

**SHAKESPEARE IN MUSIC FESTIVAL**  
**Stratford-upon-Avon**  
**2 May to 5 May 2025**



***Shakespeare's Legacy in English Opera***  
***Jon French with soloists from The Royal Birmingham Conservatoire***

*The Enchanted Island*

Days of pleasure - **Quartet**

*The Fairy Queen* - Purcell

Come, come, come let us leave the town - **Ella Blair** and **Oliver Barker**

Come, all ye songsters of the sky - **Joe Yates**

Ye gentle spirits of the air - **Ella Blair**

Hush, no more - **Oliver Barker** and **chorus**

*The Tempest* - Purcell

Arise ye subterranean winds - **Oliver Barker**

Aeolus Song – **Joe Yates**

*The Tempest* - Arne

Where the bee sucks - **Ella Blair**

*Pyramus and Thisbe* - Lampe

Ladies, don't fright you - **Oliver Barker**

Approach ye furies - **Joe Yates**

Now I am dead - **Joe Yates**

Thus folding - **Ella Blair** and **Joe Yates**

Interval

*The Enchanted Island*

Darling, it's you – **Quartet**

*Much Ado About Nothing* – Stanford

Tell me, who told you so? – **India Harding** and **Oliver Barker**

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* - Britten

Be kind and Courteous- **Ella Blair**

Puppet? Why so? - **India Harding**

Bottom's Dream - **Oliver Barker**

*Kiss Me, Kate!*

Why can't you behave – **India Harding**

So in love - **Ella Blair**

Where is the life that late I led - **Oliver Barker**

*West Side Story* - Bernstein

Something's coming - **Joe Yates**

Somewhere - **Quartet**

A boy like that/ I have a love - **Ella Blair** and **India Harding**



**Ella Blair** is a Soprano, currently studying under Amanda Roocroft at Birmingham Conservatoire. A Genesis Sixteen Young Artist in 2023/2024, she was also a prize-winner in last year's Edward Brooks Lieder Competition. She has worked with leading conductors Harry Christophers and Eamonn Dougan and, pursuing an interest in musical theatre, she has performed with the National Youth Music Theatre and recently played Mother Abbess in *The Sound of Music* in Birmingham.



**Oliver Barker** is a recent graduate of the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire (RBC), achieving a first-class degree in Vocal and Operatic studies in the summer of 2024. Taught by Christopher Turner, Oliver has performed numerous operatic roles for RBC, including Pandolfe in Massenet's *Cendrillon*, Father in Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel* and Harasta in Janacek's *Cunning Little Vixen*. Oliver is a singer with the Josephine Baker Trust, a 2024 Waterperry Young Artist and will soon join the National Opera Studio in their inaugural year of the 'NOS Academy'. Oliver has performed with the Royal Birmingham Ballet, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO), Buxton Opera Festival and the Leicester Symphony Orchestra. Next September, he will be moving to London, studying towards his master's degree at the Royal College of Music, generously supported with scholarship.



**India Harding** is a High Mezzo-Soprano studying a masters in vocal performance at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. India has had the pleasure of performing in multiple masterclasses with incredible singers such as Roderick Williams, and vocal technicians like Paul Farrington. India also continues to work a variety of jobs, supporting and educating children and young people from diverse backgrounds in order to fund her studies. As a mixed-race woman from a low income background one of India's biggest goals in her career is to promote music making and inspire young people to learn and love all that classical music and opera have to offer, as well as promoting this music to the communities that may have little to no access to it.



Tenor **Joe Yates** is currently working towards attaining his Master's in Vocal Performance at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire where he studies with Christopher Turner, and is also coached by Paul Wingfield, Robin Bowman, and Charlotte Forrest. Joe has twice been a prize-winner in the Conservatoire's Birmingham Festival Choral Society Oratorio Prize (2023,2024) and has also been a finalist in the Stuart Cameron-Smith American Song Prize (2024).



**Jonathan French** was born in Stockport, Manchester and studied Piano at Chetham's school of Music prior to commencing his degree studies at Birmingham Conservatoire. Following successful studies at RBC under Professor Malcolm Wilson, Jonathan went on to give many solo recitals and concerto performances at prestigious venues in Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow and London. He has given many solo recitals at important musical events, including the Warwick and Stratford music festivals. As an accompanist Jonathan has worked with numerous international soloists in the UK and abroad. He is currently combining a busy performing career with his full-time position as Head of Accompaniment in Vocal Studies at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, where he has recently been given an honorary B.C. award.



Between 1972 and 2020 the bass **Robert Lloyd** performed an enormous range of repertoire at the Royal Opera and the great opera houses of the world. He was the first British Bass to sing the role of Boris Godunov, in a production by Andre Tarkovsky which transferred to the Kirov Opera in Leningrad. He has appeared in virtually all the great opera houses of the world, featured in several films, notably *Bluebeard's Castle*, and *Parsifal*. He has also written and presented a large number of radio programmes about opera and the voice. He was made a CBE in 1991.