

The London Handel Festival and The Royal Opera announce a co-production of Handel's *Susanna* starring members of The Royal Opera's Jette Parker Young Artists Programme

Linbury Theatre, Royal Opera House

5-14 March 2020

Co-production between The Royal Opera and London Handel Festival.

The London Handel Festival and The Royal Opera today [14 May 2019] announced a co-production of Handel's oratorio *Susanna* as part of the 2020 London Handel Festival. The new production, performed in English in the Linbury Theatre [5 – 14 March 2020], will star members and Link Artists from The Royal Opera's Jette Parker Young Artists Programme. Handel's *Susanna* was written for Covent Garden and had its premiere on the site in 1749, but has not been performed at Covent Garden since.

Samir Savant, Festival Director of the London Handel Festival, said: 'We are delighted to be working again with the Royal Opera House after the acclaimed success of *Berenice* in this year's London Handel Festival. The Linbury Theatre is the perfect setting for *Susanna*, and we look forward to working with the Jette Parker Young Artists. The scheme provides outstanding opportunities for young talent, which is in line with our major aim to encourage and promote the next generation of performers'.

Director Isabelle Kettle, who joins the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme from the 2019/20 Season, makes her Royal Opera directing debut with *Susanna*. Patrick Milne, who joined the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme in September 2018, will make his Linbury Theatre conducting debut with *Susanna*.

The cast is led by South African soprano Masabane Cecilia Rangwanasha who takes the title role. Chilean soprano Yaritza Véliz sings Daniel, Scottish-Iranian bass-baritone Michael Mofidian sings Chelsias and Judge, and Uruguayan tenor Andrés Presno sings the First Elder. American countertenor Patrick Terry, who came second in the 2019 Handel Singing Competition, sings *Susanna's* husband Joacim. Terry recently made his Royal Opera debut singing the role of Arsace in *Berenice*, the first co-production between the London Handel Festival and The Royal Opera. The remainder of the cast are two Link Artists of the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme: April Koyejo-Audiger and Blaise Malaba, making their Royal Opera debuts.

The London Handel Festival today also announces three further concerts this year following the success of the 2019 Festival. The three concerts will all take place at St George's Hanover Square, Handel's own church. On 18 June the London Handel Orchestra and Pegasus Choir perform Handel's *Choice of Hercules* and Bach's Magnificat, conducted by Adrian Butterfield. The soloists are Joanne Lunn, Anna Dennis, Patrick Terry, Laurence Killsby and Hugo Herman-Wilson. September sees the annual Handel Singing Competition showcase, featuring Laurence Cummings and the 2019 finalists. Completing the year is the Festival's annual presentation of Handel's *Messiah*, performed by the London Handel Orchestra and the Choir of St George's.

The full programme of the 2020 London Handel Festival, 'Handel and the Hanoverians' will be announced later this year.

Susanna cast

All cast are members of the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme, or JPYAP Link Artists

Patrick Milne *conductor*

Isabelle Kettle *director*

Masabene Cecilia Rangwanasha *Susanna*

Patrick Terry *Joacim*

Yaritza Véliz *Daniel*

April Koyejo-Audiger *Attendant*

Michael Mofidian *Chelsias and Judge*

Andrés Presno *First Elder*

Blaise Malaba *Second Elder*

www.london-handel-festival.com

-ENDS-

For more information please contact

Rebecca Johns at Premier – Rebecca.johns@premiercomms.com | 020 7292 7336

Jolene Dyke at Royal Opera House – Jolene.dyke@roh.org.uk | 020 7212 9504

Notes to Editor

London Handel Festival 2019 dates

Tuesday 18 June 2019, *Choice of Hercules* and *Bach Magnificat*

St George's, Hanover Square

Adrian Butterfield, London Handel Orchestra, Pegasus Choir

Joanne Lunn, Anna Dennis, Patrick Terry, Laurence Killsby, Hugo Herman-Wilson

Thursday 19 September 2019, Handel Singing Competition showcase

St George's, Hanover Square

Laurence Cummings and finalists from 2019 competition

Thursday 5 December 2019, *Messiah*

St George's, Hanover Square

The annual popular presentation of Handel's best-loved work in his own church, with the London Handel Orchestra, Choir of St George's and soloists to be announced

5 – 14 March 2020, Handel *Susanna*

Linbury Theatre, Royal Opera House

The programme of the 2020 London Handel Festival will be announced in the autumn.

About London Handel Festival

Founded by Denys Darlow in 1978 the London Handel Festival has contributed to a Handel revival in the UK. The Festival runs for around a month each year, with many events held at Handel's parish church – St. George's, Hanover Square. Laurence Cummings took over as Musical Director in 2002.

The London Handel Orchestra, which is made up of some of London's finest professional baroque players led by Adrian Butterfield, now has an excellent reputation for historically informed performance. The annual Handel Singing Competition was inaugurated in 2002 to give young singers the opportunity to concentrate on the wealth of Handel repertoire.

Samir Savant, Festival Director

Samir Savant has 20 years' experience as a senior manager in the arts, including at Shakespeare's Globe, English National Opera, Handel House and the Royal College of Music. He started his role with the London Handel Festival in 2016 and has presented two highly successful festivals in 2017 and 2018, already attracting critical acclaim: 'Under the direction of *Samir Savant*, London Handel Festival has expanded exponentially' (*Sunday Times*, April 2018). He is committed to developing new audiences and partnerships for Handel, as is demonstrated by the Festival's collaboration with The Royal Opera on *Berenice* in 2019.

Savant is an experienced mentor and public speaker and has chaired the Institute of Fundraising's Cultural Sector Network national conference on several occasions. He sings with Pegasus, the chamber choir he co-founded, and is a trustee of Shobana Jeyasingh Dance.

Laurence Cummings, Musical Director

Laurence Cummings is one of Britain's most exciting and versatile exponents of historical performance both as a conductor and a harpsichord player. In 2012 he became Artistic Director of the Internationale Händel-Festspiele Göttingen. He is also a regular guest at Casa da Música in Porto where he is Music Director of the Orquestra Barroca Casa da Música.

Cummings makes regular appearance with English National Opera, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Gothenburg Opera, Zürich Opera, Opéra de Lyon, Garsington Opera and English Touring Opera. He made his US debut conducting *L'Orfeo* with the Handel and Haydn Society in Boston.

His numerous recordings include the first recording of Handel's newly discovered Gloria with Emma Kirkby and musicians from the Royal Academy of Music, and recital discs of solo harpsichord music.

Adrian Butterfield, Associate Director

Adrian Butterfield is a violinist, director, conductor and teacher who specialises in performing music from 1600 to 1900 on period instruments. He is Musical Director of the Tilford Bach Society and Associate Director of the London Handel Festival, and regularly directs the London Handel Orchestra and Players as well as working as a guest soloist and director in Europe and North America with modern and period ensembles.

He works annually with the Southbank Sinfonia, is Professor of Baroque Violin at the Royal College of Music, gives masterclasses in Europe and North America and teaches on a number of summer courses including the Pro Corda Conservatoire Baroque Summer Course in the UK.

He has conducted the major choral works of Bach as well as Handel's *Israel in Egypt* at St. George's, Hanover Square and *La Resurrezione* and *Esther* at Wigmore Hall, and directed ensembles such as the Croatian Baroque Ensemble in Zagreb and the London Mozart Players.