



presents

# 1936: FISHING

Episode 7 of A Gay Century

Music by Robert Ely

Libretto by Peter Scott-Presland

Stage Direction by Jeremy Rowe

Music Direction by Jack Campbell

**Website:** [www.homopromos.org](http://www.homopromos.org)

[homopromos@gmail.com](mailto:homopromos@gmail.com)

020 7277 5014



Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

## CAST

Old Philip	Kevin Neville
Young Philip	Jean-Max Lattemann
Mrs Dalton	Deborah Holborn
Lord Alfred Douglas	Sam Leggett

## MUSICIANS

Jack Campbell	Piano
Helen Betteridge	Violin
Ed Jefferies	Cello

The time is the year 2000, just before the Millennium; and the summer of 1936. The scene is set in Brighton.

## FOR THE COMPANY

Assistant Director	Emily Beech
Lighting Designer [tour]	John Brand
Photographs	Rob Falconer
Poster & Leaflets	Kerry Ovenden

Thanks to:

Old Diorama Arts Centre for rehearsal space; Gareth at the Ivy House for fishing equipment;

## LIBRETTO

The libretto can be found in 'A Gay Century, Vol. 1' and ordered online at Blackwell's, Amazon, Waterstone's, Kindle, Apple Books, etc. It is also on the Homo Promos website at: [FISHING \(homopromos.org\)](http://FISHING(homopromos.org))

You can follow the score at: [fishing-full-score.pdf \(homopromos.org\)](http://fishing-full-score.pdf(homopromos.org))

## ABOUT THE COMPANY

Kevin Neville [Baritone, Old Philip]



Kevin is a bass-baritone from Limerick, Ireland. He completed his B.A. in Music and English Literature at Trinity College Dublin and his MMus with First Class Honours at the Conservatory of Music and Drama D.I.T. Kevin is a multiple prize winner at Irish festivals. As a member of the Northern Ireland Opera Studio, he performed three tours including a condensed performance of *Così fan Tutte* as Don Alfonso. Kevin made his début with Irish National Opera as Schlemihl in Offenbach's *The Tales of Hoffmann* in 2018 and went on to play the Official Registrar in *Madama Butterfly* in 2019. He made his debut at Blackwater Valley Opera Festival as The Regent in Balfe's *The Sleeping Queen* and at the Mananan International Festival of Music & the Arts in 2019. He has performed as a soloist at the National Concert Hall, St. Patrick's Cathedral, University Concert Hall and Ulster Hall. He recently created the role of George de la Hare in the site-specific opera *No. 2 Pery Square* by Fiona Linnane and performed Dr George in another contemporary opera in development called *The Hive* by Harvey Brough.

Sam Leggett [Tenor, Lord Alfred Douglas]



Sam is an English tenor based in Glasgow. He began singing with the acclaimed boys' choir, Libera, and appeared on albums, television and world-wide tours. He read music at Bristol and has recently taken a Diploma in Vocal Teaching and an M.Mus. (Performance) at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. He has sung Nemorino in Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'Amore*, the eponymous hero in Britten's *Albert Herring*, Mozart's *Idomeneo* and Count Almaviva in *The Barber of Seville*, all for Tessitura. An accomplished choral singer, he has been a scholar of Bristol and Chichester Cathedrals and Bath Abbey, touring to Germany and appearing on the albums *Lest We Forget* [Signum] and Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* with the Bournemouth SO and Marin Alsop [Naxos]. He is a graduate of the Dunedin Consort's Bridging the Gap scheme, and between opera and choral engagements trains and conducts various vocal ensembles. He's hugely excited to contribute to the representation of LGBT+ characters in opera.

Jean-Max Lattemann [Countertenor, Young Philip]



Jean-Max is a German-British singer based in London. He studied in Dresden, then at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. His repertoire ranges from Baroque to contemporary music, with a special delight in rarely performed musical gems by the likes of Telemann, Alessandro Scarlatti and Homilius. He has sung the title role in Handel's *Serse*, Nerone in *Agrippina*, and next year appears as Nerillo in Cavalli's *L'Ormindo*, in Rabat,

Morocco – the first time the opera has been performed in the country of its setting. He has created roles in *Durst*, by multi-media award-winning Robert Jisa, in the Czech Republic; in Vahan Salorian's gay nightclub opera *Boys of Paradise*; and in Noah Mosley's *Aurora*, based on an Italian folk tale, he created the part of the Big Mountain Witch. He has appeared in the 'Rising Stars' concerts of the City of London Festival, at the Wigmore Hall, and at the L.S.O. Platforms at the Barbican Centre. He has devised a song recital programme, *A New Beginning*, with pianist Dylan Perez, to showcase the variety of the countertenor voice, with songs by Haydn, Mahler, Tippett and Jonathan Dove, among others.

Deborah Holborn [Mezzo-Soprano, Mrs Dalton]



Deborah trained at Edinburgh University and Trinity Laban, and has had an extensive career in traditional and modern opera here and in Europe. Hailed for her 'rounded, well-sung characterisation' in David Hackbridge Johnson's *Madeleine* [2021], she has appeared with Fulham Opera [Janacek], Loughborough Festival Opera [Beethoven, Wagner, Mozart], St Paul's Opera [*Albert Herring*], Opera in the Meantime [*Hansel & Gretel*, *Suor Angelica*] and several roles with Opera de Baugé. She has worked in Edinburgh with Le Petit Verre and the Studio Opera companies. Deborah is equally at home on the concert platform, having appeared in *St. John Passion* [Bach], *Messiah* [Handel], and Masses by Mozart, Rossini, Schubert and James MacMillan. She enjoys bringing music to the Community and performs for those with dementia and in care homes for the charity 'Lost Chord'. She will be appearing with the Merry Opera Company in *The Staged Messiah* early next year.

## Jack Campbell [Music Director/pianist]:



A passionate multidisciplinary musician, *Jack Campbell* wants to break down barriers and share vivid and gripping music. He's woven coloured lighting and electronic soundscapes into a piano recital and composed a piece with a web-synced score for six pianos.

Jack is a graduate of the Royal College of Music, supported by the Henry Wood Accommodation Trust. He won the keyboard category and Walter Todds bursary in BBC Young Musician 2016, and he was a semi-finalist in the George Enescu piano competition 2021–22.

One of Jack's great loves is song – a fusion of music and story – and he has collaborated with many RCM singers. He won the Most Promising Young Pianist prize at the Somerset Song Prize 2022 and regularly plays with his brother George in a piano duo.

Jack has recorded Robert Ely's piano music on CD and will perform at the Karlskrona International Piano Festival in October 2022.

## Helen Betteridge [Violin]:



Helen studied violin at the Royal Academy of Music and Trinity College. She has made a career in military music, playing clarinet and violin in the Coldstream Guards, and is currently Band Sergeant-Major with the Countess of Wessex's String Orchestra. She also pursues a freelance career, as a soloist and with her own string quartet, the Amalfi Quartet.

## Ed Jefferies [Cello]



Edward graduated from Trinity College of Music before pursuing a freelance career with a number of professional orchestras in the UK and South America. Since winning his teacher's qualification, he has worked in schools across London, as well as being Assistant Director of Music at Markham College in Peru. He is currently Head of Music at Fortismere, an outstanding Comprehensive in Muswell Hill.

## Jeremy Rowe [Stage Director]



Jeremy's eclectic directorial career started with an anti-Vietnam War musical in 1971. Amongst the many large-scale musicals and operas he has staged, the most eccentric was the children's Christmas musical *Wacky and his Fuddlejig* [music - Donald Swann; lyrics – Arthur Scholey] at the Royal Albert Hall. He has staged many musicals, including a version of *Joseph and the Technicoloured Dreamcoat* with an entire football team as Joseph's brothers. He has written and staged many plays-with-music, including *The Trouble with Henry* [VIII, that is]. He adapted and staged Michael Morpurgo's novel *The Elephant in the Garden*. He was founder and director of the National Festival of Voices. He is a former programme director and chair of the London Wagner Society. He is also a novelist, most recently with *Singing for Spitfires*. Although his main career has been in primary education, he trained as a radio journalist with the BBC, and in opera production at the Royal Opera House. Despite many years of campaigning for gay rights, "Fishing" is his first out-gay production.



Brighton Pier, 1930

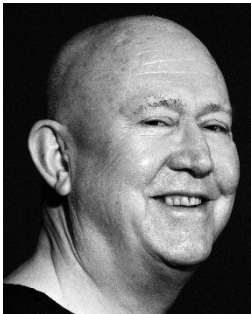
## Robert Ely [Composer]



Despite having no formal musical education, Robert was able to join the Army as a musician in 1967. He became a Bandmaster after attending the Royal Military School of Music, ending as Senior Bandmaster in the Parachute Regiment. All that ended in 1986 when he was thrown out for being gay. In response he co-founded Rank Outsiders for ex-service personnel similarly affected; their campaign resulted in the lifting of ban on LGBT+ service personnel in

2000. Outside the army he worked on typesetting scores with the new music publishing software, and has maintained a prodigious music output. He was a member of the London Gay Symphony Orchestra for several years and contributed to, and conducted, "Free", an 'anti-requiem' with words by Peter Scott-Presland for World AIDS Day 1998. He won third place at the *Coup de Vents* wind festival in Lille [2015] and second place in a similar festival in Galicia [2018]. For the last six years he has been working on the music for the seventeen pieces which make up 'A Gay Century', of which twelve are completed.

## Peter Scott-Presland [Producer/librettist]



Peter got involved in theatre at Oxford. His student revue, *Here it Comes*, was nominated for a Critics Award for Best Musical 1974. Moving to Birmingham, he ran Pub Theatre Company and took a Fringe First Award in 1977 with his musical *Yesterdaze* [music – David Harrod]. In London he wrote weekly columns for *Capital Gay*, while his theatre company Consenting Adults in Public put on original queer

work 1980 – 86, including his four Heath plays, performed in the cruising grounds of Hampstead Heath. He co-wrote [with Louise Parker Kelley] and produced what we believe was the first play in the world about HIV/AIDS; *AntiBody* premiered in October 1983 – at the Cockpit Theatre. His musicals *Dorothy's Travels* [1990/92] and *La Ronde* [2012] were nominated for awards [a DORA and an Offie]. He programmed the cabaret tent at Pride 1985 – 97 and is proud that he has given a cabaret performance after every Pride march since 1978. He translates songs from French - Edith Piaf, Serge Lama, and particularly the work of the great philosophical joker, surrealist, novelist, playwright and chansonnier Boris Vian.

## ABOUT HOMO PROMOS

Homo Promos [HP for short] was formed in response to the notorious Section 28, slipped into a Conservative Local Government Act in 1988. The clause said that local authorities "shall not intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality" or "promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship".

Since many Queer arts organisations had local authority funding and appeared on council premises, this was not only a gratuitous insult but a clear and present threat. By taking the name 'Homo Promos' we wanted to sail into the eye of the storm, challenge councils to ban us, create a cause celebre.

In fact only one venue, Oval House in Lambeth, threw a wobbly; we got round it by inserting a tiny, hand-written 'not' above the defiant and loud logo, thus highlighting the absurdity of the law. In fact, no-one was ever prosecuted under Section 28, though the psychological damage it inflicted was enormous.

In the 34 years of our existence, we have presented over twenty productions including *Double Vision* [1988], *Star Turn* [1989], *A Good Ol' Boy* [1989], *Escape from Planet Mary* [1993] with cabaret act Bent Double, Timothy Mason's *Levitation* [1994], the song cycle *Desire* [music - Peter Murphy], based on Edmund White's 'travels in gay America' *States of Desire* [2010], the smash hit *Strip Search* [2012], and *The Keyhole* [2017], a street theatre piece about the last two men to be hanged for sodomy in the UK and performed outside the house where they were arrested.

During lockdown Homo Promos gave Zoom performances every Tuesday throughout the entire period of restrictions, drawing on its and Peter Scott-Presland's extensive archive of Queer work going back to 1974; a total of 50+ plays over 66 weeks. For this spectacular marathon it won the 2021 Award from the International Lesbian and Gay Cultural Network.



## ABOUT A GAY CENTURY

For the last six years Robert and Peter have been working on *A Gay Century*, an epic cycle of Queer life 1900 – 2001. Starting from *Fishing* and working outward, we intended to have a piece for every decade of the century, though we have ended up with seventeen, with possibly three more in the pipeline. We wanted to explore our history, but in a quirky way, highlighting episodes which might have been ignored and exploring themes from odd angles.

The publication of the Wolfenden Report, for example, gives rise to *Separate Beds*, a Rossinian farce about a gay couple trying to disentangle their living arrangements in the face of an imminent police visit. The famous Jeremy Thorpe/Norman Scott scandal and murder attempt is treated from the point of view of the dogs involved. The main characters are Mrs Tish, a Jack Russell, and Rinka, a Great Dane.

*A Gay Century* covers themes such as gays in the armed forces, parenthood, AIDS/HIV, the Gay Liberation Front, and the Admiral Duncan bombings.

We agreed early on that these pieces would be chamber operas, aimed at the most flexible and experimental companies, the pop-up operas. None of the works would involve more than seven people, including cast and players.

Two pieces, *1907: The Jewels* and *1983: Quarantine*, challenge the form with multiple doubling of parts, while a couple also require offstage choruses which would probably be pre-recorded. Although each piece is pocket-sized, with all but three being one-act operas, collectively they're longer than the Ring Cycle, with a truly epic ambition. We hope that other companies will take up these works, which can all stand alone or be performed in double bills.

Why operas? Because setting words to music heightens emotion unimaginably; it forces you to distil and compress the words and situations, forces you out of dull naturalism and away from seeing historical characters as the same as us, but in fancy dress. It liberated the imagination in a way that the kitchen sink never does.

## ABOUT 1936: FISHING

This was the first piece to be written and is based on a true story told to Peter by pioneer activist Andrew Lumsden.

At the centre of it was a mysterious old man, who turned out to be Oscar Wilde's old lover, Lord Alfred Douglas.

Douglas befriends a lonely teenage boy. When the boy's mother finds out his identity, she destroys the friendship.

This is the story of the boy, from his point of view, but Douglas was the character Peter wanted to write about the most.

Imagine having all that love and attention, glamour and excitement, and then finding it all over by the age of twenty-six. Rejected by his contemporaries and with few emotional resources, Douglas clearly suffered some kind of emotional breakdown. He went through life at war with the world, prey to the vilest prejudices, slandering the love of his life, and weighed down with a reputation he couldn't shake off. Only towards the end did he mellow and try to find some kind of accommodation with the past.

At its heart this opera is a story about redemption and about legacy, but it is not an easy one. There are crosses to be born, crosses created by ignorance and the temper of the time – 1936

## VENUES – GOING TO:

Sun Sept 4<sup>th</sup>, 7pm

The Cockpit, Gateforth Street, London NW8 8EH

Tickets: £15/£5 concessions

Buy tickets here: [1936: Fishing | The Cockpit](#)

\*

Tues, Sept 6<sup>th</sup>, 8pm [a concert performance]

St Anne's, Soho, 55 Dean Street, W1D 6AF

Tickets: £15/£10 concessions inc. free glass of wine

Buy tickets here: [1936: Fishing - Episode 7 of 'A Gay Century' Tickets, Tue 6 Sep 2022 at 20:00 | Eventbrite](#)

\*

Fri, Sept 9th, 8.30pm

All Saints Hatcham Community Centre, 105 New Cross Road, SE14 5EJ

Tickets: £15/£10 concessions inc. free glass of wine

Buy tickets here: [1936: Fishing \[Episode 7 of 'A Gay Century'\] Tickets, Fri 9 Sep 2022 at 20:30 | Eventbrite](#)

\*

Sat, Sept 10<sup>th</sup>, 8.30pm SIGNED PERFORMANCE

Tower Theatre, 16 Northwold Road, London N16 7HR

Tickets: £15/£10 concessions inc. free glass of wine

Buy tickets here: [1936: Fishing Episode 7 of 'A Gay Century' Tickets, Sat 10 Sep 2022 at 20:30 | Eventbrite](#)

\*

Website: [www.homopromos.org](http://www.homopromos.org)

For further information, interviews, images or requests for media tickets:  
[homopromos@gmail.com](mailto:homopromos@gmail.com) or 07444 311695

<https://www.facebook.com/hpproduktions;>

[https://twitter.com/homopromos\\_uk;](https://twitter.com/homopromos_uk;)

<https://instagram.com/homopromos/>

