THE RED ROOM

Chamber Opera in One Act

part of Tête à Tête THE OPERA FESTIVAL

08. 09. 22
THE COCKPIT
London

SYNOPSIS

Based on an eerie and unsettling short story by Persian writer Sadegh Hedayat, THE RED ROOM is portable opera for three voices. A chance encounter at night between a stranded traveller and a mysterious host, in a provincial town in pre-war Iran turns into a night of disturbing revelations leading to the unmasking of the secret of the Red Room. With a narrative that has echoes of Franz Kafka and Edgar Allan Poe, THE RED ROOM is an intense and disturbing drama about fear, isolation, and philosophical self-destruction.

ENSEMBLE FANTôMAS

Amir Mahyar Tafreshipour – Composer
Dominic Power – Librettist
Chiara D'Anna – Stage Director
Marcello Palazzo – Conductor
Maya Sapone – Soprano
Ralph Thomas Williams – Countertenor
Yuki Okuyama – Baritone
Darragh Morgan – Violin
Christa Danielsen – Clarinet
Gabriella Dall'Olio – Harp
Steve Lowe – Lighting Designer

BIOGRAPHIES

Amir Mahyar Tafreshipour is a leading Iranian contemporary composer. In 2003 he won the first prize at the biennial composition competition for new music at Tehran University with his solo piano work 'Images of Childhood' and in the same year he was awarded a silver medal for outstanding achievement at Trinity College of Music.
His HARP CONCERTO, commissioned by the BBC, premiered on BBC Radio 3 in 2005. His opera THE DOLL BEHIND the CURTAIN, premiered at the 'Tete a Tete Opera Festival' in London in 2015 and was subsequently produced at the Royal Danish Opera House, Copenhagen in 2020. His second opera, THE RED ROOM debuts at the 'Tete a Tete Opera Festival' 2022.
PERSIAN ECHOES, a CD of Amir Mahyar Tafreshipour's music, performed by the English Chamber Orchestra and the Crash Ensemble, is out now on the Naxos label. IN ABSENTIA and PERSIAN AUTUMN, featuring compositions by Amir, Fozie Majd and Hormoz Farhat are both released by DivineArt. A CD of THE DOLL BEHIND THE CURTAIN is due for release in December 2022 by BIS Records.

Dominic Power is a radio and theatre dramatist and a librettist. He has written the libretto for Peter Wiegold's opera Brief Encounter and for End of the Line, a musical installation by Peter Wiegold. He has been an Associate Director and Editor for Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory. In that role he has created new versions of All's Well That Ends Well, Two Gentleman of Verona, A Comedy of Errors, as well Sheridan's A School for Scandal, Middleton and Rowley's and The Changeling (which enjoyed a successful run at Bristol's Tobacco Factory and the Barbican Pit.) His most recent work for STF was a collaboration with Andrew Hilton on a new, updated version of Moliere's Tartuffe. Dominic's work for radio includes adaptations of Riddley Walker, Joseph Andrews, Northanger Abbey and The History Man. For Drama on 3 Dominic collaborated with Sarah Hall on an original radio play, The Strangers' Will and an adaptation of Sarah's acclaimed novel, The Carhullan Army.

Chiara D'Anna is an Italian director, performer, lecturer and Commedia dell'Arte specialist. As artistic director of the award-winning physical theatre company Panta Rei Theatre, Chiara's mission is to inspire, challenge and entertain audiences with humour, irony and powerful imagery. Her productions integrate physical theatre, dark surreal comedy, storytelling and political satire. As a screen actress she is best known for her collaboration with writer and director Peter Strickland in Berberian Sound Studio and The Duke of Burgundy.
Chiara teaches on the MA Theatre Lab at RADA, E15 Acting School, Goldsmiths University, London Metropolitan University in London, and the Accademia dell'Arte in Arezzo, Italy. Chiara holds a BSc and MSc in Geology from the University of Turin, an MA in Physical Theatre from Royal Holloway University and a PhD in Performing Arts from London Metropolitan University. Her practice-led research on the legacy of Commedia dell'Arte in Post-Dramatic Theatre focusses on the centrality of the actor in devised performance.

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Marcello Palazzo is a conductor and composer. He has studied with Jac Van Steen, Timothy Burke, John Traill and Jessica Cottis. He has participated in masterclasses with Paul Murphy, and Jorma Panula, and has conducted at Sage One, Gateshead, Durham Cathedral, Holywell Music Room, and the Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford. Marcello conducted Durham University Symphony Orchestra, as well as the Chamber Choir and Concert Opera, the latter of which he founded and was President of. He is currently conducting Oxford University Philharmonia. As a composer, Marcello has taken part in masterclasses with Nico Muhly, Joanna Marsh and Laura Bowler.
He has studied with David Horne, Jonathan Woolgar, Laurence Osborn, Julian Anderson, and received a grant to study with Bent Sørensen. Marcello's music has been workshopped by Trio Anima, the BBC Singers, EXAUDI and CHROMA Ensemble. He has had premieres at Sage One in Newcastle by Sir Thomas Allen and in the Oxford Holywell Music Room by the Castalian String Quartet. His first string quartet has been selected for performance by the Ligeti Quartet as part of their Workout series. Marcello graduated with First Class Honours in Music from Durham University and is currently completing an MPhil in Composition at New College, Oxford.

Maya Sapone came to the UK in 2001 to train as a classical singer at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance where she graduated in 2005. She is a versatile artist and has appeared as a soloist in several concert venues, theatres and music festivals around the UK and internationally. Credits include the critically acclaimed role of Lady Thiang (King and I by Rodger and Hammerstein, Curve Theatre and UK & Ireland Tour); Bita (The Doll Behind The Curtain by Amir Mahyar Tafreshipour, Kings Place); Fisherman and Wife (The Fisherman and His Wife by Early Fernandez, Kings Place); The Teacher (Julius by Jacek Ludwig Scarso/Elastic Theatre); Lua (The Moonflower by Mario Ferraro, Riverside Studios); St Theresa (Baroque Box by Jacek Ludwig Scarso/Elastic Theatre, Old Royal Naval College); Medousa (Medousa by Jacek Ludwig Scarso/Elastic Theatre, Riverside Studios); Annina and Flora (La Traviata by G. Verdi, European Chamber Opera International Tour).
Festival appearances include Tête-à-Tête The Opera Festival, London; Fused - Royal Opera House Thurrock; La Linea Festival, Southbank Centre, London; NOA Contemporary Opera Festival, Vilnius; Icon & Idols MACRO, Museo di Arte Contemporanea, Roma; Greenwich+Docklands International Festival; Spitalfields Music Festival, London; Festival Della Musica, Roma; Italian Cultural Festival, Nairobi. Maya is a member of award-winning theatre company Elastic Theatre, and she is also a music teacher and Early Years Music Specialist.

Ralph Thomas Williams is a British countertenor active in opera, concert and choral singing around the United Kingdom. He obtained his Masters degree with first class honours at The Royal Northern College of Music under the tutelage of Nicholas Powell and Roger Hamilton and his undergraduate degree from Royal Holloway, University of London.
Recent roles have included Cupid (Venus and Adonis) with HGO, premiering Isaac/Caspar in Luke Styles/Britten's Awakening Shadow for both the Cheltenham and Presteigne Festivals, Ruggiero (Alcina) in Italy with SOA and Refugee in Jonathan Dove's Flight with RNCM.
Ralph has won numerous competitions and prizes including The Bessie Cronshaw & Frost Brownson Song Cycle Prize 2019, The Manchester Welsh Society Prize 2019, and winning performance in The Rosamond Prize 2019 at the RNCM. His concert engagements include soloist in Handel's Messiah with British Sinfonietta at St David's Cathedral, Carl Orff's Carmina Burana, Cesare from Handel's Giulio Cesare and Haydn's cantata Arianna a Naxos with the London Mozart Players. Upcoming performances include a recital in at St Michael's Earls Court and Pergolesi's Stabat Mater with soprano Caroline Taylor and The Northern Chamber Orchestra.

Yuki Okuyama is a London-based emerging baritone who has graduated from Tokyo University of the Arts and completed the master's course at Trinity Laban Conservatoire with distinction as Cathleen Creed and Morag Noble scholar, and he was selected as a finalist of The Historically Informed Music Competition 2022 in London. Yuki has studied with the voice teachers Neil Mackie, Kathleen Livingstone and Lynton Atkinson, then the coaches Andrew Robinson, Kelvin Lim and Sebastian Wybrew. Yuki has sung the role of Mr.Ford from The Merry Wives of Windsor by O. Nicolai, the role of Marcello from La Bohème by G.Puccini, the role of Enrico from Lucia di Lammermoor by G.Donizetti, the solo cantata BVW82 Ich habe genug by J.S Bach, Perry Jones from Serenade to Music by R.V.Williams and more. Especially, his performance of the title role of Don Giovanni at Italian Cultural Institute with Opera Co-Pro was highly acclaimed and the international media Complitaly covered a story of this production. Furthermore, Yuki sang the National anthem of England in Manchester for The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Event held by the international company Getir. Yuki will be singing for also much more scheduled productions which have not been published yet including operas and concerts as a baritone soloist across the UK. Yuki is recognized as also an experienced actor and dancer.

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Violinist **Darragh Morgan** has established a distinguished career as a chamber musician, soloist and teacher. He has worked closely with composers Arvo Part, Michael Finnissy, John Tavener, and appeared as guest leader of London Sinfonietta, Ensemble Modern, Musik Fabrik as well as collaborating with musicians such as Emmanuel Pahud, Nicholas Daniel and Thomas Ades. Darragh has performed as soloist with National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, Ulster Orchestra, RTE Concert Orchestra, Istanbul Symphony Orchestra, Koln Kammer Orkest and toured globally with The Smith Quartet. His solo festival appearances include Wien Modern, Festival d'Automne Paris, Maerz Musik Berlin, Bang on a Can Marathon, Aldeburgh, Cheltenham, Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival and Lucerne Festival. A founding member of Fidelio Trio, shortlisted for Royal Philharmonic Society Award, who have worked closely with composers Michael Nyman and Philip Glass. Previously on the string faculty at Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama he is regularly invited to give masterclasses internationally including Peabody Conservatory, Curtis Institute, San Francisco Conservatory of Music and Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. He has recorded on Naxos, Signum, Resonus, NMC, Delphian, Metier, Nimbus, MNR, OMM and Diatribe Records. Darragh plays an 1848 Giuseppe Rocca violin, generously on loan from the Morgan-Rocca Instrument Trust which is administered by The Royal Society of Musicians.

Christa Verlin Danielsen, lives in Denmark, where she works as freelance clarinettist and teaches Clarinet at the Svendborg Musicschool, where she teaches about 40 clarinet students. She is also a staff member at the Danish National Academy of Music, where she teaches clarinet pedagogy. She is greatly inspired in her way of teaching by Mr. Paul Harris and Michiko Yourko (music mind games). She graduated from the academy of music in Esbjerg 2005, where she studied with Ron Chen Zion (Esbjerg Ensemble), Kenneth Larsen (Odense Symphony Orchestra) and Anna Elisabeth Klett (Athelas Ensemble). For many years a member of the quartet "Tango Catz", two times the winners of the title "Svendborg Stadsensemble" (city ensemble of Svendborg). Concert tours in most of Denmark, Sweden, Istanbul, Ankara and on Cypres. She met Amir Mahyar Tafreshipor in 1997, when they were both studying at the Academy of Music in Esbjerg, Denmark. And have been a great fan of his music ever since, especially the colors and the melodies, and the way he chooses to use the instruments. The soul of his music always touches the heart. When not playing or teaching clarinet, her other passion is horses - in particular the art of Horseback Archery.

Born in her beloved Bologna, Italy, and now living in London, **Gabriella Dall'Olio** has inspired audiences throughout Europe and the Middle East with solo recitals and chamber music concerts for the past three decades.
She has recorded for international radio and television corporations, including BBC, Radio France, RAI, Bayerischer Rundfunk and Radio Suisse, and works regularly with Hebrides, Red Note, Uroboros, Gruppo Musica Insieme di Cremona, Wiener Virtuosen and with the German ensemble Kontraste, playing countless premieres and works by twentieth-century and contemporary composers, many of whom have written for her.
Her recordings have received critical acclaim and include solo CDs with Claves and Em; concertos with Claves (Turina), Naxos (Tafreshipour); AVS (Tailleferre); Toccata Next (Marquez) and chamber works with Koch, Stradivarius, Dal Segno (together with Flutist Wissam Boustany) and Ambitus. Orchestras she worked with include the Royal Opera House, BBC Symphony Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment; abroad she has played regularly with Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Berliner Philharmonikern and Wiener Philharmonikern, Symphonie Orchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, SWR Symphonie Orchester. Gabriella has enjoyed working also in the pop world with Tina Turner, Sting, Phil Collins, UK champion Beatboxer FaithSFX, Kazabian, Elton John and the Pet Shop Boys.
Alongside her busy performing career, Gabriella is deeply committed to teaching and developing the careers of young harpists: she works with passion and dedication at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in London, UK, where she is Head of Harp Studies. She gives harp courses, master classes and is often a jury member in International contests in Europe and the middle and Far East.

Steve Lowe is a freelance lighting designer; his work in theatre includes: The Chairs (The Lowry & tour); Hamlet (Bloomsbury Theatre & tour); The York Realist (Riverside Studios); Thérèse Raquin and Molière (Cochrane Theatre), and most recently Oranges and Ink (Tristan Bates, transferring to Hen & Chickens).
Opera and musical credits include: Eros & Psyche (Grimeborn Opera Festival/Arcola); The Secretary Turned CEO (Edinburgh Fringe); Rent (Cockpit Theatre); Madam Butterfly and Pagliacci (King's Head Theatre).
More details can be found at www.stevelowelighting.co.uk
He is also joint artistic director of Freathy Tippett; productions include Purcell's King Arthur (co-production with Colliers Wood Chorus), Voicing and Salty Sarah (Tête à Tête: the Opera Festival) and Licence My Roving Hands (The Space).
His work in education includes: teaching lighting design and technical theatre at Guildford School of Acting; production supervision at Rose Bruford; Lighting Designer at Goldsmiths.