

The background of the poster features a silhouette of a woman in a long, flowing opera dress on the left, and a silhouette of a man's profile on the right. They are positioned against a vertical gradient background that transitions from a deep purple at the top to a warm orange at the bottom. On the right side, there is a vertical strip showing a textured, aged wall and a wooden staircase railing. The overall mood is dramatic and artistic.

RNCM OPERA

SUN 17 MAR - SAT 23 MAR

Rossini

La scala di seta

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COLLEGE of MUSIC

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and the **natural world.**



RNCM

Sun 17 and Sat 23 Mar, 3pm
Tue 19 and Thu 21 Mar, 7.30pm
RNCM Theatre

La scala di seta

Gioachino Rossini

La scala di seta, Farsa Comica in un Atto
Critical edition by Anders Wiklund
© Casa Ricordi Srl, Milano
(Universal Music Publishing Group, Classics & Screen)
By arrangement with G. Ricordi & Co. (London) Ltd.

Sung in Italian with English surtitles

*The performance on Tuesday 19 March is dedicated to the memory of
Dame Alexandra Burslem, former Governor and long-standing friend
and supporter of the RNCM.*

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Her Majesty The Late Queen
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Professor Linda Merrick CBE
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Ravi Gupta

Synopsis

AN APARTMENT IN PARIS

Giulia lives with her guardian, Dormont, who is determined she should marry Blansac. Giulia is already secretly married to Dorvil, and they use a silken ladder to meet under the cover of darkness.

Giulia is trying to get rid of her servant Germano and her cousin Lucilla, so that her husband, Dorvil, can escape down the ladder unseen. Blansac is due to arrive to make the arrangements for their forthcoming wedding. Giulia hatches a plan to divert Blansac's amorous attentions and set him up with Lucilla. Giulia persuades Germano to spy on them and report back.

Blansac arrives with Dorvil who suggests marrying Giulia is not a good idea, but this only makes him even more determined. Blansac suggests Dorvil should hide so he can observe his expertise at wooing women.

Giulia probes Blansac to see if he would be a suitable husband for Lucilla. Germano and Dorvil overhear the conversation and mistakenly think Giulia is genuinely interested in Blansac, when in fact she is laying the groundwork for her plan. Eventually, Germano and Dorvil show themselves and confusion ensues.

INTERVAL

Blansac believes Giulia has warmed to him, but when interrupted by Lucilla, he is, as predicted, instantly smitten, and the feeling is mutual.

Giulia is desperate to explain to Dorvil why she was questioning Blansac so keenly about marriage. Germano, overhearing and getting the wrong end of the stick again, thinks Giulia is planning a midnight rendezvous with Blansac. He can't keep his mouth shut and tells Lucilla about the planned assignation. They decide to eavesdrop.

There is general surprise when Dorvil climbs the ladder and enters the apartment. He is closely followed by Blansac arriving for the planned rendezvous.

Dormont, woken by the commotion, demands to know what is going on. The situation is explained, and everyone is forgiven. Dormont blesses Giulia's marriage to Dorvil and, as a bonus, consents to Lucilla and Blansac's union.

Creative Team

Wyn Davies *conductor*

Robert Chevara *director*

Jess Curtis *designer*

Jessie Addinall *lighting designer*

Matteo Dal Maso *assistant conductor (performance Sat 23 Mar)*

Antonia Sotgiu *italian language coach*

Antonio Tilli *italian language coach*

Tomek Pieczora *production répétiteur (Sir John Fisher Foundation Junior Fellow Répétiteur)*

Casts

Sun 17 and Thu 21 Mar

*Tue 19 and *Sat 23 Mar

Jessica Hopkins, Maeve Herd* Giulia

Ishay Ravina, Matthew Secombe* Germano

Charlotte Baker, Rosa Sparks* Lucilla

Yihui Wang, Liam Forrest* Dorvil

Henry Strutt, Brennan Alleyne* Dormont

Adam Jarman, William Jowett* Blansac

RNCM Opera Orchestra

FIRST VIOLINS

Sean Morrison
Elanor Leydecker
Enhao Zhang
Finn Nguyen
Xueming Sun
Ola Stanton
Rachel Stonham
Grainne White

SECOND VIOLINS

Jasmine Morris
Cameron Jackson
Sze Chun Yip
Hannah deBordes
Janis Chan
David Harris

VIOLAS

Yupeng Cai
Emma Farnsworth
Kezia Elliott
Xavier Williams

CELLOS

Tom Ellison
Fangyi Chen
Rebekah Clarke
Roujun Yan

BASSES

Marcelo Rodrigues
Bryn Davies

FLUTES

Kira Schlosser (picc)
Kaoruko Takehara
(picc)

OBOES

Caiwei Luo
Imogen Morris (cor)

CLARINETS

Abigail Martin
Cara Smith

BASSOON

Beatriz Carvalho

HORNS

Molly Bielecki
Dominic Allison

PIANO

Tom Pieczora
(19 and 23 Mar)
Daniel Pugh-Bevan
(17 and 21 Mar)

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Dr Nico de Villiers Deputy Head of Vocal Studies
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Alex Brown School of Vocal Studies and Opera Administrator

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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

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)
Simon Alford Deputy Technical Manager (Multi-skilled)
Gary Blackburn Stage Technician
Elaine Needham Wardrobe Manager
Rebecca Parkes Deputy Wardrobe Manager
Natasha Willians Wardrobe Placement
Jo Best Wigs, Hair and Make-Up Supervisor
Deema Azar Surtitles Operator
Take 1 Scenic Scenic Construction

CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

WYN DAVIES

conductor

Wyn Davies was Director of Music, New Zealand Opera, from 2005 to 2019. He served his apprenticeship at Welsh Nation Opera in the 1970s as a Repetiteur and Chorus Master and went on to conduct at English National Opera, Scottish Opera, Opera Northern Ireland, English Touring Opera, Carl Rosa Opera, and, most frequently, Opera North. He was for two years an assistant conductor at the Metropolitan Opera, New York, and was also a conductor at the Banff Centre in Canada for two years. Elsewhere, conducting has taken him to Croatia, Japan, South Africa, Australia, Belgium, Spain, France, and Italy.

His many appearances at the Buxton International Festival include conducting works by Verdi, Offenbach, Rossini, Messenger, Cimarosa and Sondheim. He is also closely associated with Clonter Opera in Cheshire.

He has conducted opera conservatoire productions at the Royal Academy of Music, Royal College of Music, Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. He last conducted at the RNCM ten years ago and, after *La scala di seta*, he will go on to conduct in Florence at Teatro La Pergola.

ROBERT CHEVARA

director

Robert Chevara is an internationally acclaimed, award-winning artist, writer, and director. His output spans the fields of opera, film, and theatre. He has written several opera libretti and poetry collections and has had a book published by Bloomsbury, and is equally active in the arenas of political engagement and both visual and performance art. He divides his time between London and Berlin.

Robert has directed at The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, The Old Vic Theatre, The San Francisco Opera, The Soho Theatre, The Royal Northern College of Music, The Opéra Comique, Paris, The Dutch National Opera Academy, Opera New Zealand, The Arcola Theatre and the Kirov Theatre, St. Petersburg.

Seminal productions have included work by Puccini, Stravinsky, Tennessee Williams, Verdi, Bizet, Shakespeare, Prokofiev, Philip Ridley, and Thomas Adès.

Future work includes Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* in London and Terrence McNally's *Frankie and Johnny* in the Clair de Lune in Brussels.

CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

JESS CURTIS

designer

Jess trained at Motley. Recent work includes *The Chester Mystery Cycle 2023* (Chester Cathedral), *Tom's Midnight Garden* (The Minack Theatre), *The Comedy of Errors* (Shakespeare North Playhouse), *Vincent River* (The Bridge Theatre, Brussels), *A Postcard from Morocco* (Dutch National Opera Academy), *Jekyll and Hyde* (Derby), *Brief Encounter* (Stephen Joseph Theatre), *Genesis Inc.* (Hampstead Theatre), *Losing Venice* (The Orange Tree Theatre), *Uncle Vanya* (The Almeida), *Villette*, *Dangerous Corner* (West Yorkshire Playhouse), *Pod*, *Provok'd* (devised at Guildhall School), *Kiss Me Quickstep*, *Haunting Julia*, *Love Letters* (The Queen's Theatre, Hornchurch), *One for the Road*, *Glass Cage*, *Follies* (Royal and Derngate, Northampton), *The Holy Rosenbergs* (National Theatre), *Hotel Cerise* (Theatre Royal, Stratford East), *Another Door Closed* (Theatre Royal Bath), *Endgame* (Liverpool Everyman), *Dangerous Corner* (West Yorkshire Playhouse and West End), *Frankenstein* (Frantic Assembly, Northampton), *Burial at Thebes* (Nottingham Playhouse/Barbican/US Tour), and *Rhapsody*, *Fantasy* (Royal Ballet at the Royal Opera House).

She has also designed the Grosvenor Park Open Air Season 2013- 2016/2021, the opening season at Storyhouse and bar interiors for Underbelly at the South Bank, Hyde Park, and Leicester Square.

She is part of the Society of British Theatre's Sustainability working group.

JESSIE ADDINALL

lighting designer

Jessie is a Hull based lighting designer. They are also associate lighting designer for The Roaring Girls and was an ALPD Lumiere (2020). Their credits include *La scala di seta* (RNCM), *Kailey* (Keithley Creative and Kala Sangam), *Snowmen* (The Herd), *Pinocchio* (Hull Truck), *Virtual Horizons* (Jack Chamberlain Creative), *These Majestic Creatures* (Stephen Joseph Theatre), *Romeo and Juliet* and *As You Like It* (Leeds Conservatoire), *We Could All Be Perfect* (Sheffield Theatres), *MODEST* (Middle Child and Milk Presents), *Brief Encounter* (The New Wolsey and Salisbury Playhouse), *Children of the Night* (CAST), *Ladies Day* (The New Vic & The Octagon Theatre), *Jack, Mum and The Beanstalk* (Hull Truck Theatre), *Macbeth* and *Twelfth Night* (Leeds Conservatoire), *Ladies Unleashed* (Hull Truck Theatre), *The Whispering Jungle* (Concrete Youth), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Hull Truck Theatre), *Teechers Leavers 22'* (Hull Truck Theatre), *The Hound of The Baskervilles* (ERT Theatre), *we used to be closer than this* (Middle Child), *Hull and High Water* (Hull Truck), *Everything I Own* (Hull Truck), *Prince Charming's Christmas Cracker* (Hull Truck), *Ducklings* (The Herd), *Beauty Queen of Leenane* (Hull Truck Theatre and Queens Theatre), *The Canary and The Crow* (Middle Child), *Beach Body Ready* (The Roaring Girls), *Paragon Dreams* (Hull Truck), *Us Against Whatever* (Middle Child), *The Ugly Duckling* (The Herd in Association with Hull Truck), *TEN* (Hull Truck)

Associate Credits include *Dogs* (Liverpool Playhouse), *71 Coltman Street* (Hull Truck Theatre), *Megalith* (Mechanimal), *Shedding a Skin* (SOHO Theatre)

CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

MATTEO DAL MASO

assistant conductor (performance Sat 23 Mar)

Matteo Dal Maso is an Italian symphonic and opera conductor. He is First Prize winner of the fifth Athens International Conducting Competition and Audience prize winner of the Orchestra di Padova e del Veneto International Conducting Competition 'Peter Maag'.

Matteo gained his international reputation conducting many professional orchestras including BBC Philharmonic, the Hallé, Manchester Camerata, Northern Ballet, Romanian Chamber Orchestra, Dallas Winds, Orchestra Filarmonica Salernitana, Orchestra di Padova e del Veneto, Lithuanian State Symphony Orchestra, Orquesta Filarmónica de Gran Canaria, Athens Philharmonia Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Youth Orchestra, and Beogradski Simfoničari. In June 2021, Matteo made his opera debut conducting Carmen at the JK Tyl Theater in Pilsen (CZ).

He has been selected to join several conducting masterclasses around the world held by Jorma Panula, Neeme Järvi, Paavo Järvi, Kristian Järvi, Cristian Măcelaru, Daniel Oren, Sir Mark Elder, Colin Metters, Michael Sanderling, Sebastian Lang-Lessing, Michalis Economou, Mark Chichon, Mark Shapiro, Isaac Karabtchevsky, Leonid Grin, Marco Angius, and Marco Zuccarini.

During his studies in the UK, Matteo has assessed with the BBC Philharmonic and Royal Liverpool Philharmonic working with conductors such as Domingo Hindoyan, John Storgards, Sir Andrew Davis, Elena Schwarz, Antony Hermus, Nil Venditti, and Mark Wigglesworth.

Besides his conducting activities, Matteo is also known as a composer. His chamber music works have been performed in important venues such as the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow, Teatro Comunale in Bologna, Teatro Carignano in Turin, and the Bernie Wohl Music Center in Manhattan, NYC.

Before starting his conducting studies at the RNCM, he played as a clarinetist in top-tier orchestras such as the Orchestra del Teatro Regio in Turin.



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CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Giulia

JESSICA HOPKINS

Jessica is currently studying with Mary Plazas at the RNCM, having previously read music as a choral scholar at Clare College, Cambridge. Recent roles include Snow Maiden in Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Snow Maiden* (RNCM), Maria Bertram in Dove's *Mansfield Park* (RNCM), Cendrillon in Massenet's *Cendrillon* (Bedfordshire Youth Opera), Clorinda in Rossini's *La Cenerentola* (Aylesbury Opera). Jessica took part in the 22-23 RNCM/Opera North Chorus Mentor Scheme and appeared as a Young Artist with the Buxton International Festival for 2022 and 2023, performing in 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.

MAEVE HERD

Hailing from Auckland, New Zealand, Maeve Herd holds a BMus in Violin and Voice and an MMus (First Class Honours) in Voice from the University of Auckland. She studied as a 21/22 Marsden Grant Masters Scholar and won the 2022 UoA Aria Competition. Maeve

is currently studying towards a PGDipAS at the RNCM with Yvonne Howard, supported by the Jacob Marsland and NW Awards.

Despite singing in the NZ Opera Chorus and featuring as a soloist with the Auckland and Manukau Symphony Orchestras, Giulia in *La Scala di Seta* marks a milestone for Maeve as her first leading operatic role. Maeve looks forward to her upcoming role as Miranda in *Capsule*, a new opera composition by David Bicarregui, premiering in April.

Germano

ISHAY RAVINA

Ishay is currently undertaking his Master's at the RNCM under the tutelage of Matthew Best. Ishay was a finalist in the Joyce and Michael Kennedy Award for the Singing of Strauss competition, and part of the street chorus in the Manchester premiere of Bernstein's *Mass*. Ishay's wide repertoire includes more than 50 songs in more than five languages, and opera roles of different styles, such as Amantio di Nicolao (*Gianni Schicchi*), Guglielmo (*Magic Flute*), Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*), and more. Last summer, Ishay played the role of the Count from *The Marriage of Figaro*, in Chicago Summer

Opera Programme. At the RNCM, Ishay also performed the role of Mizgir in the 2023 production of *The Snow Maiden*.

MATTHEW SECOMBE

Matt's operatic performances have included Mizgir in *The Snow Maiden* and Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus* at the RNCM, 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 2023 for his performance in HGO's *Venus and Adonis* and *Dido and Aeneas*. His oratorio solos have included *Messiah* in Truro Cathedral with Truro Choral Society, Haydn's *Paukenmesse* in Holy Trinity Church Sloane Square and multiple concerts with the East Cornwall Bach Choir, including Brahms' *Requiem*. Matt's studies at the RNCM under Matthew Best are supported by the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation, the Maria Björnson memorial fund, and Ann Gerrard Bursaries.

Lucilla

CHARLOTTE BAKER

Charlotte Baker is a soprano from Berkshire in the second year of her postgraduate degree at the RNCM studying with Mary Plazas, having

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

previously studied with Louise Winter before graduating with First Class Honours. Charlotte has sung the full role of Kupava in Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Snow Maiden* (RNCM 2023), alongside scenes including Donna Elvira from Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (2024) and Blanche from André Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire* (2023). She is particularly looking forward to appearing in the Buxton International Festival as one of their 2024 Young Artists. Charlotte passionately believes that music should be accessible to all - she currently teaches singing and flute for Rochdale Music Service alongside a portfolio of private pupils.

ROSA SPARKS

Rosa Sparks is a soprano currently studying for her Master's of Music under the tutelage of Elizabeth Ritchie. Most recently, Rosa made her Opera North debut, singing the role of Emmie in their critically acclaimed production of *Albert Herring*, and won the prestigious 2024 Frederic Cox Award for Singing at the RNCM. Rosa's other operatic roles include First Lady and Papagena *Die Zauberflöte* (Opera Anywhere), Belinda *Dido and Aeneas* (Opera Sparks), Yum-Yum *The Mikado* (Opera Anywhere), and Miss

Havisham *Miss Havisham's Wedding Night* (RNCM Student Opera). She also created the leading role of The Soprano in *Interrupted*, a modern comic opera, which premiered at the 2022 Atmospheres Festival. Rosa regularly performs with professional consorts Kantos, The Swan Consort and Exodus.

Dorvil

YIHUI WANG

Yihui Wang is a dedicated Chinese lyric tenor who has been cultivating his art at the RNCM under Thomas Schulze. Yihui's notable performances during his studies include operas and oratorios such as *Mansfield Park*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Snyegurochka*, *L'elisir d'amore*, and *The Apostles* as well as concerts at The Bridgewater Hall, showing his versatility and passion for operatic storytelling. Supported by the ABRSM Scholarship, Yihui continues to refine his talents, drawing on the expertise gained from working with distinguished conductors and artists. His humble approach and consistent progress make him a valued addition of the operatic community. Yihui will be further enriching his experience through the Young Artist Programme at the Buxton International Festival this summer.

LIAM FORREST

Liam Forrest, from Dunfermline, Fife, is a postgraduate tenor at the RNCM, supported by the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation.

In 2022, he graduated from the University of Aberdeen with a Bachelor of Music with Honours. Liam has performed for the Dunfermline Carnegie Trust, the United Dunfermline Burns Club, and the Rotary Club of Dunfermline. Most recently, he was tenor soloist in Mozart's *Requiem* and Schubert's *Mass in G minor*, with HHCOS.

Liam's opera roles include Mr Rushworth in Dove's *Mansfield Park* (RNCM) (Byre Opera), Bobyl-Bakula in Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Snow Maiden* (RNCM). Liam looks forward to performing the role of Hoffman in Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffman* with Preston Opera in May 2024.

Dormont

HENRY STRUTT

Henry is studying for a Postgraduate Diploma with Peter Wilson after completing his Master's at the RNCM last year with a First. He graduated in 2020 with First Class Honours from The University of York and is an alumnus of the National Youth Choir and

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

the Genesis Sixteen. Previous roles at the RNCM include Tsar Byerendeyi (*The Snow Maiden*), 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.

BRENNAN ALLEYNE

Brennan Alleyne is an undergraduate tenor and multi-instrumentalist currently studying at the RNCM.

Passionate about music's ability to evoke emotion in others, Brennan has always pursued excellence in all of his musical endeavours. This has led Brennan from the Royal Albert Hall to Gentse Feesten before the RNCM. With over two decades of experience in professional ensembles, Brennan prides himself on how he works with others to create effective performances. Opera highlights include chorus roles in *Manon Lescaut* and *Die Zauberflöte* (Dorset Opera Festival), *Le nozze di Figaro*

(RNCM Opera), and *Madama Butterfly* (Hallé) as well as the roles of Spärlich in *Die Lustigen Weiber Von Windsor* (RNCM Opera Scenes), and Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* (Cratoule Summer School), among others.

Blansac

ADAM JARMAN

Originally from Kent, Adam Jarman is studying for a PGDip at the RNCM, generously supported by the Alice Orrell and A&N Kendall Award.

Adam completed an MMus at the RNCM and a BMus at Royal Holloway, University of London (2015-2018). At the RNCM Adam has performed the roles of Der Lakai in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Bartolo in *Le nozze di Figaro* and Dr Falke in *Die Fledermaus* and Father Frost in *The Snow Maiden*. He has previously sung in the Chorus at Buxton International Festival and at Opera Holland Park. He performed in Clonter Opera's production of *The Magic Flute* last summer as The Speaker of the Temple. He looks forward to joining the chorus at The Grange Festival for their 2024 season.

WILLIAM JOWETT

Will is a third-year undergraduate baritone from Cardiff studying with Matthew Best. In his first year, he was a recipient of the Ian Scott Award scholarship. He was awarded first prizes in the Elsie Thurston award for singing and James Martin Oncken Song Prize in his first and second year respectively, the latter won alongside collaborative pianist Hanna Csermely. Recent operatic engagements have included Maslyenitsa in *The Snow Maiden* with RNCM Opera, as a chorus member in *Die Fledermaus* also with RNCM Opera, and Marsayas in *Apollo and Marsayas* by Devon Bonelli which won the RNCM Rosamund Prize. He is excited to be performing the role of Blansac in Rossini's *La scala di seta* this spring.

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SPRING 2024

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