



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 18 April at 2pm

Young Artists Finale 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 18 April 2026, 2pm
THE VENUE, LEEDS CONSERVATOIRE



Young Artists Finale Concert

10 outstanding singers and pianists who have been part of our Young Artists Programme and who have immersed themselves in song during the Festival give a final celebration showcase to round off their week of learning.

Generously supported by the estate of the late Jane Bonner, a much-loved friend of Leeds Song.

Zheng Jiang (counter-tenor)
Yihan Zhao (piano)

Henry Purcell (1659-1695)
Sweeter than roses

Henri Duparc (1848-1933)
Phidylé

Mariana Rodrigues (soprano)
Andrew Cowie (piano)

Arr. Benjamin Britten
The Last Rose of Summer
(*Irish Folk Song Arrangements*)

Reynaldo Hahn (1873-1947)
L'énamourée

Daniel Sauer (baritone)
Honoka Komoda (piano)

John Ireland (1874-1954)
Sea Fever

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
Die Mainacht

Carleigh Ross (soprano)
Curtis Vetter (piano)

Samuel Barber (1910-1981)
The Monk and His Cat
(*Hermit Songs*)

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)
Befreit

Kelsey Thomas (soprano)
Edward Lloyd (piano)

Hugo Wolf (1860-1903)
Mein Liebster hat zu Tische mich geladen
(*Italienisches Liederbuch*)
Schweig einmal still

Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)
Anzoleta co passa la regata (*La regata veneziana*)

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)
Danse macabre

Martina Neubauer (soprano)
Alexander Koschka (piano)

Richard Wagner (1813-1883)
Träume (*Wesendonck Lieder*)

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)
Lob des hohen Verstandes
(*Des Knaben Wunderhorn*)

Naomi Boot (mezzo-soprano)
Viviana Tãga-Radu (piano)

Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936)
Notte

Liza Lehmann (1862-1918)
Ah, moon of my delight
(*In a Persian Garden*)

Bruno Meichsner (baritone)
Wan-Yen Li (piano)

Charles Ives (1874-1954)
Ich grolle nicht

Samuel Barber (1910-1981)
The Desire for Hermitage
(*Hermit Songs*)

Siri Bengtsson Marklund (soprano)
Joshua McDade (piano)

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)
Johnny (*Cabaret songs*)

Wilhelm Stenhammar (1871-1927)
I Skogen (*Songs and Ballads*)

Klara Solén (mezzo-soprano)
George Herbert (piano)

Gösta Nystroem (1890-1966)
Havet sjunger (*På reveln*)

Kurt Weill (1900-1950)
Youkali

Texts and Translations

If you are using a printed copy of this programme, please turn the pages quietly to avoid disturbing the performers and other audience members

Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

Sweeter than roses

Sweeter than roses, or cool evening breeze
On a warm flowery shore, was the dear kiss,
First trembling made me freeze,
Then shot like fire all o'er.
What magic has victorious love!
For all I touch or see since that dear kiss,
I hourly prove, all is love to me.

Richard Norton (1666-1732)

Henri Duparc (1848-1933)

Phidylé

L'herbe est molle au sommeil sous les frais peupliers,
Aux pentes des sources moussues,
Qui dans les prés en fleur germant par mille issues,
Se perdent sous les noirs halliers.

Repose, ô Phidylé! Midi sur les feuillages
Rayonne et t'invite au sommeil.
Par le trèfle et le thym, seules, en plein soleil,
Chantent les abeilles volages.

Un chaud parfum circule au détour des sentiers,
La rouge fleur des blés s'incline,
Et les oiseaux, rasant de l'aile la colline,
Cherchent l'ombre des églantiers.

Mais, quand l'Astre, incliné sur sa courbe éclatante,
Verra ses ardeurs s'apaiser,
Que ton plus beau sourire et ton meilleur baiser
Me récompensent de l'attente!

Charles-Marie-René Leconte de Lisle (1818-1894)

Phidylé

The grass is soft to sleep on under the cool poplars,
On the slopes by the mossy springs,
Which, in the meadows flowering with a thousand plants,
Disappear into dark thickets.

Rest, o Phidylé! The midday sun shines on the foliage
And invites you to sleep!
Midst clover and thyme, alone, in full sunlight
Hum the fickle honeybees.

A warm scent fragrances the paths,
The red cornflowers bend,
And the birds, skimming the hills with their wings,
Search for shade among the wild rose bushes.

But when the sun, descending on its magnificent path,
Finds its heat beginning to abate,
Let your loveliest smile and your warmest kiss
Recompense me for waiting!

Anon arr. Benjamin Britten

from *Irish Folk Song Arrangements*

The Last Rose of Summer

'Tis the last rose of summer,
Left blooming alone;
All her lovely companions
Are faded and gone;
No flow'r of her kindred,
No rosebud is nigh
To reflect back her blushes,
Or give sigh for sigh.

I'll not leave thee, thou lone one,
To pine on the stem;
Since the lovely are sleeping,
Go, sleep thou with them;
Thus kindly I scatter
Thy leaves o'er the bed,
Where thy mates of the garden
Lie senseless and dead.

So soon may I follow,
When friendships decay,
And from Love's shining circle
The gems drop away!
When true hearts lie wither'd,
And fond ones are flown,
Oh! who would inhabit
This bleak world alone?

Thomas Moore (1779-1852)

Reynaldo Hahn (1873-1947)

L'énamourée

Ils se disent, ma colombe,
Que tu rêves, morte encore,
Sous la pierre d'une tombe :
Mais pour l'âme qui t'adore,
Tu t'éveilles réanimée,
Ô pensive bien-aimée !

Par les blanches nuits d'étoiles,
Dans la brise qui murmure,
Je caresse tes longs voiles,
Ta mouvante chevelure,
Et tes ailes demi-closes
Qui voltigent sur les roses !

Ô délices ! je respire
Tes divines tresses blondes !
Ta voix pure, cette lyre,
Suit la vague sur les ondes,
Et, suave, les effleure,
Comme un cygne qui se pleure !

Théodore Faullin de Banville (1823-1891)

The one in love

They say, my dove,
That you are still dead and dreaming
Beneath a tombstone;
But for the soul which adores you
You awaken, revived,
Oh pensive beloved!

Through the blank nights of stars,
In the murmuring breeze,
I caress you long veils,
Your rippling hair,
And your half-closed wings
Which flutter among the roses.

Oh delights! I breathe in
Yur divine blond tresses!
Yur pure voice, that lyre,
Which follows the flow of the waes,
And touches them gently,
Like a weeping swan!

John Ireland (1874-1954)

Sea Fever

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face, and a grey dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way, where the wind's like a whetted
knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

John Masefield (1878-1967)

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Die Mainach

Wann der silberne Mond durch die Gesträuche blinkt,
Und sein schlummerndes Licht über den Rasen streut,
Und die Nachtigall flötet,
Wand' ich traurig von Busch zu Busch.

Überhüllet von Laub, girret ein Taubenpaar
Sein Entzücken mir vor; aber ich wende mich,
Suche dunklere Schatten,
Und die einsame Träne rinnt.

Wann, o lächelndes Bild, welches wie Morgenrot
Durch die Seele mir strahlt, find' ich auf Erden dich?
Und die einsame Träne
Bebt mir heisser die Wang' herab.

Ludwig Höltz (1748-1776)

A Night in May

When the silvery moon glimmers through the branches
And sends its drowsy light over the grass,
And the nightingale sings,
I wander sadly from bush to bush.

Hidden among the leaves a par of doves coo
Their delight to me, but I turn away,
Seek out darker shadows,
And a lonely tear runs down my cheek.

When, oh laughing image, which sears
My soul like a crimson dawn, will I find you on earth?
And the lonely tear
Trembles more warmly down my cheek.

Samuel Barber (1910-1981)

from *Hermit Songs*

The Monk and His Cat

W. H. Auden (1907-1973)

For copyright reasons, we are unable to
reproduce the text of these songs.

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

Befreit

Du wirst nicht weinen. Leise, leise
Wirst du lächeln: und wie zur Reise
Geb' ich dir Blick und Kuß zurück.
Unsre lieben vier Wände! Du hast sie bereitet,
Ich habe sie dir zur Welt geweitet -
O Glück!

Dann wirst du heiß meine Hände fassen
Und wirst mir deine Seele lassen,
Läßt unsern Kindern mich zurück.
Du schenktest mir dein ganzes Leben,
Ich will es ihnen wiedergeben -
O Glück!

Es wird sehr bald sein, wir wissen's beide,
Wir haben einander befreit vom Leide;
So gab ich dich der Welt zurück.
Dann wirst du mir nur noch im Traum erscheinen
Und mich segnen und mit mir weinen -
O Glück!

Richard Dehmel (1863-1920)

Hugo Wolf (1860-1903)

from *Italienisches Liederbuch*

Mein Liebster hat zu Tische

Mein Liebster hat zu Tische mich geladen,
Und hatte doch kein Haus, mich zu empfangen,
Nicht Holz noch Herd zum Kochen und zum Braten,
Der Hafen auch war längst entzwei gegangen.
An einem Fäßchen Wein gebrach es auch,
Und Gläser hatt' er gar nicht im Gebrauch;
Der Tisch war schmal, das Tafeltuch nicht besser,
Das Brot steinhart und völlig stumpf das Messer.

Schweig einmal still, du garst'ger Schwätzer dort!

Schweig' einmal still, du garst'ger Schwätzer dort!
Zum Ekel ist mir dein verwünschtes Singen.
Und triebst du es bis morgen früh so fort,
Doch würde dir kein schmuckes Lied gelingen.
Schweig' einmal still und lege dich aufs Ohr!
Das Ständchen eines Esels zög ich vor.

Anon

Released

You will not weep. Gently, gently
You will smile, and as before a journey
I will return your gaze and your kiss.
Our dear four walls that you helped to build,
I have widened them into the world for you -
O joy!

Then you will warmly seize my hands
And will leave me your soul,
Leaving me behind for our children,
You have given me your whole life,
So I will give it back to them -
Oh joy!

It will happen soon, we both know;
We have freed each other from sorrow:
So I give you back to the world;
Then you will appear to me only in my dreams
And bless me and weep with me -
Oh joy!

My beloved has invited me

My beloved has invited me to dinner,
But doesn't have a house where he can receive me,
Neither wood, nor hearth to cook and roast,
And the cooking pot itself was broken in two long ago.
Not even a little cask of wine does he have,
And absolutely no glasses to use,
The table was mean, the table cloth no better,
The bread was rock hard and the knife quite blunt.

Shut up out there, you odious ranter!

Shut up out there, you odious ranter!
Your cursed singing makes me sick.
And even if you kept it up till morning,
You'd still not manage a decent song.
Shut up for once and go to bed!
I'd sooner hear a donkey's serenade

Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)

from *La regata veneziana*

Anzoleta co passa la regata

I xe qua, i xe qua, vardeli, vardeli,
Povereti i ghe da drento,
Ah contrario tira el vento,
I gha l'acqua in so favor.

El mio Momolo dov'elo?
Ah lo vedo, el xe secondo.
Ah! che smania! me confondo,
A tremar me sento el cuor

Su, coraggio, voga, voga,
Prima d'esser al paletto,
Se ti voghi, ghe scometo,
Tutti indrio ti lassarà.

Caro, caro, par che el svola,
El li magna tuti quanti
Meza barca l'è andà avanti,
Ah capisso, el m'a vardà.

Francesco Maria Piave (1810-1876)

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)

Danse macabre

Zig et zig et zig, la mort cri en cadence
Frappant une tombe avec son talon,
La mort à minuit joue un air de danse,
Zig et zig et zag, sur son violon.

Le vent d'hiver souffle, et la nuit est sombre,
Des gémissements sortent des tilleuls;
Les squelettes blancs vont à travers l'ombre
Courant et sautant sous leurs grands linceuls,

Zig et zig et zig, chacun se trémousse,
On entend claquer les os des danseurs,
Un couple lascif s'asseoit sur la mousse
Comme pour goûter d'anciennes douceurs.

Zig et zig et zag, la mort continue
De racler sans fin son aigre instrument.
Un voile est tombé! La danseuse est nue!
Son danseur la serre amoureusement.

...

They're coming, they're coming, look at them,
the poor things! they row hard!
ah, the wind is against them,
but the tide is running their way.

My Momolo, where is he?
ah! I see him, he's the second,
Ah! I'm in a fidget! I get confused,
I feel my heart trembling.

Come on, row! row!
before you reach the pole,
if you keep on rowing, I'll lay a bet
you'll leave all the others behind.

Dear boy, he seems to be flying,
he's beating the others hollow,
he's gone half a length ahead,
ah, I understand: he looked at me.

Danse macabre

Zig and zig and zig, Death rhythmically
Taps upon a tomb with his heel;
Death at midnight plays a dance air,
Zig and zig and zig on his violin.

The winter wind whistles and the night is gloomy,
Groaning comes from the lime trees;
White skeletons move through the shadows,
Running and jumping under their large shrouds.

Zig and zig and zig, everyone is moving,
We hear the bones of the dancers banging,
A lascivious couple sits upon the moss
As if to taste ancient pleasures.

Zig and zig and zag, Death continues,
Scraping without end his harsh-sounding violin.
A veil has fallen! The dancer is nude!
Her partner squeezes her amorously.

...

La dame est, dit-on, marquise ou baronne.
Et le vert galant un pauvre charron—
Horreur! Et voilà qu'elle s'abandonne
Comme si le rustre était un baron!

Zig et zig et zig, quelle sarabande!
Quels cercles de morts se donnant la main!
Zig et zig et zag, on voit dans la bande
Le roi gambader auprès du vilain!

Mais psit! tout à coup on quitte la ronde,
On se pousse, on fuit, le coq a chanté...

Oh! La belle nuit pour le pauvre monde!
Et vive la mort et l'égalité!

Henri Cazalis (1840-1909)

Richard Wagner (1813-1883)

from *Wesendonck Lieder*

Träume

Sag', welch' wunderbare Träume
Halten meinen Sinn umfassen,
Daß sie nicht wie leere Schäume
Sind in ödes Nichts vergangen?

Träume, die in jeder Stunde,
Jedem Tage schöner blühen
Und mit ihrer Himmelskunde
Selig durchs Gemüte ziehn?

Träume, die wie hehre Strahlen
In die Seele sich versenken
Dort ein ewig Bild zu malen;
Allvergessen, Eingedenken!

Träume, wie wenn Frühlingsonne
Aus dem Schnee die Blüten küßt,
Daß zu nie geahnter Wonne
Sie der neue Tage begrüßt,

Daß sie wachsen, daß sie blühen,
Träumend spenden ihren Duft,
Sanft an deiner Brust verglühen
Und dann sinken in die Gruft.

Mathilde Wesendonck (1828-1902)

The lady is said to be a marchioness or baroness,
And the crude gallant a poor cartwright –
Horrors! And look, she gives herself to him
As though the churl were a baron!

Zig and zig and zig, what a saraband!
What circles of the dead, all holding hands!
Zig and zig and zag, we see in the crowd
King frolicking with peasant!

But shh! Suddenly the dance is over,
They jostle each other and take flight: the rooster
has crowed;

Oh! A beautiful night for the poor world!
And long live Death and Equality!

Dreams

Say, what are these wondrous dreams
that hold my soul captive,
and have not, like bubbles,
disappeared into oblivion?

Dreams which in every hour
of every day bloom more beautifully
and float blissfully through my mind
like messengers from heaven?

Dreams which like glorious rays
penetrate the soul,
leaving there an eternal image:
oblivion, remembrance!

Dreams which, like the spring sun
kissing blossoms out of the snow
and leading them to
undreamed-of bliss,

letting them grow, blossom
and dreamily cast their scent,
glow softly on your breast,
and then sink into their grave.

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*

Lob des hohen Verstandes

Einstmals in einem tiefen Tal
Kukuk und Nachtigall
Täten ein Wett anschlagen,
Zu singen um das Meisterstück:
„Gewinn es Kunst, gewinn es Glück,
Dank soll er davon tragen.“

Der Kukuk sprach: So dir's gefällt,
Hab ich den Richter wählt,
Und tät gleich den Esel ernennen,
Denn weil er hat zwei Ohren groß,
So kann er hören desto bos,
Und was recht ist, kennen.

Sie flogen vor den Richter bald,
Wie dem die Sache ward erzählt,
Schuf er, sie sollten singen.
Die Nachtigall sang lieblich aus,
Der Esel sprach, du machst mir's kraus.
Du machst mir's kraus. Ija! Ija!
Ich kanns in Kopf nicht bringen.

Der Kukuk drauf fing an geschwind
Sein Sang durch Terz und Quart und Quint.
Dem Esel gfiels, er sprach nur: Wart,
Dein Urteil will ich sprechen.

Wohl sungen hast du Nachtigall,
Aber Kukuk singst gut Choral,
Und hältst den Takt fein innen;
Das sprech ich nach mein' hohn Verstand,
Und kost es gleich ein ganzes Land,
So laß ichs dich gewinnen.
Kukuk, Kukuk, Ija!

Anon

In praise of high intelligence

Once in a deep valley
The cuckoo and the Nightingale
Made a bet,
Whoever sang the finer song
Whoever won win by skill or luck
Th winner will carry off the prize."

The cuckoo spoke: if it's alright with you
I have already chosen the judge,
And straight away named the donkey,
Because he has two such large ears
He'll hear more clearly what is bad
And will recognise what is good.

They flew quickly to the judge,
And explained their plan to him,
He commanded them to sing.
The nightingale sang sweetly,
The donkey said: you're driving me mad,
You're driving me mad. Hee-haw! Hee-haw!!
I just can't understand it.

Then the cuckoo quickly sang his song
Through thirds and fourths and fifths.
The donkey liked it, he just said wait:
I will give my verdict.

You sang well nightingale,
But cuckoo you sing a fine hymn
And keep good time;
That is my learned judgement,
And though it cost a whole country,
So I declare you the winner!
Cuckoo, cuckoo, hee-haw!

Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936)

Notte

*Sul giardino fantastico
Profumato di rosa
La carezza de l'ombra
Posa.*

*Pure ha un pensiero e un palpito
La quiete suprema,
L'aria come per brivido
Trema.*

*La luttuosa tenebra
Una storia di morte
Racconta alle cardenie
Smorte?*

*Forse perché una pioggia
Di soavi rugiade
[Entro socchiusi]1 petali
Cade,*

*Su l'aspose miserie
E su l'ebbrezze perdute,
Sui muti sogni e l'ansie
Mute.*

*Su le fugaci gioie
Che il disinganno infrange
La notte le sue lacrime
Piange...*

Ada Negri (1870-1945)

Liza Lehmann (1862-1918)

from *In a Persian Garden*

Ah, moon of my delight

Ah, moon of my delight, that knows no wane,
The moon of Heav'n is rising once again;
How oft hereafter rising shall she look
Through this same garden after me in vain!
And when thyself with shining foot shall pass
Among the guests star-scatter'd on the grass,
And in thy joyous errand reach the spot
Where I made one,
Turn down an empty glass.

*Hakim Omar Khayyám (c1048-c1122)
English: Edward Fitzgerald (1809-1883)*

Night

*On the fantastic garden
Perfumed by rose
The caress of a shadow -
Rests.*

*Nevertheless having a thought and a pulse
Supreme quiet,
The air, as if shivering -
Trembles.*

*Does the mournful darkness
A story of death
Tell to the gardenias -
So pale?*

*Maybe it's because a torrent
Of delicate dewdrops
Into half-closed petals -
Falls,*

*On concealed troubles
And on once intoxicating losses,
On voiceless dreams and anxieties -
Mute.*

*Over the fleeting joys
That disappointment smashes
Night, her tears
Weeps...*

Charles Ives (1874-1954)

Ich grolle nicht

Ich grolle nicht, und wenn das Herz auch bricht,
Ewig verlornes Lieb! ich grolle nicht.
Wie du auch strahlst in Diamantenpracht,
Es fällt kein Strahl in deines Herzens Nacht.
Das weiß ich längst.

Ich grolle nicht, und wenn das Herz auch bricht,
Ich sah dich ja im Traume,
Und sah die Nacht in deines Herzens Raume,
Und sah die Schlang', die dir am Herzen frisst,
Ich sah, mein Lieb, wie sehr du elend bist.
Ich grolle nicht.

Heinrich Heine (1797-1856)

I bear no grudge

I bear no grudge, even though my heart is breaking,
Love lost forever! I bear no grudge.
Although you shine in diamond splendour,
No beam falls into the night of your heart.
I knew that long ago.

I bear no grudge, even though my heart is breaking,
I saw you in my dreams,
And saw the night within your heart,
And saw the viper that gnaws at your heart;
I saw, my love, how wretched you are.
I bear no grudge.

Samuel Barber (1910-1981)

from *Hermit Songs*

The Desire for Hermitage

Seán Ó Faoláin (1900-1991)

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Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

from *Cabaret Songs*

Johnny

W. H. Auden (1907-1973)

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Wilhelm Stenhammar (1871-1927)

from *Songs and Ballads*

I skogen

Kärt är att råka dig, nattviol,
där blek du står ibland gräsen
och suckar ut efter sjunken sol
din doft, ditt innersta väsen.

Ljuvt är att höra din sång, du trast,
där högst i granen på spaning
du jublar ut under kvällens rast
om morgonrodnad din aning.

Men lär mig, nattviol, blid som din,
en sorg, när fröjd har gått under!
Trast, lär mig tolka så glad som din,
min tro på ljusare stunder!

Albert Theodor Gellerstedt (1836-1914)

In the forest

It's lovely to meet you, violet of the night,
Where palely you grow among the trees
And sigh out after the sun has set
Your scent and your inner being.

It's delightful to hear you song thrush,
When you look out from high up in the trees,
You rejoice with the dying of the day
At the dawn that will break tomorrow.

But teach me, violet of the night, shy like you,
Your sorrow, when all joy has departed!
Thrush, teach me to sing the way you do
Of my belief in happier times!

Gösta Nystroem (1890-1966)

from *På reveln*

Havet sjunger

Anders Österling (1884-1981)

For copyright reasons, we are unable to reproduce the text of these songs.

Kurt Weill (1900-1950)

Youkali

Roger Fernay (1905-1983)

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Biographies

Leeds Song Young Artists

Siri Bengtsson Marklund (soprano)

Siri Bengtsson Marklund is a Swedish soprano currently in her third year of a Bachelor's degree at the Royal College of Music in London, where she studies with Dinah Harris as a recipient of the Thriplow Charitable Trust Award. She has a particular interest in Lied and chamber music, with a focus on text-led interpretation and collaborative performance.

In November 2025, she was awarded the Schubert Song Prize at the London Song Festival Masterclass with Joseph Middleton. She has performed in the Royal College of Music's Song Plus concert series and will appear as a recitalist at the London Song Festival in autumn 2026.

Siri was brought up in the Swedish choral tradition and sang with the World Youth Choir as a teenager. Prior to her studies in London, she attended the Vadstena Song and Piano Academy, a Swedish pre-college programme specialising in art song. In 2024, she was selected by the Royal Swedish Academy of Music to participate in the Dorothy Irving Duo Masterclass. She has taken part in masterclasses and coachings with Dame Sarah Connolly, Simon Lepper, Camilla Tilling, Nigel Foster, Kristian Attila, Iréne Theorin, Magnus Svensson, Susanne Eken and Kristina Hammarström.

Recent performance highlights include Damigella in Francesca Caccini's *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola di Alcina* as part of an ERASMUS+ programme in Reykjavík, as well as Mozart's Requiem and the concert aria *Ch'io mi scordi di te?*

Siri has received generous scholarships in both Sweden and UK, including from the Anglo-Swedish Society, the Aurora Lillieros Fund, and the Thora Ohlsson Cultural Fund.

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.

Andrew Cowie (piano)

Andrew Cowie has performed at some of the world's most distinguished venues, including Buckingham Palace, the Duomo di Cremona and the Salzburger Dom. After completing an undergraduate degree in trombone at the Royal Academy of Music, he is now a postgraduate at the Royal College of Music, specialising in keyboard, historical performance and conducting. Recent highlights include the reopening of the King's Gallery; a double song recital début at the Royal Albert Hall with duo partner Mariana Rodrigues; appearances at the London Handel Festival; the London Bach Society Singer's Prize (on keyboard); and performances at the Japan Matsuri Festival and with the Aurora Orchestra at the Southbank Centre.

At home in most music written over the last 600 years, Andrew performs on various instruments, including piano, historical keyboards, trombone and sackbut. He has been a regular song accompanist alongside Richard Stokes, Florence Daguere de Hureaux and Emily Kilpatrick, and has enjoyed working with and performing for artists such as Rachel Podger, Patricia Kopatchinskaja, James Baillieu, Christian Gerhaer, Laurence Cummings, James Gilchrist, Dame Emma Kirkby, Yvonne Kenny, Nick Mulroy and Elizabeth Kenny. Recent albums as an instrumental accompanist with the Girton College, Cambridge Choir have placed in the top ten of the UK and worldwide classical charts.

Andrew is a Parnassus Scholar, supported by the Charles Colt Scholarship, and a recipient of the Help Musicians Ian Fleming Award. His song project 'Chantefable' with Mariana Rodrigues blends improvised music, poetry and song into complete concert narratives. They are BREMF 2025–26 Emerging Artists.

His recent piano feature film score for *Away with Words* will be released in 2026.

George Herbert (piano)

George Herbert was born in Manchester in 2001. His first album as a collaborative pianist, Rodrigo Ruiz's *Venus and Adonis* with Grace Davidson, won the Spanish prize *Melómano de Oro* in January 2025. He studied German and Music at St John's College, Cambridge, where he served as an organ scholar. He is now studying for an MA in Ensemble Piano at the Royal Academy of Music with Professors Michael Dussek and James Baillieu, where he is a scholarship recipient.

He has recently collaborated with Carolyn Sampson, Susan Bullock and Manchester Camerata. He is a participant in the Wigmore Hall French Song Exchange and looks forward to upcoming recitals at Wigmore Hall, Hallwylska in Stockholm, Salle Cortot in Paris and Southwark Cathedral. His recent projects include work with composer David Roche on a Welsh language heavy metal project, and a collaboration with author Bernhard Malkmus on the literary musical project *Flight Paths*.

Alongside his pianistic work, George is also active as a freelance singer. His engagements with Tenebrae and Continuum have taken him across Europe and the UK. He is generously supported by the Choir Association of St John's College, Cambridge. A passionate environmentalist, he volunteers with the London Wildlife Trust.

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.

Honoka Komoda (piano)

Honoka Komoda is a pianist from Japan. She completed her studies at the Aichi University of the Arts, where she trained with Irina Chukovskaya, Professor of Piano, and is now continuing her musical development in Austria.

From October 2022 to March 2024, she studied in the Postgraduate Piano Programme at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna with Professors Wolfgang Watzinger and Stefan Vladoar. Since March 2024, she has been enrolled in the Master's programme in Lied accompaniment with Professor Justus Zeyen.

She has won several awards at piano competitions in Japan and has performed in the Great Hall of the Vienna Musikverein. She has also appeared at the Schubertiade 'Junge Schubert-Stimmen' at Schubert Castle Atzenbrugg and in concerts organised by the Schubert Society.

In 2025 she was nominated for the Anny Felbermayer Förderpreis together with baritone Daniel Sauer. She was also nominated for scholarships from the AMICITIA Foundation and the Yamada Sadao Music Foundation. She has been selected for participation in the Basel LIEDAcademy 2026.

Honoka has received private lessons and masterclasses from distinguished artists including Dina Yoffe, Kevin Kenner, Elena Levit, Graham Scott, Noriko Ogawa, Matti Raekallio, Richard Stokes, Malcolm Martineau and Thomas Hampson.

On 19 February 2026, she will perform on the Hammerklavier in the Brahms Hall of the Vienna Musikverein as part of the concert series 'Aus der Schatzkammer' ('From the Treasury').

Alexander Karl Koschka (piano)

The Austrian pianist Alexander Karl Koschka received musical training from an early age and won multiple awards at the Prima la Musica Competition, including national level distinctions. He began his studies at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna in 2017 with Sibylla Joedicke, completing his bachelor's degree with distinction in 2022. He now studies with Matthias Trachsel for his master's degree and, since autumn 2025, has also specialised in Lied accompaniment with Justus Zeyen at the mdw.

Alexander has participated in masterclasses with Harald Ossberger, Mats Widlund and Marta Zabaleta, among others. His artistic interests encompass solo and chamber music as well as innovative concert formats and contemporary repertoire. In 2023 he took part in the world première of Georg Friedrich Haas's *11,000 Saiten* at the Wiener Konzerthaus. At the Munich Piano Podium 2024 he received several awards and subsequent invitations to perform throughout Germany.

As a Lied accompanist he forms a regular duo with soprano Martina Neubauer. Together, they won the Audience Prize at the final of the Sibelius Singing Lied Duo Competition in Finland (2025) and Third Prize at the International Copenhagen Lied Duo Competition. His playing is noted for its richness of colour, stylistic sensitivity and finely judged musicianship.

Alexander is increasingly in demand for projects that combine classical repertoire with contemporary influences. His collaborations highlight his versatility and his dedication to thoughtful programming, making him an exciting and expressive presence on today's musical scene.

Wan-Yen Li (piano)

Wan-Yen Li was born in Taipei, Taiwan. She has earned a distinguished reputation as a soloist, artsong pianist, accompanist, teacher and individual coach. She has been invited to the Heidelberger Frühling Liedakademie, the LIEDBasel Academy and Carnegie Hall SongStudio. She has also been selected for the Young Artists Programme at the 2026 Leeds Song Festival and for Campus Lied et Mélodie at the Royaumont Foundation.

She has received important artistic inspiration through collaborations with Thomas Hampson and Susan Manoff, as well as masterclasses with James Baillieu, Patricia Petibon, Anne Le Bozec, Javier Arrebola, Bryan Wagorn and others.

Wan-Yen works as a piano accompanist with numerous choirs and holds a lectureship in several singing classes at the Conservatory for Music and Dance Cologne. From the 2025 season onwards she will serve as choir accompanist at Theater Aachen in Germany. She has performed in New York, Paris, London, Basel, Montepulciano, Tokyo, Taipei and at many venues throughout Germany.

Following her bachelor's degree in Taiwan, she completed three master's degrees in Germany: in Lied interpretation with Prof. Ulrich Eisenlohr, in contemporary piano music with Prof. Pierre-Laurent Aimard and in solo piano with Prof. Florian Hölscher. She earned her Konzertexamen degree in Lied Interpretation under Prof. Stefan Irmer.

Edward Lloyd (piano)

Described as "A highly poetic and expressive performer with strong musical instincts alongside beautiful tonal colouring creating a notable silence in the audience indicative of their expressive ability and communicative musicianship." (Pascal Nemirovski)

Edward made his concerto début with the Oxford Festival Orchestra in the Church of St Mary the Virgin in 2022. Subsequent performances have brought him to the Bridgewater Hall, Stoller Hall, Liszt Academy in Budapest and most recently the Liverpool Philharmonic.

Edward has been a prize winner in numerous international competitions including the Liszt Society International Piano Competition, Christopher Duke and Vienna International Competition as well as the Beethoven Piano Society of Europe Competition. He is also active in chamber music and has received the first prize in both the Dorothy Richardson and the Alexander Young prizes for vocal accompaniment.

Edward Lloyd studied at Chetham's School of Music and is currently at the Royal Northern College of Music under the tutelage of Prof. Graham Scott, where he is supported by the The LHR Charitable Foundation.

Edward is an artist in the Davison Young Musicians Foundation. Since 2024, Edward has been an awards advocate for the DYMF. Currently in 2025, Edward has been selected as a Drake Calleja Trust Scholar and is supported by the Craxton Memorial Trust.

Joshua McDade (piano)

Joshua McDade is a Scottish pianist currently in the first year of his Master's degree in Collaborative Piano at the Royal College of Music, where he holds the Poppy Holden Scholarship. There, he studies under Roger Vignoles and Simon Lepper. Having graduated from Durham University in 2024, he is now based in London as a collaborative pianist. He currently focuses primarily on classical art song and chamber music.

Before moving to London, Joshua had been accompanying in and around the North East, primarily with Durham University, where he collaborated with a wide range of student ensembles and performers. He worked as a répétiteur for their productions of *Iolanthe*, *HMS Pinafore*, and *Dido and Aeneas*, gaining valuable experience in operatic rehearsal and performance. Alongside this, he served as an accompanist for the university's music students' examinations, supporting both singers and instrumentalists across a broad repertoire.

Joshua has performed in both chamber and solo settings, winning prizes at competitions including the Glasgow Music Festival. Before relocating to London, he participated and competed as part of various chamber ensembles, ranging from piano duets to piano trios and piano quintets, and performed as part of a national broadcast for Holocaust Memorial Day.

Since beginning his studies at the Royal College of Music, Joshua has taken part in several song competitions, including performing in the final of the Joan Chissell Schumann Competition.

As of now, Joshua is continuing to expand his work and performance opportunities in London, with upcoming internal and external competitions both within and beyond the Royal College of Music. He is particularly interested in developing long-term collaborations with singers and exploring the interpretative depth of the song repertoire.

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.

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 Elĭna Garanĉa, 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 Aerelis 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.

Viviana Țaga-Radu (piano)

Viviana-Maria Țaga-Radu began her piano studies at the age of six at the Octav Băncila National College of Art in Iași, Romania. Since then, she has taken part in more than fifty national and international piano competitions, as well as numerous chamber music festivals and concerts. From 2020 to 2022, she was a member of the youth orchestra in her hometown, performing a wide range of repertoire. Her passion for understanding music in depth was encouraged from an early age, leading her to participate in several music symposiums where she wrote and presented her own articles.

She is currently in her fourth year as an undergraduate at the Royal College of Music under the tutelage of Professor Edna Stern. Viviana has also developed an increasingly strong interest in the world of art song, collaborating with a growing number of singers. Most recently, she was awarded the Pianist Prize in the 2025 Brooks Van Der Pump English Song Competition.

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 début 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 Rimsky Korsakov's *Snegurochka* (2023).

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

Curtis Vetter (piano)

Curtis Vetter is a British German collaborative pianist and répétiteur based in London. Specialising in vocal accompaniment and chamber music, he is an acclaimed recitalist who performs across the UK. Curtis is a Young Artist at Leeds Song and was the recipient of the Sam Hutchings Pianist Prize at the Oxenfoord International Summer School, where he worked with Malcolm Martineau.

He has performed in masterclasses with renowned artists including Susan Bullock, Marie McLaughlin and Lucy Crowe, and his répétiteur work includes engagements with Birmingham Contemporary Music Group and Barber Opera on a variety of productions.

Curtis is currently undertaking postgraduate studies at the Royal Academy of Music with James Baillieu and Joseph Middleton, where he is supported by the Sir Curtis Price Scholarship. His studies are additionally funded by the Countess of Munster Musical Trust. He holds a First Class Honours degree in Music from the University of Birmingham.

Yihan Zhao (piano)

Yihan Zhao is a postgraduate student at the Royal College of Music in London, where he is studying piano with Jianing Kong and Dmitri Alexeev, and collaborative piano with Richard Uttley and Simon Lepper. He was generously supported by the Evelyn Tarrant Scholarship and the Eileen Rowe Musical Trust during his undergraduate studies, in which he was awarded the Chappell Medal as First Prize winner in the Chappell Medal Piano Competition 2022.

His recent début at Wigmore Hall in the 70th Kathleen Ferrier Award was highly commended, and his performance with countertenor Zheng Jiang received one of the most enthusiastic responses from the audience.

As a recent harpsichordist, Yihan has already achieved success as Second Prize winner at the Prix Annelie de Man, the international harpsichord competition in the Netherlands, in 2023. His involvement in the concert series *Abolition Song and Its Legacies* at the Handel Hendrix House explores, transmits and reinterprets the lost voices of historical composers and writers, particularly those who were Black or female.

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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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