

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

# Sunday 21st April

FILLING THE CITY WITH SONG  
LEEDS LIEDER FESTIVAL  
2024

## ON WINGS *of* SONG

LEEDS LIEDER 20<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY FESTIVAL



Howard  
Assembly  
Room



LEEDS  
CONSERVATOIRE



Leeds  
Minster



H  
B  
C  
P



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

TODAY

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.

# Sunday 21 April

SUN 21 APRIL | 1PM  
THE VENUE, LEEDS CONSERVATOIRE

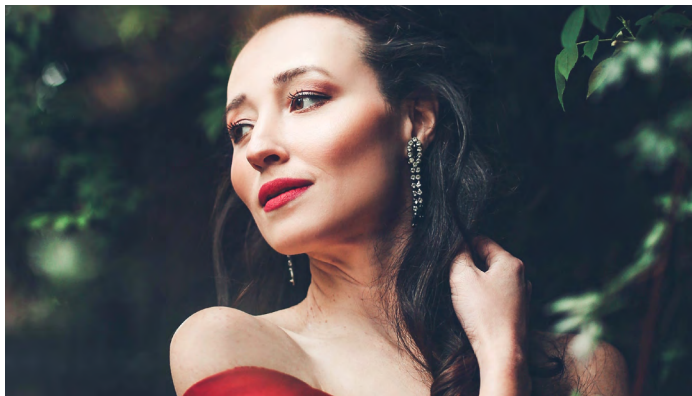
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## Lunchtime Recital: Fleur Barron and Joseph Middleton

**Fleur Barron** mezzo-soprano  
**Joseph Middleton** piano

Hailed as “a knockout performer” by The Times, Singaporean-British mezzo-soprano Fleur Barron makes a highly-anticipated return to Leeds Lieder.

Known for her boundary-breaking programmes and for her ability to juxtapose core Lied repertoire with music from the non German/Austrian canon, today’s Spanish-themed programme is designed as a homage to Victoria de los Ángeles.



© Victoria Cadisch



### PROGRAMME

#### XAVIER MONTSALVATGE

*Cinco canciones negras*  
Cuba dentro de un piano  
Punto de Habanera  
Chévere  
Canción de cuna para dormir a un negrito  
Canto negro

#### JOHANNES BRAHMS

*Volkslieder*  
Jungfräulein, soll ich mit euch gehn  
Des Liebsten Schwur  
Der Gang zum Liebchen  
In stiller Nacht  
Vergebliches Ständchen  
Die Sonne scheint nicht mehr  
Ich stand auf hohem Berge  
Feinsliebchen, du sollst  
Da unten im Tale

#### MANUEL DE FALLA

*Siete canciones populares españolas*  
El paño moruno  
Seguidilla murciana  
Asturiana  
Jota  
Nana  
Canción  
Polo

# Programme notes

**Xavier Montsalvatge** (1912–92) studied at the Barcelona Conservatory. He worked in Barcelona as a conservatory teacher and music critic. His *Three Impromptus* for piano won a prize and he soon became the leading Catalan composer. He composed in a range of styles and genres including orchestral pieces, operas, and ballets, but he is known now for his *Cinco Canciones Negras* of 1945–46; he also orchestrated these songs in 1949 and arranged three of them for choir. After the Spanish Civil War, Montsalvatge turned his attention towards the Caribbean for his first venture into vocal music. Each song interprets the Black experience in its own way, but there are elements in common. All five poems address themes of identity, which Montsalvatge articulates through a musical style known as *antillanismo* (referring to the culture of the Greater Antilles) combining Cuban dance rhythms, Spanish vocal styles, and indigenous Afro-Cuban musical forms, and using humour and melancholy. His music connects Catalan folklore to the rhythms and timbres typical of the period of Spanish colonization of territories like Cuba. 'Cuba dentro de un piano' sets a surrealist poem by Rafael Alberti which laments the influence of the USA on Central America, using the *habanera* dance to evoke a lost culture. This style continues in 'Punto de habanera', 'a humorous flirtation à la 18<sup>th</sup> century', with references to the Cuban *guajira* rhythm (2 triplets + 3 duplets; this rhythm was itself known in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as the *punto de la Habana*), heard at the start to illustrate the young Creole girl. 'Chévere' describes a young black man who brandishes a knife, audible in the piano's violent chords; the poet Nicolás Guillén was a revolutionary activist in Cuba who wrote poems in the language of the Cuban poor. 'Canción de cuna para dormir a un negrito' uses a *habanera* rhythm to create a lullaby. This song was written first and performed with great success, which then suggested to Montsalvatge the idea of a set of songs. 'Canto negro' sets another poem by Guillén in music full of African rhythms, Yoruba words and syncopated dance rhythms.

Interest in folk music in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Germany was stimulated by a belief in the wisdom of the common people. Bringing together German folk songs from different regions was part of the creation of a German national identity—similar projects took place in many other European countries.

**Johannes Brahms** (1833–97) published seven small volumes of folk song arrangements in 1894

but did not give them an opus number because he did not see himself as the composer. He said, 'It is the first time that I regard with tenderness that, which I have produced.' Brahms left the melodies intact, but the added harmonies, rhythms, and interwoven melodies put these songs in the vague area between 'pure' folk music (always an illusion) and 'art' music. His musical ideal in vocal music remained the simple German folk song with one general mood, subtly varied in response to the meaning of the text. Most of tonight's songs come from the collection, but he had also published other folk songs: 'Der Gang zum Liebchen' and 'Des Liebsten Schwur' are Bohemian songs from his Op. 48 and 69, and 'Vergebliches Ständchen' from his Op. 84 is from the lower Rhine. Some of these songs are disarmingly simple, like 'Die Sonne scheint nicht mehr', but there are also places where the more rhythmically complex Brahms appears—try, for example, to work out where the main beats fall in 'In Stiller Nacht' (without distracting your neighbour!).

**Manuel De Falla** (1876–1946) was born in Cadiz; his family moved to Madrid in 1896. He won a national composition context with his opera *La vida breve*, but performances in Spain could not be arranged so he toured Europe with a mime troupe and then moved to Paris in 1907. There was much interest in Spanish music there – Debussy's *Iberia* and Ravel's *Rhapsodie espagnole* and his opera *L'heure espagnole* were written around this time, and the Spanish pianist Ricardo Viñes was performing French and Spanish composers. When Paul Dukas was shown a score of *La vida breve* he helped introduce Falla to other Parisian musicians, and he remained in Paris until 1914. He wrote the *Siete canciones populares españolas* there just before leaving, and the première was the following year in Madrid. Like many other composers who used 'folk' material, Falla adapts this and in 'Jota' even creates his own; Janáček likewise hardly ever used genuine Moravian melodies but was able convincingly to compose in that idiom. All the texts deal with love or the process of courtship. 'El paño moruno' is a song from Murcia—Falla later re-used the opening bass line to represent the Murcian miller in his ballet *The Three-Cornered Hat*. In the closing section of the first strophe, the descending melody describes a stain that reduces the value of the cloth. 'Seguidilla murciana', also Murcian, is a dance-song in a quick triple time which gives advice but also criticism. The sad *asturiana* comes from the Asturias in the north of Spain. Falla took



the melody and text from this popular Asturian air, but his own accompaniment reshapes the piece. The *jota* is a popular dance form from Aragón; here Falla creates a dramatic rhythmic introduction before giving way to the voice. 'Nana' is an Andalusian cradle song that Falla first heard from his mother. 'Canción' begins with a light-hearted lilt, but the melody (widely known throughout Spain) takes an anguishing bend on 'madre.' 'Polo', the most energetic of all these songs, also uses an Andalusian melody and takes the form of a *cante jondo*, a *flamenco* genre believed by Falla to be the only one preserved unspoiled since antiquity. It uses violent guitar-like strumming to accompany the singer's love-related despair. The rapidly repeated notes evoke *zapateado*, a Spanish dance involving the stamping of the dancers' shoes.

George Kennaway

# Sunday 21 April

SUN 21 APRIL | 2:30PM  
THE VENUE, LEEDS CONSERVATOIRE

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## Film Screening: *Sense ficció - Brava, Victoria!*

To celebrate the centenary of the great Victoria de los Ángeles, we are thrilled to have secured the UK screening début of her documentary, *Sense ficció - Brava, Victoria!* Thanks to our partners in Barcelona at the LIFE Victoria Festival we are fortunate to be able to present this extraordinary documentary made up mainly of film footage captured by Victoria herself during her many tours around the globe. This is a fascinating snapshot of an operatic and recital career few have achieved and a heartwarming exploration of one of the warmest artists to perform in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

To accompany and inform this screening, a small exhibition of artefacts relating to the singer and her life will be available for viewing in the Rooftop Bar.





# Sunday 21 April

SUN 21 APRIL | 5PM  
THE VENUE, LEEDS CONSERVATOIRE

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## Young Artists Finale Concert

### Leeds Lieder Young Artists

This gala performance presents a culmination of the work and study undertaken by the Leeds Lieder Young Artists over the Festival week. Having participated in masterclasses, a creative new song-writing project, study events and having benefited from watching many established artists in recital, the audience will see the fruits of their labours as the Young Artists present their favourite songs from the week.



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# Sunday 21 April

SUN 21 APRIL | 7:30PM  
THE VENUE, LEEDS CONSERVATOIRE

## Closing Recital: Benjamin Appl and Sholto Kynoch - The Sound of Silence

*In memory of Jane Anthony*

**Benjamin Appl** baritone  
**Sholto Kynoch** piano

Benjamin Appl is well-established as one of the most exciting song artists of today. A former BBC New Generation Artist, a Rising Star of the European Concert Hall Organisation (ECHO) and prolific and award-winning recording artist, he appears at all the major music centres.

In a typically thoughtful programme, Benjamin Appl and Sholto Kynoch, Director of Oxford International Song Festival, perform a recital that explores the silences between the notes. A centrepiece of Schumann's *Liederkreis Op. 39* with evocative poetry by Eichendorff is complemented with songs by Schubert, Monteverdi, Wolf and James MacMillan.

A perfect way to close the Leeds Lieder 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Festival!

As our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Festival draws to a close, we celebrate with gratitude the Founder of Leeds Lieder, Jane Anthony, who died tragically early of thyroid cancer, aged just 62, in November 2014. Born and raised in Leeds, Jane was an inspirational musician, both as a professional singer and teacher. She was Head of Vocal Studies at the then Leeds College of Music as well as being a regular member of the Chorus of Opera North for 20 years. In 2004, Jane's passion for song inspired her to gather a group of similarly enthusiastic friends around her to found Leeds Lieder. Jane's mantra was 'We must be brave!' and undeterred by the lack of money in the bank, the inaugural Festival followed in October 2005 to great critical acclaim, together with a programme of education projects in schools. Captivated by Jane's vision and commitment, some of the world's finest artists came to Leeds as recitalists and as guest Artistic Directors for each Festival. No longer did song lovers have to travel to London to experience world-class performances. Since then, Leeds Lieder has grown ever more successful, now lasting nine days. When Jane's life was cut tragically short, Joseph Middleton was appointed as our first permanent Director. She would have been the first to salute his magnificent achievements to date and proud - possibly even surprised! - to see the stellar position Leeds Lieder now occupies on the national and international music scene.

Kathleen Evans, Chair, Leeds Lieder



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### PROGRAMME

#### GREGORIANISCHER CHORAL

Domine, exaudi

#### FRANZ SCHUBERT

Der Tod und das Mädchen

#### CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI

Tu se' morta

#### FRANZ SCHUBERT

Ins stille Land

#### GOTTFRIED HEINRICH STÖLZEL

Bist du bei mir

#### FRANZ SCHUBERT

Meeres Stille

#### ROBERT SCHUMANN

*Liederkreis Op. 39 (Eichendorff)*

In der Fremde • Intermezzo • Waldesgespräch •

Die Stille • Mondnacht • Schöne Fremde •

Auf einer Burg • In der Fremde • Wehmut •

Zwielicht • Im Walde • Frühlingsnacht

### Interval

#### FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY

Andante Espressivo

#### HUGO WOLF

Wir haben beide lange Zeit geschwiegen

#### FRANZ SCHUBERT

Der Einsame

#### HUGO WOLF

Begegnung

Verschwiegene Liebe

Schlafendes Jesuskind

#### FRANZ SCHUBERT

An die Laute

#### CHARLES IVES

The Circus Band

Memories A and B

#### FRANZ SCHUBERT

Der Doppelgänger

#### JAMES MACMILLAN

The Children

#### RICHARD STRAUSS

Morgen!

# Programme notes

The Romantics understood that silence was needed in order to allow one's inner voice to speak most clearly, in thought or prayer. This evening's recital therefore begins with the timeless words of the Domine, exaudi, imploring that the Lord would not turn his face from us in our time of trouble, but would hear us. The text, in which our speaker narrates their extraordinary suffering, is from the opening of Psalm 102, a penitential psalm for the confession of sin.

We move swiftly into Schubert's dramatic dialogue 'Death and the Maiden', composed in February 1817, a text by the deeply devout North German poet Matthias Claudius. A wordless funeral march opens the song, before the terrified, distressed maiden begs death to pass her by; he responds, in the same sonorous, measured tones which opened the song, that he is her friend, and her death will be gentle. While sin is not explicitly evoked, we cannot help but wonder why the maiden fears death. Famously, Schubert recycled death's music for the Theme and Variations movement of his String Quartet No. 14 later, in 1824.

In this recital, the maiden's death is mourned by none other than Orfeo, in the lament 'Tu se' morta' from Monteverdi's eponymous opera from over two centuries earlier. This devastating lament is the expressive climax of the opera, its harmonies tacking wildly, searching fruitlessly for reason or consolation. After three centuries of silence, the opera experienced a revival in the early twentieth century, its first performance in Britain given by the Oxford University Operatic Society in 1925. The aria is characterised by Monteverdi's use of the innovative Florentine mode, in which the text is of paramount importance, shaping the music.

The mood continues bleak with Schubert's rarely heard 'Ins stille Land', a setting of a text by the Swiss poet Johann Gaudenz von Salis-Seewis to which the composer returned four times. The utterly simple, folk-like music evokes a strummed instrument, as the singer asks who will lead us to the easeful land of death, the reward of a faithful life. This is not the terror of the maiden confronted with a premature death, but the resignation of those who are weary and long for rest. The gently rocking music lulls us into oblivion. And truly, there is comfort in facing death bravely and in faith, as the beautiful melody of 'Bist du bei mir' tells us; again, the gentle triple time, with hints of a decorous dance, suggests that one can depart life with dignity and resignation, if the Lord will close the dying eyes. Although associated with

Bach, this famous piece is an aria from Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel's 1718 opera *Diomedes*, however an arrangement for voice and continuo was copied into a notebook by Anna Magdalena Bach, J.S. Bach's wife. The aria, now often heard at weddings, was also silent for many years, re-entering the repertoire only during the twentieth century; it is likely that its association with Bach (rather than Stölzel) predisposed listeners to hear its beauties.


Silence is not always equated with resignation and peace, as Schubert's eerie setting of Goethe's 'Meeresstille' reveals. The poem itself dates from 1787 when Goethe was on his Italian journey, travelling from Messina to Naples. The resultant music is a metaphor of stasis, with its almost robotic octosyllabic lines supported by the most skeletal of accompaniments, which trace an unstable harmonic progression without getting anywhere. The comfort of God and faith and are now far distant, as the boatman gazes at the untroubled but deadly expanse of water around him. Beethoven, who set the same words for chorus, added the happy ending, the 'Glückliche Fahrt' which Goethe insisted always be printed alongside 'Meeresstille'; the boy Schubert, in 1815, chose to leave his ship becalmed and isolated. The words of 'Meeresstille' introduce a new aspect of silence to this recital, namely isolation in nature.

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## LIEDERKREIS

### Schumann / Eichendorff

By April 1840, Schumann had already composed *Myrthen* and the Heine *Liederkreis*. Song was pouring out of him at a rate unprecedented in the history of the Lied: the year was to yield no fewer than 138 Lieder. He was in love with Clara Wieck, and despite her father's opposition to their proposed marriage, he continued to express his love through letters, songs and at their all too infrequent meetings. One such took place in early April, when he spent a fortnight in Clara's company at her mother's house in Berlin. There they met Mendelssohn who not only sang some of Schumann's songs to Clara's accompaniment, but also enthused about the poetry of his friend Joseph von Eichendorff, whose poetry he had already set several times. When Schumann returned alone to Leipzig, he began composing the *Liederkreis* Op. 39, to poems by Eichendorff; at the same time he dashed off a flurry of letters to Clara that speak volumes about his excitement at the



new work and her involvement in its creation. For although the Eichendorff *Liederkreis* is Schumann's only cycle to bear no dedication on the title-page, it is clear that Clara was the inspiration behind this outpouring. Three letters in particular depict his mood. On May 15 he writes:

I have been composing so much again that sometimes it seems quite uncanny. Ah, I can't help it, I want to sing myself to death like a nightingale. There are 12 Eichendorff songs.

Four days later, on May 19, he writes of his longing:

Come as soon as you can, so that we might go for walks together; I seldom go out. To walk alone without you makes me so sad.

And on May 22, he writes a letter that lurches between despair, outrage, pride and rapture, and gives us a glimpse of those mood-swings that were an integral part of his psychological make-up and eventually led to his mental decline:

The Eichendorff cycle must be my most romantic and it contains much of you. Today I was so happy and so sad [...] The days all slip past quietly and simply. The weather is foul, and I sit all day long in my retreat, dreaming of my Klara. Do words exist that can describe his inhuman cheek: it suits ill my Eichendorff cycle. I had forgotten the scandal for a while, but sometimes it overwhelms me so.


And listen - it is not insubstantial, the amount I earn through composing, and things are improving too. Do you know that in the last six months I've received about 400 Taler for my works - you'd be amazed, but it's true. I do not accept less than 6 Louisdor for five pages of song. And that's important, for when the mood's on me, I can write two pages of song a day, even more if you, for example, insist on it [...] I know, by the way, that my Heine cycle is being much talked about, and that pleases me. But the Eichendorff songs, I can promise you, are much more melancholic and happy than the few things you have heard. I have revelled in these poems - and your handwriting too plays a part.

Friedrich Wieck's callous treatment of the lovers clearly still rankled during the composition of the *Liederkreis*. Suspecting, perhaps, that Schumann had contracted syphilis, he had imposed on them impossible financial conditions: if they were ever to marry, she would be obliged to give Wieck her entire earnings of the past seven years, while

Schumann would have to settle on her two-thirds of his capital. He also accused Schumann of being a heavy drinker - a charge that the court did not initially dismiss. But Wieck's antagonism, which three years previously in 1837 had caused Schumann to shun her, now only strengthened his love. He addresses her almost as a Muse, who is able to dictate the speed of composition, and it appears from the letter that it was her handwritten copies of the 12 Eichendorff poems that he worked from during the composition of these songs.

Several of them are indisputably autobiographical. 'Intermezzo' is a love-poem that the twenty-three year-old Eichendorff addressed to Luise von Larisch, whom he married three years later, and it inspired Schumann to compose for Clara one of his most longing love-songs, whose syncopated chordal figurations anticipate Brahms's 'Sapphische Ode' of over forty years later. Even more rapturous is the wonderful 'Mondnacht', which almost certainly reflects those happy days the couple spent together in Berlin during April 1840. The poem speaks of sky and earth, age-old symbols for male and female, and their imagined kiss inspired in Schumann a motif of descending fifths in the piano's left hand that first appears in bars 10-13, and is then repeated three more times, thus binding sky and earth - and the whole song - together. The motif, in German notation, reads E-H-E (marriage). Cryptology was dear to Schumann's heart, and his message must have been crystal clear to Clara, who had already received a letter from him, in which he described 'Ehe' as a 'very musical word'. If 'Mondnacht' is the raptest song in the repertoire, one of the most ecstatic must be 'Frühlingsnacht', the final song of the cycle that only a composer on the threshold of achieving his heart's desire could have conceived. Eichendorff's poem, ostensibly a nature poem that celebrates the return of spring, becomes a love poem in the final line, and Schumann responds to this postponing of an anticipated resolution by delaying the only full cadence in the entire song to the end of the final verse. The poem has attracted more than forty composers, including Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel, but none invested it with such rapture, especially in the accompaniment, which as in Schubert's 'Ungeduld', dominates the song with its throbbing semiquavers and flowing counter-melody.

But the Eichendorff *Liederkreis*, like all of Schumann's other song collections, is no idyll. If 'Intermezzo', 'Mondnacht' and 'Frühlingsnacht' are overt and impassioned expressions of his love for Clara, 'Auf einer Burg' is a scarcely disguised description of the domestic impasse in which he



found himself in 1840. Eichendorff's poem might describe the legendary old knight Barbarossa, sitting inside his Kyffhäuser mountain, ready to protect his country in time of need, but to Schumann, Barbarossa was surely Friedrich Wieck ('auf der Lauer'/'on guard'), protecting his daughter whom he compels to marry a man she does not love. Schumann's depiction of this misery is achieved by remarkable means: a sparse piano texture, seemingly doomed attempts at polyphony and a rhythmic monotony that match the oppressiveness of the poem. Many of the Eichendorff poems selected by Schumann for his cycle are similarly oppressive and threatening. No fewer than three have the word 'Fremde' - strange or foreign country - in the title, and five reflect on the power of death, either as consolation and release (the opening of *In der Fremde*) or ubiquitous threat, as in the eerie 'Zwielicht', which with its augmented fourths and diminished fourths in the vocal line, and the diminished seventh chords in the accompaniment, creates a sinister atmosphere of mistrust and fear.

Schumann was passionately committed to modern poetry, and would always seek to contact, by letter or in person, the poet whose work he wished to set. Andersen, Chamisso, Geibel, Hebbel, Heine, Lenau and Rückert - to name a few - were all approached. And Eichendorff too, but not until five years after the composition of the *Liederkreis*. The occasion was a matinee at the Schumann's apartment in January 1847, at which the Op. 39 settings were performed. Clara wrote that Eichendorff had told her that Schumann had given life to his poems, and she had replied that his poems gave life to her husband's music. Whatever the truth of this mutual congratulation, Eichendorff never mentions the songs in his correspondence, and instead praised 'the beautiful settings by Dessauer', the Bohemian composer, whose songs and operas used to enjoy great popularity and whom Wagner, in a letter to Schumann, described as a 'hypochondriacal eccentric'. Perhaps Eichendorff resented the numerous alterations that Schumann made to the poetry - some seventeen in all including, in 'Die Stille', the omission of an entire verse, and in 'Intermezzo' the change of a title. None of the alterations is considerable, but they would most probably have irked a perfectionist such as Eichendorff, whose poems had already attracted numerous other composers and which in the final sixty-seven years of the nineteenth century were to be set over 5000 times.


© Richard Stokes

Following the interval, we are reminded of the beautiful nineteenth-century concert tradition of mixing solo and vocal works, as seen in concerts of Mendelssohn, Clara Schumann, Brahms and many others. We hear one of Mendelssohn's best-loved pieces, the lyric-poignant *Andante espressivo* in E flat Op. 30 no. 1, the opening number of the second book of *Lieder ohne Worte*. These eight books of short piano pieces were composed between 1829 and 1845, and selections or individual numbers were often included in programmes in order to offer audiences a change of sound and, as in this case, a moment of reflection. In this context, the piece offers tranquillity, gentle turbulence and reconciliation.

We then turn to arguably the worst silence - that between two estranged lovers. Taken from Paul Heyse's highly popular collection of translations of Italian poetry, Hugo Wolf's 1892 setting of 'Wir haben beide lange Zeit geschwiegen' describes the magical transformation in the mood when the angels of God (and of love) descend to make peace between the lovers. Wolf's masterful setting traces the transition from the austere gloom to the harmonious reconciliation. The sunny mood is maintained and amplified in one of the loveliest celebrations of peaceful solitude, Schubert's 'Der Einsame', published in 1826. But the constant cheery chirp of the crickets in the piano part prepare us for the closing line of Karl Lappe's otherwise slight poem - namely, the speaker may be reconciled to solitude, but is still glad that the crickets keep them company.

The following trio of songs by Wolf begin by abandoning any pretence to spirituality; in 'Begegnung', composed in 1888 to a text by the poet-pastor Eduard Mörike, we experience through the turbulent, *perpetuo moto* accompaniment, the thrill and turmoil of a pair of newly-minted young lovers, who took advantage of the previous night's storm to enjoy a first, magical tryst. Through 'Verschwiegene Liebe', composed the following year, we follow the boy as he wanders through the countryside that night, rejoicing in his solitude to think of his beloved. The arch-Romantic poet Eichendorff reminds us that the beloved is often most beautiful in the imagination! In 'Schlafendes Jesuskind', also by Mörike, our hero is reimagined as Christ, asleep, as depicted by a painter, his dreams ever unfathomable behind his dark lashes.

The mood lightens again with Schubert's 'An die Laute', a Mozart-inspired serenade which our ardent lover strums on his lute under the beloved's window, whispering secrets only she can hear. The distinguished writer Franz Rochlitz knew Schubert;



his words inspired three settings, including this delightful song, penned the year before the composer's death.

Falling in love is all very well, but what happens next? We are thrust into one possible scenario with 'The Circus Band', the last of Charles Ives's *Five Street Songs*, a setting of his own text written while he was studying at Yale. Displaying Ives's characteristically magpie-like approach to music, the song has all the razzmatazz of the parade. The music is largely tonal and rhythmically regular, bar the odd 'wrong' note or stumble which depicts the chaos outdoors. But despite Ives's exuberant soundscape, the last verse reveals that the poet is scanning the crowd for a 'lady all in pink' who waved at him last year, and whose memory he has evidently cherished since then - but this time she ignores him. 'Memories', composed in two contrasting halves in 1897, also evokes loneliness and distance in public. Set in the opera house, the narrator of the first half, 'Very pleasant', is frantic with anticipation, almost babbling with excitement waiting for the curtain to rise. But the second half, 'Rather Sad', presents the performance, a subdued and confused parlour song, nostalgic and tender in mood.

Our hero is now transformed into an audience member. Did he wander out into the night after the performance, lonelier than ever? The return of Schubert with 'Der Doppelgänger', one of his bleakest, most dystopian songs, would suggest so. The narrator stands in front of the beloved's house; she left some time ago and the man experiences a terrifying vision of himself, fruitlessly waiting on the same spot for many a night. This setting of a text by Heinrich Heine was the last of Schubert's six solo settings by that poet and is usually heard as the penultimate song of *Schwanengesang*.

Events become significantly bleaker with James MacMillan's searing setting of William Soutar's 'The Children', a poem inspired by the horrors of the Spanish Civil War. Composed in 1995, MacMillan sets the song in a disarmingly simple folk-style, but fragmented, interrupted, ravaged as the broken bodies of the children it describes. The recital closes, not with Schubert, but with Richard Strauss's much-loved 'Morgen', its usual meaning completely altered by the memory of what we have just heard. John Henry Mackay's poem, anticipating the renewal of sunrise and the possibility of reunion, was written as an expression of the homosexuality he had to stifle. Here, it becomes an utterance of the universal hope of being reunited with those we love, from whom we have been separated, in life or in death.

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# 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.



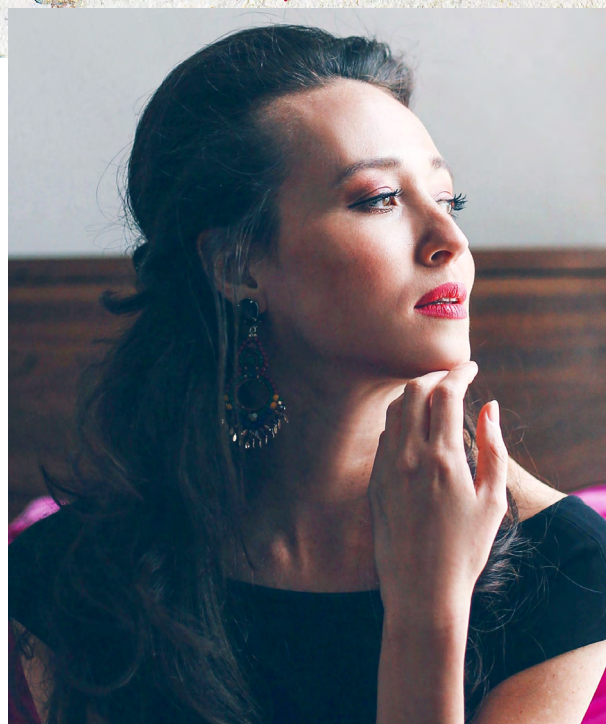
# Fleur Barron

Mezzo-soprano

Hailed as “a knockout performer” by The Times, Singaporean-British mezzo Fleur Barron recently triumphed at the San Francisco Symphony in the title role of Kaija Saariaho’s opera *Adriana Mater* in a production helmed by Peter Sellars and Esa-Pekka Salonen, and at the Aix-en-Provence Festival as Ottavia in Monteverdi’s *L’Incoronazione di Poppea*. She is a current Rising Star of Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw and an Artistic Partner of the Orquesta Sinfonica del Principado de Asturias in Oviedo, for which she will curate/perform multiple projects across several seasons. A passionate interpreter of opera, chamber music, and concert works ranging from the baroque to the contemporary, Fleur is mentored by Barbara Hannigan.

Fleur launches the 2023/24 season with a return to the London Symphony Orchestra, where she is the soloist in their Season Opening Concert at the Barbican, performing Claude Vivier’s *Wo bist du Licht*, and in performances of Stravinsky’s *Pulcinella* the following week, both under the baton of Barbara Hannigan. Autumn 2023 sees the release on Pentatone Records of her performance in the title role in Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas* with La Nuova Musica, and she also begins a multi-season partnership with the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra and conductor Ludovic Morlot, joining them to record Ravel’s *Shéhérazade* and *Trois Poèmes de Mallarmé*, and for performances of *Shéhérazade* and Montsalvatge’s *Cinco Canciones Negras* at L’Auditori Barcelona and on tour to Hamburg and Stockholm. Further orchestral engagements include Mahler’s Symphony No. 3 with the Czech Philharmonic and Semyon Bychkov at the Baden Baden Festival, both *Das Lied von der Erde* and Mahler’s Symphony No. 2 with Orquesta Sinfónica del Principado de Asturias under Nuno Coehlo, and Freya Waley-Cohen’s *Spell Book* with the Manchester Collective at the Barbican.

In 2023/24 Fleur débuts three opera roles: Penelope in Monteverdi’s *Il Ritorno d’Ulisse in Patria* with baroque ensemble I Gemelli, which tours to major venues including Teatro Real Madrid, Opéra de Bordeaux and Théâtre du Capitole Toulouse; multiple roles in George



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Benjamin’s two-person opera *Into the Little Hill* with the Staatskapelle Berlin under Finnegan Downie Dear; and the title role of John the Baptist in Maria Margherita Grimani’s baroque opera *La Decollazione* di San Giovanni Battista with Haymarket Opera in Chicago. On the recital platform, Fleur joins regular collaborator Julius Drake for concerts in London, Copenhagen, Santa Fe, Padua, Ireland and Oviedo. She debuts at the Wiener Konzerthaus in multiple chamber music concerts for their Gemischter Satz Festival, returns to the 92 Street Y in New York with Myra Huang, and joins Swedish ensemble O/Modernt at Wigmore Hall and Queen Silvia Concert Hall, Stockholm. Fleur is also the curator of OSPA’s East-West Fest in April 2024, featuring symphonic programs, chamber music, late-night concerts and community engagement over two weekends in Oviedo and Gijón.

In the 2022/23 season, Fleur had critical success in the title role of Kaija Saariaho’s opera *Adriana Mater* in a new production by Peter Sellars with the San Francisco Symphony under Esa-Pekka Salonen, and made a string of exciting orchestral débuts: Debussy’s *La Damoiselle Elue* with Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Orchestre de Paris, Stravinsky’s *Pulcinella* with the Göteborgs Symfoniker and Barbara Hannigan, Berio’s *Folksongs* with Sir Mark Elder on tour with the Junge Deutsche Philharmonie, Bruckner’s *Te Deum* with Vasily Petrenko and the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, Beethoven’s *Missa Solemnis* with Thomas Hengelbrock and the Balthasar Neumann Ensemble, Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 with Rafael Payare and the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, Berlioz’s *Les Nuits d’Ete* with the Slovenian Philharmonic,



Mahler's *Rückert Lieder* with the Orquesta Sinfonica del Principado de Asturias. She also sang the title role in Hasse's *Marc Antonio e Cleopatra* with the NDR Radiophilharmonie in Hannover, alto soloist in a new staged production of Mozart's *Requiem* at the Opéra National de Bordeaux, Bersi in *Andrea Chénier* and Mallika in *Lakmé* for Opéra de Monte-Carlo and the Théâtre de Champs-Élysées. On the recital platform, Fleur joined Julius Drake for concerts at Het Concertgebouw, MiTO Festival in Milan and Turin, Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, Spivey Hall and at the Théâtre de l'Athénée in Paris. She teamed up with duo partner Kunal Lahiry for recitals at Wigmore Hall and Oxford Lieder Festival, with Malcolm Martineau at Snape Maltings and with Joseph Middleton at Buxton Festival.

Highlights of recent seasons include Ottavia in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* at the Aix-en-Provence Festival, la Zelatrice in *Suor Angelica* with the Berlin Philharmonic under Kirill Petrenko,

Tchaikovsky's *Olga and Paulina*, at Garsington Opera and Opera de Toulon, and her début in the title role of *Carmen* for Arizona Opera; concerts with the Munich Philharmonic under Barbara Hannigan, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Malaysian Philharmonic, and opera roles with the Aix-en-Provence Festival, Opéra de Monte-Carlo, La Monnaie/de Munt, Garsington Opera, Opéra National de Montpellier, Opéra National du Rhin and Cape Town Opera.

Fleur is committed to the way music can facilitate cross-cultural dialogue and healing. She is passionate about curating inclusive chamber music programming that amplifies the voices of diverse communities. Born in Northern Ireland to a Singaporean mother and British father, Fleur grew up in Hong Kong and later New York. She holds degrees from Columbia University (B.A. Comparative Literature) and Manhattan School of Music (M.M. Vocal Performance).

# Sholto Kynoch

Piano

Sholto Kynoch is a sought-after pianist who specialises in song and chamber music. He is the founder and Artistic Director of the Oxford Lieder Festival, which won a prestigious Royal Philharmonic Society Award in 2015, cited for its 'breadth, depth and audacity' of programming. In July 2018, Sholto was elected a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music in the RAM Honours.

Working with many of today's leading singers, recent recitals have taken him to Wigmore Hall, Heidelberger Frühling, Beethovenfest Bonn, the Zeist International Lied Festival in the Netherlands, the LIFE Victoria festival and Palau de la Música in Barcelona, the Fundación Juan March in Madrid, the Opéra de Lille, Opernhaus Zürich, Maison Symphonique de Montréal, and many other leading venues and festivals nationally and internationally.

His extensive discography includes the first complete edition of the songs of Hugo Wolf, the final volume of which was released in January 2023.



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# 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 Kirchschrager, 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.

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

### **André Bertoncini**

*Piano*

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

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

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

### **Thomas McGowan**

*Baritone*

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

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

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


### **Ben Collyer**

*Piano*

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

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





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

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

### **Anusha Merrin**

*Soprano*

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

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

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

### **Chunmeng Ge**

*Piano*

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

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

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

### **Aksel Rykkvin**

*Baritone*

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

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



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

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

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

### **Zany Denyer**

*Piano*

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

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


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

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

### **Felicitas Wrede**

*Soprano*

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



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

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

### **Abhisri Chaudhuri**

*Piano*

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

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

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

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

### **Biqing Zhang**

*Soprano*

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

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

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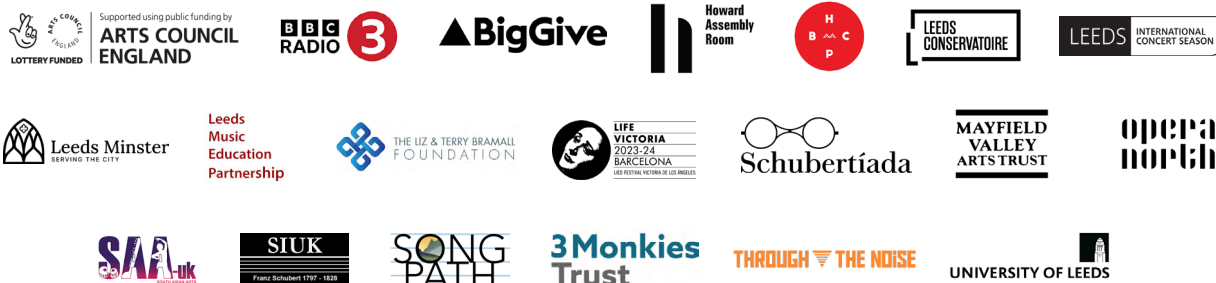
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