



Leeds
Song

"Leeds Song Festival ... from inner city to international, world-class music making."
The Guardian

*Music gives a soul
to the universe*

2026 Festival
Saturday 11 April at 6pm

Bring and Sing! Concert

THE VENUE, LEEDS CONSERVATOIRE



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



THE LIZ & TERRY BRAMALL
FOUNDATION

Director's Welcome

Music gives a soul to the universe

It is with great joy and delight that I welcome you to the Leeds Song Festival 2026, a week-long celebration of one of the most intimate, expressive, and endlessly fascinating forms of music: the art song. Across seven days and a variety of venues throughout Leeds, we have gathered some of the brightest stars, most compelling voices, and most visionary creators in the world of song to present a programme as diverse and vibrant as the city itself.

Buoyed by the extraordinary success of last year's Festival – which broke all previous box office records by 30% – we return in 2026 with renewed energy, ambition and gratitude. This momentum would not be possible without the loyal and generous support of our Friends, audiences, donors, and those trusts and foundations whose belief in our mission underpins everything we do. My heartfelt thanks to each of you.

Faced with an embarrassment of riches, it feels almost invidious to pick out highlights, but as you turn the pages ahead you'll notice programmes from internationally acclaimed singers Marianne Crebassa, Katharina Konradi, Axelle Fanyo, and Fleur Barron, who bring fresh energy to Leeds. British stars Dame Sarah Connolly, Louise Alder, Huw Montague Rendall and Roderick Williams return, delivering performances that showcase the very best of British artistry. The opening and closing evening recitals are especially packed with joyous fare.

Our commitment to supporting the finest rising stars includes recitals by Austrian mezzo-soprano Patricia Nolz, our first lute-accompanied recital with Nardus Williams (partnered by early music royalty Elizabeth Kenny), and a performance from recent Deutsche Grammophon signing Theodore Platt. Leeds Song Young Artist alumni are also represented: Héloïse Werner's *Knight's Dream* will be performed by Helen Charlston and Sholto Kynoch, while Keval Shah, Felix Gygli and Jong Sun Woo all make welcome returns.

Festival favourites Roderick Williams and Iain Burnside explore new compositions inspired by Japanese haiku from leading American composer Libby Larsen, and we are proud to present a Leeds Song commission: *Dunwich*: an intermedia première by Martin Iddon blending spoken word, piano and video in a powerful meditation on history and memory.



This year's masterclasses feature renowned artists including Bernarda Fink, Joan Rodgers CBE, Mark Padmore and Roger Vignoles, whose guidance offers invaluable insight into the art of interpretation.

Our community offering, *Bring and Sing!*, returns with Gareth Malone, inviting all to take part in a joyous performance of Haydn's *Nelson Mass*. Meanwhile, the *Composers & Poets Forum* and the Art Song Challenge winner, Gerda Iguchi, broaden the boundaries of the genre with bold, interdisciplinary work.

The festival concludes with a specially curated recital by Dame Sarah Connolly, joined by prize winners from the Northern Aldborough New Voices Singing Competition – a fitting finale, celebrating both excellence and the future of song.

Leeds Song Festival is not just a series of concerts; it is a vibrant gathering of artists, audiences, and ideas, a space where music's power to connect, move, and transform is celebrated in all its richness. Whether you are a lifelong devotee of art song or discovering it anew, we invite you to join us for what promises to be an unforgettable festival.

Thank you for being part of this journey.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph Middleton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Joseph Middleton
Director, Leeds Song

2026 Festival at a Glance

Saturday 11 April

1 – 2pm	Lunchtime Opening Recital: Patricia Nolz and Joseph Middleton	The Venue, LC
3 – 5.30pm	Bring and Sing! Rehearsal with Gareth Malone OBE	The Venue, LC
6pm	Bring and Sing! Concert with Gareth Malone OBE: Haydn <i>Nelson Mass</i>	The Venue, LC
6.30 – 7pm	Pre-concert Talk with Richard Stokes	HAR
7.30pm	Evening Opening Recital: Louise Alder, Huw Montague Rendall and Joseph Middleton	HAR

Sunday 12 April

10am – 12.30pm	Festival Masterclass I: Bernarda Fink	The Venue, LC
2 – 3pm	Lunchtime Recital: Nardus Williams and Elizabeth Kenny	Royal Armouries Museum
4 – 5.30pm	Young Artists Study Event with Richard Stokes	Recital Room, LC
6 – 7pm	Friends of Leeds Song Private Reception	Rooftop Bar, LC
6.30 – 7pm	Pre-concert Talk with Richard Stokes	The Venue, LC
7.30pm	Evening Recital: Marianne Crebassa and Joseph Middleton	The Venue, LC

Monday 13 April

10am – 1pm	Friends' Festival Masterclass II: Bernarda Fink	Linacre Studio, HOC
2pm – 5pm	Friends' Festival Masterclass III: Mark Padmore CBE	Linacre Studio, HOC

Tuesday 14 April

10am – 1pm	Festival Masterclass IV: Bernarda Fink	Linacre Studio, HOC
6 – 8pm	Evening Recital: Roderick Williams OBE and Iain Burnside	The Venue, LC
9pm	Late Night Recital: <i>Dunwich</i> : An intermedia première by Martin Iddon	The Attic

Wednesday 15 April

5 – 7pm	Composers & Poets Forum Showcase and Exhibition: 'A Leeds Songbook'	Brodrick Hall, Leeds City Museum
8pm	Evening Recital: Helen Charlston and Sholto Kynoch	Left Bank Leeds

Thursday 16 April

12 – 1.30pm	Young Artists Showcase	HAR
3 – 6pm	Festival Masterclass V: Joan Rodgers CBE	Linacre Studio, HOC
6.30 – 7pm	Pre-concert Talk with Dr Katy Hamilton	HAR
7.30pm	Evening Recital: Axelle Fanyo, Fleur Barron and Julius Drake	HAR
9.45 – 11pm	Late Night Lieder Lounge with Leeds Song Young Artists	HAR Bar

Friday 17 April

10am – 12.30pm	Festival Masterclass VI: Roger Vignoles	Linacre Studio, HOC
1 – 2pm	Lunchtime Recital: Felix Gygli and Jong Sun Woo	HAR
3 – 6pm	Festival Masterclass VII: Anna Tilbrook	Linacre Studio, HOC
6.30 – 7pm	Pre-concert Talk with Mark Rogers	HAR
7.30pm	Evening Recital: Katharina Konradi and Joseph Middleton	HAR
9.45 – 11pm	Late Night Recital: Gerda Iguchi: Art Song Challenge 2025	HAR Bar

Saturday 18 April

11am – 12pm	Coffee Recital: Theodore Platt and Keval Shah	The Venue, LC
2 – 3.30pm	Young Artists Finale Concert	The Venue, LC
6 – 6.30pm	Pre-concert Talk with Dr George Kennaway	Rooftop Bar, LC
7pm	Festival Closing Recital: Dame Sarah Connolly and Joseph Middleton (and Northern Aldborough New Voices Singing Competition Prize Winners)	The Venue, LC

HAR = Howard Assembly Room | LC = Leeds Conservatoire | HOC = Howard Opera Centre

All information correct at the time of publication.

Leeds Song reserves the right to change artists, programmes and events if necessary.

Box Office: 0113 223 3600 | boxoffice@operanorth.co.uk | www.leedssong.com/whats-on

Saturday 11 April 2026, 6pm
THE VENUE, LEEDS CONSERVATOIRE

Bring and Sing! Concert

Joseph Haydn *Nelson Mass*

with **Gareth Malone OBE**
Leeds Song Young Artists
Leeds Song Bring and Sing! Chorus

Organ
William Campbell

Soloists

Sopranos
Lisa-Marie Lebitschnig
Martina Neubauer
Mariana Rodrigues
Carleigh Ross
Kelsey Thomas

Mezzo-sopranos
Naomi Boot
Klara Solén

Counter-tenor
Zheng Jiang

Tenor
Samuel Mills

Baritone
Bruno Meichsner
Daniel Sauer



Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)
Missa in angustiis 'Nelson Mass'

1. Kyrie
(Soloist: Mariana Rodrigues)
2. Gloria
(Soloists: Kelsey Thomas, Klara Solén,
Samuel Mills and Daniel Sauer)
Qui tollis
(Soloists: Carleigh Ross and
Bruno Meichsner)
Quoniam tu solus sanctus
(Soloists: Carleigh Ross, Naomi Boot,
Samuel Mills and Daniel Sauer)
3. Credo
Et incarnatus est
(Soloists: Martina Neubauer, Klara Solén,
Samuel Mills and Daniel Sauer)
Et resurrexit
(Soloist: Lisa-Marie Lebitschnig)
4. Sanctus
Pleni sunt coeli
5. Benedictus
(Soloists: Mariana Rodrigues, Zheng Jiang,
Samuel Mills and Daniel Sauer)
Osanna in excelsis
6. Agnus Dei
(Soloists: Lisa-Marie Lebitschnig, Naomi Boot,
Samuel Mills and Daniel Sauer)
Dona nobis pacem

Programme Notes

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Missa in Angustiis 'Nelson Mass'

In 1795, Haydn returned from London to his post as Kapellmeister to Nicolaus Esterházy as an internationally renowned composer. At the same time, his court duties were considerably lighter, because Prince Nicolaus Esterházy was spending much more time in Vienna and the summer palace at Eisenstadt than at the titular grand palace of Esterházy. Haydn's main duty was to compose Masses for the name-day celebration of Princess Maria Hermenegild Esterházy, of which the 'Nelson' is the third. Haydn composed this in 1798 while recovering from exhaustion after finishing his oratorio *Die Schöpfung* ('The Creation'). Having no other duties, he finished this work in a month, about a third of the time it would normally have taken. It is not clear how it became known as the 'Nelson' Mass. Haydn's manuscript score is just called *Missa*; he added a different title, *Missa in Angustiis* (Mass in a Time of Anxiety), when he listed this work later in his personal catalogue of pieces. The Nelson connection appears to derive from one of his most famous naval victories – Napoleon's naval fleet was destroyed by Nelson in the battle of Aboukir Bay on 1st August 1798, and the first performance took place in Eisenstadt the next month. In 1800 Haydn conducted it for Nelson himself (and his mistress Lady Hamilton) during the admiral's visit to Eisenstadt, and the two men exchanged gifts. It is accompanied by an orchestra of strings, three trumpets, and timpani, because Nicolaus Esterházy had economised by dismissing his woodwind players and horns. Trumpets and drums had strong military associations, particularly evident at the dramatic start of the 'Kyrie'. There are also short solo passages for organ, possibly making up for the lack of wind instruments, which Haydn played at the first performance. For its first publication in 1803 Haydn added wind parts, and also modified the vocal parts to make them easier to sing, but modern performances often use his

original version. The 'Kyrie' and 'Benedictus' are dark and dramatic, but otherwise the mood is celebratory and almost operatic at times, with a particularly virtuosic part for the soprano soloist. The 'Gloria' combines often homophonic singing for the choir with sophisticated string writing. The bass solo 'Qui tollis peccata mundi' clearly quotes the 'Tuba mirum' from Mozart's *Requiem*. As in his two great oratorios, *Die Schöpfung* and *Die Jahreszeiten* (The Seasons), the entire work exploits Haydn's extraordinary range of invention.

© Dr George Kennaway 2026

Biographies

Gareth Malone OBE

Conductor

Gareth has helped galvanise the British choral scene through his award-winning BBC series, concert tours and recordings. Gareth is a fellow of the Royal Academy of Music where he studied with Janice Chapman and Jonathan Papp. He was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of East Anglia and Freedom of the City of London in 2010. In 2012 he was made OBE in the Queen's birthday honours for services to music. In 2021 he was awarded the prestigious Royal College of Organists' Medal for services to choral music.

He first appeared on TV in the three-part BAFTA award-winning series *The Choir* for the BBC, tackling the task of teaching choral singing to people who have never had the chance, or experience to sing before. This aired in 2006, along with three further series; *The Choir: Boys Don't Sing* in 2008, *The Choir: Unsung Town*, which involved the creation of a choir in South Oxhey, Hertfordshire, in 2009, and *The Choir: Military Wives* in 2011. The series began to air on BBC America in the summer of 2010. Since 2012, he has made two series of *Sing While You Work* for BBC2, infiltrating the workplace to get large UK companies singing.

Gareth has had three number one records in the UK with the Military Wives Choir and the Gareth Malone All Star Choir for Children in Need. His 2014 series *The Big Performance* won the Royal Television Society award for best children's television and *Gareth Goes to Glyndebourne* won an International Emmy in 2011.

Early in 2013, Gareth began a UK-wide hunt with Decca Records to find the country's most talented young singers to form a new youth choir. This culminated in *Gareth Malone's Voices*, released in 2013, embodying his vision of the future of choral music. Gareth and Voices 2015 tour followed an acclaimed 14-date UK tour earlier that year. He embarked on yet another UK Tour in Winter 2017 and due to its success, more venues and dates were added to 2018.

The following years saw him make several other TV series include *The Naked Choir*; *Invictus Games* (BBC2); *Pitch Battle* (BBC1); and *Sea Shanties and Sea Songs* (BBC4).

During 2018 and 2019, Gareth applied his signature optimism to start various choirs with Kensington Aldridge Academy (*The Choir: Our School by the Tower*), Watford's General Hospital (*Gareth Malone's Christmas Concert*) and Aylesbury Prison (*The Choir: Aylesbury Prison*). All three documentaries were aired on BBC2. He released his third



© Tom Ather

album *Music for Healing*; championing the restorative power of music. It features solo piano, choir and strings, with each piece named after a different month of the year, reflecting the role that the year's natural rhythms play in the stages of healing.

The Choir: Singing For Britain, released during the world's pandemic, saw Gareth using the best of what technology has to offer to create an online facsimile of the choir-singing experience. He spent lockdown inspiring people to sing along from their sitting rooms via his online home chorus sessions and a hand-picked few were given a moment in the spotlight. The programme was shortlisted for a Broadcast Award in 2021.

Gareth has been musical consultant on the crowd-pleasing comedy film *Military Wives*, as well as remotely recording a choir, engineering and editing the music for computer animated comedy *Boss Baby 2*.

2022 brought several fun projects including being a guest on *The Masked Dancer* for ITV. He concluded the year with his countrywide tour *Sing-a-long-a-Gareth* and working along side Gary Barlow and Lord Lloyd Webber on *The Royal Variety* show.

In 2023, Gareth appeared in *Sing For The King: The Search for the Coronation Choir*. Where the show followed the nationwide search for a choir to perform for The King and Queen Consort at the Coronation Concert. His tour *Sing-a-long-a-Gareth* took to the road again in the second half of the year.

Recently Gareth became the new Patron of Canterbury Choral Society and has presented a 3 part Easter special for BBC One, *Gareth Malone's Easter Passion*. Where Gareth took eight untrained singers and staged his own performance of Bach's *St John Passion* on the 300th anniversary of its first performance. In 2025 he conducted Handel's *Messiah* with BBC NOW and the BBC National Chorus of Wales for BBC One.

William Campbell

Organ

William Campbell is an organist, composer and conductor, currently serving as Sub-Organist and Assistant Director of Music at Bradford Cathedral. Born in Croydon to parents of Caribbean descent, he began learning the violin at the age of three before taking up the piano and trumpet. He holds a Licentiate of Trinity College London and the DipABRSM in violin performance. He began organ studies at fourteen as a music scholar at Wellington College with Simon Williamson and Sean Farrell, during which time he regularly accompanied the College Chapel Choir, including services at Winchester and Chichester Cathedrals, as well as tours to Spain. In May 2018 he was appointed Joyce Jeffries Organ Scholar at St Laurence Church, Catford, becoming Acting Organist the following year.

Upon leaving school, William became the Organ Scholar at Guildford Cathedral under Katherine Dienes. Williams while also studying with Daniel Moulton. He graduated from the University of York with First Class Honours in Music in 2023, holding posts during this period as Director of Music at St Helen's Church, Stonegate, and Interim Assistant Organist at Leeds Minster, while also deputising across all of Yorkshire's cathedrals. He subsequently spent two terms as Organ



Scholar at Canterbury Cathedral before returning to Yorkshire as Cathedral Organist at Leeds Cathedral.

William played the organ for the world première recording of *Song of the Prophets* with the Chineke! Orchestra at St Paul's Cathedral in 2021 and performed Saint Saëns' Symphony No. 3 ("Organ Symphony") with the ensemble at the Royal Festival Hall in February 2024. He has appeared on BBC Radio and television as an organist, violinist, pianist and harpsichordist. He is a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists and an examiner for the ABRSM.

An award-winning composer, William won the 3rd Blackburn Cathedral Composition Competition and the Paul Cairns Memorial Composition Competition. His work *Flourish on 'Irby'* is published by Encore Publications. At the end of May 2026, he will take up the post of Assistant Director of Music at Peterborough Cathedral.

Leeds Song Young Artists

Naomi Boot (mezzo-soprano)

Mezzo-soprano Naomi Boot is in her final year of undergraduate studies at the Royal College of Music, where she is a Douglas and Hilda Simmonds Scholar under the tutelage of Ben Johnson. She is also generously supported by the Gillian Bardsley Trust. Born in Oxford and raised in Canada, she began her vocal training with Jennifer Tung, Artistic Director of Toronto City Opera.

She sings with the Upper Voices of Eton College's Lower Chapel Choir and has performed in masterclasses with Dame Ann Murray, Matthew Rose, David Parry, Tom Primrose, James Gilchrist and Markus Hadulla. This past summer she appeared with the Scherzo Ensemble in Longhope Opera's production of Rossini's *L'italiana in Algeri* and was a Young Artist at the Southrepps Music Festival. She is also a recipient of the Folkestone on Song Luxon Amit Singing Bursary.

Most recently, Naomi was the soloist in the Royal College of Music Symphony Orchestra and Chorus's performance of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's rarely performed *Meg Blane, A Rhapsody of the Sea*, under the baton of Sofi Jeannin.

Zheng Jiang (counter-tenor)

Zheng Jiang is a Chinese countertenor praised by *The Times* for the "chorister's purity" of his timbre, rapidly establishing himself as a compelling artist on both the operatic and concert stages.

In 2026 he appears as a Season Artist with The Mozartists, making his company debut as a soloist in their Mozart Birthday Concert at Cadogan Hall. He has also been selected for the Samling Artist Programme and the Leeds Song Young Artist Programme. Later in the season he makes his role debut as Sesto (*Giulio Cesare*) in The Grange Festival's production, and in the summer he makes his Salzburg Festival debut performing Grimbald (*King Arthur Junior*) as cover, with scheduled performances. From September 2026 he will join the Royal College of Music International Opera Studio.

Recent highlights include his appearance at the 2025 Kathleen Ferrier Awards Final, where *The Times* praised his Schubert 'Nacht und Träume' as "ineffably beautiful" and his performance of "Dawn, still darkness" from Jonathan Dove's *Flight* as "compelling and devastating." As a 2025 Ferrier Awards Finalist, his competition successes also include First Prize in the Adrian Clarke Vocal Award at the Grasmere Song Festival and Third Prize in the RCM Lies Askonas Competition. In 2024 he received the Nicholas Partridge Award for Outstanding Creativity at the inaugural Eastbourne International Singing Competition.

Operatic roles include Cherubino (*Le nozze di Figaro*) and the Sandman (*Hänsel und Gretel*) at the Summer Opera Lyric Theater in Toronto, along with covers at the Royal College of Music including Piero della Francesca (*Seven Angels*). Other opera scenes include Ruggiero (*Alcina*), Rinaldo (*Rinaldo*) and Valentiniano (*Ezio*).

Zheng trained in Canada with Norma Burrowes and completed his Master's degree with distinction at the Royal College of Music, studying with Ben Johnson and supported by an RCM Study Award and the Josephine Baker Trust.

Lisa-Marie Lebitschnig (soprano)

Soprano Lisa-Marie Lebitschnig was shaped early in life by her love of the arts, expression and creativity. Her passion for opera developed on the stage of her hometown theatre, the Stadttheater Klagenfurt. Joining the company at the age of twelve, she has already taken part in more than twenty opera productions.

Highlights from her eleven years in Klagenfurt include roles such as First Boy (*Die Zauberflöte*), Yniold (*Pelléas et Mélisande*) and Barbarina (*Le nozze di Figaro*), as well as numerous performances in the children's and extra choruses. These early experiences working alongside professional singers and conductors were formative in developing her acting, musicianship and artistic professionalism.

A childhood cancer survivor, Lisa-Marie is passionate about supporting charitable organisations. She organised her first benefit concert for Kärntner Kinderkrebshilfe at the age of sixteen, raising significant donations to support their mission in combating childhood cancer.

Since 2017 she has studied voice at the Kunstuniversität Graz with Antonius Sol. There she discovered her love for the subtle art of interpreting classical song through work with Josef Breinl and Julius Drake. In February 2023 she gave her first recital at the Arnold Schönberg Center in Vienna with Thomas Ebenstein and Sascha El Mouissi at the piano, followed by a solo recital in Padova organised by L'amicci della Musica Padova. In summer 2023 she performed Despina (*Così fan tutte*) at Oper Lungau and later gave a recital for the Österreichische Richard Wagner Gesellschaft. In early 2024 she sang Pamina at the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz and subsequently took part in a number of contemporary performances at Oper Graz.

She won three prizes at the 2025 competition Liedkunst im Schloss vor Husum and completed her Master's degree in the same year.

Bruno Meichsner (baritone)

Bruno Meichsner was born in Berlin and discovered his passion for singing with the Berlin Boys' Choir. The lyric baritone completed his vocal studies in 2025 at the Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler Berlin under Prof. Stephan Rügamer.

He is a multiple prizewinner at the 7th Internationale Haydn Gesangswettbewerb für klassisches Lied und Arie. In addition to First Prize, the young baritone won the Mozarthaus Vienna Prize and the Audience Prize.

As a concert singer, he performs major roles across a wide variety of oratorios and Masses in venues such as the Philharmonie, the Konzerthaus Berlin and the Pierre Boulez Saal. He has appeared with renowned orchestras including the Rundfunk Sinfonieorchester Berlin and the KammerSymphonie Berlin.

During his studies, Bruno Meichsner appeared regularly in musictheatre productions at the HfM Hanns Eisler. These included Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*), Pasquino (*Il mondo della luna*), and Demetrius (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*).

He has received important artistic impulses through collaboration with Thomas Hampson, Wolfram Rieger and Martin Bruns, and has furthered his training in numerous masterclasses with KS Robert Holl, KS Birgid Steinberger, Susan Manoff and Malcolm Martineau.

He was a scholarship holder at the Lied Academy of the Heidelberger Frühling for the 2023–24 season.

Samuel Miller (tenor)

Samuel Mills is a British Tenor currently studying at the Royal Academy of Music with Adrian Thompson where he is a recipient of the prestigious Sir Elton John Award. Born and raised in Leeds, he has worked with Leeds Song and Opera North.

In the last year Samuel has taken part in masterclasses with David Butt Philip and Nicky Spence. He appeared as Rinuccio in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* and played the First Armed Man in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*. He has performed in such venues as Leeds Town Hall, The Howard Assembly Room, Regent Hall, Sinfonia Smith Square, The Sage Gateshead, Saffron Hall and The Royal Albert Hall. Samuel received 2nd place in the Eastbourne International Singing Competition 2025.

Martina Neubauer (soprano)

The Viennese soprano Martina Neubauer possesses a broad repertoire spanning opera, operetta, concert and Lied. She has appeared as Dido (*Dido and Aeneas*), Countess Zedlau (*Wiener Blut*), Eva the Diva (*Von O bis Oper*), the Queen (*Richard III.*, Musik Theater an der Wien), and Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*, Vienna Opera Summer Belvedere).

In 2022 she won the LIONS Music Prize, the Gabriele Sima Scholarship and the Musica Juventutis Competition of the

Wiener Konzerthaus. Further recognition followed in 2024 when she reached the finals of both the Otto Edelmann Singing Competition and the Neue Stimmen Competition and received Second Prize and the Audience Prize at the Hans Staud Music Prize.

Alongside her vocal studies in Vienna, Martina attended the operetta course taught by Wolfgang Dosch and received significant artistic impulses from masterclasses with Elina Garanča, Linda Watson, Ian Bostridge and Adrian Eröd.

In addition to her operatic work, she is deeply committed to the concert repertoire and has appeared as a soloist at both the Vienna Musikverein and the Vienna Konzerthaus. Her passion for Lied is central to her artistic identity; together with pianist Alexander Koschka, she forms a permanent duo that performs regularly in concert and on the competition stage. In 2025 the duo won the Audience Prize at the Sibelius Singing Lied Duo Competition in Finland and Third Prize at the International Copenhagen Lied Duo Competition.

Martina is equally active in exploring new sonic and artistic directions. She is the founder of the Aereelis Quintet, an ensemble consisting of soprano and four saxophonists, which combines classical tradition with contemporary innovation and reimagines well-known works through striking new colours and textures.

Mariana Rodrigues (soprano)

Described as "singing with a crystalline beauty that would tame any savage beast" (*The Times*), Portuguese soprano Mariana Rodrigues has recently completed her MA with Distinction at the Royal Academy of Music in London under Marie Vassiliou, Raymond Connell, James Baillieu, Joseph Middleton and Philip Sunderland, supported by a full scholarship. She was awarded a DipRAM for her outstanding final recital.

Mariana has appeared as a soloist for Academy Song Circle, Academy Voices, Resounding Shores and the Bach in Leipzig series, working with artists including Masaaki Suzuki, Philippe Herreweghe, Rachel Podger, John Butt, Peter Whelan, Dame Jane Glover, Elizabeth Kenny, Yvonne Kenny, Margaret Faultless and Nicholas Mulroy.

She is the winner of the Isabel Jay Memorial Prize, the Edna Balesford Vocal Prize, the Regency Award and the Flora Nielsen Prize. Mariana has also participated in masterclasses with Iestyn Davies, Dame Felicity Lott, Joanne Lunn, Christian Gerhaher, Lucy Crowe, Malcolm Martineau and Hartmut Höll.

Recent engagements include a double recital début at the Royal Albert Hall and the live première of Billy Cowie's song cycle with her duo, Chantefable; performances in the Cripta de la Sagrada Família with Bachcelona; and appearances at the Palau de la Música Catalana with Fundació Salvat. She has also performed Sir John Clerk's soprano solo cantata with the Dunedin Consort.

Alongside Carolyn Sampson, Mariana will create and première a new two-woman opera with the Dunedin Consort, Mahogany Opera and Hera as part of the project *In the Belly of the Beast*. Her recent festival appearances include Bachcelona, Bloomsbury, Baroquestock, Islington, Surrey Bach and Vilalte in the south of France.

Young Artist Programmes for the 2025–26 season include Vache Baroque James Bowman Young Artist, Bachcelona Akademie, Concertist Fellow with the Oxford Bach Soloists, BREMF Emerging Artist with Chantefable and Next Generation Artist with Sestina Music.

Mariana is the soprano recipient of the 2026 Salvat Grant for Baroque Music.

Carleigh Ross (soprano)

Carleigh Ross is a Canadian American soprano pursuing a master's degree at the Royal Academy of Music, where she studies with Catherine Wyn Rogers, Raymond Connell and Joseph Middleton. Her studies are generously supported by Help Musicians.

Recent engagements include Zdenka (*Arabella*) and Susanna (*Le nozze di Figaro*) in Royal Academy Opera scenes; performing as soloist in Ravel's *Chansons madécasses* for the Academy's celebratory Ravel concert; appearances at London's Tête à Tête Festival; and participation in the Glyndebourne Festival's Opera Lab led by Jessica Walker and Stephen Langridge. She is a prize-winner in several vocal competitions, including First Prize in the Major Van Someren-Godfrey Prize and Second Prize in both the Isabel Jay Memorial Prize and the Blyth-Buesst Operatic Prize.

Alongside her work as a Young Artist at Leeds Song, Carleigh's upcoming engagements include Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*) in Royal Academy Opera scenes, covering the female chorus (*The Rape of Lucretia*) with the Royal Academy Opera Studio, and projects at the National Institute for Dramatic Art in Brussels exploring the integration of wax and voice through George Crumb's *Apparition*.

Carleigh holds a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of British Columbia, where her roles included Hannah (*Die Passagierin*, Canadian première), Marcellina (*Le nozze di Figaro*), La Marchesa Melibea (*Il viaggio a Reims*) and Zweite Dame (*Die Zauberflöte*), as well as female soloist in Duruflé's Requiem with the UBC Symphony Orchestra. She has toured as a soloist with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, sung in masterclasses with Susan Bullock, Sondra Radvanovsky, Judith Forst and Katherine Ciesinski, and coproduced a multidisciplinary reimagining of Mahler's *RückertLieder* with WhatLab Studios as part of their Deep End Residency Programme.

Daniel Sauer (baritone)

Daniel Sauer was born in 1999 in Munich and received his first vocal training at the age of seven with the Tölzer Knabenchor. At eleven, he appeared as one of the Three Boys in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, including performances at the Bremen State Theatre.

He began his vocal studies in 2016 — initially as a precollege student — with Prof. Dominik Wortig at the Leopold Mozart College of Music at the University of Augsburg. During his bachelor's studies he discovered his passion for the piano, which has since become an important artistic companion. He completed his bachelor's degree in Augsburg in July 2023.

Masterclasses and coachings with artists such as Thomas Hampson, Philippe Jaroussky and Mariette Witteveen have further shaped his musical development. Since 2024 he has been pursuing a master's degree in 'Lied—Oratorio—Concert' at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna under Prof. Florian Boesch and Prof. Karlheinz Hanser. In Vienna he has developed a strong affinity for the art song and its close relationship with poetry — a focus reflected in numerous performances in and around the city. In 2025 he gave his first solo Lieder recital at Castello Miramare in Trieste, together with his close friend and pianist Steve Roy.

With equal curiosity and dedication, Daniel continues to explore the oratorio and opera repertoire. His artistic experience includes appearances as the baritone soloist in Gabriel Fauré's Requiem, as well as operatic roles such as Pelléas (*Impressions de Pelléas* by Marius Constant, after Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*).

Daniel Sauer is currently a scholarship holder of the Anny Felbermayer Fund, awarded to him and pianist Honoka Komoda for their joint work as a Lied duo.

Klara Solén (mezzo-soprano)

Klara Solén is a Swedish mezzo-soprano with a passion for storytelling and expressive performance. She is currently pursuing her undergraduate degree in Classical Singing at the Royal Academy of Music in London and recently made her UK operatic début in the title role of Rossini's *La Cenerentola* with Hampstead Garden Opera.

Before moving to the UK, Klara trained at Kapellsberg's Opera Studio in Sweden, where she performed roles including Carmen (*Carmen*) and Oberon (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) at the Swedish Northern Opera House, Norrlandsoperan. She has also appeared with Moderna Operan in *Amour Fou* (2025) and with Skånska Operan in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* (2024).

An active concert and recital artist, Klara's recent solo repertoire includes Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Mozart's Requiem, Vivaldi's *Stabat Mater* and Bach's *St John Passion*. At the Royal Academy of Music, she has appeared in the Academy Voices concert series and in *An Evening with Rachel Podger and the*

Royal Academy of Music at St George's, Hanover Square. She is also a member of the Royal Academy Song Circle.

Klara has a particular affinity for Nordic song and is committed to sharing this repertoire with new audiences. She has participated in masterclasses and coaching sessions with Aigul Akhmetshina, Susan Bullock, Julius Drake, Jennifer Larmore, Anna Larsson and Matthew Rose.

Kelsey Thomas (soprano)

Kelsey Thomas is a British soprano studying at the Royal Northern College of Music. She is the current award holder of the Sybil Tutton Opera Award from Help Musicians UK and is also supported by the Riga Heesom Scholarship Award and the Richard Newitt Fund from the RNCM.

On the concert stage, Kelsey has performed at numerous UK venues, including the Buxton Pavilion Arts Centre, Crosby Hall and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, where she made her professional debut opening the Philharmonic's 2025–26 lunchtime concert series alongside her duo partner, Edward Lloyd (piano). She has also appeared at several opera galas, including Grimsby Town Hall alongside Henry Waddington and Victoria Simmonds, where she was introduced as an "exciting, early career singer" (Grimsby Concert Society).

As an oratorio and chamber soloist, Kelsey has performed major soprano solos including VillaLobos's *Bachianas Brasileiras* with cellists of the Merseyside Youth Orchestra, and Handel's *Messiah* with the Liverpool Mozart Orchestra at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral. She returns as soprano soloist in *Messiah* in March 2026 with the Oldham Symphony Orchestra, and appears as guest soprano soloist in Mendelssohn's *Elijah* at Liverpool Cathedral in May.

Since 2024, Kelsey has been a member of the RNCM Songsters, a select ensemble of advanced singers and pianists at the conservatoire. Through this platform, she has performed widely, presenting a diverse range of art-song repertoire across multiple UK venues.

Recent operatic highlights include *Berenice (L'occasione fa il ladro)*, RNCM Opera Scenes 2026), *Sandrina (La finta giardiniera)*, RNCM Opera Scenes 2025), *Maria Bertram (Mansfield Park)*, RNCM Opera Scenes 2024) and *Colombina (Le donne curiose)*, RNCM Opera Scenes 2024). She has also performed with the RNCM Opera Chorus in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* (2022) and RimskyKorsakov's *Snegurochka* (2023).

Kelsey has participated in masterclasses with Rebecca Evans, Joseph Middleton, Soraya Mafi, Elizabeth Llewellyn, David Owen Norris and Roger Vignoles.

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QR codes will be available around the venue should you wish to access the programme upon arrival. You are welcome to use your mobile device to view song texts during the recital, but please ensure that your device is switched to silent mode and that your screen brightness is turned down so as not to disturb the performers or fellow audience members.

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