

## 'Let's sing and play'

Samling Artist mezzo-soprano Jade Moffatt is coached by mezzo-soprano Ann Murray DBE in a public masterclass at Sage Gateshead, February 2018

Photo: © Mark Pinder

### We begin our summer season with a concert by two rising stars of classical music.

Soprano Harriet Burns, who became a Samling Artist in February, will be accompanied by pianist Ian Tindale in a special programme at Newcastle's historic Lit & Phil on 10 May.

Also in May, we see the last of our series of auditions take place. Over the past few months we have heard well over 250 young artists. Live auditions were held in Newcastle for Samling Academy and in Glasgow and London for our professional programme, which attracted applications from singers based not only in the UK, but all over the world, for the much-coveted places.

Preparations for our summer Academy Opera production of *Venus and Adonis* and *Come, ye Sons of Art* are also well underway. With rehearsals building throughout the spring, our Academy Singers have been hard at work learning their roles with director and Samling Artist Miranda Wright and seventeenth-century dance steps and movement with choreographer Mandy Demetriou.

Our music director, John Butt, joins us in May to prepare them for working with the Dunedin Consort – one of the country's leading Baroque ensembles – in an intensive rehearsal period at The Witham in Barnard Castle in July.

As with our two previous Academy Opera productions, we have also invited a Samling Artist to join our cast. Countertenor Tim Morgan will play the part of Cupid, bringing his professional

experience as a young artist and supporting the work of our younger singers as they embark on their first fully staged and period-costumed opera production.

We are also thrilled to announce that Brewin Dolphin – one of the largest British investment management firms and winner of multiple business awards – has come on board to sponsor this exciting project, proving that the North East business community believes in championing some of the most promising young talent in the region.

'We have a long record of sponsoring and encouraging the arts and cultural activity. We are delighted to have this opportunity to help foster and invest in the development of talented young people by partnering with Samling Academy Opera,' said Brewin Dolphin's William Baker Baker.

### Robert Bowman OBE (1933–2018)



It was with great sadness that we said farewell to Bob Bowman in February. As a Trustee and a generous benefactor of Samling from the charity's earliest days, he was at the very heart of our organisation and will be greatly missed by us all.

Bob trained as a pharmacist and after National Service with the RAF he returned to Carlisle to run the family's pharmacy chain. In his

spare time he trained as a singer under the distinguished English soprano Ena Mitchell and as a fine tenor performed in concerts and recitals across the North of England and Scotland. As chairman of Carlisle and District Music and Drama Festival and president of several choirs for many years, he made an enduring contribution to music and the arts in his native Cumbria and far beyond.

'We all bore witness to Bob's greatness of heart, wonderful sense of humour and his passionate belief as a pharmacist that "music makes you well"', said Samling's founding artistic and executive director Karon Wright. 'A great spirit and a very kind man, Bob also recognised the inspiration music can bring and its importance in the developing lives of young people.'



'What a week! I can't thank Samling enough for choosing me to be part of it, and I am immensely proud to now be a Samling Artist. I will be spreading the news about Samling to all my friends and colleagues.' – *Baritone Julien Van Mellaerts, Samling Artist 2018*

SAMLING SHORTS



# John Butt OBE

John Butt, musical director of Edinburgh's Dunedin Consort and Samling Academy Opera's summer production, is Gardiner Professor of Music at the University of Glasgow and a Principal Artist with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.

Last piece of music I listened to was...

*La mer* – Debussy (centenary year of his death) – my youngest son is playing in it soon, on bassoon. There's no better piece for orchestra!

Last piece of music I conducted was...

*John Passion*, at Indiana University 2 weeks ago – but I do that so often, probably not worth mentioning! The week before was Schubert's unfinished Symphony and Mozart's unfinished Mass in C Minor, both with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra – stunning pieces! I've done Mozart quite often but the Schubert I've not really heard for about 30 years, when I played it on viola. A real revelation for me as an

extraordinarily progressive piece for the early 1820s (and indeed it was not publically available for another 40 years).

What piece of music would you like to conduct most that you haven't yet?

Probably *La mer* or Bruckner's fifth.

Would you rather have an IPA with Henry Purcell or a single malt with John Blow?

Single malt with Purcell, it has to be. Or perhaps if I had both, Blow would be a great substitute. He's very underrated and sometimes writes fantastic pieces (e.g. *Venus and Adonis*) – his keyboard music is so boring that I cannot remember a single note.

The most underrated composer is...

Bruckner

If I wasn't a musician, I'd be...

Film director, novelist, philosopher or perhaps just really a pretentious twit!

My three carry-on essentials are...

Computer (films/recent articles/emails etc); very good headphones (just in case); the tablets that keep me alive (so far)

When I have the day off I...

Do more or less what I would do on the 'day on' but perhaps a little slower.

My favourite thing about working with singers is...

That they cannot necessarily hear when they're really good, which is probably a good thing.

I'm looking forward to leading Samling Academy Opera because

I like to hear people before they get too much self-belief! But from what I know of previous cohorts, they're confident and imaginative!

## The birth of English opera



**Ahead of our summer Academy Opera production, Samling's Peter Keenan introduces *Venus and Adonis*: a watershed moment in the history of English music.**

Henry Purcell has long enjoyed his status as the first 'great' British composer. Part of this success is owed to his association, initially as pupil then as a colleague, with John Blow (1648–1708). While Purcell's oeuvre is rich in dramatic works, many of which remain popular today including *Dido and Aeneas*, *The Fairy-Queen* and *King Arthur*, Blow's better-known output consists principally of anthems and odes. *Venus and Adonis* is his only dramatic work.

The masque – a mix of dance, speech and music with allegorical plots drawn from mythological subjects – arrived in England in the early sixteenth century as a form of entertainment for the court. Courtiers themselves performed in them wearing costumes and masques. As they became longer and more complex, professional singers and dancers were engaged too.

Blow's *Venus and Adonis*, subtitled a 'masque for the entertainment of the King' (Charles II), brings all these elements together with one notable distinction: speech is replaced by continuous singing which never impedes the action. Without realising it, Blow created in 1683 what is now generally recognised as the very first English opera.

Shakespeare of course was inspired to write on the same subject almost 100 years earlier. This poem, his first publication, was a bestseller and was reprinted no fewer than fifteen times. The myth, originating from Ancient Greece but heavily rooted in Roman mythology, must have been an obvious choice for Blow. It is possibly best known today through Ovid's seminal collection of poems *Metamorphoses*, written between 8 BC and 2 AD and which was a source for Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*, Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, Handel's *Acis and Galatea* and many other works.

The story of *Venus and Adonis* draws on themes of carefree pastoral love and grief. Venus, goddess of love and beauty, is enamoured with the hunter Adonis, who is fatally wounded by a great boar while out hunting. Where Ovid's and Shakespeare's narratives focus predominantly on Venus's unrequited love for Adonis, Blow's version presents a mutual love between the two. This recasting makes Adonis's death all the more tragic. It also brings Blow's *Venus and Adonis* much closer to the operatic tradition emerging in mainland Europe at the time, stemming from Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* of 1607 in mythological subject matter and Lully's contemporary *tragédies en musique* in its use of dance to articulate the drama.

It is not known who wrote the libretto for Blow's masque-cum-opera. Previously it had been attributed to Aphra Behn, one the first English women to establish herself as a professional writer and with whom Blow later collaborated. More recent scholarship suggests another emerging poet, Anne Finch (née Kingsmill), who was a maid of honour to the second Duchess of York at the time and – so the theory goes – had every reason to cover her tracks as a writer for its perceived impropriety!

Despite its tragic elements, typical for a work of this period, the story is balanced with plenty of playful comedy too (diverging further from the myth), so the librettist – whoever it may be – was clearly very skillful in adapting this tale, which resonates through the centuries to audiences today.

Samling Academy Opera presents *Venus and Adonis* and *Come, ye Sons of Art* on 20, 26 and 27 July. For full programme details, see back page.



Lemoyne Venus and Adonis 1729

## Samling Alumni Success



### Samling Artists named finalists of International Opera Awards

Soprano Lauren Fagan (Samling Artist 2016) and soprano Anush Hovhannisyan (Samling Artist 2014) were among a group of just ten finalists in the Young Singer of the Year category at the prestigious 2018 International Opera Awards.

Lauren, who appeared at our Wigmore Hall showcase in November, recently performed Strauss's *Four Last Songs* in China with the Xi'an Symphony Orchestra, and in September she will sing Woglinde at the Royal Opera House in Keith Warner's production of *Das Rheingold*, conducted by Sir Antonio Pappano.

Anush's recently released album of romances by Rimsky-Korsakov has met with critical acclaim and her upcoming performances include Violetta in Welsh National Opera's production of *La traviata*.



Photo: Patrick Allen

### Samling Artists take top prize at Oxford Lieder Festival

In March, soprano Harriet Burns (Samling Artist 2018), and pianist Michael Pandya (Samling Artist 2016 & 2017) won Oxford Lieder Festival's coveted Young Artist Platform Award. As part of their prize these young artists are each given recitals at the Oxford Lieder Festival, as well as a number of song recital engagements around the country.

## February Masterclass

Our latest group of Samling Artists raise a glass in an encore of 'Brindisi' at Sage Gateshead, the climax of a seven-day residency working with four masters of their craft: Ann Murray DBE, Alex Jennings, Michael Chance CBE and Caroline Dowdle.



Photos: © Mark Pinder







## AN EVENING WITH SAMLING

Thursday 10 May, 6pm  
Lit & Phil, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Samling Artists soprano Harriet Burns and pianist Ian Tindale present a programme perfect for an evening in spring with music by Schubert, Schumann, Fauré, Vaughan Williams and Copland.

**Tickets** £15 to include a reception and a complimentary glass of sparkling wine. Limited number of tickets available from Samling  
Tel: 01434 602885 Email: [enquiries@samling.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@samling.org.uk) and online: [samling.org.uk/events](http://samling.org.uk/events)



## SAMLING ACADEMY OPERA

**Venus and Adonis /  
Come, ye Sons of Art**

Friday 20 July, 7.30pm  
The Witham, Barnard Castle

Thursday 26 July, 7.30pm

Sage Two, Sage Gateshead

Friday 27 July, 7.30pm

Sage Two, Sage Gateshead

Samling Academy Singers  
Dunedin Consort

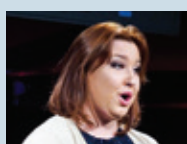
Music director John Butt conducts the Dunedin Consort – one of the UK's leading Baroque ensembles – in Samling Academy Opera's production of Blow's *Venus and Adonis* and Purcell's *Come, ye Sons of Art*. Directed by Samling Artist Miranda Wright, choreographed by Mandy Demetriou and starring Samling Artist counter-tenor Tim Morgan, don't miss the chance to witness this double-bill of Blow's masterpiece and Purcell's much-loved Baroque ode dedicated to Queen Mary.

**Tickets – now on sale!**

Friday 20 July, 7.30pm, The Witham, Barnard Castle  
Tickets £15 (£10 for under 25s/students)  
[thewitham.org.uk](http://thewitham.org.uk) | 01833 631107

Thursday 26 July, 7.30pm and Friday 27 July, 7.30pm  
Sage Two, Sage Gateshead  
Tickets £18 (£10 for under 25s/students)  
[sagegateshead.com](http://sagegateshead.com) | 0191 443 4661

Samling Academy Opera  
Associate Sponsor



## SAMLING ACADEMY 12–14 and 26–28 October

Starting the new academic year with six days of intensive training, thirty singers selected by audition will be given the opportunity to work with Samling's team of artists, coaches and experts, including:

Caroline Dowdle	Music Director
Patricia MacMahon	Vocal Teacher
Miranda Wright	Samling Artist & Vocal Teacher
Mandy Demetriou	Choreographer

Samling Artist Pianists:

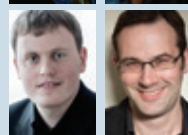
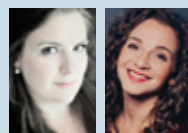
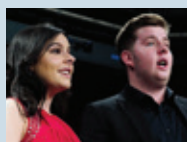
Jâms Coleman	Ian Tindale
Somi Kim	Jonathan Ware
Michael Pandya	

**Samling Academy Concert**  
Sunday 28 October, 7.30pm  
Sage Two, Sage Gateshead

Featuring some of the most talented young singers from across the North East, this year's Samling Academy perform a mix of opera and song in this special concert that showcases the singers' hard work over six days of workshops and masterclasses.

**Tickets** £14

Available from Sage Gateshead  
Tickets on sale: 9 June  
[sagegateshead.com](http://sagegateshead.com) | 0191 443 4661



## WIGMORE SHOWCASE

**Long Time Ago**

Wednesday 21 November, 7.30pm  
Wigmore Hall, London

Samling returns to Wigmore Hall for its annual showcase with Samling Artists from across the years exploring songs inspired by folklore. Telling stories of childhood, spirits, soldiers and lovers, the programme includes songs from Mahler's *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* with songs and readings from many other lands.

Elin Pritchard	soprano
Svetlana Stoyanova	mezzo-soprano
Nicky Spence	tenor
Julien Van Mellaerts	baritone
Jâms Coleman	piano
Christopher Glynn	piano
Alex Jennings	actor

Programme includes: **Mahler** Revelge; Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen; Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt; Lob des hohen Verstandes; Rheinlegendchen  
**Brahms** Da unten im Tale; In stiller nacht **Schubert** Der Fischer; Erlkönig **Schumann** Blaue Augen  
**Liszt** Die drei Zigeuner **Tchaikovsky** Was I not a blade of grass? **Dvůrák** The Pledge of Love **Grieg** Solveigs sang **Sibelius** Flickan kom ifrån sin älsklings möte  
**Shostakovich** Lullaby **Canteloube** Malurous qu'o uno fenno **Fauré** Levati, sol che la luna è levata  
**Grainger** Bold William Taylor **Ireland** The three ravens  
**Copland** I bought me a cat **Warlock** Yarmouth Fair  
**Clarke** The Seal Man **Britten** Tom Bowling

**Tickets** £40 £35 £30 £25 £15

Available from Wigmore Hall Box Office  
[wigmore-hall.org.uk](http://wigmore-hall.org.uk) | 020 7935 2141

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## SAMLING ARTIST PROGRAMME

Sunday 25 November –  
Sunday 2 December

Led by Sir John Tomlinson, Patricia MacMahon, Joseph Middleton, Jonathan Ware and Mandy Demetriou with staff pianist Ian Tindale



**Masterclass & Concert**  
Saturday 1 December 2018

1.30pm – 4.30pm and 5.15pm – 6.15pm  
Sage Two, Sage Gateshead



Joining Samling's leadership team for the first time, internationally renowned bass Sir John Tomlinson shares his musical knowledge and expertise with eight new Samling Artists. This working session – open to the public – is followed by a short concert bringing together the worlds of opera and concert performance; the highlight of Samling's residential week.



**Tickets** Masterclass and Concert £16.50

Available from Sage Gateshead  
Tickets on sale: 9 June  
[sagegateshead.com](http://sagegateshead.com) | 0191 443 4661



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