

Opéra les Fauves

the Wandering Scholar
by Gustav Holst

Including new art song orchestrations by

Michael Shearer

Alasdair Spratt

Danyal Dhondy

Tuesday 28 May 2013, 7pm

Performance Space
City University London
St John Street
London
EC1V 4PE



Opéra les Fauves

Artistic & Music Director Justin Fung

Orchestre les Fauves

The Wandering Scholar

A chamber opera in one act by Gustav Holst (1874–1934)

Libretto by Clifford Bax (1886–1962)

Alison Aimeé Toshney

Louis Richard Moore

Pierre David Menezes

Father Philippe Dionysios Kyropoulos

Director Tyrrell Jones

Costume Designer Hannah Spearing

Movement Director Depi Mavropoulou

New Art Song Orchestrations

Michael Head (1900–1976) / Michael Shearer (b. 1987)

'The Estuary' (Richard Moore, baritone)

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) / Alasdair Spratt (b. 1981)

'Ich wandte mich' from *Vier ernste Gesänge* (David Menezes, tenor)

Henry Purcell (1659–1695) / Danyal Dhondy (b. 1985)

'What Power Art Thou?' from *King Arthur* (Dionysios Kyropoulos, bass)

Orchestre les Fauves

Violin I Gemma Dickinson (leader)

Violin II Alice Hall

Viola Toby Hawkes

Cello Sophie Haynes

Double Bass Martin Lüdenbach

Flute & Piccolo Úna-Frances Clark

Oboe & English Horn Bruno Bower

Clarinet & Bass Clarinet Cosima Yu

Bassoon Harry Ventham

French Horn Sabrina Pullen

Percussion Maria Kramvi

Harp Alexander Thomas

Producer

Fiona Gent

Concert Manager

Louise Gordon

Concert Assistant

Davy Berryman

Technical Director

Will Goring

Acknowledgements

Opéra les Fauves would especially like thank the following friends and companies for their generous help and support: City University London, The Forge Venue, Royal Shakespeare Company, Savio(u)r Theatre Company, Theatre Delicatessen, Nut Films, Danyal Dhondy, Callista Nurse, Joshua Josiah-Yoshi Berry, Nicole McNielly, Mariko North, Luca Tieppo, Paul Mackenzie, Charlotte Caird, Marcos Fernandez, Ezra Williams, Alison Arnopp, Christian Halstead, Chris Beckett, Alex Rider, Ildikó Kálnoky, David Jervis and Jennifer Melville.

Introduction

Welcome to Opéra les Fauves' inaugural concert. The company started when I first met Dionysios (who sings the role of fat Father Phillippe this evening) at his Baroque Extravaganza concert in a Halloween party last year. We quickly realised that we shared a passion for opera, theatre, songs and new music. This shared passion resulted in the birth of a young and exciting new opera company: Opéra les Fauves.

As a new opera company, we strive to explore and develop new practices and aim to deliver accessible, energetic and engaging performances. In the future we envisage projects as wide-ranging as cabaret-style evenings in bars, delivering education projects to schools and communities as well as putting on site-specific performances at festivals.

Tonight's programme will feature a short, comical and dramatic one act opera: *The Wandering Scholar*, paired with an exiting new programme of art song orchestrations by three award-winning composers, which was inspired by Anton Webern's orchestration of JS Bach's *Ricercar*.

In Webern's Bach arrangement, we can simultaneously experience the voices of both Bach and Webern. Thus, I have encouraged the three composers to interpret their favourite songs in their own original voice as opposed to an academic exercise. Tonight, you will hear three very different and exciting 're-compositions' of songs by Purcell, Brahms and Michael Head.

On behalf of Opéra les Fauves, I hope that this performance will be an enthralling experience.

Justin Fung

Artistic Director & Music Director



The Wandering Scholar

The Wandering Scholar is a wonderful little opera and we have had a great deal of fun putting it all together. At first glance this is a comic opera about a housewife who chooses to add some spice to her otherwise inordinately dull life by playing away with the local priest. None of the characters are complex. They are motivated by simple animal desires (namely food and sex) but what is mostly a sex farce does have a darker side.

We have set the opera roughly in the late 50s as it was an era on the cusp of sexual liberation. In 1956 80% of married women surveyed considered sex to be part of their household chores, by the 60s these ideas were beginning to change, sex became more about pleasure and recreation, less about marital duty and babies.



As a director, I don't come from an opera background. It is an art form I have always loved but the bulk of my experience has been in theatre. This leaves me viewing opera through a theatrical lens, which I think is exciting. For me the story in theatre is always paramount, and we have experimented with this idea for this production. Music is

one of the storyteller's oldest tools. This is what excites me about opera, that music tells a story. That is why working on *The Wandering Scholar* I wanted to focus on making the narrative as dramatically compelling as possible. The acting was almost as important as the music in our process but neither as important as the telling of the story.

This has been a real experiment for all of us. We want to hear what you think in the pub afterwards.

Tyrrell Jones
Director

New art song orchestrations

Michael Head (1900–1976) / Michael Shearer (b. 1987)

'The Estuary', words by Ruth Pitter (1897–1992)

I Light, stillness and peace lie on the broad sands,
On the salt-marshes the sleep of the afternoon.
The sky's immaculate; the horizon stands
Steadfast, level and clear over the dune.
There are voices of children, musical and thin
Not far, nor near, there in the sandy hills;
As the fight begins to wane, so the tide comes in,
The shallow creek at our feet silently fills:
And silently, like sleep to the weary mind,
Silently, like the evening after the day,
The big ship bears inshore with the inshore wind,
Changes her course, and comes on up through
the bay,

Rolling along the fair deep channel she knows,
Surging along, right on top of the tide.
I can see the flowery wreath of foam at the bows,
The long bright wash streaming away from her side:
I can see the flashing gulls that follow her in,
Screaming and tumbling, like children wildly at play,
The sea-born crescent arising, pallid and thin,
The flat safe twilight shore shelving away.
Whether remembered or dreamed, read of or told,
So it has dwelt with me, so it shall dwell with me ever:
The brave ship coming home like a lamb to the fold,
Home with the tide into the mighty river.

Johannes Brahms (1833 – 1897) / Alasdair Spratt (b. 1981)

'Ich wandte mich' from *Vier ernste Gesänge*, text from Ecclesiastes, 4:1-3

Ich wandte mich und sahe an alle, die Unrecht
leiden unter der Sonne; und siehe, siehe, da waren
Tränen derer, die Unrecht litten und hatten keinen
Tröster, und die ihnen Unrecht taten waren zu
mächtig, daß sie keinen Tröster haben konnten. Da
lobte ich die Toten, die schon gestorben
waren mehr als die Lebendigen, die noch das
Leben hatten; und der noch nicht ist, ist besser als
alle beide, und des Bösen nicht inne wird, das
unter der Sonne geschieht.

I turned around and looked at everyone who
suffered injustice under the sun; and look, look,
there were the tears of those who suffered injustice
and had no comforter, and the ones who would do
them injustice were too powerful, so that they
could not have a comforter. Thus I praised the
dead who had already died more than the living
who still had life and the one who does not yet
exist, is better than both and does not experience
the evil that occurs under the sun.

Henry Purcell (1659–1695) / Danyal Dhondy (b. 1985)

'What Power Art Thou?' from *King Arthur*, words by John Dryden (1631–1700)

Cold Genius

What power art thou,
Who from below
Hast made me rise
Unwillingly and slow
From beds of everlasting snow?

See'st thou not how stiff
And wondrous old
Far unfit to bear the bitter cold?

I can scarcely move
Or draw my breath,
Let me, let me freeze again to death.

Composers

Michael Shearer (b. 1987) is a Scottish composer currently based in London. His musical outlook comes from a wide variety of different areas encompassing free improvisation and indeterminacy in music as well as opera, ballet and collaboration with other artists.

He studied at the University of Glasgow undertaking both a Bachelor of Music (Hons) and Postgraduate Diploma in Composition under Jane Stanley. Michael recently graduated from the Royal College of Music, studying for his Masters under Jonathan Cole. During his studies his music ranged from solo, chamber, vocal, opera and orchestral work. His opera *Lie Down and Stay* was premièred in the Britten Theatre, May 2012 as part of the RCM Great Expectations Festival in association with Tête à Tête which won him the Cobbett & Hurlstone Prize for Composition upon graduating.

Alasdair Spratt was born in Glasgow in 1981, and studied composition at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester with Anthony Gilbert and David Horne, before completing doctoral studies with Gordon McPherson in Glasgow and Martijn Padding in Den Haag.

His works range from solo and chamber music pieces through to a piano concerto. His music has been performed by such as Ensemble Bash, the Fidelio Trio, the Goldberg Ensemble, the Hebrides Ensemble, Liquid Architecture, the London Sinfonietta, the National Youth String Orchestra of Scotland, the Paragon Ensemble, Psappa, the Scottish Ensemble and Symposia, and in festivals such as the Cantiere Internazionale d'Arte di Montepulciano in Italy, the Edinburgh Festival, the St. Magnus Festival on Orkney, Sound in Aberdeen, and Musica Nova and Plugin Glasgow, to great critical acclaim. His choral works have been sung in cathedrals around Britain.

Danyal Dhondy is a composer and arranger from South London, who specialises in opera and theatre music. Two of his operas were premiered last year: *Just So* at Tête à Tête: The Opera Festival, and *The Open Cage* at The Yard Theatre.

His recent arrangement of *Tosca*, jointly commissioned by Malmö Opera and OperaUpClose, premiered in Sweden and the UK in 2012. His previous arrangements for OperaUpClose (of *Madama Butterfly* and *Pagliacci*), garnered critical acclaim and led to a nomination for an Arts Foundation Award in Opera Composition.

One of his arrangements (for *The Tan Yard Side*) features on Sam Lee's album *Ground Of Its Own*, which was nominated for the Mercury Music Prize in 2012.

Creative Team

Justin Fung – Artistic & Music Director

British - Chinese conductor Justin Fung is the Music Director of Opéra les Fauves, Principal Conductor of the Swinsian Ensemble and Assistant Conductor of the Firebird Orchestra of London. He is a recipient of many scholarships and awards.

His recent concert appearances have included performances with Ensemble Thing in the Hague, Opera di Verona, the Orchestra of the Swan, Haydn Sinfonietta Wien in Vienna, Amadeus Orchestra, Lithuanian State Symphony Orchestra, Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Glasgow International Festival of visual art and Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival.

Further engagements include conducting a double bill opera production of Mozart and Puccini in London, and concerts with the Asia Pacific Symphony of Hong Kong, London Arte Chamber Orchestra and Eroica Camerata of Birmingham.



Tyrrell Jones – Director

Tyrrell is a freelance director, based in London. He is in his second year of professional work after graduating from Cambridge in 2011. He was a resident director at the Barbican Theatre in Plymouth 2011/12 where he Assistant Directed *The World at Your Feet* with the Barbican and The Theatre Royal, Plymouth.

Current projects include *Bin Laden: A One Man Show*, premiering at The Clapham Omnibus in July and a documentary film *The World at Your Feet: Untold Stories* about refugee and asylum seeker actors. At Cambridge he was Artistic Director of The Corpus Playroom, had many directing credits including *The Good Soul of Szechwan* (Brecht), *Acis and Galatea* (Handel) and *Oh What a Lovely War on Terror*.



Depi Mavropoulou – Movement Director

Depi was born in Greece and moved to London in 2010. She obtained degrees in Political Science, in Physical Theatre and Acting, and a postgraduate diploma in Body Psychotherapy and Counselling. She has worked as an actress and drama coach, and is a licensed body psychotherapist that works with groups or on one-to-one sessions.

In 2001 she created the Energy Theatre method aimed at performers in all disciplines. The Energy Theatre method combines physical theatre trainings with western psycho-somatic techniques and eastern active meditative exercises. This method allows performers to unleash their full potential by releasing body tension, enhancing awareness and helping performers to connect with their emotions, feelings and sensations thus allowing them to perform truthfully.

In the UK, she has performed in poetry events and has taken part as assistant director and stage manager in the Skull of Yorick production of Traeta's opera *Antigone*, performed in the UK and Cyprus. This year she has been assistant and movement director for the City Opera Ensemble production of *Italian Opera Through the Centuries* at City University London. She is currently attending an advanced theatre directing course at CSSD.



Hannah Spearing – Costume Designer

Hannah was born and bred in a tiny village in Scotland and made the transition to the capital in pursuit of new and exciting opportunities. In 2011 she graduated from the Wimbledon College of Art as a costume designer. She has since worked with several companies, including the BBC, Iris Theatre, Vienna Festival Ballet Company and The National Theatre.

Fiona Gent – Producer

Fiona graduated from Leeds University last year in History of Art. During her time at University she acted in, produced and directed a great deal of student theatre. Since graduating she has been carving herself a career as an actress and producer, most recently in *D.A.Y.S.* a pilot TV series about a group of young drug users being premiered at the British Film Institute this summer. She has been taking leading roles in fringe theatre productions and music videos. Other work includes free lance painting and casting assisting at Spotlight.

Singers

Aimeé Toshney

Scottish soprano Aimee studied at the University of Glasgow (MA Music and Languages 1st class Hons, MMus Musicology) and the Royal Northern College of Music (MMus Solo Performance with distinction) receiving prizes for Music, French and Italian.

Recent experience includes the roles of Romilda (RNCM Opera, *Xerxes*) and Mercedes (Focus Opera, *Carmen*), numerous concert engagements (including Vivaldi *Gloria* in Bangor Cathedral, Beethoven *Mass in D* for Cleveland Philharmonic Choir, a solo recital in Ayr Town Hall and two appearances at the McLellan Arts Festival) and chorus member/concert soloist at Wexford Festival Opera.

She is, additionally, an experienced choral director, teacher and amateur, and has performed around the world as a singer of Scots song. Forthcoming engagements include a return to Wexford, British Youth Opera, the role of Carmen in Focus Opera's 2013 revival and a recital as part of the Leeds Lieder + Festival.



David Menezes

Born in Barnsley, David gained a degree in classics at St Hugh's College, Oxford, before studying singing at the Royal College of Music.

Roles include Colonel Fairfax, *Yeomen of the Guard*, Flute, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (British Youth Opera), Goro, *Dr Caius* (Wexford Festival), Satyavan, *Savitri* (Minotaur Music Theatre), Ferrando, Mozart, *Mozart & Salieri*, Nanki-Poo, Earl Tololler, Richard Dauntless, Ralph Rackstraw, Frederic, (Charles Court Opera) Remendado, *Carmen* (Longborough Festival and Opera Project), Peter Quint/Prologue, *Turn of the Screw* (Opera Up Close), and cover Manager /Secretary *Heart of Darkness* (Opera East).

Most recently, David has appeared as Jaquino, *Fidelio*, Spoletta, *Tosca*, (New London Opera Players), Don Ottavio (Co-Opera) and The Writer, *Pavane for an Invisible Princess* (Rough for Opera).



Dionysios Kyropoulos

Dionysios is a London based opera singer with an academic interest in historical stagecraft and Baroque opera. He read music at City University London while having his performance tuition at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with Robert Dean. In the next academic year he will be studying for the MPhil in Music Studies at the University of Cambridge.

Some of his full roles include Uberto in Pergolesi's *La Serva Padrona*, Plutone in Peri's *Euridice*, Masetto in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Simone in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, Polyphemus in Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, Bartolo in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and Badger in Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen*.

Dionysios has sung with several opera companies including MidAmerica Productions, Riverside Opera, Mantissa Opera, Barefoot Opera, Skull of Yorick Productions, Rose Opera Company, Lucid Arts, Unexpected Opera and Longborough Festival Opera. He participated in the British Youth Opera 2011 Easter Workshops and their 2012 production of Smetana's *The Bartered Bride* in which he sang in the chorus and understudied the role of Mícha.



Richard Moore

Richard studied Music at Granada and Sussex Universities. Upon graduating he spent a year travelling, singing and climbing in Georgia and South America, and returned to the UK in 2010 to join the choir of Gloucester Cathedral.

Since leaving Gloucester he has been active on the choral scene in and around London; singing as a Lay Clerk at Chelmsford Cathedral, a Choral Scholar at St Martin in the Fields and performing with groups such as The Syred Consort, The Armonico Consort and Musica Beata.

Opera roles include Aeneas in *Dido and Aeneas*, Sleep, Winter, Corydon and Hymen in *The Fairy Queen*, Antonio in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Polyphemus in *Acis and Galatea*, and Peter Quince in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Rich studies with Robert Dean and will be starting a master's at the Royal Northern College of Music in September.



You can follow us on twitter **@OperaLesFauves**
and let us know what you think about our tonight's
performance using the **#WanderingScholar** hashtag

For more information visit
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