

MARGOT LA ROUGE/ LE VILLI

FREDERICK DELIUS/GIACOMO PUCCINI





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#OHP2022

Find our podcast, **From the Producer's Office**, on all the main podcasting platforms, including Apple Podcasts, Spotify and Soundcloud. The series tracks Opera Holland Park's CEO and Director of Opera, James Clutton, in conversation with creatives and collaborators across the industry, exploring the process of putting opera on stage, and how the artists involved approach their craft.

Cover artwork by illustrator Lucy Sharp for Opera Holland Park, 2022.

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WELCOME FROM THE CHAIRMAN

On behalf of everyone at Opera Holland Park, I should like to extend our warmest thanks to all of our many supporters. Our Founders, who invested in the artistic excellence of the company at the very beginning of our independence in 2015 and whose support has been critical to our success. The members of the Jubilee Society, created last year to mark our Silver Jubilee, whose support will be equally critical to our success. The Trusts and Foundations which have been so generous. Those corporates which have supported us despite the difficult economic situation. And all of our Major Donors, Benefactors, Ambassadors, Envoys, Members, Friends and Volunteers, many of whom have been advocates of the company from its foundation. Thank you also to each of you in our audience — our work would not be possible without you.

As many of you will know, our ticket prices remain significantly lower than those of our peer group of leading opera companies, although our musical and dramatic ambitions do not. Keeping our ticket prices down is a vital part of our mission to make opera as accessible as possible. Our box office income covers only about 40% of our costs in a normal year, and we receive no subsidy from Arts Council England. It is only thanks to the generous support of our donors that we are able to make this model work and continue our journey towards financial sustainability, especially since 2020. To those of you who have given more generously than ever to support the 2022 Season by upgrading your membership or by declining the benefit of reduced ticket prices we are especially grateful.

Our commitment to accessibility remains at the forefront of all of the work we produce. Our award-winning education and outreach scheme, Inspire, has continued to go from strength to strength, working online and in person to reach a greater level of engagement across the Tri-Borough and beyond. We are also pleased to have retained our percentage of free and accessibly-priced Inspire tickets as we increase our greatly reduced capacity of 2021 to today's capacity of 700. We look forward, as always, to welcoming new faces to the theatre at our two Schools Matinee performances, at the five Discovery Matinees, which will also be Relaxed Performances, and at a range of extra events from spoken word events to song recitals and activities for young families.

Our work does not end when the season is over, regardless of the challenges posed in recent years. Since we were last here together the company has premiered its film of William Walton's comic opera, *The Bear*, marked Holocaust Memorial Day with a film of Ilse Weber's *Ich wandre durch Theresienstadt*, hosted talks and masterclasses with the Opera Holland Park Young Artists, and celebrated past and present Young Artists at Wilton's Music Hall. We have also commissioned a new opera for the 2023 Season, *Itch*, composed by Jonathan Dove and based on the novels by Simon Mayo. I would like to thank our CEO and Director of Opera James Clutton and his team for their inspirational work and unflagging determination to realise the full potential of Opera Holland Park, and our Board of Trustees for their invaluable support and guidance.

Thank you again, and we hope you enjoy this year's summer of opera at Opera Holland Park.

Charles Mackay CBE

Chairman

WELCOME TO THE 2022 SEASON

Welcome to the 2022 Season. Thank you for your support over the last year, and thank you for joining us today. Last summer was the busiest we have known at Opera Holland Park, with over 80 performances of live music from operas by Mozart, Verdi, Janáček and Mascagni to song recitals, calypso, jazz, chamber music and a Broadway musical, keeping your safety as our priority, and establishing a creative hub for the community.

Thanks to your generosity and continued engagement in writing to us, taking part in our discussions, watching the work we have put online, buying tickets and encouraging your friends to support us, we have a similarly ambitious programme this year, with some returning artists and ensembles, including British Youth Opera and Notting Hill Carnival, and some who will be making their Holland Park debuts. We will be producing regular free recitals on the steps to the theatre, and have introduced spoken word events. You will also notice further changes on site as we improve the redesigned auditorium and stage introduced last year in collaboration with takis.

The first and most important of these changes is that there are more of us here to share the collective experience of live performance, whether the music is intended to make you laugh, make you cry or simply pause

and breathe freely, enjoying the moment and the surroundings. The hospitality industry, like the arts, has faced extraordinary challenges since 2020. To enhance your overall experience, we have sourced food and wine from independent local suppliers, and it is a pleasure for us to work with like-minded companies. We have also adjusted the seating levels to improve sightlines, adding balcony seats with a panoramic view of the auditorium.

And so to this performance of *Margot la Rouge* and *Le Villi*. We have waited two years to bring this double bill to the stage, presenting two contrasting works by Frederick Delius and Giacomo Puccini in a new twist on our tradition of reviving operatic rarities. Conductor Franceso Cilluffo and director Martin Lloyd-Evans are joined by the great French soprano Anne Sophie Duprels, who takes the roles of Delius's Margot and Puccini's Anna. Impulsive violence and supernatural revenge are the driving forces in this dramatic double bill. We hope you will be as thrilled as both composers intended, and thank you for being a part of Opera Holland Park.

James Clutton

CEO and Director of Opera



INTRODUCING MARGOT LA ROUGE AND LE VILLI

Sometimes a story is more powerful for being concise. In *Margot la Rouge* and *Le Villi* two tales of separation, reunion and revenge – one human, the other supernatural – reflect a moment when opera shook off its reputation for unhurried and elaborate story-telling and instead cut straight to the chase. The author of this change was Edoardo Sonzogno, the music-loving scion of a publishing family that had made its money from selling true crime paperbacks, and had won the publishing rights for *Carmen* when Bizet's opera was still considered scandalous.

In 1883 Sonzogno announced a competition for unpublished composers to submit a one-act opera for production and publication. Few people today will have heard the opera that took first place in 1884, Guglielmo Zuelli's *La fata del nord*, or the winners of the third and fourth competitions, Gellio Benvenuto Coronaro's *Festa a Marina* (1892) and Gabriel Dupont's *La Cabrera* (1901). But a trend was set by the winning opera of the second competition, Pietro Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana* (1889). Although Sonzogno had not stipulated that the ideal modern opera should be nasty, brutal, short and set in the impoverished south, *Cavalleria rusticana* was an overnight sensation.

By this measure it seems strange that Frederick Delius's *Margot la Rouge* was not shortlisted in the fourth and final Concorso Sonzogno. Written in French by Berthe Gaston-Danville (under the Nordic pseudonym Rosenthal), the libretto

of *Margot* could be transposed easily from the back streets of Paris to the back streets of Palermo, and presents a narrative of a passionate reunion between two former sweethearts that concludes with a double murder. Musically, in the rapturous duet between Margot, formerly Marguerite and now a prostitute, and Thibault, now a soldier, the clearest influence is Richard Wagner, whose feverish and opulent love music was all the rage in France, where Delius lived, if not in Italy.

Several talented composers of the new generation failed to make the finals of the Sonzogno competitions before going on to achieve success. Giacomo Puccini is the most famous of them, and although his operas are commonly bracketed under the term 'verismo', none of them follow precisely the model established – and swiftly rejected – by Mascagni.

Disqualified from the first competition on the dubious grounds of illegibility, but premiered to critical and public acclaim in May 1884, *Le Villi* would be Puccini's only opera with a German setting and his only opera with a supernatural element, whereby an errant suitor is punished for abandoning his bride by dancing to his death with her ghost. Here, too, a wisp of Wagner can be heard in the Prelude. With the premiere of Puccini's next opera, *Manon Lescaut*, his career was established. What followed, from the realism of *La bohème* to the deft humour of *Gianni Schicchi*, would form a body of work to rival that of his predecessor, Giuseppe Verdi, in its versatility and lasting popularity. ●

MARGOT LA ROUGE/LE VILLI

FREDERICK DELIUS/GIACOMO PUCCINI

Margot la Rouge — Lyric Drama in one act

First performed on 8 June 1983 in Saint Louis, Missouri
Reduction for production at Opera Holland Park by Andreas
Luca Beraldo of Cecilia Music Concept GmbH, Cologne, by
permission of Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd.
French libretto by Rosenval (Berthe Gaston-Danville)
Sung in French with English surtitles
Performances given by permission of Boosey & Hawkes
Music Publishers Ltd.

*Margot la Rouge is supported by the Delius Trust in memory of
Lionel Carley (1936-2021). Lionel was archivist to the Delius
Trust for over 50 years and a prolific writer on Delius and other
musical figures. Margot la Rouge is also supported by Martin
and Wendy Kramer.*

*Laura Lolita Peresivana is supported by Andrew and Fiona
Brannon.*

Le Villi — Opera-ballet in two acts

First performed on 31 May 1884 in Milan
Orchestral reduction by Andreas Luca Beraldo of Cecilia
Music Concept GmbH, Cologne
Italian libretto by Ferdinando Fontana
Sung in Italian with English surtitles

*Le Villi is supported by Linda Christmas and the John S Cohen
Foundation.*

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Movement Director Jami Reid-Quarrell

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31 July at 2pm (Discovery Matinee, audio-described and Relaxed Performance)

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CAST

Margot la Rouge

Margot Anne Sophie Duprels

Sergeant Thibault Samuel Sakker

L'Artiste Paul Carey Jones

Lili Béguin Sarah Minns

Nini Laura Lolita Perešivana

La Patronne Laura Woods

First Soldier George von Bergen

La Poigne Jack Holton

Second Soldier Alistair Sutherland

Totor David Woloszko

First Woman Grace Nyandoro

Second Woman Alys Roberts

Third Woman Chloë Pardoe

First Drinker Steffan Lloyd Owen

Second Drinker Matthew Duncan

Third Drinker/A Man Peter Lidbetter

Waiter Richard Moore

Police Inspector Dragoș Andrei Ionel

Le Villi

Anna Anne Sophie Duprels

Roberto Peter Auty

Guglielmo Stephen Gadd

Répétiteur Stuart Wild

Assistant Director Louise Bakker

Assistant Conductor Gabriella Teychenné

Head of Music Silvia Magagni

Stage Manager Emma Ryan

Deputy Stage Manager Megan Bly

Assistant Stage Manager Coral Nelson

Stage Management Placement Alex Jaouen

Chorus Music Répétiteur Joseph Beesley

Margot la Rouge Language Coach Florent Mourier

Surtitles Translation Paul Hastie

Surtitles Operator Christine Norsworthy

Assistant Designer Sahar Gilabadi

CHORUS

Soprano

Megan Bowen
Ashleigh Charlton
Fae Evelyn
Laura Hudson
Grace Nyandoro
Alys Roberts
Valerie Wong

Mezzo-soprano

Caroline Carragher
Yolanda Grant-Thompson
Alicia Gurney
Hebe Hamilton
Chloë Pardoe

Tenor

Bobby Jeffrey
Robert Jenkins
Ian Massa-Harris
Stuart McDermott
Cameron Sibly
David Woods

Bass/baritone

Matthew Duncan
Dragoş Andrei Ionel
Peter Lidbetter
Richard Moore
Jake Stevenson
Alistair Sutherland

DANCERS

Fern Grimbley
Isabel Le Cras
Gabriella Schmidt

ORCHESTRA

Violin I

Martin Burgess
Rebecca Scott
Kathy Shave
Francesca Barritt
Ruth Funnell
Fiona McCapra

Violin 2

Jane Carwardine
Clare Hayes
Ann Lovatt
Charlotte Reid
Ted Barry

Viola

Fiona Bonds
Matt Maguire
Rebecca Low
Fiona Leggat

Cello

Will Schofield
Judith Herbert
Rachel van der Tang

Double Bass

Lynda Houghton
Markus van Horn

Flute

Karen Jones
Debbie Davis

Oboe

Dan Bates
Matthew Draper

Clarinet

Katherine Spencer
Derek Hannigan

Bassoon

Ursula Leveaux
Stephen Maw

Horn

Stephen Stirling
Tim Caister

Trumpet

Nick Betts

Trombone

Dan Jenkins

Timpani

Jeremy Cornes

Percussion

Glyn Matthews

Harp

Elizabeth Bass

Names correct at time of printing

SYNOPSSES

MARGOT LA ROUGE

A bar in a rough part of Paris

Totor, a pimp, is pushing "his ladies" out to catch the evening trade. Lili Béguin appears, taking a night off because she's upset that her lover, known as L'Artiste, has taken up with one of the other girls, Margot.

Sheltering from a rainstorm, Margot walks in, followed by a crowd of soldiers. One of them, Sergeant Thibault, thinks he recognises her and approaches. During the course of their conversation, he realises that she is his former sweetheart, Marguerite, who disappeared suddenly one winter's night five years before. Overcoming her initial reluctance, Thibault persuades her to leave with him.

Just as they are leaving, L'Artiste, alerted by the jealous Lili, storms in. A fight ensues... ●

Interval

LE VILLI

In a modest house in the woods, Roberto and Anna are celebrating their betrothal. The chorus tells how Roberto must leave tonight to claim the fortune left to him by the Old Woman of Mainz.

Anna picks some forget-me-nots, troubled by a sense of foreboding she has over Roberto's impending departure. His attempts to reassure her are interrupted by a crowd of well-wishers offering a prayer to bless his journey.

We hear that Roberto was waylaid on his way to Mainz by an infamous siren, who has lured him into a life of debauchery. Meanwhile Anna, sick with grief, waits for him.

When winter arrives, Anna dies. She is laid to rest by her father's house.

We are told the legend of the Villi: "If a maiden dies of love, in the wood every night the Villi come to dance, awaiting the betrayer. If they meet him, they laugh and dance with him until, exhausted, he dies."

Guglielmo, Anna's father, calls on the Villi to avenge his daughter's death.

Having escaped the siren's clutches, Roberto, full of remorse, returns to the village desperate to see Anna. But it is not Anna who greets him at the little house in the woods... ●



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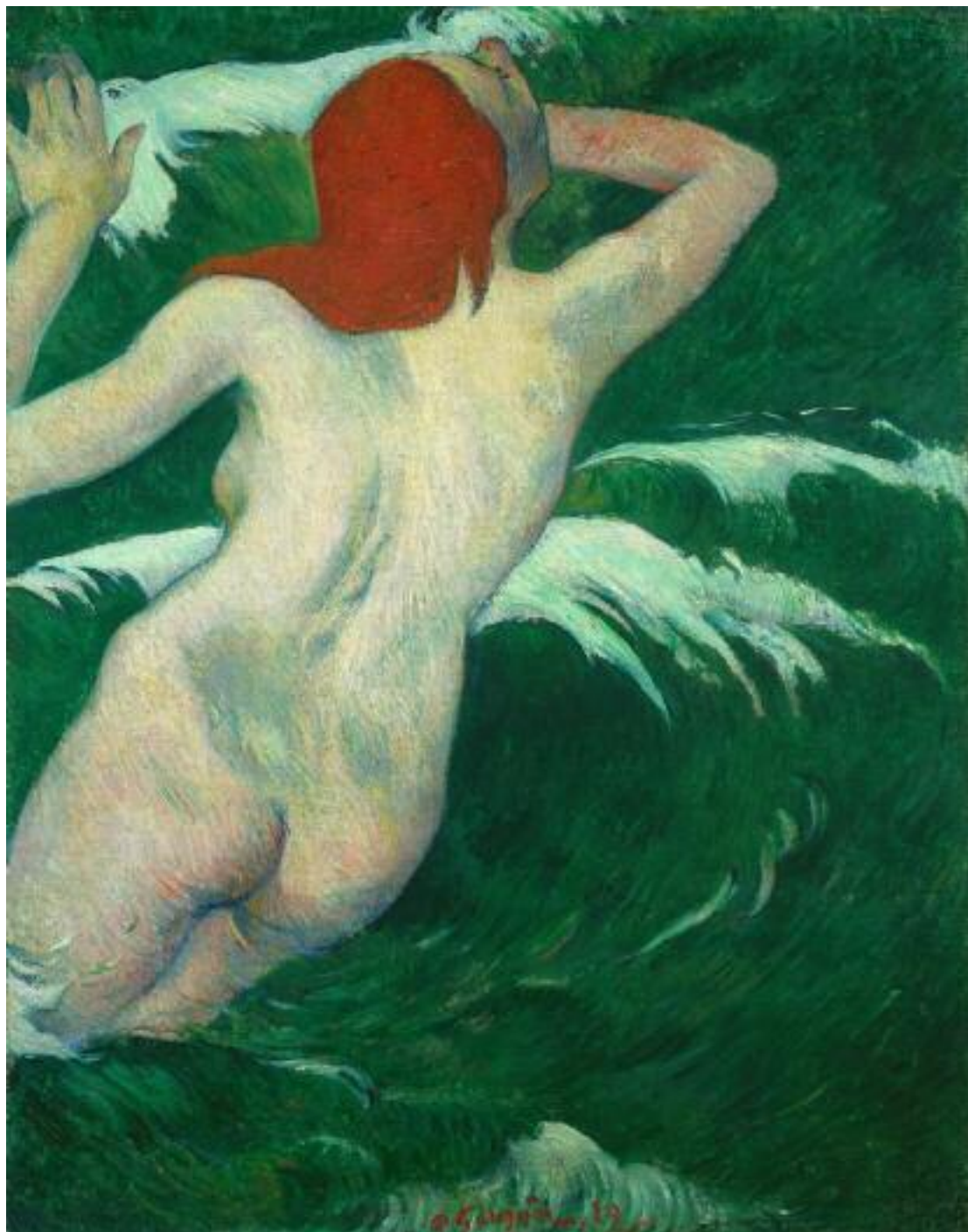
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NOT JUST MASCAGNI-CON-SODA

Paul Guinery reflects on Delius's appetite for novelty, and the sensuous charms of *Margot la Rouge*

Delius's reputation today rests on his exquisite depictions of nature such as *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring* or *Summer Night on the River*. But Delius as a composer of operas? Certainly: he wrote six, though only three were staged in his lifetime. Even *The Walk to the Paradise Garden*, one of his best known orchestral works, is part of an opera: *A Village Romeo and Juliet* (1901).

It's not surprising that Delius had an affinity for the operatic stage. He was fascinated by the human voice and wrote many large-scale choral works as well as over 60 songs. His operas, written between 1892 and 1910, are extraordinarily diverse in subject and location, ranging from medieval legend, 16th-century Florida and an 18th-century slave plantation in Louisiana, to a Swiss version of *Romeo and Juliet* and a Nordic domestic drama with psychological overtones of Ibsen and Strindberg.

Delius never wrote to a dramatic formula or repeated himself, and *Margot la Rouge*, a thriller with the flavour of *film noir*, is no exception. It was also untypical of him to conceive it as an entry for a prize sponsored by the leading Italian publishing house, Sonzogno, who'd hit the jackpot with an earlier competition for a one-act opera, won by Mascagni's ground-breaking *Cavalleria rusticana* (1890).

When a similar competition was announced in 1902 (with big prize-money) a hard-up Delius – who virtually never wrote to order but always pleased himself – decided to go with the flow. He hastily chose a libretto by 'Rosenthal', the pseudonym of the shadowy Mme Berthe Gaston-Darville, and completed the music in just a few months. The opera didn't win – but neither did the 143 other entries produce another *Cavalleria* – and it wasn't performed for over 80 years. However, Delius knew he'd written some of his best music for the orchestral prelude and the love-duet and, in the early 1930s, salvaged those pages, fitting the music to a text by Walt Whitman to fashion a new work which he called *Prelude and Idyll*.

Sonzogno, along with the firm of Ricordi, sponsored and published the younger school of opera composers, the *giovane scuola*, who wrote in a style that became known as *verismo* ('realism'). Delius grasped that the operatic fashion, at least in Italy, was for melodrama and sensation, and there's plenty of that in the pacy story of *Margot la Rouge*: a louche Parisian bar on a stormy, wet night frequented by prostitutes, pimps and pickpockets; an atmosphere electric with sexual jealousy; a fight-scene leading to a *crime passionnel* and a double-murder.

The music itself is definitely not just Mascagni-and-soda. Most of the time Delius remains true to himself. The orchestral Prelude is as sensuous and heart-breaking as anything he wrote, whilst the extended love-duet, though it lacks an obvious take-away tune, is truly inspired, reaching an ecstatic and erotic climax that makes *Margot*, despite the opinion of Sonzogno and the judges, a real winner. ●

The broadcaster and pianist Paul Guinery is co-author of Delius and his Music (Boydell, 2014) and Delius and Fenby, A Photographic Journey (Delius Society, 2004).



PUCCINI THE ROMANTIC

Alexandra Wilson uncovers the curious history of Puccini's first opera

The prospect of a 'new' Puccini opera can hardly fail to whet the appetite. 'New' must go in inverted commas, of course: *Le Villi* was in fact the first opera Puccini wrote, but it is performed so irregularly that it will be unfamiliar to most. And just like *La fanciulla del West*, *Il trittico* and *La rondine*, all recently reappraised after decades of comparative neglect, *Le Villi* provides a welcome change from endless *Madama Butterfly* and *La bohèmes*, much as one might adore them.

In the final decades of the 19th century, the publishing house Sonzogno organised an opera competition: a sort of compositional talent-spotting contest, but one motivated by commerce as much as by altruism. Puccini, still a student, submitted an entry in 1883, after being introduced by his teacher Amilcare Ponchielli to the idealistic young writer Ferdinando Fontana.

Somewhat to Puccini's surprise, the competition judges did not give his opera, *Le Villi*, so much as a commendation. (Perhaps with Ponchielli on the panel they were keen to avoid accusations of nepotism.) Active networking and fundraising on Fontana's part, however, secured a run of performances at Milan's Teatro dal Verme, which drew favourable reviews. Even more importantly, it attracted the attention of Giulio Ricordi, Sonzogno's powerful publishing rival, who offered Puccini a two-opera contract and a stipend.

Puccini was instructed to expand the work – now being publicised as *Le Willis* – rewriting it in two acts, with bumped-up roles for the two leads and additional music, including

Anna's charming cavatina '*Se come voi piccina*'. The second version was performed in Turin in 1884. Puccini made further amendments for a run at La Scala the following year, including Roberto's romanza '*Torna ai felici dì*'. The opera's dissemination was modest, and a production in Naples was even booed, but no matter: the hitherto-unknown young composer now had a powerful patron who would launch him on the path to international fame.

In *Le Villi* Fontana sought to capitalise upon a lingering Romantic obsession with the supernatural. (The 1841 ballet *Giselle* – derived from the same old central European legend – remained popular at the end of the century.) The story of a man who is cursed by forest spirits and forced to dance to his death at first appears an unlikely subject for Puccini, far removed from his later realist concerns. Yet we can see glimmers in the opera of dramatic preoccupations that would become Puccinian trademarks, notably romantic betrayal and female suffering.

Some early commentators, keen to find a successor to Verdi, were concerned that Puccini's musical language sounded too German. One critic called him "essentially a symphonist" (a label Puccini rather liked); others fretted that he had fallen under the inevitable spell of Wagner. In fact, the distinctive Puccinian musical voice was already emerging: glorious Italianate melody blended with expressive, sophisticated orchestral writing. It was to become a winning formula and it is fascinating to encounter it in its earliest manifestation. ●

Professor Alexandra Wilson is the author of The Puccini Problem: Opera, Nationalism and Modernity (Cambridge University Press) and Opera in the Jazz Age: Cultural Politics in 1920s Britain (Oxford University Press). She is co-director of the OBERTO opera research unit at Oxford Brookes.



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INNOCENCE BETRAYED

Anna Picard explores the contrasts and commonalities in an unusual double bill

What links *Margot la Rouge* and *Le Villi*? The plots of both operas are as simple as folk ballads: cautionary tales of rural innocence corrupted in an urban environment; stories of betrayal and revenge. While Delius's drama unfolds in the squalor of the banlieues, where the soldier Thibault recognises the prostitute Margot as Marguerite, his former sweetheart from the countryside, Puccini's early fantasy is a slice of Gothic Romanticism served up with a macabre tarantella in which the unfaithful Roberto is made to dance to his death with the ghost of his bride, Anna.

Delius, who knew the sort of bars frequented by women like Margot, and contracted syphilis during his bohemian years in Paris, has long been neatly, if inaccurately, filed into a box marked 'pastoral' in the popular imagination. Even his most passionate champions wrinkled their noses at *Margot la Rouge* when the orchestral score was rediscovered. Surely such a sophisticated composer would not engage seriously with a vulgar *crime passionnel*? Puccini, meanwhile, is so firmly associated with the colouristic detail and dramatic propulsion of the operas he set in Paris (*La bohème*, *La rondine*, *Il tabarro*), Rome (*Tosca*), Nagasaki (*Madama Butterfly*) and California (*La fanciulla del West*), that the Black Forest setting, extended orchestral movements and supernatural denouement of *Le Villi*, as he named the 1885 version of the opera we will hear today, comes as a surprise.

Lesser known works such as Catalani's *Lorelei* (written in 1879 but not premiered until 1890 in Turin), and Dvorák's 1885 choral romp *The Spectre's Bride* indicate that an appetite for the unexplained had not diminished with the advent of verismo opera. The 19th century was not only an era of industrialisation, commerce, social reform, secularism and

science. It was the era of spiritualism, séances and ghost stories. Photography was used to document marriages and memorialise deaths; to record attitudes of insanity or the physiognomy of criminals, and, by means of long or double exposure trickery, to conjure images of visitors from beyond the grave to exploit those who mourned them.

With every scientific advance, new horrors were imagined. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) was animated by the discovery of electricity. Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) namechecks the most modern technology: typewriters, telegrams, transfusions. Yet the life choices available to young women of modest means were almost as restricted at the end of the century as they were at the beginning. Marriage, for most, was the only respectable option. Are Margot/Marguerite and Anna then effectively mirror images of each other? One runs away to the city, and is pimped out by her lover. The other remains at home, wasting away for love of her errant fiancé until she dies of a broken heart. One is a whore. The other is a virgin. Both bring death to the men who have betrayed them.

Narratives that warn against leaving home are as old as time. But the prostitutes of Paris were not all country girls gone wrong or, like Marie Duplessis, the inspiration for Marguerite in *La dame aux camélias* and Violetta in *La traviata*, traded for sex from an early age. When the hygienist Alexandre Parent-Duchâtelet wrote his study, *De la Prostitution à Paris au XIXe siècle*, he discovered that most of the *femmes publiques*, the class of prostitute to which Margot belongs, had grown up near the Seine, if not in Paris itself. Streetwalkers were predominantly the daughters of skilled labourers. Some sold sex as a means of supplementing their meagre earnings as



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seamstresses, shop girls and servants. Alcoholism was rife. (Absinthe with sugar syrup is the first drink mentioned in *Margot la Rouge*.) So, too, was a change of name.

In Alphonse Karr's 1852 short story *Les Willis* we have another example of the city as a locus of corruption. Puccini's librettist Ferdinando Fontana jettisoned the subsidiary character of Conrad, Anna's brother, and renamed Heinrich, the young man who leaves the forest to claim his inheritance in Mainz and is there seduced by an older woman, as Roberto. The resulting text is closer to a sequence of tableaux or a melodrama than a conventional libretto. The death of Anna, and the storm through which a ruined and belatedly remorseful Roberto battles home, are described in verse to be read or recited while listening to their symphonic depiction.

At the close of Karr's story, Roberto dances exhaustedly with a succession of Willis in bridal white before he recognises Anna, whose face is promptly revealed as a skull: "*Elle n'avait plus ses cheveux noirs en bandeau; il ne vit plus qu'une hideuse tête de mort toujours couronnée de bruyères blanches. Il se débattait et le fantôme l'étreignait dans ses bras at l'entraînait dans un mouvement de valse d'une rapidité dont rien ne peut donner l'idée.*" (She no longer had black hair in a plaited crown; he could see nothing but a hideous skull, crowned with white heather. He struggled and the ghost embraced him and led him in a waltz so fast as to be beyond comprehension.)

In Mary Elizabeth Braddon's 1862 story, *The Cold Embrace*, another faithless fiancé fritters away his fortune and recognises the ghost of his abandoned sweetheart at a masked ball at the Paris Opera. He, too, dances to his death, encased in cold white arms that press him to dance "one more polka". The cause of death, officially, is "want of food, exhaustion, and the breaking of a blood vessel." Memento mori, like ghost stories, had never gone out of fashion. But in the first decade of the 20th century there was a significant revival of skull imagery in the form of optical illusions. Some represented the consequence of vanity or gluttony. Others, such as HM Rose's *Today and Tomorrow* and the anonymous *La vie et la mort*, both printed in 1908, picture young men falling in love with pretty girls. It takes little imagination to see them as forerunners of the posters warning soldiers against venereal disease in WWI and WWII.

In *Margot la Rouge* there is no dancing but the threat of disease is inbuilt. That Margot/Marguerite would have contracted syphilis from her pimp and lover, L'Artiste, or from a punter in the five years since leaving the village where she grew up seems more than likely. But so, one assumes, might Thibault and his friends had they dallied with any working girls near the garrison. When one solider mockingly sings of "*poison en guise de régal*" (poison disguised as a treat) he is not referring to absinthe or wine but to the prostitutes. Everyone knew the risks. Many went ahead all the same, like Delius, gambling against contracting a disease that could lead to blindness, paralysis or madness. It is arguable whether the supernatural retribution in *Le Villi* is worse.

We learn nothing of what made Margot/Marguerite leave home, only that the woodlands she frequented with Thibault were scattered with white violets. Once blonde, she now has the brilliant red hair we associate with the paintings of Edvard Munch (*The Murderess*, 1906) and Paul Gauguin (*Ondine*, 1889, and *Redheaded Woman with Sunflowers*, 1890), both of whom were friends with Delius. *Margot la Rouge* also taps into the French obsession with fallen women that began with Abbé Prévost's 1731 novel, *Histoire du Chevalier des Grieux, et de Manon Lescaut* and continued through the works of Victor Hugo, Balzac, Huysmans and Zola.

Was Gaston-Danville familiar with Zola's 1868 novel, *Madeleine Férat*? Its heroine is a natural redhead unable to escape the shame of her past, even upon leaving Paris. Certainly red hair became synonymous with sexual license in French art and literature. And when Thibault recognises Margot as Marguerite, there is a striking change of colour to go with the change of name — "*O Marguerite blanche!*". The prostitute is recast as a virgin, like Anna. Or a ghost, like a Willi. Naturally Thibault proposes a return to the lost paradise of the countryside from the "Purgatory" of the city. Instead, he is stabbed by L'Artiste, who is stabbed in turn by Margot/Marguerite, her hands now red with blood. ●

Anna Picard is Head of Communications and Insight at Opera Holland Park.



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The Murderess by Edvard Munch, 1906
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A SHORT ESSAY ON REVENGE

*Part III of a series of essays on emotions in
Opera Holland Park's 2022 Season by
Professor Thomas Dixon*

Preachers and philosophers have long warned against revenge. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells his followers to turn the other cheek and pray for those who persecute them. His contemporary, the Stoic philosopher Seneca, taught that the desire for revenge was a kind of madness, to be avoided at all costs — one of the many faces of rage, an emotion which he considered a “polymorphous evil”.

If people had followed such advice, there would have been much less material for poets, playwrights, and composers to work with through the ages. However, emotions of vengeance and retribution seem to be deeply rooted in the collective psyche. They form a subject of enduring fascination.

From the earliest stage tragedies in ancient Greece to the musical dramas played out in the great opera houses of the world, audiences have looked on as the sorrows of one protagonist after another transmute into rage and a lust for revenge, with predictably fatal consequences.

One of the earliest examples of this pattern is to be found in Homer's *Iliad*. Achilles is driven out of his mind by grief after the killing of his beloved friend Patroclus in battle. The feeling of loss is expressed initially in lamentation and weeping, but then in a frenzied, avenging slaughter of Trojan soldiers. When Hector is finally defeated and begs for his life, Achilles

responds, “Would to God my rage, my fury would drive me now to hack your flesh away and eat you raw — such agonies you have caused me!”

In Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, the cycle plays out once more. Macduff, his family slaughtered by Macbeth, is lost in grief, and Malcolm urges him to channel the energy towards violence. “Be this the whetstone of your sword,” Malcolm says. “Let grief convert to anger. Blunt not the heart, enrage it”.

This same logic is applied in different ways in the tales of *Margot la Rouge* and *Le Villi*. Vengeful passions, like hurricanes, destroy fragile human lives. The inability to forgive means that grief and love turn to violence. Pain in the heart becomes blood on the hands. In *Margot la Rouge*, the revenge is hot-blooded and human. In *Le Villi*, it takes a slower and more supernatural form.

Our term “vengeance” shares its Latin and French roots with other English words, including “vindication” and “vindictive”. This semantic ancestry reveals revenge's dual nature as an act of supposed justice, but also of cruelty. Surely both Thibault and Roberto could agree that they were the victims of a cruel justice. How different things could have been if forgiveness had won the day. ●

Professor Thomas Dixon is a historian of philosophy, science, medicine, and religion, with particular expertise in the history of emotions, and in Victorian intellectual and cultural history.

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SPOTLIGHT ON:
ANNE SOPHIE
DUPRELS

Anne Sophie Duprels performs the roles of Margot in Delius's *Margot la Rouge* and Anna in Puccini's *Le Villi*

Could you introduce us to your roles?

Margot herself is like Louise Michel, who was called the Red Virgin, an anarchist activist, emblematic figure of the Commune de Paris and a feminist. She went as far as saying that marriage was legalised prostitution. One interesting thing is that Margot is the only character to have a musical leitmotif, making her the centre of the story. And, an interesting anecdote, Maurice Ravel wrote the piano reduction!

In the character of Anna in *Le Villi*, you see a shy girl transformed into an angel of vengeance. It's a different journey but they are both murderesses. Oppression and liberation: it's a very strong message. Death and violence seem to be the only escape for both Anna and Margot.

Do you have a favourite memory of Opera Holland Park?

I have so many wonderful memories at OHP! Impossible to think of only one... However, the feeling you get at the first day of rehearsal, the meet-and-greet before we start working is something very special. Getting everyone together and that feeling of belonging to a big family. The energy and the anticipation of creating a new show is just amazing.

I was last at OHP in 2019 for *Un ballo in maschera* and I can't wait to be back. The festival has a very special place in my life and heart. I feel very grateful to have James Clutton's trust and be invited back regularly since I first sang here in 2001 (Violetta in *La traviata*). And, of course, the challenge of singing two operas in one evening is one I couldn't resist!

Was there any music that got you through lockdown? What was it and how did it help you?

I actually found it difficult at first to listen to music. I needed a lot of silence when the first lockdown happened. Then I listened to a lot of chamber music. Gregorian chant was also very helpful. I think I needed to find peace and find my way to be creative again in this new equation. We have to adapt, and the challenges we face are an opportunity to grow. That's how I try, in my humble way.

If you could perform any role, what would it be?

It's impossible to think of only one! There are many roles I would love to sing, including Emilia Marty (*The Makropulos Affair*), Fedora, Stephana (*Siberia*)... I love verismo! There is so much repertoire that is not performed. Every time I get the opportunity to perform underrated or forgotten pieces I'm a happy soprano!

What is the best piece of advice you've received, musical or otherwise?

Your emotions are your tools (Olivia Fuchs). ●

Interview by Lucy Hicks-Beach



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Actimides**

					18 2 He
13 B	14 C	15 N	16 O	17 F	18 Ne
11 Al	12 Si	13 P	14 S	15 Cl	16 Ar
21 Ga	22 Ge	23 As	24 Se	25 Br	26 Kr
41 In	42 Sn	43 Sb	44 Te	45 I	46 Xe
71 Tl	72 Pb	73 Bi	74 Po	75 At	76 Rn
113 Nh	114 Fl	115 Mc	116 Lv	117 Ts	118 Og

67 Ho	68 Er	69 Tm	70 Yb	71 Lu
95 Es	96 Fm	97 Md	98 No	99 Lr

Based on Simon Mayo's bestselling novels **Itch** and **Itch Rocks**, leading opera composer Jonathan Dove and librettist Alasdair Middleton have been commissioned to create a new opera for Opera Holland Park, to be premiered in our 2023 Season. Its hero is Itchingham Holte, a teenage scientist on a mission to collect all the elements in the periodic table.

WE NEED YOUR HELP TO BRING THIS NEW OPERA TO LIFE.

Like Itchingham Holte, we want to collect our own periodic table of donors, whose support will lift this new opera off the page and onto our stage.

If you would like to be part of this incredible journey, please come and speak to one of the Development Team in The Ensemble at the theatre, or email rosamund.hatfield@operahollandpark.com.



LOCAL OUTREACH AND EDUCATION WITH AN INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION FOR EXCELLENCE

Established in 2010, Opera Holland Park's Inspire project is at the heart of the company's activities all year around. Inspire works with the very young and the very old, with families, school children and care home residents, with those who are at risk of social isolation, with those who live with dementia and their carers, and with anyone for whom the pleasures of classical music and opera are otherwise inaccessible.

Local partners in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea include Age UK RBKC, Resonate Arts, Mind RBKC, St Charles' Centre for Health and Wellbeing, Open Age, Princess Louise of Kensington Nursing Home, Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, Solace RBKC, the Royal National Institute of Blind People, Kensington and Chelsea Learning Disability Centre, Equal People Mencap, RBKC Virtual School, Avonmore Primary School, Chelsea Community Hospital School, Fox Primary School and Holland Park Ecology Centre. The company also has close partnerships with Refettorio Felix and Rugby Portobello Trust.

In 2018 Inspire won the Education and Outreach Award in the International Opera Awards. Many of the company's innovations – from introducing the first Relaxed Performance of an opera in the UK in 2015 to offering discounted tickets to NHS workers from 2018, and establishing a dementia-friendly theatre in 2010 – have subsequently been taken up by other opera companies. This moves hand-in-hand with Opera Holland Park's longstanding commitment to gender equality in its creative teams and the strength of its Young Artists programme in identifying and nurturing emerging talent. Where other companies talk about changing opera, Opera Holland Park acts.

During the annual summer festival OHP offers free tickets to under 18s and over 65s, with discounted tickets for NHS workers and other frontline responders and key workers. Introduced in 2018, the Opera Holland Park Schools Matinees have presented works such as *La traviata* and *Un ballo in maschera* in full to children from RBKC and beyond, supported by workshops on characters, storylines, history and music. This year over 1,400 children will experience the music and themes of *Eugene Onegin*. Audio-described performances were introduced in 2017. During lockdown Inspire moved online, increasing its reach and adding vocal warm ups for wellbeing to those stranded at home and free online music lessons for Key Stage 2 and 3 pupils.

In 2021 four Discovery Matinees and Relaxed Performances were added to the festival programme, designed for people who wanted to try opera for the first time in a welcoming and informal environment, and those who love opera but find the usual theatre-going experience inaccessible. Each run of the five main productions in the 2022 Season includes a Discovery Matinee and Relaxed Performance. The redesign of the theatre to maximise the connection with the natural beauty of Holland Park also allowed a significant increase in wheelchair accessibility. Inspire also enjoyed its first collaboration with the Holland Park Ecology Centre in 2021, exploring the characters and themes in *The Cunning Little Vixen*. This collaboration continues in 2022 with a focus on *Le Villi*.

For more details of Inspire's work in the community, from Get Into Opera to OperaUNITY, Out of the Park Opera, Opera for Thought, Learning Disability Ambassadors, and the Discovery and Schools Matinees, as well as more information on how to support the project, please visit www.operahollandpark.com/inspire.

BIOGRAPHIES CREATIVE TEAM



Conductor

Francesco Cilluffo

For OHP: *Isabeau* 2018

Francesco Cilluffo was recently appointed Principal Guest Conductor at Wexford Festival Opera. Recent operatic engagements include Verdi's *Requiem* (The Grange Festival), *Risurrezione* (Wexford Festival Opera), Symphonic concerts (Bremer Philharmoniker, Filarmonica Toscanini, Teatro Filarmonico Verona), *Tosca* (Tulsa Opera – US debut), *Roméo et Juliette*, *La bohème*, *Rigoletto*, *L'elisir d'amore* and *Madama Butterfly* (New Israeli Opera). Recent and future engagements include *Edmea* (Wexford Festival Opera), *Falstaff*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Macbeth* (The Grange Festival), *Miseria e nobiltà* (Carlo Felice di Genova) and *L'Italiana in Algeri* (Toulon). His notable operatic engagements include *Falstaff* at the Grange Festival and at the Rete Lirica delle Marche, and the double bill of *L'Oracolo* (Leoni)/*Mala vita* (Giordano) at Wexford Festival Opera, the double bill of *Cavalleria rusticana*/*La Voix humaine* with Anna Caterina Antonacci for Opera Lombardia and in Bolzano.



Director

Martin Lloyd-Evans

For OHP: *Don Giovanni* 2002, *Stiffelio* 2003, *Le nozze di Figaro* 2004, *Andrea Chenier* 2005, *The Queen of Spades* 2006, *L'amore dei tre Re* 2007 and 2015, *La Gioconda* 2008, *Un ballo in maschera* 2009, *Francesca da Rimini* 2010, *La Wally* 2011, *Gianni Schicci* and *Zanetto* 2012, *I gioielli della Madonna* 2013, *Adriana Lecouvreur* 2014, *Il tabarro* 2015, *Die Fledermaus* 2016, *La rondine* 2017, *Isabeau* 2018

Martin studied Physics at Manchester University and Theatre Arts at Bretton Hall College. Productions include world premieres of the fully-orchestrated version of Jonathan Dove's *Mansfield Park* (The Grange Festival), Liam Paterson's *The Angel Esmeralda* and Julian Philips' *The Tale of Januarie* (the Guildhall), *The Mikado*, *The Pirates of Penzance* (Scottish Opera), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Barbican), *Roméo et Juliette* (Operosa in Bulgaria and Montenegro), *Mitridate* and *Re di Ponto* (Classical Opera Company at Sadler's Wells and Buxton Festival), *Don Giovanni*, *Falstaff*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *La bohème*, *Rigoletto*, *La traviata* (Mid Wales Opera), *Il matrimonio segreto*, *The Rape of Lucretia*, *Flight*, *Così fan tutte* (BYO), productions for the Guildhall including *Pinocchio*, *The King Goes Forth to France*, the British premiere of Dove's *The Little Green Swallow* and the UK premiere of *The Aspern Papers* (RPS Award nominee) and many productions for Garden Opera. Theatre work includes *The Russian Doctor* (Mass MoCa), *The Articulate Hand* (The Wellcome Trust and TEDMED), *Wallace and Gromit: Alive on Stage* (on tour and the West End). Future plans include *Così fan tutte* (The Grange Festival).



Designer
takis

For OHP: *Die Fledermaus* 2016, *La rondine* 2017, *Isabeau* 2018, *Un ballo in maschera* and *Il segreto di Susanna/Iolanta* 2019, *The Marriage of Figaro* and redesign of the OHP auditorium 2021, *Carmen* and *Margot la Rouge/Le Villi* 2022

In 2022 takis was nominated for an Olivier Award nomination for 'Outstanding Achievement in Opera' for his set and costume design for *HMS Pinafore* (ENO). He studied at the Romanian National University of the Arts in Bucharest, RADA, London College of Fashion and Helsinki Aalto University. Opera credits include *Phaedra* (ROH), *Don Giovanni*, *La Voix humaine* (Finnish National Opera), *Le Comte Ory* (Garsington), *Don Quichotte* (Wexford Festival Opera), *Calisto*, *Ulysses' Homecoming*, *Ottone* and *The Life on Moon* (ETO). Musical credits include *Five Guys Named Moe*, *In the Heights*, *The Toxic Avenger* (West End), *Flashdance* (Oslo, UK tour), *Hairspray* (UK tour), *West Side Story*, *Optimist* (Oslo), *Sweet Charity* (Nottingham Playhouse), *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Side Show* (Southwark Playhouse), *The LKY Musical* (Singapore Sands Theatre), *Spring Awakening*, *Oliver*, *The Sound of Music* and *Chicago* (Leicester Curve). Theatre credits include *The Cat & The Canary* (Bill Kenwright UK tour), *Jane Eyre* (Tampere Theatre – Finland), *Bacchae* (Royal & Derngate), *Fear & Am I Dead Yet?* (Bush Theatre), *Napoli* (West Yorkshire Playhouse), *Measure for Measure*, *Clytemnestra* (Sherman Theatre), *Stovepipe* (National Theatre), *Ditch* (Old Vic) and *Tonight the Eighties* (National Theatre of Kuwait). Ballet credits include *The Little Mermaid* (Finnish National Ballet). Circus credits include *Atomic Saloon* (Las Vegas), *Capra*, *The Hooley*, *Xanadu*, *My Beautiful Circus* and *Any Port in a Storm* (Giffords Circus). His work has been exhibited at the Design Museums in London and Helsinki, the Victoria & Albert Museum and the Bucharest Modern Art Museum. Future plans include *Die Lustigen Weiber von Windsor* (Dresden State Operetta), *Le Rois Arthus* (Tyrolean Festival Erl), *Moulin Rouge* (Oslo, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Helsinki), *André Chénier* (St Gallen Opera Festival) and *La traviata* (Norwegian National Opera).



Lighting Designer
Jake Wiltshire

For OHP: *The Pirates of Penzance* 2021, *HMS Pinafore* 2022

Selected credits include *Le comte Ory*, *Amadigi* (Garsington), *Don Pasquale* (WNO), *The Cunning Little Vixen*, *La traviata* (Longborough Festival Opera), *Bluebeard's Castle* (Theatre of Sound), *Sounds and Sorcery – Celebrating Disney's Fantasia* (The Vaults), *Vixen* (Silent Opera in association with ENO – London, Helsinki, Trento, Beijing), Purcells's *King Arthur*, *The Fairy Queen* (AAM at the Barbican Centre), *Die Zauberflöte*, *Le nozze di Figaro* (Turku Opera, Finland), *Così fan tutte* (Bury Court Opera), *La bohème* (Hampstead Garden Opera), *The Castle* (Silent Opera at Wilton's Music Hall in association with ENO) and *Don Giovanni* (Opera Faber, Portugal). Jake has lit productions for nearly all of the UK's major music colleges including multiple productions for the Guildhall, RCM, Trinity Laban, RNCM and over 25 productions for RAM Opera. In 2009 he was made an Honorary Associate of RAM. As an associate designer, Jake lit the US premiere of Peter Maxwell Davies and David Pountney's *Kommilitonen!* at the Lincoln Centre, New York. Engagements this summer include Buxton Opera Festival and a return to Longborough Festival Opera.



Movement Director

Jami Reid-Quarrell

For OHP: *Isabeau* 2018

Jami Reid-Quarrell is an actor, physical performer, choreographer and movement director, currently working as stunt consultant for Mischief Theatre's West End and touring shows of *The Play That Goes Wrong* and *Magic Goes Wrong*. He has trained in multiple dance forms, circus and corporeal mime with the National Centre for Circus Arts, Centre Nationale des Artes du Cirque in France and companies such as Frantic Assembly, Punchdrunk and the Blue Raincoat Theatre Company in Ireland, where he trained in Le Coq and Marceau techniques. His client list for choreography and movement direction includes Epson, Lewis Hamilton, IKEA, Sir Trevor Nunn, The Royal Variety Performance, ITV, Depeche Mode, Satoshi Date, Casiokids, Garsington and The Prison Choir Project. Future engagements include performing the role of Puck in Hanover State Opera's revival of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.



Chorus Master

Dominic Ellis-Peckham

For OHP: *The Rake's Progress* (Aldeburgh Festival), *L'arlesiana* and *Iolanta* 2019, *The Cunning Little Vixen* and *L'amico Fritz* 2021, *HMS Pinafore* 2022

Dominic is an internationally renowned conductor, chorus master, author, presenter and vocal education specialist. He works with leading orchestras, choirs and opera houses including BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, CBSO, ENO, ROH and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. Dominic is chief conductor of Chamber Choir of London, a guest conductor for London Mozart Players, the RPO, Music Director of London Oriana Choir, Aldeburgh Voices, associate principal conductor of The National Youth Choirs of Great Britain and visiting artist at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance. Previous positions include; chorus master for ENO during which he received critical acclaim from The New York Times for 'a powerful and accomplished chorus' for the world premiere of Julian Anderson's *Thebans*, artistic director of The ROH's RM19, assistant chorus master for RSNO, conductor of Cambridge Festival Opera and guest chorus master for CBSO's Youth Chorus. Dominic embraces cross-genre collaborations including TV broadcasts, arena appearances, recordings and arranging with contemporary artists. He has conducted projects at Abbey Road, Air Studios, Angel Studios, Deutsche Grammophon, Whistle Records, Signum Records, Sky, BBC and Eurovision. Most recently, his credits include collaborations with Madonna, The Who, BAFTA, Sir Paul McCartney, Rachel Fuller, Disney and Will.I.Am.

BIOGRAPHIES CAST



Margot/Anna

Anne Sophie Duprels

For OHP: Violetta *La traviata* 2001, Magda *La rondine* 2002, title role *Lucia di Lammermoor* 2003, title role *Luisa Miller* 2004, title role *Jenůfa* 2007, title role *Kát'a Kabanová* 2009, Mélisande *Pelléas et Mélisande* 2010, title role *Madama Butterfly* 2013, Giorgetta *Il tabarro* and Angelica *Suor Angelica* 2015, title role *Iris* 2016, title role Zazà and Elle *La voix humaine* (in the Elgar Room at the Royal Albert Hall) 2017, title role *Isabeau* 2018, Amelia *Un ballo in maschera* 2019

Anne Sophie Duprels trained at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse, Paris. Her numerous operatic roles include Katiusa *Risurrezione* (Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Wexford Festival Opera), title role *Edema* (Wexford Festival Opera), Theresa *Benvenuto Cellini* (Opéra National du Rhin), title role *Manon*, Mélisande *Pelléas et Mélisande* (Teatro Colón), title role *Suor Angelica*, Cio-Cio-San *Madama Butterfly*, Salud *La vida breve* (Opera North), Lisa *Pique Dame*, title role *Rusalka* (Grange Park Opera), title role *Manon*, title role *Rusalka* (Scottish Opera), title role *Jenůfa*, Cio-Cio-San *Madama Butterfly*, Marguerite *Faust* (Opera New Zealand) and title role *Thais* (Teatro Nacional de São Carlos, Theater Lubeck, Grange Park Opera). Future plans include Cio-Cio-San *Madama Butterfly* (Opéra de Rennes/Angers Nantes Opéra) and the ROH.



Sergeant Thibault

Samuel Sakker

For OHP: Federico *L'arlesiana* 2019

Samuel Sakker studied music at the Queensland Conservatorium, and later, Commerce at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. His operatic roles include Erik *Der Fliegende Holländer* (Opéra de Rennes/Angers Nantes Opéra, Nederlandse Reisopera, Cape Town Opera), Florestan *Fidelio* (Lyric Opera Ireland), Don José *Carmen* (Danish National Opera), Pollione *Norma*, Macduff *Macbeth* (Melbourne Opera), Laertes *Hamlet* (Adelaide Festival), Alfredo *La traviata* (ROH), James Nolan *Dr Atomic* (BBC Symphony Orchestra), David *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (State Opera of South Australia), Tikhon *Kát'a Kabanová*, Rodolfo *La bohème* (Scottish

Opera), Ulrik *Miss Julie* (BBCSO), title role *Faust et Hélène* (Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra/BBCSO). Future plans include Macduff *Macbeth* (The Grange Festival).



L'Artiste

Paul Carey Jones

For OHP: Lescaut *Manon Lescaut* 2019, David *L'amico Fritz* 2021

Welsh-Irish bass-baritone Paul Carey Jones won the Wagner Society Singing competition in 2013. Recent career highlights include Wotan *Das Rheingold* (Grimeborn Festival), Der Wanderer/cover Wotan *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (ROH), The Colonel *Brothers*, Marchese d'Obigny *La traviata* (Icelandic Opera), Scarpia *Tosca* (Nevill Holt Opera) and Sacristian *Tosca*, Priest *The Trial* (Scottish Opera). Recent house debuts include Ivan Ivanovich *The Nose* (ROH), Dr Schön/Jack the Ripper *Lulu* (Teatro Comunale Bolzano) and Wotan *Die Walküre* (Gothenburg Opera). His work during the pandemic has been generously supported by the Arts Council of Wales.



Lili Béguin

Sarah Minns

For OHP: Sprite *Fantastic Mr Fox* 2010, Bianca/Gabriella *La rondine* 2011, Second Cercatrice *Suor Angelica* 2015

Sarah Minns trained at RAM and the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. Her operatic career began at 18 when she created the role of Verity for the world premiere of *Jago* by Mike Westbrook (broadcast on BBC Radio 3). She has worked with many national companies including Opera North, Grange Park Opera, Longborough Festival Opera, WNO, Opera Rara and the BBC. Recently she won critical acclaim for the role of Miss Havisham *Miss Havisham's Wedding Night* (Arcola Theatre and Grange Park Opera) and the role of Adina *A Feast in the Time of Plague* (Grange Park Opera).



Nini

Laura Lolita Perešivana

OHP debut

Supported by Andrew and Fiona Brannon

Latvian soprano Laura Lolita Perešivana started her operatic journey at 19 years old covering Lauretta *Gianni Schicchi* (Latvian National Opera). A Young Artist at NOS, she recently graduated from the Guildhall's opera course. She won Second Prize at the Kathleen Ferrier Awards 2021, received the Extraordinary Prize at the 54th Tenor Viñas International Singing Contest and is the recipient of the Musicians' Company Award. Recently, Laura performed with ENO's Orchestra, with Opera Magazine writing "...her star quality combined with a sumptuous, penetrating soprano suggest she is ready for any role a big house might throw at her".



La Patronne

Laura Woods

For OHP: Agnes The Digger *Fantastic Mr Fox* 2010, 2011 and 2012, Giovanna and cover Maddalena *Rigoletto* 2011, Zita *Gianni Schicchi* (Christine Collins Young Artists Performance) 2012, Wowkle *La fanciulla del West* 2014, La Suora Zelatrice *Suor Angelica* 2015, Polina *The Queen of Spades* 2016, Glaša *Kát'a Kabanová* 2017, Flora *La traviata* 2018 and 2021, Marta *Iolanta* 2019

Laura Woods studied at The Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and is an alumna of ENO's *Opera Works*. Her operatic roles include Leonora *La Favorita* (Bangkok Opera), Mistress Quickly *Falstaff* (Opéra Berbiguières), Florence Pike *Albert Herring* (BYO), The Witch *Mad King Suibhne* (Bury Court Opera) and Sis/Wife Greek (Grimeborn Festival).



First Soldier

George von Bergen

For OHP: Marcello *La bohème* 2009, Ostasio *Francesca da Rimini* 2010, Count Almaviva *Le nozze di Figaro* 2011, Ford *Falstaff* 2012, Belcore *L'elisir d'amore* 2013, Steward *Flight* 2015, Cornelius *Isabeau* 2018, Anckarström *Un ballo in maschera* 2019

Recent and future engagements include Zurga *Les pêcheurs de perles* (Ópera de Oviedo), Renato *Un ballo in maschera* (West Green House Opera), a return as Sharpless *Madama Butterfly*, Marcello *La bohème*, Zurga *The Pearl Fishers* and cover Forester *The Cunning Little Vixen* (ENO), Enrico *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Danish National Opera), title role *Don Giovanni* (ETO), title role *Eugene Onegin* (Mid Wales Opera), and a concert of arias with the RPO at Westminster Central Hall. He was an ENO Harewood Artist and studied at RAM and NOS.



La Poigne

Jack Holton

For OHP: Anckarström *Un ballo in maschera* (Young Artists Performances) 2019

Jack Holton is in his second year on the opera course at the Guildhall, under John Evans. He is the grateful recipient of The Anne Pashley Opera Scholarship, Help Musicians' Sybil Tutton Opera Award and an Opera Awards Foundation Bursary. Previous roles include Le Podestat *Le docteur Miracle*, Le Baron de Pictordu *Cendrillon* (Guildhall), Don Parmenione *L'occasione fa il ladro* (BYO), Sky Masterson *Guys and Dolls* (West Green House Opera), title role *Don Giovanni* (Rogue Opera, The Merry Opera Company), chorus *The Veiled Prophet*, *Adina*, *Don Quichotte* (Wexford Festival Opera) and The Count *The Marriage of Figaro* (Hewletts Opera). Future plans include the role of Der Zar *Der Zar lässt sich photographieren* (Guildhall).



Second Soldier
Alistair Sutherland

For OHP: Pinellino *Gianni Schicchi* 2012 (Christine Collins Young Artists Performance) and 2015, The Official Registrar *Madama Butterfly* 2013, An Officer *Il barbiere di Siviglia* 2014, Crébillon/Rabonnier *La rondine* 2017, The Messenger *La traviata* 2018 and 2021, The Innkeeper/Sergeant of the Royal Archers *Manon Lescaut* 2019, The Pirate King *The Pirates of Penzance* (Inspire) 2020

Alistair Sutherland trained at RAM. Recent operatic performances include Alfio *Cavalleria rusticana*, Silvio *Pagliacci* (Aylesbury Opera), The Tutor *Count Ory*, Germano *La scala di seta* (Opera Alegría), Marcello *La bohème* (Opera Undone), Schaunard *La bohème*, Figaro *The Marriage of Figaro*, Dulcamara *L'elisir d'amore* (OperaUpClose), Sam *Trouble in Tahiti* (Stage Left Project), Dandini *La Cenerentola* (HighTime), Marullo *Rigoletto* (Opera Loki). As well as working with the OHP Inspire programme, Alistair runs a community folk music ensemble in south London.



Tutor
David Woloszko

For OHP: Bartolo *Le nozze di Figaro* 2004, Benoît *La bohème* 2016

David trained at the Sydney and Queensland Conservatorium of Music. David's roles include Bartolo *Le nozze di Figaro* (Opera North, Opera East, Victorian Opera), Colline *La bohème* (Opera Australia), Don Alfonso *Così fan tutte* (Opera Queensland), Baron Douphol *La traviata* (Opéra de Limoges, Opéra de Reims), Fat Englishman *The Gambler* (ROH, Grange Park Opera), Il Commendatore *Don Giovanni* (Rogue Opera), Mr Bear *The Chimney Sweep* (Pinchgut Opera), Prince Gremin *Eugene Onegin* (Opera South East), Don Magnifico *La Cenerentola* (Bury Court Opera), Pooh-Bah *The Mikado* and La Rocca *Un Giorno di Regno* (Opera Della Luna/Iford). Future plans include Eristrato *La Forza dell'amor Paterno* (Barber Opera) and *The Mikado* (Opera South East).



First Woman
Grace Nyandoro

For OHP: Jay/Rooster *The Cunning Little Vixen* 2021

A graduate of Trinity Laban, Grace has been praised for her "warmly inflected and expressive singing" (Opera Magazine). Her operatic roles include Aksinya *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* (Birmingham Opera Company), title role *Treemonisha* (Spectra Ensemble) for the Grimeborn Festival.



Second Woman
Alys Mererid Roberts

For OHP: Brat/Tweedle Dum *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and Tiny Tim/Fan *A Christmas Carol* (world premiere) 2017, Annina *La traviata* (Young Artists Performances) 2018, Pepik & Chocholka *The Cunning Little Vixen* and Edith *The Pirates of Penzance* 2021

Soprano Alys Mererid Roberts is an alumna of the RAM Opera School. Recent roles include Polly Peachum *The Beggar's Opera* (Mid Wales Opera), Despina *Così fan tutte* (Opera Project/Tobacco Factory Theatres – cancelled due to the pandemic), Muse in the opera-film *Hedd Wyn* (WNO), Euridice *Orphée aux Enfers*, Barbarina *Le nozze di Figaro*, Pannochka *May Night* and Amore/Damigella *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. She recently appeared as Flora in a critically-acclaimed new film of Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*, recorded at Wilton's Music Hall, and this spring made her debut with ETO in the title role of Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Golden Cockerel*.



Third Woman
Chloë Pardoe

For OHP: Woodpecker *The Cunning Little Vixen* 2021

Chloë Pardoe trained at The Wales International Academy of Voice under Dennis O'Neill, generously supported by The Dennis O'Neill Foundation. She was an Iford Arts New Generation Young Artist in 2019, where she sang Ida *Die Fledermaus* and Dorabella *Così fan tutte* in the New Generation Young Artist Gala concert. Other roles include Sesto *Giulio Cesare* (Cardiff Opera), *L'enfant L'enfant et les sortilèges* (Royal Birmingham Conservatoire), *Hänsel Hänsel und Gretel* (Leamington Sinfonia) and *Dido Dido and Aeneas* (Leamington Choral). She is a 2022 Leeds Lieder Young Artist, and continues to study privately with Rosa Mannion.



First Drinker
Steffan Lloyd Owen

For OHP: Dashwood *Little Women* 2022

Steffan Lloyd Owen studied at RNCM, taught by Nicholas Powell. His prizes include the W. Towyn Roberts Scholarship Prize (2018), the Blue Riband Osborne Roberts Memorial Prize (2016) and Kathleen Ferrier Society Bursary for young singers (2015). Operatic roles include Sciarraone/Jailer *Tosca* (Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod), title role *Brundibar* (Welsh National Youth Opera), Lord Hate-Good *Pilgrim's Progress*, Ser Amantio di Nicolao *Gianni Schicchi*, George Jones *Street Scene* (RNCM), Zaretsky *Eugene Onegin* and El Dancaïro *Carmen* (Opra Cymru). Other engagements this season include Mozart's *Requiem* (L'Orchestre National de Bretagne).



Second Drinker
Matthew Duncan

For OHP: Vegliardo *Isabeau* 2018

Matthew trained at RNCM. Chorus highlights have included *Peter Grimes*, *The Queen of Spades*, *The Love for Three Oranges* (Grange Park Opera), *The Rake's Progress* (Aldeburgh Festival) and *Turandot* (NI Opera). Recent recordings include *Le Villi*, *Il Paria*, *Zingari* with Opera Rara and *To Shiver the Sky* with the ROH Chorus.



Third Drinker
Peter Lidbetter

For OHP: Bob Becket *HMS Pinafore* 2022

Peter Lidbetter is a British-Irish lyric bass from London. He performs with Bergen Nasjonale Opera, the Edvard Grieg Kor under Edward Gardner, Wexford Festival Opera and Buxton Festival Opera among others in the UK and Ireland. He holds a MMus and PGdip in vocal performance from the RNCM, where he won the Elizabeth Harwood Memorial Award for graduating singers, the Brigitte Fassbaender Award for Lieder, and was a finalist in the Gold-Medal competition for all students. He debuts as The King *Cinderella* (Wexford Festival Opera) this year. His teacher is Nicholas Powell.



Waiter
Richard Moore

OHP role debut

Bass-baritone Richard Moore studied at the RNCM. He is a *BBC Introducing Classical Artist*. Concert performances include Handel's *Samson and Saul* with Laurence Cummings (Dartington International Festival) and the *St Matthew Passion* (St John's Smith Square). Roles include Berkely *Der Vampyr* (Gothic Opera), Swallow *Peter Grimes*, bass roles in *King Arthur* (Dartington Festival), Medico/Servo *Macbeth* (Buxton) and Chevalier *Robert le Diable* (La Monnaie). From 2018-19 he was a chorister at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels.



Police Inspector
Dragoș Andrei Ionel

OHP role debut

Dragoș is from Iași, Romania. His roles include Leporello *Don Giovanni* (FAVA Salzburg), Antonio *Le nozze di Figaro*, Papageno *Die Zauberflöte*, Alidoro *La Cenerentola*, Lapák *The Cunning Little Vixen*, Betto di Signa *Gianni Schichi*, Harry Easter and Frank Maurant *Street Scene*, Der Lautsprecher *Kaiser von Atlantis* (RWCMD), Hans Scholl *Kommilitonen!* (Welsh National Youth Opera), Second Bad Robber *The Vanishing Bridegroom* (BYO), Zuniga *Carmen* (Opera Națională Română Iași), Don Magnifico *Cenerentola*, Priest, Restaurant Waiter, Polish Father *Death in Venice* and Yves *Madame Chrysanthème* (Opéra National du Rhin). Future plans include Betto di Signa, Maestro Spinelloccio, Ser Amantio di Nicolao *Gianni Schicchi* (Berlin Opera Academy).



Roberto
Peter Auty

For OHP: Count Vaudémont *Iolanta* 2008, Alvaro *La forza del destino* 2010, Lensky *Eugene Onegin* 2012, Turridu *Cavalleria rusticana* and Canio *Pagliacci* 2013, Maurizio *Adriana Lecouvreur* 2014, Radamès *Aida* 2015, Des Grieux *Manon Lescaut* 2019

Since his professional debut at Opera North, Peter Auty has sung with major UK companies in the UK and abroad, including ROH, Glyndebourne, ENO, Oper Frankfurt, New Zealand Opera and Malmö Opera. Recent operatic highlights include Pinkerton *Madama Butterfly*, Laca Klemen *Jenůfa*, Don José *Carmen* (WNO), Des Grieux *Manon Lescaut* (The Grange Festival), Bill in Jonathan Dove's *Flight*, Lensky *Eugene Onegin* (Scottish Opera), Johnson *The Girl of the Golden West* (RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra) and Canio *Pagliacci* (Opera Ensemble, The Grange Festival, Longborough Festival Opera, Iford Arts).



Guglielmo
Stephen Gadd

For OHP: De Siriex *Fedora* 2006, Speaker *Die Zauberflöte* 2007, Conte di Luna *Il trovatore* 2008, Gellner *La Wally* 2011, Tonio *Pagliacci* and Alfio *Cavalleria rusticana* 2013, Michele *Il tabarro* 2015, Music Master *Ariadne auf Naxos* 2018, Giorgio Germont *La traviata* 2018 and 2021

Stephen won the Kathleen Ferrier Memorial Scholarship and has sung with major companies including ROH, ENO, Glyndebourne, Grange Park Opera, Buxton, Opera North, Scottish Opera, WNO, Finnish National Opera, Opéra de Montpellier, Opéra de Nantes, Opéra national de Paris, Opéra de Rennes, Opéra de Rouen and Dutch National Opera. He made his North American debut with Dallas Opera as Melot *Tristan und Isolde*. He appears widely in concert, his engagements including the LPO, the Philharmonia, RSNO, the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra and the Radio Filharmonisch Orkest.

BIOGRAPHIES DANCERS



Fern Grimbley

Originally from York, Fern trained at Northern School of Contemporary Dance in Leeds where she completed her undergraduate degree, as well as her Masters in the postgraduate company, Verve. Here she toured nationally and internationally works by Hannes Langolf, Matthew Robinson, Lenka Vagnerova and Sita Ostheimer. As a freelancer Fern has worked and performed with companies including Extended Play, Mathieu Geffre, Northern Rascals, and Jack Philip Creation. Alongside her theatre performing work, Fern has featured as the lead dancer and actor in the art film *Quarantaine* and Prep Bands music video *Carrie*, as well as featured in music videos for Olly Years and Years X Regard *Hallucination*, *Mykki Blanco x Dazed x Gucci*, and Emily Burns *Is It Just Me*.



Isabel Le Cras

Isabel is a contemporary dance artist and actor working across stage, film and motion capture. Recent work includes *Blanca Li Le Bal de Paris* (Barbican), *Metamorphosis* (Madrid), *FAR* by Wayne McGregor (Biennale di Venezia), *ABBA Voyage Live* by Wayne McGregor (London), *Notre Dame de Paris* (Opéra National de Bordeaux). Other companies include Compagnie Sohrâb Chitan in Bordeaux, Kennedy Junior Muntanga and the Bayerishces Staatsballett in Munich.



Gabriella Schmidt

Gabriella trained as an actor at The Oxford School of Drama after originally training as a ballet dancer at Central School of Ballet. Recent work includes *Jules Juniper and Jules* (Soho Theatre, Vault Festival), *Anna 2 Seven Deadly Sins* by Simon McBurney (LA Philharmonic, Walt Disney Concert Hall), *The Rake's Progress* by Simon McBurney (Festival D'Aix-en-Provence, Dutch National Opera, Stanislavsky Music Theatre), *The Magic Flute* (ENO/Complicite), *Skydiving* (Shoreditch Town Hall), and *Die Zauberflöte* (ROH).

Film work includes, Scottish BAFTA nominated film *Take Your Partners* (Arpeggio Pictures), *Being Nice* (Carsick Productions) and *X*, an Independent Indian Feature Film.

Gabby is also a new writer and was on Soho Theatre Writers' Lab 19/20 where her first play placed in the top 10 for the Tony Craze Award 2020.

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