

# EXPO MCYO: A Thread Through Change

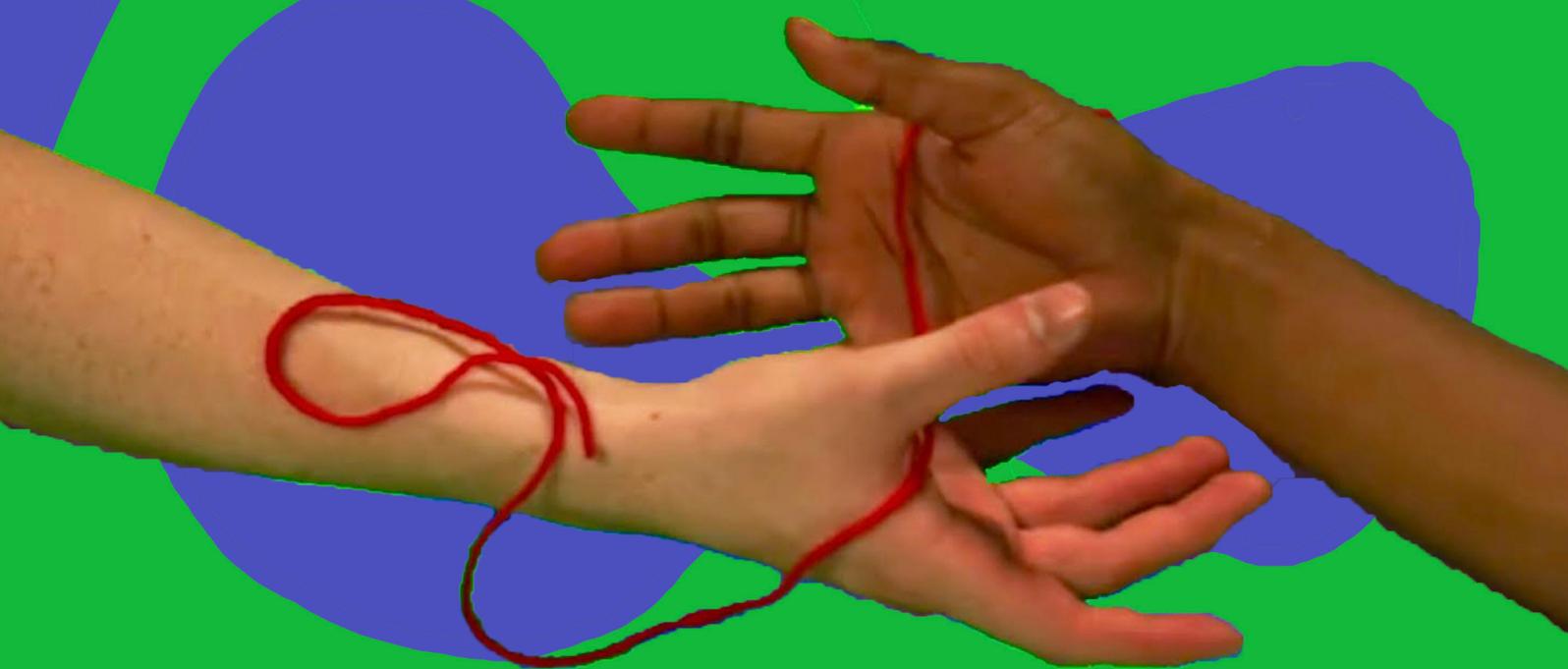
Live Performance 19:00-19:45

Monday 2nd August 2021

The Cockpit, Marylebone, London

Full Price: £15; If you can't afford it: £5

Three new operas threaded together for the Tête-à-Tête Opera Festival  
Created and performed by young artists of Manchester Contemporary Youth Opera



There will also be an interactive broadcast of this show.

**18:00-19:10 on Friday 6th August 2021.**

A recording of that broadcast will be available for 28 days.  
Tickets cost only £1 and donations are also greatly welcome.  
All donations go towards funding the next MCYO course.

AS PART OF

Tête-à-tête

**THE OPERA  
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# Introducing EXPO MCYO

Nadia Eskandari, James Gillett and Mia Serracino-Inglott

Welcome to our 2021 production 'EXPO MCYO: A Thread Through Change', created for the Tête-à-Tête Opera Festival. It has been an exciting journey curating and combining three of our previously performed short operas into this performance. The name 'A Thread Through Change' was decided upon to show our endeavouring mission to change the traditional landscape of opera. A thread may knot, fray or break but it can always be fixed. As curating artists, our roles have expanded much further than the usual remit of 'musical director' or 'performer'. We have hosted zoom meetings, created trailers and video clips for marketing and of course sent out countless emails to our team! It has been an honour curating this performance and we are so proud to see it coming to fruition as part of this festival.



Curated by

*Nadia Eskandari, James Gillett  
and Mia Serracino-Inglott*

Stage Direction

*Madeleine Brooks*

Musical Direction

*James Gillett*

Design Concept

*Tomás Palmer*

Music and Drama Preparation

*Richard Strivens*

Costume Supervisor

*Poppy Philligreen*

Videography

*Benny Vernon*

Image by

*Sohaila Ferrier*

Company Stage Manager

*Joe Lenehan*

MCYO Artistic Directors

*Richard Strivens and Nina  
Whiteman*

# Adventures through Mother Earth's Sewing Box

JEFSMN

*MCYO is grateful to the JEFSMN artists for allowing this special re-presentation at the 2021 Opera Festival*

In this opera-film, shown today in two parts, a young woman tries to relax during lockdown by taking up sewing. But the hobby quickly takes over her life, leading to obsession, anxiety and a loss of self. Will she manage to travel through Mother Earth's Sewing Box? Will she reach the other side? The performers in the theatre are part of the team who made this opera-film in summer lockdown 2020 wholly online, some members of the team are yet to meet in person.

## Adela

Patrick Shepherd  
Arabella Watkiss

In this scene, Adela's yearning to break free from an oppressive family life and society transforms into action. She is watched by her grandmother MJ who, seeing herself in Adela, feels equally protective and idealistic about Adela's decision to sacrifice her verguenza, reputation, for sensual and sexual freedom.

## Glimmerings

Dan Nolan  
Sam Woof McColl

Originally conceived for two groups of three performers representing the voice (singer), sound (instrumentalist) and mind (vocalist) of two characters, this Covid-safe performance shows one Character 'B' on stage; 'A' is on film and in recorded sound. Although these two characters, perhaps siblings separately grieving the loss of their parents in shards of half-remembered, half-forgotten memories, there are musical interactions between 'A' and 'B' indicating their linked consciousnesses. In this performance this is created by 'B' (on stage) interacting with the multimedia synchronist (above you on the gantry) cueing 'A' responses in real time.

# Performers

## Adventure through Mother Earth's Sewing Box

Young Woman  
Viola

*Mia Serracino-Inglott  
Nadia Eskandari*

## Adela

Adela  
MJ  
Viola  
Horn

*Amy Kearsley  
Laura Coppinger  
Nadia Eskandari  
George Strivens*

## Glimmerings

Voice of A\*  
Mind of A\*  
Sound of A\* (Bassoon)

*Louis de Satgé  
Laura Coppinger  
Lauren Martin*

Voice of B  
Mind of B  
Sound of B (viola)

*Mia Serracino-Inglott  
Amy Kearsley  
Nadia Eskandari*

\*pre-recorded material and played back in real time by James Gillett. Voice of 'B' Film:  
Louis de Satgé filmed by Benny Vernon and The Cockpit.

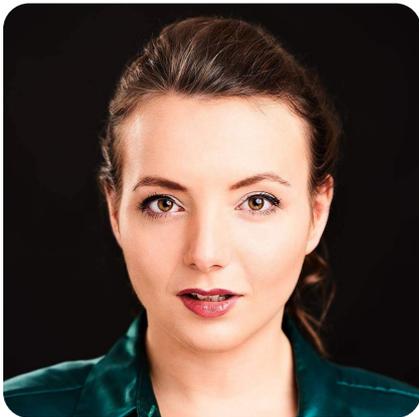
## Madeleine Brooks - Stage Director

Madeleine trained in Opera Directing at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. Studying under Martin Constantine, she was taught by a range of directors such as Katie Mitchell, Richard Jones, Deborah Warner, Polly Graham and David Pountney. Previously she gained a First-Class degree in Music at the University of Manchester. Her directing credits include Moliere's *The Love Doctor*, (Dora Stoutzker Concert Hall, Cardiff), *Blow's Venus and Adonis* (Dora Stoutzker Concert Hall, Cardiff), a new opera *The Imposter* (Atmospheres Online Festival), *The Drug Trial: opera scenes* (Richard Burton Theatre, Cardiff), *Dido and Aeneas* (Cosmo Rodewald Concert Hall, Manchester), and *Godspell* (Paradise in Augustine's, Edinburgh).



Madeleine recently assisted Olivia Fuchs on Janacek's *The Cunning Little Vixen* at Longborough Festival Opera and has worked as an assistant director in the UK to Martin Constantine, Sarah Crisp, Jem Treays, Emma Doherty, and in Berlin to Teresa Reiber. She was associate director for Mozart's *Così fan Tutte* (Dora Stoutzker Concert Hall, Cardiff). From Suffolk, Madeleine got her first taste of opera as a child performing in operas directed by Frederic Wake-Walker and the late Stuart Bedford. Having previously directed five operas with MCYO in 2018 in Manchester, Madeleine is delighted to work with the company again.

## Laura Coppinger - Voice (Adela, Glimmerings)



Laura graduated from St Hilda's College, Oxford, in 2019 (BMus First-Class Honours). Her previous roles include Zerlina (Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Oxford Alternative Orchestra), Baroness Irene (Hadyn's *La Vera Costanza*, New Chamber Opera), Cunegonde (Bernstein's *Candide*, Barricade Arts), Mabel (Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance*, OUGSS), and Second Woman (Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, Glyndebourne Youth Opera).

Laura particularly loves contemporary music; since performing in the premiere of David Bruce's *Nothing with GYO*, she has premiered Toby Young's *Witch* (chorus), Joel Baldwin's *The Beginning of an Idea* (Eva Lindberg), and the title role in Nicola LeFanu's *Cantata: St Hilda of Whitby*. She sang with MCYO in *Duality: 6 New Operas in 6000 seconds* (Maria Josefa/Adela, *The Negative One/Sole*).

Laura has been awarded a Scholarship to study an MMus degree at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland from September 2021. She is kindly supported by Help Musicians as a Postgraduate Award holder.

[www.lauracoppinger.com](http://www.lauracoppinger.com)

## Nadia Eskandari - Curator/Viola

Nadia is a Manchester-based violist, currently working as an instrumental tutor, project manager and freelancer. Having graduated from the University of Manchester with a first class degree in Music, Nadia joined the RNCM with a scholarship in September for further postgraduate study, to learn with Vicci Wardman. She has recently started working as an Ambassador for the Benedetti Foundation.

In her performing life, Nadia has played at festivals such as Manchester Jazz Festival and Manchester International Festival. Recent performances include collaborations with prestigious artists such as Brit Award winner and Mercury Prize nominee, Arlo Parks, and Snarky Puppy's Bill Laurance. A keen chamber musician, Nadia is a founding member of the Eskandari Quartet, who regularly perform new, contemporary repertoire by upcoming composers, alongside classical canonic works. Manchester Contemporary Youth Opera sparked her interest in new music, improvisation and character in performance, and Nadia now prides herself in taking these skills with her to every ensemble she works with.



## James Gillett - Curator/Musical Director



James Gillett is a young conductor and pianist based in Manchester. Having recently been awarded a First-class MusB degree in from the University of Manchester, he is shifting focus to the operatic repertoire. In September, James will be starting Masters study at the RNCM as a repetiteur where he will enjoy working with singers from the piano. Currently, he is Young Artist Conductor with Waterperry Opera Festival alongside responsibilities as Musical Director of Manchester Contemporary Youth Opera's performance tonight.

James first joined MCYO in 2019, conducting three short operas as part of 'Duality'. This experience was a key moment in developing his interest in contemporary opera, and is excited to be re-joining them again this year. EXPO MCYO has been an exciting opportunity for James, enabling artistic investigation into the boundaries of virtual and live performance.

## JEFSMN - Composers/Creators (Adventure through Mother Earth's Sewing Box)

JEFSMN is a collaborative team of young artists who came together as part of the 2020 Manchester Contemporary Youth Opera course to create the opera-film 'Adventure Through Mother Earth's Sewing Box'. Since this course occurred during the peak of lockdown, the team only met virtually - all meetings were conducted online and all footage as well as audio was filmed, recorded and edited at home. The team adopted a collaborative approach without any hierarchy and decided to create a piece that represented themselves as a team of young female and non-binary creatives in the world of opera. Jessica Rowley is located in Brighton and designed the doll and animations. Eleanor Austin, based in Essex and Manchester, wrote the poetry and sung the voice of Mother Earth. Fraz Ireland composed and edited the music for the film. Sohaila Ferrier is a filmmaker based in London who created the video. Mia Serracino-Inglott and Nadia Eskandari are both based in Manchester and will be performing live this evening. The end of the opera-film features the friends and family of the JEFSMN team all doing their own hobbies that helped them get through lockdown.

## Amy Kearsley -Voice (Glimmerings)



Amy Kearsley is a mezzo soprano from Wigan. She graduated from the University of Surrey with a First-Class BMus (Hons) in 2020. She was awarded the 'Robert Naylor Memorial Prize' for the most meritorious final performance recital and the 'Faculty Placement Student of Year Award' for her completed placement with the English National Opera's Learning and Participant team. Amy last performed with MCO in 2019, she is particularly excited to revive the role of Adela. She is currently preparing for her masters in Vocal Studies at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, which she will begin in September under the tutelage of Neil Baker.

## *Lauren Martin - Bassoon*

Lauren is a bassoonist currently based in Edinburgh, soon to begin a master's in bassoon performance at California Institute of the Arts. She recently completed her master's in musicology at the University of Manchester and has played with MCYO as part their 2019 and 2020 projects. Lauren started playing bassoon with Berkshire Maestros when eleven under Cath Millar and now studies with Graham Salvage (ex-Principal Bassoon, Hallé Orchestra). Lauren is particularly interested in contemporary works for bassoon and extended bassoon techniques and has had pieces composed for her by Manchester composers Cameron Biles-Liddell and Sebastian Schmidt. As part of her studies, she performed a recital focussing on new music which included two brand new works.



## *Dan Nolan - Composer (Glimmerings)*



Dan is a composer and percussionist based in Manchester who recently completed his Master's in Composition under Richard Whalley and Philip Grange. His first lessons in composition were with Mathew Sergeant at the Junior RNCM before coming to the University of Manchester to study Music. During his time in Manchester Dan has written works for ensembles such as the Vonnegut Collective and Camerata Players. More recently, he has had two works performed by the Red Note Ensemble as part of their Digital Noisy Nights series. He has a keen interest in incorporating many facets of music making into his composition from improvisation and theatre to more traditional concert music.

## *Louis de Satgé - Voice (Glimmerings)*

Louis de Satgé is a singer and pianist from London, based in Manchester. He is currently entering the final year of his Undergraduate Music and Drama BA degree at the University of Manchester. Despite much experience in singing with church choirs and in musical theatre productions, he has relatively recently gotten involved with opera. His initial introduction was with the MCYO in 2019, where he performed 'Glimmerings' for the first time. Since then he joined the cast of the University's production of Jonathan Dove's 'The Enchanted Pig' in 2020. He was very excited to get involved at revising 'Glimmerings' a second time in 'EXPO MCYO: A Thread through Change'.



## *Mia Serracino-Inglott - Curator/Voice*



Mia Serracino-Inglott is a twenty year old mezzo-soprano from Manchester. She is currently based in London where she is a scholarship student at the Royal Academy of Music. She is entering her third year of the BMus Performance course, under the tuition of Marie Vassiliou and Joseph Middleton. Mia has been a soloist for choral societies across the North West and has enjoyed participating in masterclasses with accomplished musicians such as Malcom Martineau, Gary Matthewman and opera singer Kathryn Rudge. Highlights this year include being a Collingwood Finalist in the Junior Kathleen Ferrier Bursary Competition and premiering two new unaccompanied compositions for the Royal Academy's 200 PIECES project. As well as spending her time singing, Mia is also president of the Royal Academy of Music Feminist Society, which she created to raise awareness about female composers and tackle issues of sexism in the classical music sphere.

## Pat Shepherd - Composer (Adela)

Pat Shepherd is a composer in Manchester. He is currently working on his postgraduate in electroacoustic music and interactive media. When he's not studying, he works in Saison and Sandbar and works as a Projects coordinator for Olympias Music Foundation.

Pat continues to sneak into MCYO activities as often as possible. In 2019, he wrote 'Adela' with Arabella Watkiss and in 2020 he co-wrote an opera for film, 'Sleep Flying', with 6 other creatives.



## Horn - George Strivens



George Strivens is a talented and extremely passionate French Horn player who enjoys a varied career of solo, chamber and orchestral playing. Upcoming engagements include recitals at the Richard-Strauss-Institut in Germany and Queen's University, Belfast. George plays with the Britten-Shostakovich Festival Orchestra and was invited to the Encuentro de Música y Academia de Santander in 2020. Previously he was Principal Horn of National Youth Chamber Orchestra of Great Britain and Hallé Youth Orchestra. Solo Horn works by Piers Hellawell and Tom Harrold were premiered by, and dedicated to, George. With Ensemble Renard, he has also worked closely with the composers Hans Abrahamsen and John Woolrich. Additionally, George is a member of the London Sinfonietta Academy. George received a scholarship to study at the Royal Academy of Music and has had the privilege of being taught by Richard Watkins, Michael Thompson, Katy Woolley and Martin Owen. George is extremely grateful for generous support from the Royal Philharmonic Society.

## Arabella Watkiss - Librettist (Adela)

Arabella Watkiss is a poet and writer based in London. She gained a distinction in her Creative Writing Masters from the University of Manchester in 2019 and now works in publishing. She last worked with MCYO in 2019, when she wrote the libretto for an earlier version of Adela as part of the 'Duality: Six New Operas in 6000 seconds,' which was performed at The Dancehouse Theatre. She's currently working on her debut novel.



## With Thanks To

Tomás Palmer, Benny Vernon, Poppy Philligreen, Isobel Mortimer and Joseph Lenehan for all of their expertise and help with this production.

All the team at Tête-à-Tête, Bill Bankes-Jones, Leo Doulton, Anna Jones and David Salter for inviting MCYO to the Opera Festival.

The Cockpit team for being so accommodating and helping us present this production.

All at Manchester Contemporary Youth Opera are very grateful to their founding sponsor, The Henfrey Charitable Trust, for the continued support and encouragement the Trust gives us, especially in bringing EXPO MCYO: a thread through change to the Tête-à-Tête 2021 Opera Festival, the first MCYO performance outside of Manchester.

# A note from MCYO Directors

Richard Strivens and Nina Whiteman

At the beginning of the year, we started talking with Bill Banks-Jones about MCYO bringing a show to the Tête-à-Tête Opera Festival. With the country deep in winter lockdown, we were all keen on the idea of offering MCYO alumni the opportunity to bring their work from Manchester to London. James Hendry (conductor, ex-RNCM, ROH and now First Kapellmeister at Staatsoper Hannover), Loré Lixenberg (mezzo-soprano, innovative opera-maker and of course, long-standing friend of Tête-à-Tête) and Richard Strivens shortlisted pieces and performers, thinking about the challenge of re-creating work in an unpredictable world. We established a team of curating artists, Nadia Eskandari, James Gillett and Mia Serracino-Inglott, who created the concept of "a thread through change" from pieces originally conceived as either fully-staged or as an opera-film from the 2019 and 2020 MCYO courses. These pieces have changed character, form and instrumentation to suit the situation—as so often has happened in opera—but collaborative working has ensured that the essence of each piece has sensitively been maintained under the direction of Madeleine Brooks and James Gillett.

Being in a double bill with Alice d'Lumiere brought MCYO artists and Alice together for a Zoom discussion, excerpts of which will be appearing on social media: the conversation was hosted by opera scholar, George Haggett, and revolved around learning, devising, collaboration, voice and perception of voice both spoken and sung. Inspired by the Opera Festival's manifesto, MCYO—now five years old—is continually striving to embed several working principles: a flattened hierarchy; instrumentalists on-stage with singers; and creative collaboration across as many art-forms as there are young artists who want to be involved. We enjoy working with and between the colleges and universities of Greater Manchester, bringing young artists together who would not otherwise meet and we welcome anyone who is curious about making art in Manchester. We want to be part of and to play our part in the ever-changing and wondrous art-form of opera.

Thank you for coming to support us today on our first performance outside Manchester. Please write to us at [mcyopera@gmail.com](mailto:mcyopera@gmail.com) or find us @mcyopera; you can make a donation to help fund more young opera artists by signing up for the Interactive Broadcast: all you donate will make the next MCYO magic happen.

