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OSSIAN HUSKINSON & MATTHEW FLETCHER

Thursday 25 January, 7.30pm
Djanogly Recital Hall

Songs Before Sleep

1. *The Mouse and the bumblebee*
2. *Wee Willie Winkie*
3. *Twinkle, twinkle, little star*
4. *Baby, baby; naughty boy*
5. *As I walked by myself*
6. *The was an old lady*

Sir Richard Rodney Bennett

Twelve Songs, Op.8

No 8: Hexenlied (Witches Song)

Felix Mendelssohn

Erlkönig (The Erl-King), D328;

Der König in Thule (The King of Thule), D367

Franz Schubert

Pesnya Mefistofelya v pogrebke Auerbakha
(Mephistopheles' Song in Auerbach's Cellar –
'Song of the Flea')

Modest Mussorgsky

Song of the Viking Guest from *Sadko*

Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov

La Belle Dame Sans Merci

Gus Tredwell

Three Salt-water Ballads

1. *Port of Many Ships*
2. *Trade Winds*
3. *Mother Carey*

Frederick Keel

Lakeside Arts is grateful to Mrs Sue Cotton for supporting this concert.

Please ensure all mobile phones are switched off. Photographs and videos of the performance are not permitted.

There is a Sennheiser Infrared enhanced hearing system in the Djanogly Recital Hall, please ask for a headset from our front-of-house staff.

PROGRAMME NOTES

There's definitely something spooky in the air through most of this evening's song recital. Richard Rodney Bennett starts us off with a selection of not-so-cosy bedtime stories. *Songs Before Sleep* was composed in 2002, in response to a joint commission from BBC Radio 3 and the Royal Philharmonic Society, as part of the Radio 3 New Generation Artists scheme. The first performance was given by Jonathan Lemalu and Michael Hampton in June 2003, in Wilton's Music Hall, London, as part of the Spitalfields Festival. Following suggestions by his sister, the poet Meg Peacocke, he chose texts from the Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes. The whimsical tale of the mouse and the bumblebee is followed by two familiar lyrics, for which Bennett made his own settings, rather than arranging the traditional tunes. 'Wee Willie Winkie' moves from wistful to boisterous, before ending with a lullaby. The deceptive simplicity of 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star' masks a profound sense of yearning. The bogey-man threats of 'Baby, baby; naughty boy' verge on the macabre, before the resigned solitude of 'As I walked by myself'. 'There was an old woman' brings together the words of several 'old woman' rhymes, ending the song-cycle on a capricious note.

Sometime in the nineteenth century, Mendelssohn's 'Hexwenlied' acquired the subtitle 'Andres Maienlied' ('Another', or 'Alternative May-Song'). The witches are looking forward eagerly to celebrating their spring festival, Walpurgisnacht, when they assemble on their rock and dance with Beelzebub. Schubert's Erl-King is another bogey-man. Composed in 1815, this was his first song to be performed in public, a huge success with both audience and critics, Goethe's macabre tale drew from Schubert a masterpiece of musical narrative, the piano's galloping figuration continuing throughout (until just before the very end) as a backdrop to the three vividly characterised voices: the father trying to calm the child (and perhaps trying to hide his own fear), the child becoming increasingly hysterical, and the sinisterly seductive Erl-King – and notice how Schubert lightens the piano texture when the Erl-King speaks, without the music losing momentum. 'Der König in Thule' is one of six lyrics from Goethe's epic verse-drama 'Faust' that Schubert set to music between 1814 and 1817. Gretchen sings to herself while thinking over her first meeting with Faust. In the style of an ancient ballad, this tale of constant love in the face of death is deeply ironic in the light of Faust's later treatment of her.

The Russian segment of tonight's programme begins with Mussorgsky setting a translation of another lyric from Goethe's *Faust*. The demonic Mephistopheles takes Faust to Auerbach's cellar, which is crowded with worse-for-wear drinkers. Mephistopheles gets up and sings his satirical song about life at a royal court.

Composed between 1895 and 1896, Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sadko* is designated as an 'opera-bilina' (a bilina being a kind of heroic ballad). It is set partly in the city of Novgorod, in "half-legendary, half-historical times." Sadko himself is a psaltery-player and singer who becomes a wealthy merchant. The fourth of the opera's seven scenes takes place on the Novgorod quayside. Sadko is assembling a fleet for a voyage to seek his fortune. He invites three visiting merchants – a Viking, an Indian and a Venetian – to sing a song each about their homelands. The Viking's song quickly became a popular recital aria in its own right.

There is another supernatural encounter, as Keat's knight-at-arms finds himself lost and bewildered after being seduced by the fairy in question in University of Nottingham alumnus Gus Tredwell's setting of 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci'.

We end the evening at sea for Frederick Keel's group of sailors' yarns, the second and better-known of his two sets of Salt-water Ballads, published in 1902 and 1919, respectively, and both to words by John Masefield. Keel was a baritone soloist as well as a composer (he gave the first London performance of Vaughan Williams' 'Linden Lea' in 1902). He studied at the Royal Academy of Music, London, where he later returned as Professor of Singing. The set opens with a lively evocation of a nautical after-life, ending on a wistful note. The more contemplative 'Trade Winds', the best-known of all Keel's songs, paints an alluring picture of a tropical anchorage. The third song is a warning to young sailors not to go near the two great oceanic mischief-makers, Mother Carey and her partner, Davy Jones, who delight in raising storms and causing shipwrecks.

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TEXTS

Bennett *Songs Before Sleep*

1. The mouse and the bumblebee

A cat came fiddling out of a barn,
With a pair of bagpipes under her arm.
She could sing nothing but fiddlededee,
The mouse shall marry the bumblebee.
Pipe, cat, dance, mouse!
We'll have a wedding at our good house.

Fiddlededee, fiddlededee
The mouse has married the bumblebee.
They went to church and married was she.
The mouse has married the bumblebee.

The cat came fiddling out of the barn
With a pair of bagpipes under her arm.
She sang nothing but fiddlededee,
Which worried the mouse and the bumblebee.
Puss began purring, the mouse ran away,
And the bee flew off with a wild huzza.

Anonymous

2. Wee Willie Winkie

Wee Willie Winkie runs through the town,
Upstairs and downstairs in his nightgown.
Rapping at the window, crying at the lock,
Are the children in bed for it's now ten o'clock.

Hey Willie Winkie, are you coming in?
The cat's singing quiet songs to the sleeping hen,

The dog's sprawled across the floor, and doesn't give a cheep.
But here's a wakeful laddie that will not fall asleep.
Anything but sleep, you rogue! Glowering like the moon,
Rattling in an iron jug with an iron spoon,
Rumbling, tumbling roundabout, crowing like a cock,
Squealing like I don't know what, waking sleeping folk.

Hey Willie Winkie, the child's in a creel,
Scrambling off its mother's knee like a very eel,
Tugging at the cat's ear and spoiling all her dreams,
Hey, Willie Winkie see, here he comes!

Weary is the mother that has a wakeful bairn,
A wee wilful mischief that can't be left alone,
That battles ev'ry night with sleep before he'll close an eye
But a kiss from off his rosy lips gives strength anew to me.

William Miller (1810-1872)

3. Twinkle, twinkle, little star

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.

When the blazing sun is gone,
When he nothing shines upon,
Then you show your little light,
Twinkle, twinkle all the night.

When the trav'ler in the dark
Thanks you for your tiny spark,
He could not see which way to go
If you did not twinkle so.

In the dark blue sky you keep,
And often through my curtains peep,
For you never shut your eye,
'Till the sun is in the sky.

As your bright and tiny spark
Lights the trav'ler in the dark,
Though I know not what you are,
Twinkle, twinkle, little star.

Jane Taylor (1786-1824)

4. Baby, baby; naughty boy

Baby, baby, naughty baby
Hush, you squalling thing, I say.
Peace this moment, peace or maybe
Bonaparte will pass this way.

Baby, baby, he's a giant,
Tall and black as Rouen steeple.
And he breakfasts, dines, rely on't
Ev'ry day on naughty people.

Baby, baby, if he hears you,
As he gallops past the house,
Limb from limb at once he'll tear you,
Just as pussy tears a mouse.

And he'll beat you, beat you, beat you,
And he'll beat you all to pap,
And he'll eat you, eat you, eat you,
Snap, snap, snap.

Anonymous

5. As I walked by myself

As I walked by myself,
And talked to myself
Myself said unto me,
Look to thyself,
Take care of thyself,
For nobody cares for thee.

I answered myself
And said to myself
In the self same repartee,
Look to thyself,
Or not to thyself,
The self-same thing will be.

Attributed to Bernard Barton (1780-1840)

6. There was an old woman

There was an old woman lived under the hill,
And if she's not gone she lives there still.
There was an old woman lived under the hill,
Put a mouse in a bag and went to the mill.
The miller did swear by the point of his knife,
He never took toll of a mouse in his life.

There was an old woman and nothing she had,
And so this old woman was said to be mad.
She'd nothing to eat and nothing to wear,
She'd nothing to lose and nothing to fear.
She'd nothing to ask and nothing to give,
And when she did die, she'd nothing to leave.

There was an old woman who lived in a shoe
She had so many children she didn't know what to do.
She gave them some porridge without any bread,
Then she borrowed a hammer and knocked them all dead.
She went to the town to bespeak 'em a coffin,
But when she got back they were lying there laughing.
She went to the stairs to ring the bell
Then she slipped her foot and down she fell.
So she got the coffin to herself.

There was an old woman tossed up in a basket,
Seventeen times as high as the moon.
And where she was going I couldn't but ask it,
For in her hand, she carried a broom.
Old woman, old woman, old woman, quoth I,
Where are you going to, up so high?
To brush the cobwebs off the sky.

Anonymous

Mendelssohn Hexenlied

Die Schwalbe fliegt,
Der Frühling siegt
Und spendet uns Blumen zum Kranze;
Bald huschen wir
Leis' aus der Tür
Und fliegen zum prächtigen Tanze.

The swallows are flying,
Spring is victorious
And offers us flowers to make garlands;
Soon we will scurry
Lightly from our doors
And fly to our splendid dance.

Ein schwarzer Bock,
Ein Besenstock,
Die Ofengabel, der Wocken
Reißt uns geschwind,
Wie Blitz und Wind,
Durch sausende Lüfte zum Brocken!

A black goat,
A broomstick,
The oven fork, the distaff
Hurry us along,
Like lightning and wind,
Through the rushing air to our rock!

Um Beelzebub
Tanzt unser Trupp
Und küßt ihm die kralligen Hände!

Around Beelzebub
We dance in a troupe
And kiss his clawed hands!
A swarm of spirits

Ein Geisterschwarm
Faßt uns beim Arm
Und schwinget im Tanzen die Brände!

Und Beelzebub
Verheißt dem Trupp
Der Tanzenden Gaben auf Gaben:
Sie sollen schön
In Seide geh'n
Und Töpfe voll Goldes sich graben.

Ein Feuerdrach'
Umflieget das Dach
Und bringet uns Butter und Eier.
Die Nachbarn dann seh'n
Die Funken weh'n,
Und schlagen ein Kreuz vor dem Feuer.

Die Schwalbe fliegt,
Der Frühling siegt,
Die Blumen erblühen zum Kranze.
Bald huschen wir
Leis' aus der Tür
Juchheissa zum prächtigen Tanze.

Ludwig Heinrich Christoph Hölty (1748-1776);
verse 5 by Johann Heinrich Voss (1751-1826)

Schubert Erlkönig

Wer reitet so spät durch Nacht und Wind?

Es ist der Vater mit seinem Kind;
Er hat den Knaben wohl in dem Arm,
Er faßt ihn sicher, er hält ihn warm.

“Mein Sohn, was birgst du so bang dein
Gesicht?” -

“Siehst, Vater, du den Erlkönig nicht?
Den Erlenkönig mit Kron' und Schweif?”
“Mein Sohn, es ist ein Nebelstreif.”

“Du liebes Kind, komm, geh mit mir!
Gar schöne Spiele spiel ich mit dir;
Manch bunte Blumen sind an dem Strand,
Meine Mutter hat manch gülden Gewand.”

Takes us by the arms
And swings their torches as we dance!

And Beelzebub
Promises to the troupe
Of dancers gifts upon gifts:
They will go
Dressed in beautiful silks
And dig up for themselves pots full of gold.

A fiery dragon
Flies round the roof
And brings us butter and eggs.
The neighbours then see
The sparks flying,
And cross themselves before the fire.

The swallows are flying,
Spring is victorious
And offers us flowers to make garlands;
Soon we will scurry
Lightly from our doors
Hooray for our splendid dance.

Who is riding so late through the night and the
wind?

It is a father with his child.
He holds the boy tightly in his arms,
He holds him safe, he keeps him warm.

“My son, why are you hiding your face so
anxiously?”

“Father, can't you see the Erl-King?
The Erl-king with his crown and tail?”
“My son, it's only a streak of mist.”

“Lovely child, come, go with me!
I'll play many pretty games with you;
There are lots of colourful flowers on the shore,
My mother has many golden robes.”

“Mein Vater, mein Vater, und hörest du nicht,
Was Erlenkönig mir leise verspricht?”
“Sei ruhig, bleibe ruhig, mein Kind:
In dürren Blättern säuselt der Wind.”

“My father, my father, can't you hear
What the Erl-King is softly promising me?”
“Be calm, stay calm, my child.
It's the wind rustling in the dry leaves.”

“Willst, feiner Knabe, du mit mir gehn?
Meine Töchter sollen dich warten schön;
Meine Töchter führen den nächtlichen Reihn
Und wiegen und tanzen und singen dich ein.”

“Sweet boy, will you go with me?
My daughters shall attend you well.
My daughters dance every night,
And they will rock you, and dance and sing you
to sleep.”

“Mein Vater, mein Vater, und siehst du nicht
dort
Erlkönigs Töchter am düstern Ort?”
“Mein Sohn, mein Sohn, ich seh es genau:
Es scheinen die alten Weiden so grau.”

“My father, my father, can't you see there
The Erl-king's daughters in that gloomy place?”
“My son, my son, I can see it clearly:
It's the old willows that look so grey.”

“Ich liebe dich, mich reizt deine schöne Gestalt;
Und bist du nicht willig, so brauch ich Gewalt.”
“Mein Vater, mein Vater, jetzt faßt er mich an!
Erlkönig hat mir ein Leids getan!”

“I love you. Your fair shape allures me;
And if you don't come willingly, I'll use force.”
“My father, my father now he's grabbing hold of
me!
The Erl-King has hurt me!”

Dem Vater grauset's, er reitet geschwind,
Er hält in Armen das ächzende Kind,
Erreicht den Hof mit Müh' und Not:
In seinen Armen das Kind war tot.

The father shudders, he rides quickly,
He holds the moaning child in his arms.
With great difficulty he reaches the courtyard.
In his arms the child was dead.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)

Schubert Der König in Thule (The King of Thule), D367

Es war ein König in Thule,
Gar treu bis an das Grab,
Dem sterbend seine Buhle
Einen goldnen Becher gab.

There once was a king of Thule,
Completely faithful, to the grave.
His dying lover
Gave him a golden goblet.

Es ging ihm nichts darüber,
Er leert' ihn jeden Schmaus;
Die Augen gingen ihm über,
So oft er trank daraus.

He valued nothing more highly,
He drained it at every banquet.
His eyes filled with tears
Every time he drank from it.

Und als er kam zu sterben,
Zählt' er seine Städt' im Reich,
Gönnt' alles seinem Erben,
Den Becher nicht zugleich.

And when he came to die,
He counted up the cities in his kingdom,
And left everything to his heir,
Except for the goblet.

Er saß beim Königsmahle,

He sat at the royal banquet

Die Ritter um ihn her,
Auf hohem Vätersaale,
Dort auf dem Schloß am Meer.

With his knights all around him
In the great ancestral hall
There in his castle by the sea.

Dort stand der alte Zecher,
Trank letzte Lebensglut,
Und warf den heil'gen Becher
Hinunter in die Flut.

There stood the old drinker,
Draining life of its last glow,
Then he threw the sacred goblet
Down into the water.

Er sah ihn stürzen, trinken
Und sinken tief ins Meer.
Die Augen täten ihm sinken
Trank nie einen Tropfen mehr.

He watched as it fell, filled up,
And sank deep into the sea.
His eyelids closed
And he never drank another drop.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Mussorgsky Pesnya Mefistofelya v pogrebke Auerbakha (Mephistopheles' Song in Auerbach's Cellar – 'Song of the Flea')

Zhil byl korol' kogda-to,
Pri njom blokha zhila,
Blokha... blokha!
Milej rodnogo brata ona jemu byla;
Blokha... kha, kha, kha! blokha?
Kha, kha, kha, kha, kha!... Blokha!
Zovjot korol' portnogo: "Poslushaj ty, churban!
Dlja druga dorogogo
Sshej barkhatnyj kaftan!"
Blokhe kaftan? Kha, kha! Blokhe?
Kha, kha, kha, kha, kha!
Kaftan? Kha, kha, kha!
Blokhe kaftan?

Once upon a time there was a king,
Who had a flea living with him...
A flea... a flea!
...dearer to him than his own brother.
A flea... ha, ha, ha! A flea?
Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha... A flea!
The king called for his tailor: "Listen, you!
Make a velvet caftan for my dear friend!"

A flea in a caftan? Ha, ha! A flea?
Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!
A caftan? Ha, ha, ha!
A flea in a caftan?

Vot v zoloto i barkhat
Blokha narjazhena,
I polnaja svoboda jej pri dvore dana. Kha, kha!
Kha, kha! Blokhe!
Korol' jej san ministra
I s nim zvezdu dajot,
Za neju i drugije poshli vse blokhi v khod.
Kha, kha!
I samoj koroleve,
I frejlinam jeja,
Ot blokh ne stalo mochi,
Ne stalo i zhit'ja. Kha, kha!
I tronut'-to bojatsja,
Ne to chtoby ikh bit'.'
A my, kto stal kusat'sja,

The flea was dressed in gold and velvet
And it was given complete freedom at court. Ha,
ha!
Ha, ha! The flea!
The King promoted it to the rank of minister
And given it a medal.
All the other fleas were promoted as well.
Ha, ha!
The Queen herself,
And her ladies-in-waiting,
Were plagued by the fleas,
And life became impossible. Ha, ha!
They were afraid to touch them,
Never mind kill them.
But as soon as one bites us

Totchas davaj dushit'!

We squash it straight away!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832),
translated by Aleksandr Nikolayevich
Strugovshchikov

Rimsky-Korsakov Song of the Viking Guest from Sadko

O skaly groznye drobjatsja s revom volny
I s beloju penoju, krutjas', begut nazad;
No tvrdo serye utesy
Vynosjat voln napor,
Nad morem stoja.
Ot skal tech kamennyh u nas, varjagov kosti,
Ot toj volny morskoy v nas krov'-ruda pošla,
A mysli tajny – ot tumanov.
My v more rodilis',
Umrem na more.
Meči bulatny, strely ostry u varjagov,
Nanosjat smert' oni bez promacha vragu.
Otvažny ljudi stran polnočnyh.
Velik ich Odin bog,
Ugrjumo mors.

The waves crash with a roar against the jagged
rock
And flow back in a vortex of white foam;
But the ash-grey cliffs, high above the sea,
Strongly resist the surge.

From those stony rocks come our Viking bones,
From those sea-waves comes our Viking blood,
And our secret thoughts come from the mists.
We are born from the sea,
And we will die in the sea.
The Vikings have swords and sharp arrows,
Which bring certain death to the enemy.
The men from the northern lands are bold.
Odin, their god, is great,
And their seas are dark.

Tredwell La Belle Dame Sans Merci

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

I see a lily on thy brow,
With anguish moist and fever-dew,
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth too.

I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful—a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She looked at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan

I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A faery's song.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna-dew,
And sure in language strange she said—
'I love thee true'.

She took me to her Elfin grot,
And there she wept and sighed full sore,
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
With kisses four.

And there she lullèd me asleep,
And there I dreamed—Ah! woe betide!—
The latest dream I ever dreamt
On the cold hill side.

I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried—'La Belle Dame sans Merci
Thee hath in thrall!'

I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
With horrid warning gapèd wide,
And I awoke and found me here,
On the cold hill's side.

And this is why I sojourn here,
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

John Keats (1795-1821)

Keel Three Salt-water Ballads

1. Port of many ships

It's a sunny pleasant anchorage, is Kingdom Come,
Where crews is always layin' aft for double-tots o' rum,
'N' there's dancing 'n' fiddling of ev'ry kind o' sort,
It's a fine place for sailor-men is that there port.

'N' I wish –
I wish as I was there.

The winds is never nothin' more than jest light airs,
N' no one gets belayin' pinn'd, n' no one never swears,
Yer free to loaf 'n' laze around, yer pipe atween yer lips,
Lollin' on the fo'c'sle, sonny, lookin' at the ships.

'N' I wish –
I wish as I was there.

For ridin' in the anchorage the ships of all the world,
Have got one anchor down 'n' all sails furl'd.
All the sunken hookers 'n' the crews as took 'n' died
They lays there merry, sonny, swingin' to the tide

'N' I wish –
I wish as I was there.

Drown'd old wooden hookers green wi' drippin' wrack,
Ships as never fetch'd to port, as never came back,
Swingin' to the blushin' tide, dippin' to the swell,
N' the crews all singin', sonny, beatin' on the bell

'N' I wish –
I wish as I was there.

2. Trade winds

In the harbour, in the island, in the Spanish seas,
Are the tiny white houses and the orange trees,
And day-long, night-long, the cool and pleasant breeze
Of the steady Trade Winds blowing.

There is the red wine, the nutty Spanish ale,
The shuffle of the dancers, and the old salt's tale,
The squeaking fiddle, and the souging in the sail
Of the steady Trade Winds blowing.

And o'nights there's the fire-flies and the yellow moon,
And in the ghostly palm trees the sleepy tune
Of the quiet voice calling me, the long low croon
Of the steady Trade Winds blowing.

3. Mother Carey (as told me by the bo'sun)

Mother Carey? She's the mother o' the witches
'N' all them sort o' rips;
She's a fine gell to look at, but the hitch is,
She's a sight too fond of ships;
She lives upon an iceberg to the norred,
'N' her man he's Davy Jones,
'N' she combs the weeds upon her forred
With pore drown'd sailors' bones.

She's the mother o' the wrecks, 'n' the mother
Of all big winds as blows;
She's up to some deviltry or other
When it storms, or sleets, or snows;
The noise of the wind's her screamin',
'I'm arter a plump, young, fine,
Brass-button'd, beefy-ribb'd young seam'n
So as me 'n' my mate kin dine.'

She's a hungry old rip 'n' a cruel
For sailor-men like we,
She's give a many mariners the gruel
'N' a long sleep under sea;
She's the blood o' many a crew upon her
'N' the bones of many a wreck,
'N' she's barnacles a-growin' on her
'N' shark's teeth round her neck.

I ain't never had no schoolin'
Nor read no books like you,
But I knows it ain't healthy to be foolin'
With that there gristly two;
You're young, you thinks, 'n' you're lairy,
But if you're to make old bones,
Steer clear, I says, o' Mother Carey,
'N' that there Davy Jones.

John Masefield (1878-1967)

Notes and translations ©Mike Wheeler, 2023

OSSIAN HUSKINSON – BASS-BARITONE

Winner of The Mozart Prize at Tenor Viñas 2024 and the Critics' Circle 2022 Young Talent (Voice) Award Ossian Huskinson is a Harewood Artist at English National Opera, where he has sung Angel in Jake Heggie's *It's a Wonderful Life*, Bob Becket *HMS Pinafore*, Harašta *The Cunning Little Vixen* and Sciarrone *Tosca*. A Finalist at the 2023 Paris Opera Competition, he also won the 2021 Clonter Opera Prize.

Other roles have included Plutone *L'Orfeo* and Truffaldino *Ariadne auf Naxos* for Garsington Opera at Wormsley, Figaro *Le nozze di Figaro* and Sarastro *The Magic Flute* for Dorset Opera Festival, Lackey *Ariadne auf Naxos* at Edinburgh International Festival and Pietro *Simon Boccanegra* for Deutsche Oper, Berlin.

Engagements during 2023 / 2024 include Speaker *The Magic Flute* for English National Opera, Seneca *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* for Opéra de Toulon and Jupiter *Platée* for Garsington Opera at Wormsley. In concert, he sings Beethoven Symphony No. 9 with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin for Beethovenfest Bonn, *Messiah* with Huddersfield Choral Society and Verdi Requiem with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

His debut solo recital 'The Roadside Fire' is now available on Linn.

Ossian Huskinson will join the Jette Parker Artists Programme of The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, in September 2024.

MATTHEW FLETCHER – PIANIST

A member of Glyndebourne Opera Festival's music staff since 2012, and winner of the Das Lied and Kathleen Ferrier accompanist prizes, Matthew is a sought-after pianist and répétiteur. His performances have taken him to major concert halls, festivals and opera houses across the UK and Europe. He has played with the London Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic, BBC Philharmonic Orchestras, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe.

Recent highlights include the world premiere of songs by James Macmillan and Poulenc's *La Voix Humaine* with Danielle De Niese, a disc of songs by Elizabeth Maconchy with Joanna Songi and performances of Janáček's *Diary of One who Disappeared* in Budapest and across France. His fortepiano continuo for Glyndebourne's recent *Don Giovanni* was described by the press as 'exciting', 'imaginative' and 'wonderfully witty' and his harpsichord playing for *The Rake's Progress* as 'absolutely scintillating'. Matthew is also a keen jazz pianist and composer.

Matthew read music at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, where he was organ scholar. He then studied piano accompaniment with Michael Dussek and Pascal Nemirovsky at the Royal Academy of Music. He was made an associate of the Royal Academy of Music in 2016, and was on their teaching staff as a vocal coach from 2015 – 2022.