



ROYAL  
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THE ROYAL OPERA REPERTORY	PAGE
<i>SIMON BOCCANEGRA</i>	2-3
<i>LA RONDINE</i>	3-5
<i>CAPRICCIO IN CONCERT</i>	5-7
<i>FROM STUDIO TO STAGE: JETTE PARKER YOUNG</i>	7-8
<i>ARTISTS SUMMER PERFORMANCE</i>	
<i>THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST</i>	8
<i>THE CANTICLES</i>	8-9
<i>INSIGHTS</i>	9-10
PRESS OFFICE CONTACTS	10

# ***SIMON BOCCANEGRA***

GIUSEPPE VERDI

27 JUNE, 1, 3, 10, 16 JULY AT 7.30PM, 13 JULY AT 7PM

- **Generous philanthropic support from Mrs Susan A. Olde OBE, Alfiya and Timur Kuanyshev and the Verdi Syndicate**

**Elijah Moshinsky's** production of Verdi's most subtle and sombre opera *Simon Boccanegra*, first seen in November 1991, returns for its sixth revival. Set designs are by **Michael Yeargan**, costume designs by **Peter J. Hall** and lighting design by **John Harrison**.

Verdi's powerful score highlights the political intrigue of Renaissance Italy. Simon Boccanegra's election as the first Doge of Genoa is organized to unite the warring factions within the city, but he is forced to deal with treachery and rebellion just as he is reunited with his long lost daughter.

Music Director for The Royal Opera **Antonio Pappano** will conduct all performances of the opera with the exception of the performance on 16 July which will be conducted by **Christopher Willis**.

The complex and sympathetic role of Simon Boccanegra contains some of the most beautiful music Verdi ever wrote and is sung by American baritone **Thomas Hampson**, singing the role for the first time at Covent Garden. He has recently sung the role in the same production for Lyric Opera of Chicago. He made his debut with The Royal Opera in 1993 as Figaro (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*) and most recently has performed Giorgio Germont (*La traviata*) and the title role in *Macbeth*.

Russian soprano **Hibla Gerzmava** makes her role debut as Boccanegra's daughter Amelia. She made her debut with The Royal Opera as Tatyana (*Eugene Onegin*) in 2008 and has since returned to sing Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*) and Mimì (*La bohème*).

Making his debut with The Royal Opera in the role of Gabriele Adorno is American tenor **Russell Thomas**. His recent roles have included Tito (*La Clemenza de Tito*) for the Metropolitan Opera and Hoffmann (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*) for Canadian Opera Company.

Returning to the role of Jacopo Fiesco is Italian bass **Ferruccio Furlanetto**, who sang the role at Covent Garden in 2008 in Ian Judge's production of the 1881 version, and in the 2010 revival of Elijah Moshinsky's production. He made his debut with The Royal Opera in 1995 as Figaro (*Le nozze di Figaro*) and his roles for the Company have included Count Walter (*Luisa Miller*), Padre Guardiano (*La forza del destino*) and Philip II (*Don Carlo*).

Greek baritone **Dimitri Platanias** will make his role debut for The Royal Opera in the role of Paolo Albiani, a role which he has previously sung in Athens. He made his debut with The Royal Opera in the 2011/12 Season in the title role of *Rigoletto*. Recent roles include the title role in *Nabucco* in Athens as well as Iago (*Otello*) and Rigoletto (*Rigoletto*) for La Fenice, Venice.

Jette Parke Young Artist Korean bass **Jihoon Kim** sings the role of Pietro for the first time. Recent roles with The Royal Opera have included Zaretsky (*Eugene Onegin*), Colline (*La bohème*), Fourth Chevalier and Priest (*Robert le diable*), Montano (*Otello*) and Ghost of Hector (*Les Troyens*).

## **INSIGHTS: SIMON BOCCANEGRA**

**Friday 14 June 7.30-9pm**

Join Antonio Pappano and the cast and creative team as they introduce this classic production of Verdi's political masterpiece.

Clore Studio Upstairs

**Tickets £17 Students £7**

## **LA RONDINE**

**GIACOMO PUCCINI**

**5, 8, 11, 17, 20 July at 7.30pm**

**13 July at 12.30pm**

**14 July at 7pm**

**21 July at 1pm**

- Production sponsored by *Coutts* | 
- Generous philanthropic support from Mr and Mrs Christopher W.T. Johnston and the American Friends of Covent Garden

Puccini's bittersweet lyric comedy returns to The Royal Opera this summer with the second revival of **Nicolas Joël's** elegant production, first seen here in 2002, which conjures up the world of Belle-Epoque Paris, with sensational sets by **Ezio Frigerio** and glamorous costumes by **Franca Squarciapino**.

Romanian soprano **Angela Gheorghiu** reprises the role of Magda, the mistress of a wealthy Parisian banker who falls for a young innocent man. She also sang the role in 1998 for The Royal Opera (in concert) when this production was new in 2002, and for the 2004 revival and has recorded the role with EMI. She will sing Mimì (*La bohème*) for The Royal Opera in the 2012/14 Season.

Sharing the role is Albanian soprano **Ermonela Jaho**, who sings the role on 13, 17 and 20 July. She was much praised for her performances with The Royal Opera in the title role of *Suor Angelica* and as Violetta (*La traviata*) last Season. She will also sing Mimì (*La bohème*) for The Royal Opera in the 2012/14 Season.

American tenor **Charles Castronovo** makes his role debut with The Royal Opera as Ruggero. He will sing Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*) in April this Season and other recent roles with The Royal Opera have included Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*) and Alfredo (*La traviata*) in the 2011/12 Season.

Sharing the role of Ruggero and making his Royal Opera debut is Brazilian tenor **Atalla Ayan**, who sings the roles on the 13, 17 and 20 July. He is currently a member of Stuttgart State Opera, where he has sung the roles of Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*), Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*), Alfred (*Die Fledermaus*) and Ismaele (*Nabucco*).

Making her debut with The Royal Opera in the role of Lisette is Spanish soprano **Sabina Puértolas**. Recent roles include Minerva and Amore (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*) in Vienna and Violetta (*La traviata*) in Liège.

Prunier will be sung by former Jette Parker Young Artist **Edgardas Montvidas**, making his role debut. He made his debut with The Royal Opera as Ruiz (*Il trovatore*) in 2002; he has also performed Alfredo (*La traviata*) and Fenton (*Falstaff*) for The Royal Opera. Recent appearances include Alfredo (*La traviata*) and Lensky

(*Eugene Onegin*) for Opéra de Lyon and Nemorino (*L'elisir d'amore*) for English National Opera.

Jette Parker Young Artists **Hanna Hipp** and **Justina Gringyte** make their role debuts as Bianca and Suzy respectively. Italian baritone **Pietro Spagnoli** sings the role of Rambaldo and British bass-baritone **John Cunningham** sings the role of Périchaud.

Jette Parker Young Artists **Pablo Bensch**, **Ashley Riches** and **Džsica Bijelić** sing the roles of Gobin, Crébillon and Yvette respectively.

Following his debut with The Royal Opera conducting *Turandot* in 2002, Italian conductor **Marco Armiliato** will conduct all performances.

## ***CAPRICCIO IN CONCERT***

**RICHARD STRAUSS**

**19 AND 21 JULY AT 7.30PM**

- **Generous philanthropic support from the Metherell Family**

Richard Strauss's final masterpiece has not been heard at the Royal Opera House since 1991 and returns now in concert this Summer. In his last opera, Strauss explores the question 'Which is greater, poetry or music?' through a music-loving Countess, her two suitors – a poet and a musician – her theatre-loving brother, a great actress, a stage director and even a prompter!

British conductor **Andrew Davis** will conduct both concerts, he has recently conducted *Thaïs* in concert and *Peter Grimes* for The Royal Opera. He is currently Music Director and Principal Conductor of Lyric Opera of Chicago.

American soprano **Renée Fleming** returns to Covent Garden to sing the role of Countess Madeleine. She made her debut with The Royal Opera in 1989 as Dircé (*Médée*) and has subsequently returned to sing the Contessa di Folleville (*Il viaggio a Reims*), Amelia Grimaldi (*Simon Boccanegra*), the Marschallin (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Desdemona (*Otello*), Violetta (*La traviata*), the title role of *Rusalka* in concert

performances and the title role of *Thaïs*, also in concert, conducted by Andrew Davis.

Canadian tenor **Joseph Kaiser** will sing the role of the composer Flamand a role which he has previously sung with Paris Opéra and the Metropolitan Opera, New York. He made his debut with The Royal Opera as Narraboth (*Salome*) in 2008 and also sang Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*) in 2011. He will make a role debut with Dallas Opera in April as Aspern (*The Aspern Papers*) and has recently appeared as Gaylord Ravenal (*Showboat*) for Houston Grand Opera.

German baritone **Christian Gerhaher** will sing the role of the poet Olivier. He made his debut with The Royal Opera as Wolfram von Eschinbach (*Tannhäuser*) in 2010 a role which he also recently sang in Berlin and recorded. Recent appearances include Pelléas (*Pelléas et Mélisande*) in Frankfurt and Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*) in Munich.

Danish baritone **Bo Skovhus** will sing the role of the Count, the brother of Countess Madeleine. He made his debut with The Royal Opera as Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*) in 1997. Recent appearances include Sixtus Beckmesser (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*) in both Hamburg and Chicago and Gabriel von Eisenstein (*Die Fledermaus*) in Munich.

British Bass **Peter Rose** will sing the role of La Roche which he has previously sung for Paris Opera and for the Metropolitan Opera. He made his debut with The Royal Opera in 1988 and his recent roles for the Company include Prince Gremin (*Eugene Onegin*), Baron Ochs (*Der Rosenkavalier*) and Animal Trainer/Athlete (*Lulu*).

British mezzo-soprano **Christine Rice** sings the role of the actress Clairon. She made her Royal Opera debut in 1998 as Flora (*La traviata*) at the Royal Albert Hall and her roles for the company have included Hänsel (*Hänsel und Gretel*), Concepcion (*L'Heure espagnole*), Giulietta (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), and Maddalena (*Rigoletto*). Her most recent role for The Royal Opera House being Ariadne (*The Minotaur*, the 2013 revival; she created this role in 2008). She will also sing Eboli (*Don Carlo*) in May this Season.

The Italian singers are sung by British soprano **Mary Plazas** and British tenor **Barry Banks**. Mary made her debut with The Royal Opera as Second Angel (*Palestrina*) in

1997. Recent roles include Cio-Cio-San (*Madame Butterfly*) for English National Opera and the title role in *Maria di Rohan* for Buxton Opera Festival. Barry made his debut with The Royal Opera as Beppe (*Pagliacci*) in 1989 and subsequent roles with the Company have included Pang (*Turandot*), Bringhella (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Don Narciso (*Il turco in Italia*) and Ernesto (*Don Pasquale*).

British tenor **Graham Clark** will make his role debut as Monsieur Taupe. He made his debut with The Royal Opera as Loge (*Das Rheingold*) in 1986 and his most recent roles with the Company include Sellem (*The Rake's Progress*), Valzacchi (*Der Rosenkavalier*) and the four servants (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*).

The Servants will be sung by Jette Parker Young Artists Argentinean tenor **Pablo Bensch**, British tenor **David Butt Philip**, Brazilian baritone **Michael de Souza**, Korean bass **Jihoon Kim** and British baritone **Ashley Riches**. The major demo will be sung by British bass **John Cunningham**.

## **INSIGHTS: IN CONVERSATION WITH RENÉE FLEMING**

**Monday 15 July 7.30-8.45pm**

From the world's greatest opera houses, to Olympic ceremonies and presidential inaugurations, soprano Renée Fleming has performed at them all. Join us for an intimate evening where she discusses her life on the stage, in concert performance and her role as a musical ambassador.

Linbury Studio Theatre

**Tickets £13 Students £7**

## ***FROM STUDIO TO STAGE: JETTE PARKER YOUNG ARTISTS SUMMER PERFORMANCE***

**MAIN STAGE**

**SUNDAY 30 JUNE 3PM**

The Jette Parker Young Artists once again make the main stage their own for their annual summer performance. All nine singers on the Programme will be involved, as will the Young Artist pianist, répétiteur, conductors and stage director. The

performance will be staged, with the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House in the pit, and will consist of excerpts from operas by Mozart, Donizetti, Tchaikovsky and Puccini, selected to give the Young Artists an opportunity to perform roles which they have covered during the Season.

The performance starts with a scene from Act I of *Die Zauberflöte*, with Serbian soprano **Dušica Bijelić**, British tenor **David Butt Philip** and Brazilian baritone **Michel de Souza** as Pamina, Tamino and Papageno. This is followed by two Donizetti duets, from Act I of *Anna Bolena* with Lithuanian mezzo-soprano **Justina Gringyte** and Korean bass **Jihoon Kim** as Giovanna Seymour and Enrico and Act II of *L'elisir d'amore* with Portuguese soprano **Susana Gaspar** and Argentinean tenor **Pablo Bensch** as Adina and Nemorino. **Dušica Bijelić**, Polish mezzo-soprano **Hanna Hipp**, **Pablo Bensch** and British baritone **Ashley Riches** perform the roles of Tatyana, Olga, Lensky and Eugene Onegin in a scene from Act I of *Eugene Onegin*, and finally, all nine singers take part in a scene from Act II of *La rondine*.

Stage Director on the Programme, **Pedro Ribeiro**, will direct and **David Syrus** will conduct the performance, with the exception of the scene from *Die Zauberflöte* which will be conducted by **Paul Wingfield** and the scene from *Eugene Onegin*, which will be conducted by **Michele Gamba**. Ballet pianist **Helen Nicholas** will play the continuo for the Act II duet for *L'elisir d'amore* and play the piano solo in Mozart's concert aria 'Ch'io mi scordi di te', sung by mezzo-soprano **Hanna Hipp**. The lighting designer is James Simpson.

## ***THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST***

**GERALD BARRY**

**14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21 JUNE AT 7.45PM AND 22 JUNE AT 6PM**

The Royal Opera presents the first UK staging of Irish composer **Gerald Barry**'s gleefully inventive opera *The Importance of Being Earnest*. The work had its concert premiere at the Barbican in 2012 and was met with huge acclaim.

Barry's hyperactive score storms through a range of genres: everything from modernism to avant-garde to Baroque. Memorable moments include Gwendolen



and Cecily's battle of wits performed through megaphones, to the accompaniment of 40 rhythmically smashed plates. Director **Ramin Gray** brings this virtuoso opera to the Linbury Studio Theatre, with set designs by **Johannes Schültz**, costume designs by **Christina Cunningham** and lighting design by **Franz Peter David**. **Tim Murray** conducts the **Britten Sinfonia** for all performances.

The cast includes British tenor **Paul Curievici** as John Worthing, British bass **Alan Ewing** as Lady Bracknell, Canadian mezzo-soprano **Stephanie Marshall** as Gwendolen Fairfax, British baritone **Benedict Nelson** as Algernon Moncrieff, Welsh contralto **Hilary Summers** as Miss Prism, British bass **Simon Wilding** as Merriman/Lane and Swedish soprano **Ida Falk Winland** as Cecily Cardew.

## *THE CANTICLES*

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

10, 11, 12 JULY AT 7.45PM

Benjamin Britten's five Canticles distil his immense talent as an opera composer into miniature musical jewels. Written between 1947 and 1974, the pieces span a large proportion of his composing life. All five Canticles are characterized by compressed musical forms, intense drama and a mood of spiritual elevation.

In a production marking 100 years since Britten's birth, the five Canticles are brought together in one sequence by Director **Neil Bartlett** and lighting designer **Paule Constable**. The cast includes renowned Britten interpreters British tenor **Ian Bostridge** and pianist **Julius Drake**, together with British countertenor **Iestyn Davies** and British baritone **Benedict Nelson**. **Richard Watkins** will play the horn and **Sally Pryce** will play the harp.

## INSIGHTS

INSIGHTS: GWYNETH JONES WAGNER MASTERCLASS

Tuesday 28 May 7.30-9.30pm

In association with Wagner 200 celebrations, come and watch internationally renowned Wagnerian soprano Dame Gwyneth Jones coach the next generation of talent and talk about her legendary career. [www.wagner200.co.uk](http://www.wagner200.co.uk)

Linbury Studio Theatre

**Tickets £17 Students £7**

## **INSIGHTS: IN CONVERSATION WITH SUSAN BULLOCK**

**Thursday 30 May 7.30-9pm**

A star in opera houses across the world, come and hear from a dramatic soprano at the top of her game in a season where she takes to the Covent Garden stage as both a Wagnerian heroine and Elizabethan queen. Interviewed by Edward Seckerson.

Linbury Studio Theatre

**Tickets £13 Students £7**

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