

Saturday 17 December 2022
West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge

A Child of Our Time

Price: Concert Overture No 2

*Stravinsky: Choral Variations on
'Vom Himmel Hoch'*

Tippett: A Child of our Time



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Price

Concert Overture No 2

Stravinsky

Choral Variations on 'Vom Himmel Hoch'

Interval

Tippett

A Child of our Time

Cambridge Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus

Harry Sever: Conductor

Steve Bingham: Guest Leader

Francesca Chiejina: Soprano

Felicity Buckland: Mezzo-soprano

Ronald Samm: Tenor

Keel Watson: Bass

Darkness and light

When black slaves in the USA sang their songs of suffering and hope, the spirituals that spoke of freedom and a better heavenly place to get to, they were yearning for light in the darkness that surrounded them, there in the shame of economic greed transformed into a wicked human stain of cruelty and oppression that still marks the societies that brought the system into being.

For Michael Tippett there was darkness, too, in the outrage of Kristallnacht – the harbinger of the Holocaust – and he approached the causes of all this in his extraordinary oratorio *A Child of our Time*, informed by the Jungian analysis he had been undergoing emphasising, as it does, the shadow and light which exists, Janus-like, in all of us.

For Johann Sebastian Bach the light of Heaven, manifested in the person of Jesus Christ, was a constant inspiration and his *Canonic Variations* on the Christmas hymn, *Vom Himmel Hoch da komm' ich her* is a magical invocation of this. Stravinsky's variations on Bach's variations on Luther's hymn (!) are revolutionary and revelatory.

And then there is Florence Price, the first female African American composer to have a symphony performed by a major symphony orchestra in her home country. Her use of spirituals in *Concert Overture No 2* paves the way for the innovative use that Tippett makes of them in his searing but ultimately uplifting work.

All these themes are present in tonight's programme of music that was and continues to be as groundbreaking in its originality as it is wonderful and inspiring to witness. After all, it's not just protest singers, rap musicians, beat poets, pop performers who use rhythm and melody to express their hopes and argue against injustice; classical composers have been doing just the same for years!

Concert Overture No 2

Florence Price (1887-1953)

Florence Price, composer, pianist, organist and teacher, was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, where, fifty-nine years later in a pivotal moment of the civil rights movement, teenager Elizabeth Eckford and her five schoolmates would endure the vitriol and hatred of the white population as they tried to put school desegregation into effect. That racial divide, still ugly today, made it difficult for any non-white composer to 'make it' in the elite world of classical

music. And yet Price and some of her colleagues were establishing exactly the kind of musical vernacular that Antonín Dvořák had argued for during his time in the US – a recognisably American genre drawing from Indigenous and African American themes. Against all odds – she was not only black, but a woman to boot – Florence Price made a name for herself producing music that was approachable and challenging and, more importantly, played, even if not as often as she deserved.

Florence Price's father was the only black dentist in Little Rock; her mother a music teacher. Despite the times, the mixed-race couple were respected and did well in their community. But in 1927, after a series of racial incidents, including a lynching, the family joined the great migration to escape Jim Crow laws and conditions, moving to Chicago. Price attended a convent and then the New England Conservatory of music having given up her dreams of being a doctor because it was too difficult for someone of her background. Part of the 'Chicago Black Renaissance', she had an early success in 1930 where her *Fantasia Nègre* was premiered. When she later parted from her abusive husband, becoming a single mother to her two daughters, she made money working, like Shostakovich, as an accompanist for silent movies and composing radio songs under an assumed name. Around this time she made friends with musician Margaret Bonds, poet Langston Hughes and singer Marian Anderson, prominent figures in the arts world who were instrumental in bringing her music to a wider public. She won first prize in the Wanamaker Foundation Awards (1932) for her *Symphony in E minor* and the symphony was played by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra the following year. In 1940 she was inducted into the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers. By the time of her death, aged sixty-six, she had composed four symphonies, three piano concertos, two violin concertos, various orchestral pieces and four choral works.

Many years after her death, in 2009, a large collection of her papers and manuscripts was discovered in an abandoned house on the outskirts of St Anne, Illinois – it had once been Price's summer house. Writing in the *New Yorker* in 2018, the musicologist Alex Ross wrote: "Not only did Price fail to enter the canon; a large quantity of her music came perilously close to obliteration. That run-down house in St Anne is a potent symbol of how a country can forget its cultural history." As anyone who heard Jeneba Kanneh-Mason play Price's *Piano Concerto in One Movement* at last year's Proms can attest, forgetting Florence Price is simply not acceptable.

One of the pieces rescued in that 2009 discovery was Price's *Concert Overture No 2*, a work that reflects negro music – spirituals, ragtime and folk tunes from way, way back. Written in 1943, between her second and third symphonies, the overture is built on three spirituals: *Go down Moses*, *Ev'ry time I feel the Spirit*, and *Nobody knows the trouble I've seen*. As we shall see, the first and third of these will turn up again in Tippett's oratorio.

The overture starts with a gentle introduction from the woodwind before a solo trumpet intones the 'Let my people go' section of 'Go down Moses'. An extended version of the spiritual, including a heavenly cello solo, leads to loving versions of the other two spirituals. There are more solos and ragtime episodes aplenty. The mood is often elegiac, interspersed with dramatic episodes of almost filmic music and rhythmic interruptions in a solemn but joyful account of the songs she has chosen. The overture ends on an emphatically positive major chord. This is music to be moved by and to luxuriate in.

What else to listen to: *Symphony No 1* (out of four), *Violin Concerto No 2*, *Mississippi River Suite*, *Fantasia Nègre for piano*, *My soul's been anchored in the Lord* (arrangement)

Choral Variations on 'Vom Himmel hoch da komm' ich her' Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)

Variation I: *In canone all' Ottava*

Variation II: *Alio modo in canone alla Quinta*

Variation III: *In canone alla Settima*

Variation IV: *In canone all' Ottava per augmentationem*

Variation V: *L'altra sorte del canone al rovescio: alla Sesta—alla Terza—alla Seconda—alla Nona*

Igor Stravinsky spent more years living in Los Angeles than anywhere else. He was a kind of double exile having left Russia for France (via Switzerland), and from there to the United States. He came from a musical family. Born in the town of Oranienbaum some twenty-five miles from St Petersburg, his father, Fyodor, was principal bass at the Imperial Opera and Anna, his mother, was also a talented amateur musician. Rimsky-Korsakov, Mussorgsky and Borodin were visitors to the intensely musical home young Igor grew up in and so, when he later studied composition (as a sideline to his legal studies), he turned to Rimsky-Korsakov to be his mentor. By the time that Rimsky-Korsakov died in 1908, Stravinsky had written a number of compositions,

and in 1909, when his piece *Feu d'artifice* (Fireworks) was programmed in St Petersburg, Diaghilev was in the audience and the rest is, well, musical history. The ballet impresario asked him to write the music for a new ballet he had dreamed up about the legend of the firebird. Lyadov, the composer Diaghilev had chosen first, was unable to deliver his version in the required time period. Stravinsky's *Firebird* was an instant triumph catapulting the then little-known composer to instant international fame. Later on, in 1913, the premiere of the ballet *The Rite of Spring* provoked an infamous riot because of its unconventional daring, though whether this was because of the dancing or the music (the incident actually started right at the end of the opening bassoon solo) it is difficult to judge. For most people in the world of classical music, however, this is seen as a pivotal moment, as profoundly influential in Stravinsky's use of rhythm and melody as THAT chord from Wagner's earlier *Tristan and Isolde* was for harmony.

Stravinsky was at the centre of twentieth-century modernism, admiring (like Michael Tippett) TS Eliot and collaborating with Picasso and Jean Cocteau. He was a devout member of the Russian Orthodox Church though he disapproved of the fact that although voices were allowed for the liturgy, instruments were not. So it was that he warmed to the music of Catholicism. By the time of his death in New York City he had been showered with honours, and was revered as one the twentieth century's towering creative forces.

In 1955 Stravinsky was commissioned to write a piece to be premiered at St Mark's cathedral in Venice. The piece he came up with was *Canticum Sacrum*, a 17-minute choral work. However, in order to extend his contribution to last at least half an hour he wrote another work using the same forces, this time based on Bach's *Vom Himmel hoch da komm' ich her'* variations. Robert Craft, Stravinsky's musical assistant, claims that it was his suggestion that the composer turned to this piece, considering it less 'variations' than a 'recomposition'. If so it was the second recomposition the piece had undergone since the original tune had been written by Martin Luther in 1539 to words (from Luke 2) created for a Christmas Eve festivity. More than two hundred years later Bach returned to Luther's hymn having previously referred to it in the original version of his *Magnificat* as well as in an organ prelude (BWV 606). This time it was a five-variation organ work composed as an offering to the Korrespondierenden Sozietät der Musicalischen Wissenschaften (Corresponding Society of the Musical Sciences), an elite fraternity which included Telemann and Handel. Bach's variations are a composition tour-de-force, each variation being a canon. For anyone

unfamiliar with this a canon has two voices where the second voice occurs, either with a delay (maybe of one note or a bar, as in a 'round') – or at a different interval, say a fifth, to the original. In addition to these canons Bach includes the chorale tune as long notes above or below the other voices. Many scholars rank this work alongside *The Goldberg Variations* or *The Art of Fugue*.

But now it was Stravinsky's turn! How could he improve or 're-compose' what was already truly amazing? The first thing he does is to retain all of Bach's notes, but with different orchestral voices. He then adds extra canon voices during some of the variations. Unusually, he writes for chorus and an orchestra without violins, cellos or horns – so that the viola section does the heavy (string) lifting, together with a harp. Trumpets and trombones play the chorale melody and contrapuntal decoration, and the woodwind introduce filigree lines and ornamentations. For the first variation, however, he states the choral tune in a lovely brass harmonisation based on Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*. It is in the second variation that the chorus, singing in unison, contribute the first verse of Luther's hymn. In the third, the flute adds its own melody as if it were the voice in one of Bach's arias. In the fourth variation Bach had introduced a third voice 'sandwiched' between the two outer lines. In the final variation Stravinsky plays with the chorale in four different sections, only introducing the chorus in the final part, as the brass section completes its task with glittering harmonic textures.

A recompositional *tour de force* added to a compositional *tour de force*! Stravinsky's variations are intricate and involving. As someone wrote on YouTube, "it's like your two favourite composers teaming up!"

What else to listen to: *Symphony of Psalms*, *The Firebird*, *Petrushka*, *The Rite of Spring*.

Text

*Vom Himmel hoch, da komm' ich
her,
Ich bring' euch gute neue Mär;
Der guten Mär bring' ich so viel,
Davon ich sing'n und sagen will.*

*From heaven above to earth I
come,
To bear good news to ev'ry home;
Glad tidings of great joy I bring,
Whereof I now will say and sing.*

Interval

A Child of our Time

Michael Tippett (1905-1998)

If you had made your way to the Adelphi Theatre in the Strand one cold March night in 1944 you would have joined others, many in uniform, climbing over rubble and sandbags to go through the entrance doors under the hoarding for Ivor Novello's *The Dancing Years*. There on the stage, in front of an ornate backdrop depicting a Victorian conservatory (I am not making this up!), was an orchestra, soloists and chorus waiting to perform the premiere of *A Child of our Time*, the new work by Michael Tippett, only recently released from prison. On that night (March 19), during the 'Baby Blitz', the German bombers concentrated on targets in the north of England and so the premiere went ahead without interruption hailed, the next morning, as "the choral work for which we have been waiting since the outbreak of this war" in the Times newspaper. Constructed, like the *Messiah*, in three parts and using many of the elements of Handel oratorios and Bach's Passions (soloists as characters and a narrator, orchestral interludes, arias, recitatives and chorale choruses), *A Child of our Time* is a desperate plea for justice and a powerful warning against prejudice and hate. In a masterstroke Tippett replaces Bach's Lutheran chorales with spirituals as a way of passing political comment on the underlying problem of racism, whether against blacks or, as in the subject of the oratorio, against the Jews.

Michael Tippett, one of Britain's towering musical figures of the twentieth century, was sometimes unfairly described as writing music that was too complicated. A Times critic, on first hearing *Fantasia on a theme of Corelli* (one of the composer's most popular works), was puzzled by the "excessive complexity of the contrapuntal writing ... there was so much going on that the perplexed ear knew not where to turn or fasten itself". When Tippett's opera *The Midsummer Marriage* was first performed at Covent Garden in 1955 the audiences "were simply unprepared for a work that departed so far from the methods of Puccini and Verdi." Critics were amazed at "a complex network of verbal symbolism" but at the same time bowled over by music of "intoxicating beauty". All of which goes to show that Tippett was a complicated, intelligent and ultimately emotional man and that these qualities shine through the wonderful legacy of music he has left us.

As a child, Michael Tippett had piano lessons and "took to improvising crazily...which I called 'composing'". Throughout his time as a schoolboy (not an entirely happy experience) and throughout his student days at the Royal College of Music, he took in music of varying styles, going to the Proms at

the Queen's Hall, operas and ballet at Covent Garden and early music (such as Palestrina masses) at Westminster Cathedral. He saw performances by the Diaghilev Ballet, heard Dame Nellie Melba and Chaliapin sing and witnessed Stravinsky and Ravel conduct. Later on, during his time in the USA, he became fascinated by jazz – an all-round consumer of music, in other words. In particular, as the Director of Music at Morley College in the 1940s, he would organise concerts that mixed early music – Gibbons, Monteverdi, Dowland – with works by Stravinsky, Hindemith or Ravel.

Tippett was a determined atheist and, for a time, a member of the Communist Party though, as an avowed Trotskyist, he was appalled by Stalin and drifted away from Communism to remain a committed socialist for the rest of his life. In 1942, having joined the Peace Pledge Union, he applied for registration as a conscientious objector. He was assigned non-combatant duties but he rejected these and, as a result, was sent off to Wormwood Scrubs prison where he served two months of a three-month sentence. Before that, he had been completely devastated when his relationship with his partner Wilfred Franks failed. Thrown into mental turmoil about his homosexuality (at one point, like Tchaikovsky before him, he contemplated marriage to his dear friend Francesca Allinson) he was pointed in the direction of Jungian analysis. His psychotherapist John Layard helped him interpret his dreams, and in what was clearly a major turning point in his life, unfolded for him the 'shadow and light' – a key element of this kind of analysis – in the human psyche. This was the duality which an individual needs to accept about their divided nature, and it brought the composer peace and revelation and led him to continue his creative and emotional life in a far more settled state than before.

In this new acceptance and understanding, he turned his attention towards an oratorio, very much in the manner of, for example, Handel and Bach. His first thought was to focus on the Dublin Easter Rising of 1916, but he turned from that to something of (for him) more contemporary relevance, the murder of a German diplomat in Paris by a 17-year-old Jewish refugee. This event was a convenient excuse for the Nazis to ramp up their persecution of the Jews, from the 1938 destruction of Kristallnacht to, ultimately, the sordid horror of the Holocaust. He wanted to explain all this, express his disgust and outrage, and show how that Jungian duality of shadow and light could be the clue to its peaceful resolution. And so Herschel Grynszpan, that 17-year-old refugee, became Tippett's 'child of our time'.

The composer asked TS Eliot to write the libretto. Unlike Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears who were good friends and colleagues, Tippett didn't form

the same bond with WH Auden or TS Eliot, even though Tippett sometimes referred to Eliot as 'my spiritual father'. Eliot, however, was not keen for some reason and advised the composer to write the words himself. It is Tippett's words, therefore, that you will hear tonight.

A Child of our Time is divided into three parts, each of which ends with a spiritual – Tippett's inspired replacements for the chorales of earlier times. The first (*Steal away*) is an attempt to find a better place to escape to. The second (*Go down Moses*) is, in the composer's words, a 'spiritual of anger', and the work ends with the consolation of *Deep river* ('my home is over Jordan. I want to cross over into camp-ground, Lord').

As the work begins, the chorus sings that 'The world turns on its dark side. It is winter.' A discourse then follows about the nature of good and evil. What place does reason have? Now the narrator tells us of lynchings and programs, and Europe brooding on a war of starvation. The soprano wonders how she can be a mother in such a world. The spiritual which closes this part seems to offer a way out.

Part II introduces a star shining down (nativity-like) on the 'scapegoat' – 'the child of our time'. Antisemitism is brutally introduced as the boy flees to safety. As the devilish chorus repeats its hate, the child's mother writes of her terror, and the boy expresses his love for her. Despite advice not to throw his life away, he determines to save her and in his desperation, when met with hostility, his 'other self' rises up and he shoots an official. We are told how 'they took a terrible vengeance' and the chorus sings the spiritual 'O, by and by' – arranged so artfully that it could well have been composed entirely by Tippett himself. His mother blames herself as the dark forces rage amidst bitterness and horror. Appalled, the chorus sings 'Go down Moses...tell old Pharaoh to let my people go.'

Part III explains everything to us. Yes, the boy is 'outcast, his manhood broken in the clash of powers', but 'Winter cold means inner warmth, the secret nursery of the seed' (almost like Amanda McBroom's pop song 'The Rose'!). The whole of this section is about duality for, as the tenor sings, 'I would know my shadow and my light so shall I at last be whole.' And finally the chorus sings *Deep river* to bring the whole work to a close.

Naïve? Angry? Spiritual (in the non-musical sense)? Perhaps it doesn't matter. *A Child of our Time* is passionate, moving, sometimes scary and, at the end, a work of consoling magnificence. With such a varied musical palette, how can it be otherwise? And yes, Michael Tippett was right, the work was, and is

prophetic about the anger and bitterness, the dark side which provokes the cruelty and misinformation we still see all around us. But there is light too, and that is what, this oratorio suggests, we should always strive to find.

What else to listen to: *Concerto for Double String orchestra, Fantasia on a theme of Corelli, The Heart's assurance* (song cycle), *Ritual dances from a Midsummer Marriage*.

Programme notes: Jeremy Harmer

Text

Part I

Chorus

The world turns on its dark side.
It is winter.

The Argument

Alto

Man has measured the heavens with a telescope, driven the gods from their thrones.

But the soul, watching the chaotic mirror, knows that the gods return.
Truly, the living God consumes within and turns the flesh to cancer!

Interludium

Scene

Chorus

Is evil then good?
Is reason untrue?

Alto

Reason is true to itself;
But pity breaks open the heart.

Chorus

We are lost.
We are as seed before the wind.
We are carried to a great slaughter.

The Narrator (Bass)

Now in each nation there were some cast out by authority and tormented,
made to suffer for the general wrong.
Pogroms in the east, lynching in the west;
Europe brooding on a war of starvation.

And a great cry went up from the people.

Chorus of the Oppressed

When shall the usurers' city cease? And famine depart from the fruitful land?

Tenor

I have no money for my bread; I have no gift for my love.

I am caught between my desires and their frustration as between the hammer and the anvil.

How can I grow to a man's stature?

Soprano

How can I cherish my man in such days, or become a mother in a world of destruction?

How shall I feed my children on so small a wage?

How can I comfort them when I am dead?

A Spiritual

Chorus and Soloists

Steal away, steal away, steal away to Jesus;

Steal away, steal away home

I han't got long to stay here.

My Lord, He calls me. He calls me by the thunder,

The trumpet sounds within-a my soul,

I han't got long to stay here.

Green trees a-bending, poor sinner stands a-trembling.

The trumpet sounds within-a my soul,

I han't got long to stay here.

Steal away, steal away, steal away to Jesus;

Steal away, steal away home - I han't got long to stay here.

Part II

Chorus

A star rises in mid-winter.

Behold the man! The scapegoat!

The child of our time.

The Narrator (Bass)

And a time came when in the continual persecution one race stood for all.

Double Chorus of Persecutors and Persecuted

Away with them!

Curse them! Kill them!

They infect the state.

Where? Why? How?
We have no refuge.

The Narrator (Bass)

Where they could, they fled from the terror.
And among them a boy escaped secretly,
and was kept in hiding in a great city.

Chorus of the Self-righteous

We cannot have them in our Empire.
They shall not work, nor draw a dole.
Let them starve in No-Man's-Land!

The Narrator (Bass)

And the boy's mother wrote a letter, saying:

Scene

Solo Quartet

Mother (Soprano)

O my son! In the dread terror they have brought me near to death.

The Boy (Tenor)

Mother! Ah, Mother!
Though men hunt me like an animal,
I will defy the world to reach you.

The Aunt (Alto)

Have patience.
Throw not your life away in futile sacrifice.

The Uncle (Bass)

You are as one against all.
Accept the impotence of your humanity.

The Boy (Tenor)

No! I must save her!

A Spiritual

Chorus and Soloists

Nobody knows the trouble I see, Lord,
Nobody knows like Jesus.
O brothers, pray for me,
O brothers, pray for me.
And help me to drive
Old Satan away.

O mothers, pray for me,
O mothers, pray for me.
And help me to drive Old Satan away.
Nobody knows the trouble I see, Lord,
Nobody knows like Jesus.

Scene

Narrator (Bass)

The boy becomes desperate in his agony.

Alto

A curse is born. The dark forces threaten him.

Bass

He goes to authority.

He is met with hostility.

Alto

His other self rises in him, demonic and destructive.

Bass

He shoots the official.

Alto

But he shoots only his dark brother.

And see...he is dead.

The Narrator (Bass)

They took a terrible vengeance.

The Terror

Chorus

Burn down their houses!

Beat in their heads!

Break them in pieces on the wheel!

The Narrator (Bass)

Men were ashamed of what was done.

There was bitterness and horror.

A Spiritual of Anger

Chorus & Bass

Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt land;

Tell old Pharaoh, to let my people go.

When Israel was in Egypt land

Oppressed so hard they could not stand
'Thus spake the Lord' bold Moses said
'If not, I'll smite your first-born dead'
Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt land;
Tell old Pharaoh to let my people go.

The Boy sings in his Prison

Boy (Tenor)

My dreams are all shattered in a ghastly reality.
The wild beating of my heart is stilled: day by day.
Earth and sky are not for those in prison.
Mother! Mother!

The Mother (Soprano)

What have I done to you, my son?
What will become of us now?
The springs of hope are dried up.
My heart aches in unending pain.

Aunt (Alto)

The dark forces rise like a flood.
Men's hearts are heavy: they cry for peace.

A Spiritual

Chorus and Soprano

O, by and by, by and by,
I'm going to lay down my heavy load.
I know my robe's going to fit me well,
I tried it on at the gates of hell.
O, hell is deep and a dark despair,
O, stop, poor sinner, and don't go there!
O, by and by, by and by.
I'm going to lay down my heavy load.

Part III

Chorus

The cold deepens.
The world descends into the icy waters where lies the jewel of great price.

Alto

The soul of man is impassioned like a woman.
She is old as the earth, beyond good and evil, the sensual garments.
Her face will be illuminated like the sun.

Then is the time of his deliverance.

Scene

Bass

The words of wisdom are these:

Winter cold means inner warmth, the secret nursery of the seed.

Chorus

How shall we have patience for the consummation of the mystery?

Who will comfort us in the going through?

Bass

Patience is born in the tension of loneliness.

The garden lies beyond the desert.

Chorus

Is the man of destiny master of us all?

Shall those cast out be unavenged?

Bass

The man of destiny is cut off from fellowship.

Healing springs from the womb of time.

The simple-hearted shall exult in the end.

Chorus

What of the boy, then? What of him?

Bass

He, too, is outcast, his manhood broken in the clash of powers.

God overpowered him - the child of our time.

Praeludium

General Ensemble

Tenor

I would know my shadow and my light,

so shall I at last be whole.

Bass

Then courage, brother, dare the grave passage.

Soprano

Here is no final grieving, but an abiding hope.

Alto

The moving waters renew the earth. It is spring.

Chorus repeats the words of the soloists.

A Spiritual

Chorus and Soloists

Deep river, my home is over Jordan,

Deep river. Lord,

I want to cross over into camp-ground.

Chillun! Don't you want to go

To that gospel feast,

That promised land,

That land where all is peace?

Walk into heaven, and take my seat.

And cast my crown at Jesus' feet.

Deep river, my home is over Jordan,

I want to cross over into camp-ground, Lord!

Thank you!

*A round of applause and thanks to **The Pye Foundation, Nash Matthews and Jesus College** for their financial support this season! We would also like to thank **The Garfield Weston Foundation** who will be funding an exciting schools outreach project in 2023.*

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Francesca Chiejina (soprano)



Nigerian-American soprano Francesca Chiejina is a recent graduate of the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, where her roles included Countess Ceprano *Rigoletto*, Lady-in-Waiting *Macbeth*, Voice from Heaven *Don Carlo*, and Ines *Il trovatore*. She also sang Micaëla *La tragédie de Carmen* at Wilton's Music Hall, Melanthe/Love *The Return of Ulysses* at the Roundhouse.

Recent and upcoming operatic highlights include Górecki's *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs* for New Crystal Pite with Royal Ballet at Royal Opera House; High

Priestess *Aida* (Royal Opera House); Lauretta *Il Trittico* (Scottish Opera); Mimì *La bohème* (Nevill Holt Opera, English Touring Opera); Miss Jessel *The Turn of the Screw* (OperaGlass Works); the title role in English Touring Opera's film of Elena Langer and Glyn Maxwell's *Ariadne*; Freia *RhineGold* (Birmingham Opera Company); Anne Trulove *The Rake's Progress* (Blackheath Halls Opera); her debut with Capella Cracoviensis as Aldimira *Sigismondo*; her house and role debut as Clara *Porgy and Bess* at Grange Park Opera; and her debut with the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal (*Serena Porgy and Bess*).

On the concert platform she has recently sung Berg's *Seven Early Songs* with the Sinfonia of London and John Wilson at the BBC Proms, Bach's *St John Passion* with Huddersfield Choral Society and Manchester Camerata, Barber's *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* with the BBC Philharmonic and with the Royal Northern Sinfonia at the Sage Gateshead; Handel's *Messiah* with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at the Royal Albert Hall; and Vaughan Williams's *Serenade to Music* at the Last Night of the BBC Proms.

Felicity Buckland (mezzo-soprano)



Felicity Buckland is a graduate of the Royal Northern College of Music and English National Opera's Opera Works programme. While at the RNCM she won the Eunice Pettigrew Prize.

In the current season she returns to English National Opera as Daughter 4 in Phelim McDermott's acclaimed staging of *Akhanten* and Girlfriend/Congregant 2 (cover) in the UK premiere of Jeanine Tesori's *Blue*. Highlights in recent seasons include Kasturbai *Satyagraha* and Siegrune (cover) *The Valkyrie* for English National Opera; Wellgunde in Birmingham Opera's production of Wagner's

RhineGold; and Lily *Porgy and Bess* at the Theater an der Wien.

Other notable appearances include the title role in *Carmen* and Nicklausse *The Tales of Hoffmann* (Kentish Opera); Rosswisse *Die Walküre* (Grange Park Opera); Paquette *Candide* (West Green House Opera); Rosina *The Barber of Seville* (Surrey Opera); Angelina *La Cenerentola* (High Time); Cherubino *The Marriage of Figaro*, Third Lady *The Magic Flute* (OperaUpClose); Olga *Eugene Onegin* (OperaUpClose, Opera South East); and Maddalena *Rigoletto* (Park Opera). Roles understudied include Second Woman/Fury *The Mask of Orpheus*, Diana *Orpheus in the Underworld* and Mercédès *Carmen* (ENO); Olga *Eugene Onegin* (Mid Wales Opera) and Suzuki *Madama Butterfly* (West Green House Opera).

On the concert platform repertoire includes Elgar *The Dream of Gerontius*, Handel *Messiah* and *Dixit Dominus*, Mozart *Requiem*, Bach *St Matthew Passion*, Rossini *Petite messe solennelle*, Haydn *Nelson Mass* and *Theresienmesse*, Duruflé *Requiem*, Mendelssohn *Elijah*, Schubert *Mass in C*, Beethoven *Mass in C*, Rutter *Feel the Spirit*, Smythe *Mass in D*, and Jenkins *The Armed Man*, conducted by the composer at the Royal Festival Hall.

Ronald Samm (tenor)



Ronald Samm was born and grew up in Trinidad, West Indies. He studied singing and piano at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, followed by postgraduate study at the Royal Northern College of Music and the National Opera Studio.

In the current season he returns to English National Opera for two major UK premieres as Uncle Billy *It's a Wonderful Life* and Reverend *Blue*. He will also perform Siegmund in *Die Walküre* for Regents Opera. Highlights in recent seasons include Pangloss/Voltaire *Candide* for Scottish Opera; Peter *Porgy and Bess* for English National Opera, Dutch National

Opera and Theater an der Wien; and Olim *Der Silbersee* for English Touring Opera.

He has performed internationally in roles including Otello, Tambourmajor *Wozzeck* and Florestan *Fidelio* (Birmingham Opera Company); Otello, Big Prisoner *From the House of the Dead* (Opera North); Lazarus *The Gospel According to the Other Mary* (Theater Bonn); Canio *Pagliacci* (Scottish Opera, Everyman, Cork); Orfeo *Orfeo ed Euridice* (Everyman, Cork); Siegfried *Götterdämmerung* (Oper Wuppertal); Siegmund *Die Walküre* (Teatro Nacional de São Carlos); Walther von Stolzing *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (Fulham Opera); and Security Guard *Between Worlds* (English National Opera). In *Porgy and Bess* he has performed Sportin' Life (Opéra de Lyon / Edinburgh International Festival) and Jake (Lisbon).

On the concert platform his repertoire includes Handel *Messiah*; Bach *Magnificat* and *St John Passion*; Mendelssohn *Elijah*; Beethoven *Mass in C*; Mozart *Requiem*; Verdi *Requiem*; and Stainer *Crucifixion*. He has appeared as The Preacher in Bernstein's *Mass* at the BBC Proms with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales; and with the London Philharmonic Orchestra in a concert commemorating the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death.

Keel Watson (bass-baritone)



Keel Watson studied singing and trombone at Trinity College of Music with Elizabeth Hawes and Roger Brenner.

In the current season he returns to English National Opera as Aye Akhnaten and Zuniga *Carmen*. He also performs his first Wotan in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* for Regents Opera. Highlights in recent seasons include The Bonze *Madam Butterfly* and Don Basilio *The Barber of Seville* for Welsh National Opera; Commendatore *Don Giovanni* for Scottish Opera; Zuniga *Carmen*, The Bonze *Madam Butterfly*, Doctor Bartolo *The Marriage of Figaro* and Aye Akhnaten for English

National Opera; and King Sharyaati *Sukanya* for The Royal Opera and London Philharmonic Orchestra.

He has performed internationally in roles including Fasolt *Das Rheingold* (Teatro Nacional de São Carlos, Teatro Massimo di Palermo); Reinmar von Zweter *Tannhäuser* (Greek National Opera); Il Re *Aïda* (Bregenzer Festspiele); Zuniga *Carmen*, Mandryka *Arabella* (Opera North); Il Re *Aida*, Oroveso *Norma*, Nourabad *Les pêcheurs de perles* (Opera Holland Park); Iago *Otello*, Dosifey *Khovanshchina*, Don Pizarro *Fidelio* (Birmingham Opera Company); Bosun *Billy Budd* (The Royal Opera); and Hans Sachs *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and the title roles in *Falstaff* and *Der fliegende Holländer* (Fulham Opera).

Major concert engagements include *Porgy and Bess* (Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra); *Carmina Burana* (Royal Festival Hall); *A Child of Our Time* (City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra); and his debut at the BBC Proms as the Abbot *Curlew River* (Birmingham Opera Company). Recordings include Bernstein *A White House Cantata* (London Symphony Orchestra); *Music of Edward Joseph Collins* (Royal Scottish National Orchestra); and Ravi Shankar's *Sukanya* (London Philharmonic Orchestra).

Harry Sever (conductor)



BBC Music Magazine ‘Rising Star’ conductor Harry Sever studied at Oxford University and trained at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the Royal Academy of Music. Recent and upcoming engagements include *Siegfried* (Sønderjyllands Symfoniorkester/Den Ny Opera), *The Fairy Queen* (Longborough), *Carmen* (Opera North), *Fantasio* (Garsington), *La Traviata* (Opera Holland Park), *Cendrillon* (Bampton Classical Opera), *The Nutcracker* (Peter Schaufuss Ballet), as well as concerts with the orchestra of Welsh National Opera,

recordings with Opera North, and projects with The Royal Danish Opera, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Trinity Laban and British Youth Opera.

Harry is currently Longborough Festival Opera’s Ring Cycle Conducting Fellow, conducting performances of *Siegfried* and *Die Walküre*, and working towards their *Ring Cycle* in 2024. A finalist in both the LSO’s Donatella Flick and Athens International Conducting Competitions, he has worked on the music staff at ENO, Den Jyske Opera, and the Grange Festival, collaborating with orchestras including the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Odense Symfoniorkester, and the Britten Sinfonia, and has performed at the Royal Albert Hall, Royal Festival Hall and the Barbican.

Harry’s recent composition highlights include commissions for the Oxford Lieder Festival and Wigmore Hall, and his musicals *James and the Giant Peach*, *Guess How Much I Love You*, and *Mr Men & Little Miss* have toured internationally with Sell-A-Door Productions. Other theatre scores include *The Kreutzer Sonata* (Arcola Theatre), *Sleeping Beauty* and *My Mother Said I Never Should* (The Theatre Chipping Norton), *King Lear*, *As You Like It*, and *Love’s Labour’s Lost* (The Minack Theatre). For the screen, credits include *Stalker* (CBS), and for radio, *Rossum’s Universal Robots* for BBC Radio 4.

Passionate about outreach work, he is a regular collaborator with the Royal Opera House, ENO and Streetwise Opera, bringing music to the wider community.

Steve Bingham (guest leader)



Steve Bingham studied violin with Emmanuel Hurwitz, Sidney Griller and the Amadeus Quartet at the Royal Academy of Music where he won prizes for orchestral leading and string quartet playing.

In 1985 he formed the Bingham String Quartet, an ensemble which has become one of the foremost in the UK, with an enviable reputation for both classical and contemporary repertoire.

Steve has appeared as guest leader with many orchestras including the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, English National Ballet and English Sinfonia. He has given solo recitals both in the UK and America and his concerto performances include works by Bach, Vivaldi, Bruch,

Prokofiev, Mendelssohn and Sibelius, given in venues as prestigious as St John's Smith Square and the Royal Albert Hall.

Steve is internationally renowned for his solo violin recitals, where he mixes acoustic pieces with live-looped electric violin arrangements in his own unique way. Steve has released five solo albums, *Duplicity*, *Ascension*, *Third*, *The Persistence of Vision* and *Touch*, alongside many single tracks. He is currently recording a new album of specially commissioned pieces for release in 2023.

As a conductor Steve is known for his work with amateur orchestras. He is currently conductor of Ely Sinfonia, the Norfolk Symphony Orchestra and Ad Hoc Sinfonia.

You can find out more about Steve's activities at: www.stevebingham.co.uk.

Cambridge Philharmonic Orchestra

Violin 1

Steve Bingham
Kate Clow (co leader)
Hilary Crooks
Roz Chalmers
Jo Cumberbatch
Eleanor Winpenny
Anne McAleer
Halyna Vakulenko
Emilie van der Aa-Burton
Margaret Scourse
Sebastian Bechmann

Violin 2

Chris Lin-Brande
Emma Lawrence
Naomi Hilton
Nichola Roe
David Favara
Marian Holness
Sarah Ridley
John Richards
Ariane Stoop
Abigail Tan
Talitha Kearey

Viola

Ruth Donnelly
Mari O'Neill
Hermione Blakiston
Peter Conlon
Edna Murphy
Jeremy Harmer
Emma McCaughan
David Yadin
Robyn Sorenson

Cello

Jessica Hiscock
Linda Hindmarsh
Angela Bennett
Daniel Coldridge
Anna Edwards
David Brown

Helen Hills
Helen Davies
Lucy O'Brien
Clare Gilmour

Double Bass

Sarah Sharrock
Tony Scholl
Susan Sparrow
Stuart Clow

Flute

Adrienne Jackson
Sarah Blazeby
Samantha Martin

Piccolo

Alison Townend

Oboe

Rachael Dunlop
Tom Gillam

Cor Anglais

Katy Wyatt

Clarinet

Graham Dolby
Sue Pettitt

Bass clarinet

Viv Halton

Bassoon

Neil Greenham
Jenny Warburton

Contrabassoon

Phil Evans

Horn

Carrie Van Renen
Tony Hawkins
Gareth Edwards
Chris Wykes

Trumpet

Colin Bloch
Laureen Hodge
Tom Thornton

Trombone

Ryan Higgin
Denise Hayles

Bass Trombone

Gary Davison

Tuba

Robin Norman

Timpani

Dave Ellis

Percussion

Derek Scurll
Lizzie Brightwell
Dan Johnstone

Harp

Lizzy Scorch

Cambridge Philharmonic Chorus

Soprano 1

Amanda Bouskill
Jane Cook
Rose Drury
Susan Earnshaw
Agnes Heydtmann
Ros Mitchell
Jan Moore
Lucy Nethsingha
Chessie Nour
Caroline Potter
Susan Randall
Mary Richards
Sheila Rushton
Anne Sales
Laura Simmons
Linda Stollwerck Boulton
Diana Sutton

Soprano 2

Cathy Ashbee
Steffi Campbell-Smith
Jennifer Day
Christine Halstead
Gertrud Hill
Maggie Hook
Wren Khouri
Suzie McCave
Joanna Pinfield
Ann Read
Pip Smith
Catharine Warren

Alto 1

Helen Black
Alexandra Bolton
Caroline Courtney
Jean Gulston
Elaine Kinsella
Alice Parr
Alison Russell
Caroline Shepherd
Sarah Upjohn
Alison Vinnicombe
Ann Willitts
Susan Wilson
Joanna Womack

Alto 2

Jane Bower
Margaret Cook
Helen Cross
Elisabeth Crowe
Jane Fenton
Jane Fleming
Stephanie Gray
Hilary Jackson
Lynne McClure
Sue Purseglove
Chris Strachan
Kate Wootton

Tenor 1

Doug Addy
Pete Alexander
Florin Enuta
Aviva Grisby
Jean Harding
Sylvia Hearn
Chris Schaefer
Peter Scholten

Tenor 2

Aidan Baker
Jeremy Baumberg
Adam Higgins
Gunnar Lange
Chris Price

Bass 1

Peter Campbell-Smith
Chris Coffin
Andrew Dobson
Chris Fisher
Patrick Hall
Andy Mason
Roger McClure
Harrison Sherwood

Bass 2

Andrew Black
Richard Birkett
Neil Caplan
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Tom Read

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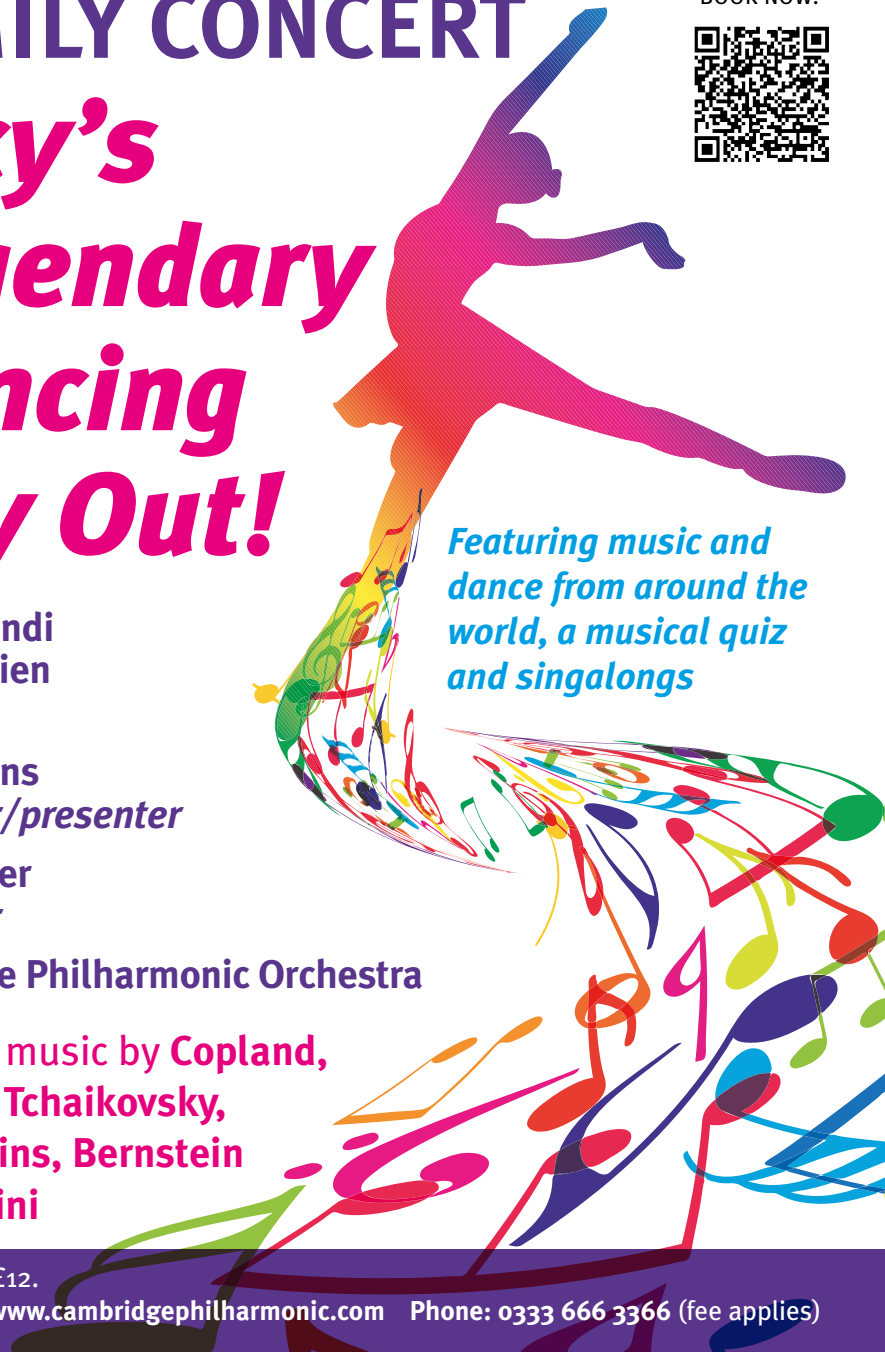
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Leoncavallo: *Pagliacci*
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