



SUN 7 AND SAT 13 DEC, 3PM
TUE 9 AND WED 10 DEC, 7.30PM

Prokofiev: L'Amour des Trois Oranges

RNCM
ROYAL NORTHERN
COLLEGE of MUSIC



RNCM

FRI 6 MAR 2026 | 7.30PM

RNCM Symphony Orchestra: Scheherazade

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Tell the King



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Sun 7 and Sat 13 Dec, 3pm
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RNCM Theatre

Prokofiev:

L'Amour des Trois Oranges

(The Love for Three Oranges)

Sergei Prokofiev (orch Philipp Haag)

L'Amour des Trois Oranges Op 33

Libretto by **Sergei Prokofiev** based on the play

L'amore delle tre melarance by **Carlo Gozzi**

Sung in French with English surtitles

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WELCOME

Welcome to the RNCM Theatre – a space purpose-built for opera that has also hosted some of the most distinguished and distinctive voices in both classical and popular music, from Sir John Tomlinson and Jane Eaglen to Marc Almond and Adele.

Today, we're excited to welcome you here to support the next generation of musicians and to experience Sergei Prokofiev's *L'Amour des Trois Oranges* (The Love for Three Oranges), a delectable cocktail of satire, slapstick, and fable that follows one of the most curious quests in operatic storytelling. An adaptation of Carlo Gozzi's 18th century commedia dell'arte (itself, a take on a 17th century Italian fairy tale), the opera premiered in 1921 and has been described by some as '*theatrical hooliganism*' for its unconventional structure and joyful disregard for the fourth wall, although Prokofiev himself simply called it '*a funny performance*'.

While it tears up the rulebook with glee and great skill, *L'Amour des Trois Oranges* also speaks to a timeless question: *why do we need opera?* We believe that opera's ability to explore the common human experiences of life (love, joy, sadness, death, grief, even politics) through the heightened theatrical lens of music and drama is unparalleled by any other art form. Most of all, our shared experiences and

emotions are transcendent, allowing opera to comfortably resonate across centuries, languages, and culture, from the baroque to the contemporary.

Opera training at the RNCM is extensive and demanding. Our students spend many months refining their skills in languages, movement, stage combat, acting, and collaboration between voice and orchestra to meet the professional standards expected by our guest creative teams, which this time includes celebrated conductor Lee Reynolds and renowned director Mark Burns. Ever since our foundation in 1973, opera has been integrated into the vocal training of all students in the School of Vocal Studies and Opera, and the RNCM remains proud of that approach.

Whether this is your first time at an RNCM opera or you are a regular supporter of our productions, we're delighted you've chosen to join us; we hope this wonderfully witty story moves you to laughter and to generous applause, and that it brings you back here in the months ahead.

SYNOPSIS

PROLOGUE

Before the curtain rises, advocates of Tragedy, Comedy, Lyric Drama, and Farce argue for their favourite theatrical form. The Ridicules take charge and tell them they are to watch *The Love for Three Oranges*.

ACT 1

In a faraway land, the King of Clubs and his advisor, Pantalon, lament the state of the sick Crown Prince. Doctors confirm the only cure is laughter. Pantalon asks Trouffaldino, the court jester, to arrange some entertainment. Léandre, the disingenuous Prime Minister, is asked to help.

Tchelio, a magician, defends and guards the King. Fata Morgana, the wicked witch, colludes with Léandre and Princess Clarisse, the King's niece, to kill the Prince so Clarisse can take the throne.

Tchelio and Fata Morgana play cards to see who will win control of the kingdom. Tchelio loses the game and Fata Morgana brandishes the King of Spades, the alias of Léandre. Sméraldine reveals that she serves Fata Morgana and declares her allegiance to her.

ACT 2

All efforts to make the Prince laugh fail. Fata Morgana is knocked over by Trouffaldino and she falls, revealing her underwear, finally making the Prince laugh. Fata Morgana, furious, curses the Prince to fall in love with three oranges. He sets off with Trouffaldino to find them.

ACT 3

Tchelio tells the Prince and Trouffaldino that the oranges are in the kitchen in Créonte's castle and are guarded by a terrifying cook. He warns them to have water ready when the oranges are opened and gives Trouffaldino a ribbon to charm the cook.

Tchelio asks a demon, Farfarello, to create a strong wind to blow the Prince and Trouffaldino towards the castle. Using the ribbon to distract the cook, they grab the oranges and escape. Whilst the Prince is asleep, Trouffaldino opens two of the oranges. Beautiful princesses emerge from each orange, but they soon die of thirst. When the final orange is opened, the Ridicules provide water to save the third princess, Ninette. The Prince falls in love with Ninette, and whilst he is away arranging their marriage, Fata Morgana turns her into a rat and puts Sméraldine in her place.

ACT 4

When the Prince returns, he is horrified at the change in his future bride, but the King insists he honour his word and take his betrothed to the palace. The Ridicules capture Fata Morgana and send Tchelio to save the situation. When the wedding procession arrives, a rat is discovered in the palace. Using his magical powers, Tchelio turns the rodent back into Princess Ninette. Fata Morgana and her accomplices flee, and the court celebrates the triumph of good over evil.

CREATIVE TEAM

Lee Reynolds
conductor

Mark Burns
director

Adrian Linford
set and costume designer

Jake Wiltshire
lighting designer

Jacobus De Jager*
assistant conductor

Sheldon Miller, Kevin Thraves
chorus directors

Bethan Rhys Wiliam
movement

Elisabeth Streichert
second assistant conductor

Lynne Dawson, Alex Vonrospace
French language coaches

Tom Henderson
production repetiteur

***Sat 13 Dec**

CASTS (IN ORDER OF SINGING)

George Elson
Le Héraut

Christian Loizou
Le Roi de Trêfles

Charlie Barker^
Pantalon

Sam Rose, Oscar Bowen-Hill*
Trouffaldino

**Edward Wenborn,
David Bicarregui**^**
Léandre

Aaron Rishel
Le Magicien Tchélío

Ellie Forrester^, Cerys MacAllister^**
Fata Morgana

Jemima Gray, Ellena Hicks^**
La Princesse Clarisse

Sarah Rappoport, Rosalind Hardie*
Sméraldine

Rafael Rojas^, Jay Broadhurst^**
Le Prince

Khaled Issa^, Guanxiang Wang*
Farfarello

George Elson
La Cuisinière

Merel-Magali Cox, Morgan Rosati^**
Linette

Sophie Akka, Eirwen Roberts*
Nicolette

**Libby Montgomery^,
Esther Shea**^**
Ninette

Kristen Gregory^
Le Maître de Cérémonies

***Tue 9 Dec and Sat 13 Dec**

^ Students supported by a scholarship or bursary funded by philanthropy this academic year.

RNCM OPERA CHORUS

LES RIDICULES

Bryan Au Yeung
Barney Fildes
Benjamin Finnie
Billy Gardiner
Grant Haddow
Gabriel Jones^
Alex Peart
Harry Priestley
Colm Traynor-Bucknall
Alex Yehorychev

LES TRAGIQUES

Alexander
Bassett-Chan
Oscar Fairclough
Matthew Hamilton
Yucheng Huo
Khaled Issa^
Aaron Rishel
Pip Thomson
Charles Trueman

LES COMIQUES

Oli Barber
Isaac Bentley
Nick Evershed
Oliver Mollett
Liam Ormiston
Nico Shaw
Haihao Wu

LES LYRIQUES

Pia Brondel
Charlotte Cathcart
Bella Chen
Eden Devaney^
Arhan Kumar^
Xingyue Lai
Ruby Lewin^
Amelia McQuire
Hannah Millett

Poppy Orrell
Saff Stringer
Grace Wexler
Sam Yuen
Tetes Vides
Leila Abdalla
Josh Carton
Morgan Fenton
Milly Holden
Macy Jagger
William Johnson
Amy Patton
Heledd Richardson
Abigail Routh
Erin Thomas
Lauren Walch
Ross Worthington

LES MÉDECINS

Oli Barber
Alexander
Bassett-Chan
Isaac Bentley
Oscar Fairclough
William Johnson
Arhan Kumar^
Xingyue Lai
Charles Trueman
Ross Worthington
Haihao Wu

LES PETITS DIABLES

Alexander
Bassett-Chan
Josh Carton
Qiushi Cen
Oscar Fairclough
Matthew Hamilton
Khaled Issa^
William Johnson
Charles Trueman
Ross Worthington

LES COURTISANS

Leila Abdalla
Oli Barber
Alexander
Bassett-Chan
Issac Bentley
Ivy Blackmoor
Josh Carton
Qiushi Cen
Charlotte Dear
Eden Devaney^
Melody Dong
Oscar Fairclough
Morgan Fenton
Nick Evershed
Matthew Hamilton
Milly Holden
Macy Jagger
William Johnson
Arhan Kumar^
Xingyue Lai
Shyen Yii Loh
Liam Ormiston
Poppy Orrell
Amy Patton
Heledd Richardson
Abigail Routh
Tamsin Schofield
Nico Shaw
Chrina Shen
Katie Shepperdson
Erin Thomas
Charles Trueman
Anna Tsoi
Lauren Walch
Ross Worthington
Sam Yuen
Venus Zhu

RNCM OPERA ORCHESTRA

FIRST VIOLINS

Joanne Teo
Cameron Jackson
Mae Baker-Tuxworth
Kaylee Bontrager
Olivia Trezise
Mary Ann Coogan
Gabby Kohler
Joshua Gill
Carola Cecchelli
Tori Li

SECOND VIOLINS

Isobel Barber
Angus Findlow
Daniel Patten
Amit Ilan Segev
Fabio Gonzales Zavala
Molly Barber
Dana Rybiantseva
Chloe Wood
Katie Keddy

VIOLAS

Maggie Zhou
Susie He
Utor Wong
Hannah Killick
Lily Machin-Bradbury
Daria Kurtii

CELLOS

Teresa De La Espada
Celilo Swain
Shiney Zhou
Immie Harpin
Nieve Mannion

BASSES

Zoe Chen
Eric Harris
Duarte Colaco

FLUTES

Natalie Ngai
Helena Lopes Rodrigues
Liberato (picc)

OBOES

Theo Chapple^
Katy Brear (cor)^

CLARINETS

Oliver Charles-Lee (Eb)
Anthony Arias (bass)

BASSOONS

Bia Carvalho
Rob Kearley (contra)

HORNS

Toby Johnson-Jones
Sami Pang
Leo Penny
Barry Lo

TRUMPETS

Edmund Tyler
Sion Lloyd

TROMBONES

Emily Nicolas
Sarah Petropoulos
Malachy Cullen

TUBA

Charlie Cresswell

TIMPANI

Michael McKeague

PERCUSSION

Amelia Leishman
(co-principal)^
Toby Stott
(co-principal)

HARP (SHARED)

Yixuan Wang
Ivy Askew

^ Students supported by a scholarship or bursary funded by philanthropy this academic year.

To find out how you can support an individual student through a scholarship or bursary, contact **Eve Riley**, Head of Philanthropy, at **eve.riley@rncm.ac.uk**.

SCHOOL OF VOCAL STUDIES AND OPERA

Professor Lynne Dawson *Head of Vocal Studies and Opera*

Kevin Thraves *Deputy Head of Opera*

Dr Nico de Villiers *Deputy Head of Vocal Studies*

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

Nick Ware *Head of Digital, Technical and Production*

Liam Whittaker *Technical and 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 *Lighting Manager*

Ellie Whitfield, Simon Alford *Deputy Lighting Managers*

David Dickson *Video Engineer*

Steve Barrington, Elsie Howard, Tina Blatt *Prop Makers*

Hanna Novak *Scenic Artist*

Osin McMahon *Fly Operative*

Elaine Needham *Wardrobe Manager*

Rebecca Parkes *Acting Wardrobe Manager*

Elanor Parkinson *Wardrobe Assistant*

Nadia Jeljeli, Angela Muirhead, Kathryn Ogden *Additional Costume Work*

Molly Saxby-Weight *Wardrobe Placement (Arts University Bournemouth)*

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

Laura Surcombe *Wigs, Hair and Make-Up Assistant*

Hannah Andrusier, Katrina Mackenzie *Surtitles Operator*

Take 1 Scenic *Scenic Construction*

Sound and AV support provided by the RNCM Sound and Video Department

LEE REYNOLDS

Lee Reynolds is an award-winning conductor (RPS, Sky Arts, Critics' Circle) with a reputation for bringing intensity and exceptional detail to his performances.

Alongside the acclaimed film production of Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, current and recent highlights include his house debut conducting Kurt Weill's *Street Scene* at the Opéra de Monte Carlo, *The Merry Widow* for Glyndebourne Festival Opera, broadcast concerts with the London Symphony Orchestra and three recordings on LSO Live, performances with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, new productions of *Rigoletto* and *Carmen* at Opera Holland Park, *La bohème* with Welsh National Opera, his performance debuts with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and a recording of British Horn Concertos with the Philharmonia Orchestra and Ben Goldscheider.

Other highlights include: recording projects with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra; concerts with the National Youth Orchestra; Britten and Wagner in the new Linbury Theatre at the Royal Ballet and Opera; performances with the Orchestra of Opera North, Sinfonietta Cracovia, Transylvania State Philharmonic, Sinfonia Smith Square and the Dublin Concert Orchestra; and conducting a new production of Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* with Nederlandse Reisopera.

As part of an extensive catalogue of recordings, his 2015 recording of Chopin's Piano Concerto No 2 with Adolfo Barabino and the LSO has been lauded in the international press. The world premiere recording of Vito Palumbo's Violin Concerto with the LSO and Francesco d'Orazio was released on the BIS label in 2023, while Lee's debut recording on Chandos, featuring Weinberg's Trumpet Concerto with Matilda Lloyd and the LSO, has been widely acclaimed. Other highlights include Barber's Violin Concerto with Min Lee and the Philharmonia Orchestra, and a recording of works for strings by Britten and Stravinsky with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra.

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 which 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 the RNCM. He has also worked with the Emerging Artists at Scottish Opera. Previously, Mark has assisted Sir Thomas Allen on his productions of *Don Giovanni* and *Barber of Seville* for Scottish Opera. Mark recently revived Silent Opera's production of *Vixen* at the Hong Kong Arts Festival and last year directed the RNCM's production of *L'étoile*.

ADRIAN LINFORD

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

After designing *L'étoile* last year, he returns to the RNCM to design *The Love for Three Oranges*. 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, the Beijing Music Festival, and Edmonton (Canada). A further production with Finnish Opera is planned in 2026, plus a return to Auckland, New Zealand, in the 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* (Opera San José, Omaha Opera, plus 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).

JAKE WILTSHIRE

Jake Wiltshire designs extensively both in the UK and worldwide. His work has been seen with major opera companies and festivals including The Royal Opera House, Welsh National Opera, Opera North, Savonlinna Opera Festival, Leipzig Oper, Garsington Opera, and St Galler Festspiele, as well as nearly all 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 (HonARAM), and in 2023 he was nominated for a Canadian Dora Mavor Moore Award for outstanding lighting design.

Recent credits include: *Madame Butterfly*, for Irish National Opera; *Follies*, for Northern Ireland Opera; *Susanna* for Opera North; *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; *Il viaggio a Reims* for Oper Leipzig, Germany; *Andrea Chenier* for St Galler Festspiele, Switzerland; *Don Giovanni* for Kilden Opera, Norway; *The Magic Flute* and *Don Pasquale* for Welsh National Opera; RPS Award-winning *Blue Beards Castle* for Theatre of Sound (London, Atlanta, Beijing, Toronto, Edmonton, and a multicounty tour of New Zealand); *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.

JACOBUS DE JAGER

Jacobus de Jager is a South African conductor and the 2025/26 Junior Fellow in Conducting at the RNCM, as well as a Conducting Fellow on the RPS Conductors Programme with the Royal Northern Sinfonia. He earned his MMus in Conducting at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland under Martyn Brabbins, where he received the RCS Conducting Prize.

Jacobus has gained international recognition as a semi-finalist in the Herbert von Karajan Young Conductors Award and the KNSO International Conducting Competition. He is currently a semi-finalist in the Concours de Genève Conducting Competition, taking place in November 2026. In 2021, he won the fifth South African Conductors' Competition.

He has worked in various settings with renowned ensembles, including the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Mozarteumorchester Salzburg, Orchestra of Scottish Opera, Orchestre National de Metz Grande Est, Orchestre de chambre de Genève, Hebrides Ensemble, Österreichisches Ensemble für Neue Musik, Silesian Philharmonic, and the Korean National Symphony Orchestra. In South Africa, he served as resident conductor of the Stellenbosch University Symphony Orchestra and has guest conducted across the country, regularly working with the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra.

His training has been further enriched through masterclasses with Neeme, Paavo, Kristjan Järvi, Marin Alsop,

CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

Thomas Søndergård, John Wilson, Ryan Bancroft, Sian Edwards, Antony Hermus, Stuart Stratford, David Reiland, and others.

Recent highlights include conducting the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra in concert for the BBC Young Conductors Showcase.

Jacobus' Junior Fellowship is supported by the Mills Williams Foundation.

KEVIN THRAVES

Prior to being appointed as Deputy Head of Opera in the School of Vocal Studies and Opera at the RNCM, Kevin worked as a freelance répétiteur, opera music staff, and as a collaborative pianist with numerous professional companies and organisations.

Kevin has worked for many leading opera companies and orchestras including English National Opera, Welsh National Opera, Scottish Opera, Opera North, the Hallé, BBC Concert Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, Manchester Camerata, the Academy of Ancient Music, the BBC Proms, and the London Philharmonic Orchestra. UK concert appearances include the Royal Festival Hall, 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's varied recital career led to many performances across Europe, Asia, and Oceania.

Kevin has delivered masterclasses throughout the UK, Scandinavia, Canada, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, Australia, India, and the USA.

Recent commercial recordings include Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder*, Britten's *Peter Grimes*, Berlioz's *Roméo et Juliette*, Cellier's *Dorothy*, and Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra*. In 2025, Kevin was invited to sit as a panel member for the Voices of Black Opera international singing competition.

CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

SHELDON MILLER

Sheldon Miller, repetiteur and vocal coach, is a graduate of the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University, where he earned degrees in voice and piano, as well as a Professional Diploma in Opera. He received further training as a young artist with Chicago Opera Theater, Kentucky Opera, and Minnesota Opera.

His operatic credits include The Santa Fe Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, Washington National Opera, Opera Omaha, Opera Colorado, Kentucky Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, Virginia Opera, San Diego Opera, Central City Opera, The Dallas Opera, and more recently in the UK, Opera North. Sheldon has collaborated with many internationally acclaimed singers, including Frederica von Stade, Erin Morley, Karita Mattila, Mariusz Kwiecień, Denyce Graves, and Will Liverman. He has frequently performed in the orchestral pit for opera productions – highlights include organist for *Tosca* with The Santa Fe Opera Orchestra, celeste in *Die Zauberflöte* with the Colorado Opera Orchestra, and piano soloist in *Elizabeth Cree* with the Chicago Opera Theatre Orchestra.

To date, Sheldon has worked as a member of the music staff on more than 80 fully staged opera productions. Recent engagements include: Kevin Puts' *Silent Night* and Verdi's *Otello* with Washington National Opera; *Carmen* and *Three Decembers* with San Diego Opera; and *Flight* with The Dallas Opera, conducted by Emmanuel Villaume. Sheldon is a Professor of Vocal Coaching at the RNCM.

BETHAN RHYS WILIAM

Bethan Rhys Wiliam served as Principal Lecturer in Physical Awareness, Movement, and Dance at the RNCM from 1996 until her retirement in 2022. During this time, she worked as choreographer and movement coach for many of the College's acclaimed opera productions. She is delighted to return as Guest Choreographer for this production of *L'Amour des Trois Oranges*.

Born in Swansea and educated at Altrincham Grammar School, Cheshire, Bethan trained in vocational dance at Bush Davies School, East Grinstead. Her professional career began with the Royal Opera Ballet of Ghent, Belgium, and continued with Ballet International, the Iranian National Ballet, Malmö Stadsteater, Northern Ballet Theatre, and as a founder member of London City Ballet. Highlights include gala performances at the London Coliseum and Royal Festival Hall with Dame Margot Fonteyn and Rudolf Nureyev in his *Nureyev and Friends* seasons. She also toured extensively in Italy, France, Romania, and Norway.

Bethan 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 dramas, 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 featured in the 1978 BBC production *The Magic of Dance*, presented by Dame Margot, which was rebroadcast in January 2024.

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A woman with vibrant red hair styled in an updo, wearing an elaborate opera costume with a yellow and black patterned bodice and a long, flowing white cape. She has a surprised or dramatic expression on her face. The background is a blurred city skyline at dusk, with a purple and blue sky.

RNCM

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CAST BIOGRAPHIES

GEORGE ELSON

Lincolnshire-born bass George Elson is currently studying with Quentin Hayes. With a passion for languages, he particularly enjoys performing German Lieder and French Mélodies, alongside an operatic repertoire ranging from Handel to Holst.

In August, George sang Il Commendatore (*Don Giovanni*) with Flat Pack Music. This month, he makes his RNCM debut as Le Héraut and *La Cuisinière* in *The Love for Three Oranges* and in February, he will perform the title role in Handel's *Hercules* with his company, Fenwold Opera.

CHRISTIAN LOIZOU

Christian Loizou is an English bass-baritone currently studying with Mark Wildman. He is a graduate of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, where he trained under Scott Johnson and Andrew McTaggart.

Christian made his international debut at

Wexford Festival Opera in 2023, performing as a Moroccan Soldier in the world premiere of Marco Tutino's *La Ciociara*. He returned in 2024 to take on the roles of Yeats and The Judge in another world premiere, Caruso's *Lady Gregory in America*. Beyond opera, Christian is active as a concert soloist and regularly performs in recitals and concerts across the UK. His studies at the RNCM are generously supported by a full ABRSM Scholarship.

CHARLIE BARKER

Charlie Barker, a 26-year-old baritone from Wiltshire, is currently studying with Mark Wildman. He completed his undergraduate degree at the RNCM last year, where he was taught by the late Michael Harper, and spent a gap year travelling internationally. This September, Charlie returned to the UK to begin his postgraduate degree as an ABRSM Scholar at the RNCM. Following this production, he will perform the role of the Forrester in the College's *The Cunning Little Vixen*.

While studying, he is generously supported by the Dame Patricia Routledge Foundation and the Maureen Spurgin Award.

SAM ROSE

Sam Rose is a fourth-year British tenor studying with Andrew Heggie. He began singing at the age of seven as a chorister at Radley College, performing in cathedrals across England and earning several awards.

Today, Sam appears regularly at opera galas, concerts, and fundraisers throughout the UK. His operatic roles include Bastien in *Bastien und Bastienne*, Lechmere in *Owen Wingrave*, and Tamino in a scene from *The Magic Flute*. His oratorio repertoire features Handel's *Messiah*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Michael Haydn's *Requiem*, and Mendelssohn's *St Paul*.

Next year, he will join the chorus at Grange Park Opera.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

OSCAR BOWEN-HILL

Oscar Bown-Hill is a young tenor already marked as one to watch. His journey began with the Glyndebourne Academy in 2023, and he now works with Yvonne Howard and Chris Turner, supported by the Gilbert and Sullivan Society Award and the Amphion Fund.

He is praised for his '*expressive tenor voice, marked by clarity, agility and emotional depth*' and Oscar's highlights include a '*brilliant*' performance of Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings*, and his operatic debut as Dr Charles Maitland in the premiere of Zakiya Leeming's *Dangerous Matter*.

Plans for 2026 include singing the Evangelist in Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with the Liverpool Bach Collective, alongside exciting concert and opera engagements across Europe.

EDWARD WENBORN

Edward Wenborn, originally from Cambridge, is a 25-year-old baritone studying with Quentin Hayes. He graduated from Durham University in 2018 with a degree in classics, where he first discovered his passion for opera.

A versatile performer, Edward currently holds a scholarship with the Diocese of Manchester and was recently awarded the Alexander Young Prize for Singing. He made his professional operatic debut as Masetto in *Don Giovanni* this summer as a Young Artist with Flat Pack Music, and also performed alongside the ENO chorus during Manchester Day.

Looking ahead, Edward has been cast as Harasta in the RNCM's upcoming production of *The Cunning Little Vixen*.

DAVID BICARREGUI

David Bicarregui is a postgraduate baritone and composer, graduating with first class honours from the University of Manchester and the RNCM Joint Course. He is supported by the Ann Gerrard Bursaries and the Sybil Tutton Opera Award, and currently studies with Mark Wildman, having previously trained with Andrew Heggie.

Recent performance credits include Leporello in *Don Giovanni* (Flat Pack Music), Escamillo in *Carmen* (Oxford Opera Society), Father Frost in *The Snowmaiden* (RNCM), and L'imperial commissario in *Madama Butterfly* (Dorset Opera). David has also appeared as a soloist with the Hallé.

As a composer, David studies with Tom Coult. His opera, *Capsule*, premiered to two sold-out houses in 2024 and is scheduled to return to the stage in 2026.

A watercolor illustration of a fox and a boy in a forest. The fox is on the left, facing right, with orange and brown fur. The boy is on the right, facing left, with dark blue and black tones. They are both looking at each other. The background is a soft, painterly forest scene with green and yellow trees.

RNCM

SUN 22 – SAT 28 MAR 2026

Janáček: The Cunning Little Vixen

Matinee **3pm**

Evening **7.30pm**



Book Online

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

AARON RISHEL

Aaron Rishel is a final year postgraduate baritone, training under the guidance of Mark Wildman. Before moving to Manchester, Aaron earned his bachelor's degree from Mississippi University for Women in 2023. During his undergraduate years, he competed in the NATS competition, placing third in 2022 and second in 2023.

Most recently, Aaron performed in France as part of the chorus for Opéra de Bauge's productions of *Don Giovanni*, *Orphée aux enfers*, and *Der Rosenkavalier*.

ELLIE FORRESTER

Scottish soprano Ellie Forrester is currently pursuing her MMus degree under the tutelage of Mary Plazas.

Alongside Fata Morgana, her operatic roles include La Contessa (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Miss Wingrave (*Owen Wingrave*), and Asphodèle (*L'étoile*). In concert, she recently performed the soprano solo in Mahler's

Symphony No 2 at The Bridgewater Hall and sang Queen/second Harlot in Handel's Solomon. Next term, Ellie will appear as Fox in the RNCM's *The Cunning Little Vixen*, sing with ENO's Engage programme, and perform Wagner's *Liebestod* in an RNCM Spotlight concert.

She is generously supported by the Dame Eva Turner Award, McGlashan Trust, SIET, Elizabeth Izatt Trust, Sir James Caird Scholarship, and Help Musicians.

CERYS MACALLISTER

Cerys MacAllister, a student of Elizabeth Ritchie, is the 2025 Birr Lions Bursary winner in the Trench Award. She was a finalist for both the Veronica Dunne International Singing Bursary and the Glenarm Festival of Voice, and is a multi-award winner at Feis Ceoil, including the Song Prize in the Irene Sandford Competition.

Her stage roles include Jane in *Banished*, First Bridesmaid and cover Barbarina in *Le nozze di Figaro*, and the Dew Fairy in *Hänsel and Gretel*.

She recently made her Wexford Festival Opera debut as Modestina in *Il viaggio a Reims* and Ceresita in *Der Zwerg*.

Cerys was a Leeds Lieder Artist in 2024 and a Camerata Young Artist in 2025. She is currently supported by the Jacob Marsland Award.

JEMIMA GRAY

Jemima Gray, a South African-born mezzo-soprano, is in her second year of a master's degree, studying with Mary Plazas.

A Buxton Young Artist 2025, her operatic roles include Kate Julian (*Owen Wingrave*, RNCM Opera), The Abbess (*Suor Angelica*, Berlin Opera Academy), Hänsel cover (*Hänsel und Gretel*, Berlin Opera Academy), The Attendant (*A Trip to the Moon*, Garsington Opera), Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*, National Opera Studio), and Mrs Ford (*Sir John in Love*, RNCM Opera Scenes).

Jemima is generously supported by The Annie Ridyrd Scholarship.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

ELLENA HICKS

Ellena Hicks is a mezzo-soprano currently studying for a Postgraduate Diploma under the tutelage of Linda Richardson. Her studies are generously supported by The Scouloudi Foundation, The N W Award, and The Waverley Fund.

Her operatic roles include Lazuli in Chabrier's *L'étoile*, Ottone in Monteverdi's Kats-Chernin's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*, and Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro*. She was a finalist in the 2024 Sydney Eisteddfod Opera Scholarship and the 2023 IFAC Handa Australian Singing Competition.

As an alto soloist, Ellena has performed major works including Bach's Mass in B Minor, Beethoven's *Choral Fantasia*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Mozart's *Requiem*, and Handel's *Messiah*.

SARAH RAPPOPORT

Sarah Rappoport is a 21-year-old mezzo-soprano from Switzerland and a fourth-year undergraduate studying with Elizabeth Ritchie. She is a 2025/26 National Opera Studio Academy Singer. Her operatic repertoire includes Lapàk (*The Cunning Little Vixen*), Sméraldine (*L'Amour des Trois Oranges*), Zweite Knabe (*Die Zauberflöte*), Koukouli (*L'étoile* - cover), Papagena (*Die Zauberflöte* - cover), and Beth Slater in the world premiere of Pearson's *Silverwood*.

Professionally, Sarah has sung in the chorus with Grange Park Opera. In concert, she has appeared as a soloist with the Hallé, Tallis Consort, Orchestra OperaViva, and at the Leric Music Festival with Opera for Peace. She is also a member of the RNCM Songsters.

ROSALIND HARDIE

Rosalind Hardie is in the second year of her master's degree, studying under Yvonne Howard and Christopher Turner. She made her debut performances with Garsington Opera as Caterina in *The Moon is Listening* and with Aylesbury Opera as Irene in their production of *Theodora*. Rosalind is also an experienced concert and oratorio soloist, with recent performances including *Elijah*, Mozart's *Requiem* and *Great Mass in C minor*, as well as Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*. A finalist in the Sir David Maddison Opera Prize, she is grateful for the support of Chichester Music Society and the Wavendon Foundation. Rosalind looks forward to joining the Bayerische Staatsoper Chorakademie in January.

RAFAEL ROJAS

Rafael Rojas, a distinguished Mexican tenor, has built a dynamic career spanning over a decade. Beginning in musical theatre at 16, he performed leading

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roles in *Chicago* (Billy Flynn) and *Moulin Rouge* (Christian), alongside collaborations with national orchestras.

A finalist in the Carlos Moreli Competition at the Palacio de Bellas Artes (2022), Rafael earned a two-year scholarship to the México Opera Studio, studying with maestros Renier Piñero and Alejandro Miyaki. During this time, he sang major roles including Don José (*Carmen*), and Baglioni (*La hija de Rapaccini*), and appeared in Morales' *Anita*.

His talent has been recognised internationally with First Prize in the Mexico district of the Laffont Competition (2023, 2024) and the Bellas Artes Prize at the Moreli Competition (2025).

Currently, Rafael is pursuing an International Artist Diploma at the RNCM and is supported by the Anthony Ogus Award and an anonymous donor. Roles include The Prince (*The Love for Three Oranges*) and The Schoolmaster (*The Cunning Little Vixen*),

affirming his status as a rising operatic talent.

JAY BROADHURST

Praised for his '*lean, polished tenor*' by *Opera* magazine, British/Irish tenor Jay Broadhurst is rapidly establishing himself on the UK opera scene. He studies under Mark Wildman and is the recent recipient of the prestigious Frederic Cox Award for Singing.

Recent engagements include: Lensky (*Eugene Onegin*); Grail Knight (*Parsifal*, Glyndebourne); Malcolm (*Macbeth*, Chelsea Opera Group); Borsa (*Rigoletto*); Don Curzio (*Le nozze di Figaro*, Garsington Opera); and Stephen in the world premiere of Bicarregui's *Capsule*. This season, Jay makes his Wigmore Hall debut performing Schumann's *Dichterliebe*.

He is supported by The Musicians' Company and the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation, and is a devoted Manchester United supporter.

KHALED ISSA

Egyptian baritone Khaled Issa is currently studying for his MMus in Vocal Performance under the tutelage of Quentin Hayes. His studies are supported by the prestigious Sawiris Arts and Culture Scholarship and the generous Alice Orrell and A&N Kendall Award.

Originally a bass guitarist in Alexandria, Khaled transitioned to classical singing and joined the Cairo Opera Company in 2022.

Previous roles include: Belcore, Papageno, Gianni Schicchi, Don Giovanni, Morales, Silvio, and Ben. His concert repertoire includes Carmina Burana, as well as oratorio performances of Fauré's *Requiem* and Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*.

Later this season, Khaled will perform Harašta (*The Cunning Little Vixen*) and Peter (*Hänsel und Gretel*).

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GUANXIANG WANG

Guanxiang Wang is a Chinese baritone currently in his second postgraduate year at the RNCM, studying with Sam Queen. He completed his undergraduate studies at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing and obtained two degrees: Musicology and Vocal Performance. During his undergraduate programme, he participated in the chorus of Rossini's *La Cenerentola* and Puccini's *La bohème*. During his time at the RNCM, Guanxiang has taken part in opera scenes singing the role of Simone in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*. He recently performed in a spotlight concert at the RNCM in a specially devised programme called *The Land of Bliss* which included Chinese folk and art songs inspired by classical poetry and film music.

MEREL-MAGALI COX

Dutch mezzo-soprano Merel-Magali Cox is currently pursuing a master's degree under the guidance of Mary Plazas, supported by

Help Musicians, Het Cultuurfonds, Peter Snook, the RNCM, and the Dame Eva Turner Award.

Recent operatic roles include Cherubino (*Le nozze di Figaro*), the title role in Handel's *Solomon*, and Idamante in an abridged *Idomeneo*. She has also performed in opera scenes by Haydn, Dove, and Strauss, winning first prize in the RNCM Song Cycle Competition and second prize in the Williams-Howard Prize.

Concert highlights feature Handel's *Messiah* and *Dixit Dominus*, Bach's *Johannes-Passion*, and various requiems. Next term, she appears as Woodpecker in the RNCM's production of *The Cunning Little Vixen* and joins Buxton Festival as a Young Artist.

MORGAN ROSATI

Morgan Rosati is an Australian-Italian mezzo-soprano currently pursuing a Postgraduate Diploma in Advanced Studies in Performance, studying with Christopher Turner. She is generously supported by the Alice Orrell and A&N

Kendall Award. Morgan previously completed a Master of Music Studies at the Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University.

Her recent operatic roles include Zia Principessa (*Suor Angelica*), Orpheus (*Underworld*), and Zita (*Gianni Schicchi*). As a concert soloist, Morgan has performed Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*, Vivaldi's *Gloria*, Michael Haydn's *Requiem*, and premiered works by Sally Greenaway and Catherine Likhuta.

SOPHIE AKKA

Soprano Sophie Akka is a second-year postgraduate student, studying with Linda Richardson and generously supported by the Dame Eva Turner Award. She graduated in 2025 from The Queen's College, Oxford, where she held the Hildburg Williams Lieder Scholarship.

Sophie recently won Clonter Opera's Betty Bannerman Award for French Song, the Sir David Maddison Opera Prize, and was a finalist in the Frederic Cox Award for Singing.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Previous highlights include performing Susanna (*Le nozze di Figaro*) and Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*) in the Sheldonian Theatre, and singing Violetta in a televised performance of the *Brindisi* for China State TV.

Upcoming engagements include the title role in *Alcina* and Despina in *Così fan tutte*.

EIRWEN ROBERTS

Welsh soprano Eirwen Roberts is a first-year postgraduate student, studying with Antonia Sotgiu. She previously trained as a singer and pianist at the Junior RNCM and began her undergraduate studies at the College in 2021.

Operatic experience includes chorus work in Strauss' *Die Fledermaus* and Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, as well as roles such as Emmie (*Albert Herring*), Cherubino (*Le nozze di Figaro*), The Sandman/Dew Fairy (*Hänsel und Gretel*), Fanny (*La Cambiale di Matrimonio*), Columbina (*Le Donne Curiose*), and Asphodèle (*L'étoile* – cover). Eirwen is also an RNCM Songster.

She is extremely grateful to the Earl of Chester's Fund for its support during her postgraduate studies.

LIBBY MONTGOMERY

Libby Montgomery is a New Zealand-born soprano currently studying with Mary Plazas and supported by The Waverley Fund. She recently completed a Postgraduate Diploma in Advanced Studies in Vocal and Opera and now focuses on operatic role preparation.

A 2024/25 Songster Artist, Libby made her UK recital debut at the Buxton Arts Pavilion and has undertaken residencies with Opera North, as well as masterclasses with leading international artists. Committed to outreach, she performed in the RNCM's 2025 Children's Opera *Treasure Island*.

Her concert work includes appearances with major New Zealand ensembles and her NZ Opera Chorus debut in *Così fan tutte*.

ESTHER SHEA

Esther Shea is currently pursuing a master's degree under the guidance of Elizabeth Ritchie. Her operatic roles include Mrs Coyle (*Owen Wingrave*), Youka (*L'étoile*), and Dido (*Dido and Aeneas*), with the role of Fox Goldenname in *The Cunning Little Vixen* coming next year.

This year, she was awarded first prize in both The Kennedy Award for the Singing of Strauss and the Williams-Howard Prize, and she is a two-time finalist in the Frederic Cox Award for Singing. As a concert soloist, her recent performances include Handel's *Solomon* and Strauss's *Vier letzte Lieder*.

Her studies are generously supported by the Dame Eva Turner Award, the LHR Charitable Foundation, the Riga Heesom Award, and the Sybil Tutton Award.

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KRISTEN GREGORY

Kristen Gregory is a 23-year-old postgraduate tenor currently studying with Paul Nilon.

His opera credits include Lechmere in Britten's *Owen Wingrave* and King Ouf in Chabrier's *L'étoile*. In 2024, Kristen performed the role of Gastone in Verdi's *La Traviata* at Dorset Opera's 50th Anniversary Gala Concert. In summer 2025, he joined the Buxton International Festival's Young Artist Programme, singing in the chorus

of Ambroise Thomas' *Hamlet* and contributing to a new series of opera Shorts.

Kristen's studies are generously supported by the Gilbert and Sullivan Society, the South Square Trust, and the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation.



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A Black man with dreadlocks is playing a double bass. He is wearing a brown, textured sweater over a white shirt and green trousers. He is holding the bow and looking down at the instrument. The background is a dark, mottled brown.

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