



WildKat ^{PR}

Tête à Tête: The Opera Festival 2019

Final Press Report

The Guardian

THE STAGE



Also featured in:

Opera Now



Evening Standard.



“If you ever thought opera was a formal, tight-lipped undertaking that demanded chandeliers and red plush, Tête à Tête will show you a completely different picture”

“Its an annual festival of small-scale music theatre, all of it newly composed and with a cheerful sense of being slightly thrown together just before the audience arrives”

“There are usually some gems among the dross.. it’s worth the risk”

“The Tête à Tête festival’s mixed bills are a music-theatre party bag. There might be the odd liquorice nightmare in there, but you still go home with a skip in your step..”

“It is an incredibly liberating thing to watch so many creative performers and theatre-makers experiment with the limitations of the form”

“.. their cross arts content draws in creatives who are new to opera; ever expanding its network and continuing the conversation.”

“.. wacky and wonderful offerings”

“Tête à Tête anarchic opera festival is back with a vengeance” – *as listed in BBC Music Magazine’s “best concert and opera highlights in the UK”*

44

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930M

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ESTIMATED COVERAGE VIEWS:

270

SOCIAL SHARES:

27

YOUTUBE VIEWS:

52

AVERAGE DOMAIN AUTHORITY:

36.3K

CIRCULATION:

23.4K

READERSHIP - 23.4K:

£6.50 October 2019

Opera

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Opera Magazine

OCT 1 2019

(IMAGE 1 OF 4)

Memories in Mind *and* The Key

Tête à Tête Opera Festival at RADA Studios and 10 Tollgate Drive, London, July 28 and August 4

Shirley J. Thompson's *Memories in Mind: Women of the Windrush Tell Their Stories* received a one-off performance at RADA Studios. Based on Thompson's 1992 documentary, the work combined film interviews with women who had made the journey from the Caribbean to London in the 1940s, with musical reflections on the experience of travel and divine comfort. The music (for soprano-piano duo) was adapted from Thompson's *Psalm for Windrush*, a choral work premiered at Westminster Abbey in 2018. At RADA, film footage was projected onto the auditorium's back screen. Centre stage, a desk, chair, suitcase and photos were enough to evoke a Windrush immigrant's home.

Thompson's brief score was on a firmly tonal, even amateur-musician-friendly ground, with musical contributions lasting barely half the work's 50-minute duration. It proved a fine vehicle, though, for Nadine Benjamin's sensitive musicianship and generous vocals, and felt entirely well judged for a work celebrating human community and resilience. Perhaps even more affecting than the musical interludes, however, were the video interviews. Cold British weather, rice and peas, staring white children, the Notting Hill riots, 'colonialism in reverse' and lasting bonds of friendship all stood out, with the recent Windrush scandal inevitably (if silently) hanging over events. There is surely

OCT 1 2019

(IMAGE 3 OF 4)



■ *Tête à Tête* novelties: (l.) 'Memories in Mind', with Nadine Benjamin; (r.) 'The Key', with Akari Mochizuki

more than enough gripping material here for a full-scale Windrush opera, if any British opera company and composer were prepared to go there. ENO—here's looking at you.

A diary, a marriage in crisis, and a house full of secrets formed the starting point for Francesca Le Lohé's ingenious new opera *The Key*, given its first UK performance at this year's festival. A middle-aged professor begins the year with a new diary, recording in it the sexual frustration rotting his 20-year marriage. Intentionally, he leaves the key visible. His wife soon reads the diary and begins her own volume, developing a covert communication between the two about their (otherwise unexpressed) desires and grievances. Their daughter is presented with a young suitor, and a sexual attraction soon develops between him and his prospective mother-in-law, reigniting erotic flames between husband and wife. But major questions inevitably hang over the entire enterprise. What can we really deduce from these part-private, part-public confessions, which lack any omniscient authorial voice? Do the characters express their real feelings, or aim only to manipulate the other? And what about the motivations of the daughter and the young man, who have no significant voice in this story?

Based on Jun'ichirō Tanizaki's epistolary novel, Le Lohé's work remained faithful to its broad outlines, while reinventing the Tanizaki as a musicalized piece of performance art. Presented in the stunning location of 10 Tollgate Drive—a minimalist dream in white, walnut and stone—each character had their own semi-mobile ensemble, with the action unfolding throughout the house. The husband's opening scene in the living room (accompanied by double bass and bamboo flute) was thus followed by a section in the hallway, the tense wife considering her situation to the sounds of sho (mouth organ) and cello. As things became more complex, however, musical and dramatic textures piled up. The married couple delivered monologues simultaneously in different rooms, the action now expanding downstairs; their petulant daughter alternated between singing and spying, her wailing reinforced by shimmering percussion and violin. The young man, by contrast, was performed by a ghostlike dancer, his gyrations unlocking the

energy repressed elsewhere. There was no privileged audience perspective on events here. Instead, each audience member sought to piece together the motivations and actions of the characters, enjoying only a partial experience as they were encouraged to circulate through the space.

Musically, Le Lohé's work owes a clear debt to Takemitsu, with its mixture of European and Japanese instruments, crisp textures, and broadly modal harmonies (and, one would presume, some aleatory elements). Vocally, too, this is an approachable idiom, the syllabic setting and modest vocal range helping the English-Japanese text come across clearly. But the musical dimensions were only a fragment in this show's success, which relied on an inspired synergy between words, music, visuals and space, and with the principals Hiroshi Amako, Akane Kudo, Akari Mochizuki and Shozo Ayaka delivering assured and impeccably rehearsed performances. In the climactic scene, the wife and young man silently seduced one another in the garden, the audience peeping through glass walls. Finally felled by a stroke, the husband expired in the downstairs living room, his heartbeat and breathing machine tapped out by double bass and flute. Would this opera succeed in a significantly different environment? Possibly not. But as a visitor to *Sun and Sea: Marina* at this year's Venice Biennale—Lithuania's much-hyped, Golden Bear-winning performance piece—I can only say that *The Key* ultimately left no less strong an impression.

DITLEV RINDOM

Opera Neil Fisher

Top pick

Rinaldo

A last-minute casting shuffle places the Polish breakdancing countertenor Jakub Jozef Orłinski in the title role of Handel's glorious romp. *Glyndebourne Opera House, Lewes (01273 815000), Thur (4pm)-Aug 25*

Tête à Tête: the Opera Festival

Highlights of the wacky and wonderful offerings include *Robe*, billed as a posthuman fantasia about cartography, cyberpunk and the AI singularity (Tues); the Music Troupe's lunar fancy *Apollo's Mission* (Wed); and *Her Face Was of Flowers*, presented by Sonopera, a retelling of Welsh myth with integrated sound design

(Thur). *The Place, London WC1 (020 7121 1100), festival to Aug 10*

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg

Fulham Opera fields the excellent Keel Watson as the heroic cobbler Hans Sachs, and the tenor Ronald Samm as the impulsive Walther in this Wagner staging. *Greenwood Theatre, London SE1 (020 7188 2682), Fri*

Book now

The Cunning Little Vixen

A tempting revival of Welsh National Opera's classic Janacek production, conducted by the company's Czech music director, Tomas Hanus. *Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff (029 2063 6464), Oct 5 & 11, then touring to Nov 28*

Death

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Memories in Mind – Women of the Windrush Tell Their Stories © Claire Shovelton

Heads up – Artistic director Bill Bankes-Jones on how Tête à Tête festival is making opera for the modern world

BY IAM CONTRIBUTOR ON AUGUST 16, 2019

ANALYSIS

BLOG

Part of the joy of spearheading a small artist-led company are the moments of great intensity in the middle of peak periods. When the festival is in full swing, it's a marvellous experience to be firing on all cylinders but it's also when vital strategies for the future reveal themselves. What has been a great joy for us at [Tête à Tête](#) (and we undertook a survey on this thoroughly a couple of years ago) is that we work with an exceptionally inclusive pool of artists. In one week of our most recent festival alone, we performed 13 world premieres, of these eight were by women and five were by BAME artists. This is our normal, Tête à Tête exists to make the widest range of artists welcome.



Bill Bankes-Jones

Having blown my own trumpet so loudly, I also have to say that what was missing in our survey results was any significant input from disabled artists and, to some degree, socio-economic barriers to participation still exist.

JOB OF THE WEEK

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AUG 16 2019

(IMAGE 1 OF 3)

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS:

8.56K

(EST.) COVERAGE VIEWS:

472

DOMAIN AUTHORITY:

44

significant input from disabled artists and, to some degree, socio-economic barriers to participation still exist. We've addressed the latter in a small way by trying to make sure everyone who works for us is paid. However, we still have some way to go in recruitment to ensure disabled artists come to work with us at Tête à Tête.

We are motivated to make this happen and I've been meeting every disabled opera maker I can find to talk through how we can be more open. We're most definitely going to try to improve in this capacity. Being more accessible is a long-haul ambition for us, though we can only deploy at Tête à Tête the skills delivered to us by the training and education system that leads people to opera in the first place.

Being open in this way is at the core of our ethos. Openness is an important agenda to have as our main opera companies are going through painful changes as their institutional misogyny and racism becomes ever more obvious to the public.

There are many initiatives around at the moment that are touting to support diversity in opera – this makes me very uncomfortable. Some of these schemes appear to be about splitting people up and allocating portions. It seems to me that so long as the focus remains on single protected characteristics, there will be the risk of omissions.

For example, I really don't want to pledge a 50/50 ratio of women/men at Tête à Tête when A) women make up the majority of our leading artists this year (therefore, they are in excess of 50%), and B) I also cherish the very important 2% non-binary opera makers that have worked with us through Tête à Tête's history.

It is surely much better to welcome *everyone*, rather than to divide, apportion and allot? I'm thrilled this is so apparent in Arts Council England's Draft Strategy 2020-2030. I very much hope they will be fiercer in enforcing its delivery.

We've had a tough few years but also a magical few years with Tête à Tête opera festival in London. On the bright side, the huge personal growth of the artists who pass through our ramshackle portals, and the inclusive nature of this group, is a great source of pride to us. Yet, the reality is that it is tough to make Tête à Tête happen. And it's becoming increasingly tougher.

These issues are all about money, really. Beyond our ACE regular funding, the huge success of our festival has been thanks to the wonderful support of trusts and foundations, and to a lesser extent, individuals. Now, though, money is far scarcer than ever before.

The 2008 recession took a long time to bite. Some key funders have bitten the dust. Like everyone, trusts are far more regulated and, dare I say, less *trusting*. For example, we lose income as initiatives focus on individual composers rather than their dreams, with the slightly saddening side effect that even the smallest work is now incentivised. With no one stepping in to fund production costs, a solo clarinet piece becomes a much more attractive prospect than a fully staged opera, however small that opera may be.

Submissions, SICK! Festival

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AUG 16 2019

(IMAGE 2 OF 3)

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS:

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8 – A Steampunk Opera © Claire Shovelton

In spite of all this, we soldier on. Right now, it's thrilling to be able to deliver a festival at all. On 29 July, for example, we presented [8 – A Steampunk Opera](#) by a composer/producer who came to me last year – aged just 18. Young Charli Eglinton is an absolute force of nature, with our support, she has made this opera all happen herself. Her independent production is an opera that collides with musical theatre and 1920s jazz, with a mechanical, steampunk twist.

This is typical of the Tête à Tête opera festival experience. Over the years it has triggered a huge and growing fringe for small-scale new opera works in the UK. This replenishing of talent is vital in the opera ecology as bigger companies focus on the great antique canon of opera, seldom make new works and therefore don't have the skills to nurture these. Recently the conductor of our [Pop Up Operas](#) told me a story I hear again and again: that the first thing he conducted was for us. It was a huge breakthrough for him and really advanced his professional career. As artistic director that is what makes putting on a festival of new work, delivered by new talent, worthwhile.

[Tête à Tête](#) took place in London from 24 July to 10 August.



Apollo's Mission © Claire Shovelton

International Arts Manager

AUG 16 2019

(IMAGE 3 OF 3)

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS: **8.56K**

(EST.) COVERAGE VIEWS: **472**

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The Observer Opera

The week in classical: Grimeborn: Das Rheingold; Die Fledermaus - review

★★★★☆

Arcola, London

The east London opera festival has become an essential fixture, but remains as bold and provocative as ever



▲ Up close and personal... Paul Carey Jones (Wotan), top, Seth Carico (Alberich) and conductor Peter Selwyn, far left, in Das Rheingold at the Arcola. Photograph: Lidia Crisafulli



Fiona Maddocks

@FionaMaddocks

Sat 10 Aug 2019 07:00 EDT



At its outset, in 2007, Grimeborn's punning name warned of a challenge to operatic safety and a blunt one at that. Who was this festival for? What was its aim? Would those susceptible to the bucolic lure of its assonant counterpart, Glyndebourne itself - high prices, world-class standards - also have the credentials to engage with this audacious newcomer, based at the Arcola, an old paint factory in east

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110



23

audacious newcomer, based at the Arcola, an old paint factory in east London? Or was it essentially a form of operatic class war?

So much has changed on the opera scene since Grimeborn began that it's hard to think these questions needed asking. It's vital that they were, and continue to be addressed by this and other plucky, small-scale outfits, too many to list. This month alone, *Tête à Tête*, *Opera in the City*, *Fulham Opera* and *Leeds Opera festival* are all hard at work. It's no longer a case of either or. Opera needs this mixed artistic economy to thrive. Grimeborn may now be an essential fixture, but it remains as bold and cage-rattling as ever, its ambitions capacious. Classics are transfigured, new works premiered, young artists given opportunities, older ones with experience welcomed to the fold. If you're sensing that this six-week event is a quixotic rattle bag for everyone, you've grasped its ethos. The frustration, for me, is in being unable to go to all 16 shows.

Die Fledermaus was whisked into a nimble 50-minute snapshot of modern life

Das Rheingold, the first part of Wagner's Ring cycle, was an opening highlight. Jonathan Dove's pared down version, made in 1990 for City of Birmingham Touring Opera, manages to be an authentic sketch of the original, never mind the loss of orchestral amplitude. A total of 18 players in the pit - the excellent *Orpheus Sinfonia* - may sound small, but it's a large number for the

Arcola. The brass were hidden away in a gulley to the rear, an effect that worked, containing but not muffling their dark resonance. The voices easily soared over the ensemble, while the ear, ever beguiled by Dove's faithful ingenuity, quickly adjusted to the thin (but capable) body of strings.

Many of the *Rheingold* team are already far along the Wagnerian road. The conductor, *Peter Selwyn*, has worked on seven Ring cycles and assisted at Bayreuth. *Paul Carey Jones*, bursting and rigid with cold self-regard, vocally magisterial as Wotan, a Wagner prize winner in 2013. (Look out for his forthcoming Wotan at Longborough.) *Claire Barnett-Jones* (Fricka) and *Harriet Williams* (Erda) also have Wagner on their CVs. *Seth Carico*'s mysteriously charming, rich-voiced Alberich, *Kiandra Howarth*'s impassioned Freia/Woglinde and *Gareth Brynmor John*'s pretty boy Donner all stood out. Julia Burbach's production - following a top-class *Rape of Lucretia* here last year - consisted of precarious piles of cardboard boxes and bags of polystyrene "gold", in Bettina John's sets. Basic, yes, but it told the story effectively, spelling out loud and clear the folly that comes with greed.



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Between now and 7 September at Grimeborn, you can see works as varied as *Bushra El-Turk*'s new opera *Silk Moth*, Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie*, Scott Joplin's *Treemonisha* and Amy Beach's *Cabildo*. With that choice, I wouldn't automatically, schedule reasons aside, have opted for an arrangement of Johann Strauss II's **Die Fledermaus**, staged by *Baseless Fabric Theatre*. I'm glad I did. The aim of this south London company, who also perform on the high street or in promenade, is to "reimagine opera for London life today". Librettist/director Joanna Turner, and

The Guardian

AUG 10 2019

(IMAGE 2 OF 3)

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS: **272M**

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DOMAIN AUTHORITY: **95**



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London life today". Librettist/director Joanna Turner, and music director/bassoonist Leo Geyer, together with four singers, an accordion player (Ilona Suomalainen) and a violinist (Henry Rankin), had whisked the frothy original into a nimble 50-minute snapshot of modern life, a touch of klezmer now tinting Strauss's delicious, waltzing score.



▲ David Horton, left, and James McOran-Campbell in Die Fledermaus. Photograph: Maxim Gamble



The action took place, arena style, in an open white space, the compact staging - mostly reliant on costumes - designed by Marina Hadjilouca. A philandering husband (David Horton as Eisenstein) can no longer escape scot-free when smartphones, Instagram and Facebook are there to like/share/track his every trespass. His wily friend Falke - James McOran-Campbell in Batman T-shirt - the nanny Adele, got up as Rhianna (Abigail Kelly), and Rosalinde (Claire Wild), the cool, long-suffering wife, were assured and witty, both musically and dramatically. The plot could have had more #MeToo stiffening to make its humour sharper. When Rosalinde raised an eyebrow to her love-rat husband and fell into his arms once more, you longed to shout "Don't do it!". An operetta that, in the wrong hands, can outstay its welcome was over too soon.

● [Grimeborn](#) runs at the Arcola theatre, London E8, until 7 September

The Guardian

AUG 10 2019

(IMAGE 3 OF 3)

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The Gif Review

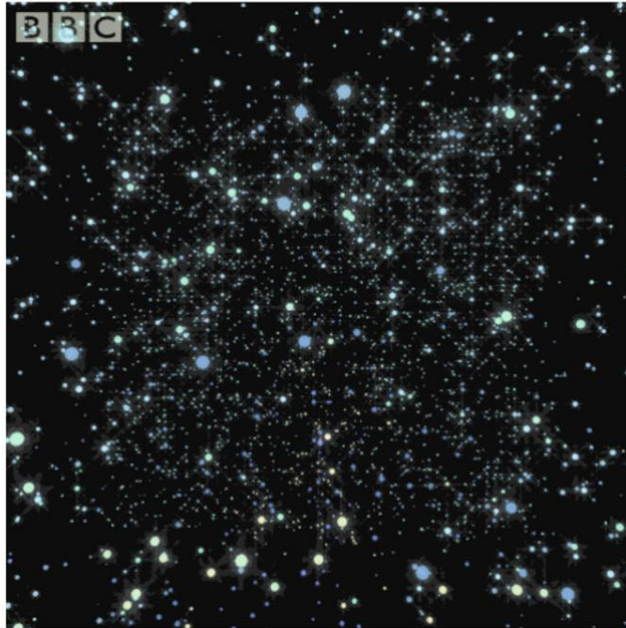
About

Theatre reviews, but gifs.

The Gif Review

AUG 10 2019

(IMAGE 1 OF 2)





The Bridge of Magpies
by Sister Sarah Productions
dir by Sarah Hutchinson
at The Place

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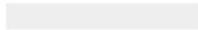
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The Gif Review

AUG 10 2019

(IMAGE 2 OF 2)



Tête à Tête Opera Festival 2019 – Her Face was of Flowers by Elfyn Jones

Thursday, August 08, 2019 The Place, Duke's Road, London WC1

Reviewed by Peter Reed

Elfyn Jones is a Welsh composer and soundscape artist and he has used a story from the Mabinogion, the compendium of ancient Welsh myth and magic, for Her Face was of Flowers, a three-hander relating the sad tale of Blodeuwedd, unhappily married to Llieu, and her mystical attraction to the stranger Gronw, a story similar to Siegmund's and Sieglinde's, but without the incest.

In a press release, Blodeuwedd was described as made of flowers for a man (Llieu) cursed by his mother, and the opera retells the myth from her point of view. That may well have been in Jones's text, but without surtitles, that amount of detail failed to register. Jones's score, however, did register strongly, an atmospheric sound-design evoking the bleak beauties and scudding clouds of the Welsh landscape anchored by a trio of clarinet (plus bass clarinet, used to great effect), cello and harp that subtly imposes the human element of anguish and passion, and, through Jones's skilful harp-writing, an instantly recognisable Welshness.

Anna Prowse dominated the empty stage with her luxurious mezzo – a good match for the colours of the score – she sustained the music's lyricism with a lovely, easy tone, and her portrayal of the poor girl's plight was very convincing. As Gronw, tenor Lars Fischer went to the heart of the lover's eloquent, otherworldly ardour; his voice has a baritone grain to it could be right up Pelléas's street one day, and his stage presence was attractively direct. Peter Edge delivered the baritone role of Llieu with a strong grasp of the husband's bewitched desperation and rage, and his good diction, astute characterisation and expressive singing could suit many a role.

Comments

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Isabella Gellis
 For Peace and Country – Opera in two parts and an interval [sung in English, with back-titles]

The Child – Lotte Betts-Dean

Ensemble – Leona Crasi (piano); Roman Lytwyniw (violin); Lydia Hillerudh (cello); Craig McClaren, Luke English (B-flat and E-flat clarinets); Anthony Friend (bass clarinet); Lucinda Dunne (alto saxophone); Patrick Bolton (bassoon); Lucy Humphris (trumpet) & Johnny Mayers (tuba)/Elias Peter Brown

Gareth Matthey – Director

Tête à Tête Opera Festival 2019 – For Peace and Country by Isabella Gellis

Thursday, August 08, 2019 The Place, Duke's Road, London WC1

Reviewed by Peter Reed

In summer, with the country-house operas either over or coming to an end, the Grimeborn and Tête à Tête festivals, in London, rush in to fill the vacuum with short runs (Grimeborn) and one-offs (Tête à Tête), with fairly basic staging and a fringy feel geared to accessibility for what is deemed a 'difficult', exclusive entertainment. In just over two weeks, Tête à Tête moves from a pond on Hampstead Heath in the north to Sydenham Hill in the south via various more central and one secret locations.

Isabella Gellis's half-hour For Peace and Country is the result of her discovery of a long-forgotten video her sister made as a child of her production of the battle between the king and queen (two stuffed toy pugs) and the marauding Elephantonla (something pink and cuddly with a trunk), all elaborately scripted and enthusiastically staged, with a cast of other creatures and a happy ending.

Gellis's ambitious music, scored for a group of seven winds (no oboe or flute), bulked up by a couple of strings and a piano, is eruptive and reactive, with bursts of lyricism, and is witty and attractive – and it reminded you of the skills involved in entering (or trying to re-enter) the child's mind, deferring tactfully to Ravel in L'Enfant et les sortilèges and Oliver Knussen in Where the Wild Things Are.

Lotte Betts-Dean, dressed in a snow-leopard-print onesie, had that odd childhood self-containment as she marshalled her cuddly, reluctant army into battle, and her big voice, impressive range and gift for characterisation gave us a little girl in total control of her world.

This one-hander is just the right length, has bags of charm and sly insight, it can be suddenly very touching, and it is easy to imagine it involving children (although there were none in the audience). The scripted interval was fun, as was the complete screening of the *ur*-video, and Elias Peter Brown and his team negotiated the mercurial score with infectious panache.

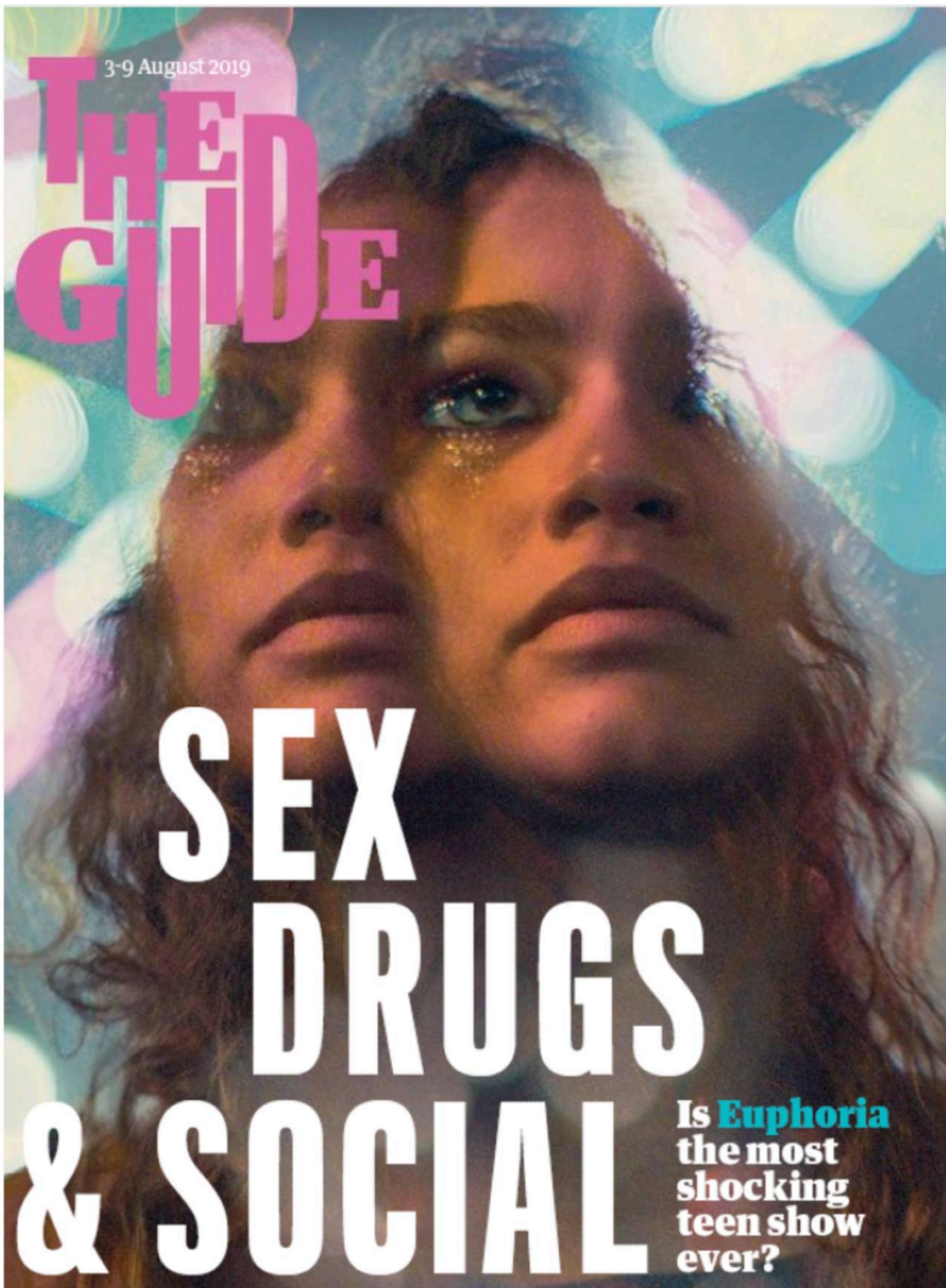
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The Guardian

(IMAGE 1 OF 5)

The Place, WC1 (020-7121 1100) 9.25pm, £9.50, adv £7.50. [DA]
Prom 26: BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales
 Nathalie Stutzmann conducts the orchestra and chorus, with soprano Fatma Said, mezzo-soprano Kathryn Rudge, tenor Sunnyboy Dladla and bass David Shipley, to perform Brahms's Tragic Overture, Wagner's Tristan and Isolde: Prelude and Liebestod, and Mozart's Requiem in D Minor (completed Süssmayr).
Royal Albert Hall, SW7 (020-7589 8212) 7pm, £9.50-£52. [DA]

THURSDAY
For Peace and Country
 Isabella Gellis's one-woman chamber opera. Part of Tête-a-Tête opera festival.
The Place, WC1 (020-7121 1100) 7pm, £9.50, adv £7.50. [DA]
Das Rheingold
 Julia Burbach directs a contemporary take on Wagner's Ring Cycle, featuring Jonathan Dove's orchestration. Sung in German with English surtitles.
Arcola Theatre, E8 (020-7503 1646) 7.30pm, £12-£40.
The Locrian Ensemble
 Handel's Arrival of the Queen of Sheba, Bach's Concerto for Violin

score with the soundscape of Welsh legend, recreated from hundreds of sound recordings.
The Place, WC1 (020-7121 1100) 7.50pm, £9.50, adv £7.50. [DA]
Sylvafield: Synthetica ... A Toxic Enchantment
 A contemporary chamber opera and fractured sung narrative exploring the Midas touch, featuring soprano, plastic trumpet and a vinyl DJ.
The Place, WC1 (020-7121 1100) 8.45pm, £9.50, adv £7.50. [DA]
FRIDAY
Belmont Ensemble of London

Luka Okros
 The pianist performs Schubert's Four Impromptus and Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No 2.
St Martin-in-the-Fields, WC2 (020-7766 1100) 1pm, free. [DA]
Plus Minus Ensemble: Duncan House
 A site-specific opera performance that looks at the outsider's perspective of modern Britain, also featuring Ensemble Lydenskab and soprano Patricia Auchterlonie.
Secret location, King's Cross, N1 (tete-a-tete.org.uk) 2.30pm, 7.30pm, adv £5.
Prom 29: John Wilson

The composer performs works from his latest album, which is titled Seven Days Walking.

Barbican Hall, EC2
[\(020-7638 8891\)](tel:02076388891) 8pm,
£69.50. [DA]

Of Body and Ghost

A dance-theatre-opera collaboration between dance-maker Yolande Snaith, composer Kris Apple, writer Roswitha Gerlitz and vocalist Barbara Byers about the experience of ageing.

The Place, WC1 [\(020-7121 1100\)](tel:02071211100) 8.15pm,
£9.50, *adv* £7.50. [DA]

Growth of the Silk

William Hearne's original fairytale about a girl's misguided wish for long lustrous hair, which leaves her crushed under the weight of the unstoppable growth.

The Place, WC1 [\(020-7121 1100\)](tel:02071211100) 7pm, £9.50,
adv £7.50. [DA]

The Music Troupe: Apollo's Mission

An opera that investigates our fascination with all things lunar and adds a twist to the Apollo 11 commemorations.

Be a Doll

Alexa Dexa's electroacoustic toy opera for solo vocalist, using live electronic processing and pre-programmed electronic sequences. *The Place, WC1* (020-7121 1100) 7pm, £9.50, *adv* £7.50. [DA]

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12 Poems of Emily Dickinson | Miss Havisham's Wedding Night review, Grimeborn Festival, Arcola Theatre: a corker of a double bill



Sarah Minns as Miss Havisham

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By **Rupert Christiansen**

3 AUGUST 2019 • 3:40PM

Over the summer holidays, two unique opera festivals take place in London. Grimeborn and Tête-à-Tête aren't posh bucolic affairs, but hardy attempts to give young musicians a chance to showcase experimental or provisional work created on a shoestring budget.

Although I warmly salute their courage and enterprise, punters should be warned that the bran-tub nature of the programming and the desperate circumstances in which productions are prepared mean that you run an unusually high risk of picking a dud. Finding something that is fresh, raw and urgent, however, can be richly

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something that is fresh, raw and urgent, however, can be richly rewarding.

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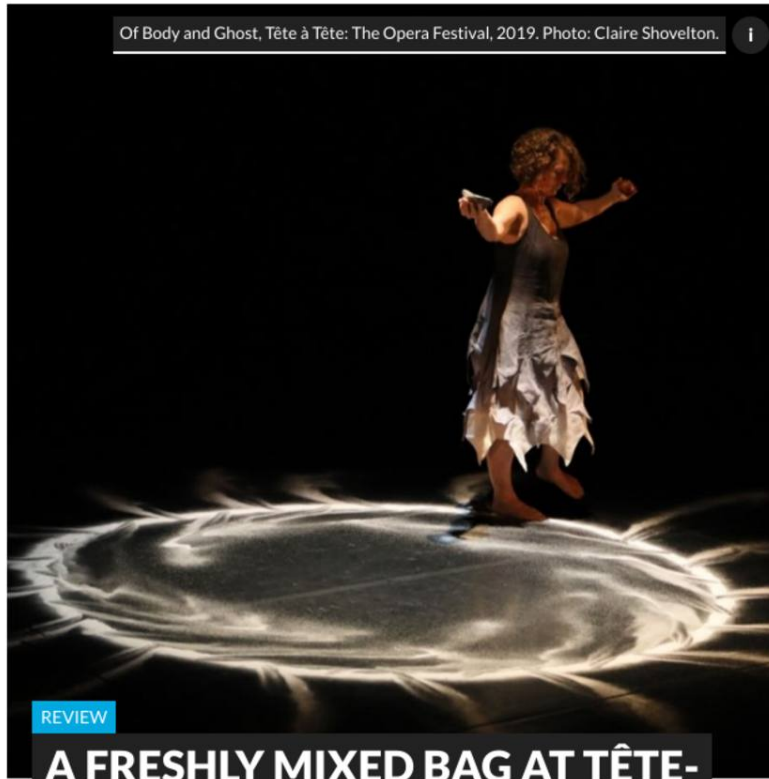
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REVIEW

A FRESHLY MIXED BAG AT TÊTE-À-TÊTE'S OPERA FESTIVAL



Alessia Naccarato - Aug 8, 2019

Two contrasting performances were presented in this back-to-back evening of theatre. First up was *Of Body and Ghost*, a dance-theatre-opera collaboration between composer/musician Kris Apple, writer/dramaturg Roswitha Gerlitz and director/choreographer Yolande Snaith that investigated the aging body through sound, movement, and storytelling.

With a single singer, violin, and electronics, they were able to create

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(IMAGE 1 OF 7)

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a sound that felt infinite.

Schmopera

AUG 8 2019

(IMAGE 2 OF 7)

This was a beautiful and contemplative performance. The music was atmospheric and more consequential than a driving force for the storyline. With a single singer, violin, and electronics, they were able to create a sound that felt infinite; reverberating around the space, echoing itself, and repeating in endless patterns. The music sometimes took the forefront and sometimes provided a backdrop for Snaith's choreography. A distorted voiceover listed facts about the aging human body in a robotic tone as Snaith danced inside of a circle of salt; responding to the words, exploring the limits of her body and its abilities.



Of Body and Ghost, Tête à Tête: The Opera Festival, 2019. Photo: Claire Shovelton.

It became clear from quite early on that Snaide was the main character in this story and Barbara Byers, who provided the vocals, was a sympathetic yet removed and otherworldly onlooker. Snaide's wrestling with her understanding of her own aging body was visceral. In a poignant sequence, she struggled to drag a heavy garbage bag across the stage. When she finally managed to lift it, she promptly began to tear it apart, allowing the soil inside of it to spill all over herself and the floor around her, almost as if it had come from inside

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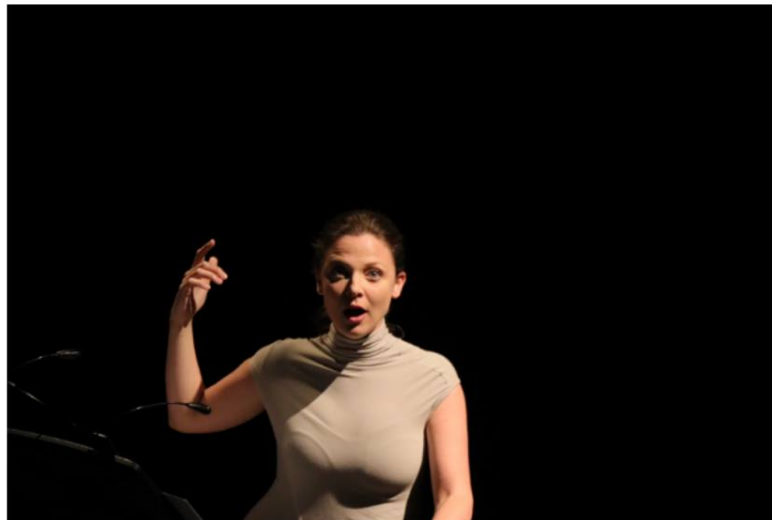
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of her.



Of Body and Ghost, Tête à Tête: The Opera Festival, 2019. Photo: Claire Shovelton.

It was a physical representation of the expulsion of her fears, anxieties, and burdens. She then proceeded to lie on the mound of dirt face down, breathing laboriously into the microphone and telling a humorous but heart-breaking story about her desire to become a tree when she dies. It was a full circle exploration of her relationship with death and it seems that at the end she finally, if not somewhat begrudgingly, come to terms with her own mortality. A thought-provoking and emotionally stimulating piece.



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ROBE, Tête à Tête: The Opera Festival, 2019. Photo: Claire Shovelton.

After a brief intermission the audience reassembled in the theatre for Alistair White's *ROBE*, the composer's newest project and the follow up to the award-winning *WEAR*. Though conceptually and visually stunning with its purpose created high fashion costume pieces, the story line was buried beneath convoluted language, inaudible text, and overly complicated melodic lines. Scored for piano, percussion, flute, and four singers, the piece had a relentless and widely unvaried texture with very few moments that broke from this.



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ROBE, Tête à Tête: The Opera Festival, 2019. Photo: Claire Shovelton.

It was highly self-reflective and self-aware music that read as slightly pretentious and inaccessible. I can understand the desire to experiment with a form to push it as far as it will go, but to create something that exists purely for its complexity I find is a challenging idea for contemporary opera.

Moments of dialogue were few and far between and the direction lacked clarity and intention.

Performers were limited by the beautiful yet cumbersome costume pieces and the necessity to be close to their scores. Moments of

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pieces and the necessity to be close to their scores. Moments of dialogue were few and far between and the direction lacked clarity and intention. Each character had distinctive movements, setting them apart from each other and creating variation on a fairly static stage but with no explanation or context for who these characters were, their performances though all expertly sung, lacked meaning.



ROBE, Tête à Tête: The Opera Festival, 2019. Photo: Claire Shovelton.

The three male dancers were the most engaging aspect of a performance that left me confused and somewhat frustrated. They interpreted the musical landscape with their bodies in a way that began to make sense of it. They brought the stage to life with their freedom of movement; a luxury the singers did not share. The most visually stimulating moments were those when the dancers interacted with the singers onstage, mirroring each other's movements.



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(IMAGE 6 OF 7)

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ROBE, Tête à Tête: The Opera Festival, 2019. Photo: Claire Shovelton.

What I like about the [Tête-à-Tête Opera Festival](#) is that it is always a mixed bag. It is an incredibly liberating thing to watch so many creative performers and theatre-makers experiment with the limitations of the form. Programming is always fresh and varied and tickets are inexpensive which easily allows audiences to attend multiple performances over the course of the festival. And their cross arts content draws in creatives who are new to opera; ever expanding its network and continuing the conversation.

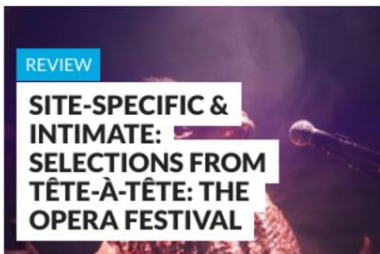
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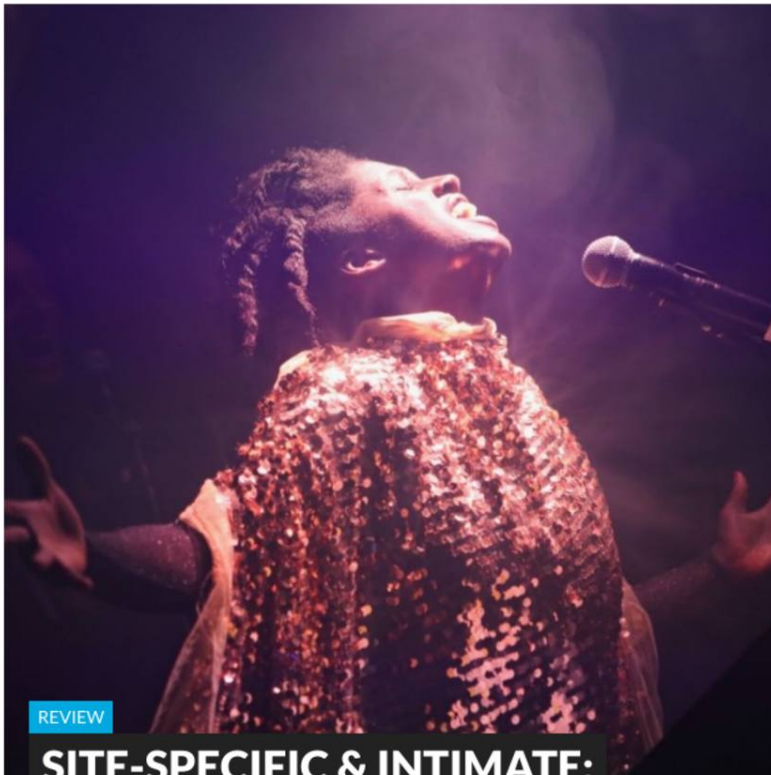
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REVIEW

SITE-SPECIFIC & INTIMATE: SELECTIONS FROM TÊTE-À-TÊTE: THE OPERA FESTIVAL



Alessia Naccarato - Aug 5, 2019

I recently had the pleasure of seeing two pieces in [Tête-à-Tête's Opera Festival line up](#) this summer. Though very different in style and subject matter, they are alike in their re-imagining of the traditional operatic performance space and in their bending of the limitations of the genre.

All senses were catered to as
audience members were misted

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audience members were misted with fragrant water and touched softly by the performers while being whispered and sung to directly.

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AUG 5 2019

(IMAGE 2 OF 8)

The first piece was Nwando Ebizie's performative installation *Hildegard: Visions*; an immersive performance that combined three original commissions using the life and work of Hildegard of Bingen as a starting point to explore her experience with cosmic visions and their connection to neurodiversity through the use of structural light, electronic soundscapes, and cross cultural rituals. Though billed as an opera, it felt more like a participatory, sensory exploration. Workshopped over the course of a week, it had a naturalistic and improvisational feel that was well suited to it, given its grounding in the research and development field. an immersive performance that combined three original commissions using the life and work of Hildegard of Bingen as a starting point to explore her experience with cosmic visions and their connection to neurodiversity through the use of structural light, electronic soundscapes, and cross cultural rituals.

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Hildegard: Visions, Tête-à-Tête: The Opera Festival, 2019. Photo: Claire Shovelton.

All senses were catered to as audience members were misted with fragrant water and touched softly by the performers while being whispered and sung to directly. There was a strong participation element as audience members were asked to wear items of clothing, shine torches, and towards the end of the piece, join in a euphoric, ritualistic dance that carried on endlessly as people began to filter out after the allotted "performance time" had ended. Structural lighting design by Shelley James was a crucial element of the piece and effectively executed, filling the space with a dazzling, other-worldly glow. The audience was fully immersed in the sound of the piece as pre-recorded polyphonic singing, whispering, and sound effects blared from speakers in every corner of the room, bathing us in an entanglement of sound.



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(IMAGE 3 OF 8)

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Hildegard: Visions, Tête-à-Tête: The Opera Festival, 2019. Photo: Claire Shovelton.

The second piece was composer, librettist, and director Francesca Le Lohe's Ango-Japanese *The Key*, based on the 1956 novella of the same name by author Junichiro Tanizaki which tells a story of a suffering marriage entirely through journal entries. The characters interact indirectly with each other by reading each other's diaries and as their actions become bolder, they threaten to destroy the marriage entirely.



Hildegard: Visions, Tête-à-Tête: The Opera Festival, 2019. Photo: Claire Shovelton.

The site-specific piece was performed in the West Dulwich mid-century home of London architect Angus Shepherd which created the perfect setting for this wonderfully and meticulously crafted piece. Featuring three trios and a solo dancer, each trio was made up of a singer, a western stringed instrument, and a traditional Japanese instrument, namely; Shakuhachi (bamboo flute), Sho (mouth organ), and Shumedaiko (percussion).

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The word “intimacy” comes to mind when describing both pieces.

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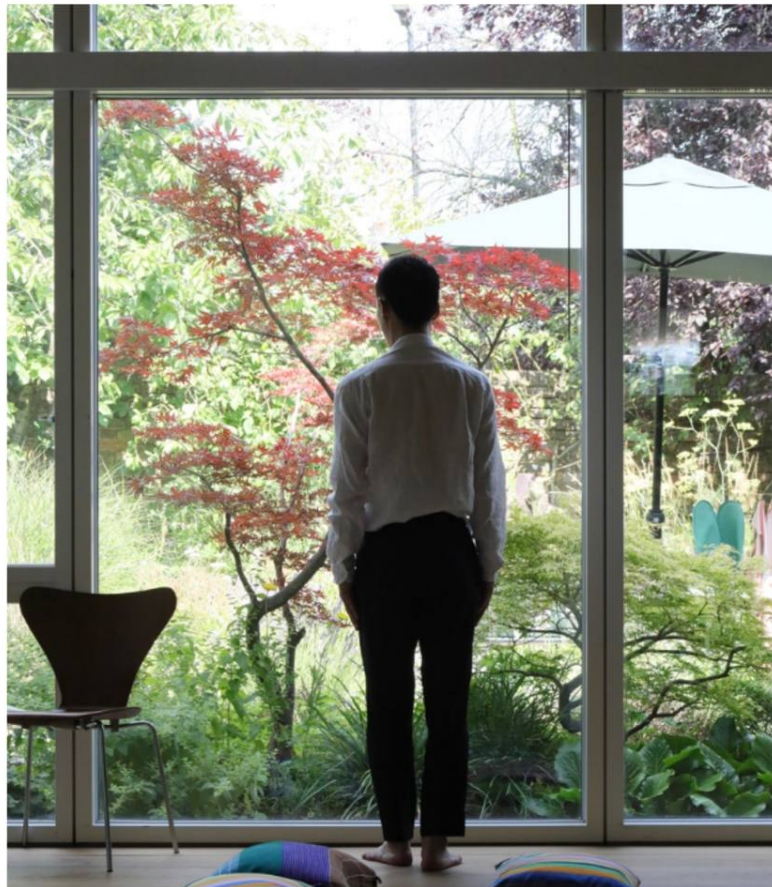
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Each trio was set up in a different room of the house, but the design was such that sound easily carried over multiple floors and through open windows. The trios performed simultaneously but with music that was independent of each other's. Often, one trio would swell to a *forte* while the other faded to silence. The instruments would weave seamlessly in and out of each other, directing the narrative to different rooms of the house. The audience were free to walk from room to room as and when we wanted, creating our own perspective on this story told from multiple angles.

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THE鍵KEY, Tête-à-Tête: The Opera Festival, 2019. Photo: Claire Shovelton.

Both pieces challenged the audience in participatory, exploratory ways. Unlike more traditional performances with an audience sitting facing a stage to which all of the action is confined to, the “stage” became the entire performance space whether it be a black box theatre, or someone’s living room, and in this sense, the audience had a large role to play. Participation was a requirement in *Visions*, as the audience became an integral part of the ritual that was being played out through the piece and therefore, our involvement was also an integral part of the overall mood of the piece. Similarly, in *The Key*, audience members inadvertently became a part of the performance as we wandered around the space, responding to the performers needs and movements.



THE鍵KEY, Tête-à-Tête: The Opera Festival, 2019. Photo: Claire Shovelton.

The word “intimacy” comes to mind when describing both pieces, and while it is more of a mood obtained in *Visions*, it is also a strong

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while it is more of a mood obtained in *Visions*, it is also a strong thematic point in *The Key*. Large performance spaces can be made to feel intimate if the performers strive to create that particular atmosphere, but this is much more easily achieved with the limited space of a family home that only allows for 20 or so audience members.

I am excited to see what else is in store.

Not only was the subject matter particularly intimate, delving into the inner workings of a marriage, but because the piece took place in a home, the sense that the audience was peering into their private lives was all the more prevalent. *Visions* created this sense of intimacy by transforming a dark, characterless space into a lush and welcoming one that invited the audience to sit freely and comfortably as the performance happened all around us.



THE KEY, Tête-à-Tête: The Opera Festival, 2019. Photo: Claire Shovelton.

Both pieces played with the boundaries of the audience's comfort

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with intimacy. In a large concert hall, it is easy to separate oneself from the emotional intimacy of the stage but with these two pieces, there was no choice but to be confronted with it.

Tête-à-Tête continues to challenge the boundaries of opera with its yearly summer festival” three weeks of explosive creativity and inspiration. Both *Hildegard: Visions* and *The Key* have presented a unique way of looking at the art form. Site-specific performances have a beautiful intimacy to them that allow for a more personal experience for both the audience and the performers and these two pieces are proof that opera truly can be performed anywhere. I am excited to see what else is in store.



THE KEY, Tête-à-Tête: The Opera Festival, 2019. Photo: Claire Shovelton.

The 2019 [Tête-à-Tête: The Opera Festival](#) line-up continues through 10 August.

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Thursday, 8 August 2019

Tête à Tête: dance, Chinese folk tales, and the Apollo Mission to the moon

Labels: opera review



Huan Li: The Bridge of Magpies - Tête à Tête (Photo Claire Shovelton)

Huan Li The Bridge of Magpies, Edward Lambert Apollo's Mission; Tête à Tête: The Opera Festival at The Place Reviewed by Robert Hugill on 7 August 2019

Dance, Chinese art song, satire and moon landings in another pair of new works from Tête à Tête

For our second visit to Tête à Tête: The Opera Festival at The Place we caught two more operas, The Bridge of Magpies by Huan Li and Apollo's Mission by Edward Lambert. The Bridge of Magpies told a traditional Chinese story using Chinese art song woven together with music by composer Huan Li with contributions on Chinese instruments, Pipa and Gugin, from Cheng Yu. The work was choreographed by Julia Cheng (who also danced) and directed by Sarah Hutchinson with Phoebe Haines (soprano), Jacob Bettinelli (baritone) and dancers Ellen Finlay and Jeremiah Olusola. Apollo's Mission had words by Norman Welch and music by Edward Lambert, in a production directed by Korina Koliakali with singers Helen Bailey, Sofia Livotov, Natasha Agarwal, Daniel Joy, Dominic Bowe, and Samuel Lom, plus dancers Marielena Sitaropoulou and Becky Stenning, accompanied by Susan Holmes (piano) and Catriona Scott (clarinet).

The Bridge of Magpies is very much a cross-art and cross cultural collaboration, using song, instrumental music, dance and projections to tell its story with artists with both Chinese and British roots. The piece tells a traditional story in which the love of a pair of lovers is forbidden and they are banished to either side of a river, once a year a flock of magpies forms a bridge to re-union the lovers. The story was effectively told in a mixture of dance and song, with the two lovers played by both singers, Phoebe Haines and Jacob Bettinelli, and dancers, Ellen Finlay and Jeremiah Olusola. The song element was made up of classic Chinese art song (sung in Chinese, I presume Mandarin but we were never told), but dance played a very important role and Julia Cheng's expressive choreography was an important feature of the production. Composer Huan Li, who also played the piano, provided music which linked both West and East with contributions on the pipa and the gugin from Cheng Yu.



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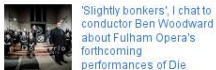
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Tchaikovsky in Opera Holland Park's double bill

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Edward Lambert: Apollo's Mission - Tête à Tête (Photo Claire Shevelton)

The result was charming and highly effective, a lovely tale well told. Though it was never quite clear for what reason the lovers were kept apart, and this scene was relatively short. I felt that, perhaps, a little more grit and anger at this point might provide a nice balance to the work's charm. There is great potential for developing this fascinating cross-cultural collaboration, but I think it would be useful to present the audience with more information about what they are hearing, translations of the sung Chinese, and perhaps more information about the music that we are hearing. What I took away from this was the sheer power and effectiveness of telling a story through movement, and it was Julia Cheng's choreography that moved me the most.



Huang Li: The Bridge of Magpies - Tête à Tête (Photo Claire Shevelton)

After the interval there was a complete mood change as composer Edward Lambert and librettist Norman Wood celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Moon landings in a work which merged the serious and the satirical. The piece took the scientific (the depiction of the mission of the astronauts landing on the moon) and interwove it with the metaphorical (the moon depicted as the goddess Selena, here a nightclub singer adored by her fans). At the key moment of the landing, the two collide and Selena is violated. She calls on her brother, the god Apollo, who appears at the moment Buzz Aldrin celebrates communion on the moon (something that did happen). Apollo is an idiot - here a Trump-alike in a golden wig.

The result was appealing and intriguing, presented in a fast paced manner with the scenes overlapping and inter-cutting, and the hard-working cast of six singers and two dancers playing multiple roles. Lambert's music moved between the popular and the more serious, and at times the piece took quite a serious approach to a satirical subject. The problem for me was that, despite the hard work of the cast, many of Norman Welch's words did not come over and you kept wishing for subtitles (never a good thought in an English comic opera), and the thought occurred to me that the libretto might be simply too busy and too detailed to be set in such a way. If you have a complex ensemble where it is clear that the words will not be heard, then perhaps it needs setting up in a way which means that the words matter less.

Natasha Agarwal made an appealing Selena, bringing a real sense of character to the role, though Dominic Bowe struggled to make Apollo much more than an idiotic caricature. All three men, Daniel Joy, Dominic Bowe and Samuel Lom played the astronauts though Joy's Neil Armstrong and Lom's Buzz Aldrin were the focus of the landing.



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Edward Lambert: *Apollo's Mission* - Tête à Tête (Photo Claire Shovelton)

These was a terrific ensemble show, and certainly made you think. There was an element of puzzlement too, but the sheer pell-mell nature of the piece and its deliberate car crash of competing facts and fantasies was rather appealing.

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God Save the Tea – Tête à Tête: The Opera Festival

AUGUST 7, 2019 LAST UPDATED: AUGUST 7, 2019 12:35 PM BY ALAN FITTER

LEAVE A COMMENT

It's been said that sometimes it's better to journey than arrive and that was the case when I went to see *God Save The Tea*. It all augured well as we were met in the lobby of the new, very shiny Camden Council offices in St Pancras Square where a number of enthusiastic people in blue t-shirts from Tête À Tête, the company putting on the local opera



God Save the Tea – Tête à Tête: The Opera Festival

festival, made sure we were comfortable and then took us through the somewhat tongue in cheek health and safety speech in English and French as we were there as "delegates" to a political summit so there were rules to be followed. We were then escorted to the lift and up to the 11th floor where we were shown into a conference room and asked to sit at various tables each of which had a flag of a European nation on it. We chose Italy (the Italian flag also had a pizza on it to make it obvious where we were from) and after a bit of banter in cod Italian with the "politician" who was leading the "summit" the performance began and unfortunately it was all very much downhill after that.

The main performer was the Politician who spoke and sang most of the text. When we arrived, she was being fanned with a tiny fern by one of her "staff" whilst she addressed us and told us we had to fill in the questionnaire on our tables although the pencils we were supplied with were soon taken away by the staff! There were cups and saucers on the tables and the two staff members then poured a small amount of tea into them although we weren't told to drink it which was probably a good thing looking at it! The Politician who mainly spoke the text, occasionally broke into cod-operatic singing backed by a flautist and cellist but the actual singing was minimal. The music itself was very contemporary and avant-garde – you couldn't confuse it with Puccini or Verdi! There was also a woman at the back sitting at a desk typing into a computer which I presume was operating the video which was shown on a large TV. The video itself added very little as it was obscured by an on-screen drawing of a teacup although I did spot film of Mrs Thatcher, Teresa May and Boris Johnson.

If this all sounds a bit strange, well it was and as I looked around the room, there seemed to be a look of bemusement on most of the audience's faces as the forty-five-minute piece unfolded.

The big problem with the piece is that if you're going to write and perform a

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS: **56.2K**

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The big problem with the piece is that if you're going to write and perform a political satire about "Western imperialism, exploitation and colonialism" as well as "banning immigration and... exploitation of poorer countries" (quoted from the programme), then you have to be sharp, concise and satirical and this piece just wasn't any of those. We live in a world that seems immune to satire and parody at the moment – just how do you satirise the real politicians in this current climate? So, if you're brave enough to try, you have to get it spot-on and unfortunately Cut Moose who conceived the piece, haven't. Also, if you're going to market your production as "immersive" then you have to immerse the audience in it and **God Save The Tea** didn't do anything of the sort.

Tête À Tête bill themselves as "the future of opera" and in the other productions I've seen over the years as part of their festivals, they are just that, moving opera into the 21st century and broadening its appeal. However, I don't think God Save The Tea is part of that future; performance art it might be – opera it isn't.



Review by Alan Fitter

We could call this performance a political satire in the form of an opera but – oh dear – how would that distinguish us from Downing Street?

It is your moral obligation to attend this summit to encourage the cohesiveness of our society.

Drawing from our interventions at the Barbican Centre and the Mais Imaginarius Festival, we will discuss policies meant to improve western altruistic imperialism, on topics such as outsourcing, free trade and cultural exchange. Attendance is strictly regulated to protect free speech. Your presence may be recorded for training and quality purposes.

There will be tea. Lovely!

God Save The Tea

Company/Producer: Cut Moose

Music: Lucas Jordan

Words: Irene

Monday 5th August

The show takes place at a secret location.

<https://www.tete-a-tete.org.uk/>

Summary	
Reviewer	Alan Fitter
Review Date	2019-08-07
Production	God Save the Tea - Tête à Tête: The Opera Festival
Author Rating	★☆☆☆☆



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London Theatre 1

AUG 7 2019

(IMAGE 2 OF 2)

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS: **56.2K**

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Image courtesy of Michael Stewart; photography by Andrew Nuding (2017)

The opera has always been a place where fashion and art come together for a moment of visual splendour. Those preparing for a night out at the box usually take care to put on their finest – richly-coloured cocktail gowns and crisp suits – making the audience just as much of a spectacle as the performance taking place on stage. There’s an art to the opera experience. And while fashionable attendance is considered practically synonymous with the opera, fashion doesn’t always make it centre-stage.

Changing the key and putting the fashion in focus of the opera is *Robe*, a new performance having its premiere in London this week. Written and composed by Scottish composer Alastair White, it tells the story of a post-human society in which virtual reality, and A.I. cross with high fashion, contemporary dance and, of course, the opera. Irish designer Michael Stewart was behind the costumes, which are taken from his 2017 RCA Graduate Collection that examined the body within the landscape. Two elders, Neachneohain and Beira, desperate to keep a society in which the real and virtual are one in tact, task Rowan, a cartographer to enter into the mind of a super-intelligent being. Named Edinburgh this creature hosts an abstract world of data and dreams. It’s within Edinburgh that the elders wish to create a living city, full of



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creature hosts an abstract world of data and dreams. It's within Edinburgh that the elders wish to create a living city, full of human life.

The opera goes on to tell the story of how Rowan and Edinburgh come to forge a union of thirty years, built on love and Rowan's mission to forge a map that will grant the elder's wish. However, there's a secret Rowan is keeping, one which could threaten the future of the world as they know it. Produced by UUU Studios, the production company founded by White and Gemma A. Williams, *Robe* wants to shed light on the little discussed topic of virtual reality being as much a futuristic tool as it is an ancient one.

"Virtual reality has existed since the dawn of time. Books, theatres – even the clothes we wear – are examples of machines which transform and augment our perception of the world," shares White. "*Robe* uses the intersections between dance, fashion, and opera to explore how the implications of mind-bending future technologies such as A.I. and cyberspace may have their origin in ancient, forgotten pasts."

The costumes designed by Stewart were inspired by the notion of ancient futures, further elaborating that there is little difference between remnants of the distant past and the future. To further make fashion central, Williams, who is the curator and author of *Fashion China*, partnered with choreographer Max Gershon, who has previously worked with Burberry and Tate Modern, to explore the theatrical language of fashion and dance. If you want to delve into the world of cyberspace in which fashion forms a bridge across two seemingly distant worlds, book your tickets asap. *Robe* premieres tomorrow, August 6th at The Place as part of *Tête-a-Tête: The Opera Festival*.

The 'Robe' performances will take place on Tuesday, August 6th at The Place. You can find more information and purchase the tickets [here](#).

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Wednesday, 7 August 2019

Tête à Tête: Yolande Snaith, Roswitha Gerlitz & Kris Apple's Of Body and Ghost, and Alastair White's ROBE

Labels: opera review, Tete a Tete



Of Body and Ghost - Yolande Snaith, Barbara Byers - Tête à Tête

Yolande Snaith, Roswitha Gerlitz, Kris Apple Of Body and Ghost, Alastair White ROBE; Yolande Snaith, Barbara Byers, Kris Apple, Clara Kanter, Rosie Middleton, Sarah Parkin, Kelly Poukens, dir: Pamela Schermann & Gemma A Williams, Ben Smith, Jenni Hogan; Tête à Tête at The Place
Reviewed by Robert Hugill on 7 August 2019

Music theatre, dance, virtual reality and cyberspace in a pair of new works at Tête à Tête

Tête à Tête: The Opera Festival continues into its third and final week, and we caught two intriguing works at The Place. Of Body and Ghost, a music theatre piece from dancer Yolande Snaith, writer Roswitha Gerlitz, composer/musician Kris Apple and singer Barbara Byers, and ROBE by Alastair White with singers Clara Kanter, Rosie Middleton, Sarah Parkin, Kelly Poukens, flautist Jenni Hogan and pianist Ben Smith, directed by Gemma A. Williams and Pamela Schermann.

Yolande Snaith is the former artistic director of Yolande Snaith Theatre/dance and she has collaborated on a number of projects with Roswitha Gerlitz as designer. But for Of Body and Ghost their roles have shifted focus and diversified, with the work exploring the changes in the human body due to aging, disease and affliction. The programme note describes the work thus, 'Of Body and Ghost investigates the aging body as an epistemological site, a living archive of experiential knowing where memory is etched in to the flesh and bones'.

On a bare stage there were just three performers, singer Barbara Byers, dancer/choreographer Yolande Snaith and, to one side, composer / musician Kris Apple, though the piece made little differentiation between the roles of Byers and Snaith both of whom moved expressively. Both were wearing striking costumes by Yolande Snaith, with the suggestion perhaps that here was the older and younger versions of the same character. Byers provided the striking live vocals which formed part of the aural sound-track of the piece, combining with electronic music, Apple's violin and pure spoken text.

It was Snaith, however, who formed the primary focus of attention with a series of dramatic interventions which intrigued and, frankly, puzzled. She started by drawing a huge circle on the stage in salt, to the accompaniment of a spoken text which provided some striking facts about the human body such as the weight of skin that we shed. This circle would prove the focus for the rest of piece, with Snaith finally dragging a huge bag of what looked like soil (perhaps the shed skin referred to earlier), filling the centre of the circle with it and lying face down.

The intention of Of Body and Ghost was to combine music, movement and visuals in a striking way, and in this it succeeded admirably, though I found it difficult at times to map the expressive movement onto the deeper meaning that the piece's makers intended.

After the interval the stage was filled by a far larger group of performers. Four singers, Clara Kanter as Rowan, Rosie Middleton as Neachneohain, Sarah Parkin as Beira, and Kelly Poukens as the Storyteller performed from plinths, each with a music stand and a score but doing so in a highly expressive manner, and Michael Stewart's costumes and Astrid Kearney's make-up were visually very striking. To one side Ben Smith played the piano (and percussion) with Jenni Hogan on flute. There were also three dancers, Charlie Nayler, Thomas Page and Moses Ward performing choreography by Max Gershon.

Alastair White, who created both the music and words for ROBE, is currently studying for a PhD at Goldsmiths, University of London. ROBE is set in a future society where the real and the virtual merge. A powerful new being, Edinburgh, threatens the society and Rowan is sent to map the mind of the creature in order that it can become a living city. The resulting process leads to Rowan and Edinburgh falling in love, yet the map making process is fraught and the result is not quite what was intended. This story was told by Clara Kanter as Rowan the mapmaker, with Rosie Middleton and Sarah Parkin as the officials who despatch Rowan to make the map, and then Middleton and Parkin joined together to create Edinburgh.

But interweaving this was the ancient story of the weaving of a poisoned red robe, told by the story teller, Kelly Poukens. And at the end the two narratives seemed to merge.

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(IMAGE 1 OF 2)

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(EST.) COVERAGE VIEWS: 1.41K

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Tchaikovsky in Opera Holland Park's double bill

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...and the two characters seemed to merge.

White's music has an intriguing elaboration to it, with instruments and voices executing striking arabesques, jagged and angular, and the resulting textures successfully evoked the strange abstract world of cyberspace, creating a real sense of non-reality. But though occasional key phrases were spoken or chanted to aid clarity, much of the poetic text was unclear as the complexities of the vocal writing made diction tricky. This meant that a lot of the allusive nature of the piece was lost, and I felt that there was a lack of dramaturgical clarity, it was not always clear who these people were or what they were doing. Or perhaps this was intentional, and the dramatic form of the work was intended to reflect the merging of the real, the abstract and the virtual to reflect the strange cyber-space world.

The work last around 90 minutes or so, rather longer than the billed time of an hour and it would have benefited from pruning and tightening. The performances from all concerned were excellent with none of the singers giving any hint of the complexities of White's music, and both Smith and Hogan provided fine instrumental counterparts to the singing. The result was full of striking and evocative textures, though perhaps overall lacking a sense of dramatic momentum.

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REVIEW: '8' A STEAMPUNK OPERA, THE OTHER PALACE

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Photo: Claire Shovelton

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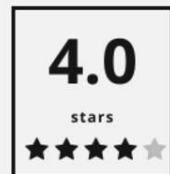
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(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS: **19.8K**

(EST.) COVERAGE VIEWS: **130**

DOMAIN AUTHORITY: **53**

REVIEW: '8' A STEAMPUNK OPERA, THE OTHER PALACE



'8' *A Steampunk Opera*, is a dark new musical with gloriously powerful voices, slow sliding melodies and an obscure plot line. This show blurs the line between musical theatre and opera to create a piece artistically similar to *Miss Saigon* and *Sweeney Todd*. '8' *A Steampunk Opera* is playing as part of *Tête à Tête*, a two-week opera festival playing across London. It shines a light onto new opera works and allows groundbreaking, experimental shows to be thrust

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REVIEW: CLASS, TRISTAM BATES THEATRE

AUGUST 3, 2019

opera works and allows groundbreaking, experimental shows to be thrust into the limelight. '8' A Steampunk Opera is a perfect example of this, and Charli Eglinton has created an astounding show. She's crafted everything from the concept, music, book and lyrics, to even creating the orchestration and artwork. It is beautifully composed with a strong cast, but the sci-fi like plot is bizarre and occasionally hard to follow.

Originally intended to be a full length ballet/opera, the show is shortened to fit in the small studio space of The Other Palace. This change is made by cutting songs, watching animated videos and reading dialogue to cover the skipped scenes. However even with these effective changes, the story feels gloomy and overly elaborate. It follows the life of Ed (Mikey Wooster), who has been branded with an 8 on his cheek by his mafia-boss father (Ralph Bogard). Ed tries to escape the evil, but inevitably finds it within himself and his past soon catches up with him. A dramatic fight scene is omitted entirely, and the abrupt ending appears way too quickly, so I yearn to see this show in its entirety.

Advert



Despite the fast pace, the story is still explained brilliantly and sets free a wild imagination. It's a fantasy land plot that embraces all the typical human tragedies, from love triangles to complex father-son relationships. What makes this musical individual is the anime-like style that incorporates automatons and a futuristic feeling. Eglinton has truly let her ideas fly to create this coherent narrative.

The music (also by Eglinton) is delightfully refreshing, as it's not following the expected pop trend that musical theatre is heading towards. Instead we are treated to beautiful lilting melodies that slide dramatically through semitones. This style is very similar to *Les Misérables* and an argument between two brothers is bizarrely comparable to Jean Valjean and Javert's battle. These moments of familiarity crop up throughout the show and while the music is exquisitely harmonious, it doesn't feel 100% original.

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DOMAIN AUTHORITY:	53

Nonetheless, Eglinton marries the music to the narrative extraordinarily well and reflects the emotion of each scene precisely with her underlying orchestration. Performing this heightened music is the star cast, who have rich operatic voices and refined tonal qualities. Their commitment is admirable and the fact they only learn the show in nine days is highly impressive. The combination of the intriguing score and pleasant voices is outstanding.

This brand new work is compelling and deeply imaginative throughout every aspect of the performance. It is extremely well developed and is already a complete show. All it needs now is a bigger space to present the full work, and I look forward to seeing it when it does.

'8' *A Steampunk Opera* is playing at *The Other Palace* until 1 August. For more information and tickets, visit [The Other Palace website](#).

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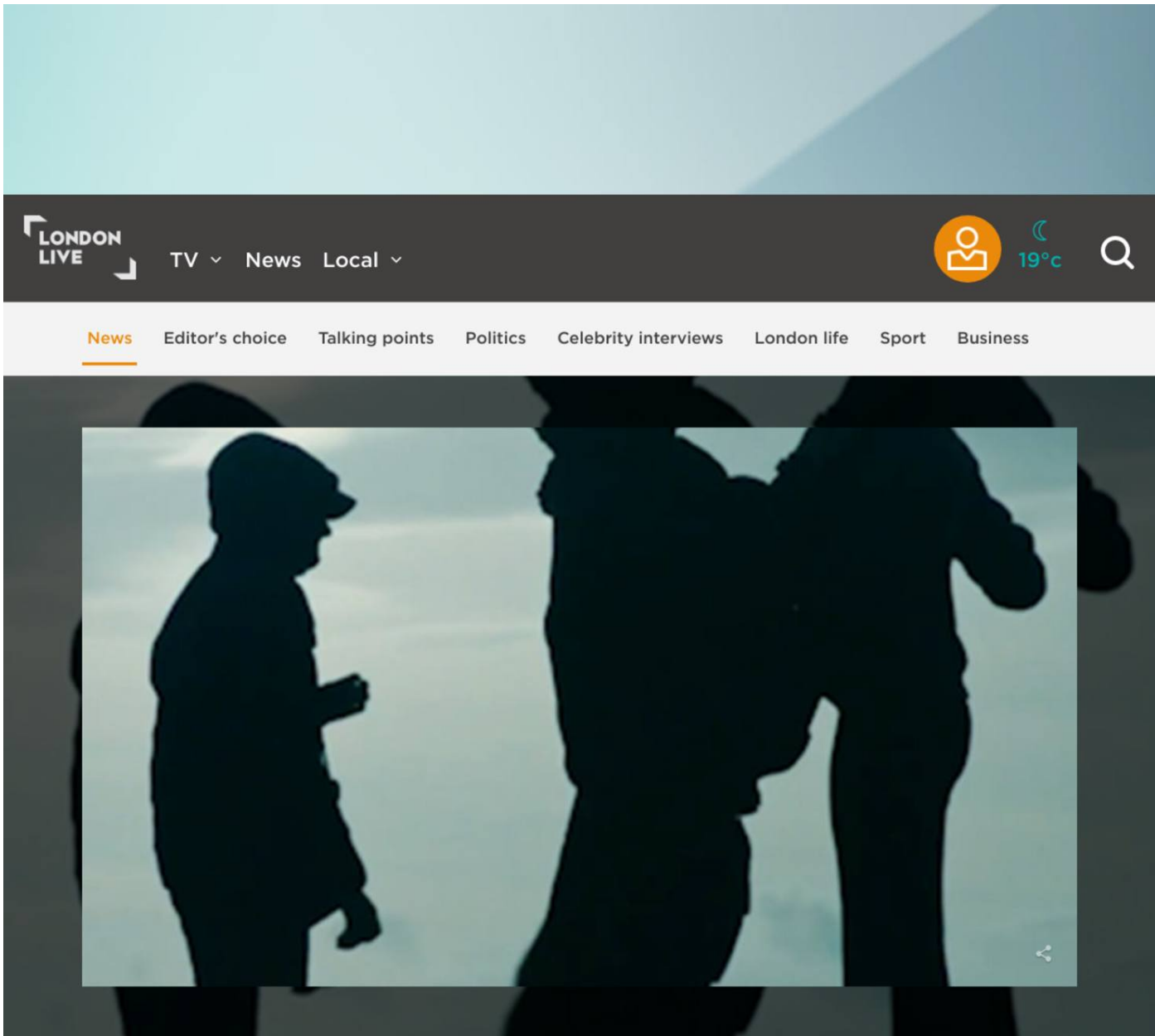
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(IMAGE 1 OF 2)

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New AI opera to premiere in Camden



London Live

2nd August 2019

A new opera which covers themes of artificial intelligence and high fashion, will have its World Premiere in Camden next week as part of the Tete a Tete festival.

Robe has been composed by Alastair White and directed by Gemma A Williams.

Robe is on at the Place in Camden next Tuesday.

[Music](#), [Theatre](#), [News](#), [London](#)

London Live

AUG 2 2019

(IMAGE 2 OF 2)

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Tete a Tete Festival review at RADA Studio, London – ‘a music-theatre party bag’



Nadine Benjamin in BEAM at RADA Studio, London. Photo: Claire Shovelton

Reviews | Opera | by Edward Bhesania - Aug 2, 2019

TWEET THIS

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The Tete a Tete festival's mixed bills are a music-theatre party bag. There might be the odd liquorice nightmare in there, but you still go home with a skip in your step.

Benjamin's voice in less classical guises, this work-in-progress has a powerful story to tell

Voice(less) juxtaposes two commissions for voice and electronics. Both feature recorded interviews with people self-identifying as female and/or non-binary, on the topic of losing your voice, both physically and metaphorically. Mezzo-soprano Rosie Middleton

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Production Information

Production	Tete a Tete Festival: BEAM/ Voice(less)/One Art/The Cruel Sister
Venue	RADA Studio
City	London

Composer	Various/Laura Bowler/Michael Betteridge/Paula M Kimper/Laurence Panter
Director	Darren Abrahams/Robin Norton-Hale/ Lucy

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS: **557K**

(EST.) COVERAGE VIEWS: **2.27K**

DOMAIN AUTHORITY: **71**

or losing your voice, both physically and metaphorically. mezzo-soprano Rosie Middleton maintains a distanced, 1,000-yard stare throughout, coinciding at times with fragments and repetitions of the taped words, and, in the second piece, using a violin as an aid to utterance. The execution is innovative but the overall effect is a little arch. (Or is the other way around?)

One Art is the story of American poet Elizabeth Bishop: successful, gay and prone to drink. Soprano Laure Meloy leads us through letters, readings and a handful of songs. It's an extraordinary performance, gripping for Meloy's freshness and nuance, as if the whole thing were unscripted.

The Cruel Sister is based on a folk ballad in which, on the eve of her wedding, a bride-to-be is killed by her jealous sister. A violin is made from the woman's remains. Meanwhile, the evil sister has taken her sibling's place as bride, only to be exposed and castigated at the wedding feast. There's black humour and some good performances here, but the music often sounds like a parody of Victorian parlour songs with a gothic twist. On the other hand, the audience gets wedding cake.

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Verdict

A typically wide-ranging selection, whose greatest strength – and weakness – lies in allowing all-comers



Norton-Hale/ Lucy Elston

Cast includes

Nadine Benjamin/Rosie Middleton/ Laure Meloy/Lucy Elston, Michelle Buckley, Edmund Caird, Samuel Lom, Esther Mallett, Jasmin Adrian-Dawson

Running time

30mins/40mins/40mins50 mins



Have your say

The Stage

AUG 2 2019

(IMAGE 2 OF 3)

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Errollyn Wallen (left) and Jennifer MT White (Hildegard: Visions, right) at the Tete a Tete Festival, London. Photos: Claire Shovelton

Reviews | Opera | by Edward Bhesania - Aug 2, 2019

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Singing at the keyboard, she was joined by a string quartet for a sequence from her new album at the outdoor stage of the Coal Drops Yard complex at King's Cross, London.

The songs are thoughtful but not angst-ridden, often rhythmically driven but not hyperactive, and they fundamentally come over as warm and naturally expressive. The selection ranged from My Feet May Take a While Longer with its hypnotic repeating chordal accompaniment, the quirkier What's Up, Doc? and the atmospheric North.

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Production Information

Production Tete a Tete Festival

Venue Coal Drops Yard/Kings Place

City London

Starts July 24, 2019

Press night August 1, 2019

Cast Richards, Nwando
Ebizie

Director Robin Norton-Hale
(artistic director,
Hildegard: Visions)

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS:

557K

(EST.) COVERAGE VIEWS:

2.27K

DOMAIN AUTHORITY:

71

chordal accompaniment, the quirkier What's Up, Doc? and the atmospheric North.

Only five days in development, **Hildegard: Visions** promised an experience that "transports its audience... from intimacy to ecstasy", and that's exactly what it did. In a dimly lit space, serene attendants welcome you: during the performance they dispense illuminated wrist bands and faux-sequin scarves. You are spritzed with scented purifying water.

In the first part, the whispering, singing and chanting performers, who envelop the audience, quietly recall texts and vocal music of the 12th-century composer, abbess and mystic Hildegard of Bingen. There is the ritual of bathing, a herbal remedy involving smoked earthworms, and we are asked to stand for funeral rites.

The second part comprised an extended (perhaps over-extended) build-up from quiet rhythmic chanting to a prolonged ecstatic climax of animalistic dancing and screaming. It's a unique, multisensory happening, even if its overall shape and purpose could do with a remedy.



Tete a Tete Festival review at RADA Studio, London – 'a music-theatre party bag'

The Tete a Tete festival's mixed bills are a music-theatre party bag. There might be the odd liquorice nightmare in there, but ... [Continue reading](#)

Lighting

Shelley James
(Hildegard: Visions)

Cast includes

Errollyn Wallen
(piano/vocals),
Rakhvinder Singh,
Rebekah Allan (violins),
Clifton Harrison (viola),
Sarah Suckling
(cello)/Ignacio Jarquin,
Jennifer MT White

Running time

1hr



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Are actors being asked to prepare too much for auditions?

No

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The Stage

AUG 2 2019

(IMAGE 2 OF 3)

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS:

557K

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Verdict

Stark but bold juxtaposition of a cabaret-style set and a ritualistic happening

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Tete a Tete Festival review at RADA Studio, London – 'a music-theatre

THE VOICE

Stars Attend World Premiere Of Windrush Opera

Jamaican High Commissioner Seth Ramocan, Baroness Floella Benjamin plus more were in attendance

31/07/2019 04:51 PM



PICTURED: Opera composer Shirley J Thompson (2nd right) with His Excellency Seth Ramocan and his wife Dr Lola Ramocan (far right), together with Baroness Floella Benjamin (Photo credit: Keith Taylor)

THE WORLD premiere of *Women of the Windrush* by acclaimed composer Shirley J Thompson's took place this week and was attended by the Jamaica High Commissioner, His Excellency Seth Ramocan and his wife Dr Lola Ramocan on July 28 at the at The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art as part of the Tête à tête Festival. Thompson was originally commissioned by the Windrush Commemoration Committee to compose music for a special service held on June 22, 2018 at Westminster Abbey to mark the 70th anniversary of the arrival of MV Empire Windrush in 1948.

The service also featured her work *Psalm to Windrush* based on Psalm 84, from both of which she has developed her new opera, which starred singer Nadine Benjamin, winner of the Voice of Black Opera award and the Verdi prize, currently singing with English National Opera.

The full title of her opera is *Memories in Mind: Women of the Windrush* tell their stories and integrates music developed from *Psalm to Windrush* with stories of many of the women who braved the journey and settled here, as documented in an award-winning film made by the composer.

Others present at the premiere were Baroness Floella Benjamin and her husband Keith and Head of Music at the South Bank Gillian Moore and trumpeter Bruce Nockles, together with Sharon Watson from Phoenix Dance.

Taking to Twitter following the performance, Baroness Floella Benjamin said: "Congrats darling Shirley on creating the moving operatic #Windrush Women Stories [👏👏](#) @NadinBenjamin singing was fantastic as usual."

Another attendee tweeted: "Transfixed by the exquisite voice of soprano Nadine Benjamin in her performance of @shirleyjmusic operatic work capturing the experiences of women of the #Windrush generation who came to Britain from the Caribbean after the 2nd World War."

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Stars Attend World Premiere Of Windrush Opera

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31/07/2019 04:51 PM



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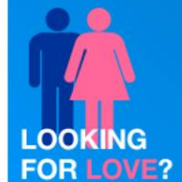
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THE VOICE DATING



The Voice

(IMAGE 1 OF 2)

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS: 188K

(EST.) COVERAGE VIEWS: 844

DOMAIN AUTHORITY: 68

1

Keith and Head of Music at the South Bank Gillian Moore and trumpeter Bruce Nockles, together with Sharon Watson from Phoenix Dance.

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THE VOICE JOBS

The Voice

(IMAGE 2 OF 2)

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REVIEW: VOICE(LESS), RADA STUDIOS

MADLINE LEE * JULY 31, 2019 * OFF WEST END * REVIEWS * THEATRE * 17 VIEWS



Claire Shovelton

JUL 31 2019

(IMAGE 1 OF 3)

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS: **19.8K**

(EST.) COVERAGE VIEWS: **130**

DOMAIN AUTHORITY: **53**

REVIEW: VOICE(LESS), RADA STUDIOS



An abstract piece of performance art with angelic singing and provocative discoveries, *Voice(less)* is a part of Tête-à-tête: The Opera Festival, which lasts for two weeks and showcases the most daring new work in opera all across London. Rosie Middleton performs this one-woman piece to question the power of the voice and what it's like to be left

voiceless — whether due to oppression from society, a medical condition or a psychological struggle. This double-billed performance is as abstract as seeing the famous pile of bricks at The Tate, and inevitably evokes different responses in each person. For me the cyclical and repetitive nature of the piece feels jolting and I yearn for more clarity from this intriguing message.

Both part one (“My Voice”) and part two (“Cover Squirrel”) are constructed from verbatim interviews that play over the top of the performance. Meanwhile Middleton repeats selected words and anguished sounds in a plaintive, operatic tone to highlight moments from the interviews. Her hauntingly resonant sound evokes an enigmatic sense of tension that makes one curious to listen to the words of the interviews. However, this overlapping of sounds is somewhat frustrating as I struggle to truly hear what is being portrayed in the interviews. This chilling effect is unfortunately lost in the difficulty of knowing where the ears should work hardest. Despite this, Middleton performs with an admirable power throughout and holds the stage unequivocally

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AUGUST 1, 2019

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admirable power throughout and holds the stage unequivocally.

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First off is Michael Betteridge's "My Voice" that consists of four interviews from female or non-binary individuals exploring their experience of voice loss. We witness Middleton acting as our interviewer as she musically questions and repeats words heard on the recordings. I particularly appreciate the commentary on people who speak just to fill time. This point really demonstrates the value of silence when nothing needs to be said. The interviewee then explains how this is magnified when speaking another language, due to the difficulty of translating. So if it

isn't worth saying, don't say it. Betteridge has formed a darkly reflective piece that conjures a stream of confusion and delight.

Following this is "Cover Squirrel", composed by [Laura Bowler](#), who approaches feeling voiceless by combining voice and recordings with more grating sounds on an untuned violin. Bowler looks at the different ways our voices are heard, whether that's recorded, singing, spoken, broken or unintelligible. It's almost like a battle between each medium of the voice and Middleton frantically jumps from one to the other. We really see the frustration of her feeling of voicelessness in her eyes as she gets louder and gazes with even more intensity into the audience. This creates an infectious itch within the audience that mirrors her yearning to finish a full sentence. Whilst at times it can be inharmonious, Bowler's section is filled with angst and desperation that says a lot about the nature of finding one's voice.

Voice(less) is an avant-garde piece of artwork that will resonate differently with each individual. It's comparable to standing in front of a surrealist painting and not knowing exactly what the artist is trying to depict, but feeling that, in some way, it speaks to you or it doesn't. For me, I leave yearning to listen more to the interviews and feeling frustrated by the words I wasn't able to discern. Perhaps an ironic interpretation is that I want to hear more from a piece that expresses a struggle to say more. Overall, it leaves my mind buzzing and is a disquieting addition to the daring Tête-à-tête Festival.

Voice(less) played RADA Studios until 27 July. For more information, see the [RADA website](#).

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LAURA BOWLER

MICHAEL BETTERIDGE

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theartsdesk Q&A: Composer Alastair White on his new opera ROBE

Emerging Scottish composer describes creating layers of reality in his latest work

by | Wednesday, 31 July 2019

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Alastair White: 'I first learned about music through rock and roll'

A robe can be many things. Sure, it's a garment, but it can also be cover, a disguise, a costume or a uniform. It's also something composed of many different threads woven together to create something much bigger. It's these kinds of layers of multiplicity which form the basis of the inspiration for Scottish composer Alastair White's new opera, ROBE, premiering at this year's Tête à Tête opera festival. Scored only for piano, flute and four female voices, the opera creates a layered matrix of worlds within worlds, exploring complex networks between stories, history and experiences.

White's route to composition is far from conventional. After completing a degree in English Literature at the University of Edinburgh, he moved to London 'on a whim' with his alt-rock band White Heath. Though he had 'no notational skills at all', he taught himself the basics of harmony and notation from books in the Barbican library, plus a couple of websites, in between his shifts in a call centre. He then

“ In our post-truth society, when there's no such thing as a stable reality, how do you reclaim your own agency? ”

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The Arts Desk

JUL 31 2019

(IMAGE 1 OF 3)

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS:

181K

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787

DOMAIN AUTHORITY:

69



3

library, plus a couple of websites, in between his shifts in a call centre. He then embarked on a master's in composition in 2016 at Goldsmiths University, where he is currently studying for a PhD.

The main 'character' in the opera is the superintelligence EDINBURGH, whose desire is to become a living city. It's a role sung by two singers at once. Soprano Sarah Parkin and mezzo-soprano Rosie Middleton (**pictured below**) work together with inter-weaving vocal melodies to bring to life this complex character. Though named after the place where White studied for his undergraduate degree, the role could represent any city in the world, where countless individuals, each with their own unique experiences and narratives, come together in a jostling melee.



MIRANDA HEGGIE: *What was the inspiration behind the story for this opera?*

ALASTAIR WHITE: ROBE is meant to be about the real experience of living in a city today. That's something you can't sum up in a single story. It's about the collision of multiple perspectives, multiple stories coming together and being contained in a single structure. In our post-truth society, when there's no such thing as a stable reality, or a stable temporality, how do you reclaim your own agency? ROBE expands on this idea. It looks at the meaning within community. Not just within yourself but society, when we're living in this kind of piecemeal world that's composed of your own experience and then public official history, such as the news. On top of that, virtual reality, internet, fiction, movies and books combine to create a disorientating multiplicity of contrasting stimuli. The piece seeks to work out how you reorganise all that to give yourself meaning. It's also about how you use history to create contemporary reality.

It seems like there are many complex layers to the piece. how are these translated into the music?

The compositional language is based around large twelve-note chords, which repeat their intervals after the tritone in the centre. All those rows contain two triads which form a polychord. From that single structure, you can create three additional structures, which in turn create their own wealth of material and work by forming each other's recontextualization within the piece. So, from that there are not just different characters, but different worlds within the opera.

And how are operas' characters represented in the score?

The way the music reflects the characters has more to do with the characters' experiences than their personal attributes. People exist at any moment in this flux of stimuli and sensations. These are much more important than any inherent qualities. So, the music exists much more on the point of the moment rather than the baggage the characters bring with them. It's situational as opposed to inherent – the libretto and the music are much more interested in what the characters are

Tête à Tête Opera Festival previews Martinů rarity

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baggage the characters bring with them. It's situational as opposed to inherent – the libretto and the music are much more interested in what the characters are feeling and experiencing in a single moment than the overarching narrative of the piece.



How have you found the experience of creating such a detailed soundscape with an ensemble of only two?

Ben Smith is the pianist and music director, and he's an incredible, incredible musician. He can do things that you wouldn't think were possible on the piano! Jenni's also from that complexity tradition, and they both push the limits of their instrument. Jenni uses movement a lot in how she plays the flute to change the sound. The incredible things that these players can do has been a huge factor in creating these multiple layers of reality. Doing that kind of world-building with only two instrumentalists wouldn't be possible without collaboration with musicians like Ben and flautist Jenni Hogan.

Your journey to classical composition has been fairly unusual, hasn't it?

I first learned about music through rock and roll. I played piano in White Heath for about ten years, but it was only when I moved down to London, I discovered what you could do with larger musical canvasses; the things that you could say and the worlds that you could create. I became really excited by composition. When you're creating rock and roll, you're creating a sound, or perhaps even more of a feeling. Learning about notation was so much fun! It was like an entire new world was opening up. You're creating a document that then creates a performance – the tension there is fascinating.

With opera, there's not one perspective to understand it from. Everybody comes together to experience it, and for me, that's where meaning happens. It exists in between the people in the seats and in between the people in the production, and somewhere above that, whatever that ephemeral, intangible thing that is called "community". That's where we're trying to create meaning.

- [ROBE is on 6 August at The Place as part of Tête à Tête Opera Festival](#)

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(IMAGE 3 OF 3)

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HUNGER TV

JUL 24 2019

(IMAGE 1 OF 2)

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A list of events to forget about all of your
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78




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 "It may have been a hot day, but that didn't stop our Pop Up Opera Penguins appearance..." via Tête à Tête Twitter

Tête à Tête – Pop Up Opera Performance

The driving force behind the UK's thriving new opera scene, Tête à Tête are showcasing the best emerging talent in the opera scene.

Pop Up Opera Performance is a great event for those who have not watched the opera before or are interested in the new wave of artists.

Tonight is also part of Tête à Tête's Summer Festival of new opera, taking place in parks, theatres and in community spaces.

Find out more info on the acts [here](#).

Price N/A, 20:00 – 20:30

Friday



HUNGER TV

JUL 24 2019

(IMAGE 2 OF 2)

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS: **126K**

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17 July 2019 10:05

From utopia to ubiquity: plastics' journey is focus of new opera

by [Leanne Taylor](#)

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Credit: sylviafield.com

The composer-in-residence at the [Museum of Design in Plastics \(MoDIP\)](#) has produced a new chamber opera exploring the journey of plastics.

Called '[Synthetica: A toxic enchantment](#)' the one-off special event tells the story of plastics from their early utopian days to their current ubiquity.

Composed by Karen Wimhurst and co-presented by Bournemouth-based MoDIP, Synthetica will take to the stage at Tete a Tete's prestigious London festival on

EVENTS

International Rubber Conference (IRC)

The International Rubber Conference will be held in London for the 2019 edition. Commemorating the 200th anniversary of Thomas Hancock's pioneering work with natural rubber, the event is a must-attend for anyone working in or for the industry today. [Read more](#)

RWM 2019

In the second outing under new management, the UK's largest recycling and waste management exhibition will return to Birmingham to present an expected 500+ exhibitors, alongside a comprehensive seminar programme. [Read more](#)

2

K 2019

The world's biggest trade fair for the plastics and rubber industries, K Show, will return in 2019. The last edition attracted 232,000 visitors over the course of the seven-day event and featured 3,293 exhibitors. [Read more](#)

Conference: Extending producer responsibility and developing a deposit return scheme for Wales

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS: **14.8K**

(EST.) COVERAGE VIEWS: **1.41K**

DOMAIN AUTHORITY: **39**

Synthetica will take to the stage at Tete a Tete's prestigious London festival on August 8.

Explaining the inspiration for the new work, Wimhurst said: "As the composer in residence with the MODiP, I was leafing through their archives and I came across this map, 'synthetica', in 'Home and Household' magazine [from] 1940 and there it was - the metaphorical map for the rise of our synthetic world."

She continued: "It has the crystalline rivers of styrene; the island of rayon. It was the utopian excitement of possibility; of course, ironic now."

"Because of that I become very interested in the history of plastics - so going from celluloid and Bakelite - true utopian visions of this material - though to the second World War when we really had true mass production capability and saw plastics entering the home, to the point where we are now, where I can't go for two minutes without touching something plastic in my life."

That research and inspiration is now Synthetica. Those attending can look forward to what Wimhurst describes as "a fractured and poetic sung narrative", that tells a story full of heady discoveries by industrial chemist, consumer crazes fuelled by the dawn of advertising, the facilitation of our easy living, plastics as a massive aid in the face of poverty and the face of environmental catastrophe; ultimately, the light and the dark.

Synthetica will be performed at 'The Place', 17 Duke's Road, London on August 8 at 8:45pm and tickets are on sale now. [For more information and to purchase, click here.](#) To watch a trailer of the performance, see below.



Museum of Design in Plastics (MoDiP) Industry Featured

by [Leanne Taylor](#)

17 July 2019 10:05

deposit return scheme for Wales

This timely policy conference will take place as the Welsh Government are targeting a recycling rate of 70 per cent for municipal waste and reducing landfill waste to five per cent in the next decade.

[Read more](#)

Conference: Reducing avoidable plastic waste - incentives, targets, and policy priorities

This London-based conference will examine the progress of England's Resources and Waste Strategy, as well as the priorities for the ongoing Courtald Commitment 2025 and the UK Plastics Pact. [Read more](#)

PVC 2020

The renowned UK conference series will return for a 14th edition in 2020 and is expected to deliver a comprehensive and varied programme of international speakers, high-quality papers and networking opportunities. [Read more](#)

British Plastics

(IMAGE 2 OF 3)

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Opera

Sondra Radvanovsky at Covent Garden

Bass notes: Borg and Chaliapin

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Opera Magazine

(IMAGE 1 OF 2)

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Music Played



Ludwig van Beethoven

Symphony No 1 in C major, Op 21 (4th mvt)
Orchestra: Chamber Orchestra of Europe. Conductor: Nikolaus Harnoncourt.
BEETHOVEN: SYMPHONIES 1-9; HARNONCOURT, CHAMBER ORCHESTRA OF EUROPE. TELDEC. 4.



Oscar Straus

Jede Frau hat irgendeine Sehnsucht
Performer: Felicity Lott. Performer: Jason Carr.





Dmitry Shostakovich


The Storming of Krasnaya Gorka (The Unforgettable Year 1919, Op. 89)


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▶  The Storming of Krasnaya Gorka (The Unforgettable Year 1919, Op 89a)
 Performer: Dmitri Alexev. Orchestra: English Chamber Orchestra. Conductor: Jerzy Maksymiuk.
SHOSTAKOVICH: PIANO CONCERTOS 1&2: ALEXEV/ENGLISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA/MAKSYMIUK. EMI. 6.

▶  **Oscar Straus**
 Je ne suis pas ce que l'on pense
 Performer: Felicity Lott. Performer: Jason Carr.


▶  **Francisco Guerrero**
 Ave virgo sanctissima
 Choir: The Sixteen. Conductor: Harry Christophers.
RENAISSANCE MUSIC FOR INNER PEACE. UNIVERSAL. 14.


▶  **Edvard Grieg**
 Rigaudon from Holberg suite, Op.40
 Orchestra: Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra.
 Conductor: Ole Kristian Ruud.
GRIEG HOLBERG SUITE. BIS. 005.

▶  **Oscar Straus**
 Je ne suis pas ce que l'on pense
 Performer: Felicity Lott. Performer: Jason Carr.


▶  **Richard Rogers**
 Bewitched
 Performer: Felicity Lott. Performer: Jason Carr.

▶  **Johannes Brahms**
 Clarinet Sonata in E flat major, Op 120 No 2 (1st mvt)
 Performer: Michael Collins. Performer: Michael McHale.
CHANDOS.

▶  **Léo Delibes**
 Coppélia (Waltz)
 Orchestra: Minnesota Orchestra. Conductor: Antal Doráti.
DELIBES; SYLVIA & COPPELIA: LSO/FISTOULARI/MINNEAPOLIS SO/DORATI. MERCURY. 11.

▶  **Frédéric Chopin**
 Study in C minor, Op 10 No 12, 'Revolutionary'
 Performer: Murray Perahia.
CHOPIN: ETUDES OP.10 & OP.25: MURRAY PERAHIA. SONY CLASSICAL. 12.

▶  **Billie Grey**
 The Laughing Policeman
 Performer: Charles Penrose.
EMI.

▶  **Benjamin Britten**
 Young Apollo, Op 16
 Performer: Steven Osborne. Orchestra: BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. Conductor: Ilan Volkov.
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24



3



Symphony Orchestra. Conductor: Ilan Volkov.
 BRITTEN: PIANO CONCERTO/DIVERSIONS/YOUNG
 APOLLO: OSBORNE/BBC SSO/VOLKOV. [HYPERION](#). 6.



Shirley Thompson

Women of the Windrush: Epilogue
 Performer: Darragh Morgan. Performer: Victoria
 Simonse. Performer: Felix Higginbottom. Performer:
 Bruce Nockles. Performer: Mary Dullea. Singer:
 Alison Buchanon. Singer: Sam Burgess. Director:
 Shirley Thompson.



George Butterworth

The Banks of Green Willow
 Orchestra: BBC National Orchestra of Wales.
 Conductor: Krišs Russman.
[BIS](#).



Péter Eötvös

Halbfinale (Pauken solo, Tutti)
 Performer: Zoltan Racz. Ensemble: UMZE Chamber
 Ensemble. Conductor: Péter Eötvös.
[PETER EOTVOS](#). [BIS](#).



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Concerto no. 2 in D major K.211 for violin and
 orchestra; 3rd movement; Rondeau
 Performer: Isabelle Faust. Orchestra: Il Giardino
 Armonico. Conductor: Giovanni Antonini.
[HARMONIA MUNDI](#).



Johann Sebastian Bach

Violin Concerto in D minor BWV 1052R (1st mvt)
 Performer: Isabelle Faust. Orchestra: Academy for
 Ancient Music Berlin.
[HARMONIA MUNDI](#).

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Glyndebourne Announces the Return of the Glyndebourne Opera Cup in 2020

Glyndebourne's major new international singing competition returns in 2020 with a renewed commitment to supporting diversity in opera. The Glyndebourne Opera Cup - the international competition for opera singers is designed to discover and spotlight the best young singers around the world, offering a top prize of £15,000 and a guaranteed role at a leading international opera house. The final will once again be broadcast live on Sky Arts on 7 March 2020 and the series is produced by Factory Films.

Garsington Opera: Five Young Singers Win Prestigious Awards

Winners of this year's prestigious Leonard Ingrams Foundation awards are mezzo-soprano Bianca Andrew and tenor Oliver Johnston. These awards support, encourage and nurture the best young artists involved in the creative process of bringing opera to the stage, and are made in memory of Garsington Opera's founder Leonard Ingrams, to ensure the continuity of his vision.

Bill Banks-Jones on the twelfth Tête à Tête Opera Festival

"We need to stop talking about 'diversity' and think instead about 'inclusivity,'" says Bill Banks-Jones, when we meet to talk about the forthcoming twelfth Tête à Tête Opera Festival which runs from 24th July to 10th August.

The Italian Opera Connection at 'The English Versailles': The Duchess of Buccleuch and the Georgian Stage at Boughton House

As part of its annual programme of events, Boughton House in Northamptonshire hosts 'A Passion for Opera', a rare exhibition portraying the musical life of Lady Elizabeth Montagu (1743-1827) and the world of Georgian operatic culture.

An interview with composer Dani Howard

The young Hong Kong-born British composer Dani Howard is having quite a busy year.

Lyric Opera of Chicago's 2020 Ring Cycle

Lyric Opera of Chicago has announced both schedules and cast-lists for its Spring 2020 performances of Richard Wagner's Ring Cycle. Given the series of individual productions already staged by the company since Fall 2016, that pave the way for the complete cycle, Lyric Opera of Chicago's complete production should affirm the artistic might of the great composer.

Irish mezzo-soprano Paula Murrin on Salzburg, Sellars and Singing

For Peter Sellars, Mozart's *Idomeneo* is a 'visionary' work, a utopian opera centred on a classic struggle between a father and a son written by an angry 25-year-old composer who wanted to show the musical establishment what a new generation could do.

London Bel Canto Festival 2019: an interview with Ken Querns-Langley

"Physiognomy, psychology and technique." These are the three things that determine the way a singer's sound is produced, so Ken



21 Jul 2019

Bill Banks-Jones on the twelfth Tête à Tête Opera Festival

"We need to stop talking about 'diversity' and think instead about 'inclusivity,'" says Bill Banks-Jones, when we meet to talk about the forthcoming twelfth Tête à Tête Opera Festival which runs from 24th July to 10th August.

'Inclusivity' is something that Bill - founder and Artistic Director of Tête à Tête, and Chair of the UK's network of opera companies, the Opera and Music Theatre Forum - returns to several times during our conversation. As soon as you give things or people 'labels', you categorise them, put them in boxes, segregate them. And, such separation creates - perhaps subconsciously, perhaps deliberately, I suggest - a sense of 'them and us': a duality formed of those who feel they can enter the box, and those who believe it's not for them, or that they are excluded. Bill agrees, noting that opera, certainly in the last ten years or so, has frequently marketed itself on 'exclusivity'. The very buildings in which it is performed - even newly designed or refurbished venues- are often intended to create a sense of stepping into a different world in which the stratification is cultural, social and architectural - a world with its own codes and rituals, and one where one either feels 'superior' because one knows the rules of the game, or 'inferior' because one doesn't.

Certainly, a glance at this year's Tête à Tête programme suggests that the Festival exists to take opera - the art form, its creators and its performers, its audiences - out of its 'box', and in some cases place it quite literally 'on the street'. Alongside performances in venues such as The Place and RADA Studios, the sound and spectacle of this year's Tête à Tête productions will resound across Coal Drop's Yard and other public spaces around King's Cross and environs. There are site-specific pieces which will take place in secret locations. And, this year, the Pop Up Operas - which came to life as a more

Tête à Tête Opera Festival 2019

An interview by Claire Seymour

Above: Bill Banks-Jones

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(IMAGE 1 OF 5)

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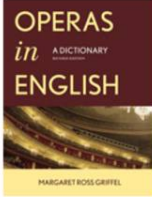
DOMAIN AUTHORITY: **49**



3



These are the three things that determine the way a singer's sound is produced, so Ken Querns-Langley explains when we meet in the genteel surroundings of the National Liberal Club, where the training programmes, open masterclasses and performances which will form part the third London Bel Canto Festival will be held from 5th-24th August.



The Royal Opera Tours to Japan in September 2019

The Royal Opera is delighted to be returning to Japan in September 2019 as part of an exciting year of UK-Japan exchanges, titled UK in Japan 2019-20, following the Company's hugely successful tour in autumn 2015.

Longborough Festival Opera announces collaboration with The Academy of Ancient Music in 2020

Longborough Festival Opera will collaborate with the Academy of Ancient Music (AAM) for its production of Monteverdi *The Return of Ulysses* in 2020. Robert Howarth will conduct Monteverdi's beautiful, compassionate drama, with Tom Randle in the title role.

Glyndebourne's first production of *Dialogues des Carmélites* to open Glyndebourne Festival 2020

Glyndebourne's first production of Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites* will open Glyndebourne Festival 2020, it was announced today. The opera house unveiled its 2020 plans at an event in its recently built Production Hub, hosted by Glyndebourne's new senior leadership team, Artistic Director Stephen Langridge and Managing Director Sarah Hopwood, who jointly replace the former position of General Director.

Garsington Opera Announces 2020 season and 2019 Paris Performance

Garsington Opera is delighted to announce the 2020 season that will open on 28 May, featuring three new productions - Verdi's *Un giorno di regno*, Mozart's *Mitridate, re di Ponto*, Dvořák's *Rusalka* and a revival of John Cox's legendary production of Beethoven's *Fidelio*.

Un ballo in maschera at Investec Opera Holland Park: in conversation with Alison Langer

"Sop. Page, attendant on the King." So, reads a typical character description of the loyal page Oscar, whose actions, in Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera*, unintentionally lead to his monarch's death. He reveals the costume that King Gustavo is wearing at the masked ball, thus enabling the monarch's secretary, Anckarstroem, to shoot him. The dying King falls into the faithful Oscar's arms.

Martin Duncan directs the first UK staging of Offenbach's *Fantasio* at Garsington

A mournful Princess forced by her father into an arranged marriage. A Prince who laments that no-one loves him for himself, and so exchanges places with his aide-de-camp. A melancholy dreamer who dons a deceased jester's motley and finds himself imprisoned for impertinence.

Thomas Larcher's *The Hunting Gun* at the Aldeburgh Festival: in conversation with Peter Schöne

'Aloneness' does not immediately seem a likely or fruitful subject for an opera. But, loneliness and isolation - an individual's inner sphere, which no other human can truly know or enter - are at the core of Yasushi Inoue's creative expression.

The London Handel Festival and The Royal Opera announce a co-production of Handel's

locations. And, this year, the **Pop Up Operas** - which came to life as a more financially viable and creatively valuable way of generating publicity and audiences than paying for lots of ad space on Tube billboards - are back for the first time since 2015, bringing opera to libraries, community centres, street corners public spaces and foyers all over Camden and King's Cross. One such Pop Up is *Aliens in the Street* with music by Vahan Salorian and words by Dominic Kimberlin, which Bill himself is directing, and which presents an 'alien conspiracy theorist trying to sell her new invention on the streets - a pair of glasses that help you see the extra-terrestrial life that is walking amongst us - when she encounters a mysterious stranger in need of help'.

There's a panoply of opera on offer - but it's not opera 'as you know it', or *think* you know it. In Coal Drop's Yard, *Madame Butterfly*, a so-called 'ruination' of Puccini's tale of colonial callousness and oriental innocence, will be followed the next evening by a performance by singer-songwriter-cellist **Ayanna Witter-Johnson**, who is described as 'a rare exception to the rule that classical and alternative R&B music cannot successfully co-exist'. *One Art*, Paula M. Kimper's settings of Elizabeth Bishop's poetry, reflects on loss. In *Be a Doll* Alexa Dexa from the USA uses vocals, toy instruments and electronics to create a 'toy opera' in which a woman's struggle to attain the submissive perfectionism to which the world conditions her, leaves her unable to determine whether she is a woman or a doll. *Hildegard: Visions* by Nwando Ebizie with Tom Richards and Loré Lixenberg, a 'sensory opera-happening', brings together Hildegard von Bingen, Haitian vodou and neurodiversity and promises to transport its audience 'through a journey from intimacy to ecstasy'.

Youth and age are juxtaposed: a dance-theatre-opera collaboration, *Of Body and Ghost*, between dance maker Yolande Snaithe, composer Kris Apple, writer/dramaturg Roswitha Gerlitz and vocalist Barbara Byers is 'an ethereal rite of passage of the process of aging'; *Growth of the Silk* (music/words William Hearne, words Lavinia Murray) is 'an original fairytale about a girl's misguided wish for long lustrous hair which leaves her ultimately crushed under the weight of the unstoppable growth. The latter sounds to me, rather like *Be a Doll*, as if it might have been the subject of a Carol Ann Duffy poem, as does *ROBE*, a 'posthuman fantasia' about cartography, cyberpunk and A.I. in which a woman charged with 'mapping' a superintelligence, EDINBURGH, grows close to the creature and weaves into the map 'things that cannot be known or spoken: the hidden histories of joy and longing each privately our own.'

Are such productions really 'opera', I ask Bill? I recall working with postgraduate dancers/researchers at London Contemporary Dance School (at The Place) almost twenty years ago, when the 'buzz words' amongst those creating new dance productions were 'text' and 'film'. If you put movement, music, voice, text, and theatre together, what do you have? Opera? Certainly, and with a dismissal of those 'labels' again, Bill agrees that the very hybridity of opera brings all these things together in ways which can/should, be liberating and inclusive. "If you don't tell an audience that they are about to see a 'contemporary opera', then they won't reject it, they'll just stop in the street and enjoy it."

So, I ask Bill, 'who is *Tête à Tête* for?' I'm aware that this question might sound a little confrontational, but it's not meant to be. It's just that, I explain, I experience and enjoy an enormous amount of opera - and music, dance, theatre - each year (week!), in venues ranging from grand country houses to **underground tunnels or former newspaper printing-press factories**, but I'm not sure that, excepting individual productions where the subject-content or performers involved might catch my eye, I would necessarily be drawn towards the Festival's offerings.

I'm aware that that probably says more about me than about *Tête à Tête*: but

Opera Today

(IMAGE 2 OF 5)

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS:	18.7K
(EST.) COVERAGE VIEWS:	281
DOMAIN AUTHORITY:	49
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Opera announce a co-production of Handel's *Susanna* starring members of The Royal Opera's Jette Parker Young Artists Programme

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.

Royal Opera House announces 17 new productions for its 2019/20 Season

The Royal Opera House today launches its 2019/20 Season, unveiling an exciting range of new commissions, world premieres and much-loved revivals, supported by a diverse range of ticketed and free daytime events, activities and festivals for people of all ages. In the first full Season since the completion of the Royal Opera House's three-year Open Up renovation, The Royal Opera Company unveils a host of innovative new work, with 13 new productions, including two world premieres, in the Season ahead.

In interview with Polly Graham, Artistic Director of Longborough Festival Opera

What links Wagner's *Das Rheingold*, Donizetti's *Anna Bolena*, Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and Cavalli's *La Calisto*? It sounds like the sort of question Paul Gambaccini might pose to contestants on BBC Radio 4's music quiz, *Counterpoint*.

Carlo Diacono: *L'Alpino*

"Diacono himself does not know what musical talent he possesses" - Mascagni

Daniel Kramer to step down as English National Opera's Artistic Director

Daniel Kramer is to step down as ENO's Artistic Director at the end of July 2019 in order to focus on directing more opera and theatre full time.

[OPERA TODAY ARCHIVES »](#)

I'm aware that that probably says more about me than about *Tête à Tête*; but Bill, fortunately, seems to find my question interesting rather than offensive or provocative. His response suggests that at the heart of the *Tête à Tête* enterprise are the performers themselves. And, I guess, that's where it all started: when, in 1997, after five years as a staff director at English National Opera, Bill became frustrated with grand, clunky mechanisms for making opera and with financial and creative structures which precluded risk, enterprise and a can-do/will-do/go-getting mentality.

And, so, *Tête à Tête* was born: in its **first guise** it was a production company collaborating with the likes of Battersea Arts Centre, ENO studio, Streetwise Opera and Opera Genesis which aimed to 'make things happen', facilitate new work and foster new relationships. Since then, *Tête à Tête* has created or enabled over 500 world premieres involving collectively 10,000 singers, conductors, instrumentalists, sound engineers, lighting specialists, costume designers, videographers. In 2007 the summer Opera Festival was launched. Subsequently, the company was awarded a UK Arts Online Award for its online archive of 400+ videos of every performance hosted or produced since 2008. The *Tête à Tête* website rightly boasts that it is 'the largest online video resource for new opera on the internet, reaching an audience of over 1,000,000 in 155 Countries from Azerbaijan to Uruguay and from Indonesia to Iceland!'

I wonder whether a 'family' of performers and creators has developed over the years, and Bill confirms that to some extent this is the case. But, his criteria for selecting productions of each year's Festival are driven by a few essential principles and values. Bill explains that he isn't interested in 'innovation' for its own sake - he later confesses to rather liking those old 'operatic rituals' - but instead he's concerned to facilitate and sustain new voices which are sincere and driven by genuine belief and passion. He admits that sometimes the decision to accept a particular production might be influenced by seemingly arbitrary factors, such as whether it would offer a creator based outside London their first opportunity to have their work seen in the capital.

So, my second question is, 'who watches *Tête à Tête* productions?'. Bill pulls out his 'phone to show me some photographs of past Cubitt Session audiences: the images are snapshots of your average London high street with children perched on their fathers' shoulders, passers-by and shoppers lounging in deckchairs, and construction workers peering down from roof-top workspaces. Will these audiences make the transition from the street - where the opera literally springs up before their eyes - to a more 'formal' *Tête à Tête* venue, or another opera house or festival? Probably not. Does that matter. No. The oft-repeated mantra about 'creating new audiences' seems irrelevant, or tangential, to Bill; it's the here and now that matters. *Tête à Tête* productions might be seen by up to 5000 people, far more than is usually the case for newly commissioned work; and the potential audience for the online videos is limitless.

Bill notes that the performers are very supportive of each other's productions and that they often bring their own audiences with them - and, of course, they are very adept at using social media to generate interest. He also comments that frequently individual productions channel quite 'specialised' audience interests: he recalls 2015 where the respective audiences for Helen Parker-Jayne Isibor's 'Nigerian pidgin opera' *Song-Queen* and for *Sacred Mountain. Incidents in the Life of Queen Nanny of the Maroons*, an opera which presented an epic narrative about the Caribbean ancestors of the composer, Shirley Thompson, barely exchanged glances as they passed to and from the performance venue. Finally, he tells me of his surprise, when an audience survey was undertaken a couple of years ago, to learn that while *Tête à Tête* audiences predominantly comprised people aged 20-30 years-old, the age-

Opera Today

(IMAGE 3 OF 5)

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS:

18.7K

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audiences predominantly comprised people aged 20-30 years-old, the age-range of those producing the opera was higher, at 30-45 years-old.

So, what Festival productions this year would Bill draw my attention to? He's very excited about the two site-specific works being presented, as individuals open up their homes for the performance of opera. Danish composer Rasmus Zwicki has been living in London for the last three years, during which time he has collected 'notes' from a communal message board in his block of flats in Camden, along with junk mail and graffiti: his *Duncan House* uses such texts to chart those three years of Brexit chaos and incumbent loneliness and isolation. In contrast, *THE 鑰KEY* by Francesca Le Lohé engages with Japanese author Junichiro Tanizaki's eponymous novel in which a man, whose sexual relationship with his wife is unfulfilling after twenty years of marriage, writes about his fantasies in his diary. Hoping that his wife will read it, he locks it in a drawer and leaves the key on the floor, but this only inspires her to begin her own diary, which she knows he will read and which she uses to deliberately mislead him.

In Tanizaki's novella, the two spouses share a life and a living space, but they never meet or b each other. As readers, we traverse an architectural space in which worlds, souls, intersect but are ever isolated. Le Lohé's opera, which was first performed in Tokyo, will be staged in a private residence around which the audience will move, voyeurs of the unfolding intimacies of the drama. Bill explains that different music by varied ensembles positioned around the building will overlap and the audience will be aware of co-existing but separate musical and personal worlds. Interestingly, and coming back to the question of audiences, Bill recounts an incident at a launch event for this production, which is being mounted in the private home of an architect: when asked whether they were regular opera-goers, just a couple of the 70 or so people present 'reluctantly' raised their hands. There were about 40 Japanese among the attendees whose interest in *THE 鑰KEY* was understandable. The others? They were there to view the architecture and interior design, Bill laughs.

One thing about *Tête à Tête* productions is that they can respond to the moment. Bill tells me that a couple of years ago Brexit and immigration were strong themes. This year, the environment looms large in several productions such as Catherine Kontz's Pop Up *Hand Clap* which sets a libretto by the composer's seven-year old daughter, Emmylou Växby, which engages with 'the choreographic and linguistic potential of children's hand-clapping games in music and space, exploring a narrative around the eco environment'.

Bill notes that in recent years opera, in the capital at least, has frequently adopted a 'West End theatre mentality', relying on productions which are marketed as 'celebrity-led', with 'big names' brought in, often from other art forms, in the quest for increased audiences. Another new phenomenon has been the introduction of cinema relays from the ROH, the Met and other big houses. Oddly, such broadcasts bring 'exclusivity' and 'inclusivity' into close proximity. And, I point out to Bill, they bring opera 'up close': "*Tête à Tête*," he adds, with a wry smile. One of the joys, evidently, for Bill of *Tête à Tête*'s work is that it creates a genuine intimacy between opera and audience, even in a public street: something that is noticeably lacking, he observes, when one moves from a rehearsal space where the creative team and cast work in close proximity, to a conventional performance space, where performers and audiences are often separated by disruptive distances.

"*Tête à Tête* is the future of opera," announces the company's website. And, I come away from my conversation with Bill feeling that - especially given the name of *this* website - I really ought to have taken and be taking more notice. Bill leaves me to head off to a rehearsal of *Aliens in the Street*, excited to be working with the full complement of singers and instrumentalists from the first, something not common in larger productions/houses, and also to be

Opera Today

(IMAGE 4 OF 5)

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS:

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first, something not common in larger productions/houses, and also to be reuniting with performers and musicians with whom he's worked before. Bill draws my attention to something that writer Mark Ravenhill - whose libretto *Intolerance* was set by composer Conor Mitchel and performed at the 2010 Festival (the first opera about IBS?) - said about *Tête à Tête*: it's the only place where, if you have an idea for an opera, you can simply get on with it straight away.

Claire Seymour

Tête à Tête 2019 runs from 24th July to 10th August.

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(IMAGE 5 OF 5)

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t 5



Tête à Tête Opera Festival

Across nine London venues in London, including the Coal Drops Yard, 30 new operas large and small, light and thought-provoking. Highlights include *Madame Butterfly*, a ruination of Puccini's masterpiece and *The Perfect Opera*, a hip hop foxtrot operatic sketch comedy show consisting of the 49 expected tropes of an opera. And they're all free!

[Read more ...](#)

WHEN Wed 24 July to Thurs 8 Aug

WHERE Various locations

Culture Whisper

(IMAGE 2 OF 2)

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS: **155K**

(EST.) COVERAGE VIEWS: **1.07K**

DOMAIN AUTHORITY: **51**




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Camden New Journal

Thursday July 18 2019

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The independent London paper

www.camdennewjournal.com

No 1931

Camden New Journal

(IMAGE 1 OF 2)

If you ever thought opera was a formal, tight-lipped undertaking that demanded chandeliers and red plush, *Tête à Tête* will show you a completely different picture. It's an annual festival of small-scale music theatre, all of it newly composed and with a cheerful sense of being slightly thrown together just before the audience arrives. Which means that standards aren't predictable.

But there are usually some gems among the dross: it's worth the risk. And the off-the-wall nature of the whole thing gets summed up in this year's theme. Which is... "it might be OK".

The explanation, and one is called for, is that the 2019 programme is based on themes of

Puccini's *Butterflop* anyone?

mythology, loss and transitions, offering (as the festival promises) stories about dark times "to remind us that, through music, art and connection, it all might be OK".

In that spirit, *Tête à Tête* will encourage you through the seriously dark times of right now with *Madame Butterflop*, a "ruination" of Puccini's masterpiece; *The Perfect Opera*, a hip hop foxtrot operatic sketch

comedy show; and *A Steampunk Opera*, whatever that might be.

There are 30 or so pieces in the programme, which runs from July 24 to August 10 in nine venues. Most of them happen around King's Cross: at Kings Place, The Place, or RADA. But they include *Duncan House* – a piece that takes place in a Camden block of flats where residents choose to communicate with each other solely through written messages. Sounds like a quiet piece.

Full details of events at tete-a-tete.org.uk



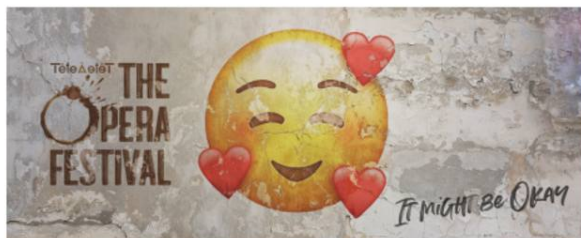
In London's (Off) West End 2019: "It Might Be Okay" Tête à Tête – The Opera Festival 2019



BY BAKCHORMEEBOY

COMMENTS 0

JULY 16, 2019



LONDON – Tête à Tête: The Opera Festival returns for its twelfth iteration this July, giving the festival's alumni and debutantes platform to experiment with unconventional operatic forms which may, or may not, be works of genius, given its unusual theme of *It Might Be Okay*. Grounded in themes of mythology, loss and transitions, the festival offers stories to us in dark times to remind us that, through music, art and connection, it all might be okay

Running from 24th July to 10th August, the festival's highlights include *Madame Butterflop*, a ruination of Puccini's masterpiece it parodies, and *The Perfect Opera*, a satirical piece that crams the 49 tropes expected of an opera into one hip hop foxtrot operatic sketch comedy show, featuring a romantic union between Shakespeare's Macbeth and a pantomime camel. Meanwhile,

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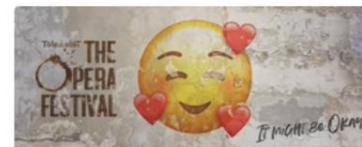
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In London's (Off) West End 2019: "It Might Be Okay" Tête à Tête – The Opera Festival 2019
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2h



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Preview: Kerson Leong Plays Schumann presented by the Singapore Symphony Orchestra
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(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS:

6.66K

(EST.) COVERAGE VIEWS:

1.66K

DOMAIN AUTHORITY:

22

union between Shakespeare’s Macbeth and a pantomime camel. Meanwhile, expect to watch more shows featuring myths and fables, such as *Growth of the Silk*, a fable about a woman whose hair won’t stop growing; the Chinese folktale *The Bridge of Magpies*, which recounts the myth of magpies helping a separated pair of lovers; *Her Face Was Of Flowers*, which encompasses the Welsh myth of a woman composed of flowers, and *The Cruel Sister*, which sees a girl drowned, before her bones are turned into a violin

Tête à Tête will also be featuring two site-specific works, offering audiences contrasting residences as experiential backdrops for pieces exploring human connection and unusual methods of communication: *The 鍵 Key*, performed in a private residence in Dulwich and based on the Japanese novel by Junichiro Tanizaki, captures a couple’s inability to connect through alternate diary entries, while *Duncan House* is performed in a block of flats in Camden where it is set, where residents choose to communicate to each other solely through written messages.

The theme of loss also feature strongly in the festival this year, with several works using various art forms and modes of expression to transform loss into meaning, and find what emerges beneath. *One Art* is a monodrama exploring the poet Elizabeth Bishop’s response to loss through her poetry, complete with original art song settings of her most famous works such as ‘One Art’; *Of Body and Ghost* is a poetic dance-opera inspired by the ageing body and humanity’s desperation to delay the inevitability of bodily decline and how history is etched in the text of an aging body, while *Voice(less)* uses the voice and electronics to explore the loss of voice due to trauma or socio-political pressures

Cubitt Sessions open the 2019 festival in King’s Cross, with free opportunities to see unique artists such as award-winning Errollyn Wallen, who writes her compositions in her lighthouse and Ayanna Witter-Johnson, the artist proving that classical music and R&B are a match. Among the 30 new operas across 9 venues, the festival will also see the return of its much-loved popop operas, with an environmental theme. These pop-up operas include *We Did Our Best*, where penguin couple express their regret about their failure to counteract climate change to their chick, and *Aliens on the Street*, where a conspiracy theorist is confronted by a real-life alien

Other highlights include *Memories in Mind*, a piece blending song and film about the Windrush Generation and a mother’s feelings of cultural



10h

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Exactly one month left to apply to the 2019 Krishen Jit Fund !

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bit.ly/2Lbs6o3

Deadline For Applications: 15 August 2019

The Krishen Jit Fund is supported by ASTRO and SK Chambers.



22h

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JUL 16 2019

(IMAGE 2 OF 3)

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displacement, and *Be A Doll*, an electroacoustic toy opera about a woman struggling so much with sociocultural messages to be the 'perfect' woman that she cannot tell if she is a human or a doll. Youths will also be featured in the festival, with *A Steampunk Opera* composed by a 19 year old, the libretto of the fantastical *For Peace and Country* being the direct transcript of the writer's 8 year old sister playing with her toys, and *Hand Clap*, which explores children's handclapping, featuring the libretto of the composer's 7-year old daughter.

Come discover the most genre-breaking operas with Tête à Tête's 2019 edition of The Opera Festival, as they show you the lighter side of the art form, and reassure you that as cruddy as life gets sometimes, it may well be okay in the end.

Tête à Tête - The Opera Festival 2019 runs from 24th July to 10th August 2019. For the full list of programmes, visit their website [here](#)

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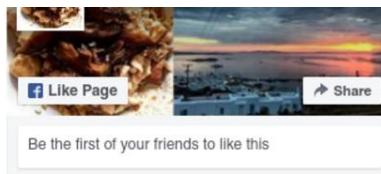
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(IMAGE 3 OF 3)

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BBC Music Magazine

(IMAGE 1 OF 2)

Live choice

Paul Riley picks the month's best concert and opera highlights in the UK

LONDON

Tête à Tête Festival
King's Cross and around,
24 July–10 August

Tel: +44 (0)20 7121 1100

Web: www.tete-a-tete.org.uk

It opens with *Madam Butterfly*, a 'ruination' of Puccini's much-loved masterpiece, and *The Perfect Camel* is described as a 'hip-hop foxtrot operatic sketch comedy show'. Yes, Tête à Tête's anarchic opera festival is back with a vengeance. Taking over public spaces and private dwellings, anything can happen!

... *sur L'Enfant Jésus*. Five of the 'Regards' are played by way of a postscript to Schubert's last piano sonata, D960 in B flat.

St Endellion Festival
St Endelienta Church,
St Endellion, 7, 9 August

Tel: +44 (0)7564 232390

Web: www.endellionfestivals.org.uk

... Later in the year Mark Padmore sings the role of Gustav von Aschenbach in a Covent Garden staging of Britten's last opera, *Death in Venice*. But he's giving his north Cornwall festival a

... Less than a decade old, Robert Carsen's exuberantly quick-fire production of Handel's *Rinaldo* notches up a second Glyndebourne revival. Elizabeth DeShong is the eponymous knight with Kristina Mkhitarian as the sorceress Armida. Conducting is the Scottish Chamber Orchestra's principal conductor designate, Maxim Emelyanychev.

Dartington Summer School
Great Hall Dartington, Totnes,
20 August

Featured interview

A first opera, opening the Cheltenham Music Festival & the RLPO's 2019/20 season: I chat to composer Dani Howard



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Friday, 5 July 2019

Site-specific, steam-punk, comic, pop-up & experimental: the many faces of new opera at Tête à Tête: The Opera Festival

Labels: [preview](#), [Tete a Tete](#)



Puccini, arr: Burke: *Toscatastrophel* - Gwenneth-Ann Rand, Keel Watson - Tête à Tête: The Opera Festival 2018

Tête à Tête: The Opera Festival is returning for the 12th festival, providing a feast of new, experimental and intriguing opera from 24 July to 10 August 2019, with 30 new operas across nine venues ranging from the free Cubitt Sessions which are outdoors, to more formal theatres, not to mention some site specific pieces, *The Key* (based on a Japanese novel) in a private residence in Dulwich and *Duncan House* in a block of Camden flats. Whilst *God Save The Tea* takes place at a secret location.

Top of everyone's list must be Tête à Tête's own *Madame Butterflop*, continuing their massacring of a classic to create shambolic and hilarious results [see my review of [last year's Toscatastrope](#)]. This year, Mary Plazas will be bravely singing the title role against all the odds. Comedy is also around elsewhere too, with *The Perfect Opera* a satirical sketch piece which attempts perfection by mixing and matching, we can expect a romantic union between Shakespeare's Macbeth and a pantomime camel. And following on from the perfect opera is a Steam-punk opera, **8**.

The multi-talented Ayanna Witter-Johnson is bringing her own show, as does soprano Nadine Benjamin in *Beam* which follow's a woman's journey through life, mixing opera, creative soundscape and imagery. Benjamin also features as performer in Shirley Thompson's *Memories in Mind: Women of Windrush Tell Their Stories*. Michael Betteridge and Laura Bowler's *Voice(less)*, which was developed at Snape Maltings, explores how people lose their voice. Errollyn Wallen and Ensemble X will be performing the Errollyn Wallen Songbook, her continually evolving set of Ivor Novello songs.

Mwando Eshia, Tom Richards and Lara Ivanberg are mixing Hildegarde of Bingen, with Haitian Vodou and Neurodiversity (no, I've

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JUL 5 2019

(IMAGE 1 OF 2)

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Top four posts this month



A sense of architecture: Philippe Herreweghe and Collegium Vocale Gent in Bach's Mass in B minor



Sheer enjoyment: Verdi's Falstaff at the Grange Festival

Nwando Ebizie, Tom Richards and Lore Lixenberg are mixing Hildegard of Bingen, with Haitian Vodou and Neurodiversity (no, I've no idea what it is either) in *Hildegard:Visions*. Alastair White's *Robe* describes itself as 'A posthuman fantasia about cartography, cyberpunk and the A.I. singularity featuring high fashion, contemporary dance and musical virtuosity'. Edward Lambert's *Apollo's Mission* will mix a celebration of the moon landing with the bonkers twist to the Apollo 11 moon landing. Visiting from Poland, Warsaw Stage Society bring Karol Nepelski & Waldemar Raźniak's *Birdy* based on William Wharton's novel exploring obsessive fantasies.

There will be pop-up opera too including a karaoke station, *Karaopera*, plus a series of composed pieces popping up, Apple Appleby's *We Did Our Best*, Catherine Kontz' *Handclap*, and Vahan Salorian's *Aliens on the Street*

Full details from the [Tête à Tête website](#).

Posted by Planet Hugill at [Friday, July 05, 2019](#)



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JUNE 17, 2019 · HANNAH FIDDY

July 2019: Event Recommendations

Fancy a baroque club night? An opera staged in a block of flats? Or how about an orchestra concert in a car park? There's a lot to look forward to this summer in all corners of the UK, including a brilliant experimental opera festival in London where you can find a [hip hop foxtrot operatic sketch comedy show](#) and [pop-up operas](#) in the streets, parks and squares of King's Cross. If you would like these recommendations to arrive straight to your inbox each month, sign up to our [mailing list](#). And come say hi on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#)! 🍷



Tête à Tête Festival 2019

24 July - 10 August, free-£9.50
Across London

Experience a whole range of unconventional operatic shows in this imaginative festival. The 2019 theme is stories to remind us in dark times that, through music, art and connection, it all *might be okay* 🍷 There are two site-specific shows, which sound great: **The Key**, held in a private residence in Dulwich, and **Duncan House**, staged in a block of flats in a secret location. Plus pop-ups and opera with a steampunk twist!

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS: Data not available

(EST.) COVERAGE VIEWS: Data not available

DOMAIN AUTHORITY: **5**



4



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Featured interview

From Supersize Polyphony to choir creation: I chat to Christopher Monks of Armonico Consort



Live reviews

The Grange Festival: Mozart *Le nozze di Figaro*



- Aldeburgh Festival: Stravinsky *The Rake's Progress*
- The Grange Festival: Handel *Belshazzar*
- Chineke! Chamber Ensemble: Saint-Saens, Wallen, Coleridge-Taylor
- Focus, concentration, engagement: Gabrieli Roar *An English Coronation*
- Garsington Opera: Offenbach *Fantasio*
- Collegium Vocale Gent: Bach's *Mass in B minor* at Barbican
- Aldeburgh Festival: Knussen Chamber Orchestra debut
- Songs of Home at Pizza Express: Njabulo Madlala, William Vann

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CD Reviews

- An artist obscured by his own myths: Ron Howard's documentary *Pavarotti*
- Craftsmanship, colour & imagination: the symphonies of Thomas Wilson
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- Deep Light: Weber, Finzi, RVW, Schumann, Francaix
- Sheherazade: a work which spans both Persian and Western classical music
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- Clive Osgood: *Sacred Choral Music*
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Thursday, 27 June 2019

Opera for £5!

Labels: [preview](#), [Tete a Tete](#)



Opera for £5! You have until 3 July to get bargain tickets for Tête à Tête's summer shows. Cutting edge experiments, comedy, fairy-tales, satire, and science - give it a go and [#ItMightBeOK!](#) [#TATFest19](#)

Full details [from Tête à Tête's website](#).

Posted by Planet Hugill at [Thursday, June 27, 2019](#)

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JUNE 30, 2019 · HANNAH FIDDY

Outdoor Classical Concerts Summer 2019

From public squares and parks to shopping centres and high streets, all the world's a stage. Here's a selection of the open-air concerts filling the UK during the summer. To receive these recommendations straight to your inbox, sign up to our [mailing list](#). And come say hi on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) or [Twitter!](#) 🍷



Cubitt Sessions

24 July - 4 August, free
Coal Drops Yard, King's Cross

Open-air music festival at London's newest and smartest shopping area. Try out *Madame Butterfly*, a bemusing ruination of Puccini's masterpiece from **Tête à Tête**, cellist Ayanna Witter-Johnson who fuses classical music with alternative R&B, and a performance by composer/singer Errollyn Wallen, who is having a piece premiered at the **BBC Proms** in August.

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS: Data not available

(EST.) COVERAGE VIEWS: Data not available

DOMAIN AUTHORITY: 5

1



£6.50 July 2019

Opera

Opera Magazine

(IMAGE 1 OF 2)

Simon Keenlyside in conversation
Lyndon Terracini – wizardry in Oz
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London

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Tête à Tête: Opera Festival

2019, July 24 to August 10

www.tete-a-tete.org.uk

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[Blog](#) » Tête à Tête 2019 (24th July–10th August)

6 Jun 2019 **Tête à Tête 2019 (24th July–10th August)**
 by [Christian Morris](#)



Tête à Tête, one of the the best places to experience new opera, has just announced its 2019 festival programme.

Always responsive to the artistic environment, themes this year include mythology, loss and transitions. It seeks also to remind us that, though times are dark, through music, art and connection, things 'might be okay.'

If you've not been before, you should prepare yourself for the thought-provoking, the banal, the novel, the farcical and the controversial. Given the sheer number of works (30 this year), there is an inevitable element of hit-and-miss to the proceedings. The festival makes a virtue of this—it is the place to experience opera in its rawest, most experimental form. You'll occasionally be enraged but you won't be bored.

Highlights this year include a Tête à Tête Puccini massacre entitled *Madame Butterflop*, which promises to 'enervate the most discerning of operatic cognoscenti while giving uproarious pleasure to newcomers to the art form' and *The Perfect Opera*, 'a satirical piece that crams the 49 tropes expected of an opera into one hip hop foxtrot operatic sketch comedy show.' Following the mythology theme, *Growth of the Silk* chronicles a fable about a woman whose hair won't stop growing, the Chinese folktale *The Bridge of Magpies* recounts the myth of magpies helping a separated pair of lovers, *Her Face Was Of Flowers* encompasses the Welsh myth of a woman composed of flowers and *The Cruel Sister* sees a girl drowned, before her bones are turned into a violin.

There are two site-specific works, *The 鍵 Key*, based upon the Japanese novel by Junichiro Tanizaki will be performed in a private Dulwich residence and *Duncan House* takes its named from a block of flats in Camden, where it will also be performed.

The theme of loss is explored in *One Art*, a monodrama exploring the poet Elizabeth Bishop's response to loss through her poetry; *Of Body and Ghost*, a poetic dance-opera inspired by the ageing body and humanity's desperation to delay the inevitability of bodily decline; and *Voice(less)*, which uses voice and electronics to explore the loss of voice due to trauma or socio-political pressures. Other works that tap into the zeitgeist include *Memories in Mind*, a piece blending song and film about the Windrush Generation, and *Be A Doll*, an electroacoustic toy opera about a woman struggling so much with sociocultural messages to be the 'perfect' woman that she cannot tell if she is a human or a doll. The festival will also see the return of its pop-up operas, with *We Did Our Best* and *Aliens In The Street*, both of which explore environmental themes.

To learn more and to book tickets:

<https://www.tete-a-tete.org.uk/>

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(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS: **39.7K**

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DOMAIN AUTHORITY: **43**

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Tête à Tête Opera Festival Announces 2019 Season

By David Salazar 10 hours ago 0 Comments



The Tête à Tête Opera Festival has announced its new season. The season opens with "Madame Butterfly," a major subversion of Puccini's classic. It will star Mary Plazas.

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Opera Wire

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(IMAGE 1 OF 5)

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Performance Date: *July 24, 2019*

Next up is "Karaopera, which is a karaoke night for opera lovers. It will be produced by Lucie Treacher at Kings Cross.

Performance Date: *July 26, 2019*

Next up will be "Beam," a story of a young woman discovering her life through opera. The work has music and words by Nadine Benjamin and will be performed at the RADA Studios.

Performance Date: *July 27, 2019*

"Voice(less)" will feature music by Michael Betteridge and Laura Bowler and is a work centering on how people lose their voices.

Performance Date: *July 27, 2019*

Femme Lunatique Productions will present "One Art" which features text by Elizabeth Bishop set to music by Paula M. Klimper.

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Performance Date: *July 27, 2019*

Motley Opera presents "The Cruel Sister," with music by Laurence Panter and text by Christopher Faulkner.

Performance Date: *July 27, 2019*

Soprano Nadine Benjamin stars in "Memories in Mind: Women of the Windrush Tell Their Stories."

Performance Date: *July 28, 2019*

Waldemar Razniak and Karol Nepelski's "Birdy" will get a showcase courtesy of Warsaw Stage Society.

Performance Date: *July 28, 2019*

Virtually Opera will present "The Perfect Opera" with music by Peter Davis and text by Leo Doulton.

Performance Date: *July 28, 2019*

"8 A Steampunk Opera" will get a performance. The work features music by Charli Eglinton.

Unveiled



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**Sonya Yoncheva
Cancels Final
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Performance Date: *July 29, 2019*

"Hildegard: Visions, Nwando Ebizie" will get a performance. The work features music by Tom Richards, Ebizie, and Lore Lixenberg.

Performance Date: *August 1, 2019*

"The Key" will be presented. The work features music of Francesca Le Lohé with excerpts from "The Key" in its original Japanese.

Performance Dates: *August 3 & 4, 2019*

Lucas Jordan and Irene Ros' "God Save The Tea" will be presented by Cut Moose.

Performance Date: *August 5, 2019*

Alexa Dexa's "Be A Doll" will get a showcase. The work is an electroacoustic toy opera about a woman struggling with perfectionist and submissive conditioning.

Performance Date: *August 6, 2019*

Barbara Byers stars in Kris Apple, Roswith Gerlitz, and Yolande Snaith's "Of Body and Ghost."

Performance Date: *August 6, 2019*

William Hearne and Lavinia Murray's "Growth of the Silk" will feature two performers – a soprano and a dancer.

Performance Date: *August 7, 2019*

Norman Welch and Edward Lambert's "Apollo's Mission" will be presented in a version directed by Korina Kokkali.

Performance Date: *August 7, 2019*

Isabella Gellis and Julia Schofield's "For Peace and Country" will be presented by All the Townfolks.

Performance Date: *August 8, 2019*

Elfyn Jones' "Her Face was of Flowers" will be presented by Sonopera.

Performance Date: *August 8, 2019*

The company will also feature a number of Pop-Up Operas including "We Did Our Best," "Hand Clap," and "Aliens in the Street."

Tagged in: **tete a tete opera festival**

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Melissa Bradshaw

Tête à Tête: The Opera Festival announces 2019 season

4:05, 3rd June 2019

Tête à Tête: The Opera Festival has today announced its 2019 season, taking place across nine London venues from 24 July – 10 August.

This year's festival includes an offering of stories based around mythology, loss and transitions, reminding audiences that despite dark times, through music, art and connection, *'it might be okay.'*

Highlights include:

- *Madame Butterfly*, a ruination of Puccini's masterpiece and *The Perfect Opera*, a satirical piece combining the 49 tropes expected of an opera into a hip hop foxtrot operatic sketch comedy show
- Site-specific pieces *The Key* performed in a private residence and *Duncan House*

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS: 50.1K**(EST.) COVERAGE VIEWS: 330****DOMAIN AUTHORITY: 53****2****4**

- Site-specific pieces *The Key*, performed in a private residence and *Duncan House*, performed in a block of flats, both exploring human connection and unusual methods of communication
- Myths and fables including *Growth of the Silk*, an opera about a woman whose hair won't stop growing, and *The Cruel Sister* about a girl whose bones are turned into a violin
- *Of Body and Ghost*, a poetic dance-opera inspired by the ageing body
- Pop-up operas with an environmental theme including *We Did Our Best*, the story of a penguin couple expressing regret to their chick about their failure to counteract climate change
- *Memories in the Wind*, a piece blending song and film about the Windrush Generation
- Works by young creators including *Hand Clap*, featuring the libretto of a seven year old, and *8 A Steampunk Opera* composed by a 19 year old

For further information and to see the full programme, visit www.tete-a-tete.org.uk.



Rhinegold

JUN 3 2019

(IMAGE 2 OF 2)

(EST.) MONTHLY VISITS: **50.1K**

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DOMAIN AUTHORITY: **53**



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BBC Music Magazine

MAR 15 2019

(IMAGE 1 OF 2)

CIRCULATION: **36.3K**

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London

look away as the opera that helped launch Caruso casts its Provençal spell: Cilea's *L'arlesiana*, a work, like Bizet's incidental music, indebted to Daudet's play.

DON'T MISS:

Il segreto di Susanna/Iolanta
from 22 July

Wolf-Ferrari's nicotine-fuelled intermezzo and Tchaikovsky's fairytale farewell to the operatic stage make for an unusual double bill, the latter conducted by Sian Edwards with Natalya Romaniw as the princess.

New Music Biennial

When: 5-7 July

Tel: +44 (0)20 3879 9555

Web: www.southbankcentre.co.uk

The first PRS Foundation biennial opened in Hull before heading to the Southbank. This year the tables are turned, with London getting the first bite of a cherry unfolding 19 new works across all media from symphony orchestra and electronica to chamber music and solo oud. Meanwhile, the leading English composer and pianist Rolf Hind pairs gamelan ensemble with prepared pianos and percussion; and, for Manchester Collective, Edmund Finnis's *The Centre is Everywhere* responds to Strauss's *Metamorphosen*.

DON'T MISS:

Chineke! 7 July

Baritone Roderick Williams and Chineke! performed at last year's

re-opening of the Queen Elizabeth Hall. Now they return to the Southbank for a new jazz-inflected work written (and sung) by the multi-talented Williams himself.

Wimbledon Music Festival

When: 9-24 November

Tel: +44 (0)20 8946 5078

Web: wimbledonmusicfestival.co.uk

With its ambitions for a Frank Gehry-designed concert hall in the public domain (see p14), it's perhaps not surprising that Wimbledon enters its second decade contemplating 'Music - Mathematics - and Architecture'. It's a theme that probes the building blocks of JS Bach's *Art of Fugue* and Heinrich Isaac's numerological calculations in Hugo Ticcianti's concert with his O/Modernt Quartet; and the spatial possibilities of Italy's great ecclesiastical edifices are pursued in Armonico's 'Land of Pope and Glory'. Not that Wimbledon is a 'theme' slave. Try Vivaldi meets Finnish rock for size. Hearing is believing!

DON'T MISS:

Haydn's Creation 9 November

Matthew Best conducts the Academy Choir and London Mozart Players in a spatially conceived performance of Haydn's dramatic oratorio setting chapters from the Book of Genesis. Soloists include soprano Kate Royal and bass-baritone Jonathan Lemalu.

Other great festivals



Capital piano:
Angela Hewitt
in Hampstead

Proms at St Jude's 22-30 June

Late night comedy leavens a Hampstead Gardens Suburb season in which The King's Singers, guitarist Miloš Karadaglić and operatic Mozart blossom.

Tel: +44 (0)20 3322 8123

Web: www.promsatsjudes.org.uk

Voices of London Festival 22-30 June

Professional ensembles to community choirs, the Paddington-based Festival celebrates the voice in all its diversity.

Web: www.voicesoflondonfestival.com

Guildhall Chamber Music Festival

5-7 July

After last year's debut, Milton Court Concert Hall welcomes back a festival including violinist Leon Chilingirian, flautist Philippa Davies and cellist Richard Lester.

Tel: +44 (0)20 7638 8891

Web: www.barbican.org.uk

BBC Proms 19 July - 14 September

The BBC Proms launch at on 17 April will reveal all - until then, all details are strictly under wraps!

Tel: 0845 401 5034 (UK only)

Web: www.bbc.co.uk/proms

Tête à Tête Opera Festival

24 July - 11 August

It's explored everything from speed dating to Shetland knitters. Operatic flair is restored to King's Cross for a 12th installment.

Tel: +44 (0)20 7121 1100

Web: www.tete-a-tete.org.uk

London Piano Festival 2-6 October

The trademark two-piano marathon crowns a distinguished line-up including Ingrid Fliter, Gwilym Simcock plus festival hosts Katya Apekisheva and Charles Owen.

Tel: +44 (0)20 7520 1490

Web: www.kingsplace.co.uk

Hampstead Arts Festival 8-23 November

Pianist Angela Hewitt, guitarist Sean Shibe, and a silent movie classic accompanied by a cappella choir.

Tel: +44 (0)7990 743188

Web: www.hampsteadartsfestival.com



Smash hit: Kate Royal
sings in Wimbledon's
Haydn Creation

JASON JOYCE, KETHI SAUNDERS

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