

 *e* Orchestra of the
Age of Enlightenment

7pm
Wednesday 27 March
Queen Elizabeth Hall

B **A**
Easter Oratorio
C **H**

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CENTRE**
RESIDENT

ENLIGHT

**"What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from."**

From *Four Quartets* by TS Eliot

Welcome to our 2023 / 24 season here at the Southbank Centre.

TS Eliot presents us with the conundrum of progress. How do ideas evolve, where do we continue, where do we originate? If it is true that you can hear the foundation of Bach, the great building blocks of western music, in the sound of Mendelssohn, can't you also hear the sparkling innovation in Mozart that announces the genius of later generations? In the risk-taking dissonances and melodic invention of Purcell, that gives his words a brilliant musical drama, don't we find the revolutionary tinder that inflames the subversive settings of Mozart's operas, *The Marriage of Figaro* and *The Magic Flute*? What do we make of our tidy system of catalogues, of order, of convenient bundling into artistic periods – a history we like to describe as passing from 'medieval' to 'romantic' – when truth is repeatedly less convenient; when the *Christmas Oratorio*, Bach in his stylistic prime, is just 25 years earlier than Haydn's first symphony, no less a statement of artistic assurance; when Mendelssohn's third symphony was really his last. If you find all of this puzzling, if not downright confusing, then you have come to the right place. So do we.

ENMENT

*Beginnings and endings
2023 / 24 Season*

Music is always part of a story. It might be that of a composer, the musicians performing it, or the audience absorbing it. It can be part of a collective chronicle or individual memories. It can hold the saga of a nation. In that sense we are always at the end, looking back.

The stories come alive when we begin to experience the music and curiosity drives us to begin our own journey. In our 2023 / 24 season of concerts at the Southbank Centre it is that desire to untangle the beginnings and endings – and all the bits in the middle – that has shaped our musical choices.

Thank you for joining with us to puzzle together this magnificent season.

It is a season built, of course, around the remarkable musicians of the OAE working with great artistic veterans, the guardians of the future and inspiring new generation talent. But the final, and most important, piece of the jigsaw is YOU. By being here in the audience today you have made the choice to support artistic endeavour, to sustain it and to be part of the story.

Bravo.

Season identity by Hannah Yates.

Introduction

Peter Whelan

Bach's Easter Oratorio is a funny fish in many ways – a joyous and somewhat overlooked gem amidst his better-known works. With its spirited melodies and accessible style, it's a testament to Bach's ingenuity, having undergone several revisions before reaching its final form. This work offers a stark contrast to the sombre tones of the St John Passion, which the congregation would have heard just days before. Imagine the shift: from solemn reflection to the startling fanfare of trumpets, drums, and oboes! In essence, the Easter Oratorio unfolds as a musical dance suite, vividly narrating the Easter story.

This oratorio holds a special place in my heart. It traces a journey from darkness into light, filled with profound questions along the way. Experiencing the Easter Oratorio within a community of music lovers offers a moment of collective reflection, where music invites us to explore deeper possibilities. Throughout the work, we witness the gradual transformation of sorrow into radiant joy. The glorious culminating gigue would have uplifted the congregation in Bach's time – and our performance today aspires to carry that spirit forth, bringing lightness to your hearts in the days to come.

There will be a pre-concert talk, Peter Whelan in conversation with Hannah French, at 6.00pm in the Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall Foyer.

Salty tears and laughter

Joanna Wyld explores Bach's Easter works



St. Thomas Church and School in Leipzig, 1723 (engraving) Bridgeman Images

Anyone who has experienced the drama of Holy Week services – the immersive theatricality of Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday – will know that Easter Sunday can feel (whisper it) a little less exciting by comparison. Theologically, it is the climax: Christ is risen. But the concept of the resurrection is hard for us as human beings to relate to – we may engage with it cerebrally and spiritually, but it can seem remote compared with the visceral and emotional gut-punch of the Passion story.

Bach's Easter Oratorio has sometimes suffered from the same contrast: the intense human suffering of the Passion accounts famously inspired his extraordinarily moving St John and St Matthew Passions, next to which the Easter Oratorio has sometimes, unjustly, been regarded as a poor relation. This is not helped by the fact that the Easter work is one of only three oratorios produced by Bach, and while the Ascension Oratorio is on a similar scale, the six cantatas of the Christmas Oratorio represent an ambitious and dazzling achievement. The Easter Oratorio has therefore been at risk of being eclipsed by its flashier counterparts; Bach a victim of his own success in producing such consistently great music. Yet he draws us into this work by emphasising, as with those other pieces, the human perspective – focusing on the emotions of our protagonists as they hurry to the empty tomb – all the while illuminating the contrasts between Passiontide and Easter, the focal point of the Lutheran liturgical year: light after darkness; profound depth after drama; something other-worldly that we cannot fully grasp but can strive towards; a sense of renewal and, above all, joy.

It was in 1723 that Bach was appointed Director of Music in Leipzig and Cantor of the St Thomas Boys Choir, made up of boys from the city's Thomasschule and affiliated with the Thomaskirche. Despite an often tense relationship with the Leipzig authorities, Bach remained in the post until his death in 1750. It seems unfathomable

now, but the consistory (church council) treated Bach as a nobody; meanwhile he would probably have regarded the appointment as a step down from his previous position in Cöthen, and he had little respect for his new employers.

In 1729, when the school's headmaster died, grievances about Bach were voiced, and in the following year he retaliated with irritations of his own, specifically relating to the forces required for a decent musical establishment: 'A well-appointed church music requires vocalists and instrumentalists... Every musical choir should contain at least three sopranos, three altos, three tenors, and as many basses'. He was frustrated by the effect the limitations of his Leipzig forces had on performance standards: '... if I should mention the music of the Holy Days (on which I must supply both the principal churches with music), the deficiency of indispensable players will show even more clearly'.

Bach also lamented the lack of flexibility in adapting to musical innovations: '... the state of music is quite different from what it was, since our artistry has increased very much and the taste has changed astonishingly, and accordingly the former style of music no longer seems to please our ears, considerable help is therefore all the more needed to choose and appoint such musicians as will satisfy the present musical taste, master the new kinds of music, and thus be in a position to do justice to the composer and his work.'

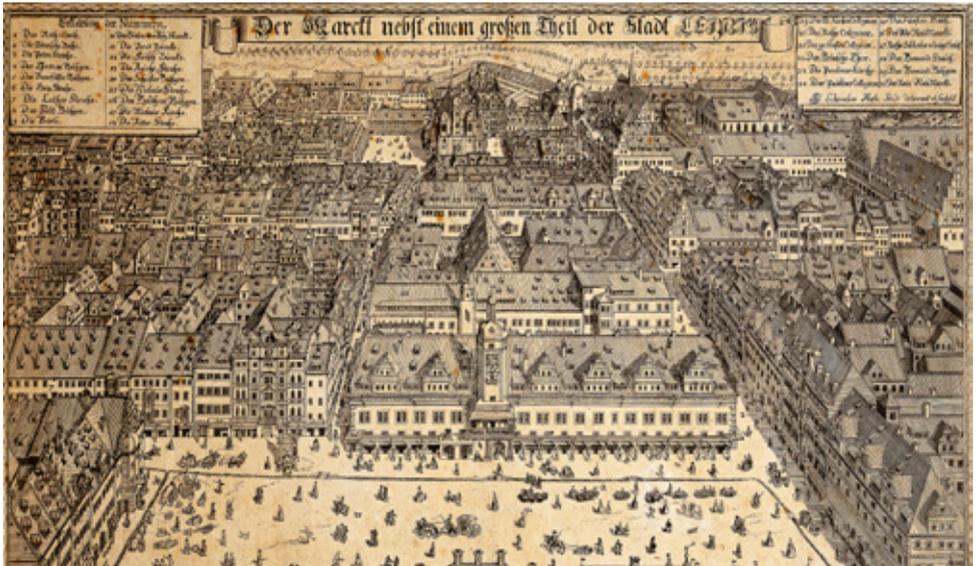
An early illustration of this friction between Bach and the authorities came in 1724 – the year before he wrote the music that would be used in the Easter Oratorio – when he composed his St John Passion for the Good Friday vespers, working on the assumption that the work would be performed in the Thomaskirche. The Leipzig consistory decreed that the work be performed at another Leipzig church, the Nicholaikirche,

as Passion performances alternated between these two churches each year. Bach only agreed to comply when his requests – that more room be made in the choir loft of the Nicholaikirche, and its harpsichord repaired – were met. Bach was asserting his authority while ensuring that his music be performed in the best possible circumstances.

Despite, or perhaps because of these frustrations – his rather stubborn nature seems to have thrived under pressure – Bach's output in Leipzig was hugely fruitful, including an eye-watering number of cantatas. These he wrote for Sunday services and for holy days; a phenomenal task on its own, but when one adds his other teaching, composing and performing duties it's a wonder he found time to eat and sleep.

It ought to be unsurprising, then, that Bach sometimes recycled his music; he was adept at the art of 'parody', which involved adapting secular materials into a sacred context – a common procedure at the time. One example of this is the boisterous cantata *Erfreut euch, ihr Herzen* BWV 66 composed for Easter Monday 1724, which Bach adapted from a (now lost) birthday cantata he had written in Cöthen for Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen. The earlier work's themes of Happiness and Fame are transformed to become Hope and Fear; there is a solo bass aria and an alto and tenor duet – both dancing, lilting numbers – and the work culminates in a tiny gem: a brief but beautiful 'Alleluia' chorale.

A year later, Bach wrote a new Easter Monday cantata, *Bleib bei uns, denn es qill Abend warden* BWV 6, which is stylistically reminiscent of his recently completed St John Passion and which hinges on these recurring themes of light and darkness. Known as the 'Emmaus' cantata, the work follows the grieving disciples – represented by solo soprano, alto, tenor and bass – bereft of their leader, on the road to



Germany, Leipzig, View of the market square, engraving, 1712 © A. Dagli Orti / © NPL – DeA Picture Library / Bridgeman Images

Emmaus. Bach balances descending, mournful music with steadfast repeated notes and lighter passages suggestive of faith and perseverance, in the process penetrating to the heart of that most basic human fear, being left alone in darkness, while subtly – never glibly – guiding us towards a sense of hope.

Like BWV 66, the Easter Oratorio began life as a secular birthday cantata, in this case dating from February 1725 and known as the Shepherd's Cantata on account of its central characters, four shepherds – two women, two men. The work's full title is *Entfliehet, verschwindet, entweichet, ihr Sorgen* ('Fly, vanish, flee, O worries') BWV 249a, and it was written for the birthday of Christian, Duke of Saxe-Weissenfels. The music is mostly lost, but the text was by Bach's regular collaborator Picander (pseudonym of Christian Friedrich Henrici), who may even have presented Bach with the sacred text of the Easter cantata at the same time as the secular poem, so

that Bach could get two uses out of his composition; Picander was well aware of the composer's need to multitask. Of his own contribution to Bach's output, he wrote modestly in 1728: 'I flatter myself that the lack of poetic charm may be compensated for by the loveliness of the music of our incomparable Kapellmeister Bach, and that these songs may be sung in the main churches of our pious Leipzig.'

Bach's Easter cantata was first performed on 1 April 1725 under the name *Kommt, gehet und eilet*. It wasn't until the mid-1730s that he became really interested in the concept of oratorios, revising the Easter cantata in 1738 by expanding and rescoring it to create the Easter Oratorio, alongside the oratorios for Christmas and Ascension. In 1734 Bach had attended the opera in Dresden, and it seems likely that he came away from that experience wanting to write something operatic himself – but as his circumstances in Leipzig would not have allowed it, he



Nikolaikirche in Leipzig 1749 by Samming H.-P.Haack via wikicommons

channelled that inspiration into opera's sacred counterpart, the oratorio, by producing these three works.

Unusually, Bach would hear the Easter piece performed several times during his lifetime, clearly prizing the music highly. He made further revisions between 1743 and 1746, including the expansion of the opening duet into four-part chorus. The last of these performances was in 1749, just days after his final version of the St John Passion. Changes to the

Easter Oratorio included the refinement of the scoring, such as the addition of the expressive transverse flute; Bach may have been making the most of the talents of Leipzig's Collegium Musicum instrumentalists. He also formalised the work by removing the characters' names from the score so that it became a work for soloists, chorus and orchestra, in keeping with the traditions of the oratorio. His intention was to play down the theatrical nature of the original work to create a

more meditative account in which human reflection on the Easter story is central.

With no Evangelist to narrate and no chorales, the four soloists are very much at the heart of the work. Although the removal of their names from the score renders them universal rather than individual, it is still interesting to bear in mind the original roles: Mary, mother of James, soprano; Mary Magdalene, alto; Peter, tenor; John the Apostle, bass. Bach's route into the mystery of the resurrection is via their beautifully characterised, balanced responses to its mysteries. The instrumentation, meanwhile, is so colourful that it almost takes on a life of its own, and given Bach's apparent tendency to imbue his instrumental lines with symbolism relating to characters in the narrative, as in the Christmas Oratorio, these orchestral sonorities may at times subtly represent Christ's spiritual presence even as his body is absent.

In any case, it is the orchestral sound that would first have arrested the attention of Leipzig congregations hearing this work on Easter Sunday. The mournful nature of Good Friday's music would still have been fresh in their ears, and the contrast is vivid: Bach unleashes a generous and vibrant ensemble of three trumpets, pairs of recorders and oboes, oboe d'amore, transverse flute, bassoon, strings and continuo. Uniquely in Bach's output, the first three movements are in triple time, creating an Italianate fast-slow-fast structure within the work's larger framework. Following the joyous Sinfonia, we are reminded of the grief and poignancy of Good Friday in the exquisite solo oboe line and plaintive strings of the Adagio. The third movement recalls the music of the Sinfonia, with the addition of voices: a lively chorus exhorting us to hasten to the tomb, with animated

tenor and bass solos evoking the joyful laughter of the text. What follows supports the idea that Bach structured the work along the lines of a Baroque dance suite, with the arias taking on the character of, respectively, a minuet, bourée, gavotte and, in the final chorus, a gigue.

Before the soprano's 'minuet' comes a brief but highly expressive recitative culminating in two mini-duets. The equality and contrasting attitudes of the protagonists is immediately established: the soprano and alto reproach the others for their despondency; tenor and bass offer their tears as an ointment to accompany that brought to the tomb. This leads us into the soprano aria, its flowing phrases decorated by an ethereal flute solo, with references to myrrh reminding us that it was once offered to the infant Christ by the magi.

In the recitative that follows, the friends discover that the tomb is empty and their anxiety begins to recede, after which comes the tenor's beautiful, pivotal aria: a lullaby accompanied by two recorders in which he expresses his newfound faith in the risen Christ as his tears evaporate. Soprano and alto long to see Christ in person, a sense of anticipation that burgeons into an alto aria of almost breathless excitement, the solo voice intertwining with the oboe d'amore. A bass recitative sums up their transformation from despair to joy before that festive final 'gigue': the full company of voices and ensemble come together to rejoice. And yet, to borrow a cliché, this is not an ending but a beginning, and Bach leaves us not with an exit but with an entry – of the 'lion of Judah', representing Christ himself. The music stops rather suddenly, leaving us, like those at the empty tomb, in a state of hopeful wonderment at what comes next.

Programme

Wednesday 27 March 2024

7.00pm at the Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685 – 1750)

Erfreut euch, ihr Herzen

(Rejoice, you hearts), BWV 66

Chorus

Recitative (baritone)

Aria (baritone)

Dialogue between Fear and Hope:

Recitative / Aria (tenor & mezzo-soprano)

Aria Duetto (mezzo-soprano & tenor)

Chorale

Bleib bei uns, denn es will Abend werden

(Stay with us, for evening falls), BWV 6

Chorus

Aria (mezzo-soprano)

Chorale (soprano)

Recitative (baritone)

Aria (tenor)

Chorale

Interval

Oster-Oratorium

(Easter Oratorio), BWV 249

Sinfonia – Adagio – Chorus

Recitative (mezzo-soprano, soprano,
tenor & baritone)

Aria (soprano)

Recitative (tenor, baritone & mezzo-soprano)

Aria (tenor)

Recitative (soprano & mezzo-soprano)

Aria (mezzo-soprano)

Recitative (baritone)

Chorus

**Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment
Choir of the Age of Enlightenment**

Madison Nonoa soprano

Rebecca Leggett mezzo-soprano

Ruairi Bowen tenor

Malachy Frame baritone

Peter Whelan director / harpsichord

Surtitle translations © Pamela Dellal, courtesy Emmanuel Music Inc.
A text and translation sheet can be downloaded from the event page for this
concert at oae.co.uk
Surtitles by Damien Kennedy

Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment

Violins I

Margaret Faultless

Alice Evans
Rodolfo Richter
Claire Holden
Deborah Diamond

Violins II

Daniel Edgar
Andrew Roberts
Dominika Feher
Stephen Rouse

Violas

John Crockatt
Oliver Wilson
Martin Kelly

Cellos

Luise Buchberger

Andrew Skidmore

Bass

Christine Sticher

Flute

Lisa Beznosiuk

Recorders

Sarah Humphrys
Catherine Latham

Oboes

Daniel Bates

Sarah Humphrys

Oboe da caccia

Hilary Stock

Bassoon

Zoe Shevlin

Trumpets

David Blackadder

Phillip Bainbridge
Matthew Wells

Timpani

Adrian Bending

Organ

Robert Howarth

Choir of the Age of Enlightenment

Sopranos

Madison Nonoa
Fiona Fraser
Aisling Kenny
Laura Oldfield
Lucy Page

Altos

Rebecca Leggett
David Clegg
Tristram Cooke
Amy Lyddon

Tenors

Ruairi Bowen
John Bowen
Richard Dowling
Oliver Martin-Smith

Basses

Malachy Frame
Ben McKee
Philip Tebb
Jonty Ward

Players in bold are OAE principal players



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Biographies



Ruairi Bowen

A graduate of King's College, Cambridge, and a finalist in the 2020 International Handel Singing Competition, Ruairi Bowen has collaborated with some of the leading conductors in the Baroque field including Emmanuelle Haïm, Sir John Eliot Gardiner and Stephen Layton.

Engagements during 2023 / 2024 include Damon in *Acis and Galatea* for Opera Holland Park, Uriel in a staged production of *Die Schöpfung* for Lithuanian National Opera, First Armed Man in *Die Zauberflöte* with Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Thespis-Mercure in *Platée* for Prague National Opera, Earl Tolloller in *Iolanthe* for English National Opera, JS Bach *St John Passion* with Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and *Easter Oratorio* with Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Boulanger *Faust et Hélène* with Royal Orchestral Society, *Messiah* at Dubai Opera House, Haydn *Nelson Mass* with Hertfordshire Chorus and Mozart *Requiem* with Huddersfield Choral Society.

Recordings and broadcasts include Stanford's *Mass Via Victrix* with BBC National Orchestra of Wales (Lyrita CD),

Orchestral Anthems with Choir of Merton College, Oxford, and Britten Sinfonia (Delphian Records CD), *Proud Songsters: English Solo Song* with Simon Lepper (King's College Recordings) and music by Nathaniel Dett and Percy Grainger (BBC Radio 3).

With Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Ruairi Bowen has previously sung Cyril in *Princess Ida*.



Malachy Frame

Belfast-born baritone Malachy Frame was Northern Ireland Opera's 'Voice of 2016,' having won the competition at the company's annual Festival of Voice, and is a Rising Star of the Enlightenment with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment for 2023 / 25.

Recent operatic roles have included Dandini in Rossini's *La Cenerentola*, Figaro and Fiorello in Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Marcello in Puccini's *La Bohème*, Guglielmo in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, Figaro in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, March Hare / White Knight in Todd's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Slook in Rossini's *La Cambiale di Matrimonio*, Leporello and Masetto in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Count Ceprano in Verdi's *Rigoletto*, and Aeneas in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*.

As a concert soloist, recent performances have included a Wigmore Hall debut singing Bach with the Gabrieli Consort, Purcell's *King Arthur* in the Laeiszhalle in Hamburg, Bach's *St John Passion* at the Barbican, Britten's *War Requiem*, Orff's *Carmina burana*, Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, *Mass in B minor*, *Magnificat*, and *St Matthew Passion*, Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, Handel's *Messiah*, *Theodora*, and Alexander's *Feast*, Vaughan-Williams' *Five Mystical Songs*, and Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast*.

Projects over the next few months include *The Magic Flute* with the Britten Sinfonia for Nevill Holt Festival, Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*, Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, and a tour of Schubert's *Winterreise* with pianist Freddie Brown.



Rebecca Leggett

Described as singing with 'grace and beauty' (The Telegraph), Rebecca Leggett is creating a name for herself in the field of early music. Since joining the 11th edition of the prestigious *Jardin des Voix* of Les Arts Florissants, the young British singer has performed worldwide with the ensemble in a new production of Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*, in such prestigious halls as Philharmonie de Paris, The Lincoln Center NYC, Palau de Artes in Valencia as well as at festivals in Luzern, Bremen and Utrecht; upcoming venues include Teatro

alla Scala and the Royal Albert Hall for the BBC Proms 2024. She made her debut with Les Arts Florissants at the Festival de Printemps in 2023; future engagements with the foundation include William Christie's 80th birthday tour in 2025 and singing *Piacere* in *Il Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno*. In the UK, Rebecca is a 'Rising Star' of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, with which she will appear in the UK throughout 2024 / 25.

Recent concert highlights as alto soloist include her debut at Het Concertgebouw with the OAE in Bach's *St John Passion* lead by Mark Padmore, Haydn's *Nelson Mass* at Cadogan Hall, a programme of Bach at the Wigmore Hall both with Harry Christophers and The Sixteen, Haydn's *Nicolaimesse* with Arcangelo and Jonathan Cohen and Handel's *Messiah* both with the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra and last year with Edward Higginbottom and the Instruments of Time and Truth. She has also sung with other ensembles and orchestras including the City of London Sinfonia, London Handel Players and Le Concert d'Astrée with Emanuelle Haim for which she covered the title role and *First Witch* in their 2022 production of *Dido and Aeneas*. In December, she sang the role of Irene in Handel's *Theodora* with Collegium Musicum Bergen, Norway conducted by Nicholas Kraemer.

Rebecca, alongside pianist George Ireland, received first place at the 2022 London Song Festival's British Art-Song Competition, selected by Sir Thomas Allen and the following year she and George reached the final of the Kathleen Ferrier Award 2023 at the Wigmore Hall. Rebecca is a graduate of the Royal College of Music and Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance. Whilst at the RCM she received first place at the Brooks-van-der-Pump English Song Competition and graduated Trinity Laban with the Wilfred Greenhouse Allt Prize for Oratorio & Cantata and TCM Silver Medal for Voice. Song is also high

on the agenda for Rebecca and in recent years she has given recitals for the Lewes Song Festival, London Song Festival and Thames Concert Series as well as appearing as an Emerging Artist for the Oxford Lieder Festival. Last year, Rebecca gave a joint recital for the Ludlow English Song Festival with Brindley Sherratt and this May she will join countertenor Hugh Cutting in a lunchtime recital for the Brighton Festival.

Earlier on, she made her debut at Teatro Maggio Fiorentino in 2015 as Flora in Britten *The Turn of the Screw*, a role she understudied at Glyndebourne. More recent stage highlights include the role of Cupid in John Blow's *Venus and Adonis* for Blackheath Halls Opera and a UK tour with ballet Rambert to venues such as Sadlers Wells and The Lowry performing Monteverdi's *Lamento della Ninfa* with guitarist George Robinson.



Madison Nonoa

New Zealand soprano Madison Nonoa holds a Masters degree in Music from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama where she studied under the tutelage of Yvonne Kenny on the prestigious Opera Course. Since graduating in 2019, Madison has made her debut at the Glyndebourne

Festival Opera as First Siren in *Rinaldo* and was selected as a 2020 / 2021 Jerwood Young Artist for the Festival. Madison was named a Samling Artist in 2020 and is a current Britten-Pears Young Artist and OAE Rising star, as well as a former Dame Malvina Major Emerging Young Artist with New Zealand Opera, where she made her debut as Papagena in *Die Zauberflöte*.

Recent highlights for Madison have included her festival debuts at the Salzburg and Whitsun Festivals, performing as Amore in *Orfeo ed Euridice* with Cecilia Bartoli and Gianluca Capuano, Amour in *Orphée et Eurydice* with Raphaël Pichon with Ensemble Pygmalion at the Pulsations Festival in Bordeaux, and her house and role debut as the title role in *Dido and Aeneas* for the Ustinov Studio at the Theatre Royal Bath. Other recent operatic engagements include Madison's festival debut as the title role in *Acis and Galatea* for the London Handel Festival, her house debut in the role of Maria in *West Side Story* for Opera du Rhin and Papagena in *Die Zauberflöte* at Glyndebourne.

Operatic engagements this season include Amor in *(m)Orpheus* with New Zealand Opera, her house and role debut as Voce Dal Cielo in *Don Carlo* for Opéra de Monte-Carlo as well as a return to Opera du Rhin in the role of Galatea in *Polifemo* conducted by Emmanuelle Haim.

On the concert platform, upcoming performances include continual appearances as an OAE Rising Star, in particular for their performance of Bach's *Easter Oratorio*, as well as appearing as soprano soloist in Schubert's *Das Paradies und die Peri* with the Royal Northern Sinfonia.

She acknowledges the ongoing support of the Dame Kiri Te Kanawa and Dame Malvina Major Foundations.



Peter Whelan

Olivier Award-winner Peter Whelan is among the most dynamic and versatile exponents of historical performance of his generation, with a remarkable career as a conductor and director. He is Artistic Director of the Irish Baroque Orchestra as well as Curator for Early Music of Norwegian Wind Ensemble. Peter is an acclaimed solo artist with an extensive and award-winning discography as a solo bassoonist.

As conductor, Peter has a particular passion for exploring and championing neglected music from the Baroque and Classical eras. Recent engagements have included appearances with English Concert, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Beethoven Orchester Bonn, Netherlands Chamber Orchestra, Portland Baroque Orchestra, Lahti Symphony Orchestra, Oulu Symphony Orchestra and Orchestre de Chambre du Luxembourg.

The beginning of 22 / 23 season saw Peter conducting Vivaldi's seldom performed 'Bajazet' with Irish National Opera. This production was met with outstanding reviews and the production won an Olivier Award for 'Outstanding Achievement in Opera'. In November/December he made his debut at San Francisco Opera, conducting Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*.

Other recent opera productions have included *Marriage of Figaro*, *Magic Flute* and *Acis and Galatea* with Irish National Opera and Handel's *Radamisto* with English Touring Opera.

Orchestral highlights of the 23 / 24 season include Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Monteverdi Choir, English Baroque Soloists, Royal Northern Sinfonia, Dunedin Consort, la festa musicale, Meininger Hofkapelle and Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra. Peter returns to Irish National Opera to conduct a production of Vivaldi's rarely performed 'Olimpiade' in May 2024.

As founding Artistic Director of Ensemble Marsyas, Peter has performed at Edinburgh International, Lammermuir, Göttingen Handel, Kilkenny Arts, Tetbury, Bath and Great Music in Irish Houses festivals. During their 2020 Wigmore Hall residency, The Telegraph described Ensemble Marsyas as "very possibly this country's finest period group – led by Peter, they perform with wonderful élan, transmitting their total enjoyment". Ensemble Marsyas has an impressive and award-winning discography with its disc of Barsanti being named Editor's Choice in Gramophone Magazine in 2017 and "Recording of the Year" in MusicWeb International 2017, as well as reaching second place in the Official UK Specialist Classical Chart.

Peter's artistic direction in live performance and the recording studio has been widely praised for its "rich insight, style and charisma" (Guardian), its "stylish verve" (BBC Music Magazine) and "phenomenally energetic direction" (Artsdesk). As a champion of early music, Peter represents "the very best of contemporary trends in bringing this music to life: flex and zest with tempi, lithe and vigorous ... an incredible alertness to colors and moods summoned by the cut-and-thrust harmonic footwork of this music" (Operawire).

Rising Stars of the Enlightenment

Initiated in 2017, the Rising Stars of the Enlightenment scheme for emerging singers is part of the OAE's broader commitment to investing in the talents of the future. The two-year programme supports artists in their professional development and includes numerous performance opportunities with the Orchestra as part of the programmes at its London residencies at the Southbank Centre and Kings Place, as well as around the UK and on international tours.

The Rising Stars for 2023 – 2025 are Madison Nonoa (soprano), Frances Gregory (mezzo-soprano), Rebecca Leggett (mezzo-soprano), Laurence Kilsby (tenor), Malachy Frame (baritone) and Florian Störtz (bass). During the 2023 / 24 season they will perform as soloists in the *Christmas Oratorio* (including

on a European tour), the *Easter Oratorio* and throughout the Bach, the Universe and Everything series at Kings Place.

The six singers were selected from an impressive field of over 100 applicants who responded to an open call and following an audition process that included video and live auditions. Tenor Mark Padmore, who is patron of the programme and part of the selection panel, added: "Yip Harburg, the lyricist of *The Wizard of Oz* wrote 'words make you think a thought, music makes you feel a feeling, but a song makes you feel a thought'. The singers we have chosen for Rising Stars have the ability to communicate not just with beauty of sound but with intelligent engagement with text. This is what great singing is all about."



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spent on art is a
penny spent on
education

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BE IN
OUR
CLUB



In 1986, a group of inquisitive London musicians took a long hard look at that curious institution we call the Orchestra, and decided to start again from scratch. They began by throwing out the rulebook. Put a single conductor in charge? No way. Specialise in repertoire of a particular era? Too restricting. Perfect a work and then move on? Too lazy. The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment was born.

And as this distinctive ensemble playing on period-specific instruments began to get a foothold, it made a promise to itself. It vowed to keep questioning, adapting and inventing as long as it lived. Residencies at the Southbank Centre and the Glyndebourne Festival didn't numb its experimentalist bent. A major record deal didn't iron out its quirks. Instead, the OAE examined musical notes with ever more freedom and resolve.

That creative thirst remains unquenched. The Night Shift series of informal performances are redefining concert formats. Its former home at London's Kings Place has fostered further diversity of planning and music-making. The ensemble has formed the bedrock for some of Glyndebourne's most ground-breaking recent productions.

In keeping with its values of always questioning, challenging and trailblazing, in September 2020, the OAE became the resident orchestra of Acland Burghley School, Camden. The residency – a first for a British orchestra – allows the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment to live, work and play amongst the students of the school.

Now more than thirty years old, the OAE is part of our musical furniture. It has even graced the outstanding conducting talents of John Butt, Elder, Adam Fischer, Iván Fischer, Jurowski, Rattle and Schiff with a joint title of Principal Artist. But don't ever think the ensemble has lost sight of its founding vow. Not all orchestras are the same. And there's nothing quite like this one.

Andrew Mellor



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Thank you to all supporters
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OAE Education 2023 / 24

A programme to involve, empower and inspire

The Fairy Queen, featured in the OAE's Season at the Southbank Centre in January 2024, stands as our latest community opera project. On stage, the OAE collaborated with performers from Camden and our national residencies, showcasing a diverse group of individuals with varying abilities united in the celebration of the collective power of music-making. We had dancers and musicians from Acland Burghley, a primary choir made up of students from three of our Camden partner primary schools.

Our journey with The Fairy Queen began with smaller concert versions, evolving from TOTS Spin, Spin a Story to adaptations for different Key Stages and Special Needs settings. Building on the success of The Moon Hares at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in November 2022, we expanded our existing Fairy Queen projects into a comprehensive community opera featuring the OAE,

three solo singers, a narrator, three primary schools, musicians, and dancers from two secondary schools, along with a community choir.

Hazel Gould and James Redwood once again wove their creative magic, seamlessly blending the story of Shakespeare and music of Purcell into a new narrative.

In a November 2023 pilot, we presented a concert version in Ipswich with students from Northgate High School, and these students subsequently joined us on stage, bringing the full community opera to the Queen Elizabeth Hall.

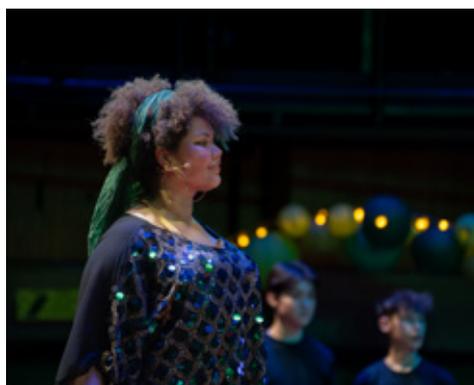
Buoyed by the positive reception and successful culmination, we are now embarking on the planning phase to take this magical opera to our national residencies over the next two years, collaborating with our existing national partners and communities.

**"It was a lifetime opportunity and overwhelming...
but in a good way!"**

PRIMARY PARTICIPANT

"What an incredible experience last night was. It was so exciting, immediate, funny, engaging that I feel compelled to share with you how much I enjoyed it. To see so many young people part of such a top quality production makes your heart dance with excitement. I don't think I've ever felt so connected to the collaboration between a live classical score and a dance piece."

ABS PARENT



The Fairy Queen at the Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall, January 2024

Our work at Acland Burghley School

In September 2020, we took up permanent residence at Acland Burghley School in Tufnell Park, north London. The residency – a first for a British orchestra – allows us to live, work and play amongst the students of the school.

The school isn't just our landlord or a physical home. Instead, it allows us to build on 20 years of work in the borough through OAE's long-standing partnership with Camden Music. Our move underpins our core Enlightenment mission of universal engagement, of access without frontiers. Our regular programme of activity at Acland Burghley includes 'Encounter Sessions' introducing the Orchestra to each new Year 7 cohort, workshops for GCSE music and dance students, and our Musical Connections and Ground Base initiatives supporting students with special educational needs and disability. We will be closely involved in delivering the new Government T Level qualifications.

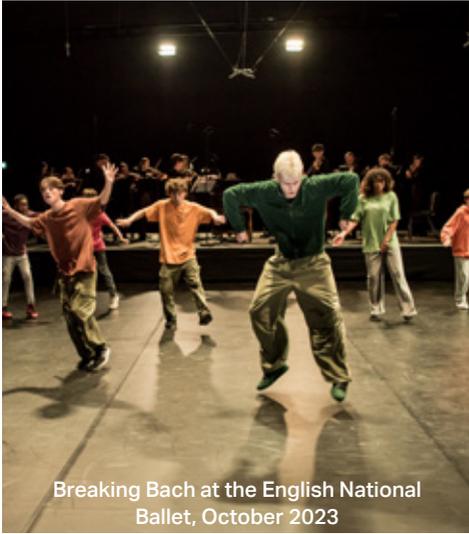
The value of our residency in Acland Burghley School is realised in many ways beyond the immediate practice of orchestral musicianship. One of the key objectives is to lift aspirations and broaden horizons for life beyond the school. We want to help students leave school with richer CVs and stronger professional aspirations. One great way to do that is to mentor the next generation in all those things we have learned as an organisation. This part of our mission captured the imagination of Dreamchasing, Sir Ron Dennis' charitable foundation, who generously fund our Dreamchasing Young Producers programme – a group of young people acquiring skills in management and production from budgeting to camera

operation. You may have seen the costumes some of them designed for our performances of *Princess Ida* in June... and keep an eye out for them in the foyer during tonight's event!

Life at Acland Burghley will also influence our artistic development. Last summer we began work on our Breaking Bach project. An ensemble of eight talented hip-hop dancers worked with internationally renowned choreographer Kim Brandstrup on a new work inspired by Bach's Double Violin Concerto. The first phase culminated in a triumphant showcase performance at English National Ballet's Mulryan Centre for Dance on 9 October and its future life will see it develop into a full scale OAE production.

Dreamchasing Young Producers

Alexander Parry	Laurie Wilkinson-
Anastasia	West
Giampoulaki	Leonard Benoiel
Armin Eorsi	Louis Madelaine-
Arthur Amidon	Rose
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Dimitris	Raph David-
Zamenopoulos	Dickens
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Jessica Sexton-	Zain Sikand
Smith	



Breaking Bach at the English National Ballet, October 2023



Live at the Hex produced by the Dreamchasing Young Producers



Introduction to the Orchestra for Year 7, September 2023



Students from Acland Burghley School making costumes for our *Princess Ida* production, June 2023



Ground Base session at Acland Burghley School, October 2023



Dreamchasing Young Producers behind-the-scenes

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The Southbank Centre is made up of the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room, Hayward Gallery, National Poetry Library and Arts Council Collection. We're one of London's favourite meeting spots, with lots of free events and places to relax, eat and shop next to the Thames.

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Let's Go on an Adventure!

10.30am & 12.00 noon
Saturday 29 June
Royal Festival Hall

Join us as we explore the world around us in our lively concerts for 2 – 5 year olds and their grown ups. Be sure to bring your clapping hands, your singing voices and of course your stamping feet!

For tickets booked through the Southbank Centre, booking fees apply online (£3.50) and over the phone (£4). There are no booking fees for in-person bookings, Southbank Centre Members, Supporters Circles and Patrons.



BEGINNINGS AND ENDINGS at the Southbank Centre

3 April
SIBELIUS Symphony No. 5
with Maxim Emelyanychev (conductor)

24 – 26 April
MENDELSSOHN: The Complete Symphonies
with Sir András Schiff (fortepiano / director)

OAE TOTS for 2–5 year olds with their parents or carers at the Southbank Centre

29 June
Let's Go on an Adventure!

THE NIGHT SHIFT Chamber music down a local pub

14 May, Chalk Farm
The Fiddler's Elbow

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Mission: to explore our place in the cosmos guided by the intergalactic genius of JS Bach. Each monthly event features one of Bach's cantatas, and other choral and instrumental works, alongside a talk by an eminent astronomer.

New season coming in Autumn 2024



SIBELIUS

Symphony no. 5

LINDS

Wednesday 3 April, 7.00pm
Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall

We continue our daring quest towards the borderline between Romanticism and Modernism. We team up again with conductor Maxim Emelyanychev in a programme crowned by Sibelius' awe-inspiring Symphony No. 5.

Sibelius is without doubt one of the Last Romantics. Along with his younger contemporary Rachmaninov, he kept faith with the common building blocks of music in the latter half of the 19th Century well into the 20th. But both had a non-conformist streak and began to find ways to move away from the prevailing styles of their time. In tonight's concert we put four 'romantic' pieces under the microscope of the OAE's historically informed performance practice to look at how their composers probing for a native identity led to a quiet radicalism.

Maxim Emelyanychev conductor

**COMING
UP...**



The Complete Symphonies



MENDELSSOHN

with Sir András Schiff

24-26 April, 7.00pm
Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall

Following the sell-out success of our Beethoven Piano Concerto series together in 2022, we reunite with Sir András Schiff for an immersive journey through the quintet of masterworks that spanned Mendelssohn's tragically short life.

Mendelssohn's symphonies date from late in his childhood to around five years before his death (at the age of 38). In that sense, they are all youthful works. The timeline is obscured by the cataloguing and naming of the works. We have to look harder to see the evolving artist. Often considered a musical conservative, the opportunity to immerse ourselves in these works and hear them performed on period instruments creates a space to question this conventional thinking. Might his reworking of the foundations of the past be more radical than first impressions suggest?

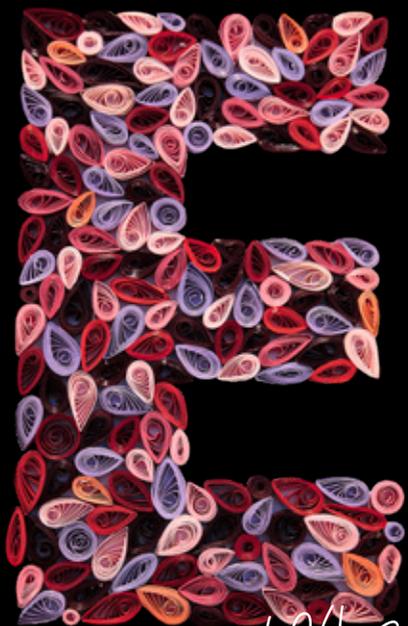
In addition to the five symphonies, Sir András will direct Mendelssohn's two piano concerts from the keyboard.

Alina Ibragimova violin
Lucy Crowe soprano
Madison Nonoa soprano
Nicky Spence tenor
Choir of the Age of Enlightenment
Sir András Schiff director



Discover more, sign up for updates and follow us

oae.co.uk



2023/24 Season



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