



### The Fairy Queen

City Recital Hall Angel Place, Sydney  
3,6,7 & 8 December 2003  
Tickets on sale in July.

Dear Friends,

April 2003

### News

- We have chosen the last of our soloists for The Fairy Queen. Jamie Allen will join us to sing the tenor role. That gives us soprano Sara Macliver, mezzo Sally-Anne Russell and bass Stephen Bennett as well as Jamie. We will give a full profile of Jamie in a later newsletter but meanwhile just mention that he is a regular principal with Opera Australia – most recently singing Orpheus in *Orpheus in the Underworld* and Arturo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. You might also have heard him with Sydney Philharmonia in Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass*, and Rachmaninov's *The Bells*. Opera Australia has kindly agreed to release him from another commitment so he can sing with us.
- Anna Ryberg, our Semele, is to join the cast of Baz Luhrmann's production of *La Boheme* on Broadway next month. Anna is excited about this though disappointed that it will take her away from her new husband (that makes it sound as if she had an old one – no, this is her first) baritone Simon Bailey. Still they will be together more regularly from next year when Anna joins Simon as a resident soloist at Frankfurt Opera.
- We are delighted to announce that Erin Helyard, one of Pinchgut's artistic directors, is one of the joint winners of the Marten Bequest Travelling Scholarship, which is a terrific start on enabling him to go to do further study in North America (we can't say exactly where yet) for a Ph.D. We wish Erin all the best for his future studies, and look forward to hearing the results on his return. Anna McDonald is taking on full artistic directorship of Sirius Ensemble after Erin goes overseas. Erin is currently directing the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra in performances of Handel, Bach, Rameau and Vivaldi. Erin will get a taste of musical life in the States before he leaves to start his studies in September when he goes to to Wolftrap Opera in July, to be the assistant conductor to Antony Walker and the keyboard continuo player in their performances of Rameau's *Dardanus*. Wolftrap is a summer festival company just outside Washington DC that specialises in training the singers of the future. Sirius will be performing at the Art Gallery of NSW on the 29th May - Neal Peres da Costa will join Anna and Erin performing Bach and Giardini amongst others.
- Sydney concert goers recently got to hear three of the Fairy Queen's singing personnel – Miriam Allan, Paul McMahon and Stephen Bennett - in the Sydney Philharmonia performance of the reconstruction of Bach's *St Mark Passion*. The reconstruction was made from sketches that Bach left, and work of a contemporary of Bach's in Leipzig Reinhard Keiser.
- Cantillation recently went on tour to northern NSW with Musica Viva's Countrywide program. Performing repertoire largely drawn from two CDs – *Prayer for Peace*, and the soon to be out great Renaissance choral masterpieces – and the concerts were very successful. Venues included Lismore and Armidale. Cantillation can be next heard in concert with the Sydney Symphony in a program of reflections on Mozart's Requiem at the end of June.

## Artist profile : Sara Macliver

We'd like to introduce you to our soprano for The Fairy Queen – Sara Macliver.



Sara is no stranger to Australian audiences, through her concert performances and recordings, though it's a while since she sang any opera. We were delighted when Sara accepted to be part of The Fairy Queen, and we asked her a bit about herself.

Sara was born in Perth, and lived in Kalgoorlie until she was seven. The youngest of four children music has always been part of Sara's life. She began piano lessons as a small child, and while beginning singing lessons when she was sixteen, she did not take her singing seriously until she was at university. There she began lessons with Molly McGurk, with whom she credits much of her success. "I sang all the time as a child because I loved it."

"I trained as a teacher because I didn't think that singing would be a full time career for me, and teaching gives you many wonderful skills." Teaching in Perth, Sara also had opportunities to sing with local choirs and then with WA Opera, with whom she was a Young Artist. Paul Dyer heard her singing in Perth, and invited Sara to do some concerts with the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra. From there her singing career took off. Now she works regularly with all the state symphony orchestras – particularly Melbourne and Sydney, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Musica Viva, the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, the Australia Bach Ensemble, Sydney Philharmonia and Melbourne Chorale to name a few. Recently too she's been involved in a number of recording projects – Handel's Messiah, a disc of Haydn arias with the Tasmanian Symphony and a number of Christmas releases. Last year she did a series of New Year's concerts in Italy with Ola Rudner, her first taste of overseas work.

"I've also recently started working with Bernadette Balkus, we've formed a duo and this year are doing some concerts with Musica Viva. This gives me a chance to work on art-song and lieder and that's wonderful." Sara and Bernadette's first program is a cycle of songs and piano pieces from many different ages pertaining to children. Having three children of her own, including a brand new son it's a subject dear to her heart.

Now living in Sydney with her husband and children, Sara is really looking forward to do the Fairy Queen – "it's been a while since I did any opera, and I'm going to really enjoy the opportunity. I love the rawness of emotion in opera – it touches my soul. And Baroque opera – I'll be in heaven!" So will we be.

[If you'd like to hear some of Sara's recent recordings these can be bought from your local ABC store or at [www.abc.net.au](http://www.abc.net.au)]

## More on the Score

In the last newsletter, we started to tell the story of the lost score of The Fairy Queen. It went missing after the 1693 revival of the work by the Dorset Company and despite an advertisement in 1700 offering a reward it was not found until 1900 when it was discovered in the library of the Royal Academy of Music in London.

With the help of the RAM library, we have pieced together some more of the story.

It's believed that Johann Christoph Pepusch (1667-1752) came by the score in around 1706. Pepusch arrived in London from Saxony some time after 1697 (and therefore cannot have souvenired it from the Dorset Theatre in 1693) and worked as a violinist, harpsichordist and composer around London's opera companies, though not the Dorset Company. He was a collector of manuscripts - and the library clerk at RAM in 1950, who helpfully made some notes that are attached to the score, speculates that it had lain in a corner of the Dorset Theatre and was passed on to Pepusch when the theatre closed in 1706.

On or before Pepusch's death the manuscript was acquired by William Savage (1720-1789) a singer who had been taught by and then worked with Pepusch. Savage has an interesting story of his own: he had been a treble in Handel's companies and the role of Oberto in *Alcina* was written for him. Later he became what Handel's biographer called "a powerful and not unpleasant bass" and sang the bass role in the first London performance of *Messiah* in 1743.

The score was next acquired by R J S Stevens (1757-1837) probably in 1817. Stevens had been a chorister at St Paul's Cathedral and apprenticed to Savage, who had been Master of the Children there. Stevens became Professor of Music at Charterhouse and in 1817 was left a large bequest by a friend of his father, which allowed him to go into semi-retirement and build up his collection of manuscripts, including a large part of Savage's collection. If you are collecting trivia, you will be interested to learn that Stevens was very active in the glee club movement, which was popular in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. He introduced female voices and instruments into some works, but they did not become a permanent part of the glee club scene, which to this day remains male and unaccompanied. (More for the trivia file: Stevens composed glees on Shakespearean themes. The best known are: *Ye spotted snakes* (1782, rev. 1791), *Sigh no more, ladies* (1787), *Crabbed age and youth* (1790), *Blow, blow, thou winter wind* (1793) and *The cloud-cap't towers*(1795)).

Stevens did not have any connection with RAM, which had been founded in 1822. In fact, no-one knows why he left the collection to RAM. That was probably why the manuscripts did not receive much attention when they arrived at RAM in 1857. They were accepted by the RAM committee in 1865 but then put away "practically untouched and certainly uncatalogued" (to quote the library clerk in 1950) until 1901 when the historian Henry Davey made an arrangement with the Principal to catalogue the library in return for use of it for his own researches. J S Shedlock, a lecturer working with Davey, made the startling discovery of the long lost score of *The Fairy Queen*.

And that is how we received a microfilm of that score, some of which is in Purcell's own hand, a couple of weeks ago.

The Savage-Stevens Collection (as RAM now calls it) continues to give up secrets. In 2000, an unknown Gloria by Handel was found in the collection. The race to record it was won by Emma Kirkby and the RAM Baroque Orchestra in June 2001.

Acknowledgement: These notes were written with help from materials in the library of the Royal Academy of Music and from [www.grovemusic.com](http://www.grovemusic.com). For those not yet bored by the subject, we warn that will be conducting further reseach in London on the provenance of the score as well as on various portraits of Purcell at RAM and the National Portrait Library.

## A Fairy Queen sampler



As we did with *Semele*, we are going to put out a sampler of the *Fairy Queen* before our production. With *Semele* there was one very famous 'hit' tune that many people knew without knowing where it came from. With the *Fairy Queen* there's nothing quite like that – but there are many fantastic pieces within the work, and we love you to have a listen to some of these. As it's a piece with a lot of incidental music there are many beautiful little miniatures ideal for a sampler.

With the very kind assistance of ABC Classics we spent a session putting down a few tracks, and we'll let you know when this is out. For those of you who know the work - just to whet your appetite - Sally-Anne is singing *The Plaint*.

## Recordings of The Fairy Queen

There are many good recordings of *The Fairy Queen*, going back to those made by Benjamin Britten and by the Dellar Consort. We recommend the modern recording by The Sixteen under Harry Christophers on the Coro label, which has been set up by The Sixteen to release their back catalogue as well as new recordings. Fish Fine Music and Michael's Music Room should have it. Harry describes the making of *The Fairy Queen* as "The happiest week of our recording life". It is interesting how often the word "happy" is mentioned by those who have performed or recorded the work.

In the next issue we'll give you an intro to Jamie Allen, and tell you about the performance history of the *Fairy Queen*.

If you know of anyone who would like to receive this newsletter drop us an email, or send a note to the address below.

Liz, Alison, Anna C, Anna Mc, Antony, Erin & Ken.

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Purcell! What a genius! And lucky, too. Nobody has ever thought to blow him up into a God-like genius, like poor old Bach, or a Misunderstood Genius, like poor old Mozart, or a Wicked and Immoral Genius, like poor old Wagner. Purcell is just a nice, simple Genius, rollicking happily through Eternity.

The boobs and the gramophone salesmen and the music hucksters haven't discovered him yet and please God they never will. Kids don't peck and mess at little scraps of Purcell for examinations.

Arthritic organists don't torture Purcell in chapels and tin Bethels all over the country on Sundays, while the middle classes are pretending to be holy. Purcell is still left for people who really like music.

Robertson Davies, Canadian novelist and music critic.

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