

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

Monday 15th April

FILLING THE CITY WITH SONG
LEEDS LIEDER FESTIVAL
2024

ON WINGS *of* SONG

LEEDS LIEDER 20TH
ANNIVERSARY FESTIVAL



Howard
Assembly
Room



LEEDS
CONSERVATOIRE



Leeds
Minster



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LOTTERY FUNDED

Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND

Director's Welcome

LEEDS LIEDER FESTIVAL 2024

For the 20th Anniversary Festival I have turned to one of the most beloved lyrics in all of Lieder, Heine's *Auf Flügeln des Gesanges*, made immortal for song lovers by Mendelssohn. Heine describes being carried "On wings of song... To the sweetest place I know...". The sweetest place must surely be one of mankind's greatest faculties - our imagination. This sacred space is ripe for exploring in the concert hall. Song gives us the possibility to fly to far-off lands, to empathise with others, and to explore our innermost feelings, all from the comfort of a concert hall seat. On these wings we can connect with others and connect with ourselves.

The feeling of unadulterated joy that can be magicked-up by attending a song concert was surely the *raison d'être* some 20 years ago for a group of inspired friends deciding to get together and promote a song concert in Leeds. With that act, Leeds Lieder was born. The early years of the Festival saw some of the greatest interpreters of Lieder come to Yorkshire: Dame Margaret Price, Dame Janet Baker, Barbara Bonney, Sir Thomas Allen to name a few, and for the first five Festivals the greatest song pianists of our time (Roger Vignoles, Graham Johnson, Julius Drake, Malcolm Martineau and Iain Burnside) each took it in turns as Artistic Director to bring their friends to the city. Those of us who came to Leeds Lieder later are indebted to this merry band of song aficionados led by the Festival founder, Jane Anthony. Her legacy has been kept aloft by subsequent volunteers, all giving selflessly to the charity so that song can thrive in Yorkshire.

As ever, we are indebted to the unwavering support of the artists we champion, promote and commission, our audience and community of Friends, who have rallied in the most generous of ways. We are so grateful to everyone who has invested in the charity. Thanks to you we are able to present this year's 20th Anniversary Festival, and I do hope you like what we have in store for you.



The music on offer is eclectic in scope and outstanding in quality. Thanks to our Friends and supporters we will continue to reach thousands of school children with our education projects and train a new cohort of Young Artists.

On behalf of the whole Leeds Lieder team, we are delighted to welcome you to "your" song Festival and look forward to being carried "on wings of song" together as we enter the next decade of Leeds Lieder.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph Middleton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style and is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

Joseph Middleton
Director

President's Welcome

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT ELLY AMELING

LUCKY LEEDS!

Welcome to all of you who have chosen to attend the Leeds Lieder Festival again. I wish I could be with you....

This year's programme is an incredibly rich choice of Art Songs, performed by the greatest talents of today's singers and pianists. Yes: today's musicians are still utterly thrilled to perform that intimate, moving and at the same time so brilliant kind of *music - on - text*.

The programme presents songs from Schubert to Bernstein - and a fantastic diversity of international composers in between those two. My great compliments to the artists who have assembled this rich FEAST of Art Song.

LEEDS IS LUCKY!

Elly Ameling
President, Leeds Lieder



At a Glance

SATURDAY 13 APRIL

2pm - 4pm SongPath musical walking trail Kirkstall Abbey

SUNDAY 14 APRIL - 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

1pm Schubertiade lunchtime opening recital: Nikola Hillebrand, Joseph Middleton and Oliver Casanovas Nuevo The Venue, LC

4pm - 5.30pm Young Artists Schubertiade: Richard Stokes and Leeds Lieder Young Artists The Venue, LC

6.15pm Friends' private reception The Rooftop Bar, LC

7.30pm Schubertiade 20th Anniversary Gala recital: Roderick Williams, Roger Vignoles, Nikola Hillebrand, Joseph Middleton and Leeds Lieder Young Artists The Venue, LC

TODAY

MONDAY 15 APRIL

2.30pm - 5.30pm Friends' Festival Masterclass I: Sir Thomas Allen Leeds Minster

TUESDAY 16 APRIL

7.30pm Evening recital: Nina Kanter, Oscar Castellino and Keval Shah Sikh Centre

WEDNESDAY 17 APRIL

11am - 12pm Schools Culmination Concert I - Living Lieder The Ballroom, Pudsey Civic Hall

1.30pm - 2.30pm Schools Culmination Concert II - Discovering Lieder The Ballroom, Pudsey Civic Hall

4pm - 5.30pm Composers & Poets Forum Showcase: *A Leeds Songbook* Leeds Minster

8pm Evening recital: James Newby and Joseph Middleton Hyde Park Book Club

THURSDAY 18 APRIL - A DAY OF FRENCH SONG

10am - 12pm Festival Masterclass II: Dame Felicity Lott The Rooftop Bar, LC

1pm - 2pm Lunchtime lecture recital: Graham Johnson, Sarah Fox and Florian Störtz The Venue, LC

3pm - 6pm Festival Masterclass III: Graham Johnson The Venue, LC

7pm - 7.30pm Pre-concert talk with Professor Barbara Kelly The Rooftop Bar, LC

8pm Evening recital: James Gilchrist and Anna Tilbrook The Venue, LC

FRIDAY 19 APRIL

12pm - 1.30pm Lunchtime recital: Young Artists Showcase HAR

3pm - 6pm Festival Masterclass IV: James Gilchrist and Anna Tilbrook Howard Opera Centre

6.30pm - 7pm Pre-concert talk with Dr George Kennaway HAR

7.30pm Evening recital: Carolyn Sampson and Joseph Middleton HAR

10pm - 11pm Late night cabaret: Claire Barnett-Jones and Libby Burgess Kino @ HAR

SATURDAY 20 APRIL

10am - 12pm Festival Masterclass V: Benjamin Appl Howard Opera Centre

1pm - 2pm Lunchtime recital: Harriet Burns, Nick Pritchard, Christopher Glynn and Kate Wakeling HAR

2.30pm - 5pm Bring and Sing! rehearsal Leeds Minster

5.30pm - 6.30pm Bring and Sing! concert: Vivaldi *Gloria* Leeds Minster

6.30pm - 7pm Pre-concert talk with Tansy Davies HAR

7.30pm Evening recital: Ema Nikolovska and Joseph Middleton HAR

10pm - 11pm Lieder Lounge with Leeds Lieder Young Artists Kino @ HAR

SUNDAY 21 APRIL

1pm - 2pm Lunchtime recital: Fleur Barron and Joseph Middleton The Venue, LC

2.30pm - 3.30pm Film screening: *Sense ficció - Brava, Victoria!* The Venue, LC

5pm - 6.30pm Finale concert: Leeds Lieder Young Artists The Venue, LC

7.30pm Evening closing recital: Benjamin Appl and Sholto Kynoch The Venue, LC

HAR = Howard Assembly Room | LC = Leeds Conservatoire | All information correct at the time of going to print. Leeds Lieder reserves the right to change artists, programmes and events if necessary.



Monday 15 April

MON 15 APRIL | 2:30PM
LEEDS MINSTER

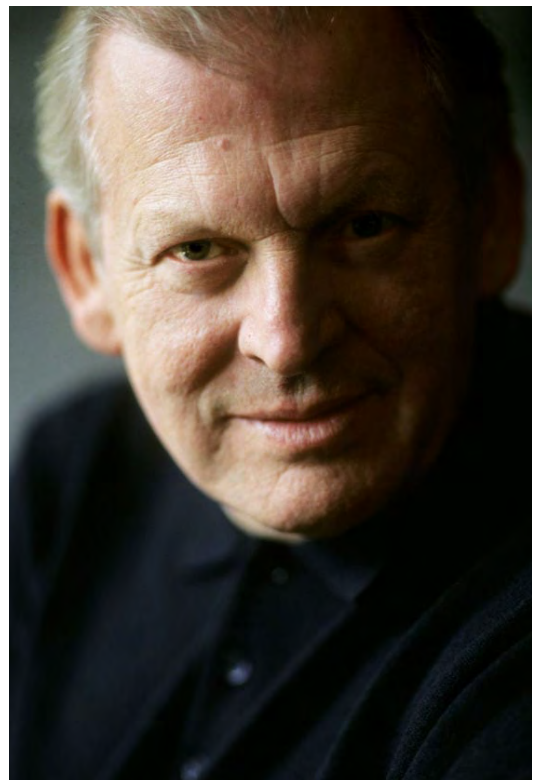
Friends' Festival Masterclass I: Sir Thomas Allen and Leeds Lieder Young Artists

Sir Thomas Allen baritone
Leeds Lieder Young Artists

As a special thank you to the Friends of Leeds Lieder, this masterclass is an opportunity to get up close to the action and meet our Young Artists whilst they prepare new material.

Appearances by Sir Thomas Allen are always red letter days in Leeds. He appeared as Guest of Honour in 2018 and his masterclasses have confirmed his reputation in Leeds as one of the most knowledgeable, affable, witty and insightful teachers. We are thrilled that he returns once more to Yorkshire to steer our Leeds Lieder duos through their chosen repertoire.

Without the support of the Friends of Leeds Lieder, we simply wouldn't be able to fill the city with song.



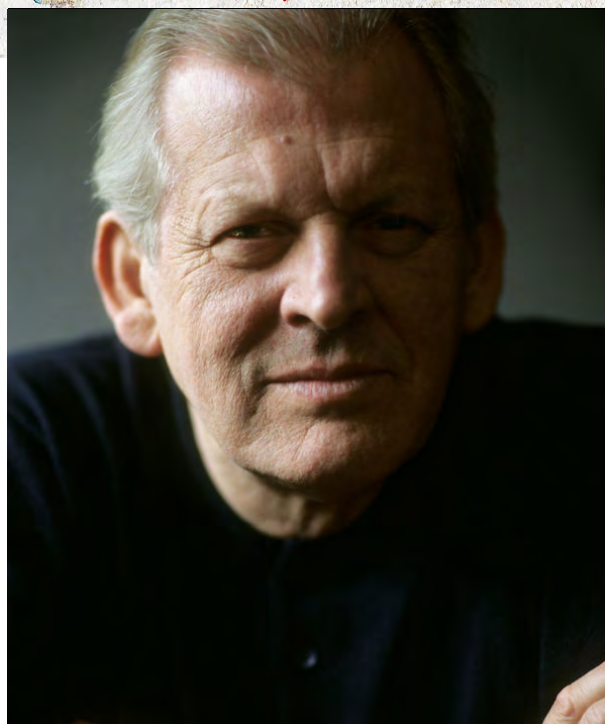
© Susie Ahlburg



Sir Thomas Allen

Baritone

Sir Thomas Allen is an established star of the great opera houses of the world. He has sung over fifty roles at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; this year he celebrates the 50th anniversary of his début with the Company. An acclaimed recitalist, he is equally renowned on the concert platform and has appeared with the world's great orchestras and conductors. His many honours include the title of Bayerischer Kammersänger awarded by the Bayerische Staatsoper. In the New Year's Honours of 1989 he was created a Commander of the British Empire and in the 1999 Queen's Birthday Honours he was made a Knight Bachelor. Among his proudest achievements is having a Channel Tunnel locomotive named after him; and most recently, being awarded the Queen's Medal for Music 2013.



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Leeds Lieder Young Artists

Laura Coppinger *Soprano*

Laura graduated with an MMus from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS), where she held a scholarship, and from Dunedin Consort's Bridging the Gap programme in summer 2023. A versatile performer, she enjoys singing a variety of repertoire from 16th century lute song (having provided recordings for use at Dean Castle, Ayrshire), Lieder, and contemporary song.

A keen recitalist, Laura has given recitals in the Jacqueline du Pré auditorium, Ludlow Assembly Rooms and as part of the New Chamber Opera recital series, amongst others. In 2022 she was a finalist in the Elgar/Spedding Memorial Lieder Competition and achieved second place in the Coro Nuovo Sussex Young Musician competition and the Charles Wood International Song Competition (in addition to winning the Charles Wood Song Prize).

Laura's previous operatic roles include Second Woman (*Dido and Aeneas*) with Glyndebourne Youth Opera, Ninfa (*L'Orfeo*) with Theatron Oneiron, Mabel (*The Pirates of Penzance*), Cunegonde (*Candide*) with Barricade Arts, Baroness Irene (*La Vera Costanza*) with New Chamber Opera, Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*) with Oxford Alternative Orchestra, Oasis (*L'Etoile*) at the RCS, Pallas (*The Judgement of Paris*) and most recently the soprano in Schoenberg's *Erwartung* with Orchestra Vox.

Laura particularly loves contemporary music, a passion she has had since performing in the première of David Bruce's *Nothing* as a member of Glyndebourne Youth Opera. Since then, she has performed in several operatic premières, including at the Tête à Tête festival in London.

Laura has been kindly supported by Help Musicians as a Postgraduate Award holder, The Caird Trust, the Sutherland Page Trust and Broadway Arts Festival.

David Palmer *Piano*

Born in 1997, David is a London-based composer and pianist specialising in 20th and 21st century repertoire. He is in demand as a soloist and collaborative pianist and has a particular interest in song. David read music at the University of Oxford, graduating with a first-class BA in 2019. He now teaches undergraduate modules in stylistic composition, arrangement, transcription, and keyboard skills at the University. David studies piano with Ronan O'Hora and Rolf Hind at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, from which he was recently awarded a Master of Performance with distinction and received a Concert Recital Diploma for exceptional performance. He is currently studying on the Artist Diploma course.

David is a member of two contemporary music ensembles: Mad Song and Constellation 15.



He has appeared as a soloist with the Guildhall School of Music and Drama's Ubu Ensemble in Berg's *Kammerkonzert*, Finissy's Piano Concerto No. 3, and Xenakis's *A l'île de Gorée*. Notable 2023 performances include the complete solo piano works of Thomas Metcalf at the University of Edinburgh; Bartok's Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion at TU Conservatoire Dublin; a Saariaho spotlight concert for BBC Radio 3; song recitals at the Broadway Arts Festival, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, and Stoller Hall; various performances with Roderick Williams, Clifton Harrison and the Britten-Pears Contemporary Ensemble at the Aldeburgh Festival; Bartok's *Contrasts* with Andrew Marriner at the GSMD Chamber Music Festival; Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* with Mad Song at the High Barnet Chamber Festival and again at Heath Street Baptist Church; a performance in the St Pancras Clock Tower with Mad Song; and a recital for City Music Society celebrating the 70th birthday of composer Robert Saxton.

David was a 2022/23 Britten Pears Young Artist. He is generously supported by the Norman Gee Foundation.

Èlia Farreras-Cabero

Soprano

Born in 1999, soprano Èlia Farreras-Cabero studied with Elisenda Cabero at the Escola de Música i Conservatori Professional de Sabadell. She is currently studying at the Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler in Berlin with Britta Schwarz, and has worked under teachers including Wolfram Rieger, Martin Bruns, Christoph Prégardien, Thomas Quasthoff, Lluís Vilamajor and Ulrich Messthaler.

Èlia is a 2024 'Lied the future' scholarship recipient from the Schubertiada, and has performed in such halls as the Konzerthaus in Berlin, the Deutsche Oper in Berlin, el Palau de la Música Catalana, La Faràndula in Sabadell and L`Atlantida in Barcelona.

Lucas Huber Sierra

Piano

Lucas Huber Sierra was raised in Madrid and began his training under concert pianist Eduardo Fernández. He later moved to Germany to study in Cologne and Lübeck with Josef Anton Scherrer and Konrad Elser, earning a bachelor's and master's degree in piano performance with the highest marks.

Over the years, he has received important guidance from artists including Claudio Martínez Mehner, Pierre-Laurent Aimard, Anthony Spiri, Thomas Quasthoff, Susan Manoff, Malcolm Martineau and Christoph Prégardien. As a prize winner of several international competitions, he had the opportunity to perform in major European concert halls and record for multiple German radio stations.

Lucas currently studies song accompaniment with Wolfram Rieger at the HfM Hanns Eisler in Berlin, where he also serves as a répétiteur for the singing class of Stephan Rügamer. He is a scholarship holder of the Heidelberger Frühling Lied Academy 2023/24 under the artistic direction of Thomas Hampson and will be part of the 'Lied the future' programme at the Schubertiada Vilabertran this summer.

Èlia Farreras-Cabero and Lucas Huber Sierra's participation in this year's festival is kindly sponsored by Schubertiada Vilabertran.




Schubertiada

Deirunas Jasiulionis

Tenor

Lithuanian tenor, Deirunas Jasiulionis (Derry) is currently in his final year of his master's at the Royal Academy of Music where he is fortunate to be studying with Susan Waters, Adrian Thompson and Joseph Middleton. Prior to moving to London, Derry was studying with Stephen Robertson at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland from which he graduated with first class Honours, won the Edith Brass prize in Lieder and was a member of Karen Cargill's young artist programme. Some of the highlights also included performing alongside RSNO and Patricia Kopatchinskaja, touring Scottish castles and historic houses, and performing the roles of Idamante (*Idomeneo*) and Monostatos (*The Magic Flute*) at the RCS opera scenes.

London has equally presented Derry with a variety of opportunities. Performing the roles of Nemorino (*L'elisir d'amore*), Tonio (*La fille du régiment*) and Alfred (*Die Fledermaus*) in the vocal faculty opera scenes as well as participating in internal and external masterclasses with Wolfgang Holzmaier, Ann Murray DBE and John Mark Ainsley were some of the outstanding highlights so far.



Derry is also a member of the Philharmonia Chorus and has performed at venues such as The Royal Festival Hall and the Royal Albert Hall under the batons of Vasily Petrenko, Santtu-Matias Rouvali and Eduardo Strausser. He is currently looking forward to returning to these venues in the following months.

Fang-Lin Liu

Piano

Fang Lin Liu is currently in her final year of master's degree at the Royal Academy of Music under the guidance of William Fong, after having achieved a first class for her bachelor's. She enjoys taking part in chamber music, working with singers, and has had experience working with dancers.

In 2018, Fang Lin received a scholarship to commence her bachelor's degree at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS) under Aaron Shorr. During her studies in Scotland, she won the Jock Holden Memorial Mozart Prize and performed Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 24 with the RCS Chamber Orchestra. She achieved second place in a number of RCS competitions: the Governors Recital Prize, the William Leslie Meikle Piano Prize and the Peter Lindsay Miller Prize for Piano Duo.

In 2015, Fang won the first prize in Los Angeles Gold Star Young Pianist Competition before commencing studies (with scholarship) at the Purcell School for Young Musicians under the tutelage of Tessa Nicholson. During this period, Fang Lin performed at the Fazioli Concert Hall in Italy, the Southbank Centre in London and The Proms at St Jude's Church in London.

She is a keen and ambitious pianist who enjoys collaboration with others, and is eager to continue her musical odyssey.

Anton Kirchoff

Baritone

Lyric baritone Anton Kirchoff commenced his musical journey in his hometown of Cologne at the age of six, starting with the violin. Three years later, he embraced the piano as his secondary instrument and, not long afterward, received his first singing lesson. In parallel to his studies on the violin and piano, he forged a path into the world of music by establishing himself as a boy soprano, discovering in the process a deep love of singing.

One of the pivotal moments that deeply influenced his passion for opera was his role as Miles (*The Turn of the Screw*) at the Cologne Opera. This experience left an indelible mark on his artistic development, fuelling his desire to explore the operatic world further.

Another important part of Anton's musical work centres around Art Song. His deep-seated passion for German Lieder was profoundly influenced by his mentorships with Benjamin Appl, Christoph Prégardien and Robert Holl. In November 2020, he embarked on a partnership with his piano partner Jou-an Chen. Most recently, having received a scholarship, they took part in the music festival LiedBasel where they performed in the final concert of the week. Their special interest lies in developing concert programmes that fuse contrasting works of various composers and offer new perspectives on their interpretation.

In the summer of 2023, Anton completed his bachelor's degree in Vocal Performance with top honours under the guidance of Thomas Laske at the Robert-Schumann-Hochschule in Düsseldorf. During his time in Düsseldorf, his academic pursuits saw him take on roles in productions at the university, such as Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*), Schaunard (*La bohème*), and Aeneas (*Dido and Aeneas*), enriching his operatic experience.

Anton is currently studying on the MA programme at the Royal Academy of Music in London, under Susan Waters and Joseph Middleton.

Jou-an Chen

Piano

Jou-an Chen was born in Taiwan. She began her musical training in both piano and oboe. She holds a bachelor's degree in piano solo and pedagogy from National Taiwan Normal University, a Piano Diplôme Supérieur d'Enseignement from L'École Normale de Musique de Paris supervised by Prof. Nelson Delle-Vigne Fabbri and Erik Berchot, and a master's degree in Liedgestaltung (Klavier) from Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln supervised by Prof. Ulrich Eisenlohr. During her studies, she was supported as a scholarship holder by Kawai Klavier, Pacing Art Culture Education Foundation, and Liedbasel (together with baritone Anton Kirchoff).

As a member of the International Certificate for Piano Artists, she received instruction from Jerome Lowenthal, Mikhail Karpov, and Daniel Blumenthal. In addition to playing piano solo, she enjoys playing art songs with singers.

In 2023, she won the first prize in the Internet Liedwettbewerb der HfMT Köln in a duo with soprano Maria Portela Larisch. From 2024, she is an artist of association "Vrienden van het Lied".

Cerys MacAllister

Soprano

Cerys MacAllister is an award-winning soprano from Ireland. In 2021 she graduated from The Royal Irish Academy of Music with first class honours in bachelor's in music performance. There she studied under the tutelage of Mary Brennan and Dearbhla Collins. Cerys is a recent graduate of the Royal Academy of Music in London where she studied under Yvonne Howard and Jonathan Papp.

In 2020 Cerys was a finalist for the Veronica Dunne international singing bursary and in 2021 was a finalist in The Glenarm Festival of Voice and the Gervase Elwes Feis Ceoil final as well as winning first prize in The Nancy Calthorpe competition for French song, first prize for the Joseph Plunkett Cup, first prize in The Vincent O'Brien Cup and Silver Medal in The Soprano solo competition as well as winning the song prize in RIAM'S Irene Sandford competition.

Cerys's opera credits at the Royal Irish Academy of Music include Stephen McNeff's *Banished*, Francesca C'accini's *La Liberazione di Ruggiero* and the international debut of Kevin O'Connell's *DreamCatcher*. At RAM she has covered the role of Barbarina (*Le nozze di Figaro*) and performed as First Bridesmaid. She recently made her professional debut as The Dew Fairy (*Hänsel und Gretel*) for HGO. Cerys has premièred new works for Antonino Abbate including his new piece *Shall I compare Thee?* with The Londinium Consort. She performed Abbate's *Sail Away* in her recital at St. James's Piccadilly. She has also performed in prestigious venues such The National Museum of Ireland, The RDS, The National Concert Hall Dublin and The Italian Cultural Institute.

André Bertoncini

Piano

André Bertoncini is a Brazilian collaborative pianist specialising in vocal repertoire. He graduated with distinction from a Master of Arts in Piano Accompaniment at the Royal Academy of Music, being awarded The Evelyn German Prize for the highest mark in final recital. In 2023, he was awarded the accompanist prize at the Bampton Classical Opera Young Singers' Competition. Before coming to the UK, he was Assistant

Collaborative Pianist at the State University of Maringá and at FEMUSC.

André holds a bachelor's degree from EMBAP under the tutelage of Prof. Olga Kiun.

Thomas McGowan

Baritone

Originally from southwest London, Thomas McGowan is currently a Sally Cohen opera scholarship holder at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He has been studying under Robert Dean since 2021. Prior to his studies at the Guildhall, Thomas was Choral Scholar at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford where he also studied for a BA in music.

Thomas is in demand as an oratorio soloist. Recent engagements include Fauré's *Requiem*, Vaughan Williams's *Dona Nobis Pacem* and *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*. Recent competition and prize successes include first prize in the Dorothy Richardson English Song competition and the Wyburd award for Lieder performance (GSMD).


In the summer of 2023, Thomas was a member of the Buxton International Festival Opera Company, performing in Bellini's *La Sonnambula*, and a new musical, *The Land of Might Have Been* featuring arrangements of Ivor Novello's music by Ian Farrington.

Ben Collyer

Piano

Ben Collyer is acting Director of Music at St John's, Hyde Park Crescent and Artist Diploma Student at the Royal College of Music, where he is generously supported by the Newton Scarth Scholarship. He began his musical education at the age of 7 in his local church choir in Stockport. He then started studies at Chetham's School of Music where he studied with Christopher Stokes and Graham Caskie. In 2017, Ben was awarded his ARCO diploma from the Royal College of Organists. In 2018 Ben took on the role of Organ Scholar at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford whilst studying for a BA in Musicology.

As a recitalist, Ben has performed in a number of prestigious venues including L'Église Saint Vincent de Carcassonne and the Royal Opera House in Muscat. In the academic year 2021/22, Ben was Organ Scholar at St Paul's Cathedral where he was involved with a number of prestigious services including the Platinum Jubilee service for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.



Ben began his postgraduate studies at the RCM in 2021, studying for an MPerf in Organ Performance. He achieved a first-class degree in his master's course in 2023, and now continues his studies for a further academic year on the Artist's Diploma course.

Upcoming concerts in 2024 include Holst's *The Planets* at the BBC Proms, a tour to Helsinki with the RCM Symphony Orchestra, and a première of an organ piece commissioned for him by English composer Francis Pott.

Anusha Merrin

Soprano

Indian Soprano Anusha Merrin is a native of Kerala and a resident of the Kingdom of Bahrain. She is currently a GREAT Indian Scholar at the Royal Northern College of Music, pursuing a Postgraduate Diploma: Advanced Studies in Vocal Studies and Opera under the tutelage of Elizabeth Ritchie. Her studies are generously supported by the Dame Eva Turner Award, Opera Awards Foundation Bursary, Inlaks Shivdasani Foundation Take-Off Grant and RNCM entrance scholarship. Prior to this, The Peter Heath Award, the Maurice and Jean and the Dame Eva Turner Award supported her Master of Music in Vocal Performance at the RNCM, where she received the degree with distinction. Anusha holds a BA (hons.) in Music from Middlesex University, London and a Diploma in Music Performance from KM Music Conservatory, Chennai.

Throughout her studies, Anusha further honed her craft by participating in masterclasses with Jennifer Larmore, David Owen Norris, Jennifer Hamilton, Benjamin Appl and Patricia Rozario. Some achievements include Finalist of the Dean and Chadlington Festival 2023, Frederic Cox Award for singing 2023, a member of the RNCM Songsters 2022/23, Second Prize at the Joyce and Michael Kennedy Award for the Singing of Strauss 2022, Best Overall Performer in Art Song Festival 2021 with Trinity Laban and KM Music Conservatory, Chorus in *Madama Butterfly* conducted by Sir Mark Elder with the Hallé and in *La Fedelta Premiata* conducted by Natalie Murray Beale at the Royal Opera House, Mumbai.

Her opera roles include Mary Crawford (*Mansfield Park*), Geraldine (*A Hand of Bridge*) and Ida (*Die Fledermaus*). This summer, she looks forward to joining the Buxton International Festival as a Young Artist.

Chunmeng Ge

Piano

Chunmeng Ge, originally from China, began her musical journey at the age of 5. Under the guidance of her teacher, Yuan Feng, a professor at Shenyang Conservatory of Music, Chunmeng honed her skills and developed a deep passion for music. In 2016, Chunmeng was admitted to the piano accompaniment major at Sichuan Conservatory of Music with the top score in Liaoning Province. During her undergraduate years, she delved into the study of piano and violin sonatas, and lieder, discovering a keen interest in collaborative music.

After completing her undergraduate studies, Chunmeng furthered her study in piano accompaniment under accompanist Qi Wang at the China Conservatory of Music in Beijing. Alongside her musical endeavours, Chunmeng undertook studies in German, passing the German B1 Goethe-Certificate examination in 2020. Chunmeng entered the Royal Academy of Music in 2022, where she was awarded a £10,000 entrance scholarship. Currently in her second year, she receives guidance from renowned professors Michael Dussek and Joseph Middleton. Chunmeng has also performed as an accompanist for Prof. Richard Stokes's German repertoire class since January 2023.

Chunmeng has participated in masterclasses given by Hartmut Höll, Susan Manoff and Thomas Steinhöfel at the Royal Academy of Music. Notably, she has performed Fauré's *Cinq Mélodies "de Venise" Op. 58* with mezzo-soprano Angharad Rowlands on BBC Radio 3's In Tune and at the Academy Song Circle concert at Wigmore Hall in January 2024.

Aksel Rykkvin

Baritone

Aksel is studying for a BMus in voice with Prof. Mark Wildman with a full ABRSM scholarship at the Royal Academy of Music. As a baritone, he was placed third in the Joan Chissell/Rex Stephens Schumann Lieder Prize in London in 2023. At the Kathleen Ferrier Society Bursary for Young Singers competition in 2023 he won the Joyce Budd Second Prize and the Norma Procter Song Prize.

Aksel received rave reviews for his treble début album recorded with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment at the age of twelve. Both his solo albums reached the UK Classical chart top 10.



He performed as a treble soloist at numerous concerts, operas, festivals, on radio and TV in Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. As Yniold in *Pelléas et Mélisande* he was hailed as 'unsurpassable' (ResMusica), and later he impressed in his Paris début at the Opéra Comique as Anthony in *Miranda*.

As a baritone, Aaksel has performed as a soloist at festivals, concerts and operas in Norway, Sweden, UK, Austria and Germany.

After his concert at Christian Gerhaher and Gerold Huber's Lied festival at Schloss Elmau in Bavaria, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* wrote he had "a voice as beautiful as milk and blood", and *Deutschlandfunk* radio was "very impressed" and praised his "extremely clear diction". Aaksel and his duo partner Zany Denyer were accepted for the five-week summer course "Poetry & Performance of the German Lied" at the Franz Schubert Institute in Baden bei Wien in 2023. Aaksel held a solo concert during the Oslo Chamber Music Festival in 2021 and is scheduled to appear again at the festival in August 2024 with songs by Backer Grøndahl and Grieg.

Zany Denyer

Piano

Zany is an award-winning London based pianist, who specialises in chamber music and vocal accompaniment. As co-founder of the award-winning ensemble, Trio Havisham, he has found success with them in various competitions, including first prize at the CAVATINA Intercollegiate Chamber Music Competition at Wigmore Hall in May 2022, and second prize at the Concours International de Musique de Chambre de Lyon in April 2023.

They have won numerous awards including the 2022 Tunnell Trust award, as well as the Musicians' Company Award at Wigmore Hall in February 2023; they are delighted to now be part of their 5-year Young Artists' Programme. They were later invited to be members of ChamberStudio UK's 2023/24 Hans Keller Forum and have recently been chosen as Kirckman Artists for 2024/25.


As a passionate accompanist, Zany enjoys uncovering the intricate world of Lieder with his regular duo partners, and throughout his studies has won numerous accompanist awards including the first prize at the Royal Academy of Music's Schumann Lieder Competition. As a result of these performances, he was invited to become a Samling Institute Young Artist for the 2023/24 season. More recently, he won the Kathleen Ferrier Society's Denis Horner Junior Accompanist prize. He is also a member of the Royal Academy of Music's Song Circle with whom he recently performed at their annual concert at Wigmore Hall.

During his studies, Zany's musicianship has been strongly influenced by several musicians he was fortunate enough to have coachings and masterclasses with. Most notably, these include Jean-Efflam Bavouzet, Petr Prause (Talich Quartet), Steven Osborne, Kathryn Stott, Stephen Hough, Philippe Cassard, Piotr Paleczny, Hartmut Höll, So-Ock Kim, The Gould Piano Trio, Trio Karénine, and Trio Gaspard.

Felicitas Wrede

Soprano

German soprano Felicitas Wrede started her studies at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater, Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy with Prof. Brigitte Wohlfarth. Since September 2022 she has studied



with Amanda Roocroft at the Royal College of Music as an ABRSM scholar. Felicitas won the second prize as well as the audience prize at the Sollima International Competition 2016 in Sicily.

Felicitas has been fortunate enough to participate in masterclasses with Angela Gheorghiu, Wolfram Rieger, Peter Anton Ling and Joseph Middleton. She has given concerts at venues in Germany including the Thomaskirche, Nikolaikirche, the Gewandhaus and at the Händelfestspiele Göttingen. On the opera stage she has performed as Pamina (*The Magic Flute*), Clomiri (*Imeneo*), the title role in Orff's *Die Kluge* and as Gretel (*Hänsel und Gretel*). She looks forward to being a part of the Atelier Lyrique at the Verbier Festival in the summer 2024.

Abhisri Chaudhuri

Piano

Scottish-Indian pianist, Abhisri Chaudhuri, is currently in her second year of master's studies in Collaborative Piano at the Royal College of Music. She studies under Roger Vignoles and Simon Lepper as a Robert Turnbull Piano Foundation scholar supported by the John Birch Scholarship, and trains with Audrey Hyland and Caroline Dowdle in vocal coaching.

Abhisri graduated from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland under the tutelage of Fali Pavri, where she made her début concerto performance of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. She has taken part in masterclasses with highly acclaimed pianists such as David Greilsammer, Susan Manoff, and Lydia Brown. She attended Brel Summer School in France where she learnt from Joseph Middleton and Amanda Roocroft.

Abhisri performed in the summer 2023 at the Nei Suoni Dei Luoghi Festival as both a soloist and collaborative pianist in Udine, Italy. Abhisri recently performed in a concert for the Princess Royal, representing the Caledonian Club in London. She has also worked with Pegasus Opera Company.

Abhisri's awards include the Nora C Leggat Prize for Pianoforte by the ABRSM, Dundee's District Rotary Young Musician, the Tony & Tania Webster Russian Song Prize and the Sir John Leng Silver Medal. She was also highly commended in the RCM Brooks Van der Pump English Song competition and in the Royal Philharmonic Society's Young Classical Writers Award, where her work is published on their website.

Biqing Zhang

Soprano

Chinese soprano, Biqing Zhang is currently in her first year of the opera course at Guildhall School of Music & Drama where she holds the Rosemary Thayer Scholarship, studying with vocal teacher Marilyn Rees and coach Linnhe Roberson. Biqing finished her bachelor's degree in vocal performance at Shanghai, Tongji University. In London, Biqing finished her two-year master's in vocal performance at Guildhall School of Music & Drama.

From a young age Biqing has regularly appeared as a soloist on stage. She has performed as a soloist in venues including Shanghai Concert Hall, Shanghai Oriental Art Centre, Barbican Hall and Milton Court in London.

In 2023, Biqing was one of the semi-finalists in the Handel International Competition at St George's Hanover Square. In the same year, Biqing performed in the role of Poppea (*Agrippina*) at Hampstead Garden Opera. More recently, Biqing played as a nightingale (*La Bella Dormente Bosco*) in the Guildhall Autumn Opera. She also performed in the Guildhall Opera Scenes in the roles of Sandman (*Hansel and Gretel*), Ophelie (*Hamlet*) and Lucia (*The Rape of Lucretia*).

Yongqiu Yuan

Piano

Yongqiu Yuan is an accomplished solo pianist, collaborative pianist and répétiteur, whose interests and capabilities span a broad spectrum. She began playing the piano at the age of 10 and received her early training at the Middle School of Sichuan Conservatory of Music in China. She obtained her BMus degree at the Royal Northern College of Music, where she was also awarded the Ensemble Prize.

In 2013, Yongqiu was granted a scholarship to continue her studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, focusing on piano accompaniment. She is an active solo and collaborative pianist who has performed in Wigmore Hall, Milton Court, Blackheath Halls, the People's Palace, and the Corbett Theatre. She has also accompanied the performances of *The Monk and the Lotus* at Tête à Tête Opera Festival and Grimeborn Festival. Additionally, Yongqiu is the official accompanist for the China-UK International Music Festival.

About Leeds Lieder



Leeds Lieder was founded in 2004 by Jane Anthony, in partnership with a group of individuals and Leeds College of Music, to promote the enjoyment, understanding, appreciation, composition and performance of art song.

With relatively few opportunities to hear the art song repertoire in live performance outside London, this gap in the musical landscape provided the inspiration for Leeds Lieder.

Leeds Lieder was inaugurated with a Festival of song in 2005 and there followed a decade of biennial Festivals attracting some of the finest singers and pianists of our time. Encouraged by this success, in 2017 it was decided that the Festival should become an annual event. In between Festivals, audiences are able to enjoy a lively season of concerts and masterclasses presented as co-promotions with our principal partners, the Howard Assembly Room, the University of Leeds, Leeds International Concert Season and Leeds Conservatoire.

The pianist Joseph Middleton was appointed Director of Leeds Lieder in December 2014.

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Why not join today and access a range of benefits including priority booking, invitations to special events and advance information? Please go to the 'Support Us' section at leedslieder.org.uk for full details and a downloadable application form. You can also ring the Festival Office on 0113 243 4438, email info@leedslieder.org.uk to request a form, or pick one up during the Festival.

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