

# A SUMMER EVENING OF OPERA HIGHLIGHTS

WITH MEMBERS OF THE WELSH NATIONAL OPERA

## THE PERFORMERS



JOANNE THOMAS



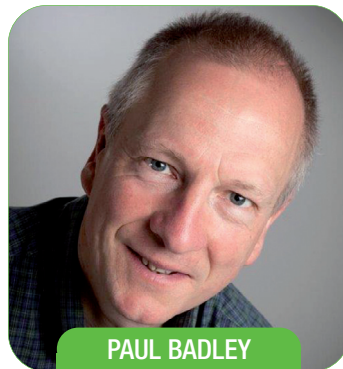
JAMES GOWER



SIMON PHILLIPPO



NAOMI HARVEY



PAUL BADLEY

All of the artists involved in this evening's concert have worked for Welsh National Opera and it is this connection that continues to bring them together for Opera Saturday. However, their careers and activities span before and beyond a significant association with one particular company.



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### ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

#### JOANNE THOMAS

MEZZO SOPRANO

Joanne Thomas was born in the Rhondda. She studied at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and the Royal Academy of Music with Beatrice Unsworth. Joanne represented Wales in BBC Cardiff Singer of the World 2001.

Operatic roles include 3rd Lady (Magic Flute) and Mme Larina (Eugene Onegin) for Welsh National Opera, Witch, Mother and Dew Fairy (Hansel and Gretel) for WNO MAX and Pocket Opera. Joanne has covered the roles of Santuzza (Cavalleria rusticana), Penelope (Ulisse), Liubov (Mazepa), Marfa (Khovanshchina), Azucena (Il Trovatore) and Amneris (Aida) for WNO. Other roles include Ramiro (Die Gartnerin aus Liebe), 2nd Lady (Magic Flute), Mama (Grace Williams' The Parlour), Charlotte (Werther), Mrs Peachum (Britten's realisation of the Beggar's Opera) and Mrs Slender (Salieri's Falstaff) for Bampton Classical Opera.

Joanne has performed in concert in Germany, Malta, Canada, USA, New Zealand and Australia, including a performance at the Sydney Opera House. Other notable performances have been the Berio Folksongs with Sinfonia Cymru, Berlioz' Les Nuits d'ete, Elgar's Sea Pictures, and the Britten Charm of Lullabies with BBC National Orchestra of Wales, all broadcast on BBC Radio. Her extensive repertoire of Oratorio includes performances of Verdi's Requiem and Rossini's Stabat Mater, and Bach's B minor Mass at St John's Smith Square.

Recital work has included the Songmaker's Almanac at the Wigmore Hall, St. David's Hall lunchtime recitals, and a BBC Radio 3 broadcast from the Fishguard Festival, where she premiered Rhian Samuels' Three Ancient Songs. Also the premier of Mervyn Burtch's Three Shakespeare Portraits. Joanne has worked for many years with distinguished pianist Graham Johnson, performing in lieder recitals in Germany and Vancouver. Joanne also appears on a new CD of the complete Roger Quilter Folksong settings with pianist David Owen Norris.

Forthcoming engagements include Annina in La Traviata for WNO. Concert engagements include Beethoven's 9th Symphony for WNO and Rossini's Stabat Mater and Verdi's Requiem for Crosskeys Choral Society.

#### NAOMI HARVEY

SOPRANO

Recent engagements include the title role in Puccini's Tosca (National Concert Hall, Dublin); Ines and cover Leonora Il Trovatore (Scottish Opera); Gertrud Hansel & Gretel, and cover Bard of Germania/Alice the Barmaid/The Queen of the Woods In Parenthesis (Welsh National Opera); Donna Anna Don Giovanni, and the covers of Senta The Flying Dutchman, and Minnie The Golden Girl of the West (English National Opera); the covers of La Comtesse de Coigny Andrea Chénier, Madam Larina Eugene Onegin, La Ciesca Gianni Schicchi, and Donna Saburova The Tsar's Bride (Royal Opera House); Sara in the world première of James McCarthy's Codebreaker (Barbican Hall, London); soprano soloist The World of Opera (Orchestra of Welsh National Opera); title role in Aida (Shrewsbury Abbey); soprano solo Verdi Requiem (Royal Festival Hall), and Mahler Symphony No. 8 (Bournemouth Symphony Chorus); Beethoven's 9th Symphony (Saint David's Hall, Cardiff) under the baton of Carlo Rizzi.

Ms. Harvey's previous seasons highlights include Marschallin Der Rosenkavalier, Elisabetta Don Carlos,

Leonora Il Trovatore, Giorgetta Il Tabarro, the title role in Tosca, Desdemona Otello, Alice Ford Falstaff, Blanche Dialogues des Carmélites, Violetta La Traviata, Liu Turandot, Mimi La Bohème, Erste Dame Die Zauberflöte, Hanna Glawari The Merry Widow, Marcellina Le nozze di Figaro, and Berta Il barbiere di Siviglia (Welsh National Opera); Emilia Marty The Markopulos Case, Donna Anna Don Giovanni, Micaela Carmen and Mimi La bohème (English National Opera); Tina Flight (Glyndebourne Festival Opera); Magda The Consul and Donna Anna Don Giovanni (Opera Holland Park); Isabella Jobling in the world première of Will Todd's The Blackened Man (Royal Opera House); Ismene Mitridate (Opera Monte Carlo); Alice Ford Falstaff (English Touring Opera); title role in Tosca (Mid Wales Opera); Rosalinda Die Fledermaus (on tour in the USA), Ellen Orford Peter Grimes (Canterbury Festival).

An experienced concert artist, Naomi has performed at many leading concert halls internationally, highlights include gala concerts with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at Queen Elizabeth Hall, London, and Symphony Hall, Birmingham; Verdi Requiem, Tippett A Child Of Our Time, Britten Spring Symphony, Vaughn-Williams Sea Symphony, Janacek Glagolitic Mass and Beethoven Mass in C (Barbican Hall, London); Mahler 8th Symphony (Royal Festival Hall and Ely Cathedral); Will Todd's The Burning Road (The Sage, Gateshead); and is a regular guest soloist with the BBC Concert Orchestra for Friday Night is Music Night (BBC Radio 2). Further concert repertoire includes Beethoven 9th Symphony, Strauss Four Last Songs, Bruckner and Dvorak Te Deum, Britten War Requiem, Handel's Messiah, Mendelssohn Elijah, Mozart Requiem. Ms. Harvey returns to the Royal Opera House in the 16/17 season, and performs in a Remembrance Day concert with the Orchestra of Welsh National Opera at St. David's Hall, Cardiff, and Verdi Requiem at Bath Abbey.

#### Simon Phillipppo

PIANIST

Simon Phillipppo studied at the Royal Academy of Music and Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, where he received a PhD in 2000. A musician with diverse interests, Simon studied conducting with Matthew Taylor, George Hurst and Sir Colin Davis, and he was a prize-winning finalist in the Leeds Conductors Competition in 2009. Simon spent a year studying at the National Opera Studio in London, before joining the music staff of Welsh National Opera, where he worked for fourteen years as staff conductor, chorus master and répétiteur. For WNO Simon conducted over 150 opera performances, and was the chorus master for many WNO productions and recordings, including the first staging in the UK of Handel's Jephtha and the world premiere of James MacMillan's The Sacrifice.

Other opera conducting engagements have included Madam Butterfly and Tosca with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at the Royal Albert Hall; Don Giovanni, Carmen, The Barber of Seville, Tosca and La Cenerentola as Music Director of Opera Brava; and La Traviata in the Middle and Far East with Opera and Concert Productions Worldwide. He has also worked with English National Opera, Opera Europa, Opera Holland Park and the European Chamber Opera. In the concert hall he has led the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the WNO Orchestra, the Orchestra of Opera North, Brandon Hill Chamber Orchestra, Mozart Festival Orchestra, Ernest Read Symphony Orchestra, and the Helios Orchestra, of which he was Artistic Director and Principal Conductor.

Simon has published widely on a range of musical subjects; he has also given talks on BBC Radio 3, and has presented lectures on opera for Welsh National Opera, Liverpool Hope University and Rose Bruford College. He has been an Associate Lecturer at Cardiff University, and is a leading authority on the British composer Robert Simpson, contributing three chapters to a major symposium published in 2013 and currently editing a new edition of Simpson's music for the publisher Ricordi. Always active as a pianist too, Simon has appeared regularly as concerto soloist, chamber musician and accompanist. He was appointed Head of Keyboard Studies at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in 2015.

#### JAMES GOWER

BASS-BARITONE

James Gower (Bass) was born in Newport, South Wales and was a music scholar at Monmouth School before gaining scholarships to both St John's College, Cambridge and the Royal Academy of Music. He performed his first operatic role 21 years ago whilst still at Cambridge. He was Bartolo and Antonio in The Marriage of Figaro under the baton of a similarly youthful Edward Gardner OBE and has performed under him many times since, on stage and in oratorio. James caught the opera bug in those student days and sang on stage at every available opportunity: from the drunken poet in Purcell's Fairy Queen to Schaunard in La Bohème. He trained as a secondary music teacher in Cardiff, before continuing his operatic training at the Royal Academy of Music. As a professional singer, James has had many career highlights. The moments that stick in the memory are always about having fun. Walking on plasterers' stilts as a 12 foot high knight in The Magic Flute at Glyndebourne; descending from the flies at ENO dressed in green latex to deliver a very important message and sharing the stage with his then teacher and mentor Robert Lloyd in The Coronation of Poppea; or shaking like a leaf when looking out at a packed Albert Hall when making his proms debut under the wonderful, late, Richard Hickox. Singing is as important to James today as it has always been and he is very happy to be with you again in Bristol for another Opera Picnic.

#### Paul Badley

TENOR

In a thirty year career Paul has worked as a soloist with Richard Hickox, Seiji Ozawa, Sir Simon Rattle, Ivan Fischer and Trevor Pinnock. He has toured and performed with The Tallis Scholars, I Fagiolini, Dunedin consort and has performed Oratorio works at major concert halls throughout the world, including Evangelist in Bach's Johannes Passion in Beijing, and Haydn's Die Schöpfung at the Singapore Festival.

Paul has performed more than twenty operatic roles throughout the U.K., France, Switzerland, Barbados and at the Bermuda Festival.

C.D. recordings as a soloist include Rachmaninov's Vespers with Tenebrae, Mozart's Requiem with The Chamber Orchestra of Europe and Percy Grainger songs with Richard Hickox.

His recent performances include Haydn's Harmoniemesse, Mozart's Requiem, Bach's Matthew Passion.

He also took part in a performance of Kurt Weill's 7 Deadly Sins with Synergy vocals and the BBC Scottish Symphony orchestra which was broadcast on radio 3. Future plans include Mendelssohn's Elijah and Bach's, Handel's Messiah and Britten's St. Nicholas.