

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a dark blue patterned shirt and a dark apron, is sculpting a white clay bust of a person's head. She is using a wooden tool to shape the clay. The bust is resting on a wooden block that has been painted with various colors. The background is a dark, paneled wall.

CHORUS

The magazine of Opera Holland Park | **Autumn 2019**

Dates for your calendar

2020 Season at a glance

- *Eugene Onegin*, 7.30pm ● YA Young Artists performance
- *Rigoletto*, 7.30pm ● Discovery matinee, 2pm
- *The Merry Widow*, 7.30pm
- *Margot la Rouge / Le Villi*, 7.30pm
- Royal Ballet School, 7.00pm ● matinee, 2pm
- *Pirates of Penzance*, 7.30pm

June

Mon	Tues	Weds	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18 ^{YA}	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

July

Mon	Tues	Weds	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

August

Mon	Tues	Weds	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Discovery matinee

On Sunday 21 June, we will be hosting our first Discovery matinee. This performance of *Rigoletto* will be a relaxed performance with Touch Tour, audio-description and accessible ticket pricing, to allow newcomers to discover opera.

Dates for your diary

February

- 27 Young Artists' Circle Launch The Gore London

March

- 11 Young Artists Masterclass with Amanda Roocroft Pushkin House
 18 Monstrous and sublime: Verdi's *Rigoletto* Italian Cultural Institute
 25 Supporters' Spring Reception Chris Beetles Gallery
 31 Waltz, schmaltz, cash and champagne: Lehár's *The Merry Widow* Mathiessen Gallery

May

- 30 *Eugene Onegin* Dress Rehearsal Opera Holland Park Theatre

June

- 4 *Rigoletto* Dress Rehearsal Opera Holland Park Theatre
 9 Pre-show Talk with Lada Valešová Opera Holland Park Theatre
 18 Pre-show Talk with Dane Lam Opera Holland Park Theatre
 23 Pre-show Talk with Professor Jeremy Black Opera Holland Park Theatre

July

- 16 *The Merry Widow* Dress Rehearsal Opera Holland Park Theatre
 17 *Margot la Rouge / Le Villi* Dress Rehearsal Opera Holland Park Theatre
 23 Pre-show Talk with Martin Lloyd-Evans Opera Holland Park Theatre
 30 Pre-show Talk with Tim Ashley Opera Holland Park Theatre

Opera Holland Park Christmas Concert 2019

Toast the festive season with Opera Holland Park at our Christmas Concert on **Saturday 7 December, 7pm**, at **St Columba's Church** in the heart of Knightsbridge.

The evening features sacred and seasonal music, songs and arias performed by the Opera Holland Park Chorus and principal singers, and celebrity guest readings.

Tickets from £25 (including a festive drink).

Call 0300 999 1000 or visit www.operahollandpark.com to book.

Members of the
Opera Holland Park
Chorus in *Iolanta* at
Opera Holland Park
© Ali Wright



As another summer fades away, and the shortening days become colder, it's time once again to reflect on the season just past and to look forward to the one to come.

The 2019 Season saw artistic achievements on stage reach new heights. There was plenty to celebrate offstage too. The Season opened in June with *Manon Lescaut* and *Un ballo in maschera*, which delivered thrilling five-star performances. The Schools' Matinee performance given by the 2019 Young Artists received a rock star-worthy standing ovation.

July brought Provençal heat to the park – not inappropriate for our production of *L'arlesiana* – and the Season ended with some unforgettable singing from the cast of our double bill. Few who heard it will forget the power and emotion of the *Iolanta* love duet, performed by Natalya Romaniw and David Butt Philip. Amidst all this, over 1,500 people came along to our best-attended Open Day ever.

As successful a season as 2019 was, our attention is already focused on the forthcoming months. We recently announced the cast and creatives for the 2020 Season, which features numerous company debuts and 12 Opera Holland Park Young Artists alumni. In December we will present our second Christmas Concert at St Columba's Church in Knightsbridge, featuring festive favourites performed by the Opera Holland Park Chorus and principals, and hosted by Penny Smith.

Alongside that, we have just premiered a new film focusing on mental health; *Into The Light*, in which three military veterans experience opera for the first time. We are also launching Opera on Film, an initiative designed to open our work to those community members who cannot attend the theatre. The project begins with a live video recording of *Un ballo in maschera* that will be made available in a variety of

formats to hospitals, care homes, shelters and schools.

It is thanks to your ongoing support of Opera Holland Park that we are able to keep expanding the range and quality of the work we do, reaching new people and staging ever more successful productions. We hope that you enjoyed the 2019 Season as much as we did, and we look forward to sharing more of our work with you soon.

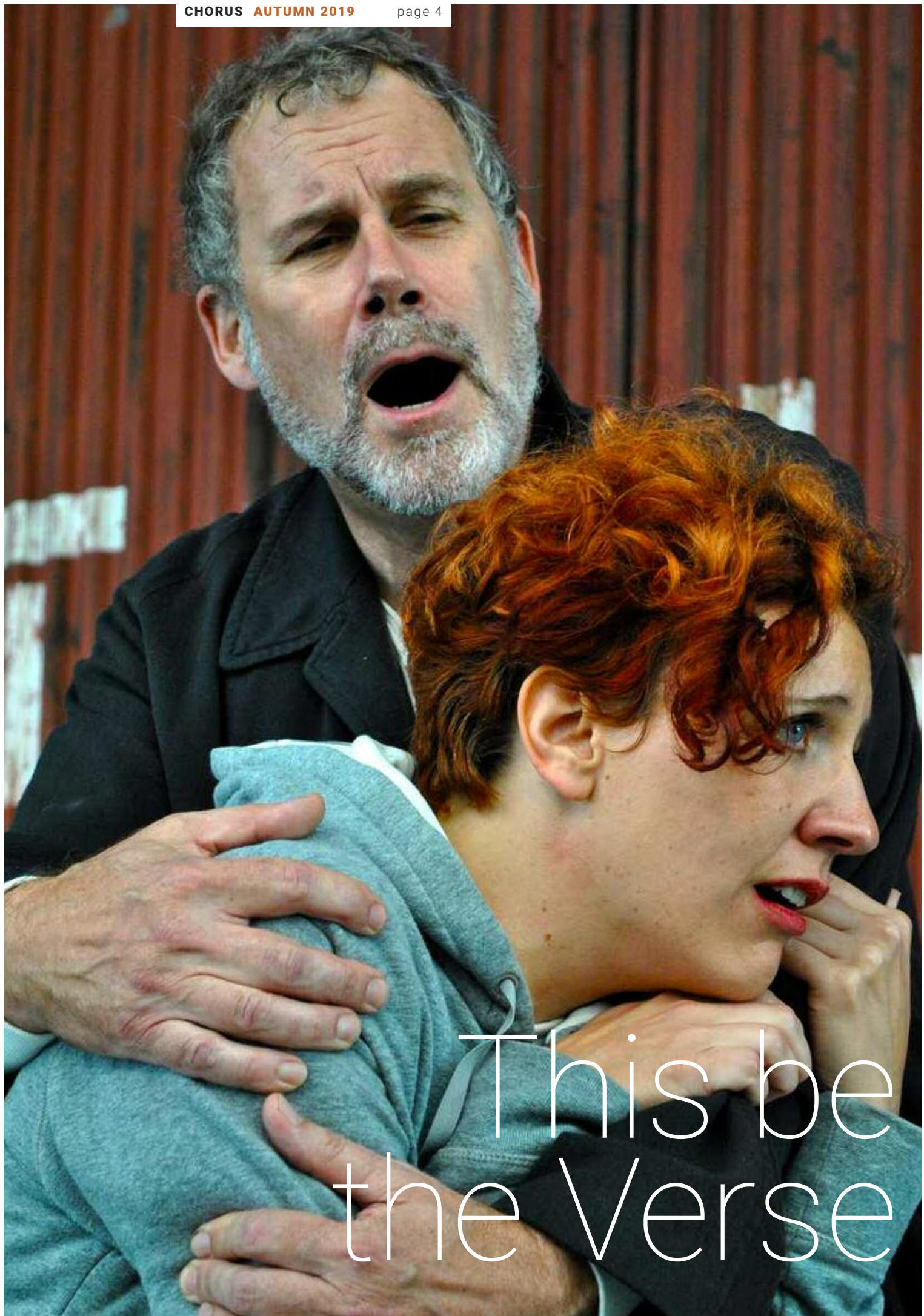
James Clutton Director of Opera

Michael Volpe General Director

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Cover image: Anne Sophie Duprels as Amelia in *Un ballo in maschera* at Opera Holland Park © Ali Wright



This be
the Verse

Robert Thicknesse casts a merciless eye on opera's mothers and fathers.

The poet Philip Larkin was no great opera fan, but his well-known views on the effects of parenting could serve very well as the art form's vision or mission statement. Next year's Opera Holland Park playlist is as good an illustration as any: *Rigoletto* is opera's unrivalled *Guide to Successful Parenting*; *Eugene Onegin* features an entertainingly bungling mother, and as for the others – well, there has to be some reason how those young things got that way.

Traditionally in opera it's dad who does most of the heavy lifting when it comes to ensuring the beloved offspring's life is grim, miserable and short. Sons or daughters, it's all the same. For every Gilda, infantilised and imprisoned by her peculiar papa, *Rigoletto*, there's a Don Carlos, dobbled into the Inquisition for strappado by gloomy dad King Phil. For every Iphigenia chucked on the barbie by a father brown-nosing the gods, there's an Idamante similarly basted. But let's hear it for the distressing effects of mothers, too: they may often be subtler in their methods – indeed, they sometimes seem able to wield their baleful spells from beyond the grave – but they are no slouches when it comes to scuppering the life-chances of their brood.

There's a strong case that all operatic tenors' social and sexual problems can be traced back to their mothers. Most of them are Italian, after all. At the fundamentalist end of this radical mothers' movement, we have *Trovatore*'s Manfredo, driven to madness and fratricide by Azucena's mood-swings, and Don José reduced from ardent lover to blubbering infant by an emasculating missive from the old mater, telepathically twitching the apron strings from her distant hovel.

Still, it's hard to deny there are fewer actively destructive mothers on the stage. The reason for this is basically structural. Opera has a highly equivocal attitude to reproduction, and therefore, alas, to mothers. They are regrettable necessities – in order to give birth to the freak shows whose various dooms are presented for our entertainment – but are thereafter dispensable. Any hint of fecundity in the next generation is severely frowned upon. Because opera, concerning itself with lust and allied furious

passions, rightly concluded that *Bringing Up Baby* would make a deeply unsatisfactory storyline. The occasional couple is permitted a visit to the family-planning department – see Mozart's Papagenic carry-on – though this is better understood as an anticipation of copious quantities of copulation.

Opera's main aim, then, as it plots its hapless heroes' future, is to stop them at all costs from exercising their genetic duty. Young women must be killed off before they are fertilised, or at least die in childbirth, like Debussy's *Mélisande*. The best possible outcome is what the tabloids might call a 'horrific double tragedy' wherein the dewy-eyed lovebirds cop it together in some improbable inferno. Here, Wagner is your go-to guy for top soap solutions: Tristan, eschewing medical attention for a superficial flesh-wound, goes gangrenous and necrotic, while Isolde checks out with a Tantric musical climax. Brünnhilde tells Hagen the best place to impale her beloved Siegfried (also her nephew) then commits suttee. As to Senta and the Flying Dutchman: well, nobody really knows what happens there, but it's not pretty.

But to get back to our parental *moutons*. Despite a slew of memorable progenitors in Baroque opera – Nero's mama Agrippina, for example, or the magnificent Medea – it was Giuseppe Verdi who established the system that would prefigure the insights of Freud. Verdi ran up an impressive nine operas in which parents and children are intimately involved in each other's ruin and/or death. Among these, *La forza del destino* has a pleasing mutuality, the father's death the proximate cause of the violent extinction of his entire clan. *Il trovatore* extends the generational conflict, beginning with the 'wrong' baby (i.e. her own son) killed by a girl wracked with guilt and shame about her own mother's fiery demise at the stake. The rest of the action is the logical hecatomb of violence required to straighten out the whole mess.

Rigoletto presents us in the starkest possible way with the consequences of the 'daddy's little princess' form of father-love, though the jolly jester's take on this is pretty X-rated. Gilda's mother having in the approved manner died during or shortly after

childbirth, the child has been saddled with preserving the image of her 'angelic purity'. This, naturally, requires Gilda to remain eternally virgin, imprisoned at home, while dad pays her secret visits as if she were a mistress, letting off steam by cherry-picking other men's unsullied daughters for rape by his lusty employer. Gilda is doomed by the over-doting father's confusion between daughter and wife – though happily for all she is spared the final indignity of childbirth by her early bath.

After all this, Tchaikovsky's Ma Larina comes as something of a homely relief, though she is frankly culpable for initiating her daughter's lifelong unhappiness. A professed devotee of the novels of Samuel Richardson, she has indoctrinated young Tatyana (a guileless little creature in provincial 1820s Russia) with the notion that the ideal suitor is an Englishman from circa 1750 (the model being Sir Charles Grandison, most tedious and upright of Richardson's heroes); and that the ideal way to light the love-story's blue touchpaper is via decorously impassioned, romantically idealistic letters. Tatyana myopically mistakes the luring Onegin – a chap from an entirely different book – for this improbable object of desire. Tchaikovsky omits one of Pushkin's jovial ironies: old Mrs L only ever *pretended* to have read Richardson, in an attempt to appear clever.

Meanwhile, Tatyana's sister Olga would seem (like her mother) to have never read a book: pretty, jolly and winsome, she is ideally cut out, like Lydia Bennet, for a life of flirtation and fickleness. We can only agree with Onegin that with her 'round, lifeless face, like the silly moon up in the silly sky', she's a poor fit for the poet's muse. Duly wounding poor Lensky's oversensitive soul with her fluttering eyelashes, she

barely waits until he is cold in the ground before gallivanting off with a cavalry officer – no doubt the spitting image of the chap her mother had eyes for all those years ago.

Relatives are sadly low-profile or reticent in next season's other offerings: Danilo's uncle *in loco parentis* in *The Merry Widow* nixed his affair with Hanna in the past, and old Guglielmo in Puccini's *Le Villi* is an identikit operatic backwoodsman who, not too surprisingly, fails to see through the love-rat Roberto. More intriguing is the entirely unmentioned mother of Delius's diligent sex-worker, Margot.

The chances are, I guess, that she was also on the game. Or, like Gilda's mother, dead. More fun, though, to imagine her a prim, proper bourgeoisie, like the mother in the Victorian music-hall song. Here, the wayward daughter, arrested as a prostitute, flees from the police and hurls herself into the Thames to drown. The perky chorus concludes:

*Had she listened to her mother, had
she hearkened to her words,*

*all her life would now be sunshine,
and as happy as the birds!*

*Every pain would be a pleasure, every
grief with joy beguiled –*

*had she only listened kindly to her
mother when a child!*

Though, as I have tried to demonstrate, it's a lesson operatic characters would on the whole be advised to ignore. ●

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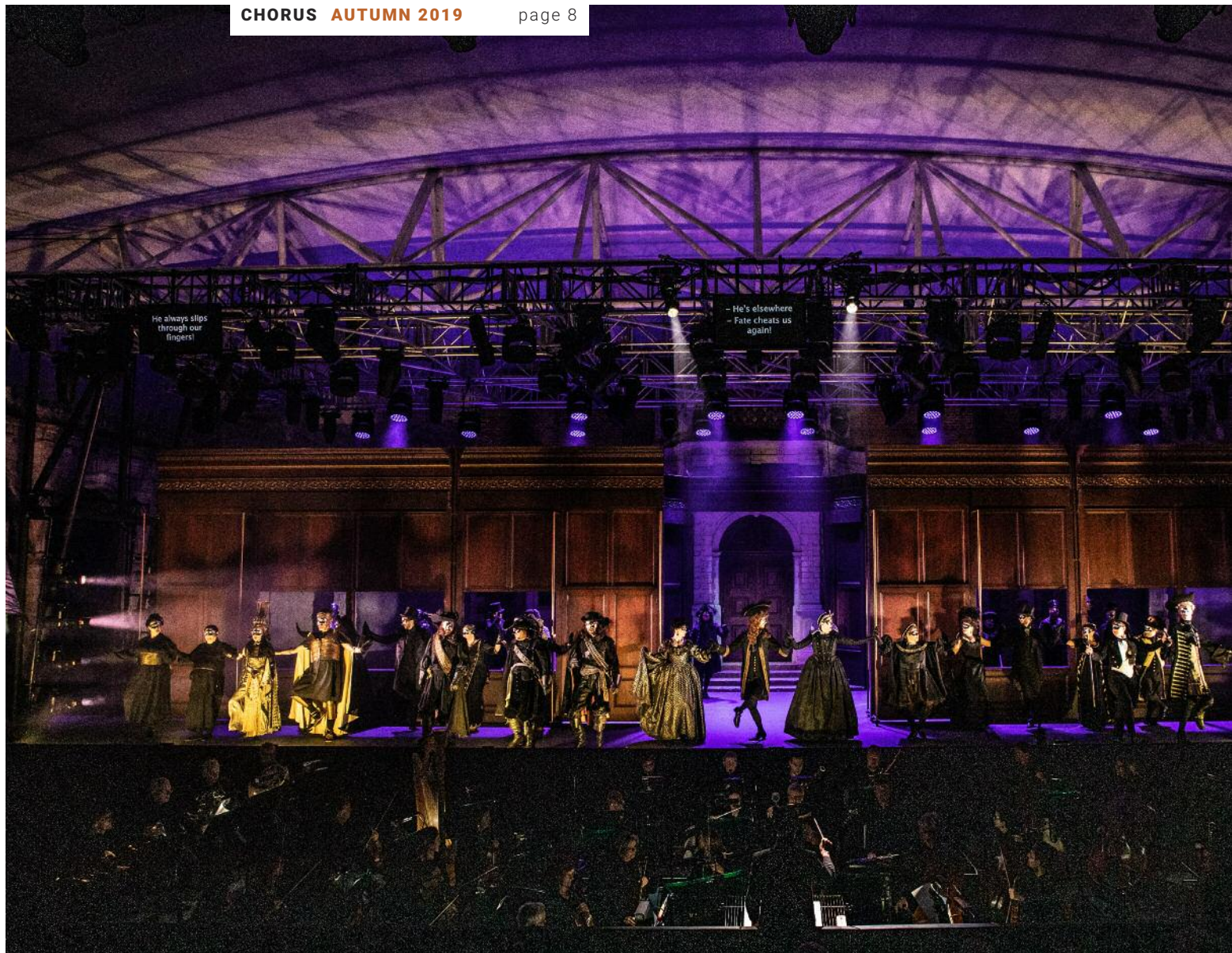
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Fatal Contagion

Anna Picard looks at the relationship between dance and opera.

First love, much of it stymied by fate or families, is one theme of the Opera Holland Park 2020 Season. Another theme is dance – a component of opera since its infancy in the palaces of Italy. The names alone are wonderfully seductive: pavana, bergamasca, passacaglia, ciaccona. First performed in 1607 in the ducal palace of Mantua, Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* opens with the Gonzaga family fanfare and closes with a moresca.

Taken to an extreme in the *opéra-ballets* of seventeenth and eighteenth century France, dance was not merely an entertaining diversion from an often convoluted plot: it provided armchair tourism in the

form of exotic rhythms and instrumentation, imagined flavours of Turkey, Spain or India, and vicarious cosplay in picaresque rigadouns and bosky musettes for lovesick sailors and shepherdesses.

Purcell assayed hornpipes and Scottish, Chinese and Mexican dances in his semi-operas. Fifty years later, Handel gave a boost to a lacklustre season in London by adding a gavotte, rondeau and bourrée to his Scottish opera, *Ariodante*, for the French dancer Marie Sallé and her troupe. Dance music described Elysium and Hades in Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, and provided a backdrop to the dénouements of Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*.

In the buttoned-up nineteenth century, dance also offered the rare spectacle of exposed ankles, calves, thighs, wrists and arms in a semi-respectable arena. To see more than that, one would have to leave one's wife at home with her needlework and set out for a cabaret – birthplace of the galop or cancan.

The Opera Holland Park Chorus in *Un ballo in maschera* at Opera Holland Park © Ali Wright



In Paris in 1861, Richard Wagner caused outrage among the members of the Jockey Club when he programmed the ballet in *Tannhäuser* immediately after the overture, clashing with their dinner, and denying them the post-prandial glimpse of dancers' stockings that they considered their right. The premiere was consequently a fiasco.

Six years later, the same gentlemen enjoyed the sight of the courtesan and adventuress Cora Pearl 'half-naked' in tunic and tights as Cupid in Offenbach's *Orphée aux enfers*. (Pauline Viardot had balked at a similarly revealing ensemble for her role as Orpheus in Berlioz's 1859 recreation of Gluck's opera.) Offenbach was cannier than his coevals when catering to the tastes of his audience.

The waltz was long considered indecent – too close a form of contact for unmarried couples, too suggestive of sex in its breathless propulsion, and, in England, too foreign. When it was first danced at court, The Times thundered that 'it is quite sufficient to cast one's eyes on the voluptuous intertwining of the limbs and close compressure on the bodies in their dance to see that it is indeed far removed from the modest reserve which has hitherto been considered distinctive of English females'. The editorial concluded censoriously that 'we feel it a duty to warn every parent against exposing his daughter to so fatal a contagion'.

Contagion was, of course, the same threat that The Times perceived in *La traviata* at its 1956 London premiere. The waltz was by now both indelibly associated with Vienna and truly international. In opera, meanwhile, dance remained a useful means to conjure class, place and period, and to throw characters into close, sometimes dangerous, proximity. (Remember the climax of *Un ballo in maschera*?)

In Lehár's second-time-lucky romantic comedy, *The Merry Widow*, which premiered in the same month of 1905 as Richard Strauss's *Salome*, with its scandalous Dance of the Seven Veils, Hanna and Danilo literally waltz their way back into each other's arms. The setting may be Paris, as illustrated by the cancan led by Valencienne, and the leading players may be Pontevedrin, as illustrated by the kolo danced at Hanna's party, but the operetta is Viennese to the core, peppery and polyglot.

Puccini's *Le Villi*, the second opera in the 2020 double-bill of rarities, opens with a choral waltz in celebration of Roberto and Anna's betrothal ('Gira! Balza! Gira!') and

closes with a fevered tarantella, as the unfaithful Roberto dances to his death with the ghost of the girl whose heart he broke. Neither dance is local to the Black Forest setting of the original story, though the waltz is a distant relative of the rustic Bavarian Welle.

The only opera in the season not to feature dance music is, curiously, Delius's *Margot la Rouge* – companion piece to *Le Villi* in the double bill, and another narrative of pastoral innocence corrupted by urban evils. Similar to Puccini's *Il tabarro* in its setting in working class Paris, its compression and its violence, it eschews the off-key barrel organ waltz that Puccini used for local colour in favour of a painterly lyricism. The sad-eyed grisette in Degas's *L'Absinthe* springs to mind.

Of the composers in the 2020 Season, Tchaikovsky is the king of the dance. Those who saw the 2019 production of *Iolanta* may recall that it was written to be performed in a double bill with *The Nutcracker*. In *Eugene Onegin*, Onegin humiliates Tatyana at her name day party by dancing with her sister, and falls belatedly in love with her when he sees her again at a ball.

The peasants on the Larin estate sing a khorovod in Act I, the folk lyrics describing the arrival of a handsome but dangerous stranger. A waltz and a mazurka are danced at Tatyana's party. Monsieur Triquet's birthday tribute nods decorously in the direction of a minuet, and is sung in French, the language of the Russian court, while the Act III ball in St Petersburg features an aristocratic polonaise and ecossaise.

Pushkin's verse novel was set in the 1820s, whereas Victor Hugo's play, *Le roi s'amuse*, the source for Verdi's *Rigoletto*, was set in the sixteenth century. Censorship forced a relocation to Mantua.

Our first glimpse of the Duke of Mantua is at a *fiesta da ballo* at which the dances include a perigordino. His first aria, 'Questa o quella', is written in the form of a ballata, while 'La donna è mobile' is a canzone. Verdi had done his musicological homework. Even the jester's name is a corruption of a renaissance round-dance, the rigioletto. Italian opera had returned to its birthplace and made an antihero of a member of the Gonzaga family, patrons of Claudio Monteverdi and the first audience to hear *L'Orfeo*. ●

2019 Season in review

The Opera Holland Park 2019 Season saw 31 performances across five different operas. Alongside our own productions, we also welcomed Juilliard Opera for their first performance with us, and the Royal Ballet School returned for another year. Our best attended Open Day yet and another incredible Schools' Matinee topped things off perfectly. Here's our 2019 Season in review...



▲ Taking part in a dance workshop at the Opera Holland Park Open Day 2019
© Laima Arlauskaitė

Over 1,500 attendees at the Opera Holland Park Open Day 2019



▲ Conducting a string quartet at the Opera Holland Park Open Day 2019
© Laima Arlauskaitė

"This is Holland Park at its best – an evening that reaches a standard in these pieces that our national companies might struggle to match." George Hall, The Stage on the double bill of *Il segreto di Susanna* and *Iolanta* ★★★★★

▼ Clare Presland as Countess Susanna in *Il segreto di Susanna* at Opera Holland Park © Ali Wright



▲ Samantha Price as L'innocente and Yvonne Howard as Rosa Mamai in *L'arlesiana* at Opera Holland Park © Ali Wright

"What a joy to hear this impeccably cast, well sung production, conducted with real authority by Dane Lam and sympathetically directed by Oliver Platt." David Mellor, Mail on Sunday on *L'arlesiana* ★★★★★

2,443 participants in the Inspire programme during 2019



"I found it really exciting. I really liked the twists and turns in the plot." – Schools' Matinee attendee



▲ Nadine Benjamin meets attendees at the 2019 Opera Holland Park Schools' Matinee
© Laima Arlauskaitė

"It's quite amazing how much sound they can get out of their voices... I've never seen opera before, so it was very interesting for me." – Schools' Matinee attendee



◀ Elizabeth Llewellyn as Manon Lescaut in *Manon Lescaut* at Opera Holland Park
© Ali Wright

"Elizabeth Llewellyn has an exciting voice for Puccini, silvery and vital..." Erica Jeal, *Guardian* on *Manon Lescaut*

"The ball scene with its bloody denouement, powered with tremendous verve by Matthew Kofi Waldren in the pit, is a triumphant meld of lighting, design and choreography, with Gaitanou's direction never putting a foot wrong." Michael Church, *Independent* on *Un ballo in maschera* ★★★★★



▲ Anne Sophie Duprels as Amelia and Matteo Lippi as Gustavo in *Un ballo in maschera* at Opera Holland Park
© Ali Wright

◀ Jack Holton as Anckarström, Blaise Malaba as Ribbing and Tom Mole as Horn in the Young Artists Performance of *Un ballo in maschera* at Opera Holland Park
© Frances Marshall / Marshall Light Studio

"I don't think I've ever heard such rapturously wonderful singing at Opera Holland Park." Rupert Christiansen, *The Telegraph* on *Iolanta* ★★★★★



▲ Full company and members of the Opera Holland Park Chorus in *Iolanta*
© Ali Wright

Michael Volpe discusses
our newly released film

Into the Light



There is a peculiar trait that you notice when you first engage with someone suffering from PTSD, which is particularly evident when that trauma has emerged from the threat to life that military experience presents. That trait is mistrust. Not outward hostility or truculence, but a distance; a barrier exemplified by doubtful eyes, as though you are being scanned for bullshit. It is inescapable and it puts you on your guard. These were my first thoughts when I met the participants in Opera Holland Park's *Into the Light*, a film that follows three UK forces veterans on a journey into opera.

Our two previous films, *From Footy to Verdi* and *Hip Hop to Opera*, also dealt with novice operagoers – football fans and inner city teenagers respectively. While both films were startling and heart-warming, they were primarily concerned with challenging the participants to expand their cultural horizons. *Into the Light* was different from the beginning.

Ian with *Iolanta* cast member Charne Rochford during rehearsals

My interest in mental health issues goes back a long way, and the benefits of music therapy are a well-established concept. I had some trepidation when stepping into the specific arena of PTSD and veterans, yet it seemed the perfect topic with which to test our belief that music – and opera, in particular – has the power to elevate mood and to engender self-reflection. As with the other films, however, opera soon took a secondary role.

Our starting thesis was that engaging with live opera and its storytelling can help all of us to find parallels with our own lives that enable us to see ourselves differently: to 'look back on ourselves' and to admit our failings; to express our own pain; to acknowledge the damage of the past. It also exposes us to experiences that simply fill us with joy, which can never be a bad thing. For veterans suffering with PTSD, stepping outside of themselves mentally can be liberating, and the potency of creativity – as an observer and as a participant – is unbridled.

Our first day was spent interviewing each of the participants at Stoll, in Fulham, a charity that provides long-term housing for service personnel leaving the forces. Mac, Tina and Ian didn't present as timid or over-sensitive. I was soon reassured that there was little risk of 'saying the wrong thing' and I could confidently ask them questions that might prompt frank and revealing answers. Mac confessed to having had suicidal ideation during his dark times. Ian spoke openly about his confidence issues and his years of anger and alcohol-abuse. Tina revealed her history of abusive relationships. But the guardedness remained, and the questioning eyes and scrutiny were ever-present.

The opera we chose to focus on was Tchaikovsky's *Iolanta*, a fairy tale about a young princess, who is blind and kept in ignorance of her condition. Love, as it turned out, would be the cure for her blindness, and her emergence into the colour and luminosity of sight is the climax of the opera. The parallels were not lost on our participants. As filming progressed and Mac, Ian and Tina began to experience the opera in rehearsal rooms and at the theatre, there was a gradual softening of attitudes. Some trust was built but I found myself increasingly aware of practiced answers – perhaps born of therapy – that sometimes locked me out.

Tina was always keen to say how she wanted to do something that entertained or helped others – running away, perhaps, from the thought that she had a right to think firstly of herself. Her abusive relationships had given her that habit. Mac's attachment to his Parasport and heavy metal music revealed a passionate soul, but one not given too readily to introspection or softness. He was still a tough soldier at his core, but a glimpse of his softer side emerged when he spoke about photography. Ian was almost embarrassed to say he enjoyed painting, and that what he liked to paint most was nature and colour. The shackles of macho soldiering, the principle that prevented all three of them seeking help for years, were not fully ruptured.

As the time for their visit to the full performance of *Iolanta* approached, I had doubts as to whether we would break through the self-protecting wall they had all built. Tina was the most eager to experience the performance, although she seemed simultaneously terrified of what it might unlock. She wanted to 'find the woman I used to be before all this happened'.

During our visit to the rehearsal room, Ian had taken courage in his hands and moved between the singers as they rehearsed the final chorus. It was a magical moment, and a clip of it has had tens of thousands of views on social media, but arriving at the theatre he pulled me aside to express his fear that he thought he might have looked foolish. I worried that my promise to remove from the film anything they were unhappy with would leave me with too little footage to work with. I needn't have been concerned, because in the end they embraced their journey.

Into the Light does little more than demonstrate what we already believed to be true; that music and drama have a unique power to affect our sense of self. Trauma and depression are never washed away easily, if at all, but sharing the fictional tales of opera, along with their monumentally affecting music, can help us set our histories and our anxieties into context. Beautiful things are never wasted. And to my great surprise, when Ian visited the theatre a second time, the film required an epilogue which is so remarkable that cynics might think it was staged. It wasn't.

Into the Light is available to watch now, on [Amazon Prime](#) and [YouTube](#). ●

2020 Season

The fever of first love and the thrill of the dance run through Opera Holland Park's 2020 Season in five new productions and a new collaboration with Charles Court Opera. Two classics of the repertoire are contrasted with two operettas and the first major London staging of two rarities by Delius and Puccini.

All productions with the City of London Sinfonia and the Opera Holland Park Chorus



Eugene Onegin Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

2, 5, 9, 11, 13, 20, 24, 26 June at 7.30pm

16 June at 12pm (Schools' Matinee)

18 June at 7.30pm (Young Artists Performance)

Four lives are changed forever in Tchaikovsky's perfect tragedy of first love and second thoughts. *Eugene Onegin* is now one of the most cherished and popular operas in the repertoire.

When Tatyana is introduced to Onegin by her sister Olga's suitor, Lensky, she falls in love, pouring her feelings into a letter. Conflict ensues when Onegin rejects her, flirting instead with Olga – a decision that he will come to regret bitterly.

Packed with exquisite melodies, sparkling dances and dramatic choruses, *Eugene Onegin* is a powerful tale of youthful love and heartbreak.

The production will be conducted by Dane Lam, directed by Julia Burbach and designed by takis.

Cast includes Anush Hovhannisyan as Tatyana, Samuel Dale Johnson as Onegin, Nicky Spence as Lensky, Emma Stannard as Olga, Amanda Roocroft as Madame Larina and Kathleen Wilkinson as Filippievna



Rigoletto Giuseppe Verdi

6, 10, 12, 17, 19, 23, 25, 27 June at 7.30pm

21 June at 2pm (Discovery matinee – relaxed performance with audio described service available)

The devil has the best tunes in Verdi's scalding exposé of unchecked power, ruined innocence and revenge.

Cursed by nature and despised by society, the jester Rigoletto's only love is his daughter, Gilda. But when Gilda falls in love with Rigoletto's master, the ruthless Duke of Mantua, the corruption of court life escalates and Gilda is abducted. Humiliated and disgraced, Rigoletto hires an assassin.

Featuring some of opera's greatest arias, including 'La donna è mobile' and 'Caro nome', *Rigoletto* is an intense psychological portrait of a man trapped by his obsessions, for which he and Gilda pay a devastating price.

Matthew Kofi Waldren returns to Opera Holland Park to conduct his third Verdi opera for the company. The production is directed by Natascha Metherell and designed by Alyson Cummins.

Cast includes Stephen Gadd as Rigoletto, Anna Patalong as Gilda, Matteo Desole as the Duke of Mantua and Blaise Malaba as Sparafucile

Introducing 2020 Season Artist Rebecca Campbell

Alongside details of our productions, artist Rebecca Campbell introduces her four beautiful artworks, reflecting the themes of each opera in the 2020 Season.

Find out more about Rebecca and her work here: www.rebeccacampbell.co.uk

"This painting depicts the pain of unrequited love. The scene, set outside Tatyana's family's country house, sees her pining for the love of Onegin, who has completely dismissed her. In the distance, a different drama is unfolding. Onegin's friend, Lensky, has challenged him to a duel after finding Onegin flirting with his fiancé. The consequences will be dire."

"Here are the two faces of Rigoletto. The first, facing his daughter Gilda as a loving father, protecting her from the ways of the world by keeping her hidden. The second, facing the Duke as the Mantuan court jester. The Duke is duplicitous and corrupt, and manages to bypass him to the affections of the naive Gilda, again, with dire consequences."



The Merry Widow

Franz Lehár

**18, 22, 24, 28, 30 July and 1 August
at 7.30pm**

Champagne, hard cash and sumptuous waltzes fuel Lehár's delicious romantic comedy as Hanna and Danilo decide whether to give love a second chance.

Hanna Glawari is wealthy, single, and a target for gold-digging French aristocrats. At a glamorous Parisian party, the Pontevedrin ambassador, Baron Zeta, conspires to keep Hanna's fortune in Pontevedro, commissioning Danilo to seduce and marry her. Unknown to Zeta, Danilo and Hanna have a shared history.

Folk dances, a can-can and sublime serenades form the soundtrack to this will-they-won't-they second-time-lucky romance. *The Merry Widow* is one of the most scintillating and seductive nights in the theatre.

The Merry Widow is conducted by John Andrews, directed by Christopher Luscombe and designed by Simon Higlett.

Cast includes Julia Sporsén as Hanna Glawari, Alex Otterburn as Count Danilo, Alison Langer as Valencienne and Stephen Aviss as Camille

"Fun, fun, fun! In Act III of the opera, *The Merry Widow*, Hanna throws a Maxim themed ball complete with can-can dancers. In this playground, all the dramas of love and wealth are resolved, and everyone enjoys a happy ending."



Margot la Rouge / Le Villi

Frederick Delius / Giacomo Puccini

21, 23, 25, 29, 31 July at 7.30pm

This tragic double bill takes us from the backstreets of Paris to an enchanted forest, in two rarely heard works of passionate intensity.

Delius's only *verismo* opera sees the soldier, Thibault, recognise his first love in a brothel. The girl he once knew as Marguerite is now Margot, and the lover of a pimp. Blending the lyrical beauty for which Delius is famed with the passion and drive of Italian opera, *Margot la Rouge* is an intoxicating and gripping drama.

In the second opera of the evening, Puccini's early opera *Le Villi*, Anna – abandoned and forgotten by her sweetheart, Roberto – dies of a broken heart. When he returns, penniless and repentant, Anna and the Willis, the haunted spirits of abandoned brides, lure him into a fatal dance. With soaring melodies, this fantasy of heartbreak and supernatural revenge launched Puccini's career as the greatest musical dramatist of his era.

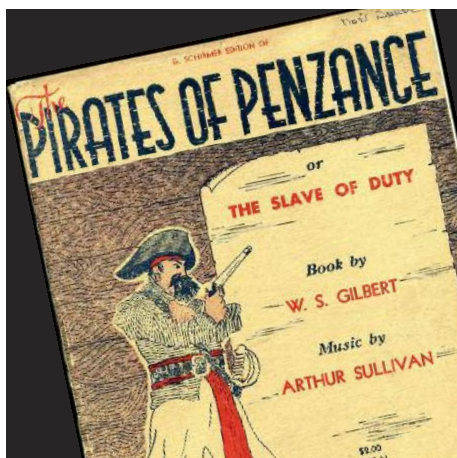
Both halves of the double bill will be conducted by Francesco Cilluffo, directed by Martin Lloyd-Evans and designed by takis.

Cast includes Anne Sophie Duprels as Margot in *Margot la Rouge* and Anna in *Le Villi*, Samuel Sakker as Sergeant Thibault in *Margot la Rouge*, Peter Auty as Roberto in *Le Villi*

"I have presented this double bill as one painting. The top half depicts *Margot la Rouge*, the bottom, a scene from *Le Villi*. Both have deadly consequences.

"The image of *Margot la Rouge* is set in a Parisian brothel masquerading as a bar. In the final tragic scene, Margot stabs the Artist, who has already killed her childhood sweetheart, Thibault.

"In *Le Villi*, Roberto is seen in the forest trying to flee his tormentors, the Willis. These spirits seek revenge on anyone that has reneged on their sweetheart, by making them dance to death. He was betrothed to Anna – now one of the Willis – but he betrayed her and she died of a broken heart."



The Pirates of Penzance

Gilbert & Sullivan

4, 5, 6, 7, 8 August at 7.30pm

The very model of a comic British opera, presented by Charles Court Opera with Opera Holland Park.

Gilbert and Sullivan return to Holland Park for the first time in twenty years.

Apprenticed to a gang of pirates since his infancy, Frederic falls in love at first sight with Mabel, the daughter of Major-General Stanley. Unfortunately, the terms of Frederic's apprenticeship prove to be more complicated than he thought. A leap year baby, he will not have completed his obligations to the pirates until his dotage. Romance, duty and tongue-twisting comic patter songs collide in a knockabout conflict of loyalties in one of Gilbert and Sullivan's most popular operas.

The Pirates of Penzance is conducted by David Eaton and directed by John Savournin.

Cast includes Richard Burkhard as Major-General Stanley, John Savournin as The Pirate King, Daisy Brown as Mabel and Yvonne Howard as Ruth

Students of the Royal Ballet School © 2019 The Royal Ballet School. Photographed by Tristram Kenton



The Royal Ballet School

2, 3, 4 July at 7pm

4 July at 2pm

The Royal Ballet School returns to Opera Holland Park once again to showcase its talented young artists-in-training.

Across four spectacular shows, students from White Lodge and the Upper School will perform a mixture of classical ballet repertoire, contemporary and character pieces. As always, this is fantastic chance to see some of the future stars of the ballet world in action.



The Laura Monaghan Bursary

In August we announced **The Laura Monaghan Bursary**, named in memory of Laura Monaghan, a soprano and core member of the Opera Holland Park Chorus, who died following a long battle with cancer during the summer of 2018.

The bursary will be awarded annually to one member of the Opera Holland Park Chorus, somebody who is consistently hard-working, always prepared for rehearsal and has a positive attitude on and offstage. They will be someone who has finished full-time study, shares Laura's interest in contemporary music and is at a point in their career where they are progressing but would benefit from additional support and guidance.

The Laura Monaghan Bursary will be used to fund coaching sessions, singing lessons and other expenses to assist career development. The recipient of the bursary will be chosen annually by Director of Opera James Clutton in consultation with the Opera Holland Park production team and chorus masters.

This year's bursary recipient is mezzo-soprano Yolanda-Grant Thompson. Yolanda trained at the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal Northern College of Music. She was a member of the Opera Holland Park Chorus for the 2019 Season productions of *L'arlesiana* and *Iolanta*, and she has been part of the *Inspire* team for our OperaUNITY family workshops.

The Laura Monaghan Bursary was set up in July 2018 by Linda Hirst, Laura's teacher at Trinity Laban Conservatoire; the British bass Matthew Rose; and James Clutton.

Matthew Rose said "Laura was one of the most incredible people I ever had the pleasure of knowing. She had the most stunning intelligence, was musical beyond belief, had utter determination, keen awareness, a sharp wit, and was the most amazing and loyal friend. I am so honoured to have had her in my life and I still can't believe we are without her. I hope that we can keep Laura's inspiration alive always with this award, and encourage others to strive for greatness and beauty in music and opera."

To donate to the Laura Monaghan Memorial Fund, please call the development team on 020 3846 6222 (option 2), or visit www.operahollandpark.com/laura-monaghan-memorial-fund/



Yolanda Grant-Thompson (third from left) with Director of Opera James Clutton, chorus master Dominic Ellis-Peckham and members of the Opera Holland Park production team

Information and Facilities

Priority Booking

- **Founders & Benefactors**
Wednesday 22 January, 10am
- **Ambassadors**
Monday 27 January, 10am
- **Envoys**
Monday 3 February, 10am
- **Gold & Silver Members**
Monday 10 February, 10am
- **Friends**
Monday 24 February, 10am

General Booking

Wednesday 26 February, 10am

How to Book

Book online and choose your own seats at www.operahollandpark.com. Here you can also find full details of all our productions and events, including cast lists and more.

If you choose to book online, please make sure you log in to the account associated with your membership. This will ensure that you can access Priority Booking, and that Member Pricing is applied automatically to all your bookings.

Call our Box Office on 0300 999 1000 every Monday to Friday from 10am to 6pm.

Book in person at the theatre from 10am to 6pm every Monday to Saturday, beginning on Wednesday 6 May. Please note that the Box Office moved from the Stable Yard in 2018, so in person booking is only available at the Opera Holland Park Theatre.

Please note that the Box Office is not open on Bank Holidays.

We accept payment by Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, Delta and American Express.

Exchanges and refunds

All tickets are non-refundable. Unfortunately, due to the restrictions of storing peoples' data enforced by the new data protection legislation we have had to remove our ticket exchange forum. Members & Supporters can now exchange their tickets between performances and productions for free up to a week prior to each performance, subject to availability.

Opening Hours

The theatre opens two hours before the performance starts. All evening performances will finish between 10pm and 10.30pm. Running times will be published on our website two days prior to the first night of each production. Please telephone the Box Office for further details.

Latecomers Policy

We have a strict no latecomers policy. Patrons arriving late will not be permitted to take their seats until a suitable break in the performance and may be required to wait until the interval.

Surtitles

There are three surtitle machines, located above the stage. The unique nature of the theatre means that the surtitles may not be fully visible from all seats for certain productions.

Membership Cards

Silver and Gold Members, Envoys and Ambassadors will receive a membership card with their membership confirmation letter. This card can be used to collect their free programme and access Member Pricing at the theatre bar. If you do not receive your card or misplace it at any time, please request a new card from the Membership team on membership@operahollandpark.com or by calling 020 3846 6222, option 2. Please note that replacement cards cannot be issued at the theatre.

Programmes

Individual programmes for each production will once again be available this year. Silver Members and above will be able to collect one free programme from the theatre upon presenting their membership card. Additional programmes cost £5 and can either be purchased in advance online or from the programme kiosk at the theatre.

Accessibility

We aim to make your visit to OHP as comfortable as possible, and we offer a range of additional support to ensure that you have an enjoyable visit.

Access bookers are entitled to up to two half-price tickets per performance, in price bands B, C and D, for themselves and a carer. These must be collection from the Box Office in order to show eligibility.

Ticket pricing

		Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	INSPIRE
<i>Eugene Onegin / Rigoletto</i>	MEMBER	£82	£78	£68	£58	£22
	NON-MEMBER	£90	£86	£76	£66	£22
<i>The Merry Widow / Margot la Rouge & Le Villi</i>	MEMBER	£80	£75	£65	£55	£22
	NON-MEMBER	£88	£83	£73	£63	£22
<i>Eugene Onegin</i> Young Artists Performance	MEMBER	£35	£30	£25	£20	£20
	NON-MEMBER	£40	£35	£30	£25	£20
<i>The Pirates of Penzance</i>	MEMBER	£55	£45	£35	£25	£22
	NON-MEMBER	£63	£53	£43	£33	£22
The Royal Ballet School	MEMBER	£36	£31	£26	£16	£16
	NON-MEMBER	£41	£36	£31	£21	£16

Stage



There are a limited number of wheelchair spaces in the front row of the auditorium, located in price band C. Wheelchair spaces can now be booked online by returning access bookers.

Due to the nature of the listed site, accessibility to some parts of the theatre is limited. There is step free access into the theatre via the West Gate by Holland Park café and the East Gate by Duchess of Bedford's Walk. The East Deck, Dutch Garden Lounge and Ensemble also offer step free access, along with Row AA in the side blocks of the auditorium. There is a single step up to Row A in the central block, and steps to other parts of the auditorium, as well as to The Terrace and The Mezzanine.

Guide dogs are permitted on the seating stand – please advise the Box Office when booking.

There is a Touch Tour and audio-described service during the matinee performance of *Rigoletto* on 21 June, which will also be a relaxed performance.

Please contact the Box Office on 0300 999 1000 for further details.

Food and Drink

Pre-booked picnic tables will once again be available on The Terrace, The East Deck, The Dutch Garden Lounge and The Mezzanine. These can be booked during Priority Booking onwards. No additional seats can be added to picnic tables, so please ensure that you have booked enough tables to accommodate all of your guests.

An onsite bar will be available at the theatre during the Season, allowing patrons to purchase drinks and snacks.

The Ensemble

Our private bar, The Ensemble, is open to supporters at Envoy level and above both pre-performance and during the interval*. Complimentary prosecco, wine and soft drinks are available for each supporter and up to three guests. If you would like to bring additional guests, please contact the Membership Office prior to the performance. A guest list will be operated on the door to the Ensemble; if you have not booked your own tickets, please contact the Membership Office to add your name to the guest list.

*Excluding dates where The Ensemble is hosting the First Night events, when entry will be by invitation only. These dates will be announced in advance of priority booking, to ensure you can enjoy The Ensemble on a less crowded evening.

Lost Property

Please email box.office@operahollandpark.com or call 020 3846 6222 about lost property.

Contacts

Box Office

Open Monday–Friday, 10am–6pm
0300 999 1000 or
boxoffice@operahollandpark.com

Membership Office

Open Monday–Friday, 10am–6pm
020 3846 6222 or
membership@operahollandpark.com

www.operahollandpark.com

Gift Memberships at Opera Holland Park

Share your love of Opera Holland Park with a gift membership this Christmas

Gift memberships are available across all our membership levels, starting from just £75. With priority booking, member pricing and unique events, you can treat your loved ones to a wonderful summer of opera in beautiful Holland Park and look forward to sharing it together.

Visit www.operahollandpark.com/members to find out more.



Samuel Sakker as Federico and Fflur Wyn as Vivetta in *L'arlesiana* at Opera Holland Park
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