



Opera Holland Park releases *The House of Life* with David Butt Philip and James Baillieu

Press Release

Embargo: Wednesday 7 April

Ahead of the 150th anniversary of Ralph Vaughan Williams's birth in 2022, Opera Holland Park is releasing a performance of *The House of Life*. Leading British tenor David Butt Philip and the acclaimed pianist and accompanist James Baillieu were filmed for Opera Holland Park by Simon Wall at Leighton House Museum.

Contemporaneous with Vaughan Williams's bracing Robert Louis Stevenson cycle, *Songs of Travel*, the song cycle *The House of Life* is an uninhibited and intimate celebration of mutual love. It draws together six of the most delicate, devoted and delirious sonnets by poet and artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti: Love Sight, Silent Noon, Love's Minstrels, Heart's Haven, Death in Love and Love's Last Gift.

When Rossetti's first wife and muse, the Pre-Raphaelite poet, painter and model Elizabeth 'Lizzie' Siddal, died in 1862 at the age of 32, Rossetti buried his poems with her. When he later retrieved and published them in 1870, he was subject to an excoriating attack by the literary critic Robert Buchanan and was accused of celebrating 'merely animal sensations' in his sonnets.

The motifs of sunlight, twilight and moonlight are skillfully wrought in music from the period between the composer's studies in Germany and London, and his studies in France with Maurice Ravel. The love described is ecstatic with no hint of impending tragedy.

Long associated with Opera Holland Park, and a building with which the poet and artist Rossetti was familiar through his friendship with Frederic Leighton, Leighton House Museum forms the backdrop of the filmed recital. David Butt Philip had learned *The House of Life* as a young baritone and was determined to revisit the song cycle as a tenor in this transposition.

James Clutton, Chief Executive and Director of Opera, says:

"David has graced the stage at Opera Holland Park many times, always with that dazzling voice and that golden talent. We had long been discussing ideas for possible recitals but when David suggested *The House of Life*, I wanted it to be the first in a new series of OHP recitals. It was a pleasure and a privilege to be there at the filming and hear the soaring music of Vaughan Williams, the alluring words of Rossetti and the partnership between David and James Baillieu, and to enjoy the experience of being transported away from 2021 to another time and place - a perfect place at that."

The House of Life will be streamed via the company's YouTube and Facebook channels at 7pm on Tuesday 13 April, with a suggested donation of £5. It will be available to watch on demand until 30 April.

Opera Holland Park would like to thank The Vaughan Williams Charitable Trust for making this project possible.

ENDS



Notes to Editors

Links and images

The recital will be available to view on YouTube [here](#) and on Facebook [here](#).

Images from the recital can be downloaded [here](#).

Donations to Opera Holland Park can be made [here](#).

2021 Season

Opera Holland Park's 2021 Season with resident orchestra City of London Sinfonia will open on 1 June. The season includes new productions of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen*, Mascagni's *L'amico Fritz*, a revival of the company's celebrated 2018 staging of Verdi's *La traviata*, and a co-production of Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance* with Charles Court Opera. British Youth Opera, a training company with which many of OHP's artists and creatives have cut their operatic teeth, will also be making its OHP debut in August 2021 with productions of Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel* and Rossini's *L'occasione fa il ladro*.

General booking opens on Wednesday 14 April at 10am.

More information about the season, including casting and information about the company's redesigned theatre, can be found on Opera Holland Park's website, www.operahollandpark.com/2021-season.

A short trailer introducing the new theatre can be accessed [here](#). Artist impressions of plans for the new auditorium and space can be downloaded [here](#).

Fata Morgana

Opera Holland Park released a film of Pavel Haas's song cycle *Fata Morgana* Op. 6 to mark Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January. Directed from the piano by Lada Valešová and performed by tenor Nicky Spence and the Navarra Quartet, the performance was preceded by a reflection on remembrance from the acclaimed author, Howard Jacobson. The film is available to watch on demand [here](#).

OHP Inspire

Opera Holland Park's International Opera Award-winning education and outreach project, *Inspire*, is continuing to work throughout the current health crisis with local partners including Age UK, using digital technology to reach isolated communities.

Recent projects include a daily series of virtual Music Lessons for Key Stage 2 and 3 pupils, and a newly announced series of OperaUNITY online family workshops which will run monthly during spring and summer. More information about *Inspire* can be found [here](#).



Website and social media

www.operahollandpark.com

www.facebook.com/operahollandpark

www.twitter.com/operahollandpk

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www.youtube.com/operahollandpark

Contacts for further information

Chloe Bridgen, Head of Marketing chloe.bridgen@operahollandpark.com 07713 326006

Anna Picard, Head of Communications and Insight anna.picard@operahollandpark.com 07710 355918

Philippa Peall, Marketing Officer philippa.peall@operahollandpark.com