



SUN 10 DEC - SAT 16 DEC 2023

Rimsky-Korsakov  
**The Snow Maiden**

RNCM  
ROYAL NORTHERN  
COLLEGE OF MUSIC

RNCM

SPRING 2024

SUN 17 MAR - SAT 23 MAR

# Rossini La scala di seta

Tickets from £15



Sun 10 and Sat 16 Dec, 3pm  
Tue 12 and Wed 13 Dec, 7pm  
RNCM Theatre

**Rimsky-Korsakov**  
**THE SNOW MAIDEN**

A prologue and opera in four acts  
Music and libretto by Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov  
Première at the Mariinsky Theatre, Saint Petersburg on  
10 February 1882

*Sung in an English translation by Christopher Cowell*



RNCM Opera: *Die Feldermaus*, 2022

**Patron**  
Her Majesty The Late Queen  
**President**  
Sir John Tomlinson CBE  
**Principal**  
Professor Linda Merrick CBE  
**Chair**  
Ravi Gupta

*This performance contains representations of misogyny, aggression, ritualism, and death.*

# Synopsis

---

## PROLOGUE

Snow Maiden has been protected and hidden away all her life by her father, Father Frost, against the wishes of her mother, Mother Spring. This has angered Yarilo, the Sun God, resulting in a fifteen-year long winter. Snow Maiden longs to experience life with the people living in a nearby isolated community. Mother Spring and Father Frost agree for her to be adopted by Bobil and his wife, Bobylìkha.

## ACT 1

Snow Maiden meets Lyel, a local boy, and is enchanted by his songs. She is disappointed when he leaves with a group of girls. Kupàva, a village girl, announces her marriage to Mizgìr. The betrothal ceremony takes place, but Mizgìr sees Snow Maiden and is enthralled by her beauty and begs her to love him. Kupàva is furious at Mizgìr's betrayal, and her friends advise her to speak to the Tsar.

## ACT 2

Kupàva tells the Tsar what has happened and Mizgìr is asked to explain his behaviour. He is sentenced to exile but insists the Tsar would understand if he met Snow Maiden. The conversation is disrupted by the appearance of Snow Maiden. The Tsar asks whom she loves, and she confirms that she doesn't love anyone. The Tsar offers a reward to anyone who can gain Snow Maiden's love. The girls think the handsome Lyel will be successful, but Mizgìr swears he will win Snow Maiden's icy heart. The Tsar agrees to a contest to win Snow Maiden's love as the people sing his praises.

*Interval*

## ACT 3

The people amuse themselves with dancing and singing. The Tsar invites Lyel to choose a girl to kiss in front of everyone and, despite Snow Maiden's pleas, he chooses Kupàva. Alone, Snow Maiden wonders why Lyel has rejected her. Mizgìr appears and tries once more to win her love. After he attempts to assault her, she runs off. Mizgìr follows, but soon loses his way. Lyel and Kupàva enter and declare their love for each other. Snow Maiden finds them and, seeing their happiness, at last truly wishes to have the capacity to love.

## ACT 4

Snow Maiden asks Mother Spring for advice and is warned to stay out of the light of the sun. As the weather warms, flowers begin to bloom, and Snow Maiden begins to feel love. Mizgìr appears and, as Snow Maiden's heart melts for the first time, she professes her love for him. The villagers, in bride and groom pairs, celebrate the day of the Sun God. Mizgìr introduces Snow Maiden as his bride. As she declares her love for Mizgìr, the sun starts to shine, and Snow Maiden melts into thin air. Unable to live without Snow Maiden, Mizgìr drowns himself. The Tsar explains to the community that the deaths of Snow Maiden and Mizgìr have ended the long winter. They sing a hymn of praise to Yarilo, the Sun God.



RNCM Opera: *Mansfield Park*, 2023



RNCM Opera: *Le nozze di Figaro*, 2022

# Creative Team

---

**Matthew Kofi Waldren** *conductor*

**Jack Furness** *director*

**Georgia de Grey** *designer*

**Ben Ormerod** *lighting designer*

**Jakub Przybycień** *assistant conductor (performance Sat 16 Dec)*

**Kevin Thraves** *chorus master*

**Bethan Rhys Wiliam** *choreographer*

# Supporting Creative Team

---

**Abigail Kessell** *intimacy director*

**Kennan Ali** *fight director*

**Tomek Pieczora** *production repetiteur (Sir John Fisher Foundation Junior Fellow Repetiteur)*

**Daniel Pugh-Bevan** *offstage conductor*

# Casts

---

Sun 10 Dec, Wed 13 Dec

\*Tue 12 Dec, Sat 16 Dec

\*\*All performances

**Olivia Swain, Kanchana Jaishankar\*** *Mother Spring*

**Adam Jarman, David Bicarregui\*** *Father Frost*

**Jessica Hopkins, Bonnie Callaghan\*** *Snow Maiden*

**Yihui Wang, Liam Forrest\*** *Bobìl*

**Leah McCabe, Siân Davies\*** *Bobylikha*

**Henry Strutt, Jay Broadhurst\*** *Tsar Byerendèyi*

**Alexander Gibb, James Connolly\*** *Byermyàta*

**Sophie Clarke, Olivia Hamblyn\*** *Lyel*

**Charlotte Baker, Sara Donnelly\*** *Kupàva*

**Matthew Secombe, Ishay Ravina\*** *Mizgìr*

**Nicholas Collins, Kristen Gregory\*** *Boggart*

**William Jowett\*\*** *Màslyenitsa*

**Dominic Morgan\*\*** *First Herald*

**Patrick Osborne\*\*** *Second Herald*

**Daisy Mitchell\*\*** *Page*

# EVERY SEAT TELLS A STORY

Commemorate a significant moment or celebrate someone special this festive season by personalising a seat plaque.

Through this unique gift, you can leave a lasting mark on the RNCM, whilst supporting and inspiring the next generation of young musicians.

**SEAT PLAQUES ARE AVAILABLE IN THE CONCERT HALL  
AND THEATRE FROM £300.**

To name a seat, visit [rncm.ac.uk/nameaseat](https://rncm.ac.uk/nameaseat)



## RNCM **MEMBERSHIP**

**Become a member today  
for only £35 per year!**

AS AN RNCM MEMBER, YOU CAN ENJOY:

- 50% off up to two tickets to RNCM Promoted Performances\*
- Free tickets to weekly Lunchtime Concerts\*
- 15% off food and drink at the RNCM Bar and Café\*
- Digital 'What's On' newsletters
- Invitations to at least two special events a year such as artists talks, digital livestreams, or backstage/archive tours, for you and a guest

**Gift an RNCM membership to the music lover in your life this festive season, by calling our ticketing partner Quay Tickets on 0300 303 4212**



*\*Terms and conditions apply*

[rncm.ac.uk/membership](https://rncm.ac.uk/membership)

# RNCM Opera Chorus

---

## **SOPRANO**

Eleanor Astridge  
Lucy Breakwell  
Gigi Casey  
Kitty Casey  
Eve Codman  
Morgan Fenton  
Glesni Jones  
Gabrielle Leung  
Ffion Short  
Natasha Theil  
Kelsey Thomas  
Clementine Thompson  
Poppy Worthington-Harris

## **ALTO**

Dylan Carys  
Eibhlin Eddy  
Ruby Hendry  
Sophie Iliafar  
Mila Johannsen  
Billie McCaffrey  
Daisy Mitchell  
Sarah Rappoport  
Isabella Taylor  
Emmeline Tovey  
Jiayi Xu

## **TENOR**

Andras Balla  
Yumeng Cui  
Johnny Derbyshire  
Barnaby Fildes  
Joshua Oram  
Jacob Parker  
Patrick Parlaj  
Aaron Peters  
Samuel Rose  
Nicholas Simper  
Samuel Yuen  
Bryan Au Yeung

## **BASS**

George Elson  
Peter Entwisle  
Cyrus Chiu  
Yucheng Huo  
Ian Lam  
Keir Lundy  
Alex Peart  
Ran Wang  
Taran Waverley-Hudson  
Edward Wenborn



# RNCM Opera Orchestra

---

## **FIRST VIOLINS**

Rachel Stonham  
Yunyi Liu  
Zinan Wang  
Jack Callaghan  
Emily Harpley Gebbels  
Nina Doig  
Luman Chen  
Charlie Roberts  
Xin Ju

## **SECOND VIOLINS**

Archie Freeman  
Yixin Sha  
Yiyang Sun  
Gemma Humphries  
Luke Chu  
Nadia Wilson  
Ellie Shek

## **VIOLAS**

Kirin Howat  
Henry Grant  
Ben Norris  
Steph Roberts  
Robert White  
Paula Bowes

## **CELLOS**

Maya Tucker  
Eva Jones  
Rhys Nicholson  
Hamish Barry  
Maisie McLoughlin

## **BASSES**

Saulo Da Silva Martins  
Joana Moura  
Yijie Guan

## **FLUTES**

Cathy Wang  
Natalie Ngai (picc)  
Jessica Foxwell (picc)

## **OBOES**

Anna Turner  
Ross Large

## **CLARINETS**

Abigail Martin  
Nathan Kenworthy

## **BASSOONS**

Erline Moreira  
Connor Huss

## **HORNS**

Chak Hin Lo  
Liaocheng Cai  
Yuan Zhang  
Ziying Chen

## **TRUMPETS**

Freddie Ball  
Finn Cormack

## **TROMBONES**

Buchen Zhao  
Sebastian Brailsford  
Freddie Hughes

## **TUBA**

Maxim Kemp

## **TIMPANI**

Dan Malone

## **PERCUSSION**

Daniel Vincent  
Zilong Jiang  
Siu Kau Kwok

## **PIANO**

Daniel Pugh-Bevan

## **HARP**

Kimberly Wong

RNCM

SPRING 2024

FRI 9 FEB // 7.30PM

# Welcome to the Cabaret!

with the RNCM Songsters

Tickets from £15



# School of Vocal Studies and Opera

---

**Professor Lynne Dawson** Head of Vocal Studies and Opera

**Dr Nico de Villiers** Deputy Head of Vocal Studies

**Kevin Thraves** Deputy Head of Opera

**Alice Brookes** School of Vocal Studies and Opera Administrator

## Orchestras and Ensembles

---

**Andrew Bayly** Head of Ensembles

**Amy Gordon** Orchestras and Ensembles Manager (SS)

**Charlotte Ferry** Orchestras and Ensembles Manager (SWBP)

**Clara Marshall Cawley** Orchestras and Ensembles Assistant Manager

**Abigail Flood** Ensembles Administrator

**Jack Grime** Chamber Music and Conducting Administrator

**Amy Brown** Ensembles Librarian

## Technical Team

---

**Nick Ware** Head of Digital, Technical and Production

**Paul Botham** Production Manager

**Greg Skipworth** Company Manager

**Tracey Collinson** Stage Manager

**Sarah Taylor Kent** Stage Manager (on the Book)

**Louise Morgan** Deputy Stage Manager (Props)

**Julie Parker** Deputy Technical Manager (LX)

**Steve Barrington** Deputy Technical Manager (Stage)

**Ellie Whitfield** Deputy Technical Manager (Multi-skilled)

**Elaine Needham** Wardrobe Manager

**Rebecca Parkes** Deputy Wardrobe Manager

**Lucy Woodcock, Nadia Jeljeli** Additional Costume Work

**Sarah Davey** Wardrobe Placement (Arts University Bournemouth)

**Jo Best** Wigs, Hair and Make-Up Supervisor

Surtitles created by **Daniel Pugh-Bevan** operated by **Deema Azar**

**Setfree Projects** Scenic Construction

# BIOGRAPHIES

---



## MATTHEW KOFI WALDREN

Matthew Kofi Waldren is a conductor of mixed British and Ghanaian ancestry, renowned for his detailed, responsive and collaborative approach to music-making. ENO Mackerras Fellow (2016-18) and nominated at the International Opera Awards (2017), he is recognised for an innate sense of theatre, equally at home in the concert hall, recording studio and theatre pit, even recording the soundtrack to London's new Elizabeth Line.

Recent engagements include *Ainadamar* and the acclaimed world premiere of Will Todd's *Migrations* (WNO), the British premiere of award-winning American opera *Blue* and Olivier nominated *Paul Bunyan* (ENO), a semi-staged concert tour of *The Pearlfishers* (Opera North), concerts with the LPO, WNO Orchestra, the CBSO and CBSO Chorus, concerts and recordings with Chineke! Orchestra - including a disc of Grant Still's *Symphony No.1* and Price's *Symphony No. 3*, a new orchestration of Jonathan Dove's *Flight* and *Les mamelles de Tirésias* (RCS Opera), *L'elisir d'amore* (West Green House), Opera Holland Park's *La traviata*, *Pelléas et Mélisande* (Scottish Opera), *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (Royal Opera Linbury, Signum Classic, OHP).

Described by The Sunday Times as 'one of the most adept and dynamic young British Verdians', Matthew Kofi has conducted highly acclaimed readings of *Un ballo in maschera*, *Rigoletto*, *La rondine*, *La bohème*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Zanetto*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (also *Lakmé*, *Les pêcheurs de perles* and *Fantastic Mr Fox*) for Opera Holland Park, *La bohème*, *Don Giovanni*, *La petite bohème* (Opera North), *Le nozze di Figaro* (English National Opera), *La cenerentola* (West Green House) and *Gianni Schicchi* (RCS).

# BIOGRAPHIES

---



## JACK FURNESS

British stage director Jack Furness is the founder and Artistic Director of Shadwell Opera. Recent directing credits include *Faust* (Irish National Opera), *Turandot* (Royal Opera House), *Il Re Pastore* (Buxton Festival), *Candide* (Scottish Opera); *Rusalka* (Garsington Opera, Edinburgh International Festival); *Don Giovanni* (Nevill Holt Opera); *Gianni Schicchi* (Copenhagen Opera Festival); *Dido and Aeneas* (Royal Academy of Music); revival of David McVicar's production of *Carmen* (Dallas Opera); revival of Kasper Holten's production of *Don Giovanni* (Royal Opera House) *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Così fan tutte* and *Don Giovanni* (Teatru Manoel, Malta); *Written on Skin* and *Lessons in Love and Violence* (Melos Sinfonia in St Petersburg); Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel* (Wexford Festival). Productions with Shadwell include Oliver Knussen's *Where the Wild Things Are* (Alexandra Palace Theatre, Bamberg Symphony, and Mariinsky Concert Hall, St Petersburg); *Die Zauberflöte*, which won a 2009 RBS Herald Angel Award (Edinburgh Fringe Festival); *The Lighthouse*; *Erwartung*; *Into the Little Hill*.

For Shadwell Opera, he has directed Oliver Knussen's *Where the Wild Things Are* (Alexandra Palace Theatre and Mariinsky Concert Hall,

St Petersburg); *Albert Herring* (Opera Holland Park); *Die Zauberflöte*, which won a 2009 RBS Herald Angel Award (Edinburgh Fringe Festival); *Così fan tutte*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Jonathan Dove's *Siren Song*, and *In the Penal Colony* (Arts Theatre, Leicester Square); Peter Maxwell Davies's *The Lighthouse* and a double bill of Schoenberg's *Erwartung* and Mark Anthony Turnage's *Twice through the Heart* (Hackney Showroom); *Speech Acts* – a double-bill of George Benjamin's *Into the Little Hill* and Stravinsky's *The Soldier's Tale* (Courtyard Theatre); and *Song* – a double bill of Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* and Peter Maxwell Davies's *Eight Songs for a Mad King* (Bart's Pathology Museum). Furness has assisted directors such as Sir David McVicar and Yoshi Oida at companies including the Glyndebourne Festival, Royal Opera House, English National Opera, Opera North and Scottish Opera. He has recently assisted on Laurent Pelly's production of *L'elisir d'amore*, Andrei Serban's production of *Turandot* and a new production of *Der Rosenkavalier* by Robert Carsen, all at the Royal Opera House.

# BIOGRAPHIES

---

## GEORGIA DE GREY

Theatre includes: *Jews. In Their Own Words* (Royal Court Theatre), *One Jewish Boy*, *The Girl Who Fell* (Trafalgar Studios), *How Love is Spelt*, *Superhero* (Southwark Playhouse), *Rails* (Theatre by the Lake), *The Listening Room* (Theatre Royal Stratford East, UK tour), *Alkaline* (The Park Theatre), *Our Town*, *Spring Storm* (North Wall Arts Centre), *If We Got Some More Cocaine I Could Show You How I Love You* (Project Arts Theatre Dublin and tour The Laramie Project, 1974 The Future of Sex (Arts Ed), *The Noises*, *Birthday Suit*, *Bromley Bedlam Bethlehem* (Old Red Lion Theatre), *Incident at Vichy* (Finborough Theatre), *Cans* (Theatre 503), *Best Served Cold* (Vault Festival).

Opera includes: *Erwartung*, *Twice Through the Heart* (Hackney Showroom), *Into the Little Hill* (The Courtyard Theatre, UK tour), *Sister* (Spitalfields Music Festival, Ovalhouse Theatre).

Georgia was a finalist for the Linbury Prize for stage design in 2013.

## BEN ORMEROD

Opera credits include: *La traviata* (Danish National Opera); *Jeanna D'arc au Bûcher* (Academia Santa Cecilia, Rome); *Falstaff, Il trovatore*, (Scottish Opera); *La traviata* (English National Opera); *The Elixir of Love* (Norfolk Into Opera Festival); *Ring Cycle* (2013), *Tristan and Isolde*, *Tannhauser*, *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Ariadne auf Naxos* (for Loughborough).

Theatre includes: *Footfalls/Rockaby* (Jermyn Street Theatre); *A Christmas Carol*, *The Duchess of Malfi*, *A Long Day's Journey Into Night*, *The Orestia*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear* (Citizens Theatre, Glasgow); *Don Juan* (Perth Theatre); *The Dresser*, *A Song At Twilight* (Bath and UK Tour); *The Model Apartment*, *Trouble In Mind* (Ustinov Theatre Bath); *Mrs Henderson Presents* (Bath, West End and Toronto); *The Sunset Limited* (Boulevard Theatre); *Assassins* (Watermill Newbury and Nottingham Playhouse); *Prism* (Birmingham Rep, UK Tour); *The Duchess of Malfi*, *A Number* (Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh); *Uncle Vanya*, *Prism*, *Loyalty* (Hampstead Theatre); *Broken Glass*, *The Dresser* (Watford Palace Theatre); *All's Well That Ends Well* (Sam Wanamaker Playhouse); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Regents Park); *Zorro* (West End, Holland, Paris, US and Japan).

Dance credits: *The Shadow* (Company Chameleon); *@Home*, *The Knot* (Humanooove, UK Tour); *Carmen* (Bird and Carrot); *Is to Be* (Le Prix De Lausanne); *The Nutcracker*, *Les Noces* (Ballet Geneva); *Frame of View* (Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet, New York); *See Blue Through/Toot!* (Oper Leipzig); *Tenderhooks* (Skanes Dansteater/Ballet Gulbenkian); *Essence* (Walker Dance Park Music).

# BIOGRAPHIES

---

## JAKUB PRZYBYCIEŃ

Jakub Przybycień is a Polish conductor and violinist. Having grown up in the orchestra, he stands out for his excellent understanding of the orchestral perspective. He has dedicated himself to conducting as a way of using his voice and standing up for his beliefs. Musicians from orchestras from all over the world appreciate his energetic and charismatic manner, and his clear character and musical ideas inspire musicians and audiences wherever he goes.

For the 2023/24 season Jakub is assistant conductor of Maestro Ludovic Morlot by the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra and National Orchestra of Catalonia and the Mills Williams Junior Fellow in Conducting at the RNCM. To further develop his musical and technical skills as a conductor, Jakub has participated in masterclasses by eminent conductors such as Neeme, Paavo and Kristjan Järvi, Marin Alsop, Jaap van Zweden, Peter Eötvös, Jorma Panula and Michael Sanderling. He has collaborated with orchestras including the London Symphony Orchestra, Baltic Sea Philharmonic, Ensemble Ars Nova, Württembergische Philharmonie Reutlingen, Philharmonie Baden-Baden, Philharmonie Südwestfalen, Kritisches Orchester Berlin, Göttinger Symphonie Orchester, Philharmonie Hradec Králové, Opéra Orchestre National Montpellier Occitanie and the Polish Radio National Symphony Orchestra. This season, Jakub will be working with the Balthasar Neumann Ensembles and the Zielona Góra Philharmonic Orchestra.

Jakub's musical education started at the age of six with the violin. During his career as a violinist, he received laureates in national and international competitions. His many achievements include qualifying for the prestigious European Union Youth Orchestra, where he worked with and learned from maestro Bernard Haitink, Manfred Honeck, Noah Bendix-Balgley, and Lorenza Borrani. Between 2014-2019 he studied violin with Professor Monika Urbaniak Lisik at the Academy of the Arts in Bern (CH), graduating with distinction. While studying violin he started pursuing his career as a conductor. He obtained his Bachelor's degree in orchestral conducting with honors at the Academy of Music in Wrocław (PL) with Professor Marek Pijarowski. During this time he worked with the NFM Wrocław Philharmonic and the Lower Silesian Philharmonic Orchestra in Jelenia Góra. For his Master's, Jakub studied in the class of Professor Johannes Schlaefli at the Zurich University of the Arts (CH).

# BIOGRAPHIES

---

## KEVIN THRAVES

As a freelance répétiteur, Kevin has worked for many leading opera companies including Scottish Opera, Opera North, Welsh National Opera, English National Opera, Essential Scottish Opera, Clonter Opera, Batignano Musica nel Chiostro (Italy), Scottish Opera-Go-Round, and the Buxton International Festival. He has also worked alongside many of the UK's leading orchestras including The Hallé, the BBC Concert Orchestra - during the Proms season at the Royal Albert Hall, the BBC Philharmonic, Manchester Camerata, The Academy of Ancient Music, and the London Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Sir Simon Rattle, Barry Wordsworth, Sir Richard Armstrong, Tugan Sokhiev, Sir Neville Marriner, Sir Mark Elder, and Edward Gardner.

His work as an accompanist and répétiteur has led to many recordings and broadcasts for radio and television both in the UK and abroad. UK concert appearances include Wigmore Hall, The Purcell Room, The Queen Elizabeth Hall, St John's Smith Square, St Martin in-the-Fields, The Royal Albert Hall, St David's Hall in Cardiff, and The Bridgewater Hall in Manchester. Kevin has a busy and varied recital career which has led to performances across Europe, Asia, and Oceania. Recently, Kevin was the co-chorus master for the world premiere of Mark Wigglesworth's *Magnificat* in Bergen, Norway, and the chorus master for performances of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* for The Hallé.

Kevin is Deputy Head of Opera at the Royal Northern College of Music where he has worked on many of the award-winning operas as music staff, répétiteur and as the RNCM Opera chorus master.

## BETHAN RHYS WILIAM

Born in Swansea, after studying vocational dance at Bush Davies School, Bethan's professional career began in Ghent, Belgium as a dancer with the Royal Opera Ballet and continued with engagements with: Ballet International, The Iranian National Ballet, Malmö Stadsteater, Northern Ballet Theatre, including gala performances at the London Coliseum and Royal Festival Hall with Dame Margot Fonteyn and Rudolf Nureyev in his *Nureyev and Friends* seasons. She was a founder member of London City Ballet. She has also danced on tours of Italy, France, Romania and Norway.

Since 1996 Bethan was engaged as tutor in Movement, Dance and Physical awareness at the Royal Northern College of Music. In addition to her academic teaching role she was involved as choreographer/movement coach/assistant director for Stefan Janski's numerous opera and musical theatre productions. She also collaborated on Garth Bardsley's staging of Benjamin Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for the RNCM which won the opera prize at the 2016 Manchester Theatre Awards. More recently Bethan worked on several RNCM opera productions with Stuart Barker and Jonathan Cocker. Her work also includes productions with Jack Edwards, Jennifer Hamilton, Sandra Dugdale's numerous Gilbert and Sullivan seasons and has directed semi-staged performances of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* and Handel's *Belshazzar* for the Manchester Camerata. She was engaged as choreographer for The Library Theatre's staging of Charles Dickens's *Hard Times* at Murray's Mill, Manchester and for Alan Bennett's adaptation of Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in The Willows* at the Lowry Quays Theatre, directed by the late Chris Honer.





# RNCM ENDANGERED INSTRUMENTS APPEAL

**Help safeguard instruments  
in critical decline**

Find out more and donate at:  
[rncm.ac.uk/annualappeal](http://rncm.ac.uk/annualappeal)



**RNCM**  
ROYAL NORTHERN  
COLLEGE of MUSIC



## Time to listen?

**Did you know you can listen to 50 years of RNCM  
recordings and view archive footage, including  
our operas?**

**Simply take a seat in  
the RNCM Foyer**

[rncm.link/lotterytw](http://rncm.link/lotterytw)

**RNCM**  
ROYAL NORTHERN  
COLLEGE of MUSIC

# CAST BIOGRAPHIES

---

## YIHUI WANG

Yihui Wang is a second-year postgraduate lyric tenor from China studying with Thomas Schulze, kindly supported by an ABRSM Scholarship. During his time at the RNCM, Yihui showcased his versatility by taking on diverse operatic roles, from Bobil-Bakula in *The Snow Maiden* to Nemorino in *L'elisir d'amore*. He has also collaborated with renowned institutions, notably singing at The Bridgewater Hall, and performing with Opera North and the Hallé Orchestra.

## OLIVIA SWAIN

Olivia is an Australian soprano pursuing a Postgraduate Diploma in Advanced Studies (Performance) with Linda Richardson, supported by the Helen Rachael Mackaness Charitable Trust.

Prior to relocating to the UK, Olivia performed as a 2023 Young Artist with Pacific Opera Studio Sydney, sponsored by the Wagner Society NSW. Supported by The John Holt Todd and Florence Todd Scholarship and mentored by soprano Dr Rowena Cowley, Olivia holds both a Bachelor's and Master's degree from the Sydney Conservatorium of

Music. Repertoire includes significant role performances of Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*), Berta (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*), the Mother (*Amahl and the Night Visitors*), Mimì (*La Bohème*), Hippolyta (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) and Erste Dame (*Die Zauberflöte*).

## HENRY STRUTT

Henry is studying for a Postgraduate Diploma with Peter Wilson after completing his Master's at the RNCM last year. He graduated in 2020 with a First from The University of York and is an alumnus of the National Youth Choir and the Genesis Sixteen. Previous roles at the RNCM include Henry Crawford (*Mansfield Park*), Alfred (*Die Fledermaus*) and Don Curzio (*Le nozze di Figaro*). He has sung as a Young Artist at the Buxton International Festival and looks forward to joining the Glyndebourne Festival Chorus in 2024. Henry is incredibly grateful to be supported by the Ann Gerrard Bursaries, and the James and Mary Glass Scholarship.

## JAMES CONNOLLY

James Connolly is a first postgraduate studying with Matthew Best, generously supported by the Francis

Higgins Bursary and the Stanley Picker Trust. James recently graduated as an undergraduate with First Class honours, during which time he was awarded First Prize in the Elsie Thurston, the James Martin Oncken, Alexander Young and Frederick Cox singing competitions for four consecutive years. James sang the role of Edmund Bertram in RNCM's production of Jonathan Dove's *Mansfield Park* (sharing the role with Conrad Chatterton) and has performed as a soloist for numerous choral societies around Manchester, including Handel's *Messiah* with Altrincham Choral Society and Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with Wigan Choral Society.

## LEAH MCCABE

Leah McCabe is a Scottish mezzo-soprano studying with Mary Plazas, generously supported by the Alice Orrell and A&N Kendall Award, the North Lanarkshire Education Fund and the McGlashan Trust.

Leah's recent performances include Lady Bertram in RNCM's production of Dove's *Mansfield Park* and Madame de la Haltière in Massenet's *Cendrillon* for RNCM Opera Scenes. She's also played Harry in Britten's

# CAST BIOGRAPHIES

---

*Albert Herring* and *Fox Cub* in Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* for Royal Academy Opera. Leah took part in RAO Scenes, playing La Marquise in Dvořák's *La Fille du Regiment* and Orpheus in Gluck's *Orpheus and Euridice*.

## JAY BROADHURST

Jay Broadhurst is a Manchester-born undergraduate tenor studying with Matthew Best. Having recently made his professional debut as Un Chef in Massenet's *Le roi de Lahore* (Dorset Opera Festival), he is thrilled to join Garsington Opera Festival as an Alvarez Young Artist in their upcoming season. Previous engagements include Lensky in *Eugene Onegin* (Preston Opera), Preacher in Bernstein's *Mass* at The Bridgewater Hall (RNCM) and RNCM excerpt performances including Ferrando and Fracasso in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* and *La finta semplice* respectively.

## PATRICK OSBORNE

Patrick is a postgraduate bass-baritone studying with Matthew Best, supported by the Hargreaves and Ball Scholarship and the Maurice and Jean Buckley Award. Previous roles at the RNCM

include Frank, *Die Fledermaus* for RNCM Opera, David A Hand of *Bridge* with RNCM Spotlight, and Registrar *Madama Butterfly* in partnership with the Hallé. Other engagements include chorus for *Parsifal* with the Edvard Grieg Kor and Bergen Philharmonic and Young Artist for *La sonnambula* with Buxton International Festival. Recent concert highlights include Mozart's *Coronation Mass* for Ulverston International Festival and performances of Bruckner's *Mass in F minor*, Haydn's *The Creation*, Handel's *Messiah* and *Athaliah*.

## ISHAY RAVINA

Ishay is studying for a Master's under the guidance of Matthew Best, supported by the James and Mary Glass Scholarship. During his studies, Ishay has taken part in masterclasses, competitions, and external sessions. Ishay had the privilege of participating in the final of the Joyce and Michael Kennedy Award for the Singing of Strauss, and was part of the street chorus in the RNCM's production of Bernstein's *Mass* at The Bridgewater Hall. Ishay's wide repertoire includes more than 50 songs in more than five different languages. Opera roles include Amantio

di Niccolao (*Gianni Schicchi*), Papageno (*Magic Flute*) and Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*). Last summer, Ishay played the role of the Count in *The Marriage of Figaro* for Chicago Summer Opera Programme. Future plans include the role of Germano in *La Scala di Seta*.

## JESSICA HOPKINS

Jessica is studying with Mary Plazas at the RNCM, having previously read music as a choral scholar at Clare College, Cambridge.

Recent roles include Maria Bertram in Dove's *Mansfield Park* (RNCM), Cendrillon in Massenet's *Cendrillon* (Bedfordshire Youth Opera) and Clorinda in Rossini's *La Cenerentola* (Aylesbury Opera). Jessica also appeared as a Young Artist with the Buxton International Festival for 2022 and 2023, performing in the chorus for Rossini's *La donna del lago* and Bellini's *La Sonnambula*.

Jessica is extremely grateful to Help Musicians, the Tillett Trust, the Colin Keer Trust, the D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust and the Waverley Fund for their support towards her studies this year.

# CAST BIOGRAPHIES

---

## MATTHEW SECOMBE

Matthew's opera engagements have included Eisenstein in RNCM's *Die Fledermaus*, Masetto in Surrey Opera's *Don Giovanni* at the Minack, and the Crocodile God in Darren Berry's *The Crocodile of Old Kang Pow* for Tête-à-Tête. He was nominated for the Offies for his performance in HGO's *Venus and Adonis* and *Dido and Aeneas*.

Matthew's oratorio solos have included *Messiah* in Truro Cathedral, Haydn's *Paukenmesse* in Holy Trinity Church Sloane Square, and Mendelssohn's *Elijah* in Barts Great Hall. He is a member of Kantos.

His studies are supported by the Andrew Lloyd-Webber Foundation, the Maria Björnson Memorial Fund, and Ann Gerrard bursaries.

## CHARLOTTE BAKER

Charlotte Baker is a soprano from Berkshire in the second year of her postgraduate degree studying with Mary Plazas, generously supported by the D'Oyly Carte Award and the Waverly Fund. She previously studied with Louise Winter before graduating with

First Class Honours. Charlotte has sung the roles of Blanche in André Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire* (2023), Miss Page in Vaughan Williams' *Sir John in Love* (2022) and Miss Pinkerton in Menotti's *The Old Maid and the Thief* (2021) in RNCM Opera Scenes. Charlotte passionately believes that music should be accessible to all - she teaches singing and flute for Rochdale Music Service.

## WILLIAM JOWETT

William is a third-year undergraduate baritone from Cardiff studying with Matthew Best.

In 2021, whilst at the Junior RWCMD, William originated the role of The Bookworm in a new chamber opera *The Y Knot* by Julia Plaut as part of the College's *Atmospheres* festival.

At the RNCM, William has embraced opportunities in both solo and ensemble settings; as a chorus member for RNCM's production of *Die Fledermaus*, and more recently as a Street Chorus soloist for the college's 50th anniversary performance of Leonard Bernstein's *Mass*. He also originated the role of Marsayas in RNCM composer

Devon Bonelli's genre defying chamber opera *Apollo and Marsayas*, which won the RNCM Rosamund Prize for composition.

William is looking forward to performing the role of Maslyenitsa in *The Snow Maiden*, and from this hopes to pursue a diverse and fulfilling career.

## DAVID BICARREGUI

David is in his last year of the Joint Course undergraduate programme. Having graduated from The University of Manchester with First Class Honours in musicology and composition, David is now finishing his GRNCM diploma at the RNCM under the tutelage of Andrew Heggie. Operatic credits include: *The Magic Flute*, *Second Armed Man* (2022), *La bohème* (2020), *Carmen* (2019) (Oxford Opera); *Le Roi de Lahore*, *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Dorset Opera); *Mrs President*, *James Blood* (UoM Opera); *Die Fledermaus* (RNCM). As a composer, David's focusses mainly on vocal repertoire, including *Capsule*, a chamber opera premiering in 2024, and *Song of Ourselves, an Earthen Requiem* (2020).

### **SOPHIE CLARKE**

Sophie Clarke is a mezzo-soprano from Liverpool studying for a Postgraduate Diploma in Advanced Studies. She is the first RNCM student to be sponsored by the international Gilbert and Sullivan Society and is also kindly sponsored by Mr Snook. Sophie is the winner of the RNCM Bessie Cronshaw/Frost Brownson Song Cycle Competition 2023 and Patricia Routledge National English Song Competition 2022. Performance highlights include *Witch* in Sondheim's *Into The Woods* for the RNCM's 50th anniversary and mezzo-soprano Soloist in Bernstein's *Mass* at The Royal Festival Hall, conducted by Marin Alsop, and at The Bridgewater Hall for the Manchester premiere.

### **SARA DONNELLY**

Soprano Sara Donnelly holds a Bachelor of Music in Performance and Graduate Certificate in Music Studies from the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University (QCGU), where she was awarded the Linda Edith Allen Undergraduate and Postgraduate Award, Donald Penman Prize and Elizabeth Muir Postgraduate Award. Operatic highlights include her

role debut as Nella in Opera Gold Coast's production of *Gianni Schicchi*, Poussette in Massenet's *Manon* (QCGU Scenes), Pamina in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* (QCGU Scenes), Dido in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* (QCGU), Anna Maurrant in Kurt Weill's *Street Scene* (QCGU) and Stella in Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire* (RNCM Opera Scenes). Sara is in her final year of her Master of Music at RNCM and was recently awarded the Dame Eva Turner Award, and is sponsored by the Muriel Berry Scholarship.

### **ALEXANDER GIBB**

Alexander Gibb is a South African baritone, born in Johannesburg. He graduated from Stellenbosch University and is now studying for his Master's with Quentin Hayes, generously supported by the Lord and Lady Lurgan Trust, the Sylvia Wyndham Bursary, the Maurice and Jean Buckley Award and the Hilda Collens Memorial Award.

Alex's previous performances include Sir Thomas Bertram in RNCM's production of Johnathan Dove's *Mansfield Park*, *The Merry Widow* for the SuidOosterfees at the Artscape Theater in Cape Town, as well

as RNCM'S Opera Scenes, where he played the roles of Colatinus from Britten's *Rape of Lucretia* and Steve from Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

### **SIÂN DAVIES**

Siân Davies is a Welsh mezzo-soprano under the tutelage of Antonia Sotgiu. Her studies are generously supported by the Alice Orrell and A&N Kendall Award, The Annie Ridyard Scholarship and the Riga Heesom Award. Recent highlights include performances with Sir Stephen Hough and RNCM Songsters.

As a child, Siân sang with local and national ensembles and her church choir. Her love of church music and the choral tradition has stayed with her, and she is proud to conduct the choir at Holy Innocents Church in Fallowfield. She also enjoys teaching singing and performing with the RNCM Chamber Choir.

### **DOMINIC MORGAN**

Dominic is a versatile young tenor from Sussex, currently studying at the RNCM with Paul Nilon. Recent highlights include taking part in Opera North's chorus mentorship scheme, joining Buxton International Festival as a member of the

# CAST BIOGRAPHIES

---

chorus for *La Sonnambula*, and performing a wide selection of scenes for Clonter's Spring Opera Showcase.

## **KANCHANA JAISHANKAR**

Kanchana Jaishankar is a contralto from New Delhi India, currently studying with Hilary Summers. This year, Kanchana is the recipient of the Annie Ridyard Scholarship and the British Council GREAT Scholarship. Notable roles include covering Drebyednyetsov (*Cherry Town*) with the Welsh National Opera (Young Company), Olga (*Eugene Onegin*) with Preston Opera and Suzuki (*Madama Butterfly*) with the North Wales Opera Studio. Solo appearances include work for BBC Radio Manchester, Lancashire and ITV. Apart from singing, Kanchana is the producer of the Manchester Indian Film Festival, part of the wider London Indian Film Festival. She has previously enjoyed an extensive career as a fashion model with work for Vogue India, Bazaar India, Turkey, Elle India and Elle UK, Dior Beauty and Swarovski.

## **LIAM FORREST**

Liam Forrest, from Dunfermline, Fife, is a postgraduate tenor studying with Matthew Best,

kindly supported by the Andrew Lloyd Webber foundation, The Waverley Fund, and the Dame Patricia Routledge Bursary. In 2022, he graduated from the University of Aberdeen with a Bachelor of Music with Honours. Liam has performed the Mozart *Requiem* and Schubert's *Mass in G minor* with Haddo House Choral and Opera Society, and as a Drapers' Scholar, he performed at The Drapers' Hall, London. In June 2023, Liam performed the role of Mr Rushworth in Jonathan Dove's *Mansfield Park* with Byre Opera in St Andrew's, Scotland.

## **ADAM JARMAN**

Originally from Kent, Adam Jarman is studying for a PgDip under the tutelage of Peter Wilson. He is thankful for support from the Alice Orrell and A&N Kendall Award which has made his continued study possible. Prior to this, Adam completed an MMus at the RNCM (2021-2023) and a BMus at Royal Holloway, University of London (2015-2018) where he sang in the college Chapel Choir. He has previously performed the roles of Dr Falke and Dr Bartolo at the RNCM. Externally, he has worked for Opera Holland Park (2023), Clonter Opera (2023) and

Buxton International Festival (2022).

## **BONNIE CALLAGHAN**

Soprano Bonnie Callaghan is studying for a Postgraduate Diploma with Yvonne Howard, generously supported by a Dame Eva Turner Scholarship. In December 2022 she made her role debut as Adele in *Die Fledermaus* for RNCM Opera. The same year, she sang in the chorus of Bellini's *La Sonnambula* with Random Opera Company where she covered the role of Lisa. Past engagements include Cis in *Albert Herring* with Opera di Firenze's Maggio Musicale Fiorentino (2016) and for Buxton International Festival (2017).

## **OLIVIA HAMBLYN**

Olivia Hamblyn is a final year Master's student, generously supported by Annie Ridyard and Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation Scholarships.

Recent solo engagements include, Julia Bertram in RNCM Opera's production of *Mansfield Park* by Jonathan Dove, alto soloist for Vivaldi's *Gloria* with Huddersfield Choral Society and mezzo-soprano soloist in the RNCM Opera Gala at The Bridgewater Hall, Manchester.

Alongside this, Olivia is also an emerging choral conductor, working with the Hallé, Sale Youth Choirs, RNCM and Meraki Choir. She has also recently been appointed as the Assistant Conductor to the Youth Ensembles of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra.

#### **NICHOLAS COLLINS**

Nicholas Collins, a 24-year-old tenor from Melbourne, Australia, completed his Bachelor of Music at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, graduating with First Class Honours in 2021. Nicholas has been involved in many performances and notably, was cast as the lead in Victoria Opera's Youth production of Schubert's *The Friends of Salamanca* (2021). In 2017 he sung with his Chamber Choir in Australia at the Summa Cum Laude Festival based in Vienna, Austria. During this time, Nicholas was invited to be the soloist at the Wiener Musikverein, performing the closing anthem of the festival. While in Melbourne, Nicholas was fortunate to learn from Stephen Grant, Jason Wasley, Roger Lemke, and the late Andrew Sinclair. Nicholas now resides in Manchester and

is in the second year of his postgraduate degree, studying with Paul Nilon. During his studies in the UK, he has been involved in RNCM Opera Scenes by Dove and Britten and portrayed the role of Don Curzio in Chicago Summer Opera's production of *Le nozze di Figaro*. Nicholas has many exciting projects and performances planned for the near future. He thoroughly enjoys being a boggart.

#### **KRISTEN GREGORY**

Four-year undergraduate tenor Kristen Gregory studies with Thomas Schulze. Throughout his time at the RNCM, Kristen has sung in the chorus of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Die Fledermaus* by Johann Strauss II. He has also played the roles of Vere from Britten's *Billy Budd* and Pelleas in Debussy's *Pelleas et Melisande* in RNCM Opera Scenes. Kristen is looking to continue his studies next year at postgraduate level, auditioning in both Manchester and London.

#### **DAISY MITCHELL**

Daisy is a mezzo-soprano studying with Jane Irwin and Amanda Roocroft, generously supported by the William

and Francis Dobie Charitable Foundation.

Recent engagements include performing in the chorus of *Carmen* as a Young Artist with Waterperry Opera Festival. Other roles at Waterperry include Nancy (*Albert Herring*, scenes), Idamante (*Idomeneo*, scenes), Sally (*A Hand of Bridge*) and Third Lady (*Die Zauberflöte*, scenes). Other work includes *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (The Grange Festival), Emmie in *Albert Herring* (Royal Academy Opera), Shepherdess in *Venus and Adonis* and as a chorus member in *The Cunning Little Vixen* (Royal Academy Opera). Daisy is excited to be part of the Opera North's Chorus Mentorship Scheme.

# RNCM

ROYAL NORTHERN  
COLLEGE of MUSIC



*This booklet has been printed on  
Eco FSC-Certified paper.*