

Roderick Williams

**Milton Court
Artist-in-Residence**

We celebrate one
of our most engaging
musicians as a singer,
composer and dramatic
collaborator.

Tue 19 Feb
An Italian Songbook

Tue 26 Feb
Roderick Williams in recital

barbican

Wolf's Italian Songbook

Tuesday 19 February 2019 7.30pm, Milton Court
Concert Hall

Wolf Italienisches Liederbuch

A new, staged English version created by
Jeremy Sams and Christopher Glynn

There will be no interval

Rowan Pierce soprano

Katie Bray mezzo-soprano

Nicky Spence tenor

Roderick Williams baritone

James Newby baritone

Christopher Glynn piano

Jeremy Sams & Louise Shephard directors

Part of Roderick Williams: Milton Court

Artist-in-Residence

Part of Barbican Presents 2018–19

Unfortunately the advertised mezzo-soprano, Kathryn Rudge, has had to withdraw from this performance. We are very grateful to Katie Bray for taking her place at short notice.



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Welcome

A warm welcome to the latest concert in Roderick Williams's Milton Court residency. Last November it was as a composer that he was featured, in a concert marking the centenary of Armistice Day. As a singer, Roderick is as renowned on the concert stage as he is in the opera house, so it's fitting that tonight he is presenting Wolf's *Italian Songbook* in a new translation and staging devised by Jeremy Sams and Christopher Glynn.

The 46 songs that make up the *Italian Songbook* celebrate life and love in their many incarnations, and in this updating the songs are reordered, giving anyone

familiar with the traditional cycle the opportunity to hear it afresh.

Joining Roderick on-stage is a stellar line-up of British talent – soprano Rowan Pierce, mezzo Katie Bray, tenor Nicky Spence and fellow baritone James Newby, along with Christopher Glynn at the piano.

It promises to be a wonderful evening. And don't forget that Roderick returns a week today for more song – programming Schumann's *Frauenliebe und -leben* with works by Clara Schumann, Brahms and Howells and bringing things right up to date with songs by Sally Beamish and Rhian Samuel.

Huw Humphreys, Head of Music, Barbican

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Please turn off watch alarms, phones, pagers etc during the performance. Taking photographs, capturing images or using recording devices during a performance is strictly prohibited.

Please remember that to use our induction loop you should switch your hearing aid to T setting on entering the hall. If your hearing aid is not correctly set to T it may cause high-pitched feedback which can spoil the enjoyment of your fellow audience members.

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.

If anything limits your enjoyment please let us know during your visit. Additional feedback can be given online.

Jeremy Sams muses on a lifetime's immersion in the songs of Hugo Wolf

For texts, see page 6

I had, I now realise, an eccentric childhood. The sound of German Lieder, sung, played on the piano or on gramophone records was the soundtrack of my youth. Schubert firstly, Wolf mostly, and then everything in between.

I should explain. My father Eric was a Lieder buff who, from my earliest memory, was playing, singing and writing about Hugo Wolf, his greatest love. He published the first guide to the songs – still, in my completely impartial (!) view, to be bettered. And as soon as I could, I would be picking out the voice part while he played – later I was the young accompanist and he the tremulous tenor. These songs were of course in German. No problem, he taught me German from Lieder texts. Soon I was fluent in brooks and linnets ... and in no time at all the whole language fell into place. Because, of course, I needed to know what the words meant – or more precisely what the music meant. The same, meanwhile, was happening for Fauré and Duparc. We had days when we only spoke in French or German. As I said, eccentric. I prefer to take my own son to the football.

One thing I did learn, without even noticing, was the fact that when there is a voice – or more precisely a story – from Schubert onwards, music describes and depicts the emotions of the words. That when song is involved (and this holds for all song) words are no longer just words, and music is no longer just music. My dad used to call this 'tonal analogues' – I think a snappier term is needed. But this insight has never yet let me down, whether I am dealing with Lieder, opera, musicals or pop songs.

And proof was forthcoming. My first girlfriend was a sweet soprano living up the road. Her best friend round the corner was also a soprano, her brother a baritone. When I was 14 or 15 we

used to sing and play together. It was clear to me that South Croydon was a musical Mecca. More accurately, I just thought that's what the world was – a place where people sang songs in foreign languages to each other. And Wolf's *Italian Songbook* became the guidebook to my newfound passion (in retrospect, I feel slightly sorry for the object of my attentions). The songs within the book seemed to be entirely about us – by which of course I mean me. They became my script, my diary, my love letters. I wanted her to warn me when she was going to look at her cutest. I even (forgive me) wished her house were made of glass. All the petty jealousies, the difficulties with parents, the mood swings, the rows, followed by making up, were chronicled in Wolf's book. So I played the songs, she sang them, and we sort of, in our adolescent way, lived them.

Later, at college, and later still when I earned my living at the piano, these songs were often in my repertoire. But they had become just that – repertoire. The problems were not so much the emotional ones of young lovers, but more the technical ones of ensemble, *Fingersatz*, and programme-building. The working life of a musician can easily drown out the lived life of a poem.

Then, in my late twenties, I ran away to join the theatre. And I didn't think of a Lied or a *mélodie* for years and years. Plays, musicals and opera became my world – in various capacities. And Story became, and remains, my god. And art-songs, I had been taught, were not about stories but feelings. Unlike opera, which it's acceptable to translate, and which is only about story. It is only in the last few years, well over 50 since I first fell in love with Lieder, that I have returned to work on them. It was tonight's pianist, Christopher Glynn, who wooed me back to a place that, in truth, I had never left. As I worked on translations for him (of Schubert and Brahms)

it was my time in the theatre that convinced me that every song is not just a story, but actually a scene. And it has been thinking of poetry as theatre that has given me the key to translating it.

So this, tonight, is our latest collaboration, and our most ambitious yet. And it's unashamedly theatrical. My way in was via my dad's Wolf book – in which he points out that this cycle (of 46 songs) is almost set in a village. Everyone knows everyone else, gossip is rife, tongues wag, people are always saying 'I hear that ...' or 'they say that ...'. It's a community, for us represented by a *Così fan tutte* style set-up. Four singers, SATB, plus a Don Alfonso figure, who manipulates, encourages, teaches, but ultimately stays detached. We've conceived the piece in three acts, as it were. The first could be called 'Aspects of Love' if that title hadn't been snaffled. The second is about loving from a distance. In the third the young lovers are deep in it, sometimes up to their necks. Don Alfonso observes as they tie themselves into and out of amorous knots. In the end, four lovers ascend to heaven in glory – with one man left out for ever. To further this scheme the pack has

been shuffled – our order of the songs may rattle the purists. (The famous opening and closing songs no longer fulfil those functions) But we are after fresh ears – hence new translations.

We think of these characters as timeless. Modern dress, but telling tales which go back to medieval times, while still being horribly familiar to all of us today. In one significant way, however, they are not us. They are Italian. Which, then as now, has specific implications. Firstly a ready and unembarrassed access to passion. Then – and this is vital – a Catholic worldview. There is much talk of heaven, God and worship throughout the cycle. These are not in any way metaphors or allegories. Religion is real and literal. And lastly ... present in a large number of the songs are mothers and fathers. Parents overprotective of their offspring, mothers by turns worshipped and cursed, children living with their parents but longing to burst free. Come to think of it, that is increasingly true in the UK!

Programme note © Jeremy Sams

Hugo Wolf (1860–1903)
The Italian Songbook

Part 1: 'Tell me the truth about love'

1

What kind of music could be worthy of you?
What song could sing of you? Unthinkable ...
Perhaps it's five fathoms deep in the ocean
Unseen, unsung by anyone at all ...
Unheard since the beginning of creation
How would it sound? Beyond imagination ...

2

You are the greatest wonder far and wide.
Far fairer than the flowers that bloom in May
The Great Cathedrals vanish by your side.
Siena and Orvieto melt away.
Hundreds of Pilgrims worship and adore you,
The Sistine Chapel fades away before you.
You are so rich in grace, so pure and true
The highest Art could never equal you

3

I heard that you were going on a journey.
Where are you bound for? And, when are you
leaving?
Tell me the day and time of your departure
I'll wash your path with bitter tears of grieving.
My sighs will rend the air with deepest yearning
By day and night I'll dream of your returning.
My tears will fall like rain from Heaven above
Think well of me. Remember me, my love.

4

I hate to leave my weary bed at morning
But then your face comes to my mind ... you
beauty.
I'm up and out, just time to throw some clothes on
And wandering through the town and making
music ...
I sing and play, and wake the world with song
The streets resound ... But not for very long.
The ladies are bewitched by what they hear.
But, soon as songs are sung they disappear

5

I hate to wake you up, I know it's late
But please don't fall asleep, please listen clearly.
My love, there are four things I need to state
They're vital, and I mean them most sincerely.
The first is that my heart belongs to you
The second is that we belong together
The third is that I'll always love you dearly
The last is – that I'm yours, now and forever.

6

I know I'm strange, but what I've always wanted
Is ... is a violinist as my beau.
Well, when you pray, sometimes your wish is
granted
He's not the tallest – but he loves me so
He may be short and shy, but the music he played
me is ...
Shoosh, he's here, he's come to serenade me ...

7

At break of day when you pull back the covers
Sunlight begins to sparkle everywhere
The morning mist is banished from the air
And tiny angels vie with one another
To bring you shoes and clothes for you to wear.
Then when you leave your house for morning
prayer
A crowd of people join you at the shrine
And when you enter, suddenly there's music
And many-coloured lights begin to shine
Gently you dab your brow with holy water
So that it twinkles like the morning dew
You bow your head, and kneel before the altar.
God created His masterpiece in you.
How wonderful is everything you do
Nothing on earth so fair or pure or true
How full of wonder everything about you ...
The world would be a darker place without you

8

You handsome soldiers on your way to war
Please keep an eye out for my dearest darling.
He's never done that sort of thing before
Make sure he doesn't run when they start
shooting.
The thought of him at war makes me uneasy
The sight of blood has always made him queasy.
Don't make him sleep outside on some bare hill
He isn't strong. I think he'd catch a chill.

9

I like a man who likes to dress in green.
It cuts a dash – implies a man of passion.
It smacks of spring, birth and regeneration.
Fertile and strong – the perfect combination.
It smacks of hunting-horns and open air,
The boy I love – green's what he loves to wear
It's certainly a shade he seems to suit,
The colour of the youngest freshest fruit

10

My daily bread is soaked with salty tears
At night the stars refuse to shine above me
I'm searching high and low, no one appears,
No one to cherish, nobody who might love me.
Some sweet old codger might be perfect for me
Some kind old soul who'd worship and adore me.
To be respected by some well-connected
millionaire
Is that too much to ask for?
Oh heavens how I hanker, how I hunger
For some old codger, of seventeen or younger

11

My darling asked me round for lunch on Sunday
And what a dreadful state I found his house in.
I didn't want to touch the food he'd made me
His filthy saucepan had a tiny mouse in.
And there was dust and debris everywhere
Plus something slightly sticky on the chair
The plates were cracked, the cutlery was rusting.
The soup stone cold – and tasted quite disgusting

12

My sweetheart is so small, so teeny weeny ...
His hair can sweep the floor without him kneeling.
Last week he took a walk, in our Giardini.
A scary bee appeared and sent him reeling.
He sat and caught his breath, beneath some
clover
An earwig came along and knocked him over.
We crept upstairs to have a sneaky hug
He was assaulted by a ladybug.
A curse on earwigs, slugs and bugs and spiders

They give my little love no end of trouble
A curse on bees and beetles and mosquitoes.
And girls who get their kisses by bending
double ...

13

The smallest things can bring the greatest pleasure
The smallest things can be the best of all
The rarest gems, diamonds that people treasure.
They cost so much to buy, and yet they're small.
You see these grapes, so tiny when they're young
And still they taste so sweet upon the tongue.
Take this forget-me-not, so small, so blue.
But smelling so delicious ... Here – it's for you

14

You think your box of tricks can make me love you?
I know your game, I know what you are after!
I've other suitors that are way above you
Don't trust my simpering, don't trust my laughter.
I've other lovers, I confess it's true.
I am in love, but sadly not with you.
I am in love, but really not with you.

15

God she's so proud, and God she makes me sick!
Pretending she's the fairest flower of all
Who knows what hapless victim she will pick
Or where her greedy gaze may chance to fall.
It's how the Arno flows thorough Tuscany
Compelling streams to follow slavishly.
First she will gather suitors, then she'll flout them
Sometimes with tributaries, sometimes without
them.

16

I know how grand she is, how nobly born
A lowly wretch like me means little to her
And while she stares at me with open scorn
Italy's finest stand in line to woo her
The finest men she conquers easily
And I've been warned, she's making sport
with me ...
She toys with me, seemingly I 'amuse' her
But God, look at her eyes, who could refuse her?

17

Blessed are the blind. They do not have to gaze on
 Those fiery eyes that set all hearts a-burning
 Blessed are the deaf. They do not have to hearken
 To all the wretched sighs of lovers' yearning
 Blessed are the dumb. Their sorrow they can never
 Speak of to those who caused their woe and
 weeping
 Blessed are the dead, for they at last are sleeping
 Safe from the bitter pangs of love forever

18

I've got it – let's dress up as wandering
 preachers ...
 Renounce all worldly enterprise completely.
 Then we could creep from door to door, discreetly
 'Have pity on two weary starving creatures'
 'Father, dear father, please accept my blessing ...
 But we've a crisis which is far more pressing
 Father, dear Father, I'm a true believer,
 But my young daughter's ill, she has a fever ...'
 'Well if she's ill, then I should be beside her
 She needs a holy hand, to help and guide her.
 If she's asleep, then maybe I should wake her
 Lest she should go unshriven to her maker
 Close all the doors, we need a private session
 So I can hear the poor dear girl's confession'

19

I've got a love who lives in Conegliano
 I've got another one in San Marino .
 One in the lovely city of Urbino.
 Then there's a priest who lives in Battigniano
 In Casentino I've a couple more
 And then the married man who lives next door.
 Then there's another pair in Frosinone
 Four in La Fratta. Ten in Castiglione!

Part 2: 'To the distant beloved'**20**

May God be praised, may he be glorified
 Such miracles he brought into existence
 He made the sea, its ever-shifting tide
 He made those galleons, gliding in the distance
 Then he made paradise, eternal grace
 Then he made beauty, and your lovely face

21

I hear that Tony – dreadful to relate -
 Is starving half to death. Poor jilted Tony ...
 The pain of unrequited love so great
 He's down to fifteen bowls of minestrone.
 And after, in order to recuperate
 He'll gorge on sausages and macaroni.
 So if Tonina doesn't call today
 There's ev'ry chance he'll simply waste away.

22

I've come to sing a humble serenade
 That's if the head of household would allow me
 Among you dwells a lovely maid
 And, if I'm frank, one that you guard a mite too
 closely
 And if she's gone to bed then say, from me
 Her faithfulest admirer longs to see her
 That every waking hour I dream about her
 That every day's empty if spent without her
 When I am far from her I waste away
 I miss her twenty-five hours every day.

23

My love is serenading me by moonlight
 And I'm lying here and pretend I'm sleeping
 Turning away so Mother doesn't see me
 Stifling my sobs in case she hears me weeping
 My eyes are red, my pillow soaking wet
 Can't tell for weeping if it's morning yet
 My eyes are bleeding and stinging from crying
 He's serenading as I lie here, dying

24

I can't sing any longer, not when I'm
Compelled to fight this bitter wind that's blowing.
It may be that I'm simply wasting time.
No sign from you, so perhaps I should be going
The slightest sign, I would be jubilating!
But as it is, my lonely bed is waiting ...

25

Stop with your noise, your grisly ghastly row
You're getting nowhere with your caterwauling ...
I'm telling you that's quite enough for now
Please change your tune, that's totally appalling
I could have sworn a cat was being spayed ...
I'd rather hear a donkey's serenade.

26

Oh, if your house were merely made of glass.
My darling, then, when I was sneaking by it
Then I'd be free to stare as I walk past.
Then I could simply gaze, in peace and quiet.
So many glances I would send your way
More than the raindrops on a rainy day
So many glances I'd send each hour
More than the raindrops in an April shower.

Part 3: 'War and peace'

27

Who called for you? Did someone ask you here?
If someone summoned you, it wasn't me!
You've got a lover, that is plain to see
So go, please, where you'd so much rather be.
Just go, to where your thoughts and passions lead
you,
Go where you're wanted, I no longer need you.
Go to your lover. Kindly disappear.
Who called for you? Did someone ask you here?

28

No, don't you dare! No, don't you even try
The way you carry on will test my patience
I'm good enough for daily use, and why?
'Cos you've a better girl for posh occasions!
You carry on, and quickly you'll discover
That you'll be forced to find another lover!

29

The moon, it seems, has been complaining bitterly.
And means to fight the matter legally.
She wants to leave the sky, for all eternity.
Your eyes have challenged her supremacy.
When the Celestial Census last was made
It seems two vital stars have been mislaid.
All of the heavenly host is searching for them
But I can see them now, and I adore them

30

Gorgeous you may be, but you're vain.
Look how you treat your suitors with disdain.
They dare to speak, and you cold-shoulder them
As if a friendly word would cause you pain
Well you're no latter-day Penelope
Nor is your father Duke of Burgundy
So if you don't like gold, make do with lead
If love offends you, try contempt instead.

31

How can I laugh at all, or dare to smile
 When all your anger rages unabated?
 You only visit here once in a while
 And then, as if you're somehow obligated.
 Why bother, when your family says no?
 Give back my heart, then you are free to go.
 Stay home and let your wretched parents have
 their way.
 What happens here on earth is not for them to say.
 Stay home if you need somewhere safe to hide.
 Whether you're mine or not – God will decide.

32

They tell me that your mother disapproves
 So stay away and do as she compels you.
 No darling, that's not what I meant at all!
 Please come, please call, don't do as Mother
 tells you.
 No. It is time you dared to disobey
 Show her who's boss, and visit every day.
 You treat her far too well, far too politely
 Show her who's boss, my love, come daily –
 nightly.

33

Last night I woke up unexpectedly
 I saw my heart was stealing through my doorway
 I said, 'Heart, what on earth is this I see?'
 And then, my heart explained, he's heading your
 way!
 Amazing – the lengths that love has led me to ...
 My heart escapes my breast, to be with you.

34

What if Bellini were to paint your portrait
 And then a group of non-believers found it
 They'd change their minds about the true religion
 And build a shrine to you – with flowers round it.
 The Church of You would soon gather brothers
 And as it grew it would eclipse all others.
 From far and wide they'd come to kneel before
 you
 Fervently they would worship and adore you.
 They'd all convert, like that – they'd form a queue
 To kneel before your shrine and worship you.

35

You say I'm not a Princess, nor a Queen ...
 Well look at you, you're hardly making millions
 No servants and no staff to cook or clean
 You walk to work, no coachmen, no postilions!
 You think my poverty's a cause for shame
 But class and wealth are really not the same.
 I've nothing, but I know my situation.
 And it is you with thoughts above his station.

36

If you but knew how much I suffer for you.
 You false and fickle creature, ev'ry night
 I'm sure you find your cottage snug and cosy
 But sleeping by your door is pure delight.
 The pouring rain is bracing and refreshing
 The lightning keeps my bedside nice and bright
 I'm happy basking in a thunderstorm
 Because I'm near you I feel safe and warm.
 I sleep quite soundly in all kinds of weathers
 This rocky ground is like a bed of feathers
 The shining stars are frescoes on my ceiling
 My darling, can you guess the pain I'm feeling?

37

I hope a chasm swallows up your farmhouse
 And that a lake of lava comes to rest there
 Hailstones like bullets, may they rain upon you
 And may a monstrous viper make its nest there
 Yes, one humungous snake with fiery eyes
 With all the poison of your vicious lies
 I'd give the snake its orders, it would obey me.
 And strike you dead, for daring to betray me.

38

Why all this rage, my love, within your breast?
 I'm sure I've done no crime, no mortal sin
 Ah, why not take a dagger to my chest
 Locate my heart, and simply drive it in.
 Or why not plunge a sword up to its hilt
 So you can watch my blameless blood be spilt?
 Or failing that, find a carving-knife
 And in a sea of blood, finish my life?

39

Heaven bless the holy mother
That pure paragon who bore you
How I worship and adore you
All my being yearns for you
All creation seems to love you
Sun and moon and stars above you
All the heavens kneel before you
Darling, heaven bless you too

Gazing from afar, in anguish
And in wonder at your beauty
Surely you can see I languish
I can hardly hide my pain
Surely all the world can tell
The living hell of all my yearning
That my heart and brain are burning.
God, it's driving me insane

Heaven bless the holy mother
That pure paragon who bore you
How I worship and adore you
All my being yearns for you
All creation seems to love you
Sun and moon and stars above you
All the heavens kneel before you
Darling, heaven bless you too

40

You want to see me die of joy, my darling
Then let your hair fall free, you beauty
Let it cascade around your lovely shoulders
Like threads of richest gold, and purest silver
Like threads of silver, swaying in the air
Which is more fair, the wearer or the hair?
Gold tresses, silver tresses, thousandfold
Rarest of treasures, silver shot with gold

41

When you look up and lock your eyes with mine
Then shyly glance down at your breast once more
Could you at least give me a warning sign
So I can tell my heart what joy's in store.
Then I can tell my heart to 'take it easy, boy,
Stay in your proper place, don't jump for joy.'
Then I can clutch my heart and press it tight
Lest it burst from my breast in sheer delight

42

It's time to end the war that we've been waging
For far too long there's been a battle raging
So please can we sit down and hold a meeting
We can't waste time, not when our time is fleeting.

The Romans made their peace with the
Phoenicians
Just as the Sultans did with the Venetians.
They signed their treaties, all these feuding powers
So who's to say that peace may not be ours?
Maybe – that which the warring nations do
Might work for loving partners? Me and you?

43

For weeks, the bitterest silences oppressed us.
Then suddenly, one day, they simply – ended.
As if some holy miracle had blessed us
As if a flight of angels had descended
God's holy angels changed our lives forever
And showed us how to love and live together
A choir of angels smiled upon our pain
And taught us peace – and how to love again

44

Think of the time I squandered, spent in loving you.
If I had worshipped God as I did you
A place would be reserved for me in heaven.
I'd sit in state beside a saint or two.
But since I chose to gaze upon your face
I have forsworn my chance of heaven's grace.
Because I chose to love you so religiously
The gates of paradise are closed to me

45

Dying will never trouble me unduly
A shroud of flowers, that's grave enough for me
So someone rest my body by your window
There, where I waited uncomplainingly.
There let me lie, in sunshine or in rain,
You're near me, how on earth can I complain?
There I'll be glad to lie whatever the weather,
That's how it should be, you and I together ...

46

When you, my love, arrive at heaven's gate
With heart in hand I will be waiting for you
And I'll embrace you with a love so great
That God will see how much I venerate you.
And when He sees what we've been through
together
He will grant us one heart to share forever
And then, with our true loving hearts combining
We'll see the fires of heaven brightly shining!

Translations © Jeremy Sams

About the performers

Benjamin Edelberg



Roderick Williams

Roderick Williams baritone

Roderick Williams is one of the most sought-after baritones of his generation and is this season's Artist-in-Residence at Milton Court Concert Hall. He performs a wide repertoire from Baroque to contemporary music in opera houses and concert halls over the world.

He enjoys relationships with all the major UK opera houses and has sung in world premieres of operas by David Sawer, Sally Beamish, Michael van der Aa, Robert Saxton and Alexander Knaifel. Recent and future engagements include the title-role in *Eugene Onegin* for Garsington, the title-role in *Billy Budd* with Opera North, Papageno for the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and productions with Dallas Opera, English National Opera and Netherlands Opera.

He sings regularly with all the BBC orchestras and other major UK orchestras, as well as the Berlin and New York Philharmonic orchestras, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Russian National Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Ensemble Orchestral de Paris, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Chicago's Music of the Baroque and Bach Collegium Japan, among others. His many festival appearances include the BBC Proms (where he sang at the Last Night in 2014) and the Edinburgh, Cheltenham, Bath, Aldeburgh and Melbourne festivals.

Roderick Williams has an extensive discography. He is also a composer and has had works premiered at the Wigmore and Barbican Halls, the Purcell Room and live on national radio. In December 2016 he won the prize for best choral composition at the British Composer Awards.

In 2015 he started a three-year odyssey of the Schubert song-cycles, culminating in performances at the Wigmore Hall in the 2017–18 season; he is now in the process of recording them for Chandos.

Roderick Williams was Artistic Director of Leeds Lieder in April 2016 and won the RPS Singer of the Year award in May the same year. He was awarded an OBE in 2017.

Gerard Collett



Rowan Pierce

Rowan Pierce soprano

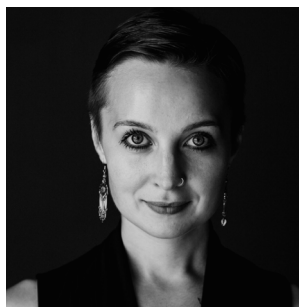
Yorkshire-born Rowan Pierce is a Rising Star of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and a Harewood Artist at English National Opera.

She appears regularly with ensembles including the Academy of Ancient Music, Gabrieli Consort, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, BBC Scottish and City of Birmingham Symphony orchestras, Florilegium and the Royal Northern Sinfonia. In 2017 she made debuts at the BBC Proms and Wigmore Hall.

Her operatic roles have included Drusilla (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*), Galatea (*Acis and Galatea*), Iris (*Semele*), Susanna (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Miss Wordsworth (*Albert Herring*) and the Princess (*L'enfant et les sortilèges*). Recent and future roles include Tiny (*Paul Bunyan*) and Papagena (*The Magic Flute*) for English National Opera and Barbarina (*The Marriage of Figaro*) for Nevill Holt Opera and The Grange Festival.

Festival performances include appearances with Thomas Allen and Christopher Glynn at the Ryedale Festival, Ann Murray and Malcolm Martineau at Oxford Lieder and Roger Vignoles at Leeds Lieder, as well as concerts at the Bath, BBC Proms, Buxton, Cheltenham and Chiltern Arts festivals. Recording plans include sessions with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Gabrieli Consort and Academy of Ancient Music.

Rowan Pierce studied at the Royal College of Music where she was awarded the President's Award by the Prince of Wales in 2017. While at the college, she also won the Van Someren-Godfrey Prize and the first Schubert Society Singer Prize in 2014. She has subsequently won both the Song Prize and First Prize at the inaugural Grange Festival International Singing Competition. She is a Samling Artist and was supported by the Countess of Munster Award and Midori Nishiura at the RCM.



Katie Bray

Katie Bray mezzo-soprano

British mezzo-soprano Katie Bray has earned praise for her stage presence and the quality of her vocal performances and is fast establishing herself as an artist to watch.

Recent roles for Opera North include Hansel (*Hansel and Gretel*), Rosina (*The Barber of Seville*), Louis XV Chair, Female Cat and Owl (*L'enfant et les sortilèges*), Lola (*Cavalleria rusticana*) and Nancy (*Albert Herring*). She has also sung the Daughter (*Akhnaten*) and *The Way Back Home* for English National Opera; Lucilla (*La scala di seta*) for Scottish Opera; Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*) for Welsh National Opera; Zulma (*L'italiana in Algeri*) and Zaida (*Il turco in Italia*) for Garsington Opera; Mallika (*Lakmé*) for Opera Holland Park; Minerva (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*) and Satirino (*La Calisto*) for English Touring Opera; and Charlotte (*Werther*) at the Grimeborn Festival. She also recently performed in *Effigies of Wickedness*, a staged cabaret of songs banned by the Nazis, at the Gate Theatre, Notting Hill, in collaboration with English National Opera.

She is equally at home on the concert platform and has performed at the Wigmore Hall, Cadogan Hall and Holywell Music Room and at the London English Song Festival and Oxford Lieder Festival, for which she recently recorded a disc of Schumann songs with Sholto Kynoch. She is particularly noted for Baroque repertoire and has appeared with Barokksolistene and Bjarte Eike, the Monteverdi Choir and Sir John Eliot Gardiner, La Nuova Musica, Aalborg Symphony Orchestra, Ludus Baroque and Spira Mirabilis.

Katie Bray graduated as a Karaviotis Scholar from the opera course at the Royal Academy of Music, and was awarded the Principal's Prize and won First Prize at the Richard Lewis Singing Competition.

Highlights of this season include Zenobia (*Radamisto*) and a semi-staged production of the *St Matthew Passion* for English Touring Opera, and a return to Opera North for Varvara (*Katya Kabanova*). Concert highlights include tonight's Wolf project, *Messiah* with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Bach's *St John Passion* with Rachel Podger, 'Mr Handel's Scholars' at the London Handel Festival with Laurence Cummings and debuts with the Paris Chamber Orchestra and the Wrocław Baroque Orchestra.



Nicky Spence

Nicky Spence tenor

Nicky Spence is fast emerging as one of the leading tenors of the younger generation. His skills as a singing actor and the honesty of his musicianship are steadily earning him a place at the top of the profession.

Highlights of this season include returns to the Opéra de Paris as Shepherd/Sailor (*Tristan und Isolde*) under Philippe Jordan, and to La Monnaie, Brussels, as Nikita (*From the House of the Dead*) and Messenger/Shipman (*The Tale of Tsar Saltan*). He also appears at the Opéra de Lyon as Nikita and as Sergeant Johnny Strong in the world premiere of Iain Bell's *Jack the Ripper* at English National Opera. In concert, he makes his debut in the title-role of *Parsifal* (Act 3) with the Hallé under Sir Mark Elder, Bruckner's *Te Deum* with La Monnaie Symphony Orchestra under Hartmut Haenchen, *Messiah* with the Pacific Symphony Orchestra under Christopher Warren-Green, and the *Glagolitic Mass* with the Highgate Choral Society and Ronald Corp.

He is also in demand on the recital platform and sings regularly with the Myrthen Ensemble, as well as enjoying collaborations with leading pianists such as Malcolm Martineau, Julius Drake, Roger Vignoles, Graham Johnson, Sholto Kynoch, Iain Burnside, Simon Lepper and Joseph Middleton. This season he will appear at the Wigmore Hall with Roger Vignoles and William Vann, Leeds Lieder with Malcolm Martineau and Middle Temple Hall with Julius Drake.

Nicky Spence's extensive discography includes the final disc of Roger Vignoles's Strauss song series (Hyperion); French *mélodies* and Shakespeare settings (both with Martineau); and songs by Buxton Orr with Iain Burnside (Delphian); world premieres of works by Jonathan Dove, Pavel Haas, Alun Hoddinott and Mark-Anthony Turnage; and songs by Schumann, Wolf and Britten. His most recent release is the role of Mime (*Das Rheingold*) under Elder.



James Newby

James Newby baritone

British baritone James Newby won the 2016 Kathleen Ferrier Award. In the 2016–17 season he sang the role of Mercurio (*La Calisto*) with La Nuova Musica and David Bates and made his BBC Proms debut in Vaughan Williams's *Serenade to Music* conducted by Sakari Oramo. He was a 2017 Jerwood Young Artist at Glyndebourne Festival Opera, appearing in *La traviata*, Brett Dean's *Hamlet* and *La clemenza di Tito*, and singing the role of the notary in *Don Pasquale*, for which he won the John Christie Award.

He was awarded the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment's Rising Stars prize for 2017–19. Recent engagements with the orchestra include Christus in the world premiere of Sally Beamish's *The Judas Passion* and a selection of Bach cantatas. This season he sings Apollo (Handel's *Apollo e Dafne*) under Jonathan Cohen and the *St Matthew Passion* under John Butt.

He has sung roles with Brent Opera, Moon Little Opera, Trinity Laban Opera, Suffolk Opera and Everybody's Theatre Company. Most recently he sang Count Almaviva (*The Marriage of Figaro*) for Nevill Holt Opera and a staged Bach *St John Passion* with the Bilbao Symphony Orchestra. Next season he joins the ensemble of the Hanover Staatsoper, where roles will include Papageno (*The Magic Flute*), Fiorello (*The Barber of Seville*), Schaunard (*La bohème*) and Dr Falke (*Die Fledermaus*).

Joanna Bergin



Christopher Glynn

He is also in demand as a recitalist: recent and future highlights include appearances at the Leeds Lieder Festival and Newbury Spring Festival with Joseph Middleton, Oxford Lieder Festival with Eugene Asti and his debut solo recital at Wigmore Hall.

Other recent and future highlights include debuts with the Gabrieli Consort, RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra and BBC and Cincinnati Symphony orchestras and a tour of *Messiah* with the Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century. He will also make debuts at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris in a revival of Calixto Bieito's staging of Bach's *St John Passion* and at La Monnaie for Howard Moody's *PUSH*. He will perform at the Ryedale, Chiltern Arts and Three Choirs Festivals and return to the Wigmore Hall.

James Newby is a recipient of the Musicians' Company Saloman Seelig Award and is supported by the Drake Calleja Trust.

Christopher Glynn piano

Christopher Glynn was born in Leicester and read music at New College, Oxford, before studying piano with John Streets in France and Malcolm Martineau at the Royal Academy of Music. His many awards include a Grammy, the accompaniment prize at the 2001 Kathleen Ferrier competition, the 2003 Gerald Moore Award and the 2002 Geoffrey Parsons Award.

He has accompanied leading singers, instrumentalists and ensembles in concerts, broadcasts and recordings throughout the world. Since making his debut at the Wigmore Hall in 2001, he has performed at major concert venues and festivals, including the BBC Proms, Carnegie Hall, Royal Opera, Covent Garden, Barbican, Southbank Centre and the Edinburgh, Aldeburgh, Cheltenham and Oxford Lieder festivals, as well as in Japan, Brazil and Sri Lanka. He is also often heard on BBC Radio 3 and has made over 20 commercial recordings. Future engagements include recitals at the Wigmore Hall and at the Oxford Lieder, Lammermuir, Chiltern Arts and Swaledale festivals.

Since 2010 he has been the Artistic Director of the Ryedale Festival, programming around 60 events each year in the many beautiful and historic venues of Ryedale, North Yorkshire. He was also involved in the creation of the Chiltern Arts Festival which was launched last year.



Jeremy Sams

Jeremy Sams director/translator

Jeremy Sams's directing and/or translating credits include *What's in a Name?* (Birmingham Rep); *Monsieur Popular* (Theatre Royal Bath); *The Rehearsal* (Chichester); *Die Fledermaus* (Metropolitan Opera, New York); *Peter Grimes* (Grange Park Opera); *The Wizard of Oz* (West End, Toronto and US tour); *Educating Rita* (West End); *The King & I* (Royal Albert Hall); *The Sound of Music* (West End, Toronto and UK tour); *13* (Broadway); *Little Britain* (London and UK tour); *Noises Off* (Royal National Theatre and Broadway); *Passion*; *Wild Oats*; *Marat/Sade*; *Enter the Guardsman*; *The Wind in the Willows*; *Two Pianos, Four Hands*; *Spend Spend Spend*; and *Benefactors*. He has written lyrics for the Tony-nominated *Amour* (Broadway).

His translations include *Die schöne Müllerin*, *Winterreise* and *Schwanengesang* (Ryedale Festival and the Wigmore Hall); *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* and *The Merry Widow* (Royal Opera, Covent Garden); *Die Fledermaus* (Metropolitan Opera); *Exit the King* (Theatre Royal Bath); *The Rehearsal*, *Beckett*, *Figaro's Wedding*, *La bohème*, *The Magic Flute* and *Wagner's Ring* (ENO); and *The Miser* and *Mary Stuart* (RNT). He has composed music for *Le Weekend* and *Hyde Park on Hudson* (Film 4); *Enduring Love* (Pathé, for which he won an Ivor Novello Award); *The Mother* (BBC); *Persuasion* (BBC Films, which

gained a BAFTA Award); *The Wind in the Willows* and *Arcadia* (RNT); and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Royal Shakespeare Company).

As an adaptor he has worked on *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (London and New York). He also created *The Enchanted Island* for the Metropolitan Opera and co-wrote the book for *A Damsel in Distress* (Chichester).



Louise Shephard

Louise Shephard director

Louise Shephard originally trained as a classical singer and actress. She is now a theatre director and a singing teacher and coach, providing singing support work on many plays and musicals in the West End and beyond.

Her directing credits include *Hello Again* and *A New Brain* (London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art), *Unidentified Item in the Bagging Area* (Old Red Lion), *Love Life*, *The Beggar's Opera* and *Allegro* (Oxford School of Drama), Musical Theatre Industry Showcase (Royal Academy of Music, 2014–16), *Assassins* (Birmingham School of Acting), *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* (assistant director to Matthew Xia, RADA) and *Intimate Apparel* (assistant director to Chipo Chung, RADA).