

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

# Saturday 20th 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

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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

## 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.

TODAY

# Saturday 20 April

SAT 20 APRIL | 10AM  
HOWARD OPERA CENTRE

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## **Festival Masterclass V: Benjamin Appl and Leeds Lieder Young Artists**

**Benjamin Appl** baritone  
Leeds Lieder Young Artists

Established as one of the leading song singers currently before the public, Appl had the good fortune of being mentored by the legendary singer Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau. Appl says "my years of working with Fischer-Dieskau were invaluable and had a hugely formative influence on me. He is an inspiration - someone who was always searching and seeking a deeper understanding of music and of life. He was a role model for how to prosper as an artist, never just delivering, but each time creating."

Benjamin Appl leads our Young Artists through their chosen repertoire, passing on the experiences he had as a pupil of Fischer-Dieskau.



© David Ruano



# Saturday 20 April

SAT 20 APRIL | 1PM  
HOWARD ASSEMBLY ROOM

## Lunchtime Recital: *Myrtles*: Harriet Burns, Nick Pritchard, Christopher Glynn, Kate Wakeling

Harriet Burns soprano

Nick Pritchard tenor

Christopher Glynn piano

Kate Wakeling poet and reader

Schumann's song cycle *Myrthen*, retold in English by Jeremy Sams, with new poems by Kate Wakeling.

In 1840, Robert Schumann was finally able to marry the woman he loved - the sensationally gifted pianist Clara Wieck - after a long and bitter legal battle with her father. His hard-won happiness found expression in an extraordinary collection of songs, presented to Clara on the morning of their marriage and named after the white myrtle sprigs that for centuries have symbolised love and hope in every wedding bouquet. With secret messages, riddles and lucky charms, these twenty-six songs are an A-Z of Robert's hopes, fears, experiences and beliefs as he stands at a crossroads in life.

Performed in English, alongside new poems by Kate Wakeling to set the scene, this is a fresh take on one of the most unusual and captivating of all song cycles.

### ROBERT SCHUMANN

Dedication

*A Garland of Song - Kate Wakeling*

Free Spirit

The Chestnut Tree

Someone

*Someone else - Kate Wakeling*

Songs of the Inn I

Songs of the Inn II

The Lotus Flower

Talismans

Suleika's song

*If the heart is a mirror - Kate Wakeling*

The Highland Widow

Bridal Song I

Bridal Song II

The Highlander's Farewell

Highland Lullaby

From the Hebrew Songs

Riddle

*Mask - Kate Wakeling*

Venetian Song I

Venetian Song II

The Captain's Lady

Far away

One lingering teardrop

No-one

In the West

*These hands - Kate Wakeling*

You're like a flower

Roses from the East

*At the last - Kate Wakeling*

At the last



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© Sebati Collett



© Sophie Davidson

# Programme notes

Clara Wieck grew up in a house filled with music and ambition. Her father Friedrich, a distinguished piano teacher and determined taskmaster, chose her name because it meant brilliant and bright, and from her earliest days set about ensuring it would come true.

And it did. Clara may not have spoken until she was four, but by the age of nine no-one was in doubt that she was a child prodigy pianist who could bear comparison with Mozart. By the age of 11, she was the talk of Leipzig after giving a sensational first public recital there in 1830. It was also the year in which the 20-year-old Robert Schumann - a brilliant-but-chaotic, not-quite-making-it musician - moved into the house to study with her father.

The two were instantly drawn to each other. Despite the age difference, they bonded over a shared love of music, literature, long country walks, spooky stories and a mutual need for closeness and companionship in the pressurised, high-achieving atmosphere of the Wieck household.

By 1835, when Clara was 16, we find Robert writing of 'long hours spent in her arms' and a deliriously happy Clara writing to her diary to record their first kiss. Friedrich Wieck's priority, though, was Clara's career, a fulfilment of all the brilliance he had planned for her. He wrote to Robert to sever all connections and whisked his daughter off on tour, extending her fame across Europe.

For almost two years, Robert and Clara did not see each other: he concentrated on trying to publish his latest piano compositions (daring and strange, still not quite 'making it'), as well as sowing some wild oats; and she was busy being a star. Their feelings, though, were unchanged. Before long, secret letters were being exchanged through a mutual friend, and it was agreed that Clara's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday was the moment when Robert would write to her father to ask for her hand in marriage.

Wieck reacted with rage, threatening to shoot Robert and banning all contact between him and his daughter. Music must come first! Schumann was a lazy drunkard, a mediocre composer, a treacherous pupil; he was owed a return on all he had invested in his brilliant daughter; and there was no way she would use her concert earnings as a dowry.

After three years of secrecy and emotional turmoil, it all ended in court. In a case that dragged on for nearly a year, Robert and Clara behaved with dignity, diplomacy and steady determination. Wieck behaved like a lunatic.

The final hearing went in favour of the star-crossed lovers and it was Robert's turn to write to his diary: 'From then on with her forever.' The marriage took place on 12<sup>th</sup> September 1840. The evening before, Robert presented Clara with a collection of songs he had been composing in secret for months, entitled *Myrthen* after the white myrtle sprigs that for centuries have symbolised love and hope in a bride's wedding bouquet.

We can imagine Clara's reaction as she opened the handsomely decorated volume (Robert had splashed out on a deluxe leather binding) and discovered 26 songs that added up to a kind of musical alphabet - an A-Z of their hopes, desires and experiences as a couple. Here were poems they had jointly treasured for years, with the great German writers of the day (Goethe, Rückert, Heine) nestled next to foreign poets like Lord Byron, Robert Burns and Thomas Moore. Here were riddles, humour, irony, nods to the Bible and the Qur'an, a mutual love of folksong. Here was a sense of their politics (liberal, progressive, internationalist) plus a magic-carpet ride to places that fascinated them - Persia, Scotland, Venice and Jerusalem. *Myrthen* was their story in song.

*Myrthen* does more than celebrate a marriage; it also *makes* a series of symbolic marriages: between literature and music, Eastern and Western cultures, simplicity and sophistication, poetry and politics, the deeply personal and the proudly public. Because as anyone who ever made a mixtape for their partner in the 80s, or a

Spotify playlist in more recent times, choosing songs for a lover is a way to express much more than purely musical enthusiasms. Emotions, desires, a sense of shared identity and much more can all be encoded through song curation, and the Schumanns were not the last couple who found this a way to communicate their deepest feelings.

Every song in this fabulously eccentric collection can just be enjoyed on its own terms. But they start to mean a lot more when you know the backstory. So our performance this afternoon brings together a new English translation by Jeremy Sams with a series of newly commissioned poems by Kate Wakeling that explore the context of a song cycle like no other. Robert recalled 'laughing and weeping for joy' as he composed this 'imperfect garland'. Clara was no less thrilled and amazed by his new songs. We hope you enjoy them too.

*Christopher Glynn*



# A Note on the Poems

These six poems respond to Robert Schumann's extraordinary wedding gift, *Myrtles*. The poems explore the song cycle's themes and dramatic backstory, while also giving voice to its recipient, Clara Schumann.

The opening poem, 'A Garland of Song', reflects on what it means to reimagine a posy of bridal flowers (a sprig of myrtle has long been included in wedding bouquets) as a collection of songs instead.

'Someone Else', written in Clara's voice, reflects on the obstacles the couple faced during their engagement. Clara's father, Friederich Wieck (also Robert's erstwhile piano teacher) objected to the relationship and launched a court case to attack and defame Robert and thus prevent the marriage. Robert is thought to have included the two drinking songs that follow in the score as a retort to his father-in-law's (certainly not unfounded) accusations of excess drinking.

'If the Heart is a Mirror' develops a line from 'Suleika's Song' to explore the beginning of Clara and Robert's relationship. Clara was just nine years old when she first met Robert but it was not until 1834 - when Clara learnt Robert was engaged to another woman - that she is thought to have realised her depth of feeling for him.

'Masks' leads into the two Venetian Songs, thought to have been included by Robert in reference to his earlier 'adventuring'. The poem also explores Clara's perspective on the different creative personas (variously named 'Florestan', 'Eusebius' and 'Master Raro') that Robert deployed in his critical writing.

'These Hands' considers the implications of Clara's unerring support of Robert's creative endeavours at the expense of her own extraordinary musical talent.

'At the Last' reflects on what would befall the couple following their marriage and imagines another possible future. In 1854, while suffering from advanced syphilis, Robert threw himself into the Rhine. He survived but was immediately taken to an asylum where he remained until his death two years later. Clara was allowed to visit him only once, two days before he died.

*Kate Wakeling*



# Saturday 20 April

SAT 20 APRIL | 5:30PM  
LEEDS MINSTER

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## Bring and Sing! Concert: Vivaldi's *Gloria*

Andrea Brown conductor  
Alexander Woodrow organ  
Leeds Lieder Young Artists  
Leeds Lieder Bring and Sing! Chorus

Come and support the newly-formed Bring and Sing! Chorus, alongside the Leeds Lieder Young Artists, as they perform Vivaldi's choral masterpiece, *Gloria*, in the atmospheric surroundings of Leeds Minster under the directorship of conductor Andrea Brown, conductor of English National Opera's Community Chorus.



### ANTONIO VIVALDI

#### *Gloria*

1. Gloria
2. Et in terra pax
3. Laudamus te - Biqing Zhang and Laura Coppinger (sopranos)
4. Gratias agimus tibi
5. Domine Deus, Rex coelestis - Cerys MacAllister (soprano)
6. Domine, Fili unigenite
7. Domine Deus, Agnus Dei - Claire Pascoe (mezzo-soprano)
8. Qui tollis peccata mundi
9. Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris - Felicitas Wrede (soprano)
10. Quoniam tu solus sanctus
11. Cum Sancto Spiritu



# Programme note

Vivaldi wrote three Glorias, two of which have survived - the third was listed in one catalogue and is assumed to be lost. Today's *Gloria*, RV 589, is one of Vivaldi's most popular works. It was probably written around 1715. It owes some of its inspiration to an earlier work, a Gloria by Giovanni Ruggieri, composed in 1708; Vivaldi was not the only composer to be influenced by this work. Vivaldi's work shares several modulations and musical motives with Ruggieri's, and Ruggieri's 'Cum Sancto Spirito' movement is harmonically enriched by Vivaldi in the manner of the later Italian baroque. Both of Vivaldi's Glorias remained relatively unknown until the composer and editor Alfredo Casella revived them in a Vivaldi event in Siena in 1939 (the manuscript had been discovered in the 1920s); he published his own edition in 1941, and others followed. It spread in popularity following recordings by André Jouve and David Willcocks. RV 589 was almost certainly written for the inmates of the Ospedale della Pietà, where Vivaldi taught and composed music. (Visitors were not allowed, but one could listen to the girls' performances through a small grille at a side door—this was quite an attraction at the time). The Ospedale was one of four charitable institutions for the orphaned and abandoned girls of Venice, many of whom had been fathered by philandering noblemen or Grand Tour visitors to the north Italian city-state. The work is in a hybrid genre of 'cantata-mass', with various parts of the text set for contrasting combinations of voices, solo instruments, choir, and orchestra. The tone is not always reverently religious; the 'Laudamus te' duet is almost operatic, and the oboe obbligato in the first 'Dominus Deus' suggests a pastoral setting. The repeated dotted rhythms of the 'Domine fili unigenite' owe more to French music. But the second 'Domine Deus' contrasts the solo voice with cello obbligato against the chanting of the choir, much more of a dramatic version of a liturgical context, and the 'Et in terra pax' has a texture of imitation and chromaticism that suggests an earlier musical style altogether, the 'stile antico'. The range of stylistic allusions and evocations is on a much greater scale than the small forces (three soloists, one trumpet, one oboe, strings, and choir) might imply, and this is one of the main reasons for this work's popularity.

© Dr George Kennaway 2024

# Saturday 20 April

SAT 20 APRIL | 6:30PM  
HOWARD ASSEMBLY ROOM

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## Pre-concert Talk with Tansy Davies

Tansy Davies composer

Tansy Davies possesses one of the most personal voices in composition today. Embracing a wide range of influences - from the classical avant-garde to funk and experimental rock - her vital, visceral music bridges the spiritual and political, the man-made and the natural.

In this pre-concert talk, Davies introduces her new song cycle, specially commissioned for this 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Festival.



© Chelsey Browne

# Saturday 20 April

SAT 20 APRIL | 7:30PM  
HOWARD ASSEMBLY ROOM

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## Evening Recital: Ema Nikolovska and Joseph Middleton

Ema Nikolovska mezzo-soprano  
Joseph Middleton piano

Macedonian-Canadian mezzo-soprano Ema Nikolovska delighted Leeds Lieder audiences in 2021, and we are thrilled to welcome her back to perform - with Joseph Middleton - the newly-commissioned song cycle by Tansy Davies. The rest of their programme centres around the songs of Schubert, Debussy and the remarkable Margaret Bonds, a composer enjoying a well-deserved renaissance.

Since being at Leeds Lieder in 2021, Ema has given her Carnegie Hall and Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin débuts as well as creating the main role in George Benjamin's *Picture a day like this* at Covent Garden's Linbury Theatre. In 2022 she became a recipient of the prestigious Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award. It's a thrill to witness the stratospheric rise of this outstanding artist and we're so pleased to welcome her back to Yorkshire!



© Karpou Kikikas



### PROGRAMME

#### FRANZ SCHUBERT

Im Frühling  
Dass sie hier gewesen  
Herbst  
Der Unglückliche

#### TANSY DAVIES

The Ice Core Sample Says

\*A Leeds Lieder commission & world première

#### MARGARET BONDS

*Songs of the Seasons*  
Poème d'Automne  
Winter Moon  
Young Love in Spring  
Summer Storm

*Interval*

#### CLAUDE DEBUSSY

*Ariettes oubliées*  
C'est l'extase langoureuse  
Il pleure dans mon cœur  
L'ombre des arbres  
Chevaux de bois  
Green  
Spleen

#### NIKOLAI MEDTNER

Twilight  
Sleeplessness

#### NICOLAS SLONIMSKY

*Five Advertising Songs*  
Utica Sheets and Pillowcases  
Pillsbury Bran Muffins  
Vauv Nose Powder  
Children Cry for Castoria  
Make This a Day of Pepsodent

# Programme notes

**Franz Schubert** (1797-1828) composed 'Im Frühling' in 1826 to a poem by Ernst Schulze (1789-1817) as one of ten poems by Schulze he set to music. They were part of Schulze's *Poetic Diary* collection (1822), and the poem's original title was 'On the 31st of March 1815'. There is a constant subtle interplay between the piano and the voice; sometimes the voice continues the melody begun by the piano, sometimes the piano embarks on a tranquil flowing variation that also lightly counterpoints the melody. The textures change at the minor-key stanza with syncopated chords, while the voice maintains the original melody, and the syncopations remain discreetly in the bass while the song returns to the major for the last stanza. The piano's easy flow may match Nature's permanence; the singer has changed. 'Dass sie hier gewesen' is one of Schubert's most remarkable songs. From the very outset, with the exotic and ambiguous harmony of the opening chords, the scent of the East is present. The certainty that 'you have been here' comes in simple C major, but the scent and tears waft through a series of sighing pairs of chords through ten bars, and this time 'she has been here' in A flat, before the song closes in C when 'they' (beauty or love) 'have been here'. The short phrases break off – there's a silent bar before the second stanza and a pause before the third – and there is a pervasive ambiguity about the whole song in spite of the simple ending. 'Herbst' is only known from one source, an autograph album belonging to Heinrich Panofka (1807-1887) whom Schubert met in 1827. It is dated 28 April 1828, seven months before Schubert's death. Later, Panofka added Schubert's dates, a small portrait, and an envelope containing flowers from Schubert's grave. We hear the cold autumn winds in the constantly oscillating notes in the upper piano part, and the singer is in a duet with the lower piano part. 'Blümigen' (flowery) is extended as if to suggest the meadows themselves. At the end of each stanza, the fading away of flowers, life, and love find a counterpart in the 'Neapolitan' harmonic shift. 'Der Unglückliche' probably originated in the friendship between the poetess Karoline Pichler and the singer Johann Michael Vogl. Vogl told Pichler that only a short time after he had composed it, Schubert did not recognize 'Der Unglückliche' as his own work ('Not bad. Who is it by?') – apparently Vogl had sent Schubert's sketches for the song to a copyist on his own initiative. This song is a dramatic cantata, or monodrama, with several highly contrasting sections – not a strophic setting repeating the same music, but through-composed.

From the ominous opening repeated chords to the high drama of recitative at 'Da stürzte dich ein grausam Machtwort nieder' this dramatic monologue has operatic aspirations.


© Dr George Kennaway 2024

Commissioned by Ian and Ann Wood for Leeds Lieder, *The Ice Core Sample Says* is a setting of a poem by Nick Drake. This song gives voice to deep, ancient ice - that of the core samples taken from ice sheets or glaciers. Core drills can reach depths of over two miles and contain ice of up to 800,000 years old. This ice has built up, layer by layer through time, and now reveals the secrets and stories of Climate through the ages.

"The ice" sees all of time all at once; is ancient, powerful and wise; speaks warnings from pre-history and the beyond; sees the planetary destruction caused by human and reaches out to connect with them.

Tansy Davies 2024

**Margaret Bonds** (1913-1972) was born in Chicago to a prominent and creative family. She was lifelong friends with poet Langston Hughes (1901-67), one of the leaders of the Harlem Renaissance, the flowering of black intellectual, literary, and artistic life that took place in the 1920s in a number of American cities, particularly Harlem – he was the librettist for Weill's opera *Street Scene*. Bonds was extremely active in the New York music scene during the 1930s, as a pianist, educator, music director and organiser of a chamber music society to foster the work of black musicians and composers. Teaching was important to her (her students included Ned Rorem), and she developed a programme to teach music literacy. She gained serious recognition and reward during her lifetime. Vocal music is central to Bonds's output, including art song, popular song and spirituals, as well as much music for musical theatre. Bonds compiled her *Songs of the Seasons* for a commission from tenor Lawrence Watson in 1955. This cycle combined 'Poème d'automne' and 'Winter Moon', composed in 1934 and 1936, with 'Young Love in Spring' and 'Summer Storm', composed in 1955. The première of this cycle was performed by Watson on March 25, 1956. *Songs of the Seasons* is in a range of styles embracing the whole of the African-American tradition in music.



In 'Young Love in Spring' opens with an evocation of a classical piano sonata but quickly moves to a more French-influenced palette, with subtly jazz-influenced passages in fourths. 'Winter Moon' is epigrammatically short, based on a simple ostinato and almost remaining on one note for the singer. 'Poème d'Automne' is dark and bluesy, matching the rich colours of the trees. The virtuosic vocal lines and jazzy rhythms of 'Summer Storm' describe emotional 'thunder' and the 'wonder' of being in love.

**Claude Debussy** (1862–1918) composed the six *Ariettes oubliées* in 1886—then, they were originally called *Ariettes, paysages belges et aquarelles* and were given their new title in 1903 when they were re-published. The cycle was dedicated to Mary Garden, the Scottish singer who created the role of Mélisande in the opera *Pelléas et Mélisande*. Debussy had already composed many songs by the time of the *Ariettes* but this Verlaine setting was his most successful – nearly one-third of Debussy's songs are settings of Verlaine. **In the 1880s, Debussy's songs were more flexible and harmonically more adventurous than his instrumental music: the musicologist Edward Lockspeiser said that** 'poetry fertilizes the art of Debussy'. The texts are from Verlaine's *Romances sans paroles*, written while he was in London with Rimbaud in 1872–73, and published in 1874 when Verlaine was in prison for attacking his companion. The words and aura of 'C'est l'extase' are perfectly embodied in the song's voluptuous mood and sylvan harmonic palette. 'Il pleure dans mon cœur' equates the gentle rain over a city, evoked by the alternating piano semiquavers almost throughout, with the poet's sorrow experienced 'without reason'. The 'drowned hopes' of a grieving traveller are reflected in the 'pale landscape' described in 'L'ombre des arbres' with strikingly shifting harmonies—the song is nominally in C sharp major but moves very flexibly through many modulations. The exuberant 'Chevaux de bois' is one of the poems set in Belgium, this one at a Brussels merry-go-round turning at top speed, if the piano part is any guide. The cycle ends with 'Green' and 'Spleen', originally two Aquarelles. 'Green' is an expression of young love that progresses from ardour to repose. Fauré's setting of 'Green' was included in James Gilchrist's recital; Debussy's is quite different, even more delicately post-coital. The despair of 'Spleen', even in a beautiful landscape, evokes a response in Debussy's more Wagnerian vein, with highly exotic harmony at the opening after an ambiguous solo line.

**Nikolai Medtner** (1880–1951) had German ancestry and was born in Moscow. Aged twelve, he entered the Moscow Conservatory, studying there 1892–1900. On graduation he won the Artur Rubinstein Prize. He was mainly active as a composer until the 1917 October Revolution. He then taught at the Moscow Conservatory until 1921 when he moved to Berlin and then Paris. Rachmaninoff arranged a concert tour for him in the USA and Canada, and he also performed in England twice in 1928. He was made an honorary member of the Royal Academy of Music and played his second concerto at a Royal Philharmonic Society concert; he settled in England in 1936. During WW2 he suffered bad health and lived in poverty. He founded the Medtner Foundation in 1948 with the aim of recording all his works; he suffered a heart attack that year, but he managed to record his piano concertos, sonatas and various other works. While in Russia, he was seen as a member of Russia's intellectual élite and as influential as Scriabin and Rachmaninoff; Rachmaninov dedicated his Fourth Piano Concerto to Medtner. The years up to 1917 are commonly called Russia's 'Silver Age', a period when the arts, music, and philosophy thrived to an unprecedented degree, and Medtner was part of this culture – a culture which virtually disappeared after the Revolution. At this time his contemporaries noted the 'psychologically intense, demonic' character of his music. As a composer his musical style remained almost unchanged (like Glazounov, or his Moscow teacher Arensky) and yet he was seen, unusually, as both progressive and conservative. His music was often thought of as Brahmsian, but Medtner was not in fact very interested in Brahms. However, his connection with German romanticism and Schumann in particular is audible in much of his work (his great-grandfather knew Goethe). Of Medtner's 106 published songs, more than half are in Russian (mostly Pushkin) and the rest are in German (mostly Goethe). However, 'Twilight' and 'Sleeplessness' are both settings of poems by Feodor Tyutchev (1803–73), an aristocrat, diplomat, and poet, whose mother was related to both Tolstoy and Rimsky-Korsakov; he himself was a friend of Pushkin and Heine. He did not take his own poems seriously, regarding them as mere bagatelles, but his love poems have been widely read in Russia ever since Turgenev had them published. He was rediscovered by the Russian symbolists like Alexander Blok in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, who recognised the modern sense of anxiety in his work. One of Tyutchev's poems inspired a piano sonata by Medtner. 'Twilight', op. 24 no. 4 (1911), could easily have been written in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in the distinctive Russian genre of 'romans' (romance) – melodic, harmonically fairly

straightforward—but the piano postlude, in effect a cadenza, is certainly Medtner. However, this song is 'modern' in its use of varying bar-lengths (4, 5, 6, and 5 beats per bar), the ambiguous metre matching the twilight where identity itself seems to dissolve. 'Sleeplessness' op. 7 no 1 (1918-20), dedicated to his brother Karl, is one of Medtner's finest songs, particularly striking for the wordless vocalise that ends the song; Medtner went on to write two entirely wordless vocalises for voice and piano. We hear the monotonous chime of the clock at the start; the bell tolls for us.

**Nicolas Slonimsky** (1894-1995) is best known now for his 'Lexicon of Musical Invective', a collection of comically abusive reviews of works by the great composers. But he was also a conductor of contemporary music, a composer, and a prolific writer about music. Born in St Petersburg, he left Russia after the Revolution and moved to New York in 1923.

He wrote two song cycles, the *Five Advertising Songs*, and *The Gravestones at Hancock, N. H.* Slonimsky himself described the circumstances of composing the former in an interview in 1977:

*Parallel to my learning the English language from Oscar Wilde and Dickens and a little Shakespeare and, anyway, very literary and very polysyllabic sources, I was fascinated by the type of American language which found its reflection in the advertising section of newspapers, but particularly the Saturday Evening Post, which I read voraciously. I thought that those advertisements were extremely revealing of the Homo Americanus, or perhaps of our society in general. I was particularly fascinated by the advertising ... where all you had*

*to do was to use a certain type of toothpaste and then you had immediately acquired happiness and success in society and so forth. And then all kinds of ailments that could be remedied by pills. And such fascinating advertisements as "Children Cry for Castoria." ... But at that time, fifty years ago ... it was very blatant and, as I said, very appealing. I still remember the illustrations of those advertisements. An advertisement showing a bearded doctor, ... looking at a young woman and in fact pointing an accusing finger at her. And the caption was, "And then her doctor told her". So you expect the worst. Well, it turns out she had some problems with her "faulty elimination". This was the kind of language used then. So I set this particular advertisement to music, very emotional, inflated, dramatic harmonies and melodies. And then of course "Children Cry for Castoria" - that was for falsetto voice. And other things. "No More Shiny Nose" - that was another thing. And "Make This A Day of Pepsodent" and so on and so forth.*

The companies involved did not want these songs to be published in case they were accused of misleading advertising, so they only appeared in print in the late 1980s. They are not only amusing for the audience; there are markings in the music for the performers like *fecalmente*, *confidenzialmente*, and *salivando* which I invite you to spot in tonight's performance.

© Dr George Kennaway 2024; Slonimsky programme note from Dr David Settle's D.M.A. dissertation on Slonimsky, University of Oklahoma, 2001.

# Saturday 20 April

SAT 20 APRIL | 10PM  
KINO @ HAR

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## Late Night Lieder Lounge with Leeds Lieder Young Artists

### Leeds Lieder Young Artists

Join us in the Howard Assembly Room's Kino Bar for an informal late-evening session of song and poetry presented by our Leeds Lieder Young Artists. Expect everything from Schubert to Sondheim, Dvorák to Disney.



© Robert Pivko



# Benjamin Appl

Baritone

Baritone Benjamin Appl is celebrated for a voice that “belongs to the last of the old great masters of song” with “an almost infinite range of colours” (Suddeutsche Zeitung), and for performances “delivered with wit, intelligence and sophistication” (Gramophone magazine). A former BBC New Generation Artist (2014-16), Wigmore Hall Emerging Artist and ECHO Rising Star (2015-16), Benjamin was also awarded Gramophone Award Young Artist of the Year (2016). He signed exclusively to Sony Classical in the same year and has since begun a multi-album deal with Alpha Classics, releasing his first album *Winterreise* in February 2021 to enormous critical acclaim.

Appl's musical journey began as a young chorister at the renowned Regensburger Domspatzen, later continuing his studies at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater München and the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London. Mentored by the legendary artist Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Appl describes the partnership as an “invaluable and a hugely formative influence. He [Fischer-Dieskau] is an inspiration - someone who is always searching and seeking a deeper understanding of music and of life. He was a role model for how to prosper as an artist, never just delivering, but each time creating.”

An established recitalist, Appl has performed at the Ravinia, Rheingau, Schleswig Holstein, Edinburgh and Oxford International festivals; Schubertiade Schwarzenberg and at the KlavierFestival Ruhr. He has performed at major concert venues including Grand Théâtre de Genève, Festspielhaus Baden-Baden, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Konzerthaus Berlin and Vienna, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg and Musée de Louvre Paris, in addition to which he is a regular recitalist at Wigmore Hall and at Heidelberger Frühling. In equal demand as soloist on the world's most prestigious stages, he collaborates with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra/Klaus Mäkelä, NHK Symphony Orchestra/Paavo Järvi, Philadelphia Orchestra/Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Staatskapelle Dresden/Christian Thielemann, Philharmonia/Maxim Emelyanychev, Seattle Symphony/Thomas Dausgaard, Vienna Symphony/ Karina Canellakis and many others.



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Some of Appl's recent recital débuts include Carnegie Hall, San Francisco Performances, Dallas Opera, Boston Celebrity Series, New York's Park Avenue Armory (of all three Schubert song cycles), Sydney Opera House, Mozarteum Salzburg, Festival St. Denis, and three presentations of *Winterreise* by the Gran Teatre del Liceu Barcelona. A creative and innovative programmer, Benjamin seeks out diverse and enriching onstage partnerships including with pianists James Baillieu, David Fray, Alice Sara Ott, Arthur & Lucas Jussen, and Jorge Viladoms; the Armida String Quartet; accordionists Martynas Levickis and Ksenija Sidorova and lutenist Thomas Dunford.

Operatic highlights of recent seasons include his role and house debut as Harlequin (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) at Liceu Barcelona; Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*) at Opéra de Rouen and his role debut as Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*) with Classical Opera Company. In the 2023/24 season, Appl will make his role début as Zurga (*Pearl Fishers*) at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and revisits the role of Guglielmo in concert performances at Mozartfest Würzburg, Germany. A revered interpreter of early music, Benjamin enjoys regular collaborations with Les Talens Lyriques, the Gabetta Ensemble, Ensemble Masques and the Berliner Barocksolisten. Equally at home in new music, Benjamin has premiered compositions by Nico Muhly, David Lang and Matthias Pintscher, as well as enjoying a significant long-term partnership with composer György Kurtág.

This season, Appl appears in concert with Munich Philharmonic, Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, Budapest Festival Orchestra, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, City of Birmingham



Symphony Orchestra and Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne. Recital performances continue to dominate Appl's season, with appearances at Tivoli Copenhagen, London's Wigmore Hall, Oxford International Song Festival, Herkulessaal Munich, Munster, Mecklenburg Vorpommern, Potsdam, Rosey Hall Rolle, Brucknerhaus Linz and many more. Further afield, Appl tours to Mexico, giving multiple performances countrywide and makes his long-awaited return to Japan for several recitals.

Appl's growing discography includes his second album for Alpha Classics entitled 'Forbidden Fruit', about which BBC Music magazine writes "The sheer breadth and ingenuity of the programming is, well... irresistible"; an album of orchestrated Schubert Lieder with Münchner Rundfunkorchester; a collection of Hans Sommer Orchestral Songs with Rundfunk- Sinfonieorchester Berlin; an album of Schumann duets with Ann Murray (DBE), accompanied by Malcolm Martineau; and a live recording of Schubert lieder with Graham Johnson for the Wigmore Hall Live label.

His first solo album for Sony Classical, 'Heimat', was Gramophone nominated and won the prestigious Prix Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (Best Lieder Singer) at the 2017-18 Académie du Disque Lyrique Orphées d'Or. Other recent recordings include an album of Bach with Concerto Köln as well as Sibelius's *Kullervo* with the BBC Scottish Symphony and Thomas Dausgaard for Hyperion Records.

Outside the concert hall, Appl recently appeared in a new realisation of Schubert's song cycle *Winterreise* which was filmed in the Swiss Alps. Commissioned by the BBC and Swiss television station SRF, directed by John Bridcut, the film offers a unique and insightful interpretation of Schubert's epic work and was broadcast on BBC Four in 2022. In addition, he recently presented a series of programmes for BBC Radio 3 entitled 'A Singer's World' and starred in the film 'Breaking Music' which celebrates both Argentinian Tango and German Lied traditions by breaking down traditional boundaries between musical genres.

# Andrea Brown

Conductor

Conducting “with spirit and vitality - and musical integrity always at its core”, Andrea Brown has led award-winning concerts and festivals across the globe. Andrea is the Musical Director of Tippett Voices, the Exeter Festival Chorus, and Associate Conductor of The Somerset Chamber Choir and The Fourth Choir. Andrea works regularly as conductor with other choirs including the BBC Singers, North London Chorus, London Oriana Choir, Borough Chamber Choir and the Southbank Centre’s Voicelab. Recent work includes concerts in Berlin with hortus vocalis, the Czech Republic with Festa Musicale and the critically-acclaimed *Memorial* with Tippett Voices at the Barbican Centre, London. Most recently she was Conductor and Musical Director of the acclaimed *The Paradis Files*, a commission by Errollyn Wallen with the BBC Concert Orchestra and Graeae Theatre Company, with the world première and BBC Radio 3 broadcast at the Queen Elizabeth Hall and subsequent UK tour.

Andrea is the Head of Choral Conducting at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, leading and teaching on the postgraduate programmes. Recently Director of Music at Morley College, and Deputy CEO of Surrey Music Hub, Andrea is a passionate advocate for music education. She co-founded the award-winning Women Conductors and Wavelength programmes, both designed to encourage, educate and promote women within the conducting profession. An active member of the Association of British Choral Directors, Andrea chairs jury panels of choral



competitions, and holds masterclasses for choirs and conductors in the UK and across the globe. Andrea was the Artistic Director of Various Voices, an international choral festival involving 60+ international choirs performing at the Southbank Centre which was awarded the Inspire mark from the London 2012 Olympics Committee.

As both soloist and consort singer Andrea has performed and recorded at some of the finest concerts-halls around the world with a range of top-class ensembles, including the Academy of Ancient Music, Gabrieli Consort, Chapelle du Roi, Ex Cathedra and Coro Cervantes. Operatic performances include Théâtre du Chatelet, Shakespeare’s Globe, Split International Festival, Spitalfields Festival, Utrecht Early Music Festival and the BBC Proms.

Andrea is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music in recognition of significant contribution to the field of Choral Music.

# Harriet Burns

Soprano

British soprano Harriet Burns is fast developing a reputation as a “polished, witty, expressive and sweet-toned” (The Times) performer both in recital and on stage. An acclaimed interpreter of song, Harriet has performed at the Wigmore Hall, Philharmonie Luxembourg, Oxford International Song Festival, Leeds Lieder Festival, International Lied Festival Zeist, Ryedale Festival and de Singel with pianists including James Baillieu, Imogen Cooper, Christopher Glynn, Graham Johnson, Sholto Kynoch, Malcolm Martineau, Joseph Middleton, Ian Tindale and Michael Pandya. With her regular duo-partner, Ian Tindale, she released an album of Schubert Lieder *'Love's Lasting Power'* to critical acclaim with Delphian Records in January 2024.

On the operatic stage, recent roles include *King Harald's Saga* (Judith Weir) for Waterperry Opera, Sifare (cover, *Mitridate, re di Ponto*, Mozart) and Oriana (cover, *Amadigi*, Handel) for Garsington Opera, Sister Grace (*The Angel Esmeralda*, Liam Paterson), Nerina (*La Fedeltà premiata*, Haydn), and Aminta (*Aminta e Fillide*, Handel) with Guildhall Opera. In concert, she has sung Thea Musgrave's *Songs for a Winter's Evening* with the Southbank Sinfonia and Gabriella Teychenné, Bach's *Magnificat* and Vivaldi's *Dixit Dominus* with Nicholas McGegan and the Royal Northern Sinfonia at Sage Gateshead, Strauss's *Four Last Songs* with the Oxford Millennium Orchestra, and Handel's *Messiah* with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, and the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra.



Harriet is a laureate of numerous international competitions. Successes include 2<sup>nd</sup> prize and German Lied Award at 2022 Concours Musical International de Montréal (Art Song division) where she also won a Vocal Residency at McGill and Montréal Universities. In 2019, she was awarded 2<sup>nd</sup> prize at the Wigmore Hall/Independent Opera International Song Competition, the Compulsory Song Prize and Recital Prize at the International Vocal Competition in 's-Hertogenbosch and 1<sup>st</sup> prize at the Maureen Lehane Vocal Awards at the Wigmore Hall. She is proud to be a City Music Foundation Artist, Samling Institute Artist, Oxford Lieder Young Artist and a Britten-Pears Young Artist. Harriet was a member of the Guildhall Opera School where she graduated with Distinction on the Artist Diploma programme and was elected as an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music in 2023.

# Tansy Davies

Composer

Tansy Davies (b. 1973) characterises the role of the solo saxophone in her 2004 work *Iris* as that of 'a shaman, or one who walks between worlds'. In doing so she also describes herself - a musician whose boundary-breaking curiosity makes her a truly distinctive voice. With a background as a horn player, electric guitarist and vocalist, Davies studied composition with Simon Bainbridge at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama and with Simon Holt at Royal Holloway. In 2004 Davies's *neon*, a gritty collage of twisted modernist funk written for the Composers Ensemble, quickly became her calling card and continues to be performed internationally.

The recipient of a 2009 Paul Hamlyn Award, Davies has written works for numerous world-class orchestras, including *Tilting* (2005) for the London Symphony Orchestra and *Wild Card*, premièred by the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the 2010 Proms. Her music has been championed internationally by ensembles including the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Orkest de Ereprijs, Ensemble intercontemporain, the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, and The Israel Contemporary Players, and at festivals including MaerzMusik, Leeds Lieder, Ultima, Présences, and Warsaw Autumn.

Brilliantly imaginative and often gloriously offbeat, Davies's work has taken its inspiration from sources as diverse as the architecture of Zaha Hadid (the 2004 trumpet concerto *Spiral House*), the work of Anselm Kiefer (*Falling Angel*), and the photography of Claude Cahun (2021's *Monolith: I Extend My Arms* for Britten Sinfonia). Davies's long fascination with the music of the Troubadours finds expression in her *Song of Pure Nothingness* and *Troubairitz*, the 2010 song cycle for soprano and percussion that gave its name to a portrait disc on Nonclassical.

In 2011, Davies's anthem *Christmas Eve* was performed at the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols in King's College, Cambridge and broadcast worldwide. As *With Voices and With Tears* - a setting of Walt Whitman for choir, string orchestra and electronics - was nominated for a 2011 South Bank Show Sky Arts Award. Davies's collaboration with Norwegian choreographer Ingun Bjørnsgaard



© Chelsey Browne

and composer Rolf Wallin, *Omega and the Deer*, premiered at the 2011 Oslo International Dance Festival. 2012 saw the première of a concerto for piano and ensemble, *Nature*, by Huw Watkins and the BCMG under Oliver Knussen, as well as the release of 'Spine', an all-Davies disc on the NMC label.

Davies's critically acclaimed début opera *Between Worlds* - a bold and highly individual response to the events of 9/11 to a libretto by Nick Drake - was premièred by English National Opera in 2015 in a production by Deborah Warner. It was later awarded the 2016 British Composer Award for Stage Work. *Re-greening* for large singing orchestra was premièred at Snape Maltings, Aldeburgh, by the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, who later performed the work at the 2015 BBC Proms. *Forest*, a concerto for four horns and orchestra, co-commissioned by the New York Philharmonic, Philharmonia Orchestra and the Warsaw Autumn Festival, was premièred in February 2017. In 2018 chamber opera *Cave*, commissioned by the Royal Opera House, was premièred by Mark Padmore, Elaine Mitchener, and the London Sinfonietta.

Davies has taught at the Royal Academy of Music, London, and was Associate Professor of Composition at the Jacobs School of Music, Bloomington, Indiana. Recent projects include *Plumes* (2019) for Royal Northern Sinfonia and *Soul Canoe* for Askø|Schönberg - the latter commissioned as part of a season-long residency at Amsterdam's Concertgebouw in 2018/19. In 2022 Davies composed *Stone Codes* for percussionist Konstantyn Napolov and the Orkest de Ereprijs for November Music. Future projects include a new work for Askø|Schönberg, premièring April 2024.

# Christopher Glynn

Piano

Christopher is a Grammy award-winning pianist and one of the UK's best-known collaborative pianists and chamber musicians. He performs with leading singers, instrumentalists and ensembles throughout the world and has made many acclaimed recordings. He is also Artistic Director of the award-winning Ryedale Festival, where he programmes around 60 events each year in beautiful and historic venues across North Yorkshire.

Praised for his 'breathtaking sensitivity' (Gramophone), 'irrepressible energy, wit and finesse' (The Guardian) and 'revelatory performances' (BBC Music Magazine), Christopher has appeared in recital with many leading artists, including Sir Thomas Allen, John Mark Ainsley, Benjamin Appl, Julian Bliss, Claire Booth, Ian Bostridge, Adrian Brendel, Allan Clayton, Dame Sarah Connolly, Joshua Ellicott, Bernarda Fink, Dame Emma Kirkby, Steven Isserlis, Anthony Rolfe Johnson, Christiane Karg, Jonas Kaufmann, Dame Felicity Lott, Christopher Maltman, Mark Padmore, Ian Partridge, Rowan Pierce, Rachel Podger, Joan Rodgers, Kate Royal, Kathryn Rudge, Nicky Spence, Toby Spence, Michael Spyres, Sir Bryn Terfel, Sir John Tomlinson, Robin Tritschler, Ailish Tynan, Roderick Williams and many others.

Christopher grew up in Leicester, read music at New College, Oxford, and studied piano with John Streets and Malcolm Martineau.



© Gerard Collett

He was awarded the accompaniment prize in the 2001 Kathleen Ferrier competition, the 2002 Geoffrey Parsons Award and the 2003 Gerald Moore Award. Christopher has performed in major concert venues throughout Europe and North America, and as far afield as Japan, China, Brazil and South Asia. In 2021 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music, where he also teaches.

Recognised by The Times as a 'visionary' and 'inspired programmer', Christopher has devised and curated projects for the Wigmore Hall and several international festivals. In 2015, he founded Polyhymnia to bring classical song to a wider audience, initially by commissioning Jeremy Sams to create new English versions of song cycles by Schubert, Schumann, Brahms and Wolf, which have been performed widely and recorded for Signum Records.

# Joseph Middleton

Piano

Pianist Joseph Middleton specialises in the art of song accompaniment and chamber music and has been internationally acclaimed within this field. Described in the BBC Music Magazine as “one of the brightest stars in the world of song and Lieder”, he has also been labelled “the cream of the new generation” by The Times and “a perfect accompanist” by Opera Now.

Joseph enjoys fruitful partnerships with internationally established singers including Sir Thomas Allen, Louise Alder, Mary Bevan, Ian Bostridge, Allan Clayton, Dame Sarah Connolly, Marianne Crebassa, Iestyn Davies, Fatma Said, Samuel Hasselhorn, Christiane Karg, Katarina Karnéus, Angelika Kirchsclager, Dame Felicity Lott, Christopher Maltman, John Mark Ainsley, Ann Murray, James Newby, Mark Padmore, Mauro Peter, Miah Persson, Carolyn Sampson, and Roderick Williams. He collaborates with rising stars from the younger generation and regularly programmes his own series for BBC Radio 3.

Recent seasons have taken him to London’s Wigmore Hall, Royal Opera House and Royal Festival Hall, the Vienna Konzerthaus and Musikverein, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Palau de Musica, Amsterdam Concertgebouw and Muziekgebouw, Köln Philharmonie, Strasbourg, Frankfurt, Lille and Gothenburg Opera Houses, Berlin Boulez Saal, Paris Musée d’Orsay, Zürich Tonhalle, deSingel Antwerp, Luxembourg Philharmonie, Bozar Brussels, Tokyo’s Oji Hall and New York’s Alice Tully Hall. He regularly appears at festivals in Aix-en-Provence, Aldeburgh, Edinburgh, Munich, Schubertiade Schwarzenberg, Vilarbertran and Hohenems, Stuttgart, Heidelberger Frühling, Frankfurt, Ravinia, Japan, San Francisco, Toronto and Vancouver as well as the BBC Proms. His fast-growing discography on Harmonia Mundi, BIS, Chandos and Signum Records have won him a Diapason D’or, Edison Award, Prix Caecilia as well as numerous Gramophone and BBC Music Magazine Award nominations.



In 2023/24 he returns to the Life Victoria Festival Barcelona with Miah Persson and Dame Sarah Connolly where he was last season’s artist in residence. Further appearances with Dame Sarah Connolly include performances in Seville, Amsterdam, and at the Wigmore Hall. He joins Sir Simon Keenlyside in Cambridge; Louise Alder in Vienna and London; Fatma Said in Vienna, Dortmund, Amsterdam, and at London’s Barbican Centre; Carolyn Sampson in Amsterdam, Zeist, and London; and Katharina Konradi at the Schubertiade in Schwarzenberg, Vilarbertran and at the Wigmore Hall where he also partners Iestyn Davies, Nicky Spence, Mary Bevan, James Newby, Ashley Riches, and Ruby Hughes.

Joseph Middleton is Director of Leeds Lieder, Musician in Residence at, and a Bye-Fellow of Pembroke College Cambridge and a Professor and Fellow at his alma mater, the Royal Academy of Music. He was the recipient of the Royal Philharmonic Society’s Young Artist of the Year Award in 2017.

# Ema Nikolovska

Mezzo-soprano

Born in North Macedonia, Mezzo-soprano Ema Nikolovska grew up in Toronto where she studied violin at The Glenn Gould School, before studying voice with Helga Tucker. She received her Master's in Voice at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London, where she also completed the Opera Course. Ema was a BBC New Generation Artist from 2019-22. In 2019 she won first prize at the International Vocal Competition in 's-Hertogenbosch, the Ferrier Loveday Song Prize (Kathleen Ferrier Awards), and was a prize-winner at the Young Classical Artists Trust (YCAT) International Auditions. In 2022 she became a recipient of the prestigious Borletti-Buitoni Trust award.

In the 2022/23 season opera appearances included her role début as Octavian (*Der Rosenkavalier*) at the Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin. An alumnus of their International Opera Studio, her roles in Berlin have included Lucile in Henze's *Cubana*, Christian Jost's *Die Arabische Nacht*, Second Lady (*Die Zauberflöte*), Schäferin (*Jenůfa*), Giovanna (*Rigoletto*) and Diane in Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie* conducted by Sir Simon Rattle. This season she makes her debut with the Canadian Opera Company as Fox in Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen*, and sings the Woman in George Benjamin's new opera *Picture a Day Like This*, at The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden's Linbury Theatre.

On the concert platform, recent highlights include Mozart's *Coronation Mass* with Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg and Roberto González-Monjas at the Salzburg Festival, Schumann's *Das Paradies und die Peri* and Mozart's *Requiem* with the Staatskapelle Berlin and Marc Minkowski, Jaquet de la Guerre's *Céphale et Procris* on tour with Reinoud van Mechelen and *Nocte Temporis* in Versailles, Namur and Brussels, Mendelssohn's



© Kaupo Kikkas

*Elijah* with the Munchener Rundfunkorchester and Howard Arman, Mozart's *Requiem* with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Adrian Partington, Stravinsky's *Pulcinella* with Musikkollegium Winterthur and Barbara Hannigan, and Ravel's *Chansons Madecasses* with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra and George Benjamin.

2023/24 concerts include Stravinsky's *Les Noces* with Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal and Kent Nagano, Vivier's *Wo du Bist du Licht* with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France and Barbara Hannigan, Scriabin's Symphony No. 1 with The Danish National Symphony Orchestra and Fabio Luisi, Mozart's *Mass in C Minor* with the Munich Philharmonic and Mendelssohn's *Elijah* on tour with Pygmalion both with Raphaël Pichon.

A celebrated recitalist, this season Ema embarks on a solo recital tour of North America, including her début at Carnegie's Weill Hall. Elsewhere, Ema has performed at the Pierre Boulez Saal, Konzerthaus Berlin, the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, London's Wigmore Hall, and at the Schubertfada Vilabertran, Verbier, Gstaad, Aldeburgh, Leeds Lieder and Toronto Summer Music Festivals, collaborating with Malcolm Martineau, Wolfram Rieger, Andras Schiff, Graham Johnson and Joseph Middleton, among others.



# Nick Pritchard

Tenor

Tenor Nick Pritchard is gaining fast recognition for his performances of the music of Bach and in particular his interpretation of the Evangelist in the *Passions*. Described as a 'Masterly Evangelist' in *The Guardian*, he has sung the role in Bach's *St John* and *Matthew Passions* around the world, including with St Paul Chamber Orchestra in Minnesota and his recording of the *St John Passion* (Evangelist) for Deutsche Grammophon with Sir John Elliot Gardiner was nominated for a Grammy Award for best Choral Performance (2023). Recent performances of the piece include those with the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra at the Concertgebouw under Jonathan Cohen, for the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Polyphony and Antwerp Symphony Orchestra.

On the concert platform he has performed with Ensemble Pygmalion, Concerto Köln, Les Talens Lyriques, Les Violons du Roy, L'Orchestre du Chambre de Paris, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, English Concert, Early Opera Company, Philharmonia Orchestra, The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Gabrieli Consort, the Monteverdi Choir and Orchestra, Early Opera Company and he made his BBC Proms debut with Britten Sinfonia under David Bates performing Mozart's *Requiem*.

He has performed under conductors including Harry Bicket, John Butt, Laurence Cummings, Jonathan Cohen, Christian Curnyn, Maxim Emelyanychev, Adam Fischer, Emmanuelle Haïm, Simon Halsey, George Petrou, Raphaël Pichon, Christophe Rousset, Sir Andrés Schiff and Ryan Wigglesworth. A fine actor and equally at home on the operatic stage, roles have included Oronte (*Alcina*) in a new Tim Albery production for Opera North, Lysander (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) as part of the Aldeburgh Festival's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*) for Glyndebourne on Tour and for Irish National Opera and Peter Whelan, Prologue (*The Turn of the Screw*) and Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*) for Opera Holland Park, Amphinomus (*The Return of Ulysses*) for the Royal Opera House, Purcell's *The Indian Queen* for the Opéra de Lille, Théâtre de Caen, Opera Vlaanderen and Grand Theatre Luxembourg all



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under Emmanuelle Haïm as well as Albert (*Albert Herring*), John/Angel 3 (*Written on Skin*), Colonel Fairfax (*The Yeomen of the Guard*), Acis (*Acis and Galatea*) and the title role in *Candide*. A regular performer of new music he has also given several world premières, including creating the role of Matthew in Mark Simpson's opera *Pleasure* (Opera North, Aldeburgh and The Royal Opera House).

In August 2023 Nick gave his Edinburgh International Festival recital début with pianist Ian Tindale which was broadcast on BBC Radio 3 including works by Gabriel Fauré, Francis Poulenc and Benjamin Britten. He has also given recitals with Gary Matthewman, James Bailieu, Simon Lepper, Sholto Kynoch, Christopher Glynn, Graham Johnson and Malcolm Martineau at Wigmore Hall, Oxford International Song Festival, Leeds Lieder Festival, Ryedale Festival, Lammermuir Festival and Two Moors Festivals.

The 2023/24 season highlights include a US tour of Handel's *L'allegro, il penseroso ed il moderato* and Bach's Mass in B Minor with Monteverdi Choir and Orchestra with two performances at Carnegie Hall, New York, performances with Early Opera Company, Les Talens Lyrique Lully's *Atys* at l'Opera Royal de Versailles and at the Vienna Konzerthaus, Evangelist with Irish Baroque under Peter Whelan, Residentie Orkest under Richard Egarr and Stavanger Symfoniorkester under Masato Suzuki, George Benjamin's *Written on Skin* (John/Angel 3) with the Finnish Radio Symphony conducted by the composer, *Messiah* with the Academy of Ancient Music and the Flemish Radio Choir and Britten *St Nicolas* at the Aldeburgh Festival.

# Kate Wakeling

Poet and reader

Described by the Guardian as “a poet to watch, her work an April rainbow of freshness and surprise,” Kate Wakeling is a writer and musicologist. Her poetry has been commended in the Forward Prizes and featured in Poetry Review, the Guardian, Magma, The Rialto, Stand Magazine, Oxford Poetry and on BBC Radio 3. A pamphlet of her poetry, *The Rainbow Faults*, is published by The Rialto.

Kate's début poetry collection for children, *Moon Juice*, won the 2017 CLIPPA and was nominated for the Carnegie Medal. Her second collection, *Cloud Soup*, was shortlisted for the 2022 CLIPPA and selected as a Book of the Month in the Guardian and Scotsman.

Kate is writer-in-residence with Aurora Orchestra and her scripts for Aurora, the BBC Symphony Orchestra and BBC Concert Orchestra have been performed widely, including at Southbank Centre, the Barbican, LSO St Luke's, Snape Maltings and the Melbourne Festival. Her poetry has been set by composer Cheryl Frances-Hoad



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in the acclaimed song cycle *everything grows extravagantly*, by Cecilia McDowall in the cantata *The Ice is Listening*, and by Christopher Fox in *The air is just desire*, a response to Schoenberg's String Quartet No. 2 which premiered at the 2022 Dartington Festival.

Kate studied Music at Cambridge University and holds a PhD in Balinese gamelan from SOAS. She writes for the Times Literary Supplement and BBC Music Magazine.

# Alexander Woodrow

Organ

Alexander Woodrow is the Organist and Director of Music at Leeds Minster, where he oversees the work of the Music Department in resourcing three choral services and an organ concert every week. He is the Director of Music of the St Peter's Singers of Leeds, and also works as the Director of Music of The Huddersfield Singers and as Accompanist to the Yorkshire Philharmonic Choir.

Following initial positions at Guildford Cathedral, St Albans Cathedral and Hexham Abbey, Alex was for almost five years the Organist and Director of Music at Bradford Cathedral, where he served as the youngest cathedral organist in the country. He later moved to Solihull School as the Head of Choral Music, freelancing widely in the Midlands for a period, before making a return to West Yorkshire.

Alex read music as Organ Scholar at Magdalene College, Cambridge, studying with Anne Page. He became a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists at the age of 19, winning first prizes in all categories, including the Limpus Prize.



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He is also a Fellow of Trinity College London and a recipient of the Silver Medal of the Worshipful Company of Musicians. Alex has regularly broadcast on BBC Radio and Television, most recently directing the Choir of Leeds Minster for the live BBC One Easter Day Eucharist in April 2022.

Solo organ recitals have taken him to many of the major churches and cathedrals of the UK, including York Minster, St John's and King's Colleges, Cambridge, and Westminster Abbey, and he continues to play recitals across the country.

# 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> 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 70<sup>th</sup> 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 début 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 début 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 (*Hänsel 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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The Friends of Leeds Lieder are the heart of the Festival. Without their financial support - membership subscriptions, donations and Gift Aid - we simply would not be able to fill the City with song. Their ambassadorship is equally valuable, helping to spread the word about Leeds Lieder and spurring us on to even greater things, and we thank them enormously for their ongoing support.

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](http://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](mailto:info@leedslieder.org.uk) to request a form, or pick one up during the Festival.

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