

GLYNDE BO

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RECIT

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OSMAN
Wigs, Hair and Make-up Technician

As part of our 2024 Autumn Season we celebrated staff working behind the scenes, including a series of portraits in the Long Bar. Pillar photo: Alun Callender

REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL...

Stephen Langridge celebrates a brilliant 2024 and looks forward to an ambitious new year.

We celebrated our 90th anniversary in 2024 and enjoyed our most successful Festival for decades. There is a virtuous circle at work here. Live performance feeds off an excited atmosphere and audience emotions. In-the-moment reactions enhance the performance, while the unique construction of our theatre enables audiences to be immersed in the vulnerable world of the performers. That warmth is one of the reasons artists love Glyndebourne, and often feel they can give their best work with us: with performers and audience together, in two-way communication as we imagine these passionate fictions through music.

I am lucky. I get to experience the same production many times, and can witness the difference of each performance. Superficially everything is the same; but the atmosphere, the audience reaction and the way the performers feed off that response shifts significantly. Conversations with audience members who see more than one performance of the same production (quite a few saw *Carmen* with both casts) underlined this. That's something you can't say about a film, which is fixed and finished before the audience arrives with their particular imagination, humour, life experience, mood.

As I write, our Autumn Season is coming to a close. Autumn at Glyndebourne is all about discovery. For some, that will mean seeing an opera for the first time – often the case for the thousands of schoolchildren who attended a schools' performance of *Il turco in Italia* – but also

many members of the general public. We've kept prices as low as we can so people feel they can take the risk – and hopefully get hooked!

It's also a chance to discover new talent, singers and conductors on the edge of major international careers, and hear some new young players in the Glyndebourne Sinfonia, on the Jerwood Pit Perfect scheme. Autumn audiences were also able to discover something about how the magic was made: they were able to see the stage crew putting up the set on the screens, front of house; view the lighting plan for *La traviata* and *Il turco* in the foyer; and we featured some beautiful portraits of staff working behind the scenes (*left*) – those who make all the action happen. Autumn has a different vibe – it's a look under the bonnet, as well as a drive in the limo.

2025 kicks off our tenth decade as we head towards the centenary in 2034, and appropriately it is an ambitious artistic year.

We begin with *Uprising* in February, a new community opera by Jonathan Dove and April De Angelis. Over 100 local people will take to the stage and play in the orchestra, alongside Glyndebourne artists, to tell the story of a young woman deeply engaged in the climate crisis – taking us from a family row in a kitchen to a threatened forest, where the trees can sing. Rehearsals are well under way and the sound of these voices raised in song is profoundly moving. ▶

The Festival brings us new productions of both a work which John Christie wanted to present in year one at Glyndebourne – *Parsifal* – and the opera which actually launched the first Festival – *Le nozze di Figaro*. Could there be two more different works? Written almost exactly a century apart, *Parsifal* (1882) brings us a profound spiritual journey stretching over an undefined mythic time scale in the face of terrible suffering; *Figaro* (1786), in contrast, gives us one hilarious, crazy day of dressing up, leaping out of windows, plotting and scheming as servants run rings around the rigid social hierarchy of the *ancien régime*. Very different operas, musically, dramatically, stylistically, yet at the heart of each lies great humanity, love and compassion.

We have wonderful pairings of conductor and director leading these projects. Robin Ticciati and Jetske Mijnsen are already enjoying their collaboration on *Parsifal*. We have a thrilling cast including some outstanding singers making UK opera debuts (Daniel Johansson, Kristina Stanek) and others well known to the Glyndebourne audience (John Tomlinson singing Titirel as he rarely does, having sung Gurnemanz for three decades all over the world).

A mercurial mix of conductor Riccardo Minasi and director Mariame Clément bring us *Le nozze di Figaro* in period costumes inspired by Carmontelle, the artist who famously painted Mozart. We have a mouth-watering cast of singing actors, again some making their Glyndebourne debuts (Michael Nagl, Anna El-Khashem) and favourites (Louise Alder, and veteran Alessandro Corbelli). Glyndebourne's tenth production of *Figaro*, and the first to be directed by a woman. It should be serious fun.

Alongside those two sit a range of revival productions of operas from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries: Handel in Barrie Kosky's brilliant version of *Saul*, Verdi with Richard Jones' sharp-witted *Falstaff*, Janáček in Damiano Michieletto's searing *Káťa Kabanová*, while Rossini tickles us in Annabel Arden's hilarious *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. And, of course, as two of our operas are based on plays by Beaumarchais (*Figaro* and *Barbiere*) it's fun to have two stories with the same characters in one Festival – '*Figaro qua, Figaro là, Figaro su, Figaro giù*' indeed!

After the Festival we draw breath before ploughing into the next Autumn Season which brings back Floris Visser's moving production of *La bohème* alongside Peter Hall's classic version of Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It also introduces the second world premiere of the year in Mark-Anthony Turnage's new version of *The Railway Children* to a libretto by Rachael Hewer. It's the familiar tale, but brought from its Edwardian period and references to Tsarist repression into the Cold War times, more George Smiley than *Doctor Zhivago*.

2025 brings over 100 performances between spring and Christmas, ranging from social satire to the sublime, with classics explored afresh alongside new commissions, new talent to discover, established international artists, and community connections. We look forward to welcoming you to Glyndebourne for some unforgettable opera experiences. ●

Stephen is Glyndebourne's Artistic Director

FESTIVAL 2025

Il barbiere di Siviglia • Parsifal • Saul • Le nozze di Figaro • Falstaff • Káťa Kabanová

Friday 10 January
Festival Society Members'
ballot deadline

Saturday 1 February
Associate Members'
ballot deadline

Sunday 23 February
Under 40s Members' booking

Public booking opens online
on Sunday 2 March

OPERA FOR TOMORROW

Throughout 2024 Glyndebourne welcomed record audiences – the largest in its history. While looking back on a bumper year, Managing Director *Richard Davidson-Houston* keeps an eye on the future as Glyndebourne works to maintain its artistic excellence while opening up the art form to a new generation.

A year of growth and excellence

As I reflect on an exhilarating 2024 and look forward to an ambitious 2025, Glyndebourne seems to me to be reinforcing its position as a leading and vital force in opera. We have long been famed as a cultural powerhouse and our combination of scale, artistic excellence and green-and-pleasant setting remains unique. Coming out of the pandemic-inflationary chicane at high speed we have emerged with our eyes on the horizon and a renewed sense of purpose.

A tale of two seasons

Glyndebourne now hosts two of the largest opera seasons in the UK: the world-renowned Festival and the new and distinctive Autumn Season. Together, through more than 100 main stage performances, they offer extraordinary variety.

The Glyndebourne Festival is recognised internationally for its quality, and draws audiences from all around the world. We are extremely proud of its hard-earned reputation for excellence.

The Autumn Season is blossoming. Propagated from the Glyndebourne Tour, which was felled by public funding cuts, it runs from October to December. The Autumn Season is intentionally designed to lower the barrier to entry to opera for new audiences while providing a full-scale, high-calibre opera platform for artists at an early stage in their career. Shorter intervals, relaxed attire and putting some of what's usually behind the scenes on show all combine to foster an informal atmosphere, without compromising on our culture of high standards. We hope, like us, you will come to enjoy the charm of this 'off-duty' counterpoint to the cherished customs and formal conventions of the immutable summer Festival: opera's oak.

Scale and impact

In 2024 we welcomed larger audiences to the Festival than at any time in nearly 20 years and more people to Glyndebourne than at any time in our history. 98% of seats were filled across 77 Festival performances. All of our Autumn Season operas and Christmas concerts were sold out. Opera in the UK has suffered many knocks and has had a mostly negative press these last few years; most of it unwarranted. But don't let anyone tell you that there's no demand for opera these days.

Your trust, attendance and support are the foundations of our ongoing success. I cannot overstate how much we appreciate not only your loyalty but also your enthusiasm for sharing Glyndebourne with friends and family. We know that the best way to convert someone to opera is to get them to come once... twice... perhaps three times. Then, often, the door, having been opened, stays open for life.

Despite record-breaking attendance, ticket sales alone are never sufficient to meet our financial needs. We rely on the generosity of our members and supporters to uphold our high artistic standards, to invest in engaging young people and to support emerging talent. In total, 20% of our income comes through philanthropy. No volume of thank yous will ever suffice.

Anyone who has ever attended a performance at Glyndebourne owes our supporters a debt of gratitude. Generosity is the secret of our success.

The new generation

As we look to the future, we will continue to balance tradition with innovation. I am ever mindful of maintaining this careful balance and it is Gus Christie's mantra, Janus-like, always to keep one eye on the past and one on the future.



We're aware that attending opera can and does feel intimidating to some, with concerns about 'rules', doubts about 'getting it', and, in particular, unhelpful preconceptions about cost. When a ticket to the opera is used as a synonym for 'very expensive' in media reports about the price of a ticket to see Oasis or Taylor Swift, it's a problem. In order to secure a bright future for opera in the UK, we must face the facts and address its public reputation.

One of the most intriguing challenges is how to overcome the misconception that one needs necessarily to be well-informed about the details of an opera before experiencing it. I think that's untrue. In reality and in my own experience, an opera can be a wonderful prism, refracting attention into a spectrum of curiosity. There's no 'right way'. The important thing is to ensure that anyone can choose to enjoy opera, whilst being realistic about the fact that, as with everything else in life, not everyone will want to.

We all know that it's crucial to engage people with the art form when they're still young. It's hopeless to expect anyone to develop a passion for anything without first being encouraged to pay proper attention to it. Exposure is a prerequisite to igniting any sort of interest. Given the dearth of

opportunities to experience opera 'by accident' in everyday life, our continued proactivity in engaging the next generation is vital. Glyndebourne's Learning & Engagement team does such a lot in this area that I haven't space to list, but I will just mention our Performances for Schools, during which the auditorium looks and sounds rather different to the one you are used to! The joy, laughter and energy is something to behold. Days never to forget.

Looking ahead

I'm committed to ensuring that Glyndebourne remains in a category of one. We've rebranded, adopting a look that is rooted in our heritage yet contemporary in feel. The choice of typography nods to the original used in 1934 – bold and aspirational, then and now.

As we approach the centenary, we are asking, what will Glyndebourne look like in 2034 and into its second century? While it's too soon to share specifics, I can assure you that we are hatching ambitious, but appropriate plans.

Thank you for your continued support. ●

Richard is Glyndebourne's Managing Director

A CHANGING OPERA LANDSCAPE

The opera sector is going to look different in 2025. *Kate Harvey* speaks to opera company leaders about the forces in play (inflation, funding cuts, the new government, and more), how the sector is feeling about the future, and how we are collaborating to better navigate it.

Opera in the UK has faced a series of challenges in recent years. Months of Covid shutdowns were followed by a one-two punch of global inflation and public funding cuts. The result was a significant reduction in the amount of touring opera in the UK and considerable pressure on opera companies to act conservatively, in the interests of self-preservation. Many experienced freelance artists and technical staff left the industry in pursuit of more secure employment, and the political and media narrative too often served to reinforce stereotypes about the art form, or to gloomily predict its imminent demise.

But does the new year herald the start of a new, more hopeful, chapter? Arriving in 2025, the landscape for opera in the UK certainly looks and feels different. Positive audience trends, an invigorated appetite for sector collaboration, healthier working environments and an abundance of exciting talent all offer hope for the future and the chance to move on from recent turbulence. To take the temperature of the industry, we spoke to a number of company leaders to ask how they are feeling about the future of opera and the challenges and opportunities they see ahead.

'I'm feeling spectacularly optimistic and bullish,' says Alex Beard, Chief Executive of Royal Ballet and Opera (RBO). 'In a world where the vast majority of people's social and cultural space is flattened and mediated through screens and social media, the extraordinary, 360° experience provided by opera is absolutely what people are after; opera is surfing the zeitgeist, 450 years on from our foundation!'

Beard's optimism is supported by data: RBO's box office occupancy returned to pre-Covid levels during its 2022/23 season (96%) and its average visitor age has dropped by three years since before the pandemic. Meanwhile, new research from the Laidlaw Opera Trust, published in October

2024, found signs of a latent interest in opera just waiting to be untapped: 43% of people polled who had never attended an opera before, expressed an interest in doing so in the future.

The report also reaffirmed the primary barriers that prevent people from stepping inside an opera house: perceptions of cost, the length of opera and the feeling that opera is for other people. Opera companies are, of course, well aware of these challenges.

'I feel very encouraged by the demand for opera that we've seen at Glyndebourne over the last few years,' says Managing Director Richard Davidson-Houston, soon after the company announced the highest paid-attendance for the annual Glyndebourne Festival since comparable records began in 2007. 'We've got to ask ourselves why that is and what we can do to see it continue. Part of it is tackling negative perceptions of what opera is about: the idea that there are certain rituals that you might not understand, or the idea that you need to know a huge amount about a piece before you come and see it.'

Alison Buchanan is Artistic Director of Pegasus Opera, whose mission is to drive greater diversity in opera, its workforce, performers and audience. She is optimistic that opera's fundamental relatability means that it has the potential to appeal to anyone. 'We all fall in love, break up, experience death and loss, birth and hope,' she says. 'Opera is about telling these shared stories, whether in an Elizabethan costume or a space odyssey outfit. It's having people understand that and not think it's a "them and us" thing.'

Robin Norton-Hale, General Director of English Touring Opera (ETO) agrees: 'I'm confident in the art; once we've got someone in the seat, I am confident in the power of what they're seeing.'



Alison Buchanan (Grace, right) in the Pegasus production of *Roman Fever* with Bernadine Pritchett (Ailda, left)

And this is borne out; people come to the opera and say it's amazing. So that in a way is not the challenge. The challenge is the communication, getting them in that seat in the first place, and maybe challenging ourselves to start talking about opera in a different way.'

Pegasus Opera regularly stages concerts that programme opera classics alongside music from other musical traditions in order to draw in the widest possible audience. 'For an audience who don't go to the opera and don't know what that is, it's a way in,' Buchanan explains. 'You can't expect people to come to you, you have to go to them. I think that's a great thing for us in opera to keep in mind.'

It's a thought echoed by Norton-Hale. 'I really believe we as an industry and those who write about the industry need to stop being precious about what is opera and what is not opera,' she says. 'This autumn we staged a really successful production of *The Snowmaiden* by Rimsky-Korsakov using a reduced score to suit the size of venue that we tour to. All the reviews were absolutely glowing but almost all of them started by mentioning the reduced score. For all the people who saw that production and had a brilliant

experience, they're in effect being told it's not the real thing. I think that's such a shame.'

Pricing is another issue on Norton-Hale's mind. 'For ETO in particular, it is a real irritation that people's perception is that all opera tickets are beyond their reach,' she explains. 'Media coverage of high ticket prices for live entertainment seems always to use opera as the shorthand for something that's too expensive,' Davidson-Houston agrees. 'The economic context remains tightened, and tightening, but it's important to continue to hold the line with respect to pricing and not put the burden back on to audiences. The perception of value for money has to be addressed sector-wide.'

A collective approach to tackling public perceptions of opera should be made easier in 2025, with plans advancing to launch a new representative body for opera. As well as value for money, companies see strong potential for greater collaboration on talent pathways, audience development and new work. 'I'm hugely "team opera,"' says Beard. 'We are all in it for the same purpose, which is delivering on our shared charitable objectives to enrich people's lives through transformational opera. It's not competitive and in fact we have a charitable ►

obligation to deliver the greatest sum benefit between all of us.'

'It's easy to talk about collaboration and harder to do it,' reflects Norton-Hale. 'But I do think that there is a really positive, much more open conversation going on between opera companies at the moment. From an audience development perspective in particular, it makes total sense to work together to develop a particular audience segment over a number of years based on a shared picture of our future programming.'

'Sometimes when we talk about new audiences it is assumed that we mean young people but given that it's only a minority of people who come to opera already, a new audience isn't necessarily a young audience. I think we need to get quite specific about which audience we're trying to attract and really celebrate the fact that opera contains something for everyone: know which audience you are targeting and lean into what would appeal most to them.'

A representative body for opera will also make it easier for the industry to communicate effectively with the new Labour government. Among the key policy issues for opera companies is the retention of Theatre Tax Relief (first introduced in 2014) and the delivery of the party's manifesto commitment to curriculum reforms that improve the status of arts subjects in schools.

'Many of us were very hopeful prior to the election because the incoming Labour government was making all the right noises around the arts and music,' notes Anna Patalong, Chief Executive of British Youth Opera (BYO). 'Keir Starmer went to Guildhall [School of Music and Drama] so we felt there was a vested interest there. Clearly there are lots of things that the government is having to make hard decisions on but I hope that we won't slip to the bottom of the pile.'

In light of the economic context, expectations for any immediate increase in public funding for arts and culture were modest and indeed the government's first budget in October 2024 made no commitment to increasing dedicated spending, despite theatre industry calls for a funding pot to invest in capital infrastructure. More positively, the budget did unveil an extra £1.3 billion for local authorities, the single largest funder of the arts in England.

'There are lots of financial challenges because there are so many other demands on public money,' acknowledges Beard. 'But I think there will, over time, be a fundamental recognition that opera, music, the arts in general, is important. In this AI-enabled world, human creativity and shared experiences are even more important. Developing people's oracy skills, their creative potential, their team-working capabilities, their imaginative capacity... those things need to be invested in.'



Ffion Edwards (Snowmaiden) in *The Snowmaiden*, English Touring Opera, 2024.

Ffion will perform as Lola in *Uprising*, Glyndebourne's new community opera, February-March 2025.

In the meantime, though, there is an urgent need to address the impact of recent under-investment and the downgrading of arts subjects in education. 'There is a generation of teachers now going into schools that have had no personal experience of creative education,' Beard warns. 'That is not going to bode well for their pupils unless we can be there to support those teachers. That leads back to the collaboration point: we need to be tackling that collectively. We need to ask ourselves, what difference can we make to support and equip the next generation of teachers to really be able to inspire the creativity of their students? Let's lean in, make a difference, effect change.'

And what about the next generation of artists who have navigated a path to training and are on the cusp of joining the profession? 'The biggest challenge is that there haven't been as many productions being put on as a result of funding challenges,' Patalong notes. 'We've still got the same number of people coming into the industry but the work hasn't been there. That supply and demand is always going to be a problem until the companies feel stable enough again to put on more shows.'

That won't happen overnight. A number of companies have made, or are considering, organisational changes that involve a reduction in performances and resulting job losses, the impact of which will continue to be felt for months and years to come. But there are also signs of confidence returning. Glyndebourne's summer Festival has always been financially independent, making it more resilient to public funding cuts. The event returns to its usual six productions in 2025, including its first ever staging of Wagner's *Parsifal*. Featuring 200 performers and musicians, it will be among the most ambitious productions the company has ever staged. Glyndebourne also has plans for the future growth of its Autumn Season.

'Since the end of the Glyndebourne Tour we have been developing our Autumn Season, which provides a major platform for emerging artists and a way for lots of people to discover the art form,' explains Davidson-Houston. '20,000 people attended an opera at Glyndebourne last autumn, more than 20% of them for the first time. It's already a significant new addition to the UK opera calendar and we're not done yet. We're in a positive place and feel a responsibility to make sure we are doing what we can to support the sector for the long term. Growing the Autumn Season is a key part of that.'

Also presenting a major new Wagner production in 2025 is RBO, which continues its *Ring Cycle* with *Die Walküre*. It's one of eight new productions in its 2024/25 season, along with the world premiere of *Festen*, a new opera by Mark-Anthony Turnage with a libretto by *Billy Elliot* writer Lee Hall and based on Thomas Vinterberg's 1998 film of the same name. Other positive developments from around the country include news that Scottish Opera is moving ahead with plans to build a new headquarters and mixed-use development in Glasgow. ETO has been settling into its new home in Sheffield, where it has been warmly welcomed by other local arts organisations keen to explore future partnerships, and English National Opera has announced a first wave of projects and events in Manchester, in anticipation of completing a move to the city in 2029.

There is also plenty of new talent coming through at a grassroots level indicating that the future is in safe hands. 'There was a lot of outside-the-box thinking during the pandemic and I think that feeling has stayed with us a little bit,' observes Patalong. 'We're seeing a lot of new groups pop up doing really fantastic work. That is the great thing about the UK: almost because we've had to struggle and fight so much, people are really prepared to work hard for their art. You can see really top-class stuff in very small venues.'

Patalong is also hopeful that those entering the profession will experience a more positive and inclusive work environment. 'The pandemic period was a chance to look at ourselves as an industry,' she says. 'A lot of the old working practices that needed to be re-evaluated have been highlighted and I think we have a much healthier working environment that people feel safe in and that is more representative. We're obviously still working on improving routes into the industry and accessibility but things are starting to move in the right direction and people are certainly very keen to make it happen.'

For a final rallying call, we return to Alex Beard, who says: 'The future is in our hands, in the work we choose to produce, the talent we convene and the level at which we make it happen: those flashes of delight and joy. We're seeing the opera community come together in its shared belief that the fundamental human urge to congregate and reflect together through the lens of the greatest works of art ever made. That urge will continue.' ●

Kate is Glyndebourne's Senior Press Manager

A FOREST OF VOICES

Philippa Burbidge attends the launch day for *Uprising*, **Jonathan Dove's** new community opera.

On a rainy Sunday morning in September 2024, the cavernous Peter Hall Room, a rehearsal space in the heart of Glyndebourne, is echoing with chattering voices and enthusiastic greetings. It's the participants' launch day for *Uprising*, Jonathan Dove's new community opera. It's the first time the giant chorus of singers is meeting together with the creative team – the energy in the room is buzzing.

Uprising's director, Sinéad O'Neill, leads the warm-up for her huge forces: the biggest ever chorus in Glyndebourne's history of community operas. An enormous circle is formed and the singers announce their names in a rhythmic chain. They 'pass a clap' round the circle which creates a wave of sound akin to a tropical rainstorm. There is already a sense of togetherness and teamwork, after only five minutes.

Together with a cast of professional singers, *Uprising* will see around 120 performers through the Glyndebourne stage in spring. The chorus will include over 50 singers from Glyndebourne's community chorus and over 50 young people from Glyndebourne Youth Opera (GYO). The orchestral pit will swell with over 40 musicians including members of Glyndebourne Sinfonia, players from its Jerwood Pit Perfect programme for young instrumentalists, plus young players from Brighton & East Sussex Youth Orchestra, including seven drummers from Brighton & Hove Percussion Ensemble.

The chorus members were recruited from the local area: several have been involved in previous Glyndebourne community operas, but many are new. And a few, like Rose, are thrilled to be



Cast at the *Uprising* launch day

Sarah Hickson



back; she's been part of GYO since she was nine, and also took part in the Glyndebourne Academy programme.

The youngest participants are from GYO, and all took part in creative workshops to prepare them for auditioning, either during the *Uprising* development phase in Eastbourne and Worthing, or at Glyndebourne in May 2023, (applications for the workshops were a record high). As Project Manager Kate Simner from Glyndebourne's Learning & Engagement team reflects: 'We wanted to make sure participants were engaged with the subject matter of the piece, so that they could be really confident about using their own voices.'

Many of the younger participants had been involved in youth opera *Pay the Piper* in 2022, and were clearly excited to be back at Glyndebourne

Total number of instrumentalists and singers in mainstage community operas at Glyndebourne



for *Uprising*. Ruby started with GYO aged ten, and has sung on the Glyndebourne stage in *Pay the Piper* and various Christmas concerts. She and her mum, Elaine, who is in the adult chorus, are taking part in *Uprising* together. She can't wait to start rehearsals: 'It's so powerful to sing together, especially when it's about real issues.'

The real issues that are at the heart of the opera are urgent and heartbreaking. The central character is Lola (Ffion Edwards), who wakes at the start of Act I with a horrifying vision about the death of the Amazon rainforest. Lola is passionate about the interdependent lives of trees (how they 'suckle their young, sending sugar to the youngest sheltering in the forest through roots as thin as hairs') and the ongoing tension throughout the opera is that her mother Angela (Madeleine Shaw) just won't listen. A disenchanted Lola then proceeds with a series of school strikes, mocked by her fellow schoolchildren as 'a one-girl circus'. But encouraged by activists she meets online (including one Greta Thunberg), she persists, and gradually fellow pupils start to join her strike. They soon find themselves part of a global movement.

The environment has been central to Jonathan Dove's music for over 20 years, with the composer having written two operas relating to climate change: *The Walk from the Garden* and ▶



Cast at the *Uprising* launch day with Assistant Director Rebecca Marine (centre), Director Sinéad O'Neill (second from right) and Répétiteur Avishka Edirisinghe (far right)

Sarah Hickson

The Day After. He composed his first community opera for Glyndebourne, *Hastings Spring*, on Hastings Pier in 1990. His breakthrough opera *Flight*, with *Uprising* librettist April De Angelis, was subsequently commissioned and performed at the Festival in 1998, 1999 and 2005 and has been performed multiple times worldwide since. The environmental crisis, represented by the passionate voices of the young activists in the opera, is central to *Uprising* and highly emotive. As Jonathan surmises: '*Uprising* is not a finger-wagging piece telling you what to do, but you'll experience a large number of teenagers who are embodying the experience of teenage activists. For them, the process of getting inside this story has the potential to be life-changing. We are celebrating the possibility of creating change'.

That forests are social communities housing intricate circles of life, is a well-explored notion. Bestselling books like Peter Wohlleben's *The Hidden Life of Trees* have popularised the idea that trees are like human families where parents live with their children, communicate with them, support them, nurse them when sick, and warn them of danger.

In the same vein, a choir is like a forest of voices: a community of different people, coming together in rehearsals to learn their notes and nourish their sound, to practise their harmonies and hone their

technique, with the ultimate goal of performing together as a unified whole, and to express something heartfelt, unique and memorable.

On that rainy Sunday in September, the newly formed community chorus were put through their paces to learn the final chorus of the opera to sing together for the first time. Inspiringly led by chorus director Ashley Beauchamp – who started his own musical journey at Glyndebourne when he was 16 through playing in Brighton Youth Orchestra for *Knight Crew* – the forest of voices in the Peter Hall room echoed with the names of birds:

'We want our dream...
To hear again the nightingales, yellowhammers,
woodpeckers, cuckoos,
To hear again the long-eared owls, egrets, osprey,
spoonbills, red kites...'

As the birds chirp merrily in the Bourne Garden – Glyndebourne's own tropical paradise – Lola's vision at the start of *Uprising* springs to mind: 'The great Amazon is dying'. The time approaches, once again, where a new opera will be mirroring the prevalent issues of the world, here shining a unique light on the urgency of the environmental crisis. ●

Philippa is Glyndebourne's Senior Marketing Manager

SHOWCASING YOUNG MUSICIANS

The Glyndebourne Sinfonia, our Autumn Season house orchestra, will play the music in *Uprising*, featuring five Jerwood Pit Perfect players (former and present), led by principal first violin Haim Choi, a Pit Perfect alumnus.

'Our Pit Perfect musicians are young professionals who have recently graduated from music colleges,' explains Jonathan Tunnell (manager of the Glyndebourne Sinfonia). 'Nine times out of ten, it gives them their first ever professional opera pit experience. Six former Pit Perfect players now play regularly with the orchestra: I like to call it my best recruiting tool!'

The experienced Glyndebourne Sinfonia players will also be joined by 22 older teenagers from the Brighton & East Sussex Youth Orchestra. 'We in the Glyndebourne Sinfonia are looking forward to having lots of sectional rehearsals (as well as full orchestra rehearsals) because my players will be heavily involved in integrating the youth players into the rehearsal process,' says Jonathan. 'We are really excited to be taking part in our first full scale community opera at Glyndebourne, which also gives us the opportunity to work closely with Glyndebourne Youth Opera singers for the first time.' ●

Joe Fuller is Glyndebourne's Publications Editor



Pablo Strong

Above: The Jerwood Pit Perfect 2024 players are: William Scotland (french horn), Alexandra Schiffiers (violin), Madeleine Pickering (violin), Vanessa Hristova (viola), Kelvin Chan (viola), Hannah Scarborough (cello) and Georgia Lloyd (bass)

NO HOLDS BARRED

On your Festival 2025 ballot form, you may have noticed a section that mentions donating to the Annual Fund, but what is it and why is it important? *Mia Julyan* finds out.

Each year it costs around £6 million to fund Glyndebourne's pioneering productions, artist development schemes and year-round community programmes. 'Ticket sales only cover around 50-60% of our costs, so we need to raise nearly all of that gap. That's where campaigns like the Annual Fund come in,' explains Helen McCarthy, Director of Development. As a charity, and with our Festival supported solely by ticket sales and donations, fundraising is extremely important, and the Annual Fund is the cornerstone for this. Money donated to the fund is unrestricted which is what makes it so powerful – it can be used where it's needed most.

It's thanks to the Annual Fund that we can marry the artistic excellence we strive for with our uniquely beautiful surroundings, enabling us to go above and beyond expectations. But, as you can imagine, it's no mean feat to make this a reality. With 12 acres of grounds, an auditorium that seats 1,200 people – and stages on average around 100 performances a year – there's a lot going on behind the scenes to keep the great engine of Glyndebourne running.

Having worked here for 36 years, with 16 of those spent in stage management, Helen has a unique insight into what it takes to make Glyndebourne happen: 'There's a whole world backstage that's crucial to the success of our productions. From dressers to crew members to musicians, it's all part of a complex operation.' Every year hundreds of performers, crew, operational and administrative staff pass through Glyndebourne's doors. Creating world-class opera requires many hands on deck.

And then there's the materials needed to bring our productions to life. For Festival 2024 our costume makers used over 250 metres of calico, while the wigs team used approximately 28 metres of lace



Graham Carlrow



Our technical team demonstrating lighting bridges at an Open Day, August 2024. Each bridge can lift over 3,000kg of lighting, sound and video equipment up to a height of 17 metres, installed as part of our backstage automation upgrade.

and 17,000 grams of hair to create all of the wigs worn by the singers on stage. That's just two examples from our makers who work backstage transforming creative visions into reality. Every metre and gram of materials needed to create our sets, props and costumes has a cost. And in the current economic climate, those costs aren't getting any lower. As just one example, we know that plywood costs have increased by 300% over the last few years. Festival 2025 was planned pre-pandemic, before the current reality of higher material costs was fully known, so financial planning is challenging, with cost predictions fluctuating continually.

It's in times like these when the power of the Annual Fund really shines. By having this unrestricted pot to draw upon, Glyndebourne can be resilient to increases in costs and agile in responding to whatever the future may hold. Since its inception, the Annual Fund has helped fund a variety of projects: backstage automation, new Steinway pianos for the rehearsal rooms, upgraded conductor podiums, LED lighting, car park resurfacing, and our latest project – refurbishing the orchestra pit. But in reality, it goes so much further than those specific projects. As an unrestricted fund, there really is no limit to what the Annual Fund can be used towards. And often its support is felt in every corner of Glyndebourne – from head gardener Kevin Martin's potting shed, to your seat in the auditorium.

The impact the Annual Fund can have on Glyndebourne's ability to continue pushing creative boundaries and produce the extraordinary opera you love is substantial, but the donations which help make it possible don't have to be. 'The beauty of the fund is that people can give any amount at any time,' says Helen. 'People sometimes feel that donating to a large organisation is like a drop in the ocean, but that's not true. Small donations add up; last year, we raised £500,000 through the Annual Fund, with many gifts coming from donations added while purchasing tickets. We are sincerely grateful for any and all donations, even a little helps Glyndebourne go a long way.' ●

Mia is Glyndebourne's Marketing Officer

ARCHIVE ACQUISITION: IRA NOWINSKI

Glyndebourne's archive houses one of the most comprehensive surveys of British 20th- and 21st-century opera photography in the country. It is a rich and varied collection dating back to Glyndebourne's inaugural Festival in 1934 through to today and captures every opera performance ever staged here by some of the world's most prolific and prominent photographers, including Bill Brandt, Angus McBean, Ilse Bing and Antony Armstrong-Jones through to those dealing almost exclusively with capturing theatre and stage, such as Guy Gravett, Clive Barda and Zoë Dominic. Each is known for their role in different photographic and artistic movements: some for surrealism or the avant-garde, others as photojournalists, stage photographers and portraitists, yet all brought their individual styles to capture the craft and quality of opera.

This year, we are pleased to announce that we have added the Glyndebourne photographic archive of American photographer Ira Nowinski (b. 1942) to our collection. An experienced opera photographer, Nowinski worked at San Francisco Opera in the 1970s and 80s documenting the complete operatic process from inception to the final curtain call. He was invited to photograph an entire Festival season at Glyndebourne in 1987, a memorable year that included the seminal production revival of *Porgy and Bess* and a revival of Peter Hall's *Carmen*.

Nowinski was granted access to all areas of the opera house. In these Glyndebourne photographs, Nowinski focuses upon faces and spaces that will be instantly familiar to those acquainted with the Festival and with opera.

The 1987 commission was made possible by funding from Glyndebourne America, in addition to sponsorship from Kodak. The sponsorship provided Nowinski with almost limitless rolls of T-MAX 400 film, with 366 of them being exposed, which resulted in an incredible c. 12,000 images captured. These photographs chronicle the many voices that come together to form 'Glyndebourne': singers, musicians, conductors, creative teams, company directors, dancers, gardeners, audience members, all integral to a Festival season. This is an important and timely acquisition for Glyndebourne, as we reflect on the creative quality and spirit crafted here, both on and off stage. They serve as a joyous reminder of how far we've come as a company since 1934 and subsequently since 1987, and contribute to our already significant photographic collection.

Nowinski's work is held in numerous collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Library of Congress, Washington DC; the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris; the National Science and Media Museum, Bradford; and the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. ●

The purchase of these photographs has been made possible by the generous support of Glyndebourne America.

Philip Boot is Glyndebourne's Archivist



A HAVEN FOR ARTISTS

Glyndebourne's six-week rehearsal period for all opera productions, as well as the run of each opera over a two- to three-month period, ensures that performers and musicians are here for a big chunk of time each year, living and working in our Sussex enclave, nestled in the South Downs. Lewes, Ringmer, Kingston, Glynde, Firle, Laughton and many more towns and villages all benefit from the influx of visitors each year who come to work at and therefore stay near to Glyndebourne – and that's even before thousands of audience members arrive for the opera. Flats, guesthouses, B&Bs, hotels and campervans are packed to the rafters. One such house is the Christie family home at Glyndebourne as *Gus Christie* explains.

Ever since I can remember, my home has been open to a myriad of people from all over the world living (and sharing) under the same roof for up to seven months each year. I am completely accustomed to this annual invasion and feel that it is a very good use of a rambling old house with 20 bedrooms and for about three months each summer, every room is inhabited.

As a child, the transition from the quieter winter months to seeing complete strangers walking down our stairs took a little getting used to, but I think it helped me to become the host I am today. Particular characters stick in the mind – a Bulgarian coach called Michael Hadjimischev with very bushy eyebrows, a wonderful Californian conductor, Calvin Simmons, who had very long fingers and we would drag him to the piano to play Scott Joplin rags. Calvin, a favourite of my Mum's, would also wind up the various clocks we had round and about, and get them to chime.

My grandparents started the tradition of having creative teams – from conductors, directors and designers to the assistants and the vocal and music coaches – stay in the house whilst they were rehearsing the operas. In the early days our house guests were treated to breakfast in bed, which the housekeeper would prepare on various trays and deliver to their rooms. Thankfully this doesn't happen today! Guests have their own kitchen and dining room facilities and, depending on the groups, have some terrific slap-up dinners.

David McVicar was infamous in the kitchen and would invite me down to join him in 2005, the first year of *Giulio Cesare*, adding the temptation that 'Danni is coming too'!

We have had a variety of housekeepers over the years and as part of their job they would make sure all the rooms were ready for guests, just like a hotel – and preside over all the parties throughout the year. I must mention the indomitable Ann Tillstone, who was housekeeper from 1984 to 2017 and didn't stand for any nonsense from the house guests and became the agony aunt for a lot of them. She was well-loved by all of our guests, and responsible for a famous lasagne, which found its way into a cookbook. That lasagne was often served at our first night parties – we usually host three every summer – singers, actors, creative teams, musicians and staff are all invited – alongside the 'cast drinks' parties we host for all performing companies.

Inviting people into my home is, I believe, a wonderful way to integrate artists from all over the world into the heart of Glyndebourne and, more often than not, the first music rehearsal for all the singers takes place in the Organ Room – also part of the house – which allows the newcomers to soak up some of Glyndebourne's history. Many a famous singer or conductor has had their first taste of Glyndebourne in the Organ Room.

In the early days, the house earned the nickname 'Glynditz' (after the 1970s TV series *Colditz*, about



Estéban Lecoq (Lillas Pastia) and Gus backstage during a rehearsal of *Carmen*, Festival 2024

Allied prisoners of war imprisoned in Colditz Castle and their attempted escapes) as the artists were trapped in this old house whilst rehearsing and never left – they would eat, drink and talk about the production they were involved in with little distraction from the outside world. It's a nickname I'm quite fond of as I think it has helped create the culture at Glyndebourne of fine-tuning our opera productions to the highest possible standard – and creating a haven for artists.

One of the biggest challenges of having up to 38 people staying in our home is, of course, privacy. Our guests respect this and as a family we are used to it, but it is not so easy for our beloved dogs – currently one Portuguese water dog, Caesar, and two British bulldogs, Norma and her daughter Mabel. Unbeknownst to us when we got

them, bulldogs seem to have an obsession with attacking people's feet, especially on staircases. Quite often, we found Norma standing staunchly at the bottom of the stairs whilst somebody would be nervously standing at the top, unable to descend. Needs must and we now have a wooden gate at the bottom of the stairs to allow for a safe passage, much to the annoyance of Norma and Mabel.

After our temporary residents leave at the end of October we are no longer 'backstage' and have the house to ourselves as a family until the end of March, when Festival rehearsals begin and we're ready to start all over again. ●

Gus is Glyndebourne's Executive Chairman



A TIMELESS COMEDY

Director **Mariame Clément** will return with a fresh take on *Le nozze di Figaro* in 2025, our first new production of the opera in over a decade, and Glyndebourne's tenth version of the Mozart classic that launched the Festival in 1934. She speaks to *Andrew Batty* about why this timeless comedy is still so popular today.

For Mariame the relationship between the characters is key to *Le nozze di Figaro*'s longevity. 'They read very well today,' she says. 'Everyone understands what a master and a servant are, even in an 18th-century context. The audience's reaction can be immediate, which is very important for comedy.' It is for that reason that she is retaining the story's 18th-century setting for this production, rather than transposing it to another time and place.

'The piece doesn't need "translating" into contemporary power relationships, in my opinion. A powerful man being defeated or even ridiculed by women or by people who are socially inferior: it's a comedy classic that always works. A lot of the comic moments are based on situation comedy anyway, and that is quite timeless too,' she observes. 'A well-timed slap, someone being mistaken for someone else, someone entering at the wrong moment: these still elicit laughs today.'

One of the challenges in making the comedy land is ensuring that the humour in the dialogue isn't lost. 'So many moments in the text make me laugh,' says Mariame, 'for instance, the Count answering Susanna's concern that the pavilion is quite dark with "we're not here to read" is truly hilarious.

'I always work very carefully on the supertitles. My stagings are very text-based, and in comedy this is even more crucial,' she explains. 'As the way in which Mozart set Da Ponte's text to music is so transparent and fluid it ensures that with good supertitles and clear storytelling, we can make sure audiences get the jokes.'

Le nozze di Figaro isn't all laughs: it has many serious themes and moments of sadness and reflection too. This is tailor-made for Mariame's approach to comedy. Reflecting on her past productions of *Don Pasquale* and *Il turco in Italia*,

she notes that 'it was essential to me to find more serious moments in those comedies, and even darker aspects, in order to make the characters more complex and moving.' For Mariame, *Figaro*, with its rich and complex characterisation, the subtlety and darkness 'is already composed. The comedy and tragedy go hand in hand.'

Now, with the Festival a few months away, is a time of preparation before rehearsals begin. 'In general, I tend to come to rehearsal very well prepared,' she says. 'This is even more true of comedy, and especially situation comedy, as it is often about positions, choreography and timing. It also involves the set, which means a lot has to be planned way ahead of time.

'With experience, one also gets a feeling for which scenes need to be precisely choreographed and which ones should be left more open to improvisation. Having a clear plan doesn't mean one isn't flexible. The trick is to feel when the singers are on to something: then it is exciting to let go of the plan and let them follow their instincts and improvise. It's the magic of the rehearsal room, of the chemistry between people, of whatever is in the air on that day, and that is what makes theatre interesting.'

This space for experimentation is all there on the page and the score. *Figaro* is an opera you can return to over and over again, and still be surprised by. 'It is so rich, so deep, the insight on human relationships is so brilliant, that I feel I could stage it every year and not be tired of it,' Mariame laughs. ●

Andrew is Glyndebourne's Digital Content Editor

FIGARO FIRSTS

Richard Hubert Smith



Louise Alder (Cleopatra), *Giulio Cesare*, Festival 2024

Glyndebourne has a reputation for nurturing young talent, but rarely does that talent arrive quite as young as it did with **Huw Montague Rendall** and **Louise Alder**. This year, singing the roles of the Count and Countess Almaviva in a new staging of Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, and only in their early 30s, they already have several decades of Glyndebourne history under their belts, as *Alexandra Coghlan* finds out.

Both Louise Alder and Huw Montague Rendall 'grew up' at Glyndebourne, spending childhood summers in dressing rooms and on the lawns while their parents performed: Louise's mother as a founder-member of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Huw's parents, mezzo Diana Montague and tenor David Rendall, on the stage.

'My mother actually played in *Figaro* at Glyndebourne when she was pregnant with me,' says Louise. 'So I suppose technically that was my first time at the Festival. A few years later and the opera was back on stage; I was absolutely livid because a child of one of my mum's colleagues (we were the same age) got to be in the show and I didn't. Roll on a few years, and I'm finally doing *Figaro* at Glyndebourne... it has been a long time coming.'

For Huw, it's an opportunity to remember 'all the moments' he had at the Festival as a child. 'I go backstage and it smells like home for me. I just love being here, whether it's walking around the lake, having lunch in the Courtyard or walking over the hills. Between us as a family we've done nearly 500 performances at Glyndebourne, which is crazy.'

Both singers are familiar faces on stage now too. Huw made his professional debut with the Glyndebourne Chorus in 2016, working his way up from the small role of Fiorello in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* ('I had never done a solo role in a major house before: that was my baptism of fire. Working with people who had been on stage for a long time, I just had to keep up.') via Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*) and Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*) to arrive in 2025 at his first Glyndebourne Count.

'I'm sure everyone says it, but Glyndebourne is just the best place to sing Mozart: it's like the music was written for it. The auditorium is intimate, and as the acoustics are so good you don't have to work super-hard vocally, so you can actually give all your attention to colour, dynamics, flexibility, phrasing, all those things that are often a luxury in other venues.'

Louise's Festival debut was a more unusual affair, not at Glyndebourne at all, but at the Proms in 2014, when, just a year out of music college, she stepped in at the last minute to sing the role of Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier*. 'I don't think it really sank in for months after,' she says. 'That night I made my role debut, my Proms debut, my Radio 3 debut, my LPO debut: it was like ripping off the most enormous plaster ever.'

The soprano progressed from cover roles via roles on the Tour (Lucia in *The Rape of Lucretia*, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*) before returning to the Festival in 2018: now officially cast as Sophie.

But while she has gone on to star in some iconic Glyndebourne productions, including John Cox and David Hockney's *The Rake's Progress* and, most recently, David McVicar's *Giulio Cesare*, Mariame Clément's *Figaro* will be the first time Louise has created a role (her first ever Countess) in a brand new Festival staging.

'Honestly,' she says, 'if you had told me as a student that I would get to do this I'd never have believed it. Glyndebourne has made a lot of dreams come true.'

Figaro is the Glyndebourne opera *par excellence*, musically where it all started back in 1934. It's a piece that never loses its appeal. 'It's an absolutely perfect opera', Huw explains, 'because you have this vast theatrical score full of colours. It's like Mozart is in the pit giggling, or setting fireworks or lighting fires! And then on stage everyone is so human. Every single character has their soul stitched into the music.'

If Figaro and his fiancée Susanna drive the plot, it's the Count and Countess who supply the opera's emotional core. Huw describes this 'broken couple' as 'putty inside a marble case. They have to be so strong on the outside,' he explains, 'and not let anyone see all that's suppressed within.' Louise



Huw Montague Rendall (Guglielmo), *Così fan tutte*, Festival 2021

and Huw are something of the exception these days, an unusually young Count and Countess. Will it change the theatrical dynamic?

'I'm unusual by today's standards,' Huw says, 'but the first Count was just 22! I see him as a spoiled child who has inherited his father's title too early. While it can be very moving to see it played older because they've had this life and love that has withered away, I think it's interesting to have them as a young couple because they are capable of forgiveness, of moving on and changing their lives.'

'There are so many different ways to write the story of *Figaro*,' Louise adds. 'So many different outcomes depending on the director's choices, so many different ways the Countess can say "I forgive you". I think you have to go back to what happened before: how did they get to such an awful place in their relationship? Is there still any trust, any love, left between them? And then you build from there. It'll be fascinating to explore this summer.' ●

Alexandra is Glyndebourne's Opera Specialist

TOP OF HIS GAME

Germán Olvera is back. Singing Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, the Mexican baritone plans to pour his heart and soul into his performances as *Karen Anderson* finds out.

'I'm off to the Olympics. I have tickets to the men's 100m final, it's a dream come true!', Germán Olvera told me joyfully as he was leaving Glyndebourne last summer following his successful run as Count Danilo Danilovitsch in *The Merry Widow*. His love of athletics is nothing new, but his proximity to Paris was and so before rehearsals started for his next gigs in the Netherlands and Spain, he made the most of it.

'I was a sprinter and used to run the 200m and the 400m when I was younger and so this summer I paid back to that child whose dream it was to be at the Olympics,' he says.

And to continue in the spirit of what might have been, he could have missed out on a career as a singer completely if he'd continued to play football: 'I always sang – I was a choir soloist in my elementary school, in middle school at 14 I was serenading girls with my friends, and I sang at big ceremonies in my home city of Morelia. But I loved athletics, I loved football and was part of a soccer team. Singing rehearsals sometimes took place at the same time as soccer practice, and one day the director of the choir told me that I had to make a decision. I chose football, and was still doing athletics, so he asked me to leave the choir.'

But then at 18 Germán's mother persuaded him to reconsider. He loved music and was having problems focusing at regular school, so she suggested he audition for the Conservatorio de las Rosas in Morelia. When he took up his place there he realised he was a good student – music and the development of his voice became paramount – and he hasn't looked back. He went on to study as a first generation student at the Sinaloa Opera Studio in Sinaloa, Mexico and briefly at the National Conservatory of Music in Mexico City before joining the Centre de Perfeccionament Plácido Domingo in Valencia,

Spain, where he made his European debut (as Lescaut in *Manon Lescaut*, conducted by Domingo).

Music has, however, always been part of his life. 'Growing up in Mexico it was literally impossible to ever be far from music,' Germán says. 'It's integral at every single event, even when people die, we sing. I sang with one of my aunts at the graveyard after my grandma died. The way Mexican families celebrate is often by gathering together and singing, and if there's tequila it becomes something of a ritual! This is where I learnt my first songs, and the first people I heard singing out loud were my father's brothers and my mother's cousins.'

But at home, as music and singing is part of everyone's lives Germán was not sure he could make a career out of it. 'While studying music in Mexico I learnt so much and discovered an amazing world of art, but honestly I never considered it as a job somehow,' he says. 'It wasn't until I travelled to Valencia, and was admitted onto their programme with a full scholarship that things got serious.'

In 2019 he joined the ensemble at Staatsoper Hannover. 'After my struggles, I felt like something very important was happening, finally I was in Germany singing principal roles for their state theatre [including Don Giovanni, Escamillo/*Carmen*, Figaro/*Il barbiere di Siviglia* and Anthony/*Sweeney Todd*] – it was a huge responsibility and I was more than ready for it, it was amazing! It was great for my voice, it raised my profile and professional capacity massively,' he adds.

'Being part of an ensemble pushes you to be in shape all the time – physically and vocally. You have a show at night and the next morning you have an orchestra rehearsal for another show or another style of music with a different team,



and you are learning all of the time. These days my ambitions are fulfilled more now that I am a freelance singer, but I sometimes miss being part of the ensemble, being part of that family.'

Germán auditioned for Glyndebourne and debuted as Count Almaviva in the 2022 Festival production of *Le nozze di Figaro*, while still a member of the ensemble in Hannover – a breakthrough production for him and an experience he really enjoyed.

This was followed by Festival 2024 and Germán making his role debut as Danilo in *The Merry Widow*. 'Working with director Cal McCrystal – all the jokes, the choreography and those amazing costumes – was such a dream for me, he adds effusively. 'And I love comedy. We had six weeks of rehearsals in which we built the characters and we laughed so much. I also enjoyed the physicality of the role. Cal showed me how to fall down the stairs night after night. I had the chance to improvise, to be silly, to have fun. It was really hard to hang Danilo's costume up for the last time.'

Germán returns this year in Annabel Arden's production of *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, singing the role of Figaro. '*Largo al factotum*', Figaro's famous aria, was his original audition piece for Pål Moe, Glyndebourne's casting consultant. 'It is one of my favourite roles; it is one of the hardest pieces

in the repertoire for a baritone. It is difficult to sing; the energy and stamina that it requires is very different to that required for other roles. You have to balance singing it properly, with clear diction, while acting naturally in a convincing way.

'When you add in the super fast tempo that many directors like to add to the role it's like catching a wave ridden by crazy unicorns jumping all over the place one after another, dropping your baggage with all you knew and breathing in the notes that Rossini wrote and giving your soul to the role. You cannot sing it like a robot, I learnt at the conservatory to keep it still and steady, focusing on technique but in an actual performance it's not like that. There are all kinds of other stuff you have to do on stage – running, dancing, carrying someone, climbing stairs or riding a motorcycle as I've done in the past – while singing it.

'I love this role, this will be my fifth time as Figaro and I think singing it at Glyndebourne is going to be a pinnacle for me, it is the best role I can perform at the moment and I'm just going to pour all my love into it.' ●

Watch Germán perform 'Si Algún Ser' by Manuel Maria Ponce in the Organ Room at glyndebourne.com/germanolvera

Karen is Glyndebourne's Head of Content

TABLE SETTING

Paul Brown tells *Karen Anderson* how Glyndebourne's highly-skilled props workshop created the banquet table in *Saul*.

Raven. A taxidermied raven originally used in *Pelléas et Mélisande* (Festival, 1999).

Stag. One of four made for *Hippolyte et Aricie* (Festival, 2013). A foam body with articulated limbs.

Boar. The first piece we made. A taxidermied head from *The Fairy Queen* (Festival, 2009) atop a foam body.

Swan. One of two originally made for *Falstaff* (Festival, 2009).

Giant fish. Carved from polystyrene and Plastazote.



Ahead of staging *Saul* for the first time in 2015, the props workshop had a huge task on its hands. Working with the designer Katrin Lea Tag they created some singular stylised food pieces and placed them on a table. 'Director Barrie Kosky then dragged everything together into one big pile,' says Paul Brown, Head of Props & Scenic Workshops, 'and basically said "I want everything you've made but loads more of it". The task was set to create a huge banquet table that was opulent, luscious and abundant. Inspired by the paintings of Caravaggio, *The Cook*, *The Thief, His Wife & Her Lover*, photographs by Helen Sobiralski, the 'snake surprise' from *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* plus more – they got to work.

'There was so much energy in the workshop working on this project: we multiplied what we'd already made, created new pieces, then looked to reuse props from shows no longer in our repertoire,' adds Paul. 'We elevated the flowers and foliage by hanging them on structures fabricated from cardboard tubes and chicken wire. Everything is its own "island" on the table, stuck down for the quick scene change. It was brilliant fun and a real creative challenge. It's not every day you get to create a sumptuous, Baroque still life.'

Pumpkin. Carved from polystyrene.

Peacock. A taxidermied peacock.

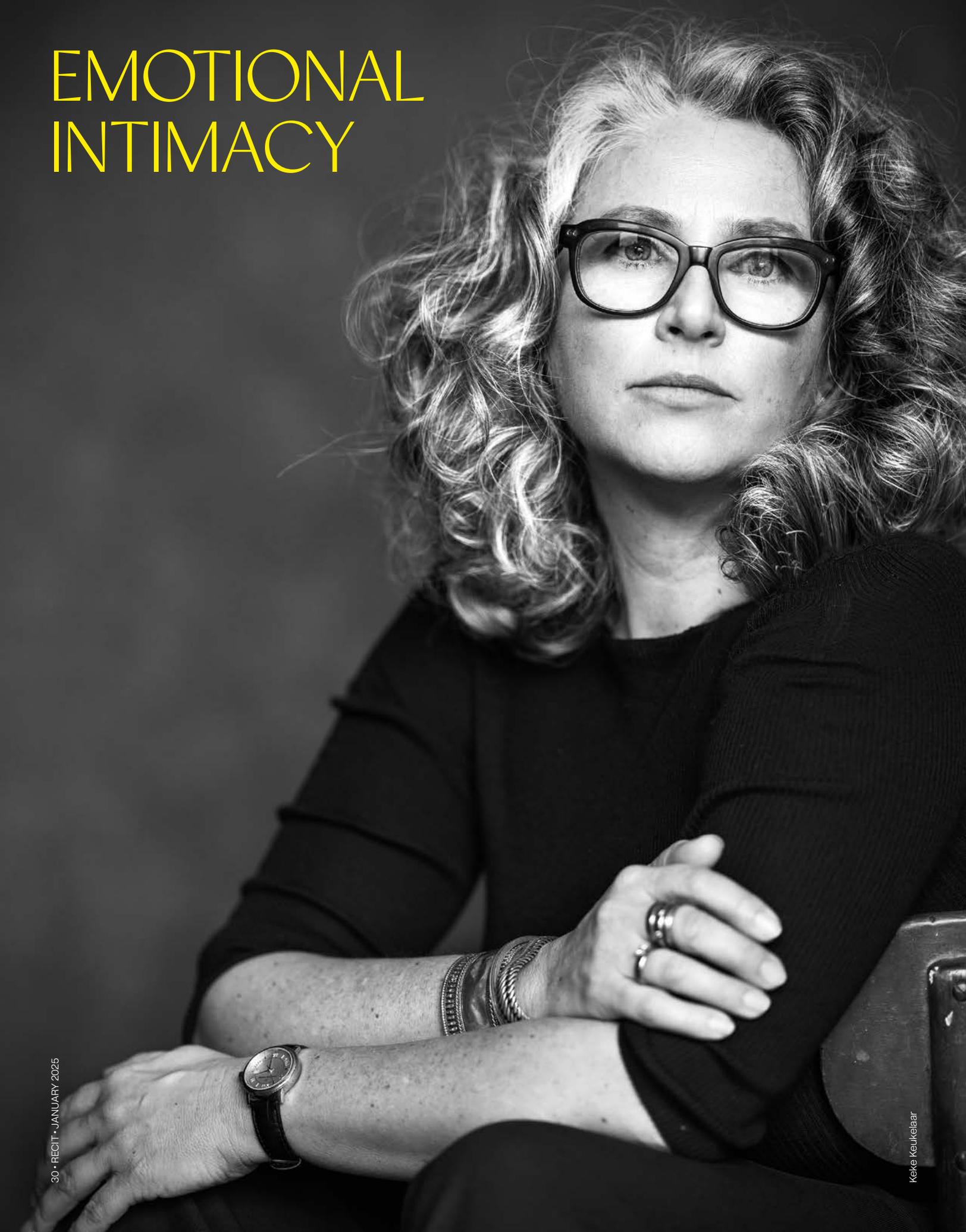
Flowers. Artificial silk. Towers are approx 6' in height built around a cardboard tube.

Fish. Some of over 3,000 made by the props department for *Betrothal in a Monastery* (Festival, 2006).

Head of Goliath. Sculpted and cast by the props department.

Tablecloths. Four tables with four tablecloths. Each tablecloth is 5.5m long x 3.7m wide.

EMOTIONAL INTIMACY



Making her UK debut **Jetske Mijnsen**, directing her first Wagner opera, looks forward to zooming into the emotional depths of Glyndebourne's first ever production of *Parsifal*, as *Alexandra Coghlan* finds out.

You could spend a lifetime thinking and reading about *Parsifal*. Wagner's final opera has inspired as much debate, philosophy and interpretation as any work of Western art. It's fascinating, knotty, often fiercely fought stuff, but all that thinking does rather get in the way of the other side of this extraordinary piece: feeling.

Because, make no mistake, the experience of seeing *Parsifal* in the theatre is anything but an intellectual exercise. It's a piece you feel long before you start to understand it, an emotional drama that speaks directly, instinctively. But how?

For director Jetske Mijnsen it all starts with the opera's themes: big, essential, uncomfortable questions that make us feel, whether we want to or not. 'I think everyone who approaches *Parsifal* is finding his or her own stories in the work Wagner gave us,' she says. 'But for me it's a highly emotional piece that tells me so much about the essence of life – death – and how we feel about it.'

'I believe this opera can comfort us, but also tell us things we don't want to talk about, things that in our society we try to avoid. My desire as a director is to zoom into those emotional depths, into the humanity of the piece.'

In *Parsifal* we meet a wounded man (Amfortas) who is desperate to die. His suffering, but more importantly the compassion of the knight Parsifal, are absolutely at the centre of the drama. For critic and *The Wagner Journal* editor Barry Millington, that's the emotional crux of the piece, the encounter which allows us 'to engage with the work on a human as well as on a spiritual level'.

We find humanity too in Wagner's portrayal of doomed, unresolvable love (the ties that bind Amfortas and Kundry) as well as in the anger, the pathos and tension of the father-son relationship between Titurel and Amfortas: a father 'with high expectations' and a son who 'cannot live up to them,' in Mijnsen's view.

It's easy to talk in abstractions when it comes to *Parsifal*. But this is a drama of characters, not just symbols: the innocent Parsifal, who must look suffering and deception in the eye and choose the right path; the flawed Amfortas who succumbed to temptation and pays the highest possible price; even Klingsor, who castrates himself in a failed attempt to achieve purity.

For Mijnsen it's the figure of Kundry – the seductress condemned to wander the world eternally for laughing at Christ on the Cross, a figure the great soprano Waltraud Meier once described as 'unfathomable and unsolvable' – who intrigues. 'She's a woman between two men – Klingsor and Amfortas,' Mijnsen says. 'And that defines her. Her guilt defines her.'

But when we talk about the emotional power of *Parsifal*, it's the music most often that we point to. For Millington it's an 'exquisitely orchestrated' score that's 'on a level of sublimity not attained elsewhere, even by Wagner'. For a composer associated with big, loud statements, Wagner achieves a startling intimacy in an opera that largely unfolds in monologues and dialogues. The orchestral textures have a transparency, a delicacy, a sheen, often suspended like a cloud or halo around the voices. This is a drama that plays out inwardly, a subtle play of shifting motives, alliances and emotions, rather than a drama of action.

Millington points to the Good Friday music in Act III as the opera's emotional peak. 'Was there ever a more poignant expression of compassionate suffering?' Here, conjured in the most diaphanous strings, oboe, flute and the softest warmth of brass, all of nature (the Knight Gurnemanz tells the astonished Parsifal) is transformed by the holy magic of Good Friday. The motifs that make up the opera's familiar musical landscape come into new focus, suddenly backlit, transfigured.

The Prelude to *Parsifal* has always moved Mijnsen 'to tears,' even before she could work out why. Groping its way, unsteadily at first in that strange, seemingly pulse-less opening phrase, towards transcendent, radiant resolution, the music shimmers with a promise we won't fully understand until the opera's close. But between the ravishing 'Dresden Amen' (the distinctively harmonised rising scale Wagner here adopts to symbolise the Grail), and the solemnity of the brass chorale, we feel the same yearning pull as the Grail Knights.

And perhaps that's the key to *Parsifal*'s emotional drama: it plays out in us as listeners as much as it does on stage. This isn't, after all, an opera but a 'Festival Play for the Consecration of the Stage,' according to Wagner: a musical ritual that casts us as silent acolytes, celebrants and congregation. ●

Alexandra is Glyndebourne's Opera Specialist

DOUBLE BASS

John Tomlinson will be singing two roles in Festival 2025: Titurel in *Parsifal* and Dikój in *Káťa Kabanová*. **Joe Fuller** caught up with him.

Richard Hubert Smith



John Tomlinson (Ghost of Old Hamlet) with Allan Clayton (Hamlet), *Hamlet*, Festival 2017

Have you performed as Dikój before?

It will be my first time singing the role. I prepared for it at the Met but then 2020 came, Covid erupted, and it was cancelled. Then I was working towards performances with Simon Rattle in 2023. I had the most wonderful three days rehearsing at the Barbican, and then I went down with Covid.

It's a powerful character. He's a big personality and a reactionary influence in this rather cloistered, walled-in town where the story takes place.

How will the new *Parsifal* differ from previous productions?

Jetske [Mijnssen, *Parsifal* director] wants Titurel acting on stage for almost the whole of the first Act, which is unprecedented, because traditionally, the role consists of five minutes of singing off-stage.

I have a long history of singing Wagner parts over the past 40 years, and they wanted somebody who has *Parsifal* running through their veins to embody the role.

I was very impressed after looking at Jetske's website, because all of the images from her productions are about people, characters, the human condition... it's not about stage effects or

glitzy superficiality. That's the way I like to work; that's what I've always loved about opera. We had a very good discussion about the role, so I'm really happy to take on this rather unusual task of being on stage for such a long period.

The conductor for both shows will be Glyndebourne's Music Director, Robin Ticciati. Have you worked with Robin before?

I know Robin well from way back in 2005, in Salzburg, when he was Simon Rattle's assistant. We have done various performances together in concert but I don't think we've ever worked on an opera production together. I look forward very much to working with him again.

What are some of your favourite memories of working at Glyndebourne?

I'm 78 years old; I've been singing professionally since 1971, so I'm a bit of an old stager. The first role I ever did professionally was on the Glyndebourne Tour in 1971, as the Priest and Armed Man in *The Magic Flute* at the Royal Court Theatre in Liverpool. I remember the Glyndebourne Chorus days with great affection. I was learning so much from so many very gifted people: conductors, directors, music staff and so on.

I think I've only sung at Glyndebourne for perhaps six years over the last 50 years, because I was in Bayreuth for 18 years singing the Wagner repertoire every summer. There was a 25-year gap between 1974 [as Silvano in *La Callisto*] and 1999 [as Golaud in *Pelléas et Mélisande*]. When I came back, Barbie [Burrows, wig manager at Glyndebourne in 1999] still had my measurements from 1974. The circumference of my head was one inch bigger, God knows why!

My last appearance on the Glyndebourne stage was in 2017: Brett Dean's triumphant *Hamlet*. Since then it's been my pleasure to be on the audience side of the footlights on many occasions. It's always a pleasure to come into that building; the best way to spend an evening. ●

Joe is Glyndebourne's Publications Editor

FORMATIVE YEARS

Conductor **Sian Edwards** and mezzo-soprano **Susan Bickley** worked together on the 1988 touring production of *Káťa Kabanová*. Both return this summer. They share their memories with *Andrew Batty*.

Nikolaus Lehnhoff's production of *Káťa Kabanová* debuted in our 1988 Festival to great acclaim. The production's turn-of-the-century costumes sharply contrasted with its vivid sets and backdrop, hinting at the repressed emotions simmering beneath the surface of its characters. When the opera returned later the same year, it followed the pattern of the Tour performances in offering opportunities to upcoming artists, and among the company were conductor Sian Edwards and mezzo-soprano Susan Bickley.

Sian felt challenged by the piece: 'Initially, as a very young conductor, I found *Káťa* absolutely wonderful and very difficult all at once. The style and idiom were completely new to me, but Nikolaus Lehnhoff's production was so beautiful and so compelling.

'Working with Sue was very special; she was incredibly generous and kind,' recalls Sian. Susan also has fond memories of working on the production. 'Both Sian, a calm, inspirational, incisive conductor, and [revival director] Stephen Lawless were endlessly helpful, patient, instructive, creative and trusting and I'm absolutely sure their support enabled me to give a decent performance that started a connection with Glyndebourne that went on for many years. The production was a turning point for me, I didn't have a strong background of working in opera, and I had never even seen or heard a Janáček opera before that.'

Both Sian and Susan went on to highly distinguished careers with numerous returns to Glyndebourne over the years (both were last at Glyndebourne in 2016 – Sian conducted the youth opera *Nothing*, and Susan sang Marcellina in *Le nozze di Figaro*). In Festival 2025 Susan reprises the role of Kabanicha, Káťa's fearsome mother-in-law, the same part she sang back in 1988. 'She despises the woman her weak and ineffectual son has chosen to marry and yet is privately intimidated by the free spirit this young woman possesses. So she bullies her.' This is a role that Susan has made her own: 'I have been fortunate to be involved in productions by Nikolaus Lehnhoff, Götz Friedrich, David Alden and Richard

Guy Gravett



Susan Bickley (Kabanicha), *Káťa Kabanová*, Glyndebourne Tour, 1988

Sam Stephenson



Sian Edwards in rehearsal for *Nothing*, Glyndebourne Youth Opera, 2016

Jones, and each different approach has given me new ideas and new clues on how to play this seriously horrid woman! I look forward to finding even more aspects of her character in Damiano Michieletto's production this year.'

Sian will be conducting the revival of *Falstaff*. 'Verdi often manages to have three strands of the story going on simultaneously, and the music is almost invariably fast-moving, so for all of us (singers, conductor, orchestra) getting these sections to stay together with the exciting action of Richard Jones' production will take some practice,' she enthuses. 'On the other hand, finding the pathos when Falstaff realises he's been made a fool of is such a sudden contrast and change of tone: I'm looking forward to working with Renato Girolami (*Falstaff*) to find this special moment.'

Both artists say there is something special about working at Glyndebourne. 'The amount of preparation and rehearsal time is second to none,' says Susan. Sian adds that she is 'hugely looking forward to the kind of intense, detailed work that rehearsing at Glyndebourne allows.' ●

Andrew is Glyndebourne's Digital Content Editor

STAGING THE RAILWAY CHILDREN

Composer **Mark-Anthony Turnage** and librettist **Rachael Hewer** met up with **Joe Fuller** to talk about *The Railway Children* – their new opera premiering in Glyndebourne’s 2025 Autumn Season.

‘The imagery, for me, belongs on stage. People would be asking for their money back if the waving of the red flag to stop the train wasn’t in the opera! I think that this is *The Railway Children* that E Nesbit would have written in 2025.’

Librettist Rachael Hewer is discussing why she and composer Mark-Anthony Turnage are premiering *The Railway Children* as a new opera at Glyndebourne in autumn 2025. Rachael is keen to ‘respect the integrity’ of Nesbit’s original 1905 book, while also offering something different for contemporary audiences. In the popular 1970 film version, for example, the mother’s story centres on looking after the children and then falling ill, but her role in the new opera is greatly expanded. ‘She forgets about the kids, basically, in ours,’ says Rachael. ‘It is all about fighting for justice at any cost, rather than being sickly in bed.’ Rachael’s reimagined version sees the mother (unnamed in the original book but called Cathy in this adaptation) and her fellow campaigner Yolanda investigate government corruption.

‘I found that certain things are quite enigmatic in the book and the film – like what the father does – so we have pushed the spy dissident theme much more,’ says Mark-Anthony. Rachael has filled in some of the gaps relating to why the father has been imprisoned, and the audience can expect much more espionage (à la *All The President’s Men*) than in the original film.

The eponymous children will be performed by adults: Bobbie and Phyllis by sopranos and Peter, by a tenor. Cathy and Yolanda will be performed by mezzo-sopranos; Perks by a tenor; and the father and ‘old gentleman’ characters both by bass-baritones.

The theme of English politeness in the film – epitomised by stiff upper lips stifling unspoken pain, and the children’s calm response after discovering the truth about their father’s imprisonment – might surprise modern viewers, and could feel anachronistic in 2025. Creating a new libretto for *The Railway Children* gives Rachael a platform for the characters to have more agency. ‘It’s very English how all these things are just sort of brushed over and skated past in the film,’ agrees Rachael. ‘Our version looks at the impact that all of that has on Bobbie, particularly. So rather than her saying: “Gosh, wasn’t that difficult? Home for tea and cakes?,” instead she’s going: “I didn’t want to be a hero! What is going on? Why is no one telling me the truth?!”’

The first lockdown in 2020 offered a rare opportunity for a swifter collaboration, due to an unexpected clearing of busy diaries. ‘We needed something to create, cultivate, and to hold on to,’ says Rachael. ‘And we thought, if we do return to the life that we used to know, what are people going to be looking for? *The Railway Children* felt like a good fit because it’s very familiar to all generations.’

‘I don’t know when else you would ever be able to work like that, as a two-person writing team,’ says Mark-Anthony. ‘If I wanted some lines to be slightly longer, because it would make more sense musically, I could get Rachael to do that straight away. It took so much less time to make because all those little changes might normally take days. There were no distractions at all: it was very peaceful.’



'The way a lot of people write for the voice in contemporary music, where it leaps about, means that you don't hear half the words,' says Mark-Anthony. The next stage in the production process was a series of workshops in London to hear how the libretto sounded when sung live, partly to ensure there was 'enough room for the words to be heard,' he continues. Both Rachael and Mark-Anthony are keen for the libretto – mostly written in English but including some French and Russian – to be clearly discernible, without the audience relying on supertitles.

Rachael, meanwhile, spends a lot of time thinking about commas. 'I only know things like this due to being in opera rehearsal rooms. Commas are where singers *breathe*. If they're working up to a big sustained vowel or word, they've got to prepare for that and breathe before it somewhere. It's very different to writing a play or a novel.'

Rachael and Mark-Anthony have worked separately on shows at English National Opera, the Royal Ballet and Opera, and many more. The pair collaborated on *Silenced*, a song cycle on the life of Alexander Litvinenko performed by Allan Clayton in 2021 – Rachael wrote two poems featuring Litvinenko's own words and Mark-Anthony composed the music – but *The Railway Children* is the first opera they have created together.

It will also be the first Mark-Anthony Turnage work performed at Glyndebourne, after the composer's *Festen* opens at the Royal Opera House in February. Rachael has worked at Glyndebourne since 2015, beginning as staff director for *Don Pasquale* for Tour 2015, then working as assistant director on six productions, most recently on *Semele* in Festival 2023. ▶

'I owe everything professionally to Glyndebourne, pretty much,' says Rachael. Both envisioned *The Railway Children* being performed at Glyndebourne while creating the opera. 'This will work really well on that stage,' says Mark-Anthony, 'and Rachael's had such a great time at Glyndebourne. There is an amazing friendliness and family feeling there.'

During October 2024 a further week of workshops took place at Glyndebourne to hone the piece, with Mark-Anthony inviting staff to a run-through, with the note 'this is a Glyndebourne project and everyone should feel welcome and included in its creation'.

'I swear by workshops,' he says. 'Some composers write their orchestral piece, and then try to do the same thing for the theatre, not realising it's completely different. In the workshops we're quite often suggesting cuts. I might have 20 bars which might be the best bit in the whole thing. And it goes...' He flicks his hand in a shooing gesture to

illustrate the loss of the best bit. 'I have the same thing, with a really nice rhyme,' sighs Rachael.

'But you have to be able to do that,' Mark-Anthony responds. 'You need an instinct for what works and what doesn't work. You get that more with musicals: you throw out a whole number if it doesn't work in the show. It's very healthy.' 'We trust each other enough to be able to go: it's brilliant... but no,' says Rachael.

'Being in an opera rehearsal room for 10 or 11 months of the year, for 15 years, exposes you to a lot of what works, what doesn't work, a lot of what people find challenging, difficult, easy, rewarding,' Rachael continues. 'We are going back, making it better: more coherent, articulate, economical, theatrical, imaginative, creative. This is how we make a really good, original opera.' ●

Joe is Glyndebourne's Publications Editor



Edward Hawkins, Elizabeth Lynch, Jonathan Berman and Harry Rylance in a workshop at Glyndebourne, October 2024

NEW LEGACY AMBASSADOR

Baritone **Thomas Allen** is a new ambassador for the John Christie Society. He talked to *Karen Anderson* about his new role.

'I thought I'd hung up my vocal cords at the end of 2019,' says Thomas Allen when talking about his retirement from the stage, 'but then the offer of Baron Zeta was too good to resist!' Having enjoyed a hugely successful run of *The Merry Widow* at Glyndebourne last summer, he announced his 'final' retirement on stage after the last performance, shortly before his 80th birthday. 'I've no idea whether I'll be tempted back by something in the future. I feel that if I were I'd have to go through the equivalent of returning the presents after a cancelled wedding,' he adds with mirth. 'The buzz from being on stage is hard to give up... but I've lots of other things in my life that keep my balance. I've done lots of drawing and painting since I stopped in 2019, and I have a workshop where I build ship models, replicas mostly of Nelson's Navy – the young lad is still alive and kicking in me!'

Which is good to know as Thomas Allen's involvement with Glyndebourne is set to continue for many years to come as he becomes an ambassador for the John Christie Society (JCS).

The JCS is Glyndebourne's legacy society, which was created in 2009 and currently numbers about 300 legacy pledgers. Those leaving a gift to Glyndebourne in their will help ensure Glyndebourne's continued excellence on the world opera stage and nurture future generations of artists and audiences. Thomas Allen joins Felicity Lott, who has been an ambassador for the JCS since 2018.

'My continued connection through the John Christie Society is a pleasure for me,' Thomas notes. 'I visited the Festival first in 1968 to see a dress rehearsal of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, little thinking I'd be a member of the Chorus the following year. That was the beginning of a long association and the accumulation of so many special memories – of rehearsals, performances and the very special people who came and went in that time. Hopefully those memories and that knowledge will be useful to me in my role as ambassador.'

Philanthropic giving is incredibly important to all arts organisations. 'Where would we be without the generosity of so many individuals and companies,



Thomas Allen (Baron Mirko Zeta) with Tom Edden (Njegus) backstage, *The Merry Widow*, Festival 2024

who recognise the relevance and importance of what it is we do in the theatre?', he asks. 'George [Christie] always took so much pride in announcing the fact that Glyndebourne had flourished for so many years without state assistance for the Festival. Gus, I'm sure, makes the same boast. With a diminution of arts subjects in our schools, there is inevitably a shortfall later in a person's life, in the take-up of musical and theatrical careers. Hopefully, that might change, but until that time philanthropy has become more and more essential to our survival.

'I look forward to helping Glyndebourne in any way I can. On top of that it's an opportunity to spend some time with Flott [Felicity Lott]. We've known one another for many years and done so much work together. We shall have no difficulty in picking up the reins once more.' ●

In spring 2025 Glyndebourne will be holding a legacy discovery event in London and anyone interested in finding out more about leaving a legacy to Glyndebourne can register their interest via glyndebourne.com/legacy.

Karen is Glyndebourne's Head of Content

MESSEL RETROSPECTIVE

Our Festival 2025 exhibition will focus on Oliver Messel as *William Clarke* explains.



Oliver Messel (1904-1978) was one of the most successful theatre designers in Britain and worked at Glyndebourne throughout the 1940s and 50s during the height of his popularity. His distinctive, individualised aesthetic combines Baroque and Rococo styles with modernist sensibility drawn from 17th- and 18th-century art and architecture. Those who attended a production of *The Merry Widow* during Festival 2024 will have seen some of Messel's influence in the set and costume designs by Gary McCann.

Messel came to Glyndebourne in 1946 to redesign the old theatre's proscenium arch and in 1950 to design a new production of Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos* which premiered at the Edinburgh Festival that year. He worked with Glyndebourne until 1965 designing nine productions including *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. Holding widespread influence at Glyndebourne he helped found the Membership scheme in 1951 and the Festival Programme Book, which launched in 1952 with a front cover design by Messel himself.

As part of the exhibition we will be presenting a selection of Messel's works including costumes, props, designs, photographs and correspondence, that span and highlight his significant time at Glyndebourne. Shown alongside this will be contemporary artistic responses and influences by artists and designers currently working between the two disciplines today, including work by Pablo Bronstein and Luke Edward Hall.

Last year Glyndebourne realised one of its most extensive and ambitious series of visual arts exhibitions to date. We welcomed pioneering British artist Conrad Shawcross and he presented exciting and poignant artwork across three areas on site. His nine monumental outdoor sculptures will remain on the Courtyard Lawn until September 2025, allowing returning visitors to observe the changing features of these works as they become more distressed in appearance over time.

In 2024 we also presented an exhibition of posters to mark Glyndebourne's 90th anniversary. These reflected both our rich history of collaboration and design and newly commissioned posters by some of the most prominent artists working in contemporary art today. These are now available online at glyndebourne.com/90thposters. ●

William was Glyndebourne's Curator of Exhibitions & Events (maternity cover) during 2024.

Oliver Messel's silver rose from *Der Rosenkavalier*, Festival 1959. Photo: Felix Reitze de la Haye

BRINGING DESIGNS BACK HOME

As we look forward to celebrating our centenary in 2034 we are launching an appeal for original stage and costume designs, that are now held in private collections, to be returned to Glyndebourne, writes *Philip Boot*.

Numerous stage designs from Glyndebourne were sold between the 1950s and 80s to audience members, many of which have since remained in private ownership. We are now appealing to anyone with an original stage design, whether set, prop or costume to consider gifting it to our permanent collection.

We hope, through generous gifts, to secure these works as part of our internationally significant theatre collection at Glyndebourne. We are in a unique position to preserve these works, which will allow us to present our rich and unique history in new and exciting ways, through exhibitions, online and in print, allowing our audiences and the communities we serve a deeper understanding of our incredible 90+ year history, whilst building upon the passion collectors and supporters have for these stage designs.

Glyndebourne's collection of artworks include original stage designs, prints, portraits of individuals significant to our history, and familiar landscapes of the theatre, gardens and the surrounding South Downs. With over 600 works from significant stage designers such as Oliver Messel, Rosemary Vercoe, Hildegard Bechtler, John Bury, Sue Blane, Caspar Neher and Christopher Oram, to contemporary artists including David Hockney, Mary Fedden, Norman Ackroyd, Maggi Hambling and Tom Hammick, our collection was founded by generous gifts from Glyndebourne Festival Society members, members of the public, artists and designers.

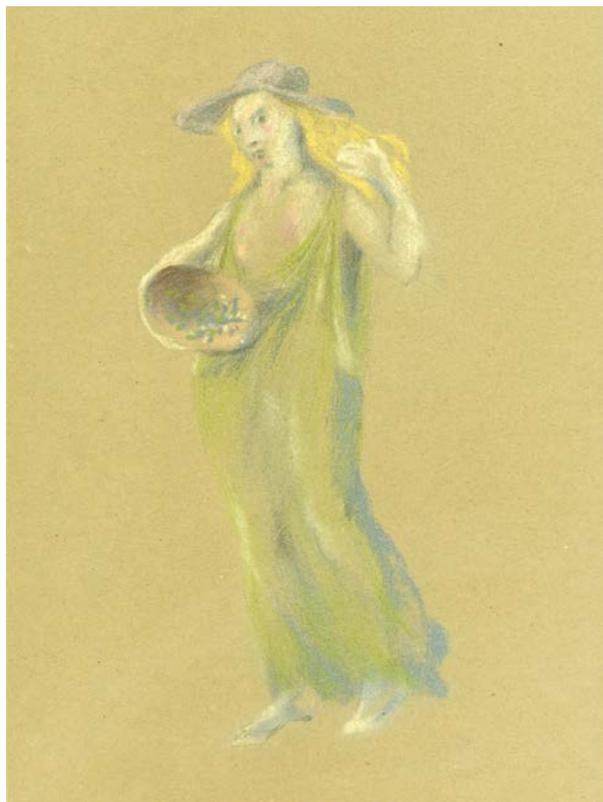
Gifts to the Glyndebourne archive include designs from two productions by Elizabeth Bury, a costume design by Leslie Hurry from 1951's *La forza del destino*, and an original design

for the character of Don Geronio from the 1970 production of *Il turco in Italia* by Emanuele Luzzati. These generous gifts have helped us showcase and build a better understanding of the work of some of the world's greatest stage designers and have opened new avenues for researchers to explore by granting access to them.

Having these works back in the collection is not only incredibly appreciated, but is of significant value to us. Without the gift of Hurry's 1951 *La forza del destino* design we would never have known that the character was dressed in a teal-coloured jacket with crimson as all of our photographs for this production are black and white. By acquiring Elizabeth Bury's work, we strengthen our collection of designs by female designers working at Glyndebourne. The addition of Luzzati's design means that we now hold one the largest collections of his work in the world. Each and every design unlocks a plethora of information which helps us learn more about our past productions and enables us to tell incredible stories. It also means that more people will enjoy and experience these as Glyndebourne heads towards its second century.

If you wish to gift an original Glyndebourne stage design to our collection, or have an initial chat about it, please contact phil.boot@glyndebourne.com. ●

Philip is Glyndebourne's Archivist



Design for Peasant Chorus Act I Scene 1, Act II Scene 3 from *Orfeo ed Euridice* by Elizabeth Bury, 1982. Presented by Bertil and Siv Nyström



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