

Memoirs of Transformation

An Opera in Two Identical Acts

By

Evan Kassof

Program Book

18 September, 2014

8 pm – Duke's Hall

Royal Academy of Music

PROGRAM

LISTEN

Memoirs of Transformation.....(37 min.)

INTERVAL

WATCH

Memoirs of Transformation.....(37 min.)

Reception to follow in the Recital Room

SARAH BAILLIE

Sarah is a London-born soprano who, until recently, was training and performing as a mezzo. She has recently completed the ENO Opera Works course, prior to which she attended the Royal Academy of Music. During her time at the Academy, she studied with Sarah Walker and Audrey Hyland, and graduated with an MA in Voice (distinction; DipRAM) in 2013. She is currently studying with Elizabeth Ritchie.



Her website is <http://sbaillie1.wix.com/sarahbaillie>



ANNA SIDERIS

Anna received her undergraduate degree in music from New College, Oxford. She studies with Jenny Dakin and Audrey Hyland and the Academy and is supported by the Kohn Foundation, the Josephine Baker Trust and received a Help Musicians Postgraduate Award. Anna has worked in masterclasses with eminent singers, such as Renee Fleming, Toby Spence and Ann Murray.

Anna has completed two seasons with Garsington Opera, covering the role of Anna in *Maometto Secondo* (Rossini) and Argene in *L'Olimpiade* (Vivaldi). Other operatic experience includes Tamiri (cover) in *Il Re Pastore* (Mozart) for New Chamber Opera and Monica in *The Medium* (Menotti) & Eurydice in *Orfeus and Eurydice* (Gluck) for New Chamber Opera Studio.

She recently recorded some Fauré songs for BBC Radio 3 Music Matters.



SOFIA TRONCOSO

Sofia Troncoso is a mezzo-soprano from the United States pursuing a post-graduate degree at the Royal Academy of Music in London where she studies with Ryland Davies and James Baillieu. She received a Bachelor's in music from Northwestern University in Chicago, IL where she was awarded grants in recognition of her musical and academic abilities. Sofia participated in the opera scenes program at Northwestern and was consistently cast in the Northwestern Opera productions and involved in concerts in and around Chicago. She debuted as Cherubino in a theatrical adaptation of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* in conjunction with *Lovers & Madmen*, a theatrical group at Northwestern University. Sofia also participated in the Castleton Artist Training Seminar at the late Lorin Maazel's Castleton Music Festival in 2010 and 2011 where she participated in the opera scenes program, main stage operas and concerts. In April 2013 Sofia was a finalist in the prestigious Bel Canto Foundation Competition in Chicago, IL. Since arriving in the UK she has been a Finalist in the Josephine Baker Trust Competition and was Very Highly Commended by the Isabel Jay Foundation. In January 2014 she was featured in the Royal Academy of Music Voice Faculty scenes as Chérubin in Massenet's *Chérubin* and as the Stewardess in Jonathan Dove's *The Flight*. Most recently she spent the summer as a Studio Artist at the prestigious young artist program at Central City Opera in Central City Colorado.



HARRIET BURNS

Harriet is a recent graduate of the Royal Academy of Music where she studied with Jenny Dakin and Audrey Hyland on the BMus course. She now studies with Sue McCulloch. Recent roles have included Lead Vocalist (Improvvised History of the World) in the Tête à Tête Opera Festival, Mary 2 (Passion and Resurrection) in the Voices of London Festival, Jove as Diana (La Calisto) and Barbarina (Marriage of Figaro) with HGO, principal roles with the Grim's Dyke Opera Company in Gilbert and Sullivan's The Pirates of Penzance, Iolanthe and Yeomen of the Guard, Gretel (Hansel und Gretel) and Tina (Flight) for the Royal Academy of Music opera scenes. Upcoming events include the role of Emmie (Albert Herring) with HGO, Rossini's Petite Messe Solenelle, Handel's Dixit Dominus and Bach's Christmas Oratorio.



WILLIAM BOUVEL

Tenor William Bouvel has performed across the United States and Europe with groups like Opera Lafayette of Washington DC, Haymarket Opera Chicago, Madison Early Music Festival, and Baroque Band. His most recent roles were Septimius in a staged version of Handel's Theodora with Benslow Music, and Reverend Parris in Robert Ward's The Crucible. He is also a regular oratorio and cantata soloist.

A current student of Philip Dohan, William has just completed his Masters of Music study at the Royal Academy of Music in London, where he recently received a commendation in the Major van Someron-Godfrey English Song Prize.

William has particular interest in innovative concert programming. He has created several productions such as 'The Heart of King David' in London and 'Skeleton Elegies' in Chicago. Heralded as “an intriguing re-imagining of the song recital idea” these ‘Song reCycle’ performances have added contemporary context to English Song and Baroque Song repertoires respectively. He is also working on a new project using Handel's oratorio repertoire.



ALEX OTTERBURN

Born in London, Alex began singing whilst studying Economics and has since performed widely across the UK on stage and in concert. He recently completed his masters at the Royal Academy of Music (Distinction, Dip RAM) where he continues to study with Mark Wildman and Jonathan Papp. Credits include Prince Yeletsky in *Pique Dame* (cover) with Grange Park Opera, Guglielmo in *Così* (Seastar Opera) and Father in *Hansel & Gretel* (Opera Holloway). Future roles include Marco in *Gianni Schicchi* for Royal Academy Opera in November and Zuniga in Bizet's *The Pearlfishers* with Larkham Choral Society next April. He is generously supported by the Josephine Baker Trust.



His website is <http://aotterburn.wix.com/baritone>



SEAN SALAMON

Hailing from the New York City area, Sean Salamon is studying for an MA in composition with David Sawyer. His music has been performed in fifteen countries, most notably by the New York Chamber Brass, the Open University Orchestra, and the Sawasdee Quintet. When not composing, Salamon performs with five-voice early/new music group Ping (pingvoices.com) which he helped found, and with whom he held residencies at several American festivals this summer. Salamon is passionate about promoting the new music of his peers, and is excited to be performing in his first opera tonight.



His website is <http://www.seanmichaelsalomon.com/>



EVAN KASSOF

Evan is a composer, conductor, and a recovering physicist. Originally from Florida, he now lives in London where he is finishing his Masters in Composition at the Royal Academy of Music where he studies under Tansy Davies.

Though no longer his focus, science plays a major role in much of Evan's music. His recent TEDxTalk discusses the relationship between science and composition, especially in regards to his pieces Cosmos 1 and Heat Death. As well as exploring scientific approaches to composition, he is also passionate about developing a coherent musical understanding of the human condition. This, plus his deep affection for opera and grandiose demeanor, has led to the new work *Memoirs of Transformation*.

Next year, he looks forward to composing yet another opera as part of the Guildhall School's new Opera Making. It will be premiered in the Milton Court Studio Theater in July 2015.



For the past two years, Evan has been generously supported by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation.

To hear his music and find information about his projects, visit his website:

<https://soundcloud.com/evan11235813>



THE ORCHESTRA

Flute, Piccolo – Hugh Roberts

Oboe, Cor Anglais – Veronica Alice Colyer

Clarinets in B^b and E^b – Leonie Bluett

Bassoon – Bernie Childs

Contrabassoon – Llywelyn Edwards

Horn I – Elliot Seidman

Horn II – Jonathan Farey

Trumpet – Sam Pierce

Trombone – Quinn Taylor Parker

Percussion I – Matthew Farthing

Percussion II – Laura Bradford

Organ – Adam Dickson

Piano – Joseph Havlat

Celesta – Thomas Ang

Violin I – Claudia Fuller

Violin II – Sara Cubarsi

Violin III – Elodie Siffert

Violin IV – Shir Victoria Levy

Viola I – Carl David Austin

Viola II – JoJo Shim

Cello I – Lydia Hillerudh

Cello II – Gage Ehmann

Bass – Raivis Misjuns

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This is by far the largest project I have ever undertaken, and nothing that happens tonight could be possible without the tireless energy and commitment of the thirty performers on stage. They volunteered to dedicate their time and talent to realizing my dream. My gratitude to them is beyond any measure.

Each of the singers you hear tonight were willing to take on, and stay committed to a project that required learning a tremendous amount of contemporary music, in four different languages, in just a handful of weeks! The level of skill and professionalism they have each brought to this project has forced me to raise my own personal expectations. Through their sincere treatment of this work, it has been transformed from a mere student project to a piece of art. A true opera realized by true opera singers.

Similarly, the members of the orchestra have (with very limited rehearsal time) turned funny-shaped dots into lines of music that far exceed anything this composer could imagine. To them, I am eternally grateful.

I have also been particularly lucky to have a group of friends – Alex Brusentsev, Claudia Fuller, Joe Havlat, Thomas Ang, and Will Bouvel – who were on board from the very beginning. Each of these wonderful musicians has suffered my endless obsessing over this project with (relative) tolerance and understanding, often offering constructive help. For all of that, I am forever thankful.

Many other people have played an important role in the realization of this work: Tansy Davies, Abi Hyde-Smith, Margarita Balanas, the wonderful staff working in the general office and in stage-management, and the recording engineers, among many others.

And, of course, to expect that I would be capable of doing anything like this without the love and support of my family and my girlfriend is complete nonsense.