

Verdi Requiem
Saturday 23rd November 2013 at 7.30 p.m.
Victoria Hall, Bolton
Director: Marco Fanti

Soloists and Orchestra

Laurie Ashworth - Soprano

Laurie Ashworth was born in Wigan, Lancashire. She commenced her studies in 2002 at the Royal Northern College of Music under the tutelage of Caroline Crawshaw. She graduated with first class honours and was awarded the RNCM Gold Medal, the college's highest award for performance.

Awards from The Arts and Humanities Research Council and The Countess of Munster Musical Trust enabled her to complete her Masters in Vocal Performance at the RCM, where she studied with Patricia Rozario and Janis Kelly, graduating with distinction in 2008. In 2010 Laurie was awarded the Song Prize at the Kathleen Ferrier Awards and in the same year she was a finalist and runner-up in BBC Radio 2's The Kiri Prize; a nationwide search by Dame Kiri Te Kanawa and the BBC to find a new operatic star.



For the last ten years Laurie has specialised in the oratorio and concert repertoire and today she is a highly sought-after artist with an extensive repertoire. She has performed at many of the UK's major venues, including the Wigmore Hall, the Royal Albert Hall, De Montfort Hall in Leicester, Brangwyn Hall in Swansea and the Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool.

Laurie's recordings and broadcasts include the premiere recording of Bob Chilcott's 'Requiem' for Hyperion Records, BBC Proms 2012 on BBC Radio 3 and numerous appearances on BBC Radio 2's 'Friday Night is Music Night.'

Janet Shell - Mezzo Soprano



Mezzo soprano Janet Shell worked as a Head of Music before retraining at Guildhall School of Music and Drama. She quickly established herself in recital and won several prizes for French song in Paris and was outright winner of the Royal Tunbridge Wells International Competition. She continues to remain one of the leading mezzos of her generation. She was the first mezzo to be taken on by YCAT and the first singer to give a live broadcast on Classic FM. She has also broadcast on several occasions for the BBC on "Friday Night is Music Night" including the

first female duet programme in their history.

Janet has sung for Welsh National Opera, Opera North, English National Opera and for the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden. It is, however, for her oratorio and recital work that Janet remains best known and her extensive repertoire continues to impress. She has performed in many major venues in the UK including the Royal Albert Hall, Beethoven *Missa Solemnis* and Mahler *Symphony 8*), Birmingham Symphony Hall, (Mahler *Symphony 8*), Barbican (Haydn *Nelson Mass*), Cadogan Hall (*Verdi Requiem*). Her affinity with the music of Elgar is often commented upon, in particular *Dream of Gerontius* which she sings regularly, notably at Liverpool Philharmonic Hall and, during the anniversary year, The Sage. Next year she will sing it at Ely Cathedral in June. Abroad she has worked with the RPO, Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Lille Philharmonic. She was invited to sing in Tokyo by the then Prime Minister, John Major, for his honoured guests, and subsequently at Downing Street. Recital engagements have taken to the Middle East, Yemen, Far East, South America and Europe. In December 2008, she sang Faure's rarely heard song cycle, "La Chanson d'Eve" in a recital to mark 21 years of working with her accompanist, their "coming of age" recital! Future recital work includes a much anticipated collaboration with Lucy Parham in the Schumann anniversary year.

She regularly sings with Opera Interludes at celebrity corporate events and is on their Operatic Highlights. She had a setting of a poem by Ben Okri especially composed for her in 2008 by Keith Burstein and together they gave the first performance with Ben present, at St James', Piccadilly.

Janet maintains a busy performing schedule, but also teaches singing and gives workshops. She has given invited vocal master classes at Stetson University, Florida and at the Music Conservatoire in Tokyo.

John Upperton - Tenor

Born in County Durham, John then read Music at the University of Liverpool as a first study pianist, continuing as a postgraduate singer at the Royal College of Music. He studies with David Pollard and works closely with the conductor David Roblou.

Royal Opera House engagements include Gherardo (*Gianni Schicchi*) and Panas (*Tsarina's Slippers*). At the English National Opera he understudied Walter (*The Passenger*) Gregor (*Makropulos Case*), Herod (*Salome*) and Molqi in *The Death of Klinghoffer*. He is principal tenor for Midsummer Opera and has also appeared with Longborough Festival Opera, Garsington and Birmingham Opera. Engagements abroad include New Israeli Opera and Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza. For his début in the Queen Elizabeth Hall he sang Pirro in Rossini's *Ermione* and for his Purcell Room début, Janáček's *Zápisník Zmizelého* which he recorded in April 2010. A gradual move into heavier repertoire includes the roles: Idomeneo, Florestan, Pollione, Edgardo, Don Carlo, Radamès, Macduff, Cavaradossi, Luigi, Calaf, Don José, Werther, Max, Lohengrin, Tristan, Siegmund, Siegfried, Tannhäuser, Bacchus, Chairman Mao, Peter Grimes and Aschenbach.



Concert repertoire includes Liszt's *Tre Sonetti di Petrarca*, Dvořák and Poulenc song cycles, Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*, Berlioz's *Les Nuits d'été*, Finzi's *Dies Natalis*, Strauss Songs, Dvořák's *Stabat Mater*, Verdi's *Requiem*, Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* and Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass*.

Baritone – Laurence Meikle



Laurence Meikle studied in his native Australia and at London's Royal Academy of Music. Highlights in 2012 include the three baritone roles Massenet's *La Vierge* (Opera Monte Carlo), Escamillo *Carmen* (both Teatro dell'Opera di Milano and Royal Scottish National Orchestra), Marcello *La Bohème* (Teatro dell'Opera di Milano), Marco Gianni Schicchi (Opera Holland Park), and Borov/Gretch *Fedora* (Bergamo Opera). For his Opera Australia debut, Laurence sang Luiz *The Gondoliers* at the Sydney Opera House; other credits in Australia and the UK include Handel's *Saul* (Spitalfields Festival) and *Belshazzar* (London Handel Festival), and roles such as *Don Giovanni*, *Guglielmo*, *Conte Almaviva*, *Marcello/Schaunard*, *Belcore*, *Malatesta*, *Ceprano* and *Angelotti*. In 2013, he will add six new roles to his repertoire with companies throughout the UK and Europe, as well as giving concert performances such as Mahler's *Ruckert Lieder* with the Bromley Symphony, *Delius' Sea Drift* with the Huntingdon Philharmonic, and a recital tour of Brazil with pianist Ivan Pires .

www.laurencemeike.com

The Orchestra

Lancashire *Sinfonietta*

The Lancashire Sinfonietta is one of the most distinctive chamber orchestras in the UK. Its members are home-grown Lancashire musicians handpicked from the finest British orchestras. They come together with world class soloists and directors to inspire the next generation through a diverse programme across Lancashire and the North West.

The orchestra is a conductor less ensemble which appears in many guises, from small chamber groups to 40-piece orchestras. Jazz fusion, new music commissions, working with pop groups, cross art-form productions, digital schools resources and a great deal of work with children offer many surprising alternatives to traditional concerts. This innovation and experimentation means the Sinfonietta is constantly evolving and responding to our audiences.

The Sinfonietta is Orchestra in Residence at Lancaster University, rated a Top 10 UK university. LU is home to the Lancaster Institute for the Contemporary Arts (LICA) and the innovative creative arts programme - Live at LICA (www.liveatlica.org). The

orchestra's annual Young Composer in Residence and Christopher Brooks Memorial Prize are also hosted by the university.

Education has always been at the heart of the orchestra's activities. The musicians have developed a strong expertise in Early Years music making, developing a 2-year programme for children under 5 thanks to £100k grant from the National Lottery through Arts Council England. A set of resources are available for babies, toddlers and pre-school children.

Primary Schools are another main source of inspiration for the orchestra and current projects include "Nutcracker Miniatures"(KS1), "The Carnival of the Animals" (KS2) and "The Wreck of the Titanic" (KS2).

Recording is an important aspect of their work and recent projects have produced a jazz fusion CD recorded live, Pictures at an Exhibition & Peter and the Wolf, web-streaming of new commissions as well as 3 CDs for children under 5.

To find out much more, explore their website and keep up to date with them on Facebook:

www.lancs-sinf.com

www.facebook.com/lancs.sinf

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Tickets on sale September 2013

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