



RNCM

SUN 8 - SAT 14 DEC 2024

# RNCM Opera Chabrier: L'étoile

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RNCM

SPRING 2025

FRI 17 JAN

# A Kabuki Winterreise: Spring Snow

Merging a celebrated song cycle with the haunting melodies of shamisen music and the graceful movements of traditional Japanese dance-theatre

PROGRAMME

**Franz Schubert** *Winterreise* Op 89 D 911  
Interspersed with short kabuki interludes

PERFORMERS

**Fleur Barron** *mezzo-soprano*  
**Suleiman Suleiman** *actor/dancer*  
**Julius Drake** *piano*  
**Hibiki Ichikawa** *shamisen*

TICKETS FROM £14



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Sun 8 and Sat 14 Dec, 3pm  
Tue 10 and Wed 11 Dec, 7.30pm  
RNCM Theatre

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# Chabrier: *L'étoile*

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Performance materials for *L'étoile* edited by Hugh Macdonald and Paul Prévost, and published by Bärenreiter-Verlag, Kassel.

Performed by arrangement with Faber Music Ltd, London.

English dialogue by Jeremy Sams and used by arrangement with Josef Weinberger Limited.

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**Patron**

His Majesty King Charles III

**Principal**

Professor Linda Merrick CBE

**President**

Sir John Tomlinson CBE

**Chair**

Ravi Gupta

# Synopsis

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## ACT 1

King Ouf, in disguise, searches for a suitable subject to execute as the grand finale to his birthday celebrations.

Ambassador Hérissou de Porc-Épic and his wife, Aloès, arrive, accompanied by his secretary, Tapioca, and Laoula, the daughter of a neighbouring monarch. They are travelling incognito, and the princess is being passed off as Hérissou's wife. Their mission, of which Laoula is unaware, is to marry her to King Ouf.

Complications arise when Laoula and Lazuli, a poor peddler, fall in love at first sight. Lazuli believes Laoula's marriage to Hérissou prevents their courtship.

Wanting to be left alone, Lazuli insults the disguised king and thus becomes the perfect candidate for death by impalement. Sirocco, the king's astrologer, reveals that the fates of the king and Lazuli are linked; the stars predict that if one dies, the other will follow within a day.

His life now precious, Lazuli is pardoned and escorted with honours into the palace.

*Interval*

## ACT 2

Lazuli grows bored with the luxury of the palace and longs for Laoula. He confesses to Ouf and Sirocco that he is in love with a married woman, and they encourage him to pursue her.

Ouf, still unaware of the disguises, imprisons Laoula's supposed husband, Hérissou, furthering Laoula and Lazuli's hopes of being together. Ouf determines to marry Aloès (who is in love with the secretary Tapioca) and Laoula and Lazuli secretly elope. Hérissou escapes and orders Lazuli to be shot.

Laoula is found safe and well, but Lazuli is presumed dead. Recalling the astrologer's earlier prediction, Ouf bemoans his own impending death.

## ACT 3

Lazuli, who survived the gunshot, overhears Ouf, Sirocco, and Hérissou discussing the situation, and decides to reveal himself to Laoula. They plan a second elopement.

The king and Sirocco turn to alcohol and try to raise their spirits with a shot of chartreuse. Ouf, desperate to marry and secure an heir to the throne, decides to marry Laoula, despite only having hours to live. However, when the time comes, Ouf does not die, and Lazuli is found.

All ends well. Ouf renounces his claim to Laoula, and everyone rejoices as the two lovers are reunited.

# Creative Team

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**Martin Pickard** conductor

**Mark Burns** director

**Adrian Linford** designer

**Jake Wiltshire** lighting designer

**Benjamin Huth\*** assistant conductor

**Kevin Thraves** chorus master

**Bethan Rhys William** choreographer

**Lynne Dawson, Alex Vonrospace**

French language coaches

**Tom Deazley** assistant director

**Tomek Pieczora** production répétiteur

**Rosina Flueckiger** second assistant conductor

**\*SAT 14 DEC**

# Casts (in order of appearance)

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**Samuel Horton** Patacha/Chief of Police

**Edward Wenborn** Zalzal/A Servant

**Jay Broadhurst, Kristen Gregory\*** King Ouf

**William Jowett, Christian Loizou\*** *Sirocco*

**Charlotte Baker, Kirsty McNaughton\***

Princess Laoula

**Rosa Sparks, Hannah Andrusier\*** Aloès

**Bradyn Debysingh, Brennan Alleyne\*** Tapioca

**Daniel Ott** Hérissou de Porc-Épic

**Ellena Hicks, Daisy Mitchell\*** Lazuli

**Kitty Casey** Oasis

**Ellie Forrester** Asphodèle

**Esther Shea** Youka

**Siân Davies** Adza

**Ruby Hendry** Zinnia

**Ruby Donnelly** Koukouli

**SUN 8 AND WED 11 DEC**

**\*TUE 10 AND SAT 14 DEC**

# Covers

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**Aaron Peters** Patacha/Chief of Police

**Harrison Morton-Deaville** Zalzal/A Servant

**Alex Riddell** Hérissou de Porc-Épic

**Maggie Zhao** Oasis

**Eirwen Roberts** Asphodèle

**Elena Whiteley** Youka

**Myome Mortimer-Davies** Adza

**Midia Kalou** Zinnia

**Sarah Rappoport** Koukouli

# RNCM Opera Chorus

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Sophia Brown  
Madeleine Wickham Brown  
Matilda Chen  
Jasmine Colgan  
Nia Edwards  
Katherine Foxall  
Rosalind Hardie  
Phoebe Heywood  
Lottie Howden  
Glesni Jones  
Milly Lennox  
Larissa Lourenço  
Leah Luo  
Poppy Orrell  
Jaz Randall  
Sarah Rappoport  
Charlotte Thomson  
Emma Turetskaya  
Matthew Vining  
Rachel Wheatley

Bryan Au Yeung  
Oliver Barber  
Isaac Bentley  
Joshua Carton  
Johnny Derbyshire  
Oscar Fairclough  
Barney Fildes  
Benjamin Finnie  
Billy Gardiner  
Yucheng Huo  
Ian Lam  
Oliver Mollett  
Liam Ormiston  
Harry Priestley  
Lewis Reardon  
Nico Shaw  
Pip Thomson  
Colm Traynor-Bucknall  
Alex Yehorychev  
Samuel Yuen

# RNCM Opera Orchestra

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## FIRST VIOLINS

Tako Tkabladze  
Ellie Prout  
David Harris  
Yuqin Zhang  
Esther Clay  
Annie Meaden  
Joe Steel  
Sophie Wu  
Thomas Bentley  
Emma Copp

## SECOND VIOLINS

Siyang Tang  
Edward Owen  
Sally Lee  
Michael Capecci  
Nyra Jain  
Kinga Kaluza  
Joel Hill  
Zoe Hennessy

## VIOLAS

Xueer Wu  
Emily O'Dell  
Alexandra Harrison  
Sophie Combes  
Eadaoin Drumgoole  
Celeste Meisel  
Abi Hammett

## CELLOS

Daniel Shearer  
Abigail Webb  
Isabella Farleigh  
Lola Garcia Marquez  
Chloe Chen

## BASSES

Duarte Colaco  
Thomas Judge  
Tom Betts

## FLUTES

Maisy Shaw (picc)  
Matthew Jones (picc)

## OBOES

Shihan Liu

## CLARINETS

Lucy Irving  
Miles Santner

## BASSOON

Hazalen Tang

## HORNS

Cecily OBrien  
Finn Smith

## CORNETS

Ainslee Farrar  
Jingrong Hua

## TROMBONE

Tate Cassells

## TIMPANI

Kiki Liang

## PERCUSSION

Michael McKeague  
Lois Lezdkan  
Nathan Jackson

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# School of Vocal Studies and Opera

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

**Kevin Thraves** Deputy Head of Opera

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

**Alex Brown** School of Vocal Studies and Opera Administrator

# RNCM Orchestras and Ensembles

---

**Andrew Bayly** Head of Ensembles

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

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

**Edgar Divver** Orchestras and Ensembles Assistant Manager

**Abigail Flood** Ensembles Administrator

**Jack Grime** Chamber Music and Conducting Administrator

**Amy Brown** Ensembles Librarian

# RNCM Technical Team

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

**Greg Skipworth** Company Manager

**Tracey Collinson** Stage Manager

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

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

**Tina Blatt** Additional Props

**Julie Parker** Lighting Manager

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

**Ellie Whitfield, Simon Alford** Deputy Technical Manager (Lighting)

**Gary Blackburn** Flyman

**Wes Harding, Andrew Deaville, Chris Barrington** Stage Technicians

**Lucy Burscough** Prop Maker

**Elaine Needham** Wardrobe Manager

**Rebecca Parkes** Deputy Wardrobe Manager

**Elsie Howard** Wardrobe Assistant

**JamieLee Donoghue** Wardrobe Placement

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

**Kevin Thraves** Surtitles Creation

**Jemina Gray** Surtitles Operator

**Setfree Projects Ltd** Scenic Construction

## CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

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### MARTIN PICKARD

After studying at Cambridge University and the Royal College of Music, Martin Pickard began his career in Germany, working as a répétiteur, conductor, and chorusmaster in the opera houses of Kiel and Nuremberg. On returning to the UK, he joined Opera North, where he conducted more than 30 different productions including *The Return of Ulysses*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Macbeth*, *La Traviata*, *Falstaff*, *Carmen*, *Boris Godunov*, *Eugene Onegin*, *La Bohème*, *The Snow Maiden*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Peter Grimes*. From 2008 - 2015 he was Opera North's Head of Music.

Alongside his work for Opera North, Martin has also worked with English National Opera, Opéra Les Azuriales, Bregenzer Festspiele, Buxton Festival, Perth International Arts Festival (Western Australia), and Matav Hungarian Symphony Orchestra (Budapest). In 2004, he conducted performances of Strauss's *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at the Tiroler Landestheater (Innsbruck) in a production by Brigitte Fassbaender.

A long association with the Glyndebourne Festival has seen him working there as an assistant and senior coach for conductors including Vladimir Jurowski, Jiří Bělohlávek, and Robin Ticciati. In 2006, he made his Glyndebourne conducting début with *The Bartered Bride*.

Between 2011 and 2016 he was part of the team which developed Opera North's acclaimed *Ring Cycle*, conducted by Richard Farnes. Between 2018 and 2024 he was assistant conductor on the London Philharmonic Orchestra's *Ring Cycle*, conducted by Vladimir Jurowski.

Martin is also active as a pianist, appearing with singers including Lesley Garrett, Catherine Wyn-Rogers, Fflur Wyn, Ilker Arcayürek and Brindley Sherratt. He is a visiting lecturer at the University of Leeds and a visiting coach at the RNCM, the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, the National Opera Studio, and the Oxenfoord International Summer School.

### MARK BURNS

Mark Burns grew up in Buxton and studied at the Royal Northern College of Music. He regularly works with many of the UK's major opera companies such as Royal Opera, Scottish Opera and Welsh National Opera. He also has a close association with Buxton International Festival for whom he has directed numerous productions including *Tisbe*, *Lucio Papirio Dittatore* and *La Voix Humaine*, the latter starring Dame Felicity Lott. He was also Associate Board Member of Buxton International Festival for several years until 2021. Mark has a passion for working with young artists and has directed at the Royal Academy of Music and Royal Northern College of Music, as well as working with the Emerging Artists at Scottish Opera. Previously, Mark has assisted Sir Thomas Allen on his productions of *Don Giovanni* and *The Barber of Seville* for Scottish Opera. Mark has also recently revived Silent Opera's production of *Vixen* at the Hong Kong Arts Festival.

## CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

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### ADRIAN LINFORD

Adrian was born in Cambridgeshire, trained at Wimbledon School of Art, and now lives in London.

His credits in the UK and Europe include *Manon Lescaut*, *Hansel and Gretel*, the UK première of Jake Heggie's opera *Dead Man Walking*, *Street Scene*, *Agrippina*, and Judith Weir's *The Vanishing Bridegroom*. He designed costumes for *Eugene Onegin* and *L'elisir d'amore* (both for West Green Opera), with further designs including *The Tempest* and *Henry V* (Shakespeare's Rose Theatre, York), *King Lear* (UK Tour), and *The Winter's Tale*. He also designed the current production of *The Marriage of Figaro* in Lübeck, Germany, *Il turco in Italia* (Nantes/Luxembourg Opera), and Sondheim's *Sunday in the Park with George* (Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris).

His designs for *Bluebeard's Castle*, originally staged in London (where it won the Royal Philharmonic Award for Opera), have since been presented in Atlanta, Toronto (nominated for Best Opera Design at the Dora Awards), New Zealand, the Edinburgh International Festival, and the Beijing Music Festival, and are being revived in Edmonton, Canada, this year, with further productions planned for 2026, including in Finland next spring.

In the US, his productions include *Rigoletto* and *La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein* (both for Santa Fe Opera), *Falstaff* (LA Opera, Dallas Opera, and Houston Grand Opera), *Orfeo ed Eurydice* (Minnesota Opera), *The Bald Soprano* and *The Maids* (New York), *The Barber of Seville* for Opera San José (which will be revived by Omaha Opera and Palm Beach Opera in 2026), and his British production of *The Habit of Art*, which received a New York Times Critic's Pick (during the Brits Off-Broadway season) last summer in New York.

### JAKE WILTSHIRE

Jake designs extensively both in the UK and worldwide. His work has appeared with major opera companies and festivals, including the Royal Opera House, Welsh National Opera, Irish National Opera, New Zealand Opera, Garsington Opera and St Galler Festspiele, as well as at many of the UK's top music conservatoires. Internationally, he's worked throughout Europe, North America, and Asia in a variety of venues from traditional proscenium arch theatres to unique site-specific spaces. In 2009, he was made an Honorary Associate of the Royal Academy of Music and in 2023, he was nominated for a Canadian Dora Mavor Moore Award for outstanding lighting design.

Recent credits include: *L'Olimpiade*, a co-production between the Royal Opera House, Irish National Opera, and Fribourg Nouvel Opera; *Nabucco* for Savonlinna Opera Festival, Finland; *Albert Herring* for Scottish Opera; *Andrea Chenier* for St Galler Festspiele, Switzerland; *Don Giovanni* for Kilden Opera, Norway; *The Magic Flute* and *Don Pasquale* for Welsh National Opera; *Blue Beard's Castle* for Theatre of Sound (Winner of the Royal Philharmonic Society Award) London, Atlanta, Beijing and Toronto; *Amadigi* and *Le Comte Ory* for Garsington Opera; *Peter Pan* for Haydn Fondazione, Italy; and *Vixen* for Silent Opera in association with ENO, (London, Helsinki, Trento, Hong Kong and Beijing). Jake has also lit multiple productions for Buxton International Opera Festival, Longborough Festival Opera, and Opera Holland Park. Previous RNCM productions include *Theodora* and *Die Fledermaus*.

Future engagements include *Der fliegende Holländer* for Trondheim Opera, Norway and *Il viaggio a Reims* for Oper Leipzig, Germany.

## CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

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### BENJAMIN HUTH

Benjamin Huth (Mills Williams Junior Fellow in Conducting) studied Church Music and Conducting in Leipzig and Detmold. He worked as an assistant at theatres in Leipzig and Cologne, and with the Academic Orchestra Leipzig. In 2020, he became a répétiteur at the Landestheater Detmold and, in 2022, he was promoted to Second Kapellmeister. During his time in Detmold, he conducted several productions including *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Das Land des Lächelns*, *Die lustige Witwe*, *Jesus Christ Superstar* and many more. He was also assistant conductor of the Detmold Orchestra Society and the Free Symphony Orchestra.

Benjamin has guest conducted at the Filarmonica Mihail Jora Bacau, Philharmonie Südwestfalen, Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie, and Vogtland Philharmonie Greiz-Reichenbach. He has participated in masterclasses with Mark Heron, Johannes Schlaefli, and Ekhart Wycik. In 2021, he won second prize at the IX Concorso Internazionale per Direttori D'Opera 'Luigi Mancinelli'.

Before winning the Fellowship at the RNCM, Benjamin worked at Theatre Plauen-Zwickau.

### 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, 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 première 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.

## CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

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### BETHAN RHYS WILIAM

In 1996, Bethan was a principal lecturer in physical awareness, movement, and dance at the RNCM from 1996 until her retirement in 2022. During this time, she was choreographer/movement coach for the College's numerous and highly acclaimed opera productions. She is delighted to return as guest choreographer in this production of *L'étoile*.

Bethan was born in Swansea and educated at Altrincham Grammar School, Cheshire. After studying vocational dance at Bush Davies School, East Grinstead, her professional dancing career began with the Royal Opera Ballet of Ghent, Belgium and continued with Ballet International, the Iranian National Ballet, Malmö Stadsteater, and Northern Ballet Theatre. Her career included 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. She has been a qualified fitness instructor since 1989 and has taught health related fitness in various further education institutions. During the 1980s, she appeared in several TV drama productions including the Welsh soap *Pobol Y Cwm* and, more recently, in Channel 4's *It's a Sin* and BBC's *Rules of the Game*. She also appeared in the 1978 BBC production *The Magic of Dance*, presented by Dame Margot, which was rebroadcast in January 2024.

### TOM DEAZLEY

Tom Deazley is a young director from Belfast, Northern Ireland, and a graduate of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland where he trained with singers such as Iain Paton, Karen Cargill, and Dame Ann Murray. Finding himself in opera at a young age, he performed Miles in Britten's *Turn of the Screw* at the likes of Opernhaus Zürich, Kolobov Novaya Opera Moscow, and Northern Ireland Opera.

After graduating, he was a Young Artist at Nevill Holt Opera in their productions of *La bohème* and *The Barber of Seville* and performed in several shows with the Gilbert and Sullivan International Festival. As a director, he has completed observerships at Longborough Festival Opera with Sarah Fahie for their production of Puccini's *La bohème*, and at Wexford Festival Opera with Orpha Phelan for their production of Donizetti's *Le convenienze ed inconvenienze teatrali*. He has been a facilitating artist at both Ulster Touring Opera and The Playhouse Theatre Derry, and has assisted Anna Morrissey at Blackheath Halls Opera, and Mathilda du Tillieul McNicol at the Royal Opera House's Linbury Theatre.

## CAST BIOGRAPHIES

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### **SAMUEL HORTON**

Samuel, from Stoke-on-Trent, studies under the tutelage of Mark Wildman. His operatic experience includes the roles of Male Chorus in the 2024 British Youth Opera production of *The Rape of Lucretia*, Mr Rushworth in the RNCM's Spring 2023 production of *Mansfield Park*, and Dr Blind in the RNCM's 50th anniversary production of *Die Fledermaus* (2022). In May 2024, Samuel performed as the tenor soloist in Finzi's *Dies Natalis* with the Amaretti Chamber Orchestra. He is also excited to announce that he will perform the role of Sir Philip Wingrave in Britten's *Owen Wingrave* for the RNCM in spring 2025.

### **EDWARD WENBORN**

Edward is currently studying under Quentin Hayes and is excited to make his RNCM role debut as Zalzal. He previously obtained a degree in Classics from Durham University and has performed various operatic roles, including Pig in Leeds Youth Opera's 2022 production of Jonathan Dove's *The Enchanted Pig*. Recent career highlights include singing with The Hallé Orchestra and Opera North Chorus in Verdi's

*Simon Boccanegra*, receiving a choral scholarship with the Diocese of Manchester, and being highly commended in the 2024 Alexander Young Singing Competition.

### **JAY BROADHURST**

Jay Broadhurst is a Manchester-born lyric tenor studying with Mark Wildman. For the 2023/24 season, Jay created the role of Stephen in the world premiere of Bicarregui's *Capsule* and was an Alvarez Young Artist with Garsington Opera Festival. Operatic roles include Lensky *Eugene Onegin* (Preston Opera), Don Curzio *Le nozze di Figaro* (Garsington OperaFirst), Un Chef *Le roi de Lahore* (Dorset Opera Festival), Tsar Berendeyi *The Snow Maiden* (RNCM Opera), Spoletta *Tosca* (NPO), Preacher Bernstein's *Mass* (RNCM), and Macduff Verdi's *Macbeth*. Jay is generously supported by the Drapers' de Turckheim Scholarship and the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation Scholarship.

### **KRISTEN GREGORY**

Kristen Gregory, a 22-year-old tenor, is currently in his first postgraduate year at the RNCM. His opera roles include

Stephen in David Bicarregui's *Capsule*, Mr Rushworth in Dove's *Mansfield Park*, Don Eusebio in Rossini's *L'occasione fa il ladro*, and Boggart in the RNCM's 2023 production of Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Snow Maiden*. In Dorset Opera's 2023 *Le Roi De Lahore*, he covered the role of Un Chef and will perform Gastone in their 50th Anniversary Gala Concert in 2024. Kristen was the tenor soloist in Mozart's *Great Mass* in C minor with the RNCM Chamber Choir and Orchestra. He is supported by the South Square Trust, the Gilbert and Sullivan Society Award, and the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation Scholarship.

### **WILLIAM JOWETT**

William is a Cardiff-born baritone currently in his fourth year of undergraduate studies. He was previously taught by Matthew Best and now studies with Mark Wildman.

His recent operatic experience includes performing as Tarquinius in *The Rape of Lucretia* (British Youth Opera), Blansac in *La scala di seta* (RNCM), Maslyenitsa in *The Snow Maiden* (RNCM), and as a Chorus member in *Die*

## CAST BIOGRAPHIES

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*Fledermaus* (RNCM). William is the recipient of the 2024 Manchester Welsh Society Prize and won first place in both the Elsie Thurston and James Martin Oncken Song Prizes at the RNCM. He is also grateful to the Ian Scott Award scholarship for supporting his studies.

### CHRISTIAN LOIZOU

Bass-baritone Christian Loizou is a graduate of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and is currently an ABRSM scholarship-holder at the Royal Northern College of Music, studying with Mark Wildman. He debuted at Wexford Festival Opera in 2023 as Moroccan Soldier No 2 in *La ciociara* (Tutino), and in the chorus, and returned in 2024 to sing the roles of Yeats and The Judge in the world première of *Lady Gregory in America* (Caruso). In 2024 he also appeared at Grange Park Opera, singing in the choruses of *Aleko* (Rachmaninov) and *Daughter of the Regiment* (Donizetti).

### CHARLOTTE BAKER

Charlotte Baker is a soprano originally from Berkshire, studying for a PGDip under the tutelage of Mary Plazas. Her studies this year are generously

supported by the Dame Eva Turner Award, the Riga Heesom Award, and the Hargreaves and Ball Scholarship. Charlotte is the 2024 winner of the Joyce and Michael Kennedy Award for the Singing of Strauss, and was a 2024 Young Artist for Buxton International Festival, appearing as chorus in Verdi's *Ernani*, and Carlos Acosta's *On Before*. Roles at the RNCM include Lucilla (Rossini's *La scala di Seta*, 2024) and Kupava (Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Snow Maiden*, 2023).

### KIRSTY MCNAUGHTON

Postgraduate Scottish soprano Kirsty McNaughton is currently studying with Eiddwen HARRY, supported by the Eva Turner Award. This summer, Kirsty was a young artist at both the Buxton International Festival and the Southrepps Festival. Laoula marks her début role in opera, and she is looking forward to performing the role of Miss Wingrave in the RNCM's spring production of *Owen Wingrave*.

### ROSA SPARKS

British soprano Rosa Sparks is completing her postgraduate diploma at the RNCM, studying under Elizabeth Ritchie. During

her studies, she won the Frederic Cox Award for Singing and received the Dame Eva Turner Award. Recent operatic roles include Emmie in *Albert Herring* (Opera North), Aloès in *L'étoile* (RNCM), and Lucilla in *La Scala di seta* (RNCM). She has also performed as Yum-Yum in *The Mikado* (Opera Anywhere) and Belinda in *Dido and Aeneas* (Opera Sparks). Rosa has a passion for contemporary music, premiering roles such as The Soprano in *Interrupted* and The Journalist in *Silverwood*. She won the John Ireland Song Prize in 2022 and has performed in oratorios including *Messiah* and *Exultate Jubilate*. Rosa is kindly supported by the Helen MacKanness Award.

### HANNAH ANDRUSIER

Hannah Andrusier is a soprano studying at the RNCM under Elizabeth Ritchie, where she holds the Eva Turner Award. She is also a Sybil Tutton Opera Award recipient and making RNCM opera her début as Aloès in *L'étoile*. Prior to her postgraduate studies, Hannah read French as a choral scholar at Somerville College, Oxford, where she sang with The Oxford Gargoyles

## CAST BIOGRAPHIES

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and performed leading roles at The Oxford Playhouse. Professionally, Hannah has sung at the Royal Albert Hall, with The Hallé and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestras, and debuted with the London Symphony Orchestra at the Barbican.

### **BRADYN DEBYSINGH**

Praised for his '*dulcet tones*' and described as '*a name you'll certainly hear more of*' (Music OMH), Bradyn Debysingh hails from Cottage Grove, Oregon, USA, and makes his RNCM Opera debut in *L'étoile*. Recent performances include Don Curzio in *Le nozze di Figaro* (Garsington Opera), Mr Su in the world première of *The Stone God* (Arcadian Opera), the title role in Carissimi's *Jephte* (Brighton Early Music Festival), and chorus work for *Aida* and *The Flying Dutchman* (Lyric Opera of Chicago). Bradyn is currently studying on the PGDip course with Mark Wildman and holds degrees from Northwestern University and Samford University. Bradyn is generously supported by the Leverhulme Trust Arts Scholarship.

### **BRENNAN ALLEYNE**

Brennan Alleyne is a postgraduate tenor and multi-instrumentalist at the RNCM, supported by the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation Scholarship and the Haworth Trust. Raised by a single mother from Dominica, Brennan has always embraced his diverse background and the unique strengths of various music genres. His performance career spans venues from the Royal Albert Hall to Gentse Feesten, with recent opera roles including *Ernani* and *The Boatswain's Mate* (Buxton International Festival), *Le nozze di Figaro* (RNCM Opera), and *Manon Lescaut* and *Die Zauberflöte* (Dorset Opera Festival). He has also collaborated with UK band SAULT, directed arrangements for the RNCM Gospel Choir, and won the Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Prize for art song performance.

### **DANIEL OTT**

Daniel Ott is a graduate of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, holding a Bachelor of Music and a Master of Music Studies. His operatic repertoire includes roles such as Nerone in *The Coronation of Poppea*

and Belcore in *L'elisir d'amore*. In 2024, he made his debut with Opera Australia as Schaunard in *La bohème* during their national tour. Daniel has also performed at notable events, including Woolworths' *Carols in the Domain* and as a guest soloist at the Zhejiang Conservatorium in China. Recently, he relocated to the UK with support from the Waverley Fund, the Leverhulme Trust Arts Scholarship, and the Wagner Society of NSW.

### **ELLENA HICKS**

Ellena is an Australian mezzo-soprano currently pursuing a Master of Music at the Royal Northern College of Music under the tutelage of Linda Richardson. She is supported by the Lady Maria Fisher Opera Scholarship and the Peter Heath Award. In 2024, Ellena was a member of the Pacific Opera Studio, where she performed Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro* and Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*. Her other operatic roles include Ottone in *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (Monteverdi/Kats-Chernin), and *Secrecy*, *Mopsa*, and *Summer* in Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*. As an alto soloist, she has performed Handel's *Messiah*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, and Mozart's *Requiem*.



## CAST BIOGRAPHIES

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### DAISY MITCHELL

Daisy is a 24-year-old mezzo-soprano postgraduate from the Staffordshire Moorlands, currently studying with Sam Queen, whilst also being mentored by Amanda Roocroft. She was an undergraduate scholar at the Royal Academy of Music, studying with Mary Nelson and Joseph Middleton. Recent engagements include Royal Page in *The Snow Maiden* at the RNCM and chorus in *Carmen* at the Waterperry Opera Festival. Other roles at Waterperry include Nancy (*Albert Herring*), Idamante (*Idomeneo*), and Sally (*A Hand of Bridge*). Daisy was a finalist in the RNCM's Frederick Cox Prize and the Joyce and Michael Kennedy Award for the Singing of Strauss.

### KITTY CASEY

Kitty Casey is a 23-year-old soprano, currently studying with Linda Richardson, generously supported by The Countess of Munster Musical Trust, Help Musicians Sybil Tutton Opera Award, and The Headley Trust. In 2023, she was a Belle-Île Young Artist for the Lyrique En Mer Festival, and also made her début at Hampstead Garden Opera as

the Sandman in *Hansel and Gretel*. She has performed small roles in Glyndebourne Festival productions from 2012-2019. In 2022 she was awarded the Dame Felicity Lott Scholarship for excellence in performance. She is also the 2024 winner of the Dame Felicity Lott Recital Prize.

### ELLIE FORRESTER

Scottish soprano Ellie is a first-year master's student studying with Mary Plazas. She has performed in the chorus of *Die Fledermaus*, and *Le nozze di Figaro* (RNCM Opera), *Manon Lescaut*, *The Magic Flute* (DOF), *Carmen*, *L'elisir d'amore*, and *Don Carlos* (Opéra de Baugé). Upcoming and recent roles include Miss Wingrave (RNCM Opera), La Contessa (Independent), and scenes as Venere, Penelope Rich, Aunt Norris, and Arminda at the RNCM. Ellie was awarded second place in the Joyce and Michael Kennedy Award for the Singing of Strauss and is an RNCM Songster. She is generously supported by the Sylvia Wyndham Bursary, Dame Eva Turner Award, McGlashan Trust, and SIET.

### ESTHER SHEA

Esther is pursuing her master's degree with Elizabeth Ritchie, supported by the Dame Eva Turner Award and the LHR Charitable Foundation. Upcoming and recent roles include Mrs Coyle in *Owen Wingrave* (RNCM Opera), Dido in *Dido and Aeneas* (Bedfordshire Youth Opera), and La Contessa in *Le nozze di Figaro* (RNCM scenes). As a concert soloist, Esther has performed in Mozart's C Minor Mass, Mendelssohn's Second Symphony, and Brahms' Ein deutsches Requiem. She reached the finals of the Frederic Cox Award for Singing and was highly commended in the Elsie Thurston Competition, James Oncken Song Prize, and the Alexander Young Prize.

### SIÂN DAVIES

Mezzo-soprano Siân Davies studies with Antonia Sotgiu and is supported by the Sybil Tutton Opera Award, the Ryan Davies Memorial Fund, an Annie Ridyard Scholarship, and the Alice Orrell and A&N Kendall Award. Career highlights include being a Young Artist at the Buxton International Festival, 5 in *Capsule* (Bicarregui), Bobylikha in *The Snow Maiden*

## CAST BIOGRAPHIES

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(Rimsky-Korsakov), the BBC Proms with the Edvard Grieg Korene (Ligeti's *Requiem*), and Street Chorus/Blues Singer in *Mass* (Bernstein). As a choral soloist, she has performed in Bach Cantatas, Haydn's *Nelson Mass*, Fauré's *Requiem*, Mendelssohn's *Hear My Prayer*, Vivaldi's *Magnificat*, and Handel's *Messiah*. Siân is also an Associate Choral Leader for the Diocese of Manchester and St Martin-in-the-Fields, Choir Director at Holy Innocents, Fallowfield, and Musical Director of the Mancunian Singers.

### **RUBY HENDRY**

Ruby is a postgraduate mezzo-soprano from West Yorkshire, currently studying with Hilary Summers. She is generously supported by a Sybil Tutton Opera Award and The Countess of Munster Musical Trust. A member of the RNCM Songsters, Ruby spent Summer 2024 as a Young Artist in the Chorus at the Buxton International Festival. She was also a finalist in the 2024 Frederic Cox Award for Singing at the RNCM and has had the opportunity to perform in masterclasses with esteemed

artists such as Jennifer Larmore, Dame Ann Murray, and Anthony Hermus.

### **RUBY DONNELLY**

Ruby is currently pursuing a postgraduate diploma, studying under Deborah Rees. Before beginning her vocal training, she graduated with First Class Honours in Chinese from the University of Edinburgh. Her operatic roles include Sally in *A Hand of Bridge* (RNCM), Fanny Price in *Mansfield Park* (RNCM Scenes), Eunice in *A Streetcar Named Desire* (RNCM Scenes), and Mother in *Maud* (Scottish Opera Young Company). Ruby has also performed as the 'World Without End' soloist in Bernstein's *Mass* at The Bridgewater Hall (RNCM) and as a chorus member with Scottish Opera. She is grateful for the support of the RNCM and Sophie's Silver Lining Fund in her studies.

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