



Photo credit: Mark Pinder

## When Music Speaks

Sir Mark Elder with mezzo-soprano Emma Roberts, Samling Artist Programme public masterclass, Marchmont House.

### Our Samling Academy Singers invite you to eavesdrop on intimate conversations between families, friends and lovers in their summer concerts this July.

'Conversation Pieces' is a semi-staged production with song, opera and poetry, extending the performance skills that our Academy Singers have been developing over the year by using movement, props and lighting. The production will also include some of the work from our recent three-day 'Scenes from Opera' workshop, when the Academy Singers worked on selected scenes by Britten, Mozart and Tchaikovsky led by actor James Garnon and theatre director Susannah Waters. 'Conversation Pieces' will be directed by Samling Artist Miranda Wright and performances take place at Saltburn Arts and Sage Gateshead following an extended period of rehearsal and coaching. Samling Artist pianist Leo Nicholson joins the team as music director and will accompany the concerts.

Every summer, we say farewell to Academy Singers who are moving on to the next stage of their musical journey and once again this year we're delighted to see singers going on to undergraduate and postgraduate studies on scholarships at the country's top conservatoires.

We also look forward to welcoming our new Samling Academy cohort in October,

following auditions held at the end of March. Thirty young singers from schools and universities across the North East have been offered places, including students from the schools we visited for our Samling Futures workshops in January (see p2).

As we go to press, we are preparing for auditions in London and Glasgow for the Samling Artist Programme. Following a highly competitive three-stage process of recommendation, video application and live auditions, twelve singers and four pianists will be offered coveted places for two residential weeks to be held at Marchmont House in November 2023 and March 2024, with leaders including soprano Yvonne Kenny AM, pianists Simon Lepper and Samling Artist James Baillieu.

### Samling and Song

The response to the first round of applications for our new Samling and Song residencies for singer and pianist duos has been fantastic. We asked for proposals that present art-song in new ways, to new audiences across the UK and which explore repertoire by under-represented groups.

The first two duos chosen to benefit are mezzo-soprano Shakira Tsindos and pianist Lana Bode and baritone Kieran Rayner and pianist Gamal Khamis. Over the next few months they will work with their project

mentors before spending a week at Marchmont to refine and rehearse their programmes. The variety and imagination of the applications we received made it clear that art-song has a lively future and we are looking forward to following the two selected projects through to fruition.



Timesight Photographic

## Samling at Sage

**Six Samling Artists joined Royal Northern Sinfonia and conductor Nicholas McGegan at Sage One in February for a concert of baroque choral music alongside the UK premiere of *Is a rose*, a song cycle by American composer Caroline Shaw.**

Mezzo-soprano Katherine Aitken (pictured above) gave an electrifying performance of *Is a rose* to an audience that included Newcastle based poet, Jacob Polley, whose poem 'The Edge' opens Shaw's work.

Katherine was joined by Samling Artists sopranos Harriet Burns and Lauren Lodge-Campbell, tenors Michael Bell and Harry Grigg and baritone Daniel Barrett for a setting of *Dixit Dominus* by Antonio Vivaldi and Johann Sebastian Bach's *Magnificat*. All six artists were making their Sage One debut and appreciated the warm welcome they received from the large audience.

Thank you so much for another incredible Samling experience. I mean it sincerely when I say that no other company I have ever worked for is making such a deep and profound impact on professionals and youngsters alike. I applaud you all so much.' *Samling Artist Neil Balfour*

# Spotlight on Cardiff

Samling Artist singers have appeared in the finals of every BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition since 2005 and this year is no exception. Mezzo-soprano Beth Taylor and bass William Thomas told us about their preparations for this year's finals.

Beth began by saying 'I'm really enjoying preparing my repertoire for Cardiff, which I'm treating more like a performance and less like a competition. I'm hoping the audience will enjoy what I offer and can only hope I present my truest and best self. It is tricky to balance preparing the competition alongside other exciting projects coming up over the summer but, whilst in the practice room, it's a great opportunity to continue delving into details and always weaving that perfect tapestry between text and music – our greatest privilege as singers! The Samling Artist Programme was a key moment in realising this and I'm very lucky to have been part of that journey of discovery, which I continue to travel.'

William added 'As I prepare for Cardiff, I'm definitely still making use of what I learnt during the Samling Artist Programme. It was amazing that I got to work with Sir Mark Elder, Sir Thomas Allen and actor Alex Jennings in the same week. They really helped me not just as a singer but also as an actor, to stand still, not give too much with my face and gestures and to focus on using my eyes to communicate. That's particularly useful when you're performing arias in a concert situation such as Cardiff and it's just you and the music with nothing else to help you.'

'It really means a lot to feel the firm voice of support from Samling Institute and to be reminded of what you do for emerging artists and it is warmly received in an otherwise turbulent time in our industry,' said Beth.

Beth and William follow 21 previous Samling Artist singers into the finals, among them Catriona Morison who won both the main prize and the song prize in 2017 and audience-prize winners Louise Alder and Claire Barnett-Jones. Watch out too for Samling Artist pianists in the Song Prize finals. We're looking forward to following Beth and William's progress and wish them all every success.



Studio 52 London



Photo: Thomas Gimson



# Samling Futures

There's something magical about seeing a hall full of buzzing, excited teenagers being brought to complete silence by a single voice.

Students at St Anthony's Girls' Catholic Academy in Sunderland were treated to a concert of opera arias by Samling Artists mezzo-soprano Katherine Aitken, bass-baritone Neil Balfour and pianist Ella O'Neill as part of this year's Samling Futures visits. The project was bigger than ever, reaching over 500 students and teachers in seven state secondary schools in Berwickshire, Hexham, Newcastle, South Shields, Sunderland and Durham.

Katherine, Neil and Ella were joined by a team of six Samling Academy Singers who took part in masterclasses, demonstrating the skills that go into classical singing and giving a taster of what happens at Samling Academy. The Samling Artists also worked with singers from the host schools. We're delighted that some of those singers have now successfully auditioned for next year's Samling Academy and we look forward to welcoming them in October.



Photos: Mark Pinder

'Being a Samling Artist has, without exaggeration, been one of the most artistically fulfilling things I've done. You really are part of a family and as a young singer in what can be a gruelling profession, having someone on your side is invaluable.' *Samling Artist Katherine Aitken*



## Samling Artist Programme

Most artists would consider it an enormous privilege to spend just half an hour working in a masterclass with Sir Mark Elder but thanks to the Samling Artist Programme, six singers and two pianists were able to spend an entire week of working and living with one of the world's leading conductors. They also benefitted from intensive coaching with soprano Patricia MacMahon, Samling Artist pianist Jonathan Ware and actor Scott Brooksbank with support from staff pianist Samling Artist Marianna Abrahamyan. The Samling Artists who took part were sopranos Jessica Cale and Aleksandra Chernenko, mezzo-sopranos Melissa Gregory and Emma Roberts, baritones Edward Kim and Jeremy Kleeman and pianists Emily Hoh and Ella O'Neill.



*'It truly was a week of inspiration and a time of growth in many aspects. I will keep this time in my heart and will make the most of the priceless knowledge I gained as a Samling Artist.'*  
Aleksandra Chernenko





**SAMLING ACADEMY SUMMER CONCERTS 'Conversation Pieces'**

**Tuesday 11 July, 7.30pm**  
**Saltburn Arts**  
**Friday 14 July, 7.30pm**  
**Sage Gateshead**

Samling Academy's semi-staged summer concert follows the art of conversation through song, opera and poetry and reveals how music speaks when words fail. The concert is directed by Samling Artists Miranda Wright and pianist Leo Nicholson who will also accompany the Academy Singers.



**SAMLING ARTIST PROGRAMME**

**Sunday 26 November - Sunday 3 December**

The core of Samling Institute's work, an intense week of coaching and musical discovery, led by world-class artists.



**Samling In Masterclass**

**Saturday 2 December, 1.30 - 4.30pm**  
**Marchmont House, Greenlaw, Berwickshire, TD10 6YL**  
**marchmonthouse.com**

Your chance to get close to the music as eight young artists work on song and opera repertoire with leaders including soprano Yvonne Kenny AM and pianist Simon Lepper. This public masterclass takes place in the stunning Arts and Crafts music room at Marchmont House.



**SAMLING ACADEMY**

**Friday 6 - Sunday 8 October and Friday 20 - Sunday 22 October**

Thirty young singers aged 14-21 spend six days of intensive musical and artistic exploration, under the guidance of an outstanding team of leaders and coaches.



Caroline Dowdle Music Director  
 Joan Rodgers CBE soprano  
 James Garnon actor  
 Mandy Demetriou movement coach



**Samling Artist leaders**

Miranda Wright vocal teacher  
 James Newby baritone  
 Dominic Sedgwick baritone  
 Jo Ramadan pianist  
 Jonathan Ware pianist  
 Emily Hoh pianist  
 Leo Nicholson pianist  
 Ella O'Neill pianist  
 Krystal Tunnicliffe pianist



**POST-CONCERT RECEPTIONS**

**Samling Friends are invited to join us to meet our Academy leaders and singers over a drink following our concerts at Sage Gateshead in July and October.**

Our Friends are at the heart of our creative community and help to make the Samling experience unique.

By joining Samling Friends, you are helping to create lifechanging opportunities for talented young musicians.

Friends also receive priority booking to events at Marchmont House, acknowledgement in concert programmes and invitations to other exclusive events.

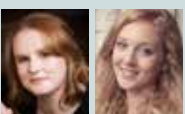
Membership is £40 per year or £60 for a couple. Find out more and join online at: [samling.org.uk/support/friends](http://samling.org.uk/support/friends)



**Samling Academy in Concert**

**Sunday 22 October, 3pm**  
**Sage Gateshead**

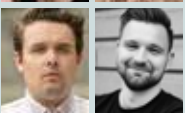
Introducing our 2023/24 Samling Academy Singers in an afternoon concert of songs and arias, accompanied by Samling Artist pianists.



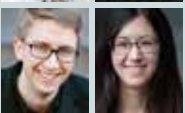
**SAMLING ARTIST SHOWCASE 'Conversation Pieces'**

**Tuesday 7 November, 7.30pm**  
**Wigmore Hall, London**

Inspired by the world of eighteenth-century conversation piece portraits, six Samling Artists reveal in song what might have been said and what was left unsaid across time and space.



**Harriet Burns** soprano  
**Bethany Horak-Hallett** mezzo-soprano  
**Ted Black** tenor  
**James Newby** baritone  
**Ian Tindale** piano  
**Krystal Tunnicliffe** piano



Tickets: £40, £35, £30, £25, £16  
 General booking 4 May  
[wigmore-hall.org.uk](http://wigmore-hall.org.uk)

Associate sponsor



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