



### Saturday, June 15th, 4:30PM

TAS Hoskins Centre Foyer

# The Artists





Australian baritone Ziggy Harris is currently undertaking his Master's of Music at the Schulich School Of Music within McGill University, under the tutelage of baritone Brett Polegato, and coach Louise Pelletier, with fellowship scholarships. His staged roles include title in Don Giovanni (Mozart), Papageno in Die Zauberflöte (Mozart), Dandini (cover) in La Cenerentola (Rossini), Cadmus in Semele (Handel), and Le Surintendent Des Plaisirs in Cendrillon (Massenet). In August of 2024, Ziggy will return to the Lyric Opera Studio Weimar to play both Il Conte and Antonio in Mozart's Le nozze di Figaro. His performed concert repertoire includes Pilate and arias in Johannespassion (J. S. Bach), Petite Messe Solennelle (Rossini), Requiem (Faure), Miserere Mei, Deus (Allegri), Coronation Mass (Mozart), Rückert-lieder (Mahler), Histoires Naturelles (Ravel) and To Julia (Quilter). In April of 2024, Ziggy performed the world premiere of Canadian composer Sylvie Rickard's song cycle Answering The Call, and placed third in the provincial vocal soloist section of Quebec's Classival competition. A graduate of the Sydney Conservatorium Of Music, Ziggy achieved a Bachelor of Music (Performance) with Distinction studying with baritone Simon Lobelson, having been awarded the Pete Davidson and Patricia Long Scholarships. Ziggy was born and raised in Armidale, New South Wales, amidst the frosts

of the Northern Tablelands, by his two mothers, Jen and Kath.

Dr Robert Manley is a freelance multi-instrumentalist specialising in collaborative piano performance.Rob has worked as a staff pianist at Queensland Ballet, the University of Queensland, New England Conservatorium, and the Australian Concerto and Vocal Competition. As a cellist, Rob has worked with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, Melbourne Chamber Orchestra, and Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra. As a recorder player, Rob has performed as soloist with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and tutored for the Australasian Recorder Festival. Other recent festival appearances include the New England Bach Festival, 4MBS Festival of Classics (Brisbane), and the Huon Valley Chamber Music Festival (Tasmania). Rob studied the piano with Joyce Skelton and Max Olding in Brisbane, recorder with Barnaby Ralph in Brisbane, and later the cello with Howard Penny at the Australian National Academy of Music (Melbourne). Rob completed a PhD at the University of Queensland in 2021. His research drew upon social capital as a theoretical framework to investigate the socio-cultural and musical factors that influence audience engagement with classical music in regional Australian communities.

# Dr Robert Manley



### PROGRAM

"Votre toast, je peux vous le rendre" from *Carmen* (1875) by Georges Bizet (1838 - 1875)

Rückert-Lieder (1902)Music by Gustav Mahler (1860 - 1911)Poetry by Friedrich Rückert (1788 - 1866)I."Liebst du um Schönheit"2."Blicke mir nicht in die Lieder"3."Ich atmet' einen linden Duft"4."Ich ben der Welt abhanden gekommen"5.

"Papagena! Weibchen! Täubchen!"

Intermissi

from *Die Zauberflöte* (1791) by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 - 1791)

"O sainte médaille ... Avant de quitter ces lieux" from *Faust* (1859) by Charles Gounod (1818 - 1893)

"Look! Through the port comes the moonshine astray" from *Billy Budd* (1951) by Benjamin Britten (1913 - 1976)

"Hai già vinta la causa?" from *Le nozze di Figaro* (1786) by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 - 1791)



"Votre toast, je peux vous le rendre" from *Carmen* (1875) by Georges Bizet (1838 - 1875)

"Awh yeah, I know this one!"

Most commonly known as the "Toreador Song", the bullfighter's aria is amongst the most recognisable in pop culture, and a staple of the baritone catalogue. The aria comes from Bizet's *Carmen*, an opera bursting with popular melodies often used in film and television, and one of the most frequently programmed at opera houses and theatres around the world. Premiered in 1875 at the Opéra-Comique in Paris, *Carmen* shocked audiences with a verismo plot, deeply flawed and realistic characters, and themes of hedonism, jealousy, heartbreak and tragedy embedded into the opéra comique performance style, with spoken dialogues between musical numbers; a genre which more frequently explored lighter themes. For these reasons, local, French audiences and critics gave it mediocre reviews, however for the same reasons, international audiences adored the opera, and it quickly gained much international success. Bizet died suddenly during the opera's first run in Paris, and never got to see *Carmen* achieve huge success.

*Carmen* is set in 1820s Seville, Spain, and boasts a cast and chorus of factory workers, soldiers, police officers, nomads, bullfighters and urchins. This aria takes place towards the beginning of Act 2 out of 4, after the mutual attraction between the title character, Carmen, and the lead tenor role, Don José, has been established. Carmen and her girlfriends are gallivanting with soldiers in a pub, when a large crowd barges in, announcing the arrival of famous local bullfighter, Escamillo. The Toreador enters the pub, and introduces himself with this aria, describing the chaos and ecstasy of the bullfighting arena, the camaraderie between bullfighters and soldiers, the frenzy of spectators, and the bull's attacks. During the aria, Escamillo is often staged to first notice, and then fixate on Carmen, which catalyses the remaining two and a half acts of plot, ultimately resulting in José's murder of the heroine due to his inestimable jealousy.

But that hasn't happened yet! We're at the pub with the cigarette girls and soldiers! So, let's all raise a toast to Bizet's masterpiece, and to an aria that has broken through into pop culture, and made opera familiar to the most unsuspecting of audiences.

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"Votre toast, je peux vous le rendre" from *Carmen* (1875) by Georges Bizet (1838 - 1875)

#### ESCAMILLO

Votre toast ... je peux vous le rendre, Señors, Señors, car avec les soldats. Oui les toreros peuvent s'entendre, Pour plaisirs ils ont les combats. Le cirque est plein, c'est jour de fête, Le cirque est plein du haut en bas. Les spectateurs perdant la tête, Les spectateurs s'interpellent à grands fracas:

> Apostrophes, cris et tapage Poussés jusques à la fureur. Car c'est la fête du courage, C'est la fête des gens de coeur.

Allons, en garde! Allons! Ah!

#### ESCAMILLO

Your toast ... I can reciprocate Gentlemen, gentlemen, as with the soldiers. Yes the bullfighters can understand these others For pleasure they both have the battle. The circus is full, it's the day of festivity, The circus is full from top to bottom. The spectators lose their heads, The spectators shout as one, a huge thunder:

> Atrocities, cries and uproar Driving to the point of fury. As it is the festival of courage, It's the festival for hearty people.

Come on, on guard! Come on! Ah!

Toréador, en garde, Toréador, toréador, Et songe bien, oui songe en combattant Qu'un oeil noir te regarde Et que l'amour t'attend. Toréador, l'amour, L'amour t'attend!

Tout d'un coup on fait silence; On fait silence. Ah que se passe-t-il? Plus de cris; c'est l'instant Le taureau s'élance en bondissant hors du toril ... Il s'élance, il entre, il frappe, Un cheval roule entraînant un picador. "Ah bravo Toro!" hurle la foule. Le taureau va, il vient et frappe encor! Toréador, on guard, Toréador, toréador, And pay respects, yes respect the fighters As if a dark eye looks upon you And as if love waits for you. Toréador, love, Love waits for you!

All of a sudden we go silent; We go silent. Ah what is happening? No more cries; it's the moment The bull rushes, leaping out of the toril ... He rushes, he enters, he strikes, A horse rolls over on top of a picador. "Ah bravo Toro!" shouts the crowd. The bull goes, he comes and strikes again! En secouant ses banderilles, Plein de fureur, il court! Le cirque est plein de sang; On se sauve, on franchit les grilles; C'est ton tour maintenant.

Allons en garde! Allons! Allons! Ah! Toréador, en garde! Toréador, toréador! Et songe bien, oui songe en combattant Qu'un oeil noir te regarde Et que l'amour t'attend. Toréador, l'amour t'attend! By shaking his banderillas, Full of fury, he runs! The circus is red with passion; We run away, we burst through the gates; It's your turn now.

Come on, on guard! Come on! Come on! Ah! Toréador, on guard, Toréador, toréador, And pay respects, yes respect the fighters As if a black eye looks upon you And as if love waits for you. Toréador, love waits for you!



Ziggy as Le Surintendent Des Plaisirs in *Cendrillon* by Massenet Opera McGill, McGill Symphony Orchestra January 26-28, 2024 Monument National Theatre, Montréal, Quebec, Canada

Photography by Stephanie Sedlbauer

#### *Rückert-Lieder* (1902)

Gustav Mahler, (b. 1860, Bohemia - d. 1911, Vienna, Austria), was an Austro-Bohemian composer and conductor, and his works are among the most beloved in the late romantic repertoire, known mostly by his ten symphonies, and immense output of vocal music to be accompanied by orchestra and/or piano. Born to a German-speaking, Jewish family in Bohemia, Mahler faced much societal ostracisation from a young age, and much turmoil throughout his personal life, including the deaths of siblings, his own daughter, and a turbulent marriage with Austrian composer, Alma Schindler. This turbulence was due to Gustav's stubborn nature described by his earlier partner Natalie Bauer-Lechner as "moody and authoritarian" - shown in his initial disdain toward Alma composing, cultural grievances between their families, and later, affairs. During the Nazi regime, Mahler's music was banned from being performed throughout much of Europe. After WWII, Mahler's music has made a grand international comeback, and today, his repertoire is some of the most beloved and regularly programmed.

Friedrich Rückert, (b. 1788, Schweinfurt, Holy Roman Empire - d. 1866, Neuseß, German Confederation) was a German poet, translator, and pedagogue of languages. Historians contend that he was fluent and self-taught in upwards of thirty languages, with particular regard to languages from Asia and the Middle East. He achieved proficiency in Arabic and Persian at the age of 18, and often translated poetry from these languages, as well as Indian and Chinese, into German. One of his most well known poem-cycles, Erbauliches und Beschauliches aus dem Morgenland

(Edifying and Contemplative, from the Orient), delves into the linguistic characteristics of these languages and the mythology from these cultures. Despite his linguistic universality, lots of his original poetry deals with the emerging romanticism of Germanic national sensibilities, as a reaction to Napoleon's invasion and occupation of Berlin, and his subsequent expulsion back to Paris by the Prussian armies, which transpired during Rückert's early adulthood. These sensibilities include the affects of the German landscape upon people, belonging in a fragmented nation, and echo German philosophies emerging out of the Sturm und Drang era lead by Goethe.

Four of these five songs were composed during the summer of 1901, during a period when Mahler was highly motivated, and according to his then partner, Natalie Bauer-Lechne, Mahler would set one poem to voice and piano one day, and then fully orchestrate it the next. Mahler's choice of these poems was inspired by the profound beauty of the Austrian landscape surrounding his lakehouse, the comfort in solitude he discovered there, and his recent near death experience due to a sudden brain-haemorrhage. Soon after, Gustav and Alma had begun their relationship, and "Liebst du um Schöhnheit" was set later, as a private gift to her, originally played and sung by Mahler himself in his lyric baritone range.

I. "Liebst du um Schönheit"

Liebst du um Schönheit, O nicht mich liebe! Liebe die Sonne, Sie trägt ein goldnes Haar.

Liebst du um Jugend, O nicht mich liebe! Liebe den Frühling, Der jung ist jedes Jahr.

Liebst du um Schätze, O nicht mich liebe! Liebe die Meerfrau, Sie hat viel Perlen klar.

Liebst du um Liebe, O ja, mich liebe! Liebe mich immer, If you love for beauty, Oh, don't love me! Love the sun, She wears a golden halo of hair.

> If you love for youth, Oh don't love me! Love the Springtime, It is young every year.

If you love for wealth, Oh don't love me! Love the mermaid, She has many pure pearls

> If you love for love, Oh yes, love me! Love me always,

Dich lieb' ich immer, immerdar.

I'll love you always, forevermore.

#### 2. Blicke mir nicht in die Lieder

Blicke mir nicht in die Lieder! Meine Augen schlag' ich nieder, Wie ertappt auf böser Tat. Selber darf ich nicht getrauen Ihrem Wachsen zuzuschauen. Deine Neugier ist Verrat!

Bienen, wenn sie Zellen bauen, Lassen auch nicht zu sich schauen, Schauen selbst auch nicht zu. Wenn die reichen Honigwaben Sie zu Tag gefördert haben, Dann vor allen nasche du! Regard me not in these songs! I cast down my eyes, As if caught in a guilty act. I may not allow myself To watch their growth. Your curiosity is betrayal!

Bees, when they build cells, Also do not allow others to behold them, They also don't behold themselves. When <u>they have offered</u> <u>The rich honeycombs</u> to the day, Then you, before all others, will taste! 3. "Ich atmet' einen linden Duft"

Ich atmet' einen linden Duft! Im Zimmer stand Ein Zweig der Linde, Ein Angebinde Von lieber Hand. Wie lieblich war der Lindenduft! Wie lieblich ist der Lindenduft! Das Lindenreis Brachst du gelinde; Ich atme leis Im Duft der Linde, Der Liebe linden Duft I breathe in a gentle scent! In the room stood A branch of the linden tree, A bond From a dear hand. How lovely was the tree's aroma! How lovely is the tree's aroma! The tree's pollen You brought gently; I softly breath In the aroma of the tree, The gentle scent of love!



4. "Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen"



Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen, Mit der ich sonst viele Zeit verdorben, Sie hat so lange nichts von mir vernommen, Sie mag wohl glauben, ich sei gestorben!

Es ist mir auch gar nichts daran gelegen, Ob sie mich für gestorben hält, Ich kann auch gar nichts sagen dagegen, Denn wirklich bin ich gestorben der Welt.

Ich bin gestorben dem Weltgetümmel, Und ruh' in einem stillen Gebiet! Ich leb' allein in meinem Himmel, In meinem Lieben, in meinem Lied! I have become lost to the world, With which I wasted so much time, She has not heard from me for so long, She may as well believe I am perished!

It is also completely nothing of value to me Whether she beholds me as perished, I can also say utterly nothing on the contrary, Because truly am I perished to the world.

> I am perished to worldly turmoils, And rest in a quiet domain! I live alone in my own heaven, In my own love, in my own song!

#### 5. "Um Mitternacht"

Um Mitternacht Hab' ich gewacht Und aufgeblickt zum Himmel; Kein Stern vom Sterngewimmel Hat mir gelacht Um Mitternacht.

Um Mitternacht Hab' ich gedacht Hinaus in dunkle Schranken. Es hat kein Lichtgedanken Mir Trost gebracht Um Mitternacht.

Um Mitternacht Nahm ich in acht Die Schläge meines Herzens; Ein einz'ger Puls des Schmerzes War angefacht Um Mitternacht. At midnight I had awoken and gazed out into the sky; No stars from the galaxy Had smiled upon me At midnight.

At midnight I had thought Out there into the dark limits. It has brought no solace To my anguish At midnight.

At midnight I took stock Of the beats of my heart; A single pulse of pain Was ignited At midnight.

Um Mitternacht Kämpft' ich die Schlacht, O Menschheit, deiner Leiden; Nicht konnt' ich sie entscheiden Mit meiner Macht Um Mitternacht.

Um Mitternacht Hab' ich die Macht In deine Hand gegeben! Herr! über Tod und Leben Du hältst die Wacht Um Mitternacht! At midnight I fought the battle, Oh humanity, your suffering; I could not attain victory With my own power At midnight.

At midnight I have the power Given into your hands! Lord! over death and life You keep vigil At midnight!





Ziggy as Cadmus in *Semele* by Handel Opera McGill, McGill Baroque Orchestra, Cappella Antica March 22-24, 2024

> Pollack Hall, Montréal, Quebec, Canada Photography by Stephanie Sedlbauer





"Papagena! Weibchen! Täubchen!" from Die Zauberflöte (1791) by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 - 1791)

Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* was commissioned by the director of the Freihaus-Theater auf der Wieden, Emmanuel Schikaneder, who wrote the libretto himself as part of the pantomime troupe's ongoing fairy-tale series. The opera was written as a *Singspiel*, which is effectively what we now know today as a standard musical; spoken dialogue between musical numbers. Schikaneder himself played the role of Papageno, and as such Mozart composed Papageno's music to suit a comedic actor capable of singing well, instead of a vocal virtuoso. At this point in the opera, Papageno has been separated from the rest of the group and is lost in the vast labyrinth of Sarastro's temple. He believed, for a second, that the magic of the temple had brought him his perfect woman, Papagena. However, she disappeared back into the shadows, and Papageno blames himself for this. In what seems to be a dismal, hopeless moment as the vögelfänger resolves to end his own life, Schikaneder and Mozart poke fun at the melodramatic tragedies popular in the royal opera houses of the time. Papageno is saved and gets to spend the rest of his life with his Papagena! Mozart died just two months after the premiere of *Die Zauberflöte*. He was 35 years old. *Die Zauberflöte* is now one of the most beloved operas written for the German language.

#### PAPAGENO

Papagena! Papagena! Papagena! Weibchen! Täubchen! Meine Schöne! -Vergebens! Ach! Sie ist verloren! Ich bin zum Unglück schon geboren! -Ich plauderte, und das war schlecht, Und drum geschieht es mir schon recht! – Seit ich gekostet diesen Wein – Seit ich das schöne Weibchen sah, So brennt's im Herzenskämmerlein, So zwicket's hier, so zwicket's da! Papagena! Herzensweibchen! Papagena liebes Täubchen! S'ist umsonst, es ist vergebens, Müde bin ich meines Lebens! Sterben macht der Lieb' ein End, Wenn's im Herzen noch so brennt. Diesen Baum da will ich zieren, Mir an ihm den Hals zuschnüren, Weil das Leben mir mißfällt, Gute Nacht, du falsche Welt! –

#### PAPAGENO

Papagena! Papagena! Papagena! Little lady! Little dove! My beauty! – It's useless! Ah! She is lost! I am predisposed to misfortune! –

I blabbed on, and that was bad, And therefore it serves me right! -Since I guzzled that wine -Since I saw that beautiful little wifey, So burns inside my heart's little room, So it stings me here, so it stings me there! Papagena! Love of my life! Papagena lovely little dove! It's for nothing, it is useless, I am exhausted of my life! Death puts love to an end, While in my heart it still burns. That tree there, I wish to decorate By tying my neck to it, Because I hate my life, Goodnight, you deceitful world! –

Weil du böse an mir handelst, Mir kein schönes Kind zubandelst, So ist's aus, so sterbe ich. Schöne Mädchen, denkt an mich! – Will sich eine um mich Armen, Eh' ich hänge, noch erbarmen – Wohl, so laß ich's diesmal sein! Rufet nur, Ja oder Nein! – Keine hört mich! Alles stille! Also ist es euer Wille! Papageno frisch hinauf, ende deinen Lebenslauf. Nun! Ich warte noch! Es sei -Bis man zählet: eins, zwei, drei!

> Eins! Zwei? Drei... Nun wohlan! es bleibt dabei! Weil mich nichts zurücke hält, Gute Nacht, du falsche Welt!

Because you act evilly towards me, You don't bestow me a beautiful child, Thus it's done, thus I die. Beautiful ladies, think of me! -Does someone want to take care of me, Before I hang, show mercy – Well, I'll let it be so, this time! Just shout, yes or no! – No one hears me! Everything is quiet! Therefore it is your desire! Papageno toughen up, end your joke of a life. Well! I'll still wait! Be it -Until someone counts: one, two, three!

> One! Two? Three... Well then! It remains that way! As nothing holds me back, Goodnight, you deceitful world!

#### DIE KNABEN

Halt ein! o Papageno, und sei klug! Man lebt nur einmal, dies sei dir genug!

#### PAPAGENO

Ihr habt gut reden, gut zu scherzen; doch brennt es euch, wie mich im Herzen, ihr würdet auch nach Mädchen geh'n.

#### **DIE KNABEN**

So lasse deine Glöckchen klingen, dies wird dein Weibchen zu dir bringen.

#### PAPAGENO

Ich Narr vergaß der Zauberdinge! Erklinge, Glockenspiel, erklinge, ich muß mein liebes Mädchen seh'n!

#### THE CHILD SPIRITS

Stop at once! Oh Papageno, and be reasonable! One lives only once, that's enough of you!

#### PAPAGENO

You have good words, good to joke with; However if it burnt you, as it burns in my heart, You would also go crazy for girls.

#### THE CHILD SPIRITS

So let your little bells ring out, This will bring your little lady to you.

#### PAPAGENO

I, idiot, forgot the magic thingy! Ring out, bell chimes, ring out, I must see my beloved lady!

"O sainte médaille...Avant de quitter ces lieux" from *Faust* (1859) by Charles Gounod (1818 - 1893)

Charles Gounod (b. 1818 - d. 1893) was a French composer best known for his output of operas and church music. His most famous operas, *Faust* and *Roméo et Juliette* still stand as two of the most regularly programmed by opera houses internationally.

Gounod's *Faust* debuted at the Théâtre-Lyrique in Paris, in 1859, and found immediate resounding success throughout Europe. Gounod's opera centres upon an elderly and regretful academic named Faust, who has lead a dull life. So, he makes a deal with the devil, Méphistophélès, to become young again, and to meet Marguerite, an attractive seamstress, in exchange for Faust's repayment in hell someday. As the libretto was based loosely on Goethe's seminal novel of the same title, Marguerite's German name is Gretchen, and the image of her at the spinning wheel was the basis for Franz Schubert's famous *Gretchen Am Spinnrade*. In Germany, *Faust* debuted at the Semperoper Dresden, and because there was another opera titled *Faust* by Dresden-based composer Louis Spohr playing at around the same time, out of respect for their local composer, the Semperoper retitled Gounod's *Faust* titled as *Marguerite*, or even as *Gretchen*, in homage to Goethe.

This aria is taken from Act 2 out of 5, as a group of soldiers are celebrating for one last time with the townsfolk before heading off to war. Valentin, the baritone, sings this aria, entrusting the safety of his sister, "O Marguerite", to the young adolescent boy, Siebel, who is secretly in love with Marguerite, and often played as a mezzo-soprano breeches role. Amongst Valentin's reflections upon the sanctity of his hometown, cries to "the king of the sky", and declarations of patriotism, he makes it clear that his motivation in this story is to protect his sister, Marguerite. Eventually, in Act 4, he pays the ultimate price attempting to avenge her, thus his character in this story is rather uncomplicated, noble, and, as Dr. Simon Lobelson says: "steak and potatoes". "O sainte médaille…Avant de quitter ces lieux" from *Faust* (1859) by Charles Gounod (1818 - 1893)

#### VALENTIN

O sainte médaille, Qui me vient de ma sœur, Au jour de la bataille, Pour écarter la mort, Reste sur mon coeur.

Avant de quitter ces lieux, Sol natal de mes aïeux A toi, Seigneur et Roi des cieux, Ma soeur je confie. Daigne de tout danger Toujours, toujours la protéger, Cette soeur si chérie daigne de tout danger la protéger, Daigne la protéger de tout danger!

#### VALENTIN

Oh holy medallion, Which came to me from my sister, On the day of the battle, For fending off death, Rest upon my heart.

Before I leave this place, Native grounds of my ancestors To you, Lord and King of the sky My sister I confide, Deign, from all danger, Always, always your protection, This sister so cherished Deign, from all danger, your protection Deign your protection from all danger!

Délivré d'une triste pensée J'irai chercher la gloire, La gloire au sein des ennemis, Le premier, le plus brave, Au fort de la mêlée, J'irai combattre pour mon pays, Et si, vers lui, Dieu me rappelle, Je veillerai sur toi fidèle, Ô Marguerite!

Avant de quitter ses lieux, Sol natale de mes aïeux, A toi, Seigneur et Roi des cieux, Ma soeur je confie! Ô Roi des cieux, jette les yeux, Protège Marguerite, Roi des cieux! Delivered from a sorrowful thought I will search for glory, Glory in the chest of the enemies, The first, the bravest, At the frontline of the combat, I will fight for my country, And if, towards him, God recalls upon me, I will watch over you faithfully, Oh Marguerite!

Before I leave this place, Native grounds of my ancestors To you, Lord and King of the sky My sister I confide, Oh King of the sky, cast your eyes, Protect Marguerite, King of the sky! "Look! Through the port comes the moonshine astray" from *Billy Budd* (1951) by Benjamin Britten (1913 - 1976)

*Billy Budd* is an opera by Benjamin Britten, based upon the novel by Herman Melville, and was premiered at the Royal Opera House, London, in December of 1951. It is one of the only operas in the canon to contain no soprano or mezzo roles or chorus parts, and to be comprised entirely of tenors, baritones and basses, as it is set on a naval battleship in during the French Revolutionary War in 1797.

In the opera's prologue, Captain Vere, the lead tenor, reflects upon his past as captain of the HMS Indomitable, and the situation that unfolded involving Billy Budd. From here, and until the epilogue, the opera shows us what happened.

Billy Budd, the lead baritone, is an innocent and naive young man with a noticeable stammer, and finds himself conscripted into the navy and brought straight onboard the HMS Indomitable. However, his kindness and enthusiasm for adventure instantly makes him a target for the wicked Master-At-Arms, John Claggart, the lead bass. As the story unfolds, Claggart attempts to entrap Billy in several set-ups, but to no avail. Eventually, Claggart

summons Billy to Captain Vere's office and fabricates a false accusation that Billy attempted to start a mutiny. As Billy is demanded by the Captain to explain himself, he begins to stammer, unable to speak. Pushed to breaking point, Billy snaps and strikes Claggart, killing him. The Captain calls up a drumhead court, comprised of other sailors, and Billy admits to the deed before everyone. It is collectively decided that Billy should face execution for his crime. In this way, Claggart has succeeded, only not in the way he originally intended. Billy sings this aria as he sits in the hull of the ship, contemplating his final moments.

In the epilogue, the old Vere realises that he failed to save Billy, but from this experience he has truly learned the difference between good and evil, and may find peace.

Benjamin Britten's life partner, tenor Peter Pears, debuted the role of Vere, and though Billy is the title role, the drama centres upon the Captain, and his struggles with morality and decision making in a position of power.

For any lyric baritone, Billy Budd is a dream role. It certainly is for me.

"Look! Through the port comes the moonshine astray" from *Billy Budd* (1951) by Benjamin Britten (1913 - 1976)

#### BILLY

#### Look!

Through the port comes the moon-shine astray! It tips the guard's cutlass and silvers this nook; But 'twill die in the dawning of Billy's last day. Ay, ay, all is up; and I must up too early in the morning, aloft from below.

On an empty stomach, now, never would it do. They'll give me a nibble – bit of biscuit ere I go. Sure, a messmate will reach me the last parting cup; but turning heads away from the hoist and the belay, heaven knows who will have the running of me up!

No pipe to those halyards – but ain't it all sham? A blur's in my eyes; it is dreaming that I am. But Donald he has promised to stand by the plank, so I'll shake a friendly hand ere I sink.

But no! No! It is dead then I'll be, come to think. They'll lash me in hammock, drop me deep, fathoms down, fathoms – how I'll dream fast asleep.

I feel it stealing now...

Roll me over fair. I'm sleepy, and the oozy weeds about me twist. "Hai già vinta la causa?" from *Le nozze di Figaro* (1786) by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 - 1791)

*Le nozze di Figaro* is based upon a comedy play, written by French playwright Pierre Beaumarchais, which was banned in Vienna, Mozart's city of residence at the time, due to its condemnation of the aristocracy's treatment of the working class, and its contribution to fuelling what would become the French Revolution. Mozart found the play, adored it, and took it to his librettist, Lorenzo Da Ponte, who then translated it into Italian. He found a way to alter the story enough, by removing explicit political commentary and emphasising general themes of humanity and pantomime, that Emperor Joseph II approved it, whilst retaining undertones of the plays' original themes. This all happened before Mozart commenced setting the libretto to music. This was the first of three collaborations between Mozart and Da Ponte, the other two being *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan tutte*.

The opera boasts an abundance of messy and quirky characters, and for this reason, the plot wastes no time in becoming rather complicated. In the palace of the Count of Almaviva (Il Conte di Almaviva), Susanna and Figaro, two of the Count and Countess' servants, are to be married! However, the Count is scheming to reinstate an edict that he, himself, had abolished years prior, so that it may be permitted, by law, for him to spend Susanna's wedding night with her, as he has been lusting after her for some time. His wife, the Countess, has been woefully neglected by the Count in his lustful and indignant endeavours, and joins Figaro and Susanna to plot against him, so that he may be humiliated.

In this aria, the Count has just overheard his servants scheming to swindle, prank, and ultimately humiliate him, and therefore declaims his fury, processes the situation, and reveals his joy at the thought of revenge. Ultimately however, the plan succeeds and the Count is humiliated, yet receives pardon from the Countess, in a demonstration of mercy and kindness.

*Le nozze di Figaro* still tops lists by Classic FM, Operabase and ABC Classic as not only one of the greatest operas of all time, but one of the greatest works of theatre and music of all time.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with the work, I implore you to go home, and to put on the opera's overture. You'll not only recognise it, but I'm sure you'll find a new ear worms for the

next few days.

"Hai già vinta la causa?" from *Le nozze di Figaro* (1786) by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 - 1791)

#### IL CONTE

"Hai già vinta la causa"? Cosa sento? In qual laccio io cadea? Perfidi! Io voglio... Io voglio di tal modo punirvi; A piacer mio la sentenza sarà!

Ma s'ei pagasse la vecchia pretendente-Pagarla!? In qual maniera!? E poi v'è Antonio, Che a un incognito Figaro ricusa Di dare una nipote in matrimonio. Coltivando l'orgoglio di questo mentecatto... Tutto giova a un raggiro... il colpo è fatto.

#### IL CONTE

"You have already won the case"? What am I hearing? What trap have I fallen into? Bastards! I would like to... I would love to punish them; At my pleasure, their sentence will be decided!

But, perhaps, he has paid of that old poser-Paid!? With what money!? And then there's Antonio, Who, unto that suspicious Figaro, refuses To give his niece away in marriage. By manipulating the arrogance of this lunatic... Everything will go as schemed... the deed is done.

Vedrò mentre io sospiro, Felice un servo mio? E un ben ch'invan desio, Ei posseder dovrà? Vedrò per man d'amore Unita a un vile oggetto Chi in me destò un affetto Che per me poi non ha?

Ah no, lasciarti in pace, Non vo' questo contento, Tu non nascesti, audace, Per dare a me tormento, E forse ancor per ridere di mia infelicità. Già la speranza sola delle vendette mie Quest'anima consola, e giubilar mi fa. Will I see, whilst I sigh, The joy of my servant? And a beauty, which I desire in vain, Should he get to possess that? Will I see, by the hand of love, Her united to that village idiot, Her, who sparks in me a passion Which, for me, she does not reciprocate?

Ah no, I won't let This happiness escape from me, You were not born - audacious brat -

To give me torment, And to make a joke out of my misfortune. Already, the single hope of my revenge Comforts my soul, and fills me with joy.

## Thank You

Upon completing my secondary education in Armidale, I was unsure of what to pursue, and had received offers to undertake several degrees at several universities majoring in several topics, ranging from Architecture to Medical Sciences, even International Relations and Law. This was not out of feeling lost or apathetic, but rather due to feeling genuinely curious to learn more about several fields and career paths. However, something within me urged me to pursue music, because I felt that the amount of time, energy and attention that had been poured into my development by the educators, musicians and wider community of Armidale, and primarily by my beautiful parents, was simply too great to leave behind me. It all had laid the foundations for a greater structure to be built upon, and the idea that it might remain abandoned, as a result of choosing another path, grieved me.

I thought about the future, and how I might kick myself for never trying to take music further, whilst I had the prime opportunity laid out in front of me in the form of an offer at the Sydney Conservatorium. By 2017, I myself had come this far, so I asked myself, why not go further? These other fields will always be interesting and there to pursue, but this gift of music must maintain momentum, and I dared not to lose that. I have chosen to pursue a career in performance, because of you, the community of Armidale. I cherish all you have given me.

As such, several acknowledgements of thanks are in order.

Thank you to TAS, and more specifically to Clare O'Sullivan and Amy Showell, who made it possible for this recital to occur in the Michael Hoskins Creative Arts Centre, where I spent my formative years. Your thoroughness and warmth have made this process welcoming and seamless.

Thank you to TAS, NECOM, The Armidale Express and Emelene Gemmell Family Law for promoting this recital, and keeping concerts like this in the minds-eye of this community.

Thank you to Kate Loxeley for turning Rob's pages. Without you, the music would have been rather delayed!

Thank you to Jordan, my best friend, for being here tonight, for being my role model, for always being there for me in times of doubt, and for providing countless memories of hernia-inducing laughter. I've heard on the grapevine that we'll have many more.

Thank you to Dr. Robert Manley for being an inspiring and lively concert partner who always brings a creative, unexpected and fascinating perspective to the table. You always make rehearsals compelling, fun and stress-free. You are an asset to this community. Armidale, I beseech, you must do everything you can to keep him.

Thank you to my parents, Jen and Kath, for sacrificing so much so that I may have this gift of music and theatre, for always supporting my creative aspirations, and for raising me in a loving and safe home, which I am lucky enough to still call home.

Lastly, thank you to each and every one of you for being here tonight. Armidale's rich culture of performing arts is alive and well because of audiences such as this one, who continue to show up to support local artists. It's always nice to have someone to sing for.