

FORTHCOMING DATES & TICKET INFORMATION



Calendar Listing

Those events marked with an asterisk * are University events

January

Friday 23 Lauren Bensted - *jazz alto**
Friday 30 Aileen Thomson - *soprano**

February

Friday 6 Robyn Allegra Parton - *soprano* &
Charlotte Denham - *mezzo-soprano**
Friday 13 Jonathan Darbourne - *counter-tenor**
Friday 20 Tom Bennett - *bass**

Gluck: *Orpheus & Euridice*

Orfeo: Joe Bolger · Euridice: Anna Sideris · Amor: Robyn Allegra Parton
Conductor: Nicholas Pritchard · Director: Michael Burden
26, 27, 28 February 2009
New College Antechapel, 8.30pm

Friday 27 Jon Stainsby - *baritone**

March

Friday 6 Dom Burnham - *counter-tenor**
Friday 13 Max Jones - *baritone**

Summer Opera

8 (Preview), 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19 July 2009
The Warden's Garden, New College

New Chamber Opera - New Chamber Opera Ensemble
The Band of Instruments - Phoenix - Cutting Edge

Patron Harvey McGregor · Singing Patron James Bowman
Director of Productions Michael Burden · Musical Director Gary Cooper
Summer Opera Steven Devine · Director, The Band of Instruments Roger Hamilton
Director, Opera Studio

Repetiteurs Timothy Motz, Matthew Hawken, Jonathon Swinard · Company Secretary Clare Atkinson
Comptroller Graham Midgley · Wardrobe Diana Lintott, Fiona Hodges
Production administrator Christine Murray · Recitals Administrator Nicholas Pritchard

New Chamber Opera · 4 Mansfield Road · Oxford OX1 3TA
Tel: 01865 281 966 · Fax: 01865 279 590 · Email: info@newchamberopera.com
Web pages: <http://www.newchamberopera.co.uk>
Company No 3502769 · Charity No 1095069

TICKET DETAILS

Lunchtime Vocal
Recitals
1.15pm

New College Ante-chapel
£2/£1 concessions
on the door

Gluck *Orpheus & Euridice*

Conductor: Nicholas Pritchard
Director: Michael Burden
26, 27 and 28 February 2009
8.30pm

New College Ante-chapel
£10/£5 concessions
Oxford Playhouse Box Office
(01865) 305 305 OR on the door

Summer Opera

Wednesday 8 (Preview), Saturday 11,
and Tuesday 14
New Chamber Opera
Please download forms from
<http://www.newchamberopera.co.uk>

Fridays 10 & 17
New College Development Office
(01865) 279 337
Sunday 12
The Art Fund
(01491) 641 259
Wednesday 15
Friends of the Oxford Botanic Garden
(01844) 214 468
Saturday 18 & Sunday 19
Friends of the Welsh National Opera
(01865) 865 806



Erismena: saved for the nation

The acquisition has been made possible thanks to the generous donations offered by the members of the general public and grants given by the V & A Purchase Grant Fund, the Friends of the Bodleian, the Friends of the National Libraries, New Chamber Opera and Esme Fairbairn Foundation.'

So runs the Bodleian Library Press release announcing the purchase of the manuscript of Cavalli's *Erismena*; the full announcement can be found on their website, and there is also a version on our own. After several months of nail-biting activity, the news came through that enough money had been raised not only to prevent an important manuscript 'the earliest surviving score of an opera in English' from going abroad, but brought it to Oxford. The release continues:

Written by Pietro Francesco Cavalli (1602-1676), the leading Italian opera composer of the mid-17th century, *Erismena* dates from the 1670s, 30 years before any other Italian operas were known to have been performed in Britain. The manuscript now enriches the Bodleian Library's outstanding music collection and is an important addition to the Library's existing holdings of English 17th- and 18th-century opera and theatre music. The score has been part of a private collection and has been studied by only a small number of scholars in the past 50 years. It is one of the most significant British 17th-century music manuscripts to have

appeared in recent decades. Richard Ovenden, Keeper of Special Collections and Associate Director, Bodleian Library, said: 'The Bodleian Library thanks all the members of the general public and the organizations whose donations made it possible for *Erismena* to be saved for the nation. The acquisition makes it possible for us to conserve this unique and significant manuscript for the benefit of generations to come'.

Those supporters of New Chamber Opera who contributed to the fund are listed below:

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13 Anonymous donors

Please let us know of any errors or omissions. There is still a slight shortfall, which we hope will be bridged soon: any member who wishes to contribute should get in touch with us, or contact the Bodleian Library directly.

Our new repetiteur tells all...

London Taxis, Patricia Rozario and a bit of W. A. Mozart: an Oxford Repetiteur's First Experience.

Not every music undergraduate gets to work with a world-class soprano in their first term. It was therefore with great excitement but slight apprehension that I Googled 'Patricia Rozario' to see what was expected of me...

Realisation 1: She has a 'Wikipedia' entry. Now of course one shouldn't base opinions (or one's essays for that matter) on such a disputed source, however the fact remains that an article in Wikipedia suggests at least some level of public recognition. Apprehension increase.

Realisation 2: Leading composers such as Arvo Part and John Tavener have written pieces especially for her. Andrew Gant's *Don't Go Down the Elephant After Midnight* represents a more recent dedicated work – premiered in London this summer under the direction of Michael Burden and now scheduled to be repeated in Oxford with yours truly at the harpsichord. Double apprehension increase.

With Patricia's biography memorised, I felt suitably equipped to attend Michael's first production meeting. Those present: Michael, myself, a pot of Earl Grey tea and the SCR biscuit tin.

Realisation 3: Half of the opera is performed over a tape of the *Marriage of Figaro*; my workload on the harpsichord was therefore not as great as originally anticipated. What is more, I had a full three weeks before rehearsals in which I could digest the score. Apprehension decrease. Let the practice begin...

My state of euphoria was soon dispelled as the first rehearsal loomed into view. It was scheduled for a

Saturday afternoon in New College's 'Old Bursary' – unfamiliar territory, but nothing porters' directions could not fix. Arriving on time, my carefully planned entrance was irritatingly ruined by a failed attempt to open the Bursary's old door; fortunately, a smiling lady emerged at the window, pointing me towards the correct entrance. I trotted on round, unaware that I had just met Patricia Rozario.

And so the rehearsal began: "Right", says Michael, "Let's take it from the top". "Er. That's the tape bit", I replied. "We won't use the tape until next week. It's only the Overture to the *Marriage of Figaro*; just keep the tempo going..." And so the sight-reading began.

Realisation 4: If you get the score in advance, look at everything. Even the bits you don't think you're going to have to play. I remain unsure whether Mozart has forgiven me for my on-the-spot interpretation of his great overture. Thankfully, the rest of the rehearsal ran somewhat smoother; however further revelations were just round the corner:

"Well Jonathon, with regard to Monday" Michael started, "if I meet you at the lodge at 12pm then we should have enough time to pick up the tube from outside Queen's and get to Patricia's ready to start about 2pm..."

"Tube?" I enquired with that look of bemusement recognised universally as the 'fresher's frown'.

"Yes – how else are we going to get to London...?"

"We're going to London?" I replied.

"Yes, we're going to London."

Realisation 5: We're going to London. Our rehearsal at Patricia's house was a slightly surreal experience. Operatically, things were taking shape. However for me, it will be most remembered as the day that an international soprano offered to make me a sandwich. Who needs an autograph, eh? Given such excitement,

it was perhaps unsurprising that I managed to leave both my scarf and diary on the returning Oxford Tube. The rest of the week was therefore inevitably marred by a slight confusion as to where I was meant to be, as well as a distinct chill down the back of my neck.

With nothing to track the passing days, the rehearsals and two successful performances passed quickly by. I'd learnt a lot over the rapid production process; indeed the whole affair seemed marked by moments of revelation and realisation. Hopefully I'd emerged a better repetiteur – if not a better pianist! I consider myself very fortunate to have worked with Patricia Rozario on such an exciting and contemporary project. Though as I appeared from the after-show drinks and began my late-night search for dinner, I couldn't help wishing I'd accepted that sandwich...

Jonathon Swinard

*Andrew Gant's opera **Don't go down the Elephant after Midnight** was premiered by Patricia Rozario and New Chamber Opera conducted by John Traill and directed by Michael Burden at the Tete-a-Tete Opera Festival at the Riverside Studios in August 2008; they gave two performances in Oxford in November.*



Forthcoming....

Summer Opera

**Baldassare Galuppi:
*Il mondo alla roversa;
or, the world topsy-turvy
with women in charge***

The Warden's Garden, New College
6.30pm
8 (Preview), 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17,
18, 19 July 2008

Il mondo alla roversa premiered in Venice in 1750. The story is by the great Venetian playwright, Carlo Goldoni, and he and Galuppi have been credited with 'inventing' opera buffa. It is set on an island in the Antipodes, which is governed by a Council of Women. The cast divides into naturally into two groups; the three powerful women who sit on the Council, and their three spineless lovers. The women are worried the men, being physically stronger, will over overpower them; unbeknownst to the women, the men are quite happy in their state of subjection! The result? The women plot and precipitate a coup in which the men take over; all the characters then agree that 'women in command make for a topsy-turvy world'.

Mailing List

Mailing Lists. Each hard copy and electronic mailing returns out of date addresses; it would be helpful if members of the **electronic mailing** could keep their address up to date. Would members of the **hard copy** mailing list who would like to join the electronic mailing list - used for reminders of forthcoming events - please let us know?

Orpheus & Euridice



26, 27, 28 February 2009
8.30pm
The Ante-chapel, New College

Orfeo ed Euridice, an opera in three acts composed by Christoph Willibald Gluck, was originally set to an Italian libretto by Ranieri de' Calzabigi and was first performed in Vienna 1762. Based on a Thracian myth, this opera can be categorised under *azione teatrale* – Italian for 'theatrical action/plot' – and is the first of Gluck's three reform operas. Both Gluck and Calzabigi were influenced by the French *tragédie en musique* and the reformist ideas of Francesco Algarotti, and thus set out to reform the elaborate Italian opera seria with 'noble simplicity', and with a stronger emphasis on drama instead of music, dance or setting. This reformist approach is reflected in the absence of the common features of opera seria such as da capo arias, secco recitatives accompanied by the continuo only, the rigid structure of alternating recitatives and arias, and a complex plot with subplots. While there is a more varied and flexible use of recitatives coupled with self-contained arias to drive a simplified plot, the chorus and the orchestra assume a much more significant role than before in Italian opera. *Orfeo ed Euridice* has undergone numerous revisions, including a 1774 French version by Gluck, and a 1859 hybrid version by Berlioz which is perhaps most-widely known and performed today.

Jasmine Chin