





tête@tête

# ODYSSEUS UNWOUND

music by Julian Grant · words by Hattie Naylor

*“War is both senseless and necessary, squalid and fulfilling, terrifying and sometimes jolly. This is like life. Humans are at home in war (though they seldom admit this). They feel they know what they have to do.*

*It is in peace that humans for the most part feel lost: they have to find out what it is they have to do. For reassurance they find themselves dragged back to conflict and to stories of conflict. But this should be shown as unnecessary by a true story of war.”*

“TIME AT WAR” BY NICOLAS MOSLEY, 2006

prologue & act one: 45 minutes  
interval: 20 minutes  
act two & three: 35 minutes

## The Company

Mezzo-Soprano	Monica Brett-Crowther	Music Director	Tim Murray
Baritone	Daniel Broad	Director	Bill Bankes-Jones
Mezzo-Soprano	Phyllis Cannan	Designer	Tim Meacock
Soprano	Sadhbh Dennedy	Lighting Design	Mark Doubleday
Mezzo-Soprano	Louise Mott		
Mezzo-Soprano	Kim-Marie Woodhouse	Répétiteur	J P Gandy
		Production Managers	Alison Ritchie Declan Costello
Knitter	Elizabeth Johnston	Stage Managers	Joss Bundy Marius Rønning
Knitter	Margaret Milligan	Costume Supervisor	Caroline Hughes
Spinner	Margaret Peterson	Sound Designer	Tom Lishman
Knitter	Janice Sawford	Sound Consultant	John Del Nero
Knitter	Anne Sinclair	Production Sound Engineers	Paul Bull Earl Barton
Orchestra	CHROMA	Tour Lighting	Mary Pope
Company Manager	Claire Shovelton	Electrician	Jonathan Rouse
Violin	Marcus Barcham-Stevens	FOH Manager, Ally Pally	Krystle Milne
Cello	Chris Allan Clare O'Connell*	Tour Transport	Lightning Trucks
Double Bass	Lucy Shaw	Set Construction	Set-Up Scenery Ltd
Oboe/Cor Anglais	Emma Feilding Ruth Contractor**	Costumes	Elsbeth Threadgold
Clarinet/Bass Clarinet	Stuart King	Administrator	Anna Gregg
Harp	Céline Saout	Consultant	Sarah Playfair
Percussion	Steve Gibson Matt Dickinson***	Print & Publicity Design	Jeremy at JADED
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		Marketing	Guy Chapman Associates

\* 13 & 15 October

\*\* 21 & 22 October, 7 & 21 November

\*\*\* 16, 21 & 22 October

## Odysseus Unwound

Three, maybe four years ago, *Odysseus Unwound* began to take shape. Merely asking my friend Susan Benn (director of Performing Arts Labs) what she was up to, I began to hear about the extraordinary artistry of Shetland knitting and its current state of flux.

Susan then amazed me by inviting me to meet Dr Anne Douglas, from On the Edge Research at Aberdeen University, who in turn invited me to Shetland to see if it might be possible to make a project intertwining knitting and opera.

Three further visits followed, each making it clearer that possible collaborations had huge potential. Travelling from island to very different island, sometimes perilously, surrounded by sheep, cliffs, rocks, sea, textiles, the raw materials of the Odyssey, it was obvious this should be the ravishing piece we had already commissioned from Julian Grant and Hattie Naylor.

Given the controlling role of the fates, female entities who span, wound and snipped everyones destinies in ancient Greek cosmology, given the space left by the exclusion of the Gods in Hattie's version of the tale, given the possibilities for a further layer of reality alongside the different performing realities of singers, instrumentalists and stage paraphernalia in a piece very much based around the tangled reality of our returning warrior, as Julian Grant says later, the whole thing became inevitable. Though it would be quite wrong to pretend we have pioneered a whole new genre, I hope at least to have led a remarkable company on a bold adventure, and we manage to let some of this rub off on you, our audience, as we come together to share in this extraordinary journey.

The whole enterprise has been a massive undertaking, and could never have been achieved without the support of a huge number of institutions, funding bodies, individuals, astounding artists and supporters. We can't thank you all enough.

**Bill Bankes-Jones**  
Artistic Director

## Funders & Thanks

### Funders

#### *For the development of the project:*

Arts Council England  
A4E  
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Fair Isle Community Council  
On the edge, Aberdeen University  
PRS Foundation  
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Shetland Arts Trust  
The People of Fair Isle

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Susan Benn, Heather Delday, Anne Douglas, Jonathan Dove, Grange Park Opera, Hazel Hughson, Matthew Peacock, Natalie Steed, Despina Tsatsas, Judith Weir, White Light and Nigel Willmott.

PETER MOORES FOUNDATION

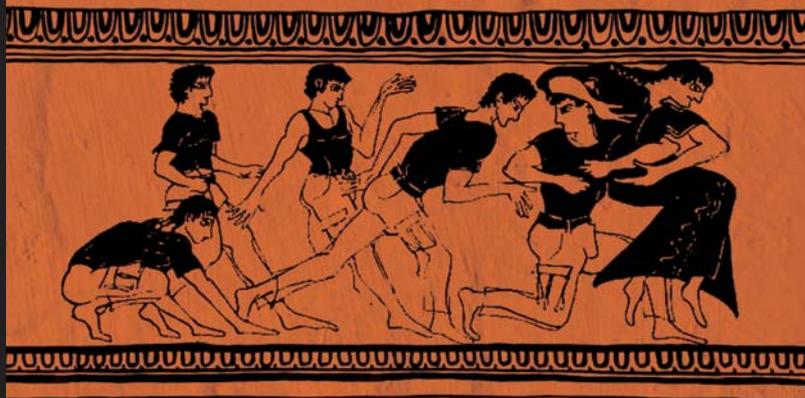


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LOTTERY FUNDED



Odysseus and his men taunt their prisoner-of-war Hecuba.

She curses him.

*“My Slavery was ordained,  
The ruin of my life made inevitable,  
On the day when Paris prince of Troy  
Had timber felled in the pine-woods of Mount Ida  
To build a ship for his voyage to Greece,  
To win the bed of Helen, the loveliest woman  
That ever lived in the light of the golden sun.  
Now pain and cruel compulsion  
Are round us in an unbreakable ring,  
And a grey-haired mother beats her head  
In grief for her dead sons,  
And tears her cheek till her nails are stained with blood.”*

EURIPIDES’ “HECUBA”, TRANS. PHILIP VELLACOTT 1963.

Ten Years Later Phaecia.

Nausicaa and her maids encounter the shipwrecked Odysseus.

*“Then to her maids: “why, why, ye coward train,  
These Fears, this flight? Ye Fear, and fly in vain.  
Dread ye a foe? Dismiss that idle dread,  
‘Tis death with hostile step these shores to tread:  
Safe in the love of heaven, an ocean flows  
Around our realm, a barrier from the foes;  
‘Tis ours this son of sorrow to relieve,  
Cheer the sad heart, nor let affliction grieve.  
By Jove the stranger and the poor are sent;  
And what to those we give to Jove is lent.  
Then food supply, and bathe his fainting limbs  
Where waving shades obscure the mazy streams.”*

ODYSSEY, TRANS. ALEXANDER POPE, 1725

Hecuba: Phyllis Cannan  
Men: Monica Brett-Crowther, Sadhbh Dennedy,  
Louise Mott, Kim-Marie Woodhouse  
Odysseus: Daniel Broad

Nausicaa: Sadhbh Dennedy  
Maids: Louise Mott, Monica Brett-Crowther,  
Kim-Marie Woodhouse  
Odysseus: Daniel Broad

Nausicaa presents Odysseus to her parents, King Alcinous and Queen Arete.

*“Close to the gates a spacious garden lies,  
From storms defended and inclement skies.  
Four acres was the allotted space of ground,  
Fenced with a green enclosure all around.  
Tall thriving trees confess'd the fruitful mould:  
The reddening apple ripens here to gold.  
Here the blue fig with luscious juice o'erflows,  
With deeper red the full pomegranate glows:  
The branch here bends beneath the weighty pear,  
And verdant olives flourish round the year.  
The balmy spirit of the western gale  
Eternal breathes on fruits, untaught to fail:  
Each dropping pear a following pear supplies,  
On apples apples, figs on figs arise:  
The same mild season gives the blooms to blow,  
The buds to harden, and the fruits to grow.”*

“ODYSSEY”, TRANS. ALEXANDER POPE, 1725

Odysseus remembers his time at war, and begins to recount his journey back from Troy, how he rescued his men by blinding the one-eyed giant Polyphemus

*“so into his eye  
The fiery stake we labour'd to imply.  
Out gush'd the blood that scalded, his eye-ball  
Thrust out a flaming vapour, that scorch'd all  
His brows and eye-lids, his eye-strings did crack,  
As in the sharp and burning rafter brake.  
And as a smith to harden any tool,  
Broad axe, or mattock, in his trough doth cool  
The red-hot substance, that so fervent is  
It makes the cold wave straight to seethe and hiss;  
So sod and hiss'd his eye about the stake.  
He roar'd withal, and all his cavern brake  
In claps like thunder. We did frighted fly,  
Dispers'd in corners.”*

“ODYSSEY”, TRANS. GEORGE CHAPMAN 1614-16

Nausicaa: Sadhbh Denny  
King Alcinous: Kim-Marie Woodhouse  
Queen Arete: Louise Mott  
Servants: Monica Brett-Crowther, Phyllis Cannan  
Odysseus: Daniel Broad

Polyphemus: Kim-Marie Woodhouse  
Men: Monica Brett-Crowther, Phyllis Cannan, Louise Mott,  
Kim-Marie Woodhouse  
Odysseus: Daniel Broad

Odysseus continues his journey. Circe has turned Odysseus' men into pigs. They watch, as Circe and Odysseus make love.

*“but venom'd was the bread, and mix'd the bowl,  
With drugs of force to darken all the soul  
Soon in the luscious feast themselves they lost  
And drank oblivion of their native coast.  
Instant her circling wand the Goddess waves,  
To hogs transformes 'em, and the Sty receives.  
No more was seen the human form divine,  
Head, face and members bristle into swine:  
Still curst with sense, their mind remains alone,  
And their own voice affrights them when they groan.”*

“ODYSSEY”, TRANS. ALEXANDER POPE, 1725

Hades, the underworld, land of the dead. Shades wander aimlessly. Among them Odysseus meets his mother, Anticleia, and the blind seer Tiresias, who warns Odysseus about the perils of the next leg of his journey.

*“...round about me fled out of the flood  
The souls of the deceas'd. There cluster'd then  
Youths and their wives, much-suffering aged men,  
Soft tender virgins that but new came there  
By timeless death, and green their sorrows were.  
There men at arms, with armours all embrew'd,  
Wounded with lances, and with falchions hew'd,  
In numbers, up and down the ditch, did stalk,  
and threw unmeasure'd cries about their walk,  
So horrid that a bloodless fear surpris'd  
My daunted spirits.”*

“ODYSSEY”, TRANS. GEORGE CHAPMAN, 1614-16

Circe: Monica Brett-Crowther  
Men/Pigs: Phyllis Cannan, Sadhbh Dennedy, Louise Mott,  
Kim-Marie Woodhouse  
Odysseus: Daniel Broad

Anticleia: Louise Mott  
Tiresias: Kim-Marie Woodhouse  
Other Shades: Monica Brett-Crowther, Phyllis Cannan,  
Sadhbh Dennedy  
Odysseus: Daniel Broad

Odysseus encounters the perils described by Tiresias.

To avoid the Sirens, deadly creatures with a seductive song, Odysseus makes his men put wax in their ears, though ties himself to the mast so he can hear them safely himself. He then navigates between the deadly whirlpool Charybdis, and the six-headed monster Scylla, to the accompaniment of Hecuba's cursing. Disturbed by his story, the Phaeacians put Odysseus to sea: their city is destroyed.

*“Now all at once tremendous scenes unfold;  
Tumultuous waves embroil the bellowing flood,  
All trembling, deafen'd, and aghast we stood!  
No more the vessel plough'd the dreadful wave,  
Fear seized the mighty, and unnerved the brave;  
Each dropp'd his oar: but swift from man to man  
With looks serene I turn'd, and thus began:  
'O friends! O often tried in adverse storms!  
With ills familiar in more dreadful forms!  
Deep in the dire Cyclopean den you lay,  
Yet safe reentr'd – Ulysses led the way.  
Learn courage hence, and in my care confide:  
Lo! Still the same Ulysses is your guide.  
Attend my words! Your oars incessant ply;  
Strain every nerve, and bid the vessel fly.”*

“ODYSSEY” TRANS. ALEXANDER POPE, 1725

Sirens: Monica Brett-Crowther, Sadhbh Denny  
Men: Louise Mott, Kim-Marie Woodhouse  
Hecuba: Phyllis Cannan  
Odysseus: Daniel Broad

Ithaca, Odysseus' palace, some time later. Penelope, Odysseus' wife still waits, knits, makes love with her suitors.

*“Her other arts exhausted all, she framed  
This stratagem; a web of amplest size  
And subtlest woof beginning, thus she spake.  
'Princes, my suitors! since the noble Chief  
Ulysses is no more, press not as yet  
My nuptials, wait till I shall finish, first,  
A fun'ral robe (lest all my threads decay)  
Which for the antient Hero I prepare,  
Laertes, looking for the mournful hour  
When fate shall snatch him to eternal rest;  
Else I the censure dread of all my sex,  
Should be, so wealthy, want at last a shroud.'  
So spake the Queen, and unsuspecting, we  
With her request complied. Thenceforth, all day  
She wove the ample web, and by the aid  
Of torches ravell'd it again at night.”*

“ODYSSEY” TRANS. WILLIAM COWPER, 1791

Penelope: Louise Mott  
Suitors: Monica Brett-Crowther, Phyllis Cannan,  
Kim-Marie Woodhouse

Odysseus, again washed up on another shore, meets a shepherd boy who tells him he is home.

*“Meanwhile Ulysses in his country lay,  
Released from sleep, and round him might survey  
The solitary shore and rolling sea.  
Yet had his mind through tedious absence lost  
The dear resemblance of his native coast;  
Besides, Minerva, to secure her care,  
Diffused around a veil of thickened air;  
For so the gods ordain’d, to keep unseen  
His royal person from his friends and queen;  
Till the proud suitors for their crimes afford  
An ample vengeance to their injured lord.”*

“ODYSSEY” TRANS. ALEXANDER POPE 1725

Odysseus kills the suitors and is reunited with his wife.

*“But in discourse the king and consort lay,  
while the soft hours stole unperceived away;  
Intent he hears Penelope disclose  
A mournful story of domestic woes,  
His servants’ insults, his invaded bed,  
How his whole flocks and herds exhausted bled,  
His generous wines disonour’d shed in vain,  
And the wild riots of the suitor-train.  
The king alternate a dire tale relates,  
Of war, of triumphs, and disastrous fates;  
All he unfolds; his listening spouse turns pale  
With pleasing horror at the dreadful tale.”*

“ODYSSEY” TRANS. ALEXANDER POPE 1725

Shepherd boy: Sadhbh Dennedy  
Odysseus: Daniel Broad

Penelope: Louise Mott  
Suitors etc: Monica Brett-Crowther, Phyllis Cannan,  
Sadhbh Dennedy, Louise Mott  
Odysseus: Daniel Broad

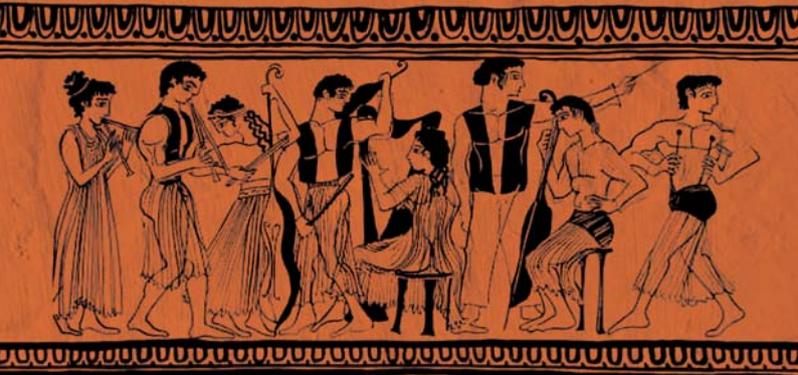
### SPINNING A NEW YARN: KNITTING THE ODYSSEY

In June of this year, on a remote American island retreat, surrounded by a *Pelléas*-like forest, I was putting the finishing touches to my latest opera when news intruded. On the National Public Radio there was a flash about a group of teenage US marines who had butchered defenceless Iraqi civilians, captured in the act on film. I was struck by a subsequent psychologist's account of the incident which emphasized that these marines were mere teenage boys, often from tough backgrounds who, though moulded into a fighting machine, were then asked to act as policemen, charged with keeping the peace. No wonder, the psychologist argued, these boys snapped under the strain of being put in such an equivocal situation.

This chimed strongly with Hattie Naylor's and my own take on the character of Odysseus: a warrior trained to kill. Yet, we were dealing with a man who was not a teenage marine, but rather a mature leader and legendary trickster, famed for living on his wits.

The Odysseus to whom we are introduced in our childhood is first a hero of brightly coloured children's books, a victim of superior forces who has fabulous *Boys' Own* adventures, outwitting monsters and treacherous ladies of dubious repute. He then goes on to triumph over interlopers in his palace, appropriately restored to the arms of his faithful wife. Even as adults, we are still drawn to the glamour of this character, rooting for him, knowing full well, having read *The Iliad*, that Odysseus's picaresque adventures are actually penance for past misdeeds - not only the slaughter of Troy, but the totally wanton destruction of Cicones.

Operatic precedents conveniently fudge the issue of Odysseus' accountability for his past actions; in Monteverdi's and Badoero's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* and Fauré's and Fauchois's *Pénélope*, the emphasis is on a journey to resolution and domestic harmony. In our version, by contrast, Odysseus is a flawed con man, a smooth and suave psychopath, whose tales of his own adventures conjure up a nightmare of blood letting, which ultimately does him in.



Hattie Naylor and I settled on *Odysseus* for our subject after I had read a wonderfully vital version of the *Odyssey* she had crafted for a youth theatre in Bristol, in which the most powerful gods were played by the youngest children. Fortunately, she was happy to revisit the subject; but this time round, it would be the obverse - a war-blackened saga leavened with even blacker humour. Both Hattie and I reckoned that our vision might have been right up Tim Burton's street.

As it happened, there was more to this team than just composer and librettist. Our commission was from Tête-à-Tête, whose founder and director, Bill Bankes-Jones, had already asked me to write two miniature operatic sketches for the mixed bills, 'Shorts' (1998) and 'Six Pack' (2001). For this company, the choice of a well worn subject and, indeed, an evening by just one composer, seemed a retreat into conventionality; but, a chance conversation led to a connection that transformed the entire project in a most unforeseen way: a marriage of opera with the traditional crafts of the Shetland Islands.

Knitting, weaving and spinning, crafts which had been associated with forced labour only then to be abandoned during the oil boom of the 1970s, was having something of a renaissance. Several exploratory trips served as fact finding missions; and I remember vividly when, in May 2004, in a windswept Shetland croft, seeing a complex knitting pattern and having it explained to me patiently and being struck by the sudden realization that an aural correlation to the sumptuous graphic could be found, not so much by mathematical construction, but rather, by contour and density. It was the lace knitting, rather than the more colourful and traditional Fair Isle patterning, that exercised my musical imagination. Here, only when the knitting is finished and pulled into its final tension is the intricate and subtle patterning which creates the lace effect finally revealed. I found this to be an intriguing way of developing basic musical material, and it operates dramatically too; a passage in the opening scene where *Odysseus* taunts *Hecuba* recurs in ever fuller versions throughout the opera as various powerful ladies fling the taunts back at him, culminating in a full blown curse just before the end.

My personal epiphany notwithstanding, it struck as all that the *Odyssey* is rife with references to the crafts we were investigating, most obviously *Penelope* at her loom; then there was *Odysseus's* island hopping, which resonated most naturally with life in the Shetlands. Yet, connectivity aside, there was still trepidation when Tête-à-Tête embarked on a three week rehearsal period in Bethnal Green and Fair Isle, filmed by BBC2's *The Culture Show*, of an unfinished draft of the opera. Would this improbable cocktail of talent work at all? Starting with a simple skills-sharing session (knitting singers and singing knitters) within days what had seemed improbable became inevitable.

The finished opera is not an *Odyssey* relocated to the Shetlands (the BBC's working title *A Shetland Odyssey* was misleading), although when it comes to names and places, the libretto sticks to the originals (and at one fleeting point in the music, I could not resist including a traditional Shetland spinning song, 'Doon da routh', because it has phrase lengths lasting seven beats, corresponding to a weaving pattern—and also because it took over my head and simply had to be exorcised! The melody emerges in the opera accompanying *Circe* and some pigs doing the Conga). The smallest touring company for which the piece is designed comprises 18 artists (six singers, five craftspeople, seven instrumentalists). If the try-outs are anything to go by, the singing and acting talents of the spinners, weavers and knitters will be in evidence, as will the knitting abilities of the singers. *Odysseus* is the sole male voice, with the five female singers taking on all other roles, including sailors, suitors, even the *Cyclops*, not to mention the formidable women pitted against him: *Hecuba*, *Circe*, *Nausicaa*, the *Sirens*, *Scylla*, *Charybdis* and *Penelope*.

Elizabeth Johnston, the very first knitter engaged by Bill Bankes Jones, exhorted him to 'make knitting cool'. I reckon I'm asking him to do the same for opera. How these two most un-cool elements will combine to explore the psychological ravages of war is anyone's guess. Rest assured, though, being part of the team concocting the hybrid has been one cool adventure.

### Julian Grant

(this article was originally published in the October issue of *Opera* magazine.)



The origins of knitting have been lost in the mists of time. Pieces of true knitting exist from the 15th century but when the technique reached Shetland, and from where, is unknown. Archaeology tells us that sheep were present on the islands from Neolithic times. Combine this fact with a practical population with strong links to Scandinavia and its nålbinding tradition, a need for warm clothing and a constant source of new ideas from passing seafarers and it is likely that Shetlanders acquired the skill very early.

In the 17th century 'course stockings' were part of the islands' exports but the levels of skill in spinning, design and construction grew with the demands of fashion and economic need. The 19th century desire for warm undergarments and lace shawls produced many new lace patterns and degree of spinning and knitting so fine that a large shawl could be pulled through a wedding ring (Unst, Shetland's most northerly island, became

famous for the fineness of its knitted lace). This meant an increase in the earning power of households throughout the isles although the Truck system, whereby knitters were remunerated with goods rather than cash, was still prevalent and lairds kept profits to the knitters very low. The women themselves wore haps (shawls) knitted of thicker yarn and the darker natural colours of the native sheep – moorit (brown), black and greys.

Meanwhile Shetland's southernmost island, Fair Isle, was spinning fine yarn and producing intricate patterned knitting, adding rich reds, blues and yellows to the natural palette. Socks, hats and jumpers were traded on passing vessels or sold directly. In the 1760's a young diarist writes of trading for knitwear, and the Bruce expedition to the Antarctic in 1902-04 was equipped with jerseys, hats, mitts, socks, and tobacco pouches (!) all knitted on the Isle. Knitting was a vital part of the economy.

By 1918 the market for lace knitting had drastically declined, and Fair Isle knitting (now a generic term) became prevalent throughout the rest of Shetland. In the 1920s Edward, Duke of Windsor made the Fair Isle Jumper popular by wearing one while golfing, and the style is still in vogue today. A combination of the very poor rates paid to knitters over the years and the coming of oil related jobs in the 1970s did mean a steep decline in the number of hand knitters but Shetland still has a thriving knitwear industry, mostly in machine made garments. Shetland College plays a vital role tutoring young knitters in innovative fashion design and techniques and Shetland knitters are still renowned worldwide.

**Anne Sinclair**

## Christopher Allan

### Cello

After graduating with Honours from the Guildhall in 1996, Christopher joined the gogmagogs, (Sydney Festival, the City of London Festival, the Du Maurier World Stage Festival in Toronto, New York, USA and worldwide). Live broadcast includes solo cellist for pianist and composer Mike Westbrook in the UK, the Czech Republic and Brussels. Recordings include soloist for Under the Stairs records (Haydn and Boccherini), Le Page Ensemble (Goldberg Variations). He also plays with the Chamber Music Company.

## Bill Bankes-Jones

### Director

A graduate of the ITV Regional Theatre Young Directors' Scheme, Bill has worked for nearly 20 years in both theatre and opera throughout the UK and in Germany, Japan, Korea, Austria and Sweden, including all Tête à Tête's productions to date.

## Daniel Broad

### Baritone

Daniel Broad has sung Schanard and Marcello *La Bohème* (Bregenz, Castleward, Holland Park and Opera North), Figaro *Barbiere* (Castleward), Anthony *Sweeney Todd* (Opera North), Eddy *Greek* (Zurich), Ned Keene *Peter Grimes* (La Monnaie), title role in Henze *Prinz Von Homburg* (Nationale Reïsooper), Bubyentsov in Shostakovich's *Cheryomushki* (Opera North).

## Marcus Barcham-Stevens

### Violin

Broadcast as soloist on BBC Radio 3 and live in recital on Classic FM. Performs widely as a chamber musician: at Manchester's Bridgewater Hall, Symphony Hall Birmingham, the London Purcell Room, at the Haydn String Quartet Festival Esterhazy Austria. He has guest led the Ensemble Modern Frankfurt, Musikfabrik Koln,

the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (also Principal First Violin), the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group and the Southern Sinfonia. Orchestrally, he has also played with the English Baroque Soloists, English Chamber Orchestra, the Kings Consort and Academy of St.Martin in the Fields.

## Monica Brett-Crowther

### Mezzo-Soprano

Monica trained at the RSAMD, in Toronto, and at the studio of Opera National du Rhin, Strasbourg; with teachers including Patricia Kern, Patricia MacMahon and Matthias Goerne. Her roles include Cherubino, Idamante L'enfant, Eva (Comedie sur le pont), Polina, Das Stuebenmaedchen (Reigen), Euridyce, Hansel, Blumenmädchen, for companies including Scottish Opera, European Opera Centre, Opera de Lausanne; and Opera National du Rhin. Forthcoming engagements include *O King* under Garry Walker; *Wesendonck Lieder* under James Lowe; a recording of Berio's *Folksongs* with the Wurtz ensemble in France and recitals with Eric Schneider.

## Phyllis Cannan

### Mezzo-Soprano

Phyllis performed many leading soprano roles in Britain and abroad, including Kostelnicka (Welsh National Opera), Tosca (English National Opera), Santuzza (Opera North, ENO), Lady Billows (Glyndebourne Touring), Hecuba (King Priam, Royal Opera), Senta (Hong Kong Festival, Stuttgart), Mrs Grose and Miss Jessel (Scottish Opera, Cologne, La Fenice and an award-winning recording for Collins Classics), before children intervened. Engagements with Streetwise Opera and Tête à Tête postpone notions of retirement.

## Ruth Contractor

### Oboe/Cor Anglais (21, 22 October, 7, 21 November)

Ruth Contractor studied jointly at Manchester University, and at the Royal Northern College of Music. Whilst still a student Ruth was selected to play principal oboe for Leonard Bernstein in the Schleswig Holstein Music Festival orchestra and Charles Dutoit in the World Youth Orchestra. More recently she was invited by Claudio Abbado to play for the Mahler Chamber Orchestra in festivals and concerts all over Europe and with his latest project Orchestra Mozart in Bologna. Ruth is a busy freelance oboist based in London, working with all the major orchestras there and throughout the UK. She also teaches in music festivals in India and northern Italy.

## Sadhbh Denedy

### Soprano

Sadhbh studies singing with Lillian Watson. She graduated from the Royal College of Music last year. Opera roles include 'Susanna' in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, 'Elsie Maynard' in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Yeomen of the Guard*, 'Soprano' in the world premier of George Higgs' *Hongongalongalo*, and 'Shepard Boy' in Puccini's *Tosca*.

## Matt Dickinson

### Percussion (16, 21, 22 October)

Matthew works with the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden with whom he has appeared on numerous broadcasts for BBC radio and television, recordings for EMI and as soloist. He has also performed with the Philharmonia, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and the contemporary ensemble Lontano. Recent West End work includes *Edward Scissorhands the Ballet*, *The Woman in White* and *Evita*. He is also Head of Percussion at the Junior Dept of the Royal Academy of Music.

## Mark Doubleday

### Lighting Design

Mark has lit over 250 productions in most UK Theatres and also New York, Washington, Europe and Asia. Mark's recent work includes: *Behzti* at Birmingham Rep, *Lysistrata* at Houston Grand Opera/New York City Opera, *Hansel & Gretel* at Scottish Opera, *Love's Labour's Lost* in Washington and RSC. Future plans include *The Snow Queen* at the Theatre royal, Stratford East and a return to Washington DC in 2007. Mark has lit all of Tête à Tête's previous productions but one!

## Emma Feilding

### Oboe/Cor Anglais

Emma studied with Celia Nicklin at the Royal Academy of Music. After several years travelling through central and South America teaching English she took up post as principal oboe with the Orquestra do Norte in Portugal. In 1994 she returned to the Academy on the Advanced Course studying with Douglas Boyd and receiving the DipRAM. She works regularly with Britten Sinfonia and most of the London orchestras but particularly loves playing chamber music in her many groups.

## JP Gandy

### Répétiteur

Has worked with such diverse artists and companies as the Rambert Dance Company, Mark E. Smith (The Fall), the acclaimed music theatre group The Clod Ensemble, improvisers: Alec Dankworth, Steve Noble, Ben Castle, Viv Corringham and Brian Abrahams, Almeida Theatre, accordion virtuoso Luke Daniels (Broderick) and 8 years collaboration with extraordinary singer/performer Bettina Jonic. As that implies, JP is interested in rummaging and getting his hands dirty with any 'genre' without relying on any elements usually associated with a particular style. There are so many different sound worlds and possibilities available – he'd love not to leave any stone unturned.

**Steve Gibson***Percussion*

This year work has included playing for Matthew Bourne's *Edward Scissorhands, Push!* for Tête à Tête, and *House of the Gods* for Music Theatre Wales. Alongside *Odysseus Unwound* current projects include working with the composer Ben Park for the WDPM tour of *5 2 10* playing a mix of computer samples and live percussion, and performing with the Divine Comedy.

**Julian Grant***Composer*

Operas include: *The Skin Drum* (winner, National Opera Association of America) *Out of Season* (ROH Garden Venture) *The Queen of Sheba's Legs* (ENO Baylis) *Heroes Don't Dance* (ROH) *A Family Affair* (Almeida) *Jump Into My Sack* (Mecklenburgh) and *A Very Private Beach* (ENO Knack). Lived in USA, Canada, Hong Kong, Japan. Since 2002 he has been Director of Music at St. Paul's Girls' School

**Anna Gregg***Administrator*

After beginning her career at The Farnham Maltings and Adonais Ballet Company she moved to Pimlico Opera where she joined the Artistic Director in setting up Grange Park Opera. After its inaugural season she moved on to The Covent Garden Festival. She currently manages the Early Opera Company

**Maija Handover***Press*

Having worked as a music publicist with Dvora Lewis PR and Global Music Network, Maija started mhpr in 2000 and has since managed a diverse range of projects in the UK and abroad. Current clients include: Contemporary Music Network, London Jazz Festival, PRS Foundation, Tete a Tete, fuseleeds, spnm, iF:06, nattjazz and Streetwise Opera. [www.mhpr.co.uk](http://www.mhpr.co.uk)

**Caroline Hughes***Wardrobe Supervisor*

Caroline Hughes has worked with Bill Bankes-Jones and Tim Meacock on Die Fledermaus for English Touring Opera, Nitro the revival at the Royal Opera House, *PUSH!* for Tête à Tête as well as various opera projects for the Opera Theatre Company in Dublin and English Touring Opera.

**Elizabeth Johnston***Knitter*

Elizabeth started knitting aged four, but a love of spinning led her to a business dealing exclusively in Shetland hand spun yarns and garments. She is also a weaver at a historic site in Shetland and teachers knitting and spinning worldwide. Elizabeth sees being part of this project as a unique opportunity to bring knitting to a new audience.

**Stuart King***Clarinet/Bass Clarinet*

Stuart began playing the clarinet aged nine. Since graduating from the GSMD in 1997 Stuart has been enjoying a rich and varied career performing, recording, teaching and leading/devising education-outreach projects. Much in demand as soloist, chamber and orchestral musician, Stuart has performed throughout the UK, Europe, the Middle East, Far East, South Africa and North America. Stuart is a founder member and Artistic Director of acclaimed chamber ensemble CHROMA.

**Tim Meacock***Designer*

For Tête à Tête: *Family Matters, Six-Pack, Orlando Plays Mad, Shorts*. With Bill Bankes-Jones: *Revival!*, (ROH2), *Die Entführung aus dem Serial* (Läckö Slottsopera), *Die Fledermaus* (ETO). Other designs: *A Touch of the Sun, Five*

*Finger Exercise, Rutherford and Son, See How They Run* (Salisbury), *Betrayal* (Exeter), *Blood Wedding, The Tempest, Waiting for Godot, The Crucible, The Provoked Wife, The Duchess of Malfi* (Colchester), *Birdsong* (RSC). Many shows at the Orange Tree, most recently The Linden Tree.

**Margaret Milligan***Knitter*

Margaret Milligan born and brought up in Shetland is married with a son, daughter and five grandchildren. Although living in happy retirement with her husband in Callander, Shetland will always be home! Interested in music and knitting from an early age to combine both in this amazing way is an incredible experience.

**Krystle Milne***Front of House Manager, Alexandra Palace*

Krystle Milne from Bury, Greater Manchester is the Front of House manager of the production *Odysseus Unwound*, here at the Alexandra Palace Theatre. Highly qualified in working in theatre, Krystle is currently Floor Manager at Disney's West end musical *The Lion King*. Krystle is delighted to be FOH Manager and hopes that you will enjoy the show.

**Louise Mott***Mezzo-Soprano*

Louise Mott studied at the Royal College of Music. She made her débuts at English National Opera as Bradamante *Alcina*, Welsh National Opera as Annio *La clemenza di Tito* and Opera North as Annina *Der Rosenkavalier*, followed by Fidalma *Il matrimonio segreto*. She has sung several roles for the Early Opera Company, and is also recognised for her expertise singing contemporary music, both on the opera stage and in concert.

**Tim Murray***Music Director*

Studied at Cambridge University, Royal College of Music, and Britten-Pears School with Oliver Knussen. He has recently conducted *The Gentle Giant* for Royal Opera House on *the Road, The (Little) Magic Flute* for ETO, *Tobias and the Angel* for ETO/Young Vic, *The Turn of the Screw* for Pigott's and *Down* by the Greenwood Side for Clarion Music Theatre. Tim made his Proms debut in 1999, aged 21, with the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, returning in 2002 for the Julian Anderson Composer Portrait. He has also performed with BBC Singers, Psappha, National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, RCM New Perspectives Ensemble, and Nottingham Philharmonic.

**Hattie Naylor***Librettist*

Hattie Naylor is currently writer-in-residence at the Theatre Royal Bath. She is an internationally award winning writer and has written many plays for live theatre in all kinds of venues and contexts. As a librettist she has adapted *The Overcoat* for Kenneth Hesketh.

**Clare O'Connell***Cello (15 & 13 October)*

Since completing her studies with Alexander Baillie, Clare has focused on chamber music: she is a founder member of CHROMA and the Rothko String Trio with whom she has performed all over England and Ireland, she is principal cellist of the chamber orchestra Sound Collective, has a busy partnership with the pianist Natasa Lipovsek and is a member of the saxophone quartet B(l)ow. She performs regularly with the Orchestra of the Swan, and has performed with the New music Players, the Marais Ensemble and the Mainardi Piano Trio. She has broadcast on Radio 2, Radio 3, and Lyric FM.

**Margaret Peterson***Spinner*

I am a Spinner of cobweb wool. Also a knitter of Shawls and lace garments all knitted by hand. I have been to Japan (3 times) Italy. Norway (3 times). Finland, also France and Germany promoting the art of Shetland knitting and spinning. I also work with classes for children and adults who wish to learn the art.

**Sarah Playfair***Consultant*

Sarah Playfair is an opera casting director. Her other regular clients include Garsington and Birmingham Opera Company, and current and recent work includes a new Jonathan Dove television opera for Tiger Aspect/Channel 4, two projects for the Young Vic and the film of *The Magic Flute*, directed by Kenneth Branagh. [www.sarahplayfair.com](http://www.sarahplayfair.com)

**Mary Pope***Tour Lighting*

Mary recently graduated from RADA's Specialist Lighting Course with distinction. Recent work includes: *Mass Appeal* Finborough Theatre, *Design for Dance*, Cochrane Theatre, *Me & Michael*, Old Red Lion Theatre, *Lodgers*, White Bear Theatre and *The Woman Who Cooked Her Husband*, Jermyn St Theatre.

**Marius Rønning***Stage Manager*

Graduated from RADA in 2001 where he trained as a Stage Manager. Since then he has been working freelance. He has worked on *Tête à Tête's Shorts*, *Six-Pack*, *Family Matters* and *PUSH!* Other companies include Trestle (Mask), Royal College of Music, New Kent Opera, English Touring Opera, Wee (Dance), The Shout, Actors Touring Company/Soho Theatre Company. Marius has worked on UK tours and has experience of working in Italy, France and Norway.

**Jonathan Rouse***Production Electrician*

Previous lighting designs include: *Arabian Nights*, Manchester Youth Theatre; *School Play*, *Hey Good Looking*, Soho Theatre Company; *All Words for Sex*, International Artistes. Relights include: *The Mysteries* and *The Beggars Opera* for Wilton's Music Hall at New Haven International Festival, Connecticut; *Six-Pack* for *Tête à Tête*. Jonathan has worked as lighting associate for Robert Bryan Albert Herring, Kent Opera and Paul Pyant Glorinana, Aldeburgh Festival. Also lighting assistant to Bruno Poet *Just Between Ourselves*, Theatre Royal Bath Productions; and Jason Taylor *The Mikado*, *Yeoman of the Guard*, *Iolanthe* for D'Oyly Carte Opera.

**Céline Saout***Harp*

Born in Paris Céline started playing the harp when she was 8. After obtaining the "Premier Prix de la ville de Paris" with distinctions, she came to London to study at the Royal Academy on the postgraduate course with Skaila Kanga. She won numerous awards and prizes including first Prize in UFAM European Competition and 2nd prize in the London Harp competition. Freelance work includes CBSO, Philharmonia, Birmingham Royal Ballet and recording and performing with pop artists Guy Chambers, Divine Comedy, Incognito, Siouxsie and the Banshees. Céline also performs as a soloist and chamber musician throughout the UK and Europe.

**Janice Sawford***Knitter*

Knitting since I was 4. Moved 52 times in my life, all the while knitting! As well as that, I am a carer for someone who lives on the same small isle as myself. I mainly knit Shetland lace but can knit Fair Isle, Aran and anything else.

**Lucy Shaw***Double Bass*

Lucy plays with groups such as *Tête à Tête*, Opus 20, Sound Collective and Composers Ensemble exploring new music. She was a member of the Gogmagogs, a theatre music company, for 7 years. She crosses over to play bass guitar in jazz and more popular music with the likes of Katie Melua and Glenn Tilbrook. She is also involved with music education projects working with Create and the LSO.

**Claire Shovelton***Company Manager*

Claire Shovelton's career includes press, PR and marketing for Riverside Studios, the Young Vic theatre and the West End, and producing for Opera Factory. She managed communications, then production, at Metro New Media, before taking up her current role as manager for chamber ensemble CHROMA. For *Odysseus Unwound* she is also company managing the tour and co-ordinating the education programme.

**Anne Sinclair***Knitter*

Anne Sinclair belongs to Fair Isle. She learnt to knit as a small child and has demonstrated her craft in Europe and the USA. Other projects include lecturing throughout northern Europe on the history and economic importance of local textile production, and performing as a singer in folk band Fridarey

**Kim-Marie Woodhouse***Mezzo-Soprano*

Born in Melton Mowbray, Kim-Marie Woodhouse studied at the Welsh College of Music & Drama. Recent roles include Teodora, *Flavio* (Early Opera Company), Zerlina, *Don Giovanni* (Opera North) and she appears as Third Lady in Kenneth Branagh's new film of *The Magic Flute*, which recently had simultaneous premières at the Toronto and Venice Film Festivals.

### WIN A SHETLAND "PRINT O'THE WAVES" SCARF

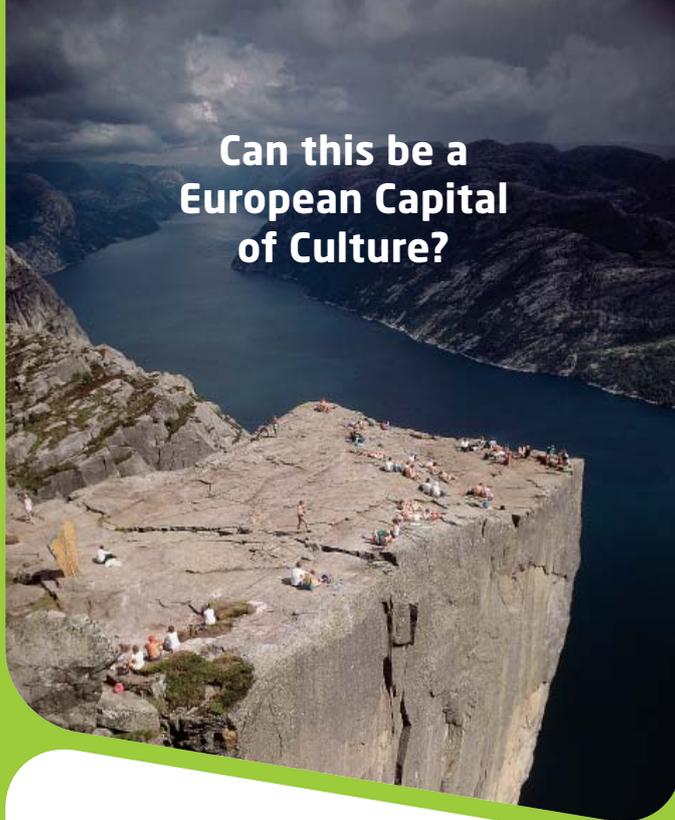
To help us meet the frightening deficit on this project, our ever-resourceful knitters have offered a scarf for each venue, to be raffled on the last night in each place. The main pattern is a traditional Shetland pattern known as the "print o'the waves," also used on our publicity image. Raffle tickets will be available at every performance.



### HELP US MEET THE FRIGHTENING DEFICIT ON THIS PROJECT

## Can this be a European Capital of Culture?

Mowden/Jan The Idea Entrepreneur



In 2008 the Stavanger region in Norway will be European Capital of Culture. We are proud to be co-commissioners of *Odyssey Unwound* - taking opera to where the sea meets the sky, and a whole world of culture begins...

[www.stavanger2008.no](http://www.stavanger2008.no)



## CHROMA

CHROMA is a dynamic, critically acclaimed chamber ensemble featuring some of Britain's most outstanding musicians. Since its inception in 1997, CHROMA has quickly gained a reputation as an ensemble of the highest calibre and has been invited to appear at many major festivals the length of the UK.

Following its debut in the Purcell Room on London's South Bank, CHROMA has become most closely associated with the performance of contemporary music and has forged close links with many prominent British composers through an extensive series of premières and collaborations. Recent projects have included a birthday tribute (Gabriel Jackson's *Windflower Cycle*) for the artist Ian Hamilton Finlay at the Tate Modern; and the première of Jonathan Dove's *On Spital Fields - a Community Cantata* at Christ Church for the Spitalfields Festival.

In addition to collaborating with Tête à Tête, highlights for 2006 include CHROMA's return visit to Spitalfields Festival with a programme of Piazzolla and Golijov, reunited with the accordion player Ian Watson, and an emotional return to Wigtownshire in Scotland with Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht* and Tchaikovsky's *Souvenir de Florence* for WestFest.

[www.chromaensemble.co.uk](http://www.chromaensemble.co.uk)



## ODYSSEUS UNWOUND EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROGRAMME

Artistic Director: Stuart King · Co-ordinator: Claire Shovelton  
As part of its collaboration with Tête à Tête CHROMA has devised an exciting and extensive programme of education and out reach work to accompany *Odyssey Unwound*. For details of all our education activity visit

[www.nocommentary.co.uk/odyssey](http://www.nocommentary.co.uk/odyssey)

Tête à Tête was founded in 1997 by Bill Bankes-Jones, Katie Price and Orlando Jopling to bring uplifting, surprising, daring and intimate opera productions of the highest quality to the widest possible audiences.

Its first production, **The Flying Fox**, (*die Fledermaus* by Johann Strauss), was performed at BAC Opera 98 and at the Purcell Room.

**Shorts** was first performed at BAC Opera 99, revived Bridewell Theatre Spring 2001 and toured the UK, including the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival and Canterbury Festival, Autumn 2001.

With **Orlando Plays Mad**, a new edition by the company, Tête à Tête performed Vivaldi's 'Orlando Finto Pazzo' at BAC Opera 2000 for the first time since the composer himself staged it in 1714.

Spring 2002, the company performed its second programme of short commissioned operas **Six-Pack** in a co-production with ENO Studio, playing to packed and delighted houses in London, and again on tour the following Autumn.

In May 2002, the company performed the world première staging of **Britten's Canticles** in Westminster Abbey, working in conjunction with clients in five centres for the homeless across London. The project was a co-production with Streetwise Opera and the London Jubilee String of Pearls Festival.

Tête à Tête performed **Family Matters** in 2003-4, which was a reworking of the third Beaumarchais Figaro play by Amanda Holden and six young composers. Workshops were held at the BAC where over 400 people contributed feedback on the first draft. Performances then took place at the Bridewell Theatre and at seven venues across the UK on a national tour.

In June 2006, in collaboration with the Genesis Foundation we gave the world premiere of **PUSH!**, David Bruce and Anna Reynolds' new opera presenting the labour of six birthing mothers.

We are currently working towards a regular festival for the presentation of new and familiar opera – [www.opera-festival.com](http://www.opera-festival.com) - and are planning a further programme of short commissions, **Blind Date** for 2007.

Tête à Tête is a member of the Opera and Music Theatre Forum

## Tête à Tête

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Chair:

**David Leeming**

Deputy Chair:

**Matthew Hart**

Directors:

**Jane Plumtre**

**Kenneth Richardson**

Company Secretary:

**Caroline Steane**

Secretary to the Friends:

**Jane Blackstock**

Artistic Director:

**Bill Bankes-Jones**

Administrator:

**Anna Gregg**

Consultant:

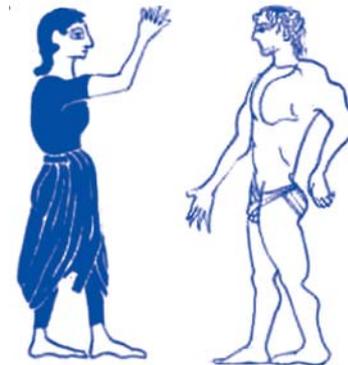
**Sarah Playfair**

## Help!

As you can imagine, getting *Odysseus Unwound* on the road has been an enormously expensive undertaking, and for the company to survive this at all we still desperately need your help.

If you would like to be involved in this way, please make a donation via [www.tete-a-tete.org.uk](http://www.tete-a-tete.org.uk), or else contact

Jane Blackstock,  
Secretary to the Friends,  
Tête à Tête,  
19 Corsica Street,  
London N5 1JT.



# tête à tête

## Tête à Tête Donors

For their help with this production, we owe an enormous thank you to the following - we really wouldn't be here without you:

Amanda Adler	Elizabeth Heritage
Sir Richard Aikens	Daisy Jopling
Ludmilla Andrew	James Kier
Primrose Arnander	Mark and Lucy Le Fanu
Jack & Leo Amiel	Rosalind Lister
Stephen Baister	Christopher McCann
R M Bankes-Jones	Fiona McTaggart
Geoffrey Barnett	Jane Manning
Jane Blackstock	Rachel Monsarrat
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Amir & Pippa Hashemi	Peter Verstage
Carolyn Hayman	Judith Weir
Patricia Healey	Diana Edgson Wright Foundation





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