

Thursday 1 July 2021

## **The Royal Opera's Jette Parker Young Artist Programme announces 20th Anniversary Company and new audition dates to join the 2022/23 Programme**

September 2021 will mark the start of **The Royal Opera's Jette Parker Young Artists Programme (JPYAP)** 20th anniversary year. Over the last two decades the Programme has trained and supported 137 young singers, directors, conductors and pianists from across the globe - providing immersive access to all areas of opera, music and theatre production. The JPYA Programme also provides participants with opportunities to work with partner companies in the UK and across the world, ensuring a truly international approach that prepares artists for global careers.

To celebrate this momentous year, the ROH are delighted to announce that former Link Artists soprano **April Koyejo-Audiger**, tenors **Thando Mjandana**, **Alan Pingarrón** and baritone **Chuma Sijeqa** - will join Young Artists from the 2021 Programme to form the **JPYAP 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Company**. They are joined by soprano **Alexandra Lowe**, mezzo-sopranos **Kseniia Nikolaieva** and **Stephanie Wake-Edwards**, tenors **Andrés Presno** and **Egor Zhuravskii**, bass **Blaise Malaba**, stage director **Isabelle Kettle**, opera répétiteur **Michael Sikich**, opera conductor and répétiteur **Michael Papadopoulos** and ballet conductor **Edo Frenkel**.

Returning in October, **Meet the Young Artists Week** offers a chance to hear music from the rising stars of the opera world, as well as returning former young artists. The rich programme of song, piano music, operatic arias and ensembles, will close with a special alumni birthday recital curated by the Programme's founder and Artistic Director David Gowland. From September, a new programme of **Recitals at Lunch** return running through to the end of summer.

In the **Linbury** in May 2022, JPYAs will mark the centenary of **Stravinsky's** rarely performed **Mavra** in a mixed programme with **Schoenberg's** 1912 melodrama **Pierrot Lunaire**. And throughout the year audiences can catch 28 returning JPYA alumni and graduates of the Link Artist programme joining the Anniversary Company for roles on both the Linbury and Mainstage. In addition, as part of a new initiative, recent conservatoire graduates will receive mentoring from former JPYAs. This new programme will also offer observership opportunities for directors and conductors and lighting designers on behalf of The Royal Opera.

The anniversary year culminates on 23 July 2022 for a special performance on the Main Stage marking the achievements of the artists and the Programme across two decades, with ROH Music Director **Antonio Pappano**, who also celebrates 20 years with The Royal Opera, joining to conduct.

The JPYAP are thrilled to announce singer, conductor and répétiteur auditions for the **2022/23 Programme**. Applications for singer auditions open on 1 July 2021 with opera conductor and repetiteur applications opening from 14 February 2022. Please visit the [ROH website](#) for full information.

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## BIOGRAPHIES

### ALAN PINGARRÓN

Alan Pingarrón began his singing studies in 2001 and was awarded the Gabino Barreda medal when he completed his BA at the National School of Music in 2003.

Appearances have included Mozart's and Verdi's Requiems, Handel's *Messiah*, Rodolfo (*La bohème*) and Nemorino (*L'elisir d'amore*). Alan participated in the Opera El Emperador de la Atlántida, in the Cervantino International Festival, in choral works such as Luis Jordá's Independence Symphonic Poem and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

In 2016 he participated in the Operalia competition in Guadalajara, in the Young Euro Classic festival in Berlin, and in the Francisco Araiza Opera Competition in Hermosillo Sonora, where he took first prize in Zarzuela. He performed in the Mexican premiere of Daniel Catán's *Salsipuedes*.

### APRIL KOYEJO-AUDIGER

British soprano April Koyejo-Audiger returns to ROH having previously sung Attendant (*Susanna*) for the JPYAP. April graduated from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland with a BMus with First Class Honours. She went on to take a master's degree in Vocal Performance at the Royal College of Music.

Most recently, she performed the role of Strawberry Woman (*Porgy and Bess*) at the Theater an der Wien and premiered online *Kind Regards*, a new commission marking International Women's Day 2021 at The Royal Opera House. She has also covered roles for ENO and Opera North. Her postponed performances include a role in Pulitzer Winner Suzan-Lori Parks play, *In the Blood* at Donmar Warehouse.

April has been working as a workshop leader for Opera Nation, an initiative led by The Royal Opera House and The Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, to develop the next generation of opera singers.

### CHUMA SIJEQA

South African baritone Chuma Sijeqa is graduating from Guildhall School of Music and Drama's Opera Course with an MA in Performance. Chuma was born in Phomolong, Tembisa, and began singing choral music in primary school. He went on to join a community choir while in secondary school, and began

solo singing, including opera, after entering the SASCE school competition. He studied in the Vocal Arts Department of Tshwane University of Technology where roles included Don Magnifico (*La Cenerentola*), Sir John Falstaff (*Falstaff*) and Don Alfonso (*Così fan tutte*). He joined Gauteng Opera in 2017.

In 2018 Chuma won Second Prize in the Voices of South Africa International Singing Competition. As part of his prize he participated in the Les Azuriales Opera Festival in Nice in the same year, where he won the Joseph Karaviotis Prize in the vocal competition. In 2019 he performed Don Bartolo for The New Generation Festival in Florence.

### **THANDO MJANDANA**

South African tenor Thando Mjandana is a graduate of the University Cape Town Opera School and is completing his studies on the Opera Course at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London where he was a finalist in the 2021 Gold Medal competition.

In recent seasons he has performed Odoardo (*Ariodante*) for ROH, Nelson and Crab Man (*Porgy and Bess*) at Dutch National Opera, and Nelson (*Porgy and Bess*) at English National Opera. At the Guildhall he has sung Beppe in Donizetti's *Rita*. Upcoming roles include Renzo in Jonathan Dove's *The Little Green Swallow* at GSMD and Nemorino *L'elisir d'amore* for Waterperry Opera Festival.

For Cape Town Opera he has performed Tamino (*The Magic Flute*), Botshelo in Sibusiso Njeza's *Blood of Mine* and Chief in Angélique Mouyis's *The Blue-Eyed Xhosa* and covered the roles of Pedrillo (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*), Remendado (*Carmen*) and Don Basilio (*Le nozze di Figaro*). Concert appearances include the Johannesburg Philharmonic and KwaZulu Natal Philharmonic Orchestra. He has been awarded 1st and 3rd Prizes at the Amazwi Omzansi International Opera Competition.

### **EDO FRENKEL**

Conductor, composer, and pianist, Edo Frenkel is currently Artist in Residence at Cité des arts de Paris. He has guest conducted for LUDWIG, Baltimore Symphony, Spoldzielnia Muzyczna, Ensemble Meitar, and Ensemble Mise-en, and performed in numerous international festivals including Ojai, Aldeburgh, Lucerne, Verbier, and for Opera Rara.

Edo has acted as assistant conductor to Sir Simon Rattle, Brad Lubman, Matthias Pintscher, and Barbara Hannigan. In addition, in 2017, Edo served as Hannigan's rehearsal pianist, collaborating on the Satie: Socrate Project. In 2019, he served as répétiteur, coach, and keyboard player for LUDWIG's international tour of Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*.

Edo regularly performs in spontaneous music-making and has performed with jazz greats Randy Brecker and Peter Erskine. He has closely collaborated with composers such as George E. Lewis, Betsy Jolas, Charles Wuorinen, and Helmut Lachenmann. To date he has given world premiere performances of nearly 100 works. Edo's compositions have been performed by such artists as Talea ensemble, EXAUDI vocal ensemble, Jack Quartet, and HKNME. In addition to his work in music, Edo is active in the field of Critical Theory; his work primarily concerns the intersections of aesthetics and politics.

**ENDS**

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

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The Jette Parker Young Artists Programme is generously made possible by OAK FOUNDATION

- The Jette Parker Young Artists Programme offers a two-year artist contract that draws globally on the talented young singers, directors, conductors and pianists just entering the profession, providing them with access to all areas of opera production while immersing them in life at the Royal Opera House and beyond.
- Visit: [www.roh.org.uk/about/jette-parker-young-artists-programme](http://www.roh.org.uk/about/jette-parker-young-artists-programme)
- Please find images [here](#).

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### **About The Royal Opera**

The Royal Opera, under the artistic direction of Antonio Pappano, Music Director, and Oliver Mears, Director of Opera, is one of the world's leading opera companies. Based in the iconic Covent Garden theatre, it is renowned both for its outstanding performances of traditional opera and for commissioning new works by today's leading opera composers.

### **About the Royal Opera House**

Home to The Royal Ballet, The Royal Opera and the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House our vision is to give everyone access to exceptional ballet and opera.

Since closing our doors due to the global pandemic in March 2020, the Royal Opera House has continued to bring together the world's most extraordinary artists and curated the #OurHouseToYourHouse programme of 19 streams, 4 socially distanced live concerts and a suite of online content that has been viewed over 315 million times in 183 countries.

The Royal Opera House continues its #OurHouseToYourHouse programme, bringing audiences the best of the ROH through a new series of live performances, cinema screenings, Friday Premieres and cultural highlights in partnership with the BBC and Sky Arts.

The Royal Opera House is committed to widening participation and deepening learning for all ages. Last summer we launched Create and Learn, offering free online home-learning opportunities for children and young people. In addition, The Royal Ballet partnered with Cast and Doncaster Council to support Doncaster residents with online resources and remote direction to create a unique community dance film, Doncaster Dances.

### **Royal Opera House Recovery Campaign**

Live performance is a shared experience, and our audiences are at the heart of what we do on our stages, backstage, online, in cinemas and in our communities. The global pandemic has affected all arts organisations across the world. We have lost £3 in every £5 of our income, and our Government loan will take us only part of the way. We need your help with our Recovery Campaign to bring artists back to our stages. [roh.org.uk/donate](http://roh.org.uk/donate)

### **About the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme**

The Jette Parker Young Artists Programme supports the artistic development of young singers, conductors, directors and répétiteurs. The Young Artists are an international group of outstanding professionals at the start of their careers. They are salaried employees of the Royal Opera House usually full-time over two years. The Young Artists work on productions for The Royal Opera and Royal Ballet, singing small roles and covering larger roles, or joining the music or directing staff for productions. They are taught and mentored by Royal Opera and Royal Ballet music staff, a wide range of freelance music and language coaches and visiting singers, directors and conductors. Every facility of the Company is made available to them so that their talents are nurtured through total immersion in the life of the Royal Opera House. The Jette Parker Young Artists Programme is made possible thanks to the exceptional generosity of Oak Foundation, who have supported the Programme since 2005. In 2017 they extended their support for their Programme and enabled new initiatives to diversify the range of artists supported by the Programme, including the development of women's conducting courses and the JPYAP Link Artist Programme, which extended coaching opportunities to individuals with exceptional potential from backgrounds underrepresented in the Royal Opera House talent pool.