



Charles Court
Opera's

EXPRESS



All aboard for a
murderous musical mystery tour!

Summer 2021



A Note from our Artistic Director & Musical Director

Express G&S was conceived during lockdown. It started as 'Reduced Shakespeare' inspired exploration of all the G&S operas, led by an appropriate amount of people for the social distancing restrictions. As with all ideas, once we started to explore it, it grew and spiralled into the 'murder mystery' you see today.

The show is in the vein of one act Victorian entertainments like Trial by Jury, Cox and Box or The Zoo. These shows were very popular at the time, either as curtain raisers or as parlour entertainments. They were always light, often silly, and aimed to make a Victorian audience giggle with their outlandish plots and off-the-wall characters. What if Gilbert had met Agatha Christie? What kind of topsy-turvy confection might have come out of that?

We have spent much of our working lives immersed in Gilbert and Sullivan, so in many ways this show is an homage to the works that we both love so much. It has been a huge pleasure to repurpose the material in new ways, to find a new madcap Gilbertian story to tell and to present many of our favourite moments in one show. Express G&S contains moments from all of the extant works that were produced by the pair. Some are obvious, some are hidden, some fly past in a line. This, we suppose, is the real detective work here – can you find all of them?

John Savournin & David Eaton



Charles Court Opera

Charles Court Opera has been described as one of the leading and most versatile chamber opera and music theatre companies in the UK. They are considered one of the champions of the current reinvigoration of Gilbert and Sullivan, described as “the masters of G&S in small places” and were the 2020 Off-west-end award winners for Best Opera for their production of H.M.S. Pinafore’.

Aside from their Gilbert & Sullivan productions, their notorious ‘Boutique Pantos’ have become a legendary part of London’s Christmas, known for their ‘off-piste’ nature and described by the Telegraph as “an annual madhouse”.

They are committed to devising new work, education and outreach, have performed across the UK in venues ranging from pub theatres to concert halls, and toured to the US and Europe.

They have co-produced operas with the Iford Arts Festival as a regular visiting company, and are proud to be an associate company of The King’s Head Theatre, London. This summer, they are to co-produce The Pirates of Penzance with Opera Holland Park, and will present Express G&S – The Complete works of G&S in 75 minutes – at the Pleasance Theatre, London before embarking on a UK tour of their brand new production of Iolanthe, Express G&S and their “five-star heaven” 2018 production of The Mikado.

Website: www.charlescourtopera.com

Twitter: @charlescourt

Facebook: charlescourtopera

Instagram: @charlescourtopera

Photographs included are shot by Robert Workman, Bill Knight and Nick Rutter.





Thank you to all our CCO Friends & Supporters!

Performing is our world, but productions are expensive – even on a small scale. We could never achieve the work that we do without the support of our beloved Friends.

As an unfunded, not-for-profit organisation, we rely on the support of our audiences, and our Friends, to whom we are eternally grateful. All donations go into our productions and the running of the company.

With special thanks to our VIP & Dress Circle Friends:

David Bowers, Tom & Silke Cochrane, Jessamine Harris, David James, Gisela Kingsley, James Lonsdale, The Hon Dame Sonia Proudman DBE, Richard van Remmen, Anonymous, Gayna Martine & Simon Masterton-Smith, Antony Thomlinson.

Laura Burgoyne, Jim & Cathy Collins, Sandra Dimmock & Hugh Smith, Maudie Foster, Shannon Kalkstein, Ellie Kayne, Charles Lax, Michael Levy, Jane Manning & Anthony Payne, John Roussety, David & Fiona Sanderson, Mr & Mrs JK Savournin, John & Emma Southgate, Nick & Glynys Sykes, The Rt Hon Lord Hunt of Kings Heath PC OBE, Richard Lynam.



Would you like to become a Friend of Charles Court Opera?

During these uncertain times we all need the escapism that theatre and music can offer and without the help of our Friends this would not be possible. Rest assured that your contribution is going to be well spent – be it on our singers' wages, costumes, scenery, or the hire of a piano.

We would love you to join our Friends scheme as a way of offering more long term support, click the memberships below to find out more about the benefits:

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A huge thank you to all our Friends for your generous support – it is very much appreciated.

A full list of all our friends can be found online:
www.charlescourtopera.com/become-a-friend-of-cco



CAST

Matthew Kellett

Catrine Kirkman

Philip Lee

TEAM

Director/Writer – John Savournin

Musical Director/ Lyricist – David Eaton

Designer – Jessie Huckin

Lighting Design – Ian Wilson

Producer – Catherine Chibnall

Stage Manager – Octavia Peneş

Stage Manager – Emily Milne

Production Manager – Ryan Wilce

Production Manager – Luke Mosley

Set Construction – Charlie Stebbings

Photography – Nick Rutter

Artwork – Alex Jackson



Matthew Kellett

London born baritone, Matthew Kellett, is a graduate of The Royal Northern College of Music and Trinity College of Music, where he was awarded the TCM Trust's Silver Medal for vocal studies.

Matthew is a regular performer with Charles Court Opera, previously taking the roles of: Dick Deadeye (HMS Pinafore), Pooh Bah (The Mikado), Robin Oakapple (Ruddigore), Papageno (The Magic Flute) and Basilio (The Barber of Seville) among many others, as well as many appearances in CCO's famous annual Christmas pantomime.

This year Matthew will also be touring with the National Gilbert and Sullivan Opera company performing as Dick Deadeye (HMS Pinafore) and Pish Tush (The Mikado).



Catrine Kirkman

Based in South East London, Catrine Kirkman graduated with a Masters from the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. Awards include First Prize and Audience Prize at the 2012 John Kerr English Song competition and the Russell-Davies Prize.

A former Britten Pears Young Artist, Catrine's Gilbert and Sullivan roles include Mad Margaret (Ruddigore), Angelina (Trial by Jury), Laetitia (The Zoo), Celia (Iolanthe) at the Kings head in Islington and Cousin Hebe in Offie award winning production of HMS Pinafore all with Charles Court Opera. In 2019 Catrine co-created & starred in her one woman show about the legendary soubrette star of the original Savoy Operas, Jessie Bond which premiered at the International Gilbert and Sullivan Festival.

As an actress Catrine also plays the title role in feature film In Love with Alma Cogan (now on Amazon Prime) alongside Roger Lloyd Pack and John Hurt.



Philip Lee

Philip studied Music and Drama at the University of Lancaster before training at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in London.

Recently he has played Colonel Fairfax in *The Yeomen of The Guard* for The National Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company and Ralph Rackstraw in *HMS Pinafore* and Dick Dauntless in *Ruddigore* for Charles Court Opera.

Previous work includes Alfredo in *La Traviata* at the Soho Theatre and on tour, Mr Snow in *Carousel* for Opera North at the Barbican and Rodolfo in Opera Up Close's Olivier award winning *La Boheme* at the Soho Theatre and on tour. Last year Philip was also nominated for an OFFIE award for best opera performance for his role in *La Boheme* at the Trafalgar Studios in London's West End.

CREATIVES

Director / Writer | John Savournin

As well as his many and varied productions for CCO, John has directed Trial by Jury (Opera North); Britten's Songs and Proverbs of William Blake (ETO); Die Zauberflöte and Il Barbiere di Siviglia (Iford Arts/CCO) and several G&S operas for the National G&S Opera Company.

This summer: The Pirates of Penzance for OHP/CCO.

During the pandemic, he directed three films: Grief, a new short by Amanda Holden and Nils Holger-Peterson (Opera Vision); a Whistle-stop Cinderella for Opera North and CCO's online pantomime (both of which he also penned).

He has written and/or directed numerous outreach projects for the Royal Opera, Opera North, OHP, Concordia Foundation and CBBC.

Musical Director/ Lyricist

| David Eaton

David Eaton studied at the Royal College of Music and has been the Musical Director of Charles Court Opera since it was founded.

He had written several opera translations, and writes both music and lyrics for the CCO pantomime at the Kings Head Theatre.

He is looking forward to conducting The Pirates of Penzance with Charles Court and Opera Holland Park this summer.

Designer | Jessie Huckin

Jessie graduated from the Winchester School of Art with a Fine Art Painting degree in 2009, and initially worked at the Polka Theatre in Wimbledon as a scenic painter and props maker. Her theatre work has involved being designer, maker and costume painter for companies including Concordia Foundation, The English National Ballet, Opera North and CCO.

Her film productions include Art Director for commercials for THIS, Virgin, Samsung with StudioYES, 'When I Grow Up' with BigEggFilms and 'VACATION', art department for the music video 'A Quiet Love' for Matshidiso, and 'JACKSON' with BFI cast and crew. She has also worked in the special educational needs sector for the last 12 years; SEN teaching, and designing and managing Movers&Makers C.I.C inclusive kids holiday camps and activities in South London.

Jessie is working on a variety of paintings for a future solo exhibition.

Lighting Designer | Ian Wilson

Ian graduated from Wimbledon College of Art with a Foundation degree in lighting design and practice. His relationship with Charles Court Opera dates back to *The Three Musketeers* Boutique Pantomime at The Rosemary Branch in 2012.

Previous lighting designs for the company include *HMS Pinafore* and *Ruddigore* along with *The Barber of Seville* and *Tosca*, both at the Musique Cordiale Festival in southern France. Other previous lighting designs include *Henna Night* – New Diorama Theatre, Euston (dir. Peter James), *A Dark and Stormy Night* – Old Laundry Theatre, Bowness-on-Windermere (dir. Roger Glossop), *And you were in it* – Questors Studio, Ealing.

Producer | Catherine Chibnall

Catherine is a Producer originally from Leeds. After initially starting her career in radio Catherine has worked as a Producer and Project Manager for various different organisations including Siren FM, Threshold Studios & Frequency Festival. Catherine joined CCO in 2017 as their Assistant Producer just in time for their 11th boutique panto King Tut. In early 2018 she became their Producer working on all their productions and outreach work since.

When not working for CCO, Catherine works as a freelance Producer/ Project & Events Manager for a variety of different organisations including Concordia Foundation's Young Audiences Project, Leeds City Council's cultural events and Oxenfoord International Summer School.

Stage Manager | Octavia Peneş

Octavia Peneş is a Romanian stage manager who graduated from National Music University in Bucharest. She started her career as a violinist; she then applied for an opera stage manager job opening and got hooked on this beautiful theatrical career.

Octavia has extensive experience working at Bucharest National Opera House, Opera Holland Park, Grange Park Opera Festival, Longborough Opera Festival, Dorset Opera Festival and The King's Head Theatre. She has worked on many productions with Charles Court Opera including The Mikado, Buttons and The Nativity Panto.

Production Manager | Ryan Wilce

Ryan is a Producer and Production Manager originally from Devon. Ryan has worked on numerous theatre productions, tours and art installations across the UK. Throughout his career Ryan has worked with some of the UK's largest regional theatres, more recently, Theatre Royal Plymouth.

As a Producer his most recent credits include Associate Producer for 'On Behalf of a Madman' at the Maltings Theatre, and 'Savitri' for Hampstead Garden Opera. Ryan is also a programmer and tour Booker for multiple companies and venues including 'The House Theatre' Plymouth. Ryan is currently the Production Manager for The Malting's 'Roman Theatre Open Air Festival'.

Production Manager | Luke Mosley

Luke Mosley is a Producer and Production Manager based in the South West. During his career, Luke has worked on numerous theatre productions including 'Miss Saigon UK Tour', 'War Horse UK Tour' and 'The SpongeBob Musical: Live on Stage!'.

His most recent producing credits include 'Big Girl UK Tour' and 'Big Girl: The Sofa Edition' by Emily Jane Rooney and Associate Producer for Animate CIC. Luke has also held other roles such as Running Wardrobe Manager on 'Wolf's Child' for Wildworks and BSL Consultant on 'Etch' for Exim Dance Company.

Charlie Stebbings | Set Construction

Over the years Charlie has worked in different areas of the industry, including working for a bespoke furniture company. After taking some time to travel, he returned to the UK with a different mindset, one that shaped his whole lifestyle; to live in a way that protects and preserves our home, to initiate and contribute positive change. This outlook had to reflect in his work.

After a few months of learning and reapplying his skills, Charlie encountered SOLOWOOD Recycling. SOLOWOOD is a Croydon based company dedicated to preventing wood waste going to landfill, keeping good wood in circulation and contributing towards community projects. 'SOLO' gave Charlie the opportunity to develop and run their wood workshop. He loves collaborating with other makers, learning new skills and teaching those with an interest in woodworking.

Charlie has had experience with a number of projects, from large shop fits to small bespoke furniture, to featuring at the RHS Flower Show, to producing market stalls at Borough Market and creating a wide range of unique pieces for producers, textile workers and much more.

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GILBERT & SULLIVAN'S

IOLANTHE

Summer 2021



TAKE GILBERT & SULLIVAN'S **IOLANTHE** HOME WITH YOU

Our production of Iolanthe is now available as an audio recording!

**BUY ON
CD NOW!**

Our brand new audio recording, featuring the original cast from our postponed King's Head Theatre London run, has just been released!

The cast features G&S veteran Simon Butteriss as the Lord Chancellor, and includes all musical numbers, as well as specially selected dialogue extracts.

To purchase and download a copy digitally ***please click here.***

If you would prefer to receive a hardcopy CD then ***please click here to contact us*** and we will register your interest for when they are available in the coming weeks.

This recording is produced in collaboration with the King's Head Theatre.

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THE MIKADO

Summer & Autumn 2021

Photo credit: Bill Knight

CCO Merchandise

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To celebrate our return to LIVE theatre we are having a **50% OFF SALE** on our limited edition G&S tote bags, which are now only £5.

The bag features characters from the G&S operas, as realised in CCO's recent productions.

Our tote bags can be bought from our online shop, as well as a number of our productions on DVD including Ruddigore, H.M.S Pinafore, Patience and The Pirates of Penzance.



Visit www.charlescourtopera.com to buy