



Keeping Music Alive

Samling Artist Louise Alder giving an online masterclass with Samling Academy Singer Martha Cook. Full story page 2.

Through the pandemic we chose not to furlough and have poured our energies into supporting young artists through online events. Now, as we cautiously emerge from lockdown, we are making plans to welcome new Samling Artists to our residential Artist Programme.

We're thrilled that in July conductor Sir Mark Elder will be joining us for the first time to lead, alongside Sir Thomas Allen and Yvonne Kenny. As it is unlikely that we will be able to hold any public events, we are planning to capture some of the work during the week to share with you on film, so keep an eye on our website for details.

As the pandemic has robbed so many early career musicians of all opportunities to study and perform, we are also pleased to announce that we're adding a third week to this year's schedule with plans in place this November and in February next year with our new partner venue Marchmont House near Berwick-upon-Tweed.

Every year we say farewell to some of our Academy Singers as they move on to new musical adventures and we welcome new young singers who are starting to explore their potential. Our Samling Futures programme helps us to find the next generation of Academy Singers by bringing the world of classical singing to students at schools

in the North East. Read more about this year's Samling Futures events on page 2.

This year our Samling Academy auditions were held online, with candidates singing live via Zoom to our panel. We are very grateful to all the young singers who braved the technological challenges to sing for us, and to their teachers for supporting them at what has been a very difficult time for schools and universities. We have chosen a new cohort of thirty singers and we look forward to meeting them – in person, we hope – for six intensive days of coaching and workshops in October.

Although schools and singing teachers have been working incredibly hard supporting students, online work is of course no substitute for the alchemy that happens when brilliant young people come together in a room with great artists. To help support young people in our region as they return to live music-making, we have selected a group of younger singers from North East schools who showed considerable promise at this year's Samling Academy auditions for a special development weekend, at which they'll be offered intensive coaching in performance skills.

There may still be challenges ahead but one thing is certain – with your support, Samling Institute will continue to play its part in nurturing the music creators of the future.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SAMLING ARTIST PROGRAMME **Sunday 25 July – Sunday 1 August**

Led by Sir Thomas Allen, Sir Mark Elder and Yvonne Kenny

Sunday 21 November – Sunday 28 November

Led by Joan Rodgers, Malcolm Martineau and actor James Garnon

SAMLING ACADEMY **8–10 and 22–24 October**

With an afternoon concert at Sage Gateshead on Sunday 24 October.

SAMLING ARTIST SHOWCASE, **WIGMORE HALL**

Sunday 7 November

Including the world premiere of a duet song-cycle by Jonathan Dove, commissioned to celebrate Samling Institute's 25th anniversary.

All events are provisional and subject to Covid-19 restrictions. Details and ticket information for public events will be announced on our website and social media.

Samling Futures

With schools closed and the country in lockdown, we faced a new set of challenges in bringing our Samling Futures workshops to secondary school students this year.

We responded by holding masterclasses online and in doing so were able to widen the range of Samling Artists leading the sessions. Soprano Louise Alder and bass-baritone Milan Siljanov both joined us from Frankfurt and Munich and tenor Nicky Spence took time out from volunteering as a Covid-19 vaccinator to lead five of our current Samling Academy Singers.

In front of audiences of students and teachers from schools and the music education hubs in North Tyneside, Tees Valley and Northumberland, they demonstrated the range of techniques required to deliver a really convincing and personal performance. The sessions covered a wide range of repertoire, with song and opera in English, German and Italian.

Shakespearean actor James Garnon, who regularly leads on both of our programmes, also joined all of the sessions and encouraged the audiences to try out techniques to take ownership of a text and be honest and true in the moment.

Three students, chosen by the host Music Hubs, were also given opportunity to



Samling Artists Nicky Spence and Milan Siljanov and Samling Academy Singer Martha Cook taking part in Samling Futures

'have a go' and work in masterclass with the Samling Artist leaders.

Academy Singer Martha Cook, pictured above working on Mozart's 'Un moto di gioia' said, 'It was a privilege to sing with Louise Alder, her input and advice was helpful and truly inspiring. Samling Institute has done a fantastic job at using technology so we can continue to sing and perform together.'

Nikki Lycett-Findlay of Tees Valley Music Service explained how the event had benefitted her students, 'This was an incredible opportunity, I've had some lovely messages from my students saying how much they've taken from the experience and are now inspired to achieve similar goals and standards'.

We look forward to meeting the students who successfully auditioned for us following Samling Futures.

SAMLING SHORTS Sir Mark Elder



Photo credit: Ben Ealovega

Sir Mark Elder CH CBE is a man who makes a difference. He spent 14 years as music director of English National Opera as part of the team that created ENO's 'powerhouse' era, and under his direction, Manchester's Hallé Orchestra has been transformed into one of the UK's most exciting orchestras.

He is a Principal Artist of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and through his work with Opera Rara, has brought neglected Italian masterpieces back to the stage and studio. We are also delighted to learn that he was born in Samling Institute's home town, Hexham!

My earliest musical memory is...

the sound of a little brass quintet from the Salvation Army playing hymns every Sunday evening in the summer on the corner of the Broadway in Crouch End. Our house was only

yards away, and their very mellow, beautiful sound contrasted dramatically with the famous Clock Tower chiming on the quarter! Charles Ives would have loved it!

The last work I conducted was...

the 'Variations on a Theme by Tchaikovsky' by Arensky. I did this beautiful work with the students of the Royal Academy – very socially distanced of course – as part of a lunchtime concert. It is for strings, and despite being so far apart they managed to find a lovely sound. It was the first time they had played together for many months!

The last piece of music I listened to was...

'Offertorium' by the great Russian composer Sofia Gubaydulina. It is an extraordinary violin concerto. I listened to it twice, straight through. The music was so much clearer and moving the second time. What had felt too complicated the first time was totally clear the second! Beautiful!

My favourite thing about Manchester is...

the feeling I had twenty years ago when I settled there, that I was part of a Renaissance. The city was changing very fast; still, now, buildings are being razed to the ground and a new confidence is being born. Manchester's character is changing with it, and our wonderful orchestra, the Hallé, is right there in the middle of it all!

The 'rare' opera that everyone should try is ...

two years ago, as my last project as Artistic Director of Opera Rara, we recorded Donizetti's completely unknown tragic opera 'Il Paria' (The Pariah). The story is a little confusing but the situations are very dramatic and powerful. It is about great passions in the context of religious

intolerance – it takes place in India! There are spectacular singing roles for soprano, tenor and baritone. It was written for three of the most famous singers of the 1820's. Very enjoyable and full of wonderful tunes, this opera is a must!

Beer with Wagner or a glass of wine with Verdi?

A great choice! I would have a great list of questions for them both...! I am not sure how welcoming and charming Wagner would be! Verdi, for all his gruffness, would be startling to meet. He did so much for our profession, and I adore the humanity in his operas. Don Carlos, Simon Boccanegra, Falstaff...

To all young musicians embarking on the professional path, I would counsel...

don't lose your inner self-belief! It is surely being put to the test in these months. Even if, for a little time, you are forced to look elsewhere to earn money, your talent – the thing that brought you to music in the first place – must be treasured, protected. Keep working, practising. Try and find opportunities, corners to make music – however humble – with other people. In the not too distant future, you need to be ready to audition again; your courage and dedication will be on show.



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