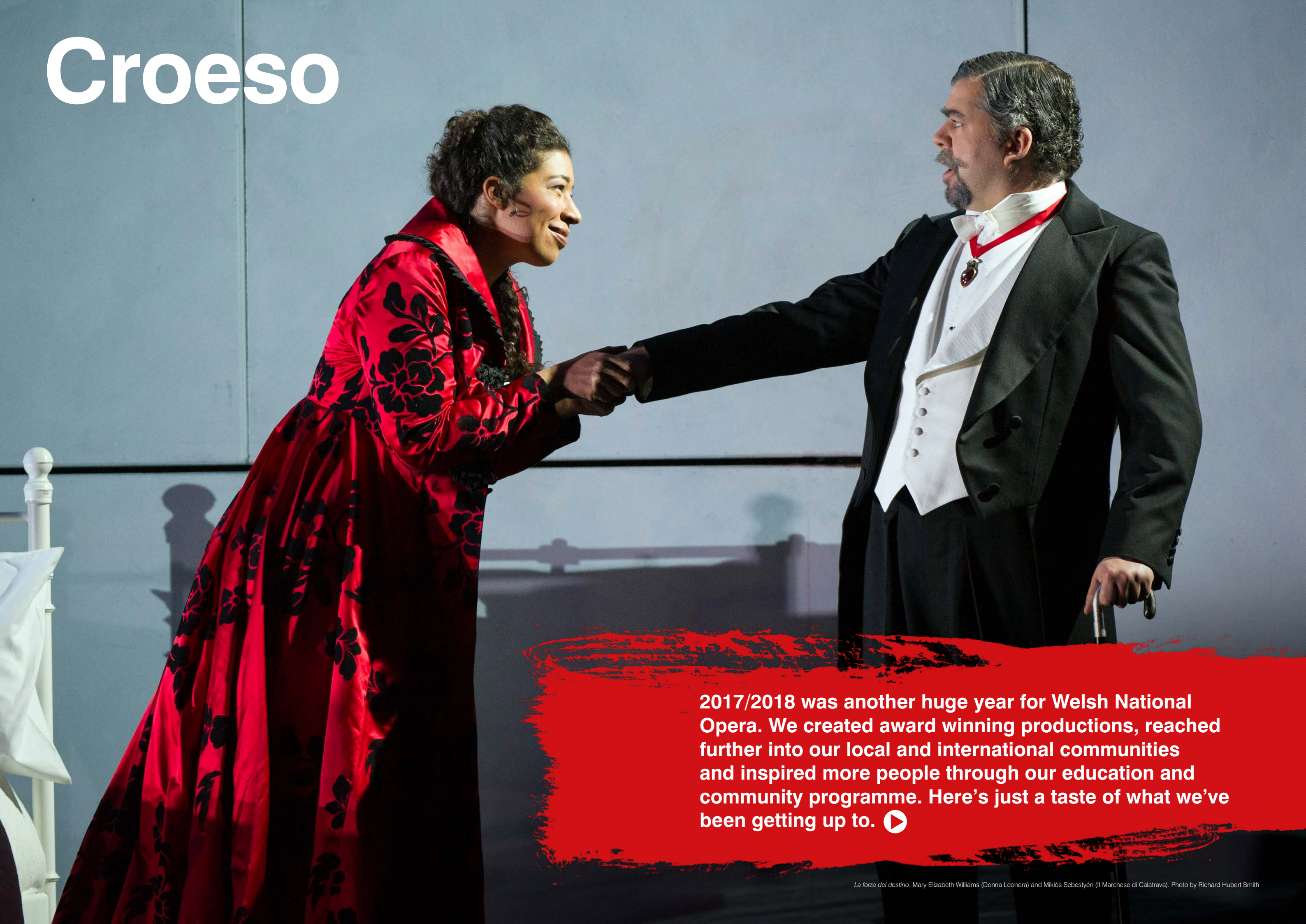



Create Reach Inspire

2017/2018 Annual Review

Croeso



2017/2018 was another huge year for Welsh National Opera. We created award winning productions, reached further into our local and international communities and inspired more people through our education and community programme. Here's just a taste of what we've been getting up to. 

In 2017/2018 we brought the power, drama and raw emotion of opera to over 135,000 people on a local, national and international stage.

‘It is probably no accident that opera exposes a fascination for rule breaking sentiments. Music itself may, paradoxically, be one of the most precise and rational languages that human beings have invented, but its impact on us is the very contrary of rational. It stirs emotions, it speaks to our instincts, it springs inspiration upon us. In short, with music of this intensity, we can expect to be galvanised, stirred to the depths of our beings!’

David Pountney
WNO Artistic Director

‘Opera tells timeless stories through incredible music and visual spectacle, there is nothing else quite like it, it speaks to people like no other art form can. 2017/2018 has been about continuing to open this experience up to more people both in the UK and internationally through our Youth, Community and Outreach work; our partnerships with venues, local communities, and arts organisations; our outstanding, ambitious and bold artistic programme; and our commitment to touring in England, Wales and internationally.’

Leonora Thomson
WNO Managing Director



Over 100,000

worldwide audience

110

live performances

35,000

engaged through
outreach work

30

touring venues



Create

We create opera that is vivid, exhilarating and bold. Whether it's a new commission, rarely performed gem or retelling of an old favourite, our artistic programme is award winning, critically acclaimed and connects with people across the world.



'During 2017/2018, it was our ambition to prove to our audience that every evening spent at a WNO performance is a special event, by creating a fully immersive experience in which our energy and love of music are exhibited. These pieces performed in 2017/2018 were so important, as they can connect our audiences through themes of peace, compassion, respect, inspiration and, at the same time, celebrate such beautiful music.' Tomáš Hanus WNO Music Director



'Art offers us a different way of understanding reality; it's not the same as listening to the news on the radio or reading it in a newspaper. It offers a different way we can approach and understand important issues because we respond to these ideas with our imagination, and that's what music, theatre and poetry invite us to do.'

David Pountney WNO Artistic Director

Reach

Aberystwyth, Bangor, Birmingham,
Brecon, Bristol, Cardiff, Carmarthen,
Haverfordwest, Hong Kong, Liverpool,
Llandudno, London, Malvern, Milton
Keynes, Mold, Newport, Newtown, Oxford,
Plymouth, Saffron Walden, Southampton,
St Davids, Swansea, Treorchy

Touring is in our blood. Our mission is to cross borders
and open up opera to everyone, from our home in Wales
to England and beyond.



Inspire

'It's hard to put into words all the benefits. It's been huge. It's broadened the children's horizons. They have a better understanding of music, language, emotions... the world. I hear the children discussing what they'd like to do when they're older. They now consider bigger dreams. We feel extremely fortunate to have been made a part of such a wonderful scheme.'

Helen Jones Deputy Head Teacher, Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon

We use the power of opera to inspire tens of thousands of people each year within our communities. Across the UK, from Llandudno to Southampton, our programme of family concerts, schools workshops, community choruses and regional youth opera groups helps us to nurture new talent and the next generation of opera lovers.



Nurture

WNO Youth Opera is an award winning training and performance programme for young singers aged between 10 and 25 based at our touring hubs in Cardiff, Llandudno and Birmingham. It is a platform for young people to develop professionally, offering ambitious repertoire, professional training and performance opportunities.



Teach

This year we worked with over 90 schools, providing a bespoke programme of digital resources, workshops and concerts, giving pupils the opportunity to participate, engage and enjoy an opera experience designed for them.

[Click here](#) to watch UPRISING! a short film produced as part of our Digital Teach work with schools in Liverpool.



Engage

Welsh National Opera's roots lie in members of the community coming together driven by their love of song. WNO Community Choruses, based in north and south Wales, invite adult amateur singers of all ages and backgrounds to come and take part in operatic experiences with WNO and be part of our WNO community.

Russian Revolution

Autumn 2017 saw major presentations of three epic Russian-themed works by WNO to mark the centenary of the Russian Revolution: Musorgsky's *Khovanshchina*, Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* and Janáček's *From the House of the Dead*. Forming part of Wales' R17 programme, the season featured the first collaborations between WNO Music Director Tomáš Hanus and Artistic Director David Pountney (*Khovanshchina*, *From the House of the Dead*), and toured across England, Wales and the Czech Republic to rave reviews in both the local and national press. Find out more [here](#).



'Unmissable.'

The Independent



'Thrillingly performed.'

The Times



'Every singer here pushes themselves to the utmost in portrayals of great force.'

The Guardian



'This is opera on the moral edge, and it mesmerises.'

The Telegraph



'Will surely be remembered for the unstinting commitment with which this work of idiosyncratic genius is realised.'

The Financial Times

Local Community Hubs

After the successful launch of our North Wales community programme in 2016 – in collaboration with Venue Cymru and many other regional partners – this year saw the launch of our Birmingham Youth & Community hub at the Lighthouse Young People's Centre, Aston. The hub was developed in collaboration with local arts organisations, community leaders and teachers, and encompasses three strands of activity: working with schools, communities and young people. Our aim is to open up opera at a grassroots level to young people and those who would not normally have access to the arts, and will be the first of several hubs across England and Wales, with plans to expand to Plymouth and Southampton.

'The children's confidence has soared. They are really enjoying it. The louder boys love it because of the performing element and some of the quieter less confident children are now putting their hands up and speaking more in class.'

Mrs Bernadette Hall Class Teacher, St Clare's Primary, Birmingham



Talent Development

In 2017/2018 we continued our long-term commitment to developing new operatic talent. In partnership with the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, the new David Seligman Opera School in association with Welsh National Opera was launched, bringing together WNO's side by side, orchestral residency and young artist schemes in a first of its kind 360° immersive opera education experience. We continued our partnership with the National Opera Studio, offering an annual residency to all of their young artists to work and perform with our creative team and Orchestra. Kerem Hasan became the Company's Associate Conductor after he reached the finals of the Donatella Flick London Symphony Orchestra Conducting Competition and, following the delivery of WNO's first Women in Classical Music Symposium, we announced a Female Conductor in Residence programme that will begin in 2019.



Hong Kong

In March 2018 WNO was invited to perform its highly acclaimed production of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* at the Hong Kong Arts Festival, marking the centenary of the composer's death. Not content with simply exporting a world-class main-scale production, we took our Family Concert and Exhibition on the flight with us, featuring a heady mix of live music, face painting, wig demos, have-a-go workshops, and our *Magic Butterfly* VR experience, the HK Cultural Centre was truly transformed into a home away from home.

To find out more about *Magic Butterfly* click [here](#).

'There is no better way to cross cultural divides than through the arts.'

Great British Brands 2019

RHONDDA RIPS IT UP!

★★★★★ **The Times**
★★★★★ **The Guardian**
★★★★★ **The Stage**



Emcee Lesley Garrett
Lady Rhondda Madeline Shaw

Composer Elena Langer
Musical Director Nicola Rose
Librettist Emma Jenkins
Director Caroline Clegg

In 2018 WNO presented *Rhondda Rips It Up!*, a rip roaring new commission celebrating the life of Welsh suffragette Margaret Haig Thomas. Featuring an all-female cast and creative team the piece was performed across England and Wales in regional theatres, engaging new audiences and receiving critical acclaim in the process. Surrounding the tour was an outreach programme of schools workshops, mass participation sing-a-longs, debates, family exhibitions, Community Chorus performances, and a new immersive VR experience *Rhondda Rebel*.

To find out more about this production watch our *Rhondda Rips It Up!* mini-series [here](#).

‘I wish that we had more of this type of production at our local theatre as it was so relevant to our lives as women.’ Audience Member, Brecon

Creative Partners

Collaboration and partnership is at the heart of what we do, alongside a programme of performances, youth, community and digital events, WNO forges artistic partnerships with opera companies and cultural partners around the globe.

Aberystwyth Arts Centre, Adamsdown Primary, Alexander Bullock Furniture Ltd, All Scene All Props, Almeida Theatre Company Ltd, Anglesey Primary School, Archbishop McGrath High School, ATG Productions Ltd, Atlanta Ballet, Bangor University, Banister Primary, Barry Community Choir, Bay Productions, Bayhouse School, Birmingham Council, Birmingham Hippodrome, Birmingham MAC, Birmingham Music Hub, Birmingham Town Hall, Blessed W. Davies Primary School, Brecon Theatr Brycheiniog, Bristol Colston Hall, Bristol Hippodrome, Bryn Seiont Newydd Caernarfon, Brynteg School, Cameron Mackintosh, Canolfan Gerdd William Mathias Music Centre, CânSing, Cardiff and the Vale Community College, Cardiff New Theatre, Cardiff Philharmonic Orchestra, Cardiff University, Cardiff West Community High School, Carmarthen Lyric Theatre, Chandos Primary School, Chichester Festival Theatre, Christchurch CP School, Clarendon Junior School, Coed-y-lan Primary School, Colmore Infant School, Conwy County Borough Council, Conwy Expressive Arts, Denbighshire Music Co-operative, Elfed High School, Elliot Harper Productions, English National Opera, Ensemble Cymru, Ffilm Cymru, Flintshire Music Service, Forget-me-not Chorus, Fundacio Del Gran Teatre Del Liceu, Galeri, Glyncoed & Coed-y-lan Primary, Glyncoed Primary School, Glyndebourne Opera, Glyndwr University, Good Chance Theatre, Greek National Opera, Greenfields Junior School, Greenholm Primary School, Grove Primary School, Hackney Empire, Hampstead Theatre, Harborne Primary School, Herbert Thompson Primary School, Heronsbridge School, Hollybrook Junior School, Holywell School, Hong Kong Arts Festival, Hong Kong Cultural Centre, Hywel Dda Primary School, IMG, Injan Cyf, Insole Court, John Frost High School, KD Productions Ltd, Liverpool Empire Theatre, Llandudno Venue Cymru, Llawn Festival, Mab Lane Primary School, Maes Ebbw School, Maesteg School, Malvern Forum Theatre, Mayflower Theatre, Meadowbank School, Milbank Primary School, Milford Haven Torch, Millbank & Moorland School, Milton Keynes Theatre, Min Motion, Montgomery Primary School, Moorland Primary School, Music Theatre Wales, National Assembly for Wales, National Eisteddfod of Wales, National Museum Wales, National Theatre, National Theatre Wales, NEW (North East Wales) Sinfonia, Newport Riverfront, North Wales Choral Festival, North Wales International Music Festival, Northampton Theatres Trust Ltd, Only Boys Aloud, Open Other End Ltd, Opera Omaha, Overmonnow Primary School,

Oxford New Theatre, Oystermouth Primary School, Park and Dare Theatre, Pendine Park, Playful UK Ltd, Plymouth Theatre Royal, Pontio, Porthcawl Comprehensive School, Presentation Design Services Ltd, PW Productions Ltd, Queens Park Primary School, Ranworth Square Primary School, Redbridge Drama Centre, Redbridge Primary, Regent's Park Theatre Ltd, REWIND, Rhoose Primary School, Riverbank Special School, Romilly Primary School, Rondo, Royal Horticultural Society, Royal Opera House, Royal Shakespeare Company, Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, S4C, Saffron Hall, Scottish Opera, Severn Screen, SFP Shows Ltd, Sheffield Theatres, Sketty Primary School, Somerville Primary School, Sonalyst, St Anne's Catholic School, St Asaph's Cathedral, St Bernadette's Primary School, St Chad's RC Primary School, St Clare's RC Primary School, St David's Hall, St David's Cathedral, St Helen's Primary School, St Helen's Primary School, St Illtyd's Primary School, St Joseph's Primary School, St Jude's RC Infant School, St Mary's Church, St Mellon's Primary School, St Michael's Primary School, St Nicholas Primary School, St Vincent's RC Primary School, St Winefride's Primary School, State Opera of South Australia, Studio 144, Swansea Music Unit, Swansea University, take pART, Taliesin Arts Centre, Teatr Wielki, Teatro di San Carlo, Tenovus Penarth, The Crescent Primary School, The Harbour School, The Hollies School, The Kiln Theatre, The Lighthouse Centre, The Pierhead, The Sessions House, The Sholing Technology College, The Singing Club, Theatr Clwyd, Theatr Colwyn, Theatr Hafren, Theatre Bonn, Touch Trust, Townhill Junior School, Trinity Laban, Turner Sims Concert Hall, U3A Cardiff, University Hospital Wales, Valentine Primary School, Venue Cymru, Wales Millennium Centre, Welsh Government, Whitchurch Primary School, Wild Creations, Willowbrook Primary School, Windsor Clive Primary School, Wordsworth Primary School, Wrexham Music Service, Yenton Primary School, Young Vic, Ysgol Bro Carmel, Ysgol Bryn Pennant, Ysgol Brynford, Ysgol Cwm Gwyddon, Ysgol Esgob Caerwys, Ysgol Glan Aber, Ysgol Glancegin, Ysgol Gynradd Cystennin, Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llwynderw, Ysgol Iau Hen Golwyn, Ysgol Lixwm, Ysgol Llanbedr, Ysgol Llanddulas, Ysgol Llandrillo yn Rhos, Ysgol Maes Glas, Ysgol Nant y Groes, Ysgol Pen Barras, Ysgol Pen y Bryn, Ysgol Porth y Felin, Ysgol St Elfod, Ysgol Treffynnon, Ysgol Trefnant, Ysgol Tudno, Ysgol y Llys, Ystrad Mynach Primary School.

Diolch

Welsh National Opera would like to send its deepest gratitude to all its supporters in 2017/2018. It is your generosity that enables us to continue to create, reach and inspire. Thank you, for being part of our story.

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What's next?



FREEDOM

A Season of operatic works with complementary panel discussions, talks and community engagement exploring the themes of human rights, justice and political imprisonment.



Carmen

A new production for Autumn 2019 directed by Jo Davies, designed by Leslie Travers, and conducted by Tomáš Hanus.



Don Pasquale

WNO brings Daisy Evans' brilliant new, witty and modern production to venues across Wales and England throughout the Summer of 2019.



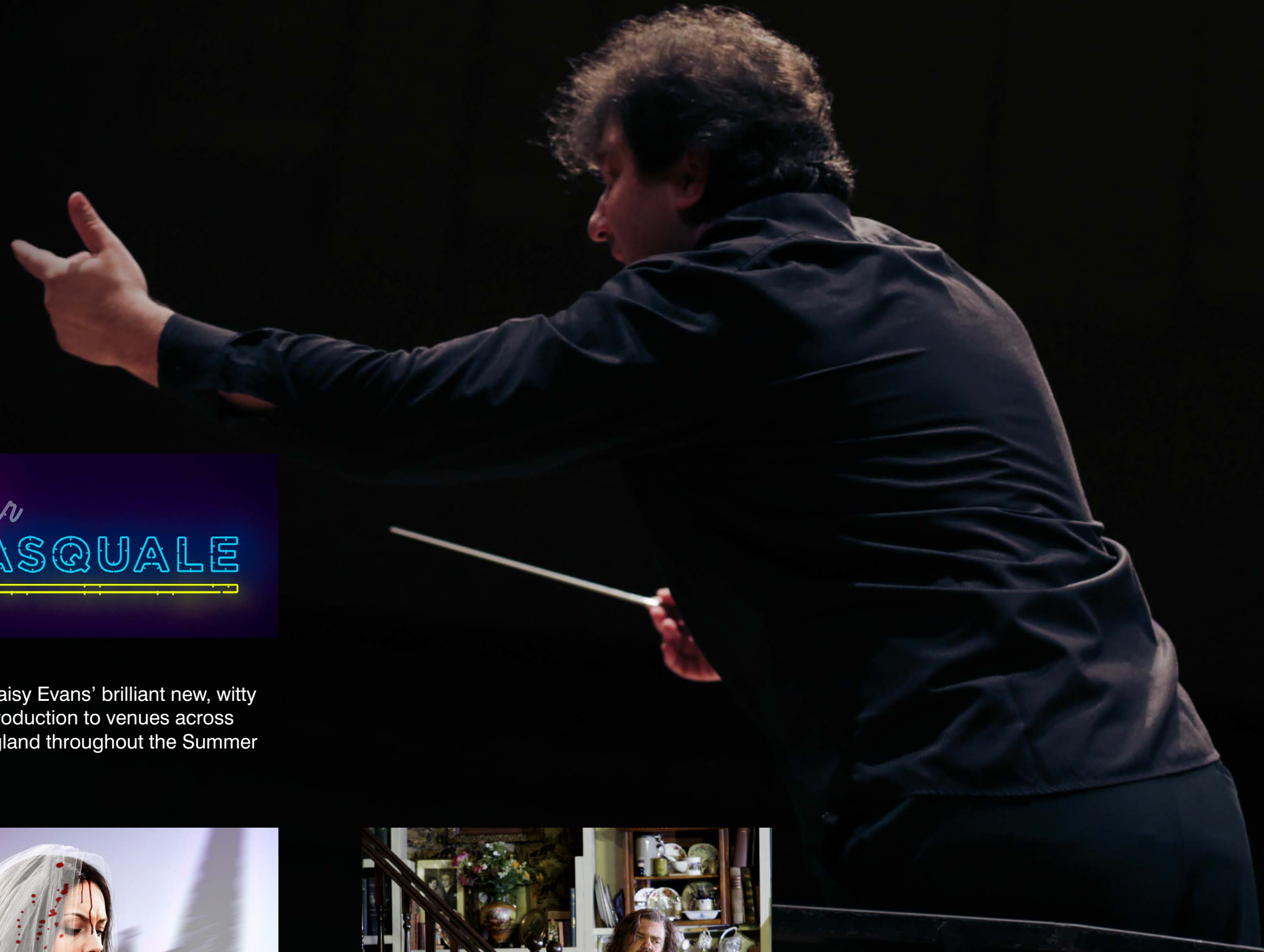
Les vêpres siciliennes

WNO's successful Verdi Trilogy (*La forza del destino* (2018) *Un ballo in maschera* (2019)) concludes in Spring 2020 with the thrilling *Les vêpres siciliennes*.



Duke Bluebeard's Castle

Summer 2020 sees the return of WNO alumni Sir Bryn Terfel, CBE in the title role of Bartok's haunting *Duke Bluebeard's Castle* for a run of performances at the Wales Millennium Centre.



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