. In 2014 the choir sang Haydn's oratorio *The Seasons* in Assisi and in 2011 a performance of Verdi's *Requiem* with the Augsburg Basilica Choir in the Royal Festival Hall was followed by a joint appearance at the Augsburg Peace Festival.

Among other major works in recent seasons have been Rachmaninov's *The Bells* with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra; Mozart's *Requiem* with the London Mozart Players, and Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and Vaughan Williams' *Sea Symphony*, all with Southbank Sinfonia. The symphony was the main work in a Battle of Jutland centenary concert.

Performances of Baroque music with the Counterpoint period instrumental ensemble include Handel's *Messiah* and *Judas Maccabaeus*, Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* and *St Matthew Passion* and Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610*. The choir often gives concerts for charity and continues to commission new works.



Mark Forkgen
Music Director

James Longford
Principal Accompanist

Fabyan Evans
Chairman

Barbara Whent
Concert Manager

Tabitha Strydom
Treasurer

Stephen Rickett
Design and
Communications

Jennifer Greenway
Membership

Eleanor Cowie
Publicity

Simon Livesey
Company Secretary

Members of London Concert Choir

Soprano

Dagmar Binsted
Mickey Bowden
Christine Brown
Olivia Brown
Aisling Caroll-Turner
Alison Carpenter
Lucy Carruthers
Caroline Clark
Eleanor Cowie
Emma Davidson
Christine Dencer
Gillian Denham
Susan Deville
Emma Dixon
Serena Ede
Francesca Ede
Anna Field
Sarah French
Lisa Gardner
Sonja Gray
Jennifer Greenway
Dalia Gurari
Philippa Harris
Emma Heath
Jennifer Hobbs
Christine Ingram
Jane Joyce
Roxana Kashani
Vickie Kelly
Anna Kosicka
Frances Lake
Susanna Lutman
Charlotte Marshall
Hannah Mason
Jenny Moran
Adrienne Morgan
Delyth Morgan
Stephanie Moussadis
Margaret Perkins
Jutta Raftery
Ines Schlenker
Frances Shaw
Caroline Sheppard

Imogen Small
Imogen Smith
Natalie Tompkins
Emily Tuite
Francesca Wareing
Janet Wells
Belinda Whittingham
Julie Wilson

Alto

Rachel Adams
Fionnuala Barrett
Heide Baumann
Kate Britten
Nancy Buchanan
Frances Cave
Lucy Charman
Carys Cooper
Deborah Curle
Georgie Day
Kathleen Dormer
Stefanie Ettelt
Rebecca Foulkes
Clare Garbett
Anna Garnier
Mary Glanville
Ashlee Godwin
Ruth Grychtol
Muriel Hall
Penny Hatfield
Joan Herbert
Tina Holderried
Anu Holter
Denise Howell
Chrina Jarvis
Chris Joseph
Ella van der Klugt
Sarah Knight
Sabine Koellmann
Joanna Kramer
Lorna Lewis
Liz Lowther
Norma MacMillan
Bridget Maidment

Adrienne Mathews
Corinna Matlis
Catherine McCarter
Anna Metcalf
Sophy Miles
Naomi Nettleship
Cathy Packe
Judith Paterson
Rachel Pearson
Gillian Perry
Dubravka Polic
Theresa Rogers
Rosie de Saram
Pamela Slatter
Tabitha Strydom
Alicia Suriel
Kate Tranter
Rachel Vroom
Gabriel West
Barbara Whent
June Williams
Nathalie Wilson

Tenor

David Broad
James Ede
Fabyan Evans
Bram Frankhuijzen
David Gilfedder
Sam Hansford
Graham Hick
Richard Holmes
Robert Home
Carolyn Knight
Ian Leslie
Frances Liew
Ben Martin
Stephen Rickett
Christopher Seaden
Tim Steer
Barry Sterndale-
Bennett
Tim Thirlway
Ruth Yeo

Bass

Colin Allies
Peter Banks
Richard Burbury
Andrew Cullen
Chris Finch
James Finlay
Richard Gillard
Martin Goodwin
Nigel Grieve
Julian Hall
Nigel Hartnell
Martin Harvey
Keith Holmes
Richard Hughes
Ian Judson
Robert Kealey
Stefan Klaazen
Simon Livesey
Angus Macdonald
Alan Machacek
Paul Milican
Alex Morley-Smith
Aziz Panni
Ben Powell Davies
Christopher Powell-
Smith
Morgan Roberts
Philip Robinson
Tom Roles
Anthony Sharp
John Somerville
Ryszard Stepaniuk
William Tilden
Wilson To
Tony Trowles
Philip Vickers
Dai Whittingham
Peter Yeadon

Southbank Sinfonia

Southbank Sinfonia is an orchestra of young professionals described by *The Independent* as 'a hugely talented young ensemble whose performances are always theatrical'. It is internationally recognised as a leading orchestral academy, each year bringing together 33 of the world's most promising graduate musicians to provide a much-needed springboard into the profession.

Its annual fellowship provides unparalleled opportunities to gain crucial experience in orchestral repertoire, chamber music, opera, dance and theatre – often in partnership with leading performing arts organisations including the Royal Opera and the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields. From giving the first ever performance of Mozart's Requiem at Notre-Dame to taking centre-stage in the National Theatre's acclaimed new production of *Amadeus*, Southbank Sinfonia ensures new generations uphold a venerable tradition, but also asks anew what orchestras have the power to communicate in the modern world.

Alongside this, specialist development sessions that embrace leadership and communication provide each musician with the professional toolkit required to pioneer their own future musical ventures. To date, nearly 500 musicians have completed the programme, many going on to enjoy exciting careers with leading orchestras worldwide.

Founded in 2002 by Music Director Simon Over, the orchestra is proud to be based at St John's Waterloo, in the heart of London, where its musicians bring their own exploratory impulse to bite-sized Free Rush Hour Concerts. By virtue of their youth, energy and excellence, Southbank Sinfonia players not only bring fresh resonance to the stage but are also ideally placed to act as role-models who inspire many younger musicians on London's Southbank and beyond.

Enabling players to devote themselves fully to the experience, every place is free and every player receives a bursary. Making this possible is a family of supporters – trusts, organisations and individuals like you – who recognise the players' potential and relish following their remarkable progress and the spirit they exude in performances. To find out how you can support the orchestra and discover more about its next performances, visit southbanksinfonia.co.uk.



@SouthbankSinf



Southbank Sinfonia

SOUTHBANK
SINFONIA
Music Director: Simon Over

Members of Southbank Sinfonia

1st Violin

Maria Oguren
Andrea Montalbano
Georgia Hannant
Colm Ó Braoin
Joanna Park
Claire Sledd
Kana Kawashima
Ana do Vale
Ioana Forna

2nd Violin

John Han
Jessica Coleman
Francina Moll Salord
Claudia Sanson
Sujin Park
Scott Lowry
Eve Kennedy

Viola

Julia Doukakis
Anastasia Sofina
Elin Parry
Kesari Pundarika
Anna Grows

Cello

Michael Grittani
Rebecca Lagman
Carola Krebs
Bernadette Morrison

Bass

Gwendolyn Hellmann
Daniel Griffin
Ria Nolan

Harp

Fontane Liang

Flute

Jemma Freestone
Alyson Frazier
Alice Thompson

Oboe

Helen Clinton
Mireia Gonzalez Ricart

Clarinet

Anthony Friend
Ross Montgomery

Bassoon

Andres Yauri
Luke Tucker

Horn

Michael Arnold
Jonathan Farey
Kirsty Howe
Hannes Arnold

Trumpet

Gwyn Owen
Dom Hammett
Imogen Hancock

Trombone

Iain Maxwell
Hilary Belsey
Sam Freeman

Tuba

Carl Woodcroft

Timpani/Percussion

Louise Goodwin
David Merseguer Royo
Paul Stoneman



Supporting the Choir

London Concert Choir is committed to high standards and works to raise the level of its performances by means of workshops and other special events. However it is not possible for us to promote our concerts with professional performers of the required calibre unless we receive income from sources other than ticket sales. We greatly appreciate the financial contribution of our regular supporters in helping the choir to maintain its position as one of the leading amateur choirs in London.

For information on joining the Supporters' Scheme, please email:

treasurer@london-concert-choir.org.uk

The choir also offers opportunities to sponsor soloists or orchestral players and for corporate support through sponsorship or programme advertising.

Enquiries should be sent to the same address.

LCC Supporters

Sue Blyth, Deborah Bono, Simon Cave, Bill and Bronwen Cook, Angela Cooper, Dianne Denham, Geoffrey Deville, Karen Evans, John and Judith Greenway, Jeremy Groom, Nicholas and Maureen Halton, Tim Ingram, Ian Judson, Miriam Kramer, John Laing Charitable Trust, Mark Loveday Trust, Jill Marx, Janet and Michael Orr, Jennifer Powell Smith, Michael Shipley, Sybil and Nicholas Spence, Ruth Steinholtz, Jill Tilden, Clare Ford Wille, Anthony Willson, Clare and Philip Ziegler

Life Friends

LCC is delighted to acknowledge the invaluable contribution made by the following individuals:

Peter Barley, Tim and Patricia Barnes, Anne Clayton, Bill Cook, Mr and Mrs Michael Hunt, Mark Loveday, Sue McFadyen, Gregory and Helen Rose, Nicholas Spence, Rachel Vroom

Joining the Choir

London Concert Choir welcomes new members, who are invited to attend a few rehearsals before an informal audition. If you are interested in joining the choir, please fill in your details online at **www.london-concert-choir.org.uk/joinus**

Mailing List

If you would like to receive advance information about our concerts, you can join the choir's free mailing list by emailing **mailinglist@london-concert-choir.org.uk**

The information you provide is subject to the Data Protection Act and as such will be used exclusively by London Concert Choir.

www.london-concert-choir.org.uk