

The Samling Foundation

NURTURING TOMORROW'S PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTISTS

news

spring 2007

issue 19

He's been described as Britain's hottest young baritone by the media both at home and abroad but to us he's quite simply 'our Don'.

Christopher Maltman, who's in demand at opera houses and on concert platforms all over the world, will play the first Don Giovanni of his career in Samling Opera's production this summer at The Sage Gateshead – and he's as excited about it as we are.

"I have waited, it seems, a long time for an opportunity to perform my first Don Giovanni. Whilst offers have been there, they have never felt quite right. Don Giovanni is one of the jewels in the crown of a baritone's repertoire and deserves respect, as many have thrown themselves at it and fallen short. It requires great mental and physical maturity to walk hand in hand with perhaps opera's greatest anti-hero," said Christopher.

Not only that, Christopher is absolutely delighted to be directed in the role by the man who has made the part his own - Sir Thomas Allen. "I had no idea that either The Samling Foundation or Thomas Allen would consider me to take on this tour-de-force but, once aired, the whole project made immediate sense to me," he said.

"Tom is one of the greatest Dons of all time, full stop. I have watched, listened to and admired his performances since I first stumbled into the world of music I now inhabit. To have him at the helm of my first voyage into these turbulent waters seems almost too poetic to be true and I relish the prospect."

Working with The Samling Foundation once again, at The Sage Gateshead and with a stellar cast and orchestra, is something he also relishes. "Add to all this the enveloping patronage of The Samling Foundation, inspired musical impetus from Thomas Zehetmair and



Northern Sinfonia and a fabulous cast, which includes Lisa Milne as Donna Elvira, and it seems we have quite a treat in store.

"Finally, if all that were not enough, I am forced to seduce my beautiful wife, Leigh Woolf, who plays Zerlina the simple peasant girl. They call this a job? I'm in heaven already..."

To find out more about Samling Opera's production of *Don Giovanni* and education project please go to www.samlingfoundation.org or telephone 01434 602885.

Samling Opera's Don Giovanni

Directed by Sir Thomas Allen
4th June The Gillian Dickinson Schools' Performance
(free to schools)

Public performances 5th, 7th, 9th June 2007

Hall One, The Sage Gateshead

Don Giovanni	- Christopher Maltman
Il Commendatore	- Ronald Nairne
Donna Anna	- Kate Valentine
Don Ottavio	- Adrian Ward
Donna Elvira	- Lisa Milne
Leporello	- Marc Labonnette
Masetto	- Benedict Nelson
Zerlina	- Leigh Woolf

Northern Sinfonia Chorus
Northern Sinfonia conducted by Thomas Zehetmair

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Who's who?

You've met 'our Don' now it's time to introduce the rest of the cast for Samling Opera's "unmissable" (to quote the Guardian) new production of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*...and what a line-up it is! An absolutely outstanding cast of young singers – all of whom we're proud to say have, at some point over the past ten years, been through a Samling Foundation Masterclass.

Lisa Milne – Donna Elvira

Scottish soprano Lisa Milne flies in direct from playing Eurydice in Gluck's *Orfeo* at the Metropolitan Opera in New York to take on her debut role as Donna Elvira – Don Giovanni's former mistress who wholeheartedly believes she is his one true love. Described as a "celebrated lyric soprano", Lisa is in demand at opera houses all over the world and is also a renowned recitalist and recording artist. She recently appeared in BBC One's 'Imagine' programme - 'Being a Diva' - with her teacher Patricia MacMahon.



Kate Valentine – Donna Anna

Another very talented Scottish soprano, Kate Valentine, takes on the role of *Donna Anna* – the daughter of the ill-fated Commendatore and object of Don Giovanni's insatiable lust in the opening scenes of the opera. Her past operatic roles include *Rosalinde*, *Die Fledermaus* with Scottish Opera Go Round and Countess Almaviva, *Le nozze di Figaro* with Glyndebourne on Tour. A regular on the concert platform, she recently appeared at the Royal Albert Hall in Handel's *Messiah* conducted by Sir David Willcocks.



Leigh Woolf – Zerlina

The stunning mezzo-soprano Leigh Woolf plays the peasant girl Zerlina who attracts the attention of the arch-womaniser (played by her husband Christopher Maltman) on her wedding day! Since graduating from The Royal College of Music with first class diplomas in opera and recital, Leigh has sung much of the major repertoire on the concert platform under the baton of Sir David Willcocks, Sir John Eliot Gardiner and Thomas Zehetmair. Her operatic roles include covering Cherubino, *Le nozze di Figaro* for Glyndebourne on Tour and Euphemia, *La Bohème* for ENO.



Marc Labonnette – Leporello

Don Giovanni's man-servant and side-kick Leporello is played by the charming French baritone Marc Labonnette. A regular on the concert platform here and in France, his repertoire has included Fauré's *Requiem* with the Brittany Orchestra and Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with Jean-Claude Malgoire. Marc already has a number of the classic roles under his belt – having played Bottom, Falstaff, Basilio and Don Alfonso for Bampton Classical Opera and the Classical Opera Company.



Ronald Nairne – Il Commendatore

Our third Scot in the cast is bass Ronald Nairne whose dark voice usually places him in roles where he plays older more mature characters. Roles he has undertaken have included Italian gentlemen, Egyptian priests, a Turkish eunuch and a Mongolian soldier! Having studied on the opera course at the Royal Academy in London under the guidance of Glenville Hargreaves, Jonathan Papp and Tony Legge, he would now like to widen his repertoire to include more oratorio and song as well as opera.



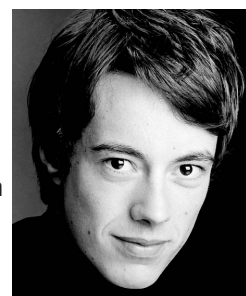
Benedict Nelson – Masetto

Currently studying at the Guildhall School of Music with Robert Dean, Benedict joins the cast to take on the role of Zerlina's betrothed Masetto. Benedict recently played Marcello in *La Bohème* for British Youth Opera in Tuscany. Future engagements for this increasingly busy baritone include Brahms' 'Ein Deutsches Requiem' at the Royal Albert Hall with Sir David Willcocks and Bach's 'St John Passion' at Cadogan Hall with Ronald Corp.



Adrian Ward – Don Ottavio

Tenor Adrian Ward from the Guildhall School of Music plays Donna Anna's fiancé, who vows to avenge the murder of her father by Don Giovanni. A regular on the concert platform, this very special young singer has performed in most of the UK's major venues including Wigmore Hall, Barbican Hall, St John's, Smith Square and Cadogan Hall. Adrian's opera experience includes the role of Gonzalve, *L'heure espagnole*, (Ravel) in the South of France near Aix en Provence, Mercurio, *La Didone* (Cavalli) and Anfinomo, *Il Ritorno d' Ulyisse* (Monteverdi), both with Christian Curnyn at the Guildhall School.



Journey of a lifetime . . .

Forty two teenagers from seven schools across the North East and Cumbria are getting ready to embark on a creative journey of a lifetime.

Running in tandem with Samling Opera's production of *Don Giovanni* will be an education project that is second to none. Building on the experience and success of the one devised for its 2005 *Così fan tutte* production, The Samling Foundation team has put together an even more comprehensive and enlightening journey of performance and musical discovery.

"Forty two gifted and talented 15 year olds will be given unparalleled access to the opera and the production process as well as working on and performing their own 'take' on the story, which will involve dance, drama, music and singing," said Katrina Quilliam, education project manager.

It will follow a similar format to the *Così* project, which the independent evaluator Jane Dancer described as "one of the most appropriate to its target group I have seen in over 16 years of leading, co-ordinating and evaluating arts and education projects nationally and regionally".

"The 'way-in' to the opera for the students will be a chat show where Don Giovanni stands accused and each of the principal characters will present their stories to the audience.

"Taking the themes of love, betrayal, murder, revenge, repentance and retribution the students will explore in workshop the motivation of the characters and through improvisation, composition, creative writing and performance, produce their own piece of words and music in response. The result will be performed in Hall One at The Sage Gateshead on Friday 8th June 2007," explained Katrina.



Susannah Waters who will once again lead Samling Opera's education project

Photo: Mark Pinder

The decision to work with the same seven schools as in 2005 is supported by Jane Dancer, The Sage Gateshead and the schools involved. "Samling has made a considerable investment in each school and because the *Così* project was new and very different, there was a feeling that that investment had only started to pay off when the project came to an end," said Mike Dutton, head of music at Whickham High School.

"For most students it was a totally new experience that had a huge effect on them, in some cases, life-changing. One of the greatest things is that it stays with them – our students who were involved in the *Così* project still talk about it two years on," he added.

The *Don Giovanni* education project kicks off in February half term at The Sage Gateshead. The seven schools taking part are: Oxclose Community School, Washington; St Wilfrid's RC Comprehensive School, South Shields; Whickham High School, Gateshead; Whitley Bay High School, North Tyneside; Queen Elizabeth High School, Hexham; Queen Elizabeth School, Kirkby Lonsdale and Gosforth High School, Newcastle.

Samling Opera's innovative educational CD-ROM based on its production of *Così fan tutte* is now available priced £29.99 offering teachers and students new and exciting ways of delivering the National Curriculum, whilst at the same time stripping away once and for all the myth that opera is for the few. But don't think it's just for students; the word is out that anyone – whatever the age – will find it illuminating and fun. For further details of how to order your copy contact The Samling Foundation on 01434 602885.

Mozart's well-loved opera *Così fan tutte* is a tale of love and deception, of heartache and betrayal. The scheming Don Alfonso persuades his two young friends (Sigismondo and Ferrando) to test the fidelity of two sisters, Fiordiligi and Dorabella, with each trying to seduce the other's sweetheart. What begins as an elaborate joke turns into a dangerous game and we are never really sure whether true love can triumph.

The Samling Foundation has been working with some of the world's greatest artists since 1996 nurturing outstanding young singers as they embark upon their professional careers. Now through Samling Opera, directed by the Foundation's Patron Sir Thomas Allen, and in partnership with Learning and Participation at The Sage Gateshead, they have taken 42 teenagers on a creative journey through the opera and this new, simply staged production. This CD-ROM shows you what they discovered along the way.

www.samlingopera.org

The Samling Foundation The Sage Gateshead

CD-ROM contains 4900MB The Samling Foundation

SAMLING OPERA

Così fan tutte

EDUCATION CD-ROM RESOURCE

The Samling Foundation
NURTURING TALENTED YOUNG SINGERS

SAMLING OPERA

così fan tutte

Still to come in 2007

Our year doesn't end with Samling Opera you'll be pleased to hear! We've got a lively programme of events to look forward to throughout the year.



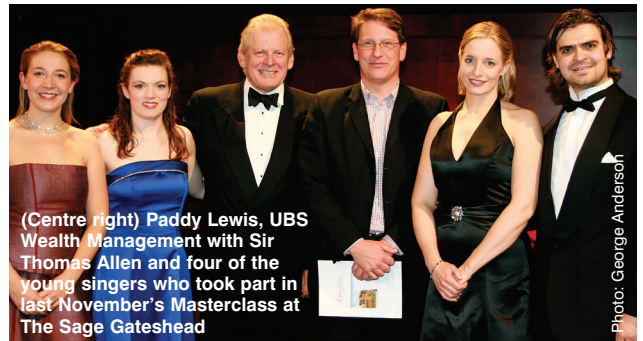
Sunday 24th June will be our annual 'Party in the Garden' at Dilston House, Corbridge – the home of our chairman, Roger McKechnie. Hopefully the sun will shine but no matter what the weather (we've got plenty of cover) it will be a glorious family fun day including great food, live music from Steelquake, Quintessential and Peter Tickell, an auction and art exhibition.

We're also currently in the early planning stages of our education and outreach project in partnership with Southbank Sinfonia working with young people and schools in the North East in September.

At the end of November we're heading back to The Sage Gateshead for our second masterclass of the year. This time Patron Sir Thomas Allen with soprano Isobel Buchanan and pianists Caroline Dowdle and Simon Over will be nurturing the talents of six specially selected young singers. There will be, as always, two public events in Hall Two sponsored once again, we're delighted to say, by UBS Wealth Management.

We finish on a high in December when we return to Wigmore Hall to showcase four outstanding Samling Scholars - Simona Mihai, Wendy Dawn Thompson, Mark Chaundy and Benedict Nelson. Alongside our Patron Sir Thomas Allen and accompanied by pianists Simon Over and Caroline Dowdle and players from Southbank Sinfonia, they will be performing a winter-themed evening of songs by Brahms, Ralph Vaughan Williams and Ravel and opera ensembles from Rimsky-Korsakov's *Christmas Eve* and Puccini's *La Bohème* – definitely one not to miss!

There is an exclusive corporate sponsorship opportunity for this concert at Wigmore Hall. For more details please contact The Samling Foundation on 01434 602885.



Dates for your diary

4th June – The Gillian Dickinson Schools' Performance
5th, 7th, 9th June – public performances 7pm

Samling Opera's *Don Giovanni*
Hall One, The Sage Gateshead

Starring Christopher Maltman as *Don Giovanni*
Directed by Sir Thomas Allen
Northern Sinfonia conducted by Thomas Zehetmair
Tickets from £7 - £28
Available from The Sage Gateshead:
Box Office: 0191 443 4661
Online: www.thesagegateshead.org

24th June 12 noon onwards

Party in the Garden
Dilston House, Corbridge

Live music from Steelquake, Quintessential and Peter Tickell, auction and original art to buy. Tickets available from The Samling Foundation on 01434 602885

September/October

Performance and Outreach Project with Southbank Sinfonia

More details to follow in next newsletter

Sunday 18th – Sunday 25th November
Samling Masterclass Week

Led by Sir Thomas Allen, Isobel Buchanan and Paul Farrington with pianists Simon Over and Caroline Dowdle and six specially selected singers

Wednesday 21st November 2-5pm
Samling Public Masterclass
Tickets £7.50

Saturday 24th November 7pm
Samling Masterclass Concert

Tickets £26, £18, £12, £6
Hall Two, The Sage Gateshead
Available from The Sage Gateshead:
Box Office: 0191 443 4661
Online: www.thesagegateshead.org

There will be a number of special tickets, which include a three-course dinner, wine and coffee with the artists after the concert. These are priced at £75 and will be available only from The Samling Foundation: 01434 602885

Sponsored by  **UBS** Wealth Management

Friday 14th December 7.30pm
Samling Foundation Showcase
Wigmore Hall, London

Patron Sir Thomas Allen and four Samling Scholars star in a captivating winter-themed evening of songs and opera ensembles.
Tickets: £28, £24, £18, £12 available from June
Wigmore Hall Box Office: 0207 935 2141 or www.wigmore-hall.org.uk

There will be a number of special tickets, which include a three-course dinner, wine and coffee with the artists after the concert. These are priced at £120 and will be available only from The Samling Foundation: 01434 602885

The Samling Foundation

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