

barbican

Classical Music

Concert programme

**Rolf Hind:
Sky in a Small Cage**

Sun 8 Sep 7.30pm

Hall

Important information



When does the opera start and finish?

The opera begins at 7.30pm and finishes at about 9.00pm, with no interval.



I'm running late!

Latecomers will be admitted if there is a suitable break in the performance.



Please ...

Switch any watch alarms and mobile phones to silent during the performance.



Please don't ...

Take photos or recordings during the performance – save it for the curtain call.



Use a hearing aid?

Please use our induction loop – just switch your hearing aid to T setting on entering the hall.



Need a break?

You can leave at any time and be readmitted if there is a suitable break in the performance, or during the interval.



Looking for refreshments?

Bars are located on Levels -1, G and 1.



Looking for the toilets?

The nearest toilets, including accessible toilets, are located on Levels G, 1 and 2.



Carrying bags and coats?

Drop them off at our free cloak room on Level -1.

Rolf Hind: Sky in a Small Cage

The extraordinary life of Rumi

Sun 8 Sep 7.30pm, Hall

Mahogany Opera

Riot Ensemble

Elaine Mitchener Narrator

James Hall I and You (becoming Rumi)

Yannis François Bird of the Sun – Shams e Parande

Loré Lixenberg Shaman of the Birds and Kerra, Rumi's wife

Siddhii Lagrutta ensemble singer

Karima El Demerdasch

ensemble singer

Anika Venkatesh ensemble singer

Rylan Gleave ensemble singer

Ty Bouque ensemble singer

Harald Hieronymus Hein ensemble singer

Rolf Hind composer

Dante Micheaux and Jalal al-Din

Rumi libretto

Frederic Wake-Walker director

Aaron Holloway-Nahum music director

Sasha Balmazi-Owen designer

Rosabel Huguet movement director

Rolf Hind *Sky in a Small Cage*

There is no interval

Produced by the Barbican

Commissioned and co-produced by Mahogany

Opera with support from the Nicholas Berwin Charitable Trust

Programme produced by Harriet Smith

All information correct at time of printing

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FSC Mix Credit



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Rolf Hind muses on the extraordinary mystic Jalal al-Din Rumi and the power his writing still holds even today.

I was on a silent retreat about 15 years ago; the group had been together for several days, sitting, walking, meditating. Then in the evening our teacher dropped a poem into her talk:

*I have lived on the lip
of insanity, wanting to know reasons,
knocking on a door. It opens.
I've been knocking from the inside.*

The words detonated inside me in the silence, and in the days after. I later found out that this was a Coleman Barks translation of Rumi, and I began to read the extraordinary, passionate, beautiful, sometimes baffling poetry.

As someone – like many of us I imagine – on a freeform journey to something spiritual, it felt like a clear fingerpost. It took me in the direction of Sufi and Buddhist writings, mystical ideas from Christianity, Hinduism and other traditions and religions which emphasise the cultivation of love and union with God, Spirit, the Universe, Nature, this Moment.

In 2016, I set this poem as the central depth charge in my opera/meditation retreat *Lost In Thought*, commissioned by the Barbican. Only after two hours of mixing instrumental and meditative elements are these words sung – it was an attempt to parallel the depth of my retreat experience in a musical, and slightly dramatised, form.

From there, director Freddie Wake-Walker and I started talking about the idea of a work with singers and instruments using more of Rumi's poetry; I read and researched and visited Rumi's home town and shrine (Konya in Anatolian Turkey.) On the very day lockdown was first



brought in in 2020 we were having a workshop on some elements of the piece that I had sketched – Rumi and Shams’ passionate duet, which is still part of the completed piece, and represents the 40 days they are said to have spent together, on their own intense spiritual retreat.

During lockdown, I carried on sketching and thinking about the project; we also decided that for the opera to have more dramatic focus there needed to be a libretto that would bridge the gap between the poetry and some of the elements of Rumi’s life at which we wanted to hint. We didn’t want a ‘representation’ of the real Rumi, Shams and 13th-century Anatolia – this felt crude and somewhat sacrilegious – but rather to hint at these archetypes in all people. This is something Rumi does himself and perhaps helps to make his work communicate to the extent that he’s sometimes described as the most popular poet in North America.

So we talked to the poet Dante Micheaux about fashioning a libretto: I was thrilled to discover his fabulously sensitive work and how knowledgeable he was about Rumi. The words he created, including those representing the Narrator and Kerra (Rumi’s wife) and the people of the town, were perfect. These interweave with the words of Rumi himself.

I have never felt very English; I’m half-German by birth, but that’s not my identity either and I only felt a real sense of my heart belonging to a place when I first visited India in the 1990s, the first of many trips. Like many children of this mobile world, I am a composite.

In a lot of my music, too, I find inspiration in a range of places. With *Sky in a Small*

Cage, not wishing to evoke a sound world of 13th-century Seljuk Turkey – even if I could imagine what that would be – I looked instead to ecstatic traditions, some Sufi, some from elsewhere, combined with contemplative music, folk and art music of different regions. It seemed to parallel to me the way in which Rumi’s writings are ‘owned’ by so many groups, East and West, secular and religious, and how all manner of ideas are projected onto them. So the music takes inspiration from Qawwali, Carnatic music, gamelan, Turkish music and more, sometimes in the actual instrumentation, elsewhere the rhythmic or melodic flavour. I tried also – despite the odd compositional riddle – to speak as directly as possible, which the white-hot poetry deserves.

The world of Sufism is steeped in arcana: in beauty, dance, fragrance and taste, prayer, meditation, poetry and music. There is also lots of humour, ‘scattering’ techniques that provoke one into a different relationship with experience, and in Rumi – and the poets that come before and after in the tradition – a rich range of imagery: gardens, wine and birds feature heavily. But above all it is love: for Shams – his literal Sun – who blew his world apart and in both his presence and then his agonising disappearance revealed to Rumi the depth and breadth of the human heart.

*I have come to drag you out of yourself
and take you into my heart.*

*I have come to bring out the beauty
you never knew you had, and lift
you like a prayer to the sky.*

© Rolf Hind

Sky in a Small Cage

I The Caravan

Chorus

You that come to birth and bring the mysteries,
your voice-thunder makes us very happy.
Roar, lion of the heart, and tear me open.

Drum sound rises on the air, its throb, my heart.
A voice inside the beat says, 'I know you're
tired,
but come. This is the way.'

II Listen, O, listen

I and You

Listen, O listen, to my plaintive cry.
Listen to my longing, or else I will die
with so many secrets. I sing aloud
but no one hears me in this crowd.

O, for a friend to share my burning state,
that our souls may mingle and contemplate
the flame of love that burns in me,
the wine of love that courses through me.
Do you wish to know the fire, the well?
Then open your hearts and I will tell ...

III Annihilation

The Narrator

It might as well be
called a death:
the gate you must
walk through to enter
yourself or beloved,
or vice-versa.
It is the same gate
but the lock on the gate
is fear. The freedom
of nothingness is a sweet
sweet death –
what are you afraid of?

IV Ritual of the Birds

Shaman of the Birds

You all know the tale of the merchant's bird
and those of you who don't will know it now:
a kindly merchant – or so he thought, kept
a speaking bird, bereft of other birds,
in a cage by the window of his costly room
– kindly because he promised his servants
gifts upon his return from traveling east.
He asked them for their hearts' desire
and asked the bird as well, to which
the bird replied, 'Υεεε Υεεε Υεεε Υεεε Υεεε
Υεεε *When you see the other birds, tell them
of my cage and me.*' We skip to the part when
the children weep, not in the tale but at what
they hear: the merchant saw birds in a tree
along the road, bellowed out the story, and
one bird, not unlike his at home, convulsed
and dropped from the tree like a stone,
leaving the merchant to lament.

When his travel ceased and he returned,
his bird was eager for reply. The merchant
told of the sad demise of the bird abroad,
perhaps his own bird kin, and at the news,
the caged bird croaked, it dropped from the
perch like a stone and broke the merchant's
heart. He opened the cage and shook the bird
from gilding, but before bird became stone
again, its wings opened and it began to fly.

The Sleepwalkers

Four formless birds beset the Way
made their nest in the hearts of humans:
duck, peacock, crow and rooster:
the four pernicious qualities in humans.
The duck is greed. The rooster is lust.
The peacock is superiority.
And the crow is worldly desire.

V Truth Be Told

The Narrator

Truth be told, Shams was stuffing his face with sweets,
charming his host for a cheap let above the stall.

Truth be told, he would not have even noticed Rumi,
if not for the hubbub of all the students in the street.

Truth be told, Shams grabbed the reins of that old mule more
to give it rest than cosy up to the fancy man on its back.

Their eyes met like two sparks from the same fire –
truth be told.

VI In Chelle

Rumi and Shams

For a while we lived with people,

but we found in them no sign of the faithfulness we wanted.

It is better to live completely within,
as water hides in metal, as fire hides in a rock.

Earlier, I promised myself I would stay on the path.

Now, looking to the right and the left,
I see nothing but you
Whatever I decide to do is inside you

I came and sat in front of you,
as I would at an altar.
Every promise I made before,
I broke when I saw you.

I am dust particles in sunlight.
I am the round sun.

To the bits of dust I say, Stay.
To the sun, keep moving.

I am morning mist, and the breathing of evening.

I am wind in the top of a grove, and surf on the cliff.

Mast, rudder, helmsman, and keel,
I am also the coral reef they founder on.

I am a tree with a trained parrot in its branches.
Silence, thought, and voice.

The musical air coming through a flute,
a spark of a stone, a flickering in metal.
Both candle and the moth crazy around it.

Rose, and the nightingale lost in the fragrance.

I am all orders of being, the circling galaxy,
the evolutionary intelligence, the lift,

and the falling away. What is, and what isn't.

You who know Jelaluddin, You the one in all,
say who I am. Say I am You.

When I die, lay out the corpse.
You may want to kiss my lips,
just beginning to decay.

Do not be frightened if I open my eyes.

VII The Jealous

Chorus

This son of a dog has stolen our Mowlana!
He keeps our master locked away with him.

Does he not know that our master is not only master but our bread and coin as well?

He's turned our order ass backwards!
... took food from our women and children!

Indolent as a lion and takes the lion's share,
a soft back from idleness to show for it!

That bottom of my shoe should eat shit!

And then there's the matter of our spiritual food.

Fuck him and may his father be cursed!

Our teacher went and named no one nayeb.

How many months have we felt around in the darkness of a sura or hadith?

VIII Kerra

Kerra, Rumi's Wife

He prefers Parande's embroidery to mine
– its nimble gold binds him in a spell
as it moves in the light, the intricacies
under his fingers a map of secrets.
My work is homespun, dark and dull,
but warms him as he contemplates
his soul. It is made by hands that rear
his sons and cool his fever.
What comes from my loom is quotidian
solace, fit for private study, a plain meal,
not the sultan courts and their finery.
Once, a cloak I made sustained him
– that was a time, a life, ago. Now
he prefers Parande's embroidery to mine.

The Silences Instrumental

IX The Murders of Shams

The Narrator

Shams looked through the eyes of many
enemies to look into the eyes of Rumi.

Some say it began in the earliest gossip,
in Shams' presence Rumi bit his own lip
– a blossoming youth acting coy
in the eyes of another youthful boy.

Some say it began out in the street,
nothing but daggers and curses to greet
Shams as he went about business in town
– head held high, the scorn a crown.

Some say it began during a meal:
seven rogues dispatched to deal
out Shams' punishment, seven knives
– with odds like that, who survives?

Some say it began in a dream –
death's premonition it would seem.
Shams drowned at the bottom of a well,
then secretly entombed in a rubble hell.

Some say it began in ending,
Shams and Rumi pretending
a love that must be kept at bay
so lover or beloved simply walked away.

X The Journey

All

I and You

Bereft of you, the nougat has gone rancid;
everything I taste is bitter
and I rage, in dark and light,
at any crumb of love that is not yours.
Bereft of you, everywhere is desert,
each grain of sand a scorched soul.
I no longer know my own teachings.
I burned, I burned, I burned ...
this is all I know for certain.

Soon I will see the Mahdi walking in the
crowds,
for surely these are the last days.
All faiths will hear their own trumpet.
My soul quakes like the earth, casting off its
burdens,
quakes under the exhausted stallions' hooves.
I see the entrance to the bottomless pit.

The Madrased see my madness.

Madrased 'Mowlana Has Gone Mad'

Look at him raving!
Teaching to classes he already taught.
He speaks to barefaced boys
but is answered by men with full beards!
Look at him raving!

I and You

And now I sip the nectar of the sleepwalkers.

The Sleepwalkers 'Perniciousness'

The crow has eaten the peacock.
Once the crow alights your shoulder
it will never leave; its whisperings
become your prayers.
Whirl to stop its descent, for we cannot.

I and You

My Shams! Was I the lover or beloved?

Bird of the Sun 'Apparition of Shams'

Without me, though the fires burn
and the blankets are piled high,
your bed is cold. Lover or beloved,
I was the fire ...

Without me, though breath enters
the ney and the mouthpiece is wet,

there is no melody. Lover or beloved,
I was music.

I and You

The jealous have always thought me mad.

The Jealous 'Choosing A Successor'

If we are to survive, we must name a nayeb.
Mowlana's son's the easy choice.
The second son draw near!

We call on you to lead us through
the haze of your father's lament.
We've need of coin. We've need of food.
Oh, and knowledge too.

I and You

My diligent and good wife?

Kerra 'Kerra's Diligence'

Husband and guide, my teacher.
I sit here weaving, weaving what
you soon may need. It's light.

Narrator 'Maqtaa'

The apparitions rise like steam
from the hot sand of his memory.

I have lived on the lip of insanity,
wanting to know reasons.
Knocking at a door; it opens.
I was knocking from the inside.

Shaman of the Birds

You all know the tale of the merchant's bird
A speaking bird, bereft of other birds,
*When you see the other birds, tell them of my
cage and me ...* but before the bird became
stone again, its wings opened and it began to
fly.

I've learned a lesson and so should you.

I and You

My scribes, none of me exists without you.
I loved you all who were myself,
my sight and speech – and often touch, the
hand on my hand is my hand
and your hand and your hands.
I look in the mirror and see your face;
I touch your cheek and feel the warmth
on my own. I turn and there is no one
in the room but you say my verses
back to me, in three voices. Together,
we arrive at the end of each ghazal
– a single name.

And when I think of you, I remember
all, I remember everyone,
each ray of sun caressing
every living thing, each star
igniting in shadow, making
of us a sole constellation
that leads back to the prayer.

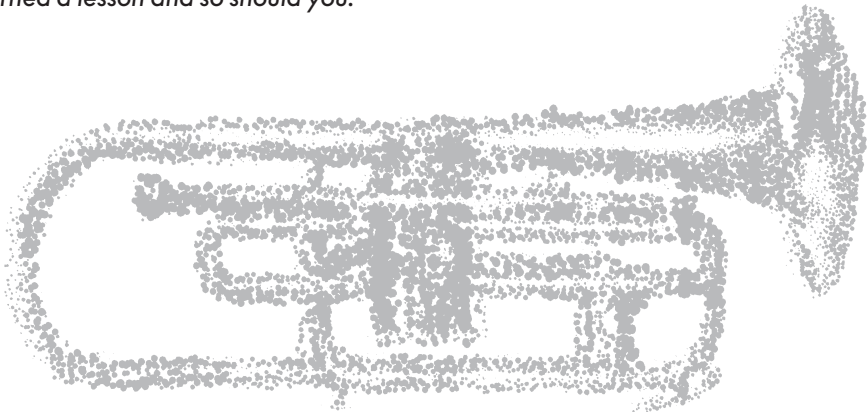
Shaman of the Birds

Birds make great sky circles
of their freedom –
how do they learn that?

They fall, and falling they're given wings.

XI Dance of Departure

Libretto by Dante Micheaux
and Jalal al-Din Rumi





© E Q Artists

Yanniss François

Born in Guadeloupe, Yanniss François began his career as a dancer with Lena Blou. He entered the École-Atelier Rudra Béjart in Lausanne and later became a member of the Béjart Ballet. During singing lessons as part of his dance school studies, Maurice Béjart encouraged him to fully explore a parallel singing career. He graduated with a master's degree in Classical Singing from the Lausanne Conservatoire.

In recent seasons he was mentored by Barbara Hannigan in her Equilibrium Young Artists programme and sang Nick Shadow (*The Rake's Progress*) in Brussels, California and at the Aldeburgh Festival, conducted by Hannigan herself.

In addition to *Sky in a Small Cage*, highlights this season include singing solo baritone in Hindemith's *Sancta Susanna* and Honegger's *La Danse des Morts* at the Nancy National Opera, and a return to Dutch Touring Opera for *L'incoronazione di Poppea*.

He has a particular passion for and knowledge of neglected music and is regularly hired to research and develop concepts for the CD programmes by artists such as Jakub Józef Orliński, Philippe Jaroussky, Julie Fuchs, Jeanine de Bique, Bruno de Sà and Lea Desandre.



© Andrew Staples

James Hall

Countertenor James Hall is in demand on concert stages and in theatres around the world, specialising in Baroque and contemporary music.

Current and future engagements include Bach's B minor Mass with Vladimir Jurowski, *Israel in Egypt* on tour with the Monteverdi Choir, *Hercules* at the Handel Festival in Karlsruhe, Purcell's *Masque of Might* at Opera North, concerts with the Dunedin Consort and RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra and *Ottone* and *Tamerlano* for English Touring Opera.

Recent highlights include the role of Hamor (*Jephtha*) in Bregenz, roles in Monteverdi's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* at the Maggio Musicale, Oberon (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) at the Deutsche Oper Berlin and Opéra National de Montpellier, the Boy (*Written on Skin*) at the Venice Biennale and concerts with Collegium Vocale Gent and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra.

He created the roles of Leon (*Osborn's The Mother*) for Mahogany Opera, Nathaniel (Na'ama Zisser's *Black Sand*) for the Tête-à-Tête and Grimeborn festivals and Johan in the world premiere of David Bruce's *Nothing* for Glyndebourne.

James Hall studied at the Royal College of Music.



Loré Lixenberg

Loré Lixenberg is the leader of The Voice Party, an original mix of a political party and an opera, which ran in the 2019 and 2024 UK elections. The Voice Party is the only party you can't join: it joins you! She began in the spheres of physical and improvised theatre with Simon McBurney (Complicité) and also in comedy with Stewart Lee, Simon Munnery and Richard Thomas. She has performed worldwide, interpreting the works of composers and artists such as Stockhausen, Ligeti, Oliveros, Dufour, Wishart, Acquaviva, Toop, Earle Brown, Aperghis, Turnage, Birtwistle, Phill Niblock, Isidore Isou, Bernard Heidsieck, Georgina Starr, Bruce Mclean, Stelarc, Imogen Sidworthy and Janice Kerbal.

As a maker, she explores the intersection between the digital and analogue worlds and their potential to create new operatic forms. Among her works are: *Bird*, *Panic Room (The Singterviews)*, the real-time opera *Prêt à Chanter*, the 'opera' dating app SINGLR and theVoicePartyOperaBotFarmi [myFuryls MyMuse] which won the Phonurgianova soundart prize in 2021.

She has published the artist's book *Memory Maps*, as well as releasing numerous CDs and DVDs. Her recent project *NancarrowKaraoke* involved transcribing for her own voice Nancarrow's polyrhythmic and microtonal works for player piano.



© D Diric

Elaine Mitchener

Elaine Mitchener is a British Afro-Caribbean vocalist, movement artist and composer working between contemporary/experimental new music, free improvisation and visual art. She is currently a Wigmore Hall Associate Artist; was a DAAD Artist-in-Berlin Fellow (2022) and was an exhibiting artist at the British Art Show 9 (2021–22). In 2022 she was awarded an MBE for services to music.

Recent collaborators include the composers George E Lewis, Jennifer Walshe, Hannah Kendall, Rolf Hind and Laure M Hiendl; the visual artists Sonia Boyce, Christian Marclay and The Otolith Group; chamber ensembles Apartment House, London Sinfonietta, Ensemble MAM, Ensemble Klang and Klangforum Wien; choreographer Dam van Huynh's company; and experimental musicians Moor Mother, Loré Lixenberg, Pat Thomas, Jason Yarde, Neil Charles and David Toop.



© Sasha Ilyushina

Siddhii Lagrutta

Siddhii Lagrutta was born in Venezuela, has Italian and German nationality and grew up in the USA and Germany. She studied acting at the Schule für Schauspiel in Hamburg, and later voice with Marianne Spiecker-Henke at the Hochschule für Künste in Bremen. She performs regularly both as a soloist and in ensembles, as well as working as a multilingual speaker and actress.

Siddhii Lagrutta was a finalist at the International Competition for Sacred Music in Rome and winner of the First Prize for interpretation at the International John Cage Awards in Germany. She completed a postgraduate degree in contemporary chamber music performance, graduating with honours from the Hochschule für Musik in Basel.

She was nominated in London for best female performance for the title-role in the play *Ondine*, which she produced, as well as composing and recording its music (for and which received two further awards nominations). She won Best Supporting Actress at the Focus International Film Festival for her performance in *White Lily*. Future engagements include performances at the Eclat and Biennale Bremen festivals.



© Ben Reason

Karima El Demerdasch

Karima El Demerdasch is an Egyptian mezzo-soprano. Having completed her Masters in Vocal Studies at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, she is currently on the Opera Course at the Guildhall, where she studies with John Evans.

In her first year at the Guildhall, she won the school's Susan Longfield Prize. She has given several performances as a soloist at Milton Court Concert Hall, and as a chorus member at the Barbican Centre.

Karima El Demerdasch was a participant at the Georg Solti Accademia Bel canto Course for singers in Tuscany, where she worked with world-renowned musicians such as Richard Bonyngé and Leo Nucci. She has also performed the title-role in Rossini's *La Cenerentola* for Opera Kipling at London's Gatehouse Theatre.



© Monography

Anika Venkatesh

Hailing from Coast Salish Territories, Anika Venkatesh is a genre-defying vocalist currently based in Tkarón:to, Ontario, Canada, and recently gained her BMus at the University of Toronto.

Recent stage highlights include the premiere of Quote Unquote Collective's *Universal Child Care* (Canadian Stage); alto soloist in Craig Hella Johnson's *Considering Matthew Shepard* (Concreamus Chamber Choir); the House in Gareth Williams's *Rocking Horse Winner*; the world premiere of Chan Ka Nin's *Dragon's Tale* (Tapestry Opera and Soundstreams Choir 21); alto soloist in R Nathaniel Dett's *The Ordering of Moses* (with the Nathaniel Dett Chorale and Rochester Oratorio Society); and Drusilla (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*) for NUOVA Vocal Arts).

Alongside classical, operatic, choral and contemporary music, Anika Venkatesh is also a jazz and R&B musician. Through musical storytelling, they hope to garner curiosity, reflection, kindness, play, connection, tenderness, intimacy and strength.



Rylan Gleave

Rylan is a composer and vocalist working in experimental and divergent fields.

Under moniker All Men Unto Me, he creates genre-merging work, with his 2023 debut release *In Chemical Transit* garnering rave reviews. All Men Unto Me's second album has grown via Sound and Music's New Voices Programme, and explores the conditions of survivorship and trans-masculinity with an Anglican filter.

Recent performance highlights include appearances at the Supersonic Festival, Roadburn Festival, Islington Assembly Hall, Amplifest, ArcTanGent, Leipziger Jazztage and Stadtgarten Köln. He recorded at Abbey Road Studios with Oliver Vibrans, Paraorchestra and Pulled By Magnets, where his performance of Scott Walker's *The Drift* was premiered on Sky Arts in 2022. He was a Musician-in-Residence with Paraorchestra in 2022-23 and now serves as a trustee, as well as being on the ABRSM's Music Education Advisory Committee and acting as their Youth Voice Lead. He holds an MMus and BMus in Composition from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.



Ty Bouque

Ty Bouque writes about opera: its slippery histories, its sensual bodies and the work of mourning for a dead genre. Elsewhere, they tour as a quarter of the new music quartet Loadbang and can be heard singing with ensembles around the world. They live in Detroit with an accordion they do not know how to play but would very much like to. Their writing can be found at *VAN Magazine*, *Tempo* and on Substack.



© Christian König

Harald Hieronymus Hein

The German bass-baritone and performer Harald Hieronymus Hein is establishing himself as an internationally sought-after interpreter of contemporary music.

This year he makes his debut at the Munich Biennale and in Madrid with the Plural Ensemble. In addition to engagements in Germany (Frankfurt Opera, Staatstheater Mainz, Staatstheater Darmstadt, Prinzregententheater Munich) and Austria (Graz Opera, Neue Oper Wien), he has appeared in Hungary, Romania, Italy, Russia and the Czech Republic. He has performed at international festivals including Wien Modern, Musikprotokoll, NODO, Ligeti 100, Fraktionen, Impuls, KlangArt-Vision, Hörsturm and Bregenz, and has sung with renowned groups such as the UMZE Ensemble, Cantando Admont, Ensemble Modern and Klangforum Wien.

Harald Hieronymus Hein undertook opera studies with Berthold Possemeyer and Thilo Dahlmann at the Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts, graduating with honours. He followed this with a Master's degree in vocal contemporary music performance practice with Holger Falk at the Graz University of Music and Performing Arts, also with honours.



© Paul Frank Rogers

Rolf Hind

Rolf Hind's career has established him as a major force as soloist, composer, recording artist, chamber musician, teacher, collaborator and concert planner. He has given recitals at many of Europe's leading new music festivals, and at Carnegie Hall, Sydney Opera House and on tours of Korea, Taiwan and Cuba.

He has worked with many leading conductors, including Vladimir Ashkenazy, Oliver Knussen, Sir Simon Rattle, David Robertson and the late Andrew Davis and appeared seven times at the BBC Proms. Orchestras with which he has worked include the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Munich Philharmonic, Baltimore, Danish Radio and Malmö Symphony orchestras, and many appearances with the London Sinfonietta, London and Royal Philharmonic orchestras and with all the BBC orchestras.

Composers who have worked with/written for him include Tan Dun, John Adams, Helmut Lachenmann, Unsuk Chin, Elliott Carter, Sir George Benjamin and Sir James MacMillan. His own compositions include a piano concerto, *Maya-Sesha* (nominated for a British Composer Award) and an Accordion Concerto, premiered here at the Barbican. Much of his music is inspired by India, where he travels often, while drawing on the technical adventurousness of performers including himself.

An interest in new dance resulted in collaborations, notably with choreographer Rui Horta on a large-scale tour of a new work, *Danza Preparata*, featuring John Cage's *Sonatas and Interludes* for prepared piano with dancer.

As a pianist Rolf Hind curated and performed in *Occupy the Pianos*, a piano festival which became a regular feature at St John's Smith Square in London and also travelled to France and Denmark. He initiated a project in March 2020 which resulted in over 100 new short piano pieces from composers far and wide, intended as responses to lockdown. He also revisited a masterpiece in the form of Messiaen's *Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus*.

His first opera, *Lost in Thought*, a 'mindfulness opera' commissioned by Mahogany Opera Group and the Barbican, was seen in London, Manchester, Bangor and Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie. Most recently, Rolf Hind's song-cycle for Elaine Mitchener and Apartment House was premiered at Wigmore Hall in April 2024 on his 60th birthday.



© Rachel Eliza Griffiths

Dante Micheaux

Dante Micheaux is the author of *Circus* (Indolent Books, 2018), which won the Four Quartets Prize from the Poetry Society of America and the T S Eliot Foundation, and *Amorous Shepherd* (Sheep Meadow Press,

2010). His poems and translations have appeared in *African American Review*, *The American Poetry Review*, *Callaloo*, *Literary Imagination*, *magma*, *Poem-A-Day*, *Poetry London*, *PN Review*, *The Rialto* and *Tongue*, among other journals and anthologies.

Dante Micheaux's other honours include the Ambit Poetry Prize and fellowships from *The New York Times* Foundation and Cave Canem Foundation.



© Jean-Manu Kamhyo

Frederic Wake-Walker

Frederic Wake-Walker is a director and producer of opera and contemporary music theatre, renowned for his groundbreaking work at major international opera houses and in unconventional spaces.

He was awarded Best Director at the inaugural Oper! Awards in 2019 for his productions of *Peter Grimes* at Oper Köln and *Ariadne auf Naxos* at La Scala, Milan. He has worked with leading conductors such as Franz Welser-Möst, Robin Ticciati, Trevor Pinnock and François-Xavier Roth. He has also made acclaimed films with the Deutsche-Symphonie Orchester Berlin.

As founding Artistic Director of Mahogany Opera, he specialises in creating new, site-responsive work with a diverse range of composers and makers; redefining how and where opera is made and who it is for. Notable productions include Rolf Hind's *Lost in Thought*,

the world's first meditation opera, premiered here before being part of the inaugural season at the Hamburg Elbphilharmonie and *Dido's Ghost* by Errollyn Wallen, also premiered here and the Edinburgh International Festival.

Many of the projects with Mahogany bring together professional and non-professional artists in inclusive settings. He conceived the award-winning Snappy Operas programme which has engaged thousands of primary school children across the UK and, increasingly, internationally.

As a founding member of the multi-disciplinary arts collective, Mica Moca, he has directed and curated large-scale events in forests, airports and warehouses in Berlin and Paris.

Frederic Wake-Walker's practice explores the space between the real and the theatrical, the ancient and the new, the performer and the audience. He is known for nurturing supportive and trusting environments that allow generosity, curiosity and creativity to flourish.



© Sam Walton

Aaron Holloway-Nahum

Aaron Holloway-Nahum has conducted more than 300 world and UK premieres at festivals such as Aldeburgh, Huddersfield Contemporary Music, Darmstadt, Wien Modern, Dark Music Days, Klangspuren and Gaudeamus. He has led ensembles in the USA, UK, Iceland, Sweden, Finland, France, Holland

and Spain. As the Co-Artistic Director of Riot Ensemble, he has commissioned and conducted music by emerging and established composers ranging from Clara Iannotta and Bára Gísladóttir to Alex Paxton, Naomi Pinnock, Georg Friedrich Haas and Chaya Czernowin.

In addition to numerous live radio broadcasts, he has led recording sessions at Abbey Road, AIR, Deutschlandfunk Köln, and Real World Studios. He is also engaged with education and has led workshops, recordings and performances at grammar schools and higher education institutions such as the Royal Academy of Music (where he is currently on the composition faculty), Cardiff University, Royal Holloway and the Hochschule Darmstadt, where he was a visiting professor for eight years.



Sasha Balmazi-Owen

Sasha Balmazi-Owen is a London-based scenographer and filmmaker.

He trained at the Kingston School of Art and Central School of Speech & Drama, and has worked with notable companies and artists, including the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Copenhagen Opera House, Channel 4, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, Contemporary Music for All, St John's Smith Square, OSO Arts Centre, Cockpit Theatre, VOpera, University College

Opera, Loré Lixenberg, Rolf Hind, Richard Court, Robert Reid Allan, Eleanor Strutt and David Toop, and has had work exhibited in the 2023 Prague Quadrennial.



© Roger Ros

Rosabel Huguet

After graduating in 2010 from Barcelona's University Institut del Teatre with a degree in Physical Theatre, Rosabel Huguet launched her career with directors such as Thomas Ostermeier and Romeo Castellucci at the Berliner Schaubühne, performing in productions that have seen extensive international touring. Since then, she has begun to explore her own artistic practice which has an open, interdisciplinary approach – she is interested in the variety of possible representations – in particular the transformation, migration and translation of movement into other forms and the mutual enrichment of various artistic practices.

Whether as a performer, stage choreographer, dance dramaturge or director, she collaborates with leading creators, among them Silvia Costa, Sasha Waltz and Guests, Maëlle Poésy and Frederic Wake-Walker. She has been invited to leading festivals and institutions, among them the Avignon, Aix-en-Provence, Adelaide and Paris Autumn festivals, the Venice Biennale, Staatsoper Stuttgart, Opéra Nationale de Lorraine and the Cleveland Orchestra.

She works with orchestras and ensembles, especially in Germany, France and the Netherlands, on movement concepts and concert productions.

As a dance dramaturge, she has collaborated with choreographer Antonio Ruz since 2021, including for *In Paradisum* and for *Pharsalia*, produced by Ruz's company and awarded with the Talía 2023 prize by the Spanish National Academy of Performing Arts.

Riot Ensemble

Shortlisted for the 2024 Royal Philharmonic Society Ensemble Award, Riot Ensemble connects people to great contemporary music in concerts and events that are just as innovative, vibrant and rewarding as the music itself. The members of Riot include some of the top European soloists in new music, and with Riot they work as performers, curators, commissioners, and collaborators, creating and producing a diverse array of projects.

Riot is particularly active in bringing emerging international voices to the British new-music scene and since 2012 has given over 250 world and UK premieres by composers from more than 35 countries. It enjoys close working relationships with leading composers, including Liza Lim, Clara Iannotta, Chaya Czernowin, Ann Cleare and Georg Friedrich Haas.

Riot performs regularly at Wigmore Hall and Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, Dark Music Days, Tampere Biennale, Nordic Music Days and November Music, with recent appearances at Warsaw Autumn, Darmstadt, Wien Modern, Arctic Arts, Tzllil Meudcan and Distat Terra.

Riot Ensemble

**cor anglais/
nagaswaram**
Philip Haworth

**bass clarinet/
e flat clarinet**
Heather Roche

horn
James Palmer

percussion
Sam Wilson
George Barton

**piano (honky tonk)
répétiteur**
Ben Smith

guitar
Petur Jonasson

harp
Oliver Wass
Hannah Runting

gamelan
Isabelle Carre
Rob Champion

In 2020 the ensemble began a new partnership with Kings Place; it has additionally founded three-year residencies at the Royal Academy of Music (from 2021) and Liverpool University (from 2023), working with a range of composers, performers and faculties across disciplines to develop projects that benefit the students and communities alike.

Riot has an extensive discography, and its debut release on Huddersfield Contemporary Records, *Speak Be Silent*, was named one of the ten most important recordings of the year by Alex Ross in *The New Yorker*. Its most recent release, *Vestige*, has also been highly praised. Forthcoming releases include a second appearance on HCR (a portrait of Patricia Alessandrini's chamber music), an LP of Laurence Osborn's *Ctrl*, and a live recording of Ben Oliver's *Love Letters for AI*.

In its first decade, Riot's work has been generously supported by Opus 2 International and Arts Council England lottery grants, the Garfield Weston Foundation, numerous private sponsors, PRSF, Diaphonique, the Ambache Charitable Trust, the RVW Trust, the Marchus Trust, the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation and the Holst Foundation.

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Bridget Carey

cello
Louise McMonagle
Raphael Lang
Gabiella Swallow

double bass
Marianne Schofield

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production team**

production manager
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stage manager
Caroline Moores

**assistant stage
manager**

Ida Pontoppidan
costume supervisor
Olivia Kellett

milliner
Kiera Saunders

set builder
Louis Hudson

executive producer
Bridget Rennie

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© Daniel Pockett

Spinifex Gum Sun 6 Oct, Hall



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The Golden Stool, or the story of Nana Yaa Asantewaa Mon 14 Oct, Hall



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