



## Celebrating 25 Years



Samling Artist Claire Lees  
Photo: Mark Pinder

**Samling Institute has grown from a concert in a barn to a global family of more than five-hundred singers, pianists and leaders.**

The first concert, given by Katarina Karnéus and the poet Tony Harrison twenty-five years ago was the beginning of an ambitious plan to bring world-class coaching in song and opera to a region with no conservatoire or resident opera company. The result was the Samling Artist Programme and this intensive residential masterclass in song and opera for early career singers and pianists remains at the heart of everything we do.

**'I am absolutely thrilled that Samling Institute has reached this important milestone and would like to congratulate Karon Wright, whose vision and tenacity over the past 25 years has created an organisation of national and international significance. It is an incredible achievement with no public financial support and a very small team, offering a unique artistic experience which inspires so many young artists.'**

Founder and former chairman Roger McKechnie

Patron Sir Thomas Allen and Malcolm Martineau joined us for the first week-long residency and they both return in this anniversary year. They will be joined by sopranos Yvonne Kenny and Joan Rodgers, conductor Mark Wigglesworth, actors James Garnon and Alex Jennings, and Samling Artist pianists Ian Tindale and Jo Ramadan.

Sir Thomas said, 'I derive tremendous satisfaction from reading programme details these days when I notice an array of singers from around the world acknowledging the fact that they are Samling Artists. Little did I realise when we began the impact Samling would have on singers and accompanists alike.'

From the very beginning, our outreach programme has brought the brilliant young artists we work with into schools across the North East and Cumbria, benefitting many thousands of young people. In 2012 we took this one step further by creating Samling Academy, a programme for young singers growing up or studying in the region, in partnership with Newcastle and Durham universities and Sage Gateshead. We are delighted that this initiative will be further strengthened this year when Northumbria University joins the partnership.

Following the success of our Academy activities, we have developed Samling Futures, a programme of workshops and masterclasses for schools. This year these sessions will be held online, continuing our successful virtual Samling Academy activities in response to the pandemic. Working closely with the Music Education Hubs in Northumberland, Tyne and Wear and Teesside, Samling Futures will introduce students in state schools to the pathways Samling Academy can offer them into classical music and singing.

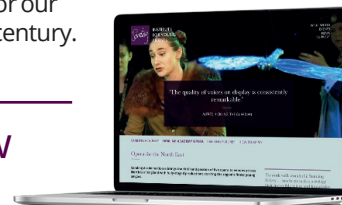
Plans are now in place for Samling Academy Opera's production of Jonathan Dove's *Mansfield Park*, which has been postponed

because of the pandemic and the closure of venues. We are delighted to announce that in July this will include two performances at Marchmont House, in the Scottish Borders, as part of an exciting new partnership with this historic house and creative community.

Jonathan Dove's music is also at the centre of this year's Samling Artist Showcase at Wigmore Hall in November, when we will give the world premiere performance of a new duet song-cycle by Dove, commissioned for our twenty-fifth anniversary.

Although we begin this anniversary year in circumstances that we couldn't possibly have imagined even a year ago, we continue to shape exciting plans that will lay the foundations for our next quarter-century.

## Our new website



**So that we can bring you all of our anniversary news in style, we have launched a beautiful redesign of our website, with photos and videos taking centre-stage.**

**The new site brings added technical and security features to improve your experience, whether you're reading on a computer, tablet or mobile phone. Take a look at [samling.org.uk](http://samling.org.uk)**



## Digital Academy

**How do you bring together 25 singers, 12 leaders, 120 pieces of music, 8 group workshops, an astonishing 336 masterclasses and a concert with everyone taking part remotely?**

This was the challenge we faced in putting together this year's Samling Academy but after a lot of hard work and a steep technological learning-curve for everyone involved, it all came together very successfully.

As well as having one-to-one sessions with all the leaders, the Academy Singers received workshops on vocal health and singing in Italian. They also worked on Shakespeare's sonnets with actor James Garnon and stagecraft with Mandy Demetriou and they put their newly acquired online skills into practice by making filmed performances.

Joan Rodgers has regularly led the Samling Artist Programme and this year joined us as an Academy leader for the first time. 'The six days were really well put together by the Samling team,' she said. 'It was a joy to work with these talented young singers and they all gave so much that sometimes I even forgot that we weren't in the same room. I hope I can come and meet them in person one day.'

Watch highlights of our virtual Academy in a film introduced by Academy Singer Rose Galbraith and available on our new website: [samling.org.uk](http://samling.org.uk)

## Recent Alumni Success

**Our story began with a concert by Katarina Karnéus who had just won BBC Cardiff Singer of the World and since then Samling Artists have regularly won major prizes across the world, most recently when Samling Artist baritones Jerome Knox and Morgan Pearce took first and second prizes at the Handel Singing Competition in December.**

After his win, Jerome told us about how he has been able to make the most of the skills that he learnt during his time on the Samling Artist Programme:

'I'm really thrilled to have won first prize ... it was incredible to perform with the London Handel Orchestra and conductor Laurence Cummings after so many months of not being able to perform. Despite no audience, we were very lucky that the whole event was streamed live online.

Since attending Samling in 2019, I've definitely enjoyed more success in competitions. I learnt so much at Samling and was very

fortunate to have the opportunity to work on my story-telling with actor Alex Hassell.

I also found a lot more confidence to take risks in performing thanks to all the coaches and mentors. After being a finalist at the Grange Festival International Singing Competition 2019 and winning the Villa Medici Prize, it was extremely satisfying to do even better this year with first prize at the Handel Singing Competition 2020.'

Since its creation in 2012, we have seen Samling Academy Singers progressing to music colleges and professional careers. Continuing this story of success, we're thrilled that current Academy Singer Tia Jordan Radix-Callixte has been offered a four-year full scholarship to study as an undergraduate at the Royal College of Music from September.



Above: Jerome Knox (L) and Alex Hassell, Samling Artist Programme

Left: Tia Jordan Radix-Callixte, Samling Academy Concert  
Photos: Mark Pinder

## A New Partnership

**A new chapter in Samling Institute's story opens this year when we begin an exciting partnership with Marchmont House in the Scottish Borders.**



The Arts and Crafts music room at Marchmont House

Marchmont has a rich history of supporting artistic excellence, which Director Hugo Burge is energetically reviving following an award-winning restoration of the house. The estate hosts a creative community for artists and craftspeople and has an impressive collection of contemporary sculpture, including pieces by Antony Gormley, David Nash and Eduardo Paolozzi.

Marchmont's association with the arts dates back to the early 20th century and its owner Robert Finnie McEwen, who commissioned leading Arts and Crafts architect Robert Lorimer to extend the original Palladian house. McEwen and his children were fine musicians, and he included a music room, complete with organ. Stanford and Vaughan Williams were regular guests at Marchmont, and McEwen gave Stanford generous financial support that helped him continue to compose.

Hugo Burge and his team are looking forward to welcoming our Artist Programme and Academy Opera in 2021:

'Samling Institute and Marchmont share the same aspiration to create spaces where people can be inspired by each other and by their surroundings and we're excited that once again, the house will be playing a role in nurturing musical talent.'

Karon Wright, Artistic and Executive Director of Samling Institute added, 'As soon as I visited Marchmont and met Hugo, I knew that this was a natural fit for us. I'm thrilled to be bringing our artists and Academy Opera to a place with such a deep tradition of care for the arts. I know that we'll be warmly welcomed at Marchmont and we're excited about what the future holds for our partnership.'

Photo: Marchmont Farms Limited

## DIARY DATES

**Please see our new website for the most up-to-date news on events. Please note that at this time, all events are provisional and are subject to Covid-19 restrictions and opening of venues.**



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