

Tête à tête:

THE OPERA FESTIVAL 2017

Celebrating our
10th Anniversary Festival



It's wonderful

to be back, poised to unleash not just another, but the tenth Tête à Tête: The Opera Festival, and in Tête à Tête's twentieth anniversary year.

We had a really creative and fruitful 2016 when we experimented with many other ways of supporting new opera. It does feel like coming home, though, to put together another festival programme. It's more apparent than ever that the festival plays a vital role in our cultural scene and creative community.

In such difficult times, which have thrown up Trump and Brexit, it's really striking how many artists have come forward to confront these issues head-on. I'm really delighted to see how, thanks to our short lead-in times, we're able to accommodate these pressingly urgent creative responses. It's also wonderful that we succeed the Royal Opera and ENO in hosting Devoted and Disgruntled (D&D) with Improbable. D&D is a huge open space weekend for our creative community, where anyone can raise and ventilate issues that move them and often launch or consolidate action.

We owe an enormous thank you to our supporters, particularly Arts Council England, the Cockayne Foundation, the Leche Trust, the visionary King's Cross, our wonderful individual friends and you, our audiences. In order to keep doing what we do, occupying a vital niche in the world of opera, Tête à Tête needs your support more than ever. Join us at many performances, bring lots of friends, spread the word and do check out the Get Involved pages in the centre of this brochure.

Here's to the next twenty years! I can't wait to see the magic start to happen in all the performances this summer, nor for us all to come together and really enjoy all this thought-provoking stuff.

Bill Bankes-Jones
Artistic Director, Tête à Tête



Cubitt Sessions, 2016
© Claire Shovelton



How it all works,

The festival is made up of both ticketed and non-ticketed shows. These have been split into four categories for you to find those that appeal to you most.

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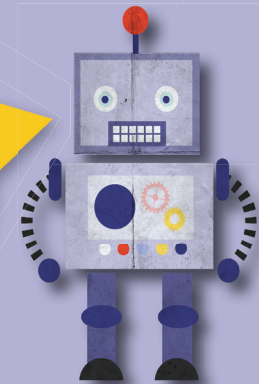
The ticketed shows in the festival are designed to allow you to sample three or more short works of opera on any given evening, with breaks in between performances for you to enjoy a drink in the Festival Bar with your fellow audience and our artists.

You can find a full schedule of shows by date on the back page of this brochure.

You can find out about our more interactive aspects of this year's festival by heading to our #TATFest17: Get Involved section on Pages 8 and 9.

For all details on Planning Your Visit, booking tickets or directions to our venues, head to pages 14 and 15.

Ready to
explore...?
Let's go!



ID, Please

The Place

Tuesday 25 July 21:15 - 21:55

Soosan Lolavar

Music Soosan Lolavar Words Daniel Hirsch

ID, Please is an opera for the age of Brexit and Trump, set at border control and exploring themes of immigration, identity and xenophobia. The work took on new relevance when its British-Iranian composer was almost prevented from attending rehearsals in the US as part of the first Muslim Ban.

Media Design Jessica Medenbach
Costume Design Nina Bova Scenic Design Caitlin Ayer

There will be a pre-performance talk at 18:00 in the Founders' Studio, The Place, involving members of the production team and Counterpoints Arts, an organisation promoting art by refugees and migrants.

The United Kingdom of Earth: A Brexit Opera

The Place

Wednesday 26 July 19:00 - 19:55

The Agitprop Allstars

Music & Words Dominic Robertson

In a not-too-distant future, following some nuclear misunderstanding the isolated island managed to avoid, a post-Brexit Britain finds itself surrounded by nothing but scorched earth. How do people from the everyday family home to the corridors of power cope with this? And what on earth is Boris doing in Downing Street in a tie-dye suit?

A commission of Worm, Rotterdam.

The Cry of the Double Bass: Act 3

RADA Studios

Thursday 10 August 19:00 - 19:50

Sebastiano Dessanay

Music Sebastiano Dessanay Words Mike Carter

An opera about powerful passions and broken dreams. The Cry of the Double Bass charts a young man's struggle against outer obstacles and inner demons to answer the call of his soul and realise his lifelong ambition in music. A deep and affecting work that will resonate with people of all ages.

Tell One, Forget One

RADA Studios

Thursday 10 & Friday 11 August 19:05 - 19:30

Leaky Boat Productions

Music & Words Kevin Jones
Arranger Desmond Clarke

Everyone has stories. Stories they'd like to remember and stories they'd like to forget. One woman in particular is trying to forget a lifetime's worth. There was this guy and this girl. That's one story. A serio-comic piece of physical theatre and miscommunication for voice, piano and electronics.

'i' – The Opera

RADA Studios

Friday 11 August 21:10 - 21:50

Waste Paper Opera Company

Music James Oldham Words Klara Kofen

Set in an oppressively happy valley ruled by a mad king and his morose daughter, 'i' is a twisted love story about an inventor who teaches his invention how to speak. Both the music and text are based on research on Artificial Intelligence, and the cast combines singer-songwriters and opera singers. 'Imagine post puberty Harry Potter on an acid trip and you're half way there'.

The Albatross

RADA Studios

Friday 11 August 19:00 - 19:30

Cambridge City Opera

Music Kim Ashton
Words Taken from Coleridge,
Melville and other sources

Albatrosses have circumnavigated the earth's great oceans for millions of years but are now facing existential crisis. Collaboration between art and science allows us to look through new eyes at these magnificent, endangered birds. Strange and beautiful creatures, they have haunted seafarers, artists and scientists throughout the ages.

Using the powerful forces of countertenor, actor and accordion, *The Albatross* evokes the other-worldliness of these wind-borne titans. This work-in-progress presentation invites the audience to glimpse a moment in the creation of a new opera.

Citizens of Nowhere

RADA Studios

Saturday 12 August 19:00 - 19:40

Opera Company

Music & Words Anna Appleby

Citizens of Nowhere is a miniature opera-ballet by composer Anna Appleby and choreographer Dane Hurst. Three islanders witness great tragedy while stranded on the mainland, and are forced to confront the prejudices of their home. The story was inspired by recent political events, and focuses on recognising common humanity.



75,000
people have
enjoyed one
of our
shows live

Mother

RADA Studios

Sunday 13 August 15:00 - 15:45

Tim Benjamin

Music & Words Tim Benjamin

What will be the impact of advanced robots on our world? Robots that can think but also feel, tireless unpaid workers but with emotions, mechanical hearts... if we embrace them, what will happen to our society?

If we reject them, what will happen to theirs? 'Mother' is set in the far future and takes a look back in time - to our near future, when artificially intelligent, wondrous machines have become a reality. What happened to them?

She Said the 'F' Word

RADA Studios

Sunday 13 August 16:05 - 16:55

Redwright Productions

Music & Words Daniel Gillingwater

She said the 'F' Word is a mostly sung through modern (yet tuneful) opera.

The Wonder Years meets *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* with a smattering of *Cunning Little Vixen*.

Look out for musical quotes; there will be prizes.

A keenly observed domestic drama centred on getting a child ready for school in the morning, highlighting the ridiculousness of the British education system and the stresses of modern parenting. Watch on as Mum, Dad, Auntie and her girlfriend queue for the bathroom, throw food at each other over the breakfast table, practise the trombone, kick the cat, watch the telly and complain about being late. The only person who rises above it all is the 10 year old child.

Liturgie

The Place Tuesday 25 July 20:05 - 20:55

Spectra Ensemble Music Daniel Lee Chappell Words Biblical texts

Liturgie was first conceived by Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes as a whimsical ballet-opera presenting the "orthodox rite" as a total work of art. For a century, it lay unfinished. Spectra Ensemble's production now marks Liturgie's world premiere, combining designs drawn from Natalia Goncharova's original plans with new music by Daniel Lee Chappell and new choreography by Camille Jetzer.

We own the largest online video resource for new opera on the internet...



with over 400 videos!

The Woman Who Refused to Dance

The Place Thursday 27 July 19:00 - 19:35

Shirley Thompson Music Productions Music & Words Shirley J. Thompson

The Woman Who Refused to Dance is a compelling operatic narrative in one act for soprano, speaker, dancers, instrumental ensemble and video. The inspirational story about an unknown woman who refused to dance on Captain Kimber's slave boat in 1792, feeds into our current human trafficking crisis and is one of a woman's triumph over insurmountable adversary. Nadine Benjamin leads and is hailed by Opera Now as one of 'a new generation of sopranos who are destined to have impressive careers.'

The Moot Virginity of Catherine of Aragon

The Place Thursday 27 July 21:15 - 22:05

The Belfast Ensemble Music & Words Conor Mitchell

'All this? All Europe, all undone?... and for what? A son?'

As Europe prepares to split, this edgy new Northern Irish company looks back to another event that tore the country in two - the divorce of England's Spanish queen. Part recitation, part song cycle, this music-theatre first charts the memories of a misremembered woman.

僧.莲 The Monk and The Lotus

RADA Studios Thursday 10 August 20:10 - 21:00

Shanghai Spatial Vocal & Physical Studio Music Niccolo D. Athens
Words Libretto adapted from ancient Chinese sources by Shiru Wang

A new opera, adapted from the Ming Dynasty classic by Xu Wei, between spiritual pursuit and human desire, questioning the nature of reality itself: flower in the mirror, moon in the water, what is real, what is illusory? This opera explores the collision. All this is expressed through innovative stage direction that takes inspiration from the close integration of singing and physical movement inherent in traditional Chinese Opera.

A Certain Sense of Order

RADA Studios Thursday 10 & Friday 11 August 20:15 - 21:05

Tick Tock Music Catherine Kontz Words Anne Sexton

A 'striking and intriguing' (Planet Hugill) portrait of the American poet Anne Sexton, known for integrating her deeply confessional poetry with the practice of psychotherapy. A Certain Sense of Order is an exquisite poetic investigation in voice, gesture, and sound.

The Winter's Tale

RADA Studios Friday 11 August 19:50 - 20:50

The Hermes Experiment Music Kim Ashton
Words William Shakespeare abridged by Nina Brazier

The Hermes Experiment presents their musically-reimagined version of Shakespeare's The Winter's Tale for the bard's 401st birthday. Abridged to an hour's length, with musicians weaving in and out of the action and five actors taking on all the key roles - don't miss this 'groundbreaking' (The Reviews Hub) and 'inventive' (The CUSP Magazine) production of a classic.

Berenice

RADA Studios Saturday 12 August 19:05 - 19:35
Sunday 13 August 15:05 - 15:35

John Barber & Hazel Gould Music John Barber
Words Hazel Gould

A story about obsession, ownership, body parts and grave robbing. In a grey and crumbling mansion, a man finds himself dangerously preoccupied with the perfect teeth of his cousin, and bride-to-be, Berenice.

Schutzwall

RADA Studios Saturday 12 August 20:00 - 20:30

Jonathan Higgins Music & Words Jonathan Higgins

'An impressive and confident piece which showed a strong control of the medium' (Planet Hugill)

Berlin, 1961. Erected overnight without warning, the Berlin Wall fractures the city. One month after the wall's construction, Schutzwall follows two sisters meeting either side, to wait for nightfall and their chance to be reunited.

To Himself, Alone

RADA Studios Saturday 12 August 20:50 - 21:20

Joseph Cabon Music & Words Joseph Cabon

Nebuchadnezzar II, the greatest Babylonian king, back on his throne after seven years of insanity wandering the wilderness realises those were the best years of his life and longs to be free again of constraints and duties of power knowing that to be impossible.

The Mark on the Wall

RADA Studios Sunday 13 August 13:00 - 14:30

The Mark on the Wall Team Music Stepha Schweiger Words Virginia Woolf

100 years of 'The Mark on the Wall' - Virginia Woolf's groundbreaking story inspired Stepha Schweiger to compose a musical theatre work to be premiered in Bloomsbury. Split into three roles: singer, dancer and speaker the protagonist embarks on a phantasmal journey between imagination and reality.

Devoted and Disgruntled: How Can We Change Opera For The Better?

Kings Cross Academy
Primary School

Saturday 5 & Sunday 6 August
Saturday: 10:30 - 17:00
Sunday: 10:30 - 18:00
£25 / £12.50

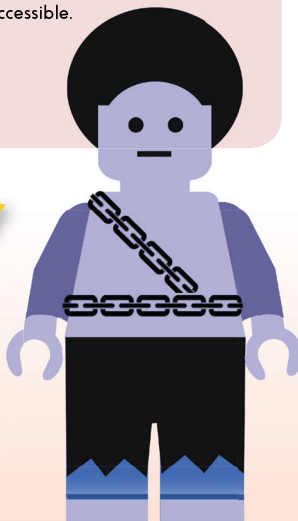
Facilitated by Phelim McDermott

Improbable's third annual Devoted and Disgruntled Open Space event for everyone who makes, loves and lives Opera, this year hosted by Tête à Tête. Whatever your big idea, knotty problem, hot issue or burning question, bring it to this weekend where you set the agenda and everyone gets heard. Share expertise, drink coffee, make friends, change the world.

Tickets are valid for both days. Fully wheelchair accessible.
BSL interpretation on request, thanks to ENO.

To request, contact dandd@improbable.co.uk
or call 020 7240 4556.

Tête à Tête
has been
commissioning
and supporting
new opera for
over 20
years



Our videos
have been
watched in
155 countries...
from Azerbaijan
and Uruguay to
Indonesia
and Iceland!



Proposition for A Conversation About A Silent Opera on Tehching Hsieh

Secret Location

Saturday 12 August 17:00 - 18:00

(Meet in the Foyer at RADA Studios)

Li - E Chen

A Participatory Conversation / Experiment will be conducted by artist Li-E Chen during the Tête à Tête festival as part of her research and development project entitled: R&D Silent Opera on The Life And Art of Tehching Hsieh.

Ask Li - E Chen the following questions during the experiment without knowing anything more about the context of her project. What is the Silent Opera? How is it possible for singers and composers to work on a silent opera without narrative and context? Where is the music? Where is the voice? What do you mean by 'de-territorialising' opera into a 'becoming-sculpture'? How is possible to write your opera? Why does it need to be opera, not a musical or theatrical text? What would you do if the project is not successful?

PODCAST OPERA

This year as part of the festival we will be streaming a podcast opera.

For further details visit our website at:
www.tete-a-tete.org.uk

Road Memoir: A Podcast Opera Renegade Hymnal

Music & Words Martin Ward

When violence breaks out on an urban street a young woman is forced to flee her home. Unable to return the following day she embarks on a perilous journey that sees her cross the line from citizen to refugee. Road Memoir is a dramatic, moving and innovative twelve-episode podcast opera.



Cubitt Sessions. 2016
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#TATEFEST17 GET INVOLVED

Pterodactyls of Ptexas - A Wild West 'Opera Buffa'

The Place Wednesday 26 July 20:15 - 21:35

Crowe Ensemble Music & Words Stephen Crowe

A new electronic opera set in the Wild West, stuffed with trigger-happy cowgirls. An ambitious young woman navigates the chauvinistic world of pre-history, belting out neolithic arias in the process.

Deeply

The Place Thursday 27 July 19:55 - 20:55

Op. 64 Music Matteo Manzitti Words Daniela Morelli

A poem of love and death for five cellos, a soprano and an actress. This work explores gender identity, outing, passion, anguish, madness, and the desire to live and to be ourselves. Because although life can be difficult, confused and obscure, it must be free. Deeply: deeply free, deeply ourselves.

The Art of Venus

RADA Studios Thursday 10 August 21:20 - 21:55

The Music Troupe Music Ed Lambert Words Max Waller

In 2027, as a crew hurtles through space on the first one-way mission to Mars, humanity holds its breath: can the planet be colonised? And will Venus take it lying down? Mythology meets sci-fact in this post-baroque opera. This production contains adult material.

The Hive

RADA Studios

Saturday 12 August 20:55 - 21:25

Hive Opera Productions

Music Harvey Brough Words Carole Hayman

We all have dark thoughts, some are darker than others but some are deadly dark. The Hive fuses verbatim interviews with a scorching operatic score to explore our fascination with serial killers – from grim tales to the real thing: from the first act of murder to the protracted effect of psychopathic darkness. A story as beguiling as it is shocking.



Family Friendly...

Dr Ferret's Bad Medicine Roadshow

The Place Tuesday 25 July 19:00 - 19:45

Opera North Youth Company Music Stephen Deazley Words Martin Riley

Beware Dr Ferret and his gang! The doctor and his Sweetheart Singers are out to find out just how mischievous today's children really are. Inspired by Hilaire Belloc's Cautionary tales, Dr Ferret's Bad Medicine Roadshow tells the curious stories of Matilda, whose lies ignited a terrible fire. Henry King who ate too much string, and George, a little boy who causes lot of trouble... Suitable for families/children of all ages.



**We've given
over 1000
performances
of over 400
new works**

The Good Night Opera

RADA Studios Wednesday 9 August 10:30 - 11:30
12:00 - 13:00 | 14:30 - 15:30
AMOYFA Friday 11 August 10:00 - 11:00
11:30 - 12:30

Music & Words Ela Zingerevich & Itamar Ringel

An interactive performance designed for young children and their caregivers. Our story begins when one day the sun decides that it doesn't want to go to bed....Can the children, assisted by a singer, a viola and a 'Linnstrument' help the sun find its course? The 'Linnstrument' is an exciting new electronic instrument. It is extremely accessible and highly sensitive to touch. We invite our audience to explore it first-hand (literally!), touching, feeling, creating and becoming part of the music.

Due to the prominent participatory element in this opera, no two performances are alike, as the young audience play a crucial role in writing and creating the music. The Good Night Opera has been created for very young children and babies. Please note that separate tickets must be purchased for everyone attending a performance, including babies.

20 Years of Tête à Tête: Score

RADA Studios Sunday 13 August 17:20 - 18:20

Tête à Tête

A potpourri of highlights from Tête à Tête's amazing 20 years of performances, living proof that daring and intimate opera can make a great night out.

Free Events...

Cubitt Sessions are supported by **King's Cross**

Cubitt Sessions: Cubitt's Muse

Impropera

Tuesday 1 August 18:30 - 19:30

Lewis Cubitt Square, King's Cross

Impropera dips into its collective experience drawn from London's West End, the Edinburgh Fringe and travels across Europe to surprise and delight audiences with their fast-paced highly skilled improvised opera show, sharing their musicianship, agile wit and ingenious storytelling.

Cubitt Sessions: Surprise Package

Tête à Tête

Wednesday 2 August 18:30 - 19:15

Lewis Cubitt Square, King's Cross

To celebrate 20 years of producing surprises and delights, the company brings its own surprise performance, specially created for this one evening. Expect laughter, joy, glorious music, brilliant work and Tête à Tête's hallmark theatricality.



Cubitt Sessions, 2016
© Claire Shovelton



Cubitt Sessions: Hummus

Opera Lab Europe (Lisbon) Thursday 3 August 18:30 - 19:00

Lewis Cubitt Square, King's Cross

Words & Music Zad Moulataka

'I WANT TO EAT HUMMUS! I WANT TO BREATHE HUMMUS!'

A man is stuffing himself on his favourite Middle-Eastern dish. Gradually memories of a massacre come back to haunt him. Opera Lab Europe bring this new staging of Zad Moulataka's a cappella opera to London direct from performances in Lisbon.

Cubitt Sessions: Ayanna Witter-Johnson

Lewis Cubitt Square, King's Cross Friday 4 August 18:30 - 19:10

Music & Words Ayanna Witter-Johnson

Having collaborated with the likes of Anoushka Shankar, Courtney Pine, London Symphony Orchestra and Akala, MOBO award-nominated singer, songwriter and cellist Ayanna Witter-Johnson previews songs from her highly anticipated debut album due out this October.

Claron & Friends

Muziektheater Transparent Tuesday 8 August 18:30 - 19:10

Lewis Cubitt Square, King's Cross

We are delighted that Muziektheater Transparent, the Low Countries premier new opera company and the bewitching soprano Claron McFadden are returning to Cubitt Sessions with a new cabaret style performance devised especially for us.

Juice Vocal Ensemble (with Roshi feat. Pars Radio)

Lewis Cubitt Square
King's Cross

Wednesday 9 August 18:30 - 19:15

Unusual three-part a cappella meets Roshi's Welsh-Iranian torch songs and electronica from Pars Radio. Juice Vocal Ensemble mix classical, folk, pop and improvisation, including a unique take on a pop song or two! Roshi's experimental folk-pop explores themes including her Iranian heritage and London life, with vocal effects, loops, field recordings and atmospheres.

Belongings

Co-commissioned and co-produced by Tête à Tête & Sound

Music: Samuel Bordoli
Words: Bill Bankes-Jones

Belongings is a miniature music theatre piece inspired by items of luggage carried by railway passengers.

It premieres on the Caledonian Sleeper (www.sleeper.scot) as the train leaves Aberdeen en route to Euston station on 24th July 2017 the eve of our 10th anniversary Festival, then performs in our foyers and around the public realm of King's Cross throughout our festival. You can catch it again during sound festival in Aberdeen this November.

Supported by King's Cross &  THE LECHE TRUST

Planning Your Visit

How does the festival work?

The ticketed shows in the festival are designed to allow you to sample three or more short works of opera on any given evening. Have a look at what else is on the day you are planning to join us.

How much are tickets?

For the best prices, we recommend booking in advance.

Advance Online: £7.50 **In Person or On Phone:** £9.50

How can I buy tickets?

ONLINE

www.tete-a-tete.org.uk

IN PERSON OR ON PHONE

Book direct with the venue for shows in that venue.

BOOKING ON THE DAY

Online sales will close mid-afternoon for performances on Monday - Saturday and midday on Sunday.

Online sales for any morning shows will close the previous evening.

Tickets will be available to purchase over the phone or in person at the venue of the performance you wish to attend.

ACCESS BOOKINGS

If you require access bookings please book direct with the venue for your chosen show

The Place: 0207 121 1100

RADA Studios: 0207 908 4800

Devoted & Disgruntled: 0207 240 4556

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