

Britten Weekend Masterclasses: English Song

The young artists participating in these masterclasses are part of the 2023–24 cohort of international performers on the Britten Pears Young Artist Programme.

The Britten Pears Young Artist Programme was founded in 1972 by Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears and offers early-career professional musicians the opportunity for high-level performance training by the world's finest performers, teachers and creatives.

This course on English Song explores a range of classical and contemporary works for voice and piano, and is led by experts in the field Julius Drake, Julia Faulkner, Audrey Hyland and Gweneth Ann Rand, alongside composer Sally Beamish and writer, director and actor Peter Thomson. As part of the programme, we've invited composer Anna Disley-Simpson and poet Katie Byford to produce a song cycle for one of the duos from this week, which will be premiered in June at the 2024 Aldeburgh Festival.

The course culminates in a recital on Sunday 15 October at 11am, as part of our Britten Weekend.



The Britten Pears Young Artist Programme is made possible with the generous support of our Trust & Foundations and individual supporters

Course participants:

Emily Jennings *soprano*

(Elizabeth Harwood Memorial Award)

Emily Jennings studied at the Royal College of Music where she completed both an undergraduate and master's degree, supported by an Alice Templeton award. A passionate recitalist, Emily most recently performed with pianist Emily Hoh in their concert 'a landscape of songs from the British Isles' in St Alfege's Church, Greenwich. Emily has a long love of folk music and was thrilled to make her solo debut at Glastonbury Festival this year where she gave a self-accompanied recital of traditional folksongs and English art songs on the Mandala Stage in the Green Futures Field. She is a keen ensemble singer and has performed with, among others, the Britten Sinfonia and Voices, the London Handel Orchestra and the Sixteen. She recently sang in Mozart's C minor Mass with the Utopia Orchestra and Choir as part of the Salzburger Festspiele.

Shafali Jalota *soprano (Richard Cave Bursary)*

British-American soprano Shafali Jalota is a prizewinner in the Metropolitan Opera National Council auditions, the Camille Coloratura Awards, the Bel Canto Vocal Scholarship Competition, and a finalist in the Bampton Classical Opera Competition. She has performed internationally with companies including the Royal Opera House, Glyndebourne, Opera Neo and Chautauqua Opera, and, most recently, in her second season at Glyndebourne as both a member of the chorus and as cover for Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*. She is currently a member of the National Talent Programme at the prestigious National Opera Studio in London. Shafali is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the Maryland Opera Studio. She is grateful for the support of St Stephen's Church, Rochester Row, the Bel Canto Vocal Scholarship Foundation and the Robertson Scholars Leadership Program.

Lindsey Reynolds *soprano*

(*Mary Mackintosh Award*)

American soprano Lindsey Reynolds is currently a second-year member of the Ryan Opera Center ensemble. This season the New Orleans native appears as Barena (*Jenůfa*), Clorinda (*La Cenerentola*) and cover for Sadie (Terrance Blanchard's *Champion*) at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. She has appeared in concert with the Curtis Symphony Orchestra under Yannick Nézet-Séguin and with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Stéphane Denève. She is the recipient of an Emerging Artist Award from Opera Index and the Richard F. Gold Career Grant from the Shoshana Foundation. Lindsey has been awarded first place in many competitions, including the Camille Coloratura Awards, James Toland Vocal Arts Competition, Young Patronesses of the Opera/Florida Grand Opera Competition and the Musicians Club of Women. She received her BMus and MMus degrees from the Curtis Institute of Music.

Siân Eleanor Griffiths *mezzo-soprano*

Born in Brighton, Siân Eleanor Griffiths is a recent graduate of the National Opera Studio's Young Artist Programme where she studied with John Evans. Previous to this, she read Ancient History at Reading University before pursuing vocal studies at the Guildhall, including its Opera School. Siân recently took part in the Verbier Festival's Atelier Lyrique programme where she participated in masterclasses and coaching with Renée Fleming, Barbara Frittoli and Thomas Hampson, as well as performing the role of Baba the Turk in a concert version of Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*, conducted by James Gaffigan. Recent highlights also include the UK premiere of Joby Talbot's opera *Everest* with the BBC SO and BBC Singers; Dryad in Garsington Opera's new production of *Ariadne auf Naxos*; and Guest Singer in the world premiere of Joby Talbot's *Like Water for Chocolate* for the Royal Ballet at the Royal Opera House.

Lydia Shariff *mezzo-soprano*

Lydia Shariff is a recent graduate of the Master's programme at the Guildhall, where she is now a student in the Opera School. She performs a great variety of repertoire and is in demand as a charismatic performer of opera, song and jazz, and has received significant young operatic training in recent years from companies such as the Glyndebourne Academy and British Youth Opera. In masterclasses and projects, Lydia has worked with Roderick Williams, Kamal Khan, Thomas Allen and Susan Bullock, among others. As a singer with the British Youth Opera Serena Fenwick programme she recently performed Vaughan Williams' *The Pilgrim's Progress* with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. She has also recently sung Juno in Handel's *Agrippina* with Hampstead Garden Opera, and covered First Norn in Longborough Festival Opera's production of Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*.

Myrna Tennant *mezzo-soprano*

(*Elizabeth Harwood Memorial Award*)

Originally from the Netherlands, Myrna Tennant is now based in Greenwich, London. She studied at the Guildhall with Yvonne Kenny and before that at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, with Helen Lawson and Wilma MacDougall. Having initially trained and worked as a soprano, Myrna made the shift to mezzo-soprano in 2023, and as a result has performed a wide and varied range of repertoire. Opera highlights include the title role in Massenet's *Cendrillon*, Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*), Dido (*Dido and Aeneas*) and Sandman (*Hansel and Gretel*). Myrna regularly performs in recital and has been the soloist in various oratorios including Haydn's *Missa 'Sancti Nicolai'*, Mozart's *Requiem* and Handel's *Messiah*. She has also been a soloist in works including Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb* and Vaughan Williams' *Serenade to Music*.

Travon D. Walker *tenor*

Travon D. Walker is a recent graduate of Rice University, where he received his Master's degree in Vocal Performance. While at Rice, he performed the role of Sam Kaplan in Kurt Weill's *Street Scene*, as well as in scenes from *Così fan tutte*, *The Turn of the Screw*, *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *West Side Story*. Travon made his debut at the Houston Grand Opera earlier this year, singing the Navigator in the world premiere of Jeremy Howard Beck's *Another City*. He completed his undergraduate studies at the Eastman School of Music, where he was heard in the roles of The Reader in Ricky Ian Gordon's *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, and Dan Leno in the virtual production of Kevin Puts' *Elizabeth Cree*. He is a former Wolf Trap Opera Studio Artist and a Carnegie Hall SongStudio Young Artist. Travon recently received an Encouragement Award in the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition (Kansas District).

Jonathan Eyers *baritone*

Jonathan Eyers is from Hamilton, New Zealand, and is currently training as a Young Artist on the Global Talent Programme at the National Opera Studio, London, generously supported by the Elizabeth Barnard Memorial Bursary. He recently completed the Opera Studies course at the Guildhall, studying with Robert Dean. He holds a Master of Performance from the Guildhall and a BMus from the University of Waikato. He is a founding member of Whānau Voices. Recent song highlights include a recital with Roger Vignoles at the Armourers' Hall, recitals in St Martin-in-the-Fields and at the Oxford Spring Song Festival, and recording Detlev Glanert's *Gesang des Achill* for BBC Radio 3. This year Jonathan premiered new works by Emily Hazrati, Nathan Williamson and Luka Venter, and will be performing later this year in the Oxford International Song and London Song festivals.

Yuriy Hadzetsky *baritone*

(*Anthony and Barbadee Meyer Song Bursary*)

Ukrainian baritone Yuriy Hadzetsky studied at the Lviv National Music Academy and the Opera Academy Young Talent Development Programme of the Polish National Opera. He is a laureate of several high-profile singing competitions, including the Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels and the International Art Song Competition in Stuttgart. Last season he performed the role of Mercutio for Opernhaus Zürich in Ted Huffman's new production of *Roméo et Juliette* under Roberto Forés Veses. This year he made his debut at the Bregenz Festival as Albert in Massenet's *Werther*, and participated in Carnegie Hall's SongStudio Program and in masterclasses with Anne Sofie von Otter at Wigmore Hall. Yuriy's operatic experience includes his debut as Don Giovanni (Lviv National Opera), Count in *Figaro* (Lyric Opera Studio Weimar) and Achilla in *Giulio Cesare* (Grand Theatre, Poznań).

Jeeyoung Lim *baritone*

Jeeyoung Lim studied at the Korea National University of Arts under the tutelage of Hans (Hyunsoo) Choi, Hyuk Lee and So Young Lee, and at the Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler in Berlin under Scot Weir, Thomas Quasthoff and Wolfram Rieger. He has taken part in the Leeds Lieder, Lied Basel, Eppaner Liedsommer, and, most recently, the Oxford Lieder festivals. Jeeyoung has won numerous prizes, including Most Promising Future Talent at the Das Lied International Song Competition, and the Britten Pears Young Artist Programme Prize at the Wigmore Hall Song Competition. Jeeyoung runs the Facebook page 'Lied World', which he founded to make German Song popular in Korea and to introduce lesser-known songs to the public. He is a scholarship recipient of the Verein Yehudi Menuhin Live Music Now Berlin e.V. and Lied Akademie des Internationalen Liedzentrums Heidelberg.

Florian Störtz *baritone*

Florian Störtz is the winner of both the 2023 International Handel Singing Competition and the 2023 Helmut Deutsch Song Competition. This season he performs under the baton of Masaaki Suzuki on a European tour of Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with the OAE, a UK tour of the *St John Passion* with Oxford Bach Soloists, and his debut at the Händel-Festspiele in Halle. In recital, Florian's recent appearances include French song concerts at the Salle Cortot in Paris, and at Wigmore Hall as part of its French Song Exchange, as well as at song festivals in Zeist (Netherlands) and Leeds. The current season also sees his recital debut alongside pianist Helmut Deutsch. Florian is an alumnus of the Royal Academy of Music, where he was awarded first prizes for both opera and song recitals. Having enjoyed his musical upbringing in the vocal music scene around Trier Cathedral in Germany, he is now based in London.

Stephen Whitford *baritone*

London-based baritone Stephen Whitford grew up in Cheltenham and studied at King's College, Cambridge, the Royal Academy of Music and the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna. His teachers have included Florian Boesch, Nuccia Focile, Joy Mammen, Joseph Middleton, Jonathan Papp and Sebastian Vitucci, and he is currently taught by Sophie Grimmer. Recent performances include the Britten Song Trail in the 2023 Aldeburgh Festival; the role of Derrick in Gothic Opera's production of *Rip van Winkle*; a concert of music by Brahms and Schumann in Vienna's Musikverein; and a recital of Ravel, Strauss and Schumann for the Wiener Gesellschaft für Musiktheater. Upcoming performances include the title role in Mendelssohn's *Messiah* (Stroud Choral) and Marcello in Aylesbury Opera's *La Bohème*. He was a semi-finalist in the 2022 Wigmore Hall/Bollinger International Song Competition.

Emily Hoh *piano*

Swedish-Taiwanese pianist Emily Hoh is the recipient of the 2023 Royal Overseas League Award for Collaborative Pianists. She studied at the RCM with Simon Lepper, Roger Vignoles and Kathron Sturrock. In May 2023 she was awarded the first place pianist prize Hope Gosse Award at the Ashburnham English Song competition. Emily is a Samling Artist and has received coaching from Mark Elder and Jonathan Ware. She has taken part in collaborative piano masterclasses with Lydia Brown on American Song and with Mark Padmore on *Dichterliebe*, and will be performing with baritone Edward Kim as part of the Oxford International Song Festival on 17 October. Prior to her music studies, Emily read Psychology at University College, London. Her dissertation investigated retrospective evaluations of musical experiences and was published in 2022 in the journal *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*.

Benedikt Holter *piano*

Austrian pianist Benedikt Holter won the Britten Pears Young Artist Programme Prize at the 2022 Wigmore Hall/Bollinger International Song Competition. He studies piano (instrumental pedagogy) with Amandine Savary, focusing on collaborative piano (Stephen Delaney), fortepiano (Stefan Gottfried), and harpsichord (performance) with Erich Traxler at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna. Currently he is on an exchange semester, studying at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music with Neal Peres da Costa and Daniel Herscovitch. He has performed in several theatres in Vienna with actor and singer Stephan Pointner, and taken part in masterclasses with, among others, Graham Johnson, Roger Vignoles, Edoardo Torbianelli, Barthold Kuijken, Gabor Csalog and Michel Béroff. Benedikt also plays the cello and completed his Master's degree in Technical Physics at the Technische Universität Vienna last June.

Juliette Journaux *piano*
(*Viola Tunnard Young Artist*)

Juliette Journaux is a graduate of the French National Conservatoire in Paris, and has a career as both a soloist and accompanist in France and abroad. As a fervent defender of the art of Lieder and French Song, she accompanies rising singers of the next generation, in particular baritones Liviu Holender and Edwin Fardini, and is regularly invited as a vocal coach by the Opéra-Comique, Rouen Opera, Aix-en-Provence festival and Tiroler Festspiele Austria. Juliette's first solo album *Wanderer without words* was released in September, featuring works by Schubert and unpublished transcriptions by Mahler and Wagner. Her plans for this season include a world premiere recording of works by Viennese composer Oskar C. Posa with violinist Eva Zavaro and baritone Edwin Fardini, and a new production of *Così fan tutte* production at the Châtelet with Christophe Rousset.

Hikaru Kanki *piano*

Hikaru Kanki is a Japanese pianist and chamber musician specialising in art song. Her concert activities have taken her to Carnegie Hall, Wigmore Hall and Semperoper Dresden, as well as to festivals such as Sommerliche Musiktage Hitzacker and LIEDBasel. She studied at the Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media (HMTM) with Roland Krüger and Jan Philip Schulze. Since 2020 she has been a faculty member at HMTM, where she leads projects on contemporary art song as a Dorothea-Erxleben scholar. Recent awards include the best pianist prizes at the Helmut Deutsch International Song Competition (2018), the Maritim Music Prize (2018) and the Wigmore Hall/ Bollinger International Song Competition (2022). At the 54th International LiedDuo Competition 's-Hertogenbosch in the Netherlands, she received first prize with baritone Arvid Fagerfjäll and the Rudolph Jansen Pianist Prize (2021).

Ilan Kurtser *piano*

Ilan Kurtser recently graduated from the Royal Academy of Music, where he studied with Michael Dussek, James Baillieu and Malcolm Martineau. He is a Leeds Lieder Young Artist, Samling Artist and the winner of many accompaniment prizes. Ilan's early training was in Israel with Enn Wittenberg and later at the Buchmann-Mehta School of Music, Tel-Aviv University with Asaf Zohar. Ilan is currently a Fellow at the RAM where he curates concerts for the Academy Song Circle and Academy Voices series, teaching and coaching singers and accompanists. As a Bicentenary Scholar he is also recording his debut CD of Wolf's complete *Goethe-Lieder* with eight singers, all RAM alumni. Concert highlights in past seasons have included recitals with violist Paul Silverthorne, mezzo-soprano Helen Charlston (Leeds Lieder) and Elizabeth Watts (Jersey), and performances at Wigmore Hall, Sage Gateshead, and Jerusalem Music Centre.

Aleksandra Myslek *piano*

Aleksandra Myslek is a Polish collaborative pianist and répétiteur. She graduated from the Royal Academy of Music where she studied piano with Christopher Elton and Hamish Milne. Turning towards collaborative piano, she then won a Junior Fellowship in piano accompaniment at Trinity Laban and subsequently completed the Guildhall Opera School répétiteur course. Aleksandra is a prizewinner of both solo and chamber music competitions such as the III International Chopin Competition in Budapest, Wilfrid Parry Brahms Prize, Brenda Webb Accompanist Prize, Tunnell Trust Award and Edith Poulsen Accompanist Prize. She frequently works as a coach and répétiteur and has experience with a large variety of repertoire. Aleksandra is a Live Music Now musician and a staff pianist at the Trinity Laban Conservatoire and the Guildhall. She was a Santander Encuentro de Música, Leeds Lieder, and Solti Accademia Young Artist.

Anna Disley-Simpson *composer*

Anna is a multi award-winning composer, performer and educator originally from Dorset. She studied Composition at the Royal Northern College of Music has just completed an MA in Opera-Making at the Guildhall, where she collaborated with librettist Olivia Bell to devise the chamber opera *Lost Property* for performance in July 2023. Her piece *february twilight* was recently selected as Song of the Day on Radio 3's *Essential Classics*. Anna's body of work ranges from uplifting vocal works and catchy pop songs to delicate electronic soundscapes and experimental multimedia pieces. With a particular affinity for working with voices and text, Anna spent 2021 as a young composer collaborating with the National Youth Choirs of Great Britain, which involved an album-release on NMC Recordings featuring two of her works. Her piece *The Way Through the Woods* written for the National Youth Choir was recently published by Stainer & Bell.

Katie Byford *poet*

Katie Byford is a poet, writer and filmmaker. She is interested in experiences of patriarchal violence, post-traumatic stress, mythmaking as trauma processing, healing and its definition, chronic illness, queer corporeality, joy and wildness. She won first place in the 2020 Oxford Brookes International Poetry Competition with her poem *Appetit*, and her first pamphlet of poems, *He Said I Was a Peach*, was published in 2021 by ignitionpress. In recent years Katie has collaborated with musicians as a librettist. She is currently developing *The Styx*, a project that brings together artists' film, poetry and opera. *The Styx*, which parallels PTSD therapy with a journey through Persephone's Underworld, is supported by Arts Council England and made in collaboration with composer Athanasia Kontou and opera producer and soprano Helene Mathiesen.

Course tutors:

Sally Beamish *tutor*

Sally Beamish was born in London. She studied viola at the RNCM and was a founder member of the Raphael Ensemble. In 1990 she began to develop her career as a composer. Her music embraces many influences – particularly jazz and Scottish traditional music. From 2018–20, she was composer-in-residence with the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields. With David Bintley, Sally is currently working on her third full-length ballet, *A Christmas Carol*, to be premiered by Finnish National Ballet in December 2023. This year has also seen the premiere of the orchestral version of *Four Songs from Hafez*, performed by Roderick Williams with the Sinfonia of London conducted by John Wilson at the 2023 Aldeburgh Festival. Sally was recently appointed as an international Fellow of the Royal Swedish Musical Academy, and in 2020 was awarded an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours.

Julius Drake *tutor*

Pianist Julius Drake lives in London and enjoys an international reputation as one of the finest instrumentalists in his field, collaborating with many of the world's leading artists, both in recital and on disc. His passionate interest in song has led to invitations to devise song series for Wigmore Hall; the Concertgebouw; 92nd Street Y, New York; and the Pierre Boulez Saal, Berlin. He curates an annual series of song recitals, Julius Drake and Friends, in the historic Middle Temple Hall in London. Julius holds a Professorship at Graz University in Austria for Music and the Performing Arts, where he has a class for song pianists. He is also a Professor of Collaborative Piano at the Guildhall and is regularly invited to give masterclasses worldwide. His recording of Janáček's *The Diary of One Who Disappeared*, with Nicky Spence and Václava Housková, won both the Gramophone and the BBC Music Magazine Awards in 2020.

Julia Faulkner *tutor*

Firmly established as one of the world's top voice teachers, Julia Faulkner has students performing globally at the Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, Berlin, Paris, Vienna State Opera, Bavarian State Opera, San Francisco Opera, and Lyric Opera of Chicago, among others. In recent years, she has had winners in many prominent competitions including the Metropolitan Opera Laffont, the Richard Tucker Foundation, and the Cardiff Singer of the World. Julia has had a distinguished international singing career with performances on many of the world's great opera and concert stages. She made her Metropolitan Opera debut in the title role of Strauss' *Arabella* in 1994 and sang major roles for many years at the Bavarian and Vienna State Operas. A well-regarded recording artist, Julia has recordings on the Naxos, EMI and Deutsche Grammophon labels.

Audrey Hyland *tutor*

Audrey Hyland studied at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, Guildhall, Britten Pears School and the Banff Center for the Arts in Canada, and subsequently joined the coaching staff at the RAM, where she enjoyed almost two decades of teaching. In great demand as a guest coach, she has worked for the Jette Parker Young Artist Programme, Royal Opera, Samling Foundation masterclasses, the Solti course in Italy, the Royal Conservatoire in Copenhagen, the Seoul and Montreal festivals, and was the artistic director of the North Sea Vocal Academy summer programme in Denmark. She is a founder member of the recital group Songsmiths. In 2017, Audrey was delighted to take up the position of Deputy Head of Vocal and Opera at RCM in London. Audrey is thrilled to be back here in this most special environment of Britten Pears Arts.

Gweneth Ann Rand *tutor*

Soprano Gweneth Ann Rand trained at the University of Exeter, Goldsmith's College, and the Guildhall. She was a Vilar Young Artist at the Royal Opera House and in 2001 represented England at BBC Cardiff Singer of the World. She is currently an Associate Artist at Wigmore Hall. In concert she has performed: Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder*; Tippett's *A Child of Our Time*; Mahler's *Das klagende Lied*; the European premiere of Elliott Carter's *Of Rewaking*, Vaughan Williams' Third Symphony; Verdi's Requiem; Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem*, Strauss' *Vier letzte Lieder*; Poulenc's Gloria; Dvořák's *Stabat Mater*; and Britten's *War Requiem*. Gweneth Ann is widely known for her acclaimed interpretations of Messiaen's song cycles *Harawi* and *Poèmes pour Mi*. Her recordings include Barber's *Mélodies Passagères*, Janáček's *The Eternal Gospel*; *Poèmes pour Mi*, and John Metcalf's *Under Milk Wood*.

Peter Thomson *tutor*

Peter Thomson is a British writer, director and actor. He went up to Oxford as a Choral Scholar, and finished as an English Scholar. After graduating, Peter began his career as an actor, and played lead roles in numerous West End, repertory and fringe productions. He also gained extensive experience in directing and writing, and has had over 30 plays produced on BBC radio, and 15 stage plays in theatres around the UK. He has collaborated with Sally Beamish, writing the libretto for her oratorio *A Knock on the Door* (commissioned by the Quakers to raise awareness of the continuing worldwide use of torture), which premiered on Remembrance Sunday, 2022. In 2017 he directed the semi-staged London premiere of *The Judas Passion* by Sally Beamish and David Harsent. In March 2022 he took part in the premiere of Beamish's *Night Songs*, as speaker, at the Royal Overseas League in London.