



TUESDAY 20 FEBRUARY 2024 //

// 7.30pm RNCM Concert Hall

THE FREDERIC COX AWARD FOR SINGING

Robert Chevara, Dr Nico de Villiers, Yvonne Howard Adjudicators

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Smanie implacabili
Charles Gounod Que fais tu, blanche tourterelle
Richard Strauss Zueignung
Jonathan Dove I bought this suitcase in New York
Hubert Parry Pink!

Ruby Hendry Mezzo-Soprano
Jonathan Fisher Piano

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Padre, Germani
Richard Strauss Allerseelen
Georges Bizet Comme autrefois
Benjamin Britten Injurious Hermia
Patricia Clarke The Wee Cooper of Fife

Esther Shea Soprano
Jonathan Fisher Piano

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Del più bel sublime soglio
Ian Venables The Hippo
Francesco Cilea La dolcissima effigie
Franz Schubert Erstarrung
Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky Kuda kuda vi udalilis

Jay Broadhurst Tenor
Jonathan Fisher Piano

Interval - 20 minutes

George Frideric Handel Neghittosi, or voi che fate

Cecilia McDowell If there are Angels

Bedřich Smetana Och, jaký žal...Ten lásky sen

Benjamin Britten My heart leaps up

Clara Schumann Süsser Freund

Rosa Sparks Soprano

Jonathan Fisher Piano

George Frideric Handel Comfort ye my people/ Every valley shall be exalted

Igor Stravinsky Here I Stand

Zoë Martlew In the Kyoto Garden

Édouard Lalo Vainement, ma bien aimée

Anton Rubinstein Es blinkt der Tau

Giacomo Puccini E lucevan le stelle

Liam Forrest Tenor

David Jones Piano

Gaetano Donizetti E sgombro il loco

Henry Purcell If Music be the food of Love

Gustav Mahler Ging Heut Morgen übers Feld

Benjamin Britten What would Missus Herring say?

James Macmillan The Children

Daisy Mitchell Mezzo-Soprano

Jonathan Fisher Piano

Adjudication

The Adjudicators

Robert Chevara

Robert Chevara is an internationally acclaimed, award-winning artist, writer and director. His output spans the fields of opera, film and theatre, and his productions include seminal works by Shakespeare, Williams, Ridley, Verdi, Bizet, Puccini, Prokofiev and Adès. He has written several opera libretti and poetry collections and 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.

Dr Nico de Villiers

Nico de Villiers is a vocal coach, collaborative pianist, and author. He is the Deputy Head of Vocal Studies of the School of Vocal Studies and Opera at the Royal Northern College of Music. He performed both as soloist and collaborative pianist in prestigious venues such as the Barbican, the Queen Elizabeth Hall and Royal Festival Hall in London; the Terrace Theatre at the Kennedy Center, Washington DC; the Kammermusiksaal, Bonn; the Mozarteum Grosser Saal, Salzburg, and the Koninklijke Concertgebouw in Amsterdam.

His festival performances include the Salzburg Festival, Edinburgh Festival, Oxford Lieder Festival, Chopin Birthday Festival in Warsaw, Poland, and the International Johannesburg Mozart Festival in South Africa. His performances have been broadcast over BBC Radio 3, ClassicFM, Polskie Radio, Sky Arts, EntertainmentTV, Netflix, and BBC Four.

Nico has led masterclasses across the UK as well as at conservatories and universities in Sweden, the USA, Austria, and his native South Africa. He has published several articles in *Opera* and *Classical Singer* magazines, scholarly journals such as *Journal of Singing* and *VOICEPrints*, and he is the co-author of *Richard Hageman: From Holland to Hollywood*. He is a recording artist for the Toccata Classics and Aliud Records labels.

Yvonne Howard

Stafford born Yvonne studied at the RNCM under David Johnston and Joseph Ward and has since gone on to enjoy an international career that has taken her to the USA, Japan, China, the Middle East, Argentina, Brazil, all over Europe and well as all over the UK.

Since making her debut at Glyndebourne, she has appeared regularly at ROH Covent Garden; ENO, Opera North; Opera du Rhin, Opera du Nantes, Le Chatelet, Hanover Opera, New Israeli Opera, Scottish Opera, Opera Holland Park and Garsington. On the concert platform, Yvonne has given recitals and oratorio performances in venues such as London's Wigmore, QEH and Festival Halls, the Bridgewater and Birmingham Symphony Halls, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam; New York, Paris and Tokyo, working with conductors such as Sir Bernard Haitink, Sir Mark Elder, Edo de Wart, Sir Anthony Pappano, Richard Farnes and Zubin Mehta and is particularly renowned for her performances of Mahler, Berlioz and the Angel in Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*.

Yvonne has always enjoyed working with young singers and from 2015 -2023 was a Professor of singing at the Royal Academy of Music, London & since September 2022 has very much enjoyed being a vocal tutor at her alma mater, the Royal Northern College of Music.

The Performers

Ruby Hendry

Ruby is a first year Masters student from West Yorkshire currently under the tutelage of Hillary Summers. Ruby is generously supported by Help Musicians UK, an RNCM entrance scholarship and the Split Infinitive Trust. Her operatic roles include Belinda/1st Witch Dido and Aeneas (Bradford Festival Choral Society), Juno/The Fairy Queen (RNCM Opera), La Contessa d'Almaviva (scenes) Le Nozze di Figaro (RNCM Opera), Aenchen (scenes) Der Freischütz (RNCM Opera), Chorus The Pilgrim's Progress (RNCM Opera) and Chorus The Snow Maiden (RNCM Opera). Ruby has performed regularly as a concert soloist for various choirs across Yorkshire. Her performed repertoire includes Handel Messiah (St Peter's Singers), Vivaldi Gloria (Bradford Chorale) and Todd Mass in Blue (Morley Music Society). During the first year of her Masters degree, Ruby has been selected as a member of the RNCM Songsters and has performed numerous engagements with them including a pre-concert recital for the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra. Ruby has also been selected to perform in masterclasses for esteemed singers such as Dame Ann Murray and Jennifer Larmore. Ruby is thrilled to have been selected as a finalist in the Frederic Cox prize- a competition she has enjoyed watching since she was a first year undergraduate.

Esther Shea

Soprano Esther Shea is in her final year of undergraduate studies at the RNCM under the tutelage of Jane Irwin. She will be continuing her vocal studies in September 2024 by embarking on a Master of Music at the RNCM. During her time at the conservatoire, she has been highly commended in the Elsie Thurston Competition, the James Oncken Song Prize and the Alexander Young Prize. In November 2023, she made her concert debut as a soloist at the Nottingham Albert Hall performing Mendelssohn's 'Second Symphony' and Mozart's 'Laudate Dominum' with the Nottingham Harmonic Choir under the baton of Richard Laing. This January, Esther performed the role of Sandrina in scenes from Mozart's 'La Finta Giardiniera' and last June as Don Ettore in scenes from Haydn's 'La Canterina' in the RNCM Opera Theatre. She was also a member of the chorus in the RNCM's production of Mozart's 'Le Nozze Di Figaro'. Last Autumn, she was selected to join the RNCM Songsters which has nurtured her love and performance of song repertoire. Esther grew up in Jersey in the Channel Islands and studied at Chetham's School of Music for sixth form where she was awarded The Drane Prize for Vocal Music.

Jay Broadhurst

Jay Broadhurst is a Manchester-born undergraduate tenor studying with Matthew Best. Having recently made his professional debut as Un Chef in Massenet's Le roi de Lahore (Dorset Opera Festival), he will join Garsington Opera Festival as an Alvarez Young Artist in their upcoming season. Previous engagements also include: Tsar Berendeyi in The Snow Maiden (RNCM), Lensky in Eugene Onegin (Preston Opera) and Preacher in Bernstein's Mass at the Bridgewater Hall (RNCM). In addition, Jay will make his directorial debut producing the premiere of Bicarregui's Capsule this season. He is thrilled to be furthering his studies at the RNCM, generously supported by the department, enabling him to continue to follow his passions for his craft and Manchester United.

Rosa Sparks

Rosa Sparks is a soprano currently studying for her Masters of Music at the Royal Northern College of Music, under the tutelage of Elizabeth Ritchie. Rosa's recent operatic engagements include Emmie, in Opera North's production of *Albert Herring*. Other opera roles include Yum-Yum (*The Mikado*, Opera Anywhere), First Lady and Papagena (*The Magic Flute*, Opera Anywhere), Belinda (*Dido and Aeneas*, Opera Sparks), and Miss Havisham (*Miss Havisham's Wedding Night*, RNCM Student Opera). She created the leading role of 'The Soprano' in 'Interrupted', a modern comedic opera which premiered at the 2022 Atmospheres Festival. She has also performed with Welsh National Opera in their Young Company production of *Cherry Town Moscow* and was part of the street chorus in the RNCM's 50th Anniversary production of *Bernstein's Mass*. Rosa is an accomplished choral and consort singer, and she regularly performs with professional consorts; Kantos, The Swan Consort and Exodus, and has worked under the baton of Harry Christophers, as part of Genesis Sixteen. Recent solo oratorio work includes Handel's *Messiah* and Mozart's *Exultate Jubilate*. Rosa will next be performing as Lucilla in *La Scala di Seta* for the RNCM's Spring Opera.

Liam Forrest

Liam Forrest, from Dunfermline, Fife, is currently a postgraduate tenor at the Royal Northern College of Music, studying with Matthew Best. Liam's studies at RNCM are kindly 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 Dunfermline Carnegie Trust, the United Dunfermline Burns Club, and the Rotary Club of Dunfermline. These included high profile events, such as the Tiffany Window dedication ceremony for the Carnegie Trust, and at John Cairney's Book Launch of 'The Tycoon and the Bard.' Liam has performed at the Rotary Club of Dunfermline's Centenary Dinner Banquet at the Balmoral Hotel, Edinburgh. As an RNCM Songster, Liam has performed the song cycle 'Other Love Songs' with Sir Stephen Hough. Most recently, he was tenor soloist in the Mozart Requiem and Schubert's Mass in G minor, with the Haddo House Operatic and Choral Society, which was attended by the Duke of Edinburgh. Operatic roles include Mr Rushworth in Dove's 'Mansfield Park' (RNCM) (Byre Opera), Bobyl-Bakula in Rimsky-Korsakov's 'The Snowmaiden' (RNCM). Opera excerpts include Ferrando in Mozart's 'Cosi fan tutte' (RNCM), Rinnucio in Puccini's 'Gianni Schicchi' (RNCM). Liam looks forward to performing the role of Dorvil in Rossini's 'La Scala di Seta' at the RNCM in March 2024.

Daisy Mitchell

Daisy is a 23-year-old mezzo-soprano from Staffordshire Moorlands. She is currently studying for a Master of Arts at the Royal Northern College of Music with Jane Irwin. Daisy continues to also be taught by Amanda Roocroft. Daisy was an undergraduate scholar at the Royal Academy of Music. Whilst at the Academy, Daisy received the Arthur Burcher Memorial prize for receiving the highest mark in her first-year recital. She was delighted to be a finalist in the Charles Wood Song Competition 2022, and to join the Josephine Baker Trusts' list of approved singers. Recent engagements include Royal Page in *The Snowmaiden* at RNCM and chorus in *Carmen* at Waterperry Opera Festival 2023, where Daisy was a Young Artist. Previously, Daisy performed in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (The Grange Festival, chorus). Other solo engagements include Rossini's *Petite Messe Solenne* (Amersham Choral Society), Durufle's *Requiem* (Stone Choral Society), Faure's *Requiem* (Stone Choral Society). She looks forward to playing Nicklaus in *The Tales of Hoffman* with Preston Opera, and to singing as alto soloist in Haydn's *Missa Sancti Nicolai* and Schubert's *Mass in A-flat* with Fleetwood Choral Society and Lytham St Anne's Choral Society respectively. Daisy is grateful to the William and Francis Dobie Charitable Foundation for support of her studies.

The Accompanists

David Jones

David Jones was born on the Wirral and completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Wales, Bangor, specialising in performance and studying piano with Jana Frenklova. He graduated from the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, with a Postgraduate Diploma in Piano Accompaniment and the degree of Master of Music in Performance. After a year as Junior Fellow in Repetiteur Studies at the RNCM, David lectured for three years at University College, Salford. He joined the School of Keyboard Studies at the RNCM as a staff pianist in 1996 and was appointed Accompaniment Co-ordinator, now Head of Accompaniment, in September 2001. He held the post of Deputy Head (Performance) for Junior RNCM between 1998 and 2023 and was for four years Chorus Master of the RNCM Chamber Choir. David is pianist for the Hallé Choir, and founder and Musical Director of Altèri, the Manchester-based chamber choir. He completed his PhD at the University of Manchester in 2011, researching the music of Jeffrey Lewis, and has so far released three discs of Lewis's piano, chamber and vocal works, on ASC, Campion Cameo – 'Gramophone' described it as '*...a disc not to be missed by anyone who cares about communicative 20th-century music*' – and Metier/Divine Art, with RNCM alumni Caroline MacPhie (soprano) and Zheng Yu Wu (violin).

Jonathan Fisher

Jonathan Fisher is an accomplished and sought after collaborative pianist having had notable performances at Leeds Lieder, Oxford Lieder Festival, Ryedale Festival, Harrogate Festival, and The Richard Strauss Society, along with many other recitals for music societies across the United Kingdom (UK). He has performed in many prestigious venues throughout the UK including The Purcell Room, The Wigmore Hall, The Bridgewater Hall, and Philharmonic Hall Liverpool. Jonathan has built his career around collaboration, having worked with internationally recognised singers such as Roderick Williams, Benjamin Appl, Sir John Tomlinson, Rachel Nichols, Kathryn Rudge, Anna Stéphany, Lynne Dawson, Linda Richardson, Paul Nilon, and Louise Winter. He has performed and toured with the young and vibrant saxophonist Jess Gillam, collaborated with Phillipe Tondre (principle oboe of the Philadelphia orchestra), Józef Bazsinka (tuba, Budapest Festival Orchestra), and soloists of the Halle Orchestra, amongst others. Recent recordings include a recital disc of songs by Julian Dawes, and The Soldier's Legacy for Retrospect Opera. In addition to his active performance schedule, Jonathan is committed to working with the next generation of musicians. He works as a Staff Pianist and Coach for the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM), where he is the co-founder and Artistic Director of the RNCM Songsters. Jonathan graduated with first class honours from The University of Huddersfield and has a Master of Music in Performance from the Royal Northern College of Music. He studied with David Jones and Benjamin Frith, and in addition has taken masterclasses and private tuition from Malcom Martineau, Julius Drake, and Roger Vignoles.