



Handel Rinaldo

Tuesday 13 March 2018 6.30pm, Hall

The English Concert

Harry Bicket conductor/harpsichord

Iestyn Davies Rinaldo

Jane Archibald Armida

Sasha Cooke Goffredo

Joëlle Harvey Almirena/Siren

Luca Pisaroni Argante

Jakub Józef Orliński Eustazio

Owen Willetts Araldo/Donna/Mago

There will be two intervals of 20 minutes following Act 1 and Act 2

Part of Barbican Presents 2017–18

We appreciate that it's not always possible to prevent coughing during a performance. But, for the sake of other audience members and the artists, if you feel the need to cough or sneeze, please stifle it with a handkerchief.

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Welcome

Tonight we welcome back Harry Bicket and The English Concert for *Rinaldo*, the latest instalment in their Handel opera series. Last season we were treated to a spine-tingling performance of *Ariodante*, with a stellar cast led by Alice Coote.

Tonight a similarly illustrious cast is led by Iestyn Davies (who made such an impact in the title-role of *Orlando* two years ago).

Such are the confidence and imagination of *Rinaldo* that it's remarkable to think it was Handel's first foray into Italian opera. The London audience of 1711 lapped it up,

as delighted by the extravagant magical effects as by Handel's endlessly inventive music. And no wonder – for *Rinaldo* brings together love, vengeance, forgiveness, battle scenes and a splendid sorceress in the form of Armida, whose chosen mode of transport is a chariot drawn by dragons. Even without such props, the magic of Handel's invention lives on, as this opera is packed with memorable arias.

It promises to be a thrilling evening. And if you enjoy this, there's *Semele* to look forward to on 5 April 2019.

Huw Humphreys, Head of Music, Barbican

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Synopsis

Act 1

The action is set in Jerusalem during the First Crusade (1096–99). Christian forces under the command of Goffredo have laid siege to the city, which is ruled by King Argante. Goffredo promises his daughter Almirena to the knight Rinaldo if the Christian army is victorious. Argante seeks the help of his mistress, the sorceress Armida, who arrives in a chariot drawn by dragons. Through black magic she has learnt that only by depriving the Christians of Rinaldo's support can Argante hope for victory. She promises to take charge.

In 'a delightful place with fountains, paths and aviaries', Almirena and Rinaldo sing of their love. Armida uses her magic powers to abduct Almirena, leaving Rinaldo bereft. Goffredo's brother Eustazio tells him to seek help from a Christian sorcerer (a contradiction in terms, of course, but no matter). Rinaldo calls on the winds to aid his mission.

interval 20 minutes

Act 2

Eustazio, Goffredo and Rinaldo arrive at a shore in search of the sorcerer. Two sirens lure Rinaldo away to Armida's palace. Goffredo vows to fight on, having lost both Almirena and Rinaldo. In a garden in Armida's enchanted palace, Argante declares his love for the grieving Almirena. She spurns him while challenging him to secure her release.

Armida offers the captive Rinaldo her love, then tries to seduce him by disguising herself as Almirena. Rinaldo suspects the deception and leaves. Armida is torn between love and vengeance. Argante enters and falls for the decoy 'Almirena', provoking Armida's fury. He admits his love for Almirena and renounces Armida's help in his defence of Jerusalem. True to form, Armida vows vengeance.

interval 20 minutes

Act 3

Goffredo and Eustazio find the sorcerer, who tells them that Rinaldo and Almirena are in Armida's palace. Attempting to climb the mountain to storm the palace, the Christians are repulsed by 'horrible monsters bearing lit torches'. The sorcerer equips Goffredo and Eustazio with magic wands, and the monsters are routed. As Goffredo and Eustazio touch the palace gate with their wands, it disappears.

Armida vows to kill Almirena in revenge for Rinaldo's rejection. As she is about to strike her, Rinaldo rushes forward to kill the sorceress. Spirits arise to protect her. Goffredo and Eustazio are reunited with Rinaldo and Almirena. Rinaldo vows to redeem himself with deeds of glory.

As battle looms, Argante and Armida, now reunited, review their troops. Rinaldo looks forward to victory and Almirena's love. After the outcome of the battle hangs in the balance, the Saracens are defeated. Rinaldo captures Argante, but spares him and Armida when they hastily convert to Christianity (don't question the maths: this is Baroque opera *seria*). All join in praise of virtue.

George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)

Rinaldo, HWV7 (1711)

An opera in three acts

Italian libretto by Giacomo Rossi based on a scenario by Aaron Hill, after Torquato Tasso's '*Gerusalemme liberata*'

The edition of '*Rinaldo*' used in these performances is published by Bärenreiter-Verlag, Kassel, edited by David Kimbell. Performed by arrangement with Faber Music Ltd, London.

The young Handel's genius was matched by the energy and acumen with which he pursued his own professional interests. During his Italian sojourn from late 1706 to early 1710, 'Il caro Sassone' (The dear Saxon), as he was dubbed, had cultivated the support of a raft of influential patrons. Such was his international prestige at the age of 25 that in June 1710 he landed the post of Kapellmeister to Georg, Elector of Hanover (the future George I), on terms so favourable as to stretch credulity: a generous salary, plus 'leave to be absent for a 12-month or more if he chose it, and to go whithersoever he please'. That autumn it pleased him to travel to London, then a seething city of nearly a million inhabitants – 'a great and monstrous thing', in Daniel Defoe's words.

The prime lure for Handel was London's new-found craze for Italian opera and its singers, whose virtuosity left their English counterparts standing. Nay-sayers derided this exotic import, with its temperamental, overpaid prima donnas and castratos, as degenerate and effeminate. Exploiting a toxic mix of homophobia, xenophobia and anti-Catholic paranoia, the anonymous writer of a pamphlet entitled 'Plain Reasons for the Growth of Sodomy' thundered that Italian opera would sap the nation of her 'manhood and empire'. London's elite was undeterred. By 1710, so-called *pasticcios* cobbled together from different Italian works had conquered age-old English resistance to all-sung opera. Handel's arrival in London, months after his Italian triumphs, could not have been better timed. As his first biographer, John Mainwaring, wrote, 'Many of the nobility were impatient for an Opera of his composing.' That opera was *Rinaldo*, the first-ever Italian opera written expressly for London, and

premiered at the Queen's Theatre, Haymarket, on 24 February 1711.

The theatre's energetic young director Aaron Hill was quick to see how the Saxon could help him consolidate all-sung opera in London. His priorities were variety of incident and spectacle, with dramatic coherence a distant third. To this end Hill took an episode from Torquato Tasso's Crusade epic *Gerusalemme liberata*, and used what he termed 'a Poet's Privilege' to adapt it to his and his audience's taste. This entailed, *inter alia*, reducing the bloody and heroic elements in Tasso, diluting the complex relationship between Rinaldo and the enchantress Armida (explored by opera composers from Lully to Dvořák), and adding a 'sentimental' heroine in the person of Rinaldo's beloved, Almirena. The theatre poet Giacomo Rossi put Hill's draft into verse; and according to his printed Wordbook, he and Handel engaged in 'a contest of skill' as to who could write faster. 'Mr Handel, the Orpheus of our age, in setting it to music, scarce gave me time to write, and I saw to my great amazement an entire opera composed by that sublime genius, to the highest degree of perfection, in only two weeks.'

Rossi's eye-catching claim was doubtless an exaggeration, though perhaps not by much if we take into account that more than half of *Rinaldo*'s music – most famously Almirena's 'Lascia ch'io pianga' – was adapted from works composed in Italy. True to form, Handel the inveterate recycler almost invariably improved on his originals. Both in the adapted music and the newly composed numbers, he exploited the lavish orchestral resources available at the Queen's Theatre, which

included oboes, bassoons, four trumpets and (in Almirena's avian aria 'Augelletti, che cantate') a consort of recorders. Capitalising on his fame as harpsichordist and organist, Handel also included a brilliant keyboard solo for himself in Armida's aria at the close of Act 2, 'Vo' far guerra'.

With a run of 15 performances in the 1711 season, *Rinaldo* was an unalloyed triumph and sealed Handel's reputation in London. Ignoring the opera's inconsistencies, absurdities and muddled imagery (duly lambasted in the press), audiences went wild over both the music and Hill's no-expense-spared staging, with its mermaids, aerial machines, fire-snorting dragons, spectacular transformations and even a flock of live sparrows (shades here of the Purcellian extravaganzas *King Arthur* and *The Fairy Queen* from the 1690s). But things could, and did, go wrong, to the delight of the editors of the satirical magazine *The Spectator*, as when the 'boy who produced fire and smoke from dragons failed to keep his head down and to hide his candle'. When at one performance stage-hands forgot to move the wing-flats, the editors' glee was unbounded. 'We were presented with the prospect of the ocean in the midst of a delightful grove and I was not a little astonished to see a well-dressed young fellow in full-bottomed wig, appear in the midst of the sea, and without visible concern taking snuff.'

The star draw among Handel's cast was the Neapolitan castrato Nicolo Grimaldi ('Nicolini') in the title-role, described by the music historian Charles Burney, simply, as 'this great singer and still greater actor'. The eight arias, plus two duets, Handel composed for him showcase both his famed virtuosity in 'long divisions' and his dramatic power. For much of Act 1 Rinaldo is a pensive and/or amorous figure, most eloquently in the continuo-accompanied 'Cor ingrato'. He then locates his inner alpha male in the thrilling bravura showpiece 'Venti, turbini', in effect a *concerto grosso* for violin, bassoon and voice.

Even more spectacular is Rinaldo's final aria, 'Or la tromba in suon festante', which pits the voice against a roistering quartet of trumpets. Near the start of Act 2 he sails away, singing 'Il Tricerbero umiliato', whose jauntily demotic tune made it an immediate popular hit. But the plum among Rinaldo's solos is his Act 1 lament 'Cara sposa', in which the vocal line seems to expand infinitely – a Handelian secret shared by few of his contemporaries – against a web of

chromatic counterpoint. For Burney this was 'by many degrees the most pathetic song, and with the richest accompaniment, which had been then heard in England'.

Next in the pecking order in 1711 was the unsnappily named soprano Elisabetta Pilotti-Schiavonetti, evidently a powerful singer with temperament to match. For her Handel created the first of his great operatic sorceresses; and from Armida's fire-snorting opening aria she dominates the stage whenever she appears. If vengeful fury, graphically exploited by Handel, is her default setting, she reveals a deeper humanity in her magnificent *scena* near the end of Act 2, after she has been spurned by Rinaldo. In the mournful outer sections of the aria 'Ah, crudel' bassoon and oboe weave their plaint against a rich-textured string accompaniment, with violins divided into three parts. But Armida's essential nature can never be suppressed for long; and grief duly yields to outrage in the aria's brief, violent central section.

Handel had met the Italian bass Giuseppe Maria Boschi in 1709 in Venice, where he played the role of Pallante in *Agrippina*. Forceful in voice and personality, he specialised in high-testosterone baddies. The saracen king Argante was the first of many roles Handel composed for him in London. In each of his arias, even the would-be suave love song 'Vieni, o cara', Handel uses Boschi's huge vocal range to express the character's swaggering, faintly grotesque self-importance. Like his paramour, Armida, he makes a spectacular first entrance, in an aria festooned with three trumpets and drums that doubtless brought the house down in 1711. London audiences would hardly have known – and probably wouldn't have cared if they had – that Handel had recycled this from Polifemo's aria in the Italian serenata *Acì, Galatea e Polifemo*.

Little is known about Isabella Girardeau, the soprano who created the role of Almirena. Her spirited opening aria 'Combatti da forte', reworked from an Italian cantata, is deceptive. For the rest of the opera Almirena is an essentially passive figure, though she does get to sing the most famous number in the opera, the exquisite – and exquisitely simple – sarabande aria 'Lascia ch'io pianga', whose ancestry reaches back via an Italian chamber cantata to Handel's early Hamburg opera *Almira*. The slight alteration of the melodic line on the repeat of the melody,

with the third note changed from A to D, has an expressive power out of all proportion to the means used. In Almirena's first-act Arcadian 'Augelletti' aria, accompanied by a trio of warbling recorders, the sparrows released onstage didn't always fly to plan: a cue for the London press to warn of the 'inconveniences which the heads of the audience may sometimes suffer from them'.

To take advantage of the available singers, Aaron Hill inflated the roles of the Christian captain Goffredo (sung in 1711 by Boschi's wife, the contralto Francesca Vanini-Boschi) and his brother Eustazio way beyond their dramatic significance. But their music is never less than pleasing and mellifluous, and in the case of Eustazio's wistful, Purcellian minuet song 'Siam prossimi', rather more than that. The opera's three duets – a playful love duet for Rinaldo and Armida, a terse spat between Rinaldo and Armida and (in Act 3) an improbably jolly gavotte for Armida and Argante – are all musically vivid, while the Sirens' Song in Act 2, 'Il vostro maggio', hovering hauntingly between major and minor, is one of the

most naggingly memorable numbers in an opera full of highlights.

After *Rinaldo*'s triumphant first run, the publisher John Walsh was quick to issue a collection of 'favourite songs' from the opera – and there was plenty of choice. Handel revived *Rinaldo* several times between 1712 and 1717, and made wholesale – and dramatically damaging – revisions for a final revival in 1731, with the great Senesino now in the title-role. Its tally of 53 stagings made *Rinaldo* Handel's most-performed opera in his lifetime: tribute both to what Aaron Hill dubbed its 'Machines and Decorations', and to a score teeming with colour, invention and the sheer exuberance of youth. There was also a touch of patriotic pride, voiced by Charles Burney, that *Rinaldo* had decisively put London on the European operatic map: '[*Rinaldo*] is so superior in composition to any opera of that period which had ever been composed in England, that its great success does honour to our nation'.

Notes and synopsis © Richard Wigmore

Surtitles by Kenneth Chalmers

About the performers

Richard Haughton



Harry Bicket

Harry Bicket conductor/harpsichord

Internationally renowned as an opera and concert conductor, Harry Bicket is especially noted for his interpretation of Baroque and Classical repertoire and in 2007 became Artistic Director of The English Concert, one of the UK's finest period orchestras. He became Chief Conductor of Santa Fe Opera in 2013 and opened the 2014 season with an acclaimed *Fidelio*. Born in Liverpool, he studied at the Royal College of Music and Oxford University and is an accomplished harpsichordist.

Highlights this season include his debut with the RTE National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, return visits to Lyric Opera of Chicago (*Orphée et Eurydice*), Metropolitan Opera, New York (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Royal Northern Sinfonia, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and a masterclass at the Juilliard School. With The English Concert he tours *Rinaldo* and goes into the recording studio, as well as conducting Bernstein's *Candide* with Santa Fe Opera.

Highlights of recent seasons include acclaimed productions in the United States and Canada with Lyric Opera of Chicago (*Carmen* and *Rinaldo*); Santa Fe Opera (*Fidelio* and *Alcina*); Houston Grand Opera (*The Marriage of Figaro* and *Rusalka*); Canadian Opera Company (*Mozart II* and *Hercules*); Atlanta Opera (*Orfeo*); and the Metropolitan Opera (*Rodelinda*, *La clemenza di Tito* and *Giulio Cesare*). In the

concert hall, he has conducted the Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles and New York Philharmonic orchestras, Los Angeles and Saint Paul Chamber orchestras, the Boston, Detroit, Houston, Indianapolis, San Francisco and Seattle Symphony orchestras, NACO Ottawa and the Minnesota Orchestra.

Within Europe he has conducted performances at the Liceu Barcelona (*Agrippina* and *Lucio Silla*), Bordeaux Opera (*Alcina*) and Theater an der Wien (*Iphigénie en Tauride* and *Mitridate, re di Ponto*) and appeared with the Monte-Carlo, Oslo, Rotterdam, Royal Liverpool and Royal Stockholm Philharmonic orchestras, Royal Northern Sinfonia, the Bavarian Radio and BBC Scottish Symphony orchestras, Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France.

Work with The English Concert includes extensive touring, taking in Europe, America and the Far East, alongside appearances at the BBC Proms and regular Wigmore Hall and Barbican projects.

He made his Glyndebourne Festival debut in 1996 with Peter Sellars's production of *Theodora* and returned in 1999 and 2003. He is now a regular guest at the Metropolitan Opera, following his debut there in 2004 with an acclaimed *Rodelinda* featuring Renée Fleming and David Daniels.

Recordings to date with The English Concert include releases on a range of labels featuring Elizabeth Watts, David Daniels, Lucy Crowe, Sarah Connolly and Rosemary Joshua. Harry Bicket's discography also includes five recordings with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, including collections of Handel opera arias with Renée Fleming and Ian Bostridge, as well as selections from Handel's *Theodora*, *Serse*, and the cantata *La Lucrezia* with Lorraine Hunt Lieberson, which was nominated for a Grammy Award. His Gramophone Award-nominated CDs also include *Sento amor*, a disc of arias by Gluck, Handel and Mozart with David Daniels, and *Il tenero momento* with Susan Graham, featuring arias by Mozart and Gluck.



Iestyn Davies

Iestyn Davies Rinaldo

After graduating in Archaeology and Anthropology from St John's College, Cambridge, Iestyn Davies studied at the Royal Academy of Music, London.

An esteemed Handelian, he has captivated audiences globally with his vocal agility in roles such as Orlando, Rinaldo, Ottone (*Agrippina*) and David (*Saul*). His intelligent and considered interpretations have led to fruitful collaborations with Thomas Adès, George Benjamin and Nico Muhly.

On the opera stage, he has appeared at the Metropolitan Opera, New York, Chicago Lyric Opera, La Scala, Milan, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, English National Opera, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Welsh National Opera and in Munich, Vienna and Zurich.

Concert highlights include performances at La Scala, Milan, the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Zurich Tonhalle, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, Lincoln Center in New York and at the BBC Proms. He has appeared in concert and recital at Carnegie Hall and regularly appears at the Wigmore Hall, where he has curated his own residency. He recently sang the role of Farinelli (*Farinelli and the King*) with Mark Rylance at the Globe Theatre and subsequently on the West End stage at the Duke of York's Theatre.

Highlights last season included a return to the Royal Opera House to perform George Benjamin's *Written on Skin* and Thomas Adès's *The Exterminating Angel*; concerts in Moscow, San Francisco and Cleveland, and many London appearances. This season he returns to the Metropolitan Opera for *The Exterminating Angel* and makes his Broadway debut in *Farinelli and the King*.

Iestyn Davies is a prolific recording artist and is the recipient of the Royal Philharmonic Society's 2010 Young Artist of the Year Prize, three Gramophone awards (in 2012, 2014 for his recital disc *Arise, my muse*, and 2017 for Bach cantatas with Arcangelo and Jonathan Cohen) and the 2013 Critics' Circle Award for Exceptional Young Talent. He was awarded an MBE in the 2017 New Year's Honours.



Helen Tansey

Jane Archibald

Jane Archibald Armida

Jane Archibald's artistry has generated excitement across Europe and North America with recent engagements including the title-role in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and Konstanze (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*) in Zurich; Adele (*Die Fledermaus*) and Ophélie (*Hamlet*) at the Metropolitan Opera, New York; Olympia (*Les contes d'Hoffmann*), Zerbinetta (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) and Cleopatra (*Giulio Cesare*) at the Opéra National de Paris; Sophie (*Der*

Rosenkavalier) at La Scala, Milan, and in Berlin; Zerbinetta at the Baden-Baden Festspielhaus, Covent Garden and in Munich; Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*) at the Theater an der Wien; and the title-role in *Semele* and *Ginevra (Ariodante)* for the Canadian Opera Company.

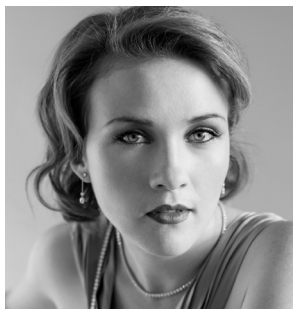
After beginning her professional opera career in her native Canada, she was an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera. She then moved to the Vienna State Opera as a member of the ensemble, making her debut in many coloratura roles.

Her many concert highlights include Mozart's *Exsultate, jubilate* with Lorin Mazel and the Orchestra of La Scala, Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra and Michael Tilson-Thomas, Messiaen's *Poèmes pour Mi* with Christian Thielemann and the Berlin Philharmonic and Mozart arias with the Camerata Salzburg and Louis Langrée.

This season she makes frequent appearances with the Canadian Opera Company as its first-ever Artist-in-Residence, taking the roles of Zdenka (*Arabella*), Konstanze and the title-role in *The Nightingale and other Short Fables*.

Other current and forthcoming highlights include Mathilde (*William Tell*) and the title-role in Strauss's *Daphne*, as well as concert performances of Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, Britten's *Les illuminations*, Cunégonde (Bernstein's *Candide*) and the Fire/Princess/Nightingale in Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges*.

Jane Archibald has featured on many CD and DVD recordings. Her first solo disc, a programme of Haydn coloratura arias, won a JUNO Award for Classical Album of the Year. Recent highlights include critically acclaimed recordings of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* under Jérémie Rhorer and *Poèmes pour Mi* with the Seattle Symphony Orchestra under Ludovic Morlot.



Dario Acosta

Sasha Cooke

Sasha Cooke Goffredo

Sasha Cooke is a Grammy Award-winning mezzo-soprano. Concert-stage highlights this season include appearances with the Dallas, London, Melbourne, New Zealand, San Francisco and Tokyo Symphony orchestras, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin and Orchestre Métropolitain de Montreal, among others, frequently performing the music of Gustav Mahler, whose works she has sung to great acclaim on four continents.

She is also sought after by the world's leading opera houses, including the Metropolitan Opera, New York, Opéra National de Bordeaux, San Francisco Opera, Dallas Opera, Houston Grand Opera and Seattle Opera. Last year she participated in two major world premieres, creating the role of Laurene Jobs in Mason Bates's *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs* at Santa Fe Opera and the title-role in Nico Muhly's *Marnie* at English National Opera.

She is known for her commitment to new music and has premiered works by Mark Adamo, William Bolcom, Laura Kaminsky, Lowell Liebermann, Marc Neikrug, Kevin Puts, Augusta Read Thomas and Joby Talbot.

Previous orchestral engagements have included appearances with the Boston, Chicago, Dallas,

Detroit, Houston, New World, Pittsburgh, Seattle, Shanghai and Singapore Symphony orchestras, Cleveland Orchestra, the Hong Kong, Los Angeles and New York Philharmonic orchestras, Philadelphia Orchestra and the Orpheus, Los Angeles and Saint Paul Chamber orchestras.

Leading conductors with whom Sasha Cooke has worked include Riccardo Muti, Bernard Haitink, Sir Andrew Davis, Alan Gilbert, Edo de Waart, Michael Tilson Thomas, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Jaap van Zweden, Gustavo Dudamel and Sir Mark Elder. She recently released *Liszt: The Complete Songs, Vol 4* with Julius Drake on Hyperion Records. She has also recorded for Naxos, Bridge, Yarlung, GPR Records and Sono Luminus.

She is a graduate of Rice University, the Juilliard School and the Metropolitan Opera Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.



Joëlle Harvey

Joëlle Harvey Almirena/Siren

American soprano Joëlle Harvey is fast becoming recognised as one of the most promising young talents of her generation. This summer she returns to Glyndebourne Festival Opera for her role debut as Cleopatra in Sir David McVicar's production of Handel's *Giulio Cesare*, conducted by William Christie.

She began the 2017–18 season performing Barber's *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* with the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra. Other highlights this season include her Pittsburgh Opera debut

as Susanna (*The Marriage of Figaro*) and a return to the New York Philharmonic for *Messiah* under Andrew Manze, while future seasons will also include a recital at Carnegie Hall.

Recent operatic engagements include Servilia (*La clemenza di Tito*) for Glyndebourne Festival Opera; Pat Nixon (*Nixon in China*) with the Los Angeles Philharmonic; Sicle (Cavalli's *L'Ormindo*) at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; Galatea (*Acis and Galatea*) at La Fenice and for the Aix-en-Provence Festival; and Zerlina in a revival of Dmitri Tcherniakov's production of *Don Giovanni* at the Aix-en-Provence Festival.

In concert, Joëlle Harvey recently appeared at the Mostly Mozart Festival in Mozart's Requiem and Mass in C minor; with the New York Philharmonic (Magnificats by Mendelssohn and Bach); the San Francisco Symphony (Mahler's *Das klagende Lied* under Michael Tilson Thomas); the London Symphony Orchestra and Royal Concertgebouw (John Adams's *El Niño*); and the Los Angeles Philharmonic (*Missa solemnis*). She has also sung Tigrane (*Radamisto*) at Carnegie Hall with Harry Bicket and The English Concert; and Michal (*Saul*) here at the Barbican with The Sixteen under Harry Christophers, a work which she subsequently recorded with the same forces.



Marco Borggreve

Luca Pisaroni

Luca Pisaroni Argante

Italian bass-baritone Luca Pisaroni has established himself as one of the most charismatic and versatile singers today. Since his debut at the age of 26 with the Vienna Philharmonic under

Nikolaus Harnoncourt at the Salzburg Festival, he has been in demand at the world's leading opera houses, concert halls and festivals.

This season began with the role of Mahomet II (Rossini's *Le siège de Corinthe*) in his debut at the Rossini Opera Festival, followed by role debuts as Golaud (*Pelléas et Mélisande*) at the Opéra de Paris and Mustafà (*L'italiana in Algeri*) at the Vienna State Opera. He returns to the Metropolitan Opera stage as Count Almaviva (*The Marriage of Figaro*) and sings Méphistophélès (Gounod's *Faust*) at the Tchaikovsky Concert Hall in Moscow. He will also perform the roles of Alidoro (*La Cenerentola*) and Leporello (*Don Giovanni*) at the Vienna State Opera and later make his debut in the role of Don Pizarro (*Fidelio*) at La Scala, Milan, under the baton of Myung-Whun Chung.

His appearances in the concert hall this season include Rossini's *Petite messe solennelle* at the Vienna Konzerthaus and Luxembourg Philharmonie; Beethoven's Mass in C with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra under Mariss Jansons; Beethoven's *Missa solemnis* with the London Symphony Orchestra under Michael Tilson Thomas; the current tour of *Rinaldo* with The English Concert directed by Harry Bicket; orchestrations of Schubert Lieder with the Filarmonica della Scala under Fabio Luisi; Mozart's Mass in C minor with Concentus Musicus Wien at the Musikverein; and a Rossini Gala with the Orchestra Sinfonica della RAI under Luisi.

Luca Pisoni has recorded for all the major labels, and his discography includes *Don Giovanni* and *Rinaldo* from the Glyndebourne Festival; *The Marriage of Figaro* with Opéra National de Paris; *Così fan tutte*, *Don Giovanni* and *The Marriage of Figaro* from the Salzburg Festival; and *Don Giovanni* with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra under Yannick Nézet-Séguin.



Anita Wasik

Jakub Józef Orlński

Jakub Józef Orlński Eustazio

Polish countertenor Jakub Józef Orlński won the Grand Finals of the 2016 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, as well as the 2015 Marcella Sembrich International Vocal Competition, and is rapidly gaining a reputation as an artist of striking vocal beauty and daring stagecraft.

This season, he makes his house and role debut at Frankfurt Opera as Handel's Rinaldo and joins the Aix-en-Provence Festival on tour in the role of Orimeno (Cavalli's *Erismena*) at the Château de Versailles and Festival de Saint-Denis, as well as appearing in the current tour as Eustazio with The English Concert under Harry Bicket. Additional highlights include concerts with Il Pomo d'Oro at Salle Gaveau in Paris and Germany's Usedomer Musikfestival, a televised performance on the 25th Victoires de la Musique Classique award show at La Grange au Lac in Evian, a programme of Vivaldi with Chicago's Music of the Baroque, the Theatrum Musicum festival in Kraków for Handel's *Samson* and *Messiah* with the Portland Baroque Orchestra. This summer he makes his Wigmore Hall debut and gives a recital at New York's National Sawdust as one of the 2017 HSBC Laureates of the Académie du Festival d'Aix.

Previously, he has performed with the Houston Symphony Orchestra, Musica Sacra and the Oratorio Society of New York. He has also sung at the Karlsruhe Handel Festival and Leipzig Opera House.

Jakub Józef Orliński has met with success at several vocal competitions, including the 2016 Lyndon Woodside Oratorio-Solo Competition (New York), International Early Music Vocal Competition (Poland), Rudolf Petrák's Singing Competition (Slovakia), Debut Competition (Germany), Mazovian Golden Voices Competition (Poland) and Le Grand Prix de l'Opera (Romania). He earned his Master's degree in vocal performance at the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music in Warsaw and gained his Graduate Diploma at the Juilliard School. He has an exclusive recording contract with Erato/Warner Classics.



Owen Willetts

Owen Willetts Araldo/Donna/Mago

Owen Willetts began singing as a choral scholar at Lichfield Cathedral and went on to study at the Royal Academy of Music with Noelle Barker, Iain Leadingham and David Lowe.

Current and future engagements include Oberon (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) for Virginia Opera; Ottone (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*) for Pinchgut Opera and in Aachen Theatre; Narciso (*Agrippina*) for Oldenburg State Theatre, Göttingen's Handel Festival and Brisbane

Baroque; Tolomeo (*Giulio Cesare*) for Bonn Theatre; Tullio (*Arminio*) in Karlsruhe and Vienna; a tour of Mozart and Bach with Les Musiciens du Louvre under Marc Minkowski; Eustazio (*Rinaldo*) and the title-role in *Giustino* with the Lauffen Compagny Berlin; Handel's *Il trionfo del tempo e del disinganno* at the Halle Opera House; *Messiah* with the Ulster Orchestra and Pergolesi's *Stabat mater* with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.

Recently he sang the title-role in Handel's *Orlando* at Heilbronn Theatre; Helicon (*Caligula*) at the Hanover State Opera; Andronico (*Tamerlano*) at the Buxton Festival; Farinelli (*Farinelli and the King*) at the Duke of York's Theatre; Famigliaro (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*) for Opera North; Summer (*The Fairy Queen*) and Bach's *St John Passion* with Dutch Touring Opera; the title-role in *Giulio Cesare* for Finnish National Opera; and Orfeo (*Orfeo ed Euridice*) and Arsace (*Partenope*) with Boston Baroque under Martin Pearlman. Other engagements have included the 2013 Jerwood Project *Awakening Shadow*, a dramatisation of Britten's *Canticles* in Glyndebourne; *Messiah* with Portland Baroque Orchestra; Ottone with Royal Academy Opera, Reykjavik Summer Opera and Iford Arts Festival; roles in *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* for Birmingham Opera Company; the title-role in *Orlando* at the Halle Opera House and Halle Handel Festival; alto arias in Bach's *St John Passion* in a staged production with Dutch Touring Opera; and *The Fairy Queen* under Emmanuelle Haïm.

In concert, Owen Willetts has performed with Les Musiciens du Louvre, Telemann Chamber Orchestra, Vancouver Early Music Festival and Lauffen Compagny. He has worked with many leading names in historical performance, including Laurence Cummings, Christian Curnyn, Emmanuelle Haïm, Marc Minkowski, Martin Pearlman, Howard Arman and Raphaël Pichon.

Richard Haughton



The English Concert

The English Concert

With an unsurpassed reputation for inspiring performances of Baroque and Classical music, The English Concert (founded 1973) ranks among the finest chamber orchestras in the world, guided along the way by founder Trevor Pinnock, his successor Andrew Manze, and current Artistic Director Harry Bicket, together with newly appointed Principal Guest Director and fortepianist Kristian Bezuidenhout.

Its award-winning discography of over 100 recordings features masterworks from Bach to Purcell and Handel to Mozart, as well as some of the most renowned artists in recent history. Lucy Crowe's debut solo recital *Il caro Sassone*, Alison Balsom's *Sound the Trumpet* and Elizabeth Watts's recent exploration of virtuosic arias by Alessandro Scarlatti are but the latest of its endeavours.

It also works with distinguished guest directors, including harpsichordists Laurence Cummings and Christian Curnyn. Last season violinist Rachel Podger returned with a typically flamboyant programme centred on the family affair of JS Bach, CPE Bach and his godfather Telemann.

Ground-breaking collaborations in musical theatre and opera are also at the forefront of The English Concert's thinking and form part of its longstanding relationships with exceptional artists and venues. From the Buxton Festival or the

Elizabethan settings of Shakespeare's Globe and the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse to challenging perceptions of gender through the music of Handel, it steps outside the traditional concert hall to reach new audiences. Last season saw Handel's much-loved *Messiah* brought to life on stage at the Bristol Old Vic through director Tom Morris's dramatic vision, which was followed last summer by an exploration at the Wigmore Hall of the musical treasures of Jewish communities.

Last season was also profoundly influenced by literature as The English Concert celebrated the 400th anniversary of the deaths of both William Shakespeare and Miguel de Cervantes. The adventures of the misguided hero Don Quixote were recounted through the music of Purcell and Telemann, while musical representations of the Bard's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Giulio Cesare* set sail on a tour to the Far East. Completing the round-the-world trip, the ensemble's series of Handel operas-in-concert, commissioned by New York's Carnegie Hall, continues to flourish after the success of *Radamisto* in 2013. *Theodora* and *Alcina* soon followed in 2014, with *Hercules* and *Orlando* hot on their heels in 2015 and 2016. Last season it was the turn of *Ariodante*, with the title-role shared between Alice Cooté and Joyce DiDonato alongside an all-star cast. This season, Iestyn Davies appears in the title-role of *Rinaldo*.

www.englishconcert.co.uk

The English Concert

**Artistic Director/
Harpsichord**

Harry Bicket

Violin 1

Nadja Zwiener *leader*
Alice Evans
Julia Kuhn
Thérèse Timoney
Silvia Schweinberger

Violin 2

Tuomo Suni
Elizabeth MacCarthy
Kinga Ujszászi
Jacek Kurzydło

Viola

Alfonso Leal del Ojo
Louise Hogan

Cello

Joseph Crouch
Gavin Kibble
Jonathan Rees

Double Bass

Christine Sticher

Recorder

Tabea Debus

Oboe

Katharina Spreckelsen
Hannah McLaughlin

Bassoon

Alberto Grazi

Trumpet

Mark Bennett
Stian Aareskjold
Simon Munday
Paul Bosworth

Timpani

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