



Samling Academy Opera *Dido and Aeneas*.
Photo: Mark Pinder

Investing in Talent

This summer's Samling Academy Opera *Dido and Aeneas* showed yet again that when you invest in young people, the results can be astonishing. Most of our young cast were performing in an opera for the first time and they rose to the challenge with grace and integrity.

Many of the cast will be continuing their Academy journey with us in October when we are also welcoming 12 new singers to the programme, including young people who took part in workshops as part of our Samling Singing Schools programme.

Over the past few years we have worked with Berwickshire High School, holding Samling Futures visits and inviting their students to informal concerts during our Artist Programme residencies at Marchmont House and we are delighted that one of their singers has successfully auditioned for Samling Academy. She'll be joining singers from schools in Sunderland, Newcastle, Durham, Teesside and Cleveland and from our partner universities.

You can see our Samling Academy Singers in an afternoon concert on Sunday 26 October at The Glasshouse, when they'll be putting into practice everything they've worked on over six intensive days of masterclasses and workshops. See p4 for more details and ticket information.

Queen Elizabeth High School in Hexham will join our Samling Singing Schools programme this autumn. Samling Artist Miranda Wright will lead ensemble and solo classes and she will work with the school music team, sharing best practice in teaching singing to developing voices.

Our annual Samling Artist Showcase at Wigmore Hall will reflect on things earthly and heavenly. Soprano Sarah Gilford, mezzo-soprano Ellen Pearson, tenor Hugo Brady, baritone Sam Hird and pianists Jonathan Ware and Francesca Lauri form the line up, with a programme including Ludwig van Beethoven's only song cycle *An die ferne Geliebte*; and selections from Gabriel Fauré's *La bonne chanson*; Gustav Mahler's *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* and William Bolcom's witty *Cabaret Songs*.

If you're a member of our Friends scheme, you are invited to join us for a drink with the artists after the concert.

Samling Artist Headlines Proms

Our global family of Samling Artists now numbers over 425 and their impact is growing every year. This year, Louise Alder became the first Samling Artist to headline one of the world's biggest classical music events, the Last Night of the Proms.

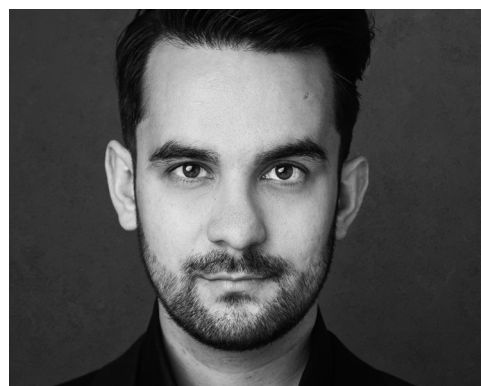


BBC / Chris Christodoulou

You can read highlights of our Samling Artists' successes in a monthly news bulletin on our website and social media and as we approach our 30th anniversary next year, we are making plans to celebrate their achievements and build a lasting legacy.

WHY SAMLING INSTITUTE?

'Surrounded by calm and focus, with nothing to pull me away, I was finally able to return to the joy of making music for its own sake. That deep immersion felt like such a rare gift. Honestly, it made my heart race – like remembering a first love (only with more arias and less dramas!)' *Samling Artist Sarah Chae*



Samling Artist Programme

Our summer Samling Artist Programme was led by the acclaimed French soprano **Véronique Gens**, pianist **Susan Manoff** and actor **James Garnon** with staff pianist **Ian Tindale**. Taking part in the programme were sopranos Sarah Chae, Sofia Kirwan-Baez and Georgie Malcolm, mezzo-soprano Cláudia Ribas, baritone Patrick Dow, bass-baritone Michael Ronan and pianists Alfred Fardell and Daniel Silcock. The week ended with a public masterclass on a sunny Saturday afternoon, with songs and arias by Bizet, Poulenc, Rachmaninoff, Berg, Britten and Mahler.



Photos: Mark Pinder



Samling and Song

Samling Artist duo baritone Neil Balfour and pianist Sid Ramchander will be premiering 'Untold Lives' at Oxford Song on Wednesday 15 October.

The title work of their recital is a new cycle written for the duo by Cheryl Frances Hoad using a libretto assembled by Neil from letters sent by Indian soldiers during World War I. The programme also includes songs by Shruthi Rajasekar and Reena Esmail drawing on both Indian and Western traditions.

The project is part of our Samling and Song initiative, giving the duos residencies to develop and rehearse new programmes in partnership with the Hugo Burge Foundation. As part of the award, Neil and Sid will also receive mentoring from Joan Rodgers CBE and actor James Garnon. They plan further performances in the North of England, giving Asian communities a rare opportunity to see their culture reflected in art song.

'The subject matter that has a personal connection to me and my family. To combine the exploration, work and discovery of this special project with my Samling family is just a dream come true. I couldn't really ask for more than having some of my favourite artists and facilitators all coming together to make this new music happen.'

Sid Ramchander

'What a spectacular Dido and Aeneas! Your young cast were intensely superb. They engaged with each other and the audience to give a mesmeric performance with dancing that was both innovative and fluid. It was enchanting.'

Dr Caroline Pryer, Lord Lieutenant of Northumberland



Samling Academy Opera

Our Samling Academy Opera production of *Dido and Aeneas* combined home-grown talent and international excellence – and showed why the North East is the place to be for young classical singers.

Three-quarters of the cast of current and recent Academy Singers grew up in North East England and most of the chorus are still at school. Not only did they have their first experience of performing a fully staged opera, but they did so with one of Europe's leading ensembles, Dunedin Consort, directed by John Butt. Samling Artist Miranda Wright directed the production and Mandy Demetriou devised the choreography and coached the cast in the intricacies of baroque dance and gesture.

Adding to the 'firsts', this was the first live opera to be staged at The Fire Station in Sunderland and our first visit to this new venue.





SAMLING ACADEMY

10–12 October and 24–26 October

Thirty young singers selected by audition from schools and universities across the North East begin their year with six days of masterclasses and workshops under the direction of Caroline Dowdle and led by an impressive team of teachers, singers, pianists, an actor and a movement coach.

Samling Academy Leaders

Caroline Dowdle Music Director

Joan Rodgers soprano

Miranda Wright Samling Artist vocal teacher

Katherine Aitken Samling Artist mezzo-soprano

Nick Pritchard Samling Artist tenor

Jonathan Ware Samling Artist pianist

Jo Ramadan Samling Artist pianist

James Garnon actor

Desireé Kongerød movement coach

And Samling Artist pianists **Alfred Fardell,**

George Ireland, Francesca Lauri,

Leo Nicholson, Daniel Peter Silcock

and **Harry Rylance**



SAMLING ACADEMY IN CONCERT

Sunday 26 October 3pm

Sage Two, The Glasshouse International Centre for Music

An afternoon of song and opera introducing our 2025/26 Samling Academy Singers, accompanied by Samling Artist pianists.

Tickets £18

theglasshouseicm.org | 0191 443 4661

SAMLING ARTIST SHOWCASE

Between Heaven and Earth

Tuesday 4 November 2025, 7.30pm
Wigmore Hall, London

Sarah Gilford soprano
Ellen Pearson mezzo-soprano
Hugo Brady tenor
Sam Hird baritone
Jonathan Ware piano
Francesca Lauri piano

Tickets £18–£40
under-35s £5
wigmore-hall.org.uk



Be part of their future

As a charity that receives no public funding and does not have an endowment, we are grateful for the support of the many organisations and individuals who have shared our belief in giving young people opportunities to discover and develop their musical talents.

Thousands of young people have benefitted from this work, from school students at the start of their musical journey to artists on the brink of international careers. We are also proud that we have been able to provide all this at no cost to participants so that we can direct our support where it is most needed. Talent, potential and dedication are the only criteria for admission to the Artist Programme and Academy and schools are not charged for our Futures and Singing School programmes.



Your donation is their future
Visit samling.org.uk/support



Samling Institute for Young Artists

Community Centre | Gilesgate | Hexham

Northumberland | NE46 3NP

Tel: 01434 602885

Email: enquiries@samling.org.uk

samling.org.uk

Patron: Sir Thomas Allen CBE

Artistic and Executive Director: Karon Wright MBE

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