

The Wessex Award Celebration Recital

8th May 2011

The Wessex Award, instituted in 1997, provides a bursary for a deserving young singer from the Glyndebourne Chorus, and is funded by events organized by the Wessex Glyndebourne Association. This evening's recital celebrates the achievements of the 2010 winner, Nicola Hughes. Nicola is accompanied by Gareth Hancock, well-known to us as an accompanist at a number of Beaulieu concerts.

Performers' Biographies

Nicola Hughes

Nicola Hughes grew up in South Wales and, always involved and passionate about music, began to take an interest in opera and classical music while at Sixth Form College. Advised to find a singing teacher, she became a pupil of Marilyn Rees, who still teaches Nicola. At the age of 17 she joined the National Youth Choir of Wales, and also took part in Welsh National Youth Opera, where she sang roles in *Hypolitus et Aricia* and *L'Elisir d'Amore*. She went on to study for five years at Cardiff's Welsh College of Music and Drama, where she gained a BMus Honours and Postgraduate Diploma, meanwhile performing Chief Hen in *Cunning Little Vixen* and Monica in Menotti's *The Medium*. After graduating she took part in the Britten Pears Summer School at Aldeburgh, studying an intensive course of French song led by Malcolm Martini, and performing the role of Cupid in Purcell's *King Arthur*.

Nicola then auditioned for the Glyndebourne Chorus, where she has been working for the past four seasons, and is now starting her fifth season. She has covered roles including Dew Fairy in *Hansel and Gretel*, First Lady in *Magic Flute*, Fortuna in *L'Incoronazione di Poppaea*, and Gianetta in *L'Elisir d'Amore*. For Glyndebourne Touring Opera she has performed the roles of Sandman in *Hansel and Gretel*, Barena in *Jenufa*, and Damigella in *L'Incoronazione di Poppaea*.

In 2009 Nicola entered the prestigious Kathleen Ferrier Award, where she reached the semi-final stage as one of the last ten singers to be selected. She found the experience of performing at the Wigmore Hall to be one of the highlights in her career to date, fulfilling a life-long dream. Nicola was delighted to win the Wessex Award, which will help her considerably with the cost of singing lessons, auditions and scores.

Gareth Hancock

Born in Worcester, Gareth graduated from Clare College, Cambridge with a BA(Hons) in Music and gained the Dip.RAM in piano accompaniment. He has subsequently worked as conductor, senior coach and répétiteur at Glyndebourne Festival and Touring Opera, The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, English National Opera, Opera North, Opera de Lyon and English Touring Opera. He has conducted *Rigoletto*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Barber of Seville*, *The Rape of Lucretia*, *Don Giovanni*, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, *Salome*, *La tragedie de Carmen*, *Tosca*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Così fan tutte*, *Wiener Blut*, *Misère* (Lunn/Plaice), *Apollo e Daphne*, and *Carmen* for Raymond Gubbay at the Royal Albert Hall.

As an accompanist Gareth has appeared at all the major London venues and throughout Europe and the USA. In addition he has appeared at many festivals including Cheltenham, Harrogate and Barmouth. He conducted the debut album for Alfie Boe for Classic fm/Sony BMG (Brno Philharmonic Orchestra) and Puccini highlights (Philharmonia) for the Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation opera in English series. He also worked as Musical Advisor and vocal coach on a film of *The Magic Flute*, directed by Kenneth Branagh. Gareth was Head of Music for Savoy Opera, is Music Director for English Music Company and was recently appointed Musical Director of the London Welsh Chorale. He is also on the coaching staff at the Royal Academy of Music and regularly coaches the Young Artists at The Royal Opera, Covent Garden.

This evening's programme

Mozart	Exsultate Jubilate Tu Virginum Corona Alleluja	
Fauré	Mandoline Le secret Le papillon et la fleur	
Massenet	Adieu Notre petite table	<i>Manon</i>
Duparc	Chanson Triste	
Puccini	Quando men vo	<i>La Bohème</i>
Dilys Elwyn Edwards	Mae Hiraeth yn y Mor	
Meirion Williams	Mai	
Ivor Novello	Waltz of my Heart	
Gershwin	Summertime	<i>Porgy and Bess</i>