



19th October 2025 • 2pm & 4pm • The Exchange 1856

**QUEST 2025** is a celebration of the creativity and talent of the North Shields community, who together have created an entire fantasy world, *The Flower of Delight*: an epic adventure which they'll present to you this afternoon alongside a retelling of the classic fantasy opera *The Rhinegold*.

The project started in the summer in Percy Main Primary School, who worked with North East poet Bob Beagrie to imagine and build their own fantasy world full of wonderful characters, and write an adventure story for those characters, and words for them to sing.

I went back to Percy Main after the holidays, and asked the children to write melodies and harmonies for the words they'd created, and I took their words to John Spence Community High School and King's Priory School, who all contributed some amazing music and some more words, and gradually *The Flower of Delight* emerged.

The North Shields Opera Chorus and the choirs of Percy Main and Whitehouse primaries have been learning to sing all this music as it's emerged song by song, and they've also been creating a retelling of Wagner's *Rhinegold*, which tells the story of the building of Valhalla, and introduces the gods of Germanic and Norse mythology: Wotan (aka Odin), Loge (aka Loki), Donner (aka Thor), Freia and a whole cast of dwarves, giants and of course the gold lying at the bottom of the River Rhine.

**QUEST 2025** also features legendary international violinist Bradley Creswick who is based in Whitley Bay, as is much-loved opera tenor and your host for this afternoon, Austin Gunn - and weaving a colourful tapestry underneath it all we welcome fabulous pianist Emily Murray, all the way from Stanley, County Durham.

TIM BURKE

### Get Involved

We have so much belief and confidence in the talented people of North Tyneside that we're really committed to making and growing more opera in the area.

No experience necessary as we look to recruit more people with more skills to move into staging, as well as singing new projects.

If you would like to keep in touch with new opportunities to collaborate with us, whatever your skill, then please do get in touch with us at:

 @teteateopera  
 [info@tete-a-tete.org.uk](mailto:info@tete-a-tete.org.uk)  
 [tete-a-tete.org.uk](http://tete-a-tete.org.uk)

### TELL US WHAT YOU THOUGHT

We would LOVE to hear what you thought about today, we can use any positive comments to help raise funds for future work, it really does help!

Scan this QR code and let us know



Tête à Tête



QUEST 2025



Tête à Tête





## QUEST 2025

### The Rhinegold (Wagner)

a retelling, adapted by Tim Burke

### The Flower of Delight

by North Tyneside Schools, Bob Beagrie & Tim Burke

*King George Hakkon* written and performed by Temitope Taiwo (King's Priory School)

Songs written and performed by Frankie Hardy, Dylan Hele and Maggie McCheyne (John Spence Community High School)

*Running time: 50 minutes, no interval*

Music Co-Creator **Tim Burke**  
& Conductor

Artistic Director **Bill Bankes-Jones**

Text Co-Creator **Bob Beagrie**

Narrator & Tenor **Austin Gunn**

Violin **Bradley Creswick**

Piano **Emily Murray**

Singers **North Shields Opera Chorus**  
**Whitehouse Primary School**  
**Percy Main Primary School**

## OUR PRINCIPALS

### Austin Gunn

Austin Gunn, a Whitley Bay resident, is one of the UK's leading tenors, Austin has worked extensively in opera and concert in the UK and in France, Italy, Portugal, Sweden, and Switzerland. He teaches singing at Trinity Laban Conservatoire and has given masterclasses for the National Student Opera Society, Leeds Youth Opera, St John's College, Durham University, Hull University, York University, for OperaLab in Brussels and at the Cite Internationale des arts in Paris. He has appeared in the previous North Shields operas and is delighted to be here again.

### Emily Murray

Emily Murray is a County Durham musician who moved to London in 2003 to join the Band of the Welsh Guards. As a trumpeter, violinist and pianist she performed at many prestigious events, including Trooping the Colour and the Royal Festival of Remembrance. During her time in the army Emily was awarded Household Musician of the Year and the Silver Medal of the Worshipful Company of Musicians. A professional accompanist, Emily has also performed as a recitalist and as a founding member of the Caritas Ensemble. She has been Musical Director of Low Fell Singers since 2017 and spent six years as Study Leader for Music Language at the Centre for Advanced Training at the Glasshouse, launching their Vocal Pathway in 2019. Becoming Assistant Director of Music at Durham School in 2012, Emily is now Director of Music at Chorister School, taking great joy in nurturing the musical talents of 3-11 year olds.

### Bradley Creswick

Bradley Creswick has recently been made Leader Emeritus of Royal Northern Sinfonia and began his long relationship them in 1984. In 1987 he moved to London to lead the Philharmonia and then the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House returning to the Sinfonia in 1994. Many recordings include Vaughan Williams' *The Lark Ascending* and Concerto Accademico for EMI. *Venus Blazing* by Deirdre Gribbin with RTE and Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante* for Violin and Viola with the Zurich Chamber Orchestra. Bradley has twice taken part in the Marlboro Music Festival in America and has occasionally been heard playing western swing fiddle back home. Lately he has been enjoying chamber music and recitals with friends, exciting collaborations, guest leading orchestras and loving playing the violin!

## NORTH SHIELDS OPERA CHORUS

North Shields Opera Chorus has grown out of a community opera initiative in North Shields which started in 2019, encouraging and celebrating the creativity of the town's residents of all ages and walks of life, producing *HOME 2022*, an opera which told the stories of North Shields residents through their own words and favourite songs. Last year North Shields Opera Chorus worked with opera company Tête à Tête to make *GALA 2024*, an epic concert with ten of the best opera choruses from all across Europe and written over a span of five hundred years, performing alongside Royal Northern Sinfonia and Chorus of Royal Northern Sinfonia.

North Shields Opera Chorus is for everyone - come and join us! Email [singingnorthshields@gmail.com](mailto:singingnorthshields@gmail.com) to get involved or find out more.

## TÊTE À TÊTE

*Tête à Tête is the future of opera.*

We make operas and support others making operas which reinvigorate the art form and empower communities; we make inclusive experiences telling relatable stories in welcoming, accessible settings.

We innovate as a "powerhouse" (The Observer, 2024), creating and supporting dozens of new works each year, telling the stories of our time to the people of our time.

We welcome people to opera across the UK, operating in Cornwall, Newcastle, North Tyneside, and London. We host the world's largest archive of new opera, sharing it for free to support the industry and increase its reach.

We nurture, helping the talent pipeline flow from entry level to late-career. Over 5,000 have grown under our wing, from the Master of the King's Music to the Executive Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company, in sectors from immersive experience design to VR and AI.

Come and see us! [www.tete-a-tete.org.uk](http://www.tete-a-tete.org.uk)

Patron: Errollyn Wallen CBE, Master of the King's Music

## Thanks

Stuart and all the team @ The Exchange 1856

Jill Hanna @ Whitehouse Primary School

Rosie Reynolds & Rachel Bailey @ Percy Main Primary School

Jemma-Louise Patrick & Damien Grazer @ John Spence Community High School

Elizabeth Johnston @ King's Priory School

Jenny Williams @ North Tyneside Music Education Hub

Karen Taws @ North Shields Cultural Quarter

Anna Disley @ New Writing North

Father Chris @ St Cuthbert's Church

Irene & Paul @ Can't Sing Choir/Linskill Community Choir

All the tremendous individuals from each of the very many partner organisations who have supported our work.

Special mention goes to all our Tête à Tête supporters, all our financial supporters and everyone who has supported today by buying a ticket today.

