THE MASSED VOICES OF INSPIRATION AND NORTHERN SINFONIA PRESENT

DO YOU HEAR THE PEOPLE SING?

13 JULY 2013, 6PM | HALL ONE, THE SAGE GATESHEAD
MUSIC DIRECTOR: GARY GRIFFITHS

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THE MASSED VOICES OF INSPIRATION AND NORTHERN SINFONIA, ORCHESTRA OF THE SAGE GATESHEAD PRESENT

AND THE WINNER IS...

17 MARCH 2013, 6PM
HALL ONE, THE SAGE GATESHEAD
MUSIC DIRECTOR: GARY GRIFFITHS
NARRATOR: JULIA PARTINGTON
This isn’t just any Tony Award-winning programme of songs. This programme has been given the unique Inspiration treatment by a choir that are constantly on the go!

Since the last concert the choir have been on a successful visit to the 20th Anniversary Christmas Choral Celebrations at Disneyland Paris. Joined by the Inspiration Leeds choir, the singers were the first and only choir to have been given permission to learn and sing the Disney 20th Anniversary song, ‘Magic Everywhere’ on the Castle Stage! Needless to say, both choirs had a magical time, cramming four performances into two days. But, if one tour wasn’t enough, the choir are currently preparing for a tour to New York in 2014 – Broadway, watch out!

Here at The Sage Gateshead, we are busy preparing for the Gateshead International Jazz Festival (5 – 7 April), where local musicians perform alongside a great list of artists as part of the free concourse programme.

Looking forward to the summer, we have our bi-annual festival Fiddles on Fire (May Bank Holiday weekend), and the now famous SummerTyne Americana Festival at the end of July. It looks to be a busy summer!

In the meantime, we hope you enjoy this evening’s concert. If you’ve felt inspired to sing, then why not click onto www.thesagegateshead.org/join-in for information about the range of choirs that are available to join. With groups for all ages, abilities and musical styles, we’re sure there’ll be something for you.

Katherine Zeserson
Director of Learning and Participation
The Sage Gateshead

Commonly known as ‘The Tony Award’ the ‘The Antoinette Perry Award for Excellence in Theatre’ was established in 1947. It is named after Antoinette Perry, an actress, director, and co-founder of the American Theatre Wing.

The Tony Award medallion was designed by Oscar winning Art Director Herman Rosse. It weighs 1.6kg, is made of bronze and brass, and portrays an adaptation of the comedy and tragedy masks on its face.

Welcome to the first of our concerts rejoicing in all that is best about musical theatre. Songs from the Shows. Showtunes!

We are deep inside our favourite type of music this term and we have had a blast in rehearsals. Experimental choreography has been tried out (and firmly discarded) in favour of, how shall we put it, a more simple and effective approach. Some special effects have been kept in – I urge you to close your eyes during the introduction to ‘Bali Ha’i’ – and some of the songs are so infectious it is impossible to stand still.

We have delved quite deep into well known songs such as ‘Memory’ and ‘With One Look’, trying to discover the meaning behind the words, talking about the character’s story and why they sing these songs, going far and above just getting the notes right. I hope you feel the connection the singers have with these absolute classics.

Then there is ‘The Lion King’. What to say here? A challenge certainly, with pages of singing in Zulu (another language to add to our arsenal, along with Latin and Sanskrit) – but so powerful and satisfying when it all comes together.

And, of course, Les Misérables. It always amazes me how much this musical resides in peoples heads. The only other example of this I can think of is ABBA. Everyone knows ABBA (whether they like it or not is a different matter) and everyone seems to know Les Mis. And with the amazing film out at the moment, what better time to hear 300 voices belting out ‘One Day More’?

‘Tomorrow we’ll discover what our God in heaven has in store”. Indeed.

Gary Griffiths
Music Director and Founder
Inspiration
Northern Sinfonia, Orchestra of The Sage Gateshead, has built a distinctive reputation as a fresh-thinking and versatile orchestra. Members are chosen to be part of a community of musicians who present a wide range of repertoire from both the orchestral and chamber canons spanning three centuries of composers. Under its Music Director, Thomas Zehetmair, Northern Sinfonia has taken a dedicated approach to stylistic excellence in all the genres that it performs aiming to present the music ‘as if the ink were still wet on the page’.

Performances in its world-class home are complemented by an extensive programme of activity in the local and regional community, as well as nationally and internationally, through performance, education and participation. This season engagements include the 2012 BBC Proms and in the Southbank Centre’s 2013 yearlong festival ‘The Rest is Noise’, and the orchestra will continue to perform regularly in Middlesbrough, Kendal, Harrogate, Dewsbury, Huddersfield and Nottingham. Northern Sinfonia work with families and schools across the region, The Sage Gateshead’s Young Musicians Programme students including its youth orchestra Young Sinfonia, and advanced composition students at Newcastle University.

A full series of classical concerts is complemented with regular collaborations with artists from other art forms to create special moments of musical integration. Sting, Pet Shop Boys, Joanna Newsome, Debbie Harry and Raul Malo have worked with the orchestra and the musicians have taken an active role in The Sage Gateshead’s celebrated festivals including Gateshead International Jazz Festival, Fiddles on Fire and SummerTyne. This year Northern Sinfonia also joined forces with Danish band Efterklang for their UK ‘Piramida’ tour.

For more information visit www.thesagegateshead.org

‘Once’ won a total of eight Tony Awards in 2012 and is a stage adaptation of the 2006 film of the same name. It retained many of the original songs including the Oscar-winning ‘Falling Slowly’ which is being perform tonight.

I have been singing for as long as I can remember. Wolverhampton Grammar School was my major musical influence – School Choir, Choral Society, Musical Theatre Group, Jazz Band – alongside the Youth Orchestra (where I was principal oboist) and the Concert Band (principal percussion).

When it came to University it had to be music, and so to York. Three wonderful years of constant music making also included being Chorus Master for York Light Opera, and Musical Director for Pickering Musical Society.

I was by now (mid-90s) a tenor (yes really) in the Choir of York Minster with all that entails; daily services as well as many world tours, concerts and recordings. After 18 years, I left and became part of the creative team behind the formation of SingLive.

Now, with Inspiration as my sole focus, I really do have my dream job. Weekly rehearsals are a joy. Our trips around the country and abroad are like taking a family on holiday – even if it is a rather extended family of 400. And I do think of the singers as just that. My musical family.

Mark has played piano for more than 30 years, and has built up a wealth of experience as a freelance performer, musical director, arranger and teacher. In 2011 he co-wrote and starred in ‘Monopolise’ a comedy musical by BBC’s Alfie Joey, whilst his MD credits include ‘West Side Story’, ‘Buddy’ and ‘The Sound of Music’.

Mark is the rehearsal pianist and assistant arranger for Inspiration. He regularly works as a function pianist and his debut album of folk-influenced, acoustic songs was released in 2010.

Mark holds the Diploma of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music in piano teaching, is currently studying for a PhD with the University of Leeds, looking at Nordic National Identity, Heritage and Mythology in Heavy Metal and has recently started to have some of his research published.

For more information, or to hire Mark, please visit www.piano-player-newcastle.co.uk.
Cliff Lee
Signed Song Interpreter

Cliff is an experienced BSL communicator who has worked with The Sage Gateshead since 2004. Amongst other projects, Cliff has set up several signed song choirs within the North East. He also runs courses for teachers and other trainers and facilitates Sign Song workshops across the community.

Cliff holds a BSL Level 3 certificate, and has completed a teaching degree. In his spare time he is learning to play the piano and enjoys nothing more than looking after his twin grandsons.

Cliff has been working with Inspiration since they started in 2009. He loves working with the choir and is looking forward to introducing more people to the joy of song through the beauty of sign language.

Julia Partington
Narrator

In her role as a member of The Sage Gateshead’s Learning & Participation Ensemble, Julia has gathered extensive experience of concert presentation and performance, having co-created and performed in a range of concerts especially devised and presented for the company. These include an interactive reimagining of Peter & the Wolf with Northern Sinfonia in December 2012, Songs in a Suitcase, Toucan Canoe, Eleanor & Julia in an English Country Garden and the Whirligig series.

A graduate of Newcastle University, she has also toured nationally as a solo mezzo soprano with early music chamber ensemble Lyra and has appeared on the concert platform alongside renowned artists such as Emma Kirkby, Mhari Lawson and Lynne Dawson.

Julia is thrilled to be working once again with Inspiration Choir and Northern Sinfonia for whom she presented Sail on Titanic and Here’s to the Heroes in 2012, both of which reduced her to laughter and tears in equal measure as a result of the fantastic singing and energy of the choir and the emotive programming. She has her handkerchief on hand tonight just in case and advises you to do the same!

Sue Mitchell
Inspiration Rehearsal Manager

On the back of two successful trips last year and knowing that I love a challenge in terms of making things happen (my family think I’m crazy I’m sure), we are off to New York! I’m reliably informed it is 402 days until Inspiration hits the Big Apple - yes singers are marking the days off on their calendars already, such is the enthusiasm for this venture! Just a small matter of swapping bus lists for flight lists and all will be well.

Imagine, a sea of black and red at the top of the Rockefeller Center, a concert in the beautiful Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine and an open air sing in Central Park Bandstand to name but a few places.

It’s going to be a lot of hard working leading up to this but hey, that’s fine. See you in the bar after this concert - mine’s a Manhattan please...

Mallory Smith
Inspiration Rehearsal Manager

Mallory, one of the team of volunteer helpers, still wearing last year’s survival blanket in February - too much snow! Hoping that when you read this in March we’ll be enjoying sunshine and spring flowers.

I love the music in this concert – every one is a winner as far as I am concerned. But we have all been challenged with learning the Lion King words. We thought we were singing in Swahili, but have now learnt it is in fact Zulu – funny enough that hasn’t made it any easier to learn!

Thank goodness we’ve all been able to fortify ourselves with pre-rehearsal coffee and cakes at the Trinity Centre, before girding our lions, or loins for the ‘sing it by heart’ rehearsals.

We have a few brand new singers this time round, and I would like to reassure them that it isn’t always so difficult - sometimes we just have to sing in Welsh or Sanskrit or Latin... hmmm, well it wouldn’t be so much fun otherwise would it?!

Cole Porter’s ‘Kiss Me, Kate’ won the first ever Tony Award for ‘Best Musical in 1949. It was the first show Porter wrote in which the music and lyrics were firmly connected to the script, and it proved to be his biggest hit.
Based on Gregory Maguire’s 1995 novel, ‘Wicked’ won three Tony Awards, six Drama Desk Awards and an Olivier Award. It also holds the weekly-gross-takings records in Chicago, Los Angeles, St. Louis, and London.
Craig Wallace is 24 and from Chester-le-Street. He’s an Engineer at Egger UK in Hexham and joined Inspiration in January 2013.

What made you decide to join Inspiration?
I have been taking part in youth musical theatre since I was 11 years old, and for the majority of that period I have been a part of Youth Connection Theatre Company based just outside of Chester-le-Street. My Mum has been a part of Inspiration for a year now and I came to see the last two concerts and I was really impressed! I then did the ‘Sing, Gentlemen Please’ day at The Sage with Gary and thoroughly enjoyed it so decided to join.

Are you enjoying Inspiration?
It’s been so much fun. I joined a bit apprehensive as to whether I’d fit in but everyone is really welcoming. As for highlights, I suppose auditioning for and then getting a solo part was rather exciting! I don’t think I’ve ever been as nervous as when I got on the stage with Gary sat there watching me audition. Another highlight was probably the learning process for the words in the ‘Lion King Medley’, that has been an experience I won’t forget!

How do you feel about your first performance?
Rather nervous to be honest, but also looking forward to the challenge. I’m sure it’ll be a great day and I hope the audience enjoy it.

Will you be inviting any family or friends to come and see you perform?
Yes, definitely! This year I have a solo part in ‘The King and I’ that has been an experience I won’t forget.

How do you prepare for a performance?
Try to conserve your voice but also make sure it is thoroughly warmed up before starting, don’t drink cold water or fizzy pop! When it comes to playing a particular role or character I think that you really have to know the character and get a feel for their personality.

What would you say to any men out there that might be thinking of joining?
I say do it! Another guy I sit with has just joined Inspiration too, he has never done anything like this before but he is loving it. Inspiration’s got me thinking about joining and I think that you’ll sound amazing in the concert.

Lorraine Craig is 43 and from Chapel House Estate, Newcastle Upon Tyne. She works as a Funding Officer for the Big Lottery Fund. Lorraine has been a member of Inspiration since it began in 2009.

What made you decide to write a blog?
Rehearsals with Gary are a real tonic. I liked the idea of a keepsake of the fun we have and I wanted to share my personal experience of singing with the alto 2s. The blog is providing a good link and shared conversation piece with Inspirationers in Newcastle and Leeds, and has helped bring about new friendships amongst both choirs. As I’m a bit of a techie I wanted to challenge myself to see how easy it was to create a blog, but at the same time I was looking for a subject I felt passionately about to write about.

Do you have any advice or tips for aspiring bloggers?
For any aspiring bloggers I’d say write about something you feel passionately about. Always write truthfully from your own perspective, and write succinctly. I try to write in the same way that I’d tell a story or joke to a group of people, rather than getting tied up with fancy language. In 2012 as a result of writing the Inspiration blog, I was chosen as the first ever guest blogger for the Live Theatre in Newcastle.

What do you cover in your blog?
To date I’ve written 64 blog posts, covering five concerts. My posts are very much tongue-in-cheek (quite difficult for a singing blog) and give a snapshot of the fun we’ve had in that week’s rehearsal.

How are you enjoying Inspiration this term?
I’m really enjoying Inspiration this term, and a particular highlight has been the challenge of learning the ‘Lion King Medley’ by heart. I’ve enjoyed the rehearsals where we have built up the chants, taking them very slowly to start with and then gradually building up to full speed. I think they’ll sound amazing in the concert.

You can follow Lorraine’s weekly blog at http://singingalto2.wordpress.com/
Inspiration’s pianist and Echo Newcastle music director Mark Deeks gives you a unique insight into his pick of what’s on at The Sage Gateshead. For more information visit www.thesagegateshead.org

**Jens Thomas and Verner Pohjola**
**Speed of Grace – a tribute to AC/DC**

Obviously musicians after my own heart as I have been known to create piano versions of rock classics from bands including Queen, Metallica and AC/DC. This is a fantastic opportunity to see a demonstration of how great music will stand the test of any reinterpretation!

Part of Gateshead International Jazz Festival 2013
Saturday 6th April, 10.30pm, Tickets: £10

**Elvis Costello and The Imposters:**
**2013 Revolvers Tour**

Elvis Costello has been consistently, for me, one of the UK’s most creative and inventive songwriters over the last 30 years. The man behind such cleverly crafted songs as ‘She’, ‘Pump It Up’, ‘Shipbuilding’ and many more, Elvis is an artist always worth checking in on to see what gems he is producing.

Wednesday 12th June, 8pm, Tickets: £37.50 – £42.50

**Ricky Ross – Untold Stories**

When I was first discovering music as a kid, one of the first bands I really got into was Deacon Blue – the band that Ricky Ross fronted along with Lorraine McIntosh. Ricky has a great voice that has delivered some fantastic pop songs over the years.

Tuesday 23rd April, 7.30pm, Tickets: £20

**Ruby Turner and Brand New Heavies**

I’m not only a fan of Ruby Turner’s voice but also her stage presence. She’s the consummate pro with a voice that anyone would love to play for. Having seen her live myself with Jools Holland, I would heartily recommend taking the chance to see her at The Sage Gateshead.

Part of Gateshead International Jazz Festival 2013
Sunday 7th April, 7.30pm, Tickets: £19.50 - £25

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Thanks as always to the small army of volunteers who help to keep Inspiration going, both in public and behind the scenes. Mal and her ladies, Jane and Barbara, Penny, Chris, Margaret and Denise, Sue, Linda and Peter. Andy and Mark of course, and especially Sue Mitchell, without whom it just wouldn’t happen. For all the practical and emotional support I am very, very grateful – Gary