



English Touring Opera present 'Handelfest', featuring a brand-new production of *Tamerlano* and revivals of critically acclaimed productions *Ottone* and *Agrippina*

1 October – 12 November

London, Poole, Great Malvern, Saffron Walden, Buxton, Exeter & Truro

This autumn also sees world premiere of *Tutankhamun's Shoes*, a new interactive opera for children

21 October – 2 December

London & Oxford

English Touring Opera (ETO) returns to stages across the UK this autumn with 'Handelfest', showcasing three of Handel's finest operas – *Ottone*, *Agrippina* and *Tamerlano* – giving audiences up and down the country the chance to immerse themselves in the music of one of the world's greatest composers.

This autumn also sees the world premiere of their new interactive opera for children, *Tutankhamun's Shoes*, which will tour theatres, schools and museums across England - making exceptional opera available and accessible to new audiences across the country.

The tour will feature a brand-new production of Handel's gripping psychological drama *Tamerlano*, directed by ETO's Artistic Director **James Conway** performed by period instrument partners the **Old Street Band** [Saturday 8 October – Saturday 12 November]. Exploring themes of tyranny and freedom, the story of the eponymous emperor and his prisoner Bajazet's intense power struggle is brought to life in a stunning modern production, shining new light on one of Handel's darker operas. Regarded as one of the composer's finest works and written in the same year as *Giulio Cesare* and *Rodelinda*, *Tamerlano* contains not only some of Handel's finest music but also one of the first major tenor roles in opera. Featuring prominent countertenor **Rodrigo Sosa Dal Pozzo** in the title role and **Jorge Navarro Colorado** as Bajazet, the talented young cast also includes **James Hall**, **Ellie Laugharne** and **April Koyejo-Audiger**.

The tour also includes revivals of two critically acclaimed ETO productions. A revival of its 2014 production of *Ottone* opens Handelfest, giving audiences a rare opportunity to see this often-neglected gem [Saturday 1 October – Wednesday 9 October]. Featuring radiant Byzantine-inspired designs by **takis** and sung in a translation by **Andrew Porter**, the original production was loved by audiences and critics alike, stating that "*this often-overlooked Handel opera received the performance it deserves*" (The Daily Telegraph). **James Hall** also stars in this production in the title

role, joined by **Nazan Fikret** as Teofane, **Gillian Webster** as Gismonda and **Kieron-Connor Valentine** as Adelberto, and ETO Music Director **Gerry Cornelius** conducts the **Old Street Band**.

Audiences around the country can be enthralled once again by Handel's masterpiece of political intrigue, **Agrippina**, in a revival of ETO's 2013 production [Friday 7 October – Friday 11 November]. An early success of Handel's, this devilish comedy brings one of ancient Rome's most notorious characters to life amid a web of scheming, ambition and deceit. Described as *"inspired"* (The Independent) and *"sparkling"* (Evening Standard), the original production was also met with particular praise for James Conway's direction and *"zippy translation"* (Evening Standard). **Paula Sides** stars as cunning Empress Agrippina, and is joined by **Hilary Cronin** as Poppea, **Edward Hawkins** as Claudio and **Esme Bronwen-Smith** as Nerone. Acclaimed Handel interpreter **Leo Duarte** conducts the **Old Street Band** through Handel's sparkling score.

Alongside Handelfest, ETO will also premiere **Tutankhamun's Shoes**, a new interactive opera for children, touring in theatres, museums and schools around the country [Friday 21 October – Friday 2 December]. Taking audiences on an adventure to Ancient Egypt and the roaring Twenties, families can learn all about the ancient world, mummification and even what links Tutankhamun with Downton Abbey, through this fun, vibrant production. Written by new ETO General Director **Robin Norton-Hale** and composed by **Rosabella Gregory**, this production forms an important part of ETO's work in making exceptional artistic experiences available to everyone and stimulating access, appreciation and understanding of opera in innovative and exciting ways.

Robin Norton-Hale, General Director of English Touring Opera, said: *"ETO's reputation for exceptional artistry and commitment to opera for all is highlighted once again with our autumn tour. Handel's operas are of course loved around the world, and [under James Conway's leadership] ETO have developed an affinity with this repertoire. It's a real pleasure to bring some of his lesser performed works like Tamerlano to new audiences, alongside revivals of acclaimed productions of Ottone and Agrippina. This season demonstrates Handel's breadth of skill as a dramatist, from the depths of tragedy to exuberant comedy, and is sure to captivate opera lovers up and down the country. ETO aims to bring opera to everyone, including the very young - something very close to my heart. It feels fitting that my first production as part of the creative team since being appointed General Director is our opera for schools and families, Tutankhamun's Shoes. I'm thrilled to have this opportunity to introduce children to the exhilarating world of opera."*

All three Handelfest productions will premiere at London's Hackney Empire before touring to various venues around England, including Lighthouse, Poole; Malvern Theatres; Buxton Opera House; Exeter Northcott Theatre; Saffron Hall; and St John's The Evangelist Church, Truro. Alongside school performances, *Tutankhamun's Shoes* will also perform at Wimbledon's Polka Theatre and the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.

-ENDS-

For more information, interview requests and press tickets, please contact Yasmin Hoy at Premier PR:

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Production shots from previous productions of *Ottone* and *Agrippina*, as well as cast headshots for all productions, can be downloaded [here](#)

Notes to Editors

English Touring Opera

Since 1979, English Touring Opera has toured outstanding live productions and impactful education and community projects to more towns and cities than any other UK opera company. At the heart of our ethos is making exceptional artistic experiences available and accessible to everyone. We reach over 50,000 people per year with five mainstage productions, two specially commissioned operas for children and young people with special educational needs, a series of creative workshops for people with dementia and their carers, and more than 70 workshops for people of all abilities and ages.

englishtouringopera.org.uk

Handelfest – Autumn 2022

Ottone

Ottone – James Hall

Teofane – Nazan Fikret

Gismonda – Gillian Webster

Adelberto – Kieron-Connor Valentine

Matilda – Lauren Young

Emireno – Edward Jowle

Revival Director – Christopher Moon-Little

Conductor – Gerry Cornelius

Music – The Old Street Band

Hackney Empire, London – Saturday 1 October 2022

Lighthouse, Poole – Friday 14 October 2022

Malvern Theatres, Great Malvern – Thursday 20 October 2022

Buxton Opera House, Buxton – Thursday 3 November 2022

Exeter Northcott Theatre, Exeter – Wednesday 9 November 2022

Agrippina

Agrippina – Paula Sides

Poppea – Hilary Cronin

Claudio – Edward Hawkins

Nerone – Esme Bronwen-Smith

Ottone – Timothy Morgan

Narciso – Matthew Paine

Pallante – Jerome Knox

Lesbo – Edward Jowle

Revival Director – Bradley Travis

Conductor – Leo Duarte

Music – The Old Street Band

Hackney Empire, London – Friday 7 October 2022

Malvern Theatres, Great Malvern – Friday 21 October 2022

Saffron Hall, Saffron Walden – Friday 28 October 2022

Buxton Opera House, Buxton – Friday 4 November 2022

Exeter Northcott Theatre, Exeter – Friday 11 November 2022

Tamerlano

Tamerlano – Rodrigo Sosa Dal Pozzo

Andronico – James Hall

Asteria – Ellie Laugharne

Bajazet – Jorge Navarro Colorado

Irene – April Koyejo-Audiger

Director – James Conway

Conductor – Jonathan Peter Kenny

Music – The Old Street Band

Hackney Empire, London – Saturday 8 October 2022

Lighthouse, Poole – Saturday 15 October 2022

Malvern Theatres, Great Malvern – Saturday 22 October 2022

Saffron Hall, Saffron Walden – Saturday 29 October 2022

Buxton Opera House, Buxton – Saturday 5 November 2022

St John's The Evangelist Church, Truro – Thursday 10 November 2022 (concert performance)

Exeter Northcott Theatre, Exeter – Saturday 12 November 2022

[Tutankhamun's Shoes](#)

Nefertiti – Claire Wild

Meryt/Lady Carnarvon – Judy Louie Brown

Tutankhamun – Keith Pun

Ay/Carter – Adam Maxey

Director – Lysanne van Overbeek

Music Director/Piano – Erika Gundesen

Writer – Robin Norton-Hale

Composer – Rosabella Gregory

Designer – Bettina John

Polka Theatre, Wimbledon – Friday 21 October 2022

Ashmolean Museum, Oxford – Friday 28 October 2022

Plus schools across the country