

Here's what we're doing ...

Our office may be empty, but we have been working harder than ever during the lockdown. We have not furloughed staff and our small team has switched seamlessly to working from home to ensure that Samling Institute's work supporting brilliant young artists continues unabated.

Young artists at all stages of their training are missing out on vital coaching and many are suffering devastating losses to their livelihoods, as concert halls, opera houses and summer festivals are closed or cancelled. This gives our work a new level of urgency as we plan and raise funds to enable us to offer life-changing experiences through our Samling Artist Programme and Academy.

Samling Academy

Our Academy production of Jonathan Dove's opera *Mansfield Park*, scheduled for July, has been postponed to next summer. We are grateful to all the tour venues who have worked with us to secure the dates so that the work of our creative team and cast, which started in January, can still be shared with audiences across the North East. Meanwhile, members of the cast have been picking up insights into their characters from Samling Artists who have sung the roles professionally. We have been dropping in on these video conversations on Zoom and will be sharing highlights in the run-up to the production.

We are making contingency plans for a digital Academy in October to ensure that the six days of intensive coaching at the start of the academic year can still go ahead regardless of the challenges posed by social distancing. Together with our leadership team, we are

developing online programmes to deliver individual and group masterclasses and workshops in vocal health, acting and movement. Our Samling Artist pianists have started recording the piano accompaniments for our Academy Singers' songs and arias – 120 pieces of music in total. With these recordings the singers will be able to prepare for the sessions and – crucially – we can ensure that the online lessons are possible with no time delay, as they will perform to a pre-recorded accompaniment. This archive of recorded repertoire will also have lasting benefit by providing us with a digital library to support young singers in the future who do not have access to a piano at home.

Samling Artist Programme

Following a first round of online submissions, we have shortlisted 105 applicants to audition for 16 places on the two Artist Programme weeks in December 2020 and January 2021. These auditions – originally scheduled to take place in April – will now be held later in the year. All of the shortlisted candidates have been contacted and informed of the situation and are aware of the dates of the two residential weeks they are being considered for.

We are also preparing a beautiful programme of song cycles on a maritime theme for 'Sea Pictures', our Samling Artist Showcase at Wigmore Hall on 5 November, details on page 2. We do not yet know what life will look like for performing arts in the coming months, but you can be assured that as we approach our 25th anniversary next year – and with your support – Samling Institute will continue to play its unique role at the heart of the classical singing world.

New Samling Institute films



Benjamin Appl

Staying Connected

With face to face singing lessons on hold, Samling Artists baritone Benjamin Appl and pianist James Baillieu have been working remotely during the lockdown with 17-year-old Samling Academy Singer Ben Ryan from Darlington.

We filmed Ben, Benjamin and James (main picture) in this Samling Institute digital masterclass, as together they explored the story of a young weaver in Benjamin Britten's arrangement of the folk song 'The Foggy Foggy Dew'.

At the end of the session all three gave a special performance for our Friends and supporters – a perfect end to an inspiring workshop.

Photo: Lars Borges / Sony Classical

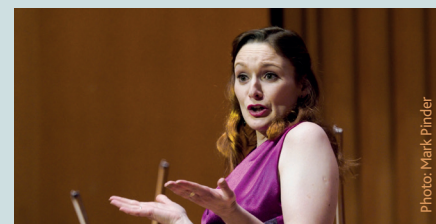


Photo: Mark Pinder

'A Safe Place to Be'

Mezzo-soprano Heather Lowe reflects here on what the Samling Artist Programme meant to her as a young emerging artist.

We caught her as she was rehearsing Rosina's aria from Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia*.

All three films are available on our website at samling.org.uk/news

James Baillieu

Pianist James Baillieu was a Samling Artist in 2009 and 2010 and has since returned as a leader for Samling Artist Programme and Samling Academy. He is one of the world's leading collaborative pianists, praised for his sensitivity and imagination in performances with leading singers and instrumentalists. In June 2020 he will be among the first group of musicians to return to UK concert halls when he takes part in Wigmore Hall's special series of lunchtime concerts to be broadcast live on BBC Radio 3.



My last live performance was ...

In Mold in Wales with the brilliant saxophonist Jess Giffam, the day before the UK was locked down.

The last piece of music I watched online was ...

Lise Davidtsen singing Alban Berg, 'Sieben frühe Lieder' live with members of the Oslo Philharmonic in a reduced chamber arrangement and performed in a socially distant manner!

If I could be locked down with any musical figure from history, it would be ...

Schubert. I would be fascinated to understand his composing process and to see what he would make of the world today and especially Covid19 – I imagine he would compose something amazing in response to it. I also have read that he was very good value at parties, so we would have fun too!

My biggest quarantine challenge has been ...

Trying to find and stick to a routine.

The first thing I'll do when lockdown ends is ...

Get a haircut!

My advice to Samling Academy Singers at this time is ...

Set yourself small and manageable daily goals. This could be learning a bar of a song, or a verse of text or even listening to three different recordings of a piece you are learning and discovering what interests you (or not) about various performances. I was reminded the other day that Beethoven composed in a time of constant war and struggle, and never really knew peace time. I found that inspiring and think of him as I challenge myself to be as creative as possible and continue working as hard as I can.

Alumni Success Update

In our last newsletter, we reported that Nicky Spence's recording of *The Diary of One Who Disappeared* by Janáček had been nominated in the 2020 BBC Music Magazine Awards.

We're delighted to update you with the news that Nicky's recording was the overall winner in the Vocal category. Another Samling Artist, soprano Rowan Pierce, appeared on the disc that won both Recording of the Year and the Opera Award – Purcell's *King Arthur*, directed by Paul McCreesh. Congratulations Nicky and Rowan.



Diary Dates



SAMLING ACADEMY CONCERT Sunday 18 October, 7.30pm Sage Two, Sage Gateshead

Introducing our 2020/21 Samling Academy, thirty young singers put into practice the skills they have developed over six days of intensive training in a programme of song and opera.

SAMLING ARTIST SHOWCASE 'Sea Pictures'

Thursday 5 November, 7.30pm
Wigmore Hall, London

Madison Nonoa soprano
Angharad Lyddon mezzo-soprano
Kunal Lahiry and Jonathan Ware piano

Patrick Terry countertenor
Benson Wilson baritone

Programme includes: Sibelius, *Luonnotar*; Elgar, *Sea Pictures*; Fauré, *L'horizon chimérique* and Rimsky-Korsakov, *U Morya*.

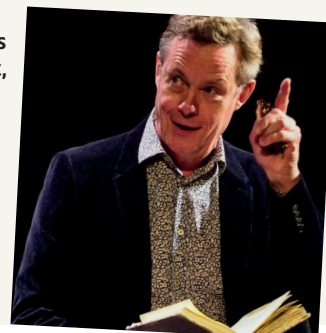


SAMLING MASTERCLASS AND CONCERT

Saturday 5 December 1.30 – 4.30pm and 5.15 – 6.15pm
Sage Two, Sage Gateshead

Introducing eight new Samling Artists in our public masterclass and concert, led by Italian opera star Barbara Fritolli, Samling Artist pianist Joseph Middleton and actor Alex Jennings.

Tickets are not yet on sale.
We will be in touch when box offices reopen.



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