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PIANO CONCERTO NO. 3 | **Tchaikovsky** SYMPHONY NO. 5

SATURDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2014, 7.30PM

Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra

Olga Scheps PIANO | **Matthias Foremny** CONDUCTOR

Mozart DIVERTIMENTO IN B FLAT, K. 137 | **Chopin** PIANO
CONCERTO NO. 1 | **R. Strauss** STRING SEXTET FROM CAPRICCIO
(ARR. FOR STRINGS) | **Tchaikovsky** SERENADE FOR STRINGS

WEDNESDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2014, 7.30PM

Brussels Philharmonic

Miloš Karadaglić GUITAR | **Oliver Condy** ORGAN |
Michel Tabachnik CONDUCTOR

Borodin POLOVTSIAN DANCES | **Rodrigo** CONCIERTO
DE ARANJUEZ | SOLO SET BY MILOŠ KARADAGLIĆ | **Saint-Saëns**
SYMPHONY NO. 3 (ORGAN)

MONDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2015, 7.30PM

St Petersburg Symphony Orchestra

Natalie Clein CELLO | **Alexander Dmitriev** CONDUCTOR

Beethoven SYMPHONY NO. 1 | **Saint-Saëns** CELLO CONCERTO
NO. 1 | **Tchaikovsky** SYMPHONY NO. 6 (PATHÉTIQUE)

TUESDAY 24 FEBRUARY 2015, 7.30PM

Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra

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Prokofiev SYMPHONY NO. 5

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Camerata Salzburg

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Autumn/Winter Concerts 2014

Welcome to the Southbank Centre. This is our fifth season of offering complimentary programmes and we hope that they are adding to your enjoyment of the evening.

Remember that you can always download programmes in advance of the concert at oae.co.uk/programmes. Lastly, perhaps you might consider putting the £3 you would usually have paid for this programme towards an OAE Priority Booking or Friends Membership? These start from £15 a year and you can find information at our desk in the foyer or within this programme.

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We'd like to thank the following group for attending this concert

Music Club of London

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Welcome

Welcome to this, Opera Rara's fourth concert performance in partnership with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. For us it is a delight to be able to present this marvellous music recreated using the instruments of the time. This is what we at Opera Rara are all about. Our mission is to recover, restore, record and perform the forgotten operatic heritage of the 19th century. There can hardly be a better example of this than Donizetti's remarkable *Les Martyrs*.

Our aim is to recreate the neglected operatic and song repertoire of the 19th century and thus make a unique contribution to our musical life. We invite you to explore the legacy of our back catalogue of over 50 complete opera recordings which feature acclaimed singers such as René Fleming, Simon Keenlyside, Nelly Miricioiu, Ildebrando D'Arcangelo, Sarah Connolly, Colin Lee, Krassimira Stoyanova and Bruce Ford.

In 2015, Opera Rara continues its exciting journey of rediscovery with recordings of Donizetti's unfinished Grand Opera *Le Duc d'Albe* and Gounod's delightful comedy *La Colombe*. We will conclude the year with a recording and concert performance of Leoncavallo's brilliant opera *Zazà*.

Today, independent classical recording companies find it increasingly difficult to survive. Opera Rara needs your support to ensure its future and we would like to take this opportunity to thank our many supporters from all over the world for their continued commitment. We invite you to join us and them in support of our future plans.

The Martyrs of tonight's opera are Armenian Christians who suffered their fate in 259 AD at the hands of the Romans. Although *Les Martyrs* is based on a historical story from thirteen centuries ago it has great resonance with more recent events. In particular, as the world commemorates the centenary of the Great War, we also remember the victims of events in Armenia in April 1915 to whose memory it is appropriate that we dedicate tonight's concert.

Thank you

Charles Alexander
Chairman
Opera Rara

Stephen Revell
Managing Director
Opera Rara



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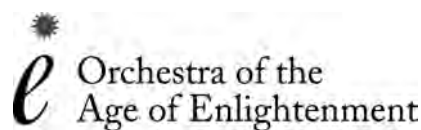
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Photo: Russell Duncan

A message from Sir Mark Elder CBE, Artistic Director

An opportunity to introduce everybody to the music of *Les Martyrs* is a rare pleasure. Tonight's performance is the first one of a new critical edition that seeks to answer the many doubts and uncertainties of the original manuscript.

In getting to know this marvellous opera, I have been struck by Donizetti's mastery of the preferences of his Parisian audience. The whole sound world is markedly different from the familiar Donizetti of *Lucia di Lammermoor* or *Maria Stuarda*. The vocal parts certainly do not lack brilliance but gone is the Italian emphasis on display for its own sake. In its place is a more passionate declamation coupled to a richly textured orchestra. That he knew for whom he was writing is beautifully apparent from the opening bars of the overture, which turns out to be a short concerto for the traditional four bassoons! Throughout the score, there are many moments of orchestral display, and the recitatives, totally rewritten from the original *Poliuto*, are astonishingly varied and exciting.

This work shows us Donizetti's first and, in my view totally successful, commission for the Paris Opéra, and it fills a gap in our understanding of Grand Opera from Meyerbeer to Verdi's *Don Carlos*

To all who have made this recording and performance of Donizetti's neglected masterpiece possible – thank you.

Sir Mark Elder CBE

Opera Rara would like to express its grateful thanks to the Armenian Ambassador to the United Kingdom, His Excellency Dr Armen Sarkissian for his interest in the project and his enthusiastic support.

Our very sincere thanks to the members of the Armenian community who have most generously supported the studio recording and tonight's concert.

**Haig and Elza Didizian
Armen and Nounch Sarkissian
Bob and Tamar Manoukian**

Opera Rara would also like to thank **Robert and Laura Cory** and **Peter and Fiona Espenhahn** for their support of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment towards this project.

Donizetti *Les Martyrs*

Tuesday 4 November 2014

7pm

Royal Festival Hall

Opera in four acts

first performed, Paris Opéra,

10 April 1840



#LesMartyrs

Donizetti *Les Martyrs*

Sir Mark Elder conductor

Cast

Michael Spyres Polyeucte

Joyce El-Khoury Pauline

David Kempster Sévère

Brindley Sherratt Félix

Clive Bayley Callisthènes

Wynne Evans Néarque

Rosalind Waters Une Femme

Andrew Friendhoff Un Chrétien

Simon Preece Un Chrétien

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Stephen Harris chorus master

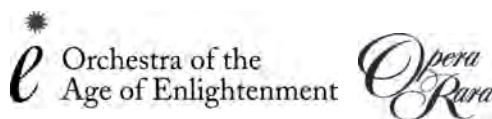
Robin Newton assistant conductor

Florence Daguerre de Hureaux French coach

Steven Maughan répétiteur

Ruth Mulholland chorus manager

Jonathan Burton surtitles



Concert given in association with Opera Rara.

Gaetano Donizetti, *Les Martyrs*, Critical edition
EDITED BY Flora Willson Casa Ricordi srl,
Milano, by arrangement with G. Ricordi & Co.
(London) Ltd

The concert will finish at approximately 10.30pm
with one interval of 20 minutes.

OAE Extras at 5.45pm, free admission

Royal Festival Hall auditorium

Professor Roger Parker, Dr Flora Willson and

Jonathan Keates introduce Donizetti's *Les Martyrs*

Tonight's concert is being recorded by
BBC Radio 3 for future broadcast.



A video recording of tonight's performance
is being made by Opera Rara for archival
purposes.

Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment

Violin 1

Matthew Truscott
Ken Aiso
Rodolfo Richter
Geoffroy Schied
Declan Daly
Jane Gordon
Nancy Elan
Claire Sansom
Julia Kuhn
Mary Hofman
Leonie Curtin
Kathryn Templeman

Violin 2

Richard Blayden
Alison Bury
Iona Davies
Stephen Rouse
Claire Holden
Catherine Ford
Colin Callow
Lucy Waterhouse
Susan Carpenter-Jacobs
Henrietta Wayne
Mary Hofman
Christiane Eidsten Dah

Violas

Nicholas Logic
Martin Kelly
Annette Isserlis
Kate Heller
Marina Ascherson
Thomas Kirby
Penny Veryard
Christopher Beckett
Nigel Goodwin
Maja Wegrzynowska
John Rockliffe

Cellos

Luise Buchberger
Andrew Skidmore
Helen Verney
Ruth Alford
Richard Tunnicliffe
Jennifer Morsches
Penny Driver
Nikolay Ginov

Double Basses

Chi-chi Nwanoku MBE
Cecelia Bruggemeyer
David Sinclair
Andrei Mihailescu
Christine Sticher
Enno Senft

Flutes

Lisa Beznosiuk
Dorothea Seel

Piccolo

Neil McLaren

Oboes

Daniel Bates
Richard Earle

Clarinets

Antony Pay
Katherine Spencer

Bassoons

Howard Dann
Sally Jackson
Rebecca Hammond
Antoine Pecqueur

Horns

Roger Montgomery
David Bentley
Gavin Edwards
Nicholas Benz

Trumpets

David Blackadder
Phillip Bainbridge
Matthew Wells
John Hutchins

Trombones

Susan Addison
Peter Thorley
Stephen Saunders
Kate Heller

Ophicleide

Anthony George

Timpani

Marney O'Sullivan

Percussion

Nicholas Ormrod
Nigel Bates
John Rockliffe

Harps

Alison Martin
Stephanie Beck

Off-stage musicians:

Trumpets

Paul Sharp
Simon Munday
Sebastian Philpott
Russell Gilmour

Trombones

Emily White
Tom Lees
Andrew Harwood-White

Opera Rara is grateful for the support provided by the Palazzetto Bru Zane for its recording of Donizetti's *Les Martyrs* (for release April 2015)

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*Opera
Rara*

Original cast from the first performance of *Les Martyrs*. Clockwise from top left: Julie Dorus-Gras (Pauline); Eugene Massol (Sévère); Prosper Dérivis (Félix); Pierre Francois Wartel (Néarque); Gilbert Duzprez (Polyeucte). Images from from Opera Rara Picture Archive

Synopsis

Act 1

The action takes place in Mélitène, capital of Armenia, under Roman rule during the third century. Persecuted Christians have gathered in the catacombs; among them are Polyeucte, a new convert about to be baptised, and his friend Néarque. As the Christians withdraw to perform their religious rites, Néarque holds Polyeucte back to ask whether he is truly dedicated to the faith. He is, after all, son-in-law of the tyrannical governor Félix, notoriously intolerant of Christianity, and husband of Pauline, who remains a pagan and knows nothing of his conversion. Polyeucte reassures Néarque that “God alone will rule my heart” and looks forward to the day when Pauline will share his new beliefs. Before they can rejoin the Christians, news arrives that Roman troops are nearby. Polyeucte muses that his baptism may yet prove to be a martyrdom, but is determined to proceed.

Young Roman girls and slaves appear, bearing accoutrements for a pagan ritual and followed by soldiers. Pauline is in their midst; she dismisses the military escort before paying her respects at the tomb of her mother with a display of sacred offerings. Left alone, Pauline reveals her most intimate thoughts: she is torn between marriage to Polyeucte, chosen for her by her father, and continuing love for Sévère, a courageous Roman general who is believed dead in battle. She overhears the chanting of the Christians nearby as, unbeknown to her, Polyeucte is being baptised. She is about to flee when Christians appear, followed by Polyeucte himself. He is furious that she has stumbled upon them; she is appalled as he defends the Christians. Pauline’s threat to denounce them to her father precipitates Polyeucte’s confession that he is now one of their number. As the Christians pray that Pauline, too, might convert and she hopes that her husband might yet be saved, the act ends with news that a further menace to the Christians – a pitiless proconsul – has just arrived in Mélitène.

Act 2

Scene 1

From his study, Félix orders his secretaries to transcribe edicts sentencing Christians to death; his own allegiance to the Roman gods is firm. When Pauline enters, Félix announces that he is issuing a new edict. Pauline, trembling, reads it aloud: all those who have been baptised will be condemned. As Félix and his staff celebrate the edict’s publication, Pauline privately expresses her anguish. Her father notices her sorrow and asks whether it is caused by unhappiness in love. Pauline replies that she had indeed been happy with Sévère; after his presumed death she had accepted the husband chosen for her, but her heart continued to belong to her first love. Their conversation is interrupted by the sound of military music outside; the high priest Callisthènes appears, accompanied by priests, magistrates and citizens, announcing the arrival of the proconsul favoured by the Emperor ever since his narrow escape from death on the battlefield. The revelation that this proconsul is none other than Sévère shocks Félix and Pauline alike; the latter struggles to hide her joy before rushing off.

Scene 2

A vast crowd has gathered in the square to watch the proconsul’s arrival. Sévère makes a spectacular entrance in a procession led by Roman legions and standard bearers, surrounded by dancing girls and followed by slaves, pipers and gladiators. He vows to protect the people from the Christian scourge and looks forward to seeing again his beloved. Sévère is treated to a gladiatorial display, followed by Greek and Roman dances. Sévère reveals that the Emperor has offered Armenia as the dowry for whomever he chooses as his wife – and that his heart is set on Pauline. His beloved now appears, but accompanied by Polyeucte, who is announced as her husband. Distracted and angry, Sévère reflects on his lost love. The scene is brought to a climax by the entrance of Callisthènes, who announces that a further baptism has just taken place; the curtain falls as Polyeucte is urged by Pauline to remain silent while the followers of the opposing faiths call on the assistance of divine powers.

INTERVAL

Synopsis

Act 3

Scene 1

Pauline, alone in her bedroom, prays for assistance. Sévère enters unannounced. In the ensuing duet Pauline implores Sévère to allow her to forget their shared past and leave forever. Lamenting his position, Sévère eventually bids her farewell – leaving just before Polyeucte enters with the news that a great sacrifice is being prepared in honour of Sévère. Pauline asks Polyeucte to accompany her to the ceremony; he refuses, but insists that his love for her is equal only to that he has for his new God. Seeing his wife's distress, he exclaims that although he can face death, he cannot bear her tears. Félix appears: as Néarque has refused to name his new Christian convert, he will be an additional sacrifice at the temple. Polyeucte now insists that he will attend the ceremony after all and, following Pauline's and Félix's departure, vows to share his friend's fate.

Scene 2

Callisthènes and the priests leave the temple with tripods, sacred vases and icons, which they place on its steps; priests and citizens sing a hymn to Jupiter, before Félix, Sévère and Pauline enter for the sacrifice. Néarque is led in and denounced as a Christian before being interrogated again about his new convert; Pauline quakes with terror. Since Néarque refuses to cooperate, Callisthènes proposes to execute him. Just in time, Polyeucte appears and, to the shock of all present, reveals himself to be the mystery neophyte. The scene ends with reactions to this revelation: Félix and Callisthènes are furious, Pauline is desperate; Polyeucte offers renewed affirmations of his faith. Pauline's appeals to her gods are condemned as futile by her husband; Félix insists that Polyeucte must recognise those gods if he is to be spared. He refuses, adamant that dying a Christian will be his moment of glory.

Act 4

Scene 1

Félix is in his private rooms with Pauline, who tries to reason with him: Polyeucte may be a Christian, but he has become a member of their family. The governor refuses to yield: the Emperor himself has condemned Polyeucte and Sévère will carry out his command. Sévère enters, reporting that the people are demanding Polyeucte's death; he is appalled to see Pauline, who continues initially to appeal to her father. When Félix refuses, Pauline turns to Sévère, begging him, as one who loves her, to help save her husband. Sévère eventually succumbs, agreeing to risk the wrath of the people and the Emperor. Félix remains implacable but repeats that he is willing to pardon the new convert if he rejects his new faith. Still hopeful, Pauline goes to find her husband.

Scene 2

In a vault where the condemned await execution, Polyeucte dreams of being united with Pauline in heaven; he implores God to reach out to her. Pauline appears, vowing to save Polyeucte's life; he insists that he wants to save her soul. Their positions seem irreconcilable until Polyeucte invokes divine intervention. To the sounds of celestial harmony, Pauline sees the light, professing herself seized with Christian zeal, and, to Polyeucte's joy, declares that she wants to share his fate. As celestial harmony is heard once more, guards appear and attempt unsuccessfully to separate the couple; they exit arm in arm to greet their deaths.

Scene 3

A vast amphitheatre teems with spectators awaiting the execution of the Christians. Félix, his bodyguards, Sévère, Callisthènes and the priests enter. Callisthènes urges immediate action; Félix confides to Sévère that Pauline has not yet returned, but cedes to Callisthènes' impatience, ordering that the Christians be fed to the lions. To Félix's and Sévère's horror, Pauline accompanies Polyeucte into the arena, insisting that she will die both as a dutiful wife and as a Christian. Sévère begs her to consider her father; the couple respond that they will be united in heaven. Néarque and other Christians are brought in. In a final confrontation, the priests vow death to the impious, while Pauline, Polyeucte, Néarque and the other martyrs affirm their readiness to die. Sévère tries to save Pauline, but is held back by guards; as the lions are released from their enclosures, Félix falls faint. The Christians drop to their knees and Pauline throws herself into her husband's arms; Polyeucte alone remains standing. The curtain falls as the lions make their approach.

Programme Notes

Donizetti in Paris

Early in 1834 Gaetano Donizetti received an offer he could not refuse. It came in the form of a flattering letter from Gioacchino Rossini, inviting him to write an opera for the Théâtre-Italien in Paris. "You will achieve a swift and brilliant success here," wrote Rossini. "With such skill and facility as yours, I do not doubt that you will score a notable triumph. You could hardly find a better opportunity for developing your admirable talent." As a further incentive, Rossini listed the theatre's leading singers, an unparalleled galaxy of bel canto stars, led by the prima donna Giulia Grisi, alongside the tenor Rubini, the dramatic baritone Tamburini and the versatile bass Luigi Lablache.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, a Paris premiere represented every self-respecting opera composer's major ambition. From 'Parigi', the Italian name for the French capital, derived the adjective *parigibile*, meaning 'adaptable for a Parisian audience' and Donizetti himself had nursed such an aspiration from an early stage in his career. Accepting Rossini's proposal forthwith, he set off for Paris in January 1835 with his new opera *Marin Faliero*, its libretto mingling Byron's sombre Venetian tragedy with a more recent drama by Casimir Delavigne, the whole work created, in the composer's words, "*con grandissima simpatia*." The work, premiered at the Italiens immediately after Vincenzo Bellini's hugely admired *I Puritani di Scozia*, only achieved what Italians call "a discreet success" in comparison. If this initial Parisian encounter was not quite the instant conquest originally promised by Rossini, it made Donizetti eager to try again. Thus began a ten-year relationship with Paris, its theatres and its cultural life, which was to prove simultaneously one of the

most stimulating yet most frustrating of Donizetti's artistic career.

While rehearsing *Marin Faliero* at the Théâtre-Italien, he took the chance to visit its larger French-language counterpart around the corner in Rue Le Peletier. The Académie Royale de Musique, known as the Opéra, had opened in 1821, in palatial premises whose external splendour, mixing fantasy Gothic and pantomime Oriental, was matched by the grandeur and vastness of its Corinthian-columned auditorium. Opera was the ultimate temple of lyric theatre. The whole edifice, as an officially subsidized national institution proclaimed France's cultural supremacy to the rest of the world. Its manager Émile Véron, a businessman who made his fortune from marketing the nineteenth-century equivalent of Vick Vapour Rub, was responsible to a government committee which took its work with due seriousness. The various spectacles on offer were scrutinized for any hints of political sedition, offences against public decency or criticism of the Catholic church. This created a more complex and insidious kind of censorship than the downright obstructiveness which Donizetti and his various Italian librettists were accustomed to facing in the opera houses of Milan, Venice or Rome. The Parisian reviewing committee, as he would soon discover, oversaw his initial contract, the plot and language of the dramatic text, the rehearsals in their different phases and the impact of a finished opera on its first-night audience.

The theatre's image as a centre of excellence was vital to each aspect of the production. At the Opéra a conscious effort was made to establish correct period detail in the design of sets and costumes. The various stage pictures for *Les Martyrs* painstakingly recreated the

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temples and tombs of Roman Armenia from available antiquarian evidence. As one of his team of scene-painters put it, “The audience, now more numerous, is made up of all social classes and their knowledge of archaeology is more exact. Local colour has become a necessity”.

The epic quality of opera staging enhanced these exalted production values. In major ensembles such as the act finales of *Les Martyrs*, a miniature army of soloists, chorus and supers executed carefully drilled manoeuvres according to meticulous instructions from the handbook specially prepared for each opera and later printed for use in other theatres. This air of limitless immensity created by the great gaslit stage was essential to a successful show, regardless of possible shortcomings in the score or the libretto. Out of the paradox that “prodigality is the better economy” the phenomenon known as Grand Opera was born.

Donizetti’s earliest direct encounter with the genre at a performance of Fromental Halevy’s much admired opera *La Juive* evoked an ambiguous response. The music itself made much less impression on him than the staging, whose “illusion taken to the ultimate degree” left him wide-eyed. “There is just too much reality, making the last scene [where the heroine drowns in boiling oil] too horrible and yet more horrible by virtue of such illusion.”

Thus the city he later called “this siren” began drawing him closer to her, even while he sensed the inherent dangers of grand opera as a theatrical experience. Despite the modified rapture greeting *Marin Faliero*, Donizetti’s reputation in Italy made his work an ultimate object of desire among French *melomanes*. When, in December 1835, *Lucia di*

Lammermoor triumphed on the boulevards, one of them sent a fervent fan letter to the composer, declaring that “You have electrified the dead: it is a miracle.”

Misunderstood, as he felt, by audiences in his adoptive home town of Naples, whose royal censors baffled him with their obtuseness, Donizetti gratefully accepted commissions from Paris for two new operas, demanding, in return, a three month rehearsal period and the services of the Opéra’s favourite theatre poet, the indefatigable Eugène Scribe.

By the end of 1840, the composer found himself lord of all he surveyed in the city’s operatic world. *L’elisir d’amore* had enchanted the Italians, *La Fille du régiment* had captivated the Opéra-Comique and *La Favorite* had clinched his hold on the Opera itself.

Only Hector Berlioz complained. “M. Donizetti seems to treat us like a conquered country,” he protested angrily. “It is a veritable invasion. One can no longer speak of the opera houses of Paris, but only of the opera houses of M. Donizetti.” Berlioz might have felt happier with the Donizetti craze had he known how frustrated and fundamentally unsatisfied the Italian composer himself was by the particular nature of his success in France. Adulation there was in plenty, but it was never quite of the right sort. Perhaps because the siren Paris would test his creative stamina to the utmost, *Les Martyrs* possesses a resonance which, from this aspect, seems intensely personal.

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Les Martyrs: lost and found in translation

Paris, spring 1840. Ten years into Louis-Philippe's reign as the bourgeois-friendly "King of the French", governments were still short-lived, often falling apart within months of their establishment. The country remained in the grip of an economic crisis, with periodic attempts at insurrection by groups of republicans or factory workers. Amid such political instability, Paris's opera houses – foremost among which was the Académie Royale de Musique, or Opéra, as it was usually known – continued to draw audiences and composers from all over Europe. But these theatres were by no means safe havens from political matters: the operatic landscape was, after all, endlessly subject to the wranglings and extravagant gestures of local and international diplomacy. In February 1840 Hector Berlioz – certainly no peacekeeper, but one of the era's acutest musical witnesses – complained about a "veritable invasion" under way on the city's operatic scene. The assailant was already well-known to many: "M. Donizetti seems to treat us like a conquered country... One can no longer speak of the opera houses of Paris, but only of the opera houses of M. Donizetti."

As a critic, Berlioz was averse neither to exaggeration nor unprovoked aggression. Yet his account here has echoes of Donizetti's own report of his Parisian activities, in a letter written in December 1839:

I am in rehearsal at the Grand Opera with *Les Martyrs* and at the Opéra-Comique with *Marie* [the opera that would become *La Fille du régiment*]. This latter will go on first, and the other will go on in mid-February. Then there's another work at the Renaissance... In the meantime, *Lucia* will be given at Havre, Nantes and Liège, and it goes very well.

This is impressive activity by

any standards – and particularly for a composer who had only arrived in Paris little more than a year earlier, in late October 1838. What is more, when *Les Martyrs* eventually had its first performance at the Opéra on 10 April 1840, it was one of a trio of Donizetti operas onstage in the French capital that same evening: *La Fille* was still going strong at the Opéra-Comique, and a French translation of *Lucia di Lammermoor* was proving enormously popular at the Théâtre de la Renaissance. The city's only major opera house *not* staging Donizetti that evening – the Théâtre-Italien – had already finished its season; but its production of *L'elisir d'amore* in January 1839 had been a frenzied success.

Not all opera houses were equal, however; and in the Opéra Paris continued to boast the most widely respected, generously funded, socially powerful opera house in the world. To produce a new work there was a unique marker of international success for a composer in the mid-nineteenth century. Donizetti's Italian operas had already found an enthusiastic audience during the 1830s at the Théâtre-Italien – *Anna Bolena*, *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *L'elisir d'amore* above all. But the Opéra offered higher fees, better protection against piracy and, most important of all, incomparable prestige. Small surprise that it was on this venue that Donizetti had set his sights. Its particular brand of *grand opéra* was on a vast scale, with unprecedentedly elaborate, state-sponsored spectacle served up alongside musical and dramatic innovation. The composer was still living in Naples with obligations to fulfil at the San Carlo opera house when, in May 1838, he signed a contract with Henri Duponchel, director of the Opéra. He was to provide those two works, the first to be delivered by 1 September

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1839. The penalty for failing to meet the deadline would be an eye-watering thirty thousand francs.

Even in these circumstances, Donizetti could not start work immediately on his Parisian commissions. In early March 1838, after a trip to Venice to supervise the premiere of *Maria de Rudenz*, he returned to Naples to fulfil his contract with the San Carlo. While in Venice, he had met Adolphe Nourrit, Paris's most recent star tenor, who had created major roles in Rossini's *Guillaume Tell* (1829) and Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots* (1836). Nourrit had left Paris suddenly after the emergence there of a significant rival: the stentorian Gilbert Duprez, whose powerful, Italianate timbre reached places that Nourrit's famously gentle, lyrical delivery could not. Travelling to Italy in the hope of adjusting his technique to the new style, Nourrit ended up with Donizetti in Naples, receiving daily lessons in Italian vocal production. Donizetti, meanwhile, was understandably keen to write for "le grand Nourrit", and it was decided that his new opera for the San Carlo would provide the singer's Italian debut. The subject was to be *Polyeucte* (Italianised as *Poliuto*), Pierre Corneille's 1642 tragedy about Christian martyrdom.

Nourrit had (he said) himself proposed the subject – an appropriately exalted one for a celebrity French tenor – and drafted the scenario on which Salvatore Cammarano's libretto would be based. Religious subjects were a central feature of two of the most successful Parisian grand operas, Halévy's *La Juive* (1835) and *Les Huguenots*; but they were unusual in mid-century Italy, and would prove to be the new work's downfall in Naples. Despite Cammarano's attempts to emphasise the libretto's "moral purpose", the Neapolitan censor

banned Donizetti's new work on the eve of its scheduled premiere. Following a brief tussle that saw the submission and rejection in quick succession of both a superficially modified version of *Poliuto* and a sanitised version of *Lucrezia Borgia*, Donizetti gave up: he paid a penalty of 300 scudi to be released from his contract at the San Carlo, gained permission from the King to leave Naples, and set sail for Paris.

Once in the French capital, Donizetti agreed with Duponchel that the first of his two Opéra commissions would be a French adaptation of *Poliuto* – now retitled *Les Martyrs* and reconceived as a grand opera in four acts. Eugène Scribe, the undisputed *éminence grise* of Parisian librettists, was engaged to translate and provide copious additions to Cammarano's text, shifting its emphasis away from the Romantic drama of *Poliuto*, towards theatre on a much grander scale. Yet for all the adjustments to be made to Cammarano's libretto in order to transform Neapolitan *Poliuto* into Parisian *Les Martyrs*, there was still more to be done musically. Donizetti was well aware of the scale of the endeavour, as a letter to his teacher Simon Mayr makes clear:

I have had to rewrite all the recitatives, make a new finale to Act 1, add arias, trios, [and] dances related to the action, as is the custom here, all so that the public won't complain that the texture is Italian. French music and librettos have a *cachet* all of their own, to which every composer must conform, both in the recitatives and in the sung pieces.

To fit its new venue, then, *Les Martyrs* needed to be impressively long; it needed to be scenically overwhelming, demonstrating the

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latest in Parisian staging techniques; it needed a full-length ballet *divertissement*; and it needed to show off the Opéra's celebrated orchestra in a score that could boast intricate uses of *couleur locale*, employment of the newest musical instruments and harmonic combinations, and "symphonic" bombast when nothing else would do.

That Donizetti managed in *Les Martyrs* to answer each of these demands – and in such a short period, with the 1 September 1839 deadline still in place and Scribe's revised libretto only gradually emerging – is impressive indeed. Even more extraordinary is how thoroughly the composer managed to marry his "native" operatic idiom to that demanded by the conventions of the Opéra – all the while tailoring his score to a new set of eminent vocal soloists. The soprano Julie Dorus-Gras (Pauline) and bass Prosper Dérivis (Félix) had both previously created major roles in grand operas by Meyerbeer, Halévy and others; and Jean-Etienne Massol (Sévère) would take the title role in the first performance of Verdi's *Nabucco* at the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels in 1845. In one of the sad ironies of the genesis of *Les Martyrs*, the role of Polyeucte was now taken by Gilbert Duprez – the very tenor whose presence in Paris had caused Nourrit to leave in 1837. While Donizetti and his prohibited score had found new potential in Paris, the end of Nourrit's Neapolitan adventure was purely tragic. He had been relying on *Poliuto* to relaunch his career; with that possibility foreclosed, he continued to pursue an Italian debut via other roles, but with little success. Having heard that Donizetti was adapting *Poliuto* for the Opéra, he wrote to his brother-in-law in November 1838 to suggest that "the composer would do well to wait for me". In

the following months, however, Nourrit's mental health deteriorated rapidly; on 8 March 1839 he leapt to his death from the balcony of his Naples hotel.

A year later, on 10 April 1840, after months of delays and fully a year and a half after Donizetti's arrival in Paris, the Opéra's curtain finally rose on *Les Martyrs*. Its reception was decidedly mixed. There were areas of agreement: most writers applauded the choice of subject; many were impressed by the singers (Duprez and Dorus-Gras especially); the staging was almost universally fêted. But Donizetti's score provoked considerable argument. Some critics found it too easy to detect the work's Italian roots – although it is difficult to say whether they objected more to being presented with a "recycled" opera or to one not sufficiently *françaisé*. In characteristically acid tones, Berlioz dismissed *Les Martyrs* as "a *Credo* in four acts". Not all critics agreed, however, and Donizetti's grandiose third act in particular won widespread approval. The *Revue et Gazette musicale* (arguably Paris's most prestigious music journal) insisted that the Act 3 finale would alone guarantee the work's success.

However, few dared to predict the fate of *Les Martyrs* in the longer term. As it turned out, *Les Martyrs* was given a modest total of eighteen performances in 1840; and an 1843 revival lasted only two nights, after which the work disappeared completely from the Opéra's roster. Ironically enough, when the premiere of *Poliuto* was finally given at the San Carlo in 1848, some months after its composer's death, it marked the beginning of an altogether more successful career: *Poliuto* would remain in the repertoire throughout the nineteenth century. *Les Martyrs*, meanwhile, was sometimes given its own new lease

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of life in an Italian translation (as *I martiri*), a version that was produced to considerable acclaim in London, among other venues, in 1852. But Donizetti's original French version disappeared into the densest of dense obscurity. What is clear, as we resurrect the opera today, is that *Les Martyrs* is absolutely a product of its time and place: it displays the fruits of its Italian beginnings, while also belonging fully to its eventual Parisian home. But although *Les Martyrs* was criticised after its premiere for its mixture of French and Italian approaches to operatic construction, we might now, in a context free from the institutional strictures that characterised Parisian operatic culture in 1840, celebrate precisely its marriage of

those styles. It was, after all, in just such internationalization that the future of opera would lie: in Verdi's own cross-pollination of national traits in *La Forza del destino* and *Aida*; in the lasting influence of those miserable Parisian experiences on Wagner; and, looking even further ahead, in the self-consciously "international" works of Puccini or Richard Strauss. In this sense, listening to *Les Martyrs* with twenty-first-century ears, we might hear it not so much as a record of an operatic world long-gone, but as a work which can gesture unexpectedly towards an operatic future that is now our own.

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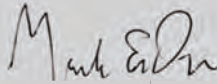
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Biography

Sir Mark Elder CBE

Opera Rara, Artistic Director

Described by both The Sunday Times and BBC Music Magazine as “*a born-again Donizettian*”, Sir Mark Elder made his first recording for Opera Rara - Donizetti’s *Dom Sébastien, roi de Portugal* - in 2005 and made a further three recordings with the company before accepting the title of Artistic Director in April 2011.

As well as a continuing focus on Donizetti, Sir Mark’s tenure as Artistic Director has seen Opera Rara renew its interest in 19th century French repertoire. Most recently he conducted the UK première of Offenbach’s *Fantasio* with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, combined with a studio recording (ORC51: released October 2014).

The release of *Rita* (ORC50) in March this year marks Opera Rara’s 50th complete opera recording. It is also the 6th Donizetti title that Elder will have recorded for the company and its first with The Hallé. Sir Mark is widely recognised for his interpretation of 19th century repertoire, particularly Verdi and Wagner, and his recent exploration of Donizetti’s oeuvres: *Imelda de’ Lambertazzi* (ORC36; 2007 world première studio recording); *Linda di Chamounix* (ORC43; 2009 live recording); *Maria di Rohan* (ORC44; 2009 world première studio recording); and *Belisario* (ORC49; 2012 world première studio recording) continues a long-held Opera Rara tradition. Future plans include the studio recording and concert performance of Donizetti’s *Les Martyrs* with the OAE and a studio recording of Donizetti’s *Le Duc d’Albe* with The Hallé.

In addition to his activities with Opera Rara, Sir Mark is Music Director of The Hallé and Principal Artist of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. He is also a frequent guest of the world’s most prominent opera houses including the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; New York’s Met; Opéra National de Paris; and Glyndebourne Festival Opera. Elder’s recordings with The Hallé have been critically acclaimed, and his recent recording of Elgar’s *The Apostles* won both the Recording of the Year and Choral Award at the 2013 BBC Music Magazine Awards, as well as Gramophone Magazine’s 2013 Choral Award.

Sir Mark Elder was knighted in 2008 and was awarded a CBE in 1989. He won an Olivier Award in 1991 for his outstanding work at English National Opera and was named Conductor of the Year by the

Royal Philharmonic Society in 2006. He was awarded Honorary Membership of the Royal Philharmonic Society in 2011.



Photo: Simon Dodds

Biography

Michael Spyres

Polyeucte

Michael Spyres was born in Mansfield (Missouri) where he grew up in a family of musicians. He began his studies in the U.S.A. and continued them at the Vienna Conservatory.

Spyres first sprang to international attention as an ensemble member of Deutsche Oper Berlin where he made his debut as Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* in 2008.

Since then he has debuted at some of the most prestigious opera theatres and festivals worldwide such as the Teatro alla Scala (Belfiore in *Il viaggio a Reims* and subsequently Rodrigo in *La donna del lago*), at the Salzburg Festival (*Betulia Liberata*), the Semperoper Dresden (Gianetto in *La gazza ladra*), the Rossini Opera Festival Pesaro (Baldassare in *Ciro in Babilonia*, a solo recital, Rodrigo in *La donna del lago* and the title role of *Aureliano in Palmira*), the Liceu in Barcelona (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), the Royal Opera House Covent Garden (*La donna del lago*), the Lyric Opera of Chicago (*Die Fledermaus*) and La Monnaie (Arnold in *Guillaume Tell*).

Recent engagements include Arnold in *Guillaume Tell* in Bologna, Polyeucte in Donizetti's *Les Martyrs* in London, for Opera Rara, Conte di Libenskoff in *Il viaggio a Reims* in Amsterdam, Baron de Mergy in Hérold's *Le pré aux clercs* in Paris, the title role of *La damnation de Faust* in Warsaw, Pirro in *Ermione* in La Coruña, Tempo in *Il trionfo del tempo e del disinganno* at the Aix-en-Provence Festival as well as the title role in *Mitridate, re di Ponto* in Paris (Théâtre des Champs Elysées), London (Covent Garden) and Brussels (La Monnaie).

He has worked with conductors such as Riccardo Muti, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Valery Gergiev, Alberto Zedda and Evelino Pidò.

Michael Spyres has recorded Rossini's *La gazzaletta*, *Otello* and *Le siège de Corinthe* (Naxos), Mazzoni's *Antigono* (Dynamic), Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots* (ASO), Schumann's *Faust-Szenen* (ASO), Verdi's *Otello* (CSO) and his solo album *A Fool For Love* (Delos). *Ciro in Babilonia* from Pesaro (Opus Arte) and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* from Barcelona (Erato) are available on DVD/Blu-Ray. Donizetti's *Les Martyrs* is Michael's first recording with Opera Rara.



Biography

Joyce El-Khoury

Pauline

Joyce El-Khoury was nominated for an International Opera Award as best “Young Singer” as a result of her studio recording and concert performance of Donizetti’s rarely heard *Belisario* with Opera Rara and Sir Mark Elder at London’s Barbican Hall. She joins Opera Rara again to record and perform, in concert, Pauline in Donizetti’s *Les Martyrs*. Also this season she returns to Dutch National Opera to sing Musetta in a new production of *La Bohème*, followed by her debuts with Vancouver Opera as Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus*, Opera Theatre of St. Louis in the title role of Tobias Picker’s *Emmeline*, and the Savolinna Festival as Violetta in *La Traviata*.

Joyce El-Khoury had a close association with the late Lorin Maazel. She sang her first performances of Desdemona in *Otello*, Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi* and the title role in *Suor Angelica* under Maazel’s direction at the Castleton Festival. Maazel also invited her to join him and the Munich Philharmonic for Beethoven’s *Missa Solemnis* and concert performances of Mimi in *La Bohème*. She has debuted as Violetta in *La Traviata* with Dutch National Opera, Welsh National Opera, Palm Beach Opera and Korea National Opera.

Last season Joyce El-Khoury sang her first performances of *Rusalka* in concert performances with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic at the Concertgebouw, San Antonio Opera and Opera North Carolina. She made debuts with Canadian Opera Company as Mimi and Musetta in *La bohème*, and at with Santa Fe Opera as Micaela in a new production of *Carmen*.

Joyce El-Khoury was born in Lebanon. She immigrated to Canada with her family when she was a child. She graduated from the University of Ottawa with a Bachelor of Music degree, and received an Artist Diploma from the Academy of Vocal Arts. She received further training as a member of the Metropolitan Opera’s Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.



Photo: Kristin Hoerbermann

Biography

David Kempster

Sévère

Born in Chirk, North Wales, David Kempster studied at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester.

David joined English National Opera as a Principal Baritone in 1998, where his many roles included Marcello *La Bohème*, Lescaut *Manon Lescaut*, Conte di Luna *Il Trovatore*, Poacher *Cunning Little Vixen* and Teddy Foran in the world premiere of Mark Anthony Turnage's opera *The Silver Tassie*. David has since returned to ENO for a number of projects including Escamillo *Carmen*, Sharpless *Madam Butterfly*, Agamemnon *La Belle Hélène* and most recently Belcore *Elixir of Love*. A long and productive relationship with Welsh National Opera has seen David as Thaos *Iphigenie en Tauride*, Marcello *La Bohème* and his hugely successful debut as Iago *Otello*, encouraging one critic to comment that he had 'blossomed into a true Verdi baritone'.

Also in the UK, David has appeared at Glyndebourne as Escamillo *Carmen* and Falke *Die Fledermaus*, at Opera North as Cecil *Maria Stuarda* and at Buxton Festival as Nottingham in *Roberto Devereux* and Miller *Luisa Miller*.

David made his US debut with Dallas Opera as Sharpless *Madam Butterfly* and returned there to sing Nottingham *Roberto Devereux*. He also appeared as Lescaut *Manon Lescaut* for Florida Grand Opera.

Appearances on the concert platform include Fauré *Requiem* (BBC National Orchestra of Wales), *Carmina Burana* (London Concert Orchestra at the Barbican; Hallé; Jersey Symphony Orchestra; National Eisteddfod of Wales), Opera Galas for Raymond Gubbay (Barbican; Bridgewater Hall; Royal Concert Hall, Glasgow), *The Dream of Gerontius* (Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra; Welsh Proms at St David's Hall, Cardiff), *Judas Maccabeus* (London Mozart Players), concert performances of *Eugene Onegin* (Hallé/Mark Elder) and *Leonore* (Schlossfestspiele, Ludwigsburg).

Recent engagements include Peter *The Apostles* (Hallé Orchestra; BBC Proms), Sharpless *Madama Butterfly* (Royal Danish Opera), *From the House of the Dead* and Iago *Otello* (Opera North), Amonasro *Aida* (Royal Albert Hall), Lescaut *Manon Lescaut*, and Nottingham *Roberto Devereux* for WNO's 'The Tudors' season, Balstrode in the Aldeburgh Festival's acclaimed production of *Peter Grimes* on Aldeburgh beach and the role in *Nabucco*.

This season David sings the title role in *Guillaume Tell* for Welsh National Opera, Sharpless in *Madame Butterfly* at the Royal Albert Hall, Count di Luna *Il Trovatore* (Scottish Opera) and *Sévère* in Donizetti's *Les Martyrs* for a concert and recording with Sir Mark Elder for Opera Rara.



Photo: Brian Tarr

Biography

Brindley Sherratt

Félix

Born in Lancashire, bass Brindley Sherratt studied at the Royal Academy of Music, of which he is now a Fellow and Visiting Professor.

His engagements in the 2014/15 season include Sparafucile *Rigoletto* at Covent Garden, Sarastro *Die Zauberflöte* at the Netherlands Opera, The King in James MacMillan's *Inés de Castro* in his debut at Scottish Opera, Trulove *The Rake's Progress* in his debut at the Metropolitan Opera and Bottom *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in his debut at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence.

Particular career highlights have included Sarastro, Gremin, Narbal *Les Troyens* and Ramfis *Aida* at Covent Garden; Balducci *Benvenuto Cellini* and Hobson *Peter Grimes* in Salzburg; Sarastro at the Vienna and Hamburg State Operas and Claggart and Rocco *Fidelio* at the Glyndebourne Festival. His many roles for the English National Opera have included Sarastro, Pimen and Fiesco *Simon Boccanegra* and other notable appearances have included Banco *Macbeth* for the Opéra de Bordeaux; Pimen for the Opéra de Nice; Rocco in Seville; Il Commendatore and Claudio *Agrippina* in Santa Fe; Pogner for the Welsh National Opera and Fasolt *Das Rheingold* and Filippo *Don Carlo* for Opera North.

Future seasons see him return to Covent Garden, the Metropolitan Opera and the English National Opera and make major debuts with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Opernhaus Zurich and the Teatro Réal in Madrid.

In demand on the concert platform he has appeared at the Bregenz, Edinburgh, Lucerne, Salzburg and Three Choirs Festivals and at the BBC Proms. He works regularly with leading orchestras and conductors and recent engagements have included the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House with Pappano; the Philharmonia with Sir Andrew Davis; the Hallé Orchestra with Elder the Mahler Chamber Orchestra with Harding; the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra with Bicket; the Monteverdi Choir with Gardiner; the Scottish Chamber Orchestra with Nézet-Séguin and the Orchestre des Champs-Élysées and Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen with Langrée.

He has recorded the roles of Polyphemus *Acis & Galatea* for Nimbus; Somnus/Cadmus *Semele* and Ariodate *Serse* for Chandos; Ubaldo in Donizetti's *Imelda de Lambertazzi*, Die Fiesque in *Maria di Rohan*, Goffredo in Bellini's *Il pirata* and most recently Le Roi

in Offenbach's *Fantasio* for Opera Rara; Rocco *Fidelio* for Glyndebourne Live as well as Judas in *The Apostles* with the Hallé Orchestra and Sir Mark Elder; Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe and John Nelson and Haydn Masses and Bach Cantatas with the Monteverdi Choir and Sir John Eliot Gardiner.



Photo: Sussie Ahlburg

Biography

Clive Bayley

Calisthènes

Born in Manchester, Clive Bayley sings regularly with the major opera companies in a diverse repertoire spanning Monteverdi, Mozart, Verdi, Puccini, Alban Berg, Benjamin Britten, Birtwistle, Richard Wagner and Ligeti.

Recent operatic engagements include Claggart in *Billy Budd* at the Gothenburg Opera and *Der Fliegende Holländer* at the Royal Danish Theatre, in which he performed the role of Daland. At the beginning of 2014, Clive made his debut at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, where he sang the role of the Doctor in *Wozzeck*. Clive has also appeared in roles such as Gesler in *William Tell* at the Welsh National Opera, *Don Quichotte* at Grange Park Opera, Sir Walter Raleigh in Benjamin Britten's *Gloriana*, at both the Hamburg Opera and the Royal Opera House and as Prince Gremin *Eugene Onegin* at Grange Park Opera. His previous appearances include such roles as Kecal in *The Bartered Bride*, Bluebeard in *Duke Bluebeard's Castle*, Rocco in *Fidelio* and König Marke in *Tristan und Isolde*.

Collaborations with prestigious opera houses include: Arkel *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Ulisse, Titirel *Parsifal*, Sylvano *La Calisto*, Geronte *Manon Lescaut* and Achilla *Giulio Cesare* at the Bayresche Staatsoper. With the Opera National du Rhin, Strasbourg, he has sung Fasolt in David McVicar's new production of *Das Rheingold* and Claggart in Richard Jones's production of *Billy Budd* at Frankfurt Opera.

In his native country Clive made his debut with the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, as 2nd Prisoner *Fidelio* and has since appeared there in the world-premiere of Harrison Birtwistle's *Gawain*, as Biterolf *Tannhäuser*, Colline *La Bohème*, Hans Foltz *Die Meistersinger*, Carbon in Alfano's *Cyrano de Bergerac*, Thoas *Iphigénie en Tauride*, Sylvano *La Calisto* and Hunding *Die Walküre*. He also works regularly with the Glyndebourne, Grange Park Opera, Opera North and Welsh National Opera.

Forthcoming engagements for the 2014/2015 season include Gesler *Guillaume Tell* with the Welsh National Opera, a recording and concert performance of Gaetano Donizetti's *Les Martyrs* as Callisthènes with Opera Rara and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Commendatore *Don Giovanni* with the Bergen Opera, and Baron Ochs *Der Rosenkavalier* at the Oper Frankfurt. Clive has previously recorded Donizetti's *La romanzesca e l'uomo nero* with Opera Rara.



Biography

Wynne Evans

Néarque

Wynne Evans is the opera singer known to millions throughout the UK as the face and voice of the GoCompare.com ad, the multi-million pound advertising campaign that has made him a household name, having made over fifty radio and television commercials for the company.

His appearances around the world have ranged from singing over a hundred roles in major international opera houses, such as the Royal Opera House, English National Opera, Welsh National Opera and the Opera de Lyon, to concerts, galas and recordings with many of the UK's premiere orchestras, including the RPO, the LSO and the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and have taken him to major concert halls and arenas including the O2, Wembley Arena, Wales Millennium Centre and over 150 performances at the Royal Albert Hall, where he appeared not only in the Proms, but also starred as Piangi in the 25th Anniversary Performance of *The Phantom of the Opera*, broadcast to cinemas worldwide and released on DVD. He became a firm favourite at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff where he most famously responded on behalf of the Welsh Rugby Team to the New Zealand Haka and went on to sing at over twenty international games.

His debut solo album, *A Song in My Heart*, which includes many of the best loved Mario Lanza hits, went straight to Number 1 in the Classical Charts and remained there for several weeks. As a presenter for both radio and TV, Wynne's many appearances include his own regular show for BBC Radio Wales and hosting his own series and numerous music programmes for both S4C and BBC2. He has also made several programmes for Classic FM including the *Wynne Evans Guide to Opera*, which was nominated for an Arquivia Radio Award. Wynne has been honoured by the National Eisteddfod, being made a member of the Gorsedd of the Bards, has been awarded an honorary fellowship by the University of Wales Trinity St Davids and has also been made a Member of the Order of St John. He is patron for Tenovus, and an ambassador for both St. John's Wales and the British Heart Foundation. Wynne is a trustee of The Elizabeth Evans Trust which he established with his brothers in memory of his mother to help fund young people wishing to pursue a career in the performing arts. Born in Carmarthen, South Wales, Wynne studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the National Opera Studio. Donizetti's *Les Martyrs* is Wynne's first recording with Opera Rara



Biographies

Opera Rara Chorus

Ruth Mulholland Chorus Manager

Stephen Harris Chorus Master

Sopranos

Elizabeth Roberts
Elizabeth Weisberg
Emma Silversides
Helen Miles
Helen Withers
Juliet Oppenheimer
Kathryn Jenkin
Prudence Sanders
Celeste Gattai
Glenys Roberts
Juliet Schiemann
Rosalind Waters

Mezzos

Jeanette Ager
Martha Bredin
Zoe Haydn
Alison Place
Siobhain Gibson
Jennifer Westwood
Tamsin Dalley
Zoe Todd
Deborah Miles-Johnson
Maria Brown

Tenor I

Simon Biazeck
Darrell Forkin
John Colyn Gyeantey
Ian Priestley
Jon English
Andrew Friedhoff
Edward Saklatvala

Tenor II

Andrew Locke-Nicholson
Phillip Bell
Adam Kowalczyk
Gerald Place
Hurdis Grandison
Paul Milosavljevic

Baritones

Simon Preece
Bryn Evans
Riccardo Simonetti
Stephen Alder
Trevor Alexander

Basses

Jeremy Birchall
Russell Matthews
Richard Fallas
Charbel Mattar
Gerard Delrez
Jonathan Wood

Stephen Harris

Chorus Master

Stephen Harris was born in Gloucester and studied at the Purcell School of Music, the Royal College of Music and the National Opera Studio. He has held the post of Chorus Master for Scottish Opera, English National Opera, the Netherlands Nationale Reisopera and Welsh National Opera. He has been guest Chorus Master for the London Symphony Chorus, Brighton Festival Chorus and the Huddersfield Choral Society. From 1998 to 2002 he was also Music Director of Kentish Opera conducting *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Pearl Fishers*, *Nabucco*, *Don Quixote*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci* and *Manon Lescaut*. This is the first time Stephen has worked as Chorus Master for Opera Rara.



Glossary

Divertissement

An interlude (usually a dance sequence or short ballet) that might be inserted in an opera or other stage performance.

Grand opera

The elaborately staged operas, characterised by large-scale casts and orchestras and lavish and spectacular design, produced at the Paris Opéra from the late 1820s to around 1850.

Librettist

A writer of libretti/libretto. A libretto (from Italian word meaning 'little book') denotes the body of words/text used in an extended musical works such as an oratorio, opera, operetta or, more recently, a musical. The role of the libretto in the creation of a musical work varies, some composers wrote their own original libretti (a composer/librettist) most others adapted the libretto from existing sources or plays, or had this done for them by librettists from a variety of sources; sacred, mythic, literary or secular.

Prima Donna

The term 'Prima Donna' (Italian for 'first lady') came into use around the 17th century to indicate the principal female singer in the cast of an opera. The need for a specific term arose together with the delineation of the crucial 'marketing' role of famous female singers, whose ability to attract audiences became central to opera production. With the increasing awareness of their status, the Prime Donne gained the right to advance special artistic demands (such as number and quality of their arias) which deeply shaped the format and quality of many librettos and opera scores.

Recitative

A musical declamation for solo voice in which singers converse, describe, or declaim, moving the action forward between the high musical moments.

A form/style of writing for vocals (used in operas, oratorios or cantatas) that is close to the manner of natural speech, with slight melodic variations and minimal orchestral accompaniment, focused on conveying the words and meaning.

Super

Short for 'supernumerary actors', usually amateur character actors in opera and ballet performances paid to appear on stage in crowd scenes or, in the case of opera, as non-singing small parts. They are the equivalent of extras in the motion picture industry.



Chi-chi Nwanoku MBE, Principal Double Bass: Credit Eric Richmond/Harrison.

Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment

Principal Artists

Sir Mark Elder
Iván Fischer
Vladimir Jurowski
Sir Simon Rattle

Emeritus Conductor

Sir Roger Norrington

‘For this remarkable ensemble, it’s all about the music’

Independent on Sunday

Nearly three decades ago, a group of inquisitive London musicians took a long hard look at that curious institution we call the Orchestra, and decided to start again from scratch. They began by throwing out the rulebook. Put a single conductor in charge? No way. Specialise in repertoire of a particular era? Too restricting. Perfect a work and then move on? Too lazy. The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment was born.

And as this distinctive ensemble playing on period-specific instruments began to get a foothold, it made a promise to itself. It vowed to keep questioning, adapting and inventing as long as it lived. Those original instruments became just one element of its quest for authenticity. Baroque and Classical music became just one strand of its repertoire. Every time the musical establishment thought it had a handle on what the OAE was all about, the ensemble pulled out another shocker: a *Symphonie Fantastique* here, some conductor-less Bach there. All the while, the Orchestra’s players called the shots.

At first it felt like a minor miracle. Ideas and talent were plentiful; money wasn’t. Somehow, the OAE survived to a year. Then to two. Then to five. It began to make benchmark recordings and attract the finest conductors. It became the toast of the European touring circuit. It bagged distinguished residencies at the Southbank Centre and Glyndebourne Festival Opera. It began, before long, to thrive.

And then came the real challenge. Eccentric idealists the ensemble’s musicians were branded. And that they were determined to remain. In the face of the music industry’s big guns, the OAE kept its head. It got organised but remained experimentalist. It sustained its founding drive but welcomed new talent. It kept on exploring performance formats, rehearsal approaches and musical techniques. It searched for the right repertoire, instruments and approaches with even greater resolve. It kept true to its founding vow.

In some small way, the OAE changed the classical music world too. It challenged those distinguished partner organisations and brought the very best from them, too. Symphony and opera orchestras began to ask it for advice. Existing period instrument groups started to vary their conductors and repertoire. New ones popped up all over Europe and America.

And so the story continues, with ever more momentum and vision. The OAE’s series of nocturnal *Night Shift* performances have redefined concert parameters. Its home at London’s Kings Place has fostered further diversity of planning and music-making. Great performances now become recordings on the Orchestra’s in-house CD label, *OAE Released*. The ensemble has formed the bedrock for some of Glyndebourne’s most groundbreaking recent productions. It travels as much abroad as to the UK regions: New York and Amsterdam court it, Birmingham and Bristol cherish it.

Remarkable people are behind it. Simon Rattle, the young conductor in whom the OAE placed so much of its initial trust, still cleaves to the ensemble. Iván Fischer, the visionary who punted some of his most individual musical ideas on the young orchestra, continues to challenge it. Mark Elder still mines for luminosity, shade and line. Vladimir Jurowski, the podium technician with an insatiable appetite for creative renewal, has drawn from it some of the most revelatory noises of recent years. All four share the title Principal Artist.

Of the instrumentalists, many remain from those brave first days; many have come since. All seem as eager and hungry as ever. They’re offered ever greater respect, but continue only to question themselves. Because still, they pride themselves on sitting ever so slightly outside the box. They wouldn’t want it any other way.

© Andrew Mellor, 2014

OAE EDUCATION

South West Music School July 2014

The OAE has a long standing partnership with South West Music School (SWMS) and this summer we were invited to join 35 talented teenagers for their end of year residential at Truro School. It was a whirlwind of activity, all inspired by our Watercycle project. Over four days we rehearsed Handel's *Water Music*, created tone poems, learnt the Watercycle song by James Redwood, created a new song for KS1 pupils that we will take on our tour over the coming year as well as composing two versions of a sea shanty. We were thinking about how we could all become more confident performers, composers and communicators and, by the sound of the final concert, we had certainly achieved our aim. It is humbling to work with students who have such respect for each other and the professionals who come and work with them.

In feedback from one student on the course we were delighted to see the words

“OAE IS AWESOME!!”.

St Laurence School Project – Bradford on Avon

Our annual opera project at St Laurence School, Bradford on Avon, is getting a 2014 shakeup and students will be treated to the delights of our Watercycle project. During the week long residency, Year 7 students will work with OAE musicians to create their own music, dance and drama pieces in response to Handel's *Water Music* and newly commissioned poems by local poets.

Watercycle

Watercycle is an orchestral journey through the urban and rural landscapes of England. After the launch of the project at the Spitalfields Festival in June 2014, we are rolling out the project to nine settings across the country. The project includes primary and secondary school workshops, special needs workshops, adult sessions and care home visits as well as OAE TOTS, schools, late night and community concerts all themed around music inspired by water.



Watercycle – Brighton Residency

We start our Watercycle journey in Brighton. From September to December, OAE musicians will work with schools, clients of Brighton Housing Trust's First Base Day Centre, amateur players and a community choir to produce and perform new compositions alongside baroque classics. There is a bassoon focus to our Brighton residency through the generous support of the Mark Williams Foundation and Brighton Early Music Festival (BREMf). At every level of the project we will be showcasing the bassoon and those who play it by introducing the instrument in schools, starting a new group of bassoonists off in the city, working with students and amateur musicians in coaching and performing Handel's famous Fireworks Music as well as making a short film to promote the bassoon. We also hope to help BREMF to start an early music ensemble in Brighton which would be a lasting legacy of the project. The residency begins with a 'Found Sounds' project where a creative team – including a digital artist, a composer, OAE musicians and a poet – will record found sounds (including recording in Brighton's famous sewers!) and edit the recorded material to create a 'Digital Overture'. OAE musicians will also collaborate with a large number of young people who will be involved in a composition workshop, 'Concerto for Brighton', inspired by a poem by Rosy Carrick. Alongside the OAE work in schools, the OAE will be offering two special OAE Tots concerts 'Sailing Away' and The Night Shift which will take place in Brighton in October. The residency will culminate in a series of concerts, involving schools, the BREMF community choir and our massed band for the Fireworks Music. For our grand finale all will sing in our Watercycle song by James Redwood and Hazel Gould.

Watercycle – York Residency

Our second residency sees the Watercycle travel to York where we will be working on a series of workshops and events in collaboration with the National Centre for Early Music (NCEM). Here our residency includes local schools, a group of A Level students from York College, the Castaway Sloop Group and Community choir, Minster Minstrels and poet John Clarke. Look out for more news in our December programme.

Making Our Band

Building on a pilot programme of work during the last academic year, we are delighted to continue our collaboration with Merton Music Foundation (MMF), the Perseid School in Merton and Linden Lodge School in Wandsworth to develop musical activity for students in these special educational needs schools. OAE musicians perform alongside students from the schools on a regular basis to build trust and importantly so everyone involved can participate at their own level and achieve their potential. In this ambitious project students from Perseid School will be performing in an extravaganza at the Albert Hall in April 2015 and we hope to continue and develop this work over the coming years.

And then on a weekly basis we will also be delivering our **OAE clubs** offering weekly tuition and ensemble opportunities for students in Islington

Check out what's on in OAE Education and find out more about the Watercycle tour on our website oae.co.uk/education

I'd also like to add a warm welcome to Louise Malijenovsky who has joined us as OAE Education Officer - what a year to be involved in OAE Education!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cherry". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style. Below the name, there is a single horizontal line that tapers at both ends, serving as a decorative underline.

Education Director

OAE EDUCATION

WATERCYCLE



by Jamal, age 7



by Sally, age 6



by Maya, age 7

Do you want to bring the gift of music to 10,000 children and young people?

During our 2014-2015 season we'll be undertaking our biggest, boldest and most exciting education project to date - bringing the joy of our music to over 10,000 children and young people through our *Watercycle* tour.

Watercycle will:

- Tour UK towns and cities, bringing our work to areas which lack cultural provision
- Feature music inspired by water, about water or to be performed on water
- Train teachers lacking in the skills or confidence to deliver music education
- Provide workshops for young people with special needs
- Involve dozens of performances and hundreds of local musicians

Such an ambitious project cannot happen without your help. Donate today and your support could be used in one of the following ways

£10 pays for a child to attend one half-day workshop with OAE musicians and participate in a concert

£50 gives a GCSE music student the opportunity to participate in two half day workshops and hear their compositions performed

£100 sponsors a community choir rehearsal led by an OAE harpsichordist

Donate now at www.oae.co.uk/donate
or contact Liz Scase on 020 7239 9380 / liz.scase@oae.co.uk

New violin appointments announced

We are very excited to announce the appointment of Colin Scobie and Huw Daniel to the violin section following an extensive audition and trial process. Huw is a frequent guest leader with EUBO, English Concert and Barrokanerne Oslo. Colin was a participant in the 2011 Ann and Peter Law OAE Experience scheme, which gives younger players the chance to play with the Orchestra. OAE leader, Margaret Fautless said of the pair, 'it has been a joy to work with them in the context of their trials for the orchestra and I look forward to collaborating with them over the years to come.'

Glyndebourne

It was another successful summer for the Orchestra at Glyndebourne, with critically acclaimed productions of *Rinaldo* and *La finta giardiniera*. We'll be back next summer as well, playing in brand new productions of Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* and Handel's *Saul*. Public booking for next summer opens on 9 March 2015.

The Works

The Works is our series that gives you the low-down on selected classical masterpieces in a friendly, relaxed and informal style. We give you the equivalent of a museum audio-tour, with our presenter and Orchestra taking you through the selected pieces step-by-step. The next event is on Monday 24 November 2014.

30 years of the OAE

Next season sees the Orchestra turn 30. We're planning all sorts of exciting things to celebrate, alongside our usual Southbank concerts. Join our mailing list to hear about the latest developments – visit oae.co.uk.

Concerts announced at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse

It gives us great pleasure to announce a string of dramatised concerts at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, Shakespeare's Globe's indoor, candlelit Jacobean theatre. In November we'll be performing Charpentier's charming incidental music to Moliere's *La Malade Imaginaire*. And we're back in January to perform a programme centred on Matthew Locke's popular incidental music to *The Tempest*, devised and directed by our Principal Theorbo, Elizabeth Kenny.

Classical Music: Minus the Rules

As you'd expect, the *Night Shift* is back again this season, bringing you more classical music in a relaxed and contemporary setting. We're playing a pub gig on 15 November in Vauxhall, with a special after party performance at infamous, post-queer clubnight, DUCKIE. Then we're back in London again on 24 November at Southbank Centre. Keep up-to-date with the *Night Shift* online (oae.co.uk/thenightshift), on twitter (@OAENightShift) and on Facebook.

OAE TOTS and Family Concerts

These concerts on 21 February and 12 April right here at Southbank Centre are the perfect introduction to classical music for children aged 2-5 and under 11. For more details visit our website or book online via Southbank Centre.

Our Supporters

The OAE continues to grow and thrive through the generosity of our supporters. We are very grateful to our sponsors and patrons and hope you will consider joining them. We offer a close involvement in the life of the orchestra with many opportunities to meet players, attend rehearsals and even accompany us on tour.

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Professor Richard Portes CBE FBA *Co-Principal Bassoon*
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OAE FUTURES

OAE Futures is the long term artistic development programme of the OAE and was established in 2006 with a substantial lead donation from The Smith Challenge Fund. The OAE is grateful to Martin and Elise Smith for this generous and imaginative support. *OAE Futures* comprises projects grouped under three headings: **Future Orchestra**, **Future Performers** and **Future Audiences**, and offers a special opportunity for donors to be involved in the development of the Orchestra's artistic strategy at the highest level. The Orchestra thanks for the following for their support of *OAE Futures*:

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Monday 24 November 2014
Queen Elizabeth Hall, 7pm
The Works

Dvořák Serenade for strings
Grieg Love poem, Op.43 No.5
Elgar Sospiri

Richard Tognetti violin
Presenter TBC

Tuesday 9 December 2014
Royal Festival Hall, 7pm
Handel's Messiah

Handel *Messiah*

Robert Howarth conductor
Sophie Bevan soprano
Catherine Wyn-Rogers
mezzo-soprano
John Mark Ainsley tenor
Ashley Riches baritone
Choir of the Enlightenment

Thursday 15 January 2015
Royal Festival Hall, 7pm
*Flying the Flag:
Russian Landscapes*

Mussorgsky *Night on a Bare
Mountain* (original version)
Mussorgsky Scenes from the
original version of *Boris Godunov*:
Coronation scene, Boris's
monologue from Act 2
(the 'clock' scene) and the
Death of Boris
Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 1 in
G minor, *Winter Daydreams*

Vladimir Jurowski conductor
Sergei Leiferkus baritone

Wednesday 5 February 2015
Queen Elizabeth Hall, 7pm
Flying the Flag: The Bohemians

Mozart Serenade in B flat,
Gran Partita
Mysliveček Wind Octet No.2
in E flat
Mozart Selection from
Don Giovanni

Wind soloists of the OAE

Wednesday 4 March 2015
Royal Festival Hall, 7pm
Flying the Flag: Best of Both

Smetana Overture, *The Bartered Bride*
Brahms Violin Concerto
Dvořák Symphony No. 9 in
E minor, *New World*

Ádám Fischer conductor
Viktoria Mullova violin

Thursday 2 April 2015
Royal Festival Hall, 7pm
Bach's St Matthew Passion

Bach *St Matthew Passion*

Choir One
Mark Padmore Director/Evangelist
Stephan Loges Christus
Sophie Bevan soprano
Paula Murrihy mezzo-soprano

Choir Two
Fflur Wyn soprano
Robin Blaze counter-tenor
Andrew Tortise tenor
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