



As the Crows Fly

01 10 25
The Cockpit Theatre

There is a fascinating constant exchange between Crow's natural self
and his civilised self, between the scavenger and the philosopher,
the goddess of complete being and the black stain,
between Crow and his birdness.

Max Porter, 'Grief is a Thing With Feathers'

Light thickens, and the crow
Makes wing to th' rooky wood.
Good things of day begin to droop and drowse,
Whiles night's black agents to their preys to
rouse.

Macbeth

As the Crows Fly

A Chamber Opera

Libretto by Edie Bailey | Music by Ben Hoppe

Hestor Dart

Ash Howard

Jasper Kindleysides-Seidl

Iris Oliver

Stage Direction by **Edie Bailey**

Music Direction by **Ben Hoppe**

Sets and Costumes Designed by **Emily Cave**

Lighting Designed by **Josie Ireland**

Movement Direction by **Aly Carter**

Stage Management by **Tiff Milner** and **Elena Veris Reynolds**

Chamber Ensemble

Gregory May, Répétiteur/Piano

Flávio Albino Rodrigues, Accordion

Hoda Jahanpour, Cello

Emily Trubshaw, Violin

Thomas Knollys, Clarinet

Carmen Lena, Trumpet

Hosted by **TêteÀtête**

A Brief Synopsis

To Set the Scene

As the Crows Fly tells the tale of three birds as they circle a fresh battlefield deciding who to eat. They are **Préachán, Feannag, and Brân**. When a dying **Soldier** enters the equation, one of these crows must decide either to complete their task or to look the other way.



Director's Note

This project has come out of a long held obsession with the natural world and of imbuing non-human creatures with human emotions and problems. In my work I love to blur the lines between creatures and people. The opera was built around the question 'how do crows feel about eating people?'

Our work in the rehearsal room has, of course, been centred around the Crow; exploring the core (caw?) of each character and what their place is in the world. With the help of the wonderful Aly Carter, we developed a physical language of the Crow. We explored the physicality of the bird and the human and how both can exist within one body.

I am immensely grateful to every single member of the cast, ensemble, and creative team for making this project a pleasure to work on. Huge thanks to the Hinrichsen Foundation and Arts Council England for believing in the project enough to fund it and make it possible.

- ***Edie Bailey***

Composer's Note

Having grown up immersed in opera and musical theatre, this project feels like the culmination of years of artistic development. I've always been drawn to stage works of all kinds, especially those that blur the lines between what is typically considered "opera" and "musical theatre." While *As the Crows Fly* is first and foremost a chamber opera, the score was also written with American and British theatre traditions, as well as early/mid 20th century cabaret pieces in mind – musical and theatrical forms that have had a major influence on my music. The opera features moments of unabashed boldness mixed with very delicate, exposed sections; both of these sonic areas are core to my practice as a composer.

I am deeply grateful to all of our extraordinary musicians and creative team for their hard work, as well as to Tête à Tête for providing the space to bring our crows (and soldier) to life.

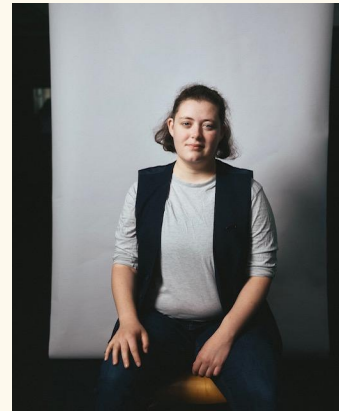
- ***Ben Hoppe***

Cast & Creatives



Hestor Dart (The Soldier) is a singer, musician and maker with an interest in expansive and ugly sound, traditional crafts and collaborative practice. Some current obsessions include weaving songs, trash music and the tale of True Thomas. Their debut EP *meet(me)* was released in 2025 with OVER/AT. Hestor is one half of the duo *loomweight*, with Patricia Auchterlonie and a founding member of The Ruffians. In 2023-24 Hestor was one of six participants in the inaugural VOICEBOX programme, delivered by Juliet Fraser in partnership with Britten Pears Arts; City, University of London; Sound Festival and Hawkwood Centre for Future Learning.

Ash Howard (Feannag) is a multi-skilled mezzo soprano “with excellent stage presence and a powerful mezzo voice” (*A Young(ish) Perspective*, Zoë Pinnell), performing across opera, competitions and choral settings, and working behind the scenes as a stage manager. He graduated his MMus in 2024 from Trinity Laban, where he was a recipient of the Kathleen Roberts Vocal Scholarship. A Waterperry Opera Festival 2024 Young Artist, he sang Chorus *Barber of Seville* and multiple roles in their opera scenes gala. He is a regular with St Paul’s Opera, where he began exploring octave-swapped roles by performing Dr Blind *Die Fledermaus*, continuing the trend with Monostatos *Die Zauberflöte* (Opera Greenwich) and Jailor/Chorus *Tosca* (Oxford Opera). Other roles include Second Spirit *Die Zauberflöte* (Cardiff Cotswold Opera), and Smeton *Try me, Good King* (Trinity Laban).



Jasper Kinleysides-Seidl (Brân) recently finished their MMus at Trinity Laban, after completing his BA (Hons) in Liberal Arts at the University of Warwick. They recently performed the roles of Elsie in “The Yeomen of the Guard” and Rose in “Ruddigore” with the Ferrier Operatic Society, and Josephine in “HMS Pinafore” with the Bristol Cabot Choir. At Trinity Laban they played Lucy in Menotti’s “The Telephone,” and the roles of Oscar in “Ballo in Maschera,” Vitellia in “Clemenza di Tito,” Amor in “Orfeo e Euridice,” and Miles in “Turn of the Screw” in Trinity Laban’s Opera Scenes. Other engagements of his have included Marenka in Opera Warwick’s “The Bartered Bride,” Josephine in the Birmingham Savoyard’s production of “HMS Pinafore,” and Samuel in the Birmingham Repertory Opera Company’s “The Pirates of Penzance.”

Iris Oliver (Préachán) is an in-demand solo and choral bass-baritone based in London, performing across the UK and beyond. Recent solo highlights include Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* as The Drunken Poet, Coridon, and Hymen, Fauré's *Requiem*, and Puccini's *Messa Di Gloria*. In the choral world, Iris regularly performs with a variety of professional ensembles across the country: she is a Voces8 UK scholar for 2025-2026 and holds scholarships with Temple Church and the Oxford Bach Soloists. In 2024-2025, she was a choral scholar with St Martin-in-the-Fields, and a member of the Genesis Sixteen and Vox Next Gen young artist schemes. She read English and French at Keble College, Oxford, where she was a choral scholar. Iris currently studies with Berty Rice.



Edie Bailey is a non-binary queer creative from South-East London. A multi-disciplinary artist, their practice is informed by their work as an Opera Director, Folk Musician, and experimental Composer. As an artist, their work is distinctly ecological and takes inspiration from British folklore and the natural world. Inspired by British folk music and folklore, their music is highly performative, putting storytelling at its centre. Edie has directed operas at the Edinburgh Fringe and Tête à Tête Festival and has worked as an Assistant and Associate Director at Opera Holland Park, Grimeborn Opera Festival, Hampstead Garden Opera and Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

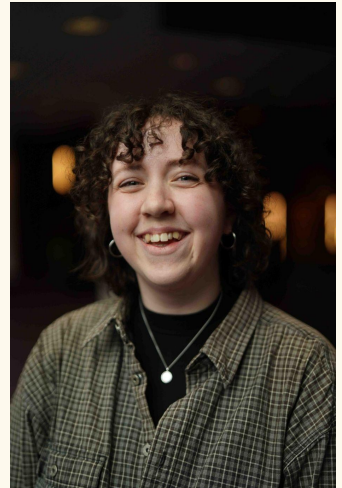
Ben Hoppe is a Chicago-born composer and instrumentalist based in Vienna. He began piano studies at a young age and soon after became active in bands, choirs and orchestras. At 13, he discovered a passion for writing music, which led him to study composition. Ben's music has been performed by Prague Modern, the Indiana University Symphonic Band, PRISM Quartet and the Big Red Horn Ensemble, among others. He's also written chamber pieces for the Roberts Institute of Art in London and the Pallant House Gallery in Chichester. He participated in an Opera Lab residency at Glyndebourne, and has taken part in video game and film scoring masterclasses. Ben is a graduate of the Royal Academy of Music and the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. benhoppe.com





Emily Cave is a multidisciplinary artist working in theatre performance as a designer, maker and dresser. Currently pursuing set and costume design, Emily is interested in work celebrating queer artists and spaces—creating environments to celebrate identity and community. As well as projects with strong consideration of sustainability, mental health awareness and support of young artists. Design credits: ‘Love in a Foreign Land’ (Playground Theatre), ‘World Stage–Battle of the Bands’ (Union Theatre), ‘Last (Holy) Day’ (The Courtyard Theatre). Other credits: Associate Designer ‘Dido and Aeneas’ (GSMD), Lead Scenic Artist ‘Creditors’ (Orange Tree Theatre).

Josie Ireland is a Lighting Designer and Production Manager for theatre, opera, and immersive experiences. A recent graduate of Guildhall School of Music & Drama, they have particular passion for accessibility, safe spaces, and queer stories. She is the chair of the ALPD Student Working Group, after being the Winner of the ALPD’s Francis Reid Award for Best Emerging Lighting Designer in 2020. Josie was also the winner of the Lightmongers’ Peter Parker ALPD Award 2025, and the Guildhall Hazel Sharples Prize in 2024. Notable lighting design credits include VERS (Hen & Chickens), Dream Lovers (Stanley Arts), L’Olimpiade (Vache Baroque), Opera Makers (GSMD), Autumn Opera Scenes (GSMD). Revival Lighting Designer for La descente d’Orphée aux enfers at Buxton International Festival (LD Andrew Ellis). Currently, they are Technical Stage Manager at Lost Estate’s 58th Street Country Club.



Aly Carter (She/They) is a theatre maker and performer from the United States currently in pursuit of their MFA in Movement Directing and Teaching at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. Previously graduating with a BFA in Theatre, Aly has a passion for collaboration and queer advocacy in the arts. They are currently inspired by Mary Oliver’s poetry, and the lyrical stylings of Stevie Nicks. Recent credits include Movement Direction on “Pinter 5” at CSSD, and Assistant Direction on “The Protecting Veil” with Trinity Laban for Spitalfields Music Festival.



Tiff Milner (they/them) is a nonbinary stage manager based in London. Their work as a stage manager ranges from plays and musicals to the occasional opera – including last year’s *Horse Person Opera* at the 2024 edition of the *Tête à Tête* festival! They love working with LGBTQ+ performers and crew and have their own queer historical production company Great Egg Theatre, wherein they also write and direct plays.

Elena Veris Reynolds is a stage manager and musician who works primarily in opera, musicals and fringe theatre. She is particularly interested in new works, and in projects that engage with community and that challenge and disrupt the status quo in the industry. Recent stage management work includes: *Iphigenia in Tauris* (Blackheath Halls Opera), *For The Plot* (Edinburgh Fringe 2025), Orange Tree Young Company, *Thanks For Having Me* (Riverside Studios), *12* (New Wimbledon Theatre Studio), alongside many others.



Chamber Ensemble



Gregory May is a pianist and composer currently based in London. His focus as a pianist is primarily on accompaniment and ensemble playing, with a particular interest in working with singers. He performs as part of a duo with the soprano Hannah Dienes-Williams, working together largely on 20th and 21st century repertoire, as well as premiering several pieces by colleagues. In the spring of 2023, they were invited by Paris Conservatoire to give a performance of Messiaen's *Harawi*, as part of a project uncovering the music of Yvonne Loriod. Greg has also made appearances as a soloist in concertos by Mozart, Beethoven, Saint-Saëns, and Shostakovich.

Flávio Albino Rodrigues began his accordion studies at the age of 9 at the Dr. José de Azeredo Perdigão Conservatory of Music in Viseu. From the age of 5, he accompanied his parents playing traditional Portuguese music, allowing him to travel the world and perform for distinguished figures, such as Pope Benedict XVI, Pope Francis, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, and two Presidents of the Portuguese Republic on various occasions. At 17, he moved to London to study at the Royal Academy of Music under Professor Owen Murray, where he completed both his Bachelor's and Master's degrees, and is currently pursuing an Advanced Diploma in Performance. During his years in London, he developed an extensive background in pedagogy, working with over 500 students, leading workshops and masterclasses at various schools in England, at the Viseu Conservatory of Music in Portugal, and at the North Jiading Accordion School in Shanghai, China.



Hoda Jahanpour is an Iranian-Slovak cellist, songwriter, and composer drawn to musical experiences that generate energy and bring people together. Her journey has taken her from solo performances with the Prague Philharmonic to sharing the stage with Nicola Benedetti as an Edinburgh International Festival Rising Star. She is Deal Festival's Young Artist in Association for 2025 and a founding member of the Woolf Quartet, Wigmore Hall/Open Academy Fellows 2025–26. Moving fluidly between Western classical, jazz, Middle Eastern fusion, and experimental music-theatre, Hoda has worked with artists including Nubya Garcia, Corrine Bailey Rae and Abel Selaoce, with performances at the Barbican Pit, Manchester Jazz Festival, and Royal Festival Hall.

Thomas Knollys is a freelance clarinettist and bass clarinettist. He completed his postgraduate degree at the Royal Northern College of Music, studying with Katherine Lacy and Ausiàs Garrigós Morant. He previously graduated from the University of Birmingham where he was taught by Oliver Janes. Thomas has played with numerous orchestras around the UK including the Hallé Orchestra, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. He was a member of the London Philharmonic Orchestra Foyle Future Firsts Professional Development Programme for 2024/25. Thomas is a passionate chamber musician, with experience playing in a variety of wind and string ensembles. He is also a keen educator, and teaches privately and in local schools and music hubs.



British-Polish violinist **Emily Trubshaw** is an extremely versatile musician, regularly presenting solo recitals across the UK, including at venues such as St James' Piccadilly, the Oxford and Cambridge Club, and Rhyl Music Club. She has participated in masterclasses with renowned violinists such as James Ehnes, Zakhar Bron, Mihaela Martin, and Daniel Hope. Emily also has a strong affinity for contemporary music, recently making her professional debut with the London Sinfonietta at Queen Elizabeth Hall. Currently a Riot Ensemble Art Mentor Scholar, she was also part of the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group NEXT scheme in 2023/24. Emily is on the London Philharmonic Orchestra's Foyle Future Firsts scheme and has also performed with the Knussen Chamber Orchestra, Brighton Philharmonic, and Waterperry Opera Festival.



Carmen Llana is a 24-year-old jazz trumpeter from Spain, currently based in London. She began her classical music studies at the age of eight in Asturias, graduating in 2019. That same year she got a place in Esmuc, Barcelona, where she studied under Mireia Farrés, principal trumpet of the *Orquestra Simfònica de Barcelona i Nacional de Catalunya (OBC)*. Carmen completed her studies at *Esmuc* in 2023. In the 2023-2024 academic year, she toured across Spain with different pop-rock groups, playing at major festivals like *Viñarock*, *Primavera Sound Festival* and *Madcool*. During the year 2024-2025 she started her jazz studies in *Guildhall School of Music & Drama* and where she pursued the *Guildhall Artist Master of Performance* program in Jazz Trumpet, graduating in June 2025. She is currently active in the London music scene, as a freelance trumpet player in classical and jazz music.



We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to our funders for tonight's performance. Producing our show would not have been possible without the generous support of the organisations and individuals listed below:



Supported using public funding by
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Jasper Kindleysides-Seidl is raising money for their top surgery

Our wonderful Brân has set up a GoFundMe to raise funds for their top surgery. If you can, please consider donating

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